



PROPOSED NEW VISITOR RECEPTION BUILDING AT WENTWORTH CASTLE GARDENS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (Including Planning Statement)

BACKGROUND

Wentworth Castle Gardens is a Grade I registered landscape, the only one of its kind in South Yorkshire. There are over 26 individually listed buildings and structures in the grounds and parkland. The site consists of over 60 acres of formal gardens and 500 acres of wider parkland. The main house and some of the surrounding buildings are owned by Northern College, which provides residential and community education for adults. The whole site lies within the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area.

The gardens, which were previously run by the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Heritage Trust, closed in 2017 as they were unable to make the business financially viable. The National Trust are entering into a lease agreement with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to run the site from summer 2019. In order to do this successfully a number of pre-opening works have been identified.

This application seeks consent for the construction of a Visitor Reception Building within existing car park at Wentworth Castle Gardens, including provision of access ramp and associated landscaping. It forms one of a series of applications due to be submitted for pre-opening works. These include:

Planning applications:

- Service trenching works through the site and installation of a new grease trap to serve the Long Barn

Listed building consent:

- Internal refit of long Barn to accommodate retail and catering facilities (ground floor). Repairs to the serpentine bridge and other estate walls and fences. Connections for IT purposes

Advertising consent:

- Alterations and additions to site signage

This application is supported by the following documents;

Heritage Statement

Planning Policy Statement – to consider green belt policy and heritage matters (Appendix 1 attached)

Ecology Statement

Plans and Elevations

Arboricultural Survey

PROPOSAL

Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Heritage Trust, utilised the Long Barn as their main visitor reception. This building was used as their reception, ticket issue point, shop and café. Master planning of the site has identified that in order to accommodate the increased number of visitors the NT are proposing, around 169,000 a year by year 10, the Long Barn needs to accommodate a larger catering space.

Therefore, the first phase of the masterplan is to design and construct a bespoke, new Visitor Reception Building in close proximity to the visitor car park to act as the gateway to the site. The NT wish to present Wentworth as one unified landscape, not just a visit to the gardens, but including the wider parkland. The new visitor reception building will present the site in this way by allowing access to the whole site.

The new visitor reception building will accommodate a pay point for non-members and provide a welcoming space to offer prospective and current members a personalised welcome as well as an area suitable for recruiting new members.

DESIGN

The proposal is to provide a simple building, of approx. 36m² that can be brought to site pre-fabricated and constructed within a short period of time. Due to the unique legal position and ambition to open the site within a very short period of time, pre-fabrication was felt as the only realistic way of achieving such a quick build.

The building will be constructed out of FSC approved timber, with horizontal timber cladding, a matt mid-grey roof and with window and doors on the north, south and west elevations. A veranda will be created at the front and back of the building to provide additional shelter. The entrance to the new building will be on the north façade and the exit on the south encouraging a flow through the building. The building will be fully accessible for wheelchair users and less ambulant visitors.

The building will be designed using materials sympathetic to the site and will be a simple functional building which reflects the agricultural nature of this part of the site. Additional landscaping will be necessary to separate visitors from the car park and also assist with controlling access to the site. The scale of the building will ensure that it does not dominate the site or obscure the view of the Home Farm and walled garden buildings.

SITE ACCESS

The existing car park was created from woodland in 2005. A new access road was also constructed across a field, to bring visitors in from Park Lane. The road alignment is set into the contours so that the crown of the road is no higher than the surrounding landscape. Constructing the new

access and parking areas required the felling of 158 trees. It provides parking for approximately 200 cars, but there is no spaces formally delineated within this area.

The car park is surrounded by mature woodland on its north and east range, an agricultural field to the east and the development of Wentworth Castle and associated buildings to the north, with the walled garden immediately above. The car park is a sloping site with the buildings to the north sitting at a higher level than the car park below.

The proposed location of the new Visitor Reception Building is within this car park. It is proposed to utilise the existing access road from the car park up to the property as the main visitor route into the property. The existing road is steep in places but still considered appropriate for access, ratio being around 1:7 up to 1:9 nearer the top. It is also proposed that the property will run a 'golf buggy' type vehicle from the visitor reception building to the Long Barn to assist visitors.

There is also an existing stepped access route from the car park up to the access road - this will be repaired and also available for visitors to use when exiting the visitor reception building.

Sitting the visitor building at the top of the car park, will allow it to be easily seen and accessed by visitors when entering the car park. Whilst its scale and design will ensure it is subservient to the main buildings on the site. The proposed site of the new building at the top of the car park also means there will be minimal loss of trees and hedges. Indeed the existing woodland surrounding the car park ensure the building will be screened from wider views in the Registered Park and Garden.

The car park is not delineated so we have assumed occupancy of around 170 spaces. The construction of the visitor reception building within the car park will reduce some of the parking spaces, approximately 5 spaces. However, it is proposed to now try to improve parking by installing a post and rail fence line which will help delineate spaces in the hope visitors' park more efficiently.

PLANNING POLICY SUMMARY

The proposed development lies within the Green Belt. As such the National Planning Policy Framework (2018) para 143 to 146 are relevant. This has been considered when looking at the functionality of the site and also the design of the building.

This area of the Green Belt has already been developed with the construction of a new access road and visitor car park. This was approved under application B/05/0437/PR and was considered in the context of the special circumstances of the proposals. These were considered to be to renovate and open up the Historic Parkland and Listed Buildings to visitors and tourism. It was considered that any potential negative impact that the car park and access drive could have was minimal compared to the

potential benefits of opening up the site to visitors by constructing the car park.

The proposal to now include a visitor reception building on the car park allows the Trust to open up Wentworth Castle Gardens to the public once again.

Also by proposing to locate the building in the car park, an area that has already been developed, there is no impact on the rest of the site. It is considered that this development will have little impact on the openness of the site, with the building size being minimal and height limited to reduce any impact on the listed buildings. It can be considered as infill development of a site in green belt and also providing appropriate facilities to support the outdoor recreation role of the property. Notwithstanding this, very special circumstances exist to support the proposal through supporting the future of heritage assets in this location.

A planning policy statement is appended to this Design and Access Statement to consider the policy issues arising from the development in further detail. This sets out how the proposal is considered to be consistent with national advice in respect of green belt development. It also considers the conclusions of the Heritage Statement in respect of NPPF assessment of impacts on heritage assets to conclude that there is minimal impacts on the heritage assets.

SUSTAINABILITY

The prefabricated building has been selected for its sustainability credentials and thermal efficiency. The pods are clad with horizontal Siberian larch cladding as standard, which is very durable and has a lifespan of at least 40 years when untreated. The timber cladding in conjunction with the matt mid-grey roof and window frames ensures the building respects the surrounding landscape.

The external walls are highly insulated structural timber of 240mm thick, incorporating vented cavities and the latest technology in waterproof membranes to prevent cold bridging. The insulation levels in the floor are consistent with the rest of the building and use waterproof membranes and vapour barriers. The windows and doors are standard are Scandinavian with high efficiency sealed unit dual pane low-E glass.

For the windows, doors and cladding timber that is FSC and PEFC certified will be used. The window units are high efficiency double glazing units with powder coated frames.

An air source heat pump will be installed to provide comfort heating to the occupants. This renewable energy technology will efficiently heat the building by absorbing heat from the outside air and transferring it internally as useable heat.

ECOLOGY

It is believed that the siting of the building within the already established car park will have little impact on the ecology of the area. There is a need to remove 3 young trees and 2 older trees to accommodate the new building but this will be mitigated by additional planting on the site that is planned over the next few years as we promote and improve the parkland. A full arboricultural report is included in this submission and supports the removal of these trees.

Wentworth Castle Gardens has areas within Local Wildlife Site no. 22 Stainborough Park – extract below:

“The estate itself has considerable ecological value which has been recorded and documented in recent years. It includes two non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (Stainborough Park and Rockley Woods) with 13% of the park designated for high nature conservation value within Barnsley District. Several Habitat Action Plans listed in the 2008 Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) apply to habitats on the estate and several species recorded on the estate have Species Action Plans including great crested newts and bats.

A key goal in the Barnsley BAP is to use the parkland project as an exemplar to promote the potential of restoring historic parklands for wildlife. Trail guides and other information are available for this site and there is opportunity to include appreciation of its wildlife in a visit to the historic park and gardens. Stainborough Park makes an excellent and memorable backdrop against which to view local wildlife.”

The Car Park area where it is proposed to site the new visitor reception building is outside of this Local Wildlife Area designation. Additional surveys of the site will be commissioned to further understand the wildlife populations on the site. This information will help form our conservation management plans moving forward.

The National Trust is committed to ensuring the parkland is re-opened for visitors to enjoy and learn about the wildlife on the site. The visitor reception building will give us a base to tell our visitors about the parkland and wildlife, and explain the importance of the site.

An additional ecology impact survey is included as part of this application and concludes that the proposals have minimal impact to the ecology of the site.

ARCHAEOLOGY

It is noted that previous planning permissions on this site have requested archaeological watching briefs and it is assumed, if planning is granted, the visitor reception building will also require such.

Our internal archaeologist has been brokered for the project and will provide a full watching brief during the foundation excavations. The potential impact of the preopening works on any archaeology has been assessed in the Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment, which is included in this submission. This report concludes that there is minimum impact on archaeology in this proposal.

BUILDING ACCESS

The design of the new visitor reception building will be fully DDA compliant for both visitors and staff.

Due to the topography of the site some landscaping work will be needed. The building will sit into the hillside in order to achieve level access and to be subservient to the existing site.

CONCLUSION

The proposed addition of a visitor reception building will help the National Trust re-open Wentworth for the enjoyment of the public. The building will provide a 'welcome' focal point for visitors, encouraging new visitors to explore the site and keep existing members up to date with activities on the site.

The future of Wentworth very much focuses on increasing visitor numbers to the site. The Long Barn needs to accommodate this increase in visitor numbers by providing a larger food and beverage area. Thus the reception needs relocating.

By relocating the reception to the car park it also allows the wider estate to be used by visitors. The car park was approved under special circumstances and this proposal could also be considered in the same way or as an infill development within the already developed area of green belt.

The subservient design of the building will not detract from the existing buildings and surroundings. The material choices will allow the building to blend into the setting, it will be of an operationally efficient design to welcome the proposed number of visitors in a pleasant manor.

The new welcome building will help the National Trust to open Wentworth to more visitors and allow it to run as a successful venture. This will in turn allow the Trust to invest in the repair and maintenance of all the various listed and historic building, structures, monuments and gardens of the site. Opening up Wentworth Castle Gardens including the wider estate will ensure it is preserved and enjoyed by future generations.

APPENDIX 1

Wentworth Castle Gardens Planning Application Planning Policy Statement

Planning policy considerations

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

In this case the Statutory Development Plan comprises the Barnsley LDF Core Strategy (Adopted September 2011), the Barnsley Education Sites Development Plan Document (Adopted January 2009), the Joint Waste Plan (Adopted March 2012) and the remaining saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (Adopted December 2000; policies saved September 2007).

Barnsley MBC is currently producing a Local Plan which will replace the Core Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan. The emerging Local Plan is at an advanced stage and a consultation on Main Modifications to the plan took place in July / August 2018. The timescale for the adoption of the Local Plan is yet to be confirmed, however adoption is anticipated for late 2018.

If the plan gets adopted whilst this planning application is being considered, we will review the newly adopted policies of the Local Plan.

Material considerations in this proposal comprise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) together with any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF which was revised in July 2018 has reinforced that there are three overarching objectives for the planning system. These are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways; an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. At the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).

Section 6 of the NPPF promotes support for a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 83 supports sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas and specifically supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure development which respect the character of the countryside. It is considered that the proposals are consistent with this guidance.

Section 12 seeks to achieve well-designed places and recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 124). In accordance with paragraph 127 (b) planning decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. It is considered that the scheme is consistent with this advice. It is also considered that the proposal complies with paragraph 127 (c) as it is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Section 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land. In accordance with paragraph 145; the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, unless it is considered an exception (as listed). Part g) permits limited infilling at previously developed sites providing there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. There is no doubt that Wentworth Castle and gardens constitutes a previously developed site.

However we note that Part (b) also includes the following exception:

“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor 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”

We consider that the proposed development can fall to be considered as an appropriate facility supporting the outdoor recreation role of the site; given that the proposals will facilitate opportunities for members of the public to enjoy the Castle Gardens.

The Visitor Reception Building is a small-scale pre-fabricated building which is to be located on previously developed land of an existing car park. The car park is screened by mature trees on most sides and as such should not be visible from the surrounding park.

The proposals are relatively modest in nature and therefore will continue to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

It is considered that the proposals will continue to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Therefore, we consider the building to constitute appropriate development in the Green Belt under paragraph 145. However, if the council considers otherwise then there are very special circumstances to further justify the proposals.

Very special circumstances are demonstrated as the proposed VRB will support the future of the heritage assets in this location and allows the property to be opened up to the public once again.

There are significant public benefits in facilitating the re-opening the site. It is also consistent with NPPF guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Whilst the NPPF is clear on its protection of the Green Belt and the prevention of inappropriate development, at the same time it recognises the need to plan positively for its use. In particular:

(Para 141) *Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.*

The proposals seek to enhance the attractiveness of the property for this use.

Paragraphs 193 – 202 of the NPPF relate to considering potential impacts of a proposed development on heritage assets. The Heritage Statement concludes that that the planned works do represent a number of small impacts on specific aspects of heritage value that can be identified.

Introduction of the visitor reception building will represent long term change, albeit reversible, within the RPG. It will alter views within the car park (themselves only recently established) and the view of the terraced slips below Shed Lane. However, the car park is screened by mature tree cover on most sides and the new building should not be visible from many other parts of the park.

The risk of heritage impact is therefore assessed as low, and the impact as being Some.

Installation of this building will serve providing public access to the property, and therefore be a beneficial impact to social/communal heritage value.

The HIA considers that that these impacts are measured and proportionate, more than compensated for by the broader public benefits of facilitating reopening of the site, which cannot be achieved without these interventions.

With regard to any potential impact on any archaeological resource the The probability of encountering significant archaeology here would appear to be low, based on understanding of the site's development. Archaeological mitigation will also be conducted with a proposed full archaeological watching brief to be conducted during excavations.

Paragraph 196 advises that where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

In this case the National Trust considers the public benefits of facilitating re-opening the site, which cannot be achieved without these interventions outweighs a small number of impacts on specific aspects of heritage value.

The NPPF [Paragraph 170] also requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment; one measure is by protecting and enhancing 'valued landscapes', sites of biodiversity or geological value. There is no doubt that a designated Registered Park and Garden of Grade I forms a valued landscape in our opinion. The proposals contribute directly therefore towards protection of this important landscape.

The Planning Practice Guidance

The Guidance was published as a web based resource in 2014. It outlines that protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the NPPF's drive to achieve sustainable development.

The PPG also explains that any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the NPPF and the Local Plan. [Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20140306]. The PPG advice is that Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. [Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 18a-009-20140306] the PPG is therefore a further material consideration to be taken into account in the assessment of the proposals.

Local Policy

Designations

The site includes the following designations;

- Green Belt
- Wentworth Castle garden and Park, Grade I registered park and garden
- The Long Barn, Serpentine Bridge and St James' Church are Grade II Listed Buildings and The Gun Room is a Grade II* Listed Building
- Wentworth Castle (Grade I Listed Building)
- Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area
- Part of the site lies within Stainborough Park Local Wildlife Site

Policies

The following local policies are considered relevant to the proposal and have been assessed accordingly;

Barnsley LDF Core Strategy (Adopted September 2011)

The proposals at Wentworth Castle Gardens comply with Council policies to promote tourism; the proposals seek to safeguard, sustain and promote the existing cultural provision and tourism offer in the District [**Policy CSP 20**]. They will also encourage the growth of the tourism business sector. In accordance with the policy, tourism related development in rural areas is encouraged where it supports and diversify the local economy.

In accordance with **Policy CSP21**, the proposals at Wentworth Castle Gardens seek to encourage a viable rural economy and allowing small-scale development in this area will result in the growth of an existing business that is related to tourism and recreation. We consider that the proposals are of a scale proportionate to the area and do not have a harmful impact on the countryside, biodiversity, Green Belt or landscape character of the area.

The site is located within the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area, there are a number of listed buildings on site including Wentworth Castle itself which is Grade I listed and it is within the Grade I listed Registered Park and Garden. In accordance with **Policy CSP 30**, the proposals seek to achieve the management, conservation and enjoyment of this heritage environment. They seek to make the most of these heritage assets by allowing public access to the property and enhancing its social / communal heritage value.

Wentworth Castle Gardens are located within the Historic Landscape Corridor of Barnsley's Green Infrastructure network. We consider that the proposals being put forward will protect and maintain the Green Infrastructure network in this location by being able to secure the future of the Castle Gardens. In turn this will achieve a number of the objectives set out in **Policy CSP 33**; including enhancing the quality of life for present and future residents and visitors, improving opportunities for recreation and tourism, respecting local distinctiveness and historical and cultural heritage and maximising potential economic and social benefits.

The site is located within the designated Green Belt as shown on the Core Strategy Key Diagram. It is not considered that the proposals will affect the extent of the Green Belt in accordance with **Policy CSP 34**. Further justification for development within the Green Belt has been provided above with regard to the NPPF.

The Stainborough Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) covers a large part of the historical parkland and ornamental gardens of the Wentworth Castle estate. However, for this application the LWS is unaffected. The LWS contains a number of important species and as such an Ecology Statement is included with the application. The car park area where the Visitor Reception Building is proposed is not within the boundary of the LWS.

Barnsley UDP (Adopted December 2000) Saved Policies

Policy WR13 (Nature Conservation Sites) is a saved policy and in accordance with **Policy GS15** identifies sites that will be safeguarded from development which would cause disturbance, pollution and other damage. Stainborough Park (WR13/22) is listed as a Natural Heritage Site, as follows;

“The site covers areas of formal gardens and parkland but includes habitats of mixed woodland, grassland, marsh and standing water. It is the most important site in the Borough for reptiles and amphibians and supports a wide range of fauna, including important bird species and bats.”

We do not consider that any of the proposals put forward will cause disturbance, pollution or other damage to the site. The Ecology Statement included with the application provides further information on this aspect.

Policy WR14 states that in accordance with **Policy GS25** the listed sites of boroughwide significance will be protected from development which would impair their availability, accessibility and particularly qualities, Stainborough Park (WR14/2) is listed as follows;

“This area is concentrated around Wentworth Castle, a large, mainly Georgian Country House presently used as a centre for further education and training. It includes a Rhododendron garden, extensive parkland and disused ornamental ponds. It is the Council's aim to promote and enhance the area as a Country Park whilst preserving the special intimate character of its Rhododendron Garden and the setting of the House.”

We consider that the proposals being put forward and the wider aims of the project are fundamentally seeking to promote and enhance this area for the enjoyment of members of the public and the proposals are aiming to improve the availability and accessibility of the Castle Gardens by allowing them to reopen.

Barnsley Local Plan Publication Draft (2016)

Whilst the Local Plan is not yet adopted, the emerging Local Plan does recognise the significance of Wentworth Castle parkland being the only grade I Registered Park and Garden in South Yorkshire (**Policy HE1** The Historic Environment).

The draft policy supports proposals which conserve and enhance the significance of the borough's heritage assets, which are listed and include Wentworth Castle parkland and designated conservation areas of special and architectural interest including Stainborough Park. The proposals are therefore consistent with emerging policy framework.

Conclusion

The NPPF at Paragraph 11 advises that in decision taking Local Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan '*without delay*'.

The proposals accord with national policy in respect of protecting and enhancing the historic environment and the proposals support the reopening Wentworth Castle Gardens to the public; its designed landscape and the buildings and structures within the landscape, improve visitor experience and help provide a sustainable footing for the future.

With this in mind it is felt that the proposals within this application are justified within the context of the planning policy and guidelines for the green belt and that protecting and enhancing the historic environment.