

PLANNING GUIDANCE (WALES)
TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE (WALES) 13

TOURISM



Welsh Office



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This document is one of a series of Technical Advice Notes (Wales) (TANs) which supplement "Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy".

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Introduction

1. This Technical Advice Note (Wales) (TAN) should be read in conjunction with Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy. Planning Guidance, Technical Advice Notes and circulars should be taken into account by local planning authorities in Wales in the preparation of development plans. They may be material to decisions on individual planning applications and will be taken into account by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors in the determination of called-in planning applications and appeals.

2. Documents listed in the Reference column in the margin provide information which should be read in conjunction with the TAN.

3. The Wales Tourist Board has responsibility for promoting and developing tourism in Wales. It has a duty to advise Government and other public bodies, including local authorities, on matters affecting tourism.

4. Tourism comprises a range of different, but interdependent activities and operations which overlap with sport, entertainment, the arts and other recreation and leisure activities. It 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. It is subject to change in the type of holiday taken and the length of the holiday season. While it cannot be regarded as a single or distinct category of land use, the issues it raises should be addressed in preparing or revising development plans and may feature in development control decisions. Development plans may provide guidance on opportunities for larger scale or innovative projects, appropriate facilities for the countryside or designated areas and the provision of facilities in historic towns and seaside resorts.

Hotels

5. Hotel development can bring benefits for the local community and support amenities and activities for residents and tourists. Such development should be compatible with neighbouring uses. The conversion of hotel stock to alternative uses can weaken a seaside town's ability to retain its resort status, and this issue should be addressed in development plans for such areas. Care should be taken not to use the

Reference

Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy 1996, paragraphs 196 and 197

Welsh Office Circular 61/96, 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas'

Welsh Office Circular 60/96, 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology and Planning'

Technical Advice Note (Wales) 5, Nature Conservation and Planning 1996

Development of Tourism Act 1969

Wales Tourist Board Annual Reports

Tourism 2000, Wales Tourist Board

planning system to perpetuate outdated accommodation for which there is no longer a market demand.

6. Many historic buildings are used as hotels. Carefully designed additions can be achieved without adversely affecting the historic fabric or character and maintain an historic building in viable use. Large-scale buildings in a small-scale setting, buildings which break prominently into the skyline, and those which by their design, materials, illumination or building line are out of sympathy with neighbouring historic buildings will normally be unacceptable. Where new buildings are proposed in historic settings, it will not be appropriate for permission to be granted in outline only, detailed plans will normally be required.

7. There are many redundant or obsolete buildings such as warehouses, railway stations or agricultural buildings that can lend themselves well to adaptation and modernisation as hotels, motels or restaurants. Converting such buildings can bring life back to an otherwise neglected asset, conserving a useful and possibly attractive building, improving a neglected site, and helping the local economy.

8. Moderately sized extensions to an existing hotel or public house, including the addition of bedroom accommodation, can help ensure the future viability of such businesses. Using the potential of the site or building may allow local as well as tourism needs to be met. However, there should not be a disproportionate increase in scale.

9. Car parking and access requirements may vary according to the scale and type of activity for which an hotel is intended and its location. In urban areas the amount of parking provided is likely also to be related to public transport facilities. Access and waiting areas should be designed to avoid congestion and minimise turning movements.

Holiday and Touring Caravans

10. This advice is concerned with the use of land for holiday static and touring caravan sites, not with residential or gypsy caravan sites, nor with provision for new age travellers. Similar considerations may apply to holiday chalet developments, and to applications which combine different types of tourist accommodation like motorised caravans and tents.

11. Authorities may receive planning applications which combine the different types of touring accommodation as touring units. Developers and site owners should be encouraged to be specific about the overall numbers. In considering such applications, authorities should take account of the land use implications, in particular relating to local roads and access. It should often be possible to grant planning permission which allows for flexibility between the number of tents and touring units, with an overall limit on the number of pitches.

12. In preparing development plans, local planning authorities should investigate the adequacy of facilities for both the static and touring caravanner and reconcile these needs with the protection of the environment. 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, while using less land for the purpose. Holiday caravan sites can be intrusive in the landscape, particularly on the coast. Special consideration needs to be given to proposals for new sites, especially in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast and sites of national and international importance designated for their natural features.

Reference

*Technical Advice
Note (Wales) 12,
Design*

*Planning Guidance
(Wales): Planning
Policy 1996,
paragraph 66*

*Caravan Sites and
Control of
Development Act
1960, Schedule 1*

*The TCP (General
Permitted
Development)
Order 1995,
(SI No 1995/718)*

*Technical Advice
Note (Wales) 5,
Nature
Conservation and
Planning*

Reference

13. The demand for sites has concentrated on the most popular holiday areas, particularly on the coast, although there is increasing demand inland. New and extended sites should be effectively screened, and planned so as not to be visually intrusive. Sites should not as a rule be allowed immediately by the sea, but should be set back a short distance inland where they are not visible from or along the coast.

14. Local planning authorities should examine the scope for encouraging holiday caravan site operators to improve the quality of their sites and to relocate sites away from particularly sensitive areas, such as the Heritage Coast. Policies to this effect should be included in development plans. In some cases, to facilitate improvement or relocation, local planning authorities may need to consider some expansion of the area covered by a site, so that improved layouts and better landscaping can be implemented. Local authorities may also need to consider dividing large sites into smaller units to reduce the overall environmental impact. In these circumstances, to ensure the overall scale of the operation is not increased, local planning authorities should consider the use of planning conditions to limit the number of pitches on a site. Authorities should also give sympathetic consideration to applications to extend the opening period allowed under existing permissions.

*Welsh Office
Circular 35/95,
'The Use of
Conditions in
Planning
Permissions'*

*Welsh Office
Circular 42/68,
'Caravan Sites Act
1968'*

*Welsh Office
Circular 7/76,
'Report of the
National Parks
Policies Review
Committee'*

*Welsh Office
Circular 32/83,
'Caravan Sites and
Control of
Development Act
1960'*

*Welsh Office
Circular 23/89,
'The Caravan Sites
and Control of
Development Act
1960 - Model
Standards'*

Seasonal and Holiday Occupancy Conditions

15. The planning system can respond to changes in tourism without compromising policies to safeguard the countryside and, in exceptional cases, holiday occupancy conditions can reconcile these two objectives. Conversions of redundant buildings into holiday accommodation where conversion to residential dwellings would not be permitted may reduce the pressure on other housing in rural areas. Such permissions may be granted with a condition specifying use as holiday accommodation only. A holiday occupancy condition would seem more appropriate than a seasonal occupancy condition where the need is to reduce pressure on local services. Authorities should continue to use seasonal occupancy conditions to prevent the permanent residential use of accommodation which, by the character of its construction or design, is unsuitable for continuous occupation especially in the winter months. Seasonal occupancy conditions may also be appropriate to protect the local environment, for example where the site is near a habitat which requires protection at particular times of the year.

16. Given the need to enforce conditions it may be appropriate to ascertain how the developer proposes to restrict occupation to holiday use. Authorities should be able to establish whether accommodation is being used exclusively by holidaymakers. Enforcement need not and should not require intrusive checks on occupants of holiday properties.

17. Where a breach of a holiday occupancy condition is suspected, the local planning authority may serve a planning contravention notice to require information about activities on the land. One question might be whether any tenancy agreement or licence includes a statement that the letting is for holiday purposes. The lack of such a statement might well indicate that the condition has been breached, because any landlord or licensor of genuine holiday accommodation is likely to have ensured that the tenancy is not an assured tenancy under the Housing Act 1988 and that a right of occupation of a dwelling house is excluded from the provisions of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

Cancellations

18. Annexes A, B, C and D of Planning Policy Guidance Note 21, Tourism, are cancelled.

Reference

*The Town and
Country Planning
Act 1990,
Section 171C*

*Housing Act 1988
Protection from
Eviction Act 1977*