



Forestry England

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NYMNPA

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# Design Statement

## Clear Fell Interpretation Shelter

by  
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in partnership with Material Cultures

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# Clear Fell Shelter - Material Cultures

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## Design Statement - Clear Fell Shelter

### Background

Over recent years Forestry England and partners have invested heavily in Dalby Forest to develop the site into a regionally significant visitor attraction, which provides recreation facilities for a wide range of audiences. Visitor numbers have increased from 350,000 to 460,000 over the last 10 years. Interpretation of the landscape, wildlife, people and traditions is a key part of the offer to our visitors.

### Context

Dalby Forest deals with many topical subjects, such as climate change and biodiversity crisis and to many different forestry practices. In order to enhance interpretation and enjoyment by the public of these subjects within the context of the nation's forests, Forestry England is now working with Central Saint Martin's University of the Arts London, its students and Material Cultures, to create a new experimental shelter building near the Forest Eye in Dalby Forest.

As well as being a functional place in which to enjoy the view and shelter from inclement weather, the building itself is a teaching tool and an exemplary construction demonstrator project which is the culmination of Material Cultures' work on the [decarbonizing the construction economy in the North East and Yorkshire](#), and their ongoing research project [Constructive Land](#) which explores the future of forestry and farming and their relationship to the construction industry. For this Material Cultures are now partnering with Central St Martins and Forestry England.

The shelter fits very well with the theme of climate change of the Forest Eye feature in the landscape, which was planted by local school children to highlight climate change 100 days after COP26.

The shelter forms part of the Forests for Everyone programme of activities that improve accessibility in our nation's forests. It will be located just off an existing well used, easy access forest track.

The shelter forms part of the delivery of Forestry England's arts strategy for Dalby Forest, which aims to establish Dalby Forest as a destination for high quality art activities. These art activities are based on the landscape, people, heritage and wildlife of the forest and are used to engage our visitors more in the unique and interesting aspects of the forest.

The proposal complies with the Forest Management Plan for Dalby Forest.

### Location

The building is proposed to be located within the trees to the north east of the Forest Eye at the end of the track that cuts through the Forest Eye feature. That track runs from the visitor centre, via Go Ape as an existing circular route.

The existing path provides good access to the site which is already a fairly level forest track that provides wheelchair access, to ensure everyone can access arts in the countryside.



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Location of the Forest Eye with the arrow pointing to the proposed location of the Central Saint Martin's building.



The building will be located within the existing trees where it will blend into the landscape, whilst providing a frame for the view across the landscape to the south west.



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## Design

The building will be used as a site for learning, meeting and teaching about our British woodlands, and the particular ecologies and biodiversity supported by Dalby Forest, following on from COP26. The material palette will be entirely biobased and explores the impact of our plantation woodlands and the different construction materials which can be drawn from both British forests and farmland. Sited in Dalby Forest the building draws together timbers (ash and larch) compromised by climate change and the spread of disease from Dalby, insulation materials drawn from farming lands within Yorkshire (hemp and miscanthus) and works with processes of thermal modification for some of the cladding to ensure longevity and demonstrate the potential of lower-grade British construction timber in external applications. The building will also demonstrate the potential of modern methods of construction to make low carbon materials and buildings effective and affordable at scale.

Measuring approx. 7m by 7m in plan the building has a traditional A-framed timber structure, infilled with hemp-batt cassettes and clad with thermally modified timber. A recycled corrugated aluminium roof, chosen for the materials ability to be recycled again at the end-of-life of the building, will shed water from the steep pitch onto the ground. It is punctured by what looks like a chimney-stack, but in reality is an owl-box. Stones sourced from within Dalby will act as staddle stone foundations that can rest directly on the limestone bed of the plantation woodland, minimizing long term impact and enabling the structure to leave entirely no trace at its end-of-life. Timber framed windows either side of the structure and at the front of the building, will also be made of thermally modified ash and will offer views of the woodland from the floor of the classroom outward onto the Forest Eye. Internally the structure is lined again in untreated timber and the roof is lined in hazel coppice-wood from the forest. A small porch to the front is a place to perch and watch the trees.

Using materials manufactured within Yorkshire the project will also coincide with the launch of the new Biobased and Circular Construction Group formed by the York and North Yorkshire LEP and celebrates the burgeoning biobased material industries of the region."

## Measurements & Materials

### Structure

Height 7200 mm

Long 7200 mm

Wide 6928 mm

**Material** A-framed timber structure, infilled with hemp-batt cassettes and clad with thermally modified timber

**Roof** Recyclable corrugated aluminium

**Windows** Timber framed windows made of thermally modified Ash

**Visual impact from forest drive** no visual impact and the impact from the footpath is minimal with a glimpse of the building through trees.

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## Links to planning guidance

*The building links to the purposes for National Park Authorities:*

*- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park*

The Clear Fell Shelter promotes enjoyment of the materials produced by the forest for the timber industry in a contemporary way. The materials used in the construction of the building represent more natural and sustainable construction materials, used in a modern style. It will provide an opportunity to follow on from COP26 and talk about and interpret climate change, sustainability and the biodiversity crisis.

The Shelter will be located in such a way that the window frames a spectacular view over the North York Moors landscape, showcasing the variety of land-uses in the area.

*DEVELOPMENT POLICY 3 Design To maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park, development will be permitted where:*

- o The siting, orientation, layout and density preserves or enhances views into and out of the site, spaces about and between buildings and other features that contribute to the character and quality of the environment and will not result in the loss of an open space.*

The building aims to enhance the forest and enhance particular types of forestry practiced in Dalby Forest as well as other materials produced in Yorkshire and the North East. It is large enough to draw attention to it from the footpath and would provide shelter from the weather. It is small enough to sit comfortably in amongst the trees. The nature of the design allows the piece to blend into the landscape it sits in.

*The design takes account of the safety, security and access needs for all potential users of the development and provides car parking provision in line with the standards adopted by the Authority.*

The building will be located close to and already existing footpath. It aims to provide school groups and general visitors a new experience of the forest and a new learning opportunity about COP 26, sustainability and ecology. It is a short walk away from the Visitor Centre.

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## 3.2 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES 26 SECTION 3

For proposals within countryside locations, particular consideration should be given to:

- *the relationship between the proposed development and existing features in the landscape, such as ridges, valleys, woods, trees, streams, open moorland, field patterns and walls, when viewed from long or short distances. How does the development sit in the landscape, is it coastal, located in a flat landscape, nestled in a valley or on an estuary, on a slope, or on a ridge?*
- *the natural landscape features of a site, which should be incorporated into the layout and design of the proposal. Conserving a site's natural features can provide a stronger relationship between new development and its surrounding environment;*
- *viewpoints from which the development would be particularly prominent or which would be obscured.*
- *Look at the site from different vantage points to assess the likely impact on the surrounding landscape. Development should enhance rather than detract from a view;*

The Shelter will be located in an area next to the Forest Eye feature, that is already planted with trees in the shape of an Eye 100 days after COP26. This COP26 feature aims to highlight sustainability issues and the Forest Eye Shelter will provide a structure where visitors can learn about this in more detail whilst overlooking the landscape where they can see and learn about a variety of land uses.

The building will be located along an established footpath not far away from standard facilities (such as toilets and catering) at Low Dalby Visitor Centre and Courtyard.

This development is the first part of a programme to enhance the facilities in Dalby Forest to cater for the increasing number of visitors willing to explore the forest further whilst at the same time raising awareness of sustainable forestry and climate change.

Care is taken to locate the shelter in such a way that the visual impact is minimal, whilst at the same time it enhances the growth of the forest around it.