



Wordie House, Winter Island

65°15'S, 64°16'W Located in the Argentine Islands

Key features

- Historic British Base 'F', Wordie House
- Glacial scenery



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Wordie House stands on a very small, flat peninsula on Winter Island (part of the Argentine Islands and composed entirely of igneous rocks). The hut is surrounded by water to the immediate south. A narrow channel called Stella Creek separates Winter Island from Galindez Island on which Vernadsky Station is situated. The surrounding islands protect the site from the open sea and in summer the area is relatively clear of snow. A large permanent snow bank is found to the west of the base.

FAUNA

Although there is no breeding fauna, the following species are regularly sighted on the Island: Adélie penguins (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), blue-eyed shags (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*), Wilson's storm-petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*), south polar skuas (*Catharacta maccormicki*), kelp gulls (*Larus dominicanus*).

Regularly haul out: Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*).

FLORA

Rhizocarpon sp. and *Usnea Antarctica* lichens are present on the island. The moss *Polytrichum strictum* is also found.

OTHER

Base 'F' is designated as Historic Site and Monument No. 62 under the Antarctic Treaty. It was built in 1947 on the site of the earlier 1936 British Grahamland Expedition hut, which was swept away by a tidal wave. In addition to the building, there is also a rare timber sign which dates from 1947.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None known.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Fire. Minor fuel spills.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships* carrying 500 or fewer passengers (however, note visitor restrictions below). One ship at a time.

Maximum 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight), of which no more than 1 can carry over 200 passengers.

VISITORS

No more than 36 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. No more than 12 visitors are allowed inside the base at any one time **.

Base 'F' was proposed as HSM No 62 by the United Kingdom. The site is managed by the UK and the nearby Ukrainian station Vernadsky. Visits to the hut may only take place with prior permission given by a Party. The Party undertaking management of the site should also be informed prior to the visit. The key for the hut is held by the Vernadsky Base Commander. Where practicable, expedition leaders are requested to invite at least one member of the Vernadsky staff to come aboard the vessel to brief passengers and staff prior to any visit taking place.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The preferred site is on the south-east side of the island, immediately in front of the entrance to the hut.

CLOSED AREAS

None.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely under close supervision.

* A ship is defined as a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers.

** Visitors enter the base at their own risk and neither the UK authorities nor National Antarctic Scientific Centre, personnel from Vernadsky, nor the Ukraine authorities will be liable for any personal injury or damage to property that may be sustained.



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Visitor Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully. Give animals the right-of-way.
No overnight stays in the hut are allowed. The hut is available for educational visits and, except in emergency circumstances, should not be used for any other purpose.
Artefacts should not be handled or removed from the site. Do not sit on chairs or other furniture, or lay objects down on tables or work surfaces.
All boots and outdoor clothing should be cleaned of snow and grit before entering the building. All backpacks and large bags should be left outside the hut.
Loose gravel, mud and snow should be swept up after each visit.
Smoking and the use of candles, matches or stoves are prohibited in and around the hut.
A record of each visit should be left in the Visitors Book, located in the base.
Visitors are to leave the base safe and fully closed up on departure.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

The rocks at the landing site can be slippery when wet.



The hut seen from the north and showing the various different builds



The hut seen from the south showing how close it is built to the sea



The kitchen and the living and bunk room area beyond



Breathing apparatus and a stirrup pump hanging on the entrance porch wall

