

Heritage Impact Assessment

Removal of pre-fabricated college buildings at The Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Stainborough.

1.0 Introduction

The assessment relates to the proposed removal of the Annex, a twin range of pre-fabricated buildings installed to provide accommodation for the College of Education in 1948. The Annex is located within the grounds of The Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Stainborough as detailed in drawings 23-023G-001 and 23-023G-200, prepared by Storah Architecture Ltd.

The Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced for the client to meet the requirements of paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and inform them, their agents and the planning authority of the historical significance of the site, together with the impact of proposals on its heritage value and significance.

This statement has been prepared by Richard Storah of Storah Architecture.

The site is within the grade I listed Park and Garden at Wentworth Castle. The site is adjacent to Wentworth Court, student accommodation constructed in the late C20. Other buildings on site are listed at grades I, II* and II.

2.0 History & Significance

2.1 Description

Wentworth Castle is the former seat of the Earls of Strafford. It is sited in a landscaped parkland at Stainborough, near Barnsley. The site was purchased by Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby in 1708 and the house and gardens extensively developed and landscaped to create the grade I listed house and park which currently house the Northern College.

2.1.1 Cutler House and Stainborough

In 1602, Thomas Cutler purchased Stainborough Hall and its estates from Francis Everingham. His son, Gervase Cutler was a lawyer at the Inner Temple in London. He became associated with the future King Charles I and was granted a knighthood. His son, also Sir Gervase was born in 1641. He inherited Stainborough in 1664 and instigated the rebuilding of the house in 1670. This house is now described as Cutler House and is now enclosed on three sides by later additions.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

2.1.2 Purchase by Thomas Wentworth

The house was purchased by Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby (1672–1739) for £14,000. In 1708. The Strafford fortune had passed from William Wentworth to his wife's nephew, Thomas Watson and only the barony of Raby had gone to a blood-relation. It has been suggested that this motivated Wentworth's purchase of Stainborough Castle only 6 miles from Watson's home at Wentworth Woodhouse, and that his efforts to surpass the Watsons at Wentworth Woodhouse in splendour and taste motivated Thomas Wentworth whom Jonathan Swift called "proud as Hell".

Wentworth was sent by Queen Anne as ambassador to Prussia in 1705–11. On his return to Britain, the earldom was revived when he was created Viscount Wentworth and 1st Earl of Strafford (second creation) in the Peerage of Great Britain. He was then sent as a representative in the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Utrecht. The Treaty which ended the War of the Spanish Succession also gained Britain both Gibraltar and the 'Asiento' - the monopoly to supply enslaved people from African countries to the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Thomas then made profit from the trade via shares and links to the East India Company and the Royal African Company.

2.1.3 The First Campaign

The first building campaign to upgrade the hall was initiated c. 1711. This campaign included the building of the Baroque wing to the designs of Johann von Bodt a military architect who had spent some years in England. James Gibbs a Scottish Architect designed parts of the interior. During this period the house was still called Stainborough in Jan Kip's engraved bird's-eye view of parterres and avenues, 1714, and in the first edition of Vitruvius Britannicus, 1715. The First Campaign, including the long gallery has been described as "a remarkable and almost unique example of Franco-Prussian architecture in Georgian England".

This period of building very much represents Thomas Wentworth in politics and belief. The Baroque style identifies both Tory and European diplomatic influence. Palladianism at the time being associated with the Whigs. The landscape also symbolises political allegiance, the maze-like garden was fashionable has been laid out to combine the crosses of St George and St Andrew, celebrating the union of Scotland and England in 1707. This union was a proud moment in Queen Anne's reign, and demonstrates his loyalty to her.

With the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the crown passed from the Stuart royal line to the Hanoverians. This promoted a change in the political landscape as the Tories were removed from power. A staunch Tory, Strafford remained in political obscurity for the remainder of his life, but required a grand house to reflect his fortunes and spent his retirement completing it and its landscape. This included the creation of Stainborough Castle, a folly ruin to preserve the name and history, when the house was renamed Wentworth Castle in 1731. He also continued to demonstrate his political views, a sitting room in the house was named "Queen Anne's Sitting Room", this remains as the Queen Anne Suite. A 1734 monument is also dedicated to Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch. This is unique in an English garden, an almost treasonable statement which hints at what he thought of the regime change.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

2.1.4 The Second Earl and the Second Campaign

The first earl died in 1739 and was succeeded by his son, William Wentworth, 2nd Earl of Strafford (1722-1791). William is acknowledged as the designer of the second Campaign, a neo-Palladian range, built in 1759–64. Whilst he employed John Platt as master mason and Charles Ross to draft the final drawings and act as “superintendent”, it was generally understood, as Lord Verulam remarked in 1768, “Lord Strafford himself is his own architect and contriver in everything.”

The Second Campaign resulted in the Palladian wing, the style having now overtaken Baroque in fashionable British architecture.

During this period, the gardens were substantially remodelled to more naturalistic forms in the style of the English Landscape Movement. Horace Walpole singled out Wentworth Castle as a paragon for the perfect integration of the site, the landscape, even the harmony of the stone “If a model is sought of the most perfect taste in architecture... the new front of Wentworth-castle...distributed so many beauties over that domain and called from wood, water, hills, prospects, and buildings, a compendium of picturesque nature, improved by the chastity of art.”

Unlike the first Earl, William’s architecture at the castle is not an expression of his political views. The exception may be the Argyll Column of 1744, dedicated to his late father in law, the 2nd Duke of Argyll, the column is topped with a statue of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom and war. She faces south to London, the Duke had been punished for opposing the government's harsh anti-Jacobite policies in Scotland.

2.1.4 Later Generations

With the extinction of the earldom following the death of third earl in 1799, the estates were divided. Wentworth Castle was left in trust for Frederick Vernon of Hilton Hall, Staffordshire. He added Wentworth to his surname and took charge of the estate in 1816. Between 1820 and 1840, the windows of the Baroque Wing were lowered on either side of the entrance hall. Frederick Vernon Wentworth also amalgamated two ground floor rooms to make what is now the blue room.

Frederick Vernon Wentworth was succeeded by his son Thomas in 1885 who added the iron framed Conservatory and electric lighting by March of the following year. The Victorian Wing also dates from this decade and its construction allowed the Vernon-Wentworths to entertain the young Duke of Clarence and his entourage during the winters of 1887 and 1889. The estate was inherited by Thomas' eldest son, Captain Bruce Vernon-Wentworth, MP for Brighton, in 1902. He had no direct heirs and sold the house and its gardens to Barnsley Corporation in 1948 shortly prior to his death in 1951.

2.1.5 Education

Barnsley Corporation brought the hall into use as a teacher training college, the Wentworth Castle College of Education, a teacher training college for women. In later years it also admitted men. The college opened in 1948 and was administered by The University of Sheffield Institute of Education.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

The college required additional accommodation for students and as a training rooms for prospective teachers. To provide this the annex was constructed on a field to the north of the gardens in around 1950. The buildings are in concrete panel construction with fibre reinforced cement roofs and metal framed single glazed windows, typical of pre-fab housing and other low-rise buildings of the immediate post-war period.



The College in the post-war period, with the newly built Annex visible to the top left.



A present view of the site, showing the remaining Annex buildings

In 1978, the College moved to Sheffield Polytechnic in 1978 and Wentworth Castle became home to Northern College.

The Northern College was founded was founded in 1978. Based at the Castle, the college is for the education and training of men and women who are without formal

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

qualifications and are seeking to return to learning. It also offers training for those who are active in community and voluntary groups as well as in trade unions.

During Northern College's tenure of the site, the Annex has become redundant due to changing needs and has been replaced by other buildings on the estate. For many years it has been fenced off and disused.

The Annex is located outside the main area of the gardens, which are bounded by Lady Lucy's Walk to the south. It is screened from the formal gardens by fencing and a group of lime trees replanted in the early C20.

2.1.6 Wentworth Castle Gardens and the National Trust

The great landscape that Walpole praised in 1780 was described in 1986 as "disturbed and ruinous". Wentworth Castle Heritage Trust was formed in 2002 as a charity and the gardens were opened to the public, with £20m spent on the restoration of the gardens between 2002 and 2017. The castle gardens were closed to the public in 2017 amidst a funding crisis. In September 2018 National Trust, Northern College and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council formed a new partnership to manage the gardens and parkland which surround the College grounds. The gardens reopened to the public on 8 June 2019.

2.2 Significance

This section assesses the relative significance of the buildings and the site, and their historic values and significance. Significance is a concept for measuring the cultural value of a place, using judgement to assess the place and its different aspects in a hierarchy. The concept was first developed in Australia, but is further described for a UK context in 'Conservation Principles' (English Heritage, 2008).

The established levels of significance are:

- Exceptional – important at national to international levels, reflected in statutory designations, such as Grade I listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.
- High – important at regional or sometimes a higher level, e.g. Grade II listed buildings
- Medium – important at a local level, and possibly at a regional level, for example for group value
- Low – of no more than local value
- Negative or intrusive features – features which in their present form detract from the value of the site.

2.2.1 The Significance of Wentworth Castle

Wentworth Castle is a high status house in the north of England. The house is important for its high quality, high status, contrasting architectural styles and its links with the Earls of Strafford, in particular the first earl, Thomas Wentworth, who instigated the First Campaign to create the Baroque wing and the second earl, who added the Palladian wing and redesigned the surrounding landscape in the style of the English Garden Movement.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

Cutler House has significance as the original building 'Stainborough' rebuilt by in 1670, which gives identity to the area. The house has been extensively remodelled and the roof raised, presumably during the construction the Baroque range from 1711.

The Baroque range has particular interest. It is featured in Vitruvius Britannicus and is described as "a remarkable and almost unique example of Franco-Prussian architecture in Georgian England" and by Nicholas Pevsner as "of a palatial splendour uncommon in England." The range is an almost unique example of Baroque architecture in Britain.

The Palladian south front is also a demonstration of country house architecture on a massive scale, and has associative links with the remodelling of the landscape and the gardens of the English Landscape Movement.

The house is listed, grade 1 and the gardens also at grade 1. It is considered of **exceptional significance** owing to its architectural and aesthetic value. Some areas, including the Victorian range have a lesser status, but remain of **high significance**. Occasional later alterations, including the mid C20 additions within the courtyard "windy ridge" have negative value and are considered to detract from significance, though remain a part of the buildings history.

The house has further significance as the seat of Thomas Wentworth, Viscount Wentworth and Earl of Strafford. Queen Anne's representative in negotiations for the Treaty of Utrecht and the 'Asiento'. His political affiliations are expressed in the design of the house and in planning and monuments in the wider landscape. His impact has had profound impacts on the way society and the UK economy developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is considered of **exceptional significance** owing to its associated historic value.

The house has societal and communal value, as The Northern College and its predecessor the Wentworth Castle College of Education. It also has societal and communal value within the Wentworth Castle Gardens. It is considered to have **high significance** owing to its communal value.

Owing to the rivalries between Thomas Wentworth and Thomas Watson of Wentworth Woodhouse, the house is considered to have associative value with Wentworth Woodhouse.

2.2.2 The Significance of the Home Farm Complex, Gun Room and Estate buildings on the site.

The Home Farm complex includes a series of former barns, stables, a coachhouse and workers dwellings and a chapel, constructed in the form of a small Anglican Church. The buildings were constructed as ancillary buildings to the main house. The deer barn to the north and Gun Room and estate buildings to the south are also listed. They are of **high significance** due to their types and due to the associative value with the castle and gardens.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

2.2.3 The Significance of post war buildings on the site

The Annex was a range of three single storey post-war pre-fabs, linked by a rendered brick corridor and boiler house with a pedimented entrance and small water tower. The group reflects the utilitarian mass production of the period, but is not of any exceptional quality. It is considered that the Annex due to its poor construction quality and form detracts from the setting of the gardens as a whole. The Annex is considered of **negative significance**, harming the garden.

Other College buildings including the Owen Block and Wollstonencraft Block reflect the design of educational buildings of the later C20. The Wollstonencraft Block is by Lyons Israel Ellis and Partners. notable architects of the period.

Wentworth Court is a late C20 low rise college accommodation block. It has no particular significance nor heritage value, and is considered **neutral** in its impact on significance.

2.2.5 The Significance of the gardens and landscape

Wentworth Castle is a high status house in the north of England. The house is important for its high quality, high status, contrasting architectural styles and it's links with the Earls of Strafford, in particular the first earl, Thomas Wentworth, who instigated the First Campaign to create the Baroque wing and the second earl, who added the Palladian wing and redesigned the surrounding landscape in the style of the English Garden Movement. The gardens and landscape are considered of **exceptional significance** nationally and internationally as reflected in their grade I listings.

3.0 The Project

The project is to remove the annex buildings, clear the thorny scrub around them and to restore the site as a series of hardstandings for future use. Part of the site is used as allotment space and has a greenhouse for educational use. This use will be expanded into the remainder of the Annex site.

3.1 The Need for the Works

The college is both proud of its location within its historic site, it is keen to present itself well, including its access and to provide safe inclusive access to all its facilities.

The Annex detracts from this aim, appearing as a series of poorly constructed vacant sheds on the main approach to the college from the car park.

It is also a safety concern for unauthorised access with collapsing roofs and ACM's used in its construction which remain a residual roost for users as the building continues to deteriorate.

3.2 Proposals

It is proposed to remove the remaining Annex buildings and to clear the site leaving concrete hardstandings which form the building footprint. Trenches for district heating will be infilled and the grounds around the buildings restored as grass and underplanting to the trees which surround the site beyond its perimeter.

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

4.0 The Impacts of the works

The Castle is some distance away to the south. The deer barn to the north and Gun Room and estate buildings to the south are also listed. All are considered too remote from the proposed greenhouse to be affected by the proposal.

The site is within the defined area of the listed garden. It is however within the previously developed Annex area which is fenced and screened from the wider gardens. Whilst there is a loss of evidential value, removing elements which inform of past educational use, it is not considered that there will be considerable aesthetic improvement in removing the buildings and restoring the site as a green space.



The site is separated from the main college grounds and gardens within a fenced enclosure.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposals should be considered in the context of national guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposals remove elements which are considered to detract from the appearance of a protected garden. They also remove a maintenance burden from the college estate, and a potential health and safety risk of unauthorised access.

The proposal will allow the restoration and landscaping of a redundant and overgrown area within the college grounds. It allows a part of the garden which is currently in a poor condition and of negative value to be returned to use and gardened as part of the college activities.

The proposals should be considered in the context of national guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states 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'*.

The impact on the heritage asset (the listed garden) is beneficial as has been demonstrated. There are benefits in the proposal in terms of allowing the reuse of a run

Heritage Impact Assessment: Removal of Annex buildings at The Northern College.

down section of the garden and its return to an active use as a garden area serving the college in meeting its students and educational needs.

The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of the NPPF, as there is no negative impact on the significance of the heritage assets (listed buildings and garden).

It is considered the proposals meet the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies.

Report prepared by

Richard Storah
for Storah Architecture

Appendix attached - List Entry for Garden