



THE YARE VALLEY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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PLANNING APPEAL: PUBLIC ENQUIRY FINDS IN FAVOUR OF SCIENCE PARK

John Thurman writes ...

The Public Enquiry in September resulted in a rapid decision by the Department of the Environment (DoE), which has ruled in favour of building the Science Park on the Watton Road Site, overlooking Earlham Park.

The Society opposed the application, and thanks are due to Elaine Tucker for preparing the documents, and to Steve Dawson for speaking at the hearing, both in a most professional manner.

The DoE Inspector accepted that the 'main issue' was the impact on the landscape. That the case was lost was a very large extent due to an old planning allocation on the land, which was not withdrawn by South Norfolk District Council until the last minute.

Newer, tighter protection policies will soon be in place: there is nothing in this decision to encourage developers to use it as a precedent.

Some quotations from the Inspector's report:

In my judgment, the Yare Valley is rightly regarded as an important asset for Norwich and I can well understand the widespread concern for its protection.

Clearly, the proposals would have an impact on the landscape of the Yare Valley, disadvantageous insofar as open views would be lost, but advantageous in that they would help to alleviate the impact of existing development. (ie the MAFF Laboratory).

The ultimate (and in our view, wrong) decision in favour of building is subject to various conditions:

- * only about half the 5.5 ha site will be built on.

- * the detailed design and siting of buildings will be subject to detailed approval by South Norfolk District Council (SNDC).
- * a new roundabout will be constructed at the Colney Lane junction.
- * No development shall take place until a full landscaping scheme has been approved by the local authority.

THE NORWICH LOCAL PLAN

Local Plans are important statutory documents. They allocate specific areas for development or for various forms of protection within the district covered.

Norwich City Council has issued a draft plan for the whole city and the public are invited to comment on it before mid-November. If you want your own copy of the draft plan, it costs £5 from City Hall.

Alternatively, there is an exhibition in the Royal Arcade until November 9th. A public meeting was held at Blackfriars Hall at 7.30pm on November 1st.

The map on page 3 opposite shows proposals for the valley area. The key policy suggested, ref. no. NE3, is :

There is an overriding presumption against development that impinges on the valleys of the Rivers Yare and Wensum as defined on the proposals maps

There are proposals for improving public access to river valley areas on the urban fringe, and some interesting ideas for open space corridor links within urban areas, to assist the movement of wildlife between existing open spaces.

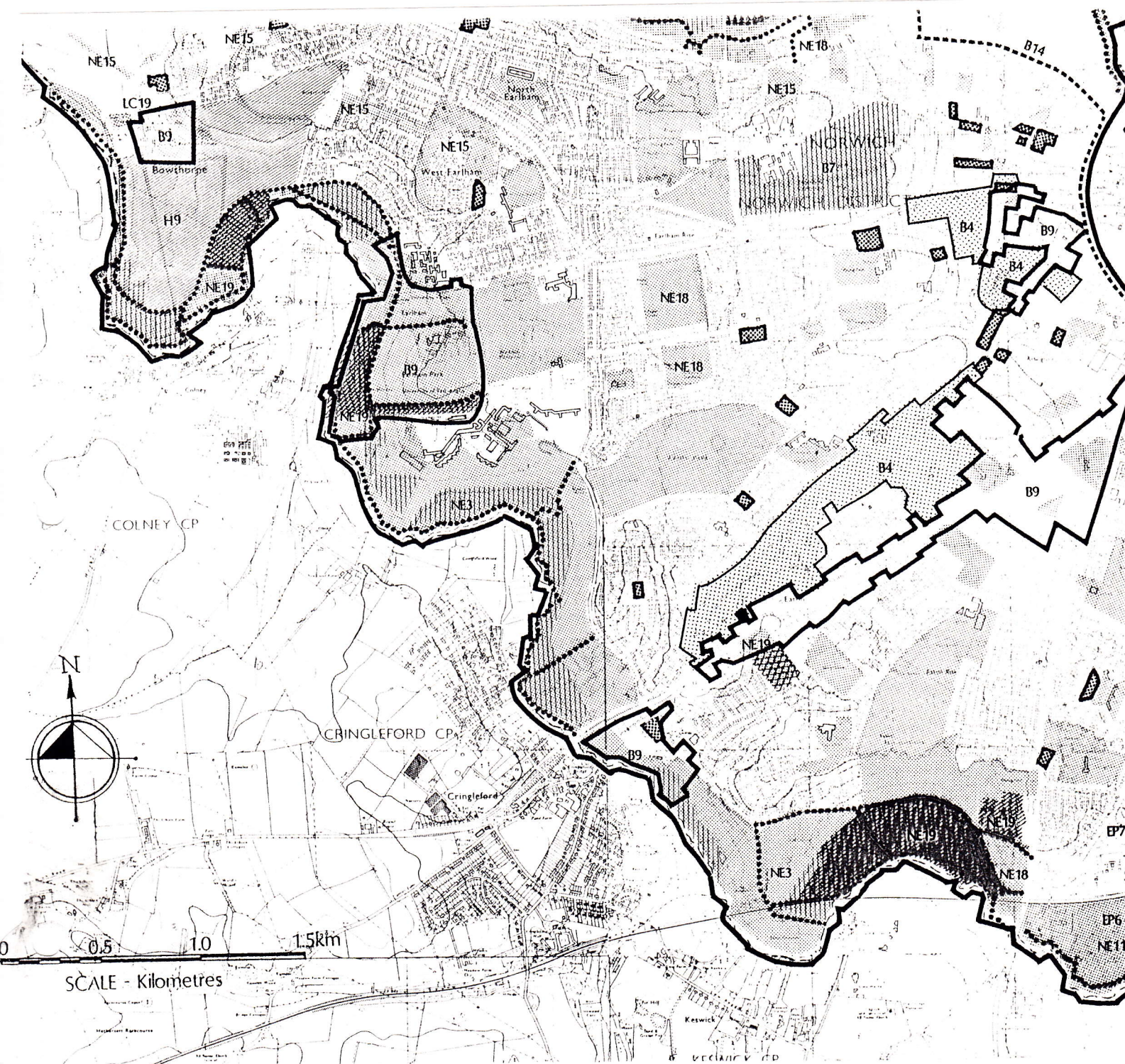
We feel generally pleased with the draft plan, but are examining it in detail.

ROY'S ROOF RUMPUS

The ugly ventilation plant on Roy's roof, visible from Eaton Street and the River was erected without planning permission. City Hall refused retrospective permission and has ordered the removal of the structure; a letter from the Society may have helped them reach this decision.

SEWAGE SOLUTIONS: PREPARING FOR THE NEW DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Excavations on the marsh between Colney Lane and UEA are scheduled to begin shortly. This work is to construct a sewer connection from the site of the New Colney Hospital, to the Yare Valley Main Sewer. The Society has already been in touch with the consulting engineers, and we will watch developments carefully in order to press for minimum environmental damage. UEA conservationists have advised on the best route for this unfortunate but unavoidable disturbance.



Understanding the references:

- B4 - proposed conservation area, B9 - existing conservation area
- H9 - housing sites (Bowthorpe area)
- NE3 - river valley, with its own special policy, NE15 - woodlands
- NE18 - allotments, NE19 - site of special scientific interest (SSSI)
- cross hatching - also shows SSSIs
- diagonal hatching - local nature reserve
- vertical hatching - 'C' sites
- spotted lines - riverside walks
- cross hatching within black boundary - local shopping centres

THE RIVER WATER QUALITY: THE NRA REPLIES TO OUR LETTER

A possible decline in the quality of the River Yare water was a subject which was raised at the AGM.

We took the matter up with the National Rivers Authority (NRA) and had the following reply from Dr B.V. Crook, the Environmental Manager (Eastern).

"...The water quality of the River Yare ... is monitored routinely by the NRA at Earham Bridge on a monthly basis. Other points below this are sampled occasionally. The River Yare has been classified for a number of years as a Class 1B river (high quality) in the DoE National Classification of River Quality and our routine monitoring confirms this. In addition to the chemical sampling, the River Yare is also monitored biologically and again this monitoring does not indicate a decline in flora and fauna in the Cringleford Area."

"The River Yare is subject, naturally, to adverse effects each year such sloughing and algal activity which give rise to turbid conditions and unsightly scums. My District Quality Officer at Norwich is not aware of any particular problems in this area, although intermittent pollution problems may occur from time to time as in any river stretch. All complaints of pollution are investigated by him and I would therefore ask that your members report promptly anything untoward they may observe with the quality of the river water..."

The letter concludes with an offer that the local District Quality Officer would be willing to attend one of our meetings to discuss the work of the NRA in greater detail.

Would members be interested in this?

Personally, I would be interested to find out how a river becomes Class 1A and also the timescale over which these observations have been made.

SMALL NEWS ITEMS

DRAGON HALL, KING STREET

The Norfolk Society now has an office in Dragon Hall, which is well worth a visit: the Society has a wealth of information about conservation, and you can see the wonderful, part restored, Merchant's Hall.

BUILDING ON THE UEA CAMPUS

The City Council Planning Committee has deferred a decision about the proposed new residential and other buildings on the Campus, until November, as UEA has been asked to make certain modifications to its proposals.

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