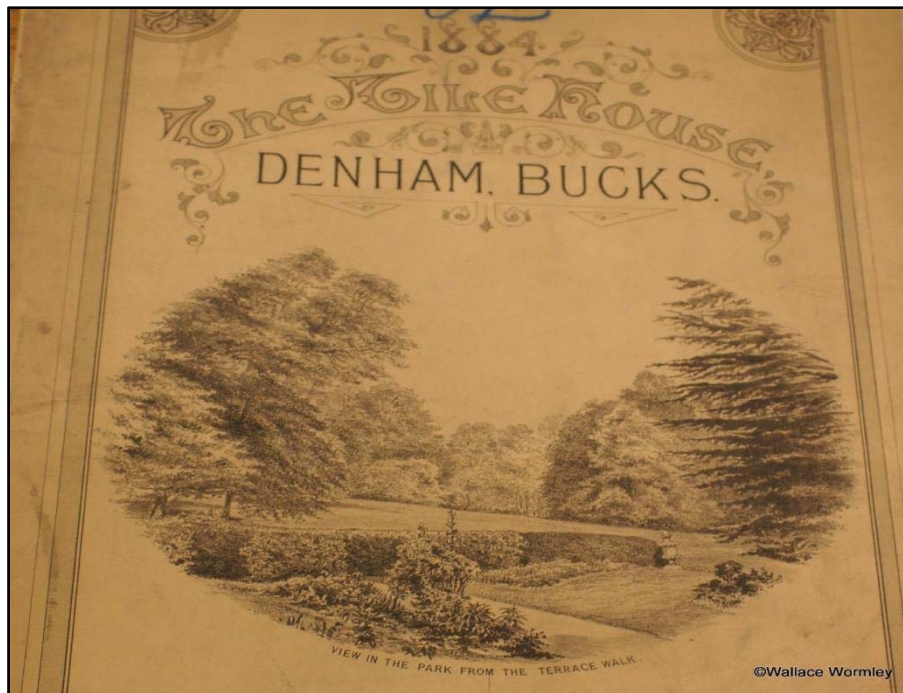


Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



Denham Grove (formerly Durdent Court/ Tile House)

April 2016



The Finnis Scott
Foundation



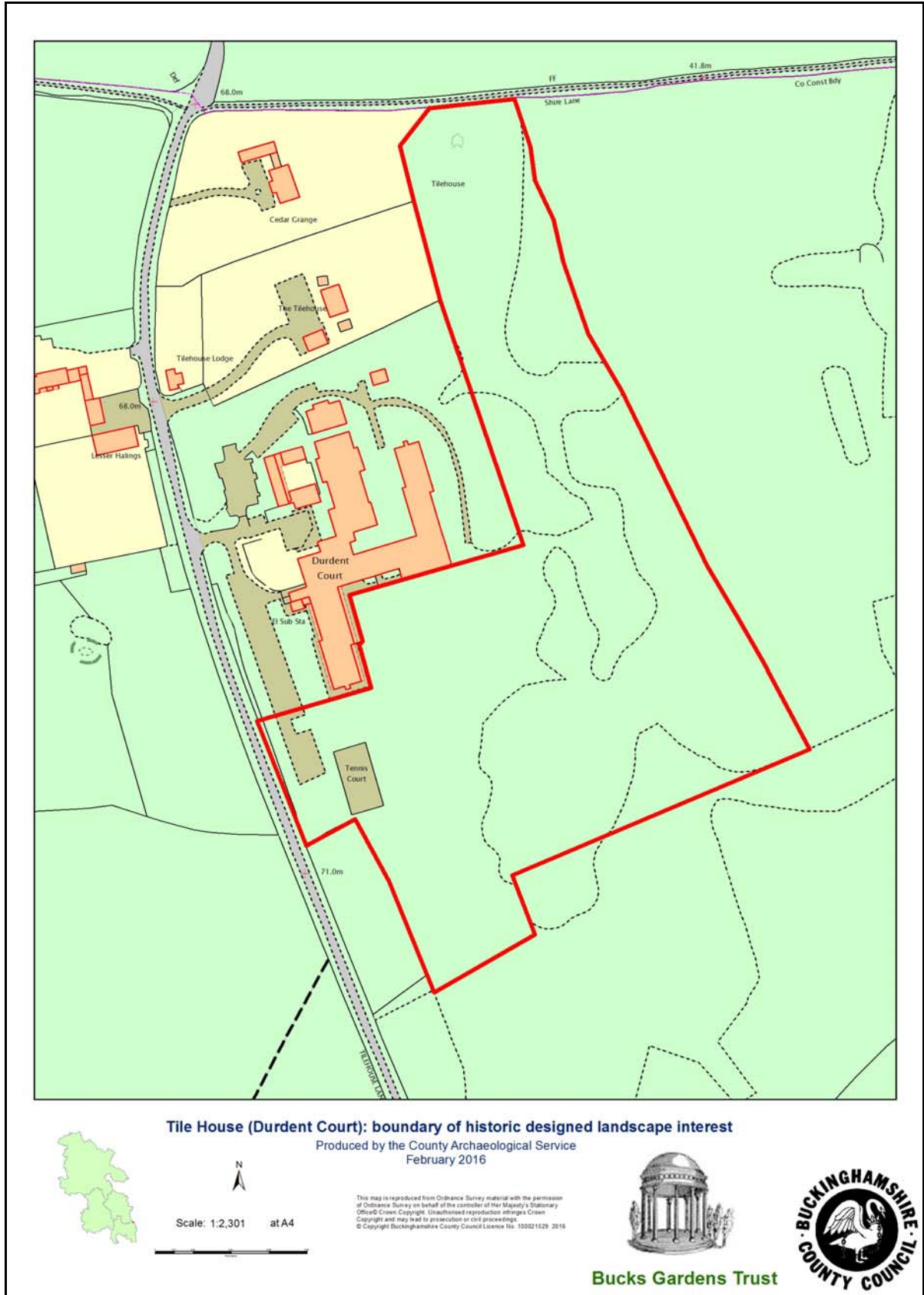
Bucks Gardens Trust

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The Stanley Smith (UK)
Horticultural Trust

HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY

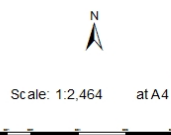




Tile House (Durdent Court): 2010 aerial photograph

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service
February 2016



Bucks Gardens Trust



INTRODUCTION

Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not conclusive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2nd edition.
- A map showing principle views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Gardens Trust (formerly the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society) and funded by BGT with significant grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and the Finnis Scott Foundation. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk

COUNTY:	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	DENHAM GROVE (formerly DURDENT COURT/ TILE HOUSE) BCC HER 0654000000
DISTRICT:	SOUTH BUCKS	
PARISH:	DENHAM	
OS REF:	TQ 031 898	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The outer grounds of a lost country house (replaced with a larger hotel on the same site), developed from 1800, and later in the C19 by the Drummond family. Little of the core of the designed landscape associated with the immediate environs of the former house survives intact but elements of the wider landscape, particularly the former parkland, survive.

Archaeological interest

The archaeological interest of the site is of local interest. More widely prehistoric finds in the Colne Valley have been made in the workings of former gravel pits. Archaeological potential arises from lost structures and garden features related to the former house.

Architectural interest

The country house called Tile House was demolished in the 1950s following a fire. There is no surviving structure of historic architectural interest.

Artistic interest

Although the core gardens associated with the lost house have gone, the former park reflects the informal layout established by the mid-C20, including scattered ornamental trees overlooking areas of lawn, interspersed with mature/overgrown park plantings in singles, clumps and belts. The former walled kitchen garden survives west of Tile House Lane within the grounds of the 1920s Little Halings (qv).

Historic interest

The property was associated with the notable Drummond banking family in the C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Tile House estate is named on the Jeffery's county map (1760s), with woodland to the north-east and to the south, but no structures depicted. Sheahan (1862) suggested that the name 'Tile House' derives from a former "tile manufactory which stood on the spot as far back as three centuries." It is also possible that the several large holes or ponds on the estate originate as sources of clay for the manufacture of tiles or pottery.

According to Lathbury (1904), Tile House was built in 1800 by Joseph Morten of the Savoy, Denham on the site just north of a farmstead called Cherry Tree Farm. By 1810 three houses stood on the site, with fields surrounding them (OSD, 1810).

After Morten died in 1818, the estate, which then contained two houses, was purchased c.1821 by Andrew Mortimer Drummond, Esq. who demolished one of the two houses and put up a new house alongside the remaining one (Lathbury). Sheahan (1862) however, says that when Drummond purchased the estate in 1821, it consisted of a small house and about 30 acres. Bryant's county map (1825) shows two houses near the centre of the Tile House estate, one larger than the other. These are directly north of farm buildings on Cherry Tree Farm.

In the 1843 (Denham Tithe Map), the estate was still owned by Andrew Mortimer Drummond, who was a member of the prominent Drummond Bank family. He was married to the painter, Lady Emily Drummond, the sister of Colonel Percy. The Drummond family continued in occupation for most of the C19. Tile House in 1843 was surrounded by a garden plantation, a cottage, extensive gardens, pleasure grounds, extensive grasslands and wood. The house faced east over the pleasure grounds, park land, grasslands and a pond field looking across the Colne Valley.

By 1862 (Sheahan) Tile House was said to be "pleasantly situated about 2 ½ miles north from the village of Denham. The house is chiefly of brick and is a neat residence." Since Mr Drummond purchased the place (c.1821), when it consisted of "a small house and about 30 acre", he had 'since greatly added to the house, and also augmented the estate by several purchases, so that it now consists of 568 acres." (Sheahan)

By the 1870s (OS) the park and gardens surrounded a substantial house, including a walled kitchen garden adjacent to the farm detached to the west across Tilehouse Lane, from the main entrance to the Tile House. This area was developed separately as Little Haylings in the 1920s (qv). The Sales Particulars from the 1884 Auction catalogue (**ASP**) described the estate as a freehold residential property, known as "The Tile House", consisting of 82 acres with offices, gardens, park, arable and wood land, and "placed in a situation of much beauty, being on a sheltered depression of the hills which enclose the valley of the Colne."

In 1908, Tile House was owned by Captain C E Wyld, who retired from the Coldstream Guards in 1903 [FWR, SEWO]. Following a fire in the 1950s, Tile House was demolished. The Tile House site was in the late C20 redeveloped as an hotel and facilities for meetings, conferences, training and events called Durdent Court which has since been renamed Denham Grove.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Denham Grove is situated about 2 ½ miles north of Denham in the small hamlet of Denham Green, approximately 3 miles south-east of Chalfont St Peter and 4 miles south of Rickmansworth. It is situated on the outskirts of the parish of Denham, near the Chiltern border between Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. It lies in a mixed area of some institutions located in former country houses, a scattering of large C20 houses, mixed farmland and woodland.

The site lies at the far eastern end of the Chiltern dip slope, above the river Colne, on a deposit of sands and gravels, the remnants of an ancient terrace of the River Thames. Towards the west boundary, nearer to Tilehouse Lane the land is relatively flat, sloping gradually to the east as land descends towards the valley of the River Colne, running east and south of the site.

The 6 ha. site is bounded to the west by Tilehouse Lane along the southern section, and the northern section by the modern complex of Denham Grove in landscaped grounds. The site is bounded to the north by a track known as Shire Lane, to the east by woodland and nursery land, and to the south by agricultural land and beyond this by C20 residential development. Tilehouse Lane is a former highway running between Denham and Rickmansworth. [BHTAR; Sheahan and VCH] Formerly the grounds of the country house were completely enclosed to the west by the Lane.

The key external views enjoyed by the Tile House were formerly eastward from the house and gardens below, overlooking the Colne Valley, and the River Colne, a tributary of the River Thames. Today (2015) the views are significantly restricted by a mixture of mature and younger trees. The 1884 sales particulars described the residence as enjoying “commanding beautiful views of the finely timbered residential estates for which this neighbourhood is so noted.”

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Today, the main entrance to the site is off Tilehouse Lane, west of the entrance to the conference centre. The former main entrance to the site lay to the north, north-west of the former Tile House. By 1884 (sales particulars) a lodge stood here opposite the Carriage Entrance to the grounds, comprising three bedrooms, a living room and kitchen. From here a drive led south-east to the house, with a spur north-west to the stable yard which stood north of the house. Elements of this arrangement still survive.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The Tile House formerly stood towards the centre of the site on a plateau with the entrance front to the west and garden fronts to the east, overlooking the Colne Valley, and south. It was demolished in the 1950s following a fire. Today (2015), the principal building is the conference centre, which occupies the site of the former house and much of the former gardens.

The former stables stood a detached to the north of the site of the former house. By 1884 (sale particulars), the stabling comprised a brick and slate-roofed coach house with loft, a smaller coach house, boxes and stalls for 7 horses, and a saddle room. The stabling has not survived and the area

of former yards north-west of the site of the former Tile House, now contains three C20 houses and their gardens.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens of Tile House formerly enclosed the house on all four sides, but have not survived. The conference centre occupies most of the area, with a car park along the west boundary with Tile House Lane. By the late C19 (OS) extensive gardens and wider pleasure grounds had developed, enclosed from the park beyond to the east and south. Plantings of conifers and deciduous trees lined paths, placed to enhance these walks and frame broad views. By the 1930s (OS), the gardens were defined by an irregular boundary to the east and south, with views of the park beyond and Colne Valley to the east. A terrace below the east front of the house took advantage of those easterly views.

PARK

The park lies on a slightly sloping plateau to the east and south of the site of the former Tile House and its gardens and pleasure grounds. It is largely laid to grass and contains various stands of mature clumps and single trees, with deciduous and exotic species. Some of the formerly open pasture has been lost to scrub. At the south-eastern edge, copses of mature trees screen some views across the Colne Valley.

KITCHEN GARDENS

The brick-walled former kitchen garden (outside the Tile House historic boundary) lies west of Tile House Lane and was in the 1920s absorbed into the newly developed Little Halings (qv). By 1884 (*Auction Sales Particulars*) the kitchen gardens lay at the back of [west of] the lodge by Tile House Lane, and were enclosed by a brick wall covered with fruit trees. Beyond this was a small orchard. The garden wall enclosed glasshouses including a 36-ft long conservatory (heated by flue from the fireplace in the main hall), two vineries (greenhouses specifically for grapevines), another greenhouse heated by hot water pipes and cucumber pits heated with flues. Three water tanks sunk in the centre of kitchen garden (1870s OS) were replaced by pumps by 1900 (OS).

Tile House farm stood adjacent to the north of the kitchen garden opposite the lodge at the entrance to the Tile House on the west side of the Lane. In the 1920s the kitchen garden and farmstead west of the road were sold separately from Tile House and by the late 1920s (OS) the a new property developed in this area had been renamed Little Halings (qv).

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Maps

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1810, Ordnance Surveyor's Draft, 2in to 1 mile scale

1825, A. Bryant, Map of the County of Buckingham.

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1883 1st edition 6-inch to 1 mile OS map, Sheet 48

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1926 3rd edition 6-inch to 1 mile OS map

1930s 25in to 1 mile OS map

1975 National Grid edition 10,000 OS

Images

1947 RAF aerial photo on the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record (HER)

1947 RAF aerial photo 2, HER

1947 RAF aerial photo 3, HER

1950s National Grid provisional edition 6, HER

1955 RAF aerial photo, HER

Archival Items

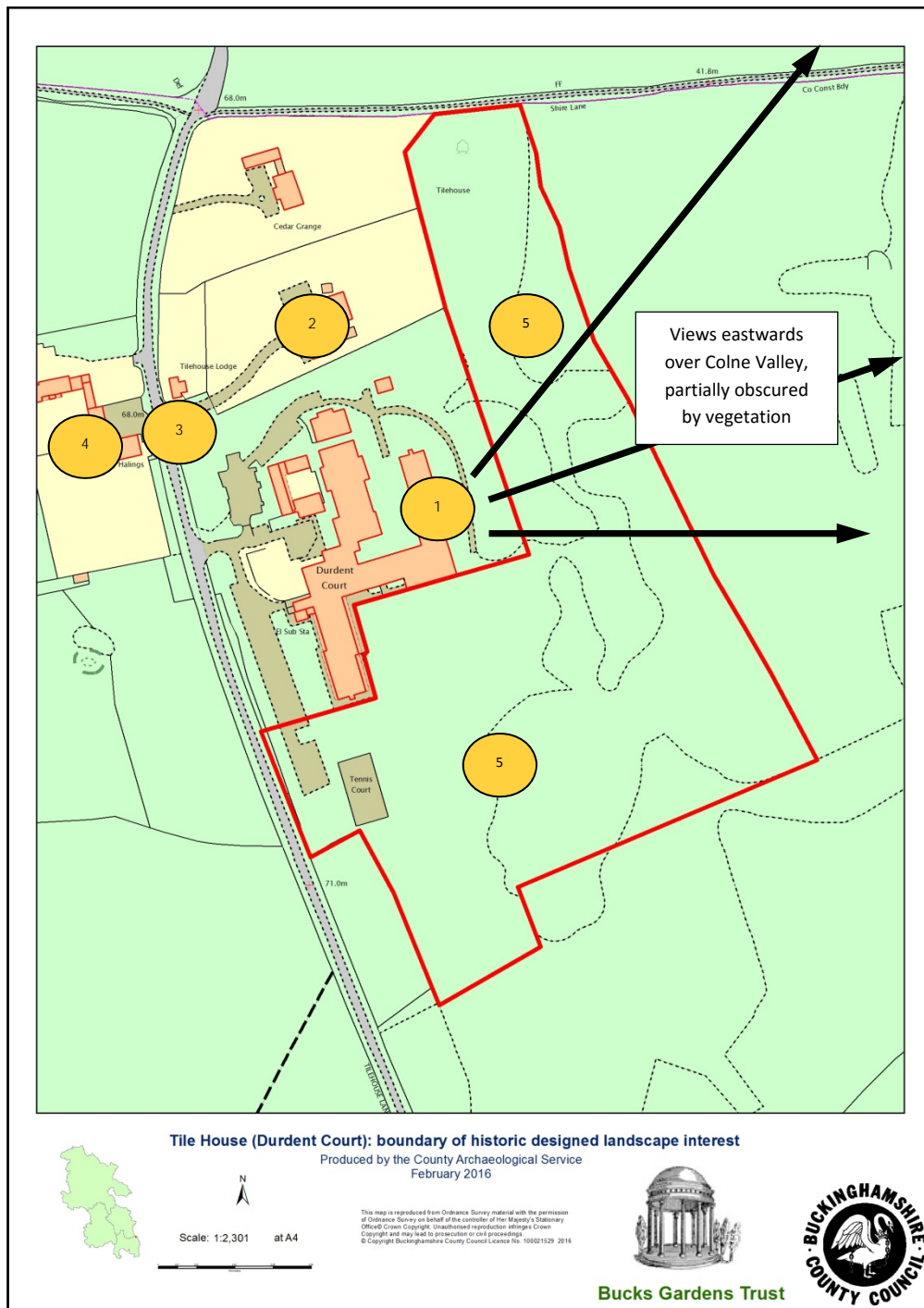
Auction Sale Particulars (ASP) catalogue for Tilehouse, 22 July 1884. [CBS AR 76-2012]

Application (PA) for Stopping up of Ancient Highway (Tile House Lane), 15 August 1836 [CBS Q/H/93]

Tithe Map [TM]/ Apportionment Denham Parish, 1843 [CBS AR: 130/81], 26 2/3": 1 mile

Wallace Wormley and Rose Palmer, 29 January 2016, edited 16 February 2016

KEY HISTORIC VIEWS & FEATURES



Key to numbered features

1. Site of former Tile House (approx.)	2. Site of former stables and yard (approx.)
3. Main, north-west entrance & lodge (site of)	4. Former kitchen garden and farmstead, since 1920s Little Halings
5. Park	

KEY IMAGES



View east across Colne River valley from the Park



View east across Colne River valley from the Park



View south from the park toward wood



View east across Colne River valley from the Park



View west, Little Halings wood from the Park



View north towards the site of the former Tile House from the Butte Close pasture



View east across the Park from the front of former house



View south-east from the Park towards woodland with Colne River valley beyond



Front View of the Tile House, looking westward from the former Park,
1884 Auction Sale Particulars

The Lands contain together 82 Acres, 1 Rood and 8 Perches

(LITTLE MORE OR LESS) SUBDIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:—

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	STATE.	QUANTITY.		
			A.	R.	P.
3	Little Halings	Wood	5	3	29
4	Ley Field	Pasture	7	2	20
5, 6, and 7	Tile House, Offices, Yards, and Pleasure Grounds		7	3	22
8	The Park	Pasture	13	2	16
21	The Park	Pasture	13	2	19
22	Little Halings	Wood	1	2	5
17	Further Clay Pit	Arable	5	1	25
20	Middle Clay Pit	Arable	4	0	6
18 and 19	The Lodge, Gardens, and Orchard		3	0	19
23	Upper Pitchcroft	Pasture and Ornamental Wood	7	0	22
25	Dell Field	Pasture	4	3	32
32	Butts Close	Pasture	4	1	35
46	Lower Pitchcroft	Arable	2	3	38
			A.82	1	8

No. 46 is let to Mr. JAMES MORTEN, a yearly Michaelmas tenant, at a rental of £4 10s. 0d. per annum, the tenant paying rates and taxes. The Residence and all the other Lands are in hand together with the Right of Sporting

©Wallace Wormley

Appurtenances of Tile House estate,
1884 Auction Sale Particulars



Map of the Tile House estate,
1884 Auction Sale Particulars



Detail from the Application to Stop Up Road, 1836 (CBS Q/H/93)