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

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

Firstly I received a letter about this new application 2024/93494 from Kirklees on 24th December, Christmas Eve (a date which would ensure that many people would miss this email as they were involved with Christmas – yet another cynical attempt by Kirklees or someone to obfuscate and prevent proper public scrutiny of this application).

The Kirklees letter dated 24/12/2025 states that object objections must be submitted by the 30th January 2026, yet on the portal today -30th January 2026 - it appears to state that comments are now closed. Another deliberate barrier ?

My Objection:
Principle of Development
• Castle Hill is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, within the Green Belt, and a landmark heritage site dominated by the Grade II listed Victoria Tower.
• Development on such a site is inherently inappropriate and contrary to national and local planning policy.
• Under the NPPF (2024), development in the Green Belt is inappropriate except in very limited circumstances, none of which apply.
• The applicant's attempt to reclassify the site as "Grey Belt" is misleading and unsound:
• Grey Belt policy relates to housing, not hotel or leisure development.
• The site's high heritage value and contribution to enjoyment of the Green Belt explicitly exclude it from Grey Belt consideration.

Heritage & Archaeological Harm
• The proposal sits at the summit and heart of the hillfort, within its ramparts and internal baileys, where development will cause unavoidable and irreversible harm.
• The 2016 Atkins Report, commissioned by Kirklees Council, concludes that development on the upper slopes and summit would adversely affect the significance

development on the upper slopes and summit would adversely affect the significance and setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.
• This crucial report is ignored, while reliance is placed on the outdated 2006 Atkins Report.
• The proposal would harm:
• The archaeological integrity of the hillfort
• The iconic flat-top profile of Castle Hill
• The setting and significance of Victoria Tower
• Historic England, the Victorian Society and local heritage bodies have all raised serious concerns, reflecting the national importance of the site.

Absence of a Proper Harm vs Benefit Case
• The application fails to provide a formal, independent Heritage Impact Assessment by a recognised specialist.
• Claimed “public benefits” (visitor facilities, education, toilets, accommodation) are:
• Largely unquantified
• Unsupported by independent evidence
• Capable of being delivered off-site, without harm to the monument
• The application does not meet the statutory requirements of:
• Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
• NPPF (2024) tests requiring clear justification where heritage harm is proposed

Misleading and Incomplete Application
• Although described as “Amended Plans”, this is a new application materially different from the expired consent.
• Continued reliance on documentation from prior, time-expired applications is inappropriate and misleading.
• The application contains:
• Missing or deleted documents
• Plans dated prior to the expired approval
• Inconsistent and contradictory information
• This prevents meaningful public scrutiny and invalidates claims of informed consultation.

Transport, Access & Safety
• The Transport Assessment is out of date and fails to reflect the full impact of a hotel, restaurant, café, bar and events venue.
• All access is via a single narrow road shared with pedestrians, cyclists, disabled users and families.
• Increased traffic, servicing vehicles and taxis will create unavoidable safety risks, including for emergency vehicles, particularly at blind bends and limited passing points.

Parking & Operational Concerns
• Parking provision is unclear and contradictory:
• Plans indicate approximately 37 spaces
• The application claims 60 spaces
• The development must accommodate hotel guests, customers, staff, site visitors and servicing vehicles, yet results in a reduction in visitor parking.
• No provision is made for motorcycles or coaches, despite regular use of the site by

these groups.

Ecology, Lighting & Amenity Impact
• The site lies within a Local Wildlife Site, Local Nature Reserve and the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network.
• The Ecological Impact Assessment fails to adequately address:
• Increased footfall and traffic
• Vehicle noise, fumes and headlights
• Light pollution from glazing and rooflights
• Noise and disturbance from outdoor dining and drinking
• Mitigation measures are limited, unconvincing and unlikely to succeed in such a constrained and sensitive location.

Community Impact & Repeated Resubmissions
• Claims of extensive community consultation are misleading and largely promotional.
• This proposal forms part of a long history of repeated applications, amendments and rebranding attempts despite:
• Widespread and sustained public opposition
• Previous failures to discharge conditions
• The continued resubmission of a fundamentally flawed concept appears designed to erode opposition rather than resolve core planning objections.

Conclusion
• The proposal would result in substantial and unjustified harm to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Green Belt and a nationally significant heritage landscape.
• The application is incomplete, misleading, poorly evidenced and contrary to planning policy
• This long-running and inappropriate proposal should now be firmly refused once and for all to safeguard Castle Hill for future generations.