

Erection of a Slipway Cover/Shed on River Drive, South Shields,
ST/1146/13/COND

05-Sep-2013. Construction started on a large slipway shed in a primarily residential area on the banks of the Tyne in South Shields and I lived, when this development started, less than 100m away. I cannot remember when my complaint went in. Many complaints to South Tyneside Council were answered by the Principal Planning Officer, Mr Peter Cunningham, who said that it was being built to plans approved in 1996. His first response claiming this was sent on the 05-Sep-2013 and the plans accompanying this reply were soon available on the planning portal. There was so much concern that the slipway shed was not being built to plan that a meeting was arranged by Councillor Anglin on 25-Nov-2013 between Mr Cunningham and local residents. He again repeated that the shed was neither too wide nor too high and had been built to an approved plan.

I could see that it had not been built to plan and this was easy to verify as one could, at that time, sight along the frames and determine with a fair degree of accuracy that the shed was about a meter too wide.

It took another 2 and a half months of emails back and forth for the Planning Manager, Mr Gordon Atkinson to concede that it was 3 meters too high as well. On 13-Feb-2014 he said, in an email to me, that the slipway shed was not built to an approved plan. It should be noted that Mr Cunningham did not even concede on any point and was still saying as much in his last email to me on 13-Jan-2014. At a meeting of concerned residents on 03-Mar-2014 it was agreed that we would raise a Petition and I would write by email to the planning office and ask them to explain their actions and eventually the Head of Development Services, Mr George Mansbridge, responded on 02-May-2014. In his response he basically reverted to Mr Cunningham's line that the shed was not 3m too high and the difference in width was immaterial which if nothing else rather undermines the position of Mr Atkinson as manager of the Planning Office.

I maintain that Council has not responded properly to our claims that the slipway shed had been started without planning permission and it would appear that the responsibility for this can be laid with Mr Mansbridge. In his Stage 2 letter Mr Mansbridge says that the slipway shed being 3m taller than approved would be a significant deviation and then goes on to try and show that it is not 3m taller than approved.

In his email to me dated 02-Jun-2014, ref: Stage 2 253539 he says in the paragraph discussing drawing 8296/14 that he would be happy to meet with me and to show me the relevant plans. I travelled some 35 miles to this meeting, with my partner and we can verify that this drawing was not produced. This drawing is rather significant as it was the one that I used to try and convince Mr Atkinson that the Slipway shed is built 3m too high.

The suggestion that the drawing was not drawn to scale, first aired by Mr Mansbridge in his Stage 2 reply to me, was repeated at this meeting. It was also repeated by Customer Advocacy in their Stage 3 reply dated 25-Sep-2014. In all my correspondences with Mr Atkinson, the manager of the Planning Office, I do not think he said that the drawing 8296/14 was not to scale. I think that Mr

Mansbridge cannot justify any claim that the slipway shed is not built 3m taller than planned.

In their last letter to me, Stage 3, Customer Advocacy used this misinformation to conclude that when Mr Mansbridge said it was not expedient to take planning enforcement action with respect to the development on River Drive it was assumed by him to be a legitimate course of action.