

Online Comment

Application H17-0216-21
Location 15 THE RESERVOIR SURFLEET SPALDING PE11 4DH
Proposal Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of new dwelling

Name Ian Marshman, Historic Environment Officer
Address Lincolnshire County Council Lancaster House 36 Orchard Street LN1 1XX

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For/Against Comments

The Surfleet Reservoir has a unique historic character that is highly locally distinctive in terms of its layout, architecture, and use of materials. New development here should be sensitive to the surrounding historic environment, and designed with reference to locally distinctive materials and built forms in order to preserve The Reservoir's character and sense of place.

The Reservoir area can be considered a non-designated heritage asset as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore any impact on its significance should be considered in any future planning decision (NPPF, section 16, paragraph 197). The Reservoir itself was constructed in 1739 by the Honourable Adventurers of Deeping Fen to designs by the Spalding engineer John Grundy. It provided a vital role in improving land drainage and navigation across South Holland by holding back a head of water that could be used to scour out silt from the mouth of the Welland, thus keeping the channel open.

The Reservoir was used increasingly for recreation in the early twentieth century, and following the First World War land that was leased from the drainage board was developed by so-called plotlanders who erected a 'colony' of huts, sheds, boats and bungalows (see photo below). These were initially used mostly on a seasonal basis but increasingly a full time settlement developed from the 1930s onwards prior to the regulations of the 1947 Town & Country Planning Act. Today a range of historic temporary, repurposed and prefabricated single storey buildings survive giving the area a unique character that is locally distinctive and of historical interest. Many of the surrounding lodges, chalets and huts may therefore also have heritage significance.

The area continues to be of importance for tourism and this will increase through the Boston Peterborough Wetland Corridor (formerly known as the Fens Waterways Link) that will turn the River Glen and The Reservoir into a major route for boat users between Lincoln, Boston, Spalding, Peterborough and Ely. The need to preserve the area's special character is therefore of increasing importance as its prominence becomes greater, and this is recognised in the SHDC's Spalding Waterspace Study where it is identified as one of five key 'Waterway Gateways' in South Holland. This study specifically highlight the area's "unique character" of chalets, moorings and reed beds.

The present building which it is proposed to replace is typical of the historic chalets that make The Reservoir distinctive, with its use of natural wood and metal roof sheeting. Although later extended with a flat roof construction the original chalet facing The Reservoir is still recognisable, and with its pitched roof and brick chimney stack is characteristic of the simple 'handmade' and repurposed construction which has made the areas so distinctive.

We recommend that the impact of the proposed modern design and materials of any replacement dwelling is carefully assessed by the local planning authority and its impact on the unique character of The Reservoir considered, with input from the Conservation Officer if necessary.