

Planning Committee

26 April 2024

Agenda item number 7.3

BA/2024/0103/HOUSEH – Wroxham - Swans Harbour, Beech Road - Replacement boathouse

Report by Planning Officer

Proposal

Replacement boathouse

Applicant

Mr Daniel Thwaites

Recommendation

Approval subject to conditions

Reason for referral to committee

Applicant is a member of Navigation Committee

Application target date

30 April 2024

Contents

1.	Description of site and proposals	2
2.	Site history	3
3.	Consultations received	3
	BA Historic Environment Manager	3
	BA Ecologist	4
	Broads Society	5
4.	Representations	5
5.	Policies	5
6.	Assessment	6
	Principle of development	6
	Impact upon the landscape	6
	Planning Committee, 26 April 2024, agenda item number 7.3	1

Design, appearance and materials	6
Ecology	7
Other issues	7
7. Conclusion	7
8. Recommendation	8
9. Reason for recommendation	8
Appendix 1 – Location map	9

1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The subject site comprises a residential plot featuring a detached dwelling house on the northern side of Beech Road. To the north of the dwellinghouse is a fairly sizeable garden and dyke/lagoon area which is divided by various narrow dykes, with foot bridges providing access between the various parts of the garden. The northern boundary of the garden comprises the southern bank of the River Bure. This area is characterised by detached properties with gardens which have inlets/pools and lakes of water, sometimes with structures such as boathouses and garden buildings and often with a natural and well treed character.
- 1.2. The garden configuration is slightly unusual in that it narrows noticeably at approximately the midpoint of the plot and for the remaining land to the north of that point, the result of which being that the applicant only has ownership over the eastern side of the dyke as it runs south from the river up to the approximate midpoint of the plot. Within this section of dyke is the existing boathouse, subject of this application, almost opposite a slightly larger boathouse located on the opposite side of the dyke.
- 1.3. The existing boathouse is a simple rectangular structure with black stained timber walls, a corrugated metal roof at an extremely shallow pitch, and a river facing entrance which is described in the submitted design statement as ‘vertical heavy duty polythene factory cool room strips’. The riverbank is protected with steel piling, this extends along the dyke edges, past the subject boathouse, and up to the approximate midpoint of the plot.
- 1.4. The property is located within the Wroxham Conservation Area.
- 1.5. The proposal is to replace the existing boathouse with a new boathouse of a larger scale and featuring a first floor area and balcony.
- 1.6. Existing boathouse: 10.95m x 6.60m, apex height of 3.54m, eaves height of 3.10m
- 1.7. Proposed boathouse: 13.90m x 7.55m, apex height of 7.50m, eaves height of 2.90m
- 1.8. The application originally proposed the use of fibre cement weatherboard walls; however, the agent has agreed to amend this to timber and has confirmed this in

writing. The other materials comprise a cedar shingle roof, timber doors and windows, and a steel roller shutter boat door.

2. Site history

- 2.1. In 2023 planning permission was granted with conditions for the replacement of existing timber quayheading with steel piling featuring timber capping and waling, and composite/plastic grid type decking (BA/2023/0125/FUL)
- 2.2. In 2019 planning permission was granted with conditions for a single storey rear extension, entrance canopy, and alterations to cladding and windows (BA/2019/0046/HOUSEH).
- 2.3. In 2015 planning permission was granted with conditions to demolish the existing porch to side of dwelling and erect a single storey extension plus cart shed to front of dwelling (BA/2015/0153/HOUSEH). 13
- 2.4. In 2004 planning permission was granted with conditions for the erection of a conservatory (revised proposal) (BA/2004/3871/HISTAP).
- 2.5. In 2004 planning permission was granted with conditions for two and single storey rear extensions (BA/2004/3882/HISTAP).

3. Consultations received

BA Historic Environment Manager

- 3.1. Thank you for consulting me on this application. The site stretches between Beech Road and the river Bure and is within the Wroxham Conservation Area, as well as within the Broads Authority Executive area where a high standard of design is expected.
- 3.2. The proposal is for a replacement boat shed of a slightly larger scale. The existing boatshed is of no architectural or historic significance and does little to contribute to the character of the conservation area. As such, I have no objection to its demolition.
- 3.3. The proposed boatshed is traditional in form and detailing and as such I have no objection to the proposal in principle. However, I do object to the proposal for Cedral lap cladding, rather than a traditional timber.
- 3.4. It is considered that the fibre cement weatherboard will not be in keeping with the otherwise vernacular palette of materials proposed and is not a sustainable material. Although it has an imitation timber texture, this is uniform in appearance, unlike timber, and the material has a sheen, not found in in timber cladding which has a softer, matt finish, more appropriate in this sensitive location.
- 3.5. The Broads Local Plan policy DM43f requires that *'the detailing and materials of a building must be of high quality and appropriate to its context. New development should employ sustainable materials'*. Policy DM43b states that, *'development must complement the character of the local area and reinforce the distinctiveness of the*

wider Broads setting. In particular, development shall respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the landscape, streetscape and waterscape quality of the local area'. The waterside chalets, properties and boathouses along this section of the Bure contribute greatly to the character of the Wroxham Conservation Area, partially due to the use of traditional materials such as timber cladding and shingles and thatch. As such I would like to see timber proposed in this location, in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Local Plan Policy DM11a and to reinforce the distinctiveness of the wider Broads setting.

- 3.6. To summarise, I would like to see the fibre cement cladding replaced with an appropriate timber finish and would not then have any objection to the proposal.

BA Ecologist

The Ecology summary

- 3.7. The boathouse is unlikely to have lasting ecological impacts and implementation of mitigation measures will prevent any detrimental impacts on the local ecology.

Habitat and species surveys required

- 3.8. Depending on timing, breeding bird checks should be undertaken.

Biodiversity Mitigation

- 3.9. A plan for the control and prevention of pollution and management of COSHH substances within the development area should be submitted for approval before works can begin. This must detail:
- Emergency contact details
 - Storage arrangements for chemicals
 - Inventory and location of emergency response equipment (spill kits)
 - Emergency procedure
 - Incident reporting procedure
- 3.10. A biosecurity plan, in line with Broads Authority guidance, should be submitted for approval before works can begin. Biosecurity protocols must be followed by all visitors and contractors on site at all times. Guidance is set out in the following documentation:
- 3.11. Biosecurity Guidance (broads-authority.gov.uk)
- 3.12. Environmental Standard Operating Procedure - Biodiversity (broads-authority.gov.uk)
- 3.13. Biosecurity Measures for Contractors on Broads Authority Sites (broads-authority.gov.uk)
- 3.14. If works are planned to take place within the breeding bird season (1st March – 31st August, inclusive) there must first be a breeding bird check by a suitably qualified

ecologist. If any signs of nesting activity are found, then all work must stop until an ecologist has confirmed that the nesting attempt has reached a natural conclusion.

Biodiversity Enhancements

- 3.15. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the following shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority for their written approval:
- 3.16. Details and location of 2 Swallow nests
- 3.17. The nests shall then be retained and maintained in full accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.
- 3.18. Consideration should be given to the implementation of a native planting scheme around the boathouse to improve the site for wildlife.

Conclusion

- 3.19. No objection.

Broads Society

- 3.20. The Broads Society fully supports this application for a replacement boathouse in this location. Although larger than the structure that it is replacing, it is considered that the form, detailed design and materials proposed are an improvement on the existing structure and will be compatible with the surrounding character of the area.

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
 - DM11 - Heritage Assets
 - DM13 - Natural Environment
 - DM16 - Development and Landscape
 - DM21 - Amenity
 - DM43 – Design
- 5.3. Other material considerations:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
 - Wroxham Conservation Area character statement

- Broads Local List of heritage assets

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The main considerations in the determination of this application are the principle of development, the design and appearance of the proposed replacement boathouse, the impacts on the Conservation Area, flood risk, and ecology.

Principle of development

- 6.2. The principle of development is considered acceptable insofar as the subject site features an existing boathouse in the same location as the proposed boathouse. In addition, it is noted that boathouses along the southern side of the River Bure in this location are a common presence, with some variation in size and design.

Impact upon the landscape

- 6.3. The existing boathouse does not make a positive contribution to the landscape and river scene in this location. This is partly due to its form with an extremely shallow pitched roof which results in an unusual appearance for a building of this type in this riverside setting. The other element is the river facing opening which the submitted design and access statement describes as ‘vertical heavy duty polythene factory cool room strips’. This appearance is atypical and arguably bizarre, not in keeping with the traditional characteristics of boathouses in this locale, or the overall appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.4. The proposed boathouse has a more traditional appearance and detailing, reflecting the design of traditional boathouses of which examples have been provided in the submitted design and access statement. In terms of the principle, the new boathouse would represent an improvement in terms of the appearance of the building, its contribution to the appearance of the site, and to the wider landscape, river scene and Conservation Area. The proposed boathouse is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policies DM11 and DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Design, appearance and materials

- 6.5. The proposed replacement boathouse is of a slightly larger scale, this is considered acceptable with regard to the scale of boathouses at adjacent sites. Whilst noticeably taller, the steep pitched roof makes a strong contribution to the design and appearance of the boathouse, and the site is of a size which can accommodate such development. The boathouse includes a first floor element, shown on the submitted first floor plan as ‘solely for storage of marine items’, and at the river facing end a balcony, neither element of which is uncommon in boathouses, and examples exist in the local area.
- 6.6. The design of the proposed boathouse is such that the larger size, increased height, and provision of first floor are comfortably incorporated in a way that does not result in a bulky form of development, or overdevelopment of this part of the site. The appearance overall is traditional which is suitable and appropriate for the site and Conservation Area setting. The proposed materials comprise cedar shingles for the roof

which are considered acceptable. The doors comprise a steel roller shutter facing towards the river, whilst this approach puts a modern edge on an otherwise traditional building, these types of doors have been accepted as a functional and practical alternative to traditional timber doors.

- 6.7. The external wall cladding was proposed as fibre cement weatherboard cladding and a sample was provided. Having viewed the sample and seen numerous examples of fibre cement cladding on buildings, it is noted that such a product has a manufactured, shiny, and obviously machine cut uniform appearance which it is considered detracts from the character and appearance of a building. Discussions around this took place with the agent, who expressed their reluctance at using an alternative product owing to maintenance and perceived sustainability advantages of fibre cement but did then agree to the use of timber. Timber is considered to be suitable for the riverside and Conservation Area setting of the boathouse. The proposed boathouse is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policies DM11 and DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Ecology

- 6.8. The proposal is not considered to result in ecological impacts. However, mitigation measures, including the control and prevention of pollution and management of COSHH substances, is required to ensure no detrimental impact. The details of these have been provided by the agent and reviewed by the Authority's ecologist and would be secured by planning condition.
- 6.9. Enhancements are proposed in the form of swallow nests which will be installed on the west elevation of the new building under cover of the overhanging eaves, over water with no land access. The proposed boathouse is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policies DM13 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Other issues

- 6.10. The proposed boathouse replaces an existing boathouse in the same location. Whilst an external balcony is proposed, this faces along the applicant's property towards the river. Further to this the separation to the properties to the opposite side of the river is considered sufficient to ensure no undue loss of privacy for residents of those properties. The proposed boathouse is therefore considered acceptable with regard to Policies DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposal is for a replacement boathouse with a modest increase in size and a noticeable increase in height by virtue of its steep pitched roof. The proposal is considered acceptable in principle, in terms of its appearance within the landscape, river scene, and Conservation Area, and in terms of its design, appearance, and use of materials. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable with regard to Policies DM11, DM13, DM16, DM21, and DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:
- i. Time limit
 - ii. In accordance with plans, and email regarding external cladding material
 - iii. First floor to be used for storage only
 - iv. In accordance with mitigation measures, and plan for the control and prevention of pollution and management of COSHH substances
 - v. Provision of 2 Swallow nests
 - vi. If works are planned to take place within the breeding bird season (1st March – 31st August, inclusive) there must first be a breeding bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. If any signs of nesting activity are found, then all work must stop until an ecologist has confirmed that the nesting attempt has reached a natural conclusion.

9. Reason for recommendation

- 9.1. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM11, DM13, DM16, DM21, and DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads, along with the National Planning Policy Framework which is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

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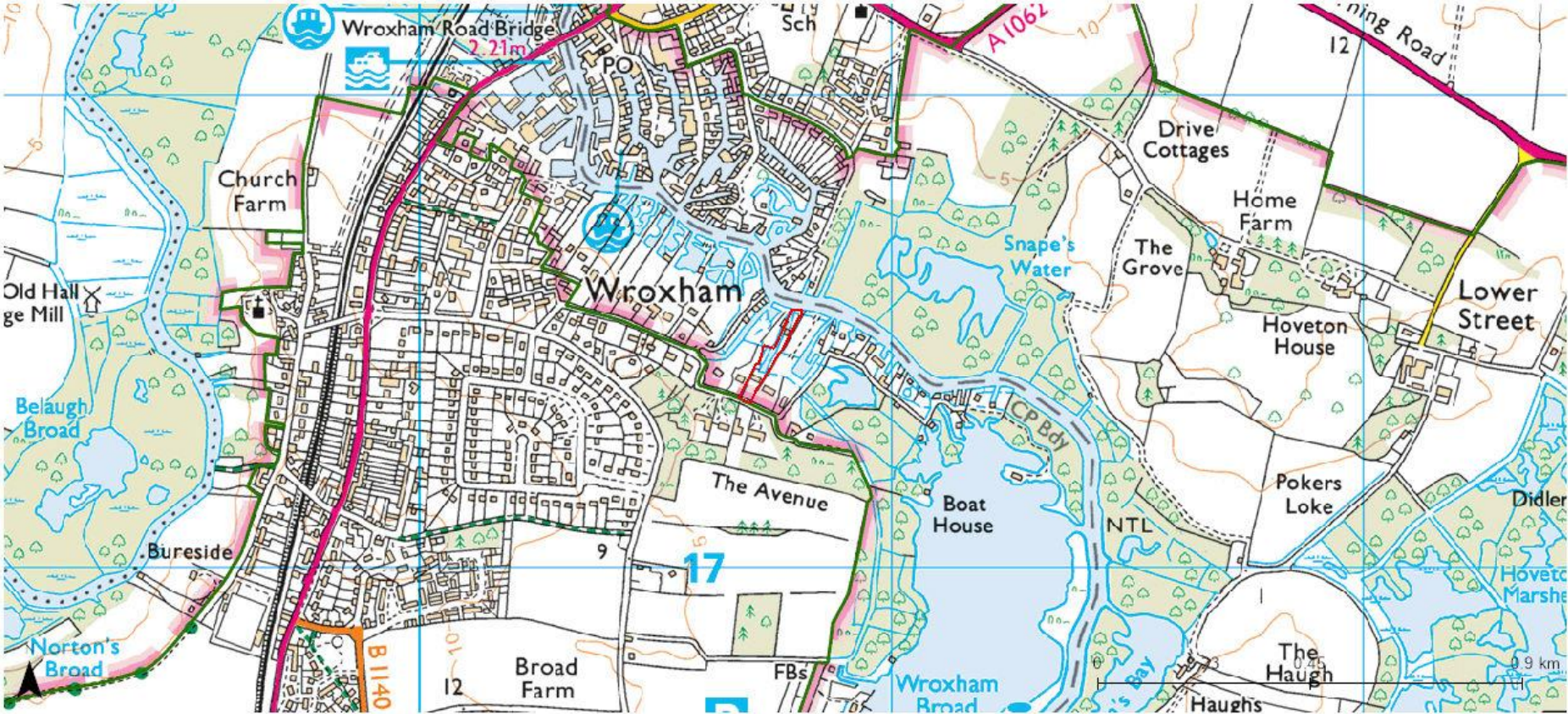
Date of report: 10 April 2024

Background papers: BA/2024/0103/HOUSEH

Appendix 1 – [Location map](#)

Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2024/0103/HOUSEH - Swans Harbour, Beech Road, Wroxham



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