24 February 2019

Dear

Ref: Planning application 2019/90190 Land adjacent to 1 Low Gate, Kirkburton HD8 0SE

In response to your letter dated 6 February 2019, I wish to raise the following objections to the planning application referenced above.

Road safety and car parking

In my opinion, not only is this application detrimental to the immediate locality, it actually poses a danger to residents and other road users for these reasons:

Low Gate is a narrow street which is split into 2 sections, with the top section being one-way only and the lower section accommodating two-way traffic. The car parking space adjacent to the top section is well-used throughout the day and evening. There is a considerable amount of traffic which passes down Low Gate and into Low Town, some of which (especially delivery vehicles) experiences difficulty in navigating the tight turns to access the existing properties. Some vehicles travel at a speed which is unsuitable to the narrowness of the road. The lines of sight are already restricted and require careful preparation for manoeuvring and I note that the highways Department classes them as sub-standard. Two of the proposed properties are planned to have vehicle access directly to/from this very junction which will add to the potential for accidents. The third property has planned access from Low Town itself, which is heavily congested with car parking on a daily basis. The potential for increased danger to drivers and pedestrians is self-evident.

Additionally, the traffic issue is compounded at the beginning and end of the school day, as parents park where space is available and then walk their primary school age children from the car to the school or back again. Adding to the existing numbers of vehicles using these already congested roads presents an increased risk to this specific sector of the community, our own young people.

I note that the application states that, because garages and driveways can accommodate 6 vehicles, there will be low impact on parking for current residents. However, I also note the comments about the size of the garage spaces being inadequate to meet planning regulations as well as those about the likelihood that properties of this size (total of 11 planned bedrooms) will probably be bought by families owning two vehicles or more. Any impact on the availability of car parking for current residents is detrimental as noted above.

Low Town is also used by farm traffic in the course of farm work (tractors and substantial equipment) on a daily basis, which requires additional space to pass through safely.

Kirklees MBC has already taken steps to manage the level of car parking in Low Town for the benefit of current residents and granting this application would be contradictory to its own judgement in this matter.

Proximity and overlooking

Each of the properties on the opposite side of Low Town (numbers 8 - 18) opens directly onto the footpath, which is approximately 1 metre wide. The footpath on the side of the proposed development is of a similar width in Low Town and non-existent in Low Gate. The road at this point is at its narrowest. It would seem most unlikely that the minimum acceptable distance between windows of adjacent properties (21 metres) will be achieved, in particular with respect to numbers . The footpath to one side of Low Gate is a similar width. The application does not appear to meet Kirklees own policy in respect of privacy.

The proximity of 3 substantial properties to existing ones will result in the adverse impact on current residents of being overlooked from close quarters and the consequent invasion of their privacy. The site will be so built on that the effect will be of living looking onto a wall which is closer to all our homes than the existing land.

Drainage and potential flooding

As the owner of a property badly affected by previous flooding, I am very mindful of the Environment Agency registration of parts of Low Town as flood zone 3. Despite the improvements made via the replacement of the Victorian culverts, the drainage has to be a concern especially with the removal of the absorbent properties of the natural site (trees of variable maturity and soil) and its replacement with non-absorbent buildings. Additional buildings with drainage joining the system at a stress point where the culvert under Low Gate meets the drainage running down Low Town are unlikely to do other than increase the risk of flooding either through pressure on the drains or increased surface water.

From previous experience it is known that flooding at this pressure point also affects the stream to and the public car park on Riley Lane.

It is debatable whether the proposed development is more than 20 metres from running water (as stated in the application) as the stream runs under Low Gate.

Conservation area

Existing properties within the conservation area are mostly of two-storey construction and built of natural stone. They are mostly in a cottage style. To describe 2 of the proposed properties as cottages is disingenuous, given that they will include integral garages, terraces and driveways as well as being of significant height in relation to other properties immediately adjacent. There will be significant and adverse effects on the overall look and feel of the conservation area if this modern development is allowed to proceed.

Nature, wild life and loss of amenities

Prior to the removal of the trees from the development site, the area was frequented by numerous birds (including owls) and bats, protected species which have been effectively removed from the area. There are no proposals to replace any of the trees with new planting. This substantially detracts from the previous small area of greenery within the conservation area.

The removal of the trees has already adversely affected the environment by increasing the level of noise heard from the B6116 (George Street and North Road) by the properties in the area. The proposed construction of the 3 properties will not mitigate against this but will rather add to the level of general noise experienced by neighbouring residents.

The low-lying nature of the conservation area has been, to some degree, off-set by the view over it which can presently be seen from George Street towards All Hallows Church and the trees of the churchyard. Combined with the trees formerly growing on the development site, this created an attractive aspect. Not only have the trees on the development site already been lost, with the effects noted above, the proposed buildings would block this view as well, thus depriving residents of the conservation area and visitors to the area of another previous positive feature.

Summary

This application should be refused on the grounds of public (especially road) safety, the proximity of the development to existing properties, and the adverse impact on the conservation area in general.

Yours sincerely,