

◆ The gardens, orchards and park at Danny in Hurstpierpoint

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ESTATE MAP OF 1666

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An estate map of Danny dated 1666, held in the East Sussex Record Office, is a little known, but extremely interesting, record of the Elizabethan house in its mid-seventeenth century setting. The following short essay is an analysis of that map, considering the architecture of the house itself, which is shown in two bird's eye views: one on the map and the other, quite possibly by another hand, in an inset detail. Many of the divisions of the landscape around the house — indicated by the walls, hedges and courts — appear to be contemporary with the house, while the planting and other features represent later work. Estate maps, such as this one, reveal important information about how landscapes developed and changed over time. The Danny map also provides clues about the personality and interests of the man who owned the estate at the time, Peter Courthope.

An estate map of Danny by the surveyor Robert Whitpaine, dated 1666, provides evidence of the state of the house, park and gardens in the middle of the seventeenth century (Fig. 1). An inscription in an ornate cartouche (Fig. 2a) reads:

A Survay of the Lands belonging to Dany Place part of the demanes of the Mannor of Hurstpierpoint And allsoe of the great and little Willcombes lying in the perishes of Hurstperpoint Pycomb and Clayton in the County of Sussex Survay,d and plotted By Robert Whitpaine 1666.

The original map is at the East Sussex Record Office (DAN 2097); a copy has been made for Danny House. The original map measures 40.5 inches by 54 inches and includes Danny, Warren Farm and Foxhole Cottages, field names, names of adjacent properties and their owners. There is a table of contents and a scale bar: 40 inches to 1 mile (Fig. 2b). West is at the top of the map; the convention of north being at the top of maps was not yet established, so this was not unusual. In addition to showing the house in the main part of the map, there is a more detailed inset view of the house in the upper right-hand corner, something that is very unusual in estate maps of the period (Fig. 3). In the other corners are drawings of wild flowers and insects (Figs 4a–c). To the left, near 'Woollsenberry Hill' are rabbits and a hunter with

his gun (Figs 5a–c). There is a compass rose of 16 points (Fig. 6) and the achievement of arms of Peter Courthope (Fig. 7).¹

THE HOUSE

The original Elizabethan house, much of which survives today, was built after 1582 by George Goring (birth date unknown, died in 1594), probably incorporating an earlier medieval hunting lodge (Figs 3 & 8). Further changes to the estate may also have been made during the ownership of his grandson, George Lord Goring (c. 1583–1663). Both of these men were important courtiers who knew the most innovative garden-makers of the period: Lord Burghley for the first George, with whom he worked as receiver general of the court of wards, and Henry Prince of Wales (and later his brother, Charles I) for the third, who also travelled to the Netherlands as ambassador to the Prince of Orange at a time when Dutch gardens were in their ascendancy. To all these men, creating a high-status garden and park would have been the essential complement to their houses. One tantalizing further piece of information comes from the will of John Tradescant the elder, made in 1638: 'Item I give to my said grandchildren the Some of One hundred and ffiftie poundes which is in the hands of ye right honourable the Lord Goring ...'.² Although this amount may have covered costs



Fig. 1. Estate map of Danny.





Fig 2a. The ornamental cartouche.



Fig. 2b. The scale bar on the map.



Fig 3. Detail of the inset view of the house.



Figs 4a–c. Corner details: wild flowers and insects.

a



Fig. 5a. Detail of rabbits and hunting.

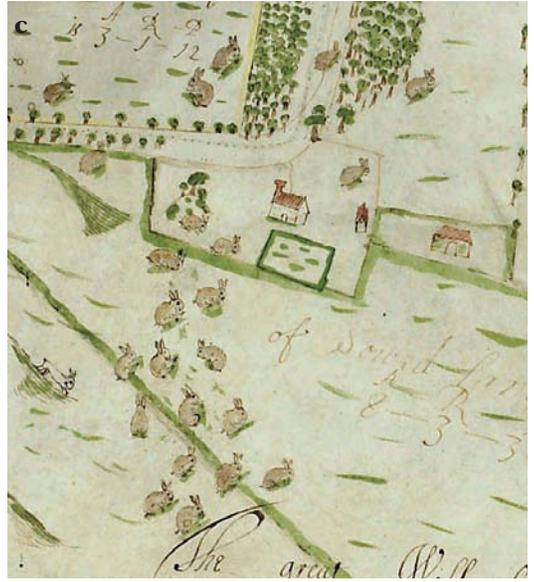


Fig. 5b-c. Details of rabbits and hunting.



Fig. 6. The compass rose.



Fig. 7. Peter Courthope's arms.



Fig. 8. Detail showing the house, gardens, orchards, dovecote and fields.

at other properties, it is possible that Tradescant provided trees and plants for Danny, just as he did for royal and Cecilian properties.

The plan of the house (in the usual form of an H) is shown in the bird's eye views of the main map (Fig. 9) and in the inset detail (Fig. 3). The centre of the house was (and is) five bays wide, gabled, with a projecting porch. Rising up on the west side (back) of the house, visible just to the left of the porch, is what appears to be an outlook tower, something that was typical of many of the finest Tudor palaces and houses.³ Closer observation of this feature in the inset map (Fig. 3) suggests that, like many others, it was polygonal (either hexagonal or octagonal) and brilliantly glazed to provide a belvedere over the gardens and park. Also visible in the inset view is the sculpted ornament (faces in roundels) in the gables of the façade (traces of which survive today), the columns flanking the porch and the exuberant fenestration typical of so many of the finest Elizabethan houses. Along the north front are projecting towers, one containing a

staircase and the others possibly used as garderobes, similar to those that survive at Gainsborough Old Hall (Lincs.) and Beckley (Oxon).

THE APPROACH

The original house was moated, and traces of the moat can be seen to the north and possibly to the southeast (Fig. 8: green rectangular compartments). The house was approached through a series of walled forecourts, typical of late Elizabethan and Jacobean houses.⁴ Sir Francis Bacon's essay, 'Of Building', on the ideal princely house (1625) describes a similar series of forecourts.

And thus much for the model of the palace; save that you must have, before you come to the front, three courts. A green court plain, with a wall about it; a second court of the same, but more garnished, with little turrets, or rather embellishments, upon the wall; and a third court, to make a square with the front ...⁵



Fig. 9. Bird's eye view of the main map.

It appears by the colouring of the map that some of the forecourt walls were built of brick (red), while other divisions (shown in green) suggest that some were hedged. It would have been very unusual, however, to put hedges along the façade of the house itself, which is suggested by the continuation of the green line around the inside of the forecourt. This convention may have been meant to show that the forecourt was grassed, something that appears to be borne out by the strokes of green wash in the inset view. There were gates into the outer forecourt to the north and to the south. The area of the inner court is given as 1 rod, 16 perches; the outer court measured 2 rods and 02 perches.

At the centre of the entrance to the main court from the outer court was a large, gabled and turreted gatehouse with a centrepiece three bays wide and of at least two storeys. The inset view shows the gatehouse as lower and squatter than in the main view. This type of gatehouse was

typical of more conservative houses in the Tudor period; examples include Tixall (Staffs), Charlecote (Warcs) and, more locally, Cuckfield (Sussex).⁶ The passageway through the gatehouse was aligned on the entrance porch of the house and linked by what looks like a stone path. Gatehouses of this medieval, turreted type were quite old-fashioned by the late sixteenth century; more innovative houses had small, ornamental porter's lodges.⁷

An ornate and disproportionately large sundial is shown just to the north of the path in the inset view (Fig. 3), suggesting that this was a much-valued ornament to the entrance.⁸ The long, tree-lined approach to the entrance courts may have been added in the seventeenth century. Lord Burghley built tree-lined avenues, but only from his garden into the park, not at the entrance, and no other Tudor examples have yet come to light.

SERVICES

Typically, the service buildings were behind the house, built to the north and east of an enclosure, shown divided into compartments (Fig. 8). This may have been a kitchen garden or yard. The types of service buildings one would have expected to find at a Tudor house would have included a stable, laundry, dairy, wash-house, smithy, slaughterhouse, etc. By the mid-seventeenth century, some of these would have been redundant, and it is not possible to determine what exactly survived in 1666.⁹ Other small buildings were placed to the south of the orchards; these may have been service buildings associated with the gardens, such as distilling houses. They may also have functioned as pleasure buildings or banqueting houses.

THE GARDENS

The house was surrounded by open land to the north and enclosed gardens to the south. The gardens were divided into enclosed compartments of varying sizes. Most sophisticated early seventeenth-century gardens were tripartite, as they appear to be here: the 'new orchard' at the top (3? acres, 0 rods, 16? perches), planted with rows of trees; a walled garden (not named, but measuring 1 rod and 36 perches), also planted with trees; and another enclosure below it (1 rod, 21 perches) with trees and what appears to be a long pond of water, quite possibly part of the moat.¹⁰

The central walled garden is enclosed by brick walls (coloured red, with the individual bricks suggested by patterning) that are aligned with the length of the south front of the house. This would have been the main pleasure garden and would have originally had walks from the house placed symmetrically, along with ornamental features; one would expect a fountain or conduit of some type at the centre, and possibly arbours or other pleasure buildings at the back. Most typical would have been a quadripartite layout with ornamental planting (knots, labyrinths or other 'curious' designs) in each of the quadrants.¹¹ Large gateways — shown at the centres of the flanking west and eastern walls — provided access into the orchards to the east and west.

The three garden enclosures are bordered by the house on the north and by a long, narrow feature on the south that runs the entire length of the three garden compartments (area given as 1 rod 13 perches). No map makers used contour lines at this period, so it isn't always possible to determine if a feature was raised or excavated. Furthermore, the feature is shown outlined in a green wash. If this was a long water feature, linking with the rectangular ponds (or the remains of the moat, if that is what they are) to the east and north, one might have expected it to be shown in blue. The problematic colouring used in this map is discussed below. Alternatively, this might have been a raised terrace, with the bulge at the eastern (lower) end representing an elevated feature (a mount) or the site of a banqueting house.

South of the main gardens were more orchards; the first is inscribed the 'Old Orchard' and the second as 'Ash Croft'. Again, each of these appears to have had a pond or pool along the eastern boundaries, each of them visually linking up with the remains of the presumed moat. Below the orchards is a large field ('pigoone house feild') and a dovecote (or pigeon house) (Fig. 8).¹² Its position on a rise in the land near the ponds corresponds to what was recommended in books on husbandry.

INTERPRETING THE MAP

Although there is no key to the meanings of the various colours used, it is useful to consider the meaning of the colours used for various elements in the map.

BLUE

Most of the buildings are shown as colourless in the main part of the map, with the exception of the building directly behind the house, which is coloured in a blue wash. The same blue colour is applied to the ogee-cap of the belvedere and to the edges of the roofs of the projecting ranges. It is very likely this was meant to show that those roofs were of lead (common for turret caps and for roof-top walks), but inexplicable in terms of the service building to the rear.¹³ As mentioned above, blue was not used for ponds, streams or any other water features, something that is very unusual and suggests that the use of blue for the other features was intended to represent something quite distinct.

RED

Red is used for brick walls (including the walls of the house in the inset view) and for chimney stacks. It was quite common for red to be used for roofs in estate maps; here it is used only for the roofs of the service buildings.

GREEN

This is used for trees, hedges and fields, so covers large parts of the map. Green has also been used for the main roofs of the house, again suggesting an attempt to distinguish the different materials used for the roofs. Although the roof areas coloured blue were most likely of lead, it is difficult to interpret the green colour; copper is a possibility, but seems unlikely on such a great expanse. As mentioned above, green was also used to indicate what must have been water features. Another distinct aspect of the use of green is the selection of schematized patterns (mostly dots and dashes) that probably represented different agricultural uses or crops.

WHY WAS THE MAP MADE?

Maps were not so common or inexpensive that they were made for no reason at all. In fact, there were many reasons a patron would commission a map: to measure the exact boundaries of his land; to demonstrate improvements made to the estate; to show the extent of a hunting park; and/or to show the leaseholders of his land. One's land was, of course, the most obvious demonstration of status and wealth; a beautiful map could be

displayed in a prominent position to emphasize this even more.

We know from the inscription that this map was made in 1666 for Peter Courthope, who owned Danny from about 1657. It must be assumed that the gardens would not have been in prime condition at that time because the Gorings had had serious financial problems from the 1630s. The estate would surely have deteriorated, particularly any high-maintenance gardens (and clipped topiary, labyrinths and mazes, and other typical ornamental features were all very high-maintenance). It may have been for this reason that the gardens and orchards were all so densely planted with trees, which required less care and could also be profitable. Clearly Courthope eschewed fiddly ornamental gardens in favour of something more productive, like trees, an attitude that was typical of the Interregnum years.¹⁴

There is one particular feature of this map that suggests one of its original purposes: the inscription — written three times — along the road that passes by the house that says: ‘This is not a hygh way’. Clearly, Courthope wanted a legal document (the map) to show that the road past his house was not a public thoroughfare. New Way Lane was created to give Courthope the privacy he so clearly desired and so emphatically proclaimed on the map.

But if Courthope was not interested in creating highly ornamental gardens, his interest in nature and friendship with the great naturalist John Ray are suggested in the finely drawn floral decoration in the corners of the map (Fig. 4). The pleasures of the hunting park are also suggested by the figure of a hunter with his gun and a large rabbit warren (Fig. 5). Only the finest maps included such ornamental features, which would have added to the cost of production. Typically, one senses Courthope’s great pride in his house and estate.

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LANDSCAPE SHOWN IN THIS MAP?

Although this essay is only concerned with interpreting Whitpaine’s map of Danny, it is interesting to consider what happened to the landscape shown in the map. It is clear by looking at later maps, particularly the eighteenth-century map drawn by Richard Budgen in 1783 (DAN 2103), that the land to the south of Danny (previously divided into gardens and orchards) was laid to ‘Lawn’, in the fashion of the day. The tree-lined avenue that was originally aligned with the east façade was also shifted to the north. Sadly, none of the later maps (even with contours) give any clues about the puzzling terrace or moat.

Any estate map only provides information about a landscape in one moment in time. Given what an important survival Elizabethan Danny is, it is frustrating that the map shows very little about the original gardens, apart from the walled enclosures that remained. At the same time, gardens of the Commonwealth Period were rarely recorded, and this map certainly adds to our understanding of gardens and land management in the middle of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the quality of the map is exceptional in the two portraits of the house itself, the details of the gardens, orchards and park, and the concern for the owner’s privacy. The many questions raised by the map — including the meaning of the colours used, the contours of the landscape and the identification of the smaller buildings on the estate — may only be answered if corroborative material in the form of documents or other maps were to come to light.

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

¹ According to the notes made by Ms Wooldridge: argent, a fess azure between three estoiles sable; crest, A dexter arm coupled, the hand grasping an anchor.

² See Prudence Leith-Ross, *The John Tradescants: Gardeners to the Rose and Lily Queen* (London, 1998), 103–5.

³ See illustrations of Melbury Hall (Dorset) and Lacock

Abbey (Wilts.) in Paula Henderson, *The Tudor House and Garden: Architecture and Landscape in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Yale, 2005), figs 241 and 182. The belvedere may have been a later addition, however, as a recent survey suggests that it was built on to the roof after the completion of the roof.

⁴ Other contemporary illustrations of typical walled approaches include Ralph Treswell’s 1587 map of

Holdenby (*Tudor House and Garden*, figs 30 and 109) and John Thorpe's survey of Cheshunt Park with a detail showing Theobalds (*Tudor House and Garden*, fig. 28).

- ⁵ Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, R. L. Ellis & D. D. Heath, 14 vols (London, 1857–74) VI, ii, 485.
- ⁶ *Tudor House and Garden*, figs 56, 58.
- ⁷ *Tudor House and Garden*, 53–62.
- ⁸ On sundials in the period, see *Tudor House and Garden*, 180–81. Very few sundials from the period survive, although books on early dials written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrate a number of them and, equally important, record their evocative *memento*

mori inscriptions.

- ⁹ By the mid seventeenth century, houses had fewer services, as they were less self-sufficient. See *Tudor House and Garden*, 12–16.
- ¹⁰ On tripartite gardens, *Tudor House and Garden*, 108–9.
- ¹¹ *Tudor House and Garden*, chapter 3.
- ¹² On dovecotes and pigeon houses, see *Tudor House and Garden*, numerous references.
- ¹³ See Paula Henderson, 'Life at the top', *Country Life*, 3 Jan. 1985, 6–9.
- ¹⁴ See the relevant discussion in T. Mowl & Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture without Kings: Rise of Puritan Classicism under Cromwell* (Manchester, 1995).
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