

Proposed Dwelling to Support Falconiformes & Hack Pen at Windrush, Highend, Hawick TD9 9SA

Supporting Statement

The submitted application is for the approval of a dwelling house to support the operational requirement of the existing Falconiformes & Hack Pen at Windrush Farm High End. The nature of the business, Falcon breeding, means that this development is only appropriate within the countryside.

The dwelling will be for continued use of essential onsite employees, employed by the owner, who are essential to the efficient operation of the Falconiformes and Hack Pens. Until now staff have been staying at the farm house which is owned by the landowner, who also resides at the house, and due to the recent expansion proposed a second dwelling house on the site is required to stop overcrowding within the main farm house and maintain the welfare of the falcons onsite.

The dwelling will help support the expansion Falcon Breeding business which in turn will look to employ local people within the Scottish Borders to help maintain and clean out the buildings, further to the specialised employees who look after the falcons and will be residing in the new dwelling.

Alternative accommodation is not available on or neighbouring the farm due to its remote location. Accommodation in the neighbouring villages is not adequate for the welfare of the falcons due to the reasons below.

Birds of prey are not a domesticated species, these birds are bred in captivity but will act as a wild bird would behave, they will exhibit stress and anxiety if disturbed. Stress and anxiety are a major trigger for the development of diseases in falcons, such as Aspergillosis.

There will be a 24hr CCTV system to monitor all the birds, there has to be 24hr immediate access to the aviaries if falcons are reacting to disputes between themselves (the male is one third smaller than the female and can be killed by the female).

If there is disturbance from unknown humans, animals, or aircraft especially at night especially if falcons are incubating eggs or brooding youngsters, immediate access is required.

Falcons will be tethered at times using traditional falconry furniture, birds must be monitored for immediate access if entanglement of the furniture occurs.

Some of these falcons will be imprinted for breeding by artificial insemination, each bird is imprinted to a specific

person, only that person will be able to work with that bird, eggs are usually laid at night and insemination to fertilise the next egg must take place within 20 minutes of laying an egg.

There must be 24-hour immediate access to the incubators or brooders if there is a power failure or issue with a particular machine, eggs or youngsters will die very quickly if temperatures are not kept between 37C-38C.

For the above reasons the applicant seeks approval of the submitted application for a domestic dwelling to ensure the welfare of the falcons and their keepers are maintained.

Impact on the Countryside

The dwelling has been located away from the main road on ground which is lower than the existing farm house and main road. It is proposed as a storey and a half, with the walls proposed as off white. The ridgeline of the roof will not sit higher than the existing farm house and the existing farm buildings, trees and bushes help disguise the dwelling from the main road.

It will be constructed from using timber, concrete block and natural slate using renewable energy to create a sustainable, robust building suited to its location.

Large amounts of glazing will also take advantage of the views surrounding the site. If the centre was to later to be decommissioned in years to come the dwelling could easily become a family home.

The aim is to allow the existing farm house to remain the main feature with the proposed dwelling sitting quietly behind it.

The siting of the proposed dwelling was considered closer to the main farm house to help fit with the urban grain of the countryside, but due to a main water supply running down the west of the existing farm house to the breeding buildings and the steep site contours this was not possible. In siting the building where it is currently shown it helps reduce the massing impact of the proposed dwelling next the existing farm house and main road and also allows employee to be closer to the falcons so immediate access is available.