

Application for Determination

Parish	Trowse with Newton Parish Council	
Reference:	BA/2014/0204/FUL	Target: 31/7/2014
Location:	Whitlingham Country Park, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse	
Proposal:	Temporary Toilet Building with Ramp for Disabled Access for a Period of up to Three Years	
Applicant:	Broads Authority	
Reason for referral:	Broads Authority is the applicant	
Recommendation:	Approve with conditions	

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The site of this proposed development forms part of the current car park of the Whitlingham Country Park, adjacent to the Flint Barn. The proposed site covers an area of 0.2ha which is currently used to provide nine parking spaces.
- 1.2 The site is situated in the south eastern corner of the car park adjacent to an existing young, mixed native species hedge, which runs along the southern boundary of the site. Beyond the hedge there is a grass verge of approximately 3m width accommodating a gravel pathway, which runs adjacent to the public highway (Whitlingham Lane). The area to be occupied by the building is a flat area of hard-packed gravel type material over a soil substrate. There is an electricity cabinet situated approximately 8m to the east of the parking bay. Beyond the electricity cabinet to the east is an area of mixed woodland. Existing parking bays and the remainder of the car park will be retained to the north and west of the site.
- 1.3 This proposal is seeking consent for the erection of a prefabricated single storey building to accommodate additional toilet facilities for visitors to the Country Park. The existing toilet facilities for the Country Park comprise three toilets with handwashing facilities, two of which are for public use, situated on the ground floor of the Flint Barn. Given the high number of visitors to the Country Park these facilities are proving to be inadequate to meet the needs of the visitors. Therefore the proposed building would accommodate:

- One unisex disabled/ baby change compartment
 - One male only compartment with two toilets, three urinals and three hand-washing basins
 - One female only compartment with three toilets and three hand-washing basins.
- 1.4 The building would be positioned on the site so that its long axis would be aligned east west parallel to the hedge with its doorways facing north towards the Great Broad. The building would be a prefabricated, flat roofed building measuring approximately 8.5m by 3m with a maximum height of 2.97m when mounted on its legs. The disabled access ramp would be approximately 7m long by 1.3m wide and 1.5m high. The building would be clad in a durable, bonded vinyl cover with a woodland scene design. Foul waste from the building would be disposed of via a holding tank situated to the east of the building which would be linked to the existing foul sewer point adjacent to the Flint Barn via an outlet pipe to be laid in the grass verge running adjacent to the road on the southern side of the hedge. The toilet building would be open between the hours of 9am to 5pm to coincide with the opening times of the Flint Barn.
- 1.5 It is proposed to erect post mounted signs measuring 300mm by 150mm in the Little Broad car park and outside the Flint Barn advising of the location of the additional toilet facilities. A sign measuring 400mm by 200mm would also be added to the eastern end of the building advising visitors of the location of the additional toilets. All signs would be non-illuminated and would be white lettering on a blue background.
- 1.6 A temporary consent for three years is being sought to enable the immediate need for additional toilet facilities to be met whilst a more permanent solution is identified and delivered.

2 Site History

- 2.1 Various consents were granted in the Whitlingham area for sand and gravel extraction during the 1990's. Various other minor planning permissions have been granted in the Country Park over the last few years but the significant consents to create the range of facilities that are currently provided at the Country Park have been summarised as follows:
- 2.2 In 2003 planning permission was granted for the change of use of the Flint Barn to provide a visitors centre and café (BA/2003/0734/CU).
- 2.3 In 2008 planning permission was granted to amend consent BA/2003/0734/CU to extend the hours of operation for the visitors centre to midnight to accommodate evening meetings and events (BA/2008/0198/COND).
- 2.4 In 2010 planning permission was granted for the change of use of the former quarry area to enable the provision of car and bus parking and access to the wider Whitlingham Country Park (BA/2010/0129/FUL).

- 2.5 Also in 2010 planning permission was granted for the extension and improvement to an existing quay heading for the launching and recovery of rowing boats, canoes and coaching launches (BA/2010/0287/FUL).
- 2.6 In 2011 planning permission was granted for two pontoons to be created on Whitlingham Great Broad. One of the pontoons is an extension to an existing mooring and launching platform associated with the Outdoor Education Centre at the western end of the Broad. The second pontoon is positioned to the north of the main visitor car park and used to facilitate the operation of the Broads Authority's solar powered boat Ra (BA/2011/0235/FUL).
- 2.7 Planning permission was granted in 2011 for pontoon access into Whitlingham Little Broad and for other minor additions and improvements to fencing and quay heading in the area (BA/2011/0290/FUL).
- 2.8 In 2012 planning permission was granted for a change of use for of two fields to be used as a touring campsite (tents and campers only, no caravans) for a temporary period of three years (BA/2012/0338/CU).
- 2.9 In 2014 planning permission was granted for various amendments to planning permission BA/2012/0338/CU to improve various campsite facilities (BA/2014/0012/CU).

3 Consultation

Highway Authority – It is noted that the proposals will remove parking from the car park adjacent to the visitor centre, and in this respect there is the possibility of this parking being displaced possibly onto the highway. However, given that the public highway is controlled by a clearway order and should therefore prevent parking, and the fact that there are other car parks in the very near vicinity of the visitor I do not consider that the proposals will create a significant issue in highway terms. Accordingly I have no objection to the proposals outlined, nor do I wish to restrict the grant of permission.

Historic Environment Service – Based on currently available information the proposal does not have any significant implications for the historic environment and we do not wish to make any recommendations for archaeological work.

Broads Society – Pleased to advise that we have no objections.

Environment Agency – The site of the proposed toilet building and ramp is in Flood Zone 1 and the proposal would involve using the existing sewer network to deal with foul water, therefore we have no comments.

Trowse with Newton Parish Council

Response awaited and to be reported verbally at Committee.

Whitlingham Charitable Trust – Response awaited.

District Member – Response awaited.

4 Representations

None received.

5 Policy

- 5.1 The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and has been found to be fully consistent with the direction of the NPPF:

Adopted Broads Core Strategy (2007)

[Core Strategy Adopted September 2007 pdf](#)

CS1 Landscape Protection and Enhancement

CS2 Landscape Protection and Enhancement

CS4 Creation of New Resources

CS5 Historic and Cultural Environments

CS6 Historic and Cultural Environments

CS9 Sustainable Tourism

CS11 Sustainable Tourism

Adopted Broads Development Management DPD (2011)

[DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT](#)

DP1 Natural Environment

DP2 Landscape and Trees

DP3 Water Quality and Resources

DP4 Design

DP10 Advertisements and Signs

DP11 Access on Land

DP29 Development on Sites with a High Probability of Flooding

- 5.2 The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to be mostly consistent with the direction of the NPPF; any divergence from the NPPF is due to the content of the policy being largely Broads-specific and therefore not being reflected in the document. The policy below is not considered to conflict with the NPPF:

Adopted Broads Core Strategy (2007)

CS7 Environmental Protection

CS20 Sites at Risk from Flooding

Adopted Broads Development Management DPD (2011)

DP5 Historic Environment

DP14 General Location of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development.

5.3 Material Considerations
[NPPF](#)

Policy WHI 1 Whitlingham Country Park - Proposed Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document

6 Assessment

- 6.1 In terms of the assessment of this proposal the main matters to be considered include: the principle of the development; siting and design; landscape impact; highway impact; historic environment and archaeology impact; servicing; and ecology.
- 6.2 Policies CS9 and CS11 of the Core Strategy and Policy DP14 of the Development Management Policies DPD all seek to ensure that facilities and opportunities for tourism and recreation development within the Broads Area are supported and strengthened by appropriately situated development. Whitlingham Country Park is an established visitor centre and recreational facility that is currently heavily used by both local residents and tourists. Whilst the Outdoor Education Centre situated at the western end of the Great Broad does have toilet facilities for use by people involved in the various outdoor activities run by the Outdoor Education Centre, the only toilet facilities that are currently available for use by general visitors to the Park are the two public toilets situated in the Flint Barn. It is accepted that the number of toilets available and their location within the Flint Barn is not sufficient to meet the current needs of the visitors. In order to address the urgent welfare situation and provide additional toilet facilities as soon as possible the applicant, Whitlingham Charitable Trust, has agreed to fund a temporary building to accommodate the required additional toilet facilities.
- 6.3 Whitlingham Country Park is subject to a specific Policy in the Site Specific Policies Document. This Policy, WHI 1 seeks to ensure that the Park can continue to be used to provide recreation and quiet enjoyment. Further development of buildings and facilities which contribute to this use will be supported subject to the satisfaction of a number of criteria which seek to ensure that: the buildings and facilities will not have a detrimental impact on the river valley landscape; the number of buildings are kept to a minimum; and that the needs and requirements of pedestrians, cyclists and car users are met and that there is no adverse impact on highway safety on Whitlingham Lane. This Policy specifically states that additional public toilet facilities will be particularly encouraged. The Site Specifics DPD is due for adoption on 11 July 2014. Therefore considerable weight can be attached to it in the consideration and determination of this application.
- 6.4 Subject to this particular proposal satisfying the specific criteria set out in Policy WHI1 the principle of this development is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan Policies and therefore acceptable.
- 6.5 In terms of the siting and design of the proposed building, the siting is driven

to a large extent by the need for the toilet facilities to be close to the Flint Barn, which is the central hub of the Country Park and where the majority of the visitors congregate, and the need to consolidate the buildings within the Park. The building would be positioned in an area of the existing car park where it would be easily accessible and where it could utilise the screening benefits of existing landscape planting. The building would be positioned on an east – west axis to minimise its impact on vehicular circulation within the car park and to enable the building to be aligned along the existing hedgerow. The planning permission being sought is for a temporary period of three years and it is therefore appropriate that a prefabricated temporary building is used at this stage as it can be commissioned quickly and removed when a more permanent solution is identified. The building would be flat roofed with a maximum height of approximately 2.97m. It would be clad in bonded vinyl cover with a woodland design. A ramp would be added to the northern elevation of the building to provide access for all. Limited signage would be added to the northern and western elevations of the building to advise of the toilet facilities. It is considered that the scale and design of the building would be appropriate for its use and setting and that the proposal is in accordance with criterion (b) of Policy WHI 1 of the Site Specific Policies DPD and Policy DP4 of the Development Management Policies DPD.

- 6.6 The building has been located so that it would be screened from the southern area of the Park and Whitlingham Lane by the existing hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the site. The building would also be screened from views from the north and east by existing woodland to the east of the site. Furthermore given the existing vegetation around the southern edge of the Great Broad and the distance of the building from the Broad, the building would not be visible from the majority of the Great Broad. The low height and addition of a woodland scene to the vinyl cladding of the building would also assist in the overall assimilation of the building into the landscape of the area. In addition to the signs on the building itself, it is proposed to erect post mounted signs immediately outside the Flint Barn east sliding doors and in the south east corner of the Little Broad car park at its intersection with the Plane Tree Avenue and the footpath leading to the Flint Barn. It is considered that these directional signs are necessary and that the addition of these signs would not result in a proliferation of signs in the area which would have an adverse effect on the landscape. It is therefore concluded that this proposal, whilst not making a positive contribution to the river valley landscape as required by criterion (a) of Policy WHI 1, is only a temporary arrangement and will not have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape quality of this area and that it is therefore generally in accordance with Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, Policy DP2 of the Development Management Policies DPD and Policy WHI 1 of the Site Specific Policies DPD.
- 6.7 The building would be located within the existing car park to consolidate the buildings within the Park and provide the additional toilets where they would be easily accessible by the majority of visitors. This would however mean that 9 parking spaces would be lost. The Highway Authority has stated that

the loss of these parking spaces could result in the parking being displaced possibly onto the highway. However given that Whitlingham Lane is controlled by a clearway order which should therefore prevent parking on the road and the fact that there are other car parks in the very near vicinity of this development, they do not consider that the proposal would create a significant issue in highway terms. Accordingly, there is no highway objection to this proposal and it can be considered to be in accordance with Policy DP11 of the Development Management Policies DPD and criteria (c) and (d) of Policy WHI1 of the Site Specific Policies DPD.

- 6.8 The proposed temporary toilet building would be positioned within the vicinity of the Flint Barn for functional reasons. However it would be sited on the eastern side of the car park so there would be a degree of separation between the barn and this building. It is therefore considered that this proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the character or setting of the barn. The building itself would be erected on four legs and there would therefore be no excavation of the site arising from the erection of the building itself, although the excavation of a trench to link the sewer pipes would be required. The Historic Environment Service has no objection and does not require any archaeological work. It is therefore concluded that this proposal is in accordance with Policies CS5 and CS6 of the Core Strategy, Policy DP5 of the Development Management Policies DPD and the NPPF.
- 6.9 The proposed toilet block would be connected to the public sewer system and there would therefore be no adverse effect on water quality in the area arising from this proposal. The Environment Agency have no comment to make on this application and it is considered to be in accordance with Policy DP3 of the Development Management Policies DPD.
- 6.10 Given that the site of the proposed building is currently a heavily used car park the proposal is unlikely to have any adverse effect on the ecology in the area except for the potential for nesting birds to be disturbed in the hedge close to the toilet block while it is being erected. This matter could however be covered effectively by the inclusion of a Condition on any planning permission that may be granted which restricts the timing of the work to outside the bird nesting season unless the hedge is first checked by a suitably qualified ecologist. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DP1 of the Development Management Policies DPD.
- 6.11 This application is seeking a temporary consent for a period of three years and the subsequent removal of the building and reinstatement of the site can be covered by Condition.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 This proposal is seeking temporary consent for additional toilet facilities at Whitlingham Country Park to address an urgent welfare situation. It is considered that the scale and design of the proposed building is suitable for its intended use on the basis that it would only be on the site for a period of three years. The siting of the building has been carefully considered to

ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts arising from this development. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the relevant Development Plan Policies and the NPPF and it is recommended that it be approved subject to the recommended Conditions.

8 Recommendation

8.1 Approve subject to conditions:

1. Time limit
2. In accordance with approved plans
3. Timing of the works (Outside Bird Breeding/Nesting Season)- with flexibility if the site is checked.
4. Removal of building and reinstatement of site within 3 years from the date of approval.

Background Papers: None

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Date: 26 June 2014

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Plan

APPENDIX 1

BA/2014/0204/FUL Whitlingham Country Park Temporary toilet building with ramp for disabled access for a period of up to 3 years

