

Robert Halstead

Chartered Surveyors & Town Planners

N.C. Willock MRICS MRTPI

Office G of H, Bridge Mills, Huddersfield Road, Holmfirth, HD9 3TW

Planning Development

By Email Only

26th June 2025

Kirklees Council
Planning – Development Control

FAO Nina Sayers

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE STOREY FRONT/REAR EXTENSION, FIRST FLOOR BALCONY AND ASSOCIATED ALTERATIONS

MOORLANDS CRICKET CLUB, MIRFIELD MEMORIAL PARK, HUDDERSFIELD ROAD, MIRFIELD, WF14 8AE

LPA REF: 2025/90956

Dear Madam,

Robert Halstead Chartered Surveyors and Town Planners have been instructed to submit an objection letter to Kirklees Council on behalf of Mirfield Town Council.

Whilst Mirfield Town Council are supportive of the scheme in principle, they unfortunately have a number of planning and highway concerns regarding the proposals in their current form.

Their concerns relate to the impact on trees, highway safety, the proposed use of the building, and the impact the development would have on the war memorial. These issues will form the basis of this objection.

Impact on Trees

Paragraph 136 in the NPPF states:

Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Local Plan Policies LP24 and LP33 also state:

Proposals should promote good design by ensuring: i) the retention of valuable or important trees.

The Council will not grant planning permission for development which directly or indirectly threaten trees or woodlands of significant amenity. Proposals should normally retain any valuable or important trees where they make a contribution to public amenity, the distinctiveness of a specific location or contribute to the environment.

As demonstrated in the Google Street View image below and as noted by the Council's Tree Officer "The trees along the frontage of Huddersfield Road, provide good amenity and screening to the local area." The Tree Officer goes on to state that they "would not be able to support proposals that would threaten these prominent trees."



Google Street View – Trees along site frontage prior to felling

It is claimed within the applicant's Supporting Statement that "no trees are proposed to be removed," however, the photographs below clearly show that a number of mature trees along the site frontage have already been felled. Whilst it is acknowledged that the trees were not protected by a Tree Preservation Order, the site is owned by the Council and as such, the applicant should have sought permission from the Council prior to removing the trees (unless written permission from the relevant Council department has in fact been given). It would appear, however, that the Council's Tree Officer is clearly unaware that the trees have already been removed.

The Application Form also states that there are trees on the proposed development site, however, none of the plans show the location of the trees in relation to the proposed development, and as noted by the Council's Tree Officer, the applicant has not submitted a Tree Survey or an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. It is requested that the felled trees and the lack of a Tree Survey and AIA are carefully taken into account when full assessment of the application is made.

Biodiversity

Furthermore, despite the applicant's claim on the Application Form that the proposed development is exempt from the Biodiversity Gain condition (due to the de minimis exemption), the Council's Ecologist

disagrees with this and has stated that Biodiversity Net Gain is applicable and therefore a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment should be provided as part of the application.

In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) where unauthorised degradation of the onsite habitat has taken place on the land between 30th January 2020 and the date of submission, the pre-development value of the onsite habitat should be calculated as the biodiversity value of the habitat on the date immediately before the carrying out of these degradation activities. Unauthorised degradation of onsite habitat is any degradation which is not in accordance with a previous planning permission. In other words, the felled trees should be taken into account when the pre-development value of the onsite habitat is calculated. The 10% biodiversity net gain would then subsequently be based on that value and not a value post-tree felling.



Application Site – Street frontage post tree felling



Application Site – post tree felling

Given the above, the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable due to the detrimental impact the proposals would have on valuable and important trees. The proposals are considered to be contrary to paragraph 136 in the NPPF and Local Plan Policies LP24 and LP33.

Highway Matters

Local Plan Policy LP21 states:

'New development will normally be permitted where safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and where the residual cumulative impacts of development are not severe. Proposals shall demonstrate adequate information and mitigation measures to avoid a detrimental impact on highway safety and the local highway network.'

Local Plan Policy LP22 also states:

'All proposals shall provide full details of the design and levels of proposed parking provision.'

The applicant's Supporting Statement states:

'Existing parking facilities are located on-site and will not be affected by the proposed works. The development will not alter the current parking arrangements, ensuring no disruption to existing vehicle access. However, it is important to note that the majority of visitors that will use the site walk or cycle, in line with the site's location within a highly sustainable location.'

Whilst there is an existing car park on-site, the Cricket Club does not own it or have the exclusive rights to use it. The park is currently used by various clubs - pétanque, bowling, tennis, Mirfield Cricket Club and a playgroup, and it is used by general members of the public. Furthermore, the existing car park only contains 8 spaces with no further spaces proposed.

The proposed development would increase the size of the clubhouse by 116 sq.m. More importantly, the majority of the additional space created would be used as social space. The Existing Plans show 18 covers, whereas the Proposed Plans show 136 covers. This represents a significant increase and strongly suggests the numbers of people the clubhouse is hoping to attract post-development. Where is everyone going to park? Huddersfield Road is a busy classified A road. Any increase in on-street parking along Huddersfield Road would likely increase congestion and reduce the free flow of traffic to the detriment of highway safety.

In addition, the site access is relatively narrow. The use of the access is likely to intensify should the proposed development be approved. This could potentially result in more cars needing to reverse onto Huddersfield Road from the application site if another car is trying to exit the site at the same time. The site access is also close to a bus stop and close to a bend in the road. Visibility for drivers, either exiting the site or travelling along Huddersfield Road, is therefore already impeded. The addition of on-street parking would reduce visibility even further, again to the detriment of highway safety.

The applicant's assertion that the majority of visitors will walk or cycle to the site is not backed up with any evidence and is probably unlikely. No cycle parking is proposed, making it far less likely that people would cycle to the site. Visitors participating in sports at the site are also likely to have equipment and / or changes of clothing with them, again making it less likely that they would walk or cycle. Away players and supporters would also be travelling to the site from further afield, so would also be required to drive to the site.

The waste bins are currently located within the car park, thus reducing space for parking and manoeuvring still further. The plans do not include the location of the proposed bin storage, and it is unknown whether the number of bins would be increased should the development be approved. It is considered that clarification should be sought on this issue.



Huddersfield Road – facing eastwards from site access

The proposals are therefore considered to be unacceptable as they would cause undue harm to highway safety due to the unsuitable access, lack of on-site car and cycle parking, and the lack of information concerning bin storage. The proposed development is therefore considered to be contrary to Local Plan Policies LP21 and LP22 and the aims of Chapter 9 in the NPPF.

The Proposed Use – Sport and Recreation

Local Plan Policy LP50 states:

The Council will seek to protect, enhance and support new and existing open spaces, outdoor and indoor sport and leisure facilities where appropriate, encouraging everyone in Kirklees to be as physically active as possible and promoting a healthier lifestyle for all.

Although the Proposed Plans include the addition of a female changing room with toilets and showers, the main bulk of the development proposed appears to centre around increasing and improving the social space e.g. a larger bar, a new stage/pool table area, a new/improved function room and a new outside balcony. As mentioned above, according to the plans, the existing clubhouse caters for approximately 18 covers, whereas the proposed development would cater for up to 136 covers.

The proposed development therefore raises questions as to whether the proposals are truly enhancing an existing sporting facility in accordance with the aims of Local Plan Policy LP50, or simply providing a bigger venue for social functions.

War Memorial

Local Plan Policy LP35 states:

Proposals which would remove, harm or undermine the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, or its contribution to a character of a place will be permitted only where benefits of the development outweigh the harm having regard to the scale of the harm and the significance of the heritage asset.

A war memorial / gateway funded by Mirfield Town Council with support of Kirklees Council is located on either side of the site entrance. This war memorial / gateway is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset which makes an important contribution to the character of the park and local area. The reason for this is that the Town Council have confirmed that at the time of its installation, Kirklees Council said they would respect as if it were a listed memorial.

The proposed extensions and alterations to the clubhouse would bring the built development closer to the site frontage and war memorial. As a result, part of the memorial would be overshadowed by the development causing harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The applicant has not made any reference to the war memorial / gateway in their application and has therefore not argued that any benefits the development may have outweigh the harm caused.

Furthermore, there should be a commitment (in the event that permission was recommended) that any bin storage is agreed to be positioned away from the war memorial, so as not to affect its setting or visual amenity.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be unacceptable and contrary to Local Plan Policy LP35 and the aims of Chapter 16 in the NPPF.



Photo – War Memorial (one half)

For the reasons outlined above, Mirfield Town Council objects to the proposed development, and it is therefore respectfully requested that this application is refused.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Halstead Chartered Surveyors & Town Planners