

London Borough of Hillingdon
3 North Civic Centre
High Street
Uxbridge
Middlesex
UB8 1UW

Your Ref 2382/APP/2023/2906

Our Ref CRTR-PLAN-2023-40379

Wednesday 6 December 2023

Dear Michael Briginshaw,

Proposal: Redevelopment of the site to create the Hillingdon Watersports Facility and Activity Centre including demolition of existing Broadwater Lake Sailing Club (BSC) clubhouse at the north of the lake and erection of a building to be occupied by HOAC and BSC including changing facilities, meeting rooms, storage, Workshop and seasonal worker accommodation (sui generis), activeworks...helters; installation of pontoons and concrete slipways; boat shed; equipment storage huts (north of lake and at entrance); boat parking and racking areas; camping area; outdoor activity areas; ecological enhancement throughout the site; new pedestrian routes through the peninsula; landscaping including new woodland, dense vegetation screens and boundary treatment; new access and access road; localised dredging and land reclamation; relocation of existing sailing area and creation of floating and fixed islands within the lake; coach drop off and turning area; vehicle parking; cycle parking; and associated works

Location: Broadwater Lake, Moorhall Road, Harefield

Waterway: Grand Union Canal

Thank you for your consultation.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural, and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process.

The Trust own and manage the Grand Union canal which lies to the east of the site. There is an existing bridge (no.179), which is included within the red line site area, although this bridge crosses the canal, it is not owned by the Trust.

There are a number of mooring points along this stretch and to the north, a section of the canal falls within the Coppermill Lock conservation area (CA). At the southern end of the site the canal is within the Widewater lock CA, both of the CAs also contain listed locks and associated lock cottages. The site has an extensive boundary with the canal with both being designated nature conservation sites of metropolitan importance and the site itself forming part of the designated Mid Colne Valley SSSI. Considering the proximity to the canal and extent of shared boundary it is extremely important that any proposals fully consider the potential impacts to the canal corridor during both construction and operation of the site.

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 **E:** nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** canalrivertrust.org.uk

The main issues relevant to the Trust as statutory consultee on this application are:

- a. Bridge crossing
- b. Canal boundary and towpath access.
- c. The impact on water quality
- d. Accessibility

Based on the information available our substantive response (as required by the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)) is to advise that suitably worded **conditions are necessary** to address these matters. Our advice and comments follow:

Bridge crossing

There is an existing bridge crossing of the canal to the east of the site which is currently unused and access across it restricted. The submission indicates that the bridge would not be reopened for pedestrian/cyclist access, but any crossing would be utilised only for cable crossings in association with the proposed development. The proposals for the bridge itself though are not clear, the Detailed Construction Logistics Plan states that the proposal is to remove the bridge and replace with a utilities gantry whereas the Utilities Report refers to the bridge being refurbished. The applicant/developer should provide further clarity on the proposals here and if it is development that needs planning permission it ought to be included within this Application.

With any development close to the waterway there is the potential for adverse impacts on the infrastructure of the canal in terms of stability, drainage, pollution etc. The Trust recommends that whenever the opportunity arises to remove existing service crossings, for instance when it is in need of renewal, the services should preferably be diverted under the waterway. The applicant/developer will need to engage further with the Trust on their proposals for any service crossings and provide the rationale for their approach.

The Trust generally recommend that any proposals for a bridge crossing should include pedestrian and cycle access to/from the canal towpath via a suitable graded access to improve walking and cycling connectivity with the towpath. It is noted that the current intention is not to open the bridge for pedestrian/cycle traffic due to landowner restrictions on the eastern side of the canal. However, further consideration of the implications of this will be necessary once further detail on the proposed scheme for the crossing itself is submitted for consideration.

Any new crossing or changes to the visual appearance of the structure will need to be reviewed to ensure the design is appropriate to the existing character and appearance of the waterway corridor. A Heritage Assessment of the existing bridge would need to be undertaken and utilised to inform the proposals. The Trust's current preference would be to retain the existing bridge, though any scheme will need to give consideration to incorporating the historic bridge abutments and wing walls.

The visual impacts and effectiveness of measures that would be necessary to restrict pedestrian/cycle access onto and across the bridge deck will also need to be fully considered. It is likely that in the absence of properly designed measures to restrict access, informal access will be created by those wishing to access the bridge crossing and canal corridor. This could lead to adverse impacts on structural integrity, compromise the safety of waterway users and adversely impact on visual amenity. Whether works would preclude the creation of a link in the future also needs to be considered.

The Trust, as landowner, will require detailed design /drawings and construction methodology for works to the bridge / cable crossing as part of our own approval process. The applicant is also advised to review the Canal &

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 E: nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: canalrivertrust.org.uk

River Trust "Code of Practice for Works affecting the Canal & River Trust" as all works will need to adhere to the Code.

Furthermore, detail on the future ownership, maintenance and technical approval authority for any bridge crossing will be required and it should be noted that the Trust will not take on the future ownership or maintenance of any bridge crossing. Additional information on the cable crossings proposed will also be required and as detailed above, this should include consideration as to whether cable crossings could be accommodated underneath the canal.

The proposals for the existing bridge and proposed utilities crossings could be addressed by condition and the Trust wish to be consulted on any information submitted in relation to crossings of the canal. However, we strongly recommend the applicant/developer contact the Trust to discuss this further prior to any formal submission to address any practical issues around development works on, over or adjacent to Trust land/water space. We currently run a free pre-application advice service and encourage applicants to engage with us as early as possible on any proposed or amended canal crossings. Further information can be found via our website: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design/our-statutory-consultee-role/what-were-interested-in/pre-application-advice>

Canal boundary and towpath access.

The proposed works would largely be set back substantially from the canal corridor and whilst the impact of the proposed buildings may be limited, this will depend on the retention of existing canalside vegetation, particularly at the southern end of the site where the main concentration of buildings would be located. There should be strengthening of the existing vegetation and potential new planting wherever possible, though particularly within the peninsula area.

As advised previously, additional landscaping and the provision of a reedbed in front of the proposed water sports centre would further aid in screening the development from the canal's outward perspective, whilst also providing new habitat for breeding birds.

The proposals still indicate 2.4m high weld mesh fencing is proposed along the length of the site boundary with the canal with 2no. lockable access gates to allow new managed site access to the canal. Any fencing should be sited to avoid tree root protection zones and existing planting to ensure the existing character and biodiversity of the waterway corridor is retained.

The proposals indicate that hedging will be provided alongside the proposed fencing which will aid in mitigating its visual impact, though it is disappointing to note that native planting is not currently proposed along the full boundary. The submission does however indicate that full details of the proposed boundary treatment will be addressed by condition and the Trust wish to be consulted on this detail when available.

The impact on biodiversity and water quality

Potential contamination of the waterway and ground water from wind blow, seepage or spillage at the site should be avoided and details of pollution prevention measures and response plan should be provided. The details of any further intrusive site investigations should be submitted for consideration, and it should be ensured that any drainage strategy considers and is informed by the results and recommendations of the site investigations, with surface water during construction and operation of the site avoiding or incorporating appropriate mitigation measures if passing through any contamination hotspots.

Works should also be carried out at appropriate times to avoid adverse impacts to nesting birds / bats etc. This could be addressed by the imposition of a condition requiring the submission of a Construction and

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 E: nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: canalrivertrust.org.uk

Environmental Management Plan. As detailed above the Construction Logistics Plan will need to be updated/amended in respect of the bridge crossing works.

Accessibility

The Trust generally seeks to maintain its assets in a “steady state”, and in the case of towpath maintenance, this is based on current usage. Where new development has the likelihood to increase usage the Trust’s maintenance liabilities will also increase, and we consider that it is reasonable to request a financial contribution from developers to either cover increased maintenance costs, or to upgrade the towpath surface to a standard which is more durable and thus able to accommodate increased usage without adding to the Trust’s future maintenance costs.

The canal towpath is an important traffic free route for walking / cycling. There are existing access points from the towpath close to the site entrance and the canal could provide linkages between the site and the urban areas to the south, including access to train and underground stations.

It is possible the current predicted level of the use of the site could increase substantially in the future and if it is considered that additional investment in the local area to support the development could be accommodated, then supporting the improvement of active travel links to the site would be a good local benefit, along the towpath hosting NCN6, linking key population areas to the site. The Trust have been discussing with Hillingdon Council the opportunities to improve the towpath between Uxbridge and Harefield and would be happy to discuss this further to determine whether this application may be able to support those improvements.

For clarity, we recommend that **conditions** relating to the following matters relevant to the Trust should be imposed on any approval:

- Full details of the proposals for the existing bridge crossing and any new structures or cables crossing under or over the Grand Union canal. This should include a heritage assessment, bat roost assessment, detail of any temporary or permanent lighting, detailed construction methodology and future maintenance and management regimes and responsibilities.
- Details of boundary treatment to the Grand Union canal boundary including fencing, soft landscaping and future maintenance and management regimes and responsibilities.
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan

Should planning permission be granted we also request that the following **informatives are** appended to the decision notice:

- 1) *There is some land /water space within the red line site area which is within the ownership of the Canal & River Trust. Although there is an existing lease of the Trust’s airspace for the bridge, any works or changes to the bridge and cable crossings may require further commercial agreements/licences from the Trust. Changes to the bridge crossing may also require consent from DEFRA. Please contact Bernadette McNicholas, Estates Surveyor (Bernadette.mcnicholas@canalrivertrust.org.uk) to discuss these matters further and any commercial agreements/licences in respect of access points from the site to the towpath.*
- 2) *The applicant/developer is advised to contact the Works Engineering Team on 0303 040 4040 in order to ensure that any necessary consents are obtained and that the works comply with the Canal & River Trust “Code of Practice for Works affecting the Canal & River Trust”.*

For us to monitor effectively our role as a statutory consultee, please send me a copy of the decision notice and the requirements of any planning obligation.

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW
T: 0151 355 5017 E: nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk W: canalrivertrust.org.uk

Comments as Landowner

There is some land /water space within the red line site area which is within the ownership of the Trust. However, we advise that no Notice appears to have been served on us by the Applicant.

Although there is an existing lease of the Trust's airspace for the bridge, any works or changes to the bridge and cable crossings may require further commercial agreements/licences from the Trust. Changes to the bridge crossing may also require consent from DEFRA. Please contact Bernadette McNicholas, Estates Surveyor to discuss these matters further and any commercial agreements/licences in respect of access points from the site to the towpath.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Denby MRTPI

Area Planner

Anne.Denby@canalrivertrust.org.uk

07920 115389

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/specialist-teams/planning-and-design>

Canal & River Trust Planning Team

Canal & River Trust, National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port South Pier Road Ellesmere Port Cheshire CH65 4FW

T: 0151 355 5017 **E:** nationalwaterwaysmuseum@canalrivertrust.org.uk **W:** canalrivertrust.org.uk