

2410 Land at Stoneywath Farm, Ennerdale for the Proposed Siting of a Single Camping Pod

Design, Access & Supporting Statements

September 2024

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a planning application for the siting of a single camping pod within an open field at Stoneywath Farm, Kirkland. The proposed development seeks to diversify the farm's operations by introducing a small-scale tourism facility that provides accommodation for visitors seeking to explore the rural surroundings and those undertaking the coast-to-coast route which passes through the nearby village of Ennerdale Bridge. The camping pod will complement the agricultural nature of the farm and provide a low-impact, eco-friendly option for guests to stay in the area and support the local, rural economy.

2. Site Context and Location

Stoneywath Farm is a working agricultural farm located on the outskirts of the village of Kirkland in Cumbria. The farm represents one of the few remaining traditional Lake District hill farms in existence.

The site lies in a rural area, surrounded predominantly by agricultural land, with views of the surrounding countryside and hills typical of the region. The location is accessible via an existing farm access road that connects to the local highway network.

The proposed location for the camping pod is within an existing open field that forms part of the farm's small holding. The field is situated a sufficient distance from the main farm buildings, ensuring privacy for both farm operations and potential guests whilst providing a unique rural experience sought by visitors. The selected location to site the pod is relatively flat, with minimal disruption required to the existing landscape.

3. Design Principles and Development

The design of the camping pod reflects a modern yet rustic approach, blending into the rural surroundings with natural materials and a minimal environmental footprint. The key design principles are:

Size and Scale:

The camping pod is designed as a modest, self-contained unit, measuring approximately 6 meters in length, 3 meters in width, and 2.7 meters in height. The scale is appropriate for its setting, ensuring that it does not dominate the landscape and remains sympathetic to its agricultural context.

Materials:

The exterior of the pod is clad in a singular material which wraps the pods roof and walls to create a uniform appearance that helps it to blend into the natural environment. Decra Oberon roof tiles are a lightweight steel solution modelled on traditional timber shingles. They are designed to offer unsurpassed protection of timber frame structures, particularly on exposed sites such as this one and will maintain their original appearance over the life of the structure ensuring it remains in keeping with the surrounding area, regardless of the weathering that natural materials undergo, potentially changing their appearance to lighter, more visible tones within the landscape.



Decra Oberon.

The external bulkhead walls will be finished in contrasting horizontal timber cladding with timber framed windows and doors.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage:

Foul water drainage will be to the existing septic tank located adjacent to the main house.

Surface water will drain naturally from the roof of the proposed camping pod which does not include any gutters or downpipes.

Sustainability:

The camping pod has been considered to have a minimal environmental impact. It will be insulated to a high standard, ensuring energy efficiency. The unit will include a toilet, shower and a small kitchenette ensuring self-sufficiency when in use without the need to disrupt farm operations.

Access and Circulation:

Access to the camping pod will be via an existing farm track on foot only, with a small additional gravel path extending from the track to the pod's location. This will ensure that vehicular traffic is excluded from the field, maintaining the natural condition of the surroundings. Parking will be provided within the existing yard for a single vehicle when the pod is occupied. The yard is used for existing private vehicles and farm machinery in connection with the farm and house.

4. Impact on the Landscape and Surroundings

The proposed development has been carefully considered to ensure that it has minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and agricultural operations. The pod's small scale, natural materials, and sympathetic positioning ensure that it blends into the existing environment. No trees or hedgerows will be removed as part of the development, and the pod will be located at a sufficient distance from any neighbouring properties to ensure there is no adverse effect on residential amenity.



Proposed location of the camping pod (centre, foreground)

Additionally, the pod will be positioned in such a way as to avoid any disruption to the working farm or its grazing livestock. The field selected for the pod is currently underutilised, and its new use will not detract from the farm's primary agricultural function. Furthermore, as a prefabricated unit the pod could be easily removed at the end of its life and either replaced or removed from the site and the field restored accordingly.

5. Access and Transport

The site is accessible from the main road via the existing farm entrance, which is used for agricultural purposes. The volume of traffic generated by a single camping pod will be minimal akin to a visitor to the farmhouse, with access limited to the occasional vehicle associated with guests' arrivals and departures. There is ample space for parking on-site, and the pod is located away from any public footpaths or areas of public access.

The rural location of the farm encourages sustainable modes of transport, with local walking and cycling routes available for visitors to explore the area. Furthermore, the small scale of the development ensures that there will be no significant increase in vehicular traffic on local roads.

6. Appraisal of Existing Farm Buildings

Stoneywath Farm is a traditional Lake District hill farm with a range of existing outbuildings that support its ongoing agricultural operations. These buildings are essential for livestock housing, storage of machinery, and farm equipment, all of which are integral to the farm's daily functioning. As one of the last remaining hill farms in the region, maintaining these buildings in their current agricultural use is critical to the farm's viability as a working farm.



It has been considered whether converting one of these outbuildings for holiday accommodation could provide a viable alternative to the proposed camping pod. However, such a conversion would not be economically viable for the following reasons:

Operational Impact:

Converting an existing outbuilding would compromise the essential farm operations, as these buildings are necessary for storage and livestock management. The loss of these facilities would disrupt farm productivity and the ability to function effectively as a working hill farm.

Conversion Costs:

The existing buildings are designed for agricultural use and would require significant investment to bring them up to the standards needed for holiday accommodation. The costs associated with such a conversion, including structural alterations, upgrading of utilities, and compliance with building regulations, would be disproportionately high compared to the revenue generated by a single accommodation unit.

Heritage and Farm Preservation:

Preserving the farm's traditional character as a working agricultural enterprise is vital for both its heritage value and economic sustainability. Altering or repurposing these buildings would detract from the farm's historical integrity and its role in maintaining the area's agricultural heritage. The conversion would have a negative impact on the adjacent Grade II listed farmhouse and the traditional farmyard it overlooks.

Considering these factors, the siting of a separate, low-impact camping pod is a more appropriate and sustainable way to diversify the farm's income without disrupting its core operations or undermining its agricultural heritage.

7. Current Level of Farming as Advised by the Client Mr C Calvin (September 2024):

The grazing land will be used to capacity within SFI (Sustainable farming Incentive) meeting the agreed guidance and requirements, predominantly sheep, some horses and possibly some cattle in the future if we feel this will help manage the land in a sympathetic way increasing biodiversity and creating sustainable habitat.

The idea behind cattle is they graze differently to sheep allowing more wildflowers to come through and gently disturbing the ground to allow new seedlings to germinate. Horses also help in a similar way which we already have. In-short this is not overgrazing the land to increase biodiversity which fits the ethos we employ here at Stoneywath.

There are three main buildings, two traditional and one steel frame.

The stone building in front of the house is divided into three sections one section is used for animal feed and wood storage / fuel for the farmhouse. One section for lambing in spring, and livestock that is struggling in the winter months when there is harsh or extreme weather on the farm whilst the last section is for the poultry. The stone building attached to the house is used to store the tractor, quad, farm implements and tools securely. The steel frame building is the main lambing shed, and stabling for horses. All of these buildings are considered essential for day-to-day farm operations.

8. Conclusion

The proposed siting of a single camping pod at Stoneywath Farm represents a low-impact, sustainable development that provides a sensitive and practical means of diversifying the farm's income while enhancing local tourism. The design respects the rural and agricultural character of the area, with careful attention given to the pod's scale, materials, and siting to ensure minimal visual and environmental impact.

Converting existing farm buildings for holiday accommodation has been considered but deemed economically unviable due to the high costs of conversion and the critical role these buildings play in the farm's day-to-day operations. As one of the last remaining hill farms in the Lake District, preserving the functionality of these buildings is essential to maintaining the agricultural heritage of the site.

The camping pod offers a solution that supports rural tourism without compromising the working nature of the farm or its historic value. The proposal aligns with local planning policies that promote sustainable rural development while protecting heritage assets and maintaining the character of the landscape.

Appendix

1. Ecological Statement
2. Heritage Impact Assessment
3. Visual Impact Assessment
4. Camping Pod Design
Refer to sperate document submitted as part of the application.

Appendix 1

Ecological Statement

The proposed development for the siting of a single camping pod at Stoneywath Farm, Kirkland, has been carefully designed and located to ensure minimal ecological impact on the surrounding environment.

The following considerations demonstrate how the ecological footprint of this proposal has been kept to a minimum:

Minimal Disruption to Habitat

The proposed location for the camping pod is within an existing open field that is primarily used for agricultural purposes. The field is not identified as a habitat of particular ecological sensitivity or biodiversity importance. The development does not require the removal of any trees, hedgerows, or other significant vegetation. As such, there will be no direct loss of habitats or disruption to local wildlife.

Sustainable Design Features

The camping pod has been designed to incorporate sustainable features that reduce its environmental impact:

Insulation and Energy Efficiency:

The pod will be insulated to modern energy standards, ensuring minimal energy use for heating. The compact size of the pod and its energy-efficient design mean that it will have a very low carbon footprint during operation.

Limited Ground Disturbance:

The camping pod has an area of less than 25m² and will be installed on a minimal foundation system, designed to reduce ground disturbance and avoid unnecessary excavation. The foundation system will be designed to be reversible, meaning that if the pod is ever removed, the land can be restored to its original condition with minimal impact on the soil or local ecosystem.

A small gravel path will be created to provide access to the pod from the existing farm track, but this will cover a very small portion of the field and will not significantly affect the surrounding vegetation or wildlife.

Protection of Local Wildlife

It is understood that there are no sensitive habitats within the immediate area of the proposed development. However, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that local wildlife is protected during and after construction:

Low Light Pollution:

The camping pod will be fitted with low-intensity, downward-facing lighting to minimise light pollution and avoid disruption to nocturnal wildlife.

Long-Term Ecological Considerations.

Once the pod is operational, it will have a very low ecological impact. Visitors to the pod will be encouraged to respect the natural surroundings, with signage and information provided to promote responsible behaviour, such as staying on marked paths and avoiding disturbance to

wildlife. The pod's usage will be restricted to small numbers of guests, further limiting human presence and activity in the area.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the proposed camping pod at Stoneywath Farm has been designed with ecological sensitivity in mind. The scale of the development is minimal, and through the use of sustainable materials, low-impact construction methods, and thoughtful management of the site, the overall ecological impact of the proposal will be negligible. The proposal preserves the existing rural character of the area.

The development aligns with local and national planning policies that promote low-impact, sustainable rural tourism and farm diversification, while ensuring the protection of the natural environment.

Appendix 2

Heritage Impact Assessment

Introduction:

This Heritage Impact Assessment supports a planning application for the siting of a single camping pod at Stoneywath Farm, home to a Grade II listed farmhouse. The assessment demonstrates that the proposed camping pod will not adversely affect the significance, character, or setting of the heritage asset.

List Entry Number: 1336023

House, early C18 with later additions and alterations. Original house front incised stucco with end pilaster and cornice; scullery, added to left pebble-dashed with cornice extended. Roof hipped to east end; graduated slate to front pitch, C20 concrete tiles to rear. House chimneys rendered, scullery chimney brick. 2 storeys. Original house 3 bays, symmetrical: central part-glazed door in pedimented architrave has sash, with glazing bars, in architrave to either side and 3 above; all architraves shouldered. Single bay scullery has C20 part-glazed door in stone surround. Interior: Some early C18 2-panelled doors and other later, 6-panelled. Stone dog-leg stair added at rear has closed string with turned balusters and newels and moulded handrail.

Impact on the Heritage Asset:

The listed farmhouse, recognised for its architectural and historic significance, forms part of a traditional agricultural landscape. The proposed camping pod is located at a sufficient distance from the farmhouse, ensuring the heritage asset's visual and historic integrity remains intact. Situated on a private farm, the building remains invisible to visitors to the local area. Guests to the camping pod will be able to observe the house where previously its façade remained inaccessible to the public.

Key Considerations

Distance and Visibility:

The pod will be situated far enough from the farmhouse to avoid any direct impact on its setting or key views. It will not intrude on the historic relationship between the farmhouse and the surrounding landscape.

Scale and Design:

The camping pod is a modest, low-profile structure, clad in materials that blend into the environment. Its design ensures it will not visually compete with or overshadow the farmhouse.

Reversible and Low Impact:

The pod's installation involves minimal ground disturbance and is fully reversible, ensuring that the development does not permanently alter the historic character of the site.

Conclusion:

The proposed camping pod at Stoneywath Farm is designed to have no negative impact on the Grade II listed farmhouse. Its careful siting, scale, and use of sympathetic materials ensure that the heritage asset's significance and setting are preserved. The proposal aligns with planning policies aimed at protecting heritage assets while allowing appropriate rural development.

Appendix 3

Visual Impact Assessment

The proposed camping pod at Stoneywath Farm is positioned in a discreet location within an open field, surrounded by natural features such as hedgerows and trees that provide screening. Due to its small scale, low-profile design, and careful choice of materials, the pod will blend into the landscape. It is not visible from any nearby elevated ground, including the fell overlooking Ennerdale Water, ensuring that it does not disrupt key views or the visual character of the surrounding rural area. The pod's positioning preserves the natural beauty of the landscape and maintains the unspoiled nature of the local environment.



Image 1 - viewed with the naked eye



Image 2 – 10x magnification