

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appeal by Northern Trust

ref. APP/N2345/A/11/2145837

Site at Tanterton Hall Road, Ingol, Preston PR2 7BY

SHORT FORM

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Of

ALAN BROOKES BSc CEng MICE

On Behalf Of

INGOL GOLF VILLAGE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (IGVRA)

1.0 Witness Experience

- 1.1 I am Alan Gwyn Brookes. I am a retired Chartered Civil Engineer with some forty years experience in the design and construction of major projects. I have a detailed knowledge of the development site having lived local to the golf course, in The Avenue, for some twenty three years. I have enjoyed the open space that the course provides for recreation since it was first opened in May 1981.
- 1.2 I am appearing as a witness on behalf of the Ingol Golf Village Residents Association (IGVRA). I have been a member of the IGVRA Committee since a public meeting in February 2010. That meeting was attended by some three hundred plus residents.

2.0 Ingol Golf Village Residents Association (IGVRA)

- 2.1 The Ingol Golf Villages is the generic name given primarily to the housing developments which were an integral part of the development of the Ingol East area by the Central Lancashire Development Corporation (CLDC). The objective of the Association is to preserve and enhance the quality of the local environment for the benefit of the community.
- 2.2 The Association actively encouraged the local community to attend the 'IngolVision' presentation by Northern Trust in February 2010. The Association have since hosted further public meetings, including an open 'drop in' meeting and also local presentations by Preston City Council to the local community, through the 'Citizen Zone' bus, to better communicate the Northern Trust proposals to develop the golf course.

3.0 A major open space provision serving the north west of Preston

- 3.1 **Development of Ingol East** - Draft CLDC Outline Plan proposals incorporating the golf course included for a range of facilities for use by the community; namely, squash and tennis courts, a bowling green, a small swimming pool.
- 3.2 As a master planned whole, the provision of a significant open space and a golf course as part of the development of Ingol East would have relevance for the developments at Cottam and Cottam Hall. The provision of infrastructure over the past thirty five years has clearly been based upon the Outline Plan. The completion of the development at Cottam Hall is currently being master planned on behalf of the Homes and Communities Agency. The inference must be that the original concept as proposed by CLDC is still valid.
- 3.3 **Ingol East: Open Space provision and Public Access** - The Ingol Golf Course was integrated as a whole with the then concurrent development of the several adjacent housing

estates to form the Ingol Golf Villages.

- 3.4 The development plan details as approved by the Secretary of State at that time refer specifically to the Ingol Golf Course lands as 'Public Open Space/Golf Course'. The intent is clear. the Ingol Golf Course land as a whole is to form the recreational open space provision for the immediately adjacent Golf Village housing estates as well as for the wider area. This is supported by the numerous public access points to the open space built into the development as a whole. Indeed access is a significant feature of the proposal.
- 3.5 **Background to the Procurement and subsequent Sale of the Ingol Golf Course -** Through a well thought through procurement strategy CLDC obtained a substantial open space at effectively zero cost and potentially set up a mechanism, through the golf course, in which that open space could be maintained. The golf course opened in 1981 and was designed, executed and marketed as a 'Championship standard' course. The layout of the course has been described as 'challenging for the better golfer'.
- 3.6 In April 1985 CLDC transferred the freehold to Hemm-Inns, 'a well known locally based leisure operator' for £50k, debt free, cancelled the lease with the then operator and transferred it to Hemm-Inns. A covenant restricting use to playing golf was extinguished.
- 3.7 CLDC were intending for further investment in the golf course as a leisure facility for the community, possibly in line with the Outline Plan. The community and golfers would contend that the intended investment never materialised resulting in the current Planning Application and Appeal.
- 3.8 **Defence and Statutory Protection of Open Space Provision and Public Access -** The planning designation of Open Space/Golf Course and the concept of Access have been carried forward in the Fulwood and Western Suburbs Plan and the Preston Local Plan 2004; endorsed through public consultation.
- 3.9 **The Central Lancashire Local Development Framework Core Strategy -** The value placed on these lands is fully recognised in the ongoing future planning of the City and wider urban area. The concept of the open space as an 'Area of Major Separation' between Ingol/Tanterton and Greyfriars/Cadley has been included in the Submission Version of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy document. The planned intent is that this area is the whole of the Ingol Golf Course land as a minimum. The Core Strategy document includes Cottam as the Strategic Site in the north west of Preston.
- 3.10 **Prematurity -** The Planning Application clearly goes against the planning intent in the Core

Strategy and the vision for the future growth of Preston.

- 3.11 The development could undermine key strands of the Core Strategy. The development of Cottam Hall is a key element in the housing provision in the Core Strategy allied to the Cottam Strategic Site, as is the development of the Cottam Brickworks.

4.0 A very special resource still needed by the Local Community

- 4.1 The Government, in PPG 17, recognises the very special role that open space and recreational provision play in the lives and health of local communities. Ingol Golf Course represents a very special resource in many ways not least because it is within the very heart of the community and was developed as part of and to serve that new residential community.
- 4.2 The golf course, whilst it was well maintained, was enjoyed by the better golfer, as various comments will testify. By its very location the golf course was readily accessible to the local catchment and community, and had strong youth and seniors sections.
- 4.3 The clubhouse was also well used as a venue for social functions.
- 4.4 The squash courts were well used, Ingol being a member of a local squash league. The squash club had recently returned to use the two courts.
- 4.5 The Ingol golf course complex is a facility which was intended to be and was at the heart of the leisure and recreational activity in the community.
- 4.6 The golf course land is crossed by numerous dedicated walking routes. As such the open space that the golf course provides has been used in its entirety for casual recreational walking and related pursuits since inception. It provides a pleasant and rewarding semi rural area within the existing urban boundary with a variety of wildlife.
- 4.7 I consider that the original concept of the golf villages estates, fully integrated with the open space/golf course providing for an excellent setting with its open views, is fully justified
- 4.8 The community have had and still enjoy the un-opposed use of the golf course land as recreational open space. The open space that the whole of the Ingol Golf Course provides very much defines the whole character of the area. It cannot be said in any way to be surplus to the recreational requirements of the community and in this and other respects the proposed development clearly conflicts with PPG17.

5.0 A development that the Local Community does not want

- 5.1 It has been apparent to the golfing community and the local community that the condition of the golf course proper and the open space provision, particularly the infrastructure, has been

allowed to deteriorate over the years.

- 5.2 The Association came into being prompted by the closure of the Ingol Golf Course in January 2010 and the subsequent announcement by Northern Trust of the 'IngolVision' presentation. From the outset there was almost unanimous opposition to the prospect of development of the golf course and the loss of the open space. That opposition has remained consistent over the ensuing 18 months as proposals were publicised, a Planning Application lodged and this Appeal pursued by Northern Trust.
- 5.3 The requirements of PPG17 that the developer should demonstrate categorically that there is community support for the proposals to develop this recreational open space have in no way been met.

6.0 An unnecessary development that will not increase housing supply.

- 6.1 The claim by Northern Trust that the golf course is needed to provide enough housing land for the next 5 years ignores the economic conditions that exist today and the uncertain and slow recovery that is anticipated.
- 6.2 Evidence commissioned for the Submission Core Strategy (the ECORYS study) and statistics from the Council for Mortgage Lenders and the Land Registry suggest that the actual demand for housing is set to remain depressed for a number of years.
- 6.3 In these circumstances the consequences of planning permission being granted will not be that more houses or affordable units are delivered over the next 5 years but instead that:
- ◆ few if any units are completed on the application site
 - ◆ any units that are completed are likely to be almost wholly offset by lower sales and fewer completions on other nearby sites

7.0 A development that does not deliver any other significant Local Public Benefit

- 7.1 The development proposals lead to the loss of significant recreational open space. There is little included in the Applicant's proposals that would in any way mitigate this loss to the local and wider community as the community have enjoyed un-opposed access to the whole of the recreational open space/golf course since inception.
- 7.2 The link to the Guild Wheel could be provided without the necessity of the proposed development.
- 7.3 The offer of some 500 sq.m. for an as yet unspecified 'community facility' without significant ongoing funding in no way compensates for the loss of the golf course as a facility for the

youth of the area, for the loss of the club house as a focus for the community, for the loss of the squash courts or for the loss of the open space/golf course for casual recreation.

8.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1 The development of Ingol East lead to the concept of the Ingol Golf Villages which provided for recreational open space within the context of a golf course fully integrated into the housing provision. This concept has been carried through all subsequent Local Plans and is embodied in the LDF Submission Core Strategy.
- 8.2 The Ingol Golf Course was sold to Hemm-Inns, as a developer of leisure interests, with the intent that the recreational and leisure aspects might be further developed. That further development and investment has not happened.
- 8.3 The local community has had un-opposed access since the inception of the Ingol Golf Course and continues to utilise the whole of the area as recreational green space. The Golf Course, Squash Courts and Clubhouse were a well used and highly valued resource that contributed much to the life of the local community. Their decline and closure has come about through a lack of investment and proper management and maintenance. The Appellant has not demonstrated that the course and associated facilities are surplus to the wider recreational requirements of the local community.
- 8.4 The proposal is directly contrary to past, and present local planning policies and conflicts with the emerging vision, objectives and strategic policies for the area as set out in the Submission Central Lancashire Core Strategy..
- 8.5 The current proposal to develop housing on Ingol Golf Course has little or no demonstrable support within the local community to the standard required, indeed the local community have been proven to be almost unanimously against the proposal.
- 8.6 Little or no additional housing is likely to arise from the development of Ingol Golf Course. The proposed development of the Ingol Golf Course will be in direct conflict to and have the potential to undermine the completion of developments which are a Core Strategy priority.
- 8.7 The proposal to develop housing on the Ingol Golf Course does not offer to deliver any significant local public benefits in terms of open space provision and access; community facilities or infrastructure.