

# Planning Committee

31 March 2023

Agenda item number 7.2

## BA/2023/0083/FUL - Strumpshaw - Works to pumping station drainage channel and outlet pipe

Report by Planning Officer

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### Proposal

The repair of the existing drainage channel and extension to outflow pipe

### Applicant

Andrew Farrell on behalf of Broads Authority

### Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions

### Reason for referral to committee

Broads Authority involved in application

### Application target date

27 April 2023

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# 1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The subject site is located within Strumpshaw Fen RSPB Reserve. Strumpshaw Fen sits on the north-east bank of the River Yare, to the south-east of Brundall. Strumpshaw Fen is a rural site which operates as a popular nature reserve with visitor trails, hides and a small visitor centre and forms part of a Site Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), RAMSAR Site, Special area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and is a National Nature Reserve (NNR). The reserve is accessed via a carpark which sits to the north east of the site, on the opposite side of the Norwich to Lowestoft rail line which runs through the north-east side of the reserve. To the south of the site sits a Locally Listed steam engine house and chimney, formerly used as a pumping station, approximately 11 metres from the riverbank. Whilst a private track which is suitable for vehicles runs down from Station Road to the pumping station, the public can only access this by private footpaths within the reserve.
- 1.2. The subject of this application is the pumping station drainage channel and outflow pipe which are sited between the steam engine house and the river. The building was used to pump water from the marshes, with water travelling from the building, along the drainage channel and to the river through cast-iron water gates at the river's edge. Initially it was powered by steam, and then later by a diesel pump; it remains operational but is not the main drainage pump here. Improvements to flood defences as part of the BESL works has resulted in the installation of flood boards to either side of the channel, these being at a height above the channel walls.
- 1.3. In 2018 planning permission was granted for works to the chimney, the engine house, the moving of an irrigation pump and landscaping in the area. During that project it became apparent that the works required for the drainage channel repair were more extensive than originally anticipated and beyond the time and budget available. This element of the work was removed from that project and now forms the subject of this application.
- 1.4. The drainage channel has been in a poor state of repair for a number of years and is reliant on temporary timber supports. There is water ingress into the newly repaired building, water seepage into the flood bank and water seepage from the river into the drainage channel.
- 1.5. The proposal is to repair the drainage channel. The works proposed are as follows:
  - works to the drainage channel walls which would include the increase in height by approximately 2 brickwork courses, this is to match the height of the adjoining floodboards;
  - provision of new headwall within the drainage channel in line with the flood defences on either side and to the height of channel walls;
  - extension to the existing outflow pipe within the drainage channel up to and over the headwall;

- backfilling of drainage channel section between the building and the new headwall with Type 3 aggregate up to 800mm below the top of the channel walls.

## **2. Site history**

- 2.1. In 2004 planning permission was granted for flood defence works including bank strengthening, bank re-alignment, soke dyke excavation, temporary site compounds and access and associated engineering works (BA/2004/3867/HISTAP).
- 2.2. In 2018 planning permission was granted for works to chimney, the engine house, moving of irrigation pump and landscaping in the area (BA/2017/0496/FUL).
- 2.3. In 2021 planning permission was granted to extend footprint of works, reshape the adjacent ditch and relocate the irrigation pump hard-standing. This was a variation of the 2017 application (BA/2021/0015/COND).

## **3. Consultations received**

### **Parish Council**

- 3.1. Strumpshaw parish Council recommends the application should be approved.

### **District Member**

- 3.2. This application can be determined by the Head of Planning (delegated decision)

### **Environment Agency**

- 3.3. To be reported orally

### **Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways**

- 3.4. No objection subject to condition regarding construction access route

### **Natural England**

- 3.5. No objection

### **Broads Drainage Broad**

- 3.6. Advised on permitting regime

### **BA Heritage Planning Officer**

- 3.7. No objection subject to conditions

### **BA Ecologist**

- 3.8. No objection providing the ecological advice provided in the appraisal is followed at all times during the development.

### **BA Rivers Engineer**

- 3.9. A Works Licence will be required before construction.

## 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)

## 6. Assessment

- 6.1. The key issues in the determination of this application are the principle of the development, the landscape impact, impact on the locally listed heritage assets and flood risk.

### Principle of development

- 6.2. The proposed works seek to address issues with the existing drainage channel. In alleviating these issues, the works would contribute to the long-term preservation of the recently repaired engine house and effective flood defence near the river's edge through the improvement in the function and maintenance of the drainage channel. The proposed works are therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, with regard to National Planning Policy Framework and Policies DM5 and DM11 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

### Impact upon the landscape

- 6.3. The pumping station complex is a prominent and well-known feature in the local landscape, primarily due to its rather attractive chimney, along with its siting in an area largely devoid of buildings. The drainage channel in comparison is largely hidden and only really appreciated up close, where its simple form and clear functional role to the pumping station complex make a pleasing contribution to the overall appearance of the site.

- 6.4. The proposed works to the channel itself are relatively minor and there would be limited impact on the landscape's appearance through the raising of the channel sides. The addition of the headwall will read well given its siting as a continuation of the existing flood boards to either side of the channel.
- 6.5. The most obvious addition will be in the form of the extension to the outflow pipe. The existing outflow pipe is visible where it exits the engine house, but only extends into the drainage channel for a short distance. The proposed extension would take it along the drainage channel at the same level as the existing short section of pipe, but where it reaches the headwall it is necessary to rise up and go over the wall. The pipe diameter is 400mm, the pipe will only rise as high as is required to clear the wall so will extend approximately 400mm above the upper part of the drainage channel and headwall. The pipe stays close to the headwall so its protrusion is kept to the minimum required. Whilst being a clearly visible addition, given the setting next to an engine house and chimney, and its function as part of an existing drainage channel, it is not considered that the alteration is unacceptable in visual terms.
- 6.6. The proposed works are considered to have no adverse impact on landscape character and appearance, with regard to Policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

### **Design and heritage**

- 6.7. The drainage channel is an integral part of the pumping station complex, providing the outflow into the river. Due to the poor condition of the drainage channel and the numerous repairs and use of substitute materials which have taken place previously, it is considered that its significance as part of the complex results from its historic contribution to the function of the pumping station, rather than in its fabric.
- 6.8. The repairs proposed to the drainage channel walls and addition of the headwall are relatively low key and do not alter the historic location of the channel which will still be read as part of the overall complex. Furthermore, they do not have an impact on the significance of the Locally Listed structure. It is noted that the cast-iron water gates at the river's edge will be retained which will maintain the appearance when viewed from the river.
- 6.9. The majority of the extended outflow pipe will not be visible due to the infilling of the channel up to 800mm below the extended walls. Where the pipe rises up and over the proposed headwall this will be approximately 400mm above the headwall and will be a visible element. Taking into account the separation to the engine house, the siting as part of a well established drainage channel, and with regard to the contribution to the long term protection of the local heritage asset, the proposed outflow pipe is considered to be acceptable.
- 6.10. The BA Heritage Planning Officer has commented that, 'In order to repair the channel significant alterations and re-building are proposed but it is clear from the documentation submitted that the existing channel has undergone many alterations in the past, has become structurally unstable and in need of a high level of intervention to

help save the structure. The increase in height is also required due to higher water levels and to match up with the existing floodboards which is considered reasonable. The in-filling, whilst will change the character and function of the structure, will be at a low level in the landscape and will only be visible close up - interpretation of how this once functioned could also be provided in the interpretation secured under the 2017 application. The in-filling is required to help stabilise the structure further and stop wildlife become trapped in the channel which is considered reasonable. It is therefore considered that the alterations proposed, whilst significant in historic building terms, will have a minimal impact on the character of the wider building, are necessary and fully justified, and will help ensure the historic asset can be read and enjoyed by users of the RSPB reserve and river and can therefore be supported’.

- 6.11. The proposed works would not result in harm to the setting or significance of the Locally Listed heritage asset and would contribute to the long term health of those assets. The proposed works are therefore acceptable with regard to Policy DM11 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

### **Flood risk**

- 6.12. The proposed works would improve the integrity of the existing drainage channel which has benefits to the Locally Listed heritage asset, and also contributes to the integrity of the flood defences on the northern bank of the River Yare. The existing flood boards stop either side of the channel, the provision of a headwall within the channel aligned with the flood boards would provide a level of continuity to the flood defences. In addition to this, the improvements to the drainage channel would significantly reduce and potentially prevent further seepage into the existing flood wall. Taking these points into account it is considered that the proposed works would be beneficial to the integrity and function of the flood defences and are therefore acceptable with regard to Policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

### **Other issues**

- 6.13. Norfolk County Council as Highways Authority have raised no objection to the scheme subject to use of the Construction Traffic Access Route only during the construction phase, this would be secured by planning condition. The proposed works are therefore acceptable with regard to Policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. The proposed seeks to repair and improve the existing drainage channel serving the Locally Listed engine house and chimney, this would be beneficial to the long term preservation of those structures, and would contribute to the flood defences in this location. The works are reasonably low key and in keeping with the overall appearance of the drainage channel, and would not have an adverse impact on the heritage assets or landscape and river scene. The application is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM5, DM11, DM16, and DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads, along with the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 8. Recommendation

8.1. Subject to no new issues being raised by consultees, to approve with the following conditions:

- i. Standard time limit.
- ii. In accordance with approved plans.
- iii. Details of alternative materials
- iv. Submission of photographic survey.
- v. Construction Traffic Access Route.
- vi. Any damage created as a result of the work will be repaired as agreed by LPA.
- vii. The works compound will cease 1 month following completion of the works.
- viii. The land at the works compound will be put back to original condition within 3 months following completion of the works.

## 9. Reason for recommendation

9.1. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM5, DM11, DM16, and DM23 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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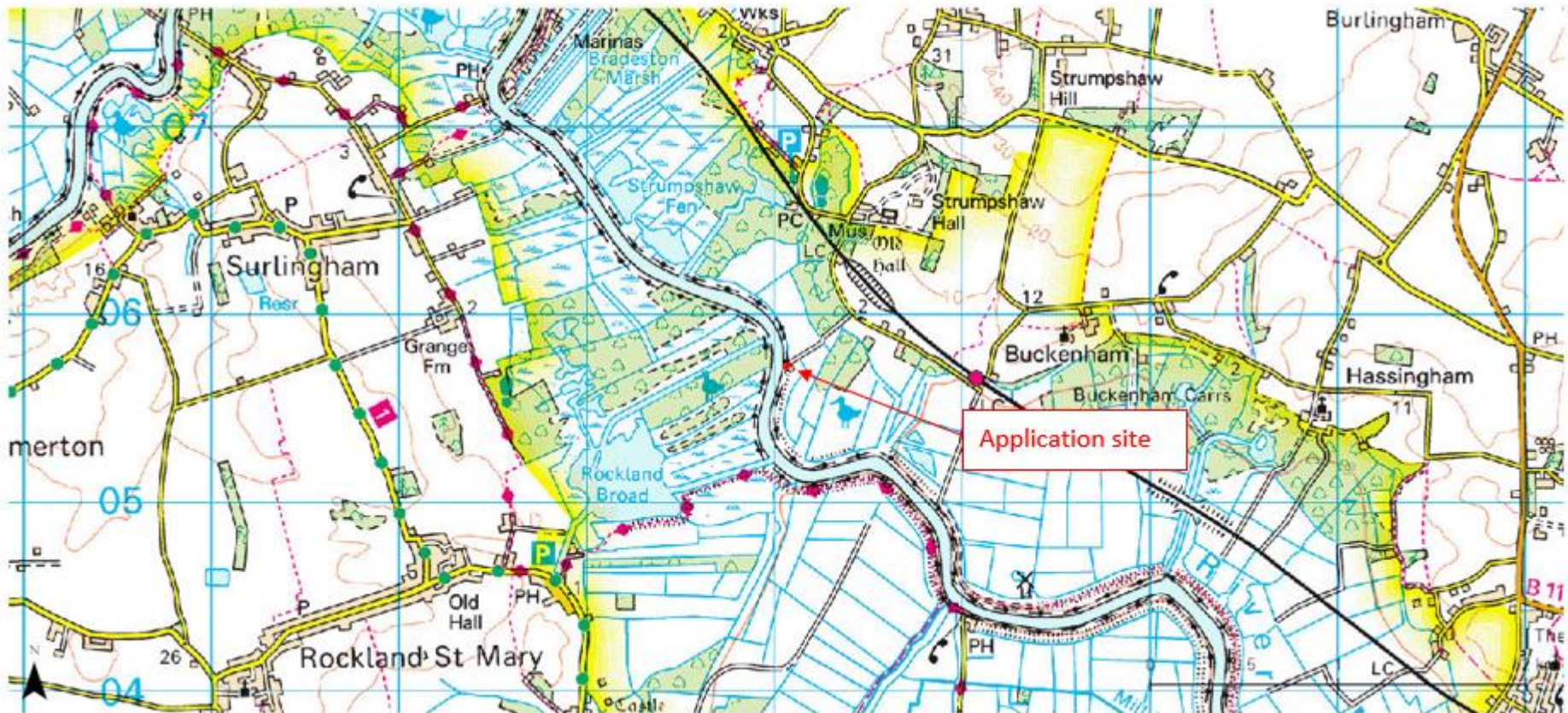
Date of report: 15 March 2023

Background papers: BA/2023/0083/FUL

Appendix 1 – Location map

# Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2023/0083/FUL – Pumping Station, Low Road, Strumpshaw



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