

Planning Objection: Loss of Front Gardens and Violation of LP24 Design Principles

The Kirklees Local Plan, under Local Policy LP24 (Design), makes a clear and unequivocal statement:

"The way buildings and spaces are designed improves the built and natural environment."

LP24 also states the importance of, *"landscaping to maximise visual amenity and environmental benefits"*.

In fact, at the end of LP24, three documents are named that provide supporting evidence: **Building for Life 12**, **Urban Design Compendium**, and **Manual for Streets**.

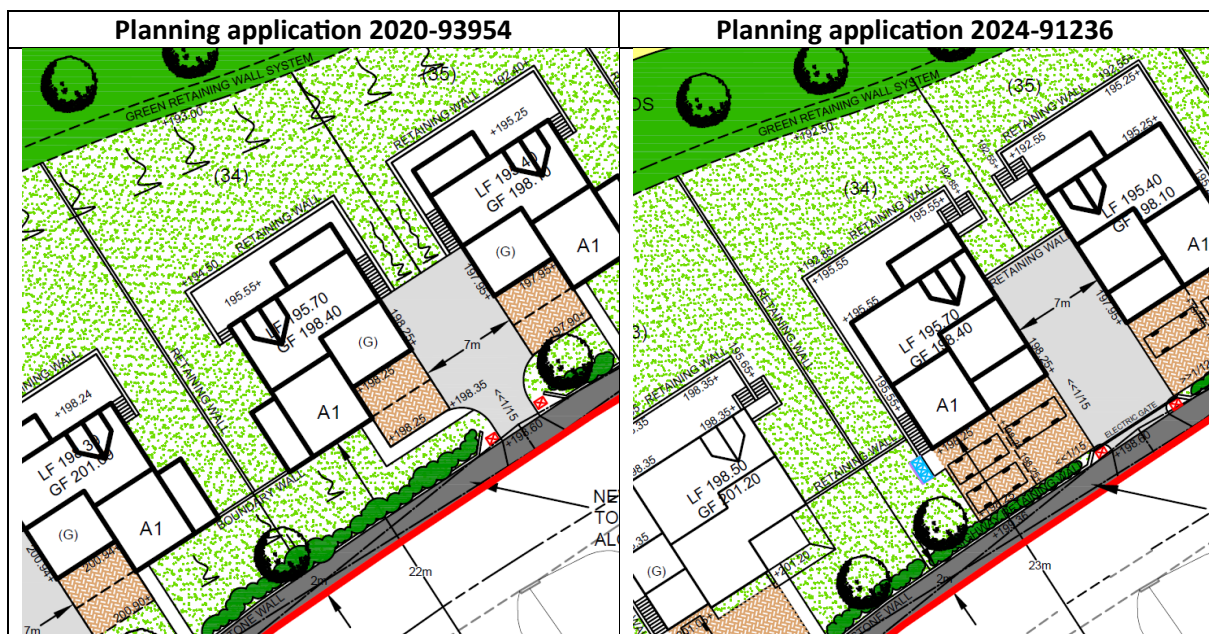
These documents are not optional guidance. They are embedded within the Local Plan and therefore constitute material planning considerations. Their content must be respected and applied.

Building for Life 12 includes the following:

"Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination"

What is being proposed would provide the polar opposite of what that statement supports.

Instead, vehicle domination is exactly what would be seen.



You can see this when comparing the two images above that show how parking would dominate the front, at the expense of front garden's floor space, as currently approved.

Building for Life 12 also talks about the importance of avoiding situations where developments are, *"not balancing the amount of parking in front of plots with soft relief."*

There can be no balance, in what is proposed, where a significant amount of the *"soft relief"* would be sacrificed.

Building for Life 12 also proposes, *"Creating homes that offer something to the street, Afford particular attention to the space between the pavement and front doors. A thoughtful and well designed entrance area and front door scheme will enhance the kerb appeal of homes whilst also contributing towards creating a visually interesting street."*

This application offers nothing to the street.

Nor would it enhance kerb appeal.

Instead, the proposal (in a functional sense) focuses purely on the new residents, at the expense of existing residents, and at the expense of the street in particular.

This is supported by the **Manual for Streets** that says converting front gardens to hard standing, for car parking, *"is not necessarily the most desirable outcome for street users in terms of amenity and quality of place"*.

In fact, the extended parking areas would take away the landscaping, and *"verdant character"* that the planning officer was keen to support, in the previous planning application granted approval.

The *Report of the Head of Planning and Development*, dated 2nd February 2023, at paragraph 10.35 includes *'officers are satisfied that sufficient tree planting is proposed within the Public Open Space and front gardens to ensure a verdant character which achieves the overall aims and objectives of current street planting policies.'*

Verdant character being defined as *'green with grass or other rich vegetation'*, which means trees are not the only feature capable of providing such character.

The **Manual for Streets** also supports the importance of garden space, when it says, *"Front doors should open onto front gardens"*

This application would not see resident doing that.

Instead, they would more likely open their front door, and immediately face the side of a car.

One importance of front gardens is offered by the **Urban Design Compendium**, which states that *"private gardens can provide man-made habitats of great ecological importance"*.

With the bird population thriving, in this area, every inch of available garden will help support them; particularly as they will soon lose a large number of fields that constitute their current habitat.

Conclusion

The proposal is in direct conflict with LP24 and its supporting documents. It prioritises vehicle accommodation over environmental quality, visual amenity, and ecological integrity. The planning authority must uphold the principles of the Local Plan and reject any design that sacrifices front gardens for hardstanding. The community deserves better than a car-dominated streetscape. It deserves development that respects place, people, and policy.