**About the application**

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

**User comments**

| Type of comment: An objection | |
|---|---|
| Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously? | Yes |

We would like to make an objection to the above development.

Whilst we appreciate there seems to be little change from the original 2018 application, there are still queries which we feel need to be raised regarding the amendments, specifically the following:

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.

As you can see from our address above, we are part of the local community who live directly below Castle Hill and although we do recall seeing the virtual tour on Facebook, as residents there was no community consultation. We would have taken a specific interest in this, as living on one of the main access points to Castle Hill, we would be directly affected by additional traffic, especially coaches, which already cause problems on High Lane, due to resident parking narrowing the road considerably. The road infrastructure around Castle Hill is not suitable for large vehicles.

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.

Reading through the correspondence from Historic England dated 7 March 2025, they still have concerns on heritage grounds and recommend that the application is refused by your authority. Their email dated 27 March 2025 stated only that they had a preference for curved walls, it does not seem to be a specific request made by them. They also recommended that the submitted supporting documents are withdrawn and resubmitted following a comprehensive redrafting with the necessary detail, and that your authority commissions a consultant (at the applicant's cost) to audit the Business

your authority commissions a consultant (at the applicant's cost) to audit the Business and Financial plans to establish if they seem legitimate and viable. Has Kirklees Council commissioned a consultant to ascertain if these plans are legitimate and viable? If so, what was the outcome?

Another issue raised by Historic England is that on the basis of the information currently submitted they are not convinced that the applicant has fully understood the implications of forming and operating a CIC (Community Interest Company). Bearing in mind that with the Thandi's previous modus operandi, there is a huge amount of distrust with the way they have dealt with matters in the past. A Community Interest Company may be the way forward, giving them less control of how the proposed visitor centre is managed and run on a daily basis, however, has this CIC been set up yet? It doesn't appear on the Find My Charity website which lists the CIC's.

We note from their submitted Business Case : Executive Summary that "The Castle Hill CIC is made up of a broad range of members, including representatives from local community groups, heritage professionals, and council stakeholders", which implies that it does exist. If this is not the case, when will it be formed? Please can this matter be clarified and if it does exist who are the members and which local community groups have representatives?

It also claims in the Business Case that "the present applicant, nor any member of the professional team had any involvement in that former scheme, we understand why confidence must be rebuilt"

We appreciate that ONE17 took over from Alisdair Ingram as architects and were not involved in the previous application but the Thandi Brothers were the original applicants and The Thandi Partnership are the current applicants. The owners of the leasehold interest of the footprint of the old Castle Hill Hotel has not changed since 8 August 2019, being Major S Thandi and A Singh Thandi so while it is difficult to ascertain who is behind the Thandi Partnership, the leasehold land is still owned by the original Thandi Brothers, who as leaseholders, we presume, will still have involvement and say as to what goes on with the proposed new development.