



**PROPOSED REPAIRS TO SERPENTINE BRIDGE, ESTATE
WALLS, INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO LONG BARN AND BIN
STORE AT 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 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 Listed Building Consent for repairs to the Serpentine Bridge [Grade II], repairs to estate walls and internal alterations to the Long Barn [Grade II Listed] needed prior to reopening Wentworth to the public.

This application is one of a series of applications due to be submitted for pre-opening works. These include:

Planning application:

- Construction of Visitor Reception building within existing car park at Wentworth Castle Gardens, including provision of access ramp and associated landscaping.
- Service trenching works through the site and installation of a new grease trap to serve the Long Barn

Advertising consent:

- Alterations and additions to site signage

This application is supported by the following documents;

Construction and section details
Heritage Impact Assessment
Ecology Statement
Arboricultural Report

PROPOSAL

The proposals for the Long Barn are a simple internal refresh, including removal of glass partitions (not historical) to open up the space. This will create one open space on the ground floor to accommodate the retail and catering offer.

The repairs to the Serpentine Bridge are to reinstate the vandalised section of stone balustrade as per the original design that was reinstated in 2005.

Repairs to the stone wall around the playground area include rebuilding a section that has collapsed, stone replacement where eroded severely and repointing where necessary to reinstate to a good condition. This is not the subject of a separate listing but is assumed to be curtilage listed structures within the estate.

The original bin store for the Long Barn has been damaged by fire. This proposal is to relocate the bin store to within the St James courtyard to best serve the kitchen and to screen it behind the existing courtyard walls from the visiting public.

DESIGN

Repairs to the bridge and estate walls are all to reinstate what was there originally. The damaged balustrade will be reinstated as per existing design, but with improved structural elements to ensure it survives any further attempt to damage it.

The proposed small alterations to the Long Barn only impact on works done in 2007 and not to any historic fabric and are considered minimal but essential to operate a successful site.

The bin store would be constructed out of soft wood timber posts and rails with double gates ensuring the area is secure from unauthorised access. The bins would be enclosed behind the fencing and wall of the courtyard. Access from the rear of the kitchens would be maintained in order to allow staff to bring refuse directly from the kitchen to the bin store. Refuse collection would be as previous arrangements with the pickup of bins now from the courtyard side of the wall.

SITE ACCESS

All areas of the proposed works can be accessed via the main driveways. The repair of the Serpentine Bridge will allow the public to use the bridge again, as it is currently fenced off due to health and safety issues. The Long Barn works will open up the ground floor and be fully accessible and compliant with disabled access regulations.

Refuse collection would be as previous arrangements, with vehicles travelling along northern college entrance, through the double gates

adjacent to home farm and the bins collected from the courtyard rather than further down the roadway. This has all been agreed with the refuse collection company.

SETTING

Repairing the Serpentine Bridge will improve the historic setting of the park, reinstating the landscaped views designed back in the 18th century.

Repairs to the estate walls will allow that area of the site to be opened up to the public again, removing any health and safety concerns, and reinstating the walls to a good condition.

Alterations to the Long Barn will assist in reopening Wentworth to the public and allow a more efficient offer to accommodate the predicted increase in visitors. The external setting of the Long Barn will not be altered and with only slight internal alterations the setting will be very similar internally.

The siting of the new bin store within the courtyard of St James removes it from the visitor route and conceals it from the main house and external views. The timber construction acknowledges its utility function and is ultimately reversible, being able to be removed without any impact on the existing structures.

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 either be contained within an existing building or constitute repairs to existing structures in the green belt; 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 restoration of existing structures.

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*'.

The accompanying heritage statement has undertaken 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 in detail, so they are not repeated here.

The Heritage Statement outlines that the impacts from the proposal are positive in respect of restoration of historic fabric and the planned refurbishment of Long Barn affects fittings only completed in the past ten years.

No other impacts have been identified in the Heritage Impact Assessment to the setting of heritage assets.

Local policy

The relevant policies of the LDF Core Strategy (2011) and saved policies of the Barnsley UDP (2000) have been consulted together with policies in the emerging Local Plan, which is nearing adoption.

The proposals at Wentworth Castle Gardens comply with **Policy CSP 20** in that they promote tourism and will support the growth and development of cultural provision in the District.

In accordance with **Policy CSP21**, the proposals at Wentworth Castle Gardens seek to support a viable rural economy and the proposed development will support the growth of the business and is related to tourism and recreation.

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.

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 LWS contains a number of important species and as such an Ecology Statement is included with the application which demonstrates there is no conflict with **policy CSP 36** on biodiversity. Further the proposals cause no damage to Nature Conservation Sites identified in saved **policy WR13**. Nor to the qualities of Stainborough Park identified in WR14/2.

Whilst the emerging Local Plan is not yet adopted, the 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 seeks to support proposals which conserve and enhance the significance of the borough's heritage assets.

The proposals support the business functions of running the property and in turn this supports the heritage assets.

SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring all the repairs are carried out to the Serpentine Bridge and estate walls prior to opening the site to the public removes any health and safety concerns. The alterations to the Long Barn will allow the National Trust to offer a more efficient space for retail and catering; helping to ensure the site is a success and therefore can remain open for the public for the foreseeable future - offering a sustainable heritage visitor offer.

ECOLOGY

This application is supported by a full ecology assessment report. This report concludes that the proposed repairs to the bridge if completed prior to March will have little impact on the known Great Crested Newt habitat. Additional care will be taken when setting the site up and contractors will be fully briefed on the correct approach to this work. The method statement within the ecology report will be issued to contractors and strictly enforced.

Repairs to the estate walls are also considered to have little impact on the ecology of the site but all mitigation measures outlined in the report will be followed. The report concludes that as long as the mitigation is followed there will be little negative impact on the ecology of the site.

ARCHAEOLOGY

This application is supported by a full archaeological impact assessment covering all the pre-opening works. This concludes that the proposals in this application have a moderate impact on heritage, but is very limited in scope and balanced by considerable beneficial gain.

CONCLUSION

The proposed works will help the National Trust to open Wentworth Castle Gardens to 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.

The pre-opening works identified in this document are considered to have a positive impact on the significance of the site, by reinstating the bridge and estate walls. The alterations proposed to the Long Barn are minimal but essential to run a successful operation.

Overall it is considered that these pre-opening works will have little impact on the site overall. These proposals will allow its future to be secured by once again opening it up to the public, for it to be enjoyed by visitors for generations to come.