

**Application referred to Broads Authority for Consultation – to be determined
by Norwich City Council**

Parish	Norwich City
Reference	BA/2012/0030/NEIGHB Target date 2 March 2012
Location	The Riverside Site, Kerrison Road, Norwich
Proposal	Outline application for proposed redevelopment of vacant riverside site to provide 208 flats, 140 parking spaces and 190m ² of commercial office space (B1a Use Class) with associated external works including the provision of a Riverside Walk. Detailed approval of reserved matters details relating to access, layout and scale.
Applicant	Broadland Housing Association Limited
Recommendation	Comments are endorsed
Reason for referral to Committee	Major development

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The site covers approximately 1.03ha and forms part of the area of urban land known as the 'Carrow Quarter'. The site is bounded by Kerrison Road to the north, Hardy Road to the east and Koblenz Avenue to the west. The River Wensum and the Broads Authority's Executive Area boundary adjoins the southern boundary of the site. The red line site boundary has been drawn to exclude the river bank.
- 1.2 Outline planning consent for the residential development of this site was previously granted in 2005 as part of a masterplan application for the Norwich City Football Club and adjoining Laurence Scott Electromotors land. This site currently benefits from an extant planning permission for the temporary use of the site as a car park in association with the redevelopment of adjoining land at Norwich City Football Club. However this outline application is a new application made on land which is now within the exclusive ownership of Broadland Housing Association.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks outline planning consent for a residential led mixed use development. The development will comprise 208 one and two bed flats in

five main blocks with 190m² of commercial space. The residential units will be constructed above a 'podium' slab level and 140 parking spaces will be provided underneath at existing ground level. The car parking is to be accessed directly off Kerrison Road. The buildings will range in height between a minimum of approximately 19m up to a maximum height of approximately 32.5m (four to eight storeys). A 9m wide strip of land will be provided between the development and the River Wensum to enable the continuation of the 3.75m wide Riverside Walk along the southern boundary of the site.

- 1.4 The application states that the podium level will be used to create communal amenity space and will be linked to the Riverside Walk via two sets of stairs. Seating terraces and areas of informal seating will be created along the length of the site to add interest to the river bank and to encourage its use.

2 Assessment

- 2.1 The Broads Authority was involved in various pre-application discussions with Broadland Housing Association and Norwich City Council prior to the formal submission of this planning application. It is pleasing to note that a number of the comments that were made at that time regarding the scale and design of the proposed buildings and their relationship to the river frontage and the Riverside Walk have been taken into account to some extent in this planning application.
- 2.2 The overall scale of the buildings, varying between four and eight storeys in height is considered to be appropriate for the site's location. The development is at its maximum height in the north eastern corner of the site and at the eastern end of the site, where it is closest to the existing high rise residential developments in the area. The heights of the proposed buildings then vary up and down across the site before reaching the lowest level at the western end of the site. This variation in height across the site creates visual interest and helps to break up the mass of the development.
- 2.3 The accommodation is provided within five buildings which are arranged around the north, eastern and western edges of each of the two communal amenity areas to be created at podium level, with the southern edge of these amenity areas being open to the river. Only three of the five buildings are positioned close to the river, with the remaining two buildings being situated adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. The plot to footprint ratio is considered to be acceptable and ensures that the site does not appear to be overdeveloped. The arrangement of the buildings around the open space and the density of the overall development create a scheme which has an open feel to it and avoids the canalisation of the river area.
- 2.4 The scheme sets the buildings 9m back from the bank of the river allowing the continuation of the Riverside Walk along the southern boundary of the site. Whilst it is welcomed that this area has been designated a 'car-free area' and identified as a pedestrian/cycleway/amenity area there is an issue with the way the interface area between the river and the plinth wall enclosing the car

park has been treated. It is acknowledged that there is a need for on-site car parking and a requirement for no habitable accommodation on the ground floor due to flood risk. However the solution to satisfactorily address these two constraints has resulted in the creation of a uniform, solid wall plane which extends above head height of anyone using the Riverside Walk. From the lower level of the river and the Riverside Walk it will be this wall which will be viewed rather than the raised courtyards created at podium level and it is therefore crucial that this wall and the amenity area created between the wall and the river is better articulated and more carefully and creatively landscaped.

- 2.5 Landscaping will be the key to creating a positive interface between the river and the development itself, with the treatment of the plinth wall being particularly important. It is suggested that the mass of the wall be broken up by introducing large 'living wall' panels along its length. It is also suggested that trees should be introduced at this level as well as at the higher podium level to help balance views of the development from the river and continue the more formally laid out riverside path which already exists upstream of this site. Rather than planting what appear to be reeds at the top of the river wall it would be more appropriate to create a grass bank in this location as reeds are rarely seen growing in the city and the false ruralisation of this site is incongruous. The replacement of the reeds with a grass bank and the planting of trees will create a slightly more formal landscaped theme more in tune with the urban location. These features together with the softening of the plinth wall will also reinforce the Riverside Walk as a pleasant urban open space. The two staircases proposed will act as links both physically and visually between the amenity spaces created at podium level and the river level below. These staircases, as well as the two amenity areas at the podium level, may require some form of safety guarding and the design of this requires consideration now as part of the overall design of this area rather than being dealt with as an afterthought.
- 2.6 It is noted that the red line site boundary has been drawn to exclude the river bank and that this outline application planning application excludes any works to the river bank. At the time of the pre-application discussions the site included the river bank and there was a lot of discussion about the potential for the river bank to be used for moorings and for a variety of water based recreational uses as part of the overall development of this site. It is extremely disappointing that the site now excludes the riverbank and that the opportunity to create additional moorings and maximise the potential recreational value of this stretch of the river as an integral part of this development has been completely ignored.
- 2.7 The disposal of surface water from the site will be via the surface water system previously installed to drain this site as part of the drainage masterplan prepared in 2006 for the whole Norwich City Football Club and Laurence Scott Electromotors site. The surface water will be discharged into the River Wensum. It is recommended that a comment be forwarded to Norwich City Council requesting that they ensure that this surface water

disposal system incorporates sufficient infiltration measures to ensure that there is no discharge of pollutants from the site into the river.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 It is concluded that there is no objection in principle to the proposed development or the detailed layout and design of the residential and commercial buildings. The application does seem to have taken into account pre-application advice given by the Broads Authority in that it moves the development back from the River and, by setting some of the blocks further back and by creating space between the buildings, ensures that there is no canalisation of the river as a result of this development. The courtyards that are created are substantial open spaces addressing the river frontage and this is welcomed.
- 3.2 However whilst the scheme does provide for the continuation of the Riverwalk and ensures that this area is protected as a footpath/cycleway/amenity area the actual treatment of the walkway and the associated area between the river and the plinth wall enclosing the car parking needs to be more articulated and carefully landscaped. It is recommended that this matter should be carefully conditioned on any planning consent that is issued by Norwich City Council and dealt with fully at the time the Reserved Matters application is made.
- 3.3 It is extremely regrettable that the river bank has been excluded from the site and that the opportunity to create additional moorings and water based recreational facilities within the City centre as an integral part of this development has been completely overlooked.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 That the above comments be agreed as the views of the Broads Authority.

List of Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Map

Background papers: Application File BA/2012/0030/NEIGHB

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APPENDIX 1

BA/2012/0030/NEIGHB - The Riverside Site, Kerrison Road, Norwich
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