

Toller Porcorum CLT Board Meeting
Held at the Village Hall on 20th May 2013

Present: Jill Bacchus, Rorie Geddes, Colin Baker, Alex Carstairs.

In attendance, shareholders: Mick and Jennifer Rolfe, Evelyn Whitcombe, Peggy Denty, Debbie Billen, Jeremy Stavenhagen, Janet and Alan Knowles.

Apologies: Barry Rutherford

The objective of the meeting was to review the package of plans and supporting documentation which are to be submitted for planning.

Affordable Housing Statement; no particular comment.

Design and Access Statement;

It was felt that the Statement would have benefited from being cross-referenced to the supporting surveys.

It is appreciated that great care has been taken to ensure that the development fits with the design and style of other cottages in the village.

References in 4.1 and 4.4 to the River Hooke should read Toller Brook. This is important as the recently named Toller Brook is now registered with Environment Agency. It is probably unimportant but the picture in 4.1 incorrectly shows nos. 7,9,11 High Street as Toller House (mistake by Google).

4.4 The flood risk is stated to be in Flood Zone 1 apart from the area in the north east corner. The ground here has been raised considerably to ensure a more level site above the flood plain. This has required the construction of a retaining wall which clearly, on the map attached to the Flood risk Assessment, impinges on the flood plain at the 112.5m level and is counter to Flood Risk Assessment (FLA) 5.1 Flood Mitigation Measures. Also in FLA 4.1 it is proposed to have a soakaway located in the central area of the driveway, "if suitable". This is not apparent on the plans and indeed any excess water will run directly to the front doors of the cottages. Any drainage system here will allow faster drainage of surface water into Toller Brook and the real threat from these two points is not to the site but to properties downstream as detailed below.

5.0 Please see comments below re tree survey.

5.6 The use of cream coloured render and zinc canopies was approved after some discussion. We questioned the use of wooden windows and doors, largely on the basis of the expense of maintenance, but that is obviously the responsibility of Aster. On balance use of wood was preferred. There was a clear preference for artificial slate on all dwellings. There have been some strange choices of pantiles over the years!

6.0 No reference is made to disabled access to Post Office. Is this a legal requirement anyway?

8.3 SUDS (?) drainage system to be designed, as above, it is important this does not impinge on downstream properties.

8.4 Gas boilers. No mains gas in the village, is there a proposal for communal gas supplies?

Flood risk:

We should say from the start that we believe the flood risk survey to be flawed in its inception. It would appear that the focus of the report's deliberations was on whether the development of new housing was at risk from flooding, and if so, how to negate this. We believe that this was mis-conceived. The survey should more properly have been concerned with the total environmental impact of flooding caused by the so-called 'urbanisation' of this part of Toller Porcorum. Had it done so then the report would have dealt with the issues we highlight below.

1. At paragraph 5.1 Flood Mitigation Measures, of the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) it states:

"Existing ground levels are to be maintained (no levels raised) within the flood zone area to the north east of the site. Fencing between the properties within the flood zone is to be 'permeable' to allow the passage of any flood waters."

We note that a crib block retaining wall with a close boarded fence above is to be constructed within the flood zone to the north east of the site. This wall/fence will be 3.2 metres high and will have two functions. The first will be to act as a barrier to any flood waters encroaching on the site. The second will be to retain the two metres of soil needed to level the site, in line with the site plans which show that finished floor levels will be set no lower than 114.0m. The flood plain itself is at 112.0m.

As noted at para 5.1 above any fencing should be permeable. In fact this fence is being constructed **precisely because it is not permeable**.

2. At para 6.0 of the FRA, Off Site Impacts it states, *"The proposed works do not impinge on the flood zone extent and assuming that soakaways will be suitable there will be no increase in surface water run-off from the site and therefore the development will not have any off site impacts."*

We have seen on the site plans that the crib wall and fence is to be built within the flood plain extent, **therefore it is incorrect to say that the proposed works do not impinge.**

Further, particularly because the site will be constructed using cobbles, macadam, concrete paving slabs and concrete block paving, our concerns are not at all alleviated by the use of the word 'assumed' in regard to the soak-aways. **We need to be assured that there will be no increase in surface water run-off, and simple assumptions are not good enough.**

3. Paragraph 7.0 deals with the so-called Residual Risks, and states, *"There are no residual flood risks associated with the development proposals."*

The two properties immediately 'downstream' of the site are Grade 2 Listed buildings with the stream running through their gardens. These gardens flooded extensively on 07 July 2013 and indeed flood quite readily at other times of prolonged or heavy rainfall. The ground level is being raised, contrary to the report's conclusion, Para 8, which claims that the developers *"...will be maintaining existing ground levels and...that the proposed development has a minimal impact on flood risk, both within the site and off-site."*

As the existing ground levels are clearly being raised it therefore calls into question the claim that the development will have a minimal impact on flood risk, '**both within the site and off-site**'. We believe that more needs to be done to ensure that there is not an increased risk of flooding to properties immediately downstream.

One reason that the flooding occurs is because of the restriction posed by the culvert underneath the stone bridge to the east of the old railway bridge. This has a concrete base which was laid to prevent any erosion by the stream but in effect has meant that the culvert is simply not large enough to take the volume of water when the stream is in full flood. This leads to water 'backing up' and causing more flooding immediately up-stream.

We believe that in order to mitigate the effect of water hitting the crib wall, (where previously it would have run onto the land on the proposed site), together with additional volume from the soak-aways of the new development, the culvert under the stone bridge should be made deeper, thus allowing a larger volume of water through.

Tree survey;

1. The recommendations from Middlemarch Environmental Ltd are both interesting and possibly problematic.
2. The survey identifies 5 trees and one group of trees that are category B. This means trees of moderate quality and value, that have at least a further twenty years of life. The report further concludes that the retention of these trees across this site, "...should be considered as a priority...".
3. Tree No.2 is a Lawson Cypress cultivar, in the garden of No. 23 High Street, on land adjacent to the development but not on it. The Root Protection Area (RPA) does though encroach on the proposed site. More about the RPA later.
4. Tree No.8 is a large Willow, again on land adjacent to the site. (This is the big Willow that Satish is planning to fell.) The report is clear that this tree should be retained. There is an issue in relation to the RPA, which covers the whole of the area designated for the post office. The report has this to say about the RPA.

"In order to avoid damage to the roots or rooting environment of retained trees, the RPA has been calculated for each of the Category A, B and C trees. This is a minimum area around a tree which is deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the trees viability. Protection of the roots and soil structure in this area should be treated as a priority."

5. Trees 11, 13, and 14 are Ash and Western Red Cedars, all within the site and all problem free.

6. The group of trees for retention, Group 7, are a collection of Western Red Cedar, Ash, Hazel and Apple. All of these are on the dividing line between the development and the adjacent flood plain. The proposed retaining wall will be built on the northern side of this group so that all of these trees will be incorporated into the gardens of the new houses.

7. The main problem is the big Willow. The report is clear that , ... *"Where any new development is proposed within the RPA or canopy spread of a retained tree it must be*

constructed in such a way that damage of the trees root system or crown can be avoided. Should new development require works within the RPA of any retained tree an Arboricultural Method

Statement (AMS) should be prepared to set out what steps are to be taken to protect the trees during the course of development. "

8. The CLT should therefore ask for an AMS in relation to both tree No. 8, the Willow and tree No. 2 the Lawson Cypress cultivar, even though neither of these trees are actually on the site of the proposed development.

Plans; These were enthusiastically received and had the full support of the meeting. An issue was raised that the boundary was incorrectly shown in the south east corner. However inspection of the Land Registry details proved that it was correctly shown.

