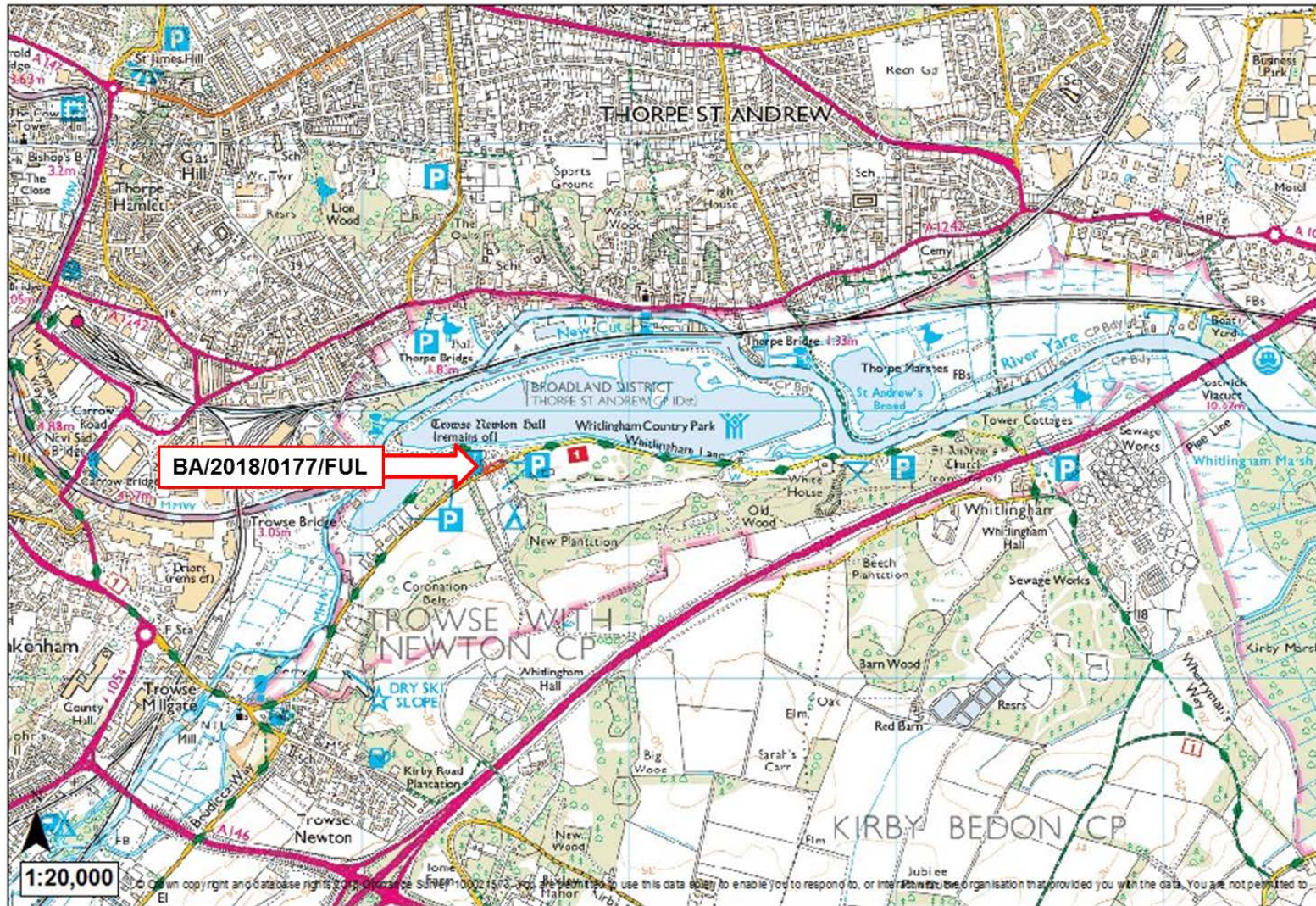


Reference:
Location

BA/2018/0177/FUL
Whitlingham Broad Visitor Centre, Whitlingham
Lane, Trowse

BA/2018/0177/FUL 20000



Application for Determination
Report by Planning Officer

Target Date	01.08.2018
Parish:	Trowse with Newton Parish Council
Reference:	BA/2018/0177/FUL
Location:	Whitlingham Broad Visitor Centre, Whitlingham Lane, Trowse
Proposal:	Retain temporary toilet building with ramp for another 3 years
Applicant:	Whitlingham Charitable Trust and Broads Authority
Recommendation:	Approve subject to conditions
Reason for referral to Committee:	Broads Authority involvement

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The site of this proposed development forms part of the car park of the Whitlingham Country Park, adjacent to the Flint Barn.
- 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 which contains the toilet block is a flat area of hard-packed gravel type material over a soil substrate.
- 1.3 Planning permission was granted in 2014 for a toilet block and access ramp to serve visitors of Whitlingham Country Park (BA/2014/0204/FUL). The permission was restricted to a temporary three year time scale. The toilet has been installed and provides 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. This proposal (BA/2018/0177/FUL) is seeking to retain the temporary toilet block for another 3 years.

- 1.4 The building is positioned on the site so that its long axis is aligned parallel to the hedge with its doorways facing north towards the Great Broad. The building is a prefabricated, flat roofed building measuring approximately 8.5m by 3m with a maximum height of 2.97m. The disabled access ramp is approximately 7m long by 1.3m wide and 1.5m high. The building is clad in dark green sheets. The toilet building is open between the hours of 9am to 5pm which coincides with the opening times of the Flint Barn.
- 1.5 A further 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 below.
- 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).
- 2.10 In 2014 planning permission was granted for the erection of a toilet block and access ramp for a temporary period of three years (BA/2014/0204/FUL).

3 Consultations

3.1 Consultations received:

Broads Society- No response
Parish Council- Supports the application
District Member- No response
Norfolk County Council Highways- No objection
Environment Agency- No comment
Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Services- No comment

3.2 Representations received:

None

4 Policies

4.1 [Adopted Broads Development Management DPD \(2011\):](#)

DP1 Natural Environment
DP2 Landscape and Trees
DP4 Design
DP5 Historic Environment
DP14 General Location of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development.

[Site Specific Polices \(2014\):](#)

WHI 1 Whitlingham Country Park

5 Assessment

- 5.1 In terms of the assessment of this proposal the main matters to be considered include the principle of the development, justification for the extension in a temporary permission, design and landscape impact and impact on the historic environment.

Principle

- 5.2 As with the previous permission, Policy DP14 of the Development Management Policies DPD seeks 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 would be available for use by general visitors (without the existing toilet block) 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.
- 5.3 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 principle of this development is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan Policies and therefore acceptable.

Justification

- 5.4 It is regrettable that a more permanent solution hasn't been sought within the 3 years of the temporary permission, however the Trust has advised that additional toilets to the ones available in the Flint Barn are important because of the number of people using them, with over 400,000 pa visitors to the park. They advise that the toilets are particularly well used by children and elderly people whose needs must be met. They have advised that there is evidence through recent visitor survey that provision of the additional toilets is essential.
- 5.5 The Trust recognise that temporary facilities are not appropriate on a permanent basis and will use its best endeavours to secure a long-term solution as the provision of permanent toilets is part of the wider aspiration for the park. They have advised that this will be a key aspect of their strategic direction and work planning.
- 5.6 The Trust have provided the timescales below in which they hope to secure a more permanent solution:

Whitlingham Charitable Trust Meeting	Item to Discuss
September 2018	Agenda item to discuss Toilet block/budgeting/funding.

November 2018	Present proposals.
January 2019	Agree design/budget.
April 2019	Submit planning application for permanent Toilet Block.

5.7 Given the temporary nature of the toilet block and the fact that the site is within a very public and popular gateway to the Broads, a more permanent solution is considered the most appropriate way forward in planning terms. The predominant reason for the stalling of provision of a more permanent solution has been lack of funding, which is not a planning matter. However, given the clear and vital need for the facility and reassurances that a more permanent solution is being sought it is considered on balance that an extension for another 3 years is considered reasonable in this instance.

5.8 Additionally, as highlighted below the toilet building, albeit temporary in nature, is not considered wholly inappropriate in design and landscape terms given its temporary status and whilst not ideal is not considered to adversely impact on the wider character of the area (a full assessment can be seen below). Given this, the extension to the time limit is considered acceptable in this instance.

Landscape and Design

5.9 In terms of the siting and design of the 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 is positioned in an area of the existing car park where it is easily accessible and where it utilises the screening benefits of existing landscape planting. The planning permission being sought is for another temporary period of three years and due to its pre-fabricated design can easily be removed when a more permanent solution is identified. It is considered that the scale and design of the building is appropriate for its use and setting on a temporary basis 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.

5.10 The building has been located so that it is 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 is also 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 is not visible from the majority of the Great Broad. The low height and green colour also assists in the overall assimilation of the building into the landscape of the area. 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 (albeit 3 years longer than previously

agreed) and does not have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape quality of this area and that it is therefore generally in accordance with Policy DP2 of the Development Management Policies DPD and Policy WH1 of the Site Specific Policies DPD.

Historic Environment

- 5.11 The proposed temporary toilet building is positioned within the vicinity of the Flint Barn for functional reasons. However it is sited on the eastern side of the car park so there is a degree of separation between the barn, which has some historic significance, and this building. It is therefore considered that this proposal does not have a detrimental effect on the character or setting of the barn. It is therefore concluded that this proposal is in accordance with Policy DP5 of the Development Management Policies DPD and the NPPF.
- 5.12 This application is seeking a further temporary consent for a period of 3 years and it is recommended that the subsequent removal of the building and reinstatement of the site be covered by Condition.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This proposal is seeking an additional temporary consent for toilet facilities at Whitlingham Country Park. It is considered that an additional temporary consent can be justified in this instance. 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 another 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.

7 Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions:

1. In accordance with approved plans
2. Removal of building and reinstatement of site within 3 years from the date of approval.

8 Reason for Recommendation

- 8.1 In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the development is acceptable and accords with the NPPF and Local Policies WH1 of the Site Specific Policies DPD (2014) and DP1, DP2, DP4, DP5, DP14 of the Development Management Policies DPD (2011).

9 Note by Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

9.1 I have had this application drawn to my attention due to the identity of the Applicants. As Monitoring Officer I have read the application and file and it appears to have been dealt with normally taking into account development policy and has correctly been referred to the Planning Committee. I should for the sake of transparency also point out that I am the Company Secretary of Whitlingham Charitable Trust, but have had no involvement in that capacity with the matter the subject of this application.

Background papers: BA/2014/0204/FUL
BA/2018/0177/FUL

Author: Kayleigh Judson

Date of report: 01 August 2018

Appendices: Appendix A – Map

APPENDIX A

BA/2018/0177/FUL 5000

