



Planning application for the
Proposed Tourist (Tree
Tent) accommodation
development

At

Land at Ham Wood

**Ham Manor Park
Llantwit Major
CF61 1BD**

24th September 2016

ADDRESS: Land Adjacent to Woodside Hamlet
Ham Wood, Ham Manor,
Llantwit Major
CF61 1BD

DATE: 24th September 2016

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 The application relates to an area of mixed woodland to the south of Llantwit Major, with the main access gained from Ham Manor Park residential Park, to the south. The site lies outside of the settlement of Llantwit Major as defined by the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 and as such is in the countryside. There are significant site level differences running centrally through the site and as a result a large amount of the site also sits within Flood Zone C2. The site lies adjacent to but not within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.
- 1.02 To the south of the site is Ham Manor Park, with a mixture of static caravans and chalet log cabins.
- 1.03 The site is densely populated with trees of varying age, size, height and condition. A detailed arboricultural survey has been carried out and method statement and constraints report accompany this application.
- 1.06 The area is restricted mainly to the woodland habitat type. The biodiversity value of the habitats varied according to the level of size, naturalness, degree of agricultural or other management and species diversity. The semi-natural broadleaved woodland to some extent lacked structural and species diversity, due to a lack of management intervention for an extended period of time. The habitat was thought not to qualify as County Wildlife site quality, due to a low number of indicator species present (SWWSP 2004). The canopy and ground flora were dominated by common and widespread species typical of secondary woodland. The origins of the woodland are uncertain, but are likely to not be from ancient woodland but perhaps parkland associated with the former Ham Manor.

The small pond found within the woodland was thought to have minimal biodiversity value, since it was likely that all newt species were absent from using it as a breeding pond. Common frog and common toad may use this pond for breeding, but no evidence in the form of spawn, tadpoles or adults were noted on the day of the survey. The pond was very shaded and covered by duckweed, further limiting its value.

The River Hoddnant for the majority of its length through the study area could be considered as of County Wildlife site quality and therefore County level importance due to the mainly unmodified nature (SWWSP 2004). However towards the western side of the study area, pollution was evident via an outfall pipe and the effect downstream. This part of the water course may not be considered clean enough to qualify under the South Wales wildlife sites selection criteria.

2.0 THE PROPOSED SITE

- 2.1 It is proposed to make best use of the site, which as outlined in the reports by both the Arboricultural Study and Ecology Study, has been left unmaintained for many years and consequently has become neglected and somewhat overgrown.
- 2.2 The first intention was to see if the design of log cabins to the south could be continued into the site. But with its significant levels, it would prove difficult to site the units successfully. Therefore, this application is for the installation of Tree Tents. Detailed information about the tents are included later in this document. However, woodlands are our future, and to help sustain this future woodlands need to be used for more than just harvesting timber during their lifetimes, or as a simple backdrop to the character of a neighbourhood. Research, conservation, work, play and retreat are all important activities that can be enjoyed as part of the forests cycle.
- 2.3 Tree Tents aim to offer comfortable and low impact inclusion into the woodland at any time of year whether it be for recreation, research, conservation or education.
- 2.4 The Tree Tent concept is a culmination of over 3 years of work and research (and decades of experience) in sustainable shelter systems, fabric structures and tree top living. They offer a lightweight and efficient structure using sustainable, recyclable, recycled and natural materials. A structure that can be easily transported and assembled on-site with minimal, non-permanent impact on its environment. They are a unique, hybrid aluminium and green ash static airframe combined with an expertly tailored 100% cotton canvas skin.
- 2.5 The spherical structure is 3m in diameter, sizable enough to comfortably accommodate two adults. 100% wool, winter thermal liners allow for all year round accommodation while wood stove, water and electric options offer the extra creature comforts

- 2.6 Tree Tents are lightweight, hybrid aluminium and steam bent ash airframes and offer a comfortable, low impact shelter at any time of year. The spherical structure is encompassed by a 16oz rot and waterproofed, 100% cotton canvas. Its dirigible structure blends two very different but complementary engineering materials - aluminium and wood; with inspiration and design cues taken heavily from early zeppelin engineering and lightweight aircraft design.
- 2.7 Tree Tents are also available as stand-alone ground mounted structures which reduce the required aluminium framing and rigging complexities but still offer the advantage of a raised structure. The easily installed spiral ground mounts offer minimal impact and the variable length, stilted legs can adapt to uneven and difficult terrain.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Archaeological and contamination surveys have not been carried out as the existing use and background of this part of the site do not raise any suggestion of their relevance.
- 3.2 An Arboricultural survey has been prepared by Treescene and their appropriate reports are included within the supporting application documents.
- 3.3 An Ecology Report has been prepared by East Ecology and the appropriate reports are included within the supporting application documents.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Pre Application Enquiry 2014/00091/PRE
- 4.2 Response by letter dated 21st October 2014 from Mr Robert Lankshear;

I refer to your correspondence received on 4 June 2014, concerning the above and your request for pre-application advice. Firstly I would like to take the opportunity to apologise for the delay in responding to your request. Having considered the nature of submission in detail, I respond as follows.

Local Context and Constraints

The pre-application relates to an area of mixed woodland to the south of Llantwit Major with access gained from the Ham Manor Park residential park to the south. The site lies outside of the settlement of Llantwit Major as defined by the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 and as such is in the countryside. There are significant site levels differences at the site, with the River Hoddnant running through centrally through the site and as a result a large amount of the site also sits within Flood Zone C2. The site lies adjacent to but not within the Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

Relevant Planning History

From an examination of our records, the application site has no relevant planning history.

Relevant Planning Policies

In addition to national guidance contained within Planning Policy Wales, any application would be considered against the Policies within the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011, details of which are available on the Council's web site by visiting www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk. The relevant policies would include:

ENV1	DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE
ENV27	DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS
TOUR4	CARAVAN, CHALET AND TENT SITES
TRAN10	PARKING

Analysis of Proposal

The pre-application enquiry relates to the provision of 6 no. tree tents and ancillary infrastructure including shower and toilet facilities and 2 no. bridges to provide access across the River Hoddnant from the proposed car parking area to the south-west of the site within the Ham Manor Park residential park. Having assessed the provisions of the policies listed above it is considered that the main issues to consider are the principle of development, the visual impact and scale, impact upon amenity of neighbouring residential properties, ecological issues, impact upon trees and parking provision.

Principle of development

As noted the site lies in the countryside and therefore policy ENV1 of the development plan is of relevance, which notes that development will only be permitted for particular purposes including appropriate recreational use or development approved under other policies of the plan. In this instance, it is considered that policy TOUR4 relating to Caravan, Chalet and Tent sites is of relevance in this instance. This policy states that 'proposals for additional sites outside the boundary of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and other parts of the Coastal Zone will be permitted' subject to a number of criteria. These criteria include i) appropriate scale ii) not unacceptably effecting interests of agriculture, conservation, ecology, wildlife, landscape or archaeology, iii) not having unacceptable impact upon character or amenity and viii) the site is not in an area where there is a risk of flooding. Noting the above, therefore it is considered that there is unlikely to be an objection in principle to the development subject to compliance with the relevant criteria and other policies within the plan.

Visual impact, scale and impact upon character

As discussed at our meeting, having carefully assessed the submitted details, it is considered that the provision of 6 no. tents of the scale and design of those shown, could largely assimilate into the landscape and therefore may not have an unacceptable impact upon the visual amenities of the countryside or the adjoining Glamorgan Heritage Coast.

However, at our meeting we also discussed that the likely extent of any visual impact would also depend on all equipment associated with the pods such as ladders, canopies and raised platforms and all ancillary structures including the proposed toilet and shower facilities, manager's accommodation, bridges and pathways through the woodland. Full details of any such structure should accompany application, although as noted at our meeting any such structures should be commensurate to the size of development in terms of their number, scale and design in relation to the nature and scale of the use and the setting.

At our meeting, we also discussed the provision of a DDA compliant access to one of the pods and the potential for extensive engineering operations to accommodate such a structure. Noting the substantial levels differences within the site, and the position of the pods relative to the access, there is some concern as to whether such access can be achieved without the requirement for formal pathways and substantial engineering works which could undermine the intrinsic quality of the woodland.

You indicated at our meeting that the 'manager's accommodation' building would not provide habitable accommodation but more an ancillary function and reception point. As discussed, a residential function within this building would most likely be resisted.

Impact upon amenity of neighbouring residential properties

Given the relative proximity of the pods to nearest permanent residential properties and the intervening vegetation cover, it is considered that the proposals are unlikely to cause an unacceptable degree of detriment to the amenity enjoyed by occupiers of neighbouring residential properties.

Ecological issues

Limited information has been provided with this pre-application enquiry with regard to how ecological constraints have been considered. Following discussion with the Council's Ecologist it was considered that there was potential for the woodland to provide habitat for a number of species including badgers and dormice, and that potential works may require a licence to be obtained from Natural Resources Wales. As noted at our meeting, given the nature of the works and the more formal use of the woodland proposed, any submission should be supported by an appropriate Ecological Assessment (Phase 1 Habitat Survey) as well as a detailed management plan including details of maintenance and waste management.

The footpaths around the site are predominantly established, however, are neglected and with overgrowth. The proposals will allow these paths to be repaired and cleared, and maintained, allowing natural flora and fauna to flourish. There are two new footpath timber bridges shown crossing over the river. These would be installed as part of the tree tent works, and their construction would have minimal impact on the ground or trees. The steps to the bridge are outside of the flood risk zone.

Impact upon trees

Whilst noting that the trees within the woodland are not currently protected by a Tree Preservation Order, they nevertheless make a significant contribution to the rural and undeveloped character of the area. Concern was raised at our meeting with regard to the manner in which the proposals would be erected and what impact this may have upon the trees within the woodland. At our meeting you indicated that that the tents would be supported using bolts fixed through the trees and that an arboriculturalist had already made an initial assessment of the trees although this has not been submitted with this enquiry. Any works should not cause undue assessed with a full tree survey (including impact assessment and methodology) submitted with any planning application.

Any such survey should also include an assessment of the likely impact that the ancillary equipment and structures including the manager's accommodation and toilet block would have upon adjacent trees.

Flooding

As can be seen from the below map the centre of the site, adjacent to the River Hoddnant is classified as Flood Zone C2.

Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk indicates that Flood Zone C2 comprise 'areas of the floodplain without significant flood defence infrastructure' and 'indicate that only less vulnerable development should be considered subject to application of justification test, including acceptability of consequences. Emergency services and highly vulnerable development should not be considered.' Highly vulnerable development identified within TAN15 includes all residential development and as such it is considered that the proposals fall within this category. Noting the above, it is noted that the amenity facilities and manager's accommodation would be within the flood zone whilst it would also appear that tents 3, 5 and 6 would also be within or close to the identified Flood Zone. You are therefore advised to re-consider the position of the buildings adjacent to the river and the tents within this area, whilst it is advisable that you contact Natural Resources Wales to gain their advice with regard to development in the Flood Zone and whether further assessment of the risk of flooding would be required for such an application.

Parking provision

Following discussion with the Council's Highways Department it is considered that the provision of 6 spaces to serve the proposed development would be adequate. Clarification should be provided with any application submitted with regard to rights of access to the proposed parking area.

Conclusions

Overall, it is considered that there is unlikely to be objection in principle to the proposed use of the woodland for tourism purposes although it is considered that this would need to be fully assessed with the benefit of a site visit and further information. As detailed above, further information is required in respect of impact upon trees, details of ancillary structures, buildings etc, ecological details as well as further consideration of potential issues with regard to the site in part falling within Flood Zone C2 as defined by TAN15.

Required Supporting Documentation

In addition to the submission of standard mandatory supporting documentation such as application forms, plans and a Design and Access Statement (see TAN 12 Design, Appendix 1), please be advised that any application for the above development should also be accompanied by the following additional documentation: -

Flood Consequences Assessment
Phase 1 Habitat Survey / Bat Survey/ Barn Owl Survey
Tree Survey

If any subsequent application fails to include the information above, there is a chance it may not be registered and, in any event, it is likely that an application will either be refused or will not be able to be progressed until its satisfactory submission.

Requests for Further Advice

In accordance with the Council's Guidance Note on 'charging for pre-application advice', any further requests for pre-application advice will attract payment of a further fee, and should be made in writing with appropriate supporting documentation.

Development Team Approach – Building Control

Please note if you decide to employ the Council's Building Control team in respect of the proposed development for which you have sought advice, any fees you have paid in respect of this guidance will be taken into account in assessing the relevant Building Regulations fee. All Building Regulations fees are now based on a standard hourly rate with the final fee payable worked out on a risk assessed basis. Accordingly as the Council's officers will have been involved in the project from the earliest stages this will be considered in the final risk assessment based fee for Building Regulations.

Should you have any further questions regarding the above, please contact Mr Robert Lankshear on the above number.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Robert Lankshear
for Operational Manager Development & Building Control

Extract from the Pre-Application Sketches



4.3 OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION - Woodside Hamlet, Ham manor, Llantwit- Ref 15/00995/OUT
Withdrawn in November 2015

4.4 Response from Morgan Howell Senior Planner (Development Control) dated 23rd November 2015

Dear Mr. Morgan,

I write with regard to the above mentioned application and your recent email. It should be noted that I changed your details on our system.

Tree Survey

I understand the tree survey with respect to the information submitted and I understand that tree scene categorize the trees, which suggests that 53 of the 82 trees surveyed are recommended for removal due to some consideration of their health or safety. However, any recommendations by a tree survey or arboriculturist in a tree survey are not compulsory as part of any application. It can be perfectly acceptable to have a tree survey that recommends removal of trees or not but the application can propose something different. Accordingly, the tree scene recommendation is not a definitive proposal of what trees will be removed or not as part of the application. Accordingly, if the tree survey has nothing to do with the proposed development, why submit it with the application and without a document to explain that the development itself will not result in loss of any trees?

In view of the above, there is no clear plan to demonstrate what trees will be or will not be retained as part of this development. As such, I would request that an appropriately scaled plan and explanatory document is submitted that clearly explains what trees will be removed and those that will be retained and used as part of the development proposed.

Ecology

With regard to Ecology matters at the site, NRW have now responded formally and as well as requesting a Bat survey and they have now formally objected to the proposal on insufficient information grounds and the potential impacts on European Protected Species. (See attached response)

With regards to your comments below and in respect to appropriately worded conditions for any reserved matters application, I think that the ecology matters are fundamental to the principle of this planning application being acceptable and I cannot see how an OUT application can be determined positively without knowing the impacts of the development on protected species. As such, it is not going to be that the OUT is approved subject to bat survey conditions.

I agree that further surveys will be needed to overcome the ecology objections and most likely an appropriate bat survey should be carried out that would satisfy the Councils ecologist and Natural Resource Wales on the potential impact. As these surveys would be better carried out between May and September it is unlikely that you will be able to carry out the appropriate surveys anytime soon. In view of this, I would advise that it would be beneficial in this instance to withdraw the current application, carry out the appropriate ecology investigation and bat survey (as well as the additional information on trees) and re submit the application. In addition, in my opinion I do not see the benefit in this instance in submitting an Outline application and it could be better to simply include all of information necessary to consider the application as a FULL when resubmitting.

Accordingly, given my advice, it would be beneficial if you reply to outline how you would like to proceed with respect to the application. It should be understood that based on the information currently submitted and the lack of sufficient information to determine the application, the recommendation would be for refusal.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me on 01446 704743.

Kind regards

Morgan Howell
Senior Planner (Development Control)
Regeneration and Planning

Morgan Howell
Senior Planner (Development Control)

7. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

The key policy is TOUR4. This states that proposals for additional sites outside the boundary of the Glamorgan Heritage Coast and other parts of the coastal zone will be permitted (subject to a number of criteria). These include scale; effect of agriculture, conservation, ecology, wildlife, landscape or archaeology; not having an unacceptable impact upon character or amenity and the site is not in an area where there is risk of flooding.

In response to this; it is seen that it would be considered appropriate for tourist accommodation (tents) to be in accordance with this policy, other than the flooding issue which we cover later. Therefore the principle of development is accepted.

Visual Impact, Scale and impact upon character

With the inconspicuous nature of the tree tents, their considered positioning, and the fact that the structures can be easily transported and assembled on-site with minimal, non-permanent impact on its environment, the pre-app response agreed that it would be unlikely that there would be an unacceptable impact upon the visual amenities of the countryside or the adjoining heritage coast. Detailed information on the tents and typical installations are included with this application.

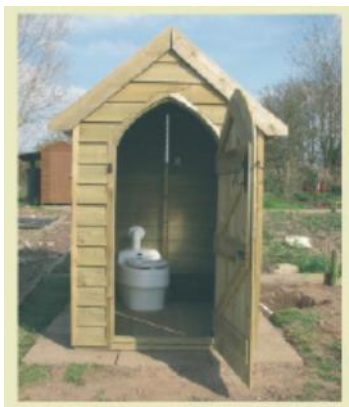


The pre-app response raised the concerns over DDA access. With the sites undulating levels and the very nature of the tree tents themselves, it is hard to see how a fully DDA compliant site could be created allowing for level access. However, Tree Tent 3 on the proposed plans could be one that is sited at a lower level on a tripod frame, which would allow a small ramped access. With the Dis WC facilities in close proximity, and disabled parking space adjacent this would give the site flexibility to offer accessible facilities.

The manager's office, along with shower/toilet facilities are shown as being housed in more traditional (proprietary) timber frame/log cabin structures in clearings fairly central to the site. These are proposed as single storey, timber frame construction, set on simple raised stone setts or slabs. The office is likely to only be managed part time, to coincide with arrivals and departures of guests, and would have display boards and the usual tourist information leaflets. It would also have an emergency contact of the site manager who would live off site.

Given the proximity of the pods to the nearest permanent residential properties and the vegetation cover, it is considered, as the pre-app response states, that the proposals are unlikely to cause an unacceptable degree of detriment to the amenity enjoyed by the occupiers of those neighbouring properties.

The toilet and wash up areas are proposed as simple "shed like" structures, which could be self-composting, although there is mains drainage running across the site. We would suggest that a drainage scheme is set as a conditional item, and this can be controlled during the Building Control stage. Typically something such as the range produced by Ecotoilets Ltd (www.ecotoilets.co.uk) can be used and adapted accordingly, although there are a number of suppliers available. Images are shown below.



No pits to dig, no
sewage outlet
required, no water
to flush, no
chemicals to harm
the environment
and no smell, ever.

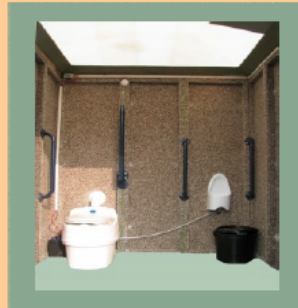
The secure cabin is guaranteed for 30 years

The 'Separett Villa' Toilet is guaranteed for 5 years

All other ancilliary products are guaranteed between 1 and 2 years.

Optional Extras

Solar Panel
Battery
Waterless Urinal
Sanitary Bins
Automatic Waste Bins
Automatic Lighting Kit
Paper Towels & Dispenser
Combination Key Safe
Non-Slip Vinyl Flooring
Prepared Soak Away
Full Disabled Bars & Alarm kit
(Disabled Facilities to 'Doc M' Standard)



Delivery & Installation costs are dependent on distance and size of cabin

Ecotoilets Ltd
Unit 1, Bitteswell
Business Park,
Ullesthorpe Road,
Bitteswell,
LUTTERWORTH
LE17 4LR

01327 844442

The image shows the full disabled facilities in the 8 x 6' secure cabin. Including hand rails etc. plus the 'Separett Villa' toilet and waterless urinal

Also showing the translucent roof and non-slip vinyl flooring

For those difficult suburban areas, or where security is paramount, there are cabins made from TPR, a synthetic concrete which carries the 'Secured by Design' label.

These can be used as toilet cabins or tool sheds. Available in various colours and sizes they are guaranteed for 30 years.

Our latest secure toilet is the Egloo®, an egg shaped design made from natural hemp and resin, which is moulded into shape. This produces a stylish non-flammable cabin suitable for allotments and gardens.

The larger cabins, (wooden, secure & egloo) can be fitted with full disabled facilities.



Therefore the Visual Impact and scale of the scheme, is not considered to be detrimental to the character of the neighbourhood.

ECOLOGY REPORT

An EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY 2016, has been carried out, and the report forms part of this application. The report concludes;

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Designate Sites

The tree tent structures and associated cabins and access are very unlikely to impact negatively on the protected sites identified in the baseline conditions section. There may be slightly increased levels of visitors to the nearby cwm colhiw nature reserve, but not in significant enough numbers to impact negatively on the features for which it was designated. There would be no significant impact on the designated site.

Habitats

The proposals are unlikely to have significant impacts on the habitats present at Ham Woods. The river Hoddnant is likely to not suffer any negative impacts due to the nature of the proposals. The two small footbridges proposed will span the watercourse completely and leave the banks intact. They will not require any footings or foundation. No significant impact is anticipated on the running water habitat.

The tree tents will be elevated from the ground by the use of a tripod anchoring system. These small aluminium legs, will have no significant impact on the woodland habitat, particularly the trees. The legs of the mountings will have an insignificant impact on the ground flora. No significant impact will be experienced while small tree limbs and scrub are trimmed back to accommodate the tree tents, within clearings already present. Any minor scrub clearance and de-limbing will be conducted outside of the bird breeding season where possible and supervised by an ecologist.

The buildings proposed for cooking, washing-up and bathroom facilities have a small footprint. This impact would be considered a moderate level, localized, negative, permanent but reversible impact. The size of the area lost would be minor in the wider context of the whole woodland. At any point in the future when the cabins are removed, the woodland ground flora would recover quickly, since no concrete footings are proposed. No scarce or ancient woodland indicator plants were present, all ground flora recorded was made up of common and widespread species.

A temporary disturbance to ground flora will be unavoidable during the construction of the cooking, washing-up and bathroom buildings, as well as the provision of electricity and water to them, via underground cables and pipes. In order to minimise the impacts the required ditches will be kept to a minimum area and preferably under paths which already exist or are proposed. This will be a low level, localised, negative, short term, reversible impact on the woodland ground flora, since it will be allowed to recover to its former state after the disturbance.

The parking area will be provided by arranging spaces around the existing trees to eliminate the need for felling. Some scrub and smaller branches will require removal to widen the access onto Mill Lay Lane avoiding the bird breeding season and under the supervision of an ecologist. The

Parking area will be covered by a grass grid using the existing gradients which will allow the woodland ground flora to grow through the grid. The parking area is not thought to have a significant impact on the woodland ground flora.

CONCLUSIONS

The woodland habitat at Ham Woods was found to be of planted ancient woodland origin while the river running through it was largely natural and unpolluted making both of County level importance. The woodland habitat was found to support other ecological features of interest, such as a diversity of bird life, some of local or RSPB amber listing and badgers. The habitat was thought very likely to support roosting bats due to the large number of trees scoring highly in the bat roost assessment. Dormice may be present in the woodland, although no records or evidence of them was found and otters have been shown to pass through the site regularly.

Some species surveys were not undertaken due to the small and very localised impacts anticipated from the project, such as a dormouse nest tube survey.

After mitigation the proposals were thought not to have any significant residual negative impacts worthy of compensation on the habitats or the species known or possibly present.

Enhancement of the woodland habitat is proposed by appropriate planting of hedges and thin areas with native shrub species. Selective felling of trees to open the canopy in areas where trees become unsafe in the future and habitat enhancement to the pond are proposed.

Additional enhancements are proposed in the form of wildlife boxes, otter holts and brash piles, all of which will be monitored on an annual basis. This will assist in the assessment of any ongoing impacts on wildlife during the operation of the tree tent camp

Impact on Trees

A tree report was prepared by Julian Wilkes of Treescene Ltd. The report dated May 2015 shows that a vast majority of the trees are dead, or at the end of their natural life and could/should be removed. However, the applicant has determined, following advice from the Ecology Report that all trees should remain. The tree report is included within the application package to highlight that a fully considered scheme has been put together, with all consultants liaising to develop the most sensitive and sustainable scheme. It is therefore not proposed to remove any trees, even the fallen ones, as they form an important backdrop to the tree tent scheme, and the scheme can be implemented without removal of any trees, or major disturbance to flora or fauna.

The ecology report shows that bat roosts and other species are likely to be present in the area. It is also very likely that bats are roosting within the trees at Ham Woods and the assessment survey of trees for bat roosting potential found that 10 trees were identified as grade 1*, 16 as grade 1, 21 grade 2, 11 grade 3 26 trees surveyed (grade 1* and 1) were thought to hold potential for at least one bat to roost within features identified. The woodland is thought to be of at least local level importance for bat roosting

The trees on the site are not protected with any TPO orders, but do offer a significant contribution to the rural and undeveloped character of the area. The tree tent company have designed the rigging, attachment and mounting of the tents to be as non-evasive to the trees and surroundings as possible. Tree anchor bolts are designed to not cause any harmful damage to the tree and ground mounting plates can be removed after use without a trace. An attachment and mounting overview by the manufacturers is included in the application pack.

Most of the tents proposed will be ground mounted using the tree tent stilt mounting pack. Ground plates can be fitted to cement blocks or screw in ground anchors, both of which can be easily removed.

Flood Risk

The site has the river Hoddnant running through the valley, and initial discussions with Barry Cox at Natural Resources Wales show that the site falls into Flood Zone C2. The plan produced for the pre app had three of the tents and the manager's accommodation within the flood zone. The revised plans that form this application have taken that into account, and all tents and cabins are now outside of the 1:1000 year zone, which has been shown shaded on the plans.

Parking Provision

Since the previous application, the Ecology Consultant and Architect met on site to review all information and see if a scheme could be developed, allowing flora and fauna to remain, and with minimal disturbance to wildlife. The Ecology report is now very detailed and is included as part of the application. The previous scheme had access and parking coming in from the Southern end of the site, with a raised, platform on stilts in the SW corner. However, it was found that Badger Setts would have made this very difficult to create. Therefore, we have now returned to reinstating the existing access from Mill Lay Lane and creating a self-contained site with no vehicle access to Ham Manor Park required.

A natural car parking area will be created to the Northern end of the site, just off the existing access area, using the natural gradients and clearings on the site. This could be formed in Grass Grid by Gridforce. This offers a revolutionary tile system made of 100% recycled plastic to reinforce ground surfaces. With a weight bearing capacity of up to 400 tonnes per square metre the tough grids can be laid above or below the ground level and then filled with either decorative aggregate or top soil and then seeded. Offered as either a temporary or permanent solution, the interlocking tiles are specifically designed to give a firm surface that will not sink, rut or shift once installed.

Gridforce products offer a practical, economical and environmentally sound solution to many ground reinforcement problems. Fully compliant to sustainable drainage technology Gridforce can alleviate the effects of unstable ground conditions and surface water excesses. This will help avoid the expense of installing underground tanks needed for more conventional surfaces. Our system is favoured by planning departments and

provides a natural means of dealing with drainage issues in many construction situations. Proper site preparation is the key to a successful installation.

There would be space for at least 10 vehicles, one of which could be a disabled type space close to Tent 3.

Cycle parking/racks would be next to each tent pitch.

7. SUMMARY

This proposal fits comfortably on the site and the accommodation has been arranged having regard for the neighbouring properties and occupiers. The Trees and Ecology of the site will not be adversely affected. It will not be detrimental to the privacy, daylight and amenity of neighbouring properties, and makes use of a neglected woodlands, and with its carefully considered design approach, will see the woods and the habitats enhanced and regenerated. The local tourism will be boosted, and with its unique and unusual nature, the tree tents will draw members of all communities to the area. With good access and links to public transport routes and local tourist locations. The design accords with the local context and constraints and is unlikely to have any detrimental impact on neighbourhood. It will create an interesting and complimentary character, it complies with policies noted above and it is therefore considered that planning approval should be granted, with appropriate conditions.

