HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT Ref No. F/13/73354

DESCRIPTION	Retrospective: Replacement of unstable single brick boundary wall with wooden open boarded fence at 1.8m high
ADDRESS	1C Grange Road Netley Abbey Southampton SO31 5FD

SITE VISIT DATE	02 January 2014
ARE PLANS ACCURATE?	The plans submitted are sufficient to allow for the determination of the retrospective planning application.
HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED?	Yes

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	The application seeks retrospective approval for the erection of a 1.8m high timber fence situated along the front and part of the eastern side boundaries of the plot and abutting the highway footpath. The applicant has stated on the submitted application form that this section of boundary previously consisted of an unstable section of brick wall. The application is a resubmission following the refusal of F/12/71808 which sought consent for the retention of the same section of fencing; the only material change to the proposal concerns the applicants stated intention that an Escallonia hedge will be planted to grow through and cover the fence.
TOPOGRAPHY	The site slopes from east to west and from north to south.
TREES	None affected.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The rear boundary of the plot with No. 2 New Road is marked by hedging and close-boarded fencing, with a 1.8m high brick wall along the remainder of the eastern side boundary.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	No. 1c Grange Road is a 1960s, link-detached, two-storey dwellinghouse forming part of a pair with the neighbouring property to the west (1b Grange Road). The property is situated on a prominent corner plot at the junction of New Road and Grange Road, and has parking on its frontage with amenity space to the front, side and rear.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site is situated within an established residential area, with New Road and the southern side of this part of Grange Road consisting of two-storey dwellings of mixture of design, period and house type. Residential boundary treatments within the immediate vicinity of the site consist of predominantly low level walls and hedging, or a combination of both. Opposite the application site (to the north) is St Edward's Church and the associated Vicarage with dense hedging and trees marking the boundary with Grange Road.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
WIR10540	The erection of two houses	PERMIT – 15/08/1963

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
Z/18252/000	Extension	PERMIT – 23/02/1978
F/12/71808	Retrospective: Erection of boundary fence, following removal of wall	REFUSE – 27/02/2013

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
Hound Parish Council	(03/12/2013): Object to height of fence and unsuitable materials near the conservation area.
Head of Transportation and Engineering	(06/01/2013): Transport Policy Officer: *No objection* *The fence is located on the corner of the junction with New Road / Grange Road. The local highway speed is a 30 mph zone, which in accordance to Manual for Street, stipulates the need for a visibility splay of 2.4 x 43.0m to be achieved, with any obstructing object within this splay to be set no higher than 1.05m.* *Sight lines of in excess of the 2.4 x 43.0 metres to the near side kerb are achievable, with an extended splay recorded when taken to the centre line of the carriageway. This extended splay is potentially a more suitable measurement given that traffic potentially obscured by the fence will be coming from the left hand side / far side carriageway.* DC Engineer: *The fence is preferable to a boundary of tall overgrown vegetation which overhangs obstructing the footway from other sites in nearby in the locality, so no objection.*

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Within Built-up Area Boundary Within Established Residential Area

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAVED POLICIES, EMERGING LOCAL PLAN POLICIES AND SPD'S

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011), Saved Policy 59.BE
Revised Draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, Policy DM1
Supplementary Planning Guidance: Quality Places

CHARACTER APPRAISAL AREA

Bursledon, Hamble-le-Rice and Hound Character Area:

The site falls within the character area *BHH1.* The Council's adopted appraisal document sets out the

following guidance principles for new development in this area:

- Maintain the predominant shallow building setbacks in order to retain the sense of enclosure provided by existing development.
- Maintain the importance of the views south to Southampton Water along Grange Road, Garfield Road and Chamberlayne Road.
- Maintain the predominant narrow plot widths.

SPECIAL POLICY AREA

n/a

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework:

Of particular relevance to this application is *Section 7: Requiring good design* which stipulates that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is indivisible from good planning; that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment; and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies and guidance combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to highway matters, street scene and character of the area.

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

None received		See below		
Other – comments noted.				

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None received	X	See below		
Other …				

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

Planning obligations are not applicable to this application.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Legislative Background:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Development Plan Policies:

Saved Policy 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) requires development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and be appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting. It also requires a high standard of landscape design, have a satisfactory means of access and layout for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians, make provision for refuse and cycle storage and avoid unduly impacting on neighbouring uses through overlooking, loss of light, loss of outlook, noise and fumes.

Relevant Guidance within Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places SPD (page 23) states that "…for existing properties, the boundary treatment should be reflective of the general character of the area" and "…in general terms, it is advisable for boundaries that abut a public footway to be as robust as possible".

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Principle:

The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with any formal planning approval being based upon the exact nature, design and impact of that proposed being considered appropriate and in accordance with the relevant local plan policies and supplementary guidance.

Appearance, Layout and Impact on the Street Scene and Character of the Area:

The application is a resubmission following the refusal of application F/12/71808 which sought retrospective approval for the retention of the same section of fencing. This application was refused on the grounds that the fencing, by way of its height, inappropriate form and prominent siting, introduced a visually unsympathetic and dominant feature, to the detriment of the street scene and the character of the area. The only material change from that application is in respect of the proposed planting of an Escallonia hedge to grow through and cover the fence.

As noted in the planning officer's delegated report pertaining to the previous submission, in general, residential boundary treatments within this part of Grange Road and New Road consist of predominantly low level walls or of hedging, or in some instances a combination of both. Whilst there are instances of front boundary fencing within Grange Road, these are further eastwards down the street and are of a significantly lesser height (up to 1m) and length than that proposed as part of this application. Accordingly, it is considered that timber fences of this nature are not currently a particular or prominent feature of the street scene hereabouts.

In addition, the aforementioned officer report also acknowledged that part of the application site alongside New Road is already marked by a brick wall at a similar height to the fencing, and that the sense of enclosure that is afforded by the fencing along the eastern side boundary is perhaps not dissimilar to that of the hedging at the property on the opposite corner of Grange Road/New Road. However, it was considered that the materials used as well as the excessive length of the fencing when combined with its height, result in a feature that is both visually unattractive as well as unduly prominent within the street scene, creating quite stark, harsh boundary treatment across

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

both the front and side of the property; something that is further accentuated by the prominent corner location of the site. The fencing was, therefore, considered to be out of character with the surrounding area and the nature of other residential boundary treatments in the immediate vicinity, contrary to the requirements of Saved Policy 59.BE (i) of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2001-2011.

It is not considered that the proposed hedge planting will serve to adequately overcome this impact and make the development acceptable in planning terms. Due to the nature of the fencing, it is considered that any hedge growth through it would be notably sporadic and would look somewhat untidy within the street scene rather than serving to adequately soften the harsh visual impact of the timber fence. In addition and crucially, the growth of any hedging through the fence would impinge onto and obstruct the highway footpath. Notwithstanding the highway safety issues that this may potentially result in, as this land is outside of the control of the applicant the local planning authority could not impose a planning condition requiring the planting of the hedge such as to obscure the fencing or its continued retention for this purpose. Accordingly, it is not considered that there are any material changes to the proposal which serve to overcome the previous concerns raised and therefore, the proposals are still considered to conflict with the requirements of Saved Policy 59.BE of the adopted Local Plan.

Highway Matters:

The Council's Head of Transportation and Engineering has raised no objections to the proposals noting that adequate sight lines can be achieved at the traffic junction. They also stated that from a highway point of view "the fence is preferable to a boundary of tall overgrown vegetation which overhangs obstructing the footway from other sites in the locality". As noted above, however, any requirement to plant a hedge behind the fence with a view to it growing through and covering it in order to soften its visual prominence, it is considered, may in fact result in such an impact. Whilst this perceived impact is not considered such as to warrant a separate reason for refusal in itself, it does represent a matter of notable and material concern.

Overall, for the reasons as outlined above, the application is considered to be contrary to the requirements of the relevant development plan policies, associated supplementary planning guidance, and national planning policy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Also of relevance is the Revised Draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan's replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies essentially echo those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

CONCLUSION

The application is recommended for refusal.

REF. NO. «AltRef»