



Maplestead Magna Carta

Great Maplestead Parish Council's Award-Winning Newsletter

Mobile Phone Mast Plan – good or bad?

Better phone reception...

The phone company Telefónica (O²) intends to submit a planning application for a radio base station (aka a mobile phone mast) in Great Maplestead.

The proposed location is the field opposite the junction of **Mill Lane** and **Toldish Hall Road** (see location maps and design overleaf).

The application is part of an ongoing network improvement programme by the company, which has determined a specific requirement for a mast in this location to help provide a **better mobile phone service** to their customers in this area of Braintree District, particularly in respect of delivering 4G and associated data services.

The proposed installation comprises a 15m (50ft) mast of the design shown, carrying 3 antennas, 2 dish antennas, a GPS module and three radio equipment cabinets, with an associated meter cabinet all in a fenced compound located in the field opposite **Mill Lane**.

Telefónica advise that the planning history of the site has been examined, **Local Planning Authority** records have been reviewed and **Development Plan** policies taken into account.

It also confirms that its phone mast installations are designed to be **fully compliant with public exposure guidelines** established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which also have the support of UK Government, the European Union and the formal backing of the World Health Organisation.

...or a visual blight?

One of the essential requirements of phone mast installations is to ensure line-of-sight links with masts in adjacent 'cells', to allow uninterrupted micro-wave transmissions.

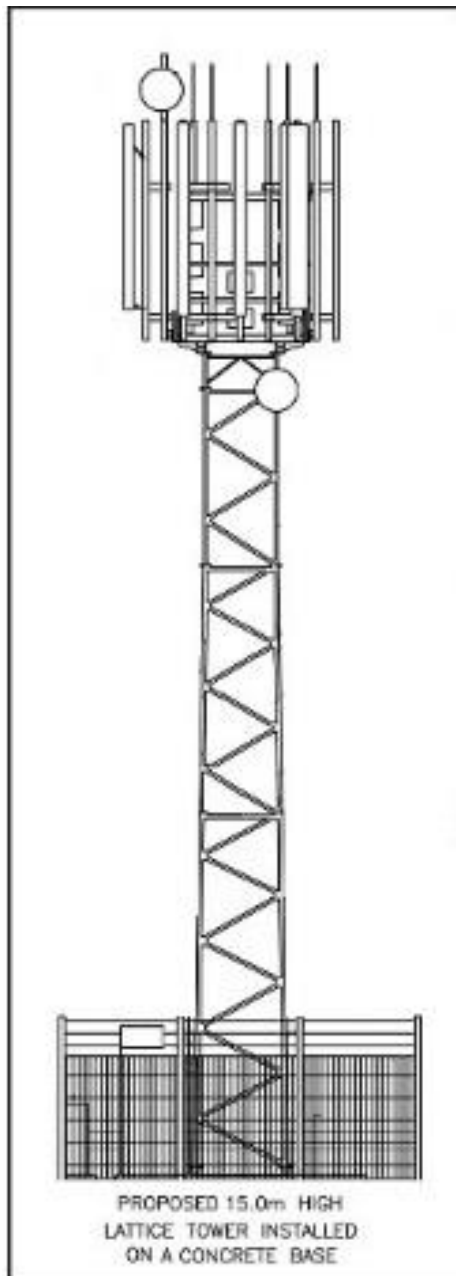
Consequently, to be most effective, phone masts almost always have to be located on the highest ground in any locality; as a result, they can be visible across wide stretches of the surrounding countryside.

Also phone masts, like electricity pylons, are designed to be purely functional. Any adverse visual impact on the land-scape, and potentially detrimental effects this may have on dwellings in the surrounding area, are therefore likely to be more severe than with developments that can be blended in more successfully.

For many years the **Council** has been fielding complaints from parishioners bemoaning the lack of decent mobile phone coverage in and around the village and asking what could be done to improve things – this proposal would, on the face of it, appear to offer a solution to the problem.

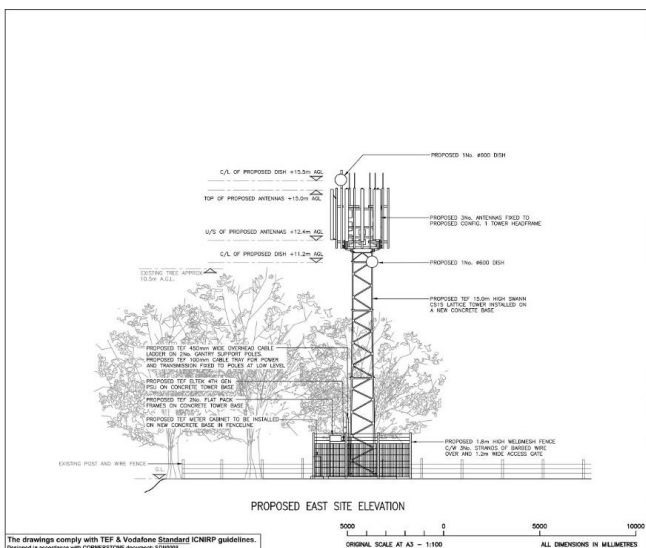
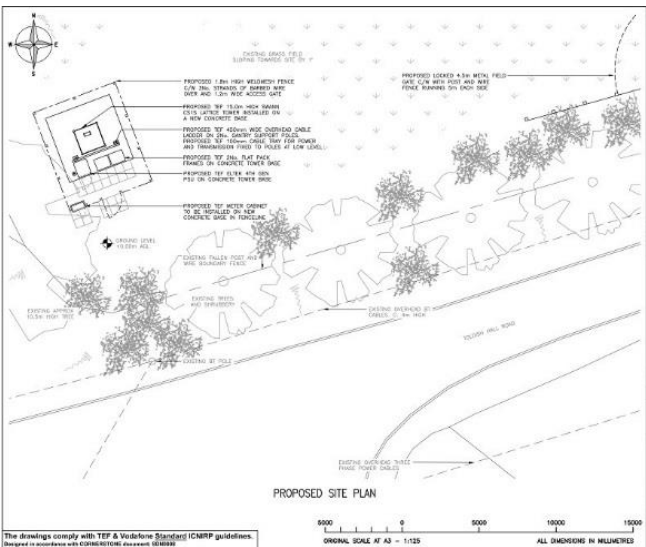
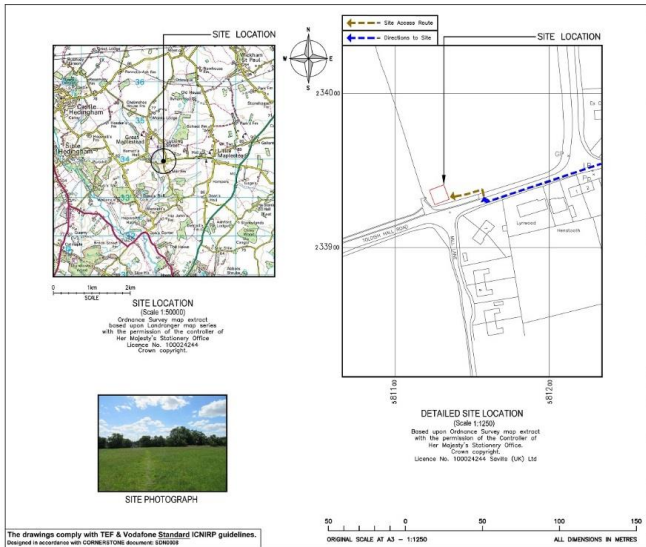
However, such a welcome benefit needs to be balanced against the potential downsides of the proposed mast siting, both in terms of its visual impact and the ways in which its presence may otherwise affect residents living in the near vicinity.

The **Council** is consulting with all parishioners before formulating its response to this planning proposal, in order to ensure that everyone's views can be taken into collective account and communicated to **Telefónica** before the company makes its formal planning submission.



The proposed location...

The following plans show the proposed site location in more detail and give more information about the mast and its surroundings and what it will look like in situ.

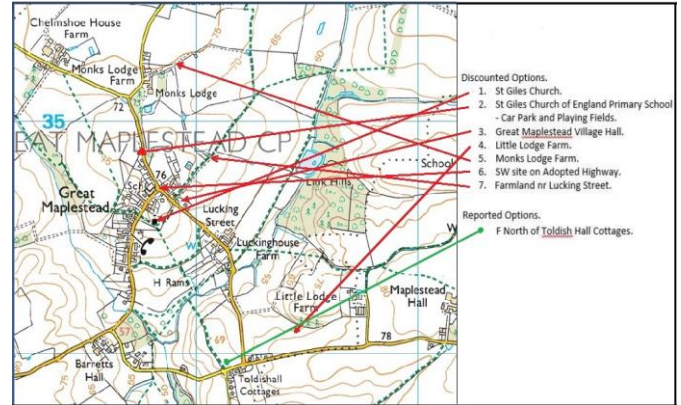


Larger-scale versions of these plans can be found at <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk/latest-news/> by clicking on the highlighted links.

...and the rejected alternatives

A number of alternative locations in the local area were investigated for the siting of the mast but these were found to be unsuitable for various reasons.

The alternative sites, and the reasons they were discounted, are shown below:



No	Site	Reason for Rejection
1	Church Tower, St Giles Church	Discounted due to the limited space on the church tower and its position below the level of surrounding mature trees.
2	St Giles School Car Park and Playing Field	Discounted due to the limited space in this area.
3	Village Hall	Discounted due to the limited space in this area.
4	Little Lodge Farm, Church Road, Little Maplestead	Development in this location would be incongruous due to its very prominent position over-looking the village and no other large items of street furniture here to add context.
5	Monks Lodge Farm, Gestingthorpe Road	Discounted as here there is no viable space.
6	Traffic Island (junction of Church St & Lucking St)	Discounted as here there is no viable space.
7	Farmland near Lucking Street.	Discounted as there is no viable way of supplying the necessary utilities (electricity and phone lines) to this site.

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Contacting the Council

If you have any views or comments about this proposal, they should be e-mailed or sent to the **Parish Clerk** as soon as possible:

Ann Crisp, New House, St Giles Close Great Maplestead, CO9 2RW
Tel: 01787 460 216 (4-6pm Mon-Thurs)
E-mail: anncrisp@greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk
Website: <https://greatmaplesteadpc.co.uk>