

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR 10 HOLIDAY BOTHIES ON BRUCEFIELD ESTATE, FORESTMILL, CLACKMANNANSHIRE, FK10 3QF

SUPPORTING DESIGN STATEMENT -

Extract from 'Hutting Service Sheet – Scotland' produced by Savills, Edinburgh (provided as pdf) -

“Scandinavian style huts for recreational use now have support through the Scottish Planning Policy and increasingly through new Local Development Plans. Even before covid-19, Visit Scotland research suggested that “getting away from it all” is the main appeal for a quarter of all visitors, leading to an important rise in demand for unique forms of holiday accommodation in some of the country’s wilder locations. If properly planned huts can act as a quirky weekend retreats for both local people and to help satisfy the demand of visitors”

Location and General Background: -

The location of Brucefield Estate lies between the A977 to the north and the A907 to the south, and approximately 5km east of Clackmannan. The overall site area is approximately 425 hectares and the woodland area of the Estate is currently 184.92ha with a 60:40 mix of commercial conifers and native species.

There are a wide range of objectives for the estate which include farming, timber production, long-term residential lets, returning historic rural buildings to use, agri-environmental activities, wildlife management, and hospitality & tourism. The purpose of this Planning Application is to address tourism.

The forest is situated 55–85m above sea level and has varying aspects though is generally on a north–south facing slope.

There are numerous ditches / drains and several watercourses that run into the Bluther burn which runs from the forest and farmland, eventually flowing into the Forth Estuary some 7km to the south east. This drainage network will be used to remove any surface water resulting from each small bothy development.

Access: -

Public access to the sites is via the A907 public road from Clackmannan to Oakley then via an unclassified road (known as Brucefield Road) to Forestmill, 1.5miles east of the Gartarry Roundabout. There are farm and forestry tracks from this unclassified road into the woodlands and these have been utilised in the locating the bothies. It is not considered the proposal will impact on any of the existing access arrangements.

Another important access to Brucefield Estate is via the old Stirling to Dunfermline railway route, which is now the very popular National Cycle Network (Route 764), a branch line of the Round the Forth Route 76. For travellers arriving by train, Brucefield Estate is a 30-minute cycle ride, and the path gives cyclists and walkers access to Clackmannan, Culross and beyond giving visitors wide access to local services and amenities.

Vehicle parking and turning areas for 2 - 4 cars will be provided near the access road point but remote from each bothy. A 1.5m consolidated hardcore footpath track, minimising damage to the woodland floor will then lead to each facility.

Forestry:

The woodlands consist primarily of Sitka Spruce, Scots Pine, Norway Spruce and Japanese Larch.

There are some compartments within the Estate that have a mix of broadleaf and conifer.

The Forestry Commission-approved Long Term Forest Plan (LTFP) for the period 2018–2028 is available for review if required.

All sites in this application are approved for thinning and/or felling in the approved LTFP. Tree felling within the bothy areas will be kept to an absolute minimum and only extend to allow pedestrian access and erection of the bothy: the aim is to achieve a secluded but sunny environment within the woodland.

Historic Environment:

There are no scheduled monuments within the woodlands of Brucefield Estate however there are two known unscheduled sites of Slack Wood enclosure and Chapel Knowe. Slack wood enclosure NS945 918 is a small circular double ditch feature. Chapel Knowe NS950 912 is a mound within the woodland that is believed to be the site of a former chapel.

Brucefield Estate has recently completed an Historic Landscape Assessment and an Illustrated Heritage Gazetteer. These, along with their review of maps, the Old and New Statistical Accounts, and historic census data will provide guests with a fascinating account of Brucefield Estate under three different owners, as well as the local and national historical context.

Ecology and Conservation: -

Refer to separate attached report 'Brucefield Estate Bothies: Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey'.

Over the last three years, Brucefield Estate has undertaken a series of Phase 2 ecological monitoring studies involving breeding birds, protected mammals, invertebrates, pollinators, and botany. The Estate now has a comprehensive Wildlife Management Plan, which guests will be able to participate in and learn about.

Business Plan: -

Brucefield Estate propose to start in the first year with two to four bothys in total, and potentially expand from there. It is intended all bothies will be available for holiday short stay lets occupancy 365 days of the year however the business plan reflects an anticipated 60% (218 days) occupancy operational basis. They will not be available for let under a Private Residential Tenancy Agreement.

This proposed responsible tourism accommodation scheme will help stimulate local economic activity for goods and services. It will encourage people to visit the area and be part of Visit Scotland's Clackmannanshire offering. The Estate is renovating a byre (approx. 90m²) to be used for rural events and workshops.

Bothy Design: -

Background –

Careful consideration has been given to the location of each bothy to ensure they are in keeping with the surroundings, that they are rustic, have low impact, and ecologically sustainable in accordance with the Scottish Planning Policy 2014. It is important that the bothies should also be a relatively comfortable experience to suit a variety of visitors.

It is not considered that the proposals submitted will have any adverse effect on the existing LTFP, nor will they impact on the Biodiversity (see Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey). Access rights will be unaffected and the close proximity to the Sustran route will further promote local sustainable transport and active travel. The small footprint will give no risk to flooding and given the isolation, drainage from the Bothies will be managed on a local level.

Design -

All bothies are of the same design on each of the 10 locations. The ground floor area will extend to 12.96m² with an upper sleeping area of 5.43m².

Built in timber frame construction, with a local joinery firm, and insulated with Povatex, a highly efficient natural breathing wood fibre, the walls and roof will then be finished externally with corrugated Plastisol-coated steel sheet. The main access side wall will be finished in natural Scots Larch.

Colours of the Corrugated sheet (Accord Cladding) will vary and may include: -

Juniper Green BS12B29

Anthracite RAL7016

Aged Rust Effect

Slate Blue BS18B29

Internally the walls will be clad in oiled birch plywood. A small kitchen and adjacent toilet area with sliding door will accommodate a shower, WC and WHB with hot and cold water. The ground floor will accommodate a sofa, chair and table with a small log burning stove to provide suitable heating. Above this area and accessed by a fixed ladder will be a sleeping area within the roof pitch. Sliding glazed doors orientated south will provide access to a ground level timber deck area. Bicycle wall racks will be provided. Hardstanding, footpaths etc will be kept to a minimum to ensure the woodland is preserved.

Given the nature of the local ground and levels of the woodland, access for physically disabled will be limited due to the ladder. However, Brucefield Estate offers a two-bedroom cottage, recently completely refurbished for holiday lets, in which there are no steps at all, wet floor bathroom with floor level access to shower with pulldown seat and appropriately placed grab bars.

Utilities:

Water mains supply and mains electric power and/or roof or ground mounted PV with canister LPG generator will be connected to each bothy.

Greywater from the sink, shower and WHB will be disposed of via a filtration trench system.

Surface water from roofs will be discharged into the surrounding land drains via attenuation trenches.

Soil from the WC will be via a composting toilet arrangement incorporating sunken tank collection unit.

Waste Management: -

Waste containers will be provided at one central location on the Estate and guests encouraged to segregate various types of waste (plastic, paper, general) Periodic uplift will be made to filter this waste into the Farm's general waste management strategy.

Bothy GPS Locations

1	295337 691522 NS9533791522	SawMill Bothy Location
2	295241 691558 NS9524191558	SawMill Bothy Location
3	295430 691696 NS9543091696	Low Field Bothy Location
4	295326 691729 NS9532691729	Low Field Bothy Location
5	295730 692079 NS9573092079	Scaurs Bothy Location
6	295676 692021 NS9567692021	Scaurs Bothy Location
7	295964 692355 NS9596492355	Red Yetts Bothy Location
8	296061 691554 NS9606191554	Hartshaw Farm Bothy Location
9	296033 691547 NS9603391547	Hartshaw Farm Bothy Location
10	295657 691341 NS9565791341	Hartshaw Clump Bothy Location