

The Ballroom

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The focus of the whole building is the room that has been known as the ballroom since 1826. Before that date it was known as the 'grand room'. It was called the 'banqueting room' by Paine when he published his Plans in 1751. It is a 'double cube' room, so called because it is sixty feet long, thirty feet high and thirty feet wide.

Again, Paine is perhaps recalling the designs of Inigo Jones. Amongst Jones's works is a double cube room for the earl of Pembroke at Wilton House, Wiltshire. In his published Plans of 1751, Paine showed the room as having paintings on the ceilings, an expense beyond the resources of the corporation. This was perhaps another of his attempts to aggrandise his commission in the eyes of possible future patrons.

The room does not have paintings in the ceilings but instead it has plaster work of a wonderfully high quality, the work of Joseph Rose or Thomas Perritt, who were amongst the finest craftsmen of the age. The room is lighted by three crystal chandeliers, which the corporation decided to buy in 1750.

There is a musician's gallery over the principal entrance doors, which lead from the landing at the top of the imperial-style staircase. The portraits include those of King George III, presented by Lord Eardley in 1804, and the first portrait to hang in the House, and Queen Victoria. There are portraits of three generations of the grandees who lived at Wentworth Woodhouse: the Marquis of Rockingham, Prime Minister in 1782, and his successors the fifth and sixth Earls Fitzwilliam. These noblemen were among the most influential figures in Yorkshire society and politics.

In addition, there are also portraits of the Doncaster-born Sir Frank Lockwood, the barrister who defended the locally-notorious Charles Peace, and M P for York, who became Solicitor General in 1894, and Lord Lonsdale, the sporting earl (painted by Sir John Lavery, 1930), another reminder of Doncaster's racing history.