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Application Number:	P/FUL/2025/02071
Webpage:	Planning application: P/FUL/2025/02071 - dorsetforyou.com
Site address:	Ferndown County Middle School Church Road Ferndown BH22 9ET
Proposal:	Removal of existing fencing and erection of new 2.4m and 3m weldmesh fencing.
Applicant name:	Mrs Moore
Case Officer:	Claire Hicks
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Lugg and Cllr Parkes

1. Reason application is going to committee:

The application site comprises land in the Council's ownership.

2. Summary of recommendation:

GRANT subject to conditions as set out at the end of this report

3. Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Acceptable: Urban area
Impact on character and appearance including trees	Acceptable subject to pre-commencement condition to secure methodology
Impact on the living conditions of the occupants and neighbouring properties	Acceptable
Highway impacts, safety, access and parking	Acceptable: no impacts
Biodiversity	Acceptable: BNG will be secured by condition

4. Description of site

4.1 Ferndown County Middle School lies on the western edge of the urban area of Ferndown with St George V Playing Field to the north and east forming part of the designated Green Belt.

4.2 The site is served by a vehicle access from Peter Grant Way off Church Road to the east. Ferndown First School lies to the south. There is one dwelling within the school grounds. The nearest neighbouring residential properties lies to the east arranged around

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the cul-de-sac, Old School Close, positioned south of the entrance and on Church Road further east.

- 4.3 The school grounds are currently demarcated by post and wire fencing and by some brick walling and piers supporting gates which is softened by vegetation and trees.

5. Description of development

- 5.1 It is proposed to demolish the brick walls and piers and replace the existing boundary fencing. 2.4m high weld mesh fencing is proposed round the front and along the north of the site, joining with existing fencing to the retained.
- 5.2 3m high weld mesh fencing is proposed along the rear (west) boundary adjacent to the tennis courts and play area with existing fencing to be retained in the southwest corner of the site and along the southern boundary.
- 5.3 Proposed ducting is also shown running from the building to the two front gates (nos. 2 and 3) and to a southern boundary gate (no.5)

6. Background and relevant planning history

- 03/01/1055/ZZ - Decision: No Objection - Decision Date: 25/10/2001
Replace Existing Length Boundary Fencing With 3 Metre High Coated Wire Fence.
(Dorset County Council Application)
- P/FUL/2022/04424 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 03/11/2022
Replacement and introduction of perimeter fencing.

7. List of constraints

Within Settlement Boundary; Ferndown

Adjacent to King George V Playing Field, Policy: HE4 - Distance: 0

Public Right of Way: Footpath E42/30; - Distance: 12.13

Dorset Council Land Freehold : Ferndown First & Middle Schools & Youth Centre & AE Centre, Mountbatten Drive, Ferndown

Existing ecological network - Terrestrial

Western extent of the site within the Greenbelt

Groundwater – Susceptibility to flooding;

Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 1000

DESI - Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Area - ID: 5494.0

Radon: Class: 1.0

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Adjacent to Dorset Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (Record ID 84.0)

8. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. **Dorset Council Tree team**- no objection subject to conditions
2. **Dorset Council Highways**- no objection
3. **Ferndown Town Council**- Support
4. **Ward Members Ferndown North**- no comments received

Representations received

The application was advertised by site notices. No representations were received.

9. Duties

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

10. Relevant policies

Development plan

In this case the development plan comprises:

Adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan:

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

KS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

KS2: Settlement hierarchy

HE2: Design of new development

HE3: Landscape quality

ME1: Safeguarding biodiversity and geodiversity

Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

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- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless specific NPPF policies protecting areas or assets provide a strong reason for refusal and/or any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, with particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well designed places and providing affordable homes.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4 'Decision making': Para 39 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 8 'Promoting healthy and safe communities': Para 100 a proactive, positive and collaborative approach should be taken to meeting the requirement to provide sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places.
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places' This indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 131 – 141 advise that:

The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

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- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- Paragraphs 192-195 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.

Other material considerations

National Planning Practice Guidance

Including 'Determining a planning application'

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Dorset Council Interim Guidance and Position Statement Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction. December 2023.

11. Human rights

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have "regard to" and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

No impacts on persons with protected characteristics has been identified.

13. Public Benefits

No significant financial benefits identified.

14. Planning Assessment

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Principle of development

- 14.1 The proposed boundary development is associated with an existing school and the development will not extend into the adjacent Green Belt, so the principle is acceptable.

Impact on the character of the area including trees

- 14.2 Policy HE2 requires that development should be compatible with its surroundings in relation to 11 criteria including scale, visual impact and relationship with mature trees. Existing boundary treatments at the school have a low visual impact with trees contributing to a sylvan character.
- 14.3 The proposed weld mesh fencing will be visually permeable and is now a common feature in school grounds. Finished in green it will have a limited visual impact.
- 14.4 The proposed 2.4m close-board fencing along part of the southern boundary adjacent to the dwellinghouse at 1 Peter Grant Way will have a great visual impact as it will replace a hedge and is higher than would usually be anticipated for domestic fencing, but given the trees backdrop that will remain predominant and in the context of the school grounds no significant visual harm has been identified.
- 14.5 The proposed fencing will be positioned around the majority of the existing school site including in areas that are well treed. It is important that the trees are protected during the removal of existing boundary treatment and that fencing is installed in a manner which avoids harm to tree roots in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area. The Council's tree officer has advised that a pre-commencement condition should be imposed to secure appropriate methodology (no. 3).
- 14.6 Subject to this condition the proposal will accord with policy HE2.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

- 14.7 The 2.4m high close-board fencing will run along the northern side boundary of 1 Peter Grant Way. The property has several windows facing north which will have their outlook curtailed, but a 2m separation distance from the windows will be maintained and the fencing will secure improved privacy for the occupants, so no demonstrable harm is anticipated.
- 14.8 Other neighbouring land uses which comprise the playing fields and Ferndown County First School, will not be impacted.

Benefits

- 14.9 The new boundary enclosure will meet ESFA standards, providing additional security for pupils and the site in general, enabling the school to meet its safeguarding and security responsibilities.

Environmental implications

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- 14.10 No significant environmental impacts have been identified. There will be some benefit from the scheme which will include new tree planting to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. These can be secured by condition (no. 4).

Summary of issues and the planning balance

For the above reasons the application is found to accord with the Development Plan and there are no material planning considerations that would warrant refusal.

The agreement of the agent to the pre-commencement planning conditions was received on 25 June 2025.

15. Recommendation

To delegate authority to the Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement and Development Management Area Manager East to GRANT permission following the 21 day owner notification period subject to no further representations being received which raise new material planning considerations, and subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2.The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

634-P-01B Site Plan
634-P-02B Block Plan
560-C-08B Main Entrance Works and Typical Detail
634-P-04C Overview of Whole Site and Gate Numbers
634-P-05C Fencing location 1
634-P-06C Fencing location 2
634-P-07C Fencing location 3

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3.Before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, a method statement for the wall demolition and fence removal and a construction statement for the proposed fencing which secure tree protection shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall then proceed fully in accordance with the approved method and construction statements.

Reason: To ensure that trees and their rooting environments are afforded adequate physical protection during construction.

- 4.No development shall be commenced until a timetable for the implementation and maintenance of any proposed on-site (within the red line of the application site) non-significant biodiversity net gain (see informative below), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The implementation timetable and

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maintenance details must be prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for the site. Thereafter the on-site non-significant biodiversity net gain shall be implemented and maintained for a period of no less than 5 years following the completion of said biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved timetable and maintenance details. If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any habitat it is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies (or becomes in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority seriously damaged or defective) the habitat shall be replaced with the same habitat as set out in the approved biodiversity gain plan in the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority first agrees in writing to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that non-significant on-site biodiversity net gain is provided on site as required by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative Notes:

1. It is likely that if the proposed BNG is on-site and it does not meet one or more of the criteria below that it will not be considered to be significant. However, what counts as a significant enhancement will vary depending on the scale of development and existing habitat, but would normally be:
 - habitats of medium or higher distinctiveness in the biodiversity metric (both proposed habitats and retained habitats)
 - habitats of low distinctiveness which create a large number of biodiversity units relative to the biodiversity value of the site before development - the combined number of units delivered is equal to or greater than 0.5; and/or the combined number of low distinctiveness units is equivalent to 10% or more of the baseline biodiversity unit value of the site (excluding proposed gardens)
 - habitat creation or enhancement where distinctiveness is increased relative to the distinctiveness of the habitat before development - higher distinctiveness of any baseline habitat type e.g. low to medium
 - enhancements to habitat condition, for example from poor or moderate to good

2. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.