

Thames Farm Action Group
Rambler Cottage, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake, Oxon RG9 3PH

Former Wyevale Garden Centre, Reading Road, Lower Shiplake

Holding Objection to RM Application Reference : P21/S4271/RM.

We object to the above Planning Application for the following reasons:

1. The site is next to Thames Farm and is highly likely to suffer from similar geotechnical, engineering and infrastructure issues as those faced by Thames Farm.
2. It must be acknowledged that the Planning process was unable to adequately deal with the issues at Thames Farm and suffered from repeated defects in the need for the presentation of adequate information necessary for careful and diligent / informed decision making by the various regulatory authorities responsible for the decision making required by the Planning process.
3. In particular there were repeated failures to require the developer of Thames Farm to undertake the necessary due diligence and presentation of robust and accurate geotechnical information that was necessary; and this arose mainly due to the failure of the authorities to recognise and ensure that the application adequately acknowledged and reflected the status of the Grade 1 Source Protection designation of the site, the location and nature of the underground dissolution features that existed, the potential to cause harm to the underground aquifers that provide the district with its potable water supply.
4. The area was designated as a Grade 1 source protection zone by the Environment Agency, and as such it should protect its own designated areas and ensure that before any works of any kind are permitted within such a designated area the purpose of that designation is fully and comprehensively protected.
5. Moreover the regulatory authorities permitted infrastructure and enabling works to be started and completed, including works that were **part of** the application site when there was insufficient information made available to them about the need to grout the site and create an offsite drainage solution. This action directly led to the developer being put in a position of securing a Lawful Development Certificate preserving in perpetuity its ability to implement the scheme of development that would give rise to the need to grout to a depth of 16m and vibro-compact the entire proposed built area of the site

6. The developer was permitted to cut down dozens of mature trees along the site frontage without the need to replace with an alternative planting and screening scheme because it argued that planting trees would endanger site operatives whilst clearly cutting them down and removing them was seemingly not dangerous. This has led to the site being an eyesore and a blight on the entire area as has the poor site management and perimeter fencing that has been constructed.
7. The very significant changes that are now visibly occurring in the UK and world-wide as a result of global warming. This is absolutely **not** the time that a source of potable water relied upon by the community at large should be put to any degree of risk whatsoever
8. The lack of an alternative source of potable water to meet the needs of the district in the event that the supply here becomes contaminated.
9. The correct questions and thus the proposed solutions necessary to permit development to take place on these sites must be asked and detailed designs undertaken as part of the **current** approvals process such that a second disastrous and contentious application does not blindly stagger forwards and is approved causing further intractable problems for the future.
10. It is clear that this site sits within a Grade 1 source protection zone, that the surface of the site is made ground, that the developer proposes piled foundations, and also there is the **possibility of a grouting process needed**. This possibility is specifically flagged in the reports appended and forming part of this application.
11. Grampian style conditions should **not** be used in this situation to put off full due diligence, disclosure and detailed designs for matters such as site preparation, foundation design, foul water disposal, surface water disposal nor the removal of trees, and these issues should all be **addressed in detail at the current stage**
12. This 'holding objection' has been submitted to allow time for a comprehensive review and analysis to take place by TFAG's geotechnical and drainage advisors which given the complexities of development in this area is the type of review that the regulatory authorities should also be undertaking and publicising.

12/08/2022