

Planning Committee

11 October 2024

Agenda item number 9

BA/2024/0012/TPO Land at former Bridge Hotel The Causeway, Repps With Bastwick

Report by Historic Environment Manager

Summary

A Provisional Tree Preservation Order (TPO) has been served on three trees and one group of trees at the former Bridge Hotel site, The Causeway, Repps with Bastwick. A single objection to the TPO was received and so a site visit was attended by Members on 6 September 2024.

Recommendation

To consider whether to confirm the TPO. The officers' recommendation is that it is confirmed.

1. Background

- 1.1. As part of its obligation as a Local Planning Authority (LPA), the Broads Authority is required to serve Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on trees which are considered to be of amenity value and which are under threat. There are criteria set out in The Town and Country (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations) 2012 against which a tree must be assessed in order to determine whether it meets the threshold for protection.
- 1.2. This report explains how this process has been carried out in respect of three willows and a group of white willows at the former Bridge Hotel site, The Causeway, Repps with Bastwick (BA/2024/0012/TPO).

2. Tree Preservation Order procedure

- 2.1. There are two prerequisites which must be met for a tree to be considered for protection through a TPO. Firstly, the tree must be of amenity value, and secondly it must be under threat. There are many trees in the Broads (and elsewhere) which are of sufficient amenity value to qualify for TPO status, but which are not protected as they are not under threat. The TPO process is not a designation like, for example, a conservation area which is made following an assessment of particular character but is effectively a response to a set of circumstances.
- 2.2. Typically, the consideration of a tree for a TPO designation will arise in connection with either a Section 211 notification, notifying the authority of proposed works to trees within a conservation area or a development proposal, either through a formal planning

application or a pre-planning application discussion. At a site visit or when looking at photos or other visual representation, a case officer may see there is a tree on the site which is potentially of amenity value and under threat from the proposed development. The case officer will consult the Authority's Arboricultural Consultant, who may need to investigate further and will visit the site and make an assessment of the tree under the 2012 Regulations. If the tree is considered to meet the criteria in the Regulations, then a provisional TPO will be served.

- 2.3. After a provisional TPO has been served there is a consultation period, which gives the opportunity for the landowner and other interested parties to comment on it.
- 2.4. The Regulations require that a provisional TPO must be formally confirmed by the LPA within 6 months of it being served; if it is not confirmed then it will lapse.
- 2.5. The Authority's scheme of delegation allows provisional TPOs to be served and for non-controversial TPOs (i.e. where no objections have been received) to be confirmed by officers under delegated powers.
- 2.6. Where an objection has been received as part of the consultation process the decision on whether or not to confirm the provisional TPO is made by the Planning Committee.

3. The potential Tree Preservation Orders at the former Bridge Hotel site, The Causeway, Repps with Bastwick

- 3.1. The subject trees are white willows and willows.
- 3.2. The site was formerly occupied by the Bridge Hotel and is currently vacant with part of the space used for private car parking. It sits on the southern bank of the River Thurne, immediately to the south-east of the medieval Potter Heigham bridge (scheduled monument). The western boundary of the site is formed by The Causeway, which runs from Repps with Bastwick into Potter Heigham. The northern site boundary is formed by the river; the eastern boundary is adjacent to a boatyard and the southern boundary abuts a restaurant and amusement arcade. The site is a prominent one and sits in the heart of the settlement and immediately opposite a public open space on the northern river bank.
- 3.3. Group G1 is a group of semi-mature white willows with high growth potential, located towards the south-eastern corner of the site. They are large trees that are highly visible. T1 and T2 are both willows positioned close to the river's edge on the bank at the northern edge of the site. T1 is a veteran tree and T2 is a pollarded tree and although they both have decay within their base they have high visual amenity. T3 is a smaller pollarded white willow, again with decay within its base but again with high visual amenity.
- 3.4. Despite the decay, if properly managed, the trees should continue to thrive. It is considered that the large trees contribute greatly to the amenity of the local area and the wider Broads landscape. In May 2024 the Planning Inspector who considered the

appeal of the BA/2021/0490/FUL application stated, that ‘the proposal includes removing groups of willows on the north-west and north-east boundaries (grades C and B respectively)...I find the grade B group plays an important role in the landscape when looking from the river and also from the footpath to the east, as it softens the built form and infuses it with trees so characteristic of the area.’ He goes on to state, ‘I consider that by removing a grade B group of trees the scheme would fail to conserve a key characteristic of the Broads’. It is these grade B trees that are covered by the provisional TPO, along with a grade A tree (T1).

- 3.5. On 13 June 2024 a provisional TPO was served on the trees. This must be confirmed by 13 December 2024.
- 3.6. On 18 June 2024 a letter objecting to the TPOs was received.
- 3.7. On 6 September 2024 members undertook a site visit, viewing the trees from the surrounding area and the notes from this visit can be found at Appendix 2.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. Following the site visit, the provisional TPO is reported to Planning Committee for its consideration.
- 4.2. The Authority’s Arboricultural Consultant considers that the trees detailed in this report are worthy of a TPO due to the contribution that they make to the local and wider area, as explained at 3.4 above. An objection has been received and the following Statement of Case sets out those objections formally, along with the response from the Arboricultural Consultant.

No.	Representation	Response
1.	The trees do not contribute to the character and wider amenity of the site and surrounding area due to the trees possibly creating a breach to the river bank	The trees are all clearly visible on the river bank or close to it and are an integral part of both the riparian character of the site and surrounding area. The trees on the river frontage are all mature/veteran trees that have been managed as part of the on-going management of the site and to date have not caused undue concern. They also have important biodiversity value as mature native pollards and are important features within the immediate and wider Broads landscape.
2.	Concern that the willow trees on the site are invasive and have an aggressive root system that may cause damage both to the land and waterways.	Willow trees are an integral part of the Broads landscape and can be very vigorous. However, appropriate management of the trees, as can be seen on the river frontage,

No.	Representation	Response
		allows for these perceived potential risks to be managed.
3.	The TPO should not be confirmed so that the site can be developed and the area can be made presentable for both residents and visitors	The Tree Preservation Order does not, and is not intended to, preclude development or tidying up of the site. It is aimed at securing the necessary protection for the existing tree cover on the site as part of any future development. As always with TPOs and development in the Broads, we will work with the site owner to deliver the best possible outcome for both the environment (trees) and any prospective development.

4.3. Members should consider this Statement of Case when considering whether to confirm the TPO.

5. Recommendation

5.1. It is recommended that the provisional Tree Preservation Order at the former Bridge Hotel site, the Causeway, Repps with Bastwick is confirmed.

Author: Kate Knights

Date of report: 25 September 2024

Background papers: TPO (BA/2024/0012/TPO) file

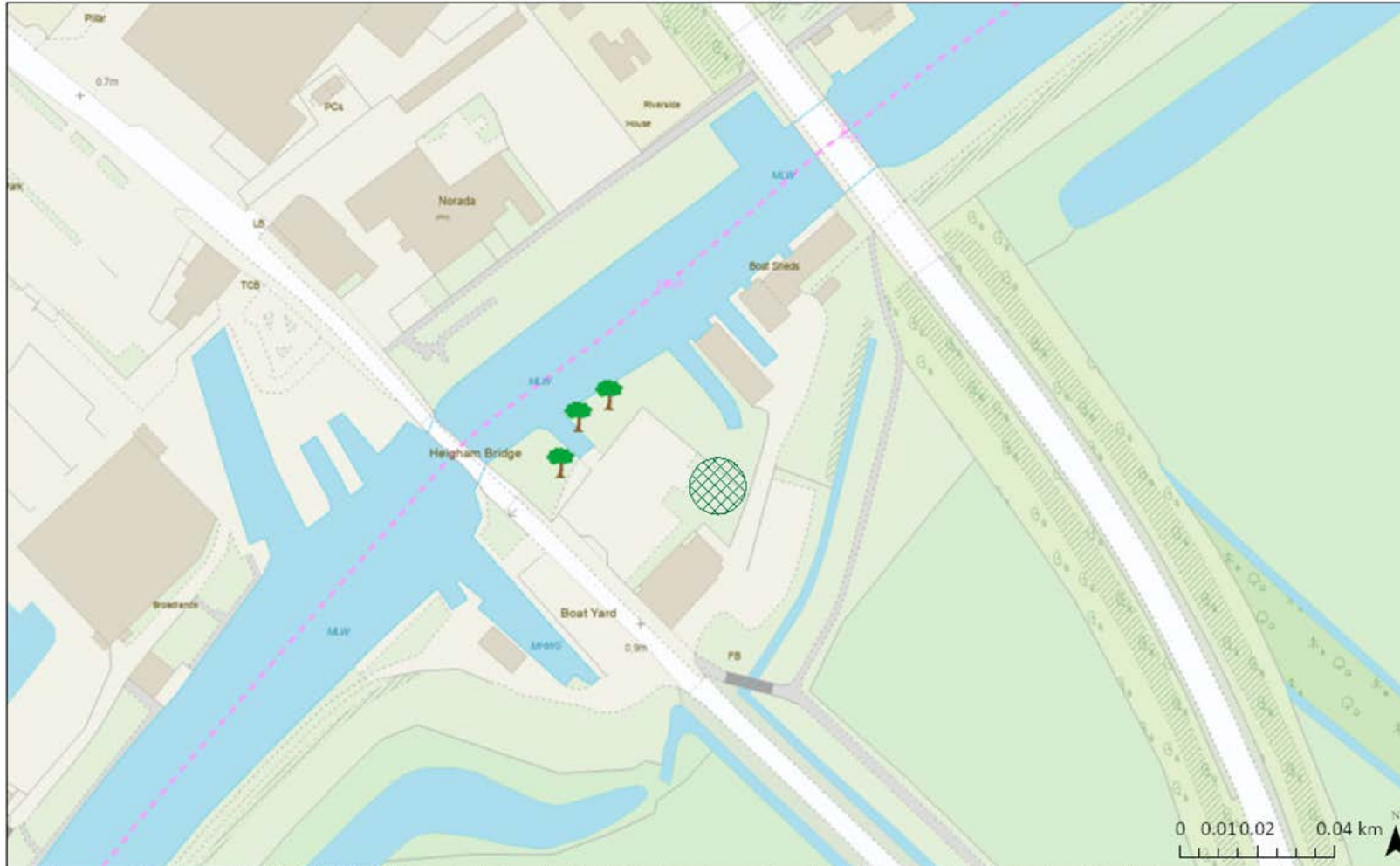
Appendix 1 – Location map

Appendix 2 – [Notes of site visit to Land at former Bridge Hotel, Repps with Bastwick](#)

Appendix 1 – Location map

BA/2024/0012/TPO - Land At Former Bridge Hotel The Causeway Repps With Bastwick

Scale: 1:1,250



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 TPO Point

Appendix 2 – Notes of site visit held on 6 September 2024

Planning Committee

Minutes of the site visit to Land at former Bridge Hotel, The Causeway, Repps with Batswick, Horning held on 6 September 2024

Present

Tony Grayling – in the Chair, Harry Blathwayt, Stephen Bolt, Andrée Gee, and Leslie Mogford.

In attendance

Stephen Hayden – Arboricultural Consultant, Kate Knights – Historic Environment Manager and Lorraine Taylor – Governance Officer

Members of the public in attendance

Peter Smith - observer on behalf of the Broads Society, Keith Bacon - the lessee of the land at the former Bridge Hotel, Fred Sharman – Chair of Repps with Bastwick Parish Council, Tracy Neave – Clerk of Repps with Bastwick Parish Council, Keith Lowe – Member of Potter Heigham Parish Council, and Mrs Sue Lowe – observer.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Tim Jickells, Kevin Maguire, Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro, and Fran Whymark.

1. Introduction

Members met at 10:00am at the Staithe, Potter Heigham.

The Chair welcomed everyone and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

The Chair reminded Members of the protocol associated with a site visit emphasising that it was purely a fact-finding exercise, and no decision would be made at this visit. The Tree Preservation Order (TPO) would be considered for confirmation at the next committee meeting on Friday 11 October 2024. The aim of the visit was not to debate the issues, but to enable Members to see the site and its context, and to make sure all participants were satisfied that Members have seen all the appropriate details of the tree and viewed it from various aspects.

Members were reminded:

- To be as impartial as possible before, during and after the visit.

- To avoid discussing the TPO with owners or objectors before, during or after the site visit.
- If members wanted to ask questions of any party, this should take place only when the whole group was present.
- That Members should politely deflect any attempts at lobbying, by suggesting that comments be put in writing to the Authority or made during public speaking at the Planning Committee.

2. BA/2024/0012/TPO: Land at former Bridge Hotel, The Causeway, Repps with Batswick

The Heritage Environment Manager (HEM) provided an overview of the provisional Tree Preservation Order:

- Whether to hold a site visit for Members to look at the site of the provisional Tree Preservation Order (TPO) at land at the former Bridge Hotel, The Causeway, Repps with Bastwick was discussed at the Planning Committee held on 16 August 2024.
- The provisional TPO was served on 13 June 2024 and this must be confirmed by 13 December 2024.
- The provisional TPO covered three trees at the front of the site and a group of trees situated to the rear of the site.
- The site was the former Bridge Hotel. A recent planning application had been refused. This was then taken to appeal which was subsequently dismissed by the inspector, where he made reference to the contribution that the trees make to the landscape character of the area.
- The HEM said that when serving a TPO, there are four considerations: the condition of the trees; the amenity value; the likely lifespan; and any potential threat to the trees.
- The HEM said that the Broads Authority did feel that the trees had amenity value and that they were likely to have longevity of life.
- The HEM explained the objection to the TPO, in that that it was not considered that the trees contributed to the character and wider amenity of the site and surrounding area due to the trees possibly creating a breach to the riverbank. There was concern that the Willow trees at the site and the surrounding area were invasive and had an aggressive root system that might cause damage both to the land and waterways and that the trees would prevent development or improvements to the site.
- The HEM confirmed that any TPO would not stop the site from being developed in the future.

A Member asked how long the TPO would be in force. The HEM explained that this would be for the whole of the life of the trees, however, it would not stop any work being carried out to

maintain the trees such as pollarding. In addition, it would not stop the removal of any of the trees if adequate justification was provided, however, this would require approval from the Broads Authority.

Members, officers and member of the public were able to view the trees from the opposite riverbank situated in Potter Heigham. Stephen Hayden, the Authority's Arboricultural Consultant (AC) explained that there were three individual trees within the TPO and that it should be noted that they had been pollarded in the past. He added that the Authority would work with the owner to assist with the management of these trees, as well as being able to advise if the bank was damaged. The AC said that one of the three trees was a veteran tree, approximately 90+ years old and as part of the ongoing management of the trees, could be pollarded if needed.

The AC then pointed out the group of trees that were part of the TPO, but also pointed out the trees that were not included – one that was not in the boundary of the site and the other that was not in good condition.

The group moved on across the bridge into Repps with Bastwick and were able to view the trees from the footpath looking across the carpark. The group then moved on to the public footpath behind the chip shop so that they were able to view the group of trees in more detail.

In response to a question regarding root growth, the AC explained that there were ways to work around roots, so that the site could be developed in the future. The AC pointed out that the group of trees look like they have possibly had no maintenance and had not been pollarded, however, this could be done if required.

The group then concluded their site visit and returned to the staithe where the Chair asked if anyone had any questions. A question was asked whether the area of Potter Heigham/Repps with Bastwick was in a National Park. The Chair said that this was within Broads executive area, and that the Broads Authority was part of the National Park family. Harry Blathwayt, Chair of the Authority said that as far as planning applications were concerned, this was within a National Park.

3. Conclusion

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the site inspection and confirmed that the TPO would be considered for confirmation at the next Planning Committee meeting on Friday 11 October 2024 meeting.

The meeting was closed at 10:40am.

Appendix 1 – [Route of the site visit](#)

Appendix 1 – Route of site visit

