DC Admin

From:
Sent: 21 February 2025 10:00
To: DC Admin
Subject: OBJECTION - 2024/93494 Planning Application

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Dear whom it may concern,

I wanted to take the time to send you my thoughts on this planning application, for the record, I do not live on, or close to Castle Hill. However, I have spent many happy hours around Castle Hill and Almondbury over the last 30 years. It is a marvellous location where you can get away from everything and peacefully enjoy the fantastic open views around and across the hill top.

Having briefly reviewed the application, the supporting material appears very limited for what is a very large, commercial enterprise - buried 2-floors into the centre of a 4000yr Hill Fort!

The application fails to provide datum points which would highlight the exact location and height of the development relative to the listed Victoria Tower, the Scheduled Ancient hill fort embankments, the profile of the hill; which would reveal its dramatic effect on the general openness of the green belt!

There are 'illustrative drawings' but these carry a clear warning regarding non-reliance (i.e. inaccurate). Disclosure of the precise location, height of rooflines and overall impact of the proposed development (with its landscaping) would undoubtedly reveal the damage it will cause to both the current 360 degree open vistas and a remarkable historical site.

I'm disappointed to see that changes incorporated into this new application (to address prior conditional requirements) introduce harmful impacts, not previously factored into either the green belt or heritage impact of the prior application (these have been developed post approval).

- The proposed lighting and security solutions underline the significant harm created by placing a commercial enterprise in a remote greenbelt location with limited access. Indeed, the response from the police acknowledges the required security measures are potentially inconsistent with the nature of the site. Without needing to add the obvious light pollution at the highest point in Huddersfield!

- The high security gates and boundary treatment of the proposed service area introduce features which would harm interpretation of the heritage features and openness of the green belt - as well as being a clear eye sore on an otherwise beautiful open area - a disgrace.

Unsubstantiated benefits based on local employment and tourism cannot form part of a justification without evidence of direct impact – none of which is present in the application. If this development were to create justifying additional tourism, the volume of resultant visitors to the site would choke the access and obstruct local roads with roadside parking.

Incidental benefits arising from the provision of facilities to the public, via the ongoing operation of what is fundamentally a commercial venture, cannot be determined without professional evidence of long term availability. Frankly this type of required guarantee cannot be supplied by a commercial venture. Trends change; funding costs can increase and employment costs can change materially overnight (witness the recent budget changes on employment costs) not to mention the 20% uplift in cost of living since 2020!! Over time the 'public benefits' will be withdrawn on unaffordability grounds.

This is a large urban development proposed for an inappropriate remote rural location. The scale of this development goes far, far beyond the limited facilities required for the heritage site. It is also many times greater than the previous hotel removed many years ago.

A far simpler solution is required, potentially involving licensing of 'pop-up' mobile venues (for busy times of the year) and installation of porta-loos secured at the time the security gate is locked and re-opened. These days, information on personal mobiles is what visitors expect - which could be produced using material held in Tolson Museum.

During the 30yrs of wrangling over various proposals for the site, the world has moved on! The articulation of this proposal as having public benefit at its heart - is a farce. This application should, without question, be rejected!

Regards