



Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Wentworth Castle Gardens | Battlements

Photographic Recording Document

2025



Contact information

Daniel Elkington



York Office

15 High Petergate

York, YO1 7FJ

www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk

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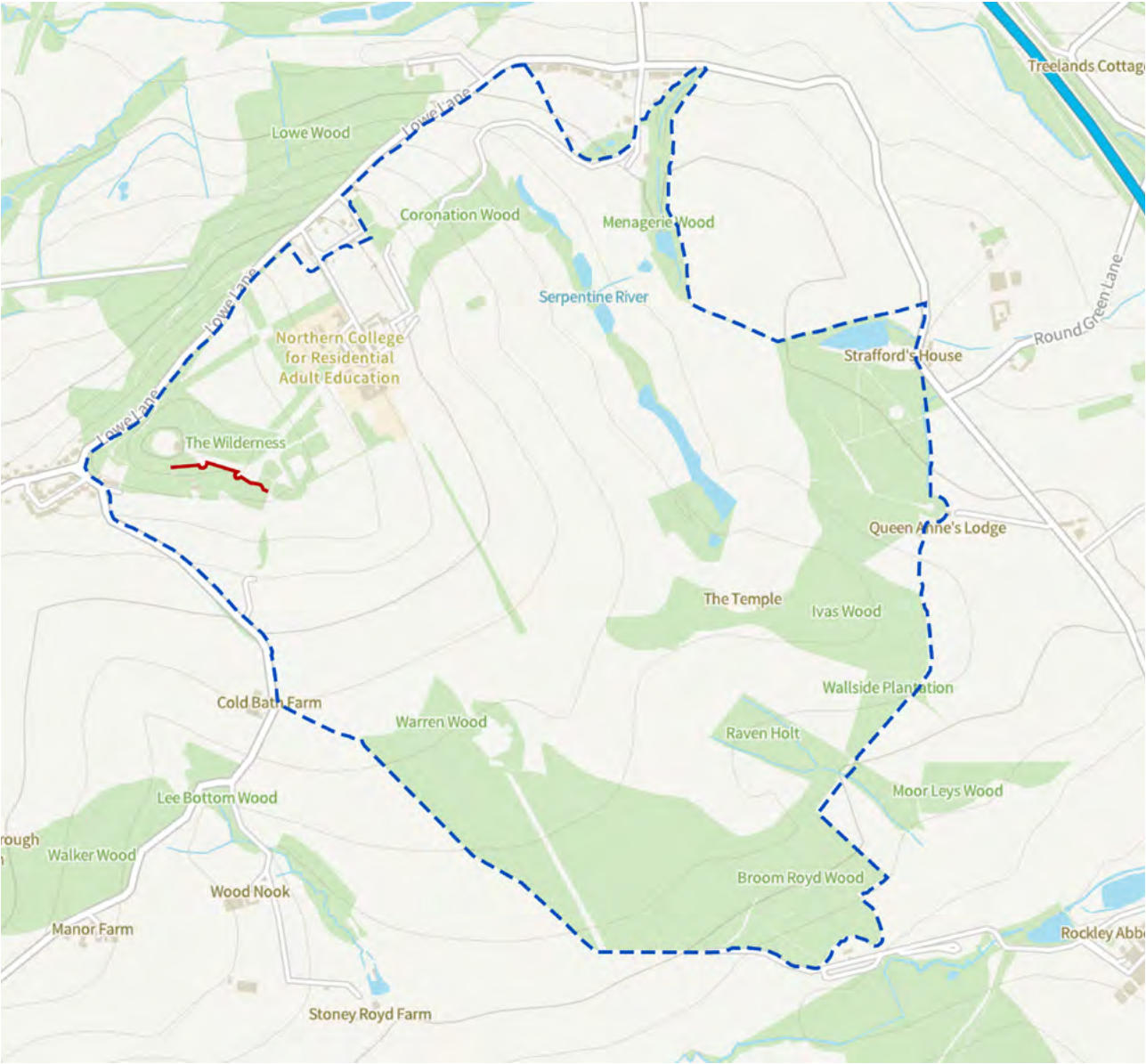
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Location Plan of the Battlements shown in red, within Wentworth Castle Gardens (Historic England)

1.0 Summary of Recording Document

1.1 Introduction

This Photographic Recording Document has been prepared in accordance with the conditions stipulated under the Listed Building Consent granted for repair works to the battlemented walls at Wentworth Castle Gardens. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive visual and written record of the condition of the walls prior to intervention, as well as the conservation and repair works undertaken between April 2023 and July 2025.

1.2 Location

The battlemented walls are situated within Wentworth Castle Gardens, Park Dr, Barnsley S75 3EN. The site is located adjacent to Stainborough Castle, within the grounds of the historic estate. The National Grid Reference for the battlement walls is SE3182002942.

1.3 Legal Status of the Structure

Wentworth Castle Gardens is designated as a Grade I Registered Park and Garden (List Entry No. 1000415), recognised for its exceptional historic and landscape value. The battlemented walls, which form part of the ornamental landscape adjacent to Stainborough Castle, are individually listed at Grade II (List Entry No. 1191749). The estate is currently owned and managed by the National Trust in partnership with Barnsley Council.

1.4 History of the Site

Wentworth Castle Gardens represent one of the most significant historic landscapes in South Yorkshire, notable for its rich architectural and horticultural heritage. The estate was originally known as Stainborough Hall and was acquired in 1708 by Thomas Wentworth, later the 1st Earl of Strafford, following a bitter inheritance dispute with his cousin Thomas Watson over the nearby Wentworth Woodhouse estate.

Determined to establish a rival seat of power, Thomas Wentworth undertook extensive development of the estate, commissioning Baroque and later Palladian architectural additions, as well as laying out formal gardens and constructing numerous monuments. Among these was the mock-medieval Stainborough Castle, built between 1727 and 1731 on the highest point of the estate, symbolising Wentworth's ambition and status.

The battlemented walls adjacent to Stainborough Castle were conceived as part of this romanticised landscape, designed to evoke the grandeur and antiquity of a medieval fortress. Over successive generations, the estate evolved, with later additions including the conservatory and further landscaping of the Pleasure Grounds. The site remained in private ownership until its sale in 1949 to Barnsley Corporation, and has since undergone various phases of restoration and public engagement.

1.5 Description of the Works

Donald Insall Associates were appointed in 2022 to undertake a detailed condition survey of the battlemented walls, which informed the specification of necessary conservation and repair works. The project commenced on site in April 2023.

The poor condition of the existing stone walls required areas of rebuilding using existing stone, new stonework to match the existing, reinstatement of merlons, removal of vegetation, and repointing in lime mortar.

In November 2023, a partial collapse of the battlements occurred, necessitating an extension of the original contract. This allowed for the development of structural engineering proposals, the securing of additional funding by the client, and the submission of a variation to the approved Listed Building Consent.

1.5 Document Summary

This report has been compiled by Donald Insall Associates in August 2025, following the completion of the conservation works in July 2025. It serves as a formal record of the pre-intervention condition and the subsequent repair and stabilisation of the battlemented walls, in accordance with Historic England Level 1 recording standards.

1.1 Official List Entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1191749

Date first listed: 18-Mar-1968

List Entry Name: BATTLEMENTED WALL
INCLUDING TRIPLE ARCHWAY ALONG SOUTH SIDE
OF THE WILDERNESS

Statutory Address 1: BATTLEMENTED WALL
INCLUDING TRIPLE ARCHWAY ALONG SOUTH SIDE OF
THE WILDERNESS, WENTWORTH CASTLE

Location

Statutory Address:

BATTLEMENTED WALL INCLUDING TRIPLE ARCHWAY
ALONG SOUTH SIDE OF THE WILDERNESS,
WENTWORTH CASTLE

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of
more than one authority.

District: Barnsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Stainborough

National Grid Reference: SE3182002942

Details

STAINBOROUGH WENTWORTH CASTLE SE30SW
1/49 Battlemented wall including triple archway along
south 18.3.68 side of the Wilderness GV II Entrance
gateway, battlemented retaining wall and ha-ha.
Probably 1738-39 for Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl
of Strafford, (Wilkinson, pp397-8). Ashlar sandstone
gateway, otherwise coursed, dressed sandstone
and rubble walling. Gateway, known as Archer's Hill
Gate, has plinth and impost band to 3 round- headed
archways set in canted, rusticated walls with 7 ball
finials; arches, now shored-up, retain iron gates. Wall
to west forms southern boundary of The Wilderness
and has embattled parapet. Wall to east is a low
rubble retaining wall which links to dressed walling
of convex ha-ha at south end of lawn to Wentworth
Castle (q.v.). Ha-ha has projecting piers and ashlar
copings. Wilkinson records instructions set out by
the 1st Earl for the construction of ha-ha's during the
winter of 1738-39.

J. Wilkinson, Worthies, Families and Celebrities of
Barnsley and District, 1883, pp397-8.

Listing NGR: SE3182002942

2.0 Location of the Works



Section 1: *South Bastion*
April 2023 - March 2024

Section 2: *12m Section*
June 2023 - June 2024

Section 3: *21m Section*
February 2024 - August 2024

Section 4: *Lower Wall*
August 2024

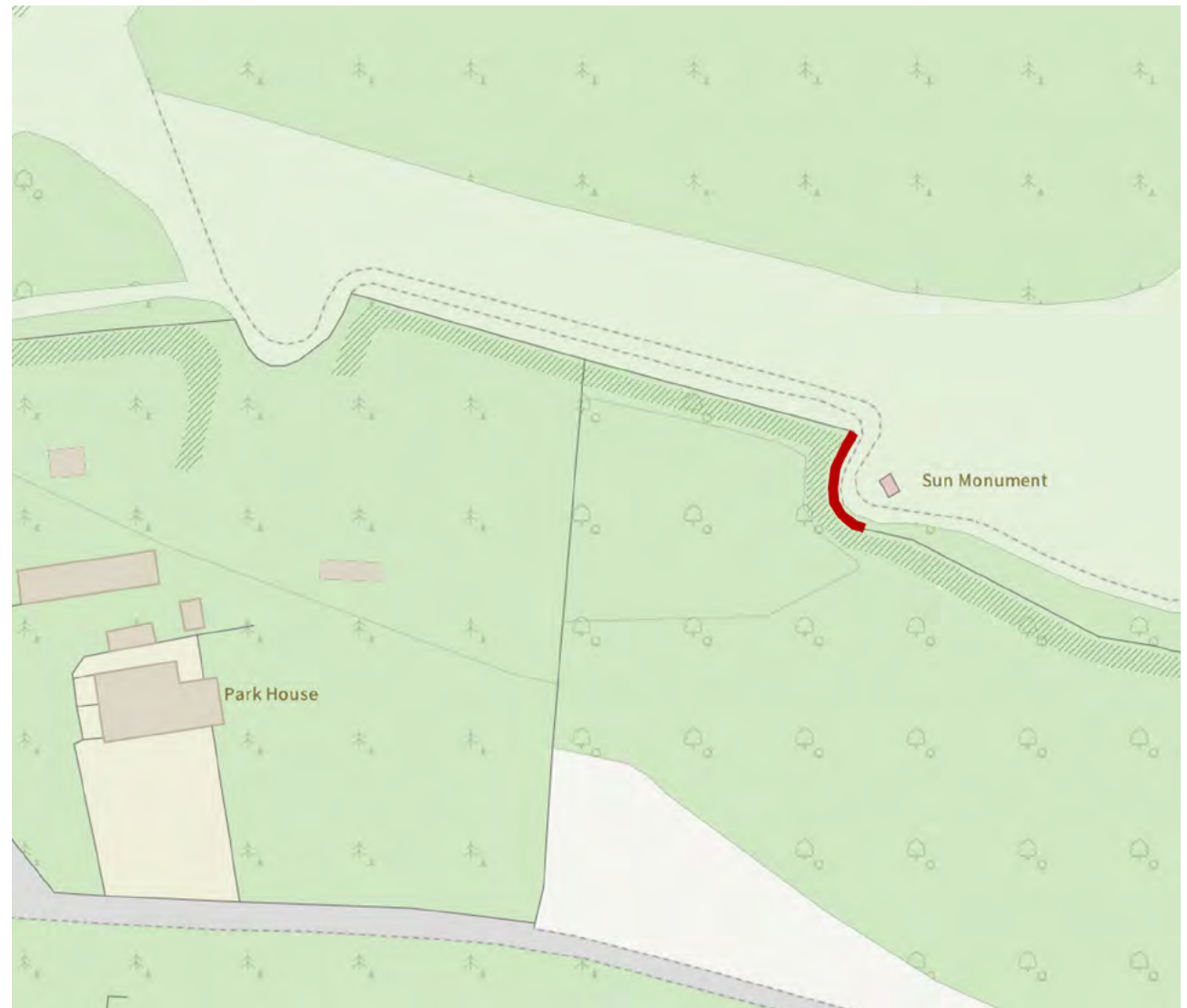
Section 5: *Collapsed Section*
December 2024 - July 2025

Works Location Plan (Historic England)

3.0 Section One

3.1 South Bastion

The South Bastion had deteriorated significantly, exhibiting eroded stonework, missing merlons and coping stones, cementitious mortar, and areas of displaced or fallen masonry. The remedial works comprised the replacement of damaged stones, which were carefully tooled to match the existing fabric. Merlons were repaired and reinstated, and existing coping stones were reset. Crenellations were reinstated to reflect the original size, style, and proportions of the historic merlons and embrasures. A cracked junction between the bastion and adjoining walling was rebuilt. Missing stonework was reinstated using matching stone and lime mortar. All elevations were cleared of vegetation, and open joints were repointed in lime mortar.



Section One Location Plan (Historic England)



July 2022



July 2022



August 2022



August 2022



July 2023



July 2023



February 2024



March 2024



August 2024



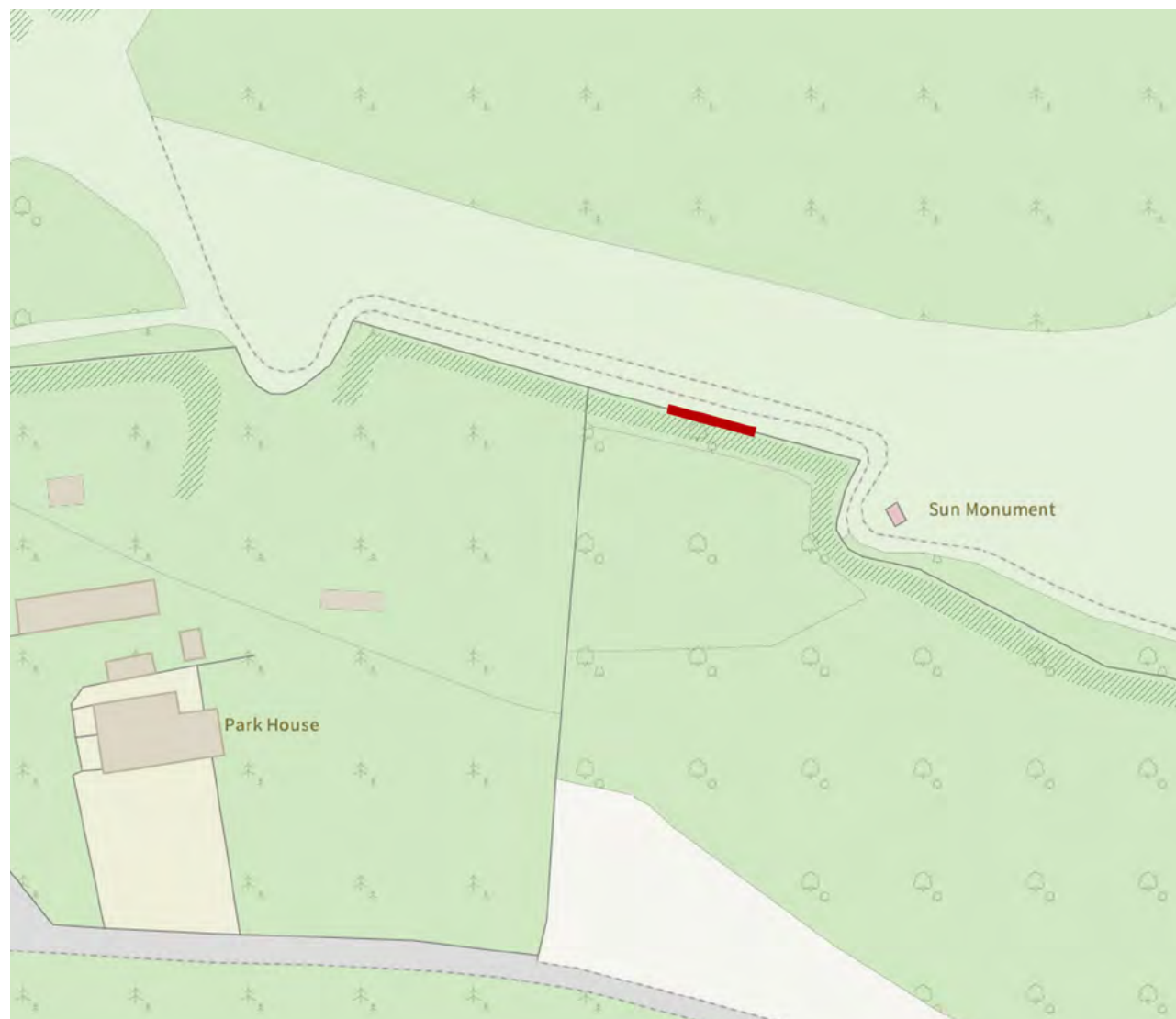
August 2025

4.0 Section Two

4.1 12m Section

A 12-metre section of walling was identified in the condition survey as being in very poor condition, which was further substantiated upon commencement of site works. The stonework, compounded by cementitious mortar and mature tree growth, had resulted in significant bulging. Initially, the scope of works included repointing and minor stone repairs, including the rebuilding and reinstatement of merlons. However, following vegetation clearance, the extent of deterioration necessitated a more substantial intervention, including partial wall reconstruction.

Existing stones were carefully dismantled, catalogued, and reinstated in their original positions. This approach, although involving rebuilding, remained like-for-like due to the reuse of original materials and the application of lime mortar, consistent with the methodology used for merlon reconstruction. Weep holes were introduced to facilitate rainwater management. A movement gap was left between this section and the adjacent collapsed area to prevent possible movement from compromising the newly rebuilt wall. This gap was subsequently closed and pointed in lime mortar, in conjunction with the reconstruction of the collapsed section.



Section Two Location Plan (Historic England)



July 2022



July 2023



October 2023



October 2023



January 2024



January 2024



February 2024



February 2024



April 2024



April 2024



June 2024



June 2024



August 2025



August 2025

5.0 Section Three

5.1 21m Section

A 21-metre section of walling was also identified as being in very poor condition, with severely eroded stonework and the presence of cementitious mortar and vegetation contributing to poor structural integrity and the collapse of a number of merlons. The initial repair strategy involved repointing and stonework repairs, including the rebuilding and reinstatement of merlons. However, the condition was found to be worse than anticipated, necessitating partial reconstruction.

Stones were carefully removed, sorted, and reinstated in their original positions where possible, particularly to the public-facing east elevation. Where stonework on the west-facing elevation was beyond salvage, reclaimed stones were introduced. This ensured that the east elevation retained its original appearance, utilising as much existing material as possible with reclaimed material where necessary. Merlons were rebuilt, and existing coping stones were reinstated using lime mortar.



Section Three Location Plan (Historic England)



July 2022



July 2022



February 2024



February 2024



February 2024



February 2024



March 2024



March 2024



June 2024



June 2024



August 2024



August 2024



August 2025

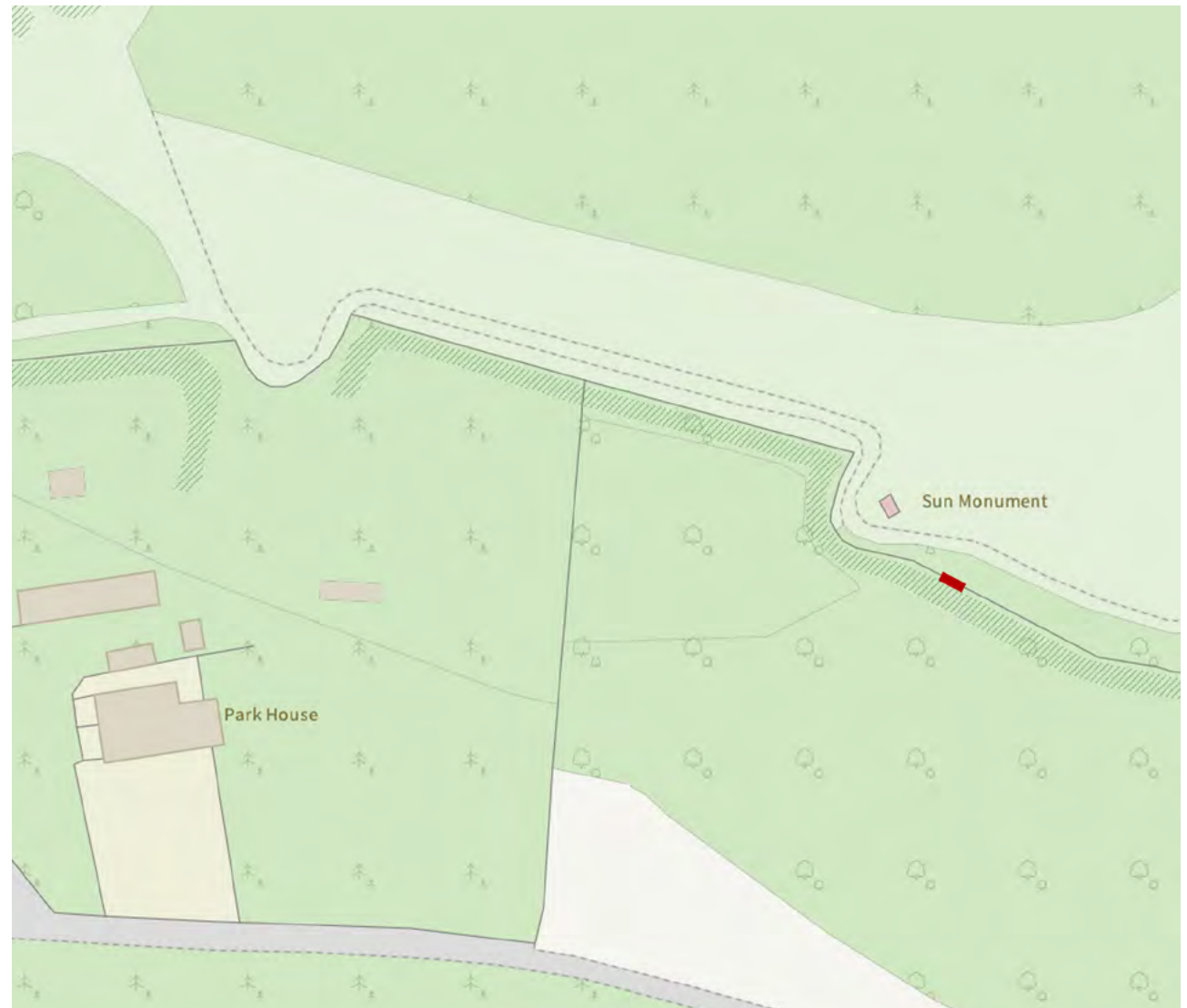


August 2025

6.0 Section Four

6.1 Lower Wall

A ground-level section of the battlement wall was found to be in poor condition, exhibiting bulging, missing stones, and cementitious mortar. The proposed works included minor stone repairs and repointing in lime mortar. The lower bulging section was rebuilt and consolidated using lime mortar, ensuring all voids were fully packed to maintain structural integrity.



Section Four Location Plan (Historic England)



July 2022



April 2024



June 2024



August 2025

7.0 Section Five

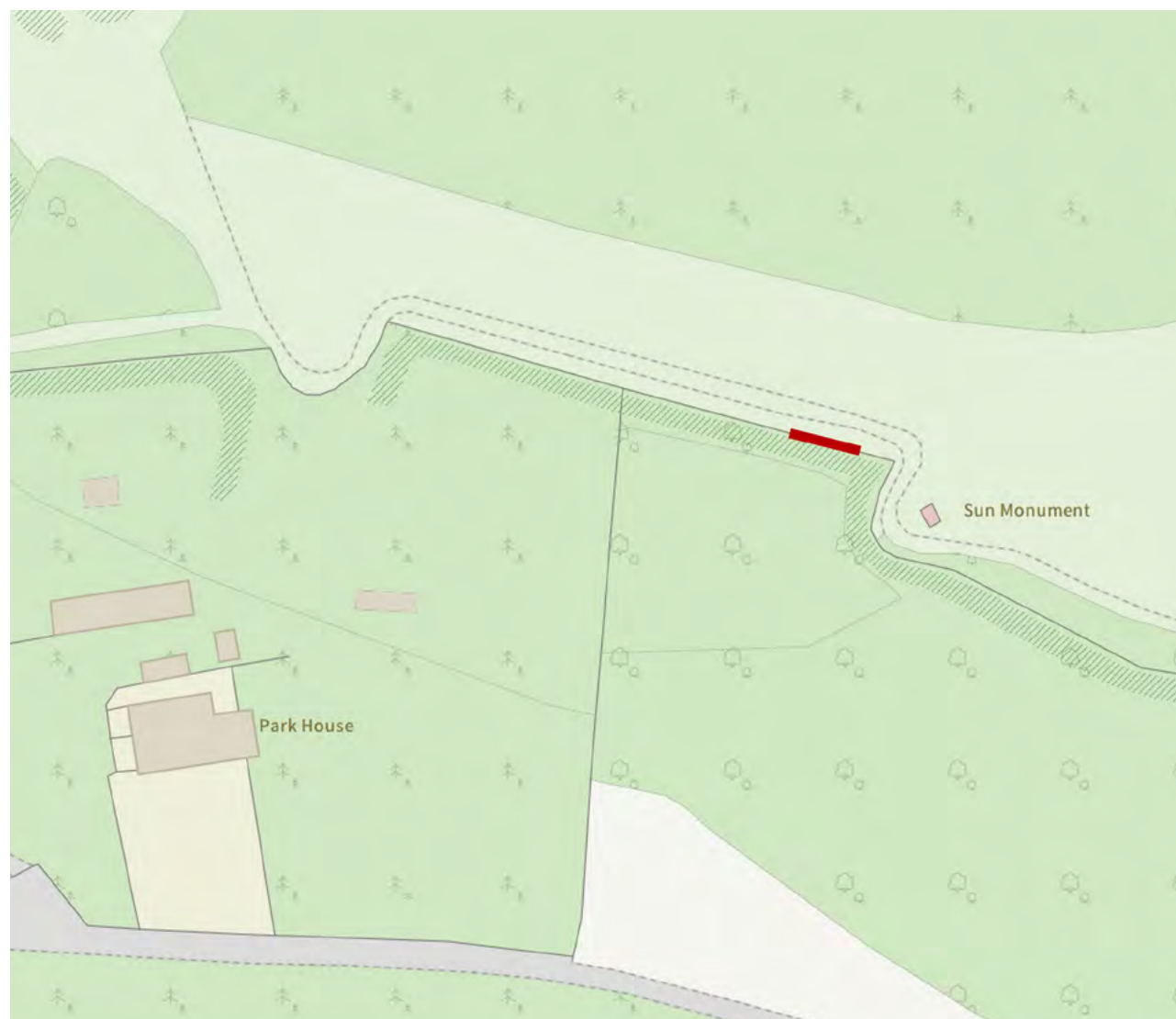
7.1 Collapsed Section

A section of the battlements collapsed in November 2023. The collapse was attributed to pressure exerted by nearby mature trees and waterlogged ground, exacerbated by cementitious pointing which had trapped moisture within the structure.

The solution incorporated soil nails for stabilisation and to restrain the newly rebuilt dry-stone masonry wall atop the existing bedrock. This approach mirrored a previous intervention undertaken circa 1970 on an adjacent section. Debris from the collapse was carefully removed and sorted prior to commencement of works.

Following clearance, an inspection by the contractor and structural engineer revealed that the original wall had been constructed directly onto bedrock, which in places was insufficient to bear the required loads. A concrete kerb was therefore installed at the base of the affected section to provide a stable and continuous foundation. This kerb was positioned below ground level and remains concealed, preserving the visual and historic character of the battlements.

To address drainage concerns, the wedge between the soil-facing side and the dry-stone wall was filled with Type 3 aggregate, enclosed within a Terram geotextile membrane. This configuration allows water to percolate through to a perforated drain and weep holes at the base of the wall. Merlons were rebuilt and all new works were carried out using lime mortar and matching stone, in keeping with the traditional materials and character of the battlements.



Section Five Location Plan (Historic England)



July 2022



November 2023



November 2023



November 2023



February 2025



February 2025



March 2025



March 2025



March 2025



April 2025



April 2025



April 2025



May 2025



May 2025



July 2025



August 2025



August 2025



August 2025

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 Completed Works

The conservation and repair works undertaken across the South Bastion and associated wall sections have been completed using traditional materials and techniques, with careful attention paid to the historic character and structural integrity of the battlements. Each intervention was informed by detailed condition surveys and adapted responsively to findings on site, ensuring that all repairs were sympathetic to the original construction and fabric.

This recording document provides a comprehensive account of the works carried out and will serve as a valuable reference for future inspections and maintenance. It will assist in the continued monitoring of the condition of the walls, supporting informed decision-making and the long-term stewardship of this important historic structure.



Sorting of Existing Stonework

Donald Insall Associates
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