

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



ALDERBOURNE MANOR

May 2017, amended June 2020



The Finnis Scott
Foundation



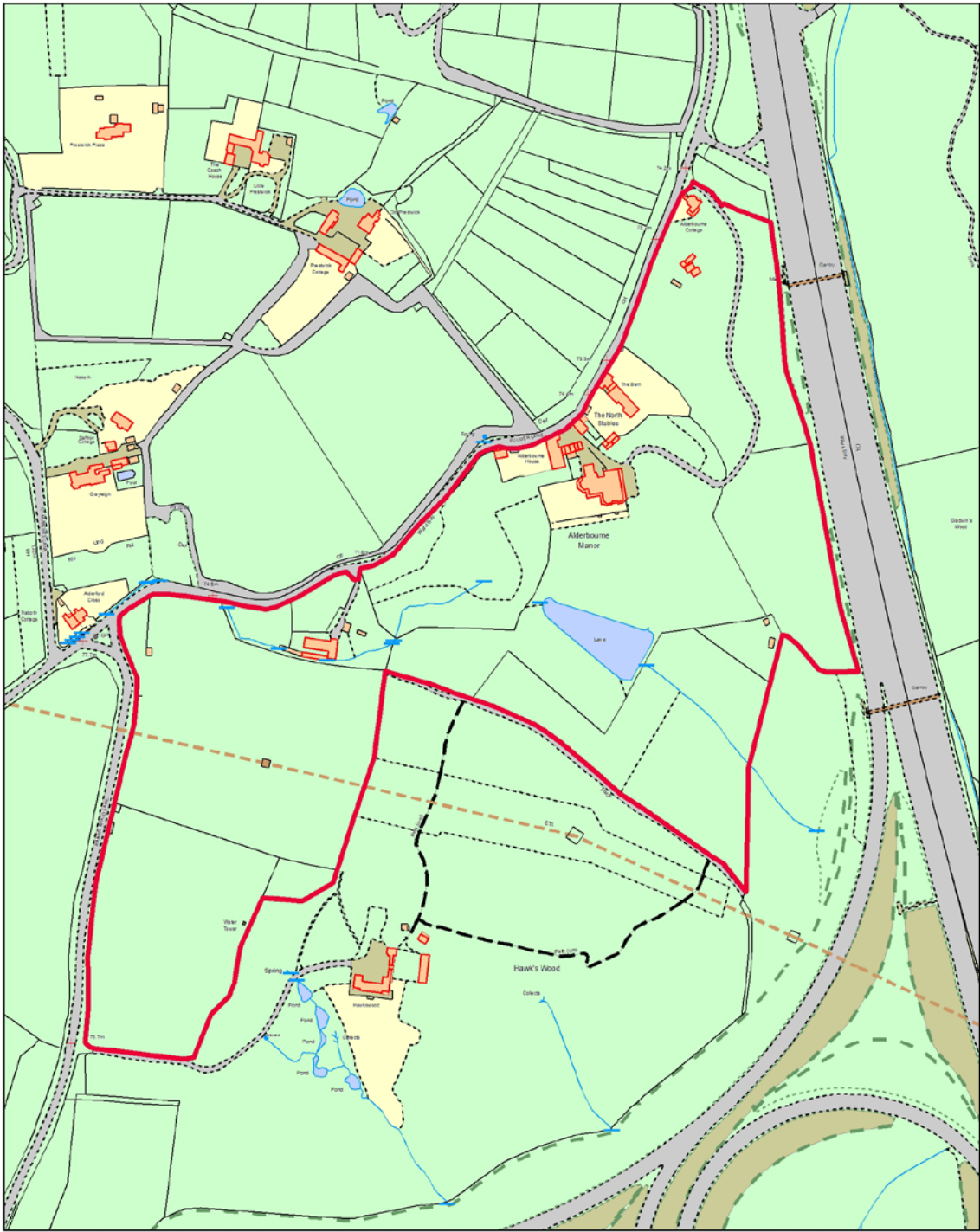
Bucks Gardens Trust

THE
GARDENS
TRUST



The Stanley Smith (UK)
Horticultural Trust

HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



Alderbourne Manor: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the County Archaeological Service
January 2017



Scale: 1:3,930 at A4



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office/Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
© Copyright Buckinghamshire County Council Licence No. 100021529 2017



Bucks Gardens Trust





Scale: 1:3,930 at A4



Alderbourne Manor: 2012 aerial photograph

© Getmapping plc. www.getmapping.com

Produced by the County Archaeological Service
January 2017



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 (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive 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/Historic England 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 (now Historic England) *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest 2nd edn.*
- ☐ A map showing principal 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	ALDERBOURNE MANOR (FORMERLY LODGE)
DISTRICT:	SOUTH BUCKS	
PARISH:	Langley Marish, Denham, Iver	BCC HER 0524600000
OS REF.:	TO 015 865	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

A typical mid-C19 Chiltern villa ensemble, with lawns and pleasure grounds, parkland and associated lodge in the form of a cottage orné and main drive set in woodland. The lake in the park and much of the garden and pleasure ground layout and planting established by the early C20 remain. However, they are diminished by the impact of the motorway constructed through the park and other more recent changes. These include the loss of the kitchen gardens, and new developments and car parking along the north-west boundary.

Archaeological interest

There is considerable archaeological potential as several C11 kiln sites are recorded here. There may also be evidence of former structures demolished after 1845 to make way for the present buildings and layout. Evidence may survive for lost C19 and C20 garden features, including in the former kitchen gardens. These may include paths, walls, terracing, glasshouses, and other pleasure ground and park features such as summerhouses and masonry seats.

Architectural Interest

A typical mid-C19 country villa ensemble. The villa has an ornamental iron veranda overlooking the gardens, and adjacent contemporary service buildings, and a more distant lodge in the form of a cottage orné (listed Grade II). The villa is possibly partly modelled on Henbury Vicarage near Bristol, previous home of Rev. Henry Hugh Way; members of the Way family were the vicars there from 1830 until 1928.

Artistic Interest

A typical mid-C19 country villa grounds, including woodland, park and garden. The layout enjoys elevated views over characteristic rolling Chiltern landscape, including a boating lake in the park; a winding woodland drive approaches the house. The grounds largely survive, although the former kitchen gardens have gone and some changes have been made on the north-west boundary in the late C20/early C21, including in the woodland. Many mature trees forming part of the ornamental scheme from the mid-C19 onwards survive.

Historic Interest

The property was associated with the Way family of nearby Denham Place and with Ngiao Marsh. During the 1940s-50s it was the home of the DeCourcy family. The important 1950s-70s collection of works of art of the Kahnweilers, now in the Tate Gallery, was housed here, with pieces placed in the gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Alderbourne belonged to Ankerwycke Priory at the south tip of Bucks until the Dissolution of the Monasteries (c.mid-C16) and in the C17 became the property of the Windsor family. It subsequently passed into the ownership of the Dukes of Somerset and then the Way family of nearby Denham Place (CBS AR/69/64, VCH).

In 1809 a house, yard and yard buildings stood adjacent to the east of Fulmer Lane with a 'home field' to the south-east and alongside the lane and Hawks Wood to the south; a wood known as Nutters Grove lay to the north-east (Inclosure Map, OSD). This wooded area to the north-east was called Nutting Grove in 1845, whilst a group of buildings remained next to the road (estate map, CBS D/TR/9/22c).

The name was changed in the mid-C19, as indicated on map entitled 'Alderbourne Manor' in 1845 and in 1862 a reference to 'Alderbourne Manor, formerly called Nutley Grove (near to Gerrard's Cross), now the seat of Rev. Henry Hugh Way' (Sheahan); it was referred to as Alderbourne Manor on maps from 1875 (OS). However, the house was still referred to as Nutting Grove in 1881 (census) and 1883 (Kelly's Directory).

The Alderbourne estate may have been in the possession of Rev. Henry Hugh Way from about 1852 as documents exist for the transfer of land in Denham and Iver from Benjamin Way to Rev. Henry Hugh Way (CBS D/W/33-16). Certainly, he owned it from 1861 until his death in 1890. During this time it is rumoured that the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and his mistress Lily Langtry were weekend visitors. It is said that 'On the opposite side of the lake from the house there was a rustic wooden bench - also a bit worn/weathered - which I was told was Edward and Lily's bench where they used to like to sit alone by the lake' and a servants' call box was still in a workshop at the house in the 1960s on which rooms were clearly marked 'the Kings Room' and 'Lily's Room' (pers. comm., a former resident, 2018).

Between 1845 (estate map, CBS D/TR/9/22c) and 1875 a new house and drive with a roadside lodge were built, a building was erected where The Barn now stands and an extensive network of paths was created, leading through planted areas and woodland (estate map CBS D/TR/9/22c and OS). The new service yard included the site of the former house, yard and yard buildings (Inclosure map). In the 1870s an area of gardens with glasshouses lay north of the house, between it and the service buildings, with a further area of what may have been kitchen garden west of this, bordering the road (OS). Three somewhat dilapidated late Victorian/Edwardian greenhouses, all of the same design, were still present in the 1960s, one of which was still in use (pers. comm., a former resident, 2018).

The lake also appears to have been created at this time as it does not appear on earlier maps. (estate map, CBS D/TR/9/22c; OS 1875), probably by damming a stream. A boating house was added subsequently (OS, 1897) but was apparently removed some time between 1923 and 1941, although it is still shown on a map c1950 and traces of it may remain (OS; *Alderbourne Memories*). At some time a ha-ha was built but had been filled in by 1941 (*Memories*).

In 1895 Alderbourne Manor was the residence of Viscount Coke (*Kelly's*). By 1907 it was the residence of John Bell White, later High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, who made alterations to both the manor house and Alderbourne Manor Farm (Eton RDC plans; census). He was still there in 1919 (*Bucks Herald*). Between 1900 and 1926 the network of paths to the west of the manor, around Hawk's Wood to the south-west and through the woods adjacent to the drive to the north-east was also apparently extended (OS 2nd and 3rd ed).

From about 1927 Alderbourne Manor was the home of Captain Tahu Rhodes and his wife Hon Helen Plunket (*The Tatler Magazine* and *Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter Road Directory*, 1929). The author Dame Ngiao Marsh was a regular visitor and apparently the Rhodes family appear as the Lampreys in *A surfeit of Lampreys* (1941) (*Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*).

Between 1931 and 1935 it was the home of Murray Adams-Acton (*Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter Road Directories*), a furniture designer and inventor, who designed the dining room to Shirenewton Hall in 1910 and some

of the interiors of Swan & Edgar's shop in Piccadilly in 1927. He was also the author of many books about design and a keen gardener, noted in particular for his rhododendron cultivation in Scotland in the 1940s.

A former resident recalls 'I remember often walking down the driveway from the house down to the little thatched lodge house that flanked Fulmer Lane and clearly remember Cedar trees and lots of rhododendrons. Nearby, flanking the grounds of the Manor, there was a wood called 'Gladwins Wood' which, we were told, had a very rare collection of rhododendrons, but alas, I recall that when they built the Motorway, most of that ancient woodland and the precious rhododendrons were lost' (pers. comm., a former resident, 2018). Presumably these were planted by Murray Adams-Acton.

Alderbourne Manor was then occupied by Major Arthur W. M. Burton and then the de Courcy family (Gloucestershire Echo 1940 and 1950). Mrs de Courcy entertained the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, King Leopold III of Belgium, King Humbert II of Italy, Archduke Otto of Austria and Yugoslav royalty at Alderbourne Manor, her London house and on the continent. (New York Times) Her son Kenneth was an editor of the British subscription newsletter Intelligence Digest, and a confidant of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and in the 1940s, he was part of a plot return the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to Britain and establish a regency. (The Telegraph) There is a photograph of Kenneth de Courcy and Archduke Otto of Austria in the gardens of the Manor.

The estate was split during the 1950s and between 1958 and 1974 Gustav Kahnweiler CBE and his wife Elizabeth owned one of the apartments within the manor house. Their collection of works of art of, now in the Tate Gallery, was housed here (Planning Inspectorate references APP/NO410/C/15/3078099, 3078100 and 3129769 Ref. No: 16/50001/ENFC). One of them, a statue by Henry Moore was on turntable by the lake, it was turned to face Mr Kahnweiler's flat when he was in residence but would be turned to face the lake when he was away. The owner of the Manor House for much of that time was Mr Basil Palmas. 'Behind the lake there was a path (to the right of the lake) and a short walk through the woods led to where Mr Palmas had a little 'farm' where he kept goats - to make his greek/cypriot cheese - and loads and loads of chickens.' (pers. comm., a former resident, 2018).

Parts of the former wider estate were destroyed or detached by the building of the M25 to the east, between 1971-74, and by the construction of the M40 to the south. Electricity pylons installed by 1975 (OS) cut through the woods and park to the south-west.

The site remains (2016) in split private ownership. The Manor house and service buildings have been divided (8 flats/maisonettes, Alderbourne House and The North Stables), other buildings are linked houses known as The Barn and Coach House.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM SETTING

Alderbourne Manor lies chiefly in the parish of Langley Marish, but extends also into the neighbouring parishes of Denham and Iver. The 16 ha. site lies 1 mile north-east of Fulmer village in the wooded and agricultural Chilterns on undulating hilly ground that falls from c.75m AOD southwards to Boodspring Wood and beyond this to the Alder Bourne. It is bounded by Fulmer Lane to the north-west, Hawks Wood Lane to the west, and by the M25 to the east although this cuts across part of the historic estate. The irregular south boundary abuts Hawks Wood and agricultural land with the M40/M25 junction beyond this.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The 'Long Drive' enters off Fulmer Lane at the lodge, Alderbourne Cottage (listed Grade II), and a spur leads to parking spaces in front of, and to the side of the cottage. It is an early-mid C19 cottage orné with a thatched roof overhanging an open veranda with rustic posts and leaded lights. The drive facade has a central concavity which,

with the welling out of the roof, forms a circular floor area beneath. The roadside elevation has a porch with timber-framed gable. It has a central chimney and leaded lights. It is first mapped in 1875 (OS).

The cottage and its 0.25 ha. garden are surrounded by woodland, with a mature holly hedge alongside part of the boundary with Fulmer Lane. The grounds feature formal gardens with a summer house, workshop and polytunnel. South of the cottage is a paved terrace with pergola and a further terrace with lawns to the south west. To the north the mature woodland includes oak ash and beech with wild rhododendrons. This woodland setting is in keeping with the fashions of the time at which it was built and forms part of the historic setting.

From here the Long Drive winds its way 300m south through Ancient Woodland (believed to date from before 1600), before turning west for 80m between the woodland and a lawn, to end in a gravelled area bordering the veranda, below the east, entrance front of Alderbourne Manor. This drive appears by 1875 (OS).

A recently-created entrance lies south-west of the lodge, with brick gate piers and gates 60m south-west of the entrance to the Long Drive.

A service drive leads from 80m further south west along Fulmer Lane north of the house. This was present by 1845 (CBS D/TR/9/22c). This gives access The Barn and Coach House (private dwellings). This is ungated and flanked by two low brick walls. It leads to a large area for car parking.

Another former service gateway enters 60m south-west along Fulmer Lane, north-north-west of the house between brick pillars. This entrance leads to a gravelled area and a row of garages (formerly coach houses) one block of which is surmounted by a clock and bell tower. This apparently served the service buildings abutting Fulmer Lane (estate map, CBS D/TR/9/22c). This area gives access to The North Stables via an electric gate set in a brick wall which leads to a gravelled parking area.

A further modern entrance 50m along Fulmer Lane north-west of the house gives access to a large, gravelled car park.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The manor house and its service buildings are grouped next to the north-west boundary with Fulmer Lane. They consist of The Barn and Coach House, Alderbourne House and The North Stables, all now residential. The service buildings abut Fulmer Lane roughly at the mid-point of the north-west edge of the site and the manor stands nearby to the south-east. The entrance to the manor faces east, and it overlooks gardens and parkland to the south, east and west.

The manor house dates from c.1860 (*Memories*; maps 1845 and OS 1875). The entrance front is to the east, the garden fronts to the west and south, and the service front to the north. The two-storey rendered building has a prominent veranda with ornamental iron pillars set on a low stone terrace wrapping round the south and east sides. The south front features two full height bay windows overlooking the garden terrace and paddock and boating lake beyond. It appeared in television programmes in the 1970s including episodes of the series *Affairs of the Heart* and the programme *The Persuaders!* (<http://avengerland.theavengers.tv/spotting/TotheDeath001.jpg>)

The Barn and Coach House is a large thatched house with annexe and 0.5 ha. grounds. This group of buildings did not appear until 1875 (OS), although a group of buildings near the location described in 1809 (Enclosure) was noted as 'house, yard and buildings' which remained in 1845 (CBS D/TR/9/22c). The North Stables is a house created from the converted stable block which lies off a courtyard north of the manor house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens are enclosed by woodland to the north, east and south. Fulmer Lane forms the boundary to the north-west and is marked by a group of shrubs and trees. The Manor lies to the south of the former service buildings behind a belt of trees and a wall.

The manor garden largely encloses the house, with lawns to the east, south and west. The west lawn leads to a belt of mature trees and then a lawn dotted with shrubs, bounded by Fulmer Lane to the west and by mature trees on the remaining sides. East of the Manor and gravel sweep is a further large area of lawn and scattered trees. South of the Manor steps lead down from the veranda on the south front to a lawn, with steps leading down to a wide gravel terrace. The terrace runs west to east along the southern edge and has three large yew topiaries along it and a mature cedar near the west end. The terrace was present in the late C19 (OS) and forms a key element of the garden. Formerly it connected with a path running south to north along the west edge of the lawn to the adjacent former kitchen garden, now a lawn and car park (OS 1875). Beyond the south lawn is a park paddock overlooked by the south front and lawn. Formerly the grounds featured a ha-ha, filled up by 1941, and a garden path from the manor past an arbour containing a huge natural club [sic] (*Memories*).

‘Draped Reclining Woman’ by Henry Moore, 1957-58, was displayed by the Kahnweilers as part of their sculpture collection on the lawn between the house and the lake (planning appeal 2016) (Planning Inspectorate references APP/NO410/C/15/3078099, 3078100 and 3129769 Ref. No: 16/50001/ENFC).

PARK

The park comprises areas of grassland to the south of the Manor (the paddock) and to the south-west. The south-sloping paddock is open grassland to the north and to the south contains some mature trees. By the early C20 (OS) it contained scattered specimen trees, mostly in the south half, including a small group of conifers to the south. It adjoined a larger area of parkland to the south-east leading to Boodspring Wood. This is now largely lost to motorways with what survives as woodland.

South and west of the paddock lies a 0.25 ha. lake, which has apparently been recently renovated. It is bounded by early C20 woodland to the west and south (OS) and overlooks the house, south lawns and paddock to the north and east. It was formerly a boating lake (*Memories*), with a boathouse in the east corner next to the paddock in the late C19 and early C20 (OS 1897 and 1926; *Memories*), traces of which may remain. In the late C19 it was set in open parkland overlooked by the house and south terrace in the gardens to the north (OS 1875).

The area of former park west of Hawk’s Wood is bounded by Fulmer Lane to the north, by Hawks Wood Lane to the west, and by Hawks Wood to the east and south. Now open, it formerly contained a fenced roundel of trees in the north half, close to the present electricity pylon.

Hawks Wood encloses the paddock and lake to the south-west. It may still contain the graves of horses and dogs owned by former residents (*Memories*). East of the paddock is part of Gladwin’s Wood.

A network of paths formerly connected the woodlands, linked across the paddock (OS). This may have been used for shooting activities in the C19/early C20.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The gardens of Alderbourne House at the north end of the park field adjacent to Fulmer Lane may include the remains of the kitchen garden (OS, late C19). Part of this area is paved whilst the rest is laid to lawn containing a variety of specimen trees.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

Bucks Herald (22 November 1919).

Chewton Rose, Gerrards Cross, Sale particulars (2015).

Dept. for Communities and Local Government Planning, APPLICATION REF: 12/00153/FUL (June 2014).

Eton Rural District Council, plans 1896-1947, <http://www.gx2006.co.uk/planning%20applications/d-base%20erdc%20%20by%20plan%20number%20and%20date.pdf>.

Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter Road Directory (1929), 88.

Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter Road Directory (1931), 82.

Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter Road Directory (1935), 93.

Gloucestershire Echo (8 February 1940, 11 April 1950).

Harrison and Sons, *History of the Way Family* (1914), 72 -76.

Kelly's *Directory of Buckinghamshire* (1883), 348.

Kelly's *Directory of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxon* (1895), 106.

New York Times, 8 April 1950

[Roberts Newby, Gerrards Cross](#), Sale particulars (April 2014)

Winkworth & Co. Chalfont St. Peter, Sale particulars (2015).

Sheahan, J.J., *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire* (1862), 864.

Stafford, J., 'Dame Ngiao Marsh', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 4, (1998).

The Tatler Magazine (November 1928).

The Telegraph, 22 November 2009

Trevor Kent and Co. Sale particulars (Sept 2014).

Victoria County History, Buckinghamshire

Page, W., (ed.), *Victoria County History, Buckinghamshire*, Vol. 3 (1925), 294-301.

Way, Charles P., *Alderbourne Memories*, (1941) (CBS D192/25/10).

MAPS

Centre for Bucks Studies

1660 (DX/1139).

1809, *Inclosure Map of the Parish of Langley Marish*, surveyed by John Woodcock (IR55).

1845, Map of Alderbourne Manor (D/TR/9/22c).

Ordnance Survey

1810 2" draft Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing (BL)

1st edition 6" surveyed 1875, pub. 1883

2nd edition 6" surveyed 1897, pub. 1900

3rd edition 6" rev 1923, pub. 1926

1st edition 25" surveyed 1875, pub. 1877

2nd edition 25" surveyed 1897, pub. 1899

3rd edition 25" surveyed 1923, pub. 1925

6" 1950s National Grid Provisional Ed.

1:10,000 1975 National Grid

IMAGES

Black and white aerial photographs 1945, 1947, 1951, 1955, 1974, 1979 and 1985 and colour aerial photographs 1989, 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2012 (BCC HER).

<http://www.zoopla.co.uk/property-history/the-barn/fulmer-lane/gerrards-cross/sl9-7bl/29540719>
<http://www.henburybrentrycommunity.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Old-Vicarage.pdf>
<http://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/detailMatching.html?prop=51716977&sale=1901929&country=england>
<http://www.zoopla.co.uk/property-history/alderbourne-house/fulmer-lane/gerrards-cross/sl9-7bl/36219098>
<http://www.zoopla.co.uk/property-history/flat-4/alderbourne-manor/fulmer-lane/gerrards-cross/sl9-7bl/28211096>
<http://avengerland.theavengers.tv/spotting/TotheDeath001.jpg>

Archival Items

Centre for Bucks Studies

D/W/91

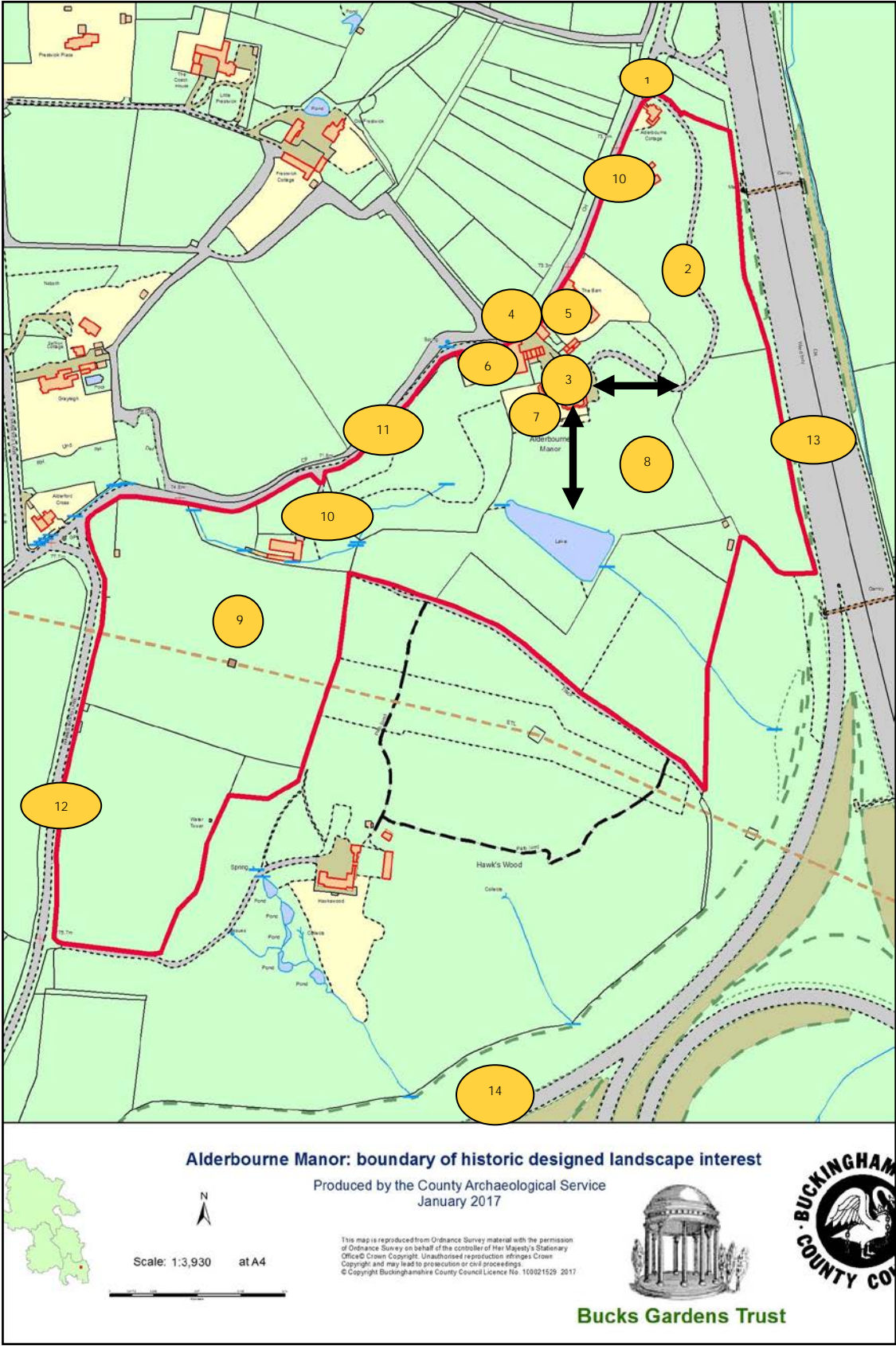
D/W/33-16 Agreement for Exchange Benjamin Way and Rev Henry Hugh Way, land in Denham and Iver.

Website

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80R01731R000400280004-8.pdf>

Gill Grocott November 2016 amended June 2020 SR edited May 2017, amendments March 2018; June 2020

KEY HISTORIC VIEWS AND FEATURES



Key to Features

1. Main Entrance and lodge	2. Long Drive (main drive through woodland)
3. Alderbourne Manor (now flats)	4. C19/early C20 service entrance to stables, etc
5. Former service buildings including stables, etc. Now residential.	6. Site of former kitchen garden, now partly built on
7. Gardens	8. Paddock
9. West Park	10. Later C20 development
11. Fulmer Lane	12. Hawks Wood Lane
13. M25 motorway	14. M40 motorway junction

CURRENT IMAGES



North entrance to the Long Drive off Fulmer Lane (left); cottage orné lodge adjacent to the north entrance (right).



Outer side of former service buildings and stable yard alongside Fulmer Lane (left); former service entrance off Fulmer Lane (right).



Alderbourne Manor: east, entrance front and forecourt (left); south, garden front and iron veranda (right).



Alderbourne Manor: south, garden front and south lawn (left);
terrace walk along south lawn, view south-west (right).



South lawn and terrace, view west (left); south paddock, view towards lake from house and garden (right).



Boating lake in south paddock.

Historic Images and Documents



The garden 'Under one of the Great Oak Trees', c.1885 (?*Memories*) (left);



Henry Moore sculpture, taken in 1964/5, children striking the same pose as the 'Draped Reclining Woman'.

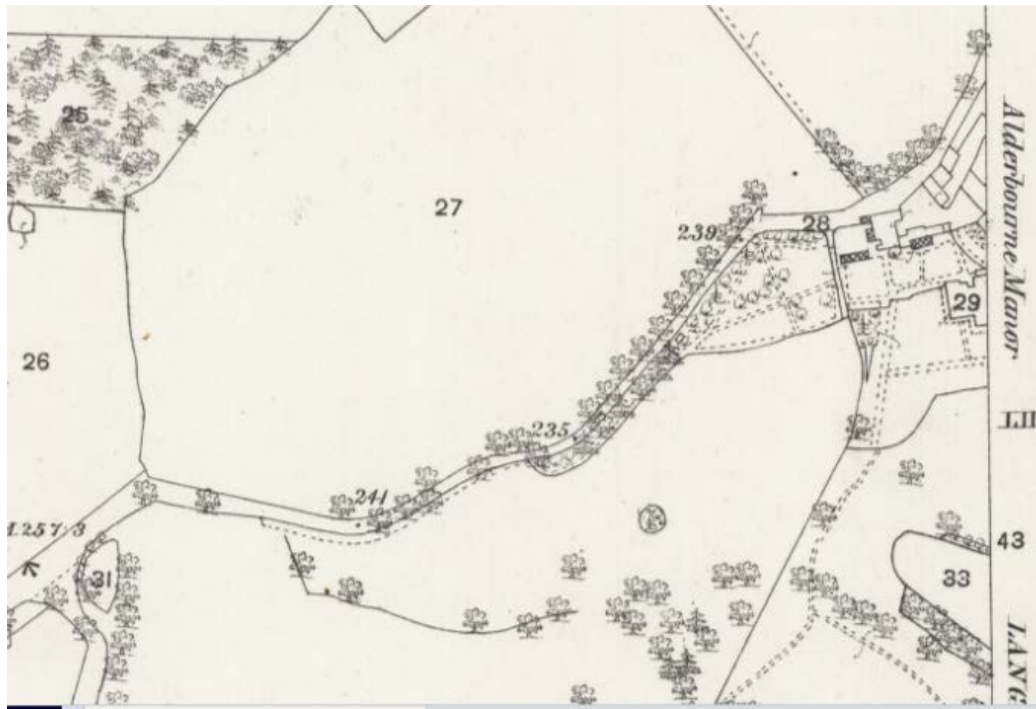
(A.F. Robinson via S Hogg-Robinson)



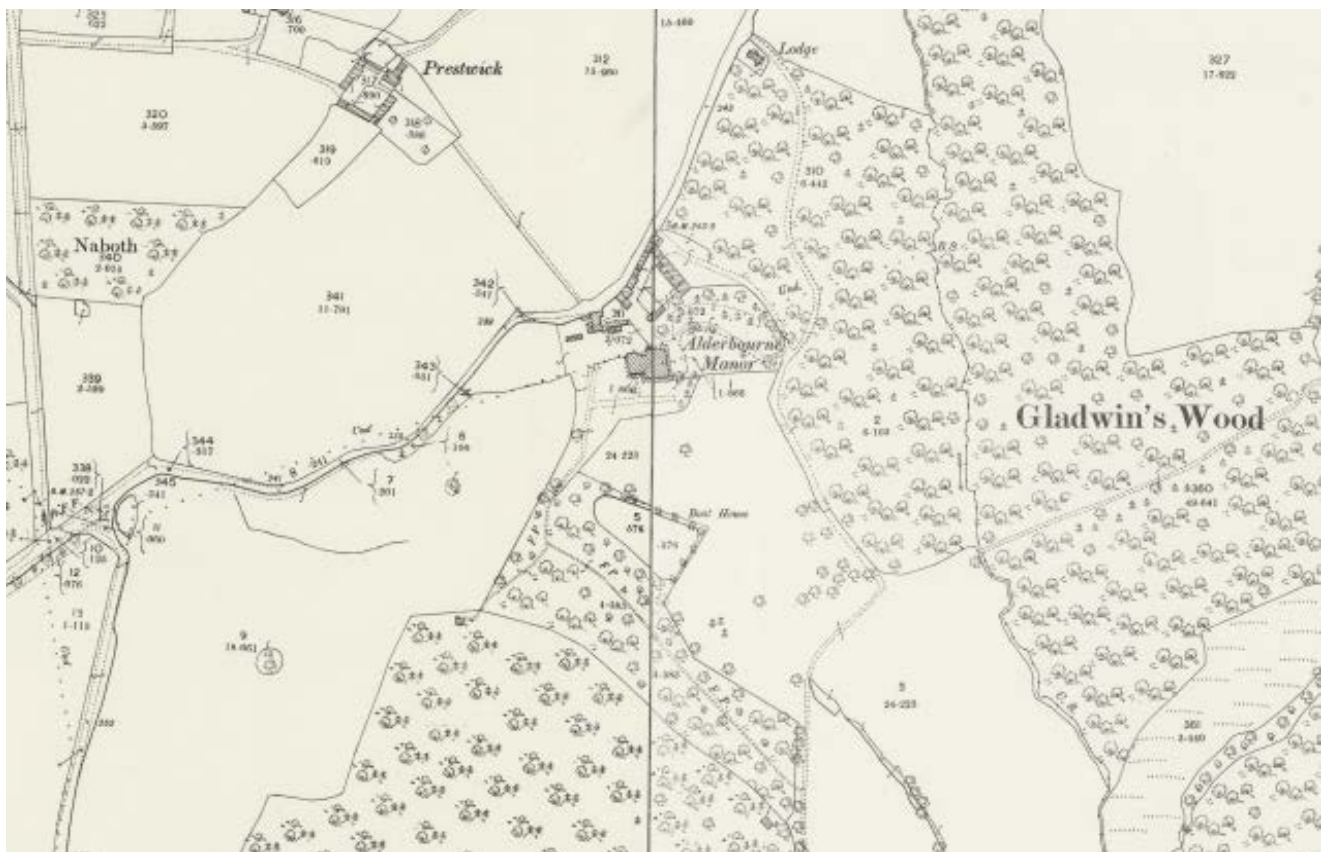
1809 Inclosure Map (CBS IR55); the previous group of buildings are at top right.



1845 Sale plan before the present house built and landscape laid out by the Revd Way (CBS D/TR/9/22c).



Ordnance Survey 25" surveyed 1875.



Ordnance Survey 25" surveyed early C20