



## Committee Report

**Planning Committee South** - 26 March 2024

**Application no** DC/23/3477/RG3

**Location**

Land Adjacent The Ferry Boat Inn  
The Ferry  
Felixstowe  
Suffolk

**Expiry date** 10 November 2023  
**Application type** Deemed Council Development  
**Applicant** Mr Ian Woodford

**Parish** Felixstowe  
**Proposal** Resurfacing and extension of existing car park  
**Case Officer** Grant Heal  
01394 444779  
[grant.heal@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:grant.heal@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the resurfacing and extension of an existing car park on land adjacent The Ferry Boat Inn, The Ferry, Felixstowe.
- 1.2 Considered against all relevant material planning matters, the application is deemed sustainable and therefore recommended for approval in accordance with the NPPF and all relevant policies of the adopted development plan.
- 1.3 While there are no objections from statutory consultees, the application must proceed to planning committee because East Suffolk Council are the applicant and part landowners.

N.B. East Suffolk Council are currently in the process of purchasing some of the land that forms part of the proposed landscaping and access area within the application site. The red line on the application site location plan has therefore been updated which has triggered the requirement to serve notice on the current owners. If the committee resolve to approve

the proposal, planning permission would not be issued until the 21-day notice period to the third-party owner has expired, as required by Certificate B of the application process.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site comprises an existing public car park accessible off Ferry Road. Vehicular access into the site is shared by the Ferry Boat Inn Public House, as well as several residential properties situated further north on the opposite side of a large public recreation green space. A boat yard is evident on the opposite side of Ferry Road, beyond which lies the sea wall embankment. The Council managed Millenium Green public recreation space also sits opposite the site to the north-east.
- 2.2 The existing car park provides informal parking for approx. 14 vehicles but is in a poor state with uneven and impermeable surfacing which results in the pooling of surface water. Its southern boundary runs parallel to a public footway along Ferry Road, however, there is no physical demarcation between parking and footway areas resulting in inappropriate and unsafe vehicle access/egress over the footway. Inappropriate parking of vehicles also takes place on the surrounding green area.
- 2.3 The site lies within The Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape (formerly known as an AONB) and Flood Zone 3a.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for resurfacing improvements and a minor extension of the existing car park, along with associated landscaping.
- 3.2 East Suffolk Council recently acquired the site with a view to updating it, along with the provision of additional spaces, new planting and boundary features.
- 3.3 The proposed pay and display arrangement will formalise the facility and help to secure its long-term use as a car park towards supporting local businesses, including the adjacent Public House, as well as the nearby café, restaurant and tearooms situated further north towards the ferry boat landing. The improvements will also encourage greater use of both the adjacent open green area and Millenium Green public recreation space positioned opposite.
- 3.4 The improved car park would provide 21 car parking spaces, including two disabled badge holder spaces, and it is anticipated that users will be able to purchase 30-minute, 2-hour, 4-hour, and daily ticket options.
- 3.5 Two permit holder resident parking spaces will also be formalised close to the site's entrance where various other improvements to the existing footway and crossing, including tactile paving, would be introduced.
- 3.6 No external lighting or physical barriers are proposed. No new signage is proposed, however, any future signage requirements that may arise will be dealt with separately via the appropriate advertisement consent process.

## 4. Consultees

### Third Party Representations

- 4.1 23 third-party representations of objection have been received which raise concerns relating to potential flood risk, impact on the National Landscape (formerly AONB), access/ highway safety, disabled parking, amenity impacts, drainage and external lighting.
- 4.2 Three third-party representations of support have been received which highlight the importance of regularising the existing car park to effectively control parking within the area in the interest of highway safety and the avoidance of inappropriate parking practice.
- 4.3 Two neutral third-party representations have been received which raise the consideration of amenity impacts, drainage and external lighting arrangements.
- 4.4 A representation from the Felixstowe Ferry Residents Association has also been received which includes a survey undertaken by 36 residents, of which 7 support, 23 oppose and 6 hold a neutral stance on the proposal. Principal issues relate to potential loss of residents parking, use of proposed surfacing materials, access safety issues and the potential negative impact of increased signage.
- 4.5 The Council's Asset Management Team provided the following published response on October 25 2023:

*'Asset management are acting for the Council as landowner and not as planning authority. We are keen to improve the area in keeping with the AONB, a landscaping plan has been commissioned as part of the pending application. In response to the comments made the actual land take for the addition parking space is small whilst enabling a number of additional parking spaces, the remainder of open space will remain, and the design will of course reflect the location, the use of tarmac is only on limited areas for exit and egress and for disabled use not the main car park area. The exit will be compliant with highway requirements. The introduction of paid parking will be the mechanism by which these improvements can be made and some of the current misuse can be policed under civil parking legislation, specifically addressing some of the issues like trailers that current exist. No physical height barriers are proposed. Because tarmac is not to be used except for disabled and egress the remaining spaces will not be lined but will be like the parking area in the nearby private car park. Cycle parking is included reflecting requirements identified. We hope these comments go some way to address some of the concerns raised'.*

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Felixstowe Town Council	18 September 2023	4 October 2023
	7 December 2023	10 January 2024
	30 January 2024	7 February 2024

Summary of comments:

4 October 2023:

Committee recommended APPROVAL. However, we would suggest some appropriate landscaping to soften its appearance in the AONB.

10 January 2024:

Committee recommend APPROVAL but would ask that the plans be amended to provide two disabled parking bays rather than one.

7 February 2024:

Committee recommended APPROVAL.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Coasts And Heaths Project	18 September 2023	5 October 2023
	N/A	10 October 2023
	7 December 2023	14 December 2023
	12 January 2024	1 February 2024

Summary of comments:

5 October 2023:

The AONB team has no objection to the proposed works to the parking area adjacent to The Ferry Boat Inn at Felixstowe Ferry. No provision appears to have been made for cycle parking in the car park and this should be addressed. Consideration should also be given to introducing some soft landscaping along the verge frontage to the site to soften its visual impact.

10 October 2023:

Additional comments provided concerning size of proposed parking area, the need for landscaping and the control of external lighting.

14 December 2023:

The reduction in the number of parking spaces, the retention and upgrade of the existing single entrance/exit, the provision for cycle parking and the changes to the surfacing material in the car park are all fully supported. The improvements to the public realm/open space which includes the installation of a knee high railing, soft landscaping and the installation of timber sleepers to define and contain the western edge of the car park are also supported.

The overall design approach now being proposed is considered much more sensitive and appropriate than the schemes previously submitted. The scheme as proposed will enable necessary enhancements to be made to the existing car park in a way that will also help to conserve the unique and quirky character of Felixstowe Ferry and this part of the National Landscape.

The concerns raised the National Landscape team in our previous response dated 25/10/23 have been fully addressed by the scheme now proposed.

1 February 2024:

No additional comments to see to revisions to the splay lines.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Landscape Team	5 October 2023	6 October 2023
	7 December 2023	11 December 2023
	12 January 2024	19 January 2024
	30 January 2024	13 February 2024
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p><u>6 October 2023:</u> No objections. I do not consider that the proposals will have any relevant impact on the AONB landscape in which it is located. I agree with the response on the AONB unit that some native species scrub planting around the margins would help assimilate the carpark into the local landscape. This could be secured by condition.</p> <p><u>11 December 2023:</u> I have reviewed the revised plans and noted the inclusion of a cycle parking area, but I can advise that my previously submitted response remains valid and unaltered by the revision.</p> <p><u>19 January 2024:</u> Having reviewed the landscape planting plan dated December 2023, I can confirm that it is acceptable.</p> <p><u>13 February 2024:</u> No comment to make in respect of the revised visibility splay plan.</p>		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Heritage	5 October 2023	9 October 2023
	7 December 2023	8 December 2023
<p>Summary of comments: No comment.</p>		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	18 September 2023	9 October 2023
	7 December 2023	No response
	12 January 2024	16 January 2024
	30 January 2024	21 February 2024
<p>Summary of comments:</p> <p><u>9 October 2023:</u> No objection - conditions recommended regarding visibility splays, layout, gradient and surfacing of access, parking layout and drainage.</p> <p><u>16 January 2024:</u> Holding objection based on insufficient information concerning visibility splays and pedestrian access.</p> <p><u>21 February 2024:</u> No objection - conditions recommended regarding visibility splays, highway improvements, licencing, parking layout, cycle storage and drainage.</p>		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Felixstowe Society	N/A 7 December 2023	15 November 2023 No response
Summary of comments: No objection on balance, whilst the urbanisation of Felixstowe Ferry is resisted, the proposal would improve facilities to visitors in the area.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Estates Asset Management	18 September 2023 7 December 2023	No response No response
Summary of comments: No response.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Head Of Coastal Management	18 September 2023 7 December 2023	19 September 2023 15 December 2023
Summary of comments: <u>19 September 2023:</u> The site location sits within a 30m risk zone and a Level A CEVA has been provided. This is sufficient for this development. <u>15 December 2023:</u> No further comments to make.		

### Publicity

None

### Site notices

General Site Notice

Reason for site notice: General Site Notice

Date posted: 20 September 2023

Expiry date: 11 October 2023

## **5. Planning policy**

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

SCLP3.3 - Settlement Boundaries (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP3.2 - Settlement Hierarchy (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP12.2 - Strategy for Felixstowe (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP12.11 - Felixstowe Ferry and Golf Course (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP8.1 - Community Facilities and Assets (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP8.2 - Open Space (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP6.1 - Tourism (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP6.2 - Tourism Destinations (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP6.3 - Tourism Development within the AONB and Heritage Coast (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP10.4 - Landscape Character (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.1 - Design Quality (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP7.1 - Sustainable Transport (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP7.2 - Parking Proposals and Standards (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP11.2 - Residential Amenity (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP9.3 - Coastal Change Management Area (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP9.5 - Flood Risk (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

SCLP9.6 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Adopted September 2020)

## 6. Planning Considerations

### Planning history:

- 6.1 E7143 | Use of land as exhibition site for sale of boats and marine equipment also potable office building | Land Adjacent The Ferry Boat Inn, The Ferry, Felixstowe - Permitted 26 June 1962.

### Assessment:

- 6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages decisions that ensure the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities, while providing shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities. Importantly, it emphasises the need to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services and ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop, modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.
- 6.3 The proposal site lies outside the settlement boundary (SCLP3.3), of Felixstowe. It therefore sits within 'The Countryside', as per the Settlement Hierarchy (SCLP3.2) of the adopted Local Plan.
- 6.4 SCLP12.2 (Strategy for Felixstowe) states that the vision for Felixstowe is to retain its role as a thriving coastal resort and major centre with a comprehensive range of services and facilities which support the community of Felixstowe and the neighbouring settlements on the Peninsula. Infrastructure improvements are required over the plan period to meet future needs as well as enhancing the quality of life of existing communities and visitors. With particular relevance to this proposal, it states:
- 'Car parking provision is maintained and enhanced through redevelopment opportunities to serve residents, visitors and tourists'.*
- 6.5 The site also lies within the policy area designated by SCLP12.11 (Felixstowe Ferry and Golf Course) which states:
- 'Felixstowe Ferry is to be protected to ensure that the unique traditional character continues to contribute to the overall tourism offer. Any future development proposals need to be sympathetic to the traditional low-key activities in the area. Views and interactions between the existing buildings, landscape and water need to be retained to maintain the overall setting of Felixstowe Ferry as a small fishing and boat building community...'*
- 6.6 With relevance to this proposal, Policy SCLP8.1 (Community Facilities and Assets) states that:



*'Proposals for new community facilities and assets will be supported if the proposal meets the needs of the local community, is of a proportionate scale, well related to the settlement which it serves and would not adversely affect existing facilities that are easily accessible and available to the local community'.*

6.7 SCLP8.2 (Open Space) states that there is a presumption against any development that involves the loss of open space or community sport and recreation facilities. Where a loss of such space would result, the policy sets out that development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

*'a) The proposal is ancillary to the open nature of the area and will enhance local character, increase local amenity and be of greater community or wildlife benefit;*

*b) An open space assessment demonstrates the site is surplus to requirements including its ability to be used for alternative open space uses'.*

6.8 Assessed within the context of the above policies, the proposal would help to modernise and enhance the existing parking offering within a small community reliant on year-round footfall to support local businesses and encourage visitors to nearby recreational facilities.

6.9 While the inclusion of a modest extension to the existing car park would result in the loss of a small undeveloped area along the site's south-eastern corner adjacent Ferry Road, it is noted that this area currently comprises a small embankment of only limited usability for recreational purposes. It is therefore found that the provision of additional parking spaces would, along with other proposed landscaping enhancements, provide an overall benefit to visitors to the area without undermining local character and access to recreational facilities. Importantly, the negligible loss of undeveloped space that would result from this application would not undermine the end-user's ability to enjoy the public green area to the west (adjacent the pub) nor to the north at Millenium Green. Indeed, the development would both remain ancillary to and encourage the use of these spaces.

6.10 The application would otherwise support and enhance the area's tourism experience in the spirit of policies SCLP6.1 (Tourism) and SCLP6.2 (Tourism Destinations) and the improvements would assist in the management of the local area towards ensuring its long-term sustainability, as advocated by SCLP6.3 (Tourism Development within the AONB and Heritage Coast).

6.11 In-line with the above assessment, it is therefore judged that, on balance, the planning principle could be considered acceptable, subject to a satisfactory assessment of other material planning matters, as set out below.

6.12 Towards ensuring the proposal would not result in undue impacts on the character of the area, the applicant and Case Officer have worked closely with the Council's Principal Landscape Officer and National Landscape Team.

6.13 The National Landscape Team's comments provides the following assessment of the proposal which has been refined and amended through the application consultation process:

*'The reduction in the number of parking spaces, the retention and upgrade of the existing single entrance/exit, the provision for cycle parking and the changes to the surfacing*

*material in the car park are all fully supported. The improvements to the public realm/open space which includes the installation of a knee high railing, soft landscaping and the installation of timber sleepers to define and contain the western edge of the car park are also supported.*

*The overall design approach now being proposed is considered much more sensitive and appropriate than the schemes previously submitted. The scheme as proposed will enable necessary enhancements to be made to the existing car park in a way that will also help to conserve the unique and quirky character of Felixstowe Ferry and this part of the National Landscape.*

*The concerns raised by the National Landscape team in our previous response dated 25/10/23 have been fully addressed by the scheme now proposed'.*

- 6.14 Taken together, Officers are content that the proposal would result in the overall visual and operational enhancement to existing facilities and the scheme would not undermine the relevant provisions of the NPPF, nor policies SCLP10.4 (Landscape Character) and SCLP11.1 (Design Quality), in this regard.
- 6.15 The County Council Highway Authority have raised no objection, and the nature of the proposal is otherwise unlikely to present the potential to impact negatively upon existing highway safety or restrict parking provision unduly, when judged against the provisions of the NPPF, or policies SCLP7.1 (Sustainable Transport) and SCLP7.2 (Parking proposals and Standards) of the adopted development plan. Indeed, the inclusion of cycle stands and formalised parking for residents would provide further enhancement for visitors and the community. No new signage or external lighting is otherwise included within this proposal and, therefore, the application does not hold the potential to undermine amenity to a level that could be considered unacceptable, when judged against the relevant provisions of the NPPF and SCLP11.2 (Residential Amenity).
- 6.16 The proposal site lies wholly within flood zone 3a and is at a high risk from tidal flooding. The site is also partially affected by low levels of surface water flooding. The published Flood risk vulnerability classification (Annex 3 of the NPPF) states that car parks are less vulnerable to the risks of flooding and that a 'less vulnerable' development within flood zone 3a is not subject to the sequential or exception tests.
- 6.17 Notwithstanding the proposal site's susceptibility to the risks of tidal flooding, given the site's established use, the less vulnerable nature of development and the existence of protective flood defences, this application is not considered to hold the potential to undermine the provisions of the NPPF or policy SCLP9.5 (Flood Risk) of the adopted development plan. The application of permeable surfacing materials to all parking and access areas would also ensure that existing surface water issues within the site would be improved and, moreover, that the risk of flooding off-site would not be increased as a result of the development, as required by the NPPF and SCLP9.6 (Sustainable Drainage Systems).
- 6.18 The suggestion made within the submitted Flood Risk Assessment that there should be no overnight parking at the site due to the associated risks has been considered by officers. However, it is felt that imposing such a requirement via planning condition would be unnecessary and, moreover, unenforceable without the installation of additional barriers and management apparatus which would result in additional visual clutter within the area.

6.19 The Council's Coastal Management Team have noted that the site location sits within a 30m risk zone and a Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Assessment (CEVA) has been provided which is deemed sufficient for this development. No concerns have been raised in this regard and the application is thus considered to meet the requirements of policy SCLP9.3 (Coastal Change Management Area).

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 As per the above assessment, this application accords with the NPPF and the relevant policies of the adopted development plan.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 Authority to Approve the application following the expiry of the 21-day period following the notice that has been served on the other landowner, as required by Certificate B of the application process.

### **Conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in complete accordance with the following approved drawings:
  - 65206953-SWE-ZZ-00-D-S-0100 Rev. P11 (Proposed car park);
  - 15-12-60 10 Rev. A (Block Plan Site Location Plan);
  - WL 85/01 Rev. B (Felixstowe Ferry, Landscape Plan for Car Park).

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

3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed by the local planning authority.

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

4. In the event that contamination which has not already been identified to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is found or suspected on the site it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Unless agreed in writing by the LPA no further development (including any construction, demolition, site clearance, removal of underground tanks and relic structures) shall take place until this condition has been complied with in its entirety.

An investigation and risk assessment must be completed in accordance with a scheme which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons (see National Planning Policy Framework) and conform with prevailing guidance (including BS8485:2015+A1:2019, BS

10175:2011+A2:2017 and Land Contamination Risk Management) and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the review and confirmation in writing by the Local Planning Authority that likely risks have been identified and will be investigated accordingly.

Where remediation is necessary a detailed Remediation Strategy (RS) must be prepared, and is subject to the review and confirmation in writing by the Local Planning Authority as likely to address the risks identified. The RS must include detailed methodologies for all works to be undertaken, site management procedures, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria. The RS must be carried out in its entirety and the Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification prior to the commencement of the remedial works.

Following completion of the remediation strategy a validation report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation must be submitted to, reviewed by and confirmed in writing by the LPA as likely to have addressed the risks identified.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

5. The use shall not commence until the area within the site shown on drawing no. '65206953-SWE-ZZ-00-D-S-0100 Rev. P11' for the purposes of manoeuvring and parking vehicles has been provided and thereafter that area shall be retained and used for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on-site parking of vehicles is provided and maintained to ensure the provision of adequate on-site space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles where on-street parking and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety to users of the highway.

6. The use shall not commence until the area within the site shown on drawing no. '65206953-SWE-ZZ-00-D-S-0100 Rev. P11' for the purposes of cycle parking has been provided and thereafter the area(s) shall be retained, maintained, and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient areas for secure cycle storage are provided in accordance with Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2023 to promote sustainable travel.

7. Before any construction materials are brought to site details shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority showing the means to prevent the discharge of surface water from the development onto the highway including any system to dispose of the water. Any installed soakaway must maintain 5m clearance from the carriageway and any building. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the access is first used and shall be retained thereafter in its approved form.

Reason: To prevent hazards caused by flowing water or ice on the highway.

8. The approved landscaping and planting works shall be implemented prior to first use of the development (or within such extended period as the Local Planning Authority may allow) and shall thereafter be retained and maintained. Any plant material removed, dying or

becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the next available planting season and shall thereafter be retained and maintained.

Reason: To ensure the submission and implementation of a well-laid out scheme of landscaping in the interest of visual amenity.

9. No external lighting shall be installed at the site without the prior submission and approval of an external lighting scheme (including position and height of mounting features, height and angle of lights including aiming points, light fixing type, size and appearance, and the luminance levels) submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter only the approved lighting scheme shall be installed and maintained in that form unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity, and protection of the local rural environment, including the ecological environment.

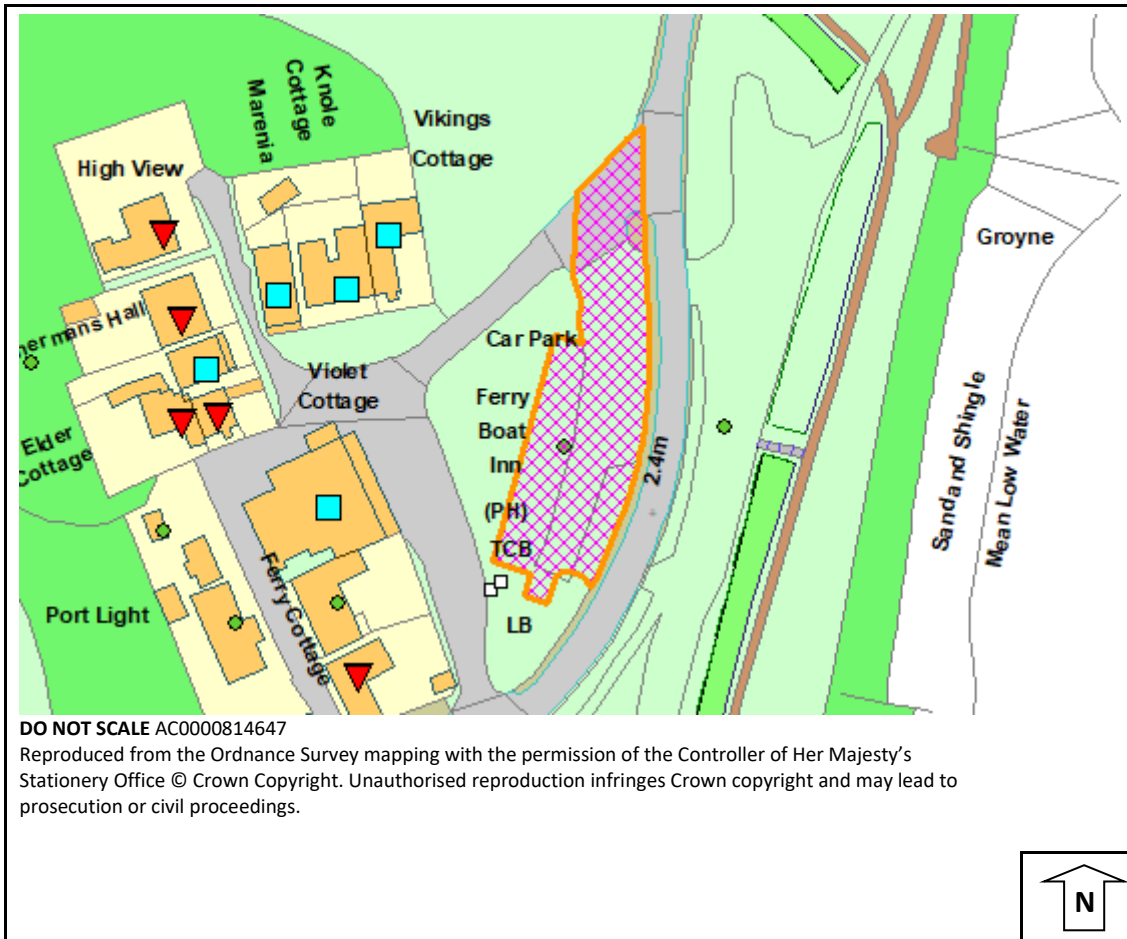
**Informatives:**

1. The Local Planning Authority has assessed the proposal against all material considerations including planning policies and any comments that may have been received. The planning application has been approved in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and local plan to promote the delivery of sustainable development and to approach decision taking in a positive way.





**Background information**

See application reference DC/23/3477/RG3 on [Public Access](#)

# Map



## Key

-  Notified, no comments received
-  Objection
-  Representation
-  Support