

Application No: 24/00102FULL Full Application
Site: Harry's Meadow, Hale Park, Hale, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 2RE

Proposal: Use of land as a seasonal campsite for 50 pitches for no more than 60 days in a calendar year (AMENDED DESCRIPTION AND PLANS)

Applicant: J Sheriff

Case Officer: Lucie Cooper
Parish: HALE PARISH COUNCIL

1. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Contrary to Parish Council View

2. POLICIES

Development Plan Designations

Conservation Area
Historic Park and Garden
Tree Preservation Order

Principal Development Plan Policies

SP5 Nature conservation sites of international importance
SP7 Landscape character
SP15 Tranquillity
SP16 The historic and built environment
DP2 General development principles
DP47 Holiday parks and campsites

Supplementary Planning Documents

Habitat Mitigation Scheme SPD
Planning Guidance Note – applications for temporary camping uses (updated January 2024)

NPPF

Sec 2 - Achieving sustainable development
Sec 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
Sec 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
Sec 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Sec 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3. MEMBER COMMENTS

None received

4. PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS

Hale Parish Council: Recommend refusal. The application fails to meet and comply with any of the planning policies, the application contains errors and inconsistencies particularly in the Design and Access statement and the ecology survey is not adequate for such a sensitive location. Letters of support included are inconsistent; many are historical and therefore do not relate to this application. Councillors agreed that the application is inadequate with insufficient information for a major planning application.

5. CONSULTEES

Ecologist: No objection, subject to conditioning of management considerations such as the details for biodiversity enhancement and management based on further survey work and monitoring, as well as operational controls and management of campsite effects.

Natural England: No objection (to original proposal), subject to appropriate mitigation being secured for:

- Treatment of waste water outside of the River Avon and Solent catchment.
- Appropriate contributions in line with the NFNPA's Revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme 2020.

Any other likely significant effects that could arise from the development should also be assessed. Further comments awaited on revised description/amended plans.

Landscape Officer: On balance, with the measures described (exclusion zone within the area of the lime tree avenue) the landscape priority of protecting the lime trees that form the avenue (being a significant part of the Grade II listed Park and Garden) will be maintained and the temporary campsite should not adversely affect the avenue of trees.

Tree Officer: The site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO/0007/21) and the Lime Avenue also forms part of the grade II listed park and garden. The amended plans show camping is to be confined to the north of the Lime Avenue with three vehicle access points from the field leading to the gravel track between the rows of trees. Soil compaction between the trees through the continued and repetitive movement of vehicles can have a detrimental impact on the health of trees. This can be easily avoided using simple load spreading plates/boards in these locations.

The plan also shows the facilities block has been re-positioned from its original position to the south of the avenue to the north. Its re-positioning is of no significance to the trees; however, from what I have seen on site,

the main water point terminates to the south of the trees. How the water will be taken across to the unit from its current point needs to be clarified and is expected to be above ground. Excavation to install any utilities in this location would not be supported.

Overall, the proposed use of the site as a campsite is considered feasible, however further information (vehicle access points, marking the edge of the proposed exclusion zone and route/installation of services) should be submitted prior to the use of the land and secured by condition.

Senior Building Design and Conservation Officer: The applicant has taken steps to address some of the earlier concerns. There remains the potential for this proposal to have an adverse impact on the registered park and garden and rural character of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. To avoid any conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy SP16 (a)(ii) the Planning Officer will need to ensure that there are sufficient controls in place to limit vehicular access points, to safeguard the lime tree avenue and control over the location of associated facilities.

Historic England: Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application. Suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.

The Gardens Trust: No objection due to the temporary nature of the seasonal campsite and the absence of any additional hard-standing or permanent features. But do have comments relating to the historic lime avenue and suggest that should the Authority decide to approve the application, that an exclusion zone be enforced around the avenue. Also suggest that the owner of the avenue considers the planting of a replacement avenue down the entire length of the existing one.

HCC Highways: No objection. Since the Highway Authority's previous comments, there has been an amended description and additional information, including a transport statement, that has been submitted. This highlights the fact that the site previously operated 150 pitches, with this current application seeking to operate 50 pitches. This in itself will result in a small reduction in trips associated with the use of the site. Furthermore, the applicant has suggested "minor hedge cutting and replanting" of hedges within the vicinity of the access to maintain the visibility splays from the access. This is therefore acceptable to the Highway Authority, as such there is no objection to this application.

Environmental Health (NFDC): No objection providing suitable planning conditions are attached to any granted permission. The implementation/enforcement of the management plan should be secured by way of condition in order to control music and people noise, as well as lighting and smoke (from fire pits).

Local Lead Flood Authority (HCC): The site is at very low risk of flooding and no new impermeable area is proposed, the LLFA has no comments.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

Original proposal

77 representations of objection on the following grounds:

- risk to local environment; conservation & landscape enhancement should take precedence.
- disturbance to wildlife and livestock; concerns over wild swimming.
- insufficient ecological information to satisfy Habitat Regulations.
- concerns over foul/grey waste removal/disposal.
- elevated fire risk from use of fire pits; smoke disturbance.
- previous camping uses have been unneighbourly; anti-social behaviour by campers; noise pollution, litter and trespass.
- poorly managed site.
- alternative campsites available in the New Forest.
- onsite catering has adverse impact on local businesses.
- sets a bad precedent; number of pitches exceeds 50.
- previous breaches of planning control; bogus exemption certificate used to enable camping/rally on the site previously.
- Management Plan does not include method to restrict campers from leaving red line boundary of site.
- increased traffic (on foot and by car); poor access, transport statement should be required.
- poor maintenance of tree avenue.
- risk of lightning to campers; risk of lime trees dropping limbs on campers.
- proximity to local cemetery.
- Heritage Statement fails to adequately assess the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposals in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Five representations in support:

- application should be for no more than 50 pitches.
- support people wishing to visit the National Park.
- not noticed many of the issues raised by other comments.
- not aware of excessive smoke or noise pollution.
- benefits local businesses.
- income supports Estate in sustainable land management, including maintenance of trees, footpaths and buildings.

Amended proposal:

16 further representations of objection. New grounds raised:

- concerned that key reports not published in good time.
- greater impact on the setting of the Park and residential amenities resulting from extended period of use (42 days to 60 days).
- query/dispute the comments made by consultees.

- transport statement is substandard and lacks relevant data to support key claims.

One further representation in support. New comment:

- Camping is a low-cost accommodation option that helps visitors connect with the special landscape of the Forest.

7. RELEVANT HISTORY

A seasonal 100+ pitch campsite has been operating from the site as permitted development since 2020.

Application for Approval pursuant to Regulations 75 - 78 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) for the proposed temporary use of land under Part 5 Class C of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) as a tented campsite for up to 80 pitches for up to 10 days in the 2023 calendar year (23/00553PAHR) - approved on 16 June 2023.

Article 4 Direction made on 17 October 2023 withdrawing permitted development rights for temporary campsites (unless in first use prior to 1 March 2020 and limited to no more than 28 days a year).

8. ASSESSMENT

The Application site

- 8.1 Harry's Meadow is located within the Hale Park Estate, occupying an area of parkland to the north of the historic lime tree avenue. The site comprises just over 1ha of modified grassland which is managed through a combination of livestock grazing and cutting. The site lies within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area and occupies a slightly elevated position, affording fine views across the Avon Valley.
- 8.2 The Hale Park Estate itself is of national importance and includes a Grade I listed country house dating from the early C18th. The application site is some distance from the main house but it is served by an access road which forms part of an historic lime tree avenue - the avenue itself falls within the Grade II* Listed Park and Garden. The site is also subject to Tree Preservation Order TPO/0007/21 that protects 2 x oak trees, 1 x veteran oak tree and the 252 veteran lime trees that form the avenue leading up to the house.
- 8.3 Access to the site is gained via an existing gated access point from the adjoining Hale Road. The northern site boundary is defined by an established roadside hedge. Hale village lies just to the east whilst Woodgreen is some 2km to the south-west. Towards the western end of the site is Home Farm. Aside from Home Farm, no other dwellings border the application site but

there are a number of scattered dwellings which lie to the south of the wider Hale Park Estate. A small cemetery abuts the eastern end of the site.

Proposed development

- 8.4 This is the first planning application to be submitted following the making of the most recent National Park-wide Article 4 Direction which removes permitted development rights for temporary campsites as detailed above. The application initially proposed 67 pitches / 42 days but has since been amended to conform to the nationally permitted 50 pitches / 60 days.
- 8.5 The temporary campsite would be restricted to the northern side of the lime tree avenue. The site plan indicates an 'exclusion zone' underneath the tree canopy and also confirms that the portable showers and WCs would be located on the same side of the lime tree avenue (earlier plans showed these facilities on the opposite side).
- 8.6 The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents that include a Design and Access Statement, Transportation Statement, Heritage Statement, Management Plan, Preliminary Ecological Survey and Shadow Appropriate Assessment. The applicant has also submitted copies of the 'campsite information' and 'pre-arrival information' which is made available to guests and sets out the campsite rules – which have now been incorporated into the accompanying Management Plan.
- 8.7 The campsite rules include instructions to guests on how to access the site, discouraging them from using the narrow, tight bends of Hale Lane from the Woodgreen approach. Public footpaths are signposted from the site and maps of local footpaths and cycle rides are made available. Other control measures set out in the Management Plan include a 10.30 pm 'noise curfew', no playing of music and a site manager and warden being 'on hand 24/7' to ensure the campsite rules are adhered to. No external lighting is provided or allowed (only torches are permitted). Nor are guests permitted to bring their own BBQs – any outdoor cooking is only allowed to take place on purpose-built fire pits using locally sourced, seasoned firewood (both provided by the campsite).

Consideration

- 8.8 Key issues for consideration are:
- The principle of development.
 - Landscape and heritage impacts.
 - Ecological and recreational impacts.
 - Highway and access impacts.
 - Impacts on the local community (residents and businesses).

Principle of development

- 8.9 The Government has deemed (as a matter of principle) that 60-day campsites up to 50 pitches are generally acceptable across the country (including National Parks) – hence the introduction of the new permitted development right last July. The Authority's subsequent Article 4 Direction removes this permitted development right to ensure that temporary campsites in the National Park are properly planned.
- 8.10 Earlier this year (January) the Authority approved a Planning Guidance Note to assist the determination of applications for temporary campsites caught by the Article 4 Direction. This sets out the relevant planning considerations that will apply and makes it clear that the Authority will only consider the grant of planning permission for up to 50 pitches for up to 60 days in any one calendar year. Any proposals in excess of these thresholds will be determined against Local Plan Policy DP47 which does not permit new campsites (unless they are to enable the removal of pitches from more sensitive areas).
- 8.11 As this proposal is for 50 pitches / 60 days it needs to be assessed against the relevant considerations set out in the approved Planning Guidance Note.

Landscape and Heritage impacts

- 8.12 The site is located within the Conservation Area and Hale Park Estate. The main landscape feature of this part of the listed park and garden of Hale Park, associated with Hale House, is the lime tree avenue which bisects the land and forms a dramatic and symmetrical axis to the frontage of Hale House, a common design feature in the landscape associated with 18th century mansions. The proposed temporary campsite is located on the north side of the lime tree avenue and falls within the Landscape Type of 'Historic Parkland'. Future landscape management guidelines in the New Forest National Park Landscape Character Assessment note that historic parkland features should be protected and managed to ensure that they form visible features in the landscape. The impact of the camping use on the setting of the historic park and the protected avenue of trees, as well as the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and National Park landscape, are therefore important considerations. Due consideration has been given to Section 16 of the NPPF, Section 66 of the 1990 Act and Policies DP2 (General Development Principles), Policy SP16 (Historic and Built Environment), Policy SP17 (Local Distinctiveness) and DP18 (Design Principles) of the adopted Local Plan and the Design Guide SPD (2022).
- 8.13 The camping area is to be contained in the northern part of the site to restrict spread across the wider site (previous camping

uses have extended across the site either side of the avenue of trees). Importantly, the submitted plans now show an 'exclusion zone' where camping would not be permitted close to or under the canopy of the protected avenue of trees as well as limiting the car crossing points to three specific areas. These measures can be secured by condition and are considered sufficient to protect and maintain the historic avenue of trees, subject to agreeing the exact details. No permanent buildings, hardstandings or infrastructure are proposed and coupled with the seasonal use of the site (max 60 days) and limited number of pitches (50), it is considered that the proposal would not harm the special interest, character or appearance of the registered park and garden.

- 8.14 The northern boundary of the site abutting Hale Lane is defined by an established hedge which helps to minimise views into the site. The temporary nature of the proposed use would not have any adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or the wider National Park landscape. For these reasons, the proposal is considered to accord with Local Plan Policies SP7 and SP16.

Ecological and recreational impacts

- 8.15 Local Plan Policy SP6 seeks to protect and enhance habitats and species of biodiversity importance. The application site itself is not subject to any nature conservation designations and the proposal would not result in any direct habitat loss. The applicant has commissioned Wild New Forest to prepare a preliminary ecological survey and to provide recommendations for future site management to increase biodiversity. The ecological survey confirmed that the proposed temporary use would not affect any protected species whilst future site management proposals include a combination of natural regeneration, buffer strips, native tree planting around the site margins to expand adjacent areas of woodland, improved connectivity between woodland blocks, providing an additional buffer between the campsite and adjacent designated sites, and developing areas of rough grassland and wood pasture. These measures should all help to deliver increased biodiversity in and around the site and can be secured by condition (as the application was submitted prior to 12 February 2024 there is no mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirement).
- 8.16 The site does lie within 1km of the River Avon and New Forest designated European sites and in accordance with the Habitat Regulations, an Appropriate Assessment has been carried out as to whether granting planning permission would adversely affect the integrity of the New Forest and River Avon European sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives. The Assessment concludes that the proposed development would, in combination with other developments, without mitigation, have an adverse effect due to the recreational impacts on the

European sites and changes to water quality, but that the adverse impacts would be avoided if the planning permission were to be conditional upon securing the proposals for the mitigation of that impact in accordance with the Authority's Mitigation Strategy or mitigation to at least an equivalent effect.

- 8.17 These measures include a financial contribution to the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme to address recreational impacts and having an agreed arrangement in place that wastewater generated by the temporary use will be dealt with by having the foul water tankered off site by a licenced operator (Rob Beale Ltd) to Waste Water Treatment Works which do not discharge treated effluent into the catchment of the River Avon or any other river catchments whose special ecological interest is sensitive to nutrient loading. These measures have been agreed for other temporary campsites operating in the National Park.

Highway and access impacts

- 8.18 The site is served by an existing gated access from Hale Road. No additional access works or hard infrastructure are proposed. Whilst the roads serving the site are typical of the narrow country lanes in this area, they are considered adequate to safely cater for the additional traffic generated by the temporary campsite use. The applicant's Transportation Statement includes a description of the local highway network, the additional traffic to be generated (125 trips per 12hr day), means to discourage visitors using the approach from Woodgreen (see Management Plan) and maintenance of the sightlines for the existing access. This information has been reviewed by the Highway Authority who raise no objection to the proposal.

Impacts on the local community (residents and businesses)

- 8.19 Previous uses of the application site as a temporary campsite have included over 150 pitches at any one time and have been held over a much larger site which has included land to the south of the lime tree avenue (and as a result land much closer to neighbouring residential properties). The applicant has been able to do this under previous permitted development rights (with no limit on the number of pitches) and also as an 'exempt recreational organisation' (known as Wild Camp) which is licenced by Natural England. These previous, much larger campsites have clearly had an impact on local residents and this is reflected in the number of objections to the current application.

- 8.20 However, officers consider the proposed temporary campsite use to be very different to what has gone before. With many less pitches and the camping use being restricted to the northern part of the site, the impacts will be much reduced. The concerns of the Parish Council and residents are understood but it is considered that any remaining impacts can be further mitigated through the control measures put forward in the applicant's Management Plan as well as the conditions recommended below. The applicant has further agreed not to hold any additional camping activities on the wider Hale Park Estate, effectively surrendering the use of the site by an 'exempt recreational organisation' (to be secured through a legal agreement that will need to be co-signed by the landowner). These are important concessions and taken together as a whole, it is not considered that a properly managed 50 pitch seasonal campsite in this location would have the degree of adverse impact on neighbour amenity to warrant a refusal.
- 8.21 Part of the camping offer on the site does include visiting mobile catering vans but providing these are restricted to the red line application site, these would not have any impact on local amenities. The effect on local businesses is considered to be neutral although it is not unreasonable to assume that campsite guests would visit local shops and pubs. Whilst Go New Forest have not formally submitted a response to the application, they have nonetheless indicated that they support the proposal.

Conclusion

- 8.22 The proposal is considered to meet all the requirements set out in the Authority's recently approved Planning Guidance Note 'Applications for temporary camping uses'. As per the Guidance Note, the permission, if granted, would be temporary and limited to three years only. The use of the site and compliance with the conditions will be actively monitored (and if necessary enforced) during this period. The applicant therefore has a clear incentive to adhere to the planning conditions and to operate a well-run, low impact temporary campsite, especially should he wish to renew the permission at any time in the future.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Subject to:

- i. the prior completion of a legal agreement to secure the necessary habitat mitigation and to prevent any further camping and caravanning activity taking place on the application site and the wider Hale Park Estate; and;
- ii. the consideration of any further comments from Natural England

Grant Temporary Planning Permission subject to conditions:

Conditions

1. The use of the land hereby permitted shall cease on or before 21 May 2027 and the land restored to a condition which has first been agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the impact of the seasonal campsite use in light of the circumstances then obtaining.

2. Development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved plans (DAK/HP/01/REV-B, DAK/HP/02) and the details set out in the accompanying Transportation Statement, Management Plan and Preliminary Ecological Survey. No alterations to the approved development shall be made unless otherwise agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority. All associated camping activities and facilities including parking, deliveries, mobile catering, picnicking, outdoor play etc. shall only take place within the red line application site and on no other part of the Hale Park Estate.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable form of development in accordance with Policies SP16, SP17, DP18 and DP2 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

3. Prior to the commencement of development ecological mitigation for the River Avon and New Forest European sites shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority. The ecological mitigation (for recreational impacts) may take the form of a planning obligation which secures financial contributions in accordance with the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme.

Reason: To safeguard sites of international ecological importance in accordance with Policies SP5 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019), the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme.

4. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) England Order 2015 (or any re-enactment of that Order) no other camping or caravanning use otherwise approved by Class B of Part 4 and Classes A and C of Part 5 of Schedule 2 to the Order, shall be carried out without express planning permission first having been granted.

Reason: To ensure that no other form of temporary camping or caravan use takes place on the site in accordance with Policy DP47 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 or any order revoking or re-enacting that order, no access, vehicular or pedestrian, other than that shown on the approved plan shall be formed to the site.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to comply with Policy SP55 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019) and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No goods, plant, or machinery shall be stored on the site without the express planning permission of the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: In the interest of the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy DP2 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

7. No external lighting shall be installed on the site.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP15 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

8. The use hereby permitted shall not commence until the arrangements to be taken for the protection of the avenue of lime trees have been implemented in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority. Such arrangements will include details of a suitably cordoned exclusion zone and details of the car crossing points in the areas shown on the approved site location plan, drawing number DAK/HP/01/REV-B.

The agreed arrangements shall be carried-out in full prior to any camping use taking place and shall remain in-situ for the duration of the camping use.

Reason: To safeguard historic trees and natural features which are important to the visual amenities of the area, in accordance with Policies DP2, SP6 and SP16 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

9. No barbeques or wildfires shall be carried out at the site unless details are submitted to and agreed in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: In order to protect the nearby designated sites and residential properties from fire risk in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP5 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

10. No amplified music shall be played in conjunction with the use of the land as a temporary campsite.

Reason: In the interests of the tranquility of the area and neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP15 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019).

11. The proposed management recommendations as set out in Wild New Forest's preliminary ecological survey report dated 21 January 2024, which include additional field surveys and a combination of natural regeneration, buffer strips, native tree planting around the site margins, improved connectivity between woodland blocks, providing an additional buffer between the campsite and adjacent designated sites and developing areas of rough grassland and wood pasture, shall be updated and enhanced by a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP). The BEP shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority within five (5) months of the date of this decision. The measures set out in the approved BEP shall thereafter be implemented and maintained as agreed.

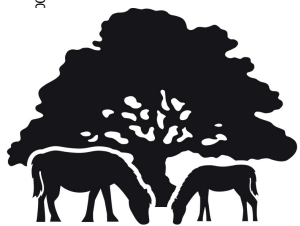
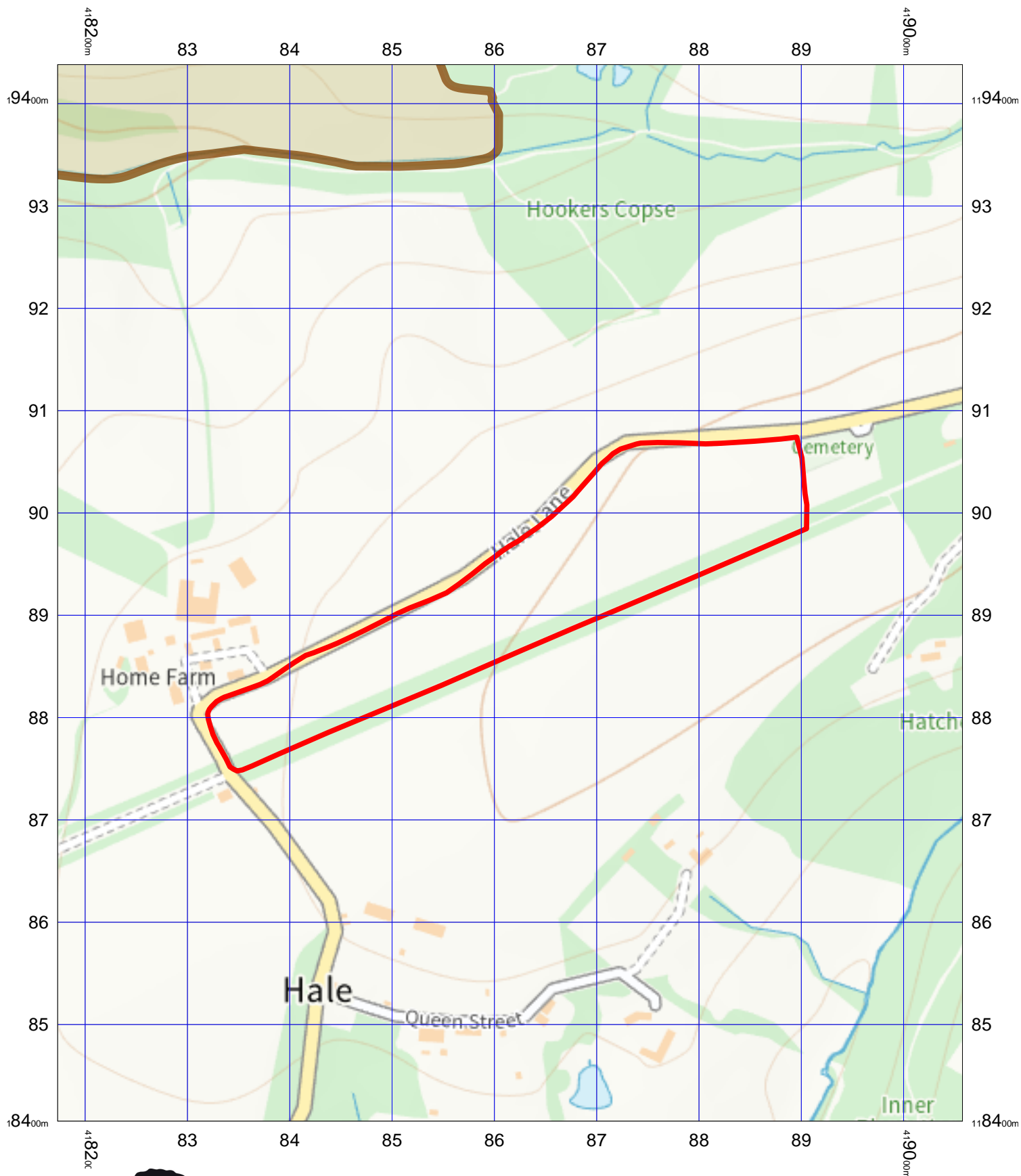
Reason: To safeguard protected species and to ensure the proposed development delivers the stated Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with Policies DP2 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016- 2036 (August 2019).

12. Prior to the commencement of development, the details of the facilities (showers and WCs), to include the route of all services and the method of their installation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority. All wastewater generated by the temporary use will be dealt with by having the foul water tankered off site by a licenced operator to Waste Water Treatment Works which do not discharge treated effluent into the catchment of the River Avon or any other river catchments whose special ecological interest is sensitive to nutrient loading.

Reason: To safeguard sites of international ecological importance in accordance with Policies SP5 and SP6 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019), the Authority's Habitat Mitigation Scheme and the SRMP.

13. The control measures set out in the Management Plan (January 2024) shall apply at all times unless otherwise approved in writing by the New Forest National Park Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers in accordance with Policy DP2 of the adopted New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (August 2019),



NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

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