

Date: 4th November 2021

FAO: Public Enquiry

From: Mr. C. Scorer – Owner of Fenwick Close

Re: Objection to current planning application

I am writing to register my desire to attend and give evidence at the public enquiry in respect of the above proposed development.

The documents I will seek to rely on in giving this evidence will include the following:

1. A statement of rental incomes for the property as a holiday let. (Available on request)
2. A rental valuation statement for the property. (<https://www.pattinson.co.uk/property/particulars/384131>)
3. A statement from the local police as to the extent of car crime in the local multi-story car park – a likely alternative that may be offered to us in lieu of current parking provision. (Not available as yet – FOI request pending)
4. A valuation of the property for sale rather than rental. (<https://strike.co.uk/property-for-sale/187031>)
5. A surveyor's report that is not funded by the applicant for the development. This is specifically aimed at establishing the potential long-term damage to the fabric of the building and the possible costs arising. **This will require funding and as yet is prohibitively expensive for us as owners. This is a cornerstone issue in our ability to raise objections.** (<https://www.checktrade.com/blog/cost-guides/structural-engineer-costs/>)
6. A noise impact assessment of both the works and the long-term issues associated with the increased rail traffic. It is important to note that this needs to be funded by and carried out by an independent party – not a surveyor funded by the development applicant. **This will require funding and as yet is prohibitively expensive for us as owners. This is a cornerstone issue in our ability to raise objections. They are charged at £60/hour and it is difficult to know how many hours and what additional might be involved with this. Preliminary phone calls with 2 BS7445 compliant firms suggests a minimum of 20 hours or more plus other charges.** (<https://environmentallysound.co.uk/noise-consultants/environmental-noise-impact-assessment>)

6th July 2010

Northumberland County Council

northumberlandLine@land-referencing.co.uk

russell.mills@slcproperty.co.uk

nltwao@northumberland.gov.uk

transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Fenwick Close, – Objection re Development of Northumberland Park

I am writing in relation to the planning application and proposed development of Northumberland Park Metro station and the impact on the above address, of which I am the owner.

I wish to put on record the issues arising out of this proposal and the devastating financial impact this will have on the property and my family finances.

Initially, the correspondence was all marked as registered post. However, it was not signed for and the items were randomly posted in letter boxes and also dumped on the estate and in the property bin stores. This reduced the time and opportunity owners have had to read and digest the plans. This happened with all correspondence and it was not an isolated incident. Further, I have subsequently received boxed up copies of the planning application and accompanying legal documents. This amounts to 13 spiral bound booklets and 2 full lever-arch files. This is full of complex legal material that is difficult to digest for the lay person and impossible to fight without proper legal representation. This is a costly battle to take on financially and a time consuming one for someone who works and has a young family. The pressure and damage this process alone is creating is worthy of compensation in itself.

Secondly, the carpark is private land is an integral part of the viability of the property as either a rental property or a holiday-let. The absence of this space or vehicular access creates multiple issues that render the property largely unrentable for the period of the works. The current rental value on the property is around £800-£1400 per month as a holiday let or £650 per month as a tenanted property. The proposal for occupiers to use the multi-story will have a material impact on insurance premiums and will expose cars to greater risk of vandalism, damage or theft.

Thirdly, the process of the work itself removes the worth of the property as a quiet and comfortable let, this makes renting the property out difficult and/or impossible and it leaves us with reputational difficulties if the property is not seen to have been recently rented. Specifically, the works themselves will cause disruption, but the planned development will also add noise and disturbance once completed. Specifically, the additional heavy trains running close to the property will add noise and likely vibration. This is exacerbated by the removal of trees and natural sound proofing. The heavier trains travelling so close to the property will be loud and can be felt. This will be uncomfortable, but does also beg long-term engineering questions as to the impact of the structural integrity of the property in the long-term. A full engineering report will be too costly for pensioners and private citizens to fund. The new station will increase the number of people in close proximity to the property at either end of the day and this will increase noise levels, likely anti-social behaviour and potential vandalism.

Finally, the impact on wildlife and the green environment of the property will be damaged. This in itself is a problem, but it further impacts the value of the property.

This response has been drafted in haste due to the dishonest manner of notification by Northumberland County Council and other issues may well come to light as discussions progress. In summary, the value of the property was recently put at £110,000 before this planning process became public. Even conservatively, if we assume a fall of 20-25% for the actual property value and then a monthly figure of £1200 for the rental value while work is underway, (assuming a 12 month period for now – but duration needs to be clarified), then there is a prima facie net loss to me as owner of £35,400 - £40,650. Add in legal advice and stress, anxiety and time and we are approaching £50,000 plus. This is a preliminary estimate based on only an initial and incomplete assessment of the loss, if funding were available we could quantify things more accurately. But the owners and occupiers are in no position to shoulder the burden of this kind of legal battle and as such, preliminary funds should be made available to allow us to seek independent advice. Further, time should be granted for the same, something not provided through the initial stages of this process.

If we were able to obtain some compensation from NCC that would allow us as owners to commission the various reports, we might be able to satisfy ourselves that the reports are genuinely independent. This would be a good starting point. From there we would be better able to quantify the loss arising from the works and during the works. I also note, as an experienced researcher, there is always an element of confirmation bias in any research, but that is usually more significant when there is a paying client commissioning the service. Such reports represent a clear conflict of interest in the legal process because of the paid nature of the commission and indeed the scale and likelihood of future contracts not being awarded if advice received is not as the commissioner of the reports wishes. This is not to defame either party, but it is a reality – the reports commissioned by NCC or their agents cannot be independent given their vested interests in delivering on this project.

It is important to recognise that I am not a commercial landlord with a legal team behind me and resources allocated for such contingencies as an occupational risk. I am an individual who has sought to maintain an asset to help support myself and my family now and as I head towards retirement. I am a teacher and my income is not enough to pick up a legal fight with NCC without putting my home and the well-being of my young family at risk. Further, the time required to simply read these documents and make sense of them is significant. The relative position of the parties in dispute makes it very difficult, very stressful and very damaging for individuals like myself to cope with the process, even before we get to the works and the final outcomes. The speed of this process and the failure to deliver papers appropriately has added to that challenge and stress.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Scorer BA Law, PGCE, CELTA, MA (Durham)