

Address: 40 Moat Hill Farm Drive, WF17 0HR.

About the application

Application number: 2020/94203.

The application is for demolition of dwelling and associated outbuildings etc.

The address of the site or building is: Clough House, 236 Leeds Road, Birstall, Batley, WF17 0HW.

The applicant's postcode is: YO26 8EW.

The following comments represent an objection to the above mentioned application:

Street Plans for the proposed development

Having perused the plans and associated documents, I was surprised to see that the development would be split into two cul-de-sacs, with 23 dwellings in the 'northern' cul-de-sac, utilising the proposed access from Moat Hill Farm Drive, and the other 7 dwellings in the 'southern' cul-de-sac (which seems to be somewhat insular) with their own access via the A643, Leeds Road, but no vehicular access to either the 'northern' cul-de-sac, or elsewhere.

Within para. 3.10 (page 26) of Kirklees SPD, Highway Design Guide – November 2019, it states: 'Cul-de-sac layouts will normally be discouraged, unless absolutely necessary due to exceptional circumstances.' I do realise that this refers to developments of over 300 dwellings. However, in all cases, a stipulated priority requirement is to provide easy access to dwellings for emergency vehicles and refuse collection for all developments. This does not appear to be the case in this proposed development.

Moat Hill Farm Drive

Another objection to this application is the fact that Moat Hill Farm Drive has been selected as an entry/exit route for the proposed new development. I consider that this is a most unsatisfactory choice – for reasons which follow. I feel that this has been planned with very little (if any) consideration to adjoining residential areas (i.e. Moat Hill Farm Drive, and the residents thereof)

– in contravention of the firm guidelines laid out in “*Kirklees Local Plan’ Highway Design Guide – November 2019.*”

I have been a resident in Moat Hill Farm Drive for around five years. The properties and roadway were built in approx 1988 to accommodate a small group of 17 houses (mainly at the top end of the cul-de-sac), plus another 13 properties (Jason Terrace) and a further 6 properties (Rose Terrace) at the lower end of the street. The latter 19 properties having been there for many years do not have dedicated parking spaces, and many have to park on the roadway. The roadway was obviously initially built to cater for such a relatively small number of properties with minimal traffic flow – in a cul-de-sac, and with only one vehicular entry/exit.

The Paragon Highways report - submitted in support of this application, under ‘Supporting Information – Transport Assessment’ indicates that this is an estate road with a width of 5.4 metres. This is hardly a suitable thoroughfare for the possibility of having to cope with an increasing volume of traffic, pedestrians and cyclists etc. A further 10 properties are nearing completion, at the top of Moat Hill Farm Drive, and if a further 23 properties were forthcoming, this would virtually double the amount. Even now, the residents of Moat Hill Farm Drive are experiencing problems with the narrow (estate type) roads. There is an ongoing problem with these narrow roads. If vehicles have a need to park here, and park legally (i.e. on the road, and not half on the road, and half on the pavement) the roadway is instantly reduced to single passage. Apart from the regular Waste collection vehicles, Post Office vans, emergency vehicles, regular delivery vehicles (especially during Covid) – we have for the past year had a multitude of large and small vehicles working on the building site for the 10 new houses. These, thankfully, are virtually completed. The thought of another lengthy period with regular noisy and heavy construction traffic utilising these narrow streets is unbearable. In the upper part of Moat Hill Farm Drive there are elderly residents (in their 70’s and 80’s) who can move around safely. There are also families with young children, who can cycle and play in relative safety. This was the prime reason for both these groups of people moving to the area. This would change dramatically if the cul-de-sac was ‘opened up’. Another factor which should be taken into consideration is the fact that most of Moat Hill Farm Drive consists of a steep incline, which during the winter months regularly becomes virtually impassable when snow and ice are present – resulting in treacherous conditions for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The past few days, with such conditions, have been a reminder of this, with conditions requiring residents to apply their own sand and gravel to the roads to allow cycles, pedestrians and vehicles on

essential journeys to proceed, hopefully without any mishaps. Also on the junction, when exiting Moat Hill Farm Drive to Leeds Road, there is impaired visibility, due to the gradient of the hill on the main road and the regular presence of vehicles parked on this road.

I refer to: Kirklees Highway Design Guide – P16 – Scheme Design – A number of overall proposals are listed, which should be aimed for, one of which is:

“Place emphasis on the edges of the site to ensure that important connections with residential areas are successful”

Referring to the above document, I do not believe that efforts have been made to integrate with surrounding areas.

Clough Drive

This has been suggested by some other ‘objectors’ as a much better alternative to Moat Hill Farm Drive. I visited this area a couple of days ago to investigate, and could immediately see the reason for this. The street, which is a cul-de-sac off Leeds Road, and terminates (a wooden fence) at the edge of the Clough House site,

The roads are much wider than Moat Hill Farm Drive, with central white lines on the road. It is also a much shorter (and safer) route from the proposed development to the A643 Leeds Road. The area is flat (no hills), and there is clear visibility for traffic turning right or left onto this road.

I cannot understand why this entry exit was not considered (or was it??)

Clough House Demolition –

My feelings on the demolition of Clough House are that it is very sad that such an impressive looking building with around two centuries of history, and was a redeeming fixture of our village and its history, should be so neglected, vandalised and eventually demolished.

I understand that a Listing Application has been made for this building.

However I feel that the situation is in doubt, particularly with the apparent non-committal remarks from English Heritage (Historic England) in their email message of 23rd December 2020. (ref. Consultee Responses – English Heritage in the Planning Application).

It is hoped that this elegant, and once magnificent building (until just over year ago) can be rescued.