

I would like to request that the temporary condition attached to the planning permission for the boundary fence be removed and that permission be granted for the fence to remain in place on a permanent basis.

When planning permission was originally granted, the principal concern identified by Mid Sussex Planning related to the visual impact of the fence and its appearance within the street scene. Since that time, the circumstances that gave rise to this concern have changed significantly.

A substantial hedge has now matured along the boundary and screens the vast majority of the fence from public view. The hedge has become the dominant boundary feature, with only limited sections of the fence visible. As a result, the fence is no longer a prominent element within the street scene and its visual impact has been substantially reduced.

Furthermore, views of the fence from the opposite side of the road are restricted by established trees located on the grass verge to the West. These trees provide additional screening and further limit visibility of the fence from public vantage points. Taken together, the hedge and surrounding vegetation ensure that the fence is largely concealed and has minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area. We have even planted evergreen climbers (honeysuckle) against sections of the fence which planning regulations would not apply to further soften any impact.

Given the extent of the natural screening that has developed since the original permission was granted, the concerns that initially justified the temporary condition no longer apply to the same degree. The fence now has little, if any, material effect on the street scene and is substantially screened by mature landscaping. In these circumstances, it is considered that any previous concerns regarding compliance with policies within the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014–2031 have effectively been addressed.

Should any concerns remain regarding the acceptability of the fence within the local context, it is also relevant to note that there are a number of similar boundary treatments within the village. Most notably, the fence at 4 Portsmouth Wood, located approximately 20 metres away, was granted permanent planning permission despite being considerably more visible and not benefiting from the same level of screening provided by a mature hedge.

In addition to the reduced visual impact, there are important practical and safety reasons for retaining the fence. While the hedge provides effective visual screening, it does not form a complete physical barrier. The fence prevents our spaniel from passing through gaps within the hedge and accessing the retaining wall beyond, where there is a risk of falling or potentially reaching the road. The fence also provides a safe and secure enclosed area for our children to play, particularly our seven-year-old. Retaining the fence therefore continues to serve an important safety function for our family while having a significantly reduced visual presence.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the temporary condition be removed and that planning permission be granted for the fence to remain on a permanent basis.