

## FTC Final Statement re 18/02520/FUL Land South of Wick House

There are 3 main issues with this proposed development:

- Drainage – particularly surface water flood risk
- Access – practicality and safety
- Impact on designated heritage assets and their settings

The first 2 of these are normally ones that can potentially be overcome by modifying the design, or other mitigation. However, in this case we believe there are genuine issues of feasibility, and therefore the acceptability of the whole development. The third has its normal significance.

### 1. Drainage

- a) The main flooding risk to this site and neighbouring properties is from surface water (exacerbated by high groundwater levels).** This was the major part of the problem at this location in the 2007 flood incident, as shown in the EA report on this (Ref 1). This is corroborated by evidence from neighbouring residents (Refs 12).
- b) Whatever the sequential test requirement, the NPPF emphasises the need to address all sources of flooding, as well as risks to other properties.
- c) The applicant has not provided details of the proposed driveway construction, and the effect of this on surface water flood risk to the adjacent properties has not been assessed in the FRA (Ref 2). The permeability of a compacted surface is unlikely to match that of the existing ground.
- d) There is also a risk that the proposed properties will end up 'sitting in their own puddle' due to the existing apparently impermeable wall around the southern end of the site (This is not addressed by the proposed planning condition.)
- e) The Hydrology study prepared for the emerging Fairford Neighbourhood Plan includes data on groundwater levels from a well close to the site, that has been correlated with longer-term data from other boreholes in Fairford to give an estimate of the maximum groundwater level in the vicinity (Ref 3, p15). The conclusion to be drawn is that there is likely to be insufficient 'freeboard' (in accordance with the CIRIA guidelines (Ref 3, p22)) between the ground level on the application site and the maximum groundwater level to ensure that infiltration SUDS can be effective at the most critical times. Moreover, the EA's requirement that the ground level should not be raised has implications for the feasibility of an on-site 'attenuation' solution.**
- f) Neither the applicant nor the EA have responded to FTC's comments and evidence on this (Refs 3, 4(iii) and 5). The EA's conclusions (Ref 6), submitted before this, cannot have taken this evidence into account.
- g) The GCC Drainage Engineer has questioned the feasibility of SUDS for this development (Ref Officer's report). Without a practical solution the development may not be acceptable.**

### 2. Access

- a) The main issue is the practicality of safe access for 2 properties on an unlit single track road with a right angle bend in the middle and possible presence of pedestrians.**
- b) Reversing out into the 'shared area' at the western end is not a safe option, and there is no intermediate passing place without encroaching on the property of Cotswold Cottage (Ref 7).

- c) It is not possible for a large vehicle to pass pedestrians safely on the narrow lane (with or without hedge removal).
- d) No swept path analysis has been provided for construction or delivery vehicles, and it would not appear possible for larger vehicles to negotiate the corner without encroaching (unlawfully) on or over the property of Cotswold Cottage. The feasibility of access needs to be demonstrated.
- e) Not all the issues highlighted in the Highways authority's letter of 14 August (Ref 8(i)) have been addressed and some of the suggested planning conditions (Ref 8(ii)) do not appear practical, to the extent that their final opinion is not logically consistent with the facts of the situation.

### 3. Impact on designated heritage assets

- a) **The statement (in the Officer's report) that there is no impact on the 2 designated heritage assets (East End House and the Conservation Area) or their settings is not credible.**
- b) Another CDC Conservation opinion, on a development proposal in the vicinity, highlighted Historic England guidance that impermanent features such as trees could not be relied on for landscaping or screening (Ref 10). Is CDC now saying that this was incorrect? The answer to this question also has important implications for other proposals and our Neighbourhood Plan.
- c) Without the screening of the existing high conifer hedge and the proposed planting, the impact of 2 new modern houses of unexceptional design on the setting of East End House would clearly be significant. They would not be an 'enhancement' of the setting or the Conservation Area.
- d) The high stone wall is a significant feature of this part of the Conservation Area (see p6, para 5 in Ref 11), and the grassed area to the west of it is a key part of its setting. Both of these would clearly be affected by the proposed development (from a strict policy point of view), as would the amenity value of these for adjacent residents in Moor Lane and Lindenfield (including during the construction period).
- e) As paragraph 6.2.6 in the supporting guidance to policy DS2 in the Local Plan says, "Open spaces, gardens, gaps, 'green wedges' and 'green corridors' all make important contributions to the built environment. They can provide settings for buildings, variety in the street scene, vistas, and buffers between developed areas. Cotswold settlements derive much of their character from open spaces within the built-up area and it is important that they are protected from inappropriate development." This is clearly very relevant to this site.
- f) **Even if the harm to these assets or their settings is judged 'less than substantial', both Local and National policies state this has to be justified by demonstrating clearly that this is outweighed by public benefits. No such benefits have been identified in this case.**
- g) Regarding the supposed benefit of the development for repair of the wall, there are other legal mechanisms for procuring such remediation within a conservation area.

In addition, we are concerned that there doesn't seem to have been as much constructive engagement as there might have been by the applicants to address the very genuine concerns raised by neighbouring residents (Ref 12), who in some cases have legal rights over the same land.

### Conclusion

Fairford Town Council believes there are substantive issues with this proposed development, in terms of drainage, access and impact on heritage assets. We do not believe these can be adequately or reliably mitigated by planning conditions, and therefore strongly suggest that permission should be refused.

References (Additional supporting documents to be provided to the Committee)

1. Fairford, Whelford, Kempsford & Lechlade Floods Review July 2007, Environment Agency, 2008
2. Applicant's FRA
3. Groundwater Monitoring and Review of Flood Risk at Fairford, Water Resource Associates (WRA), November 2018
4. Copies of previous submissions by Fairford Town Council
5. Supporting references
  - (i) Cotswold District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Updated Final Report, JBA Consulting, May 2016
  - (ii) Fairford Drainage Strategy – Stage 1, Thames Water, 2016
  - (iii) Gloucestershire Groundwater Management Plan: Groundwater Intermediate Assessment – South Cotswold District, Atkins, April 2015
6. Environment Agency response 16 March 2018
7. Copies of Land Registry entries for Cotswold Cottage, East End Garden House and Wick House
8. GCC Highways Officer letters of 14 August 2018 and 10 January 2019
9. Applicants 'Highways Response' and 'Road Safety Opinion'
10. CDC Conservation opinion on 17/05185/FUL
11. Applicant's Heritage Statement
12. Copies of comments from neighbouring residents (Rand, Straates, Murdoch, Goldstone, Benfield, Murano, Hill, Miller, Milne, Thorne, Bishop)

