

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Committee:** Main Planning  
**Date:** 24 June 2004

**Ward:** Dringhouses And Woodthorpe  
**Parish:** Dringhouses/Woodthorpe  
Planning Panel

**Reference:** 04/00757/FUL  
**Application at:** Land Adjacent To York Sixth Form College Sim Balk Lane York YO23 2UD  
**For:** Change of use of agricultural land to outdoor sports pitches, all-weather pitch with perimeter fencing and lighting columns, multi use games area with perimeter fencing  
**By:** York College  
**Application Type:** Full Application

### 1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The site comprises 7.3ha of open land to the east of the Sim Balk Lane College site. Part of the site (4.3ha) is currently used for outdoor sport. The proposal is to change the use of agricultural land, currently owned by the Council, to outdoor sports pitches and to lay out an All Weather Pitch (AWP), with perimeter fencing and floodlighting, and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with perimeter fencing. The AWP would be located on a existing grass football pitch adjacent to the Sim Balk Lane site. It would have a flexible playing surface for use throughout the year and 8 X 15m high lighting columns with twenty light fittings. the application does not include details of the proposed fencing. The MUGA is primarily aimed at providing three tennis courts and two netball courts.

### 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001

2.2 Policies:

CYGB1  
Development within the Green Belt

### 3.0 CONSULTATIONS

INTERNAL

3.1 HIGHWAY NETWORK MANAGEMENT: The applicants state that adequate parking for the sports pitches will be provided on the College site and that community users will be encouraged to use parking spaces on the College site. Players and spectators that currently use the pitches are parking on Sim Balk Lane and causing an obstruction of the pedestrian/cycle route.

3.2 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT : The statement accompanying the application does not include details of the height, colour or type of fencing for the AWP or specify the type of surfacing for the MUGA. The AWP and MUGA, by way of their artificial surfacing and high fencing, would disturb the openness of the Green Belt on this visually exposed edge of York. However the new College building and car park would be so dominant as to render the additional manufactured pitches less visually significant, especially as this treatment is limited to one pitch and one MUGA. The lighting columns and spacing have been carefully considered to avoid light pollution however there will be an inevitable slightly harmful visual effect due to the area of pitch that is lit.

3.3 ARCHAEOLOGIST: The site is in close proximity to a pre-historic crop mark site and has potential to reveal Romano British deposits. A condition requiring an Archaeological Watching Brief on all groundworks is recommended.

3.4 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION UNIT: NO objections subject to conditions limiting construction hours and times when the pitches would be in use (08.00 to 22.00hrs Monday to Sunday).

#### EXTERNAL

3.5 YORKSHIRE WATER: No objections - conditions are recommended to protect an area of 3m either side of the water main and sewer that cross the site.

3.6 YORK NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PANEL: "The built footprint of new car park and building is pushing the sports field out from the site into farmland which is green belt. Considering most of the sports field is hard landscaping this would be unsuitable. Overall the affect of the combined applications by the College is incursion into the green belt. In summary the panel are opposed to this group of developments which are interrelated."

3.7 BISHOPTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL: "Firstly we note that most of the area has and is in use as sports pitches. Probably the time these have been used has been sufficient for the change of use has changed by default (sic). Not with standing this we would support the application. There is a demand for sports pitches and whilst these will be for the college use, we would hope that they would be made available to other local groups. As you are aware the Parish Council has objected to the consolidation of the college to the sixth form site. Therefore we have to view this application as if the sixth form site application is refused. We would wish the application for the sports pitches to succeed but wonder about the all weather pitch and associated lighting etc. The lighting would be out of place under these circumstances."

3.8 DRINGHOUSES/WOODTHORPE PLANNING PANEL: No objections.

3.9 SPORT ENGLAND; no response at time of writing.

3.10 NEIGHBOUR LETTERS, SITE AND PRESS NOTICES: Letters of support for the College proposals in general are described in the previous report for the new College building. Three letters from local residents raising the following concerns and objections have been received:

- the lighting would attract 'undesirables'/risk of anti-social behaviour outside of College hours
- will other schools use the facilities
- will there be expansion into other areas

- houses on Dringthorpe Road will be affected - increase in noise due to pitches closer to houses
- proposals will lead to structures built on the land for toilets and changing
- wildlife will be affected - Bats, Owls, Pheasants, Sparrow Hawks, Mice, Voles, Rabbits
- why not use part of the Tadcaster Road site rather than use Green Belt land

## 4.0 APPRAISAL

### 4.1 KEY ISSUES

- planning policy
- impact on Green Belt/character and appearance of the area
- impact on residents

4.2 Planning Policy Guidance note 2 'Green Belts' sets out the purposes of including land within Green Belts and establishes specific categories of development that are appropriate within Green Belts. All other development is deemed inappropriate and therefore harmful to the Green Belt. For such development to be acceptable in Green Belts very special circumstances must be demonstrated to show that the harm is outweighed by other considerations. Policy E8 of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan establishes a Green Belt around the City of York. The boundaries of the Green Belt are detailed on the Proposals Map of the City of York Local Plan Deposit Draft (CYLPDD) and this site clearly falls within the Green Belt. Policy GB1 'Development in the Green Belt' of the CYLPDD follows the advice contained in PPG2 in stating that permission for development will only be granted where: the scale, location and design would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt; it would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt; and it would not prejudice the setting and special character of the City, and is for a type of development listed as appropriate development (including facilities essential for outdoor sport). All other forms of development are considered to be inappropriate and very special circumstances would be required to justify where the presumption against development should not apply.

4.3 The proposal is for new sports pitches and facilities for outdoor sport that are forms of development listed in PPG2 and Policy GB1 as being appropriate uses of Green Belt land. For the proposal to be acceptable in terms of Policy GB1 however, it needs to be of a scale, location and design that would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt. It is considered that the proposed lighting columns and fixtures are not of a scale that would harm the openness of the Green Belt. However there would be an impact on the rural /agricultural character of the area from the lighting columns, the fencing, the all weather surfaces and illumination of the site. Should permission be granted for the new College these features would be viewed against the backdrop of a large modern building, with attendant car park, and hard surfaces, that would also be illuminated during the evening and in winter. It is considered that the visual impact of the proposed pitches, fencing, light columns etc would not be significant in this context and providing the hours of illumination are controlled and suitable landscape planting is undertaken along the existing field boundaries.

4.4 The proposed AWP will be the only pitch to be illuminated and is to be located adjacent to the entrance to the College site, facing Sim Balk Lane. The nearest residential properties will be houses on The Grove. There are some significant trees around the boundary with these properties that would screen views of the AWP and MUGA. The applicants have submitted a report detailing the impact of lighting on the area and which indicates that although floodlighting will be visible from these properties there will be no direct light spill. The report recommends additional planting along the boundary, that floodlights are turned off when not in use and the hours of use of the floodlighting are restricted. Restrictions on

the times during which the AWP and MUGA are used would also mitigate the impact of noise generated by users of these facilities. Two new football pitches are proposed on agricultural land to the north east of the proposed College building that would be closer to houses on Dringthorpe Road. These pitches would not be illuminated and would be over 150m from the nearest residential property and therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on the amenity of residents of Dringthorpe Road..

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 It is considered that the proposed pitches and associated development would not have a significant impact on the openness or character of the Green Belt or on the residential amenity of people living nearby, given the context of the proposal for the new College building and subject to the conditions outlined below.

5.2 The applicants have agreed to allow use of the proposed sports facilities by the community and it is recommended that a Community Use Agreement be secured by a S106 agreement.

## **COMMITTEE TO VISIT**

### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to Section 106 Agreement**

- 1 TIME1 Development start within five years
- 2 The use of the Multi Use Games Area and All Weather Pitch for sports activities shall be limited to between 08.00 to 22.00 hours.

Reason : to protect residents living nearby from noise and disturbance generated by activity at unsocial hours when ambient noise levels are low.

- 3 The floodlighting hereby permitted shall be in operation (illuminating the pitch) only when the All Weather Pitch is in use and between 08.00 and 22.00 hours and not at any other time.

Reason : to protect the residential amenity of people living near the site and to mitigate the impact of the floodlighting on the character and appearance of the area.

- 4 No development shall take place until there has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed landscaping scheme which shall illustrate the number, species, height and position of trees and shrubs to be planted. This scheme shall be implemented within a period of six months of the completion of the development. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless alternatives are agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: So that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied with the variety, suitability and disposition of species within the site, in the interest of screening the development from residential properties and softening the visual impact of the development on the wider landscape..

- 5 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted full details of the surface materials and fencing for the All Weather Pitch and Multi Use Games Area shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason : in the interests of the appearance of the area.

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