



Planning, Transport
and Environment

INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title A12 Wickham market - Saxmundham Improvement	Details Brief historical Assessment
Road Number A12	Date
Contractor	
County Suffolk	
OS Reference	
Single sided ✓ Double sided A3 1 Colour 0	

A12 WICKHAM MARKET TO SAXMUNDHAM IMPROVEMENT, SUFFOLK

BRIEF HISTORICAL ASSESSMENT OF FOXBURROW WOOD AND PALANT'S GROVE, EAST OF FARNHAM HALL

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A historical assessment of two areas of woodland to the east of Farnham Hall, named Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove, was carried out on 16-17 November 1994 by Anthony Walker and Partners. This work, which was commissioned by the Highways Agency, was to attempt to define the ecological and/or historic interest of the woodland.
- 1.2 The work comprised an initial search through the published documentary and cartographic evidence available at the Ipswich branch of the Suffolk County Record Office (SRO), and a site inspection.

2 Historical background

- 2.1 There is little published historical material on Farnham and its immediate area. A brief account of the manorial history and landownership is, however, contained in Copinger (Copinger, W A 1910 The Manors of Suffolk volume 3, 127-130) while other more general county works provide some background information (eg. Dymond, D & Martin, E (eds) 1988 An Historical Atlas of Suffolk; Dymond, D & Northeast, P 1985 A History of Suffolk).
- 2.2 In 1086 the present parish of Farnham was divided between two manors, Farnham and Claydon. The Domesday Book records that the manor of Farnham had previously been held by Edric of Laxfield and was now held by Robert Malet. The manor is described as comprising 1 carucate of land, 10 acres of meadow, a ploughteam held in demesne and a mill, all valued at 20 shillings.
- 2.3 Robert Malet was one of the largest Norman magnates in Suffolk, holding some 220 manors centred on the castle and borough of Eye. In 1110, his son Robert plotted against the King and his lands were taken into royal ownership; the manor of Farnham was subsequently given to Sir Robert de Sankville or Sackville as part of the Honor of Eye. The manor passed to William de Glanville by marriage and in 1171 Ralph de Glanville gave it to the newly founded Augustinian Priory at Butley, east of Orford. It remained in monastic hands throughout the medieval period until the suppression in 1513, after which it was owned by Sir John Glemham. In the late 17th century the manor passed from the Glemham family to Sir Dudley North and his descendants.
- 2.4 The village of Farnham was always small. It has its origins before the 11th century, when it is named as a hamlet in 1086. In 1428 it is recorded as comprising less than 10 households while in 1674 the Hearth Tax notes that, although this had risen to some 30, over half were classified as poor. The present Farnham Hall dates to 1602.

3 Documentary and cartographic research

- 3.1 As noted above, the manor of Farnham is poorly documented in terms of readily available published material, although it is possible, and even likely, that there are specific references to the manor and the various land parcels within it in unpublished and untranslated medieval documents, such as court rolls held either locally and nationally.
- 3.2 The Domesday survey generally refers to woodland when describing the components of a manor. However, in Suffolk, woodland is listed in terms of the number of pigs that were supposed to fatten on their acorns; none are listed for Farnham. Rackham has undertaken a limited assessment of the medieval woods in Suffolk and concludes that only some 9% of the county was woodland in the 11th century. Although his list is not exhaustive, he suggests that there is no woodland of medieval origin in Farnham (Dymond, D & Northeast, P 1985 (eds) An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, 50-51).
- 3.3 In the absence of any readily available documentary material, evidence for the presence of woodland within the parish has to come from cartographic sources. From these, a simple landscape regression analysis can be compiled (see figure 1). The arrow at the north-west corner of Foxburrow Wood provides a fixed reference point for each plan.
- 3.4 The earliest map which is at a scale appropriate to identify isolated areas of woodland is that printed by Hodkinson in 1783 (SRO S912). This shows Foxburrow Wood (not named) as an approximately square block of woodland divided by a straight sections of road leading from Farnham Hall. Although the scale of the map makes it difficult to be absolutely certain, it is assumed from adjacent road junctions and other topographical features that the northwest-southeast section of the road passing through the wood is that which survives today. A second road is depicted to run north-south on the east side of Foxburrow Wood. A building, later named as "Walk Barn" on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale map (Pathfinder sheet 986), is also shown, adjacent to the south-east corner of the wood. An area of woodland corresponding to Palant's Grove is not shown, neither is the present north-south road to the east of Palant's Grove which currently runs from Burnt House Farm to Manor Farm; the road that is depicted follows the present north-south footpath to the east of the railway line. A similar arrangement of roads and woodlands is shown on an Ordnance Survey map of 1798 (SRO MR28).
- 3.5 An estate map of 1803 titled "A view of the parish of Farnham in Plomesgate Hundred, Suffolk..." (SRO HA408/B/74) shows "Foxburrow Wood" on both sides of the road. However, it is clear that the southern part of the wood has been reduced in size by approximately one-half, the south-east corner of the wood now joins the road at the point at which it turns to the south, to the north of "Walk Barn". The north-south road no longer continues to the north. "Pallants Grove" is also shown to the east; its boundaries correspond to the present woodland although it extends further eastwards as far as the present road and it is physically separated from

Foxburrow Wood by the line of the former road. An isolated rectangular house within an enclosure is shown to the east of Pallants Grove; this corresponds to a building known as Monks Valley. The map indicates that this house belongs to John Pallant and it is likely that he is the originator of Pallants (now Palant's) Grove. The fields to the south of Palant's Grove are named as "old enclosed ground".

- 3.6 The Ordnance Survey 1" map of 1837 (sheet 50SE) depicts Foxburrow Wood (again not named) with the road passing through its centre. The southern boundary of the wood is shown as stepped with an area marked as "Sand Pits" encroaching on the south-west corner. No north-south road at the east end of Foxburrow Wood is depicted. Palant's Grove is shown as an unnamed area of woodland to the east with its area being the same as in 1803. Two parallel north-south roads are now shown, one corresponding to the earlier road to the east of the railway line and now named as "Snuff Lane", and one at the east end of Palant's Grove, corresponding to the existing road.
- 3.7 The 1841 tithe map, titled "Plan of the parish of Farnham, Suffolk, 1841" (SCR P461/95) depicts a similar arrangement, although at a larger scale. The wood to the north of the road is named simply as "Grove" while the triangular area to the south is "Foxburrow". Palant's Grove is still named as "Pallants Grove" and all the woodland is owned by William Long, who also owned but did not occupy Farnham Hall at this time. It is interesting to note that, although owned by William Long, Pallants Grove does not lie within the Farnham Hall estate.
- 3.8 The Ordnance Survey 6" map of 1883 (sheet 59NE) shows that the woodland to the south of the road from Farnham Hall has now disappeared although two "Old Sand Pits" and the southern field boundary remain. The name "Foxburrow Wood" now applies only to the remaining northern section of woodland and a track is shown running east-west through it. The former north-south road running between Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove is also shown as a footpath. Otherwise, all is as shown on the 1841 tithe map, although the house occupied by John Pallant is now named as "Monkey's Hole".

4 Field evidence

- 4.1 A site inspection of the two areas of woodland was carried out on 17 November 1994 during light and sunny conditions. In places, the two areas of woodland were heavily vegetated with bracken and other undergrowth which made the identification of any internal earthwork features impossible.

Foxburrow Wood

- 4.2 The Detailed Ecological Assessment Report (Anthony Walker and Partners 1992 A12 Wickham Market to Saxmundham Improvement: Detailed Ecological Assessment: Preferred Route, 38) notes that a considerable number of canopy trees have been lost in Foxburrow Wood through recent storms. The wood is dominated by ash, oak, hornbeam and beech, with an

understorey of hazel, elder, field maple and silver birch. The ground flora includes ramsons, bluebell, dogs mercury, ground ivy, early purple orchid, lesser celandine, bramble, nettle and red campion. Replanting has been undertaken in open areas with introduced species such as sycamore and horse chestnut. The wood is classified in the Nature Conservancy Council's provisional list for Suffolk as being ancient.

- 4.3 The site visit showed that Foxburrow Wood is surrounded by an earthwork bank with an external ditch of varying dimensions. Along its southern boundary, adjacent to the track from Farnham Hall, the bank is between 0.25-0.50m high with an external ditch of similar dimensions, although in places this has silted up. A number of mature oak trees and oak stumps stand on the top or sides of the bank. The bank is more substantial on the east side of the wood, with a well developed but rounded profile up to 1m high and 1m wide. On the north and west sides the bank and ditch are still visible although it has been disturbed and possibly accentuated by modern dredging to facilitate drainage. The north side contains a large pollarded oak, positioned at the angle of the boundary (see figure 1).
- 4.4 There were no internal features visible in Foxburrow Wood apart from an apparently modern rectangular pit approximately 7m by 4m in a central eastern location; this was filled with modern debris and rubbish. There were also no obvious remains associated with the former track and footpath shown on the historic maps as passing through this part of the wood. However, given the presence of bracken and other vegetation, the presence of other internal features cannot be discounted.

Palant's Grove

- 4.5 The Detailed Ecological Assessment Report (Anthony Walker and Partners 1992 A12 Wickham Market to Saxmundham Improvement: Detailed Ecological Assessment: Preferred Route, 38) notes that Palant's Grove is of poor structure, with much dead and fallen timber. However, the ground flora is of good quality and includes dogs mercury, bluebell, red campion, hazel, ash, elm, oak, nettle, ground ivy, elder, horse chestnut, lesser celandine, larch, cuckoo pint, blackthorn, field maple and ramsons.
- 4.6 As with Foxburrow Wood, Palant's Grove is also surrounded by a bank and ditch. Significantly, a bank approximately 0.5m high curves around the western tongue of the wood, confirming the cartographic evidence that Palant's Grove and Foxburrow Wood are two separate areas of woodland. The intervening ground, which was formerly a track in the late 18th century, remains as a grass footpath, although a slight earthwork bank across the path remains from a former field boundary.
- 4.7 The enclosing bank is best preserved on the southern side of the western tongue. This is 1m high and 2m wide and lies parallel to but inside the present field boundary. Once again, there is an external ditch and a number of oaks on the top and sides of the bank. The bank and ditch continue along the south side, running into the existing east-west field boundary which originally formed part of the wood. The bank and ditch is not so

prominent on the north side of the wood; in places it has been disturbed by a modern ditch while in others it has been ploughed out and incorporated into the adjacent fields.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The cartographic research suggests that Foxburrow Wood and Palant's Grove were always two separate areas of woodland divided by a north-south track and later footpath. Foxburrow Wood was in existence by 1783 but Palant's Grove is first shown on a map of 1803, possibly associated with a landholding to the east occupied by John Pallant. Both areas of woodland were originally larger; Foxburrow Wood extended for some distance to the south of the track from Farnham Hall and Palant's Grove extended to the east to the line of the present north-south road.
- 5.2 The field evidence broadly confirms the cartographic evidence. The curving boundary bank in the western tongue of Palant's Grove confirms that the two areas of woodland were always physically separate. Both woods are surrounded by boundary banks and ditches, although in places it has been disturbed by modern intervention. Well preserved sections of both earthworks remain and it appears that that surrounding Foxburrow Wood has a more rounded profile, suggesting, although not proving, an earlier date relative to the Palant's Grove bank. However, the fact that neither boundary bank is particularly massive implies that they are of fairly recent creation.
- 5.3 The question of whether Foxburrow Wood can be classified as "ancient", defined by the Nature Conservancy Council as having been in existence before 1600 and representing areas of former medieval wildwood, is problematic and almost impossible to prove without further detailed research to identify specific documentary references which may or may not exist. Rackham suggests that the Oxlip (*Primula elatior*) occurs in almost every wood in Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex known on documentary or topographical grounds to be ancient (Rackham O, 1983 Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape, 124-125) and its absence in Foxburrow Wood may be significant.
- 5.4 The boundaries of the original extent of Foxburrow Wood, as shown on the 1793 map, appear to be regular and directly aligned with a section of track leading from Farnham Hall. The course of the track from Farnham church to beyond Walk Barn is actually made up of several wide and straight sections. This all suggests that this particular area of landscape was laid out at one point in time, rather than being the result of gradual landscape development over centuries when more curvilinear alignments and boundaries would be expected to survive. Based on current research, the evidence points to an enclosure landscape, brought about by the regularisation of earlier land holdings into a more uniform and rectangular field pattern characterised by straight boundaries. Many new wide and straight roads were created and areas of woodland planted as part of this process.

- 5.5 There are, however, no records of enclosure in Farnham, implying that this was a piecemeal process undertaken by agreement rather than deliberate Act of Parliament. This process may have taken place at any time during the 16th or 17th centuries, but is unlikely to have occurred while the manor was in monastic ownership (ie. pre 1513); the map of 1803 notes the fields to the south of Palant's Grove as being "old enclosed ground".
- 5.6 In conclusion, therefore, it is only possible to say that, while Palant's Grove has its origins at the end of the 18th century, Foxburrow Wood was already in existence at that time. The cartographic evidence shows that the track from Farnham Hall was an integral part of the wood, originally passing through its centre, and it is likely that both originated at the time of enclosure, possibly in the late 16th or 17th centuries. This may suggest that the wood is ancient (ie. pre 1600) but it is unlikely, on the basis of the records consulted as part of this survey, to represent an area of earlier, medieval, woodland.

