

**Planning Application with Navigation Implications: Proposed Residential Development at the Former Ferry Boat Inn  
Erection of a Riverside Walkway/Staithe on the River Wensum and Construction of Projecting Balconies over the River Wensum**  
Report by Planning Officer

**Summary:** A planning application (**BA/2015/0066/FUL**) has been submitted to the Broads Authority in respect of the erection of a riverside walkway/staithe on the western bank of the River Wensum and the construction of cantilevered balconies over the River Wensum. The walkway/staithe is proposed to be situated adjacent to the northern side of the Novi Sad footbridge and along the river frontage of the former Ferry Boat Inn site.

The walkway/staithe is part of the wider proposals for the redevelopment of the Ferry Boat Inn site for residential use, which is being considered and determined by Norwich City Council and which the Broads Authority has been consulted on. The reference number for the City Council Planning Application is **15/00273/F**.

Anticipated navigation issues are set out in Section 4, members' views are sought on these and the conclusions are set out in Section 5.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The former Ferry Boat Inn site has lain vacant for a number of years since the closure of the pub in 2006. The existing buildings and river edge are in a deteriorating and semi-derelict state.
- 1.2 The applicant is therefore proposing to redevelop this site for residential use by restoring the Ferry Boat Inn building and constructing a series of new buildings ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys to provide a total of 47 residential units ranging in scale from studios to 4-bed houses. The residential units fronting the river would have cantilevered balconies over the River Wensum and the scheme also proposes a cantilevered walkway/staithe over the River Wensum.

## **2 The Planning Application Process**

- 2.1 The planning application for the construction of the residential units and associated infrastructure on the site itself has been submitted to Norwich City Council for determination.

The application can be viewed in full using the following link:

<http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/>

and then searching for 15/00273/F.

The planning application for the cantilevered balconies and the walkway/staithe over the River Wensum has been submitted to the Broads Authority for determination.

The application can be viewed in full using the following link:

<http://planning.broads-authority.gov.uk/online-applications/>

and then searching for BA/2015/0066/FUL.

### **3 The Planning Application**

- 3.1 Comments are now sought from the Navigation Committee on the planning application submitted to the Broads Authority.
- 3.2 The development site is situated on the western back of the River Wensum and adjacent to the northern side of the Novi Sad Friendship Bridge and the fendering around the base of the bridge. The southern boundary of the site adjoins the pedestrian ramp running down from King Street to the river beside the Novi Sad bridge and the northern boundary of the site adjoins the disused warehouse 'King Street Stores' with the Wensum Sports Centre to the north of that. The Riverside Retail Leisure Area is situated opposite the site on the eastern side of the river. There are existing moorings on the eastern bank of the river adjacent to the Riverside Complex.
- 3.3 The proposed walkway would extend from the base of the existing ramp alongside the Novi Sad Bridge across the front of the site for a distance of approximately 29m. This walkway would project into the river channel by 2.4m whilst providing a clear width of 2m. The walkway would have a shallow gradient of 1:42. The northern end of the walkway would adjoin the landing stage via two small sections of ramp measuring a total length of approximately 7m. The landing stage would extend along the remaining 9m of the site frontage and would project into the river channel by 2.25m. The application states that the landing stage would be able to support the launching of small craft and potentially provide de-masting facilities. The whole structure would be cantilevered from the structural frame of the building thereby avoiding any structural connection to the river wall. The primary structure of the walkway and landing stage would be fabricated in steel. The guardings to the walkway would be constructed in metal mesh. The walkway would be designed and structured to be capable of withstanding impact from vehicles within the river rather than requiring separate protection from fendering.
- 3.4 The balconies would have vertical metal railings and would project approximately 1.4m from the front elevation of the building and would therefore oversail the river by approximately 1.2m. The balconies would be added to the building at all 6 floor levels.

## 4 Navigation Issues

4.1 As the Navigation Authority, the Broads Authority requires that planning applications with navigation implications are subject to consultation with the Navigation Committee, and a number of possible issues have been identified which are outlined below.

4.1.1 **Restriction of River Width** – The proposed walkway would project into the river channel by a maximum of 2.4m for a total length of approximately 45m. This is a busy section of river, particularly in the main boating season, and it is heavily used by hire craft entering and leaving Norwich Yacht Station and also much larger craft. Hire craft are often helmed by inexperienced crew and a width restriction on what is already a narrow channel would present potential navigation safety issues. Additionally the emerging Wensum Corridor Strategy, which is being produced by Norwich City Council in partnership with the Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council, is seeking to encourage short stay mooring in the river corridor and sections of the opposite bank are likely to be identified in the Strategy for this purpose. It is also understood that the river bus is intending to use the bank opposite this site for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers. All of this proposed additional navigation use renders the permanent width restriction that would result from the proposed walkway along the river frontage of the Ferry Boat Inn site completely unsupportable.

4.1.2 **Use of Staithe** – No details have been provided in the planning application as to how the proposed staithe/ demasting mooring / landing stage / boat launch point would operate and how it would be accessed for the purposes of launching boats. Also launching boats from a suspended structure is not an activity that is considered to be acceptable. The multiple use of this staithe area would not work satisfactorily and could not be supported.

4.1.3 **Projecting Balconies** – The suspended balconies on the river frontage of the proposed building, oversailing the walkway and the river, would also result in an encroachment on the navigable width of the river, particularly for vessels with masts. In general terms it is disappointing to see that, if constructed as shown on the plans, the proposed development would further add to the canalisation of the river frontage and the height of the buildings would exacerbate this effect. It would be preferable to see the residential blocks set back from the river frontage as this would lessen their visual impact on the river environment and would also give the opportunity to allow river front access to a viewing area without the need for encroachments on the channel width.

## 5 Conclusions

5.1 The application would result in a restriction in the width of the navigation and could potentially impact on the safety of existing and proposed boat users.

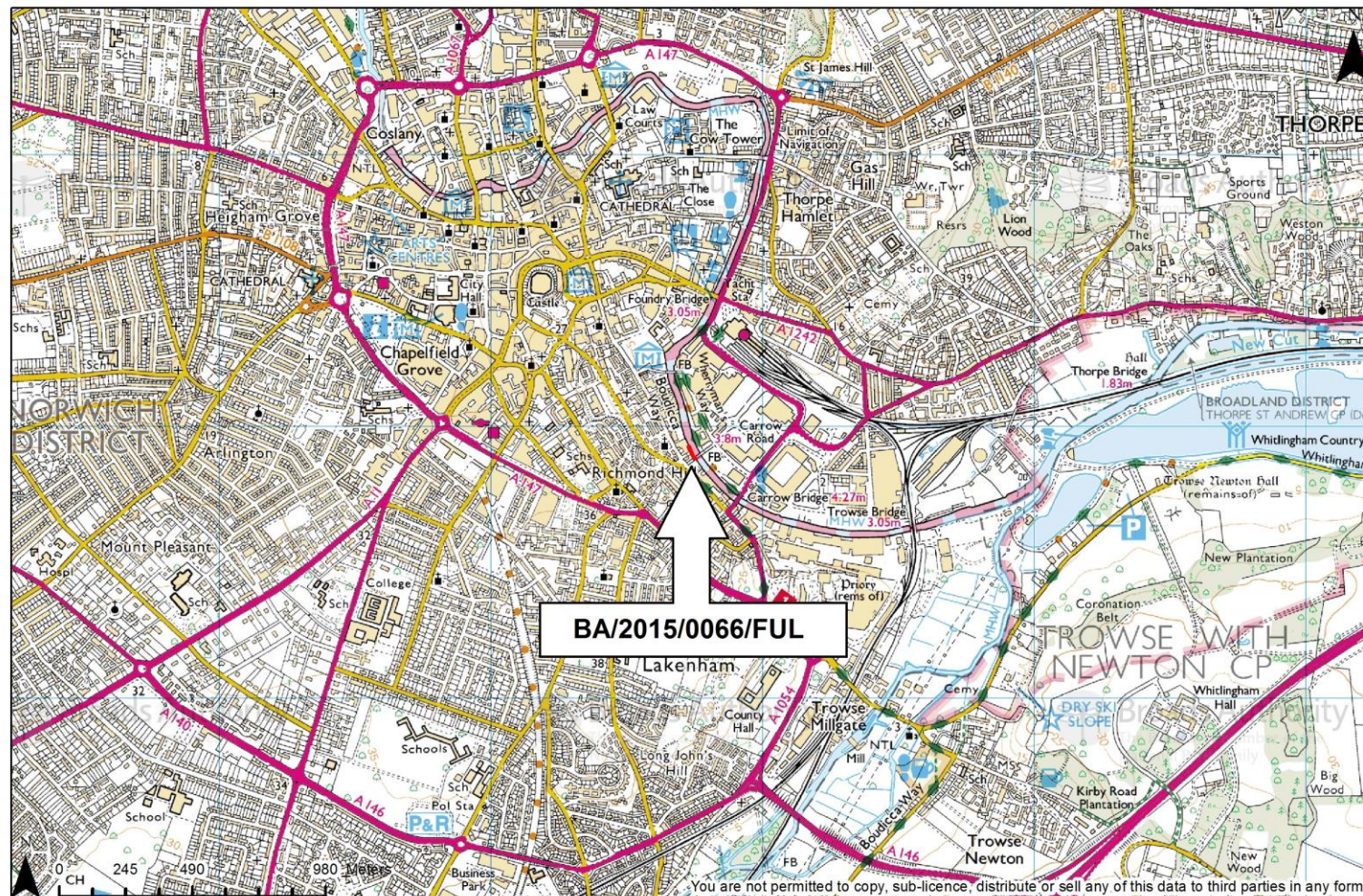
Member's views on these and any other matters of relevance to navigation are sought and will be considered as part of the planning process.

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Background papers:      | BA/2015/0066/FUL            |
| Author:                 | Alison Macnab               |
| Date of report:         | 7 April 2015                |
| Broads Plan Objectives: | None                        |
| Appendices:             | APPENDIX 1 – Location Plans |



## BA/2015/0066/FUL - Former Ferry Boat Inn, 191 King Street, Norwich

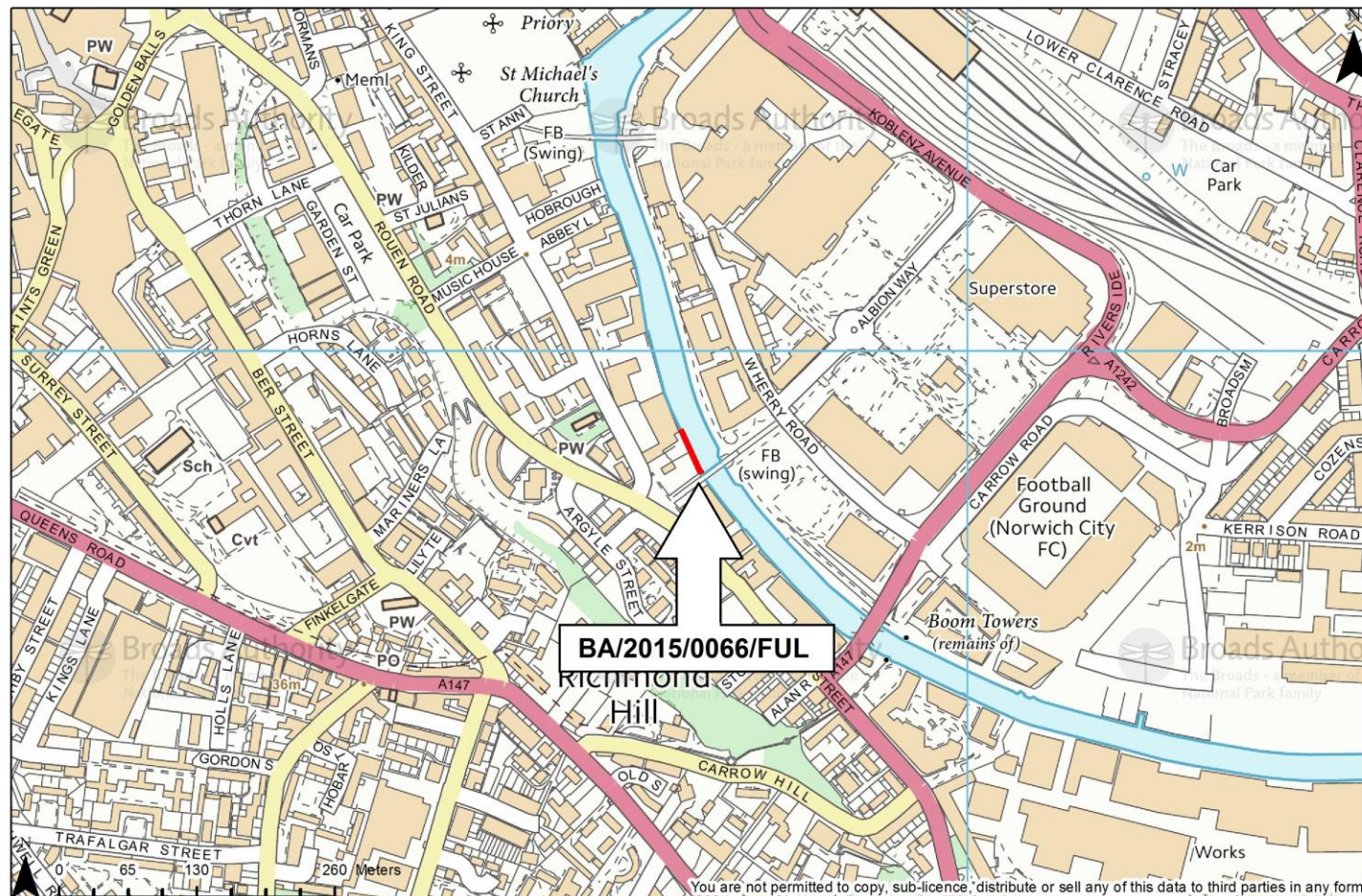
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