

Planning Department  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

Our Ref : AWM/TJ/GEN0061/HEDDON  
Your Ref :  
Date : 08 October 2019

**BY POST AND E-MAIL: [richard.laughton@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:richard.laughton@northumberland.gov.uk)**

Dear Sirs

**Our Clients: Heddon on the Wall Parish Council**  
**Re: Planning Application 19/01406/FUL – Proposed change of use from agricultural land to D2 assembly and leisure for the purposes of providing junior football facilities. Land to the south of Selman Park Heddon on the Wall**

We act for Heddon on the Wall Parish Council.

Our clients wish to object to the above-numbered planning application for the following reasons: -

1. Part of the proposed application site is owned by Heddon on the Wall Parish Council. The land in question is a strip of land measuring 2 metres in width running along the east side of the public highway U9096 to the junction lying to the south at which point the U9096 meets the B6528 Hexham Road and the slip road on to the A69. We enclose a copy of our client's title to the land in question together with a plan showing its location and extent.

Although our clients have received notification of the planning application, the applicants have neither sought nor obtained the consent of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council to include the land within the application site. If consent had been sought it is unlikely to have been given.

The strip of land comprised in Title Number ND152661 was acquired by Heddon on the Wall Parish Council at the time it developed Selman Park which lies to the north of the application site. Selman Park is a playing field owned by Heddon on the Wall Parish Council for use and enjoyment by residents of Heddon on the Wall. It includes three football pitches. The strip of land was acquired by the Parish Council to create a footpath which could be used by local residents to gain pedestrian access to and from Selman Park without the need to walk up the very narrow roadway U9096. This is not a public footpath but rather is privately owned by the Parish Council. The applicants have neither sought nor been granted permission to use this strip of land.

The strip of land which is owned by Heddon the Wall Parish Council includes the mature hedgerow which runs along the western boundary of the strip of land between the footpath and the adjoining road (U9096). The hedgerow serves as a home for wildlife and a useful wind and snow break. The Parish Council would not wish to see any alterations being made to that hedgerow which should be protected at all times.

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Heddon on the Wall Parish Council would not wish its land comprised in Title Number ND152661 to be used in the manner proposed by this application.

2. The reason that the pedestrian walkway was created to the east of the U9096 was due to the fact that that roadway is a single track road only. It is not safe to be used by pedestrians.
3. It is proposed that there should be three new football pitches created on the land which is the subject of this application. There are currently three football pitches at Selman Park itself. The creation of additional football pitches as proposed by this application is, in the opinion of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council, unnecessary. Heddon on the Wall Parish Council has offered reasonable access to the applicants to use the current facility at Selman Park but they have chosen to decline that offer. Selman Park is purpose built with its own changing facilities. Having regard to the current population of Heddon on the Wall and other sports facilities which are available nearby, no new facilities are required or desirable.
4. Heddon on the Wall Parish Council does not consider that the access road (U9096) is suitable for any intensification of use which would be created if planning permission were granted. The road is to all intents and purposes a single track road with passing places. It has a number of existing users including:
  - The owners and occupiers of homes and businesses lying to the north of the application site. This includes working farms and kennels. The road is used by both domestic and commercial/agricultural vehicles.
  - Cyclists. The road is a very popular road for cyclists.
  - Horse riders. The road is frequently used by individuals exercising horses from nearby stables.
  - Existing users of Selman Park.
  - It is also used as a shortcut for motorists from the A69 across to Stamfordham Road which lies to the north and to Darras Hall and Ponteland.

In the opinion of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council, any intensification of use of the U9096 would be potentially dangerous. There is currently insufficient room for a vehicle and a cyclist to pass safely let alone two vehicles travelling in the opposite direction.

The proposed development creates a situation where it is quite possible that motorists will have to reverse either up or down the road in order to allow others to pass. Such a manoeuvre would clearly be dangerous.

The road can get particularly congested at its southern end where it joins the B6528 Hexham Road and the slip road on to the A69. Any further congestion at that junction would be potentially dangerous.

5. The proposed access into the site from the U9096 is also potentially dangerous. It measures 3.6 metres in width only which is not sufficient to enable two vehicles to pass safely. If permission were granted for this facility there could be up to six football pitches in use at any one time. This may well be the case on a Sunday morning when junior football is active. This could mean up to 120 cars using the two sites at any one time with cars passing in and out of the access. As there is insufficient space for 2 cars to pass at the access, this would require vehicles to either reverse out on to the U9096 or reverse back into the site. This will create further difficulties and hazards on the narrow roadway.
6. The Parish Council has taken advice from a road safety planner who has advised as follows: -
  - (a) If permission were granted the site access and hedge within the visibility splay should be included within the redline application site and protected under a robust planning maintenance condition, secured by a Section 106 Agreement to ensure the growth in the hedge/fence/wall does not exceed 900 mm in height and does not extend on to the edge of the adopted highway.

- (b) No visibility splay lines or speed surveys have been provided. As a minimum a speed survey should be undertaken at 3 locations: -
- (i) At the site access;
  - (ii) Within 100 metres to the left of the site access (towards the A69); and
  - (iii) 160 metres to the right

to ensure that visibility splays and stopping sight distances are achievable and adequate for the actual road speeds. This should be confirmed by a topographical survey in 3D to ensure that vertical and horizontal splays are achievable. To the left there appears to be a dip in the road which is problematic and to the right a hedge, which appears to be a potentially serious issue.

- (c) Once all of the above have been properly designed and provided the proposals should undergo a Road Safety Audit.

In the opinion of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council the advice which it has received should be a minimum requirement. The Parish Council would not wish to see any alterations being made to its own land or the hedge which lies within its ownership

7. Section 7.3 of the Development Report states that the site lies in an area beyond the settlement boundaries of Heddon village as defined in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan of 2003. It follows that the site is located in open countryside and within greenbelt. In order to safeguard the greenbelt, as and when Selman Park was created, it was designed so that it could not be seen from the adjoining road in any direction. The proposed new site will be visible from all surrounding roads including the A69. Heddon on the Wall Parish Council does not consider this satisfactory.
8. Section 7.4 of the Development Report states the development in open countryside beyond settlement boundaries will not be permitted unless the proposals can be justified as being essential to the needs of agriculture or forestry or draw reference to other policies in the Development Plan. Heddon on the Wall Parish Council does not consider that such a development is justified. There is current facility at Selman Park and the Parish Council has offered reasonable access to Heddon Juniors Football Club to use that facility but they have declined to do so. In the opinion of Heddon on the Wall Parish Council, the current facility of approximately 6 acres of playing fields at Selman Park with changing rooms and toilets is more than adequate for the 650 households in Heddon on the Wall.
9. Section 7.5 of the Development Report states that the County Council's strategy for playing fields is not yet available. In the circumstances Heddon on the Wall Parish Council has considered the current FA guidelines relating to such a facility. These are to create a high quality shared central venue which can sustain day to day use with 4g pitches and lights such as the development carried out at Bullocksteads. The proposed application site will never be suitable for a large modern playing field due to greenbelt issues and inadequate access.

Yours faithfully



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