NOTE TO PHIL COOK IN RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM CLLR P MOXON

Former Grammar School Playing Fields, Moorland Road, Leeds

A planning application has been received for alterations and extensions to the buildings as part of proposals for the University Business School and a museum. This does not include the playing field area at this stage.

The site in question is a grass playing pitch within the curtilage of a Grade II listed building, which was formerly occupied by Leeds Grammar School. The Revised Draft UDP designates the pitch as Protected Playing Field under Policy N6. The Grammar School lodged an objection on the grounds that the N6 allocation would restrict the future expansion of the Grammar School and force the school to relocate elsewhere.

When the school relocated and the buildings came into the ownership of the University, the latter body took over the pitch and the objection. They submitted further evidence in July 1996 in which they indicated that their current intention was to use the major part of the school as a Business School, and the N6 designation would conflict with this. They questioned the Council's assertion that there is a deficiency of pitches. They also contended that it would not be economically or administratively feasible for the University to maintain a single pitch, which is much separated from the remaining sports facilities and that there would be conflict with the use of the buildings.

The council responded to these objections, considering that there was a gross deficiency in playing pitch provision, particularly in some inner city areas, including University Ward.

Policy N6 seeks to protect playing pitches from development unless particular exceptions apply. The first of these (N6i) allows for overall pitch quality and provision to be upgraded though part development or relocation. N6ii allows development if there is no shortage of pitches, locally, and city-wide, and the land is not required for additional greenspace.

The Inspector's decision is not expected until the end of the year at the earliest and the current position is that any development on the pitch area would be contrary to the UDP protection policy and would have to be fully justified.

Please note that I am meeting Cllr Moxon with community representatives on 13 February to discuss greenspace in Burley. He is concerned about proposals for sports uses on amenity greenspaces and has specifically raised with me the issue of possible availability of the Grammar School pitch for the community.

Rachel Wigginton
Local Plans West
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