

From: [REDACTED]
To: wldp
Subject: RE: West Lothian Development Plan - Objection to Preston Farm Field Site H-LL 12
Date: 10 November 2015 08:16:28

Dear Sirs

Please note the below email we sent late last night, noting our objections to Linlithgow site H-LL 12, contained dates with wrong years in it. These dates were in paragraph 3 and have now been amended below to reflect the correct dates. Please use the below email for the purposes of noting our objections and confirm both that this has been done along with receipt of this email.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher & Andrea Rait

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: wldp@westlothian.gov.uk
Subject: West Lothian Development Plan - Objection to Preston Farm Field Site H-LL 12
Date: Mon, 9 Nov 2015 23:44:32 +0000

Mr & Mrs C A Rait

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

10 November 2015

Dear Sirs

West Lothian Council Proposed Development Plan
Settlement Area: Linlithgow
Site Location: Preston Farm Field, Site Ref: H-LL 12

We are writing to strongly object to the above referenced site being rezoned for the purposes of housing development. We are of the view and think it is vital Preston Farm Field (H-LL 12) remains as a Special Landscape Area and is protected as a

historic Greenbelt site.

Please note we make these submissions as individuals and are representing our own personal views. This is the first time we have made written representations regarding the West Lothian Proposed Development Plan. We would be grateful if you can acknowledge safe receipt of this email by return.

After roughly 2 years looking for a suitable family home in Linlithgow, within our budget, [REDACTED] was advertised for sale. We viewed the property immediately and for various reasons, (explained in detail below) made an offer over the asking price to guarantee we got the property. In October 2014 our offer was accepted and we became owners of [REDACTED] in February 2015.

Your Development Plan had not been published at the time our offer was accepted. We undertook research on the surrounding area and read the Council's own views published by your Environmental Department on Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and from what information was available felt assured that the special landscape area of Preston Farm Field right across the road from [REDACTED] would remain as such. This was a major factor with us proceeding with the house purchase.

Every front facing room in our home looks onto Preston Farm Field. We bought our home and paid a high price because the house was situated in a quiet community in the heart of Linlithgow whilst having almost 360 degree views of the countryside. Should site H-LL 12 be re-zoned for housing this would materially change the whole aspect of our property. The front view would be facing a large housing complex making it a far less appealing place to live and almost certainly diminishing the value of our property. Sunlight and light in general will be blocked to our property should any housing development take place on the site. That will be permanent as will the additional noise from having so many buildings and additional traffic literally meters from our property. Compensation would have to be paid to all homes affected in the area should Preston Farm Field be re-zoned. We will be seeking independent legal advice in the event the Council does not look at an alternative and proceeds to re-zone site H-LL 12.

We have 2 young children aged 3 & 8 years old who regularly play on [REDACTED] with many other children who live nearby. Again, the quiet, safe specific layout of the surrounding area was a main contributing factor in moving to [REDACTED]. Their safety and other children's in the community is of paramount importance to us. Any housing development on site H-LL 12 would undoubtedly put their safety at risk. The amount of additional traffic created would be significant and make it extremely dangerous for children playing in the community as they do now.

Traffic on Preston Road and Linlithgow High Street is at bursting point already. These are

the main roads that will be used both leading to and exiting any houses built on Preston Farm Field. Most, if not all houses built will have a minimum of 2 vehicles. This number of additional vehicles will cripple the movement of traffic on Preston Road, Linlithgow High Street, Friars Brae and Manse Road leading over Canal Bridge to Linlithgow Station. Furthermore school children's' safety will undoubtedly be jeopardised by such a huge incremental increase in traffic numbers on Preston Road where 3 schools have their main entrances. Unbelievably by re-zoning H-LL 12 for housing it is clear the site will actually fail a number of tests and criteria which are detailed in your own planning tests relating to the impact of traffic on the community.

Linlithgow schools near [REDACTED] are already having issues with capacity. Adding to overcrowding issues by creating large housing developments of the size proposed on site H-LL 12 will be to the detriment of all residents in the town but most importantly the children themselves as class sizes rise and teachers have trouble coping. Standards will undoubtedly drop in what is currently a respected school system within Linlithgow. The disadvantages to children and families may be irreversible.

Preston Farm Field adds to the tranquillity and heart of this area and to the Town. It massively contributes to its character. Taking away the only field in the surrounding area adds absolutely no value to the community, in fact it does quite the opposite. This piece of rural land is a historic part of Linlithgow and we understand has been protected for many many years. This has been done for good reason. It was historically part of the Grade A listed Preston House/Preston Hall Estate and remains on its boundary. To build on this site would be ruinous to the beautiful listed property and surrounding area. In our view it is the equivalent of building on the park area next to Linlithgow Palace. Again it provides no value to the town or its inhabitants. On the contrary it devalues the surrounding area and takes away what is a huge area of value from people like us who live next to it. Once gone it can never be returned and it is almost beyond belief when the Scottish Government is explicit in their guidance on protecting settings of listed buildings.

There are numerous environmental reasons to halt immediately all plans to re-zone H-LL 12. These include the impact on the bats that we see regularly that must be nesting adjacent to the field along with the many other types of wildlife. The birds of prey that we watch hovering repeatedly over the field will not be seen again by our community. Overnight they will be gone, never to return. Similarly we assume the Canal will be affected from the environmental aspects that will arise from a large housing development taking place a matter of meters away.

People who actually live in Linlithgow and care about this Town have produced "A Plan For The Future" via the Linlithgow Planning Forum. We are far more in favour of a development plan based on their proposals which focuses on additional housing on the other side of town. In particular, any large developments would be far better suited on the old hospital site. Although some of the issues and objections relating to site H-LL 12

also apply to that site there doesn't seem to be nearly such a detrimental impact when it comes to existing homes, traffic, safety, schooling or listed buildings. We used to be residents in St Magdalenes before we moved and were supportive of a scaled down development behind our building when we resided there.

What is clear is that site H-LL 12 should not be re-zoned now, or in the future, for the reasons we have set out above. Your proposed development plan should immediately be amended to reflect the views of residents of Linlithgow and so it doesn't contradict numerous departments within your own Council. They clearly state that historic long-standing greenfield sites such as H-LL 12 must be protected and are not suitable for housing.

In this case specifically, there is the adverse impact of traffic, on schooling, child safety, the character of the area, the environment and detriment to a very close listed building. All these factors, coupled with the fact that there are only disadvantages to the communities living next to the proposed site, (with no obvious benefit to the residents of Linlithgow as a whole), it is clear the proposed re-zoning of Preston Farm Field should not have been considered in the West Lothian Development Plan at all. As such it should be removed from the existing development plan with immediate effect.

We trust that the Cala Homes housing proposal, which seems to worryingly mimic your proposed re-zoning of H-LL 12, has not unduly influenced the judgement of those responsible when picking housing sites for the West Lothian Development Plan. It must be clear to those same individuals, that numerous other criteria stipulated by the Council as required when selecting a site suitable for housing categorically fall short of the benchmark in the case of H-LL 12.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher & Andrea Rait

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]