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Bord  
Pleanála

## Inspector's Report ABP 301660-18

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<b>Development</b>	Erect 15m communications mast, associated equipment, cabinets, fencing and access.
<b>Location</b>	Milehouse, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford.
<b>Planning Authority</b>	Wexford County Council
<b>Planning Authority Reg. Ref.</b>	20180250
<b>Applicant(s)</b>	Signal Infrastructure Limited
<b>Type of Application</b>	Permission
<b>Planning Authority Decision</b>	Grant with conditions.
<b>Type of Appeal</b>	Third Party
<b>Appellant(s)</b>	Peter/Liz Jordan
<b>Observer(s)</b>	None
<b>Date of Site Inspection</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> September 2018.
<b>Inspector</b>	Hugh Mannion

## **1.0 Site Location and Description**

1.1. The site has a stated area of 0.08ha and comprises a corner of an agricultural field and access lane to the public road in a rural area at Milehouse, Enniscorthy, County Wexford. The access lane is overgrown and impassable at present but is marked by two stone piers at its junction with the public road. The public road is a minor road which links Milehouse village (about 1km south) to the R745 about 8kms to the north. There are two houses in the adjoining field to the northeast and 5 more houses on the opposite side of the public road from the proposed site entrance.

## **2.0 Proposed Development**

2.1. Erect a 15m high monopole telecommunications mast, associated equipment, cabinets, fencing and access track and new access onto public road at Milehouse, Enniscorthy, County Wexford.

## **3.0 Planning Authority Decision**

### **3.1. Decision**

Grant permission with conditions.

### **3.2. Planning Authority Reports**

#### **3.2.1. Planning Reports**

- Planner's report recommended a grant of permission as set out in the managers order.

#### **3.2.2. Other Technical Reports**

No reports.

### **3.3. Prescribed Bodies**

No submissions.

### 3.4. **Third Party Observations**

The present appellants and others made submissions which generally raised similar issues to the grounds of appeal.

## 4.0 **Planning History**

Reference 20170123. Permission was refused for a 24m high mast and associated equipment close by the current site because of a road reservation, lack of justification for an additional mast in the area and impact on visual amenity.

## 5.0 **Policy Context**

### 5.1. **Development Plan**

The site is un-zoned in the **Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019**.

**Objective TC01** “to facilitate the delivery of high-capacity telecommunications infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the county subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Chapter 18”.

The **Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996** is the relevant national guidance.

### 5.2. **Natural Heritage Designations**

Not relevant

## 6.0 **The Appeal**

### 6.1. **Grounds of Appeal**

- There are 36 houses in the area, the nearest is 85m from the site.
- The proposed access lane is non-existent. The proposed development would endanger public safety because of the additional traffic movements and inadequate sightlines at the proposed entrance.

- Inadequate effort was made to locate more suitable sites and inadequate efforts were made to find appropriate co-location opportunities.
- The proposed development will seriously injure the visual amenity of the area and devalue properties in the vicinity.

## 6.2. Applicant Response

- There is an existing lane which, while overgrown and subject to some dumping, will be cleaned up and is a suitable access to the proposed mast. Sightlines are adequate and the increase of traffic associated with the proposed development will be minimal.
- A previous application was refused for three reasons at local authority stage. The present revised application seeks to overcome the previous refusal reasons. The height of the tower has been reduced from 24m to 15 and relocated.
- The new tower is required to improve coverage in the area which is poor and to provide in-car coverage on the new M11.

## 6.3. Planning Authority Response

No comment

## 6.4. Observations

No observations.

## 6.5. Further Responses

None

## 7.0 Assessment

### 7.1. Amenity

- 7.2. It is an objective of the planning authority set out in the county development plan (objective TC01) to facilitate the delivery of high-capacity telecommunications

infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the county subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the development management standards contained in Chapter 18 of the plan.

- 7.3. The predominant landuse in the area is agriculture and the site is part of a tillage field. The appeal makes the point that there are 36 houses in the area which will be impacted upon by the proposed development.
- 7.4. There are two houses in the adjoining field to the north east of the site and 5 houses close to the proposed entrance accessing the public road to the east. There are a number of houses on the R702 to the west of the site but several fields intervene between the proposed telecoms mast and the R702. The mast will be close to a local high point but is relatively low at 15m and substantially lower than was envisaged in the 1996 guidance where masts were, typically, expected to be between 20m and 40m high.
- 7.5. The planning application included a visual impact assessment which includes photomontages of the proposed mast from the local road network. The site is located in an area designated as 'lowlands' in the landscape character assessment set out in the current County Development Plan and which the plan describes as having "a higher capacity to absorb development without causing visual intrusion".
- 7.6. Having regard to the separation distance from nearby houses, the relatively modest scale of the proposed mast and associated structures and the capacity of the area to absorb development I conclude that the proposed development will not seriously injure the visual amenity of the area or of property in the vicinity.
- 7.7. **Traffic hazard.**
- 7.8. The appeal makes the point that proposed development will give rise to traffic hazard.
- 7.9. Notwithstanding that the access laneway is overgrown at present I conclude that there was once an access onto the public road as illustrated in the submitted drawings. There are reasonable sightlines available in both directions at the proposed site entrance to the public road and, furthermore, the proposed development, when operational, can be expected to generate a level of maintenance traffic which does not have the capacity to materially impact on the carrying capacity of the local road network.

7.10. I conclude that the proposed development will not endanger public safety by reason of traffic hazard.

**7.11. Co-location**

7.12. The 1996 Guidelines make the point that sharing masts and/or sites by separate providers should be the norm. The appeal makes the point that the applicant has not made sufficient efforts to co-locate the mast with other providers on available sites.

7.13. The applicant makes the point that coverage in the area is poor, that development on the proposed site will improve coverage within houses in the area and in Milehouse village and for motorists on the new M11 which is passing about 200m to the east of the site.

7.14. Having regard to the material submitted with the application and appeal I conclude that the proposed location of the mast is justified.

**7.15. Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

7.16. Having regard to nature of the development comprising a telecommunications mast and associated equipment and the rural location of the site there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. The need for environmental impact assessment can, therefore, be excluded at preliminary examination and a screening determination is not required.

**7.17. Appropriate Assessment Screening**

7.18. Having regard to nature and modest scale of the proposed development 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. I recommend a grant of permission.

## 9.0 Reasons and Considerations

It is an objective of the planning authority set out in the Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019 to facilitate the delivery of high-capacity telecommunications infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the county. Having regard to the location of the proposed development in a rural area which has the capacity to absorb additional development without serious negative visual impact, to the modest scale of the proposed development and the separation distance between the site and nearby houses it is considered that the proposed development will not seriously injure the visual amenity of the area or the residential amenity of property in the vicinity, will not give rise to traffic hazard and will otherwise accord with the County Development Plan and 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. Details of the proposed colour scheme for the telecommunications structure, ancillary structures and fencing shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

**Reason:** In the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

3. Where the telecommunications structure ceases to operate for more than a

year the telecommunications structure and related ancillary structures shall then be removed unless, prior to the end of the period, planning permission shall have been granted for their retention for a further period.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory reinstatement of the site upon cessation of the permitted use.

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Hugh Mannion  
Senior Planning Inspector

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018