

Oversley Castle, Alcester, Warwickshire

Heritage Asset Assessment 2013



understanding heritage matters

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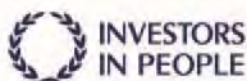
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Summary

Oversley Castle is a landmark edifice panoramically endowed above the 100m contour and aside the River Arrow. Its prospect has been enjoyed by the denizens of several parishes and quite possibly some midland counties, for generations.

The present, rather ineloquent, form of the house is largely attributable to a rebuild in 1932 using the skeleton of a 17th farmhouse castellated in the 19th century, equivocally at the behest of the Marquess of Hertford. The castle formerly included an impressive octagonal tower, which, upon notice of its imminent demolition at the end of the 19th century, provoked an unsuccessful local petition for its preservation.

The house quite possibly developed from a 17th century park keepers lodge or tower, first alluded to by the Throckmorton's steward, one Richard Kempson, who wrote a letter from Oversley in 1652. Within the house there are considerable vestigial elements of 17th and 18th century structure. It will require keyhole archaeological and architectural survey to reconcile this regionally important contention of its origin. The proposed subdivision of this building, referencing the distinct phases of its construction, presents an unparalleled opportunity to carry out the necessary recording and analysis to better understand its origins and development. Revitalising the house by increasing the numbers on site also increases the appreciation of the related listed buildings and their setting. Reintroducing the second tower would reclaim the former vista and skyline from Ragley Hall and revert the deperdition of its prospect from the immediate hinterland.

During the 17th century the 'Lodge' was at the centre of an estate farm of which the magnificent, yet precarious, Grade II Listed timber-framed barn remains the architectural crutch of the complex. The surviving ensemble are all of different dates, status, and state of preservation, but all are redundant, awaiting conversion to domestic accommodation. Some are statutorily listed but with disuse they lack a farming route to assured survival. They all enjoy an exceptional and arresting setting with a commanding prospect over the landscape to the west and though visible from miles around, they are currently inaccessible. Conversion will present recording-opportunities to learn more about the structures and the origins and development of the farmyard, while a new lease of life to the redundant buildings as homes will enhance visiting-public appreciation of what has already become an unwelcome wasting resource.

In the gardens, a steel-framed greenhouse and pool-house annexe share a common maker and mode of construction dated to 1932. They appertain to the estate as an agricultural/horticultural employer and supplier and a place of society recreation in the pre-Second World War years. Despite being without intrinsic architectural merit, they are prominent in the landscape and their loss would represent a denudation of the historic ensemble. Their modular construction makes carefully-selected salvage, conservation, and targeted re-siting possible.

The proposed development is designed to infuse a significant historic complex with a new vibrancy and footfall, without loss of integrity or heritage asset. This will be enhanced by the creation of a new public circumnavigatory footpath for the benefit of local communities, walkers, and the public good.

1 Introduction

1.1 Plans are currently being advanced to develop Oversley Castle in Warwickshire, an erstwhile eye-catcher of some local repute and in need of rejuvenation. Despite the grandiloquent appellation, the buildings were never defensive and the extant aggregation is a miscellany of architectural forms, albeit some of importance and including some Listed Grade II. Formerly a working farm, the castle in modern times has proven an unviable business and its upkeep has required the piecemeal divestment of the agricultural estate.

1.2 The heyday of the agrarian elements of the complex was the latter part of the 19th century; thereafter the buildings, if not already redundant, were incapable of sustaining modern farming needs. This is most evident in the absence of modern agricultural buildings and services on the site, with the core of the agricultural unit having been off-site for many years. The estate has changed hands many times in the last 100 years, with most of the recent owners by and large having been gentleman farmers with substantial additional incomes and hence little requirement to make a sustainable living.

1.3 The domestic heart of the complex reached its zenith in the 1930s, when the Art Deco inspired styling was introduced to what was a third home for a successful grocer from Brixton.

1.4 A bold and ambitious plan is required to extend the lease of life to what is a miscellany of arresting, but neglected buildings, preserving and enhancing all that is significant and utilising the opportunity of development to explore and research the historic fabric.

1.5 Archaeology Warwickshire were tasked to assess the historic assets on the site in accordance with relevant planning policy.

THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

National guidance and legislation

1.6 National guidance on the historic environment in England in relation to the planning process is contained in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* (DCLG 2012). The Framework defines the purpose of the planning system as being to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and its policies, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of sustainable development.

1.7 The NPPF superseded Planning Policy Statement No.5 (DCLG 2010), and follows the latter in adopting a single holistic approach to the historic environment rather than treating historic buildings and archaeology separately as did the earlier PPGs 15 and 16. It defines a 'heritage asset' as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage

interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).' (DCLG 2012, 52)

1.8 PPS5 also included the requirement to consider the setting of a heritage asset when determining a planning application, and this is carried forward to the NPPF.

1.9 The Framework contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It identifies three inter-related dimensions to creating such development: economic, social, and environmental (NPPF para.7), and defines the last as '...contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment...'. Paragraph 17 lists twelve Core Planning Principles, of which one is to:

'...conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.'

1.10 This has two main effects: firstly, that due consideration for the historic environment is an integral component of sustainable development, and secondly, that it is essential to establish the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposed development and the impact of the development on them so that a properly-informed decision can be made on any planning application. The weight to be given to the conservation of an asset is balanced against, and proportionate to, the significance of that asset.

1.11 In addition to general planning legislation there are various specific provisions that can affect the historic environment. The law protecting designated archaeological sites of national importance (Scheduled Ancient Monuments) is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Sites and buildings may also be covered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Relevant sites can also be nationally designated as Registered Parks and Gardens under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 or Registered Battlefields (non-statutory), and internationally as World Heritage Sites. Historic hedgerows which satisfy the relevant criteria are protected under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Local planning authorities may also maintain local lists of heritage assets considered to be important to the area; these are non-statutory, but are a material consideration in the planning process (EH 2010).

2 Location

2.1 Oversley Castle is located in the south of the parish of Alcester, at National Grid Reference SP 0945 5537. It lies adjacent to the modern border with both Exhall and Wixford in a manner which suggests that the hilltop may once have been used as the point of reference for the boundary between the three parishes.

2.2 As a hilltop location, drainage is naturally circumferential and most obvious today some 450m to the north in the form of an unnamed stream canalised in the field edges, and 680m to the south in the Hay Brook; both drawing to the River Arrow which flows north to south some 1000m to the west.

2.3 The underlying geology of the area is a remnant fluvio-glacial sand and gravel deposit capping a peak of Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey 1974).

3 Aims and Methodology

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

3.1 The overall objective of the documentary research was to establish the evolution of the building. The main specific questions set at the outset of the project were to establish the character of the site and its historical development.

Methodology and sources consulted

3.2 Research concentrated on the history of the site in the middle of the 18th century and later, the period during which the castellated structure is reputed to have been built and then altered. It was carried out using original documents in the Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick (WCRO), the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive in Stratford upon Avon (SCLA), and in the possession of the National Trust at Coughton Court, supplemented by secondary sources in these, the archives of the Alcester and District Local History Society (ADLHS) and Alcester Library. It is understood that there may be further Throckmorton Estate material still in the possession of the family at Coughton Court (Linda Martin, National Trust *pers comm*), but this was not accessible. Leases, estate maps, rentals, accounts, land tax assessments, and other documentary resources were used to establish the sequence of ownership and occupation, and, as far as possible, phases of building, repair, and rebuilding.

3.3 Only a brief outline of the medieval and early post-medieval history of the manor of Oversley is given in order to provide background context to the site. This, and the post-medieval history of the site to the mid-18th century, has largely been summarised from existing work by Booth (1997) and Saville (1979; 1982a, b), although a small number of original late 17th- and early 18th-century documents were also examined.

BUILDING APPRAISAL

Building survey

3.4 Extant building elevations and plans have been prepared and used as the basis of the appraisal. The site was walked over extensively and each building photographed digitally from different angles using a Fujifilm Finepix S4240 Bridge Camera. The buildings were examined and the salient details concerning timber treatments, brick-bonds, roof assemblies, and relevant fixtures and fitting were extracted. Note was taken of modern intrusions and alterations related to changes of use. Setting was also a consideration together with the open spaces which dominate a farmyard and, in this case, the Oversley Castle grounds.

Proposed development

3.5 The architectural masterplan, proposed plans and elevations designed by Jonathan Hendry Architects, have been used to assess the impact. The exteriors and interiors were considered for the flows and space they encompass and the existing entrances/windows,

comparing these with the proposals, which will see surviving agricultural spaces become converted for domestic purposes. The quality of what survives was also paramount, since some buildings have very limited significance and no redeeming features in terms of dilapidation (such as the south range stables). Others, however, have greater significance but yet still suffer great deprecation (such as the oldest barn). The setting of the listed and unlisted buildings has been considered as exceptional. The aspect of, and the prospect from, the site are two of the most striking characteristics of the site and the impact of the proposals has in every case been married up with the potential to enhance one of the most arresting settings in Warwickshire with newly conserved buildings.

Site visit

3.6 In total four visits were made. All architectural plans were made available, showing the site as currently laid out and another master-plan with basic proposals for the establishment of the new properties. A topographical survey was also available. Some basic interior measurements were verified on site for archaeological purposes using a Leica ‘disto-pro’ laser measurer to assess the drawings’ suitability for use in potential archaeological recording. All areas were accessed and no building or room was out of bounds in any of the inspections.

4 Archaeological Background

DESIGNATED SITES

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

4.1 There are no Scheduled sites within the development area. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the vicinity, but the impact of the proposed development will be nil and no mitigation is required.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Location</i>
74	Oversley (Boteler’s) Castle	On lower ground c.1km to the north-west
33143	Medieval churchyard cross	Lies 600m to south-west on low ground

Listed Buildings

4.2 There are three Listed buildings within the development. All three will be significantly affected by the proposed development (Listing in Appendix C).

<i>Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Hereafter named</i>
1250076	Barn to SSE of Oversley Castle	II	Tudor Barn
1250083	Byre to S of Oversley Castle	II	Byre
1024572	Stable to SSW of Oversley Castle	II	Stables and Loft

4.3 In addition there are a total of 22 Listed buildings in the vicinity. The impact will in each case be negligible and no mitigation is required.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Wixford		
1024655	Moor Hall	II*
1355369	Church of St Milburga	II*
1024654	Church OF St Milburga, Stable	II
1300272	Church OF St Milburga, Barn approximately 35 metres south	II
1300307	Church of St Milburga, churchyard cross approximately 4 metres south	II
1252323	Barn at SP0969 5406	II
1252325	K6 Telephone kiosk East North East of Wixford Bridge	II
1300214	Ford Cottage Ford Farmhouse	II
1024656	Horseshoe Cottage	II
1355351	Wixford Bridge	II
1355371	Bank Cottage	II
1184138	Oversley Farmhouse	II
Exhall		
1024679	St Giles House and Cottage adjoining North-East	II
1024680	Glebe Farmhouse	II
1024681	Hillborough House	II
1024682	Hillside	II
1183636	The Grange	II
1300488	Broom Cottage Lilac Cottage	II
1300492	Ivy Cottage	II
1300496	Church of St Giles	II
1350370	The Smithy approximately 3 metres south east of the Close (not included)	II
1355343	Glebe Cottage	II

Conservation Areas

4.4 The development site is not part of a Conservation Area. A large part of the village of Exhall lies within a designated Stratford on Avon Conservation Area. The impact of the development will be negligible and no mitigation is required.

OTHER SITES ON THE WARWICKSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

4.5 The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record contains a single record in the area of the proposed development: MWA 8585 records the recommendation by Dr Lovie that the post-medieval garden be designated as an Historic Garden.

Summary of archaeological background

4.6 Oversley Castle commands a dominant position overlooking the valley of the River Arrow. From the end of the last Ice Age c.6000BC, the hill-top would have been a useful vantage for hunter-gatherer (Mesolithic) and herding (Neolithic) communities in the region, and was perhaps even then a well-known landscape feature on a seasonal round. Evidence for their passing has been found in the form of flint tools and flakes during archaeological work at Oversley Mill Services and Boteler's Castle (Jones et al 1997), and it would be no surprise to find similar evidence on the hill top should opportunity present.

4.7 The locale is curiously devoid of Neolithic monuments of the type that are replete in the Avon Valley (Palmer 2000; 2007), but the Early Bronze Age pits excavated in 1992 (Jones et al 1997), which contained evidence for early cereal cultivation as well as forest bounty, suggest that the valley was exploited in this early period. The undated cropmark complex immediately north of the hill top (MWA 4934) could represent nearby later prehistoric (late Bronze Age or Iron Age) agricultural activity and it is now relatively certain that the valley was densely populated at this time (Palmer 2000).

4.8 The exposed position on the hilltop, some way above the agricultural plateau, may well have proven an unattractive prospect for early farming communities. For instance, the site is practically surrounded by Roman period activity, including a fort overlooking the river crossing at Alcester to the north, and a newly revealed villa complex at Exhall to the south-east (Rann 2008). The medieval fortification known as Boteler's Castle lies lower down the valley slope to the north-west, and the villages of Exhall and Wixford to the south were built at river level.

4.9 Within the hinterland there are a significant number of recorded sites which span the Holocene epoch.

MWA No	Date	Description
12127	Neolithic	Flint
4597	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flint scrapers
5012	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flint
10227	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flint
10311	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flint
8162	Neolithic/Bronze Age	Flint
10287	Bronze Age	Pits
10287	Bronze Age	Pits
6417	Iron Age	Possible Iron Age gully
7232	Iron Age	Features
4642	Roman	Assorted finds
6961	Roman	Enclosure
8317	Roman	Villa
451	Roman	Road
10290	Roman	Possible field system
5981	Roman	Coin and brooch
455	Roman	Fort
445	Roman	Road
527	Roman	Finds
529	Early medieval	Cemetery

1513	Medieval	Churchyard cross
9033	Medieval	Village
5586	Medieval	Objects
5587	Medieval	Buckle
1504	Medieval	Church of St Giles
5624	Medieval	Coin
543	Medieval	Boteler's Castle
9028	Medieval	Wixford
1512	Medieval	Church
1515	Medieval	Cross
5011	Medieval	Coin and pottery
8674	Medieval	Road
6119	Medieval	Earthworks
6149	Medieval	Manor house
533	Medieval	Ditch
6628	Medieval/Post-medieval	Coins
13006	Medieval/Post-medieval	Moat
536	Medieval/Post-medieval	Horse shoes
12336	Medieval/Post-medieval	Ridge and furrow cultivation
8696	Post-medieval	Park
9769	Post-medieval/Imperial	Stable
1552	Imperial	Blacksmith
1539	Imperial	Steam mill
8684	Imperial	Turnpike
7723	Imperial	Railway
8585	Imperial/Modern	Oversley Castle gardens
13018	Modern	Exhall Court garden
7453	Undated	Blackened layer
441	Undated	Quarry
4935	Undated	Cropmark
4934	Undated	Cropmark
6407	Undated	Cropmark

5 Historical Background *Ian Greig*

5.1 The building currently known as Oversley Castle, but for most of its life as 'Oversley (Great) Lodge', 'The Lodge', 'Upper Lodge Farm' or some variant of these., was rebuilt in 1932 from a farmhouse of ornate castellated appearance, but retained parts of the original, notably the castellated square tower. 'The Lodge' is reputed to have been built, or rebuilt, by the 2nd Marquess of Hertford as an eye-catching focal point in the main vista from the front of Ragley Hall to please the Prince Regent (the future King George IV), who was a frequent visitor to the Hall and who is alleged to have conducted an affair with the Marchioness. The Ragley Park entry on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Importance dates it as late 18th-century, although it is more usually described as early 19th-century. It must be distinguished from Lower Lodge (Farm) or, as it was described in the mid-18th century, 'The other Lodge' (below).

HISTORY OF THE SITE

Oversley Manor

5.2 In the Domesday Book of 1086, the manor of Oversley is recorded as a possession of the Count of Meulan, held from him by Fulk. By the early 12th century it had come under the control of the Boteler family, butlers to Meulan, then to his son the Earl of Leicester and his successor Earls. In the 13th century the family gained the manor of Wem in Shropshire which became their main residence, but Oversley continued in their hands until William Boteler died on 14th August 1369. There were then several changes of ownership by either marriage or sale until 1537, when the manor was bought by Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex and Henry VIII's chief minister. Following his disgrace and execution, the king sold the manor to Sir George Throckmorton in 1541 (Booth 1997, 8-9, drawing on VCH 1945 and other sources). The Oversley Estate was sold by Sir William Throckmorton in 1919, when the present site, Upper Lodge Farm or 'Oversley Castle' as it was by then commonly known, was bought by David Greig, owner of the eponymous chain of grocery stores (WCRO CR4180/2).

5.3 The building currently called Oversley Castle is not the original 12th-century Oversley Castle of the Botelers, the site of which is *c.*1km to the north-west on the west side of the modern A46 dual carriageway. Nothing of the medieval motte-and-bailey castle remains above ground, but its site was confirmed by archaeological excavation of the outer bailey in 1992-3, in advance of road construction (Jones *et al* 1997).

5.4 The medieval castle had ceased to exist by 1283, but the site continued to be occupied as an undefended manor complex which became known as Oversley Court. From the later 15th century it was probably no longer regularly occupied by the lords of the manor, and when Cromwell bought the manor it was occupied by the bailiff, Thomas Bickerson (Booth 1997, 11) and was later a farm (below).

Oversley Park and Upper Lodge

5.5 The medieval manor included a deer park. In an Inquisition of 1283 the manor is noted as including a park with two groves, and an Extent of the early 14th century describes the house, gardens etc. and a park of 387.5 acres. Documents show the name Durlop Hill (*c.*2km north-east of the present site) to be a corruption of 'Deer Leap' – a feature of deer parks designed to let the animals in but prevent their escape. The medieval park appears to have included the present Oversley Wood and some of the fields to the north (Booth 1997, 11; Saville 1982a, 7-8).

5.6 By the mid-16th century the park had been enlarged by enclosing and emparking fields around the Court. Booth (1997, 12) considers this probably took place before the early 16th century as Oversley is missing from inclosure Inquisitions of 1517-1518 and 1549. Saville, however (1982a, 8), points to church records of Elizabethan tithes in Oversley which list the names of various pastures 'in the park newly enclosed', suggesting that this shows the emparking to have been carried out by the Throckmortons after they acquired the manor in 1541. He also notes the field names 'Waldens Park' and 'Lower Park' and the word 'lawn' as further evidence for the extension of the park.

5.7 Parks were usually overseen by park keepers or parkers, for whom a house or lodge was often provided within the park. Other structures in a park could include a watch tower to provide the keeper with a vantage point, hunting lodges, and dower houses. Where these survive they can often be identified by the words 'Lodge' or 'Park' in their names (Dennison 1988). Saville (1982a, 9) notes a roll of 1603 recording that Thomas Kempson had paid a year's rent (£100) of Oversley Park – which at that price must have included rights to make use of it, not simply live there – and that he, and later his son Richard, appear to have been park managers or stewards for the Throckmortons as well as (from the tone of the letters) friends and advisers. They were also Catholics, a common feature of Throckmorton tenants. There are several surviving letters by Kempson from Oversley Park to Sir Robert Throckmorton regarding estate and other matters, and Richard certainly occupied Oversley Lodge in 1652, when he is named as living there (SCLA DR5/954; see Appendix A for table of owners and occupiers).

Conversion of the park to farmland; Upper Lodge Farm to 1782

5.8 From around the mid-17th century the Waters family became tenants of Upper Lodge. Like the Kempsons they were also Catholics, a daughter married into the Throckmorton family; they probably took over from the Kempsons as their local stewards or representatives. It is not known when the extended park ceased to function as such, but Saville (*ibid*) suggests that the process was gradual; there is at present no evidence to confirm or refute this. However, from 1695 to 1698 the Widow Waters is shown in Throckmorton Estate rentals under 'Oversley Leases' as the tenant of The Lodge at a rent of £13-10s-0d per half year, and in 1702 and 1703 she is the tenant of Lodge Farm at the same rent (SCLA DR5/3406 & 7). This indicates that at least some of the parkland had been converted to farming by the late 17th century.

5.9 There were several members of the Waters family with the same names occupying both Upper and Lower Lodges and surviving documents record variations of the name of the landholdings. It is therefore hard to work out exactly who occupied what and when, and this has not been attempted for the present project. For example, as well as Widow Waters (above), the rentals for 1695-8 also have a P Waters paying the slightly higher rent of £14-0s-0d for an un-named holding, and then John Waters in 1702 and 1703 paying the same rent 'for Lodge', clearly the same place. The will (1706) of Edmund Waters, described as yeoman of Oversley Lodge, also refers to (according to Saville URNa): his cousin Mary Waters of the Upper Lodge ('Widow Waters' possibly?) and her son William; and Mary Waters of Oversley Lower Lodge, widow (of John?) and, in separate bequests, her sons Robert and Edmund. In all other known instances the names Oversley Lodge and Upper Lodge refer to the same holding. There is no reason to think otherwise in this case, despite the different names in the same document, and it is probable that Waters, his cousin Mary and her son shared Oversley Upper Lodge.

5.10 Of possibly more interest is an inventory dated 1708 accompanying Edmund Waters' will of 1706. This describes the house as having a hall; parlour; kitchen; buttery; dairy; meal chamber; lumber room, and one other room downstairs; cellar; five rooms upstairs; a garrett; and iron house and a pewter house; and sundry attached buildings. It also mentions several items indicative of wealth and culture not normally then found in farm inventories: books, maps, and clocks. It shows a relatively large house and well-off family (Saville *ibid*; Saville URNa), and is the earliest known description of Upper Lodge.

5.11 The position in 1747 is much clearer, and there is no doubt that by then the extended park had been divided up into fields split between a number of farms. In that year Thomas Thorpe produced a high-quality map, survey, and valuation of the Manor of Oversley for Sir Robert Throckmorton (WCRO CR1998/M12 & A70). This shows Oversley Lodge Farm to be 158 acres 0 roods 12 perches in extent and worth £87-1s-6d (Plates 1, 2). It is described as being occupied by Mr John Wilks, as was Oversley Court Farm, worth £97-10s-0d. 'The other Lodge Farm' was occupied by Mr Moor; from the field names this is without doubt Lower Lodge Farm (202a 3r 16p; £150-4s-0d).

5.12 Saville (*ibid*) states that Wilks had taken over by 1725 (without quoting evidence) and that he may not have lived full time at the Lodge as a 'John Wilks, gent' is described as 'of Coughton Court' in 1760. The latter statement is certainly correct, as the 1747 survey lists him as occupying Coughton Court as well as the two farms. In addition, in his will of 1728, one Richard Steward describes himself as being of Oversley Lodge; and in the associated inventory the rooms correspond closely to those in Waters' inventory of 1708. He would appear to have been a sub-tenant, with Wilkes actually living at Coughton, although he is described as a yeoman in his own right (Saville URNa, b). Steward may have moved there from Oversley Court because Upper Lodge and Oversley Court Farms were now operated as one unit; an assignment in trust dated 1709/10 names a Richard Stuard of Oversley Court (SCLA DR5/952-3). Maps and field names show that the old manorial buildings were mostly demolished in the 18th century.

5.13 Slightly later, a valuation catalogued as *c.*1770-90 (but possibly slightly earlier – see below) lists a John Wilks Junior at Upper Lodge and Oversley Court Farms (WCRO CR1998/A75), while a letter dated 1794 from Sir John [Throckmorton] to Mr Wilkes (presumably Junior by this time) at Coughton about estate matters (WCRO CR1998/CD/Folder 2/25). The Wilks family appear in the Coughton catholic registers but little else is known about them (Saville 1982b, 9-10). Their presence at Coughton Court, and the estate correspondence, would suggest that they took over from the Waters as local representatives of the Throckmortons, whose main residence at the time was Buckland in Berkshire. This is confirmed by the Coughton parish registers (on microfilm at Warwickshire County Record Office), which record the burial of John Wilks, described as 'Steward to Sir John Throckmorton, Bart', on 21st January 1802.

5.14 The earliest known surviving lease indenture for Upper Lodge Farm is between Edward Morgan and the Throckmorton Estate dated 28th September 1767, with a term of 12 years (farm tenancies ran from either Lady Day, 25th March, or Michaelmas Day, 29th September). The date indicates that the valuation mentioned in the previous paragraph is actually earlier than catalogued because Morgan held the tenancy for thirty six years from that date. The document also confirms that he took over the farms from John Wilks, and that although the latter had leased both Upper Lodge and Oversley Court Farms, they had previously still been considered as separate holdings because from this date they were formally amalgamated. The lease to Morgan is for the premises called '...Oversley Upper Lodge...late in the occupation of John Wilkes and now of the said Edward Morgan ...heretofore...two farms one of which was known by the name of Oversley Upper Lodge and the other Oversley Court Farm'. The changes to Upper Lodge Farm and its constituents are shown in the table of field names in Appendix B.

5.15 Morgan must have obtained a new lease in 1779, although the document is not known to have survived, as he obtained a further 21 year lease dated 10th December 1789 (WCRO

CR114/3/1/99). He is also recorded as the tenant of The Lodge in the Oversley Land Tax assessments from the earliest available (1775) right through until 1803 (WCRO QS77/8). By this time, however, he had a new landlord, the future 2nd Marquess of Hertford.

Lease of Upper and Lower Oversley Lodge Farms to the Seymour Conway family, 1782

5.16 On 22nd July 1782, Francis Seymour Conway, Lord Viscount Beauchamp, eldest son and heir apparent to the Earl of Hertford, leased both Upper Lodge and Lower Lodge Farms from the Throckmorton family, along with timber at an agreed valuation and fishing rights (SCLA DR5/943). The term was for 99 years, as long as one of himself, his son Francis Charles or his brother the 6th son of the Earl, Lord William Seymour Conway still lived (i.e. 99 years or three lives whichever was shorter, not a simple 99 years as described in the archive catalogue and by Saville, *ibid*). His father the Earl was created Marquess of Hertford in 1793 but died the following year, on which Beauchamp succeeded to the title as 2nd Marquess, and the lease then descended with the estate until it expired. Both farms continued to be occupied by the existing tenants, in the case of Upper Lodge, Edward Morgan.

5.17 Leases for lives, or lifehold tenancies, were a common form of farm tenancy in the 17th and 18th centuries (Clay 1981). There are no records to say why Beauchamp wanted to lease the farms, nor why the lease was a lifehold when none of the preceding or succeeding leases took this form. Interestingly, the 1782 lease refers to an earlier 21 year lease dated 1st April 1779, which excluded the fishing rights and was surrendered by Beauchamp in exchange for the 99-year lifehold. Morgan's original lease of Upper Lodge expired in 1779, but there is nothing to indicate whether this was related or a coincidence. In any case, the Oversley land tax assessments still record Sir Robert Throckmorton as landlord in 1781 and 1782 (the latter was made in May, before the lease of that year was signed; those for 1779 and 1780 are missing). The 1783 assessment has Beauchamp as landlord (WCRO QS77/8). It would appear that despite the clear reference to it, the 1779 lease was never implemented. Unfortunately there are no surviving rentals or accounts from either estate covering 1779-1782 that might explain why.

5.18 The 1782 lease continued until it expired on 1st March 1842 with the death of Francis Charles Seymour Conway, 3rd Marquess of Hertford, Lord William having died previously on 31st January 1837. It is recorded in the Throckmorton Estate steward's book of 1808 as '*The Marquess of Hertford. Oversley Upper and Lower Lodges. Lease for three lives dated 2nd July 1782*' at £400 per annum. The Throckmorton rentals show that the (3rd) Marquess actually paid a further instalment of rent due on March 25th 1842, after the lease had technically expired (WCRO CR1998/A51). This may have been due to either bureaucratic inertia or an agreement by his executors to pay a further half-year's rent whilst the transfer of control back to the Throckmorton estate was organised – the Marquess died only three weeks before the rent was due, which would not have given much time for arrangements to be made.

5.19 Edward Morgan continued as a tenant of Upper Lodge Farm, now paying rent to the Ragley Estate, until 1803 (WCRO CR114A/200). His son Richard, who had been baptised at Upper Lodge by a catholic priest, was then 19 years old and working the farm on behalf of his father who was infirm (Saville 1982b, 10). The Coughton registers record the burial of Edward Morgan on July 10th 1804; this is probably the same man. 'Mr Morgans' farm is shown on a Ragley Estate map which is undated, but must be between 1782, when

Beauchamp leased Upper and Lower Lodges, and 1793 when he was made Earl of Yarmouth – he is still called Viscount Beauchamp on the map (Plate 3).

5.20 On 22nd January 1813 Morgan, possibly due to his ill-health, assigned the unexpired term of his lease (7 years) to Edward Wilks, another catholic and related to the family who previously leased Upper Lodge (WCRO CR114/3/1/100; Saville *ibid*). Wilks surrendered that lease almost immediately, on 1st February, taking a new one for five years on the same day. His first rent payment was that due on 25th March 1803, and although the surviving Ragley accounts only go as far as 1814, the land tax assessments show that he remained the tenant until 1816 (WCRO CR114/3/1/101; CR114A/200; QS77/8).

Lease of Upper Lodge to Samuel and William Silvester – 'Silvester's Castle' (1816-1883)

5.21 On 10th August 1816, Samuel Silvester (sometimes Sylvester) took a lease of Upper Lodge Farm for one year from the Michaelmas Quarter Day, 29th September, renewable annually, and his family were to remain at the farm for the next 70 years (WCRO CR114/3/1/103). He appears to have been the first non-catholic tenant of Upper Lodge. Saville suggests, probably correctly, that this was because his immediate landlord was the protestant Marquess of Hertford, who had no particular interest in furthering the interests of catholic tenants.

5.22 Samuel remained the tenant until his death in 1842 (Saville *ibid*). This was the same year that the head lease to the Marquess of Hertford expired on the death of the 3rd Marquess (above), after which the rent was payable to the Throckmorton Estate. Both events are recorded by the Throckmorton rentals, which note the last payment by the Marquess on 25th March 1842, and a payment by Silvester's Administrators (executors) on 29th September. His son, William Prattenton Silvester took over the farm, his first rent payment being for 25th March 1843 (WCRO CR1998/A51). The probate of Samuel's will shows that he left an estate worth over £3,000, a substantial sum for those days (Saville *ibid*). It was under the Silvester tenancy that Upper Lodge Farm reached its maximum extent, when it included not only the former Oversley Court Farm but also the much smaller Rosehill (or Roushill) Farm and some additional meadowland by the river (Plates 4, 5; Appendix B).

5.23 Detailed information about life at Upper Lodge becomes much more plentiful during the Silvesters' time, partly because of the national census, and partly because a local newspaper, the *Alcester Chronicle* (AC) started publication in 1864. The 1841 census shows that Samuel had five live-in servants, and in 1871 William had three, with a further fifteen men and three boys working for him on the farm (Saville *ibid*). On 9th December 1865 the *Chronicle* had a notice recording the death aged 86 of Samuel's widow Oratoria. Its advertisements and reports record the details of 19th-century farming at Upper Lodge, some mundane, some tragic:

- For sale (W Smallwood, auctioneer) 3 capital sows with pigs, 1 fat pig and 1 boar pig, all the White Yorkshire breed, by order Mr WP Silvester (29/2/1868)
- Withy hurdles for sale, apply WP Silvester, Oversley (23/11/1872);
- Wanted, a steady, clean young girl as housemaid. Apply to Mrs Silvester, Oversley Lodge (28/3/1874)
- the fatal accident to Henry Cadd, an 'industrious and valued' employee for 16 years,

who was killed when the horse tethered to a wagon of hay he was loading took fright and he was thrown to the ground (27/7/1872).

5.24 William Silvester was a prominent and respected member of local society. He was elected a parish guardian and tax assessor in 1874 (AC 28/3/1874) and a churchwarden. The notice of his death: '...on February 7th, at Oversley Lodge, in this county, deeply regretted, William Prattenton Silvester, aged 70 appeared in the *Chronicle* on 10th February 1883, and he received a fulsome obituary the following week, under the heading 'The Late Mr Silvester' (AC 17/2/1883). His death '...cast a gloom over the parish in which he [was] a most useful member of society...Mr Silvester was a gentleman who was highly esteemed by all classes in the neighbourhood, and was deservedly respected by his workpeople and all those who came into...contact with him in matters of business.'

5.25 It was in William's time that the first references to the term 'Castle' for Oversley Upper Lodge appeared. The earliest is the *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser*, 11th October 1851, when the Ordnance Survey used one of its towers as a triangulation station:

'During the last week the necessary apparatus has been erected on the Tower of "Oversley Castle" near this town [Alcester] for the use of the Survey Party, here engaged in the Ordnance Survey' (copy at WCRO on microfilm; Saville URNc).

5.26 The more usual name in the 19th century was 'Silvester's Castle', in recognition of the long association of the family. William's obituary explains:

'Mr Silvester and his ancestors have occupied Oversley Lodge for a very great number of years, and so associated has the name become with the residence that it is commonly known throughout the district as "Silvester's Castle", and as such forms a prominent landmark in the neighbourhood, and by that name it will no doubt continue to be known.'

5.27 The name was still used into the early 20th century, well after the Silvesters had left. A letter in the *Chronicle* of 15th February 1896 advocates increasing tourism to Alcester by advertising the town in Stratford railway station with photographs of its most interesting buildings, along with views of the 'scenery in and near Arrow, and Sylvester's Castle...', and a poem published in 1906 refers to 'Silvester's sham castle and the noble timber there'.

Late 19th century to 1919

5.28 After the death of William Silvester in February 1883, his executors paid the rent due on March 25th, but from Michaelmas (29th September) 1883 Upper Lodge was let to Philemon Bayliss Heynes. He only remained at Upper Lodge for three years, after which he left the district. His farm goods and equipment were sold by auction on 23rd September 1886, including 42 shorthorn cattle, 110 pure-bred Shropshire sheep, 10 carthorses and colts, 5 sows in and with pig, and various agricultural implements. The household effects were auctioned on 16th October. The farm was then directly managed by the Throckmorton Estate, described as 'in hand' in the rentals and accounts, until let to Thomas W. Oakley from 29th September 1888 (WCRO CR1998/A63, A64; AC 18/9/1886, 9/10/1896).

5.29 Oakley himself died at the early age of 60 in 1894, the death notice appearing in the

Alcester Chronicle, but his executors/representatives continued the tenancy (AC 24/11/1894; WCRO CR1998/A64-6). In practice this seems to have been his widow, as Mrs Teresa Mary Oakley is listed as farmer, Oversley Upper Lodge in Kelly's *Directory of Warwickshire* for 1900. There are also two reports of her at the farm in this period in the *Chronicle*: 'Five Shillings Reward! Lost on Wednesday, July 3rd, a black collie dog, answers to the name of "Soot" – anyone returning it to Mrs Oakley, Oversley Castle Farm, will receive the above reward' (AC 13/7/1895); and a report of dogs worrying sheep belonging to Mrs Oakley, of Upper Lodge, Oversley (AC 26/12/1896). The executors / representatives continued paying rent until September 1901.

5.30 From 25th March 1902 the rent was paid by Miss Josephine Oakley, although the lease to her was not dated until 14th February 1903. She was followed by her brother, Francis (Frank) Cuthbert Oakley. The Coughton Estate register of occupiers as at 1907 notes a lease to him dated 19th September 1907 (WCRO CR1998/A66, A137-8). The Coughton Estate rentals from 1906 are held by the National Trust at Coughton Court, rather than by the County Record Office. They show the rent as still paid by Miss Oakley on 29th September that year, although this was after the lease to Frank. The first payment from Frank in his own name is recorded as for 25th March 1908, and the last was for September 29th 1912. The Throckmorton Estate cropping book for Oversley, 1895-1918, includes maps of the farms. The map of Upper Lodge Farm as originally drawn includes Rosehill Farm. However, in the register of farms and fields latter is once again listed as a separate farm and a pencil line between fields 107 and 108 on the map indicates the boundary (WCRO CR1998/A119; Plate 6). It may have been separated at the end of Silvester's tenancy, or possibly on the death of William Oakley, but the date has not been checked for this project; the rentals would no doubt confirm the date.

5.31 Upper Lodge Farm was taken over by George Hunt from 25th March 1913, and he remained its tenant until it was sold by the Throckmorton Estate in 1919. The rental for Michaelmas 1919 is annotated 'Sold by auction by Messrs Knight, Frank and Rutley June 17th 1919. Rent collected by the Purchaser' (20th-century Coughton Estate rentals held by National Trust, Coughton Court).

Sale of Oversley Estate, 1919

5.32 The Oversley Estate, including Upper Lodge Farm along with Lower Lodge, Rosehill, Oversley Green, and Oversley Hill Farms and other premises were sold by Sir William Throckmorton at auction on Tuesday 17th June 1919. The auctioneers were Messrs Knight, Frank and Rutley, a major national firm of chartered surveyors. The sale was held at the Grand Hotel, Birmingham. The sale catalogue, with other papers recording purchasers, prices etc, is now in the Warwickshire County Record Office (WCRO CR4180/4; Plates 7-10 'Upper Oversley Lodge or Castle Farm' was sold for £8,200 to Mr David Greig, owner of a chain of grocery stores originally based in Brixton, London, and by then extending over the south of the country. The *Alcester Chronicle* carried a full report on the sale on 21st June.

5.33 His wife described the purchase in a privately-published book of memoirs (Greig 1940, 273):

'We acquired Oversley Castle Farm in Warwickshire as an additional country house, whilst retaining Apsley Rise, Westgate, as a seaside residence, and it has been a great

delight to our grandchildren to be able to go and stay there during holidays...Of recent years David has taken a keen interest in the farm itself, despite his many other activities, and usually runs up there to supervise the work there one day each week.'

5.34 The Greigs modernised and extended the house in 1932. The subsequent history has not been studied in detail for this project, but Saville (1982b, 10) briefly mentioned owners in the 1970s. He notes that at the start of the decade the Dillons (of the newsagents chain) owned both Upper and Lower Lodges (Greig had only bought Upper Lodge), and in 1973 the Wills (tobacco) family bought the combined property, they lived at the Castle/Upper Lodge, and an estate manager in the Lower Lodge. A *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper article on 5th July 1998 stated that Dillon bought Oversley Castle in 1970; the early history of the house in this article is extremely inaccurate, but the later information may be more reliable. The article was written as a review when the property was sold again. The surveyors who handled the 1998 (private treaty) sale were the same firm as had auctioned it in 1919, though by then known as Knight Frank International (WCRO EAC527).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOUSE AND MAIN OUTBUILDINGS

5.35 Apart from the inventories described above, the earliest description of Upper Lodge and its outbuildings that has been found to date is in a Throckmorton Estate valuation by HW Keary of 1864, during William Silvester's tenancy, but this says nothing about the origins of the house or farm (WCRO CR1998/A93):

'The house is a fantastic castellated building but on the whole tolerably comfortable. Some of the buildings are old and built of wood and thatch. Those recently erected are very substantial and in a good state of repair.'

5.36 The earliest documentary reference to Oversley Lodge / Upper Lodge in either court or estate records is said by Saville (1982a, 9) to be from 1641, but he gives no details or reference. He also suggests that letters written by Thomas Kempson from Oversley Park around 1610/11 about estate matters may actually have been from the Lodge, but this cannot be confirmed (e.g. WCRO CR1998/F48/28 & 40). It was certainly in existence in 1652, as Richard Kempson is named as living there in that year.

5.37 The origin of the local legend that the castellated building was constructed by the 2nd Marquess of Hertford to please, and possibly at the suggestion of, the Prince Regent is not known. The earliest reference to it so far found is an article entitled '*When a Prince of Wales came to Ragley*' in the *Alcester Chronicle* (30/4/1932) by EW Jephcott, a local historian. In it he describes a visit by the Prince to Ragley in 1818, saying:

'From the eastern windows of Ragley the Prince would look out across the valley of the Arrow to the wooded hills of Oversley. Lovely as the scene was, the Marquess of Hertford considered that it could be improved for the royal visitor by the erection of a castle-like building on the highest point in the hills. Accordingly, the so-called Oversley Castle, with two towers, rapidly made its appearance.'

5.38 There is a collection of Jephcott papers in the Warwickshire Record Office. This has been examined but there is nothing to add further light to the statement (Booth *pers comm*). A slightly different version is given in a Ragley Hall guide book (WCRO B.ARR.Sey (P)),

which quotes from a visitors book in which the 8th Marquess had written:

'...Oversley Castle...was built in the early 1800s because the Prince Regent, looking out of this room, remarked to his host: "My dear Lord Hertford, your view would have been improved by a castle! So there it is!"'

Map evidence

5.39 There are no maps pre-dating the 18th century, nor are there any early plans showing the layout of the house. The earliest estate map that shows it in outline is by Thorpe, 1747 which is of a high standard, albeit, it was prepared to record fields and landholdings, rather than building detail (Plate 13). It shows a two-rectangle structure, and the one on the NE is very likely the square tower.

5.40 Subsequent maps indicate that the main body of the house increased in area, but it is not possible to tell the degree to which this was by extension or rebuilding. The Ragley Estate map of 1782-93 has a larger building footprint. It does not appear to show any towers, but seems to be less detailed at individual building level and may not be entirely reliable (Plate 14).

5.41 Pippett's sketch map of c.1854 shows the house in much more detail, although the proportions of the various elements are not accurate (Plate 15). It shows a basically rectangular house with a north-east square tower, and for the first time the octagonal tower on the south-west corner; its size is slightly exaggerated, but it is correctly shown as a multi-sided structure although it looks to have six sides rather than eight. His more accurate map of 1872 shows the same basic arrangement although the octagonal tower is less prominent.

5.42 An undated (possibly 1880s) estate map (Plates 16-17) shows the octagonal tower simplified, as a square projection, in the same manner as the 1st edition OS 1:2500 map of 1886-7 (Plate 12). Subsequent 2nd (1905) and 3rd (1923) edition maps (Plates 18-19) show the same structure. The current map shows the house substantially rebuilt, with only the square tower readily recognisable from the previous maps (Plate 20).

Crenellations and the octagonal tower

5.43 The octagonal tower was most likely built as part of a single programme of building work that also added the castellated façade to the main house and the square tower. Adding sham castle façades to an existing farmhouse was a cheaper alternative to a completely new structure where a 'folly' or 'eyecatcher' of this type was desired (Whitelaw 2005, 8), and there is no reason to assume that the existing house at Oversley was demolished and completely rebuilt. Evidence for the date of this building programme was sought in the leases (e.g. clauses relating to building works), Ragley Estate rentals (change of rent, and/or comments added to the records), land tax assessments (change in assessed value) and estate accounts (details of expenditure).

5.44 None of the Ragley or Throckmorton leases examined made any mention of building works of this nature. One obvious time for them to have been carried out would be the changeover from Wilks' tenancy to Silvester in 1816, which is within the period of the Prince

Regent's visits to Ragley and close to the date mentioned by Jephcott, but neither the lease to Silvester nor its draft make any mention of the subject (WCRO CR114A/92; CR114/3/1/103). None of the rentals examined had any note regarding alterations to the building, and the (rare) changes in rent were clearly, often explicitly, related to changes in the value or extent of the agricultural land concerned. The Oversley Land Tax assessments for 1775 to 1832 revealed no change in value payable throughout the whole period, apart from the increase in rate payable from 3/- in the pound in the first year to 4/- subsequently (WCRO QS77/8). This is perhaps not surprising, as the value of the farmhouse is secondary to that of the land in farm valuation.

5.45 The only possibility found is in the Ragley Estate accounts for 1810-1812 (WCRO CR114A/23-27). Unfortunately there are no surviving later receipts or accounts covering the attributed period of construction; the next in date are those of 1856 and 1869-70, which are after the Ragley lease had expired (CR 114A/223A and 201A). The relevant entries from the 1810-12 accounts are tabulated below.

Date	Name	Amount (£-s-d)	Description
3/5/1810	John Watts	34 8 4½	work at Oversley Lodge
do.	Wm Ankers	3 3 0	brick at Oversley Lodges
13/6/1810	John Bennett	14 0 6	sawing at the repairs to Oversley Lodges
7/11/1810	John Watts	63 11 0	work at Oversley Lodges
8/11/1810	John Bennett	16 11 0	sawing at Oversley repairs
do.	Wm Hunt	12 10 6	carpenter at do.
2/5/1811	Wm Hunt	40 3 3	work at Oversley Lodges
do.	John Bennett	13 16 1½	do.
do.	Wm Ankers	22 16 0	do.
do.	John Watts	56 10 8	do.
do.	Abel Franklin	34 10 2½	do.
do.	Wm Ankers	1 0 0	for tile [<i>site not given; poss also at Oversley</i>]
do.	John Crookshanks	8 7 6	do.
7/11/1811	John Crookshanks	102 19 0	brick and tile at Oversley Lodges
do.	Wm Hunt	38 16 0	for work at do.
do.	John Watts	21 18 8	do.
do.	John Bennett	6 12 1	sawing at do.
12/11/1811	To Mr Morgan	24 2 0	bill paid for boards at Oversley Repairs
do.	do.	15 10 9	bill for plaisterer [<i>sic</i>]
21/11/1811	A Franklin	6 19 0	for work at Oversley Lodges
7/5/1812	John Watts	10 2 0	do.
7/5/1812	Wm Hunt	<u>12 9 0</u>	do.
	TOTAL	560 6 7½	

5.46 There is nothing to say what this work was, except that it is described as repairs. Apart from the first entry, the accounts also refer to 'Lodges' in the plural, suggesting that work was taking place at both Upper and Lower Lodges. The cost was substantial. It is possible that the work included rebuilding Upper Lodge into its castellated form, but the construction of the octagonal tower could never be classed as a repair, unless this was done

for some arcane accounting reason not apparent today. The rest of the work could easily be major repairs or rebuilding of agricultural buildings; these could be the 'recently erected' buildings mentioned by Keary in his valuation, although they would only be recent in comparison with the old timber-and-thatch structures. The only suggestion that the work was not for purely functional buildings was the bill for the plasterer (12/11/1811) which would not be needed for normal agricultural buildings, although even here the actual site of the work is not specified and it is only suggested to be Oversley by association with the rest.

5.47 All that can be said with reasonable certainty on the presently-available evidence is that the octagonal tower was built sometime between 1747 and the 1850s, and that both it and the castellated façade (and possibly also the square tower), *might* have been built in 1810-12.

Possible links between 'Castle' construction, the Throckmorton Estate and Coughton Court

5.48 The Ragley accounts also contain a suggestion, albeit a faint and inconclusive one, that the Throckmorton Estate may have been involved in these works. The entries for the 12th of November 1811 are for payments to Mr Morgan. Ordinary tradesmen were not referred to as 'Mr'; this title was used for the gentry and professional classes. It is possible that 'Mr Morgan' was John Morgan, Throckmorton Estate steward from 1802 to 1812. If true, this suggests that the Estate had provided some of the material and the services of a plasterer for the work, would therefore have been aware of it, and possibly have granted permission for it. The Throckmorton accounts for 1810-12 do not have any entries for payments received corresponding exactly to these figures (WCRO CR1998/A4). They show that William Hanwell, plasterer, was paid on October 29th 1811, but he received £13-9-9½d not £15-10-9d as in the Ragley accounts. In addition to his salary (£50 per half year), there are payments to 'John Morgan for bill'. It is possible that these represent payments he made himself which were then reimbursed as expenses but, again, none of them correspond to these two payments either individually or in sum. Those for the Oversley work may have been aggregated with other items, but there appears to be no way of checking this.

5.49 Given the connection in ownership between the two, there is a degree of similarity in appearance between the appearance of 'Oversley Castle' and Coughton Court that should be considered (Plate 21). The square tower of Oversley Castle is reminiscent of the 16th-century gatehouse at Coughton, which also has octagonal towers similar to the 'round' tower at Oversley. The 'battlements', and the stucco walls with rectangular windows and hood mouldings at Oversley are very similar to the west frontage of the outer bays of the north and south wings at Coughton. The new guide to Coughton Court dates its stucco and castellated parapet (which on the outer bays replaced 'Dutch' gables of the late 17th century) to the 1820s, under Sir Charles Throckmorton, 7th Baronet (Garnett 2012, 6). These features are far from unique – many 'Gothick' buildings share similar design elements – and the designs for the two buildings could very easily have been arrived at independently. If the similarity is not a coincidence, it suggests that one was deliberately intended to reflect the other – probably Oversley as a smaller, simpler version of Coughton.

5.50 It is tempting to suggest that this shows the 'Castle' at Oversley was actually the work of the Throckmortons, and nothing to do with the Marquis of Hertford despite the local legend, but the dates do not fit; Oversley was leased by the Marquess throughout the 1820s when the work at Coughton was carried out. Also, it was a time of retrenchment for the

Throckmortons (Garnett 2012, 43), and although money was spent on Coughton Court it seems unlikely that unnecessary expenditure on a leased-out building would have been contemplated. The only way round this would be to follow the Victoria County History (1945, 76) which dates the appearance of the whole west front at Coughton (apart from the gatehouse) to the 1780s, a period when Sir Robert Throckmorton, 4th Baronet, was spending considerable sums on the house: in relation to the west front Garnett, *op cit*, 6, only puts the pointed windows and a coat of whitewash to this period. It would also be necessary to assume that the 1782-1793 Ragley Estate map is either very badly drawn or wrong in not showing any towers, and to accept that the work happened very early in the decade, before the signing of the lease on 22nd July 1782. It is more likely that the creation of the 'Castle' was indeed the work of the Marquess, regardless of any similarities in appearance to Coughton Court.

Demolition of the octagonal tower

5.51 On 28th September 1889, the *Alcester Chronicle* carried a letter from RH Jephcott as follows:

'Sir, It was with great regret that I heard of the contemplated pulling down of the round tower at "Oversley Castle", and so the destruction of the most picturesque land mark in the neighbourhood. I understand a petition to Sir William Throckmorton is being signed, and I can only think that Sir William will comply with the request, and thus save one of the prettiest objects near Alcester.'

5.52 The petition survives in the Warwickshire Record Office, and runs to four sides of foolscap (WCRO CR4180/13). The first signature on the petition was that of Alfred Williams, Rector and High Bailiff of Alcester, followed by RW Jephcott, surgeon and Low Bailiff, the others including RH Jephcott himself and William Badger, proprietor of the *Chronicle*. They must have been disappointed. In his 1932 *Chronicle* article, EW Jephcott states that the tower was demolished because it had become unsafe.

5.53 A postcard of Oversley Lodge in the Warwickshire Record Office, postmarked 30th December 1904, and signed by Miss JM Oakley (the tenant of Oversley Lodge Farm at the time) with the same date in her handwriting on the front (WCRO PH/352/9/26; Plate 22), shows the octagonal tower had been demolished down to the level of the roof of the main part of the house, but the building otherwise remained unaltered from the 1880s photograph. Another example of the card in the ADLHS collection has the date 8th March 1907 in the same writing (ADLHS photo 700). It is possible that the family had the cards made for their own use, which also suggests the possibility that the ladies featuring in it are the Oakleys themselves: there is also a card with an identical image, but marked 'Alcester Oversley', which was probably made for commercial sale – Plate 23; ADLHS photo 51.

Alterations by David Greig, 1932

5.54 The 1919 sale catalogue shows that at the time of David Greig's purchase the house was in the same condition as shown on the postcard of 1904, but the new owners made substantial changes (Plates 10, 11). Greig's wife devotes only a few paragraphs to Oversley in her book, and about the work to the house says only:

'We have had the interior modernised – electric lighting has been laid on and central heating fitted. We have added a billiard room and a sun-parlour, and had a delightful swimming pool constructed in the garden' (Greig 1940, 273).

5.55 In 1931 plans to carry out a substantial rebuilding were submitted to the local authorities for approval. The Alcester Rural District Council minutes for 16th December 1931 record that plans for 'Alterations and additions to Oversley Castle, Alcester, for Red House Estates Ltd' were approved (WCRO CR1547/14). Red House Estates Ltd seems to have been Greig's holding company, named after Red House, his home in Beckenham, Kent. The major rebuilding was carried out in 1932 and Mrs Greig's book contains several photographs of that date, which show the house in much the same condition as it is in today. Saville (1982b, 10) notes that the date is over the door, along with David Greig's arms and initials.

5.56 There are no known surviving plans showing the internal layout of the house before these alterations. The RDC planning archive is held in the Warwickshire County Record Office under ref. WCC18 and the earliest surviving plans are from 1934 (Booth *pers comm*). Red House Estates Ltd no longer exists, and the Companies House website contains no details of it. David Greig Supermarkets eventually became part of the Somerfield Group, now owned by Co-operative supermarkets, but the Greig company was dissolved on 23rd July 1997 (www.companieshouse.gov.uk).

Gardens and farm buildings

5.57 There is nothing to indicate the early gardens, other than the *c.*1904 postcard which shows the house surrounded by lawns or meadow on the north and west sides (Plate 21). There is no evidence to confirm whether they remained the same immediately after Greig's purchase in 1919 or were soon altered. The 1923 OS map (Plate 19) does not show the gardens in detail, but is basically the same as those of 1886-7 and 1905; none show the pool. Photographs taken in 1932 show gardens to the west of the altered house, which look recently planted but do not appear to be the present terracing, and one dated 1934 shows the pool in existence (Greig 1940, 274-5; 299). The current OS map (Plate 20) shows the major divisions within the grounds, and the pool, but no other detail.

5.58 Air photographs from the collections held by the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record and English Heritage were examined in an attempt to date the gardens. Unfortunately the early ones are all at a scale too small to show the details clearly. The earliest are RAF images from 1946-7. Comparison of the present view with shadow on the 1946 image suggests that the basis of the existing terracing to the south-west of the house (to the left of it on the figure) was in place in 1946, though it is not certain whether the stone retaining walls were in place. The position of existing steps in the centre of the retaining walls is marked by a path (no longer present) leading from the house in the early image, but it is not possible to state whether the steps themselves are *in situ* (Plates 26, 27). Larger-scale photographs of 1968 show the present terracing (Warwickshire HER SP0954 OS/68/283 045).

5.59 It is stated that the existing gardens are 'locally reputed' to have been designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, apparently on the basis of a letter, but that no documentary evidence to confirm this has been located (Lovie 1997, 115). There is no mention of Lutyens in the section about Oversley in Mrs Greig's book, published no earlier than 1940 and containing

information and photographs, including one taken at Oversley, dated to that year (Greig 1940, 115). Lutyens died in 1944, and whilst it has not been possible to date the gardens precisely, and his involvement is not impossible, the attribution must be treated with considerable caution. *N.B. there are mistakes in Lovie's description of the gardens – he dates Greig's purchase to 1930 whereas it was 1919, and states that the family also built the nearby Temple Grafton Court, which was actually built in 1876 by J.W. Carlile; (VCH 1945, 94-100; SCLA DR165/181a, DR392/37).*

5.60 The Grade II Listed barn, dated to the 17th century in the List Description, is shown on all the historic maps (Appendix C, List Entry Number 1250076). The late 18th-century byre (1250083) is not on Thorpe's map of 1747, but a long narrow building in this position appears on all the subsequent maps, from the 1782-1793 Ragley Estate map onwards. Although the detail is variable until the 1st Edition OS map of 1886-7, these are all likely to show the same building. The late 18th-/early 19th-century stable (1024572) is not on Pippett's sketch map of 1854 but is on his better quality map of 1872, which dates it to the middle of the 19th century, slightly later than in the List description.

5.61 The barn must be one of the 'old [buildings] of wood and thatch' described by Keary in 1864 (above), and the stable, and probably the byre, are presumably those he describes as 'recently erected...very substantial and in a good state of repair'. It is not clear what the other old buildings would have been, but it appears from the maps that those at the north-east and south of the farmyard were replaced in the later 19th century, and were probably those to which he referred.

6 Buildings Appraisal *Iain Soden*

THE CASTLE

6.1 Historic maps and photographs depict an Oversley Castle which appeared very different from today and analysis of the surviving plans suggest that some older elements will survive within the present house.

6.2 The earliest surviving phase of the castle appears to be the square tower, which on mapping grounds, dates from at least the 18th century. On-going research has suggested a variety of possible origins for it, but all appear to originate in that century or before.

6.3 Surmounting the old centre portion of the house are two cross-gables with a valley between. These would not have been visible on historic photographs taken before *c* 1932, since the house then had a crenelated parapet hiding them. This roof-arrangement may date between the 16th and 18th centuries and may be among the oldest elements of the building.

6.4 Two blocks within the core of the house are also probably late 16th-17th century. The first is that which contains the entrance hall and the west wall of the kitchen. The very thick walls and distinctive angled window-splays are redolent of an early date. The second is that which contains the sitting room and dining room, with its beamed fireplace between them and a spiral stair to the side. This is an early form and one which possibly dates from the 17th century as, by the end of that century, the central stacks designed to heat the whole house were more often moved to become an end stack in the gable.

6.5 A massive, crenelated, octagonal tower has been lost which formerly stood under or close to the semi-circular apse which today looks west from the drawing room.

6.6 The majority of the house was modified by the Greig family in the inter-war period. The modifications included the construction of a purpose-built billiard room on the north side, and widespread Arts and Crafts styling. Also included was the white-painted render which effectively masked earlier aspects of the house, and under which are likely to lie numerous building scars.

6.7 To the west and north of the castle lie local-stone terraces belonging to a set of 1920s or early 1930s gardens. These will remain.

REINTRODUCING A SECOND TOWER

6.8 In the late 19th century the owners demolished a tall, crenelated tower which stood at or close to the west end of the main house. The tower was apparently octagonal, built of stone and was complemented - or contrasted with the extant square tower to the east.

6.9 Historic postcards and photographs show the upper reaches of the structure, although not its lowest storey, nor do they give a clear indication of the nature of its stonework. It is clear, however that the tower had a presence on the hilltop every bit as dominant as its square cousin and looked just as much the sham-castle.

THE 'TUDOR' BARN

6.10 The rectangular barn comprises on the east a lower half of close studded timberwork nogged in brick with numerous ventilation holes, all resting on a mortared stone dwarf wall. From mid-rail to eaves height of the northern gable the structure is box-framed, again nogged in brick. Box framing is the preferred construction on the west from plinth to mid-rail. Other areas are clap-boarded over the timber frame. Some major timbers show signs of reuse from another major structure. The Queen-post roof is particularly fine, with a fine set of wind-braces. The principal uprights are jowled.

6.11 Divided into three parts the through doors are capacious, and the substantial iron belt-driven spindle and wheels show that the barn was in regular use right through the period of steam-threshing in the late 19th- and early 20th century.

THE BYRE

6.12 The byre is a Listed Building, Grade II, and has a late 18th century timber-framed front wall and half-hipped plain tile roof. It was included on the listing for group value only.

THE BLACKSMITH'S FORGE

6.13 This is a small and relatively insignificant building in the farmyard and one which was probably added in the 19th century. It has been much altered and is not in good condition.

Evidence of its former use is now limited and all fixtures and fittings gone.

THE GARAGE AND PIG-PENS BENEATH

6.14 The garage is the only one of the farmyard buildings which relates to the outside of the farmyard. Of the first half of the 20th-century and located on two levels, the upper, north-facing side is turned to the main house of Oversley Castle which it currently serves. Views from this level south over the farmyard and to the valley beyond are currently very limited. The lower level, which exists only because the building sits on a terrace into the hillside, contains a row of distinct, deep and very large vaulted alcoves used for pig-rearing.

THE STABLES (SOUTH)

6.15 The brick stables on the south side are the simplest range around the farmyard and also the poorest-preserved. They appear to be late 19th century or early 20th century in date. Early maps indicate that they probably replaced a previous range of unknown purpose. As with many of the buildings, in recent years they were used for pig-rearing. They are subdivided into individual loose boxes, but the doors and windows are in very poor condition and horse-related fixtures have been lost. The roof is corrugated tin. The south wall has fallen outwards and the whole is now open to the elements, used by sheep in adjacent fields.

THE STABLE AND LOFT (WEST)

6.16 The stable and loft to the west is Listed Grade II, and reckoned to be late 18th or early 19th century. It is a basic rectangular building, of brick beneath a pitched, tiled roof. Its windows are slatted for ventilation and there is a drain in the floor for livestock effluent. Map evidence strongly suggests that it was built in the mid 19th century, not during the later 18th century, which the listing (below) suggests. Upstairs the hay-loft is plain and empties down over an open ledge into the hay-racks along the west wall. An open-tread stair stands in the north-east corner. No travisses or stalls survive, although there are a few tethering rings on the west. The space downstairs has been used for storage and most recently for timber, a use likely to result in the introduction of harmful beetle infestation. The interior walls were formerly limewashed.

6.17 On the west is a lean-to with an asbestos cat-slope roof. This was added on mapping grounds in the period 1886-1905 and rests upon a massive oak truss, probably built for this purpose. This lean-to is now a haphazard store and shelter for materials from the rain.

THE POOL-HOUSE

6.18 This building stands separate from the farmyard and relates to the house. It is the first building arrived at when approaching the site. Built between 1894 and 1905 (on historic mapping grounds), it was probably the early carriage house, with room for three carriages or gigs in the open, north front. It has also been called an Orangery, but the open north (cold) side makes the likely success of this aspect contentious. The front was altered and in-filled in 1932 with Art-Deco styling, when the adjacent pool was dug and a glass annexe added for

lounging beside the pool. There is a room in the roof. Like the farm buildings, the pool-house is now redundant.

THE SO-CALLED 'CASINO'

6.19 This is a small building to the north east of the farmyard, named since farmworkers allegedly played cards there. It seems to have enjoyed a general social function. Its proximity to, but separateness the farmyard and its small hearth may mean it originally served as a workshop and tack-room.

THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE

6.20 This small brick building is of single storey with a deep, hipped roof and a pronounced cat-slope. It has been associated, at least anecdotally, with Sir Edwin Lutyens. It has undergone some alterations, but remains inextricably linked to the kitchen garden.

THE KITCHEN-GARDEN GREENHOUSE

6.21 The greenhouse measures c23m x c3.5m in plan and is 3.3m high at the interior of the ridge. Converted to the Imperial measurements in which they were made, this equates to a proportionate 80ft x 24ft and 10ft 8in at the ridge (probably c11ft at the exterior, but not ascertained). At intervals of 3ft stands a slender steel truss, the whole structure then broken by principal steel 'trusses' into three equal bays of 25ft interior length. It is braced by a steel purlin on either side of the ridge and at intervals the slender trusses sport a tensioned steel brace tensioned at the ridge and to both sides, to prevent spreading and breaking at the ridge. The upper south-facing elements of the greenhouse can be opened as louvres by means of a cranked handle mechanism, cast with the maker's name in relief: Skinner Board & Co, Bristol.

6.22 Essentially this comprises three smaller identical modular greenhouses built end-to-end. The steel superstructure rests upon a waist-high dwarf brick wall constructed in the very common English garden wall-bond. This means that it could also be termed a planting house, since it is not strictly glass all the way to the floor.

6.23 Since one side of the greenhouse is a lean-to, the full original trusses have been fabricated to allow for this and each module is asymmetrical about its cross-section. The wall against which it is built, south-facing, is lime-washed white to maximise light-reflection and therefore the sun's heat.

6.24 The floor comprises a concrete screed along the centre of which is a trough containing heating pipes from a boiler in an adjacent brick building. The trough is covered by cast iron grilles. The heating pipes run for two-thirds of the length of the structure, the easternmost third being unheated for hardier plants, or hardening-off plants before bedding out.

6.25 The greenhouse is provided with proprietary steel staging, finished in exactly the same way as the structure, and almost certainly bought in from the same maker at the time of construction.

THE POOL-HOUSE ANNEXE

6.26 The steel-framed pool-house annexe is constructed in exactly the same way as the horticultural greenhouse, which is perhaps not a surprise as it shares an identical origin and appears to date from around 1932, when the pool was dug.

6.27 It is built onto what was an existing brick agricultural building which had been put up originally sometime between 1892 and 1905 (on OS Map evidence). This may have been a former carriage-house or even a motor-garage with an open front on the north side, with room for three vehicles. It was converted to serve the outdoor pool when the pool was dug.

6.28 The earliest depiction noted is on an RAF aerial photograph of 1946, but it can only be inferred from shadows as the print is very blurred. Otherwise it is not consistently or clearly shown until mapped by the Ordnance Survey in the early 1970s.

6.29 The building measures 15.5m x 6.2m maximum width (wrapping as it does around the adjacent brick building). At the ridge it stands 5m high. In terms of the Imperial measurements in which it was made, this equates to approximately 50ft x 20ft x 16ft high. It is glass-built around the same tensioned-wire braced steel frame as the greenhouse, with a similar cranked louvre system either side of the ridge to ventilate. Unlike the greenhouse it is not overtly modular and represents a single interior space, the roof hipped at the south end. There are two steel doors in the south gable, with brass handles, and two pairs of modern UPVC sliding doors in the west face. It is not known what these replaced. Elsewhere it rests, just as the greenhouse does, on a dwarf wall, here of local stone to the north and brick to the south, east and part of the west sides.

6.30 The interior floor is of black and white stone tiles alternating to form a chequerboard. It is not known if there is any under-floor heating, but it is suspected not in this case as there is no obvious boiler room adjacent.

6.31 Below the eaves level the mullion- and transom-forms, where unaltered, are simply but distinctively Art-Deco inspired, match the adjacent building to which the pool-house is annexed.

The glass structures as a group

6.32 The following has been found, written (Green *et al*, 1991) about the company which made the greenhouse and the pool-house annexe.

SKINNER BOARD & CO LTD

Skinner Board & Co. Ltd, Sussex Street, St Phillips, Bristol. Vincent Skinner together with Robert J Board and Frederick Board founded the firm in the 1880's but Mr Skinner soon ceased to have any further involvement and left the firm. The firm commenced its operations from premises in Rupert Street Bristol working mainly as Horticultural Builders who manufactured and installed their own Greenhouses complete with the installation of the heating systems, which they continued to carry out up until the early 1970's. The firm operated as a

family concern with Robert's sons Kenneth and Donald joining the business in the 1920's. In the inter-war years they moved premises to Exmoor Street Bedminster with their main activity now becoming heating, ventilating and air conditioning. They have been Contractors to Bristol Education Committee, Port of Bristol Authority, Local County Councils and the War Office and were incorporated as a Limited Company in 1947.

6.33 The company made its last returns in 2008 and was dissolved in 2011 (www.companieshouse.co.uk).

6.34 The following early description of their products is taken from the newspaper, The New Zealand Star, for 1 October 1909. It was clearly also intended as salesmanship. It is the only place where any reference is made to their products having applications in structures beyond horticulture. It is not known if their output included successful exports to New Zealand.

GREENHOUSE CONSTRUCTION

The old-fashioned way of building glass-houses is rapidly going out of date in Great Britain. Plant-houses, stores, vineries, peacheries and cucumber and melon pits are now built on a much improved plan, and at no increased cost. The system has been patented by the famed horticultural builders, Messrs Skinner, Board and Co., Rupert Works, Bedminster, Bristol. These houses are constructed with strong iron rafters, placed at about 2ft or 3ft apart, through which are threaded galvanised steel rods. To these galvanised steel clips are attached, into which the glass is inserted, each square overlapping the other. . The whole structure is well braced, therefore firm and strong to resist wind pressure, etc. This mode of construction gives an uninterrupted surface of glass, which admits all the light. The house is perfectly dry, both as regards' rain and condensed moisture, and it is confidently asserted that these houses surpass anything yet introduced to horticulturists for the culture of all kinds of flowers, fruit, etc. ; and the graceful curvilinear form of these houses, and method of glazing, specially adapt them for ornamental conservatories, winter gardens, corridors, etc. The first cost of these houses is as cheap as ordinary wood structures, and, taking into consideration that practically no painting is required on the roof; a great saving in cost of maintenance is effected. The roofs of these houses being constructed with iron and glass only, there is practically no deterioration, and they can be easily erected or taken down, without any damage to the structure. The glass in the houses, not being confined between the iron rafters, as in ordinary houses constructed of iron, is not subject to contraction and expansion of same. Any square of glass can be taken out from the inside by slipping the clips along the rods on the next square. In the construction of these houses a beautiful curve can be given without any Increase of price, as in wood structures. In conservatory roofs, etc., this adds materially to the generally artistic appearance of the same. Iron sills can be supplied to these houses. Ordinary 2loz flat glass is used in glazing. The ventilation of the roofs of these houses is constructed on a patent revolving Venetian principle, to open the whole length of the house, in sections or in one movement, according to length of house, with gearing being self-locking in any position required. In a recent number of the

London "Journal of Horticulture " there are some fine illustrations of these "wire tension" houses.

(<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>)

6.35 Later, in 1935, the advert depicted in the Illustrated Building Catalogue (45) was placed in a local paper for the greenhouse type and roof-style seen at Oversley Castle: (rights reserved: www.flickr.com/photos/brizzlebornandbred)

7 Traffic Routing and Permitted Footpath

TRAFFIC

7.1 There are currently two ways to access Oversley Castle: north from the A46 and south-west from the old Roman road Rykniel Street in present day Wixford.

7.2 The existing track from the north is a farm route which follows the hedgeline of the post-medieval field system. At its northern end it crosses Primrose Hill Roman fort (MWA 455). This fort was revealed as a cropmark and has never been excavated or surveyed. It very likely was constructed by the Roman army in the early part of the conquest to dominate the river crossing and was the precursor to the better known and longer lasting example on Bleachfield Street, Alcester. Adjacent to the fort are a series of 80 large pits recorded by BW Davis in 1930. Davis suggested that they were quarry pits for the building stone used in Roman Alcester (MWA 441), although this is certainly questionable.

7.3 The route through Wixford utilises Rykniel Street (MWA 445), although this may not have been the exact alignment in the Roman period, or indeed the medieval period (MWA 8674) as roads are known to migrate over time. However, there is the potential for encountering Roman settlement at any point along a Roman road, particularly perhaps in a location which developed into a medieval village (cf Palmer 2005).

7.4 From Rykniel Street it wends around the southern and eastern edge of medieval Wixford according to the Historic Environment Record (MWA 9028). This record is derived from extent of the village recorded on the First Edition Ordnance Survey (1886), a method which has proven highly variable in determining the extent of medieval villages, but without any alternative data, the best means at hand.

NEW FOOTPATH

7.5 As part of the development it is proposed to create a new footpath within the curtilage of the Castle garden. This is a hugely significant benefit to local people, ramblers and dog walkers. The footpath will link the Heart of England Way to a path from Exhall which then joins the Arden Way. It is designed to provide a much needed, safe and pleasant, off-road route for walkers between Exhall and Wixford. It will afford a new and dramatic link to the Oversley Wood Nature Reserve and it will complete a circular walk around the castle from which the Listed and historic buildings can be enjoyed, without affecting the privacy of occupants.

7.6 The creation of the path will involve minimal groundworks for signage and gating.

8 Impact Assessment *Iain Soden with Stuart Palmer*

8.1 The redevelopment of Ovesley Castle is considered the only viable way of securing the future of a disparate range of designated, significant and interesting buildings and structures. The following section provides a context for the currently tabled sustainable option.

HILLTOP ARCHAEOLOGY

The proposal

8.2 To construct new buildings, car parking, services etc and to reduce floor levels inside existing structures and externally.

Significance and impact

8.3 There is a minor chance that the development groundworks will disturb previously undetected prehistoric deposits or artefacts that survive on the hill top. Historic mapping indicates that several older buildings once populated the hilltop. Any such deposits or evidence is considered significant in the local context and should be recorded before destruction.

Moderating factors

8.4 No investigative fieldwork has previously been undertaken on the hilltop and any data recovered from the proposed programme has the potential of improving the local record.

Mitigation

8.5 A programme of evaluation trial trenching and subsequent excavation on all areas where historic mapping suggest older buildings formerly existed. This will ensure that no significant deposits are lost without record and understanding the nature of the buried resource will enhance the value of the extant designated and significant heritage assets.

8.6 Where groundworks are undertaken within extant buildings, a Watching Brief can ensure that significant earlier phases and floors are recorded to an appropriate standard before they are disturbed (see Fig 6).

THE CASTLE

The proposal

8.7 It is proposed to divide the house into five separate, smaller homes, with selected extensions / additions including the reintroducing a second tower.

Significance and impact

8.8 Oversley Castle is not in itself a listed building. However, it may contain and encompass architectural components which might otherwise enjoy statutory listing. The most obvious aspect of the house is its 1930s exterior and interiors, with earlier elements. The proposal would allow the Arts and Crafts interiors to be re-arranged to allow an un-paralleled opportunity to authenticate the differently-dated elements. The master-plan has been devised to complement the physical differences and 'break-lines' which the house still contains. The exterior has elements which strongly reflect prevailing design features, such as the 1932 entrance porch (see below), which is strongly redolent of the work of Baillie Scott and Beresford, architects, then of London (See Calloway 2012, 309). Unfortunately their records were destroyed in the Blitz in 1941.

8.9 All around the interior are Arts and Crafts-inspired features and decorative details which suggest the use of a specialist architect in 1932. The relevant aspects are:

- Simple three-quarter height oak panelling, designed to have a papered frieze above it.
- Widespread use of plain oak with exceptionally good quality joinery
- 'Anachronistic' detailing depicting (for instance) tudor rose, fleur de lys.
- Queen-Anne style almost full panelling in the Billiard Room
- Pargetting in the dining room
- Uniform window fittings

(All of the above aspects are in the Illustrated Building Catalogue)

8.10 Speculation concerning an association of the building with Sir Edwin Lutyens remains unsubstantiated. While the 'feel' of the interiors behind 80 years of more eclectic furniture is certainly one of Arts and Crafts, and the background décor was undoubtedly backward looking in 1932, almost eschewing the growing Art-Deco taste. While this was clearly deliberate and unifies most of the interiors, there is arguably a stronger association to be made with much more prolific practices such as Baillie Scott and Beresford (for whom 25-30 commissions at any one time was normal). The loss of their practice records in 1941 means that the favourable comparison with their work can probably be taken no further.

8.11 Other, older features have been noted. On the stairs the use of an acorn finial and a matching pendant is typical of the later 17th century (Hall 2005, 124-6). The balusters look very clean indeed so may be contemporary or later replacements. Numerous old timbers are apparent in the roofs. However, many are boarded over or inaccessible and a clearer, more meticulous survey would be needed to ascertain which is 'original' and which has been re-used in the current roof. The capacity for timber re-use is considerable. The square tower's upper floors contain blocked window reveals, which have every capacity for re-opening. The

ground and first floors of the tower have been similarly treated to the rest of the house, in an Arts and Crafts style.

8.12 While the house appears to have acquired a natural 'flow' downstairs, upstairs a series of distinct bedroom-suites is dominated by the recurrence of numerous opulent and extravagant bathrooms. These are tiled in stone and marble mosaic tiles with some picked out additionally in gold leaf. Both the extravagance of the décor and the subdivision of the floor into these compartments derive from the use of the house in the 1930s as a gentleman's retreat and the society party venue.

8.13 The proposed redevelopment thus has one home based on the Tower and a new building to the east. Another is based around the thick-walled older shell which today forms the hall and kitchen. Another falls within the shell of the sitting-room and dining room with its central stack. Another is based within the 1930s drawing room to the west and the last is based in the purpose-built 1930s billiard room extension with a storey to be newly added.

8.14 The impact of dividing up the house like this is to strip it briefly of its interior Arts and Crafts styling and dispose of the current domestic flows. The requirements of separating the elements will occasion physical interventions to assure aspects like fire-protection, introduction of new services to each and removal/introduction of partitions. It will result in five smaller domestic flows where once a single flow dominated, at least from c1919 when the Greig family bought it and 1932 when they remodelled it. There is little evidence as to how the house worked before that. It is to be noted that the downstairs flow which unites the parts of the house, is in marked contrast to the first floor, where existing separate 'units' were created in 1932, so each bedroom suite is paired up with dressing area and bathroom, for the different family units staying. In many ways, the upstairs already does function in separate parts.

8.15 Plans to reintroduce a second tower, as part of the existing structure, are innovative and bold, and represent a return of the castle to its landmark position on the skyline.

8.16 The undertaking to provide new and startling views towards Alcester and the Arrow valley, not seen for almost a century, is a compliment to the vision of those castle architects, whose prospect of the old and contemporary landscape was part and parcel of the literary and artistic movements' ideals of the day.

8.17 It is to be welcomed that the current proposals do not seek to re-create a copy or pastiche of the old tower, but rather to afford again the views within an overall plan and elevation which complements the existing architecture, and does not compete with it (which a re-creation would).

Moderating factors

8.18 The works outlined present the only opportunity ever afforded to look in detail at the make-up of this extraordinary, but little-understood building. Phases strongly suspected will become discernible and may be separable in clear new property-divisions, making the history of the building patently obvious, where now it is merely inferred from surveyed plans. The master-plan, independent of this appraisal, has deliberately been designed to reference real, historical divisions within the whole which appear to define the development of the house.

8.19 The predominant Arts and Crafts (or at least 1932) styling however, is extensive and somewhat oppressive. The Arts and Crafts movement purports to pay its dues for its origins to a slightly mythologised view of the English Vernacular, espousing the virtues of simple lines, unfussy detail (not always followed). In respect of domestic accommodation, this was the use of ‘honest’ materials simply, but meticulously worked to create vernacular spaces which made canting allusions to the best of traditional craftsmanship distilled from the medieval and later periods.

8.20 Within the house, considerable plain oak panelling survives but there is also opportunity for the introduction of paint and stencilling or wallpaper friezes (as intended) to lighten the acres of bare wood which, but for some tasteful pieces of art, plush carpets and beautiful antique furniture used by the present owners, would give the downstairs interiors the feel of a London gentleman’s club.

8.21 Though imitative of Arts and Crafts ideals of simplicity and honesty of design and material, the interiors will require modification if they are to meet modern expectations and conceptions of comfort, of light and shade, and of personnel ornamentation.

8.22 As to the new building to the east of the tower, this site least affects existing prospects from or aspects of the building. The addition of this building to the east of the tower would actually add a new vista over the garden wall into the middle distance which the tower, with its small windows, cannot enjoy to the same extent. It is also screened by the garden wall which means it would not dominate the ensemble for anyone approaching from the north.

8.23 A reintroduced tower would also maximise the views of the setting of the farmyard Listed Buildings nearby, restoring to them the maximum range of landscape prospects they once enjoyed, just as they are (potentially) to be rejuvenated by their own conversions to domestic accommodation.

8.24 The reintroduction of a tower-prospect, would invigorate the Listed Buildings of the farmyard ensemble with arguably the most striking rural setting in the District, whether in consideration of the prospect from or the aspect of the buildings.

Mitigation

8.25 The temporary removal and re-arrangement of panelling is the opportunity to look at construction methods and workmen’s graffiti (often found on the rear) to ascertain the methodologies of the best craftsmen of the day. This is the core of a watching brief and buildings recording during conversion.

8.26 With a new view, however brief, of the structure of the building beneath the panelling and the floorboards and the loft-boarding, the opportunity now exists to scrutinise those elements which predate 1932 and more firmly date the origins and development of Oversley Castle up to that point.

8.27 A programme of targeted building recording should be considered to accompany the conversion works. This would best be put in place as a watching brief to take place actually during conversion, to monitor interventions within the fabric and better understand the development of the building which is already suspected.

8.28 A similar watching brief will also repay the effort of monitoring ground-works for any new services around the building, to verify any former layouts suspected from historic maps and even old photographs, since both suggest that the foregoing phases of the building were massive and distinctive, backed up by observation of the interior layout and related survey.

8.29 Other than photographs, it is unclear how the old tower was built. It may be possible to use the opportunity of works at this end of the building, to recover evidence for the old foundations and record the size and details at ground floor level. This quite likely would create a great deal of positive publicity for the development.

THE 'TUDOR' BARN

Proposal

8.30 Degradation of the building in this exposed site is continuing and its conversion to domestic accommodation is arguably the best opportunity likely to be presented for its conservation and any reasonable chance of continuity.

Significance and impact

8.31 The barn is a striking building, which has seen a number of alterations to its walling, with two distinctive construction methods apparent, close studding and box-framing. Some principal timbers have clearly been re-used from elsewhere. The nogging is almost certainly an 18th or early 19th-century replacement for earlier wattle and daub or lath and daub panels. The roof-covering is a replacement, either for tile or thatch. The survival of a drive spindle and belt-driven iron wheels are remnants of the steam-threshing regime of the later 19th-century, which caused a great deal of consternation and job-losses in rural areas. Most of the basic frame, however, looks to be original to this site and construction and the Grade II listing probably accurately reflects both this and its much-altered state. It is almost certainly the only building which dates to the earliest farm on the site and its exposed location suggests that the breath-taking aspect of - and commanding prospect from - the building, have been largely unaltered from the east and south for 350 years.

8.32 Conversion of the barn will lose many of the existing interior spaces, and with them the easily-perceivable evidence of its intended function.

Moderating factors

8.33 Without conversion the opportunities for conservation funding are almost nil. The farming function at this site has already gone and will not return. In addition the building is now neither watertight nor does it breathe in a sensible manner, being in a location which could not be more exposed. Issues of conservation present now will be exacerbated by increasing degradation of the timber coverings and weathering of the exposed, un-conserved frame. Like for like replacement of timber and re-fitting of brick-nogging panels will give the structure new weather-proofing.

Mitigation

8.34 The conversion of the barn also presents the best opportunity to record the various elements of its construction to understand its evolution properly. It would likely as not repay (approximate) Level 3 building recording in widespread access from a scaffold, in a carefully-managed programme of drawing and photography, for instance ‘exploding’ joints three-dimensionally and backed up by a suite of Tree-Ring dating samples and regional publication. Its fine Queen-post roof structure could then take its place alongside a recently-published array of dated historic roof assemblies set out by the nationally-recognised Vernacular Architecture Group. Once converted, such an opportunity will probably not arise again in many generations. A watching brief on any groundworks.

THE BYRE

Proposal

8.35 Conversion of the range for domestic purposes.

Significance and impact

8.36 This building is listed only for its group value. The listing makes no mention of the interior fixtures and fittings. The conversion of this building into accommodation will as likely as not remove all indication of its intended purpose, since that is encapsulated by the interior partitions, fixtures and fittings, which have no place in a domestic arrangement.

Moderating factors

8.37 The original purpose of the building, probably accessed along the east-west passageway on the north side, was as an animal byre, possibly for cattle, which were formerly tethered in pairs. These have most recently been turned over to keeping pigs. At the east end of the building, one of the sectional dividers appears to be that from a travis from a stable-stall, indicating that the timberwork is not all original to this building. The building is as likely as not never to be needed for agricultural purposes, and the interior arrangements would probably no longer meet rules on animal welfare.

8.38 The conversion of the range to domestic use would present a prospect from the listed building not previously afforded to anyone but farmworkers. It enjoys a slightly elevated position within the farmyard and an unmatched vista of the other Listed ranges of the ensemble.

Mitigation

8.39 It would be of benefit to the study of historic farm buildings if the interior of the byre were cleaned out and photographed extensively for record purposes before conversion.

Representative sections through both elements would record the use of space. This constitutes Level 1 or 2 building recording.

THE BLACKSMITH'S FORGE

Proposal

8.40 Demolition.

Significance and impact

8.41 The significance of this small single-storey covered area, once open-fronted, is limited. It was (obviously) used for the mending and upkeep of farm machinery, tack and shoeing horses. It was probably only used occasionally and by a visiting blacksmith or farrier. Maps suggest it was not in existence as a roofed building until after 1905.

Moderating factors

8.42 The building is not an integral part of the original farmyard and appears to have been shoe-horned into the embankment. It has clearly been altered by (first) the side walls being raised, with a roof being put over it and (second) the addition of a front wall to baffle the wind, suggesting it was not an easy place to work in. All of the interior fixtures and fittings relating to a forge have gone. The brickwork is in poor condition.

Mitigation

8.43 General Level 1 photographic recording is proposed before demolition and watching brief during groundworks.

THE GARAGE AND PIG-PENS BENEATH

Proposal

8.44 Conversion to domestic accommodation, garage-spaces below.

Significance and impact

8.45 The building is not listed and currently has no domestic directional view, being functional. The conversion would take away the intended functionality.

Moderating factors

8.46 The building at the upper level appears well-conserved due to continued and regular use but redundancy below may be a threat in the longer term. The re-use of the purpose-built pig-pens under the building as individual garages is an effective re-use of what is otherwise a redundant space. The conversion allows the building footprint to be almost wholly preserved in the buildings ensemble whether viewed from north or south while the conversion, creating accommodation, will provide new south-facing vistas across the farmyard and with them, permanent wider appreciation of the aspect and setting of the listed buildings of the group in the landscape.

Mitigation

8.47 Watching brief during groundworks.

THE STABLES (SOUTH)

Proposal

8.48 Conversion to domestic accommodation.

Significance and impact

8.49 This range is the least prepossessing of the farmyard and the most recent of the main ranges. The impact of conversion would be very low since they retain nothing of their previous use, being now used as happenstance sheep-shelters via the collapsed south wall. One wooden ventilator shutter remains; these are relatively uncommon survivals although far from rare.

Moderating factors

8.50 The south wall of some of the building has fallen out and the interior is exposed to the elements. Ironically this range, converted to domestic accommodation, presents the best uninterrupted view from the farmyard across the valley into Worcestershire in a vista of unparalleled beauty. Any appreciation of the setting of the listed buildings would reach considerable heights from this range if converted.

Mitigation

8.51 Watching brief during ground works.

THE STABLE AND LOFT (WEST)

Proposal

8.52 Conversion to domestic accommodation

Significance and impact

8.53 The greater age and relatively unaltered state of this building is entirely in keeping with its status Listed Grade II. The feeding trough along the foot of the west wall is probably not original although the hay-rack above may be. The space both downstairs and upstairs is relatively clear of encumbrance, showing what is, therefore, a simple, plain building. The building is poorly lit as is common in stables and conversion would involve the insertion of windows as well as dividing up the space inside.

Moderating factors

8.54 A series of empty mortices in the west wall show that the former travisses of the horse stalls have been lost. The interior ensemble is therefore denuded although it was once clearly subdivided previously. The open space is a recent result of its disuse as a stable. The proposed continuity of the lean-to, far from enhancing what the listing calls 'not of special architectural interest', might make use of what is nevertheless some very substantial and striking timberwork, thus involving the entire building-history in the conversion.

Mitigation

8.55 Level 2 building recording would be appropriate, but a greater record would be superfluous since the building lacks much of the detail which Level 3 is usually directed towards.

THE POOL-HOUSE

Proposal

8.56 Conversion to a home

Significance and impact

8.57 The building is not architecturally important but for its interesting Art-Deco styling in the inserted south-facing windows. Its more obvious north-face is of three distinct bays which survived its previous conversion. Any proposals might try to perpetuate this former-open-front aspect.

Moderating factors

8.58 The only architecturally-arresting aspect of this building is its south-facing windows and the views they might offer. Further such upper-floor prospects can be encouraged in any conversion, while adding views of the listed buildings to the east and glimpses into the farmyard.

Mitigation

8.59 None proposed

THE SO CALLED 'CASINO'

Proposal

8.60 Retention as an outhouse for the barn conversion

Significance and impact

8.61 A relatively insignificant building but one whose retention enhances the completeness of the useful buildings-ensemble.

Moderating factors

8.62 Well-preserved structure with the benefit of heating. It presents an ideal separate location for a heat-source for the barn, with its otherwise very combustible structure.

Mitigation

8.63 None proposed

THE GARDENER'S COTTAGE

Proposal

8.64 Incorporation into the design of a larger home

Significance and impact

8.65 There are anecdotal suggestions that the cottage may have been designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, but these have not yet been confirmed as evidence is lacking. Certainly the catslide

roof is redolent of some of Lutyens' work, but further than that cannot be said at present with certainty.

Moderating factors

8.66 The new house into which the former gardener's cottage is proposed to be built is actually more of a connection, a physical link, currently found in the form of the garden wall. The cottage is to retain its integrity and its apparent separateness, continuing to be the first part of the house approached from the drive, and yet physically connected to the kitchen garden to its rear.

Mitigation

8.67 A full Level 2 survey would be appropriate, particularly to verify existing floor plans and the garden relationships before the new house is built behind and the new link created. There should perhaps be further research to seek archival evidence and firmly establish or refute the anecdotal link to designs by Sir Edwin Lutyens, an internationally-respected figure.

THE GLASS STRUCTURES AS A GROUP

Proposal

8.68 Incorporation into the design of larger homes.

Significance and impact

8.69 The two glass structures, the greenhouse and the pool-house annexe share a common origin in Skinner Board & Co, horticultural makers and suppliers. Their modular greenhouse buildings were built on simple premises for ease of mass-production and erection. They were purported to be tested for 30 years by the time the Oversley examples were put up. Even as the Oversley examples were being delivered, however the makers were already moving away from the production of such buildings to concentrate upon heating, plumbing and, eventually, air-conditioning.

8.70 The supply of proprietary staging in the same style indicates that the greenhouses were supplied as just that, with a mass-produced product in pre-existing moulds, just like the structural elements. Steel tensioning wires and a maximised glass-area gave them their selling point. The supply of the pool-house annexe in the same vein was to use a tried-and-tested formula but one which lacks architectural merit of its own. It is essentially a glorified greenhouse as a venue for pool-side society entertainment. Like the greenhouse it is modular but like the greenhouse exhibits a similar level of decay, but made more difficult to maintain due to its greater height. Both buildings arguably have limited further life as they stand and for reasons of continuing Health and Safety are unlikely to be sensibly re-useable without massive and disproportionate conservation in any new development scheme.

8.71 A further 80 years has produced considerable decay in the iron and steel elements and the continuing robustness of the glass is open to question. The subsequent demise of the company means their moulds and pattern books cannot now be re-visited to re-make elements.

Moderating factors

8.72 Despite widespread decay, there may be modular elements which might be salvageable to make-up one or more smaller greenhouses which might be added to any new scheme. Smaller-scale greenhouses, their 1930s elements conserved, re-cycled from the larger whole and re-sited, might add value and 'green' credentials to those components of the site which are to benefit from the old kitchen garden and a sunny aspect.

FOOTPATH

Proposal

8.73 The creation of a new footpath along the field edge and signage where appropriate.

Moderating factors

8.74 The footpath will provide a tremendous and sustainable community benefit.

Mitigation

8.75 To be decided.

9 Implications and Strategy

HERITAGE BENEFITS

9.1 There are a number of heritage benefits that weigh in favour of a proposed scheme:

- It sustains and enhances the significance of a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets and secures their setting.
- It removes the risk of neglect from all three Listed buildings.
- It secures the optimum viable use of a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets and secures their long term conservation.
- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities.

- It better reveals the significance of the heritage assets and enhances their enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

ARCHAEOLOGY

9.2 The preparation of this document has in itself exponentially increased our understanding of the historic resource in the locale. The opportunity to investigate the hilltop for prehistoric and historic remains is unlikely to be available without redevelopment on the scale proposed here.

9.3 A programme of archaeological investigation would begin with the excavation of a series of trial trenches in the positions indicated on Fig 6. Such a programme would be conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) formerly approved by the Planning Authority with the understanding that further investigative work may be required.

9.4 Concomitant with the construction works, a formal watching brief would ensure that previously hidden significance is recorded and if necessary conserved. This would be undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the relevant Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) guidelines (see Fig 6).

THE CASTLE

9.5 This is a hugely distinctive and important building, about which very little is known. The proposed conversion is the first opportunity that will have been presented to learn more about its origins and development. The plans advanced thus far divide the building neatly into compartments which appear to relate to different structural origins.

9.6 A programme of concomitant building recording and a watching brief on ground-works will add greatly to our understanding of the structure.

9.7 Subdivision in this case would introduce the unparalleled views over the landscape and the aspect of the nearby Listed Buildings to a new and much larger audience. This is a singular issue of enhancing the setting of the (Farmyard) Listed Buildings simply by making them accessible to far more people, whether they live adjacent or are simply visiting those who do. This kind of appreciation in numbers of the setting and the buildings has not been possible since the site was a fully working farm.

9.8 Reintroducing the second tower would reclaim the former skyline and prospect from Ragley Hall.

THE FARMYARD

9.9 The proposals for the redundant farmyard fall under the general heading of conversion to domestic accommodation. They represent a way forward for what is now a wasting resource since there is unlikely ever to be any further farming at the site.

9.10 Those internal elements of the farm buildings which make them historically significant are ironically those interior aspects which render them largely unusable without a major overhaul in places, for reasons of animal welfare in an increasingly stringent and costly farming environment.

9.11 Conversion of the buildings to domestic accommodation is likely to result in (obviously) more people living there, but also far more people visiting the site, enhancing the cultural value of the Listed Buildings and ensuring wider and therefore better appreciation of their cultural significance and their setting in the landscape.

9.12 The entire group has been fully surveyed as existing. This needs only on-site verification for archaeological purposes. An array of appropriate building recording, with different levels of record targeting different buildings in accordance with their perceived importance, will ensure that historic features and elements are appreciated and understood before those elements are covered up, altered, or in a few cases lost.

9.13 Research on the gardener's cottage may confirm or refute the anecdotal association with Sir Edwin Lutyens.

9.14 Historic maps suggest earlier structures preceded the current buildings ensemble. A programme of targeted field evaluation combined with an archaeological watching brief during ground-works, might be sufficient to confirm the relevant building plans of lost structures, as informed by historic maps, provide evidence of their date and confirm former farmyard layouts and building uses.

9.15 The creation of a new footpath linking the Heart of England Way to the Arden Way, providing a safe off-road route between Exhall and Wixford and allowing new access to Oversley Wood Nature Reserve as well as a circular walk around the castle is free of negative impact. By enabling the Listed and historic buildings to be appreciated by far higher numbers of people the footpath is surely a major and sustainable community gain.

Acknowledgements

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Sources

'Documents examined in normal type. Documents not examined and explanatory notes in italics.'

1 Warwickshire County Record Office

1.1 PHOTOS, PRINTS and VIEWS

Photos

PH68/24 - Oversley Castle c.1880 (This is in a copy of the *Around Alcester in Old Photographs* book, and same as ADLHS photo 201)

PH52/9/26 - Oversley Lodge, Alcester, 1904 (a postcard sent by Miss Oakley, postmarked 30/12/1904; no date or publisher on postcard)

EAC527 - Sunday Telegraph article on sale in 1998 (factually v. inaccurate), 5/7/1998
(N.B. - /210/9 is site of Boteler's Castle - N/A)

1.2 RAGLEY ESTATE PAPERS

CR114 Ragley Estate deeds

(i) *Oversley*

/3/1/97 - lease, Sir RT to Edward Morgan, 12 yrs, 28/9/1767

/3/1/99 - lease, MoH to Edward Morgan, 21 yrs, 10/12/1789

/3/1/101 - lease, MoH to Edward Wilks, 5 yrs, 1 Feb 1803

/3/1/103 - lease, MoH to Silvester, 1 yr renewable, 10 Aug 1816 (draft is CR114A/92)

/3/1/98 - counterpart of /97

/3/1/100 - assignment, Morgan to Edward Wilks, 22/1/1803 (surrendered 1/2/1803)

/3/1/102 - counterpart of /101

(ii) *Maps and Plans*

/3/6/2-3 - two half plans of Ragley estate, not complementary, diff dates, C17 & 18 [N/A]

(iii) *Quittance Rolls and Accounts*

/3/9/2/2 - estate bill of Marquess of H and others, c.1790 [N/A - parliamentary bill re below]

/3/9/2/3 - misc accounts, nd [N/A - all Shepheard/Ingram estate]

/3/9/2/1 - rental and account book, Warks estates, 1762-4 (see also CR85/bundle 3 for 1698-1711)

CR114A Ragley Estate

(i) *Title Deeds*

Abstracts of title, wills etc. relating to estates. Checked in catalogue, no specific refs to Oversley. None inspected. Appear to relate to estates/wills as a whole, not individual

properties (see (ii) for individual properties), prob not relevant; /46 includes copy of rental of 1864 but this is too late - after reversion to Throckmorton estate:

(ii) Deeds of individual properties

/92 - lease, draft of CR114/3/1/103 (lease to Silvester), 1816 [checked; same as /114/3/1/103]

(iii) Maps and Plans

/187 - Ragley estate showing Old Park Wood and surroundings, nd, mid C18

/188 - Estates in the parishes of Arrow, Salford..Oversley..., late C18 pre-1793

/190 - Book of plans, c.1823

(iv) Accounts (N.B. only leased to Ragley July 1782 - Sept 1842, anything earlier and later is N/A)

(a) General

/194 - disbursements (John Denton, acc't), 1779-1784

/195 - receipts and disbursements (John Cogden, acc't), 1791-5

/196 - receipts and disbursements, 1795-6

/197A & B - rec and dis work at Ragley, 1795-6

/198 - receipts and disbursements (John Carleton, acc't), 1797-8

/199 - farms disbursements (John Cogden, acc't), 1795-6

/200/1-30 - estate accounts (John Carleton, accountant), 1798-1814

(b) Household

Nothing in catalogue looks relevant

(c) Building

/202 - Weekly accounts, day work at Ragley, 1778-87

/203 - Weekly wages accounts, carpenters, masons etc. (each man's time), 1779-83

/204-5 - carpenters' weekly wages [cat. says no details of work - prob N/A], 1783-87

(d) Timber

Nothing in catalogue looks relevant

(e) Rentals (N.B. rest too late)

/208 - estates in co Warwick and co. Worc...Oversley..., 1798 [N.B. leased to Morgan this year]

/209 - small rents in Wark and Worc, 1825-59 (prob N/A - farm is large let)

(f) Vouchers and receipts

Most are actual receipts. These should be recorded in the account books - unlikely to be worth examining, except for these, which are registers and include earlier material:

/217 - registers of receipts (those for work at Ragley are marked), 1742-63.

/219 - register of receipts for payment for work at Ragley, 1779-84

/218 - registers of receipts (those for work at Ragley are marked), 1780-83

[Could also check /220/1-26 and /221 if accounts look incomplete. /222/1-34 relate to /200/1-30 above, which look extremely accurate - might be worth checking receipts to see if any

additional information but highly unlikely.]

(v) Estate papers

Nothing in catalogue looks relevant

(vi) Personal Papers

/285/1 & 2 - 2 letters: Earl of Yarmouth [later 3rd Marquis] on family topics, 1817, nd before 1822

/778 - valuation of timber on two farms at Oversley Park, the prop of Sir RT, 1782 [N.B. this will be the timber valuation referred to in the lease of this year to Seymour Conway, Lord Beauchamp]

1.3 THROCKMORTON ESTATE PAPERS

Catalogue has been checked. Entries under these main refs that are not listed do not appear relevant.

CR1998 Throckmorton Estate

PART I

(Only those specifically mentioning Oversley included here - seems to be distinguished from Coughton in the lists, so assumed not to be subsumed into Coughton Estate records. 'Misc Warks' or similar also excluded unless obviously refers to a mixed collection not closely studied.)

/J/Boxes 1-33 - Series of ancient deeds, mainly of the Worcestershire and Warwickshire estates, arranged chronologically [in 1894] by Isaac Herbert Jeayes, C12-17

/Box 37 - Deeds of Oversley etc, 1340-1582

/Box 38 - Deeds of Alcester, Kinwarton, Oversley..., C13-15

/Box 39 Deeds etc. of Coughton, Sambourne, Oversley, C16-19

/Box 60/Folder 2/36 - letter, J Waters from Oversley re horse-soldier, manor courts etc., 8/9/1640

/Box 60/Folder 3/17 - letter T Kempson from O Park to RT. Apr 1612

/Box 60/Folder 3/19 - letter Thos Ridley to Mrs T re estate matters, tenure at Coughton, 10/9/1612

/Box 60/Folder 3/20 - letter T Kempson from O Park to RT re estate matters, 10/6/1612

/Box 61/Folder 3/10 - Draft will RT...manors of...Oversley..., 13/1/1650

/Box 66/Folder 9 - misc papers, legal matters, estate matters no further info, C18

/Box 70 - incs misc deeds of Warks, C16-19

/Box 71 - Deeds Upton, Haselor, Oversley..., C15-19

/Box 86/42 - letter R Kempson at Oversley re militia horses, 25/12/1650

/Box 86/43 - letter RT to R Morgan at Coughton re tithes and other estate matters, 6/12/1816

/EB/13 - deed of exchange, Henry VIII & Sir GT...Oversley...property described, 20/2/1541

/EB/14 - letters patent re 13 above

/EB/16 - letters patent, Charles I to RT, manorial rights at...Oversley..., 17/5/1631

/FE/8 - misc papers re manor of Oversley, inc rentals and account rolls, C14-16

PART II

Maps

- /M12 - Manor of Oversley, surveyed Thos Thorpe, 1747
- /M26 - Hamlet of Oversley, surveyed John Slatter, 1858 [N/A]
- /M27 - Upper Lodge Farm, surveyed Benedict Pippet, 1872
- /M31 - OS map with small land exchanges, 1898 [N/A]

Accounts, Rentals and Surveys

(i) Accounts

- /A4 - Coughton estate receipts and disbursements, 1803-1835

- /A5 - as above, 1835-54*
- /A8 - day book, receipts and disbursements, 1854-8*
- /A9 - as above, 1858-61*
- /A10 - as above 1864-7*
- /A11 - as above, 1867-70*
- /A12 - as above, 1870-3*
- /A13 - as above, 1877*
- /A14 - account book, Mr Pippet in A/c with Sir R, Sir W & Sir N T, 1854-69*
- /A15 - as above, 1869-77*
- /A18 - as above "No. 2. Incidental Expenses" 1854-73*
- /A25 - as above "No. 6, Special Payments" 1854-73*
- /A26 - as above "No. 6, Special Payments" 1874-77*
- /A27 - as above "No. 27, Repairs" 1874-77*
- /A38 - Coughton Estates. Rental and expenditure 1877-8*
- /A39 - as above, 1878-9*
- /A40-48 - as above, 1879-80...87-8*

(ii) Rentals

- /A49 - Stewards book, giving leases, lessees, acreage, rent etc, 1808 (annotations to 1816)
- /A50 - Warks & Worcs estates (exc. Chaddesley), 1814-1826
- /A51 - 'Coughton rental' as 50, 1827-76
- /A58 - Farm rentals, 1860-3
- /A59 - Farm and cottage rentals, 1863-5 (9 in catalogue)
- /A60 - Coughton Estate rental inc farms and cottages, 1877-83 (as /A63, less detail)
- /A63 - Coughton Estate Farm rental, 1877-83
- /A64 - Coughton Estate Farm rental, 1884-90
- /A65 - Coughton Estate Farm rental, 1891-98
- /A66 - Coughton Estate Farm rental, 1899-1906

- /A61 - Coughton Estate rental inc farms and cottages, 1884-90*
- /A62 - Coughton Estate rental inc farms and cottages, 1891-97*
- /A67 - Coughton Audit Book, rents due at Michaelmas, 1884-88*

(iii) Surveys & Valuations

- /A70 - survey by Thos Thorpe (all Warwickshire) - goes with Map /M12, 1746-7
- /A75 - valuation of Warks estates, inc tenants names and rent, c.1770-90
- /A89 - survey book inc map, Oversley, c.1854 (one of series, whole estate as Pippet became

agent)

/A93 - valuation by Keary, 1864

/A102 - drainage plans Oversley, (one of series of whole estate) 1869-70

/A109 - Oversley cropping book, c.1878

/A118 - as above, 1878-94

/A119 - as above, 1895-1918

/A137 - Coughton Estate register of all lands and occupiers (read with 138), 1907 [2/11/12]

/A138 - Coughton Estate "Farms", 1907 [N.B. /139 N/A - cottages and small holdings]

/A72 - as above, draft of Oversley section (N.B. /A71 has slight diffs from 70 - does this?)

/A86 - book of lease details, 1854

/A95 - drainage charges on tenants, 1868-76

/A140 - OS 6" map showing estates in Oversley, Wixford, Exhall and Broom, 1906

Correspondence Files

/F2/25 - letter Sir J T to Wilkes at Coughton re estate matters, 1794

/F48/28 - Thos Kempson from O Park to RT re estate matters, 1611

/F/48/31 - Nicholas Morris from Sambourn to TT re prospective tenants at O Park, early C17

/F/48/40 - T Kempson from O Park to RT re advowson and estate matters, 1612

/F/48/50 - T Kempson to Lady T re timber at O for a mill, 1612 (N/A? - O Mill?)

"Large Carved Box"

/LCB/20 - [includes] inquisition re debts...and proceedings re lands in...O..., 1624

/LCB/45 - rental, Warks estates, 1679-82

/LCB/61 - valuations of several farms in Warks, 1764

/LCB/65 - abstract of deeds re...Coughton..., (may inc. O?), c.1743

CR 2323 Throckmorton of Coughton Court, Manorial Records

/2 - valuation, estates of Sir RT...Oversley..., 1754

/4 and 5 - valuation of Upper & Lower Lodge Farms, 1807 / nd / c.1807

/18 - schedule of leases...Oversley..., 1848

/19 - rate re-assessment book, Coughton, Sperrall, Oversley, Wixford, 1863

CR4180 Throckmorton Estate ('temporary list')

/4 - sale catalogue, 1919

/13 - petition from residents of Alcester to Sir WT re demolition of tower, 5/10/1889

/18 - various maps and plans [only one relevant, nd, poss. 1880s]

/20 - misc. papers [none relevant]

1.4 LAND TAX ASSESSMENTS

QS77/8 Oversley, 1775-1832 [21 & 22/11/12 - notes. Shows no changes]

1.5 MISCELLANEOUS

WCC18 - Warwickshire County Council planning files c.1930-1974

CR1312 - EW Jephcott papers

CR1868 - as above (brief sample examination only)

2 Shakespeare Centre Library & Archive

2.1 DR5 THROCKMORTON PAPERS

(N.B. /930-955 specifically covers Oversley)

/943 - Lease of U & L Lodges to Francis Seymour Conway, 22 July 1782

/3406 - rental, 1701-3

/3407 - rental, 1695-1698

/954 - bond from Richard Kempson of O Lodge, gent. 1652 (N/A to this, but confirms RK as at O Lodge)

/1887-8 - abstracts of Sir RT's deeds in... Oversley... 1540-1657

/1896 - 2 papers partics of leaseholds for lives in... Oversley... corrected to 1888

/2292 - rental 1613-4

/3396 - rental 1652

/3397 - rental 1653

/3398-3403 - rentals, 1672-1685, 1809

/3404 - valuation, Coughton etc, 1754

2.2 DR165 SLATTER & SON PAPERS

/509/21 - Oversley: Upper Lodge Estate; n.d. [XOS] - no other description, in 1850s sequence [This is a plan, in a series of surveys by John Slatter. Appears to be missing from the SBTRO]

2.3 DR317 PRINTED MATERIAL and MSS

/6 - articles from Alcester Chronicle re Ragley, in booklet, 23/7/1864-24/6/1865 [N/A]

2.4 VARIOUS

DR348/17 - MSS notes on history of Ragley [N/A]

ER1/118/1d - James Saunders papers. MSS notes [N/A]

3 Coughton Court (documents held by National Trust)

Throckmorton Estate Rental, 1906-1919

4 Air photographs

ENGLISH HERITAGE

No oblique images earlier than 1978 (none examined)

Vertical images

RAF/106G/UK/1348	Frame	5117	1/1/1946
RAF/106G/UK/1354	Frame	5039	2/4/1946
RAF/106G/UK/1698	Frame	6352	27/8/1946
RAF/CPE/UK/1960	Frame	3105	9/4/1947
MAL/72098	Frame	250	21/10/1972
OS/68283	Frame	41	22/8/1968
OS/64149	Frame	16	22/8/1964
OS/72014	Frame	23	12/3/1972

WARWICKSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

No oblique images available

Vertical images for NGR square SP 0954; 0955. The RAF ones are duplicates of the English Heritage collection, apart from large prints at very small-scale that do not show enough detail for this purpose.

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Saville, URNb GE Saville undated research note Ove 18.000, ADLHS archive

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Appendix A Owners and Occupiers (to 1970)

Normal type: dates where the full length of occupancy /ownership is known. (Tenancies usually ran from either Lady Day, 25th March, or Michaelmas Day, 29th September)

Italics: occupancy is known at that date, but exact beginning and/or end dates are not known

Freehold	Head Lease	Tenant / Occupier
Throckmorton Estate 1541 - 1919		Richard Kempson <i>1651</i>
		Widow Waters / Edmund Waters <i>1695 - 1703 / 1706</i>
		John Wilks <i>1725-1767</i>
		(Sub-tenant Richard Steward <i>1728</i>)
		Edward Morgan 1767 - 1803
	Ragley Estate 1782 - 1842	Edward Wilks 1803-1816
	Francis Seymour Conway, Lord Viscount Beauchamp. (Heir to 1st Marquis of Hertford)	Samuel Silvester 1816 - 1842
	Became 2nd Marquess, 14/6/1794, died 28/6/1822	
	Succeeded by 3rd Marquess, died 1/3/1842, on which the lease expired	
		Silvester's Administrators 1842 - 1843
		William Pattenton Silvester 1843 - 1883
		Executors of WP Silvester 1883
		Philemon Bayliss Heynes 1883 - 1886
	Not let - directly managed ('in hand') 1886 - 1888	
	Thomas W Oakley 1888 - 1894	

		Reps / Executors of TW Oakley 1894 - 1902
		Miss JM Oakley 1902 - 1907/8
		Frank Cuthbert Oakley 1907/8 - 1913
		George Hunt 1913 - after 1919 sale
David Greig (Red House Estates) 1919 - ?1970		

Appendix B Oversley Upper Lodge Farm - field names

The fields of the former Oversley Court Farm were significantly affected by the railway (1866); many boundaries were rearranged and the old fields divided between several new fields, hence the multiple entries below. (Thorpe = map, survey and valuation, Thos Thorpe 1746-7)

Oversley Lodge Farm from Thorpe, 1747	Oversley Court Farm from Thorpe, 1747	Rosehill (Roushill) Fm from Thorpe, 1747	Oversley Upper Lodge from Morgan lease 1767	Upper Lodge Farm from Pippett's map, 1872	Upper Lodge Farm from cropping book, 1895-1918
1. Homestall and Well Close			Homestall & Well Close	93. Homestead 94. Rickyard & Orchard 95. Horse Pool Bank 96. The Brake	93. Homestead 94. Rickyard 95. Well Close 96. Brake
2. Stable Hill (Stable Close in book)			Stable Hill Close	97. Stable Hill	97. Stable Hill
3. Wolsinghams Ground			Walsingham Grounds	106. Walsingham	106. Walsingham
4. Little Close			Little Close	107. Little Walsinghams (part of single field - Far Hill & L. Wals'ams. Far Hill is the former Long Park Close, <i>not</i> part of Upper Lodge Farm in 1747 - see below & R'hill Fm)	107. Walsingham & Far Hill (part of single field, as 1872)
5. Pool Coppice			Poll Coppice	117. Powles Coppice	117. Powless Coppice
6. Lawrences Ground			Lawrences Ground	118. Lawrences	118. Lawrences
7. Stone Pit Ground			Stone Pit Ground	119. Stone Pit Ground	119. Stone Pit Ground
8. Hill Ground (The Hill in book)			The Hill & Grove adj (pt)	103. Garden 104. Buildings Rickyard 105. Green Hill	103. Garden 104. Barn etc 105. Green Hill
9. The Grove			The Hill & Grove adj (pt)	100. The Grove	100. The Grove
10. Wakemans Close			Wakemans Close	98. Wakemans Close 99. Lower	98 & 99. Wakemans Close (two

				Wakemans Close	enclosures, same name in book)
11. Thistley Close (Thistle Hill in book)			Thistley Hill	101. Thistle Hill	101. Thistle Hill
12. Calves Close			Calves Close	102. Oak Tree Ground and Calves Close	102. Oaktree Ground and Calves Close
13. Lady Well Hill			Lady Well Hill	120. Lady Well Hill	120. Ladywell Hill
14. Knowls Hill			Knowls Hill	121. Knowles Hill	121. Knowles Hill
	1. Castle Hill and Homestall		Castle Hill	131. Old House Ground (pt) 132. Lower Garrets Bank	131. Castle Hill (part) 132. Lower Garrets Bank (heavily affected by railway)
	2. The Home Close		The Home Close or Little Close	130. Little Perkins 131. Old House Ground (pt)	130. Home Close 131. Castle Hill (part)
	3. Little Grove		The Little Grove	131. Old House Ground (pt)	131. Castle Hill (part)
	4. Little Knowls		Little Knowls	137. The Knowles (part)	137. The Knowles (part)
	5. Great Knowls		Great Knowls	137. The Knowles (part)	137. The Knowles (part)
	6. Further Knowls		Further Knowls	139. The Seven Acres	139. Seven Acres
	7. Hither Knowls		Hither Knowls	138. Barn Ground 140. Knowles Barn	138. Barn Ground 140. Knowles Barn
	8. Perkins Close		Perkins Close	124. Great Perkins	124. Great Perkins
	9. Coneygear, Barn and Yard (survey); Cunney Geer (map)		Coney Gree	125. Hill Ground (part) 129. Ov'ley Court Buildings 130. Home Close (part)	125. Hill Ground (part) 129. Oversley Court Barn 130. Home Close (part)
	10. Great Meadow		Great or Mill Meadow	126. Mill Meadow 127. Part of Mill Meadow	not in list; shown on map but marked as [now]

				128. Garrets Bank	'Bomford'
	11. Hill Ground		The Hill Ground	125. Oversley Court Ground (part)	125. Hill Ground (part)
	12. Little Meadow		Beef Leazow & meadow adj		
	13. Beef Leazes		Beef Leazow & meadow adj		
	14. Mill Close		Close by Mill		
		1. Roushill Home Close & Homestall		108. Home Hill	
		2. Long Park Close		107. Far Hill (and Little Walsinghams see row 3 above)	107. (Walsingham &) Far Hill (as 1872)
		3. Home Close & Barns		109. Home Close 110. Rose Hill Homestead	
		4. Park Close		113. Little Wood Ground	
		5. Middle Piece		112. Middle Close	
		6. Cockshoot Close		111. Cock Shoot	
		7. Roushill Coppice		114. Rose Hill Coppice	
		8. Wood Close		116. Horse Pool Ground (pt)	
		9. Lower Wood Close		116. Horse Pool Ground (pt)	
		10. Middle Close		116. Horse Pool Ground (pt)	
		11. Further Wood Close		116. Horse Pool Ground (pt)	
			Half Ley Meadow	133. Upp. Leverley Meadow	133. Upper Leverley Meadow
				134. Lower Meadow	134. Lower Meadow
				135. Far Meadow	135. Lower Meadow (as 134, crossed out on map and list)
				136. Upper Meadow	136. Upper Meadow

Appendix C Listed Building Descriptions

(i) BARN TO SOUTH SOUTH EAST OF OVERSLEY CASTLE (NOT INCLUDED)

List Entry Number: 1250076

Grade: II

Date first listed: 28-Nov-1986

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

GV II

Barn. C17. Timber-framed in close studding and square panels on coursed squared Has plinth with plain tile roof. Weatherboarding and C18 and C19 red brick infill in part. 5 bays. Central opposing double doors lead to threshing floor with low side walls and struts. Later first floor in bay to right with metal pulley wheels. 5-bay queen post roof with curved struts above collars and curved windbraces to lower set of purlins. Two C19 windows to rear.

National Grid Reference: SP 09480 55330

(ii) BYRE TO SOUTH OF OVERSLEY CASTLE (NOT INCLUDED)

List entry Number: 1250083

Grade: II

Date first listed: 28-Nov-1986

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

LBS UID: 305345

GV II

Byre. Late C18. Red brick with timber-framed front wall and half-hipped plain tile roof. L-plan, projecting brick section to front left. This section has coursed squared lias plinth. 9 bays. Timber-framed and weatherboarded front has wooden doors. 9-bay queen post roof with clasped principals and some machined struts. Included for group value only.

National Grid Reference: SP 09451 55348

(iii) STABLE TO SOUTH SOUTH WEST OF OVERSLEY CASTLE (NOT INCLUDED)

List Entry Number: 1024572

Grade: II

Date first listed: 28-Nov-1986

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

GV II

Stable. Late C18/early C19. Red brick with plain tile roof. One storey with loft over. 3 bays. Central door with overlight and 2-light window either side, all with cambered brick heads. Small 1-light window and loft door on right end. 3-bay interrupted queen post roof with struts to eaves level. Floor has chamfered spine beams and edges open to give access to hay racks below. C20 lean-to extension to rear is not of special architectural interest.

National Grid Reference: SP 09447 55328

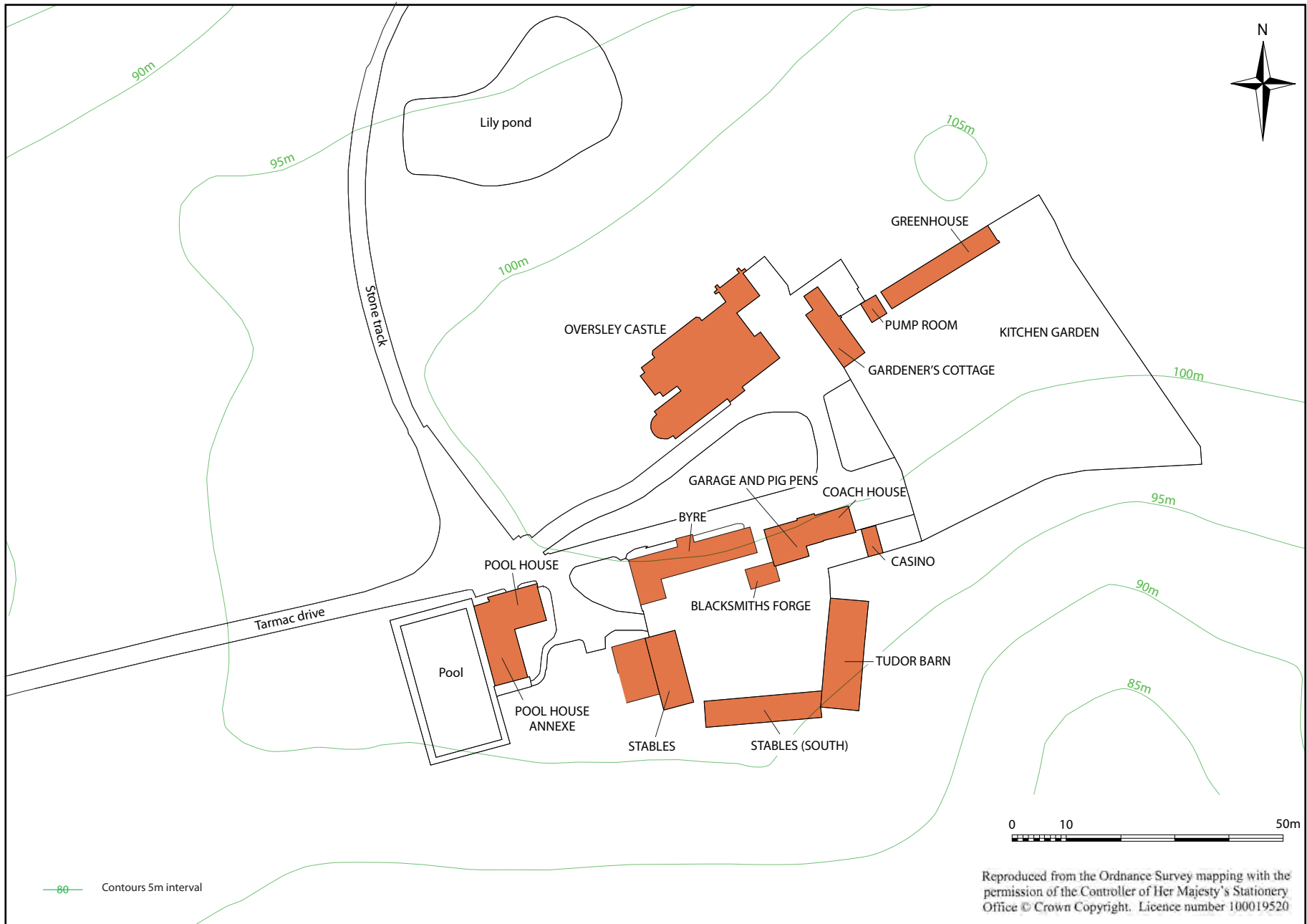


Fig 2: Oversley Castle, simplified buildings and contours

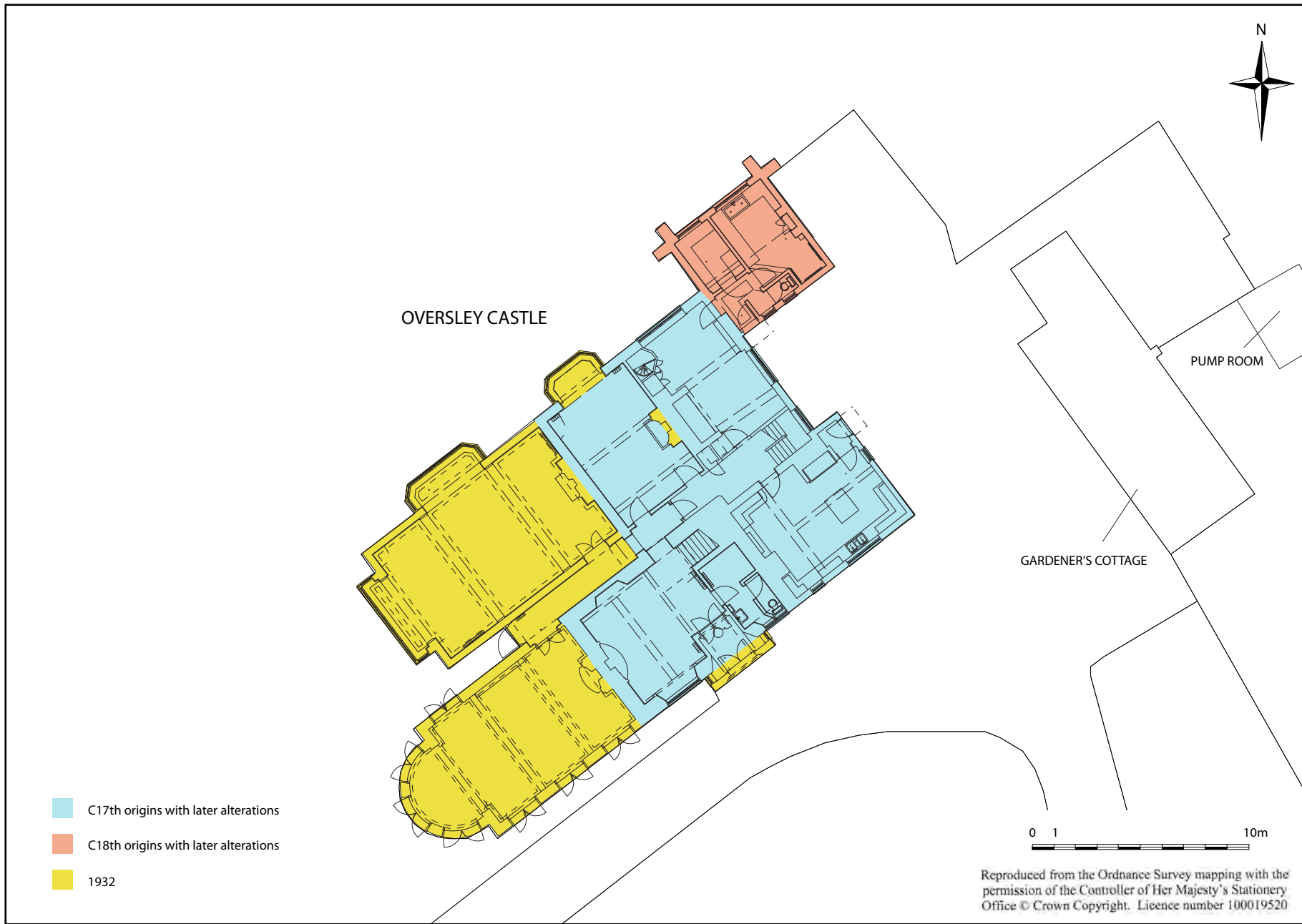


Fig 3: Oversley Castle: house phasing

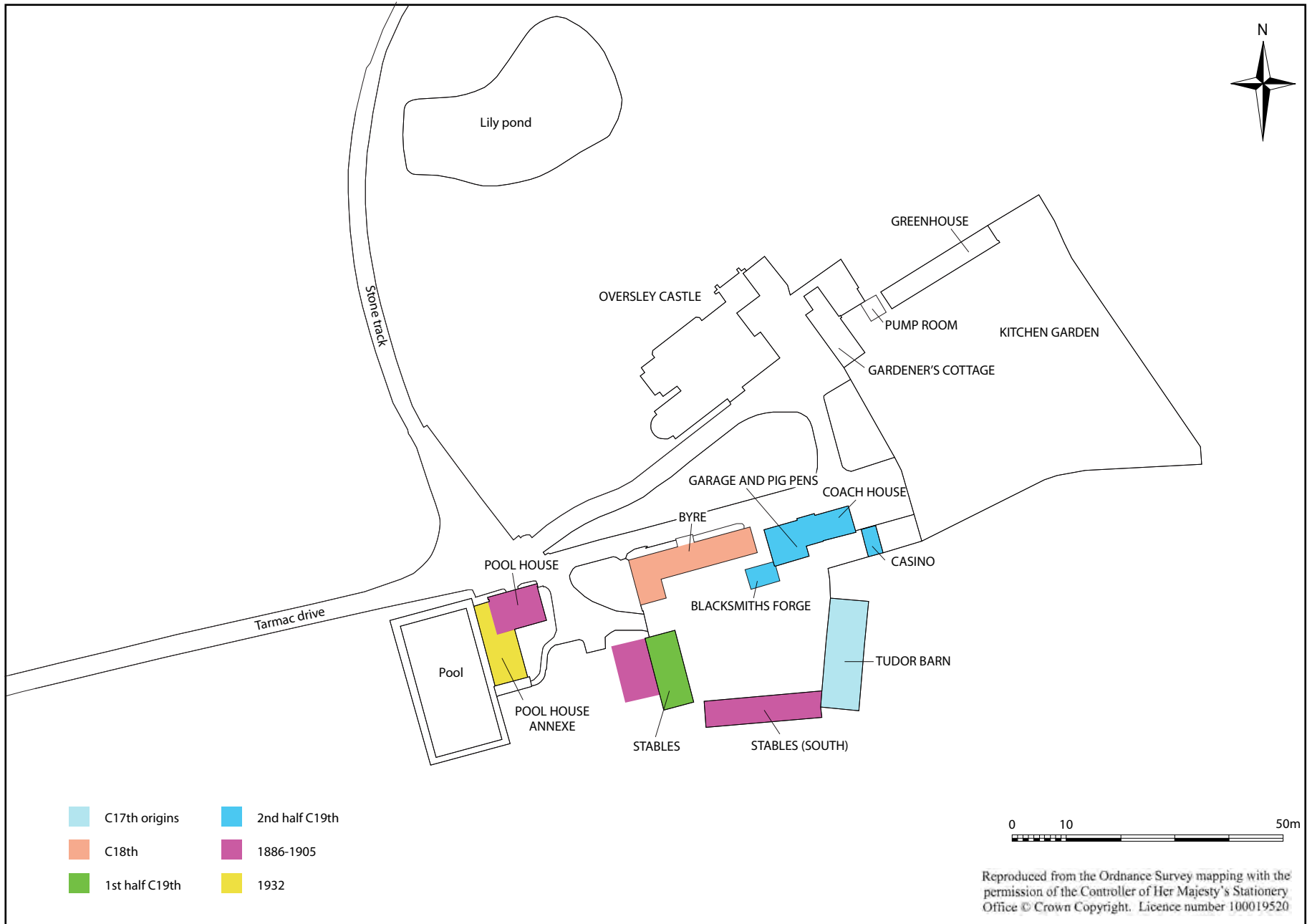


Fig 4: Farmyard phases

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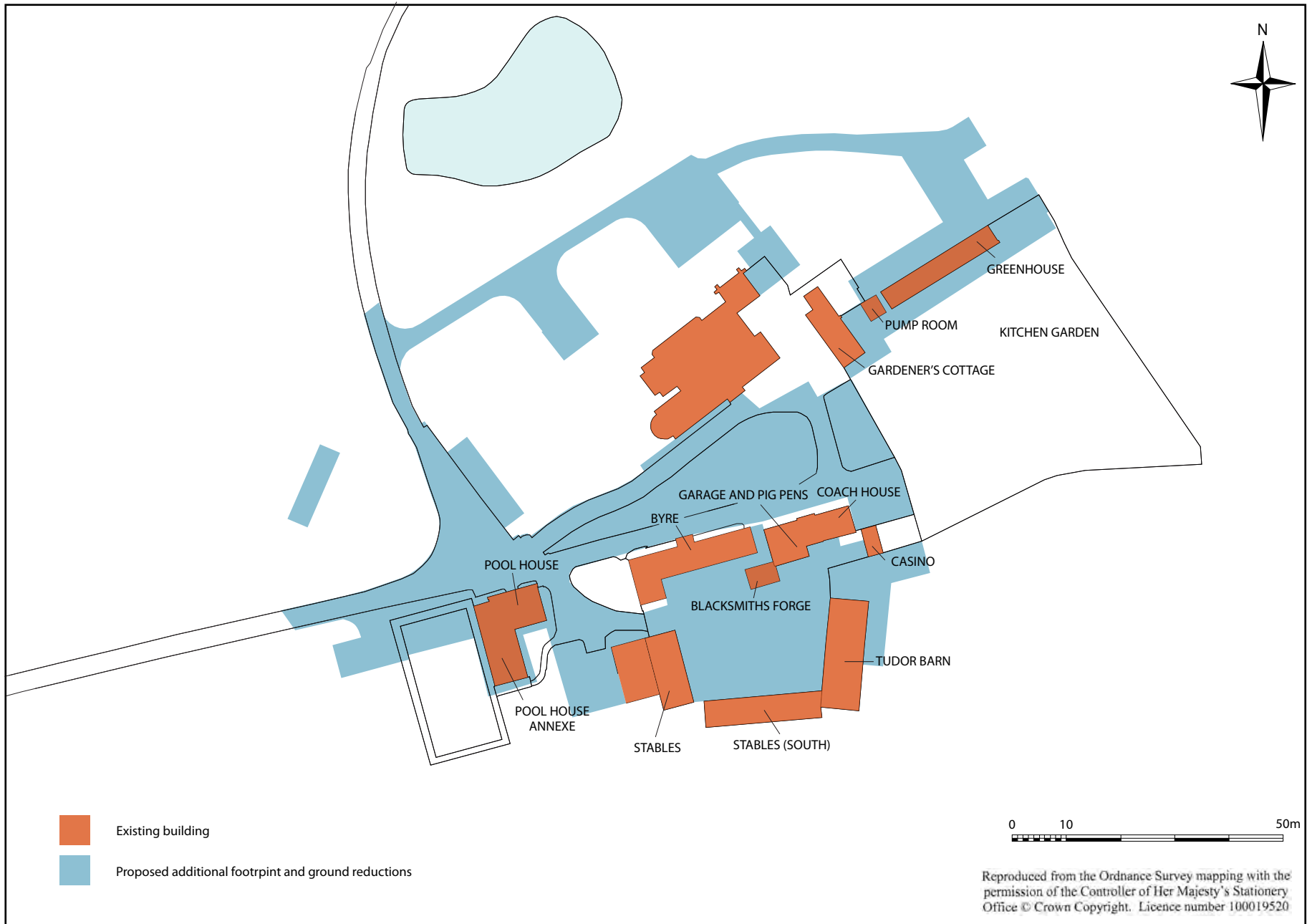


Fig 5: Existing building footprints and proposed ground reductions

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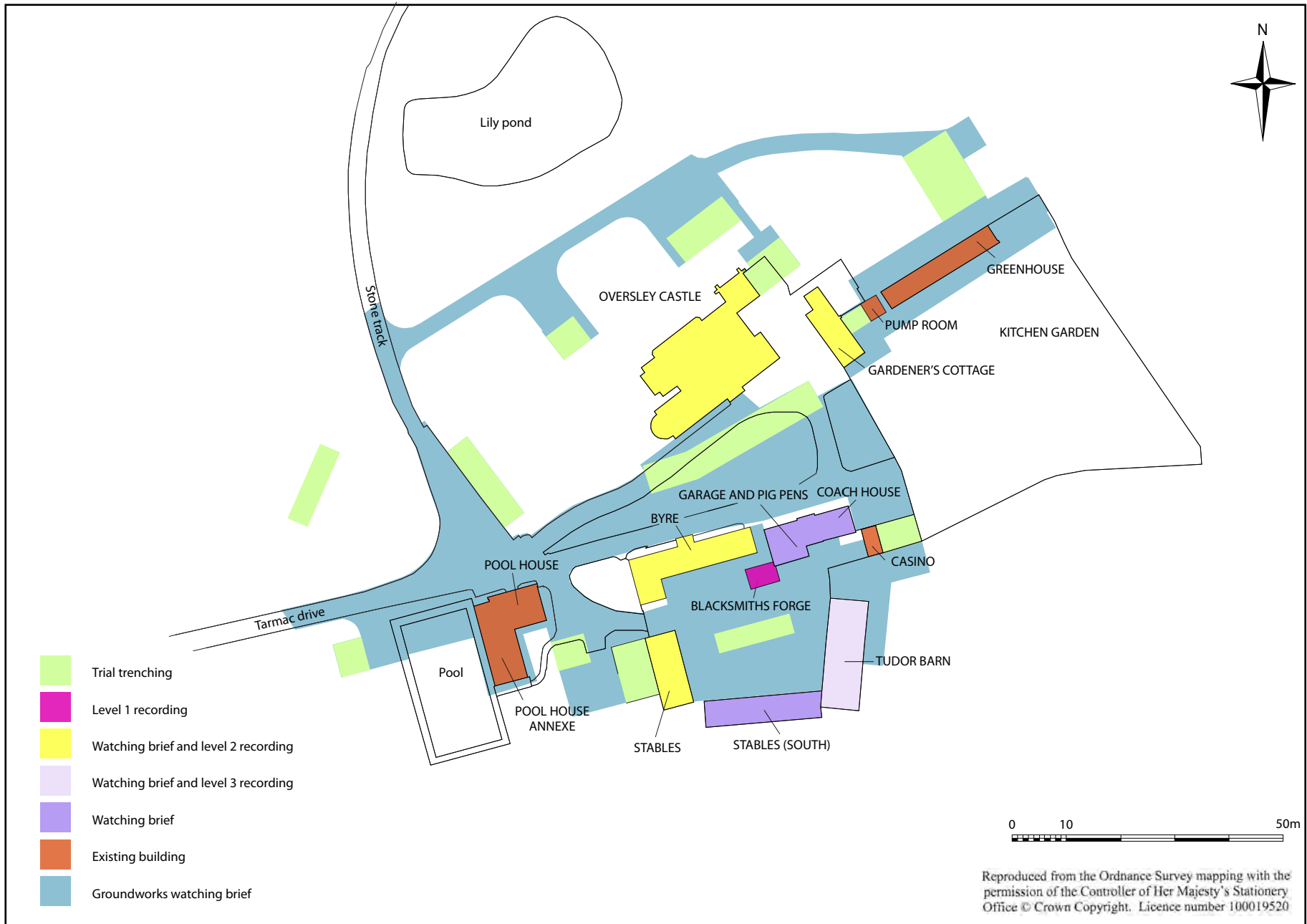


Fig 6: Indicative areas for archaeological mitigation

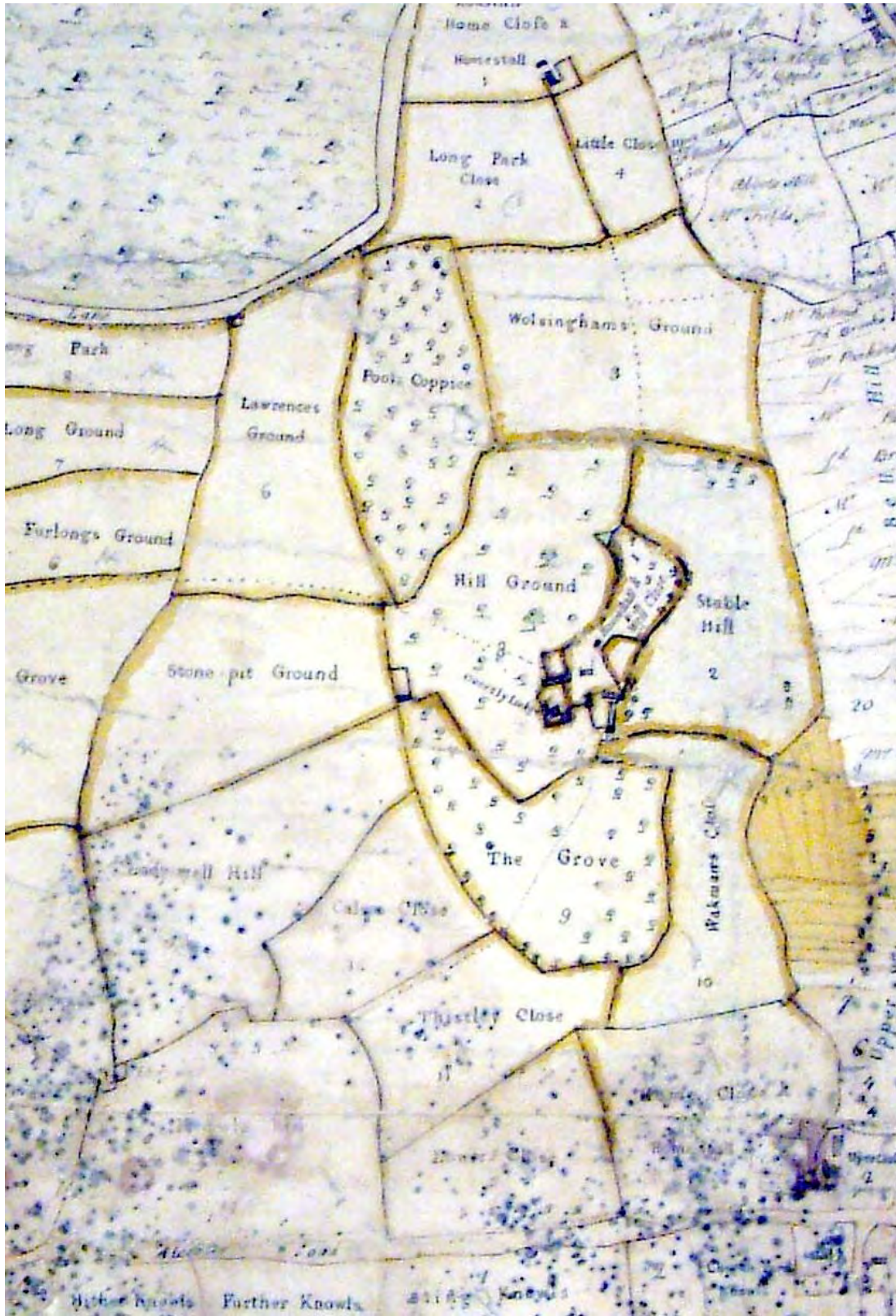


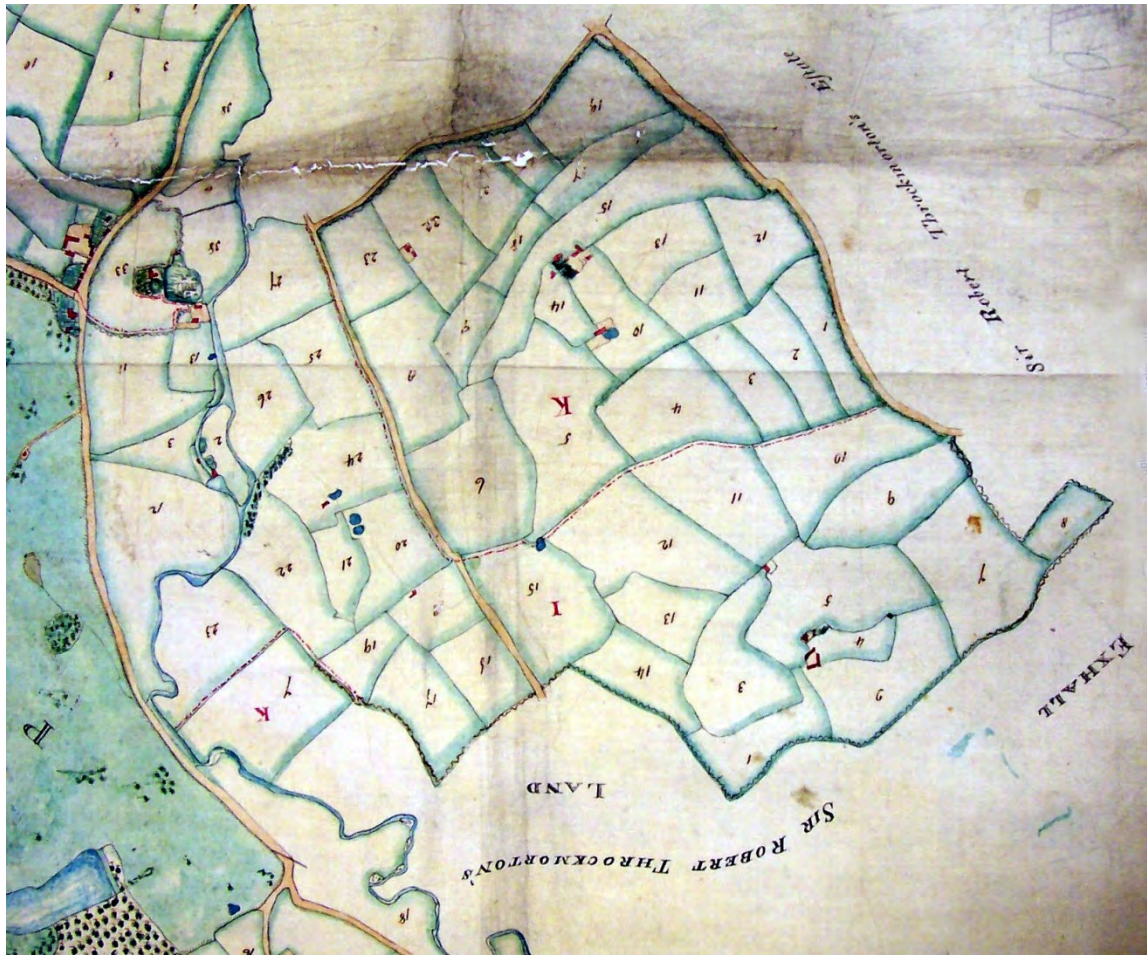
Plate 1: Oversley Lodge Farm, Thorpe's map of 1747 (WCRO CR1998/M12)

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The Reference to the
Plan of the MANOR of OVERSLY
in the County of Warwick
being part of the Parish of Arow And likewise
the Parish of Exhall and Wigglesford alias
Wixford in the said County belonging to
Sir Robert Throckmorton Bart.
Surveyd by Tho. Thorpe 1747.

In the Occupation of M ^r . John		Acres	R.	P.	Value for Acre
Wills called Oversly Lodge					£. s. d.
Farm - Tith free.					
1	The Homestall and lock Close	4	0	24	0 ^s 10 ^d 0
2	Stable Close	12	3	01	0 ^s 11 ^d 0
3	Loalsinghams Ground	16	3	12	0 ^s 11 ^d 0
4	Little Close	04	0	08	0 ^s 11 ^d 0
5	Pool Coppice	11	01	04	0 ^s 2 ^d 6
6	Lawrences Ground	09	0	29	0 ^s 11 ^d 0
7	Stone Dit ^t Ground	12	5	39	0 ^s 12 ^d 0
8	The Hill	15	2	13	0 ^s 10 ^d 0
9	The Grove	12	01	13	0 ^s 08 ^d 0
10	Wakersmans Close	08	03	31	0 ^s 16 ^d 0
11	Thistle Hill	09	0	14	0 ^s 12 ^d 0
12	Calves Close	07	0	35	0 ^s 13 ^d 0
13	Lady lock Hill	16	2	05	0 ^s 14 ^d 0
14	Knowl Hill	17	0	24	0 ^s 13 ^d 0
The End of the Lodge Farm		158	0	19	87 ✓ 6

Plate 2: Oversley Lodge Farm, Thorpe's survey and valuation of 1747 (WCRO CR1998/A70)



REFERENCE		A.	R.	P.
A	M ^r Stephen's Farm	305	3	0
B	M ^r John Stephens	285	2	22
C	M ^r John Jackson's	275	2	14
D	M ^r F ^r Stephens	210	3	27
E	M ^r Marshalls	168	0	26
F	M ^r Coulda	336	2	2
G	M ^r Wallis	213	1	6
H	M ^r Hurst	37	2	-
I	M ^r Morgans	277	1	10
K	M ^r Haynes	217	3	14
L	M ^r Tho ^s Fairs	121	1	23
M	M ^r Samuel Jackson's	132	3	3
N	M ^r Cha ^s Fairs	286	-	13
O	M ^{rs} Archer	42	2	4
		<u>2928</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>
The Park		307	3	30

Plate 3: Detail from Ragley Estate map, 1782-1793, showing Upper and Lower Lodge Farms (inverted for easier comparison with other figures). Boundary shown by a red dot-dash line. Reference enlarged – Upper Lodge is 'I Mr Morgans' (WCRO CR114A/188)

In the Tenure
of
SAMUEL . SILVESTER

N ^o 1	Wakman's Cleft	8	2	2	Brought forward	132	2	18
2	Stable Hill	12	0	27	N ^o 14 Thistle Hill	8	1	20
3	Crove	12	0	9	15 Knowles' Hill	15	2	36
4	Horse Pool Bank	3	0	2	16 Knowles Seven Acres	6	3	30
5	Green Hill	15	1	30	17 Knowles Ten Acres	10	2	10
6	House Garden, Yards &c	0	2	12	18 Knowles Barn Cleft	3	3	3
7	Great Walsingham	16	"	"	19 Lower Knowles	5	0	22
8	Little Walsingham	4	0	19	20 Perstons	10	0	0
9	Poles Coppice	10	3	25	21 Meadow Pluck	4	3	12
10	Lording's Cleft	13	1	0	22 Gadditts Hill	13	2	20
11	Stone-Pit Ground	13	1	14	23 Lea Meadow	16	3	15
12	Lady Well Hill	15	1	15	24 Overley Court Ground	13	3	3
13	Calves Cleft	6	3	35	25 Bell Ground	9	3	25
	Carried forward	132	2	18	27 Beg' Leasjones	12	1	32
					Total	266	2	22

Plate 4: Upper Lodge Farm field record, from Ragley estate book of sketch plans, c.1823 (WCRO CR114A/190)



Plate 5: Upper Lodge Farm, 1872, surveyed by Benedict Pippett (WCRO CR1998/M27)

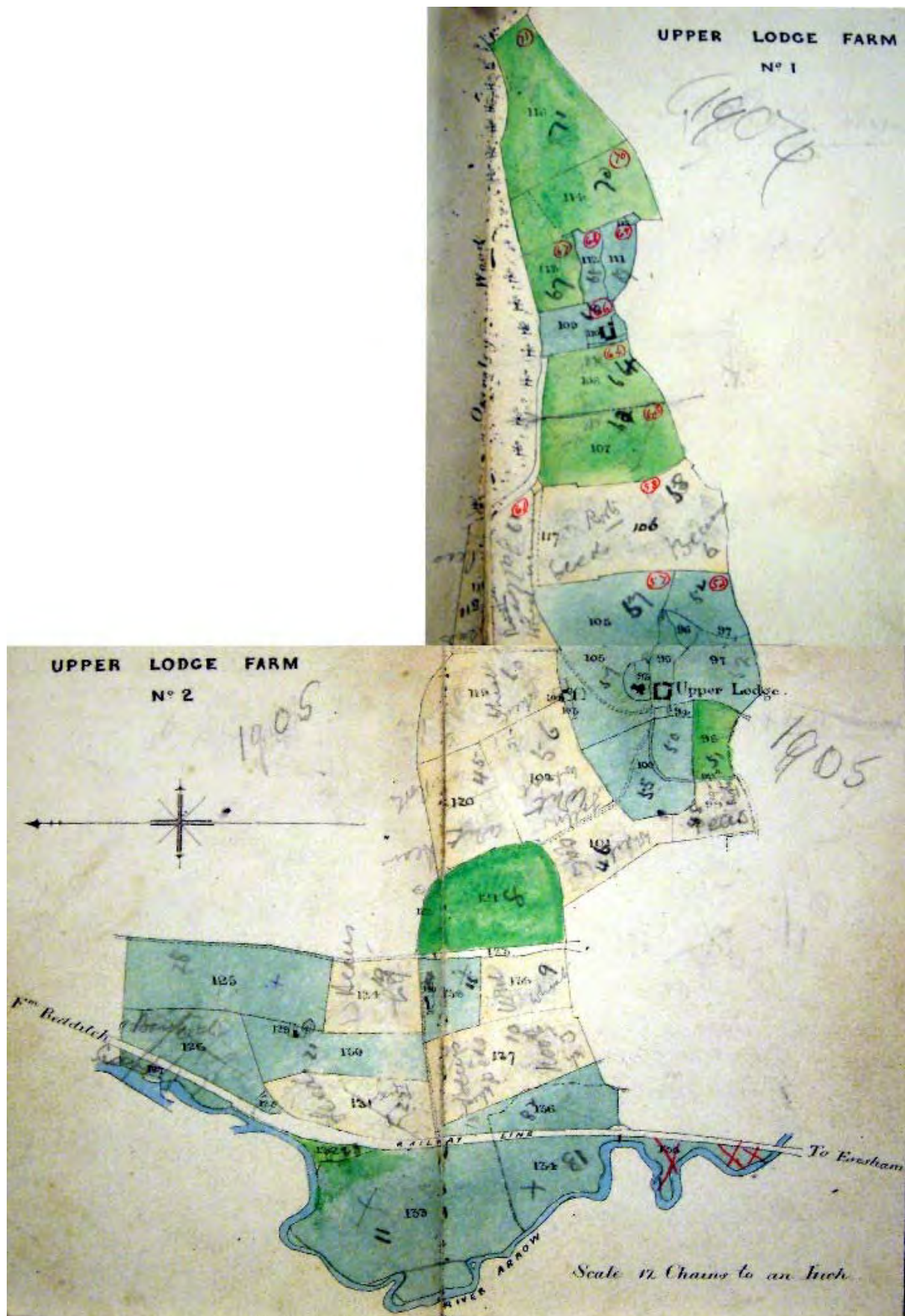


Plate 6: Upper Lodge Farm, from cropping book of 1895-1918 - maps 1 and 2 on separate pages joined (WCRO CR1998/A119)

By direction of Sir William Throckmorton, Bart.

WARWICKSHIRE

Near ALCESTER and STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

Illustrated Particulars and Plan
OF THE

OVERSLEY ESTATE

A Freehold Agricultural Property

Situate in the Parishes of Oversley, Wixford, Exhall, Bidford, Arrow and Haselor between Birmingham and Evesham on the Midland Railway extending to about

2,084 Acres.

To be offered by Auction by Messrs.

Knight, Frank and Rutley

(SIR HOWARD G. FRANK, K.C.B. & JOHN FREDERICK KNIGHT).

At the GRAND HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM.

On Tuesday, the 17th day of June, 1919,

At 2.30 o'clock precisely

(unless previously Sold by Private Treaty).

Solicitors:

Messrs. WITHAM, ROSKELL, MUNSTER & WELD,
1, Gray's Inn Square, London, W.C.

Land Agent:

F. HADDON CAVE, Esq., Estate Office, Rugby.

Auctioneers:

Messrs. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY, 20, Hanover Square, London, W. 1;
100, Princes Street, Edinburgh; and
78, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.

Summary of Estate as Lotted.

LOT.	HOLDING.	TENANT.	AREA.
1	Garden Ground ..	Mr. A. Stanley .. ..	.132
2	Cottage and Garden ..	Mrs. M. Cubberley .. ..	.300
3	Exhall Lodge ..	Executors of late Mr. J. Ellis ..	25.372
4	Arable Land ..	Do. ..	9.257
5	Garden Ground ..	Do. and Mr. C. Hall ..	.436
6	Do. ..	Executors of late Mr. J. Ellis ..	.212
7	Meadow ..	Mr. F. W. Hammond ..	10.519
8	Wixford Lodge ..	Do. ..	165.807
9	Small Holding ..	Do. ..	15.809
10	Arable Land ..	Mrs. M. Cubberley	24.128
11	Moor Hall Farm ..	Do. ..	173.632
12	Arable Land ..	Do. ..	6.204
13	"Three Horse Shoes" ..	Mrs. Lamb	4.032
14	Arable Land ..	Mrs. M. Cubberley	22.630
15	Wixford Allotments ..	Various	6.471
16	Garden Ground ..	Mr. H. Freeman .. ..	.386
17	"Fish Hotel" ..	Messrs. Allsopp & Sons Ltd. ..	14.341
18	Garden and Site ..	Messrs. Allsopp & Sons Ltd. and Mr. R. Wheeler ..	1.461
19	Two Cottages and Gardens ..	Mrs. M. Cubberley .. ..	.250
20	Pasture and Garden ..	Messrs. Allsopp & Sons Ltd. ..	5.883
21	Church Farm ..	Mr. F. W. Hammond and others	106.476
22	Cottage and Garden ..	Messrs. Allsopp and Mr. H. Freeman	2.023
23	Accommodation Land ..	Mr. F. W. Hammond ..	9.273
24	Garden and Site ..	In Hand .. ..	.172
25	Garden Plot ..	Mr. J. Williams .. ..	.165
26	Cottage and Garden ..	Mr. E. C. Riddell .. ..	.152
27	Arable Land ..	Mrs. M. Cubberley	29.100
28	Garden Plot ..	Mrs. Lamb .. ..	.100
29	Do. ..	Mr. J. Williams .. ..	.110
30	Two Cottages and Gardens ..	Mr. R. Simpson and Mrs. D. Bettridge .. ..	.440
31	Garden Plot ..	Mr. J. Harman .. ..	.020
32	Lower Oversley Lodge ..	Mr. F. M. Sisam and another ..	205.322
33	Upper Oversley Lodge ..	Mr. G. Hunt	289.910
34	Oversley Mill ..	Mr. H. L. Sisam	15.977
35	Meadow Land ..	Mr. F. M. Sisam and another ..	24.728
36	Cottage and Garden ..	Mr. F. M. Sisam .. ..	.136
37	Meadow ..	Mr. H. Rimell	6.988
38	Oversley Green Farm ..	Do.	107.534
39	Cottage and Land ..	Do. and in Hand	9.223
40	Do. ..	Various	6.832
41	Three Cottages and Gardens ..	Do.	1.102
42	"Hillside" ..	Mr. E. Mortiboys and others ..	.950
		Carried forward	1303.435

Plate 7: 1919 sale catalogue, title page (above) and Lot details (below) – Oversley Castle is Lot 33 (WCRO CR4180/4)

LOT 33
(Coloured Yellow on Plan).

Upper Oversley Lodge or Castle Farm

An Agricultural Residential Property

Situate in the PARISHES of OVERSLEY, ARROW and WIXFORD about 1½ miles from the Town of Alcester. The Lot consists of

Excellent Pasture and Productive Arable Lands
the total area being about

289a. 3r. 26p.

The Castellated Residence

built partly of Brick and partly Rough Cast with Tiled Roof and a large square Tower occupies a commanding position on the crest of a hill, 300ft. above sea level, and about 170ft. above the town, with magnificent views.

The accommodation comprises: Tiled Entrance Hall, Drawing Room, Dining Room, Breakfast Room, Kitchen, Back Kitchen with oven and copper, Pantry, Dairy, Cooling Cellar and another Cellar. Seven Bedrooms, Cheese Room, Three Attics and a Boxroom. Flower Garden and partly walled-in Kitchen Garden. Well of soft water.

The Homestead

chiefly built of Brick and Tiled comprise: Two-stall Nag Stable, Trap House, Harness Room, Loose Box, Five Pigsties and Boiling House; Cow stalls for 12; Meal House with Loft over; Half timbered and Tiled Barn; Two Cattle Pens and a 4-bay Open Shed. Cart Horse Stable for 7 and a Small Yard with 2-bay Open Horse Stable for 7 and a Small Yard with 2-bay open Cattle Shed; 3-bay open Shed with Granary over.

Near to the Farm-house is a capital Brick and Tiled

Bailiff's Cottage

containing a Sitting Room, Kitchen, Pantry and Three Bedrooms, and a range of out-buildings adjoining comprising a Wood and Thatched Barn; Brick and Iron Roofed 5-bay open Shed and Lambing Pen.

At Upper Oversley Court, in enclosure No. 21, is a Wood and Tiled Barn and Rick Yard.

Knockle Barn Buildings, in enclosure No. 14, comprise a 3-bay open Wood and Tiled Shed, a 4-bay Brick and Iron Shed; a Cowstall; Barn and Implement Shed and a good Stack Yard.

30

There is some well grown timber upon this lot.

Let to Mr. G. Hunt on a Yearly (Michaelmas) Tenancy.

The water supply is derived from an Hydraulic Ram in enclosure No. 17 (Lot 32) which also supplies water in common to Lower Oversley Lodge.

The respective Purchasers of this Lot and Lot 32 will be required to enter into a covenant in their Conveyances to keep the said Ram in proper working order and repair at their joint expense and to maintain a continuous and uninterrupted supply of water as at present enjoyed by both Farms.

SCHEDULE.

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DECIMAL ACREAGE.	NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	DECIMAL ACREAGE.
PARISH OF OVERSLEY.—continued.					
PARISH OF OVERSLEY.			<i>Brought forward</i> 168.692		
4	Pasture .. ..	.997	51	Pasture	3.776
7	Road .. ..	.060	52	Ditto	14.562
8	Pasture	15.629	53	Ditto .. ..	.770
9	Arable	7.112	54	House and Farm buildings ..	1.786
10	Ditto	15.300	55	Pasture	7.613
11	Pasture	30.637	56	Arable	13.714
13	Ditto	1.730	57	Pasture	20.859
14	Buildings (Knockle Barn) .. ..	.459	58	Arable	24.085
15	Pasture	9.702	59	Cottage Garden and Buildings ..	.495
16	Road (Icknield Street) ..	2.020	60	Arable	13.562
19	Arable	8.639	61	Ditto	13.739
21	Pasture and Oversley Court Buildings ..	11.200	62	Occupation Road ..	.499
22	Arable	11.132	PARISH OF ARROW.		
23	Pasture	1.694			
28	Ditto	18.961	129A	Pasture .. ..	.119
45	Arable	10.983	PARISH OF WIXFORD.		
46	Ditto	8.308			
48	Ditto	4.332	81	Pasture	9.214
49	Road .. ..	.441	82	Ditto	6.425
50	Pasture	2.943			
50A	Rickyard .. ..	.442	Total A. 289.910		
<i>Carried forward</i>		168.692			

LANDLORD'S OUTGOINGS—NIL.

This Lot is sold with the benefit of rights of way as shown on Plan over Lots 21, 32, 34, 35, 39, 64 and 65, and over the road to the Village of Exhall as marked "E-F" on plan.

The Lot is sold subject to a right of way for Lot 65 through No. 62 as a means of access to enclosure No. 63.

31

Plate 8: 1919 sale catalogue, details of Lot 33, Upper Oversley Lodge / Oversley Castle (WCRO CR4180/4)

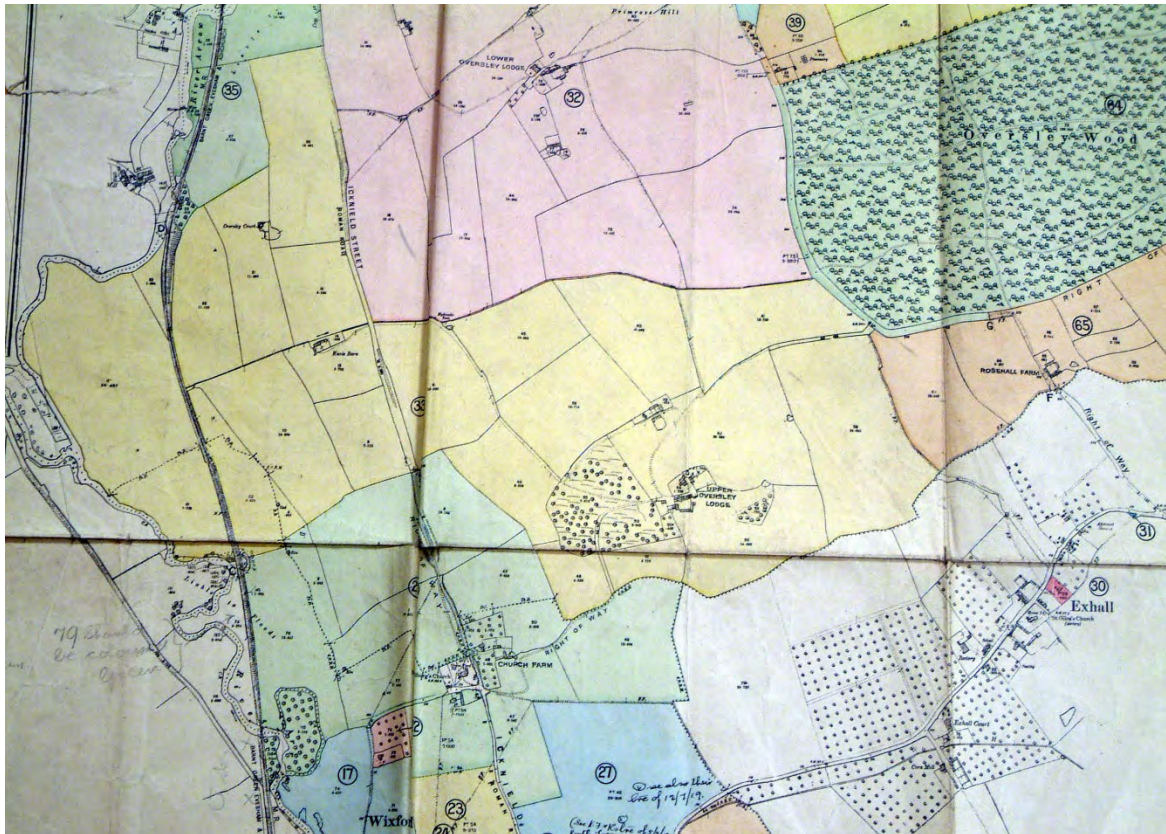


Plate 9: 1919 sale catalogue, plan – Upper Oversley Lodge Farm shown yellow (WCRO CR4180/4)



Plate 10: 1919 sale catalogue, Upper Oversley Lodge (WCRO CR4180/4)

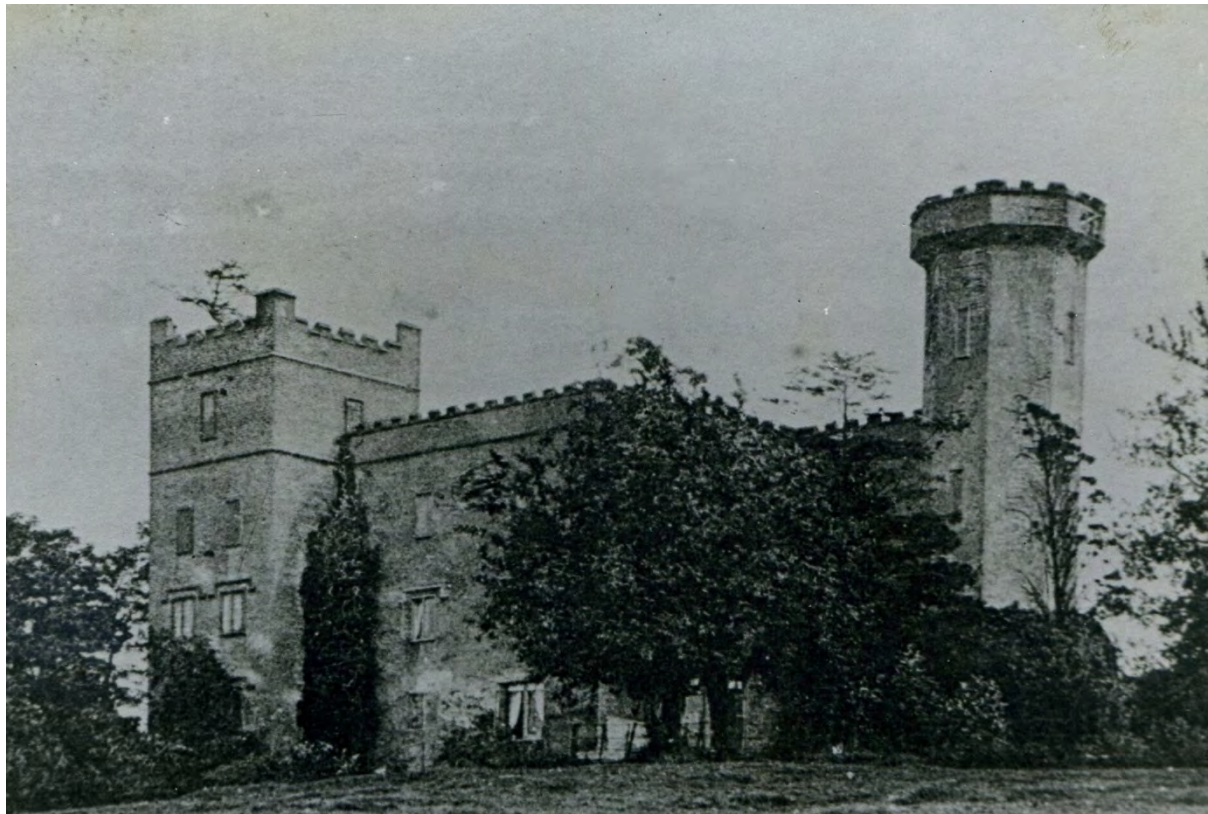


Plate 11: Oversley Upper Lodge / Castle, c.1880s (ADLHS 201)

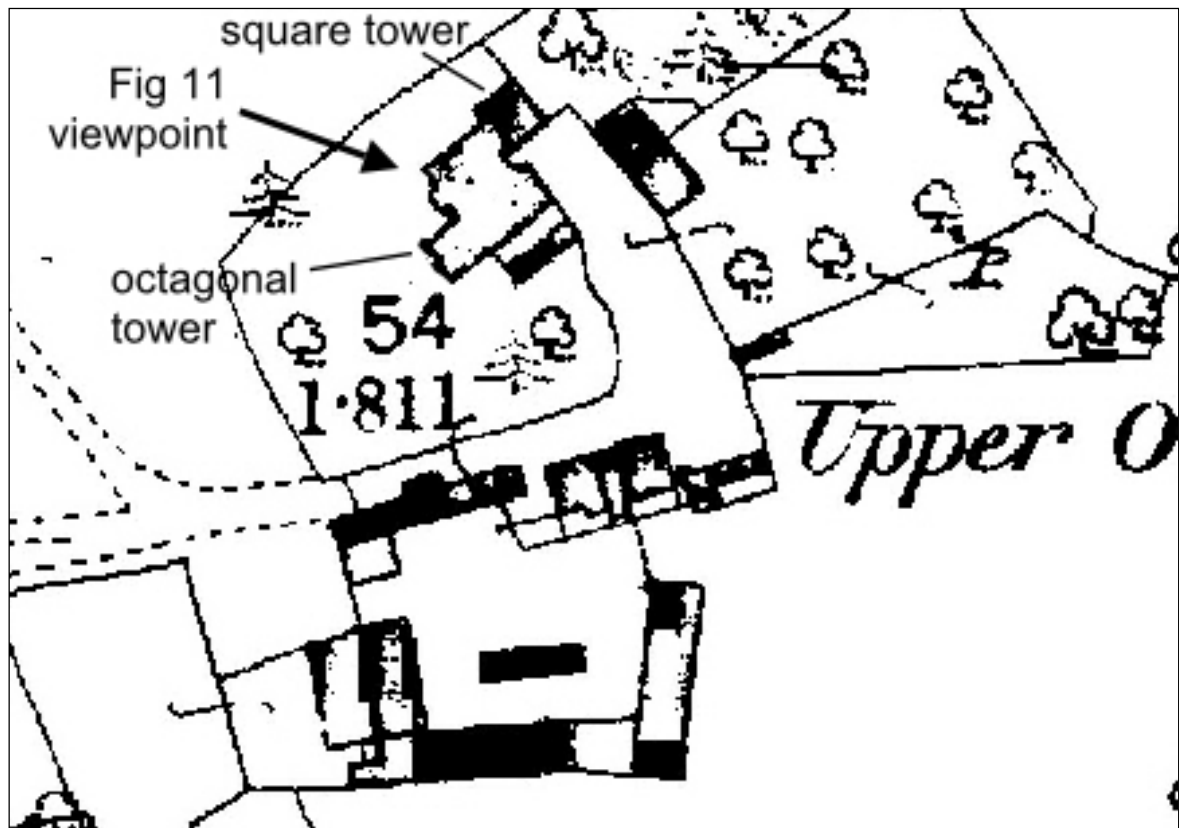


Plate 12: Lodge and outbuildings, 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 188XX



Plate 13: Detail from Thorpe's map of 1747 (WCRO CR1998/M12)

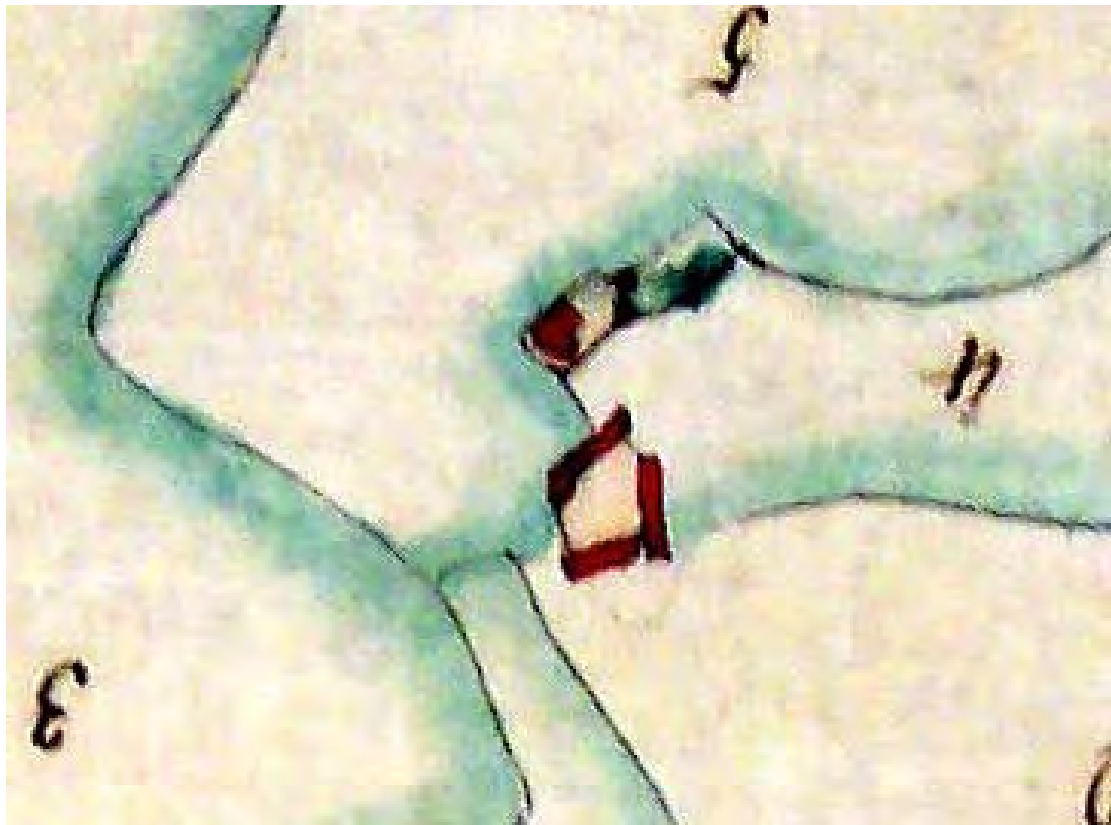


Plate 14: Detail from Ragley Estate map, 1782-1793 (WCRO CR114A/188)



Plate 15: Detail from sketch map by B Pippett, c.1854 (WCRO CR1998/A89)

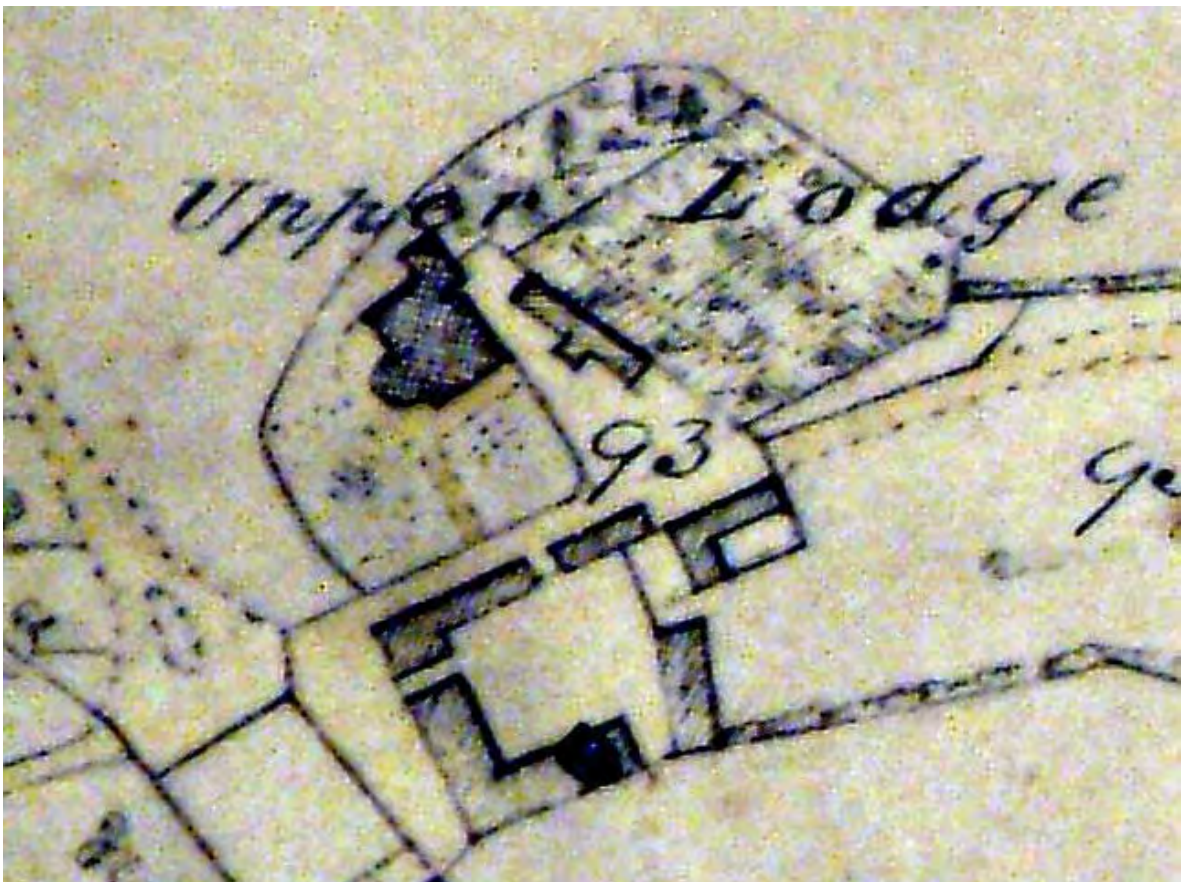


Plate 16: Detail from Pippett's map of 1872 (WCRO CR1998/M27)

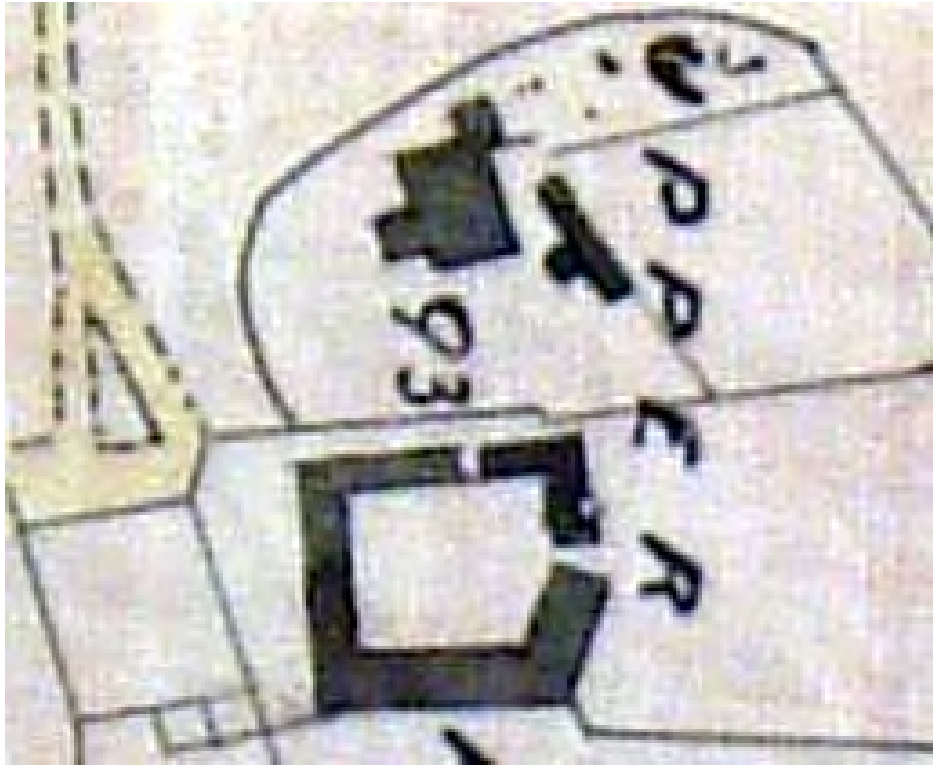


Plate 17: Detail from Throckmorton Estate map, undated possibly 1880s (WCRO 4180/18)

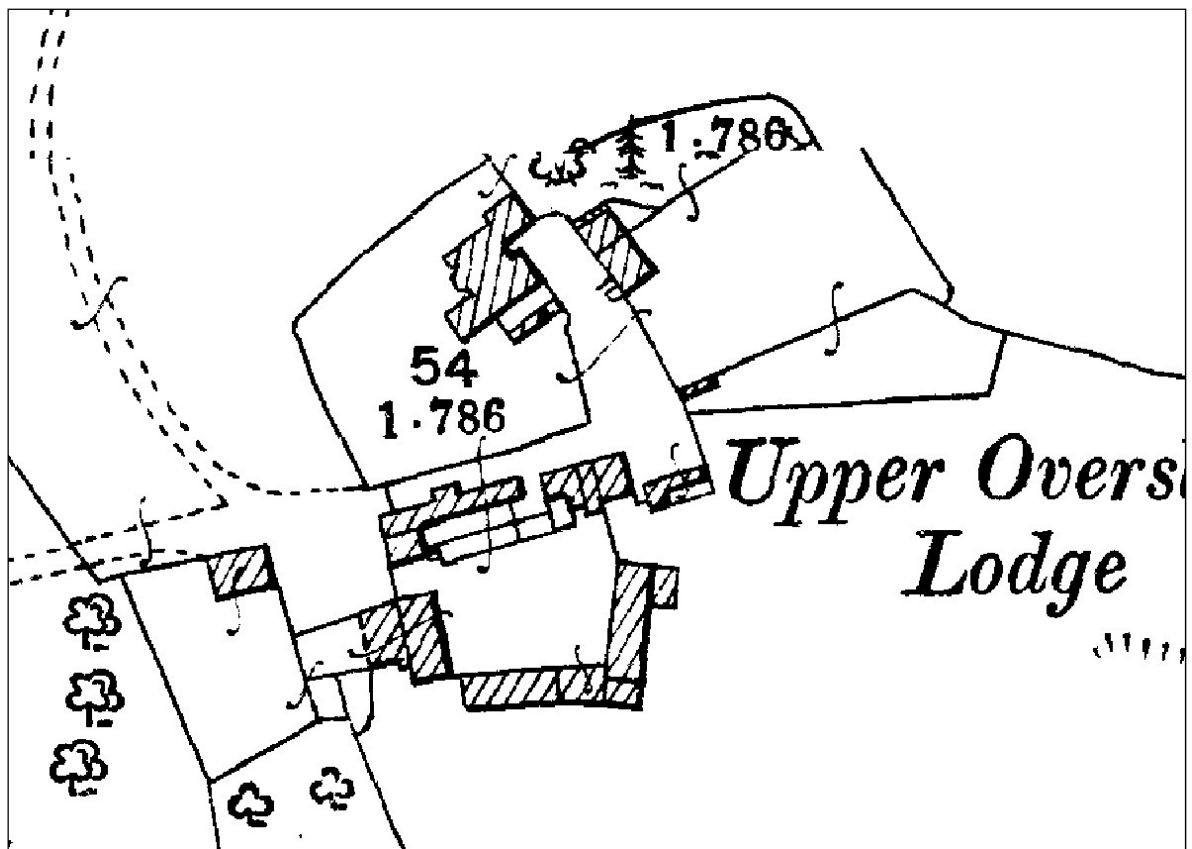


Plate 18: 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1905

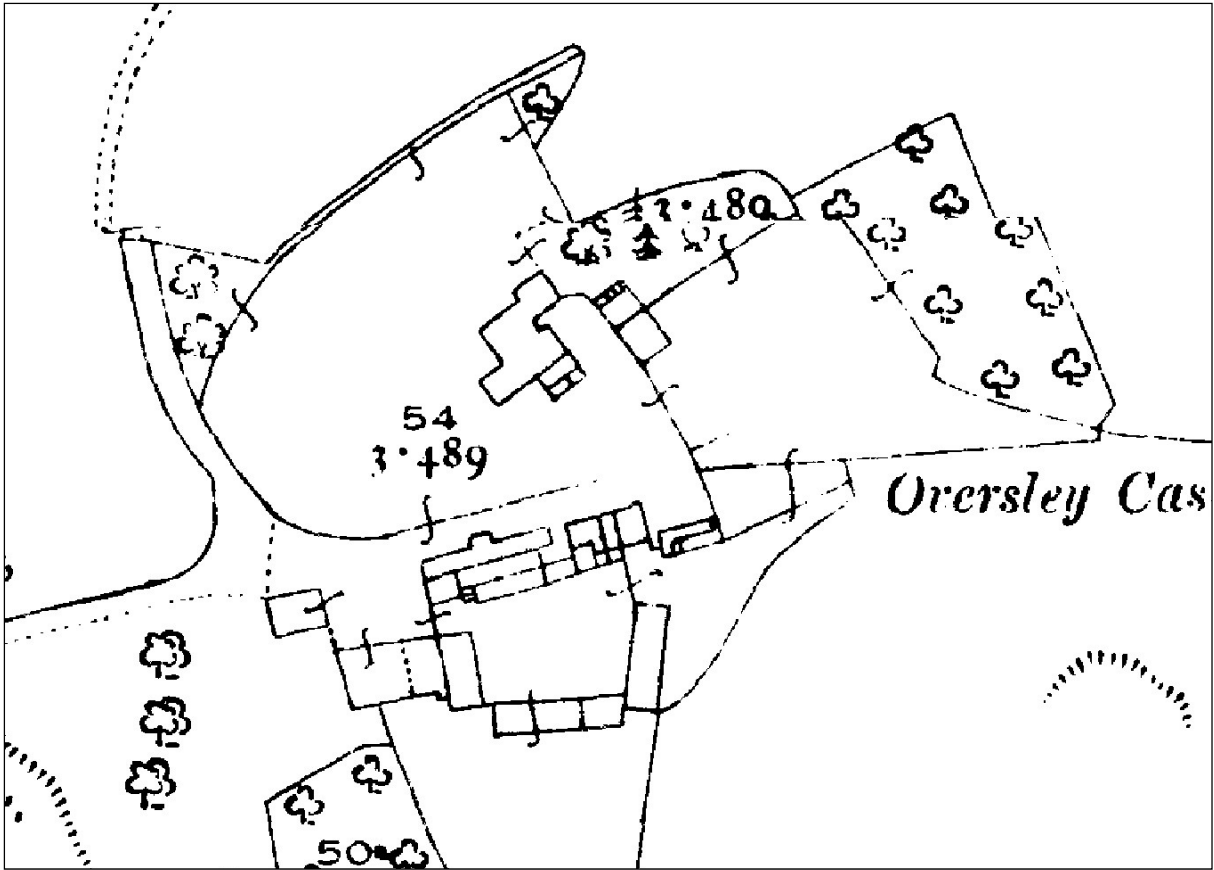


Plate 19: 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 19XX

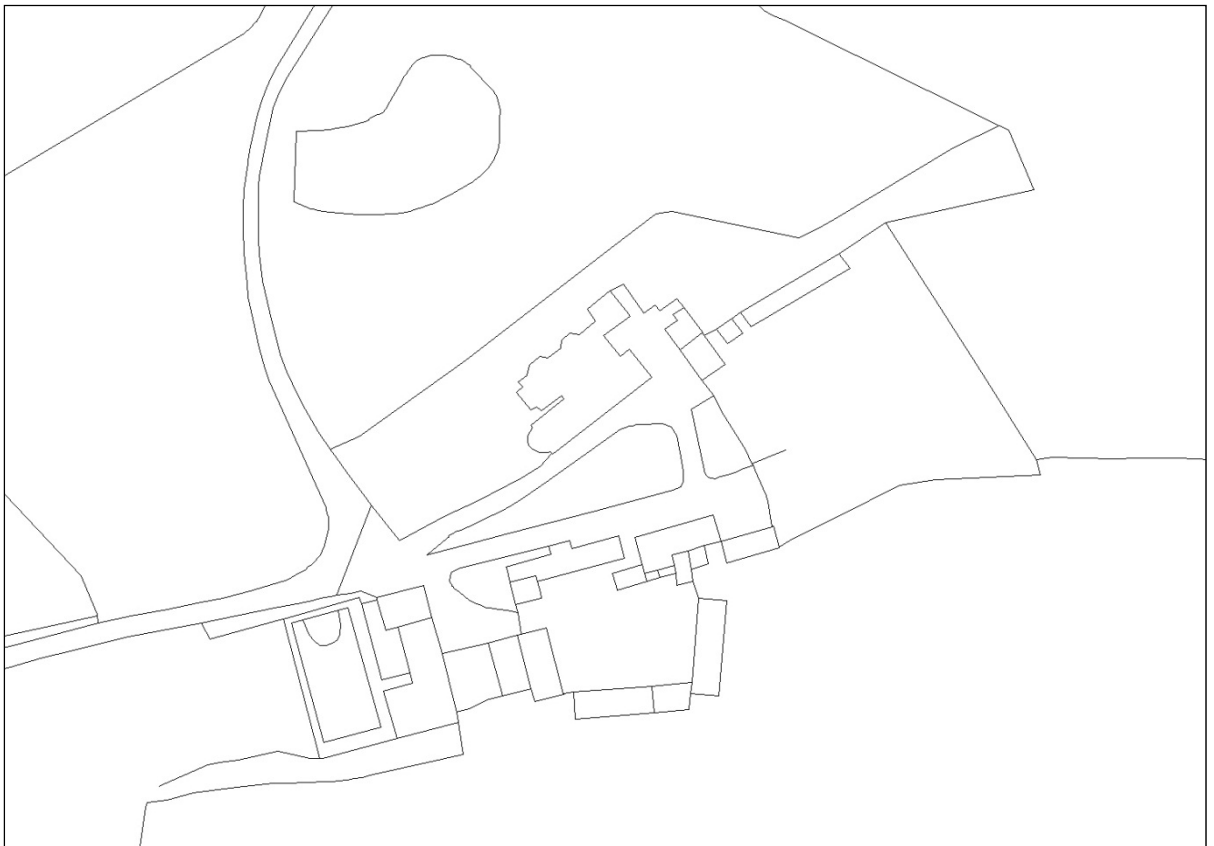


Plate 20: Current Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map



Plate 21: Oversley Castle, 1880s (top), and Coughton Court, 2012 (below), showing similarity in the appearance. (N.B. the photo of Coughton is converted to a mirror image because the correct view is not clear due to trees; the frontage is symmetrical so this does not create any false impression.)



Plate 22: Postcard, possibly made for the Oakleys, sent by Miss JM Oakley from Oversley Lodge, postmarked Dec 30th 1904 (WCRO PH/352/9/26)



Plate 23: Postcard similar to Fig 22, probably for commercial purposes (ADLHS photo 51)



IBC 1: The best, partial view of the house from the kitchen garden. No clear views of or from the farmyard were intended, but rather a vista which could ignore the workaday



IBC 2: The southern, principal façade of the house over the farm; the 17th century core to the right, the later drawing room to the left. New terraced garages in the slope would leave the prospect from the house largely unaltered



IBC 3: The western aspect, largely 1930s and taking in the garden views falling away to the valley; note the two cross-gables at the heart of the house. The 'hidden' corner in the middle is probably the western end of the earliest house



IBC 4: The 18th century tower from the east; here it is proposed to build an adjoining structure into the slope



IBC 5: The 1930s Art deco wing containing the Billiard Room; it is currently flat-roofed behind a high parapet (roof level indicated by rain-water hopper)



IBC 6: Entrance Porch redolent of the work of Baillie Scott and Beresford (1919-41)



IBC 7: Arts and Crafts-inspired carved bressumer in the 'Loggia'



IBC 8: The exceptionally fine oak panelling. Restrained but overwhelming



IBC 9: Queen Anne-style panelling in the Billiard Room



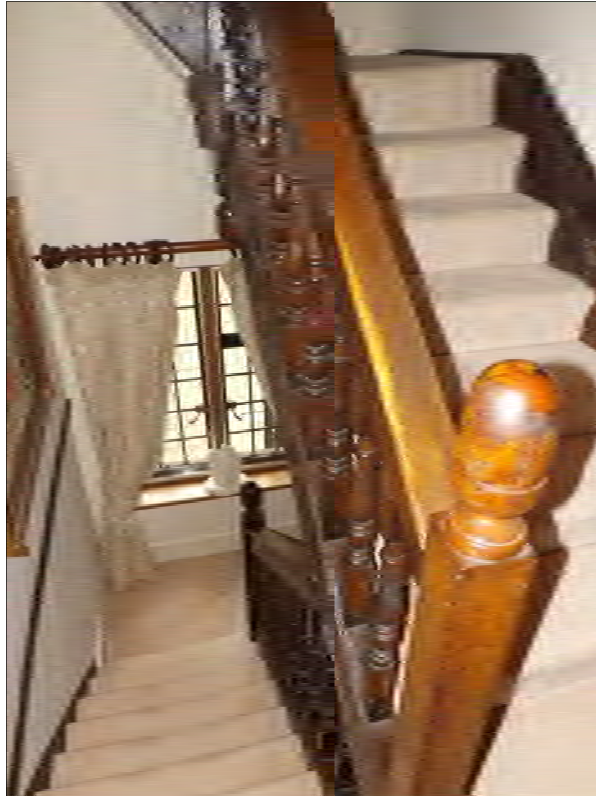
IBC 10: Parquetry (not normally painted) and carved detail on a ceiling beam



IBC 11: Window catches, Arts and Crafts 1932



IBC 12: Adjustable window stay, Arts and Crafts 1932



IBC 13: The acorn finial on the stairs, pendant behind



IBC 14: Barn exterior; east face - plinth, close-studding and boarding; gable – plinth, close studding, box-framing and boarded upper portion



IBC 15: Barn, north end interior



IBC 16: Barn interior, looking south



IBC 17: Barn interior, the queen-post roof and belt-driven shaft and wheels



IBC 18: Barn exterior, plinth, box-framing, nogging and boarding. Note re-used corner post



IBC 19: The byre; south-facing open front boarded in



IBC 20: The byre, interior, looking east



IBC 21: The byre, interior looking west; note the slope of a re-used stable travis to the left



IBC 22: The forge, two distinct phases of side-wall; later baffle wall across front



IBC 23: Forge interior: the hearth and alcove; two phases of side and rear wall distinct



IBC 24: The garage, facing the house of Oversley Castle to the north



IBC 25: Beneath the garage, pig pens on the south, under-built in the hillside; upper windows are few, wasting the exceptional views



IBC 26: The stables from the farmyard



IBC 27: The stables; a sliding ventilation shutter of offset slats



IBC 28: The stable from the farmyard



IBC 29: The stable, interior with feeding trough and hay-racks



IBC 30: 20th-century lean-to addition to the stable rear (west)



IBC 31: The former open front of the coach house/pool-house from the drive



IBC 32: The former coach-house/pool house interior



IBC 33: The so-called casino, from the farmyard



IBC 34: The gardener's cottage from the kitchen garden



IBC 35: View along the greenhouse exterior



IBC 36: Interior of the greenhouse at a modular break. Note the heated/unheated sections and proprietary steel staging



IBC 37: The aspect of the greenhouse across the kitchen garden, now only partly used



IBC 38: Pool house annexe, long, (west) face, half of its length replacement UPVC doors



IBC 39: Pool house annexe, north gable; here its greenhouse basis is most easily seen



IBC 40: The hipped south gable with two doors



IBC 41: The pool-house annexe interior



IBC 42: The louvre-crank ventilator system, common to both pool-house annexe and greenhouse



IBC 43: 1930s brass door furniture on the west gable doors



IBC 44: Inside the pool-house proper. Doors on right lead to the glass-house annexe

**BOARD'S "WIRE TENSION" GREEN-
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BUILD IN STEEL!

CAPTURE LIGHT! CUT OUT PUTTY!
TESTED FOR THIRTY YEARS

10ft. × 7ft. - £16 | 16ft. × 8ft. - £24

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