

About the application

Application number: 2020/92657	
What is the application for?:	Erection of 10 classroom teaching block and formation of car parking area with a
Address of the site or building:	King James School, St Helen's Gate, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD4 6SG
Postcode:	HD4 6SG

User comments

Type of comment: An objection

I object to the application on the following grounds:

1. The impact of the proposed development on the designated heritage asset and its setting
2. The impact of the proposed development on the openness of the green belt
3. The impact of the proposed development on highway safety

1. There have been several extensions to the school over the last century, of varying quality, but all have been relatively sympathetic to the listed buildings fronting onto St Helen's Gate, in their use of stone and their pattern and proportions of fenestration. The use of brick on the proposed new building is inappropriate in relation to the heritage asset and wider conservation area, where local, natural stone is the dominant material. The overall design is uninspiring and feels as though it has been lifted from an urban context. It would feel incongruous in the rural setting of the Woodsome Valley.

2. The current school buildings are relatively low-rise and do not dominate the landscape when viewed from Woodsome Road and elsewhere in the Woodsome Valley. In contrast, the position of the proposed building on the edge of the site, and its height relative to the adjacent sports, would have an impact on the openness of the green belt and be highly visible. If Kirklees is minded to approve the application, it should be conditional on the planting of appropriate trees between the new building and playing fields to lessen the visual impact from Arkenley Lane.

3. The transport statement downplays the safety issues associated with St Helen's Gate and the use of it by parents and staff for parking.

Paragraph 2.3 of the Transport Statement states that:

'St Helen's Gate is a two-way single carriageway route providing access to the north towards the village of Almondbury. It has a typical carriageway width along its length of 5m with a footway provided to the west of the carriageway.'

This is not an accurate description of the road which has several pinch points. The stretch of road immediately above the school entrance narrows to 4.2m and the pavement is only 1.1m along most of its length. This narrow section of road is used for parking by parents at drop-off and pick-up times and by staff and visitors during the day. Cars often park on the kerb forcing school pupils and other pedestrians, including those pushing prams to walk in the road.

There is clearly a problem with parking at the school but there are often spaces in the carpark when cars are parked on the narrow stretch of St Helen's Gate, close to reception. There is no mention in the Transport Statement of the the various visitors to the school during the day, including an influx of invigilators during exam times, who feel it is acceptable to park across residents' driveways.

Visitors will continue to park on St Helen's Gate as it is more convenient. The provision of additional spaces within the school grounds will only be a 'betterment to the existing situation' if they are used in conjunction with parking restrictions along St Helen's Gate with a combination of parking permits for residents and double yellow lines.