**DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

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| **SMD/2016/0721**<br>**Valid 21/11/2016** | **ST MARYS CATHOLIC ACADEMY CRUSO STREET LEEK** | **PROPOSED 2.4M HIGH PALADIN MESH BOUNDARY FENCE**<br><br>**(FULL - MINOR)** |

**MAIN ISSUES**

- Impact on the character and appearance of the street scene
- Impact on residential amenity

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

St Marys Roman Catholic School comprises of a collection of modern buildings which occupy an elevated position at the corner of Cruso Street with Broad Street, Leek. To the rear (north east) of the site lies Town Yard Industrial Estate. To the north west lie semi-detached buildings set on a short cul-de-sac. To the south east on Cruso Street lie terraced dwellings with two large semi-detached dwellings on the opposite side of Broad Street to the south west. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within a designated settlement boundary and adjacent to a designated Conservation Area.

**PROPOSAL**

This is a full application which seeks consent for the erection of a 2.43m high paladin mesh boundary fence. The proposed fencing is for the entirety of the boundary to Broad Street and continuing around the corner onto Cruso Street. There will also be new fencing to the boundary on the passageway to Geoffrey Avenue.

**RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

**Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)**

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS5a Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

**National Planning Policy Framework**

Chapter 7 Requiring Good Design

## SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There is an extensive planning history to the site which relate to the change of use of adjacent land to form playing fields, erection of boundary fences, buildings and storage sheds and entrance canopies.

## CONSULTATIONS

### Publicity

Site notice displayed and 11 neighbours notified.

### Public Comments

No representations received.

### Town / Parish Comments

Recommend approval.

## OFFICER COMMENTS

### Principle of Development

The application site lies within the Leek Town development boundary as identified by the Policies Maps of the adopted Core Strategy where there is a general presumption in favour of development. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in principle subject to detailed matters of design and impact on residential amenity.

### Design

Policy DC1 (Design Considerations) states that all development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area and also be designed to respect the site and surroundings, through scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

At present the existing boundary fencing to part of Cruso Street, Broad Street and Geoffrey Avenue is formed by a low cast iron rail fencing with a higher paladin style mesh fencing behind. The low cast iron railings are corroded and It is proposed that the railings and the existing fencing be removed and a new 2.4m high paladin fencing be erected in its place. The submitted scheme proposes fencing which will match that in terms of its colour, design and materials which has already been erected along part of Cruso Street.

Whilst the loss of the existing original railings is unfortunate it is not considered that the LPA could insist on their restoration given that the site is not listed or in a Conservation Area. Furthermore, whilst the submitted drawings would indicate that the proposed fencing has a rather heavy design the reality is that it is much more lightweight and transparent than shown on the drawings.

A series of discussions have been undertaken with the applicant's agent and it was suggested that the height of the proposed fence be lowered so that it is below the eaves level of the school buildings. It has however been subsequently confirmed that the height of the fencing cannot be reduced due to the fact that children play ball games in this area. It has also been demonstrated that a more lightweight structure had been considered and discounted due to H & S requirements for falling. The only way therefore to reduce the visual impact of the proposed fence would therefore be to change the proposed colour. Whilst it is accepted that the proposed blue is the school colour it is quite strident. It is acknowledged that this has been considered acceptable along Cruso Street however this is positioned at street level rather than above a large retaining wall. It is also not adjacent to the Conservation Area. The applicant's agent has confirmed their agreement to the use of a darker more recessive colour such as black and it is considered subject to this minor change that the proposed development would not adversely affect the street scene and in this respect complies with policy DC1 of the adopted Core Strategy.

**Amenity**

Policy DC1 states that all new development should protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. It is not considered that the proposals would be prejudicial to the amenity currently enjoyed by any of the surrounding residential dwellings or neighbouring land uses. The elevations from Cruso Street and Broad Street would be broadly similar in terms of character and appearance to the existing. Whilst there would be some infilling of the boundary fence alongside Geoffrey Avenue this would be at the rear of the dwellings which sit at an obtuse angle to the application site.

**CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

In conclusion it is considered that the proposed development would not unduly harm the character and appearance of the site or the wider surrounding area nor would it be detrimental to the reasonable enjoyment of any of the neighbouring dwellings or land uses.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE subject to statutory time limit and submitted plans .**

**Case Officer: Teresa Critchlow**
**Recommendation Date: 30th January 2017**

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Haywood, Ben

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**