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Leeds City Council
Department of Planning
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LEEDS
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26 August 2010

Our Ref: Y/LE/2010/21235/S

Dear Mathias

Application Number: 08/04216/FU
Site Address: LEEDS GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL Headingley Lane
West Yorkshire LS6 1BN
Proposal: Change of use and extension including part
demolition of school building and stable block to
32 flats and 3 terrace houses

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 2010, in respect of the above.
We also refer to the letter and attachments of 23 June 2010 sent to yourself
from the Land Use and Development Practice. Having read the above letter and
attachments, Sport England would make the following comments:

Statutory Consultation

It is understood that the site forms part of, or constitutes a playing field as
defined in Article 10(2) the Town and Country Planning (General Development
Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended by SI 1996/1817 and SI 2009/453), in that
it is on land that allocated for the use as a playing field in a development plan or
in proposals for such a plan or its alteration or replacement.

Sport England has therefore considered the application in the light of its playing
fields policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is an adequate supply
of quality pitches to satisfy the current and estimated future demand for pitch
sports within the area. The policy seeks to protect all parts of the playing field
from development and not just those which, for the time being, are laid out as
pitches. The Policy states that;

***“Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for
any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice
the use of, all or any part of a playing field, or land last used as a
playing field or allocated for use as a playing field in an adopted or
draft deposit local plan, unless, in the judgement of Sport England,
one of the Specific circumstances applies.”***

Reason; Development which would lead to the loss of all or part of a playing field, or which would prejudice its use, should not normally be permitted because it would permanently reduce the opportunities for participation in sporting activities. Government planning policy and the policies of Sport England have recognised the importance of such activities to the social and economic well-being of the country.

Part of the application site is recognised in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan as protected playing pitches by virtue of policy N6. Although the application site does not contain a pitch, it does contain a court area with markings for two tennis and two netball courts, and another court area with markings for four tennis and four netball courts – for clarity a bank of two tennis/netball courts and a bank of four tennis/netball courts.

The letter and attachment of 23 June set out the new provision of tennis courts at that the Grammar School at Leeds site that followed as a result of the merger of Leeds Girls High School and Leeds Grammar School. The tennis courts, with other sport facilities such as synthetic turf pitches, were created on the existing playing field. However to compensate for the footprint of the playing field taken by these facilities, a new area of playing field was created to the east of the school. Therefore, there has been no net loss of playing field in area terms. The courts are also relatively new and therefore we are satisfied that they are acceptable in terms of their quality.

Sport England is aware that the facilities at Leeds Girls High School were used by Kings Camps (children's holiday camp) over Easter and summer between 1993 to 2007. However Sport England accepts that this was limited community use and the people attending the holiday camps would have come from a wider catchment than that of the local community.

Sport England has been provided with a section 106 agreement that sets out the facilities at the Grammar School at Leeds which include sports field, sports hall and associated changing facilities, all are available for community use. Given the limited community use at Leeds Girls High school, Sport England accepts that the new facilities provided at the Grammar Schools at Leeds, with community use is a welcome addition, as the ones at Headingley did not serve the local community.

In light of the above Sport England considers that the new facilities at the Grammar Schools at Leeds meets exception E4 of our Playing Fields Policy which states:

E4 The playing field or playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality and of equivalent or greater quantity, in a suitable location and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to the commencement of development.

Sport England therefore **withdraws its statutory objection** of 18 August 2008.

Although Sport England is satisfied the proposal meets E4, we would like to take this opportunity to remind the Local Planning Authority that the requirements of paragraph 10 of PPG17 also need to be met:

“10. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space or the buildings and land to be surplus to requirements. For open space, 'surplus to requirements' should include consideration of all the functions that open space can perform. Not all open space, sport and recreational land and buildings are of equal merit and some may be available for alternative uses. In the absence of a robust and up-to-date assessment by a local authority, an applicant for planning permission may seek to demonstrate through an independent assessment that the land or buildings are surplus to requirements. Developers will need to consult the local community and demonstrate that their proposals are widely supported by them. Paragraph 15 below applies in respect of any planning applications involving playing fields.”

Non statutory consultation

Sport England has considered the application in the light of Sport England's Land Use Planning Policy Statement Planning Policies for Sport. The overall thrust of the statement is that a planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities for sport is necessary in order to ensure the sport and recreational needs of local communities are met.

Sport England has adopted the following policy objective:

“To promote the use of planning obligations as a way of securing the provision of new or enhanced places of sport and a contribution towards their future maintenance to meet the needs arising from new development”.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation sets out in paragraph 23 that:

“Local Authorities should ensure that provision is made for local sports and recreation facilities (both either through an increase in number of facilities or through improvements through existing facilities) where planning permission is granted for new developments (especially housing). Planning applications should be used where appropriate to seek increased provision of open spaces and local sports and recreational facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities”

We are advised that Leeds Council does not have a SPD on planning obligations relating to money into sport. In assessing the needs arising from the development we would refer you to Sport England's website and the “Planning Tools and Guidance section” which provides guidance and tools to assist in determining the appropriate level of provision/contributions. In particular the sports facilities calculator is of assistance.

The calculator uses population breakdowns from the ONS population projections (2006 base projected to 2010) and from locally derived figures for sports halls, pools and indoor bowls. It then uses information Sport England has gathered from the National Halls and Pools Survey, Benchmarking Service, Indoor Bowls User Survey, and General Household Survey, on who uses facilities and applies this to the actual population profile of the local area. This ensures that the calculation is sensitive to the needs of the people who actually live there.

We calculate that the development consisting of a total of 35 dwellings will require £27,149 of money into sport facilities based on the English average of 2.36 occupants per dwelling (we would accept regional variance to the occupancy figure if it differs in Leeds).

We are advised in the letter of 23 June 2010 that the school intends to provide play and leisure facilities for the local community at Headingley. These could be Ford House Garden or Victoria Road Sports Hall. The letter advises that the school has made efforts to find a party to operate the sports hall. Sport England accepts the principle of the offer of the facilities to the community in Headingley and we acknowledge that discussions over this are on going.

To this end, Sport England would wish to maintain its non statutory objection to the application. Sport England would be grateful if we could be consulted on the details of the sport facilities that will be offered to the community of Headingley. **We can confirm that Sport England will withdraw our non statutory objection once a suitable section 106 or other legal mechanism is signed that delivers a sporting offer for the community of Headingley and the new residents who will occupy the dwellings subject to this application.**

We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending a copy of the decision notice.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s) and committee date(s), if it is the procedure of your Council to inform those who have made representations on a planning application. We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending a copy of the decision notice.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact the undersigned at the address below.

Yours sincerely

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Planning Manager

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