

Planning Application with Navigation Implications
Planning Application at Deal Ground, Trowse for a Bridge over the River Yare
Report by Head of Development Management

Summary: An application has been submitted for an opening bridge over the River Wensum with a 14' soffit height. The views of the Navigation Committee are sought.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Deal Ground is located to the east of Norwich and comprises approximately 14 hectares of brownfield/previously developed land. In December 2010 a planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the site. A mixed-use redevelopment scheme was proposed, comprising approximately 680 residential units and 1,200 m² of commercial floorspace located to the western side of the site, with the eastern part of the site, much of which is a County Wildlife Site, to be retained as open space and to provide flood storage capacity. The application also included the provision of a bridge over the River Wensum to provide a pedestrian, cycle and service link to land to the north at the Utilities site.
- 1.2 The bridge was to be located between the Trowse Railway Bridge and Trowse Eye, towards the western end of the Deal Ground site. The bridge was to be an opening bridge, however given that its primary function is to provide access to and between the Deal Ground and Utilities sites, the developers proposed that it would remain primarily in the 'closed' position to achieve those linkages uninterrupted, although it would open for river users on demand. The bridge was to have a soffit height of 10'. As 'compensation' for the impediment to navigation represented by the new bridge, the application proposed a marina within the centre of the site and on-line moorings. Details of the management of these were to be agreed.
- 1.3 The application site fell within the areas of three separate Local Planning Authorities and the planning application was accordingly submitted to Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and the Broads Authority. The Authority would determine the application for the bridge.
- 1.4 In 2011 there were amendments to the application and the marina element was removed. In 2012 there were further amendments to the application and the bridge element was removed.
- 1.5 As a consequence of the removal of the bridge element, the Authority is no longer a determining party for the application. The application will be determined by Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council in due course.

- 1.6 A report on the potential implications of the removal of the bridge from the scheme was considered by Navigation Committee at their meeting in September 2012. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.7 In January 2013 a planning application for the bridge was submitted to Norwich City Council. Due to the manner in which the site boundary has been drawn, Norwich City Council will determine the larger part of the application, however the Authority will deal with that aspect covering the bridge over the River Wensum.

2 The Planning Application

- 2.1 The application is in outline only, but sets out the principles of the proposal.
- 2.2 The application site area extends from the junction of Hardy Road with Kerrison Road (adjacent to the eastern end of the Norwich City Football Club/Laurence Scott Electromotors site), south and then east along Hardy Road and under the Trowse Railway bridge to an area of land adjacent to the Network Rail land north of the river which would form the northern landing point of the bridge. On the southern bank the bridge would land within the Deal Ground site.
- 2.3 The outline proposals show an opening bridge with a soffit height of a minimum of 14' above mean high water. The overall span of the bridge would be approximately 50m across and the central section of approximately 17.4m wide would open. This would give an opening section across one third of the river's width at this point. Supports within the river channel would be required, but these would be outside of the opening section. No final details of design have been included, but it is suggested that in order to achieve the opening arrangement the bridge be of either a double bascule or sliding type. The bridge deck would be approximately 4.1m wide and would accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. There would be no vehicular access over the bridge.
- 2.4 No undertaking regarding the opening arrangements has been submitted, however it is understood from the agent that the bridge would be kept normally in the 'closed' position and would open as required. The agent advises that in respect of opening arrangements the applicants are proposing to adhere to the requirements of Section 25 (4) of the Trowse Bridge Act which requires:
 - (a) the new bridge shall be provided with adequate machinery, works and conveniences for opening and closing of the opening span of the bridge;
 - (b) unless prevented by unavoidable injury or accident to the new bridge, the Board shall open the new bridge when completed for the passage of vessels on request at any time of the day or night except when engines or carriages shall be about to pass over the new bridge and on any such occasions the new bridge shall not be closed so as to delay or detain any vessel for longer than shall be necessary to allow the passage of such engines and carriages.

2.5 Members will recall that when the report to the September 2012 meeting was considered, they were concerned that the original benefits to navigation which had been offered in December 2010 (as set out at paragraph 3.3 of that report) had been omitted. It should be noted that none of these elements are present in the current application, however it should also be noted that the proposed soffit height is now 14' as opposed to 10' when it was considered previously.

3 Navigation Issues

3.1 There are a number of issues and matters relating to navigation arising from the application. These include the location and design of the bridge, the opening arrangements for the bridge and the facilities for river users associated with the application.

3.2 If it is considered that the proposals would have an adverse impact on navigation or if mitigation measures are required, this will need to be addressed at this stage.

3.3 The views of the Navigation Committee are sought.

4 Conclusions

4.1 The redevelopment of the Deal Ground offers the potential for significant levels of growth and a bridge is required to provide a link the site from the north. The impact on navigation must be considered and mitigated at an early stage. The views of the Navigation Committee will be taken into account in the determination of the application and/or forwarded to Norwich City Council as appropriate.

Background papers: None

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Date of report: 11 February 2013

Broads Plan Objectives: CC4

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 - Report to Navigation Committee – 6 September 2012

**Planning Application with Navigation Implications:
Planning Application at Deal Ground, Trowse for Mixed Use Development
comprising a maximum of 670 Residential Units, a Local Centre with
Commercial and Leisure Uses, Parking plus a Vehicular Bridge
over the River Yare**

Report by Head of Development Management

Summary: Proposals for the redevelopment of the Deal Ground have been amended and no longer include the provision of a bridge, although this is proposed in the longer term. The deletion compromises the full and timely consideration of how best to address the impact on navigation of a bridge.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Deal Ground is located to the east of Norwich and represents a significant area of brownfield/previously developed land.
- 1.2 The Deal Ground comprises approximately 14 hectares and is located to the south of the River Wensum. It is bordered to the east by the River Yare as this meanders up to the head of navigation at Trowse bridge and to the west by the railway line. It forms part of a larger site which includes the former May Gurney site located to the south and through which one must pass to access the Deal Ground. The access from the former May Gurney site gives direct access on to The Street, Trowse and thence to the roundabout at County Hall. There is planning permission for a mixed-use redevelopment scheme on the former May Gurney site and this includes a bridge to cross the River Yare and access the Deal Ground. The air draft height of this bridge has been set at a minimum of 6' and this was supported at the 10 December 2009 meeting of the Navigation Committee.
- 1.3 In December 2010, mindful of an imminent planning application for redevelopment scheme at the Deal Ground, a report on the principle of the development and, in particular, the bridge, was presented to Navigation Committee. The Navigation Committee concluded:

“Members agreed that the redevelopment of the Deal Ground and Utilities sites offered the potential for significant levels of growth and, although in principle they would prefer that the soffit height of any bridge was maintained at 14' and were concerned at the adverse impact on the navigation, they might be prepared to consider a lower height of 10' subject to an adequate level of mitigation being provided in the form of additional facilities for river

users. In addition there would also be a need for adequate management arrangements which would provide the facility for the bridge to be opened promptly for river users on demand.”

- 1.4 In December 2010 the planning application was submitted for a mixed-use redevelopment scheme at the Deal Ground comprising approximately 680 residential units and 1200 m² of commercial floorspace located to the western side of the site and located off a central spine road. The eastern part of the site, much of which is a County Wildlife Site, was to be retained as open space and managed for wildlife; this part of the site is within the flood plain and provides flood storage capacity. The application also included the provision of a bridge over the River Wensum to provide a pedestrian, cycle and service link to land to the north at the Utilities site.
- 1.5 The bridge would be located between the Trowse Railway Bridge and Trowse Eye, towards the western end of the Deal Ground site. The bridge would be an opening bridge, however given that its primary function is to provide access to and between the Deal Ground and Utilities sites, the developers propose that it would remain primarily in the ‘closed’ position to achieve those linkages uninterrupted, although it would open for river users on demand. The bridge would have a soffit height of 10’. As ‘compensation’ for the impediment to navigation represented by the new bridge, the application proposed a marina within the centre of the site and on-line moorings. Details of the management of these were to be agreed.
- 1.6 The application site fell within the areas of three separate Local Planning Authorities and the planning application was accordingly submitted to Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and the Broads Authority. The Authority would determine the application for the bridge.

2 The Planning Application

- 2.1 The planning application which was submitted in December 2010 has not been determined. Subsequent to its submission there has been a considerable amount of discussion and revision of the application, with the most recent amendments being made in March 2012 and re-validated in June.
- 2.2 The amendments have been driven partly by issues over the achievement of the bridge link to the land to the north. It is understood that agreement cannot be reached between the applicant and the representatives of the owners of the land to the north over where the bridge would land; there are also issues over the sharing of the costs of the bridge and other facilities.
- 2.3 The amendments to the application include a revision to the number of residential units proposed and deletion of the path through the CWS, however the main changes which are of interest to the Broads Authority are the removal of the bridge over the River Wensum and the deletion of the mooring basin. In the interim the developers propose to achieve access to the Deal Ground via a river bus to run between the Deal Ground and the city centre.

Planning permission for this was granted in March 2012 (BA reference 2012/0012), but in the longer term it is proposed to submit a separate application for a bridge.

3 Implications of the Amendments

3.1 As set out at 1.5 above, the mooring basin and on-line moorings were proposed as mitigation for the impact of the bridge on the navigation, however as no bridge is now proposed neither mitigation is required.

3.2 Whilst it is understood that a bridge is proposed in the longer term, and indeed Norwich City Council have indicated that this will be requirement for any substantial development on the Deal Ground site, unless it is considered as part of the main scheme it will be very difficult to obtain any benefits or mitigation for the navigation interest.

3.3 Members will recall that when the principle of a bridge was considered in December 2010, the developers were advising that they were considering the following package of measures to mitigate the impact of the bridge:

- A new marina on the Deal Ground site
- A new marina on the Utilities site
- Provision of moorings on both banks downstream of the proposed new bridge for a length of approximately 100m either side, providing public moorings
- A link from the Postwick Park and Ride site to the River Yare at Postwick, with the provision of a landing point at the river and the provision of a river taxi service onwards into Norwich
- A jetty or equivalent to service Whitlingham Country Park
- Jetties or equivalent on the north and south sides of the River Wensum opposite and adjacent to the Deal Ground development.

They also advised that a public slipway on the Deal Ground site and a ferry to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists from the Utilities site to Whitlingham Country Park would be provided. Demasting moorings would also be provided, however it should be noted that these were not proposed as a mitigation measure, but an essential prerequisite and would be required for any new bridge. These would be required on all four bridge quadrants.

3.4 The application as originally submitted included the mooring basin on the Deal Ground site, plus on-line moorings. As stated at 2.3 above, planning permission has been granted for a ferry link from the Deal Ground to the city centre, however this has not been implemented.

3.5 It is noted that of the original package of measures proposed, none is included in the amended application. Separately, it is also understood that the viability of the scheme is very marginal. The planning policies of Norwich City Council require the provision of 35% of affordable housing on major schemes such as this and funding this will significantly affect the viability of the scheme. Developers are more likely to direct their contributions to the

provision of affordable housing to satisfy the requirements of Norwich City Council rather than facilities for boaters.

- 3.6 The Navigation Committee will be consulted on any future application for a bridge here, however given the importance of linking the bridge to the main scheme, if any benefits to navigation are to be achieved, it is essential that the Navigation Committee uses this opportunity to comment on the wider application before that opportunity is lost.
- 3.7 Members' views are sought.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The redevelopment of the Deal Ground offers the potential for significant levels of growth. There is, however, potential for there to be an adverse impact on the navigation in the longer term if any potential impacts upon navigation remain unmitigated. Therefore this impact needs to be considered and mitigated at an early stage.

Background papers:	Report to Navigation Committee 9 December 2010
Author:	Cally Smith
Date of report:	10 August 2012
Broads Plan Objectives:	CC4
Appendices:	None