

Further to the recent hearings in which there were questions raised regarding the methodology used to assess the visual amenity and how the significance was assessed; the applicant stated:

Professional judgment is applied to ensure that the potential for significant effects arising has been thoroughly considered.

I wish to dispute this statement.

Having had the opportunity to speak to a representative of the applicant this week, I raised the issue of [REDACTED] (Gr46) identified as one of the most impacted properties.

I questioned the following statement in document EN010162/APP/6.4.7.6d, Residential Visual Amenity Assessment page 11:

"Once the proposed hedge along the edge of the panel area to the west matures (7-10 years), effects would reduce to Negligible."

The boundary hedge is already a very mature hedge; already being fully established in 2007 when the property was purchased. I therefore questioned whether there was a further hedge proposed beyond the existing hedge which would require time to mature, but it was suggested not. I then asked whether, by 'mature' the statement actually meant 'left to get taller', to which the response was 'yes probably'.

If this hedge is allowed to grow and screen some of the visual impact it will have an even more significant impact on the property.

This property was built in an area of land much lower than the adjacent field - over 1 metre difference in places. Under present conditions the hedge is cut bi-annually by the land owner/maintainer to a level approximately 3 metres above ground level on the property side of the hedge; though much lower on the field side, being nearer to 1.5 metres high. In the period between cuts when new growth quickly reaches 4+ metres high from the property side, it is extremely difficult to keep the overhanging branches cut back in order to prevent damage to vehicles using the shared access driveway, such as a motorhome entering and exiting the property.

Although a taller hedge may screen the view of the nearest panels, it would greatly increase the burden of overhanging hedgerow, thus significantly impacting daily access to the property. Impact would not therefore be reduced to negligible as stated it would simply be changed to a different type of impact. Domestic hedge cutters are not designed to withstand work on such mature hedging and do not have the reach to work at such height. I do not therefore believe any professional judgement was applied to assess the impact of this mitigation measure at this property.

It is thus requested that this hedge be excluded from any visibility mitigation.