



Committee Report

Planning Committee North – 11 June 2024

Application no DC/24/1177/FUL

Location

Dip Farm Car Park
Corton Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR32 4PL

Expiry date 3 June 2024

Application type Full Application

Applicant Mrs Denise Davey

Parish Lowestoft

Proposal Siting of a shipping container on Dip Farm concrete car park to serve as a workshop/tool storage and volunteer hut for Friends of Dip Farm sized as 3.048 metres by 2.438 metres.

Case Officer Katherine Rawlins
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1. Summary

- 1.1 The application seeks consent for a temporary period to locate a shipping container on part of the carpark at Dip Farm, Lowestoft, for the storage of tools and as a volunteer hub.
- 1.2 The application is referred to Planning Committee as the landowner is East Suffolk Council.
- 1.3 It is considered that the proposal is compliant with local and national planning policy, and as such it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site is a concrete hardstanding/carpark that is located at Dip Farm, Lowestoft, which is run by a group of volunteers and a community group, Friends of Dip Farm, as an area of open space and nature trails for use by local residents and the public.
- 2.2 The site area edged red is a carpark located in the northern extent of the wider Dip Farm site and measures 0.94ha. The site is situated close to Pleasurewood Hills Theme Park, which is located to the north of the application site.
- 2.3 The site was formerly a pitch and putt golf course, which closed in 2018, and is now an area of public open space and is an Asset of Community Value.
- 2.4 The site is located to the west of Gunton Warren County Wildlife Site and Gunton Warren and Corton Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR), on the opposite side of Corton Road. Corton Woods Local Nature Reserve is located to the north of the carpark.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Permission is sought for a specified temporary period to locate a shipping container on part of the carpark for the storage of tools and as a volunteer hub.

4. Consultations/comments

- 4.1 2 representations in support of the application:

- Excellent example of a community group and assets – volunteers allow playing fields to be used all year;
- Residents and visitors can enjoy the space and natural habitat;
- FODF regularly commit to litter picks;
- Waveney FC supports storage container – need for volunteers to have equipment close to hand;
- Valuable community service;
- Responsible for the upkeep of the area – secure storage for tools and equipment will assist in Friends endeavours;
- Location is of minimal detriment to carpark users; and
- Visual impact will be negligible, subject to suitable colour.

Consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Lowestoft Town Council	9 April 2024	No response
Summary of comments:		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Ecology	9 April 2024	18 April 2024
Summary of comments: Based on the available information the proposed development appears unlikely to result in a significant adverse impact on protected species or UK Priority habitats or species (under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)). The development does not require mandatory BNG.		

5. Publicity

5.1 The application has been subject to the following publicity:

Site Notice Type	Date Posted	Expiry date	Reason
General Site Notice	12 April 2024	3 May 2024	General Site Notice

6. Planning policy

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states “where in making any determination under the planning Acts, if regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. The Development Plan is the Adopted Waveney Local Plan (2019).

6.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

6.3 The following policies are considered relevant:

- WLP1.1 - Scale and Location of Growth (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
- WLP1.2 - Settlement Boundaries (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
- WLP8.21 - Sustainable Transport (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
- WLP8.29 - Design (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

- WLP8.22 - Built Community Services and Facilities (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
- WLP8.34 – GeoBiodiversity (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

7. Planning Considerations

Principle

- 7.1 The application site is not located within the settlement boundaries of Corton, to the north, or Lowestoft, to the south, and is therefore located in an area of designated countryside for the purposes of the Development Plan. In such locations, there is a general presumption against most forms of development, except where specific policies of the Development Plan indicate otherwise.
- 7.2 Dip Farm is a registered Asset of Community Value - its main use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community . Regard is therefore had to policy WLP8.22 of the Adopted Waveney Local Plan (2019). The policy supports proposals for new community services and facilities, provided it meets the needs of the local community, is of proportionate scale, well related to the settlement in which it serves and would not affect existing facilities that are easily accessible and available to the local community.
- 7.3 This proposal relates to the use of a small area of the main carpark, in the northern extent of the wider site at Dip Farm, to locate a shipping container for a temporary period.
- 7.4 The Friends of Dip Farm is a community group of volunteers that runs DIP Farm as an area of green, open space and woodland with café, containing nature trails and walks. It is a well-established community use therefore, albeit it is in the form of an area of public open space containing nature trails and walks as a space that is accessible for local residents to use and enjoy throughout the year. The Friends of Dip Farm is supported by East Suffolk Council. It is proposed that the shipping container would be padlocked whilst not in use, and that it would be accessible to volunteers for the storage of tools/equipment and as a volunteer hub between 9-5pm Monday-Friday, and 9.30-midday Saturday. The statement adds that no mains electricity or water would be provided; hence, it would be an ancillary building used in conjunction with the main community use of the land.
- 7.5 A supporting statement by the applicant refers to the need for the shipping container for the storage of tools and to act as a focal point as a volunteer hut for the Friends of Dip Farm. It is stated that the shipping container would be temporary but is expected to be in place for a number of years. The shipping container would be of metal construction and measure 3 metres in height and width, coloured green. The proposal would therefore provide ancillary storage of tools and a volunteer hut, albeit on a temporary basis, for a well-established community facility that serves the needs of the wider locality.

Design and Amenity

- 7.6 Policy WLP8.29 requires development to:
- To respond to local context and form of surrounding buildings in relation to overall scale, layout,
 - site coverage and height and massing of existing buildings;

- The relationship between buildings and the wider streetscene;
- To protect the amenity of the wider environment and neighbouring uses;
- Take into account important landscape of topographical features/retain/enhance semi-natural features on site.

7.7 The site and immediate locality is semi-rural in character and is set well back from the main road to the east (Corton Road, B1385) and is screened by trees along the eastern site boundary. There is a mature tree belt to the north beyond which is Pleasure Wood Hills, and the land to the south contains trees, open space, and nature trails. There are a number of small wooden cabins/huts located adjacent to the carpark that serves visitors to the Farm. The concrete carpark/hardstanding is on a flat area of the site, and there are trees and natural landscape features abutting the main carpark.

7.8 Whilst the use of the land for the siting of a metal shipping container would not generally be considered suitable as a permanent design solution in this semi-rural location, outside a designated settlement boundary, it is considered that temporary planning permission could be granted for a period of 5 years, as it would support the wider community use of the site as an Asset of Community Value. Although the shipping container would be clearly visible from views within the carpark, this part of the site is also well screened in wider public views from outside the application site, and no removal of trees, vegetation or hedgerow would be required for the temporary siting of the shipping container.

7.9 The proposal therefore complies with policy WLP8.29.

Loss of Parking

7.10 The proposal would result in a small area of the carpark being used for the temporary siting of the storage container. There are no demarcated parking bays or TROs in force in this location, and the loss of a small area of the carpark (of between 1-2 bays) is outweighed by the wider public benefits of providing ancillary storage/volunteer hub for use by volunteers of Dip Farm. Furthermore, as this is a temporary consent, the impact on parking provision could be reviewed in the future.

Ecology

7.11 Policy WLP8.34 states that where there is reason to suspect the presence of protected species or habitat, applications should be supported by an ecological survey undertaken by a suitably qualified person. If present, the proposal must be sensitive to and make provision for their needs.

7.12 The site is located to the west of Gunton Warren County Wildlife Site and Gunton Warren and Corton Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR), on the opposite side of Corton Road. Corton Woods Local Nature Reserve is located to the north of the carpark.

7.13 The carpark is located in an area of public open space and nature reserve containing woodland, grassland. As this application does not seek to undertake development that would require the clearance of vegetation or habitat, or the conversion of a disused building, no Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is submitted in support of the application.

7.14 The application has been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist, who is satisfied that on the basis of the available evidence and information, the temporary siting of a shipping container on part of the carpark as ancillary storage/volunteer hub, is unlikely to result in a significant adverse impact on protected species, or UK Priority Habitat or Species (under Section 41 of the NERC Act) or require mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. The small nature of the proposal would not adversely impact statutory and non-statutory designated nature conservation sites.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Approve.

9. Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be for a maximum period of 5 years from the date of this permission, after which time the shipping container hereby permitted shall be removed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and the land reinstated to its former condition.

Reason: Having regard to the non-permanent nature of the structure. A temporary permission is justified in this particular case, as the site is located in an area of designated countryside, outside a settlement boundary, in which there is a general presumption against development, in a location where the permanent siting of a shipping container would not normally be supported on design grounds.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with Site Plan, Proposed Block Plan and Supporting Statement received by the Local Planning Authority 24 March 2024, for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

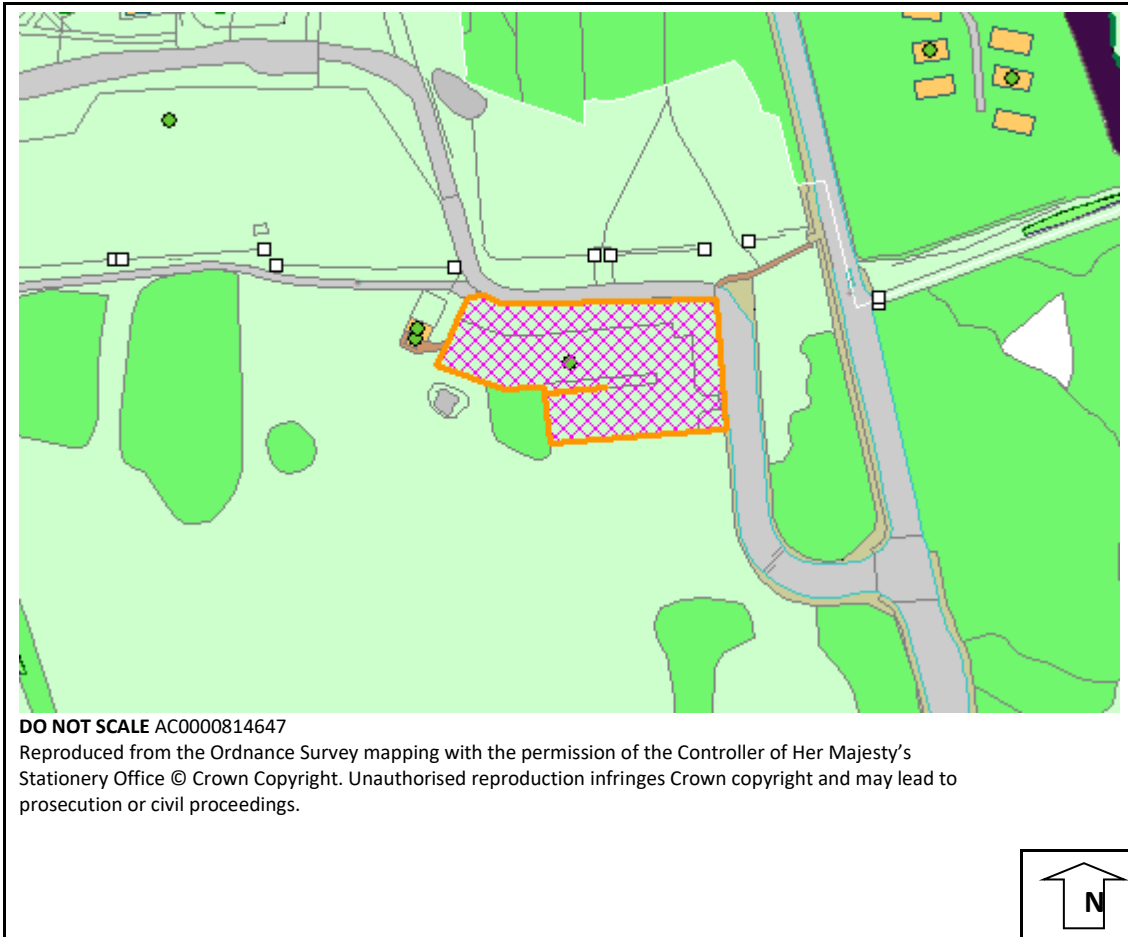
3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity.

Background information

See application reference DC/24/1177/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support