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# Djarragun College concerns

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A DECISION that allows Djarragun College to expand its Gordonvale campus without council approvals has fallen foul of residents, who fear their idyllic rural lifestyle will be lost if the school grows.

Residents say they will fight a decision by Cairns Regional Council that allows Djarragun to "self assess" construction and land usage on its entire block without having to go through the red tape of council approval processes.

But Djarragun 's owners insist they have gone far enough to appease the concerns of neighbouring residents, and would not negotiate further.

The council this week approved an extension to the Djarragun College Planning Area - a special planning code that allows the school to develop its land without subjecting plans to public notification.

Residents in the area are fearful that proposed sporting fields on Dexter Rd would attract large crowds of spectators, and require flood lighting after dark. Cairns Regional Council this week approved an extension to the Djarragun College Planning Area - a special planning code that allows the school to "self assess" construction and land usage on the Maher Rd property.

The code was designed to give Djarragun similar development rights as state schools, which can build new education facilities on campus without going through the red tape of a public notification process.

The unique guidelines initially only covered part of the school's land, but the expansion approved by the council on Wednesday allows Djarragun to develop its entire lot.

Residents have vowed to fight the council's decision, fearful that proposed sporting fields will attract large crowds of spectators, and require flood lighting after dark.

"We're in a rural area down here and we all paid good money for our blocks," resident Phil Harvey said.

"They can do what they like over there (at the school) but we don't want football

matches at eight o'clock at night and we want to know that our property is secure."

Mr Harvey was among a group of residents that negotiated with the school over the terms of the relaxed planning codes.

But the group says their concerns haven't been eased, and they would consider appealing against the council's decision pending legal advice.

The division's councillor, Paul Gregory, said he would prefer to see the dispute settled outside an appeals court, and hoped negotiations between residents and the school could continue.

However, general manager of Cape York Partnerships, Adam Peut, said the school's new owners were intent on optimising the use of the site.

"(The college ) won't be actively negotiating outside of the council's current restrictions, which it believes already goes more than far enough to prevent any adverse impacts on residents," Mr Peut said.