

**Application Ref:** 14/00062/FUL

**Proposal:** Erection of ball stop boundary perimeter fencing (6.4m high x 60m long) to new sports building extension

**Site:** Peterborough Regional College, Park Crescent, Peterborough, PE1 4DZ  
**Applicant:** Peterborough Regional College

**Agent:** Jefferson Sheard Architects

**Referred by:** **Councillor Peach**  
**Reason:** Harmful impact upon the visual amenity of the area, out of keeping with the adjacent Conservation Area and similar to a previous application which was refused

**Site visit:** 20.02.14

**Case officer:** Miss L C Lovegrove  
**Telephone No.** 01733 454439  
**E-Mail:** louise.lovegrove@peterborough.gov.uk

**Recommendation:** **GRANT** subject to conditions

**1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal**

**Site and Surroundings**

The application site comprises an area of playing fields associated with the wider site of Peterborough Regional College and is sited immediately adjacent to the College Sports Hall. The site boundary currently comprises 2.4 metre high steel palisade fencing and to the south west by mature shrubbery which separates the site from the residential premises on Tait Close. To the east is a public footway lined by an area of open space with mature Lime trees which are the subject of group Tree Preservation Order. Beyond this are residential properties on Derby Drive whose gardens face towards the site.

**Proposal**

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of 6.4 metre high black fabric mesh fencing along the southern boundary of the playing fields of Peterborough Regional College, immediately adjacent to the Sports Hall building. The netting is capable of being raised and lowered when the pitches are in use and is proposed to ensure that footballs and rugby balls are contained within the site whilst matches are being played, thereby preventing damage to the building adjacent. The total length of fencing proposed stands at 60 metres.

It should be noted that similar fencing/netting has previously been approved by Members of the Planning Committee (under planning permission reference 12/01123/FUL) which is sited along the northern and eastern boundaries of the same playing fields.

## **2 Planning History**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Date</b>
10/01721/FUL	Construction of extension to existing sports hall for additional changing rooms	Permitted	15/02/2011
12/00534/FUL	Construction of fencing to contain rugby/football balls	Withdrawn	11/06/2012
12/01123/FUL	Construction of fencing to contain rugby/football balls	Permitted	10/09/2012
12/01934/FUL	Two storey extension to sports hall and relocation of 19 car parking spaces	Permitted	28/02/2013

## **3 Planning Policy**

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)**

#### **CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm**

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

### **Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012)**

#### **PP02 - Design Quality**

Permission will only be granted for development which makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment; does not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area; is sufficiently robust to withstand/adapt to climate change; and is designed for longevity.

#### **PP03 - Impacts of New Development**

Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

## **4 Consultations/Representations**

### **Transport & Engineering Services (17.02.14)**

No objections.

### **Police Architectural Liaison Officer (29.01.14)**

No objections, recommendations or observations.

### **Victoria Park Residents Association**

No comments received.

### **Local Residents/Interested Parties**

Initial consultations: 78

Total number of responses: 4

Total number of objections: 4

Total number in support: 0

Three letters of objection have been received from local residents on the following grounds:

- This scheme appears to be very similar, if not exactly the same, as the previous scheme which was refused planning permission.
- The College has not used the moveable fencing they had permission for and have managed this long without any additional fencing.
- There is a gate put in the boundary some time ago which is unlocked during every game to allow someone to collect any balls that go over the fence. There was no need for the fence before and I can see no reason for it now.
- The fencing would be an eyesore for nearby residents.

**Councillor J Peach** – The Councillor request that if officer's recommend approval, that the application be referred for determination by Committee. Councillor Peach is somewhat surprised that the same/very similar application has been submitted again as the College never uses this land and the previous scheme was refused. The Councillor considers that the fencing would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area and is not in keeping with the adjacent Conservation Area.

## **5 Assessment of the planning issues**

The main considerations are:

- Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- Neighbour amenity

### **a) Design and impact upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area**

It is acknowledged that the proposed fencing and netting would exceed the height of the existing 2.4 metre steel palisade fencing that surrounds the application site. However, it is not considered that this would appear incongruous or alien within the locality and will not result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the area. This type of fencing and netting is commonplace on playing fields and is used to prevent balls from leaving the playing field area. There is already an example of 5 metre high wire mesh fencing in place immediately adjacent to the application site, on the playing fields associated with Thomas Deacon Academy.

It is considered that the proposed fencing, whilst taller than the existing fencing, will not appear unduly obtrusive. In addition the design of the fencing permits views through and accordingly, will not represent an obtrusive element within the public realm. Furthermore, the fencing would be situated immediately adjacent to the two storey Sports Hall building which has recently been renovated and extended. When viewed against this building, the fencing would not be unduly dominant and it is considered, would have limited visual impact.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact upon the character, appearance or visual amenity of the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

## **b) Neighbour amenity**

Three objections have been received from nearby residents which have been further supported by comments received from Councillor Peach. The objections mainly focus on the loss of visual amenity to the area, as discussed in the preceding section. With regards to the impact of the proposal upon neighbour amenity, it is not considered that the proposed fencing and netting will result in any significant loss to the amenities of neighbouring residents. The fencing would not form any shared boundaries to the neighbouring residential properties which surround the sports fields and would be sited a sufficient distance from those neighbouring properties so as to not appear unduly obtrusive or overbearing.

It is accepted that the fencing previously approved on the site (to the northern and western boundaries) was conditioned to ensure that the netting was retained at a height of 1.8 metres, only being extended to 5 metres in height during the times of day when the pitches are in use (approximately 15 hours per week). However in this instance, given the separation distance of the fencing to neighbouring properties (28 metres to the nearest), it is not considered that such a restriction is reasonable or necessary.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impact to the amenities of neighbouring residents and is therefore in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP3 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

## **c) Other matters**

Neighbour objections have been received in respect of this application, questioning the need for the proposed fencing, given that previous permissions for similar fencing have been approved and not implemented. The question of need is not a material planning consideration and accordingly cannot be considered through the planning system.

Councillor Peach has raised concern regarding the impact of the proposal upon the character of the adjacent Conservation Area. The position of the proposed fencing is to the north-east of the existing built form of the college whilst the nearby Park Conservation Area is located to the south and south-west. The proposal would be almost entirely screened by the existing buildings within the wider college site and it is therefore considered that the proposal would have no unacceptably harmful impact to the setting of the identified heritage asset.

## **6 Conclusions**

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

- the proposed fencing and netting would not appear incongruous or overbearing within the public realm and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance or visual amenity of the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012); and
- the proposal would not result in any unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP3 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

## **7 Recommendation**

The Director of Growth and Regeneration recommends that planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following condition(s):

- C 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- C 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on drawing number A\_2406 Revision A and the Harrod Perimeter Pole System fencing specification (received 17 January 2014).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of the visual amenity of the surrounding area, in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011) and Policy PP2 of the Peterborough Planning Policies DPD (2012).

Copies to Councillors: Mrs Pam Kreling, John Peach, John Shearman

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