

**Applications referred to Broads Authority for Consultation – to be determined
by Broadland District Council**

Parish Thorpe St Andrew Town Council

Reference BA/2012/0246/NEIGHB **Target date** 14 September 2012

Location Pinebanks, 9 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew

Proposal Demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 215 dwellings, construction of two new vehicular accesses together with associated infrastructure, roads, open space and landscaping

AND

Parish Thorpe St Andrew Town Council

Reference BA/2012/0247/NEIGHB **Target date** 14 September 2012

Location Land at Griffin Lane, Thorpe St Andrew

Proposal Erection of up to 52 dwellings and community building (of up to 645sqm GEA) and construction of new access together with associated infrastructure, open space, roads and landscaping.

Applicant Berliet Limited

Recommendation Comments are endorsed

Reason for Referral to Committee Major developments with the potential for impact on the Broads

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The subject of this report is two separate outline planning applications that have been submitted to Broadland District Council and on which the Broads Authority has been consulted. However the two developments, if granted planning consent, will be linked by way of a legal agreement and it is therefore practical for them to be considered together. Both applications are seeking outline consent with all Matters Reserved except for Site Access.

2 Pinebanks Site

- 2.1 The Pinebanks site is the site of the former Aviva (Norwich Union) Social Club in Thorpe St Andrew. The site also includes 46 Hillcrest Road to the northeast corner of the Aviva site. The total area of the site is 16.1ha and includes the former private sports pitches to the north of the site, the club house, surrounding woodlands and former gravel pit to the east. Historically, access to the site has been from Yarmouth Road via a shared drive with Thorpe House/Langley Preparatory School and a right of way over White Farm Lane, a private road. A set of gates exist allowing access from Hillcrest Road.
- 2.2 The centre of the site lies approximately 0.5km outside the boundary of the Broads Authority's Executive Area, which lies to the south.
- 2.3 Approximately 3.8 ha of the woodlands within the site are designated by Natural England as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and strategically this site forms part of the wooded ridge to the north of the Yare Valley.
- 2.4 The southern section of the site which contains the existing Pinebanks building, associated extensions and Taylor's Tower, a Victorian Grade II listed folly, falls within the Thorpe St Andrew Conservation Area.
- 2.5 The gravel pit is designated as a Regionally Important Geological Site due to its special geological interest and a County Wildlife Site.
- 2.6 The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps.
- 2.7 The proposal is seeking outline consent for up to 215 dwellings comprising a mixture of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed properties accommodated in one, two and three storey buildings. Based on the full site area the development density is 13 to 14 dwellings per hectare, however based on the developable area of 8.5ha the development density is 25 dwellings per hectare. The overall contribution of affordable housing proposed is 22.5% to be split between this site and the associated site at Griffin Lane. The majority of the affordable housing will be accommodated on the Griffin Lane site.
- 2.8 Vehicular access to the site will be via two accesses, one to be established by extending Henby Way with a second access being provided from Hillcrest Road.
- 2.9 A sustainable drainage scheme will be designed for the whole site.
- 2.10 The masterplan proposes a central play area aimed at older children with four LAP's (Local Areas of Play) for younger children provided throughout the site. The existing woodland and gravel pit will also be used for natural play. Additional recreational opportunities will also be created at the Griffin Lane site.
- 2.11 A Landscape Design Framework has been drawn up for the site and all new planting will be native, hardy species. A detailed Landscaping Scheme will be submitted as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application.

- 2.12 A Woodland Management Plan has been submitted as part of the planning application and this Plan will be used to ensure the long term protection and management of the ancient woodland. The Grade II listed Folly Tower will be retained and its setting enhance as an integral element of the scheme.

3 Griffin Lane Site

- 3.1 The Griffin Lane site is adjacent to, and to the west of, The Griffin Public House on Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew. The northern boundary of the site is defined by Yarmouth Road with the Norwich/coastal railway line defining both the north western and southern site boundaries. To the west of the site is Bungalow Lane and immediately to the east of the site is Griffin Lane which leads to a number of boatyards and businesses at Griffin Marina. Beyond the site to the south and across the River Yare is the Whitlingham Country Park.
- 3.2 The site covers a total area of 5.66ha. However the Broads Authority's Executive Area boundary bisects the site from east to west and the 1.66 ha of the site which is situated to the south and falls within the Broads Authority's Executive Area has been excluded from the developable area of the site bringing the area of the site subject of this planning application down to 4ha.
- 3.3 The north of the site is surrounded by existing buildings along the Yarmouth Road and the site slopes away to the south and the Broads Authority's Executive Area. A large number of trees are located to the south of the site in an area of wet woodland grading into the flood plain of the river. The northern section of the site consists of a large area of pasture land. There is a concentration of trees along Yarmouth Road but the rest of the site is sparsely covered with only a belt of trees running down the centre.
- 3.4 The change in levels across the site means that the site is situated in Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zones. The northern area of the site, where the development will predominantly occur is situated in Flood Zone 1 with the lower lying southern area of the site falling into Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 3.5 Griffin Marsh forms part of the green river corridor running from Norwich to the Broads. The site is not currently the subject of a County Wildlife Site designation.
- 3.6 A World War II anti tank feature comprising a ditch and large concrete blocks runs from north to south close to the centre of the site.
- 3.7 The Griffin Lane site has been included within the overall development scheme for the Pinebanks site to ensure that a comprehensive package of community benefits, private and affordable housing and sporting leisure and recreation facilities across both sites can be provided.
- 3.8 Outline planning permission is sought for the construction of 52 affordable dwellings on this site, 33 for social rent and 19 for intermediate discounted market value. The dwellings will range from 1 to 4 bedroom accommodation in a range of house types which will vary from 2 to 2.5 storeys in height. The houses will occupy just over 1ha of the northern area of the site, closest to

Yarmouth Road. Based on the developable area of the site the density of the residential development will be 33 dwellings /ha.

- 3.9 The remainder of the site will be used for community and recreational purposes. Central to the scheme is the construction of a two storey community building, which it is hoped that Thorpe Town Council will take over and which will be designed and used for a wide range of community uses. This building will be situated in the centre of the site, with onsite parking being provided adjacent to the building. A Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and a LAP will be provided close to the community building with various other green areas throughout the site being identified for informal recreational use. An important element of the scheme is the creation of a pedestrian route starting at the new community building, looping through the marsh and woody vegetation through the creation of a designated route, access will be controlled into this sensitive area allowing views across the marsh without direct access to it. Interpretation boards and marker posts will inform and guide visitors along the route. The path will lead towards Bungalow Lane allowing access to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Thorpe Marsh reserve to the south-west and to the wider Broads Executive Area.
- 3.10 Access into the site will be provided via a new roundabout on Yarmouth Road which will be located approximately 50m west of the existing Griffin Lane junction. The access will extend to link into the existing Griffin Lane alignment approximately 75m south of the existing junction with Yarmouth Road. The realignment and the wider road will provide the residents and businesses at the boatyards with improved access on to Yarmouth Road. The section of Griffin Lane from Yarmouth Road to the new access road will be retained for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3.11 A Sustainable Surface Water Drainage Scheme will be designed for the site in accordance with the Flood and Water Management Act. The application states that the overall scheme will have to use a combination of expanding existing wetlands areas, bioretention tree planters, water butts, permeable paving and swales to dispose of surface water. Drainage systems will be designed to maintain as high a water table as possible within the low-lying parts of the site.
- 3.12 The Landscape Strategy for the site seeks to create a landscaped buffer between the developed area of the site to the north and the wetland habitats and Broads Authority Executive Area to the south. The landscape buffer will be a combination of retained existing floodplain, fringe vegetation and new planting. Management will be based on a phased programme of reed cutting, selective clearance of invasive willow and some planting of native trees and shrubs. A detailed Landscaping Scheme will be submitted as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application.

4 Assessment

- 4.1 In terms of the assessment of both of these planning applications the focus of the Broads Authority's comments will be on the impact that the developments may have on the landscape setting of the Broads and ensuring that the ecological and biodiversity value of the Broads is not compromised and if possible enhanced. Issues such as the appropriate mix of uses, layout and

access more generally will be matters for Broadland District Council to consider in the determination of the applications.

4.2 Pinebanks Site

4.2.1 This extensive site lies on the northern valley side of the River Yare in a prominent location in terms of landscape. There is a significant amount of woodland and mature tree planting associated with the existing development which contributes to the current character of the skyline and filters views of buildings in the locality. The presence of this vegetation is an important aspect in the extensive views of the site from the Broads Authority's Executive Area notably Local Character Area (LCA) 10 – Yare Valley – Whitlingham Lane and Country Park and LCA 11 – Yare Valley Carey's Meadow, Thorpe Island and Marshes, Postwick Grove and Whitlingham Marshes. Other than the Pinebanks site, development on the northern valley side comprises in the main of residential properties which tend to have very well vegetated gardens which ameliorate the possible visual effects of such development and which provide a valuable backdrop and sense of enclosure to the river valley generally. Longer distance views across the valley from LCA 10 are available and these would be sensitive to change as a result of the redevelopment of the Pine banks site. Views from LCA 11 (the adjacent LCA) would be more localised.

4.2.2 In terms of impact on landscape, having assessed the proposed development and the details of the scheme, such as have been stated at this outline stage, it is considered that there are no objections to the scheme in terms of its effect on the landscape setting of the Broads or on the landscape character of LCA 10 and 11. However it is recommended that:

- the significant amount of existing tree and shrub vegetation especially on the southern boundary of the site which provides an exceptionally good visual buffer between the proposed development and views from the Broads area are retained;
- that the existing planting should be subject to a comprehensive management and replanting programme which should be tie to any planning permission;
- that landscape proposals for internal planting (within the development) should seek to reduce views of the main development in the longer term as the Visual Impact Assessment has identified that possible glimpsed views of the proposed development may be available during winter periods. This will require allowing space within the site for the introduction of tree species that will attain stature in the future.

4.2.3 In terms of impact on ecology, given the distance of the site to the Broads Executive Area it is considered that direct impact on ecology of the Broads would be minimal. However, the Broads Authority would welcome measures to link habitats with the wider area and particularly welcome the retention of the ancient woodland to the south which is an important habitat resource.

4.3 Griffin Lane Site

4.3.1 Due to the close proximity the Griffin Lane site has a greater possibility to impact on the Broads Authority Executive Area, its landscape setting and biodiversity value. Although it is appreciated that this is an outline application,

the general layout and density of the development is acceptable. The development has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussion and it is considered that the applicant has taken on board comments on general layout, constraints, and function of the site. It is welcomed that the southern part of the site, adjacent to the Broads boundary, has been left for low key recreational use and that a landscaped buffer has been established to protect the Broads Authority Executive Area from the more intensive development proposed to the north of the site.

4.3.2 In terms of impact on landscape, having assessed the proposed development and the details of the scheme it is considered that there are no objections to the scheme in terms of its effect on the landscape setting of the Broads or on the landscape character of LCA 10 and 11. However it is recommended that:

- the buildings should be of a low level to avoid them being prominent in views from outside the area;
- it should be of a sufficiently low density to enable tree and shrub establishment both within and along the perimeter
- the use of the lower parts of the site for recreational activity and nature conservation purposes should be the subject of detailed design and a management plan;
- opportunities should be sought to promote the Broads Area within the proposal.

4.3.3 In terms of impact on ecology, having assessed the proposed development and details of the scheme it is considered that there are no objections to the scheme in terms of its effect on the ecological integrity and biodiversity value of the Broads. It is considered that the applicant has taken account of comments made at pre-application stage and this is welcomed. However, in terms of the reserved matters application it is recommended that:

- lighting details should be submitted. Lighting should be on a low level to protect the low light corridor along the River Yare as the site supports a significant amount of Bats and other Protected Species. This should extend down to the lighting levels of the proposed dwellings;
- the southern recreational track should be bounded by water filled ditches which would be consistent with the wider Broads landscape and reduce possibility of disturbances to wildlife by domestic pets;
- a site and details of a Bat hibernacula should be included within the development to make up for the loss of bat habitat at the fringes of the development; and
- many birds currently use the whole of the site. The details of the development should include a very significant level of mitigation for the loss of habitat in the form of Barn Owl boxes, Kestrel boxes, and numerous high quality and long lasting small bird boxes, to be included at appropriate locations of both the built and open parts of the site.

4.3.4 It is noted that the proposal includes the provision of a new mini-roundabout, as set out at 3.10 above, which will improve access to and from Griffin Lane. The re-alignment of this junction is welcomed. There are a number of businesses and other properties accessed off Griffin Lane, including the Broads Authority's dockyard located adjacent to the River Yare at the end of Griffin Lane. The improvements to the junction with Yarmouth Road and to the access at the top end of Griffin Lane will benefit these businesses,

although it is noted that the inadequate width and alignment of the remainder of Griffin Lane will continue to be a constraint to increased development of the riverside here.

- 4.4 The Broads Authority has received objections to the application at Pinebanks from a number of local residents, who ask the Broads Authority to support their objections to the applications. The objections relate to inadequate water or sewage capacity to serve the sites and the consequences resulting from this. Whilst the concerns of the residents are acknowledged, these are matters for Broadland District Council in their determination of the application.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 It is considered that both development sites have the potential to impact on the Broads Authority Executive Area. It is considered that there is a greater potential to impact on the Broads Authority Executive Area at the Griffin Lane site due to the close proximity.
- 5.2 Having reviewed the neighbouring consultations at both sites it is considered that the proposals represent an appropriate form of development and that the density and use are appropriate. It is therefore considered that there will be no adverse impact on either the landscape character or ecological or biodiversity value of the Broads subject to the recommendations outlined above. The Broads Authority welcome continued open discussion with the Developer and should be consulted on the Reserved Matters applications in due course.

6 Recommendation

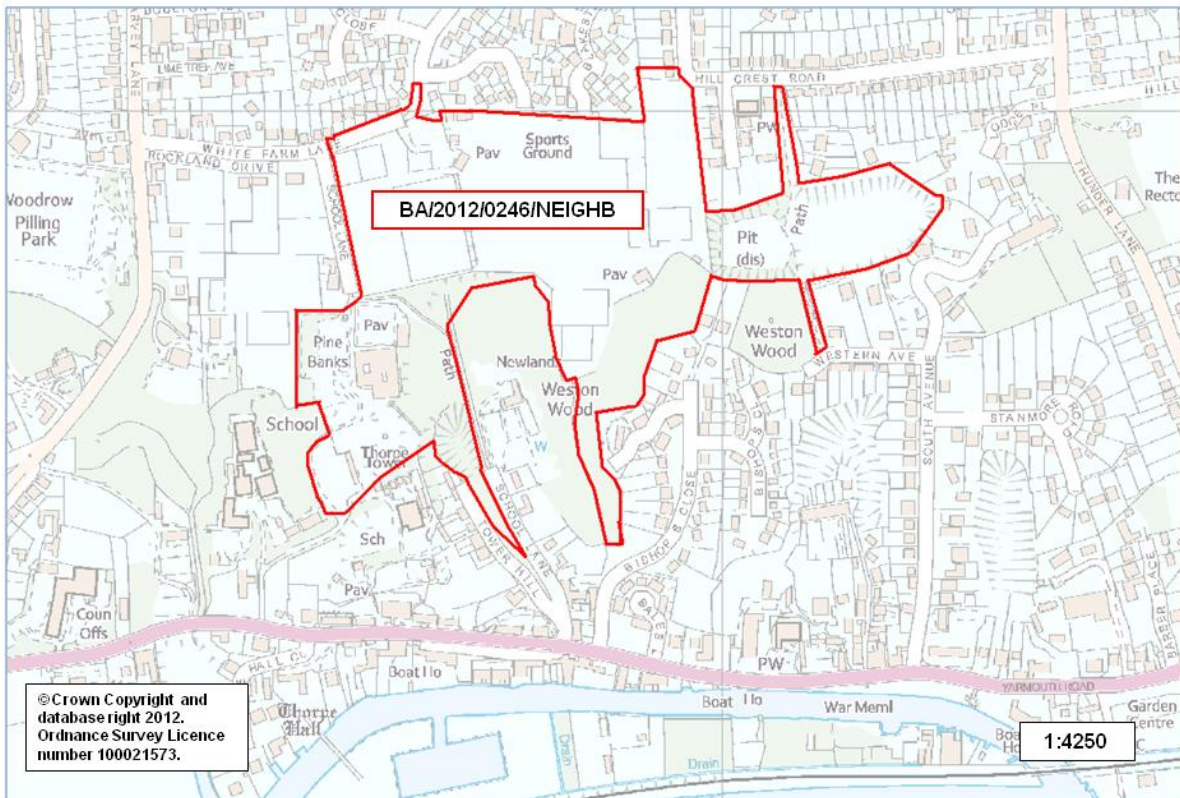
- 6.1 That the above comments are agreed as the views of the Broads Authority and forwarded to Broadland District Council in response to applications 20121017 and 20121020.

Background papers: BA/2012/0246/NEIGHB and BA/2012/0247/NEIGHB

Author: Alison Macnab/ Kayleigh Wood
Date of report: 28 August 2012

List of Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Plans

BA/2012/0246/NEIGHB – Pinebanks, 9 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew
 Demolition of existing buildings and erection of up to 215 dwellings, construction of two new vehicular accesses together with associated infrastructure, roads, open space and landscaping



BA/2012/0247/NEIGHB – Land At Griffin Lane, Thorpe St Andrew
 Erection of up to 52 dwellings and community building (of up to 645sqm GEA) and construction of new access together with associated infrastructure, open space, roads and landscaping

