

Parish:	Middleton	
Proposal:	Retrospective construction of timber boundary fence 2.770m high.	
Location:	Tower Farm Station Road Tower End Middleton King's Lynn Norfolk PE32 1EE	
Applicant:	Mr & Mrs T. Barclay	
Case No:	25/01728/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Tom Ellis-Daish	Date for Determination: 15 December 2025 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 9 January 2026

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Application made by Councillor Barclay.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

Retrospective planning permission is sought for a timber boundary fence, erected above an existing brick and carstone boundary wall. 0.90m over the height of the existing wall, bringing the total height to 2.77m at the highest point (some variation exists due to sloping land levels). Timber mountings are present on the rear of the wall and are affixed to the wall itself. The site is located along Station Road, Middleton, at Tower Farm. Tower farm itself is approx. 750m Northeast from the development boundary for Middleton and is considered to be within the countryside.

The boundary wall was originally permitted under application 16/00906/F at a height of 1.35m, then modified under application 17/0104/F to a height of 2.08m.

Key Issues

Principle of development.
Impact upon the setting of Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the area.
Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of the application.

Recommendation:

REFUSE

THE APPLICATION

Retrospective permission is sought for the construction of a timber boundary fence affixed to an existing carstone and brick wall. The fence itself protrudes over the height of the existing wall by 0.90m, bringing the total height to 2.77m, and is comprised of unpainted horizontal timber boarding. The fence measures 40m in width.

The site is located along Station Road, Middleton, at Tower Farm. Tower farm itself is approx. 750m Northeast from the development boundary for Middleton and is considered to be within the countryside. This section of Station Road is largely verdant, with a small number of buildings adjacent to the highway. Opposite the site is a smaller boundary wall and a picket fence. To the north one of the entranceways to Middleton Castle can be seen, which is of brick construction.

SUPPORTING CASE

No supporting case has been received at the time of writing this report.

PLANNING HISTORY

Tower Farm has been the subject of a number of planning applications in the past. The most relevant recent history is:

25/01596/LB: Consent Not Required: 30/09/25 - Retrospective Listed Building consent for installation of 2.770m timber fencing.

24/00866/F and 24/00914/LB: Application Permitted: 01/07/24 - Relocation and Reinstatement of Vehicular Highways Access and Alterations to Boundary Wall.

17/01014/F and 17/01015/LB: Application Permitted: 19/07/17 - Formation of Drive access and wall feature to the front elevation to match the existing arrangements. Revised Design to application ref: 16/00906/F and 16/00907/LB

16/00906/F and 16/00907/LB: Application Permitted: 12/10/16 - New drive accesses to be formed and wall feature to the principal elevation to match the existing arrangements

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: NO OBJECTIONS.

Conservation Officer: OBJECTS.

The wall which is the subject of this application does not meet the tests for curtilage listing as it was constructed after 1948. There is no wall present in 2009 google imagery, but is a wall present in 2021. Therefore, there is little historic interest in the wall.

The site falls within the setting of a listed building and therefore any works to the wall should be considered in this context;

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A wall here is appropriate given the farm building typology and use, however a close panel boarded fence is an inappropriate addition as it would be incongruous in the setting of traditional buildings and construction method;

The height of the fence and its position on top of the traditionally constructed wall adds to the prominence of the material and makes it more visible within the streetscene;

Understands the applicant's need for privacy and suggests raising the existing wall in Carstone and brick and removing the fence;

The fence would not respect the significance of the Listed Building and would represent a harmful addition to the building's setting,
Therefore, consider that "less than substantial harm" should be weighted in the planning balance;

Would be happy to work with the applicant to resolve issues if necessary.

REPRESENTATIONS No third-party letters of representation have been received at the time of writing this report.

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040

LP06 - Climate Change (Strategic Policy)

LP18 - Design & Sustainable Development (Strategic Policy)

LP20 - Environmental Assets- Historic Environment (Strategic Policy)

LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity (Strategic Policy)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Design Guide 2021

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

Principle of Development.

Impact upon the setting of Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the area.
Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of this application.

Principle of Development:

The site is located outside of the development boundary for Middleton and is therefore considered to be within the countryside.

Tower Farmhouse, as well as the Cattle Shelter and a barn to the north of Tower Farmhouse and The Cottage to the northwest are Grade II Listed Buildings. To the north of the site is Middleton Castle which is a Grade I Listed Building and Scheduled Monument.

Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) reiterates the requirements of planning law which is that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this instance, the Development Plan comprises the Local Plan (2021-2040).

The principle of a boundary treatment in this location is acceptable, subject to compliance with relevant plan policies and guidance.

Form, Character and Impact Upon Listed Buildings:

Policy LP20 of the Local Plan states that the Historic Environment will be conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to its significance and that development which is of the highest quality design that will sustain and, where appropriate, enhance the special interest, character and significance of heritage assets and their settings will be supported. LP20 further states that protecting historic assets which contribute to the character and identity of the Borough is a priority. Policies LP18 and LP21 further re-enforce the requirements to conserve the historic environment, in addition to protecting the general visual amenity of the area.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that any level of harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 215 further states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal.

This section of Station Road is largely verdant, with a small number of buildings adjacent to the highway. Opposite the site is a smaller boundary wall (of a traditional appearance) and a picket fence. To the north one of the entranceways to Middleton Castle can be seen, which is of brick construction.

The application site comprises what appears to have been a row of cottages, at two storey height, perpendicular to the highway and barn/stable buildings of carstone and red brick construction. The existing approved wall to the front (west) of the site is also of carstone and brick construction, at a height of 1.85m. Horizontal timber boarding has been added to this wall, affixed at the rear by supporting posts, raising the overall height of the wall to 2.77m high.

The height of the wall and fence combined results in an intrusive feature in the countryside, being at odds with the limited height of built boundary treatments in the area.

The impact of the height of the proposal is further exacerbated by the use of timber boarding, appearing as a vertical extension to the existing wall and eroding the wall's traditional design and unsettling its appearance, both in the streetscene and in relation to the Listed Building, causing harm categorised as "less than substantial".

In this instance, it is not apparent that the proposal would bring any public benefit against which the harm to the Listed Building would otherwise be balanced in accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

The impact of the proposal on Middleton Castle is negligible due to the orientation of the proposal in relation to the castle and the distance between them.

The proposal's harm to the streetscene and Listed Buildings is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan and Paragraphs 187, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

Any other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of this application:

The proposal would not pose adverse impacts on neighbour amenity, in accordance with the requirements of Policy LP21.

Whilst not formally consulted, the Highway Officer has confirmed that due to the height wall as approved, and the distance of the wall from the highway, the additional height of the fencing does not pose a highway safety concern.

In the absence of an acceptable scheme for returning the wall to its previous height or an application for an acceptable alternative, enforcement action may be instigated to secure the fencing's removal within an appropriate timescale.

CONCLUSION:

The development, located within a sensitive countryside location and in close proximity to Listed Buildings, is of an unacceptable scale and design. This causes harm to the setting of Listed Buildings and the character of the streetscene, principally by virtue of its height and use of closed board timber, contrasting with the traditional materials of the wall and the boundary treatment of other sites in the vicinity.

The development is therefore contrary to Policies LP18, LP20, LP21 of the Local Plan as well as Paragraphs 187, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

It is therefore recommended that this application be refused for the following reason:

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE for the following reason(s):

- 1 The fence, by reason of its height, siting and appearance, has a harmful impact upon the setting of a Listed Building and represents an incongruous and intrusive form of development. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies LP18, LP20 and LP21 of the Local Plan and Paragraphs 187, 213 and 215 of the NPPF.

