

Dear Kirklees Council,

This letter is sent to outline the strong communal opposition alongside my own, to planning application number 2020/92307.

As a member of the Lepton/ Fenay Bridge community, having contemplated various commentaries including those of the community, developers, council and planning inspectorate concerning the development of HS2 (previously H2684a) & HS3 (previously H2730a), several questionable issues protrude that must be answered in the process of this application.

- **How will the proposal effect the curtilage of Woodsome Hall, a grade 1 listed building (Historic England id: 1184158)? Where is the heritage impact assessment for Woodsome Hall for this application?** The lack of heritage impact assessment within this application concerning this high-ranking heritage asset is vexatious. By the same means, prior to and within the local plan hearing the omission of such a heritage impact assessment obscured the allocation given to HS2 (H2684a) & HS3 (H2730a).
A **statement by Historic England**, post local plan examination hearing, **clearly sets out what recommendations would be presented if they were consulted on the development of sites HS2 (H2684a) & HS3 (H2730a) with regards to the impact on Woodsome hall.** This can be found at: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/planning-policy/pdf/examination/additional-information/Huddersfield/HD2-4-Historic-England.pdf> .
- **Kirklees council has a duty to protect Heritage assets within its area, in this regard Historic England's professional evaluation concerning development of HS2 (H2684a) & HS3 (H2730a) must be taken into consideration within this (HS2; H2684a) and future planning (HS3; H2730a) applications.**

As such, following is Historic England's assessment of Woodsome hall with regards to HS2(H2684a) & HS3 (H2730a) which wholly pleads my objection to this planning application on this particular heritage issue:

"3 Impact of the proposed allocations on Woodsome Hall

*3.1 Woodsome Hall is a very fine example of a hall house built between the early C16 and mid C17. In plan, the building is H-shaped, which is typical of many of the gentry houses built in West Yorkshire around this period. The timber-framed, open hall is the most characteristic room of the **medieval house and the one at Woodsome is one of the largest in the county.***

*3.2 Although for many properties from this period it was generally the building itself which was designed to impress visitors rather than views out towards the surrounding landscape, **the siting of Woodsome Hall on such a commanding position overlooking the valley of Feney Beck and its easterly orientation would indicate that views from the Hall were considered to be important. Indeed, the importance of the view eastwards from Woodsome Hall is reinforced by the fact that the vast majority of similar gentry houses of this period had their principal elevations facing in a southerly or south-westerly direction.***

3.3 The grounds of Woodsome Hall have undergone considerable alteration and remodelling as part of its current use as a golf course. Whether the tree belts which frame the view eastwards from the Hall and its terrace were planted deliberately to focus the viewer, the enlargement of these woodland areas during the C20 has had the effect of directing the eye of the viewer very much upon the hillside opposite.

*3.4 **Whilst the immediate setting of the Hall may have changed considerably in the C20, what is particularly notable when comparing the 1893 OS First Edition map of this area***

with the corresponding one today, is how little wider landscape outside the grounds of Woodsome Hall has changed. Despite the growth of Fenay Bridge southwards, the prospect from the Hall and its terrace is still, essentially, that of an agricultural landscape, the pattern of fields and woodlands little changed in over a century. Whilst the field structure is an Enclosure landscape, relic medieval remnants are still evident.

3.5 The rising hillside with its patchwork of fields and woodland is extremely prominent in views from not just the terrace of Woodsome Hall but also the all rooms on its eastern elevation. This rural setting, therefore, makes a very important contribution to one's experience of The Hall and to the significance of this Grade I Listed Building.

3.6 Occupying, as it does, the higher land, the development of virtually all of Site H2730a, would be particularly noticeable in views from the Hall, the only area unlikely to be seen from the terrace or easternmost rooms being the field to the south of the Grade II Listed Crow Trees on Rowley Lane (about which Historic England has already submitted comments). It is likely that less of Site H2684a will be visible from Woodsome Hall, much of the westernmost field (adjacent to Site H2730a) and the southern end of the easternmost field (alongside Penistone Road) being largely screened by existing woodland blocks from the Hall. However, the eastern half of that part of the site adjoining Penistone Road would be visible from the Hall (especially from its first floor rooms). Indeed, there is a particularly fine view across Site H2684a towards Woodsome Hall from the car park of the office buildings on Woodsome Park.

3.7 The development of both these sites as is currently proposed will impact upon views from Woodsome Hall harming an important element which contributes to the significance of this Grade I Listed Building. The development of Site H2730a, because of its position higher up the hillside, would completely destroy the rural prospect from the terrace and from the principal rooms on its eastern side. The loss of, what is at present, an attractive agricultural landscape and its replacement by a very large housing estate would cause considerable harm to the setting of Woodsome Hall. Indeed, the urbanisation that it would cause would change the perception of Woodsome Hall being an impressive gentry house lying within, and commanding views across, the open countryside to a building which is sited on the edge of a large built-up area. Because Site H2684a is more screened from the Hall, some residential development could be accommodated on parts of that site without intruding on views from the Listed Building. However, the higher part of the area alongside Penistone Road would be visible from the Hall and, thus harm the Hall's rural setting.

4.4 Conclusions

4.1 Given the contribution which both of these sites make to the setting of Woodsome Hall, had Historic England appreciated at the time of the Publication Draft the impact which their development might have upon the significance of this high-Grade Listed Building, we would have sought the production of a Heritage Impact Assessment to evaluate the potential impact of these allocations upon Woodsome Hall. Indeed, there is almost certain that Historic England would have objected to both these allocations, as currently proposed, because of the harm they would be likely to cause to Woodsome Hall.

4.2 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF sets out a requirement for Local Plans to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 132 of the NPPF makes it clear that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and explains that significance can be harmed by development within its setting.

4.3 The development of these sites would result in the loss of an area of countryside which makes an important contribution to a Grade I Listed Building. In terms of NPPF Paragraph

134, this is likely to constitute less than substantial harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset (albeit in the case of Site H2730a towards the higher end of the spectrum). Whilst the degree of harm may be less than substantial, nevertheless, it would still be causing harm to a designated heritage asset considered by the Government to be of the highest significance and to which the greatest weight should be given to its conservation. As such, therefore, **the development of neither of these sites, at present, would deliver sustainable development in terms of protecting and enhancing the historic environment, it would conflict with one of the Government's Core Planning Principles** (that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance), nor would it be likely to provide the positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment that is required for Local Plans.

4.4 Had Historic England made representations regarding Woodsome Hall, we would have proposed that:-

(a) Site H2730a should be deleted

(b) Site H2684a should have an additional Site Specific Consideration added along the following lines

5 "A Heritage Impact Assessment including, as appropriate, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility, shall be produced to evaluate the impact which the development of this area might have upon views from the Grade I Listed Woodsome Hall. No development should take place on those areas of the site visible from the terrace or principal rooms of Woodsome Hall".

The above document may be found at: (KMC local plan examination library, section 15, Huddersfield (HD2), ID26, HD2.4 Historic England). For reader clarification H2730a refers to site HS3, H2684a refers to site HS2 (the subject of this planning application).

- **Has a heritage statement and impact assessment for Woodsome Bridge a grade 2 heritage asset (Historic England id: 1135320) been submitted?** If so, where can this be found? The proposed infrastructure is within its curtilage and will have effect on its setting. Is this bridge capable of withstanding more traffic without damaging the asset?
- Furthermore, The position of the proposed roundabout will without doubt redirect traffic from Penistone Road to Woodsome Bridge/ Woodsome Road. Is the blind corner/ narrow road on the grade 2 listed bridge acceptable to accommodate such traffic?
- Any (roundabout) connection between artery routes such as Penistone & Wakefield roads which allows easier ingress /digress of Huddersfield town centre through villages is a concern. The proposed infrastructure will potentially create a commuter run through Lepton (Rowley lane) and Almondbury (Woodsome road/ Saint Helens Gate/Somerset road) villages. Logically imagine the routes, the rights of ways and lack of traffic lights, this is inevitable. This route passes two schools (Rowley lane junior, infant & nursery school; King James's school).
- **Why is this planning application/ infrastructure for HS2 (H2684a) been considered in isolation of HS3 (H2730a)?** A joint masterplan (HS2 + HS3) was a requirement of planning proposals within the local plan hearings.
- **What social value does this planning application generate?** (Please may I have a copy of the council's social value policy & developers social value framework if submitted, by return). As

sites HS2 & HS3 have no doubt caused a significant level of public spending over the many years of planning system considerations.

- **Existing demographics** of the community (high population of retired people and family's) **creates suboptimal access to local authority services** (NHS surgeries, Schools), such planning proposals will only cause further depredation. **How will this social impact be mitigated?** Judging by the community responses to this application (to 22/08/20), and inevitable future development (HS3) this issue is palpably distressing for local residents, residents relying on already over stretched services supported & provided by KMC.

Yours Sincerely