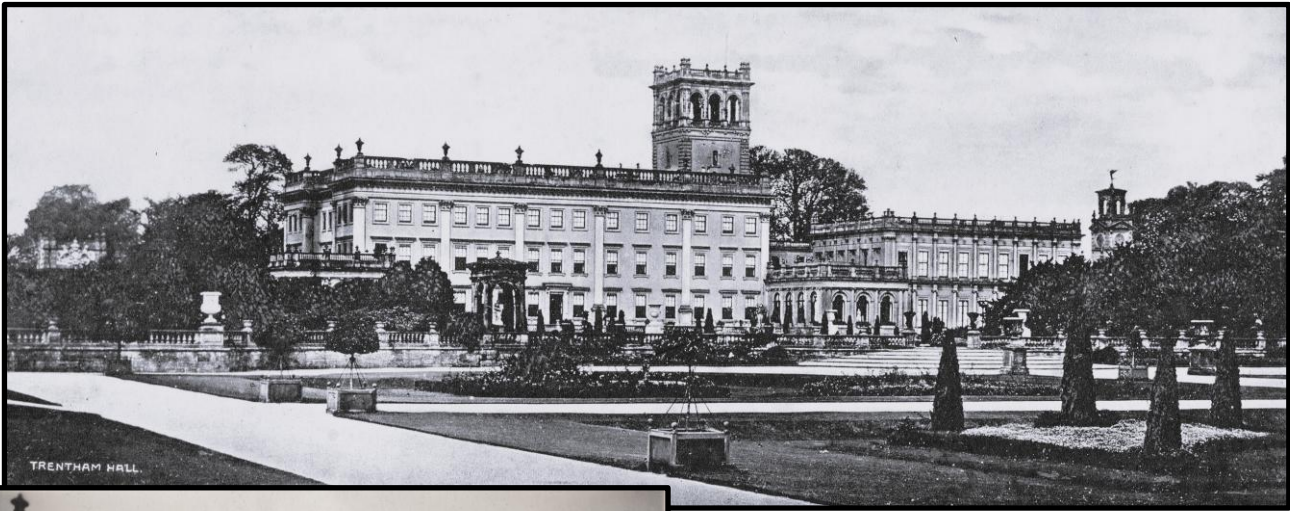


# TRENTHAM HALL TIMELINE



# INTRODUCTION

Trentham Hall was demolished over a century ago. No-one living today, would have seen it, but it remains a familiar, if ghostly, image. It is mainly associated with those leviathans of wealth, the Dukes of Sutherland, although it was never their primary residence.

There persists a belief that Trentham was robbed of its heritage when the hall was demolished in 1912, because neither Staffordshire County Council or the newly federated Borough of Stoke on Trent would take on its ownership and upkeep.

The Sutherland's local legacy, however, remains strong through the provision of Trentham Park and the gardens. Coinciding with the demolition of the Hall, the trustees of the estate opened the gardens to the public and they quickly became an established destination for entertainment and recreation. They are particularly fondly remembered by countless thousands for the open-air swimming pool, the miniature lakeside train and the ballroom, although those too eventually fell into disrepair and were obliterated from the landscape.

The gardens and attractions continued with different owners, but their upkeep and popularity dwindled towards the Millenium. But in 2004, after a huge and much needed redevelopment and renewal programme by St Modwen and Trentham Leisure Ltd, the estate reopened to the public. Over two decades later under different ownership and management, the gardens and shopping village and events continue to attract the crowds.

Today, some visitors might wonder why these gardens exist here, on the edge of Stoke on Trent. They might also be intrigued at the story behind the rather dilapidated buildings, that can be seen at the northern end of the gardens. They may be surprised to learn that they were once attached to a ducal palace, belonging to one of the richest families in the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the origin of this place starts way back in the Dark Ages and leads into this timeline for the now invisible Trentham Hall.

Trentham Heritage Project  
2025

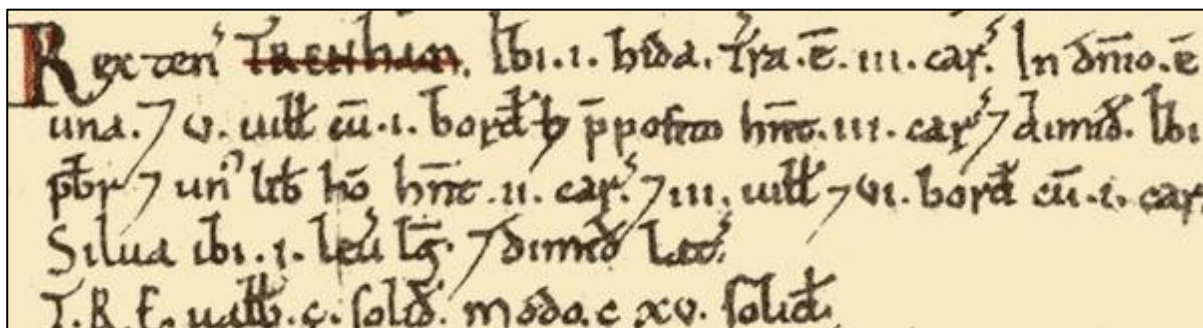
# BACKGROUND

The early settlement at the meeting of three streams – the River Trent, Park Brook and Longton Brook, may have gained its name from the Old English word ‘ham’ which means settlement. Trentham being a settlement by the Trent.

AD680      There is recorded history of the settlement with the founding of a nunnery by St Werburgh, daughter of King Wulphere, at the side of Park Brook.

1086      Trentham has an entry in the Domesday Book.

## IN PIREHEL HD



‘History from the Sources’ - Domesday Book’ ed. John Morris 1976

## In PIREHILL Hundred

**TRENTHAM** 1 hide. Land for 3 ploughs. In lordship 1;  
5 villagers with 1 smallholder and a reeve have 3½ ploughs.  
A priest and a free man have 2 ploughs;  
3 villagers and 6 smallholders with 1 plough.  
Woodland 1 league long and ½ league wide

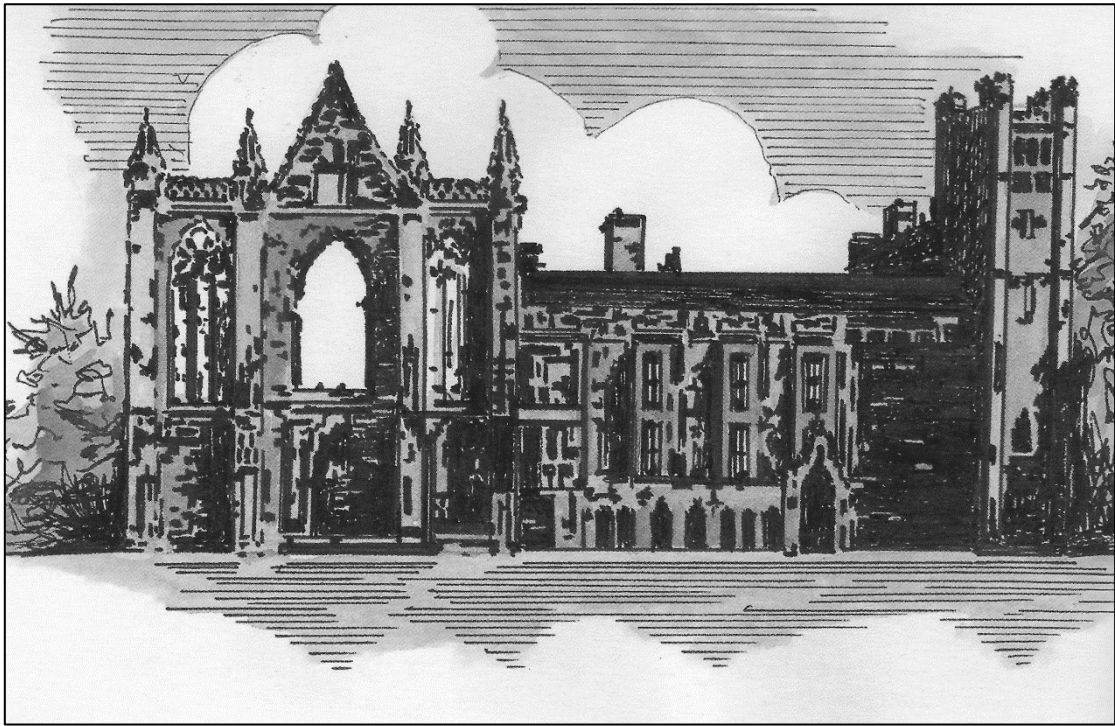
Trentham was the property of the King William I and the mention of a priest suggests an active church at the site. This royal manor had several square miles of woodland.

c1150      An Augustinian priory, dedicated to Saint Mary and All Saints, was established on the site of the former nunnery.

During this period King Henry II developed a deer park around the settlement.

c1300      Sheep farming took place at Trentham and the wool was exported to Tuscany.

1536      The Priory was dissolved.



Artist's Impression by Alan Myatt of the Augustinian Priory after the dissolution

- 1537**      **The Manor was leased to Richard Trentham.**
- 1538**      **The Manor was owned by Charles Brandon, the Duke of Suffolk and Sir Thomas Pope in rapid succession.**

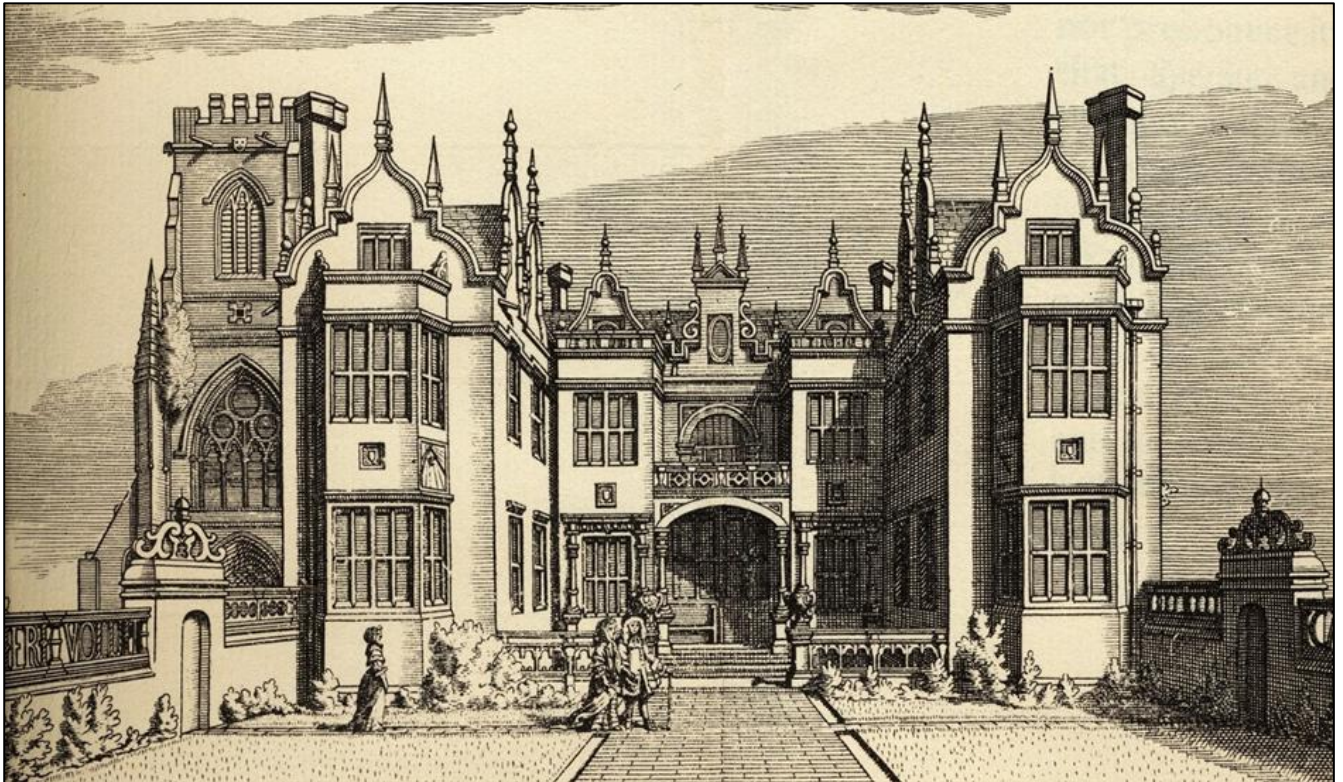
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## **THE BEGINNING OF THE LEVESON CONNECTION**

- 1540**      **The Manor was sold to James Leveson, a wool merchant from Wolverhampton.**
- By this time, part of the church may have already been demolished but the remainder had been left for parish use and later development.
- 1547**      **The estate passed to Richard Leveson and it, and the property, was developed further.**
- 1599**      **During the late 1500s the west and south sides of the cloister were converted into a house which had a hall, gallery and a 'Lord's Treasurer's chamber'.**
- 1605**      **An inventory at this date describes a two-storey house which included Lady Leveson's chamber, a gallery and a cellar.**
- 1630**      **The old priory was largely demolished and the old house rebuilt and enlarged by Sir Richard Leveson KB. It had an H-plan footprint and an Elizabethan style of architecture. The front 'main entrance' had large mullioned windows and the house faced west. This entrance had a**



gatehouse with the inscription: 'CAROLO BRITANAE REGE RICHARDVS LEVESON EQVES BALNEI AEDES HASCE HIC FIERI VOLVIT' (When Charles was King of Britain, Richard Leveson, Knight of the Bath desired this house to be built). Its irregular design (particularly to the south and east of the site) perhaps reflected the incorporation of earlier buildings on the site. The tower of the church was retained and can be seen in images of the building from this period. The southern aspect of the house had gardens with walled compartments.

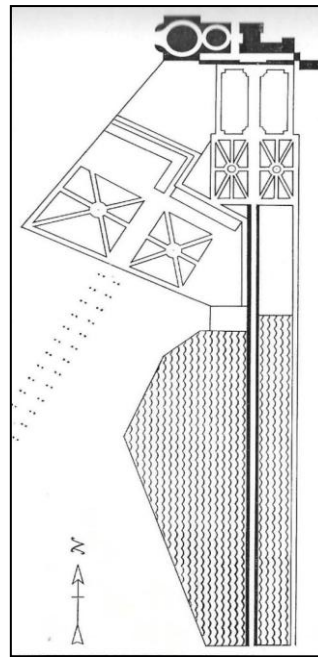


Trentham Hall from the west, showing church tower  
Natural History of Staffordshire - Plot 1686

- 1661      The Leveson and Gower families were united through marriage and the estate passed to William Leveson-Gower.
- 1695      Sir John Leveson-Gower inherited the estate. There was no lake, only marshland. A causeway, with a canal on either side, was constructed across the marshy land south of the house. It was brick built and had little ornamentation. Its function was to give an interesting vista from the house towards the south and to enhance the impact of the property when approached from the south. In later years the look of this feature was 'softened' by sympathetic planting around it.

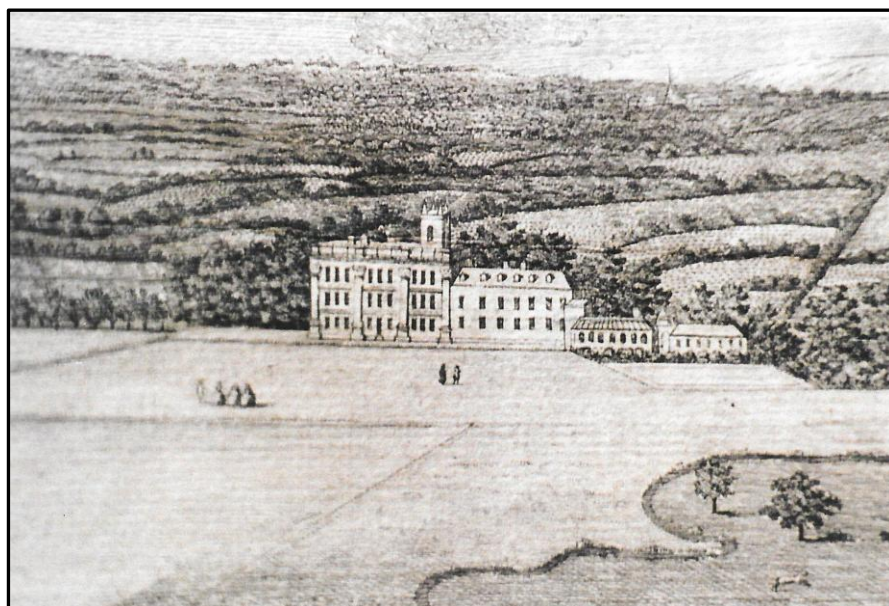


1716 extract from Burton's map of  
causeway and canals



Simplified plan of causeway and  
canals from Country Life 1968

- 1706-10**     **The old house was pulled down and rebuilt for the 1st Baron Gower to the design of William Smith of Warwick.**
- 1720**       **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Gower had much work done on the grounds.**
- 1730**       **John Leveson-Gower (created 1st Earl Gower and Viscount Trentham from 1746) erected a house based on the design of Buckingham House. It was brick built and had little ornamentation.**
- 1737**       **He commissioned Francis Smith of Warwick to add a library and steward's room to the house. The church tower was retained.**



1751 Trentham Hall, view from the south by J Harris before additions by Brown and Holland



**1746-8      The causeway was removed and a lake formed.**

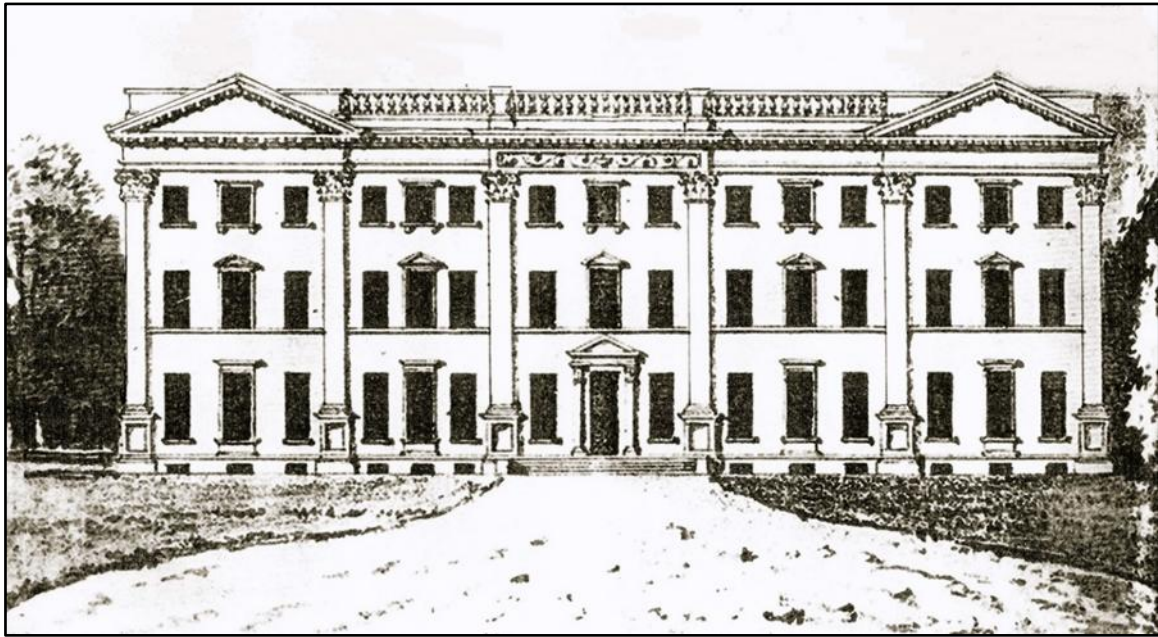


1751 engraving by J Bennion, showing an almost square shaped lake in front of the hall

**1752      The church tower was removed due its dangerous condition.**

**1760-75      Plans were drawn and work undertaken for a redesigned house and gardens for Granville the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Gower, by Henry Holland and Lancelot Brown. Their plans for the southern aspect included full height extensions at each side of the existing building taking it from a three-bay southern range which overlooked the lake, to a five bay one. One illustration of this work shows pilasters (ornamental columns) with triangular capitals at their top. Contemporary images generally show a house with columns but, without capitals. These images invariably show ornamental parapets.**





1775 The Holland Designed House – from Country Life January 1968

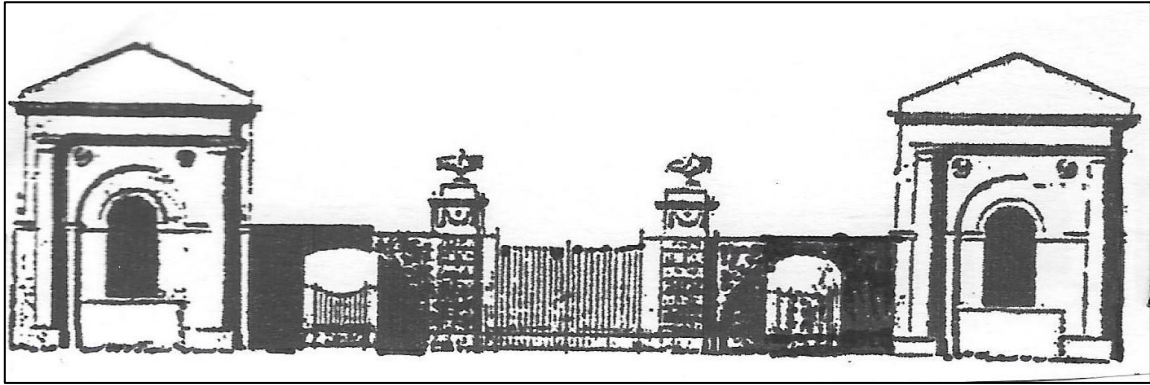


Illustration of the Holland designed house by G. Barrett R.A. and W. Watts 1781

**1775/6**

Lodges, designed by Joseph Pickford of Derby, were erected at the southern end of the park to control the use of the private road from the south, which went through the parkland to the house.





Pickford Lodges

Illustration - Andrew Dobraszczyk. Social History Walk Kings Wood, Spring Valley, Trentham Park.

The commissioning of Capability Brown from 1759 brought changes to the surrounding landscape. One of the most striking aspects was the substantial enlargement of the lake to cover 75 acres, bringing it nearer to the house and diverting the river through the lake and out through a cascade at the southern end. A single span iron bridge was erected across the river.



View of the Hall from the south, Rev. Stebbing Shaw. 1781

## THE SUTHERLAND ERA –

### THE 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY DEVELOPMENT OF TRENTHAM HALL

**1803** George Granville Leveson-Gower succeeded to the title 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Stafford. He had married Elizabeth, Countess of Sutherland in 1785.

Charles Heathcote Tatham, a former pupil of Holland, was commissioned to design lodges for the entrance to the west courtyard, the main entrance to the house. The designs would later be adapted by Charles Barry, when the house was remodelled with a grand west entrance.

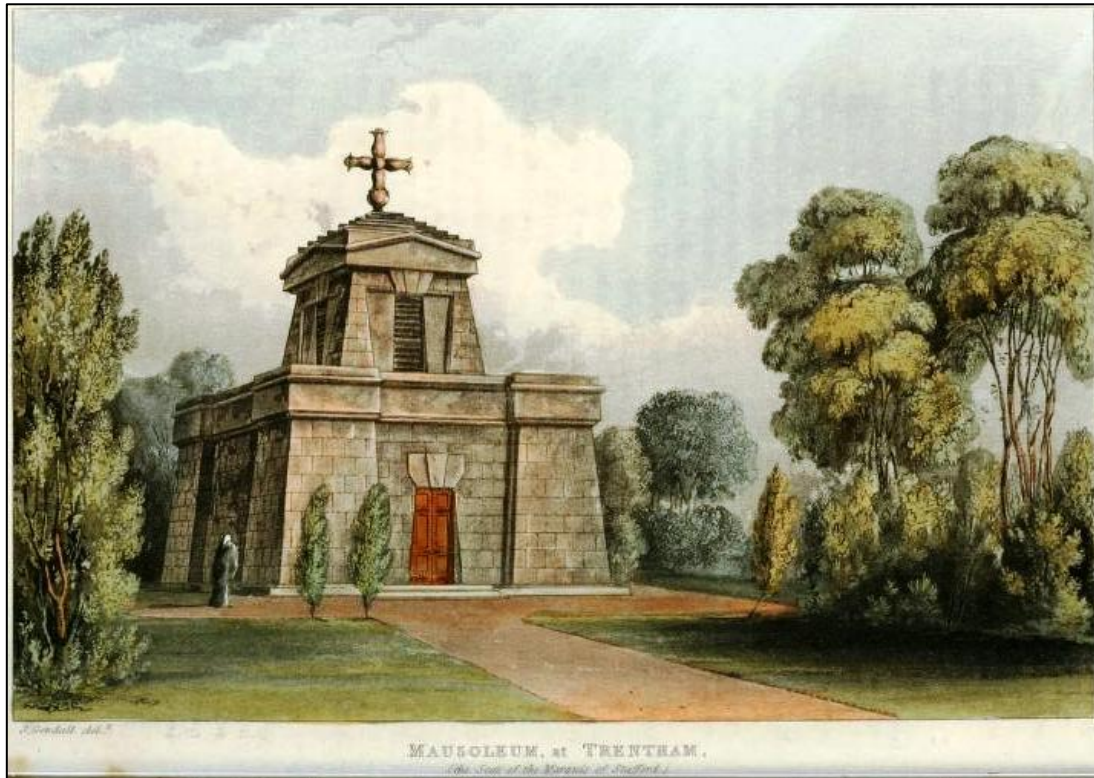
**1807** Tatham also designed a conservatory for the west front of the house.



Drawing by J. Neale and engraving by J.C. Varrall, 1820 showing the Tatham conservatory

**1808** A family Mausoleum, again designed by Tatham, was built at the east side of the Hall, beyond the river and the north/south road. A private road linking the Mausoleum with the Hall was constructed. The total cost was £5000.





Mausoleum from Ackerman's Repository of Arts July 1824

**1814-17** A three storey addition to the Hall containing a library, dining room, bedrooms and offices was added to the east end of the south front, plus a single storey orangery. They were built by Charles Winks, a former clerk of works to Tatham.



Drawn by J.P. Neale and engraved by W.Wallis, 1820 - Showing the Winks additions

1823

A further lodge, at Tittensor, was created at the southern entrance to the Hall grounds. It was demolished in 1961.



Postcard - Lodge and gates at Tittensor



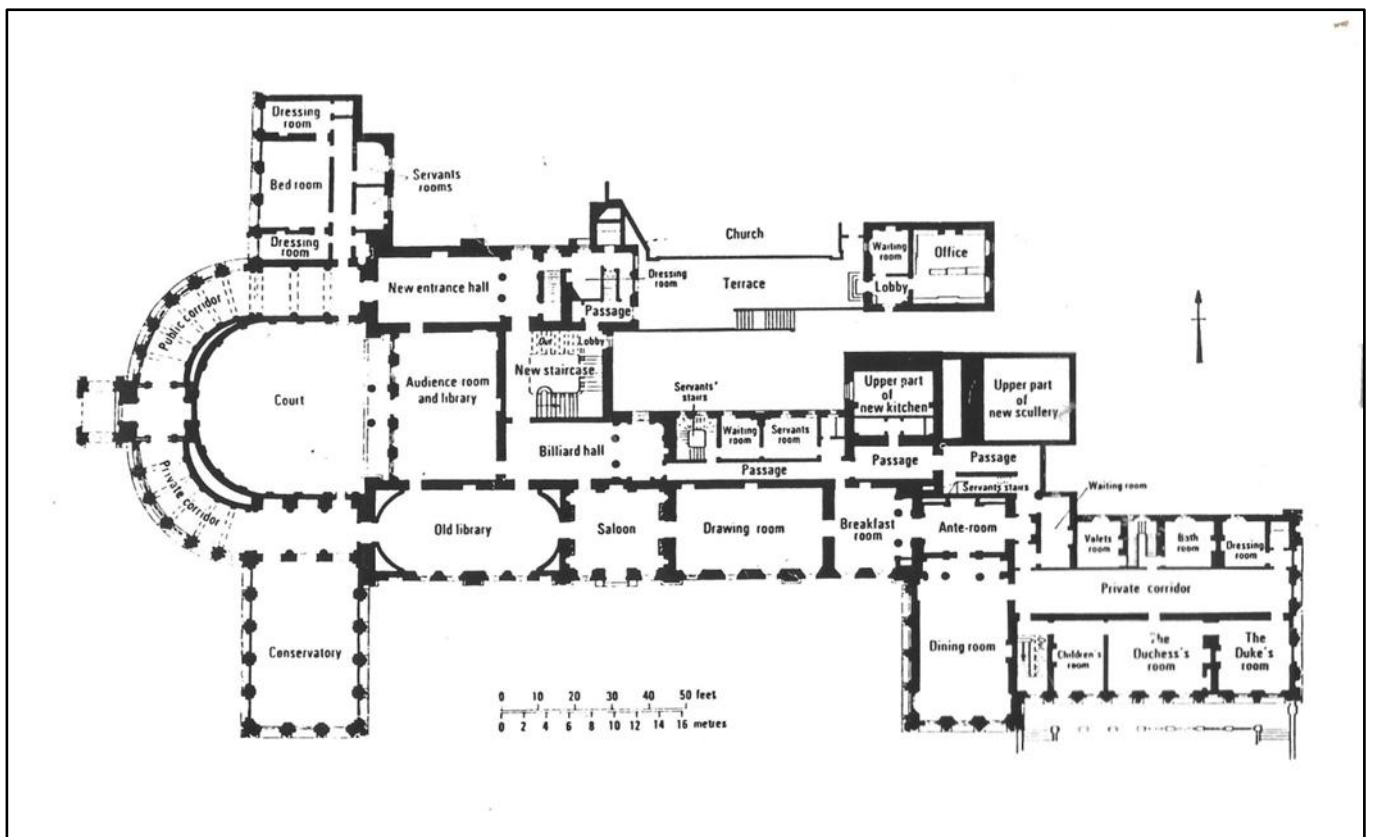
# THE FINAL HALL

1830s

Following the death of his father in 1833, only six months after he was created 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Sutherland, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Sutherland and his wife Harriet required a larger and more impressive Hall for their growing family and as befitted their status as one of the wealthiest families in the country.

They employed Charles Barry, who later became the architect of the Houses of Parliament, to transform the existing building. It was to be considerably remodelled and enlarged in the ornate Italianate design/style favoured by Barry.

At the early planning stage there was an estimated cost of £40,000 for the work to the Hall and gardens with an estimated workforce of 13 builders initially required. Barry's design, in size and layout, was intended to make the Hall suitable for both large scale formal entertaining and a home for a growing family. To this end, the public rooms were placed towards the west side of the Hall and the private rooms off a corridor and behind a colonnade, at the south-east side of the Hall. The Hall was to be faced/rendered in cement with a concrete frieze embellished with urns at the roofline.



Barry's plan for the main floor of the hall, Staffordshire Archives

St Mary and All Saints Church was to be incorporated into the northern range of the Hall complex.

The 'home farm, which was to remain located on an elongated triangle of land north of the Hall, was to be largely rebuilt in a similar but less ornate Italianate style of the Hall, as were the poultry and fish rearing facilities and other service buildings alongside the home farm. A short distance beyond these facilities new ones were added e.g. a new ice house, to replace the one on the northern shore of the lake, and a gas house to provide a new and modern energy supply to the Hall. The school and school mistress's home in this same road were also renovated. At this time the dairy was positioned in the east wing of the service yard.

1834 Work began on the renovation of the Hall. James Trubshaw, who had undertaken work at the Hall previously, was the appointed builder and the original estimated completion date was 1839.

1839 By this date the south west front was largely complete and work was underway on construction of the Belvedere Tower. The main floor of the Hall had been significantly altered as family bedrooms, dressing rooms and sitting rooms were either enlarged or added. Other key rooms were also altered, enlarged and elaborately decorated e.g. library, salon, breakfast room and Venetian Room.

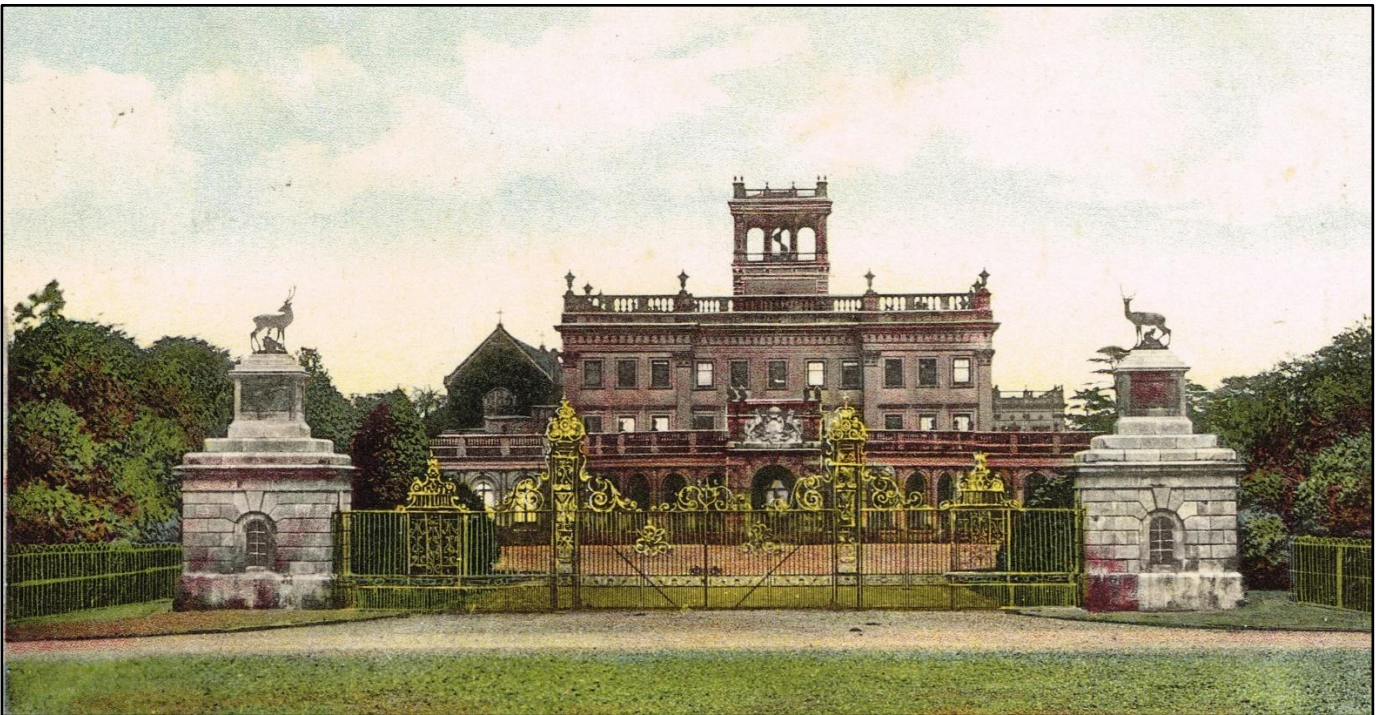


The Venetian Room



The house servants now had work rooms and waiting rooms on this main floor and the upper parts of the new kitchen and scullery were also at this level.

The west entrance, where the roads to the Hall from the Duke's other properties converged in a goosefoot design, had been enlarged and developed to include large ornamental gatehouses and gates. Later gates, which were not part of Barry's designs, often referred to as Golden Gates, were replicas of those at Buckingham Palace and were later re-used at Lilleshall. They were black with 'golden' ornamentation.



Colourised postcard of the west entrance showing the "golden gates"

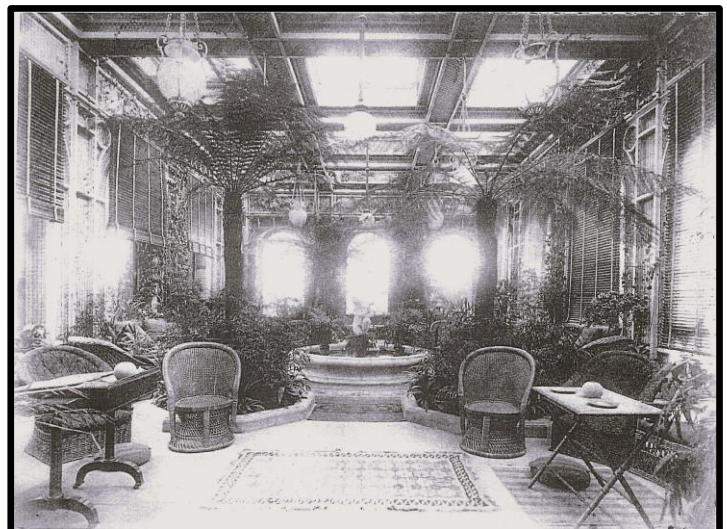
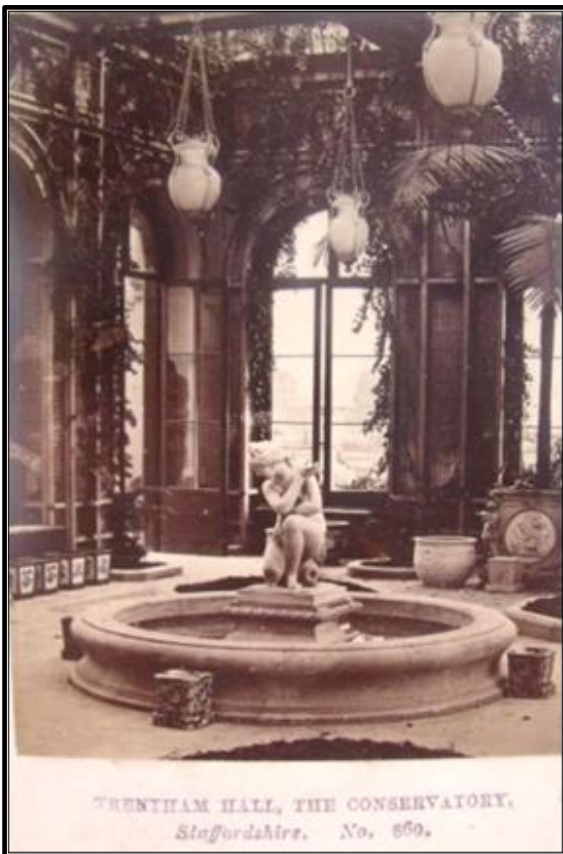
At the front of the grand west entrance building was a 'porte cochère'. This structure allowed carriages access to a point where their occupants could disembark/embark under cover. It bore the arms of the Dukes of Sutherland. There was a similar but smaller and much less ornate structure at the back of the Hall for those arriving through the service yard. The family would use this entrance on a 'day to day' basis.





Postcard showing the porte cochère and the semi-circular private corridor

**Beyond the west entrance were the public corridor to the rooms in the northern wing of the Hall and the private corridor to the south leading to a private conservatory and other private rooms of the Hall.**



Postcards – The Private Conservatory



**These corridors embraced the open west court and led to an audience room, library and the entrance to the grand staircase.**



The library as it looked prior to the sale of contents in 1906

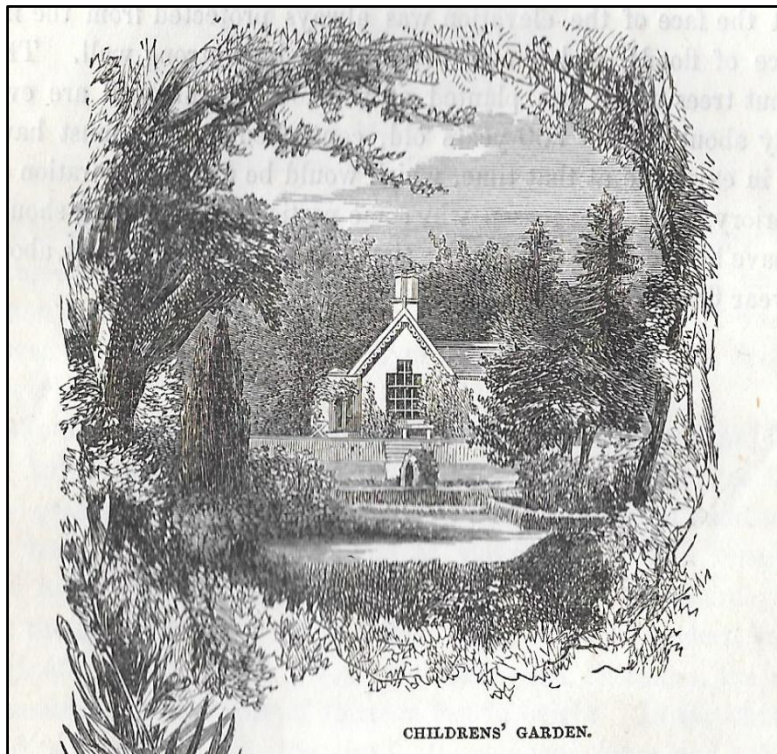
**1839** Much of the work on the south west front was completed or well underway. Work was also underway on the construction of the Belvedere Tower. The main floor of the Hall had been significantly altered as rooms were changed or added.

**1840s** By this decade further work had been planned and more of the original work completed. During this later stage of building development, an orangery with a southern aspect overlooking the ornate gardens and a sculpture gallery, were added.



Postcard showing the Hall and Orangery

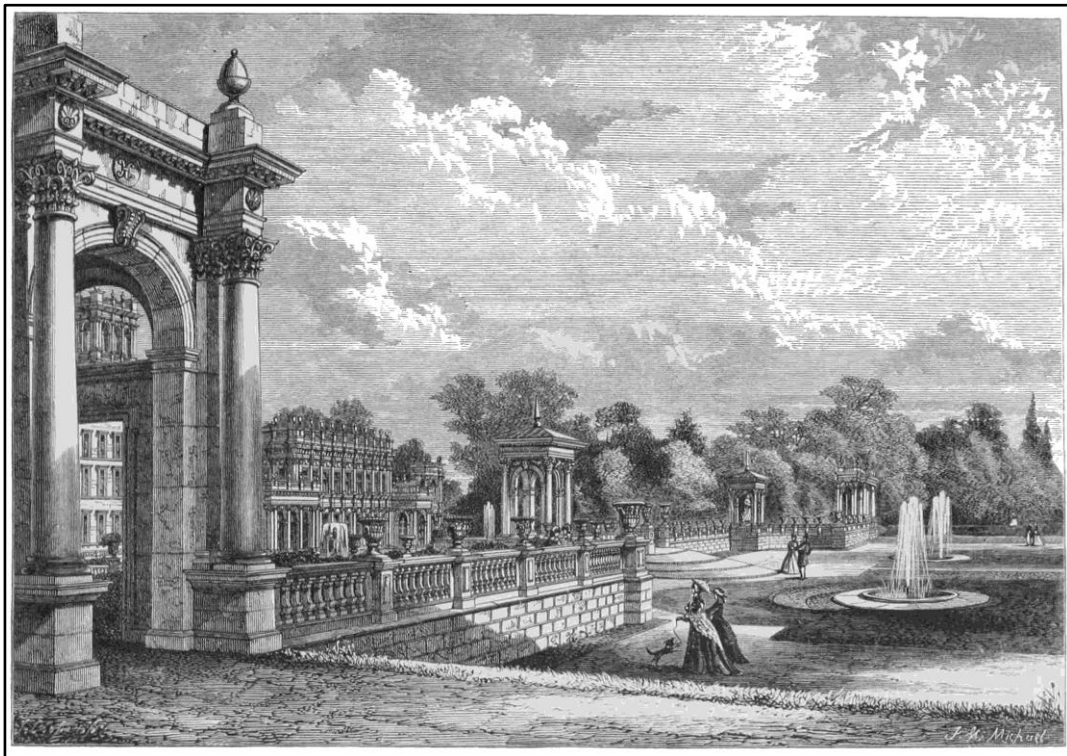
**A children's cottage was added in the vicinity of the Hall.**



Children's Cottage

Trentham Hall and its Gardens, William Molyneux 1857

**Ornamental garden buildings, loggias and pavilions, were added to the perimeter of the terrace.**



Engraving showing part of the Hall and gardens and loggias  
Project Gutenberg



Further buildings, which adjoined the Hall, were at the eastern side of the complex and overlooked the river. They formed part of the service range, stables and coach yard. This complex, which largely survives, had a clock tower with a bronze figure of the Genius of Liberty at its pinnacle, unfortunately the figure is no longer in place. Still visible is a statue of Richard Leveson, a privateer, in an alcove facing into the service yard. The present statue is a replica of the original. The dairy was located in this eastern range of the service yard. An original inscription 'Lac Non Defit' – meaning 'Milk Does Not Fail' can still be seen on the outer east-facing wall of this range. The buildings in the service area and stable yard were less ornate than those forming the rest of the complex. There was originally, but later demolished, a central building which, at one time, housed coaches and also provided accommodation for coachmen.



Postcard - Service buildings including dairy and accommodation block

The buildings in the service area and stable yard, though less ornate than those forming the rest of the Hall complex, were in keeping with the Italianate design of the main part of the Hall.

This enclosed service yard, sometimes more recently referred to as the Riding School, was accessed from Park Drive, across a bridge over the Park Brook. The estate office was located on one side of the gates, and was where the estate clerks worked and where the estate safes were housed. On the other side of the entrance there was a lodge providing working space for the estate porters and also a place from which 'doles for the poor' were given.

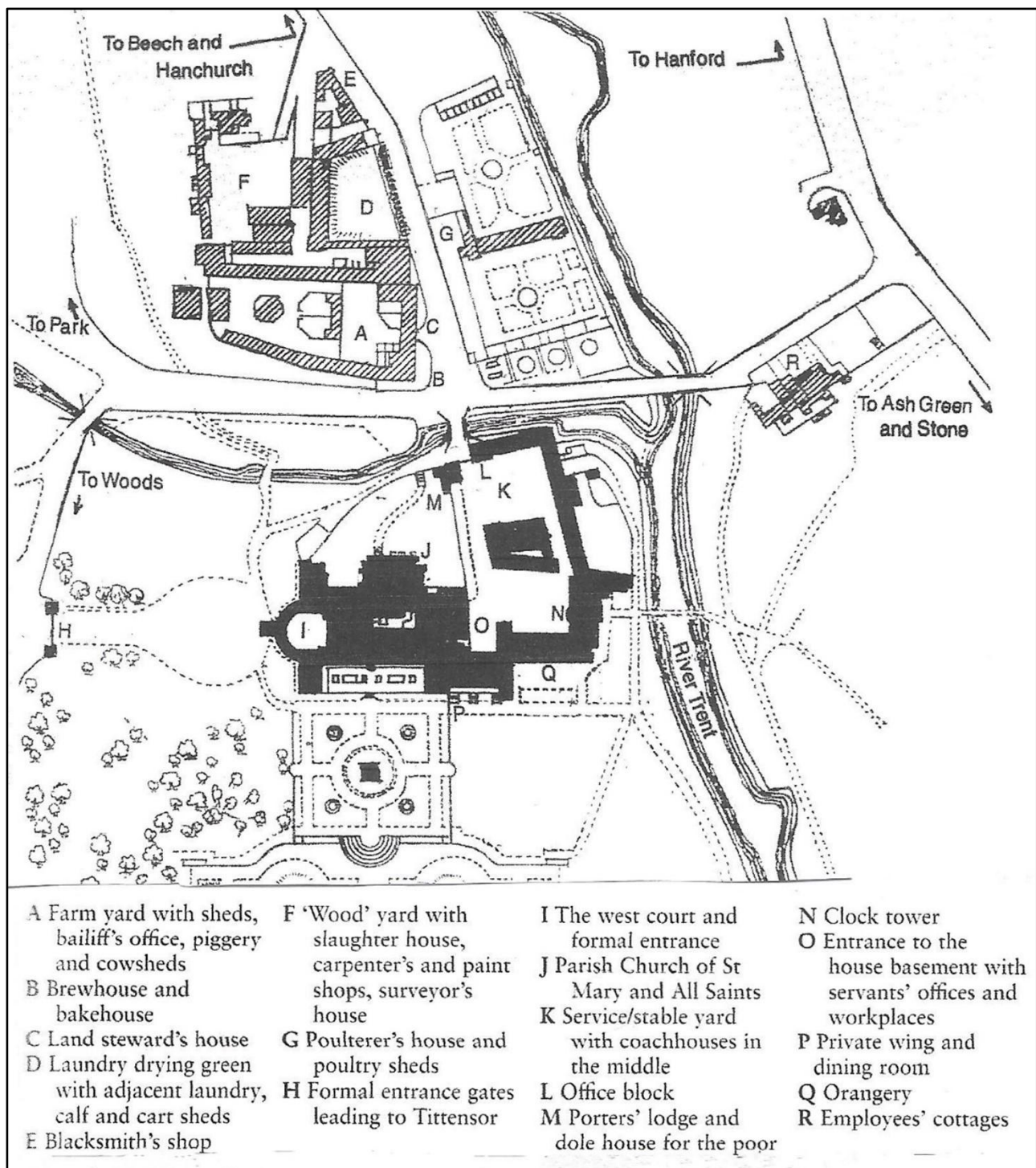


Postcard - Entrance to service yard with estate office on the left and porter's lodge on the right

A section of the St. Mary and All Saints churchyard wall formed the western boundary of this service area. Immediately outside the service yard gates was a dolphin headed fountain set in the church wall.

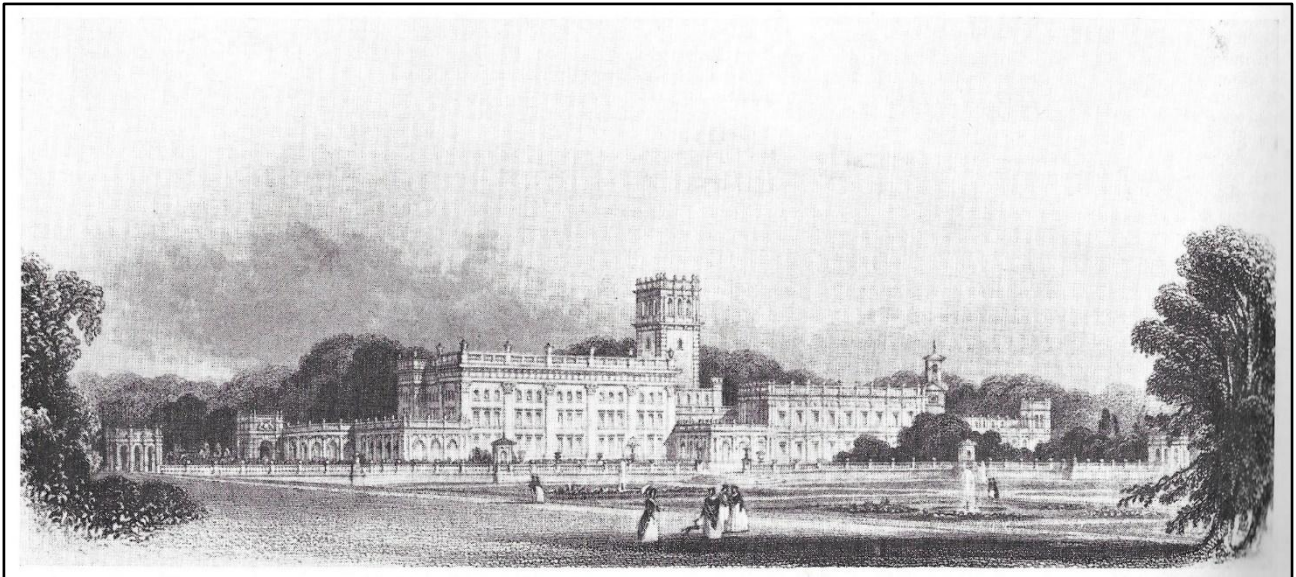
Work on other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Hall was also undertaken at this time. e.g. the home farm, the poultry rearing complex and the fish stews. An icehouse was created and embedded into a nearby rockface, as was a gas house to provide the Hall with a modern energy source. By this period of the development of the Hall, the Duke had spent £123,000 on the Hall and gardens. A new builder from London (Hick) had been commissioned to continue with the construction.





Plan of Hall and estate buildings c1848

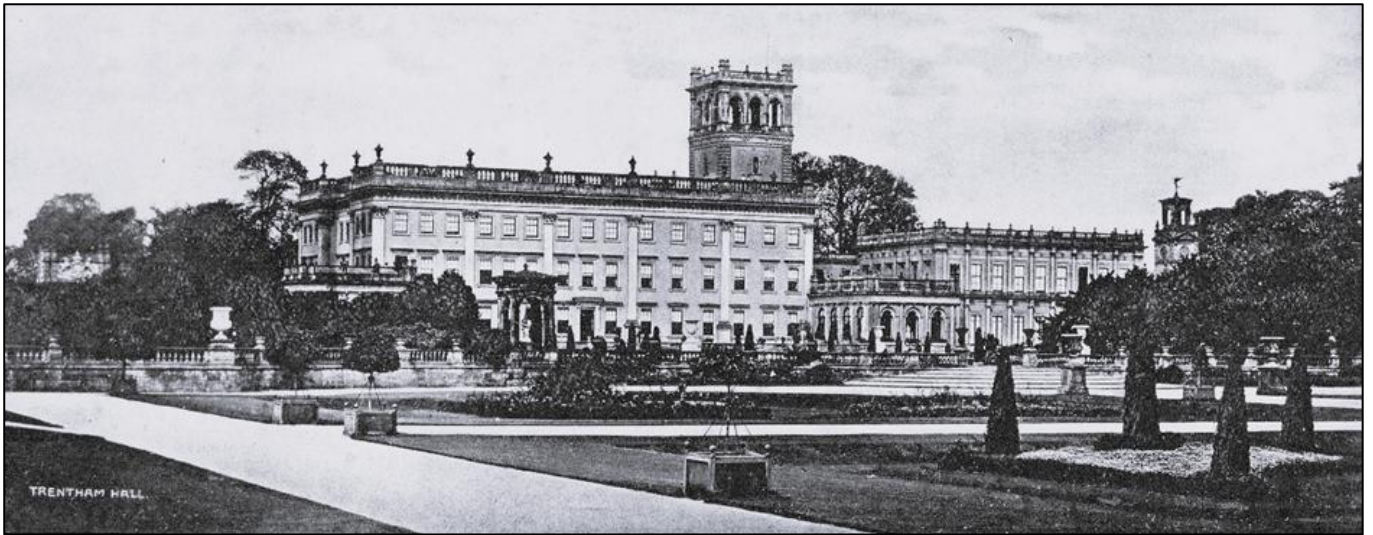
The impressive elevation of the Hall, when viewed from the south or west, was altered and improved by the construction of an ornate 'Belvedere' tower. It was reminiscent of the earlier church tower demolished nearly 100 years before, and it also served as a water tower. This new addition completed the design and extent of the inner courtyard.



Charles Barry sketch of the frontage of Trentham Hall - Country Life 1968

- 1840s**      **Work continued on projects started in earlier stages of the development and much of the planned work was completed.**
- Substantial reconstruction of the Church was undertaken, its southern wall remaining part of the inner court of the Hall and part of its eastern boundary wall acting as a perimeter wall of the service yard.
- Other properties in the immediate vicinity of the Hall, like those in Park Drive were renovated or rebuilt. These cottages often housed key members of staff at the Hall.
- 1850s**      **The Duke and Duchess held social events e.g. celebrations of family events at the Hall. Meetings of various local committees were also held at the Hall e.g. meetings of a committee charged with the development of an infirmary for the area which was led by the Duchess.**
- 1860s – 80s** **In 1861, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Sutherland inherited Trentham Hall, but he was often absent. He made few alterations to the hall, but played host to some eminent guests, including, in 1866, the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII. In 1873, the Shah of Persia visited the Duke at the hall. He arrived for his stay at Trentham Railway Station and wrote enthusiastically of his visit.**
- 1892**      **The Duke died, having spent little time at Trentham, but having spent sufficient money on the Hall to maintain it in reasonable order. He opted to be interred in the Mausoleum.**





Giant photographic postcard of Trentham Hall 1880

## THE HALL IN DECLINE

- 1892** He was succeeded by Cromartie Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland and his wife Millicent, a society hostess, with a social conscience.
- 1895 →** Cromartie served as the Mayor of Longton and was instrumental throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in campaigns for improved provision of municipal and educational facilities in North Staffordshire. He was a key figure in promoting the union of the six Potteries towns and played a prominent role in negotiations which finally resulted in the Federation in 1910.
- 1905** The Duke decided to leave the Hall. It was the first of his houses to be relinquished. His decision was probably prompted by the problems of the polluted River Trent and changes in his financial situation, landed estates were no longer viable.

This decision would have had a profound effect on those staff, permanently resident at the Hall e.g. the housekeeper and housemaids, laundry maids, a carpenter, porters etc. Their roles were to maintain the Hall whether the Sutherlands were in residence or not. It would also have impacted on those who worked when required at the Hall, but lived locally. They stood to lose their source of income and, possibly, their homes.

If the Sutherlands wished to stay in the central part of the country, they still had the option of using Lilleshall.

Trentham Hall was offered, by the Duke, to Staffordshire County Council on condition that it would be used for higher education purposes, as a North Staffordshire College. The Council was reluctant to open a higher education institution and proposed a teacher training college. This suggestion was not agreed to by the Duke.

1906 The County Council declined the offer and the sale of the Hall's contents began.

1907 The library and its contents were sold at auction.

The Duke offered to give the estate to the six Potteries towns, as a public park, if the federation of the six towns was achieved. The gift included the Hall and nine acres of land, plus the use, for all time, of 200 acres of parkland.

1908 In February 101 paintings from the Hall were auctioned at Christie's

Many fixtures and fittings were also sold e.g. three flights of the grand staircase for £28. Marble steps and skirting were sold for £10 and the whole of the state bathroom with copper bath and tiles, by Copeland and Garret, achieved £14.

1910 After Federation, the new Stoke-on-Trent Corporation reconsidered the offer made by the Duke in 1907 but declined it because of estimated high maintenance costs.

The Trentham Park Railway Line opened on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1910. Branching from the main line, it brought visitors to the Stone Road, directly opposite the road to Whitmore and within walking distance to Trentham Hall.

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1910, Trentham Gardens and Pleasure Grounds opened to the public and the Hall was initially a 'striking backdrop' to the lake, beautiful gardens and to an outdoor activities complex. This venue offered activities such as angling, boating, tennis, croquet, bowling and rowing. Visitors could get afternoon tea in the conservatory, repurposed as a tea room, where musical recitals were sometimes held, but where no alcohol was served. Admission was via the porter's lodge at the Park Drive entrance to the service yard.

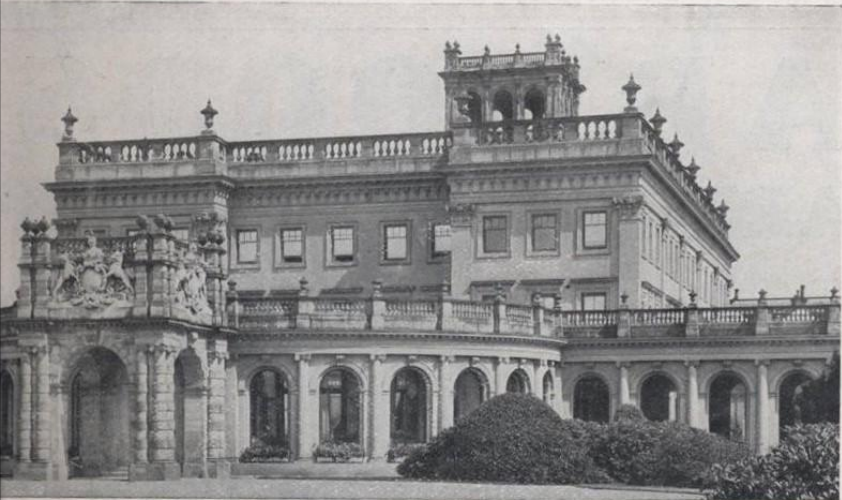




Postcard - Waiting for the gates to open on Park Drive

**1911**      **Demolition of further parts of the main structure of the Hall began after some parts of the Hall were sold separately e.g. the Belvedere Tower was carefully demolished and reconstructed at Earl of Harrowby's park at Sandon and is now registered as an Ancient Monument.**

*Architectural Supplement to COUNTRY LIFE.* iii



## Stone Balustrade

CONTAINING

**140 TURNED BALUSTERS**

**80 HALF-BALUSTERS**

**13 MASSIVE PILLARS**

With heavy base and capping, the whole having a length of 330ft. 0in. or thereabouts, and being 4ft. 10in. in height and 2ft. 0in. in width. The pillars are surmounted by superbly turned stone urns, each of which is 6ft. 6in. high, and

**13 URNS**  
6ft. 6in. high (as described above).

FROM TRENTHAM HALL.

**PRICE - £200 0 0**

Forming the Coping Balustrade to Trentham Hall, as shown in the illustration. To be removed at Purchaser's expense. Apply

**ESTATE OFFICE, TRENTHAM HALL,  
STAFFORDSHIRE.**

Advert for the sale of balustrades from the Architectural supplement to Country Life 1912



**Much of the rest of the Hall was sold to Young and Sons, contractors of Longton. The central/main floors were then also demolished.**



The deconstruction of the Belvedere Tower begins



Demolition continues into 1912



- 1912** The demolition of the main part of the Hall was completed. Only the west entrance, west court and east and west corridors, conservatory, orangery sculpture gallery of this main part remained. The home farm and service yard complex also survived.
- 1930s** Trentham Gardens Ltd. was established in 1931 to manage and further develop the gardens. Some of the remaining parts of the Hall were again repurposed e.g. the surviving conservatory remained 'a tea room with a view' – formerly suitable for nobility and royalty and in more recent years the paying public. It provided music but no alcohol. A new entertainments centre was opened in the same year, becoming famous for its ballroom. A popular open air swimming pool would follow in 1935.

The two limestone lodges from the west entrance to the Hall were moved to the main road end of the, originally private, road between the Hall and the family Mausoleum. They then became lodges at the entrance to the gardens and other attractions.

The lodges and that entrance are no longer in use, but they are still visible. Few people would now know that they once stood proudly on either side of the 'golden gates' that graced the grand west entrance of Trentham Hall in its heyday.



1938 - Entrance for pedestrians and vehicles

# WHAT REMAINS

2024

Some remnants of the Hall continue to deteriorate, but they retain interest. Largely Grade II or Grade II\* listed, they hint at the Italianate splendour of Trentham Hall as envisioned and created by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke and Duchess of Sutherland and Charles Barry.



Porte cochère, private corridor and conservatory of the former grand west entrance



West court with glazed corridors



Orangery

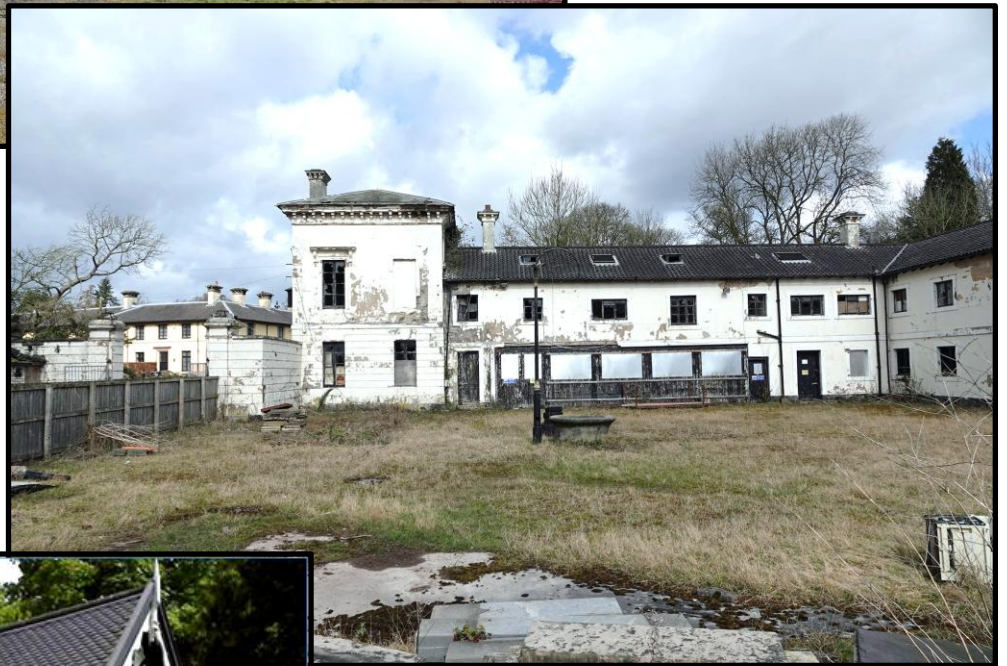


Garden loggia - renovated





Service yard buildings,  
clock tower and porte cochère



Service yard buildings and estate offices



Children's cottage - renovated



St Mary's and All Saints Church seen from the Gardens

## **BOOKS AND ARTICLES USED IN PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

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- . **HISTORY FROM THE SOURCES - STAFFORDSHIRE – ed. John Morris 1976**
- . **A SOCIOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT – E.J.D. Warrillow 1977**
- . **TRENTHAM - The Hall, Gardens and Branch Railway - C.T.Goode 1985**
- . **TRENTHAM AT WAR – The story of a country estate during WWII – Graham Bebbington 1995**
- . **TRENTHAM PARK AND GARDENS TOPOGRAPHICAL HISTORY - Elizabeth Banks Assoc. for St Modern Properties plc. 1998**
- . **TRENTHAM REFLECTIONS – Graham Bebbington 2005**
- . **VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY OF STAFFORDSHIRE VOL X1 Audley, Keele and Trentham - Nigel Tringham 2013**
- . **TRENTHAM THROUGH TIME – Alan Myatt 2015**
- . **THE SERVANTS' STORY: MANAGING A GREAT COUNTRY HOUSE - Pamela Sambrook 2016**
- . **SECRET TRENTHAM – Alan Myatt 2018**
- . **A/Z OF TRENTHAM – Alan Myatt 2019**
- . **TRENTHAM HISTORY TOUR – Alan Myatt 2019**
- . **THE TRANSFORMATION OF TRENTHAM PARK IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY – A. Dobraszczyk undated**