

I write in objection to this application. Whilst some of the issues of the original application have been resolved, many have not.

Whilst the proposal does remove parked cars from the road, it increases the danger with multiple cars subsequently being able to access Towngate from the blind entrance. At the time of writing, KMC Highways opinion of this issue is unknown. Surely the lack of visibility is a massive safety issue to them. Should cars be parked opposite the entrance, access to and from the parking area beyond the house is going to be highly dangerous. I feel this issue alone should be enough to reject the application, however there are a number of other issues to be addressed.

The roller shutter door on the proposed tunnel through Sycamore Farm Barn (no17) still appears to be on the plan. This was previously stated, in an official Kirklees response, to be out of keeping within the conservation area. Originally there was a large wooden traditional double barn door, which can be seen on the google street view of 2009 and I feel this should be re-instated, irrespective of whether the application is passed or not. The roller shutter is there purely for convenience. As cars are not to be kept in the proposed tunnel access, there is no reason the roller shutter shouldn't be replaced with a proper timber mechanical wooden door as the internal opening space (proposed tunnel) should be empty. It should also be assumed that by opening the rear of the barn to create a tunnel, this will cause a roller shutter door to rattle relentlessly in the wind thus creating a constant noise and disturbance.

The Consultation response from KC, Conservation & Design (Sue Brooks 17/05/2023) appears to support the revised application with a number of conditions. In the unfortunate event of these plans being passed, I feel these conditions need to be extended to include:

1) no planning application can be submitted in the future, for the land where the proposed garage was to have been (now parking and turning area) and the property's land and grassed / field area (ie entirely within the boundary of Sycamore Farm and Barn (aka no17 Towngate). This area cannot be built upon in the future with this application being used to start a drip drip effect of building upon this land.

2) The laurel hedge to be planted below the pub car park wall, must not be allowed to grow beyond the height of the existing wall, so as not to obscure the view whilst seated. Any other planting to be done (or which has been done in the last 2 years) must be maintained and not allowed to obscure the panoramic, scenic view from the pub and its car park.

Does this planting (especially that which has been done in recent months) fall within conservation area tree pruning laws, and if so is this a cynical and devious effort to block the vista from the pub? The excuse in the future of not pruning etc. due to the new planting being within in a conservation area must not be allowed to be used. In the event of plans being passed or not, this issue must be seriously addressed by the planning committee and relevant authorities, or the existing planting be removed.

3) Temporary structures (eg the eyesore netted geese run recently installed) must be below the height of the existing pub car park wall, and should be situated further down the field area, beyond their proposed car parking area. Again this could be perceived as having been erected, as a cynical attempt, to spoil the enjoyment of those sat outside the pub as it blocks the view. The noise of the geese and the potential for attracting vermin are also issues. This should be addressed whether plans are passed or not.

4) In the event of plans being passed, no construction (and such) works should be carried out at weekends or after 4pm weekdays between March 31st and October 1st so as not to spoil the tranquillity or hinder Towngate access for residents and visitors.

The application makes no reference as to where or how the construction / workforce equipment, skips, diggers, materials, wagons and vans etc. are going to be accommodated upon Towngate.

These considerations are intended to deter the applicant, or future applicants, from spoiling the view and light from both inside and outside at the Royal Oak, which in recent months appears to have been the applicant's intention, This has been the cause of much antagonism within the village. The pub dates back to at least 1842 and any future applications or activities (eg unsightly temporary structures or high growth planting) on this area of land must not be allowed, if they are to be at the expense of the viability of this historic business and the pleasure it brings to many. In the present climate far too many villages are losing their pubs which (as with the Royal Oak) can be one of the hubs of a rural village.

The main objective must be to maintain the remaining traditional fabric and makeup of the village. This has been eroded for too long. Upperthong was not made into a conservation area for no good reason. Yet it seems to be relentlessly blighted by more and more building. The reason Towngate can't cope with the traffic is because the village has been allowed to expand way beyond its infrastructures' capacity. Most of the new building within the village has resulted in healthy financial gain for the land owners. It is surely no coincidence that the extensive land with Sycamore Farm (aka no17 Towngate) could be ripe for development once an access has been granted and created. Any planning allowed here would create financial gain for the owners and can not be dressed up as providing an opportunity for young people to live in the village.

For these reasons I urge that the application is rejected.