

2021/0968

Ms Emma Tuckey

RSPB, Old Moor Lane, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 0YF

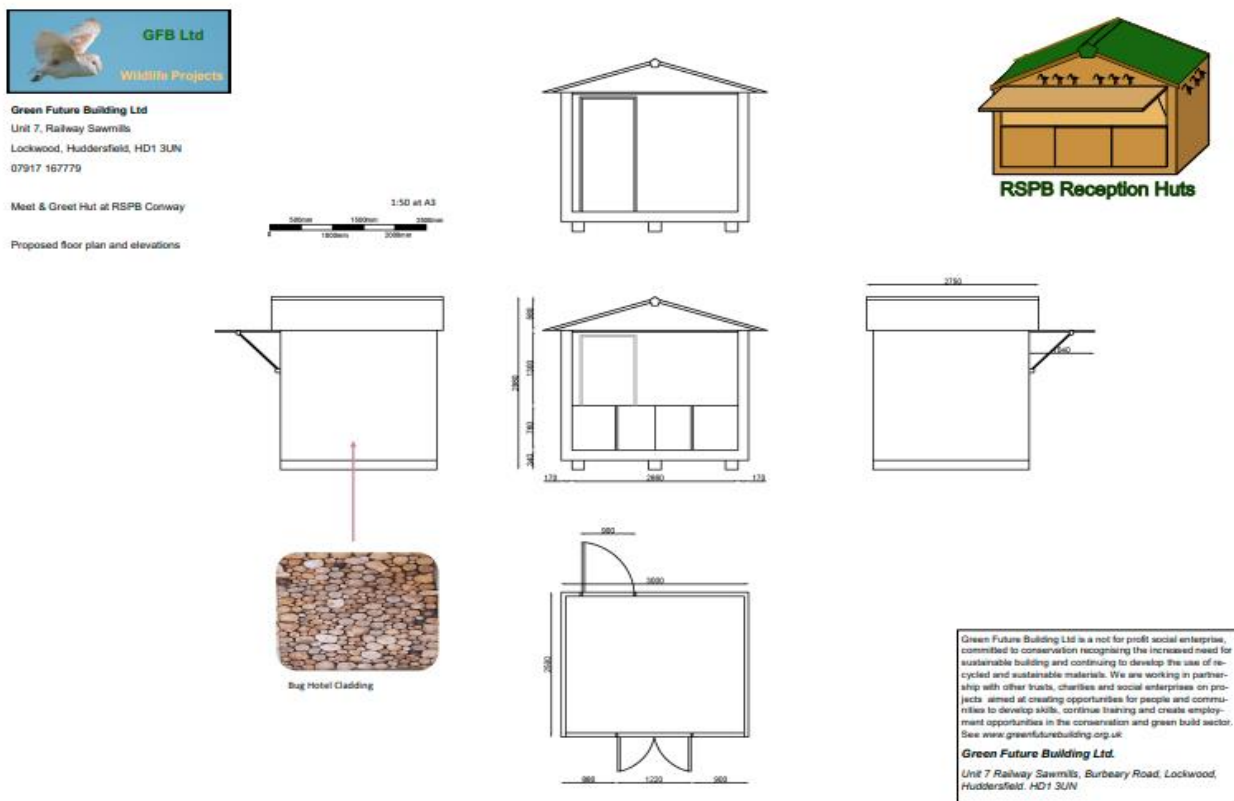
Erection of wooden hut at entrance to reserve

Site Description

Old Moor is an RSPB reserve located to the south east of Darfield and Wombwell at the boundary of the borough with Rotherham. The site is a nature reserve with visitor facilities and associated office accommodation. The visitor centre is accessed via a long private road and the traditional stone buildings are screened by surrounding woodland. The buildings are arranged around a central courtyard with tables and chairs associated with the café.

Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking approval for the erection of a wooden reception hut. The hut has a length of 2.5 meters and a width of 3 meters. The hut will feature a pitched roof with a ridge height of 2.98 meters and an eaves height of 2.4 meters. The materials used will be wood and bug hotel cladding.



Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of the Local Plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Authority (LPA) has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

The site is allocated as Green Belt, Biodiversity or Geological Interest Site and Nature Improvement Area, within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and adjacent to Natural England designated Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) therefore the following policies are relevant:

Policy GB1 Protection of Green Belt
Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making
Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection
Policy GD1 General Development
Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 goes on to outline exceptions to paragraph 148. The exceptions include:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;
 - or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Consultations

The LPA's Biodiversity Officer was consulted and provided no response.

Darfield Ward Councillors were consulted and provided no response.

Natural England were consulted and raised no objections.

Pollution Control were consulted and raised no objections.

Representations

A site notice was erected adjacent to the site; no representations have been received.

Assessment

Principle of Development

Development is considered acceptable where it conserves and enhances the biodiversity and geological features of the borough and provides appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land) for outdoor sport and recreation as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The site is a nature reserve run by the RSPB, with the existing stone buildings on site converted to offices used in association with the nature reserve, with an on-site café, shop and educational facilities. The wooden reception hut is considered an appropriate facility in line with the existing uses of the site to enhance the visitor experience.

Visual Amenity

The wooden reception hut is to be located to the south of the existing building which houses the café at the visitor entrance to the site. The hut is to be constructed from wood and bug hotel cladding and therefore has an appearance which relates well to the existing buildings and its surroundings. The hut would not be highly visible from public vantage points, only the visitor entrance to which purpose it serves and is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.

It is considered that the wooden reception hut is located such that it does not give rise to a cluttered or overly commercial appearance nor does it detract from the character of the wider area or openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the installation of the wooden reception hut is acceptable and in compliance with Local Plan Policies GB1: Protection of Green Belt, D1: High Quality Design and Place Making and GD1: General Development.

Biodiversity

The site is located within a Biodiversity or Geological Interest Site and adjacent to a Natural England designated Dearne Valley Wetlands SSSI. Natural England were consulted and raised no objections. The LPA's Biodiversity Officer was consulted but provided no response.

No issues have been raised regarding the location of the hut nor its size and massing and it is not considered to impact on the biodiversity of the area nor upon the features for which the SSSI had been notified and as such is in compliance with Local Plan Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Residential Amenity

There are no residential properties within close proximity of the site and therefore would not lead to the proposal having a detrimental impact in terms of residential amenity therefore it does not conflict with Local Plan Policies GD1: General Development and Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection.

Highway Safety

There will be no impact upon highway safety.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions