
ref Planning Application 2019/62/93124/W

Applicant

Down to Earth

Location

Land east of, Hillock Farm, Dean Road, Holmfirth, HD9 3XB

15th October 2019

To whom it may concern

I would like to lodge my objection to the above application in the strongest possible terms. This application is outrageous on so many levels. It has inaccuracies, untruths and I also suspect very dubious neighbour submittals. Most importantly a large amount of the work has already been carried out, without planning permission.

On Monday 12th August 2019 following a conversation with planning, I emailed my complaint about works being carried out on the site, in my opinion unlawfully (COMP/19/0236).

I pointed out that a gateway had been created onto the road without any application or permission. I also attached a google streetview photograph proving there was never an entrance there (re-attached). The application talks about the gateway and wall being improved yet the wall was in good order and the gateway never existed. I questioned the legality of a track being built across the agricultural land and for what purpose it was. I also questioned what the track was made of. Where has the track surface material come from? Is it stone contaminated by asbestos, or any other substance, from a nearby mill demolition? If so the applicant's claim that the land is uncontaminated would now be incorrect.

Hannah Thickett who is handling my initial complaint at Kirklees planning has visited the site and advises me that the hard standing being applied for, is already present. Has that been made using any contaminated materials?

The application refers to neighbours' comments of support. Who are the neighbours making comment in favour of the application, before the application went in? Whilst I can't speak for them, I would strongly doubt it is any of the families (the nearest properties to the east of the site). My initial complaint about the activities was made with their blessing. The comments may have come from . I believe he formerly owned the land. If so it would be in his interests to sell the site at the maximum value possible. There are no other neighbours so who the 4 comments are from is, in my opinion, suspect. The comments also bear a striking resemblance in tone to each other and I would question if they were possibly from the same hand...and maybe signed by others. It certainly merits questioning.

Hannah Thickett advised me, after her site visit, that to the best of her knowledge, the works carried out for wood / log processing could only have been done if the trees were coming from that site. They are not, and I don't believe the applicant owns or has access to the adjoining woods. The application intimates that the wood will be brought in. This is green belt agricultural land, not a site for someone to ride rough-shod over the laws and set up a business.

The application makes the comment

This is not visible from the road and has actually improved the area and nice to see a

thoughtful and practical improvement that should be encouraged rather than a lot of the uses that this land could of been used for that would detract from this area.

What is meant by that? It reads to me like a scare statement as it is green belt agricultural land. What other uses could it be used for? Is he implying housing? The site has a new entrance screened by saplings which would be befitting to housing. If so is the actual intention to use the hard standing area to apply for a residential dwelling in the future and then more houses after that? The standard of the gate and wall works and planting of saplings seems over the top to process some logs. The appearance of the track across the field, in my opinion is certainly not an improvement!

I also note that the field has a fence erected around 1/3rd in from Hillock Farm. Why? Does the applicant not own all the land or is it being split up for other uses/reasons? At the time of my complaint in August, Hannah Thickett advised me that there was nothing on the Land Registry to lead her to who the land owner actually was. Has this been resolved?

To the best of my knowledge the application should be posted at the site. It is not. If it was it has now been removed, preventing any of the many people who walk daily on Dean Road from knowing about it. Not everyone looks at the planning portal. I look every 2 days and still missed it.

Dean Road is a narrow rural road which is now experiencing increased traffic, partly as a way to avoid the centre of Holmfirth but largely due to the much increased housing which is appearing in the village. The road is relatively flat, for the hilly area, and therefore is used by a great number of walkers, particularly the less able and mustn't be allowed to have increased commercial traffic accessing this site. In places the road is too narrow for 2 cars, in places there is a dangerous and deep drainage ditch at the edge of the road, often hidden by the uncut grass and at no point is there a pavement. The newly created gateway is on a stretch of road with poor visibility and I would question whether it meets Highways Department requirements.

At this point I haven't considered the impact on wildlife and the noise of log cutting machinery in a peaceful and tranquil area. Whilst isn't overly populated I would imagine the noise would be an appalling intrusion to the lives of those who do live nearby. One chain saw makes a dreadful noise, the prospect of a processing facility must be a nightmare.

I would like to state that I have no connection to the site or any knowledge of the applicant or reason to bear a grudge. I write as a resident of Upperthong, and strongly feel this application must be rejected, and the green belt / agricultural land be returned to the condition it was in earlier this year. It cannot be right that someone can come along and just do what they want and worry about the formalities later. The Council and Planning department must be firm and not be bought by a few (untrue) nice words about improving walls and gateways and the planting of some trees. They must not be bought by shallow words of creating or maintaining local employment and certainly must not fall for the threat of a *"lot of the uses that this land could of been used for that would detract from this area"*. It is green belt agricultural land and must be kept that way.

At the time of writing, I am waiting for Hannah Thickett to call me back with an update to my complaint of 12th August 2019 . I would appreciate if you could keep my contact details confidential, however you are welcome to contact me regarding my objection and earlier complaint