

Planning Committee

17 July 2020

Agenda item number 10.1

BA/2020/0126/FUL Thorpe St Andrew, Yare Boat Club, New building

Report by Senior Planning Officer

Proposal

2 No. new boat houses for storage of rowing boats, alterations of existing shed for new facilities & replacement pontoon

Applicant

Yare Boat Club

Recommendation

Approve, subject to conditions

Reason for referral to committee

The proposal is a departure from the development plan.

Application target date

29 June 2020

Contents

1.	Description of site and proposals	2
2.	Site history	3
3.	Consultations received	3
	Thorpe Town Council	3
	Environment Agency	3
	BA Tree Officer	3
	Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways	3
	BA Environment Officer	3
	BA Policy Officer	3
	BA Landscape Officer	3
	Planning Committee, 17 July 2020, agenda item number 10.1	1

	BA Historic Environment Manager	3
4.	Representations	3
5.	Policies	4
6.	Assessment	4
	Principle of development	5
	Impact upon the landscape and trees	6
	Design and Heritage Impacts	6
	Neighbour Amenity	7
	Highways and parking	7
	Other issues	8
7.	Conclusion	8
8.	Recommendation	9
9.	Reason for recommendation	9
	Appendix 1 – Location map	10

1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The application site lies in the central part of Thorpe Island, to the south side of the River Yare and opposite the River Garden Public House. Access to the site is via rowing boats from a private pontoon accessed through the River Garden car park. The south of the site is bounded by the railway and the north by the river, which has a channel width here of approximately 22m. The east and west boundaries are trees and hedgerow. The site is within the Thorpe St Andrew Conservation Area.
- 1.2. The application site is approximately 3250m² of land which is predominantly trees and grass. There are currently two structures on the site: a boat house situated towards the northern end, with its gable facing the river, and a storage shed situated behind this, further to the south. There is also a pontoon in the river.
- 1.3. The application seeks permission to erect two additional storage sheds to the rear (south-west area) of the site to store additional craft resulting from the amalgamation of Yare Boat Club with Broadland Boat Club, which has been required to move from its old site due to the end of the lease. The new sheds are identical in size, being 10m in width by 29.5m in length. There is a slight change in levels on the site, but the height to the ridge is just under 5m. The buildings would be orientated north-south, set back in the site to the southern boundary and the proposed materials are a profiled metal sheet cladding in green but with larch cladding to the front (north) elevations visible from across the river.

- 1.4. In addition, the facilities in the existing boat house will be improved with the addition of solar panels for additional power needs. A replacement pontoon is also proposed and this element is retrospective. The pontoon is 20.78m by 1.97m and is fixed to the river bed with mini piles. The metal parts of the pontoon will be painted matt black.

2. Site history

- 2.1. None.

3. Consultations received

Thorpe Town Council

- 3.1. Support the proposal in principle subject to the cladding looking less industrial and a condition regarding car parking.

Environment Agency

- 3.2. No objections.

BA Tree Officer

- 3.3. No objection subject to a condition requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways

- 3.4. No objection.

BA Environment Officer

- 3.5. No objections subject to conditions.

BA Policy Officer

- 3.6. Comments regarding policies to consider.

BA Landscape Officer

- 3.7. No objections but comments provided.

BA Historic Environment Manager

- 3.8. No objections in principle. Content with the amendments.

4. Representations

- 4.1. Letters of representation have been received from four households and Thorpe History Group. A summary of their comments are below:

- The proposal is contrary to the local plan.
- Ecological impacts.
- Adverse impact on the amenity of residents.
- Traffic and parking concerns.
- The pontoon is unsympathetic to the Conservation Area.

- Concerns regarding a reduction in the width of the river channel.
- Noise concerns.
- Increase of traffic on the river.
- Suburbanisation of the island.
- Unsympathetic design and materials.
- Precedent for further development.

5. Policies

5.1. The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (adopted 2019).

5.2. The following policies were used in the determination of the application:

- DM2 Water quality & foul drainage
- DM3: Boat wash down facilities
- DM5: Development & flood risk
- DM6: Surface water runoff
- DM11: Heritage Assets
- DM13: Natural environment
- DM16: Development & landscape
- DM21: Amenity
- DM23: Transport, highways & access
- DM24: Recreation facilities parking areas
- DM31: Access to the water
- DM43: Design
- DM46: Safety by the water
- TSA2: Thorpe Island

5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) are material considerations.

6. Assessment

6.1. The main considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of development, the design of the new buildings and the impacts on the Conservation Area, biodiversity, trees, flood risk, neighbour amenity and highways.

Principle of development

- 6.2. In terms of the principle of development, the application seeks permission for the erection of two new boatsheds on the central part of Thorpe Island and Policy TSA2 of the Local Plan for the Broads applies. Policy TSA2 states that the central part of Thorpe Island will be retained in its current use with no significant extensions to the existing buildings and replacements on a like for like basis.
- 6.3. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are other material considerations that indicate otherwise. This proposal is, in principle, contrary to Policy TSA2 criteria (b) of the Local Plan for the Broads because, whilst the development would support the retention of the site in its current use, it proposes a level of development beyond either an extension of not significant size to an existing building or a like for like replacement. The objectives of that policy are to retain the existing semi-natural appearance that much of the island provides and which contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Whilst there is a clear policy presumption against the development in principle, it should be considered what the impacts of allowing this specific proposal would be on those objectives, whether the proposal is otherwise acceptable and what material considerations may weigh in its favour.
- 6.4. The proposed buildings are to house craft resulting from the amalgamation of Yare Boat Club with Broadland Boat Club. Broadland Boat Club is a long established club which provides local facilities and contributes to the relationship between the settlement and the river, which the Local Plan policies seek to support. Formerly located elsewhere on the river in Thorpe St Andrew, they have been required to move from their historic location, but have sought to remain in the area. Unable to find their own premises, they have merged with Yare Boat Club which will create a larger, stronger group. Whilst the new buildings are required to accommodate the enlarged club on this site, there is also an element of relocation in this which is worth noting. The amalgamation has already begun and is progressing, with the membership of the club potentially doubling in size by the end of 2020 (current members 47). The additional craft will be stored at the club and this proposal seeks to construct storage sheds large enough to accommodate them to prevent untidy, outside storage on the site.
- 6.5. It must be considered what impact the introduction of the new storage facilities will have on the landscape and visual quality of the waterscape here. The site is within Thorpe St Andrew Conservation Area and is predominantly semi-natural in appearance with vegetation visible from the northern riverbank. It is the case that the buildings, at 10m x 29.5 m are large, however the size is dictated by the use as they need to be able to store 8-man rowing boats (Eights) and sculls (Octuples) and 4-man rowing boats (Fours) and sculls (Quads) so that the club are able to compete in these competitions. They already have two Octuples and plan on adding two to three Eights and Octuples in the future. The proposed storage sheds are sited towards the rear (south) of the site so

that they are screened by the existing vegetation that it is intended to retain. They will be set approximately 50m back from the river, which will maximise the effect of the mitigation. The green profiled sheeting and larch cladding to the front are designed to reduce the visual impact as far as possible and will weather and ensure in the long-term that the buildings become visually recessive thereby mitigating any potential harm from glimpses of the buildings. As the main feature of a sylvan environment will continue to be dominant here, it is not considered that the proposal would significantly detract from the landscape or waterscape that Policy TSA2 of the Local Plan for the Broads is seeking to protect.

- 6.6. In conclusion, therefore, whilst it is acknowledged that these are new buildings and they are large, a clear justification has been provided for both the need for them and their size, and the proposal has been designed to mitigate the impacts as far as possible through careful siting and materials. Whilst the application is contrary to the provisions of TSA2, it is not considered on balance that the impacts of the proposal would undermine the objectives of the policy and the scheme can therefore be supported.

Impact upon the landscape and trees

- 6.7. The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Broads Authority Tree Officer has no objections to the works proposed. There will be the need to remove some trees to facilitate the erection of the buildings, but there is also some replanting proposed to mitigate the loss. The agent has confirmed that no hard surfaces are proposed and no additional services which would harm the trees. There will therefore be no detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area in terms of loss of vegetation.
- 6.8. The site is within the Yare-Carey's Meadow to Postwick Grove/Whitlingham Marsh Landscape Character Area which is within the Norwich settlement fringe and has a high level of boating activity. Views of the development from Yarmouth Road would be limited, but the site is visible from the pub garden and the railway behind, as well as the residential properties opposite. Whilst it is noted that the appearance of the area from these viewpoints would experience some change as a consequence of this development, with the new buildings being visible, the overall wooded character would be retained and the siting and mitigation would ensure that the buildings do not dominate. The Landscape Officer commented on the replacement planting needing to incorporate native species such as alder, willow and poplar and these have been included in the Amended Drawing (C). On balance, it is therefore not considered that the construction of the new buildings would have an adverse visual impact on the landscape as a whole and the proposal is in accordance with Policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Design and Heritage Impacts

- 6.9. The site lies within the Thorpe St Andrew Conservation Area and is immediately opposite the Grade II listed River Garden Public House and in the vicinity of several other listed buildings on Yarmouth Road. The Historic Environment Manager suggested larch cladding to the front and first bay of the side elevations of the proposed boat sheds so as to give them a less industrialised appearance and to reduce their overall

impact on the Conservation Area. This treatment is not required to the remainder of the buildings (i.e. the sides and the rear) as these are screened by trees and shrubs; additionally the Club have previously experienced arson so are keen to minimise the use of material which are easily damaged. Amended plans have been received with this revision and this is welcomed.

- 6.10. The proposed pontoon is a replacement and has already been installed, so this part of the application is retrospective. The new pontoon is 0.47m wider than the previous one but is reduced in length by 1.22m, and is secured in place with mini piles. The applicant explains that this stability is needed as a British Rowing Club requirement. Currently there are galvanised metal elements (railings and upright piling poles) but the amended plans show it is now proposed to paint these matt black to create a more visually recessive finish. The pontoon is a very visible element of the development, being located within the river, however it is noted that the boating use does form part of the character of the Conservation Area and the pontoon and the manner in which it facilitates such activity is consistent with this.
- 6.11. Overall, whilst it is recognised that this is a sensitive site, the proposals are not considered to result in harm to the settings of nearby listed buildings or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is in accordance with Policy DM11 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Neighbour Amenity

- 6.12. Some concerns have been raised that the increase in membership at the Yare Boat Club will create noise and disturbance which will adversely impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby residential properties. The club currently operates from the site and the majority of events are held at weekends in the mornings. The amalgamation of the two clubs is already progressing and does not in itself require planning permission.
- 6.13. The agent has addressed these concerns by confirming that they propose a maximum of 20 members at any one time attending the site within a two hour slot. This is the maximum the facility will take within a two hour slot based on access to the river and limitations on the length of the pontoon. Previously, the maximum number of members at one time was 15 members and no problems were reported. Additionally, members do have to book 4 days in advance, so numbers can easily be controlled.
- 6.14. Whilst the facilities at the clubhouse will be improved as part of the scheme, given the restricted number of members able to access the facility at any one time, it is not considered that this will give rise to additional noise and disturbance within the locality. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Highways and parking

- 6.15. The parking on this section of Yarmouth Road is unrestricted, meaning that there are no double yellow lines and vehicles are allowed to park on the side of the highway. The boat club have access to the River Garden Public House car park as they mainly operate

in the early mornings outside of the pub's opening hours. Based on the parking available of 15 spaces, if everyone came by individual car, they are five spaces short, but in reality, half the members come by bike or walk and some members are within the same family. The maximum number of members at the site at any one time is 20, a rise from the previous number of 15.

- 6.16. Although parking along Yarmouth Road can be busy at times, it is unrestricted so whilst the concerns raised about the impact of additional parking and congestion are noted, it is the case that vehicles are allowed to park there. If such parking were considered to be unsafe this would be a matter for the Highways Authority, which would introduce restrictions, however this is not the case and no restrictions have been applied. Given, therefore, that the parking is lawful it follows that would be difficult to resist the proposal on the grounds of parking. Furthermore, the main use of the club would be weekends and mornings and so not at peak times. In addition, the site can be easily accessed via public transport. On this basis, it is not considered that an objection on highway safety grounds can be warranted and the proposal is not considered to be unacceptable in terms of Policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Other issues

- 6.17. The application has been submitted with a Flood Risk Assessment and there is no objection from the Environment Agency. The new storage sheds will be constructed on piles and stilts so that the floor area is above the 1 in 100 year flood level and will allow water to run underneath the structure. In terms of surface water, a swale will be constructed (by hand) and sized to accommodate the whole of the 1 in 20 rain storm of critical duration to limit on-flow to the river. The proposal therefore accords with Policies DM5 and DM6 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.18. The Yare Boat Club policy for washing down of boats is using water, a light sponge and towel drying. A rainwater harvesting system is in place for this and this will remain the case. There is an existing treatment plant on site for the foul water from the shower and kitchen facilities. This will also remain in place. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.19. The facilities cannot be used in the dark for health and safety reasons and so no additional lighting is proposed. The proposal therefore accords with Policy DM22 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Based on the information submitted to support this application for the proposed boat sheds, alterations to clubhouse and replacement pontoon, although the proposal is contrary to Policy TSA2 of the Local Plan for the Broads in terms of the principle of development, there are other material considerations to take into account. The boat sheds have been sited so as to minimise their impact on the landscape and surrounding Conservation Area. The materials have been amended to include larch cladding and black matt fixtures for the pontoon and the new tree planting has been amended to include

native species. This area of the River Yare is heavily used by boats and is a sustainable location for the boat club to be situated. The benefits of allowing the improvements to the clubhouse and merger of two historic boatclubs which have been long-established in the locality of Thorpe St Andrew are considered to outweigh the in-principle policy objection and therefore it is recommended that planning permission is approved subject to conditions.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approve subject to the following conditions:

- i. Time Limit
- ii. In accordance with approved plans (including FRA, Drainage Report, Ecology Report & AIA and Additional Emails from Agent)
- iii. Material samples
- iv. Biodiversity conditions including enhancements
- v. Register of number of members using facilities at any one time to be kept and made available.
- vi. Restrict the use to boat club storage only and remove pd rights for conversion to another use.
- vii. No external lighting.
- viii. Restriction on use by Yare Boat Club and Broadland Boat Club only.
- ix. No commercial use or hiring.

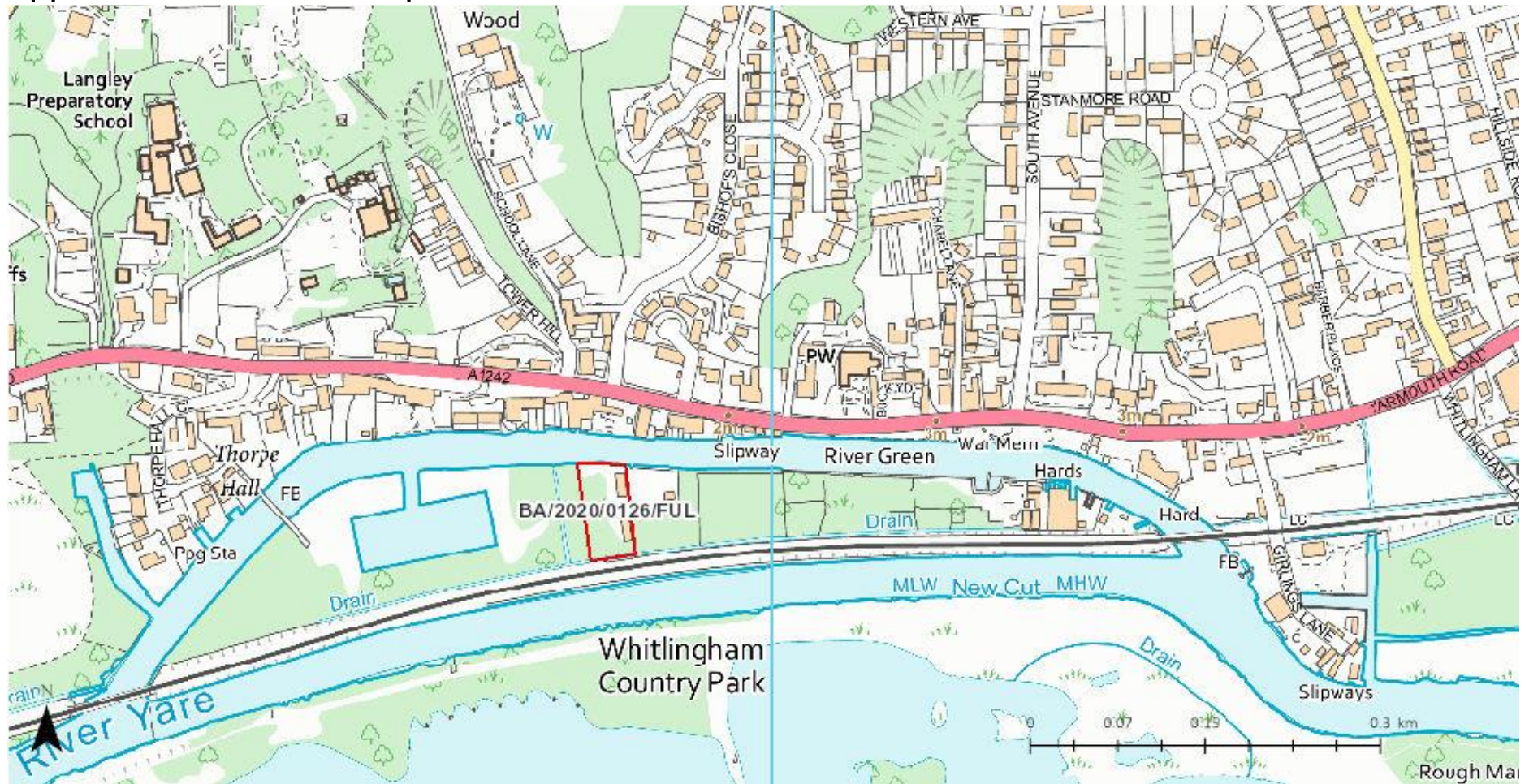
9. Reason for recommendation

9.1. Subject to the conditions outlined above, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM2, DM3, DM5, DM6, DM11, DM13, DM16, DM21, DM23, DM24, DM31, DM43 and DM46 of the adopted Broads Local Plan 2019.

Author: Cheryl Peel

Date of report: 03 July 2020

Appendix 1 – Location map



© Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 100021573. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.