

17th November 2005

Chief Planning Officer
Ryedale District Council
Ryedale House
Malton
YO17 0HH

Chairman: Mr W Worsley
AONB Officer: Paul Jackson
My Reference: 3.1
Your Reference: 05/01182/MFUL

Dear Sir,

Change of use of agricultural land to school playing fields to include 5 rugby pitches

I am responding as Chairman of the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Joint Advisory Committee to your consultation regarding the above proposal.

This application involves the conversion of agricultural land near Gilling village to sports pitches for St Martin's School, Gilling.

I have the following comments to make:

- In landscape terms, my Committee feels that an area of amenity land in this location would be a very incongruous feature in the local landscape. The playing fields would not be linked either physically or visually to any school or village settlement – they would effectively appear as an 'island' within an area of agricultural land. Current sports pitches at both Ampleforth College and Gilling Castle are closely associated with those establishments, such that they form an obvious visual link to casual observers. These proposals have no such link.
- When going west along the road from Gilling, which forms part of a popular walk for both local people and visitors, the landscape opens out soon after the Old School in Gilling village, giving uninterrupted rural views up the valley. This proposal would sit right in the middle of those views.
- The single-track road adjacent to the proposed sports pitches is a public road and therefore the applicant has no jurisdiction over it. My Committee feels that it is unrealistic to expect that school parents will park at Gilling Castle and walk down the hill. Consequently the road will become a linear car park, with cars pulled half-off the road onto the verge. This will create significant problems for both car traffic and the large farm machinery that routinely uses the road. It will also impact heavily on the enjoyment of local people using the road for quiet recreation.

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- No mitigating landscape planting has been proposed for the scheme, in an attempt to integrate it into the local landscape. My Committee feels however that the scale and location of the development is such that landscaping measures would not be able to mitigate its impact on the landscape.

In conclusion, my Committee wishes to **OBJECT** to this development, on the grounds that it would create an incongruous area of amenity land in a very rural setting within the AONB.

Yours sincerely

WILLIAM WORSLEY
Chairman
Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee