The Coal Authority

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For the attention of: Ms E. Thornhill – Case Officer
Kirklees Council

[By email: DC.Admin@kirklees.gov.uk]

19 February 2024

Dear Ms Thornhill

Re: Planning application 2023/62/92633/E

Demolition of buildings and erection of residential development (within a Conservation Area) at St Marys RC Church, Upton Street, Carlinghow, Batley, WF17 8PH

Thank you for your notification of 30 January 2024 seeking the views of the Coal Authority on the above planning application.

The Coal Authority is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. As a statutory consultee, the Coal Authority has a duty to respond to planning applications and development plans in order to protect the public and the environment in mining areas.

The Coal Authority response: Material Consideration

The application site falls within the Coal Authority's defined Development High Risk Area. Therefore, within the site and surrounding area there are coal mining features present at surface or shallow depths. The risk these features may pose should be considered as part of the planning process.

More specifically, the Coal Authority's information indicates that the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded underground coal mining is likely to have taken place at shallow depth.

Voids and broken ground associated with such workings can pose a risk of ground instability and may give rise to the emission of mine gases.

The planning application is accompanied by a Geological Report (29 August 2018, prepared by RGS). We are aware that this report was originally submitted in support of outline proposals for residential development at the site, which were considered by the LPA under planning application 2018/60/92555/E. The report was considered acceptable by the Coal Authority at that time.

Whilst the submitted report is now over five years old, it reviews appropriate sources of coal mining and geological information and concludes that the possibility of shallow coal seams having being worked beneath the site cannot be ruled out. Accordingly, it goes on to make appropriate recommendations for the undertaking of intrusive ground investigations, in the form of the drilling of boreholes, in order to establish the shallow coal mining situation.

The Coal Authority's Planning & Development Team welcomes the recommendation for the undertaking of intrusive site investigations. These should be designed and carried out by competent persons, in cognisance of the conclusions of the submitted report, and should be appropriate in terms of assessing the ground conditions at the site in order to establish the coal-mining legacy present and the risks it may pose to the development.

The report does not outline what measures may be required in the event that mine workings are encountered within influencing distance of the surface. The results of the investigations should therefore be interpreted by competent persons and used to inform any remedial works and/or mitigation measures that may be necessary to ensure the safety and stability of the proposed development as a whole, including the buildings and external parts of the site such as the vehicle access and parking areas. Such works/measures may include grouting stabilisation works and foundation solutions.

The applicant should note that Permission is required from our Permitting & Licensing Team before undertaking any activity, such as ground investigation and ground works, which may disturb Coal Authority property. Any comments that the Coal Authority may have made in a Planning context are without prejudice to the outcomes of a Permit application.

Mine Gas

It should be noted that wherever coal resources or coal mine features exist at shallow depth or at the surface, there is the potential for mine gases to exist. These risks should always be considered by the LPA. The Planning & Development Team at the Coal Authority, in its role of statutory consultee in the planning process, only comments on gas issues if our data indicates that gas emissions have been recorded on the site. However, the absence of such a comment should not be interpreted to imply that there are no gas risks present. Whether or not specific emissions have been noted by the Coal Authority, local planning authorities

should seek their own technical advice on the gas hazards that may exist, and appropriate measures to be implemented, from technically competent personnel.

SuDS

Where SuDS are proposed as part of the development scheme consideration will need to be given to the implications of this in relation to the stability and public safety risks posed by coal mining legacy. The developer should seek their own advice from a technically competent person to ensure that a proper assessment has been made of the potential interaction between hydrology, the proposed drainage system and ground stability, including the implications this may have for any mine workings which may be present beneath the site.

The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority's Planning & Development Team concurs with the recommendations of the Geological Report; that coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that investigations are required, along with possible remedial measures, in order to ensure the safety and stability of the proposed development.

As such, should planning permission be granted for the proposed development, we would recommend that the following conditions are included on the Decision Notice:

1. ***No above ground development shall commence (excluding the demolition of existing structures) until;***

   a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past shallow coal mining activity; and

   b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the development proposed.

   The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

2. ***Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.***

The Coal Authority therefore has **no objection** to the proposed development **subject to the imposition of the above conditions**. This is our recommendation for condition wording.

Whilst we appreciate that you may wish to make some amendment to the choice of words, we would respectfully request that the specific parameters to be satisfied are not altered by any changes that may be made.

The following statement provides the justification why the Coal Authority considers that a pre-commencement condition is required in this instance:

The undertaking of intrusive site investigations, prior to the commencement of development, is considered to be necessary to ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigatory measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site. This is in order to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 189 and 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Should planning permission be granted for this proposal, we also request that the following Informative Notes are included on the decision notice:

1 - Ground Investigations and groundworks

Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities which disturb or enter any coal seams, coal mine workings or coal mine entries (shafts and adits) require the prior written permission of the Coal Authority since these activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Such activities could include site investigation boreholes, excavations for foundations, piling activities, other ground works and any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings and coal mine entries for ground stability purposes. Failure to obtain permission to enter or disturb our property will result in the potential for court action. Application forms for Coal Authority permission and further guidance can be obtained from The Coal Authority's website at: www.gov.uk/get-a-permit-to-deal-with-a-coal-mine-on-your-property.

2 - Shallow coal seams

In areas where shallow coal seams are present caution should be taken when carrying out any on site burning or heat focused activities.

3 - Mine entry used for waste disposal

The Coal Authority's records indicate that close to this site there is a mine entry (424424-002) in which it is believed waste material may been deposited. Consideration will need to be given to the potential risks this may pose, not only to the development itself but also to any investigatory and remedial operations necessary to ensure its safety and stability. Appropriate advice from a technically competent person should be sought on the potential risks posed by any fill material and the possible implications of this for the works proposed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss the above matters further.

Yours sincerely

James Smith *BSc. (Hons), Dip.URP, MRTPI*
Planning and Development Manager

Disclaimer
The above consultation response is provided by The Coal Authority as a Statutory Consultee and is based upon the latest available data on the date of the response, and electronic consultation records held by The Coal Authority since 1 April 2013. The comments made are also based upon only the information provided to The Coal Authority by the Local Planning Authority and/or has been published on the Council's website for consultation purposes in relation to this specific planning application. The views and conclusions contained in this response may be subject to review and amendment by The Coal Authority if additional or new data/information (such as a revised Coal Mining Risk Assessment) is provided by the Local Planning Authority or the Applicant for consultation purposes.

In formulating this response The Coal Authority has taken full account of the professional conclusions reached by the competent person who has prepared the Coal Mining Risk Assessment or other similar report. In the event that any future claim for liability arises in relation to this development The Coal Authority will take full account of the views, conclusions and mitigation previously expressed by the professional advisers for this development in relation to ground conditions and the acceptability of development.