

Application Reference Number:	2025/0556
Proposal Description:	Erection of storage container
Location:	RSPB, Old Moor Lane, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 0YF

Recommendation:

Approve subject to conditions.

Site Description

Old Moor is an RSPB reserve located to the southeast 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. The site of the container is located away from the visitor centre and is only accessible by staff.

Planning History

- 2022/0033 - Installation of storage container – Approved subject to conditions
- 2021/0968 - Erection of wooden hut at entrance to reserve – Approved subject to conditions.

Proposed Development

The applicant has proposed for the erection of storage container located at RSPB, Old Moor Lane, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 0YF. The site is currently gravelled and would be concreted over before the container is placed at the site. The container would be used to store small machinery, such as woodchippers and mowers etc.

The container would measure approximately:

- 3.88m x4.37m, and 2.09m in height with a flat roof and 2 doors to the front

Relevant Policies

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for Barnsley consists of the Barnsley Local Plan (adopted January 2019).

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting on 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

- 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 GD2 – Temporary Buildings and Uses
- Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance

In December 2024, The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") which is the most recent revision of the original Framework, published first in 2012 and updated a number of times, providing the overarching planning framework for England.

It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions. This revised document has replaced the earlier planning policy statements, planning policy guidance and various policy letters and circulars, which are now cancelled.

Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is at the heart of the framework (paragraph 10) and plans and decisions should apply this presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). The NPPF confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental; each of these aspects are mutually dependent.

The most relevant sections are:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision making
- Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land

The National Design Guidance (2019) is a material consideration and sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places based on planning policy expectations. A written ministerial statement states that local planning authorities should take it into account when taking decisions.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

In line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Barnsley has adopted twenty-eight Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following the adoption of the Local Plan in January 2019.

Consultations

Biodiversity – No comments received.

Representations

The application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015. A site notice was posted at the site. No representations have been received.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are as follows:

- Principle of development
- The impact on the character of the area
- The impact on neighbouring residential properties
- Highways
- Biodiversity

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale unless the NPPF establishes a specific weight:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of Development

Development within the Green Belt is considered acceptable in principle where it 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, an on-site café, shop, reception, and educational facilities. The proposal can therefore be seen as appropriate facilities in connection with a recreational facility. Planning permission for steel containers within the green belt is not usually encouraged, however, the impact of the container in terms of design, location and visual impact will be closely assessed below.

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. Moderate planning weight has been granted to this.

Visual Amenity

The visual amenity considerations need to be taken into account with regards to the proposal. Planning permission for steel containers within green belt locations are not usually encouraged, however, there are a number of factors to consider when assessing this application. The proposed container will be located on the existing concrete base, and the area is well screened from the centre and nearby street scenes by way of surrounding hedges and hawthorn bushes. The container will be green in colour and corrugated, which will also help minimise the potential impact within the area. As such there would be little to no detrimental impact on visual amenity. Moderate planning weight has been granted to this.

Highways Safety

There would be little to no impact upon highway safety and as such the Council's Highway Officer has not been consulted upon.

Biodiversity

The Council consulted its Biodiversity Officer; however no comments were made in regard to the proposal. The current space is gravel and is to concrete and then the container will be placed on top. The site size is below the minimum requirement for a BNG assessment. As such the scheme would be acceptable. Moderate planning weight has been granted to this.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

For the reasons stated in the report above the proposal is granted approval subject to the conditions. The scheme would have little to no adverse impacts on visual and residential amenity, biodiversity and highway safety. As such the scheme would comply with the Council's policies.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions

Justification

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 35 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE ORDER 2015

Due regard has been given to Article 8 and Protocol 1 of Article 1 of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998 when considering objections, the determination of the application and the resulting recommendation. It is considered that the recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or any objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.