

## About the application

Application number: 2025/93572	
What is the application for?:	Outline application with all matters reserved, bar vehicle access into the site,
Address of the site or building:	Land South of, Barnsley Road, Upper Cumberworth, Huddersfield, HD8 8NN
Postcode:	

## User comments

Type of comment: An objection	
Do you wish your comments to be published on the website anonymously?	Yes
<p>I wish to strongly object to the application adjacent to Stephen Woods at Upper Cumberworth, and express my extreme concern about the effects any nearby development would have on the invaluable and irreplaceable ancient woodland that has existed in this location long before our existence and should be allowed to thrive long after we are gone.</p> <p>We are in the midst of a climate emergency. The UK is experiencing significant biodiversity loss, with 16% of species threatened with extinction, and is heavily affected by "climate whiplash," due to rapid swings between extreme drought and severe flooding.</p> <p>Since 1970, the abundance of priority species has declined to 37% of its baseline. More than half of plant species have disappeared from places they were previously found.</p> <p>Protecting ancient woodland is vital, they are an irreplaceable habitat that has existed since at least 1600 AD. Once destroyed, their unique, centuries-old ecosystems cannot be recreated.</p> <p>They support more threatened species than any other land-based habitat in the UK including "ancient woodland indicators"—specialist plants, fungi, and insects that cannot survive in newer woods.</p> <p>Ancient woodlands provide Massive Carbon Storage: While they make up only 25–28% of the UK's woodland, they hold approximately 37–38% of all carbon stored in living trees. Their undisturbed soils are also significant long-term carbon sinks.</p> <p>They have evolved to provide unique soil health: The layers of rich, undisturbed soil have developed over hundreds of years, supporting complex fungal networks and nutrient cycles essential for rare flora.</p>	

They have an abundance of

Historical and Cultural Value: These woods are "living museums" containing archaeological features like ancient boundary banks and walling and evidence of traditional management like coppicing. Historical assets are evident in Stephen Wood, please make time to read the information boards or browse the website of the much appreciated Upper Dearne Woods Conservation Group who work tirelessly and selflessly to preserve the woods.

Ancient woodland offer unmatched climate resilience: Ancient woodlands are often more genetically diverse, giving them a higher potential to adapt to climate change and resist new pests or diseases compared to modern plantations. The unique hydrology of the woods in Upper Cumberworth with its ample freshwater springs has ensured trees have established and been able to thrive here. To develop the land which feeds these springs would severely affect the quantity and quality of the aquifer which feeds these springs and would cause catastrophic changes to the watering regime of Stephen Wood.

The proposal to discharge contaminated run off directly into the infant river Dearne would be an environmental disaster; for the woodland, the highly sensitive watercourse which lacks the flows to dilute even small amounts of contamination, and to the wildlife pond beyond which is thriving with newts and frogs.

Of less importance to environmentalists like myself, but equally worth mentioning is the economic risk posed by nature degradation which could cause a 12% loss to UK GDP, with climate-related damages to farming and infrastructure likely to increase.

I understand the planning action group have had contact with universities who would look to study the effects any development would have on these woods, but please make the right decision, refuse this application and let this amazing sanctuary continue to thrive and grow and make its irreplaceable contribution to the environment and future of our children.

Please consider the forestry commissions mapping which shows the high spatial priority habitat network buffer which extends 50m into the field, and indicates areas which should be preserved, enhanced and set aside for ancient woodland to naturally expand. The opposing boundary of the woods is a brilliant example of how woodland can naturally expand when space is allowed with saplings establishing far beyond the drystone walling.

New trees are actively being planted across the country, how amazing would it be if trees were planted on this field? Not only would it provide the carbon capture so desperately needed but it would offer optimal protection to the existing trees and opportunities for the already established ecology it is home to. Wouldn't that be a commendable alternative study for the universities.

Please don't be bullied by greedy developers and landowners and refuse the application here. There are ample alternative locations in sustainable locations, which might not offer the same profit margin, but wouldn't amount to ecocide of the highest level such as this proposal does.

