

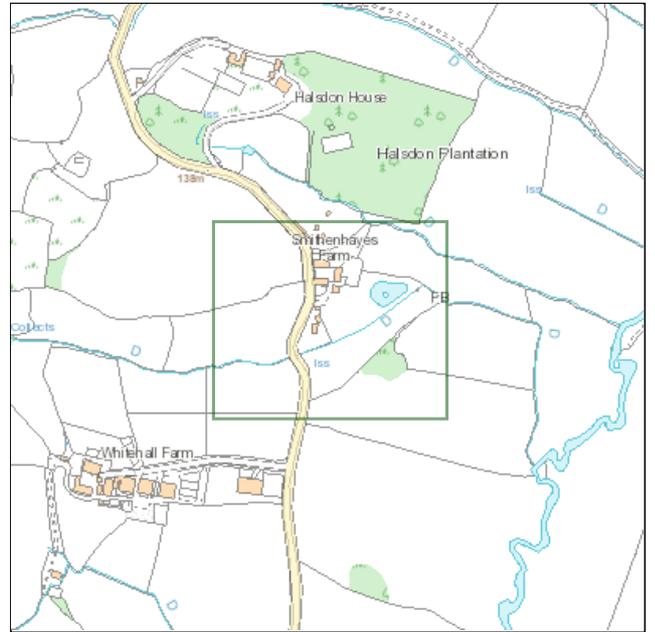
Ward Dunkeswell And Otterhead

Reference 21/0709/FUL

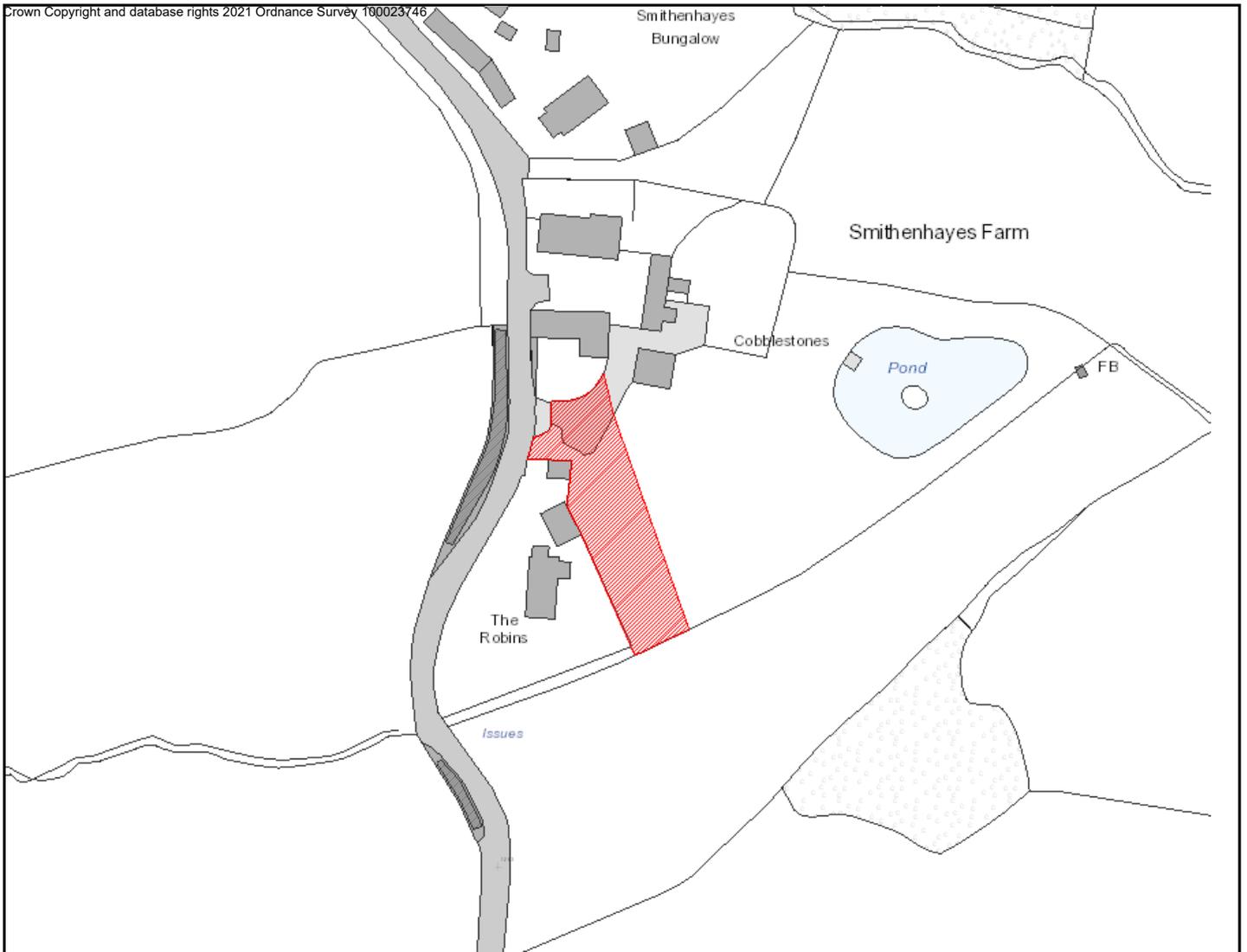
Applicant Mrs Katie Hollyer

Location Smithenhayes Farm Luppitt Honiton EX14 4TR

Proposal Erection of one glamping cabin for holiday let purposes.



RECOMMENDATION: Refusal



		Committee Date: 15th July 2021
Dunkeswell And Otterhead (Luppitt)	21/0709/FUL	Target Date: 11.05.2021
Applicant:	Mrs Katie Hollyer	
Location:	Smithenhayes Farm Luppitt	
Proposal:	Erection of one glamping cabin for holiday let purposes.	

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application is before committee as the officer recommendation differs from that of one of the ward member councillors.

Smithenhayes Farm relates to a main dwelling house (grade II* listed), associated group of traditional outbuildings and adjoining land. The site is located in open countryside to the northeast of Honiton and within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The applicant runs a successful holiday let 'The Milking Parlour' from the converted barn on site. They advise that a dairy farm originally operated from the site but that over the years land was sold off and the remaining 4.5 acres has not been farmed for many years. There is therefore no existing farm business.

The proposal seeks to erect a 'glamping' cabin on land to the south of the building group to provide an additional unit of holiday accommodation. There is considered to be increased demand for this type of accommodation as a result of more domestic vacations taking place.

Although the development would take place within a highly sensitive landscape and within the setting of a designated heritage asset no specific landscape or heritage harm is considered to arise.

Local Plan policy offers some support for proposals which represent rural diversification and where they are operated as part of an overall holding, or where they involve conversion of redundant rural buildings, however in this instance there is no existing farm business and the proposal involves a new build. There are no other policies of the Local Plan that provides the explicit support for the proposal and as such it is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Strategy 7 of the Local Plan for development in the countryside. In addition, the

location of the site is such that visitors are likely to be reliant on private transport for most journeys and the proposal would therefore fail to represent a sustainable form of development.

There are no other material considerations that indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the Local Plan and on balance, the limited economic benefits of the scheme are considered to be outweighed by the harmful environmental impacts and the scheme is recommended for refusal.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Parish/Town Council

Luppitt Parish Council supports this planning application.

Dunkeswell And Otterhead - Cllr David Key

21.04.21: I have no objection as visibility is hidden and so support.

27.05.21: I believe there has been some misunderstanding as on 21st. April at 12.13 I sent an email to say that as it was not visible I support the application. So could this be checked as I have been told I refused. I support the application.

Technical Consultations

Conservation

CONSULTATION REPLY TO PLANNING EAST TEAM
PLANNING APPLICATION AFFECTING LISTED BUILDING

ADDRESS: Smithenhayes Farm, Luppitt

GRADE: II* APPLICATION NO: 21/0709/FUL

PROPOSAL: Erection of one glamping cabin for holiday let purposes

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC CHARACTER/ ARCHITECTURAL MERIT:

See listing description and information on file

HOW WILL PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AFFECT HISTORIC CHARACTER OF BUILDING AND ITS SETTING:

The application relates to the construction of a glamping cabin for holiday let purposes to the south of the principal farmhouse and adjacent to the well screened boundary with 'The Robins'. The location has been chosen to minimise the impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed building and due to the topography and the location of the existing converted outbuildings, there is no intervisibility between the two.

Whilst there are wider long distance views from the east, again due to the topography, the mature landscape (trees & hedgerows) and the close proximity of other buildings, both agricultural and domestic in appearance, the cabin will not be overly visible. This is further mitigated by the use of traditional materials in keeping with the surrounding locality, including the Dutch barn. Further screening to the sides of the cabin, as referred to in the section on 'Landscaping' in the Design & Access Statement, will also minimise any impact. However, this screening is not shown on plan.

It is considered that the proposed glamping cabin will have no impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed building and therefore resulting in no harm to the heritage asset.

PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATION - PROPOSAL ACCEPTABLE

Other Representations

2 no. representations in support of the proposal have been submitted, with comments summarised as follows:

- Support additional high-quality accommodation, the glamping cabin would make an excellent addition to an already successful holiday business.
- Proposal will help to meet demand for upsurge in staycations
- Plans create a unique and low-impact holiday experience contributing to the sustainable travel industry, promoting nature and eco-tourism.
- High demand for this type of accommodation.
- Research indicates glamping attracts environmentally conscious travellers who tend to support local independent businesses.

PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
13/0906/FUL	Change of use and conversion of barn into one unit of holiday accommodation.	Approval with conditions	07.06.2013
13/0907/LBC	Internal and external works including new roof structure, underpinning and repointing of walls, new window frame and rebuilding of southern elevation to enable use as holiday let.	Approval with conditions	07.06.2013

POLICIES

Adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 Policies
Strategy 3 (Sustainable Development)

Strategy 33 (Promotion of Tourism in East Devon)

Strategy 46 (Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBs)

Strategy 7 (Development in the Countryside)

D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

E4 (Rural Diversification)

E5 (Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas)

TC7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)

TC9 (Parking Provision in New Development)

Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan (Final Draft)

Government Planning Documents

NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework 2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Site Location and Description

Smithenhayes Farm relates to a traditional detached stone farmhouse (grade II*) listed its associated outbuildings to the south and southeast of the farmhouse and adjoining land which extends to approximately 4.5 acres. The outbuildings include a single storey annexe conversion and a larger stone barn converted to self-catering holiday accommodation.

The application site is located south of the traditional building group and vehicular access on an area of land that lies adjacent immediately adjacent to the neighbouring residential property, 'The Robins'.

The site lies in open countryside forming part of the designated Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and located approximately 2 ½ miles northeast of Honiton.

Proposed Development

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a glamping cabin on the site. The cabin would be pre-fabricated off site and constructed in sections on site. It would be timber clad and have a curved corrugated roof. It would measure 7.8 metres by 3.4 metres with an exterior height of 3.65 metres. Internally it would provide for one bedroom with mezzanine above providing further sleeping accommodation; an open plan kitchen/living/dining area and a shower room. An area of decking is proposed forward and to the side of the cabin. Parking is proposed adjacent to the site access with a gravel/timber walkway leading to the cabin.

ANALYSIS

It is considered that the main issues in the determination of the application relate to:

- The principle of development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Economic Benefits
- Highway Issues
- Other Issues

The principle of development

The Development Plan for the area currently consists of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031. Luppitt Parish has been designated as a Neighbourhood Area and a draft Neighbourhood Plan has been produced this has not yet been the subject of formal consultation and as such the policies contained within it can be given only limited weight.

In policy terms the site lies in open countryside and therefore falls to be considered under Strategy 7 Development within the Countryside.

Strategy 7 is quite specific by stating,

'Development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such development'

And goes on to say

'and where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities within which it is located'.

Strategy 33 Promotion of Tourism in East Devon of the Local Plan, seeks to support and facilitate high quality tourism that promotes a year round industry. It states tourism growth should be sustainable and should not damage the natural assets of the District. Whilst this policy offers some general support to tourism development proposals it is not a policy that 'explicitly permits such development'.

Policy E16 Proposals for Holiday or Overnight Accommodation and Associated Facilities deals specifically with new tourist accommodation proposals. This policy supports hotel development, conversion of dwellings into self-catering accommodation, guest houses and upgrading of existing accommodation within built-up area boundaries (i.e. larger villages and towns) but in rural areas only supports conversion or use of existing buildings for small scale holiday accommodation uses. It does not make provision for new units or new build holiday lets. This policy would therefore offer no support for the proposal.

Similarly, Policy E19, which deals with Holiday Accommodation Parks and therefore does not apply to this small scale development, in any case it only permits extension or changes to existing sites and not the creation of new sites within designated

landscapes.

Policy E4, relates to rural diversification proposals and could potentially offer support to proposals that are of an appropriate scale and location and subject to a number of other listed criteria. Importantly though for a proposal to find support under this policy it must be complementary to or compatible with agricultural operations in the area and be operated as part of an overall farm holding. The submitted Design and Access Statement explains that the farm land has been sold off over the years and the land has ‘...not been farmed for over a decade’. As there is no existing farm business remaining which the proposal could hold to support or represent a diversification from it is not considered that the proposal would find support under this policy.

Policy E5 Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Areas provides support the expansion of existing businesses but requires sites to be sustainably located and designed to provide jobs and as such it is not considered that this policy supports the proposal.

Strategy 46 Landscape Conservation and Enhancement and AONBS seeks to ensure that development is undertaken in a manner that is sympathetic to the AONB.

Policy TC2 Accessibility of New Development states that new development should be located so as to be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and also well related to compatible land uses so as to minimise the need to travel by car.

In terms of the draft Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) policy ND7 – Holiday Cottages, offers some support for proposals, ‘...that support tourism, including (but not limited to)... lodges, caravans, tree houses, shepherds’ huts, pods, yurts, tents, glamping and camping’. It states that these will be considered on their merits and subject to the provisions of Policy ND10 and other policies in the plan and impacts on landscape and neighbouring properties.

Policy ND10 of the LNP relates to farm diversification and states proposals to assist local farming and support tourism and employment opportunities will be considered on a case to case basis and subject to criteria relating to impacts on landscape and residential amenity. Again this is not diversification of a farm and as such the policies add little support.

Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), para. 83 states planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas and support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The site lies within The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the inclusion of the site within the AONB gives it the highest status in terms of its landscape and scenic beauty and great weight must be given to the conservation of such landscapes.

The location of the cabin is to the south of the existing vehicular access serving the wider site and tucked tight against the boundary with the neighbouring property, 'The Robins'. At this point the boundary is formed by a conifer hedge which provides suitable screening from neighbouring land, the cabin would also be sited adjacent to an existing outbuilding on the neighbouring property. The land on which the cabin would be located does not appear to be formal garden area associated with the farmhouse, or existing holiday let. Whilst the application form refers to this area as garden and there are some signs of domestication of it, its default and historical use is agricultural land. The site would not be readily visible from the local road to the west of the site and there are no public rights of way across the site, the wider area of owned land or in the vicinity of the site. Some public views may be visible from the A30 to the east but these would be over some distance and against the backdrop of rising land to the rear.

The proposal would use materials that are commonly used on rural buildings and the small area of decking proposed would not be well related to the cabin. As such, it is considered that the proposal would have a very limited landscape or visual impact and would not give rise to any significant harm to the character or appearance of the area. Having said this it would result in some erosion of the undeveloped character of this part of the site and have an inherent and urbanising impact on the site.

Economic Benefits

The applicant runs a successful holiday let business with the 'Milking Parlour' to the north of the application site having been converted to a holiday let approximately seven years ago. They advise that this property achieves nearly 80% occupancy annually and has won numerous tourism awards they wish to build on the success of this business by providing an additional accommodation offer in the form of the proposed cabin. There is support for the proposal from 'Canopy and Stars' a holiday letting business specialising in rural glamping and who have suggested there is significant demand for this type of accommodation and which they suggest tends to attract environmentally conscious guests who are keen to support local/independent businesses.

It is acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly suppressed the international tourism market and led to a growth in demand for holiday stays within the UK. Whilst no figures have been provided in relation to the local tourism accommodation market there is no reason to consider that the proposal would not, if appropriately priced, attract a high level of interest and that visitors would help to support local businesses and the wider tourism economy.

Whilst such benefits would be small in scale they offer some support in favour of the proposal, this must be balanced against the planning policy situation and consideration of whether the Council wishes to see numerous proposals such as this supported across the district.

Highway Issues

The application would be served by the existing vehicular access to the property, this already serves the existing holiday let and annexe as well as providing a secondary

access to the farmhouse. The access gates are set back from the road allowing cars to pull off the highway to open these and visibility is relatively good in both directions. The applicant has control over land to the north and south of the access and as such maintenance of visibility splays can be controlled. There is space within the site for the parking and turning of vehicles. Although the visibility splays have not been indicated on the submitted plans and are likely to be low standard requirements the road is likely to be relatively lightly trafficked and speeds low such that it is not considered that the proposal would give result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety such as to warrant objection on these grounds.

In terms of location the site is some distance from the nearest shops or services and where the most direct route to access these would be via the busy A30 trunk road, which lacks footway provision. The applicant has suggested that visitors to the site could travel to it via public transport and cycle and this may be an option for some but it is expected that the majority of visitors will arrive by car. It is advised that bikes will be available for guests to borrow during their stay and that walking, cycling and public transport use will be encouraged. This promotion of sustainable modes of transport is encouraging however the location of the site, the winding and in places steep nature of the local road network and limited public footpaths, coupled with the infrequency of the local bus service and distance to the nearest stop means guests will in all likelihood use private transport for the majority of their journeys. As such, the proposal would not be in a sustainable location.

Other Issues

The main farmhouse is grade II* listed and the traditional outbuildings are curtilage listed to it. In accordance with policy EN9 of the Local Plan and para. 195 and 196 of the NPPF it is necessary to consider what impact the proposal would have on the significance of these designated heritage assets and where harm is identified to balance this against any public benefits of the scheme. In this instance, the chosen location of the cabin has been chosen to minimise potential impact on the setting of these heritage assets and where the topography of the site and position to the existing converted barn there is no intervisibility between the site and the farmhouse. There is also the opportunity for further landscape planting to be provided, however, as it stands it is not considered that the proposal would result in any harm to the setting of the listed buildings.

The proposal would be served by a new private package treatment plant due to the distance to the nearest mains connection. There is no objection in principle to this and there is adequate space available to provide on-site drainage in accordance with policy EN19 of the Local Plan.

Policy EN5 of the Local plan requires consideration to be given to the potential for development proposals to result in damage to or loss of nature conservation value of a site. The proposal would be sited on an area of close cut grass and the nature and scale of is not likely to give rise to adverse impacts on any specific designations. Were the proposal otherwise considered to be acceptable it would be possible to control external lighting in the interests of wildlife that may use the site.

CONCLUSION

Whilst the proposal has the potential to provide some limited benefits to the local economy through increase tourist spend and to expand the existing tourist accommodation offer onsite it is not explicitly supported by any Local Plan Policies and as such is in conflict with Strategy 7 of it. Furthermore it would not be located in a sustainable location and guests are likely to be reliant on private transport for most of their journeys conflicting with policy TC2 of the plan.

The site is well screened from public views and would have a negligible impact in terms of landscape or visual impact on the AONB landscape. However the development of the site would have an inherent impact on the undeveloped character of the site without policy justification to support or offset such impact.

Whilst it is recognised that in this instance the harm from the proposal would be limited the benefits would be similarly so. This is not a situation where there would be benefits arising from the re-use of an existing building that might offset the harm relating to the unsustainable location of the site, or where the proposal would represent a diversification proposal that would help to support an existing farm business or agricultural holding. It is on this basis that on balance it is not considered that any benefits that may arise from the scheme would outweigh the conflict with adopted policy and the proposal would not therefore represent sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed holiday accommodation would represent development in the countryside where this is strictly controlled other than where supported by a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy. In addition it would be divorced from any settlement with a suitable range of services and facilities to serve such development without the need to be primarily reliant on the private car. The proposal would therefore represent an unsustainable form of development contrary to Strategies 7 (Development in the Countryside), 33 (Promotion of Tourism), and TC2 (Accessibility of New Development) of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 East Devon District Council seeks to work positively with applicants to try and ensure that all relevant planning concerns have been appropriately resolved; however, in this case the development is considered to be fundamentally unacceptable such that the Council's concerns could not be overcome through negotiation.

Plans relating to this application:

P-01 V01 : Perspective Drawing 10.03.21

exterior

P-02 V01 : Perspective Drawing 10.03.21
exterior

Location Plan 15.03.21

P-08 V01 : Other Plans 10.03.21
materials

P-03 V02 Proposed Combined 10.03.21
Plans

P-04 V02 : Other Plans 10.03.21
proposed
decking

P-05 V02 Proposed Elevation 10.03.21

Proposed Site Plan 15.03.21

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.