

By email

12 February 2024

your ref 2023/93667

Dear Mathias Franklin

Application 2023/93667 Storthes Hall Lane – demolition of buildings and erection of residential development (up to 261 dwellings)

Thank you for your letter of 8 January 2024 concerning the above planning application. I am submitting the following comments as a resident of Storthes Hall Lane.

This application does not accord with the development principles set out under Policy LP73 of the Kirklees Local Plan and disregards the listed site-specific considerations.

Destruction of Little North Spring Wood

Little North Spring Wood is the largest area of semi-natural habitat within the site and protected by Tree Preservation Order 17/89/w1. It contains trees of a variety of sizes and ages from large mature specimens to naturally regenerating saplings. There is also fallen dead wood which provides habitat for a variety of fungi and invertebrates. The wood is an attractive landscape feature and screens the student village site from the houses opposite on Storthes Hall Lane. The footpath through the wood provides access to the student village site and woodland beyond.

The development proposal threatens the destruction of the wood and the loss of all the benefits it provides.

Loss of protected trees

The proposed development would also result in the significant loss of other protected trees across the site, most notably those covered by Tree Preservation Orders 17/89/a6 and 17/89/a8 which were retained through the development of the student village.

Site capacity, housing volumes and lack of affordable and social housing

Policy LP73 gives an indicative capacity of 505 dwellings. The proposed development exceeds this by more than ten per cent (adding 261 to existing permission for 300 dwellings plus care home on the adjacent part of the site). This volume of housing is not compatible with retaining important features of the site nor its Green Belt situation.

Despite this proposed volume of housing the application includes no affordable, social or starter home provision, with the majority of houses being three or four bedroom. This is despite the required level of affordable provision being reduced by 20% and the Council's

preference for the reduced provision to be on-site.

Loss of access to public transport, car dependency and traffic impacts

The Community Consultation Leaflet describes the Storthes Hall site as 'relatively remote'.

The proposed development would result in the loss of local bus services (398/399) which provide fast and regular services between Storthes Hall and the centre of Huddersfield, stopping close to major supermarkets at Waterloo. These services are currently used by local residents on Storthes Hall Lane as well as students.

It would also result in more than doubling the existing parking provision from 250 car spaces to 550. Despite an additional 300 car parking spaces, the shift from a student population to a more affluent house-holder population, plus loss of existing bus services, the projected traffic generation is only 156 trips in the morning peak. This is despite a lack of local school bus services.

As new residents would be heavily car-dependent, the projected traffic generation figures lack credibility and residents on Storthes Hall Lane as well as those on the main routes through villages such as Farnley Tyas are likely to be exposed to increased road traffic and its associated noise and health and well-being impacts.

Demolition of heritage buildings

Despite the successful repurposing of what is currently the reception/shop building and 'The Venue' as part of the student village development, the current application would see both these historic buildings demolished.

Loss of facilities and amenities

The proposed development makes no provision for on-site facilities and would result in the loss of the current retail and dining outlets.

Biodiversity metric calculation document

This stretches to 1941 pages most of which are blank or are partial page fragments. The two annotated maps are illegible and the document is incomprehensible. There seems to be some off-site biodiversity net gain provision at Farnley Road but it is unclear.

Statement of Community Involvement

The leaflet drop to local residents took place on 8 December 2023. The application is recorded as being received by Kirklees Planning Dept on 12 December. Despite an on-site meeting being held with ward members back in January 2023, there was no direct engagement with local people likely to be affected by the proposed development throughout the intervening months.

Site Boundary

The application boundary extends beyond the Local Plan MDGB1 site, into neighbouring Green Belt/ greenfield land. This should not be treated as part of the MDGB1 site for development nor 'on-site' for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Relationship with neighbouring MDGB1 development

This application not only fails to reflect the considerations spelt out under local plan policy LP73 it has also been developed with little reference to development which has been granted permission on the other part of the MDGB1 site. It includes no measures to mitigate additional peak hour traffic unlike the adjacent retirement home development but would instead undermine the goal of avoiding additional peak hour trips.

Given the significance of this application can you confirm that it will be decided at Planning Committee.

Yours sincerely

42 Storthes Hall Lane