

Planning Objection Letter - Application 2026/62/91886/W
Change of Use to 22 Bed HMO – 108 - 110 Halifax Old Road, Birkby

My objection is based on multiple material planning considerations, detailed below.

1. Severe Overdevelopment and Intensification of Use

The proposal for a 22-bed HMO represents an extreme intensification of use that is wholly inappropriate for a quiet, family-based residential street. Halifax Old Road is characterised by long-standing family homes with residents ranging from very young children to elderly individuals. A development of this scale is incompatible with the established character and residential amenity of the area.

2. Highway Safety, Parking Pressure and Emergency Access Risks

The street already experiences significant parking pressure due to multiple mosques located along or near Halifax Old Road, all of which rely on this road as a main access route for worshippers. Croft Medical Practice also generates constant parking demand. Existing congestion already causes emergency services to struggle to park and navigate the road. Introducing 22 residents and 12 additional parking spaces, along with increased vehicle movements, will create unacceptable cumulative harm.

3. Pedestrian Safety – Prams, Wheelchairs, Children and Elderly

Halifax Old Road is a primary walking route for children attending nearby schools, elderly residents walking to multiple mosques, parents with prams, and wheelchair users. The pavements are narrow, and prams and wheelchairs already struggle to pass safely. The proposal introduces a new dropped kerb and vehicles entering and exiting both front and rear parking areas, creating a direct collision risk for vulnerable pedestrians. Cars driving over pavements at both the front and rear significantly increase danger for children and elderly residents who rely on this route daily.

4. Rear Parking Obstructing Private Drives

Vehicle access and manoeuvring at the rear of the property will obstruct or delay access to private drives behind neighbouring homes. Residents may be forced to wait for HMO vehicles to pull in or out, creating conflict, inconvenience, and safety risks.

5. Conservation Area Harm

The site lies within a Conservation Area, where development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the surroundings. The creation of a large car park, a new dropped kerb, boundary wall alterations, intensified use, and commercial waste storage will materially harm the visual character of the Conservation Area.

6. Noise, Disturbance and Loss of Residential Amenity

A 22 bed HMO will generate a higher turnover of occupants, increased late-night activity, more deliveries, taxis, and visitors, and more comings and goings at all hours. This will severely impact neighbouring amenity, particularly for families with young children and elderly residents.

7. Waste and Refuse Management Problems

There are ongoing issues with 108 failing to store bins within their property boundary. A 22 bed HMO will generate significantly more waste, including large trade bins, raising concerns about further overflowing waste, odour, vermin, obstruction of pavements, and harm to the Conservation Area.

8. Loss of Family Housing

The proposal removes two large family homes from a street that is clearly family-based. The Kirklees Local Plan emphasises retaining family housing stock, especially in established residential areas. A 22 bed HMO undermines the social structure and housing mix of the neighbourhood.

9. Applicant Credibility and Amenity Concerns

The individuals behind this HMO previously lived at 108 and 110. They have recently moved out to quieter locations yet now seek to impose a high-intensity commercial development on the street they left. This raises serious concerns about the credibility of their claims that the HMO will be low-impact or compatible with the area.

10. Unacceptable Cumulative Impact

Multiple mosques using Halifax Old Road as a main access route, medical practice parking, narrow pavements, existing bin issues, emergency access difficulties, high pedestrian use, Conservation Area sensitivity, and a proposed 22 bed HMO with 12 parking spaces create an overwhelming cumulative impact.

11. Evidence of Potential Unauthorised Change of Use Already Occurring

Despite the Council stating that the change of use has not been approved, multiple individuals have been observed entering and leaving 110 Halifax Old Road daily with suitcases. This strongly suggests that the property is already being used as an HMO without permission. This raises serious concerns about compliance, management standards, and respect for planning controls, and should be investigated by Planning Enforcement.

12. Harmful Impact on the Birkby Conservation Area

Birkby is a designated Conservation Area because of its historic Victorian streetscape, traditional stone boundary walls, mature gardens, and the consistent architectural rhythm of family homes. The character of the area relies on traditional residential use, historic building form, original boundary treatments, low-intensity occupation, and a quiet, stable community environment.

This proposal conflicts with these Conservation Area principles. The creation of large parking areas, increased traffic movements, boundary wall alterations, commercial waste storage, and high-intensity occupation are all incompatible with the protected character of Birkby. The development would cause a harmful impact within the Conservation Area, failing to preserve or enhance its appearance, contrary to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

13. Lack of Proper Public Notification

No site notice was placed on Halifax Old Road adjacent to the property until 30 July 2026, despite multiple suitable lamp posts directly outside and nearby. This road is the primary access route for residents, mosque visitors, schoolchildren, and pedestrians and a notice should have been clearly displayed much earlier.

14. Evidence of Potential Works Already Commencing

Scaffolding has been erected at both 108 and 110, and full roof works are currently taking place. This level of construction activity strongly suggests that preparation for the proposed HMO use has already begun, despite the change of use not being approved. Carrying out significant structural works before permission is granted raises serious concerns about the applicant's respect for planning regulations and indicates an assumption that approval is guaranteed. This behaviour warrants investigation by Planning Enforcement.

16. Impact on Property Values

The proposed 22 bed HMO would materially harm the residential character and amenity of Halifax Old Road in several ways that are known to negatively affect property values. The street is made up of long-standing family homes within a Conservation Area, and the introduction of a high-intensity commercial HMO use would significantly alter the environment that existing homeowners rely on.

Increased noise, higher turnover of occupants, intensified vehicle movements, parking pressure, late-night activity, and the erosion of the Conservation Area's character all contribute to reduced desirability for prospective buyers. These factors are well-recognised as having a detrimental impact on property values in established residential neighbourhoods.

Residents have invested in their homes on the basis of a stable, family-oriented environment, and the proposed development would undermine that stability, resulting in a clear and foreseeable reduction in property values along the street.

Conclusion

For all the reasons above including highway safety, pedestrian danger, Conservation Area harm, overdevelopment, waste issues, loss of amenity, applicant credibility, evidence of unauthorised use, premature construction works, and the negative impact on property values I respectfully request that this application be refused.