



**Mr. Mark Ketley
Planning Officer
Planning Department (West Area)
Northumberland County Council
Hadrian House, Market Street
Hexham NE46 3NH**

25th July 2011

Dear Mr. Ketley,

Planning Application 11/01399/FUL. Demolition of Mill House and Erection of 7 Dwellings.

On behalf of the Ponteland Civic Society, I object to the above Application for the reasons given below.

The Flood Report attached to the Application refers mainly to records over the last decade. Ponteland has, however, been subject to serious and intermittent flooding since before records began, with the great flood of the 2nd February 1900 being particularly remembered (see appended photograph).

Within the last decade important flood-prevention measures have been undertaken to protect Main Street, Callerton Lane and Bell Villas. Within the past year we have also seen further raising of the earth-barriers between Ponteland Park and Riverside, together with an increased height of the ramp at the entrance to Waitrose's car park. The evident and deliberate effect of these measures will be to protect Ponteland village at the expense of Ponteland Park and the Waitrose car park.

The sharp curve of the river immediately upstream of the proposed site could also lead to erosion problems close to the Type A1 houses (plots 01, 02, & 03) at periods of increased river flow. This could give rise to high costs to the Council in attempting to provide protection.

The above factors have not been adequately considered in the Flooding Report, and we take the view that the risk of flooding to the proposed dwellings will be much greater than has been suggested. We have also been informed by the Ponteland Scout Group that insurance of their headquarters against flooding is unavailable – a significant fact of which due note should be taken.

Ponteland Park is considered particularly valuable as a recreational area by all the residents. Whilst it is virtually surrounded by housing, very little of this is visible from within the Park and it therefore gives the impression of an oasis of rural tranquillity. Regardless of the architectural merit of the proposed houses however, their close juxtaposition combined with their height – types A1 and C are three-storey dwellings and types B and D/E are four-storey – will result in an unacceptable degree of dominance of the western end of the Park and destroy the effect described.

It is presumed that surface water drainage will go into the river, but the proposed arrangements for the disposal of foul-water sewage have not been indicated, nor have any arrangements to avoid contamination in the event of flooding.

The site plan would appear to show the presence of boundary fences between the houses of the A1 type. The space between these dwellings should, in our view, be adequate for the provision of natural hedge boundaries, which should be mandatory.

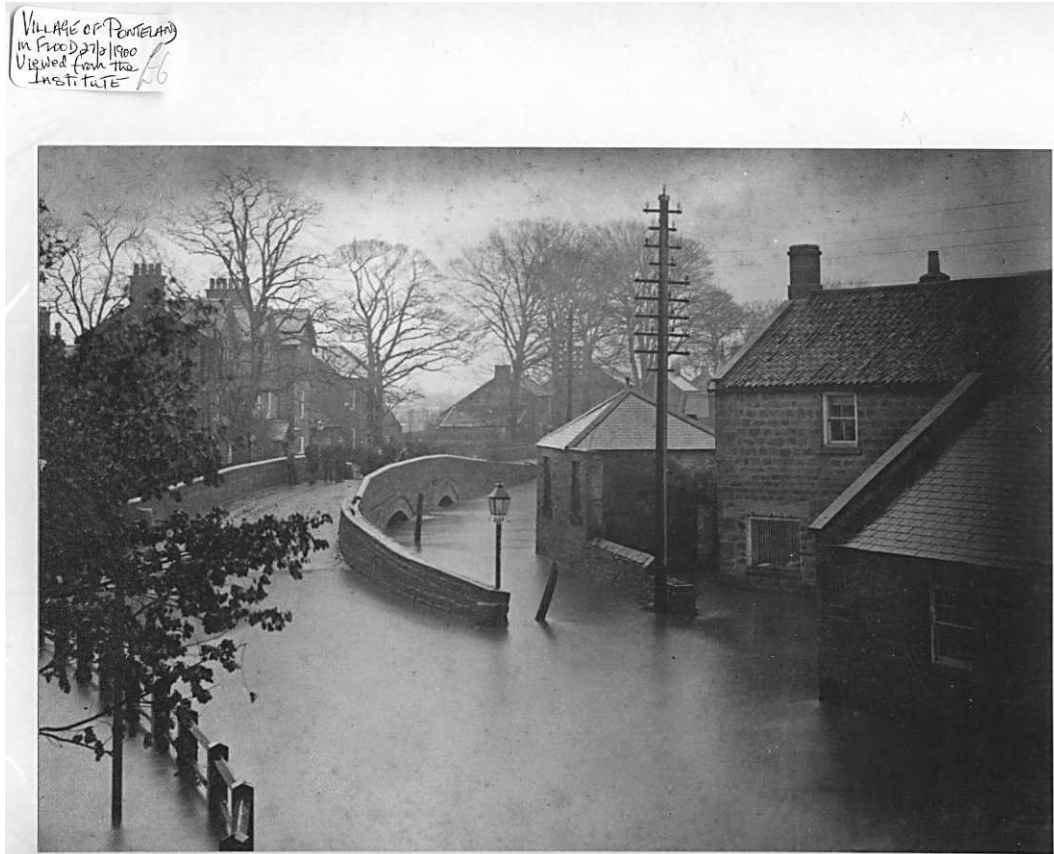
Whilst the existing right of way into the Park is to be retained, the removal of the former Galliford Try parking area will result in an unacceptable loss of manoeuvring space. Traditional events which take place in the Park – typified by the *Party in the Park* in June, requires free passage for a number of large vehicles such as Fire Appliances, etc., as well as numbers of cars.

No adequate recognition appears to have been given of the historic importance to Ponteland of the mill site. Demolition of the existing Mill House and development of the site should only be carried out in conjunction with a developer-funded archaeological survey.

Yours truly,

Philip Ham.

Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society.





Mr. Mark Ketley
Planning Officer
Planning Department (West Area)
Northumberland County Council
Hadrian House, Market Street
Hexham NE46 3NH

26th July 2011

Dear Mr. Ketley,

Planning Application 11/01399/FUL. Demolition of Mill House and Erection of 7 Dwellings.

Further to my letter of the 25th July 2011 on behalf of the Ponteland Civic Society, I wish to add a further comment relating to the above Application.

We understand from the *Friends of Ponteland Park* that, in addition to an infestation of Himalayan Balsam, there are also some sites in the western area of the Park where Japanese Knotweed exists. It is reported that some of these may not be far from the location of the proposed housing development.

We also understand that the County Council has been undertaking a programme of eradication of the Knotweed in recent years but that the infestations are far from being eradicated.

Whilst we appreciate that the presence of Japanese Knotweed is not a valid objection in planning terms, we feel the Applicant should be made aware of the presence of the infestation locally in order that, should he be successful, he can make provision to undertake all necessary eradication measures.

We would point out that, while the eradication measures are being carried out there could be serious restrictions to Park access from the retained western right of way.

Yours truly,

Philip Ham.
Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society.