

SITE SELECTION REPORT
STOUSLIE SNUGS

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to analyse the potential sites across Stouslie farm that could be used in the farm diversification project for short term holiday accommodation.

Stouslie Farm

Stouslie is a small upland livestock farm of 155 acres including grassland, woodland areas and a pond.

The farm house is located within the farm yard where there are several purpose-built livestock sheds used to house the cattle and sheep during the winter months. These are vital for the operation of the farm and are not suitable for any type of conversion.

Site selection requirements

In order to establish the best location on the farm for diversification the site must ensure that it meets the following criteria:

- Can the site provide an appropriate level of **guest safety**?
- Can the site ensure there is **no disruption to farm operations**?
- Will the site provide a reduced need for major **construction work**?
- Does the site **reduce the need for land development**?
- Does the site have a **minimal impact to the environment and landscape context**?
- Can the site cater for the **installation of utilities**?
- Can the site provide **safe and fit for purpose road access**?
- Does the site provide **an adequate drainage system** in accordance with SEPA guidance?
- Will the site **appeal to customers** and increase **marketability**?

Site Analysis

Within this section of the report we will analyse 4 different sites across Stouslie farm against the site selection criteria. These sites have been chosen as they are all within close proximity to the farmhouse.

To assist with the analysis all 4 sites have been marked up on the farm map included in Appendix A. Please note this map is not to scale and is intended to provide a guide to site location only.

Site 1 : Stone Building located within the farm yard

Contained within the farm yard there is a dyke stone building that measures approximately 21m by 6m. This building could be restored into a barn conversion which would provide relative ease for the installation of utilities. Please see Appendix A - marked orange on the map.

That being said, it would not be our chosen location to diversify into holiday accommodation firstly because it is a functional building used on the farm to securely store fuel, animal feed, farm machinery (i.e. atv bike) and livestock during lambing time. If this building were to be converted into a holiday let an additional shed space would need to be constructed to carry out these farm functions leaving any gains to be had in a reduced need for land development negligible. A new shed space would also have an impact on the environment and would not blend into the landscape.

The building itself is located in heart of the busy farm yard where it would present significant difficulties to ensure guest safety. Large machinery including tractors and a telehandler are in use on a daily basis to feed and bed the surrounding sheds. Equally livestock present their own dangers to the general public. A holiday let in this location would cause significant disruption to operation of the farm.

Construction would also present many difficulties including changes to the road access, disruption to farm operations and installation of a drainage system.

The ability to provide a peaceful and relaxing getaway would be close to impossible as the noise, smell and muck and from the farm combined with the inability to provide a green space i.e. a garden, views across the countryside or parking would be unappealing to almost all customers.

We also believe there isn't the same market for a barn conversion as self-catering holiday cottages where guests tend to stay on a weekly basis are in abundance across the Scottish borders.

Site 2 : Plot West of Stouslie farm (Proposed and preferred site)

West of Stouslie farm there is a plot of land that could potentially be used for the development of the proposed Glamping site. It is approximately 175m from the farm house. Please see Appendix A - marked in red. It should be noted that this is the preferred location for development.

The only drawback to this site is the same issue that is common across all 4 sites whereby some land development will be required.

The location of this site is far enough away from the farmyard and runs parallel with the main unnamed road that it will not cause any disruption to the farm operations nor will it present any guest safety issues. The road access will consist of the removal of a small section of dyke wall approximately 6m in total to provide a safe and fit for purpose access point into the site. Please see splay drawing and site plan.

Construction will also be far less onerous as the site lies on a natural level plateau approximately 20m wide from the road before the downhill gradient (banking) into the field. Therefore, groundwork will be focused primarily on the drainage system (soakaways) and trenching only. There is a farm track that runs east of the site that will be used as the main access point for diggers therefore preventing the need to remove a large section of dyke wall.

Installation of utilities would not present an issue as electricity will be run underground from the nearest fuse box in the farmyard through the field to the site and water will run naturally given the lie of the land without the need for a water pump. The percolation test provides evidence that this site will accommodate an adequate drainage system approved by SEPA.

From a customer appeal perspective, this site will provide a peaceful and relaxing stay without interruptions from daily farm operation. It will provide a green space and beautiful view down the Teviotdale valley to enjoy and connect with nature with enough room to add a hot tub to make their stay even more luxurious.

Glamping pods in general are designed to fit in with the countryside as they are handmade from wood and compact in size meaning there would be a reduced impact on the environment and landscape context. As this site is backed by trees, hedges and a dyke stone wall the glamping pods will easily blend into the landscape and be sheltered from adverse weather.

Site 3 : Plot South of Stouslie farm

South of Stouslie farm there is another plot of land that could potentially be used for the development of the proposed Glamping site. It is approximately 75m from the farmyard. Please see Appendix A - marked yellow on the map.

This site is similar in some ways to our preferred site (2) as it can provide a green space and a beautiful view that would appeal to our customers. The installation of utilities would also be the same but with less distance to travel. As previously noted, Glamping pods in general are designed to fit in with the countryside as they are made from wood and compact in size meaning there would be a reduced impact on the environment and landscape context. However, as this location is in an open field there is little in the way of other vegetation or trees to either shelter or blend the pods into the context of the landscape.

This site comes with its own problems. Firstly, the site is very near to the main access point to all fields south of the farm causing issues in guest safety and disruption to the farm operations. Tractors pulling trailers and other heavy machinery use this access point on a daily basis. Livestock are also brought up through this area when they are moved to a different field. A Glamping site in this location would cause unnecessary disruption to the farm management and guests would not be able to enjoy a peaceful and relaxing environment.

The site itself would cause a series of construction issues as it lies on a downhill gradient and would therefore require significant groundwork to level and build up the site. Drainage would also be difficult to accommodate due to the lie of the land and lack of space to build appropriately sized soakaways where there is heavy farm traffic.

Most notably this site does not have any road access. The farm track in its current form (uneven dirt track) would not be suitable for use therefore the construction of a new road would be required. This would also impact upon road safety as the access point on the unnamed road that runs through Stouslie farm has a clear lack of visibility from the west.

As with all 4 sites land development will be required.

Site 4 : Plot East of Stouslie farm

East of Stouslie farm there is another plot of land that could potentially be used for the development of the proposed Glamping site. It is approximately 175m from the farmyard. Please see Appendix A - marked blue on the map.

Again, this site is similar in some ways to our preferred site (2) as the location of this site is far enough away from the farmyard and runs parallel with the main unnamed road that it will not cause any guest safety issues and only minimal disruption to the farm operations during construction.

The site itself sits on the brow of a hill unlike the preferred site (2) it does not have a naturally level plateau therefore significantly more groundwork will be required to level the site out. During construction, a larger section of the dyke wall will need to be removed in order for diggers to gain access as there is no farm track that can be utilised in this instance. This will potentially cause both farm disruption and delays for the public using the unnamed road. Ultimately the dyke stone wall would be rebuilt leaving a safe and fit for purpose access point of approximately 6m into the site.

The installation of utilities would also present numerous difficulties. As this site is at a high point on the farm, water will not run naturally and will require a pump. At the foot of the hill the land is very wet and boggy causing drainage issues as well as an added risk of pollution to the pond area from the soakaway which SEPA would most likely object to. Electricity would be similar to site (2) however cables will need to run underground through part of the farmyard from a different fuse box closer to the site. Again, this would cause disruption to farm operations during the construction.

As previously stated, Glamping pods in general are designed to fit in with the countryside as they are made from wood and compact in size meaning there would be a reduced impact on the environment and landscape context. However, this location is in an open stretch of land where there is no other vegetation or trees to either shelter or blend the pods into the context of the landscape. It is also very exposed to the weather in every direction and suffers badly from snow drifting which would be hazardous to guests.

This site offers a green space for customers to enjoy a peaceful stay with a view of the field, woodland area and pond in front. The width of the site from the road is less compared to the preferred site (2) due to the way the land lies. This means the pods would need to be sited closer to the road resulting in reduced privacy for guests.

As with all 4 sites land development will be required.

Summary

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.

Appendix 1 - Map

Please note this map is not to scale and is only to be used as a guide to each site location.



Key

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|--|---------------|--------|
| | Orange circle | Site 1 |
| | Red circle | Site 2 |
| | Yellow circle | Site 3 |
| | Blue circle | Site 4 |