

Heritage Statement for the Installation of 2.4m High Security Fencing

At

Longridge C of E Primary School, Berry Lane, Longridge, PR3 3JA

This heritage statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for permission to install 358 Mesh System Fencing to specified areas within and along the boundary of Longridge CE Primary School, together with infilling open sections of fencing with fencing to match adjoining i.e. galvanised railings and powder coated railings. The application also covers the replacement of 3 no. existing pedestrian gates.

The main school building is not a listed building but does lie within Longridge Conservation Area - see figure 1. The school is used as a Primary School education establishment.

Heritage

Historical Context

A review of documented histories of Longridge C of E School reveals little significance recorded about the property, although the Gothic windows to the Primary School and the United Reformed Church are mentioned briefly in the Ribble Valley Borough Council – Longridge Conservation Area Appraisal.

Longridge Primary School on Berry Lane was built circa 1865 to accommodate the increased population following the arrival of the railway in 1840 to aid transport of locally quarried sandstone being transported to build Liverpool Docks. Two separate school buildings can be seen on the first OS First Edition map of 1892, labelled 'school' and 'infant school', these two buildings have been connected by use of an 'infill extension' during the 20th Century. A search of the area using the Heritage Gateway website and the PastScape website did not provide any further information about the school property.

The proposed fencing solution will not require any alterations to the main school buildings, there will be no change or new restricted views of the school elevations.

Aesthetic & Communal Context

The Longridge Conservation Area is essentially urban in character with the three principal streets being lined with buildings, mostly without any front gardens. This restricts views out of the streets although there are some notable long views along each, especially southwards along Berry Lane to The Dog Inn.

Berry Lane is the only street with some public space off it (Towneley Gardens), which does provide a 'green' break in the buildings, with pleasant views across the trees and Bowling Green. St Paul's Church is notable for the vista up Church Street from Berry Lane. St Wilfred's RC Church is another focal building, this time in Derby Road.

The front of the property forms part of a street scene based on a line of properties on Berry Lane which also includes the most significant building in Longridge, the Longridge Co-Operative Industrial Society Building.

The Property

The school building which faces on to Berry Lane is believed to have been built circa 1865 from locally quarried sandstone. The nursery building was newly built in 2006 as a temporary facility but has now become a permanent addition.

Assessment of Heritage Significance

The two school buildings which now make up Longridge C of E Primary School, are good examples of 19th Century stone buildings which lie within the heart of the existing Longridge Conservation Area and have a significant visual impact upon the street scene of Berry Lane.

The proposed improvement of the fencing will have no detrimental effect on the school elevations but would result in a significant improvement to the security of the building.

Design Proposals

The existing concrete panel fencing will remain in situ to the South East boundary (see photograph 4) with new 2.4m high 358 Mesh System Fencing installed on the 'school side' of the boundary in order to improve the security and safeguarding of the building and its occupants. It will ensure that privacy is maintained to the adjacent residential properties whilst also ensuring unwanted access to the building and its grounds is severely inhibited.

It is proposed to replace the existing 1m high timber gate to the front of the school along Berry Lane with 2.3m high metal gate to match the existing adjacent railings. There is no pedestrian access gate to the walkway leading to the car park, this allows unrestricted access to trespassers during and outside of school hours. It is proposed to install a galvanised gate to match the adjoining vehicular access gate.

The current galvanised railings protecting the school playground from the car park is easily climbed. This is to be replaced with a 2.4m high 358 Mesh System Fencing.

The parapet wall to the steps located within the school playground is to be secure via 2.4m high 358 Mesh System Fencing.

Finally the pedestrian gate to rear of the school is to be replaced. The existing gate is a large single, heavy gate which is very difficult to operate and is lockable by a key code device. This is insufficient as the gate is positioned on a fire escape route. The gate is to be replaced by a 2.4m high 358 Mesh System double leaf security gate which is openable but can be locked outside of normal school hours.

The security fencing is urgently required in order to reduce the amount of vandalism and trespassing on the site. The school have numerous Police Crime Numbers itemising the frequent issues experienced with vandalism, damage and nuisance. Often the school find drug paraphernalia in the morning or need to clear up damage ahead of children entering the site.

Pre-application advice for the fencing proposals was provided by Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Department. With regards to the replacement of the 3no. pedestrian gates, the report stated:

Replacement of the existing pedestrian gate which faces onto Berry Lane with a 2.3m high metal gate which matches the colour and appearance of the existing railings does not raise any design concerns.

Similarly, proposed pedestrian gates nos. 1 and 2 would be set well back from the Berry Lane frontage. Subject to the use of appropriate materials there would be no concerns relating to the installation of 2.4m high security gates.

With regards to the South East fencing proposal, the report stated:

It would be appropriate in my view to retain or replace the existing 1.5m high concrete fence with some form of hard boundary between the playground and the rear yards of residential properties to a height of approximately 1.2 metres. This would afford the occupants of nos. 15-18 Chapel Street some degree of privacy within their private garden areas. The 1.8m – 2m high security fencing would then be erected on the 'school side' of the concrete fence or similar replacement boundary treatment.

We proposed leaving the concrete panels in situ.

The proposed fencing and gate solutions are specified as a mesh fencing system which is marketed as providing excellent security benefits and a good aesthetical appearance. This will match the existing fencing already installed on site to the rear of the playground adjacent to the playing fields.

'Weldmesh' type fencing will be used, this is because, although having a dense matrix of close gauge steel mesh in its structure is it virtually transparent from any distance greater than 2 meters. Black fencing is proposed as the back-drop to the fencing is hard surfacing rather than grass areas, this would help mask the fencing against the back-drop. The fencing's structure prevents climb aids or destructive tools, for example car jacks or bolt cutters, from being employed, hence its success.

The use of 2.4m high fencing will deter any unauthorised access to the site therefore vastly reducing the risk of criminal damage, vandalism and arson attacks to the school.

It is recommended the fencing to the South East boundary is continued along the entire boundary adjacent to the public access road and terminating at the point of the existing concrete fence. Should the fencing stop short at any point along this boundary it may encourage trespassers to favour this route into the site which is in closer vicinity of neighbouring buildings.

The additional areas of fencing to the front elevation of the school aid to secure the school building and grounds out of hours but will also be seen as a deterrent during the school day.

Layout

There will be no change to the layout of the school site

Scale

The proposals are to increase the fencing height as outlined above.

Landscaping

Landscaping will not be affected or altered by these proposals

Access

Access to the premises will not be altered by these proposals however it will offer much more control in/out of the grounds.

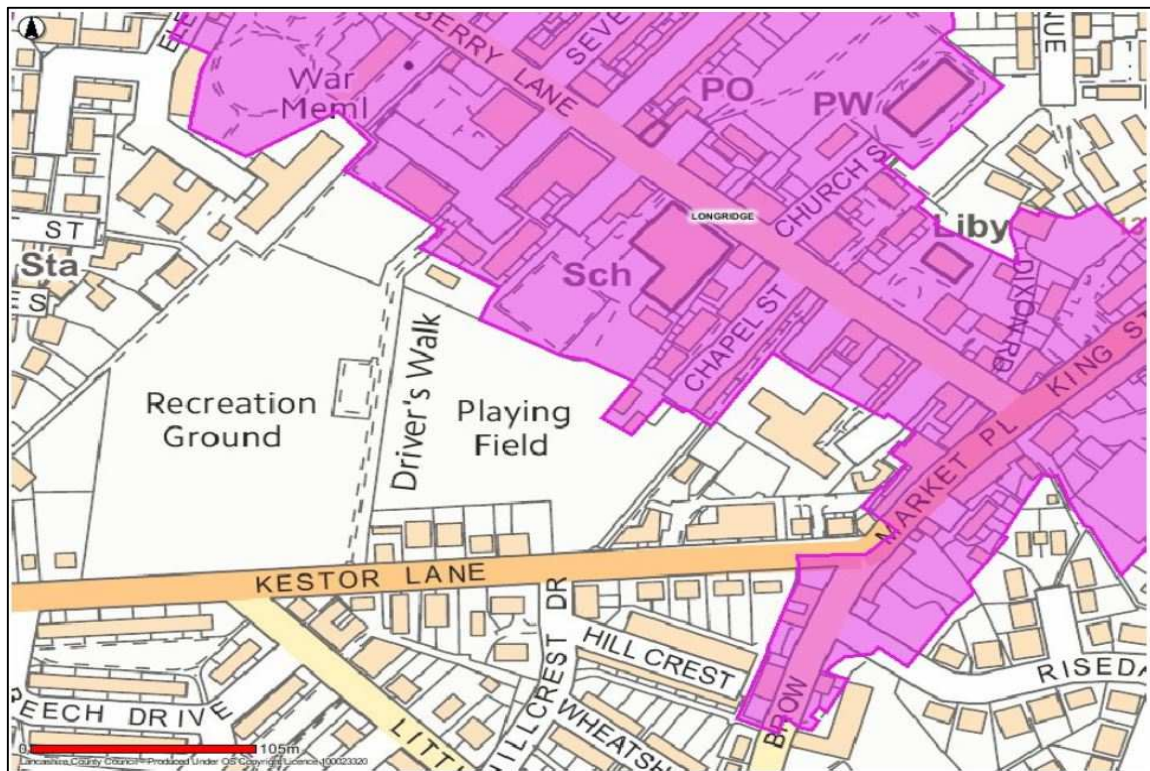


Figure 1: Longridge Conservation Area



Figure 2: Existing Perimeter Fence at the South East Boundary
(Fence Ref No.2 as per Drawing LPS/2017/001)



Figure 3: Existing Rear Fence at the Southern Boundary