

Comments on Objections and Comments as summarised for the Planning Committee

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1	<p>- The area comprises a semi-natural habitat and screen between the rear of residential properties on Grimshaw Road and the school playing fields belonging to the Thomas Deacon Academy.</p>	<p><b>ADD</b> The Land Registry has confirmed that the roughly rectangular strip of land between a number of residential property and the school boundaries is not registered. The area is banked steeply on two sides of an old drainage ditch or culvert which runs along its length. It appears to have been reasonably well maintained, despite historic issues over current ownership and questions over whether if it is a ditch it goes anywhere else. A concrete cover may be an exit to an underground drainage system. If it is a culvert then the following applies to it: “Culverts are used to divert or drain water from land above it. They are enclosed watercourses and may be quite large. Responsibility to main a culvert is usually with the landowner for that part of it that is on the owner's land. This may be difficult if it is an old one and is buried beneath the ground and not visible. <b>Blocked culverts can cause the water to back up and prevent it from draining the ground above, as intended and may also collapse. They may also contain toxic gases and are dangerous to go into.</b> Knowing the identify of the land owners (or other land owners if you are one of them) over which a culvert runs will be of value to you in the event that the culvert becomes blocked and is or is likely to cause damage to your land, goods or local environment.” <a href="https://www.land-search-online.co.uk/portal/land-">https://www.land-search-online.co.uk/portal/land-</a></p>	<p>There is a very steep financial barrier to members of the public obtaining the necessary drainage maps from the Environment Agency. Since there is a concrete cover which could be an outlet or point of continuation to a potentially blocked drain, lack of knowledge is a safety issue. The remedies are: to ask the Environment Agency for their advice, to investigate the local history archives. I have examined the map on Fix My Street, which shows other water courses in the area and they could join up: possibly draining into the Dogsthorpe allotments.</p>

2	- Although no formal survey of the biodiversity value of this area has been carried out, observational evidence and recent informal surveys by local naturalists suggest that it has the potential to be a valuable refuge.	<b>UPDATE</b> A sadly brief survey is available at <a href="http://plandocs.peterborough.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01167451.pdf">http://plandocs.peterborough.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/01167451.pdf</a> and <b>DOES NOT WELCOME</b> the proposal. Comments by residents on wildlife observed provide more substantial background on a rich diversity of species seen in this area.	
3	- This area forms a corridor which may well be used by mobile species of birds and mammals.	yes	
4	- It is an increasingly rare habitat type in the local area. Indeed despite the relative proximity of Central Park - which is a formal managed landscape - there is very little semi-natural green space in Park Ward.	yes	
5	- The proposal threatens to do irreparable damage to this semi-natural habitat and its functionality removing any continuity along the corridor. It also compromises a riparian channel/drainage ditch. - It removes the part of the screen between the residential properties and the school playing fields which are used regularly for sports activities. As such there would be a child protection issues particularly if windows are installed.	yes	
6	- A dangerous precedent would be set where other residents may be inclined to simply extend the boundary of their own property where other residents may be inclined to simply extend the boundary of their own property effectively a land grab.	yes	

7	- There is hardly any semi-natural green space in Park Ward and it could set a dangerous precedent whereby other residents may be inclined to simply extend the boundary of their own property to effectively stage a 'land grab'.	yes	
8	- If the land is sold to the applicant please place a ban on removing the culvert.	This cannot be considered since the land is not the council's to dispose of at the moment.	I very much hope that the council will support a bid for the land from the Thomas Deacon Academy. It could help by providing fly tip removal services to clean out the ditch. The council could do this by 1) rejecting the proposal outright 2) insisting that the building is demolished, or taken back to the residential boundary 3) supporting residents in reinstating the residential gardens boundary fence (preferably by wildlife permeable means)
9	- Wildlife is slowly disappearing due to the lack of vegetation.	as a near neighbour, I share this concern. Sparrows and thrushes have recently disappeared from gardens in this area, despite very lush and large gardens. Sparrows have been brought back (by gardeners providing suitable food) but thrushes are very rarely seen: they need wild areas and small insects and invertebrates, which are under extreme pressure. To bring thrushes back we probably need an education programme locally to stop people using poisons in their gardens. It can be seen from the proposal itself that the resident sees rats as his only local wildlife.	The council needs to review available local services for rat control since desperate residents are probably contributing to wildlife decline inadvertently when they resort to using garden pesticides. There are walls of these wretched things in B&Q.

<b>10</b>	- The Grimshaw Road Wildlife Corridor contains a wealth of flora and fauna and connects with a further wildlife corridor located along the eastern boundary of the Thomas Deacon Academy.	<b>ADD</b> The ditch is a few metres away from the pond which was installed during TDA's construction in order to take surface water from the playing field. This is a large and valuable wildlife amenity.	The council could ask PECT if grant funding is available for an environmental restoration project like this, in such a rich educational situation (3,000 children are the immediate neighbours of this ditch).
<b>11</b>	- The proposal for the application for a storage building on the site at the southern end of the residential garden will block off the whole width of the corridor. This will effectively create two smaller wildlife sites which will not allow the free movement of wildlife at ground level and so the existing wildlife will be constrained and less viable.	yes	
<b>12</b>	- The suggestion of gaps in the brick wall will offer only a partial solution because larger mammals will not be able to use them.	yes	
<b>13</b>	- The Head Groundsman of the Thomas Deacon Academy advises that badgers are in the area.	<b>ADD</b> I have asked for help identifying the creature which has dug holes in a large mound (probably originally compost). 100% respondents tell me it is a badger.	

14	- In November 2002 Peterborough City Council published 'The Council's Approach to Biodiversity: Report of the Environment Select Panel'. It stated it would "Protect and enhance all sites and habitats of wildlife interest including the provision of wildlife corridors to establish links between sites of known wildlife interest. It listed protected species such as bats great crested newts dormice and 400 species of invertebrates. It further stated that "even small areas of suitable habitat can be of high value to invertebrates.	<b>ADD</b> I believe the value of even quite a small corridor is massively increased when it is in a predominantly urban setting. The countryside is increasingly toxic to wildlife. I had a very unusual visitor to my garden this year: a hummingbird moth.	
15	- The retrospective works that have been carried out have destroyed valuable ground environments. This is based upon the existing wildlife habitat on adjacent sites such as the removal of hawthorns which are capable of supporting holly blue butterflies.	<b>ADD</b> The unpermitted development has dumped unknown aggregate materials to form a rough foundation. This bridges the ditch/culvert and spills out to either side of the "building". In extreme weather it is possible this would get washed up and down the ditch and possibly even fail as a foundation.	The council should view this aggregate as illegal contamination of a valuable historic ecology and should enforce its removal.
16	- The proposal has already reduced insect life to the site which bats rely upon these insects	yes	
17	- The ditch is an historic watercourse as such there are likely to be riparian rights and responsibilities attached. The applicant appears to have ignored these rights and responsibilities.	<b>ADD</b> The rights and responsibilities exist even in the absence of a legal owner, and apart from the encroachments, appear to me to have been historically observed and undertaken	
18	- The site should be returned to its former condition.	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	

19	<p>- The Grimshaw Road Wildlife Corridor Group have identified dormice, hedgehogs, squirrels, foxes, toads and possibly badgers and newts. Badger droppings have been seen by the head groundsman of the Thomas Deacon Academy. Newts were seen on the site several years ago and may still be present. Bats regularly feed above the wooded areas. There is also a wide variety of flora on the site including hawthorn and a rare Smooth Leaved Elm (Ulmus Minor). Also many wild birds use the site (several of which are declining in other areas and some which are protected). As such the GRWC Group would like to see a professional wildlife survey carried out in the area.</p>	<p><b>ADD</b> Reptiles, birds and Invertebrates should also be listed. The presence of the UK's largest land predator means that the biodiversity here is likely to be rich and strong, as I would expect, given the site's history and existing and previously supportive neighbours.</p>	

20	<p>- The proposed structures are not attractive. There are no details submitted to identify the specification of the brick and tile types used.</p>	<p><b>VERY STRONGLY AGREE AND ADD</b> photographic evidence has been obtained to show that the building is composed of breeze blocks to the TDA facing elevation and to both long sides. The structure has never been permitted, not properly finished (the roof tiles do not extend as far as the wall), is very ugly, is profoundly unneighbourly and is a monstrosity in a previously inoffensive residential landscape. The “shed” overlooks TDA, which was constructed at immense cost to be an architectural gem in the landscape and to lift the aspirations and expectations of children studying in the school. The “shed” is positioned behind the goal post on the football field, so will be part of the landscape for huge numbers of children playing there. It is like something put up in distress in a shanty town. It is not suitable for the city of Peterborough.</p>	<p>The council needs to examine what support is made available to local builders and to residents: this is not the first example of an outrageously bad unpermitted development in this area. It seems that developers are getting no advice from the council. And that builders are not advising residents on correct procedure. However in the short term decisive and high profile action is needed to remove this structure and the council must make people understand that it will not tolerate unprofessional building behaviours.</p>
21	<p>- The height of the retrospective building is excessive compared with a traditional garden shed.</p>	<p><b>ADD</b> The proposed use is garden tools and childrens’ toy storage. The building is out of proportion for its intended purpose. In addition the rat hole which the resident has inserted (a mockery mitigation for hedgehogs) render it unsanitary as a storage facility for children’s toys.</p>	
22	<p>- The height to the eaves of 2.7 metres is excessive especially when it is viewed alongside the considerably lower (1.830m) boundary wall.</p>	<p><b>STRONGLY AGREE</b></p>	

<b>23</b>	- No details have been provided with regards to the composition of the landfill material and whether there is an infringement of legal landfill and taxation costs.	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	
<b>24</b>	- It is surprising that PCC could permit a development which is in contravention of riparian rights and responsibilities. Who would take action?	<b>DISAGREE</b> It would be outrageous.	The council needs to get a firm handle on this. Although it is not the landowner, it does have power to refuse the application and enforce demolition. The council needs to support TDA, as the optimal bidder for the land. The TDA is supportive, but quite correctly it needs the encroachments firmly dealt with and the boundaries settled before it takes action to bid. There is also no reason why it should bear the cost of fly tip clearance, although it (along with residents along Grimshaw Road) TDA might need to assist in providing access routes for waste disposal.
<b>25</b>	- No comments have been received as to whether the proposal breaches the requirements of the PCC Biodiversity Strategy (December 2018) Objectives 1 'Biodiversity in Planning' and Objective 7 'Awareness raising'.	My opinion is that it does.	
<b>26</b>	- Have Officers inspected adjacent sites and the remainder of the Grimshaw Road Wildlife Corridor. The application site is considered to be an important part of the corridor?		
<b>27</b>	- There is no doubt that the site is frequented by dormice bats and badgers (protected species).	<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	



28	- Natural England advise 'Access between setts and foraging / watering areas should be maintained or new ones provided.	yes	
29	- Has the local badger group been informed about the planning application?		
30	- The ditch has a history of holding potential flood water at times of high rainfall and would have provided a refuge for amphibious creatures. In light of forecasts of heavier rainfall resulting from climate change further encroachment of this ditch should not be permitted.	<b>VERY STRONGLY AGREE</b>	The water table can and occasionally does rise above the level of the land in this area and cause flooding. This is due to the soil being river silt, which easily forms a waterproof clay like layer. The value and utility of soft absorbent land next to highly compacted land (football pitch) cannot be overstated. TDA has sited its composts under the trees next to the ditch. This is extremely helpful as the composted materials add humus to the soil, massively increasing its absorptive capacity. Climate change means much heavier and more extended periods of rain, especially in summer and we live in a landscape which is simply not accustomed to these conditions. The way we garden has become critically important.

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