

09/00629/FUL PROVISION OF 2M HIGH BETA FENCE GREEN POWDER COATED
 SECURIFOR 2D FENCE AND MATCHING GATES TO PLAYING FIELD AT
 NORWOOD SCHOOL GUNTHORPE

VALID: 11.06.2009

APPLICANT: MRS DEBORAH REYNOLDS

AGENT: MR RICHARD WATERMAN

REFERRED BY: CLLR FOWER

REASON: THE IMPACT CAUSED BY THE PROPOSALS ON THE AMENITY OF THE
 OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING DWELLINGS AND THE IMPACT UPON
 THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

DEPARTURE: NO

CASE OFFICER: DAVE JOLLEY

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1 SUMMARY/OUTLINE OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The main considerations are:

- The effect of the proposals on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby dwellings
- The impact upon the character of the area
- The loss of open space that had previously been used by the public

The Head of Planning Services recommends that the application is **APPROVED**.

2 PLANNING POLICY

In order to comply with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies set out below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Policies

Key policies highlighted below.

The Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement)

DA2 The effect of a development on the amenities and character of an area

Planning permission will only be granted for development if it can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site itself, would not adversely affect the character of the area and would have no adverse impact on the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties.

PPS1 Delivering sustainable development

Planning permission should only be granted if a development is sustainable, in terms of materials, design and community

3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Permission is sought to erect a 2.0 metre Nylofor 2D security fence around the school playing field area of Norwood School. The fence would be set back 6.0 metres from the edge of the pathway adjacent to Elter Walk, to the North West along the line of the existing fence that divides the school playing field and the community field and directly adjacent to the rear boundaries of the properties along Keswick Close.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The Norwood school site sits within a broadly residential area bounded to the west by Elter Walk and to the east by Keswick Close. North of the application site is an additional playing field, not owned by the school.

5 PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Description	Date	Decision
01/01635/R3FUL	Three single storey extensions to provide cloakrooms/wc's	21.12.2001	Permitted
04/01010/R3FUL	Single storey extension to form enclosed lobby	21.06.2004	Permitted
98/00756/R3FUL	Retention of existing mobile teaching unit for educational use (95 PO296 refers)	01.07.1998	Permitted
06/00125/R3FUL	Single storey extension to staff room	21.02.2006	Permitted
07/00878/FUL	Single storey extension to form store for main hall	29.05.2007	Permitted

6 CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

INTERNAL

Head of Transport and Engineering – No objections

EXTERNAL

Architectural Liaison Officer (Cambridgeshire Constabulary) – States that in recent months the school has reported incidents to the police of damage and theft. The Nylofor type of fence will provide the deterrent for regular users walking their dog etc on the field and provide an adequate level of child protection. Nylofor 2D fencing is probably the best compromise between aesthetics and security.

NEIGHBOURS

Letters of objection have been received from 12 local residents raising the following issues:

- Will create a walkway to the rear of Keswick Close that will be used by undesirables
- Will impact on nearby residents amenity
- Will harm the community, There has been open access to the field for more than 20 years
- Children will no longer be able to play on the field
- The area round the school is safe therefore the fence is not needed
- It will be like looking at a prison fence
- A different, more open type of fence would be more acceptable
- 'No Dog' Signs could solve the dog problem
- Will devalue nearby properties

COUNCILLORS

Cllr Fower has objected to the application on the following grounds;

- The proposals will unacceptably harm the amenity of the area
- The type of fencing is out of character with the area

7 REASONING

a) **The principle of the development**

The school wishes to enclose their school field within a 2.0 metre green weld mesh fence with 3 sets of matching 2.0 metre gates.

At present the school field is unsecured and offers free access at all times. This has caused the school a number of problems and is considered by the school to be a risk to child safety. The school have sited issues such as;

- Dog excrement being left on the field
- Broken glass and needles being discovered by children
- Horses being left on the field and
- People accessing the field whilst the children are playing

Other security issues have been highlighted by the head teacher and confirmed by the architectural liaison officer involving incidents of theft and vandalism.

Through discussion with the applicant the type of fence proposed has been changed and moved 6.0 metres away from the pathway parallel to Elter Walk. It is considered that the new, more open type of fencing would be acceptable in this location.

b) The effect of development on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby dwellings

The original submission, on which the comments of residents are based, was considered unacceptable. The fencing chosen was too heavy duty and too close to the frontages of the residents of Elter Walk. Taking on feedback from the local residents the fencing specification has been revised, the new fencing is far more open and more light weight in appearance, the fence has also been moved 6.0 metres in from the edge of the pathway from Elter Walk have on balance enabled the revised proposals to be considered acceptable and in accordance with Local Plan Policy DA2.

In addition the access strip from Coniston Road, along the rear of the gardens along Keswick Close has been removed. This will prevent any issues with crime and anti social behaviour taking place in this location and will prevent disturbance being caused through its use as a means of access to the unfenced portion of the field.

It is clear that there will be an impact upon the amenities of the Residents of Elter Walk, they have enjoyed uninterrupted views across the field for over 30 years. However, taking the revisions into consideration it is considered that the impact upon amenity is not enough to warrant refusal of the application under policy DA2.

c) The impact upon the character of the area

The Norwood school site sits within a broadly residential area. Currently the playing field of the school is bordered by a low fence and shrubbery. Access to the field is via a pair of low gates one at Coniston Avenue and the other adjacent to Elter Walk. Visually the fence is in a fair condition and is improved by the planting to the front of the fencing. It is clear that installing a 2.0 metre weld mesh fence on a field that currently is bounded by a low wooden fence will result in an impact upon the character of the area. However this has been mitigated as far as possible by changing the fence specification to a more open type, by setting the fence back from the pathway adjacent to Elter Walk and by retaining the existing fence and shrubbery, it is considered that the impact upon the character of the area is outweighed by the child safety needs.

d) The loss of open space that had previously been used by the public

It is regrettable that the public will no longer be able to gain access to a field that they have been able to use freely for over 20 years. The anger this has caused is understandable. However the school has the right to control access to its own property. There is an additional playing field to the North East of the Norwood School field that is of a comparable size and should be adequate for the needs of the local population.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighting against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

This type of fencing around schools is not unusual and is perhaps sadly a sign of the times that we live in. The pressure from parents who quite rightly demand the safest of environments for their children coupled with incidences of theft and vandalism have forced the head teacher into this action.

The head teacher of Norwood School has a duty of care towards her pupils. The most practical way to ensure the safety of these children is to prevent access to the school by members of the public. The only way to achieve this is through this type security fencing. A lower, perhaps more aesthetically pleasing fence would not serve the purpose that is required of it as it could be easily climbed.

It is clear that the proposals would cause harm to both the character of the area and to the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings, this is contrary to policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement); however this harm is not considered severe enough to warrant refusal and the need to provide a safe environment for children further tips the balance in favour of approval.

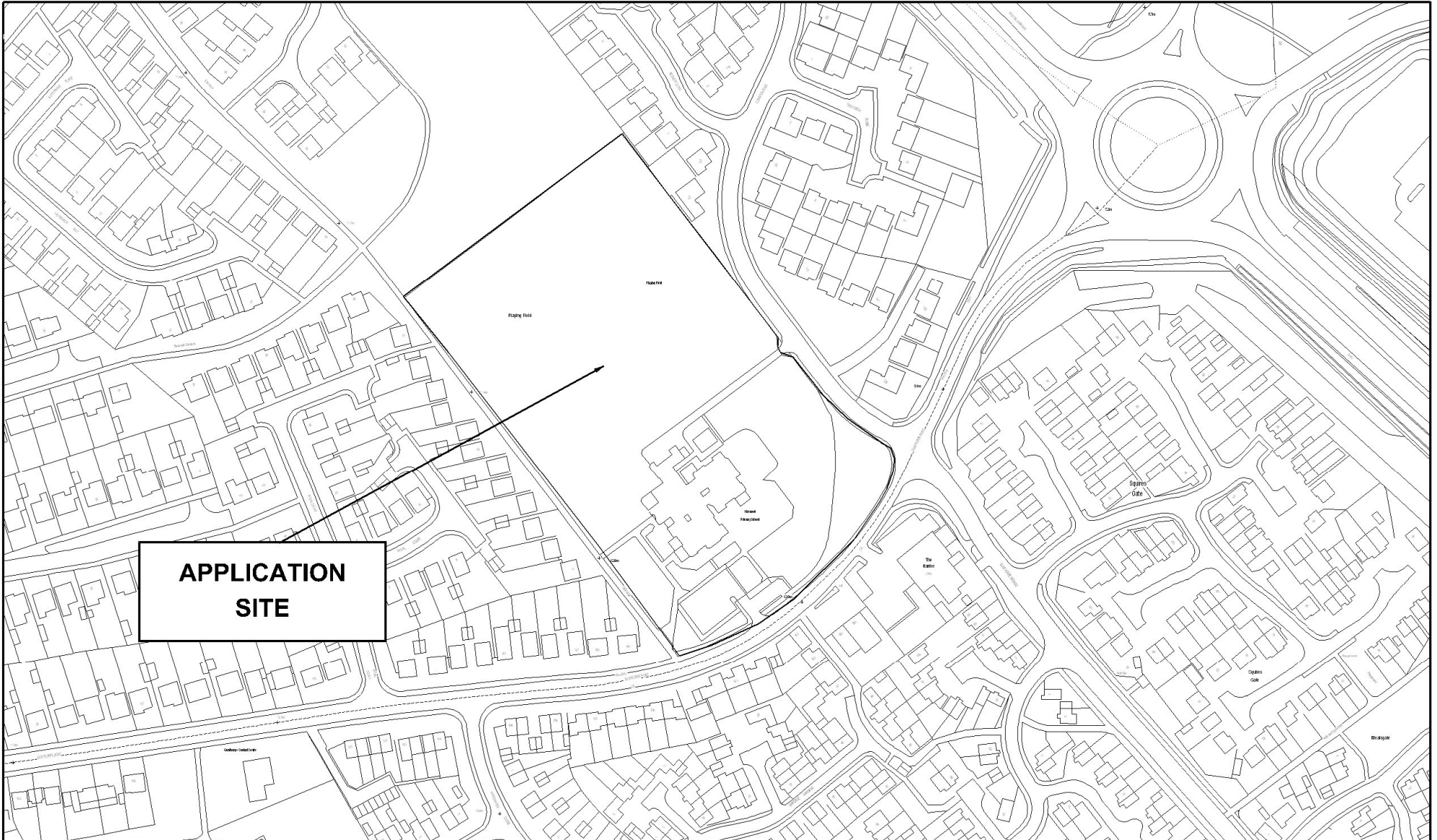
Therefore on balance the proposals are considered compliant with policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

9 RECOMMENDATION

The Head of Planning Services recommends that this application is APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

- C1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**
Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- C2 Notwithstanding the approved details all existing planting and fencing should be retained and where necessary repaired.**
Reason: In order to soften the visual impact of the proposed fencing; in accordance with policy DA2 of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement).

Copy to Councillors: C Burton, D Fower, P Thacker



LOCATION PLAN 09/00629/FUL

Norwood Primary School, Gunthorpe Road, Gunthorpe, Peterborough

Scale 1:2500 Date 19/8/2009 Name MKB Department Planning Services

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