



# WORKS TO REPAIR THE ROOF AT QUEBEC HOUSE

Including Heritage Statement, Design and Access Statement.

National Trust  
London and South East  
Micheldever Consultancy Hub  
4 Warren Farm Barns  
Andover Road  
Winchester  
Hampshire SO21 3FL  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Chair of Regional Advisory Board for  
London and South East: Bernard Donoghue OBE  
Director for London and South East:  
Nicola Briggs

Registered office:  
Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon  
Wiltshire SN2 2NA  
Registered charity number 205846

Quality Assurance: 21.03.24

Written by: RH

Checked by: AS

Approved by: JK

© National Trust

The information contained within this report should solely be used for the purposes of this report and should not be used by any third party for any other purpose.



**National  
Trust**

## 1. Introduction

This supporting statement accompanies a listed building consent application by the National Trust for repairs to the roof at Quebec House, childhood home of General James Wolfe, victor of the Battle of Quebec 1759.

The National Trust is one of Europe's largest conservation organisations, with a responsibility for managing and protecting some of the most beautiful, historically important and environmentally sensitive places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The National Trust are the owners and custodians of Quebec House, a Grade I listed building.



*Figure 1 – General James Wolfe as a young man oil on canvas portrait by Benjamin West PRA Quebec House, Kent ©National Trust Images/Matthew Hollow.*

## 2. Quebec House

The Quebec House Statement of Significance summarises the importance of the property:

“Quebec House has the leading collection of Wolfe memorabilia in the world. Artefacts from the Flemish dressing-gown in which General Wolfe's remains were returned to England, his field-canteen and other family items are displayed along with a thorough representation of the art and literature inspired by his heroic death.

Originally known as Spiers, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the name of the house was changed to Quebec House, in memory of General Wolfe. In 1726 Edward and Henrietta Wolfe took up residence in the village of Westerham and rented the house. The following January, whilst Edward was away on military service and Henrietta was staying at the Old Vicarage, James was born. Soon the family took up residence at Spiers and lived there for the next eleven years. At the age of fourteen, James received his first military commission and was to spend the majority of the remaining eighteen years of his life on service. Quebec House rightly claims to be the House he would have known as home. After leaving the village James was to retain close ties; he received his first commission at Squerryes Court, the home of his childhood friend George Warde.

James Wolfe was born to be a soldier. At the age of thirteen he was forced through ill health to withdraw from the expedition to capture





## National Trust

Carthagen. Brought to note for good service at Dettingen and Culloden, he was rapidly promoted and at thirty-two he was appointed Major General and entrusted by Pitt the Elder with command of the troops sent to capture Quebec. His untimely death at the moment of victory ensured his immortality in history.

A wave of exaltation spread through the worlds of literature and art as the nation celebrated the death of the first 'British Hero'; the Highland Regiments had fought alongside their old enemies of Culloden for the first time at Quebec. The death of Wolfe became the most iconic image of its day, Adam and Wilton competed to design the monument at Westminster Abbey, while Romney, Penny and West painted the moment of his demise. Popular demand led to reproductions in sculpture, paintings, engravings, tapestries, and in many other media; representations of which are in the collection at Quebec House. The death of Wolfe was as renowned as that of Nelson fifty years later.

In 1913 Joseph Bowles Learmont, a prominent Montreal businessman and philanthropist, was seeking both a lasting memorial to General Wolfe and a way to mark the strong ties between Britain and Canada. A decade earlier Quebec House had been purchased by the Warde family who had returned it to how they thought it had appeared at the time James Wolfe and his family were resident. To much public acclaim, especially in Canada, Learmont purchased Quebec House as the tribute he sought.

By 1918 the National Trust was growing and as well as taking care of areas of countryside and coastline had begun to buy specific houses of historic importance that were at risk. Although Learmont died in 1914, his wife Charlotte shared his vision and in 1918 presented Quebec House to The National Trust with a desire to promote "the closer union of the races constituting the Dominion of Canada with those of Great Britain and assist the working out of the great destinies of the two countries". It was the first house to be donated to the Trust, the Learmonts' collection of "Wolfania" and "Canadiana" represents the first collection given into the Trust's care. Whilst much of the "Canadiana" was returned to Canada, the House was endowed with a fund for the continued collection of "Wolfania".

Of Tudor origin, Quebec is a Grade I listed three storey house built of red brick and Kentish ragstone with a clay-tile roof. It is located on the eastern edge of the picturesque village of Westerham, a designated Conservation Area set within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Greensand Ridge Special Landscape and Metropolitan Green Belt. Its current appearance is as a result of a number of alterations over the centuries and the building is an important example of a gentry house of architectural and historical significance.

In the grounds of Quebec House is a largely untouched Tudor coach-house that contains a comprehensive exhibition telling the story of General Wolfe's life and his victory at Quebec. The coach-house is one of



## National Trust

the few buildings in England known to retain bee-boles; wall niches to house bee skeps, whilst the Tudor cellars of the main house still show traces of in-door bee-boles used for over-wintering.”



*Figure 2 – Early summer scene at Quebec House ©National Trust Images/Laurence Perry*

### 3. Site Location

Quebec House is located on the A25 on the eastern edge of the town of Westerham. The house is surrounded by gardens of 0.15 hectare. The property is an important visitor attraction within the town.

Quebec House is Grade I listed (list entry number: 1244133) and sits within the context of two other listed structures under the care of the National Trust:

- The Cottage behind Quebec House to the north – Grade II – list entry number: 1244134).
- The Front Garden Wall to south of Quebec House – Grade II – list entry number: 1272529.

The area of roof to be repaired is on the south elevation of Quebec House. It entails repairs to the lead valley gutter and internal plastering repairs to the Top Flat.



National  
Trust

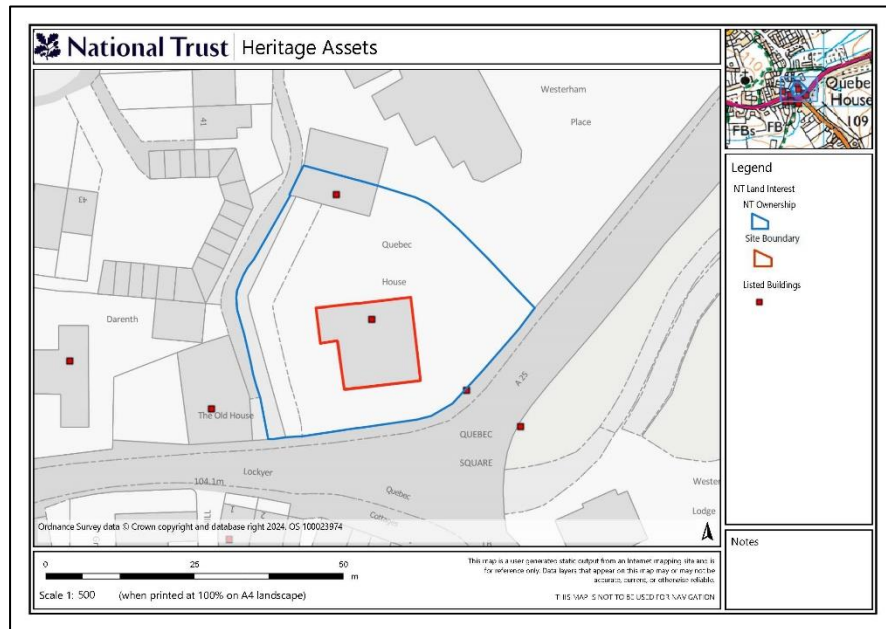


Figure 3 – Map showing heritage assets in relation to the site boundary ©National Trust.

#### 4. Proposal and Design

During investigation it was found that water ingress via the leadwork valley gutter had caused localised wet rot to the timber valley boards and bearers, wall plate and ends of the rafter feet. The water ingress had also locally damaged an area of internal plasterwork. These works to repair the lead valley gutter and internal plastering are the extent of this application. This proposal is to repair the roof includes:

- Carefully remove tiles, battens, counter battens underlay etc, and set aside any undamaged tiles to be reused;
- Removal of decayed timber;
- Replacement timber to be installed using either full replacement in matching species or scarf repairs as per the structural engineer's drawings;
- Additional structural support to brickwork gable ends with new timber noggins and restraints straps as per the structural engineer's drawings;
- Replace the underlay with Type 1F (unless where exposed it will be Type 5U, or equivalent UV durable type);
- Installation of new softwood battens;
- Replacement of tiles and re-use of existing tiles that are in good condition;
- New leadwork valley gutter;
- Localised internal replastering on a like for like basis as required.





## National Trust

This option for repairing the roof provides an almost like for like use of materials during the repairs and there will be no visible alterations to the building once works are complete, ensuring that the significance of this heritage asset is not affected by the proposed works.



Figure 5 – Image showing the area of roof in need of repair ©National Trust.



Figure 4 – Image showing a section of decayed timber from the roof ©National Trust.



**National  
Trust**

## 5. Heritage Assessment

The National Trust has followed the approach set out in Good Practice Advice in Planning 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015) and Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). In addition, we have also had regard to general Historic England guidance, including Historic England Advice Note 12 relating to Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets which states under Paragraph 29 that:

“While it is important that applicants should take full advantage of opportunities to analyse the significance of their heritage assets, and for local planning authorities to ensure that they have sufficient information to make an appropriate assessment, in the terms of the NPPF, it is also important that the level of detail given in a statement of heritage significance is proportionate to the impact of the proposal. However, while that analysis should be as full as necessary to understand significance, the description provided to the LPA need be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on significance”.

In this case, the repair to the roof at Quebec House is a small section of the listed building and this repair on an almost complete like for like basis will have a minimal impact on the significance of the heritage assets at Quebec House as described in Section 2 above.

The National Trust has carefully considered this proposal against heritage policies at both a national (NPPF, 2023) and local (Sevenoaks Core Strategy, 2011 and Allocation and Development Management Plan, 2015) level.

This proposal complies with Policy LO8 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN5 of the Allocation and Development Management Plan because the proposed development will conserve the character of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty through the lack of external change to Quebec House as a result of this proposal.

Furthermore, repairing the roof of Quebec House will protect it as a heritage asset associated with General Wolfe, supporting Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy and Policy EN4 of the Allocation and Development Management Plan.

Under paragraph 208 of the NPPF, it is considered that repairing the roof at Quebec House on a like for like basis with modern materials in a traditional style is going to cause minor less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets at Quebec House. Repairing the damaged areas of the roof that are currently allowing water ingress will be of public benefit by keeping the structure in a good condition. Once the works are completed there will be no visual impact of this proposal.



## National Trust

Quebec House is included within the Westerham Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, 2015, notes that Quebec House is a Grade I listed Jacobean House with distinctive gables, which is partially hidden behind its walls and amongst mature trees, but the ground of the Grade II listed neo-classical Quebec Cottages, with later shop fronts, on the road junction are the first real indication of the quality of the built environment in the town (section 4.2.1).

Due to the lack of aesthetic change once the works are completed, it is not considered that this proposal would have an impact on the setting of nearby heritage assets.

### 6. Access

There will be no long term changes to access at Quebec House as a result of this proposal. Some rooms may be closed to visitors to facilitate works to the roof, as necessary. Externally, fixed scaffolding will provide access to the roof, as a result there may be some diversion of visitor paths for health and safety purposes. Once the works are completed and the scaffolding has been removed, any areas that were temporarily closed or diverted will re-open to the public.

The emergency response routes to the property will remain unchanged as a result of this proposal.





**National  
Trust**

## 7. Summary

This proposal to repair the roof at Quebec House is not considered to cause harm to the heritage assets as the materials used will be like for like and once the works are complete, there will be no visual impact from this work. The works to repair the roof are of public benefit by ensuring that the building remains watertight for future generations, for everyone, for ever.

This proposal complies with the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF. Therefore, since there are no material considerations against this proposal and the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the minor less than substantial harm caused to the heritage asset, Listed Building Consent should be granted.



*Figure 6 – Image of Quebec House ©National Trust*



National  
Trust

