

A03

F/TH/13/0019

PROPOSAL: Change of use of sports field to provide an extension to Foxhunter Caravan Park, to be occupied by 48 static caravans relocated from existing caravan park which contains total of 340 static caravans, erection of storage building, and associated internal road and landscaping, with occupancy of all caravans all year round.

LOCATION: FOXHUNTER CARAVAN PARK, MONKTON STREET,
RAMSGATE, CT12 4JG

WARD:

AGENT: Charles F Jones & Sons LLP

APPLICANT: The Foxhunter Park

RECOMMENDATION: **Approve**

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

GROUND:

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a watching brief to be undertaken by an archaeologist approved by the Local Planning Authority so that the excavation is observed and items of interest and finds are recorded. The watching brief shall be in accordance with a written programme and specification, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

GROUND:

To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

- 3 No development shall take place until details of the means of foul and surface water disposal, including details of the implementation, management and maintenance of any proposed Sustainable urban Drainage Systems, have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with such details as are agreed and thereafter maintained.

GROUND:

To prevent pollution, in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF.

- 4 The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with drawings numbered 2390/D001 Rev. A received by the Local Planning Authority on 21 August 2013 and drawing entitled 'Proposed New Workshop and Machine Store' received by the Local Planning Authority on 3 January 2013.

GROUND:

To secure proper development of the site.

- 5 The area shown on the deposited plan for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles shall be operational prior to any part of the development hereby approved being brought into use, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The area agreed shall thereafter be maintained for that purpose.

GROUND:

In the interests of highway safety

- 6 All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development, or in accordance with a programme of works to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives any written consent to any variation.

GROUND:

In the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies D1 and D2 of the Thanet Local Plan

- 7 No development shall take place until a 5 metre landscape buffer has been provided in accordance with plan no.2390/D001 Rev A and dated 21 August 2013 hereby approved.

GROUND:

In order to aid the retention of reptiles on the site in accordance with the NPPF.

- 8 Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of external lighting, including their fittings, illumination levels and spread of light shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The lighting installation shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

GROUND:

To ensure that light pollution is minimised in the interest of the visual amenities of the area, in accordance with Policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan.

- 9 No more than 340 approved static holiday caravans shall be located on the site as shown on "Plan 1: Location Plan." and dated 3 January 2013.

GROUND:

In the interest of highway safety and to ensure the upgrading of tourist facilities in accordance with Thanet Local Plan Policy T1.

- 10 The caravans (static and touring) shall be occupied for holiday purposes only. No caravan (static or touring) shall be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence.

GROUND:

To safeguard against permanent residential use of the units to ensure the continued availability of holiday accommodation in the area, in accordance with Thanet Local Plan Policies TR1, TR2 and CC1.

- 11 The operators of the caravan park shall maintain an up-to date register of the names of all owners/occupiers of individual caravans (static and touring) on the site, and of their main home addresses and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority

GROUND:

To safeguard against permanent residential use of the units to ensure the continued availability of holiday accommodation in the area, in accordance with Thanet Local Plan Policies TR1, TR2 and CC1.

- 12 If, during development, significant contamination is found or caused at the site, then this contamination shall be fully assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The approved works shall be implemented within a timetable agreed by the Local Planning Authority and shall be of such a nature as to render harmless the identified contamination given the proposed end use of the site and surrounding environment, including controlled waters.

GROUND:

To ensure that the proposed development will not cause harm to human health or pollution of the environment, in accordance with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVES

1. A formal application for connection to the public sewerage system is required in order to service this development. To initiate a sewer capacity check to identify the appropriate connection point for the development, please contact Atkins Ltd, Anglo St James House, 39a Southgate Street, Winchester, SO23 9EH (tel 01962 858688) or www.southernwater.co.uk.

2. The applicant is advised that in order to prevent mud and debris being carried on to the highway during construction, wheel washing facilities shall be provided on site.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is approximately 9.27 hectares to the south of Monkton Street. It is occupied by the Foxhunter Caravan Park which benefits from a 10 1/2 month season. The south westerly part of this site is a 2.55 hectare irregular shaped parcel of land which is currently used as recreational land for the caravan park. A pedestrian footbridge links the main caravan park and this area.

The site is outside of the village and urban confines of Thanet although in close proximity of the village of Monkton. The surrounding area is predominantly rural, characterised by open agricultural land and associated farm buildings. The site is enclosed by mature trees and hedges along its boundaries, flat in contour and is not visible from Monkton Street.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There has been a holiday and residential caravan park on this site since the 1950s. The site has had several planning permissions over the years to extend and improve the site the most relevant being:

F/TH/99/1041 - Change of use from agricultural land to sports field and construction of footbridge, **Granted** 08/03/2001

F/TH/00/0349 - Variation of Condition imposed on CH/7/66/390 so as to permit occupation of caravans during the months of November December and February Closing for a six week period between 1 January And 14 February, **Granted** 03/08/2000

F/TH/12/0341 - Erection of single storey extension and glazed link together with increase in roof height of existing single storey element of clubhouse, **Granted** 22/06/2012

F/TH/12/0111 - Change of use of sports field to provide an extension to Foxhunter Caravan Park, to be occupied by 48 static caravans relocated from existing caravan park which contains total of 340 static caravans, erection of storage building, and associated internal road and landscaping, with occupancy of all caravans all year round, **Withdrawn** 21/08/2012

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought to change the use of the recreation ground to relocate 48 previously approved static holiday caravans on the south westerly part of the site (2.55 ha), together with landscaping, the erection of a 9.14 metre x 3.05 metre storage building on the northern most part of the site, as well as to remove condition 2 of planning permission reference F/TH/09/0349 which states that the touring caravans on the site shall only be occupied between 15 February and 31 December in any calendar year, closing for a minimum 6 week period between 1 January and 14 February to allow all year round occupation of the holiday park.

This application is a re-submission of F/TH/12/0111 and contains further information about the proposal.

The planning design and access statement submitted with the application states the following:

- Extension would be occupied by single and twin unit caravans giving the potential holiday makers a choice of caravans to purchase or hire
- Storage building required for maintenance and grass cutting machinery and as a workshop
- There are currently 39 empty pitches as holidaymakers require larger caravans which cannot be accommodated within the existing confines and loss in income and to the local economy

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan (2006)

CC1 - Development in the Countryside

CC2 - Landscape Character Areas-Former Wantsum North Shore

TR16 - Car Parking Provision

D1 - Design Principles

D2 - Landscaping

HE11 and HE12 – Archaeology

T1 – Tourist Facilities

T3 – Self-Catering Accommodation

EP13 – Groundwater Protection Zones

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters of notification were sent to neighbouring property occupiers, three site notice posted on the site and an advertisement placed in the local paper.

Four letters of representation were received objecting to the proposal. The main issues raised are:

- Stretch local services
- Traffic congestion
- Risk to groundwater quality
- Noise and disturbance
- Impact on sewerage and water supply system
- Unenforceable conditions
- Landscaping maintenance
- Crime fears
- Harm to wildlife
- Economic sustainability
- Risk to highway safety
- No need for development
- Harm to Landscape Character Area
- Harm to the Green Belt
- Harm to the countryside
- Inadequate parking
- Inconvenience from loading/unloading
- Reduce outdoor recreation space
- Increase in occupants
- Risk of flooding

- All year round use of the site
- Increase in the built form
- No benefit to local economy
- Land ownership

Minster Parish Council – objects to the proposal and have raised the following matters:

- impact on open spaces
- increased traffic movements on Monkton Road
- Effect on services within Minster

CONSULTATIONS

Kent County Council Highways Service – have undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and is satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway, they have raised no objection subject to parking/turning provision and wheel washing facilities.

Kent County Council Biodiversity Officer – Satisfied with the proposal subject to a 5 metre rough grassland buffer being created around the western and northern boundaries of the site to aid retention of reptiles on site.

Kent County Council Archaeological Officer – there are several important prehistoric and Anglo Saxon sites known to the north of Monkton and evidence of associated activity could survive; therefore a condition to secure a watching brief should be applied.

Tourism Manager - support the application as the "plans reflect the changes in the market responds to the investment in parks elsewhere in the country and will develop an offer that is more in line with customers' expectations and will be a welcome boost to the tourism accommodation for the district....moving away from the rows of static caravans to culs-de-sacs of caravan holiday homes will enable the park to meet demand for higher quality accommodation."

Environmental Health and Safety Officer – makes the following comments:

- Culvert strengthening will be required
- Fencing around pond/water feature
- Spaces between caravans
- Closed period remain in effect
- Maintain a register
- No residential occupation
- Will require changes to the license

Environmental Health – no objection subject to conditions

Environment Agency – no objection subject to conditions

Natural England – no objection, subject to biodiversity enhancements.

Southern Water - Raise no objections to the scheme, and advises that an application is required for connection to the public sewerage system, the adequacy of the proposals for discharge surface water should be considered and the exact position of the public water main must be determined and protected during construction.

Kent Fire and Rescue – no objections

Kent Police – no objection, advises use of crime reduction measures

Sports England – no comments

COMMENTS

The application is brought before Members as a departure from the development plan, being development in the open countryside where development is not normally permitted.

Principle of Development

The site is located in the countryside, outside of the identified urban and village confines, where new development will not be permitted unless there is a need for the development that overrides the need to protect the countryside. The site is also located within the Former Wantsum North Shore Landscape Character Area, where the landscape is very open with few features and wide, long views of the former Wantsum Channel.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in its core principles advocates that planning should drive and support sustainable economic development by meeting the business needs of an area to provide opportunities for growth. The NPPF continues to state that provision and expansion of tourist facilities should be supported in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities. This is consistent with policy T1 of the Thanet Local Plan which seeks to promote and provide opportunities for new tourism facilities and to protect and enhance the local economy in Thanet; through the extension or upgrading of the range of tourist facilities. Policy T3 also recognises that "tourist facilities need to adapt to an ever changing market. The upgrading of self-catering accommodation facilities to provide an improved product for the tourist market will therefore be supported by the Council." It outlines that proposals for "suitable extensions to existing sites will be permitted, subject to siting, design and access considerations and providing there is no overriding conflict with other planning policies" as well as "proposals to diversify, upgrade or improve facilities relating to self-catering accommodation will be permitted subject to scale, siting design, access and landscaping considerations."

Information from the Council's Tourism Manager outlines that almost 690, 000 UK and overseas visitors spent just over 2.7 million nights in self catering and caravan and camping accommodation in Kent in 2009. The average length of stay in self catering accommodation and camping and caravanning being 5 and 3.75 nights respectively with an average spend of £41.26 and £29.72 respectively. There appears to have been an increase in demand for self catering and caravan and camping accommodation in Kent with the number of overseas visitors staying in self catering accommodation increasing by 8.1% between 2006 and 2009 and the numbers of visitors staying in caravans and tents increasing by 11.7%.The holiday home rental market is stated to have increased by 25% in 2009 and continued to grow in 2010 and 2011 as UK holiday makers have sought lower cost holiday options and holiday park operators have responded to this by upgrading their home hire fleets to meet demand. The applicant states that the Foxhunter Caravan Park should be producing £2.6 million into the local economy each year however due to its current limitations approximately £300,000 is being lost from the local economy.

The site currently benefits from a 10 1/2 month operating system whereby no caravans should be occupied at any other time than between 15 February and following 31

December. The applicant states that a 12 month operating period would bring the operation of the park in line with other holiday parks in Thanet and the UK. Given the economic and tourism benefits of the use of the site as a caravan park it would be necessary to prevent permanent residential occupation being established at the site. Conditions could be imposed that will be effective in this regard to prevent the site from being used as permanent residence so that the year round use of the site as a holiday park would improve the tourist offer of the park, and is therefore supported by Thanet Local Plan Policies T1 and T3.

The application also includes the change of use of the recreational land for the siting of caravans and the siting of a storage building. The current density of caravans on the park is 51 caravans per hectare and the introduction of additional land would allow the park to increase the space between the caravans whilst not reducing overall numbers. The applicant states that this will meet the aspirations and demands of holiday makers who expect more space between caravans in a landscaped setting as well as the choice of larger caravans. The applicant states that these densities would be deemed more acceptable in today's terms. The submitted planning statement notes that there are currently 39 pitches on site which are either vacant or for sale, the reason being that holiday makers require larger caravans which cannot currently be accommodated within the Foxhunter Caravan Park. The proposed change of use of land on part of the site would allow for larger caravans to be accommodated on site. Advice from the Council's tourism manager reflects this and states that the plans respond to changes to the tourism market and would offer an improved standard of accommodation and provide a welcome boost to the tourism accommodation offer to the district. Many holiday park operators have made improvements including improved layouts and landscaping in order to improve the facilities on offer. The proposed storage building would accommodate grass cutting and maintenance machinery and would be used as a workshop in support of the use of the site. In this respect I therefore consider the scheme would allow for an upgrade to the range of tourist facilities on offer in the district, in accordance with Thanet Local Plan Policy T1.

The existing use of the land is for recreational purposes associated with the caravan park (F/TH/99/1041). The proposal retains a smaller recreation area towards the southern part of the site. I consider that this is not a publicly available recreation space and that the park would continue to benefit from other facilities including a tennis court, play area and smaller recreational area. I consider that the loss of this recreational space to meet changing demands of holiday makers and improve the tourist facilities is considered acceptable.

Overall I consider the change of use of part of the land and the 12 month operating season would improve the facilities on offer in the holiday park, bringing it in line with other parks in the area and the country and benefiting the local economy. I consider that careful use of conditions can prevent the use of the site as permanent residential units.

Landscape and Visual Impact

This site is located on the Former Wantsum North Shore Landscape Character Area. The Local Plan characterises this area as being open and states that development will only be permitted that would not damage the setting of the Wantsum Channel and long views of Pegwell Bay; The Wantsum Channel and the adjacent marshes and the sea.

The extension of the caravan park into the open countryside has the potential to be visually intrusive from the undeveloped agricultural land to the west and south. In this

case, whilst the proposal would involve physical alterations to the land with the siting of static caravans and the associated landscaping and roads, as the site is flat in contour and enclosed by mature trees and hedges along its boundaries of approximately 6-8 metres in height, this would ensure the development would not appear intrusive and given that the northern boundary of this part of the application site is approximately 100m from the village confines this would not appear isolated.

The NPPF and Local Plan policies support development in the countryside where it can be shown that there is an overriding need for the development and that mitigating measures can be taken to preserve the landscape environment. In this instance, mitigating landscaping measures the applicant has proposed include the retention and supplementing of boundary trees and hedges with a management strategy to encourage biodiversity, internal landscaping with native and ornamental species and a pond. The additional planting and existing boundary screening would ensure that the proposed development would not harm the rural setting of the surrounding countryside as it would be well screening and as there would be no increase in the number of caravans the level of activity on the site and occupancy would be as existing.

The workshop and machine store would be located in the north eastern corner of this area, the external appearance would be similar to the surrounding buildings and as the building would be approximately 3.4m high with a pitched roof, this would not appear unduly prominent.

I do not consider that the year round use of the site would have a landscape or visual impact.

Therefore, the proposal would not undermine the objectives of the landscape character area in which it lies.

Ecology

An ecological appraisal has been carried out for the site, this states that boundary trees, shrubs and scrub should be retained and enhanced, and a 5 metre rough grassland buffer zone is included within the scheme to protect reptile populations on site. The proposal also includes gaps within the boundary tree line to be replanted with native species, for a central pond feature and landscaping between the caravans consisting of native and ornamental species. These measures provide an opportunity for ecological improvements.

Impact on Living Conditions

With regard to the impact on neighbouring residents, the residential caravan site partly adjoins the northern boundary of the application site. This is where the storage building would be positioned, and, given the scale and use of the structure, it is not envisaged that there would be any harmful overbearing impact or loss of privacy due to the significant distance from neighbouring properties.

Due to the juxtaposition of the proposed caravan pitches along the northern boundary and the retained screening comprising a 4-6m high Willow shrub, this would ensure that there would be no detrimental loss of privacy to the existing occupants.

I consider that while the use of the caravan site during the current closure period would result in vehicular movements and general noise associated with the holiday park I consider that this would not exceed that in the current opening time, and as such would be

acceptable. I also consider that noise and disturbance can be controlled by other legislation, specifically through the Caravan Licence and the Environmental Protection Act. Furthermore, as there would be no net increase in the number of caravans on the site, there would not be a significant impact in terms of noise and disturbance as occupancy levels and traffic movements would be similar to existing levels.

The proposal may involve the installation of external lighting, to ensure that this would not have undue light spill which would affect neighbouring residential caravans and wildlife, further information can be submitted by using a condition.

Highway Matters

The site would utilise the existing vehicular access from Monkton Street, Highway Services have assessed the proposal and they have raised no objections as the proposal would not result in a net increase of caravans so there would be no greater number of traffic movements generated than the current situation.

The site is located close to the A253 a main thoroughfare road and the secondary roads that lead to this, furthermore Monkton Street is served by a bus service. I consider it necessary to condition that the number of units does not increase, to ensure that there is no additional potential impact upon highway safety.

Drainage

A flood risk assessment (FRA) has been submitted as the site is in Flood Zone 1 and over 1.0 hectare in size. The site is currently undeveloped and drained by boundary ditches on all four sides. The proposal would result in an increase of impermeable surfaces the discharge of surface water runoff would increase as a result, however, this is not considered to increase the downstream flood risk, and there is adequate storage in the swales, shallow ditches and overland flow.

As the site is in close proximity of the ground water protection zone and level of hardstanding surfaces, it would be appropriate to incorporate a sustainable surface water drainage scheme, details of which will be submitted through a condition.

Southern Water confirm that the current application does not represent a net increase in foul flows to the public sewer and therefore, do not object to the application.

Other matters

Kent Police have not raised any concerns regarding antisocial behaviour and the associated noise and disturbance from guests. Due to the seasonal nature of a holiday park, this would be isolated to certain times of the year and as there would be no increase in the number of caravans it is not envisaged that there would be a similar number of occupants.

An objector has questioned the land ownership of the site, the application documents identify the land with a red line and Certificate of Ownership – Certificate A has been completed as the applicant is the owner. Any land disputes or covenants are a private civil matter.

The site is not identified as having any contamination however, as a precaution in case any unknown contaminants are identified during works, a condition can be imposed.

Conclusion

The proposed development would improve quality accommodation for tourists and therefore would make a valuable contribution to the local economy, which I consider on balance overrides the need to protect the countryside. The site is well screened and therefore the resting of caravans would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the designated landscape character area.

As the proposal is for the relocation of caravans the proposal would involve no net gain so would utilise the existing facilities, staff resources and result in a scheme that would not cause material harm to the local transport network, biodiversity and flood zone. It is therefore, recommended that the application be approved with conditions, including one which prevents an increase in the number of caravans.

Cheryl Macer
Case Officer

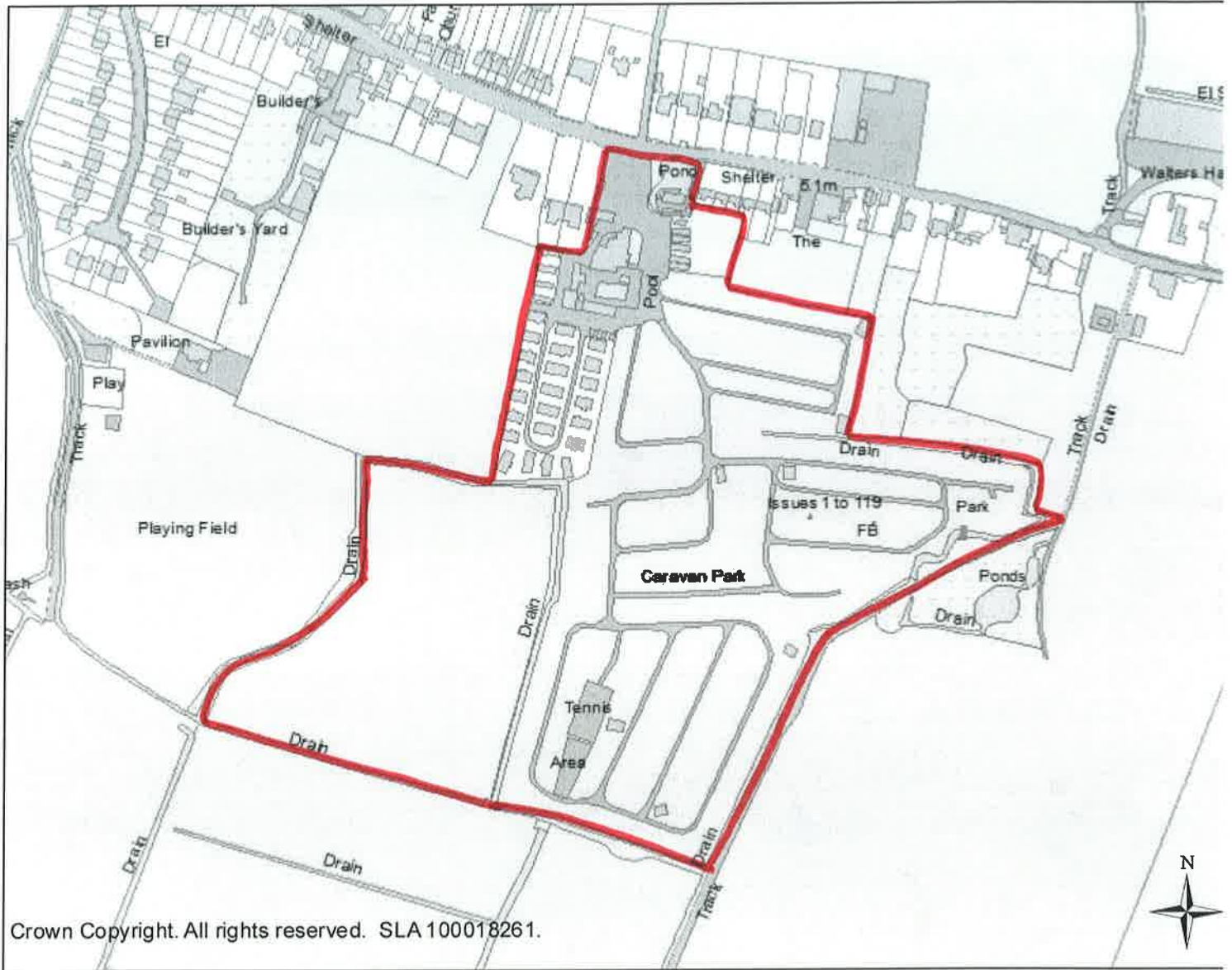
Title: F/TH/13/0019

Project name: Foxhunter Caravan Park, Monkton Street, Ramsgate

Notes:

Scale: 1:3,750

Author:



Legend

F/TH/13/0019

FOXHUNTER CARAVAN PARK

