

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



HORSENDEN MANOR

November 2015



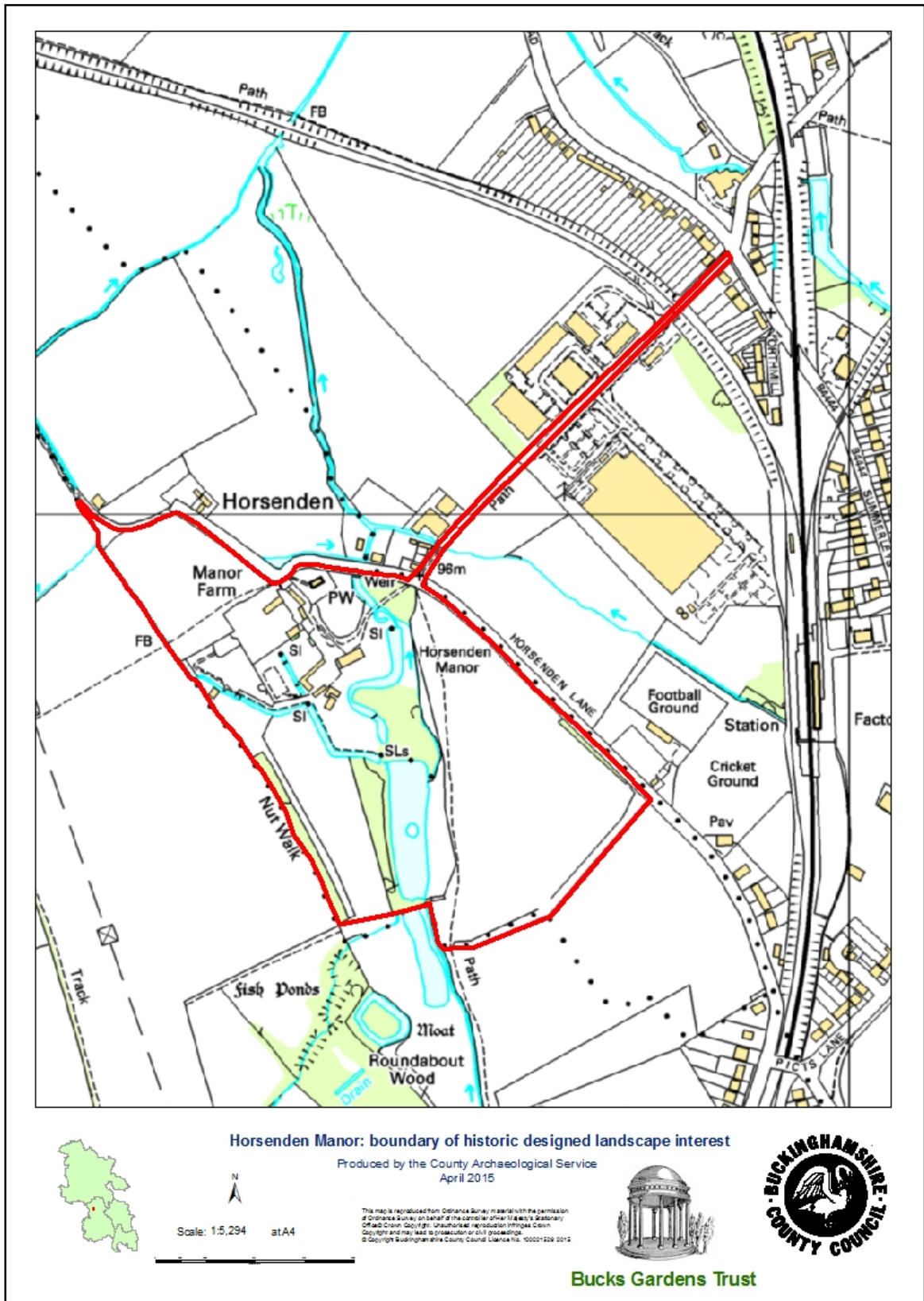
Bucks Gardens
Trust



Association of
Gardens
Trusts



HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY





Horsenden Manor: 2008 aerial photograph

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service
April 2015



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 edn.
- 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 Association of Gardens Trusts and funded by BGT with a significant grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund. 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	HORSENDEN MANOR BCC HER 0032303000
DISTRICT:	WYCOMBE	
PARISH:	LONGWICK-CUM-ILMER	
OS REF:	SP 794 028	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The pleasure grounds and modest park of a Regency country villa, on the site of a medieval and later manor house. A Civil War moat has been incorporated into the pleasure grounds design which is focussed on an unusually complex series of informal ponds and water courses and also on the parish church. The Regency layout (c.1810) survives largely intact as it had developed by the early C20, with some later alterations. The extent and survival of villa gardens is not well recorded and this is a good example at this scale, with an ensemble of typical features as well as the unusual water features.

Archaeological interest

The house incorporates the remains of the previous manor house, some of which dates from the C15 (service wing). The site of part of the former churchyard occupies part of the lawns to the north of the house, adjacent to the present churchyard boundary (established early C19). South of the house and outside the designed landscape boundary is a medieval settlement site with a moat and fishponds (SAM).

Architectural interest

Horsenden Manor is a typical Regency villa built in 1810 in stucco (recently largely removed) with sash windows and slate roof. The two storey house had battlemented parapets (now gone) and a third storey was added during the C19. Manor Farm is later, with a date stone of 1891. The parish church which includes medieval remains (the chancel) is a prominent feature in the landscape.

Artistic interest

An early C19 villa, park and pleasure ground with unusually extensive water features, which shape and bisect the design, incorporating parts of a Civil War moat. The mature woody planting and views of the church contribute to the design. The layout largely reflects a finely executed anonymous proposal of 1794, for John Grubb IV (CBS) which incorporates earlier features and has been subject to some later alterations. The C19 landscape survives intact including a 400m long avenue from Summerleys Road, formerly giving direct access to the house from Princes Risborough. The principle entrance front was intended to command views of the ancient Whiteleaf Cross (SAM) and the Chiltern Hills (Lipscombe, 1847).

Historic interest

The property has been associated with important and influential figures, including John Morton C15, leading religious /states person and political advisor to Henry VII and the Donne family. There are strong associations with the Civil War when the house was garrisoned. In the C17 the manor passed to the Grubb family who were responsible for the

development of the site as it survives (2015) and apparently commissioned the fine 1794 design proposal plan.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1086 the land at Horsenden is recorded as being held by Robert, Earl of Morton and Cornwall (Domesday Survey). During the C14 the land was reported as poor and lay barren. In 1462, the manor was granted to John Gaune and others to hold for the use of John Morton (Lipscombe). John Morton (1420-1500) was an important, wealthy and religious figure and political advisor to Henry VII. It is doubtful whether he spent a significant amount of time at the manor and there was probably no development of the grounds, his primary residence being Knole House in Kent. He was appointed Bishop of Ely in 1479, Henry VII appointed him Archbishop of Canterbury in 1486, and Lord Chancellor of England in 1487 (VCH).

Sir John Donne, a notable figure in the Yorkist party, named Horsenden as his primary residence in 1489. The Donne Triptych by Hans Memling (National Gallery) shows the family, including a daughter possibly Anne (later Cotton). A household book kept between 1510 and 1551 by Sir Edward Don (Donne) mentions a saffron garden, orchards and gardens (Bucks Records Society, No 33). Anne Cotton's daughter Jane married John Denham, surveyor of the King's parks and buildings, a royalist. They were living in the house during the Civil War during the conflict it was garrisoned and the moat dug or enlarged. The manor was seized by Parliament and after the war conveyed to William Page for the duration of the Commonwealth (Lipscombe/HER).

In 1662, John Grubb of Kimbell became the owner. In 1784 John Grubb III (c.1700-85) and his wife Mary were each painted in their later years by the fashionable artist Johann Zoffany (paintings owned by Bucks County Council). In 1794 a detailed proposal for the grounds was drawn for John Grubb IV (d.1812), including informal pleasure grounds containing a number of garden buildings, an orchard and water features (CBS D 42/G1R). In 1810 John Grubb IV had the house largely rebuilt on the site of the old manor house (Taunt; 1823 map, CBS Ma 257). Alterations to the gardens established the framework of today's layout, reflecting much of the 1794 proposals (CBS D 42/G1R, Ma 257; Tithe Map, 1838). The grounds were enclosed and in the pleasure ground part of the former defensive moat was incorporated into the garden design around the east and south of the house. Beyond this in the new park a 'new walk' (now known as Nut Walk) was formed to the south-west and a lake was created from former fishponds (Taunt; 1823 map, CBS Ma 257). Between 1812 and 1823 a straight drive flanked by an avenue was created extending from Horsenden Lane opposite the north-east entrance in a north-east direction to Summerleys Road, giving access directly from Princes Risborough (OSD, 1812; CBS Ma 257). By the 1870s this had been bisected by the railway line (OS, 1885). By 1838 pleasure grounds, lawns, ponds and a kitchen garden were laid out by John Grubb V around the rebuilt villa (Tithe Map).

In 1841 the Duke of Buckingham purchased Horsenden (450 acres) as part of a lot, including Princes Risborough and Abbots Risborough totalling 1240 acres (Lipscombe). During this time there was no change made to the landscape it seems. Lipscombe noted the key

elements of the Grubb landscape by 1847 included 'ornamental trees and shrubs, interspersed with gravel-walks' with the 'principal front commanding a view of the Chiltern Hills and the celebrated White-leaf ... Cross'. He also noted the lake with an island and the park-like grounds of some 50 acres. Sheahan (1862) noted the north-eastern approach avenue about 0.25 mile long, along with 9 acres of pleasure grounds including ornamental water and two cascades.

In 1848 (after the bankruptcy of the Duke of Buckingham) the Rev. William Edwards Partridge, Rector of Horsenden became the owner (Sheahan). It was inherited by Mrs Leonard Jacques in 1886 (WDC CA appraisal). A subsequent owner, Mrs Gourlay, is believed to have employed Lanning Roper the American landscape architect (also worked at Highgrove) who wrote two reports for the garden (1970s). It is unclear whether his proposals were executed. In 2015 the site remains in private ownership.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Horsenden Manor is situated in the small village of Horsenden within the Vale of Aylesbury some 2 miles west of the Chiltern scarp. The 29 ha site lies one mile south-west of the centre of Princes Risborough and seven miles south of Aylesbury. The Lower Icknield Way, an ancient route, passes 750m south of the site, at Saunderton (Bryant map 1825).

The site lies at the northern end of Horsenden Lane, a no-through road giving access from Princes Risborough and High Wycombe. The immediate surrounding area is rural with a scattering of village houses. The C21 Princes Industrial Estate lies 150 metres to the north-east of the manor, flanking the north-east approach avenue from Summerleys Road.

The site is bounded to the north and north-east by Horsenden Lane and to the south and west by fields with traditional hedging, of which Nut Walk forms part to the south-west of the house. Along the northern boundary of the site and abutting the main entrance gate there is a C19 metal railing park fence.

The elevation is below 100 metres and the soil is Gault clay. Water plays an important role in the character of the site. The stream which bisects the site from south to north rises on the Chiltern spring-line at Saunderton to the south. The stream enters the pleasure grounds on the southern boundary and flows out of the site at a weir to the north of the house, next to the present north-east entrance gates. Within the site it is dammed and controlled by a number of sluices to form ponds and river-like stretches. It eventually joins the River Thames at Longwick Mill 0.75m to the north.

350m south of the house (outside the historic boundary) is a medieval settlement which was part of a manorial complex held by Ralph Brown in 1300, within Roundabout Wood. The site is moated and includes a fish pond (SAM).

The north-west, entrance front of the house was intended to command views to the north-east of the ancient Whiteleaf Cross (SAM) some two miles away, and the sweep of the scarp

slope of the Chiltern Hills in which it is set (Lipscombe, 1847). The pleasure grounds and park were also apparently designed to enjoy these views.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main entrance to the site is from the north-west off Horsenden Lane. Here the north-west gateway lies 100m to the north-west of the house adjacent to the west side of the churchyard and its entrance. From here the drive curves south-east to a forecourt below the north-west front of the house. The stable yard is entered from the drive immediately to the south. From the forecourt the drive continues north-east across a bridge to the north-east gateway and back onto Horsenden Lane. This access is shown on maps since the 1794 Grubb proposal plan (CBS), which shows a turning circle in front of the house from a proposed main entrance through gates at a point where the road widens to the west of the church.

The north-east drive enters 100m north-east of the house off Horsenden Lane opposite Gate Cottage. This entrance first appeared between 1806 and 1823 (CBS D 42/G3T, 1806; Ma 257, 1823), after a similar route was sketched lightly in pencil on the 1794 proposal over the watercolour body. From this gateway the drive curves south-west to the forecourt below the house, and joining the north-west arm of the drive (as shown on the 1794 plan). A sunken railing fence/ditch follows the northern line of the drive, possibly a ha-ha.

Today (2015) the remains of a C19 approach avenue are situated to the north-east of the main grounds. This former drive flanked by mixed mature trees is now used as access to the C21 Princes Industrial Estate and as a public footpath entered from Summerleys Road some 650m north-east of the house. From here it runs south-west for 550m to Gate Cottage, linking with the north-east entrance to the grounds across Horsenden Lane. The avenue first appeared in the early C19 as a formal approach for visitors to the house directly from Princes Risborough and Thame/High Wycombe (CBS Ma 257, 1823) and was subsequently noted as an avenue approach by Sheahan (1862). From 1862 it provided access for the family from the nearby newly-built railway station (OS 1884).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Horsenden Manor (Grade II) stands towards the north end of the site. It was built in 1810 using stucco, in the Regency villa style. The current house is on the site of the old manor house and part of the associated Civil War moat still remains (1794 map CBS D42/G1R). The house is on two storeys with an attic but the stucco has recently been removed from the main part (BAS 2004). Notable features include the five bay windows on the northwest entrance front and the Doric porch with four rendered columns and entablature.

Each end of the house has bowed projections with three bays of tall paired wooden casement windows overlooking the grounds (added mid-C19, BAS 2004). A two-storey linked service wing (brick built) to the west of the house, incorporates remains of the earliest manor house some of which dates from the C15. The south-east, garden front has three bays of sashes. The centre window is Venetian in style over a pedimented Doric porch (Bucks Monument report 2014). The brick and stone stable building to the west is dated 1912 (WDC conservation report).

Manor Farm (1891 incorporating earlier work) lies 75m north-west of the house. The farmhouse is a rendered three bay house. Improvements were made in the late C19 by Mrs Jacques (WDC Conservation Area Survey). The C17/C18 thatched Gate Cottage (listed Grade II) 250m north-east of the house stands adjacent to the avenue entrance off Horsenden Lane leading north-east to Summerleys Road. The church of St Michael (Grade II) is a fragment based on its medieval chancel. In 1765 it fell into disrepair and the tower and nave were pulled down leaving a very small building as an eye-catcher for the subsequent manor grounds.

PLEASURE GROUNDS

The pleasure grounds enclose the house to the north, east and south. They are linked by a series of narrow serpentine ponds (fed by a stream running south to north) which was established by the 1790s (Grubb plan 1794). The ponds, which are controlled by a number of sluices are overlooked by the garden fronts of the house to the south and east and crossed by the north-east drive. All of these were established in their present form by 1806 (CBS D 42/G3T).

The south pleasure ground is bisected by the serpentine ponds into west and east halves. An overflow channel runs north-west from the north end of the park pond (Adjacent to the south side of the pleasure ground) out into agricultural land. The house is enclosed by lawns and gardens to the south and east which are bounded by a serpentine pond which is believed to have originated as a C17 Civil War moat, and by the overflow channel. The area to the south and east of the 'moat' pond is more wooded.

The north pleasure ground is enclosed to the west, south and east by the drive and to the north by the churchyard (where a sunken fence forms the boundary with the churchyard) and Horsenden Lane. It is overlooked by the north-west, entrance front of the house. The area is laid to informal lawn with specimen trees, and overlooks the small parish and churchyard. This area includes part of the former churchyard (CBS D 42/G1R, 1794, 1823) which was taken into the grounds between 1823 and the 1840s leaving a truncated churchyard (CBS Ma 257; D42/G5 lithograph in 1840s sales particulars). Views of the 1840s show the house with a bow-windowed stuccoed east end as well as the fragment of the church before it was extended and restored in the 1850s-60s (Lipscombe in BAS 2004; CBS D42/G5 lithograph in sales particulars). The house and church are shown as though a single property in a park with cattle and sheep. A C19 photograph shows a sunken fence/ha-ha around the churchyard boundary, allowing clear views of the church set among ornamental trees in the churchyard (Historic England CC74/00225).

The 1794 Grubb map is a design proposal for the house and garden as it detailed and artistically rendered in watercolour. It shows the landscape much as it has survived. It also shows two ponds, possibly part of the former moat west of the house, which have since gone, and the churchyard in its earlier more extensive form running as far south as the turning circle below the house.

PARK

The small park is divided into two sections, flanking a rectangular pond to the west and east. The larger east half is bounded to the north-east by Horsenden Lane, and is crossed north-south by a public footpath. The west half is bounded by the Nut Walk on the west boundary. The pond is rectangular with a dam at its north end and a small central island (C19) and is apparently of C17 origin (Bucks Monument Report). A further pond to the south (outside the historic boundary) is a C20 addition.

There are a number of mature trees within the park, which screen and frame the views. Both halves are laid to pasture with scattered trees. Its layout largely reflects the proposal in the 1794 plan and surveyed in 1806 (CBS D42/G1R, 1794; D 42/G3T, 1806).

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled kitchen garden is situated 25m north-west of the house. It is L-shaped, in two adjacent sections to west and east, some 80 x 60m at its widest points. It remains partly in productive use (to the east) and partly lawns (to the west).

The plan of 1794 (CBS) shows a quartered kitchen garden north-west of the house with an additional area attached to the south as was present in outline by 1806 (CBS D42/G1R, 1794; D 42/G3T, 1806). This eastern section was divided from the area to the west by a water channel. By 1848 the eastern area was roughly quartered (Tithe Map). The kitchen garden was productive during the C19 and C20 with a vegetable plot, heated glasshouses and fruit trees and orchards to the west (OS C19; sales particulars 1997).

REFERENCES

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- Raffety Buckland, Sale Particulars, 1997.

MAPS

- Jefferys, Map of Buckinghamshire, 1770.
- 'General plan of the House, Offices and Grounds at Horsenden', 1794 (CBS D 42/G1R)
- 'Sketch of lands at or near Horsenden, Bucks., the property of John Grubb, Esq., Hussey, surveyor, 1806' (CBS D 42/G3T)
- Plan of Parish of Horsenden, n.d. early C19, post-1806 (CBS D 42/G4R)
- 1812 Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing, 2" scale (sh. 154, BL).
- 1823 Plan Horsenden (CBS MA 257)

Bryant, Map of Buckinghamshire, 1825.

Tithe map Horsenden, 1838 (CBS)

Ordnance Survey

6" to 1 mile: 1st edition, s. 1877, p. 1884

2nd edition, 1898-99

Revised 1922

25" to 1 mile: 1st edition, s. 1878-80, p. 1885

1: 10,000: NG edition, 1982.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Centre for Bucks Studies

D 42. Grubb estate papers relating to the Grubb family estate in Horsenden, Princes Risborough and Hughenden C13-1885

D 42/G5 n.d., C19. Parcel containing rough plans and tracings of different parts of the Risborough estate. Includes 2 sales particulars lithographs of Horsenden House from north and south, n.d. 1840s.

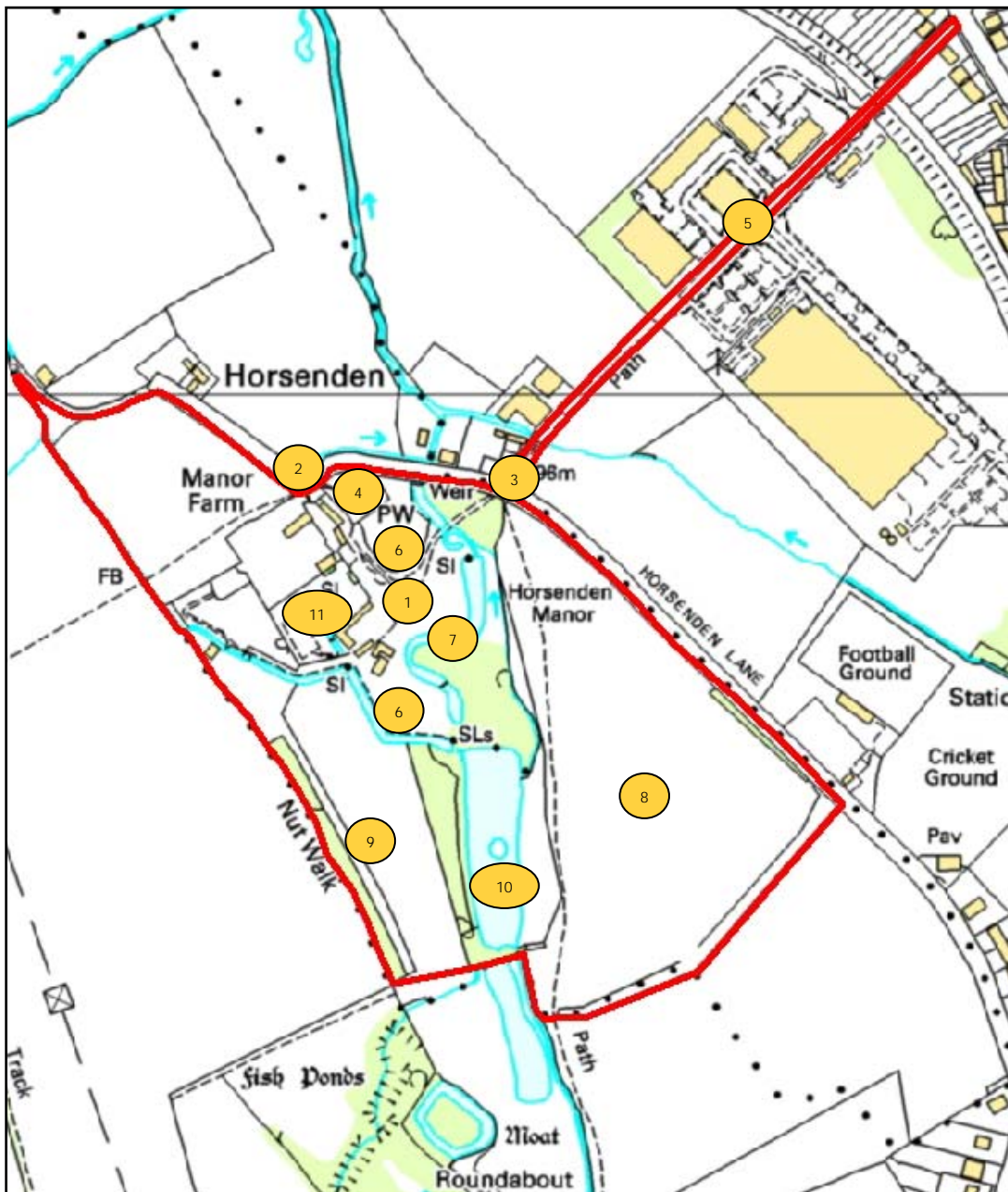
Historic England Archive

4 photographs, late C19 CC74/00223-25, HT00371


<http://archive.historicengland.org.uk/results/results.aspx?t=Quick&l=all&cr=horsenden&io=True>

C de Carle July 2015; edited 02 November 2015


KEY FEATURES




Horsenden Manor: boundary of historic designed landscape interest
 Produced by the County Archaeological Service
 April 2015





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Scale: 1:5,294 at A4



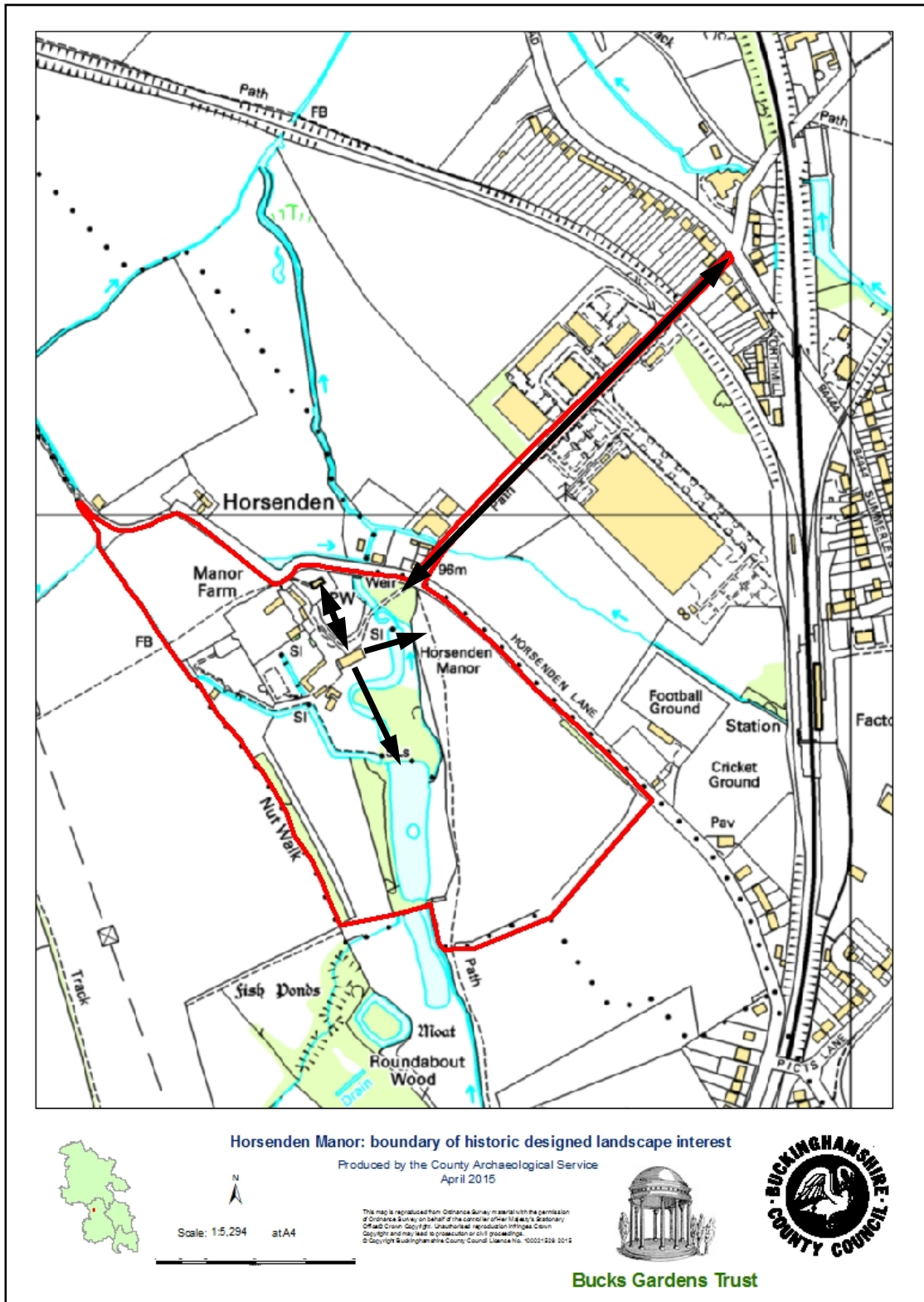
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1. House	2. NW entrance
3. NE entrance	4. Church
5. Avenue drive from Summerleys Road	6. Pleasure ground
7. Serpentine lake (former moat)	8. East park
9. West park	10. Park lake
11. Kitchen Garden	

KEY HISTORIC VIEWS





Park to the east of the house



Remains of C19 avenue,
looking to the north-east



Boundary fence between pleasure
grounds and park



Two remaining trees at
entrance to avenue



View of house from the churchyard



View of church from the north



Pleasure grounds north of the house, with
park fencing