

**Reference:**

BA/2017/0392/FUL

**Location**

Land North of Tonnage Bridge Cottage, Oak Road,  
Dilham



**Application for Determination**  
Report by Planning Assistant

<b>Target Date</b>	05/02/2018
<b>Parish:</b>	Dilham Parish Council
<b>Reference:</b>	BA/2017/0392/FUL
<b>Location:</b>	Land North Of Tonnage Bridge Cottage, Oak Road, Dilham, Norfolk, NR28 9PW
<b>Proposal:</b>	10 glamping pods and carpark
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr L Paterson
<b>Recommendation:</b>	That planning permission be granted.
<b>Reason for referral to Committee:</b>	At the request of the District Member

## **1 Description of Site and Proposals**

- 1.1 The application site is a strip of agricultural land that lies to the north east of the village of Dilham. The site is accessed by Oak Road, with the western end of the road adopted highway and the eastern end privately owned by the applicant. The site lies between Oak Farm and the North Walsham and Dilham Canal which runs to the east of the site. Tonnage Bridge and a group of three residential properties are located to the south of the site. A public footpath runs along the length of the western bank on the canal from Tonnage Bridge to the village of Honing, and another footpath runs for a short distance on the east bank of the canal, heading off to the north east towards East Ruston
- 1.2 In the past the farm has been in receipt of monies under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the form of the basic payment scheme. Beyond 2019 the farm will not receive funding from the CAP therefore reducing its income. The applicant advises that the proposed Tonnage Bridge Glamping is a form of farm diversification that has the ability to replace the funds no longer

received from the CAP. The farm currently manages 380 hectares of land and the proposed glamping site would use less than 1 hectare of land.

- 1.3 This application seeks consent for 10 cedar clad glamping pods on a 400m long strip of land running from south to north along the western side of the North Walsham & Dilham Canal. Two designs of pods have been proposed with the QPW measuring 3.9m by 6m with a maximum height of 3.1m and the Mipod measuring 4m by 6m with a maximum height of 3.3m. The pods would be located at 40 metre intervals along the strip of land in order to provide a remote and secluded location for each pod. The pods would be set 20 metres back from the canal and a native hedgerow would be planted along the western boundary of the strip of land. The pods are proposed to have year round use.
- 1.4 The pods are connected to water and electricity and provide all services internally, removing the need for additional ancillary structures usually associated with camping sites, such as toilet and shower blocks. The water supply would be provided via underground pipes and the electricity also provided underground via a connection to the existing 11,000 volt cables on the site, whilst a septic tank would be constructed to deal with foul water and sewage.
- 1.5 The proposal includes creating a car park with sufficient space for 15 vehicles in a non-demarcated area that would be on the southern boundary of the site, accessed from the private track. The car park would be made up of a hardcore base topped with an ecogrid filled with soil and grass seed to provide a natural top layer. The car park would be screened with a native hedgerow.
- 1.6 Waste bins would be provided and stored in the car parking area, screened by the proposed native hedgerow and would be checked daily, and collected weekly or fortnightly when required.
- 1.7 No formal track or external lighting is proposed between the pods, with torches available at the car park if required. Downward facing external lighting would be available on each individual pod.
- 1.8 Bikes and canoes would be available to hire and when not in use these would be stored off site. The noise policy proposed is that there is no noise after 10pm.
- 1.9 The proposal includes formalising two existing informal passing bays in line with advice from the Highways Authority and this would not require the removal of any hedges along Oak Road.
- 1.10 In terms of signage, one sign is proposed on site in the car park showing the layout of the site. Three simple A3 signs are proposed with a logo and directional arrow to help guide guests to the site; these would be placed on the farm's land.

## **2 Site History**

No relevant site history

## **3 Consultations**

### **3.1 Consultations received**

Parish Council – Concerns raised on highway, residential amenity and conservation

District Member - The proposed development poses highway issues and loss of amenity to the local residents.

Environment Agency - No objections

Norfolk Highways - No objection subject to conditions

### **3.2 Representations received**

In total 13 representations were received, 7 supporting the application as it would help support the rural economy and 6 raising an objection over impacts on the highway network, residential amenity, landscape and ecology.

## **4 Policies**

- 4.1 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

### [NPPF](#)

DP1 – Natural Environment  
DP2 – Landscape and Trees  
DP4 – Design  
DP11 – Access on Land

### [Development-Management-DPD2011](#)

- 4.2. The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

DP14 – General Location of Sustainable Tourism and Recreational Development  
DP15 – Holiday Accommodation – New Provision and Retention  
DP28 - Amenity

#### 4.3 Material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

### 5 Assessment

- 5.1 The key issues in the determination of this application relate to the design and materials of the proposal and the impact of the proposal on the surrounding landscape, highway network, ecology and amenity of any neighbouring occupiers.

#### Principle

- 5.2 In terms of the principle of development, national planning policies are supportive of encouraging a prosperous rural economy. In particular, Paragraph 28 of the NPPF highlights the importance of agriculture on the economy and the benefits of diversification in order to support the viability of farming units. The NPPF, however, also places great emphasis on the protection of specially designated landscapes such as the Broads in Paragraph 115.
- 5.3 In terms of local planning policies, the principle of farm diversification to provide new tourism accommodation is considered under Policy DP14 which states that the requirement to demonstrate a need to be located in open countryside does not apply to farm diversification development to provide tourism accommodation. The proposed development is for short term tourist accommodation over an area of less than a hectare on a farming unit of 380 hectares, and meets the requirements of the policy and therefore is considered to be an appropriate form of farm diversification in the open countryside. Therefore in terms of assessment, there is no objection in principle to the proposed development subject the proposal satisfying criteria (a) to (e) of DP14.

- 5.4 In terms of Criterion (a), this requires that the new tourism facilities:

(a) Are in accordance with the Core Strategy and other policies of the Development Plan;..

Overall, the proposed development is on balance considered to be in accordance with the Core Strategy and other policies of the Development Plan, with the relevant policies addressed later in this report.

- 5.5 Criterion (b) requires that the new tourism facilities:

(b) Do not involve a significant amount of new built development; ..

The proposal is for 10 timber glamping pods spaced at 40 metre intervals adjacent to the North Walsham & Dilham Canal. The areas surrounding each pod would be left undeveloped, with vehicles parked in a proposed naturally screened car park off Oak Road. Whilst clearly the proposal would result in

new development in a previously undeveloped area, the individual units are small and the cumulative amount of development of the development is modest. This proposed level of development is not considered to be a significant amount of new development, in accordance with Criterion (b).

5.6 In terms of Criterion (c), this requires that the new facilities:

(c) Do not adversely affect, and wherever possible contribute positively towards, the landscape character of the locality; ..

It is the case that the introduction of 10 glamping pods here would have an impact on the local landscape, both intrinsically by their very presence and through the associated use which would introduce activity into a previously still landscape. Whilst the site does benefit from an existing level of natural screening, which limits views from the private road and associated properties, and the topography limits views along the canal, the development would nonetheless represent a significant change. Criterion (c) requires that the development must not 'adversely affect' the landscape character and this is the test that must be met.

5.7 The site lies within the Local Character Area 27 (Ant Valley – Upstream of Wayford Bridge) and the key aspects of this character area are the tranquillity, winding waterways and strong sense of remoteness. Whilst it is a remote area, it should be noted that the application site is located adjacent to existing built development in the form of three residential properties, one with a canal frontage and ancillary boatshed, Tonnage Bridge, and an IDB pump house and security fence. The site is accessible by an existing road and a footpath passes through the site and other footpaths run nearby on the opposite side of the canal.

5.8 In order to reduce the landscape impact, it was suggested to the applicant that the number of proposed glamping pods be reduced from 10 to 5 and that the space between each pod be reduced to minimise the extent of the application site. The applicant has maintained the proposal for 10 glamping pods as, he states, it is this number that gives the necessary critical mass for the project to be financially viable, due to the costs associated with the provision of two passing bays, connection to services, the septic tank and car park. The spacing at 40 metres has also been maintained as the applicant would like to deliver a high level of privacy to guests.

5.9 While not reducing the number of units, in order to mitigate the landscape impact of the development the applicant has proposed to cedar clad the glamping pods which would soften the impact of the structures on the surrounding landscape. The units would be spaced at 40 metre intervals; there would be no formal access track or lighting between the units; and all services would be provided internally negating the need for ancillary structures. The proposed site layout would therefore allow each individual unit to be seen in an area of relative isolation, reflecting the existing mix of tranquillity adjacent to minor built development.

5.10 In addition, the applicant has followed officer advice by proposing a naturally screened car park with a natural surface at the entrance to the site in order to avoid vehicles being parked next to each individual glamping pod, and therefore reducing potential landscape clutter. In addition, a native species hedge is proposed along the western boundary of the site to provide additional natural screening. The application site is further screened from long distant views by the topography of the land which drops down from west to east from the agricultural field to canal level. This means that from the west the pods would not be visible and from the east the pods would be seen with a backdrop of a rising agricultural field and the proposed hedgerow. The proposed development would therefore result in intermittent views of cedar clad glamping pods along the footpaths through breaks in the existing and proposed hedgerows

5.11 It is considered that the arguments around whether or not the proposal would 'adversely affect' the landscape character are finely balanced – whilst the development would inevitably have an impact on the landscape character, that impact would be spatially limited in terms of the extent to which it would be experienced and it would be limited in terms of scope as the development proposed is low key. Whilst in principle the use could be year-round, in practical terms this is unlikely and the main use period is likely to be Easter to September, when there is at least some degree of natural screening and there are already other users on the canal and adjacent footpaths. On balance it is concluded that the proposal would not result in a significant adverse impact on the surrounding landscape, and would not warrant the refusal of the application on landscape grounds alone.

5.12 In terms of Criterion (d), this requires that the new facilities:

(d) Do not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of a protected site or protected species; ..

The site lies outside of the SSSI that lies approximately 500 metres to the south and the proposed native species hedgerows would also act as a biodiversity enhancement, and therefore it is considered that it would not result in any adverse effect on protected species, in accordance with Criterion (d).

5.13 Finally, criterion (e) requires that the new facilities:

(e) Would not compromise existing tourism or recreation facilities in more sustainable locations.

The purpose of this criterion is effectively to promote a sequential approach to the location of tourism facilities, and to permit facilities in isolated locations only where this is specifically justifiable in respect of those particular facilities. In this case, the scheme proposes a unique offer in terms of location, with that location determined by the need (identified by the applicant) to develop a farm diversification product. It is not considered that this would undermine or compromise existing facilities, and criterion (e) can be met.

- 5.14 Overall and on balance it is considered that the requirements of Policy DP14 are met and the development is acceptable in principle.

#### Design

- 5.15 In terms of design, two types of pods are proposed, the QPW and Mipod. The two designs are of a similar scale which are dictated by their intended use and are of a simple function design utilising sustainable materials. The proposed cedar cladding would weather and soften over time reducing the impact on the surrounding landscape. It is therefore considered that the proposed design, scale and materials are in accordance with Policy DP4. The details of the final design and materials would be secured via condition.

#### Impact on landscape

- 5.16 In terms of assessing the impact on the surrounding landscape, this is covered in detail at 5.6 – 5.11 above.

#### Impact on Highways

- 5.17 In terms of impact on the highway network, the access point between the site and Oak Road is at the eastern private end of the road. The application includes the provision of two passing bays at the western public end of Oak Road in accordance with advice from Norfolk County Council as Highways Authority. The passing bays and car parking details would be secured via condition. There is no objection to the scheme on highways grounds.

#### Impact on residential amenity

- 5.18 In terms of residential amenity, the proposed development would be well screened from the nearby residential properties and therefore the development would not result in any overlooking or overshadowing of the neighbouring properties. The primary material planning consideration raised is the potential for noise from the site and by vehicles accessing the site. It is acknowledged that there is an existing vehicular access road used by farm machinery and the residents of the three properties. The existing access road passes the property known as Oak Farm on three sides so any increase in vehicle movements would have the greatest impact on this property. The road is narrow with tight turns and therefore vehicles will be forced to travel at low speeds and therefore the noise created when passing the properties is not considered to result in a significant adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties. The site would operate a no noise after 10pm policy which would be monitored by staff. In summary, the proposed development is not considered to result in any significant adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policy DP28.

## Ecology

- 5.19 In terms of the ecology, the site lies outside of an SSSI which is located approximately 500 metres to the south of the site. The proposed additional planting including native hedgerows would provide additional biodiversity enhancements to the area. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DP1.

## Other matters

- 5.20 It should be noted that whilst both national planning policies in the form of the NPPF do place great emphasis on the protection of specially designated landscapes such as the Broads, they are also supportive of encouraging a prosperous rural economy. It is noted that the proposed development has the ability to replace a lost funding stream on the farm, employ five local people (the applicant states) and contribute to the tourist economy in the vicinity. These economic benefits are a material consideration and must be weighed against any adverse impacts.
- 5.21 Finally, it should be noted that the landowner also operates a 25 tent campsite in Dilham, located on Honing Road, which was developed as a farm diversification scheme in 2017 (BA/2017/0097/CU). The two sites would offer different facilities.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 In conclusion it is considered that the proposal for 10 glamping pods and associated car park is acceptable in principle. Whilst there are landscape impacts these are not considered to be of such a magnitude as to justify a refusal of planning permission, and there are also benefits to the rural economy. There would also be no significant impact on the highway network, ecology or neighbouring amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the relevant Development Plan Policies and the NPPF.

## **7 Recommendation**

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit for commencement
2. In accordance with submitted plans and supporting documents
3. Materials and design
4. Highway passing bays
5. Car park layout
6. Landscaping
7. Waste disposal
8. External lighting
9. Noise management
10. Removal of temporary use PD rights
11. Sign details

## **8 Reason for Recommendation**

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the development is acceptable in respect of Planning Policy and in particular in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies DP1, DP2, DP4, DP11, DP14, DP15 and DP28, as the development is considered an appropriate form of farm diversification protecting rural employment, with no significant adverse impact on the landscape, neighbouring amenity, highway network or ecology subject to the recommended conditions.

Background papers: BA/2017/0392/FUL

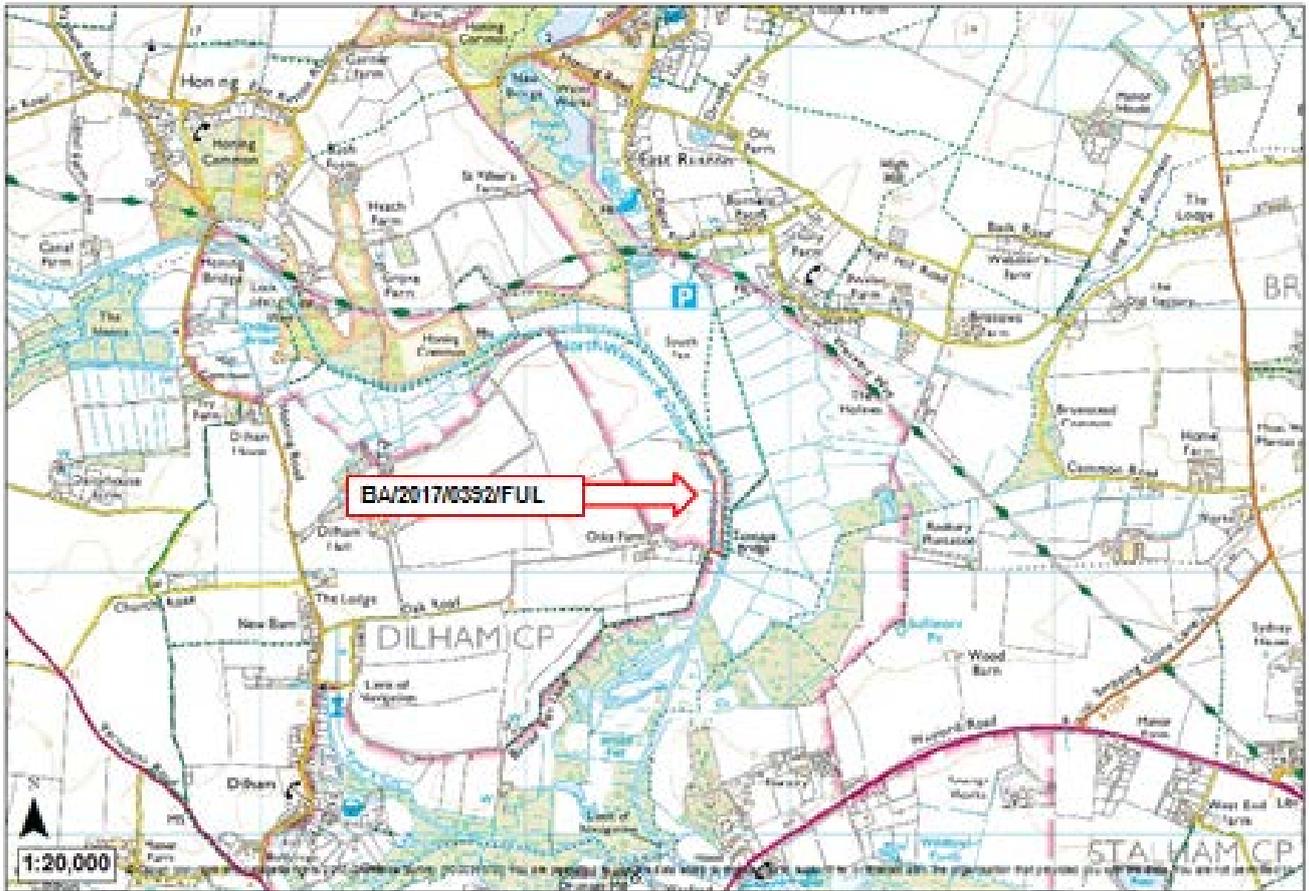
Author: George Papworth

Date of report: 19 January 2018

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Map  
Appendix 2 – Notes of Site Visit held on 19 January 2018

APPENDIX 1

BA/2017/0392/FUL - Land North of Tonnage Bridge, Dilham



**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

2 February 2018

**Note of site visit held on Friday 19 January 2018**

**BA/2017/0392/FUL Land north of Tonnage Bridge Cottage, Oak Road, Dilham Norfolk**

Ten Glamping Pods and Car Park

**Applicant:** Mr L Paterson

Present:

Sir Peter Dixon– in the Chair

Prof Jacquie Burgess	Mr Haydn Thirte
Mr Mike Barnard	Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro
Mr Bill Dickson	Mr John Timewell
Ms Gail Harris	

Also Present:

Ms Melanie Walker – North Norfolk District Council  
Mr Keith Bacon – Broads Society

In attendance:

Mrs Sandra A Beckett – Administrative Officer (BA)  
Ms Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services BA)  
Mr George Papworth – Planning Assistant (BA)  
Mr Ben Hogg – Historic Environment Manager (BA)  
Mr L Paterson – The Applicant

**Apologies for absence** were received from: Mr Paul Rice and Mr Vic Thomson

### **Introduction**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee welcomed everyone and invited them to introduce themselves.

The Chairman reminded members of the procedures for the site visit emphasising that it was purely fact finding and no decisions would be made at this visit but the matter would be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Planning Committee on 2 February 2018. Members were on the visit to aid their understanding of the proposed development in the context of its rural and isolated location, the nature and scale of the works proposed and to make sure that all the relevant factors of the site had been pointed out. They were able to ask questions.

Members met at the farm buildings and residences on a track off Oak Road. They walked down the privately owned track to Tonnage Bridge and the North Walsham and Dilham Canal, noting the three residential properties en route. They noted that the track would form the access to the proposed Glamping site. Two of the

residences were at the top of the track, the third being Tonnage Bridge Cottage, adjacent to the application site.

The Planning Officer provided Members with a set of plans depicting the site, together with examples of the design of the proposed pods. Members walked onto the site, which was a strip of agricultural land measuring 400m running along the western side of the North Walsham and Dilham Canal. Members noted that the site was at the bottom of sloping land with no public access from the west.

The pods would be set back 20 metres from the canal bank and located at 40 metre intervals, the aim being to provide a remote and secluded location for each pod. A native hedgerow would be planted behind the glamping pods, along the western boundary of the site. Two designs of pods were proposed; one design would measure 3.9 m by 6 m with a maximum height of 3.1m, the other would measure 4m by 6m with a maximum height of 3.3m. A ranging pole was used to show the ridge height of the tallest pods. The pods would be provided with water and electricity and services internally. There would be no additional structures, normally associated with camp sites such as toilet/laundry blocks. The water and electricity would be provided by underground pipes and cables. A septic tank would be constructed to deal with the foul water and sewage. The applicant commented that the necessary consultations and permissions from the Environment Agency and the IDB would be sought and would be adhered to. It was intended that the glamping pods would be available throughout the year. The applicant explained that the running of the site could result in the provision of 4 jobs.

Members noted the location of the public footpaths, one running along the length of the western bank of the canal from Tonnage Bridge to the village of Honing, whilst the other ran for a short distance on the eastern bank of the canal, before heading north east towards East Ruston.

Members also noted the location of the car park, providing 15 spaces, which was to be made up of hard core with an ecogrid filled with soil and grass seed to provide a more natural look. It would also be screened by a hedgerow of native species. The applicant explained that customers would be provided with a trolley and torches to be able to take their luggage and provisions to their respective glamping pod.

Members walked two thirds of the length of the strip of land to gain a greater understanding of the context of the site as well as walking over Tonnage Bridge to the other side of the canal

## **Conclusion and Procedures**

The Chairman confirmed that the application would be considered by the Committee at the next scheduled meeting on 2 February 2018. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the site inspection.

The meeting was closed at 14.45pm