

Application:	2017/0436/FUL	ITEM 2	
Proposal:	Change of use from horticultural to glamping / camping. Construction of No. 6 Safari Tents for holiday use and Reception and the creation of a car parking area including footpaths and a drive.		
Address:	Land at Uppingham Road, Preston, Rutland		
Applicant:	Mr Anthony Woolley	Parish	AYSTON, PRESTON
Agent:	Mr Ross Thain Ross Thain Architects	Ward	Braunston and Belton
Reason for presenting to Committee:	Local objections, policy issues		
Date of Committee:	4 July 2017		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposal is located in an unsustainable location where a previous scheme was refused on sustainability and visual grounds. The scheme has been reduced in scale and tents located in more screened positions which will screen them from views most of the time. The site is in an unsustainable location so is recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSAL, for the following reasons:

The site is located in open countryside in an unsustainable location, remote from any visitor attractions or other services or facilities. The scheme is therefore contrary to the advice in Paragraph 28 of the NPPF, Policy CS1 of the Rutland Core Strategy (2011) and Policies SP7 and SP25 of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014).

Site & Surroundings

1. The site is located on the west side of the A6003, 700 metres to the south of Preston and was previously used in part as a vineyard. The site slopes north to south and there is a tree/hedge screen all around the site of varying height and density. There are various areas of tree planting within the site that provide internal screens and 'rooms'.
2. The site has an access, approximately 18 metres wide at the front, tapering to a double gate width of around 8 metres, the gates are set approximately 17 metres back from the carriageway.
3. The distance from the access to the A47 and Uppingham market place are approximately 1000 metres (0.6 mile) and 2000 metres (1.2 miles) respectively.

Proposal

4. The proposal is to use part of the overall site for the siting of 6 safari 'glamping' tents, one of which is a 'reception' tent. These would be 12 metres by 5 metres and have a 3 metre decking area at the front. The tents would be 3.6m high at the ridge. They would be located on the site in area's that are least visible from outside the site. The roof would be khaki green/grey and the side would be a sand colour.

5. A car parking area would be created behind the roadside boundary hedge providing parking for 11 cars.
6. The applicant has also confirmed that the proposed opening dates for the site are intended to be from the 1st of March until the 31st of October, electricity supply would be provided to the reception tent only, lighting will be provided by hand held lanterns & torches to ensure that no light pollution is caused within this area and pathways would be lit by low level, removable, solar powered LED lights.
7. The layout is shown in the **Appendix 1**.
8. The scheme is a revised submission following a refusal under delegated powers in January 2017 for the use of the whole site area for glamping (ref 2016/1163).

Relevant Planning History

Application	Description	Decision
2016/1163	Change of use of the entire site area from horticultural to glamping / camping. Construction of No. 11 Safari Tents for holiday use, No. 1 Reception Log Cabin and the creation of a car parking area including footpaths and a drive	Refused Jan 2017

9. The previous reason for refusal was as follows:
10. The site is located in open countryside, remote from any visitor attractions or other services or facilities. The site is on an exposed south facing slope which is prominent when approaching the site from the south. The appearance of the proposed tents in the landscape here would have a detrimental impact on the character of the open rolling landscape to the detriment of visual amenity. It is considered therefore that the scheme is contrary to the advice in Para 28 in particular of the NPPF, Policy CS15 of the Rutland Core Strategy (2011) and Policies SP7, SP15 and SP25 of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014).

Planning Guidance and Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF supports sustainable development.

Para 28 – support sustainable rural tourism and leisure that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside, including supporting the provision of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.

Rutland Core Strategy (2011)

CS1 – Sustainable Development Principles

New development in Rutland will be expected to:

- a) minimise the impact on climate change and include measures to take account of future changes in the climate; (see Policy CS19 and 20)
- b) maintain and wherever possible enhance the county's environmental, cultural and heritage assets;(see Policies CS21 and 22)

- c) be located where it minimises the need to travel and wherever possible where services and facilities can be accessed safely on foot, by bicycle or public transport; (see Policy CS4 and CS18)
- d) make use of previously developed land or conversion or redevelopment of vacant and under-used land and buildings within settlements before development of new green field land;(see Policy CS4)
- e) respect and wherever possible enhance the character of the towns, villages and landscape; (see Policies CS19, 20, 21, 22)
- f) minimise the use of resources and meet high environmental standards in terms of design and construction with particular regard to energy and water efficiency, use of sustainable materials and minimisation of waste; (see Policies CS19 and 20)
- g) avoid development of land at risk of flooding or where it would exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere (see Policy CS19);
- h) contribute towards creating a strong, stable and more diverse economy (see Policies CS13, 14, 15, 16, and 17)
- i) include provision, or contribute towards any services and infrastructure needed to support the development (see Policy CS8)

CS3 – Preston is classified as a Restraint village

CS4 – Location of Development – Countryside

Development in the countryside will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, to support the rural economy.

CS15 – Tourism

- Allow provision for visitors which is appropriate in use and character to Rutland's countryside.
- Allow new tourism provision in,...the villages where these would benefit local communities and support the rural economy and development of an appropriate scale in the countryside'

Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014)

SP7 – Non-residential Development in the Countryside

Sustainable development in the countryside will be supported where it is:

- Essential for visitor facilities, provided that:
 - Amount of new build kept to a minimum, the development would not by itself be detrimental to the character and appearance of the landscape, visual amenity or the character of open land
 - Would be in an accessible location and not generate an unacceptable increase in traffic movements including car travel.

SP15 – Design & Amenity

- c) amenity – light pollution

SP25 - Lodges, log cabins, chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation

This is particularly relevant here. It states that schemes such as this are acceptable provided they meet 6 criteria:

Outside of the Rutland Water and Eyebrook Reservoir Areas, Lodges, Log Cabins, Chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation will only be acceptable where:

- a) provision is made to minimise disruption and prevent pollution;
- b) they are well related to an existing tourism attraction or recreation facility;
- c) they are located with convenient access to supporting facilities;
- d) they would not result in an unacceptable increase in the amount of car travel;
- e) they are not detrimental to environmental, amenity and highway considerations; and
- f) they are not detrimental to visual amenity and the appearance of the landscape;

The Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (2003) was used as the evidence base for the preparation of the Development Plan. This identifies that the site is in area A(ii), Ridges and Valleys sub area of High Rutland.

The recommended Landscape Objectives for High Rutland - Ridges and Valleys are:

To sustain and restore the rural, mixed-agricultural, busy, colourful, diverse landscape with regular patterns, straight lines, frequent movement, many large and small historic, stonebuilt conservation villages that fit well with the landform, to protect the landscape setting and conserve and enhance the edges of villages, to increase the woodland cover and other semi-natural habitats whilst protecting historic features and panoramic views from the ridges.

Consultations

11. Ecology Unit

The ecology survey submitted in support of the application (Philip Irving, November 2016) found no evidence of protected species on site although it was considered that the site had potential to support protected species. Suitable working methods have been included in section 6 of the report to minimise any potential impact (for example by removing woody plants outside of the bird-breeding season) and we would recommend that these are forwarded to the applicant as a condition of the development if planning permission is granted. The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey season for habitat surveys and whilst it was noted that the grassland was of low biodiversity interest it is possible that some botanical species were overlooked. However, we do not consider that the proposed change of use of the site should significantly decrease the value of the grassland, provided that the existing grassland is retained and managed appropriately. The site should not be stripped and replaced with amenity grassland. Consideration should also be given to planting a wildflower mix around the edge of the tent area in order to increase biodiversity on site.

12. Preston Parish Meeting

Overall, there is unanimous agreement that the revised application must be rejected, on the following grounds:

Road Safety

The entrance is located on a hill where the speed limit is 60mph, and only visible at the last minute to traffic approaching. The ability of moving traffic to stop in time, should a vehicle be in the road awaiting entry to the site is a great concern. Vehicles regularly travel 'fast' on the downhill section, in advance of the steep climb back up the other side. Contrary to the Architects report (ref 6.2 in D&A statement), there is only a SINGLE lane access to the site – based on the 'dropped kerb', so there is a very real risk of traffic being stationary in the road. The fact that there hasn't been an accident caused by current access to the site is irrelevant, given that the site is barely used at present, and therefore receives little, if any, vehicular traffic.

Visibility

The Architect's report conveniently shows an 'impression' of the site in the height of summer when trees are in full leaf. However, that leaves the rest of the year when the trees are bare and the campsite will be in full view. This is still an unacceptable blot on the beautiful Rutland landscape

Local Facilities

The application makes much of its proximity to Rutland Water, however, this requires travel on the main A6003 hill between Preston and Manton, which doesn't benefit from a cyclepath/footpath, and other than being a great challenge for cycling groups, is certainly not realistic for the average tourist whether cycling or walking. Hence reference to accessing the public house at Manton is nonsense, unless they make a long detour via Wing. Ditto for access to the Wing pub, which is a restaurant rather than pub.

Planning Policy SP24 – Caravan and Camping sites policy.

While the creation of a footpath from Preston to Uppingham was very welcome by residents - who otherwise had to walk in the road, this can hardly be described as a 'pleasant walk' into the centre of Uppingham – with lorries racing by at 50-60mph, just 6 feet away. The footpath is used 'of necessity', but tourists at the Glamping site will inevitably resort to cars, adding to the traffic volume. It's alleged 'underuse' is somewhat bizarre given the volume of locals using it, but may also be to do with it stopping at Preston, rather than linking Uppingham to Oakham/Rutland Water which would make it much more strategically important.

Viability

While the revised proposal to reduce the number of tents down to 6, in order to make them less visible is noted, it raises the very real concern as to the viability of the business on that small number. Hence, how long would it be before the inevitable application to expand the site emerged; no doubt justified on 'protecting' whatever benefits the site was bringing to the area which would otherwise have to close. A fellow colleague, who lives on the A6003 has already commented about the level of noise from road traffic. This is made bearable by double glazing – but will be a major detriment to those occupying the tents, who will hear the lorries passing all through the night. Overall this is no improvement on the previous application, and brings nothing to the local environment

Neighbour Representations

13. There have been 7 letters of objection from local residents. These are on the following grounds:
 - does not address previous issues,
 - lack of recognition for Preston Conservation Area,
 - lack of local amenities,
 - busy road, speed of traffic,
 - disturbance to occupiers from traffic
 - footpath to Uppingham is not pleasant and will encourage use of cars
 - impact on rural landscape which must be preserved
 - permanent structures, visible all year, especially in winter
 - no water or sanitation info,
 - no evidence of compliance with SP25

14. There have been 2 letters of support from individuals further afield, stating that:
- this is a great idea,
 - away from Preston village,
 - much needed entrepreneurialism, enhances local economy/tourism,
 - well placed for Rutland Water and other attractions.

Planning Assessment

15. The main issues are the principle of development in this location, the visual impact and highway safety.

Policy/Principle

16. The main issue here is compliance with the accessibility/sustainable location elements of CS1, SP7 and SP25.
17. Policy CS1 sets the background for the sustainable development theme running through the development plan, reflecting the advice in the NPPF.
18. The policy contains several criteria set out above. The proposal does not comply with criteria a), c), d) and f). It would contribute to the cultural heritage of the County and would avoid developing land at risk of flooding, but in balancing the overall criteria, the proposal does not comply with CS1.
19. SP15 Design & Amenity seeks to prevent pollution, including from lighting. Lighting at night could be a potential problem here and would make the site visible at night if not well controlled. Other sites have self-limited the use of electric lighting and use hand held lanterns only.
20. Policy SP25 has 6 specific criteria. It is considered that criteria b), c) and d) are not met in this instance.
21. The scheme will generate journeys by car and there is little scope for other sustainable means of transport to be utilised here. The nearest bus stop is in Preston to the north, 830 metres uphill from the site entrance. There is a new footpath along this route. This is served by the Rutland Flyer 1 service between Oakham and Corby, which provides an hourly service Monday to Saturday from 0715 until 1830 at Preston. It is likely that occupiers of this site would use a private car both to arrive at the site and to visit the local area during their stay.
22. Preston itself has no facilities, in terms of shops or pubs. It is 9.5km from the site to the south shore of Rutland Water at Normanton, the nearest point of access for vehicles and a designated 'recreation area'. The nearest point of access on foot or cycle is 4km away at Sounding Bridge on the A6003 north of Manton (this involves a journey along a fast section of road over 2 significant hills with no cycle path between Preston and Manton).
23. The site is not therefore close to visitor attractions and is remote from public transport facilities.
24. Whilst there is a public footpath alongside the road to Uppingham, and into Preston, the traffic along the road is heavy and fast moving. This does not produce a desirable route for pedestrians especially when the weather is not conducive to walking/cycling. The likelihood is that visitors to the site will use their cars to visit Uppingham and other locations further afield.
25. The previous refusal was 2 pronged, policy and visual impact.

Visual Impact

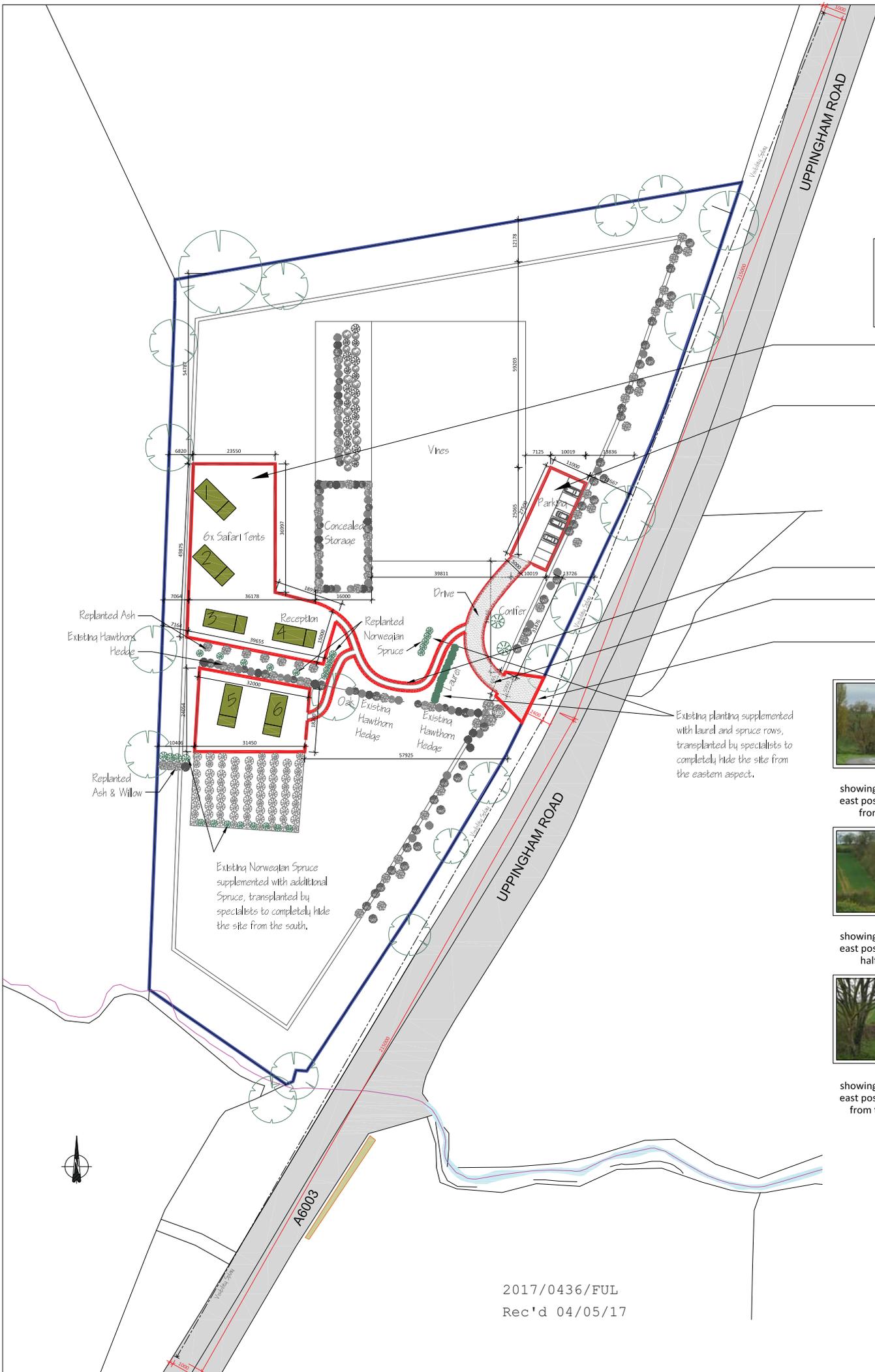
26. The location of the 6 tents in their current locations is the optimum siting to maximise screening from hedges and trees on and around the site. The applicant has indicated that additional screen planting is possible if required. If approved this would need to be dealt with by a landscaping condition, an accurate tree survey and a Tree Preservation Order to ensure that all necessary trees on site, including new ones, were retained. Some of the proposed landscaping is with non-native species that could be transplanted from elsewhere within the site. A more appropriate native planting scheme could be secured by condition if the development was deemed to be acceptable.
27. Other glamping sites that have been approved elsewhere have been virtually invisible from outside the site and the public realm. They are generally close to at least some facilities. A prominent site on the edge of Whitwell was refused and dismissed on appeal (2009/1324). Screening has been particularly important where there are unusual structures such as the white domes at Brook Farm Greetham. In this case it is proposed to use more traditional safari tents with green/grey canvas roofs. These would minimise any longer views from the south during winter. If the site is closed for the winter there would not be any vehicles or other activity at the site in times of least screening. The tents would be screened by the vegetation that would remain after autumn and it is possible that they may be visible through the bare structural screen. The applicant has provided a landscape visual analysis which shows 4 photos from various locations to the south on the main road. These show that a 4 metre high flag is not visible in the location of the proposed tents at the time the photos were taken. However, there is no analysis of winter visibility so it has to be assumed the tents would be partially visible. Other sites have concluded that it is not practicable to remove the tents during the winter as there is so much heavy equipment provided inside, such as log burners, cooking range and bathroom.
28. Whilst it is desirable to screen the units as far as practicable. There is nothing to say that they should not be seen at all, under any circumstances, especially where a more conventional design of tent is used, it should just not be so prominent as to detract from amenity.
29. In this case it is concluded that the visual impact would be minimal and that this can no longer be sustained as a reason for refusal.

Highway Safety

30. The highway authority had some initial concerns about the previous proposal but the applicant cut back vegetation and the highway authority was satisfied that there was adequate visibility at the access, based on a plan which showed visibility splays. The previous refusal did not include a highway safety reason. The highway officer has visited the site again and was able to exit the site easily. Once the visibility splays have been cut and retained it will be easier for all motorists to see movements to and from the site.

Other Issues

31. The application states that foul drainage would be to a public sewer and surface water to soakaways. There does not appear to be a public sewer in this area so it would be necessary to use a package treatment plant. The applicant confirms that such a proposal would work on this site. The advice of the Councils Building Control and Environmental Protection Officers is that provided an electrical supply can be provided there is no reason why a package treatment plant would not work on this site, even if it closes down in winter.



Safari Tents
12.0 x 5.0m including
3.0m Decking Area

Car Parking Area

Footpath

Drive

Access from Uppingham Rd



View 1
showing the site from a south-east position on Uppingham Rd from the top of the hill



View 2
showing the site from a south-east position on Uppingham Rd half way down the hill



View 3
showing the site from a south-east position on Uppingham Rd from the bottom of the hill

Existing planting supplemented with laurel and spruce rows, transplanted by specialists to completely hide the site from the eastern aspect.

Existing Norwegian Spruce supplemented with additional Spruce, transplanted by specialists to completely hide the site from the south.

2017/0436/FUL
Rec'd 04/05/17

Rev.	Date	Details	Drawn
A	21.12.16	Visibility Study 215 m	BCK

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Job Title
Preston Glamping
Uppingham Road
Preston
Oakham

Scale: 1:500@A1 **Date:** April 2017

Drawn: BCK

Drawing Title:
Proposed Block Plan

Drawing No: 1107-03 **Revision:** D

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Proposed Block Plan