

KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

PLANNING SERVICE

UPDATE OF LIST OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DECIDED BY

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

10 APRIL 2025

Planning Application 2023/93667

Item 9 Page 13

Outline application, including the consideration of access for vehicles into the site, for demolition of buildings and erection of residential development (up to 261 dwellings), including redevelopment of Lodge Cottage and Administration Building for residential use, two vehicular access points off Storthes Hall Lane, and associated works

Storthes Hall Student Village, Storthes Hall Lane, Kirkburton, Huddersfield, HD8 0WA

Change of description

Following continued discussions between the applicant and agent, an amendment to the description of the development has been agreed. It is changed from:

Outline application, including the consideration of access for vehicles into the site, for demolition of buildings and erection of residential development (up to 261 dwellings), including redevelopment of Lodge Cottage and Administration Building for residential use, two vehicular access points off Storthes Hall Lane, and associated works

To:

Demolition of buildings and outline application, including the consideration of access for vehicles into the site, for the erection of residential development (up to 261 dwellings), including redevelopment of Lodge Cottage and Administration Building for residential use, two vehicular access points off Storthes Hall Lane, and associated works

The effect of this change is to allow the demolition of buildings on site prior to the submission and approval of the Reserved Matters. The reason for this is that the applicant has cited concerns regarding retaining the vacant buildings (potentially for several years) before Reserved Matters are submitted and approved. The concerns relate to ongoing costs associated with keeping the buildings. Risks of break-in, theft, general anti-social behaviour, and risk to safety would necessitate a constant security presence on site, which itself would be a continued cost.

Officers consider the related development description change to be acceptable. It would result in no material changes to the assessment made within the committee report. Demolition was always an aspect of the proposal, considered throughout the report (where relevant), with the only change being a matter of timing.

Notwithstanding the above, specific conditions would be required to differentiate between the demolition phase and future construction phases. This includes a dedicated demolition construction environment management plan (CEMP), a construction environment management plan (Biodiversity) (CEMP: Biodiversity), and Arboricultural Impact and Method Statements. Furthermore, for precision, a condition stipulating precisely which buildings may be demolished (and more importantly, those which cannot) would be required.

This would not extend to any tree felling (of TPO trees), which would need to remain unconfirmed until the Reserved Matters is assessed and determined. A note outlining this is recommended.

The amendment to the description does not necessitate re-publicity. Demolition was always an integral aspect of the proposal.

None of the representations received have raised concerns over the timing of the demolition. Concerns regarding the principle of demolition, in terms of climate impact (i.e., querying why buildings should be knocked down to build new buildings), have been received, however a changing in the timing of demolition would not prejudice this.

Recommended additional conditions / note:

- Condition clearly identifying which buildings may be demolished;
- Dedicated demolition CEMP, CEMP (Biodiversity), and Arboricultural Impact and Method Statement; and
- Note confirming felling of TPO trees not permitted until after Reserved Matters are approved.

Final comments from K.C. Trees

In section 8 (consultation responses) of the committee report, the following was stated:

K.C. Trees: Object to the proposal, due to the extent of tree loss proposed, although the last comments received relate to an earlier version of the scheme. Final comments requested and to be provided within the update.

K.C. Trees' final formal comments, based on the final plans, have now been received. In full, they are as follows:

Northern Access

After a meeting with KC Highways team and reviewing the most up to date submitted plans it appears this can be achieved with minimal impact on the surrounding trees. There is space for the work to be carried out under the supervision of the project arboriculturalist in an attempt to retain most if not all of the trees within this area. Some root pruning may be required to facilitate the new pillars being set and this should be performed by the project arboriculturalist. Overall there is no objection to the submitted plans for widening this entrance for visibility reasons.

Southern Access

The most recently submitted plans for the amended location of the Southern access will result in more tree loss. After reviewing Iain Tavendales AIA which specifically looks at this area, KC Trees believes the loss of T2 and G1/G2 to be tolerable when taking into consideration the mitigation planting proposed. The status of T1 is a category A tree and should be retained by any means possible. KC Trees is of the opinion that the tree can be retained with the potential of some root pruning to facilitate the new Access. Again, this should be carried out by the project arboriculturalist.

Eastern/western Boundaries

The retention of the majority of trees to both the eastern and western boundaries is a welcome improvement from the original proposals and will sufficiently maintain the current landscape and appearance of the area. With regard to the western boundary running parallel to Storthes Hall Lane this should maintain a suitable screen for the existing residents both visually and audibly during construction. There is a loss of some trees on the internal side of this boundary which is regrettable however this is the preferred option if the roadside trees are to be retained. Almost all trees are now to be retained along the eastern boundary which is a great addition to the plans.

Central Northern Trees

There is extensive tree removal proposed to the Central northern area of the site. This is broadly acceptable as these trees are mostly not protected, relatively young and small in stature and most likely planted as part of a scheme when the original buildings were built. There is also a substantial amount of planting proposed as part of the mitigation process for the loss of these trees.

Central Southern Trees

The internal trees to the south of the site are largely category A and B trees of large stature and particularly prominent site features. KC trees believes not enough consideration has been given to their contribution to the setting of this area and little attempt to incorporate them into the design layout. There is a line of almost exclusively category A trees

which line the southern boundary road. These trees have all been suggested for removal and replanting however the replanting in this area would take hundreds of years to establish to the current level of amenity value provided. Furthermore, there is a cluster of category A and B trees to the rear of the building known as the venue. In this area it would be regrettable to see any further tree loss as they not only provide a huge amount of amenity value but they also contribute to the historical value due to this area previously being named the arboretum.

Conclusion

There are aspects of the proposals that have undergone vast improvement and lots of trees have been retained due to this. There are also areas of high value tree loss that may be avoidable via the design layout. It is down to the overall planning balance to determine if the positives outweigh the loss

The above comments align with the assessment undertaken within the committee report. To reiterate, the tree loss is acknowledged to be a negative aspect of the proposal. Nevertheless, for the reasons set out in the main report, in the planning balance the benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the harm identified.

Alteration to off-site highway works

The applicant has decided to omit the cycle lane improvement works, and associated aspects, on and around the North Road / Penistone Road junction. An updated plan, showing all the other previously-proposed (and assessed within the main report) off-site road improvements without the cycle lane, has been submitted. This has been reviewed by K.C. Highways (HDM), who have commented:

HDM provided a consultation response on 31/03/25, confirming no objection to the above development, subject to conditions and S106 requirements. Following this consultation response, the applicant has confirmed that they now do not propose to provide the cycle/footway link on North Road previously proposed, which was intended to link to the new controlled crossing on Penistone Road; and had been designed to enable cyclists to turn right into Penistone Road separately from motor-traffic at the junction. The applicant has confirmed that this element has been removed due to the local concerns raised regarding this element of the scheme; and in particular, the indicative 'no waiting' proposals on North Road that had been indicated to facilitate this element of the works.

The removal of this cycling improvement from the wider off-site highway works proposals is disappointing, as this element of the scheme would have provided significant benefits for cyclists, and would comply with many local and national planning policy objections. However, whilst the removal of this element of the scheme dilutes some of the active travel benefits of the development, the off-site highway works still provide significant pedestrian improvements that will be of benefit to existing and proposed highway users. Therefore, HDM continue to raise no objection to these proposals, and the wider development.

The applicant has now submitted the following off-site highway works drawings (Option C), that exclude the proposed cycle/footway link on North Road, and amends the proposed Toucan crossing on Penistone Road to a Puffin crossing (e.g. a pedestrian only signal controlled crossing):

Off-site Improvement Scheme Drawings

- *Optima drawing no. 18092/GA/07 – General Arrangement*
- *Optima drawing no. 18092/ATR/06 – Vehicle Swept Path Analysis*
- *Optima drawing no. 18092/IN/07 – Indicative Traffic Regulation Orders*

HDM have reviewed the above drawings with the Councils Highway Safety Team, and it is confirmed that they are acceptable for preliminary design purposes. It is also confirmed that a new Stage 1 Road Safety Audit is not required at this stage, as the revised proposals do not include any material changes relating to the remaining elements of the scheme, which have already been considered by the previous Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. However, Stage 2 and 3 Road Safety Audit will be required in due course, should this preliminary design scheme progress to the deliver stage.

It is noted that the revised scheme does still indicatively show ‘no waiting’ markings on this initial section of North Road adjacent to the Penistone Road junction, as requested by the Highway Safety Team. However, these are limited to the immediate vicinity of the junction, and the existing pedestrian crossing point, where drivers should not (and do not, based on numerous on-site observations) park for safety reasons, and in accordance with the highway code. Therefore, these revised proposals address local concerns regarding the impact on-street parking availability on North Road. Notwithstanding this, it is reiterated that all ‘no waiting’ marking shown on the plans are indicative and would be subject to the formal TRO consultation process in due course, should this preliminary design proposal be progress to the deliver stage.

In conclusion, HDM offer no objection to the development proposals, subject to the conditions and S106 requirements identified in the previous consultation response dated 31/03/25.

Planning officers concur with the above assessment and conclusion. While the removal of the cycle lane is acknowledged to be a negative and a missed opportunity in some respects, its removal from the scheme does not make the development unacceptable in planning terms, having regard to all matters to be weighed in the planning balance.

Representations

Comments were received from Kirkburton Parish Council 15/02/2024, which were not included in the committee report. Since the report was published, the parish council has resent their comments to reiterate their previous concerns. These are set out below, with officer comments in response.

Destruction of Little North Spring Wood and other protected trees: *Little North Spring Wood is the largest area of wildlife habitat within the site and is protected by TPO 17/89/w1. The wood is an attractive landscape feature and screens the student village site from the houses opposite on Storthes Hall Lane. The footpath through the wood provides access to the student village site and woodland beyond. The development proposal threatens the destruction of the wood and would also result in the significant loss of other protected trees across the site, most notably those covered by TPOs 17/89/a6 and 17/89/a8, which were retained through the development of the student village.*

Response: This matter is considered within the main report, with the arboricultural implications set out within paragraphs 10.109 – 10.120 and the ecological impacts in paragraphs 10.146 – 10.154.

Site capacity, housing volumes and lack of affordable and social housing: *Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP73 gives an indicative capacity of 505 dwellings. The proposed development exceeds this by more than 10% (adding 261 to existing permission for 300 dwellings plus care home on the adjacent part of the site). This volume of housing is not compatible with retaining important features of the site nor its Green Belt situation.*

The application includes no affordable, social or starter home provision.

Response: The proposal's Green Belt impacts, including the density of development and what it may mean for openness, are considered in paragraphs 10.7 – 10.27 and 10.33 – 10.36. It has been determined that, in principle, the site can accommodate such a density without causing greater harm to openness, however this will be subject to a more detailed assessment at Reserved Matters stage.

The proposal includes a 10% affordable housing offer, by virtue of Vacant Building Credit, as detailed in paragraphs 10.160 – 10.168.

Loss of access to public transport, car dependency and traffic impacts: *The proposed development would result in the loss of local bus services (398/399) which provide regular services between Storthes Hall and the centre of Huddersfield, stopping close to major supermarkets at Waterloo. These services are currently used by local residents on Storthes Hall Lane as well as students.*

It would also result in more than doubling the existing parking provision from 250 car spaces to 550. With an additional 300 car parking spaces, the traffic generated is likely to be far in excess of the projected 156 trips at the morning peak. Residents on Storthes Hall Lane as well as those on the main routes through Farnley Tyas, which will be used as a 'rat run', are likely to be exposed to increased road traffic.

The traffic generated exceeds the capacity of the junction of Storthes Hall Lane and Penistone Road (A629). The traffic assessment fails to reflect the difficult layout of this junction and congestion at peak hours.

Response: Following the closure of the Student Accommodation, the bus services have ended since this comment was received.

The traffic generation implications of the proposal, including upon the Storthes Hall Lane and Penistone Road junction, is considered in paragraphs 10.86 – 10.92.

Demolition of heritage buildings: *Despite the successful repurposing of what is currently the reception / shop building and 'The Venue' as part of the student village development, the current application would see both of these historic buildings demolished.*

Response: Since these comments were received The Reception is to be retained. The demolition of The Venue is considered in paragraphs 10.103 – 10.120.

Biodiversity metric calculation document: *It is not possible to read or make out the content of this document and its maps. Most of its 1941 pages are blank.*

Response: This is noted, and is a technical issue regarding Excel documents showing online (which officers are looking to try and resolve). Nevertheless, while the formatting is skewed, all pertinent information is viewable.

Statement of Community Involvement: *The leaflet drop to local residents took place on 8 December 2023. The application is recorded as being received by the Kirklees Planning Services on 12 December 2023. There has been no direct engagement with the local people likely to be affected by the proposed development.*

Response: This is noted, and while high quality community engagement is requested from applicants, it cannot be mandated.

Relationship with neighbouring MDGB1 development: *This application not only fails to reflect the considerations spelt out under Local Plan Policy LP73 it has also been developed with little reference to development, which has been granted permission on the other part of the MDGB1 site. It includes no measures to mitigate additional peak hour traffic, unlike the adjacent retirement home development.*

Response: It is acknowledged that a masterplan linking the two halves of the allocation has not been provided, contrary to the Local Plan's allocation expectation. It is understood that there is no working relationship between the two landowners / applicants. However, given that the southern half of the

allocation already has permission (which did not include a masterplan linking the northern section at the time), on balance it was considered unreasonable to impose this requirement on the applicant.

Regarding mitigating peak hour traffic, since the comment was received, off-site highway improvements to promote walking have been proposed, as has a contribution to a new bus service into the site (minimum five years).