

**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

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Broads Plan Objectives: None

Appendices: None