Address: 63 Hall Bower Huddersfield HD4 6RR

About the application

Application number: 2024/93494	
What is the application for?:	Erection of restaurant/café/bar, six guest rooms, exhibition/interpretation room
Address of the site or building:	Victoria Tower, Castle Hill, Lumb Lane, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD4 6TA
Postcode:	

User comments

Type of comment: An objection	
Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously?	No

I wish to object to the proposal 2024/93494 to build an hotel on Castle Hill.

The proposed development would take place on Green Belt land, on the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument and in a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The National Planning Policy Framework (Para 154) says that development within a Green Belt is always inappropriate with a few exceptions that do not apply to this proposal. This proposal lacks any evidence of Public Benefit that might overcome its presumed rejection and has already received objections from Huddersfield Civic Society and Huddersfield and District Archaeological Society.

The core of the applicants' claim lies in the Atkins Management Plan (2006) which found that visitors would welcome more interpretation of the site. The proposal by the applicant for an interpretation room large enough for a class of children to use is completely out of touch with the site and with the times. In this century people carry their interpretation with them in the form of a mobile telephone, or a virtual reality device and future developments are likely to make interpretation devices more, rather than less mobile. There is little point in taking a class of children to Castle Hill to sit in a classroom. There is little point in any fit person going to Castle Hill to sit indoors. Castle Hill is a wild, mysterious place that excites the imagination. The rich mix of myth and legend associated with the hill attest to its ability in this regard.

Apart from the interpretation room, the proposal offers little Public Benefit. The proposed modern hotel design is completely out of sympathy with the Victoria Tower, which was itself designed to augment the original Castle Hill Hotel which did capture the spirit of the hill. The new design looks as if it is trying to hide from the world and the Conservation and Heritage Assessment section 12.0 reinforces the point that the proposed hotel will have little visual impact. In which case the Public Benefit is hard to see.

The proposed improvements to vehicular access promise only to increase vehicle numbers and threaten the mystique of the hill. The applicant's estimates of additional vehicle movements seem to account for only one movement per hotel guest per day and nothing for the food, waste, laundry, etc. that would be needed to service an active hotel. I think we deserve a more informed transport assessment.

I know of no historic monument that has interpretation and other facilities on the monument. To allow this application would set a dangerous precedent in that regard. Because of this I ask the planning committee to reject the application.