

Home owner says hedgehog holes will make fence unsafe

A home owner told planners she could not put hedgehog holes in a new fence because her small dog could escape.

Susan Gibson applied for retrospective planning permission for the fence, which she said was put up to replace one which had blown down in high winds.

But a report by Midlothian planning officers said while it had become standard practice for new fences to have holes to allow hedgehogs safe passage through housing estates, Mrs Gibson had opted against them.

Planning officers went on to refuse permission for part of the fencing which had been moved out to the edge of a grassed area at the side of the house, on Chester View, Bonnyrigg, saying it was a 'stark' and 'prominent' structure which set an 'undesirable precedent' for the street.



Original fence at Chester View, Bonnyrigg was set back from the pavement. pic Google Maps

In their report into the fence application officers said: "The fence is highly visible and a very prominent and stark feature at the entrance to this part of Chesters View totally out of keeping with the character of and detracting from the visual amenity of this area.

They added: "It is now standard practice of the planning authority to require hedgehog holes to be placed in new fencing in the interest of biodiversity, however, the applicant confirmed in an email that she has a small dog and cannot therefore create small holes in order to keep the dog secure."

The council received three objections to the new fence, the majority of which was permitted development with only a section at the east requiring planning permission.

Objectors pointed to it contravening planning policy, setting

a precedent and being overbearing in the open plan estate.

Planners refused permission saying: "The 1.8m high fence along the east boundary of the property hard up to the pavement presents as a harsh boundary treatment along the street frontage which has a significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the immediate surrounding area diminishing its attractive open landscaped character and is contrary to policies."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter