

High Peak Borough Council
Planning Department
Buxton Town Hall
Market Place
Buxton
Derbyshire
SK17 6EL

For the attention of Mr D. Cleary

18 October 2023
EP ref: 23-194

Dear Declan

Re: Oaklands Manor, Manchester Road, Buxton, Derbyshire – application ref: HPK/2023/0233

Further to your request for further information on existing and proposed activities at the site, we set out below further information in support of our case demonstrating that the proposed level of activity would be substantially less than those of the approved use.

Lawful use

Oaklands Manor was previously in use as an activity-based centre run by the University of Derby, the owners of the site. The university's website still makes reference to the site, as demonstrated in the extract below.

The website information refers to the site's use as a training centre with 3 teaching rooms, break out study space, computer room and accommodation for students, to enable students to experience outdoor activities. The fact that there are numerous teaching rooms and a large drying area within the basement indicates that the centre accommodated many young people using the facilities at any one time.

OAKLANDS MANOR

Our specialist outdoor leadership centre, Oaklands Manor, provides a unique learning environment for students studying our outdoor courses.

Surrounded by stunning views of the Peak District and only a five-minute drive from our Buxton campus, a regular, free mini bus service ensures students travel easily between sites.

Our facilities

Oaklands Manor, our outdoor leadership centre, boasts a range of bespoke facilities, including:

- Three teaching rooms and a break-out study space
- A specialist computer suite
- Shower facilities and bespoke drying room for wet gear after caving and canoeing practicals
- Kitchen facilities
- Caving, canoeing, climbing and bush craft kit storage

In addition, the amount of teaching space and the number of bathroom/toilets is also evident on the existing floor plans for the property.

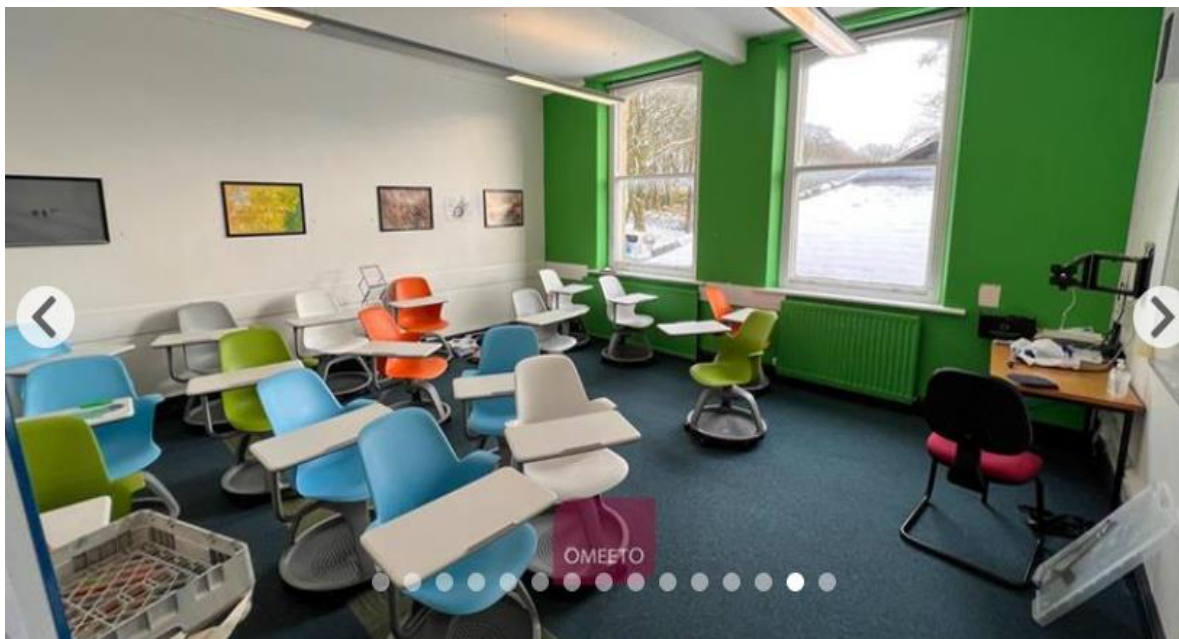
The existing floor plans demonstrate that there are 6 showers in one room, 5 toilets in another room and 2 individual showers with a communal shower room in another, all within the basement. There is also a drying room located adjacent the boiler room.

In addition, there are 2 bathrooms with a shower in each and a separate shower room on the first floor. Clearly the number of shower and toilet facilities indicates that the existing use would have accommodated large groups.

On the ground floor, there is a servery that accompanies a commercial kitchen area with a cold store and large dining hall, also used as a social area. There is a large lecture room/collaborative learning area used for conferences. Again, this would accommodate large groups and is in addition to the offices and equipment stores on this level.

On the first floor there are 5 offices and a computer room.

In the photograph of one of the conference rooms, taken from the sales particulars for the property, the number of chairs indicates that this one room alone would have accommodated 40+ people. In addition, the classrooms would accommodate at least 20 people (see photograph below).



The photographs of the overnight accommodation within the sales particulars also demonstrate that the bedrooms were used as dormitories, shown by the bunk beds. The photograph below shows that up to 14 young persons could be accommodated in one of the larger bedrooms.

There are 6 bedrooms in total on the second floor. The two largest bedrooms measure 38 sq. m each (internally). There are toilets and showers on this floor too with a social space and kitchen.



In the committee report for the approved use of the property as a “residential training centre” (under application ref: 039197), there is reference to the previous use as a part hotel/part office use. Clearly the hotel/office use would have included numerous visits from patrons and users of the office.

The committee report for the training centre use states that:

“the use would compare favourably to the existing hotel, conference centre and office development.”

This indicates that the training centre use was similar in terms of the number of visitors and the frequency of visitors stating, in terms of highways that:

“.....it is not anticipated that the proposed development would result in a material increase in movement to and from the access and on this basis objection to the proposals would be difficult to sustain.”

The committee report refers to the fact that the applicant was World Challenge Expeditions, who:

“train children and young adults prior to them going on overseas expeditions.”

The activities included indoor and outdoor based activities and students walking and camping overnight in the Peak or would camp away from the centre at sites within the Peak National Park.

The current owners of the property (the University of Derby) have advised that the premises was used for 80 to 90 students in 2015, this reduced to 66 students in 2019/20, and supported by 6 staff. The building was used for teaching during term time and over the holiday periods it was used for outdoor activities including summer camps. The shower facilities were used regularly by students who would engage in outdoor pursuits such as caving, climbing and bushcraft activities during the day before attending lectures.

The parking layout accommodates at least 50 cars, again this is associated with the use of the property both in terms of the residential training centre use and the previous use as a hotel. The University has informed us that some of the students were of college age therefore they would drive, use the university minibus or walk.

Proposed use

In terms of the proposed use, the maximum number of children would be no more than 8 and each young person would have their own bedroom. The numbers of individual toilets and showers would be reduced so that the rooms can be used to provide bathrooms.

There would be 6 staff bedrooms, however the number of staff would include 16 carers, operating on a rota basis and dependant on the requirements of each child. As stated in our planning statement:

“The planned activities would be outdoors therefore the majority of children would stay elsewhere for a couple of days at a time engaging in activities. They would stay in cottages, caravans, bunk barns or camping in rural locations away from home with their support staff and activity staff.”

The application site has ample off-road parking for around 50 vehicles, more than sufficient to cater for the proposed use. At a maximum there would be approximately 20 cars on the site during the day which can easily be accommodated on site. This is substantially less than the maximum number of cars associated with the previous uses of the site.

The maximum number of occupants, if all children were in the property at the same time, would amount to 16 including staff. Given that the previous use accommodated up to 90 students and, even though the numbers did decrease by 2019/20 plus teaching/activity staff, the proposed use still represents a significant reduction in the number of occupants, based on the maximum figures. In addition, it should be noted that the only cars would be those of staff given that the young people would not be driving.

Summary

In terms of the level of activity, the numbers of young people, staffing levels and numbers of vehicles would be substantially less than the numbers referred to above that have occurred as part of the lawful existing use as a residential training centre when it was operated by the University of Derby. This is summarised below.

	Total number of occupants
Existing lawful use	72 (based on figures from 2019/20) – however these would be of university age i.e. adults
Proposed Use	24 (at maximum occupancy levels <u>and</u> only when all occupants are on site at any one time) – note that 8 would be young people and 16 would be adults.

Yours sincerely
Emery Planning

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