

32 Hart Street
Newsome
Huddersfield
HD4 6LS

18th August 2021

Nick Hirst
Kirklees Planning Service
Kirklees Council
PO BOX B93
Civic Centre III
Market Street
Huddersfield HD1 2JR

Objection to planning application 2021/91638 – Hart Street, Newsome

Dear Mr Hirst,

I'm writing on behalf of the Newsome Mills Campaign. We wish to reiterate our objection to planning application number 2021/91638.

We have previously shared our concerns about the potential loss of a key part of our local heritage. Those concerns remain. We are also committed to helping residents to have a voice in what happens to all parts of the Newsome Mills site, and we are concerned about the potential impact of these proposals for local people. We would therefore like to share some further comments based on the latest information from the applicant.

Drainage

The correspondence included in the drainage assessment report shows a lack of understanding about the source of the water flows into the mill ponds, from both parties. For example:

"We have no idea the flow rate coming in."
(Adept to Yorkshire Water, 30th June)

"Any idea of where the piped WC system originates?"
(Yorkshire Water to Adept, 10th August)

"Sorry – the origin of the piped watercourse is unknown."
(Adept to Yorkshire Water, 10h August)

Newsome Mill Ponds are fed by a network of land drains laid in a herringbone pattern down the hillside between Castle Hill and Newsome village. The land drains were established in the early 19th century have been feeding a system of sustainable drainage for Newsome village for 200 years.

The correspondence also shows assumptions are being made about whether the ponds are impermeable:

“You can only assume the ponds are impermeable but have no proof. This introduces a risk to our network when you have the watercourse in full flow and the site in full flow.” (Yorkshire Water to Adept, 1st July)

This lack of understanding is very concerning for residents, who are rightly asking for clear information about how the natural water flows would be safely diverted. The report highlights that the incoming water would need to be diverted on private land, and that this would be outside the boundary of the development. This is also worrying as it's unclear who would deal with this, when or how.

The view shared in the application that “by connecting on to the sewer in Newsome Road we are only short cutting the path it (the water) used to take into the sewer” fails to acknowledge the role of the mill ponds in storing such a high volume of water and keeping the local watercourse in balance.

Trees

The arboricultural information shows that most of the mature trees along Naomi Road would be retained. This is essential as these trees are part of the character of the area. The plans seem to suggest that the southernmost wall of the nineteenth century pond may be retained. As this is vital for the stability of the trees, we would like to see further detail about what would be retained, and how this would be done. Without a method statement, it's difficult to be confident of what would happen in practice, especially given the sloping site and difference in ground levels between the road and the current level of the pond.

Planned removal of all the street trees along Hart Street, with no new street trees incorporated into the treatment of the site boundary, would be a great loss for residents here. In the latest site layout, almost the entire of the boundary along Hart Street has been taken up for parking spaces and a new roadway to give access into the planned development. No provision has been made to plant street trees along Hart Street, which would provide some visual relief for residents. This development would result in a very significant loss of amenity greenspace, and no mitigation has been offered for the residents of Hart Street in particular.

Ecology

The ecological survey provides further evidence of foraging bats on the site and confirms that the mature trees and open water are valuable habitat for bats. It also comments on the mixed habitat on site being good for wildlife. As there would be no body of water retained on the site, the main supporting habitat for bats and several species of birds would be lost. There is no mitigation given for

the loss of the ponds. The potential loss of amenity value and damage to people's wellbeing also needs to be considered alongside the ecology report.

Public Open Space

The Kirklees Conservation and Design team have commented: "The open space and stand of trees contrast to the industrial and residential streetscapes which enclose the site along Naomi Road, Newsome Road and Hart Street. Thus, the site currently retains a valuable visual relief and a wildlife habitat in this urban area." The only Public Open Space allocated in the plans is an area right next to the busy main road, which seems to be more of a short cut footpath from Naomi Road into the planned development than a space where anyone could spend time or interact with wildlife. For near neighbours and those from local day centres and schools who currently enjoy watching the wildlife on the mill ponds, this offers little respite.

Parking and access

The latest site layout would necessitate loss of all the current parking space along the southernmost side of Hart Street, along the site boundary. This is a further loss of amenity for local residents and visitors who currently rely on the street parking. Some properties in the plan have direct vehicular access to Newsome Road, which being a main road out of Huddersfield has a high volume of traffic. As the site is very close to the busy crossroads in Newsome, this should be taken into consideration. Where there are existing driveways directly off Newsome Road, there isn't this kind of parking arrangement on both sides of the road in the same location. We'd like to know whether the safety concerns previously raised by the Kirklees Highways team have been addressed.

Streetscape

Given the prominence and sensitivity of the Newsome Mill Ponds site, understanding how the proposed housing would fit in the existing streetscape is important. So we would like to see some streetscape designs that make clear how the planned development would sit alongside the existing buildings, streets and trees. This is a complex site, not level, and is part of the historic Newsome Mills site which is of significant heritage value for Newsome. We feel this warrants better visualisations (not just generic housing types shown in isolation) to help residents understand how the development would look in our neighbourhood.

It would be particularly helpful to see perspective drawings of the development from neighbouring streets, including the environs. There is still no information in the application about how the proposed development would impact on the setting of other buildings on the Newsome Mills site, including 2 to 8 Hart Street and the Coach House buildings along present day Ruth Street.

No information has been given about possible retention of the 19th century culvert. It is unclear whether this would be retained or where the ground level in that part of the site would be in relation to the culvert. These are important considerations for residents who care about our local heritage.

Confirming our objection

Other than the plan to retain almost all of the mature trees along Naomi Road (which is an expectation, given their significance for the area and the Tree Preservation Order that is in place) nothing in the new information provided by the applicant has changed local people's views about how damaging this development would be for Newsome.

Circumstances have changed since the outline planning application of 2016. We have a Local Plan for Kirklees, demonstrating an adequate supply of land for housing. The Newsome Mill Ponds site is not allocated for development in that plan. We would like to see the decision about this application viewed in that light.

We ask you to give fair consideration to the loss of amenity for local residents, the potential damage to the character and visual relief of the area, and the impact that loss of this urban greenspace and wildlife habitat would have on the wellbeing of local people.

Yours sincerely,