

DEESIDE AREA

ITEM	APP/2005/5055/D	WARD Hoylake and Meols
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**Location:** Land at Melsemere South West of 14 Bertram Drive North Meols Wirral CH47 0LW

**Proposal** Erection 1 x 19metre high cypress tree telecommunications mast with 6 antennas, one microwave dish and associated equipment cabin

**Applicant:** 02 (Uk) Ltd  
260 Bath Road  
Slough  
Barkshire  
SL1 4DX

**Agent:** Pentland Ltd  
Cloister House  
Riverside  
New Bailey Street  
Manchester  
M3 5AG

**Development Plan allocation and policies:** Green Belt, UDP; Policy GB2, TEL1, TE1.

**Planning History:** APP/2004/7032/D - Erection of 1 No. 20 metre high telecommunications column, 3 No. antennas, 2 dishes and associated equipment cabin (Refused 01/10/2004).

APP/2004/7484/D - Erection of 1 No. 17.5 metre high telecommunications column, 3 No. antennas and associated equipment cabin (Refused 03/12/2004).

**Representations and consultations** Councillor Gerry Ellis - requested that the application be brought out of delegated powers.

Stephen Hesford MP - Objects to the proposal on grounds that:

- The mast is an unnecessary intrusion on Green Belt
- The height and design of the mast would harm visual amenity, especially as it will be permanently in view amongst deciduous trees
- The entrance of the site, across an unmanned rail crossing, is potentially dangerous
- There has been no pre-consultation
- Not all options for mast sharing have been satisfactorily explored.

Green Belt Council - Object to the proposal.

A petition was received with 181 addresses on it. 183 individual letters of objection have also been received, most of which appeared on the petition. Local residents object on the grounds of:

- Visual impact upon the Green Belt;
- Visual impact and intrusiveness upon the local residential area;
- Location close to a railway will result in a hazardous attraction to local children;
- Loss of property value;
- Not all options for mast sharing have been satisfactorily explored;
- Potential interference and disruption to existing television services;
- The 'cypress tree' will not blend in with the existing trees;
- The base station will result in noise pollution;
- There are protected species of wildlife on the site;
- Perceived health risks;
- Health concerns - including the potential risk from masts which research has not ruled out, the close proximity of the railway line and electricity sub station, the perception and genuine public fear of masts. Most objectors requested that the 'precautionary approach', as stated in the Stewart Report, be followed due to the safety of telecommunications masts not being conclusively proven.

A letter of objection was received from Kingsmead School, which is located approximately 400 metres from the proposed site. The school objects on health grounds, visual impact of the mast, potential hazard of location across the railway line and potential loss of property value.

A letter of objection was received from Wirral Wildlife. The letter stated that they had reason to believe that protected wildlife are located on the site.

Hoylelake & District Civic Society object to the proposal.

Director of Technical Services (Traffic) - No objection.

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Director of Housing & Environmental Protection has no objection to this application based on:

- The level of emissions from the proposed telecommunications mast conforms with the standard set by the International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation protection.
- Members of the public will not have access to the exclusion zone.
- The Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation, in the report of the 14th January 2004 states that: "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health".

**Directors comments:**

The applicant has provided certification that the installation complies with recognised emissions standards in the form of a 'Declaration of Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines'. Having regard to the comments of the Director of Housing and Environmental Protection, there are no grounds for refusal of the application on health grounds.

The applicant has indicated that other sites have been considered but not deemed acceptable. These sites and the reasons that they are unacceptable are:

- Meols Water Waste treatment Works, Carr Lane
- The Railway Public House, Birkenhead Road, Meols
- Meols Train Station, Sub Station, Meols
- Church of St John, Birkenhead Road, Meols  
(These sites were considered unacceptable as the site owners refused to allow masts on their land)
- Meols BT Exchange, Birkenhead Road  
(This site was considered unacceptable due to the potential visual harm that would result)
- The Railway Public House, grass verge to front, Birkenhead Road  
(This site was considered unacceptable due to its prominent location and therefore potential harm to the local environment)
- GC Dog Training Services, Park Lane, Meols  
(This site was considered unacceptable due to it being too far away to provide the required coverage)
- Adopted Highway, near to Bridge, Birkenhead Road, Meols  
(This site was considered unacceptable due to the pavement being too narrow to install equipment)

There have been two previous applications for a telecommunications mast on this site. APP/2004/7032/D proposed a 20metre high monopole column and was refused on 1st October 2004. APP/2004/7484/D proposed a 17.5metre high monopole column. This was also refused, on 3rd December 2004.

This application, the third for the site, is for a 19metre high 'cypress tree' telecommunications mast with associated equipment cabin.

The proposal is located adjacent the railway, on the opposite side from residential properties. It is reached by an access track, which runs out onto Bertram Drive North, after having crossed the railway line. The immediate area surrounding the application site is covered in deciduous trees, with the highest reaching no more than 15 metres. There is therefore a consistent 'treescape' evident from Bertram Drive North.

The access track now runs directly parallel to the railway line, with three detached dwellings currently being built on the land adjacent to 14 Bertram Drive North.

The steady skyline created by the treescape will be interrupted by the mast, which will project approximately 4 metres above the trees.

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The design of the mast as a cypress tree would help to lessen the visual impact of the mast on the surrounding area when compared to regular, monopole telecommunications masts. However, the design is not considered sufficient to fully negate the adverse impact the mast would still have on the surrounding area.

There are no authentic cypress trees' in the area, which will result in the proposal being an obvious and alien feature which would be out of place and out of character. This may have been considered acceptable if the mast had only been visible within the wooded area and not from a distance. However, as the mast projects above the treescape it will clearly be visible from both the neighbouring residential area and other parts of the Green Belt and by railway passengers.

The residential area around Bertram Drive consists primarily of low-density, two-storey dwellings. Despite the presence of the nearby railway, the area retains the character of a quiet, solely residential area. Although the proposed mast would not have a particularly adverse impact on the amenities of the occupiers of the residential area, it would impact on the street scene of parts of the residential area.

As this land is within the Green Belt it further accentuates the impact on the surrounding environment. Although the proposal is not located within open Green Belt land or an Area of Special Landscape Value, it is still considered an inappropriate development within the Green Belt that will have an adverse impact upon the environment and general undeveloped nature of the Green Belt.

Although the proposal, due to its design, is less obtrusive than the previous applications, the presence of the surrounding trees would not mitigate the impact on the Green Belt. This is because although the trees would provide some cover in summer when they are all in leaf, in the winter there will be little screening of the proposed mast. This would mean that the mast looks further out of character with the surrounding area and would therefore be visually obtrusive within the Green Belt.

The proposal would result in a development which would harm the visual amenity of the Green Belt.

The proposal is contrary to Policies GB2, TEL1 and TE1 of the adopted Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

**Recommendation:**        **Refuse**

**Reason(s):**

- 1        The proposal would result in a development which would have an adverse environmental impact on the Wirral Green Belt and is considered an inappropriate development. This is contrary to Policy GB2 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

**Last Comments By:**        **25 February 2005**

**56 Day Expires On:**       **16 March 2005**