

Horse lovers retreat on hillside 'too conspicuous'

A bid to create a glamping retreat for horse lovers on a hillside in Midlothian has been rejected by planners who said they would be 'too conspicuous' from the passing road.

The proposals by Pentland Shepherd Huts to build five pods at Braidlaw Farm, near Penicuik, aimed to design the accommodation to look similar to horse sheds already on the land.

And the applicants told Midlothian Council they hoped it would provide countryside breaks for tourists, who would be able to spend time with the farm's horses and ponies.

They said: "There is a growing body of research that recognises the positive effects on mental health of spending time with horses.

"The site operator will also provide guests with up-close experiences with their horses and ponies, such as grooming and feeding."

However planners ruled the pods would stick out on the hillside and be too visible from the passing road.

They refused planning permission saying it would be 'conspicuous' and 'impinge on the scenic views."

The applicants said the plans were a diversification of the existing livery business at the farm which, they said, was not economically viable as it stand.

They said: "The small-scale, sustainable glamping development will provide subtle and discreet countryside accommodation for tourists visiting the area on short breaks and weekend stays.

“It will be marketed in particular to horse lovers and owners. Facilities will be provided for glamping guests to bring their own horses with them to the site if they desire.

“One of the applicants is a well-being coach. Every day she meets clients who are stressed, anxious and burnt out.

“Significant research has now been done into the benefits of spending time in nature and being able to stay in the shepherd huts will allow clients a chance to rest and reset.”

Rejecting the application, planning officers said: “While the proposed landscaping is beneficial in terms of optimising biodiversity value, the pods are clustered together on a low ridge within a landscape that is typically characterised by expansive undulating farmland and has few other built features to detract from the panoramic views of the Pentland Hills and adjoining rural area.

“Within this context the development, particularly the array of pods, would be conspicuous and impinge on scenic views from the A766.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter