

# DESIGN, ACCESS, LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Erection of 20 pre-fabricated glamping pods and associated footpaths, retrospective alterations to previously consented raised timber decking adjacent to driving range with addition of pergola and associated alterations, and erection of pergolas over clubhouse rear patio

Blacknest Golf & Country Club, Frith End Road, Blacknest, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4QL

Applicant : 360 Beech Limited

Ref: 20-2487/FULPP/CF/DAS/V2

Date: November 2022—revision A dated 25th April 2023—revision B dated 15/02/2024



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Figure 1: Aerial map showing areas of proposals, showing tipis erected and a previous event using temporary camping 'tipis' for additional overnight accommodation —copyright Google Maps 2022

## INTRODUCTION:

This revised Design, Access, Landscape & Visual Impact Statement is submitted in support of a s73 amendment application to alter the type of cabin style in the consented proposals to install 20 glamping cabins and alterations to the driving range to create raised decking with a pergola and opening up the sides, and 2 pergolas over the clubhouse's rear patio.

**This s73 application only alters the type of cabin with minor alterations to paths and landscaping to suit the changes in cabin type and sizes. The site layout is not significantly altered. The remainder of the proposals are not altered by this s73.**

Planning policies are addressed in a separate statement.

Previous planning application SDNP/18/03009/FUL consented at appeal, superseded by MMA SDNP/21/00335/CND, consented for 3 linked tipis and the associated facilities outbuilding, as well as 10 hotel rooms in the main building and raised decking/paths by the driving range to facilitate 3 hotel rooms.

These proposals further support the existing facilities on site, and the cabins are proposed to be installed in three phases to allow flexibility based on the success of the first phases of the proposals.

## SITE & DESIGN:

Blacknest Golf & Country Club lies to the South of the settlement of Blacknest,

and is bounded to the North-East by Frith End Road, which is the main access to the site, and to the North-West by The Street.

The site is heavily screened from both roads by existing mature trees and hedges, that line the majority of the site, with the vegetation slightly thinning and reducing to hedges along the short boundary with Frith End Road.

The property is reached via a private driveway that serves the car park and main buildings.

The site lies within the countryside and consists of an 18 hole golf course, the clubhouse and driving range, and a 6 hole Academy course to the East side of the site adjacent to the main road.

The proposals are sited well within the curtilage of the manmade landscape and golf course, and in the main cannot be seen from the main roads.

The clubhouse is two storey of chalet roof style in brick, render and red pantiles, with an elongated single storey timber driving range and teaching suite attached to the North, facing the North-West orientated driving range. It was purpose built in 1993, and has had several extensions added to it. There are also several associated outbuildings within close proximity to the main building including the 3 linked tips and associated facilities building, and a large car park.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

### Clubhouse rear patio pergolas:

*These works are retrospective, erected to provide a solution to the need to socially distance and to provide covered external seating areas.*

The proposals are to replace the need for multiple single umbrellas and the unsustainable regular replacement due to damage, and to create a more cohesive and longer term solution for year round sun and light rain protection.

The timber pergolas took design reference from the existing pergolas that previously ran between the path and the orangery's side doors. These existing pergolas did not provide a practical purpose apart from a feature and support for a climbing plant.

The new pergolas were designed to frame the sides of the orangery's main doors, allowing natural light to still enter the orangery and framed the views out, as well as

providing two large covered areas that tables could be sited under at distance, as well as leaving suitable areas for tables on the patio to be exposed to the sunshine.

The timber reflects the timber cladding on the clubhouse, and creates a feature for the climbing plants to continue to grow over.

### Driving range raised decking and pergola:

*These works are retrospective, and in part in response to the pandemic requiring social distancing and external seating, and to support the driving range's new gaming system.*

Previous planning application SDNP/18/03009/FUL consented at appeal, superseded by MMA SDNP/21/00335/CND, provided consent for raised decking/paths in this location.

These proposals infill the remaining area between the car park and driving range to create a larger decked area.

The design alterations improve ease of access into the driving range, as well as providing a larger area for chairs and tables to be spaced out for those using or waiting to use the driving range. At present golfers have to wait in the car park or outside the single entrance into the driving range, as there is no other method to know when a bay becomes available, apart from use of the online 'booking system' for some bays.

This design alteration significantly improves safety on site as golfers can wait out of the way of moving vehicles, in particular for those waiting with children.

The pergola has a similar design principle to the pergolas erected over the Clubhouse's rear patio, to provide some protection from sun and light rain, whilst also reflecting the material used in the gable ends of the clubhouse and the driving range.



Figure 2: Example of Nokken cabin in woodland setting. Copyright Nokken

The design of the raised decking was also altered to improve the ease of construction and move the footings further away from the retained trees, as floor joists span between the footings by the car park and load onto the existing driving range's foundations, removing the need for central supports.

#### Glamping cabins and paths:

The cabins are prefabricated by Nokken with a rectangular shape clad in black/dark grey natural timber cladding and metal panels, and a parapet roof.

Three different cabin types are proposed in similar styles in order to provide and cater to a wider range of requirements ie. couples, families, disability requirements etc.

The change in style of the cabins has been chosen to reflect the site's new custodians' preferences for a more modern and higher quality cabin style and finish, with a separate entrance door to the main picture window view out into the landscape. The cabins are highly insulated and eco conscious in design and construction.

The black/dark grey timber and metal panelling helps them blend into their setting. The use of natural timber cladding reflects the existing materials used on the clubhouse, and also the cladding on the adjacent approved facilities outbuilding that is in the process of being constructed.

From a design appearance these alternative cabins are unobtrusive in appearance, more in-keeping with the landscape than the previous cabin style, and due to their pre-fabricated nature, makes them easier to move and install on site in phases.

## ACCESS:

#### Clubhouse rear patio pergola:

The pergolas do not impact on existing access to the clubhouse, and they improve ease of access for the less mobile and wheelchair users, as well as pushchairs to be comfortably accommodated under cover when using the external patio due to not relying on being close to the tables as the pergolas cover a much larger area.

#### Driving range raised decking and pergola:

The raised decking and associated alterations to open up the rear of the driving range significantly improves ease of access into the driving range:

- increases the width of the access points into the driving range;
- Access point leads onto a large open area that can hold chairs and tables to allow people to wait to use a bay or whilst waiting/watching others using the driving range, which opens up the opportunity for families and children's parties to use the range more as there is space to sit whilst awaiting turns or to watch.
- Provides larger area for wheelchair users, and pushchairs to be accommodated for those using or watching others use the driving range;
- Improves ease of access to the majority of the bays, rather than having to walk behind others playing, significantly reducing risk of accidents.
- Moves the ball dispenser to a more open space, further reducing risk of accidents from others using the range whilst using the machine as ones back is no longer facing them.

#### Glamping cabins and paths:

There are 3 types of cabins including a Part M accessible cabin. Three accessible cabins are proposed to provide a range of types to allow catering to a wider range of users.

The accessible cabins can also cater to larger families, as well as parents with younger children being able to use a Studio suite or disabled cabin (NKN-29-A), with an adjacent Micro Studio (NKN-18) used for older children or other family members, or a carer with their recipient of care.

The arrangement of the various sizes of cabins and their phasing of construction has been carefully considered to cater for the demand in type of accommodation currently being requested by guests, and the most popular size of hotel room currently requested.

The cabins are constructed as modules that can be placed onto flat bed vehicles or trailers to allow ease of movement from the workshop, onto transport, and then onto site. The cabins are installed on site using above ground EasyPads or helical screw piles (ground screws). This means the floor levels of the pods are slightly raised from the underside of the module, hence the majority of the cabins will have part of the ground, to their fronts in particular, excavated to allow level access into the front door of the cabins to improve access. Particularly important for the accessible cabins.

The proposals require creating a permeable hardcore base for the cabins to sit on to provide more stability for the ground without changing the underlying structure, which

will be installed in the excavated ground where required to allow level access to the front door of the cabins.

The remainder of the height different between the paths and the cabins can be accommodated through either the minor lowering of cabins into the ground, or gently ramping of the paths to the front door.

*2 cabins in the copse cannot be 'sunken' or have land ramped up, therefore, a couple of timber steps formed by decking or stones are required for these 2 cabins, and two other cabins adjacent to the copse of trees cannot be 'sunken' but could have land ramped up to the front door for level access, concealed by vegetation.*

The main path and paths leading to the cabins are approximately 1.5m wide to accommodate a buggy (electric) to ease moving luggage, cleaning equipment/laundry, and less abled guests to and from the cabins.

The paths are also designed to allow construction with as small a slope as possible to cater for ease of wheelchair and pushchair access with flush access to the adjacent grass to reduce trip hazards for those with visual impairments.

## LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS:

### Clubhouse rear patio pergola:

Retrospective works—the pergolas are single storey and located to the rear of the Clubhouse, which is a significant distance from the nearest site boundaries.

The pergolas are of similar materials and style to the existing building and not considered to adversely impact the landscape, in particular as they are very well screened by the existing boundary trees and trees on site and general distance.

### Driving range raised decking and pergola:

Whilst the decking has a reasonable height difference at the furthest North point, the decking and pergola are well screened by the existing driving range, trees surrounding the car park and site boundaries and orientation with the nearest public viewing points.

The decking and pergolas are constructed of similar materials to the clubhouse and driving range, and below the eaves line of the driving range. They are not considered to have an adverse visual impact on the landscape.

### Glamping cabins and paths:

The cabins are single storey and consist of a black/dark grey stained natural timber cladding and metal cladding panels, and a parapet roof with a black/dark grey metal trim.

The timber cladding finishes reflect the timber cladding on the clubhouse and facilities outbuilding.

The cabins are located in small groups with new trees and planting areas in between, with 6 cabins set within/adjacent to the existing central tree copse. All the cabins are in close proximity to the existing tipis and facilities outbuilding, and set around/between the existing copse of trees and the thick tree screening to the South boundary which heavily screens the cabins from the public viewing points.

The location of the cabins and existing trees screen the cabins from the nearest public view point, Frith End Road.

The cabins are considered to not have a negative visual impact on the landscape both in proximity and afar due to the nature of their design, their location and the existing heavy boundary screening and manmade nature of the site. The additional tree planting further screens the cabins within the landscape, to make them nearly invisible from further afield.

## IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES:

### Clubhouse rear patio pergola:

These pergolas are over an existing patio and replace existing patio umbrellas. The proposals are not intended to increase noise generating activities, and are well visually screened due to distance, and boundary treatments. Therefore, considered to have no negative impact on neighbouring properties.

### Driving range raised decking and pergola:

The raised decking and pergola are to improve access to the existing driving range and reduce people waiting in the car park for a bay.

Whilst it provides space for people to sit and wait, the intended use as an ancillary sitting area to the driving range is not considered to increase noise. The proposals are also only in use when the driving range is in operation. These proposals are considered to have no negative impact on neighbouring properties.

Glamping cabins and paths:

The cabins themselves have acoustic attenuation properties due to being insulated, which significantly reduces any noise resulting from internal occupation.

Whilst occupants may sit on the decking in the evenings, there will be staff on-site 24/7 to attend and monitor overnight guests. Therefore, should there be any unnecessary noise or potential noise issues, the staff will be able to address this promptly.

The minor vehicle movements of guests/tourists in the evenings and guest movement around the site after dark is not considered to negatively impact neighbouring properties from a noise or visual perspective as the cabins are well screened, external lighting is all low level and downwards shielded and there are staff on site to monitor guest movements, and as existing there are hotel rooms on site which these proposals support.

**CONCLUSION:**

In the policy context it is considered these proposals are consistent with relevant planning policies of the South Downs Local Plan, and government legislation set out in the NPPF.

In particular the proposals comply with the SDNP's 'Camping and Glamping Technical Advice Note' July 2021, which focuses on increasing tourism accommodation in the SDNP on appropriate sites. This site is an existing leisure and recreation facility, therefore, the proposals are sustainably and suitably located, and are ancillary to and support the main function of the site.

It is considered that the design and locations of the proposals compliment the existing buildings and layout on site, and improves access for all to use the existing and additional facilities proposed.

All the proposals have been carefully located near to the existing group of buildings to reduce the area of built development within the manmade landscape and as a result are set back well into the site, which further heavily restricts the visibility of the proposals.

Due to the manmade landscape and layout of the site, the proposals are considered to

not negatively impact the appearance of the landscape from the public viewing points, neighbouring properties and from afar.

**The alternative cabin style proposed is considered to be a more suitable type for the locality, with a higher quality appearance, better insulated and designed with an eco conscious focus in mind.**

**The revised cabin type will sit comfortably within the landscape, and there are considered to be no negative impacts resulting from the change in cabin manufacturer and the resulting alterations required to accommodate the change in cabin within the landscape.**

Refer to Noise Tranquillity Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Checklist for further information.

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