

Planning Committee

5 December 2025

Agenda item number 7.2

BA/2023/0443/FUL Richardsons Boatyard, The Staithe, Stalham

Report by Planning Officer

Proposal

Proposed redevelopment to provide new visitors' centre/reception, workshop extension, associated parking and landscaping etc., demolition of existing workshop buildings and excavation of basins to provide additional/enhanced moorings.

Applicant

Richardsons Leisure Ltd

Recommendation

Approval with conditions

Reason for referral to committee

Major application

Application target date

5 March 2024

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1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. Richardson’s Boatyard in Stalham is a large marina in the Stalham Staithe area, sited towards the northern end of Stalham Dyke on its eastern side, and accessed via the road known as The Staithe. The site covers approximately 11.3 hectares and includes 320 metres of frontage onto the dyke. It features 9 existing buildings, predominantly workshops including 3 sizeable workshops, and 3 large areas of moorings.

- 1.2. The site is effectively divided up by virtue of its mooring basins so that at the eastern side there are 2 large workshop buildings, next to which is a mooring basin. Beyond this is a central area featuring an office building and a large area of car parking. At the northern end of this section is the third of the large workshop buildings, and to the west of the office building and car parking are two parallel mooring basins divided by a spit of land which also provides car parking. Following this is the area to the western side which ultimately fronts onto Stalham Dyke, this area features the remaining 5 buildings which are in a rough line in a north to south configuration parallel to the dyke, these all being workshop buildings. To the dyke side of the buildings and fronting onto the dyke are three further mooring basins divided by small sections of land, this includes a section of stern-on moorings open to the dyke, and side-on moorings to the dyke side.
- 1.3. The site has a long frontage onto the road known as The Staithe to the northern boundary, and also onto the A149 which passes the north-eastern part of the site. The southern part of the site comprises a private dyke which provides access to the various internal parts of the site, beyond this is an area of woodland.
- 1.4. The surrounding area comprises woodland to the south of the site and part of the area to the west on the opposite side of Stalham Dyke. Also, on the opposite side of Stalham Dyke are residential properties, holiday lets, and a boatyard. The dyke also provides access to the town staithe northwest of the site and the Museum of the Broads north of the site. Further residential properties are sited to the north of the site, and a builders yard sited opposite the entrance to the subject site.
- 1.5. Stalham Dyke and the areas to the west and north of the site are within the Stalham Staithe Conservation Area and is included in the conservation area, abutting the subject site on its northern and western boundaries. A grade II listed building known as The Old Granary is sited approximately 35 metres to the north of the subject site, there are also a number of buildings of local interest in the immediate surrounding area.
- 1.6. An area of designated sites commences some 270m to the south-west of the subject site comprising the Broadland RAMSAR, Broadland SPA, The Broads SAC, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There is also a County Wildlife Site to the opposite side of the A149.
- 1.7. It is proposed to demolish the 5 workshop buildings which are parallel to Stalham Dyke on the western side of the site, the office building to the centre of the site, and the workshop at the northern end of the central area. The 2 workshop buildings at the eastern side of the site would be retained, with one being extended along its flank, and the other utilised for private mooring.
- 1.8. A visitor centre and reception building is proposed at the northern end of the central area.
- 1.9. Of the mooring basins, the one to the eastern side is retained as existing providing 70 moorings for the hire fleet. In the central area the two parallel mooring basins divided

by a spit of land are retained, with a relatively modest widening of one of the basins on its eastern side, and the other basin extended at its northern end, the basins providing 130 moorings for the hire craft business (60 x fleet mooring, 58 x charter storage moorings, and 12 day boat hire moorings).

- 1.10. The three mooring basins adjacent to Stalham Dyke to the western side of the site would be expanded through the narrowing of the land separating the three basins from one another and from Stalham Dyke, and an extension of the basins to the east across the area currently occupied by the 5 workshop buildings which are parallel to the Stalham Dyke. There is also a minor extension at the northern end of the mooring area. It is noted that the existing banks along the eastern side of Stalham Dyke would be retained.
- 1.11. The works here would retain the three mooring basins and include finger pontoons to regularise the mooring provision, with a total of 95 stern on moorings and 10 side on moorings. All the mooring in this area would be private moorings. The existing mooring provision here in the three basins is approximately 60 moorings, so the increase in mooring provision adjacent to Stalham Dyke would be in the region of 45 moorings. It is noted that the stern on and side on moorings along Stalham Dyke would be retained as existing and at the current number of moorings.
- 1.12. There are currently 530 car park spaces at the site. The proposed site would have 303 car park spaces, 49 drop off spaces, and 2 coach parking spaces.
- 1.13. A total of 10 no. full-time jobs will be created as a result of the proposals.

2. Site history

- 2.1. In 2012 planning permission was granted for the roof installation of photovoltaic solar panels under planning reference BA/2012/0130/FUL.

3. Consultations received

Parish Council

- 3.1. Council has no objections to this planning application.

Environment Agency (EA)

- 3.2. Currently there is a holding objection on flood risk grounds, this relates to additional information requested by the EA which has subsequently been provided, and the EA have been reconsulted. Members will be updated verbally on the EA consultation response.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways

- 3.3. The Highway Authority raise no objection to the revised proposals but would recommend conditions and an informative note be appended to any grant of permission your Authority is minded to make.

Natural England

- 3.4. No objection subject to appropriate mitigation being secured.

Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association

- 3.5. Comments made on original proposal.

Broads Internal Drainage Board

- 3.6. Advised Land Drainage Consent is required.

Norfolk Police Architectural Liaison Officer

- 3.7. Information and advice provided.

The Broads Society

- 3.8. The Broads Society generally supports the application in principle as, although the proposals are extensive, they offer an opportunity for positive enhancement and improvements to the layout of the boatyard.

North Norfolk Environmental Protection Team

- 3.9. I have noted the phase one investigation report undertaken on behalf of the applicant. The report is robust and comprehensive to support the conclusions of the Author. In conjunction with the recommendations of the author the applicant will need to undertake further investigation of the site to fully characterise the risks identified in the Phase 1, secured by planning conditions.

BA Landscape Architect

- 3.10. No landscape objection raised subject to conditions.

BA Heritage and Design Manager

- 3.11. No objection subject to conditions. It is considered that the scheme is acceptable and meets the requirement of Local Plan Policies DM11 and DM43, as well as the BA Design Guide and Code requirements, particularly those relating to boatyards.

BA Tree officer

- 3.12. No objection subject to conditions.

BA Ecologist

- 3.13. No objection. All mitigations and enhancements should be followed. Some conditions are required before work can begin.

4. Representations

- 4.1. 6 responses were received with the relevant points summarised as follows:

- Redevelopment is probably well overdue for this site, having not been updated for many years. The boating industry will not only benefit from this proposed facility, but the new development will enhance the local tourist industry and will provide additional employment for the local community enhancing the local economy.

- There is no mention of access from the river. Surely this should also be a prime consideration bearing in mind that this is a boat yard from which boats travel.
- The 3 "hammerheads" are directly opposite our frontage and quay heading onto the river. We remain deeply concerned about potential narrowing of the river, general boat access, increased wash from greater boat traffic activity, safety and general traffic flow of river craft.
- Concern over increase in boat traffic using Stalham Dyke and surrounding system, including congestion at Ludham Bridge. Demand for visitor and 24 hour moorings will further increase. There will be subsequent impacts on the River Ant.
- Increase of mooring capacity could have an adverse effects on the local landscape character and tranquility. Additional moorings and boats would lead to more boat trips on the surrounding waterways with subsequent effects on tranquility, levels of recreational activity and potential for disturbance of designated sites.
- I think this would enhance the Marina have a better visual aspect from the road and the whole site. Providing a much better visitor experience, improved entrance and parking facilities. I feel this proposed plan would enhance and benefit the local area.
- In principle, the Museum of the Broads supports this planning application. It will enhance the current site which is in need of some upgrading. It will encourage tourism and add to the 'experience' of not only those visiting the Broads, but the rest of Norfolk and East Anglia.
- Careful consideration must be given to road access to the site and to and from the A149. Staithe Road may not cope with a large increase in movements.
- Suitable car parking and traffic movements on the site will need to be managed in a sustainable way.
- We would suggest that as part of this redevelopment, mooring on the river side is limited.
- There is reference to sustainable energy use but we would like to see a more comprehensive emphasis on creation of a carbon neutral operation throughout.

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
 - DM10 - Peat Soils
 - DM11 - Heritage Assets

- DM13 - Natural Environment
- DM16 - Development and Landscape
- DM21 - Amenity
- DM20 - Settlement fringe landscape character
- DM22 - Light pollution and dark skies
- DM23 - Transport, highways and access
- DM28 - Development on Waterside Sites
- DM31 - Access to the Water
- DM32 - Riverbank stabilisation
- DM33 - Moorings, mooring basins and marinas.
- DM43 - Design
- DM44 - Vis. and Com. Facilities and Services
- DM46 - Safety by the Water
- STA1LP - Land at Stalham Staithe (Richardsons)

5.3. Other material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Stalham Conservation Area character appraisal
- Landscape Character Assessment: 28 Ant Valley - Wayford Bridge to Turf Fen

6. Assessment

6.1. The application is for the redevelopment of the site involving the excavation of basins to provide additional/enhanced moorings, a new visitors' centre/reception, workshop extension, associated parking and landscaping, and the demolition of existing workshop buildings.

Background

6.2. There has been a number of delays with this application, this has been around the siting and design of proposed buildings, removal of trees, landscape and ecology issues, the proposed moorings adjacent to Stalham Dyke, and the disposal of peat arisings. Following meetings and discussions an amended proposal was received which sought to reduce the number of new buildings, retain trees and existing landscape features including the defined bank edge along Stalham Dyke, alter the site layout, and include

additional soft planting. The issue of peat disposal was carefully considered and potential deposit sites assessed.

Principle of development

- 6.3. The principle of the proposed development is acceptable insofar as the enlargement of the existing mooring areas will contribute to the network of facilities around the Broads system and would result in an improvement to the quality of the mooring provision. The mooring provision is existing and the improvement would increase the revenue stream which would help support the viability of the business at the site. In these respects the proposal is considered to accord with the general thrust of Policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Impact upon the landscape

- 6.4. The existing Stalham marina is a sizeable site which dominates the Stalham Staithe area due to its scale and to some extent due to the scale of buildings and the appearance and character of those buildings. This is most keenly felt when viewed from the A149 and some parts of The Staithe, and from Stalham Dyke. In longer views along Stalham Dyke leading up to the subject site the marina is largely hidden due to the well tree lined riverbanks and gentle meander in the river, with its presence revealed when alongside other sizable mooring areas to the west of the river.
- 6.5. The site is dominated by the 3 large workshop buildings. The 2 buildings to the south-east corner of the site, which are to be retained, are generally well sited with some level of screening which partly mutes their presence, and with a backdrop of mature trees which provides a softer background to the buildings. An extension is proposed to the 98.3m wide north facing elevation of the northern of the 2 workshop buildings, this comprises a single storey flat roofed projection with a width of 70.2m and sited centrally on the building frontage, with a height matching the eaves level of the building. Centrally on the extension would be an additional storey with a mono-pitched roof and a width of 30.3m. Although taller than the eaves at the section of the existing building it adjoins, the overall height of the proposed 2-storey element of the extension is 6.3m, the host building has an overall height of 8.95m, this would ensure that the scale of the proposed extension is acceptable with regard to the scale of the host building and therefore is acceptable in terms of the appearance of the site.
- 6.6. The existing south facing roof of the northern of the 2 workshop buildings would be fitted with solar panels. These are sited so that they would face away from the subject site, with a second workshop building to the rear, and a tree belt on the southern boundary of the site. The solar panels would make a contribution to sustainability and would not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the workshop building or the character and appearance of the subject site.
- 6.7. The building at the corner of the A149 and The Staithe, which is to be demolished, is a more obvious presence on site due to its size and siting, and lack of any screen planting, with its long elevation on The Staithe effectively forming the site boundary. Whilst an

appropriate building for the site, its siting is such that it dominates the corner of the site with a presence in the street scene which effectively turns its back on the road and presents a long blank façade. The loss of this building is therefore considered to be of benefit to the appearance of the site, surrounding area, and street scene.

- 6.8. The removal of a large and dominating building will make a significant change to the way the site is experienced and appreciated, particularly from the A149 and The Staithe. In roughly the same location, although noticeably separated from the northern site boundary, is a new 2 storey visitor centre/reception of a modern design and appearance. The siting of the building is such that it would provide visual interest in this area of the site and act as a focal point in this the most open part of the site. This would help ensure that the commercial provision is a readable presence, and the expanse of the many mooring areas have context and a sense of scale. This would be augmented by a soft landscaping scheme which would present a softer and more pleasing appearance particularly when viewed from The Staithe. The BA Heritage and Design Manager commented that the amalgamation of the visitor centre and reception block and its relocation to the north of the site provides a much more coherent layout and concentrates the built form to the eastern side of the site closer to the road, which is certainly beneficial and will reduce the potential impact on the setting of the Stalham Staithe Conservation Area and the wider Broads' setting. The proposed visitor centre/reception is acceptable with regard to the size and siting and therefore is acceptable in terms of the appearance of the site.
- 6.9. To the central area of the site there are minor extension to the existing basins, these are relatively modest in relation to the size of the existing basins, but would allow for a more regularised mooring provision through the use of finger pontoons. The overall appearance of this section of the site would remain as existing and would be acceptable in landscape terms.
- 6.10. To the south of the central area of the site is an area of moorings along the southern bank of the site. This comprises approximately 60m of quayheading with access from a timber boardwalk next to an area of closely mowed grass. It is proposed to extend the quayheading by 72.8m immediately west of the existing quayheading. This is a semi-natural area which appears to be periodically maintained in a sympathetic manner, with an informal footpath along the bank. The BA tree officer has commented that 'Previously one of my main concerns was the increase in mooring on the southern boundary and associated access. I see that the access has been minimized in the new layout and, having inspected it I think with a little judicious pruning pedestrian access is possible. There is a need for new quay heading which should not affect existing trees. This element of the proposal is an extension to an existing mooring provision, opposite the central mooring basins, and with sufficient separation from the site entrance on Stalham Dyke to maintain a sufficient level of natural appearance in views from Stalham Dyke. The proposed quayheading extension is therefore considered acceptable.

- 6.11. To the western side of the site the 3 mooring basins would be enlarged but retained as 3 separate basins, and with the outside edge of the basins which is the eastern riverbank of Stalham Dyke also retained. The area of the site adjacent to the 3 mooring basins is comprised of predominantly of hardsurfacing and features 5 old workshop buildings of reasonably modest size in the context of the site, although as a group do have a clear presence on the site. The 5 buildings are obviously of an age, have a tired appearance and are not worthy retention, the loss of these buildings being considered acceptable. The area where the buildings and surrounding hardstanding exists would be excavated to provide enlargements to the 3 mooring basins, with an 11.3m spit of land on the eastern side to maintain separation to the central mooring basins, along with providing access to moorings, car parking, and access to the peninsula at the south-western corner of the site. The resulting appearance, although notably different from the existing primarily through the removal of the 5 buildings, is considered acceptable as it complements the existing mooring provision and contributes to the overall boatyard use of the site. The peninsula and the mature trees sited there would be retained, which softens the appearance of the site when approached along Stalham Dyke from the south, and retains some vertical elements on this side of the site which provides more visual interest. Whilst the appearance of the western side of the site would notably change, this change is considered acceptable, and given the age and appearance of the existing buildings, their removal would contribute to an improvement in the overall of appearance of this section of the site, which being adjacent to the Conservation Area would also be beneficial.
- 6.12. The level of activity on the rivers is such that the waterscape here can be very congested in the summer months. Following amendments to the proposal the number of proposed moorings has been reduced, with the number of different moorings now proposed as follows:

MOORING TYPE	EXISTING	PROPOSED	CHANGE
Private Moorings	180	226	+46
Charter Fleet Moorings	250	130	-62
Charter Storage Mooring		58	
Day Boat	0	12	+12
Educational Trip Boat	0	1	+1
24 Hour Free Moorings	0	2	+2
TOTAL	430	429	-1

Overall, there is a loss of 1 mooring when compared to existing mooring numbers. This is predominantly due to the changes in mooring accessibility where finger pontoons are proposed to all the mooring areas proposed to be altered as a result of the current scheme. This has clear benefits in the use of the moorings and reflects a trend across the Broads system where safer boat access through the use of finger jetties and floating pontoons. This does have an impact on mooring provision but also increases the attractiveness and usability of the mooring offer at the site. Generally speaking, private

moorings can create more spontaneous river traffic which extends beyond the summer holiday season, this could affect local tranquillity of the river throughout the year, but the overall numbers are reasonable taking into account the existing provision, and any effects would likely be localised and lessen the further away from the site travelled.

- 6.13. The BA Landscape Architect has provided a balanced assessment of the proposal and concluded that the development would be beneficial to the locality as it included removal or refurbishment of existing buildings considered to be negative features in the landscape, landscape proposals respond to the site context and address the site interface along the northern boundary with Staithe Road, the positioning and design of visitor centre, car parking and circulation around the site are well considered. The proposals are in line with the landscape requirements set out in site specific policy STA1, along with policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads and the scheme is considered acceptable in landscape terms.

Design and Heritage

- 6.14. The application proposes the removal of one large workshop building, 5 smaller workshop buildings, and the reception building. A new reception/visitor centre would be provided and an extension to one of the retained large workshop buildings. The BA Heritage and Design Manager has assessed the proposal, commenting that generally it is considered that the proposed visitor centre / reception is acceptable. It uses a relatively contemporary design but reflects the form and materials used elsewhere in the boatyard. Although the courtyard type arrangement is not typical of boatyard development, given the proposed use of the building as a visitor centre and reception, it is considered that this is acceptable and the arrangement should provide a pleasant and welcoming space for users. Although it is a substantially sized building, it is acceptable in this relatively open area where there are a number of other substantially sized buildings. The massing of the building is also broken up into individual elements which helps to reduce the impression of size’.
- 6.15. The proposed extension to the large workshop building to the east of the site is of a simple design which provides some visual interest to the long workshop building façade, and with a height at ground and first floor which helps ensure that it relates well to the host building in both appearance and scale. The overall design is acceptable as an extension and in contribution to the existing workshop building.
- 6.16. The BA Heritage and Design Manager has concluded that ‘generally it is considered that the scheme is acceptable and meets the requirement of Local Plan Policies DM11 and DM43, as well as the BA Design Guide and Code requirements, particularly those relating to boatyards’.

Navigation

- 6.17. The scheme as originally submitted included moorings along the eastern bank of Stalham Dyke leading up to the site, and the replacement of the eastern bank of Stalham Dyke with floating walkways and finger jetties, this being to the western side of

the subject site. The scheme was subsequently amended to remove both of these proposed elements, there are no longer new moorings proposed outside of the existing site parameters, and the existing Stalham Dyke edge at the western side of the site would be retained. The result of this is that there would be no narrowing of the existing navigation either through the provision of new moorings or alterations to the existing moorings or dyke banks. There is existing mooring along Stalham Dyke to the western side of the subject site, this would be retained as existing and again would not contribute to the narrowing of the existing navigation.

- 6.18. The mooring provision on the western side of the site, with 3 basins accessed directly from Stalham Dyke, would be expanded through the enlargement of each of the 3 basins, although it is noted that improvements to the mooring through provision of finger jetties does have some impact on mooring numbers as they take up space formally occupied by moored boats. The additional moorings here would total 45. Although contributing to additional river traffic along Stalham Dyke, the width of the dyke would be maintained, and the numbers proposed are not excessive when considering the overall provision of moorings in this area. No objections were received in internal consultations and no adverse comments made at navigation committee. The proposed changes to the mooring provision at the site are therefore considered acceptable in terms of impact on navigation with regard to Policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Trees

- 6.19. The scheme as originally submitted would have resulted in the loss of existing trees which are considered to make a telling contribution to the site and its appearance within the surrounding area. The BA tree officer assessed the amended scheme commenting that 'it is clear that the revised layout takes a much more sensitive approach to the existing trees and their retention as part of the redevelopment. I am glad to see the large trees in the northwestern corner retained as well as the line of Willows and Silver Birch in the southwest of the site. The proposed parking on the norther boundary of the site, replacing the previously proposed chalets will lead to far less potential conflict with the exiting large Poplars. I also feel that the new check in/reception area and play area are better placed requiring less tree loss'.
- 6.20. Proposed mooring along the southern boundary has been greatly reduced, in response to this the BA tree officer has commented that 'I see that the access has been minimized in the new layout and, having inspected it I think with a little judicious pruning pedestrian access is possible. There is a need for new quay heading which should not affect existing trees'.
- 6.21. In conclusion the BA tree officer has raised no objections to the proposed development, subject to the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement to ensure the future protection health and safety of the trees to be retained prior to, during and following any approved development. The proposal in relation to trees is considered acceptable with regard to policy DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Ecology

- 6.22. The site lies 270m upstream of the Broadland Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar, The Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the Ant Broads and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proximity of these designated sites required a Habitat Regulations Assessment – Stage 1 Screening carried out by the BA ecologist and submitted to Natural England. In response Natural England raised no objection to the proposal commenting that without appropriate mitigation the application would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the designated sites. In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, mitigation measures should be secured for the provision of appropriate silt curtains and the implementation of a Construction and Management Plan (CEMP). The requirement for submission of a CEMP and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) was proposed in the ecology documents submitted in support of the application, and in the planning conditions proposed by the BA ecologist.
- 6.23. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment were submitted in support of the application; these consider the potential ecological impacts on the basis of existing conditions at the site and surrounds for the construction phase and lifetime of the development. The documents were assessed by the BA ecologist and considered to be acceptable, no further surveys were deemed to be required, measures to avoid or reduce impacts are discussed, and ecological enhancements proposed. As with the CEMP and LEMP proposed mitigation and enhancement are proposed to be secured by planning condition, subject to which the proposal is considered to be acceptable in ecology terms with regard to Policy DM13 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Impact on peat

- 6.24. The proposed works include a number of areas of excavation to provide additional mooring space. These are predominantly on the mooring areas which are immediately adjacent to Stalham Dyke on the western side of the site, and also extension of the two mooring basins to the central area of the site. The proposed excavations would predominantly be on hard landscaped areas. The proposal requires consideration of the peat that would be excavated as part of the works.
- 6.25. Policy DM10 sets out a presumption in favour of the preservation of peat in-situ, with development proposals that will result in unavoidable harm to peat only being permitted subject to assessment against specific criteria, namely:
- i) There is not a less harmful viable option;
 - ii) The amount of harm has been reduced to the minimum possible;
 - iii) Satisfactory provision is made for the evaluation, recording and interpretation of the peat before commencement of development; and
 - iv) The peat is disposed of in a way that will limit carbon loss to the atmosphere.

- 6.26. The nature of this element of the proposal which is to extend the existing mooring basins necessarily requires excavation, as such it is not possible to consider the preservation of peat in-situ.
- 6.27. A peat stratigraphy report was submitted in support of the application, this noted that 'the general condition of the peat resource within the area to be excavated is considered to be 'Moderate' to 'Good', reflecting the substantial modification of a proportion of the primary peat by the historic placement of dredged material and hard core and some historic excavation leading to the development of secondary peat'.
- 6.28. In seeking to reduce the amount of harm to the minimum possible, the report advises that the footprint of the new basins has been designed to ensure minimal landtake, having been reduced from 10810m² to 9480m², and avoids areas of semi-natural vegetation where active peat formation is ongoing. Areas of the site where is no peat and areas of former turbary have been maximised. Together this does reduce the excavation of solid peat or well-consolidated secondary peat. It is therefore considered that the proposal satisfies criteria i) and ii) of Policy DM10.
- 6.29. The applicants have included as proposed mitigation measures that the Geological Society of Norfolk be invited to visit the site during excavation work to make records and take samples of the exposed geology. This would satisfy criterion iii) of Policy DM10.
- 6.30. In considering how to address the suitable depositing of the excavated peat various options for re-use of the peat local to the excavation have been considered, this included use on a site to the opposite side of the A149, deposit at another Richardsons site where excavation was under consideration, bank-restoration or other wetland restoration opportunities, the peat stratigraphy report concluding that there are no viable options on site, on the landholding available to Richardsons Ltd, or elsewhere in the upper Ant catchment which would not cause damage to habitats/protected wildlife or risk biosecurity implications'. Consequently, it is proposed that the excavated peat would be spread upon nearby arable land.
- 6.31. The spreading of excavated peat on nearby arable land does have some benefits which the peat stratigraphy report argues 'increase the levels of organic matter in the soils and so improve water retention and boost CO₂ uptake by those soils, increase uptake of fertilisers by crops and help prevent surface runoff'. Although it is not being disposed of in a way that will limit carbon loss to the atmosphere, it is considered on balance that this approach is not an unreasonable one given the constraints presented and the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the policy requirements under criterion iv) of DM10 have been met.
- 6.32. In conclusion, the proposed extension of the existing mooring basins are considered to be acceptable with regard to Policy DM10 and criterion f) of Policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Amenity of residential properties

- 6.33. The proposed new building and extended workshop are sited well away from neighbouring residential properties and so will not have an impact on residential amenity by virtue of the built form. There is minimal change to the overall number of moorings at the site, noting the change in the type of moorings provided. A new visitor centre is to be provided, along with an external play area, this has the potential to attract additional visitors to the site. However, given the size of the site, its layout and separation of the visitor provision from the residential areas, and the siting of the entrance which should ensure that traffic visiting the site does not pass the residential properties on The Staithe, the proposed changes to the site would not unduly impact on the amenity and privacy of the neighbouring residents with regard to Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Highways and public rights of way

- 6.34. Norfolk County Council has assessed the amended scheme, noting that 'the initial plans reduced parking provision and the detailed breakdown in that respect provided by the applicant indicated that the proposed provision would meet the requirements of the development, with the caveat that an addition 96 spaces could be achieved by "over spill" parking on the mooring sides. The plans now indicate that the "over spill" has significantly reduced or is not available, with drop off spaces clear being shown in those areas. However, whilst there is now limited flexibility or spare capacity, clearly it is evident that the parking provision still meets the original justified parking provision for the development. Likewise, I am minded that clear demarcation of parking will ensure both functionality of parking areas and also help to maximise the space available'.
- 6.35. According, the Highway Authority raise no objection to the revised proposals subject to conditions and an informative note. The proposal is therefore acceptable with regard to Policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Flood risk

- 6.36. The proposal includes the removal of 2 buildings to the central area of the site and 5 to the western side of the site. A new reception/visitor centre is proposed to the central area, and an extension added to one of the retained workshop buildings in the eastern part of the site. The proposed scheme has benefits from a flood risk point of view in terms of the expansion of the area of water through the expanded mooring basins, and the notable reduction in the footprint of buildings. The Environment Agency (EA) commented on the proposal, raising concerns over a lack of clarity regarding the floor level of the proposed visitor centre/reception, and in response to an erroneous comment in the submitted design and access statement which referred to land raising. The agent for the application has provided clarity on the floor level of the visitor centre/reception, clearly showing that it is at the minimum level required by the EA, and provided an amended design and access statement removing the reference to land raising as this does not part of the subject proposal. Whilst the information has been submitted to address the EA concerns and the proposed scheme would be acceptable

with regard to policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads, a formal consultation request has been sent to the EA for an updated response in light of the new information, this is expected to arrive after publication of this report, therefore members will be verbally updated on the contents of the updated EA consultation response.

- 6.37. In relation to overall flood risk at the site, the proposed works would reduce the footprint of the existing built form and extend various mooring areas. This would increase the flood water capacity at the site by a noticeable amount. The proposed visitor centre/reception has a raised ground floor level and includes a first floor which is positive in terms of flood resilience and site safety. The proposed works would contribute to an improvement overall at the site in relation to flood risk and is acceptable in relation to Policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads, subject to any updated consultation responses received.

Other issues

- 6.38. The application proposes 2 new visitor moorings. The proposed numbers are such that this is considered to be an adequate provision taking into account the change in mooring numbers are the policy requirement for visitor moorings under Policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposed development would provide an improvement to the existing mooring provision and allow for mooring types and numbers in keeping with the contemporary needs of the business. The removal of redundant buildings and provision of a modern visitor centre and reception will improve the appearance, layout, and function of the site. The proposed new building and workshop extension are considered to be acceptable in terms of size, design, and siting. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape and adjacent conservation area. There would be no adverse impact on ecology and designated sites, and no impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. The proposal is acceptable in terms of highways impact and flood risk. Consequently, the application is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM5, DM10, DM11, DM13, DM16, DM23, DM28, DM31, DM32, DM33, DM43, and STA1LP of the Local Plan for the Broads, along with the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1. Subject to no new issues raised by consultees, to approve with the following conditions:
- i. Standard time limit
 - ii. In accordance with approved plans
 - iii. Details of method statement for piling and dredging works

- iv. Details of Construction Environmental Management Plan
- v. Details of Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
- vi. Details of Pollution Prevention Plan
- vii. Details of all external materials including solar panels
- viii. Details of Arboricultural Method Statement
- ix. Details of landscaping scheme including a landscape management plan
- x. Replacement of trees or plants planted under landscape scheme
- xi. Details of extracted peat use. Spoil to be deposited in flood zone 1. Re-use within 7 days
- xii. Details of phase 2 assessment of the risks posed by any contamination
- xiii. Details of remediation scheme following phase 2 assessment
- xiv. Details of staging/piling/quayheading
- xv. Details of upgraded/widened vehicular access
- xvi. Details of provision for on-site parking for construction workers
- xvii. Details of visitor mooring sign - position, size, and design
- xviii. Details of the play equipment
- xix. Provision of silt curtains during all active works
- xx. Follow mitigation for reptiles, birds, breeding birds, and bats as set out in 5.2.1 of the EIA
- xxi. Habitat enhancement as set out in 6.2.2 of the EIA
- xxii. Provision of nest boxes and cups, and bat boxes, as set out in 6.3.1 of the EIA
- xxiii. No external lighting without agreement in writing
- xxiv. No residential mooring
- xxv. Short stay moorings retained
- xxvi. Provision of visibility splays
- xxvii. Access gates/bollard/chain/other means of obstruction - function and siting
- xxviii. Works for on-site car parking/servicing/turning/waiting areas

9. Reason for recommendation

- 9.1. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies DM5, DM10, DM11, DM13, DM16, DM23, DM28, DM31, DM32, DM33, DM43, and STA1LP 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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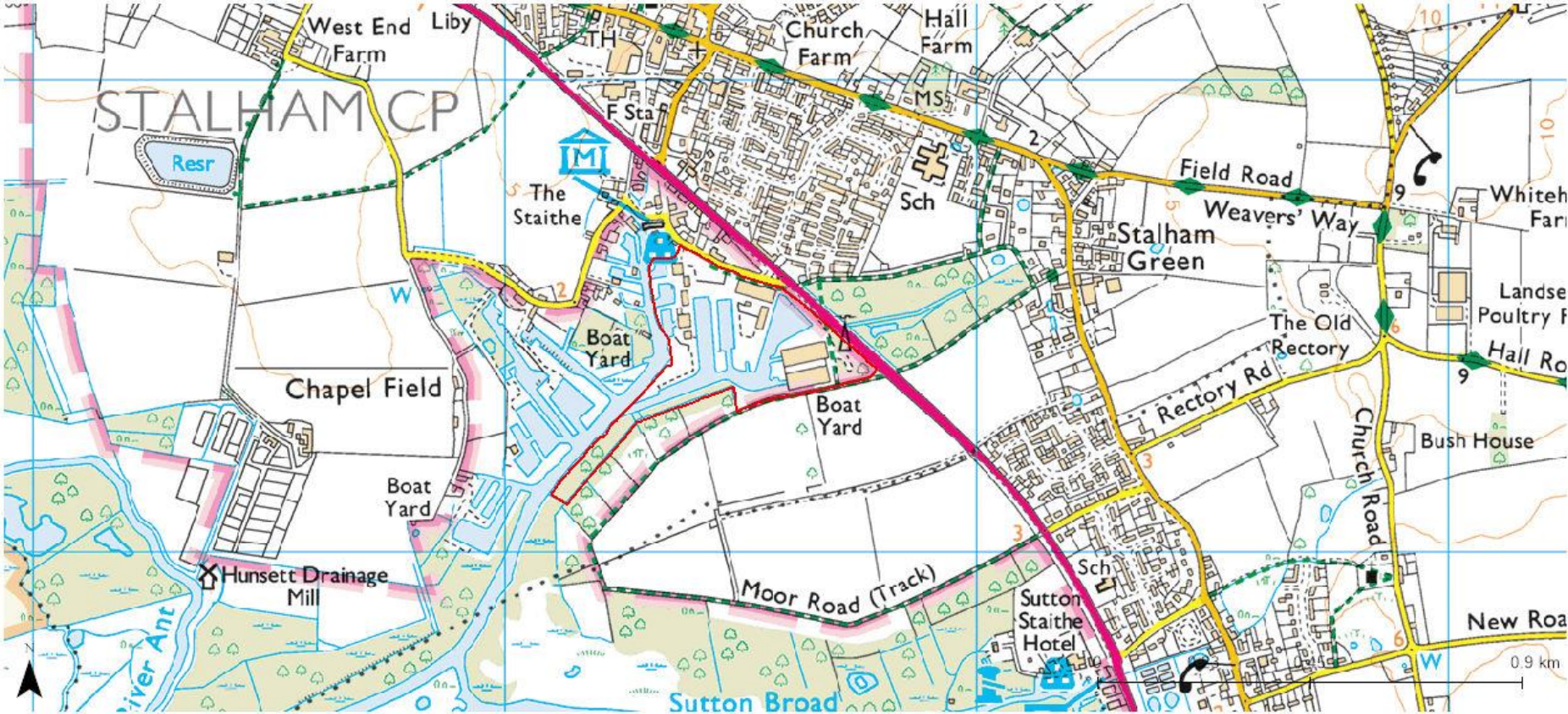
Date of report: 13 November 2025

Background papers: BA/2023/0443/FUL

Appendix 1 – [Location map](#)

Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2023/0443/FUL - Richardsons Boatyard, The Staithe, Stalham



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