

PL/19/0027/FA | Demolition of existing buildings and hardstanding and erection of 8 dwellings and associated landscaping and vehicular access. The Old Boathouse Mill Lane Taplow Buckinghamshire SL6 0AA

The Hitcham and Taplow Society raises objections to this application.

The Society has been in existence for over 50 years. It has a main objective to ensure that all development within the district is of the highest standard and preserves the quality of the environment. It represents a significant proportion of the residents of Taplow.

The eight houses at the core of this application are unexceptional and we do not raise any specific concerns. However we contend that there is a major omission from the application that requires its rejection in its present form.

The section of Mill Lane bordering the Thames is a major facility for leisure boating, a key feature of the Thames. To date much of this amenity has been moorings operated from the site of this application. The application plan shows that there is to be no provision for access to these moorings other than on foot and no provision for even temporary parking for owners bringing supplies and equipment to their boats. There is no space provision for any administration support. **Given the importance of this leisure boating facility to the preservation of public amenity on the Thames, this omission is unacceptable and the application must be rejected in its absence.**

There are two other sites on Mill Lane that are concerned with support of boating. One is the immediately adjacent site owned by Berkeley Homes with outline planning permission for a “boatyard and chandlery”, the other is Marlow Boat Services adjacent to the Maidenhead Bridge, a site owned by SBDC. To date Berkeley Homes have been silent on plans for the boatyard. Mysteriously, their latest Design and Access document shows the chandlery described as a “boathouse”.

The main development planning approvals were guided by a Supplementary Planning Document prepared by SBDC which laid out the principles and aspirations for the redevelopment of the site. It has been disappointing that all subsequent applications relating to this development area have been dealt with piecemeal, despite representations by local interests. This has resulted in growth in the approved number of dwellings, significant expected traffic growths and a growth of parking spaces by some 80% (e.g. see PL/18/4641/FA), turning the riverside into a car park. If SBDC continues to deal piecemeal with applications on Mill Lane it is likely to fail in its clear duty to maintain public amenity. The SPD contains the following statements:

- (3.4.18) Saved Local Plan Policy L4 (River Thames Setting) must also be considered. This states that the loss of features associated with the **special character**, landscape or **amenity** of the river setting will generally be resisted
- (3.4.20) “development will only be permitted where its scale, layout, siting, height, design, external materials and use are compatible with the **character and amenities of the site itself**, and adjoining development and the locality in general”

We accept that technically, the site that is the subject of this application was not part of the site considered for redevelopment but the ambitions and direction of the SPD should still be a major factor in assessing this application for a site embedded within the redevelopment area.

We regard it as essential that SBDC takes a clear view as to how it will preserve boating amenities and activities on this stretch of the Thames and protect it from commercial depredation. Owning one of the sites and having planning control over the other two gives SBDC a great opportunity to do this.

We urge SBDC to reject this application as the first step to assuring the public that it will deliver on the promise of the SPD to preserve that character and amenity of this stretch of the Thames.

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c/o Littlemere, River Road, Taplow SL6 0BB