

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE (NORTH)

At a Meeting of the **Area Planning Committee (North)** held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 25 July 2024 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Peeke (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors W Stelling (Vice-Chair), J Blakey, L Brown, K Earley, J Griffiths, J Purvis, K Shaw, A Sterling and A Watson

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Applications to be determined;

a DM/24/00715/FPA - Williams Garage, Front Street, Grange Villa, Chester-le-street, DH2 3LJ

The Committee considered a report of the Principal Planning Officer regarding an application to remove current front brick wall to front and erection of a 2.4 metre v mesh fencing around site with accompanying gates at Williams Garage, Front Street, Grange Villa, Chester-Le-Street (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

Leigh Dalby, Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the application was for the erection of a 2.4 metre fencing and not a 2.5 metre fence as stated in the report. He continued that it was noted on the site visit that a fence had been erected to the side and the rear of the property that were not included in the submitted drawings and would be looked at as a separate matter.

The Principal Planning Officer provided a detailed presentation of the application which included site location, arial photograph, site photographs, site plan, and an example of fencing that comes in various colours. He advised Members that responses were received from Pelton Parish Council who objected to the application and asked that the application be reported to Committee due to concern about the aesthetics of the proposed mesh fence. No objections were received from the Highways Authority and no responses were received from any interested parties, neighbours or anyone consulted on the application.

In terms of the principles of the application these were considered to be acceptable and was in accordance with Policy 6 of the County Durham Plan in line with NPPF paragraph 85. There was no change to the existing site access and no impact on traffic generation on the highway and the Highways Authority had not objected on that basis.

In terms of the character and appearance of the area the site was a mixed area of commercial and residential and there was no single identifiable design characteristics in the area. Surrounding buildings were of various design and material finishes along with various boundary treatments.

It was not considered that the proposed fence would be detrimental to the existing area and would consider to be in accordance with Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan.

In terms of the impact on residential amenity the Officer reported that the closest property was to the East that was the Reading Rooms, and it was not considered that due to the nature of the development would impact any neighbouring residential properties as the site was not overlooked.

In summary, it was considered that the site was acceptable in accordance with the relevant policies as set out in the report.

Members of the Committee had visited the site and were familiar with the location and setting.

Mr Owens, the Applicant stated that since he bought the premises last year, they have had six vehicles damaged. They have cameras installed on site

and stated that the damage was from children chucking stones and was the reason he wished to erect fencing. He continued that they had chosen the v mesh fencing as they did not want to box the site in completely as it would be unsightly. The fencing came in various colours and was a square grided fence that was see through but would stop people chucking stones. The business was serving the disabled community and they tried to bring employment into the area and were trying to make the site better and safer. He stated that all the local neighbours had commented that he had improved the site massively as it was previously run down.

Councillor Blakey referred to the objection from Pelton Parish Council who objected to the application due to the aesthetics of the fence and asked what this was such as the colour or height of the fence.

The Principal Planning Officer read out the comments from Pelton Parish Council that were submitted in the report.

Councillor Brown noted that the fence to the side of the premises was now a wooden fence and asked if they granted planning permission would there have to be a variation of planning permission. She commented that the fence could be climbed, and it may be an idea to install anti-climb paint.

The Applicant responded that the fence was required to stop the throwing of stones.

Councillor Brown asked if the fence to the front of the property could be the same height for aesthetic reasons and integration of policy 31. She also asked if the colour of the fence could be black or grey.

Councillor Stelling asked if the colour of the fence would make a change to the Parish Council given that they were not in attendance at the meeting to confirm what they wanted.

The Principal Planning Officer commented that Members needed to use their best judgement and indicated when they look at the site photographs there was a lot of grey behind the site, and this would help the fence blend into the surrounding area. He stated that they had conditioned that the colour of the materials to be used be submitted and agreed by the planning authority but if Members had a strong opinion, they could take that forward.

Councillor Brown commented that there was a black fence further along from the site that blended in well.

The Applicant stated that the colour was not an issue whatever suits the building. He advised Members that the grey building to the rear of the property they had planning permission to increase the height and would be

speaking to the planners regarding the colour of this building, so it could be painted any colour.

Councillor Shaw indicated if there were no material planning reasons why the application could not be refused, he moved that they agree the Officer's recommendation and approve the application.

Councillor Brown seconded the Officer's recommendation to approve the application and confirmed that the colour of the fence be agreed with the planning authority.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously:

Resolved:

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the conditions listed in the report.