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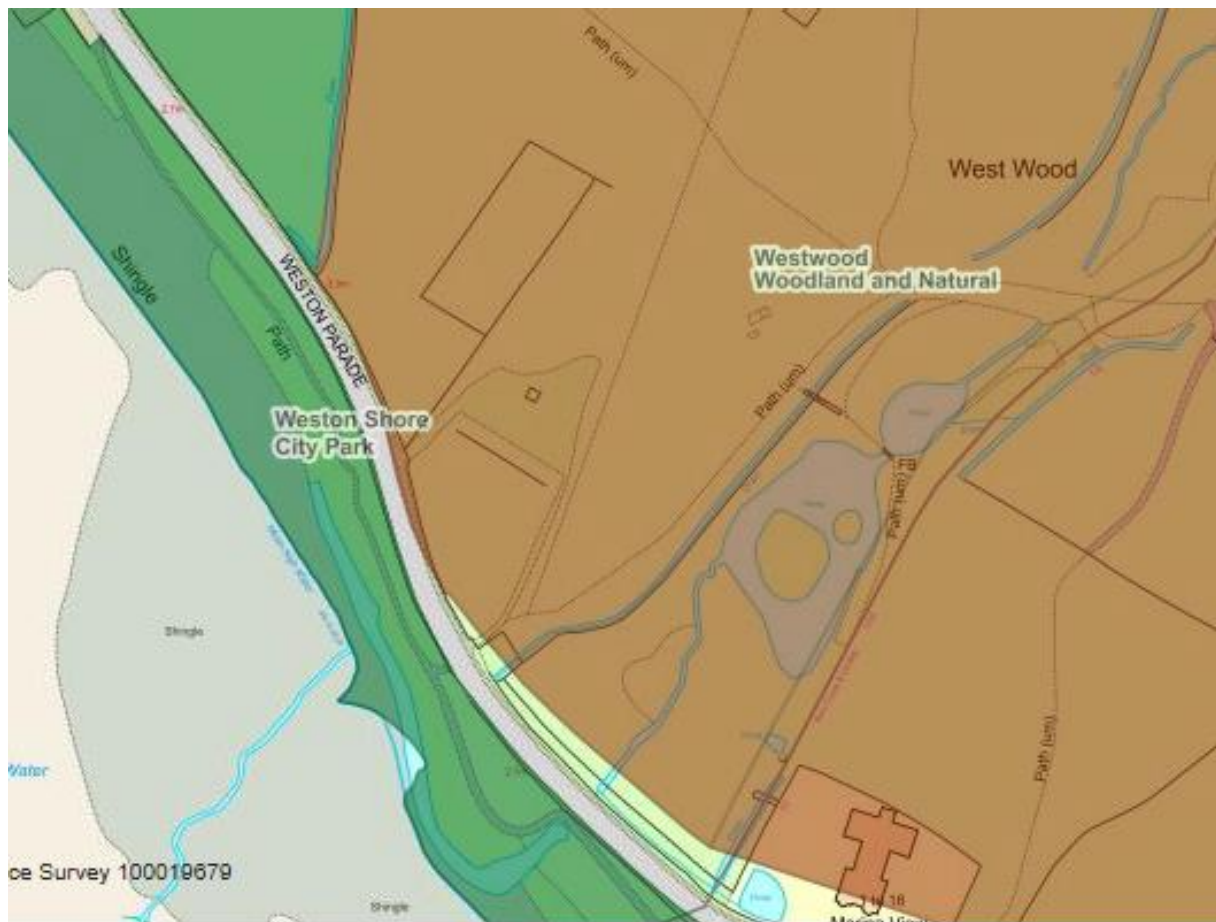
1. Introduction and background

The site lies near to Westwood Woodland Park Local Nature Reserve, and forms part of an interesting history of human activity. It was once part of a large estate in the ownership of the Cistercian monastery of Netley Abbey.

Westwood was later managed by local farmers who used the site as coppice woodland. They cut hazel stems from the woods each winter to make hurdles and charcoal.

During the Victorian era houses were built along the southern edge of the site, as part of the Chamberlayne Estate. These included the former Hilton House and the now demolished Lake House, which took its name from the ornamental lake that stood in its grounds. The lake is now Westwood Country Park's main pond and the Bamboo plants that surround it date back to the Victorian period. Until the Second World War the rest of the woodland was managed by a gamekeeper on behalf of the Chamberlayne estate. It was most likely used for shooting.





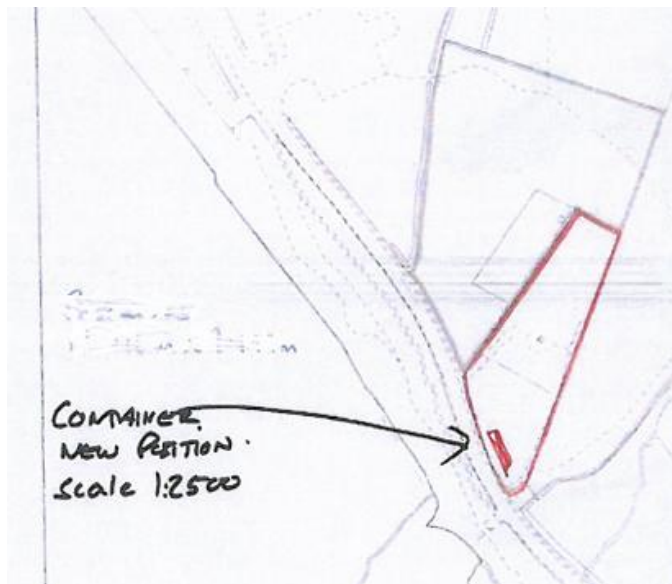
The site also lies near to Weston Shore City Park, as shown above.

2. Relevant planning history

On the formal planning register, there is a Certificate of Lawfulness for a storage container 3m x 12m, granted in 2015 (15/00200/PLDC). The Certificate was granted; this was not on a time-limited basis. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the container can remain on site.

Back in 2015, the site was described and characterised as per the text below:

Site Description: The site is an area of woodland adjacent to Weston Parade and close to the municipal boundary of the city. The site is part of the Weston Greenway and forms part of the strategic gap between Southampton and Eastleigh. There is no discernible trace of the former Hilton House on site other than the remains of some external steps. The site is covered by a Woodland Tree Preservation Order and lies within a Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC).



The site address on the Certificate is '2 Hilton House' and the postcode is logged as 'SO19 9DX'.

The original steps up to the former Hilton House are still present on site, as shown below.

In recent times, the site was granted a Certificate by the Carvan Club, to be used as upto 5 caravan pitches, as part of their network. We understand the Certificate was rescinded in light of planning enforcement interest in the site. The applicant was tasked with a list of actions by the planning enforcement team, most of which have now been adhered to. Rather than re-submit for an exemption certificate again at this juncture, planning permission for the 5 caravan pitches is sought instead, and permission is also sought to retain the existing 'amenity building' to serve the caravan site. Please note that this would

not form a habitable building, but would instead form a day room which caravanners could use in inclement weather.



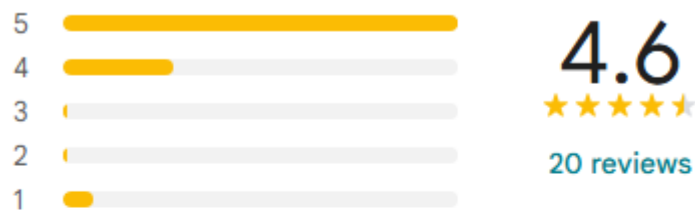
Above: the former steps to Hilton House, and the proposed amenity building serving the campsite

Whilst the Caravan Club licence was in place for ‘Ocean House caravan site’, the applicant received positive feedback about the use of the site, and the proposals at this juncture therefore seek to adapt the use of the site to one which is more suited to its woodland park location, and in doing so, ensure that any other uses are structures which are not on the plans are removed from the site to the satisfaction of the planning enforcement team. The campsite received 4.6 stars out of 5 on google reviews. Visitors enjoyed the site, recently stating:

******Been here a couple of times , lovely location , a stones throw from the sea , lovely and quite , will defo return if i get the chance 🎸🤘🎸*

******This is a great site, been here several times for several nights at a time. Ash is great. Cross the road and onto a path that is great for wheelchairs, my husband uses a wheelchair or folding up scooter. His assistance dog loves it too. Will be back again soon. Thanks Ash*

Review summary



Reviews aren't verified ⓘ



"A no frills **campsite**, **water** and elsan disposal on site."



"Amazing **location** and very friendly **owner**."



"Great **little spot** for a **night** in the van 🐾 "

3. The proposed caravanning use

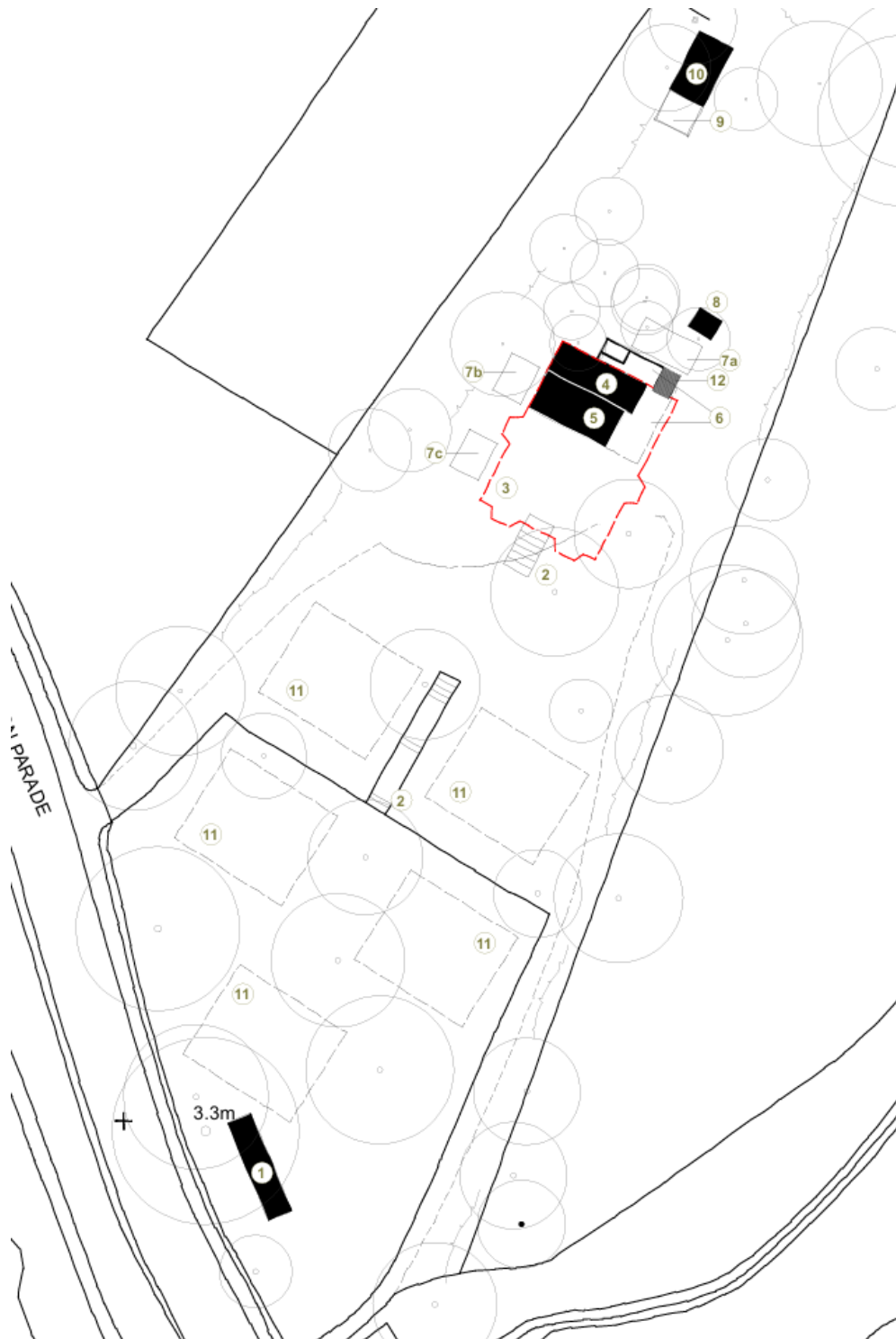
On Hampshire County Council's website for Westwood Woodland Park, there are limited accommodation options in the near vicinity of the site:-

[Camping | Things to do in Hampshire | Hampshire County Council](#)

Visitors are directed to glamping at Royal Victoria Country Park, or Basingstoke Canal Camping, which is at the Canal Centre in Mytchett, and is open from Easter to September, which is in Surrey and a long way away from the woodland park.

Rather than directing visitors up towards Farnborough and Basingstoke, a small base within the adjacent site, which already benefits from access and has a proven record of successfully housing caravans in recent times, would be a sensible and more sustainable option for visitors and volunteers.

The use would comprise five pitches, assimilated into existing clearings between trees, and utilising the existing access track.



Above: excerpt from proposed site layout plan showing pitches between existing trees

4. Relevant planning policy

The Development Plan situation at Southampton is presently quite complex, as it is a collection of adopted plans. These consist of the City Centre Action Plan (adopted 2015), Core Strategy including the changes from the Core Strategy Partial Review (adopted 2015), 'saved' policies in the Local Plan Review (amended 2015), the Bassett

Neighbourhood Plan (2016) and the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted 2013). There are also supplementary planning documents with more detailed policies. The emerging Southampton City Vision doesn't appear like it will be adopted any time soon. The plans don't seem to contain policies which specifically address tourism and recreation in the form of campsites around the rural edges of the city.

Southampton City Council's tourism policy is perhaps best articulated in its **Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2021–2031**. This document is included with the application. The Council's 10-year vision seeks to deliver exceptional experiences and prove a welcoming destination for visitors. The Plan doesn't reflect how this will best be achieved in more rural or countryside areas of Southampton, such as the site in question, although it is clear from Hampshire County Council's website which refers visitors to Basingstoke for caravan sites, that there is a shortage of such accommodation in the vicinity.

The plan sets out how tourism brings significant benefits to Southampton City. In 2019, tourism generated an estimated £422 million of direct expenditure to the local economy. This supported a total of 7,720 Full time Job Equivalents (FTEs) including indirect and induced jobs. In section 3.3, 'Opportunities', Green Spaces – it is proposed to better utilise parks as spaces and potential event venues subject to environmental and neighbourhood sustainability, supported by ambitions to secure Green Flag awards as a benchmark for good management and public access. In this case, the proposed use would be compatible with and would enhance enjoyment of the Woodland Park and City Park, enhancing the visitor experience. The third of the four objectives for the City is to 'create a visitor-focused city' – this specifically includes the wider city offer, not just the City Centre. Section 7.1 sets out how the Council needs to need to continue to work proactively with developers, chains and potential businesses to bring forward viable schemes that will increase capacity and broaden accommodation offer around the City area. The plan confirms that tourism is not high profile within the city and the overall welcome and information for visitors needs to be improved.

This proposal would re-instate the small caravan site, which proved successful on its initial inception, to allow visitors to enjoy the waterside and woodland park of the Weston Parade area of the City.

5. Other material planning considerations

The development would not be visible from the wider area outside of the site. There are no close neighbours whose amenity would be affected. The trees on-site would be retained and the proposal would not necessitate the removal or lopping of any trees. Any developer contributions which are due, as a result of the proximity of the Solent, are offered in accordance with the Solent Recreational Mitigation Strategy.

6. Summary and conclusions

This application aims to resolve any outstanding enforcement matters at the site and at the same time, provide an improved version of the Certified Site which was tried and tested during the past year. This would re-purpose the site in a beneficial way which enhances the tourism offer of the City, makes viable use of the Hilton House site, and complements the existing Woodland Park. The proposal complies with the aims and objectives of the Destination Management Plan and the plans aim to improve the appearance and quality of the overall site, in a manner befitting of its setting and location. The applicant is hoping to work with the Council/ HCC here, on a beneficial solution for the future of the site, and would be pleased to take into account any officer ideas for the evolution of this objective. It is therefore hoped that ultimately the proposal can be approved on this collaborative basis.