Castle Hill Planning Application 2024/93494 Objection

This is an objection to the planning application **2024/93494** development on Castle Hill, Lumb Lane, Almondbury, Huddersfield HD4 6TA.

This planning application should not be considered as it fails to meet Kirklees Council's own criteria as published in Kirklees Planning Validation Requirements (which came into effect from the 6th February 2023) and essential required documents have not been provided for members of the public to be able to understand and comment on this planning application.

We also object to the proposed development for the following reasons:

1) Castle Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Historic England 's List Entry No. 1009848 states this is a 'slight univallate hillfort, small multivallate hillfort, motte and bailey castle and deserted village.' Hillforts are rare in the North of England making this one important not only to the Yorkshire but also nationally. This is a historic environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.

2) This is Green Belt, and the proposed development would be inappropriate and cause substantial harm. The proposal does not comply with any of the exceptions tests as set out in para 154 of the NPPF 2024.

3) Victoria Tower is a designated heritage asset being grade II listed. It is recognised as a symbol across the whole of the borough. It is a prominent visible landmark above the town of Huddersfield; it can be seen from Beaumont Park, Netherton and Newsome to name just a few of the places it can be observed distinctly on the skyline.

4) Castle Hill Setting Study by Atkins (2016) which appears on the Kirklees website appears to have been ignored. P38 **Slopes and summit of Castle Hill** 'The profile of the upper slopes of Castle Hill and its rural essentially undeveloped character are key characteristics of the site and contribute to its setting and significance. These aspects would be adversely affected by small-scale development and it is unlikely that such development could be accommodated on the hill itself'.

   And para 6.12 Developers bringing forward in the areas identified above should provide evidence that demonstrates the scale of impact of their proposals on the setting and significance of Castle Hill.

5) There is no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) This is a sensitive area as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). This should be carried out due to the significant effect on the environment of Castle Hill. The need for an EIA is clear due to the scale and complexity of the proposed project.

6) This is a Local Wildlife Site (LWS2) 9.93 hectares under Policy LP30 an area identified for its nature conservation value.

7) The proposal is for a commercial enterprise and is a threat to both architectural and archaeological heritage by the very nature of the plan to excavate into the SAM and its close proximity to a regionally important iconic listed building, the grade II listed Victoria Tower built in 1899

8) There is no reference to any commercial viability test for this essentially town centre business to be located here.

9) A commercial business here would create noise, light pollution and litter in a place that is highly valued for its openness, peace and tranquility. The value of this space to the well being of those who walk here, enjoy the fresh air and take in the panoramic views should not be underestimated.

10) The access road is inadequate. It would not be safe for large vehicles to access the site for construction work, deliveries and waste collection. This would also adversely affect the safety of pedestrians

11) There is reference to an underpass. What is this? There are no drawings that show this feature which would seem to be a significant feature that would also potentially create significant harm to the SAM.

12) There is little public benefit to be gained as the site is now more secure as the gate secures the site at dusk which has reduced both anti-social behaviour and littering significantly. The site already contains display boards explaining some of the history, nature and significance of the site. The history of Castle Hill and its environs is also recorded in The Tolson Museum to which interested visitors could be signposted.

In view of the above important considerations please recommend REFUSAL of this planning application.

Cllr Andrew Cooper
Cllr Karen Allison
Cllr Susan Lee-Richards
Cllr Alex Vickers

Green Group Kirklees