

From: [REDACTED]
To: [wlldp](#)
Subject: LINLITHGOW SITE HLL - 12 PRESTON FARM FIELD
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LINLITHGOW SITE HLL - 12 PRESTON FARM FIELD

I am making this submission as an individual representing my own views. This is my first representation on the Proposed Plan.

Whilst not opposed to the principle that further housing provision is required within West Lothian, I am however strongly opposed to the proposal that LINLITHGOW SITE HLL - 12 PRESTON FARM FIELD be re-zoned for housing for several reasons. My first contention is that before purchasing my property, which sits directly across from the field, I studied the current adopted Local Development Plan and noted the site was designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and outside the settlement boundary; with this information I telephoned West Lothian Council (WLC) Planning department for further comfort that the site across from my property would not be developed to which one of your colleagues confirmed that the AGLV as well as the setting of the listed Preston House protected this area from future development. As you can imagine I am less than happy that less than two years later WLC is changing its own policy on this important area which I think is severely misguided and flawed for the following reasons.

Re-drawing of the AGLV boundary – This is a ridiculous decision to now consider this section of the field, which is highly visible as you travel east along the A803 north of Whitecross, as no longer being of great landscape value when it clearly currently fits in with the wider context and character of the Bathgate Hills AGLV. The AGLV provides an essential buffer against urban creep into this important landscape so any future housing in this area would be contradictory to the purpose of the current designation. I can only imagine this has not been investigated fully as it would seem obvious to me that any future housing here would stick out like a sore thumb in the wider context of their surrounds and be extremely detrimental to the setting and character of backdrop of agricultural fields, Beecraigs Country Park, Cockleroy and the wider Bathgate Hills.

Loss of Listed Building Setting – Having seen an Ordinance Survey Map dated from 1856 of the former boundary of Preston House Estate and its associated parkland it is clear that this closely matches the existing Preston Farm Field boundary; any future housing would not only impinge on the setting of the listed Preston House but obscure views to and from the house and create a visual and physical barrier between the house and the Union Canal Scheduled Monument. Any development of this area would negatively impact the existing views toward the house enjoyed from my property.

Increased transport pressure and associated safety concerns – The resultant extra traffic from any new housing in Preston field could not be adequately coped with along the already extremely congested Preston Road. In the morning and evening this road, which already has traffic calming measures in place as well here and on the adjoining Riccarton Road, is extremely busy with commuters, and from the school run to the primary schools and high school. As the proposed housing area is further away than the advised distances from the nearest bus and train links it can only be reasoned that the car will be the primary mode of transport for any new residents to this area only exacerbating the existing issues and increasing the potential risk to the safety of pedestrians and motorists along Preston Road particularly during peak use hours. My understanding is that it would be incumbent on any developer building here to provide a supplementary access road to Preston Road for the Deanburn area which based on the existing infrastructure would be next to impossible, another compelling reason to remove this area from the proposed LDP. Any new access road into a new development is likely to be put right outside my house which would negatively the access to my property currently enjoyed.

Habitat loss and impact on wildlife – It is my understanding that the field provides an important habitat for the Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle and Naterreri species of bat in the mature trees within and surrounding the field and that loss of the field area could negatively impact these protected species. It is my further understanding that the Naterreri bat in particular requires darkness to reach its feeding area along the canal and that housing and the associated lighting would provide a barrier to this rare and important species.

Loss of quality farmland - I am also concerned that developing this field for housing will reduce WLC's net area of prime quality farmland of which there is, rightly, a national requirement to protect.

Impact on Scheduled Monument – I am concerned for the impact any future housing development may have on the Union Canal. Both the canal itself and the path along it are enjoyed by canoeists/kayakers, barge users, cyclist, horse riders, walkers etc. and Preston Field plays an important role in diffusing the impact as you enter Linlithgow from the west where the character becomes more residential.

Finally, having a vested interest in the WLC Local Development Plan (LDP) consultation I have become aware of Linlithgow Planning Forum's '**Linlithgow: A Plan for the Future 2015-2030**' proposal to be presented to WLC as part of this LDP consultation and have been impressed by their proposals contained within. I have been particularly impressed with how they have approached the shortage in housing by taking a more strategic view on the location of new housing zones on a more significant and meaningful scale and integrating those with proposals for the necessary transport links and provision for amenities such as schools and retail areas as well as employment areas. They propose significant housing provision to the south east of the town where it would seem only logical WLC should be concentrating their efforts also.

I trust you will reconsider proposing this area be re-zoned for housing and remove it from the proposed LDP.

Yours faithfully

Stewart Towers

