

Mr Matthew Broome  
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23 October 2014

By email

14/01407/CR4D

Dear Mr Broome

### **Objection – Application Reference 14/01407/CR4D**

This letter of objection is submitted on behalf of Tonbridge School and The Skinners' Company in respect of planning application reference 14/01407/CR4D for the construction of 14 residential dwellings on land to the south and south east of 15 Shipbourne Road.

In terms of context, the land shown at C and bounded in yellow on plan A at Appendix 1 is owned by The Skinners' Company and held on a lease by Tonbridge School. The land subject to the application is marked at B, whilst the land at D is also in the ownership of The Skinners' Company (on lease to the School). The Skinners' Company is a charitable organisation with a modus operandi of fostering education and training, whilst Tonbridge School is one of the several educational institutions supported by the Company. The land shown at C and D is, locally, viewed as being owned by the Tonbridge School; hence, for ease of reference in this matter, we refer to the School as "owners".

An initial objection to the planning application was lodged by the Bursar of Tonbridge School on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014. This outlined concerns in relation to the impact of development on preventing access to neighbouring land owned by the School, and the need for the proposed layout to respond to this, ensuing that a right of access is maintained. This letter of objection provides clarity on this issue and responds to the Council's assessment as set out in the Planning Committee Report (Agenda Item 7).

The land at C lies immediately to the north of the application site, separated by a small strip of scrubland held under a separate ownership and shaded in blue on the plan at Appendix 2. The land at C is largely unused and accessed by footpaths to the east and west, though vehicular access is restricted. The above application therefore represents the last opportunity to provide for appropriate access to the land. Whilst the School and The Skinners' Company do not currently have plans to develop the land, they have

identified it as a potential future opportunity, either for uses ancillary to the School's operation or indeed residential development, in common with the application currently before the Council. The owner of the blue land has indicated their willingness to discuss granting appropriate access rights over this land.

We have seen a copy of Area 1 Planning Committee Report prepared at the request of Cllr Branson in response to local interest generated by the application. Paragraph 6.16 of the Report states that the access arrangements proposed by the applicant would not interfere with the access arrangements serving the neighbouring properties or other adjoining land and that a clear delineation would be made between the existing and proposed accesses. This assessment is not accurate. No access arrangements are proposed to enable access to the land owned by the School, ultimately sterilising any development potential or operational use of the School land. On this basis it is suggested that further work is undertaken by the applicant, working with the School, to ensure that appropriate vehicular access can be provided.

Paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 of the Committee Report refer to the importance of encouraging the effective use of previously developed land (PDL), drawing on paragraph 17 of the NPPF and policy CP11 of the Core Strategy which both support development of PDL. Moreover the report identifies the broad location of the site as within the urban confines of Tonbridge and a highly sustainable location for residential development. The Committee Report's recommendation to grant consent for the proposed development is therefore contrary to both paragraph 17 of the NPPF and policy CP11 of the Core Strategy.

Development as proposed will unnecessarily sterilise a significant area of PDL, preventing its future reuse. While the application will provide 14 new homes on PDL, it will equally be preventing the reuse of neighbouring PDL. While the future use of the School's land is not yet identified, potential does exist for the site's development for new homes, on a similar scale to that proposed by the applicant. The land could therefore make a positive contribution to the Council's housing land supply in a location the Council considers to be sustainable and close to the town centre.

In light of the above context, the opportunity exists for a far more efficient use of the application site and land owned by the School. Accordingly it is suggested that determination of the planning application is deferred, or if not, refused on the grounds set out above. Deferring the planning application would present two opportunities for the Council, including:

1. Amending the site layout to enable access to the School's land and therefore reuse of PDL in a sustainable location and within the urban confines of Tonbridge; and
2. The potential for a larger, more efficient and better planned development across two sites, contributing to the Council's housing land supply.

On the basis that access arrangement is not secured to the School's land, the School maintain their objection to this planning application. In light of the approach suggested above, the School welcomes the opportunity to meet with both the Council and the applicant to establish a solution to the agreement of both parties.

Yours sincerely

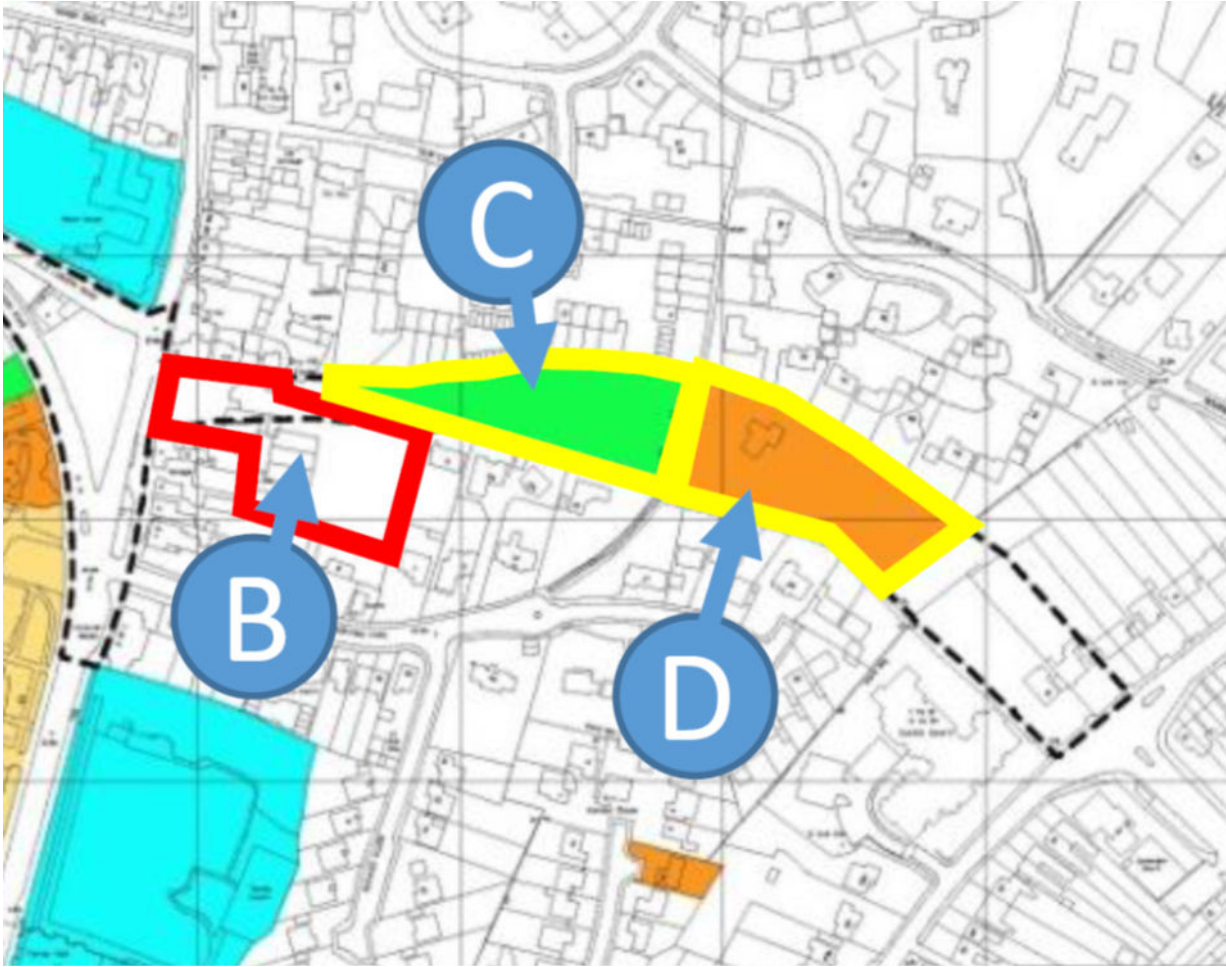


Nigel Durman  
Deloitte LLP

cc. Mark Organ, Tonbridge School

cc. John Cook, The Skinners' Company

Appendix 1 – Land Ownership Plan



## Appendix 2 – Land Ownership Plan 2

