

Item 5 - Report on Planning Applications

Application Ref: NP/16/0377/FUL

Case Officer	Caroline Bowen		
Applicant	Mr Izzard		
Agent			
Proposal	Glamping site of 10 bell tents with toilet & shower block (retrospective)		
Site Location	Beavers Retreat, Beavers Hill, The Ridgeway, Manorbier, Tenby, Pembrokeshire, SA70 8LQ		
Grid Ref	SS05779971		
Date Valid	14-Jul-2016	Target Date	07-Sep-2016

Summary

This planning application is reported to committee at the request of a member of the Development Management Committee, as it is considered that the application would assist the economic stability of Jameston and the surrounding area and would boost the choice of holiday accommodation in the Pembrokeshire area.

The application site comprises land located in a countryside setting, north of the village of Jameston. Planning permission is sought in retrospect for the use of the land as a seasonal campsite, together with the provision of ancillary facilities comprising a gas powered showers and compost toilets.

Following public consultation, no letters of objection have been received to the application.

The proposal has been considered against the policies of the current Local Development Plan, and whilst the applicant has sought to justify the retention of the campsite in this particular instance, the main Local Development Plan policy 38 – Camping, Touring Caravans, Statics and Chalet Sites - which is relevant to this proposal - is not criteria-based, and is clear that no new camping sites would be supported. There are no material considerations put forward by the applicant that would be considered to outweigh the very clear policy position regarding such developments. As such, the application cannot be supported by officers, and the recommendation is for refusal.

Consultee Response

PCNPA - Park Direction: Objecting - The proposal is contrary to adopted Local Development Plan policy.

Natural Resources Wales: Only grant planning permission for the scheme if it can meet requirements relating to the disposal of foul water and grey water, to address significant concerns that NRW have identified.

Manorbier Community Council: Reply

Dyfed Archaeological Trust: No objection

PCC - Transportation & Environment: No objection

PCNPA - Ecologist: No adverse comments

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Public Response

A site notice was posted in accordance with statutory requirements. No third party comments have been received.

Policies considered

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokehire Coast National Park website - <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549>

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty
LDP Policy 07 - Countryside
LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities
LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokehire Coast National Park
LDP Policy 30 - Amenity
LDP Policy 32 - Surface Water Drainage
LDP Policy 35 - Visitor Economy
LDP Policy 38 - Camping, Touring Caravans, Statics and Chalet Sites
LDP Policy 53 - Impacts on traffic
PPW8 Chapter 03 - Making and Enforcing Planning Decisions
PPW8 Chapter 07 - Economic Development
PPW8 Chapter 11 - Tourism, Sport and Recreation
SPG06 - Landscape
TAN 06 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities
TAN 12 - Design
TAN 13 - Tourism
TAN 23 - Economic Development

Constraints

LDP Mineral Safeguard
Historic Landscape
Potential for surface water flooding
Recreation Character Areas

Officer's Appraisal

Background and site description

The application site is located on the eastern flank of the minor rural road linking Jameston to The Ridgeway to the north, and is immediately east of Beavers Hill Crossing, adjacent to the railway line. The site falls outside of any Centre or Rural Centre Boundary, as defined in the Pembrokehire Coast

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National Park Local Development Plan, and is in open countryside for policy purposes. The area of land, subject of this application, falls within the existing boundary for the property, Beavers Hill Farm.

The site itself measures approximately 0.99 hectares in area and is a broadly level field, bordered by mature hedgerow and trees to the west, north and east, and by the railway line to the south.

The application is made for retrospective planning permission, and the applicant states that the use began in June 2015.

Planning History

There are no related applications for this site.

Constraints

- LDP Mineral Safeguard
- Historic Landscape
- Potential for surface water flooding
- Recreation Character Area

Current proposal

Planning permission is sought for the retention of the following works;

- 10 bell tents
- 5 timber sheds on palettes, which provides two showers, compost toilets and washing up facilities.

The site operates between April and September, and the bell tents and associated picnic tables and bin facilities are removed from the site. The showers and toilets are kept on the land, but are unused.

Key issues

- Policy and principle of development.
- Amenity and privacy
- Access, parking and Highway Safety
- Drainage
- Biodiversity
- Other material considerations

Policy and Principle of development

Policy 7 states that development in the countryside will only be permitted where it would fall into one of eight categories. Criterion (e) allows tourist attractions or recreational activity where the need to locate in the countryside is essential.

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Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategic policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced. This policy is supported by supplementary planning guidance on landscape assessment. The application site falls within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 4 – Manorbier/Freshwater East, which is a large tract of rolling lowland with an indented cliff coastline. The area is characterised as agricultural coastal hinterland of small to medium sized fields interdispersed with settlements; and which has a strong historical and cultural sense of place. The management guidance suggests that the area is generally in a well maintained condition and that tourism development in the landscape should be improved in its integration.

Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a' and 'b' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion and/or, that would be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape. It further resists development that would not be compatible with its location (criterion 'c'), fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park (criterion'd').

Policy 30 of the LDP seeks to avoid development that is visually intrusive (criterion'd').

Policy 35 reiterates Policy 7 and states that visitor attractions, recreational and leisure activities in the countryside will need to demonstrate why a countryside location is essential.

Policy 38 states that in the National Park, new camping, caravanning static caravan or chalet sites will not be permitted.

The use for which permission is sought is for seasonal camping, and the bell tents and associated paraphernalia are removed, as opposed to being permanent features of the landscape, at the end of the summer season. Whilst the toilet/shower facilities are currently kept on site all year round, they are capable of being removed from the site as they are not connected to mains services. However, there are mature trees and hedges surrounding the site to the east, north and west - the land offers an aspect toward a bank of trees to the south over the railway line and glimpses of the site are possible on approach from Jameston, however, the mature planting offers a good level of screening from the rural road and access, and the site is set well back inland from the more sensitive coastal belt. There are no immediate residential dwellings neighbouring the site.

However, Policy 38 is not criteria-based, and is clear in that no new camping sites would be allowed in the National Park. The context of this policy is set out in paragraph 4.168 of the LDP – the majority of caravan and camping sites are concentrated in the National Park, which occupies only 37% of the total land area of the County. In light of this, the proposal is contrary to policy 38 of the Local Development Plan, and cannot be supported, unless there

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were very strong material considerations that outweighed the conflict with policy 38.

Amenity & Privacy

In respect of amenity, the site would operate between April and September in each calendar year, therefore is a seasonal business which could reasonably return to its original undeveloped character during the winter months with no lasting impact on the landscape provided that the bell tents, showers and toilets are removed from site. The land rises to the north behind the site, up to The Ridgeway – there are no views of the site from this aspect due to the prevailing ground levels and the existing mature trees and hedges. There are no immediate neighbours to the site.

Access, parking and Highway Safety

Following consultation, the Highways Officer recommended that there was no objection, advising that 'The access being used is away from the open crossing of the railway, so cannot be objected to due to proximity. The access is satisfactory in terms of visibility when considering the traffic use of the lane, the speed of traffic approaching from each direction, and the advance visibility of the access which approaching drivers have. It also does not require permanent changes in terms of width or surfacing. The reception is at the Beavers Hill Farm House, and first time guests are likely to be guided to arrive from The Ridgeway and connections to the A477.'

Drainage

The site is served by compost toilets, and the waste water from the showers and washing up is piped to a soakaway.

Natural Resources Wales have advised that there is no objection to the proposal, subject to the applicant ensuring that treatment of the shower and washing up water is installed prior to the discharge to the soakaway – the suggested methods are a septic tank or private package treatment plant. The compost toilets can also be treated by the same method. The soakaway will require an environmental permit.

Biodiversity

The Authority's Planning ecologist has been consulted and has advised that there are no comments for this application.

Other material considerations

- Supporting information on behalf of the applicants.

A detailed planning statement accompanied this application, which is summarised below:-(the full details are available to view on the planning file).

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Background

The applicant started Beavers Retreat in June 2015, with 2 bell tents and a compost toilet and shower. The tents were advertised by means of a website, and, due to popularity, the numbers of tents offered in the 2015 season rose to 5. For the 2016 season, the number of tents rose to 10, and additional toilet/shower facilities were added.

10 letters of support from guests and from local businesses have been appended to the application.

Key points of application.

The applicant has identified the following

- According to 4.4.4 in Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan written in 2013, the strategy should “Support sustainable land management and traditional activities through tourism” and recognises this can be done by “**encouraging farm diversification to provide facilities for visitors**”.
- According to 4.3.4, the local authorities should “**Consider the provision of low impact facilities such as safari tents, yurts, camping pods and tree houses**”
- Point 2.4; “A significant proportion of the UK population do not know about Pembrokeshire or have an outdated impression of what is on offer.”
- Beavers Retreat complies with the Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan
- Beavers Retreat complies with Planning Policy Wales Chapter 11
- Beavers Retreat provides a much needed economic boost to the local area and one full time job.
- PCNP Caravan, Camping and Chalet Capacity Assessment which is helping review the Local Development Plan recognises need for low impact Glamping development away from the coast.
- Importance of supporting the tourism industry and the Tourism Strategy for Wales
- Positive impact on local business
- Site supports demand for short breaks in Pembrokeshire
- Farm diversification scheme
- There is a new and growing demand for Glamping
- Non-permanent tents which are only erect for the summer months
- A young enterprising person should be supported in the local area.

The Local Development Plan (2010) and the background paper; PCNP Caravan, Camping and Chalet Capacity Assessment (2015).

In response to the requirements of Policy 38, the applicant states that since the Local Development Plan was written in 2010, visitors to the County are looking for a different type of accommodation rather than the traditional caravans or camping. In his view, the LDP can be proven to be outdated as it is currently being reviewed, and, in the background paper on Caravan,

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Camping and Chalet Capacity, it advises that the glamping market is moving swiftly with some creative options being pursued to capture the imagination of visitors. In conclusion, where the report advises that the main recommendations of this report are generally to site any new development away from the coast and Preseli's and not interdivisible with them', the applicant has responded that Beavers Retreat is 2 miles away from the coast and is in an area where the bell tents cannot be viewed from any coast line. The site is very well hidden in the summer months when in use due to the maturity of hedges.

In considering the above evidence, officers would note that reference is made to the "Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan 2013-18". This Plan includes reference to the need to increase profitability and to attract more visitors, especially at times when there is capacity. To achieve this, the document lists a number of aims including protection of the environment; new products to attract new markets and keep pace with visitor expectations and protecting the environment – which is the reason that people come to the area. In support of creating a year-round visitor economy the Plan aims to improve the availability of good quality serviced accommodation; support continual upgrading of self-catering accommodation and upgrading of camping and caravanning accommodation. However, the Plan does not seek to increase the number of accommodation providers. This supports the policy position of the Local Development Plan.

In respect of the status of the Local Development Plan and its review – particularly, the Caravan, Camping and Chalet Landscape Capacity Assessment (2015), the review is in its initial stages, and a Draft Plan is yet to be produced. In light of this, whilst the applicant has considered the Assessment's findings in detail (which is commended), the document itself carries no weight in decision-making at this particular time, and as a result, cannot be considered a material consideration that would outweigh the current Local Development Plan.

Whilst the applicant's evidence is that glamping is of a different characteristic to camping and caravanning – the structures are essentially tents, thus would be considered against the current camping policies in the LDP. There may be material considerations that weigh against the current policy position, however, these would need to be substantial, and officers consider that the evidence provided is not sufficiently detailed nor compelling to be considered to outweigh the current local development plan. Whilst the proposal is referred to as farm diversification, there is no evidence to show how the glamping business links to and forms part of the existing farm enterprise at Beavers Hill. The proposal is presented as a business in its own right, and officers cannot consider the proposal as farm diversification.

Conclusion

The proposal has been considered against the policies of the current Local Development Plan, and whilst the applicant has argued for the retention of the campsite in this particular instance, the main policy – 38 – Camping, Touring

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Caravans, Statics and Chalet Sites - which is relevant to this proposal, is not criteria-based, and is clear in that no new camping sites would be supported. There are no material considerations that would be considered to outweigh the very clear policy position set out in Policy 38 of the Local Development Plan, regarding such developments. As such, the application cannot be supported by officers, and the recommendation is of refusal.

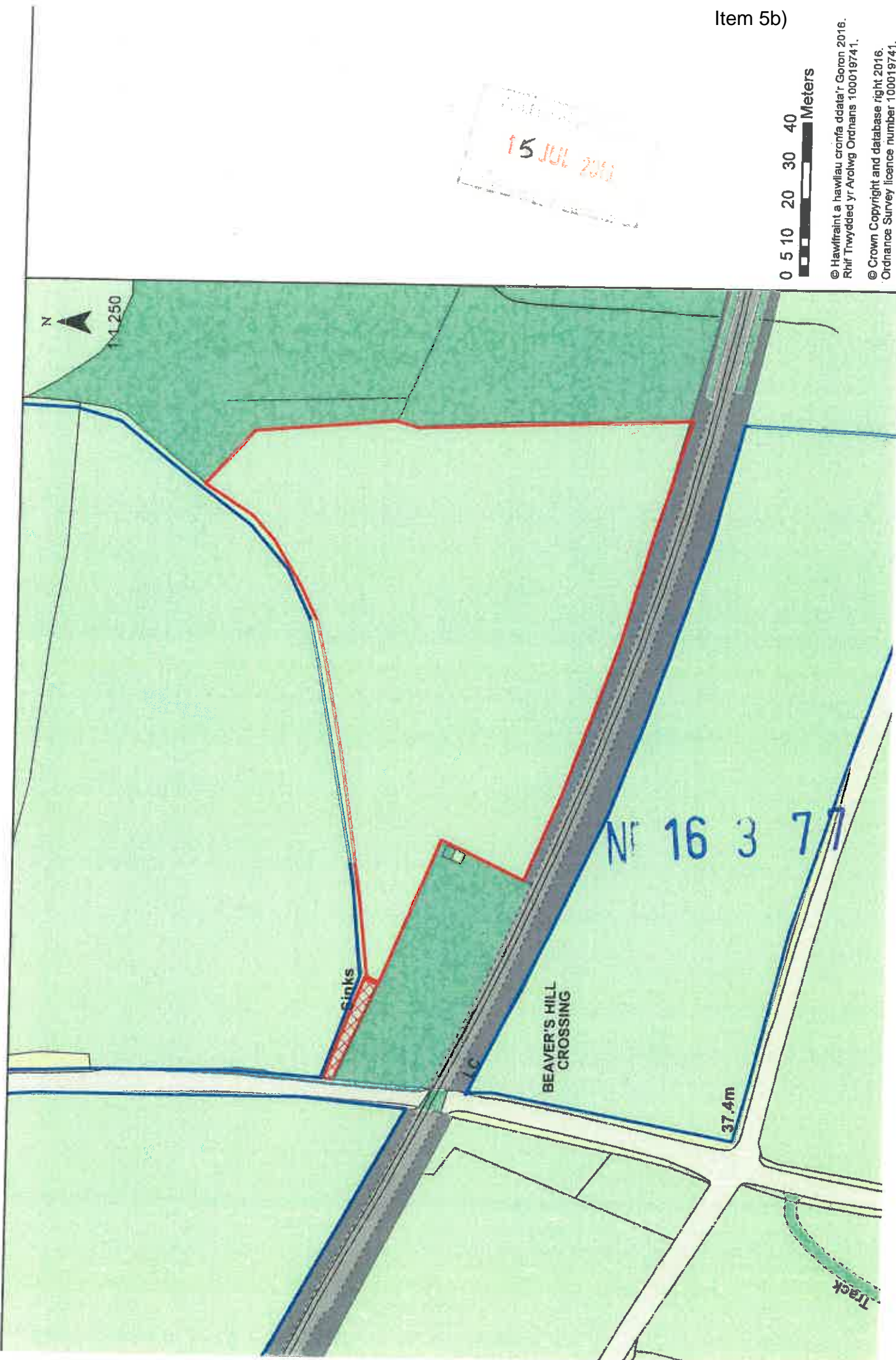
Recommendation

That the application be refused, subject to the following reason:

1. Policy 35 and 38 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan state that new camping, caravanning, static caravan or chalet sites will not be permitted in the National Park. The provision of these seasonal campsites and associated development is therefore contrary to adopted Local Development Plan Policy.

Location Plan

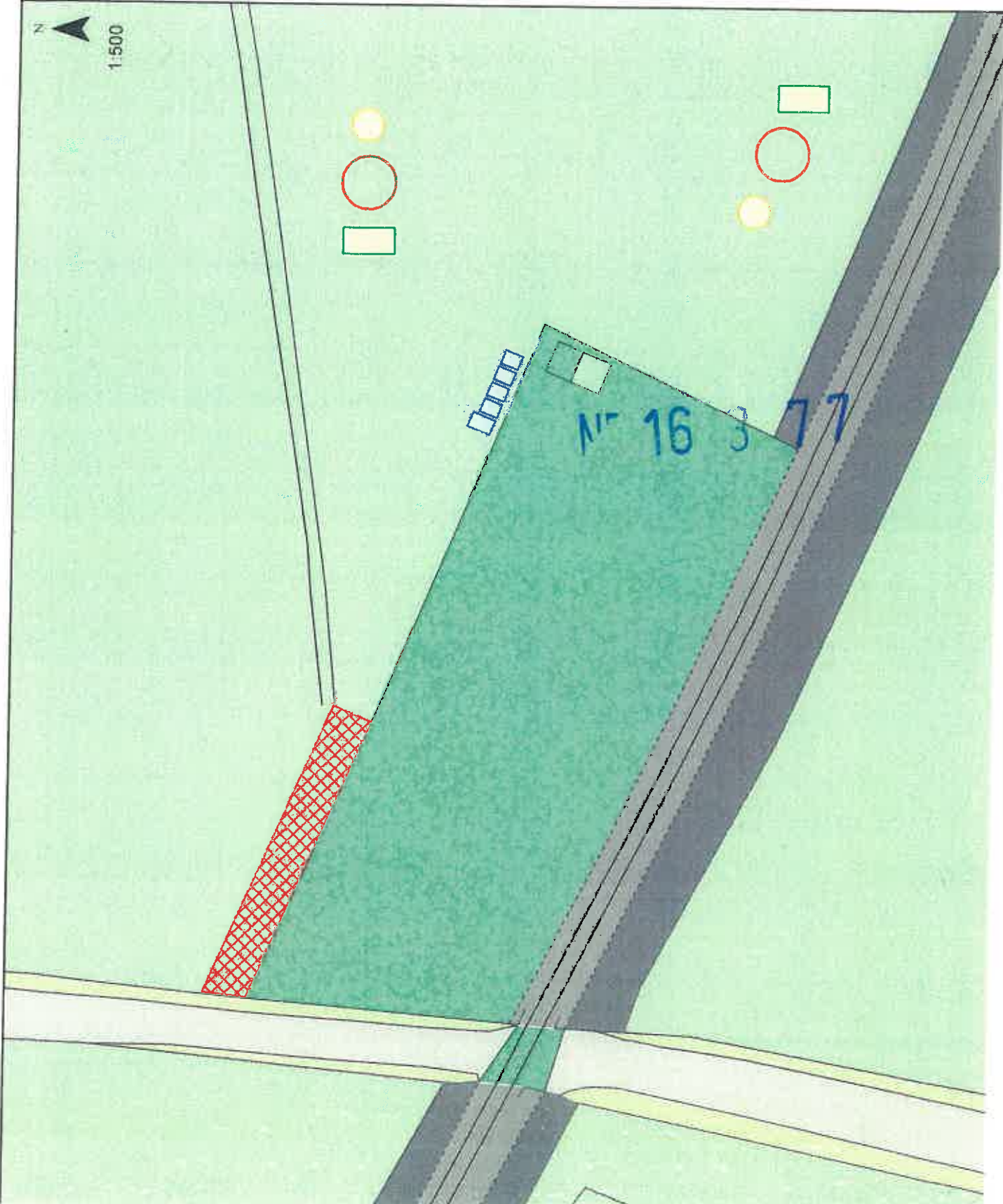
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Site Plan



Legend

- BBQ & Picnic Area
- Car Park Space
- Handstanding Entrance
- Shower, Toilet and Washing Facilities

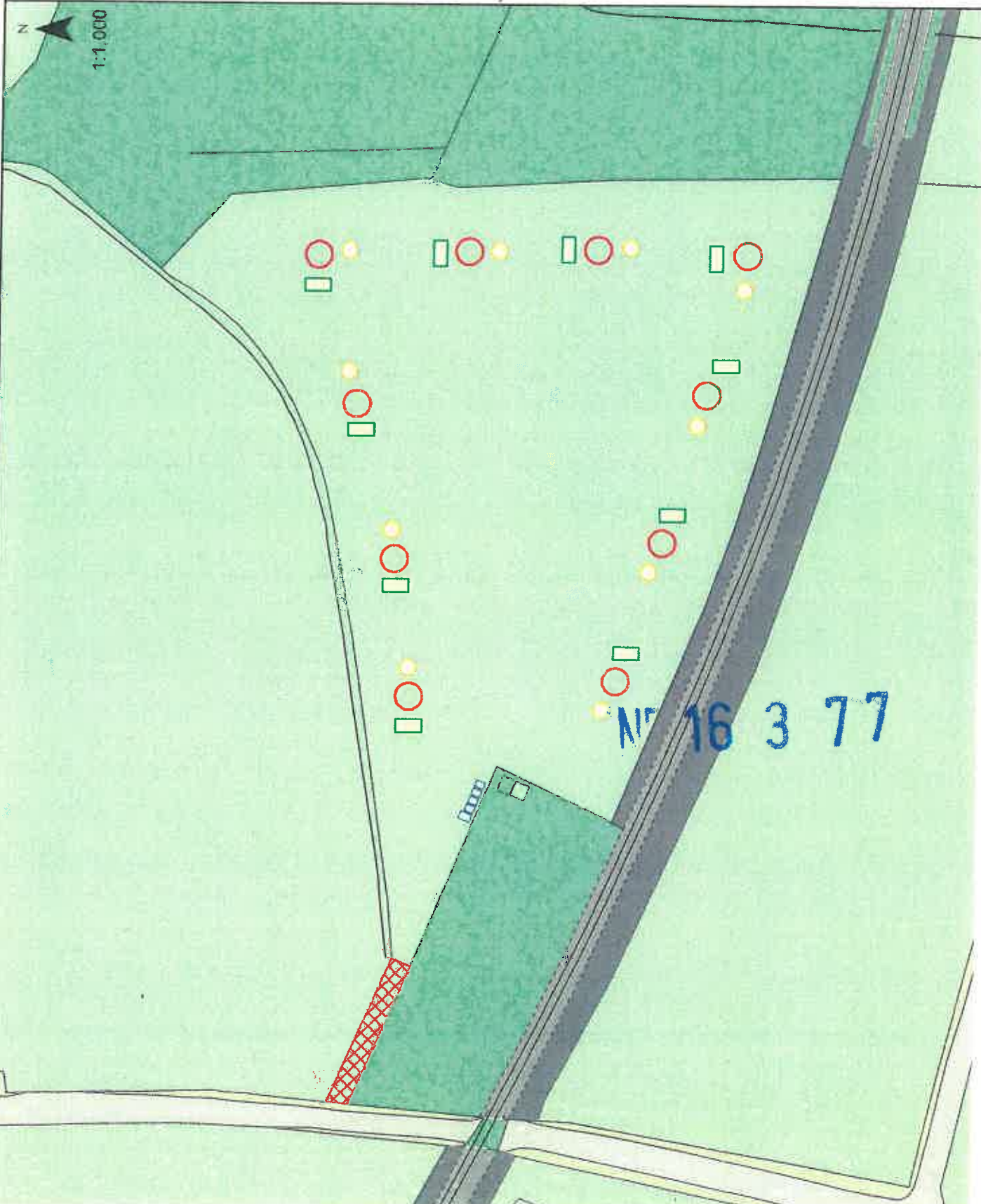
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