
**WOODLAND SURVEY
AT PARK PLACE,
REMENHAM, BERKSHIRE
(REWS 12)**

Work Undertaken For
Coll Spink 2

April 2013

Report Compiled by
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

Woodland survey was undertaken at Park Place, Remenham, at the request of the Berkshire County Archaeological Officer, in order to determine the presence/absence of archaeological features in the wooded areas in advance of woodland management procedures.

The site lies in parkland within the Park Place Estate, Remenham, Berkshire. The area has been parkland since at least the 1700s and, prior to that, was kept as hunting grounds in the medieval period.

No ancient archaeological features were found in the woodland surveyed.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Coll Spink 2 to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation (survey of the woodlands) at Park Place, Remenham, Berkshire, as part of the ongoing archaeological works in advance of development. The survey, requested by the Archaeological Officer, Berkshire Archaeology, was undertaken on 29th March 2012. The area of the study is defined on Figure 1. Park Place Estate is a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Remenham is located 12km northeast of Reading and 12km west of Maidenhead in the administrative district of Wokingham, Berkshire. Park Place Estate and is situated 2.2km southeast of Remenham village. The site, centred on National Grid Reference SU 786 818, lies largely in the parish of Remenham, extending south into neighbouring Wargrave (Figs. 1 & 2).

Park Place Estate is located towards the southern end of the Chiltern Hills within a loop of the River Thames. Henley upon Thames lies at the base of Remenham Hill 1km west of the site and marks the county boundary between Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The highest part of the estate lies adjacent to Park Place at a height of c.105m OD. The land drops sharply from the west down towards the River Thames, which lies at c. 35m OD. The area of investigation (Figure 1) forms part of the landscaped estate grounds around Park Place.

Local soils are of the Frilsham Association, typically composed of argillic brown earths. These soils overlie solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk, although outcrops of Older River Gravels above clay with flints occur along the northern edge of the application area (Hodge *et al* 1984).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Park Place Estate lies within the Thames Valley, an area rich in well documented archaeological remains ranging in date from the Palaeolithic to the present day. Palaeolithic finds, including hand-axes, have been found at Harpsden, Remenham Hill and gravel quarries near Remenham village, all close to the development area (Wymer 1968, 202).

Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts are known from the local area, including early Neolithic pottery and flints from a pit excavated in advance of a gas pipeline at Remenham (Holgate and Start 1985, 6). Numerous Bronze Age find spots in the area probably derive from the River Thames and may represent votive deposition. Furthermore, two Bronze Age

barrows and a boundary ditch lie to the north of the development site.

Ritual deposition into the Thames appears to have continued well into the Iron Age, although the number of sites is reduced from that of the preceding period. Occupation sites are known from this period, one in the river valley south of Henley-on-Thames and others within the development area itself. One was revealed during an evaluation of the Aspect Golf course east of Parkplace Farm (Oxford Archaeological Unit 1995), as was evidence of Early Roman occupation. An Iron Age and Roman site was revealed during trenching (Wood 2005) and Iron Age pits during evaluation ahead of a Haul Road (Failes 2012).

Remenham is mentioned in the Domesday Book *c.* 1086 as *Rameham*, derived from the Old English meaning settlement ‘*ham*’ by the ‘*rima*’ meaning bank; indicating its position by the River Thames (Ekwall 1974, 384). The King held Remenham from Queen Edith at the time of the Domesday survey when it contained a mill, 52 acres of meadow and woodland for fencing.

The manor of Remenham was granted to the Earls of Warwick in 1090 with whom it remained until the end of the 15th century when it once again became royal property. Remenham parish formerly lay within the Forest of Windsor and was kept largely as park and hunting grounds throughout the medieval period (Cope-Faulkner and Taylor 2004, 3).

Lord Archibald Hamilton built a villa at Park Place shortly after he acquired the estate in 1719.

In 1752 the property was bought by General Henry Seymour Conway who made substantial alterations to the house during the 1750s. From 1760 through to

the 1780s Conway enlarged the parkland and embellished the estate with various ornamental structures and buildings including a Neolithic Passage grave from Jersey (The Druidic Temple) which he had reconstituted within the estate grounds (Temple Combe). General Conway, former governor of Jersey received this as a donation from the islands inhabitants upon his departure.

Lord Malmesbury purchased the property in 1797 and a sketch plan of this date shows a lane or drive ending in a U-shaped turning area at the north front of the house. The plan also shows a porch at the centre of the north front which by this stage was the principle entrance to the house.

The 1815 Estate Plan records for the first time, a configuration of fields subdivided by hedgerows and linear plantations in the southeast area of the estate (known as Kenton’s Farm). This was agricultural land which lay outside of the designed landscape of ornamental structures and buildings. A dense plantation of trees runs northeast to southwest alongside the northwestern side of this area, clearly delineating the perimeter of the Maylmesbury’s Estate and the boundary of the designed landscape.

The northeastern area of the estate (Aspect Park) is shown on a 1761 plan as agricultural common land divided by medieval field boundaries and the land remained in agricultural use until it was purchased by Lord Malmesbury (in 1797), as part of the extension to the east of the original Estate land.

This area was not integrated into the estate until the introduction of two eastern carriage drives, one of which subdivided the area into northern and southern halves. From the late 19th century the northern half of this area became parkland, while the southern half remained in agricultural use.

The estate was sold to Spurling in 1816 who exchanged it in 1824 with his cousin, Ebenezer Fuller-Maitland.

The estate was sold again in 1867 to Charles Easton who made extensive alterations to the house (Page and Ditchfield 1923, 162), including the demolition and replacement of the south part of the house, adding a new south-facing semi-circular bay, rising through all three stories, at the western corner of the south front. The alterations were completed by 1869. As part of the alterations, the rooms on the main floor were raised in height, the windows on the west front were all remodelled, a steeper roof with a mansard at the centre was added and the pediment at the centre of the west front was removed.

Charles Easton also constructed Temple Combe House, Temple Combe Farmhouse and Temple Comb Stable. Temple Combe was developed as a separate estate in the 19th century, with its own designed landscape. The structures are shown on the 1st edition 1883 OS Map. Temple Combe House was demolished in the late 20th century and replaced by a modern house built in 1964 on the same site.

The estate passed to Mr. J. Noble prior to a fire in 1870 which partially destroyed the main house. As a result, Noble had the house extensively remodelled and reorganised by Thomas Cundy, architect to the Grosvenor estate in London and the third generation of the family to hold that position. The house was re-built of rendered brick in the French Renaissance style.

During the early twentieth century, the mansion house was used by Middlesex County Council as a residential school, being taken over by Hillingdon Council in

1965, which maintained the school until its closure in 1988.

3. AIMS

The aim of the survey was to gather information to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any extant archaeological features in the Park Place wooded areas in order to enable the Archaeological Officer, Berkshire Archaeology, to formulate a policy for the management of any such resources present on the site and their protection during future woodland management.

4. METHODS

Each area of woodland surveyed (see Fig. 2) was walked through as systematically as the vegetation would allow. A record of density of cover and presence/absence of any archaeological remains was made and committed to pro-formas for each piece of woodland. A photographic record was made.

5. RESULTS

The woods subjected to survey are shown on Figure 2.

Wood No 1 (Fig. 2)

Name: Fir Wood

NGR: SU 78284 80919

Parish: Wargrave

Situated in the south of the area this wood was chiefly of well spaced out mainly deciduous trees (despite the name of the wood). Trees were first shown here on the 1900 Ordnance Survey map and named Fir Wood on the 1938 equivalent.

No external banks were present and there

was no obvious earthwork remains or archaeological features within the wood.

Wood No 2 (Fig. 2; Plates 1 and 2)

Name: Pond Clump

NGR: SU 78518 81172

Parish: Wargrave

A bank along the northern side of this small wooded area appears man-made but co-incides with a distinct break of slope. Banks are absent on the east and west sides. The southern side of Pond Clump has been removed recently and the wood felled. The main species in the remaining wood appears to be very mature hawthorn. The wood floor is carpeted with bluebells, a species said to be indicative of ancient woodland (Peterken 1974, 241).

Part of Pond Clump is present of the Estate Plan dated 1815, where it is depicted by relatively dense trees. The area around the pond, recently felled, is depicted in 1815 with sparse drawings of trees.

No archaeology/earthwork features were apparent within the woodland.

Wood No 3 (Fig. 2)

Name: Pit Clump

NGR: SU 78693 81425

Parish: Wargrave

Pit Clump is a grouping of mature deciduous trees well spaced out with cut grass in between.

It appears on the 1866 Fuller Maitland Sales Plan depicted by occasional trees.

No archaeological features or earthworks were evident.

Wood No 4 (Fig. 2)

Name: Garden Clump

NGR: SU 78454 81451

Parish: Wargrave

Garden Clump is also present on the 1866 sales Plan. It now takes the form of a group of isolated well-spaced out mature trees including deciduous, conifer and cedar. Bluebells is the main plant on the wood floor. No wood banks or other archaeological/earthwork features are present.

Wood No 5 (Fig. 2; Plates 3-6)

Name: Templecombe Wood (part thereof)

NGR: SU 78539 81799

Parish: Wargrave/Remenham

Describes as ‘...a relatively young area of woodland which occupies the site of Bickferry Common, which survived into the late 18th century.’ (LUC 2005) Templecombe Wood is now mixed woodland with medium dense ground cover. It contains a bowl-shaped quarry pit c15m dia x 2m deep at SU 78638 81831 (Plate 4). On the south side a low bank c1.5-2m wide extends west-east from inside the wood to the edge at SU 78598 81803 (Plate 3).

The northern edge of the westernmost part of the surveyed wood is marked by a low external bank, in places with internal ditch (Plate 5). In places there is a narrow longitudinal cut of unknown function along the bank (Plate 6). The boundary of Wargrave and Remenham parishes is not obviously highlighted within the wood by a bank or other markers.

An old track, probably just a carriage track, extends through the wood.

Wood No 6 (Fig. 2; Plate 7)

Name: Wild’s Belt

NGR: SU 78469 82419

Parish: Remenham

A forerunner of Wild’s Belt appears on the Remenham Tithe Award map of 1841, where it is depicted as an area of few trees.

This north-south aligned linear wood was densely overgrown on the east side, particularly with rhododendron bushes, and was unwalkable there. The west side was much thinner and with sparser planting.

Separating the east and west sides for some 40m was a c10m wide by c5m deep narrow cut of unknown function but probably a quarry (Plate 7).

No other archaeological features or earthworks were visible.

Wood No 7 (Fig. 2)

Name: No Name

NGR: 78629 82083

Parish: Remenham

This wood is composed of mixed deciduous, firs and laurel with medium thick undergrowth. Rhododendron bushes are common on the north side of the wood but there is an existing former carriage track through the wood which remains fairly open. Some bluebells are present on the wood floor.

No archaeological features or earthworks were visible.

Wood No 8 (Fig. 2; Plates 8 and 9)

Name: No Name

NGR: 78365 82749

Parish: Remenham

This narrow belt of mixed trees at the northern limit, adjacent to the main road, is first depicted on the 1866 Fuller Maitland Sales Plan.

Within the tree belt at SU 78174 82755, is an irregular uneven area with two parallel and one offset linear pits c3.5m long x 1m wide x 0.75m deep (marked 'Parallel Pits on Fig. 2; Plate 8). Their purpose is unknown. There may be very faint traces

of ridge and furrow aligned north-south at SU 78365 82749. A bowl-shaped pit c10m diameter x 2m deep is present at SU78260 82754. Adjacent are two recent walls forming a 'gateway' into/out of the area (Plate 9).

6. DISCUSSION

Woodland survey was conducted over a number of the plantations and wooded areas at the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden at Park Place Estate, Remenham.

Survey took place in late March, when the woodland floors were still predominantly clear and visibility good, although some areas were overgrown with bushes.

Aside from the possibility of limited remnant ridge and furrow in Wood 8, no obviously medieval or earlier archaeological features were evident during the survey of eight woods. Neither was surrounding banks, often indicators of old woodland, evident, other than at northwest surveyed part of Templecombe Wood (Fig. 2, No 5; Plate 5). Undated pits were present, as were occasional remains of carriage tracks belonging to the 18th-19th century development of the parkland.

None of the woods examined appear on early maps (eg Roque 1791, Pride and Luckombe 1790), although these maps are of small scale and show some generalisation. Woods numbered 5 and 7 on Figure 2 appear on the 1883 First Edition Ordnance Survey plan. An apparent forerunner of Wild's Belt (Fig. 2, No 6) appears on the Remenham Tithe Award map of 1841.

Pits, almost certainly quarry pits of post medieval date are present in Woods 5, 6 and 8. The example in Wood 6 is substantial at c40m long by 10m wide and c5m deep and possibly for stone blocks or

surfacing materials. The remaining examples are bowl-shaped, of smaller dimensions and may have yielded material to be spread on arable fields to improve fertility, as in other chalk areas of the country (eg Brocklesby Estate, Lincolnshire [Cope-Faulkner and Lane 1999, 24]). These would have originated pre-woodland. Shallow rectangular pits of unknown function are also present in Wood 8.

Despite the presence of Bluebells in Woods 4 and 7, often stated to be an indicator of ancient woodland (Peterken 1974, 241), none of the woods examined had an appearance of being ancient and most contained non-native planted species.

Overall, most of the woodland appears to be plantation dating to the early 19th century onward.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Woodland survey at Park Place, Remenham, was required by the county archaeologist to provide a corpus of archaeological and earthwork features in advance of woodland management.

In the event, no such features of ancient date were located during the survey and the majority of the wooded areas seemed to be of relatively recent origin and associated with development of the parkland.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Tom Lane
Site Staff: Tom Lane
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Andrew Failes
Post-excavation Analyst: Tom Lane

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

OS Ordnance Survey

Appendix 1

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 1 Daily record sheet
- 8 Wood Survey sheets

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Pending

Accession Number: TBC

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: REWS 12

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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