



The Bearsted & Thurnham Society

The Residents Association for the Civil Parishes of Bearsted and Thurnham



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Mr R. Timms,
Planning Department
Maidstone Borough Council
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ

10th October 2019

Dear Mr Timms,

Planning application no. 18/506656/FULL - New Schools - Perimeter Fencing

The planning approval granted by Maidstone Borough Council on 3rd May 2019 lists seventeen drawings in order to clarify which of the submitted plans had been approved. One of these plans, Fencing General Arrangement, shows the types of fencing to be used in and around the site and includes a note that it is to be read in conjunction with all other Landscape Architect's drawings, where the landscape architects were ares of Sheffield.

This drawing is mentioned in Condition 4 of the approval document, which states that –

The boundary treatments for the development shall be constructed in accordance with the details shown on drawing no. FS0745-ALA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-9003 RevP12 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

This drawing shows the boundary fence to the site as being 2.4m tall weldmesh fencing Q40:125B, where Q40:125 is a designation that refers to "open mesh steel panel general purpose fencing". The letter B at the end of the reference refers to an ares specification document and no fence colour was included in this document. This was confirmed by ares on October 8th.

Although not specifically mentioned in the approval document a Landscape and Visual Assessment, also prepared by ares, was submitted as part of the planning application.

This document assesses the visual impact of the proposal from five key "receptors" which were believed to be the most sensitive, where the term 'receptor' is used to mean an element or assemblage of elements that will directly or indirectly be affected by the proposed development, and "Receptor 4" was identified as being the "Bearsted Road Views".

The document contains a number of Photomontages which are based on photographs taken in December when the majority of the trees were not in leaf. Proposed views are produced based on mitigation measures having had 10 years' growth to establish.

One of these photomontages is shown on the following page and the colour of the boundary fence is shown as green, which would be as expected in a rural location.

However the recently erected fence is blue which is totally incongruous, particularly when the visual sensitivity of the site is considered. When the construction of the schools is complete the ancient woodland to the north of the site, together with the backdrop of the North Downs AONB, will still be visible and the colour is seen as being completely unacceptable.

The submitted planning documents appear to be silent with regard to fence colour and currently it is not known if Maidstone borough council approved it, or are even aware of the situation.

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The submitted planning documents appear to be silent with regard to fence colour and currently it is not known if Maidstone Borough Council approved it, or are even aware of the situation.

We would be grateful, therefore, if you would confirm whether or not Maidstone Borough Council has approved this fence colour. If not, please would clarify Maidstone Borough Council's position on the colour of this fencing.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Vanhecke
Chairman



View from Ash Tree Gardens

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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, ares Landscape Architects.



Adjacent to Ash Tree Gardens

The earth spoil heaps are temporary.

The impact worsens as you look along the fence line to the left rather than through it.