Caerlaverock Estate

Proposed Eco Cabins





Fig 1 View across the site form the roadside

1.0

Planning permission is sought for "change of use for the land to site a caravan" to provide bespoke, self contained visitor accommodation on Caerlaverock Estate. The proposed structures are contemporary, sustainable, and off-grid, and are designed to meet BS: 3632:2015. It is proposed the structures will be designed and built by ECHO; a Castle Douglas based designer and manufacturer of small, off grid buildings. In accordance with **Planning Policies OP1, OP2**, the cabins will be of a bespoke, site specific design, sympathetic to the unspoiled rural context; as with all of Echo's buildings to date, it will be constructed to a high quality using high performance, sustainable materials, and will be complete with bespoke fixtures, fittings and finishes. This statement has been prepared in support of the application.

1.1 Background

The Caerlaverock Estate extends to approximate 5,000 acres and includes an area of merse in the Solway Firth that is a breeding habitat for numerous species of migratory geese and bird species. The Estate is a patchwork of tenanted livestock and dairy farms, residential properties, ancient woodland, historic sites (including Caerlaverock Castle), an in-hand farming operation covering 1500 acres as well as new business venture, The Boathouse Restaurant & Shop in Glencaple.



Fig 2. The popular visitor attraction of Caerlaverock Castle lies within the Caerlaverock Estate

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2. Summary Proposal
As a mixed use Estate it was considered that the offering for year round, short-term accommodation within the portfolio was missing, and the Estate are seeking to rectify this with an offering of sustainably built, small cabins of high-end design, located sensitively within the landscape of Caerlaverock in accordance with **Planning Policies OP1, OP2, ED2, ED10a.**

2.1
The proposed cabins will be of a bespoke and site specific design, specially commissioned to sit comfortably within the natural environment in terms of materials used and external appearance; although their footprint is small, the internal space is efficiently organised and the interiors will be designed to maximise daylight and to take advantage of the fantastic views. Due to their small external footprint, the cabins do not conflict with the in-hand farming operations upon the land on which the cabins are proposed to be sited. The area required is negligible within the field and it is proposed that the visitor experience will be enhanced by being close to agricultural practices on a working farm.

The proposed cabins will be constructed using sustainable materials, and will be off grid, powered by solar PV panels. They will be super insulated with Sheep Wool Insulation; their small spaces efficiently heated by solar gain and wood burning stove. The only brought in utility that will be required is water and this will be distributed around the cabins with efficient low flow/flush demand fitments. Hot water will be provided by an instant water heater, cooking and hot water is fuelled by bottled gas. The cabins by their very nature will be eco in design and will operate sustainably.

The management of the cabins will fall seamlessly into the management of the wider residential portfolio with daily management being undertaken as an additional role for a member of Estate staff. Working in conjunction with the Estates partners of Historic Environment Scotland, the Wildlife & Wetlands Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage, the Estate will work to promote the area of Caerlaverock and wider region as a destination, all to the benefit of the natural environment and local economy. Allowing visitors to share in the wild experience that the pods will offer at Caerlaverock, will bring a significant benefit not only to the visitors and their appreciation of the natural environment but also the local businesses and attractions that are on the doorstep and easily accessed from the site.

3. The Proposed Site
The site has spectacular views across the Solway and Criffel however, these views can only truly be appreciated from within the proposed site due to existing woodland screening along the roadside of the B725.



Fig 3. View of Criffel from the site

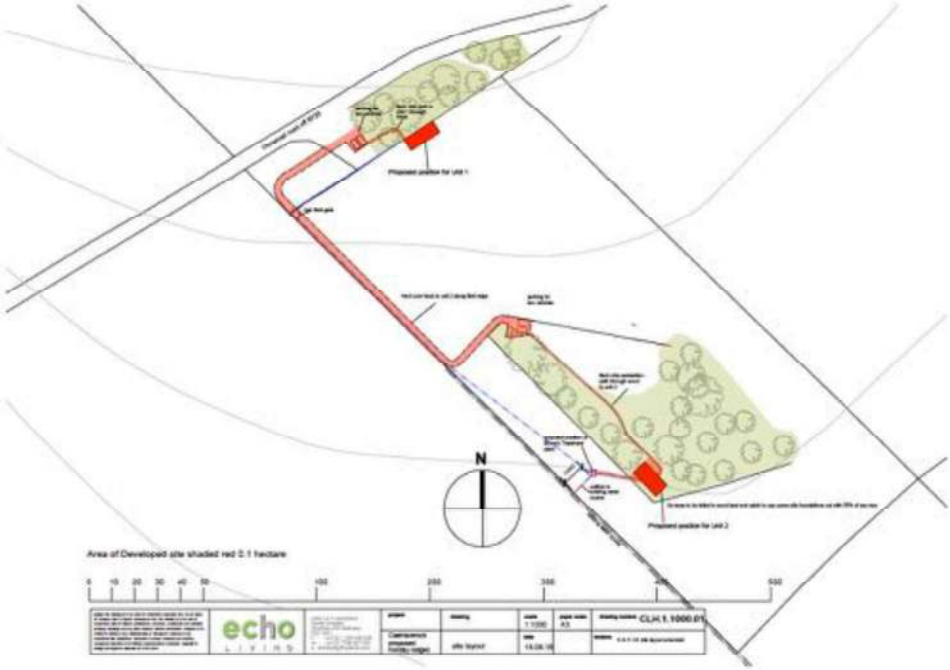


Fig 4 Proposed Site Layout showing positions of units 1 & 2, both screened from view







Figs. 5,6,7. View to southwest on the approach road; the existing lay by where the proposed vehicle access to car park would be formed; view to northeast on the approach road

Fig 4. Above shows the proposed layout of the units on the site.

Unit 1 would be positioned adjacent to the single track road, (Figs 5,6,7) and would be set facing southeast behind the existing woodland, screening the cabin from the minor single track unnamed road, mainly used for local access. Additional trees would be planted to provide further privacy and seclusion, and to minimise visibility from the road in accordance with **ED10 b.**

Unit 2 would be situated on the edge of an existing woodland within the field, and would be set facing Southwest against the backdrop and in the shelter of the woodland to the north and west, and will offer visitors a unique 'tree house' type experience, in natural, peaceful surroundings, but without impacting on the woodland environment in accordance with **ED10 b.**



Fig 8. View of the north side of the Spinney Site, from the site of the proposed car park.

4. Planning Considerations

4.1

The following planning policies are considered relevant and are referenced in our overall proposal Justification.

OP1: Development Considerations

OP2: Design Quality

ED2: Business Development in a Rural Area

ED10: Tourism

The management of the Cabins will fall seamlessly into the management of the wider residential portfolio with daily management being undertaken as an additional role for a member of Estate staff.

Working in conjunction with the Estates partners of Historic Environment Scotland, the Wildlife & Wetlands Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage, the Estate will work to promote the area of Caerlaverock and wider region as a destination, all to the benefit of the natural environment and local economy. Allowing visitors to

share in the wild experience that the pods will offer at Caerlaverock, will bring a significant benefit not only to the visitors and their appreciation of the natural environment but also the local businesses and attractions that are on the doorstep and easily accessed from the site.

The proposal provides an offer of sustainable tourism, which will enhance the stay of any visitor drawn to the area, both the cultural attractions of Dumfries and the Solway coast in particular and of the region as a whole. Visitors will have access to an area of natural beauty with scenic views and will benefit from the Estate's existing attractions and new restaurant and shop facilities at Glencaple. The proposed positions of the locations on the site are secluded and visitors will benefit not only from being in the heart of the Caerlaverock Estate, but also accessing some of the region's best views in accordance with **ED10.**

The geographical location of the farm is ideally placed for the accommodation of visitors. The site is only 1mile from Route 7 of the National Cycle Network from Sunderland North to Inverness. Route 7 links the accommodation with Dumfries and it's national bus and rail connections, Visitors will be encouraged to use the bicycles and public transport in accordance with **OP1e**. Dumfries town centre, with its many historic and cultural attractions, restaurants and boutique cinema, is only a scenic 7-mile journey from the proposed site. Local visitor attractions include the Gracefield Arts Centre, Dumfries Museum and Robert Burns House, also nearby is Sweetheart Abbey and Ellisland Farm. 7stanes, Mabie is just outside Dumfries for mountain biking enthusiast. The town hosts many seasonal events, including the Big Burns Supper, Spring Fling and the traditional Guid Nychburris event. Caerlaverock Estate is also home to the famous Caerlaverock Castle, just 2 miles from the site, whilst the year round attractions of Caerlaverock Wetland Centre is only 1.5miles away.

Access to the two cabins will be by a new track, leading from the public road via an existing lay-by. Secure cycle storage will be provided for cyclists travelling on the national cycle route accordance with **OP1e**. Those arriving by car can leave their vehicles at the proposed parking at both cabins.
The accommodation offered would be compatible with the rural setting and landscape, and complimentary to the existing and successful attractions of Caerlaverock Estate in accordance with **ED2**. It will augment accommodation provision in an area.

The offering provided by the Estate's new restaurant and shop facility at the Boathouse, Glencaple, just over 1.5 miles from the proposed site, provides high quality food and refreshment offering for visitors to the accommodation, along side a wide range other easily accessed local eateries and facilities in Dumfries.

5. Description of Proposed Structure.

5.1
Each proposed structures will provide off grid, self-contained accommodation for two to four people, with a separate double bedroom, shower room, kitchenette and living space. The cabins will be designed and pre-fabricated to meet BS: 3632:2015 in its method of delivery, and in all other respects.

The structure will be clad in FSC Siberian Larch, or other suitably stable and durable timber species, respecting the site's rural and woodland context. The timber will be untreated and will therefore silver with age, for a natural timber finish and complimenting the spruce interior, which will darken to a rich, golden brown.
Double-glazing will be floor to ceiling where possible to maximise the views, daylight and solar gain in the winter months. Windows will be framed with neutral grey/blue frames where visible. Generous double glazed patio doors to the Southerly elevations will lead onto timber decking providing a sun deck and viewing platform. The structure will incorporate solar panels for the generation of power in accordance with **OP1f.**
As with all previous projects, ECHO would undertake the coordination and management of all aspects of the project at the Caerlaverock site, including the preparatory ground works, delivery and installation, to ensure the most environmentally responsible methods are used for both the off-site prefabrication of the structure and its final installation on site.

Method of construction
The cabins will be prefabricated off-site at ECHO's workshops in Clarebrand near Castle Douglas, and delivered to site, to sit on pre-prepared groundwork. The structure will be designed to sit on minimal foundations, anchored to a small number of removable screw-piles, or small concrete pads as appropriate to site conditions; the cabins are designed to minimise environmental impact