ENGINEERING WORKS TO INSTAL DRAINAGE AND TANKS – CAR PARK AND COMPOST AREA

WENTWORTH CASTLE GARDENS

DESIGN AND ACCESS 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 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 has entered into a lease agreement with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to run the site from summer 2019.

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of surface water drainage and an oil interceptor tank in the car park as well as a leachate tank for the existing compost area.

It follows on from a series of applications submitted for pre-opening works. One of which included the new visitor reception building on the existing car park.

This application is supported by the following documents;

Construction and section details
Arboricultural Report
Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment

PROPOSAL

The visitor car park has performed poorly in terms of surface run-off since it was constructed by the previous Trust. This has resulted in large areas of the Cedec surface becoming rutted causing issues for visitors driving across them, large areas of ponding and its general poor condition.

The introduction of a few drainage channels across the car park is hoped to drastically reduce this issue. In doing so it is imperative that an oil interceptor is installed in order to prevent any pollution, oil for example from a broken down vehicle, entering the drainage and resulting in environmental pollution into the nearby brook and water course.

The existing compost bays on the site do not have any drainage or leachate collection tanks. By installing the drainage and tank the compost leachate can be collected and used as fertiliser across the compost and wider site. This will stop the existing leachate running off entering the ground water and causing potential issues.

DESIGN

The drainage runs in the car park have been designed to work with the existing car park structure. It is proposed to excavate channels around 400mm deep, 500mm wide, install a geotextile membrane and fill with 40mm single sized aggregate, wrap the membrane around the aggregate and top with clean stone flush with the car park surface. These channels will link into the visitor reception building, collecting the rain water pipes and terminate into the tank before the outflow ends at the brook in Coronation woods.

It is proposed that the compost bay will have an aco style drain at the edge of the existing concrete slab; this will flow into the leachate tank buried under ground, 1.9 m deep. The garden team will periodically empty this and use it as fertiliser. The tank size has been designed on the size of the compost area as outlined in The Composting Association's "Large Scale Composting - A practical manual for the UK"

SITE ACCESS

The proposed works to the visitor car park can be accessed from the main drive or from the staff access via Lowe Lane. The work area within the main visitor car park will be cordoned off and warning signs put up. Moving of equipment will happen prior to opening to the public at 10am every day.

Works to the compost area are all 'back of house' and accessed from Northern College drive. A compound area for storing materials and spoil will be formed in the compost area for the duration of the works.

SETTING

The two proposed tanks will be underground with small manhole covers only visible. The land drainage channels will be within the car park area, and will look like straight lines of white stone these will also help delineate the parking area for visitors.

PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National policy

The site lies within designated green belt. The green belt test contained in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 146 requires that development must preserve its openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The works will constitute below ground engineering operations to install two tanks with limited works at surface level to accommodate the land drains; as a result there will be no impact on the green belt in this location.

The proposals will result in enhancement to the visual aspects of the Registered Park and Garden through ensuring the car park operates in a way to maintain its condition.

In respect of other aspects of the proposals, it is relevant that the NPPF supports a prosperous rural economy. In particular, paragraph 83 states that planning decisions should enable;

'The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and well -designed new buildings'.

In addition there is support for sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments *'which respect the character of the countryside'.*

The proposals are supported by this guidance.

The NPPF recognises the importance of the historic environment in Section 16 *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* which sets out a clear strategy to ensure that heritage assets are conserved and enjoyed. As part of this where proposals affect heritage assets, it requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. (***para 189)***. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

In addition, there is a statutory requirement under Sections 71 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – which requires the local planning authority to have '*special regard'* to the need to *'preserve or enhance'* the character, appearance and setting of conservation areas. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities, as decision makers, in considering whether to grant Planning Permission for development, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets is to be considered in line with advice through NPPF at Paras 193-196. This reinforces that '*great weight'* should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset '*the greater the weight should be'*. The paragraphs also confirm that significance can be harmed or lost from development '*within its setting'.* As heritage assets are irreplaceable '*any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification'.*

A heritage statement accompanies this application. This undertakes a detailed assessment of the significance of all the heritage assets in the proposals and an assessment of the impact of the components of the proposals on that significance are outlined, so they are not repeated here.

As the proposed works are largely below ground, no other impacts have been identified in the Heritage Impact Assessment to the setting of heritage assets.

Local policy

Barnsley's Local Plan was adopted on 3 January 2019 and the relevant policies have been considered below.

Wentworth Castle parkland is identified within Policy HE1 (The Historic Environment) as the only grade I Registered Park and Garden in South Yorkshire. In accordance with this policy proposals which conserve and enhance the significance and setting of the borough's heritage assets will be supported.

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 Part C of Policy HE1 proposals that would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area will be supported.

A Heritage Statement is attached which sets out that the application in accordance with Policy HE2.

Policy HE3 contains policy relating to development affecting Historic Buildings. There are no alterations in this respect in this current proposal.

In accordance with Policy HE4 (Development affecting Historic Areas or Landscapes), the proposals which are within the Registered Park and Garden seek to respect historic precedents in terms of layout, density, forms, massing, architectural detail and materials that contribute to the special interest of an area.

The works are within the existing car park within an area of the RPG that has been disturbed previously, there would therefore be no wider impact on the RPG and indeed the oil interceptor tank would assist in preventing contamination within the landscape from surface water from the car park.

Part of the site shares its boundary with the Stainborough Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which comprises a large part of the historical parkland and ornamental gardens of the Wentworth Castle estate. The car park is sufficiently distant from the LWS and the proposals will not conflict with Policy BIO1 on biodiversity. There is no impact on trees or root protection areas as a result of the proposal.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring environmental compliance to this very special landscape is seen as a positive benefit of this proposal. Ensuring pollution is prevented, car park surfaces are safe, and leachate is reused as fertiliser are all ensuring the site will be a successful visitor attraction for years to come.

ECOLOGY

These proposals are considered to have little impact on the ecology of the site, as both areas are in already highly compromised areas. The arboricultural report concludes that there is no impact on any trees, the general precautions in this report will be followed by the contractor.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Supporting this application is a Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment which concludes there is little to no impact from the proposals.

For this proposal the excavation will be through the car park surfacing laid during the HLF funded projects, and then any underlying deposits.

Documentary research suggests that this area was previously only an open field, prior to enclosure within the expanded park boundaries and (c.1910) planting as woodland. This history does not suggest a high likelihood of significant archaeological deposits here, and of course construction of the car park will have truncated the pre-existing soil horizons (probably to substrate).

The risk of heritage impact is therefore assessed as low, and the probability of encountering significant archaeology here would appear to be low, based on understanding of the site's development.

A watching brief can be employed here in this proposal should the Council require.

The only visible above ground works will be two manhole covers and the channels for the land drains which will be crushed stone.

The heritage impact on the setting of the heritage assets is assessed as low. There is a minor beneficial impact in allowing the car park to drain in a more efficient way.

The leachate tank will collect the water from the compost area and be used for fertiliser in the gardens thereby supporting the maintenance of the planting scheme within the Registered Park and Garden. Again the heritage impact is assessed as low.

CONCLUSION

These proposals are seen as necessary in order to maintain the beautiful landscape of Wentworth Castle Gardens. They reduce the risk of pollution incidents, improve the condition of the existing car park and allow improved productivity of the compost and fertiliser for the gardens. The impact of the proposals is considered minimal and the public benefits in supporting the recently reopened visitor facility greatly outweigh any negligible impacts.