

Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



Denham Mount c.1810 (Lugar)

DENHAM MOUNT, DENHAM

February 2023

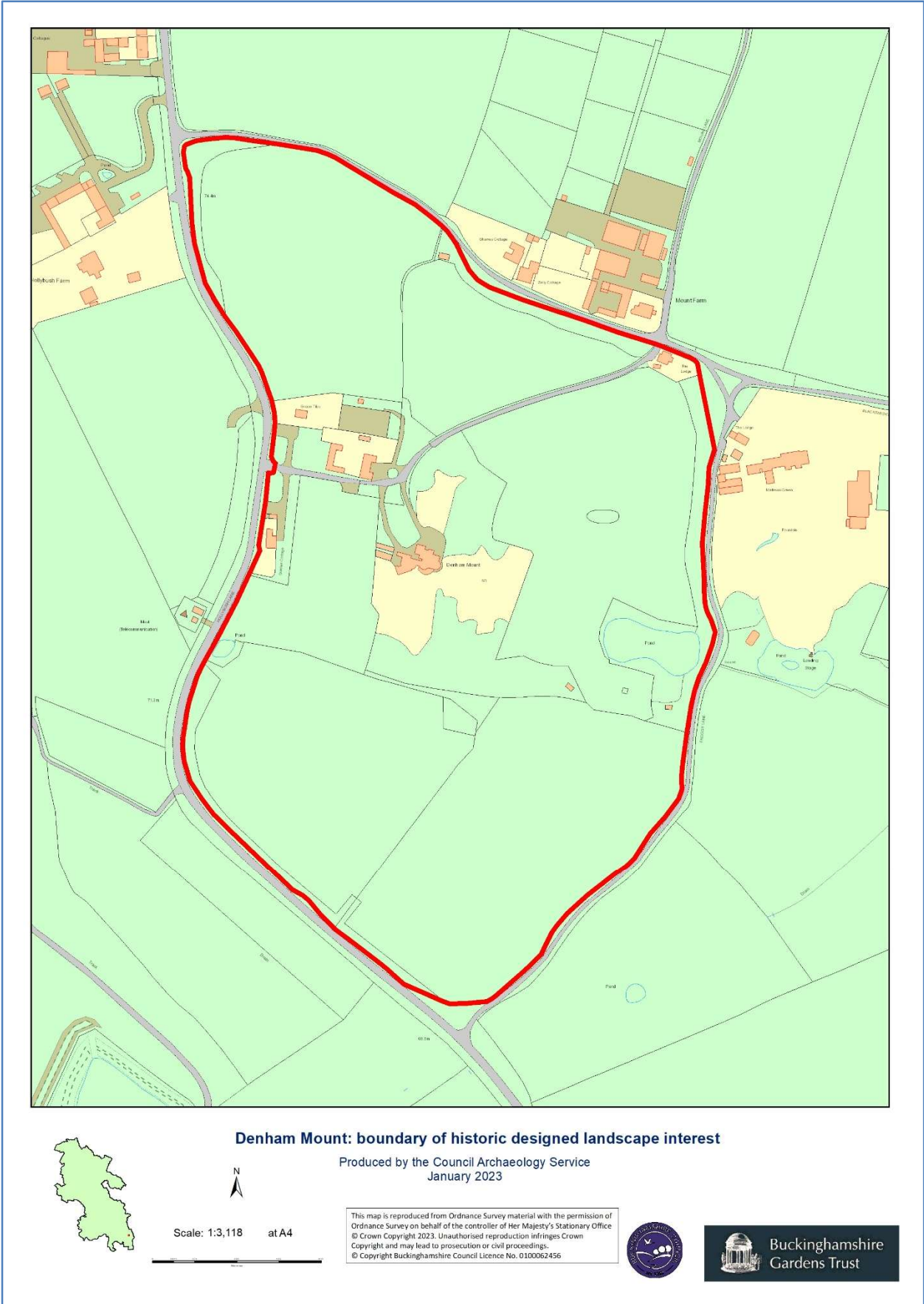


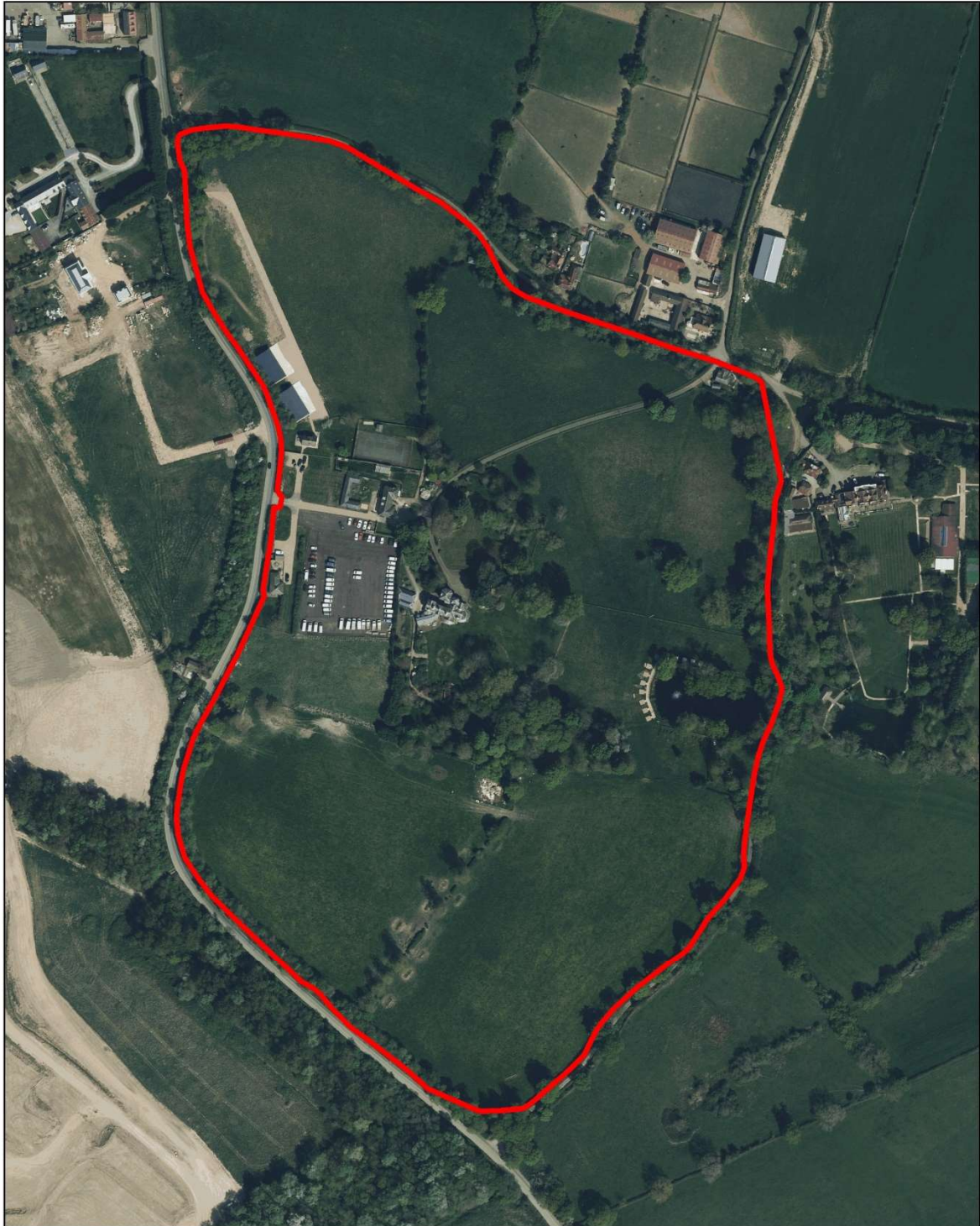
The Finnis Scott
Foundation

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Foundation



HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY





Scale: 1:3,118 at A4



Denham Mount: 2022 aerial photograph

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Produced by the Council Archaeology Service
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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 (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 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 (now 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/ 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 a significant grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust. 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	Denham Mount Denham HER 0535905000
FORMER DISTRICT:	SOUTH BUCKS	
PARISH:	DENHAM	
OS REF:	TQ 028865	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

The grounds of an early Regency-style Italianate country villa, built c.1800-10, with minor modifications in the later C19 and early C20. The 16 ha. site on the Chiltern dip slope is of a typical informal Regency-style layout focussed on the detached villa. The extent and survival of villa gardens is not well recorded and this is a good example at this scale, with an ensemble of typical landscape features focused on architect Robert Lugar's three main structures (lodge/gateway, stable block and villa) including the serpentine drive, park and pleasure grounds. The early layout survives largely intact except for the loss of the walled kitchen garden. It was published in Lugar's early pattern book *Plans and views of Ornamental Domestic Buildings* (1811, 2nd edn. 1823), with two plans and a view of the villa and its immediate surrounds, which has little altered since then.

At this time architects were pioneering the Italianate style for this type of modest residence for the growing middle classes, one of the most important being John Nash's Cronkhill, Shropshire (1802), said to be the earliest Italianate villa in England. It is unclear to what extent Lugar designed the grounds but they are clearly by an expert, taking advantage of the topography and other aspects of the locality to site the house to greatest advantage in its grounds. The house has particular similarities with Lugar's Brandon Cottage/Lodge in Warwickshire, also illustrated in his *Plans and Views* (1823 edn, pls. 14-16), another early work probably of c.1800-1810.

Archaeological Interest The archaeological interest and potential largely arises from evidence relating to previous agricultural and village uses, including those relating to the former Drovers Road that bisects the site. There is the potential for lost domestic buildings and garden features, which are likely to be largely of C19-C20 origin including the walled garden although this may have been so disturbed that little evidence survives.

Architectural Interest The site is focussed on Lugar's elegant villa (listed Grade II) freestanding on an eminence towards the west side of the site. It is a fine stucco-faced Regency-style villa of c.1800, present by 1810, designed to take full advantage of views over the grounds to the south and east from both storeys. Features include a porch tower addressing the approach, a curving verandah-ed wing overlooking the pleasure grounds, and a projecting corner with double-aspect rooms. It was slightly modified in the later C19 in similar style. Other estate structures are typical ancillary buildings in yellow stock brick including the lodge and gateway at the entrance, and the stable block, erected at the same time as the villa and probably by Lugar. Together these are of note as an ensemble whose consistency of style helps to unite the landscape design.

Artistic Interest The contemporary grounds of an early Regency-style villa of c.1800-10, early in the movement in which modest villa gardens became a major part of garden design. The typical informal layout of park and pleasure ground lawns focussed on the villa overlooking the sinuous lake below in the park. Key views are from the south and east fronts of the house, and from the drive, enclosed by the mature belt planting. The site is isolated by the Chiltern lanes, beyond which is an agricultural and wooded landscape punctuated by country villa landscapes.

Historic Interest: The documentary evidence for the development of the design is of considerable interest.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The history of Denham Mount appears to begin with the three buildings mapped by Rocque in 1760 in a rectangular enclosure accessed from Blacksmith's Lane on the north side of the identified site. Jefferys (1770) noted buildings here without indicating any owner. A house and garden called 'Wheelers' is shown in detail by a Parish Map dated 1783 (Denham parish 4/144049). It stood around 70m north of the current house judging by its location relative to bends in Hollybush Lane to the west. There was no indication of a lake. By the time of the draft survey for the Ordnance Survey, c.1810, the current plan of the house with its park is fully in evidence, comprising: the house, occupying a central position between the three lanes bounding the roughly quadrilateral landscape as designated in this report (it stands in the south west corner of a designed landscape occupying the north-east quarter of the land bounded by these lanes); perimeter planting to the south and east of the designed landscape; a lodge at the north-east corner of the designated area; an approach road from this lodge curving towards the house from the north; a lake extending eastwards from the house towards the east boundary; a detached building to the north west of the house (presumably the former stables); and a rectangular walled enclosure to the west of the house (this is the only original feature that has not survived). The house was designed by Robert Lugar (1773-1855) for Nathaniel Snell. Bryant (1824) also depicts the house and grounds in this completed state.

ROBERT LUGAR (1773-1855)

Lugar was a prolific architect of houses with a particular concentration of finished commissions in mid-Wales (Scourfield and Haslam) and Scotland but nothing more in Buckinghamshire (Pevsner and Williamson). He was born in Colchester and became County Surveyor of Essex in 1816. His works are generally either 'cottage orné' style or in castellated Gothic or Tudor style: he is credited with introducing the asymmetrical castellated style to Scotland with two castles in Dunbartonshire (<http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk>). His influential publications include:

Architectural Sketches for Cottages, Rural Dwellings, and Villas (1805, reprinted 1815 and 1822)

The Gentleman's Architect (1807)

Designs for Farm House and Yards

Plans and views executed in England and Scotland in the Castellated and other styles (1811: 2nd edn 1823)

Villa Architecture, a Collection of Views, with Plans of Buildings, executed in England, Scotland etc (1828)

Plans and views of Ornamental Domestic Buildings (1836) which includes plans and a view of Denham Mount

The design of Denham Mount is very similar to that of Yaxham Rectory (Norfolk) and Ffrwdgrech 1828 (Llanfaes, Powys).

By 1843 (Sale particulars for auction on 20 May 1843), the house stood in the centre of an estate of 40 acres and 16 perches (16.23 ha.) of 'Chiefly Park-like Meadow, Arable and Wood Lands' and including: a farm yard; a grapery and a conservatory; an ornamental pavilion and 'a fine piece of water'. The house had been extended by the addition of an extension to the east of the entrance 'tower' (Denham Tithe Map 1843). The fields at the north-east extremity had names commemorating the name Wheelers. The map shows the pleasure grounds and the perimeter planting to south, east and north. A small building at the south-east corner of the park and south of the lake is presumably the ornamental pavilion referred to in the 1834 sale.

By 1875 (OS) the pleasure grounds extended north and south from the entrance front. Both pleasure grounds were crossed by several parallel paths. The park to the north and east was dotted with trees with perimeter planting to the north, east and south. The drive from the north-east corner of the park entered the pleasure grounds to the north of the house through a screen of trees and approached the house between shrubby beds, passing the symmetrical stable block façade with two flanking projections. A path from the south end of the pleasure grounds

looped within the perimeter planting around a kidney-shaped lake at the south-east corner of the park (with a short looped detour to a small structure – probably the pavilion) and continued within the east perimeter up to the lodge beside Froggy Lane.

The stables c.1875 formed three sides around a square yard, until c1979 (AP) with only a short stub for the southern wing. South of the stables and west of the house the rectangular walled garden was divided irregularly into rectangles with a building straddling its northern boundary, south of the stables. Further small detached buildings stood to the west of the stables and of the walled garden on Hollybush Lane on the west boundary. The fields outside the designed park were subdivided and with hedgerow trees supplemented with perimeter planting at their corners to north-west and south-east. That at the north-west corner (the junction of Hollybush and Blacksmiths Lanes) extended south along the east side of Hollybush Lane. The two small ponds lay on the east side of Hollybush Lane south of the detached building noted above, and in the centre of the park equidistant between the drive and the kidney-shaped lake.

By 1923 (OS) the pleasure ground had been extended east into the park towards the large lake. Some seven years later, a curved glazed extension had been added to the south-west corner of the house, overlooking the south garden, which by this time was occupied by a rose garden with hooped trellises. A timber bell-cote had been added to the roof (photo in heritage statement with Application PL/21/3458/FA). In 1945 the house was used for filming Noël Coward's 'Blithe Spirit' starring Rex Harrison and Kay Hammond, directed by David Lean ([https://www.thedecamillo.com/house/denham-mount-and Gritten](https://www.thedecamillo.com/house/denham-mount-and-Gritten)). The kitchen garden and orchards were in full use (OS).

By 1951 (aerial photograph) looping paths remained in the extended pleasure ground east of the house and also south of the house around a decorative arrangement of individual beds. The house now known as 'Green Tiles' was present by 1975 (OS) slightly north of the location of the detached building west of the stables noted above in 1875. This may indicate a date for the founding of the 'Green Tiles Garden Centre' by the kitchen garden. The stables had lost its northern wing and had been reduced to two separate buildings to east and west. A tennis court lay north of the stables (1989 AP). By 1999 (AP) the south garden had been redesigned with a central feature and a path leading south away from the house.

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2009 for the replacement of the rear extension (Apps 09/00195/FUL and 09/00185/LBC). In 2014 permission was granted to fell several trees on the boundary to Froggy Lane in part because of waterlogging by the lake. The garden centre was cleared by 2019 and access from Hollybush Lane to most of the detached buildings north-west of the house had been rationalised in a comprehensive scheme (2019 AP). The house was on the market in 2020 (*Country Life* February 11) with 16ha. Denham Mount was apparently sold in October 2020 (<https://www.thedecamillo.com/house/denham-mount>). An application was submitted in September 2021 for change of use to hotel (seven rooms in the house and nine more in the various detached buildings: App PL/21/3458/FA). The application site included all the land within the three lanes. This application was withdrawn in January 2022.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING, VIEWS

The 16 ha. site occupies higher ground west of the valley of the River Colne close to its confluence with the River Misbourne, 4km (2.5 miles) north-west of Uxbridge and 2km (1.25 miles) west-south-west of Denham village. The centre of the M40 and the M25 interchange is 1km (1100 yards) to the south-west. Iwer Village is 5.5 km (3.4 miles)

south of the house. The whole site is a rough quadrilateral bounded by three lanes: Hollybush Lane (the principal thoroughfare) to south and west; Blacksmith's Lane to the north; and Froggy Lane to the east. The site is well shielded by historic and modern perimeter planting from these lanes but the house appears in incidental views from Hollybush Lane south of 'Garden Cottage' and from the east from Froggy Lane.

Within the site, the principal views are between the semi-circular bay and verandah of the original dining room, and the park to the east particularly the lake below. A key vista of the park opens on entering past the lodge with a key view from the semi-circular bay in the house, north-east across the park. There are no views beyond the site.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The historic and current principal approach to the house is from the north-east, through decorative iron gates at the north-east corner of the original landscaped park, 215m north-east of the house. The drive enters between plain red brick gate piers with the house name incised on the fronts of the cap stones and surmounted by stone ball finials (listed Grade II) and past the lodge (also listed Grade II) of yellow London stock brick, standing inside and to the east of the entrance gates. It is of early C19 date (list description) and was built by 1810 (OSD) and is likely to be by Lugar as well as the house. The plain, single storey house has an L- plan layout under a slate roof with a combination of plain and hipped gables.

The approach proceeds west-south-west across the park, curving south towards the house. It originally entered the pleasure grounds 70m north of the house and immediately east of the former stables and which it served. It now runs slightly further east and away from the converted stables and proceed through lawns to terminate in a curved tarmac turning area immediately in front of the entrance porch in the north elevation of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Denham Mount (listed Grade II) is an early C19, two-storey villa in Italianate style by Robert Lugar, erected by 1810 (OSD). It stands near the south-west corner of the original contemporary designed landscape but is the centre of the historic site as identified here.

The most distinctive and characteristic features are: walls all in white stucco; square corners chamfered or 'canted'; hipped slate roofs with some gables; and deep eaves supported by paired brackets. Denham Mount has its principal entrance through a round arched porch set in a projecting 'tower' with its own pyramidal roof against its north elevation. A later extension (by 1843) west of the porch matches these design features exactly though it reduces the impact of the original entrance with its modest 'tower'. The east elevation overlooks the depression containing the lake in the park. It is enlivened by a large semi-circular bay with an iron verandah. The original layout was divided into two distinct sections: the principal (east) portion, entered through the principal porch and hall on the north side; containing originally on the ground floor a dining room with the semi-circular bay looking east, a library next to the porch and a drawing room overlooking the formal garden on the south side reached through the house's main stair. The main bedrooms were over these: the principal bedroom being over the dining room and having the semi-circular bay. The other portion ran westwards and contained the kitchen, stores, a servants' hall, bedrooms and offices. This service wing has been enlarged with an additional floor compared to the view in Lugar's 1836 book (<https://www.historyarchive.org/images>).

Mount Cottage (listed Grade II) comprises the east part of the former stables, 70m north-west of the house originally adjacent to the main approach. It is also early C19 (list description) and present by 1810 (OSD), so likely to be part of the Lugar ensemble. It is of one-and-a-half storeys, of stock brick under a hipped slate roof in similar style to the

lodge. The east elevation facing the approach has two projecting gables and large 'cart shed' openings. The rear roofs have several prominent C20 dormers from the modern residential conversions.

Garden Cottage is not evident by 1810 (OSD) but was built by 1875 (OS). It is a plain rectangular single-storey house in stock brick under a pyramidal slate roof with a central stack. It stands on the Hollybush Lane frontage, 105m west of the house. The front door in the centre of its south elevation is flanked by two canted bays slate roofs. It matches the other ancillary buildings in the identified site.

Green Tiles may be a replacement possibly from the mid-1970s for an earlier detached building located a little further south. It is a simple one-and-a-half storey rectangular house with rendered walls and a pitched tiled roof with a central chimney and a large dormer on its northern elevation.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The immediate surroundings of the villa as extended east by the early C20 consist of lawns fringed with shrub planting to the north, east and south of the house. The lawn to the south is enlivened with a circular arrangement of beds of roses around a sundial, being the latest of a number of different decorative planting schemes in this location (Heritage Statement July 2021 for hotel application App PL/21/3458/FA)

PARK

The original area of park occupies the north-east quarter of the triangular site within the three lanes. It comprises pasture with open 'rides' bordered by groups of mature trees with some scattered specimens trees. The lake in the depression to the east is divided from the house by a rustic fence. Modern glazed 'glamping' pods are sited within the mature planting on the north side and on the west side of the lake. A vaguely cubical classical temple ornament, possibly made of dark cream plastic, has been recently sited on the south-east side of the lake overlooking it.

The outlying fields to the south-east, south-west and north-west are more open but that to the south-east is, like the park, fringed with tall mature trees. The others offer glimpses of the main house from Hollybush Lane. The boundaries are treated in various ways with much use of barbed wire on posts sometimes set well inside the verges of the lanes which are often planted, providing a strong green perimeter. The north boundary to Blacksmiths Lane is mainly lined by a fence of timber panels. The park to the north-west contains two large modern buildings clad in timber, close to the frontage with Hollybush Lane but well-screened from it, reached via a modern drive through black sheet metal gates near the north-west corner.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The kitchen garden was rectangular measuring 70m N/S by 60m E/W, standing west of the service wing of the house. By 1875 (OS) it was divided into 5 unequal sections by a grid of straight paths with a small building straddling the centre of the northern wall. Mid-late C20 aerial photographs suggest that there was a glasshouse against the length of its northern wall which survived at least until 2003. It and the walled enclosure have gone since the site, used by the Green Tiles Garden Centre from the mid-1970s, closed, in turn to be cleared and replaced by a large tarmac apron.

REFERENCES

Lugar R., *Plans and views of Ornamental Domestic Buildings* (1811, 2nd edn. 1836)

Ed. Gritten D, *Halliwells Film Guide 2008* (2007) p.136

Pevsner N. and Williamson E., *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (1994) p.274

Scourfield R. and Haslam R., *The Buildings of Wales: Powys* (2013) p.509

Maps

1760 Rocque map of Buckinghamshire

1770 Jefferys map of Buckinghamshire

1784 'A Map of the Parish of Denham with lands adjoining in the Parishes of Iwer and Langley'

1825 Bryant map of Buckinghamshire

1843 Tithe Map (County Archive: Tithe1843)

Ordnance Survey

c.1810 OS surveyor's draft 2-inch drawing

First Edn 6 inch: surveyed 1875, published 1883

First Edn 25 inch: c1877

Photographs

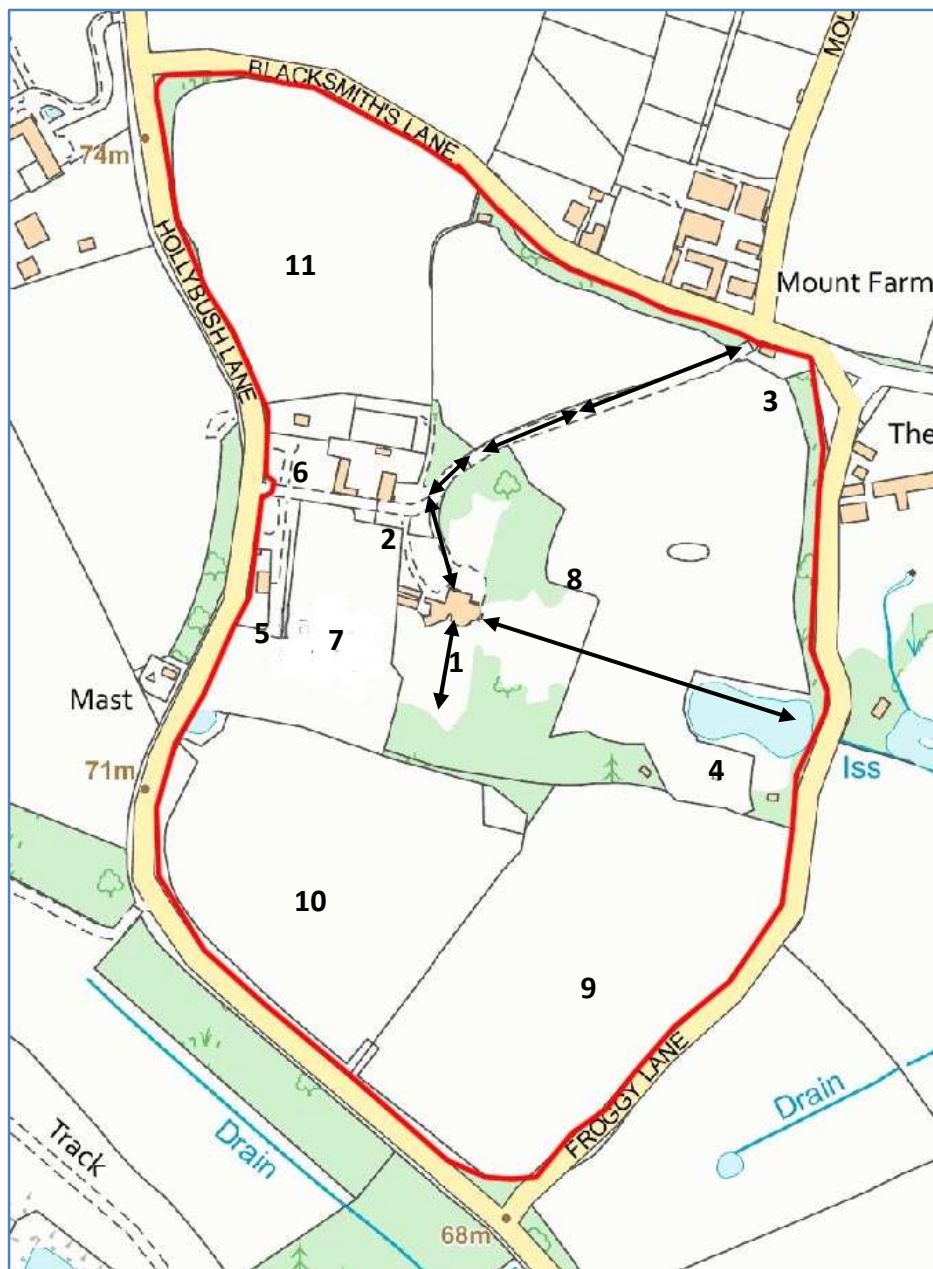
Aerial photographs of 1951, 74, 89, 2003, 2019

GH, edited SR January 2023

KEY HISTORIC FEATURES AND VIEWS

Key to numbered features. Views marked by arrows.

1 Denham Mount	7 Tarmac apron (site of former kitchen garden)
2 Mount Cottage (former stables)	8 Park
3 Lodge and principal entrance	9 SE Outlying park
4 Pond	10 SW Outlying park
5 Garden Cottage	11 NW Outlying park
6 Green Tiles	



CURRENT IMAGES



Denham Mount: House looking W from Froggy Lane over the lake (left) and looking NE from Hollybush Lane (right).



View along Blacksmith Lane approaching the principal entrance from W (left) and the listed gates and lodge on Blacksmith Lane from N (right)



Garden Cottage and Hollybush Lane looking N (left), and (right) the listed stables (centre) with new stables, and behind it, the roof of Green Tiles all looking S



SE outlying park from the SE (left) and the SW outlying park looking N towards the house and the tarmac apron on the site of the former garden centre (right)



Gates from Hollybush Lane: the entrance to the tarmac apron and to the properties to the W of the house (left) and the entrance to the NW outlying park (right)