

Address: 14 Eddercliff Crescent Liversedge WF15 6LR

About the application

Application number: 2022/92619	
What is the application for?:	Change of use of land and formation of skate park
Address of the site or building:	Royds Park, Bradford Road, Rawfolds, Cleckheaton, BD19 5LL
Postcode:	HD1 9EL

User comments

Type of comment: An objection	
Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously?	No
In relation to the planning for a skate park within Royds Park and the demolition of the Victorian era park building, I have concerns that we will not only be losing a piece of the local history, but also the change in landscape will negatively impact on the local area. Firstly, the existing building is of historical importance. It may appear small and insignificant to those who have never visited the park or have only seen it in its current state of disrepair, but to the local residents (like myself) who have grown up in that area and have a genuine interest in the regeneration of the area, this Victorian era building is important. Rather than demolishing the building, it would be much better served being renovated and used as a small park coffee shop. I believe this would be very popular with park users, if constructed and marketed in the right way. Secondly, in terms of the change of use from green space woodland park, into that of a skate park will have an immensely detrimental effect on the local area. There are currently already massive issues with anti-social behaviour within the park, from the tennis court/football court area, to the building up at the model railway, where it is common for youths to congregate (not using the courts for sports as intended) and use drugs, smoking cannabis, damaging the existing facilities (fences ripped down, bins kicked over and set on fire etc.), graffiti on every surface nearby, including bins and the walls of the Victorian building, the walls of the council gardens depot, the walls of the public toilet and elsewhere. I strongly believe that this would be exacerbated by the building of a skate park. As a Police officer, I have already encountered instances of ASB into the hundreds in this park. I have personally reported dozens of incidents to Police whilst off duty, as well as physically intervening myself more times than I care to remember. This has ranged from instances of criminal damage and arson, where I have found youths ripping roof tiles off the Victorian hut to gain access to the building, the using rocks and kicking the boarded up doors and windows to gain access, to setting fires inside the building. These are criminal acts and I believe they stem from giving youths a place to congregate. Their minds then wander and for some reason, they result to criminality. The youth of today are broadly not interested in using facilities such as football/tennis courts and skate parks for the purpose which they are	

facilities such as football/tennis courts and skate parks for the purpose which they are intended. They are far more likely (if not guaranteed) to use the new skate park for associating in large groups, smoking, using drugs, fighting and ultimately, their minds become bored and they turn to causing damage to the facilities.

On top of this, as is inherently true of every single skate park I have ever encountered in my life; the skate park will become adorned in graffiti, making it a complete eyesore for other park users who generally want to walk their dog or on their own in a quiet country park. In addition to this, the park has a lot of elderly walking around on their own. There are obvious opportunities for intimidation by groups of youth, which I have personally witnessed already, before the addition of another place for youths to congregate. On one instance, I witnessed a middle ages lady walking through the park, be approached by a group of three youths, one of which exposed his genitals to the woman and propositioning her, to which she screamed and ran away. I have had to physically intervene to protect the woman. This is unacceptable, as I'm sure anyone would agree. Finally, there is always a worrying amount of noise on a night, sometimes well into the early hours of the morning from youths.

Green space (which is already in short supply) would be destroyed to make way for concrete and metal. Kirklees council (along with all other UK councils) have an obligation to plant for trees and create more green spaces to improve biodiversity. This project goes completely against these obligations by destroying green space and the cutting down of trees. Not only that - concrete is one of the most carbon intensive materials known to man. This project will use copious amounts of concrete. Along with the green space being removed, that will have a knock on effect for local wildlife. Birds, hedgehogs, squirrels, insects and surely thousands of other organisms are to be found in this park. Destruction of their habitat will result in a reduction in biodiversity. I'm sure you will agree, this is not good for the area.

In terms of the aesthetics of the area, a large patch of idyllic grass/woodland will be replaced with a grey, concrete and metal monstrosity. This area is already deteriorating and descending into a neglected state - this project would further compound that.

I'm sure that you will be aware of the issues caused by the previous skate park behind Spen baths. Anti-social behaviour, drugs, violence, ASB motorcycles/quads, criminal damage, arson, sexual offences - the list is endless. By building this new skate park, you are only shifting those issues into a new location.

I understand that you aspire to create a place for youths to socialise in a lawful manner but I can assure you that very little (if any) lawful activities will go on here. This is proven time and time again by not only the previous skate park but by skate parks up and down the country. The money would be better spend planting more trees, renovating the old Victorian hut and making use of that, improving the landscaping of the park and improving the upkeep.

I have seen this park deteriorate over my lifetime. I have lived in Littleton for over thirty years. I speak with the councils parks/gardens teams on almost a daily basis whilst I walk around the park. They complain of a lack of funding resulting in their inability to maintain the park to a decent standard. Why not put this money into funding the work of the parks team properly?