

**From:**  
**To:** [DCAdmin](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Application 2022/91735  
**Date:** 20 July 2022 16:21:32

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Please find attached some thoughts on the above planning application.

I look forward to confirmation of its safe receipt.

1 Great Wood Gardens

Lepton

Huddersfield

HD8 0EX

16<sup>th</sup> July 2022

To whom it might concern,

Re Application number 2022/91735

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the above submission

While I understand, and accept, the pressure upon local councils and the government, to provide more housing, I do feel they have other duties toward the environment. In particular I do not understand why Kirklees Council considers this same site no longer needs to be protected when a few years ago it was arguing with, and funding, opposition to a developer with similar ambitions for the green field site. On that occasion the central government inspector ruled that this

particular site should remain a permanent open space, and that the view from the woods across the valley should be preserved.

Is Kirklees so short of brown field building land that they have to release this land to such a large development, in such an environmentally sensitive area? I suspect not.

It does feel as though the gathering of local views is part of a statutory process rather than a truly genuine consultative exercise with local people, but I am prepared to be proved wrong hence my contribution to the debate.

I believe people living in the Lepton area are very much opposed to this development in total, not just because of the need to protect the beautiful and unique setting of Lepton Great Wood, but also out of a genuine and serious concern regarding the impact it will have on the infrastructure of the village. These concerns would include traffic issues on Rowley Lane and the proposed site access via Hermitage Park exiting onto a potentially dangerous bend, on a very busy road; a road which becomes almost gridlocked at school drop off and collection times.

Having lived almost 30 years on Rowley Lane I am aware of a marked and recent increase in road traffic, particularly post co-vid.

I suspect some of this undoubted increase has been prompted by the increasing use of Sat Navs which are selecting Rowley Lane as a direct route without regard to the existence of a large school and the significant traffic that attracts. This recent traffic increase is not restricted to cars but includes agricultural vehicles and heavy lorries.

I believe any new traffic survey would confirm the increased traffic flows and would expose the dangers of attempting to bring the additional traffic from the proposed development through the narrow road on Hermitage Park and deliver into Rowley Lane on a relatively dangerous and obscured corner.

I really hope that Kirklees planning authorities will feel able to re-visit this proposal.

If the development is approved at some level then I really feel the access/exit route should be via the proposed roundabout on Penniston Road and not via Hermitage Park. I appreciate the developer may prefer to avoid this expense.

In addition I have genuine concerns about the ability of the village to absorb the very significant numbers of people and families who would accompany this development. Is there spare capacity at the local school's, nursery provision, GP and health services etc?.....I doubt it.

What will be the impact on the wildlife that enjoys this woodland environment. I feel I have been fortunate, over the years, having observed an abundance of birdlife and wildlife in and around the Lepton Great Wood including foxes, badgers, deer, and birdlife includes woodpeckers, most species of tit's, jays, nuthatch, hawks and numerous bats. Will their populations survive such a development?.....I doubt it!

I suspect that, despite all the above, the development will go ahead in some form as these points have been put forward in many earlier submissions, and set aside. If that is the case then I would like to raise one further point.

I understand that Lepton Great Wood is both regarded as ancient woodland, and a site of special scientific interest (SSI). Government guidance and advice to local authorities making planning decisions near such sites published on 14/1/2022 includes a number of recommendations relevant to this site.

It recommends that councils should refuse planning permission if the development will result in a loss or deterioration to the natural environment unless there are **wholly exceptional reasons**.....I do not think anyone would argue that there will be no loss or deterioration to the environment with this development..... are there wholly exceptional reasons to proceed ..... I doubt it.

The guidance also refers to the use of buffer zones as a way of mitigating the effects of development on adjoining ancient woodland and understands that the buffer zone should vary depending upon the scale and type of development **and** its effect upon the woodland.....and then states that larger buffer zones are more likely to be needed if the surrounding area is less densely wooded, close to residential areas, and steeply sloped. It appears that all three indicators for a larger buffer zone are met on this occasion and yet the submitted plan appears to have included the absolute minimum buffer zone, presumably to maximize the number of properties that the developer can accommodate on the site.

If this development is to go ahead in some form then I would ask that Kirklees look very carefully and the buffer zone with a view to increasing it significantly in line with government advice. This would help minimise the adverse impact on the wildlife environment and help preserve something of Lepton Great Wood's natural setting and the views across the valley offered from the footpaths within the Woods which were identified as worth preserving by an earlier government inspectors report.

With thanks