

RHYDYGARTH, LLANDEFALLE, BRECON, LD3 0NR

RETENTION OF SHEPHERD'S HUT AND ASSOCIATED HARDSTANDING

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

Introduction

I have read and have regard to the Minister's letter of 11 October 2023, to Local Planning Authorities, this accompanying significant changes to Planning Policy Wales (and now formally published in Edition 12 of PPW) to recognise the importance of green infrastructure in protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

It is recognised in the new additions to Policy that the provisions encouraging positive engagement with nature and the opportunities that presents to enhance the environment are proportionate to the nature and scale of each development. That fact is reflected in the Statement below which is submitted notwithstanding the very modest scale and very positive objectives of the application/applicant.

Rhydygarth – Green Infrastructure Statement

Rhydygarth is set on a valley side well hidden from any significant development. It is not on a through route and is visited only by those with a purpose. Its setting is within a mosaic of unimproved fields used to support upland farming of sheep. The mosaic is marked by mature hedgerows and areas of scrub and mature woodland. The surrounding topography is of gentle slopes and hills with water running down into the valleys and ultimately into the River Wye some distance away.

There is an abundance of wildlife in the area surrounding Rhydygarth, small mammals, extensive birdlife and a profusion of tree species, hedgerow plants and field and meadow plants typical of the area and elevation. The owner/occupier of Rhydygarth is committed to working hand in hand with nature and has implemented a range of initiatives in and around the small brooks that run along the boundary of the property and withing the land in which Rhydygarth itself site with a view to enhancing biodiversity.

The proposal supported by this Statement is of a very modest nature involving a footprint of 20m² for the shepherd's hut on a porous hardstanding of (in total) less than 50m². The hut is served by a compost toilet and is otherwise of a deliberately 'low-impact' nature (no mains connections, TV or wi-fi) that attracts visitors keen to escape the intrusion that modern society offers. In practice, while not a scientifically-backed claim, it is likely that the effect of visitors temporarily vacating their normal 'urban' accommodation in favour of use of the hut is to offer a small contribution to reducing environmental impact.

The owner/occupier of Rhydygarth is confident that the ethos and delivery of low impact holiday accommodation chimes perfectly with aims and objectives now enshrined in PPW. Nevertheless, to further underline her own approach to biodiversity and as a sign of her commitment to the 'Green Infrastructure' drive, the application is also supported by a Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme.

Peter Weavers
February 2024