

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Packet Boat Marina, Packet Boat Lane,
Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 2JJ

British Waterways Marinas Limited (BWML)



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Copy of pre-application response from London Borough of Hillingdon; dated 13th December 2013.

Appendix 2 BWML Mooring Definitions

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This Planning Supporting Statement is submitted by British Waterways Marinas Limited (BWML) in respect of Packet Boat Marina, Packet Boat Lane, Uxbridge. The planning application seeks planning permission for:-

“Change of use of 10 of the existing Grade 1 leisure moorings to full residential status”.

- 1.2. BWML are in the process of reviewing their entire business strategy in respect of all their marinas across the UK and are seeking to work with a number of Councils in order to reclassify some of the residential berths. Including Packet Boat Marina, some marinas already have the benefit of planning permission for full residential occupation in a proportion of their moorings. Recent permissions for residential occupation include:

- 20% of berths at Priory Marina, Bedford
- 50% of berths at White Bear Marina, Chorley
- 50% of berths at Poplar Dock Marina, London
- 33% of berths at Limehouse Basin Marina, London
- 15% of berths at Ripon Marina, Ripon
- 20% of berths at Diglis Basin Marina, Worcester
- 20% of berths at Lemonroyd Marina, Leeds
- 20% of berths at Hull Marina, Hull

- 1.3. This Statement follows detailed consideration of the proposal's planning merits and an analysis of the Development Plan and all material considerations including national government guidance.

- 1.4. In order to fully assess this application, this statement should be read in conjunction with the following information:

- Completed applications forms and ownership certificate;
- Drawing PBMR/001 – Site Location Plan;
- Planning Supporting Statement;
- Flood Risk Assessment, produced by Weetwoods;

- 1.5. There has been a substantial growth in boat ownership on the UK's inland waterway network. This is due to the improved amenity value of the waterways, such as the canal system, through urban regeneration and increased investment in the overall network. As a consequence there is increased pressure on the UK's waterways as a whole and increasingly there is more demand for moorings with their full time residential occupation.

- 1.6. Some water based recreational uses raise issues in respect of sustainability, rural protection, amenity and ecology but such uses can also result in a positive overall impact in providing access to the countryside, the UK's waterways and to outdoor sport and recreation. It is usually the physical manifestations of water sports that are likely to cause most concern to planning authorities in terms of the addition of boathouses, launch ramps, jetties and so on.
- 1.7. Where a use is already established and there is merely a change of use such matters will not be a consideration, as in this case.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE SUBMISSION

- 2.1. Prior to the submission of the planning application, a pre-application package was submitted to the Council for consideration. The purpose of the pre-application was to establish whether the Council could support the change of use in principle and to ascertain the level of information and range of supporting documentation required for the formal submission of the application.
- 2.2. Following the submission of the pre-application package in June 2013, a formal letter of response from the Council dated 13 December 2013 (Appendix 1) outlined the relevant issues and outstanding matters requiring attention as well as points of agreement. In brief these were identified as follows;
 1. The proposal would not increase the total number of moorings within the marina as the ten moorings already exist and are used by boat owners on a semi-permanent basis for unlimited leisure use;
 2. The use of moorings for permanent residency within Packet Boat Marina has already been established with 20 existing residential moorings;
 3. No change to existing facilities on site including toilet/shower facilities, car parking and refuse;
 4. Flood Risk Assessment required as site falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3.
- 2.3. Each of the above has been addressed and / or justified as part of the planning application and the resultant scheme should therefore be to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site falls within the jurisdiction of The London Borough of Hillingdon being located centrally between Uxbridge and West Drayton. Packet Boat Marina is situated on the Grand Union Canal at the junction with the Slough Arm which provides waterway access to the East Midlands waterway network. The site is attractively landscaped and is located in a highly sustainable location with easy access to the M25 and M4 motorways. West Drayton railway station is located close to the site along as well as Uxbridge tube station. Frequent bus routes along High Road also provides additional transport amenity. The marina is a well used and well managed marina under the control of the Canal and River Trust and leased to BWML and contains 157 moorings. Access to the moorings is secure with gated access onto the marina.
- 3.2. The marina in itself is a fairly recent development having only been constructed in circa 2001. The marina currently houses a visitor building, toilet block, car parking and associated landscaping. The marina was constructed by the Canal and River Trust (formally known as British Waterways). BWML lease the site along with a number of other marinas across the UK. BWML have their own Mooring Berth Definitions which range from Full Residential Status to Grade 3 (Appendix 2).
- 3.3. The degree of service provision available to residents in any marina at any site is dictated by the degree of residential status afforded to them. So, for example, those who enjoy full residential access for 365 days a year are able to take advantage of the full range of facilities on the site along with their right to be included on the electoral register and make use of local facilities, namely schools, doctors surgeries etc. Some berth holders only have very basic mooring rights (classed as Grade 3) and occupy the mooring for only a few months a year (usually April to October) with no car parking rights and no electrical or water connection at the mooring itself. There are degrees of occupancy operating throughout the marina and the residents pay according to which classification they fall within.
- 3.4. Packet Boat has 20 no. existing Residential Moorings, along with a number of Grade 1 and 2 status users and all berths have mains power and water. Other facilities are pump out, elsan, toilets, showers and laundry, rubbish disposal, security gates and car parking. There is a small office on site with local shops within walking distance including Tesco and Uxbridge or West Drayton town centre. The site is accordingly highly sustainable.
- 3.5. The marina forms part of the Green Belt and is a Nature Conservation Site of Metropolitan or Borough Grade I Importance. It also forms part of the Colne Valley Regional Park. The Water's Edge Public House and the boatyard of the marina also form part of the Cowley Lock Conservation Area which adjoins the application site to the north.

4. THE PROPOSALS

- 4.1. The planning application seeks planning permission for a change of use of 10 of the existing leisure moorings (Grade 1) to full residential status. Currently, the owners of the Grade 1 moorings can access their boats on an unlimited basis, 365 days a year, but are unable to occupy the boats on a full residential basis without planning permission. This application seeks for obtain the planning permission necessary for owners to do this. A copy of the BWML berth definitions in attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.2. All other aspects of the site layout including levels of car parking, refuse and toilet/shower facilities would remain the same.
- 4.3. The site is well landscaped and is secure and well managed with private security gates at the access to the site through the nearby commercial/residential development
- 4.4. An approval would result in a consistent level of occupancy in line with other sites that have been newly built with planning approval for full residential status. For example, planning permission was granted in respect of BWML's site in Newark, Nottinghamshire when the marina was built in 2000. More recently, 30 berths at BWML's Hull Marina, Hull, were granted planning approval for full residential use. The application was granted consent in 2012.
- 4.5. The proposals for an additional 10 residential moorings would result in a number of benefits, as follows:
 - The full residential use of the moorings would meet the increasing demand for full residential rights and meet the steady growth in boat ownership and occupation throughout the UK;
 - The occupancy of the boats 365 days a year would provide a type of much needed low cost home in the area;
 - Residential moorings would represent an environmentally low impact home, using less electricity, gas and water than a conventional home;
 - Residents would enjoy access to the full range of facilities on and off-site, much within walking distance, which would help boost the local economy;
 - Residents could take advantage of local employment sources which would also boost the economy;
 - Formal residential use would enable the Council to charge Council Tax to the residents;
 - Residents could make use of the local facilities such as schools, health centres, libraries etc.;
 - Residents would have a formal postal address, which would assist in gaining bank accounts and other formal applications, such as new employment;
 - Residents would be included on the electoral register enabling them to vote in the area;

- The increased presence of boat occupiers throughout the year would increase security at the site achieved by their physical presence and increased surveillance;
- Visual enhancements to the site as more residents take a pride in the upkeep of their boats and immediate surroundings throughout the year.

5. PLANNING HISTORY AND POLICY CONTEXT

Planning History

- 5.1. Due to the fairly recent construction of the marina, there appears to be limited planning history associated with this site, some of which a bearing on these proposals. The specific planning applications are as follows:
- 53216/98/1499 – Construction of 93 berth marina with associated residential moorings, visitor centre, and retail area, sanitary station and car parking facilities. Permitted 3 March 1999.
 - 53216/APP/2009/672 – Change of use from Class A3 café to Class B1 office. Permitted 22 January 2010.
 - 53216/APP/2012/604 – The installation of eight railway sleeper walled gardens with gravel floors and a viewing platform. Permitted 25 July 2012.
- 5.2. It should be noted that application 53216/98/1499 for the original construction of the marina also had permission for no more than 10% of the moorings within the marina shall be used for permanent residential use. The reason for this being the development is considered appropriate as it is primarily contributing to open air leisure, water and recreational activities in the Green Belt.
- 5.3. Additional moorings have been installed since the original permission was granted in 1999. It is understood that these were permitted under Class B, Part 17, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended.

Development Plan

- 5.4. The starting point in the assessment of the scheme, as dictated by legislation, is the Development Plan which in this instance comprises the Local Plan Adopted November 2012 and the Unitary Development Plan Adopted in 1998.
- 5.5. There are some saved policies of the UDP that still remain in force after the Council Adopted the Local Plan in November 2012, some of which are relevant to the marina.

London Borough of Hillingdon UDP Adopted 1998, Saved Policies 27th Sept. 2007

- 5.6. Policy BE33 of the Saved Policies in the UDP states that applications for residential moorings will be assessed on the following criteria:
- (i) Residential moorings should be located on urban stretches of the canal and not on rural or open stretches where they would be incongruous and out of place;
 - (ii) They should be located so that they do not interfere with other uses of the canal, or use of the bank or towpath, and should generally be located off the canal in a marina or basin, or on the non-towpath side;

- (iii) The number and density of boats at any point should not be so great that they act as a barrier separating people on the bank from the canal, or exert a detrimental effect on the canal scene;
- (iv) Provision for service vehicles and car parking must be made in a form which will not adversely affect the amenity of the canal; and
- (v) Adequate service facilities must be provided.

We feel that the above criteria can be met in order to successfully achieve planning permission for residential moorings at the site.

Local Plan Part 1 Adopted November 2012

5.7. Policy EM2: Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Chains

As no physical works are proposed as part of the intended planning application, the change of use would not be inappropriate and no harm to the openness, therefore no harm to the Green Belt. It should be noted that the residential moorings would be indistinguishable from the leisure moorings. This view has been taken by other local authorities when assessing planning applications for residential moorings in Green Belt land.

6. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

6.1. Taking into account all the above and following the pre-application with the LPA, it is considered that the following are the key planning issues pertinent to this case:

- 1) The principle of the change of use in terms of the current operation of the marina and taking into account key planning policies;*
- 2) Impact on visual appearance of the site and the Green Belt;*
- 3) Flood Risk*
- 4) Impact on Highway Safety*
- 5) Ecology and Trees*

Principle of the change of use

- 6.2. The use of the marina for an additional 10 moorings is considered to be acceptable to the Council in the context of the aforementioned policies. If permission were granted, the full residential status at the site would help meet the growing demand for full time occupation of boats.
- 6.3. The application is a change of use for the marina only, and the existing 10 leisure moorings already operate on a Grade 1 mooring basis. There are no major operational developments other than those mentioned earlier which will ensure no significant impact on amenity or aesthetic appearance.
- 6.4. Significantly, the proposals would not result in harm to the operation of the marina or the character of the adjoining area, and they would result in the provision of a type of low cost housing to the benefit of the area.
- 6.5. Permitting the proposals would also facilitate investment at the site and attract users to the marinas for leisure purposes on a more regular basis.
- 6.6. The key point is that the moorings are already there and they are already in use by boat owners on a semi-permanent basis without any planning control. The proposal would not result in any increase in number of moorings, but would simply allow permanent residency of the moorings should owners so wish. There is only a marginal difference between Grade 1 users and full residential as defined by BWML, the main being that it would grant occupancy through a planning approval.
- 6.7. The Council, in their pre-application response, have acknowledged that there would not be an adverse impact on the marina given the way in which the berths are already used and given no increase in intensity. The conclusion was therefore that the principle of having residential moorings at the marina is acceptable.

Impact on the visual appearance of the site and the Green Belt.

- 6.8. Given the proposal is simply for a change of use, it is considered that there would be no visual impact, and therefore harm, to the visual appearance of the site, including impact on the character and appearance of the Green Belt. The site is also well landscaped and well managed generally.
- 6.9. The proposed use would not conflict with adjoining land uses as the area is characterised by existing housing and employment land which is adjacent to the site. The proposals are therefore appropriate here in land use terms as explained above.
- 6.10. The installation or construction of domestic paraphernalia by berth holders such as washing lines, sheds etc are strictly prohibited in accordance with BWML's terms and conditions when taking any type of mooring within the marina. This will also assist in ensuring the preservation of the setting of the Green Belt of which Packet Boat Marina sits in.

Flood Risk

- 6.11. According to the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) the proposed development site is located outside of the 1 in 1000 year flood outline and is therefore defined by the NPPF as being situated within Flood Zone 1. However as the site is greater than one hectare consequently a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) accompanies this application. There is no requirement for a Sequential Test as the proposal is for a change of use only.
- 6.12. In summary the report concluded that:
- There are no historical records of flooding from any source at the site and the site and access/egress route is considered to be at low risk of flooding from all sources.
 - Packet Boat Marina contains modular section moorings that are supported by floats and are secured to vertical piles. This allows moorings to rise and fall. The residential moorings will therefore be afforded free movement with any change in water level.
 - As the planning application is for the change of use of existing leisure moorings to residential moorings, there will be no change in impermeable areas at the site and therefore no changes in surface water runoff from the site.

Impact on Highway Safety

- 6.13. There would be no change to the way the site operates in this respect with access to the site remaining as existing. There are sufficient car parking spaces to accommodate the additional 10 residential moorings. There is also adequate car

parking space for visitors to the marina and this would not change as a result of these proposals. Details are provided in the accompanying site plan.

- 6.14. The site is located in a highly sustainable location close to alternative means of transport, other than a private car, including West Drayton railway station as well as Uxbridge tube station. Frequent bus routes along High Road also provides additional transport amenity.

Ecology and Trees

- 6.15. The nature of the proposed change of use will not result in an adverse impact upon ecology or trees.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. It is considered that this proposal is straightforward and acceptable. The scheme for full residential status of 10 existing berths is appropriate and will not result in any undue impacts in terms of the current operation of the marina. We feel that criteria detailed in Policy BE33 of the Saved Policies in the UDP that would preclude this type of development can be met by the existing site facilities. The LPA have raised some matters of detail which are addressed in this submission.
- 7.2. The proposal would result in a number of benefits to the marina itself, the occupiers of the moorings and the local economy. It will enable BWML to make continued investments in the marina to the benefit of existing and future users of the facilities. All such benefits are specified in Section 4.5 of this Statement.
- 7.3. As the moorings already exist there is no requirement for any operational development.
- 7.4. The site has an adequate level of car parking, cycle parking and bin storage, all of which are already in place. The site is also located in a highly sustainable location.
- 7.5. For all the above reasons it follows that the application is worthy of the grant of consent being in accordance with the relevant Policies.