Item No: 5.1

Application 16/01916/FULH Author: Maxine Ingram

No:

decision date:

Application type: Householder Full application

Location: Jubilee School House, Mullen Road, Wallsend, Tyne And Wear, NE28 9HA

Proposal: Removal of dilapidated 1.8m and 1.6m fence with 20cm trellis to East and South of property and removal of 7ft high hedge in sections, replaced with 1.8m fence to East and South of property to maintain private and secure enclosed garden and play area. (Retrospective) Resubmission of 16/01083/FULH

Applicant: Mr Richard Brand, Jubilee School House Mullen Road High Farm WALLSEND NE28 9HA

RECOMMENDATION: Application Refused

INFORMATION

1.0 Summary Of Key Issues & Conclusions

- 1.0 The main issues for Members to consider are:
- -Impact on character and appearance;
- -Impact on residential amenity; and
- -Impact on highway safety.
- 1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Members need to consider whether this application accords with the development plan and also take into account any other material considerations in reaching their decision.

2.0 Description of the Site

2.1 The site to which the application relates is Jubilee School House. This detached property is located to the north of Mullen Road and to the west of the

access road leading to Wallsend Jubilee Primary School. Several trees are located to the west of the site.

- 2.2 A new residential development is currently being constructed to the north and west of the application site.
- 2.3 Members are advised that, the fencing subject of this application is already in place.

3.0 Description of the Proposed Development

- 3.1 Retrospective planning permission is sought for a 1.8m high timber fence to the eastern and southern boundaries of the property to maintain a private and secure enclosed garden and play area.
- 3.2 The applicant has advised that the timber fence, subject of this application, replaces a dilapidated 1.8m and 1.6m high fence with 0.2m trellis to the eastern and southern boundaries of the property and the removal of a 7ft high hedge in sections.
- 3.3 Although the applicant says that the proposed fence is to replace a dilapidated 1.8m and 1.6m high fence with a 0.2m trellis the photographs submitted by the applicant clearly show that the replacement fence is higher than the original fence and it is not the case that it is replacing one fence with another at the same overall height.

3.4 Background Information provided by the applicant

- 3.5 There is quite a lot of background information as this has been ongoing since February 2014 when Kier replaced the boundary fence to our home, this was done as part of the fence replacement programme on the whole estate. We discussed the fence with the Kier workmen before the job commenced and it was agreed the fence would be 'like for like' as regards to height and that our privacy in the front garden would not be affected. The work commenced when we were on holiday.
- 3.6 We returned from holiday to find that the fence was not 'close board' it had gaps in the fence panels, so Kier had to make a return visit and double board the fence so that our privacy was not affected. Little did we know at the time that the trellis added to the top of the 51/2ft fence to make it 6ft, could not be included in the original height of the fence at the front of our home, so this created the requirement for planning permission. The cost of the replacement fence amounted to £3224.80.
- 3.7 We then received a letter from the enforcement section of NTC asking us to apply for planning permission. At that time we presumed the fence was 'like for

like' and should not have required planning permission (as stated on the Government planning portal) and we were shocked when we received another letter stating that the fence should be reduced to 1m in height. We had not requested the fence, nor had we paid for it so we directed the issue back to NTC via Paul Herron.

- 3.8 I contacted MP Mary Glindon, who received a letter from Patrick Melia (Chief Executive of NTC). Mr Meila advised Mary Glindon that "we are seeking to resolve this issue with the wishes of the tenants in mind". Kier then applied for retrospective planning permission, but nobody contacted us from the planning section to let us know that this had happened and Ms Davidson of Kier told me she did not receive anything from the NTC planning section either. The first we knew about the retrospective planning application was when one of our neighbours told us that he had received a consultation letter from the Council regarding the fence. We presumed that this was a result of Mr Melia's letter and that retrospective planning permission would be granted. However, it was not. The case officer Maxine Ingram refused planning permission on the grounds that she finds it 'visually intrusive'. We were then informed that an appeal would have to be sent to the Secretary of State.
- 3.9 On the grounds that we felt that the retrospective planning application submitted by Kier did not give any information as to the height of the original dilapidated fence, nor the height and privacy that the privet gave our garden and home, we asked Mr Meila if we could resubmit the application with all the relevant information on it.
- 3.10 There are photos indicating that the nearest fence to us has identical fencing as regards to build and quality. Bellway got planning permission for the whole boundary fence around the new Parkside estate that our home is now joined to. We cannot understand how identical fencing can achieve planning permission but our adjoining fence did not. Also please take into consideration that Kier have replaced fencing on Council owned homes on the entire estate with identical materials, if the case officer thinks the fence is of 'poor design' then it raises the question as to how Kier were instructed to replace fencing on the entire estate in the same fashion (there are several properties with rear gardens that have 6ft fencing surrounding them) and this has not been an issue.
- 3.11 We are aware that 12 Warkworth Avenue which is 0.4 miles from our house (further along Mullen Road) was granted planning permission for a 6ft fence on 16 May 2016. The proposal states 'removal of boundary wall and hedge to be replaced with a close boarded fence between 1.8m and 2m in height to create an enclosed garden'. Considering that the boundary wall was approximately 1m in height, the before and after photos (following removal of the privet at the site) are very similar to our home.

- 3.12 It is worth mentioning that Richard Brand, the caretaker of Jubilee Primary School has lived in the property for almost ten years. It appears that the previous caretaker had added height to the fence while he lived there; we presume this was so that he had some privacy. The only private space we have in the garden is at the front of our home, the fence is lower at the rear of the property so that we can access our driveway and this also gives Richard a clear view of the school from the house. We are understandably concerned that the planning section has previously indicated that they intend to take the fence down to 1m in height. Bearing in mind that we have no dividing wall between our dining room and living room, this would mean that we would have very little privacy in our home or the blinds would be permanently closed. The school children idolise Richard and constantly should 'hello Mr Brand' to him, whether it is at school or when he is not at work. Reducing the fence to 1m would seriously affect our privacy, well being and quality of life. We could potentially be living at the school house for another twenty years until Richard retires. The caretakers house at Redesdale Primary School on Wiltshire Drive has a 6ft fence around it and is clearly visible from the road, we feel we should be afforded the same privacy and security that he has too.
- 3.13 The planning application is on the agenda for the committee meeting due to take place on 10 January 2017 (however the date may be rescheduled). The closing date for consultation is 2 January 2017. I have included various e-mails and photos to support our resubmitted retrospective planning application and to give you more information that we feel is relevant in considering the application. We have encountered many problems with the planning section, some of which have been raised as formal complaints with Yvette Monaghan. The most serious of which has been that Mr Brand's signature and mobile telephone number were uploaded to the planning portal, resulting in a serious breach of the Data Protection Act. This breach continued for a few days after the document had what looked like black marker pen used to scribble out the sensitive information however it was uploaded to the planning portal and we could still see the information through the scribble. This had to be removed again and even now, the pages are on the planning portal in the wrong order.
- 3.14 On 29 December I visited several homes directly across the road from the school house (Parkside Terrace) and further along Mullen Road. Everyone who was home confirmed that they do not object to the fence, in fact most of them said it s a huge improvement on the previous one and looks nicer. They have signed a form indicating this. The majority of the signatories have received consultation letters form the planning section.

3.15 I appreciate that this is a great deal of information to pass on to you and this might not be something that you would usually be involved in. We really hope that you will support our application.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

4.1 Application site

16/01083/FULH - Installation of 1.8m high close boarded timber fence to boundary – Refused 23.08.2016

4.2 Reason for refusal

The height and position of the fencing represents a visually intrusive feature in the existing streetscene, out of character with the immediate area. The means of enclosure is considered to be contrary to policy H11 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan 2002 and LDD11 'Design Quality' SPD.

4.3 Adjacent residential development

14/00897/FUL - Demolition of existing school and development of 69 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) including associated access and landscaping (Amendments to boundary treatments and changes to some units including windows 18.07.2014) (Amendment to plot 69 05.09.2014) (Amendment to plots 13-17 22.09.2014) – Permitted 27.02.2015

4.4 No. 12 Warkworth Avenue

16/00355/FULH - Removal of boundary wall and hedge to be replaced with a close boarded fence between 1.8m and 2m in height to create an enclosed garden – Permitted 16.05.2016

4.5 Recent appeal decisions

4.6 160 Whitley Road, Whitley Bay

16/01318/FULH - Unauthorised erection of a boundary enclosure over 1 metre in height and adjacent to a highway (appeal against enforcement notice) – Dismissed at appeal 14.12.2016.

Planning Inspector stated: "When seen in its overall context I agree with the previous Inspector that the high fence/wall surrounding the appeal property are incongruous and intrusive elements within the street scene. When viewed from Whitley Road (from both directions), the fencing appears as a stark, alien and visually intrusive build form against the traditional boundary treatments in the immediate vicinity. I consider it is contrary to Policy H11 of the NTUDP as well as to policies within the NPPF which require good design. As paragraph 64 of the NPPF it is stated that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunity available for improving the character and

quality of an area and the way it functions. The poor design of this enclosure was refused planning permission by the LPA and the decision was upheld on appeal.

In my [Inspector's] view, the fencing as installed is significantly harmful to the character and appearance of this part of Whitley Bay."

4.7 1 Shaftesbury Crescent, Cullercoats

16/00919/FULH - Installation of a fence adjacent to highway to the side of our rear garden (retrospective) – Refused 23.08.2016. Dismissed at appeal 16.1.16

Planning Inspector stated: "The fence at Shaftesbury Crescent, however, an abrupt and incongruous disruption to the consistency of boundary treatment found along Farringdon Road. It has a stark appearance immediately at the rear of the pavement edge which is not softened by it being set back behind the external face of the low boundary wall. Whilst I note that the low wall has been retained below the fence, and that as a consequence there is a degree of depth to the face of the fence and wall, it is nonetheless a stark and obtrusive feature in a prominent position in the estate.

Thus, I conclude that the scale, form and positioning of the fence fails to take adequately into account the nature, character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to Policy H11 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan 2002 (UDP), and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document LDD11: Design Quality (SPD). Together, these seek to ensure high quality design that takes into account, amongst other factors, the impact of a proposal on its site and local amenity. The proposal would also be at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks high quality design.

I appreciate that within an estate layout such as this, corner plots present certain difficulties in addressing two separate road frontages. From my observations of the surrounding area I found such situations to be mostly sensitively handled, with well maintained hedges typically providing additional height to side and rear garden boundaries where they adjoin Farringdon Road."

5.0 Development Plan

5.1 North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan (adopted March 2002) Direction from Secretary of State under Paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 of Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 in respect of policies in the North Tyneside UDP (August 2007)

6.0 Government Policy

- 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)
- 6.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (As amended)

6.3 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of all applications. It requires LPAs to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development in determining development proposals. Due weight should still be attached to Development Plan policies according to the degree to which any policy is consistent with the NPPF.

PLANNING OFFICERS REPORT

7.0 Main Issues

- 7.1 The main issues for Members to consider are:
- -Impact on character and appearance;
- -Impact on residential amenity; and
- -Impact on highway safety.
- 7.2 Consultations responses and representations received as a result of the publicity given to this application are set out in the appendix to this report.

8.0 Impact on the character and appearance of the area

- 8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that permission should be refused for development of poor design.
- 8.2 Policy H11 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan (adopted March 2002) seeks to ensure a high standard of design. Policy H11 stipulates that the local planning authority will take into account (amongst other things) the scale, density, massing, construction, landscaping and materials to be used in any proposal.
- 8.3 Development Control Policy No.9 'Residential Extensions' states that any decision has to take into account the affect upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, e.g. loss of sunlight, daylight, outlook or privacy, or the effect of the proposal on the street scene and the character of the area and the extent to which works have a high quality of design that respects the character and materials of the existing building.
- 8.4 LDD11 'Design Quality' states that boundary treatments should be carefully considered and should not detract from the public realm. This document further states that care should be taken to limit the need for long sections of new walls or high close boarded fences, especially where these bound public areas. Where

new boundary walls/fences are required, their design should match those used elsewhere locally and in particular comprise of materials and detailing which relate to the context of the site.

- 8.5 When travelling along Mullen Road towards the application site, the majority of the front gardens of nearby residential properties fronting onto Mullen Road are enclosed by low level boundary treatments. It is acknowledged that there are a few notable exceptions within the immediate vicinity of the site, including the adjacent school and the junction of Exeter Road and Mullen Road. However, each application must be assessed on its own merits.
- 8.6 The proposed development has resulted in the loss of a former timber fence and hedgerow and its replacement with a solid 1.8m high timber fencing adjacent to Mullen Road and the eastern access road. It is the view of officers that the previous boundary enclosure was less visually intrusive than the fencing subject of this application. It is considered that this fencing results in a sizeable length of a solid boundary treatment, at a height of approximately 1.8m, part of which is immediately adjacent to Mullen Road, within a street scene that is mainly characterised by low level boundary treatments. When considered in this context of the immediate street scene, particularly when viewed from Mullen Road, the fencing appears as a stark, incongruous and visually intrusive feature. It is the view of officers that the fencing is contrary to Policy H11 of the UDP as well as to policies within the NPPF which require good design. At paragraph 64 of the NPPF it is stated that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunity available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 8.7 It is noted that within the submitted correspondence reference has been made to an application approving a fence at No. 12 Warkworth Drive. The case officer considered this development to be acceptable, as it did not project beyond the front building line or continue around the corner. The case officer also gave consideration to the previous boundary treatment and the boundary treatments within the immediate vicinity. This planning application is referenced in the planning history section of this report, along with the most recent appeal decisions relating to fences being dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate. However, Members are advised that every case must be determined on its own merits.
- 8.8 Members need to determine whether the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of the immediate street scene. It is the view of officers that, the proposed development by virtue of its height and position represents a visually intrusive feature in the existing street scene that is out of character with the immediate surrounding area. Officers consider that this type of boundary treatment is considered to be

contrary to the advice in NPPF, policy H11 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan 2002 and LDD11 'Design Quality' SPD.

9.0 Impact on Residential Amenity

- 9.1 Policy H11 of the UDP states that the impact of the proposal on its site, local amenity, the environment and adjoining land uses must be taken into account when considering proposals.
- 9.2 The application site is separated from the residential properties to the south by an existing public highway, Mullen Road. A separation distance of approximately 17m would exist between the fencing and these residential properties. Albeit, views of the proposed development would be afforded, it is not considered that the proposed development would significantly affect their outlook to such an extent that would sustain a recommendation of refusal.
- 9.3 It is noted that works have commenced on the adjacent residential development. Plot 69 would be located to the west of the application site. The southern boundary of this plot would be enclosed by a 0.6m high birds mouth timber fence, with an area of informal open space beyond. The eastern boundary treatment is to be a 2m high close boarded timber fence. Views of the proposed fencing may be afforded from this dwelling. However, the impact on outlook is considered minimal and insufficient to sustain a recommendation of refusal.
- 9.4 Members need to determine whether the proposed development would result in an acceptable impact on the residential amenity of existing and future occupants. It is the view of officers that the proposed development by virtue of its siting is not considered to adversely affect the residential amenity of immediate neighbouring properties.

10.0 Impact on Highway Safety

- 10.1 The Highways Network Manager has been consulted. He has raised no objection to the proposed development.
- 10.2 Members need to determine whether the proposed development would result in an acceptable impact on highway safety. On balance, it is the view of officer's that the proposed development would not impact on highway safety.

11.0 Other Issues

- 11.1 The Contaminated Land Officer has been consulted. He previously raised no objections.
- 11.2 The Council's Landscape Architect has been consulted. He previously raised no objections.

12. Local Financial Considerations

12.1 Local financial considerations are defined as a grant or other financial assistance that has been, that will or that could be provided to a relevant authority by the Minister of the Crown (such as New Homes Bonus payments) or sums that a relevant authority has received, or will or could receive in payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy. It is not considered that the proposal results in any local financial considerations.

13.0 Conclusion

13.1 Members need to determine whether the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its design and its impact on the character and appearance of the area, its impact on residential amenity and on highway safety. It is the view of officers that the benefits to the applicant in terms of privacy and security are not sufficient to overcome the harm caused by this development in terms of its visual impact. It is the view of officers that the proposed development should be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: Application Refused

Conditions/Reasons

1. The height and position of the fencing represents a visually intrusive feature in the existing streetscene, out of character with the immediate area. The means of enclosure is considered to be contrary to the advice in NPPF, policy H11 of the North Tyneside Council Unitary Development Plan 2002 and LDD11 'Design Quality' SPD.

Statement under Article 35 of the Town & Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015):

The proposal would not improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There were no amendments to the scheme, or conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which could have made the development acceptable and it was not therefore possible to approve the application. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirements in Paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.



Application reference: 16/01916/FULH

Location: Jubilee School House, Mullen Road, Wallsend, Tyne And Wear Proposal: Removal of dilapidated 1.8m and 1.6m fence with 20cm trellis to East and South of property and removal of 7ft high hedge in sections, replaced with 1.8m fence to East and South of property to maintain private and secure enclosed garden and play area. (Retrospective) Resubmission of 16/01083/FULH

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Appendix 1 – 16/01916/FULH Item 1

Consultations/representations

1.0 Ward Councillors

1.1 Councillor Andy Newman has requested that this application is to be presented at Planning Committee and he has also requested speaking rights.

2.0 Internal Consultees

2.1 Highways Network Manager

- 2.2 The proposed fence allows the required visibility splays to be retained and is set back from the adopted highway. Approval is recommended.
- 2.3 Recommendation Approval

2.4 Informatives:

- 110 No Doors/Gates to Project over Highways
- 112 Contact ERH Erect Scaffolding on Rd
- 113 Don't obstruct Highway, Build Materials
- 146 Highway Inspection before dvlpt

2.5 Landscape Architect

2.6 This is a retrospective application – there are no trees or hedges that have been affected by the proposals.

3.0 Representations

- 3.1 22 letters of support have been received. The comments are set out in full below:
- -I would like to support the objection of removal of the existing fence. Public monies have very recently been spent erecting the existing fence, can you really justify additional use of public funds to put right what boils down to an administrative error, Kier should have applied for the appropriate planning permission at the appropriate time. It is an outrage that this lovely family are being penalised for Kier/the council error. Additionally everyone has a right to privacy, would you like school children and parents being able to see into your lives? They are also responsible dog owners who should be able to put their dog in their garden without the fear of it flitting or being stolen.
- -I can see no reason why the fence should be removed it does not cause a problem to neighbouring residents and helps maintain the privacy and security of the current residents. As a previous resident myself of this area I am aware of the existing fencing and would consider it to be an unnecessary waste of public funds to alter the boundaries.

- -The fence is necessary to provide a safe and private area for the residents. Without a fence there would be a risk that pets and children at the property could come to harm.
- -The new fence is the same height as the former fence.
- -The "new" fence was erected over a year ago.
- -The family in this home deserve privacy and security.
- -I support the proposal to maintain privacy and security for the property.
- -Loss of privacy.
- -As a servant of the local community the affected resident surely has the right to some privacy, especially where no losses or adverse conditions would be inflicted on other parties. Does the Council not have better things to spend its money on in these hard times?
- -I support the fence staying to maintain privacy and security of the property.
- -Can see no issue with this as it is supported by the Engineering services department. Also was the replacement of an existing fence. Protects the privacy and safety of the family.
- -The fence allows privacy for the whole family and a safe play area for the children. The height of the fence is important in not only securing privacy but also in securing the family dog; preventing theft of the dog and preventing the dog from escaping the property. I see no reason for the removal if the fence when it virtually replaces like for like.
- -I am objecting to having this fence replaced. There is nothing wrong with this fence, if it is replaced and lowered, it will be like living in a gold fish bowl for the residents. It is not out of character, it fits in well with the surroundings. It would be crazy to replace for both the costs involved and the impact it will have on those people living in the school house.
- -What a waste of money pulling this fence down.
- -I support the proposal to maintain privacy and security for the property.
- -On behalf of the Headteacher and the Senior Management of the school, I am writing to express my dismay that this situation has been permitted to happen in the first place. As anyone informed of this project is aware, this original fence was replaced by Kier in February 2015 at a cost of £3224, as part of a fence renewal programme across part of the Borough.

We fail to understand how almost 2 full years later; this is still an unresolved situation. Basically, due to an administrative error of not obtaining the necessary planning permission (through no fault whatsoever of the occupant of Jubilee House or his family), there is STILL discussion being had about the removal of said fence, The implications both in terms of time and finances of deconstructing the current fence in order to erect a new one are absolutely ludicrous, and I have no doubt that council tax payers of North Tyneside would far rather see their money being spent in sensible projects, not wasting more time on this. We feel that the replacement fence offers better security and privacy for our colleague and his family and that he has a right to demand that, especially

considering the property is immediately adjacent to the school and overlooked by pupils, their families and the general public from the road.

We would like to see common sense prevail here and for the situation to be left as it currently stands, along with the fence!

- -I have worked as the Caretaker of Wallsend Jubilee Primary School and lived in the School House for over 10 years. There has always been a high fence with patches of privet which had broken through and taken over parts of the fence around the front and side of property providing privacy and security. Two years ago Kier asked if we wanted the old broken 6ft fence and 7ft privet removed and replaced with a new fence of the same like for like height as part of North Tyneside councils housing improvement scheme, we agreed and the work was done. Now after a stressful two years we are still fighting to keep the fence that provides a safe place for my three kids and dog to play. All the neighbours we have spoken to say that the new fence is a great improvement and should be left alone. This house is our home for the next 20 years until I retire and I think we deserve the same privacy that my family have had for the previous 10 years. -On 29/12/16 I knocked at houses directly opposite Jubilee School House and along Mullen Road with a petition form. I was overwhelmed with the support the neighbours have for us. Everyone who was at home signed the form and most of them commented on how nice the fence looks compared to the state it was before! None of the neighbours see the fence as 'visually intrusive' and their opinion should be paramount. The Highways Network Manager has approved the fence confirming that the fence is not detrimental to highway safety.
- -I am writing to inform you that I do not object to the 6ft that has been put up to replace the previous high fence and privet. I do not think that the fence is out of character with the rest of Mullen Road and I do not find it visually intrusive at all. There are several high fences along Mullen Road and all of the corner plots at this end of Mullen Road have high fences, so I fail to see why this property should be treated any differently.
- -I am in full support of the residents Richard Brand and Linda McElearney and their wishes to have fence left as it is. Richard has a very public job as Caretaker at Jubilee School and I agree that his need for privacy in his own garden should be taken into account when considering this planning application. The front garden was private before the new fence was put up and I think it is unreasonable that a minor difference in height could result in planning permission refusal. The previous fence was 5.5ft with trellis along the top making it 6ft. Richard told me that the replacement fence cost over £3, 200 and I don't agree that any more time and money should be spent taking this down all because of an error by another party, i.e. Kier who did not check planning regulations before moving the old fence.

I think the fence should stay. It looks lovely, much better than the previous fence. Also, the majority of neighbours are also in agreement. So I object to the proposal to remove it. There are no positive reasons for comment above. Hence the comment here.

- 3.2 A petition signed by 12 individuals supporting the application has been received.
- -I do not object to the 6ft that has been put up to replace the previous fence and privet.
- -I do not consider that the fence is out of character with the rest of Mullen Road. There are several corner plots between Jubilee Primary School and Station Road which have high fences and private space in their gardens.
- -I support the residents and agree the applications should be approved.

4.0 External Consultees

4.1 None.