

Seacourt Application APP/23/00415

Lesley,

I am aware that since Joseph Toole left you have picked up this application. Having had time to review the two new documents added to the application in terms of the bat survey and Venta acoustics response letter I would like to make the following comments (I would be grateful if these could be added to the application for consideration as part of the decision-making process.)

Regarding the Baseline Bat Survey

I note with interest they have recorded 22 bats over the site over a 16-day period. I also note that one of their key mitigations to protect the bats is

“Addition of natural screening with native UK trees and shrubs (hazel, hawthorn, holly, yew, hornbeam, crab apple, dog rose, field maple). New vegetation will take time to contribute to light attenuation.”

I question how this can possibly be achieved considering they have already removed significant natural screening and will need to remove more to install the courts, once these are installed this will leave minimal access around the courts for pedestrians and spectators which is already likely to be insufficient based on Seacourts stated aspirations.

The reality is from its existing position natural screening will be massively reduced and there is nowhere I can see that any new planting could be provided and still allow pedestrian and spectator access

Regarding the Venta acoustics report

This report is obviously intended to challenge a well-considered EHO assessment, as previously there are several anomalies/ contradictions which I would like to raise

In its first section A

the response states

“We believe that our report adheres to best practices and current guidelines, indicating that the proposed development is expected to result in acceptable noise levels and not significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.”

This is not a correct or a true statement as their original report recognized that they would exceed the accepted noise levels they stated

“While the predicted LAeq,1hour levels at the first floor level of three properties to the south slightly exceed the LAeq 50dB limit suggested by Sports England, the levels at ground floor level and at other dwellings meet the suggested target and are commensurate with the existing ambient (LAeq) sound levels in the area. It is offered that as the courts are only available for use during the day and there are no first floor balconies the external sound levels at ground floor level are more relevant. At ground floor level the sound levels meet the requirements of Sports England and the existing acoustic is not expected to be increased or compromised by the proposed padel courts. At first floor level the increase in ambient sound levels is moderate and would not be at a level that would interfere with normal use of the dwellings.”

They have assumed as “normal use of the dwellings” a traditional housing layout with living areas downstairs and bedrooms upstairs and have missed the fact that due to the Sea Front nature of the properties mentioned they have their living areas on the first floor so would be most affected by the decibel level they have assessed as been above the acceptable sports England levels. This would mean our daily living and ability to open rear facing upstairs windows for ventilation would be significantly affected by noise levels in excess of recommended guidelines. Venta have clearly confirmed this by their statements shown above.

In the second section B

the response totally ignores the point the EHO is making regarding the NPPFs requirements to consider the cumulative effects of the additional courts which would raise the courts from 2 to 4 along with the associated spectator noise related to this increase. To argue that due to there already being tennis courts in place we should accept the additional noise which they admit is above recommended levels is unfair

In the third section C

The EHO states that

“Guidance specifies that development should be avoided where noise is disruptive. Disruptive outcomes can include changes in behavior or diminished quality of life due to noise. “

Venta state

“The predicted sound levels are at levels that meet guidelines and are not expected to lead to material changes in behaviour.”

This is not a true statement they have admitted in their original report (see quote above) they exceed acceptable limits at first floor level and have completely missed the fact that both dwellings have first floor living areas.

In the fourth section D

Again Venta refer to daytime noise levels being acceptable I believe based on a belief that the upstairs of the houses are bedrooms, as stated they are not.

They mention that the use of the courts could be controlled through condition however this could not be used to reduce noise levels in our daytime living environment

They also state they have only considered the cumulative effects of the two padel courts when assessing noise and have not addressed the cumulative effects of all 4 courts

In the fifth section E

They again state the report shows compliance with Sports England Guidelines yet they have openly stated in their original report that it does not.

The rest of the response and its conclusions continue to make statements that do not align with the original report not to mention the different findings of the additional acoustic report provided by an alternative independent expert which showed noise levels to be higher.

I also note that as ever, no allowance has been given for the right of the properties to the south to enjoy peaceful use of their gardens where noise levels would be significantly higher.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any points please feel free to contact me

Best Regards

[Redacted text]