

OBJECTION – Land adjacent to 21 Thomas Street, Lindley, Huddersfield, HD3 3JJ – Outline Application for a Care Home (Use Class C2) of up to 60 beds with associated access.
Application No. 2022/92194

I refer to the above Planning Application validated on 22nd June 2022 submitted by Walshingham Planning & Knutsford Cheshire on behalf of Muller Property Group – address unknown.

The area of land comprises 0.267 hectares of brownfield land fronting Thomas Street and Vine Street, Huddersfield from a site formerly a children's home and later an office and with parking. The unit was single-storey and was demolished in approximately 2012. Planning permission was later granted for 12 housing units (Application No. 2012/90951).

The ownership of the site is in question. It is assumed that Kirklees Borough Council own the site when used for a children's home with office. The site is currently owned by Unit 5 Enterprise Court, Fairfield Park, Rotherham. The ownership name has been redacted from the Web. The current Applicant does not own the site and has served notice on this address in Rotherham.

I have lived in Lindley over 30 years and I am very familiar with this site and the whole village. Lindley has grown out of all proportion during the 90's and early part of this Century with brownfield site housing developments having taken place on every available plot with a result that must be now more than 1,000/2,000 recent housing units built in Lindley in the last 30 years, each unit having at least 2 cars, creating an overwhelming amount of traffic. Schools and doctor's surgeries and general retail provision has not taken place to balance this rapid increase in population.

Car ownership in England has grown from 4 million in the 1970's to 40 million at the current time and demand for parking space and road space is therefore at a premium. Parking spaces have unfortunately been removed and road spaces and carriageways have remained unaltered with the result that the highway situation in Lindley is catastrophic. One of the main arterial roads out of Huddersfield passes through Lindley to obtain access to the east and west routes along the M62. Return trips follow the same route.

The Application site is on one of these routes and a busy bus route. As Lindley has become busier with cars it has also got busier with people and some of the small businesses have been upgraded and the viability of Lindley High Street has improved which has resulted in additional traffic issues and there is nowhere to park in Lindley except for one or two appropriate areas.

I am very concerned that they are now proposing to build a 60 bedroomed care home on this small site. The development will be 2.5 storeys in height and take up most of the site. The building will comprise approximately 2.5 thousand square metres gross internal floor area which is far larger than the floor area of the single-storey building which previously occupied the site. The building will cover most of the site and, therefore, constitutes over development and will leave no room for an open or garden area for the residents and their visitors to enjoy, it will be very depressing and will not help the resident's mental health and well-being. A garden space is very important for health as many people have come to realise during the Covid pandemic.

I think the opportunity for this site would be to provide a short stay car park to serve the small businesses in Lindley and also the doctor's surgery adjacent to the site which is being overwhelmed by new patients and no parking provision is available save for opportunist on street parking and the small car park within the doctor's curtilage providing approximately 6 spaces.

The proposed development incorporates 21 spaces but the presumption is that 60 beds will be 60 patients who could each have a car and a ratio of patients to staff 1 carer to 2 patients would result in a requirement for 90 car parking spaces. There would also be visitors (2 or 3 per resident) to the care home, the majority of which would also arrive by car. The 21 car parking spaces provided would be grossly inadequate.

The Applicants would say that the site is close to public transport there being a bus route and bus stop adjacent. However, human nature being as it is, people would use cars to travel the smallest of distances rather than use public transport. I therefore come to the conclusion that this proposed use is inappropriate on this site as it would generate too much traffic in the area without provision for parking vehicles and vehicle movements and would therefore compromise highway safety and would have severe residual accumulative impacts, meaning that the proposal is not acceptable in terms of the NPPF 2021.

I would suggest that if a care home is to be built other sites should be investigated and there is one major site nearby in the form of Oakes School, Oakes Road, Huddersfield. This building is a Grade II Listed Building and is in a considerably bad state of repair and is being vandalised on a daily basis. It is also unsightly as it has been set on fire and not repaired. It is however located near to the centre of Lindley and in a location whereby visitors, staff and the general public could access the area and park safely off the road without detriment to highway safety or having residual accumulative impacts. The development of this site for a care home would also ensure that the Listed Building is brought back to its former glory as an attractive Victorian building with substantial architectural interest and disperse traffic onto New Hey Road.

I therefore object to the proposed care home on highway grounds and suggest that as there is a need for care homes generally, that Oakes School, Oakes Road, should be considered as an alternative site and appropriate action taken to ensure the acquisition of Oakes School and its reinstatement as an attractive Grade II Listed Building with an appropriate use such as a 60 bedroomed care home.

A 60 bedroomed care home on the proposed site would decimate Lindley Centre and create a traffic maelstrom. It also constitutes over development as there is no open area only a 3-storey building.

The opportunity should be taken to rectify the failings of the past by providing a short stay car park (with charges if necessary) and by redirecting the care home development to save the Grade II Listed Oakes School.