

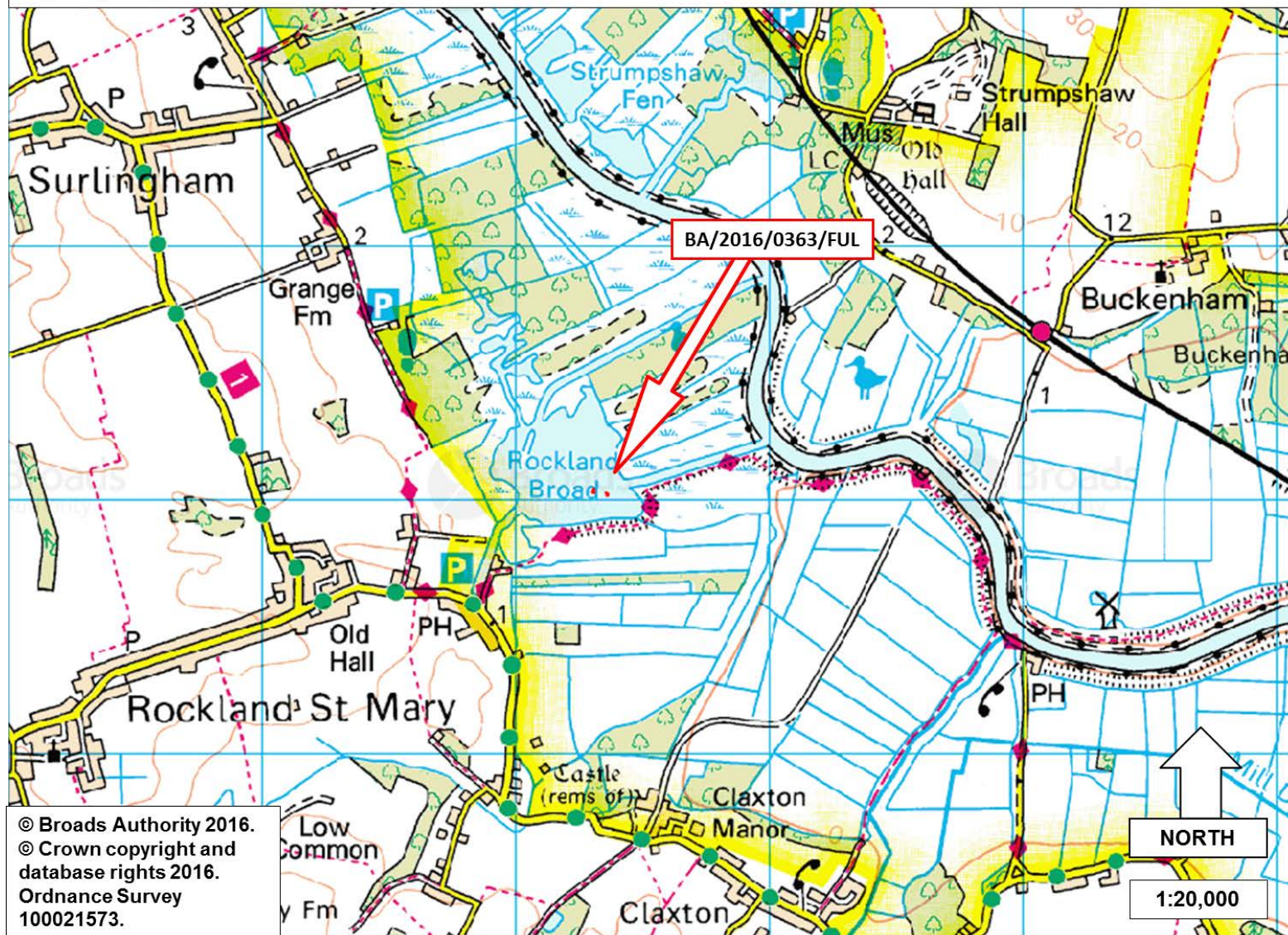
Reference:

BA/2016/0363/FUL

Location

Rockland Broad, Rockland St Mary

BA/2016/0363/FUL - Rockland Broad.



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Ordnance Survey
100021573.

NORTH
1:20,000

Application for Determination

Parish	Rockland St Mary with Hellington
Reference	BA/2016/0363/FUL Target date 28 December 2016
Location	Rockland Broad, Rockland St Mary, Norfolk
Proposal	Replacement and extension of silt curtains installed in 2011 (PP BA/2011/0002/FUL) to protect three Peat baulks. A single barrier protecting two islands will be approximately 130m in length, with another barrier protecting the third island of approximately 60m in length.
Applicant	Mr Jonathan Cook
Recommendation	Approve subject to conditions
Reason for referral to Committee	Broads Authority application

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 Rockland Broad lies to the north-east of the village of Rockland St Mary. It comprises an area of approximately 50 acres (200,000m²) and is surrounded on all sides by open marshland and tall reed beds. The Broad is connected to the River Yare by two navigable dykes, Short Dyke and Fleet Dyke; a further dyke leads south connecting the Broad with Rockland Staithe.
- 1.2 The Broad is situated within the Yare Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is part of the Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC), lies within the Broadland Ramsar site, and constitutes part of the Broadland Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 1.3 There are three small reed islands situated in the south-east corner of the Broad, remnants of the original peat workings which created the Broads. Over time these reed islands have degraded as the margins eroded. This is a natural process accelerated by wash from boats and grazing by feral geese.
- 1.4 The reed islands are regarded as a positive feature contributing to both the cultural heritage of the Broads, the aesthetics of the area and providing a valuable protected habitat for native flora and fauna. Loss of the islands would be detrimental to these interests. The erosion of the islands has a further negative effect by contributing to silt levels within the broad, resulting in problems to both navigation and the aquatic environment within the broad.

- 1.5 In 2011 planning permission was granted for interventions at two of the islands, one with a PVC silt curtain, the other with vegetated gabion baskets, with the third island remaining undefended. The purpose of this approach was an experiment to monitor the effectiveness of the protection methods, with the undefended island acting as a control by which to measure the effectiveness of the interventions.
- 1.6 The monitoring lasted for five years and the results showed that the undefended island was subject to ongoing erosion, the gabion baskets had limited success, whilst the silt curtain was successful in ensuring no further erosion of the island it protected.
- 1.7 The current proposal seeks to provide silt curtains to protect all three islands, with the two islands which were subject of the experiment to be protected by one continuous silt curtain measuring 130 metres in length, and the third island to be protected by a silt curtain measuring 60 metres in length. The island would then be surrounded by a silt accrual curtain, supported by floating tubes at the water surface and anchored to the bed of the broad with a heavy chain. The silt curtains would have a series of one-way flaps which allow turbid water to enter the calmer area between the curtain and the island edge.

2 Site History

- 2.1 In 2011 consent was granted for vegetated gabion baskets around one island and the temporary installation of a silt curtain around one island for a period of 5 years (BA/2011/0002/FUL).

3 Consultation

BA Landscape Architect - no objection subject to condition relating to curtain removal.

4 Representations

None received.

5 Policies

- 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 Policy (2007)
[Core Strategy Adopted September 2007.pdf](#)

CS1 - Landscape Protection and Enhancement
CS3 - Navigable Water Space Protection and Enhancement

CS5 - Key Buildings, Structures and Features Protection and Enhancement

Development Management DPD (2011)

DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT

DP1 - The Natural Environment

6 Assessment

- 6.1 The previous application was considered to be an innovative proposal which sought to trial methods of reversing the decline of important Broads' features. Being a trial it was monitored regularly to allow for a full appreciation of how the different approaches were working and their effectiveness.
- 6.2 The island where no protective measure was installed has been exposed to waves eroding the substrate and geese feeding on the young succulent vegetation, resulting in further loss of habitat.
- 6.3 The island protected by floating baskets had limited success. The baskets broke apart on a number of occasions and the required repairs were difficult. The plants in the baskets did not become established in all areas, which meant that the island still received some disturbances from the waves and geese could still feed on the sections of the exposed island, it therefore required frequent replanting. Due to the plants not becoming fully established the structure was fairly visible and didn't blend into its surroundings as well as intended.
- 6.4 The island protected by the PVC silt curtain has been the most effective in protecting the reed island. The structure was robust and has only required minimal repositioning. The floating curtain has protected the island from erosion preventing any further reduction of the island. The structure required the least amount of long term maintenance and visually was the least intrusive. The floating tops of the curtain have been the only visible part of the structure and are a dark blue. For the proposed replacement structure the buoyancy aids are to be grey or brown to further reduce any visual impact on the environment.
- 6.5 Part of the current proposal is to envelop the two islands which are located close together with one continuous silt curtain which, in addition to preventing their eventual loss through disturbance, over time it is hoped that the two islands would join becoming one large island having a beneficial effect for wildlife.
- 6.6 Policy CS5 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to protect key features which contribute to the Broads' character and distinctiveness and encourages enhancements which maintain the overall cultural heritage value of the features. Given the importance of the reed islands to the unique landscape of the Broads and their role as a remnant of the original peat workings that created the Broads, it is considered that there is clear policy support for a

scheme of this nature. The key issues in the determination of this application are impact on landscape, navigation and conservation.

Landscape

- 6.7 As part of the assessment of the previous application it was noted that that the proposed scheme would have only a limited and temporary negative impact on the landscape of Rockland Broad and that, through protection of a unique feature of the Broads, the success of the schemes would result in a net positive benefit to the landscape. The flotation tubes supporting the curtains do rest on the surface of the water, however these are not readily visible from a reasonable distance, and the colouring of the tubes allows them to blend with their surroundings. Having viewed the existing silt curtain in situ I am satisfied that the impact on the Broads landscape is very limited, and mindful of the fact that the floatation tubes and curtain would be in place for a maximum of five years, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the Broads landscape, particularly given the wider benefits.

Navigation

- 6.8 Whilst the whole of Rockland Broad is open to watercraft, there are two principle channels of navigation across the Broad. Two of the islands are situated close to the channel leading from Rockland Staithe to Short Dyke. The proposed works would not intrude on this principle channel of navigation and, provided the works are appropriately signed (as required by the Navigation Works License) there is no objection to the proposal on the grounds of impact on navigation. It is also noted that there is the potential for the scheme to benefit navigation in the Broad by reducing the volume of sediment in the water.
- 6.9 Due to the extension of the silt accrual curtains to encompass the island nearest to the marked channel, appropriate warning signage will be enhanced on the true left side of the channel. Guidance for wording and size of signage will be taken from the Broads Authority's Rivers Engineer, as per the Navigation Works Guidance produced by the Authority.

Conservation

- 6.10 One of the principle objectives of this project of island restoration is the net positive effect of the development on the ecology of the Broads: island stabilisation and restoration would result in less sediment in the water (and associated increased light levels and benefits to ecology) and increased island surface area means more 'safe' habitat for birds and other animals within the Broad. Nevertheless, the site is in a designated area and the impact of the proposed development on the SSSI, Ramsar site, SAC and SPA must be considered.
- 6.11 As part of the assessment of the previous application potential harm was noted to be limited to works required to provide the vegetated gabion baskets, and this element does not form part of the current proposal which is limited to provision of silt curtains only. The only potential disturbance would be from the installation of the curtains, however the whole of the Broad is open to

navigation in any case and as such the potential for disturbance arising from the installation of the structures is considered to be minor.

- 6.12 Having regard to the above, it is not considered that the proposal will result in any significant adverse impact on the ecology of the Broads, and that the scheme has the potential to provide a net benefit to conservation and ecology within the Broads area.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed installation of two silt curtains to protect three peat baulks, would have only a limited and temporary negative impact on the landscape and offers the potential for significant landscape improvements through the protection of features which are distinctive to and characteristic of the Broads. It is further considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impact on navigation and protected habitats or species. Consequently the application is considered to be acceptable with regard to Policies CS1, CS3, and CS5 of the Core Strategy, and Policy DP1 of the Development Plan Document.

8 Recommendation

- 8.1 Approve, subject to conditions:
- (i) Standard time limit
 - (ii) In accordance with approved plans and supporting statement
 - (iii) Condition requiring the date of the installation of the silt curtain to be confirmed in writing to the Broads Authority and for the curtain to be removed within 5 years of this date
 - (iv) The approved signage shall be installed in accordance with the submitted details and retained for the life of the development

9 Reason for recommendation

- 9.1 The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CS1, CS3, and CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007), Policy DP1 of the Development Management Plan Document (2011), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Background papers: Application File BA/2016/0363/FUL

Author: Nigel Catherall
Date of Report: 23 November 2016

List of Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Plans

