

Retrospective Planning Statement

Replacement boundary fencing and gates

4 and 4A Forewoods Common

This statement is submitted in support of our retrospective planning application for replacement boundary fencing and gates at 4 and 4A Forewoods Common.

Our property occupies a highly exposed position adjacent to two fast roads and a busy staggered junction. The boundary treatment is therefore required not only to define the site, but also to provide an important safety and acoustic barrier for the dwelling, while offering some screening from traffic-related pollution.

The current boundary treatment replaces a former timber fence and gates which had been in place for over 16 years, with some elements believed to have been present for significantly longer. When we took ownership of the property, that boundary treatment was already dilapidated and failing. The former fence had an overall height of between approximately 2.2 metres and 2.35 metres. The previous boundary was also screened and softened by ivy and boundary planting along the site edge. Following the removal of an outbuilding and the severe storms in November 2024, the former fence collapsed completely. The replacement boundary works were then carried out between December 2024 and May 2025.

The collapse of the fence left the garden directly exposed to two fast roads and the nearby junction. With a small child and a dog at the property, it was necessary for us to act quickly to re-establish a secure and safe boundary. The situation created an immediate safety risk and could not reasonably be left unresolved.

The replacement fence has been constructed using steel posts and rockwool acoustic panels. These materials were chosen specifically to provide a robust structure capable of acting as a safety barrier, while also helping to reduce traffic noise and provide some screening from traffic-related pollution. The rockwool panels are manufactured in 1.2 metre heights, and the fence was formed by stacking two panels in order to create a continuous 2.4 metre screen. This approach was considered necessary in order to provide a sufficiently robust and effective safety and noise-reducing barrier in this unusually exposed roadside location. Although this is slightly higher than the former fence, which had an overall height of between approximately 2.2 metres and 2.35 metres, the increase is modest and reflects the need for the fence to function effectively as both a safety barrier and acoustic screen in this particularly exposed setting.

A pair of gates is also proposed within the site frontage opening. These will be electrically operated gates formed from a steel box-section frame with timber cladding, including a shadow-gap timber finish, so as to provide a secure and visually coherent entrance treatment that relates appropriately to the wider boundary enclosure. The opening is approximately 7.1 metres wide, with each gate leaf being approximately 3.55 metres wide and 2.4 metres high. The gates are intended to sit as an integrated part of the boundary treatment rather than as a separate feature, and their design and materials are consistent with the need for a robust, secure and well-finished frontage in this exposed roadside location.

This is not a typical domestic boundary situation. In addition to general traffic, the property is affected by frequent HGV movements using the surrounding roads and negotiating the nearby junction. This causes congestion, noise, disturbance and emissions, reinforcing the need for a substantial and protective boundary treatment.

The need for a robust fence is not theoretical. On 3 August 2025, a vehicle lost control and collided with the boundary fence. The submitted aerial and site photographs show visible skid marks on the carriageway and support the position that the vehicle approached from the Bradford on Avon direction towards Holt, crossed from the opposite side of the road, and struck the fence with significant force. The vehicle was subsequently abandoned at the scene. The photographs also show the damage caused to both the vehicle and the fence. The police officers who attended the incident advised that, given the speed at which the vehicle had been travelling, had the robust fence not been in place the vehicle would have gone through into the garden and directly towards the kitchen of the dwelling. This would have presented an extremely serious risk to our family and could have resulted in very serious injury or worse. This incident therefore clearly demonstrates the genuine highway danger affecting the site and the importance of having a strong and protective boundary structure in place.

The boundary treatment does not adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity. There are no neighbouring properties that are materially affected by the development in terms of outlook, overshadowing or enclosure.

Highway safety has also been carefully considered. The replacement fence has been stepped in from the former boundary line by approximately 500 to 2,000 mm around the boundary in order to assist visibility at the junction and improve the relationship between the site and the highway. We also spoke with Wiltshire Highways by telephone and were advised that the fence does not interfere with visibility splays at the junction. Photographs have also been provided to demonstrate this. The circled trees shown on the submitted photographs act as fixed visual markers and help demonstrate the extent to which the fence line has been stepped in from its former position.

The gates are set within the site frontage and are part of the same overall boundary strategy. They provide a secure point of access while maintaining a consistent design approach across the frontage. Given their integrated position and the fact that they form part of the enclosed boundary treatment, they are not considered to give rise to any additional unacceptable impact in visual or highway terms.

Although parts of the boundary treatment are currently unfinished, works were paused once the planning issues arose so that the matter could be addressed properly through the retrospective application process. It is intended that the steel fence sections will be softened by ivy planting to create a green screen, and evergreen shrubs will be planted in front of selected sections of the fence. This will help reduce the visual impact of the structure over time and provide a softer, greener and more natural boundary treatment in the context of the site. We also have experience in the installation and maintenance of living wall systems, which gives confidence that the proposed ivy screen can be successfully established and properly maintained. The ivy will be trained using a suitable mesh or support system to ensure that it establishes evenly and provides effective coverage of the steel fence sections over time. The proposed green screening will be actively maintained to ensure that it establishes successfully and remains neat and controlled. This will include regular watering during the establishment period, replacement of any failed plants where necessary, and routine trimming to prevent overgrowth and to ensure that the planting does not affect visibility at the junction or extend beyond the site boundary.

In addition, evergreen shrub planting is proposed along parts of the boundary in order to further soften the appearance of the development and provide additional green screening. This planting will be properly established and maintained to ensure healthy growth and a tidy appearance, and will be managed so that it does not interfere with visibility at the junction or extend beyond the site boundary.

If the local planning authority has any concerns regarding the detailed treatment of the external finish, we would be willing to discuss and agree an alternative softening or landscaping approach to ensure a satisfactory final appearance.

Overall, the development replaces a long-established boundary treatment in a highly constrained and hazardous roadside location. It is a proportionate and site-specific response to the need for safety, noise reduction, security and residential protection. It does not harm neighbouring amenity or highway visibility, and given the unusual circumstances of the site, the fence and gates are considered justified and planning permission is respectfully requested.