



An
Bord
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-300679-18

Development	Pole-mounted shrouded antenna, dishes and other associated equipment at roof level and equipment cabinets, cables and ancillary works at ground level.
Location	The Coultry Neighbourhood Centre, Santry Way, Dublin 9
Planning Authority	Dublin City Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	4090/17
Applicant(s)	Signal Infrastructure Ltd.
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Refuse Permission
Type of Appeal	First Party
Appellant(s)	Signal Infrastructure Ltd.
Observer(s)	None
Date of Site Inspection	12 th April 2018
Inspector	Una O'Neill

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site is located within Coultury Neighbourhood Centre, east of Ballymun Road and south of Santry Avenue, in a suburb north of Dublin City Centre.
- 1.2. The site comprises a three storey, flat-roof, building known as Coultury Neighbourhood Centre, which comprises four ground floor commercial units (three of which are vacant) and two floors of apartments above. There is an enclosed yard to the rear of the building. The site is located at the junction of Santry Way and Coultury Road and fronts onto Santry Way. On the opposite side of the site is a single storey building accommodating glór na ngeall and south of this at the junction is a three storey building accommodating Pieta House. On the opposite side of the junction with Coultury Road, a primary school is currently under construction. The streets in the immediate vicinity of the site, Coultury Road to the south and Coultury Lawn to the north, comprise traditional two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings. South of the site is a more modern development of three storey dwellings constructed around Coultury Park, which links west to Ballymun town centre.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development comprises the following:
 - Pole-mounted shrouded antenna, dishes and other associated equipment at roof level.
 - Equipment cabinets, cables and ancillary works at ground level.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

REFUSED for one reason:

R1: Scale and location on a rooftop of a building which contains residential uses would be visually obtrusive and visually incongruous in the local streetscape... It is considered the proposed development would be detrimental to the visual and residential amenities of the area.

3.2. **Planning Authority Reports**

3.2.1. Planning Reports

The Planning Officer's report generally reflects the decision of the Planning Authority.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

Drainage Division: No objection subject to conditions.

3.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None.

3.4. **Third Party Observations**

None.

4.0 **Planning History**

PL29N.200711 (reg ref 1183/02) Permission GRANTED for a three storey building comprising four number retail units and 14 number apartments above.

5.0 **Policy Context**

5.1. **National Policy**

- Telecommunications Antenna and Support Structures—Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 1996 (DEHLG) – This document provides general guidance on planning issues so that environmental impact is minimised and that a consistent approach is adopted by the various planning authorities. Section 4.5 of the Guidelines refers to *Sharing Facilities and Clustering* and states that “all applicants will be encouraged to share and will have to satisfy the authority that they have made a reasonable effort to share”.
- Circular Letter PL07/12 – This circular updates the guidance document and specifically refers to temporary permissions, removal of separation distances from houses and schools, bonds and contributions, planning considerations to related to

location and design and not health and safety matters, and the establishment of a register / database.

5.2. **Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022**

- Zoning objective Z3, to provide for and improve neighbourhood facilities.
- Section 9.5.11 Telecommunications
- Section 16.33 Telecommunications Apparatus

5.3. **Natural Heritage Designations**

The site is not located within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site.

6.0 **The Appeal**

6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

The grounds of appeal as submitted by the applicant can be summarised as follows:

- The development has been designed to minimise the potential visual impact on the subject site and surrounding residential area and to minimise any impact on the residential amenity of those living in the residential units at the subject site.
- The maximum height including the shroud of the antennae is 2m. A lightning final extends above the shroud by a further 0.5m. The applicant argues the final is so thin its visual impact is negligible. The proposed dishes are not within a shroud as it is considered that such dishes are visually acceptable in the area, there are numerous satellite-type dishes on residential buildings in the area. The equipment cabinets are to be located in an existing plant store at ground level and will not present a significant visual impact. The 300mm cable along the side of the building will be painted the same colour as the building. There will be no visual impact from the ground level equipment which will be placed within an existing plant storage area.

- The antennae must be located close to the roof edge so that the signal is not 'clipped' by the rooftop. The antennae cannot therefore be set back.
- The proposal will not affect residential amenity. Any maintenance required will be undertaken by means of a cherry picker with no disturbance in terms of access to the building for the residents.
- The telecommunications guidelines indicated in relation to telecommunications antennae will have some degree of visual impact in most circumstances, however with careful design the benefits to the national economy and society in general will often outweigh any localised visual impact.
- A technical justification has been provided demonstrating the locational requirements for this development.
- The development is of strategic and national importance in terms of the national strategy for the improvement of mobile communication services and broadband.
- The proposal is in accordance with national telecommunications guidelines, circular PL07/12, which advise against the inclusion of separation distances.
- The site is not within a specially designated area or within a landscape of particular sensitivity.

6.2. **Planning Authority Response**

No additional issues raised.

6.3. **Observations**

None.

6.4. **Further Responses**

None.

7.0 Assessment

Zoning

- 7.1. The subject site is located within zoning objective Z3, the objective for which is 'to provide for and improve neighbourhood facilities'. Telecommunications installations are defined as public service installation in the Land Use Definitions in Appendix 21 of the Plan. A public service installation is a permissible use within this zoning.
- 7.2. In the documentation submitted, the applicant has demonstrated that there are no reasonable alternative sites available and stated the rooftop of Pieta House opposite the site was considered but was not suitable or viable.
- 7.3. I consider the development as proposed to be acceptable in principle within this zoning objective.
- 7.4. The primary issues for assessment include:
- Visual Amenity
 - Residential Amenity

Visual Amenity

- 7.5. Section 16.33.1 of the development plan in relation to siting, design and visual amenity of telecommunications infrastructure states telecommunications antennae and supporting structures should preferably be located on industrial estates or on lands zoned for industrial/employment uses. Possible locations in commercial areas, such as rooftop locations on tall buildings, may also be acceptable, subject to visual amenity considerations..... In assessing proposals for telecommunication antennae and support structures, factors such as the object in the wider townscape and the position of the object with respect to the skyline will be closely examined.
- 7.6. The roof top development consists of six pieces of equipment. The tallest elements are the antennae. Two antenna are proposed toward the south-western end/front of the building and these will be contained within a shroud. One antennae within a shroud is proposed on the south-eastern end/rear of the building. The maximum height of the antennae is indicated to be 2m, with a lightning final extending above the shrouds by a further 0.5m. The applicant states the antenna cannot be set back from the roof-top edge for technical reasons. Two satellite dishes (1.2-1.5m high) are

proposed at the southern end of the building adjoining Coultry Road and two low level pieces of equipment approx. 400mm high.

- 7.7. I have reviewed the 'anticipated visual impact assessment' submitted by the applicant which includes photomontages of the proposed development from Santry Way, Coultry Road, and Coultry Lawn. I have further considered potential impacts from Coultry Park to the south. In my view, having regard to the scale of the proposed development and the positioning of the equipment on the buildings, in the context of the narrow width of the streets within the immediate area, I do not consider the proposed development will unduly impact on the skyline or the streetscape when viewed from various vantage points.
- 7.8. Should the Board be minded to grant permission, I am of the view that a condition limiting exempt development provisions should be included in any grant of permission. This in my view is warranted considering the location of the infrastructure on a flat roof building in a residential area as opposed to an industrial/employment area, where the intensification of antennae on the existing support structure above what is hereby permitted could have the potential to negatively impact on the visual amenity of the area.

Residential Amenity

- 7.9. The applicant considers there will no impact on residential amenity in terms of maintenance requirements as a cherry picker would be utilised for maintenance with no requirement for maintenance crew to access the corridors of the apartments.
- 7.10. I note circular letter PL07/12 states planning considerations in the assessment of telecommunications infrastructure should be related to location and design and not health and safety matters. In my view the location of the telecommunications infrastructure on top of a residential building does not give rise to any issues in terms of residential amenity.

Appropriate Assessment

- 7.11. Having regard to the minor nature of the development, its location in a serviced urban area, and the separation distance to any European site, no Appropriate Assessment issues arise and it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to have a significant effect individually or in combination with other plans or projects on a European site.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1. It is recommended that permission be granted.

9.0 Reasons and Considerations

9.1. Having regard to the provisions of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, the existing pattern of development in the area, and the nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the amenities of the area or of property in the area. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and any statutory provision amending or replacing them, the telecommunication structures shall not be altered and no additional apparatus shall be attached, without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: To clarify the nature and extend of the permitted development to which this permission relates and to facilitate a full assessment of any future alterations.

Una O'Neill
Senior Planning Inspector

23rd April 2018