

SUPPOSED MOATED ENCLOSURE, OAKS ROAD, STANWELL (TQ 057 746)

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About 400 metres to the north of the parish church of Stanwell (formerly in Middlesex, but now in Surrey), and close to the southern boundary of Heathrow Airport is an earthwork scheduled as an ancient monument (A.M. in Fig. 1). There is now a plantation of trees within the earthwork, the moat is partially infilled and the south-eastern corner has been destroyed by a large warehouse, built before the site was scheduled in 1975. It is described as a moated enclosure in the inventory of ancient monuments of Middlesex where it was thought to predate 1714.² However a review of the documentary evidence available indicates that the monument could not have been constructed before 1819.

According to a survey of Stanwell and Hammonds Manor undertaken in 1748, the site and the area immediately to the south were then occupied by 4 enclosed plots of land—*4 Acres Close, Drying Yard Close, Close next Green and Gardens* including a house—all described as meadow, pasture or gardens in the ownership of Alexander Hume Campbell but leased to the Stanhope family (Fig. 1.2.1).³ Rocque's map of Middlesex (1754)⁴ is at a smaller scale than the one included in the earlier survey but is more pictographic, showing additional details such as trees and vegetation within the major field boundaries. From his map it is clear that the plan of the house referred to and illustrated in the 1748 survey had altered only slightly but in 1754 the area now occupied by the enclosure then formed part of an ornamental or landscaped garden attached to the building, divided by rows of trees and containing what appear to have been two small ponds.

The Enclosure Award of 1792⁵ indicates that the same area had again undergone changes not only in land divisions but also in terms of property ownership. At that time the area in question was referred to as *the Canal and Pleasure Grounds* together with the *Mansion House* belonging to E. F. Stanhope. The plan included in the survey is schematised to a certain extent and shows only the major plot boundaries and buildings. The canal is not illustrated but the *Mansion House* is shown as a rectangular structure occupying the same position as the house in the 1748 survey.

Greenwood's map of Middlesex (1819) does, however, show the *Canal* and demonstrates that by that date the *Mansion House* had been rebuilt on a different site to the east, as a winged building (Fig. 1.2.2). In Greenwood's map the *Canal* and western property boundary (indicated by dashed lines in Fig. 1.2.2) extended into arable land belonging to the Gibbons family, lords of Stanwell

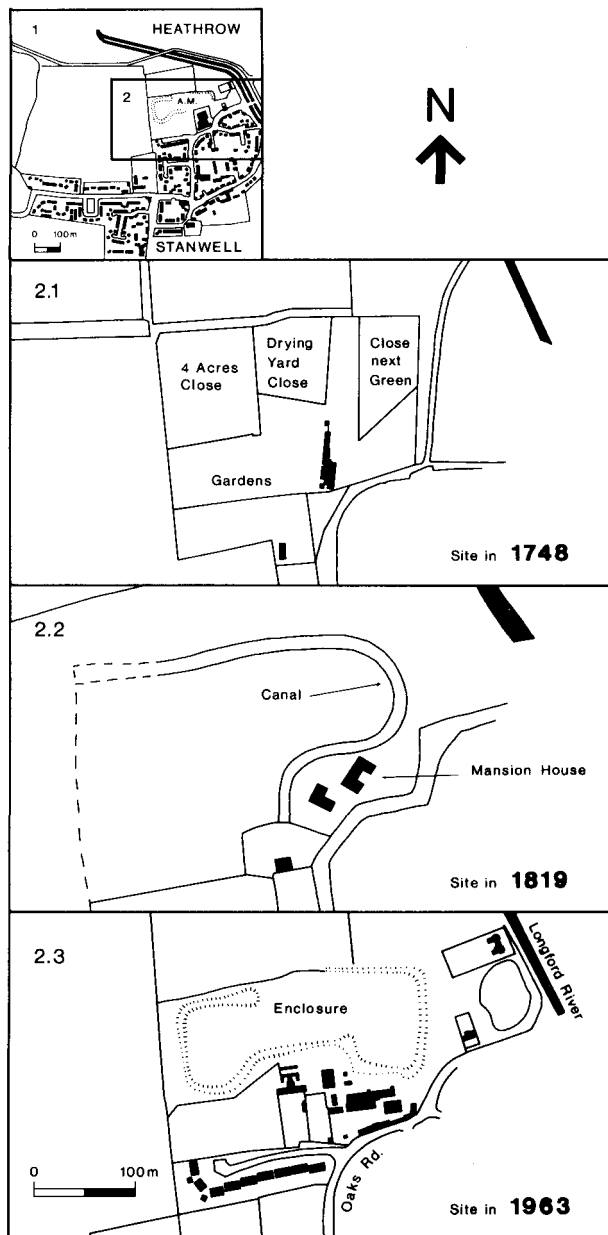


Fig. 1 Supposed Moated Enclosure, Oaks Road, Stanwell; site location and Site at different stages of development. (Crown copyright reserved)

Manor, but in the Tithe Map of Stanwell (1840)⁶ the boundary had returned to the line shown on the 1748 map. This probably reflects an error in Greenwood's surveying and it should be noted that not only was his map drawn at a relatively small scale (approx. 1:34000) but it is also stylised and not as accurate as either the 1748 map or the Tithe map. The *Mansion House* itself can be equated with a building referred to as a 'house of some consequence' that up until 1820 stood at the bend in Oaks Road.⁷

By 1819/20 the land owned by the Stanhopes had been acquired by the Gibbons family⁸ and had been enclosed within the park attached to Stanwell Place, their residence as the lords of the manor. The present enclosure had replaced the *Canal* by 1840, as it appears on the Tithe Map where it is depicted as a water-filled feature, described as a *Fish Pond*. The *Mansion House* had been demolished and the land had become a sort of pleasure garden. The water supply for the *Fish Pond* appears to have been provided by a culvert which was probably connected with the Longford River to the north of the site. Part of that culvert is still visible at the northern end of the western arm of the enclosure and is composed of at least two brick arches. The enclosure still retained its original outline in 1963 (Fig 1; 2.3) but was no longer filled with water.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the enclosure is of no great antiquity and simply formed a landscape feature within Stanwell Park, replacing an earlier water-filled feature originally belonging to the Stanhope family.

NOTES

1. This paper has arisen as a result of an excavation carried out in a field to the west of the site under the direction of Martin O'Connell on behalf of the Archaeological Unit, Planning Department, Surrey County Council.
2. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) (1937) *Middlesex*.
3. Survey of Stanwell and Hammonds Manor (1748) Greater London Record Office Acc 809/MST 9B and 10A.
4. J. Rocque (1971) *A Topographical Map of the County of Middlesex* (1754) Reprinted by London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.
5. Enclosure Award (1792) Greater London Record Office Acc 621/14a and 15.
6. Tithe Map of Stanwell (1840) Greater London Record Office TA/S'WELL.
7. Victoria County History (VCH) *Middlesex* 3 (1962)
8. Land Tax Assessment Greater London Record Office MR/PLT 6718.