
Planning, Design and Access Statement

Oakwood Valley Lodges, Llanfair Caereinion,
Welshpool SY21 0DB



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Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Section 73

PROPOSED VARIATION OF CONDITION NO. 1 OF PLANNING PERMISSION M2007/0742 TO ALLOW FOR THE 12 MONTH OCCUPATION OF THE HOLIDAY LODGES APPROVED UNDER M20853

Oakwood Valley Lodges, Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool SY21 0DB

For Unwind Leisure Ltd

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Plans

Location Plan 1:2500 @ A4

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement sets out the principle of this planning application and provides additional information in support of the proposed development.
- 1.2. The subject application seeks consent under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the variation of condition no.1 of planning permission M2007/0742 to allow for 22 lodges at Oakwood Valley Lodges to operate by way of a 12 month holiday season.

2. Oakwood Valley Lodges

- 2.1. Oakwood Valley Lodges is an exclusive holiday lodge park located approximately 1.7km west of the town of Llanfair Caereinion, near Welshpool.
- 2.2. The park has planning permission for 89 holiday (caravan) lodges and 3 (built) chalets across a site area of approximately 9 hectares (22.23 acres). The planning history is set out as follows:
 - M20853 dated 15th May 1991
Erection of 22 holiday chalets, installation of sewage treatment plant and construction of vehicular access
 - M2004/0142 dated 31st March 2004
Erection of 9 additional chalets and an office [Condition 3 prohibits units from being occupied during November]
 - M2005/0361 dated 1st July 2005
Change of use of land to form extension to chalet site to provide 12 additional chalets, change of use of 1 existing chalet from holiday accommodation to residential use, installation of a septic tank and associated works [Condition 4 prohibits units from being occupied during February]
 - M2007/0742 dated 14th November 2007
Section 73 application to vary condition 4 attached to planning application M20853 (occupancy period) [Condition 1 prohibits units from being occupied during February]
 - P2009/1079 dated 2nd December 2009
Siting of 21 holiday lodges and associated works [Condition 11 prohibits units from being occupied during February]
 - 22/0423/FUL dated 4th August 2022
Extension to Oakwood Valley Lodges to accommodate 25 holiday lodges together with environmental improvements [allows year round holiday use]

3. The Planning Application

- 3.1. The subject planning application relates to the area of Oakwood Valley Lodges which was granted permission for the *“Erection of 22 holiday chalets, installation of sewage treatment plant and construction of vehicular access”* under ref: M20853.
- 3.2. Condition 4 of permission M20853 was subsequently varied under Section 73 to allowed an 11 month holiday season from 1st March to 31st January in the following year under application ref: M2007/0742.
- 3.3. This subject planning application is simplistic and proposes to vary condition 1 of planning permission M2007/0742 to allow for the lodges to be occupied for holiday purposes on a year round basis. Condition 1 currently states:

“The holiday chalets sited within that area of land subject of planning permission M20853 shall be used for holiday purposes only and shall not be used for human habitation between the 31st of January and 1st March in any one year”

- 3.4. It is proposed that the wording of condition 1 is varied to state:

“The holiday chalets sited within that area of land subject of planning permission M20853 shall be occupied as holiday accommodation only and shall not be occupied as a person’s sole or main place of residence by any persons. An up-to-date register shall be kept at the holiday accommodation hereby permitted and be made available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority upon request. The register shall contain details of the names of all of the occupiers of the accommodation, their main home addresses and their date of arrival and departure from the accommodation”

- 3.5. As mentioned in Section 2 above, planning consent has recently been granted (under ref: 22/0423/FUL) for an extension to Oakwood Valley Lodges to accommodate 25 additional lodges. This latest permission allowed the 12 month, year round holiday occupancy of the new development, with the holiday use sufficiently controlled using the same wording as outlined in paragraph 3.4 above. This demonstrates the acceptability of, and sets a precedent for, a year round holiday season on this site.
- 3.6. It will be noted from the planning history summary at paragraph 2.2 that, as it stands, different areas of Oakwood Valley Lodges operate on different holiday seasons, with some elements of the park unable to be occupied by holidaymakers during either November or February, and with the newest element of the park able to be occupied year round.
- 3.7. The applicant is now therefore seeking to standardise the holiday season across the entire park to 12 months, involving the removal and variation of a number of conditions across 4 operative consents, including the permission subject of this application, to bring all consents (and their prescribed operating seasons) into line with each other.

- 3.8. As you will appreciate, there are commercial reasons behind providing a standardised season, as varying operating seasons across the park has implications for the operational side of the business in terms of needing to account for different holiday licences, pitch fees, and periods when general site maintenance can take place.
- 3.9. In addition, it is important for the applicant's business to be consistent those other holiday parks in Powys (and beyond) that already offer a year round holiday season as standard. 12 month holiday seasons are becoming increasingly the norm on holiday parks and the applicant is keen for their business to remain competitive. The extended holiday season will help to ensure that Oakwood Valley Lodges remains competitive and appealing to consumers in the current economic market.

4. Use

- 4.1. The continued use of the subject 22 lodges at Oakwood Valley Lodges will be strictly for holiday purposes only and the applicant would accept the planning condition outlined at paragraph 3.4 above to control this use effectively.
- 4.2. The reason for this condition is to ensure that approved holiday accommodation is not used for unauthorised permanent residential occupation. The register required in the wording of the condition shall normally be collected by the caravan site licence holder or his/her nominated person.
- 4.3. The one chalet that was granted permission for a change of use from holiday accommodation to residential use under planning consent ref: M2005/0361 that is located in the western element of the application site, is unaffected by this application and therefore will remain as existing (residential use).

5. Character (Layout, Scale and Appearance)

- 5.1. The application site is subject to an approved layout which will be unaffected by this planning application. It is simply an extended period of holiday occupation of the approved lodges that is being sought.
- 5.2. The scale and appearance of the proposed development will not therefore change from what is presently approved at Oakwood Valley Lodges.

6. Access To, From and Within the Site

- 6.1. The existing access arrangements to Oakwood Valley Lodges (including movements to, from and within the site) are unaffected by this planning application.
- 6.2. All of the internal access roads and car parking areas are privately maintained (i.e. not part of the adopted highway) and will be retained on this basis. The nature of this planning application does not affect this position. It should also be noted that the application does not propose any operational development in this sense.

- 6.3. Planning permission 22/0423/FUL mostly recently granted confirmed that the highway network providing access to the site was sufficient to accommodate the traffic associated with the holiday park. It is unlikely that this application, either on its own or in conjunction with the 3 similar planning applications also submitted on different parts of the site, will have a material increase in the amount of traffic accessing the park. The introduction of 12 month season across part or all of the entire park will only have an impact on traffic levels during the months of November and February, which is when parts of the site are currently restricted in occupancy, and in any case these months will see lower occupancy rates than the peak holiday season.

7. Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

- 7.1. PPW is the Welsh Government's formal guidance on planning in Wales and sets out how the Government (Welsh Assembly) expects policies to be formulated and applied.
- 7.2. Whilst PPW has many parallels with the NPPF in England particularly with regards to sustainability, it also focuses on the concept of 'placemaking'; whereby the planning system should *"create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all"*.
- 7.3. Placemaking can be split into 4 key themes; Strategic and Spatial Choices, Productive and Enterprising Places, Distinctive and Natural Places, and Active and Social Places which all collectively contribute to the making of 'places'.
- 7.4. PPW is firmly rooted in the Welsh context and as a result it has a particular emphasis on coastal planning, tourism and cultural heritage. Section 5.5 specifically deals with Tourism. With particular regard to placemaking in rural areas of Wales, PPW notes that the rural countryside can provide *"an economic and environmental base for agriculture and tourism to thrive"*.
- 7.5. PPW Chapter 5, paragraphs 5.5.1 to 5.5.2, state that;
- "Tourism is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. Tourism can be a catalyst for regeneration, improvement of the built environment and environmental protection ... In addition to supporting the continued success of existing tourist areas, appropriate tourism-related development in new destinations is encouraged"*.
- 7.6. Furthermore, paragraph 5.5.3 relates specifically to rural tourism, and states:
- "In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. In addition to more traditional forms of rural tourism, planning authorities should plan positively for active, green and cultural tourism where they are appropriate. Development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment"*.

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- 7.7. PPW is therefore very much 'pro-tourism' in terms of how it expects policies to be formulated and applied with an emphasis on sustainable forms of tourism development relating to the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability.
- 7.8. The policy stance of PPW fully supports the basis of this proposal to invest in Oakwood Valley Lodges as a local tourism business to extend the current holiday season, in order to meet demand from holidaymakers for such extended periods, thereby securing the economic sustainability of Oakwood Valley Lodges. The subject application does not seek consent for any operational development, nor does it propose to amend the approved layout of holiday caravans or extend beyond the permitted boundaries of the site.
- 7.9. In addition, the tourism strategy for Wales specifically is set out in the 'Partnership for Growth: strategy for tourism 2013-2020' which is aimed at driving higher tourism earnings to deliver maximum value for the Welsh economy. The objectives of this strategy include promoting Wales as a destination through a higher quality tourism offer and extending the tourism season.
- 7.10. It is anticipated that the holiday parks industry will be instrumental in the UK recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of providing the population with high quality holiday accommodation. As such, local authorities should support holiday parks with appropriate development proposals such as extending operating seasons.

Technical Advice Notes

- 7.11. The Welsh Technical Advice Notes (TANs) are provided to supplement Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with the advice and guidance within PPW.
- 7.12. Consistent with the approach of PPW, TAN 13 (Tourism) confirms the importance of the tourism sector to the Welsh economy and under paragraph 4 states that Tourism *"makes a major contribution to the Welsh economy, provides employment in a wide variety of occupations and can bring benefits to local economies and communities in urban and rural areas"*.
- 7.13. The advice in relation to holiday and touring caravan sites is similarly positive with paragraph 12 stating that *"holiday and touring caravan parks are an important part of the self-catering holiday sector and can contribute as much to the local tourism economy as serviced holiday accommodation whilst using less land for the purpose"*.

Local Planning Policy

- 7.14. The adopted Development Plan for Powys comprises the Powys Local Development Plan (LDP) which was adopted in April 2018.
- 7.15. Policy TD1 (Tourism Development) covers all forms of tourism accommodation within the district including holiday caravans (chalets, static caravans and touring caravans) and states:

Development proposals for tourist accommodation, facilities and attractions, including extensions to existing development, will be permitted as follows:

1. *Within settlements, where commensurate in scale and size to the settlement.*
2. *In the open countryside, where compatible in terms of location, siting, design and scale and well integrated into the landscape so that it would not detract from the overall character and appearance of the area and in particular where:*
 - i. *It is part of a farm diversification scheme; or*
 - ii. *It re-uses a suitable rural building in accordance with TAN 6; or*
 - iii. *It complements an existing tourist development or asset, without causing unacceptable adverse harm to the enjoyment of that development or asset; or*
 - iv. *It is not permanent in its nature.*
3. *Accommodation shall not be used for permanent residential accommodation*

- 7.16. As the subject planning application does not involve any operational development and merely comprises a variation to the permitted holiday season, it does not trigger criteria 1 and 2 of the above extract and there is no conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy TD1.
- 7.17. With regard to criteria 3 of TD1, the lodges in question will not be used for permanent residential use, with the 'holiday' use of the lodges to be effectively controlled via the suggested wording set out within paragraph 3.6 of this Planning, Design and Access Statement. The proposed year round holiday use can therefore be adequately controlled via a planning condition to avoid any residential occupation, which is a position that has been implemented and accepted by the Local Planning Authority in the recently approved planning permission ref 22/0423/FUL.
- 7.18. The proposals will also help to prolong the tourism season in Powys, which is a key aim of the policy as set out within the policy subtext.
- 7.19. In view of the above, this planning application is fully compliant with planning policy at both a national and local planning level, and does not raise any conflict with the aims and objectives of the policies contained within the adopted Powys LDP.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The subject planning application seeks consent to extend the holiday season on 22 lodges originally approved under planning permission M20853 to allow them to operate on a year round holiday season. The occupancy period is currently restricted by Condition 1 of planning permission M2007/0742, which varied the occupancy season originally prescribed on permission M20853. Condition 1 of M2007/0742 is now proposed to be varied to allow year round holiday occupancy, as well as provide additional control over the holiday use taking place.
- 8.2. The details of this application do not involve any operational development, or changes to the approved layout of lodges on this part of the park.
- 8.3. The planning application will enhance the economic sustainability of Oakwood Valley Lodges as a tourism business and local employer and will help to increase year round tourism spend in the area.

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- 8.4. The extended holiday season is fully in accordance with the aims and objectives of those policies contained within national or local planning policies and does not raise any conflict in this respect.
- 8.5. We therefore trust you will find this planning application to be in order and that a favourable determination can be made.

Philippa Davey BSc. (Hons) MRTPI
Associate
Savills (UK) Limited
16 Grosvenor Court
Foregate Street
Chester CH1 1HN

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Philippa Davey BSc. (Hons) MRTPI
Associate

Savills (UK) Limited
16 Grosvenor Court
Foregate Street
Chester
CH1 1HN

+44 (0) 1244 702056
philippa.davey@savills.com