

Design & Access Statement
RevB

Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Bradbourne Vale Road

April 2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

1.1, This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3DH. This should be read alongside the application drawings and reports.

1.2, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve offers the wider community a fantastic opportunity to enjoy nature and educate both children and adults alike. Indeed Kent Wildlife Trust, as part of their mission statement look to ensure that wildlife is protected and restored.

Kent Wildlife Trust is the leading conservation charity for the county of Kent. Through their work and reserves they strive to connect organisations, people and communities to nature and to care for their natural places. Here they look to instil a passion for nature and inspire us to act in ways that are beneficial to the natural world. Their values ambitiously look to secure a strong future for the people and wildlife of Kent.

The Trust operate a number of reserves throughout the county, the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve and Jeffery Harrison Visitor Centre being one of these.

Their values have informed both the design of this scheme but also run centrally to the Trusts ambitions for the future of the reserve. Here they are looking to add to the some 2,000 species of bats, dragonflies, fungi and bird life that already are found within the reserve.

As part of their public consultation the trust confirmed that:

'the centre will become a place to learn, research, explore, be active, get connected and provide opportunities to give back to the local community through volunteering. This reserve will bring Wilding to life and create space for nature and natural processes to thrive as part of our vision for a Wilder Kent'

The Visitor Centre and reserve as stated is a wonderful community asset, which the proposed works look to enhance, offering the local community a place to enjoy and learn.

1.3, The current visitor centre is however in a poor state of repair, as well as not being attractive to the general public. It does not meet the Trusts needs and is not fit for purpose. The immediate surroundings are also in need of work to improve the current facilities and enhance the overall user experience.

1.4, This submission follows on from a Pre-application submission to Sevenoaks District Council in 2019, Ref: PA/19/00497, which sought to gather feedback on sketch proposals prepared by Studio McLeod. As part of this it was confirmed that the principle of the development would be intrinsically linked to the proposals impact on the Green Belt and the SSSI in which it is located. Further details are provided within the supporting planning statement prepared by Savills, however in summary the main issues considerations were:

- Impact on the Green Belt / Special Scientific Interest.
- Impact to the design and character of the area.
- Impact on amenity.
- Parking and highways.
- Trees and Landscaping / area of Archaeological Potential.

1.5, Pre-app advice was also sought from Natural England. This was again based on the original pre-app scheme by Studio McLeod. This set out advice on design and layout and potential mitigation to consider.

1.6, The scheme submitted for pre-application advice has been reviewed and is now more in line with the aims and objectives of the Kent Wildlife Trust. As such, the proposals are now for a modest extension and refurbishment of the existing Visitor Centre, the demolition of redundant structures, and improved car parking, access and security resulting in an enhanced visitor experience. Generally the proposals will add to the natural environment, in part by removing some poor quality structures and rewilding areas through a continued ecological management plan for the reserve.

1.7, Prior to this planning submission pre-application advice was sought from KCC Highways on the general layout, provision of parking facilities. Further details can be found in the Transport Statement.

1.8, To gather public opinion on the proposals a public consultations was also undertaken in early 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was undertaken online and all necessary stakeholders were invited to comment on the proposals including local councillors and members of the public. Please refer to the supporting Planning Statement for further details.

1.9, This statement analyses the characteristics of the surrounding area.

1.10, The statement then covers the proposals in more depth, the design strategy behind the proposals and concludes with a summary of the proposed development.

1.11, This statement should be read in conjunction with the attached site photographs, associated planning drawings and supporting information, submitted as part of this application.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND ASSESSMENT

2.1, The application site is situated off of Bradbourne Vale Road, and is located north of Sevenoaks town centre with Riverhead to the west and Seal to the East. As such, whilst the site, which is a former quarry extending to approximately 71 hectares, is open and wild in nature, the surrounding context is predominantly residential and built up.

2.2, The application site is not situated within a Conservation Area, nor is it within an AONB. The site is however within the Green Belt and in part designated as an SSSI. The boundary of which is indicated on the Proposed Site Layout Plan. Refer to page 4 for further details.

2.3, Considering its wider context, the reserve sits within the heart of the Darenth Valley landscape. The southern end of wet meadow valley runs for several miles to Otford and past the downland sites of Kemsing Down, St Michaels Mount, Otford Mount etc.

2.4, The centre is a popular venue in the community, attracting some 80,000 visitors per year. This is largely due to its extensive biodiversity in wetland species, where it provides a home to over 2,000 species including bats, dragonflies, fungi, birds etc.

2.5, The reserve is well screened for the most part and primarily accessed via an access road spurring off of Bradbourne Vale Road. This leads directly to the existing Visitor Centre building and associated car parking areas. From here users can directly access the reserve and follow some of its walks and or use the current facilities.

2.6, There is no immediate built form within the proximity of the existing visitor centre with the exception of a number of poor quality outbuildings and a small lodge building which sits to the north, slightly further into the reserve.

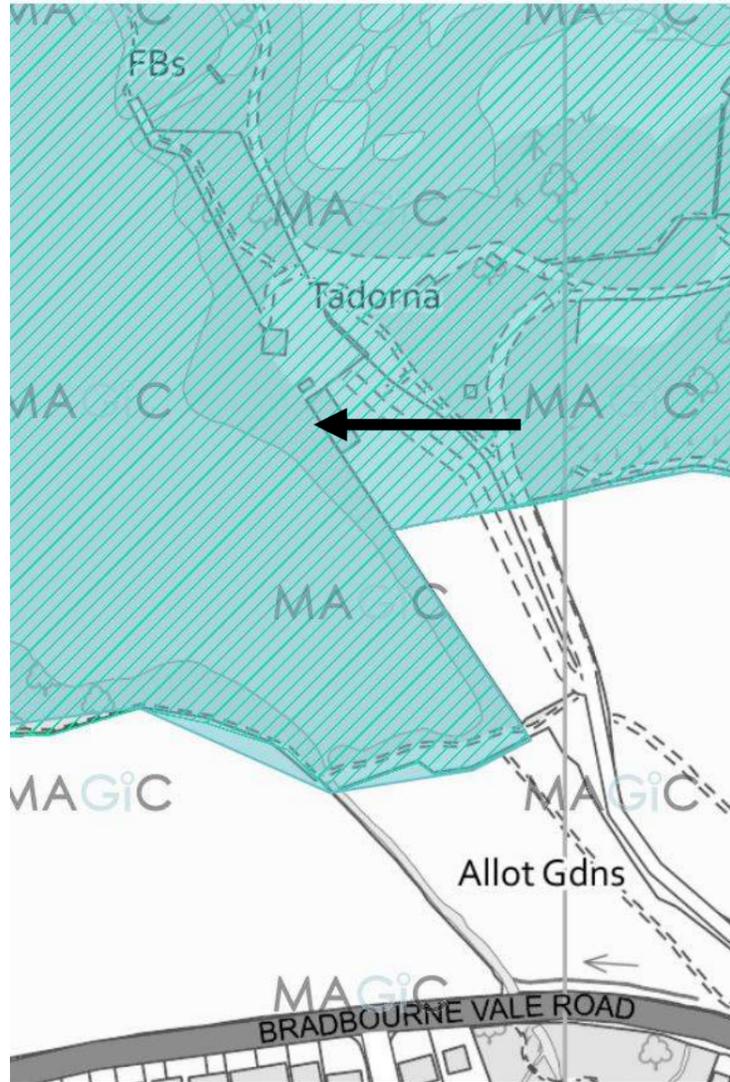
2.7, The Visitor Centre itself is mostly finished with timber horizontal cladding and a tiled roof. Largely devoid of fenestration and detailing, the building is quite simple. Due to its age, the building is in need of repair and maintenance to bring it up to a modern standard.

2.8, In addition to the centre building itself, the existing access road is in need of upkeep.

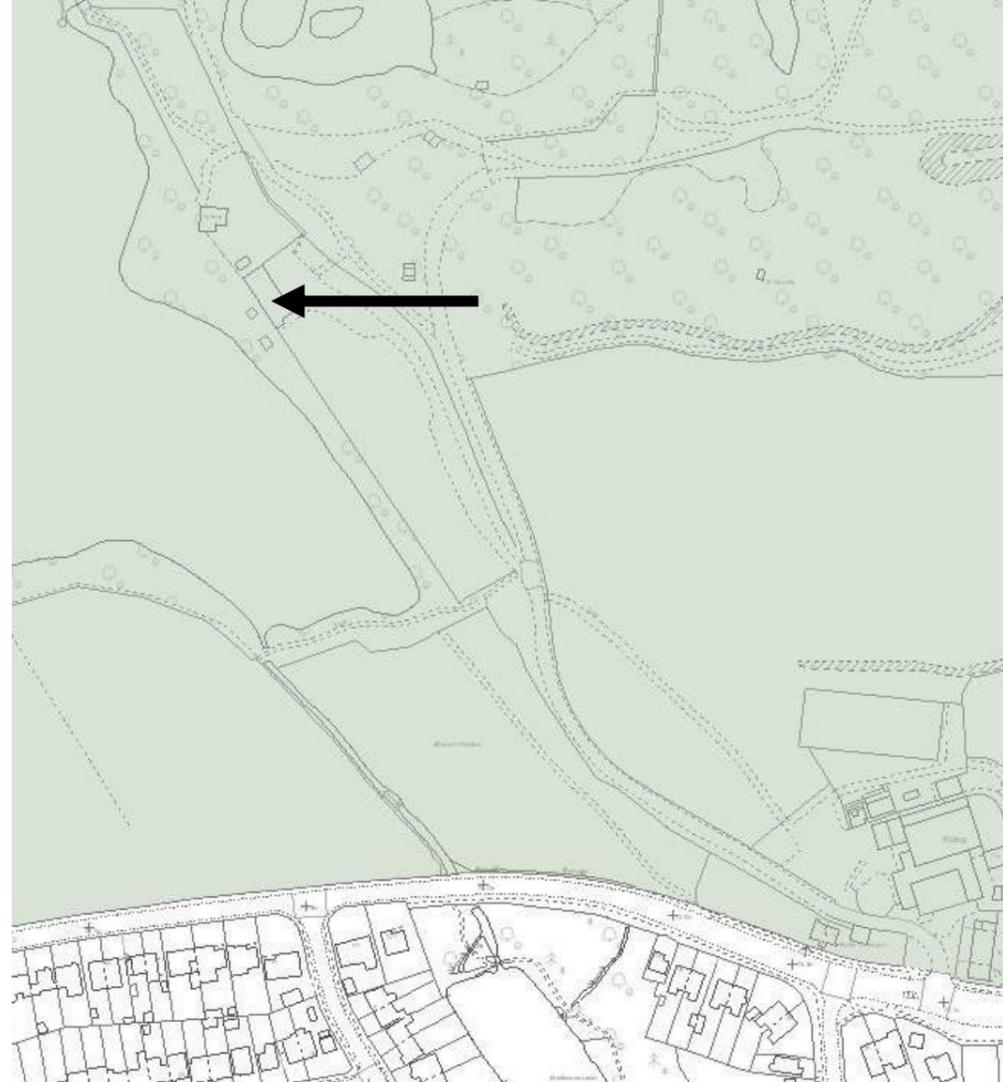
2.9 The site is easily accessible, with bus stops immediately adjacent to the site entrance, with this providing services to areas such as Plaxtol, South Darenth, Wilmington, Sevenoaks (town centre), Crockenhill, Shoreham, Westerham, Tonbridge and Edenbridge. Bat & Ball and Sevenoaks railway stations are also a short walk from the site providing easy access to faster means into London. The site is also just a 10 minute drive from the A21 and M25, both major routes between the South East and London. In addition to this there are numerous existing pedestrian and cycle routes which provide access to the reserve for visitors. Whilst no cycling is allowed on the site, there are existing secure cycle spaces close to the Visitor Centre with a new covered canopy proposed. This new canopy was requested by KCC Highways following a pre-app meeting on the 21st January 201 and looks to encourage visitors to cycle to the site. Further details are provided within the supporting Transport Statement.

2.10 The Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve was the first British attempt to create a series of gravel pits for the purpose of nature conservation and has since informed other similar schemes throughout the country. It was Dr. James and Jeffery Harrison who first suggested the idea of developing the lakes into a nature reserve. Most of the trees on site were planted between 1960 and 1974 . As confirmed in the tree survey, the majority of the trees in the vicinity of the Visitor Centre are actually category 'U' or 'C' trees which are of no or limited arboricultural value.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT



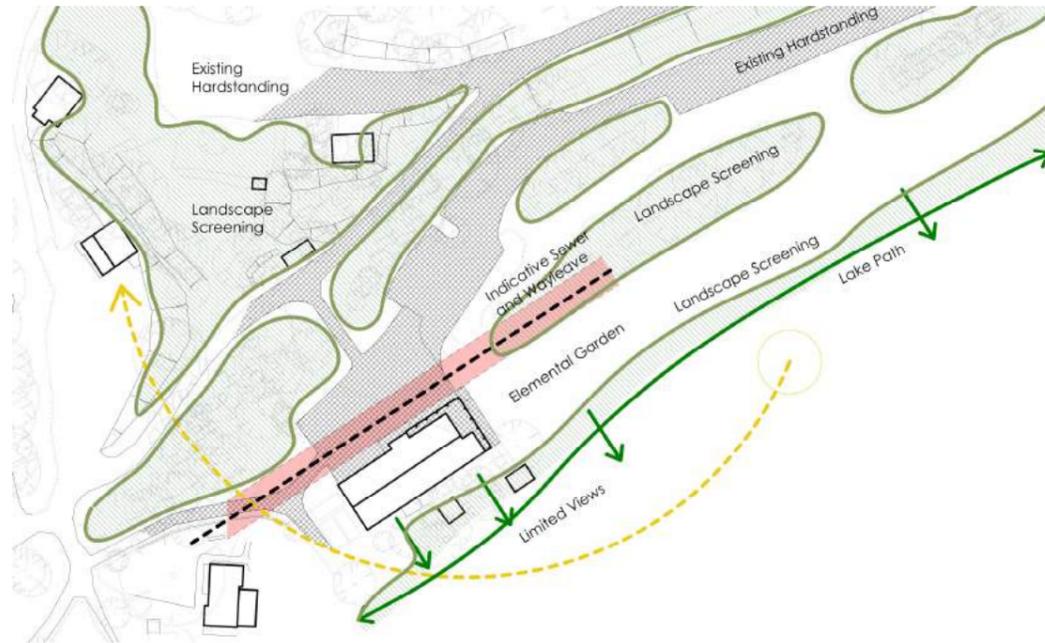
Extract from DEFRA, Magic map, showing indicative boundary to the SSSI, Site of Special Scientific Interest. This shows that the Visitor Centre and a large proportion of the application site are within the SSSI. The access road and some of the parking to the south however fall outside of this. The indicative location of the SSSI are shown on the Proposed Site Layout Plan.



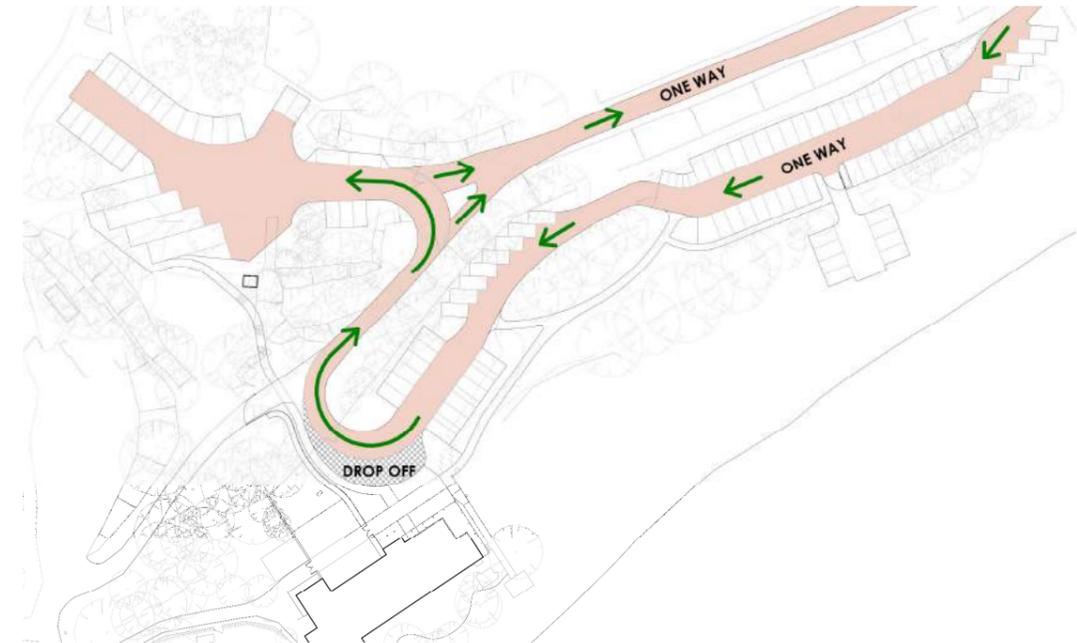
Extract from Sevenoaks District Council Policy Map, showing that the entire application site falls within the Green Belt, with this including the access road. Bradbourne Vale Road marks the edge of the Green Belt land.

2.11, SSSI's are areas that encompass land that provides some of the best environments for flora, fauna etc. As such they are worthy of protection in order to preserve the quality of the environment. Development can be undertaken within in them, however it should be shown that what is proposed will not be detrimental, and rather enhance the SSSI. Further details of how this is achieved can be found within the Design and Access Statement, as well as the supporting Planning Statement, Arboricultural and Ecology Reports.

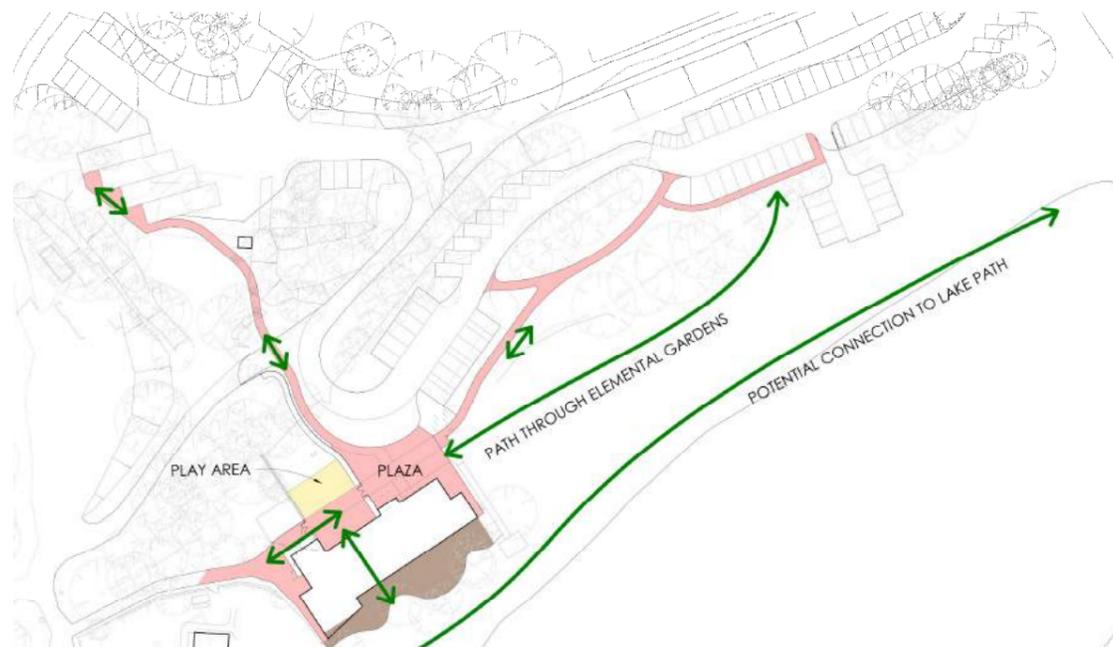
2.12, The land also falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, as such new development is also strictly controlled by local and national policy. Key to this is the openness of the Green Belt with certain development being considered inappropriate. There are exceptions to this including the extension or alteration of an existing buildings, please refer to the Planning Statement for further details. Careful consideration to this has been given to the scale of the scheme, which has actually resulted in a reduction in on site Gross External Area, Footprint and Built Form Volume in comparison to existing. Please refer to section 6.0 As such there is a strong argument that the openness of the Green Belt has been improved.



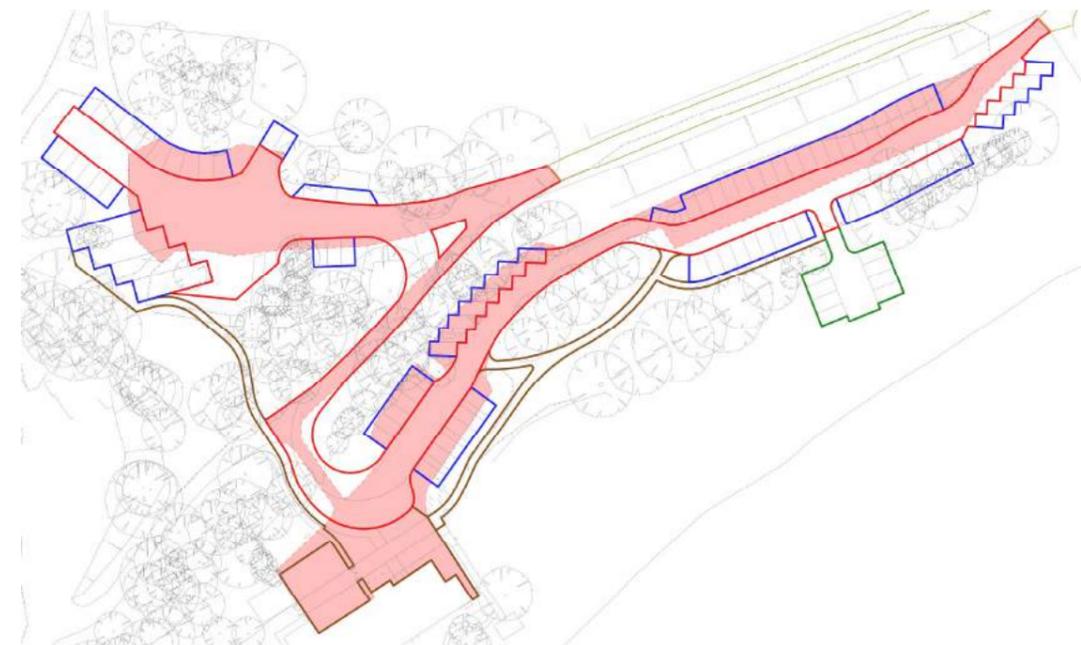
Initial Site Analysis Sketch



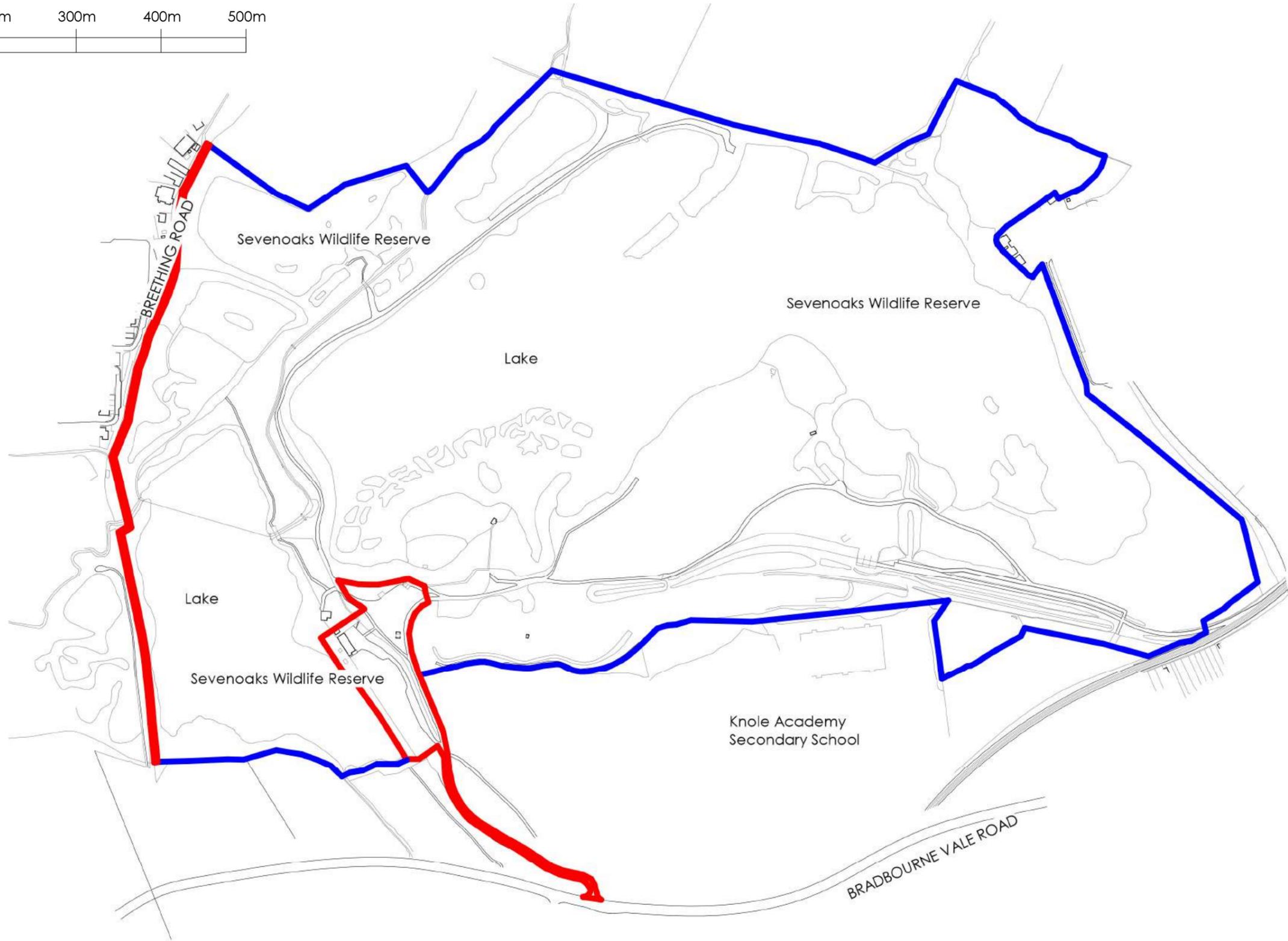
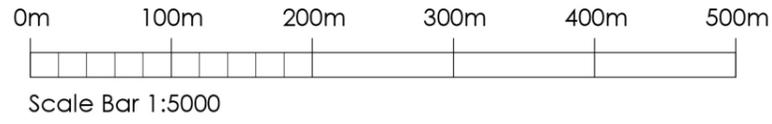
Initial concept sketch to show flow of traffic throughout site and new one way system



Initial concept sketch showing the plaza and Visitor Centre acting as a link for new paths / routes and access into the reserve



Initial concept sketch showing the parking areas overlaid with existing hardstanding areas



Site Location Plan, 1:5000



3.0 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1, Photograph looking towards the front of the existing Visitor Centre and the main entrance which is directly adjacent to the existing disabled car parking bays



Photo 2, Photograph looking towards the existing external toilet facilities, which are tucked away down the side of the centre.



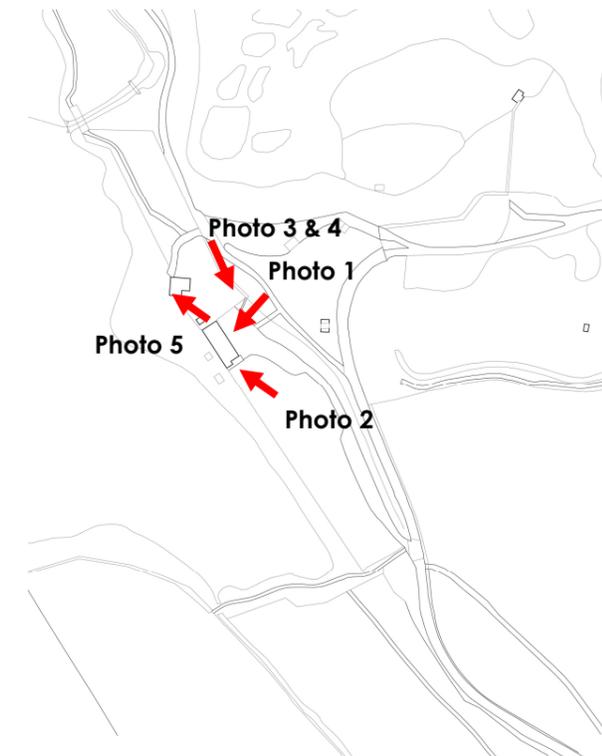
Photo 3, Photograph taken from one of the main routes into and out of the reserve with a metal container and adjacent lean too in the foreground.



Photo 4, Photograph looking towards the adjacent lean too, with this area gated off to prevent access.



Photo 5, Photograph of Oak Lodge to the north.



3.0 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 6, Photograph of one of the existing outbuildings. The anglers hut in this photo is to be retained, but converted to improve biodiversity.



Photo 7, Photograph looking towards existing outbuilding 7, which is to be removed to tidy up the sites appearance.



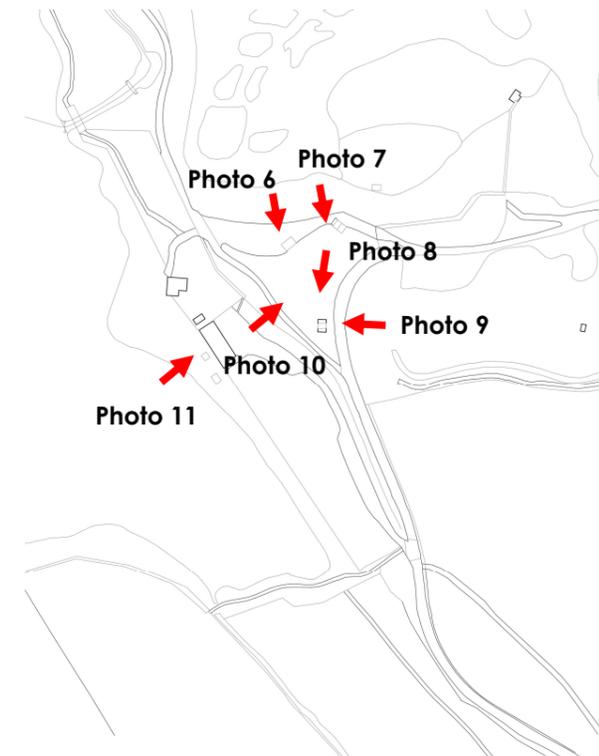
Photo 8, Photograph showing an existing clearing area that is to be utilised for the coach car parking.



Photo 9, Photograph looking towards outbuilding 9, which again is to be removed.



Photo 10 & 11, Photographs showing some smaller structures to be removed including some poor quality outdoor toilets and an existing storage shed to the rear of the centre. Note this area, which is visible to the wider reserve is used to store items and looks unkempt and messy



3.0 EXISTING SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 12, Photograph showing the existing picnic bench area adjacent to the Visitor Centre and hide ramp.



Photo 13, Photograph looking at the Elemental Gardens, which provides an attractive space with areas to improve biodiversity.



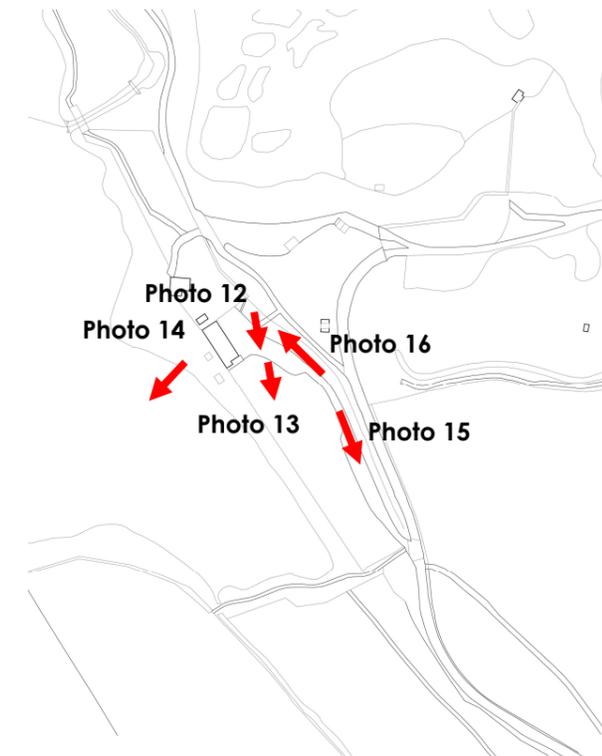
Photo 14, Photograph taken from the footpath adjacent to the western lake.



Photo 15, Photograph showing some of the existing car parking. This is informal and is not demarcated.



Photo 16, Photograph of the existing unattractive hardstanding area in front of the Visitor Centre with this space currently used for disabled parking and turning larger vehicles.



4.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

4.1, Access to the site is currently via an existing road that feeds off Bradbourne Vale Road and enters into the reserve along the southern boundary. The bottom section of this road is shared with the riding school who are situated much closer to the junction with the main highway. The reserve has had issues relating to car parking along this access route, which has created problems historically. As such new bollards have recently been installed to prevent unauthorised car parking along this road. A public right of way (SU1) runs adjacent to the western boundary with an existing track connecting this with the top most part of the access road, adjacent to the car park entrance. Car parking is provided within the site itself, this however is not demarcated and therefore the number vehicles that can be accommodated will vary, however the current layout allows for approximately 48no. car parking spaces.

4.2, It is proposed to refurbish and extend the current centre, as well as to demolish a number of existing poor quality outbuildings and structures, and remove a number of other large containers. As part of the scheme the road layout within the reserve is to be adjusted and dedicated car parking provision provided. This will be able to accommodate 87no. permanent car parking spaces, which includes 2no. parent and child spaces and 6no. disabled spaces, which are in close proximity to the Visitor Centre. An approximate additional 14 car parking spaces can be provided on the grass overspill area to the south, providing a total of 101 spaces. It is proposed to utilise these spaces if needed in dry weather.

4.3, Currently there are 6no. Secure cycle stands, which provide space for 12no. Cycles. These are to be retained as part of the proposed scheme.

4.4, Currently there are no dedicated disabled bays or coach parking spaces. As such coaches cannot park on site and disabled users need to park on the hardstanding in front of the centre. There is also no provision for motor bikes.

4.5, The proposed scheme will in contrast provide 4no. Coach parking spaces and 5no. Motor bike bays.

4.6, The parking provision has been designed in accordance with KCC Highways standards in terms of numbers and size. Further details can be found in the Transport Statement.

4.7, The whole reserve stretches to approximately 71 hectares, this is not to change as part of this scheme.

4.8, There are a number of existing outbuildings, containers and structures throughout the site. It is proposed to remove a number of these as part of the works. This will result in a reduction in on site Gross External Area (GEA), footprint and built form volume. This is all to the benefit of the wider SSSI and Green Belt. Further details are provided in 6.0, Scale.

4.9, The site currently attracts approximately 80,000 visitors. Its not expected that this will change significantly following the works. Further details can be found in the Planning Statement.

5.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

LAYOUT

5.1, The site is currently primarily accessed via an access road that is in part shared with the Bradbourne Riding school, which is located to the south. This is the only public vehicle access into the site. The layout of this is to remain as existing, however the surface which is in a poor state of repair and pot holed is to be repaired to enhance access. The existing crossover onto Bradbourne Vale Road is to remain unchanged.

5.2, Within the site, the adjusted road and car parking layout has been located in large part on top of existing hard landscaping, mitigating any encroachment onto unbuilt on land.

5.3, The access road currently splits off at the entrance to the reserve and incorporates the existing car parking spaces. Currently disabled spaces and turning for larger coaches is provided in front of the centre itself, however this area is not sufficient for purpose. There is also no space to park coaches on site, requiring any visiting coaches to leave only to return for pick up, doubling trip generation. A second road, which is gated connects the access road with an open area of hardstanding, that is not utilised to the north east of the centre.

5.4, It is proposed to connect these two roads and the current open space to the north east with two new hairpin turns. This will form a one way system that in large part utilises the existing road network and significantly improves access and movement throughout the site. During a pre-app with KCC Highways this approach was accepted by the officer.

5.5, 4no. new dedicated coach parking spaces are proposed which allows coaches to park on site, something that is not currently possible. As such this reduces the number of coach vehicle movements to and from the site, as highlighted further in the supporting Transport Statement. In addition, extra car parking spaces, including dedicated disabled and parent and child spaces and motor bike spaces are being provided. The existing secure cycle stands are being retained. It is proposed to provide a new canopy over a number of these spaces to provide some covered and secured cycle spaces. This in turn will help to encourage cycle use to the reserve.

5.6, A new entrance plaza will replace the existing expanse of tarmac hardstanding Infront of the Visitor Centre. This will provide a much more attractive and functional area that includes space for picnic tables, drop off and pick up, outdoor play and congregation / amenity spaces.

5.7, This new entrance plaza connects existing access footpaths with the entrance to the Visitor Centre, encouraging users to enter the building and interact with its exhibits. A new access footpath will also connect this entrance space with the coach parking area to the north east. This will be via a new timber boardwalk. New buggy storage is to be provided to the front of the centre, just off the plaza and under the existing covered canopy adjacent to the main entrance. This will make the centre more family friendly and adaptable, enhancing overall accessibility to all visitors. Positioning the new timber play area in this central location will create a safer outside space for families.

The new gates and fencing also help to encourage visitors to enter into the reserve via the Visitors Centre by guiding them to the plaza and then into the building. This in turn introduces them to the centres facilities as well as opportunities to educate them about the Kent Wildlife Trust and the reserve.

5.8, To the rear of the centre it is proposed to construct a modest, raised terrace that provides a small amount of outside space. This will be accessible externally as well as via the centre itself. This terrace provides external access to the centre's toilets, providing the flexibility for the Kent Wildlife Trust to keep this facility open for public use, when the centre is closed.

5.9, The proposals do not affect the layout of the wider reserve.

5.10, Within the visitor centre the internal spaces have been laid out so that all the accommodation is now located on the ground floor allowing the internal spaces to be vaulted. This creates a more open and inclusive building layout, where as at the moment some exhibits are on the first floor. Upon entering a visitor will step into the open shop/ reception area before progressing back into the reserve or onto the café / flexible space. The entrance space is also located close to the much improved toilet facilities, which includes an accessible WC and baby change.

5.11, Internally it is proposed to provide a play space. This is shown adjacent to the entrance, at the heart of the building so can be viewed and access easily from all areas. This will also look to take the opportunity to educate younger children about nature and the reserve.

5.12, Throughout the site and within the centre itself opportunities for interpretation and signage are to be provided. These will look to educate visitors on all aspects in relation to the reserve/ conservation etc. This will include a future piece of public art that might look to incorporate features relating to rain water harvesting/ grey water. This will be located to the front of the Visitors Centre.

5.13, Broadly throughout the site care has been taken to ensure that new built form / hardstanding is located in areas where there currently is existing form already. This therefore mitigates against harm to both the Green Belt and SSSI. This approach also has the benefit of avoiding any harm to the character of the site and wider views from public rights of way that would result from moving built form. Indeed CGI image 3 provided in 8.0 shows that from across the western lake the extension and alterations have an immaterial impact on the views into the site. Like wise this means that the proposals have no impact on amenity to neighbouring residential properties.

5.14, In addition, the location of new elements, as well as the removal of some existing built form has an ecological benefit. This has been a key consideration throughout the design process ensuring that the proposals result in a light touch on the existing landscaping, minimising the amount of clearance and excavations. The scheme also looks to enhance areas of re-wilding, planting, gabion walls for reptiles etc.

6.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

SCALE

6.1, Considering the site's context within the Green Belt, care has been taken with regards to the scale of the works. Indeed, the figures provided below clearly show that the modest extension to the building and the demolition of redundant buildings in the site represent a clear and significant improvement to the openness of the Green Belt in comparison to existing.

6.2, It is proposed to refurbish and extend the current centre, as well as to demolish a number of existing poor quality outbuildings and structures, and remove a number of other large containers. Further details are provided within the massing study on the proceeding pages. This shows that existing on site built form measures:

- Existing Volume: 2,614.64m³
- Existing Gross External Area (GEA) 671m²
- Existing Building Footprint: 591m²

6.3, As part of the works it is proposed to demolish a number of these existing structures, ultimately the proposed built form on site will measure:

- Proposed Volume: 2,483.03m³ **(5.0% REDUCTION IN VOLUME)**
- Proposed Gross External Area (GEA) 539m² **(19.7% REDUCTION IN GEA)**
- Proposed Building Footprint: 539m² **(8.8% REDUCTION IN FOOTPRINT)**

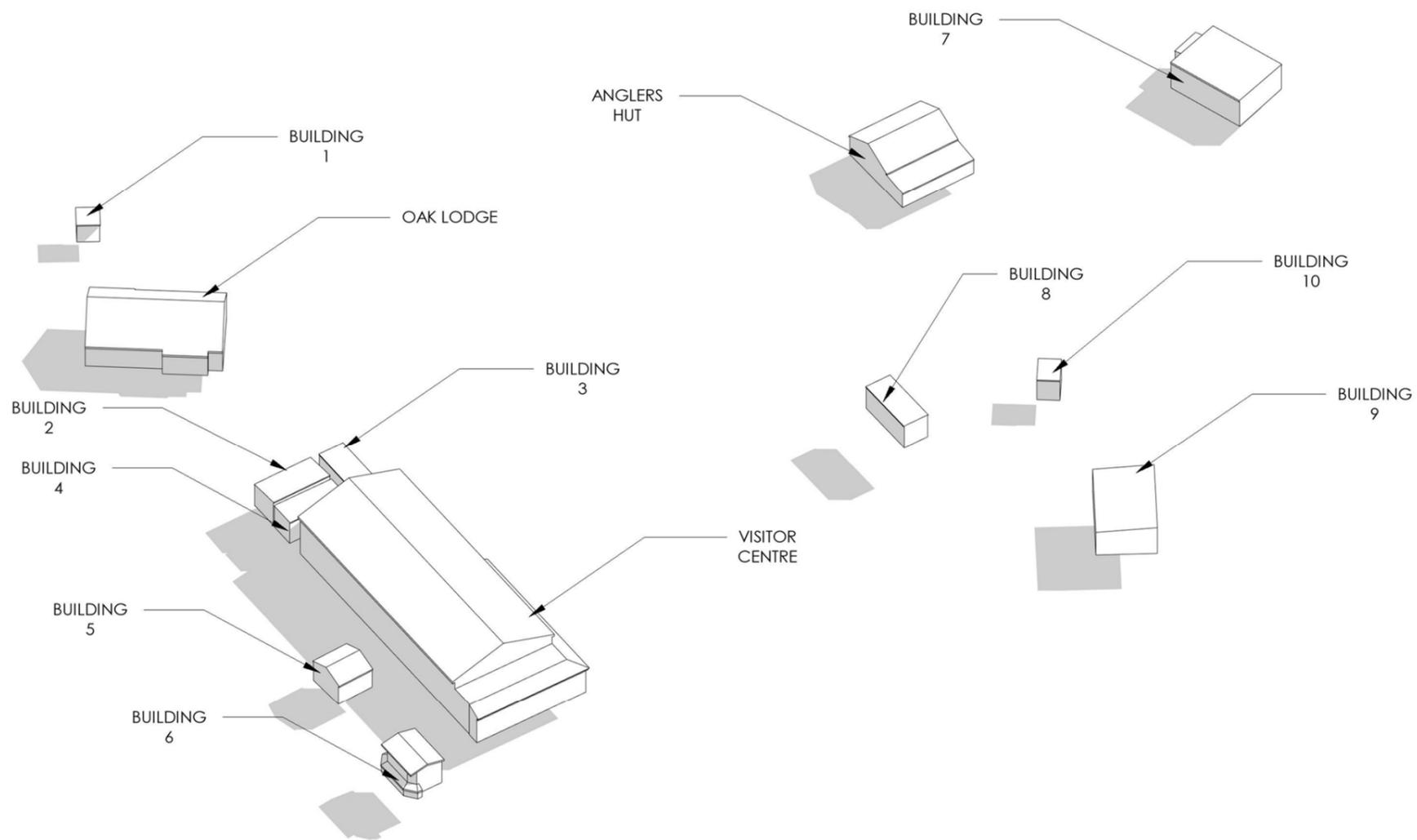
6.4, Clearly from a numerical perspective the proposals will result in a improvement in the openness of the Green Belt. There is a notable reduction in GEA due to the removal of the first floor, however even when considering the proposed footprint on site the scheme has a significant improvement, something that is to be encouraged.

6.5, Care has also been taken in terms of the design of the new extension. This has been developed so that it is single storey in height and subservient to the main original building, with this largely hidden by the existing mature landscaping. By also removing the spread out nature of some of the existing buildings the proposed scheme has the potential again to enhance the Green Belt by condensing the built form into a smaller, well screened area.

6.6, The scheme for the most part does not change the scale and bulk of the original building itself, albeit there will be alterations to the buildings fenestration and material finishes. Here the ridge and eaves lines will remain as will the form and massing of the main pitched roof. The only changes to the scale of this building will come from the new single storey side extension and the infilling of part of the existing covered canopy to accommodate the refuse and air source heat pumps.

6.7, The proposed CGI images, in particular image 3, which is seen from across the western lake, highlight how the proposals are almost entirely hidden from wider view. The use of natural materials on the Visitor Centre further enhance this and allow the building to sit comfortably in its surroundings.

EXISTING MASSING



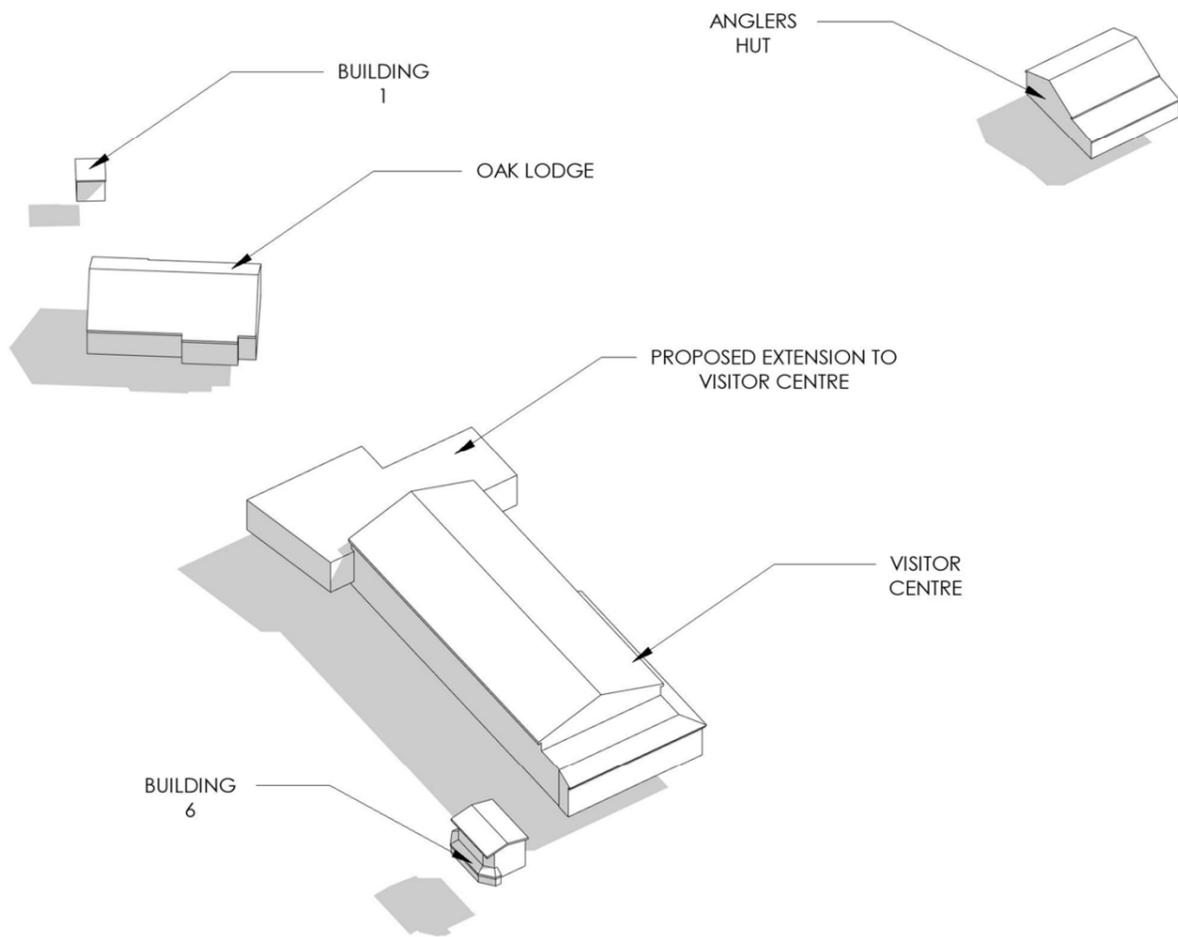
BUILDING	GROSS EXTERNAL AREA
ANGLERS HUT	60 m ²
BUILDING 1	4 m ²
BUILDING 2	17 m ²
BUILDING 3	15 m ²
BUILDING 4	15 m ²
BUILDING 5	13 m ²
BUILDING 6	14 m ²
BUILDING 7	48 m ²
BUILDING 8	14 m ²
BUILDING 9	42 m ²
BUILDING 10	5 m ²
OAK LODGE	82 m ²
VISITOR CENTRE	262 m ²
VISITOR CENTRE – FF	80 m ²
	671 m²

BUILDING	VOLUME
ANGLERS HUT	157.47 m ³
BUILDING 1	8.90 m ³
BUILDING 2	46.74 m ³
BUILDING 3	37.73 m ³
BUILDING 4	37.23 m ³
BUILDING 5	36.35 m ³
BUILDING 6	44.35 m ³
BUILDING 7	145.19 m ³
BUILDING 8	39.18 m ³
BUILDING 9	123.09 m ³
BUILDING 10	12.98 m ³
OAK LODGE	337.33 m ³
VISITOR CENTRE	1588.10 m ³
	2614.64 m³

BUILDING	FOOTPRINT
ANGLERS HUT	60 m ²
BUILDING 1	4 m ²
BUILDING 2	17 m ²
BUILDING 3	15 m ²
BUILDING 4	15 m ²
BUILDING 5	13 m ²
BUILDING 6	14 m ²
BUILDING 7	48 m ²
BUILDING 8	14 m ²
BUILDING 9	42 m ²
BUILDING 10	5 m ²
OAK LODGE	82 m ²
VISITOR CENTRE	262 m ²
	591 m²



PROPOSED MASSING



BUILDING	GROSS EXTERNAL AREA
ANGLERS HUT	60 m ²
BUILDING 1	4 m ²
BUILDING 6	14 m ²
OAK LODGE	82 m ²
VISITOR CENTRE	379 m ²
539 m² 19.7% REDUCTION	

BUILDING	VOLUME
ANGLERS HUT	157.47 m ³
BUILDING 1	8.90 m ³
BUILDING 6	44.35 m ³
OAK LODGE	337.33 m ³
VISITOR CENTRE	1934.98 m ³
2483.03 m³ 5.0% REDUCTION	

BUILDING	FOOTPRINT
ANGLERS HUT	60 m ²
BUILDING 1	4 m ²
BUILDING 6	14 m ²
OAK LODGE	82 m ²
VISITOR CENTRE	379 m ²
539 m² 8.8% REDUCTION	

7.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

LANDSCAPING

7.1, The significant majority of the reserve is to remain untouched as part of the planning proposals. The alterations that form part of this submission are largely located in and around the existing visitor centre, with this forming only a small part of the reserve.

7.2, The access road is also largely being retained as existing, however the surface is to be improved, with existing passing spaces retained, and a pedestrian demarcated route to be provided.

7.3, The existing roads are to be retained, with these being joined with new hair pin turns to form the new one vehicle way system through the site. This altered road layout also now accesses a clearing to the north east of the centre with this space now forming additional car and coach parking.

7.4, By retaining the existing roads and positioning new car parking bays largely on top of existing hardstanding the impact on the SSSI and Green Belt are minimised, responding to some of the comments raised during previous pre-application submission. This is further mitigated against through the specification of grass reinforced grid and mesh car parking bays, which allow grass to grow up in the bays themselves. This reduces the perceived extent of hardstanding and also has minimal impact on the ground in terms of construction works.

7.5, A large proportion of the site is located within the SSSI so the design and layout of the proposals, as discussed above, looks to work around the landscaping and existing built form. This has the result of there being a minimal number of trees being impacted as part of the works. The specification of a low impact car parking bay construction further helps to assist this. Additional details are provided within the supporting Arboricultural Report. In addition to this further native planting will be provided to enhance biodiversity and retain the existing landscaping.

7.6, The supporting Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey confirm that whilst a lot of the site is within an SSSI, a large number of the trees are category 'U' or 'C' value, and therefore of limited value. It is not proposed to remove any of the category 'B' or 'A' trees. As part of the works, new trees planting is proposed, including around the existing anglers car parking area. This works forms part of the Trusts continued management of the site, and looks to re-wild areas, which will result in improved biodiversity. This again looks to respond to comments from SDC in relation to net biodiversity gain.

7.7, New footpaths and walkways are proposed as part of the landscaping works. These largely connect the Visitor Centre and plaza, and therefore the main entrance to the reserve, with the car parking areas to the north and south. Primarily these will be in the form of woodchip paths, or a raised timber boardwalk.

7.8, In front of the Visitor Centre a new communal plaza space is proposed. This will act as a focal point for the external landscaping and will accommodate the drop off area, picnic benches, kids play area, and space to congregate. From here visitors will be able to enter into the reserve.

7.9, To help manage visitor flow and circulation through the site a limited amount of new fencing in the form of post and wire stock fencing, to match existing, and picket fencing around the plaza are proposed.

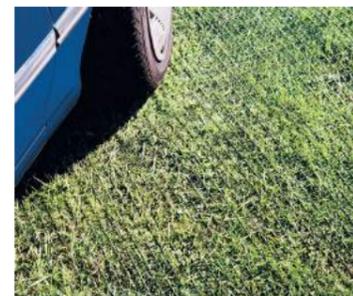
7.10, To the rear of the centre, a small raised timber terrace is proposed. This will be able to accommodate a small number of tables and will also provide external access to the toilets for park users.

7.11, Importantly within the reserve itself, the proposals will have no impact. This includes any impact on visual impact when looking back from wider views. CGI image 3 in particular as well as images 1 and 5, show how well the building sits within its landscaped context.

7.12, To control out of hours access into the site a new 5 bar gate is proposed on the 'In' access into the site. This will allow the reserve car parking to be shut off out of hours. A new one way traffic system with signage is proposed to the 'Out' access road, which allows any remaining vehicles to exit the site.

7.13, Currently there is an issue with unauthorised access and trespassing into the site, with this to a large extent occurring along the western boundary to the reserve. It is therefore proposed to construct a new security perimeter fence along the western boundary. This will be a 2m high black metal wire mesh fence which will blend seamlessly into the landscaped setting, whilst also helping to overcome the issue of unauthorised access.

7.14, The existing pond within the Elemental Gardens, to the south of the Visitor Centre, is to be retained. It is however to be refurbished as part of the works, helping to enhance biodiversity in the immediate areas.



Indicative landscaping materials, including grass reinforced grid/mesh (top) and the road/plaza finishes (bottom)



8.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

APPEARANCE

8.1, Currently the existing Visitor Centre is clad with dark timber cladding with dark roof tiles and dark brown windows and doors. Overall the structure has a dated appearance which is also in need of some updating. The uninspiring hard landscaping surrounding this also is detrimental to the overall quality of the building.

8.2, In addition to the hardstanding the poor quality existing outbuildings, along with the metal shipping containers, and areas of rubbish and external storage further detract from the quality of the Visitor Centre. The removal of such features is not only of benefit to the Green Belt, but also to the general appearance and setting of the building. Indeed this addresses the councils previous concerns relating to the additional paraphernalia within the site that would have resulted from the larger pre-app scheme.

8.3, The form and bulk of the existing building is to remain as existing with the wrap around covered canopy being retained also. The existing building will therefore be clearly distinguishable from the new, more contemporary single storey extension which is located to the northern flank elevation.

8.4, To enhance the existing building it is however proposed to reclad the exterior with new horizontal timber cladding, offering up the opportunity to also better insulate the main building structure. Whilst repairs and alterations are being proposed to the roof, this will be reclad with roof slates that look to freshen up and enhance the visual appeal of the existing structure. Details such as the new windows, doors and large barn door shutters, and contemporary detailing help to add interest to what is otherwise a fairly simple façade. The new glazing will also help to flood the internal spaces with light, creating a much more attractive and appealing interior, thereby reducing the amount of artificial lighting required, and as a consequence the buildings energy demand. In comparison to the existing building this results in a larger extent of glazing which can also now be opened up. This includes the large new glazed doors to the front and rear elevation as well as glazed doors to new extension.

8.5, The extension has been treated differently with a vertical timber cladding contrasting with the cladding to the main building. With its flat roof and parapet detail which gradually increases in height this will stand out as a contemporary addition, however which is subservient to the original building and which has a minimal impact in terms of scale.

8.6, Within the site the works will look to enhance the overall quality of the reserve, the most notable change being the amended road surface and demarcated parking bays. To be finished with grass reinforced grids or mesh, these will give the appearance of being green areas that have a lesser impact on the perceived openness of the site. In addition, this system has added benefits in terms of limiting works close to trees, something of benefit in the SSSI. This looks to respond to the councils concerns relating to the amount of additional hard surfaces and urbanisation as a result of increased parking provision. Indeed partial grass crete was suggested as an alternative option of hardstanding with the grass reinforced system being similar in nature. By positioning new car parking in similar locations as existing, it helps to mitigate against any impact on the character of the site through large continuous expanses of regular parking. The existing unattractive gas cylinder and its housing will also be removed, to aid the overall appearance of the site.

8.7, New elements in the landscaping will also be limited and entirely in keeping with the green nature of the reserve, this includes the timber board walk, woodchip footpath, post and wire fences, 5 bar gates etc.

8.8, Currently to the front of the Visitor Centre there is a large expanse of hardstanding with no real use, other than to provide periodic disabled car parking and coach turning. The immediate setting of the Visitor Centre will be notably enhanced through the new plaza area, with its drop off area, picnic benches, kids play area etc.

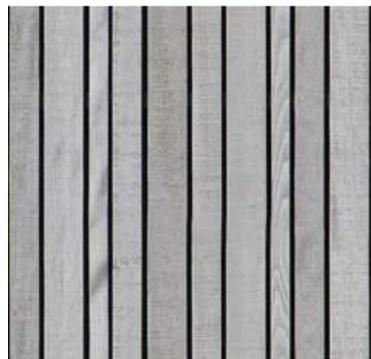
8.9, Similarly to the rear, a new terrace will replace what is currently a back of house area that has a messy appearance as a result of the detached timber outbuilding and numerous items stored externally. The works in this vicinity will however be minimal with the new terrace raised off of the ground.



FRONT (SOUTH) ELEVATION

1

Vertical timber cladding



2

Horizontal timber cladding



3

Roof slates



4

Grey roof lights



5

Grey UPVC windows and doors

6

Timber barn doors

7

Single ply flat roof

8

Black UPVC gutters and downpipes

9

Solar panels

10

Stainless steel sinks

11

Extract duct to match window colour



CGI 1, View of the Visitor Centre as seen from the south east and on the one way access road.



CGI 2, View of the Visitor Centre as seen from the north east, close to new footpath leading to the coach parking.



CGI 3, View of the Visitor Centre as seen from the south west, across the western lake.



CGI 4, View of the Visitor Centre as seen from the north, close to the main entry and exit into the reserve.



CGI 5, View of the Visitor Centre as seen from the north west, and from within the garden to Oak Lodge



CGI 6, Ariel view of the Visitor Centre as seen from the west

9.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

USE / ACCESS

9.1, The main entrance, including the vehicular entrance to the site is via the exiting access road that spurs off of Bradbourne Vale Road to the south. This is in part shared with the riding school, close to the main road. This is currently very pot holed and is a poor condition, that does not reflect the quality of the facility that the Trust are looking to create. It is proposed to improve this as part of the works to improve accessibility. This is also achieved by demarcating the existing passing areas where the road widens, and providing a pedestrian zone along its northern edge. The existing entrance crossover is to remain as existing. Please refer to the supporting Transport Statement for further details of this and the points discussed below.

9.2, Whilst there are secure cycle stands, the site does not provide dedicated disabled, child and parent spaces, coach and motor bike parking. Due to the site layout the only space to turn coaches on site is outside the visitor centre, with this raising health and safety issues as this is a main pedestrian access into the reserve. Any coaches that do come to the reserve then need to leave only to return to pick passengers up, as such doubling coach trip generation to and from site.

9.3, The proposed scheme will provide 87 permeant car parking spaces, which includes 6no. disabled spaces, 2no.child and parent spaces. An approximate additional 14 car parking spaces can be provided on the grass overspill area to the south, providing a total of 101 car spaces. It is proposed to utilise these spaces if needed in dry weather. 5no. Motor bike and 4no. Coach parking bays are also to be provided. These are in accordance with the numbers and sizes as set out in KCC design standards. This not only provides additional parking on site but results in a more rational layout, clearly set out and accessed via a new one way system. In addition it helps to enhance the overall accessibility of the centre and reserve for all users, which results in a more inclusive facility for the wider community.

9.4, The new one way system primarily utilised the two existing access roads which will be joined with new hair pin turns, which are sufficient to turn both coaches and refuse vehicles. This has a significant benefit to coach trip generation, as vehicles can now park on site, rather than having to leave only to return for pick up.

9.5, New footpaths are proposed connecting the parking areas with the new entrance plaza that feeds into the visitor centre and reserve. To the north a new timber board walk is proposed with this providing a pedestrian access route through the existing trees and over the banked area of landscaping.

9.6, Within the reserve the existing footpaths and landscaping will remain largely as existing.

9.7, As part of the design process a pre-app was undertaken with KCC Highways, at which the general principal of the scheme was accepted. For further details please refer to the Transport Statement.

9.8, The new scheme will be designed to be fully compliant with DDA and Building Regulations. This will include installing level thresholds and having all accommodation on a single floor, which is not currently the case. Hearing loops at the tills will also be included.

9.9, As discussed it is proposed to create a one way system for road traffic that enters the site via an 'In' point and exists via an 'Out' access point, both of which are located close to the existing entrance to the reserve. Out of hours access to the reserve will be controlled by closing a new gate to prevent access. Any vehicles that are in the reserve can still exit via a one way traffic flow system on the road surface. New signage will be installed to clearly identify the entrance and exit.

9.10, The buildings primary use is that of a Visitor Centre for the wider reserve. This is not going to change as part of this application. For further details please refer to the Planning Statement.

10.0 PROPOSED DESIGN STRATEGY

SUSTAINABILITY / BIODIVERSITY

10.1, Considering the status of the site as an SSSI, its use as a wildlife reserve and Kent Wildlife Trusts core ethos and ambitions, it is proposed to try and build sustainability into the scheme and maximise improvements to the existing building. As part of this its proposed to incorporate some of the features discussed below.

10.2, As part of this the existing fabric, which is not efficient and up to modern standards is to be upgraded to reduce demand for energy through an improvement building fabric.

10.3, In addition to improving the building envelope, it is proposed to install new renewable technologies that enhance its sustainable credentials. This will be a significant improvement over the current system which in part uses propane gas to fuel the building, with this stored in a tank to the rear of the centre.

10.4, It is proposed to utilise new Air Source Heat Pumps, which will be located in a new enclosure under the existing overhang to the southern side of the building. This will provide the heating for the building with this powering new heating units within the structure. In addition to these it is proposed to install 6no. Solar panels, which will provide renewable electricity to help reduce demand from the refurbished and extended building.

10.5, Grey water systems are to be utilised as part of the proposals to harvest waste water and again reduce the buildings footprint.

10.6, Within the site the scheme will take the opportunities to enhance biodiversity, with this in part being driven by the Kent Wildlife Trusts vision and management of the site.

10.7, It is proposed to re-wild a number of areas within the immediate surroundings with new native species, that are complimentary to the area. This in addition to refurbishing the existing pond within the Elemental Gardens to the south of the Visitor Centre, and the installation of a new low level gabion wall which will be adjacent to the new kids play area. This will provide an excellent habitat for reptiles considering the proximity to green space.

11.0 SUMMARY

11.1, Care has been taken to ensure that the proposed building sits comfortably within its context, indeed by looking to refurbish and extend the existing Visitor Centre any impact is very much minimal.

11.2, The openness of the Green Belt is a primary consideration, and therefore the scale, height, location and amount of any new built form and landscaping is a key factor. As shown the proposals will result in a reduction in Gross External Area, footprint and volume on site through the removal of existing structures and outbuildings. This therefore results in an improvement in the Green Belt openness, whilst also improving the setting and appearance of the site. This further achieved by designing the new extension as a single storey, flat roofed, subservient addition to the existing building which is to remain unchanged in terms of scale. The alterations in the landscaping have been designed so that their impact is as minimal as possible. This is achieved through the retention and use of existing access roads, retaining parking and hardstanding broadly where it currently exists and specifying a reinforced grass grid and mesh construction for the car parking bays. This also avoids the potential perceived urbanisation of the landscape.

11.3, The proposals have a minimal impact on the SSSI and existing trees within the site. As such the scheme results in a minimal impact on the landscape. Through continued landscaping management, which has been considered by the Kent Wildlife Trust and informs their ongoing plans, the site will also be rewilded in areas with additional tree planting, as shown on the proposed site layout plan. This is to the betterment of the overall biodiversity and arboricultural value of the site.

11.4, Due to the minimal extent of the proposals and their subservient nature, the character of the site and its wider setting will not be affected. Indeed the 3D perspective images show that from wider views the proposals have a negligible impact on the outlook and appearance of the site. This in turn confirms that the proposals won't affect neighbouring amenity due to the proximity of neighbouring properties and the retained mature landscaping.

11.5, The proposals will result in enhancements to highways and access. This is achieved through the construction of more demarcated car bays and the provision of dedicated disabled, child and parent and motor bike bays. In addition the construction of 4no. on site coach spaces and turning for these will result in a significant reduction in coach trip generation to and from the site. The improvements to the access road will also improve access for all users with the current surface being very pot holed.

11.6, Overall the proposals will look to enhance what has become a tired Visitor Centre and its surroundings, in order to provide a facility which is of benefit to not only to the site biodiversity value, but also to the wider community who can enjoy the natural environment and all the facilities that the proposals will provide.

APPENDIX A

SDC PRE-APP RESPONSE, REF: PA/19/00497

Savills
74 High Street
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 1JR

Tel No: 01732 227000
Ask for: Emma Gore
Email: dc.south@sevenoaks.gov.uk
My Ref: PA/19/00497
Your Ref:
Date: 21/04/2020

Dear Ms Robinson,

Pre-Application Advice Enquiry

Site: Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, KENT,
TN13 3DH

Development: New nature and wellbeing centre.

I refer to the information submitted on 23rd December 2019 for the above proposal and the meeting held on the 30/01/2020.

Purpose of this letter

This letter will provide feedback on your scheme and set out some key information that may be helpful to you when considering your proposal. You are advised to seek your own independent advice on the issues raised in this email, to help you understand how planning policy may have an impact on your proposal. Appended to this letter is further information and website links, to help you research the planning issues in more detail, before submitting an application.

Planning Assessment

Based on the information submitted, the main issues relevant to your proposals are considered below.

Principle of Development:

Policy LO1 states that development will be focused in existing settlements. The site is located outside of an existing settlement as it is located within the Green Belt. As such, priority is given to protecting the rural character of the District. Policy LO8 of the Core Strategy states that the extent of the Green Belt will be maintained and the countryside will be maintained.

Policy SP10 of the Core Strategy states that recreational facilities will exceptionally be allowed where replacement provision of at least equivalent value to the local community is provided.

Policy LT1 of the ADMP states that the benefits to the local economy will be recognised in considering proposals for tourist accommodation or facilities.

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF provides: 'Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity'. The Social objective of the NPPF seeks 'fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being'.

Due to the sites location within the Green Belt the principle of the development would be intrinsically linked to the consideration of the proposals impact to said designation.

The proposal would appear to provide facilities of a greater value than that which currently exists and the improvements and links to health and wellbeing may be considered positively when viewed against the Framework and local policies. However, the site is sensitively located in the Green Belt and an area of Scientific Interest and these will be the principle areas to be addressed.

Impact to the Green Belt:

As set out in paragraph 145 of the NPPF, new buildings in the Green Belt are inappropriate development, there are some exceptions. Paragraph 143 states that where a proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 144 of the NPPF advises we should give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Therefore, the harm in principle to the Green Belt remains even if there is no further harm to openness because of the development.

Openness is an essential characteristic of the Green Belt and is different from visual impact. Openness is about freedom from built form. Even if there is absence of harm to openness, there can be harm in principle to the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

Paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

'A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

(b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sports and 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’.

The proposal for a new nature and wellbeing centre would be considered to represent an appropriate facility in connection with outdoor recreation. However, the proposed facilities scale, bulk and mass would be significantly larger than the existing centre and would be located in an area free from any development.

The retention of the existing centre only emphasises the degree of built form in this location. The proposal would also add further hardstanding and paraphernalia to the site and result in the loss of vegetation. As such, it would be considered that the proposal may not preserve openness.

As a result, it is considered that were an application to be submitted it would fall for a case of very special circumstances under paragraph 143 and 144 of the NPPF to be considered.

As discussed above the proposal would create an improved tourist facility and visitor attraction, for which policies in the framework are widely supportive. As part of a well-constructed case of very special circumstances a business plan could be submitted highlighting the benefits of the proposal to the local economy and the need for improved and enlarged facilities which may have added health benefits.

It is noted a few of the smaller ancillary buildings would be demolished to support the application. However, the existing visitor centre would be retained. In order for the local planning authority to apply weight to supporting the application the existing centre could be removed. Sufficient justification for two buildings in the Green Belt does not appear evident.

While the design and style of the building has clearly been carefully considered to reduce visual impact, this on its own would not provide sufficient weight to consider the proposal acceptable. In connection with other information as discussed above it may contribute to justifying the development.

The significant additional hardstanding would result in a degree of urbanisation in this location. It is suggested that the materiality of the access and parking is reflective of the vegetated and green surrounds. Partial grass crete and rural style hard core would be a more appropriate choice.

As with any proposal which would require a case of very special circumstances to justify the development it would not be possible to provide guidance as to the likely success of the proposal. Any development would be considered on a balancing scale and must clearly outweigh the harm that would result in the public benefit in this instance which would be key to any consideration of the proposal. Any loss of unnecessary bulk and mass should be considered to aid in increasing the acceptability of the proposal.

Site of Special Scientific Interest:

The application site is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The citation broadly indicates that it was designated as such for:

- The group of lakes,
- Breeding and Wintering Bird populations,
- Extensive landscaping (including shallows, spits and islands),
- Trees
- Aquatic plant life

It should be noted that paragraph 177 of the NPPF states that:

‘The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitat site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site’.

Paragraph 175 ‘When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- (a) If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- (b) Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

The proposal would be located close to the water course and would result in the loss of a number of trees within the site. The site has primarily been designated a SSSI on the basis of the lakes, breeding birds and trees. The loss of this habitat and the presence of the built form in combination with the proposed uplift in visitor numbers would have an impact on the SSSI.

As part of any proposal a number of bodies would be consulted with the application including Natural England, Kent County Council Ecology and other wildlife bodies. It is clear that ecological scoping surveys and impact statements would be required as part of an application.

As the balance would favour refusal, in accord with the details provided above, it is important that the proposal results in an uplift to the ecology of the area. Mitigation and compensation would not be sufficient in this instance. Clear enhancements to the SSSI would be required to justify the proposal.

It is understood that the centre would serve a number of purposes including access to the wildlife centre. The overall loss of habitat is of concern, however it would be for external consultees to determine the extent of the harm and understand the

degree of enhancement to ensure compliance with the NPPF and policy SP11 of the Core Strategy.

Enhancements to the area could also work with the consideration of Very Special Circumstances for the impact to the Green Belt.

Impact to the Design and impact on the character of the area:

Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN1 of the ADMP state that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to and respect the character of the area in which it is situated.

The building has clearly been designed in light of the end use and through careful consideration of the natural environment. The use of materials, form and mass may be acceptable given they relate to the surroundings and seek to create better interaction with the wildlife and wider use of the site.

A Design Statement should be provided justifying the design, from the discussion in the meeting the use of toned lighting, internal spaces for calm reflection and overall design may aid in justifying the proposal and it's siting. As highlighted above the external canopies are an interesting addition to the centre but the additional bulk and mass may harm the open character of the site.

The impact of the design would be dependent upon wider views. A visual impact assessment could be submitted to draw out how the development would settle into its context. Views from the public realm including from the public right of way, views to the north from the open countryside adjacent to Dunton Green and the adjacent road to the south being the most prominent.

Impact to amenity:

Policy EN2 of the ADMP requires proposals to provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development. Development affecting neighbouring amenity cannot be fully assessed until an application is submitted and a site visit conducted.

The proposed siting of the improved ecology centre would be some distance from surrounding residential dwellings. As a result, the scale of the built form may not result in loss of daylight/sunlight, visual intrusion or loss of privacy to these properties. This largely due to the distance. It is recommend that open balconies do not have a wider view toward residential sites.

The distance between the proposed centre and residential units would be fairly considerable. However, increased visitor numbers may result in an uplift the associated noise with the site. It is unlikely due distance that this would have significant impact, but is worth considering particularly as increase in noise may have resultant impacts on the ecology of the area i.e. the breeding birds.

Parking and Highways Impact:

Policy EN1 states that all new development should provide satisfactory means of access for vehicles and pedestrians and provide adequate parking. Policy T2 of the ADMP states that vehicle parking provision, including cycle parking, in new non-residential developments should be made in accordance with advice by Kent County Council.

KCC Highway run their own pre-application service and it is advised that their advice is sought prior to any submission. As discussed, a travel plan would need to be submitted alongside any formal application to demonstrate existing and proposed vehicle movements and parking requirements. A few concerns arise with regard to the developments impact to the highway.

Firstly, given the proposed improvements to the centre and the perceived increase in footfall, the shared access from Bradbourne Vale Road (which is classified) and the riding school would need to be subject to improvements. Visibility for vehicles and pedestrians would need to be detailed on plan.

Secondly, the access road to the site is very narrow and informal. Given the proposal aims to increase visitor numbers, improvements to the access road would be required and likely need to include passing points. Any widening of the access could result in further harm to the biodiversity of the area through the loss of vegetation and additional hardstanding. As such, intervention required for highways policy needs to be justified and adequately mitigated for in accord with biodiversity policy.

The proposal would require additional parking. For guidance on the number of spaces required it may be worth reviewing the Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006 (Kent Vehicle Parking Standards). The aforementioned guidance is maximum standards and this should be taken into account. Cycle parking should be provided and it would be expected that the provision of electric vehicle charging points would be included. All of the proposed spaces and parking provisions should be detailed on plan.

The additional parking may require a further loss of habitat in the form of trees and additional hardstanding provided. The impact of this would need to be drawn out in ecology surveys provided as part of an application pack. It is suggested that non-traditional hardstanding is considered i.e. no tarmac but grass crete and minimal intervention considered.

As discussed in the meeting any additional uses considered for the site, such as markets need to be carefully considered. Further uses need to be detailed as any proposal would be tightly conditioned. Further use may have an impact on the highway that could trigger a larger impact on the road network and the ecology of the site.

It is strongly suggested that KCC highways are contacted prior to submission to fully consider the concerns highlighted above.

Trees and landscaping:

The trees on site are not protected by any Tree Preservation Orders and the site is not located in a Conservation Area. However, the trees make a valued contribution to the biodiversity of this Site of Special Scientific Interest. Any loss of trees would need to be justified. An application should be accompanied by a tree survey to identify the trees to be lost and how they would be replaced.

Area of Archaeological Potential:

The application site is located in an area of archaeological potential. The site did used to accommodate a quarry but has been subject to development. However, an assessment of the impact to the heritage of the site should be considered alongside the application.

The KCC Archaeological Officer would be consulted on any application, watching briefs and other heritage information may be required.

Public Right of Way:

The site is surrounded by a network of of Public Rights of Way which provide access to the outdoors and are well used. The main Public Right of Way is located to the west of the site. The distance from the proposed centre is likely to be sufficient to prevent interference with the right of way. However, views from the right of way should be carefully considered as they would provide the closest public view of the centre.

Conclusion

The proposal represents an interesting project with potential public benefit. However, the impact to the Green Belt would likely be considered inappropriate and could only be justified under a Case of Very Special Circumstances. The Case should draw upon not only comparisons to bulk and mass but also public benefit (health and wellbeing, tourist attraction and enhancements to ecology). A Business Report/plan may be needed to accompany the proposal to draw out the tangible benefits and Cleary justify the circumstances and need for the proposals.

The impact to the SSSI must result in an overall uplift in biodiversity specific to the reason for which the site was designated. Ecology reports need to cover not just mitigation but enhancements. Concerns with regard to the highway impact should be discussed with KCC Highways.

Please note that this letter is not intended to provide a comprehensive response of all issues which may be relevant. The advice refers to the issues we consider likely to be the most pertinent to the consideration of an application in the event of a submission along the lines presently proposed.

This advice is without prejudice to the decision making processes of the local planning authority and in no way prejudices any future determinations or decisions made by the local planning authority.

Please review the additional information attached to this letter.

Yours sincerely

Case Officer
Emma Gore

APPENDIX

Planning Policy and Constraints

The planning constraints listed below may be of particular relevance to your proposal:

- Metropolitan Green Belt
- Site of Special Scientific Interest - SSSI
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area
- Area of Archaeological Potential - AAP
- Public Rights of Way - PRoW

You can find further information on other constraints that may be relevant to your proposal, by using the interactive map on our website:

<https://maps.sevenoaks.gov.uk/planning/>

Both national and local planning policy will be relevant to your proposal, if a planning application is submitted for the site. You can review these policies on the following websites:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Sevenoaks District Council:

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20014/planning_policy

New Local Plan

Please note that Sevenoaks District Council is currently undergoing the process to adopt a new local plan. As such, dependent upon the time of any planning applications submission local policy considerations may have changed. Planning decisions will be based upon the adopted local policies at the time of the decision. The applicant is advised to review the proposed timetable for the adoption of the new local policies, please see link below:

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20014/planning_policy

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Please note under the terms of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), the Sevenoaks Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) may be chargeable on this development.

Applicants are recommended to take their own advice. For further information please see the planning portal website:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/howtoapply/whattosubmit/cil> and Sevenoaks District Council website:

<http://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/services/housing/planning/planning-applications/community-infrastructure-levy-cil>

Consideration of this pre application response

The information and advice in this letter is not intended to provide a comprehensive response of all issues which may be relevant, but intends to set out those which I consider likely to be most pertinent to the consideration of an application in the event of a submission along the lines presently proposed.

Please note that this response is given at officer level, does not constitute a formal response or decision and should not be considered as binding on the Council in the event of a consequent planning application.

I would recommend that you research all relevant policies and guidance, which may change over time, and consider how they apply to your proposal before submitting any planning application. You may also wish to discuss your proposals with adjoining properties prior to submission as the Council will notify them of the application and you may be able to address their concerns prior to submission.

As a final note, please be advised that Planning Validation Requirements and application forms can be found on the planning section of our website. You do not need to fill out the validation list, but it will help guide you as to what information should be submitted to ensure swift validation of your application.