

FAO: **Kate Bellwood**,
(Planning Officer)
Development Management Group
South Lakeland District Council
South Lakeland House
Lowther Street
KENDAL
Cumbria LA9 4DL



55 Hayclose Crescent
(Kendal Parks Estate)
Kendal
Cumbria LA9 7NT

Tel: 01539 722158

henryadams@dragonfly1.plus.com

10th December 2011

Your Ref: SL/2011/0896

Dear Sirs/Madams,

**LOCATION: LAND AT OXENHOLME ROAD, KENDAL,
including the "Strawberry Field" – a lapwing breeding site**

DEVELOPMENT: EXTENSION TO TIME CONDITION ON PLANNING PERMISSION SL/2008/1220 (ENGINEERING OPERATIONS TO RE-GRADE THE SITE TO FORM TWO FULL SIZE RUGBY PITCHES AND A FLOODLIT TRAINING PITCH, WITH CLUBHOUSE PARKING AND LANDSCAPED WOODS)

REF. NUMBER: SL/2011/0896



The present letter is an incomplete rushed draft letter which I am submitting now as I have run out of spare time to complete it and don't want to miss the end of the consultation period. I intend to follow it up with a final version when I have time (many other pressing deadlines!). [I didn't have time to improve this but seems OK as it is!]

I am writing to object to this extension request because a number of important subjects were significantly downplayed or ignored when the planning permission was granted, and to make additional points – which I doubt have been considered at all up to now (such as transition town and future resilience aspects).

Firstly I have no reason to doubt that the Rugby Club need better clubhouse facilities – and I wish them success in getting them built – but *in situ* – **on their present site** – which also has access to plenty of field area which can be improved to give better drainage. The prospect of getting money for moving to Oxenholme Road has given the club less incentive to seek alternative sources of money to develop in situ. The plus points for the Rugby Club to move to Oxenholme Road in no way outweighs both the existing value of the Strawberry Field to locals here (e.g. for its unique scenic interest, lapwing breeding colony and pick-your-own facility) which would be destroyed, nor the negative effects to residents here of its replacement with Rugby and night-club facilities (e.g. late-night noise & trouble, increased traffic). The development would be totally out-of-place in the attractive and relatively quiet rural-residential setting that is now here – and loved by many residents.

The proposed development would result in the loss of over half of the Strawberry field and would make the site no longer suitable for the colony of lapwings which regularly breed here. The lapwings are important to those who appreciate their attractive appearance, spectacular tumbling display flights and evocative calling. Such pleasures that can be had for free are often dismissed by people in power who are focussed more on aspects of money, 'growth', status and aggrandisement.

The Strawberry field is a key attribute of the Green Gap between Kendal and Oxenholme.

This area designated as 'GREEN GAP' should not be developed, in accordance with the conclusions and evidence of the Government Inspector's Report from the Public Enquiry into the SLDC Local Plan Alteration Number 1 in 2002/2003. Since then, conditions have not changed sufficiently to warrant the development of this GREEN GAP

and therefore the conclusions of the Inquiry are still valid. Unfortunately ways of ignoring or disregarding the Inspector's decisions and reports have been found when faced with more recent vested/prestige urban growth interests – that can appeal more to those in power than rural/scenic/wildlife interests.

Landscape scenic attributes

The following photos show the scenic attractiveness of the Strawberry field and its environs – which has often been deliberately down-played or totally ignored by the Councils / SLDC (and especially so in an incompetent report earlier this year for the Town Council).



The picture above shows the uniquely attractive rural landscape character of this area. This is despite its proximity to the town – a consequence of it being surrounded and thus visually shielded on most sides by a horse-shoe of green slopes including the attractive drumlin. This view – from Oxenholme Road – would be obliterated if viewed from this point if the Morbaine development goes ahead – especially if tall dense shrubs are planted near the road to hide the car-park. Other photos are appended.

“Gateway to the Lakes” is a name often given to Kendal (e.g. Town Council website home-page) and for rail-tourists and rail-travellers the Strawberry field is a unique and attractive part of the welcome arrival view and memorable departure view when walking or driving to or from Oxenholme Station. Several visitors and tourists have remarked to me their appreciation of the uplifting view of the Strawberry Field in its setting – and have expressed dismay when I have told them its possible fate.

The numerous **visual landscape attributes** of the Green Gap are stated in the 2003 Inspector's report. Additionally, paragraph 2.1.10 of the 2003 report states that two previous inspectors also recommended against development due to the resulting loss of separation between Kendal and Oxenholme. The planning decision under present time extension consultation tried to pretend that the development would comply with the Green Gap requirement, but **about a third of its plan view is tarmac and a huge 2-storey building with night-club facilities – about as urban as you can get in character**. Furthermore – when viewed from the road (if you can see it behind the proposed “green” screen) most of your view of it will be the urban car-park and building – not the “green” playing fields behind. Thus the proposed development is definitely **not** a Green Gap-compliant development whatever spin is written.

The breeding lapwings

Lapwings have been nesting in the strawberry field for many years, and seeing and hearing them there has given delight to me and no doubt many other people. The uniqueness here is their proximity to the town-edge – and thus they can be seen and heard without the carbon-footprint and time-constraint of having to drive a car to see them. Thus they are a big asset to the quality of life here.

Regarding the lapwings, the 2003 Inspector's report states (extract from Para 2.1.49): "I am especially concerned about the possible adverse impact that the development could have on the lapwing breeding ground at the adjacent strawberry fields. These birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.... there would seem to be significant, possible wildlife constraints upon its development."



Although lapwings are not at present scarce in South Lakeland they have become so over large areas elsewhere in England and Wales due to loss of suitable habitat.

The pick-your-own fruit & veg and Transition Town attributes

The Rugby Club development threatens the viability of the fruit-growing in the smaller-part of the strawberry field it leaves alone.

Kendal is now a **Transition Town**. The production of locally grown food is an important part of a Transition Town as part of providing long-term **resilience** to the inevitable future rises in fuel and food prices linked with the decline in *conventional* oil production (it past its peak c.2007) and climate change. When oil and thus food prices inevitably increase – the demand for locally grown (and pick-your-own) fruit and veg will increase. Thus the reduction and/or loss of local food-growing here in the Strawberry Field is very short-sighted in view of Kendal's future resilience needs.



Negative aspects of the development proposal

Again these have been down-played. I recall from reading an SLDC document several years ago listing the reasons for and against the development proposal here that the nearby residents would just have to put up with the late night noise that would inevitably result from the night-club facilities. It callously put the need to fund the rugby club above the basic human rights of the nearby residents to get a good night's sleep. Unfortunately I have been unable to relocate this document on the SLDC website so I cannot remember the words precisely. I also recall (if my memory is right) that the number of people writing against the development *and who also gave their addresses* far exceeded those for the development who *also submitted their addresses*. The reasons against clearly outweighed the reasons for the development – even though attributes I've described above were down-played or ignored, yet the decision surprisingly came out for.

[Summary on next page]

Summary

The Rugby Club (/Morbaine) gained planning permission to destroy over half of the Strawberry field if they relocate here - despite huge local opposition. This planning decision is viewed by many as a big failure in the planning decision process due to the huge, strong and multi-aspect case against the development when set against the weak single-issue and minority support for it (although I accept that they need improved facilities – the case for not doing so in situ is the weakness).

Yours sincerely

Dr Henry Adams



Dr Henry Adams, Kendal, December 2011