

REF: 2023/62/92595/W

SITE: Oak Leas Manor, Spring Lane, New Mill, Holmfirth, HD9 7EH

RE: Change of use and alterations, including new car park to create events/wedding venue

We object for the following reasons:

We have lived in New Mill for the past 4 decades and our home is in close association to the application site, so will be directly affected by this proposal. Further, as residents of the area, we know the limitations of Spring Lane where it accesses Sheffield Road (to the south of the Site) and Penistone Road to the north – Spring Lane is little over 1 car width at points, has a sharp-blind corner and is barely able to accommodate the existing traffic without an added pressure of this poorly conceived unsuitable use. Against this background, we have the following comments to make as to why the principle and detail of this proposal is unacceptable.

### **1. Principle:**

The site in the Green Belt (“GB”), wherein the fundamental aim of the GB is prevent urban sprawl and keep land permanently open. NPPF Para.143.c states one of the purposes of the GB is safeguard the countryside from encroachment. Para.152 confirms inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the GB. Para.154 sets out the exceptions that can be acceptable; at no point is there any mention of the over- intensification and introduction of a use that will create excessive movements, development and noise & disturbance in the GB. As such, clearly, the principle of this ‘wedding venue’ is unacceptable and not in accordance with the NPPF

The Applicant’s Planning Consultant even suggests the use as a ‘wedding venue’ that has sleeping accommodation, does not fall within a town centre use? I am not sure if he has even read the section, surely such a venue that provides events where people attend and has sleeping accommodation is more closely associated with a ‘conference centre’ and ‘hotel’ - many weddings are held in venues that use the same rooms for conference facilities that also double for wedding functions. Clearly this is a town centre use that is most appropriate in urban areas or district centres – not isolated locations in the GB. Further, reading the planning statement, it implies one ever gets married in urban areas or town/ edge of centre locations.

### **2. Highways:**

Firstly, let’s look at what the Applicant’s Planning Consultant states:

- 40-60 guests for a day event.
- 100-150 guest for an evening event.
- 62 car parking spaces on site.

From our research of wedding venues accommodating 150 guests, car parking needs to be much higher for such an isolated venue with no real public transport options.

This leads to ask, how is their Planning Consultant able to conclude '*the use will generate minimal traffic*' – at least 62 cars arriving at a similar time on Spring Lane is not minimal. Further, what about catering, wedding staff, furniture, flowers, entertainment – or do they walk? I think not!

This then leads on to his assertion that such is safe, we have not integrated the TRICs database, nor has the Applicant provided an Transport Assessment nor Travel Plan – as such, we fail to see how this Application can even be registered, let alone entertained without such. Nor without such assessments, how the Applicant's Agent can state traffic is minimal, safe and there is sufficient car parking is beyond me. I put it to the Applicant that when the parking of cars on the drive, by the building or wherever else is proposed is inconvenient, the vehicles will be parked on Spring Lane, further leading the highways safety concerns. Is he truly telling us that the 'grass crete' will be suitable for 35 cars to park in a field, year round with the amount of rain that falls – this is wishful thinking, Spring Lane will be used.

Finally, we have 150 guests on site for an evening reception, many we presume will enjoy a drink will be unable to drive, with only limited bedrooms for guests on site, therefore guests will need to travel to B&Bs, hotels or home – this we would expect is via taxi. This seems to have been completely omitted from the Applicant's submission.

Staff - the Applicant suggests there will be 3 full time employees – this seems incredible to serve 150 guests, again further undermining the weight that can be attributed to this submission.

### **3. Noise & Disturbance**

This proposal is for a wedding venue, that will have fireworks, outdoor noise, helicopters, music, lighting in the countryside. The submission makes no reference to how they have assessed or provided any explanation as to how this proposal will not harm amenities or ecology.

If we review the drawings, I fail to see how 150 people can be accommodated in one room, which leads to the question, will the Applicant erect marquees – as is common with many such venues, the only answer is yes. Or are they all going to sit in individual rooms, I think not! A marquee will lead to further noise and disturbance and lighting of the green belt.

Irrespective of marquee or not, the use will have significant impacts on residents amenities and wildlife.

This submission should have included:

- Noise Impact Assessment.
- Ecology Impact Assessment.
- Lighting Assessment.

There are no such assessments nor even reference in the Planning Statement.

In terms of 'Hours of Opening' the Applicant has ticket such is not relevant, how again this conclusion is reached is beyond me, clearly the opening times are very relevant.

It is noted that the 'Owner' of the house has held parties before at the property and is accustomed to 'landing' his helicopter near the house. The parties generated noise and have fireworks, this has resulted in significant harm to the piece and tranquillity of this Green Belt site, the holding of 3 events per week, until the small hours, will have a significant impact on amenities of local residents and impact on the wildlife, which is abundant in this area.

#### **4. Totally Unsuitable Site**

Based on our review of the site and the proposed site, it is totally unsuitable for a wedding venue, the Applicant's agent is totally unrealistic about number of vehicles, the impact such will have and the number of staff visiting the site; presented little information and does not think hours of operation is relevant.

Further, the Applicant's agent presents a nonsensical argument that a 'wedding venues' have been historically located in the countryside. Further, I cannot even make sense of his argument that a wedding venue are not town centre uses or policies never intended to apply – he is frankly wrong. Maybe he needs to re-read his own statement and reference to policy - this 'wedding venue' provides sleeping accommodation and the form nature is similar conference facilities, which are often what hotels use functions rooms for. As such, it is clearly a town centre use. For note, and maybe I suggest he re-reads the NPPF. It states, para.90e states:

*where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available for main town centre uses, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites that are well connected to the town centre. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, policies should explain how identified needs can be met in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;*

Further, Holmfirth is a 'town centre', which provides wedding venues, as does Huddersfield and edge of centre – there is no need for the reuse of an existing dwelling in the Green Belt as a wedding venue.

When considering the GB, the Applicant's Agent refers to Policy LP60, which states:

*b. the resultant scheme does not introduce incongruous domestic or urban characteristics into the landscape, including through the treatment of outside areas such as means of access and car parking, curtilages and other enclosures and ancillary or curtilage buildings;*

The Applicant's Agent feels this helps their case, however, b) is clear, conversion of buildings in the Green Belt will normally be acceptable provided they do not introduce incongruous domestic or urban characteristics into the landscape, including car parking.

Clearly, the Applicant has misread such, as they are proposing to site a new car parking (35 spaces) and estimate 62 car parking space on site – this scheme will see gatherings of 150

people, 3 times per week in the Green Belt – this completely fails to comply with Policy LP60. This again reaffirms why this site is unsuitable as a wedding venue.

## **5. Summary**

The Applicant has presented a use that is totally at odds with the reason for including land in the Green Belt, which will result in highway safety and congestion, blight the Green Belt turning a very pleasant site into a car park and introduce activity that will harm both residential amenities and wildlife.

The scheme fails to comply with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF and fails to comply with the Local Plan by proposing a town centre use in a rural Green Belt site, which is in complete contradiction of Policy LP60.

The application is poorly prepared fails to provide requisite information and frankly, the Applicant's Agents submission seems to veer in to fantasy in respect of the hours of operation, vehicle movements and true review of this scheme. Spring Lane does not provide capacity nor is it suitable for the influx of this number of vehicle 3 x times per week.

To even contemplate approving this application, we submit would be a departure from the Development Plan and we submit, leaves the Council open for Challenge.

As such, we urge Officers to refuse this application for the following reasons:

1. Principle of development in the Green Belt is unacceptable.
2. Highway Safety and Congestion.
3. Impact on the green Belt as result of activity and car parking.
4. Impact on Amenities of nearby neighbours.
5. Failure to consider the impact of the proposal on ecology.