

HG/JC/2666

11th August 2020

Kirklees Council
Development Management
PO Box B93
Huddersfield
HD1 2JR

Dear Sir/Madam

**Change of Use of Former Public House to Education Centre and Prayer Room,
at The Nelson Inn, 145 Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury WF12 9DW**

Please find enclosed a planning application for the change of use of the former Nelson Inn to an Islamic Education Centre and prayer room, at 145 Slaithwaite Road, Thornhill Lees. Dewsbury.

The pub has been on the Market with Fleurets for over 3 years and closed at the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic in March this year. The last owners were struggling to make a living from it, resulting in the premises being put on the market for sale. Since being on the Market there has been little interest from any potential purchaser. Nationally the economic viability of public houses has fallen, so the chances of new landlord/landlady for the pub being found seems remote.

The applicant wishes to change the public house into an Islamic Education Centre and Prayer Room. Currently there are no places of worship or educational facilities that serve this group in this area.

The proposed development will serve a maximum of 15 students at any one time. The establishment will be used between 4pm to 8pm with classes predominantly taking place between 4:30pm and 7:30pm. The building will also be used for morning prayers by up to 10 adults. These are 15-minute sessions, that take place at times between 5:30am in the summer and 7:00am in the winter. Similarly, there will be an evening prayers session at times between 8:30pm in the winter and 10:30pm in the summer.

The proposed development seeks the change of use of a former public house which has an adjacent parking area suitable for 7 or 8 cars to park off the street and safely turn round before existing the site onto the highway. We therefore believe that the proposed development will not impact upon highway safety.

The other planning policy consideration relates to Local Plan Policy LP48 Community Facilities and Services.

Amongst other things the policy states

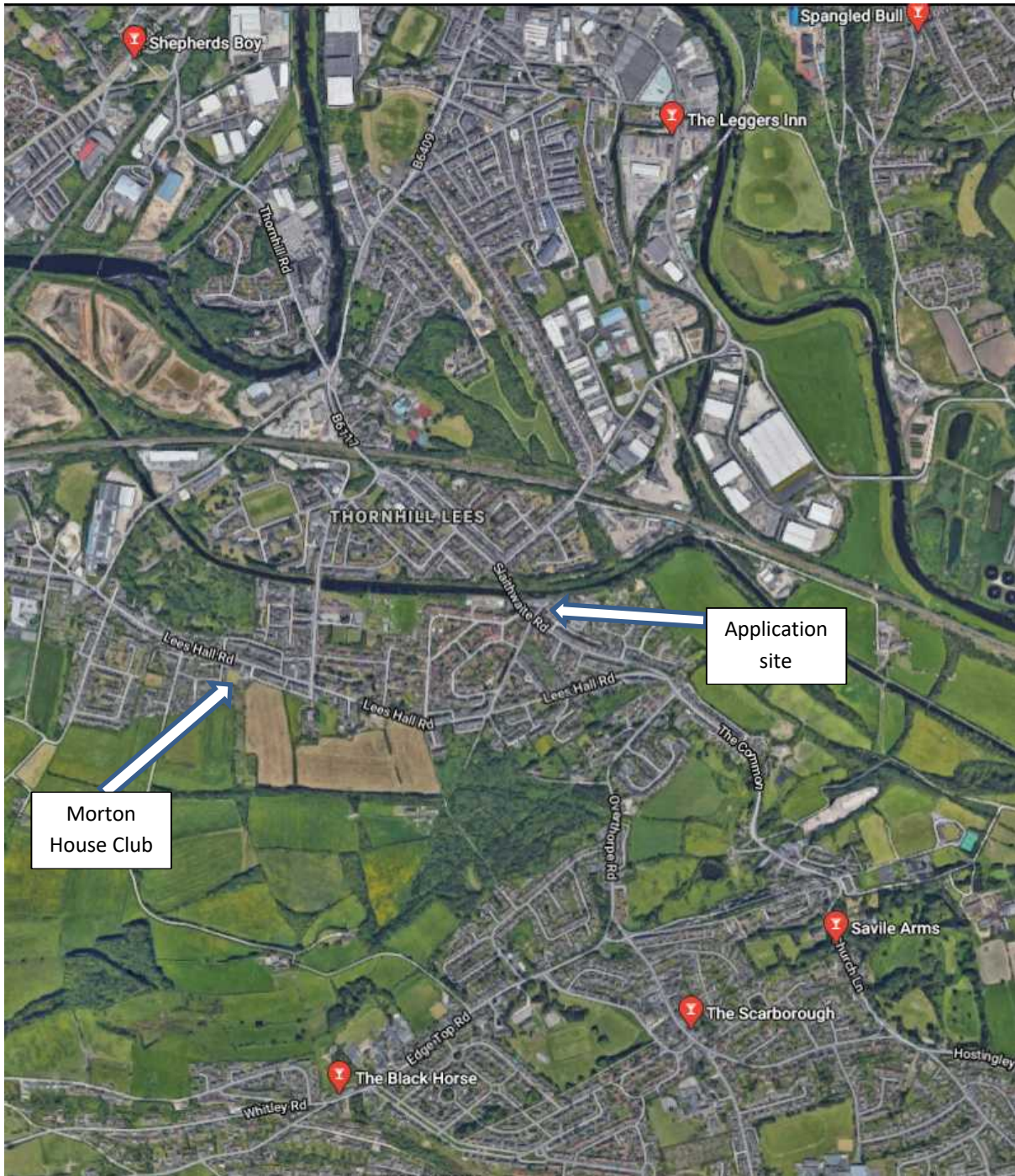
“Proposals which involve the loss of valued community facilities such as shops, public houses and other facilities of value to the local community will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there is no longer a need for the facility and all options including the scope for alternative community uses have been considered; or***
- b. its current use is no longer viable; or***
- c. there is adequate alternative provision in the locality to serve the local community which is in an equally accessible location; or***
- d. an alternative facility of equivalent or better standard will be provided, either on-site or equally accessible; and***
- e. any assets listed on a Community Asset Register have satisfied the requirements under the relevant legislation.”***

In this case it should be understood that there is no longer a need for a Public House in this location. The make-up of the Thornhill Lees community has changed much over the last 15 years, with much of the population being predominantly Asian and with that change, the need for a Public House has declined. The Nelson Inn used to be a viable business, but cultural changes to the local community as well as national trends which has seen the closure of many public houses, means there is no longer a demand for a pub in this location. The proposed development does however create a Community Facility that meets the needs of the local community and therefore the proposed development accords with part (a) of policy LP24. Furthermore, the lack of need for the public house means it is no longer viable, which is reflected by the fact that the premises have been actively marketed for over three years with no interest. The proposed development therefore accords with part (b).

In terms of alternative provision for public houses (c) there are a number of other public houses in the area. The closest being Morton House Club on Lees Hall Road, approximately 750m to the west of the site. The Scarborough and Saville Arms public houses are both within a kilometre of the site to the south and to the north is the Leggers Inn in Saville Town and The Shepherds Boy on Huddersfield Road.

The location of these alternative facilities can be seen on the aerial photograph below:



The proposed development accords with part (d) of the policy as an alternative community facility will be provided on the site.

Finally, in terms of LP24 the Nelson Inn is not listed on the Community Asset Register.

For the reasons above we believe the proposed development accords with LP24 and will not have a detrimental impact on Highway Safety. The proposed development will provide a much-needed community facility, for which the community have been searching for a number of years to find suitable premises. The proposed development will ensure a long-term sustainable use for the building, which if left vacant is likely to

fall into disrepair and detract from the character from the area, as well as the other problems that such vacant buildings bring such as anti-social behaviour

In light of the above we believe the proposed development accords with both national and local planning policy. I hope you agree that the information above and the attached plans are sufficient for you to validate and subsequently approve this planning application.

Yours faithfully

Hamish Gledhill BSc (Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI

