



National
Trust

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

To support a Planning Application to install 3 No. polytunnels in the walled garden for a temporary period of 5 years at Wentworth Castle Gardens

1. Introduction

This statement accompanies a planning application seeking consent for the installation of 3 no. polytunnel in the walled garden for a temporary period of 5 years at the National Trust property known as Wentworth Castle Gardens. The applicant is the National Trust, Goddard's, 27 Tadcaster Road, York, YO24 1GG. This application is accompanied by and should be read alongside the following documents;

- Location plan
- Site Plan & Elevations
- Manufacturer's brochure
- Statement of Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment
- Ecology Statement

In accordance with national validation requirements, the purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to outline the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development.

1.1 Overview of the proposal

Wentworth Castle Gardens is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden (RPG), 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 which is open to the public. The main house and some of the surrounding buildings are owned by Northern College, which provides residential and community education for adults.

The proposal lies within the National Trust visitor property at Wentworth Castle Gardens which lies within the bounds of the Grade I RPG. The Grade II listed former orangery is located to the southeast of the proposals. The Grade II* pillared barn is located to the northwest of the proposals.

The erected polytunnels will be visible from these listed buildings and lies within the setting of these Heritage Assets. The wider site contains several other listed structures to the south in the Home Farm complex. The proposals lie within Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area and the whole of the property lies within designated Green Belt.

This statement considers the impact of the polytunnels on the significance of the heritage assets in this location and considers the requirement under the National Planning Policy Framework to provide an assessment of any harm arising as required by paragraphs 199 - 202 of the NPPF. The National Trust approach is informed at the outset by a set of conservation principles. The focus being on revealing and sharing the significance of the places we care for and ensuring that their special qualities are protected, enhanced and enjoyed and understood by present and future generations.

1.2 Installation of polytunnels

This application seeks Planning Permission for the installation of 3 No. polytunnels in the walled garden for a specific temporary period of 5 years. The polytunnels will be used as part of a research project whereby innovative demonstrator polytunnel-protected hydroponics for a range of leafy greens will be evaluated. The polytunnel is therefore required for a strictly limited period. The project is working in partnership with Sheffield University.

2. Proposed Development

2.1 Historical background

Working in partnership with Barnsley Council and Northern College, this estate, rooted in rivalry, provides a space to bring people together. Royal diplomat Thomas Wentworth was outraged when a cousin inherited his family home, Wentworth Woodhouse, in 1695. Known for his ferocious ambition, Wentworth was determined to outdo his rival, creating this spectacular place once known as 'the finest garden in England'.

Wentworth's wealth was deeply entwined with empire and the slave trade. He was one of the principal negotiators of the Treaty of Utrecht, which secured Britain as supplier of enslaved Africans to Spanish colonies in the New World.

Despite its turbulent past, this breath-taking landscape now provides space for relaxation, reflection and opportunities for people to enjoy nature and beauty. Today it is South Yorkshire's only Grade I registered landscape. There are surprises along every avenue, including a castle that is not what it seems. The main house is closed to visitors as it houses Northern College, which offers residential adult education courses.

Wentworth Castle Gardens was previously run by the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Heritage Trust, this ceased to operate in 2017. In 2019, The National Trust (NT) entered into a 25-year lease agreement with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to run the site in partnership with Barnsley MBC and Northern College.

2.2 Location

Wentworth Castle Gardens is located with the southwest of Barnsley and south of Dodworth. The proposed polytunnels are to be located within the walled garden (see below plan).



Figure 1: Location of proposed polytunnels within the walled garden at Wentworth Castle Gardens

The following photograph shows the proposed location of the polytunnels;



Designations

The site lies within the following designations identified in the Barnsley Local Plan (2019);

- Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area

- Green Belt
- Grade I Registered Park and Garden

2.3 The proposal

The proposed polytunnels are part of a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) project in partnership with government. The aim of the research project is to fundamentally transform the UK food system, by placing healthy people and a healthy natural environment at its centre. The consortium brings together top centres of expertise including from the University of Sheffield which is leading the project.

This part of the project addresses the linked challenges of improving local supply and increasing the resilience and sustainability of UK healthy leafy greens production. Leafy greens are rich dietary sources of folic acid, vitamins (C, K) essential elements, healthy carbohydrates and fibre but nearly 50% available in the UK are imported. Most existing UK production is on fenland peat which is a system facing an existential crisis of environmental, labour and economic sustainability, as the peat soils are rapidly eroding and oxidizing, migrant labour supply has been disrupted by Covid-19 and Brexit, and the current business model is challenged by the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, that will increasingly fund taking lowland peatland land out of food production.

The projects aim is to work with landowners, farms and local colleges near urban centres to establish innovative demonstrator polytunnel-protected hydroponics, and evaluate, for a range of leafy greens, whether there are benefits to production rates, labour requirements, nutritional value, and economic and environmental sustainability. Polytunnel-based hydroponics extends the growing season, increases the ease of cultivation and harvesting and locating these systems close to urban centres with tertiary colleges running horticulture courses provides a supply of trained labour.

This is a partnership project with the University of Sheffield. Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council is also initiators of the proposal being established at Wentworth Castle Gardens given their interest in the site and climate change aspirations. The University of Sheffield were keen to expand their area of operation to the wider Sheffield City region. The NT partnership with the Northern College also provides opportunities to develop horticultural educational provision. There will be no visitor access to the polytunnels, however NT envisage developing the area as one with increasing levels of volunteering and other community engagement and education.

The polytunnels consist of 3 new polytunnels each consisting of 6 hoops with the following dimensions; 6400 mm wide x 10970 mm long x 3300 mm high. Legs 450 mm long into the ground with concrete backfill. Sliding doors to front and rear elevations.

A temporary consent for a period of 5 years is sought to enable the project to proceed and conclude. The polytunnels would be removed at the end of this period.

The following images shows the type of polytunnel and anchoring that is proposed, however the proposed polytunnels will only have 6 hoops;



Figure 2: Proposed design of the polytunnel

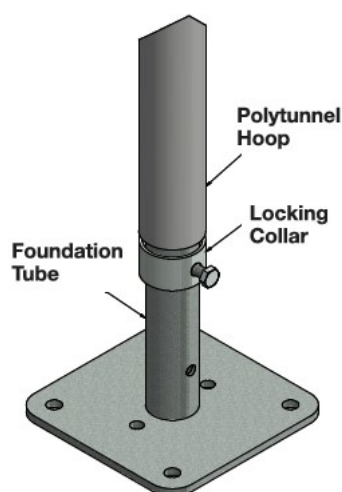


Figure 3: Proposed foundation tube

3. Planning and Related Policy Framework

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.

3.1 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF (July 2021) 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 137 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 138;

- 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.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that “a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt”. However, there are stated exceptions to this and of those exceptions, point (a) provides for “buildings for agriculture and forestry.” Under s336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, “agriculture” includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing (...), market gardens and nursery grounds.

It is considered that the proposal provides buildings for agriculture and forestry and as such does not constitute inappropriate development. As set out previously, the polytunnels are part of a research project to establish innovative demonstrator polytunnel-protected hydroponics for a range of leafy greens.

Notwithstanding the above, we consider that the proposal can also constitute limited infilling of previously developed land in accordance with point (g) of paragraph 149 of the NPPF. The polytunnels are located within the confines of the walled garden set within the wider context of other garden structures. It therefore does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment where paragraph 180 requires local planning authorities to apply various principles when determining planning applications. Point a) of the paragraph states that “if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”

The site has been subject to ecological assessment which has confirmed there are no natural or semi-natural habitats likely to be impacted by the new Polytunnels and the risk to protected species has been assessed as low.

Mitigation identified as necessary for the proposals relates to good practice precautionary guidelines to follow during the construction process.

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment where paragraphs 199 – 208 of the NPPF relate to considering potential impacts of a proposed development on heritage assets. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been completed and is included with the application. The Heritage Statement concludes that it is the view of the National Trust that the proposals are appropriate to this setting, proportionate and overall will have a neutral impact on the heritage values of the site. Its overall significance will remain unaltered.

In determining applications, the NPPF (para 194) 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 199 - 202 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 200 also confirms that significance can be harmed or lost from development '*within its setting*'.

In order to examine the overall level of 'harm' in NPPF terms (i.e., whether it is to be considered either as 'substantial' or 'less than substantial') and given that great weight must be given to conservation afforded by the importance of the Grade I RPG and Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area it is important to outline a summary of the overall impacts, which can be found in the Heritage Statement. This concludes that it is the National Trust's assessment (in response to the test contained in NPPF paragraph 202) that no element of the proposed development constitutes Substantial harm (or for that matter more than slight, potential, harm) to a recognised heritage asset.

3.2 Local Policy

Barnsley Local Plan

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 GD2 Temporary Building and Uses states that temporary buildings will normally be allowed where it can be demonstrated that a permanent building is not suitable. We do not consider that a permanent structure is suitable or necessary for the purposes of this project. The policy states that on sites visible from highways and public areas, temporary buildings will normally be given a temporary permission not exceeding 5 years. We consider that the lifespan of the structure is approximately 5 years and therefore we are seeking permission for 5 years to provide for sufficient time for the research project.

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 HIA that accompanies this application sets out 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.

The polytunnels are to be located within the walled garden on a site previously used for glasshouses. The polytunnels are to be set out in the same layout as previously observed within the walled garden and this seeks to minimise the impact on the wider RPG. Further discussion of this is set out within the accompanying HIA.

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 accompanying 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. The accompanying Ecology Statement assesses and concludes no specific impacts of the proposal on habitats and species on the site. The application site lies out with 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

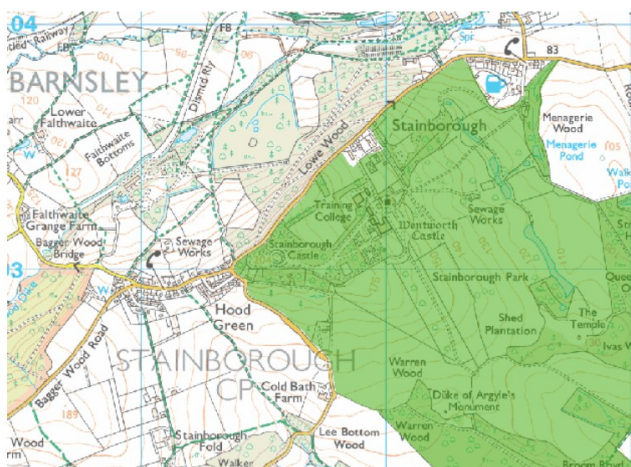
In accordance with national and local planning policy, the main planning issues raised by the development are as follows:

- the impact upon the historic environment;
- the impact upon relevant ecological interests; and
- the impact upon the Green Belt

4.2 Historic Environment

Wentworth Castle is a Grade 1 Registered Park and Garden, and the extent is indicated on the following plan:

map



Wentworth Castle Registered Park and Garden

The estate also contains several designated heritage assets which are identified in the following table.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>National Heritage List number</i>
The Pillared Barn	Grade II* Listed	NHL 1315049
Steeple Lodge	Grade II Listed	NHL 1151059

The Orangery	Grade II Listed	NHL 1151072
Former calf houses, Home Farm	Grade II Listed	NHL 1315053
Dairy House Home Farm	Grade II Listed	NHL 1191812
Cart Shed, Home Farm	Grade II Listed	NHL 1191802
Cottage East of Cart Shed, Home Farm	Grade II Listed	NHL 1151071
Former stable block and attached arch	Grade II Listed	NHL 1191779
Church of St James	Grade II Listed	NHL 1286916
Barn and attached wall, Home Farm	Grade II Listed	NHL 1315052
Churchyard Gates and Gate piers	Grade II Listed	NHL 1151070
Statue of 1 st Earl of Strafford	Grade II* Listed	NHL 1191709
Wentworth Castle	Grade I Listed	NHL 1151065

Overall heritage assessment

The accompanying HIA has undertaken a detailed assessment of the significance of the heritage assets involved and an assessment of the impact of the components of the development on the significance of the Assets is considered.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed works will have some visual effect on the site and some physical effect through the need for 36 postholes for footings. The size of the postholes precludes their meaningful excavation by archaeological means although recording of any exposed remains could potentially be undertaken. The National Trust remains committed to, and concerned with, archaeological remains of all periods including modern and has sought to minimise impact through selection of a polytunnel that leaves extant footings in place.

The Heritage Statement states that in light of the assessments made, it is the view of the National Trust that the proposals are appropriate to this setting, proportionate and overall will have a neutral impact on the heritage values of the site. Its overall significance will remain unaltered.

Therefore, it is the National Trust's assessment (in response to the test contained in NPPF paragraph 202) that no element of the proposed development constitutes Substantial harm (or for that matter more than slight, potential, harm) to a recognised heritage asset. It is also satisfied that the proposal is compliant with the relevant local planning policies pertinent to heritage.

Paragraph 202 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 proposal supports the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) project in partnership with government to transform the UK food system. The National Trust considers this represents a clearly identifiable public benefit of the proposal outweighing the very slight and only potential harm identified to heritage assets.

The National Trust therefore feels confident that it is an appropriate proposal to make for the site.

4.3 Ecology

The wider Wentworth Castle Gardens site is recognised as a sensitive site in terms of protected species and the site 'Stainborough Park' is identified as a Local Wildlife Site for its biodiversity. An Ecology Statement has been produced to assess this proposal and this identifies that there are no natural or semi-natural habitats likely to be impacted by the new polytunnels. Impact will be limited to areas previously used for greenhouses and are highly modified ruderal vegetation in a built-up setting. No significant impacts are identified.

In respect of protected species there are no records of badger recorded within the site and nor are bats present on the development site. The potential for reptiles is assessed as low.

The Great Crested Newts assessment indicates that whilst they are present elsewhere on site, the potential for being within the walled garden for hibernation purposes, at some distance away from ponds, is considered highly unlikely and therefore the potential for them to be impacted by the proposal is assessed as low.

In terms of mitigation measures a number of precautionary measures are recommended in respect of site clearance and construction.

4.4 Green Belt

As stated previously with regard to NPPF assessment, it is considered that the proposal falls within one of the exceptions allowed for agriculture and forestry buildings and as such does not constitute inappropriate development. Notwithstanding this, we also consider that the proposal constitutes limited infilling of previously developed land in accordance with point (g) of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, which does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

5. Conclusion

The planning application seeks consent for the installation of a 3 no. polytunnels in the walled garden at the National Trust property known as Wentworth Castle Gardens for a temporary period of 5 years. It has been demonstrated that the development is consistent with national and local planning policy and will add to the wider environmental and community benefit aspirations of Wentworth Castle Gardens.

The scale and extent of the development has been kept to a minimum, carefully balancing the needs of the research project with the need to conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment. It is considered that there are significant public benefits of the development arising from the proposal.

Accordingly, it is requested that planning permission is granted.