

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GLAMPING  
POD SITE ON STOUSLIE FARM, NEAR HAWICK.

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## Executive Summary

Proposed are a total of three handmade timber glamping pods with individual eco-friendly wood fired hot tubs, decking, gravel, outdoor seating and firepit/barbecues areas. The proposed site will be named "Stouslie Snugs Luxury Glamping Pods" and will function in ecological & logistical harmony with both the environment and current farm activities.

One of the three pods will be angled to the west more than the others to benefit from excellent views of the rolling landscape down Teviotdale valley. All pods are to be manufactured and supplied by Lune Valley Pods.

The proposed glamping site is close to the town of Hawick and will provide subtle, discreet and luxurious rural accommodation for tourists visiting this area's many attractions or for Border's residents to enjoy short breaks. The site location is near to the A7 road and is a 1.5hr drive from Edinburgh & Newcastle and a 2-hour drive from Glasgow. It will therefore be suited to short & weekend breaks for residents of these cities. This of course brings visitors benefits to the area, such as more money being spent in restaurants, shops and attractions in and around Hawick.

## Reason for diversification

The Anderson family has been farming for many generations in the Hawick area by renting from the Buccleuch Estate. 'J & S Anderson' as the business is known, previously rented two small farms 2 miles north of Hawick, which were run together to make a viable farming unit. Stouslie farm was held on a secure tenancy whilst the other farm, West Boonraw, was held on a limited partnership.

In May 2017, the Buccleuch Estate terminated the limited partnership leaving us to either buy the farm or get out. So, we spent a year negotiating a new deal: the purchase of Stouslie Farm along with a 12-and-a-half-year Modern Limited Duration Tenancy on West Boonraw farm.

When the tenancy agreement ends the business will be in a position to clear most of the mortgage however Stouslie Farm on its own is not big enough to provide a sufficient income. As a result, we are looking at ways to diversify our farm in order to secure the sustainability of the business and provide an opportunity for the younger generation (our son) to continue working one of the UK's most important industries. As a family, we want to continue to be able to manage the rural environment and wildlife, play our role in providing food for the nation but now also have the opportunity to share this with visitors in our luxury accommodation.

## Site and Surrounding Area

### Location

The proposed site is located approx. 2km north of Hawick. From Hawick, Stouslie farm is reached by turning left off the A7 onto an unnamed road or by taking the Stritches Road, which also connects to the unnamed road just mentioned. The farm is approx. 2.5km along the unnamed road from the A7 turnoff.

### Proposed Site Information

The plot for the proposed glamping site will occupy approx. 1862m<sup>2</sup> of one of Stouslie Farm's field. The field is currently a large open & grassy space, bordered by roads to the north and west and more grassy fields to the south & east, where fencing and hedgerows demarcate the boundaries.

To the western boundary is a neighbouring building, which we understand is used for holiday lets. The building is 160m away from the glamping site and naturally shielded from it by trees and the gradients of the land. It should therefore not be affected by noise from the glamping site, which we would not expect to an issue in any case.

### Site Selection

Please see the site selection report for a full analysis of why this particular site has been chosen on the farm to diversify into holiday accommodation. Extract of the summary of the report can be found below:

*"In conclusion, it is clear to see why site 2 is the preferred location for diversification as it meets all but one of the site selection criteria. This particular requirement is consistent across all four sites where some land development will need to take place.*

*The topography of this particular field is a little unusual in that a strip of approx. 20m from the road has a higher elevation than the rest of the field. This creates a natural plateau which results in a reduced need for groundwork construction, gravity drainage from the pods to the private drainage system and provides a beautiful view of rolling hills down Teviotdale valley which are both extremely appealing to guests staying at the pods and the owners from a marketing viewpoint.*

*The existing trees, hedges and dyke stone wall will both shelter and help blend the pods into the context of the landscape. We will also plant hedge around the decking area to provide a natural privacy wall for each pod and plant wild flowers on the banking in front of the pods to encourage and create a new habitat for insects and wildlife as well as enhancing the natural beauty of the environment with rich colours.*

*The proposed site is also a generous distance from the nearest neighbouring property. As glamping customers tend to be more focused on relaxation than rowdiness, this location is very unlikely to have any negative impact to neighbours.*

*Glamping accommodation is an on trend, different and quirky type of accommodation which the Scottish Borders is lacking. Coupled with added luxuries like a hot tub it can act as an attraction to the area in itself."*

## Access

The field is currently accessed from a farm track leading from Stouslie Farm. This would be suitable access for plant equipment in order to prepare the site for installation of glamping pods. It would not however be suited to customer use, due to it being unsurfaced, quite steep and because it joins the public road at an oblique angle.

Access to the glamping site for guests is intended to be from the unnamed road to the north of the site. This will entail removing approximately 6m of boundary wall, to allow cars to safely turn in/out of the site. Any dyke stones that are removed, will be re used elsewhere on the farm for repairs to other boundary walls.

A permeable road surface will be used for the very small section from the road to the parking area. The new access point identified is just left of the top of a crest on the road. Positioning the access at this point will prevent and run-off water entering the site from the road. The natural gradient of the field (downward from the road level) will also prevent and run-off water entering the road from the site. Car parking for guests will be provided within the site boundary by the site entrance from the road, for customer use. A total of 4 parking bays will be constructed, one for each pod plus one additional space for staff/service use. The parking surface will be permeable to prevent surface water build up or run off.

## Justification for Proposed Use

Being located so close to Hawick in the Scottish Borders. The pods will offer high quality, luxurious and contemporary accommodation in a rural setting for tourists visiting the area and nearby borders attractions. The intention is for the site to provide an idyllic, relaxing retreat with stunning views out over the rolling borders landscape looking down Teviotdale valley. Our hope is that guests will stay for several days at a time (short stays) as opposed to more common day-trip visits. This will allow more time to explore attractions such as castles & country houses, farmers markets, museums, other historic border towns etc and for events such as the Reivers festival, Common ridings and the Border Union Show. This in turn brings more money to the local economy.

We anticipate a large portion of guests will be residents of Edinburgh, Newcastle, Glasgow, Carlisle and even Manchester as they are all relatively close by car. That said, borders residents & tourists on larger tours of Scotland will also be attracted to the site due to glamping's popularity and the previously mentioned proximity to fantastic attractions.

Existing accommodation offering short term stays tend to be limited to either bed & breakfast & guest houses. In fact, there only appears to be two hotels in Hawick (Balcary & Mansfield House Hotels). By offering 'on-trend' high-end Glamping accommodation, the pods will attract new visitors, be profitable and bring new custom to the local economy.

The proposed site will be on a tranquil green area. Glamping installations require minimal ground works or harmful construction practices. A small amount of concrete will be required to provide a level 4" thick pad for the pods to sit on, but again this is much less than required for a typical building foundation. It is important to note that Glamping pods are temporary structures similar to a static caravan, so can be removed more easily and cleanly than a traditional building can. We therefore believe the pods provide an ecologically viable accommodation solution, suited to the area.

## Intended Use

### Accommodation Pods

The pods would be rented out on a per-nightly basis. Patrons would likely be couples, friends or families using 1 pod, or groups split into multiple pods. For this reason, the pods have been sized to accommodate a family of two adults and two children.

The site would be operated as a typical (year-round) holiday let, much like a caravan site, but with much fewer guests meaning less noise and disruption to neighbouring properties and road users etc. The site will also be marketed as a peaceful and relaxing retreat, which again should mean noise from guests is not a consideration. There is absolutely no intention to use the pods for long term lease / permanent residences. Such a small-scale development and the compact footprint of the pods would not be suited to this in any case.

Please see the accompanying business plan for full details on the vision for this business.

## Amount

The table below shows the breakdown of used area and remaining green space.

Note: - Stouslie farm is so large (approx. 1.4M m<sup>2</sup>) that any analysis on change of area from the proposed glamping site becomes insignificant. For this reason, we have considered the change of area of the field in which the proposed site is to be located.

Land Usage Item	Area Used	% of Overall Boundary
Overall Farm Site	1.4 million m <sup>2</sup>	-
Area of Field	48,000 m <sup>2</sup>	100%
Proposed Site Area	1862 m <sup>2</sup>	3.88 %
Green Space – Current	48,000 m <sup>2</sup>	100 %
Green Space – After Site Build	47,364 m <sup>2</sup>	98.67 %
Glamping Pods	65.1 m <sup>2</sup> (21.7 m <sup>2</sup> per pod)	0.14 %
Hot Tubs	6 m <sup>2</sup> (2m <sup>2</sup> per pod)	0.01 %
Parking	304 m <sup>2</sup>	0.63 %
Footpaths	96 m <sup>2</sup>	0.2 %
Decking Area	77.8 m <sup>2</sup> (25.9m <sup>2</sup> per pod)	0.16 %
Gravel Picnic Area	87.5 m <sup>2</sup> (29.1m <sup>2</sup> per pod)	0.18 %

## Layout

### Parking & Site Entrance

Guests will arrive at the parking area for the new glamping site. From the parking area, guests will access the site using footpaths to be constructed throughout the site.

Recycling & waste bins will be sited in the car park to allow council collections.

Signage for the glamping business will be erected by the entrance.

## Reception

The intention is to have an automated entry system (using key safes) with instructions for guests included within their confirmation email. This removes the need for a dedicated reception/storage building on site.

## Glamping Pods

The glamping pods are manufactured by Lune Valley Pods and measure 6.7m by 3.2m (please see drawing for full elevation, layout and photographs). Each pod is handmade from timber using 5th Redwood for the interior and Siberian larch for the exterior which requires no maintenance as it will 'silver' over time. They are built onto a steel galvanised base with lifting points to allow the pods to be lifted safely into position onto the concrete pad with no danger to the structure. Another benefit of using temporary accommodation (glamping pods) for this development, is that should the pods need to be removed at a later date, utility supplies are disconnected and the pods are lifted off-site, with minimal disruption/environmental impact.

The pods are fitted with brown Britmet which is a lightweight roofing tile that comes with a 40-year guarantee. The colour and shape of this pod will help it blend into the natural context of the landscape with the trees and hedge backing the site.

The pods come fully insulated in the floor and roof and are fitted with double glazing throughout. These particular pods have a full glass front in order for guests to enjoy the spectacular views from the comfort of the corner sofa in the living area.

Also included as standard within each pod are full electrics i.e. led lights, sockets, underfloor heating. A kitchenette, toilet and shower, double bed, corner sofa and dining area is also on offer. Please see the business plan for full details.

The main path from the parking area will run westward along the back of the pods, in line with the northern boundary. An individual access path will lead from the main path to each pod.

All pods will have a decking area surrounding a eco-friendly wood fired hot tub. These hot tubs use no chemicals and require no electrical supplies. They do not feature water pumps, instead relying on natural convection to move water around the hot tub. An appropriately sized & located flu will control smoke discharge.

An outdoor seating area including a firepit/barbecue will be adjacent to the hot tub decking. This will be finished with gravel/stone chippings. The pods will be oriented to allow views from the pod entrances out to the landscape (approx. 15° clockwise from due south). The most westerly pod will be rotated further (approx. 35° clockwise from due south) to encompass more of the landscape.

## Drainage

South of the pod sites, the gradient of the land becomes noticeable steeper, before evening out again. Drainage pipework will be installed below the ground so that discharge from the pods will gravity flow down to the lower flat level, to an appropriately sized treatment tank and soak away in compliance with SEPA guidelines.

Water to be drained from the hot tubs, will be allowed to cool to ambient temperature before discharging to a standalone (appropriately sized) soakaway. This arrangement has been discussed with SEPA and provided that no chemicals are discharged to the soakaway / local environment, no approval is required.

## Waste & Recycling

Suitably sized bins shall be provided next to the car parking area, to allow disposal & recycling of waste.

## Scale

All proposed structures are small single storey cabins (approx. 3m tall), so no restriction of neighbouring views is anticipated. The site boundaries will be finished with fencing where required and will use existing trees & hedgerows for privacy and to minimise the appearance of the pods further. As previously noted, since the pods are of timber construction with brown roofs, they tend to blend into the landscape in any case.

The A7 & unnamed road (to Stouslie farm) are well maintained and are in good condition. They are both sufficiently sized so that any increase in traffic from guests of the site will have little to no impact above current rates. We anticipate any changes to be minor due to the relatively low occupancy of the pods (3 cars at any one time), coupled to the fact that road currently has few users. The unnamed road is narrow, so the entrance to the site shall be appropriately sized (6m in width) and will be profiled allow consistent gradient between the unnamed road and parking area.

## Landscaping

Minor levelling will be required to create suitable footings for the pods and other structures. The intention is to maintain the overall gentle gradient of the site, thus preventing the need for any retaining walls and to aid drainage.

Structures on the finished site may therefore be at slightly different elevations relative to each other. Broken ground will be re-instated & wooden fencing will be erected to demarcate the site boundary. A hedge will be planted round the decking area of each pod to provide a natural privacy wall for guests and additional shelter from the wind. Wooden fencing will be used in the interim until the hedge grows to its full height. All footpaths will consist of stone chips (slate for example).

The banking at the foot of the pods will be planted with wild flowers pods to encourage and create a new habitat for insects and wildlife as well as enhancing the natural beauty of the environment with rich colours.

## Build Phases

### Stage 1 - Access

The existing farm access road (and roads mentioned previously) will provide suitable access to plant. Guests will eventually access via a new entrance from the road on the northern boundary. If it is deemed that this access point is preferred for plant equipment access also, removing the section of wall to provide the new access will be the first task of the build.

### Stage 2 - Groundwork

Very little ground levelling will be required on site, due to the naturally flat plateau selected for the pods. The main groundwork task will be installing the drainage system. This will entail some digging/trenching to lay suitable pipework and to manage the gradient changes between the level of the pods and the lower level of the treatment tank & soakaway. Groundworks will then focus on preparing the concrete pads for the pod sites and gas cylinder housing area.

Following this, services ducting will be laid for power and water as required from the existing farm connections. Pipework will be run for water & cables for electricity will be pulled to site. A private water supply will be used for the Glamping site. At present this supplies Stouslie farm, Priestrig croft and Fiddlehill holiday let. In line with advice previously provided by the planning department to Fiddlehill holiday let, a UV filter will be installed on the site water connection, to ensure the water quality meets the recommended standard for public use. Please advise if this does not meet required standard.

Trenching will also be completed to lay the pipework for the gas connections into each pod from the main gas housing area following Calor gas regulations.

Internet will be provided by satellite through Borderlink. Neighbours in this area are currently in talks with Borderlink to construct a new satellite station for this rural neighbourhood to enjoy faster and reliable broadband.

### Stage 3 – Pod Install

Pods are delivered to the site and installed (after being fabricated off-site). Positioning of the pods will either be via the Hiab transporter delivering the pods or using tractor/plant equipment. Once the pods are in place electricity, gas and water will be connected to each pod. Then work will begin building the surrounding decking and installation of the hot tub.

Following this, footpaths throughout the site will be laid consisting of type 1 stone chips and landscaping will then commence. This will include the reinstatement of broken ground, planting hedge, construction of fencing and planting wild flowers as previously mentioned.

### Stage 4 – Roads, Parking & Clean

No more plant/transport access is required other than to build the parking spaces. These shall consist of permeable surface to allow surface water to drain naturally.

Work on the dyke stone wall will also commence. The newly opened end sections of dyke will be contoured to the ground to provide the required stability, as well as safe access and road visibility.

Finally, a total clear-out of the site will be done to ensure no leftover waste from the build stage is left. All cleaning waste will be recycled where possible and safely disposed of otherwise.

## Summary

Glamping pod sites proposed in this location will provide a new and exciting accommodation option, to supplement the nearby alternatives in Hawick. This will increase footfall for local businesses and through correct marketing, should increase the length of time that visitors stay in the local area. This should be beneficial to local retailers, tourist attractions and events.

The construction of a glamping site in this location can be achieved in less time, with less intrusive construction methods and less environmental impact, than traditional luxury accommodation builds require. This is clearly favourable in an area of countryside rich in natural & beauty and ties in with the land owner's ecologically responsible ethos, while also aligning with the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy 2013-2020 targets by:

- Increasing volume of overnight visitors.
- Increasing overnight visitor spend.
- Ensure the Region's accommodation offerings meet consumer demands and where opportunities are available can act as an attractor of demand in themselves.
- Ensure a relevant range of types of accommodation is available across the Region to meet evolving market demand and expectations. Identify opportunities where better quality and new products can 'lead' and generate new demand and will continue to raise average quality quotient across all forms of accommodation