**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**25/00717/HHFUL**

**OFFICER REPORT**

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**Case No:** **25/00717/HHFUL** **Householder (Full)**

**Proposal:** **2m high boundary fence (Retrospective)**

**Location:** **36 Park Avenue Little Paxton St Neots**

**Applicant:** **Mr Gary Sampson**

**Grid Ref:** **518805 262433**

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## DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The dwelling is a semi-detached dwelling of brick construction with cladding to the front, located within a residential area of Little Paxton. Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

The site is situated in flood zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

The application is for the retrospective erection of a 2m high boundary fence. It is noted that a previous application (23/00704/HHFUL) for the same proposal was refused in July 2024.

## NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

## PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles – Parts 3.1 Place Making Principles and 3.7 Building Form

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

## PLANNING HISTORY

78/00457/FUL – Extension to dwelling – permission granted 28.04.1978
79/00655/FUL – Erection of garden wall - permission granted 02.08.1979
23/00704/HHFUL - Retrospective application for erection of boundary fence – refused 29.07.2024

## CONSULTATIONS

Little Paxton Parish Council made comments in support of the planning application. It was agreed that the application will have no detrimental impact on either the area or neighbouring properties.

## REPRESENTATIONS

No objections received at time of determination.

## SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential amenity

*Design and Visual Amenity

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity. Achieving this by applying the guidance set out in supplementary design documents of both the Huntingdonshire Design Guide and the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.

The proposal is for the retrospective approval of a 2 metre high boundary fence. It is noted that the fence is to the front of the property and extends along the eastern boundary, adjacent to the garage block and enclosing an off-street parking space. The same documents have been submitted as for the previous application, with the exception of additional photos of existing similar fences in the local area.

The street scene is characterised by two-storey brick dwellings fronting onto Park Avenue, with open frontages creating a wide, open, and often leafy vista along Park Avenue. It is acknowledged that 30 and 52 Park Avenue have boundary treatments of a similar height to that of the application site. It should be noted however that in relation to No 52 Park Avenue the high boundary treatment is limited to the rear and part of the side garden of the property. Part of the side garden adjacent to Park Avenue, and all of the front garden are surrounded by a low wall, which helps to maintain the wide, open character of this part of Park Avenue. This is not the case with the boundary treatment to No. 36, which encloses all of the front and side garden, and leads to a more closed and utilitarian appearance at variance with the prevailing character of Park Avenue. In addition, No.36 is positioned at the end of the terrace on a corner plot and as such the expanse of fencing is more obtrusive and more visually prominent in the street scene. The boundary treatment to No. 30 Park Avenue is opposite an area of public space, covered in grass and trees. This public space which contributes to the wide, open vista of this part of Park Avenue and helps to somewhat counteract the boundary treatment at No. 30. No planning history can be found relating to planning permission for the fences nor certificates of lawful existing development for their retention at either of these properties and therefore it is likely that they were erected without the benefit of planning permission.

HDC's Design Guide SPD 2017 states that 'If the side or rear walls are in the public realm then these should be either solid wall or high hedge, or a combination of both.' Furthermore, the Design Guide sets out six principles which should be followed with regards to boundaries which includes 'Close boarded fencing should be avoided in locations facing the public realm this includes communal and semi-public parking areas such as rear car courts'. As such, the proposed timber fence does not accord with the principles set out in the Design Guide.

It is noted that there have been no changes in policy or appeals since the previous refusal in July 2024 and therefore the reason for refusal for that application still stands and continues to be relevant. No material planning considerations have been put forward to change the position in the determination of this application.

As such it is considered that the timber fence is not in keeping with the wide, open character of the area, with open frontages to the dwellings and therefore appears incongruous within the street scene. In addition, it is considered to be contrary to HDC's Design Guide SPD 2017.

Taking the above into consideration the proposal is not considered acceptable with regards to design and visual amenity and impact on the character or appearance of the area and therefore fails to accord with policies LP11 and LP12 (a, c, and n) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and the place making principles set out in chapter 3 of Huntingdonshire's Design Guide SPD (2017), in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Due to the nature and location of the proposal there will be no significant detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

Therefore, overall, the development is considered acceptable in terms of overshadowing, overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of light and would not have a significant impact upon residential amenity. The proposal, therefore, accords with LP14 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019) in this regard.

*Conclusion
The proposed development is not considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:
* Is of an appropriate scale and design;
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be refused.

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**CONTACT OFFICER:**
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**