DC Admin

From:
Sent: 30 January 2026 16:27
To: DC Admin
Subject: Objection to planning application 2024/62/93494/W

Categories:

Planning Application - 2024/62/93494/W

I wish to object to the proposal to build a hospitality venue on the iconic site of Castle Hill. This is a Scheduled Monument of national significance, lying within the Green Belt. It is visible from a significant hinterland and the distinctive shape of the Hill and the Victoria Tower make it Huddersfield's most recognisable feature. Any development to the site will cause irreversible damage to the setting, detracting from the historical integrity of the site. Castle Hill currently has cultural, historical and visual importance which will be diminished if this development takes place.

The excavations and the heavy vehicle movement required for the building work and subsequent deliveries to the venue will damage the double bailey of this historic site. Any changes to the access road will cut into the ramparts, diminishing the quality of this nationally regarded, exceptional site.

The Applicants attempt to justify their development as providing a public 'good'. They claim visitors to Castle Hill will welcome their information boards, toilets and refreshments and suggest these represent 'Very Special Circumstances'. 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. Even the Applicant's own report from KC Conservation and Design admits that there is no evidence that these facilities are required (Page 3).

The design of the proposed hospitality venue has glazed elevations and a zinc roof. These are out of character with the Victoria Tower. The 24 hour lighting required – since this is a hotel – will be visible for miles around. The impact will be an urban building in a rural, undeveloped landscape.

The Business Case Executive Summary by ONE17DESIGN proposes a Community Interest Company. Paragraph 3.15 of the Planning Support Design and Access Statement claims; *'The essence of the scheme is that Castle Hill Visitors Centre is not a commercial development with public benefits , it is a public benefit driven proposal supported by sustainable revenue streams. For this reason the Community Interest Company model is our preference for management of the scheme.*

However, the history of the applications, the space devoted to each use and the unbalanced opening hours – it is purely commercial after 5pm, suggest otherwise.

The Business Plan and its review by Wheawill & Sudworth highlight shortcomings and unresolved issues including:

- The general viability of venues operating in the leisure and hospitality sector, and for this specific development
- Take up and sustainability of customer demand and spend relating to this venue
- Lack of clarity regarding current funding.

The report notes the documentation supplied but also makes clear there is no audit verification.

The absence of evidence on long term viability means the Applicants have not demonstrated the 'delivery' of benefits necessary to justify planning approval for an inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The latest submission is stated to be another revision of the concept developed under the previous expired application (2018/93591) with new proposals that incorporate the revisions and additions. Most notable of these are an extended car park, introduction of a large gated service yard, an apparent adjustment of the building's position northwards on the site in order to allow extra parking and a change in the provision of accommodation. The drawings are misleading and others have disappeared from the application. Some plans with the same date and revision letter appear in both the current drawings section and in the superseded drawings section.

This planning application for this hospitality venue (bar, restaurant and bedrooms) is in opposition to the aims of the Heritage strategy. It conflicts with national and local strategies to protect heritage assets and the Green Belt. It will cause significant damage to a 4.000 years old hill fort, which is a Scheduled Monument of national importance.

In view of these considerations it is vital that you recommend refusal of this amended planning application