

CHELMONDISTON – FORESHORE IN FRONT OF, THE BARGES, PIN MILL.

Retention of 1 No. mooring post and erection of 15 No. mooring posts for house boats.

Applicant: Babergh District Council

Case Officer: Richard Collins

BACKGROUND

The application is reported to Development Committee as Babergh District Council are the applicants.

SITE

1. The application site comprises the foreshore at Pin Mill, downstream of the Butt & Oyster, which is within the Suffolk Coasts & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the Consultation Zone for the Orwell Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest. The foreshore area is comprised of National Trust woodland and is used for the mooring of houseboats, with some of these moored by ropes tied around the mature trees.

PROPOSAL

2. Planning permission is sought to erect 15 No. mooring posts and to retain 1 No. mooring post. The mooring post is a 1.8 metre long telegraph pole, with 0.6 metres visible above ground, and 1.2 metres below ground. Two bearing boards one metre in length would be attached to the pole below ground to act as supports.
3. This application has been made following a complaint from the National Trust as houseboats were using the trees to act as moorings. These proposed moorings if approved should remove the need for vessels to be attached to the trees, and were designed by the National Trust and approved by the representative of the houseboat owners on their behalf. The application is an initiative generated from the Pin Mill Task Group, which represents all the interested parties at Pin Mill with the design being a co-ordinated effort between Babergh District Council, the National Trust and the houseboat owners.
4. This application is only designed to include mooring posts for those houseboats currently moored to the National Trust trees.

PLANNING HISTORY

5. There is a substantial planning history on the Barges along the Pin Mill foreshore. It is not considered relevant to include this history for this application.

POLICY

Please note that details or extracts of policies are no longer included in reports - see page 4 of these papers

6. The following national planning guidance notes and adopted development plan policies provide the framework against which this application should be judged:

Suffolk Structure Plan 2001 Policies

- ENV7 – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006) Policies *the policy references below relate to the adopted version of the Local Plan - the policy numbers in some cases differ from those in the second deposit draft. Where this is the case, the previous reference number is given in brackets*

- CR01 – Protection of the countryside
- CR02 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- EN08 (CR19) - Character and ecology of estuaries
- CR15 (CR27) - Mooring of houseboats
- CR16 (CR28) – New & replacement Jetties and storage buildings.

OBSERVATIONS

7. PC – Recommend refusal on engineering grounds. This recommendation is based on the fact that posts with bearing boards installed in an open hole with back-fill, whilst being sited only 1 metre from the bank, will prove to be totally inadequate for the safe mooring of 1 houseboat, let alone the plan projection of up to 3 houseboats. This bank is in no way suitably robust and compacted for the duty that is envisaged. It is suggested that these posts are re-sited with a minimum of 2 metres from the bank edge and are installed in deep concrete foundations or sinkers.
8. EA – No objection to the development in flood risk terms or ecological grounds.
9. Suffolk Coasts and Heaths – Any comments received to be reported verbally at the meeting.
10. The National Trust – The proposals have been formulated in discussion with National Trust staff and that the implementation will make a considerable improvement to the appearance of the Pin Mill foreshore. The Trust is happy to fully support the application.
11. English Nature – Any comments received to be reported verbally at the meeting.
12. Pin Mill Preservation Society – Any comments received to be reported verbally at the meeting.
13. Letters - One letter of objection received, the points are summarised below;
 - Proposed posts will not create strong enough moorings to withstand the enormous force that a barge can exert in heavy weather and/or strong wash.

- The wooden markers that have been put in to show the proposed positions are very close to trees and the excavations are likely to damage the roots.
- The wooden marker next to Dolfijn is so close to the edge of the bank that the excavation is likely to weaken the bank so much that a barge moored to it could cause the bank to collapse.
- If a post was put in in front of Dolfijn I would not use it as both the bank and barge will be endangered.

ASSESSMENT

14. The foreshore area of Pin Mill is owned by the National Trust, and comprises various mature trees, as well as access gangways to the houseboats. Many of these houseboats are moored to these mature trees. One mooring post is already in situ, with the houseboat Ganapati Kumari moored to this.
15. The policy relevant to the determination of this application is Policy CR16 (CR28), which states that planning permission will not be granted for any structures on land adjacent to the houseboats at Pin Mill, except in the case of proposals necessary for delivering utility services or to act as mooring posts. In this instance, only 0.6 metres (2 feet) of the mooring post will be visible above ground level, and as such the wider impact of the proposal on the countryside or the AONB is insignificant.
16. These mooring posts should prevent vessels attaching themselves to the trees, hence the support from the National Trust. It is considered that the mooring posts will at least provide an authorised mooring, and reduce any future damage to the trees.
17. The Parish Council's comments are noted. However, the structural integrity of each installation is individual and it is impossible to show each one separately. This planning application is to accept a principle on a design used by the National Trust, with the objective to remove the source of the damage to the mature trees. With regards to each mooring post, the intention is to carefully place these in conjunction with the agreement of the individual houseboat resident.
18. In view of the above and having regard to the relevant Development Plan and its policies, the following recommendation is made.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

The proposal, for the retention of 1 No. mooring post and erection of 15 No. mooring posts for houseboats, is considered to be in accordance with the provisions of policies CR01, CR02, CR16, CR15 and EN08 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006). In particular, the development will not be detrimental to the landscape setting of the Orwell estuary, and the development would have due regard to the landscape characteristics of the locality by way of safeguarding the existing mature trees on the foreshore.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant (Planning Permission)

DECISION