REVISED PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed erection of restaurant/café/ bar, six guest bedrooms, exhibition/interpretation room, WC's, terrace, car parking and ancillary accommodation

At

Victoria Tower, Lumb Lane, Castle Hill

Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD4 6TA

By

The Thandi Partnership

Application reference 2024/93494

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application essentially seeks to extend the period of time allowed to implement the planning permission, 2018/93591.

1.2 This is necessitated by the complexities of obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England and the Secretary of State. The fact is, the process is not within my client's control.

1.3 This application comprises-

- This Planning Statement
- Application Form and Certificates
- Drawings prepared by One17 Design
- Background, Vision and Management Report.
- Planning Support, Design and Access Statement
- Climate Change Statement
- Ecological Report including BNG Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Public Footpath Proposals
- Video Presentation
- Email from Historic England - Keith Emerick

2.0 SITE HISTORY

2.1 There is a considerable history of planning applications going back 20 years for rebuilding on the site of the former public house/ restaurant/ hotel (Castle Hill Hotel).

2.2 The most recent is application 2018/93591 which was granted by the Council on 10 February 2022 following consideration at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee and the signing of S106 Agreement.

3.0 THE PRESENT SITUATION

3.1 As set out in the Background, Vision and Management Report, given the designation of Castle Hill as an Ancient Monument, Scheduled Monument Consent is required before any work can be undertaken to implement the current planning permission.

3.2 Considerable discussion of a highly detailed nature has taken place with Historic England but at the moment in time further details need to be resolved before it is possible to submit the formal application for Scheduled Monument Consent.

4.0 THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The proposals now put forward are essentially the same as those the subject of the current permission 2018/93591 except that; firstly, to improve the visitor experience in what will be known as the Castle Hill Visitor Centre minor changes have been made internally to incorporate a reception desk, a larger interpretation space, gift shop, accessible WC and a slight reduction in floor space to the bedrooms.

4.2 The majority of these internal changes have been made following feedback from key stakeholders. These refinements improve visitor flow and functionality, while remaining entirely within the previously approved footprint.

4.3 Community consultation was carried out and a virtual tour showcasing this new interpretation floor layout was circulated in 2024 to all key audiences, including the public via the examiner, Huddersfield Hub, ward members, the Strategic Planning Committee, and other stakeholders, and was also made available on YouTube. This attracted positive feedback and comments.

4.4 There is also an understanding from Historic England that the interpretation space should ideally be accessible all year round to maximise public benefit. Thus it is now proposed to be open to the public all year round, Monday to Sunday with the same hours 0900 to 1700 and bookings required only for the school groups, as previously approved.

4.5 Externally, the alterations include very minor changes at the lower ground adjacent to the entrance, creating a more aesthetically pleasing pair of curved walls. These curved walls are a specific request of Historic England (see attached email from Keith Emerick in Appendix 2) and not applicant led.

4.6 Minor additional detail has been added to show the position of cycle racks at the north- western corner of the car park as well as the availability of space within the car park to accommodate turning vehicles at the head of the public byway. A gate has been added to the service yard entrance.

4.7 Now forming part of the application are landscaping proposals required since the previous planning permission in respect of biodiversity net gain.

5.0 GREEN BELT IMPACT.

5.1 The government recently made changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introducing in December 2024 the concept of Grey Belt. An appendix is attached to this statement which assesses this proposal in the light of that policy revision.

6.0 CONCLUSION.

6.1 It is considered that the proposals, essentially the same as those previously approved, raise no new issues particularly in respect of impact on the Green Belt or on the importance of Castle Hill as an Ancient Monument.

6.2 As such it is considered that there is no good reason why permission should not be granted.

Malcolm Sizer.

Malcolm Sizer Planning Ltd.

April 2025.

Appendix 1.

As noted at Section 5 the government has made changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, introducing the concept of Grey Belt.

1. The NPPF changes introduce the concept of Grey Belt, defined as Green Belt land comprising developed land and/ or any other land that does not strongly contribute to the Green Belt purposes of restricting urban sprawl, preventing the merging of towns or preserving the setting of historic towns.

2. I consider that the proposed building is to a large extent to be located on previously developed land (as defined in the NPPF Glossary) where Castle Hill Hotel formerly stood and where the former site has not blended into the landscape.

3. Further that the proposal is on land that does not strongly contribute to the 3 Green Belt purposes identified at 2. above.

4. As such the tests set out in paragraph 155 apply. If met, then the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

5. It is argued that an unmet need for the development of facilities for visitors to the historic site of Castle Hill has been clearly set out in documentation submitted as part of the application, thus satisfying paragraph 155b.

6. It is acknowledged that the proposal is not in a highly sustainable location and thus fails to meet the requirement of paragraph 155c. However, it is to meet the need of visitors to Castle Hill and logically must be located there, whatever deficit exists in sustainability terms.

However, it should be noted that car parking provision is to be improved by the formal laying out of the existing car park, the centre is to be located where a number of public footpaths and a byway converge and there is a bus service along Ashes Lane immediately to the north.

7. The siting of the centre must be where the attraction is and through that is not in a highly sustainable location in transport terms, it is logically the only place on Castle Hill , where it can be sited.

As such it is considered that the proposals meet the test so far as possible to satisfy its designation as Grey Belt and thus being accepted as not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

Appendix 2.

Subject: RE: Castle Hill
Date: Thursday, 27 March 2025 at 11:57:34 Greenwich Mean Time
From: Emerick, Keith
To: [redacted]
CC: [redacted]
Attachments: image001.gif, image002.png

Dear mark,
Good morning and thanks for the update.
I can confirm that the curved entrance was the Historic England preference.

Best wishes

Keith Emerick

Keith Emerick
Inspector of Ancient Monuments
Regions: North East and Yorkshire
Historic England, [redacted]

How can we transform our historic textile mills into 21st century engines of growth? Read our exciting research and findings on our Mills of the North webpage. #lovemills

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From: [redacted]
Sent: 26 March 2025 11:55
To: Emerick, Keith [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Castle Hill

-- WARNING: This is an external message. Please use caution when replying, opening attachments or clicking on any links in this e-mail.--

Keith

We had a zoom call yesterday with KMC Planning, Conservation, Highways and Public Rights of Way to go through the current planning application.

A key requirements is for us to provide justification for any changes between the original planning approval and the new application.

One of the amendments is the entrance to the building which now has two curved dry stone walls rather than the approved single square wall and single curved wall (both versions attached). This amendment came from discussions between One17 and Historic England as part of the designs evolution. I recall the revised entrance was the clear preference of Historic England.

Would you please confirm so I can forward to KMC Conservation.

[redacted]

ONE17 DESIGN | [redacted] | ARCHITECTURE INTERIORS STRUCTURE PROJECT MANAGEMENT GRAPHICS CHARITY RIBA | 2022 NORTHERN DESIGN AWARDS WINNER 2023 NORTHERN DESIGN AWARDS WINNER BEST RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

ONE17 DESIGN
[redacted]

ARCHITECTURE | INTERIORS | STRUCTURE | PROJECT MANAGEMENT | GRAPHICS | CHARITY