



## Scotland's Garden & Landscape Heritage

Planning & Development Standards

Scottish Borders Council

Newtown St Boswells

TD6 0SA

25 May 2022

By email only [dcconsultees@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:dcconsultees@scotborders.gov.uk)  
[paul.duncan@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:paul.duncan@scotborders.gov.uk)

For the attention of Paul Duncan

Dear Mr Duncan,

### **22/00676/FUL Erection of 7 no glamping pods with associated parking and access road: Land North East Of Paxton House Paxton Scottish Borders**

Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage (SGLH) is grateful to be consulted on the above application which affects Paxton House designed landscape, included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland and therefore assessed by Historic Environment Scotland to be of National Significance.

We have studied the documents submitted in support of the application and although we have not made a specific site visit on this occasion, we are familiar with the site from previous visits.

Paxton House is a major example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century picturesque improvement landscape, originally laid out by Robert Robinson (1734–1794) a leading landscape designer, which retains many original and important features, together with some 19<sup>th</sup>–century additions. The landscape provides the setting for the Paxton House Mansion built in the mid–18<sup>th</sup> century, probably attributable to John and James Adam and now Category–A Listed. The importance of the Paxton House landscape is detailed in the Inventory entry and can be summarised as being of **'Outstanding' Historical, Architectural and Artistic Interest Value;** **'High Scenic'** and **Nature Conservation Value;** and with **'Some' Horticultural and Archaeological Value.** We are therefore concerned that the full significance of the designed landscape does not appear to have been recognised in the application documents, other than a passing mention in paragraph 2.2 of the Design and Access Statement of '...historical importance...' and '...its former 18<sup>th</sup> century glory...'

## Scotland's Garden & Landscape Heritage

Page 2

Our main concerns are the intended location of the glamping pods themselves in Tweed Braes and the proposal to perforate the historic ha-ha with a new access road to the pods. The ha-ha would have originally been constructed to allow uninterrupted views of Tweed Braes and the countryside beyond from Paxton House and areas of the core landscape. Whilst it is stated in the Design and Access Statement that the location for the pods was selected because ‘...it is out of sight of the main house and lawns...’, we consider that the regimented line of five pods extending down the hillside with the accompanying line of tree planting and access road is out of character with the designed landscape and will appear visually intrusive.

We would advise that alternative more sympathetic locations should be investigated for the pods, possibly in a woodland area where suitable screening is already established. We note that the walled garden has already been developed as a camping facility at Paxton House and would suggest that the wider area around the walled garden might be considered as a more suitable location for the majority of glamping pods. We do however appreciate that it would be preferable to retain one or two of the more discreetly located pods in the area of the bothy and boathouse, as part of the wedding package offering.

We also question the need for every pod to have a parking space located immediately adjacent. Whilst this is obviously vital for some pods to allow full disabled access, we wonder whether an alternative solution might be to consider a more centralised parking area with pedestrian access to certain pods, thereby reducing intrusive traffic movement across the landscape. We further question why the existing gravel track to the bothy cannot be used for accessing any pods proposed in this area.

To summarise: whilst we do not object to the principle of glamping pods in the Paxton House designed landscape, we do object to this application in its current form, considering the selected location, layout, parking and access arrangements to be too visually intrusive in the landscape and causing unnecessary damage to an historic feature i.e. removing a section of the ha-ha. In its current form we consider the application contrary to:

*Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019)*

‘HEP4 Changes to specific assets and their contexts should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment’

And

*Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Setting (2016)*

That the ‘views to, from and across or beyond the historic asset or place’ (Paxton House and its designed landscape) contribute to its setting and as such will be disrupted by this development.

SGLH would be grateful to remain included in this consultation and also further planning applications affecting Paxton House and other Inventory and non-Inventory designed landscapes in Scottish Borders.

## Scotland's Garden & Landscape Heritage

Page 3

Yours sincerely,

Alison Allighan BSc (Hons), MSc, CSFHS, CMLI  
Conservation Consultant  
Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage  
[conservation@sglh.org](mailto:conservation@sglh.org)