

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
GLAMPING POD SITE AT
BROOK BARN, CHURCH LANE
WHITEWELL, WHITCHURCH
SHROPSHIRE
SY13 3AN

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Executive Summary

Proposed are a total of six handmade timber glamping pods, associated paths and landscaping with a parking and turning area.

All pods are to be manufactured and supplied by Lune Valley Pods. A four-person style pod will be installed. The plot is on the periphery of the town of Whitewell. The proposed glamping site will provide subtle and discreet countryside accommodation for tourists visiting this area's attractions on short breaks and weekend stays.

Policy

In designing the proposed glamping site, Wrexham County Borough Council's Local Development Plan (2013-2028) was adopted and the following policies were considered, and it is believed that the proposal is in compliant with each of them.

- EC4 – Hedgerows, Trees and Woodland
- EC5 – Special Landscape Areas
- EC6 – Biodiversity Conservation
- GDP1 – Development Objectives
- PS1 – Settlement Limits
- PS11 – Biodiversity
- RA6 – Development and the Environment

Site and Surrounding Area

Location

Whitewell is a small settlement in the east Wales, approximately 18km south-east of Wrexham. The area and is comprised of attractive rural countryside, which the development hopes to preserve whilst bolstering the local economy through provision sustainable, discreet tourist accommodation.

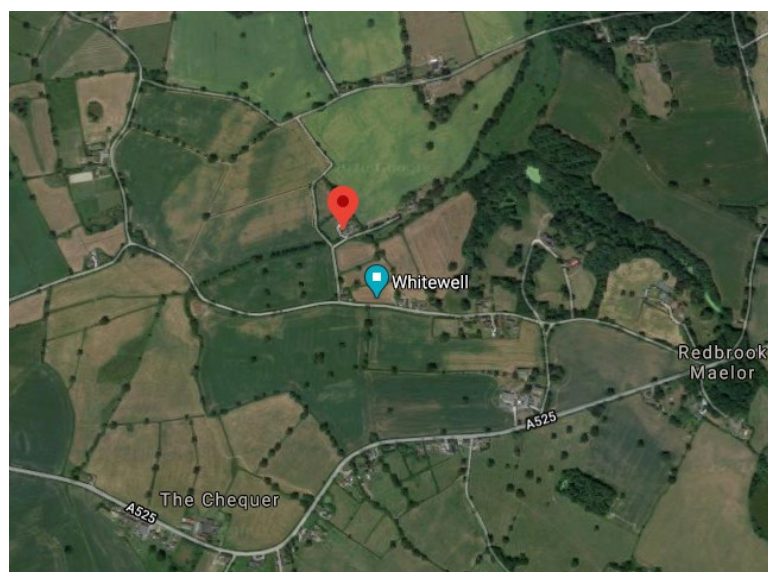


Figure 1 – Aerial View to Site

Proposed Site Information

The plot for the proposed glamping site will occupy approx. 10,439.7m² of the applicant's land. The vast majority of the site will be left as open green space.

The existing road access from Whitewell Road, which serves St Mary's Church and the applicant's property, will be the main access route to reach the glamping site. The site will be located at the northern boundary of the applicant's land, which will in turn be accessed from the applicant's drive. Existing gravel surfaced area will be enlarged (and cleared of debris) to form a new permeable surface parking & turning area. Although the pods will be marketed to cyclists & walkers, one parking space will be provided per glamping pod to prevent possible parking issues.

Guests will reach the pods via footpaths from the parking area, which removes the risk of cars manoeuvring near any pods, where guests are likely to be walking and prevents further reduction of green space. All paths will be permeable; formed using stone or slate chippings.

The North, East & West boundaries of the site are neighboured by green fields, with the southern boundary neighboured by the applicant's dwelling. St Mary's Church is the nearest other building some 140m to the east from the south-east corner of the site. The next nearest building (dwelling) is 180m to the south of the site, so residential amenity is not anticipated to be an issue, especially since the existing local hedgerows are tall and dense and will provide complete screening of the glamping pods site. The South site boundary gives access to the public road and will be bordered by existing hedging. The nearest neighbouring residence is roughly 500m from the nearest pod. As the pods are positioned at the northern end of the site, they will not be visible from the main road. This will prevent any damage to landscaping and help with noise mitigation.

Justification for Proposed Use

The proposed site is located close to Whitewell. The pods will offer contemporary accommodation to visitors and tourists travelling to the area. The accommodation is most suitable for weekend and short breaks.

The proposed site will be on a tranquil green area. Glamping installations require minimal ground works and harmful construction practices. Through use of ground screws to mount pods, concrete may not be required at all. We therefore believe pods provide an ecologically viable accommodation solution, suited to the area.

The concept of luxury glamping is now gaining popularity throughout the UK, with standards and guests' expectations on the rise. It is intended by the site operator that this site will be amongst the best available. At present there are no other sites in or around Whitewell offering this kind of luxury pod accommodation giving guests exclusive facilities. Therefore, we feel the site would be providing a positive alternative for visitors to the area.

Use

The pods would be rented out on a per-nightly basis. Patrons would likely be families, couples, or friends split into multiple pods. For this reason, the pods have been sized to accommodate four persons only. Party groups will not be permitted by the operator.

The site would be operated as a typical (year-round) holiday let, much like a caravan site, but with much fewer guests, meaning less noise and disruption to neighbouring properties and road users etc. The site will also be marketed as a peaceful and relaxing retreat, which again should mean noise from guests is not a consideration.

There is no intention to use the pods for long term lease / permanent residences. Such a small-scale development and the compact footprint of the pods would not be suited to this in any case.

Amount

The table below shows the breakdown of used area and remaining green space.

Land Usage Item	Area Used	% of Overall Site
Greater Ownership Boundary	10,439.7 m ²	100 %
Glamping Site Area	10,439.7 m ²	100 %
Green Space – Proposed Site	10,439.7 m ²	100 %
Green Space – After Site Build	9,864.1 m ²	94.5 %
Glamping Pods (6 Pods)	126.6 m ²	1.2 %
Recycling Area	8 m ²	0.07 %
Parking & Turning	268 m ²	2.56 %
Footpaths	173 m ²	1.65 %

Layout & Access

The access road (Whitewell Road) is a well-maintained public road, capable of servicing the town of Whitewell. The increase in traffic associated to the pod site will be of a negligible impact to the surrounding area and current road users with only a maximum of 6 cars at any one time.

From the access road the glamping site vehicular access will follow a short road and track to reach the parking and turning area. The glamping site will be for pedestrian access only. The main footpath will run South to North with secondary paths running to each pod. The configuration of the paths has been designed to add interest to the layout.

The further most south western corner of the proposed site will be left clear of any structure and will be used for the below-ground drainage channels and water treatment plant. Water will then be exhausted to the water running at the bottom of the site.

The design implemented for the site has purposely underdeveloped the site, utilising less than 1.5% of the site area for the pods in order to provide both privacy for guests and to minimise impact on neighbouring sites/properties.

Scale

The proposed pods are small single storey cabins (approx. 3m tall), so no restriction of neighbouring views will occur. The site boundaries will remain as is, being finished with stock fencing and hedges. Since the pods are of timber construction, they tend to blend into the landscape in any case.

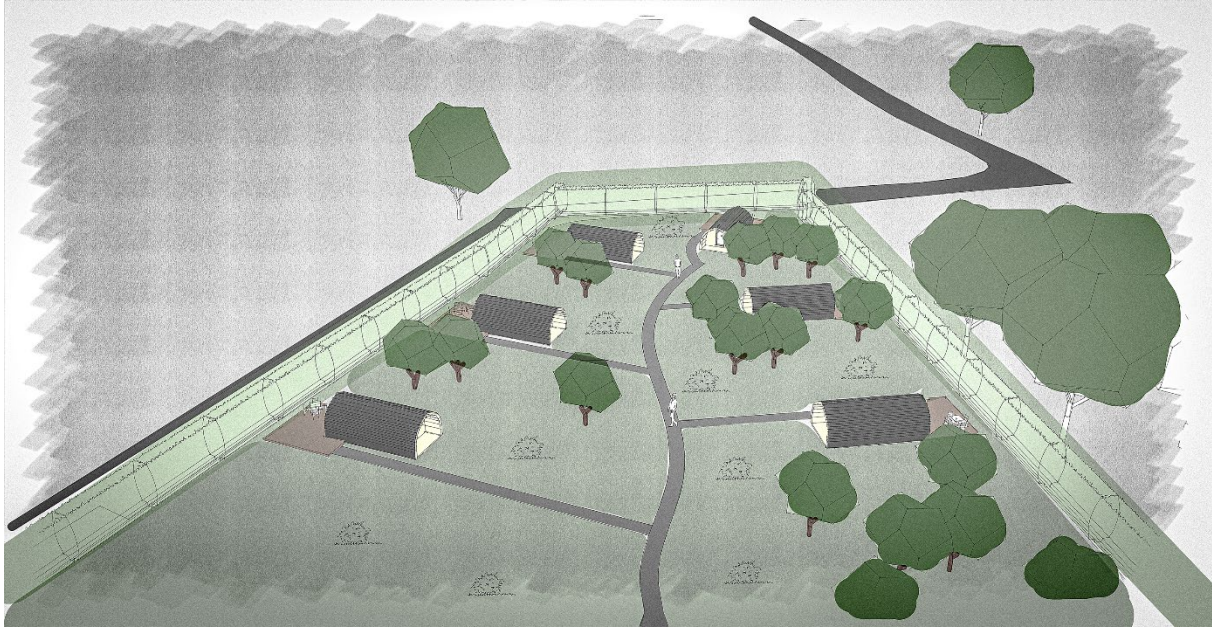


Figure 4 - Artists Visualisation – View from South

Landscaping

Some minor levelling will be required to create suitable footings for the pods and other structures. The intention is to maintain the overall gradient of the site, thus preventing the need for any retaining structures. The pods on the finished site will be installed to adjacent ground levels, therefore will be at varying levels relative to each other.

Any broken ground will be re-instated (turfed where required). Suitable trees/hedges will be around the site to demarcate the pods and provide additional screening.

Footpaths will consist of timber borders filled with either stone or slate chippings.

Design

Stage 1 - Access

No new boundary treatment will be installed at the access point of the site. This access path will also provide initial access for installation of plant and equipment and this will become the site vehicular access to the parking and turning area.

Stage 2 - Groundwork

A sewage treatment tank with relevant inspection chambers will be installed.

Due to the natural flat gradient, little minor levelling will be required to prepare the pod footings (concrete pads or ground screws).

No retaining walls or structure will be required.

Following this, services ducting will be laid for power, water and telecoms as required. Pipework will be run for water and cables for electricity and telecoms will be pulled.

Stage 3 – Pod Install

Pods and other structures are delivered to site and installed (after being fabricated off-site).

Following this, footpaths throughout the site will be laid. Footpaths typically consist of stone or slate chippings.

The aim in the design is to minimise as much disruption to the site as possible. The design plans to remove a minimal amount of soil from the pod bases and the pathways. There will be screening shrubs and trees planted to a height of 2 - 3m to provide further screening of the pods and provide privacy for guests. The screening is also intended to further reduce any visual impact. The trees and bushes planted will match that of the local area as closely as possible and shown on the Layout Plan.

Stage 4 – Roads, Parking & Clean

From the existing entrance gate an extent of new road will be installed; this extent is shown on the site layout plan and will be permeable surface.

No more plant/transport access is required other than to build the parking spaces and turning area. This will be constructed with a permeable material typically compacted type 1 to prevent the use of concrete/tarmac and the need for a dedicated run-off water management system.

Finally, a total clear-out of the site will be done to ensure no leftover waste from the build stage is left. All cleaning waste will be recycled where possible and safely disposed of otherwise.

Sustainability

The proposal will offer an economic stimulus in the area on the currently unused site.

The pods themselves are manufactured off site and designed to be energy efficient with well insulated floors and walls/roofs with the use of materials with a low life cycle environmental impact. All glazing will be double glazed units. LED light fittings are installed as standard throughout the pods. Water heating is instantaneous with no stored hot water. Water saving sanitary fittings and appliances within the pods deliver water efficiency to the site. The minimal surface water run-off from the pods will discharge into pebble borders and all paths and parking areas will be permeable.

Appropriate implementation of measures to minimise environmental impacts arising from any site works; the site will be constructed with efficient construction methods as stated in Stage 3 above thus reducing any waste and earth works will result in no removals from site required.

An efficient operational waste management and recycling strategy will be carried out by the operator as required by Wrexham County Borough Council. The waste and recycling station is located next to the car park.

Summary

The proposed glamping site will provide a new and exciting accommodation option to Whitewell. Demand for this type of accommodation is high throughout the country, which has also been shown to be true of other glamping sites within Scotland.

This development will increase footfall for local businesses and through correct marketing, should increase the length of time tourists remains in the area. This will be beneficial for local tourist attractions, restaurants etc.

The construction of a glamping site in this location can be achieved in less time, with less intrusive construction methods and less environmental impact, than traditional luxury accommodation builds require. This is clearly favourable in an area of countryside rich in natural beauty.

Based on the above points, it is reasonable to suggest that glamping accommodation is warranted in this location, to cater for increasing visitor demand, without sacrificing the area's beauty or ecology.