

Planning Committee

13 August 2021

Agenda item number 9.2

BA/2019/0412/FUL Three Rivers Campsite, Station Road, Geldeston

Report by Planning Officer

Proposal

Demolition of service sheds and container; erection of new service building; shower room extension to boatshed; enlargement of basin and pontoon to provide mobility access and mooring/charging for electric day boats and visitor berth; play area; increase in number of caravan standings from 12 to 20; hard surface path to south end of site to provide mobility access; improved slipway

Applicant

Mr James Bromley

Recommendation

Approval subject to conditions

Reason for referral to committee

Major application

Application target date

23rd July 2021

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1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. The application site is a plot of land of approximately 3.2 hectares in a roughly L-shaped form located to the south-west of the village of Geldeston. Along the north boundary is a dyke and a former railway line, on the opposite side of this boundary is a neighbouring boat yard, moorings and Certificated Location campsite at Rowan Craft. Along the eastern boundary is Geldeston Dyke, which runs from the village staithe to the River Waveney approximately 1km to the south of the site. This dyke allows access for boats and is used by a variety of motored and non-motorised craft. To the west is a small dyke which links Geldeston Dyke to the application site's boatshed and where the water sports users of the site set off and return to. To the south are grazing marshes which in 2020 were designated as a County Wildlife Site. On the southern tip of the application site there is a timber piled jetty and an informal slip way sloping into the eastern dyke at the point it joins with Geldeston Dyke.
- 1.2. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is via a private access road which joins to Station Road at the north east corner of the site. Station Road links to the A143 at Ellingham to the west and eventually Gillingham and Beccles to the east either by the A143 or using the rural roads. Station Road is characterised by having interspersed dwellings, hedgerows and some areas of grazing land along its length. There is not a footway along this stretch of the road, although it is popular with cyclists and to a lesser extent pedestrians as it links to regional and national cycle routes, and also the relatively expansive walking and footpath network in this area.
- 1.3. Geldeston is a popular tourist destination by virtue of its connection to the wider Broads river network, being within close distance to Beccles and access to the larger moorings there and at Oulton Broad and elsewhere on the River Waveney. Conversely, as this area is on the quieter stretch of the upper River Waveney, it is a popular location for visitors with paddle craft or those hiring them at this and the neighbouring site. The village has limited services, but does benefit from two public houses (The Wherry to the east, and The Geldeston Locks to the south). There is not a shop within the village, but there are services in Beccles and Ditchingham/Bungay.
- 1.4. The site has an established mixed use as a camping and caravanning site with water sports and activity use centred on the boatshed. There are a number of buildings on site, including a timber framed amenities block and boatshed which also functions as an office and store. There are a container and other shed type buildings to the north of the main boatshed building. From the boatshed building guests of the campsite and day visitors can hire paddleboards, canoes and kayaks. The camping ground has a formalised area of caravan pitches with electric hook up. This is directly to the south of the boat shed building. The camping field is characterised as a large area of mown and

longer meadow grass as well as planting and mature trees interspersed on the western and partially along the eastern boundary.

- 1.5. The application seeks planning permission for various works and changes to how the site operates. Firstly, the application seeks an increase in the number of permitted caravan pitches at the site from 12 (as approved under permission BA/2018/0198/FUL), to 20 pitches. It would see the existing storage sheds demolished and container removed and the erection of new service building. This service building would measure 12m x 6m wide with an eaves height of 4.6m with the apex of the steeply pitched cedar shingle roof at 8.25m. The materials would be to match those of the existing boat house building on site with timber waney edged cladding, timber bargeboards and soffits and a cedar shingle roof covering. The roller shutter door would be black powder coated. There would be a first floor built within the roof, with an appearance similar to that of the existing boatshed on site. The building is elevated and would have a lean-to open sided tractor port on the south eastern elevation. This building would be raised 0.45m from ground level. The lean to open sided tractor store on the east elevation would be lower in height than the main building and would add an additional 3.0m to the width of the building (12.0m x 9.0m in total).
- 1.6. The existing boat shed would see an extension to provide an enlarged shower room on the southern elevation. The extension would be 2.5m wide, 2.85m projection out from the building, also elevated at the same finished flood level as the existing building. The materials would be cladding to match existing and a metal sheet roof covering as this roof is proposed to have a lower, shallow pitched lean to roof as compared to the main building.
- 1.7. Associated with the water sport and boating activities, the proposal also includes the enlargement of the dyke to create a 75m² basin alongside the existing pontoon located to the south of the existing boatshed. This would approximately double the existing area of the canoe launching basin. This has been justified as required to provide mobility access and also to allow for the expansion of the hire business to include space for circulation of departing canoes and paddle boards. In addition to this expansion, the proposal also seeks permission for the formalisation and alteration to an area at the most southern point of the site which is used for the launching of boats to create a formal slipway.
- 1.8. During the course of the application process, the play area proposed to the north of the existing boatshed building has been constructed so this element is now retrospective.
- 1.9. A scheme of landscaping has been submitted in support of the application, detailing the options for disposing of the peat arising from the excavation of the mooring basin excavation (approx. 300m²), as well as details of mitigation screening and planting.

2. Site history

- 2.1. BA/2018/0198/FUL - Provision of 12 caravan pitches with electric hook up points and bin stores - Approved
- 2.2. BA/2017/0435/COND - Variation of condition 2: approved plans, and removal of condition 3: landscaping, of BA/2016/0152/FUL - Approved
- 2.3. BA/2016/0152/FUL - Boathouse for canoe and cycle storage, landing stage and retrospective permission for three service buildings - Approved
- 2.4. BA/2007/0317/FUL - Amended proposal: Erection of workshop and site facilities for cycle hire, day boats and electric launches, wc/showers and widening of dyke to provide moorings. - Refused
- 2.5. BA/2005/6661/HISTAP - Erection of 6no. waterside lodges, workshop, manager's house and shower block and use of land for camping - Refused
- 2.6. BA/1991/7318/HISTAP - Relief basin for visitor mooring - Refused
- 2.7. BA/1990/7366/HISTAP - Mooring basin for 25 rivercraft from mainstream - Refused
- 2.8. BA/1988/7449/HISTAP - 25 replacement moorings from mainstream to off-cut position in backwater - Refused
- 2.9. BA/1987/7486/HISTAP - 25 off-cut moorings for public hire - Refused

3. Consultations received

Geldeston Parish Council

- 3.1. Objection. Due to the following concerns: - Ecology, - Noise, - Pollution, - Visual Impact
- 3.2. The environmental impact on the Geldeston famous Dark Skies. GPC have previously objected to increased sites/pitches on this site. None of the previous objections have been considered. The following will need to be looked into: Policies SP6, DM13, DM21 and DM22. The need to consider the protection of the glow worms and the bat species.
- 3.3. The increase of 12-20 pitches is way too high, there will be a high increase in noise and traffic.

Environment Agency

- 3.4. No objection subject to the LPA having had due regard to the flood risk and the development complying with the NPPF's requirement for meeting the sequential and exceptions test. The application is supported by an FRA which shows the land to be within flood zone 3A and also is supported by a flood response plan and flood resilience measures.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways

- 3.5. No Objection, subject to access being made to acceptable standard

Norfolk County Council Public Rights of Way

- 3.6. No objections on Public Rights of Way grounds as although Geldeston footpath 10 is in the vicinity, it does not appear to be affected by the proposals.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

- 3.7. The neighbouring site has been allocated as a County Wildlife Site (Geldeston Marshes) and there are light sensitive species at this site which could be affected by the development. In addition to the comments made by the BA Ecologist to a previous iteration of the scheme which involved the spreading of peat spoil on an area the proposal should be supported with an Ecology Survey.

4. Representations

- 4.1. More than 10 objections have been received from local residents regarding the proposed development; these have been reiterated following re-consultation on amendments to the proposal. The issues raised in these objections include the following:-
- Visual impact and harm associated with more caravans at the site in the wider landscape;
 - Noise disturbance from campers and also users of the water sports hire business;
 - Highway safety concerns relating to the increased traffic and size of caravans;
 - Safety concerns regarding the proposed alterations to the slip way;
 - Impact upon the County Wildlife Site and surrounding areas and ecology;
 - Harm to the dark skies in the area;
 - Over development in terms of numbers of caravans proposed;
 - Disturbance of peat from the expansion of the cut;
 - Lack of screening proposed.
- 4.2. Letters of support were received at the time of the initial consultation from the landlords of both village pubs, although it should be noted that the Geldeston Locks Pub has since changed ownership. An additional letter of support was received from a member of the public. The reasons for support included
- Benefits to tourism in the wider Waveney Valley;
 - Tourists help sustain the pubs and farm shop in the village of Geldeston;
 - Previous development at the site has been conducted sympathetically.

5. Policies

- 5.1. The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (adopted 2019).
- 5.2. The following policies were used in the determination of the application:
- DM10 - Peat soils
 - DM5 - Development and Flood Risk
 - DM13 - Natural Environment
 - DM16 - Development and Landscape
 - DM20 - Settlement fringe landscape character
 - DM21 - Amenity
 - DM22 - Light pollution and dark skies
 - DM43 - Design
 - DM22 - Light pollution and dark skies
 - DM23 - Transport, highways and access
 - DM24 - Recreation Facilities Parking Areas
 - DM29 - Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development
 - DM30 - Holiday Accommodation - New and Retention
 - DM31 - Access to the Water
- 5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.

6. Assessment

- 6.1. The key considerations in terms of this development are the principle of development, the impact upon the landscape, impact upon ecology and peat soils, impact upon the amenity of neighbours, design and flood risk.

Principle of development

- 6.2. The application site has an existing tourist use which this scheme seeks to expand upon, and which can be broken into two strands. The expansion of the camp site pitch numbers is one element, and the expansion and improvement of the built features linked to the water activities base and site is the second element. There is an obvious interrelation between these two uses as the camping guests have access to the water and this would be a draw for those staying at the camp site, and the access, facilities etc for both uses are to a degree shared.

- 6.3. The principle of the expansion of the caravan pitch numbers is assessed against policy DM29 and DM30 of the Local Plan for the Broads. The proposal is adjacent to an existing tourist use (the site itself and the neighbouring boatyard and campsite) so the locational criteria set out in Policy DM29 part(a(ii)) would in principle be met. On balance, the development is also considered to meet the criteria set out in part (b) of policy DM29, and these will be expanded upon below when considering the other criteria : highways (vi), parking (vii), dark skies and landscape (viii), design (ix), navigation (x), scale compatible with their location and setting (xi).
- 6.4. In regards to new or expanded holiday accommodation, the relevant policy is DM30. The policy sets out four criteria, one of which requires it to meet policy DM29, so the proposal is considered to have met this criteria. The remaining three criteria are as follows. Criteria (b) requires that the development is for short term holiday rental, which is the case here. Criteria (c) requires that the development is proposed on a sound financial basis and there is a demand for the accommodation proposed. In this case, the applicant has set out in a justification statement that the business requires additional camping pitches to support the growing business, that this is a popular site and that the development is based on a sustainable business model. Criteria (d) requires that a register of bookings is kept, and the applicant already does this. This part of policy DM30 is therefore met.
- 6.5. In principle the replacement of the service buildings (subject to a condition ensuring the removal of the existing structures) is positive, as these small structures have a functional use, but are not attractive. The proposed building is large and would have an impact upon the character of the landscape. However, the building is of a very similar design and construction to that of the existing building and is located in an area which is relatively well screened and would not have a significant impact on the wider landscape. The need for this building has been outlined in the applicant's documents and relates particularly to the expansion of the number of paddle craft which need to be stored on site. It is considered reasonable to condition the use of this new building to be specifically linked to the current use of the site, and also to exclude overnight occupation. This is because it is the stated intention of the applicant to use this building as incidentally to the business, to avoid confusion as to how the building can be used, and so that should overnight accommodation be proposed, the LPA has the opportunity to assess the potential additional impacts of overnight accommodation in a building including flood risk, amenity or loss of workspace.
- 6.6. The principle of the expansion of the existing amenities block is acceptable as it is required for the current use of the site in general. The changes to the mooring would allow for safer access to the water for those using the site as existing. The issue of peat removal is important and is covered later in the report. However, the scale of the proposal is reduced from previously refused historic applications and therefore is considered to be of a scale appropriate for the surrounding site and landscape in accordance with Policy DM29 criteria (xi)

6.7. Overall, the principle of the development is considered acceptable.

Impact upon the landscape

- 6.8. The site lies within Landscape Character Area 2 in the Authority's Landscape Character Assessment and is in an area of drained peat or clay/peat mix adjacent to the river Waveney. The Settlement Fringe policy (DM20) is relevant here due to the location towards the edge of development at Geldeston.
- 6.9. The site is used as an existing camping and caravan site, with the application seeking to increase the number of caravan pitches to 20, with a new building and extension to existing, an expanded basin, as well as improvements to a slipway, and creation of a play area.
- 6.10. The proposed building extension and new building are in keeping with the Broads vernacular and existing buildings on the site. Their location to the back of the site is relatively unobtrusive to the wider landscape, with existing vegetation intercepting views. The colour and finish of the proposed buildings also aids to recess them in the landscape. As such this element of the development is considered to accord with Policy DM20 and DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.11. The construction of these buildings will enable a formalised car parking area to be created where the existing buildings are (as they will be removed) and this should reduce the number (if not completely remove) car parking within the camping area, which is open to the marshes landscape and therefore visible within the landscape. The applicant highlighted on site that they are looking to manage car parking for campers in this manner, only allowing equipment and luggage to be dropped off, with cars then required to be parked in the main car park. This management will reduce landscape and visual impacts in this sensitive fringe area and potentially reducing current impacts.
- 6.12. With regard to the play area, these can vary greatly in form and colour, however what has been erected is of a scale and design which is functional, but not obtrusive in the wider landscape.
- 6.13. The amended drawings submitted in respect of landscaping have addressed the concerns about views across the marshland into the caravan area. Additional tree planting has been included along the Geldeston Dyke boundary, which is considered beneficial as it would further intercept views across the marshes into the site, particularly from the riverside public right of way where the viewing angle changes as it follows the course of the river. This landscape and planting scheme sets out an acceptable level of soft landscaping which would be an improvement over existing screening and mitigation currently at the site.
- 6.14. In regards to the details submitted covering the treatment and use of excavated peat, the potential for ground raising has been limited to a maximum of 120mm and in specific areas only. This, however, is a maximum as there would need to be back filling of hollows and to deal with bank erosion, as well as the potential for the peat to be used as a soil improver off site. As such it is not considered that this would result in a

perceptible difference once the grass and meadow planting has taken. On this basis the proposal is considered to accord with Policy DM17 (Land raising) and Policy DM18 (excavated material). The wider issue of the treatment of peat is covered in section 6.18 to 6.21.

- 6.15. In landscape terms, the information submitted with regards to the new slipway would benefit from greater detail. The revised information shows that the new steel ramp cannot be overlaid on the existing earth ramp and that some groundworks will be required. The application site sits higher than the surrounding marshland and so it would be preferable for the steel ramp to sit lower in the ground, with planted embankments either side to better assimilate it into the landscape and localise any effects. It is recommended that further information on the appearance of the ramp be conditioned, alongside inclusion of this area in the proposed landscape scheme to ensure effects of this proposal remain localised.
- 6.16. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable on the basis that an adequate landscaping scheme has been submitted, which would be conditioned for implementation. Prior to the works on the slipway, further detail would be required through condition to ensure this element is as recessive as possible. In regards to planting, this has been considered to have the joint benefit of screening the site from wider views to mitigate the visual impact of new buildings and increased numbers of caravans on site, as well as acting as a biodiversity enhancement.

Impact upon ecology and peat soils

- 6.17. The proposal would result in approximately 300m³ of earth being excavated to create the slightly larger basin of approximately 75m², which slightly more than doubles the width of a 15m section of the dyke directly in front of the boat house to accommodate launching and mooring of the craft rented from the site. Following peat coring and analysis, it is anticipated that of this spoil, approximately 60% would be peat. Policy DM10 sets out how peat should be considered, especially if this natural resource is to be removed or excavated, and sets out 4 criteria to be met.
- 6.18. The scale of the proposal has been significantly reduced from previously refused schemes and, on this basis, the proposal is in accordance with criteria (ii) of DM10 in that it reduces to a minimum the required excavation to result in a useful additional launching and circulation space. Following discussion, the applicant has set out the growth in the business and the functional need to provide improved access and mobility options for the existing and expanding demand for canoe, paddleboard and other craft hire. On this basis it is considered that there is not a less harmful viable option if the business is to expand in line with policy DM29. This is in accordance with criterion (i) of Policy DM10 as there is not a less harmful viable option to expand the basin.
- 6.19. In regards to criteria (iii), there has been sufficient evaluation of peat prior to its disposal, considering the small area in question and also that the coring of peat has shown that the quality of this land is not particularly good. The final criteria (iv) of

Policy DM10 requires the disposal of peat to be in such a way as to limit carbon loss. The amended landscaping scheme has set out how the peat could be used on site as mulch for planting, back fill for eroded banks, and also potentially as soil improver for neighbouring farm land. This would limit carbon loss to varying degrees. If the peat were spread on the site (which is also indicated as an alternative option, either in whole or in part), carbon would be lost, however this would be to an extent limited because of the small scale of excavation, and the degree to which these other measures are implemented.

- 6.20. It is no longer proposed to spread spoil arising from the expanded mooring area onto the southernmost point of the site, so there is no impact on the potential reptile habitat here.
- 6.21. The points raised by residents and Norfolk Wildlife Trust regarding the neighbouring County Wildlife Site are relevant, however in this instance it is considered that the existing use of the site means that there is no requirement for an ecology survey, whilst the removal of the proposal to spread peat across the site has also reduced the ecological risk. It is also noted that there would be biodiversity enhancements resulting from the planting schedule. That being said, additional unauthorised lighting could cause issues, and therefore a condition restricting lighting would be attached requiring further details and LPA approval of any additional lighting to protect the dark sky status of the area (Policy DM22).
- 6.22. The proposed development relates to an existing use, the buildings to be demolished/removed are not likely to offer important habitat, and nor are the areas where development would take place. On this basis subject to the condition referenced above, the proposal is considered on balance to be acceptable.

Amenity of residential properties

- 6.23. The site is used as an existing camping and caravanning site, as well as for water based recreation. The proposal does not seek to change this use, but would result in both an intensification of this use, and also expansion of the size of the buildings on site. This has been raised as a material planning issue in letters of objection letters in terms of the impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents, as well as those visiting the surrounding area.
- 6.24. Whilst there would be an increase in the number of caravan pitches, and potentially in the recreational use of the water, the site remains separated from neighbouring residential properties and the new service building would be located approximately 130m from the nearest residential property. The location of the caravanning pitches would not encroach closer to the neighbouring residential properties, and, as set out in the landscaping consideration section above, the proposal includes a landscaping plan which includes significant screening. This would result in an acceptable degree of mitigation in terms of impact upon neighbour's outlook.

6.25. In regards to noise, the existing use has not resulted (as far as we have been made aware) of any statutory nuisance complaints from neighbouring properties, and camping and caravanning is not in itself a noisy operation. It is proposed to limit the occupation of the campsite to short stay visitors, and through the use of conditions it would be reasonable to limit amplified noise and external lighting. On balance, given the distance to neighbours and similarity of the existing use to the proposed, it is therefore considered that the impact in terms of noise and disturbance would not be so significant a change as to warrant refusal. It should also be noted that the site would also be controlled through separate environmental health legislation as a caravan and camp site, which could restrict unacceptable impacts outside of the normal use of a campsite. The proposal is therefore acceptable in terms of its impact on local amenity.

Design

6.26. The removal of the existing storage buildings and consolidation of this use in a purpose built structure is a positive factor in this proposal. The building as proposed is relatively large, and higher than the existing structure it would replace, however it would be set back further from the highway and the nearest residential buildings, and located in an area that is already quite well screened from views by existing planting, which would be supplemented by further landscaping. The proposed timber clad building is of a much better quality finish than the current steel container and shed on site.

6.27. Weight also needs to be given to the functional requirements of the existing site use and how this additional building and extension to is an investment in the existing site operation. As a functional building, it would provide capacity for the business to develop, improve storage and security as well as provide a better working environment. This would avoid the need for unsightly overspill as seen on similar sites where materials, craft etc. are stored permanently outside, or, as with the current site, in temporary containers. In design terms, the use of natural materials such as the waney edged timber cladding, cedar shingle roof covering proposed are similar to those used at the existing building are considered a positive addition over the existing structures and would be in keeping with similar buildings on site and at the neighbouring boat yard site Rowan Craft.

6.28. The proposed building is large, being some 12.0m x 9.0m and with space within the roof and so it would have some impact upon the character of the landscape. However, it is of a very similar design and construction to that of the existing building and is located in an area which is screened from wider views to an extent. In addition the increase in planting would further limit views of this building. On balance it is considered that the proposal is acceptable meeting policy DM43 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

Highways and public rights of way

6.29. The initial response to this application from the Local Highways Authority (LHA) raised concerns with regard to the local highway network and the increase in touring caravans. It sought further information from the applicant about whether the site

operates any formal timed check-in/check-out system that would influence this, such that the possibility of two touring caravans meeting would be minimised.

- 6.30. The LHA then considered that it is accepted that once pitched at the site, caravans are unlikely to leave on a regular basis. So, whilst there are constraints to the local highway network in terms of its width and it cannot be precluded that two touring caravans would meet, the occasions this happens are likely to be minimal. On this basis, the LHA concluded that it could not reasonably seek any mitigation to the local road network as such mitigation would be extensive, disproportionate and unlikely to meet the tests within the NPPF.
- 6.31. Likewise, the LHA are also mindful that the NPPF is clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The LHA are of the opinion that it would be difficult to sustain an objection on either grounds, or to defend such an objection at appeal.
- 6.32. However, was noted that the access to the site (i.e. the track from the public highway) is of an unbound material and this is being discharged onto the highway, which does give rise to conditions detrimental to highway safety. The improvement of the access was conditioned in the planning consent for the provision of 12 caravan pitches (BA/2018/0198/FUL), and has since been implemented following the initial response from the LHA to this application.
- 6.33. Whilst objections from neighbours were raised regarding highway safety it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in highways terms following consultation with Norfolk County Council as the LHA and on this basis the proposal is considered to acceptable.
- 6.34. The proposed development would not affect any of the nearby public rights of way.

Flood risk

- 6.35. The Environment Agency maps show the site lies within fluvial and tidal Flood Zone 3a defined by the 'Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change' as having a high probability of flooding. The proposal is classified as a 'less vulnerable' development, as defined in annex 3 of the NPPF. Therefore, to comply with national policy the application is required to pass the Sequential Test and be supported by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 6.36. The submitted FRA sets out that the site lies within the flood extent for a 1% (1 in 100) fluvial and 0.5% (1 in 200) tidal annual probability event, including an allowance for climate change. The site does not benefit from the presence of defences.
- 6.37. It is noted that the application does not include any buildings which would be used for residential accommodation, with all buildings used for storage or commercial purposes. The ground floor levels have been proposed at 2.45m AOD. This is below the 0.1% (1 in 1000) annual probability flood level including climate change of 3.20m AOD and

therefore at risk of flooding by 0.75m depth in this event. Finished first floor levels have been proposed at 5.35m AOD and therefore there is refuge above the 0.1% (1 in 1000) including climate change annual probability flood level of 3.20m AOD. This proposal does not have a safe means of access in the event of flooding from all new buildings to an area wholly outside the floodplain (up to a 1% (1 in 100) and 0.5% (1 in 200) annual probability including climate change flood event).

- 6.38. The Environment Agency have no objections to the proposed development on flood risk access safety grounds because an Emergency Flood Plan has been submitted by the applicant. The plan sets out practical and reasonable measures to help respond should flood warnings or flood events occur and is considered adequate to ensure the safety of the occupants in line with Policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads. A condition should be imposed to require its implemented and that it be maintained for the lifetime of development.
- 6.39. Whilst the FRA has shown that the development would incorporate flood resilience measures and also would provide first floor refuge which would improve the current structure's resilience to flooding there is a need to consider whether alternative sites are more appropriate. The requirement to apply the Sequential Test is set out in Paragraph 161 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Exception Test is set out in paragraph 163.
- 6.40. Sequentially there are no areas within the application site or land owned by the applicant which is at a lower risk of flooding and therefore sequentially, the development could not be moved to a lower risk area within the application site.
- 6.41. In regards to the replacement of the existing buildings, and the shower room extension of the boatshed, as these are functional uses tied to the existing use of the site, it is not reasonable to look further afield for areas of lower flood risk than in the immediate vicinity. Even for instance on the opposite side of the road would mean significant distances for water craft, machinery (tractor, mower etc.) or visitors to walk or to be moved. Therefore, sequentially there are no alternative options on site or elsewhere within a reasonable distance.
- 6.42. The expansion of the numbers of caravan pitches again could not be accommodated within the site in an area of lower risk. Other neighbouring areas of this site outside of the ownership of the applicant are at a higher risk of flooding due to their lower level.
- 6.43. Whilst there may be sites outside of the Broads Authority area in the vicinity of Geldeston which have a lower risk of flooding, none would be within a reasonable distance of the existing services on site and would not allow for the two businesses to operate with oversight from a single base. As such, it is not felt that there are sites that are appropriate in terms of the scope of the Sequential Test. Therefore, in this instance, it is considered that there are no alternatives available to this business which would be available or deliverable which are at a lower risk of flooding. On this basis the proposal is considered to meet the Sequential Test.

- 6.44. The service building and boatshed expansion are not required to meet the Exceptions Test. The Exceptions Test is required for changes of use of land, where that change of use relates to caravans/camping. In this instance a case has been made by the applicant that the economic benefits to both the business and the expansion of employment opportunities created, along with the positive responses from local public houses show that there would be economic benefits to this development. Additionally, the intensification of an existing use, and improvement of facilities for the water sports use are beneficial in ensuring that the business is robust. On this basis, it is considered that the development would have benefits to economic and social sustainability which supports this development in accordance with Policy DM5, meeting the Exceptions Test as set out in the NPPF.
- 6.45. As part of the design of the building, flood resilience/resistance measures have been included to reduce the impact of and mitigate for a flood event, including the provision of an refuge above the predicted flood levels. Given that refuge is identified as a fall back mitigation measure it is important that the building is structurally resilient to withstand the pressures and forces (hydrostatic and hydrodynamic pressures) associated with flood water.
- 6.46. In this instance in principle it would be possible to construct this building in such a way as it to be structurally resilient, however as the building regulations do not require submission of such details, a condition is required. This condition would require the submission of supporting information and calculations to provide certainty that the buildings will be constructed to withstand these water pressures.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The proposed development is considered to be an appropriate scale of expansion to a successful tourism business in accordance with Policy DM29 and DM30 of the Local Plan for the Broads. Consideration has been given to ensure that the development does not have an adverse impact upon amenity, landscape or dark skies (Policy DM21, 16 and DM22). No objection has been raised by the Environment Agency (Policy DM5 of the Local Plan for the Broads) subject to a flood response plan being implemented and maintained in accordance with the details set out in the submitted FRA, on which basis the development would be safe for the lifetime of the development and meets the Sequential Test. The benefits of supporting the development in accordance with Policy DM29 and DM30 of the Local Plan for the Broads, weighs in favour of this proposal in terms of the NPPF Exceptions Test for flood risk.
- 7.2. In regards to design and scale of this development, objections are noted, however on balance the addition of a landscaping scheme and the relative quality of the proposed replacement service building mean that scheme would accord with Policy DM43 and DM16 of the Local Plan for the Broads. No objection has been raised by the Local Highways Authority (policy DM23 of the Local Plan for the Broads). Whilst the objections relating to increased traffic and increased number of caravans are noted, the

Local Highways Authority have stated that they do not feel that this impact is sufficient to warrant refusal, or would be sustained at appeal.

- 7.3. The site is sensitive, and subject to the intentions of the applicant being carried out the development would result in benefits to local tourist businesses, as well as improving access to the water (DM31 of the Local Plan for the Broads). To ensure this development is controlled in line with the submitted details conditions are recommended (see below).

8. Recommendation

Approval subject to conditions

- 8.1. Standard time limit condition
- 8.2. Standard plans condition
- 8.3. Materials condition prior to works above slab level/piling level of relevant building
- 8.4. Flood response plan and structural details for flood proofing prior to commencement of development
- 8.5. Details of boat wash down prior to commencement of development of the service building
- 8.6. Details of slipway/ramp prior to commencement of works on the slipway
- 8.7. Holiday use limit
- 8.8. Use restriction condition (Buildings not to be used for sleeping accommodation or human habitation)
- 8.9. Limit to size of craft used/launched from and within the site
- 8.10. Landscaping management condition
- 8.11. Car parking condition
- 8.12. Lighting restriction/details
- 8.13. Biodiversity enhancement
- 8.14. No amplified music

9. Reason for recommendation

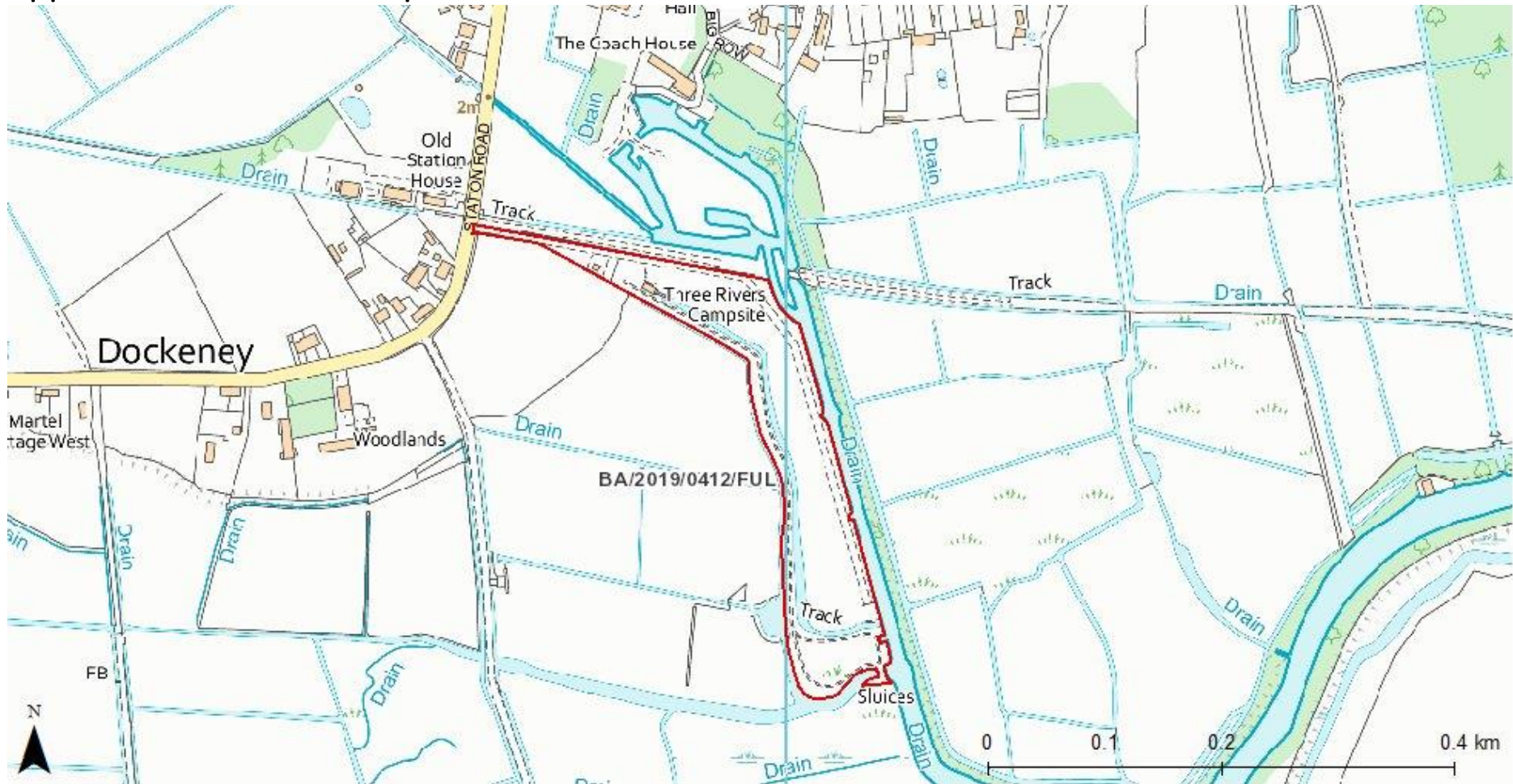
- 9.1. On balance the proposed development is considered to accord with relevant planning policy including Policy DM29, DM30, DM5, DM43, DM10, DM21 and DM32 and subject to conditions

Author: Jack Ibbotson

Date of report: 30 July 2021

Appendix 1 – Location map

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