

BACONSTHORPE - PF/18/1921 - Proposed change of use of land from agricultural to tent-only campsite for a maximum of 63 units of tents-only camping with associated electric hook-up points. Change of use of part of the existing campsite to create a wildflower meadow. Use of part of the existing agricultural field for wildflower meadow. Erection of 6 camping pods. Retrospective erection of camp site reception/shop building, shower and wash-up block, two toilet blocks, utility block and children's play area. [Re-consultation: Amended Layout Plan and Revised Description]; Baconsthorpe Meadows Campsite At, Pitt Farm, The Street, Baconsthorpe, Holt, NR25 6LF for A V Youngs Farms Limited

Major Development

- Target Date: 08 February 2019
- Extension of time agreed until 22 August 2019

Case Officer: Nick Westlake

Full Planning Permission

RELEVANT CONSTRAINTS

Countryside

C Road

Part of site within/adjacent to Conservation Area

Public Right of Way

EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water 1 in 1000

Mineral Safeguard Area

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PF/17/2187 Change of use of agricultural land to campsite (40 tents) and installation of 10 timber camping pods/lodges, with associated works - Withdrawn by Applicant 14/03/2018

PF/15/1774 Variation of condition 4 of planning permission ref: 12/1263 to allow extended use until 31 October and re-open 20 March - Approved 22/04/2016

PF/14/0705 Pitt Farm, The Street, Baconsthorpe, Conversion of barns to six residential dwellings - Approved 01/08/2014

CDA/12/1263 Discharge of conditions 9 & 15 of planning permission PF/12/1263
Condition Discharge Reply 15/03/2016

PF/12/1263 Change of use of land from agriculture to 53 units tent-only campsite and formation of vehicular access - Approved 24/01/2013

PF/12/0562 PF Hare & Hounds, Baconsthorpe Road, Hempstead, Holt, NR25 6LD
Change of use from Public House to residential dwelling - Refused 28/05/2014
Appeal Allowed - 17/03/2015 (Planning Appeal APP/Y/2620/A/14/2228487)

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The site, known as Baconsthorpe Meadows Camp site is located on the southern side of The Street within the hamlet of Baconsthorpe approximately 2 miles east of Holt, which is accessed via the Hempstead Road (C class road).

The camping site was opened in 2013 following the grant of planning permission (ref: PF/12/1263) allowing for a 'Change of use of land from agriculture to a 53 unit tent-only

campsite and formation of vehicular access’.

The entrance to the campsite is found on ‘The Street to the west of the hamlet of Baconsthorpe, approximately 55 metres west of a property known as Meadowbank. The campsite access road then navigates eastwards some 300 metres behind Meadowbank, the old Hare and Hounds Public House and the Old Barn, that are all residential dwellings located in a small cluster south of The Street, and all effectively immediate neighbours to the existing campsite.

South of the first 150 metres of this access route, there is an existing large open field measuring some 100 metres in width and 170 metres in length. This is outside the curtilage of the existing campsite. There is a small hedge planted in a cross shape, centrally positioned to divide the field up. This field is enclosed by an approximate 2 metre high hedge, the eastern boundary is adjacent to the existing campsite and a public right of way that runs from north to south to one side of the campsite.

The current operational campsite site is east of this neighbouring field, measures some 100 metres in width and 300 metres in length being broadly rectangular in nature. The eastern area is dedicated for car parking, the Wardens Office and the onsite Shower, Washing and W.C facilities.

The red line of the original application approval (ref: PF/12/1263) did not permit car parking or shower/washing block area which are currently being used by the applicant without the benefit of planning permission.

Approximately 30% of the existing camping area is north of the access road, with the remaining 70% south of this access road. The fields are enclosed with fencing and hedging that is approximately 2 metres in height and well established.

The campsite is closely associated with Pitt Farm to the east, a working arable farm, opposite Hall Lane which leads to the historic site of Baconsthorpe Castle. Application PF/14/0705 allowed for the ‘Conversion of barns to six residential dwellings’ at Pitt Farm. These buildings are not part of this development and benefit from a new separate access to the east of the buildings away from the campsite access.

There is a public right of way known as the Holt – Mannington Walk or Hempstead Footpath 14 running to the west of the existing site. Effectively, this acts as the western boundary of the campsite. This western boundary also contains a number of mature trees. A permissive bridleway between Field Lane and the western edge of the campsite was agreed and implemented as part of the 2012 planning application, known as Hempstead Bridleway 11.

Surrounding the entire site, there are agricultural fields to the south, east and west, with residential properties as mentioned to the north. These properties are in part between 10 and 30 metres distance from the existing host site, making a close relationship between these opposing land uses.

There are no environmental designations on the site. The site is, save for a small section along the eastern boundary, outside of but adjacent to outside Baconsthorpe Conservation Area. Ultimately the site falls within the landscape setting of this heritage asset. However, there are no Listed Buildings or Ancient Ruins within immediate or close proximity to the site.

PROPOSAL

Proposes to increase the size of the campsite by expanding the 'curtilage' or red line area of the site. This expansion is to enable the campsite to accommodate an additional 10 camping pitches bringing the number up to 63 from 53. Separate to this there are 6 proposed camping pods making the overall total number of Camping pitches and camping pods 69 from the existing number of 53 camping pitches only.

These pitches would be spread across the existing field and the newly proposed field.

The proposed camping pods are approximately 2.5 metres wide, 2.7 metres in height and 3.0 metres in length. They are wooden in material and will be coloured a dark stain.

The expansions to the red line area or curtilage of the campsite includes two main areas; to the west of the existing site and to the east of the existing site.

The proposal includes two wild flower meadows which, amongst other things, help provide a 'buffer zone' from the main campsite in the interests of preserving and protecting residential amenity. Separate to the proposed meadows, a widespread level of additional planting and screening has been designed into the application with over 150 new trees and hedges being introduced.

On the eastern side of the site the applicant is seeking to regularise a number of uses including an area of land used for campsite car parking, a children's play area and a number of structures including a warden's office/on site shop, shower and washing blocks and a toilet block. The toilet blocks/shower buildings are green in colour and porta cabin like in appearance measuring approximately 9 metres in length, 3 metres in width and 3 metres in height. The office building is a smaller wooden shed type building.

The six proposed camping pods are located in this area in groups of three, one group to the east and one group to the south of the main campsite facilities.

Finally, the application includes the creation and retention of a number of electrical hook up points within the site, overall 30 electrical points are shown, 12 newly proposed and 18 existing these are seeking retrospective permission. They are non-illuminated and stand at 1 metre in height and approximately 0.2 metres wide.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

At the request of the Head of the Planning & Building Control to allow for the complex planning issues regarding to be public heard and considered by Committee.

REPRESENTATIONS

8 letters of representation have been received, 1 in support and 7 in objection:

Summary of representations of objection:

- Neighbours do not wish to see an increase in the size of the campsite
- The wildflower meadows will not keep campers off this land
- How will there be guarantees the wildflower meadows will be planted
- The south east field has been included into this way has this expansion been allowed, will it be used for camping?
- Many previous planning conditions have been breached on site why should the

- applicant be trusted this time round
- Camper vans have been using the site
- The septic tank is too small
- The campsite access is very narrow, undrained and not lit, how will it accommodate the extra traffic
- The farm and school traffic together with the extras movements predicted from the camp site will make the area intolerable for local residents.
- This is not a 'back to basics' campsite
- When the site is empty most of the time why are the proposing the expansion
- The traffic monitoring assessment from Kingdom TP was misleading in its remit, scope and methodology. Ultimately giving incorrect readings of the proposed traffic impact of the development
- No additional noise especially late at night is wanted by the neighbours
- No new jobs are created
- The toilet blocks are unsightly and should be further screened
- The plans are misleading and don't show the electrical hook up points
- There is a lack of toilets on site and the drainage is inadequate
- Loss of agricultural land
- The smoke and noise (including dogs barking) coming the site from morning to night is at an unacceptable level
- The tents on the site are too large allowing for 10 people to stay per tent
- Any increase in traffic flow will necessitate even more use of 'passing places' on the Holt to Baconsthorpe Road
- There is no pavement through Baconsthorpe additional people could lead to a highway safety concern

Summary of representation in Support:

- The site supports the local economy
- The business is seasonal so the highway impact is limited.
- The small increase shall have negligible impact on the local area.

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health: No Objection

There is sufficient toilet and shower facilities on site. Provided that the applicant is able to demonstrate that the foul water drainage scheme on site will be sufficient there is no objections to this application on Environmental Health grounds.

The applicant is in the process of getting a Foul Drainage Permit from the Environment Agency this is a separate independent process to a Planning Application about which the Local Planning Authority have no input.

Environment Agency: No Objection, subject to condition

The current treatment system is a 6,000 litre septic tank which discharges into the ground. On the basis of 2 people per tent pitch and camping pod, a tank with a capacity to treat 10,350 litres per day is required. As such a condition is recommended restricting commencement of the proposal until an adequate drainage scheme is submitted to the LPA and implemented as approved.

The applicant has applied for a Foul Drainage Permit and this is shortly to be issued by the Environment Agency.

Public Rights of Way: No Objection

There are two Public Rights that are aligned within the site, Hempstead Footpath 14 and Hempstead Bridleway 11. The additional planting is welcomed however the full legal extent of these Public Rights of Way must remain open and accessible for the duration of the development and subsequent occupation. This includes the encroachment of the screening vegetation, which must be planted back from the PROW to allow for growth and to maintain the legal widths.

Highways: No Objection

Despite the original objection to the application, the Highways Authority reversed their decision. This is due to the fact that only modest car borne traffic expected is expected and also the Hempstead Road is wide enough for two cars to pass. Ultimately, they do not believe that they could substantiate a highway safety objection to the current proposal.

Building Regulations: No Objections

The drainage from the 'mobile buildings' housing the shower and W.C block would not require Building Regulations approval due to the fact they are 'mobile buildings'.

Open Spaces Society: Objection

The public's views and quiet experience of the countryside, meadows and farm buildings will be spoilt by the proposed buildings, structures and associated paraphernalia associated with the camp site. The landscaping is limited and will not mitigate against this harm. Furthermore, the width of the Bridleways that go through and run adjacent to the site should be a minimum width of between 3 and 5 metres.

Lead Local Flooding Authority: No Objection

No objection given the site is not within a surface water flow path as defined the Environment Agency.

Landscape Officer: No Objections

The development as proposed would have limited negative impacts on the local landscape character. Subject to the implementation of the Landscape Strategy, the development accords with the requirements of policies EN2 and EN4 of the Core Strategy and meet the requirements of the NPPF.

A condition should be attached to any permission given to secure the long term protection of the landscape planting.

Environmental Protection: No Objection

There have been no historic complaints regarding amenity issues or operational problems relating to the running of the site. Having a buffer zone between the campsite and the residents would be beneficial in helping overcome concerns in relation to loss of residential amenity. Non gravel surfacing would help reduce the noise of vehicle movements. With regards to camp fires and fire pits on site, discussions with the owners are suggested to reach an agreement on usage. Car parking is advised to be as far from the residential properties as possible.

Baconsthorpe Parish Council: No Objection

Subject to a condition being imposed that the site is restricted to tents and the camping pods only.

Hempstead Parish Council: No Response

RELEVANT POLICIES

North Norfolk Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (2008)

- Policy SS2: Development in the Countryside (*prevents general development in the countryside with specific exceptions*).
- Policy SS 4: Environment (*strategic approach to environmental issues*).
- Policy SS 5: Economy (*strategic approach to economic issues*).
- Policy EN 1: Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and The Broads (*prevents developments which would be significantly detrimental to the areas and their setting*).
- Policy EN 2: Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the Landscape Character Assessment*).
- Policy EN 4: Design (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the North Norfolk Design Guide and sustainable construction*).
- Policy EN 8: Protecting and enhancing the historic environment (*prevents insensitive development and specifies requirements relating to designated assets and other valuable buildings*).
- Policy EN 9: Biodiversity and geology (*requires no adverse impact on designated nature conservation sites*).
- Policy EN 10: Flood risk (*prevents inappropriate development in flood risk areas*).
- Policy EN 13: Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation (*minimises pollution and provides guidance on contaminated land and Major Hazard Zones*).
- Policy EC 3: Extensions to existing businesses in the Countryside (*prevents extensions of inappropriate scale and that would be detrimental to the character of the area*).
- Policy EC 7: The location of new tourism development (*provides a sequential approach for new tourist accommodation and attractions*).
- Policy EC 10: Static and touring caravans and camping sites (*specifies criteria for new sites and extensions or intensification of existing sites*).
- Policy CT 5: The transport impact on new development (*specifies criteria to ensure reduction of need to travel and promotion of sustainable forms of transport*).
- Policy CT 6: Parking provision (*requires compliance with the Council's car parking standards other than in exceptional circumstances*).

Relevant National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sections:

- Section 1 – Building a strong and competitive economy
- Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Section 7 – Requiring good design
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Other material considerations:

- North Norfolk Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (December 2008)

OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Main Issues:

- 1. Principle of development;**
- 2. Extensions to Existing Businesses in the Countryside**
- 3. Location of New Tourism Development**
- 4. Static and Touring Caravan and Camping Sites**
- 5. Impact on Landscape Character**
- 6. Amenity**
- 7. Highways Safety and Parking**
- 8. Public Rights of Way**
- 9. Design**
- 10. Impact on Heritage Assets**
- 11. Ecology**
- 12. Drainage**
- 13. Material Considerations in favour of the proposal**

1. Principle of development

The site is located within the Countryside Policy area where Policy SS 2 permits recreation and tourism proposals as well as extension to existing businesses subject to compliance with other relevant Core Strategy policies. Those other relevant policies would include Policy SS 4 in relation to the protection of the environment, Policy SS 5 in relation to the Economy requiring tourism proposals to demonstrate that they will not have a significant detrimental effect on the environment, Policy EN 2 in relation to landscape together with Policy EC 7 in relation to the location of new tourism development, Policy EC 3 in relation to extensions to existing businesses in the countryside and Policy EC 10 in relation to static and touring caravan and camping sites.

In terms of other material considerations, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) indicates how Local Planning Authorities can support a prosperous rural economy including setting out at paragraph 83 that decisions '*should enable...sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside*',

Assessment of the proposal against Core Strategy Policies and other relevant material considerations are set out below. Subject to the proposal according with these policies the principle of development would be considered acceptable. Where the proposal fails to accord with relevant Core Strategy policy it will be necessary to consider any other relevant material planning considerations in favour of the proposal to justify a departure from the Development Plan when making the planning balance.

2. Extensions to Existing Businesses in the Countryside

The existing Baconsthorpe Meadows Campsite has become an established tourism business which makes a positive contribution to the local economy. Core Strategy Policy EC 3 sets out that '*extensions to existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where it is of a scale appropriate to the existing development and would not have a detrimental effect on the*

character of the area'

This expansion is to enable the campsite to accommodate an additional 10 camping pitches bringing the number up to 63 from 53. Separate to this there are 6 proposed camping pods. Making the overall total number of Camping pitches and camping pods 69 from the existing number of 53 camping pitches only.

It is a planning judgement as to whether the further extension to the site is of an appropriate scale. Officers consider that the acceptability of expansion under Policy EC 3 hinges not only on the scale of growth but also on whether the proposal has a detrimental effect on the character of the area.

Whilst the scale of growth in terms of numbers is considered to be acceptable, the land-take given over to the enlarged camp site has been a concern for Officers with the potential for the site to be used for a larger number of camping plots than being applied for leading to potentially unacceptable adverse impacts. However, after lengthy discussion and negotiation with the applicant, a solution has been agreed which includes the planting of two areas of wildflower meadow which, in effect act to limit the number of plots on the site.

An assessment below considers the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape. Officers consider that, with the addition of mitigation planting, the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area.

As such it can be reasonably concluded that the proposal would accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EC 3.

3. Location of New Tourism Development

Core Strategy Policy EC 7 sets out that:

'New tourist accommodation and attractions should be located in accordance with the sequential approach below:

- *Proposals for new build tourist accommodation and attractions should be located within the Principal and Secondary Settlements.*
- *Within the Service Villages, Coastal Service Villages and the Countryside proposals for new tourist accommodation and attractions will be permitted in accordance with other policies for Employment Areas, the Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside, and Extensions to Existing Businesses in the Countryside.*
- *Where it can be demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites, no suitable buildings for re-use and that a rural location is necessary, then new build attractions and serviced accommodation may be permitted in the 'resorts and hinterland' and 'rural' Tourism Asset Zones of the Countryside where they are in close proximity and have good links to, the Principal and Secondary Settlements.*

Proposals for new build unserviced holiday accommodation in the Countryside will be treated as though they are permanent residential dwellings and will not be permitted.'

The countryside location of the site means that the proposal should be considered under the second bullet point within Policy EC 7. As such, the acceptability of the proposal under EC 7 is dependent upon whether the proposal accords with extension to businesses in the

countryside under Policy EC 3. As set out above, Officers consider the proposal to be of an acceptable scale and, with mitigation planting, would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area meaning that the proposal would accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN 3 and therefore also meet the requirements of the second bullet point of Core Strategy Policy EC 7.

The proposal therefore accords with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EC 7.

4. Static and Touring Caravan and Camping Sites

Core Strategy Policy EC 10 sets out that:

‘Proposals for new static caravan sites or woodland lodge holiday accommodation will only be permitted where they result in:

- *the removal of an existing cliff-top static caravan site; or*
- *the re-location of existing provision which is within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area or Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 3.*

Proposals permitted under this exception should result in no significant intensification of the use and, if appropriate, comply with the criteria in Policy EN11 ‘Coastal Erosion’. Proposals should seek to re-locate to the ‘rural’ and ‘resorts and hinterland’ Tourism Asset Zones in preference to the ‘coastal’ or ‘North Norfolk Broads’ zones.

Extension of, or intensification of, existing static caravan sites (including replacement with woodland lodges) and touring caravan / camping sites will only be permitted where the proposal:

- ***conclusively demonstrates a very high standard of design and landscaping and minimal adverse impact on its surroundings;***
- ***is appropriate when considered against the other policies of the plan.***

New touring caravan and camping sites will not be permitted within the Norfolk Coast AONB, Undeveloped Coast or Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 3. Elsewhere proposals will be judged against other Core Strategy policies. Temporary permission may be granted within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area’.

The proposal before Committee does not involve the removal of an existing cliff-top static caravan site nor does it result in the removal of existing provision within the Coastal Erosion Constraint Area or Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 3.

The proposal represents an extension of an existing camping site and, after lengthy discussion and negotiation with the applicant, a solution has been agreed which, on balance, demonstrates a high standard of design and landscaping with minimal adverse impact on its surroundings and which generally accords with the requirements of other relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

As such the proposal is considered to accord with the requirements and aims of Core Strategy Policy EC 10.

5. Impact on Landscape Character

Core Strategy Policy EN 2 sets out that:

‘Proposals for development should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive character areas identified in the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment and features identified in relevant settlement character studies.

Development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance:

- *the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area (including its historical, biodiversity and cultural character)*
- *gaps between settlements, and their landscape setting*
- *distinctive settlement character*
- *the pattern of distinctive landscape features, such as watercourses, woodland, trees and field boundaries, and their function as ecological corridors for dispersal of wildlife*
- *visually sensitive skylines, hillsides, seascapes, valley sides and geological features*
- *nocturnal character*
- *the setting of, and views from, Conservation Areas and Historic Parks and Gardens.*
- *the defined Setting of Sheringham Park, as shown on the Proposals Map.’*

The application has been supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVIA) prepared by Sheilsflynn. This seeks to assess the landscape capacity and sensitivity with a view to providing a landscape strategy that enables the integration of the development into the landscape without detriment to the distinctive character and qualities of the local landscape. The LVIA draws upon relevant Topic Papers and guidelines, as well as North Norfolk’s Landscape Character Assessment, to make the assessment.

The LVIA identifies the key characteristics and sensitivities of the local landscape character and suggests that the character of Baconsthorpe’s landscape setting is stronger in some parts than others and that this strength of character can be enhanced by replanting lost hedgerows, hedgerow trees, arable reversion to pasture and the creation of copses and woods. The LVIA goes further to identify where the development provides opportunities to enhance locally distinctive features that are sensitive to the development. Overall the LVIA suggests that the development will have a minimal impact on the sensitive landscape elements and features but recommends a landscape strategy that can reinforce and enhance the existing landscape character.

The LVIA also assesses the visual sensitivity of the local area and the impact of the development proposals. Six viewpoints within the campsite itself are assessed as having moderate-high sensitivity with two viewpoints outside of the site assessed as having moderate visual sensitivity. Again, a landscape strategy is recommended which seeks to mitigate and screen some of the views within and of the campsite.

The Landscape Strategy is provided in full in Section 4 of the LVIA and details areas of

individual tree and shrub planting, new hedgerows and woodland copses. Native species are proposed in a mix of sizes from whips to standard trees with a failures replacement planting programme covering five years. Planting that was not implemented as part of the 2012 permission has been explained and supplemented as part of the Landscape Strategy.

The Landscape Officer considers that the LVIA provides a robust assessment of the impacts of the development on landscape character and visual receptors and consider that the development as proposed would have limited negative impacts on the local landscape character. Furthermore, that the landscape strategy as identified in the LVIA would enhance the landscape character.

Through the Landscape Strategy this development proposal would take the opportunities for enhancement and therefore meet the requirements of the NPPF paragraph 130.

Subject to the imposition of conditions to secure the implementation of the Landscape Strategy and conditions to secure retention of existing landscaping and new planting/replacements for a period of ten years, Officers consider that the development accords with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy EN 2.

6. Amenity

Officers consider and recognise that mechanisms to secure adequate levels of residential amenity for the neighbouring residential properties are critical to the longer term success of this scheme. This includes consideration of how issues such as noise levels, traffic noise, smoke, overlooking, recreational activities outside allocated areas and unwanted antisocial behaviour in particular are managed by the site owner.

Notwithstanding the strength of concerns raised by the neighbours as a consequence of this proposal, the Environmental Health Section has confirmed that prior to this application there have been no recorded complaints, to the Environmental Protection Department.

Despite the increase in numbers proposed as part of this application, the actual physical distance between nearest effected neighbouring residential properties and proposed sites for campers to stay is increasing. At present 53 pitches can be located on the eastern field both north and south of the central access road, resulting in possible camping distances of 10 – 15 metres from the nearest effected residential neighbouring boundary. Officers recognise that there is a small section in the northern field that is not meant to be used for camping and which is proving difficult to enforce.

The proposed application, through the creation of two dedicated wildflower meadows, increases the distance to nearest neighbours to some 45 metres within the northern section of the existing field. The distance from the newly created campsite space in the western field is some 85 metres away from these nearby residential neighbouring properties.

Officers consider it reasonable to limit the number of pitches in both the existing eastern side of the site to 38 (44 including the camping pods). At present the number allowed is 53. Due to the smaller overall size of the western field it is considered reasonable to limit the number of pitches allowed to 25. Therefore, the proposed 63 tent pitches would be spread across a wider area and be further away from the immediate neighbouring properties than exists at present.

Officers consider that the proposed six camping pods to the very south east of the site would not significantly affect the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties due to the fact they are over 120 metres away from these properties.

There have been no objections from residents at Pitt Farm House. Nevertheless, if on site numbers are restricted to 38, as proposed on the eastern field, and 25 on the western field then the number of pitches on the existing eastern site would be some 9 less than what can be used at present, (taking into consideration the proposed camping pods also).

In the event of approval, Officers would recommend a condition be included limiting the numbers of campers in both the western and the eastern (existing fields) in the interest of residential amenity.

In respect of reducing adverse effects on residential amenity, some concerns have been raised about impacts from amplified music and barbeques associated with the camp site as well as general noise from campsite guests. Whilst the applicant states quite clearly on their business website that the site is a 'traditional campsite' with a 'No Noise after 10pm' policy, Officers considered that a site management plan can be secured by way of planning condition which would enable a clear understanding of the ways that the site owner will manage camping activities on the site so as protect residential amenity. To aid with this, the proposed sectioning off of the wild life meadows via fencing and hedging should ensure these wide areas are not used for sport or recreation.

Whilst not seeking to curtail the running of a successful campsite business, the final recommendation, based on discussions between Officers and Environmental Protection is to limit the overall number of people camping on site, together with the number of pitches, that this application allows for. Given the wide variety of tent sizes now readily available, if for example 63 ten-man tents were erected this could result in the total number of holiday makers on site up to 630 people (plus another 12 people using the proposed camping pods at 2 people per pod. Clearly this could have a significant and materially different impact on the area than a site with fewer guests. Officers consider a sensible and pragmatic approach would be to work on the basis of 4 people per tent per plot (4 x 63 = 252 **plus** 12 people using the six proposed camping pods at 2 people per pod) with a suggested site capacity of **264** campers on site at any one time.

This suggested limit does not necessarily prevent larger tents from being used but means that they cannot be used in large numbers across the site, particularly as larger groups can have an increased noise impact. This means that group sizes can be effectively managed by the applicant thus reducing the potential for unintended adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residents.

As set out above, no formal complaints have been received by the Environmental Protection Team. Nonetheless with positive and proactive site management secured through a site management plan and by limiting the overall number of people camping on site, together with the number of pitches, the likelihood of increased noise and disturbance resulting from additional tent pitches will be reduced.

As such it is considered that the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policies EN 4 and EN 13.

7. Highway Safety and Parking

The site is located to the west of the village of Baconsthorpe. Visitors to the site from the Holt/A148 direction would likely use Hempstead Road, however, with the advent of satellite navigation systems in most newer cars, approaches from other directions cannot be ruled out. The Highway Authority have been consulted and consider that Hempstead Road is sufficiently wide for two vehicles to cross without difficulty. As such, the Highway Authority have raised no objection to the proposal.

It is considered that there are adequate parking facilities at the site for both visitors and holiday makers, many of whom would tend to park their vehicles next to the tents. Access to the newly created field in the western section of the site is via a grass track that is enclosed by hedge. No objection to this development is offered.

One area of contention for the nearby residents is the gravel drive that runs through the site. This is considered noisy from the neighbours perspective. Environmental Protection and the Highways Officer both have suggested either the removal of these stones or using a bound gravel surface. Due to cost implications it is not considered reasonable to request a bound gravel surface however, the removal of the stones to expose the hard surface below, appears the most sensible and cost effective method to maintain amenity levels for neighbours. This shall be recommended as a planning condition.

The applicant has agreed to reposition brown Tourist signs to the Campsite to use the Holt 'bypass road' south of the A148, before you reach Holt proper. The road is known locally as Heath Drive and although it is not officially opened yet, this is expected in the next 12 months. The road connects into the Hempstead Road to the south, avoiding the more residential stretch of Hempstead Road. The Highways Authority have agreed this proposal in principle, an informative will be added to encourage the fulfilment of this proposal, a condition is not considered appropriate as the proposal was not officially part of the application and the proposal could not be refused on these grounds alone.

Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions it is considered that the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policies CT 5 and CT 6.

8. Public Rights of Way

Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are aligned within the site, Hempstead Footpath 14 and Hempstead Bridleway 11. The Public Rights of Way Officer has been consulted on this application and has raised no objections, albeit requesting that the full legal extent of these public Rights of Way must remain open and accessible for the duration of the development and subsequent occupation. This includes encroachment of screening vegetation, which must be planted back from the PRoW to allow for growth and to be maintained thereafter to maintain the legal widths. This is recommended to be conditioned as part of any approval.

The Open Spaces Society have objected to the proposal overall due to the negative impact they consider the campsite would have on persons using the public access routes. However, the use of the site for a campsite has been established and the modest increase in overall numbers on site and the associated buildings and infrastructure is considered entirely expected of such an established use. Overall Officers do not believe the appearance of the site would be incongruous within the country side setting, while overall the proposed planting is considered to enhance the setting of the site generally.

The Open Space Society recommended that the widths of the existing footpaths be widened as a result of this application. This goes beyond the request made by the Public Rights of Way Officer and Officers consider a request to widen these further could be considered unreasonable given the overall limited scale of growth being put forward by the proposal.

Subject to the imposition of conditions suggested by the PRoW Officer, it is considered that the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policy CT 5.

9. Design

It is recognised that the general nature of a camping site is such that the pitching of tents should not in itself have a long term or lasting effect on the character and appearance of the area. However, during busy periods, areas for the erection of tents will become more noticeable in the landscape. In this case, the applicant is proposing significant landscape planting designed to lessen the impact of camping activities in the wider landscape, which is welcomed.

There are a number of more permanent structures on site including the children's play area, new camping pods, wardens office, toilet block and shower & washing block and electrical hook up points.

There are no objections to the Children's Play equipment, this is limited in size and scope and to be expected on a campsite of this nature. Furthermore, the electrical hook up points are similarly of limited impact being non illuminated and discrete in appearance and very much the norm on modern day campsites.

Whilst the toilet block and shower & washing block are very utilitarian in appearance made up from various portable buildings, they are nonetheless painted a recessive dark green colour which helps in blending in. It is recognised that the campsite needs these facilities to attract paying guests. The units already installed appear to be well maintained.

Similarly, the campsite block/wardens lodge is relatively basic and utilitarian but is unlikely to be considered harmful to the wider landscape or the amenity of the area.

The proposed camping pods are limited in number and are located near to the existing buildings. Therefore, notwithstanding their rather unusual appearance, they would only be modestly sized structures with a localised impact which would be primarily confined to views from the adjacent rights of way.

With regards to the enlargement of the campsite in the western field, this would be reserved for tents only and would not feature any pods, lodges or any other permanent structures. Consequently, out of season, the character of this field would be largely unaffected by the development. Furthermore, the additional landscaping across the site would further ameliorate the impact during opening times, which is already to some extent contained and compartmentalised due to previous successful landscape planted associated with the 2012 permission.

On balance, whilst a number of neighbouring residents have raised concerns regarding the design and appearance of the buildings and features on site, these structures are all considered to be relatively temporary in nature and therefore reversible.

Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions (including landscaping and control of lighting), the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policy EN 4.

10. Impact on Heritage Assets

When considering the impact on heritage assets, the Committee is advised to take account of advice within Core Strategy Policy EN 8 (Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment) together with the advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in particular paragraphs 193, 194, 196 and 197.

In making its decision the Committee needs also to have regard to its duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 including Section 72 (Conservation Areas - special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area).

A small section of the site comprising the proposed campsite parking area on the eastern boundary falls within the Baconsthorpe Conservation Area. The Conservation Area extends eastwards from the application site encompassing the historic barns at Pitt Farm with the main bulk of the conservation area further east primarily comprising development on and between The Street and School Lane in the centre of Baconsthorpe village.

The area of the site falling within Baconsthorpe Conservation Area is designated primarily because of the existence of the historic buildings at Pitt Farm. The main range of buildings has permission to be converted to six dwellings and is or was in the same ownership as the campsite when granted permission. Whilst Committee are required to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Baconsthorpe Conservation Area, it is considered that the harm arising from the proposed campsite car park would amount to less than substantial harm, particularly having regard to the existence of the modern steel-framed agricultural buildings to the north and east of the car park. Only modest public benefits would be needed to outweigh this harm.

Outside of but adjacent to the conservation area, whilst the external appearance of the proposed campsite toilet block and shower and washing block and wardens large are simple and rather basic in design, they are all temporary in nature and easily reversible. Whilst they do result in some harm to the setting of the conservation area, this is considered to amount to less than substantial harm and again, only modest public benefits would be needed to outweigh this harm.

The public benefits of the proposal include the positive contribution that the site makes to the tourism economy of the area. It is considered that these public benefits outweigh the very modest harm arising to the Baconsthorpe Conservation Area. As such it is considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of Development Plan Policy and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

11. Ecology

Whilst a Habitat and Protected Species survey has not been submitted with the application, the proposal does not involve the removal of vegetation or trees and actually propose an enhancement of the landscaping on site resulting in a net gain in ecology overall. The Landscape Officer does not object to the proposal on ecology grounds subject to the enhancement works being carried out as proposed.

Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policy EN 9.

12. Drainage

Whilst the site is over 1 hectare in size, the Lead Local Flooding Authority have not commented on the application given the site is not within a surface water flow path as defined the Environment Agency. Officers are generally content that the ground conditions are acceptable to use soakaways to dispose of surface water.

In respect of foul water, both the Environmental Health Section and the Environment Agency have confirmed that the current septic tank on site is too small to operate under the proposed enlarged numbers. In the event of approval of this application, a 'Grampian' style planning condition is recommended so that, before more than 53 pitches are allowed, the applicant can demonstrate that an enlarged drainage facility capable of dealing with 264+ people in attendance across 69 pitches has been installed in accordance with approved details. Effectively this shall result in the applicant not being able to implement the approval until such time as a drainage strategy has been submitted to and implemented in full to the satisfaction of both the Environment Agency and the Environmental Health Department.

The numbers of toilets and showers on site is considered acceptable by Officers for an expansion of this size.

The Environment Agency's state that all public campsites must have a Foul Water Discharge permit in place. This is an entirely separate piece of independent legislation to Planning regulations. It is understood that the host site has operated without such a permit since they first opened but have now applied for this licence and this is nearly ready to be issued according to the Environment Agency themselves who saw no problems with the current capacity and arrangements.

Subject to the imposition of conditions as set out above, the proposal would accord with Core Strategy Policies EN 10 and EN 13.

13. Material Considerations in favour of the proposal

In support of their proposal, the applicant has stated that the proposed enlargement is for those few times during the year where there is high demand requiring a larger number of pitches.

The applicant states that a single part-time job shall be created as a result of this proposal in addition to the existing full time job created by the original permission. Further employment opportunities in the tourism sector are welcomed in accordance with the aims of Core Strategy Policy SS 5.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the economic case towards building a strong competitive economy. Paragraph 80 encourages businesses to expand and adapt, while Paragraph 83 specifically considers the rural economy. Indeed, paragraph 83 is focused on 'sustainable growth' while Paragraph 84 is concerned with development that is 'sensitive to its surroundings'.

This proposal fulfils these aims of the NPPF and act as further material considerations in support of the proposal from an economic and social perspective.

Conclusion

This application seeks a modest extension to the number of camping pitches at the site from 53 to 63 together with the provision of six camping pods as well as a range of site facilities including a children's play area, wardens office, toilet block and shower & washing block and electrical hook up points.

In addition, the proposal includes a range of landscape and ecology enhancements which act to help reduce the impact of the proposal on the wider landscape.

Whilst it is recognised that the warden's office, toilet block and shower & washing block are of utilitarian appearance, on balance it is considered that with the imposition of appropriate conditions, the proposal would accord with the aims of Core Strategy policies and would strengthen the tourism offer in this part of the District.

RECOMMENDATION:

Delegated Authority to the Head of Planning to approve the proposal subject to imposition of the following condition topics:

- 1. Time Limit**
- 2. In accordance with approved Plans**
- 3. Tents only (no caravans or camper vans)**
- 4. Total number of people on site limited to 264**
- 5. No more than 25 pitches in the Western field and 38 in the Eastern field**
- 6. Western field shall be for tents only no additional buildings or structures.**
- 7. Land south of the 'Modern Barn' set out on the Site Plan 18/042/05/D shall not be included within the campsite area and shall not be used for camping purposes.**
- 8. Submission of Site Management Plan**
- 9. No commencement until adequate drainage details are submitted**
- 10. Landscaping Implemented as stated**
- 11. Any landscape that dies or fails in 10 years from the start of the permission, replanted**
- 12. No obstruction of the vehicular access**
- 13. Any additional external lighting to be agreed in advance**
- 14. Full details or any mechanical extractor system install to be agreed in advance**
- 15. Details of refuse disposal to be submitted prior to the commencement of the development**
- 16. External materials of the Camping Pods to be agreed**
- 17. Remove the stones from the access road**
- 18. Public Right of Way must stay open and clear of vegetation and no planting within 1 metre of these accesses.**

and any other conditions considered necessary by the Head of Planning.