



# **Wentworth Castle Gardens**

## **Gun Room Temporary Roof Repair**

**Design and Access Statement  
with Heritage Impact Assessment**

**November 2025**

**National Trust - North Region**

Goddards

27 Tadcaster Road

York

YO24 1GG



# Application to install a temporary roof covering to the Gun Room at Wentworth Castle Gardens.

## 1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a planning application seeking consent for the installation of a temporary roof over the structure known as the Gun Room at the National Trust property known as Wentworth Castle Gardens. The applicant is the National Trust, Goddard's, 27 Tadcaster Road, York, YO24 1GG. This application is accompanied by and should be read alongside the following documents:

- 10043689\_PL\_00 - NT Boundary Plan
- 10043689\_PL\_01 - Location Plan
- 10043689\_PL\_02 - Site Plan
- 10043689\_PL\_03 - Roof Plan
- 10043689\_PL\_04 - Roof Sections
- 10043689\_PL\_05 - Chimney Details
- 10043689\_PL\_06 - Existing Elevations
- 10043689\_PL\_07 - Proposed Elevations
- WCG\_Roof Condition Survey 28.03.25
- MBE BAT 2025 011 02 Gun Room at Wentworth Castle Gardens - Bat Survey Report In accordance with national validation requirements, the purpose of this Design and Access Statement is to outline the design principles and concepts that have been applied to proposed new roof coverings.

### 1.1 Overview of the proposal

Wentworth Castle Gardens and Stainborough Park is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden (RPG NHL 1000451), the only one of its kind in South Yorkshire. The property also lies within the designated Wentworth Conservation and Stainborough Park Conservation Area and within the green belt.

The entire site consists of over 60 acres of formal gardens and 500 acres of wider parkland, the majority of which are open to the public. Within this site over 26 individually listed buildings and structures in the grounds and parkland. The majority of this is owned by Barnsley Council and is on a 25 year repairing lease to the National Trust. The major exclusion is the Grade I mansion house which (along with some of the surrounding buildings) is leased by Northern College and provides residential and community education for adults and is not open to the public except by occasional tour.

The Gun Room lies within the area leased by the National Trust. It is approximately 50 metres to northwest of the mansion and is Grade II\* listed (NHLE 1151066). It is currently on the Historic England 'At Risk' register.

The history of the structure is unclear, but it is likely to have been created in the first half of the 18th century, with at least one later phase of adaptation as a place to store and clean guns for use during sporting shoots in the 19th century; from which the modern name derives. The formal listing states:

*STAINBOROUGH*

*1800/1/44 WENTWORTH CASTLE 28-AUG-03 Gun Room*

*GV II\* Probably built as a banqueting-house or bath-house, used as a gun room in C19. Mid C18 with C19 alterations. Built for the Wentworth Castle estate. Red brick, ashlar sandstone dressings. Modillioned ashlar cornice, hipped Welsh slate roof. Square, single-storey building. Main facade: ashlar plinth and sill band. Central projection with badly-weathered Doric Venetian window having paired side lights, the outer lights blind, and one inner light with margin-light glazing; frieze with triglyphs and bucrania, open pediment encloses round-arched head of central light. Right return: original doorway with architrave and pediment on left; to right, late C19 hipped-roof canopy supported by sturdy wooden posts and matching old 18-pane sash. INTERIOR: remains of fine mid-C18 plasterwork. Curved entrance apse with moulded plaster doorcase with Vitruvian scrolls beneath cornices. Corinthian-columned side screens each with section of entablature carried over beneath a shallow segmental arch. Octagonal ceiling bosses in apsidal end bay decorated with flowers. Smaller tiled room to rear.*

While subject to extensive external repair and conservation during the 2000s under the previous trust that leased the site, this work did not extend to the roof or the internal decoration which remains in a poor state and under severe risk of further, irreversible damage. While this work will not resolve these ongoing issues, it is intended to act as a vital temporary measure that will offer protection to the internal structure while necessary funds are raised.

## **1.2 Summary of work**

This scheme is an initial protection and enabling project to weatherproof the building, facilitate drying of the existing fabric and to inform future design work to ultimately restore the Gun Room and remove it from the Heritage at Risk Register.

The scheme proposes to remove the existing failed slate roof coverings and provide a temporary EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer) rubber roof covering, incorporating detailing to ventilate the roof void and structure. This measure will prevent continued water ingress and mitigate further water damage to the internal fabric and roof structure.

Black coloured EPDM will be utilised to soften the visual impact. Lead detailing to the ridge, hips, valleys and apron will be retained to maintain much of the roofs aesthetic, though fabric performance of these elements will be upgraded by utilising EPDM membrane and DPC layers beneath.

The chimney provided to the north slope of the roof will also be repointed, capped and lead flashings replaced.

## 2. Proposed Development

### 2.1 Location

Wentworth Castle Gardens are located to the southwest of Barnsley and south of Dodworth. The Gun Room is located to the northwest of the property (see below plan).



### 2.2 Designations

The site lies within the following designations identified in the Barnsley Local Plan (2019):

- Grade I Registered Park and Garden (see plan below):



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- Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area
- Green Belt

### 2.3 Historic Overview of Site

Stainborough Hall was owned by the Everingham family, who sold it to the Cutlers in the mid-17th century who rebuilt the hall in c1670-72. The house and estate were bought in 1708 by the Soldier and diplomat **Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (2nd creation) (1672-1739)**. A member of the powerful Yorkshire Wentworth family, Thomas was convinced he would inherit the family's dynastic headquarters at Wentworth Woodhouse and was therefore deeply aggrieved when this instead passed to his cousin in 1695. Determined to outmanoeuvre his cousin, as soon as he had the funds, he purchased the neighbouring estate of Stainborough and from the 1710s set about transforming it into a rival dynastic seat that would reflect and project his own importance and overshadow Wentworth Woodhouse.

The work was extensive and included a large new wing added to the existing relatively modest Cutler house, along with the development of a formal parkland and gardens. This included the commissioning of numerous monuments and other structures, notably in the 1720s and '30s. It is highly likely that the Gun Room was one of these additions. By this time, a change of royal dynasty had seen Thomas' political influence sidelined and the work has been interpreted as reflecting his frustrated pride and veiled hopes for a change of political fortune.

The development of the house and estate was continued by Thomas' son and heir, **William Wentworth, 2nd Earl of Strafford (2nd creation) (1722-1791)**. Less overtly political than his father, William sought to express his cultured taste by adapting his father's vision with a further wing to the house and new parkland features.

After William's death, Wentworth Castle was caught up in a protracted series of family legal disputes, eventually being inherited by the Vernon Wentworths in 1803. The estate remained with the family for three generations (Frederick, Thomas, Bruce), eventually being sold by Bruce Vernon Wentworth in 1948. Through this time there was further development of the house and associated property, notably Home Farm and parts of the gardens including the grand conservatory. Of growing importance was the use of the parkland for game shooting, which acted as a focus for society events during the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

With the family largely living at other estates in Scotland and Suffolk, the house declined in status during the 20th century and much of the art was sold in 1919. Following requisition by the army during the Second World War, the house and gardens were sold to Barnsley Corporation in 1948 and re-purposed largely for educational use; initially as a teacher training college and from 1978 bought by Northern College to create a residential adult education college. New structures were built close to the mansion during this period.

In 2002 a new **Wentworth Castle & Stainborough Park Heritage Trust** was formed to reunite ownership of the gardens and parkland and undertake a programme of restoration and (from 2007) to open these to the public. The Trust folded in 2017, but a new partnership was created involving the **National Trust**, Barnsley Council and Northern College and the site re-opened to the public in 2019. From a place born of rivalry, Wentworth Castle now provides a space to bring people together.

## 2.4 Design

The existing roof coverings are contributing to water ingress into the Gun Room. The works in this application are proposed following unsuccessful patch repairs undertaken in March 2025, which sought to reposition and affix slipped slates and flashings to temporarily weather the main roof to the Gun Room. This commenced on the south facing slope and was abandoned due to the extent of decay observed in the battens and underfelt.

Assessment of the roof thereafter concluded that lapping of Welsh slate courses is minimal and has proven to be insufficient for the shallow roof pitches. Additionally, the lead features to the ridge, hips and apron are provided with minimal lapping cover and are simple lapped, permitting standing/slow moving water to penetrate between sheets. These routes for ingress, combined with a lack of ventilation to the roof structure, has led to an environment that supports decay and insect attack within the roof void, affecting the roof structure and ceilings below.



*Existing Roof Coverings and Lead Apron Detail Prior to Stripping the South Slope*

It is intended that permanent roof repairs will be undertaken as part of a follow up phase of works, which will include the conservation and restoration of the existing plaster ceilings, roof structure and reinstatement of slate coverings. Whilst research into the extent of conservation work is ongoing, current funding constraints are likely to preclude this from commencing in the short term.

To prevent continued deterioration to the building and enable the structure to dry out, this application proposes that the existing slate roof coverings are removed and stored on site for reuse at a later date. The decayed roof laths and bitumen felt will be removed and replaced with new, including the addition of counter battens to improve ventilation to the roof structure and to mitigate condensation.

A temporary roof covering will comprise a standard 1.14mm thick black EPDM roofing membrane (FlexiProof or similar) adhered to 12mm OSB decking on new tanalised softwood battens. Ventilation gaps will be formed at the eaves and roof vents will be formed near the top of each slope to promote air movement throughout the roof void. Although the ecological assessment has not identified any bats roosting in the building, type 1F bituminous roofing felt will be incorporated to mitigate risk to any opportunistic bat roosting.

Once exposed, the roof structure will be assessed and recorded to inform this and later roof repair schemes. To facilitate this temporary roofing works, minimal repairs will be undertaken. It

is known that areas of the roof structure are affected by decay and insect activity. Where possible, the existing timbers will be retained and additional support provided by sistering with tanalised softwood to carry the temporary roof structure. Where sistering is not possible, the primary structure will be repaired on a like-for-like basis with seasoned oak, spliced in to match the existing fabric. Where common rafters or sprockets have been lost, these will be replaced with tanalised softwood equivalents to support the temporary coverings.

The replacement of isolated members of the roof structure with tanalised softwood has already been undertaken, as can be observed on the south facing section where seven common rafters, a principal rafter to the girder truss and a purlin were replaced during the 2005 repair scheme.



*Existing roof structure to the south elevation where coverings have been stripped.*

The lead sheeting to the ridge, hips, valleys and apron will be retained to maintain much of the roofs aesthetic in its temporary state, however to counter the inadequate lapping and jointing of the apron, a DPC will be introduced beneath this element to weather the stone cornice and wall head.

The chimney on the north slope will be repointed and lead flashings replaced. In addition, a stone capping will be introduced to mitigate water ingress. This will be mounted upon stone pedestals to each corner to provide a 25mm high ventilation slot to all sides.



*Existing Chimney Detail with Loose Flashings and Weathered Pointing*

The rainwater goods provided to the east elevation will remain unaltered by this proposal. There are no rainwater goods provided to the north, west or south elevations, with rainfall cascading

from a drip to the apron. This has contributed to erosion of the cornice detail over time and consideration has been given to introducing a temporary box gutter atop the stone cornice by removing the sprockets in these areas, however given challenges in achieving adequate falls and considering the temporary nature of these works, this has not been included in this phase.

No remedial works are proposed to the stone cornice at this time.

## **2.5 Access**

Access to and around the building will not be negatively impacted by this proposal. The drying of the building fabric facilitated by these works paves the way for future conservation work that will ultimately lead to the Gun Room being removed from the Heritage At Risk Register and made accessible to the public.

### 3. Planning and Related Policy Framework

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). In this case the Statutory Development Plan comprises:

- Barnsley Local Plan (Adopted January 2019)

Material considerations in this proposal comprise the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) together with any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents. 7 The key elements of national and local planning policy therefore relating to this proposal are set out below.

#### 3.1 National Policy

##### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF (December 2024) states that there are three overarching objectives for the planning system. These are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways; an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

Section 13 of the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land.

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states that *“the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and recognising that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence”*.

The five purposes of Green Belt are set out at paragraph 143;

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

and e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment where paragraph 193 requires local planning authorities to apply various principles when determining planning applications. Point a) of the paragraph states that *“if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.”*

The site has been subject to ecological assessment which has confirmed there are no natural or semi-natural habitats likely to be impacted by the roof replacement works and the risk to protected species has been assessed as low. Mitigation identified as necessary for the proposals relates to good practice precautionary guidelines to follow during the construction process. Please refer to the associated 'bat survey report' for more details.

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment where paragraphs 212-221 of the NPPF relate to considering potential impacts of a proposed development on heritage assets. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been completed and is included in section 4.2 below. The Heritage assessment concludes that it is the view of the National Trust that the proposals are appropriate to this setting, proportionate and overall will have a mildly beneficial impact on the heritage values of the site. Its overall significance will remain largely unaltered. In determining applications, the NPPF (para 207) requires an applicant to *"describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be 'proportionate' to the assets' importance"*. The impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets is to be considered in line with the advice contained within paragraphs 212 onwards of the NPPF. This reinforces that *"great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be"*. Paragraph 213 confirms that *"any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification"*.

In order to examine the overall level of 'harm' in NPPF terms (i.e. whether it is to be considered either as 'substantial' or 'less than substantial') and given that great weight must be given to conservation afforded by the importance of the Grade I RPG and Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park Conservation Area it is important to outline a summary of the overall impacts, which can be found below in a proportionate assessment.

### 3.2 Local Policy

Barnsley's **Local Plan** was adopted on 3 January 2019. Relevant policies are summarised below:

**Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development** contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development and to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

**Policy E6 Rural Economy** states that a viable rural economy will be encouraged by allowing development in rural areas if it supports the sustainable diversification and development of the rural economy, results in growth of existing businesses, is related to tourism and recreation or improves the range and quality of local services in existing settlements.

**Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making** expects development to be of high-quality design and expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and features of Barnsley.

**Policy HE1 The Historic Environment** positively encourages 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 specifically including Wentworth Castle parkland (the only grade I Registered Park and Garden in South Yorkshire) and Stainborough Park conservation area
- b) ensuring that proposals affecting designated heritage assets conserve those elements which contribute to its significance
- c) supporting proposals that would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area
- d) ensuring that proposals affecting an archaeological site of less than national importance or sites with no statutory protection conserve those elements which contribute to its significance in line with the importance of the remains
- e) supporting proposals which conserve Barnsley's non-designated heritage assets
- f) supporting proposals which will help to secure a sustainable future for Barnsley's heritage assets, especially those identified as being at greatest risk of loss or decay.

**Policy HE 4 Developments affecting Historic Area or Landscapes** expects proposals that are within a Registered Park and Garden 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 either within the area or views that contribute to the setting of the area and take account of and respect important landscape elements including topographic features or trees that contribute to the significance of the area where harm might prejudice future restoration.

**Policy HE6 Archaeology** states that applications for development on sites where archaeological remains may be present must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment. The HIA provides further commentary on this.

**Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity** expects development to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough. The accompanying Preliminary Risk Assessment concludes no specific impacts of the proposal on habitats and species on the site. The application site lies out with the designated Stainborough Park Local Wildlife Site.

**Policy GB1 Protection of Green Belt states that Green Belt** will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. The detailed boundaries are defined on the Policies Map which includes land at Wentworth Castle Gardens.

## 4. Assessment of the proposal

### 4.1 Planning Issues

In accordance with national and local planning policy, the main planning issues raised by the development are as follows:

- the impact upon the historic environment;
- the impact upon relevant ecological interests; and
- the impact upon the Green Belt

### 4.2 Historic Environment

#### 4.2.1 Wider Site significance

Wentworth Castle Gardens is designated Grade I for the following principal reasons:

**Historic interest:** As a remarkably complex and well-surviving example of an early- to mid-C18 country-house designed landscape retaining a significant proportion of the principal features of the layout and design by both the first and second Earls of Strafford. The creation and development of the gardens are particularly well documented in estate archives, published and personal writings, paintings and illustrations, including a 1714 engraving by Knyff and Kip and a perspective view of 1730 by Badeslade, resulting in an unusually complete record of its layout and evolution.

**Design interest:** The gardens demonstrate the latest designed landscape fashions of the age in the planting, as well as positioning and appearance of a fine collection of high-quality buildings and structures, with an extra intellectual dimension presented by a number that conveyed coded political messages about the family's allegiances to well-educated contemporary visitors.

**Group value:** The gardens' interest is notably enhanced by containing a large and varied group of listed garden buildings and structures, which together shape the designed landscape and form the setting for the Grade I Wentworth Castle, Conservatory (Grade II\*), St James' Church (Grade II) and Home Farm (various buildings listed Grade II).

#### 4.2.2 Structure Description

An historic building survey to Historic England Level 3 standard (Menuge and Lane 2016) was carried out by Solstice Heritage LLP in January 2020. The survey consisted of a written, drawn (measured) and photographic account. An extract is included below:

##### Exterior

The Gun Room is a single-storey, brick-built, building with sandstone dressings. The building has a principal west-facing elevation, with an open-sided canopy adjoining its southern and eastern sides. A later building abuts part of the building's northern elevation at its eastern

extent. There is some evidence for alterations, with the building having been developed over time.

### **External West-Facing Elevation**

This is the principal elevation of the building constructed in handmade brick in an irregular bond with a sandstone ashlar plinth and sill band. The single-storey elevation is topped by a modillioned ashlar cornice beneath a hipped Welsh slate roof. The elevation has a central projection which includes a Doric Venetian window with six engaged Doric columns, paired side lights, the outer lights blind, and one inner light with margin-light glazing. Above the side lights is a frieze decorated with triglyphs, separated by alternating bosses and bucrania within the metopes, beneath an open pediment enclosing the round-arched head of the central light. All of the stonework surrounding the window has been completely renewed since the 2003 listing where it was described it as 'badly weathered'. The sill band and plinth, are mostly original aside from some replacement of the sill band at its northern extent. The replacement stonework is a faithful and complete copy of the original. Much of the surrounding brickwork has also been recently repointed. To either side of the gable of the pediment are a pair of square blocked windows with flat-headed brick lintels. The brick blocking appears to match the surrounding fabric, and so it is unclear, without invasive investigation, whether these windows were ever used.

### **External North-Facing Elevation**

This is a relatively blank, side elevation of the building and is constructed in handmade brick in an irregular bond with a sandstone ashlar plinth. The building's sill band terminates at the elevation's western extent and does not cross it. The single-storey elevation is topped by a plain moulded ashlar cornice beneath a hipped Welsh slate roof with a squat, brick-built chimney. At the elevation's eastern extent, it is partially masked by a later attached building. At the western extent of the elevation, c.1 m below the cornice, two small, rounded sandstone fragments are included within the brickwork. The function of these incongruous elements is uncertain; however, it seems possible that they might be filling holes left by the presence of the structure of an adjoining building, now removed.

### **East-Facing Elevation**

This is a subservient, rear elevation of the building, partially masked at its northern extent by a later stone-built extension to the buildings at its northern side. The elevation is also partly covered by a latterly added canopy which extends around to the south side of the building.

Unlike the other elevations of the building, this side is constructed in well-coursed, roughly squared, sandstone masonry and is terminated at its northern and southern extents by rows of alternating long and short quoins. This elevation does not include the deep cornice present on the other sides of the building, which stops in line with it. At the centre of the elevation is a vertically boarded timber door with a six-light transom light within a heavy stone surround. The doorway itself appears original, although the timber door and transom light are likely to be much later. This doorway lies beneath a higher window or possibly a low door with a badly worn sandstone sill and heavy stone lintel. Across the front of the elevation is a latterly added canopy roof, supported on thick, chamfered timber uprights resting on tooled stone blocks. The roof structure of the canopy has been inserted into the masonry of the earlier Gun Room. The canopy itself is covered with Welsh slate. The wooden elements of this were repaired and repainted in 2024.

At the southern extent of the elevation, the canopy sits on a higher terrace level preserving the height of the ground at the western side of the building. This terrace ends at a solid wall returning to the building close to its southern extent. Given that the block supports for the chamfered timber uprights sit on matching masonry columns within the structure of this terrace it seems most likely that the terrace and the canopy were built at the same time. A modern set of timber steps provides access from the terrace to the lower area by the doorway.

In line with the front of the canopy, and the front of the terrace at this side, it is possible to note a scar in the surfacing of the ground where the wall line previously continued. This perhaps suggests that this area, to the rear of the building and surrounding the doorway, was historically intended to be an enclosed yard. The roof structure of the canopy continues across this area and is now supported by the brickwork of the later, modern building now present in this area. This suggests that the roof perhaps continued further in the past and, perhaps, at least as far as the line of the north elevation of the building.

### **External South-Facing Elevation**

The south-facing elevation of the building is more ornate than the north and east elevations, and faces the mansion. The elevation is constructed in handmade brick in an irregular bond with a sandstone ashlar plinth, topped by a plain, moulded cornice under a hipped roof covered in Welsh slate. At the eastern extent of the elevation are a row of long and short quoins, partly masked by the return of the latterly added canopy which covers the eastern part of this elevation. At the western side of the elevation is an original doorway with a sandstone architrave, pulvinated frieze and pediment, all of which were completely renewed in c.2004. The doorway encloses a six-panel door which is most likely to be a replacement of a similar original. To the east of this, the later hipped-roof canopy is again supported by sturdy, chamfered wooden posts, behind which is an 18-pane sash window in an original opening with a flat arched brick head and a projecting stone sill.

### **Gun Room - Interior**

Internally, the Gun Room includes a main ground-floor room, Room 1, with a lower-ground-floor room, Room 2, to the east.

Room 1 is the principal room in the building and is accessed by an external doorway at its south side and an internal doorway at its eastern side leading to Room 2. The room is in very poor repair, with a central scaffold supporting the main ceiling at the time of survey. Although in a poor state, the room contains widespread remains of fine mid-18th century plasterwork in a highly decorated interior. The south wall of the room includes a curved entrance apse with moulded plaster doorcase with Vitruvian scrolls beneath cornices, the higher supported by scrolled corbels. The entrance apse is undecorated, sitting beneath a higher cornice with egg and dart moulding, which continues around the entirety of the higher, central ceiling. To each side of the doorway original rectangular niches have been latterly converted to cupboards with the addition of framing and four-panel doors. Beneath these, a moulded timber dado is present, but only partially survives. At a lower level, the brickwork of the building is exposed where the previous interior decoration - timber panelling elsewhere - has been lost. The doorway here includes a replacement six-panel timber door.

The west wall of the room includes a Corinthian-columned side screen with a section of highly decorated entablature carried over beneath a shallow segmental arch. The screen includes four columns, with two complete central columns and an engaged column at each end. The arch is decorated with square bosses filled with flowers. Beyond the screen the higher cornice with Vitruvian scroll decoration continues until broken by the round head of the central light of the Venetian window described externally. It is possible to see that the window frames and glazing have all been replaced recently, presumably as part of the same phase of restoration works which saw the replacement of the external sandstone dressings on the west elevation of the building. At a lower level, some original timber panelling survives below dado height along with a deep moulded skirting board. At the northern end of this wall a timber rack has been inserted, at around head height, which most likely relates to the building's later use as a Gun Room. The two blocked windows noted externally at this side of the building are above the existing ceiling height and can not be seen internally.

The north wall of the room includes an apsidal end bay with a central blocked fireplace beneath a central apse decorated with octagonal ceiling bosses with flowers. Flanking the fireplace are two rectangular niches, the right of which preserves a latterly inserted timber gun rack. Beneath the boss decoration is the continuation of the cornice with Vitruvian scroll decoration supported by scrolled corbels. Above the apse, the central flat ceiling is edged by the upper cornice with egg and dart moulding. The east wall of the room, which is a close replica of the west wall, includes a Corinthian-columned side screen with a section of highly decorated entablature carried over beneath a shallow segmental arch. The screen would have originally included four columns, with two complete central columns and an engaged column at each end; however, the southernmost central columns now lies removed at the north-eastern corner of the building and has been temporarily replaced by a timber upright. The segmental arch is decorated with square bosses filled with flowers. Beyond the screen the higher cornice with Vitruvian scroll decoration continues over a central doorway to Room 2, which includes a moulded timber architrave beneath a plaster frieze of Vitruvian scrolls under a modillioned cornice. To each side of the doorway, a timber rack survives, presumably part of the room's later use as a Gun Room. Fixed to the timber architrave at the head of the door are two brackets which suggest a curtain pole was once hung across the door, presumably to create further separation between this room and Room 2. These metal brackets are of uncertain date and seem unlikely to be original. A large stone slab currently lies propped against the doorway. It seems most likely that this slab came from the centre of the floor of this room.

Room 2 lies to the east of Room 1, at a lower level. It is accessed by an external doorway at its eastern side and an internal doorway from Room 1 at its western side. The room is a tall, narrow, tiled space with a stone flagged floor and a modern inserted chipboard ceiling. The south wall of the room includes a tall, central 18-pane sash window, noted externally, with a moulded timber architrave and timber sill. The rest of the wall is covered with square, white, glazed tiles which are most likely of earlier 20th century date. The west wall of the room is also covered in the same tiles and includes a centrally placed doorway with a timber architrave which matches all of the other architraves around the other openings in this room. The doorway houses a six-panel timber door. The door sits well above the floor level and presumably was previously accessible via now missing steps. To the south of the doorway, set against the wall, is a thick slate counter, supported on tapering cast iron legs set into the floor. The north wall of the room is a mirror image of the south wall, with a centrally placed 18-pane sash window with a moulded timber architrave and timber sill, although only the upper sash of the window survives in place. As with the other walls, the rest of the wall is tiled with the same square, white tiles. Beyond the window, it is possible to see the brickwork of the later building which has covered this part of

the exterior of the Gun Room as noted above. This blind brickwork, which consists of red, machine-made, imperial size bricks, appears to be early-mid 20th century in date.

The east wall of the room is also tiled and has a centrally placed recessed doorway containing a wooden ledge and brace door with vertical planks with a six-pane transom light over. The doorway has a wooden architrave matching the others present in the room. Above the doorway is a further window opening, also with a matching architrave, which is only partly visible due to the inserted ceiling now present in the room. This window was noted externally, where it has had a wooden board inserted to cover it. To either side of the central doorway are further lengths of thick slate counter supported on tapering cast iron legs. These extend from the edges of the doorway to the corners of the room. Given that notches have been roughly cut out of the architrave around the door to admit the counters, it seems most likely that these are a later insertion within the room, and, certainly, they appear to sit over the tiles which cover the walls. The southern countertop sits beneath a set of white-painted, timber shelves which have been inserted over the tiled wall.

#### **4.2.3 Structure History and Purpose**

The Gun Room is an enigmatic structure which has so far proved hard to pin down in terms of date or original purpose. As discussed below, it is highly decorated both externally and internally and clearly represents significant investment for a more than simply functional purpose.

In term of age, it was built very close to what had been a main public road which ran roughly southwest-wards past the front of the old Stainborough Hall (aka ‘the Cutler House’) and towards Hood Green . This road was moved northwards around 1720 to what is now Lowe Lane, suggesting it is not earlier than this date. The structure is also not present on the earliest estate map, dated to the late 1720s, nor the slightly fanciful engravings of the site published in 1730 and 1739. It may be visible as one of a cluster of buildings to the north of the mansion in a painting showing the parkland from Keresforth Hill produced by Thomas Bardwell in c.1751 (Detail below. Original work owned by John Bennet Fine Art)



The exterior has been stylistically attributed by the architectural historian Terry Friedman to the influential and prolific early-18th century architect James Gibbs (1682-1785), who was commissioned by both Thomas Wentworth and his son William to design the interiors of Wentworth Castle and also various parkland structures.

In terms of function, assessments have ranged from bathhouse to a garden temple or banquet space, where guests would have been served refreshments within the classical interior as part of a wider visit to the designed gardens. The building's lower, eastern room may have had a service function as a servery or preparation space, with refreshments being served through the connecting door between the two rooms and access for guests focussed on the decorated entrance at the south-west corner of the building.

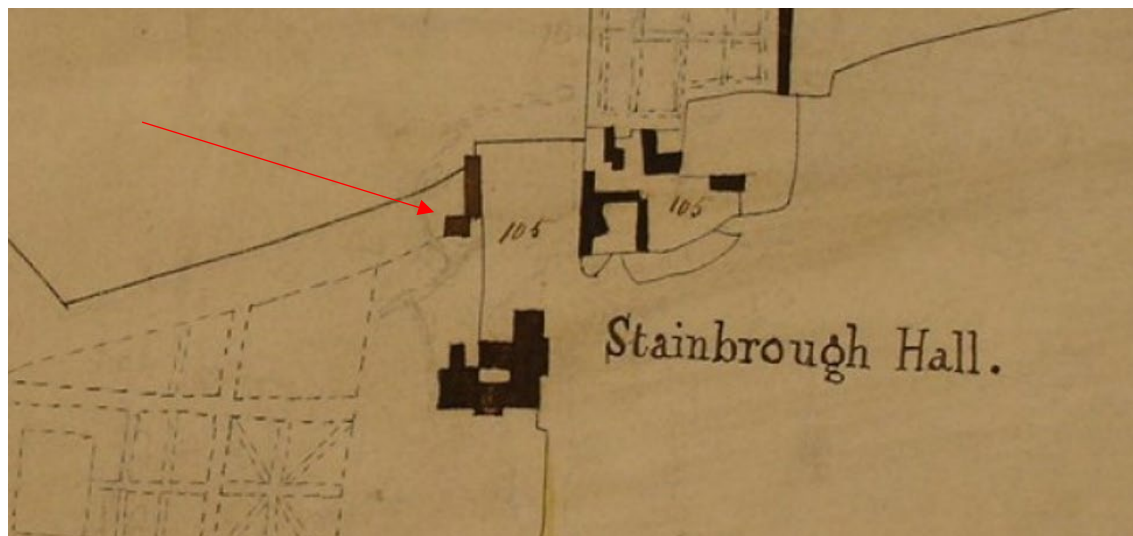
More recent transcription and analysis of archive records have offered an alternative case that it was conceived as a form of model dairy, sitting as a threshold between the service buildings and icehouse on one side and with a facing directly up the avenue to the gardens on the other. As with other similar examples on country estates, such a building would probably have combined a functional 'back end' with a decorated and refined front section where the lady of the house could role play preparing dairy products and serve guests. If so, this would represent an important early example.

It is clear from archive records that a significant dairy was built for William Wentworth between 1747 and 1751, with surviving bills for foundations, brickwork, ashlar, columns and arches, stucco, a tiled milk room, a flagged area and expensive leadwork. Horace Walpole, in his travel diary summary of the estate in August 1760, noted the existence of a "dairy chamber designed by Hugh, Earl of Northumberland, the ceiling copied from the China Room at Strawberry Hill" (The China Room, converted from a kitchen, was created at Strawberry Hill in 1755). Unfortunately, it is unclear from Walpole's notes where this was on the estate.

A building somewhere near the mansion is noted in 19<sup>th</sup> century records as an 'old dairy' and other circumstantial evidence suggests this may refer to the Gun Room. However, with no early detailed mapping or precise enough visitor account yet identified, the 'model dairy' hypothesis must remain a suggestion.

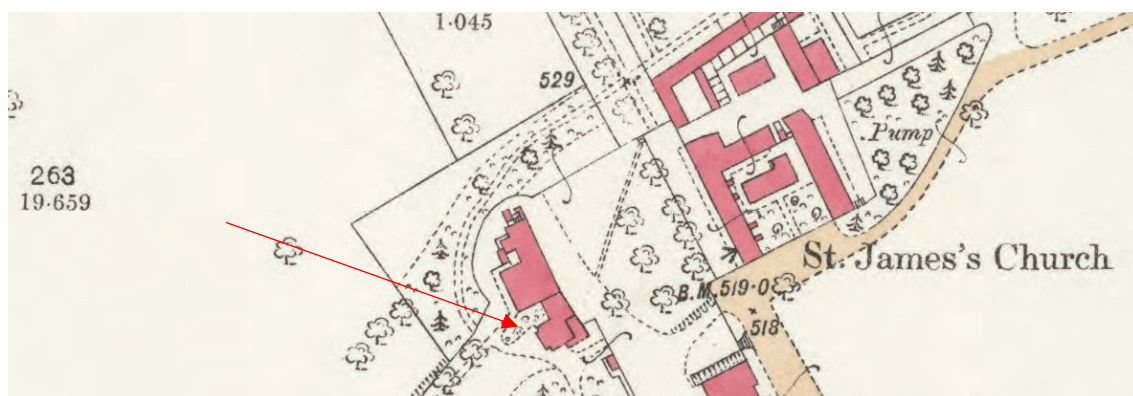
Whatever is original function, it is clear that the building was adapted during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest map available that shows what is now known as the Gun Room is an estate plan of 1824. Although not a particularly detailed, the building appears roughly square in shape and is either joined to the building to the north at its north-east corner or the buildings are very close together. The veranda that now runs around its south and east sides does not seem to be present.

### 1824 estate map:



The 6-inch OS Map of 1855 shows the same configuration, but by the time of the 25-inch OS Map of 1893 the building to north has been extended to the west, and a veranda running around the Gun Room is now clearly present, the south side of which is depicted as open. There is little change in the general layout of the Gun Room between the 25-inch OS Map of 1893 and the 25-inch OS Map of 1931.

### 1893 OS:



This map evidence would suggest that the veranda was added between the later 1850s and the early 1890s and is likely to have related to internal changes inside room 1, where gun cupboards and timber racking were inserted. Room 2 may have been used as a tiled game larder. This is most likely related to the increased use of the parkland and surrounding estate for game shooting, something particularly associated with Thomas Vernon Wentworth in the 1880s. An intriguing alternative possibility is that it was in response to fears of industrial unrest in the region; for example the Thorncliffe colliery riot of 1870 which included many men from Worsborough.

This phase of adaption may also have seen the reconstruction of the roof. Physical evidence on the east side of the structure suggests there may originally have been an enclosed yard at the back of the building, with the roof perhaps extending over this. If the Bardwell painting (see above) is broadly accurate, then this may well indicate that the original roof had stone slate covering (as is the case with the nearby Corinthian Temple, built 1766). Welsh slate may have

been introduced at the time of the Gun Room conversion, but no photographic or other evidence has been found to confirm this before 1956, when it appears in an aerial view:



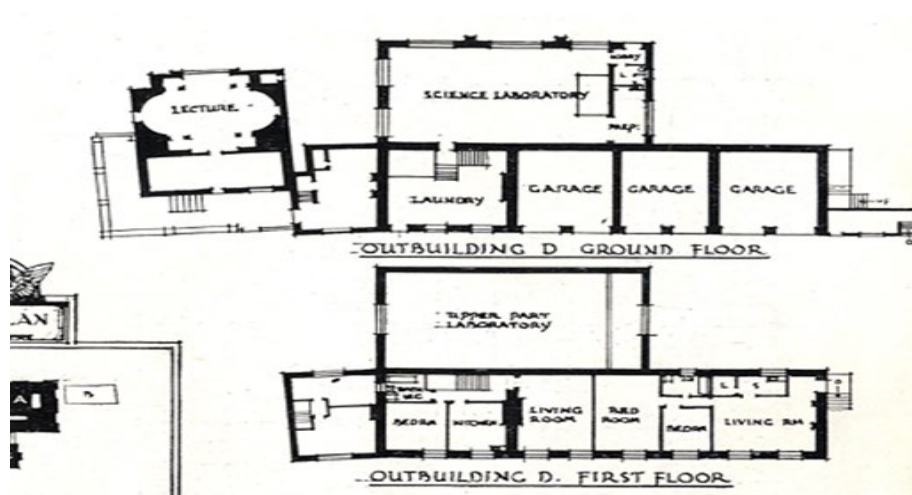
The roof is recorded as having been re-slatted in 1977.

The aerial photograph also shows that the extension of next door Dairy Cottage under the canopy had not yet taken place (see illustration below); this is likely to have been in the late 1950s or early 1960s to create an internal bathroom for the cottage.



The mansion and site were requisitioned for military use during the Second World War, but the Gun Room was not included as so was not described in the condition survey undertaken at the time.

In 1948 the house became a teacher training college. An October 1948 promotional brochure (below) indicates the Gun Room was allocated for use as a lecture theatre and some former students recall being in here, suggesting that its interior must have been relatively intact. There also appears to be a small addition externally filling in the north west corner of the Gun Room, apparently to form a toilet. This was later removed as part of restoration of the exterior of the building in the 2000s.



By the late 1960s (as indicated by interior graffiti), the Gun Room appears to have been used as an informal garden store or bothy, but was essentially left to decay until around 2004 when extensive external conservation on the stonework was undertaken by the Wentworth Castle & Stainborough Parkland Trust (see description above). Plans were drawn up for addressing the failing roof and restoring the heavily damaged internal plasterwork, including sampling of surviving interior paint decoration in 2009. In the event funds did not extend to this being carried out. Holding repairs were undertaken with some rafters to the south slope being replaced with softwood.

Most recently, under the management of the National Trust, further repairs have been undertaken to the vernadiah woodwork, repointing of bricks and removal of some inappropriate late 20th century paint covering.

#### 4.2.4 Statement of Significance

##### Evidential Value

Evidential value makes an important contribution to the heritage significance of the Gun Room. The building retains clear evidence of phasing within its construction, related primarily to the internal alteration of Room 2 and the exterior addition of the building's veranda and canopy roof, all of which could be further explored and retain structural evidence of the building's development over time. Further evidence of the building's original construction, possible date, and evidence of the craftsmanship used may be preserved within the building's roof structure, but there is also reason for thinking this has been changed.

Structural evidence within the roof space may shed light on the original construction and design intention of the two blind openings present on the building's west elevation. This may also be true for the blocked fireplace within Room 1. Also, within Room 1, the extensive surviving plaster and woodwork detailing preserves enough evidence to allow for a relatively complete understanding of the flamboyant decorative scheme, which was originally conceived for this space, despite its later widespread deterioration. This understanding of the original design intention within the room is assisted by the limited later change which seems to have occurred in order to convert it for use as a gun room.

Beyond the building, there remains the possibility that archaeological evidence might survive of former structures which may have linked to it, or closely surrounded it.

## **Historical Value**

Historical value makes an important contribution to the heritage significance of the Gun Room. In terms of this value, the contribution to significance is both associative and illustrative. The building's historical associations are, for such a small building, particularly notable. Firstly, the possible attribution of the building to the influential architect James Gibbs is its most significant historical association.

Secondly, the function of the room remains unclear. If it can be supported, the more recent theory that the structure was created, or at least adapted, as a form of mid-18th century model dairy would make it particularly notable. The adaptation for the storage of guns, probably for game shooting but possibly 'estate defence' add a second layer of significance. The later 19<sup>th</sup> century veranda design, with its colonial design heritage, may be considered a further area of architectural interest.

In terms of the building's illustrative value, it can still be seen to provide an evocative experience of 18th century society and landscape design and use, despite its parlous state and its later alterations, although these do affect the experience to a significant degree. This experience has been enhanced by the relatively recent repair works to the building's west elevation and given additional value by the setting of the building amongst part of its original garden surrounds, most notably the avenue of trees it seems to have been constructed to respect. The wider Wentworth designed landscape provides a further group value and historic experiential context which enhances the significance of all the structures within it

## **Aesthetic Value**

Aesthetic value makes a further contribution to the heritage significance of the Gun Room. In terms of this value, the contribution to significance is primarily made through the design value of the building and its connections to other buildings in the Wentworth designed landscape, as well as that landscape itself.

In terms of the building's design value, this is primarily exhibited externally by the building's western elevation, where recent renovation works have allowed the original design of the building - albeit compromised by the addition of the less attractive, later canopy roof and veranda - to be better appreciated and understood, thereby providing a clear appreciation of the architect's original design and classical inspiration, and a general understanding of the building's age. Given the surviving elements of the gardens, most notably the avenue of trees upon which the building is aligned, this design value is further enhanced and a limited degree of appreciation of the building's historic surroundings is possible. This contribution from the building's immediate surrounds is further enhanced by the presence of the other historic buildings closely adjacent, most notably Wentworth Castle itself. These buildings provide an attractive cluster of structures which partly create a wider 'period' experience that enhances the significance of each individually.

This period experience is compromised by the modern buildings of the college and the modern signage and surfacing which surround them, all of which impinge upon the ability to experience the historic surroundings of the buildings and the visual linkages between them. Internally, aesthetic value is most notably present within Room 1. The design quality of the historic plasterwork in Room 1, and the quality of the craftsmanship involved, allow an important experience in terms of appreciating the historic 'feel' of the building, its original design intention and its social status. This is despite the current state of the room, which is in a state of serious

disrepair. Clearly, sensitive restoration works to the interior of the building would be likely to greatly enhance the already important contribution to significance made by the aesthetic value of this interior.

### **Communal Value**

As it is in a poor state of repair and inaccessible to the public, the Gun Room currently has a relatively low communal value at present, other than the external view making a positive visual contribution to the public heritage site as a whole.

### **Summary of Impact**

Given its individually listed status, and position as important components within the designed landscape of a wider Registered Park and Garden, it is considered that the building is of de-facto National importance as a heritage asset. As a result, careful consideration has gone into balancing the impact of the work against the urgent need for the building and interior to be far better protected against the elements despite limited resources preventing a full programme at this stage.

As outlined above (section 2.4) the proposed work will require the creation of a temporary roof to replace the existing failed slate covering. The removal of the slates and their replacement will have an unavoidable negative impact, particularly on the **aesthetic value** of the structure as viewed from other parts of the site; notably the gardens. This will be mitigated to a certain extent by the use of black EPDM material and a lead detailing which will stand out less than a coloured material.

Impact upon the **communal value** will similarly be broadly negative because of this visual impact, although as noted, this value is currently relatively low.

The impact of the proposed work upon the **evidential value** of the structure is considered neutral, with some potential for a positive contribution should the removal of the slates and investigation of the surviving roof timbers underneath. This may indicate whether the roof was significantly altered during the presumed 19thc adaptation or later and may also reveal any graffiti evidence. The slates themselves (thought to have been installed in the late 1970s, although possibly some reused from older roof) will be retained and reused. Failure to undertake the work will result in further potentially catastrophic damage to the timbers and loss of any such evidence.

Historic value will similarly be neutral as the proposed work is temporary and intended to enable more extensive repairs and weather proofing and a return to the original roof profile as it exists, not any significant change.

### **4.3 Ecology**

A preliminary roost assessment was undertaken on 17th February 2025 and a single nocturnal survey carried out on 2nd May 2025. The survey identified a probable absence of roosting bats from the roof of the Gun Room and no evidence of bird nesting was recorded.

On conclusion, given the bat roost suitability of the Gun Room roof, no further bat survey is considered necessary providing works commence within 24 months of the survey date.

The works will be planned outside of the bird nesting season.

#### **4.4 Greenbelt**

The proposed works on the Gun Room roof will have no greater impact on the openness of the green belt in this location and can therefore be considered appropriate development.

## **5. Conclusion**

The planning application seeks consent for the provision of temporary coverings to the roof of the Gun Room at the National Trust property known as Wentworth Castle Gardens.

It has been demonstrated that the development is consistent with national and local planning policy and forms an important step in the conservation of a significant historic asset, ultimately contributing to the wider community benefit aspirations of Wentworth Castle Gardens.

The scale and extent of the development has been carefully balanced to ensure an effective weatherproof roof is created to protect the internal features within the structure, while conserving the essential historic structure of the roof itself as far as possible. This initial phase of work will enable the time and space needed to develop designs for a permanent solution for the roof and ceiling repair, and to secure funding for future phases of work.

It is considered that there are significant public benefits of the development arising from the proposal and it is therefore requested that planning permission is granted.