

Reference:

BA/2018/0399/FUL

Location:

Hoveton Great Broad, Lower Street Hoveton

BA/2018/0325/FUL Hoveton Great Broad



Application for Determination

Parish	Hoveton		
Reference	BA/2018/0325/FUL	Target date	31 st October 2018
Location	Hoveton Great Broad, Lower Street, Hoveton		
Proposal	Viewing platform		
Applicant	Natural England		
Recommendation	Approve subject to conditions		
Reason for referral to Committee	Director referral		

1 Description of the Site and Proposals

- 1.1 Hoveton Great Broad and Nature Trail is within the parish of Hoveton. Hoveton Great Broad, and the specific application site is located within a meander in the River Bure that forms a 'U' shape east of the settlement of Wroxham and Wroxham Broad and north of Salhouse Broad. The application site is on land located between Hoveton Great Broad and the River Bure. This land is characterised by carr woodland. The Broad is designated a Ramsar site, SPA, SAC and SSSI.
- 1.2 Hoveton Great Broad is a private broad within the Hoveton Estate and there is no public access to the water. It forms part of the Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve and Natural England, the applicant, operates a seasonal nature trail on the southern edge of the Broad through the carr woodland which is accessed by moorings on the main river. The nature trail is not a public right of way and there is no general public access to it. There is a gate that gives private access by water from the main river and the trail is made up of footpaths and, where required, narrow wooden walkways. On the northern edge of the walkway there is an elevated bird hide which overlooks Hoveton Great Broad. Timber foot bridges are also used to cross drainage channels on the east and western edges of the nature walk.
- 1.3 The specific application site for the proposed viewing platform is located centrally within the nature trail looking into a secluded and enclosed area of open water, which is separated from both the Broad and the river by carr woodland. Previously there had been an elevated bird hide (in the form of a timber clad, flat roof structure) located within this area of marsh. No views of

the site are available from outside of the immediate vicinity. Access is solely by foot from the existing nature trail.

- 1.4 Planning permission is sought for the erection of an elevated viewing platform which would be constructed in a natural finished timber. The platform will be formed of two levels, firstly raising from the footpath with a timber ramp to the main viewing platform which would be 1.0m above ground level. From this platform stairs would then take visitors to a smaller raised platform with floor level of approximately 3.7m above ground, or 2.7m above the deck level of the main platform. The lower platform would have an area of around 6m², with the upper platform around 2m². The access ramp and both platforms are enclosed by variable length screens and balustrading, also in natural timber. The proposed design takes on a spiral type form with the highest point overlooking the water, and the use of non-uniform lengths of timber creates a visually interesting design. The highest point of the structure is 5.5m in height, this high point is the rear screen of the upper viewing platform, although much of the lower platform and access ramp is 2.5m or lower in height.
- 1.5 This application follows on from previous planning permissions (see below for references) related to Hoveton Great Broad and Natural England's work within the Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve. Previously a bio-manipulation scheme has been approved and works have been on going; additionally other public access schemes have been granted planning permission. These have in part been funded by Lottery funding, which at the time of the previous applications had been a point of discussion. This application seeks to improve both the quality of visitor experience and understanding of the nature reserve and Broads conservation, as well as leading to an increase in capacity and visitor numbers to this nature trail.

2 Site History

BA/2006/1161/HISTAP Installation of replacement quay heading and construction of path – Approved

BA/2012/0324/FUL Replacement of existing reception hut with new in the same position. Approved

BA/2014/0248/FUL The creation of reedbeds by pumping lake sediment into geotextile to create bunds, back-filling the areas behind with more sediment, and planting these areas with locally sourced fen vegetation, together with the construction of temporary fish barriers – Approved subject to conditions

BA/2014/0407/FUL New vehicular access from the A1062 Horning Road, car park, timber equipment store, temporary toilet facilities, boardwalk and canoe slipway at Pound End; landing stage, boardwalk, and viewing platform at Hoveton Great Broad; and temporary de-watering lagoon - Approved subject to conditions.

BA/2017/0433/APPCON Details of: Conditions 8: Biosecurity and 10: Macrophyte and Snail Survey of permission BA/2014/0407/FUL – Approved

BA/2017/0497/APPCON Details of Conditions 3: Fence and Gate Details, 4: Shed, Portaloos and Timber Screen Details, 5: Landscaping Scheme, 6: Footpath Details, 11: Habitat Creation and 28: Signage of permission
BA/2014/0407/FUL – Approved.

BA/2017/0454/COND Variation of conditions 2: approved plans and 7: ramp sections, and removal of condition 9: archaeology of permission
BA/2014/0407/FUL. Approved subject to conditions

3 Consultation

Hoveton Parish Council – No objection

Wroxham Parish Council – No response received

District Member – No response received

Natural England – No objection. Based on the plans submitted Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutory protected sites.

Environment Agency – No objections to the proposal.

BA Ecologist – No objection. Suggests a condition regarding timing of the works

NSBA – No response received

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.

[NPPF](#)

[Development Management Policies DPD \(adopted 2011\)](#)

DP1 – Natural Environment

DP2 – Landscape and Trees

DP4 – Design

DP11 – Access on Land

DP27 – Visitor and Community Facilities and Services

DP29 – Development on site with a High Probability of Flooding

Neighbourhood Plans

5.2 There is no neighbourhood plan in force in this area.

6 Assessment

6.1 The application is for a viewing platform adjacent to a nature trail footpath operated by Natural England within the Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve viewing into a secluded and screened area of carr woodland. The key considerations are whether the principle of development is acceptable, whether the design is acceptable, if there is an impact upon protect species or habitat, and what the impact of the site being located within flood zone 3 has in terms of this proposal.

Principle of development

6.2 The use of the site and the proposed viewing platform are linked to the nature trail and this proposal would support this existing use of land by improving public access provisions to the Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve. Proposals for facilities which are educational in nature or relate to the promotion of the conservation of the Broads environment are generally supported by Development Management Policy DP27.

6.3 The proposal would ensure an improved access and additional opportunities for visitors to better view and experience the nature trail. It would also be a space where groups visiting the nature trail can congregate, which would assist in teaching opportunities. Currently there are no areas within the site which allow for groups to congregate, or for those that wish to sit to rest. The proposed platform provides both. As such the principle of this structure is considered acceptable as it would comply with Policy DP27.

Design, Landscape and Ecology

6.4 Previously there had been a basic structure here which was used as an elevated bird hide, however due to its dilapidated nature it had begun to detract from the character of the area. It was, however, well screened and did allow for enclosed bird watching which enhanced the use of the nature trail. This previous structure in total would not have been more than 3.5m in height, however it was a solid timber clad building with roof. It has now been removed.

6.5 The site is well screened by a mature copse of carr woodland. The site is not visible from outside of the nature walk and is not visible from any other public viewpoints. The proposal would be significantly taller at its highest point and has a larger footprint than the previous bird hide on site, however much of the lower level platform is of a similar height to this previous structure, and would be more open due to the spaced out timber balustrade design. The striking design in natural timber finish would sit well within the group of trees overlooking the enclosed area of water.

6.6 Due to the screening of trees and distance from all other public viewpoints the proposal would not be visible outside of the nature walk. Views towards the

structure are limited to the close approaches to the structure from the nature walk of approximately a distance of 100m maximum. No views are possible of this site from either Hoveton Great Broad, or the River Bure and the structure would therefore not have an adverse impact upon the landscape. This design and the required elevation it provides would function well as a means for visitors to view the immediate area of the nature reserve and allow for educational groups to congregate and represent an improvement on the previous structure in terms of functionality.

- 6.7 The proposal is sited on an area of land previously developed with an elevated bird hide in a clearing area. As such there is unlikely to be a requirement to remove trees from the site, however a condition would be attached to ensure details of works including root protection areas, and replacement planting (if this is required) is submitted prior to development commencing.
- 6.8 No objection has been received from the Broads Authority Ecologist and Natural England (as statutory consultee) is satisfied that the proposal would not have a significant effect upon the Broadland SPA/Ramsar or Broads SAC or the SSSI site or on site features. In conclusion, subject to a condition regarding timing of works, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon the habitat and species in the application site and surrounding areas.

Flood Risk

- 6.9 The elevation of the platform would result in it being safe in the event of flooding, although it should be noted that the site is closed both to visitors and staff where flood warnings are in place. The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposal and is satisfied with the information submitted within the Flood Risk Assessment. A condition would be attached requiring the applicant to submit a Flood Response Plan to be compiled prior to the commencement of the use of the viewing platform.

7. Conclusion

Subject to conditions as set out below, the proposed viewing platform, which replaces a previous bird hide, is considered to be an acceptably design structure that would comply with policy DM27 and which supports facilities which are educational in nature and relate to the promotion of the conservation of the Broads environment. The structure would not harm the character and appearance of the site or wider area due to the established woodland which totally screens the site from public view. As such the scheme is considered to accord with all relevant planning policy and is recommended for approval.

8. Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions as follows:

- (i) Standard time limit;
- (ii) In accordance with submitted plans;
- (iii) Prior to commencement of development samples of materials;
- (iv) Details of tree protection measures and any landscaping and surfacing of access footpath to be submitted
- (v) Timing works outside bird breeding/nesting season (March- end August)
- (vi) Prior to commencement of use submit a flood response plan

9. Reason for Recommendation

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CS9 and CS24 of the Core Strategy (2007), Policies DP11, DP14, DP15, DP20 and DP28 of the Development Plan Document (2011), and the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

List of Appendices:	Location Plan
Background papers:	Application File BA/2018/0325/FUL
Author:	Jack Ibbotson
Date of Report:	22 November 2018

