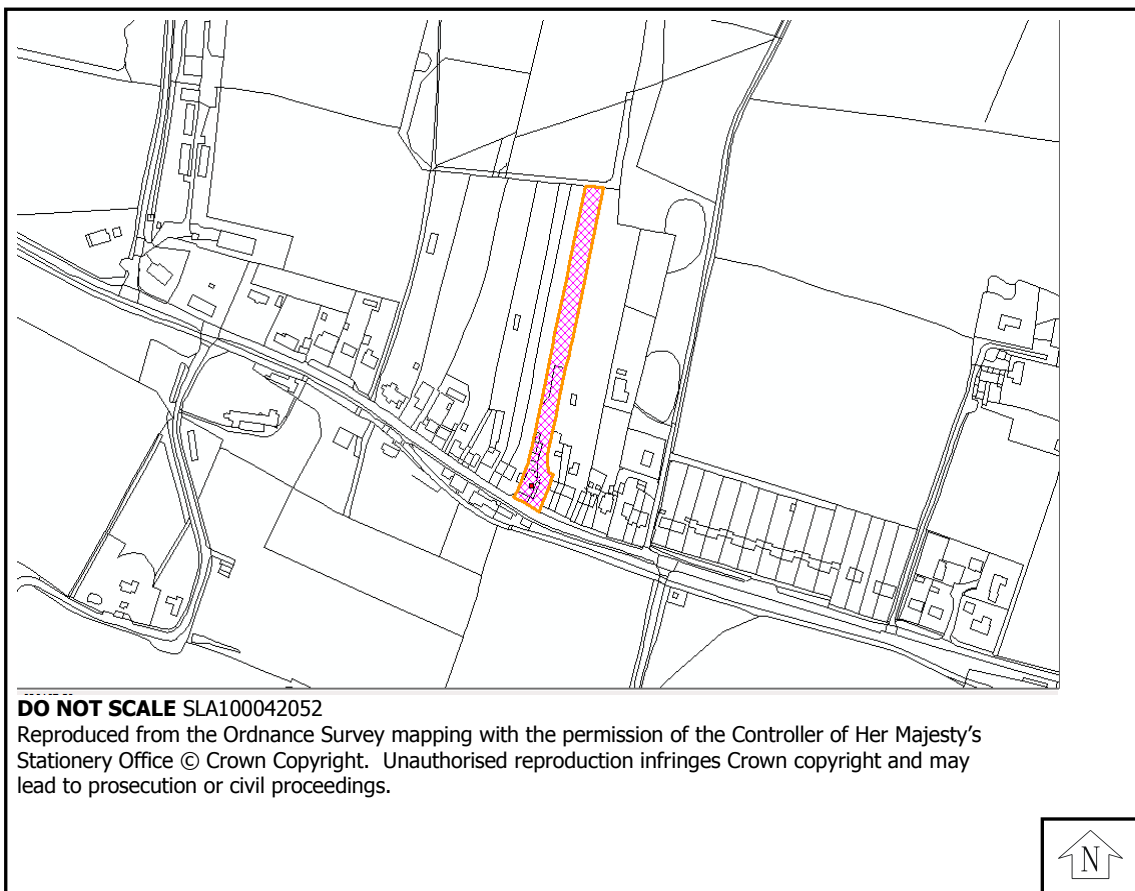


**PLANNING COMMITTEE - 13 December 2016****APPLICATION NO** DC/16/4494/FUL**LOCATION**

8 The Street

Wissett

IP19 0JE

**EXPIRY DATE** 17 December 2016**APPLICATION TYPE** Full Application**APPLICANT** Mr Mick Latham**PARISH** Wissett**PROPOSAL** Change of use to caravan park for three static caravans for tourist use**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The submitted application is seeking approval for the use of land behind The Plough Public House for the siting of three static caravans, with associated parking and services for tourist purposes.
- 1.2 It is being presented to members for consideration as the result of a councillor call-in due to Parish Council and local resident objections.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The Plough is located on the northern side of The Street and is within a ribbon form of development that runs in an east-west direction to the northern and southern sides of The Street. The properties along the northern side of The Street all have long, thin gardens and the land, subject to this application, to the rear of The Plough reflects this general grain and character.
- 2.2 Wissett is located approximately 2 miles to the south-west of Halesworth and the facilities in the town are within easy reach.

## 3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The submitted application is seeking approval for the use of land behind The Plough Public House for the siting of three static caravans, with associated parking and services for tourist purposes

## 4 CONSULTATIONS/COMMENTS

- 4.1 **Neighbour consultation/representations** 5 letters of objection received:

- Boundary issues
- Design
- Dominating/Overbearing
- Drainage/Flooding
- Inappropriate in Conservation Area
- Landscape impact
- Light Pollution
- Loss of Light
- Noise
- Over Shadowing
- Overlooking
- Principle of Use
- Setting of precedent
- Trees
- Wildlife

### Comments:

- 4.2 Three static caravans parked in the Plough Pub garden are inappropriate for a conservation area. The field and long gardens that run from Buntings Lane to 12 The Street are an open space and locally distinctive. The Plough garden is seen from The Street, and from the south side of the Wissett valley.
- 4.3 The two leylandii trees do not provide screening from The Street because of the position and the trunks have been cleared. The front of one and sides of three static caravans will be visible from The Street. I strongly object to the increase in the boundary fence height between myself and the pub. The proposed increase in height and visual impact of the

fence is not in keeping with the local environment. The static caravans are 3300mm tall and with the 2300mm fence I will see 1000mm of them.

- 4.4 Hardcore is not porous, and there is no provision for the additional surface water. The water run off from 10ml of rainfall will be 119.5 cubic metres of water. To bear the weight of a vehicle, hard core is compacted when it is laid. I estimate the total surface area of the caravan pads and road to be 1195 cubic metres Therefore 10ml of rainfall equals 119.5 cubic metres water Resurfacing the existing car park and drive will over double the 119.5
- 4.5 The proposed access road and footpath are a carriageway and will need to be lit, creating lighting in pitch black countryside. The properties adjacent to the pub already suffer from light pollution. Cars with headlights going up and down the access road, swinging around as the cars turn to park, beaming light into more properties.
- 4.6 Wissett has a low background noise level and because of this noise carries. Three static caravans of holidaymakers making merry, driving to the caravans etc. will be heard throughout Wissett The proposed new Leylandii hedge out of keeping with the Plough's rural location. A native English hedge better aesthetically and for wildlife The long gardens of Wissett have grass snakes and hedgehogs.
- 4.7 It would be in a designated Conservation Area.
- 4.8 It is in the centre of a small village where most of the population is concentrated. Access would be at the narrowest part of the road through the village. Access to the caravans in case of fire, ambulance, etc. would be inadequate, especially if the pub car park were full and if the pub entrance is blocked.
- 4.9 An increase in the height of fencing to the side of the park would not be in keeping with the Conservation status. The caravans would be visible to many surrounding neighbours despite fencing and tree planting.
- 4.10 Noise would significantly increase. Light pollution would be greatly increased.
- 4.11 Only one parking space per caravan is allowed, but in effect more vehicles would be present. The resulting overflow would mean parking on the village main street or vehicles would take up pub parking places. Water runoff down the gravel drive would significantly increase in an area already designated by the Environment Agency as a flood risk.
- 4.12 The land is stated to be of 'undetermined ownership'. Approval of the application would lead to other applications for further development. The granting of planning would set a precedent in the village and would be inappropriate. The development would not benefit the pub.
- 4.13 We bought our house in a designated conservation area in the belief that this would prevent any development in the centre of this wonderful Suffolk village.
- 4.14 We question the viability of such holiday homes in the Village, where there are no facilities, and no public transport (as stated in the design and access statement). We also believe that should this be granted, it would only be a matter of time before a further change of use is applied for, for permanent dwellings.

- 4.13 Should this application be granted, it will set a precedent for further development requests in the conservation area. We are also concerned with the wildlife impact, with several protected species being present in the area. This proposed development does nothing to benefit or enhance either the Village, or the peoples that live here.
- 4.14 Static caravans are not an appropriate development in the centre of our village. The proposal seriously affects the future commercial viability of the pub on the site, reducing the available car parking space, which is limited anyway. The access to the site from the highway, is poor. At a special meeting of the Parish Council 100% of those present - Councillors and public - were against this proposal.
- 4.15 We run a smallholding which runs across the top of the pub garden and the smells and noise from the animals would make it very unpleasant for anyone living there. We also use the areas behind where the caravans would be for fire wood production which include chainsaw use.
- 4.16 There are more houses in the village than phone lines with no increase being proposed. We already have waste water problems due to a dated sewage system. There are bats in the large trees next to this site. The access to this site is not sufficient for what uses it already. We have seen a number of accidents in the seven years that we have lived here. This would cause so much trouble in the village.
- 4.17 People are already talking about what they could do to make peoples stay in the caravans an unpleasant experience. If this permission is granted we will instantly put in a proposal for something similar as planning has told us in the past we would be wasting out time in a conservation area and we would love to run a campsite and our land doesn't overlook or cause anyone problems. Please don't ruin our lovely village. Especially as the financial gain from this would not benefit the pub as they would be run separately by different people. This would turn the village against the pub which would mean it would close again just leaving a caravan park.
- 4.18 **Parish Council Comments:** Refuse for the following reasons: (comments précised – full comments viewable on website)
- Site is within a designated Conservation Area
  - It is within the most populated part of the village
  - Concern that it is a precursor to later change of use of land to more permanent properties
  - It may set a precedent for more development in our conservation area
  - Is there a real need for the site?
  - Wissett is a village with no facilities
  - Concern over potential light and noise pollution
  - Caravans would be visible from the road and neighbouring properties
  - The adjacent neighbour will not allow for her boundary fence to be made higher as it will adversely affect her garden and existing planting
  - Planting of Leylandii trees is not in keeping with the natural environment
  - The area is prone to flooding from rainfall and field drainage and the addition of caravans on hard bases and associated areas may make this a more prevalent problem
  - The proposed development does nothing to benefit the pub and would reduce available parking

- Reduction in outside space used for functions (such as the annual beer festival)
- More likely to impact on the pubs commercial viability
- Access is at the narrowest part of Wissett
- Concern over potential fire hazard as access would be difficult for emergency services
- We believe the caravan club has previously refused to accept this site as a registered site due to access
- Wildlife may be affected
- What solid guarantees can we be given, IF this proposed development is granted permission by WDC that it will not become either a permanently long term occupied site or that houses will replace them.

4.19 **Suffolk County - Highways Department:** Notice is hereby given that the County Council as Highway Authority recommends that any permission which that Planning Authority may give should include the conditions shown below:

4.20 The use shall not commence until the areas within the site shown on AWC / 15 / 583 - 103 for the purposes of manoeuvring and parking of vehicles has been provided and thereafter that areas shall be retained and used for no other purposes.

4.21 Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on site parking of vehicles is provided and maintained in order 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.

4.22 **Suffolk County Council Flood and Engineer:** As this is a minor application with a small increase in the hardstanding areas the surface water runoff from the site would be negligible. There are voids within the hardcore for water to dissipate as long as it is not bound. We have had no reported incidents of surface water flooding within Wissett.

## **PUBLICITY**

4.23 The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Published</b>	<b>Expiry</b>	<b>Publication</b>
Conservation Area,	04.11.2016	24.11.2016	Beccles and Bungay Journal
Conservation Area,	04.11.2016	24.11.2016	Lowestoft Journal

## **SITE NOTICES**

4.24 The following site notices have been displayed:

<b>General Site Notice</b>	<b>Reason for site notice: Conservation Area, Date posted</b>
	02.11.2016 Expiry date 22.11.2016

## **5 PLANNING POLICY**

5.1 The Core Strategy policies were adopted in January 2009 – relevant policies are: CS01 Spatial Strategy, CS02 High Quality and Sustainable Design and CS13 Tourism.

- 5.2 The Development Management policies were adopted in January 2011 – relevant policies are: DM02 Design Principles and DM24 Touring Caravan, Camping and Permanent Holiday Sites.

## **6 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy CS02 states that outside the locations defined in the policy, development will be regarded as being in the open countryside where the objective is to preserve the countryside for its own sake. Exceptions to this overall approach will be infill housing development and affordable housing that meets a local need, both subject to the character and form of the settlement and access to services and facilities. Other exceptions will be developments of an appropriate scale that contribute to the continued viability of the agricultural industry and/or diversify the local rural economy.
- 6.2 In respect of the above policy it could be said that the caravans which are intended for tourism purposes it is considered that the proposal would comply with this policy as it would diversify the local rural economy. It is appreciated that the impact of three caravans may be somewhat limited, however there is scope for some increase in local spending created by the occupancy of these units.
- 6.3 Policy CS13 requires that new tourist accommodation and attractions should be developed in locations that offer good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. New tourism development will normally be located in or close to Lowestoft and the market towns, the larger village coastal resorts of Corton and Kessingland, and other villages where local services, facilities and public transport reduce the need to travel by car. Outside of these locations new-build development will not normally be acceptable. The focus will be on the conversion of existing buildings and development that contributes to farm diversification.
- 6.4 As noted previously, the village is located approximately two miles from Halesworth which has a number of shops including a small supermarket and other facilities such as cafes and takeaways along with other retail units. The connection between the two is relatively good and is a walkable distance and is popular with cyclists. There are other facilities within the wider area and the district as a whole.
- 6.5 Though the policy states that ‘new build’ will not be permitted it is considered that caravans are generally of a temporary nature and works would be reversible should they need to be removed in the future. As caravans do have a limited lifetime, it is suggested that temporary consent be granted for a period of 5 years, which would allow sufficient time to establish whether the facility is well-used and forms a valuable contribution to the village and would allow the council to retain control over a parcel of land where development would not generally be permitted.
- 6.6 Policy DM 02 states that planning permission will normally be granted where the proposed development is sympathetic to the site and its surroundings, particularly in terms of the principles set out in the Suffolk Design Guide and where proposals respect and enhance the identity and character of the site, contribute towards the distinctiveness of the local area, the quality of the built environment and the surrounding landscape.

6.7 It also goes on to state that development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures will be expected to:

- Protect the amenity of the wider environment, neighbouring uses and occupiers of the proposed development in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of outlook, loss of light, pollution (including contaminated land, light pollution or emissions), odour, noise and other forms of disturbance;
- Produce developments in keeping with the overall scale, character, layout, site coverage, height and massing of existing buildings, taking into account the relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene or townscape and use appropriate materials for the locality;
- Take into account the need to promote public safety and deter crime and disorder through careful layout and design of buildings, car parking areas, landscaping, public spaces and pedestrian routeways;
- Provide good access for all, including the integration of facilities for people with mobility impairments, appropriate to the proposed use and the characteristics of the development. This includes access to and within buildings, parking areas, public spaces and highways;
- Make provision for access by pedestrians and cyclists as well as provide good links to and from public transport routes. Developers will be expected to retain existing footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways or to make provision for their reinstatement, and to make provision for new routes to link with existing networks. This includes taking opportunities to enhance access to the countryside and the coast through improvements to the rights of way network;
- Adequate vehicle parking facilities will be provided by the developer to serve the needs of the proposed development. Development proposals should make provision for vehicle and cycle parking in accordance with Suffolk County Council's Advisory Parking Standards, including parking for people with disabilities. In exceptional circumstances, the application of these standards may be varied in order to reflect the accessibility of the site by non-car modes or other identified local requirement;
- Incorporate measures to minimise water and energy consumption, through carefully considered design, layout and orientation of buildings and to make provision for recycling waste, in particular ensuring that adequate bin storage areas are provided;
- Ensure that the capacity of local wastewater treatment and sewerage network infrastructure is not exceeded and that the proposals comply with the Water Framework Directive objectives;
- Incorporate Sustainable Drainage Schemes unless following adequate assessment, soil conditions and/or engineering feasibility demonstrates this method is inappropriate;
- Retain and enhance existing landscaping and natural and semi-natural features on site, for example woodland, trees, hedgerows, ponds, watercourses, geological features. All new developments must include details of new hard and soft landscaping to illustrate how the development could be satisfactorily integrated into the surrounding area and create greenlinks and networks to improve ecological connectivity;
- Ensure access to the site that does not compromise highway safety and the traffic generated by the development is capable of being accommodated on the surrounding highway network

6.8 Having considered the above, the proposed scheme would broadly comply with the provisions and requirements of policy DM02 insofar as providing adequate parking

facilities, providing access to the site that is acceptable in highway terms, has quite good cycle links to surrounding areas and to Halesworth, and would go some way towards boosting the local economy albeit on a small scale.

- 6.9 With regards to the amenity of the wider environment, noise, overlooking and loss of privacy these can be dealt with via conditions should members be minded to grant temporary consent. It is suggested that the proposed leylandii hedge be altered to a native hedge of mixed species which would also have ecological benefits as well as maintaining privacy of nearby residents and lights can be conditioned to be low level and pointed downwards to minimise any potential light pollution. With regards to noise this will be subject to Environmental Health legislation who would advise on any noise nuisance created by the site.
- 6.10 Policy DM02 also requires developments to be in keeping with the overall scale, character, layout, site coverage, height and massing of existing buildings, take into account the relationship between buildings and spaces and the wider street scene or townscape and use appropriate materials for the locality. The caravans are of a modest scale being 3.3 metres tall x 3.6 metres wide x 11.15 metres long and the land would be partially excavated to allow them to sit within the ground slightly and give a terraced effect. There would be some visual impact to nearby residents in that part of the roof would be visible, however the suggested hedging would go some way to helping to soften the visual impact and would be more appropriate within the context of the village and therefore the proposed development is considered to accord with policy DM02.
- 6.11 Lastly policy DM24 has been considered which states that proposals for new or extensions to large-scale touring caravan and camping sites will generally be acceptable when contained within the landscape and outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that proposals for new or extensions to small-scale touring caravan and camping sites will only be acceptable when contained within the landscape and outside the Heritage Coast. In addition the policy states that wherever possible, existing buildings should be used for the accommodation of associated permanent tourist facilities.
- 6.12 Furthermore new or extensions to existing permanent holiday sites will only be permitted subject to the following criteria:
- Proposals should be contained within the landscape and the site is not situated within the Area of Outstanding National Beauty, the Heritage Coast or on land that would have adverse impacts on these areas;
  - The layout retains natural on-site features or provides compensatory planting and other nature conservation measures elsewhere within or near the site; landscaping integrates the development with its surroundings and creates a high quality environment within the site;
  - For new sites, the provision of on-site commercial, recreational or entertainment activities should form an integral part of the scheme and be located away from other sensitive uses in the locality;
  - The provision of a variety of accommodation types, densities and informal layout groupings.
- 6.13 There are no specific landscape designations or features on note on the land, which is currently roughly grassed and has been used as a beer garden and for local events. There are views from The Street, however these have not been noted as being valuable and is



mentioned in passing in the Wissett Conservation Area Appraisal, although The Plough itself is noted as making a positive contribution to the street scene.

- 6.14 Additional planting is suggested in place of *Leylandii* which is not a native species and would have an impact on the appearance of the area as whole. It is considered that a native hedge would be less harmful to the character and appearance of the area and would have increased ecological benefits for hedgehogs, nesting birds and other species.
- 6.15 It is also suggested that the colour of the caravans be agreed in order to prevent them being overly obvious and intrusive into the landscape and a muted green or taupe colour would assist with this particular aspect. Should members be minded to grant consent a condition has been suggested below to agree colour.
- 6.16 As members will have noted from the comments above, there have been a number of objections received in relation to the proposed use of the land to site 3 static caravans for tourist purposes and some of their concerns relating to the proposed hedge, light and noise pollution and the visual aspect of the proposed development have, it is believed, been addressed above.
- 6.17 Nevertheless there remain some issues which need to be addressed specifically, including:
- Flooding from rainfall and field drainage
  - No benefit to the pub and would reduce available parking
  - Reduction in outside space used for functions (such as the annual beer festival)
  - More likely to impact on the pubs commercial viability
  - Concern over potential fire hazard
  - Previous refusal of Caravan Club to register this site due to access
  - What solid guarantees can we be given, IF this proposed development is granted permission by WDC that it will not become either a permanently long term occupied site or that houses will replace them.
- 6.18 With regards to flooding, your officer has discussed this issue with Suffolk County Council Flood and Water engineers who have stated “As this is a minor application with a small increase in the hardstanding areas the surface water runoff from the site would be negligible. There are voids within the hardcore for water to dissipate as long as it is not bound. We have had no reported incidents of surface water flooding within Wissett”. As such it is believed that should permission be granted then all paving should be permeable and this can be required via condition. There are some grassed areas remaining and it is considered that the proposal would not significantly increase water-run off that would increase flood risk and endanger those living in the village.
- 6.19 Whilst it is appreciated that part of The Street is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, due to the location and proximity of the brook on the southern side of The Street officers investigations have not uncovered any significant flooding and in the absence of objections from County Council Flood Officers, it is difficult to support this particular objection.
- 6.20 Comments have been made with commercial viability of the pub and that the caravans would have no benefit to the pub, however this is not a planning consideration and is the matter of speculation and not tangible facts. It is appreciated that the pub is currently closed and there are suggestions that it may be sold, however these again, are not hard

facts and cannot be taken into consideration. Furthermore the loss of what essentially is private space for the pub cannot be considered. It is up to the publican as to whether they feel that the land can be used for more public purposes and there is a public field elsewhere in the village that can be utilised for village events.

- 6.21 There have been queries raised as to fire safety and accessibility to the caravans, however there has been no response received to queries from your officer to the Fire Officer and should there be any concerns or comments surrounding this issue then members will be updated accordingly.
- 6.22 It has also been alleged that the Caravan Club had previously refused to grant a licence due to access, however it has been brought to your officers attention that the land has been used by touring caravans and camper vans in the past, however neither of these has been able to be corroborated and as such they have been given little weight. Suffolk County Highways have not raised any objections to the proposal and it will be difficult to support a refusal on highways/access grounds.
- 6.23 Finally, the Parish Council have asked officers “what solid guarantees can we be given, IF this proposed development is granted permission by WDC that it will not become either a permanently long term occupied site or that houses will replace them”. Whilst it is not possible to ever give any cast iron guarantees, Wissett is classed as an other village in the local plan, and this is unlikely to change, and therefore it is unlikely that an application for the erection of dwellings in this location would be supported. There would need to be truly exceptional circumstances or a proven local need and robust evidence would be required to support this. In addition it is suggested that should permission be forthcoming that a temporary 5 –year consent be granted in order to prevent the assimilation of the site to residential status and to allow the council to retain control over the land for a purpose that may not be supportable in the future.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is fully appreciated that this site is rather unusual and it has generated rather a lot of concern in the village, however it is relatively minor in nature and, with the conditions noted below, would be considered to have a lesser impact on local residents than originally suggested. The temporary nature of the development along with improved planting schemes, controlling lighting and the colour of the vans to lessen their visual impact

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 Approve for a temporary period of five years and with the imposition of conditions noted below.

### **CONDITIONS:**

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

Reason: Having regard to the non-permanent nature of the structure.

2. The approved holiday unit(s) shall be occupied solely as holiday accommodation and for no other purpose whatsoever including residential use. No unit shall be occupied for more than 28 consecutive days in any calendar year by the same person or persons. The owner shall maintain, and keep available for inspection at all reasonable times, an up-to-date register of lettings

Reason: The proposed unit(s) are suitable for holiday accommodation but not suitable for residential use.

3. Details of the colours and finishes of the caravans hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory external appearance of the development.

4. Details of any lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of development. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: in the interests of the amenity of the area.

5. The use shall not commence until the areas within the site shown on AWC / 15 / 583 - 103 for the purposes of manoeuvring and parking of vehicles has been provided and thereafter that areas shall be retained and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on site parking of vehicles is provided and maintained in order 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. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, species, sizes and mix of hedging plants to be erected along the eastern boundary. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the first occupation of the caravans. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. This shall apply notwithstanding the details submitted

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the appearance of the locality.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** See application ref: DC/16/4494/FUL at [www.waveney.gov.uk/publicaccess](http://www.waveney.gov.uk/publicaccess)

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