

To all members of the planning committee,

Unfortunately due to work commitments I may be unable to speak person at the hearing therefor I have decided to write this letter of support in the event I am unable to attend.

Firstly I believe it is necessary to point out that the residents of Jubilee school house are completely blameless in this matter. Before the new fence was erected by Kier they had of large fenced with a trellis on top and a large 7ft hedge behind it. Kier then removed these and erected the fence that now stands. After kier finished the fence it was determined that planning permission was needed and therefore a process started that has led to this issue being brought before the committee. In no part of this journey have the residents done anything wrong and instead have been a victim of bureaucratic mistakes, however I digress.

I believe the officer is wrong to recommend the application be refused. The officer states that the reason for this in section 1.0. However I feel the officers assessment of these issues is wrong and has overestimated the impact of the fence in the officers assessment.

Firstly it states that one consideration is the Impact on character and appearance. However two issues arise in this assessment firstly the school house sits in isolation, there are no direct neighbours to its right as you look at it there is a small access road and Jubilee first school. To its left is a small piece of grass and the entrance to a newly built estate and Directly behind it is the new estate. Except for a newly built house in the entrance of the new estate there are no other residential houses on that side of the road until much further down the road. There are a number of houses on the opposite side of the road with small fences around them yet to assume that that gives grounds for refusing planning is misguided as to reduce the size of the fence to that recommended by the officers wold still result in a fence larger than those on the other side of the road.

Secondly the new estate has a perimeter fence which is of the same Hight and material as those used in the school house fence (please see pic 1), surprisingly it was deemed that new estates fence wound not have an impact on the character and appearance of the area yet the school house directly next to it does. As you can see from the pictures it goes so far as to even connect to the school house fence (please see pic 1 &2). Therefore, the size, style and material of the jubilee school house is consistent with the newly built estate which has been granted planning permission including the fence it currently uses, It is important to note that the new estates fence at its entrance stretches to exactly the same distance from the road as jubilee school house and less than (please picture 3).

The officer notes in 8.6 that the street is mainly characterised by low level boundaries but previously in 8.5 notes that there are some exceptions within the street. What the officer fails to note is that most low fences are situated on the opposite side of the road to jubilee school house and most larger fences / large hedges are located on the same side of the road therefore the officer is wrong to characterise jubilee school houses fence as out of place. The office has stated that the fence “represents a visually intrusive feature in the existing street scene that is out of character with the immediate surrounding area” however as I have described above the officer is wrong and has overestimated its impact in this regard planning should not be refused on these grounds

The officer also states that the Impact on Residential Amenity as a consideration but again I believe the officer has overestimated the impact that the fence will have I also note in 9.3 it says that the new developments eastern boundary fence is to be a “2m high close boarded timber fence. Views of

the proposed fencing would be afforded from this dwelling. However, the impact on outlook is considered minimal and insufficient to sustain a recommendation of refusal". Therefore, in this respect there is little impact and therefore planning should not be refused on these ground

The officer has stated that the impact on highway safety is a consideration however picture 4 clearly shows that there is no obstruction to drivers at the junction and therefore there is no impact on highway safety a view backed by The Highways Network Manager who states in 10.2 " that the proposed development would not impact on highway safety". Therefore, the fence has no impact in this regards and planning should not be refused on these grounds.

I would like to end by talking about its actual impact. Does anyone benefit from the fence staying or being removed? Currently the residents do benefit. Before the erection of this fence there was a large fence with a trellis and a 7ft hedge, affording the residents some privacy especially during busy school times. If planning is granted and the fence was to remain the residents would benefit from the same level of privacy as they once enjoyed. If planning was turned down and the fence shortened would any one benefit from this? The answer to my mind is no one, no one in my mind would benefit from the fence being shortened and if no one will benefit then why are we considering it. I would also like to point out that there have been 8 comments made, reproduced in the appendix all of which supported the residents and the fence remaining. Add to that my comments and that makes 9 only the officer has reacted negatively towards this application, the residents don't want it to be refused, there neighbours don't want it refused and I support them in this. I seems to me that there has been to much bureaucracy and not enough common sense applied to this application and I can only apologise that it has been brought before you all as it should never have gotten to this stage in the first place.

I hope you all look favourably on the residents application

Kind Regards

Cllr Andy Newman

Northumberland Ward Councillor.

Picture 1

Please note that the fence connected to the rear of Jubilee school house forms part of the new estate. The rear is a small carpark used by the school and the same style of fence is used on the parameter of the car park



Picture 2

This picture shows jubilee school house, please note that the fence just past the school house and before bellway sales room was constructed by Bellway and matches jubilee school houses fence



Picture 3

This is the entrance to the new estate which is the closest house to jubilee school house. Please note that its fence is of the same height and construction as that used in jubilee school house and even reaches the paving making it the same distance from the road as jubilee school house yet this fence has planning permission



Picture 4

