

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
GLAMPING POD SITE AT

HUDEGATE FARM
MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE,
DL12 0QR

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1.0 Executive Summary

Proposed are a total of four handmade timber glamping pods for guests along with recycling/waste and a cycle storage area. Guest will use the existing entrance track to the parking area. The client intends to use existing parking on site for guests to use, one parking bay per pod is proposed with one being an accessible parking bay. Each guest pod will have a small area of decking to the front. Also intended are associated footpaths and landscaping of the site.

Accessibility will be considered throughout the site so that guests of all ages and abilities will be welcome. The accommodation will be designed inclusively, with step-free access, portable hearing loops, appropriate signage and other universally designed functions that won't compromise but complement the aesthetic of the site.

All pods are to be manufactured off-site and to be provided by Ellipse Leisure Buildings. The Tees plus model has been chosen for the site with one unit being adapted to be fully accessible.

The plot is situated just off the B6277 Middleton-in-Teesdale in the north Pennines. The proposed glamping site will provide subtle and discreet countryside accommodation for tourists visiting this area's attractions on short breaks and weekend stays.

2.0 Policy

In designing the proposed glamping site, the County Durham Plan (2020) was referenced, and the following policies were considered. It is believed that the proposal is compliant with each of the following policies:

County Durham Plan (2020)

- Policy 08 - Visitor Accommodation

This policy highlights that applications, where new accommodation is not used for permanent residential occupancy and is an appropriate scale to the character of the area, will be supported if they follow the specific criteria.

This proposal is in accordance with this policy as it meets the demand of the area in respect to the needs of more visitor accommodation, it is an example of farm diversification therefore it will be used to support the long term sustainability of Hudegate Farm, the scale of the site and the layout has been designed to respect the character of the countryside and it also provided more opportunities to make the location more sustainable by encouraging the use of sustainable transport when visiting nearby attractions. The site will also open up access to the countryside by providing accessible accommodation to guests.

- Policy 10 - Development in the Countryside

The site enables diversification to support the long term sustainability of Hudegate Farm. The site has been designed to ensure the scale is suitable to its location, by introducing only 4 pods they will be contained to the north end of the site surrounded by existing buildings and structures.

- Policy 21 - Delivering Sustainable Transport

The site will propose 4 parking spaces for guest use, one being an accessible parking bay with ample room on either side for wheelchair access. An additional bay will be provided with an electric vehicle charging point to encourage the use of sustainable vehicles.

Secure cycle storage can also be found on-site, this will be available for guests to utilise during their stay, encouraging people to bring along their bikes and use them to visit local attractions and bike trails.

The site is a short 10-minute walk into the town of Middleton-in-Teesdale, where guests can take local bus services to the surrounding towns and as far as Penrith and Durham.

- Policy 29 - Sustainable Design

The site has been designed to remain in keeping with the local landscape, it will contribute positively to the existing characteristics of the area. The pods have been placed as close as possible to the existing buildings which surround them. Therefore, in keeping their surroundings to not disturb the greater landscape. New indigenous shrubbery and trees will be planted throughout the site to integrate the proposal further. For further information and visual aids please refer to the visual impact assessment which has been provided.

The proposed pods are capable of adapting to change to remain in keeping with the appropriate local conditions. This will ensure the site and surroundings will be safe and secure for the public at all times.

The pods will be energy efficient and will offer an economic stimulus in the area, more on this can be found within section 11 of this report.

The material proposed throughout this site will be natural and respect the area, there is a designated recycling/refuse point on-site to encourage guests to be environmentally respectful during their stay.

- Policy 31 - Amenity and Pollution

The proposed glamping site will not cause any harmful impact on health, living or working conditions or to the natural environment. The site will be an example of farm diversification as it will support the existing Hudegate farm. Any future occupants of the site will not be negatively affected by the proposed development due to the temporary nature of the pods, meaning the site can be returned to its previous state without any complications.

The lighting scheme proposed for the site will be the minimum necessary for functional and security purposes, providing guests with a safe passage to and from their pods. The lights will be censored therefore will only be on when required, this will stop any light pollution from occurring.

- Policy 35 – Water management

The chosen site of the development does not propose any floor risks including surface water flooding. A permeable border will be placed around all pods to provide a suitable SUDS system. The pod's drainage system will be a water treatment package discharging into a suitably sized soakaway, details of this can be found in drawing 210318-01-03.

- Policy 36 – Water infrastructure

As stated above the pods will be connected to a package sewage treatment plant to dispose of foul water. The drainage will be discharged into a soakaway located towards the southern boundary of the site.

- Policy 38 – North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The development proposed consists of 4 small scale glamping pods that aims to provide no harmful impacts upon the area of outstanding natural beauty. The site has been designed and will be managed to a high environmental standard, more on this can be found throughout this report.

As stated in the North Pennines AONB management plan the part of the vision for 2030 is that 'Development takes place to a high standard, meeting community need and contributing to the area's quality and character'. The proposed development aims to enhance and complement the character of the area, the site will comprise of high-end glamping pods using quality natural materials to provide guests with a unique stay where they can respect their surrounding location. It is believed this site will allow outside guests to also celebrate and respect the local natural heritage.

- Policy 39 - Landscape

The chosen site is located within the North Pennines AONB. The small-scale development has been designed so the pods are located close to the existing built environment in the Northern area of the site. Additional screening is proposed to ensure the development will blend into the landscape and not affect any views across the valley. The development aims to enhance the local landscape by respecting the character of the area. This is done through the use of natural timber structures on-site to blend in and compliment the surroundings, the pods will not be visible from afar views please see the visual assessment supporting document for further confirmation.

- Policy 40 - Trees, Woodlands and Hedges

To maintain and protect the surrounding trees and woodlands, the site has been designed so no trees will need to be removed to make way for this development. Below the southern boundary of the site (within the ownership boundary) lies a row of trees and hedges which offer natural screening to the site, these will remain untouched throughout and after the construction of the development. A singular oak tree is located to the southern boundary of the site, this can be seen in drawing 210318-01-02, and will remain unaffected by the proposal both during and after construction.

To improve the site and to create natural screening around the pods, additional indigenous trees and shrubbery will be planted. To allow for immediate screening a range of trees of different ages will be planted.

- Policy 41 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The proposed development aims to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the site. It is the intention to create a wetland area around the soakaway location to create a natural feature and encourage more native species to the site. Other areas of the site will focus on creating a meadow-like feel to the grass, to again create a natural feel to the site.

The National Planning Policy Framework (**NPPF**) was also referenced, and the following policies were considered. It is believed that the proposal is compliant with each of the following policies:

- Part 4 – Decision-Making

A previous pre-planning application was submitted for this proposal as promoted by the council. The previous application was for a 10-unit glamping site, the pods were scattered around the proposed site to allow maximum distance between each unit. Based on the comments provided the design of the site now has a reduced number of units, 4 instead of 10, to allow the site to complement the surroundings and respect the existing character of the area. The units have also been moved closer to the existing buildings which surround the site, meaning they will become part of the pre-existing built environment. Additional screening has also been implemented to help integrate the development into the landscape.

- Part 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

The site is located within the countryside and will be an example of sustainable farm diversification. The new business will focus on supporting the pre-existing Hudegate farm. This will allow for the farm to continue to grow and thrive.

- Part 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

The proposal aims to make use of land which is currently under-utilised in the hope to bring more guests to the countryside. The chosen location has been previously used for sheep grazing. The site operator intends to create a natural wetland area within the site along with a meadow-like area, these will help to introduce new habitats to the site.

3.0 Site and Surrounding Area

3.1 Location

'Hudegate Hideaway' is a settlement in the Middleton-in-Teesdale area of the North Pennines, located approximately 10 miles North-East of Barnard Castle and approximately 37 miles from Penrith. The area and surroundings are rich in tourist attractions, with many walking/biking opportunities, village shops, pubs and other attractions/activities. The proposals will create a significant economic benefit to the surrounding area and local businesses. With easy road access via the B6276, B6277 and the B6282 linking from Barnard castle, Sunderland and Teesside, the site will be accessible from across the country through cars and buses. Buses currently stop informally in close proximity to the site access point.



Figure 1 – Aerial View showing Location.



Figure 2 – Aerial View to Site.

3.2 Proposed Site Information

The plot for the proposed glamping site will occupy approx. 5362 m² of the applicant's land. The vast majority of the site will be left as open green space with common areas for guests to relax. The 4 no. guest pods will be well spaced at approx. 11m apart in distance to give each visitor a good amount of privacy, for social distancing and to control the carry of sound.

The existing road named Stacks Lane off the B6277 will be the access route to reach the glamping site area, then guests will use the existing entry point to the site. The site will use an existing entry point and the gateway is for guest access onto the site, which will lead into a small parking and turning area. Visibility and access are good in both directions on Stacks Lane, where the entrance will lie perpendicular to. This can be seen in figures 3 and 4 below.



Figure 3 – View to existing access looking East.



Figure 4 – View at Access Point looking West.

Once guests enter the site, a short existing track will lead into the parking and turning area, which will accommodate four cars. Please refer to the Site plan for further details.

Guests will reach the pods by foot from the parking area, using footpaths. All tracks will be formed from permeable plastic paving grids which will be placed over the existing grass, allowing the grass to continue to grow through. By doing so, this will help integrate the site into its surroundings without causing any effects to the character of the area. Low level LED lighting bollards will be provided to the tracks for safety when walking at night. Low level is proposed to minimise effects on local wildlife, more information can be found on drawing 210318-01-07.

The West and East boundaries of the site are neighbour owned fields, boundaries will remain unchanged. As shown on drawing 210318-01-02, Layout Plan.

The nearest neighbouring residence is approximately 45m from the nearest pod, located North-West of the Site. This residence will be shielded from view by the 5-foot-high existing wall and proposed indigenous shrubbery and bushes. It is therefore not expected that noise from the pods will impact any neighbours. In our experience, glamping guests tend to be respectful to others and do not create noise in any case.

3.3 Justification for Proposed Use

The proposed site is just outside of Middleton-in-Teeside. The pods will offer contemporary accommodation to visitors which is within a suitable travel distance from Penrith, Barnard Castle, Durham, Darlington and further afield across the country, thus being suitable for weekend trips and short breaks. The application site is well located to allow occupiers to enjoy the surrounding tourism assets, which includes the North Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales.

The proposed site will be in a tranquil green area. Glamping installations require minimal groundworks and minimal harmful construction practices. Through the use of ground screws to mount pods, concrete may not be required at all. We, therefore, believe pods provide an ecologically viable accommodation solution, suited to the area.

The concept of luxury glamping is now gaining popularity throughout the UK, with standards and guests' expectations on the rise. It is intended by the site operator that this site will be amongst the best available in the area. At the moment, there is little presence in the Middleton in Teesdale area offering this kind of luxury pod accommodation giving guests exclusive facilities. The only other 'Glamping Style' site is Hill Top Huts, all other accommodation appears to be caravan parks or B&B's. Therefore, we feel the site would be providing a positive alternative for visitors to the area.

This site will be unique in that it will be an example of sustainable farm diversification, providing an outlet for Agri-tourism and education. The proposal would be providing an exciting new alternative to the area, providing guests with a secluded, high-quality glamping accommodation. The site would aid in driving sustainable tourism to the local areas which would help businesses recover after the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.0 Use

The pods would be rented out on a per-nightly basis. Patrons would likely be couples, families or friends split into multiple pods. Party groups will not be permitted by the operator.

The site has been designed to be inclusive for all, with wheelchair access throughout the site and specific features available in one of the proposed pods. This will provide a unique opportunity in the area and cater for more user groups.

The site would be operated as a typical (year-round) holiday let, much like a caravan site, but with much fewer guests, meaning less noise and disruption to neighbouring properties and road users etc. The site will also be marketed as a peaceful and relaxing retreat, which again should mean noise from guests is not a consideration.

There is no intention to use the pods for long term lease / permanent residences. Such a small-scale development and the compact footprint of the pods would not be suited to this in any case.

5.0 Amount

The table below shows the breakdown of the used area and remaining green space.

Land Usage Item	Area Used	% of Overall Site
Greater Ownership Boundary.	8021 m ²	100 %
Glamping Site Area.	5362 m ²	66% (of ownership boundary)
Green Space – Proposed Site.	4721 m ²	88% (of site boundary)
Existing parking area	641 m ²	12% (of site boundary)
Green Space – After Site Build.	4566 m ²	96.8 % (of green space)
Glamping Pods (4 Pods).	132.6 m ²	2.8 % (of green space)
Footpaths.	73 m ²	1.5 % (of green space)

6.0 Layout

From Stacks Lane, the glamping site vehicular access will follow a short track to reach the parking and turning area. The existing main track within the site runs in a South direction. The existing parking area will accommodate one parking space per pod, including a disabled parking bay, from here footpaths will direct guests to the pods.

Pods will be sited facing towards the South-West of the site and given a generous distance to all boundaries, the pods will be spaced out at approximately 7+ metre intervals.

Each pod will have a private decking leading to/from the pod entrances. Shrubbery and a section of fencing will be installed to one side of the decks provided to aid guest privacy.

In the centre will be a communal grass area with benches to allow guests to soak in the surrounding views. This area will be surrounded by shrubbery and wildflowers to create a meadow type area to improve the biodiversity on the site. There is an existing oak tree within the field that will be undisturbed by the proposal.

To the south of the site will lie a water treatment plant which will be used to allow waste to be exhausted to a soakaway.

The design implemented for the site has purposely underdeveloped the site, utilising less than 2% of the area of the site for the pods and other amenities to provide both privacy for guests and to minimise the impact on neighbouring sites and properties.

7.0 Scale

4 pods are to be installed within this site, all of which are to be manufactured offsite and delivered by Ellipse Leisure Buildings. The proposed pods provided are small single-storey cabins (under 3.5m tall), so no restriction of neighbouring views will occur. The site boundaries will remain as is. Since the pods are of timber construction, they tend to blend into the landscape in any case. The pods are also located beside the existing farmhouse and surrounded by new large trees and bushes, so shall be out of view from the main road and adjacent walks. For further details and visual aids please refer to the visual impact assessment provided.

The client intends to use the Tees plus model for the units. One will be appropriately adapted to create an accessible pod with the required features.



Figure 6 – Front Facing View of Tees plus glamping unit.

8.0 Public Rights of Way

No public rights of way are affected by this proposal.

9.0 Landscaping

Some minor levelling will be required to create suitable footings for the pods and other structures. The intention is to maintain the low gradient of the site, thus preventing the need for any retaining structures. The pods on the finished site will be installed to adjacent ground levels, therefore will be at varying levels relative to each other.

Any broken ground will be re-instated (turfed where required). Suitable shrubbery will be planted around the decks to demarcate the pods and provide additional screening.

Additional native trees will be planted around the pods to provide further screening from the existing farmhouse and the proposed glamping units.

Meadow grass will be utilised throughout the site to help create a relaxing retreat feel to the site. A wetland area will also be created near the proposed soakaway, this will enhance the biodiversity of the site and aid in creating more natural elements for the retreat.

10.0 Design

10.1 Stage 1 – Access

Stacks Lane is a well-maintained public road. The minimal increase in traffic associated with the pod site will be of a negligible impact to the surrounding area with a maximum of 4 vehicles at any one time at the site. The existing main road provides open vehicle access. The existing entrance and access to the site will provide initial access for installation of plant and equipment this will also be the site vehicular access to the parking and turning area. It will also provide access for a maintenance vehicle to treat/empty the treatment tanks.

10.2 Stage 2 - Groundwork

Due to natural undulations and a gentle downward gradient running down the site, minor levelling will be required to prepare the pod footings (concrete pads or ground screws).

No retaining walls or structure will be required.

The existing septic tank on the site will be covered first before any work starts.

A sewage treatment tank will be installed with the treated water discharging via a suitably sized soakaway, with the location to be developed/discussed.

Following this, services ducting will be laid for power, water and telecoms as required. Pipework will be run for water and cables for electricity and telecoms will be pulled.

10.3 Stage 3 – Pod Install

The Pods are delivered to the site and installed, with the pods to be prefabricated off-site. The design aims to minimise as much disruption to the site as possible. The design plans to remove a minimal amount of soil from the pod bases. Any new trees and shrubbery planted will match that of the local area as closely as possible and are shown on the site layout plan.

10.4 Stage 4 – Roads, Parking & Clean up

The entry point is the existing access to the site, with a short track leading to a parking bay area. This can be seen in the layout plan, drawing 200318-01-02.

No more plant/transport access is required other than to build the parking spaces and turning area. This will be constructed with a permeable material typically compacted type 1 to prevent the use of concrete/tarmac and the need for a dedicated run-off water management system.

Finally, a total clear-out of the site will be done to ensure no leftover waste from the build stage is left. All cleaning waste will be recycled where possible and safely disposed of otherwise.

11.0 Sustainability

The proposal will offer an economic stimulus in the area.

The pods themselves are manufactured and designed to be energy efficient with well-insulated floors and walls/roofs with the use of materials with a low life cycle environmental impact. All glazing will be double glazed units. LED light fittings are installed as standard throughout the pods. Water heating is instantaneous with no stored hot water. Underfloor heating will be used to heat the pods. Water-saving sanitary fittings and appliances within the pods deliver water efficiency to the site. The minimal surface water run-off from the pods will discharge into pebble borders and the existing parking area is permeable.

Appropriate implementation of measures to minimise environmental impacts arising from any site works; the site will be constructed with efficient construction methods as stated in Stage 3 above thus reducing any waste and earthworks will result in no removals from site required.

An efficient operational waste management and recycling strategy will be carried out by the operator as required by the Durham County Council. The waste and recycling station bins are located next to the car parking area for easy access, these will then be moved to the road site on collection days.

Securely covered cycle racks will be provided to promote the use of bicycles whilst guests visit the local attractions.

1.no Electrical vehicle charging point will be provided at the parking area.

12.0 - Flood Risk

It has been identified from the Government Flood Maps that the proposed pod locations and site has no potential for flooding from Rivers or Surface water, therefore an FRA will not be required.

13.0 Summary

The proposed glamping site will provide a new and exciting accommodation option to the Middleton-in-Teesdale area. Demand for this type of accommodation is high throughout the country, which has also been shown to be true of other glamping sites within the UK.

This development will increase footfall for local businesses and through correct marketing, should increase the length of time tourists remains in the area. This will be beneficial for local tourist attractions, restaurants and businesses etc.

The construction of a glamping site in this location can be achieved in less time, with less intrusive construction methods and less environmental impact, than traditional luxury accommodation builds require. This is clearly favourable in an area of countryside rich in natural beauty.

Based on the points discussed above, it is reasonable to suggest that glamping accommodation is warranted in this location, to cater for increasing visitor demand, without sacrificing the area's beauty or ecology.

To conclude, we anticipate the business will create at least one full-time job and one part-time job. The operator also intends to build on existing relationships they have with other local businesses in the area to offer their goods and services to the guests, including shops, pubs and restaurants to name but a few. The operator will be promoting these services within the pods along with providing the guests with local knowledge of the many beauty spots to visit.

The operator also intends to use local businesses to carry out the building and groundworks, utilizing local suppliers and local labour.