

Objection to Planning Application 92846 – Land to Rear of 51-53 Huddersfield Road

Context

Whilst the site is listed as 'Midway House, Rear of 51 and 53 Huddersfield Road it is actually quite remote from these two properties.

The site has been unmanaged over the last few years and allowed to deteriorate. The application does not acknowledge that the field, once an orchard that is overlooked, and in the past used by neighbouring properties, might have any amenity value.

The application is in outline only but regardless, very little context is given for the proposed development. Even the adjoining cottages are not considered in any detail, despite the proposed private gardens extending up to the rear face and windows of the existing properties.

Whilst the proposals describe the site's proximity to the commercial centre of Meltham, the field is actually part of a series of green spaces which run continuously down to Meltham Mills along the southern border of the old railway lines, now the Greenway.

Traffic Proposals

Our main objections, at this outline stage, relate to the over-development of the site with regards to increased traffic and parking.

Parking

The current site is infrequently used by delivery vans and occasional car parking for employees of the business at Midway House, with provision for approx. four parked cars. The proposed vehicular plans allow for an additional 10 parking spaces with a total provision for 14.

Two of these parking spaces take the place of an existing historic barn, demolished as part of the plans. The barn is shown clearly in historic local maps dating back more than 100 years and is arguably of some heritage value.

Highways

From our family's experience of the site, it is clear that the traffic to and from the site will be significantly increased. Access onto Huddersfield Road, from the narrow driveway has always been a problem, given its location onto a busy street between a bus stop and zebra crossing close by.

The proposed modification to the Grade II listed wall appears only to be the minimum to accommodate the sweep of a fire truck. Whilst it may increase visibility to a small extent it does not go nearly far enough in addressing serious safety concerns associated with this restricted access point to the busy street.

The traffic proposal requires much more detailed consideration in order to improve sight lines, and allow vehicles to safely filter into traffic, before it can be considered to be practically viable.

Wildlife

The trees identified include two mature apple trees, once believed to be part of a larger orchard, and considered to have some amenity value.

The existing barn was locally known as a bat roost until very recently when the roof has been allowed to deteriorate and then partially replaced.

Heritage

The barn is an independent structure which may, or may not, have historically had a connection with the Grade II listed, Midway House. This building has been neglected by the present owner but whilst the roof is in clear need of maintenance, the primary structure appears to be solidly built and largely intact.

The application gives the structure no more architectural or heritage value than the 1980's additions to Midway House, which is clearly not the case. Extensions to the rear of Midway House appear on historic maps of the area similar to the current footprint. A detailed assessment of the potential heritage value of the existing extension is not given.

There is also a small outbuilding which is within the applicant's ownership, but not mentioned in the application. This has received little or no maintenance over the years and there are concerns over what purpose this structure will have and who will maintain it in future.

Privacy and access

Whilst it is understood that the application is in outline only, the plans have been developed in sufficient detail

In addition to the greatly increased provision of cars to and from the site, the planned road arrangement infringes on the privacy and access to the existing neighbouring properties. The turning circle for all cars to the new and converted properties will be just 7m away.

Of more concern, as the proposals stand, the garden of the new-build property will extend right up to the external wall and living room windows removing their privacy, view, and any access to the rear of their properties to allow for cleaning, repainting,

maintenance and repair. A note is included in the proposals indicating that a slither of land might be available for the existing owners to buy, should the application be granted permission. This is effectively coercing the residents to pay (an undisclosed sum) to retain these basic requirements that have been taken away by the development. There has been no consultation on this issue and no offers made on either side.

Access to the rear of the existing properties is essential for upkeep and maintenance and should not come at the expense of enforced acquisition of land dictated by the potential development.

Removal of the existing properties' privacy and the negative impact on their living conditions is our key concern were this application to be granted and developed in detail.

Summary

We kindly ask Kirklees Planning Department to please take into consideration our concerns, listed above, and to reject the proposals at this stage.