

PLANNING APPLICATION 2022/62/92356/E
CLOUGH HOUSE, 236 LEEDS ROAD, BIRSTALL, BATLEY WF17 0HW

Erection of 17 dwellings and change of use and alterations to Clough House and Barn to form 6 flats (Listed Building)

The latest development proposals for Clough House represents a significant improvement to the original plans submitted in December 2020 and facilitates restoration of the historical building which is a positive for the community and the environment. However, the proposals would benefit from some amendments to avoid negative impacts for the residents of existing dwellings immediately neighbouring the site on Moat Hill Farm Drive and the dwellings which access Moat Hill Farm Drive from Rose Terrace, Jason Terrace and Leeds Road. I wish to make the following representations:

- **New Access from the Clough House development via Moat Hill Farm Drive**

Whilst the application would suggest that there is an existing access and that traffic levels are low, this is not an accurate statement. Traffic surveys used to support the application are out of date and precede the new residential development built on Moat Hill Farm Drive in 2020. I have lived on Moat Hill Farm Drive for 32 years and therefore feel qualified to comment on traffic levels in the context of road safety for both road users and pedestrians. Moat Hill Farm Drive is the highest point above sea level in Howden Clough and is exposed to high winds and severe ice during inclement weather conditions. The gradient of the road and a sharp bend at the top of Moat Hill Farm Drive combined with an ill placed access point on the bend for the new houses, is a cause of concern as a number of near misses have occurred and delivery or service vehicles have at times been unable to access the residents' homes at the top of the road or within the cul-de-sac. Taxi drivers refuse to pick up or drop off at the top of the road when there is snow or frosty weather due to the risk of damaging their cars. Additionally, there is low visibility at the junction to Leeds Road at the bottom of Moat Hill Drive due to boundary walls, trees and parked cars and accidents have occurred. I personally have missed medical appointments due to lorries blocking the road on the hill. There have been some occasions when bins were not emptied due to access difficulties during the construction phase of the recent development. On the grounds of safety and amenity detriment to existing residents of Moat Hill Farm Drive and Jason Terrace, I would object to access from Clough House via Moat Hill Farm Drive as the increased traffic would exacerbate existing problems. Access on the opposite side of site from Clough Drive would potentially make a more suitable access road for the Clough House development as the road is a shorter route to Leeds Road and does not have the same gradient issues.

- **Plot 17 (and 16) House type B 2 storey dwelling**

The proposed dwelling is in proximity of 51 Moat Hill Farm Drive and the window on the side elevation will directly overlook the windows of 51 Moat Hill Farm Drive. Whilst removing the window from the side elevation will not be welcome, ensuring the window uses obscure glass as a planning condition would provide sufficient light for the ensuite bathroom for this dwelling and reduces the impact for the existing dwelling. May I suggest that an alternative proposal would be to change plots 16 and 17 from a pair of semi-detached dwellings to a single detached dwelling which would provide a more spatial gap from the existing dwelling and may be more marketable. The proposed development has a mixed house type provision in any case.

- **House type A 3 storey dwellings**

I have concerns over the 3-storey dwellings and ultimately the imposing height of these aesthetically and more importantly for wind turbulence.

As already noted above, the location and elevation of Moat Hill Farm already suffers from strong high winds and I'm assuming that plots 11 to 17 will be similar. The area is well known for wind turbulence and significant damage was prevalent at Birstall's Spring Ram Retail Park and the Leeds Bridgewater Place development which caused serious harm to persons and property, for which wind calming measures were required at both sites. I would object to 3 storey dwellings unless evidential information is provided for reassurances that the proposals would not have detrimental wind turbulence consequences for the surrounding existing dwellings.

- **Construction Phase**

I have significant concerns regarding the construction phase of any approved plans and would wish to see planning conditions to mitigate against a detriment to the residents of existing dwellings on Moat Hill Farm Drive. The construction of 10 new dwellings on Moat Hill Farm Drive commenced in January 2020 and continued throughout the pandemic with only a 2-week stoppage at Easter 2020. The builders took advantage that Kirklees officials were not making regulatory visits during the pandemic and hence the residents suffered from significant noise and traffic disturbance. The road was frequently blocked by construction vehicles and working hours exceeded reasonable expectations. Illegal tipping was taking place on Crown property to the rear of Moat Hill Farm Drive and sleeping patterns for residents were frequently being disturbed. One resident suffered damage to their driveway from a construction vehicle. As the road is double parked ordinarily, the additional traffic from the construction resulted in the residents of Moat Hill Farm Drive experiencing unreasonable and unmanageable congestion which prevented safe access to their own properties. I think it is reasonable that the planning conditions includes provision that the construction of the proposed development is contained within the existing Clough House site boundaries throughout and all construction vehicles access the site via the existing Leeds Road access until near completion. Additionally, restrictions for working hours of no earlier than 8 am and no later than 5pm weekdays with no weekend working should be provided.

- **Yorkshire Water Consultation Document**

The document uploaded to this application appears to relate to a different site and planning application and needs to be corrected. Consequently, any response from Yorkshire Water is missing. Yorkshire Water had previously raised concerns over storm and flood risks due to the gradient of the land and therefore I would anticipate additional measures need to be incorporated which may also pose risks to existing neighbouring residents.

- **Tree survey**

The supporting information is out of date and the trees on the Leeds Road boundary were cut down prior to the original planning application. The trees were an important characteristic of the road and much loved by the community and thus was a huge detriment to the locality. The trees should be reinstated as part of the development to mitigate the environmental impact of the proposed housing development.

- **Clough House site boundaries**

I have reservations of the accuracy of the boundary to the north of the site and feel that part of site relates to the former Norquest land which reverted to the Crown on the company's bankruptcy and needs to be checked.

- **Historical contamination**

The site was previously a farm and therefore there are risks that there is contaminated land. 34 bore holes were made on the original Moat Hill Farm Drive development in the late 198's therefore I would expect similar tests to take place for Clough House accordingly.