

Shalsheles, 4 Middleton Road, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M8 5DS

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Proposal: Installation of 3m high Security Fencing around the entire perimeter of the site. New Security gates at vehicle entry point on Bennett Road and pedestrian entry point from Middleton Road.

October 2023



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Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access and Heritage statement is intended to support a planning application for the erection of new perimeter security fencing and security gates at Shalshelles Further Education College, 4 Middleton Road, Crumpsall, Manchester.

This document provides a detailed description of the existing development at this site and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Architectural Drawing Pack produced by Norton Mayfield Architects
- Arboriculture Report Tree Survey produced by ROAVR Group
- Heritage Statement produced by EA Town Planning Ltd

Introduction and Background

The site has been occupied as Shalshelles Further Education College since planning permission was granted for the conversion of the property from a Doctors Surgery (Class E(e)) into a non-residential

educational college (Class F1(a)) for teenage girls between the age of 16 and 18. Planning permission was granted on 27th September 2021 (Application Reference: 131022/FO/2021). Shalshelles Further Education College was established in 2016 and provides A levels, level 3 qualifications, and vocational courses for 50-60 students between the ages of 16 and 18.

Shalshelles Further Educational College is a Jewish School. Over recent years there has been a significant rise in the security risk faced by Jewish institutions. The pertinent security risk assessment is beyond the scope of this statement however further information about the current risk level is available here - <https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications>

As this school is a recognisably Jewish institution, there is an urgent need for increased security measures at this site in light of the recent tragic events in Israel and the ongoing war in Israel/Gaza.

The recent tragic events in Israel and the ongoing war have led to a rise in Antisemitic incidents and anti-Jewish hate crimes across Europe and the United Kingdom. These incidents have increased the urgency of installing these measures as soon as possible. In its current set up, the site is not secure and this is causing considerable anxiety for students and attendants at the school. The Governors and heads of the College are obligated to ensure that students and staff are kept safe.

This application follows a series of preapplication correspondence between EA Town Planning and Steve Mccoombe of Manchester City Council. The preapplication advice indicated that the proposal for new 3m high 358 weld mesh security fencing around the entire perimeter of the site would be acceptable in principle, however a full planning application would be required to assess the proposal formally.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site, formerly known as Roselands, occupies a corner plot close to the junction of Leicester Road, Cheetham Hill Road, Middleton Road and Bury Old Road. The site is located on a large plot of land at the corner of Middleton Road and Bennett Road within the Crumpsall Area Conservation Area. The site sits directly adjacent to the BT Exchange Building and offices to the south, with Bennett Road along its northern boundary and Middleton Road along its Western 'front' boundary.



Google aerial view picture showing location of application site along Middleton Road.

The application site is an irregular rectangular shape approximately 1712sqm in size and comprises two buildings of differing ages. The main building on site, built circa 1890's, is a three storey town house building of a traditional Victorian style common for the period. The property is not listed nor locally listed. The second smaller bungalow building is tucked away to the rear of the site is a smaller more

modern annexe building built circa 1980's. The main building is occupied as classrooms and offices. The annexe building is occupied as a school kitchen and dining room/mess room for the students.

The main building is located on the southwestern side of the site facing Middleton Road. The single storey building at the rear is located in the southeastern corner of the site and faces Bennett Road. The site is broadly level to the East with a gentle slope to the west towards Middleton Road.

The site features several mature trees, some of which have TPO status, thick foliage, greenery and planting along its northern and western site boundaries. There are a few major trees on the site but the vast amount of vegetation is mainly fruit or garden species of light growth. The existing trees, hedges and foliage almost completely shield the site from the street views along both Bennett Road and Middleton Road.

There are two access points to the site. A vehicular/pedestrian access point from Bennett Road and a pedestrian access point from Middleton Road. The vehicular access into the site opens to a concreted car parking area designated for parking and site deliveries.

In terms of its heritage value, whilst the existing buildings on site are neither listed or locally listed, the site lies within the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area, a recognised heritage asset. The Conservation area contains many large detached and semi-detached Victorian dwellings, reflecting the area's historical links to a once affluent domicile for business. The surrounding streets and properties are also bounded by a large number of tall and mature trees giving the area a green and leafy appearance and contributing strongly towards the character of the Conservation area. Also noticeable are a large amount of modern residential retirement homes interspersed amongst the original properties.

Middleton Road and Bennett Road comprise a mixture of both detached and semi – detached buildings with off-road parking provided within each individual site. The existing properties along both roads are of two- or three-storey dwellings with brick or rendered walls and tiled roofs.

Planning History

- (App Ref: 116157/FO/2017) Full Planning Application for the '*Change of use of 'Roselands' from Class D1 (non-residential institution) to Class C2 (residential care facility) with associated two storey rear extensions, and erection of two 2 storey detached properties (residential care, and ancillary offices use) following the demolition of the existing bungalow to the rear of the site.*' Application Approved. Decision Date: 16-November-2017. This permission was never implemented.

- (App Ref: 131022/FO/2021) Full Planning Application for the '*Change of use of former doctors' surgery Class E(e) to educational college Class F1(a) (Local Community and Learning).*' Approved. Decision Date: 27-September-2021.
- (App Ref: 137810/FO/2023) Full Planning Application for the '*Retrospective application for the retention of the existing portable building and associated air-conditioner units and security cabin. Temporary Permission of 3 years.*' Approved. Decision Date: 12-October-2023

Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England with a strong emphasis being on presumption in favour of sustainable development.

In Chapter 2, the NPPF identifies that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: Economic, Social and Environment objectives).

Paragraph 8 of the framework sets out the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development in the planning system, these include:

- 'Economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- Social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and **safe built environment**, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
- Environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

The proposal at this site falls under the Social Objective for achieving sustainable development. The installation of security fencing will contribute towards the safe built environment both now and in the future, providing safe and secure further education facilities to the local community.

Section 8 Paragraph 91 'Promoting healthy and safe communities' of NPPF (February, 2019) advises that: 'planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

Section 12 Paragraph 127 'Achieving Well Designed Places' of NPPF (February, 2019) advises that: 'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience'.

Evident from the sections quoted from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the emphasis and encouragement for Local Planning Authorities to prioritize the importance of ensuring safe and secure developments to promote the health and well being of all members of society. The implementation of the security fencing proposed for this location aligns directly with this objective.

In light of the recent events, the prime minister, Rishi Sunak, announced on the 12 of October 2023, that the government would provide the Community Service Trust (CST), a charity that helps to protect British Jews from antisemitism and related threats, with additional funding to "protect schools, synagogues and other Jewish community buildings".

The additional funding was granted in direct response to the increased antisemitic incidents and a surge in antisemitic sentiments following the terror attacks and the results war in Israel/Gaza. CST have said that they have recorded at least 89 antisemitic incidents across the UK from 7 to 11 October.

The prime minister said that the additional funding will offer more protection against antisemitism attacks "in the wake of Hamas' terrorist attacks in Israel". The Government recognises the increase threat to Jewish Establishments and Jewish communities across the United Kingdom and seeks to ensure their continued safety, security and right to practise their religion freely.

Principle of Development

The applicant is running an educational facility, providing a direct service to its students (and their parents) and a communal service to the wider community. As mentioned above, Shalshelles is a recognisably Jewish College and both the pupils and the premises are more vulnerable to hate crimes. This application seeks planning permission for new perimeter fencing to ensure the protection of the College, its staff members and its students.

While not wishing to sound alarmist, the management of the school and government are required to prioritise the security and safety of all members of society. Additional justification includes:

- **Rising Anti-Semitism:** Anti-Semitic incidents have been on the rise globally and this has become more prevalent since the recent terror attack in Israel on the 7th of October. Jewish communities frequently face acts of vandalism, harassment, and violence. The tragic events in Israel have contributed to a surge in anti-Semitic sentiments, making security measures more important than ever.
- **Protection of Vulnerable Targets:** Synagogues and schools are often soft targets due to their open and welcoming nature. This vulnerability necessitates increased security to safeguard congregants and students from potential harm.
- **Historical Precedents:** History has shown that Jewish institutions are susceptible to attacks.
- **Duty to Protect:** Governments, communities, and institutions have a moral obligation to protect their citizens and members. Enhancing security measures is a way to fulfil this responsibility.
- **Deterrence:** Visible security measures can serve as a deterrent to potential attackers. Knowing that a location is well-protected may dissuade individuals from targeting it.
- **Community Well-being:** Feeling safe within their places of worship and education is vital for the well-being of the Jewish community. Strengthened security measures can help alleviate anxiety and fear.
- **The international community** has recognized the importance of protecting religious freedom and ensuring the safety of religious minorities. Increased security at Jewish institutions aligns with these commitments.

In light of these considerations, the college and its governors are seeking to protect and ensure the safety and security of the staff and pupils attending the college. The college is seeking planning

permission for new security fencing around the full perimeter of the site creating a secure enclosed space around the premises.

Proposal Description

The proposal is for the installation of new security fencing and security gates across the entire perimeter of the site:

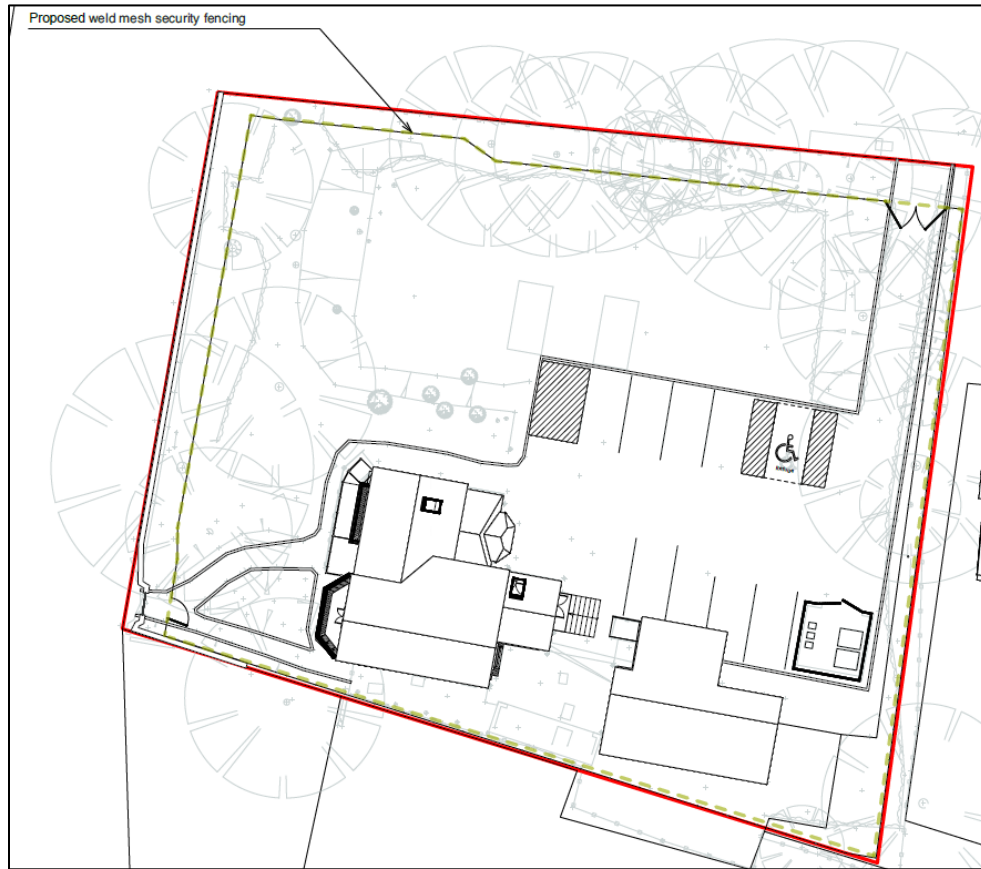
- Northern site boundary (Bennett Road frontage) - Security fencing along site boundary and security gate at vehicle access point
- Southern site boundary (In between the college premises and the BT Exchange Building) – Security fencing along the site boundary.
- Western site boundary (Middleton Road frontage) – Security fencing along site boundary and security gate at pedestrian access point
- Eastern site boundary (in between the neighbouring residential flats at no.2 Bennett Road and the college) – Security fencing along the site boundary.

These are discussed in more detail below.

Northern Site Boundary - Bennett Road frontage

It is proposed to install 3m high security fencing along the entire North Elevation of the site, fronting Bennett Road. The fencing will be installed behind the existing row of trees and vegetation located to the rear of the concrete panel fencing fronting onto Bennett Road. The proposed fencing will be stepped back 2.4m (almost 8 feet) from the site boundary at its furthest point along the boundary and 1.3m (4.3 feet) at its closest point to the Bennett Road Boundary. Please see the Proposed Block Plan below which shows the exact position of the proposed security fencing in green and security gates in black. The proposed fencing will be positioned to the rear of the TPO trees located on the Northern boundary of

the site. The fence posts will avoid the root protection areas of the existing trees and will be strategically placed along this boundary to achieve this goal.



Site Plan showing location of proposed security fencing around the perimeter of the site



Existing concrete fencing along Bennett Road frontage

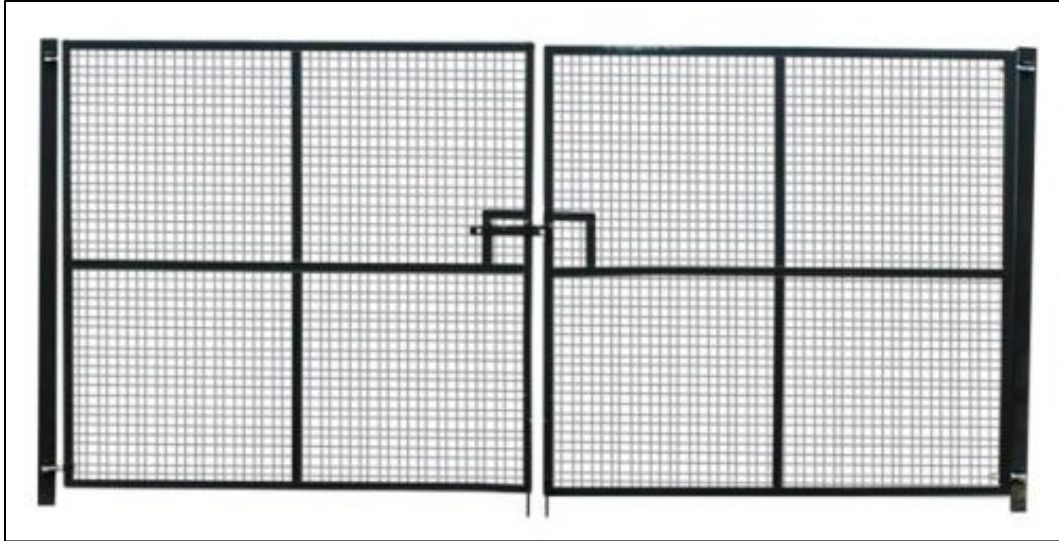
New Security Gate at Bennett Road Entrance

A 2.4m high security gate will be installed at the existing vehicular entrance to the site. Access through this security gate will be controlled by the security guard stationed at this entrance during school hours. The gates will be locked at all other times.

The new security fencing will be stepped back by 2.4m (approximately 8 feet) from the site boundary as shown on the attached site plan. Aside from reducing the visual impact of the security gates on the surrounding street scene and the wider conservation area, the set back will also allow for a car to drive into the site from Bennett Road up the gates and be questioned by the security guard before entering the site fully.



Existing Vehicular Entrance to the Site



Example of 358 wire mesh security gates to be installed at the Bennett Road Entrance

Southern Site Boundary (In between the college premises and the BT Exchange Building)

In addition, it is proposed to install 3m high security fencing along the entire western perimeter of the site in between the BT Exchange building and the college premises. The neighbouring BT Exchange building is set back a fair distance from Middleton road, and as a result, a large section of the southern elevation is directly exposed to Middleton Road. The proposed security fencing will secure this area creating a full enclosed perimeter around the edge of the site. Please see the proposed block plan above and the proposed south elevation drawing below which shows the position of the proposed fence.



Proposed southern site elevation

Western Site Boundary (Middleton Road frontage)

The proposal includes the installation of 3m high security fencing along the full length of the Western Elevation Middleton Road boundary of the site. The proposed fencing will be set back from the site

boundary by 2.17m (approximately 7 feet). The fencing will be positioned to the rear of the existing trees and vegetation along this frontage effectively partially screening the fencing from the street view.



Google Street view image of the Middleton Road frontage



Proposed Western (front) Middleton Road Elevation

New Security Gate at Middleton Road Entrance Point

A 2.4m high security gate will be installed at the existing pedestrian entrance to the site. The gate will be fitted with a combination lock, allowing for exclusive access of pupils and staff members into the site. In order to maintain a uniform perimeter height of 3m across the entire boundary, an additional panel will be installed above the proposed security gate. This will also prevent intruders from using the pillars and

rocks on either side of the entrance to scale the fence and climb over the gate. See excerpt from proposed western elevation below from Middleton Road which depicts this elevation in visual detail.



Existing Pedestrian Entrance to the site



Excerpt of proposed western elevation plan from Middleton Road showing the new security gate to the rear of the existing gate at the Middleton Road pedestrian entrance.

Please refer to the proposed block plan above and the proposed West Elevation plan below which shows the exact location of the security fence and gate.

Eastern site boundary (in between the neighbouring residential flats at no.2 Bennett Road and the college)

The proposal includes the installation of 3m high security fencing along the full length of the Eastern site boundary located in between the site at no.2 Bennett Road and the college premises. The proposed fencing will be installed directly adjacent to the existing boundary fencing separating the two sites. The fencing will be mostly obscured from view by the existing trees and foliage along the Eastern site boundary. The line of fencing along this boundary, on the Bennet Road side, will only commence at 2.4m from the sites northern boundary, in line with the proposed security gate and fencing along the Bennett Road frontage. The proposed fencing along this boundary should be relative inconspicuous given its set back from the street side and its proximity to the adjacent trees and foliage. It is not anticipated that this will have any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Proposed Fencing

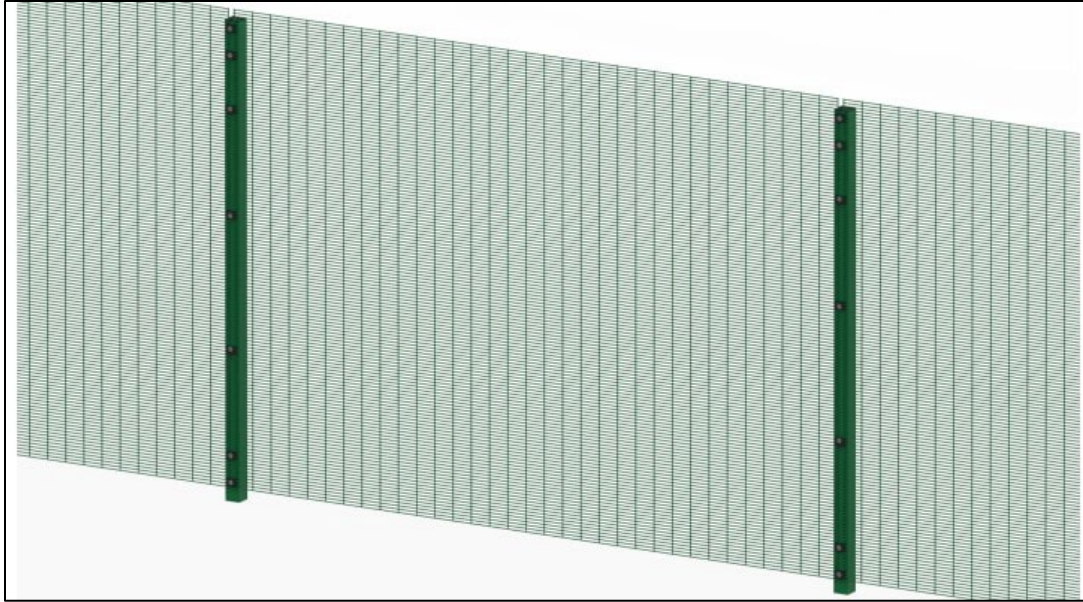
The proposed fencing will be 3m high 358 green mesh galvanised steel fencing.

Product Description

358 mesh fencing is a type of high-security fence made from welded steel wire mesh with small openings, typically measuring 76.2 mm x 12.7 mm. The name "358" refers to the specific measurements of the mesh: 3 inches by 0.5 inches by 8 gauge wire diameter, which makes it extremely difficult to cut or climb.

This type of fencing is commonly used in security sensitive areas such as military bases, airports and religious institutions where perimeter security is critical. It provides a high level of protection against intrusion, vandalism, and theft, while also allowing for good visibility and air circulation.

The fencing is also conveniently customizable and can be designed to fit specific site requirements and aesthetic preferences.



Example picture of proposed 358 Weld Mesh security fencing.

Character Impact Assessment

Whilst it is noted that the proposed security fencing will be visible from the street scene and may not blend in naturally with the character of the Conservation Area, Shalshelles is a Jewish educational institution and the installation of this fencing is thus essential to protect, secure and maintain a safe environment for its staff and pupils. The security fencing is essential to prevent unauthorized access and any potential security threats. The NPPF places a particular emphasis on the protection and security of religious institutions and educational facilities such as this college. This has been further emphasised by the Prime Ministers grant of additional funding to the Community Security Trust to bolster the security of Jewish places of worship, schools and educational facilities in response to recent events and the surge of antisemitic incidents over recent days.

As per the NPPF directives, the potential harm on the surrounding conservation area (a designated heritage asset) needs to be weighed against the public benefits resulting from the proposal which in this case would be safety and security of the staff and pupils attending the college.

The Home Office similarly recognises the threats faced by Jewish and religious colleges and institutions and takes the safety of Jewish schools, colleges and other institutions very seriously. In March of this year £15 million in funding was committed to ensuring the safety and security of Jewish schools, colleges and synagogues across the country. This funding was intended to enable institutions protect themselves, including by way of erecting security fencing around the perimeter of their sites at Jewish

communal premises throughout Britain. The government grant specifies that Jewish schools are the priority recipients for this funding. The need for the security fencing is obvious and should outweigh any perceived harm on the Bennett Road Street scene and the wider Conservation Area.

The preapplication advice recommended the installation of ornate metal railing fencing along the site boundaries however this option would prove to be cost prohibitive for the college. Moreover, the CST funding limits the type of fencing which can be installed using the grant funding to the 358 weld mesh fencing which has been approved by CST as adequate and appropriate security fencing for the purposes of securing a site.

The Preapplication advice received from Manchester City Council indicated that if the proposed 358 weld mesh fencing would be sufficiently set back from the site boundaries, in principle this would be sufficient to mitigate its impact on the surrounding conservation area. Moreover, it should be noted that the site benefits from a number of mature trees, dense foliage and hedges on all of its boundaries and the Middleton Road and Bennett Road boundaries in particular. It is anticipated that together with the proposed set back, the existing trees, hedges and dense foliage will assist to screen the proposed fencing from view. The applicant has agreed to add additional defensible planting in front of the proposed fencing to further camouflage the fences from view should this be deemed necessary.

See the attached photo montage of the existing elevations along Middleton Road and Bennett Road which shows the dense foliage surrounding the site's boundaries. Please further see the proposed street elevation plans, which depicts the visibility of the proposed fencing behind the existing trees and hedges surrounding the site.

Heritage Statement

The college seeks planning permission for the installation of security fencing to enclose and secure the site without resulting in any undue impact on the appearance of the site and the surrounding street scenes and also without detracting from character, features, and significance of the Conservation Area.

The appearance of the existing buildings on site and the features which contribute towards the significance of the conservation area i.e. the existing mature trees, hedges and foliage, will remain entirely unchanged by the proposal. The proposal does not include any alterations to the existing buildings, the site layout or the existing trees and foliage on site. The landscape merit and heritage value of the existing site will be entirely retained and preserved by the proposal and the new security

fencing around the perimeter of the site will have a limited impact on the appearance of the site as a whole.

At 3m in height, the proposed fencing will be prominent however the given the security benefits provided by the increased height, the increased height is justified. In terms of its architectural form and appearance, its purposed and very essence as security fencing does not lend itself to contribute positively towards the character and appearance of a Conservation area and it is not anticipated that the proposed fencing will blend in naturally with the architectural features and character of the existing buildings on site and the wider Conservation area. The site does however benefit from dense foliage and mature trees around all of its boundaries which to a large extent will obscure the proposed fencing. Moreover, the proposed fencing will be stepped back a fair distance from the site boundaries and together with the dense foliage and mature trees around the perimeter of the site, it is anticipated that this will limit the visual impact of the fencing on the character and appearance of the surrounding street scenes and the wider Conservation Area.

The proposed fencing will not detract from any significant views within the Conservation Area.

The proposed fencing will be most noticeable along the front (western) site boundary fronting on to Middleton Road and the side (northern) site boundary fronting onto Bennett Road, however even within these locations, the fencing will be partly screened by the existing mature trees, hedges and foliage along the sites boundaries. The existing low height brick wall fronting onto Middleton Road, located directly adjacent to the public foot path along Middleton Road, a key feature of the site, will be entirely retained. In addition, although unsightly, the existing concrete panel fencing fronting onto Bennett Road will be retained as existing. The existing fencing will additionally screen the proposed security fencing from the street view.

In addition, the proposed fencing will be set back a fair distance (approximately 8 feet) from the site boundaries around the primary frontages facing Middleton Road and Bennett Road. The fencing will also be partially screened from view by the existing mature trees, dense foliage and vegetation already present on site. It is anticipated that this will help to ensure that the new fencing will have a minimal and less than significant impact on the character, appearance and significance of the Conservation area. Any perceived impact will be significantly outweighed by the public benefits afforded by the proposed fencing.

Based on our assessment, we conclude that although the proposed fencing will not contribute positively towards the character or appearance of the Conservation area, the existing features on site which contribute towards the significance and appearance of the Conservation Area will be entirely retained by the proposal and the proposal will not detract from the Conservation Area or have any negative impact on the surrounding Conservation Area.

In heritage terms, given the absence of any positive contribution or enhancements to the surrounding conservation area, it is considered that the proposal will have a nominal impact on the Conservation Area however given the mitigation measures proposed which include setting back the fencing line from the site boundary and the existing site features in the form of mature trees, hedges and dense foliage, the proposed fencing should be acceptable.

Following careful evaluation of the impact of the proposed 3m high security fencing on the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area, we acknowledge that the proposed fencing may have a minimal effect on the Conservation area, falling under the category of less than substantial harm. However, this must be weighed against the public benefits offered by the development in terms of ensuring the protection, safety and security of the staff and pupils attending the site, in a volatile global climate which has seen increased incidents of antisemitic and anti-jewish hate crimes.

On the basis of the above, it is concluded that the proposal for new security fencing around the perimeter of the site will not detract from the character, appearance or historical significance of the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area in any significant way and any perceived non-significant impact has been sufficiently justified.

Arboricultural Impact Assessment

Please find attached an Arboriculture Impact Assessment produced by ROAVR Group. The report identifies the potential impact of the proposed security fencing on the existing TPO's and their root protection areas and suggests appropriate measures to avoid any harm to the TPO's.

The appointed fencing contractors have clarified that all fence posts will be installed away from any tree roots and any reduction to the hedges and vegetation surrounding the site to facilitate the installation of the fencing will be kept to a minimum.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this application seeks planning permission for 3m high 358 green weld mesh security fencing around the entire perimeter of the site known as 4 Middleton Road Crumpsall. The college is located within the Crumpsall Lane Conservation Area, and the northern and western site boundaries are prominent frontages within the area. The site benefits from dense foliage and mature trees around all of its boundaries within the site curtilage which to a large extent shield the site from the street view.

The site is occupied by Shalshelles College, a Jewish Higher Educational College, which in the current global climate has an acutely heightened need for increased security to the site. Following recent tragic events in Israel on the 7th of October and the resultant war in Israel/Gaza, there has been a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents globally, with increased instances of vandalism, harassment, and violence to Jewish communities and premises. Adequate and appropriate security measures at all Jewish institutions and educational centres is thus essential.

In light of recent events, the college is seeking to protect and ensure the safety and security of the staff and its pupils. The college is seeking planning permission for new security fencing around the full perimeter of the site creating a secure enclosed security boundary around the premises.

Whilst the proposed fencing would not contribute positively towards the character of Conservation Area, relevant assessments have conclusively shown that the proposed fencing will have a non-significant impact on the existing Trees and the surrounding natural and built environment. Moreover, the new fencing will be discreetly positioned to the rear of the existing trees along the sites boundaries and will be partly concealed by dense foliage and trees, with minimal visual impact on the site's surroundings.

In conclusion, the installation of the proposed security fencing will enable the college to continue its provision of educational services in a safe and secure environment. The proposed fencing will have a minimal adverse impact on the surrounding area and the wider conservation area. The principle of development aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) objective to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being for all members of society.

We trust that you will find this proposal acceptable and grant approval for this as submitted. Should you require any information, please do not hesitate to contact me at info@eatownplanning.co.uk or 0330 221 0449.