

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2017/0975/L	Andrew Willmott	2 Holly Village	14/03/2017 15:45:17	OBJ	<p>My wife Alma and I wish to object to this application on the grounds that it does not preserve the character and appearance of Holly Village, a Grade II* listed enclave of twelve households. In fact, the application is arguably misleading as to the provenance of the current appearance, and the recent history surrounding the application.</p> <p>Firstly, I should disclose we are the immediate neighbours of #1, owning the right-hand side of the gatehouse building, at #2, and thus the right-hand side of the frontage (facing the entrance from Swain"s Lane). On behalf of the Holly Village Fences committee, we filed an application to repair our side of the frontage, maintaining its existing appearance as exactly as possible. (The reference number for this application is 2013/2365/L.) This was necessary because some of the posts had rotted to an extent that they were in obvious need of urgent repair. (Our initial understanding was that such a repair maintaining appearance did not need consent, but #1 persuaded Camden Council to require it through contacts there. Retrospectively this has at least had the advantage of documenting the process.) This repair was paid for by the freeholders association, although we ourselves contributed to relining some of the paving stones which had sunk back from the pavement.</p> <p>You can see a classic photo of the Holly Village frontage before the repair here:</p> <p>http://www.hampsteadheath.net/files/Holly-Village-entrance.jpg</p> <p>And these are a couple of photos from after the repair. We hope you can agree that the character was preserved as per the application.</p> <p>https://www.dropbox.com/s/lbtp2tad88c0ljs/HV%20Frontage%20Post%20Repair.png?dl=0 http://l7.alamy.com/zooms/df6181ce7f474d32a1c1f8283450178e/main-entrance-to-holly-village-in-highgate-london-built-in-1865-by-gdprdy.jpg</p> <p>I should explain the background to both applications further, as the relationship between Holly Village freeholders is key. Holly Village was built as a whole by Angela Burdett-Coutts in 1865, and tenanted. It was then bought by its tenants in the 1920s, and subdivided into twelve individual parcels of land. To preserve the character of the village, the original freeholders had the foresight to introduce the Holly Village Covenant, a document that binds all of us, which you can find here:</p> <p>https://www.dropbox.com/s/0bosyo68rqm6q1h/HollyVillageDeedofCovenant.rtf?dl=0</p> <p>The gist is that individual freeholders agree not to build fences or place other obstructions on the shared area of the village, and that the maintenance of the external hedges, and the internal paths and lawns, will be undertaken collectively by a committee formed of the freeholders, which meets twice a year. Without this, individual freeholders might bar others using the paths on their individual parcels of land, from using the entrances, and even subdivide the main lawns. (We at #2 for instance technically own the largest section of the main lawn.) It would also leave individual freeholders free to vary the appearance-as-a-whole of the village, prior to the listed buildings act at least.</p>

Application No: **Consultees Name:** **Consultees Addr:** **Received:**

Comment: **Response:**

Obviously the village frontage, and the gate area which many freeholders use to access the property, are a crucial part of this appearance. The left-hand-side frontage is technically the property of #1, as is the gate, but the covenant ensures (or is supposed to ensure!) that it is kept consistent with the existing appearance. The same goes for all other freeholders, some of whom have the rear drive entrances on their property, and most of whom have an associated boundary.

To this end, the freeholders all pay for the boundary maintenance; to keep the holly hedges trimmed to 2m yearly (and 1m out front), to replace the classic cross-hatched trellis sections as needed, and for larger projects as discussed and agreed on at the meetings. The frontage has been one of these projects for a long time, money was put aside for a project to repair it, and a subcommittee formed, and plans drawn up. There were many years of discussion before the decision was finally taken to separate the job into two parts, given ongoing prevarication from #1, and fears about the posts rotting beyond repair in the face of delays. (Which have since been borne out.)

Unfortunately, since 2013, not only have we been unable to agree details on going forth with repairs to the #1 side, they have allowed their frontage to deteriorate massively and quite shockingly. (Some pictures can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uicmjsx7r8vrcoci/AABWyzI00MtHd8uZnBLtEw1Sa?dl=0>.) The original fence posts have rotted further until they are now supposedly unrepairable, and a number have been summarily removed by #1. The hedge has been trimmed progressively lower, then slashed to almost nothing, then finally removed, and cheap green mesh has been used to maintain a rough boundary. (Rather than leaving maintenance to the hedge trimming the village pays for.) The interior garden has variously been left to run wild and then completely stripped bare, and the matching tree to #2 hacked at until it's of a quite different size, again, rather than leaving maintenance to the professional tree surgeons who maintain the major trees in the village. In the last month this has been cleaned up a bit by the application of yellowish gravel, although of a different size and grain to that used on the village paths.

Here is a photo taken by a tourist after the aforementioned deterioration from 2013: https://farm6.static.flickr.com/5679/30427549453_dc7947323d_b.jpg. (Note that at this point #1 had even ripped off the Chester Road street sign at the corner. We went for some months without this sign before it was replaced at the side of the building, as the fence which framed it had been removed at that point.)

This brings us up to today. #1 have decided to ignore the freeholders committee at this point, and submit their own separate planning application, without consultation. (I'm not sure what happens to the money put aside for the job now, we will find out at the next meeting.)

To the application itself: it ignores the existing appearance of Holly Village, and if granted would lead to a different frontage on the left and right. The only visual reference of the entire frontage it provides is a photograph from over a hundred years ago. (You can judge by the size of the now-fully-grown trees!) Our side (#2) is visually misrepresented as having no hedge or trellis sections, and the photo supplied of #1 is from after the previous fencing and hedge was run down. (We suspect deliberately.)

Application No: Consultees Name: Consultees Addr: Received:

Comment: Response:

Snide comments are made about the appearance on the #2 side (D&A statement p3), but you can see from the photographs referenced above that there was no substantial change in appearance, and it seems odd to suddenly be criticising the look of something you have apparently lived with for multiple decades. These panels after all are replicated around the entire village boundary. The rationale that all the houses have slight variations, and thus it doesn't matter if the frontage looks completely different on the two sides is unconvincing in the extreme.

Happily Holly Village for obvious reasons is a widely photographed site, so it is easy to find images establishing its look on Google:

<http://static.panoramio.com/photos/medium/108529494.jpg>

<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/darbishire/6.jpg> (#1's frontage fence and hedge before recent events)

<http://www.hampsteadheath.net/files/holly-village-2-highgate.jpg> (#2's frontage fence and hedge)

<http://c8.alamy.com/comp/BXHNRG/holly-village-victorian-gothic-cottages-highgate-camden-london-BXHNRG.jpg>

What should have happened in this situation is that both fence sides were repaired at the same time to the existing condition back in 2013 (or indeed well before!), and then any change in the hedge height, or addition of chains or other visual elements, should have been agreed on by Holly Village as a whole, and implemented across both sides. Instead this application completely omits to mention the freeholder-related history, misrepresents the repair on #2's side as a change in appearance, and misrepresents the rundown of #1's side from its previous matching appearance over the last four years as being how it has always been.

(We find the whole thing is quite deceitful. For instance, the claim "During that time the twelve freeholders have not repaired or replaced the fence that is the subject of this application for listed building consent, save for some temporary measures" is either delusional or a bald-faced lie, depending on how charitable you are. As above, the panels have been replaced over the years, and the only reason the posts haven't been in the last eight years is the obstructive behaviour of #1. Then, "From experience, the public often think that the footpath is an extension of the road, not recognizing that it's in private ownership." There was an oak post in the middle of the entrance path that was removed by #1 some years ago, and has not been returned despite frequent requests from the rest of the freeholders. This has led the entrance to seem like a mini drive, leading to people parking there(!), including #1 themselves, as seen here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/1ngcu7186pnrb8/IMG_0278.jpg?dl=0. It is very difficult to square the past behaviour with the professed concern. Especially considering #1 have also in the past bolted the gates open for a period, seemingly to annoy other freeholders by giving said public free access.)

In summary, we argue this application should be rejected. Moreover, we would like to see #1 required by the council to restore their frontage to how it looked in 2013 so that it once again matches #2, and then partake in the proper process, as per the Holly Village Covenant, for discussing and approving any visual changes to the frontage and the entrance path. We wonder why, given that we had to submit a

Application No: **Consultees Name:** **Consultees Addr:** **Received:** **Comment:** **Response:**

planning application to repair #2's fence to the *existing appearance*, it has been possible for #1 to drastically alter the appearance of their frontage, including hedge, trellis, and post removal, without filing a planning application. Surely this was illegal?

Kind regards,

Andrew Willmott and Alma Whitten
