Address: 63, HALL BOWER, HUDDERSFIELD, HD4 6RR

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?	No

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to object to the proposal 2024/93494 to build an hotel on Castle Hill.

Castle Hill is an iconic site within Kirklees. It is a Scheduled Monument lying within the Green Belt and it contains the Victoria Tower. Any development on this site will do harm to one of Huddersfield's most recognisable features. The proposed development is opposed by both the Huddersfield Civic Society and the District Archaeological Society.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) Para. 154 says that development on Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It then defines "Very Special Circumstances" in terms of the harm done by the development being clearly outweighed by other considerations. The Applicants attempt to bolster their proposal by claiming that visitors to Castle Hill will welcome the information boards, the toilets and the refreshments that are proposed. They suggest that these represent "Very Special Circumstances".

Even the Applicant's own report from KC Conservation and Design admits that there is no evidence that these facilities are required (Page 3). Information boards are a throwback to an age before the mobile telephone; very few people today visit a site like Castle Hill to look at information boards when the site has mobile telephone coverage.

It would be convenient to have toilets available on Castle Hill, but if Public Health is an issue, these toilets should be truly public and be provided by a public organisation off the historic site, not at the whim of a private developer on the site. The report from Quants Environmental suggests that fouling by dogs is a greater risk to the acid grassland and the proposed development offers nothing to ameliorate this risk.

Road access to the proposed hotel is a perennial problem and the recent report by Sanderson Associates does little but accentuate how narrow the access road is and how much work would be required to make it suitable for the increase in traffic that would result from the building of the proposed hotel. I have serious doubts about whether the road access could ever provide adequate support for traffic generated by routine operation of the hotel, or the occasional demand for emergency vehicle access to deal with fire, or other emergency.

The proposed hotel would be extensively glazed and having a zinc roof would be completely out of sympathy with the Victoria Tower. This is a design and for a purpose that would be suitable in a town centre, but is completely inappropriate in the Green Belt and on an Ancient Monument, it offers nothing to the people of Huddersfield, but visual and potentially noise pollution of an otherwise silent and magical place. It does not offer the very special circumstances that outweigh the harm it does to the site.