

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: H/24/96959

Site Address: CASTLENAU, KNOWLE LANE, HORTON HEATH, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7DZ

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Erection of 1.2 metre high post & rail fence with stockproof mesh and new hedge planting along highway boundary, following removal of existing 1.8 metre close board timber fence, and retention of secondary access gates.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Outside the urban edge		

Planning History?	Yes ☐	No ☒
There is no record of any previous planning history relating to the site.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Fair Oak Parish Council:	Concerns raised on highway issues and inclusion of additional gates onto Knowle Lane. <i>Note: These comments were given prior to the amendments made to the application.</i>		
Ecology:	<u>Original Comments:</u> Concern at loss of the original hedge and subsequent loss of habitat which will need to be mitigated. <u>Amended Proposals:</u> Advice provided as to the species mix of plants required to provide new habitat to complement and enhance that already along the lane.		
Hampshire Highways:	<u>Original Comments:</u> Concern that the position of the 1.8 metre close board fence interferes with sightlines when existing the site access, impacting highway safety. <u>Amended Proposals:</u> A post & rail fence is considered more appropriate as it allows viewed through the fencing. However, planting will need to be kept to a height of no more than a metre either side of the site entrance to ensure sightlines are maintained.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☐	No ☒
No site visit was considered necessary as up to date site photographs are available via Google Streetview, as well as recent historic photos.		

Policy:**National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Practice Guidance****Development Plan:**

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S2 and S5; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM11, DM13 and DM14.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals; trees and Development.

Assessment:**Site Context:**

The site lies outside the urban edge within designated countryside and along a rural lane which is characterised by well vegetated verges, trees and hedgerows. Where fencing is present, it is either modest post and rail fencing relatively close to the lane, or discrete close board timber fencing set well back from the lane behind mature and relatively dense planting.

Proposals:

The application originally sought retrospective consent for the retention of a 1.8 metre close board timber fence along the site frontage. The total length of the site frontage is around 90 metres with the fence being approximately 40 metres. However, serious concerns were raised by the Council's Ecologist, Hampshire Highways and the planning case officer. As such, an amended scheme has been negotiated to remove the close boarded timber panels, cut down the existing posts to 1.2 metres in height and fit timber rails between the posts with stockproof mesh. Behind this new hedge planting will be added to replace that previously removed.

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies outside the urban edge where the basic principle of development is not usually considered acceptable except for agricultural or horticultural purposes, together with other specific uses. Notwithstanding, alterations and extensions to existing residential properties within the countryside is allowed provided that proposed is considered to be appropriate.

In this instance the most relevant policy is DM1 of the adopted Local Plan which requires all new development to take appropriate account of the site context and that of the surrounding area, to be of an appropriate design quality, and to minimise its impact upon the amenity of neighbouring uses, occupiers and the surrounding area.

Character & Street Scene:

As set out briefly above, Knowle Lane is a narrow rural lane which is generally bounded by dense hedgerow and tree planting. Where fencing is present, it is generally unobtrusive and set well back from the edge of the lane.

The current 1.8 metre high close board fencing is set immediately on the edge of the lane, resulting in an very intrusive and overtly urban feature in an otherwise very green rural setting. As such, it is entirely out of keeping with the lane's existing character and has a significant detrimental impact upon the visual amenity and character of the lane. This was considered to be sufficient grounds to refuse the application. However, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant who has agreed to revise the scheme as set out above to a post and rail fence with new planting. Whilst ideally the fence would be removed in its entirety and new hedge planting allowed to take its place, a compromise has been negotiated which is considered to be appropriate and much more in keeping

with the prevailing character and appearance of the lane. A condition requiring the works to be undertaken within a six month period of permission is recommended.

Access, Parking & Highways:

The application site has two points of access, one to the north which is the main daily access to the property, and the second to the south opposite the allotments entrance. This second access is only used on an occasional basis to allow access to maintain the electricity poles which run across the site. Part of the application seeks consent for the retention of a set of gates to this access point, which raises no concerns in terms of their appearance or highway safety.

As set out above concerns were initially raised to the retention of the existing 1.8 metre high close board fencing to either side of the main site entrance as this severely restricted sightlines in either direction along the lane. The amended lower post and rail fencing will allow views over and through in either direction, although hedge planting will need to be kept below a metre to ensure sightlines are not obstructed. This can be controlled by condition.

In terms of parking and other highway issues, that proposed does not alter the existing situation which is otherwise acceptable.

Trees and Ecology:

Whilst no trees were removed to make way for the fence, a significant portion of hedge was taken out. Some of this hedge remains behind the current fence and will be reinforced with new planting, with species as advised by the Council's Ecologist. The amended plans include a planting specification and basic management plan which can be conditioned to be undertaken within a set period of time following completion of works to amend the current fence. The reinstatement of the removed planting will provide habitat and biodiversity enhancement to complement that which already exists along the lane.

Amenity:

In terms of the usual amenity issues, that proposed raises no concerns or issues for adjacent properties which are all some distance away.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒**REFUSE** ☐

For the reasons set out above, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions relating to the following:

- Approved drawings;
- Existing fencing to be altered as approved within six months;
- All new planting to be completed within 18 months of approval, and any new planting which is diseased, dies or removed within the first five years to be replaced; and
- No planting above 1.0 metres within sightlines.