

West End Action Group (WEAG)

14 September 2017

Taylor Wimpey development at Beldam Bridge Road: 45 more houses to add to the 84 already approved

Dear WEAG supporters,

WEAG invited representatives of Taylor Wimpey (TW) to meet our Committee to discuss the timing, staging and other aspects of their plans to build 84 homes on land at Beldam Bridge road.

Land for an additional 45 homes

The meeting began with TW announcing that they had recently acquired land on which they proposed to build about 45 homes. The land is next to the area on which TW already has planning permission to build 84 homes, and TW hope to be able to treat the entire site for 129 homes as a single building project. The newly acquired area is directly to the north of the 84-home site, on land behind houses on the right-angle bend in Benner Lane. All of it is part of the 'reserve land' identified in the Local Plan for eventual development.

The intention is that car access to the new houses will be through TW's 84-house estate; there will be no vehicular access from Benner Lane, as it would have to be on the right-angle bend. However once the 45-houses site has been completed, TW will open up a pedestrian footpath from the entire TW estate onto Benner Lane at this bend, enabling those residents to reach Holy Trinity School without walking along Beldam Bridge Road.

TW will be holding a public consultation exhibition about the 45 homes in the Sports Pavilion on Wednesday 4 October, from 2pm till 8pm. After that they will submit a formal planning application to Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC), probably around the end of October. This could go before the Planning Applications Committee in February or March. It is likely that the application will be granted, given all that has happened in the last year or two.

If approved, construction work on the extended land may begin around June or July 2018. This would be soon enough for it to be encompassed into the building work on the 84-home site, thus treating all 129 homes as a single project.

Constructing the original 84 homes

Meanwhile, preparatory work will begin on the 84-home part of the site. At present the ground is covered by wild scrub and scattered birch trees; these will be cleared away in November (except certain trees along the edge of Beldam Bridge Road which form a screen). The required archaeological investigation will be carried out, digging sample trenches. Will more Iron Age remains be found? Unlikely - but not impossible, as we know from the Malthouse Farm site.

The exact design of the entrance to the site has yet to be approved. It will be located where the present boarded gateway announces the name of the estate, 'Beldam Bridge Gardens'. This is a potentially dangerous location, particularly for traffic driving south along Beldam Bridge Road which will round the blind corner and suddenly find itself on top of the estate entrance; and for vehicles leaving the estate. Nevertheless this is the location endorsed by the supine Surrey County Council, who raised no objection, and SHBC who approved it. TW's design of the entrance will attempt to minimise the effect of the blind corner by including wide visibility splays, which may involve removing a number of roadside trees and thus diminishing the screening. The 30 mph speed limit which applies to the northern stretch of Beldam Bridge Road may be pushed out beyond the TW site entrance, approaching the bridge itself.

Security fencing will be erected round the boundary of the site: 6-foot high metal fencing with tamper-proof bolts and screws, which will be replaced by permanent wooden fencing as development nears an end.

TW will brief subcontractors' drivers about the routes they should take to the site, and signage will be in place. TW expect vehicles to approach the site from all directions, even in some cases through the narrow double bends at the Chobham end of Pennypot Lane, and the equally sharp double bends on Scotts Grove Road. There will be two explicit no-go roads. One is Benner Lane: drivers to TW will be instructed not to use Benner Lane because of its congested nature – congestion already heightened by the Martin Grant construction traffic using the northern section of Benner Lane to reach the Malthouse Farm site. The other is Kings Road. Other than that, TW traffic will mingle with the construction traffic serving the Shanly Homes and Thakeham Homes sites off Kings Road. When the TW estate road bases have been put in, parking of delivery vehicles and workers' cars and vans will be on the TW site, not on public roads (though there may be rogue parkers who ignore instructions). Other instructions will require deliveries to avoid school-run times (though again some drivers may ignore that, since they can't be stopped from using public roads when it suits them).

Piling of house foundations will be required, because of the dense roots of the trees that stood on the site, and the high water table in places. The quieter auger piling is preferred, but for technical reasons this may have to be the noisy hammer piling; this aspect is currently out to tender.

The formal Construction Method Statement, which will set out more details of the arrangements for construction, has yet to be submitted to SHBC, whose approval is required. The document is expected to be posted onto SHBC's website, either at the end of October or soon after. This, and signage at the site entrance, will provide names and details of TW people, both on-site and at head office, whom residents may contact with questions or to report breaches of TW procedures/instructions by drivers or others.

A show home and marketing suite will be one of the first to be built, and sales will be open from about Spring 2018, where prospective residents will be able to buy off plan, before the houses are completed. The entire 129 house estate is expected to be finished by the end of 2019 or early 2020.

After completion of the housing, management of the green spaces will be handed over to a management company (yet to be appointed), funded by contributions from householders on the site.

Up to 400 new homes in West End

The additional 45 homes from TW (if granted planning permission) will mean the total of new houses being built on estates in West End in the next two or three years will approach 400: 129 by TW, 105 by Shanly Homes, 35 by Thakeham Homes and 95 by Martin Grant. In addition the land occupied by the cane furniture business on the A322, adjoining the Thakeham site, is likely to come up for housing: it would only require 36 houses there to bring the total to 400.

400 homes means several hundred children needing school places, about 800 additional cars on our roads, about 1000 people needing medical facilities, and so on. Yet WEAG's meeting on 19 May with Surrey County Council's permanent heads of education, transport and infrastructure, and the elected Cabinet members responsible for these areas, and SHBC representatives, showed there are no immediate plans to create the infrastructure to deal with these pressures. The Councils will soon have a lot of firefighting of crises to do!

Regards

Guy Consterdine
Secretary, WEAG
contract@weag.info