

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 21 June 2012
Report of Head of planning services
Subject 12/00801/F River Bank South East Of 38 & 38A Friars Quay Norwich

Item
5(7)

SUMMARY

Description:	Installation of boardwalk to facilitate erection of a floating pontoon with a wooden ticket office and access via a gangway.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Mancroft
Contact Officer:	Mrs Joy Brown 01603 212542
Valid Date:	12 April 2012
Applicant:	Mr Ashley Dalton
Agent:	Mr Ashley Dalton

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The site is located on the north bank of the River Wensum to the east of St Georges Bridge. It is in close proximity to the Norwich Playhouse on St Georges Street, residential properties on Friars Quay and a public open space. On the south side of the river is the Norwich School of Art and Design.
2. The Broads Authority is the Local Planning Authority for the majority of the application site with only the western section of the site (the lower bank and steps) falling within Norwich City Council local planning authority area (see shading on site plan).
3. The site is situated within the City Centre Conservation Area.

Planning History

BA/2012/0103/FUL – Installation of a floating pontoon and ticket office to facilitate a punting operation on the River Wensum –Approved 27/04/2012 with conditions:-

- Standard time limit;
- In accordance with plans;
- Restricted Hours of operation (8.00am – 11.30pm);
- Operation by trained professionals employed by the ‘Norwich Punting Company’ only. No self-hire;
- All punts are to be securely locked out of hours of operation.

No other relevant planning history

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are significant equality or diversity issues relating to disabled access (see para 20)

The Proposal

4. The applicant seeks to install a floating pontoon which is 11.5m long and 2.3m wide which will run parallel with the bank. It is also proposed to have a cedar plank ticket office on the eastern end of the pontoon. A boardwalk and gangway will link the pontoon to the lower bank and existing steps. The site would be operated by the Norwich Punting Company.
5. The pontoon has already been granted planning permission by the Broads Authority (App. No. BA/2012/0103/FUL); however as the application site falls within both the Broads Authority and Norwich City Council area, permission is required from both local planning authorities. Members should however be aware that consideration should only be given to the part of the proposal that falls within the Norwich City Council area. In summary this is only the boardwalk on the lower bank which links and provides access from the existing steps to the pontoon and ticket office which already has planning permission.

Representations Received

6. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 9 letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.
- 7.

Issues Raised	Response
Support the proposed punting business as it will enable people to enjoy the river.	See paragraph 12
The whole visual aspect is low key in keeping with the delights of this lovely urban park.	See paragraphs 14 - 16
The proposal is liable to create a	This is not relevant to the part of the

statutory noise nuisance to neighbouring residents, especially if music is played on a stationary punt at the pontoon. No music should be allowed from stationary punts.	application that falls within Norwich City Council.
The proposal should include a locked safety gate to prevent easy access to the pontoon.	This is included within the plans.
The hours of proposed use are not clear	This is not relevant to the part of the application that falls within Norwich City Council.
Local residents should be given contact details so issues can be addressed should they arise.	This is not relevant to the part of the application that falls within Norwich City Council.
Lopping of the willow tree branches should be considered so CCTV can overlook the fishing stage and pontoon	See paragraph 17
The punt operator should be responsible for picking up of litter.	This is a management issues.
Only guided punts should be operated.	This is not relevant to the part of the application that falls within Norwich City Council.
The Broads Angling Strategy group and other anglers object as it would result in a further loss of valuable angling access along this stretch of the river. Alternative sites for punting should be considered.	See paragraph 13
A condition should be attached to any permission stating that parking on nearby streets is for residents and pointing people to the nearby public car parks.	This is not relevant to the part of the application that falls within Norwich City Council.
Could the developer provide a new bench for people who want to watch the punts?	This is not relevant to the part of the application that falls within Norwich City Council.

Consultation Responses

8. Broads Authority – Supports the application for the linking timber walkway which would help facilitate the operation of the punting pontoon and ticket office. It is considered that the walkway has been appropriately designed and scaled and matches the development proposed for the river. The fact that access remains to the existing concrete platform is welcomed.
9. Local Highway Authority – No objection subject to travel information plan and refuse statement.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

- Statement 7 – Requiring good design
- Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Statement 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Statement 8 – Promoting healthy communities
- Statement 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011

- Policy 1 – Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
- Policy 2 – Promoting good design
- Policy 11 – Norwich City Centre

Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

- HBE8 - Development in Conservation Areas
- HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments
- EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
- TVA1 – Proposals for new visitor attractions - access
- TVA3 – Waterborne tourism and river moorings

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

10. The pontoon and ticket office has already been granted planning permission by the Broads Authority and consideration should only be given to the part of the proposal that falls within the Norwich City Council area. This is the boardwalk on the lower bank which links and provides access from the existing steps to the pontoon and ticket office.
11. The main issues for consideration are design, impact upon the conservation area, impact upon tourism and recreation, flood risk and access. It is not considered that the provision of the boardwalk itself will have any impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents. This issue was addressed by the Broads Authority when considering the potential impact that the pontoon and punting business may have upon nearby residents.

Tourism and Recreation

12. The provision of a boardwalk to provide access to the pontoon, ticket office and punts will facilitate and help support and promote the recreational use of the River Wensum in accordance with policy TVA3 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.
13. Concern has been raised by a number of local anglers as the lower bank has historically been used to fish. However as the lower bank can still be accessed and as only a small proportion of it will be taken up by the boardwalk, it is not considered that the proposal will unduly impact upon this facilities. Furthermore the

applicant has confirmed that they are prepared to offer anglers access to the pontoon provided that it does not impede upon staff, customers and the safe operation of punting tours.

Design and impact on conservation area

14. The site is situated within the city centre conservation area and as such it is important that the proposal is of good design and does not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
15. The boardwalk is to be situated on the lower bank and particularly due to screening provided by the nearby willow tree and as the boardwalk is lower than the main bank, it is not visible from many views. Where it is visible it is considered that the design is both functional and simple and makes use of appropriate materials. As such it is considered that the design is acceptable, appropriate for its riverside setting and will not impact upon the character of the conservation area.
16. With regards to signage, the applicant has confirmed that they have no intention to display advertisements on the outside of the ticket office nor will they have any independent 'A' boards. This will prevent there being any visual impact on the locality or unnecessary cluttering of the pathway adjacent to the steps. An informative should be attached to any permission, notifying the applicant that advertisement consent may be required for the display of adverts on or adjacent to the site.

Trees and landscaping

17. The overhanging trees on site form a very attractive vista along the river. If it is considered that 'crown lifting' is required, any works must be agreed in advance with the Arboricultural Officer. An informative should be attached to any permission, notifying the applicant of this.

Floodrisk

18. It is not considered that the proposal will result in an adverse impact on flood risk. The pontoon and connecting ramp which are in the Broads Authority area would rise and fall with the tide and the lower bank and boardwalk would be allowed to flood.

Transport and Access

19. It is not considered that the proposed business will have a significant traffic impact as the site is centrally located with most customers likely to arrive on foot or by cycle. The local highway officer has confirmed that they have no objection to the proposal subject to confirmation that a Travel Information Plan and refuse statement will be submitted. However as the part of the proposal that is within the Norwich City Council area only facilitates the operation of the business and does not involve the consideration of the business itself it is not considered reasonable to require either a Travel Information Plan or refuse statement in this instance.
20. Handrails and balustrades have been provided (on part of the boardwalk and the hinged gangway) to give a high level of safety to customers and it is considered necessary to condition that the boardwalk will be treated with an anti slip coating to improve safety. The design and access statement explains that the access arrangements will enable a degree of negotiable access for disabled customers but full wheelchair access is not practical as the existing 8 steps will be used as the

point of access from the surrounding land. The operator has confirmed he would be pleased to offer assistance to any disabled person who wishes to go on a punt ride. This is considered acceptable in this instance given the constraints of the site.

Conclusions

21. The proposed boardwalk will facilitate the use of the pontoon and ticket office which have already been granted planning permission by the Broads Authority. This will help support and promote the recreational use of the River Wensum whilst not unduly impacting upon the existing angling facility. The proposal is of good design, will not have a harmful impact upon the city centre conservation area and will not have any significant transport implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation

To approve Application No 12/00801/F and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

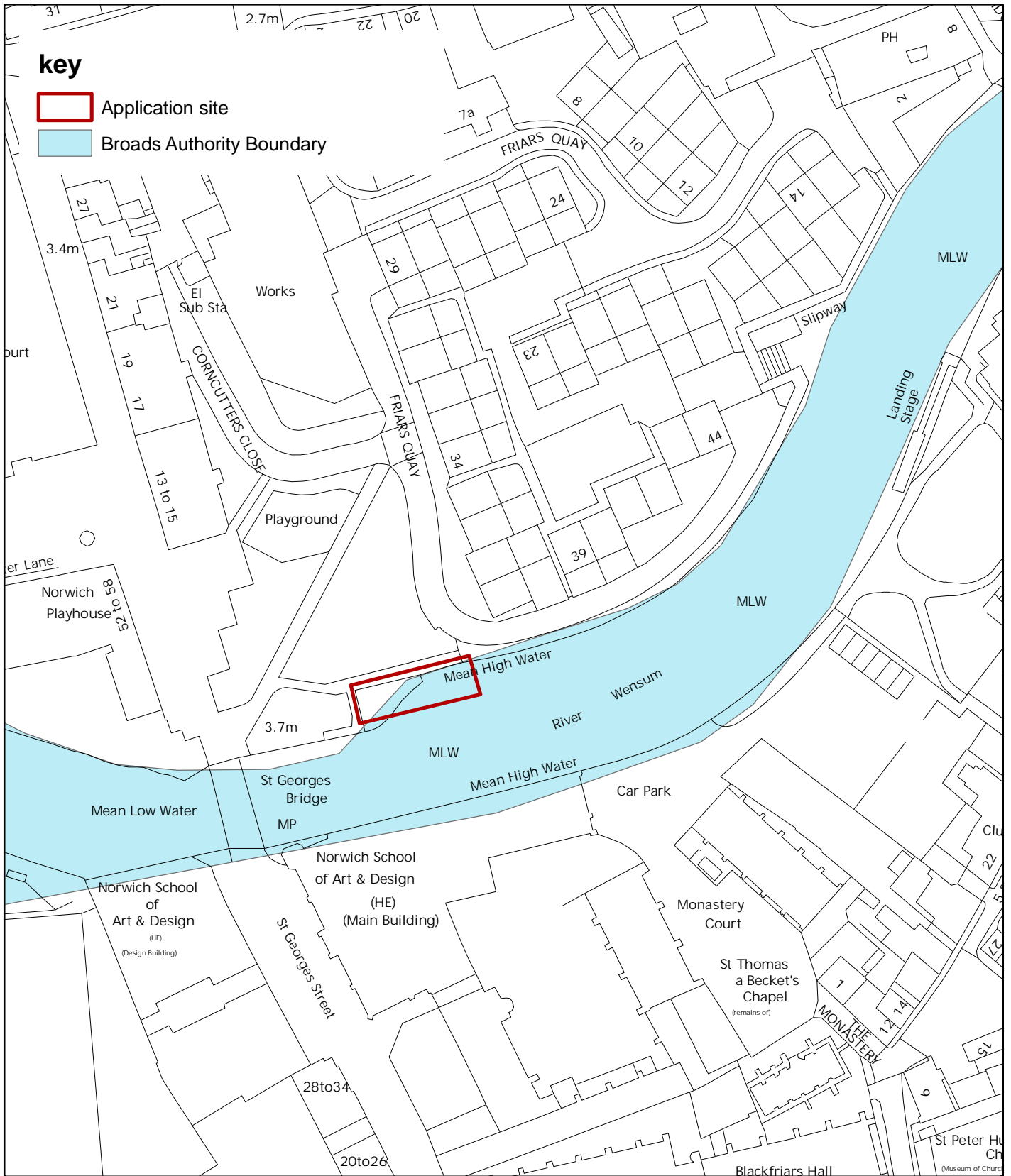
- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) In accordance with plans
- 3) Boardwalk to be treated with anti slip coating

Informatives

- 1) Any on site and off site advertisements may require advertisement consent
- 2) Consent will be required for any works to nearby trees

Reasons for Recommendation:

The development is considered in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework; policies 1, 2 and 11 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and saved policies HBE8, HBE12, EP22, TVA1 and TVA3 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan.



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Planning Application No 12/00801/F

Site Address

Erection of a floating pontoon with a wooden ticket office and access via a gangway

Scale

1:1,000



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

