

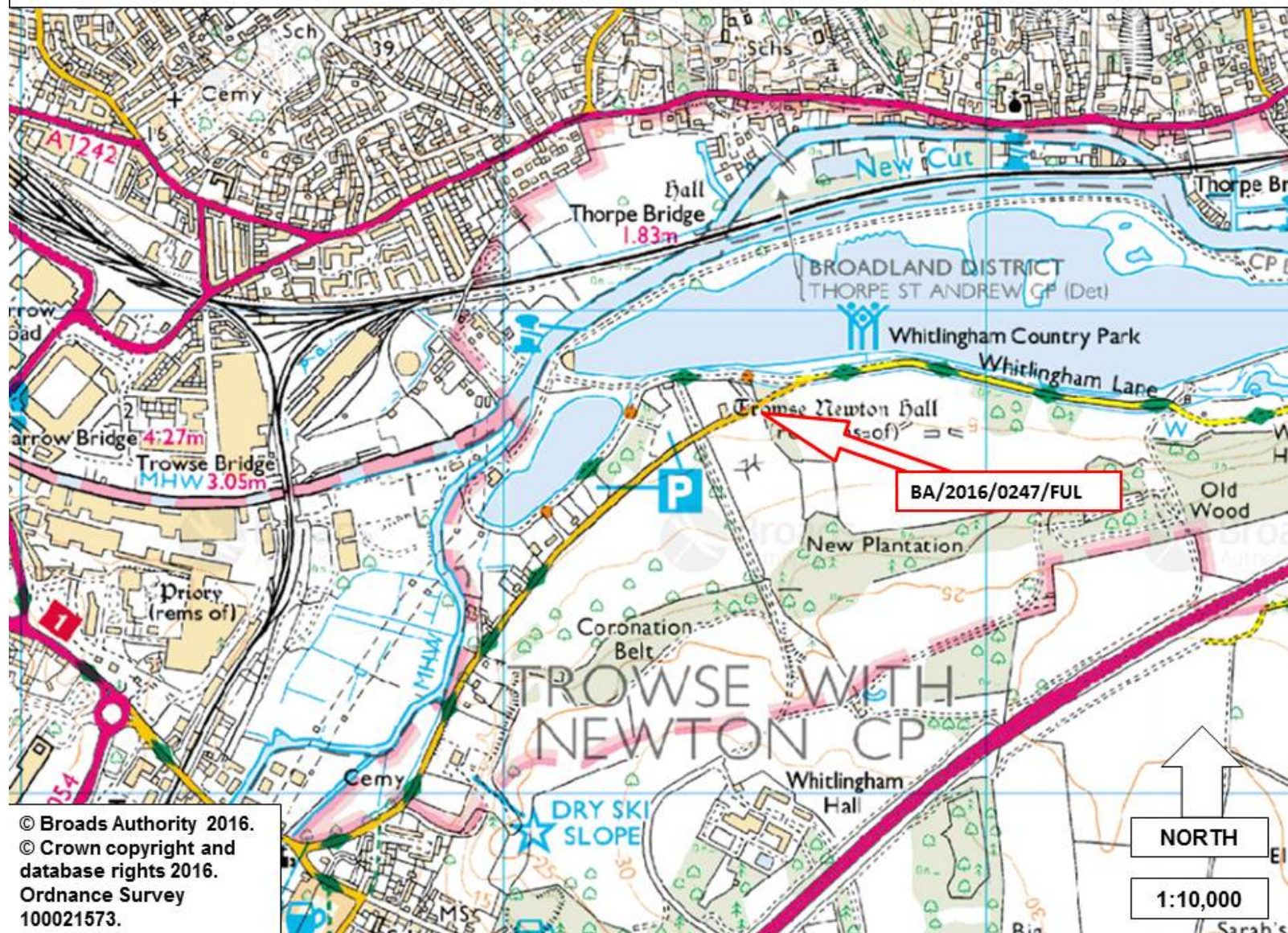
**Reference:**

BA/2016/0247/FUL

**Location**

Whitlingham Broad Visitors Centre, Whitlingham  
Lane, Trowse

BA/2016/0247/FUL - Whitlingham Broad Visitors Centre, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse, NR14 8TR



## **Application for Determination**

<b>Parish</b>	Trowse with Newton		
<b>Reference</b>	BA/2016/0247/FUL	<b>Target date</b>	22 September 2016
<b>Location</b>	Whitlingham Broad Visitors Centre, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse		
<b>Proposal</b>	Nesting tower		
<b>Applicant</b>	Ms Andrea Kelly, Broads Authority		
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve subject to conditions		
<b>Reason for referral to Committee</b>	Broads Authority application		

### **1 Description of Site and Proposals**

- 1.1 The application concerns an area within the car park of the Visitors Centre at Whitlingham Country Park, off Whitlingham Lane. The car park lies to the east of the barn which accommodates the visitor centre and is separated from the road by a mixed hedgerow. In the southeast corner of the car park stands a temporary toilet building and the southernmost area of the car park is enclosed by post and rail fencing.
- 1.2 The application proposes installing a nesting tower within the car park, in a landscaped area around two disabled parking bays. It would be approximately 20 metres north of the car park entrance and 20 metres east of the barn. The tower would consist of a metal post set in a concrete pad with a 1.1 metre square metal nesting box with a hipped roof set on the top. This would have a total height of 5.75 metres above ground level and the nesting box would be 1.16 metres wide and 1 metre high.
- 1.3 Two sides of the box would have six small openings and the other two would have four, each giving access for swifts into twenty internal nest boxes. An audio system would be installed playing recordings of swift calls to attract the birds and this would either be powered by a solar panel on the post or a mains connection trenched to the barn. Young swifts breeding for the first time follow other swifts to established sites, so the calls are necessary to attract the birds for the first time. The calls would be played at a similar volume to the natural level and the application states they would be heard around the tower and within 10-20 metres. They would be set on an automatic timer and managed remotely to play during

from 0600 to 2230 from June to mid-August. Any interpretation would be provided within the barn.

## **2 Site History**

BA/2014/0204/FUL - Temporary toilet building with ramp for disabled access for a period of up to 3 years - Approved subject to conditions (temporary three year consent)

## **3 Consultation**

Broads Society – No response.

Parish Council – Approve

District Member – No response.

Historic England - No requirement for consultation.

Gardens Trust – No response.

Responses to re-consultation on amended plan to be reported at the meeting.

## **Representations**

Whitlingham Charitable Trust - There do not appear to be any planning objections to the application, though the Trust will need to consider the proposal before implementation of the project (the next meeting is on 21 September). Meanwhile I shall be grateful if you will check the precise location of the Tower and confirm that it would not result in the loss of any existing car parking spaces.

## **4 Policies**

- 4.1 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.

[NPPF](#)  
[DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT](#)  
[Core Strategy Adopted September 2007 pdf](#)

CS1 - Landscape protection and enhancement  
CS5 - Historic and Cultural Environments  
DP1 - Natural Environment  
DP2 - Landscape and Trees  
DP4 - Design

- 4.2 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

DP5 - Historic Environment

DP28 - Amenity

- 4.3 Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014)  
WH1 - Whitlingham Country Park

- 4.4 There is no neighbourhood plan in force for the area for the application site.

## **5 Assessment**

- 5.1 The application proposes a new feature to enhance nesting opportunities for native birds in the Country Park. Site Specific Policy WH1 encourages the continued use of the Park for recreation and quiet enjoyment, supported by scenic landscape and wildlife habitat and the proposal is considered acceptable in principle with this policy and Policy DP1 which encourages development to incorporate beneficial biodiversity features.
- 5.2 There are a number of posts, signs and other functional features throughout the car park. The proposed siting would be prominent to visitors, being in front of you as you enter the car park and in front of the barn entrance. The design of the nesting box is led by its function but is not dissimilar to a traditional dove cote. The height and its position on a post clear of adjacent vegetation or other features are also determined by the requirements for the approaches to the individual nest boxes to be clear of obstructions. In design and materials, the nesting box is considered appropriate for its function and acceptable in accordance with Policy DP4.
- 5.3 The nesting box would introduce another vertical feature into the car park where there are other posts with various apparatus on and it is being investigated whether two cameras on an adjacent post could be relocated to beneath the nesting box. In accordance with criterion (b) of Policy WH11, the shared use of new development to avoid a proliferation of structures would be welcomed but given that the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of design and the other existing posts have distinct purposes, it would not be unacceptable in addition to existing posts. Indeed, taking account of its scale and context, it is not considered that visually it would detract from the barn, surrounding landscape or parkscape of the Crown Point Registered Park and Garden in accordance with Policies DP2, DP5 and criterion (a) of Policy WH11.
- 5.4 The siting would not affect the use of the adjacent parking spaces nor result in the loss of any spaces. It would require removal of a buddleia and the landscaping around these parking spaces is due to be reduced and managed independent of this proposal. The biodiversity gain from the provision of new nesting feature is considered to outweigh the loss of a



small area of existing shrubs and the proposal is acceptable in accordance with Policy DP1.

- 5.5 With regards amenity, the playing of amplified sound to attract swifts is proposed only seasonally and a natural level that should not be heard more than 10-20 metres away. At this distance it would not be heard (by humans) beyond the car park and it is suggested that it would not be necessary to play the sounds if the tower is successful and used by a number of pairs for three consecutive years. It is not considered the amplified sound, nor construction or use of the tower, would have any unacceptable impacts on amenity in accordance with Policy DP28, however it is considered necessary to manage the use of the amplified sound in accordance with the timings and volume set out in the application.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposal would add a new biodiversity feature to the Country Park to attract swifts which are a species facing decline if new nesting opportunities are not provided. This development is considered to be an appropriate addition to the car park area which would not have any unacceptable impacts on the appearance of the area, the designated heritage asset of the Registered Park and Garden, parking or amenity.

## **7 Recommendation**

Approval subject to the following conditions:

- i. Standard time limit
- ii. In accordance with submitted plans
- iii. Amplified sound to be played only as necessary between hours of 0600 to 2230 from 1 June to 31 August at a level that is not audible outside the car park area identified on the submitted plan

## **8 Reason for recommendation**

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the adopted Core Strategy (2007), Policies DP1, DP2, DP4, DP5 and DP28 of the adopted Development Management Policies DPD (2011), Policy WH11 of the adopted Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

List of Appendices: Location Plan

Background papers: Application File Ba/2016/0247/FUL

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## Appendix 1

BA/2016/0247/FUL - Whitlingham Broad Visitors Centre, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse, NR14 8TR

