

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**APPLICATION TO BE DETERMINED UNDER POWERS DELEGATED TO  
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**PART III REPORT (INCORPORATING REPORT OF HANDLING)**

**REF :** 20/00343/FUL

**APPLICANT :** Mrs Carly Anderson

**AGENT :** Glampitect

**DEVELOPMENT :** Siting of 3 No glamping pods and associated works

**LOCATION:** Land South West Of Stouslie Farmhouse  
Hawick  
Scottish Borders

**TYPE :** FUL Application

**REASON FOR DELAY:**

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**DRAWING NUMBERS:**

<b>Plan Ref</b>	<b>Plan Type</b>	<b>Plan Status</b>
200104-2-01	Location Plan	Refused
200104-1-01	Proposed Site Plan	Refused
200104-2-01	Proposed Site Plan	Refused
200104-3-01	Proposed Site Plan	Refused
200104-4-01	Proposed Site Plan	Refused
200104-9-01	Proposed Elevations	Refused
200104-11-01	Landscaping Plan	Refused

**NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS: 0**

**SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:**

Consultees;

Access Officer: No response at the time of writing.

Community Council: No response at the time of writing.

Economic Development: No objection. The development compliments with the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy 2013-2020 strategic target by:

- o Increasing volume of overnight visitors and visitor spend.
- o Ensure the Region's accommodation offerings meet consumer demands and where opportunities are available can act as an attractor of demand in themselves.
- o 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.
- o Consider the proposed cabins are accessible friendly.

Environmental health: No response at the time of writing.

Landscape Architect: No objection. The development of three pods in this rural location will have a modest level of visual intrusion, given the remote location and limit number of roads or locations where it will be visible from. While there is a hedge and roadside trees to the north forming a backdrop to the site, more robust planting proposals would assimilate the development into the wider landscape as well as providing some shelter and privacy at this elevated location. Recommend a condition to agree a suitable landscaping scheme and note that the entrance to the development should be low key.

Roads Planning: The principle of the development is supportable. Recommend that further information is required to determine if the increase in traffic using the minor road would cause any conflicts with traffic associated with adjoining agricultural land. A site visit would normally determine if there were sufficient informal passing opportunity along the road to mitigate traffic or if formal passing places would be required. Due to covid-19 restrictions it has not been possible to carry out a site visit to assess this. Additionally it may be worth liaising with Transport Scotland to confirm if they have any comment regarding the A7.

#### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICIES:**

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016

PMD1: Sustainability

PMD2: Quality Standards

EP3: Local Biodiversity

ED7: Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside

EP13: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity

IS7: Parking Provision and Standards

IS9: Waste Water Treatments Standards and Sustainable urban Drainage

Supplementary Guidance on;

Biodiversity

Placemaking and Design

Landscape and Development

Trees and Development

Waste Management

Privacy and overlooking

Other Considerations;

Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy (SBTS) 2013-2020

**Recommendation by** - Scott Shearer (Planning Officer) on 2nd July 2020

Site Description

The application site is located on the northern edge of a field next to a minor road on Stouslie Farm which is located approximately 1.45km to the North West of Hawick. A dry stone dyke separates the site from the road which is enclosed by mature planting on its opposite side. The site is located on a plateau which gently slopes away from the road before the field falls more drastically in a south to south westerly direction towards a small watercourse. Stouslie farm steading is located further along the minor road to the north east on the opposite side of a pocket of planting. A property known as Preistrig and its outbuilding are located adjacent to the watercourse.

Proposal

Consent is sought for change of use and erection of 3 glamping pods and associated works which include formation of an entrance, parking area and internal access. Each pod would be timber clad and include an attached deck with hot tub and gravel surfaced seating area.

## Site History

The site does not appear to have had any previous planning history associated and appears to have only been previously used for farming operations.

A preapp (ref; 20/00052/PREAPP) for this development was undertaken where concerns were raised about the visual impact of the chosen location.

## Policy Principle

The application site is located out with a settlement boundary within the countryside. Policy ED7 aims to allow appropriate employment generating development in the countryside whilst protecting the environment and ensuring such developments are appropriate for their location, including suitable tourism developments.

The proposed glamping development is to be used for tourism purposes and the proposals would represent a partial diversification of the existing farming enterprise which would continue to operate elsewhere on the applicants land. The application has been supported by a Business Plan which is required by Policy ED7 where new businesses are being created. The Business Plan has been updated through the application process and suggests that the development would be viable. The Councils Economic Development Officers are satisfied that the development would accord with the SBTS.

Glamping accommodation represents a form of tourism development which can be appropriate to a countryside location. Against the three qualifying criteria which are listed under Policy ED7 as potential rural diversification proposals, I am satisfied that the broad principles of this tourism development aligns with the requirements of item b). Thereafter the policy lists a range of detailed criteria for which are assessed in the following sections below.

## Landscape and Visual Impact

The site is not located within any designated landscape areas. LDP policy provision which are particularly relevant for the assessment of the landscape and visual impact of the proposed development are;

- o Criteria a) of the other considerations listed in ED7 which seeks to ensure that the development must respect the amenity and character of the surrounding area.
- o Criteria h) of Policy PMD2 seeks for development to be created with a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of their context.
- o Criteria k) of PMD2 seeks to ensure that the development is compatible with, and respect the character of the surrounding area.
- o Criteria m) of PMD2 seeks to ensure that appropriate boundary treatments are provided to help integrate the proposals into their surroundings.

This rural area has been identified as being attractive by the Councils Landscape Architect. The site does have a picturesque setting at towards the summit of rolling fields with views from the south contained by the mature planting on the opposite side of the road. The area has a remote quality and where previous development has taken place in this part of the countryside buildings appear discrete with screening afforded by mature planting or hidden by the rolling landform.

Evidence of the suitability of other sites on the landholding have been provided in the submission with the applicants discounting other options based on conflicts with the farming operations, lack of access and site topography. Against item c) of the other considerations of Policy ED7 I am satisfied that there are no existing building which could be converted to provide holiday accommodation at this stage and there appears are no suitable brownfield sites on the farm.

There may be limited visibility of the proposed development from the Southern Upland Way which runs from Hawick in a north east direction past Stouslie. There is however visibility of the development from the minor road which runs from Heip Hill towards Priestrig to the south west of the development. The development would not appear to be visible across all of this route, however where there is visibility you are seeing the proposals from a lower ground level. The property of Priestrig may be partly visible from some views however it is pretty well screened by landscaping and the property is located at a noticeably lower ground

level and also far enough away from the application site that the proposals and existing property will not appear to be well related to one another. There appears to be even less visual integration with the Stoullie Farm Steading to the north east. There is no existing landscaping at the site which the proposals can attempt to tie into. In this context the site appears to be set out on its own in the landscape and this is a concern.

I recognise that the Council's landscape architect has not objected and the applicants have sought to better integrate the development into the surrounding by improving the sites landscaping. The planting proposals do provide a hedge to flank the development however it offers little robust planting to assimilate the development into the surrounding landscape when viewing from the south and instead protects outward views. The scale and design of the pods are not necessarily challenging however there will also be visibility of the associated hardstanding's, hot tubs and parked cars in the site. The linear layout also sets a potential scenario for future expansion that would further impact on the landscape (albeit any future application would require consideration on its own merits). The sloping nature of the site would also suggest that the development would likely require some engineering operations the visual impact of which is not clear.

The linear position of the development across the summit of the field will draw attention and land engineering works could exacerbate its visual impact by not tying in sympathetically with the natural landform and the application submission does not demonstrate otherwise. It is conceded that these views are from a minor road nevertheless the proposed development would appear exposed and isolated and its appearance would jar with the natural character and appearance of this settled rural area. These detrimental impacts are judged to cause enough demonstrable harm to conclude that the landscape and visual impact of the development does not satisfy Criteria a) of the other considerations listed in ED7, Criteria h) and k) of PMD2. Furthermore the proposed planting does not suitably integrate the development into the surrounding landscape therefore Criteria m) of PMD2 has not been fully met.

#### Impact on neighbouring uses

The proposals would not adversely affect the amenity of any neighbouring residential properties.

The development could impact on the existing farming operation nevertheless this would ultimately be under the control of the applicants and would be a business decision to ensure that the uses could adequately co-exist.

#### Accessibility

Roads planning are supportive of the principle of the proposals. While Roads have not be able to fully determine if the increase traffic using the minor road would cause any conflicts with agricultural vehicles, if mitigation was necessary this could normally be address via planning conditions seeking to agree passing places. The applicants would appear to have control over the land surrounding the road. Therefore if passing places were required these could be provided and as a result of this there appears no compelling roads safety issues which could not be addressed by planning conditions if approval was recommended. There is no need to consult Transport Scotland.

PMD1 requires encouragement of walking, cycling and public transport in preference to the private car. The proposal is not directly served by any means of public transport and is not within likely reasonable walking distance from amenities. It is anticipated that the proposals would rely on car users, though the Southern Upland Way is not a significant distance from the development whereby the proposals could appeal to walkers and cyclists or promote visitors to use the route. It is, ultimately, not opposed on accessibility grounds given its small scale but it has the potential to expand and future development could be a potential concern regarding the sustainability of the development as a result of its relatively remote location. That is not a matter for this application, however.

#### Site Services

A private water supply is to be provided with foul drainage to treatment tanks and soakaways. Correspondence has been provided from the applicant's discussions with SEPA which identifies that SEPA do not raise concerns about the means of foul drainage.

No precise information has been provided about water supply or surface water drainage. These details could however be agreed by condition if approval were to be recommended.

#### Other Matters

I have assessed this proposal against the Local Development Plan and I have not found there to be any other areas of conflict. There are no affected ecological designations and no works that would require prior ecological assessment.

#### **REASON FOR DECISION :**

The development is contrary to Policy ED7 and criterion h), k) and m) of Policy PMD2 of the Local Development Plan 2016 in that the site occupies an isolated and exposed location where the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals would fail to sympathetically integrate with the character, appearance and sense of place of the surrounding rural area and the proposed landscaping does not provide sufficient mitigation of the resulting landscape and visual impacts. Other material considerations do not outweigh this conflict.

#### **Recommendation:** Refused

- 1 The development is contrary to Policy ED7 and criterion h), k) and m) of Policy PMD2 of the Local Development Plan 2016 in that the site occupies an isolated and exposed location where the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals would fail to sympathetically integrate with the character, appearance and sense of place of the surrounding rural area and the proposed landscaping does not provide sufficient mitigation of the resulting landscape and visual impacts. Other material considerations do not outweigh this conflict.

**“Photographs taken in connection with the determination of the application and any other associated documentation form part of the Report of Handling”.**