

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



BRADWELL HOUSE, MILTON KEYNES

JULY 2020

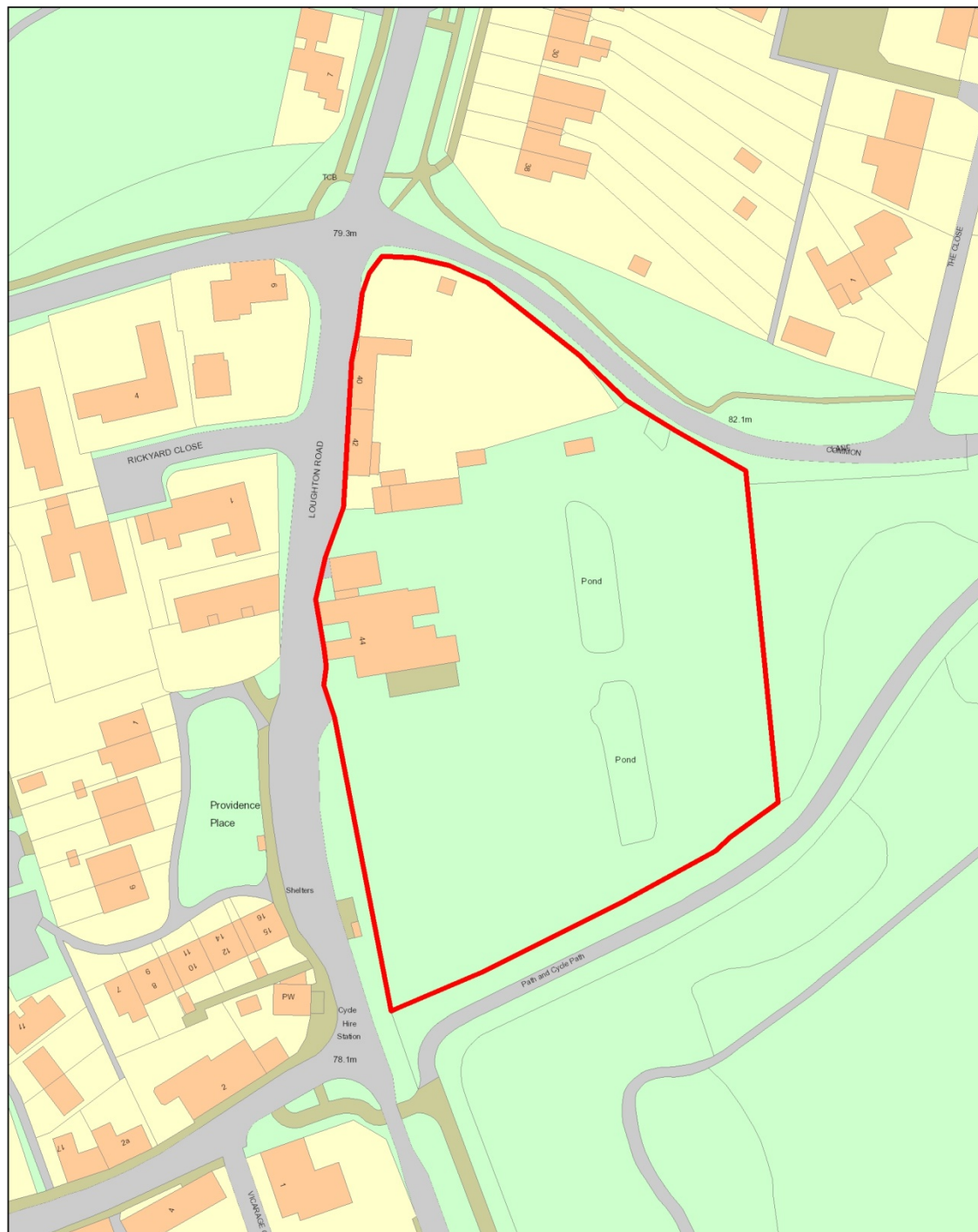


The Finnis Scott
Foundation

Roland
Callingham
Foundation



HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



Bradwell House: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the Council Archaeology Service
June 2020

Scale: 1:993 at A4

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Bradwell House: 2017 aerial photograph

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**Buckinghamshire
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 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 written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of 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 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

SITE NAME: BRADWELL HOUSE	MK HER NO: -
COUNTY: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	GRID REF: SP833 397
PARISH: BRADWELL	POSTCODE: MK13 9AE

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The garden for a village house developed from a C17 farmhouse into a 'polite' residence in the early C18 and extended in the mid-C19. The garden combines formal and informal features of the C18 and C19 focussed on the detached house at the edge of the village. The extent and survival of such gardens is not well recorded and this is a good example at this scale, with an ensemble of typical features including lawns, boundary wall, two formal ponds, and a walled kitchen garden, which survives largely intact. Much of the rural setting has changed with the development of Milton Keynes around and within the village and only a fragment of the former stable block survives across the road.

Archaeological Interest

The archaeological interest and potential largely arises from evidence for lost domestic buildings and garden features, including garden buildings, paths, turning circle, beds and boundary and kitchen garden structures, which are likely to be of C18-C20 origin. There is lesser potential for evidence relating to previous agricultural and village uses, due to the considerable disturbance for the creation of the garden.

Architectural Interest

The site is focussed on the house (listed Grade II*) standing on the roadside boundary. It combines a rear wing (the original farmhouse) with a fine early C18 range facing south, and a mid-C19 porch by the road, built when the main axial entrance in the C18 range was moved to the roadside, as well as a C19 extension of the C18 range in similar style. Other structures are typical service buildings including the garden wall (listed Grade II), in Flemish bond ornamented with burnt headers, and a section of the stable block detached on the far side of the road.

Artistic Interest

The garden for a village house developed in the C18 and C19. It typically combines formal lawns and two ponds of C18 origin focussed on the house, with later informal features, and a kitchen garden and orchard. The C18 roadside wall forms a backdrop for the garden. The layout survives largely intact but the kitchen garden is now domestic gardens and the former short south avenue beyond the lawn has gone. Long views south (from the centre of the C18 range framed by the former avenue) and east over former agricultural land are now screened since the development of the surrounding Bradwell as part Milton Keynes.

Historic Interest

The site is of considerable interest for its connection with local people of note.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Bradwell first appears as a settlement in the 10th century, although there is evidence of earlier Roman occupation. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Bradewelle, from the Anglo-Saxon meaning a settlement at the broad spring or stream. It was granted to Walter Giffard, Lord of Longueville, by William the Conqueror (Village Plan and Conservation Proposal). The church of St Lawrence dates to the 12th century, adjacent to which are the remains of a castle mound and manor house moat of the mid-12th century. To the west of the village are the remains of Bradwell Priory which was founded around 1154 and dissolved in 1525. Although the Priory was in a separate parish it would have had an influence on the village (Pevsner and Article by Dennis Mynard).

Bradwell continued as a mainly agricultural and lace-making community until the coming of the railway in the 1830s when the new village of New Bradwell was built to house railway workers.

Bradwell House was built in the 17th century but it is unclear by and for whom it was built. It was possibly originally a farmhouse with a south frontage added in the 18th century. The house is marked on Jeffreys map (1768) and on the OSD (1815). The building was extended to the east in the mid-19th century (English Heritage listing).

It was purchased by William Baily in 1787 (*Cows Before Concrete*) and passed to his son, Joseph, on his death in 1802 (church window in Bradwell). By 1815 (OSD) the garden contained a short avenue focussed on the south entrance doorway and two ornamental ponds. Joseph died in 1817 (*Gentleman's Magazine*) and his widow, Celia, continued to live in the property. By 1825 the house had a short avenue of trees to the south (Bryant). During this period the property was owned by Joseph and Celia's son, William James Baily, (1839 tithe map and schedule). By 1839 (Tithe) the garden layout remained similar to 1815. Celia Baily died in 1859 (church window in Bradwell church). William George Duncan JP purchased the property in the mid-1850s and died in 1876 (church window in Bradwell church). For the next half century, Bradwell House was owned by a Mrs Jones and was occupied by a number of different tenants (Kelly's Directories). During World War II it was a rest home for London firemen (Hill). The layout of the gardens remained similar other than the addition of an area of land to the east of the property sometime around 1900 (OS maps).

In 1960 the house was acquired by Harry Stammers, a noted stained glass artist. Examples of his work can be found in St Lawrence's church in Bradwell and also in All Saints church in the neighbouring village of Loughton. On his death in 1968 the property was bought by C B Martindale, a Cathedral and Historic Buildings architect, with a practice based in Cumbria. He was responsible for designing the extension to the church in Bradwell in 1992 (Pevsner). In 1972 Mr Martindale corresponded with various local and national authorities requesting a financial contribution towards the cost of repairs to the house, associated buildings and grounds (Centre for Bucks Studies).

Bradwell was incorporated into the new town of Milton Keynes which was founded in 1967. Bradwell expanded with residential development and the area was enclosed by the grid road system. Bradwell House and its gardens have remained largely unchanged since the mid-C19 apart from the loss of some garden paths and the addition of two small areas to the south and east in the 1970s. The house remains in private ownership with the kitchen garden in separate ownership.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Location, area, boundaries, landform and setting

The 1ha site is located in the Bradwell area of Milton Keynes and lies to the east of the village of Old Bradwell. It is bounded by the city grid roads of Monks Way to the north, Grafton Street to the East and Dansteed Way to the south. It lies adjacent to the east side of Loughton Road which runs north through Bradwell from Dansteed Way. The West Coast railway lies 0.5km to the west.

The west boundary runs along the east side of Loughton Road. The southern section, some 35m long, is marked with a close-boarded wooden fence with hedging on the road side. A section of metal spiked railings, probably late 19th century, overgrown with ivy, has been relocated parallel to this fence on the internal boundary. Running northwards the boundary is marked for c.40m with an 18th century brick wall (Grade II listed), c.2m high in Flemish bond ornamented with burnt headers. The wall is terminated at the north end by the mid-C19 porch. North of the porch the boundary is lined by two cottages. The boundary turns south-east for 70m along Common Lane, forming the north boundary of the site, marked by hedging and trees alongside the cottages. The boundary turns south and the east boundary runs for 70m and is marked by post and wire fence, beech hedging and trees. The boundary turns WSW and runs for 95m, marked by post and wire fence, hedging and trees and bounded by a City Redway (path and cycle track).

Bradwell lies on slightly elevated ground east of a northward-flowing tributary of the River Great Ouse at around the 80m contour. The site lies east of the village of Old Bradwell. To the north and south is housing built from the 1970s onwards, with Bradwell Village School (1979) to the south-east. East of the site is an area of grass and trees. The site previously overlooked agricultural land, but is now enclosed by mature trees. The small avenue of trees in the garden shown on the Bryant map (1825) suggests there was a vista south from the house over the adjacent countryside.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Bradwell House is entered directly from Loughton Road via a door on the west elevation within a substantial mid-C19 porch. North of this entrance a gate leads to the rear (north side) of the property. On the north-east corner garden, leading onto Common Lane, is a late 20th century double-gate flanked by brick pillars as a service access.

South of the porch and front door on the east side of Loughton Road a change in the type of brick in the boundary wall indicates a previous entrance, opposite the stable block on the other side of the road. The former gateway led to a turning circle by an entrance on the south elevation of the house, which can still sometimes be seen in outline (pers. comm. H Martindale, 31-1-20). The gateway was presumably removed and the gap blocked in the mid-C19 when the entrance was moved from the centre of the south elevation to the west elevation through the newly-built porch.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Situated in the north-west corner of the site, Bradwell House (listed Grade II*) is a 17th century building with an early-18th century south front. It has two storeys and is built of red brick with a

hipped tile and slate roof behind a panelled parapet. The 18th century south front originated with five bays with brick pilasters and segment-headed windows. Two more matching bays were added in matching materials to the east in the 19th century (Pevsner). At a similar time the front door was relocated to the western side, off Loughton Road, enclosed by a substantial porch in yellow brick. The previous entrance was on the south elevation, which was replaced by the central window of the 18th century facade. It is possible, in dry weather, to see the shape of a turning circle in the grass in front of this window (pers. comm. H Martindale, 31-1-20).

A single-storey stable block (listed Grade II) stands west of the house, detached from the property on the opposite side of Loughton Road with an entrance on the south side. It is early 19th century, built of brick with a hipped slate roof, but is in a state of disrepair. This is the remaining half of the former south range of a rectangular yard which was attached to now lost ranges on the west and in turn the north sides. The yard was formerly entered from Loughton Road via a gateway opposite the entrance to the domestic service yard north of the house.

A glasshouse formerly stood in the orchard east of the house. It is thought to be mid-20th century (pers. comm. H Martindale, 31-1-20). It fell into disrepair and was demolished by the current owners. The area is grassed over but there are the remains of the footings in the grass.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens lie south and east of the house and consist of a lawned area, a wildflower meadow, an enclosed former rose garden, ornamental ponds and an orchard, within a belt of mature evergreen and deciduous trees.

The lawned area extends from the south elevation of the house, with a paved terrace between the house and the lawn. Formerly (OS, 1880) a straight path led south from the central axis of the 18th century facade. The line is evident as a raised area. At the south end of the path two stone steps set into the grass lead to a Doric style pillar set on a circular base. A dip in the top of the pillar suggests there may have been an object on the top. The OS 25" maps mark the feature with "SD" so is likely to have been a sun-dial, probably late 19th century. Photographs from the 1970s show espalier fruit trees along the line of the path.

South of this feature is a line of conifers and behind them is a beech hedge, parallel to the south elevation of the house. The hedge and conifers were planted in the 1970s. The hedge is partly obscured from the house by the conifers.

South of the beech hedge are the remains of a stone ha-ha which formed the south boundary of the garden. The avenue of trees present in 1825 (Bryant) and framing views southwards would have extended south of the ha-ha. A triangular area beyond the ha-ha, planted with ash trees, has extended the garden southwards since the late C20. The south-west corner has a group of mature yew trees and a pine tree on a slight bank.

South-east of the house is an informal area planted with spring bulbs and wildflowers.

East and south-east of the house are two narrow, rectangular ponds running north to south (each c.35m x 7m). They are clay-lined and the north pond has some stone reinforcement along its western bank. The ponds are fed by run-off from the village school playing fields which lie to the south-east of the site and the south pond drains into the north pond. The south pond has mature yew trees on the west and south banks and the north pond has trees and shrubs along the east bank. The ponds have appeared on maps of the site since at least 1815 and may be at least of C18 origin, perhaps in association with the refronting of the south front in the early C18 (OSD).

A path between the ponds leads to a grassed area planted with mature fruit trees.

North-east of the house is a square area (18m x 18m) enclosed by a 2m high yew hedge. At the south-west corner is a gap in the hedge, forming an entrance. The area is grassed but it was formerly a rose garden and a few rose bushes remain. A recent photograph, taken in dry weather, shows the outline of the former paths. North-east of the former rose garden is the trunk of a large horse chestnut which was taken down in January 2020.

North of the house various service buildings include a garage and log store.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The kitchen garden lies north of the garden, bounded to the south by a range of sheds, to the west against Loughton Road by the pair of cottages and to the north by Common Lane. It is now residential gardens. It is divided into two, to west and east.

By 1839 (Tithe map) a rectangular area (40m x 20m) north of the house was owned by the owner of the rest of the property, William James Baily, and was probably in productive cultivation as the kitchen garden. The tithe apportionment describes it as "Cottages and gardens". By 1881 (OS) the area was in productive cultivation as the kitchen garden and the triangular area to the east was an orchard. Both of these areas remain distinct, but are in separate ownership and are the gardens for private residences in the cottages.

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OS Surveyor's Drawing, 1815

OS 25" to 1 mile, surveyed 1880

OS 25" to 1 mile, revised 1898

OS 25" to 1 mile, revised 1924

OS 25" to 1 mile, revised 1938

OS 6" to 1 mile, surveyed 1881

Tithe map and apportionment, 1839 (Buckinghamshire Archive)

Illustrations

Photographs, Buckinghamshire Archive, D-MKDC11-1-3-1

Photographs provided by current owner

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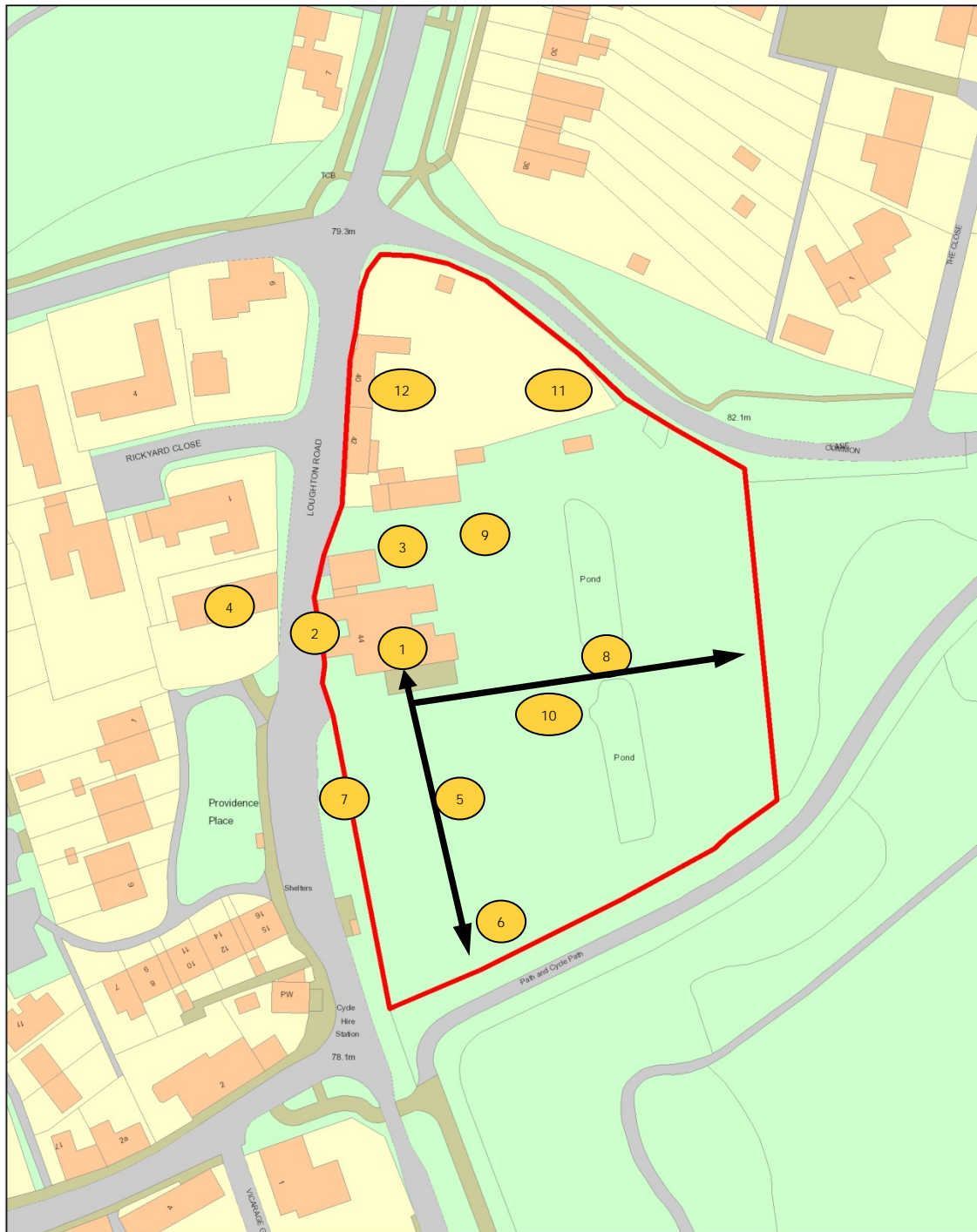
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KEY HISTORIC FEATURES & VIEWS



Bradwell House: boundary of historic designed landscape interest

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Buckinghamshire
Gardens Trust

Key to numbered features

1. House, service yard	2. Entrance to house
3. Service yard	4. Stable block
5. South lawn	6. Ha-ha
7. Roadside wall, C18	8. Ponds
9. Former rose garden	10. Wildflower meadow
11. Orchard (former)	12. Kitchen garden (former)

CURRENT & HISTORIC IMAGES



Entrance on Loughton Road



Listed western boundary wall showing change of brickwork



Stable block



Former rose garden with stump of horse chestnut



North pond



South pond



Orchard



Ha-ha and beech hedge looking north



Sun-dial and beech hedge looking south



Wildflower and bulb meadow (H Martindale)



Looking south-east from the house to fields beyond. Private collection.



Looking south from the house (1970s)
Private collection.