



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Application Site:	Gladhouse Reservoir Gorebridge <i>Gladhouse, Midlothian, Scotland, EH23 4TA</i> <i>NGR: NT 29024 53833</i>
Application Description:	Formation of visitor car park and associated access works
Date:	December 2022
Prepared by:	Christian Evans

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We are aware that Gladhouse Reservoir, Midlothian has become a popular location for the public to visit and spend time to enjoy the outdoors, however this reservoir is a working site and as a result, we contend there is a need for Gladhouse Reservoir to achieve safe and attractive parking provision for visitors to this part of Midlothian, with the following objectives:

- Remove the need for dangerous and unsightly parking on the verges of narrow lanes
- Improve the safety, capacity and aesthetics of existing improvised on-street car parking
- Extend the parking into an area of recently felled plantation, thereby achieving sufficient capacity to accommodate high total numbers of cars
- Through a combination of robust and creative design, use of local materials, native planting and sustainable drainage, enable parking to blend in sympathetically with the surround landscape and ecology

Usage

- The proposals create a visitor 'base' at this important gateway, providing access to various footpaths and trails.
- Provide welcoming and attractive facilities to cater for travellers wishing to stop en route, free-of-charge for a short break

- Provide a base for engagement work, parking for emergency services, training and a venue for other events
- Provide an opportunity to expand awareness of and disseminate information about the work of Scottish Water at the reservoir and further afield



Figure 1 Damaged grass verges due to parking (Source: Google)



Figure 2 Satellite view of busy roadside parking (Source: Google)

Requirement for planning permission

The works to create a car park would constitute 'development' as per the definition set out within Section 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The land in question falls outside the ownership of Scottish Water and therefore is not operational land. As such, development cannot be undertaken through Class 38 (1)(indent d) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, as associated development of operational land. As such, full planning permission is required.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 *Site Description*

Gladhouse reservoir was built in 1879 as part of Moorfoot scheme to supply drinking water to Edinburgh. Scottish Water manages the asset and part of that is the continued monitoring and interventions which can extend the asset life as is the case with this reservoir.

Gladhouse supplies raw water to two compensation reservoirs – Edgelaw & Roseberry. Gladhouse Reservoir, formerly known as Moorfoot Loch, is a reservoir in Midlothian, Scotland, five miles south of Penicuik. It is the most southerly reservoir in Midlothian, as well as being the largest area of freshwater in the Lothians. It is used to supply Edinburgh with drinking water.

Gladhouse Reservoir is located in the South of Midlothian, near the border with the Scottish Borders. The reservoir has become a popular location for picnics, walking, cycling, water sports (open water swimming, kayaks, Stand Up Paddle boarding, fishing) and wild camping to name a few.

Scottish Water aim to work with and help local communities so the reservoir can be used safely and appropriately by the public.

The application site ('the Site') covers approximately 0.25 hectares and encompasses a section towards the western extent of Gladhouse Reservoir (National Grid Reference: NT 29024 53833). The location of the site is shown on plan reference 'AGO-ZZ-XX-DR-C-30001'.

In the wider context, Gladhouse reservoir is approximately 12 miles south of Edinburgh. In the Temple area of Midlothian and falls within the administrative area of Midlothian Council.

The Site is located within a rural landscape dominated by Gladhouse Reservoir and is surrounded by hills and agricultural land. The closest notable settlements are Penicuik and Gorebridge, which are approximately 5 miles from the site to the northwest or northeast, respectively.



Figure 3 Location (Source: Google)

2.2 Planning Application

The planning application comprises of the development of a new car park, to extend a parking area into the area of felled plantation. The newly designed car park will give the impression of parking in an open woodland. This will provide more appropriate infrastructure for tourist and leisure trips, while protecting and enhancing the special qualities of the area which make it an attractive landscape to visit.

This section of the statement provides a summary of how the scheme has evolved from options work through to the detailed design (see below).

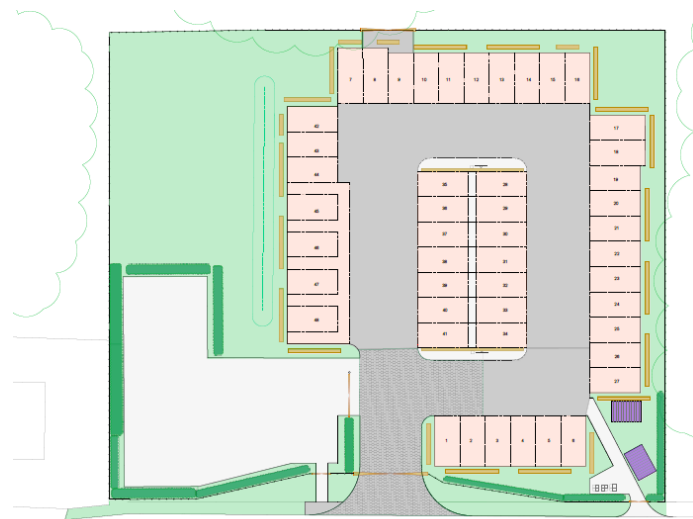


Figure 4 Proposed Site Plan

It is considered the main issues / matters in the determination of this application are:

- Principle acceptability
- Landscape Impact
- Ecology
- Trees
- Flooding
- Core Paths
- Access
- Heritage
- Electric Vehicles

2.3 The Proposal

Notwithstanding the above proposal description, the proposal is to be future proofed to ensure that the development is capable of accommodating potential future improvements, such as inclusion of lighting or toilets. The proposal also ensures that the car park and associated works are designed to conserve archaeology and allow for possible future enhancement, clearance or consolidation.

Access will be from the minor road which follows the reservoir and dam toe.

An image of the road and proposed site is shown (below).



Figure 5 Approximate location of proposed site access (Source: Google, 2011).

Car Park

The proposed car park will create approximately 41 new spaces, the roadways will be constructed of a well compacted hardcore, the parking bays will be formed of a self binding gravel and associated green landscaped areas will surround the perimeter of the site.

The site to situate the car park is currently owned by a third party but will be transferred to Scottish Water once full planning permission is obtained – see drawing 512560-AGO-ZZ-XX-DR-C-30201.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

The development plan is comprised of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (June 2013) and the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 (MLDP).

3.1 *Development Plan*

Under Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the proposed development stands to be determined against the policies contained within the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Strategic Development Plan (2013) for Edinburgh and South-East Scotland

The Strategic Development Plan sets the strategic policy framework and development strategy for growth and environmental protection in this part of Scotland to 2032. The plan is currently under review.

Midlothian Local Development Plan (Nov 2017)

The 2017 Midlothian Local Development Plan sets out the development strategy for Midlothian for the next 10 years including the housing and economic land requirements identified in the SDP. It also sets out the detailed policies used to determine planning applications in Midlothian.

The LDP sets out a strategy for sustainable growth, within the national and regional context, it aligns itself with the SESplan's growth aspirations for Midlothian, ensuring the committed development land is supported by new infrastructure. In addition, it ensures quality of place can be achieved, it states it will be essential for growth to be accompanied by suitable infrastructure provision and facilities to provide for and help to foster community development. However, from the outset, an essential component of successful place-making is good design and careful integration of new development into its landscape setting.

This careful integration carries through to ensure our infrastructure integrates with existing communities through the shared use of open spaces; and the ability to establish good links, especially footpath and cycle routes, and structure landscaping to create a strong setting for the expanded communities. As mentioned, Gladhouse Reservoir is a popular visitor destination.

The following policies are relevant to the proposal:

Policy **DEV5: Sustainability in New Development** sets out the requirements for development with regards to sustainability principles.

Policy **TRAN1: Sustainable Travel** aims to encourage sustainable modes of travel.

Policy **TRAN5: Electric Vehicle Charging** seeks to promote a network of electric vehicle charging stations by requiring provision to be an integral part of any new development.

Policy **ENV11: Woodland, Trees and Hedges** states that development will not be permitted where it could lead directly or indirectly to the loss of, or damage to, woodland, groups of trees (including trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order, areas defined as ancient or semi-natural woodland, veteran trees or areas forming part of any designated landscape) and hedges which have a particular amenity, nature conservation, biodiversity, recreation, landscape, shelter, cultural, or historical value or are of other importance.

3.2. Issues / Planning Policy / Matters Arising

Acceptability

The site is a rural location as confirmed by Policy RD1 [Development in the Countryside], the Plan seeks to minimise adverse effects on the character of the countryside whilst maximising the benefits to its communities and the Midlothian economy. In general, promoters of new development must evidence the need for a countryside location. The proposed car park is a response to an increased tourism demand at the reservoir, particularly post-Covid. The car park represents development in the countryside for the furtherance of countryside recreation and/or tourism – therefore, we contend it accords with Policy RD1 of the Local Development Plan, thus acceptable in principle policy terms.

Heritage

Gladhouse reservoir including dam, weirs, revetments, gangway, measuring house, tweedaleburn aqueduct and bridges over tributaries are designated listed assets - Category B (Reference. LB45811).

Described as ". . . a beautiful lake with small islands here and there . . . the beauty of the scenery was all the more enhanced [by] the surrounding hills casting their dark shadow across the still water" (J Colston, p194). The huge embankment, designed for the Edinburgh and District Water Trust to contain up to 1700 million gallons, was at the time an exceptional piece of engineering. By damming the River South Esk the reservoir increased the water supply available to the people of Edinburgh by 39 gallons per person.

It is clear the asset makes a strong contribution on the character and appearance of the landscape and countryside. Even as a man-made body of water, there is clear historic, architectural, and aesthetic merit to the reservoir. The siting of the car park is outside the

immediate boundary of the reservoir however could still be considered to be within the curtilage of the asset (i.e. any area of land and other buildings that is around and associated with [the asset]). Given the proposals seek to create a largely 'nature based' compound (e.g. comprising of log barriers, planting and gravel base), Scottish Water consider the proposed works to the listed assets to be negligible and acceptable, ensuring compliance with Policy ENV22 [Listed Buildings].

Landscape

The site falls within a designated Special Landscape Area (Number s03 – Gladhouse Reservoir and Moorfoot Scarp), as set out within Policy ENV6 [Special Landscape Areas]. The Statements of Importance set out in the Supplementary Guidance on Special Landscape Areas has been reviewed when formulating these development proposals.

This sets out criteria for development:

Important considerations for landscape impact in the preparation and assessment of development proposals include:

- *Potential for intrusion on key views to the Moorfoot Hills from the Gladhouse Reservoir area – not anticipated*
- *Impacts on the openness and natural character of Gladhouse Reservoir and on areas of moss and moorland – none anticipated*
- *Impacts on important views from the B7007 across Midlothian to the Pentland Hills – N/A*

Scottish Water contend the development proposals are sensitively sited, designed and screened, and thus will not adversely affect the special landscape qualities of the area – ensuring compliance with ENV6 [Special Landscape Areas].

Ecology

In line with Policy ENV15 [Species and Habitat Protection and Enhancement], where development proposals will be expected to demonstrate compatibility with the aims and objectives of the Midlothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan and related plans, by identifying appropriate measures to protect, enhance and promote existing habitats and/ or the creation of new ones, and provide for the effective management of these habitats. An accompanying Ecological Walkover Survey has been prepared and carried out in support of this planning application.

The ecological survey has identified species present and associated recommendations going forward. Please refer to the report.

A pre-construction Survey will re-examine the woodland clearance area.

Flooding

The development site is an outside a specific flood risk area (i.e. a low risk probability area).

Scottish Water contend the proposed works present no risk of surface water flooding at the site, ensuring compliance with Policy ENV9 [Flooding].

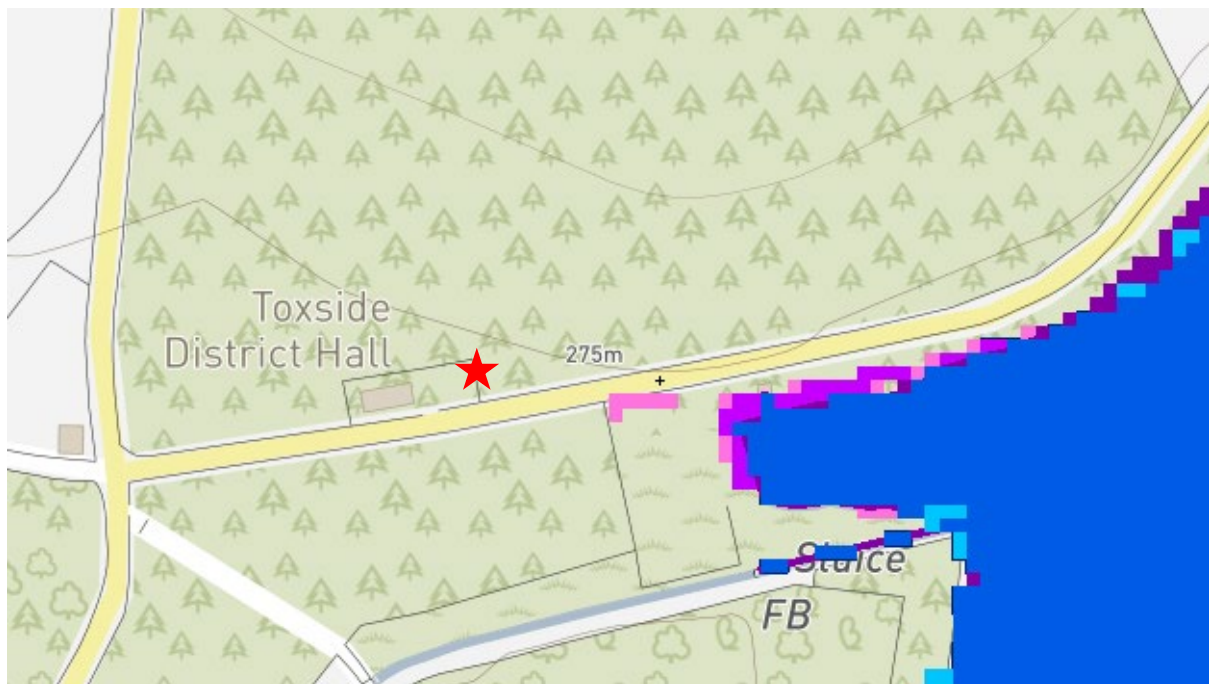


Figure 6 SEPA Flood Mapping with Site Depicted as Red Star (Source: SEPA)

Trees

As part of the proposed works, it is required for some trees to be scheduled for removal to enable the works to be carried out, these are presently in a good condition but are not covered by Tree Preservation Orders. Moreover, Scottish Water are open to discussions with the Council to provide necessary replacement or biodiversity enhancement, the site presents an opportunity to include potential wet meadow planting around the car park area as concurrent with the recommendations of the walkover survey. The trees are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order and are not within a Conservation Area. No consent from the Planning Authority is required to fell the trees.

The works have a clear defined additional public benefits and therefore represent a likely exception to Policy ENV11 [Woodland, Trees, and Hedges].

Core Paths

The access to the site stems from a recognised core path route. This is a system of paths established to give reasonable access throughout the local area, as required by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Given the nature of the proposed works, there will not be a requirement to temporarily stop up the core path. No diversion will be required to allow the formation of the car park and associated works – the period of time in which to complete the works is yet to be determined.

The map (below) highlights the network of Core Paths in relation to the site.

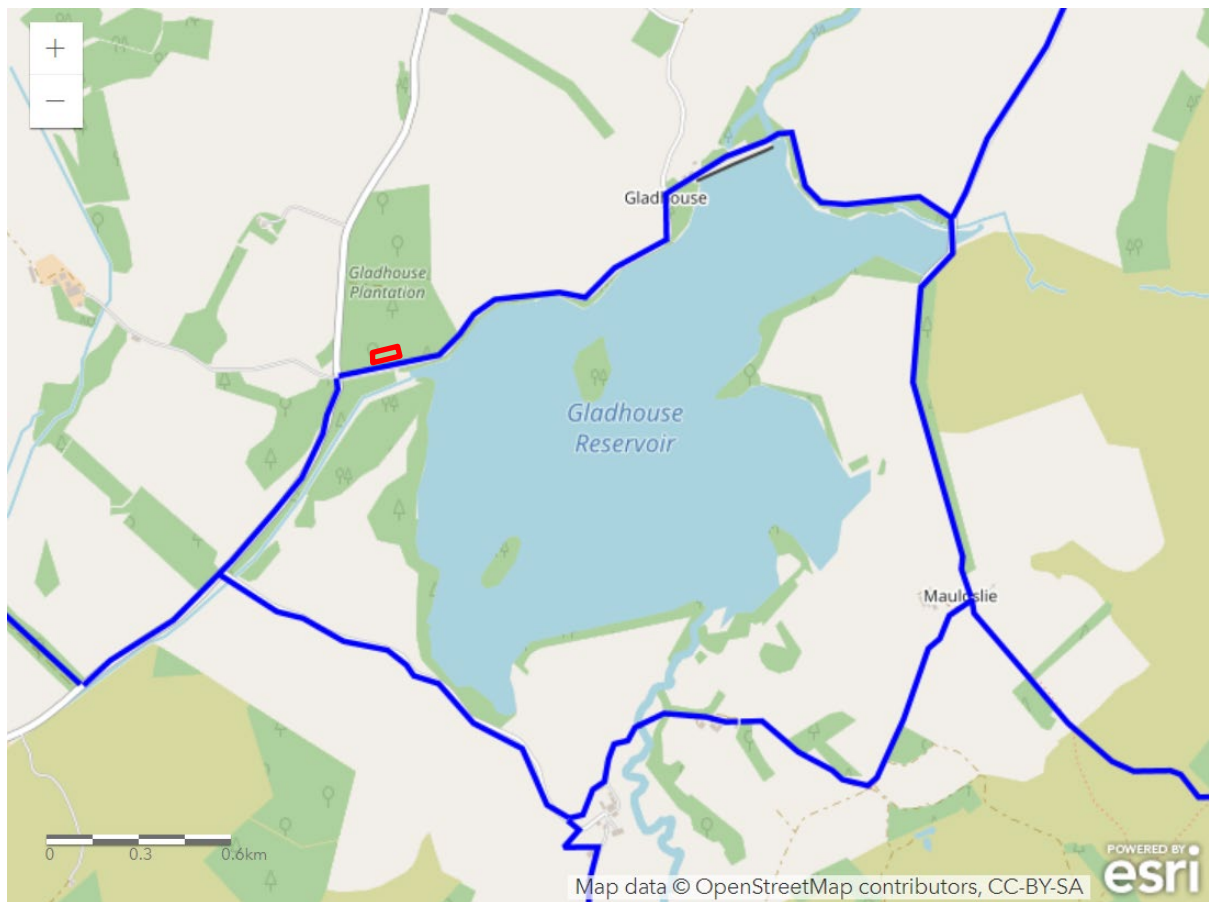


Figure 7 Core Paths (Source: NatureScot)

Archaeology

Through the determination process of similar applications in the vicinity (Ref. 22/00711/DPP), from an archaeological perspective it has been recommended and advised that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during ground breaking work associated with the proposals, at least in locations where at least more than turf/topsoil is likely to be removed or where there is a requirement for digging to depths down and alongside existing structures. If there is a requirement for lowering of the water level to allow for safe working etc, this can also be an opportunity for archaeological survey and recording to take place in newly exposed

areas. Similarly, monitoring work should (as best practice) be undertaken under an approved WSI and subsequently reported upon. In summary, requirement for all historic structures to be recorded on the historic building register; requirement for a WSI; archaeology watching brief. We therefore contend this watching brief can be put in place through the construction phase.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points ('EVCPs')

It is recognised that there is policy (local and national) and guidance which requires the provision of EVCPs, whilst most pertinent to residential development. Policy TRAN5 seeks to promote a network of ENCPs by requiring provision to be an integral part of any new development. Whilst respecting this position, Scottish Water present these proposals to monitor and assess the demand of the parking required at Gladhouse reservoir, this represents an experiment to see whether the demand is there for such use. We therefore contend, the required and likely potential impact of creating an electricity network and the required upgrading that may be necessary to achieve the correct supply to support the loadings that would be required with use of EVCPs would cause some recognisable impact. It could be considered that a blanket approach to the provision of EVCPs cannot be taken and EVCPs provision for each development should be considered in the context of the infrastructure capacity in each location. In relation to the proposed site at Gladhouse, whilst investigations have not taken place, we contend at this stage there would be too much environmental disruption caused by securing the required electricity infrastructure/supply to support a network of EVCPs – particularly when demand at this stage is unknown, and whether the project will prove successful or not.

Whilst we accept the cost burden of providing EVCPs in the development including any necessary infrastructure cost including upgrading / increasing of the electricity capacity is a development constraint that should be born by the applicant/developer. It is for this reason the potential payment machine may be switched from a mains powered machine to a solar powered alternative, and present these additions (alongside portaloos and lighting) as aspirational elements at this stage.

Signage

Lecture style display boards will be sited beside the pedestrian gates to inform visitors of site history or walking routes before 'setting off'. We consider these would be considered 'deemed consent' falling outside the requirement to submit a formal application in respect of it.

Conversations with Visit Scotland will be held in regard to a 'brown thistle' advance signpost sign at the nearby road junction.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In summary this planning application seeks permission for formation of a car park at Gladhouse Reservoir. The proposed works are required to remove the need for dangerous and unsightly parking on the verges of narrow lanes.

The proposed works will be situated outside the existing operational site at Gladhouse Reservoir and the development is not considered to result in any significantly adverse impacts on heritage, highways, ecology, flood risk or amenity. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policy and it is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.

Application Documents:

Drawings:

- 30001 Location Plan
- 30002 Elevation Sections
- 30003 Site plan
- 30004 Surface finishes
- 30015 Construction details
- 30201 Land acquisition plan

Supporting information:

Gladhouse Car Park Supporting Planning Statement

Ecological Walkover Survey

Fee: The fee of £500 for site area 0.25 Ha was paid by BACS transfer on 14/12/2022.