

2025/92440 – Residential development of this site is inappropriate – the application should be rejected.

Logically, the application documents (submitted with the initial development of five properties) are not directly relevant for what is now a different scheme. Furthermore, the Eco and Highway submissions are substandard. Why hasn't this application been rejected? Public consultation, without provision of accurate plans and supporting documentation, cannot fully assess the development, and calls into question the validity of any consultation.

Green Belt Comments/objections:

The proposed development is situated within the green belt and does not comply with NPPF guidelines for development. The applicant's claim, that the site represents grey belt, is both mischievous and clearly inappropriate. The currently unused greenhouses (and office) were merely the environment required for the agriculture carried out in the field.

NPPF section 147 states that inappropriate development in the green belt is, by definition, harmful and can only be approved in special circumstances. This development is not supported by the required case:

- The previous agricultural use of the site, as a wholesale nursery (with no permanent structure), should preclude this development
- The number, size and scale of proposed dwellings would adversely impact the countryside and reduce openness.
- The proximity of listed properties, heritage assets and the setting of the historic approach to Castle Hill means the development would harm the setting of several Heritage Assets, contrary to NPPF 199 and LP35.
- The proposed dwellings do not create any meaningful contribution of new (affordable) housing to targets set within the Kirklees's Local Plan.

Given the above, the applicant has not demonstrated circumstances that clearly outweigh resultant harm.

The proposed development site sits within an area of natural beauty, and historical significance. The valley bottom, within which the development is proposed, is primarily farmland. Key features, harmed by the proposed development, include Fletcher House Farm (the oldest inhabited dwelling within Kirklees), several nearby listed properties, and Castle Hillfort a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Traffic Comments/Objections:

Lumb Lane is a country lane (no white lines) which already carries significant traffic volumes daily. Roadside parking (in front of properties without off-road parking facilities) reduces the width, such that vehicles larger than a car cannot pass without mounting the pavement.

Recent re-development along Lumb Lane has already increased traffic volumes to a level where regular issues can arise. The addition of four further dwellings would result in traffic levels contrary to Local Planning Policy (LP21) worsening conditions for cars, delivery vehicles, cycles, horse riders and pedestrians. Clearly, the lane is used extensively by large agricultural vehicles associated with several farming interests operating in the valley.

NPPF 179 and LP30 requirements to increase biodiversity and secure measurable net gain:

The submitted biodiversity report fails to demonstrate a significant net gain. It is beyond question that the proposed development MUST result in a net loss due to:

- Destruction of what is currently a naturalised site frequented by all forms of local wildlife
- The introduction of human habitation adjacent to woodland, fields and the stream abounding much of the site.
- The development site sits in close proximity to the recently designated wildlife corridor into Farnley Valley (under development Nov and planting by KMC Estates Nov 2025).
- The proposed building site borders a stream which supports rural wildlife creating an essential facility for the above wildlife route – How can this proposal be described as ecologically sensitive or environmentally sound?

Access and local Facilities Comments/Objections:

Despite implying the development 'sits within Almondbury Village' the reality is that this location is well outside the village and lies in open countryside. The application represents an inappropriate attempt to reclassify a green belt site as village 'in-fill'. There is no practical local public transport, the nearest shop is a half hour walk, and all exits are uphill. The proposal that residents, living in executive houses, might regularly cycle to work is unrealistic.

Highway Access and safety Concerns/Objections:

Lumb Lane is already subject to increased traffic volumes following recent re-development of existing dwellings. The proposed development would worsen existing conditions for vehicles, pedestrians, and equestrians, contrary to LP21.

Numerous objections refer to access issues on Lumb Lane. The development site opens onto what is a particularly narrow point of this lane where unavoidable overspill (of visitor cars) would create significant problems.

Four properties would normally incorporate off-road parking for circa ten vehicles - this does not appear to be the case here! Any 'on street' parking will make through traffic access difficult, and impossible for emergency and regular agricultural vehicles.