



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2026

by **P Hatch BA (Hons) Ad. Dip MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Z4310/W/25/3377120

Land adjacent to 1 & 14 Hawthorns Grove, Sandfield Park, Liverpool, L12 1NE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Hawthorns Grove Gate Company Limited against the decision of Liverpool City Council.
 - The application Ref is 25F/1729.
 - The development proposed is to erect a 1.6-1.8m high automated steel gates across Hawthorns Grove entrance and associated cabinet for electrical supply.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of 1.6 – 1.8m high automated steel gates across Hawthorns Grove entrance and associated cabinet for electrical supply on land adjacent to 1 & 14 Hawthorns Grove, Sandfield Park, Liverpool, L12 1NE in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 25F/1729 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans dated June 2025: HG-PA-05 Proposed site plan; HG-PA-06 Proposed elevations; and HG-PA-07 Proposed elevations.
 - 3) The proposed gates and posts shall be painted black and the proposed cabinet shall be painted green to match surroundings.
 - 4) No development shall commence until details of access arrangements for emergency vehicles has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Details should include how the gates will be operated in the event of an emergency and how they will be maintained in accordance with the approved details. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained in accordance with these details for the lifetime of the development.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address provided as part of the planning application form refers to the appeal site as 'Street Record, Hawthorns Grove, Liverpool, L12 1NE'. However, I do not consider this to be a factually accurate description of the appeal's location. Consequently, in this decision I refer to the appeal site as 'Land adjacent to 1 & 14 Hawthorns Grove, Sandfield Park, Liverpool, L12 1NE' which I believe to be a more accurate description.

3. I noted the appellant stated that car parking in connection to the nearby school is at its most prevalent at peak drop off and pick up times. I therefore aligned my site visit to the morning drop off time to observe the potential impacts on residential amenity.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
- the effect of the proposed development on the achievement of healthy and safe communities, particularly in regard to social cohesion, safety and inclusivity.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site is part of a private cul-de-sac containing a number of detached residential properties. Hawthorns Grove is open in nature with front gardens which are free of any formal boundary treatment and include off-street car parking. Access to the cul-de-sac is taken from North Drive at the junction of which is a series of bollards that seek to delineate between the public highway and the adjoining footpath.
6. During my site visit, I observed a heavy sense of enclosure within the surrounding street scene. St Edwards College, which is adjacent to North Drive is enclosed by stone walling, palisade fencing and is well screened by mature trees. I also observed a number of properties on North Drive which have highly prominent fencing to their frontages and large gates to their driveways. These features all lead to a distinct lack of openness when assessing the character of the area.
7. The railing design of the proposed gates allows for clear views through and into Hawthorns Grove for passers-by. The height of the proposed gates is also consistent with existing boundary treatment to the frontage of properties on North Drive. Accordingly, I do not agree that the installation of gates across Hawthorns Grove would be out of character to the area, nor do I consider it to be out of keeping to the existing pattern of enclosure which is already present along North Drive.
8. I therefore find the proposal consistent with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Liverpool Local Plan which sets out that development should seek to reflect the local grain and pattern of development and achieve a positive layout and form.

Healthy and Safe Communities

9. The proposed gates seek to restrict access to Hawthorns Grove to all vehicles that do not have the necessary key fob for their operation. Unfettered access would still be retained to the residential properties for pedestrians and access for vehicles can be secured via the permission of homeowners at the gates themselves.

10. Whilst I note the Council's concerns that the installation of gates would appear to be unwelcoming to non-residents and hinder cohesion with the wider community, there is no substantive evidence to support such concerns. The gates do not prevent pedestrian access to Hawthorns Grove and the use of railings ensures that the properties on the cul-de-sac do not appear visually cut off from their surroundings.
11. With regard to access for emergency services, I note that the responses made by these parties as part of the application process did not raise objection to the proposed development subject to in an emergency being able to open the proposed gates and gain vehicular access to Hawthorns Grove. I acknowledge that equipment malfunctions could occur in light of poor maintenance or care. However, it is incumbent on the residents and management company to ensure that the gates are fully operational and maintained at all times.
12. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact upon resident cohesion and interaction, inclusivity and public safety. I also do not agree that it would result in segregating the cul-de-sac from the wider community and hinder access for emergency vehicles. As such it would comply with Policy UD2 of the Liverpool Local Plan which sets out that development should consider issues of amenity and that adequate street management should be considered, secured and delivered.

Other Considerations

Living Conditions

13. I note that the appellant and other third-party responses set out clear reasoning around the need for gates in this location. Primarily, this relates to the ongoing issues which are experienced due to the parking arrangements of parents dropping off and picking up children from the nearby St Edwards College and the nearby Runnymede Primary School.
14. Having visited the site, I acknowledge the impact of on-street car parking associated with the nearby schools on surrounding roads and at the junction of Hawthorns Grove with North Drive. I also noted the measures which have already been taken by local residents to seek to manage that situation on their street, including the use of an ANPR service and signage to deter drivers from parking on the cul-de-sac.
15. Notwithstanding the short time span it is experienced across the day, I accept the appellants argument around the impact that on-street parking has on the residential amenity in the local area. I would also acknowledge that Hawthorns Grove is not capable of accommodating any significant quantity of on-street parking due to the narrow carriageway widths.
16. Given Hawthorns Grove is a private road then it is entirely within the right of residents of the cul-de-sac to investigate the options open to them in regard to managing parking on their street, options which have been clearly explored to date. With this in mind, I give the impact on residential amenity arising from the potential for unauthorised parking significant material weight in this decision.

Other Matters

17. Decision makers are required by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity and to eliminate unlawful discrimination in relation to, amongst others, older people and people with disabilities.
18. The appellant has drawn my attention to the implications around the lack of access in and out of the cul-de-sac at peak school times for older people or people with disabilities, whether that be for the reasons of access to medical care or reliable access to their own vehicles at all times of the day. I attach notable weight to these factors.

Conditions

19. In the interests of certainty, it is necessary to specify the plans that the development should be carried out in accordance with. To ensure that the development complements the character and appearance of the area, the gates and associated infrastructure need to be painted in colours sympathetic to their surroundings.
20. In the event of an emergency, arrangements need to be put in place for the emergency services to be able to gain prompt access to Hawthorns Grove. I have required all these matters by condition.

Conclusion

21. I have found that the proposed installation of automated gates to be in accordance with the development plan and I attach significant weight to the benefits afforded to the residents through the installation of these gates. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

P Hatch

INSPECTOR