

Application Recommended for Approve with Conditions

FUL/2021/0412

Whittlefield With Ightenhill Ward

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Erection of 2m high welded mesh fencing & vehicle/pedestrian gates to the head of School Drive

Wellfield Methodist and Anglican Primary School, Wellfield Drive, Burnley

Applicant: The Board of Governors, Wellfield MA & C School.

Background:

The application is being considered at this Committee due to neighbour objections that have been received.

The application site relates to Wellfield School, located off Wellfield Drive to the rear of St Mary Magdalene's School. The proposal involves the erection of 2m high fencing and vehicle/pedestrian gates at the head of School Drive to provide additional security for safeguarding reasons.

Relevant Policies:

Burnley's Local Plan July 2018

SP1 – Achieving Sustainable Development

SP4 – Development Strategy

SP5 – Development Quality and Sustainability

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Site History:

Wellfield School site:

92/0049 – phase 2 of existing primary school comprising 3 base rooms, toilets, cloaks, staff room, stores etc. – c/c

98/0152 – proposed extension to class base and assembly hall to create new storerooms – granted

NOT/08/0431 – LCC consultation – 2 single storey infill extensions – no objections

NOT/08/0573 – LCC consultation – creation of new play area to front of school with 1.8m high hoop top railings and retractable sun awning – no objections

Landscaped/garden site:

88/0301 – outline app – 40 dwellings – c/c

88/0922 – full application – erection of 28 dwellings – c/c

94/0157 – breach of condition – non-compliance with condition 4 (POS)

94/0158 – breach of condition – non-compliance with condition 3 (landscaping)

94/0590 – change of use of land to provide extension to garden area (3 Clover Crescent) – c/c

School and landscaped site: APP/2014/0405 – proposed single-storey extension to provide school with commercial kitchen facilities and a replacement parking area – approved with conditions. (At the time the applicants found out that they didn't own the land at the entrance to the school access road (public open space area). As the

owners of the land had not been confirmed it was decided that until the issue had been resolved that land couldn't be included as part of the application site).

Consultation Responses:

LCC Highways

The proposal raises no highway concerns, and they therefore raise no objections on highway grounds.

Publicity

Five objections have been received from neighbouring residents for the following reasons:

- There is no reason to have a fence at the position shown on the plan and question why it couldn't be erected at the site of the existing gate across the school access road.
- The fence doesn't match the current school fencing and will be an eyesore.
- The plans do not show clearly the extent of the public open space.
- Concerned that a large proportion of the current planting will have to be removed to install the fencing, with the remainder being removed in the future. Would have an effect on wildlife habitats and would lose the current public open space.
- The fence will not improve the safeguarding aspect of its function, although the gate and fence will be 2m high the fence bordering the drive is not at that height.
- The map doesn't show the gate and access system that is currently in place.
- Questions 8 and 10 have been incorrectly completed, there are sizeable trees on the site and a new pedestrian access point will be created. (Q 8 relates to new or altered vehicular and pedestrian rights of way – there are no new rights of way proposed; the proposal only consists of the erection of a gate. Q10 relates to whether there are any hedges/trees on the site; the agent has ticked no on the application form, he will be asked to change this to yes, as there are trees/shrubs adjacent to the proposed fence).
- Very few pupils, visitors or deliveries enter via the drive; as virtually all non-vehicular traffic uses the gate opening onto Pendle Way. Therefore, there are no safeguarding or health issues which need to be considered.
- The application represents an attempt to enclose the currently landscaped public open space, as a prelude to the clearance of the existing trees and bushes so that the area can be converted into parking spaces similar to those removed from a previous application by the school in 2014.
- I have concerns regarding the ownership of the area of public open land to the south of my property (*evidence has been provided showing that the board of education purchased the land in May 2019*).

Planning and Environmental Considerations:

Principle of proposal

The main issue is the visual impact of the proposal, having regard also to the benefits of additional security for Wellfield School. Policy SP5 seeks a high standard of design and, amongst other things, requires proposals to respect their townscape and landscape setting.

Visual impact and suitability of proposal

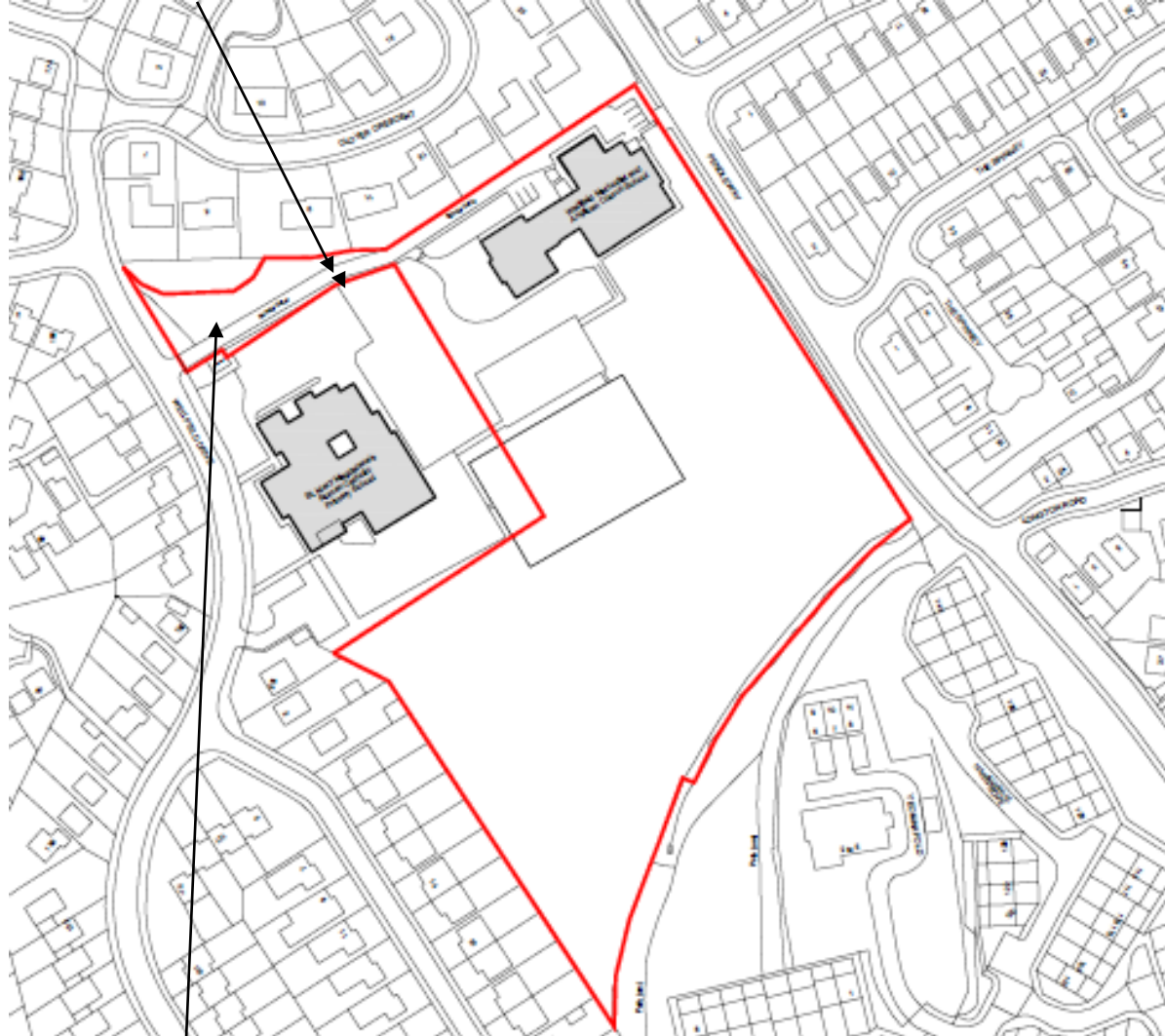
The proposal comprises a new boundary 2m high fence and gates to the head of School Drive. The applicant states that the purpose of the proposed fencing is to increase security for safeguarding reasons; currently persons (visitors and pupils) are able to enter and leave the site in an uncontrolled manner which is a health and safety/safeguarding risk.

The proposed fencing and gates would be 2m high and extended for a length of 38m along the existing verge line at the head of School Drive. The gates and fence would be Green 'RAL 6005' and installed against the backdrop of the existing vegetation.

The existing planted area within the school grounds would be retained as existing, with some localised cutting back to enable the fence to be fitted.

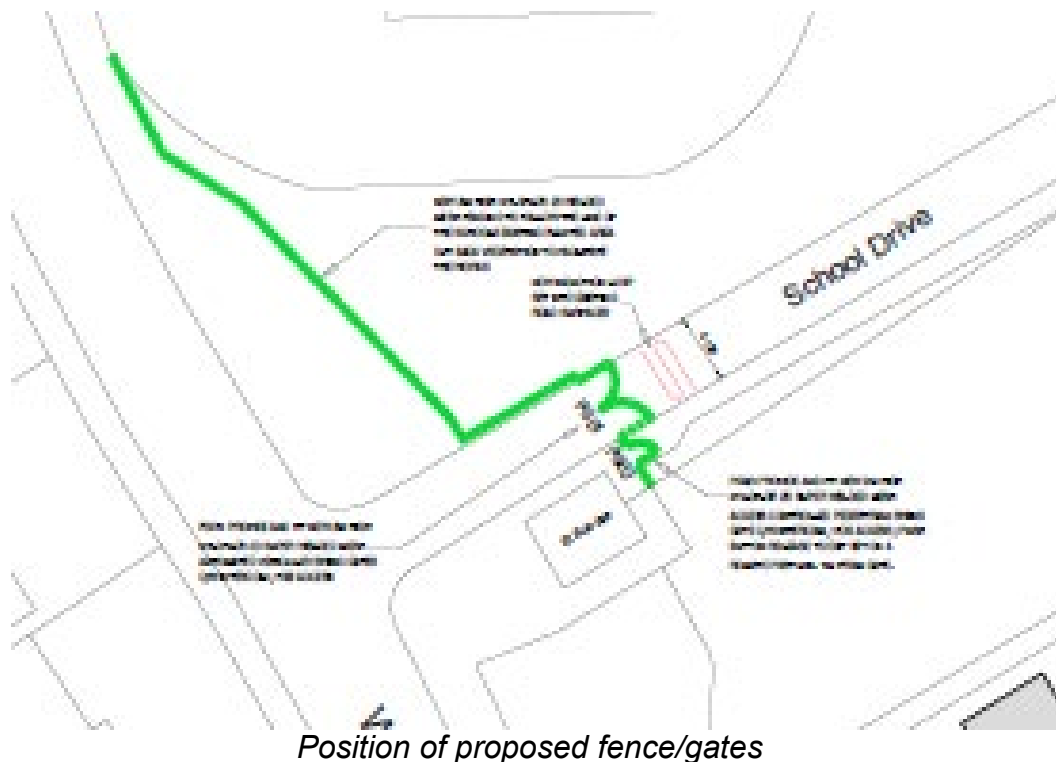
School Drive would continue to be used to access the school premises but would be controlled at the proposed new gates

position of existing gate mentioned by objectors



existing POS landscaped area

Land ownership plan



Landscaped area at corner of School Drive

An area of public open space was allocated on the corner of Wellfield Drive adjacent to the housing development at Clover Crescent when the housing estate was granted planning consent in 1988 (12/88/0922) (*the conditions in respect of the area of POS stated that the public open space had to be maintained for 5 years*). A large part of the allocated area of public open space was granted permission for a change of use to a garden area for no.3 Clover Crescent in 1994 (12/94/0590). It was agreed at the time this application was approved (12/94/0590) that the remaining triangular shaped section of land on the corner of Wellfield Drive would be part landscaped (trees, shrubs and climbing plants) and partly hard surfaced (to provide valuable off-street waiting space for parents/children at busy school periods, alleviating a problem with congestion). (The hardstanding area was not created in accordance with the plan agreed in 1994).

The area of land outside the extended garden to 3 Clover Crescent is currently covered in bushes, small trees and shrubs (see photos below). The land is shown on the submitted plan as being within the ownership of the applicant (Wellfield School). (*Evidence has been provided to show that the land was purchased in May 2019*).



Views from Wellfield Drive



View towards Wellfield Drive



View along School Drive

The land was not intended to provide recreational public open space but to provide a visually attractive area. (Due to the dense nature of the trees/bushes it would be difficult to walk through this landscaped area).

The current proposal consists of a 2m high fence and gates. The existing planted area would be retained as existing with the exception of some localised cutting back to enable the fence to be erected. The shrubbery would still be retained as a buffer/screen for adjacent properties.

The fence and gates would be 2m in height and would be a green welded mesh type in appearance (see below).



As the planted area would be retained, the buffer screen between properties on Clover Crescent and the school would not be affected.

The proposed green coloured fencing would blend into the backdrop of the planted area and is unlikely to significantly affect the visual amenity of the site or its surroundings.

Conclusion

The proposal would be beneficial in improving school security which is necessary for safeguarding measures. The positioning, height and appearance of the fence is suitable at this location and would not significantly affect the visual amenities of the site. The proposal therefore complies with development plan policies.

Recommendation: Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed on this notice below.

Reason: To ensure the development is implemented in accordance with the approved plans and to avoid ambiguity.

Lesley Blakey
29th November 2021