

3PL / 2015 / 05 12

Design & Access Statement**Relating to the Proposed Change of Use**

To allow the siting of 45 No. Bespoke Holiday Lodges, Lodge Style Reception Building and all associated infrastructure to

Baileys Lakes, Easthaugh Road, Wensum Valley, Lyng, NR9 5LN

April 2015

1.00 Introduction

- 1.01 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared and submitted by Paul Robinson Partnership (UK) LLP, on behalf of Baileys of Norfolk Limited, Owners of the Application Site.
- 1.02 The Application seeks Planning Permission for a change of use to allow the siting of 45 No. Bespoke Holiday Lodges, Lodge Style Reception Building and all associated infrastructure.
- 1.03 The aim of this report is to examine the key issues against relevant planning policy and assessment criteria relevant to the proposal and identify appropriate mitigation measures where these can be provided to demonstrate how the scheme has evolved to its current form.
- 1.04 The proposal for 45 No. Bespoke holiday lodges will generate increased visitor spend within the local economy in shops, pubs, restaurants and other local services. **30 APR 2015**
- 1.05 The proposal will also create additional business for local contractors in the construction of the Park and new jobs for the running of the Park with Reception and General Maintenance (Gardeners and Cleaning).
- 1.06 The Planning Application is accompanied by the following documentation and this statement should be read in conjunction with these:
- Drawing Ref. 7288/02 and 03A together with indicative reception design
 - Phase 1 Habitat Protected Species Survey as prepared by Ecocheck Consultancy Limited
 - Flood Risk Assessment as prepared by Evans Rivers and Coastal
 - Transport Statement as prepared by Kingdom TP

(Please note drawings may be revised during the processing of the Application).

- 1.07 The Site Location Plan is also included for Baileys Lakes which is located in the Wensum Valley, 8 miles to the north west of Norwich, with access from both the A1067, Norwich to Fakenham and the A47, Swaffham to King's Lynn roads.

- 1.08 The site has a vehicular access from the Eastaugh Road to the south with the River Wensum to the north and is in a predominantly rural area.
- 1.09 The lakes have been formed and landscaped by way of restoration following the extraction of sand and gravel between 1957 and 2006. The property lies within a flood plain.
- 1.10 There are seven lakes ranging in size from 1 acre to 10 acres. The majority of the lakes are accessible by vehicle and on foot.
- 1.11 The Breckland District Council Local Plan has designated the property as an Area of Important Landscape Quality (AILQ). The River Wensum itself is designated a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), by Natural England.

2.00 Planning Policy

- 2.01 This section of the Statement identifies the local and national planning policy context of the site, in particular those policies which have a direct bearing/influence over the proposed development.
- 2.02 The Breckland LDF is made up of a number of documents which will enable and manage future land use and development for the District. The approach from Breckland has been to prepare a joint core strategy and development control policies development plan document, as the first part of the LDF.
- 2.03 As part of the pre-application meeting, it was specifically highlighted that Section CP10/11 and DC8 would be directly attributable to the proposal.
- 2.04 Additionally, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is an important material consideration and a determination of any applications. The NPPF was formally adopted on 27 March 2012 and replaces the old PPG's and PPS's. This sets out the Governments economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Governments vision of achieving sustainable developments, which should be interpreted and applied locally to meet local aspirations.
- 2.05 Sustainable development is defined in terms of its economic, social and environmental roles. In economic terms, the proposed development will provide additional spend within the local economy in pubs, shops, restaurants and other local services. The additional spend into the local economy will both sustain and contribute towards the creation of new jobs.
- 2.06 In social terms, some of the spending will be spent directly (by visitors), and indirectly by (local workers, in receipt of wages from visitor spending) in local jobs helping to maintain the viability of local social facilities.

The construction of the site will also generate additional income within the local economy through the use of local contractors.

- 2.07 In environmental terms, the existing site is well screened and the low density nature and the choice of materials for the bespoke lodges will not impact significantly on the surroundings.
- 2.08 Other Government guidance is also a material consideration and determination of the Planning Application, in particular the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Each of the relevant Planning Policies are considered below with a brief commentary on how the proposed scheme would comply with each.

Policy CP10 – Natural Environment

The Policy seeks to enhance bio-diversity and geo-diversity whilst protecting the ecological network. Sites of Special Scientific Interest need to be assessed to identify the impact of the proposed development. It is also a requirement that an appropriate assessment is undertaken of the site to ensure protection of native species.

Commentary

A Phase 1 Habitat and Protected Species Survey has been commissioned by Ecocheck Consultancy Limited and the report dated October 2014 forms part of the Application Package submitted.

The Report seeks to address each of the policy issues and provide appropriate measures for avoidance, reduction or compensation for the effects of the proposed development.

Policy CP11 – Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape

The elements should have a particular regard to maintaining the aesthetic and bio-diversity qualities of natural and man-made features within the landscape, including the consideration of individual or groups of natural features such as trees, hedges, woodlands or rivers, streams or other topographical features.

Commentary

The site is a former aggregate extraction pit and over the period between 1957 and 2006, extraction of sand and gravel led to the formation of seven lakes, which each range in size from 1 acre to 10 acres.

The site benefits from approximately 1,000 metres of frontage to the River Wensum with large mature tree groupings to the north east and west of the site, together with mature trees planted to the perimeter edge of the existing lakes.

An existing network of tracks are formed around the site, which have been used to continue the woodland management of the site and it is the Applicant's intention to utilise the track network to access the proposed lodge accommodation.

The proposal does not involve the removal of any mature trees and the strategic positioning of the low density single storey lodges has been undertaken to limit any impact on the existing tree screening. The colour and materials selected for the proposed lodges have been designed specifically to maintain the existing character of the site which is key in attracting holiday guests to the site and unique rural character.

Policy DC8 – Tourism Related Development

Tourism development will normally be permitted where it is seen to take place in a sustainable manner and does not adversely affect the environment which attracts tourist activity.

Commentary

The proposal adds to the range and quality of tourism accommodation offered in the area and the Phase 1 Habitat and Protected Species Survey prepared confirms the nature of the development proposed will have little or no affect on the environment and where impact has been highlighted, then mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce the level of impact. This report also highlights that given the nature of the site and its previous use, the site has little ecological merit.

National Planning Policy Framework

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a thread through both plan making and decision taking. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.

The NPPF supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors and which respect the character of the countryside.

This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by ?? facilities in rural service centres.

Commentary

The proposal will assist in generating economic benefits throughout the local economy in sustaining the employment in local contractors in the construction and regular maintenance of the site. Additional employment would be created for the Reception and general maintenance and cleaning of the Park. This coupled with the spend from the visitors to the Park will help generate local economic growth within the local community.

The proposed development is considered to be sustainable in terms of design/layout and ability to enhance bio-diversity, economic benefits to the local economy and community benefits arising from the scheme.

3.00 Design Concept

3.01 The Planning Application comprises the layout for 45 bespoke holiday lodges and lodge style reception building together with vehicular and pedestrian access. Whilst it is intended the design and layout of the reception unit will be subject to a conditioned approval and indicative style layout and design has been included as part of the application details.

3.02 As is the nature of a lodge style holiday park, units are relocated and upgraded at various times. By definition a lodge falls within the description of a "caravan" under the site licence conditions ie a caravan can be easily relocated in no more than two sections and therefore by definition are not classed as a permanent structure and do not fall under the constraints of the Building Regulations.

3.03 All siting, spacing and installation details fall under the site licence conditions which would be issued once a planning consent is given.

3.04 Access – the vehicular and pedestrian to the existing site will remain via Easthaugh Road and via the private track. Once on the site, the existing track network will be retained and utilised to provide access to individual lodge accommodation where car parking will be provided and also to continue access around the site to continue with woodland management and maintenance.

Kingdom TP have undertaken a measured and traffic survey at the entrance and deemed the proposal will not significantly affect traffic flow, and that the existing entrance will be satisfactory for the proposed use. Their report is attached to the application.

3.05 Proposed lodge positions – it is proposed to provide 45 bespoke lodges units of varying type but similar construction and materials to allow a diverse mix of accommodation for proposed holiday guests on the site.

3.06 It is proposed to use timber piles to create a decked area on which to site the lodge units which will all be of a standard size to allow the siting of a maximum lodge unit of 6.5m x 13m, with the platform deck extended to allow a walkway around the unit and small jetty from which to fish or moor a canoe or rowing boat.

- 3.07 The buildings are to be of simple design using brown timber clad walling or a composite material to achieve the same appearance with brown timber/maintenance free joinery. The position of the lodges is to comply with the required distances under the site licence conditions.
- 3.08 Given the very low density and low key profile of the lodge units, the visual impact of the area is considered to be limited and able to merge into the rural surrounding. There are larger areas of trees to the north east and west with tree lined planting to the perimeter of the lakes, which will all add to screen the development.
- 3.09 External lighting within the proposed development will be designed to minimise its visual intrusion on the surrounding countryside and comprise low level, anti-pollution LED bollard lighting to enable guests to safely move around the site.
- 3.10 Scale of development – the scale of the proposal is considered to be appropriate to the type of site, especially given the extremely low density of the development. This is considered to be appropriate to help meet the visitor requirements, whilst appreciating the need to be very sympathetic to the local environment.
- 3.11 Amount – the proposal is to provide 45 bespoke holiday lodges for use on a seasonal basis, dictated by the site licence conditions – suggested 11 month occupancy.
- 3.12 Layout considerations – the submitted layout plan reference 7288/03A demonstrates how the lodges would be arranged in an attractive low density layout maximising the views across the existing lakes whilst retaining existing landscaping to ensure privacy between adjacent lodges.

4.00 Economic Benefits of the Proposed Development

- 4.01 Research produced by the British Holiday and Home Parks Association in 2010 shows Holiday Parks as a whole have generated an increased tourism spend of more than £3.06bn for the UK. That is 14% of the British entire tourism economy and accounts for 22% of all holiday bed nights according to the figures.
- 4.02 There were 17.3m trips taken in 2002 representing 80.8m nights away.
- 4.03 The expenditure in 2003 accounted for £170m for overnight visitors of which £47.1m was spent on accommodation.
- 4.04 Holiday parks are an important provider of accommodation for the tourism economy.
- 4.05 In recent years many operators have transformed standards across the industry, investing significant to upgrade parks and facilities in order to appeal to the continuing discerning market.

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4.06 Visitors to the site can take advantage of local facilities whilst enjoying the local countryside.

4.07 There are clear economic and social benefits, in terms of employment and support to other services and facilities for the local community that would result from the development.

5.00 Flood Risk and Mitigation

5.01 A Flood Risk Assessment is submitted with the application, prepared by Evans Rivers and Coastal.

5.02 Flood risk is a factor that has been taken into account in the design of the proposed development. The site is located within the Flood Zone 3A, 3B 2 and 1.

5.03 A Flood Risk Assessment and Evacuation Plan are submitted with the planning application.

5.04 The deck of the proposed lodges will be raised above the ground on piles/stilts and the access roads will remain permeable.

5.05 It is considered there is a low risk of ground water flooding at the site from underlying deposits. There is also generally a low risk of surface water flooding and a low risk of flooding from artificial sources. A warning and evacuation strategy has been developed within the assessment and a site warden will be on site for the duration of the holiday season (11 months).

6.00 Conclusions

6.01 We consider our Clients proposals for the lodge development is acceptable and accords well with the relevant planning policies of the Government and the Development Plan.

6.02 Overall the proposal is considered to meet the objectives in providing adequate facilities in strengthening the tourism economy together with a need to protect the landscape and ecological interests of the site.

6.03 National Planning Policy undoubtedly offers considerable support for tourism, emphasising its important role in sustaining the rural economy. In particular, it is considered the proposal could have appropriate regard to the high quality niche market tourist related development.

6.04 The planning balance is about consideration of the benefits and disadvantages arising from the proposed development in this location, when taken as a whole. It is considered the proposal would attract mainly positive rather than negative assessment.

- 6.05 When all the benefits are taken together, it is considered they would outweigh any other issues.
- 6.06 The development of lodge accommodation would provide additional accommodation in a sought after location. This sector of the tourism market is predicted to grow. There is a need to satisfy this existing and future demand in order to meet wider social, economic, planning and sustainability objectives.
- 6.07 The most appropriate way of achieving this is through well planned facilities and sustainable locations.
- 6.08 Furthermore this proposed development has the benefit of helping to reinforce and regenerate the tourism economy of the local area.
- 6.09 In respect of flood risk, it is anticipated the proposed risk can be managed by constructing the lodges at specific levels and providing a warning and evacuation strategy, including safe refuge across the site.
- 6.10 It is considered the application would be in accordance with the core strategy and development controlled policies, representing a sustainable development that offers a number of benefits.
- 6.11 The NPPF strongly supports sustainable development and provides material weight in favour of this proposal.
- 6.12 The low density layout of the proposed lodges, together with the careful choice of materials and design interspersed with the existing landscaping would have a low visual impact on the surroundings.
- 6.13 Planning Policy Framework at national and local levels anticipates and, indeed, supports the growth in tourism and recognises the importance of holiday parks in meeting the regeneration and growth. Policies aimed at protecting the countryside, landscape environment, whilst encouraging sustainable forms of development and rural enterprise are also embraced.
- 6.14 The ecological value and bio-diversity of the application site would be protected and significantly enhanced in line with the development plan and Government objectives.
- 6.15 It is considered the proposed lodge park development accords with the development plan and meets wider national and local planning objectives in a sustainable manner, which protects and enhances the landscape and ecological value of the site.