

Proposed holiday chalets at Bickley Old School House, Bickley, North Yorkshire

SUPPORTING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. The site and its surroundings

The site lies in a steep-sided valley in an area of forestation between Dalby Forest and Langdale Forest about 5km west of the village of Hackness. It is accessed from a minor rural road linking Hackness to Thornton-le Dale, passing through the Dalby Forest recreational area. Immediately to the north is a cycle hire facility and the site is in an area providing a wealth of recreational footpath and cycle trails.

The former school house and associated outbuilding have been converted to holiday accommodation and the application site forms part of the former school curtilage, comprising a paddock to the east of the Old School House, which is traversed by a public footpath.

The site slopes gently to the south and is bordered by a stream and wooded areas to the north, south and east, and by the existing holiday accommodation to the west. The site is completely surrounded by dense forest.

2. Proposed Development of the Site

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of three timber chalets for holiday use in association with the existing holiday accommodation on the site.

The existing holiday accommodation is well located and popular but, as there is no on-site living accommodation for a manager, it has to be managed remotely with staff visiting the site on a daily basis. This adversely affects the financial viability of the operation. The provision of additional high quality holiday accommodation would meet a clear demand and position the holiday accommodation business on a sounder financial basis.

3. Layout Considerations

The proposals have been formulated to take account of the following considerations:

- The need to create a pleasing visual grouping of buildings, well related to existing buildings and landscape features.
- The need to protect the setting of the attractive existing buildings.
- The need to create a development which harmonises with the character of surrounding development.
- The need to create a pleasant holiday environment.
- The desire to ensure that all the accommodation benefits from a pleasing outlook.
- The need to minimise disturbance to existing trees.
- The need to avoid unnecessary incursion into open countryside.
- The desire to make effective use of the site.

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4. Scale and Design

The heavily wooded surroundings have influenced the choice of materials and prompted the use of timber chalets, which will be assimilated into the surrounding landscape.

The scale and design of the proposed buildings has been strongly influenced by the character and form of the Old School House, which will remain the dominant building on the site. The proposed chalet design, incorporating a narrow span and strong gable features with overhanging eaves and verges, reflects the dominant characteristics of the Old School House. Blue slate roofing and natural stone plinths will help the chalets integrate well with the existing buildings.

The proposed fenestration maintains a vertical emphasis, again reflecting the character of the existing buildings.

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5. Landscaping

A survey plan showing the location and extent of existing trees and hedgerows beyond the site boundary is submitted (drawing No. H.11.01). Some trimming back of the roadside hedgerows may be necessary to improve visibility at the vehicular access points but, otherwise, The location of buildings and the access driveway have been designed to ensure that all existing trees and hedgerows will be unaffected by the development.

Substantial additional tree and planting is proposed as shown on plan H.11.02. Full details of proposed landscaping will be submitted as a reserved matter.

6. Access

No new access from the highway is proposed. Visibility from both existing access points is good, although some trimming back of the roadside hedgerows may be desirable.

Each existing and proposed holiday unit will have at least one parking space and there will be additional visitor parking areas. On site provision of parking and manoeuvring space will ensure that there is no obstruction to the safe passage of vehicles past the site.

The ground floor accommodation of the holiday chalets will be accessible to persons with restricted mobility. Each dwelling will have space for disabled parking.

Given the intended use for holiday accommodation, the site occupies a sustainable location, exceptionally well served by extensive recreational facilities in the immediate vicinity.

7 Planning Policy Issues

The proposal is also in broad accord with national planning policy as set out in The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism and PPS 7.

The relevant Local Plan policies are Development Policy 14- Tourism and Recreation, and Development Policy 16- Chalet and Camping Sites.

Development Policy 14 is supportive of tourism development where certain criteria are met. This proposal accords with the relevant criteria.

Development Policy 16 requires that proposed holiday chalet sites should satisfy 5 criteria. This site satisfies all the relevant requirements. In particular:

1. The site is located within an area of well established forests.
2. The site is physically and functionally linked to an existing tourism business.
3. The site is in close proximity to the road network and would not harm road safety.
4. The scale of the development would not harm the special qualities of the National Park.
5. Being of timber construction, the design of the buildings minimises their permanency.

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