



# **Wentworth Castle Gardens**

## **Walled Garden Security Improvements**

**Design and Access Statement  
with Heritage Impact Assessment**

**November 2025**

**The National Trust  
Goddards  
27 Tadcaster Road  
Dringhouses  
York  
YO24 1GG**

## 1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support an application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the Walled Garden Security Improvements at Wentworth Castle Gardens.

The proposal involves the replacement of existing steel mesh gates to the west gate entrance of the walled garden and the provision of retractable steel bollards on the outside of both the west and north gate entrances.

This document should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents submitted as part of the application.

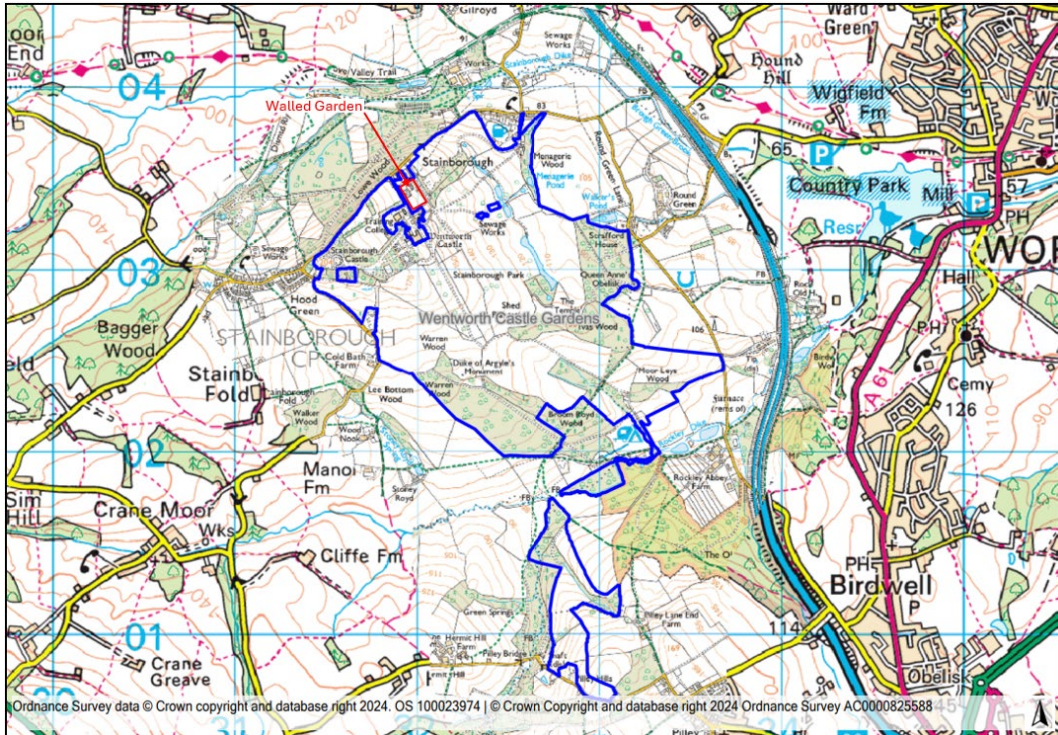
### 1.1 The National Trust & Wentworth Castle Gardens

The National Trust is one of the country's largest conservation organisations, with a responsibility for managing and protecting some of the most beautiful, historically important, and environmentally sensitive places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

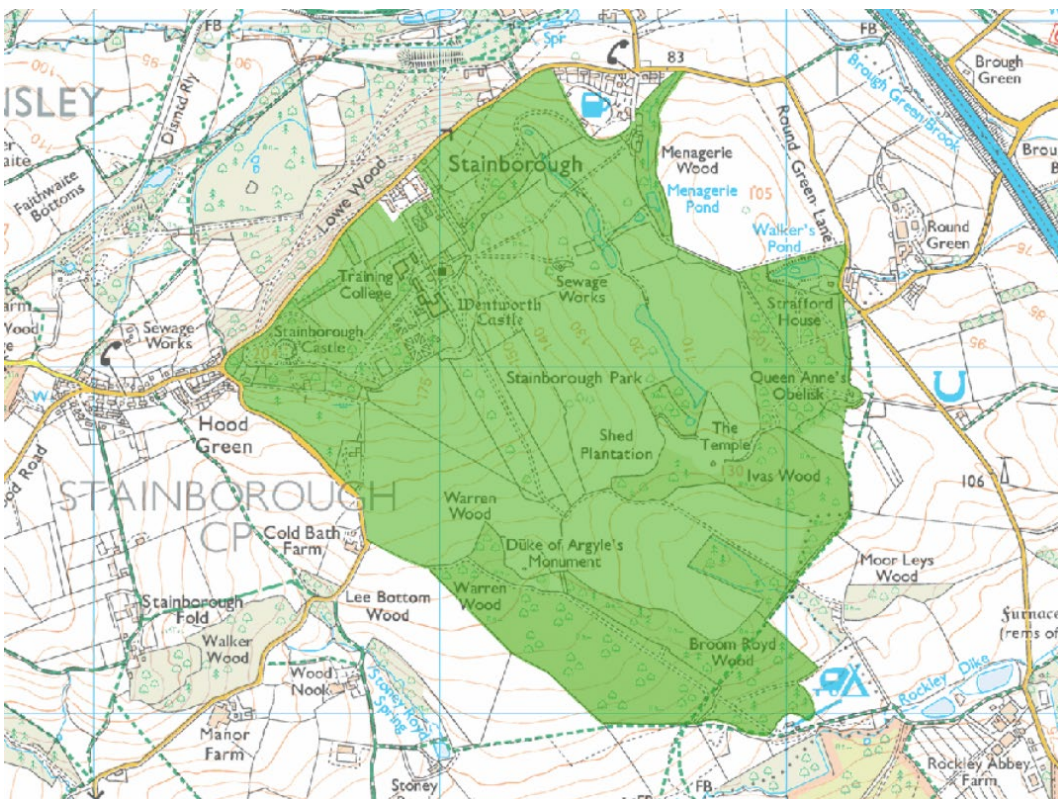
Wentworth Castle Gardens and Stainborough Park is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden (RPG NHL 1000451), the only one of its kind in South Yorkshire. The property also lies within the designated Wentworth and Stainborough Park Conservation Area and within the green belt. The site consists of over 60 acres of formal gardens and 500 acres of wider parkland, the majority of which are open to the public. Within this sit over 26 individually listed buildings and structures in the grounds and parkland.

The National Trust holds a 25 year repairing lease on the majority of the formal gardens and parkland including the conservatory, orangery and walled garden among others. The principal building on the site, Wentworth Castle, and several buildings immediately surround it are owned and managed by Northern College, a residential adult education college.

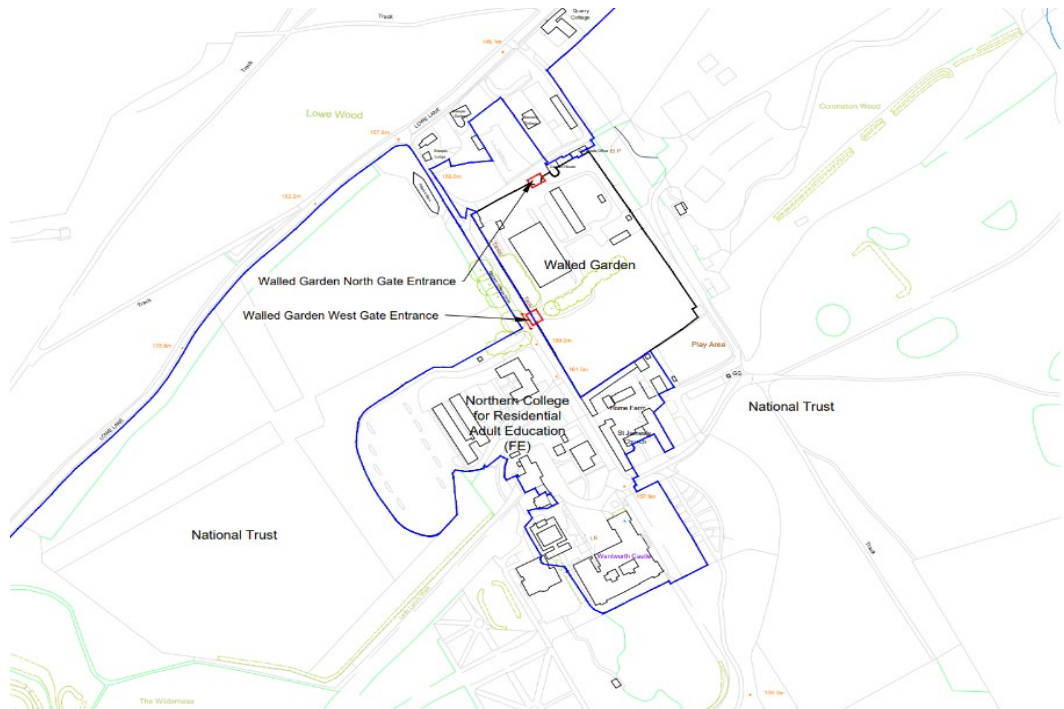
The Walled Gardens are located toward the north boundary of the site, approximately 100m north of Wentworth Castle and 80m south of Lowe Lane. The site's location and the location of heritage assets are identified below. The garden walls are unlisted but there are a number of heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposal. The sites' location and the location of the works and heritage assets are identified in the figures that follow.



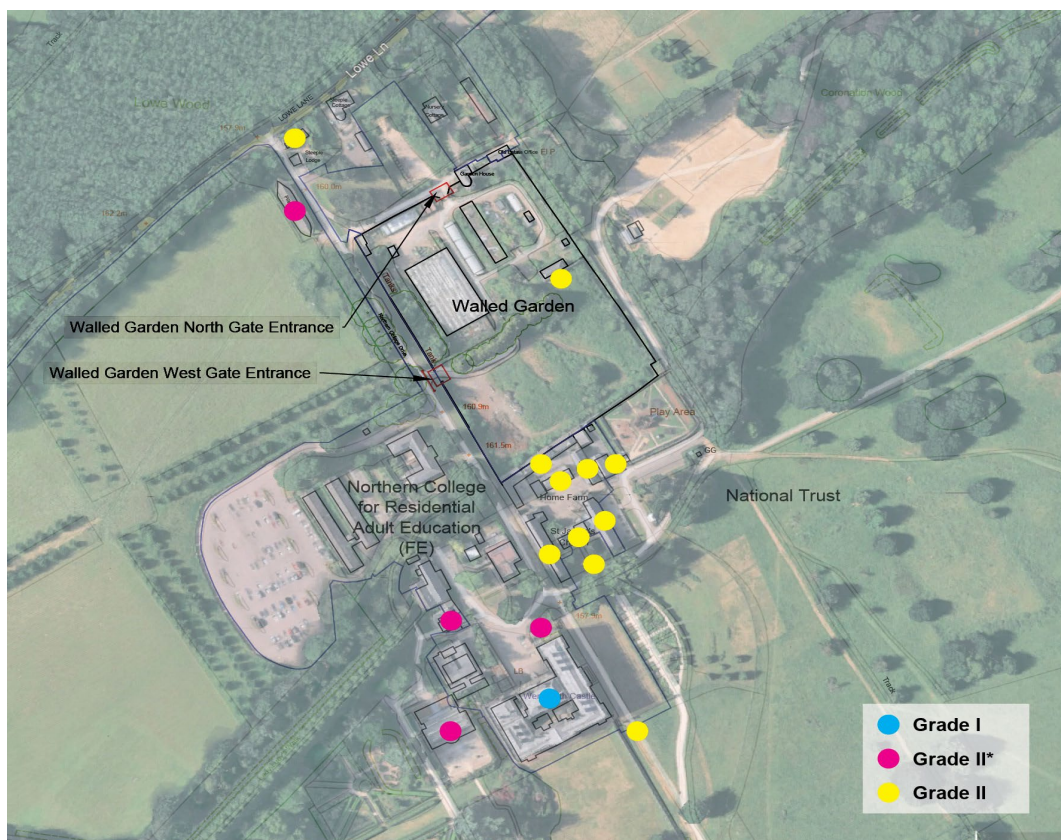
**Figure 1: National Trust Boundary and Walled Garden Location**



**Figure 2 – Registered Park & Garden designation**



**Figure 3 – Location of the proposals**



**Figure 4 – Location of heritage assets**

## 1.2 Project Background

The Walled Gardens are an operational area of the site with greenhouses and containers used for storage of plants and equipment by the National Trust gardeners and rangers used to maintain the property, with access also provided to Barnsley Council and Sheffield University for shared use of greenhouses.

Since occupying the site in 2019, the National Trust has recognised a pattern of theft and criminal activity to this area of the site, including theft of National Trust and contractor vehicles and equipment. In recent months there have been three separate thefts and attempted thefts recorded, in September 2024, February 2025 and June 2025. The most recent event saw around £45,000 worth of National Trust equipment stolen from the Walled Garden compound.

This project seeks to improve sensitively the security measures to the two principal entrances to the Walled Garden to mitigate further losses. These are the West and North Gate Entrances.

## 1.3 Supporting Documents

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- 10045329\_NT Boundary at WCG
- 10045329\_PL\_01 – Location Plan
- 10045329\_PL\_02 – Site Plan
- 10045329\_PL\_03 – West Gate Plan
- 10045329\_PL\_04 – West Gate Elevations
- 10045329\_PL\_05 – North Gate Plan, Elevations and Section

## 2.0 Design

The security improvements proposed include the replacement of existing steel mesh gates to the west gate entrance and provision of retractable steel bollards on the outside of both the west and north gate entrances.

### 2.1 North Gate

The gates to the north entrance have been replaced in recent years and are of sound construction. There is therefore no proposal to replace or alter the gates themselves. Works to this area are limited to introduction of bollards only.



*Figure 5: Existing North Gate Entrance*

### 2.2 West Gate

The walled gardens walls have been subject to various phases of rebuilding and alteration throughout their life, including previous alterations to the gateways and are unlisted. The West Gate Entrance has previously been widened, and the brickwork crudely terminated. Hot rolled steel columns have been installed as gate posts and steel mesh gates fabricated in an asymmetric pattern. The grass verge to the Northern College driveway extends across the

gate opening where it has been widened on the right hand side as viewed from outside the walled garden.

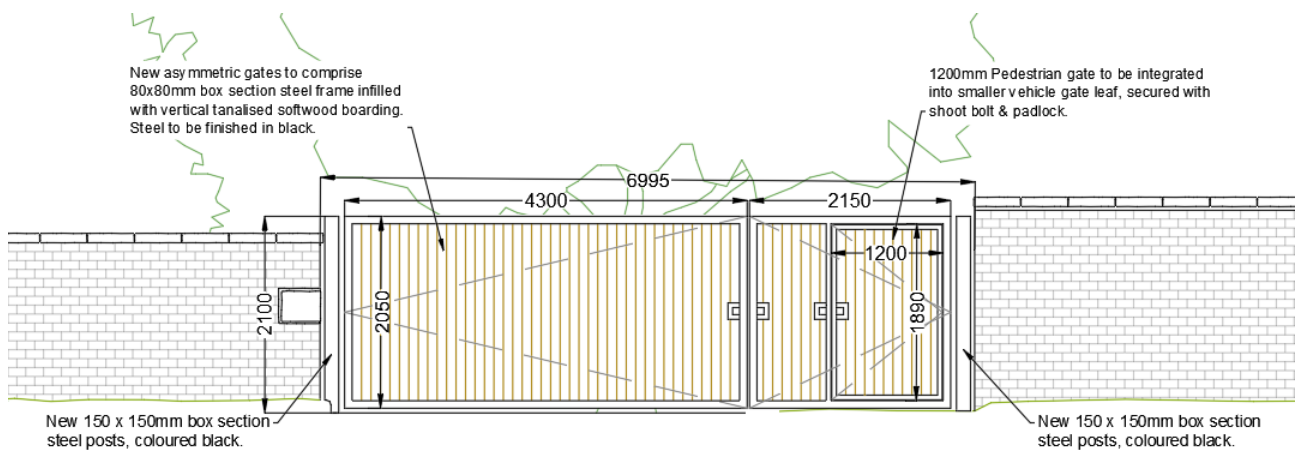


*View of West Gate Entrance from Northern College driveway and access road*

*Brickwork and steel column post to the right hand side where the gate opening has been widened*

**Figure 2: Existing West Gate Entrance**

This proposal is to replace the existing posts and gates with heavy duty fabricated steel alternatives. Consideration was given to making the new West gates match the gates to the North entrance, however due to the large span, a steel frame is required. The proposal offers this, with a similar vertical timber board arrangement to reflect that of the north gate.



**Figure 3: Arrangement of proposed gate**

The new posts will be 150 x 150mm box section steel posts, painted black. The gates are to be manufactured from 80 x 80mm box section steel incorporating vertical treated timber infill panels to screen the compound from view. The primary leaves of the new gates will retain the overall widths of the existing, however an additional personnel gate is to be integrated into the

smaller leaf of the vehicular gate. This inclusion reduces the need for the larger, heavier vehicle gates to be opened, and potential for the increased security risk of them being left open unattended.



**Figure 4: Example image of similar gate design with steel frame and vertical timber infill panels**

### 2.3 Bollards

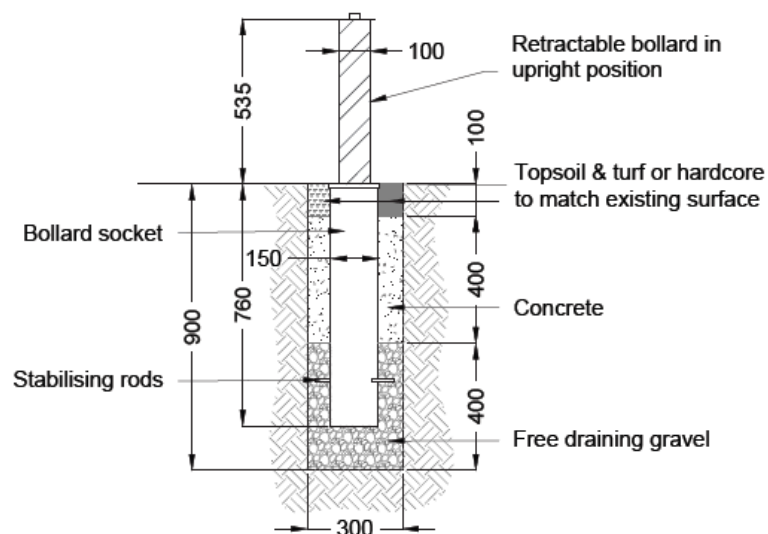
Steel bollards are proposed to provide additional security and deter further break-ins. Manual retractable bollards have been selected to ensure minimal visual disruption when in dropped position and maximum security when raised, with no requirement for power supply, or associated excavation and ducting.



**Figure 6: Example of the proposed bollards in raised and dropped positions**

The proposed bollards are to be installed 600mm from the gate line on the outside of both the north and west gate entrances. Bollards will be 100mm wide, standing 535mm high and positioned 1100mm apart to ensure a maximum 1m clear opening between individual bollards and the gateposts. Bollards will be secured in position with PP30 disc-type padlocks at the base as pictured above.

Installation will require excavation of material 300x300mm in plan and 900mm deep. The excavated material will be set aside within the walled garden. Backfill will comprise free-draining gravel and concrete. The concrete will be kept 100mm below ground level, with the existing surface materials (tarmac, hardcore or topsoil) finishing up to the socket rim.



**Figure 7: Typical section of the proposed bollard installation**

## 2.4 Habitat

There will be no impact upon the biodiversity and ecology of this area. The proposed works are limited to areas of hardstanding to the front of the existing gates.

## 2.5 Accessibility

The Walled Gardens are an operational area of the site and are not open to visitors. The proposal does include for heavier gates to be installed to the west gate, however the number of times the larger gates are to be opened, and left open, will be reduced by integrating a personnel gate into the larger gate leaf.

It is considered that authorised access is not impacted by the proposal, and the risk of unauthorised access is significantly reduced.

## 3.0 Planning Considerations

### 3.1 Relevant Planning Policy

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 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

In this case the Statutory Development Plan comprises:

- Barnsley Local Plan (Adopted January 2019)

Material considerations in this proposal comprise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) together with any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents. The key elements of national and local planning policy therefore relating to this proposal are set out below.

### 3.2 National Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF (December 2024) states 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 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that *“the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and recognising that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*.

The five purposes of Green Belt are set out at paragraph 143;

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- and e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

As this proposal is located within the green belt the impacts of the proposal on the green belt is considered further in the assessment section of this document.

Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment where paragraph 187 outlines that developments should be minimising impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

For this application it has not been subject to an ecological assessment and is exempt from biodiversity net gain, on the basis that the proposed security improvements are limited to replacing an existing gate and the insertion of bollards into areas of existing hardstanding (which can be seen in the above photographs). This is therefore not considered further within this statement.

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment where paragraphs 212- 221 of the NPPF relate to considering potential impacts of a proposed development on the significance of heritage assets involved.

In determining applications, the NPPF (para 207) requires an applicant to *“describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be ‘proportionate’ to the assets’ importance”*.

The impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets is to be considered in line with the advice contained within paragraphs 212 onwards of the NPPF. This reinforces that *“‘great weight’ should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset\_ ‘the greater the weight should be’.”* Paragraph 213 confirms that *“any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require ‘clear and convincing justification”*.

At paragraphs 214- 215, the NPPF requires an assessment of harm to be undertaken and should this be identified a consideration of whether this is either ‘substantial’ or ‘less than substantial’ harm.

Planning Practice Guidance advises that the test of substantial harm is a high one and not likely to apply in many cases.

Where a proposal leads 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.

Local planning authorities are advised at paragraph 219 to look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

As these proposals lie within a Grade I Registered Park and Garden and the setting of Heritage Assets as well as Wentworth Castle & Stainborough Park Conservation Area a consideration of the proposals and the impacts on significance across the assets here are set out in a proportionate assessment of heritage impacts in section 4.

### 3.2 Local Policy

Barnsley's **Local Plan** was adopted on 3 January 2019. Relevant policies are summarised below:

**Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development** contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development and to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

**Policy E6 Rural Economy** states that a viable rural economy will be encouraged by allowing development in rural areas if it supports the sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy, results in growth of existing businesses, is related to tourism and recreation or improves the range and quality of local services in existing settlements.

**Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making** expects development to be of high-quality design and expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and features of Barnsley.

**Policy HE1 The Historic Environment** positively encourages developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment, especially for those assets which are at risk. This will be achieved by;

- a) supporting proposals which conserve and enhance the significance and setting of the borough's heritage assets specifically including Wentworth Castle parkland (the only grade I Registered Park and Garden in South Yorkshire) and Stainborough Park conservation area
- b) ensuring that proposals affecting designated heritage assets conserve those elements which contribute to its significance
- c) supporting proposals that would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area
- d) ensuring that proposals affecting an archaeological site of less than national importance or sites with no statutory protection conserve those elements which contribute to its significance in line with the importance of the remains
- e) supporting proposals which conserve Barnsley's non-designated heritage assets
- f) supporting proposals which will help to secure a sustainable future for Barnsley's heritage assets, especially those identified as being at greatest risk of loss or decay.

The section that follows undertakes an assessment of the proposal against this policy.

**Policy HE 4 Developments affecting Historic Area or Landscapes** expects proposals that are within a Registered Park and Garden to respect historic precedents of layout, density, scale, forms, massing, architectural detail and materials that contribute to the special interest of an area; respect important views either within the area or views that contribute to the setting of the area and take account of and respect important landscape elements including topographic features or trees that contribute to the significance of the area where harm might prejudice future restoration.

**Policy HE6 Archaeology** states that applications for development on sites where archaeological remains may be present must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment. The HIA provides further commentary on this.

**Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity** expects development to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough. There are no specific impacts of this proposal on habitats and species on the site. The application site lies outside the designated Stainborough Park Local Wildlife Site.

**Policy GB1 Protection of Green Belt states that Green Belt** will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. The detailed boundaries are defined on the Policies Map which includes land at Wentworth Castle Gardens.

## 4. Assessment of the proposal

### 4.1 Planning Issues

In accordance with national and local planning policy, the main planning issues raised by the development are as follows:

- the impact upon the historic environment and
- the impact upon the Green Belt

### 4.2 Historic Environment

#### 4.2.1 Wider Site significance

Wentworth Castle Gardens is designated Grade I for the following principal reasons:

**Historic interest:** As a remarkably complex and well-surviving example of an early- to mid-C18 country-house designed landscape retaining a significant proportion of the principal features of the layout and design by both the first and second Earls of Strafford. The creation and development of the gardens are particularly well documented in estate archives, published and personal writings, paintings and illustrations, including a 1714 engraving by Knyff and Kip and a perspective view of 1730 by Bladesdale, resulting in an unusually complete record of its layout and evolution.

**Design interest:** The gardens demonstrate the latest designed landscape fashions of the age in their planting, as well as positioning and appearance of a fine collection of high-quality buildings and structures, with an extra intellectual dimension presented by a number that conveyed coded political messages about the family's allegiances to well-educated contemporary visitors.

**Group value:** The gardens' interest is notably enhanced by containing a large and varied group of listed garden buildings and structures, which together shape the designed landscape and form the setting for the Grade I Wentworth Castle, Conservatory (Grade II\*), St James' Church (Grade II) and Home Farm (various buildings listed Grade II)

#### 4.2.2 The walled gardens & significance

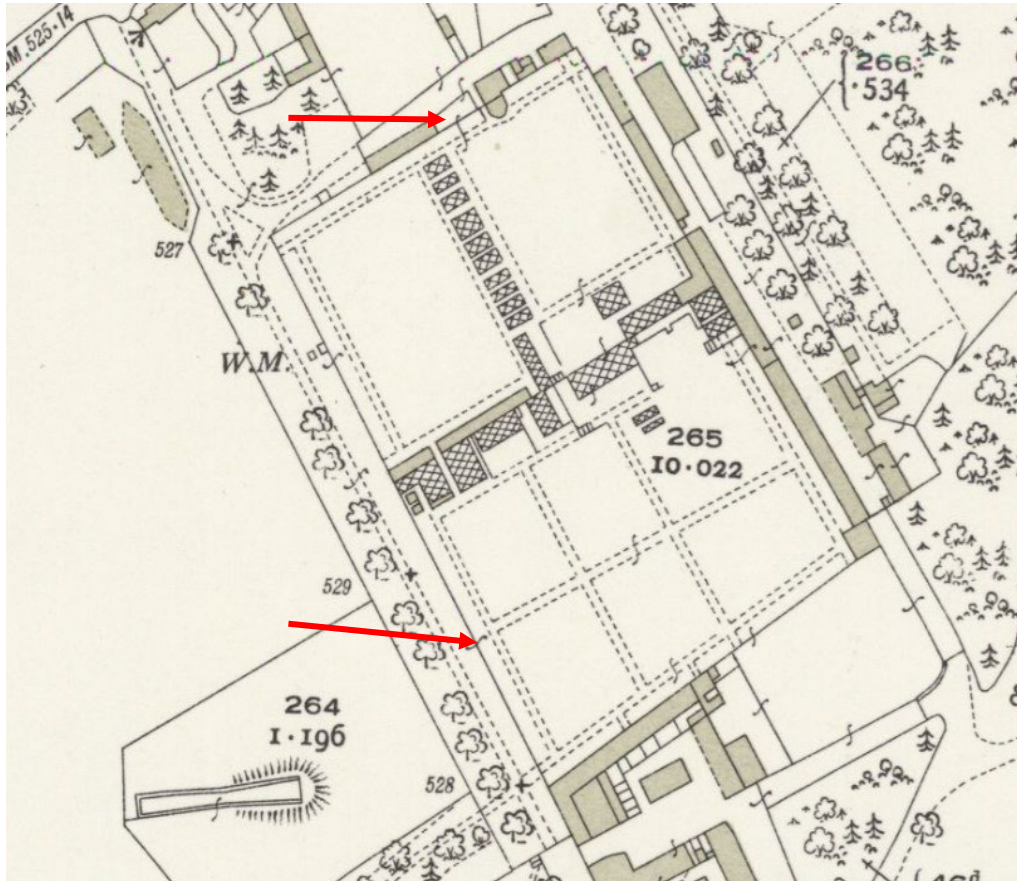
The origin of the walled garden at Wentworth Castle is an integral part of the redesign of the house, gardens and parkland by Thomas Wentworth, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Strafford (2<sup>nd</sup> creation) from the 1710s. The rich archive related to Thomas Wentworth, who was often away from his house and receiving regular reports from his head gardener, plus early engraving and mapping evidence, give us a rough overview of the development. In essence, these suggest that the walled garden was a new addition, designed to run along-side an approach road leading to the original Stainborough Hall from the public road (now Lowe Lane) which

Thomas had diverted further north away from his house. The walled garden began as a more modest area divided into four quarters at the southwestern corner of the newly embraced space. Over the following years it was further developed, reaching as far as Lowe Lane and expanding into Katherine Well field at the eastern side with the building of the orangery (1724) and the creation of the orangery garden and heated walls in the 1720s. The area to the north of the orangery was probably originally a large unenclosed orchard, first referred to in 1718.

Further infrastructure was added from the 1740s under Thomas' son, William Wentworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Strafford. This was designed to allow the growing of a wider range of fruits and other plants otherwise susceptible to the South Yorkshire weather, particularly pineapples. The early 1760s seems to have seen a second phase of heated wall building, possibly the orchard wall that survives in part along the eastern (Shed Lane) boundary, north of the orangery. New glasshouses were added the following decade and, after a period of neglect while the estate was subject to extended legal dispute, further glasshouses were added to the northern section in the early 19th; century by the new Vernon Wentworth owners. Added to, significantly, again mid-century by the 1880s there were over twenty growing houses or various specialist functions.

By the time a rather schematic 1824 estate map was drawn up, the northern end of the walled garden appears to have been cropped off with a transverse wall, with the area north of this towards Lowe Lane perhaps remaining an orchard or simply left a broad tree boundary. By the later 19th century, two estate workers houses had been built on the immediate outside of the eastern corner of the north wall, with a row of sheds along much of the western end. There was a small gate in this wall next to Garden House, built into the walled gardens north wall in the mid C19. The current north entrance remains in roughly the same place as the original gate, but the whole north wall has been largely rebuilt (following significant C20 decline and then municipal use or a very pragmatic character by Barnsley Council's Parks department) and the entrance significantly widened to allow modern vehicles; reportedly in or after 1978 when the site was sold to Northern College and significant rationalisation of old garden structures undertaken.

The west wall of the walled garden, which built on higher ground, was always much lower in height, also shows signs of extensive, often crudely done, later 20th century repair and consolidation. It is unclear from historic mapping if the current gate entrance was originally a similar widening of an older footpath gate or was simply a new opening created in the late 20th century. The 1929 OS map, for example does not even show a footgate.



**Figure 8: Detail of 1929 O.S. map showing the Walled Garden.**

**The current north and west gates (indicated by red arrows) are marked**

#### **4.2.3 Assessment of impacts on significance**

While the walled garden (as an entity if not for its current uses and structures) is of considerable historical significance as a whole, the proposed work will have a minimal and broadly neutral impact upon this.

The north wall and gate entrance in particular have been completely rebuilt in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and are in general of limited historic significance. The west wall has a longer historic integrity, but the gate entrance is another modern creation. The work proposed offers a net improvement on the current adhoc and unsightly arrangement.

The two sets of bollards are an important intervention to improve security. While necessarily coloured to aid visibility, they are not on visitor routes, will not stand out on any major sightline, especially those located by the north gate which is slightly down a slope and not on a public road.

The west gate is also not on a public road but will be visible to traffic on the approach road to the college and college carpark. It is possible that it may also be visible to visitors in the lower part of the field to the immediate west of the entrance. However, the low profile of the bollards should mean they have only the most minimal of visible intrusion. Furthermore, the

replacement of the current unsightly steel mesh arrangement which forms the west gate, combined with the tidying up of the brick pillar, will represent a net improvement to the visual impression of this area, as well as a significant upgrade to the security.

The installation of the bollards in front of both gates will require the excavation of holes. It is considered that these are too shallow to have a negative impact on the potential evidential value of this part of the site.

#### 4.2.4 Summary of Impacts

**Physical:** The proposed works will involve the removal of unsightly LC20 gate arrangements to the west, limited physical excavations for the bollards at both sites and for gateposts to the west. These excavations will be of limited footprint, though greater depth.

The excavations will be in areas that have long been impacted by access. The necessary depth may or may not simply impact surfacing layers. However, historical records narrate the shallowness of the soil found to be present when the walled garden was first laid out. In this context, the probability of any significant archaeological deposits being present is considered to be very low. Even if archaeology were to be, unexpectedly, present the extent of disturbance is small and would leave the majority of any extensive deposits intact.

No previous watching briefs or other observations have observed any evident archaeological survivals in the at risk areas.

However, if archaeology were to be present then damage by excavation is, of its nature, adverse in character. The weight of impact is only “potential” with only a low risk of presence.

Given the very limited nature of the excavations and their form making meaningful observations difficult if not impossible, it is not proposed to maintain a watching brief unless the archaeological adviser to the Local Authority disagree and consider this to be necessary.

**Visual:** The proposed works will certainly bring about some small measures of visual change. At the north gate this impact will be very slight, when the bollards are retracted, limited to small change in the ground surface not visible from any distance. When raised the bollards will be visible seen against modern gate. They would not impinge on views outwards towards the broader setting or other heritage assets.

There would be a larger degree of change at the western gate. The same comments about the visibility of the bollards applies here, though when in use they would be seen for longer journeys along the road to North College. At either end of that route there are Listed buildings: it has been assessed whether introducing the bollards would impinge on the setting of those structures and concluded that they would not represent any harmful impact, just be very minor changes in the wider vicinity of those structures, and the RPG.

Replacing the gate would have an impact of greater weight. As this is replacing one modern structure with another of higher design and build standards, at worst this could be assessed as only representing change rather harm. More favourably, there is case to be made that replacing the present low quality gating with something better is a small beneficial impact on the RPG and the settings of the site’s listed buildings.

**Setting:** Whilst lying within the RPG and in generalised proximity to a number of Listed structures, the proposed works are generally discrete in nature and are assessed as having little or no impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets. There is potential that the bollards by the west gate might be intervisible from the vicinity of the mansion or its surrounding Listed structures, but only as small roadside details.

**Overall:** in terms of impact on designated and identified non-designated heritage assets it is assessed that no significant harm is recognised. Indeed, it is hard to establish that any harm is being caused and it can be held that some slight beneficial impact is represented.

#### **4.2.5 NPPF and Policy assessment**

The above assessment has considered the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets, which includes the Grade I Registered Park and Garden and other listed structures and the impact on the character and appearance of the Wentworth and Stainborough Conservation Area. The assessment concludes there is no harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets.

The proposals comply with policies HE1 to conserve the significance of the Registered Park and Garden and Conservation Area by modestly enhancing the appearance of the area with the introduction of improved gates at the west entrance which are in keeping with the character of those to the north entrance of the walled garden. The appearance will be more unified and respect its setting in accordance with policy HE4. This assessment's conclusion is that there is no known archaeology (or likely archaeology) at significant risk from this proposal, the assessment having been undertaken complying with the intent of policy HE6.

#### **4.3 Green Belt**

The proposed works to construct the bollards are considered to have no greater impact on the openness of the green belt in this location as they are to be situated in front of existing gates and are not visually prominent. When not in use, they lie flush with the ground. They are located in an area of existing operational activity and will not alter how the openness of the green belt is perceived in this location.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless certain exceptions apply one of which is outlined in part b) as;

*the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, 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;*

This proposal supports maintaining the outdoor recreation function of the property and this minor development can be considered appropriate development in the green belt on this basis.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This application seeks consent for minor works to improve security measures around the walled gardens lying within the Wentworth Castle Gardens property.

No harm has been identified to heritage interests and the proposal delivers public benefit by enabling the security gardening and other equipment to be maintained which is needed to look after and maintain the heritage assets.