Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

THE DAIRY, HULME FARM
FREEHAY

SEPTEMBER 2023

Site Address:
The Dairy, Hollington Road, Freehay, Staffordshire, ST10 1RE

Applicant:
Mr. Doyle

Proposal:
Siting of Glamping Pod

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 21st September 2023
Job Reference: RDP/2023/091

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. Doyle to seek full planning permission for the siting of a glamping pod on land at The Dairy, Hollington Road, Freehay.

1.2 The proposed glamping pod will occupy a footprint of 37.3 square metres and will stand to a height of 3.2 metres (3.85 metres on its south elevation owing to the change in levels across the site). The pod will be constructed from timber and have a domed appearance typical of this kind of installation. Its accommodation will comprise of a siting / kitchen area, two bedrooms and a shower room / toilet.

1.3 The glamping pod will be located to the west of the existing dwellinghouse, within its rear garden and southeast of an existing agricultural building which is also within the applicant's ownership. An area of hardstanding to the north of the glamping pod will be modestly enlarged to provide two parking spaces for use by guests.

1.4 Vehicular access to the site will be taken direct off the Hollington Road to the southeast of the dwellinghouse, via the existing track that was recently approved under application SMD/2021/0540. The access will be shared with the existing dwellinghouse.

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site lies within the rural area and comprises a detached barn that was converted to a dwellinghouse via Class MB Permitted Development Rights (LPA Reference: DET/2014/0054). The dwelling forms part of a small holding that extends to some 5.5 acres which is farmed by the applicant.

2.2 An agricultural building is located to the northwest of the existing dwelling and garden, with outbuildings associated with Hulme Farm located beyond the northern site boundary. Open fields extend to the south and the west. An existing detached bungalow associated with Hulme Farm is located immediately to the east of the site, beyond the existing dwellinghouse and access track.

2.3 Vehicular access to the site is taken via the recently constructed access track that connects with Hollington Road to the southeast, as approved under application SMD/2021/0540. The site is not located within a Conservation Area, nor are there are any statutorily listed buildings located within close proximity of the site.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into account any relevant material considerations. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance to the determination of the application:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering (amongst others):

- Quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers

- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community

- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce

- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the

rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that these objectives will be achieved by, amongst other measures:

- Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area, requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the landscape

- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E4.

3.4 Policy E4 of the Local Plan relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that new tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 to SS10. In addition:

1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

   A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

   B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

   C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

3.5 Policy E4 goes on to state that new accommodation, attractions and facilities should support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities, and that all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance

3.6 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;

- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;

- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

3.7 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with

the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by (amongst other measures):

- Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

- Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of securing high quality design, ensuring highway safety and boosting the rural economy. The content of the NPPF has been taken into account in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Tourism Strategy (2022-2027)

4.2 The recently published Tourism Strategy places an emphasis on raising the profile of the Staffordshire Moorlands so that it becomes a stronger destination as a place for both day visits and longer holidays, improving the current offer and unlocking the District's potential and boost the local economy. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

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4.3 The above prior approval application was submitted pursuant to Class MB [as was] of the Permitted Development Order and secured approval for the formation of the existing dwellinghouse located on the site. The conclusions of the Local Authority in their assessment of that application are referenced within the Statement of Case as a material consideration.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application proposes the siting of a glamping pod on land within the domestic curtilage of an existing dwelling, on a site that is located within the rural area. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to development in the rural areas and confirms support for new tourism developments where they meet the requirements of policy E4 of the Local Plan.

5.2 Policy E4 of the Local Plan states that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer either:

A) Good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) In locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

C) In areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

5.3 Facilitating more overnight stays is a key objective of the Local Authority's recently published Tourism Strategy which identifies a lack of accommodation investment and a dominance of day visitors being weaknesses of the tourism economy in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

5.4 The Tourism Strategy sets out a series of aims and objectives aimed at growing the tourism economy in the Moorlands, including the following:

- *Get visitors to stay longer in the area by developing itineraries that combine Alton Towers with other experiences especially 'Activities' and 'Attractions', moving from a day visit to an overnight, or a 1 night to a 2 night visit.*

- *Encourage accommodation development – small scale, quality, catered & self-catered that keeps visitors in the local area.*

- *Expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions.*

- *Encourage accommodation development in the towns/villages, at existing sites where services are already in place.*

5.5 The submitted proposal will provide a small-scale form of overnight accommodation that will help to encourage visitors to remain in the area and stay overnight, thereby helping to keep their spending within the local area, as per the objectives of the Tourism Strategy. Such economic benefits are reinforced by paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

> *"sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside"*

5.6 The Tourism Strategy acknowledges that countryside within the Moorlands as being 'outstanding' and identifies the landscape and gentle activity such as cycling and walking as being an area of strength within the Moorlands.

5.7 The application site affords direct access to the local public footpath network (Cheadle 15 / Cheadle 44) which provides access to the surrounding countryside. The Queens Public House also lies a relatively short walk away (580m).

5.8 The site also lies relatively close to Cheadle, which is located well within the recognised 5km threshold for cycling. Within Cheadle there are a wealth of local services, including the St. Giles' Catholic Church (Pugin's Gem) which the Tourism Strategy identifies as one of the main attractions within the Moorlands.

5.9 There is also a limited public transport service whose bus stops are located close to the site. Opportunities also exist for shopping deliveries to be made to the site also thereby also contributing to minimising vehicular movements to and from the site. Even if journeys by car are made or required, these will be short in duration given the proximity of the site to the Churnet Valley and other tourist attractions in the local area. It is nevertheless clear that opportunities to access the surrounding countryside and local facilities by means other than the car do exist from this site.

5.10 In reaching this conclusion we draw attention to the Local Authority's conclusions in determining the original prior approval application on the site (DET/2014/0054) for the conversion of the former agricultural building to a dwelling under Class MB Permitted Development Rights (now Class Q). That dwelling now constitutes 'The Dairy'. At the time that application was determined Local Authorities were still giving consideration to matters of sustainability of location when assessing such applications. In granting prior approval the Local Authority concluded that:

> *`'It therefore only remains to consider whether or not the siting or location is such as to make a conversion to residential use*

> *impractical or otherwise undesirable. The site does have a relatively remote feel to it, but* ***in fact it is only 1.8 miles from the heart of market town of Cheadle with all its community and commercial facilities****, and it is only about 100 metres away from a (very limited) bus service, a small shop that provided basis daily grocery items, and is slightly further from a pub/restaurant which is within walking distance.* ***Although there is no footway to Cheadle, it is considered that use of a bicycle would be a pragmatic option. So in that respect the site is in a reasonably sustainable location****". (our emphasis)*

5.11 The site is consequently held to have good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling, and thereby accords with the provisions of policies SS10 and E4 of the Local Plan. The principle of development is consequently concluded to be acceptable.

Design & Layout

5.12 The proposed glamping pod is a simple, low-key form of development and is to be constructed in a muted palette of materials (timber). Its modest ridge height and location to the west of the existing dwellinghouse mean it will have a close physical association with the existing buildings on the site, and will avoid any encroachment of development into the surrounding countryside.

5.13 In views from the Hollington Road on approach from the south, any glimpses of the glamping pod will been seen in the context of the existing dwellinghouse and agricultural building behind, with the development not appearing isolated or incongruous within its surroundings. On approach along the Hollington Road from the north there will be no material impact as the development will be wholly screened by surrounding built development.

5.14 The proposed development will therefore not have a strident impact within its surroundings, and will safeguard the character and appearance of the area. The glamping pod is also non-permanent in nature, and thus will be capable of being removed from site in the event that they are no longer required for holiday let purposes in the future. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Residential Amenity

5.15 The proposed glamping pod will be located within the domestic curtilage of the existing dwellinghouse on the site to the west of that building. By virtue of its siting, the occupancy of the glamping pod will not give rise to any material harm to neighbouring amenity, with the nearest neighbours being located circa 45m to the east (Hulme Farm) and 59m to the northeast (Asthorne House). The existing dwellinghouse (The Dairy) will be located in between and thus afford screening of the development from these neighbouring properties. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.16 The application site benefits from an existing means of vehicular access onto the Hollington Road by way of a track approved under application SMD/2021/0540. The access benefits from good visibility in both directions on egress, and provides a suitable means of access for the proposed glamping pod. Two off-street parking spaces are to be provided on a modestly enlarged area of hardstanding to the north of the proposed pod, with turning space provided to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. It is consequently submitted that no material harm to highway safety will arise as a consequence of the development and that the proposal meets the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed glamping pod constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The site has good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, in particular by cycling and is located in close proximity to local public footpaths providing access to the surrounding countryside which itself is a tourist attraction.

- The proposal will facilitate longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, in accordance with the recently published Tourism Strategy for the District.

- The glamping pod has a simple, unobtrusive design and will not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.

- The proposal will not give rise to any material adverse impacts to highway safety within the locality.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, E4, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.