

## Objection to Planning Application for Replacement Fence for Coombe Park

I have lived at Greenways, RG8 7HB which is at the corner of Hartslock Bridleway and the High Street for over 30 years. I have taught 2 generations (2 daughters and a granddaughter) to ride bicycles on the Bridleway and regularly use Hartslock Bridleway for walking and cycling with my granddaughter.

The owner of Coombe Park Estate has erected a new fence along Hartslock Bridleway without planning permission I would like to object to the placement and design of the fence as follows:

- 1) **Placement.** Initial work on the replacement fence saw the new fence placed in all places so as to encroach on the Bridleway verge. This encroachment varied between circa 0.3 and over 2m as shown in the following photographs.



This has resulted in a significant reduction in the verge area used by pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists to avoid passing vehicles which use the Bridleway. Vehicle traffic has increased considerably over the years (more cars per household, delivery vans etc.) and the latest generation of agricultural vehicles as used by Coombe Park Farm are significantly wider and have reduced visibility to the sides and rear (see example photographs). Loss of this verge area will lead to a significant reduction in amenity value for the many people using the Thames Path which is a National Footpath within an AONB. Using the Bridleway will be far less safe in particular for those with disabilities, with small children or walking dogs when confronted by these vehicles.



Following the intervention of Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department the last section of the fence was erected on the original fence line. The difference in available verge area is clear from the following photograph which shows the fence in the foreground erected on the original fence line transitioning to the format (within the verge area) prior to intervention of the OCC. Unfortunately the major part of the fence had been erected prior to OCC intervention and hence there is a significantly smaller refuge verge area now available.

It is imperative that SODC reject any planning application that reduces the verge area at the sides of the Thames Path. A proposal which sets the fence back further than the original fence line to improve safety along this section of the Thames Path would be preferable.

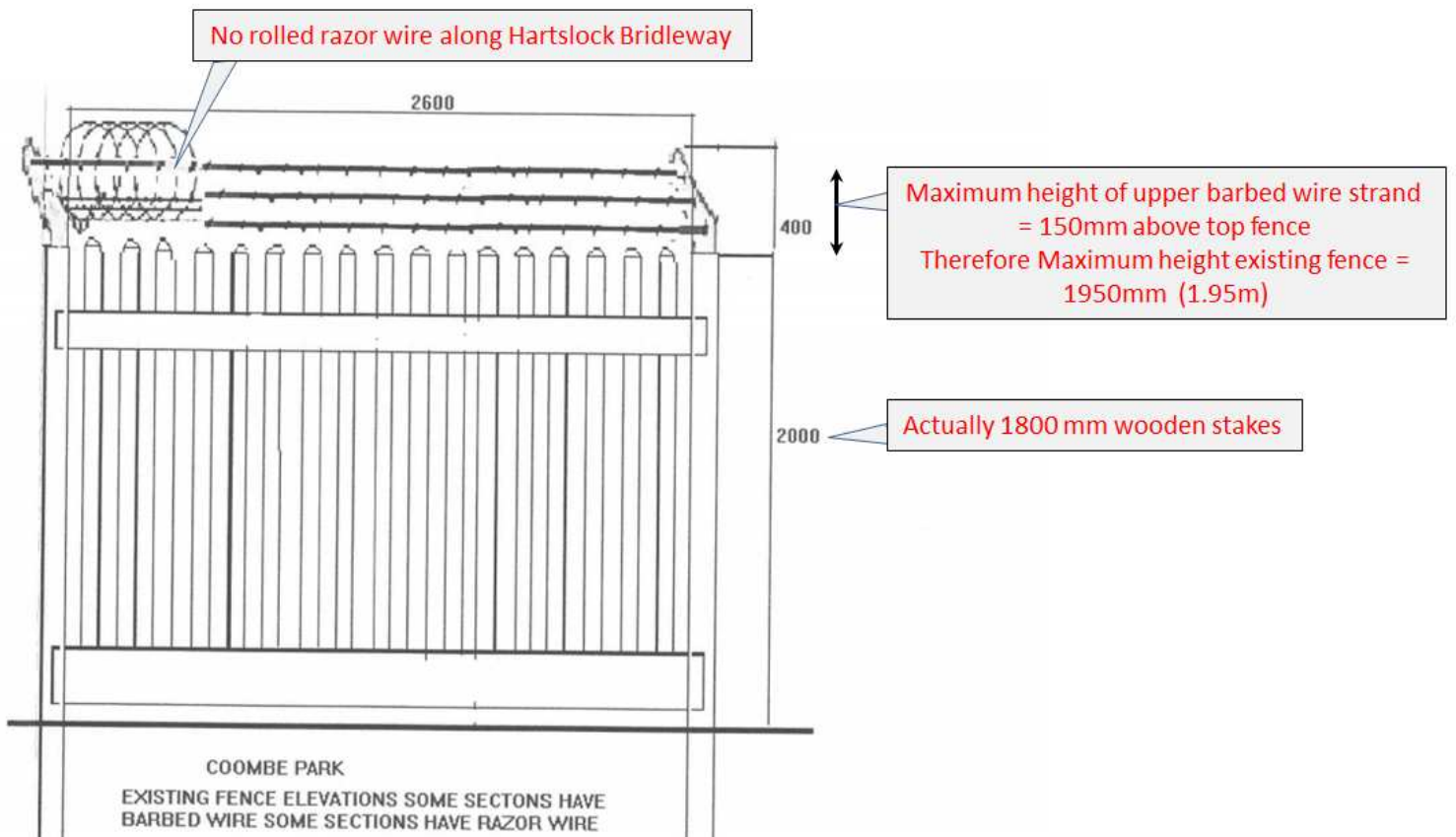




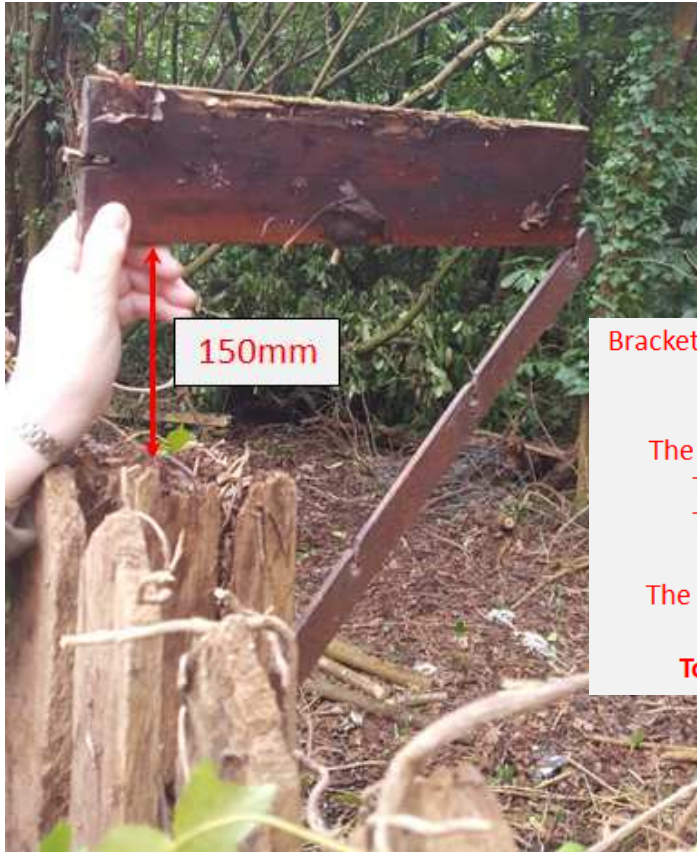
- 2) **Design.** The applicant has erected a 2.4m (8 foot) metal fence topped with spikes. This style of industrial fencing in combination with the excessive height is oppressive and out of keeping in a rural area and especially within an AONB.



The applicant's description of the fence being replaced as a 2.3 to 2.4m fence (see Existing Fence Elevation Plan) is very misleading. I was living here when the old fence was erected some 25 years ago and am quite familiar with its construction and have since checked the measurements. It comprised a wooden palisade fence 1.8m (6 foot) high, not 2.0m. Although the fence was topped with barbed wire strands these were set back well behind the fence on 45 degree angled brackets. For this reason the wire was generally not visible to those of a height less than 2m and the original fence had a maximum height of 1.95m. There has never been any rolled razor wire along the original Hartslock Bridleway fence line. Some rolled barbed wire was added recently to the top of temporary fencing placed by the applicant to infill areas where the original fence had fallen down. This cannot be considered as part of the description of the fence being replaced. These points are illustrated in the following diagram and photographs.







150mm

Brackets holding barbed wire are set back from the wooden fence.  
Bracket can take 3 strands of barbed wire

The Lower slot is below top fence level and was never used.  
The Middle slot is circa 40mm above top fence level.  
The Upper Slot is circa 150mm above top fence level

The barbed wire has thus been hardly visible to pedestrians.

**Total fence height with barbed wire was less than 2m**



Comparative Visual Impact of Original (1.8m) vs. Erected (2.4m) Fence

It is clear the new fence bears no relation to the original fence in terms of scale.

The security concerns submitted by the applicant as justification for this type of fence seem over done. Clearly during the period that the property had been left vacant with overgrown grounds and dilapidated fencing there have been intrusions to the grounds and house. However it is considered that most of these intrusions will cease once it is clear that the property is occupied whilst the security fence will be in existence as an eyesore for decades. Thus a fence of a similar scale to the original fence would be more appropriate.