

Planning, Design and Access Report

Proposal: Siting of five caravans for short-term holiday accommodation, foul drainage connection to the public sewer and associated works.

Site: 51A Brook Drive, Corsham, SN13 9AX

Client: Foundrock Ltd

LPA: Wiltshire Council

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By	BN	Approved by	
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Introduction

1. Greenfinch has been instructed by Foundrock Ltd to submit a planning application for the siting of five caravans for short-term holiday accommodation, foul drainage connection to the public sewer and associated works at 51A Brook Drive, Corsham, SN13 9AX.
2. Within this document, Greenfinch will demonstrate a clear understanding of the site's constraints and opportunities and show a sensitive proposal that meets the particularities of the site and the requirements of the client.

Background

3. The site forms part of the property known as Highlands, on the eastern edge of Corsham. The applicant wishes to bring an additional income stream to the site by developing a small-scale, low-impact tourism offer aimed at visitors who want to stay in a quiet setting on the edge of the town and the countryside beyond.
4. The proposal seeks to develop five units for short-term letting. These comprise three shepherd's huts, one burrowed (earth-sheltered) unit and one timber Woodman's hut, all finished in natural materials so they sit quietly within the landscape. The units are highly insulated and served by mains electricity, with the potential for renewable generation and storage to supplement demand, meaning they can run from low-carbon sources.
5. Parking will be provided within the site, with at least one space per unit, together with turning space and an additional space for service and maintenance vehicles.
6. The proposal is intended to be as low-impact as possible. The units are demountable and brought to the site as complete structures, requiring only a buried water and drainage connection and lightweight foundations as permanent development, allowing the units to be removed and the land reinstated should that be necessary in the future or at the end of any temporary permission.

Description of the site

7. The site lies on the eastern edge of Corsham and forms a long strip of land running broadly east to west. It is bounded by Ladbrook Lane to the north and residential properties on Brook Drive and Broadmead to the south. The land comprises existing residential curtilage, a storage yard and paddock, and is currently rough grassland. It is accessed from Ladbrook Lane via an existing field access to the east of the site. Corsham town centre and its services lie a short distance to the west.

Designations

8. There are no statutory designations on the site.

Planning History

9. The following table sets out the relevant planning history for the site:

Reference	Description	Decision
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656/66	Erection of one dwelling.	Approved (March 1967)
00/00591/FUL	Single storey extension.	Permitted
15/11544/OUT	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 31 dwellings following the demolition of 6 No. existing dwellings and associated access.	Refused by the Council; allowed on appeal (31 May 2017)
17/07133/OUT	Outline Application for the Erection of up to 31 dwellings Following the Demolition of 6 No. Existing Dwellings & Associated Access (All matters reserved except access) (Resubmission of 15/11544/OUT).	Undecided (application closed)
18/07085/VAR	Variation of condition 4 of outline permission 15/11544/OUT.	Refused; appeal dismissed (2 September 2019)
19/03152/OUT	Outline planning application for the erection of up to 27 dwellings following the demolition of 2 No. existing dwellings and an attached domestic garage.	Withdrawn (29 January 2024)
20/04367/REM	Reserved matters for the erection of 29 dwellings following the demolition of 6 No. existing dwellings, pursuant to outline permission 15/11544/OUT.	Withdrawn by applicant (29 January 2024)
21/01698/CLP	Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed siting of 2 No. caravans for use as ancillary residential accommodation.	Approved (16 April 2021)
PL/2022/07933	Prior approval (Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA) for the enlargement of the dwellinghouse by construction of an additional storey.	Prior approval granted (2022)

Commentary on the planning history

10. The application site has been through a number of applications and planning appeals to gain outline consent for dwellings on the site. The proposal went through a number of iterations, with the original consent (15/11544/OUT) being for 38 dwellings, which was reduced to 31 and approved on appeal in May 2017, having first been refused by the Council. The applicant then pursued a number of further applications revising the proposal, including an application to vary a condition of the outline permission, which was refused and dismissed at appeal in 2019 (18/07085/VAR), an outline application for up to 27 dwellings (19/03152/OUT) and a reserved matters application for 29 dwellings (20/04367/REM). Due to significant local opposition, the applicant decided to stop pursuing the residential proposal despite the appeal approval, and both later applications were withdrawn in January 2024.
11. Our client has subsequently gained consent on the site for a certificate of lawfulness for the siting of two caravans for use as ancillary residential annexes (21/01698/CLP), approved in April 2021, and prior approval for the enlargement of the dwellinghouse through the construction of an additional storey (PL/2022/07933), granted in 2022.

Description of Proposal

The following description is offered as the formal description for the Proposal:

12. Siting of five caravans for short-term holiday accommodation, foul drainage connection to the public sewer and associated works..

13. The operational development consists of:

- lightweight and screw pile foundations
- buried water and electric supply
- a new foul drainage connection to the existing public sewer, with buried foul drainage and surface water managed by infiltration
- permeable car parking spaces, an access track and footpaths

Building Design

14. The units are designed to be delivered to the site as complete structures and set down on lightweight foundations, which minimises the need for ground works and will allow the units to be demounted and relocated should that be necessary in the future or at the end of any temporary permission. The burrowed unit is set into the existing ground levels so that it reads as part of the landform and reduces its visual presence within the landscape. All holiday lets will be built to the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (amended by the Caravan Sites Act 1968).

Policy Assessment

National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) supports a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable 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 (paragraph 88a), the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses (paragraph 88b), and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside (paragraph 88c). Paragraph 89 recognises that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, provided that the development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and takes opportunities to make the location more sustainable, with the use of sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements encouraged.

15. This proposal will allow the applicant to diversify their income and bring a new revenue stream to the site through the siting of five low-impact holiday units. The units are manufactured off-site, reducing waste through controlled and standardised building practices. They are finished in natural materials, highly insulated and served by mains electricity with the potential for renewable generation, meaning the units can run from low-carbon sources. This proposal does not remove any housing stock from the local community, and because of the modular design and lightweight foundations the units can be removed if the business no longer needs them. The site lies on the edge of Corsham and is physically well-related to the existing settlement, in line with paragraph 89, so that the development supports the diversification and sustainable rural tourism

encouraged by paragraph 88 while bringing visitors into the local area and boosting the local economy.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy – *The Settlement Strategy identifies the settlements where sustainable development will take place. Corsham is identified as a Market Town with the potential to support sustainable patterns of living through its facilities, services and employment.*

16. The site lies on the edge of the Corsham settlement boundary, immediately adjacent to the residential area of Brook Drive. This is a sustainable and accessible location on the edge of a Market Town, where the proposal can draw on the services of Corsham while sitting comfortably within its edge-of-settlement context.

Core Policy 39: Tourism – *Within Principal Settlements and Market Towns, proposals for tourist development of an appropriate scale, including tourist accommodation, will be supported subject to a sequential assessment. Proposals should carefully consider the need to protect landscapes and environmentally sensitive sites while providing adequate facilities and improving the financial viability of the offer.*

17. This proposal is for five modest holiday units on the edge of Corsham, a Market Town, where Core Policy 39 offers in-principle support for tourist accommodation of an appropriate scale. The development is sequentially appropriate: it occupies an edge-of-settlement site that is physically well-related to Corsham rather than open countryside, and there are no suitable, available sites within the built-up area capable of delivering this form of countryside-based, low-impact holiday accommodation. The scheme is appropriately scaled, sits alongside an existing residential property and makes use of an existing access. It supports the visitor economy, provides a diversified income for the applicant and can be accommodated without harm to the character of the area. Wiltshire Council's recent approval of a comparable small-scale glamping scheme at Field Farm, Porton Road (PL/2023/10276) demonstrates clear support for this type of low-impact rural tourism.

Core Policy 51: Landscape – *Development should protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance landscape character, and must not have a harmful impact upon it, with any negative impacts mitigated through sensitive design and landscape measures.*

18. The site sits on the transition between the built edge of Corsham and the open countryside to the north. The units are low structures of natural materials, with the burrowed unit set into the ground to reduce its presence. New native planting, a growing area, woodland paths and a natural swimming pond will strengthen the landscape framework and screen the units, conserving the edge-of-settlement character and protecting views and tranquillity.

Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping – *A high standard of design is required in all new development. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place by drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.*

19. The units have been designed to respond to their setting, using natural materials, low rooflines and a dispersed layout that follows the grain of the land. The units are screened by existing and proposed planting, and the overall scheme draws on the local rural character to create a strong sense of place.

Core Policy 60: Sustainable transport and Core Policy 61: Transport and new development
– Development should be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, to encourage sustainable transport alternatives, and to be served by safe access to the highway network with adequate parking.

20. The proposal makes use of an existing access off Ladbrook Lane. Due to the location of the proposal, it is likely that most guests will travel by car, and each unit is served by at least one parking space, with turning space and an additional space for service vehicles so that all vehicles can enter and leave the site in forward gear. The site is on the edge of Corsham, within reach of the town's services, shops and public transport, and the proposal supports walking and cycling within and around the site.
21. The site benefits from its close proximity to Corsham and, as a result, has a score of 45 on the Gov.uk connectivity tool for leisure developments for modes of transport excluding cars. This score is only 10 lower than the middle of Corsham, showing the suitability of the site and connectivity to the town centre (Appendix One).

Commentary on the policy framework

22. This proposal seeks to provide an existing property with a new, diversified revenue stream on the edge of a Market Town through a small-scale, low-impact tourism offer. It meets both the general thrust of planning policy for tourist accommodation and satisfies the detailed site planning criteria for such proposals. It achieves this by making use of an existing access, by using natural materials and new planting to reduce the visual impact of the units while enhancing the local landscape character, and by controlling drainage through a connection to the existing public sewer. The design and siting of the units will cause no significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Material Considerations

Habitat

23. The site comprises existing residential curtilage, a storage yard and paddock, being modified agricultural pasture rather than a designated ecological habitat, and is not subject to specific environmental protections. The site will see a habitat improvement through new native planting, a growing area and a natural swimming pond. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been undertaken using the Natural England Small Sites Metric, demonstrating the required 10% net gain, secured through new planting and long-term management (Appendix Three).

Biodiversity Net Gain

24. The proposal has a baseline BNG habitat unit value of 4.7352 and a proposed development unit value of 5.5187, with a 16.55% gain meeting the 10% biodiversity net gain threshold.

Flood Risk

25. The site is not situated within the Environment Agency's flood risk areas. Surface water will be managed through permeable surfacing and infiltration.

Archaeology

26. There are no recorded heritage or archaeological designations on the site. The lightweight and screw pile foundations used for the majority of the units will minimise disturbance to the ground.

Heritage

27. There is no historic designation on the proposed site, and no listed buildings or conservation areas are affected by the proposal.

Residential Amenity

28. The nearest residential properties are those on Brook Drive and Broadmead to the south. A band of established trees some 20 metres deep runs along the southern boundary, between the site and the rear gardens of these properties, providing a substantial existing screen and a generous separation distance. The holiday units are single-storey, low-profile structures, dispersed across the site and set well back from this boundary, so there would be no overlooking or overbearing impact on neighbours. Comings and goings, external lighting and noise will be controlled through the Site Management Plan, including a sensitive lighting scheme and quiet-hours arrangements, ensuring that the amenity of neighbouring occupiers is protected.

Drainage

29. Foul drainage will be managed by a new connection to the existing public sewer, with the western units served by a new foul drain and the burrowed unit's foul drainage pumped up to the level of the connection. Surface water from the units, car park and footpaths will infiltrate into the ground through permeable surfacing, maintaining the infiltration capacity of the land.

Site Management

30. The day-to-day operation of the site will be governed by a Site Management Plan, submitted in support of the application (Appendix Four). The Plan sets out how the units will be let as short-term holiday accommodation only, with no permanent or primary residential occupation, and covers arrivals and departures, parking and servicing, refuse storage and collection, external lighting, noise and quiet hours, and the long-term management of the landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. Securing the Site Management Plan by condition will ensure that the development operates in a way that protects neighbouring amenity, highway safety and the ecological interests of the site.

Balancing Exercise

31. The site has previously been found capable of accommodating substantial residential development, with outline permission for up to 31 dwellings allowed on appeal (15/11544/OUT). Although that permission is no longer extant, it demonstrates that the principle of significant development on the site has been established. The current proposal is of a far lower order of impact: five demountable, single-storey holiday units that involve no permanent built form, can be removed and the land reinstated, and would be constructed in accordance with the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. The site already benefits from a certificate of lawfulness for the siting of caravans for ancillary use (21/01698/CLP), and the holiday units represent a modest, reversible and well-screened use of the land.
32. The applicant is content for the permission to be controlled by condition, including an occupancy restriction, adherence to the Site Management Plan and, if the Council considers it necessary, a temporary or restoration condition. Overall, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal, in providing a diversified business and supporting the local visitor economy on the edge of a Market Town, clearly outweigh any limited impacts on policy objectives, particularly given the low-impact and reversible nature of the development.

Design and Access Statement

Context and Use

33. The proposal provides short-term holiday accommodation which is consistent with the edge-of-settlement, semi-rural setting on the boundary of Corsham.

Amount

34. The proposal is for five units: three shepherd's huts, one burrowed unit and one Woodman's hut.

Layout

35. The units are dispersed across the site to give each guest privacy, with a minimum of 6 metres between units to meet fire safety standards. Shared facilities, including the car park, growing area, natural swimming pond and changing hut, are arranged along the central farm track and woodland paths.

Scale and Appearance

36. The units are single-storey structures of modest scale, finished in natural materials so that they sit quietly within the landscape. The proposed units are set out in the schedule below:

Quantity	Name	Size	Materials
3	Shepherds Hut	2.5m x 6m	Walls: Corrugated (sinusoidal) metal cladding Roof: Corrugated Metal
1	Burrowed Unit	2.4m x 8m	Walls and Roof: Buried under ground Door: Brick-clad arch with timber-framed glazed doors and clear glazing
1	Changing Hut	2.5m x 4.75m	Walls: Corrugated (sinusoidal) metal cladding Roof: Corrugated Metal
1	Woodman's Hut	3m x 6m	Walls: Natural timber cladding Roof: Corrugated Metal

Landscaping

37. New native planting, a growing area, woodland paths and a natural swimming pond are proposed to enhance the site, screen the units and deliver biodiversity net gain.

Access

38. Access will be provided via the existing field access off Ladbroke Lane. The proposal makes use of this established access without alteration, and no trees will be removed as part of the development. Each unit is served by parking within the site, and internally all fittings will comply with current building regulations to ensure that all sections of society can use the units.

Conditions

39. There are no matters that could warrant refusal of this proposal that could not be dealt with by condition. Appropriate conditions are likely to include an occupancy restriction limiting the units to short-term holiday use only (with no permanent or primary residential occupation), approval and implementation of landscaping and biodiversity management, drainage details, external lighting controls, adherence to the submitted Site Management Plan, and restoration of the land should the tourism use cease.
40. As always, it is considered good practice for an LPA to discuss any proposed conditions with the applicant before the decision is issued to avoid any unnecessary or unduly onerous ones.

Appendices

Appendix One: GOV.uk Connectivity Tool



Appendix Two: Site Photos



FIGURE 1 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED WOODMAN'S HUT



FIGURE 2 LOCATION OF A PROPOSED SHEPHERD'S HUT



FIGURE 3 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED BURROWED UNIT



FIGURE 4 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED WOODMAN'S HUT

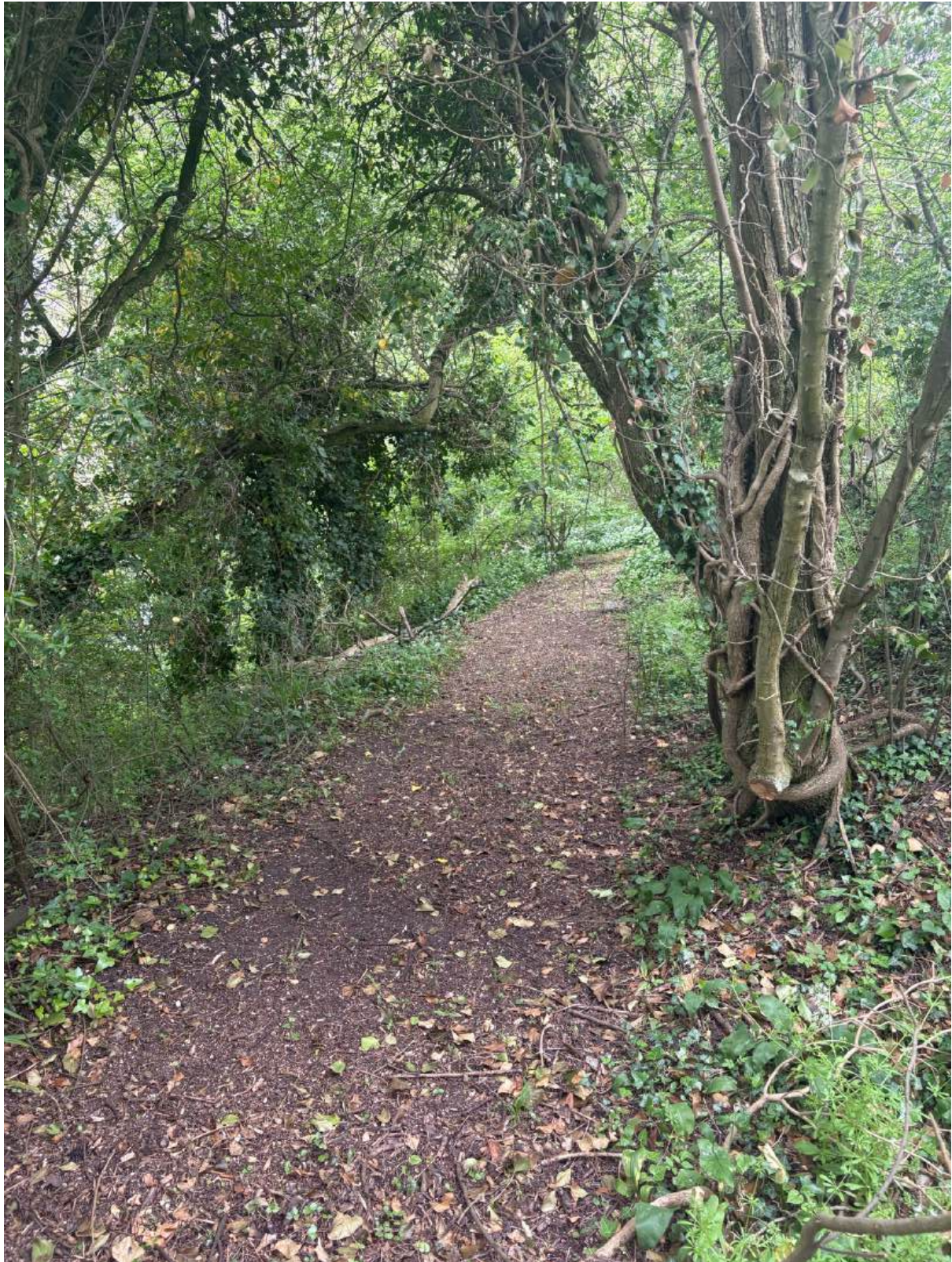


FIGURE 5 EXISTING PATH TO THE BURROWED UNIT



FIGURE 6 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED POND



FIGURE 7 LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED SHEPHERD HUTS

Appendix Three: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site Name		51A Brook Drive
Sheet Name		Headline Results
Headline Results		
Headline		BNG Targets Met ✓
Trading Rules		Trading Rules Satisfied ✓
Next steps		Check for input errors/rule breaks present in the metric !
Baseline Units	Habitat units	4.7352
	Hedgerow units	Zero Units Baseline
	Watercourse units	Zero Units Baseline
Post-development Units	Habitat units	5.5187
	Hedgerow units	0.0000
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.7835 ✓
	Hedgerow units	0.0000
	Watercourse units	0.0000
Total net % change	Habitat units	16.55% ✓
	Hedgerow units	% target not appropriate
	Watercourse units	% target not appropriate
Habitats units required to meet target		0.0000
Hedgerow units required to meet target		0.0000
Watercourse units required to meet target		0.0000

Appendix Four: Site Management Plan

26_5009 - Clark - Site Management Plan – attached