

**Runnymede Borough Council**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 17th September 2008 at 7.30pm**

**A D D E N D U M**

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

1. Page 1

**Tasis England, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe - RU.07/1153, RU.07/1165, RU.07/1176, RU.08/0689, RU.08/0761, RU.08/0762, RU.06/0789**

The following position statement relating to the above Tasis applications has been received from Thorpe Residents' Action Group:-

**BACKGROUND**

The Group was formed as a result of the planning application (RU.07.1153) submitted to Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) in October 2007 by Tasis. The application was to be presented to RBC Planning Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008 and this has been deferred until the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

More than 250 residents have signed a petition opposing the application and over 50 have attended meetings to increase their understanding of the proposals and produce a coherent response. A meeting was held with Tasis on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008, where they explained the proposed application in more detail and also the rationale behind it.

**IMPORTANCE OF THORPE AS AN HISTORIC VILLAGE**

RBC has stated in their "Local Plan 2001" that Thorpe is a village where:

*"The Council wishes to exercise tight control over development in this settlement. Thorpe is of Borough-wide importance as an historic village where environmental and historical characteristics are of fundamental importance. Its attractive core is designated as a conservation area and includes several fine old buildings, but its character and setting have been eroded in recent years by unsympathetic modern housing development, by the proximity of the M25 and M3 motorways, and mineral workings. The Council wishes to **conserve** and **enhance** the substantial remaining character."*

**OBJECTIONS TO TASIS' PROPOSALS**

As of 5<sup>th</sup> September the residents who have attended the Thorpe Residents' Action Group meetings have the following objections to the proposals:

**1. THE CONTINUED EXPANSION OF TASIS INTO THE VILLAGE**

Tasis has grown in terms of numbers of pupils and its footprint on the village. The student population has increased from 500+ to 650 to 725 (actually 750+) and it is now proposed to grow further to 800. The teaching staff has also increased in size not only because of the numbers of pupils but the additional academic qualifications being offered such as the International Baccalaureate (IB). This continued growth has led Tasis to purchasing family homes in the village and converting them into flats (Pippins, Rydal and Anners) also building new flats behind St. Mary's Church (Vicarage Mews) in order to accommodate teaching staff. In addition the White House has been converted into student and staff accommodation.

TASIS proposes that both the White House and Renalds Herne are incorporated into its campus. The number of entrances into the campus is to be increased. The increase in size has led to increasing traffic problems in Coldharbour Lane, problems with parking when events are held that include parents which will be further compounded by the reduction in the number of car park spaces by 31.

There is no guarantee that this is the upper limit of TASIS expansion and their proposal states that whilst the proposed housing will achieve their target of housing 50% of teaching staff they "reserve the right to re-evaluate the situation should circumstances change". We want TASIS to remain part of the village of Thorpe but not have Thorpe become a college campus.

**TRAG Proposal:**

RBC restricts the size of TASIS to the current 725 and enforces the current agreement with RBC. In addition the RBC "Local Plan 2001" states that a review of conservation areas in Runnymede is underway on a rolling basis, we would strongly suggest that a planning application of this magnitude is not approved until the review of Thorpe is completed thereby giving residents an opportunity to shape the future of their village.

RBC Comment

*The main village of Thorpe comprises approximately 420 dwellings. TASIS has acquired 5 outside the campus (Pippins, Rydal, Anners, Renalds Herne and White Cottage). The County Highway Authority does not object to the proposals in terms of highway safety nor capacity issues. Whilst a review of conservation areas is an aspiration, it is not currently underway and a delay in determining current planning applications is unreasonable.*

**2. RENALDS HERNE AND PROPOSED VISITORS' ENTRANCE**

Renalds Herne was until its acquisition by TASIS a private family dwelling set within its own grounds. The property has subsequently been used to house students and teaching staff. The proposal is to incorporate this building into the TASIS campus and provide an entrance (only) to the school for visitors. This change of setting for a Grade II listed building must be prevented. Once integrated Renalds Herne ceases to be a single residential property. Coldharbour Lane, together with Renalds Herne, is in the core of the Village and with the proposed changes to the White House this will extend the campus further along Coldharbour Lane. TASIS already has a substantial entrance in the Lane which they choose not to use. Many residents also believe that it will be impossible to restrict the use of this new entrance to just visitors

**TRAG Proposal:**

Renalds Herne is used for residential accommodation and remains within its current setting. TASIS review the options for using the current entrance in Coldharbour Lane for visitors, an entrance which is not on a bend and is further away from Church Approach. Or they continue to use Ten Acre Lane.

RBC Comment

*Renalds Herne is already used by TASIS and the proposed use does not require planning permission. In historic building terms, it is being re-integrated into the wider estate as it was many years ago. Ten Acre Lane remains as the main access.*

### 3. *WHITE HOUSE*

The proposal is that that the White House is incorporated into the campus. This will as previously stated extend the TASIS campus along Coldharbour Lane, thereby reducing the residential part of the village further.

#### **TRAG Proposal:**

The White House should remain distinct and separate from the rest of the campus so that in the future it could still be used as residential accommodation separate from the TASIS Campus.

#### RBC Comment

*A pedestrian link only to the campus is proposed. There is nothing preventing this property being used as separate residential property in the future.*

### 4. *ANNERS*

Anners is a Grade II listed building which has recently been converted into flats and suffered from an unsympathetic development through the building of a new extension. (See Appendix 1). The proposal is to build two blocks containing six flats thereby increasing the accommodation on Anners to 15 flats. This development will also overlook an Infant/Junior school playing field and compromise the view of Anners from the North and West. It also destroys one of the last remaining historic plots in the village which traditionally was large houses set in their own grounds. (Appendix 3) The second issue is the lack of parking (4 spaces are planned for an additional 6 flats/11 bedrooms). There is also concern that the current entrance to Anners is unsuitable from a safety perspective for such a large number of properties and people (there will be 23 bedrooms on this site). It should be noted that Anners Close had specific requirements placed on its development regarding the size and placement of the entrance. (See Appendix 2)

#### **TRAG Proposal:**

Anners development does not proceed as planned and TASIS look to purchase existing properties in the village or in adjacent areas rather than building new ones.

#### RBC Comment

*The 'two blocks' are two, two-storey buildings. There are trees and screening along the boundary with the school and the development no more overlooks the playing field than existing houses in Anners Close. Detailed design can minimise any privacy issues. The County Highway Authority is content with the proposals. In point 1 above, TRAG objects to TASIS purchasing properties in the village, now it is being recommended.*

### 5. *CHURCH APPROACH*

This is an unadopted road which is the responsibility of the residents that "front" onto Church Approach. Residents have a number of concerns regarding the practicality of the design when issues such as parking for church services, access for weddings and funerals and the disabled are considered. More detail on the proposed design is needed.

#### **TRAG Proposal:**

The proposed development is reviewed in detail with local residents so that issues mentioned previously are addressed. Perhaps as this road provides access to the parish church it should become adopted by RBC and not left to the residents of Church Approach to decide on its development and use.

#### RBC Comment

*It is agreed that no works should be undertaken at Church Approach without consultation and local agreement.*

Information Submitted in Support of Application from Applicant's Agents

1. Changes in Floor Area on the Original Campus resulting from Outline Permission RU.99/1249 (original masterplan) and other planning permissions

a) Existing and permitted floor area at September 2001	15,646 sq.m
b) Add floor area built under outline permission RU.99/1249 at August 2007	1,917 sq.m
c) Add floor area outstanding under outline permission RU.99/1249 at August 2007	2,435 sq.m
d) Add additional floor area under other permissions (Security Gatehouse/ Vicarage Mews)	153 sq.m
e) Minus floor area to be removed or permissions revoked under RU.99/1249	- 1,211 sq.m
<b>Total floor area on Campus resulting from outline permission RU.99/1249 and others</b>	<b>18,940 sq.m</b>
<b>Total increase in floor area on Campus resulting from outline permission RU.99/1249 and others</b>	<b>3,294 sq.m</b>
<b>Percentage increase in floor area resulting from outline permission RU.99/1249 and others</b>	<b>21 per cent</b>

2. Changes in Floor Area on the Original Campus resulting from current outline application (revised masterplan)

a) Total floor area resulting from original permission RU.99/1249 and others	18,940 sq.m
b) Add increase in floor area resulting from building projects new to the revised masterplan (Upper School and Business Centre)	693 sq.m
c) Add proposed increases in floor areas of building projects previously approved under outline permission RU.99/1249 but not implemented (Coach House Annex and Science/Language Centre)	191 sq.m
d) Minus proposed reductions in floor area of building projects previously approved under outline permission RU.99/1249 but no longer proposed (Building E2)	- 30 sq.m
e) Minus demolitions not previously identified under outline permission RU.99/1249	- 13 sq.m
<b>Total floor area on Campus resulting from Revised Masterplan</b>	<b>19,781 sq.m</b>
<b>Increase in floor area on Campus resulting from changes to the Masterplan</b>	<b>841 sq.m</b>
<b>Percentage increase in floor area on Campus resulting from changes to the Masterplan</b>	<b>4.5 per cent</b>

3. Changes in Floor Area off Campus resulting from current application (revised masterplan)

a) Original floor area of acquired properties	1,364 sq.m
b) Add increase in floor area resulting from implementation of planning permissions up to August 2007 (extension to Anners House)	70 sq.m
c) Total floor area off Campus at August 2007	1,434 sq.m
d) Add increases in floor area proposed as part of revised masterplan	540 sq.m
<b>Total floor area off Campus resulting from revised masterplan</b>	<b>1,974 sq.m</b>
<b>Increase in floor area off Campus resulting from revised masterplan</b>	<b>540 sq.m</b>
<b>Percentage increase in floor area off Campus resulting from revised masterplan</b>	<b>37 per cent</b>

Pupils and Staff Numbers

It is important to the consideration of the revised masterplan that the additional development for which outline permission is being sought will not itself result in any increases in staff or pupil numbers. The additional floorspace is required to replace existing facilities as well as address the demand for additional classrooms/academic facilities resulting from the introduction of the International Baccalaureate programme. Furthermore, the requirement for additional teaching staff (increased from 117 to 129) is also a result of the programme and the desire to maintain pupil/teacher ratios. Nevertheless, the outline application is seen as an opportunity for TASIS to propose a small increase in pupils from 725 to 800 (10 per cent) in order to secure its long term viability. This increase will result entirely from the enrolment of additional day pupils since there are no plans to increase the number of boarding pupils. The effects of the proposed increase on traffic within the Village is assessed in the submitted Transport Statement.

**Tasis England, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe - RU.07/1153 and RU.07/1165**

7 further letters of objection have been received from 6 different people, including one from the Thorpe Ward Residents' Association on the following grounds:

- The school currently has 750 pupils which is in excess of the numbers allowed by the Legal Agreement. The proposed increase in the number of pupils to 800 will exacerbate the daily traffic jams which occur when pupils are dropped off and picked up from school.
- Deplore the proposal to turn Renald's Herne into offices and its entrance to become the main access into the Campus from Coldharbour Lane. Nearby is an existing entrance to the Campus which is on a straight section of the road. This entrance will provide more hazards for motorists and pedestrians.
- There are no purpose built blocks of flats within the village. The proposed blocks of flats at the rear of Anners and behind the Church would be out of character.

- The entrance into Anners is very narrow and is unsuitable for the proposed number of residents. The existing entrance is already in a dangerous place with a busy bus stop approximately 3 metres from it. When buses stop they obscure the vision of oncoming traffic resulting in a serious issue regarding the safety of pedestrians and vehicles using Anners.
- Insufficient parking for the proposed development at Anners.
- TAsIS should comply with the same requirements made to Berkeley Homes in 1991 when 3 houses were erected on part of the Anners House site (now known as Anners Close). The width of this drive was required to start at 4.8 metres and widen to 5.5 metres on the curve of the drive.
- The preliminary proposed alterations to Church Approach would be a retrograde step, out of character with the Church and which will cause more problems than they solve, and could result in difficulties for people who want to attend the Church or meet in the meeting room.
- TAsIS are gradually changing the character of the Village.

The Thorpe Ward Residents' Association request that some method of control be adopted to limit and monitor incoming vehicles; perhaps by ensuring the existing metal gates remain closed until a visitor announces their presence.

A letter has been received from the Reverend Canon, Dr Michael Hereward Rothwell, advising that there appears to be some misconception regarding the proposed alterations to Church Approach. The pressure to achieve this scheme originated with the Church some 20 years ago who were concerned about the indiscriminate and often inconsiderate use of Church Approach as a car park and cab rank for TAsIS, the Village Hall, Thorpe Park and the Church, which was becoming a significant danger to pedestrians seeking access to the Church, School or Vicarage and that the grey and patched tarmac and removal of the central lamp stand had destroyed the 18th Century aspect of the Approach. The resurfacing was wholly unsympathetic with the significant historic streetscape of Church Approach and without any designated footway has created the atmosphere of a public unrestricted car park. The School and the Church have subsequently taken steps to address the parking issues; the School has greatly enlarged its parking provision and provides Sunday and major event parking for the Church and the front garden of the Vicarage has been remodelled to provide adequate parking for normal weekday Church usage. Both the School and the Church have made it clear to their constituents that parking in Church Approach is not acceptable except for exceptional circumstances. However the dangers to pedestrians have persisted and worsened. Church Approach is an unadopted road to which only the School and Church have a frontage and therefore it is the responsibility of the School and Church. Church Approach should provide safe access to the Church, School and Vicarage for vehicles and pedestrians and enhance the historic heart of the Village.

#### **Tasis England, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe - RU.07/1176**

2 further letters of objection received on the grounds that the entrance to Renalds Herne should not be used as an access for visitors as the entrance is on a blind spot.

**Tasis England, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe - RU.08/0761**

2 further letters have been received. 1 resident has no objections subject to the current permitted use continuing. 1 objection on the grounds that this should remain part of the Green Belt and should not be given permanent permission. The applicant has persistently breached conditions.

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**2. Page 68 Land at Wick Road/London Road, Englefield Green - RU.08/0628**

**Consultations:**

**Para 4.1:** A further letter has been received from a neighbour who has already objected. This letter requests that her written objections are read out if there is no one to speak publicly. These concerns are however already summarised in the report.

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**3. Page 112 100-106 Church Road, Addlestone – RU.08/0667**

**Consultations:**

**Para 4.2:** The County Highway Authority raise no objection subject to conditions.

**Planning Considerations:**

Affordable Housing

This scheme proposing 53 residential units could be eligible for affordable housing provision. The Council's Interim Advice Note on Affordable Housing requires an affordable housing provision from sheltered or extra care housing. However, in this case given the level of dementia care proposed (39 out of 53 units) the layout of the individual units (which only have a bedroom and bathroom) and the high degree of communal facilities provided, this use is more appropriately classed as a nursing home. The proposed residential units are not self-contained and do not include either a kitchen or lounge. The layout could not easily be adapted to sheltered or extra care housing. It is therefore considered that a nursing home falls outside the remit of the Interim Advice Note on Affordable Housing and no affordable housing provision is required with this specific proposal.

**Recommendation:** Amend the first reason for refusal to read :-

The proposed development, by reason of the scale, height, width, depth, mass, bulk, forward projection, proximity to common boundaries, layout and site coverage of buildings with contrived car parking and servicing arrangements would be a prominent and incongruous form of development...

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**Consultations:**

**Para 4.1:** Add to end of paragraph :-

A further letter has been received from a neighbour raising concerns over the visual .impact of the development and attaching a newspaper report showing a Huf Haus built in a suburban street in Kingston Vale.

**Recommendation:**

**Condition 15:** Add a drawing number for condition to read as follows :-

“The boundary enclosure details shown on drawing numbers D1494.L.200 and TF/TPP/D525 Rev A shall be erected and hedges planted prior to the occupation of the new dwellings hereby permitted...”

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