

Twistgates Farm

Upottery, Honiton, Devon, EX14 9PE

Sustainable Tourism Accommodation

Planning Application Supporting Statement
(including Design and Access Statement)



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Introduction

This Statement is submitted in support of a planning application by Crown and Canopy for change of use of land to site 3 no timber cabins for holiday accommodation, and landscaping and construction of a pond.

Twistgates Farm was purchased 20 years ago, with 3 existing holiday lets in a poor state of repair which were then renovated and a fourth built. No longer a working farm, the applicants are looking to expand their offering into glamping, while maintaining the tranquil setting which is enjoyed currently, and incorporating rewilding and habitat enhancement schemes.

The proposal is intended to provide unusual and stand-out accommodation amidst a flourishing wildlife site with a holistic sustainable approach. The 3 temporary cabins are to be sited as outlined in the attached proposed site plan TWI-P02.

The units would serve as year-round accommodation for people visiting Devon and the surrounding area. The 3 units would sleep 2-4 people accommodating a maximum of 12 people on site at any time.

The proposal is designed to be forward thinking and to stand out with sustainability and a low impact appearance on the natural landscape at the heart of the project. These elements are integrated into the design and infrastructure of the development and detailed in the following statement.

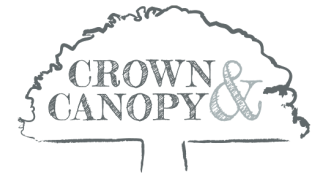
The units will provide accommodation for the increasing staycation market and the overall project has a sustainable ethos through the extensive environmental enhancements. This ethos ensures the least environmental and visual impact, with maximum impact in terms of environmental benefit.

Crown & Canopy were approached by Duncan Gray to produce a Planning Statement to support the establishment of a business at the land at Twistgates Farm, Upton, Nr Honiton, East Devon EX14 9PE.

The proposed development has been considered against the East Devon Local Plan (2013 - 2031) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The proposal will help boost rural, sustainable tourism whilst benefiting local businesses and the environment.

In addition to reference to relevant policy as outlined above, the brief has been assessed against a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.



Site and Local Context



Landscape Character Area

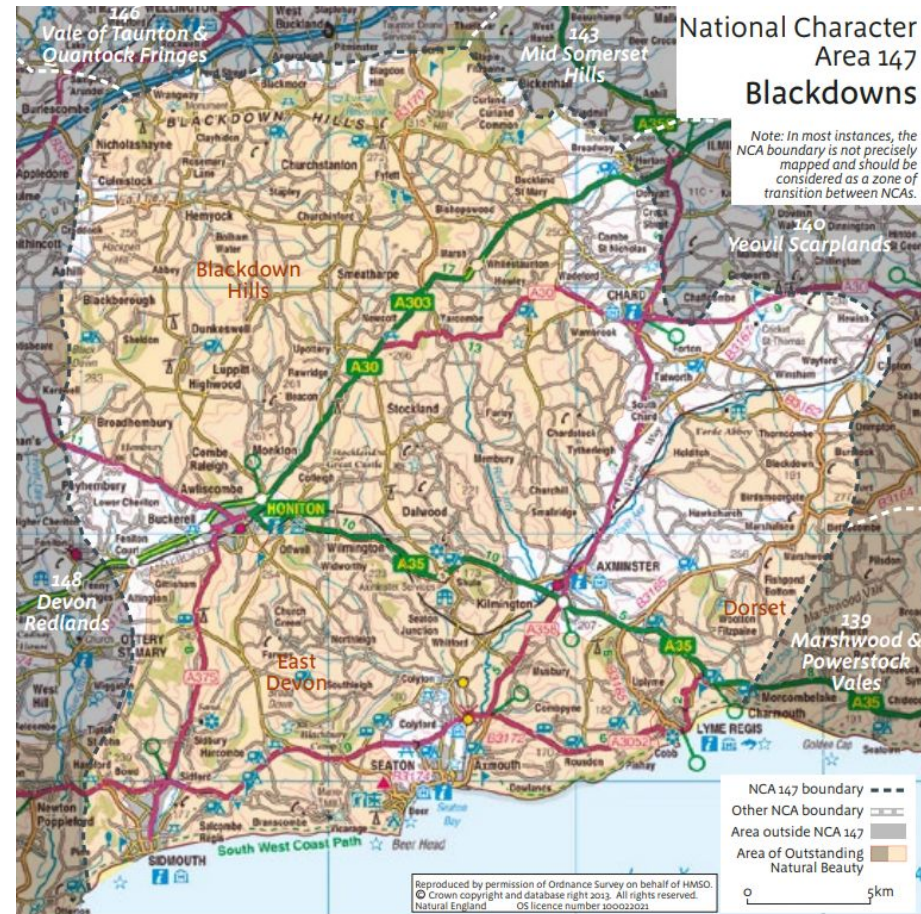
The site lies within the South West National Character Area: 147. Blackdowns. It is described as:

Long, dark ridges, deep valleys and dynamic cliffs are the essence of the Blackdowns National Character Area (NCA). The ridges create prominent backdrops from afar and offer far-reaching views. Beech hedgerows and avenues enclose the grazed landscape, although areas of remnant common, lowland heath and scrub still exist, providing open access. Woodland, much of semi-natural origin, dominates the steep valley tops, creating sinuous dark edges to the ridges; some conifer plantations also exist and intrude onto the plateaux. Below the wooded edge pastoral valleys feature with a medieval field pattern of small, irregular fields bounded by dense species-rich hedgebanks and hedgerow trees, creating an enclosed, tranquil setting. A myriad of springs and streams flow south through the valleys and can often be traced by semi-natural habitats: springline mires, rush pasture and carr woodland. Some valley floors widen and provide an opportunity for arable production, notably the Axe Valley which is characterised by a much wider flood plain. The entire River Axe within the NCA is designated for its biodiversity value.

Along the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site tall red sandstone cliffs abut the starkly contrasting white chalk before passing into grey clay and limestone to the east. The geology results in frequent landslips and constantly changing coastal features: beaches, stacks and bars. Natural erosion also maintains internationally important fossil-rich exposures. Blackdowns NCA retains a very rural character, with a strong sense of place, a rich biodiversity resource and opportunities to enjoy quiet recreation. These attributes are reflected in 78 per cent of the area being designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Landscape opportunities outlined in NCA 147 include:

- Protect and manage the tranquil, enclosed valleys and the network of streams, springs and associated semi-natural habitats set within a farmed landscape, for the maintenance and enhancement of livelihoods, public enjoyment and ecosystem services.
- Protect the relatively unsettled, rural character of this nationally important landscape, maintaining open skylines and historic settlement form. Reflect the local vernacular and geodiversity in new development and encourage provision of high-quality green infrastructure.



Site Location

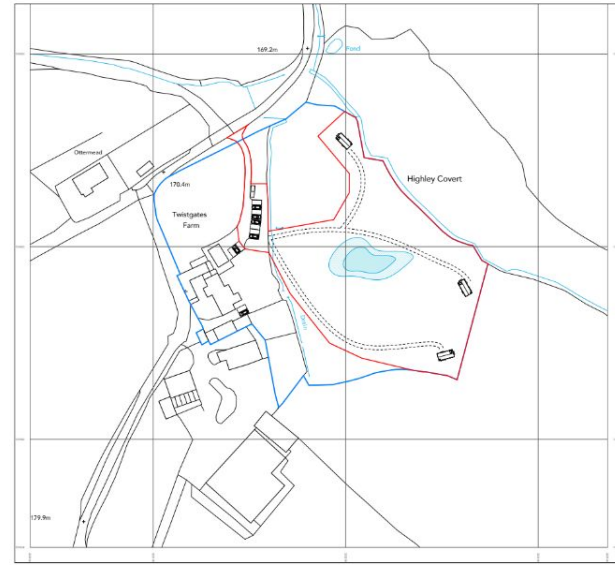
The proposed site is situated within East Devon Local District.

The land is situated east of the village of Uptontery and approximately 7 miles northeast of the larger town of Honiton. Nearest pubs and shops are circa 2.5 miles away in Churchinford and Uptontery. The land is situated to enjoy direct access to public footpaths and bridleways and benefits from a peaceful situation with beautiful views over the surrounding countryside.

Proximity to the A303 provides good transport links. The site is within easy travelling distance of Bristol - approximately 1.5 hrs drive and Birmingham and London are both within a 3.5 hour drive. These are all manageable travel distances for short breaks.

Local Context

Located off Twistgates Lane which links to the A303, the surrounding area is predominantly agricultural farmland interspersed with small villages. There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.



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The OMI Council Depot
Fresington, Exeter, EX2 2QK
www.crowncanopy.com
01392 761 402

Notes:
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Site Address: Twistgates Farm Cottages,
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Location Plan
Twistgates Farm
TWI-P01

Location Plan TWI-P01



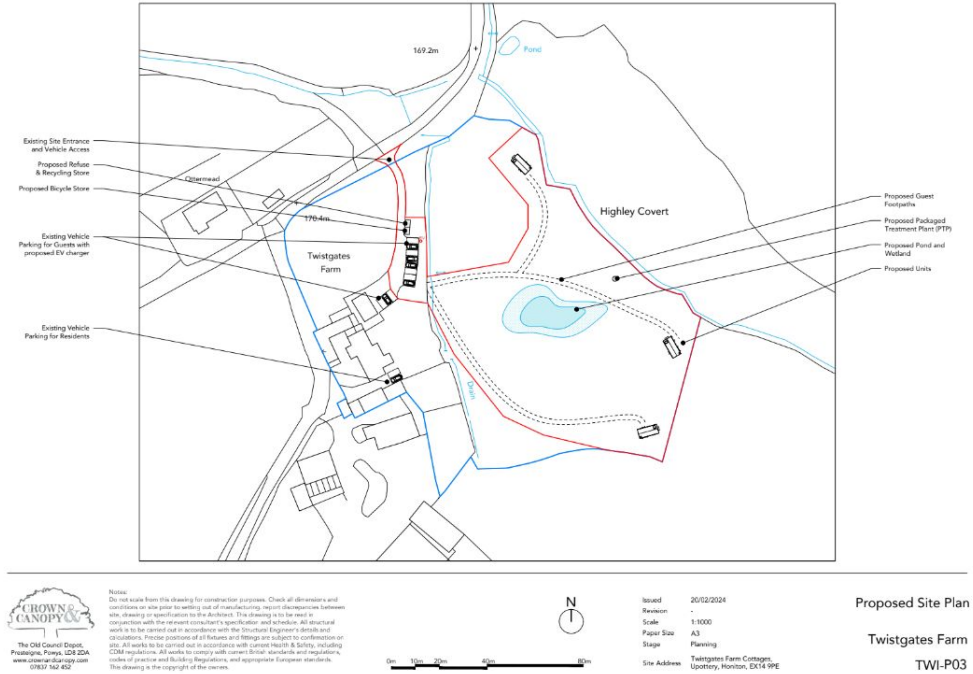
Development Site

The land was acquired by the applicants approximately 20 years ago. Site of development itself is 1.2 hectares in size. The land is bordered by mature trees and hedgerow.

The applicant has a strong interest in enhancing the site for nature through enhancements which will create a wildlife rich site for guests to enjoy but will also make more private and secluded settings for each unit. The proposal is to include a large pond which would represent an excellent site enhancement, visually and environmentally.

The site identified for the accommodation units has been chosen for a formal planning application for several reasons. Visual impact is minimal due to the lower lying nature of the land along with the established trees and hedgerows surrounding the site and there is potential for significant biodiversity net gains through the proposal. There are pleasant views of the surrounding woodland, stream, and meadows providing further ideal siting for a relaxing retreat.

The site also benefits from having an existing access as well as car park for guests, situated adjacent to the road. This will therefore impose no further impact upon the land or visually, since this parking area is shielded from view of the road by the farm buildings themselves. The new proposed footpaths as shown on Site Plan TWI-P02 would be surfaced with geogrid matting to ensure a safe access to each unit.



Site Plan TWI-P02





Image of proposed site



Planning Context



The Development Plan

The proposed development has been assessed against the East Devon Local Plan (2013 - 2031). In addition, national planning policy and non-statutory supplementary documents are relevant material considerations.

The final proposal has been assessed against a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

National Planning Policy

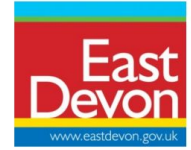
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (on-line)

Local Policy

East Devon Local Plan:

- Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)
- Strategy 33 (Promotion of Tourism in East Devon)
- Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs)
- D1 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- D2 - Landscape Requirements
- D3 - Trees and Development Sites
- D6 – Locations without Access to Natural Gas
- EN5 - Wildlife Habitats and Features
- EN13 - Development on High Quality Agricultural Land
- EN14 - Control of Pollution
- EN18 - Maintenance of Water Quality and Quantity
- EN19 - Adequacy of Foul Sewers and Adequacy of Sewage Treatment Systems
- EN22 - Surface Run-Off Implications of New Development
- E2 - Employment Generating Development in Built-Up Areas
- E4 - Rural Diversification
- E5 - Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas
- E16 - Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities

There is currently no Neighbourhood Plan for Upottery Parish.



Planning History

There have been the following planning applications relating to Twistgates:

Construction of replacement outbuilding to provide holiday accommodation, laundry and store

Twistgates Farm Upottery Honiton EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 12/2691/FUL | Validated: Tue 11 Dec 2012 | Status: Approved

Construction of replacement outbuilding to provide holiday accommodation, laundry and store

Twistgates Farm Upottery Honiton EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 12/1530/FUL | Validated: Tue 10 Jul 2012 | Status: Refused

Removal of existing single storey structure and construction of holiday letting unit including balcony and external staircase.

Twistgates Farm Upottery Honiton EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 10/1463/FUL | Validated: Wed 21 Jul 2010 | Status: Refused

Conversion of barn to holiday let

Twistgates Farm Upottery EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 08/3008/FUL | Validated: Mon 22 Dec 2008 | Status: Approved

Conversion of barn to holiday letting unit

Twistgates Farm (barn) Upottery Devon EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 05/3144/FUL | Validated: Tue 22 Nov 2005 | Status: Approved

Conversion of barn to dwelling

Twistgates Farm Upottery Devon EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 05/2584/FUL | Validated: Mon 03 Oct 2005 | Status: Withdrawn

Convert One Holiday Let To Dwelling

Twistgates Farm Upottery Devon EX14 9PE

Ref. No: 98/P1295 | Validated: Thu 30 Jul 1998 | Status: Refused

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Key Designations

The site lies within the Blackdown Hills AONB but is not within or near any SSSI, SAC, SPA, or Ramsar areas of wildlife conservation.

There are a number of listed buildings nearby, the two nearest being:
Highley Farmhouse including Front Garden Walls
Charles Hayes Farmhouse Grade II*

There is no designated ancient woodland on site.

The site is not within a level 2 or 3 flood risk zone.



Application Proposals



Overview of Proposals

Having renovated 3 holiday lets and constructed a replacement building on the site of a barn over the course of the past two decades to form a successful business, there is scope to expand this further into glamping with a habitat enhancement scheme.

The site for development is 1.2 hectares within 1.67 in total. As this site is an existing tourism business, the applicants are well experienced in catering to the needs of guests and it is in their best interest to maintain the appealing tranquil setting which is appropriate to the locality and what attracts them in the first place.

The applicants are keen to establish an ecotourism business on the land. The proposal would represent a low impact and sustainable rural business, expanding on an existing successful business, which would have social, cultural and significant environmental benefits, while retaining a space that is respectful of the local area.

This expansion of the business to accommodate a modest increase in visitors would fund improvement to the site as a whole as well as providing an opportunity to enhance the habitat for wildlife which is of particular importance to the applicants, as noted in the habitat enhancement plan TWI-P03. Guests can also enjoy this wildlife rich site while being able to enjoy a naturally private and secluded setting for each unit.

The sustainable outdoor tourism accommodation offer would bring economic benefits to the local area through increased overnight visitors and associated increased spend into the local economy. Guests will be provided with bountiful information advising on nearby attractions that can be access on foot or by bike.

This high end outdoor accommodation would diversify the offering in Devon, expanding it to be suitable for those attracted to a more back to nature experience. Leading glamping agency Canopy & Stars have identified that they had 114,000 unique searches for accommodation in Devon in 2022 and currently only represent 100 spaces. The proposal would offer guests the opportunity to relax and unwind in a tranquil nature rich environment, surrounded by wildlife in luxurious accommodation which literally reflects the environment in which it sits.

The proposal is for the siting of 3 cabins. The units are to be sited in the locations outlined in the attached site plan TWI-P02.

The units would serve as year-round accommodation for people visiting East Devon. Each of the 3 units would sleep 2-4 people accommodating a maximum of 12 people on site at any time but are targeted at couples.



Overview of Proposals

Scheme concept

The proposal is inherently low impact with 3 high quality bespoke temporary cabins with internal floorspace of 25m², situated on removable groundscrew foundations.

Each cabin sleeps 2-4 people and has full self catering facilities including a kitchenette, bedroom areas, toilet and shower.

Site layout

The land is situated east of the village of Upottery. The 1.2 acre development site is an attractive meadow bordered by mature trees and hedgerow. It is discreetly hidden from the lane, with pleasant views of the surrounding woodland, stream, and meadows. The secluded layout is important for the target market as well as ensuring that the proposal has no detrimental impact on neighbours and the local area.

Appearance

High quality cabins clad in sustainably sourced timber which will naturally silver off over time, blending with the surrounding landscape. Each are positioned carefully to provide views of nature but without overlooking each other or nearby properties.

As dedicated holiday let accommodation, they have a compact form that gives enough living area for a short stays, but lack the storage and provisions for longer stays or permanent dwelling.

No overhead exterior lighting would be used or installed on the site to minimise disturbance and protect the dark sky experience. All internal lights will be low wattage with a warm hue in order to maintain dark skies and local tranquillity.

Landscape and screening

Minimal visual impact due to the lower lying nature of the land along with the established trees, hedgerows and proposed planting surrounding the site which will provide natural screening.



Overview of Proposals

Construction

The units would be pre-fabricated, brought to site and erected, all in accordance with ecological and arboricultural guidelines. The units are designed to be commensurate in scale to their use.

Utilities (power and water)

Good proximity and access to services. Power supply will be shared with the existing holiday lets, and water with those and the main house.

The site benefits from one existing EV charging point which would be available for use by guests, and it is proposed to install an additional one within this proposal.

Access and servicing

The site benefits from the existing access and parking from the main site. This is concealed from view from the main road by the farm buildings as well as hedgerow and trees.

The land is situated to enjoy direct access to public footpaths and bridleways and benefits from a peaceful situation with beautiful views over the surrounding countryside. Nearest pubs are circa 2.5 miles away in Churchinford and Uptottery, with the closest shop in Churchinford .

Secure bicycle storage will be situated in the car park and there are already electric car charging points.

Waste and recycling

Separate refuse and recycling storage facilities will be located at the car park, and collection will be at the road end on the allocated day, to be organised by the applicant or site manager.

Drainage

A new biodigester will service all three units.

The minimal surface water run-off from the units will discharge through permeable surfaces straight into the ground. All paths will be permeable to assist with rainwater drainage.



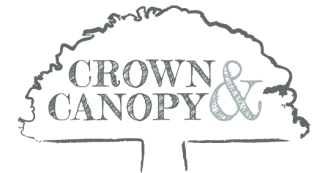
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Proposed 3D Views

Twistgates Farm
TWI-P12

Render of proposed cabin by the stream



Assessment



Principle of Development

The proposed glamping venture would ensure a sustainable revenue for the land and expand upon a business that is also regenerative for the land and contributes to the local area.

The principle of the development is, therefore, considered acceptable and in compliance with Local and national policies.

Rural Economy and Tourism

Tourism in the AONB is largely characterised by high-quality accommodation and quiet countryside pursuits and it is well established that there is a balance to be struck between realising the economic benefits of tourism and conserving the environmental wealth that is the attraction to visitors.

Strategy 33 - Promotion of Tourism in East Devon: The Council will support and facilitate high quality tourism in East Devon that promotes a year-round industry that is responsive to changing visitor demands.

E19 - Holiday Accommodation Parks

Outside of designated landscape areas, proposals for new sites and extensions of existing sites will be permitted where they meet the following six criteria:

- The proposal relates sensitively in scale and siting to the surroundings and includes extensive landscaping and visual screening to mitigate against adverse impacts. They do not affect habitats or protected species.
- They are within, or in close proximity, to an existing settlement but would not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of that settlement or the amenities of adjoining residents.
- They would not use the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- They will be provided with adequate services and utilities
- Traffic generated by the proposal can be accommodated safely on the local highway network and safe highway access to the site can be achieved.
- The development will be subject to the provisions of plan policy in terms of sustainable construction and on site renewable energy production.

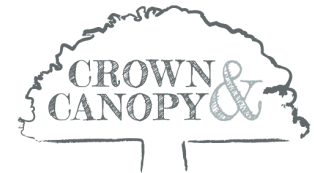
Scheme Response

While the site is not directly within a settlement, the nature of the proposal is such that it requires a rural location to deliver an authentic nature based retreat. It is immediately surrounded by beautiful landscape providing ample walks, with the two closest public footpaths under 1km circa from site. The closest local pub is in Upottery, a 40 minute walk, around 1.2 miles from site, with the closest shop in Churchinford approximately 1-hour walk or 5 minute drive. Upottery also has a bus service.

Over the past few years winter bookings have been increasing year on year with around a 30% to 40% increase each year. This type of temporary timber built outdoor tourism accommodation enables year-round occupancy which not only enhances the tourism offer, but also brings in visitors and related economic contributions and employment to the local area through visitors frequenting local shops, pubs and businesses, especially important through the winter months.

The proposal for 3 temporary units is small scale and low impact, it has been sensitively designed to ensure minimal visual impact, and to be a structure that reflects and respects the natural landscape through use of natural materials.

Through the extensive habitat enhancement plan, the proposal would significantly enhance the biodiversity and wildlife value of the land and the wider landscape.



Principle of Development

Policy Context

Achieving sustainable development is a key principle of the **NPPF**, and paragraph 11 of the Framework sets out a clear presumption in favour of granting permission for sustainable forms of development.

The Framework seeks to support a prosperous rural economy, and paragraph 84 states that planning decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all type of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification and other land-based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Paragraph 84 notes that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

E5 - Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas

In villages and rural areas small scale economic development (not including retail use classes/other uses in Classes A1 – A4) and expansion of existing businesses designed to provide jobs for local people will be permitted where:

If new buildings are involved, it is on previously developed land. Or

If on a Greenfield site, shall be well related in scale and form and in sustainability terms to the village and surrounding areas.

Provided that the following criteria are met: a safe highway access, the local highway network is capable of accommodating the forecast increase in traffic established by a Traffic Assessment, no detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, wildlife, landscape or historic interests. All new buildings shall be designed to blend into their location and shall meet sustainable construction and on site renewable energy production.

Scheme Response

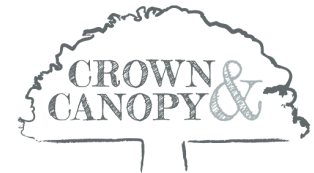
There is a thread of sustainability running through the whole development, from the extensive environmental enhancements proposed throughout the site to the sustainable travel plan..

The proposal will contribute to the local economic, social and environmental conditions through a richer, more diverse tourism offer, thereby aligning with the principle of sustainable development which is a 'golden thread' running through the NPPF.

The proposal represents the expansion of a sustainable and environmentally minded rural business which will boost rural, sustainable tourism and bring wider benefits to local businesses, as well as increased employment for the business itself.

The proposed site is attractive and along with the extensive habitat enhancements including a lake and native tree planting, an outstanding guest experience would be delivered. This has the combined effect of increasing peoples enjoyment and care of the Devon countryside and directly increasing biodiversity in the area.

Accordingly, the principle of the proposed development is considered strongly supported in planning terms.



Design and Visual Impact

Policy Context

The NPPF places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high-quality design. The Framework states that “Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps to make development acceptable to communities”.

In terms of heritage, the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting (paragraph 194).

Policies of relevance to design and visual impact in the Local Plan are **D1 Achieving High Quality and Locally Distinctive Design** and **D2 Landscaping requirements**

21.1 Promoting high quality and locally distinctive design is of critical importance. We will seek to ensure the highest design standards to reflect local traditions and use of local materials. The varied geology of East Devon has helped to ensure we have a diverse range of traditions and style in development and we see it as essential that traditional vernacular is retained. This does not mean that building should not meet sustainability credentials and care with siting, orientation and layout of new buildings can help with promotion and utilisation of sustainable technologies

21.5 Tree planting and retention should form an integral part of a landscaping scheme submitted with a development proposal either initially or at a detailed planning stage.

Scheme Response

The design of the units has been carefully considered to be in keeping with the rural surrounding. Each are timber clad to blend in with the natural environment, and have corrugated metal roofs that are in keeping with the agricultural local vernacular. Two are nestled in the wooded field boundary overlooking the stream, with the other situated close to an existing boundary hedge, blending in seamlessly with the environment.

In line with Policy D1 Achieving High Quality and Locally Distinctive Design, the proposal incorporates an extremely high standard of design, contributing positively to the outdoor accommodation provision in the area. As the policy details, the design standard is not exclusively restricted to the units, the site has been designed as a whole. As an established site for small scale tourist accommodation within a rural setting, it is in the applicant’s interests to maintain its authentic feel, suitable to its locality. The site’s natural features such as hedgerow, meadow, trees and a stream will be both maintained and enhanced with additional planting and a pond to encourage biodiversity and wildlife, as shown on the Habitat Enhancement Plan TWI-P03.

With the units being located not only beyond the existing car park and out of site of any roads, but also with the natural screening of existing vegetation and proposed planting, it upholds a private nature setting for the guests of the cabins, as well as the privacy of neighbours and guests in the existing holiday lets. As fully self catered units, there is no need for additional ancillary buildings which mitigates impact.

Accordingly, the design of the proposal in terms of its siting, appearance and visual impact is considered in accordance with the relevant policy considerations.



Landscape and Ecology

Policy Context

Paragraph 174 of the Framework states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Strategy 46 - Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs

Development will need to be undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to, and helps conserve and enhance the quality and local distinctiveness of, the natural and historic landscape character of East Devon, in particular in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Development will only be permitted where it:

conserves and enhances the landscape character of the area;

does not undermine landscape quality; and

is appropriate to the economic, social and well being of the area.

EN5 - Wildlife Habitats and Features

Wherever possible sites supporting important wildlife habitats or features not otherwise protected by policies will be protected from development proposals which would result in the loss of or damage to their nature conservation value, particularly where these form a link between or buffer to designated wildlife sites. Where potential arises positive opportunities for habitat creation will be encouraged through the development process.

Where development is permitted on such sites mitigation will be required to reduce the negative impacts and where this is not possible adequate compensatory habitat enhancement or creation schemes will be required and/or measures required to be taken to ensure that the impacts of the development on valued natural features and wildlife have been mitigated to their fullest practical extent.

Scheme Response

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment was carried out by Redstone Ecology in November 2023. A summary of findings and recommendations are outlined below.

The grassland was assessed as being of Site importance and the boundary hedgerows and woodland of Local ecological importance.

Statutory Sites

- There are no statutory designated sites within 1km of the site.
- A single European designated site is present within the 10km buffer which was the Quants Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located 9km North of the site.
- This site is located within a Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone. This however does not include glamping applications or any residential applications including overnight accommodation as a risk factor.

The report concludes that:

With the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement strategy described above, the proposed development would be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation.

The proposed grassland enhancement along with the wetland habitat creation would provide an overall habitat enhancement that would be beneficial at the Local level in the long-term and result in a net gain in biodiversity. Effects on protected and notable species in the post-construction phase are considered to be Negligible and the overall post construction impacts on habitats would be beneficial at the Site level long-term. The proposed grassland enhancement, wetland habitat, bat and bird boxes would provide supplementary habitat for a range of species including bats, nesting birds, foraging badgers and hedgehog and reptiles.



Landscape and Ecology

Notes

All measures described are for the ecological enhancement of the site, to mitigate for any loss of habitats and result in a Net Gain in Biodiversity. All are based on ecologist recommendations.

Geogrid matting would be used beneath paths, and the glamping units secured by temporary removable ground screw foundations, to minimise impacts on the grassland habitat.

The grassland within the site and surrounding field would be managed to increase the condition from Moderate to Good through altering the cutting regime. This would allow the grassland to have greater structure throughout the year.

Wetland habitat would be created including standing water and a wetland meadow created around the meager to the water body.

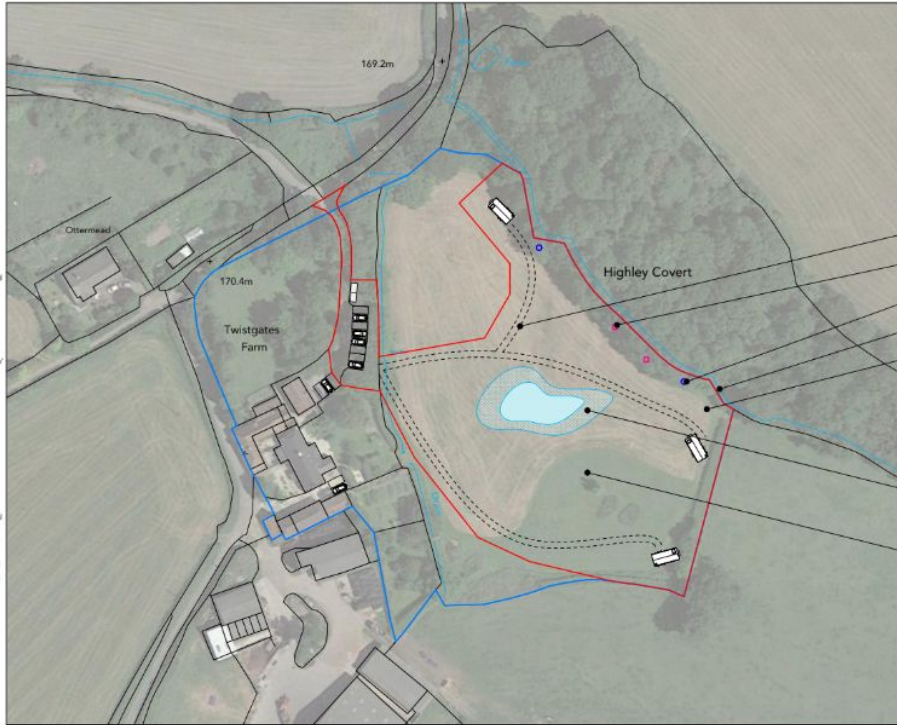
Retained trees, hedgerow and woodland would be fenced and protected during construction in accordance with best practice guidance detailed in BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction (British Standard, 2012) to reduce potential impacts and accidental damage.

To ensure no impacts occur to the stream standard construction safeguards, such as those provided by CIBA Charles, 2015, will take place in relation to noise, vibration, dust and contaminated run-off causing any impact.

2x bat boxes on suitable trees would provide additional roosting habitat post development.
2x traditional wooden bird boxes would be installed on suitable trees to provide additional nesting habitat.

There will be no artificial lighting beyond that associated with the new holiday units. External lighting will be of a downward pointing design to avoid illumination of the nearby habitats, and on timers to further minimise any impact on bats or other nocturnal wildlife in the area.

For more information and full details of mitigation and enhancement recommendations, see the ecology report included with the application.



- Geogrid matting beneath all paths.
- 2x Proposed Bat Boxes.
- 2x Proposed Bird Boxes.
- Proposed Pond.
- Units secured by temporary removable ground screw foundations to minimise their ecological impact.
- Proposed wetland habitat with standing water and surrounding wetland meadow.
- All grassland within the site would be managed to increase the quality of it's condition.



The Old Council Depot,
Preston, Powys, LS2 2DA
www.crowncanopy.com
01837 162 452

Notes

Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes. Check all dimensions and conditions on site prior to writing out of manufacturing. Report discrepancies between site, drawing or specification to the Architect. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with the relevant consultant's specification and schedule. All structural work is to be carried out in accordance with the Structural Engineer's details and calculations. Precise positions of all fixtures and fittings are subject to confirmation on site. All works to be carried out in accordance with current Health & Safety, including CDM regulations. All works to comply with current British standards and regulatory codes of practice and Building Regulations, and appropriate European standards. This drawing is the copyright of the client.



0m 10m 20m 40m 80m

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Revision: -
Scale: 1:1000
Paper Size: A3
Stage: Planning
Site Address: Twistgates Farm Cottages
Uptonwy, Hornton, EKI4 9PE

Habitat Enhancement
Plan
Twistgates Farm
TWI-P04

Habitat Enhancement Plan TWI-P03



Flood risk and drainage

The proposed site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1 therefore is at very low risk of flooding and a flood risk assessment is not deemed necessary.

There is already a Klargester which will currently services the existing holiday lets and main house. It is proposed to add a biodigester to encompass the additional units which will also discharge into the stream. This is shown on TWI-PO1, the location of which has been carefully considered due to topography and to avoid the need for a drainage field.



Amenity Impact

The NPPF requires a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers of land and buildings.

Included in E16 - Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities

Proposals for hotel development, conversion of dwellings into self catering accommodation, guest houses and upgrading of existing holiday accommodation will be permitted within the Built-up Area Boundaries of towns and villages provided the following criteria are met in full:

- 1. The scale, level and intensity of development is compatible with the character of the surrounding area, including adjoining and nearby settlements.*
- 2. The proposal does not harm the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties.*
- 3. On-site servicing and parking facilities are provided commensurate with the level and intensity of the proposed use.*
- 4. The proposal is accessible on foot, by bicycle and public transport and will not impair road safety or the free flow of traffic.*

Conversion or use of existing buildings in the open countryside, within close proximity to the main farmhouse or country house, for small-scale holiday accommodation uses will be permitted where compatible with the above.

Scheme Response

The proposal has been carefully designed to minimise amenity impact. As an existing and successful holiday let business, the applicants have gained experience in ensuring their guests have the utmost guest experience and access to amenities.

The 3 new units will be constructed in untreated timber which will silver off over time and result in a natural appearance. The units are set well away from the roadways and existing holiday lets and are, set against a backdrop of mature trees and vegetation which further reduces their visual and amenity impact. They are fully self catered accommodation, meaning no further buildings are required and they are not adding pressure on any existing amenities onsite or of neighbouring properties.

The applicants have previously had permission granted twice on renovating an existing barn, however after appraising the feasibility of this it was found to be not economically viable and therefore this proposal offers better long term investment potential.

Onsite parking facilities are existing and no further developments are required to cater for the additional guests. The nature of the development is of a tranquil back to nature retreat, and the proposal is small, with units, targeted primarily at couples with a pop-up sleeping area for small children. The level of noise generated by the development will be minimal and the units are fully insulated.

No overhead exterior lighting would be used or installed on the site to minimise disturbance and protect the dark sky experience. All internal lights will be low wattage with a warm hue in order to maintain dark skies and local tranquillity.



Transport and Access

Policy Context

Paragraph 105 of the **NPPF** states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in order to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air-quality and public health.

Paragraph 111 states that, development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or residual cumulative impacts of the road network would be severe.

Strategy 5B - Sustainable Transport

Development proposals should contribute to the objectives of promoting and securing sustainable modes of travel and transport. Development will need to be of a form, incorporate proposals for and be at locations where it will encourage and allow for efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Scheme Response

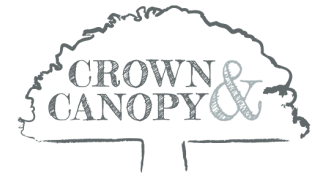
Transport and access of the proposed development has been carefully considered to ensure safe movement of guests and to ensure no negative impact on highways. As the development is small scale, it is not anticipated that there will be any high level impact on highways or the road network.

An existing access point is to be used, this is historic access with suitable visibility splays. It's use negates the need for additional works and disruption, as does the existing car park.

From the car park, guests would access the units via recycled geogrid mat paths. There would be no vehicular access in to the fields, and all cars would be left at the car park.

1 EV car charging point is already provided, with another proposed and would be available for use by guests. Secure bicycle storage for 12 bicycles would be located at the car park.

As a part of their established tourism business, the applicants send out a welcome package for guests prior to their visit full of useful information on things to do. This encompasses a multitude of tips and recommendations to maximise their stay, from circular walks straight from the site, heritage sites to explore and activities to cater to all types of visitor.



Scheme Benefits

E5 - Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas

In villages and rural areas small scale economic development (not including retail use classes/other uses in Classes A1 – A4) and expansion of existing businesses designed to provide jobs for local people will be permitted where:

If new buildings are involved, it is on previously developed land. Or

If on a Greenfield site, shall be well related in scale and form and in sustainability terms to the village and surrounding areas.

Provided that the following criteria are met: a safe highway access, the local highway network is capable of accommodating the forecast increase in traffic established by a Traffic Assessment, no detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, wildlife, landscape or historic interests. All new buildings shall be designed to blend into their location and shall meet sustainable construction and on site renewable energy production.

Scheme

Response

The development will generate a healthy spend into the local economy. We would predict the combined spend from the three units to be circa £132,057 per year based on 60% occupancy calculated on an average of 3 people per unit with a £67 per head per day spend.

The development will generate a significant employment provision of an estimated 22.5 hours per week. This calculation based upon 2 changeovers per week per unit of circa 3 hours per change = 0.75 FTE (30 hrs per week, 12 months per year). This role involves changeovers, cleaning, re-stocking, and all laundry services for the holiday lets.

Furthermore, it is expected that the hours per week for the gardeners currently contracted from mid March-December will increase by 2 hours, to 6 hours per week.

Overall, this proposal presents a positive economic development to the AONB, whilst adding to the diversity of offering the area makes.



Summary and Conclusion



Summary

This Statement is submitted in support of a planning application by Crown and Canopy for the siting of 3 temporary cabins on removable ground screw foundations at Twistgates Farm near Honiton to be used for tourist accommodation, along with landscaping of a pond for habitat enhancement. This would be an expansion of a successful business on the site which already consists of holiday lets, and fund the significant habitat enhancement of the site for the enjoyment of guests and wellbeing of the land and wildlife.

This sustainable outdoor tourist accommodation proposal would represent the establishment of a low impact, sustainable, rural business. The proposal would deliver a year-round, low carbon development which contributes to the local rural economy, protects and enhances the environment and aligns with local and national aims to promote sustainable tourism.

The innovative design of the accommodation celebrates the surrounding natural landscape, sustainable measures are integrated throughout the proposal whilst the substantial habitat enhancements result in significant biodiversity net gain and wider connectivity. The proposal is sensitive to its rural location and has been designed accordingly. The overall project will contribute to the local social, economic and environmental landscape.

The principle of development is strongly supported by planning policies and the benefits arising from the proposals are significant and should weigh heavily in favour of the application.

In summary, the proposals would:

- Support the expansion of an existing rural business within the same tourism industry
- Contribute towards the long-term economic sustainability of the local area
- Provide high-quality, unique tourist accommodation that will contribute towards the wider tourism offer and economic well-being of the area
- Sit sensitively on the site and through the form and appearance of the units combined with their private situation would have minimal visual impact
- Deliver significant biodiversity net gains, increase landscape scale connectivity and develop revenue for the ongoing management of the land

For the reasons set in the Statement the proposals are considered to fully comply with the relevant policies contained with the East Devon Local Plan and accord with the principles set out in the NPPF.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that planning permission is granted.

