

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Full Planning Permission



Change of Use at land at Beehive, Woodland Lakes to
form a seasonal wedding venue, Lullington Road,
Rosliston, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 8JD.

May 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application submitted by Beehive Leisure Limited (the Applicant) for the change of use of land at Beehive Woodland Lakes to form a seasonal wedding venue from 1st April to 31st October including the erection of four linked Tipis and the construction of a timber A frame ceremony structure.

This statement will seek to assess the development proposal through this submission in the context of the adopted Development Plan, National Planning Policy and any other material considerations that may influence the determination of this application.

2.0 THE BACKGROUND

Beehive Woodland Lakes was created almost three decades ago and was the brainchild of Alistair Chapman, a director of Beehive Leisure Limited. Originally a dairy farmer, Alistair had the foresight to realize that due to declining returns and pressures affecting the farming industry he needed to take the business in a different direction. Being in the heart of the National Forest and with an ever-increasing demand for outdoor recreation and leisure pursuits, Alistair saw the opportunity to create something unique. With that Beehive Woodland Lakes was borne. Over a number of years an ambitious program of tree planting was undertaken, together with creation of three fishing lakes and a campsite. So much so Alistair has been a winner in three separate years of the National Forest Tender Scheme and is a true example of farm diversification. Today the site benefits from over 66 acres of mixed woodland and has a popular campsite for touring caravans, motorhomes and tents. In addition the woodland combines both recreation and conservation with tree fishing lakes.

Whilst local tourism still remains popular in the area, the less than predictable UK weather can have a significant impact on the fortunes of the campsite business. Couple this with increased opportunities for low cost holidays abroad and this can have a substantial influence on overall business profit. Furthermore, whilst the Woodland provides a unique and attractive backdrop to the campsite and fishing activities, its management and upkeep represents an on-going cost to the business.

Keen to avoid this volatility the Applicant started to look at other complimentary business actives, which would make best use of existing assets and ensure the continued viability of the core leisure business. Just over two years ago an enquiry from a wedding business (Peak Tipis) specializing in creating bespoke tipi weddings provided the applicant with the opportunity they had been looking for. Peak Tipis were looking for a unique and secluded wedding venue within a woodland setting, and Beehive Woodland Lakes was an ideal location.

So in 2017 a joint venture was formed between Beehive Woodland Lakes and Peak Tipis and the 'The Hidden Hive' was created to create a unique outdoor wedding experience.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

This planning application seeks approval for the change of use of land at Beehive Woodland Lakes to form a seasonal wedding venue from 1st April to 31st October including the erection of four linked Tipis and the construction of a timber A frame ceremony structure.

For the past two years the venue has operated under Schedule 2 Part 4 Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO). However, due to increasing demand of this unique venue the applicant now wishes to formalize the arrangement and is seeking planning permission to host wedding events over the spring/summer season commencing on the 1st April and finishing on 31st October. During the winter the tipis will be dismantled and removed from site.

Whilst there are a number of wedding venues within the locality, there is nothing which is comparable to the Hidden Hive. Since its creation in 2017, the Hidden Hive has grown in popularity, as more and more couples are looking for more relaxed and unique wedding experience. Indeed bookings are already being taken for 2020 and beyond. Further details of Hidden Hive can be found on their website www.thehidenhive.co.uk

As part of the proposals the Applicant is also seeking to construct a timber 'A' frame ceremony structure. This is as a result of increasing numbers of enquires from couples asking if they can get married on site. The current laws prevent weddings from taking outside unless they are solemnized in a permanent structure with a solid roof. Last year in his 2018 Budget, the Chancellor, Philip Hammond announced a potential relaxation to the law to allow

couples to marry outside without the need for a permanent structure. However, the consultation is still ongoing and the current rules remain in place.

4.0 APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is situated in a secluded woodland meadow located to south of Lullington Road, Rosliston. The site is predominately-managed grassland within a woodland setting. A small brook runs through the center of the site. To the north-east of the site runs Lullington Road which is bounded by a mature hedgerow and avenue tree planting. This provides screening from the public highway. To the east of the site is an area of existing hard standing parking and two fishing lakes within pockets of woodland.

The site is accessed via an existing access off Lullington Road.

The wider surroundings are dominated by woodland, arable fields, hedgerows and tree lined boundaries. The village of Rosliston is located to the north west of the site. Rosliston has a wider range of local amenities including a Church, CoE Primary School, Co-op store, Post Office, Village Hall, Fish and Chip and a Public House. There is also well-established public transport infrastructure with regular bus services to nearby towns of Burton on Trent and Swadlincote.

Historically the site was in arable production, but has since been reverted to its current use under the National Forest Scheme.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

There is no known planning history, which relates to the site.

6.0 PRE-PLANNING CONSULTATION

As part of the development process and in accordance with paragraphs 39-43 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the Applicant has engaged in dialogue with both South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC) and Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

A copy of the email received from Thomas Beardsmore a Senior Planning Officer at SDDC is shown below; which subject to certain criteria confirms the proposal to be acceptable in principal.

Dear Rupert,

Apologies for the delayed response, having looked at the proposed plans for the erection of a structure to accommodate wedding ceremonies. In policy terms I consider the proposal to be acceptable in principle, subject to the required supporting information being supplied during the submission of any planning application. When assessing the proposal against the council's policies:

- The site is located outside of Rosliston Settle Boundary, as defined by Policy SDT1
- Therefore the proposal is considered development in a Rural Area – Policy BNE5
- Development will be supported when allowed for by certain policies
- Policy E7 - Rural Development, could be applied for this proposal
- Development of a new building will be supported where:
 - It is supported by a sound business case
 - The local highway network is capable of accommodating the traffic generated
 - Development will not give rise to any undue impacts on neighbouring land
 - It is well designed and of a scale commensurate with the proposed use
 - Visual intrusion and the impact on the character of the locality is minimised
- Supported by Policy INF10 – Tourism Development, subject to the proposed development being well designed, where identified needs are not met by existing facilities, this should be addressed by the application.

The consideration of the proposal will very much depend on the associated impacts through access provision, parking areas, and the visual impact of the proposals. The proposed structures I think are sympathetic to their strong rural setting and can be considered reversible and of a temporary nature, which is also supported by Policy INF10 . I would recommend discussing your proposal with Derbyshire County Council (The Highway Authority) in order to establish whether the existing access to the site would be suitable for the size of vehicles likely and the intensification in use of the site, Tel 01629 533190. In addition. I would also recommend some sort of planting scheme, in order to screen any potential views from the nearby highway and views from the public realm. Any application will need a supporting business case, in order for the proposal to comply with policy and to justify the need for such a development.

A full ecology and arboricultural survey should accompany any application given the high potential for protected species and the significance of the surrounding trees.

I hope the above is useful but please note that advice is given at officer level only and does not prejudice any formal decision the Council makes in the future.

Regards,

Tom Beardsmore
Senior Planning Officer – Service Delivery
T: 01283 595821
www.south-derbys.gov.uk

As recommended above, consultation was also undertaken with Derbyshire Country Council Highways, the results of this show that the existing access arrangement to be adequate for the intended use.

From: Gemma Statham (Economy Transport and Environment)
<Gemma.Statham@derbyshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 01 April 2019 10:15
To: Rupert Rayson
Subject: RE: Pre Planning Advice - Beehive Woodland Lakes, DE12 8HZ

Hi Rupert

Further to your enquiry regarding Beehive Woodland Lakes, I can now comment as follows.

The principle of the proposal would be acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to visibility sightlines of 2.4m x 120m being provided, it is considered that given the nature of the lane vehicle speeds are unlikely to be more than 40mph. It is also considered that these sightlines are achievable within controlled land. Suitable parking will also need to be provided within the site curtilage to ensure that no overspill parking takes place on the highway. Parking will be dependent on the maximum numbers permitted at the venue.

I hope the above information is of assistance to you, however you will appreciate it is given without prejudice to any formal application which may be received.

If you would like any further information please contact me.

Regards

Gemma Statham | Senior Technician – Development Control | Economy, Transport and Environment | County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG | 01629 538519 www.derbyshire.gov.uk
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} Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 April 2019 10:51
To: Gemma Statham (Economy Transport and Environment)
<Gemma.Statham@derbyshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Pre Planning Advice - Beehive Woodland Lakes, DE12 8HZ

Hi Gemma

I hope you had a good Easter break?

Many thanks for the information below, which is much appreciated.

Just a quick point regarding the viz splays. To the right of the access point (easterly direction) we can comfortably achieve in excess of the 120m. However, to the left (westerly direction) we can achieve circa. 102m. After this point the road enters a series of bends before straightening out again. I completely agree that traffic is unlikely to exceed 40 mph. Being a regular user myself this is certainly the case.

Due to the width and bends in the road when travelling from the west in an easterly direction this creates its own optimum speed limit/restriction, which from my own perspective is circa. 30mph. With this in mind are you willing to take a view as to the viz splay of 102m, being only 18m or so short? It obviously an existing access so my hands are somewhat tied as to making alternative arrangements.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards
Rupert

Gemma Statham (Economy Transport and Environment) <Gemma.Statham@derbyshire.gov.uk>

Tue 14/05/2019 08:56

You

□

Hi Rupert

Whilst not ideal, given the likely vehicle speeds due to the alignment it is not considered that an objection would be raised should visibility sightline of 2.4m x120m being provided to the east and 2.4m x 102m being provided west, subject to suitable parking and manoeuvring also being provided within the site curtilage.

I hope the above information is of assistance to you, however, you will appreciate it is given without prejudice to any formal application which may be received.

Regards

Gemma Statham | Senior Technician – Development Control | Economy,
Transport and Environment | County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG | 01629
538519 www.derbyshire.gov.uk

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7.0 PLANNING POLICY

The development plan for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) comprises the South Derbyshire District Local Plan Parts 1 (adopted 13th April 2016) and 2 (adopted 2nd November 2017).

National Planning guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also relevant.

This statement will concentrate on the relevant Local Plan policies and advice set out in National Policy documents, together with any material planning considerations.

7.1 National Planning Policy

The NPPF was originally published in March 2012, replacing the majority of the existing planning policy statements (PPS). Since its publication the NPPF was revised in July 2018 and updated more recently on 19th February 2019. It is intended to make the planning system less complex and more accessible to protect the environment and to provide sustainable growth. The relevant policies and provisions of the NPPF are identified below:

The NPPF clearly states 'that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' (Para 7). Para 11 confirms that 'in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

At Para 8 the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are outlined. An elaboration of the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice for the planning system is detailed later in the NPPF. Relevant parts are cited below.

The NPPF Para. 47 confirms that planning laws requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, i.e. the development plan is the starting point for decision making.

Para 38 states inter alia that 'local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a post and creative way. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.'

In order to support a prosperous rural economy Para 83 states:

Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural 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.

The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.2 Local Planning Policy

The proposed development is within the jurisdiction of the South Derbyshire District Local Plan Parts 1 and 2 adopted 13th April 2016 and 2nd November 2017 respectively.

For planning purposes the application site lies outside of the Rosliston village settlement boundary. Policy SDT1 applies.

Policy SDT1 – Settlement Boundaries and Development

Settlement boundaries define the built limits of a settlement. Within settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map and in Appendix A, development will be permitted where it accords with the development plan.

Outside of settlement boundaries and allocated sites, within Rural Areas as defined in Policy H1, development will be limited to that considered acceptable inter alia by Policy BNE5.

As the development site is situated outside of the settlement boundary of Rosliston village, for planning purposes it is therefore located in a Rural Area and Policy BNE15 – Development in Rural Areas applies.

Policy BNE15 – Development in Rural Areas

Outside of settlement boundaries (as defined in Policy SDT1) within the Rural Areas of the district planning permission will be granted where the development is:

- i. allowed for by policies H1, H22, E7, INF10, H24, H26, H27 or H28; or
- ii. otherwise essential to a rural based activity; or
- iii. unavoidable outside settlement boundaries; or
- iv. considered to be infill that is in keeping with the character of the locality and represents the infilling of a small gap for not normally more than two dwellings, within small groups or housing; and
- v. will not unduly impact on; landscape character and quality, biodiversity, best and most versatile agricultural land, and heritage assets.

Paragraph 4.3 of the Local Plan states that ‘development will be supported that provides facilities essential to rural based activities which include forestry, agriculture, equestrianism and outdoor recreation.

Paragraph 4.4 of the Local Plan further states that ‘it is necessary to ensure that development within the Rural Areas should be integrated into the landscape as sympathetically as possible within minimal impact. The design, layout and materials of the development should reflect the character of the area.

Policy E7 - Rural Development

Development proposals, which diversify and expand the range of sustainable employment activities on land outside of settlement boundaries, will be supported by the Council provided they support the social and economic needs of the rural communities in the District.

Para 6.28 further states that for all forms of development outside of settlement boundaries, it is important that the scale of development proposals is appropriate to

its surroundings to ensure that visual intrusion and impact on the character of the locality are minimised.

Policy INF10 – Tourism Development

Tourism development, including overnight accommodation and visitor attractions, will be permitted:

- i. within or adjoining the urban area or the Key Service Villages or;
- ii. in other appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities.

In all cases the District Council will expect new tourism development to be

- i. provided through the conversion or reuse of existing buildings or;
- ii. accommodation of a reversible and temporary nature, or
- iii. sustainable and well designed new buildings, where identified needs are not met by existing facilities, subject to all the other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

Furthermore ***Policy S2 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development*** - states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will work proactively with applicants to seek solutions, which mean that proposals secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

8.0 DESIGN AND ACCESS

This section of the report comprises the formal Design and Access Statement.

8.1 Use

The proposal is for the change of use of land at Beehive Woodland Lakes to form a seasonal wedding venue from 1st April to 31st October including the erection of four linked Tipis and the construction of a timber A frame ceremony structure. During the winter period the Tipis will be dismantled and removed from site.

8.2 Amount

The proposal involves the temporary siting of four interlinked tipi structures and the construction of a single timber A frame ceremony structure.

8.3 Design & Layout

The general arrangement of the proposed development has been determined having regard to the configuration and size of the site, access configuration and the need to achieve an appropriate relationship between the existing woodland setting and proposed development.

8.4 Materials

The tipis are of timber pole construction under khaki canvas covers. The A frame ceremony structure will be constructed from rustic timber poles under a cedar shingle roof. Material choice has been made to ensure compatibility with the site and its surroundings.

8.5 Scale

The configuration of the tipis is such that they occupy an overall area of 29m wide by 19m deep.

The A frame ceremony structure will be 15m long by 10m wide and 7m tall to the ridge.

8.6 Access

Vehicular access would be via the existing gated access off Lullington Road. Ample existing off highways parking is already present on site and will be made available as part of the development.

9.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Having regard to the nature of the proposal, its context, relevant National and Local planning policies, the main planning issues for consideration, are as follows:

- Assessment of adopted Local Plan policies relating to the application site.
- Assessment in relation to the NPPF.
- Highway Safety.
- Layout, Design and Landscape Impact.
- Neighbour Amenity.
- Miscellaneous Considerations.

Each of these points is addressed in turn below:

8.1 Assessment of adopted Local Plan

The usual starting point for decision-making is the Development Plan.

The application site lies outside Rosliston Settlement Boundary in both the adopted Local Plan Parts 1 and 2. As such Policy BNE15 applies which confirms that within Rural Areas development will be permitted where it accords with policy INF10 or is otherwise essential to a rural based activity. Further any development should not unduly impact on; landscape character and quality, biodiversity, best and most versatile agricultural land, and heritage assets.

As previously explained the need for the development arises out of a need to diversify the existing core camping and caravanning business. To remove some of the volatilities associated with weather, and provide much needed income to subsidise the ongoing management of the wider woodland assets on site. The camping site business is highly weather dependent and whilst the sun is shining business is generally good, on the flip side the inclement nature of the UK weather can have a significant effect on site bookings and have a negative impact on cashflow. By diversifying the business and adding a complimentary business venture this will mean that cashflow can be 'smoothed' out and provide an additional level of income, to help sustain the existing business.

There is also added synergy between the two business elements, with many wedding guests choosing to stay at the campsite, which in turn provides a valuable and dependable income

stream to the campsite business. There are also wider economic benefits to the local community with local suppliers being asked to provide catering, floristry, and other wedding related services.

As part of the pre-application assessment it was suggested that the proposed development could afford support through **Policy INF10 – Tourism Development**. The proposed structures as identified by the LPA are considered to be sympathetic to their strong rural setting and reversible due to their temporary nature, which is supported by Policy INF10.

Policy INF10 also supports development where identified needs are not met by existing facilities. In view of the bookings taken over the past two years, and future booking being taken to 2020 and beyond, there can be little doubt that the proposed development represents an appropriate location for a seasonal wedding venue. There is a wedding venue on the northern outskirts of the village of Rosliston, at the Forestry Centre. However, this is a more conventional, standard ‘white’ marquee, which appeals to a very different market. Those who choose to host their wedding celebrations at the Hidden Hive are seeking a very specific type of celebration centered on the attractive woodland setting. Indeed there are no comparable venues in the locality that offer the same rustic and rural setting and level of service.

8.2 Assessment in relationship to the NPPF

Against this background, what also becomes central to the decision-making process is the statement at Paragraph 83 of the NPPF. That is, planning policies should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. This should include the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

8.3 Highway Safety

Through pre-application consultation and following recommendations made by the LPA, the Applicant has engaged with Derbyshire County Highways to discuss the proposals in order to establish the suitability of the site access. It was concluded that the existing access arrangements are adequate for the intended use, with sufficient off road parking.

The existing area of hard standing is currently used for parking for the fishing lakes. During the wedding day no fishing will be permitted and exclusivity to the parking area will be given to the wedding guests.

Notwithstanding the above, the current use of the site already generates unrestricted traffic movement, and therefore it is considered the proposed development would have no further detrimental impact on highway safety.

8.4 Layout, Design and Landscape Impact

At pre-application state the LPA highlighted the need to ensure that the development has no unacceptable impacts on wildlife, habitats, protected species and the surrounding area.

Firstly, it is important to note that successful stewardship of the land by the Applicant has ultimately turned what were once open arable fields into the stunning landscape that it is today. Preservation and enhancement of the landscape is also essential to the continued success of the venue. Furthermore, the woodland was created under the National Forest Scheme and as such there is an ongoing obligation upon the applicant to ensure that surrounding trees are retained and managed in accordance with the schemes requirements. Failure to do so would be in breach of the scheme.

At the request of the LPA the Applicant commissioned a preliminary ecological appraisal, which was carried out by Rothen Ecology. The report concluded that no further species surveys are required and the proposed development would have no adverse impact on existing wildlife or its habitat.

8.5 Neighbour Amenity

The amenity of nearby occupiers deserves due consideration. Occupiers, which are in closest proximity to the site, are those camping and caravanning guests on the Applicant's campsite, which are approximately 350m to the north east of the proposed development. To the southeast, over 500m away are a small cluster of residential properties. Given the nearest occupier's who may be effected by the development are those choosing to stay at the Applicant's campsite it is clearly in the Applicant's own interest to ensure the proposed development does not have a detrimental impact on the neighboring amenity. From a visual amenity perspective the site is well screened by judicious woodland planting, which also acts as a sound barrier to any perceived noise emanating from the site.

To ensure that neighboring occupiers are not significantly affected by the proposed development it is currently imposed upon all guests that any amplified music is kept to a reasonable level and is not permitted to continue beyond 12:00 midnight.

8.6 Miscellaneous Considerations

The site does not lie within an Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone.

There are no heritage designations or features of heritage interest relating to the site. There are no heritage designations in the vicinity of the site. Accordingly, the proposal would result in no detriment to heritage interests.

Mains water is present on the site. Electricity is provided by means of portable generator. Toilets are provided by means of specialist mobile event toilet hire, which will be located on the site for the duration of the event and then removed once the event is concluded.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The proposal seeks the change of use of land to create a seasonal wedding venue. Due to increased demand the venue can no longer adequately operate under existing permitted development rights. By its nature and ethos of the business the proposed development requires a rural location.

The tipis are temporary in nature and sympathetic to the existing woodland setting. Whilst the timber A frame structure is technically of permanent construction, it could, if required be removed with minimal effort, should the proposed use ever cease. Furthermore, the open nature of the structure provides a transparency, which helps to assimilate the structure into the surrounding woodland backdrop.

In view of the limited impact of the proposal on the local landscape, and in the absence of identifiable harm to any issue of acknowledged planning importance, it is therefore respectfully requested that a conditional planning permission be granted in due course.