

**Town and Country Planning Act
1990 (as Amended)**

PLANNING STATEMENT

Application for temporary permission
for the erection of two polytunnels and
associated structures (retrospective)

Site: Heath House, Hollington Road,
Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 4HA

Client: Primafiles (Suisse) SA

Date: January 2026

Ref: YUS256/1/TPA

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Site and Surroundings	5
3.	Planning History	6
4.	The Proposal	7
5.	Development Plan and Other Material Considerations	8
6.	Assessment	10
7.	Conclusion	12

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Knights on behalf of Primafides (Suisse) SA (the applicant) in support of a temporary planning permission (retrospective) for the erection of two polytunnels and associated structures at Heath House, near Tean, Staffordshire Moorlands.
- 1.2 Heath House is a Grade II* listed building, with the wider estate containing several other buildings and structures which are either listed in their own right, or curtilage listed by association.
- 1.3 This submission should be read in conjunction with the following documents prepared by Donald Insall Associates:
- (a) Heritage design and access statement
 - (b) Location Plan
 - (c) Proposed plans
 - (d) Existing (prior to works) sections and elevations
 - (e) Proposed sections and elevations
- 1.4 The existing estate under the ownership of the applicant includes the following features categorised by their listed status:
- Grade II*
- (a) Heath House.
 - (b) Orangery.
- Grade II* and II
- (c) Woodlands, parkland, and landscaping.
- Grade II
- (d) Entrance gates.
 - (e) Front lodge.
 - (f) North lodge.
 - (g) Walled garden.
 - (h) Dutch barn.
 - (i) Stable block.
 - (j) Planting troughs.
 - (k) Italian garden.
- 1.5 The applicants acquired the property and associated estate over three years ago. Prior to their ownership, Heath House had a commercial use as a wedding venue. It is the intention of the applicants to continue to fully restore the house and estate as a private residence and for the

estate to become self-sufficient and self-sustaining in terms of providing the applicants with food self-sufficiency, as it would have done when it was originally occupied as a private residence.

- 1.6 The current need for retention of two polytunnels and associated garden structures that have been installed, as an interim measure, in the walled garden and adjacent orchard paddock, is to provide food cultivation facilities on a private basis for the use of the estate whilst restoration works are ongoing.
- 1.7 After years of abandonment and disrepair under previous ownership, the walled garden has now been largely returned to working use for its original purpose by the applicant - as a kitchen garden for estate food production. However, parts of the wall structures are currently in a poor state of repair or are unsafe.
- 1.8 Until repairs are carried out, areas of the cultivable area of the walled garden are not available for use and the protected area that the walled garden enclosure would provide for young plant growth, from weather and wild animal damage, is much reduced – all of which has limited food production.
- 1.9 A considered approach has been taken to address these issues as follows:
 - (a) A remediation package for the repair of the walled garden is being assessed and is currently being prepared by Donald Insall Associates, including a full structural assessment of the walls, which will be shared in close consultation with the Local Planning Authority Conservation Officer in due course.
 - (b) In parallel to the walled garden repair programme, preparation is also underway for proposals for further, new and sensitively designed, cultivable areas to expand capacity for food production elsewhere on the estate, which are the subject of ongoing consultation with the Local Planning Authority and would be the subject of a separate application.
- 1.10 In the interim, and following pre-application consultation with the Local Planning Authority conservation advisors, Mel Morris Conservation, and Historic England, planning permission is sought for temporary retention of the two polytunnels and smaller associated temporary garden structures for a five year period to enable food production to continue whilst the repairs programme is being carried out. Once the repair programme to the walled garden is completed, the walled garden would be returned to full re-use, giving the estate improved capacity for self-sufficient food production, which would mean the polytunnels and temporary structures can be taken down.
- 1.11 The size, scale and number of garden structures that have been erected on a temporary basis is the minimum reasonably necessary for seasonal production of fruit and vegetables for Heath House, no more have been erected than the capacity required to meet the family's personal, basic needs.
- 1.12 The applicants have a strong desire to restore the estate and have the resources and commitment to do so. This therefore represents a strong and unique opportunity for the Council

and the applicant to work positively together to secure the long term future use and sustainability of the estate and to preserve and enhance an important local heritage asset as a single entity for future generations.

- 1.13 This statement will seek to demonstrate that the proposals would comply with relevant policies of the Development Plan, and in accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, that planning permission for the additional temporary period ought to be granted.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Heath House estate is located between Upper and Lower Tean in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The supporting heritage design and access statement by Donald Insall Associates set out that the original house that was first constructed comprised a Georgian house that was replaced by the Tudor Gothic house that now stands on the site. The north and north-west lodges were built around 1830-31, and a south lodge (no longer part of the estate) was also constructed around this time. The walled garden was laid out by this date and historical estate maps show that there were stable buildings to the north of the site. The Orangery, Italian Garden and associated features were also constructed around this time.
- 2.2 In the early 20th Century the house was extended through the provision of a service wing to the northeast of the house. The house was first listed in 1967 as Grade II before being upgraded to Grade II* in 1986.
- 2.3 In 2011 planning and listed building consent was granted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the use of Heath House as a wedding venue. The approved use was carried out but ceased prior to the current owners acquiring the estate in 2021.
- 2.4 The estate surrounding the house comprises parkland/pastureland with areas of woodland and a tree lined access drive to the west of the house.
- 2.5 There are three established access routes to the site, however the main points of access that are the most frequently used are the access to the west which joins the junction of Heath House Lane and Hollington Road to the northwest, and the access which joins Hollington Road to the northeast. As part of the planning permission for the wedding venue, a one-way route was established whereby vehicles would enter the site from the northwest and leave the site from the north east.
- 2.6 A more detailed description of the buildings, their setting and the historical development of the estate as well as their significance are set out in the reports by Donald Insall Associates.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Heath House

- 3.1 SMD/2011/0264 – Erection of a marquee and change of use of premises from residential to commercial wedding venue with bed and breakfast facilities – Approved 31/07/2013.
- 3.2 SMD/2001/1247 – Part change of use to offices (B1) – Approved 08/03/2002.
- 3.3 SMD/2001/1281 – Listed building consent for part change of use to office accommodation – approved 21/09/2001.

Stable Block

- 3.4 SMD/2002/1231 – Change of use/conversion of redundant stable block to office units – approved 20/02/2003.
- 3.5 SMD/2002/1223 – Listed building application for conversion of stable block to offices – approved 28/02/2003.

North Lodge

- 3.6 SMD/2002/0053 – Internal alterations to listed building – Approved 18/06/2002.
- 3.7 SMD/2023/0446 – Proposed repairs, refurbishment and alterations to the Grade II listed North Lodge and erection of a rear orangery – Live application yet to be determined.
- 3.8 SMD/2023/0447 – Listed building consent for proposed repairs, refurbishment and alterations to the Grade II listed North Lodge and erection of a rear orangery – Live application yet to be determined.

Front Lodge

- 3.9 No planning history available on the Council's web site.

Sawmill

- 3.10 SMD/2022/1220 – Change of use/conversion of sawmill to dwelling – approved 28/02/2003.
- 3.11 SMD/2022/1221 – Listed building application to convert sawmill to dwelling – approved 28/02/2003.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 This application seeks temporary planning permission (retrospective) for the erection of two polytunnels and associated structures to be retained for a period of 5 years to enable food to be grown on the estate during restoration works for the existing walled garden, following which the structures would be removed.

4.2 To enable the terms of any temporary permission to be enforceable and precise, it is proposed that a condition be attached to the permission as follows:

The polytunnels and associated structures hereby permitted shall be for a maximum of 5 years from the date of this planning permission being granted after which time the land occupied by the polytunnels and associated structures shall be restored to its prior condition shown on the following drawing references:

- (a) *STHH.01 1010 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Plan*
- (b) *STHH.01 1210 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Elevations and Sections Sheet 1*
- (c) *STHH.01 1211 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Elevations and Sections Sheet 2*
- (d) *STHH.01 1212 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Elevations and Sections Sheet 3*

Upon completion of the restoration works, written confirmation that the restoration works have been completed shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

4.3 Further details relating to the proposed structures are set out within the heritage design and access statement by Donald Insall Associates.

5. DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The adopted development plan for the area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan adopted in September 2020.
- 5.2 The proposals seek to re-establish Heath House as a private residence from its previous use as a commercial wedding venue.
- 5.3 For planning policy purposes, the site is in countryside.
- 5.4 Policy SS10 supports the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside for residential use in accordance with Policy H1, and in addition, allows suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC2.
- 5.5 Policy H1(5)(d) states that the following forms of housing development will be permitted:

“The conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets”.

- 5.6 Policy DC2 sets out the historic environment policies of the Council through 7 policy criteria as follows:

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.
3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.
5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.
7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and

those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.

5.7 Other Material Considerations include the following:

- (a) National Planning Policy Framework.
- (b) Planning Practice Guidance.
- (c) Historic England technical advice publications¹ relating to retrofit and energy efficiency in historic buildings:
 - (i) Insulating roofs in historic buildings.
 - (ii) Insulating walls in historic buildings.
 - (iii) Modifying historic windows as part of retrofitting energy saving measures.
 - (iv) Insulating floors in historic buildings.
 - (v) Overheating in historic buildings.
 - (vi) Energy performance certificates.
 - (vii) Low and zero carbon technologies.
- (d) Government review on adapting historic homes for energy efficiency: a review of the barriers²

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/retrofit-and-energy-efficiency-in-historic-buildings/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adapting-historic-homes-for-energy-efficiency-a-review-of-the-barriers/adapting-historic-homes-for-energy-efficiency-a-review-of-the-barriers>

6. ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Policy SS11 (other rural areas) supports proposals which have an essential need to be in the countryside, including allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC2.
- 6.2 In this case, the proposals seek planning permission for a five year period for the retention of temporary garden structures that have been erected on the Heath House Estate. The structures lie within the curtilage of the Walled Garden (listed Grade II), and the adjacent paddock and orchard, both of which form part of the curtilage of Heath House (listed Grade II*).
- 6.3 The Walled Garden, adjacent paddock and orchard, having been underused for decades, have now been largely returned to active use. Both areas have been replanted for their historic horticultural purposes as kitchen gardens and for private food production for the family, their guests and staff at Heath House.
- 6.4 However, owing to the declining fortunes of the estate in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries, these areas have had little or no maintenance and the walls in particular of the Walled Garden are demonstrably in poor condition. A condition survey and structural monitoring is being undertaken to understand the extent of the problem, and a programme of repairs will be prepared. In the interim, the temporary structures are essential to facilitate the forcing and slowing of the growth of vegetables and fruit out of due season and are necessary to support the ongoing active re-use of the Walled Garden and orchard.
- 6.5 Further, whilst there was once a plethora of historic ancillary support garden structures in the vicinity of the Walled Garden, all have been lost and there are none now available for re-use. This means new sheds, composting bins and greenhouse structures are needed to support horticultural activities.
- 6.6 The size, scale and number of garden structures that have been erected is the minimum reasonably necessary for seasonal production of fruit and vegetables for Heath House, no more have been erected at this stage than the capacity required to meet the family's personal, basic needs.
- 6.7 The impact of the new structures has been intentionally designed to be mitigated, with particular regard to the significance, views and setting of the heritage assets on the estate. The new structures are low in height, visibility is largely concealed by surrounding historic walls, woodland and hedges. All are free standing structures, and, with the exception of the small electric box are fully demountable and reversible.

- 6.8 No alterations to the listed buildings or structures have been made, with no fixings to walls. The integrity of the form, fabric and historic purpose of the walled garden and orchard remains intact.
- 6.9 It is therefore considered that the need for the proposals on a temporary basis would accord with Policy DC2 and SS11 and are therefore acceptable in principle.

Heritage Impact and Heritage Balance

- 6.10 In assessing the impact of the scheme as built, in accordance with the NPPF, for the most part there is neutral impact on the significance, views and setting of the heritage assets of the North Lodge, the Stables, the Walled Garden, Heath House and its historic parkland. A minor – negligible degree of “less than substantial harm” has been identified as a result of limited, wider distant views of the external cladding of the orchard polytunnel from the north estate drive.
- 6.11 However, this is decisively outweighed by the heritage and public benefits that arise from the use of the new structures on a temporary basis to:
- (a) support the return to active re-use of the former estate walled kitchen garden and historic orchard, that is compatible with and better reveals the historic interest of those heritage assets and their connection with Heath House.
 - (b) allow repairs that will preserve the historic fabric and significance of the Walled Garden to take place.
 - (c) enable the on-going use of the historic horticultural areas to continue for basic food production whilst carefully considered proposals for expansion of food cultivation to other parts of the estate are prepared by expert landscape designers.
 - (d) arrest decline and reduce risk to vulnerable historic fabric of the Heath House heritage assets and secure them for future generations to enjoy.
 - (e) low carbon food miles through locally produced food and extension of the growing season.
 - (f) employment of skilled garden staff for management and implementation of the Heath House horticulture, which benefits the local community and helps sustain the rural economy.
- 6.12 In light of the above considerations, the public benefits of the proposals significantly and demonstrably outweigh any less than substantial harm at the lowest end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm. In any event, this low level of harm would only be for a temporary period. Planning permission should therefore be granted accordingly.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This planning statement has been prepared by Knights on behalf of Primafides (Suisse) SA (the applicant) in support of a temporary planning permission (retrospective) for the erection of two polytunnels and associated structures at Heath House, near Tean, Staffordshire Moorlands.
- 7.2 Heath House is a Grade II* listed building, with the wider estate containing several other buildings and structures which are either listed in their own right, or curtilage listed by association.
- 7.3 This submission should be read in conjunction with the following documents prepared by Donald Insall Associates:
- (a) Heritage design and access statement
 - (b) Location Plan
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 - (e) Proposed sections and elevations
- 7.4 The applicant is in a unique position in that they do not require enabling development for the wider proposals to be viable, as would be the case had Heath House fallen to the local authority, community trust or a commercial property investor. They have the necessary funds required to restore the Heath House estate without heavy reliance on external funding sources or supplementary business ventures. This extends as far as repairing and conserving properties that they currently have no need for, for example the stable blocks. They recognise that the preservation of such structures, regardless of their current viability, is of national importance.
- 7.5 This application seeks temporary planning permission (retrospective) for the erection of two polytunnels and associated structures to be retained for a period of 5 years to enable food to be grown on the estate during restoration works for the existing walled garden, following which the structures would be removed.
- 7.6 This submission has demonstrated that the public benefits of the proposals would outweigh any less than substantial harm that falls at the bottom end of the range of less than substantial harm, and in any event, the level of harm would only exist for a temporary basis whilst restoration of the listed walled garden takes place.
- 7.7 To enable the terms of any temporary permission to be enforceable and precise, it is proposed that a condition be attached to the permission as follows:

The polytunnels and associated structures hereby permitted shall be for a maximum of 5 years from the date of this planning permission being granted after which time the land occupied by the polytunnels and associated structures shall be restored to its prior condition shown on the following drawing references:

- (a) *STHH.01 1010 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Plan*
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- (d) *STHH.01 1212 Revision 0 – Existing Prior to the Works Elevations and Sections Sheet 3*

Upon completion of the restoration works, written confirmation that the restoration works have been completed shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

- 7.8 This planning statement has therefore demonstrated that the proposals would comply with the policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations.
- 7.9 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, it is respectfully requested that temporary planning permission is granted, subject to appropriately worded planning conditions as agreed.

Knights
January 2026