

Tuesday 01 April 2014

WORRIED residents in South Tyneside claim a huge industrial shed has left them with a “shipyard on the doorstep”.

UK Docks has built the 36ft-high boat repair shed at Tyne Slipway, South Shields – just yards from homes in nearby Harbour View – which residents say is obstructing clear river views, increasing noise levels and raising fears of health risks.

Before work started on the structure last September, the slipway had been used by Nexus to repair its ferries, and residents in Harbour View and Green Place regarded that as acceptable and of “low impact”.

But now people living there say they have to endure noise from drills and generators from 7am to 7pm as repairs are carried out inside the shed.

Residents also claim UK Docks is in breach of the original planning application, granted way back in 1996.

One of those conditions stated that no work should be carried out unless the structure was fitted with doors, to minimise noise and risk of pollution. No such doors have yet been installed.

Homeowners also say the structure is wider and taller than stipulated in the original application.

Now a 130-name petition is calling on South Tyneside Council to act on the alleged breaches and will be presented later this week – amid fears that UK Docks is planning to extend the site still further with two additional sheds and slipways.

No one from UK Docks was available for comment on the allegations yesterday.

One protester, who did not wish to be named, said: “We feel we are being stone-walled by the council. We are asking the council why it has not stopped this work because of the breaches to the conditions.

“We are not against the commercial use of the land. We had no problem with its use by Nexus but we believe we are receiving short shrift from the current owners.

“We keep being told that it is an established industrial site. But we are an established residential site and there is no magic wall separating us from the shed.”

He added: “There was a worker there recently dismantling a fibre glass speedboat, just yards from our home. He was wearing full protective gear – that’s something we don’t have.

“We feel it is being turned into a full-blown shipyard without due consideration to the neighbourhood.”

A South Tyneside Council spokesman said: “The council will investigate any complaints made in respect of noise and general disturbance associated with the UK Docks’ boat repair yard. We have also been informed by the company that they intend to enclose the ends of the shelter.

“The council has not received a planning application from UK Docks for a second structure.

“If a future application is received the council will follow the appropriate measures, and publicise it by writing to adjacent residents.

“All planning applications have to be considered against the council’s adopted planning policies having had careful regard to any third-party representations received – particularly from local residents.”

Residents did not receive any notice when work on the structure started in September last year.

They were informed at the time that the applicant did not require planning permission because a previous application had been granted back in 1996.

Although the applicant did not go ahead with the work then, the foundations of the structure were laid, and, as a result, it was not necessary under planning law for a new application to be made.

At the time, a spokesman for UK Docks said: “All I can say is that we have been through all the controls with

the planners, and the work meets all the necessary legal requirements.

“All we are doing is going ahead with the previous planning permission.”