
2021/1448

Installation of 3 no. polytunnels for a temporary period of 5 years within the walled garden area

Wentworth Castle, Stainborough, Barnsley

Site Location and Description

Wentworth Castle is located to the South of Lowe Lane between Stainborough and Hood Green. It lies within a Green Belt and Conservation area. The nearest non-involved residential properties lie within the grounds of the hall close to the main access from Lowe Lane.

Wentworth Castle site is of considerable historical, architectural and landscape importance with Grade 1 Listed Wentworth Castle and numerous Grade 2 Listed out- buildings. The site is surrounded by Grade 1 Listed woodland gardens. The area lies wholly within the Green Belt and form the Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area.

The site lies within the former productive, walled gardens at Wentworth Castle/Stainborough Park and is included in the List description. The red-brick walls were partially rebuilt in the late 20th century, when the garden was used as a municipal nursery. At this time around a dozen glasshouses were erected on site. The glasshouses have since been removed. The walled garden includes a Grade II Listed building (The Orangery), nearby are a number of other Grade II and II* Listed buildings and, beyond, the Grade I Mansion.

There is a long and complex planning history due to its many buildings.

Proposed Development

Permission is sought to erect a row of 3 polytunnels for a period of 5 years. The details are as follows:

- Erection of 3x 11m by 6.4m polytunnels, 3.3m high, aligned end to end
- The above will include excavation of 36 postholes (0.50m cubed max dims)
- Public access for the operation of University of Sheffield's hydroponics' project
- Underground electricity cabling to link to mains supply on north wall of walled garden.



Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy and the saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

The new Local Plan was adopted at the full Council meeting held 3rd January 2019 after it was found to be sound by the appointed Planning Inspector following the examination process. This means that it now takes on full weight for decision making process in planning law terms as the development plan

for the Borough, superseding the remaining saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (adopted in the year 2000) and the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011).

Local Plan Policies

GB1 Green Belt

Policy E5 Promoting Tourism and encouraging Cultural Provision

D1 Design

HE1 Historic Environment

HE3 Developments affecting Historic Buildings

BIO1 Protection and enhancement of Biodiversity

Local Plan Policy HE1 The Historic Environment states:

We will positively encourage 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, paying particular attention to those elements which contribute most to the borough's distinctive character and sense of place.

Local Plan Policy HE3 Developments affecting Historic Buildings states:

Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings or buildings of evident historic significance such as locally listed buildings (or their setting) should seek to conserve and where appropriate enhance that building's significance.

Local Plan Policy HE4 Developments affecting Historic Areas or Landscapes states:

Proposals that are likely to affect the setting and the heritage significance of a registered Park and Garden will be expected 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 that contribute to the setting.
- Respect important landscape elements including topography and trees.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at para 194:

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).

The NPPF further states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).

Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act

The main issue to be considered in the determination of this Listed Building Consent application is: -

- Whether or not the proposed alterations would harm the special architectural or historic interest or impact on the setting of the listed Building.

In terms of the impact on the special character and appearance of the listed building, Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, states:

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Green Belt

Consultations

Conservation Officer – no objection

Culture Sport and Tourism – Has concerns about proximity to listed buildings

Stainborough Parish Council – no comments received

South Yorkshire Archaeology Service – no comments subject to a planning condition

Historic England – No objections

Ward Councillors – no comments received

Representations

The proposal was advertised by press notice, site notices and neighbour notification letters. No representations have been received.

Assessment

Material Consideration

Principle of development

Impact on Green Belt

Impact on LB and Conservation Area and Historic Park

Principle of development

Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings or buildings of evident historic significance such as locally listed buildings (or their setting) should seek to conserve and where appropriate enhance that building's significance

Development within a Conservation Area should aim to protect or enhance the character of the Conservation Area and it is considered that the provision of modern communications in a via an underground cable will preserve the character of the Conservation Area.

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. 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.

The polytunnels are of a temporary nature and will be placed within a walled garden where there is historic precedent for greenhouses. These developments are not considered to be of detriment to the

character and openness of the Green Belt and, whilst visible to the public within the grounds, are located in context within the curtilage of Wentworth Castle walled gardens and do not present a departure from Green Belt policy. As such the proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policy GB1.

Impact on Listed Building and Conservation Area and Historic Park

The head of Culture and Visitor economy did not raise any concerns about the impacts on the visitor economy although did have some concerns about the impacts on the listed buildings and landscape.

However, a detailed reply from the Conservation officer notes that this proposal from the NT seeks permission to install three 11m polytunnels within the historic walled garden area of Wentworth Castle Gardens. These will be located approximately 70m south east of the 11* pillared barn, 120m north of Home Farm and 220m north of Wentworth Castle (house). The site is within the grade I parkland and is as the historic core of the park with a multitude of designated, curtilage and undesignated assets in the immediate vicinity. Formerly, there were C20 glasshouses within the walled garden, but these have now been removed. The proposal includes a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment that looks at the historic significance of the setting and assets within it. This concludes that the works will have a minor visual impact and a minor physical impact (36 postholes for footings). As a result, the Conservation Officer considers there may be some very minor disturbance to archaeological deposits but will leave the vast majority of any extant footings of former buildings in place and unharmed. The Conservation Officer considers the proposal is deemed to be reasonable, proportionate, and justified in this setting considers the overall impact will be neutral and that the visual impact will be minor, following a well-established precedent, and will not represent harm to the historic significance of this place.

He considers that there is adequate justification in terms of the need for the development as this supports the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) project in partnership with government to transform the UK food system and if there is some minor harm, this would be more than outweighed by the public benefit of the proposal. Historic England also had no objections to the proposals on heritage grounds.

To conclude, the Conservation Officer is satisfied that the public benefits accruing from the proposed development would outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage assets and that the proposal meets the requirements of paragraphs 199, 200, 202 and 208 of the NPPF (2021). He has also taken into account the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

The proposals therefore considered to comply with HE1, HE3 and D1 of the Local Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Archaeology

The South Yorkshire Archaeology Service has considered the proposals, in particular the post holes and the trenching required for the cabling. However, no objections are raised subject to a planning condition.

Visual Amenity

Whilst the proposal will introduce new structures within the site, they are of limited extent and of temporary nature. Their use is also in context with the walled garden being used for horticultural purposes. Whilst they will be visible from some historic structures and areas within Wentworth Castle site, the proposal would not be considered detrimental.

Residential amenity

The site lies well away from the residential dwellings which lie within the grounds. It is considered that sufficient distance is maintained that privacy and amenity would not be compromised to a significant degree.

Ecology

An Ecology Survey has been submitted in support of the proposal which offers appropriate mitigations. No conditions are proposed.

Recommendation

Grant subject to conditions