

Application for Determination

Parish: Irstead

Reference: BA/2013/0319/FUL **Target Date:** 11 December 2013

Location: South bank of River Ant, downstream from Irstead Staithe, Irstead

Proposal: Installation of 24 metres of erosion protection

Applicant: Broads Authority

Reason for referral: Broads Authority application

Recommendation: Approve with conditions

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Planning Committee meeting on 6 December 2013, members considered a report on the above proposal (attached as Appendix A). A number of concerns were raised and it was resolved to defer a decision to enable additional information to be supplied (and to also allow the matter to be considered at Navigation Committee on 12 December 2013).
- 1.2 This report seeks to respond to the points of concern raised by members, notably in relation to:
- Current use of the area (is it an informal mooring area?)
 - The reason for proposed technique / what alternative solutions were considered?
 - What will be the appearance of the completed erosion protection (how does this compare to recent works on opposite bank)?
 - How will reed growth be secured given proximity of trees?

2 Additional Supporting Detail

- 2.1 The applicant has indicated that the area is not used as an informal mooring and the landowner discourages such mooring. In addition in the eroded pockets, the water depths are fairly limited (estimated as about 0.5 metres) and therefore would not be suitable for many boats (and tree roots in the vicinity may also discourage informal / casual mooring).
- 2.2 The application proposal has been formulated to deliver a soft engineering solution, rather than a hard piled edge. The proposed erosion protection

technique using a 'nicospan' mesh has been used for bank repair in a number of locations (including locally in the River Wensum) but has not been used in the Broads area. The 'nicospan' is a fine mesh, black in colour that allows vegetation to grow through the mesh to secure a more natural appearance. The mesh will be held in place by timber poles, most of which will be at or below bank level.

- 2.3 In devising the scheme, the 'nicospan' technique is favoured because other soft engineering solutions (such as staked hazel faggots) often raises maintenance issues and do not consistently deliver a successful long term solution. It is considered that the proposed 'nicospan' and pole technique has potential to be used widely in the Broads to deliver a more robust, cost effective soft erosion protection and this site will provide a useful 'test' for this approach in the Broads area.
- 2.4 On the north bank of the River Ant, similar pockets of erosion have been tackled with new protection installed. The technique used differ from the proposed works in this application as wooden planks were used which project above water level and provide a less natural appearance (photographs will be displayed at the meeting).
- 2.5 The applicant has highlighted that three trees are located close to the eroded pockets on the application site. To ensure that these trees will not lead to unacceptable shading (of areas where new reed growth is to be promoted on dredged infill - behind the new edge), two of the trees are to be 'pollarded'. In addition, overhanging limbs / branches (and associated scrub) will be removed to limit shading. The 'reed' mix to be used for planting has been selected due to its robust, deep rooted nature, and its 'shade friendly' qualities. The applicant has highlighted that the landowner will maintain vegetation close by to limit shade and the Broads Authority will be in control of aftercare and maintenance of the application site works.

3 Consultations

- 3.1 No updates.

4 Representations

- 4.1 The Navigation Committee's views will be reported verbally to the meeting.

5 Assessment

- 5.1 It is considered that the additional information supplied addresses the concerns expressed by members.
- 5.2 The application site is not an area which is encouraged or used as informal mooring (and mooring is available close by at Irstead Staithe; the Broads 24 hour mooring some 300 metres to the north west).
- 5.3 As a new technique to the Broads, it could be viewed as a test area.

However given its extensive use elsewhere, the technique proposed in the application is not anticipated to raise any issues for boat users and subject to the success of this scheme, may have potential for wider use in the Broads area.

- 5.4 It is considered that the initial mesh appearance will not have an unacceptable impact as most will be below the water line and vegetation should quickly establish above the water and grow through the mesh. In addition, as a result of works to trees and scrub clearance, new reed / vegetation should satisfactorily establish effectively, particularly based on the robust mix of planting proposed for this area.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Based on the application details submitted (and reported to December Planning Committee) coupled with the additional information supplied, it is considered that the proposal will deliver erosion protection in an acceptable manner and will ensure no unacceptable impact on flood risk, ecological, navigation or landscape considerations subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 Based on the additional details supplied, this planning application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Standard time limit condition
- (ii) Submitted plans / details
- (iii) New edge / channel markers

- 7.2 The following informative be specified on the decision notice of the planning application:

- The applicant will need to apply for Flood Defence Consent for the proposed works, prior to commencement. This is a legal requirement for all works in, under, or over the main River Ant and for works within nine metres of the banks of the river under Sections 109 and 210 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Anglian Region Land Drainage Byelaws.
- Invasive shrimp (*dikerogammarus villosus*) and zebra mussel (*dreissena polymorpha*) are present in large numbers in Barton Broad and the River Ant. It is advised that a method statement be prepared that incorporates bio security measures and the 'check-clean-dry' guidance to ensure invasive species are not accidentally transported elsewhere / offsite with machinery, equipment and waste materials.
- Measures should be in place to prevent silt pollution of the watercourse.

Background Papers: BA/2013/0319/FUL

Author: Andy Scales
Date of report: 11 December 2013

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 - Planning Committee report 6 December 2013

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Proposal: Installation of 24 metres of erosion protection

Applicant: Broads Authority

Reason for referral: Broads Authority application

Recommendation: Approve with conditions

1 Description of Site and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is located on the south bank of the River Ant some 320 metres downstream of Irstead Staithe (see appendix 1 – Location Plan).
- 1.2 The proposal is to install erosion protection into two eroded bays along a section of riverbank. To provide erosion protection, a soft engineering solution called ‘nicospan’ is proposed to be used. This is a fine mesh material that is held in place with timber poles, and would be positioned along the line of the original bank (and would not extend into the navigable channel). The area of eroded material (a volume of 72 cubic metres) behind the ‘nicospan’ would be infilled with dredged sediment from the adjacent river. The infill area would then be planted using coir matting and native species and protected from goose grazing. As part of the works, signage would be erected to prevent mooring alongside the repaired length of bank.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Ant Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Broadland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. There are no listed buildings or other heritage assets located close to the application site. There is no public right of way along the river close to the application site and the nearest public mooring is at Irstead Staithe.
- 1.4 The proposals have been informed by (and the planning application is accompanied by) flood risk, tree survey and protected species detail.

- 1.5 The works are proposed to be undertaken during the winter outside the bird breeding season with all material transportation taking place by water.

2 Planning History

- 2.1 None

3 Consultations

- 3.1 Irstead Parish Council – Awaited.

Broads Society – No objection.

Environment Agency – No objection - the proposed erosion protection will not adversely affect flood risk as it will restore the pre-existing situation, all the infilling will be below the normal water level, and the material will be sourced from nearby dredgings.

The applicant will need to apply for flood defence consent for the proposed works, prior to commencement. This is a legal requirement for all works in, under, or over the main river Ant and for works within nine metres of the banks.

Invasive shrimp (*Dikerogammarus villosus*) and zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) are present in large numbers in Barton Broad and the River Ant. We advise that the method statement incorporates bio security measures and the 'check-clean-dry' guidance to ensure invasive species are not accidentally transported elsewhere/offsite with machinery, equipment, waste materials, etc.

Measures should also be in place to prevent silt pollution of the watercourse.

Natural England – No objection and no conditions requested. Natural England is satisfied that the proposed development being carried out in strict accordance with the details of the application, as submitted, will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been notified. We therefore advise your authority that the SSSI designation does not represent a constraint in determining this application.

NCC HES – Based on currently available information the proposal does not have any implications for the historic environment and we would not make any recommendations for archaeological work.

NSBA – Awaited.

4 Representations

- 4.1 None received. Members should note that, given the size and nature of the proposal, there is no requirement to report to Navigation Committee as it will not have a significant impact on the navigation area.

5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

Core Strategy (CS) (2007)

[Core Strategy \(Adopted Sept 2007\).pdf](#)

Policy CS1 – Landscape protection and enhancement

Policy CS2 – Landscape protection and enhancement

Policy CS3 - Navigation

Policy CS4 – Creation of new resources

Development Management Plan DPD (DMP) (2011)

[DMP DPD - Adoption version.pdf](#)

Policy DP1 – Natural environment

Policy DP2 – Landscape and Trees

Policy DP29 – Development on Sites with High Probability of Flooding

- 5.2 Material Planning Consideration

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

[NPPF](#)

6 Assessment

- 6.1 The application seeks to provide erosion protection to a short length of bank, which is welcomed. The proposal will not result in an increase in flood risk or water levels as the material to infill the eroded areas will be provided from material dredged from the River Ant. Therefore the scheme is consistent with the aims of development plan policy DP29.
- 6.2 Whilst the site is within an SSSI (part of the European designated site), the ecology details that accompany the application have identified that there are no special ecological features on the application site. Furthermore Natural England have assessed the proposal and concluded that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features for which the site has been designated. The Environment Agency have identified that some invasive species are present in the area and advise that bio-security measures / guidance are followed to ensure invasive species are not accidentally transported or spread offsite with machinery, equipment and waste materials. Therefore it is considered that an informative advisory note be added to the decision notice. With this approach, the proposal will meet the tests of development plan policies CS1, CS2 and DP1.
- 6.3 The proposed works are to be undertaken in the winter months when impact

on boating will be more limited. It is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on navigation provided that temporary channel markers are placed in front of the erosion protection prior to vegetation becoming established behind the 'nicospan' edge. This will reduce the risk of boats colliding with the bank and ensure navigation water space and interests are protected, meeting the aims of development plan policy CS3.

- 6.4 The proposed approach will not require the removal of any tree; only involve limited scrub clearance, and on completion will provide an acceptable natural appearance. Goose guard measures to protect the infilled area will enable early establishment of reed and the use of timber poles coupled with hazel faggots placed behind the poles will provide a form of defence seen in many parts of the Broads area. Therefore it is considered that the appearance of the development will be acceptable, will protect the character and appearance of the area and be consistent with development plan policies CS1, CS4 and DP2.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposal will deliver erosion protection for a short section of the River Ant. It is considered that the proposed technique is acceptable and will ensure no unacceptable impact on flood risk, ecological, navigation or landscape considerations subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

8 Recommendation

- 8.1 Subject to no other substantive representation/comment being raised, this planning application be approved subject to the following conditions.

- (i) Standard time limit condition
- (ii) Submitted plans / details
- (iii) Navigation / channel / hazard markers

- 8.2 The following informative be specified on the decision notice of the planning application:

- The applicant will need to apply for Flood Defence Consent for the proposed works, prior to commencement. This is a legal requirement for all works in, under, or over the main River Ant and for works within nine metres of the banks of the river under Sections 109 and 210 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Anglian Region Land Drainage Byelaws.
- Invasive shrimp (*dikerogammarus villosus*) and zebra mussel (*dreissena polymorpha*) are present in large numbers in Barton Broad and the River Ant. It is advised that a method statement be prepared that incorporates bio security measures and the 'check-clean-dry' guidance to ensure invasive species are not accidentally transported elsewhere / offsite with machinery, equipment and waste materials.
- Measures should be in place to prevent silt pollution of the watercourse.

Background Papers: Planning File BA/2013/0319/FUL

Author: Andy Scales
Date of report: 20 November 2013

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Plan

APPENDIX 1

