

SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH OFFICE
SWALLOWFIELD STREET, SWALLOWFIELD
READING, BERKS, RG7 1QX
Tel: 0118 988 5929 email: clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk

2nd November 2015

Attn: Justin Turvey
Planning Department
Wokingham Borough Council
Shute End
Wokingham
Berks RG40 1WR

Dear Mr Turvey

Application No: 152659 and others, Willow Tree Works, Swallowfield Street

Swallowfield Parish Council agrees with the comments submitted by the Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group (SFRG), copy attached. The Council wishes to highlight the sensitivity of the site to flooding and the ground water problems that affect the area around Hornbeams. Strict conditions were applied to the planning permission to allow for further technical studies and design work to take place since the work of the SFRG had highlighted serious deficiencies in the application detail. Conditions were also imposed to ensure that appropriate measures were taken to mitigate flood risk during the demolition and construction works.

Such was the seriousness of these concerns that it was agreed that the discharge of these conditions would be brought back to the WBC Planning Committee for consideration. Accordingly, it is essential that WBC performs thorough and independent due diligence to ensure that the conditions have been met in full.

The Parish Council is most concerned that the developer appears to be taking a cavalier approach by proceeding with the development before the requisite enabling conditions have been discharged. In the circumstances it seems surprising that a Stop Notice has not been served.

The Parish Council would also like to highlight that, although a number of members of the local community have stepped forward to become members of the Project Community Liaison Group that was to be established to ensure that residents were kept informed, the developer has so far failed to follow this up. Thus far there has been no dialogue with or meeting of the group as required under Condition 27.

The Parish Council is also disappointed that WBC has not notified it of the many applications that have been made in respect of discharge of conditions. This is unacceptable given the contentious nature of the scheme. Either the process has failed or it needs review.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. E. Halson
Parish Clerk

Attachment:
Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group response

Copies to:
Cllr Stuart Munro
Members of the Planning Committee

22 October 2015

To Justin Turvey, WBC

Dear Mr Turvey,

PLANNING APPLICATION 152659 WILLOW TREE WORKS

I am writing on behalf of Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group. We have many concerns about the drainage scheme provided. There are several very clear reasons why Condition 23 must not be discharged by this application:

1. Condition 23 states: “No development shall take place until full details have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include: Full details of all phasing and/or measures to mitigate risks of flooding and /or pollution incidents arising to receiving watercourses/ bodies or neighbouring development throughout construction”

The mitigation of flood risk through construction has not been addressed. No risk assessment has been provided.

As evidence of this, the existing critical site drainage has been destroyed by preliminary work on site. The local ditch system is flooded and the pond drain is at a very high level, with the drain headwall completely submerged.

2. Provision of a drainage scheme is highly dependent on the boundary design at Hornbeams, which has shown to be a critical flood risk area, as evidenced by the flood event of 2007. The details of this boundary have not been provided (this is in breach of Condition 8).

We have particular concern that the Developer is planning a retaining wall, similar to a sea wall. This will not comply with Odyssey Markides Technical Note (hydraulic modelling) which assumed a graded earth bank, and which has been taken as the development guideline in this Condition.

3. Groundwater conditions have not been taken into account as specified. Many of the drain invert levels shown are below groundwater level. The drains are also laid at or very near the minimum permitted fall (CIRI C697 standards). Therefore:

- The drains will be full or part full at all times of flood risk. Therefore there will be a heavy mass of standing water in the drains. This will deaden the response to peak rainfall and increase the risk of flood.

- The close tolerances required to install the drains will be difficult to achieve and maintain on a site with very significant re-graded earthwork.

4. Condition 8 has not been discharged, in respect of the perimeter boundary design.
This is a pre-requirement to drainage design as noted in item 2 above.

We note that construction has commenced ahead of the conditions being discharged.
I work in Wokingham and I would like to meet you to discuss these points.
Yours sincerely,

Andy Keith
Joint Chairman
Swallowfield Flood Resilience Group
mobile: 07714 222312