

Planning Committee

23 April 2021

Agenda item number 8.1

BA/2021/0092/FUL- Norfolk Broads Yacht Club, The Avenue, Wroxham- Replacement single storey office building

Report by Planning Officer

Proposal

Replacement of existing single storey office building with one of similar size and same location, subsidiary to the main clubhouse building.

Applicant

Mrs Elysia Ferrier-Hanger

Recommendation

Delegate approval to officers, subject to removal of Environment Agency holding objection and resolution of issue around the potential for bats.

Reason for referral to committee

Members of the club include BA Members and staff

Application target date

07.05.2021

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1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The application site is a sailing club located on the western banks of Wroxham Broad accessed off a private road which connects to the public highway on The Avenues, Wroxham. The site is to the south of Wroxham and Hoveton and is characterised by farmland to the west and north west of the sailing club grounds, and woodland to the north east of the grounds. The Broad runs the length of the eastern boundary of the sailing club. The sailing club has a car park, boat park, club house, moorings, slip ways and open lawn areas as well as a timber single storey office building located to the north of the main club house (to which this application relates), and a number of other buildings elsewhere on site.
- 1.2. The application site is located within an area of high flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3), it is not in a Conservation Area and there are no trees in close proximity to the existing building. The area to the east of the River Bure, which is in turn to the east of Wroxham Broad and this application site, has nature and habitat protection status, including Special Area of Conservation, Broadland RAMSAR, Bure Marshes National Nature Reserve and Broadland SPA.
- 1.3. Planning permission is sought for the replacement of the timber office building. The office building and use is incidental to the sailing club which is a sports, leisure and recreation use. The current building is approximately 4.0m wide, 8.0m long, and has a ridge height of 4.2m. The design of the existing building is a timber clad single storey building with a relatively steeply pitched roof with gables at either end. The application explains that the building is no longer fit for purpose as it suffers from rot and some settlement of the piling foundations. The building houses the club's 3 staff members.
- 1.4. The proposed replacement building is of a similar scale and design, and located on the same footprint. It would be 9.08m long x 5.0m in width with a ridge height of 5.3m from ground level. All of these dimensions are approximately 1.0m greater than the existing building's dimensions. It would have dark stained timber cladding, barge boards etc and corrugated metal roof covering coated in green PVC. Windows would be as existing (white UPVC). Included in the drawing is a 1.2m wide access ramp with a 1:12 gradient, which would replace the current stepped access.
- 1.5. In support of the application as part of the proposal, are details of the flood resilience measures to be included in the construction of the replacement building. These include a slightly elevated floor level (450mm above ground level), all electrical fittings to be elevated 1.0m minimum from finished floor level. The submission is also supported with a flood response plan setting out how flood risk could be mitigated, and in the

event of a flood or flood warnings evacuation to higher ground outside of a flood risk zone is possible.

2. Site history

- 2.1. None relevant.

3. Consultations received

Wroxham Parish Council

- 3.1. Support for proposal.

Environment Agency

- 3.2. Holding objection as all development within flood zone 3 requires a Flood Risk Assessment. However, informally the EA consider that it should be possible to address flood risk in a fairly brief document and there is a high probability that the development would not lead to an increased flood risk to users of the application site and surrounding sites.

Norfolk County Council as Local Highways Authority

- 3.3. No objection as there will be no material change or generation of additional traffic.

BA Ecology

- 3.4. A bat survey is required and suitable mitigation and biodiversity enhancements would be required subject to the results of this survey.

BA Historic Environment Manager

- 3.5. No objection in principle subject to details of materials being agreed.

4. Representations

- 4.1. None received.

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:

- DM5 Development and Flood Risk
- DM13 Natural Environment
- DM16 Development and Landscape
- DM21 Amenity
- DM22 Light Pollution and Dark Skies

- DM23 Transport, Highways and Access
- DM29 Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development
- DM43 Design
- DM44 Visitor and Community facilities and services

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The replacement of an existing building with a building of similar proportions for the same use still requires consideration of the principle of development. The other key considerations are design, flood risk and ecology. Other considerations include accessibility, amenity and highways.

Principle of development

- 6.2. The sailing club use is a water compatible use and the office building as currently occupied is incidental to the overall use on the site. The replacement of the office building, in terms of maintaining the facilities of this sports club, is supported in principle by policy DM29 and DM44 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.3. As this is a water compatible use, the location of the development within a flood area can in principle be acceptable, subject to the scheme not representing an increase in flood risk. Flood risk is covered later in the report.
- 6.4. There is a functional need to locate this building in close proximity to the club house and, therefore, to the water's edge as this is both the focal point of club events and the point at which members, visitors, employees etc congregate. Additionally, by having staff within close proximity to, and with a view over the Broad, this provides a degree of safety cover for those using the water.

Design

- 6.5. The proposed replacement building is of a similar scale, layout, massing and finish to the existing and the slight increase of volume of the building (1.0m approx. additional in each dimension of length, height and width) is acceptable. The design is considered to be an appropriate replacement which would not have any major visual impact, particularly as the relationship with the dominant club house building would be retained, and the gable facing the broad and 45 degree roof pitch would also be retained. This would ensure that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the wider landscape or character of the site in accordance with Policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.6. The materials and detailing proposed include a corrugated steel roof (finished in green), black stained timber cladding, all of which are typical materials for boatyard and waterside uses in the Broads. In this instance the materials are considered acceptable. The barge boards and soffits would be timber of a similar appearance to those on the existing building. The use of UPVC rainwater goods windows and doors are in this instance considered to be acceptable and accord with Policy DM43 of the Local Plan for

the Broads. Whilst timber windows would be preferable, on balance given that the existing windows on site, including in the main club house, are white UPVC it is considered that the use of UPVC is not unacceptable.

Flood risk

- 6.7. The site is located within an area of flood risk so a formal Flood Risk Assessment(FRA) is required, however this has not been submitted with the application. The applicant has agreed to update the information provided in the planning statement and flood response plan to effectively create a more comprehensive flood risk assessment, following the comments of the Environment Agency. This is awaited, but in the meantime, the Environment Agency has raised a holding objection.
- 6.8. Following discussions with the Environment Agency, it is considered that there is a good likelihood that this issue can be resolved and the objection will be removed.
- 6.9. Informally, considering the information within the Planning Statement and flood response plan, and following discussions with both the applicant and the Environment Agency, a water compatible use can be appropriate here, and it is the case that there are no other suitable locations at a lower risk of flooding which could offer the required overview of the Broad and proximity to existing services. This, combined with the fact that the proposal would result in betterment of an existing building in regards to flood resilience, and would be a replacement mean that the issue of flood risk is likely to meet the requirements of Policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads, as well as the Exceptions and Sequential Test set out in the NPPF.
- 6.10. An update on this issue will be given verbally at the meeting.

Ecology

- 6.11. The existing single storey timber clad building has a shingle roof and the application details show that some of the timbers are broken, giving access to the gap between the internal and external walls, and potentially to the roof lining. Given its proximity to the water and the associated suitable foraging habitats, it is possible that this building supports roosting bats. Bat roosts are protected by law at all times of year, even when bats are not present. An assessment of use by bats therefore needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to consider any potential impacts on bats resulting from the demolition of the existing building.
- 6.12. As the period for bat surveys runs between May and September this survey has not yet been conducted, but could be completed in a relatively short period of time.
- 6.13. Recommendations for mitigation and enhancements can be made following the results of the bat survey but could include the use of BS747 Type 1F Bitumastic Felt for roofing (non-spun bond, non-breathable membrane) as other types of roofing felt have been shown to delaminate and trap bats. Enhancements could also include the installation of swallow nesting cups and the applicant has indicated that this would be acceptable.

- 6.14. At this point, therefore, there is a requirement for a further survey. If the results of this show that the demolition is possible with no impact on bats, or that the impacts can be mitigated, the proposal is acceptable. If the survey reveals that there are impacts which cannot be mitigated, then further consideration and assessment will need to be undertaken.
- 6.15. It is recommended that members delegate the decision to officers, in consultation with the Authority's ecologist, to approve if there is no effect on bats, or if this effect can be mitigated. Should this not be achievable, the decision would be referred back to the Planning Committee.

Other issues

- 6.16. In regards to amenity, the use is established and the building would not have any additional impact upon neighbouring residential properties subject to conditions relating to lighting. The building is a workplace for staff members, so improving this space both in floor area as well as insulation etc. would improve the amenity of employees of this site. The development would therefore comply with Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.17. Turning to the access, the proposal includes a wheelchair accessible ramp which the applicant has agreed will comply with the relevant Building Regulations (Part M2). Therefore, this would be a betterment over the current stepped access and accords with Policy DM43 part H.
- 6.18. The replacement of an existing building would not result in any additional vehicular traffic and there is no objection on highways grounds. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads. The site has sufficient car parking, and the applicant has separately proposed to install cycle parking on site.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The application is considered to be in accordance in principle with Policy DM44 of the Local Plan for the Broads as this development supports a popular local and regionally important sports and recreation club. The development would improve the working conditions of the employees of the club, and also ensure that the continued safe and efficient functioning of the club's activities can continue. The scale and design of the replacement building are proportionate and well considered and accord with policy DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 7.2. Two issues remain to be resolved. These are the completion and submission of a bat survey and the assessment of this data; and the provision of further details to overcome the holding objection from the Environment Agency. It is proposed that the decision is delegated to officers to approve, subject to satisfactory resolution of these issues. The application would be brought back before the Planning Committee if either of these issues cannot be resolved.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Members are requested to resolve to delegate to officers the power to approve the decision including appropriate conditions, subject to the successful confirmation that protected species (bats) would not be harmed in this development, and following the removal of the Environment Agency's holding objection.

9. Reason for recommendation

- 9.1. The scheme is in accordance with Policy DM43, 44, 21, 23 of the Local Plan for the Broads. Subject to two points of clarification the scheme is likely to comply with Policy DM13 (Natural Environment) and DM5 (Development and Flood Risk) of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Author: Jack Ibbotson

Date of report: 09 April 2021

Appendix 1 – Location map

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