

PLANNING APPLICATION DM/24/2263

Submission by The Copthorne & District Angling Society

Proposed demolition of the existing buildings and annexe at The Lake House Rowant, RH10 4TB and construction of a new substantial luxury dwelling.

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Prepared by:

The Committee.

Copthorne & District Angling Society

07 June 2025

Section A

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION DM/24/2263

1. To ensure that access and use of the Fisherman's Path that winds north to south along the entire west bank of Rowfant Mill Pond is protected and preserved. This is not a public footpath. This is a long-standing (96 years) and well-established footpath used almost exclusively by the Copthorne & District Angling Society for the sole purpose of access to fishing the pond and to enable associated pond and fishery maintenance.
2. To ensure that during the demolition and construction process, site workers take due care and attention to the health and safety of anglers using the pond.
3. That during the demolition and construction process, due care is taken to prevent potential pollutants and contaminants entering the pond or watercourse. In particular, sewage, oil and fuel are all lethal to fish and other pond wildlife.

Section B

ABOUT THE COPTHORNE & DISTRICT ANGLING SOCIETY ("The Society")

The Society is a long-standing local community group formed in 1929, making it 96 years old this year.

It has its headquarters at the Copthorne Social Club (RH10 3RE) adjacent to the Copthorne Village Hall. This is where it's Committee meetings and Annual General Meetings are held.

The Society is a not-for-profit organisation and is run entirely by volunteers who are elected to a committee by its members at the Annual General Meeting. It presently has around 400 members. This comprises around 210 adults, 130 senior citizens and 60 juniors.

It is an important recreational amenity provider, open to all and is a valuable addition to community life.

The present Committee includes long standing officials of between 30 and 40 years dedicated service to this important community facility.

There are concessional rates for senior citizens and juniors under 16 are free.

The Society's constitutional objectives are:

- To provide for members, facilities for recreational freshwater angling.
- To promote fair angling and a spirit of good sportsmanship among members.
- To honour & promote the countryside code & the preservation of wildlife.
- To protect & preserve angling facilities for our future generations.

100% of income from membership subscriptions go into providing and maintaining the fisheries under its control.

Within the Society fishery portfolio are, Rowfant Mill Pond , Little Rowfant Lakes Complex (off nearby Wallage Lane), Piltdown Pond (off the A272 at Piltdown, Sussex), and around 8 miles of the Sussex River Ouse running south downstream from Goldbridge on the A272 at Newick, Sussex

The Society is a full member of The Angling Trust, angling's national governing body which works closely with the Environment Agency.

Membership of the Society is conditional upon all anglers possessing a valid Environment Agency fishing licence.

The Society is an active member (9.2% share) of the Rowfant Road Users Association that manages the upkeep, maintenance and associated costs of the private road that leads from the Old Hollow.

Further information about the Society can be found at www.copthorneangling.co.uk

Section C

ABOUT ROWFANT MILL POND

The proposed DM/24/2263 development lies midway along the west bank of Rowfant Mill Pond, a beautiful tree-lined 7-acre lake.

The Society policy, developed over many years with neighbouring residents, is to maintain the pond appearance as private and as natural looking as possible. The cutting of trees and vegetation, therefore, is kept to an absolute minimum. Just enough to be able to walk around the pond and to facilitate the ability to go fishing.

Whilst there is a rich English heritage associated with Rowfant Mill as a building, it is often forgotten that the pond itself, with its long history, natural beauty and its long-standing reputation for its excellent fishing, also forms part of this rich heritage.

Originally an iron forge was sited at Rowfant and was in operation between 1556 to 1653 and it is thought that a dam across the stream created a hammer-pond with enough waterpower to drive bellows and hammer for use in the forge. Hence the name "hammer-pond".

At some point after this period, the pond was enlarged, and the forge was converted to a mill for grinding corn. Hence the name "millpond". The Mill ceased functional operation in the early 1930's.

During these formative years, a complex jigsaw of ownership has developed.

Rowfant Mill Pond has 5 different owners. Each one is different. Some own water and bank, some own bank but not water. There are 2 land registers that draw 2 invisible lines right across the pond, east to west.

The proponents of the Lake House re-development own part of the west bank, but do not own any part of Rowfant Mill Pond itself.

The Society retains the exclusive fishing rights to the top section of Rowfant Mill Pond which is only accessible by the west bank Fisherman's Path.

Notwithstanding this, the Society holds the exclusive Cefas registration for the whole of Rowfant Mill Pond.

Note: Cefas - The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science is an executive agency of the United Kingdom government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Further information about Cefas can be found at www.cefas.co.uk

Rowfant Mill Pond and the Society pre-date the existence of Lake House (built around the mid-1950s),

Rowfant Mill Pond was the founding fishery that enabled the creation of the Society in 1929.

Since this time, members of the Society have enjoyed exclusive, unfettered access and use of the Fishermans Path to enable and enjoy a quiet uninterrupted days fishing on Rowfant Mill Pond.

Section D

THE FISHERMAN'S PATH

The Fisherman's Path goes along the west bank and past Lake House and continues for the entire length of the pond.

Entry to the Fisherman's Path is gained by walking through the entrance to the long driveway to Lake House. After about 30 metres, the entry to the path is to the left, down through a gap in the hedge to the pond. There is a left turn to access a few fishing positions in this area. The main path turns right and continues along the bank of the pond until it reaches the annex to Lake House which is the closest residential space to the water.

Over the past 40 years or more, there have been many different tenants occupying Lake House. It is presently unoccupied. During its period of custodianship, the Society has recognised the need for residential privacy and has developed a policy of not permitting its members to fish in front of the annex or anywhere along the adjacent garden area. In the Section F map, this part of the path is shown between "pegs" 10 and 11. This section of the path is for the Society access to the upper reaches of the pond only.

The footpath continues past the annex up a steep bank and along the outside of the garden for about 25 metres where it then rejoins the bankside path and then continues the entire length of the pond. At the end there is a footbridge (presently not in use) that connects the west and east banks, completing a circular path all around the pond.

Section F shows a map from the Society website showing Rowfant Mill Pond with paths and access.

Section E

CONCLUSION

The Society, representing its membership, does not in principle object to the proposed development DM/24/2263 in itself, provided the following conditions are put in place.

1. To ensure that access and use of the Fisherman's Path that winds north to south along the entire west bank of Rowfant Mill Pond is protected and preserved. This is not a public footpath. This is a long-standing (96 years) and well-established footpath used almost exclusively by the Copthorne & District Angling Society for the sole purpose of access to fishing the pond and associated pond and fishery maintenance.
2. To ensure that during the demolition and construction process, site workers take due care and attention to the health and safety of anglers using the pond.
3. To ensure that during the demolition and construction process, due care is taken to prevent potential pollutants and contaminants entering the pond or watercourse. In particular, sewage, oil and fuel are all lethal to fish and other pond wildlife.



COPTHORNE & DISTRICT ANGLING SOCIETY ROWFANT MILL



LOCATION

Nearest Post Code RH10 4TB

-  Footpath
-  Fishing Pegs

