

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## GREENLANDS, HAMBLEMEN

JUNE 2020

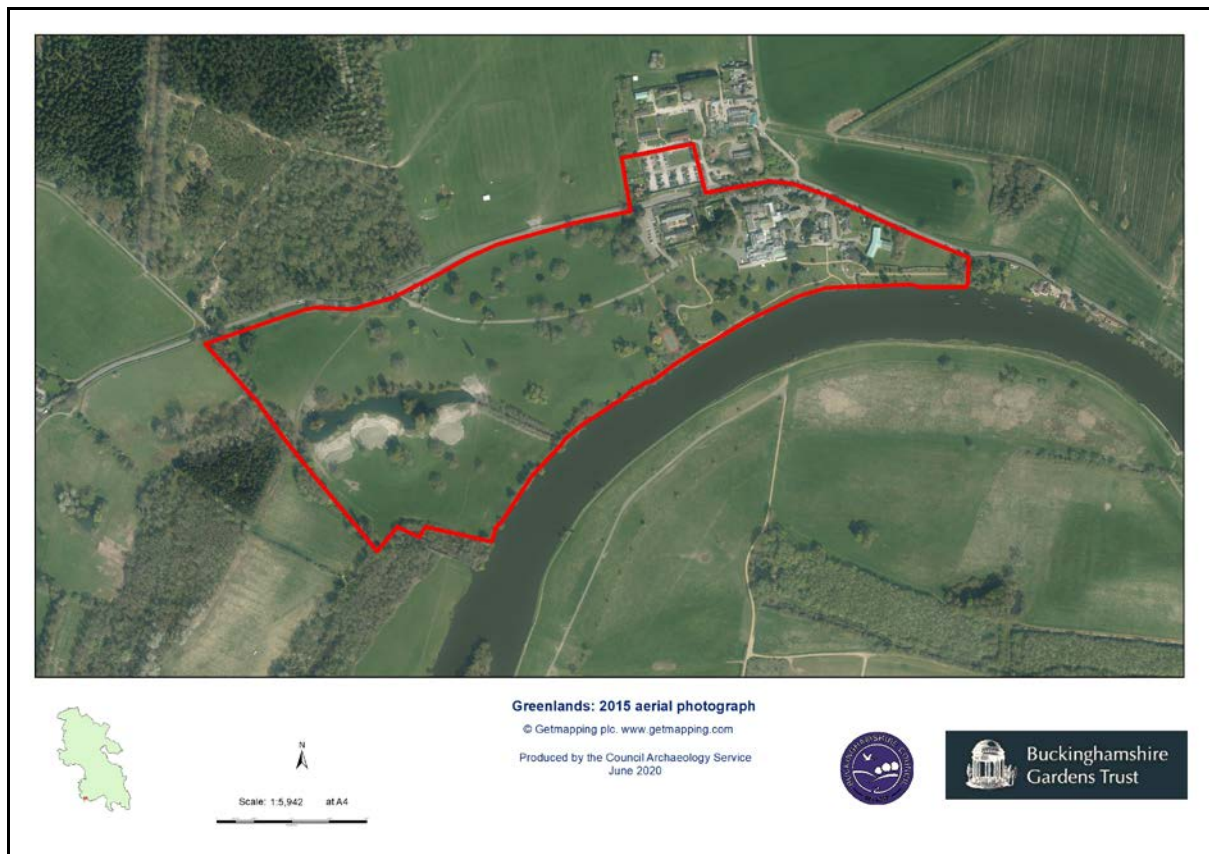
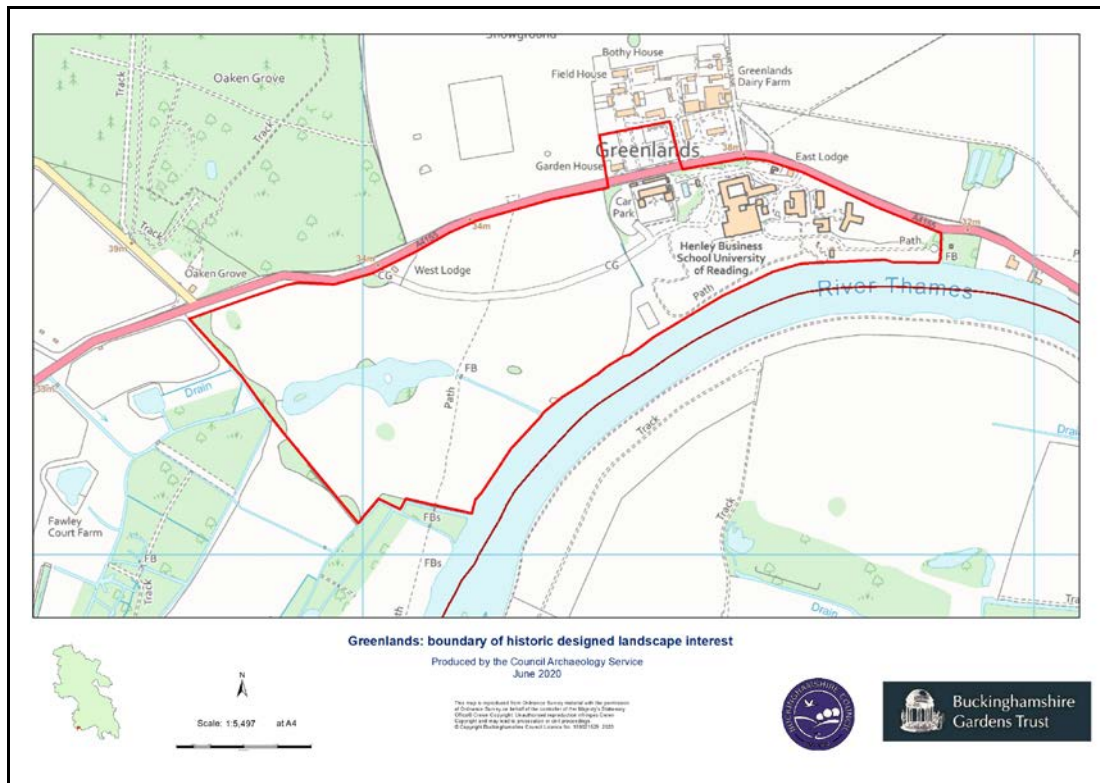


The Finnis Scott  
Foundation

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Foundation



# HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



## 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 by BGT in appraising designed landscapes.

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 Planning Policy Framework and including an overview.
- A description, derived from documentary research and site visits, based on the format of Historic England's *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 funded by BGT, with significant grants from the Finnis Scott Foundation, the Roland Callingham Foundation, BCC (since April 2020 part of Buckinghamshire Council) and various private donors. Buckinghamshire Council also provided significant funding, and help in kind including current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record. The project is supported by The Gardens Trust.

The Trust thanks 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](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>SITE NAME: GREENLANDS</b>	<b>HER NO: 0181605000</b>
<b>COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE</b>	<b>GRID REF: SU 774 854</b>
<b>PARISH: HAMBLEDEN</b>	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Overview

The grounds of a substantial C19 Thames-side country villa, developed in 3 main phases alongside those of the villa. The informal pleasure grounds of c.1810 around the new villa were supplemented in the early 1850s by the park and old kitchen garden, and in the early 1870s by a new kitchen garden and lodges; a final, minor, later C19 phase saw the pleasure grounds extended east. This layout, including much planting, survives largely intact although with some losses around the villa and in the kitchen gardens resulting from the use as a management college since 1946 and construction of new buildings and car parking. It is part of an important group of Thames-side villas along this stretch including Taplow Court, Cliveden, Harleyford, Danesfield, Wittington, Fawley Court (all Bucks), Culham Court and Park Place (both Berkshire).

### Archaeological interest

The potential exists for evidence related to the former manor complex beneath the lawn and for the C18 farmhouse to the north as well as former agricultural uses of the park. Lost garden and park features may relate to paths, walls, beds, kitchen garden structures, garden buildings including a circular summerhouse, and other features evident on maps and images. Evidence may survive relating to the uses of the river since prehistoric times.

### Architectural interest

A largely complete ensemble of buildings for a C19 country villa focussed on the villa (listed Grade II\*) which was developed in three main phases from c.1810, and in the early 1850s and 1870s with some later alterations. It has since 1946 been enclosed to the north and east by college buildings. Other estate structures are typical ancillary buildings including the two lodges and gateways (1870s), stables, kitchen garden walls (1850s and 1870s) and gardener's house (1870s listed Grade II). Lesser garden structures include stone steps and the timber boathouse. The glasshouses, fountain and circular summerhouse at the east end of the formal riverside walk have gone, along with the belvedere that formed a landmark above the mansion roofs.

### Artistic interest

The layout is typical of a substantial C19 Thames-side villa park and pleasure grounds and survives largely intact. The earliest layout, the pleasure ground terrace and informal lawns surrounding the villa, are set in the later parkland with a lake and drive. The site contains many fine mature trees framing vistas over and along the Thames to the rural Chiltern setting. The design makes maximum use of the Thames as a feature and the site is best seen from the river. Areas of the pleasure grounds north and east of the villa have been lost to later C20 and C21 college buildings and areas of lawn are car parking. The boundary of the old kitchen garden survives but within are recent college buildings; to the north the new kitchen garden survives but is a car park.



## Historic interest

The historic interest arises principally from associations with nationally significant owners, particularly from 1871-1891 with the newsagent and influential politician WH Smith, and with his successors as Viscounts Hambleden. A notable Civil War skirmish in which Parliamentary forces razed the manor house occurred in 1644.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Yewden in Hambleden was in the ownership of the Doyley family in the medieval period. John Doyley (d.1492) changed the chief seat to Greenlands in Yewden on acquiring that estate from Sir William Stonor c.1480. On his tomb in Hurley Church, John is described as 'a famous soldier in France.' Thomas, son and heir of John Doyley, was buried at Hambleden in 1545 and in the following year his son John received a pardon for entering Yewden Manor without licence. (VCH)

The manor house stood on the river bank, on the lawn south of the present villa. It was garrisoned for the king in 1644 and laid siege by a Parliamentary force, until 'the house 'could no longer be defended, the whole structure being beaten down by the cannon' (VCH). Portions of the foundations have been uncovered from time to time, and cannon balls, relics of the siege, have been found in the garden and were by the 1920s preserved at Greenlands (VCH). In 1651 the Doyleys sold the estate to Bulstrode Whitelocke of adjacent Fawley Court who sold it in the 1660s (Banks). The estate passed through various hands during the C18 and was split in ownership. The Henley to Marlow Road was turnpiked in 1768. The buildings enclosed a square beside the road, opposite the lane to Hambleden (Rocque, 1761).

The rustic farmhouse adjacent to the road that succeeded the house lost in the Civil War (OSD 1809; Banks) was purchased c.1810 by Thomas Darby Coventry, DL (d.1842?). He built a riverside villa on or close to the site of the farmhouse, with the garden front overlooking the river across a broad lawn where the original house had stood. A belt of evergreens formed a dense and picturesque back drop for the villa, screening the back of the house from the Henley to Marlow Road (1840 engraving, in Banks). The lawn was relatively uneven, still showing scars from the siege of 1644. By 1825 the villa stood in a small, rectangular pleasure ground, enclosed to the north by the road and south by the river (Bryant). The 1838-42 Tithe Map shows the modest layout towards the end of Coventry's ownership. A collection of specimen trees was planted.

Edward Marjoribanks (d.1868), MP for Berwick, was the next owner who acquired the place in the early 1850s. He enlarged the house in the 1850s to designs by architect Mr Kelly, influenced by the royal Osborne House, built in the early 1840s (Banks). This included built the two bow-windowed additions flanking the original villa, and the tower as a belvedere with extensive views. In c.1850-52 Marjoribanks laid out the walled gardens and park west of the house (Banks). He combined several meadows as the setting for the new, scenic main approach from the west, overlooking a large new pond at the far end, and the river. Park planting in clumps and specimens included cedars of Lebanon, oak, plane and chestnut so that the park apparently included land north and south of the river, both owned by Marjoribanks (Banks). A sunk fence separated the park from the pleasure ground. The pleasure ground was enhanced with further planting and a walled garden built against the road. The River House was built in the pleasure ground c.1853 (Banks). In 1862 the 'gardens, shrubberies, and pleasure grounds' were noted as 'both extensive and beautiful' (Sheahan). By c.1869 (Wikipedia watercolour) the maturing specimen planting on the lawns included many

conifers, and a serpentine riverside walk, framing the river view of the villa, with colourful seasonal bedding to the west.

The Rt. Hon. W. H. Smith (d.1891), M.P. (sometime First Lord of the Treasury) and newsagent, who purchased the Greenlands estate in 1871, immediately made major additions, building the dining room and the ranges of offices, &c., on the north side, and giving the house the appearance which it now has including the conservatory/garden room on the south front. [VCH, confusion over who did tower Banks says Marjoribanks] In the grounds, c.1871-72, the lawn was levelled, more trees were planted including rarer specimens, glasshouses were built in the kitchen garden and the path network expanded (Banks). A new kitchen garden was built north of the road, with the gardener's house, and the lodges built to west and east. Greenlands is mentioned in Jerome K Jerome's book *Three Men in a Boat* (1889), as 'the rather uninteresting looking river residence of my newsagent – a quiet unassuming gentleman'. The grounds reached their most fully developed by c.1900 with the extension of the pleasure ground eastwards into Wharf Close and a long walk alongside the river.

The Smiths (from 1891 known as Viscounts Hambleden) expanded the estate from c.665 acres in 1871 to c.5,000 acres by the mid-C20. In 1944 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount entered into a restrictive covenant over c.4,500 acres of the estate with the National Trust to safeguard the Hambleden Valley from injurious development. Although it is known as the Greenlands covenant Lord Hambleden deliberately excluded Greenlands and its grounds because he wanted it to become a training college.

In 1946 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount moved to Hambleden Manor and the site was leased to Greenlands Administrative Staff College which purchased the site in 1952. Various college buildings were built near the house during the rest of the C20 and early C21 including a group by Geddes Hyslop in the 1950s-60s. It remains a management college, the Henley Business School, University of Reading.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM AND SETTING**

The 26ha. site is situated deep in the Chiltern Hills on largely level ground on the north bank of the River Thames at the south extremity of Hambleden parish. It flanks the Henley to Marlow turnpike road (A4155), 3 miles north of Henley and 5.5 miles west of Marlow, with Hambleden village 1 mile to the north-east. The majority of the roughly triangular site is bounded to the north by the Henley to Marlow Road, to the south by the river, and to the west by the parkland of Fawley Court. The new kitchen garden north of the road lies within farmland.

The rural Chiltern setting is enclosed to the west, north and east by a rim of hills rising from the river valley and beyond the river to the south by level agricultural land between Remenham and Aston rising to Remenham Wood and Hill, with no significant C20 intrusions. Greenlands is one of an important group of Thames-side villas with notable landscapes along this stretch including Fawley Court, Harleyford, Danesfield, Wittington and Cliveden. The site enjoys long views south-west towards Fawley Court, south-east downstream along the river towards the parkland of Culham Court on the opposite bank. The main site is screened from the road and best seen from the river and beyond this the Remenham to Aston lane, and the Remenham escarpment which enjoys panoramic views of Greenlands and Fawley Court. The kitchen garden walls are a feature flanking the roadside.

## **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

Greenlands is approached from Marlow to the east and Henley to the south along the A4155 via two drives. The main entrance lies 500m west-south-west of the house opposite the Oaken Grove ancient wood. It is set back from the road and marked by brick piers with stone ball finials supporting ornate iron gates, flanked by low walls with iron railings. The single-storey West Lodge, adjacent to the north-east is rendered under hipped slate roofs with a bay overlooking the entrance and facing the approach from Henley. From here the west drives curves east through the park with views of the lake and river to the south. 145m west of the house it crosses the line of the sunk fence and enters the pleasure grounds, passing the old kitchen garden to the north, and leading to a forecourt below the porch on the west front of the house. A spur leads north to a car park west of the old kitchen garden and a modern gateway to the road.

The short east drive enters 80m north-east of the house off the A4155. The entrance is similar to the west gateway. It is set back from the road and marked by brick piers, in this case with iron lamp finials, flanked by low curved walls with iron railings. The iron gates have gone. The single-storey East Lodge, adjacent to the south-west is similar in style to West Lodge, being rendered under hipped slate roofs with a bay overlooking the entrance and facing the approach from Marlow. From here the east drives curves south-east through car parking and the main college buildings, around the north side of the house, to the forecourt.

The west drive was laid out with the park by Marjoribanks in the early 1850s, and the two lodges built in the early 1870s by Smith.

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

Greenlands (listed Grade II\*) stands towards the east end of the site, set back from the road on a slight rise above the river. The entrance front is to the west, the main garden front to the south and services to the north.

The two-storey building, in Italianate style, is rendered under slate roofs with a balustrade parapet. The west, 6-bay entrance front has a Doric-style porch enclosing the front door and enjoys views of the park and the Fawley and Henley Park estates beyond, alongside the river. The 5-bay south, garden front, overlooking the terrace, lawns and river beyond, has a central Ionic porch and garden door flanked by pairs of full-height bays. It is terminated at the east end by the site of a single-storey former orangery or garden room which was rebuilt as a dining room. The late C19 service wing is to the north with further extensions to the north and east. The building was until 1934 dominated by a 3-storey belvedere tower to the north-east, its steep pyramid roof enclosed by an arcade of Romanesque arches with balustrade parapet and urn finials.

The core of the house including the three central bays is based on the modest c.1810 villa. This was extended considerably by Marjoribanks in the early 1850s with the architect Kelly, including the tower, and again in the early 1870s by Norman Shaw for WH Smith. Additions and alterations were made in the early-mid-C20 including in the 1930s the demolition of the tower as unsafe, rebuilding of the conservatory as a dining room, and building of an outdoor swimming pool (removed early C21). In the later 1940s-50s P Geddes Hyslop converted Greenlands for college use (Pevsner).

The former stable block and coach house stand nearby to the east of the house and were converted to college use by Geddes Hyslop in 1951 (Pevsner). They were considerably altered in appearance

and now overlook the river, where they were formerly screened by shrubs and trees (Aerofilms, 1931).

Various college buildings were added from the 1970s onwards to the north and east of the house including in the old kitchen garden.

## **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The informal pleasure grounds enclose the villa to the west, south and east, stretching for 450m alongside the river bank. The pleasure grounds are entered from the south front of the villa via the central garden door and French windows in the flanking bays, leading to the terrace overlooking the river and countryside beyond. At the west end stone steps lead down to the network of looping paths that cross the lawns below. At the east end the terrace joins a path that leads to the Italianate terrace walk across Wharf Close between the wooden boathouse over a dock, and the site of a former circular garden pavilion at the eastern extremity (OS). The lawns are divided from the park to the west by the sunk fence.

The River House, built by Marjoribanks in c.1853 (Banks), stands 80m east of the house. It is a two-storey building in classical style, its gabled south front overlooking the lawns and river beyond. It may have originated on the site of, or as part of, the C18 farmhouse.

A 150m long formal riverside walk links the boathouse to the site of a former small circular pavilion 280m from the house (OS). A yew hedge separates the walk from the grassy expanse of Wharf Close to the north on the roadside. Formerly a long flower border divided the path from the hedge (Aerofilms, 1931).

The gardens survive largely intact, although they have lost some of the beds and shrubberies that were scattered across them, and a fountain that lay between the River House and the Boat House (OS). The layout originated as an informal Picturesque pleasure ground with the villa c.1810 for Coventry. It was largely perpetuated in this style by Marjoribanks in the early 1850s and Smith in the early 1870s. Smith levelled the lawn and planted more trees including *Magnolia acuminata*, *Liquidambar styraciflua* and *Calocedrus decurrens*. He extended the garden east into Wharf Close with the 150m long formal riverside walk from the boathouse to a small circular pavilion (Banks; OS).

## **PARK**

The 19ha. park lies west of the pleasure grounds, from which it is separated by the sunk fence on its east side. To the north it is bounded by the road, and beyond this the ancient Oaken Grove wood, and agricultural land; to the south-east it is bounded by the river, and to the south-west by Fawley Court parkland. It is laid to grass with mature specimen trees and clumps. At the west end is the 250m long lake with 2 islands. The lake along with a treed fence line divides the larger north half of the park from the paddock to the south.

The park was laid out and planted in the early 1850s by Marjoribanks, along with the lake and west drive and was little altered after that except for the addition of the West Lodge. He planted cedar of Lebanon, oak, plane and chestnut. (Banks)



## KITCHEN GARDEN

Two rectangular kitchen gardens lie north-west of the house, flanking the A4155. The former old kitchen garden (Marjoribanks, early 1850s) lies south of the road 80m from the house. It is occupied by two modern college buildings. The brick north wall has a range of low sheds along the outer side against the road [do the other walls survive?] Formerly a glasshouse range ran along the inside of the north wall with a group of freestanding glasshouses and frames outside to the east (OS 1898).

The new kitchen garden (for WH Smith, early 1870s) lies north of the road, 115m from the house. It is enclosed by brick walls (listed Grade II) and is now a car park. The red brick walls in English bond have semi-circular brick coping and banded corner piers with stone ball finials. A gateway in the east side is flanked by similar piers with a pair of large wrought iron gates with the Smith coat of arms. A small arched gate at the centre of the south side gives direct access from the villa across the road. The roadside is lined by a lawn fenced by iron park rail fence against the path. Formerly a glasshouse range ran along the inner north wall, with a further range against the outside of the east wall.

Just outside the south-west corner of the new kitchen garden is the Garden House (listed Grade II), 170m north-west of the house. It was built for WH Smith for the head gardener in the 1870s, possibly by Norman Shaw (Pevsner). The Picturesque L-plan building, of two storeys in ornate Tudor style, is set back from the road behind a garden fenced with iron park rail fence. It is of red brick to the ground floor with the upper storey rendered and whitewashed with ornamental half-timbering. The porch on the south elevation is set diagonally across the angle between the bays and has a patterned tiled gabled roof with carved bargeboards on unusual tapering wooden Mannerist piers with drapes, tassels and volute capitals. The half-hipped roof has patterned tiling and prominent brick chimneys.

In 1897 head gardener Henry Perkins was renowned as a cultivator and exhibitor (*Gardeners' Chronicle*). Greenlands was noted for its extensive glasshouses. The new kitchen garden contained a range of six fruit houses including three vineries. The glasshouses south of the road included five vineries and a very large stove house for exotics containing a collection of *Hippeastrums* and orchids, amongst other things.

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## Maps

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 Ordnance Surveyor's 6" to 1 mile, surveyed 1874/76  
 Tithe map and apportionment, 1838-42 (CBS)

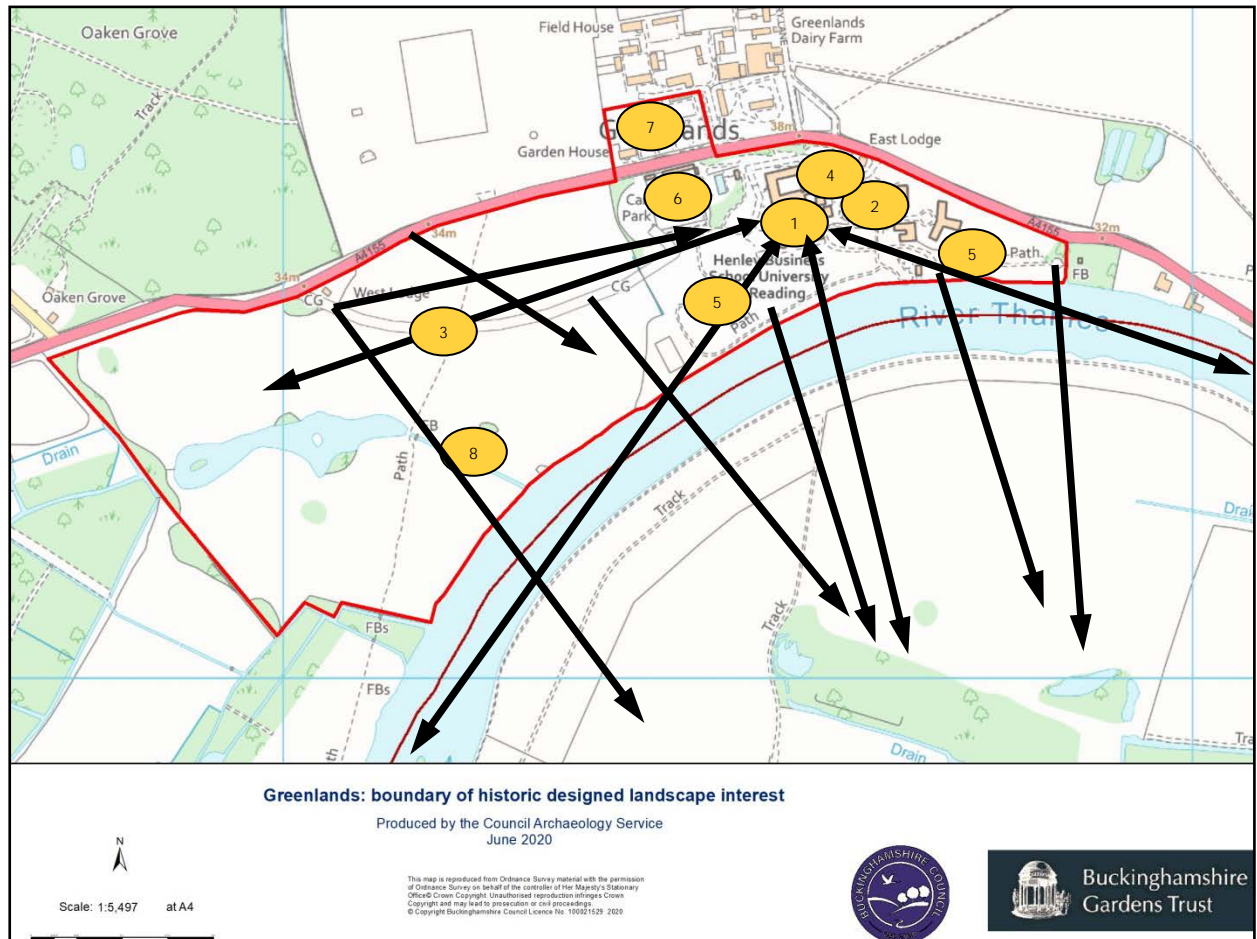
## Illustrations

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c.1869 watercolour [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenlands,\\_Henley-upon-Thames,\\_about\\_1869.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenlands,_Henley-upon-Thames,_about_1869.JPG)

## KEY HISTORIC FEATURES & VIEWS



### Key to numbered features

1. House and terrace	2. Former stable block
3. West drive	4. North entrance
5. Pleasure Grounds	6. Old kitchen garden
7. New kitchen garden	8. Park

# HISTORIC IMAGES



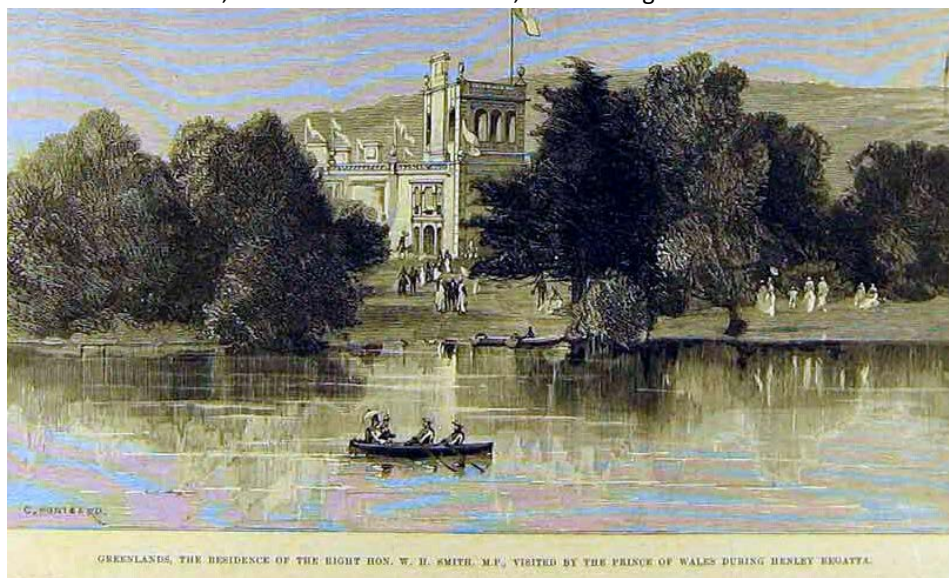
Greenlands, c.1869 south front from the far river bank. Credit: Sylvia Stanley

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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenlands,\\_Henley-upon-Thames,\\_about\\_1869.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greenlands,_Henley-upon-Thames,_about_1869.JPG)



1882, view from the south-west, Historic England Archive.



1887, *Illustrated London News*, July 09, view from the south.





1891, *Daily Graphic*, October 07. The conservatory.



1891, *Illustrated London News*, October 17. The south, garden front.



Entrance front, n.d., early C20.



Garden front and terrace, n.d., early C20.



1931, aerial photograph from the south-east.



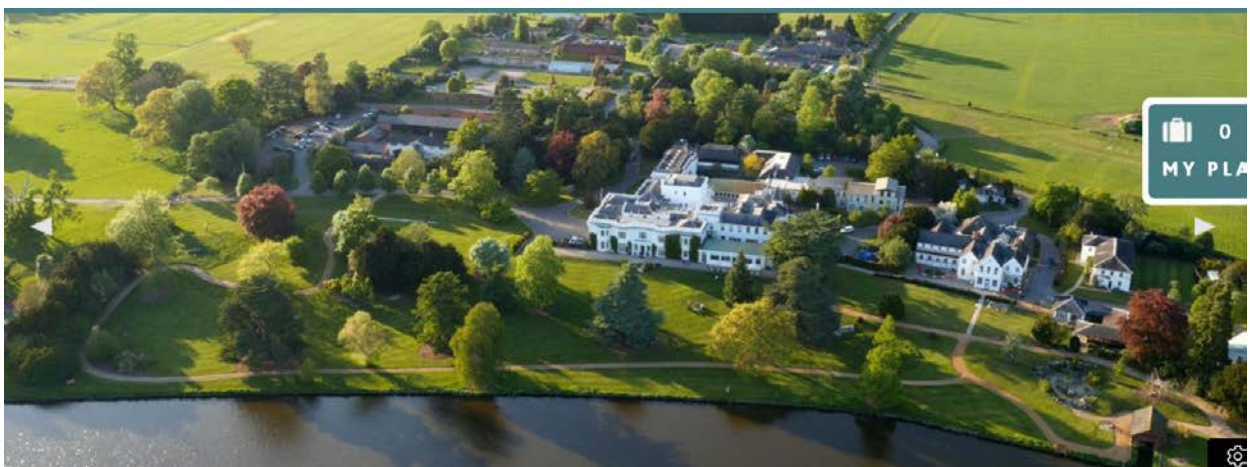
1931, aerial photograph from the south-west.



## CURRENT IMAGES



Garden front, terrace and lawns.



Aerial photograph from the south.



Garden front, terrace and lawns from the river.





River House, 1853 (left); Garden House, early 1870s (right).



West Lodge early 1870s and gateway to west drive, early 1850s.



Park view east towards house, park laid out early 1850s.



East gateway to east drive, early 1850s.



East Lodge, early 1870s, and gateway to east drive, early 1850s.



New Kitchen Garden, south wall and gateway, Garden House roof in distance, all early 1870s.



Old Kitchen Garden, North Wall with back sheds in front, early 1850s, and recent entrance to right.