

**Application Number: 23/10050** Full Planning Permission

**Site:** Land at FORMER FAWLEY POWER STATION, FAWLEY ROAD,  
FAWLEY SO45 1TW

**Development:** Site 1: Temporary storage of wind turbine blades on site of  
demolished Fawley Power Station Boiler House; Site 2:  
Temporary storage of wind turbine blades on the site of the  
Fawley Power Station Control Room and the adjoining car park.

**Applicant:** Fawley Waterside Ltd

**Agent:** Adams Infrastructure Planning Ltd.

**Target Date:** 18/04/2023

**Case Officer:** Ian Rayner

**Extension Date:** 05/05/2023

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## 1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- 1) The principle of development
- 2) Whether the development is justified in the light of Policy Strategic Site 4 and the existing proposals for the redevelopment of the Former Power Station
- 3) Landscape and visual impacts, including impacts on the National Park and the setting of nearby Listed Buildings
- 4) Impacts on residential amenities
- 5) Flood Risk
- 6) Ecology

This application is to be considered by Committee because the application is not in accordance with Policy - specifically Policy Strategic Site 4 of the Local Plan.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application relates to 6.22 hectares of the former Fawley Power Station, and encompasses 2 distinct areas. The first and larger area, measuring 5.21 hectares, is set on the western side of the former power station site and extends over parts of the now demolished power station buildings, including the site of the former chimney. This larger area also extends southwards of the former power station buildings to a point that is fairly close to the power station's southern boundary with the New Forest National Park. The second smaller area, measuring 1.01 hectares, is set to the east side of the main power station buildings, and includes the site of the control tower building which was still in situ at the time of the Case Officer site visit (in late January 2023), but which has since been the subject of demolition activity.

### **3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The application seeks to store wind turbine blades on the 2 areas in question for a temporary period, expiring on 31st December 2025. The wind turbine blades are 80 metres in length and 6 metres in width (at their widest point).

Wind turbine storage already takes place on adjoining parts of the power station site - specifically on 3 distinct areas covering a total area of 12.78 hectares. The existing areas where wind turbine storage currently takes place were permitted pursuant to a temporary planning permission granted in September 2017 (17/10805) which allows wind turbine storage to take place until 31st December 2027.

### **4 PLANNING HISTORY**

#### *Previous proposals relating to wind turbine storage use*

- 4.1 2 steel portal framed industrial buildings (Use Class B2); mobile portable cabin; use of land for storage of wind turbine blades (B8); temporary permission sought for 10 years (17/10805) - granted temporary permission 8/9/2017
- 4.2 Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 17/10805 to allow amended plan numbers entailing the addition of buttresses and associated alterations to the approved blade painting facility building (17/11724) - granted temporary permission 19/2/2018
- 4.3 Leading Edge Protection Building; single-storey portable cabins for welfare facilities and offices (18/10583) - granted temporary permission 30/7/18
- 4.4 EIA Screening Opinions in respect of the above 3 proposals (17/10237), (17/11752), (18/10586) - Opinions given in 2017 and 2018 that EIA not required.
- 4.5 Temporary Open Storage of Wind Turbine blades at Fawley Quarry (New Forest National Park application 21/00098) - granted temporary permission by the National Park Authority 5/5/21

#### *Proposals for the demolition of the Fawley Power Station Buildings*

- 4.6 Dismantling and removal of external structures including tanks, ductwork and bunds (18/11048) (Demolition Prior Notification Application) - details not required to be approved 28/8/18
- 4.7 Dismantling, removal and site clearance of buildings (19/10131) (Demolition Prior Notification Application) - details not required to be approved 31/5/19
- 4.8 Dismantling, removal and site clearance of buildings at Fawley Power Station and remediation of the site (19/10138) (Approval under Regulations 73 and 75 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) - granted 31/5/19

#### *Proposal for the redevelopment of Fawley Power Station*

- 4.9 Land within the New Forest District Council comprising the demolition of ancillary power station buildings and provision of 1,380 new homes, 95,300 square metres of new commercial, civic and employment space (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C3, D1 and D2), enlargement of the dock

and creation of a canal within part of the turbine hall basement, refurbishment of the remainder of the turbine hall basement to create up to 2,100 space car park, surface car parking, a boat stack, public open space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, primary access road through the site, flood defences/sea wall, raising site level, hard and soft landscaping, associated infrastructure and engineering works (19/10581) (Outline Application with details only of Access) - decision pending

## 5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy

Strategic Site 4: The former Fawley Power Station

Policy CCC1: Safe and healthy communities

Policy ECON1: Employment land and development

Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness

Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality

Policy STR1: Achieving Sustainable Development

Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside, Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining New Forest National Park

Policy STR6: Sustainable economic growth

## 6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Fawley Parish Council: Recommend permission

## 7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

None

## 8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

Comments have been received from the following consultees:

**HCC Highways:** No objection

**Natural England:** No objection

**Environment Agency:** No objection

**Environmental Health (contaminated land):** No concerns

**Environmental Health (pollution):** No objection subject to condition

**National Grid Company:** The proposal does not affect National Grid Assets

**New Forest National Park Authority:** No objection on the basis that the proposal is for a temporary period only and provided that it does not prejudice the delivery of planning applications NFDC reference: 19/10581 and NPA reference: 19/00365.

## 9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

None

## 10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

### Principle of Development

- 10.1 The application site forms part of an allocated site - where Policy Strategic Site 4 applies.
- 10.2 Policy Strategic Site 4 seeks a comprehensive redevelopment of the former Fawley Power Station site for a residential-led mixed use scheme and public open space - comprising around 1380 new homes, up to 10,000 square metres of ancillary community, retail, leisure and service uses, some office uses and a marina within the central and southern parts of the site, and around 10 hectares of business and industrial uses on the northern part of the site. The policy is accompanied by a Concept Masterplan which indicates that the 2 areas affected by this application should be developed primarily for residential purposes.
- 10.3 The proposed storage of wind turbines on the 2 new areas in question is not considered to be in accordance with the requirements and expectations of Policy Strategic Site 4. Indeed, the permanent siting of wind turbines on this site would be clearly contrary to policy and would not be a proposal that could be supported.
- 10.4 The key consideration is whether in the light of policy and other considerations, a short term temporary permission (less than 3 years) would be justified.

### Site History

- 10.5 In considering the justification for this application, it is first necessary to have an understanding of the recent planning history of the Fawley Power Station site.
- 10.6 As noted above, a temporary planning permission (Ref: 17/10805) was granted in September 2017 for the storage of wind turbines on 3 distinct areas of the former power station site for a period of 10 years, expiring on 31st December 2027. Under this temporary planning permission, approval was also given for a couple of temporary buildings, including one where the turbines are painted. These buildings and some associated portable cabins were subsequently the subject of separate temporary planning permissions in 2018, again expiring on 31st December 2027.
- 10.7 The reason for only giving 10 year temporary permissions previously was because:

*"This is the basis on which planning permission has been applied for, and the Local Planning Authority would wish to review the impact of a longer term use / development in the light of the site's sensitive location adjacent to the New Forest National Park, and to ensure compliance with policies CS2 and CS3 of the Core Strategy for New Forest District outside of the National Park."*

It is important to note that at the time the 2017 and 2018 temporary planning permissions were granted, there was no site specific planning policy affecting the former power station site. The permissions predated the New Forest District Local Plan Part (2016-2036) Part One: Planning Strategy that was adopted in July 2020, and consequently, the requirements of Policy Strategic Site 4 did not apply. The previous 10 year temporary planning permissions

were all considered to be in accordance with the policies that did apply at the time the permissions were granted.

- 10.8 The 2017/2018 temporary planning permissions have been implemented, and the approved wind turbine storage use that commenced in 2018 continues to take place on 12.78 hectares of open land to the north and east side of the now largely demolished power station buildings.
- 10.9 In May 2019, an outline planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the power station site with 1380 dwellings and significant new areas of employment / commercial floorspace. A related outline planning application for 120 dwellings and infrastructure was submitted to the New Forest National Park Authority. The applications (collectively relating to a development known as Fawley Waterside) were considered by the respective planning committees in July 2020, and there is a resolution to approve both applications subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 legal agreement. At the time of writing, this legal agreement has not yet been completed, although it is anticipated that completion will take place very soon, at which point the outline planning permissions can be granted.
- 10.10 The outline planning applications to redevelop the power station site are accompanied by an illustrative phasing plan that proposes 8 main phases of development. The first phase would be various civil engineering and infrastructure works, including the provision of a new canal and an extended dock. The second phase of development (and the first with buildings on it) is proposed to take place to the south side of the extended dock and would provide roughly 220 dwellings and 12,420 square metres of non-residential floorspace. Other phases would follow. Precise timelines for delivering the redevelopment proposals are not currently clear. What is clear, however, is that the initial projected timescales for implementing the early phases of development have slipped, and it will be some time yet before development pursuant to the outline planning applications could be lawfully commenced.

#### The need for the proposed development

- 10.11 Vestas Wind Systems A/S (Vestas) manufacture wind turbine blades on the Isle of Wight and since 2018 have transported blades to the power station site by barge for painting and storage. The blades are then shipped out for eventual erection at offshore wind farms around the UK coast.
- 10.12 Blades are currently being manufactured for use at the Seagreen wind farm in the North Sea. An additional storage area is needed for these blades. Vestas has a strong demand for its wind turbines for the period from Q2 2023 through to the end of 2024.
- 10.13 Until the end of December 2022, an area of land was being used within the adjacent Fawley Quarry (within the New Forest National Park) for the storage of blades. However, a temporary planning permission granted by the New Forest National Park Authority for this storage use has now expired, meaning the storage use within the quarry land has now ceased, with a consequent recent reduction in storage capacity. Previously, additional land within the power station site was not available, which is why a temporary planning permission had been sought from the National Park Authority to store blades within Fawley Quarry. Now, however, with the demolition of the main power station structures, there is available land within the power station site where the 'lost' storage area could be provided, at least in the short term. The proposed new storage areas would thus ensure that there continues to be

adequate space for blade storage following the vacation of the storage facility in Fawley Quarry.

- 10.14 The agent for this application also advises that Fawley Waterside Ltd (the applicant) is seeking to bring forward other development on land within the power station, known as the Northern Quarter, where Vestas currently store wind turbines. There may therefore be a need at some point (possibly in 2024) to shift Vestas from parts of the 'Northern Quarter' to make that land available for other employment uses. The additional storage capacity is also seen as providing some flexibility for 'Lift and Shift' of the blades to enable site preparation and delivery of the Fawley Waterside proposals in the period to December 2025.
- 10.15 It is considered that the applicant/agent has clearly explained why additional land for wind turbine storage is needed at this time. The provision of additional wind turbine storage areas would clearly deliver economic benefits by providing additional capacity and flexibility for Vestas in the short term. The proposal would also have environmental benefits insofar as the provision of an area to store wind turbines before they are installed can be said to support objectives for reducing climate change impacts. These points are considered to weigh materially in favour of the proposed development.

#### Impact on the delivery of Policy Strategic Site 4

- 10.16 Clearly, if a temporary planning permission were to be granted for this proposal, it would mean that development pursuant to the outline planning applications could not necessarily commence on the areas subject to this application until 1st January 2026. So, this proposal, if granted, does have the potential to delay the delivery of a development that meets the objectives of Policy Strategic Site 4.
- 10.17 Looking more closely at the areas where wind turbine storage is now proposed, the smaller area on the eastern side of the former power station buildings is an area that immediately abuts one of the main existing wind turbine storage areas. It is an area that forms part of Phase 5 of the Fawley Waterside development and is not an area that is programmed for early development. Indeed, it is not an area expected to come forward for development before the end of December 2025. As such, permitting wind turbine storage on this area until the end of December 2025 is not considered to prejudice the delivery of the Fawley Waterside development and/or a development that meets the objectives of Policy Strategic Site 4.
- 10.18 The larger area where wind turbine storage is now proposed extends over areas that form part of Phases 2, 3 and 4 of the Fawley Waterside development. Whilst these are earlier phases, it is likely to be some time yet (as alluded to above) before these phases of development are ready to be commenced. 3 indicative early phasing plans have been submitted with this application, which suggest that the initial development focus will be to provide the new southern access road serving the Fawley Waterside development, as well as elements of green infrastructure. Works on the new canal and extended dock and other key infrastructure (such as flood defences) would follow, and Phase 2 would follow on from this. In the light of this projected phasing and given the need for various reserved matters applications as well as various applications to discharge planning conditions, it is considered that Phases 3 and 4 of the Fawley Waterside development are not now likely to come forward until after 2025. In these circumstances, provision of wind turbine storage on these Phase 3 and 4 areas until the end of 2025 is not

considered prejudicial to the delivery of the Fawley Waterside development and/or a development that meets the objectives of Policy Strategic Site 4.

10.19 For the relatively small area of proposed wind turbine storage on Phase 2 of the proposed Fawley Waterside development, it is considered that a slightly more cautionary approach is justified. This area could potentially be ready for development at some point in 2025, and it is important that the delivery of such development is not unduly delayed because of a temporary use. Therefore, for the areas of proposed wind turbine storage use within Phase 2 of the Fawley Waterside development, it is considered that only a shorter term temporary use ending in 2024 would ensure that the delivery of the Fawley Waterside development is not unduly prejudiced.

10.20 Overall, therefore, it is considered that the objectives of Policy Strategic Site 4 would not be unacceptably compromised by permitting an economically and environmentally beneficial temporary wind turbine storage use on the additional areas proposed, providing the use is only permitted until the end of 2025 and in the case of the Fawley Waterside Phase 2 area until the end of 2024.

#### Design, visual and landscape impact

10.21 In terms of its visual impact, the proposed wind turbine storage areas would be seen as a simple extension of the existing wind turbine storage areas on land that was until recently covered by the significant power station structures. Given this context, the landscape impact of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable, particularly given the temporary nature of the proposal.

10.22 The proposed wind turbine storage areas could be seen from adjacent areas within the New Forest National Park, perhaps most notably from the public footpath that runs close to the southern boundary of the former power station. However, laid horizontally the ground, the wind turbines would not be visually dominant and would assimilate into the existing industrialised landscape of the former power station site without adversely affecting the special qualities of the New Forest National Park. The impact would, of course, only be temporary.

10.23 The proposed wind turbine storage areas would also be visible from the Grade II Listed Building at Ower Farm (within the National Park). The impact on the setting of this building is briefly assessed in the details supporting the application. The wind turbine storage use would be a reasonably generous distance away from Ower Farm (about 250 metres away), and given the existing industrial context and the limited height of the stored wind turbines, the proposal is not considered to adversely affect the setting of Ower Farm or indeed any other heritage asset.

#### Highway safety, access and parking

10.24 As the wind turbines would be transported to the site by barge, the proposal would have no material implications for highway safety.

#### Residential amenity

10.25 The nearest residential properties to the proposed wind turbine storage area are in Ower Lane. The nearest property is approximately 100 metres away from the area where wind turbines would be stored. Whilst stored, the wind

turbines would have no material impact upon residential amenities. However, the movement of the wind turbines to and from their stored position would generate some noise. Such noise needs to be viewed in the context of the existing noise environment and recent and ongoing demolition works.

- 10.26 The application is accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment - the same assessment that accompanied the 2017 planning application. The Council's environmental health officer is satisfied that any noise impact on nearby residential properties could be satisfactorily dealt with by reimposing one of the conditions of the 2017 planning permission that restricts noise levels. As such, provided this condition is imposed, it is not considered the proposed use would cause harm to residential amenities. It is of note that the area is one which has been subject to significant demolition activity over the past few years, and is expected to be subject to significant construction activity in the years to come, so against this context, the noise associated with the proposed temporary use would not be materially harmful.

### Flood Risk

- 10.27 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment that confirms that the eastern part of the application site is within an area at risk of tidal flooding (flood zones 2 and 3). The Flood Risk Assessment includes a consideration of the Sequential and Exception tests as well as a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan.
- 10.28 The Environment Agency have confirmed that they have no objection to the proposal. The development would be classified as 'less vulnerable', and so the flood risk associated with the development is considered to be acceptable. It is considered that because the proposal relates to the use of land rather than operational development, that the Sequential Test does not need to be applied. The Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan is considered appropriate.

### Ecology

- 10.29 The areas where wind turbine storage is proposed are areas of hardstanding and areas where buildings formerly stood. They have little in the way of ecological value. Wind turbine storage on these areas would not have any direct impact on ecological interests.
- 10.30 The wind turbines that would be stored would be transported to and from the site across and adjacent to sensitive coastal habitats that are designated for their ecological interest. However, it is to be noted that the proposal is not expected to result in a material increase in barge movements to and from the site.
- 10.31 Natural England have highlighted the site's proximity to the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramar Site, and the Solent Maritime Special Area for Conservation, as well as the Hythe to Calshot Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, due to the lack of construction works and the fact that the proposed wind turbine storage areas are set a little distance away from the designated sites (materially further away than one of the main existing storage areas) they are satisfied that conditions imposed on the previous temporary planning permissions do not need to be reapplied. Overall, in view of the approved uses that currently take place on the power station site and the specific locations where wind turbine storage use is now proposed, it is not considered the proposal would have a



discernible additional impact or a significant effect on designated sites.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

10.32 The application proposal is considered to be Schedule 2 development under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. An EIA Screening Opinion has been undertaken which concludes that the proposal is not EIA development.

## **11 CONCLUSION**

The proposed temporary storage of wind turbines would be contrary to policy because the proposed use does not accord with the strategic site allocation for the former Fawley Power Station site (Policy Strategic Site 4).

However, adjacent areas of the former power station site are already used for the temporary storage and painting of wind turbines, a use that has been in existence since 2018 and which has permission to continue until the end of 2027.

The delivery of a policy compliant development on the former power station site - one that accords with Policy Strategic Site 4 - is still some way off being something that can be commenced, noting that the outline planning application for redevelopment has yet to be issued, and noting as well that there will be other approvals needed before development can be commenced, all of which will take time.

In the interim, it is felt that an economically and environmentally beneficial temporary use, supporting an existing site user, could take place without adversely prejudicing the delivery of a policy compliant scheme in the longer term. A small part of the application site where a policy compliant development may be in a position to come forward during 2025 is considered only appropriate for a temporary use expiring at the end of 2024. However, for the majority of the site, it is considered a temporary planning permission could reasonably be given for the proposed use until the end of the requested period - i.e. 31st December 2025.

The proposed use could take place without adversely affecting the landscape character of the wider area, including the special qualities of the New Forest National Park. The proposal would also have an acceptable impact on residential amenities and ecological and heritage interests.

As such, the application is recommended for a temporary permission, reflecting the conditions below.

## **12 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

In coming to this recommendation, consideration has been given to the rights set out in Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Whilst it is recognised that there may be an interference with these rights and the rights of other third parties, such interference has to be balanced with the like rights of the applicant to develop the land in the way proposed. In this case it is considered that the protection of the rights and freedoms of the applicant outweigh any possible interference that may result to any third party.

## **13 RECOMMENDATION**

### **Grant Temporary Permission**

### **Proposed Conditions:**

1. The use hereby approved shall cease on that part of the application site outlined in yellow on illustrative drawings L-603 and L-604 on or before 31st December 2024.

Reason: The application site forms part of a Strategic Site allocation that is expected to be developed in accordance with Policy Strategic Site 4 of the New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1. The proposed development would not be in accordance with this policy. However, specifically for those parts of the site outlined in yellow on illustrative drawings L-603 and L-604, it is considered that a temporary permission until the end of 2024, but not beyond, would deliver justified economic and environmental benefits in the short-term without prejudicing the delivery of a policy compliant scheme in the medium to long term.

2. The use hereby approved shall cease on all of those parts of the application site that are not outlined in yellow on illustrative drawings L-603 and L-604 on or before 31st December 2025.

Reason: The application site forms part of a Strategic Site allocation that is expected to be developed in accordance with Policy Strategic Site 4 of the New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1. The proposed development would not be in accordance with this policy. However, for the majority of the application site, excepting those parts of the site outlined in yellow on illustrative drawings L-603 and L-604, it is considered that a temporary permission until the end of 2025 would deliver justified economic and environmental benefits in the short-term without prejudicing the delivery of a policy compliant scheme in the medium to long term.

3. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1:5000 Location Plan, 1:5000 Block Plan

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

4. The combined noise rating level of noise from the development hereby permitted shall not exceed +0dB above the background level (LA90) at 3.5m from the facade of any noise sensitive premises in accordance with BS4142:2014.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal does not result in levels of noise disturbance that would be detrimental to residential amenities and to comply with Policy CS2 of the Core Strategy for New Forest District outside of the National Park.

5. No external lighting shall be installed in connection with the development hereby approved unless details of that lighting have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the area including the adjacent New Forest National Park in accordance with Policies CS2 and CS3 of the Core Strategy for New Forest District outside of the National Park.

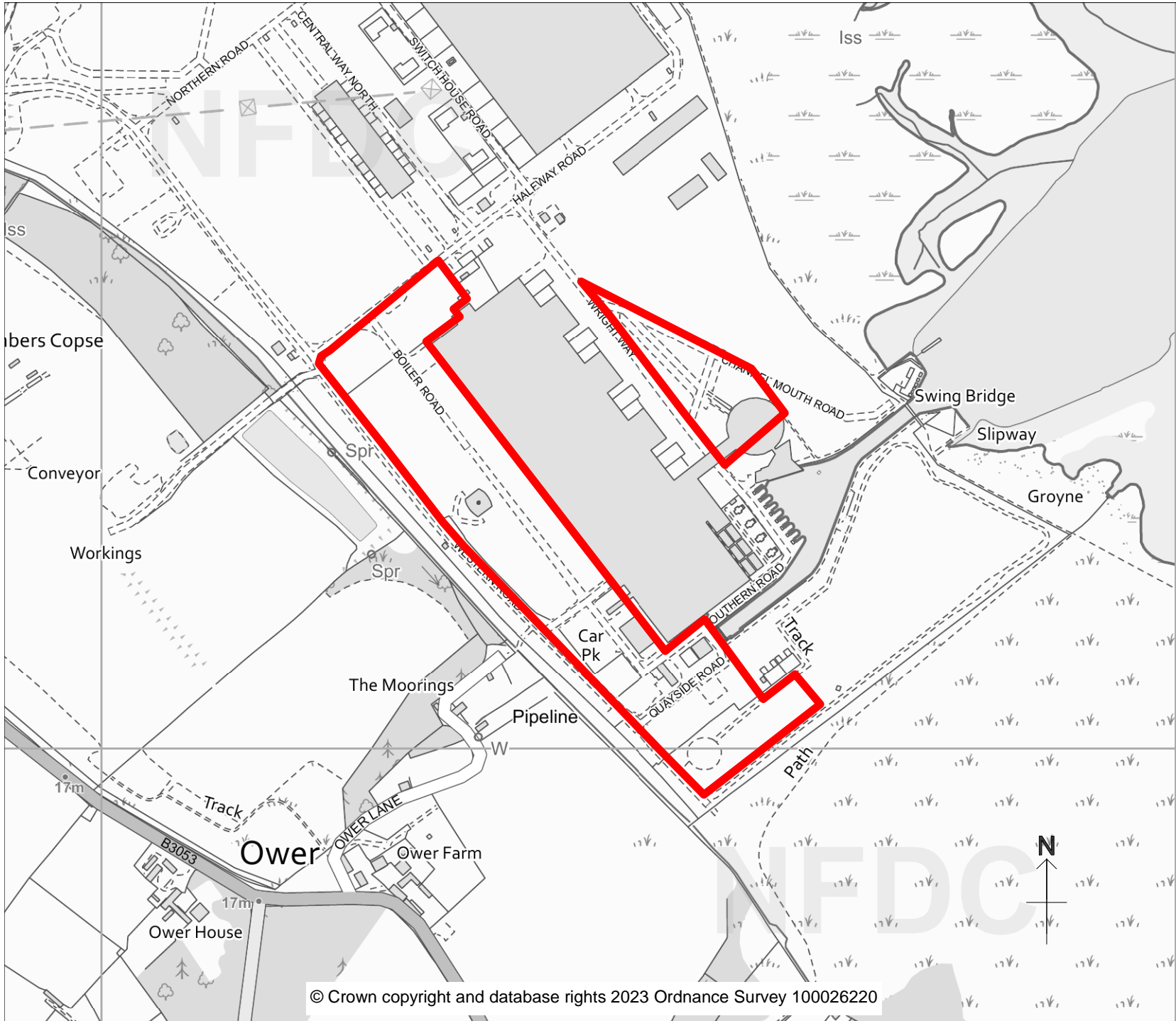
6. The application site shall only be occupied for the use hereby approved if the measures within the Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan (Appendix 3 of the Adams Infrastructure Flood Risk Assessment) are adhered to at all times.

Reason: To ensure that the flood risk associated with the development is acceptably minimised in accordance with Policy CCC1 of the New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1.

**Further Information:**

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# New Forest

DISTRICT COUNCIL

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## PLANNING COMMITTEE

May 2023

Land of Former Fawley Power Station  
 Fawley Road  
 Fawley  
 23/10050

Scale 1:5000

N.B. If printing this plan from the internet, it will not be to scale.