

PLANNING REF : 242067
PROPERTY ADDRESS : School Road
: Hurst, Reading
: RG10 0ET
SUBMITTED BY : Mr Andrew Butler
DATE SUBMITTED : 27/08/2024

COMMENTS:

Objection to Application Number 242067, and a Planning Enforcement Request for the Developer to rectify completed unauthorized groundworks. This work has disrupted and removed an important Hurst surface water drain and associated flood compensation capacity "Causing a flood risk" to increase for the immediate neighbours, and over the Hurst Terrace in general.

If one looks at the proposed site entrance onto Lodge Road B3030 on "Google Street View", the overgrown hedge either side of the gates make it difficult to see or assess the proposed development site. However, if one selects "See more dates", the unauthorized work already carried out is very clear, viz:

Oct 2008: Google Street View shows a blue hatchback car parked in front of the site entrance onto Lodge Road. Beyond the gates, piled up waste or soil heaps can be seen in the vicinity of the onsite ditch, with the trees previously marking the line of this ditch (as seen on the right) having already been removed. The felled trees along the destroyed section of the ditch are shown in place on the Developer's "Planning Statements and Reports", Contamination Report, Part 4, Page 11, on the aerial photograph, capture date 04/09/1999.

Mar 2009: Google Street View shows work well underway to bulldoze the waste/spoil/soil heaps into the ditch, levelling this part of the site, completely blocking drainage flow north and removing many cubic metres of ditch/swale flood compensation capacity.

Apr 2010: Google Street View shows ditch destruction more or less complete, preventing any natural drainage north, and (now unsurprisingly) with standing water visible beyond on the waterlogged field, resulting in an associated increased flood risk to neighbours east in Tape Lane, and south in Martineau/Sawpit and beyond.

Why is reinstating this Ditch important?

Firstly, on the EA Flood Map for Planning the on-site Ditch is designated as "Main river", and currently shown as being complete and functional; which it is not. See GOV.UK. website. Or see Developer's "Planning Statements and Reports", Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (FRA&DS), 4.2 FLOOD RISK STRATEGY, Page 5, Figure 2: Extract of EA Flood Map for Planning.

Secondly, the correct functioning of this ditch is essential to the Developer's proposed scheme for surface water drainage from the site. The Developer's FRA&DS, Section 5.6, Proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy concerning discharge of all surface water states, "ultimately discharging to the onsite water course located along the western site boundary". Also Drawing Number 409.010068.00001-SLR-HD6-500-1 Rev P04, shows; INSET A - SECTION A-A

PROPOSED OUTFALL TO EXISTING DITCH. The ditch shown in impressive technical detail (on the drawing), is 3.12m wide 1.5m deep, with a top edge level of 37.15m A.O.D. (which is a very low level for land to be built on within the Hurst Terrace surface water trapment triangle). At present with the ditch closed-off at the north end, on-site surface water collecting in the remains of the on-site ditch to the south, will have to seep further south and elsewhere through Hurst; Tape Lane, Lodge road, Martineau etc, down to Hatchgate, across to Broadcommon, and then north below Haines Hill to join the Twyford Brook and River Loddon.

Thirdly, the Developer's Contamination Report Part 1, similarly requires Hurst's damaged system of ditches, (which to the west, largely no longer exist as continuous waterways), to function as they once did. Looking at the Executive Summary, the Developer's report states under "Hydrology", "On site, along western site boundary. Ditch carries surface water from south to north, toward the inland river north-west of the site. Rivers are located 180m west and 244m north of the site". Under "Topography", "The ditch was filled with water at the time of inspection". Clearly any site inspection by the Developer's contractor must have been rather cursory, otherwise they would have seen and known the Ditch is now non-existent at the north of the site. Also looking at Google maps, the nearest river is the Loddon over 400m west-north-west of the north-west corner of the site, which does make one wonder about the veracity of the Developer's observations and submissions. But the last document/page of "Contamination Report Part 1", is very useful for tracking the Drain. It is an OS Map covering the location of the proposed site entrance, and shows the Ditch as surveyed in 1966. From ref: 479300/173700, running 160m north across the proposed access area, the Ditch then runs sharply west for 20m through an on-site culvert and then a culvert under Lodge Road B3030; the Developer's Contractors could have checked using this, their own map, before compiling a misleading and fundamentally incorrect report, which WBC Planners now have to waste precious time reviewing.

Finally, on the Application Form this application is for access only, which I would have thought covered such things as road safety, let-down kerbs, visibility splays, footpath and road widths etc. But it must also cover retention of roadside ditches/swales for local flood compensation during heavy rainfall, and in this particular proposal, a scheme for reinstatement of the on-site Ditch/swale for both surface water flood compensation and drainage would need to be included in the design and implemented prior to any development.

It is hoped WBC refuse this "access only" Application, and issue an enforcement notice for the vandalism and damage to the on-site Ditch carried out over the last 15 years to be rectified.