CastleHill

Project:

Castle Hill Visitors'Centre

Almondbury, Huddersfield HD4 6TA

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Background, Vision and Management

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01. ***"Castle Hill, Almondbury, is a good and well-preserved example of a slight univallate hillfort which developed into a small multivallate hillfort. Not only does it lie outside the main distribution (of such monuments), it belongs to an extremely small group of northern single-banked hillforts with an internal area of more than 1ha. It is, in addition, one of the very few small multivallate hillforts datable to the period before 400BC and is unique in that, during its multi-banked phase, the bivallate interior was surrounded by two outer earthworks set in places more than 30m apart. It also possesses other rare features, including an outwork, and its earliest ramparts preserve the pre-enclosure ground surface contemporary with earlier Prehistoric use of the site."***

1.02. This paragraph above is taken from the ancient monument official listing entry for Castle Hill (entry number 1009846). The hill is not just a rare example of its archaeological type in the north of England, it has a multi-layered history that has led to the use of that word 'unique'. It is therefore of national, not just local, importance, having seen continuous human activity on the hill for around 4,000 years.

1.03. It is the premier heritage asset within Kirklees Metropolitan Council, yet many local residents and visitors are unaware of just how significant Castle Hill is. The site has not been promoted to visitors as one might expect, and those that do visit find little in the way of educational and interpretive material. Nevertheless, in large part because of the superb views available from the top, it is very popular with local walkers and dog-owners

1.04. A tower, erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee, sits atop Castle Hill and is itself listed. Today it is so strongly identified with Castle Hill that it is often confused with the ancient monument on which it sits. Some people identify the Tower as the Castle that sits on Castle Hill. However, the Victoria Tower was never intended to be a castle although graphic representations of Tower and Hill together are frequently used to symbolise Huddersfield.

1.05. Despite its importance both historically and symbolically there are today not even the most basic visitor facilities such as toilets, shelter and refreshments available on the Hill, let alone the desperately needed education and interpretation resources required to reveal the remarkable history of this immensely valuable monument.

1.06. The site is exposed and not easy to access. Despite being highly visible it is remote and the absence of monitoring or supervision of the site for long periods has made it susceptible to anti-social behaviour, further discouraging some visitors.

1.07. So, although facilities are certainly needed, the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and any development with the potential to cause harm to the heritage asset or its setting is required to be weighed against the public benefits that such development would deliver. Therefore, minimum impact for maximum public benefit is at the heart of the proposal.

1.08. Conditional planning approval was granted by Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) in February 2022 (2018/62/93591) for what was essentially the same scheme now put forward. The sensitivity and complexity of the scheme meant that it was not possible to discharge all planning conditions and receive Scheduled Monument Consent in time to implement the scheme by the deadline set by the earlier planning approval.

1.09. This is a highly sensitive project and it been years since work on it first began. This period reflects the wide-ranging discussion, consultation and project development work that has brought the scheme to this present point.

1.10. Historic England (HE) recommends that in a Heritage Statement technical analysis should be seen primarily as material supporting a clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument that sets out “what matters and why” in terms of the heritage significance and setting of the assets affected, together with the effects of the development upon them.

1.11 The next section of the report provides more on the background to the present proposal, giving the context for the sought-after development.

LOCATION

Brighouse
A629
A644
Greetland
Elland
M62
Holywell
Green
BRACKENHALL
M62
Halifax Rd
Sowood
Greenhead
Park
Outlane
New Hey Rd
Huddersfield
Wakefield Rd
Scapegoat Hill
Pole Moor
Golcar
Beaumont Park
Linthwaite
Castle Hill
Almondbury
Slaithwaite
Blackmoorfoot
Farnley Tyas
South
Crosland
Honley
Meltham
Thongsbridge
Fulstone
Upperthong
Holmfirth
Burnlee
Jackson Bridge
Holmbridge
Meal Hill

Wrenthorpe
Dewsbury
A638
Flushdyke
Mirfield
A644
Huddersfield Rd
Ossett
A638
A642
Middlestown
Overton
Durkar
Grange Moor
A642
A642
Lepton
Flockton
A637
Flockton Moor
Huddersfield
Thorncliff
Emley
Park Gate
Haigh
M1
Woolley Grange
Shelley
Clayton West
Skelmanthorpe
Scissett
Darton
A637
Denby Dale
Cawthorne
Barugh Green
Nether End
Higham
A629
M1

fig.2.1 Atkins report cover

fig.2.2 Jubilee Tower on the horizon

fig.2.3 Top of Castle Hill

fig.2.4 Castle Hill from Hall Bower

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.01. In 2006 Kirklees Council (KMC) appointed the independent Consultants Atkins to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Hill. Atkins later produced a report, the 'Castle Hill Setting Study' and these two documents have informed decisions by KMC regarding this most important heritage asset, which it was acknowledged had been ill-served for a long time.

2.02. Key management policies identified by Atkins for Castle Hill have now been formally adopted within KMC's Heritage and Tourism Strategies.

2.03. The Atkins report was focussed specifically upon the historic and archaeological management of the site and went to some lengths to communicate the complex archaeological aspects of the site. Two important points made in the report are as follows;

- ***"It will be vital....to ensure that Castle Hill remains a treasured and widely used place..."*** (Atkins Summary Document)

- ***"All decisions regarding the future management and enhancement of the Hill will be based on a clear and robust understanding of the Site and the potential issues and impacts that changes could cause"***
(Atkins Summary Document.)

2.04. The report also invited responses to a questionnaire regarding the use of the site. Responses showed that 42% of respondents visited the site once a month at least (page 9 Atkins Management Plan); 92% of respondents felt that the views from the site were also important (page 32 Atkins Management Plan.) and 88% of respondents agreed, or agreed strongly, that there was a need for greater interpretation of the site for visitors.

2.05. The Atkins report goes on to state that the ***"Setting, and in particular, the immediate setting (of the site) will require careful management over the coming decades."*** (Page 32 Atkins Management Plan)

2.06. With these responses in mind, the report breaks down the Castle Hill site into Management Zones to aid interpretation of specific areas more carefully. The report highlights (section 4.0) the issues around events, access, management and the risks associated with (what was at the time becoming) increasing anti-social behaviour around the site and the impact that such instances could have upon the monument and its future sustainability.

2.07. Indeed, following this the report highlighted the consultants' survey results that overwhelmingly (68%) support a greater year-round presence upon Castle Hill. It did however note the opinions of a number of respondents that appreciate the current feeling of 'wildness' upon the hill and expressed a preference for nothing further to be located on the site. This prompts the report to highlight the need for any new facilities to be as unobtrusive as possible and that for any solution to be very carefully designed. (page 75 and Section 5 Atkins Management Plan)

2.08. The report concludes with these management points.

- The need for a formal management framework
- The need to formalise the current maintenance strategy and staffing
- The management of archaeological / historical research
- The management of ecological habitats; and
- The management of the site's environs

2.09. With reference to new development there is a re-emphasis upon the careful development of new structures and that opportunities for enhancement should be taken where possible and key policies in Section 5 of the report reiterate these points. (See policy list at the end of this section).

2.10. The general tone of the Atkins report, as well as specific policies it contains, were fundamental to the development of the scheme proposals. This document sets out how these policies have been incorporated into the scheme and evaluates the impact of the proposed design upon the significance and setting of the heritage assets.

2.11. The Castle Hill Setting Study, referred to above, says at paragraph 4.25: ***"The topographical prominence of the hilltop within its setting has been the key factor in its settlement, use and reuse over thousands of years".*** This accounts for two further factors that contribute to its significance:

- ***it can be seen from a great distance in many directions as a prominent feature in the landscape***

- ***views from the site are panoramic and largely unbroken, allowing an appreciation of the landscape rarely possible from other viewpoints.***

2.12. Significance is also given by the importance of Castle Hill to local people. Paragraph 4.14 of the Setting Study notes: ***"Castle Hill is a treasured and valued place for members of the local communities who consider it to be part of their and the area's identity. The hilltop is significant as an extremely valuable local recreation site, drawing in considerable numbers of people from local and more distant communities every year who come for a range of leisure activities. Castle Hill features strongly in tourism literature as an icon of the area: a distinctive site…….. used by local communities as a place to bring visitors, and former residents of the area to go on their visits home. Such use reflects the strong sense of local pride in the Site as an icon of the wider area. Other intangible significances related to Castle Hill include its infrequent use as an educational resource and study destination by different school groups, its use as a base for events, including celebratory fireworks displays and the use of the beacon, and its use for small scale ritual activity."***

2.13. For long periods of its history there were buildings on the hill, most recently the very popular Castle Hill Hotel, which provided some facilities for visitors to the Hill, but which did nothing to promote the historical and archaeological significance of the monument.

2.14. Since the demise of the hotel the absence of visitor facilities and remaining minimal interpretive and educational provision were now missed opportunities to promote Kirklees. Within the requirement to ensure that the heritage asset and its setting were not harmed, KMC was happy to entertain proposals for some new development that would rectify this glaring shortfall.

2.15. Thus began a search to find a way to provide visitor facilities that would boost the opportunities for education and interpretation at Castle Hill without harming the Monument or its setting and responding to the policies below.

RELEVANT KEY POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF CASTLE HILL FROM WS ATKINS REPORT (MARCH 2006)

Key Policy 1: Future decisions relating to management, conservation and enhancement of Castle Hill should respect and sustain all of its significances

Key Policy 4: The Site will be maintained as a premier recreational destination in Kirklees

Key Policy 5: The significances, story and sensitivities of Castle Hill should be communicated to as wide an audience as possible

Policy FD1: Any future development on Castle Hill should have no significant adverse impact on its:

- unique profile when viewed from outside the site;
- open and exposed character;
- archaeological remains; and
- setting.

Policy FD2: Any decisions on future enhancement or development on Castle Hill should consider its archaeological potential

Policy FD3: The management and enhancement of Castle Hill should not adversely affect its open and exposed character

Policy U2: Basic visitor facilities should be provided

Policy U6: Antisocial behaviour should be discouraged by the introduction of measures to control it

Policy U8: High quality and accessible interpretation material should be provided on Site to enhance the visitor experience

Policy U9: The views and needs of users should be taken into account in future decisions relating to the management, conservation and enhancement of Castle Hill

Policy U10: Continue to review the need for further visitor facilities for the Hill

Policy Ac5: The condition of the hilltop car park should be improved

3.0 HISTORY OF CASTLE HILL

3.01 ***"High as Almondbury is, Castle Hill is higher, and is crowned with a lofty tower, a striking landmark of the Victorian era. Holiday folk love to come here for the magnificent view of the Colne valley with Huddersfield in the hollow and the moors above. Below the tower is an ancient camp of 40 acres with high ramparts, a sunken way cut through the sandstone."***
Arthur Mee 'The Kings England – Yorkshire West Riding' Edited by Arthur Mee, first published 1941. Edition 1996 by Kings England Press.

3.02 Castle Hill has a long and fascinating history. We now have direct evidence that the site formed part of an Iron Age encampment, and Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation is also considered likely due to the finding of flints and a polished axehead dating from around 3000BC. The majority of what is known about the site has been obtained through antiquarian accounts and notably, the work of Archaeologist William Varley, with extensive excavations between 1939 and 1972. More latterly subsequent work by West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service (WYAAS) and the RCHME has contributed and enabled the strands of evidence to be better pieced together.

3.03 The site, being of such prominence, would have been an obvious location of interest for early peoples. Strikingly situated above what is now the Colne/Holme Valley, the site can even be seen from as far afield as the outskirts of Leeds, from where Castle Hill is clearly visible from the route around Roman Road 721 (as categorised by Margary 1957).

fig.3.1 Castle Hill with Huddersfield in the background

3.04 The site represents an example of a Multivallate hillfort, which is a rare type of multi embanked enclosure fort within this part of the country, and the site seems to have started out as a simple palisaded enclosure of around 2ha dating to around 550BC. There is substantial evidence for the site's occupation in the later Iron Age when the castle was fortified and its flat plateau was occupied and cultivated. The defensive earthworks were subsequently enlarged around this time with defensive ditches containing large stone revetments.

3.05 Archaeological evidence halts around 100BC until the 12th Century AD and as such the likelihood of the site being occupied during the early Roman period is unfortunately lacking. As such the tantalising tales of the site being the abode of the Brigantian Queen Cartimandua and her husband are not supported by the archaeological evidence. During this time however two Roman forts were constructed nearby, at Slack and Castleshaw and as such it seems possible that the site would have some role to play within the Roman strategy or as a beacon site.

fig.3.2 Earth works on Castle Hill

3.06 Archaeological evidence picks up again in the 12th Century when many of the extant earthworks were substantially altered and rebuilt to create the motte and inner bailey associated with a small castle under the reign of King Stephen, whose license to crenulate was granted to the Barons Lacy of Pontefract in 1137. During

works to the castle, inner and outer baileys were created by the formation of a large ditch across the centre of the fort plateau. The infill of this was used to create a small motte to the south-western side. It may have been at this time that the associated village was established. The settlement was granted a market in 1294, although this ultimately failed and the castle was abandoned by the late 16th century.

3.07 The hill was noted in Camden's Magnus Britannia (1586) and described as follows;
"Six miles from hence (Halifax) and not far from the river Calder, neere unto Almondbury, a little town standing upon a high and steep hill, which hath no easy passage or even ground unto it but on one side, are seen the manifest tokens of a rampire, some ruine of walles and a castle, which was garded about with a triple strength of forts and bulwarks. Some will have this to be Olicana, but the truth said otherwise, and namely, this it is Cambodunum… Yet afterward, there was a castle built in the same place, which King Stephen, as I have read, confirmed to Henry Lacy."

3.08 There is evidence of a major fire on the hill around 430 BCE which is thought to explain the local legend of a fiery dragon inhabiting the site. It may have been this account that led to the erection of a beacon on the hill during the potential invasion of the Spanish Armada two years later, as part of the 'fire over England' system of warning beacons. This was again utilised as such during the Napoleonic Wars when another beacon was constructed as an early warning system. A beacon stood on the hill following the 500th anniversary of the Armada in 1988 when the event was re-enacted. See fig 3.3.

3.09 The site seems to have fired local imagination throughout history and the social accounts of the site being used for leisure and for the amenity and enjoyment of local people are very common within Victorian antiquarian accounts. Rev Charles Augustus Hulbert (1882) states, in his beautifully romantic fashion, that the site is ***"much frequented for recreation by the inhabitants of Huddersfield (that flourishing daughter of Almondbury) which lies, by day, as a map below. And at night like a lower firmament, with its thousand lights."***

3.10 Castle Hill's elevated position made it an ideal location for warning beacons, such as that built to signal the approach of the Spanish Armada in 1588; beacons for various purposes have been built on the hill ever since.

fig.3.3 Beacon with former Castle Hill hotel behind

fig.3.4 The foundation stone of the tower is laid

3.11 The chequered history of provision for visitors to Castle Hill began in 1810 with the construction of an alehouse. This was later taken over by the local Temperance Society. They stopped selling alcohol and turned the building into a lodging house.

3.12 As the wheel of history turned, by the 1860's a new Castle Hill Hotel was built combining accommodation and the return of alcohol sales. The site was so popular that accounts of everything from cock fighting to bare knuckle brawls taking place there can be found in the archives. Later still a bowling green was laid out close to the hotel.

3.13 The idea never went away however and, due largely to the efforts of Mr Isaac Horden, Cashier to the Ramsden Estate, and Mr G.W. Tomlinson (who ultimately gained much of the credit for the scheme) the proposal for a tower, this time to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, was resurrected. To quote from a letter from Tomlinson to the Mayor:
"Huddersfield with its widely extended municipal boundary has a feature within its borders which I believe to be unique. I know of no city or borough in the kingdom with an elevation of 900 feet above sea level such as we have on Castle Hill and I therefore propose that a Tower should be built on the summit of the Hill with a platform on the top, at least 100 feet high, making a total height of 1000ft."

3.14 A vast number of shares were sold but the scheme ultimately collapsed when Mr George Lock, Agent to the Ramsden Estate, objected to the building of a 'Castle in the air' on top of Castle Hill.

3.15 The idea never went away however and, due largely to the efforts of Mr Isaac Horden, Cashier to the Ramsden Estate, and Mr G.W. Tomlinson (who ultimately gained much of the credit for the scheme) the proposal for a tower, this time to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, was resurrected. A quote from a letter from Tomlinson to the Mayor:

"Huddersfield with its widely extended municipal boundary has a feature within its borders which I believe to be unique. I know of no city or borough in the kingdom with an elevation of 900 feet above sea level such as we have on Castle Hill and I therefore propose that a Tower should be built on the summit of the Hill with a platform on the top, at least 100 feet high, making a total height of 1000ft."

3.16 A committee was later formed, subscriptions collected and the estate was persuaded to lease the site to the Trustees of the Tower for 999 years. On the 25th June 1898, John Frechville Ramsden, in the presence of his father, Sir John W. Ramsden, officially laid the cornerstone to cheers from a huge gathering of local people. Not so many attended the official opening on the 24th June 1899 by the Earl of Scarborough as the weather – the wind in particular – was awful.

fig.3.5 Castle Hill referenced on local signage

fig.3.6 The Examiner newspaper

3.17 The stone for the tower came from nearby Crosland Hill and the base of the tower was built four feet thick, tapering to two feet at the turret. Its official title was the Jubilee Tower but was changed when Queen Victoria later personally gave approval to the name change.

fig.3.7 Inside the Tower today

fig.3.8

3.18 The Victoria Tower was not built without opposition; some people thought it was a waste of money and that a more useful building should have been erected for the occasion. Bear in mind that Huddersfield did not have a public library at the time. This opposition may explain why the original conception of including a museum of antiquities and refreshment rooms did not proceed, despite the fact that their inclusion would have made it a more useful building.

3.19 World War 2 curtailed activities at Castle Hill and lack of use of the tower, combined with lack of funds to carry out maintenance and repairs meant it suffered badly. There was even a suggestion that it should be demolished to avoid becoming a beacon for bombing raids. It was officially closed at the end of 1947 and spent many years empty and forlorn. By the late 1950s finances were easing but at that time any repairs and renovations were pragmatic at best.

3.20. Although air raids around Huddersfield during the war inflicted little damage on Castle Hill and the tower, they did give rise to another archaeological site just a stone's throw from the hill. Towards the village of Farnley Tyas, in open land, an anti-aircraft gun emplacement was built, the ruins of which can still be seen today.

fig.3.9 Long distance views from Castle Hill

3.21. As may be expected, it has proved attractive to graffiti artists, but still repays study. It is also believed for example that buildings at the emplacement housed prisoners of war at some point. Such wartime activity undoubtedly produced instances of further archaeological interest around Castle Hill still to be explored

3.22. In 1960 the tower, which had previously stood 1000 feet above sea-level, was renovated and the top seven feet were removed. The tower now stands at 996.7 feet precisely. The tower atop the hill has become an icon for Kirklees and the people of the surrounding towns, especially those of the Heavy Woollen District north of Huddersfield, within whose sweeping, long distance vistas, the hill and its tower are so easily visible. This iconic status has seen the image of the tower being included on everything from 'Welcome to Kirklees' signs in the late 1990's, to the logo of the Huddersfield Examiner newspaper and Huddersfield FC regalia.

3.23. The site still fulfils its long-held role as a focus of community pride and outdoor activities such as walking, exercising dogs, flying kites etc. The tower itself is open on school holidays and for certain special events. Noticeboards erected on the site attempt to communicate the history of the area and illustrate the community pride in the site as a visitor destination, but these have suffered from vandalism and weather erosion.

3.24. Despite communal interest in the site and anticipation generated by long-distance views, visitors often experience something of an anti-climax when reaching the peak. What seems to be a significant destination when viewed from afar often proves to be a rather unloved, windswept place with precious little quality interpretation of such an important heritage asset. In inclement weather the absence of any form of shelter or the most basic welfare facilities further discourages spending time on the Hill.

4.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CASTLE HILL

4.01. When considering the ***impact*** of proposals on heritage assets, Historic England's advice is to consider the ***significance*** of the heritage asset in question and then establish the contribution made by its ***setting***, before then considering the impact of proposals on both asset and setting.

4.02. The official list entry for Castle Hill (no. 1009846) could not be clearer on its importance and significance on a national scale, due to its rarity as:

- a multivallate hillfort typology within the north of England;
- the length of time it has existed;
- the range of activities it has accommodated in that time and its multiple historical associations.

4.03. The fact that it can be seen from over a vast area adds to its significance.

4.04. An extract from the listing entry expands on this: ***"Castle Hill, Almondbury is a good and well-preserved example of a slight univallate hillfort which developed into a small multivallate hillfort. Not only does it lie outside the main distribution (of such monuments), it belongs to an extremely small***

fig.4.1 Dominant form of Castle Hill

fig.4.2 Jubillee Tower

fig.4.3 Tower as marker in landscape

group of northern single-banked hillforts with an internal area of more than 1ha. It is, in addition, one of the very few small multivallate hillforts datable to the period before 400BC and is unique* in that, during its multi-banked phase, the bivallate interior was surrounded by two outer earthworks set in places more than 30m apart. It also possesses other rare features, including an outwork, and its earliest ramparts preserve the pre-enclosure ground surface contemporary with earlier Prehistoric use of the site."

4.05. The archaeology of Castle Hill is the principal heritage asset. The setting of Castle Hill is intrinsic to its significance because it is the prominence of the topography of the hill that first attracted prehistoric human activity which has continued, on and off, to the present day. Atkins' Castle Hill Setting Study notes at paragraph 4.25: ***"The topographical prominence of the hilltop within its setting has been the key factor in its settlement, use and reuse over thousands of years".***

4.06. For many if not most people, the archaeology of Castle Hill is under-appreciated because the majority is not visible. Remaining evidence of the earthworks that have been carried out over the history of the hill are visible but difficult to appreciate except close up and are poorly served in terms of interpretation at present. This contrasts with the fact that the prominence of the landform of Castle Hill can be appreciated from considerable distances with views available from virtually all directions. Additionally, views from the site are panoramic and largely unbroken, allowing an appreciation of the surrounding landscape rarely possible from other viewpoints.

4.07. The relatively recent Victoria Tower (a separately listed building) has an intimate relationship with Castle Hill: it emphasises the prominence of the hill by acting as a marker aiding the identification of the hill from distance as well as reinforcing the understanding of the importance of the hill as a place of celebration and congregation for local people over centuries.

4.08. Similarly, the beacon was erected on top of the hill is there because of the prominence of the landform as well as being another marker of the significance of the hill, and a focus of congregation, for local people in times of threat and celebration. The site has an ingrained and meaningful symbolism for local people. Paragraph 4.14 of the Atkins Setting Study acknowledged this: ***"Castle Hill is a treasured and valued place for members of the local communities who consider it to be part of their and the area's identity. The hilltop is significant as an extremely valuable local recreation site, drawing in considerable numbers of people from local and more distant communities every year who come for a range of leisure activities. Castle Hill features strongly in tourism literature as an icon of the area: a distinctive site…….. used by local communities as a place to bring visitors, and former residents of the area to go on their visits home. Such use reflects the strong sense of local pride in the Site as an icon of the wider area. Other intangible significances related to Castle Hill include its infrequent use as an educational resource and study destination by different school groups, its use as a base for events, including celebratory fireworks displays and the use of the beacon, and its use for small scale ritual activity."***

4.09. Assessing significance is an essential part of proactive conservation management and is echoed in the Conservation Management Plan produced by Atkins consultants in 2006. Through such an assessment it is possible to understand what qualities of importance are manifest within an identified heritage asset, and this in turn allows ***"a clear and robust understanding of the Site and the potential issues and impacts that changes could cause."*** (Atkins 2006)

4.10. Such an assessment can identify areas of particular sensitivity or, equally, areas of opportunity for enhancement, change, or for the greater appreciation of the asset as a whole. It is recognised (Atkins report) that Castle Hill is currently undervalued and that the future custodianship of the site is a priority for the Council and local community.

4.11. The Atkins report outlines several key themes that are important for understanding the significance of Castle Hill. These are as follows:

- Archaeological and historical significance
- Landscape significance
- Ecological significance
- Significance of the Site's Setting
- Geological significance
- Intangible significances

4.12. Since Atkins, Historic England has further distilled the ways to define significance through a list of associations in the document 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' (2008).

4.13. This provides an updated guide for assessing and understanding the types and subtleties of significance. They are:

- Evidential Value,
- Historical Value,
- Aesthetic Value and
- Communal Value.

4.14. Based on all these criteria the overall significance of Castle Hill as a designated scheduled monument is of High Significance. The scheme is considered in this context.

5.0 SETTING

5.01. The setting of Castle Hill is unusually large. As a prominent topographical feature on the lower slopes of the South Pennines near Huddersfield within landscape typical of this part of West Yorkshire, Castle Hill can be seen from an abundance of viewpoints from almost every direction of the compass.

> Castle Hill Setting Study, paragraph 4.25: ***"The topographical prominence of the hilltop within its setting has been the key factor in its settlement, use and reuse over thousands of years".***

5.02. So, it can be seen from a great distance in many directions but also views from the site are panoramic and largely unbroken, allowing an appreciation of the landscape rarely possible from other viewpoints. This prominence means one can also obtain dynamic views when moving along certain roads and footpaths. The prominence of Castle Hill as a topographical feature also means that views from the site form an important part of the setting, providing extensive views of the surrounding area. It is easy to see why the hill was settled from a very early age and has continued to be a site of human activity to the present day.

5.03. The setting of Castle Hill is linked with the setting of the Victoria Tower. Although it may seem self-evident, the Tower is where it is because of Castle Hill and for many people the two assets are inseparable. Views of Castle Hill are almost impossible without inclusion of the Tower. It is only once one is on top of Castle Hill that the setting of the Tower within the hilltop environment can be considered.

5.04. Today the listed Victoria Tower provides a marker by which to identify Castle Hill for anyone unsure. Confusion between the Hill and the Tower as the principal heritage asset on the part of some people unfamiliar with the site is understandable.

5.05. As regards long distance views, depending on the direction of view, Castle Hill can appear as a prominent feature on the horizon (see Fig.5.1) or standing against a backdrop of the South Pennines (see Fig.5.2). Similarly, depending on direction of view, Castle Hill can appear to rise from a rural landscape (see Fig.5.3) or to sit behind the distinctly urban landscape of Huddersfield town centre (see Fig.5.4).

fig.5.1

fig.5.2

5.06. Mid-distance views are more variable, depending on the viewer's position because of landscaping features and buildings to masking the Hill. Thanks to its simple vertical prominence, the Tower becomes an easier point of orientation for mid distance views, compared to the greater mass of Castle Hill.

fig.5.3

fig.5.4

5.07. Close views make the scale of the Hill evident but because close views are only available from the base of the Hill (until one begins to ascend the mound) the top of the Hill is out of sight until the summit is reached. The closer one approaches Castle Hill the more evident its scale and prominence become, particularly if approached through the urban areas.

5.08. This setting, at the junction between urban, rural (agricultural) and rugged moorland landscape is unusual and powerful. It provides an intuitive understanding of why generation after generation has regarded the site as significant and important. The setting is therefore fundamental and integral to the importance of Castle Hill and hence to an understanding of its function through history.

fig.5.5 Approaching on Ashes Lane

fig.5.6 Approaching on Ashes Lane

fig.5.7 Castle Hill Side (Access Road)

fig.5.8 View of Victoria Tower from the car park

5.09. As previously noted, the prominence of the hill means not only that it can be viewed from numerous directions and distances, but it can also be appreciated in a dynamic manner as a viewer traverses the surrounding area, appearing and disappearing, only to re-emerge in a slightly different perspective. Castle Hill and in particular the Victoria Tower become obvious reference points by which to orientate oneself as one moves around this part of West Yorkshire.

5.10. Despite the visibility of Castle Hill within the surrounding landscape it is arguably not until one emerges from the top of the access road or from a climb onto the top of the Hill that its true nature is revealed. This limitation in visibility of the heritage asset as one approaches from distance until the revelation when one is finally atop the Hill is one that is greatly to be valued.

fig.5.9 Castle Hill long distance views

5.11. On the other hand, the strange and enigmatic landscape of the Hill does not reveal its history or significance to the general visitor even once he or she has arrived at the top. What may first have attracted the eye as simply an intriguing tower protruding from a prominent hilltop when seen from a distance needs to be interpreted to most people, once one arrives on top of the hill, if they are to understand and appreciate the earthworks, significance and history of Castle Hill.

fig.5.10 Top of monument (hill) only revealed at site entrance

5.12. The topographical prominence of Castle Hill means a visit in poor weather may put off many people. One may appreciate that it is a good location from which to obtain excellent views of the surroundings, although wind, rain and cloud may preclude even that. The present paucity of educational and interpretative material available on site, together with the absence of basic amenities, sadly devalues this premier heritage asset of Kirklees of national stature.

5.13. The history of Castle Hill is one of continuous use and activity for over 4,000 years and in that time it has undergone various changes. The Castle Hill Management Plan prepared by W S Atkins in 2006, commissioned by Kirklees MC, the site owners, stresses the importance of the site as a heritage asset and as a visitor attraction for Kirklees. It also stresses the need for both visitor amenities and interpretation facilities. This cannot be achieved without some impact and explains why so much time and effort has gone into the design and siting of the proposed building to minimise its impact whilst maximising the public benefits.

fig.5.11 Inclement weather - Credit: Yorkshire Live

fig.5.12 Roofline of new building just visible above rampart. Beacon sits between new building and Tower

fig.5.13 Main entrance seen from car park

fig.5.14 Former approved planning scheme in red with proposed comparison overlay in black

fig.5.15 Tower view from interpretation and education spaces

6.0 THE POLICY CONTEXT

6.01. What was essentially the same scheme as the present one received conditional planning approval from Kirklees MC in February 2022 (2018/62/93591). The sensitivity and complexity of the scheme meant that it was not possible to discharge all planning conditions and receive Scheduled Monument Consent in time to implement the scheme by the deadline set by the earlier planning approval. Hence the current reapplication, with no significant changes.

6.02. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of December 2024 deals with Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment at Section 16, paragraphs 202 to 221. Compliance with this section also goes a long way to ensuring the scheme meets the requirements of Section 13, Protecting Green Belt Land.

6.03. NPPF paragraph 219 notes that LPAs "***should look for opportunities for new development within…..the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance."*** The entire point of the development is to improve access to this major heritage asset and enhance its significance through education and interpretation, in accordance with KMC policies.

6.04. This dovetails nicely with paragraph 155a of the NPPF where the concept of 'grey belt' land is mentioned, as land within Green Belt that has been previously developed. The NPPF advises development should be considered in such locations where approval would not undermine the other general purposes of Green Belt. These general purposes are noted at paragraph 143 of the NPPF. Approval of the scheme would in no way undermine those general purposes.

6.05. Locating the new building on the site of the former Castle Hill Hotel refers to this concept of grey belt land whilst also complying with paragraph 219 of the NPPF. Because of the archaeological importance of Castle Hill, West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (WYAS) was engaged to undertake site investigation of the area proposed for construction. This meets the requirements of NPPF paragraph 207. The findings concluded that the siting should have no effects on the site's archaeology. The full report is available.

6.06. The building sits into the topography allowing good views out but with minimal impact when looking back into the site. By sitting the scheme down into the top of the hill, towards the far side of the site from the car park, there is no view of the building from the

access road until one emerges into the car park. Views from Ashes Lane, which runs along the base of the hillside, are shielded by the hillside itself. At the top of the hillside the new building is sited to permit views over the wider landscape,

6.07. It is only from a considerable distance that any view of the building can be obtained from outside the site and the form and materials of the scheme have been chosen to minimise visual impact from such distant views; the Victoria Tower remains the construction that catches the eye.

6.08. The entrance level and ultimate building height have been reviewed with the LPA and HE before arriving at the current proposal. Visualisations are included in the planning application documentation that illustrate the development in terms of views from within and without the site. These aid an assessment of the impact of the new scheme on the Hill and the Tower, dealt with at greater length elsewhere in this Statement

6.09. For all these reasons we believe the impact of the development will lead to ***"less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset"*** as noted in paragraph 215 of the NPPF. Rather than harming the asset, the scheme is specifically about sustaining and enhancing the asset as noted at paragraph 210a of the NPPF.

6.10. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF confirms that any perceived harm caused by the proposal must be weighed against the public benefits produced. It is our opinion that any perceived harm by the scheme to the heritage assets or their settings is substantially outweighed by the public benefits.

7.0 THE PROPOSAL

7.01. The proposal is to create a new visitor centre building on top of Castle Hill together with improvements to access, parking etc, to fulfil the Council's aspirations for the site and public benefit, without unacceptable impact on the heritage assets or their setting. The brief for the scheme developed directly from the recommendations of the Atkins report, commissioned by KMC and explained in greater detail elsewhere in this Statement.

7.02. The project aims, first and foremost, to provide interpretive and educational materials and experiences to explain the monument and put it into context. Furthermore this opportunity to learn about and understand the monument should be made available to as wide a range of persons as possible. Fundamental to provision of this opportunity is that it be available free of charge. The same to be true of access to clean, modern and accessible WC facilities.

7.03. To facilitate this provision and the improvements to parking areas and the access road, the scheme needs to be self-sufficient and sustainable. Consequently, further facilities for the comfort and enjoyment of visitors are also included that will generate income to subsidise the non-profit elements.

7.04. As well as improving access to, and understanding of, a heritage asset of both local and national significance the scheme will also act as a catalyst for regeneration in Kirklees and become a focus for cultural tourism in Kirklees. Incidentally a more permanent presence on the Hill will reduce the risk of damage to the monument.

7.05. Establishing the best location for the building was a primary concern. After extensive discussion, the site of the former Castle Hill Hotel was chosen for the following reasons:

- it was the area least likely to affect archaeological remains
- it enabled the building to be set into the landscape to achieve minimal impact when viewed from outside the site
- it enabled a beneficial relationship with the entrance road, the car park and the Victoria Tower
- it provided the best opportunity to connect service supplies (from the old hotel) without the need for extensive new trenching

fig.7.1 Former infilled basement shown in red, proposed basement shown in green

7.06. In relation to the first bullet point above, West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (WYAS) was engaged to undertake site investigation of the area proposed for construction. Their findings concluded that the siting should have no effects on the site's archaeology. Their full report is available.

7.07. The most important parts of the building are the education and interpretation facilities. This comprises a suite of three spaces for these purposes at lower ground level, accessed directly from the car park, together with a reception desk, a gift shop and family friendly toilets. All these facilities are free to use.

7.08. The further accommodation that could generate income to subsidise the free to enter facilities, is predominantly at upper ground level with a light, bright cafeteria and servery for daytime use, capable of being transformed into a restaurant and bar for evenings. This can be accessed by stair or lift from the lower ground. The accommodation also located at lower ground level.

fig.7.2 Early analytic sketch

fig.7.3 Examples of illustrations from earlier scheme proposals that were rejected

7.09. It is uncommon to find accommodation at heritage sites. At Castle Hill it plays a key role in the site's income streams, ensuring its long-term financial sustainability. Six rooms provide essential revenue that helps subsidise free facilities and services for visitors, including educational programmes, enhanced interpretation, and improved public amenities. This reinforces Castle Hill's role as a cultural and historical asset, providing lasting public benefit beyond its immediate financial contribution.

7.10. Additionally, the accommodation supports the local economy by addressing the shortage of overnight stays in Huddersfield, attracting visitors who contribute to local businesses, restaurants, and the hospitality sector. It also provides a convenient and affordable option for parents visiting students at Huddersfield's universities and schools, helping to ease the demand for accommodation in the area.

7.11. The accommodation is specifically designed as basic overnight lodging and will not be repurposed for any other use. Its sole function is to support the site's financial sustainability while addressing local accommodation needs. Guests staying at Castle Hill will also contribute to the catering revenue. As a key pillar of the site's income streams, this accommodation is critical to the financial viability of the project. Without it, the site's ability to sustain operations, maintain high-quality visitor experiences, and continue providing free public benefits would be greatly impacted.

7.12. Thanks to the topography of the site there is also direct access to the outside from the upper ground floor, with views of the Hill, the Tower and the landscape beyond.

7.13. For many years the Castle Hill Hotel stood on top of Castle Hill. It was such a popular venue that the management, who leased the site of the hotel from the owner, KMC, applied to extend the building and the larger scheme received planning approval.

7.14. The scale of the proposed visitor centre building is smaller than the Castle Hill Hotel extension scheme that received planning approval. The total volume of the earlier extended approved scheme was 4,032 cu.m. The total volume of the present scheme is 2,624 cu.m. Importantly, in terms of visual impact, the entire volume of the earlier approved scheme was above natural ground (car park) level whereas only 800 cu.m. of the presently proposed scheme is above ground.

7.15. The comparison can be seen in drawing no.3287 (0-) 19 (see page 50) which forms part of the drawing set which shows overlays of the old and new elevations.

7.16. The overall ground floor footprint of the extended approved scheme was 420 sq.m. and the overall ground floor footprint of the present scheme is only 217 sq.m..

7.17. The height and therefore prominence of the application building is far less than the former hotel or the approved extended scheme. The scale has been developed to sit within the context of the Hill and the neighbouring listed Victoria Tower, complementing but not competing with this important feature. This aspect of the design is well illustrated in the drawing set.

7.18. The need to ensure a financially sustainable facility to enable delivery of the public benefits raises the question of site management. Three models were considered:

1. Private Commercial Operation

- A privately run visitor centre could generate profit but would risk appearing to prioritise revenue over heritage conservation and accessibility.

2. Charitable Trust or Foundation

- A registered charity model aligns with heritage and education goals but faces limitations in commercial revenue generation due to restrictions on trading activities.

3. Community Interest Company (CIC)

- This would give a wider range of stakeholders the opportunity to be involved and would avoid queries over private gain for public benefits. The board is expected to contain representation from KMC and we understand from discussion that this is the intention; however, for reasons of protocol, KMC will not formally announce this until final unconditional planning approval has been obtained.

7.19. The essence of the scheme is that Castle Hill Visitor Centre is not a commercial development with public benefits, it is a public benefit-driven project supported by sustainable revenue streams. For this reason the CIC model is our preference for management of the scheme.

7.20. Discussions with Historic England have confirmed that the final, detailed Management Plan, covering site management, traffic control, and landscape maintenance, can be finalised prior to project commencement. HE has agreed such detail is not required for comment at this stage.

7.21. As noted elsewhere in this Statement, what was essentially the same scheme received conditional planning approval from KMC in February 2022 (2018/62/93591). The sensitivity and complexity of the scheme meant that it was not possible to discharge all planning conditions and receive Scheduled Monument Consent in time to implement the scheme by the deadline set by the earlier planning approval and hence the current reapplication. The minor design changes in the present scheme since the previous approval are:

- Lower Ground Floor Entrance curved - no straight walls.

- Lower Ground Floor Entrance layout revised to incorporate larger interpretation space, larger reception, shop, larger accessible WC and staff cycle store. Bedroom positions adjusted to accommodate this but all still underground and within the line of the upper ground floor, so no visible changes to the building 'above ground.'

7.22. The new building is the most visible feature of the scheme but related improvements to external areas including the access road and the car park are also proposed. The scheme marks a new era for Kirklees, where the authority's premier heritage asset is recognised and celebrated as a unique venue that can be experienced physically, intellectually, emotionally and intuitively.

7.23. Standard architectural drawings (plans, elevations etc) can be extremely difficult to picture as a completed building. Even perspective drawings give only a single fixed viewpoint. For this reason, a computer generated 3D 'flythrough' of the scheme accompanies the drawings. We would suggest that the two forms of representation be viewed together to provide a better understanding of the scheme.

8.0 PLANS & ELEVATIONS

Existing Site Plan 1:500

Notes

Do not scale from drawing, use figured dimensions only.

All dimensions must be checked and verified on site prior to commencement of work and architect to be notified of any discrepancies.

This drawing is intended to permit overall scheme proposals only and cannot be used for construction purposes without further information.

Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre,
Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status: Planning
Company: AD

Drawing: Existing Site Plan
Scale @ A1: 1:500

Date: May 2019
Drawn Checked

Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 01
Revision: -

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date

Proposed South Elevation 1:100

Proposed North Elevation 1:100

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre,
Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status	Company
Planning	AD

Drawing	Scale @ A1
Proposed Elevations	1:200

Date	Drawn	Checked
October 2019	FWG	

Drawing No.	Revision
3287 (0-) 10	-

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20

Proposed South Elevation 1:200

Proposed North Elevation 1:200

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status: Planning
Company: AD

Drawing: Proposed Elevations Sheet 1 of 2
Scale @ A1: 1:200

Date: October 2019
Drawn: FWG
Checked:

Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 08
Revision: A

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No.		Drwn.	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20

Proposed South Elevation 1:200

Proposed North Elevation 1:200

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status: Planning
Company: AD

Drawing: Proposed Elevations Sheet 2 of 2
Scale @ A1: 1:200

Date: October 2019
Drawn: FWG
Checked:

Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 09
Revision: A

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Rev.		Drawn	Checked	Date

Proposed South Elevation comparison with approved Alasdair Ingram scheme from July 2002 1:200

Proposed North Elevation comparison with approved Alasdair Ingram scheme from July 2002 1:200

Job Title
Castle Hill,
Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status	Company
Planning	AD

Drawing	Scale @ A1
Elevation Comparison	1:200

Date	Drawn	Checked
March 2020	FWG	

Drawing No.	Revision
3287 (0-)19	-

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20

Proposed Section A-A 1:200

Proposed Section B-B 1:200

Job Title: Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield	
Client: The Thandi Partnership	
Status: Planning	Company: AD
Drawing: Proposed Site Sections	Scale @ A1: 1:200
Date: November 2019	Drawn Checked: FWG
Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 19	Revision: A

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Proposed Site Plan 1:200

Notes

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions	FWG		10.02.20
B	Entrance wall revised to allow for footpath 2m in width	FWG		27.10.20
C	Car park revised following comments from highways	FWG		27.10.20
D	Carpark and entrance revised in line with business plan	MJN		18.09.23
E	Carpark and Site Plan reverted to former Planning approval layout	MJN		26.03.25
F	Additional Notes added	MJN		28.03.25

KEY

1. Main Entrance
2. Secondary Entrance
3. Cafe Terrace
4. Roof Glazing Over Exhibition
5. Footpath
6. Viewing Terrace
7. Beacon
8. Footpath to Tower
9. Victoria Tower
10. Existing Upper Path
11. Existing Lower Path
12. Contoured Banking
13. Deliveries / Staff Entrance
14. Car Park (37 Spaces)
15. Exit to Castle Hill Side
16. Unobstructed access to carpark
17. Bike Storage
18. Accessible Parking Spaces
19. EV Charging Spaces
20. Delivery and Service Yard
21. Service Yard Gate
22. Gorse Hedge

N

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre,
Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status: Planning
Company: AD

Drawing: Proposed Site Plan
Scale @ A1: 1:200

Date: October 2019
Drawn: FWG
Checked:

Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 05
Revision: F

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20
B	Entrance wall revised to allow for footpath 2m in width	FWG		20.10.27
C	Revised in line with business plan	MJN		19.09.23
D	Bar area updated in line with business plan	MJN		19.09.24
E	FL added	MJN		02.12.24
F	Carpark and Site Plan reverted to former Planning approval layout	MJN		28.03.25

Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1:100

N

Job Title: Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield	
Client: The Thandi Partnership	
Status: Planning	Company: AD
Drawing: Proposed Ground Floor Plan	Scale @ A1: 1:100
Date: May 2019	Drawn Checked: FWG
Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 02	Revision: F

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Rev		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20
B	Entrance wall revised to allow for footpath 2m in width	FWG		20.10.27
C	Revised in line with business plan	MJN		18.09.23
D	Interpretation room updated in line with business plan	MJN		13.09.24
E	Carpark and Site Plan reverted to former Planning approval layout	MJN		28.03.25

Job Title
Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield

Client
The Thandi Partnership

Status: Planning
Company: AD

Drawing: Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
Scale @ A1: 1:100

Date: May 2019
Drawn: FWG
Checked:

Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 03
Revision: E

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No.		Drawn	Checked	Date
A	General revisions to entrance	FWG		20.02.20

Proposed Basement Floor Plan 1:100

Job Title: Castle Hill Visitor Centre, Huddersfield	
Client: The Thandi Partnership	
Status: Planning	Company: AD
Drawing: Proposed Basement Plan	Scale @ A1: 1:100
Date: May 2019	Drawn Checked: FWG
Drawing No.: 3287 (0-) 04	Revision: A

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9.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATTERS

Please note the paragraph numbering has been retained from the original WYAS document.

Castle Hill,

Almondbury,

West Yorkshire

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief

Prepared by: Jane Richardson and Stuart Wrathmell
Archaeological Services WYAS
Nepshaw Lane South
Morley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS27 7JQ

On behalf of: The Thandi Partnership

Nat. grid ref.: SE 15222 14067

October 2023

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Castle Hill, Almondbury, Kirklees, West Yorkshire

1. Summary description

1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) on behalf of The Thandi Partnership, lessee of that part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument which contained the hotel and 19th-century outbuildings. It has been informed by two key documents: Historic England's general guidance on the preparation of WSIs for projects relating to the historic environment (Historic England 2006, re-issue 2015), and the West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service (WYAAS) research agenda for the site as a whole (WYAAS 2014). It also takes account of discussions between the client's representative, their architects, Historic England and WYAAS.

1.2 The proposed project involves the archaeological excavation of the footprint of the proposed development (the building) in the northern quadrant of the middle ward of the motte and bailey castle, a ward which was formed out of the south-western half of an Iron Age hillfort (Fig. 1). Its aim is to record the extent and significance of archaeological deposits in an area that became, in the early 19th century, the site of a tavern with extensive outbuildings, paddocks and gardens, and in the mid-19th century, the location of a hotel. All these structures have subsequently been removed.

1.3 In addition to detailed excavation where development impact is greatest, an archaeological watching brief is also proposed for works associated with the carpark, any intrusive works related to the identification and reconnection of existing services, and passing places on the road to site.

2. Background

2.1 Castle Hill, Almondbury (SE 15222 14067), is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 13297; HA 1009846; Appendix 1). It stands in the eastern foothills of the Pennines, some 3km south-east of the centre of Huddersfield. The hill is roughly ovoid in plan, aligned north-east to south-west, with steep slopes and a flattish summit. The highest part of the hill, as indicated on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 6 Inch map (Fig. 2), was (at least since the 12th century), at the south-west end. The hill's shape and elevation reflect its geological formation which comprises alternating bands of sandstones and shales of the Lower Coal Measures series, laid almost horizontally and capped by an outlier of resistant Grenoside rock. Castle Hill is one of the most prominent landscape features in the region.

2.2 The site has long been known as the location of a medieval castle and earlier fortifications, but its detailed development remained unknown until the programme of archaeological excavations carried out between 1939 and 1973 under the direction of W.J. Varley, FSA. Varley identified the earliest bounded settlement as a Late Bronze Age univallate enclosure, occupying the south-western half of the hill, though he also identified evidence for earlier activity on the ground surface below the enclosure bank, which he believed to indicate a Neolithic presence on the basis of a radiocarbon determination.

2.3 The Iron Age saw the remodelling of the small Late Bronze Age enclosure into a larger hillfort, the extent of which is mirrored by the surviving medieval earthworks which were seemingly constructed over the prehistoric banks and ditches. The exact date of the Iron Age expansion is not known. It appears, however, that the first phase of hillfort development saw the rebuilding of the Bronze Age bank and ditch now enclosing the area occupied by the medieval middle and inner bailey, with the subsequent extension of these defences so as to enclose the entire hilltop. Shortly after this extension it appears that a further bank and ditch were added (forming a bivallate hillfort).

2.4 A series of outworks, including what were long interpreted as another outer rampart and an annexe, were also constructed. The latter formed an outer, north-east enclosed area which was thought to represent a defended pasture for stock. However, a recent re-excavation, by the Huddersfield and District Archaeological Society, of one of Varley's trenches in this area has indicated that the earthworks here are likely to be of medieval or early post-medieval date (Roberts 2017).

2.5 In the medieval period, Almondbury formed part of the territory known as the Honour of Pontefract, which was held by the de Laci family and it is possible that they were responsible for the establishment of a castle on the hill. The generally agreed narrative, based on the earliest reference to a castellum at Almondbury in a charter issued by King Stephen (see Renn 1973, 89), sees construction of the motte and bailey in the early 12th century. The Iron Age earthworks were modified by the cutting of the deep ditch to form the middle and inner baileys. The upcast from this ditch was possibly palisaded, creating a secure place within which to locate the keep. This period also saw the remodelling of the ramparts and the construction of new banks and ditches across the hilltop. The original entrances to the various baileys appear to be the same as the entrances used today.

2.6 Towards the end of the 13th century, the outer bailey was turned over to agriculture, and the buildings of the inner bailey became a hunting lodge. Some sources suggest that there was an attempt to establish a borough on the hill. Under dry conditions aerial photography has revealed in the outer bailey what appears to be a central roadway flanked by regularly laid-out plots – although these features were interpreted as ridge and furrow by the RCHME when they surveyed the site in the mid-1990s. It is thought that this settlement (if it

existed) was abandoned by the 1340s, although memory of it may have lingered, since the 1634 map of Almondbury (West Yorkshire Archive Service: Kirklees, DD/R KCZ 0016) marks the outer bailey as the site of the 'towne' (Fig. 3). At that period the name 'town' was frequently applied to settlements no larger than villages.

2.7 Radiocarbon dates from organic samples recovered from the cores of ramparts indicated that the development of the Iron Age fortifications took place during the 5th and 6th centuries BC (Gilks 1992, Appendix). Parts of the timber-laced inner rampart of the final, multivallate fort showed clear evidence of destruction by fire, and this led Varley to conclude that a thermoluminescence (TL) date of 431 BC +/- 180 for that burning provided a date for its abandonment:

> 'that burning brought to an end the occupation of the site in the pre-Roman phase of its history… whereafter the defences were not repaired or re-erected until the twelfth century AD.' (Varley 1976, 128).

Subsequent commentators have accepted his chronology (e.g. Gilks 1992, 20).

2.8 The site seems to have been unoccupied between the later Middle Ages and the early 19th century, when a tavern with outbuildings was erected. The buildings, first recorded in 1810–11, were set in two ranges backing on to (and cutting into) the defensive banks forming the north-west and north-east sides of the middle ward. They are shown on the 1850 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 2), along with an area in front of them, divided into two, which may have included a hard-standing for coaches and traps, and a paddock for horses. The tavern itself was partly demolished when the Castle Hill Hotel was erected in 1854.The remaining part of the tavern became a cottage, with outside privy, attached to the range of outbuildings. These are shown along with the hotel on a photograph by W.H. Sykes taken in 1912 (Kirklees Museums collections; Fig. 4). The hotel was significantly altered during the 20th century and was demolished in 2005.

2.9 In 2012 a detailed assessment of Castle Hill archive, held at the Tolson Museum, Huddersfield, was carried out by ArcHeritage. Their report (ArcHeritage 2012) is broadly pessimistic about the value of reworking the Varley archive to gain further insights into the development of the site. Section 8 of the report, written by Dr Melanie Giles, comments that Varley's investigations:

> 'were certainly deficient in levels of recording, and problematic in their interpretation of key features… many of these individual strands of evidence rest uncomfortably on poorly drawn and photographed records. There is much to warrant future investigation, not least in terms of picking apart the ways in which surviving elements of the medieval and historic periods (which Varley had little interest in) intersect with the prehistoric evidence.' (ArcHeritage 2012, 66).

2.10 In her recommendations for further investigations, Dr Giles also draws attention to the current social value of such sites, in terms of strengthening shared values in local communities:

> 'Hillforts are not only iconic monuments of the Iron Age but sites of contemporary significance for local communities. They pose important questions about how people built significant sites to which they felt they belonged… as such, they are rich in the archaeological imagination but also have great potential to bring together contemporary communities to investigate themes which are still of contemporary relevance' (Arc Heritage 2012, 67).

The opportunity for public engagement is considered further in section 11, below.

2.11 More recent investigations of Castle Hill have included several phases of trenching, both before and after the demolition of the hotel. In 1998 six trial trenches were excavated around its periphery (reported in Appendix 1 of the HIA). Two trenches provided evidence of ditches or gullies cut into the natural. A seventh trial trench was excavated in 2001, to inform further proposals to extend the footprint of the hotel (Appendix 2 of the HIA). There was no indication of any in situ layers pre-dating the mid-19th-century construction of the building. As part of the present development proposals, further trial trenching was carried out in August 2018 (Appendix 3 of the HIA). The only feature of note was an earlier linear feature cut into the natural shales and clayey loams, possibly running on a similar alignment to the bank (Trench 2) but it produced no datable artefacts.

3. Research Questions

3.1 Despite the overall uniformity of evidence cited in support of the above chronology, there are reasons to suggest that we actually know much less about Castle Hill's occupation than we think we do. Some issues are outwith the scope of the project – for example the very limited number of radiocarbon determinations, and the precise status of the samples from which they were derived. One of the pre-conditions of the proposed project is that intrusive work must not impinge on the historically significant earthworks, and the radiocarbon dating samples were drawn from the Iron Age earthwork banks. Other issues can, however, be addressed by this project.

3.2 The first relates to the supposed absence of occupation on the site after the 4th century BC until the early 12th century AD. The first reference to a castle in medieval administrative documentation is not necessarily a precise indication of when it was founded – even in the case of licences to crenellate. Furthermore, some West Yorkshire castles were established on the sites of earlier settlements and administrative centres (for example, Pontefract and Mirfield), as physical expressions of the 'seisin' acquired by their Norman lords (see Wrathmell 2012, 230-31).

3.3 There is also more specific evidence for occupation in the period before the 12th century. Two of the metalwork finds from the Varley excavations were iron key barrels, bound with copper alloy strips (see Fig. 5), which in 1972 were identified by Leslie Webster, then at the British Museum, as Anglo-Scandinavian artefacts (L Webster, in litt., 29 July 1972, Castle Hill archive). They were found in the 1939 Site 7, a trench running from the inner ward of the castle southwards into the ditch. Webster's identification has been confirmed recently by Ian Riddler who comments (email of 06/02/2018): 'I have had a chance to look into the keys a bit more and it is pretty conclusive that the type that you have is of 9th to 11th century date, and isn't any later. It is replaced by a longer and flatter type. Post-Conquest examples of the Almondbury type are rare and are all thought to be residual in their contexts. So I would definitely say that they are earlier than the castle.'

3.4 Domesday Book records that, in 1066, Almondbury was a single manor in the hands of two landholders with Scandinavian personal names: Ketill and Sveinn. They held four carucates of land (DB Yorks 9W105), and their holdings may well have been administered from a settlement on Castle Hill, probably one in the south-western half of the site given the provenance of the keys.

3.5 There is further information relating to the middle ward which, though again present in the Castle Hill archive since the 1970s, seems not previously to have been taken into account. It is a copy of what is clearly an early 18th-century plan of the site which, in an associated letter, is suggested as having been drawn by William Stukeley FSA (A Havercroft, in litt. 8 June 1976, Castle Hill archive). The plan (Fig. 6) shows a rectangular outline within the ward which is described as follows:

> 'This hollow is about 8 yds wide 18 long with a shallow trench about a yard wide, the site of a Temple probably'.

3.6 We need not feel obliged to agree with the functional identification to suggest this as the site of a building, the yard-wide trenches marking the robbing out of stone footings. Its width as recorded on the plan might indicate an aisled building, either a hall or a barn. If the former, it might have origins in the pre-Conquest period; in any case, it is likely to date to the period before the mid-14th century (see 2.6 above). It appears to have been located on or close to the site later occupied by the Victorian hotel; in either case, traces of it may remain, along with external areas of associated occupation.

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1 The immediate aim of the excavation programme within the footprint of the proposed new building is to determine (prior to development commencing) the potential of this part of the hilltop to further our understanding of prehistoric, Anglo-Scandinavian, Norman and later medieval activity. The excavation will provide information on the presence or absence and the extent, character,

chronology, depth of burial and degree of archaeological survival across the area due to be impacted upon by development.

4.2 The aim is also to establish and record definitively the extent of 19th, 20th and 21st-century intrusion into the earlier site deposits. The excavations will also attempt to identify existing trenched service pipes and conduits which formerly served the hotel, so that these can be taken into account when looking to reconnect to services.

4.3 The archaeological watching brief (service reconnection, carpark and passing places) aims to ensure that any archaeological significant deposits, features of finds disturbed by the development are adequately recorded and/or recovered. The watching brief will provide information on the presence or absence and the extent, character, chronology, depth of burial and degree of archaeological survival across all areas impacted by development beyond that of the footprint of the proposed new building (see 4.1).

4.4 One of the aims of the development proposals is to provide facilities, including an interpretation space with display boards and cases relating to the site. This will transform the visitor experience at Castle Hill and address the potential for enhancing the community value of the site, a potential outlined eloquently by Dr Giles in 2012 (above, 2.10). The programme of excavation and watching brief offers a first opportunity to develop engagement with the local community in its widest sense (section 11, below).

5. Project Scope

5.1 The area excavation and watching brief proposed in this WSI will provide key information about the impact on the monument of the development. The scope of this WSI is limited to the recording, analysis, reporting and curation of the data retrieved from the pre-development excavation of the building's footprint, and the recording, analysis, reporting and curation of the data retrieved from the watching brief elements of the development itself (service reconnection, carpark and passing places).

5.2 Reporting, in the first instance, will be an assessment report on all works (excavation and watching brief). Given the archaeological importance of the site, this will be followed by a final archive report which will address any specialist recommendations.

5.3 Based on the results of the excavation and watching brief it is possible that a publication of the results will be required. This element of work, if necessary, will follow the production of an Update Project Design that will require approval by representatives of Historic England and WYAAS. Further outreach, such as public talks, will also be agreed at this UPD stage.

6. Interfaces

6.1 The excavation and watching brief are intended to ensure that any archaeological significant deposits, features of finds disturbed by the development are adequately recorded and/or recovered. The results of the investigations may also inform the development of visitor facilities, which will represent a collaborative development between The Thandi Partnership brothers and Kirklees Metropolitan Council.

7. Project review

7.1 The overall purpose of the excavation and watching brief is to determine the impact of 19th, 20th and 21st-century construction activity on the archaeological potential of this area of the hillfort, to mitigate the impact of the development proposals on any pre-19th-century remains, and to adequately excavate, record and report on the features, deposits and finds recovered.

7.2 The project will be implemented in the form of an iterative process, in which the excavation area (and any watching brief areas that impact on archaeologically significant remains) will require review at various stages during the course of the excavations. This may require the need for frequent site visits by Historic England (and WYAAS at Historic England's request). An initial review of the open area once stripped will determine subsequent stages of work.

7.2 The first critical review point will occur when the extent and depth of disturbance in recent centuries has been established within the open area. At this point a review meeting will be held on site with representatives of Historic England. A provisional date for the meeting will be agreed in advance of the start of the excavation element of the project. The requirement and timetabling of any subsequent review meetings on site will be determined at the first review meeting.

8. Communications

8.1 If the investigations proposed in this WSI are approved, Historic England will be given the required advance notice of the start of the works, and they will be consulted on a provisional date for the first review stage. The review will be attended by the ASWYAS project manager. Representatives of the lessee and owners, and of the owners' archaeological advisors (WYAAS) will also be invited.

9. Fieldwork Methodology

9.1 Given that Castle Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Appendix 1), Scheduled Monument Consent will be required for the archaeological works proposed here. It is noted that some features are excluded from the scheduling. These include the surfaces of the approach road, carpark, drives and paths up

to and round the monument, all modern walling and fencing, the Victorian Jubilee Tower which is Grade II Listed, the buildings and fixtures of Castle Hill Hotel (no longer extant) and the buildings of the house on Hill Side, the safety grille over the well, the Armada anniversary beacon, all modern steps up to and on the monument and the telephone poles crossing the monument. The ground beneath these exclusions, however, **with the exception of that beneath the hotel which will have been disrupted by cellarage**, is included.

9.2 All archaeological works will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards (CIfA 2020a-b; Historic England 1991, 2006, 2008). The archaeological works will involve the excavation of an open area incorporating the footprint of the proposed building, as well as watching briefs on works associated with service reconnection, carpark and passing places.

9.3 It is expected that the exact limits of the open area excavation and watching brief will be finalised following a meeting between ASWYAS, WYAAS and Historic England, the client and their representatives at the site, prior to any works commencing. At this meeting, the extent of any fencing required around the excavation, the site for welfare facilities and the location of spoil will be determined. Both the welfare facilities and the fencing will be free standing to avoid damage to the monument. Material laid down to protect the monument, prior to the storage of spoil, will also be agreed.

Table 1. Rationale and objectives for archaeological works

Intervention	Dimensions	Rationale and Objectives
Excavation	Estimated 25m by 35m	This area will be located over the footprint of the new build. It will be large enough to cover all intrusive groundworks associated with the build, with its final dimensions agreed during a pre-commencement site meeting (9.3). Its primary objective is to establish the extent and depth of structures and intrusions related to the former hotel, and to record any remains (prehistoric, Anglo-Scandinavian, Norman or later medieval structures and deposits) that may have survived 19th-century and later interventions.
Watching brief - services	-	An archaeological watching brief will be maintained on all intrusive works associated with identifying and reconnecting existing services. A watching brief is considered adequate due to the expectation that existing services will be re-used. The impact on the monument by these works is considered minimal.
Watching brief - carpark	-	An archaeological watching brief will be maintained on all intrusive works associated with expansion and/or relaying of the existing carpark. A watching brief is considered adequate due to expectation that excavation depths are likely to be

		shallow. The impact on the monument by these works is considered minimal.
Watching brief - passing places	-	An archaeological watching brief will be maintained on all intrusive works associated with the creation of passing places on the existing road up to the top of the monument. A watching brief is considered adequate due to the expectation that intrusion into the monument is likely to be limited. The impact on the monument by these works is considered minimal.
		Sterile soil bund – can architects provide detail about this? Will need to add something here? Not sure what this entails. If bund is being placed onto an existing ground surface, does an archaeologist need to be present? Decision for HE, not ASWYAS

9.4 As almost the whole of the relevant excavation area is covered by hard-standing, it is proposed that this area will be opened by machine, and the topsoil and recent overburden removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits of a maximum 0.2m thickness. This will be achieved by use of an appropriate machine with a wide toothless ditching blade. Any machine work will be carried out under direct archaeological supervision and the machine halted if significant archaeological deposits are encountered. The top of the first significant archaeological horizon may be exposed by the machine, but it will then be cleaned by hand and inspected for features.

9.5 Once the extent of deposits relating to the 20th century and later has been identified, any further work to determine the depth of these will be established by the use of an appropriate machine using a wide toothless ditching blade. Any machine work will be carried out under direct archaeological supervision and the machine will be halted if archaeological deposits pre-dating the 20th century are encountered.

9.6 Earlier features/deposits identified during excavation or watching brief will be manually excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner, in order to meet the aims and objectives outlined above. All features identified are expected to be half-sectioned and the full depth of archaeological deposits assessed.

9.7 All features exposed will be sample excavated employing the following strategy:

- Linear features: sufficient excavation will be carried out to investigate the depth, profile and fills of a ditch or gully and to recover dating and environmental evidence from its fills. Normally this will involve a minimum of 20% sample dispersed along the length of the feature (each

sample section to be not less than 1m). One 1m section will be located and recorded adjacent to the area edge where possible. Feature intersections will always be excavated in such a way to determine a stratigraphic relationship.

- Discrete features: pits, post-holes and other discrete features will normally be half-sectioned to determine and record their form. The complete excavation of such features may be appropriate, but only following consultation with Historic England.

9.8 A full written, drawn and photographic record of all material revealed during the course of all works will be made. The excavation and watching brief limits will be surveyed using electronic survey equipment with larger-scale, hand drawn plans of features, at 1:20 or 1:50, being created as appropriate. Sections of linear and discrete features will be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20. All sections, plans and elevations will include spot-heights related to Ordnance Datum in metres as correct to two decimal places. Tie-in information will be generated during the course of the excavations and will be fixed in relation to nearby permanent structures and roads and to the National Grid.

9.9 All excavated archaeological contexts will be fully recorded by written records, giving details of location, composition, shape, dimensions, relationships, finds, samples, and cross-references to other elements of the record and other relevant contexts, in accordance with best practice. All contexts, and any small finds and samples from them will be given unique numbers. Bulk finds will be collected by context.

9.10 As of April 2022 the West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service no longer requires the use of 35mm black and white film photography. When archaeological remains are encountered good quality digital photography may be employed. Images must be archived with the Archaeology Data Service. These images will assume the role of the ‘permanent photographic record’ in place of monochrome 35mm photographs.

9.11 ASWYAS will plan for using this digital photography and prepare a Data Management Plan (see Chartered Institute for Archaeology https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital/) to track the various components of the site archive and their archiving procedures. A copy of this plan should be included in the report and with any material supplied to the ADS. Images should be archived with the ADS following the using the ADS Guidelines for Depositors.

9.12 In general, good quality digital photography using cameras with a minimum resolution of 10 megapixels; RAW format may be used to capture images on site but these must be archived as .tiff Digital photography should follow the guidance given by Historic England in Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice, July 2015. ASWYAS will include metadata embedded in the image file. This metadata will include the following: the

commonly used name for the site being photographed, the relevant centred OS grid coordinates for the site to at least six figures, the relevant township name, the date of photograph, the subject of the photograph, the direction of shot and the name of the organisation taking the photograph.

9.13 All artefacts will be removed from the site for assessment and analysis, except for modern material, and where it is appropriate, their find spots will be recorded three dimensionally. Non-modern artefacts from the excavated topsoil and subsoil will be collected. Finds material will be stored in controlled environments, where appropriate. All artefacts recovered will be retained, cleaned, labelled and stored as detailed in the guidelines laid out in the CIfA (2020c). Any necessary conservation work will be undertaken by approved conservators working to UKIC guidelines.

9.14 Spoil heaps are to be scanned for non-ferrous metal artefacts using a metal detector capable of making this discrimination, operated by an experienced metal detector user (if necessary, operating under the supervision of the contracting archaeologist). Modern artefacts will be noted but not retained.

9.15 If a non-professional archaeologist is to be used to carry out the metal-detecting, a formal agreement of their position as a sub-contractor working under direction must be agreed in advance of their use on site. This formal agreement will apply whether they are paid or not. To avoid financial claims under the Treasure Act a suggested wording for this formal agreement with the metal detectorist is: "In the process of working on the archaeological investigation at [*location of site*] between the dates of [*insert dates*], [*name of person contributing to project*] is working under direction or permission of [*name of archaeological organisation*] and hereby waives all rights to rewards for objects discovered that could otherwise be payable under the Treasure Act 1996."

9.16 In the event of human remains being discovered they will, in the first instance, be left in situ, covered and protected. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with the Burial Act 1857. An exhumation licence will be obtained from the Ministry of Justice prior to the removal of the remains.

9.17 All finds defined as ‘treasure’ under the Treasure Act 1996 will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996.

9.18 A soil-sampling programme will be undertaken during the course of the investigations for the identification and recovery of carbonised remains, vertebrate remains, molluscs and small artefactual material. Appropriate specialists will advise on sampling strategies as required, including Historic England’s Regional Science Advisor, and their suggested strategies will then be implemented. Provision will be made to recover material suitable for scientific dating. Contingency sums will be made available to undertake such dating. Further contingency provision will be made for additional specialist advice, e.g. for finds analysis and conservation.

9.19 The excavation and spoil locations will be secured by non-intrusive fencing which meets the ASWYAS's Health and Safety policy (section 13, below). The excavation upcast will be retained within the secured area. Where upcast has to be stored on Scheduled ground, it will be stored on a membrane which will ensure the ground does not become contaminated with excavated material. The exact location of fencing and spoil wll be determined in consultation with the representatives of the client and Historic England.

10. Analysis and Reporting Methodology

10.1 Following the conclusion of all fieldwork (excavation and watching briefs) an assessment of the results of the project will be carried out, designed to enable Historic England to take informed decisions on any recommendations for further work therein.

10.2 For all categories of material recovered, including finds, palaeo-environmental, industrial and other specialist samples, an assessment by an appropriately experienced specialist will be undertaken. Samples will be processed and sorted, and any artefacts recovered provided to the appropriate specialist(s) to be considered alongside the hand-recovered material. Stratigraphic information will be supplied to the project specialists. All finds will be treated in accordance with current best practice guidance. Finds will be cleaned and marked, according to accepted principles and in line with appropriate period/material guidelines.

10.3 In terms of ceramic assemblages, recording will be carried out in a manner compatible with existing typological series of local pottery reference collections in the Tolson Museum and in the WYAAS's Medieval Pottery Reference Collection. All ferrous objects which are not demonstrably of recent centuries, and a selection of similar non-ferrous objects (including all coins), will be x-radiographed. Where material suitable for scientific dating has been recovered, sufficient dating will be undertaken to meet the aims of the project.

10.4 The site archive will be assembled in line with the recommended composition provided in Historic England PPN3 (2008) and UKIC's document Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage and the CIfA's (2020d) "Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives. The integrity of the primary field record will be preserved. Security copies will be maintained where appropriate.

10.5 In addition to the site records, artefacts, ecofacts and other sample residues, the archive will contain all the data collected during the fieldwork, including records, finds and environmental samples. It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent. Archive consolidation will be undertaken immediately following the conclusion of fieldwork and will involve:

- the site record being checked, cross-referenced and indexed as necessary;

- retained finds being cleaned, stabilised, marked and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum;
- retained finds being assessed and recorded using pro forma recording sheets, by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Initial artefact dating will be integrated within the site matrix;
- environmental samples being processed by suitably experienced and qualified staff and recorded using pro forma recording sheets.

In addition to the site records, artefacts, ecofacts and other sample residues, the archive will contain:

- a summary report synthesising the context record;
- a summary of the artefact record;
- a summary of the environment record.

10.6 Provision will be made for the deposition of the archive, artefacts and environmental material with Kirklees Museums, as representatives of the landowner. The museum will be contacted in advance of commencement of fieldwork to ascertain their requirements for the archive (e.g. marking and labelling requirements, accession number). A budget to cover the museum's deposition charge will be allowed for. On completion of archiving, confirmation of deposition will be supplied to Historic England and WYAAS.

10.7 An assessment report will be prepared within an agreed timescale and will outline the archaeological significance of the deposits which have been identified, and it will provide an interpretation of the results in relation to earlier archaeological interventions on Castle Hill. It will also include the following:

- a non-technical summary of the results of the work;
- a summary of the project's background;
- the dates the fieldwork took place;
- the site location, including National Grid Reference;
- an account of the method;
- the results of the evaluation, including phasing and interpretation of the site sequence;
- conservation assessment;
- an assessment of the stratigraphic and other written, drawn and photographic records;

- a catalogue of the archaeological material recovered during the evaluation;
- assessments of each material category of finds recovered, including their types, quantities and concentrations, illustrations and/or photographs as appropriate;
- a summary of the contents of the project archive and its location;
- an overall plan of the site, accurately identifying the location of the evaluation and any findings.

10.8 Copies of the assessment report will be supplied to the client, to Historic England and to WYAAS. If there is a subsequent decision not to proceed with further stages of the project, the results will be made available to the wider archaeological community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS. ASWYAS will complete the online OASIS form at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/.

10.9 Given the importance of the site, a final archive report which will address any specialist recommendations will be required. A publication may also be necessary, and this will follow the production of an Update Project Design that will require approval by representatives of Historic England and WYAAS.

11. Public Engagement

11.1 As noted above by Dr Giles (2.10), the site at Almondbury offers significant opportunities for encouraging local communities to explore a monument which may well have played a major role in expressing and reinforcing community identity as early as the Iron Age. As far as long-term, sustained engagement is concerned, the development proposals will lead to the restaurant/hotel and other commercial elements supporting innovative exhibition and education facilities.

11.2 In the short term, the archaeological excavation will include opportunities for the public to experience on-site presentations of the work, and its progress and results will be disseminated through social media linked to Kirklees Museums Service and the WYAAS. Further engagement with the public and stakeholders of the site is proposed through having signage up during the excavation to provide information on the works. Depending upon the work schedule, it is also proposed that an archaeologist on site will be made available at set times to engage with the public detailing the work and findings. This would take the form of an informal site tour from the rampart overlooking the main excavation area.

11.3 Though this WSI does not envisage volunteer opportunities for the excavation process itself the likelihood of discovering significant quantities of artefacts from recent centuries provides an opportunity to encourage volunteers from local

groups and societies – such as the Huddersfield and District Archaeological Society – to participate in this project.

12. Copyright, Confidentiality and Publicity

12.1 Copyright in the documentation prepared by ASWYAS and specialist sub-contractors will be the subject of additional licences in favour of the repository accepting the archive to use such documentation for their standard educational and museum service functions, and to provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions.

12.2 Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR), information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as ‘confidential’ or ‘commercially sensitive’.

12.3 Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. ASWYAS will inform the client of EIR requirements, and will ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.

12.4 Unless the client commissioning the project wishes to state otherwise, the copyright of any written, graphic or photographic record and reports will rest with the originating body (Archaeological Services WYAS).

13. Health and Safety

13.1 ASWYAS has its own Health and Safety policy which has been compiled using national guidelines. These guidelines conform to all relevant Health and Safety legislation.

13.2 In addition, each project undergoes a 'Risk Assessment' which sets project specific Health and Safety requirements, which all members of staff are made aware of prior to on-site work commencing. Health and Safety will take priority over archaeological matters. Necessary precautions will be taken over underground services at the outset of the project.

14. Insurance

14.1 ASWYAS is covered by the insurance and indemnities of the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee. Insurance has been arranged through: Zurich Municipal, Zurich House, 2 Gladiator Way, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6GB (policy number QLA-03R896-0013). Any further enquiries should be directed to: Head of Finance, Wakefield Council, Wakefield One, PO Box 700, Wakefield, WF1 2EB.

15. Summary

15.1 Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching as part of the current development proposals was carried out in 2018 to record the extent of 19th to 21st-century disturbance of earlier deposits. The three trenches excavated revealed demolition deposits relating to the previous hotel, surviving remains of the hotel cellar and buried services. Only one linear feature, on a similar alignment to the bank, may be of note, but it produced no dateable finds. On the basis of this evaluation, and previous trial trenching in 1998 and 2001, the impact of development within the immediate footprint of the former hotel and its extensions is considered to be low. Elsewhere, the impact of development works on the scheduled monument is likely to be low to moderate where ground disturbance is minimal (e.g. modifications to the car park) and high where ground disturbance is significant.

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Castle Hill central ward (1:750 @ A3)

10.0 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL (Read in conjunction with '5.0 Setting')

10.01. Many people will think firstly of the visual impact of the proposal. This will be primarily that of the new visitor centre building. However, as the primary aim of the scheme is to make a major heritage asset more accessible and comprehensible to a much wider audience than before, assessment of harmful impacts of the scheme (visual and other) must be weighed against the public benefits that will ensue (NPPF paragraph 215).

10.02. Harm refers to harm the significance of an asset. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that ***"Any harm to…the significance of a designated heritage asset… from development within its setting…should require clear and convincing justification."***

10.03. Much of section 16 of the NPPF that deals with heritage assets is quite naturally concerned with sustaining, and if possible, enhancing the significance of heritage assets (paragraph 210). The primary purpose of this scheme is to enhance the significance of Castle Hill. With this in mind, reference to paragraph 219 of the NPPF tells us that ***"local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within…. The setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance."***

10.04. The new visitor centre building is the element of the scheme most likely to impact the setting of the asset. Locating the building on recently developed land on the hill – the former Castle Hill Hotel – reducing the scale of the building in relation to previously approved schemes, as well as setting the scheme down into the landscape of the hill, all work to mitigate impact. Beneficially this location also gives ideal orientation in relation to the car park, the Victoria Tower and important views from the site.

10.05. Only when one emerges on to the top of the plateau of Castle Hill, either from the access road or climbing the hillside will the new building be fully revealed. No other near views are possible and from any distance the new building will appear as little more than a small smudge at some remove from the Victoria Tower.

10.06. Impact by the scheme on the setting of Castle Hill itself is miniscule, such is the scale of that setting. One has to be standing on top of the monument before one see any real impact, despite the fact the monument may have been in view from miles away.

10.07. There will be a greater impact on the setting of the Victoria Tower. Once at the summit of the hill, the Tower and the new building will be seen together. This juxtaposition can itself illustrate a number of interesting points. For example, within the lifespan of Castle Hill, both the Victoria Tower and the new building come very late in the timescale, although for many years there were buildings on the site of the proposed new visitor centre even before the Tower was erected.

fig.10.1 Best views of surroundings from high point of the hill

10.08. The Tower coexisted with other buildings on the top of Castle Hill for many years. Whilst there is no one alive today who can have seen Castle Hill before the Tower was built, there are many who will remember times when the Tower was not the only building on top of the hill.

10.09. The Tower is a vertical feature of no great function other than to signal the hill's presence over as wide an area as possible, and even further reaching views of the surrounding landscape. The new visitor centre by contrast is horizontal in form, contemporary in nature, hiding within the Hill earthworks – and incidentally, lower than the other most recently demolished buildings – with a very specific public function. This contrast draws attention to the Tower but in a positive manner: one that begs the question why the Tower was built and what part it has played in the long history of the monument. The hill, the tower and their relationship comprise most of the educational and interpretative subject matter of the new scheme.

10.10. The new building is sited and orientated to acknowledge and reinforce the significance of the Tower. Within the principal space of the education and interpretation suite visitors cannot avoid paying attention to the Tower as it is the focus of the most important external view from that space. It is a powerful use of architectural design to draw attention to another building.

10.11. The grandeur and scale of the setting of Castle Hill mitigate impact by the new building. The setting of the Victoria Tower operates at two scales:

i. where the Tower is read as a feature on the Hill from distance, that setting will be no more impacted than the Hill itself;
ii. where it is seen within the setting of the top of Castle Hill, it will be impacted, but in a positive manner that reinforces an understanding of why the Tower was built here and its place in the history of the monument.

10.12. The potential for artificial light from the new building impacting the setting of Castle Hill has been raised. The Centre has been designed to minimise potential light pollution, whilst nevertheless making it evident that there is a presence on the Hill to discourage antisocial behaviour. The old Castle Hill Hotel and earlier buildings will of course have produced artificial light on the Hill in their time. But any such light cannot (and should not) compete against the night-time light shows that from time to time now take place on the Victoria Tower and that have proved so popular with many people.

10.13. As previously noted, the new visitor centre is sited on the area once occupied by the Castle Hill Hotel, which is an important link with the more recent history of Castle Hill. The dominance of the Motte with the Victoria Tower will be maintained thanks to the defensive inner ditch and the topography of the man-made (medieval) landscape. The integration of the new building follows the historical tradition for ancillary buildings in such situations, where halls, kitchens, stores, barracks etc would be clustered at the feet of the Keep. Even an Iron Age site would observe such a hierarchy.

10.14. The scheme has the potential to increase traffic to the Hill. This is acknowledged and taken into account in terms of parking, highways and the business plan. One concern raised during development is the impact that large functions being hosted in the new building might have. Management has acknowledged this concern and confirms it is willing to enter a legal agreement that such functions will not be promoted nor hosted at the venue.

fig.10.2 Illustration of 1 mile radius from Castle Hill

10.15. The visual impact of Castle Hill reaches far and wide, and within this sphere of influence there are several designated heritage assets to be considered. The topography of the area means that visible impact is limited to certain areas. Although harm to setting can occur in areas where there is no intervisibility, for instance where development affects a main approach or is considered important due to historic ownership etc, this is not the case with the application scheme.

fig.10.3 View of Castle Hill from outside Farnley Tyas

10.16. Assessment shows that actual visible impact of the proposal scheme within a two mile radius will be greatly limited by topography. Almondbury, for instance, will have negligible intervisibility. Therefore the likelihood of harm to designated heritage assets there or within the Almondbury Conservation area is negligible and of mainly historical associative impact. Assets to the south of Castle Hill are also rarely exposed to visibility of the proposed building. These assets generally occupy the lower slopes of Castle Hill and the Colne Valley and, due to the topography and height of the site, impact will be nominal.

10.17. There are five areas without the site where heritage assets may be impacted. These are:

i. Heritage assets around Longley
ii. Heritage assets around Ashes Lane
iii. Heritage assets around Hall Bower and Newsome
iv. Heritage assets to the south of Castle Hill
v. Heritage assets around Farnley Tyas

fig.10.4 Image Key Plan

Heritage Assets Around Longley

10.18. Longley Hall is a Grade II* Listed house dating to at least the 14th Century. The Hall was the seat of the Ramsden family from the 16th to the early 20th centuries. As landowners of the extensive titular Ramsden Estate they virtually owned the whole of Huddersfield until its sale to the Corporation in 1920.

10.19. Longley is a small hamlet of cottages and ancillary buildings associated with the Hall. Castle Hill is dominant above the settlement. However mid twentieth century development of suburban semi-detached housing has contributed much to the erosion of this relationship. The proposal will in no way dilute this physical relationship or the dominance of Castle Hill and the proposed building will likely not be visible from the immediate locality of the Hall

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Images:

1. *Longley Hall front view.*
2. *Sketch drawing from Rev Hubert's History of Almondbury 1882.*
3. *Other ancillary cottages within the Longley complex.*
4. *View of Longley Hall from the approach towards Ashes Lane.*
5. *Highly characterful lane next to Longley hall.*
6. *View of Castle Hill from in front of Longley Hall.*

Heritage Assets Around Ashes Lane

10.20. Ashes Lane runs along the cusp of the hillside around the North side of Castle Hill. It is home to several dispersed farmsteads that have a direct relationship to Castle Hill. Views of the application site are limited, although some minor encroachment over the Castle defences may occur. In light of this, some impact may occur to the immediate outlook of some of these listed cottages. However, the forms of the building and its strong relationship to the landscape will help to mitigate any harm.

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Images:

7. 112 Kaye Lane, Grade II

8. View of Castle Hill from Ashes Lane around 155 Ashes Lane.

9. 155 Ashes Lane seen from the West.

10. 157-159 Ashes Lane.

11. 158 Ashes Lane that stands at the end of Castle Hill Side lane.

12. View from Castle Hill Side towards 158 Ashes Lane.

13. View from Ashes Lane towards isolated (possibly Lathe houses) of 165 Ashes Lane.

Heritage Assets Around Hall Bower and Newsome

10.21. Hall Bower is a collection of mainly 18th century cottages with a direct outlook onto the north of Castle Hill. The long terraces rely on their rural setting for much of their significance and, despite this having been eroded through later development, the isolated semi agricultural character is important for the appreciation of several Listed buildings. Their view of Castle Hill will be slightly impacted upon by the proposal, but the proposed building will be much less prominent than the previous public house and the curvature of the hill side will remain, thereby substantially mitigating any harm.

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Images:

14. *View of Castle Hill from Listed cottages in Hall Bower with number 158 Ashes Lane immediately to the right of Victoria Tower. Note the dominance of the tower asserting the dominance of the Motte. The proposed building will be farther to the left of this scene and reflect the contour of the land as well as being hidden by trees.*
15. *Cottages of Hall Bower.*
16. *Non Listed former church in Hall Bower, illustrating the dominance of Castle Hill and Jubilee Tower.*

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Heritage Assets to the South of Castle Hill

10.22. To the south of Castle Hill are several listed farmsteads and houses linked with early yeoman farmers. These include some early examples of encased timber frame structures. Many of these buildings rely upon Castle Hill for their setting, however, in terms of visibility at least, there will be very little impact upon the designated assets, due mainly to the steep topography and the impossibility of inter-visibility between the assets in the valley and the top of Castle Hill. Even Victoria Tower is barely visible from many places.

Images:

17. Clay Hall Grade II Listed building, Victoria Tower just visible behind the garage.

18. 'Lumb' and associated farm buildings Grade II. Tucked away within the valley.

19. Panoramic image of Castle Hill showing the above two listed buildings in the foreground to the right.

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Heritage Assets Around Farnley Tyas

10.23. Farnley Tyas stands high upon the opposite escarpment to Castle Hill to the south. The two main Listed buildings within the village are the Church of St Lucius and Yew Tree Farm, the latter now undergoing redevelopment.

10.24. Castle Hill is obviously an important landmark within the are but any views of the hill itself from the listed buildings are now obscured by other buildings that enclose the village street. As such only select glimpses can be obtained towards Castle Hill. Any impact will therefore be similar to that on other long-distance viewpoints. The new building will likely be capable of being seen only by those specifically seeking views or by those very familiar with the landscape; even then it will be difficult to distinguish details.

10.25. It is our belief that the scheme will have low impact on the setting of Castle Hill. As the principal heritage asset within Kirklees, it has been poorly served for some time. Lack of awareness and understanding of this nationally significant monument has certainly not helped awareness and understanding of lesser heritage assets within the authority area. The beneficial impact that the Castle Hill Visitor Centre will have on the monument itself must increase interest in other heritage assets within Kirklees. This can only enhance opportunities for cultural tourism in the area, with spin-off benefits for the entire district.

Images:

20. View of Castle Hill as glimpsed from Farnley Tyas. This view is only very limited.

21. Church of St Lucius.

22. Barn at Yew Tree Farm.

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11.0 PUBLIC BENEFITS

11.01 Regardless of changes in short term political and economic fortunes, Castle Hill will persist as a monument of national importance and the jewel in Kirklees' heritage crown. The profound and broad-ranging changes Castle Hill has witnessed in its history constitute an unparalleled record for the locality. Given the more than 4,000-year history of the Hill, changes within any individual's lifespan are put into perspective. Such a dense and compendious resource is woefully underserved at the present time.

11.02 The opportunities to learn from Castle Hill are immense but need decisive intervention to make them available to more people. The public benefits may be broadly divided into sections:

- Access to better information about Castle Hill
- Greater promotion of the heritage asset
- Benefits to the local economy
- Shelter, catering and WC provision
- Improved access and security

These sections often overlap and are expanded upon below.

11.03 Castle Hill's importance demands that local people, scholars and visitors be given the opportunity fully to understand and appreciate its history and how that history illuminates the story of local life over more than 4,000 years. Visiting the Hill is a visceral experience, where landscape, history and meteorology come together to provide a memorable encounter. The impact of such an experience is amplified with an awareness and understanding of the history of the hill.

11.04 Access to Castle Hill is presently restricted for many people because of the topography of the site and the absence of welfare facilities that are essential for many visitors: shelter, WC provision, the opportunity for refreshment etc. At present access is only possible by car or for fit ambulant visitors and cyclists. The new scheme will widen access to the non-ambulant, the neurodiverse, hearing and sight impaired, amongst others.

11.05 There will be a first-rate exhibition and interpretation facility on the Hill itself. Existing information boards only scratch the surface. However, any harm to the monument in providing new facilities must be minimal and outweighed by these public benefits.

11.06 Increased awareness of Castle Hill as Kirklees' premier heritage asset and for Kirklees cultural tourism more widely. Free access to the interpretation and engagement spaces – Education Room, Gallery Room and Immersive Room. These will tell the stories of the hill through a range of media and provide learning spaces for educational and special interest groups to provide an immersive learning experience. The visitor centre will be free for everyone to ensure that Castle Hill's heritage is accessible to visitors from all socio-economic groups.

11.07 The interpretation and engagement spaces will be open every day. The visitor centre is seen as a major educational resource and organised school groups will be able to book time in the Education Room for a range of activities. (Refer to the separate interpretation strategy). Booking for these groups is necessary to enable preparation and recording of such visits. These groups will enjoy free refreshments during their visits. As members of the public, school age children are free to visit at any time.

11.08 Greater promotion of the heritage asset locally and beyond with details of the facilities available and linking Castle Hill with other local visitor attractions. Interpretation and educational materials managed, reviewed and improved on a regular basis will feed into the promotional initiatives and online engagement.

11.09 Increased knowledge about and understanding of the asset will engender a greater sense of value and care in the public. An active, community-led space fosters local responsibility for preserving Castle Hill.

11.10 Volunteer programmes could train local residents as site guides, conservation helpers, and event coordinators, embedding public ownership of the site's future. Without these facilities, Castle Hill risks remaining a passive landmark rather than a living, community-driven heritage site.

11.11 Free access to high-quality WC facilities maintained, cleaned and monitored by the management at all times that the building is open. There will be full disability access plus baby changing facilities and it is not necessary to engage with the broader centre to use the WCs.

11.12 Shelter for visitors to the Hill during inclement weather both externally and internally; internal spaces are heated.

11.13 Availability of hot and cold refreshments from simple hot and cold beverages to full hot meals. Café during the day; bar and restaurant in the evening. Fresh locally sourced meals and ingredients. Indoor and outdoor seating with scenic views and all budgets catered for including grab-and-go snacks.

11.14 Detailed, high-quality educational and interpretation materials across the site, internally and externally, in formats accessible to all, regularly reviewed covering Castle Hill, its history, flora and fauna etc all monitored as part of the ongoing management of the site. External material would of course always be available and inclusivity is fundamental to the scheme: wheelchair accessibility; neurodivergent friendly spaces; braille signage; audio-guided tours; multilingual interpretation.

11.15 Unlike some other heritage sites, this project actively improves green space management, wildlife protection, and habitat restoration. Dedicated cycle storage to encourage green travel; electric vehicle charging points for sustainable transport; improved pedestrian access to reduce reliance on cars. All these help to reduce the site's carbon footprint.

11.16 Opportunities for promotion of the heritage asset locally, across the region and beyond to raise awareness of the monument and the improved visitor facilities available, raising the visitor profile of Kirklees. Digital access and remote engagement through website and online resources will include educational and research materials, virtual tours and expert led webinars plus the opportunity to buy shop merchandise online.

11.17 Whilst the entire scheme is to be used to convey information about Castle Hill, a concise history of Castle Hill will be available within the interpretation and engagement spaces. This will encourage exploration of the site itself to help understand the landforms, how and when they were created, and why.

11.18 Information boards will explain and interpret Castle Hill in situ, meaning visitors can experience the impact of history immediately. This will include the WW2 gun emplacements just a stone's throw from the hill. During the development phase of the scheme schools outreach programmes will be considered including input from the relevant departments of the local authority.

11.19 The management team is acutely aware of the educational opportunities for schoolchildren that the scheme represents. These can start even before completion. Section 11 of the archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation emphasises how public engagement and hence public benefit relating directly to Castle Hill could begin whilst work is on site, with on-site presentations, informal tours, signage, question and answer sessions with an archaeologist etc. subject to securing specific funding.

11.20 The benefits of the scheme would thus begin to be felt well before the completed scheme is open, with this 'run-up' period enabling higher and further engagement once the project is complete.Such opportunities mean there will be an awareness of and eagerness to visit the centre as soon as it opens. The visitor centre will provide permanent educational resources, offering free learning programmes, workshops, and interactive experiences. Partnerships with Huddersfield University, local schools, and historical societies could be formed to facilitate research and community engagement.

11.21 One easily overlooked public benefit of this development is the creation of a space that serves local communities as much as tourists. The Centre is a perfect venue to host talks, exhibitions, and community-led activities, making Castle Hill a living part of local culture rather than just a static historical site. Seasonal and themed programming (e.g., archaeology days, heritage festivals, nighttime astronomy sessions) would broaden engagement beyond typical daytime visitors.

11.22 A 24 hr/365 days a year supervisory presence on the Hill. This will include video surveillance (recorded) and a night porter service to discourage antisocial behaviour, theft, vandalism, substance abuse etc. This commitment to security can only enhance the visitor experience, reduce the need for police intervention and provide long-term site integrity. Non-polluting lighting of the exterior will further discourage antisocial behaviour.

11.23 Improved access for all and improved parking with designated disability parking spaces, electric vehicle charging points and secure bicycle storage. Access road and parking improvements will not impinge on the archaeology of the site. Incentives will be given for pedestrian, cycle and public transport access. Management will make information on public transport, foot and cycle access routes available throughout the local area.

11.24 There will be new employment opportunities in the short and longer terms during both the construction and operational phases. Commitment to creating a sustainable development means that the new employment opportunities will be for the long-term, not merely short part-time positions. There will be 30 to 35 permanent roles to be filled in hospitality, visitor services, maintenance and security.

11.25 Many heritage sites actively contribute to local economies. Without proper infrastructure, Castle Hill is missing opportunities to support local tourism, education, and hospitality sectors. The Castle Hill Visitor Centre would provide a much-needed significant economic boost to Huddersfield, generating an estimated £5–10 million annually through increased tourism, local business growth, and job creation. Higher visitor numbers would drive spending in hospitality, retail, and accommodation, benefiting the town's economy and long-term development.

11.26 Heritage sites that fail to respond to change risk becoming disconnected from modern audiences. Conservation is an active, not passive process. Simply maintaining Castle Hill in its current form does not address the accessibility and security challenges that continue to impact the site.

11.27 Other Scheduled Monuments have responded successfully to similar challenges. Sites like Stonehenge, Tintagel, and Hadrian's Wall have all introduced visitor infrastructure whilst protecting historical integrity. This proposal gives Castle Hill a long-term future as a valuable cultural asset for Kirklees.

12.0 MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

12.01 Castle Hill is owned by Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC). Part of the site is leased under a long-term agreement with the operators of the former Castle Hill Hotel. As the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) of national importance, Historic England (HE) acting for the government on such matters, is critically concerned in all proposals for the site. Lastly, it is a much-loved heritage asset for the public locally and beyond, with numerous interest groups deeply concerned with its welfare.

12.02 The essence of the scheme is that Castle Hill Visitor Centre is not a commercial development with public benefits, it is a public benefit-driven project supported by sustainable revenue streams. A particular management structure is required to administer such a model. Applicant and local authority are committed to a strong collaborative partnership to develop a comprehensive management plan for Castle Hill.

12.03 An important part of the plan will be to ensure that KMC does not suffer financially from the project, with the asset no longer appearing as a liability on the council's books as it has done for some time.

12.04 Three management structures have been considered for the Visitor Centre scheme:

1. Private Commercial Operation
2. Charitable Trust or Foundation
3. Community Interest Company (CIC)

12.05 A privately run visitor centre could certainly generate sufficient commercial profit to deliver the critical public benefits but in our view a private company would risk appearing to prioritise revenue over heritage conservation and accessibility. It would be more difficult to maintain the sense of transparency which we believe is important if the project is to engender a sense of ownership and responsibility amongst local people in particular.

12.06 A registered charity management structure would certainly align more evidently with the heritage and education goals of the scheme but would face limitations in commercial revenue generation due to restrictions on trading activities. This would be counterproductive to the broader aims of the scheme.

12.07 A CIC would give a much broader range of stakeholders the opportunity to be involved and would most easily permit an appropriate blend of skills and experience to be brought on to the Board of the Centre. Most pertinently it would avoid queries arising over private gain for public benefits.

12.08 For these reasons the CIC model is our preference for the management structure for the scheme.

12.09 Discussions with Historic England (HE) have confirmed that the final, detailed Management Plan, covering site management, traffic control, and landscape maintenance, can be finalised prior to project commencement. HE has agreed such detail is not required for comment at this stage of the application process.

12.10 The shared goal is to preserve the heritage of this historically significant site and ensure its effective management throughout all phases—before, during, and after development - enabling many more people to learn about and enjoy this historic and iconic site.

12.11 Castle Hill's value as a viewpoint and recreational resource can only be enhanced by the proposals and make it accessible to a wider community that cherishes the wild and rugged landscape than has been possible before.

13.0 INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

13.01. Whilst it is neither possible nor appropriate at this stage to attempt to present a fully detailed interpretation plan for the project, it is possible to make evident the themes and intended outcomes of that interpretation such as to guide further development and detail as partners and stakeholders become engaged. It will also ensure, as funding opportunities are clarified, where emphasis and priorities for interpretation should be placed.

13.02. Castle Hill has been intimately connected with the people of Huddersfield and beyond for millennia and much work has been done in the past to interpret the monument to visitors. Today however, key messages about this asset are failing to be conveyed. The Heritage project is an obvious opportunity to revisit and reinvigorate the interpretation strategy.

13.03. Our overarching aim for interpretation at Castle Hill is to develop understanding and appreciation of the national importance of the monument, in terms of its archaeological significance, its long and varied history, and its role as both a place and emblem for local people throughout that history.

13.04. Some of the factors interpretation should aim to reveal:

- the specialness of the Hill;
- what makes it so;
- why it looks the way it does;
- why it is where it is;
- the physical experience of being on Castle Hill;
- what's happened there over the centuries;
- how it relates to other local heritage assets;
- where it stands in the national hierarchy of ancient monuments;
- why it holds such a powerful grip on many local people;
- why it deserves care and attention at the same time as all the ways in which it can be enjoyed.

13.05. There is huge scope to increase the audience. For example:

- those presently unable to attain the top of the hill;
- those for whom umediated exposure on Castle Hill may be problematic;
- people for whom English is not their first language;
- those for whom physical disabilities militate against enjoyment of the asset;
- those who seek a broader understanding of the context of this strange landform;
- those who wish to spend longer periods on the hill to absorb the experience.

  This is by no means an exhaustive list.

13.06. Some of the key messages that interpretation needs visitors to understand include:

- That Castle Hill is a natural landform modified by human activity
- That there has been human activity at Castle Hill for thousands of years
- How rare an example of this type of monument it is – particularly in the north of England
- That Castle Hill probably holds many secrets as yet undiscovered

13.07. The interpretation should help people understand the intangible 'specialness' of the place and go some way to explain the many reasons for this. From the amazing views of the surrounding landscapes that are available, to the reasons why buildings, including the Victoria Tower, have been erected – and destroyed – on Castle Hill over the centuries.

13.08. The interpretation will benefit from the full range of authorities available to contribute, from historians and archaeologists all the way through to local people for whom the site has more emotional resonances.

13.09. So wide is the audience that an equally wide range of interpretation materials and techniques will be appropriate, subject as always to financial constraints. The Heritage Project would permit an in-situ video exhibition for the first time, capable of conveying a lot of information in a short time and capable also of pointing visitors to other sources of information about Castle Hill, such as that available at Tolson Park.

13.10. Standard media such as signboards and printed guides will of course be essential. Wherever possible existing signboard locations will be used to avoid unnecessary damage to below ground assets.

13.11. A critically important feature should be an immersive timeline experience to convey the long lifetime of Castle Hill and the different activities it has hosted from its origins and early history through Iron Age, Roman, Middle Ages, Victorian and so on. It is essential that the scheme development and business plan enable free access for all to this exhilarating educational resource.

13.12. There is also scope for activities such as guided walks, dramatic re-enactments (perhaps involving the beacon!), guest lectures etc. Much of this will depend upon volunteers coming forward, and the willingness of drama, outdoor experience and similar organisations to become involved. The scope, because of the scale and dramatic setting of Castle Hill, is almost boundless.

13.13. The visitor experience will be transformed from what it is at present. Visitors will feel like they have arrived at a very special place, which is valued and cherished by authorities, agencies and ordinary local people alike.

13.14. Welcome and directional signage will orientate from the off. The managed and monitored feel of the site with discreet lighting, dedicated disabled parking areas, better litter bin provision and so on will contrast greatly with the rather sad quality at present. The new Heritage building itself, where visitors can pick up information leaflets, watch explanatory media, obtain tickets for the Tower and prepare for their exploration of the site in comfort, will transform the visitor experience.

13.15. No longer a remote, unsupervised, slightly scary place where antisocial activity may be encountered, visitors will now experience the myriad opportunities Castle Hill offers for recreation and education (which are not mutually exclusive!) and realise that this is an asset which will repay repeated visits. Exit notices will encourage precisely that.

13.16. We should not attempt to build interpretation Rome in a day. The early years of the new Castle Hill Heritage Centre and visitor experience will generate feedback on the initial offering that must be used to develop and modify the interpretation materials and techniques. This must form part of the management function of the Centre, relating as always to the finance that can be made available to continue this work.

13.17. Through the course of scheme development, the interpretation, education and presentation spaces included in the scheme have evolved and developed, requiring adjustments to other parts of the building. Reference to earlier iterations of the floor plans as compared with those of the present application scheme make this abundantly clear. Viewing of the computer generated interactive 3D virtual tour of the building makes the extent and quality of provision comprehensible for those unused to reading orthographic drawings or single point static 3D images.

13.18. Within this mixture of spaces, visitors will be able to access static and projected information and displays using the long – and continuing – history of Castle Hill to gain an understanding of the geographical, archaeological, social and cultural importance of the site. In purely historical terms it will set out a timeline starting with the origins and early history through the Iron Age period, Roman influences, the mediaeval period, post-Conquest influences, buildings, earthworks etc, all of which can be related, through drone imagery, to the physical environment outside the door.

13.19. The timeline will emphasise the long history of the Hill: the periods of activity and inactivity; the physical changes brought about; how social and cultural events have affected the site: the erection of a beacon; the genesis of the Tower.

13.20. Archaeological information will link to Hill material at Tolson Museum and beyond and there is scope for activities such as workshops and talks, school group activities and guided walking trails.

13.21. All this will be available free of charge to all, with open entry available whenever the building is open to the public.

13.22. The support and input of the Council's key departments and experts will ensure that an informed, immersive and exciting experience awaits each and every visitor regardless of age, level of knowledge, interest, background or place of residence.

CASTLE HILL VISITOR CENTRE

INTERPRETATION OUTLINE

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10/02/2025

Interpretation Outline

This outline is a remote piece of work based on existing information provided by the project team, including Director Indy Thandi and the architect, one17design. I have had access to the visitor centre architect site plans and elevations, the virtual tour, and online sources such as Historic England's National Heritage List, West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record, Google Maps and Wikipedia.

While this is not an interpretation plan, original research, audience development or consultation with partners and stakeholders, it is a first step towards an interpretation plan and sets out the broad aims, locations, interpretive theme and topics to be interpreted, along with the visitor groups. These will be refined and developed during interpretative planning. The interpretive planning process will involve consultation with partners, stakeholders and visitor groups to ensure that interpretation meets their needs.

The aim of the interpretive planning process is to create a well-rounded and engaging new visitor experience at Castle Hill that tells the key stories of the hill through appropriate media that meet the interests of the centre's proposed visitor groups and the objectives of the centre's owners as well as stakeholders and partners.

Central to this are:

1. **The physical experience** of being on the hill, from the elevated feeling of scenic views and the presence of the sky above day or night, to being open to the elements (the wind on your face, etc). External interpretation should enhance but not distract from.
2. **Curiosity to find out more** about the history, landmarks, visible features and significance of the hill, which the visitor centre and external interpretation should provide for to different depths.

Locations

This is an initial suggestions for where visitor information and interpretation can be located. Specific locations and interpretive stories will be developed during the interpretive planning process and will need to take into account limitations placed by scheduling and listing. As part of the broader improvements across Castle Hill, including the visitor centre and surrounding areas, the Victoria Tower requires a much needed interpretation upgrade to ensure it aligns seamlessly with the enhanced new visitor experience across the site.

1. Footpath access points - provide, for those arriving on foot, welcome and orientation to the hill, introduce the interpretive theme, signpost things to do and places to visit, including the visitor centre, cafe, toilets and Victoria Tower.

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2. The car park - provide, for those arriving by vehicle, welcome and orientation to the hill, introduce the interpretive theme, signpost things to do and places to visit, including the visitor centre, cafe, toilets and Victoria Tower.

3. Key historic locations - interpret the history and significance of that location, eg Victoria Tower, site of Medieval castle and village, hillfort earthworks, specific subsurface features identified through archaeological work.

4. The entrance to the visitor centre - to reinforce the interpretive theme and highlight the key topics through the people who settled on the hill.

5. The cafe/restaurant - artworks that visually reference the interpretive theme and highlight the key topics. There is also the potential for menu items to be named to reference the theme and topics and for colouring sheets to be provided for families.

6. The visitor centre gift shop - the shop will enhance the interpretive experience by offering a selection of locally sourced souvenirs, historical books, and themed gifts that reflect Castle Hill's heritage. A £5 guidebook will be available, providing visitors with deeper insights into the site's 4,000-year history, archaeological discoveries, and key landmarks. Additionally, educational materials, replica artifacts, and family-friendly resources such as activity kits and colouring books will ensure a lasting connection to Castle Hill's story.

7. The visitor centre's three interpretation and engagement rooms - Education Room, Gallery Room and Immersive Room. These will tell the stories of the hill through a range of media and provide learning spaces for educational and special interest groups to provide an immersive learning experience. The visitor centre will be free for all visitors to ensure that Castle Hill's heritage is accessible to visitors from all socio-economic group. This includes the dedicated school education area which will be free for all school groups. Schools visiting the centre will also receive free refreshments, as part of a commitment to accessible heritage education for young learners.

8. Social media platforms.

Locations and Visitor Flow

Identifying where visitor information and interpretation will be located is essential to ensure that there is a logical sequence to which stories are encountered and the depth of information or interpretation provided at specific locations. While there is not a set route for a visit, however there are some known or likely scenarios for routes and which interpretive locations visitors may encounter first, depending on where and how visitors access the hill, whether they are repeat or new visitors, and their motivations for visiting.

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Nearby residents or walkers accessing the hill by one of the public rights of way, while those coming from further afield for a day out or special visit are more likely to drive and park in the car park by the visitor centre and cafe/restaurant.

These are, therefore, key locations for welcome interpretation and orientation to be installed.

Once on the hill, visitors are relatively free to follow any route they choose and to begin a visit at whichever feature or visitor service attracts them the most. This will be influenced by their motivations for visiting, existing knowledge of the site and more immediate needs such as toilets and refreshments.

There is the opportunity for the installation of a number of external interpretation interventions, depending on receiving the appropriate planning, scheduled monument and listed building consents. All of these interventions will relate back to the exhibitions in the visitor centre so that all interpretation will provide a cohesive and comprehensive experience that includes all of the topics.

All of the above will be addressed during the interpretive planning process so that each interpretive output has an identified location, recommended medium and materials, interpretive, visitor experience and wayfinding aims, topics and the appropriate amount of detail.

Broad Aims

This is what visitor information and interpretation sets out to achieve. These will be reviewed and further developed in the interpretation planning process.

1. Interpretation will cater for the range of interests, motivations and visitor behaviour of the target audiences as identified as Key Visitor Groups.
2. Interpretation will be accessible to a diverse range of visitors.
3. Visitors know what are the key features to visit and how to find them.
4. Visitors are encouraged to explore various locations on the hill.
5. Visitors understand the geological formation of the hill.
6. Visitors understand the history of occupation and land use on the hill through time.
7. Visitors understand the natural environment and wildlife of the hill.
8. Visitors are encouraged to visit the visitor centre.
9. Visitors appreciate why Castle Hill is significant for its cultural and natural heritage.
10. Visitors are motivated to return and to tell their friends and family about Castle Hill as a visitor and heritage destination.

Target Audiences

Castle Hill key visitor groups comprise:

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1. Leisure & General Visitors

1. Leisure Visitors – Those coming for a day out, drawn by the café, restaurant, tower, and landscape.
2. Casual Tourists & Sightseers – Visitors attracted by scenic views and the landmark status.
3. Café/Restaurant Patrons – Those visiting primarily for food and drink.
4. Family Visitors – Parents with children looking for a safe, engaging, and educational experience.
5. Senior Visitors & Retirees – Older individuals who may prefer guided tours, accessible paths, and cultural experiences.
6. Photographers & Artists – Those drawn to the scenic views, landscapes, and historic structures for creative projects.
7. Seasonal Visitors & Tourists – People visiting during peak travel seasons (summer, school holidays, etc.).

–

2. Heritage & Educational Visitors

1. History & Archaeology Enthusiasts – Visitors interested in Castle Hill's ancient and medieval history.
2. Heritage Researchers & Academics – Archaeologists, university students, and scholars studying the site.
3. Special Interest & Walking Groups – Heritage societies, hiking clubs, and study groups.
4. Community & Cultural Groups – Local organisations interested in heritage events or cultural activities.
5. Students – School and university groups on educational visits.
6. Genealogy & Local History Enthusiasts – Individuals researching family connections and historical records.
7. Historic Preservation & Conservation Groups – Organisations focused on heritage protection and restoration.
8. Museum & Archive Visitors – People interested in Castle Hill's connection to museum collections and historical archives.

3. Outdoor & Recreational Visitors

1. Outdoor & Adventure Enthusiasts – Runners, hikers, and nature lovers.
2. Cyclist Groups – Cyclists looking for routes, bike parking, and cycle-friendly access.
3. Birdwatchers & Wildlife Enthusiasts – Visitors drawn by the site's biodiversity and conservation value.
4. Spiritual & Mindfulness Visitors – People using the landscape for meditation, reflection, and well-being.
5. Fitness & Well-being Groups – Yoga, Tai Chi, or outdoor fitness groups.

4. Group-Based Visitors

1. School & Educational Groups – Students visiting for curriculum-based learning.

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2. Corporate & Business Groups – Organisations seeking meeting spaces, team-building activities, or business retreats.
3. Theatre & Performance Groups – Drama companies staging historical reenactments or outdoor theatre.
4. Community Volunteers & Citizen Science Groups – Those engaged in heritage conservation, environmental monitoring, or archaeology projects.
5. Public Service & Charity Organisations – Groups holding fundraisers, awareness campaigns, and social initiatives.

5. Niche & Specialist Visitors

1. Dark Tourism Enthusiasts – Visitors interested in ghost stories, legends, and darker historical events.
2. Stargazers & Astronomy Groups – Due to the elevated location, visitors looking for night-sky observation and astronomy events.
3. Drone & Technology Enthusiasts – People using drones for aerial photography, mapping, or research.

A Draft Interpretive Theme

The overarching big idea the project team would like visitors to take away with them. This will be created during the interpretive planning process. The following are the building blocks, based on the topics, for such a theme.

Keywords: defence - gathering - viewpoint

The hill has been a visually prominent and naturally **defendable** settlement at different times.
The hill has been a place for **gatherings** at different times.
As a **viewpoint** across the surrounding countryside, the hill has been a symbol of power, for communication, celebration and recreation at different times.

Topics

These features and periods in time have been identified as important locations and subjects for interoperation. These will be further researched during interpretive planning to develop a set of relevant stories to engage visitor groups with these topics.

1. Formation of the hill

1. Geological and geomorphological story.

2. Coming to the hill

1. Neolithic and Bronze Age people present on the hill at times, as evident by small finds.

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3. A Prehistoric safe haven

1. Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.

4. The hillfort is strengthened and attacked

1. Mid Iron Age.

5. Medieval fortification and decline

1. 12th century motte and bailey castle.
2. 12th-15th century medieval village.

6. 19th century transformation

1. Gatherings - political, religious and other meetings, including Chartist rallies and weavers' union rally.
2. Hospitality - the tavern with bowling green, boxing, dog and cock fights.
3. Visitors and celebration - 1899 Victoria Tower.

7. Defence of the Realm

1. The beacon - Spanish Armada and Napoleonic Wars.
2. Second World War anti-aircraft battery.

8. 20th century research and recreation

1. Recreation from dog walking to kite flying to lighting the Armada anniversary beacon.
2. Hill as scenic viewpoint, including what key places or features visitors can see in the surrounding landscape.
3. Stargazing, what can visitors see in the night sky at different times of the year.
4. Archaeological work has added to our knowledge of the human history of the hill.

9. Wildlife and nature

1. The natural habitats of the hill, including any influences on these by past activities and archaeological features.
2. Wildlife visitors can see and hear.

Interpretive Media

An outline of the types of experiences envisaged for the project, including proposed media, events and activities. This is an initial and broad indiction. This will be refined with greater detail during the interpretive planning process.

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1. External Panels

These will provide welcome and orientation visitor information and interpret specific key features around the hill.

2. Trails

Themed self-guided trails available from the visitor centre.

3. Artwork

Carefully chosen art in the cafe/restaurant area will reinforce the interpretive theme and stories.

4. Interpretive exhibition

Inside the visitor centre, using graphic panels and audio-visual presentations, to tell the stories of the topics outlined above.

5. Educational material

Materials such as worksheets for school groups.

6. Themed colouring sheets

Provided for families in the cafe/restaurant area.

7. Events and activities inc guided walks

A programme of activities and events to tell the key stories and engage visitors with the features and experiences of the hill.

8. Website content

The website for the cafe/restaurant/visitor centre can introduce the interpretive theme, key stories and features.

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14.0 SUMMARY

14.01. Castle Hill, owned by Kirklees Metropolitan Council (KMC) is an example of a rare category of ancient monuments of national significance, and which is arguably unique with regard to its history, location and condition. It is without doubt the premier heritage asset within the Kirklees Metropolitan Council area.

14.02. It is a prominent hill within the landscape, somewhat remote and exposed, visible over a very wide area from virtually all directions. This visual prominence alone evokes intrigue and makes it a magnet for visitors. Unsurprisingly, views from the Hill over the surrounding landscape are also impressive.

14.03. Castle Hill has been the site of human activity for over 4,000 years; activity that has shaped the Hill in all kinds of ways. Settlements and buildings have come and gone with associated changes to the landforms.

14.04. Relatively recently a tower was erected on top of the hill to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Now with no formal function it nevertheless provides even greater views out from the site and forms an unmistakeable identifying marker for Castle Hill visible from far and wide. Many people have compared modern views of Castle Hill with those of Glastonbury Tor.

14.05. Today, on reaching Castle Hill, the casual visitor is presented with little in the way of information or interpretive material to make clear the long and complex history of the site or its importance either regionally or nationally. The exposure of the site to the elements with no shelter or comfort facilities discourages all but the most determined and physically capable of visitors from remaining on site for more than a brief period at many times of the year.

14.06. For many years a hostelry, the Castle Hill Hotel, stood atop this important monument – well before the construction of the Victoria Tower in fact. It provided accommodation, shelter, refreshment and publicly accessible toilets. It is not difficult to understand why it was popular and well-used. Since the demise of the hotel, Castle Hill has gained something of a reputation for antisocial behaviour,

with its remoteness and intermittent supervision attracting some visitors with little interest in ancient monuments. The owners of the former hotel retain a lease over that part of the Hill which the hotel once occupied. The lease was granted by KMC which owns all the land.

14.07. Today there is widespread belief that Castle Hill warrants visitor facilities that can combine comprehensive and engaging interpretative and educational resources with comforts such as refreshment and toilets. These should be of a standard appropriate to this unique asset. Obviously, the public benefits of any such development would have to balance and outweigh any potential harm to the heritage asset or its setting.

14.08. The local authority does not have the resources to provide such a facility, let alone the revenue budget required to maintain it for years and preferably decades. The owners of the former hotel expressed a willingness to consider funding a new development, on the site of the former hotel, that would combine interpretive and educational functions appropriate to the jewel in Kirklees' heritage crown, with the typical range of catering and comfort facilities expected by visitors to premier heritage destinations.

14.09. All stakeholders agreed that the educational and interpretive functions of a visitor centre must be free to access. To realise such a development would require that it be self-funding, with some profit-making elements included to fund the free to enter elements. The whole to be as small as possible, as unobtrusive as possible, with minimal impact on the monument or its setting. The public benefits of such a scheme would have to outweigh any perceived harm.

14.10. With developments affecting ancient monuments, Historic England seeks a "clearly expressed and non-technical narrative argument that sets out 'what matters and why' in terms of the heritage significance and setting of the assets affected, together with the effects of the development upon them." We hope just such a clear narrative thread runs throughout this document with detail sufficient to set out the public benefits to weigh against perceived harm.

14.11. It is critical that the scheme enables the broadest possible range of people, both locally and beyond, to access the monument and enjoy the educational and interpretational resources the scheme will provide. A greater understanding and appreciation of Castle Hill will engender a pride in the local community that has been maintained by too few for too long.

14.12. The process to arrive at a scheme that could achieve all the desired outcomes has been long and complex. It has involved many different agencies, stakeholders and specialist consultants as detailed in the Statement as a whole. We believe the proposal achieves the delicate balance required of such a significant project and commend it to the decision makers.

14.13. A successful outcome to the scheme will achieve far more than just a visitor centre for an important ancient monument. It will have other benefits for Kirklees both within and beyond the authority's boundaries. It will allow the promotion of Kirklees as a heritage tourism destination, bring attention to the many other heritage assets of the district as well as economic benefits of many kinds to the local area.

fig.14.1 Proposed external visuals

fig.14.2 Proposed visitor's main entrance

fig.14.3 Reception and retail space

fig.14.4 Interactive and immersive sensory room

fig.14.5 Restaurant level external view

fig.14.6 Internal viewing of Jubilee tower from interpretation space

fig.14.7 Internal views of bar and restaurant

15.0 APPENDIX A

OFFICIAL LIST ENTRY

Heritage Category:

Scheduled Monument

List Entry Number:

1009846

Date first listed:

30-Mar-1925

Date of most recent amendment:

10-Mar-1992

Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:

Kirklees (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish:

Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference:

SE 15215 14052

Reasons for Designation

Slight univallate hillforts are enclosures defined by a single line of earthworks located on or near the tops of hills. The scale of the earthworks, which may comprise a rampart, a ditch and a counterscarp bank, is small. This and the fact that they are not necessarily located on the highest or most inaccessible hills but almost exclusively above river valleys, implies they were not primarily defensive features but were sited for ease of communication and access to the greatest variety of resources. Most slight univallate hillforts were built in the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Approximately 150 examples are recorded nationally, with only a small number lying outside central southern England. In area they vary between l and 10ha though, again, those at the upper end of the scale tend to be concentrated in the south. Common features of the internal layouts of slight univallate hillforts include the postholes, stakeholes and trenches of timber buildings, storage pits and hearths, and small finds such as spindle whorls, wool combs, tools and personal adornments. These are indicative of temporary or permanent occupation though

some slight univallate hill forts have been interpreted as stock enclosures or redistribution centres. Slight univallate hillforts are one of the rarer types of monument that characterise the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age and, as such, are important for the understanding of the transition between the two periods. All examples surviving comparatively well and with the potential for the recovery of further archaeological remains are considered worthy of protection. A number of slight univallate hill forts were remodelled during the later Iron Age to become more strongly defended and multivallate in form. Small multivallate hill forts are those which have an internal area of less than 5ha, with the majority measuring between l and 3.5ha. All were built between the sixth century BC and the mid-first century AD though most originated in the fourth to second centuries BC and only a small number date from the period before 400BC. The boundaries of small multivallate hillforts comprise two or more lines of close-set earthworks generally spaced at intervals of less than 15m, though wider spacing is known from a small sample. Each line will consist of a rampart and ditch or a rampart only, and a large number also possess counterscarp banks. The most favoured locations were the hills above rivers and the construction of multiple earthworks is believed not only to have been for protection but as a means of displaying power. Small multivallate hill forts were permanently occupied and sometimes were the foci for large areas of the surrounding countryside. A small number possessed extra-mural settlements and most were connected with the processing of agricultural produce and are likely to have controlled its distribution. The internal structures of most small multivallate hillforts support the view that they were places of high status, with finds such as weapons, Gallo-Belgic coins and goods from distant locations demonstrating this and indicating a period of social development characterised by increased competition between different social groups. Similarly, although the primary function of multiple enclosures may not have been defensive, the number of small multivallate hill forts with vitrified inner ramparts, burnt entrances and hoards of slingshot suggests an increase in raiding and possibly warfare. Small multivallate hill forts therefore provide an important commentary on the nature of settlement and social organisation in the Iron Age and, with only c.100 examples known nationally, are one of the rarer classes of monument belonging to the period. All examples with surviving archaeological deposits are considered to be of national importance. Motte and bailey castles are medieval fortifications of a type introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower and adjoined by an embanked enclosure, the bailey, which contained additional buildings. Motte and bailey castles had several functions. They were strongholds, acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, were often aristocratic residences and were the centres of local and royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside,

they generally occupied strategic positions, dominating their immediate locality. Over 600 are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. As such, and as one of a restricted range of early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short time, they continued to be built and occupied from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Castle Hill, Almondbury is a good and well-preserved example of a slight univallate hillfort which developed into a small multivallate hillfort. Not only does it lie outside the main distribution, it belongs to an extremely small group of northern single-banked hillforts with an internal area of more than 1ha. It is, in addition, one of the very few small multivallate hillforts datable to the period before 400BC and is unique in that, during its multi-banked phase, the bivallate interior was surrounded by two outer earthworks set in places more than 30m apart. It also possesses other rare features, including an outwork, and its earliest ramparts preserve the pre- enclosure ground surface contemporary with earlier Prehistoric use of the site. A substantial part of the monument remains unexcavated, making it of great importance to the study of hillforts of these two types. Equally important are the well-preserved remains of the motte and bailey castle. Furthermore, in addition to the garrison and ancillary buildings whose remains survive in the bailey, the well-preserved earthworks of an associated medieval settlement are contained in the area adjacent.

Details

Castle Hill is situated south of Huddersfield at Almondbury, on a hill top above the Holme Valley south of its confluence with the River Colne. The monument includes the remains of a late Bronze Age or early Iron Age univallate hillfort, a later Iron Age multivallate hillfort, a twelfth century motte and bailey castle and the site of a deserted medieval village. Evidence for the occupation and development of Castle Hill comes from a series of partial excavations carried out by W.J.Varley between 1939 and 1973. The earliest period of use was approximately four thousand years ago, as shown by the discovery of Late Neolithic flint tools and part of a polished stone axe. This predated the first hillfort by circa one and a half thousand years. The earthworks encircling the hill were constructed in stages over a period of roughly two hundred years. The earliest enclosure, dated by radiocarbon and thermoluminescence techniques to the late seventh century BC, consisted of an area of c.2ha at the south-west end of the hill enclosed by a single bank measuring c.3m wide. This first enclosure did not have an external ditch but the bank would have been surmounted by a wooden palisade. A simple inturned entrance bisected the bank that crossed the hill and had a small guard room to one side. Early in the sixth century BC, the first enclosure was surrounded by a wide, flat-bottomed ditch and the upcast was

used to construct a new bank, also 3m wide, which roughly followed the line of the old bank but in places had a different alignment. In the mid-sixth century BC, this univallate hill fort was refortified and expanded to become a complex double- banked and ditched enclosure. New ramparts, of identical structure to the earlier, were built across the ends of the transverse ditch and were continued round the north-eastern half of the hill, effectively doubling the size of the enclosure. A new entrance was created at the north-east approach and the single bank and ditch of the original enclosure were reinforced by the addition of a second rampart. Post-holes at the front and rear of these defences were found to be contemporary and would have supported the timbers of a shelter attached to the rampart. Approximately one hundred years later this bivallate hill fort was fundamentally rebuilt. The inner rampart was widened and raised and now almost entirely consisted of two parallel drystone revetments separated by horizontal timber lacing infilled with shale and clay. A deeper V-shaped ditch was cut beyond the rampart and a short length of shale rampart was added parallel to the north-east extension. A longer stretch was built outside it and continued to the north-east entrance where an outwork was also added. This outwork shared the outer ditch of the latter rampart and created an oblique approach to the hillfort, carried along a holloway from the north- east. Two new banks, almost continuous and spaced wide apart, were built lower down the hill to entirely surround the complex. By the end of the fifth century BC, however, this multivallate hillfort had been abandoned. The vitrification of the inner rampart indicates that it was destroyed by fire at about that time, possibly during hostilities. The site does not appear to have been occupied again until the early twelfth century AD when the earthworks were modified and reconstructed to create a motte and bailey castle. A broad ditch, 27m wide and 9m deep, was cut across the top of the hill, south-west of the transverse ditch belonging to the original univallate hillfort. The upcast from the ditch was used to build a motte with a surrounding rampart. In the first half of the twelfth century, licence to fortify was granted by King Stephen and the timber palisade that would originally have surmounted the motte was replaced by a stone wall. The remains of timber buildings, and others of timber and stone, have been found on the motte. These had a number of functions and were accompanied by a 27m deep well in which was found well-preserved organic material of the medieval period in addition to medieval pottery and metalwork. Ancillary and garrison buildings, and pens for cattle and horses, would have occupied the bailey and the remains of these will survive in the south-western half of the site overlying deposits relating to the internal layout of the hillfort. The north-eastern half was, at this time, the site of a small medieval settlement which survived the abandonment of the castle by circa two centuries, being still occupied in the fifteenth century. This settlement was characterised by a row of dwellings on either side of a track that ran from the north-east entrance to the gap in the rampart of the univallate hillfort.

Each building occupied a strip of land which lay at right-angles to the track and was separated from its neighbours by a shallow ditch. After the desertion of the settlement, Castle Hill remained unoccupied until the nineteenth century when a tavern was built that is still in use as a hotel and public house. In the interim it was twice used as a beacon hill, with one fire being lit there at the time of the Spanish Armada and another being prepared in the event of a Napoleonic invasion. Traditionally, in the past, it has been held to be the site of Camelot and, less fancifully, a Roman fort or the headquarters of the Brigantian Queen Cartimandua. These theories have been discounted, however, due to the complete break in occupation between the fourth century BC and the Middle Ages. A number of features are excluded from the scheduling. These include the surfaces of the approach road, carpark, drives and paths up to and round the monument, all modern walling and fencing, the Victorian Jubilee Tower which is Grade II Listed, the buildings and fixtures of Castle Hill Hotel and the buildings of the house on Hill Side, the safety grille over the well, the Armada anniversary beacon, all modern steps up to and on the monument and the telephone poles crossing the monument. The ground beneath these exclusions, however, with the exception of that beneath the hotel which will have been disrupted by cellarage, is included.

The site of the monument is shown here.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:

13297

Legacy System:

RSM

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15.0 APPENDIX B

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Revision	Comments	Amendment		Checked	
		Date	Initial	Date	Initial
•	Client Issue 26 March 2025	26 March 2025	KD/IT	26 March 2025	MJN
A	Addition of *in*Heritage Interpretation Outline to Section 13.0 Drawings 3287 (0-) 05, 3287 (0-) 02, 3287 (0-) 03 amended following meeting with KMC Planning dated 25 March 2025	01 April 2025	KD/IT	01 April 2025	MJN
B	Addition of Summary Section 15.1 in WYAS Report	08 April 2025	KD/IT	08 April 2025	MJN

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