

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



Rayners (formerly Penn School)

February 2016, amended January 2021



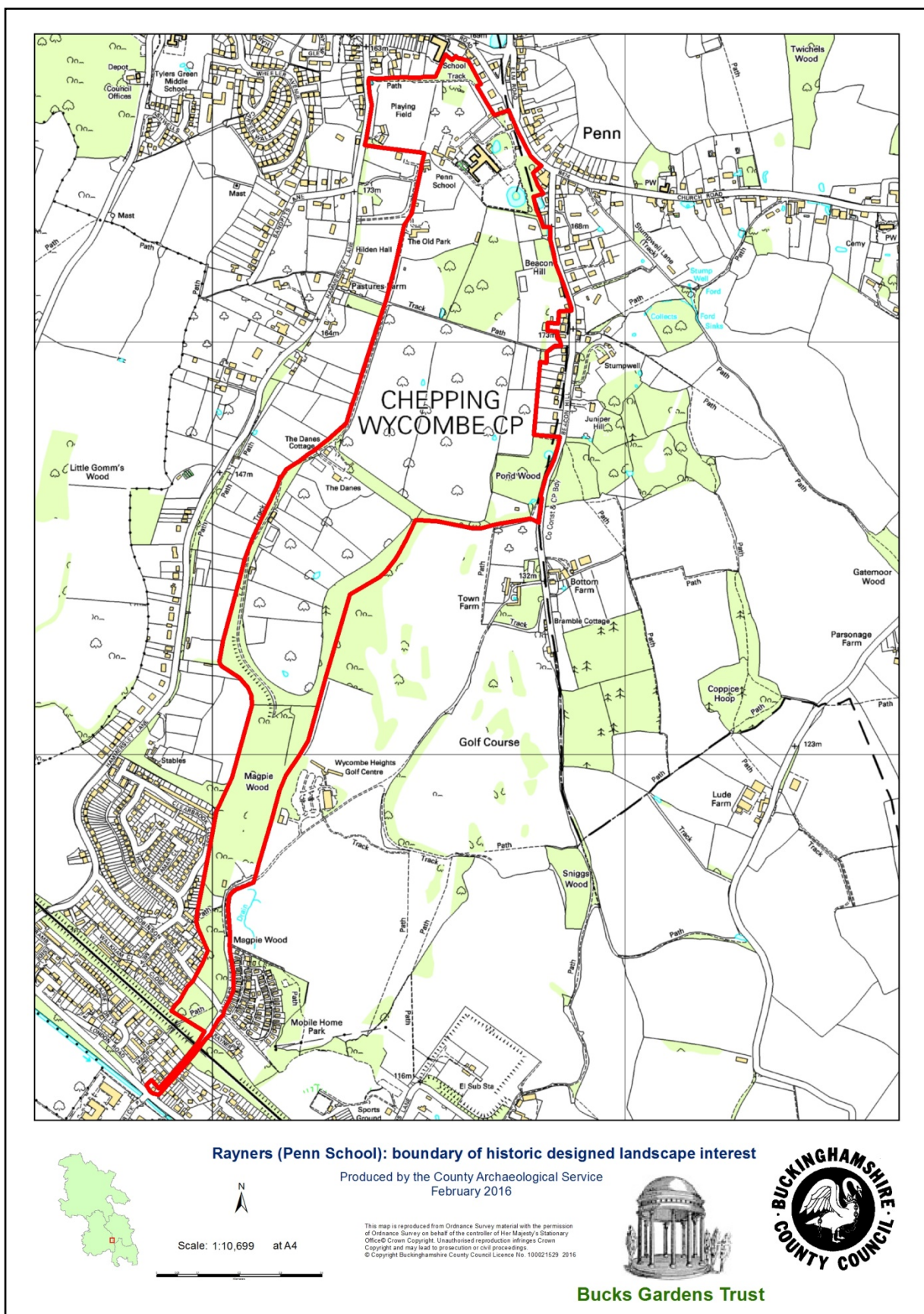
Bucks Gardens
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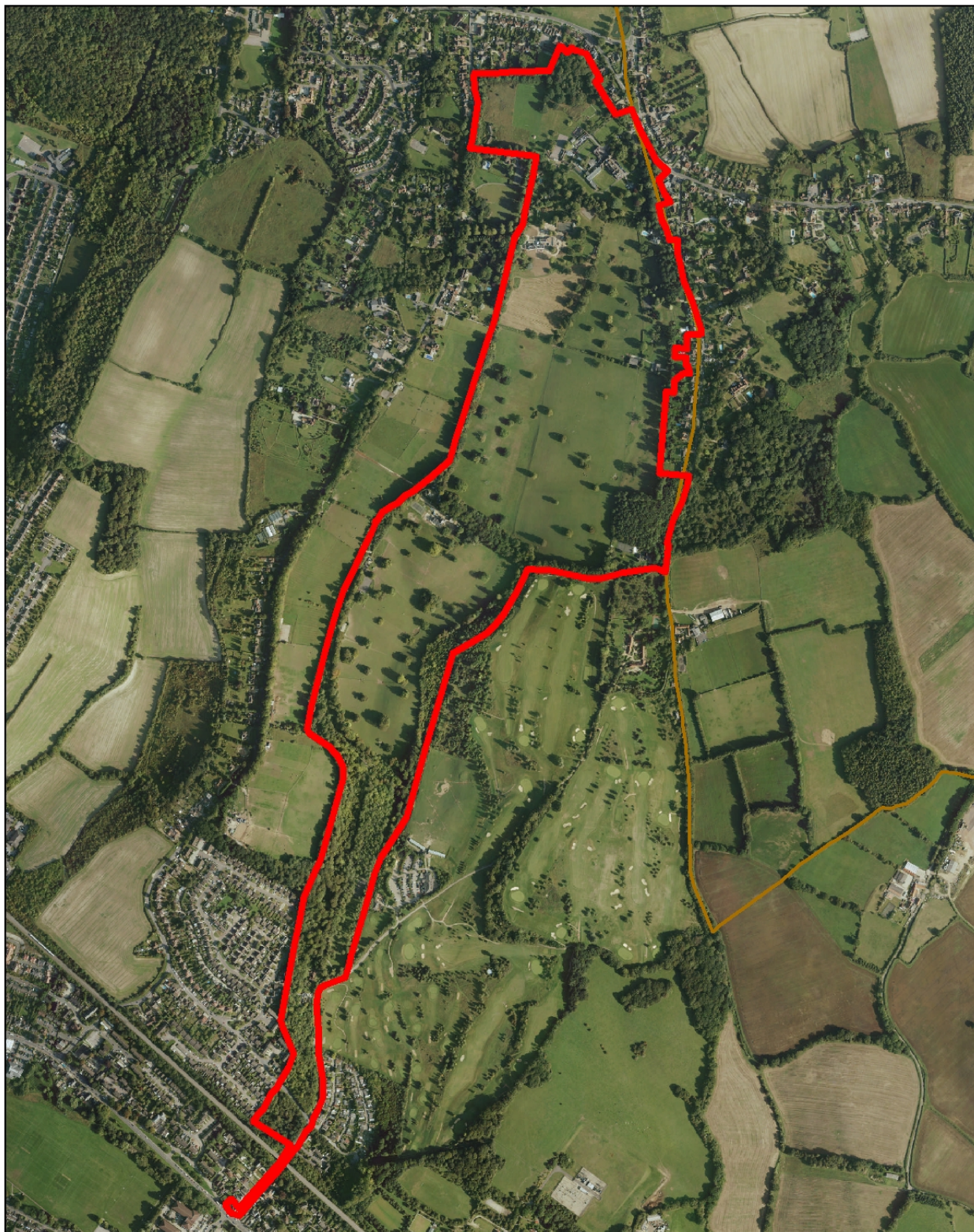


Association of
Gardens
Trusts



HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY





Rayners (Penn School): 2008 aerial photograph

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service
February 2016

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Scale: 1:10,759 at A4



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 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	RAYNERS (FORMERLY PENN SCHOOL) BCC HER 0641300000
DISTRICT:	Wycombe	
PARISH:	Tylers Green	
OS REF.:	SU 9062 9348	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview:

A mid-late C19 Chiltern country house, gardens and park, developed in two major phases for Philip Rose, a local solicitor who was a close business, political and personal associate of the Prime Minister and author Benjamin Disraeli throughout his career. The C19 design makes good use of the Chiltern setting and survives largely intact, including many mature trees, although with some losses to residential development. It is one of a group of C19 villas and country houses located on hillsides around High Wycombe, developed to take advantage of an elevated position and extensive southerly Chiltern views, including Hughenden Manor, Brands House and Castle Hill House (Wycombe Museum).

Archaeological interest:

The identified archaeology is of local significance as far as it is understood to date. The most important archaeological potential is connected with lost features of the C19 layout and buildings.

Architectural interest:

A typical mid-late C19 country house ensemble built by Philip Rose from 1847 for his new estate, including a mansion, several ornate lodges, gateways, garden buildings, stables and kitchen garden structures, much of which survives intact. The mid-C20 school-associated structures are of lower architectural significance.

Artistic interest:

A mid-late C19 country house gardens and park, the design of which exploits the dramatic Chiltern topography. The features and layout established by 1900 were typical for a wealthy businessman: based on sweeps of lawns decorated with ornate horticultural features (gone) surrounding the mansion, with ponds, framed by mature trees and shrubs within wider parkland, occupying the north side of the Wye Valley to make the most of elevated views over characteristic rolling Chiltern valleys. The layout reflects the high aspirations of its owner and developer Philip Rose, paralleling the scale and quality of the country estate that his close associate Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli developed at the same time at nearby Hughenden Manor. Notable surviving features include the pond, lawns and many fine mature late C19 and early C20 trees in the gardens and pleasure grounds, and the park and woodland associated with Rayners Avenue to the south, embellished by various ornate architectural features. The framework of the design survives largely intact, although the north end of the park is divided into various gardens and paddocks for scattered C20 houses. School buildings have overlain parts of the garden but the C19 layout and structures largely survive.

HISTORIC INTEREST

The landscape is of significance for the close associations with local solicitor and businessman Philip Rose, in particular for his close association with Benjamin Disraeli, and for the association with Queen Victoria when she passed through the estate on her way to visit Disraeli's grave at Hughenden in 1881. Rose was also a member of a prominent local family which was associated with High Wycombe. The understanding of the C19/early C20 development of the landscape is based on documentary evidence, site survey and surviving site evidence. The Rose photograph album is of particular importance in understanding the features that have since been lost or simplified.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Two farms, Rayners and Colehatch, occupied the site in Penn before Rayners house was built (Bryant, 1824). The land was purchased speculatively by solicitor Philip Rose (1816-1883) in 1845 as he knew that the Great Western Railway was due to expand into the area (Green). Rose was from a successful High Wycombe family, including mayors of Wycombe. He earned his fortune from the Great Western Railway as it expanded westwards. He organised a branch line to Wycombe from Maidenhead (built 1852-54) with a convenient station at Loudwater (opened 1854), towards which he constructed his own driveway (Rayner's Avenue). Rose became the squire of Tylers Green, employed many of the inhabitants, built St Margaret's Church and owned or built many other buildings, mostly concentrated on the south side of School Road and Church Road (West).

Rose was a devoted friend of the politician and latterly Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81, who had grown up at nearby Bradenham Manor), becoming his long-term 'confidential man of business' (*Dictionary of National Biography*), and managed his legal and financial affairs as well as acting as a national agent for the Conservative party. As Disraeli ascended, so did Rose. Rose and Disraeli bought their country estates at nearby Rayners and Hughenden within a year of each other (Disraeli bought the latter in 1847-48) and often exchanged visits. Rose negotiated the complex financing and purchase of the 750 acre Hughenden estate for Disraeli. While Rose built a house and laid out the extensive grounds from scratch, Disraeli remodelled and enlarged the modest house and small park that he had bought. When Disraeli was made Prime Minister in 1874 he immediately offered Rose a baronetcy. Rose was also the High Sheriff of the County of Buckinghamshire.

The Elizabethan-style house was built in 1847 (Green) and later extended by Rose. Queen Victoria travelled from Windsor Castle through Rayners on her way to Disraeli's grave at Hughenden 4 days after his funeral in 1881, commemorated by Rose in the grounds of Rayners with a tree and an obelisk. The small early park was considerably extended southwards in the late C19 alongside Rayner's Avenue which he had established off the London Road by 1875 (OS, 1875, 1897). The maturing landscape is shown in photographs in the Rose photograph album (SWOP RHW) dating from the 1860s, c.1880, 1882 (just before Rose died) and 1906-14. The grounds were kept to a high standard with complex horticultural displays and a variety of trees around the house including many conifers. The maturing park enjoyed dramatic long southerly views over the Wye valley.

Sir Philip died in 1883, two years after Disraeli, having sorted his papers. The estate was inherited by his son, the second Sir Philip, who further sorted Disraeli's papers. The Great Central Railway line to Wycombe was constructed across the south end of the estate near the London Road in the 1890s, including a large embankment and viaduct. The second Sir Philip died in 1919, and in 1920 the estate was sold for his 15

year old son, Humphrey, who had inherited it. As a result 543 acres was auctioned in 37 lots (sale particulars, 1920). The 36 acre northern half of the park (Lot 15) was sold separately to the 220 acre southern half (Lot 10), comprising Colehatch Farm, Loudwater Lodge and Plantations. Lot 6, amounting to 22 acres at the northern tip of the site that included the house (Rayners) and pleasure grounds, was bought by the London County Council for use as a school for deaf children. In the 1960s a large school extension was added at the rear of the house to the south-west. In 2001 the school became a non-maintained special school and closed in July 2015. The building and core of the landscape await re-use.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

The 68 ha. Rayners is located in south Buckinghamshire in a semi-rural area of the Chilterns in the village of Penn. The house stands close to the north of the site, some 2.5m east of the centre of High Wycombe and half a mile north of Penn church. Disraeli's former Hughenden Manor estate lies 3 miles to the north-west. The northern core of the site is bounded on the west by Hammersley Lane with a low brick and flint wall with round brick coping stones and to the east by School Road. The eastern roadside boundary wall, of brick and flint with piers and pyramidal caps, runs south between the former primary school to the north and the turning for Beacon Hill. The south-east boundary is two wooden fences with a shelterbelt between.

The north end of the site occupies a plateau, sloping to the south in a valley from 150m AOD at the site of the house to 60m at the south end of Rayners Avenue where it meets London Road. The site is on clay used for brick making and the hills are of chalk. A spring line runs north-east to south-west where the chalk meets the impervious clay and several ponds mark the site of former brick pits. These ponds provided the only drinking water for the area. Philip Rose had a 100m well dug to provide drinking water in times of drought, site unknown (Green). The house formerly had panoramic views to the south-west of High Wycombe and over the valley to the east, now obscured by trees. The park enjoyed views of the valley to the south, now partly obscured by trees.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Rayners is approached off School Road Penn, 100m north-east of the house. The brick gateway is set back off the road between curved brick walls. These are in turn flanked by the brick & flint boundary wall with flint caps. The brick piers formerly supported wrought iron gates which were removed in World War II (SWOP RHW 51909, 1906) and are decorated by large C19 Penn tiles. Adjacent to the north stands the red and yellow, brick and flint Rayner's Lodge (1847, listed Grade II). The lodge was possibly added during the extensions by Brandon, or else in 1874 to the designs of Arthur Vernon, who was also Disraeli's agent to the estate at Hughenden and designed the similar southern gate lodge at Loudwater From here the tarmac (formerly gravelled) main, north drive runs south-west through lawns towards the north end of the house. A small obelisk (listed Grade II) of Portland Stone and Peterhead granite stands on the west side of the drive c.50m from the gateway, erected by Philip Rose in 1881 to commemorate Queen Victoria's journey from Windsor Castle through Rayners on her way to Benjamin Disraeli's funeral at Hughenden.

The drive passes through an arch in the clock tower at the north end of the house to the main entrance on the north-east front. From here the drive curves east and north back to the main entrance, encircling a

lawn with a deep pond to the east of the clock tower. The lawn was in the early C20 laid out with a seasonal bedding display and central tazza (SWOP RHW 51909, 1906; RHW 51962, c.1914).

The long southerly approach, Rayners Avenue, enters off the London Road some 1.75 miles south of the house. It was built by Philip Rose to provide direct access to the railway station in Loudwater. The west side of the entrance is marked by the two-storey Loudwater or London Road Lodge, by local architect Arthur Vernon (1874), described as a virtuoso mid-Victorian display of yellow stock brick with a wealth of moulded brick and geometric ornament (Pevsner). Vernon was also agent for Disraeli's Hughenden Manor, where he designed a lodge. The former gateway was lost in the C20, but stretches of the flint and brick boundary wall survive next to the London Road (SWOP RHW 51102, 1906). From here the drive runs northwards initially for 100m flanked by C20 houses to cross beneath the railway line carried by a tall three-arched viaduct (1890s). The viaduct is built of ornamented red brick on the upper level, including bartizans on the parapet, and below this engineering bricks carrying the three high arches.

Beyond the viaduct the Avenue continues north through a band of mature trees and between further C20 developments, after 300m reaching the Picturesque Magpie Lodge standing above it to the west, and facing east over the valley. The three-storey Lodge, below a broad, sweeping roof, is tile hung with beamed timber decoration above a brick lowest storey. It marks the site of a former gateway (SWOP RHW 51101, c.1880) at the entrance to a straight section of the drive, now a track?, within the belt of trees, lined by an avenue of larches. 850m north of the Loudwater Lodge the drive reaches the parkland, from here running along the west side of the open park for a further 1,100m. The south drive now terminates some 400m south-west of the house, where it meets a spur leading west to Hammersley Lane. Formerly it continued northwards through the park to curve around the west and north sides of the service buildings west of the house, meeting the main, north drive at the water tower (OS, late C19, early C20). An early C20 view shows the drive kept to a high standard and flanked by closely spaced trees (SWOP RHW 51907, 1906).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Rayners house (listed Grade II) stands towards the south side of the pleasure grounds. It is a country house of about 1847, possibly designed by Edward Buckton Lamb, with additions built in the 1850s and from 1867-1868 by David Brandon with further additions dating from the 1960s. It is a large red-brick Elizabethan-style gabled house with black brick details in diaper pattern, and a slate roof. It was built in 1847 (architect unknown) and is one of the largest houses in Penn and Tylers Green. It is named after one of the two farms bought by Phillip Rose in 1845 as the basis for his new estate, and was built from bricks made on the site using clay dug from the pond below the clock tower (Green). It was extended for Rose over the next 20 years including work in 1868 by David Brandon, the architect of, among other buildings, St Margaret's church Tyler's Green in 1853 (Green), where Sir Philip Rose was buried, and Bucks Asylum 1850-53 (Pevsner). The Rose photograph album (SWOP RHW) shows a number of late C19/early C20 views of the house and associated service structures and yards.

The main entrance is on the north-east front, approached from the north through a large arch in the attached clock tower. A conservatory at the south-east end overlooks the pleasure grounds and boating pond. Many encaustic tiles decorate the conservatory and garden gateways. This type of tiling is a speciality of the area. Adjacent to the north-west is a large C19 coach house and stable block, converted for school use. To the west of the house is a range of late C19 brick service buildings formerly part of a

kitchen garden with, beyond this a cow byre. Additional buildings for school use including teacher accommodation and classrooms stand to the south-west (begun c.1959).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens and pleasure grounds surround the house to the east and south and are laid largely to informal lawn with scattered specimen trees. To the south-west lies a lawn and flower beds leading to a large brick greenhouse with vine and peach walk (glass gone, 2015). The greenhouse boiler room has ornate venting. This lawn was by the early C20 a tennis lawn separated from the house by a low balustrade (SWOP RHW 51863, c.1900).

Lawns lead south-east from the conservatory, planted with mature specimen trees including Oak, Cedar of Lebanon, Copper Beech, Lime, various fir trees and Sycamore. In the south-east corner is a large boating pond, now mostly filled in (2015) with a raised, central, treed island on which stands an ornate summer house with a single entrance facing south. The roof is ornate fish scale slate and the pillars at the door once decorated the main entrance to the house. The floor is parquet with a cedar lined internal roof structure.

By the 1860s the garden was noted as about a dozen acres in extent, 'beautifully diversified, and planted with the choicest shrubs and flowers.' (Sheahan, 1862) The Rose photograph album includes a number of views of the horticultural displays, including of the south drive near the water tower, a pergola, a dogs cemetery (SWOP RHW 51888, 1882) and a memorial tree planted for Disraeli in 1882 with an adjacent stone memorial plinth (SWOP RHW 51886-7, 1882).

PARK

The park extends south from the pleasure grounds for some 1.75m to the London Road in High Wycombe. It is laid to grass, planted with mature belts, woodland and scattered trees and divided into several sections, with belts of woodland flanking Rayner's Avenue at the southern end which are flanked by C20 housing. The north end adjacent to the pleasure ground contains several scattered C20 houses and gardens. By the mid-1870s (OS) a small park, densely planted with clumps and specimen trees, lay to the south and west of the pleasure grounds. Through this ran the short northerly stretch of Rayner's Avenue, which continued south through agricultural land flanked by a narrow belt of trees, passing Magpie Lodge on its way to the London Road lodge. By 1897 (OS) the park was greatly extended southwards along the east side of Rayner's Avenue and planted with many trees and belts.

The view south was an important feature noted by Sheahan (1862) who mentioned how 'the extensive park-like grounds adjoining afford the most delightful prospects, including Windsor Park and Castle, and extending to the chain of hills called the Hog's Back and to the Portsmouth Downs'. The view was recorded in the Rose photograph album, particularly a view overlooking the Loudwater valley showing the immature planting (SWOP RHW 52051, c.1880).

KITCHEN GARDENS

North of the house lie the remains of a rectangular kitchen garden facing south-east (OS C19). It is laid to lawn with apple trees, and enclosed by C19 ironwork supporting espalier fruit trees; ornate gothic brick arches around the boundary have encaustic tile decoration. Formerly it contained a row of glasshouses along the north-west wall (OS C19). Beyond this to the north-west are lawns enclosed by trees around the site boundary which formerly contained an orchard (OS C19). A further section of the kitchen garden lay

to the south-west, beyond the Rayner's Avenue approach, west of the house (OS 1897). This became a school courtyard and is now laid to lawn with paths. It contains the Bothy (c.1847, listed Grade II), of similar elaborate construction to the main lodge and including trellis arches, standing near to the greenhouse west of the house. The Bothy appears to date from the second or third period of expansion at Rayners and may be the work of David Brandon or A Vernon, both of whom made designs for Rose.

A detached 2-3 acre kitchen garden formerly lay to the west of Hammersley Lane, opposite Colehatch House. It was sold as Lot 7 in 1920 (sale particulars) and now contains a house and its garden.

REFERENCES

HMSO, *An Inventory of the Historic Monuments of Buckinghamshire* (1912), 266-69.
Green, Miles and Clark, Evelyn, *The Rose Family, Rayners and Tyler's Green* (1982).
Green, Miles, *Mansions and Mud House* (2007).
Millar, Mary S. 'Rose, Sir Philip, first baronet (1816–1883)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/41059>, accessed 25 Oct 2015]
Page, W. (ed.), *A History of the County of Buckingham*, vol. 3 (1925), 235-40 (*Victoria County History*).
Sheahan, J.J. *History & Topography of Buckinghamshire* (1862; reprint 1971), 929.

MAPS

Bryant, Map of Bucks, 1824
1863 St Margaret's District based on 1848 Wycombe Tithe Map
1920 Plan of the Rayners Estate in sales particulars (Knight, Frank & Rutley) (in Green, 20-21).

Ordinance Survey

25" scale 1st Edition s.1875, p.1880; 2nd edn s.1894, p.1899; 3rd edn 1925 (sh. XLVII.3)
6" scale Surveyed 1874 revised 1924, 1938 (sh. XLV11)
6" scale Surveyed 1956 Revised 1961 (sheet SU89S)
1:10,000 scale 1965 (sheet SU89SE) National Grid 1977
1:1,250 scale surveyed 1965 (sheet SU8693SE) 1979

ILLUSTRATIONS

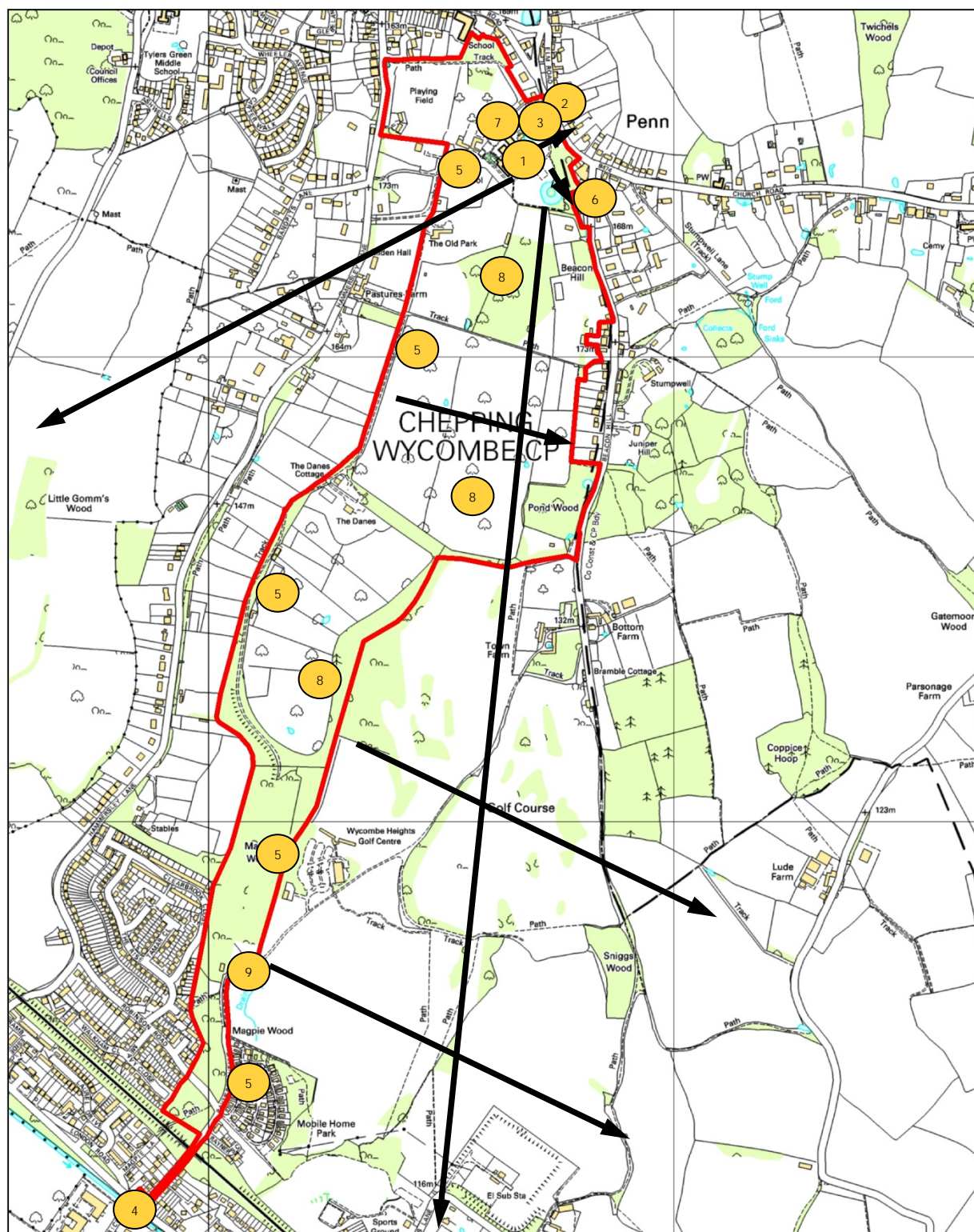
Rose Family Photograph Album, 1860s-1920s, accessed via Bucks County Council, Sharing Wycombe's Old Photographs (SWOP) web site <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/centre-for-buckinghamshire-studies/online-resources/swop/>
Pictures, 1906, by permission of Headmistress, Penn School, May 2015

Written C Balsdon & C Clark September 2015; edited 26 October 2015 SR

Amended January 2021 SR

Amendments reflect Historic England Listing status (August 2020) for the following structures, at Grade II:
Rayners House
Rayners Lodge
Gardeners' Bothy and Trellis Arches to the east
Obelisk Commemorating Benjamin Disraeli

KEY HISTORIC VIEWS & FEATURES



Rayners (Penn School): boundary of historic designed landscape interest

Produced by the County Archaeological Service
February 2016



Scale: 1:10,699 at A4



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Key to numbered features

1. Rayners house, clock tower and stables	2. North, Penn entrance
3. North Drive with obelisk adjacent	4. South, Loudwater Lodge by London Road
5. South Drive: Rayner's Avenue	6. Pleasure ground with boating pond and summerhouse on island
7. Former kitchen garden & orchard	8. Park
9. Magpie Lodge	

HISTORIC IMAGES



Lodge, Rayners Ave/London Rd



Rayners Ave 1906



Rayners Ave near Wycombe Golf Club



Skating on the boating pond, December 1906

KEY IMAGES, 2015



Rear View facing south



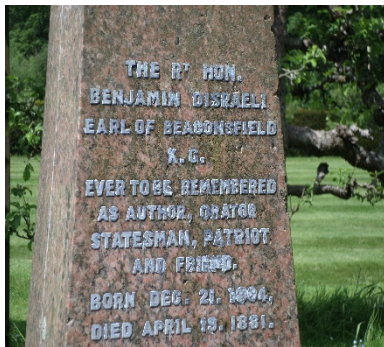
Clock Tower



Detail of tiling pattern



Obelisk



Visit by Queen Victoria



Encaustic Tiles



Espalier fruit trees



The Lodge by the main gate



Park Land



Ventilation Cover



The Bothy



Old orchard with ornate Arch



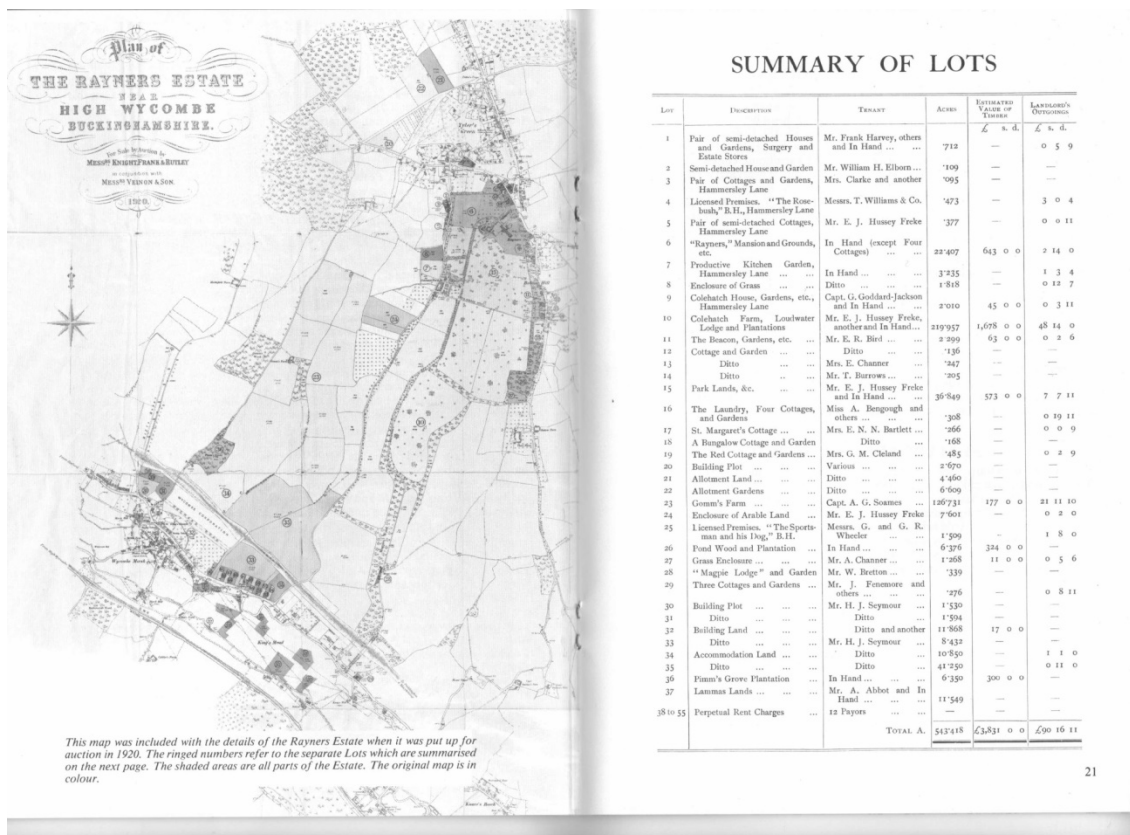
Vine & Peach Walk



Main Entrance onto Church Rd



Summer House on Boating Lake Island



Page taken from the auction catalogue of the sale of the Estate of Phillip Rose, Bart, 19 January 1920 by
Messrs Knight, Frank and Rutley