

**Hartridge Buddhist Monastery
Odle Cottage
Upottery
Honiton EX14 9QE**

Design & Access Statement

**Change of Use of agricultural land to ancillary accommodation in connection with the Hartridge
Buddhist Monastery comprising the provision of three meditation huts**

Date: June 2021

Key design principles

Simplicity of accommodation conducive to meditation practice

- Low impact within rural surroundings
- Low energy use
- Low maintenance

Use

The three new huts [kutis] will be used as a space for individual meditation and specifically for the members of the monastic community.

Amount

It is proposed to create three meditation huts.

Layout

Internally each hut is a simple room of around 7m² with a covered porch or conservatory entrance of another 3-4m². The huts, whilst simple, would be well insulated throughout, and so would be low energy use with each hut having a small wood burning stove for heat. We only use well-seasoned wood (mainly from our own woodland), so as to minimise smoke and maximize efficiency. There would be no electric or plumbing connections and no cooking facilities.

Each meditation hut is deliberately located within its own setting to aid solitary meditative practice.

The three proposed hut sites will be concealed by 3,000 young trees and woodland planted by the monastery in 2008-9. In 2020 we further incorporated additional trees to include more understorey woodland species around and close to the proposed sites, and along our western boundary with the Hartridge Common land, to enhance the visual screening further in the winter months when there is no foliage. Already the sites are quite well screened, and every year this increases as the trees and shrubs gradually mature. We actively manage our existing woodland and boundaries, and one aim of this is to maintain the privacy and seclusion of the (existing) meditation huts in as natural a way as possible. This makes their presence very low impact in the local environment.

Scale

The meditation huts are approximately 2.6m high at the highest point.

Landscaping

The proposed sites do not require any trees to be removed, and would not impact on wildlife (badgers, deer, rabbits, birds etc all seem to happily have found homes very close to and sometimes in or under the existing huts). We have done a lot of work over the years planting trees, creating spaces for wildflowers etc, and these are environments that we will continue to sustain and support. We propose a further planting scheme and details are marked on the site plan.

Appearance

In addition to taking great care with the siting and screening of the proposed huts, the materials used would be timber stud walls built on minimal block pad footings, timber clad and with lightweight sheet roofing, all of natural, darker, matt finishes externally so that the huts are inconspicuous.

We respect the policies of the proposed Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan, that aim for “the protection of the unique Luppitt environment from inappropriate development and change”, and believe that the huts would be of very low (or no) impact in the rural environment.

We would use timber cladding which would weather naturally and would not require a paint or stain finish, and any windows which might conceivably reflect the sunlight where it might be visible from any public area will be non-reflective glass.

Access

Access to the huts would be by foot only, along existing natural woodland paths and across the open meadows.

We do not propose any vehicular access. The meditation huts are simple buildings requiring minimal maintenance which would obviate access by service vehicles.

It is not proposed to make any sort of paved paths, which would be completely out of character with the huts, the woodlands and fields, and contrary to our aims.