
**PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY
OF ELEMENTS
OF REMENHAM PARK PLACE ESTATE,
REMENHAM, BERKSHIRE
(RPPP 09)**

**Work Undertaken For
Spink Properties Ltd**

January 2010

Report Compiled by
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



Quality Control

Photographic Survey of Elements of Remenham Park Place Estate, Remanham, Berkshire (RPPP 09)

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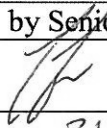
Approved by Senior Archaeologist
 Tom Lane
Date: 31-2-10

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Plate 40 Stone column set at the head of Happy Family south of the house

Plate 41 Stone column south of the house showing squared off base and unfinished back where it was once attached to the western façade of the house

1. SUMMARY

A photographic record of a number of features and buildings within the landscape at Remenham Park Place Estate was compiled showing their relevant details, present context, state of repair and where possible, any interior and exterior views. For the purposes of context, old or existing photographs were also used.

The features or buildings surveyed during the project included the Chinese Cottage (of which only the foundations remain), the Grecian Grotto, the Flint Alcove or Grotto, The Flint Gazebo and Cove Boulder, the Ponds and Lakes to the east of the house, the Stone Obelisks and the Stone Columns

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Spink Properties Ltd to undertake a photographic survey of elements of the landscape at Park Place, Remenham, Berkshire, prior to any alterations. Approval for development at the site was sought through the submission of planning application 0/2008/1353 to Wokingham Borough Council. The watching brief was carried out between the 22nd and 25th of September 2009.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Remenham is located 12km northeast of Reading and 12km west of Maidenhead in the administrative district of Wokingham, Berkshire (Fig 1).

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 ground slopes more gently towards the east.

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

The development site 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. Two occupation sites are known of this period, one in the river valley south of Henley-on-Thames and the second within the development area itself. This latter site 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.

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 (Page and Ditchfield 1923, 160). Remenham parish formerly lay within the Forest of Windsor and was kept largely as park and hunting grounds throughout the medieval period (APS 2004, 3).

The Park Place estate was formerly known as Strowdes Place and Vyne’s Place. The Strode family held land in Remenham as early as 1257 and a Thomas Vyne is recorded as holding land in 1479 (Page and Ditchfield 1923, 162). In the 16th century, the land was owned by William Marriott and a Roger Draper held the estate in 1676 when it was called Perkes Place alias Strowdes (Page and Ditchfield 1923, 162).

Lord Archibald Hamilton built a villa at Park Place shortly after he acquired the estate in 1719. A painting by John Wootton in the Royal Collection at Windsor, dated 1742-3, shows a square, two storey villa of seven bays with the central five bays breaking forward under a steep pediment and hipped roofs. The main front was to the west with a central entrance on that side from a raised cross terrace that in part covered basement rooms.

The first major alterations to the house appear to have been made in the 1750s after the property was acquired by General Conway. The work was probably under the direction of the architect Sanderson Mille,

a pioneer of Gothic revival architecture, and a landscape designer who often added follies or other picturesque garden buildings and features to the grounds of an estate. During this period of work, substantial new blocks were added at each side of the front which rose to form corner pavilions and a new full third floor was constructed, replacing the earlier attic rooms in the roof. From 1760 through to the 1780s Conway enlarged the parkland and embellished the estate with various ornamental structures and buildings.

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 estate was sold to Spurling in 1816 who exchanged it in 1824 with his cousin, E Fuller-Maitland. It 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 and shown on a photograph which was taken of the remodelled house. 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.

The estate passed to Mr J. Noble between 1867 and 1870, the grounds being subjected to extensive ‘landscape gardening’ by Robert Marnock around 1869.

This house was partially destroyed by fire in 1870 and as a result, was 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 (English Heritage 1999). Some alterations of note include an even steeper mansard roof with ornate dormers and a new tower added at the north end of the west front, a north-east service block which was possibly completely rebuilt and a new porte-cochere added on the north front with a new entrance hall and steps to make the original first-floor level the principal floor.

At the west front of the house, an 18th century terrace with a plain retaining wall (shown on a photograph in a family album dated 1868) was replaced. The new wall incorporates symmetrically placed pavilions with seating areas set back under the terrace. This wall forms the present raised stone terrace and was constructed just after the remodelling of the house between 1871 and 1874. An elaborate arrangement of steps, with a double flight at the centre, and stone balustrades, leads down from the terrace to the formal gardens to the west of the house. Presumably the gardens were created as part of the same project; photographic evidence shows they did not exist prior to 1874. The gardens are defined by an ornate-shaped low retaining wall and have a rectangular shape with circular elements at either end.

New work in the late 19th century included a conservatory or winter gardens added on the east side of the main range with a grotto at garden level

The estate was sold off in 1947 as a number of separate lots. The principal Lot, including the mansion house was bought by Middlesex County Council and used as a residential school. Ownership passed to Hillingdon Council in 1965 who maintained the school until its closure in 1988. The asphalt tennis courts, located in

the centre of what was once the formal gardens, were a late 20th century addition associated with the school.

An archaeological evaluation prior to redevelopment and extension of Park Place golf course in 2005 revealed deposits of Middle Iron Age to 4th century AD date 1km southeast of the laundry. Evidence for malting, grain storage and rubbish disposal probably associated with settlement was recorded. A medieval gully and post-medieval trackway were also identified (Wood 2005).

A recent evaluation at the laundry (Peachey 2009) revealed a sequence of layers of made up ground, two fragments of redeposited Roman and medieval tile, along with two sherds of 16th to 17th century pottery, which represent activity at the site prior to the construction of the original house in 1719.

3. AIMS

The aim of the survey was to compile a photographic record of a number of features and buildings in the Park Place Estate landscape prior to their restoration or removal from their present context.

4. METHODS

A photographic record of a number of features and buildings within the landscape at Remenham Park Place Estate was compiled showing their relevant details, present context, state of repair and where possible, any interior and exterior views. For the purposes of context, old or existing photographs were used. The new photographic survey utilised black and white print film and colour digital photography.

5. THE ELEMENTS OF THE SURVEY

The Chinese Cottage (Plates 1-3)

The Chinese cottage, so named because of scenes painted on the walls, was erected in 1763 and used as a tea house. Percy Noble in 1915 describes the cottage as having been built 'on site of Bottom House Farm, in one of the beautiful hollows in the grounds.' A photograph published in 1905 shows a polygonal two-storey building with external steps leading up to the room on the first floor. This building has been demolished and only the footings remain.

The Grecian Grotto (Plates 4-15)

The Grecian Grotto was one of many adornments that Conway introduced to the property. Built sometime around 1763 the Grotto is located 450 metres south-east of the south front of the house, at the head of Happy Valley (Plate 13). A photo from 1900 shows a complex series of arches and arcades built of, and into, the chalk at the mouth of an old quarry (Plate 4). The Grotto faced southwest with distant glimpsed views of the Thames through Conway's Bridge (Plate 15) and was flanked by two structures, the Gothic Cottage, erected in 1763, and a flint and brick structure representing Grecian ruins. The Grotto could be reached through a 120m long tunnel system built into the chalk which emerged at the top of Happy Valley. The entrances to the tunnels were located to the north, immediately south-east of the walled kitchen garden. References to the grotto found in letters to Horace Walpole attribute the design of the structure to James Stuart (1713-88), better known as James 'Athenian' Stuart, due to his long residence in Athens (Noble 1905, 41).

By 1905, the two story structure had been reduced to a single story and the adjacent buildings removed. There are now six arches built with squared blocks of chalk (Plates 8, 13-15), with a substantial barrel vaulted space running behind the central

four arches (Plate 9). On the rear wall and front wall of this space are small niches in between the arches (Plate 9), two large niches are located on the side walls at either end of the space. These presumably held statues, fragments of which were found in the debris covering the floor, including a base with part of a foot. At the west end there are arched entrances leading into two tunnels (Plates 7 & 10).

Flint Alcove or Grotto (Plates 16-18)

The flint and shell alcove, or grotto, is a small rustic semi-circular and hemispherical structure with an open front built into the contour of the hillside of Mill Bank Woodland on the southwest slope of the river cliff (Plates 16-17). It stands at the edge of an unused terraced path running northwest to southeast along the contour of the hillside. The arch is formed of large flint nodules while the inside of the dome is lined with square knapped flints with ribs of inset conches (Plate 18) rising to a geometric pattern of square and small round flints at the apex. Around the base of the alcove there is a semi-circular seat with a knapped flint front and tiles on top. The floor has a lozenge pattern of knapped flints (Parks and Gardens Register, Park Place and Temple Combe).

It is unclear when the flint alcove (or grotto) was constructed. It would appear to be in keeping with Conway's scheme of adornments to the property; however, it is not marked on the map for exchange between Maitland and Easton which raises the possibility that this is a late 19th century conceit. The first edition OS map of 1875 shows a seat marked in the position of the structure.

Flint Gazebo and Cove Boulder (Plates 19-27)

The Flint Gazebo is located 40 metres south of Conway's Bridge, set up on the steep bank between the two boat houses. The gazebo is circular with an arched entry on the side facing the river (Plate 20) and two small loops or windows on the north

and south sides (Plates 21, 24-25). It measures about 4 meters in height with an internal diameter of 3.5 meters.

It is unclear when the gazebo was built, but the style is in keeping with Conway's various adornments to the property. The structure may have been the initial destination of the walk down the valley and through the arch of the bridge. From the gazebo it would have been possible to look along the river in both directions and down into the cove to the south where the Dry Boat House was later built.

The Cove Boulder is set into the ground immediately in front of the gazebo on the lip of the slope down to the river bank (Plates 22-23, 26-27). The gazebo may not have been visible from the river bank which raises the possibility that the Cove Boulder was placed in this position in order to mark the gazebo's location.

Ponds and Lakes (Plates 28-30)

A sketch plan from 1797 held within the Malmesbury papers indicates two ponds adjacent to a brickyard to the east of the house. The easternmost pond was linked by a hedgerow to an icehouse and the foundations of a chapel. A brick kiln is marked further east of the chapel. By 1815 a third rectangular pond associated with the brick workings is visible in this area.

A plan of the estate from the Fuller-Maitland-Charles Easton sale shows two ponds north of the east drive. These are probably the two rectangular ponds from the 1797 sketch, formed into more aesthetically pleasing ornamental ponds of irregular shape. A larger fishpond with a central island was situated south of the east drive, and another linear pond to the south of the fishpond stretched eastward towards the kitchen garden.

The Fuller-Maitland sales plan shows the four ponds with varying shapes and sizes. Two of these appear to connect beneath the driveway. By 1883, land extended into

the largest ponds and two islands are now shown. By 1900 the largest pond appeared to be slightly remodelled at the northern end and a bridge may have been added. The pond area was extensively redesigned by Robert Marnock in the gardenesque style from c. 1869, although precise details of the scheme are sketchy. The 1931 OS plan the paths, estate rail and bridges around the ponds and lakes.

Prior to the dredging from the current works, the ponds were in a decayed state. The largest still held some water but the island was much enlarged and severely overgrown. The other ponds were entirely silted up.

Stone Obelisks (Plates 31-33)

Four stone obelisks, two on each side of the drive leading to the north entrance, are located 50 metres north of the entrance through the porte-cochere (Plate 31). They are set on what was grass immediately before the drive opens out at the entrance at the centre of the north end of the forecourt (Plates 32-33).

They measure 4.4 metres high and the bases are 70cm square. The central pair that flank the drive, are 4.9 metres apart and overall the obelisks are spaced over 10.75 metres. There is evidence in the sides of the bases for channels for the ironwork of a fence and possibly sockets for the supports of the gate.

The obelisks probably date from the 18th century and were brought from Stanstead Hall in Essex by Ebenezer Fuller-Maitland after he acquired the property by exchange in 1824.

Stone Columns (Plates 34-41)

Three stone columns, originally from the west front of the house, were salvaged after the fire and remodelling of the house in the 1870's and set up in the grounds as ornamental features. The column set up in the lightly wooded area east of the house (Plate 34) has evidence showing it was unfinished on the back (Plate 35-36) and

the base is cut off square where it was once attached to the west front of the house. A second stone column (Plate 37), located to the west of the house in Mill Bank Woodland, has a substantial stone sphere added as a finial. A section of this column has been removed and can be found lying on its side a few meters to the east (Plate 38-39). The third stone column has been set up at the head of Happy Valley and is shorter than the others with an overall height of 3.1 meters (Plate 40). The south side of the column has some undressed stonework and the base is flattened where the column was attached to the house (Plate 41). Although it is known that these columns were removed shortly after the fire in 1871, it is not known if they stand in their original positions or whether they have been moved around in the intervening years.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of John Bateman of Spink Property Ltd for commissioning the fieldwork and analysis, as well as for his cooperation and assistance throughout the process. Tom Lane edited this report.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Tom Lane
 Site Supervisors: Andrew Failes
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Andrew Failes
 Report Author: Andrew Failes

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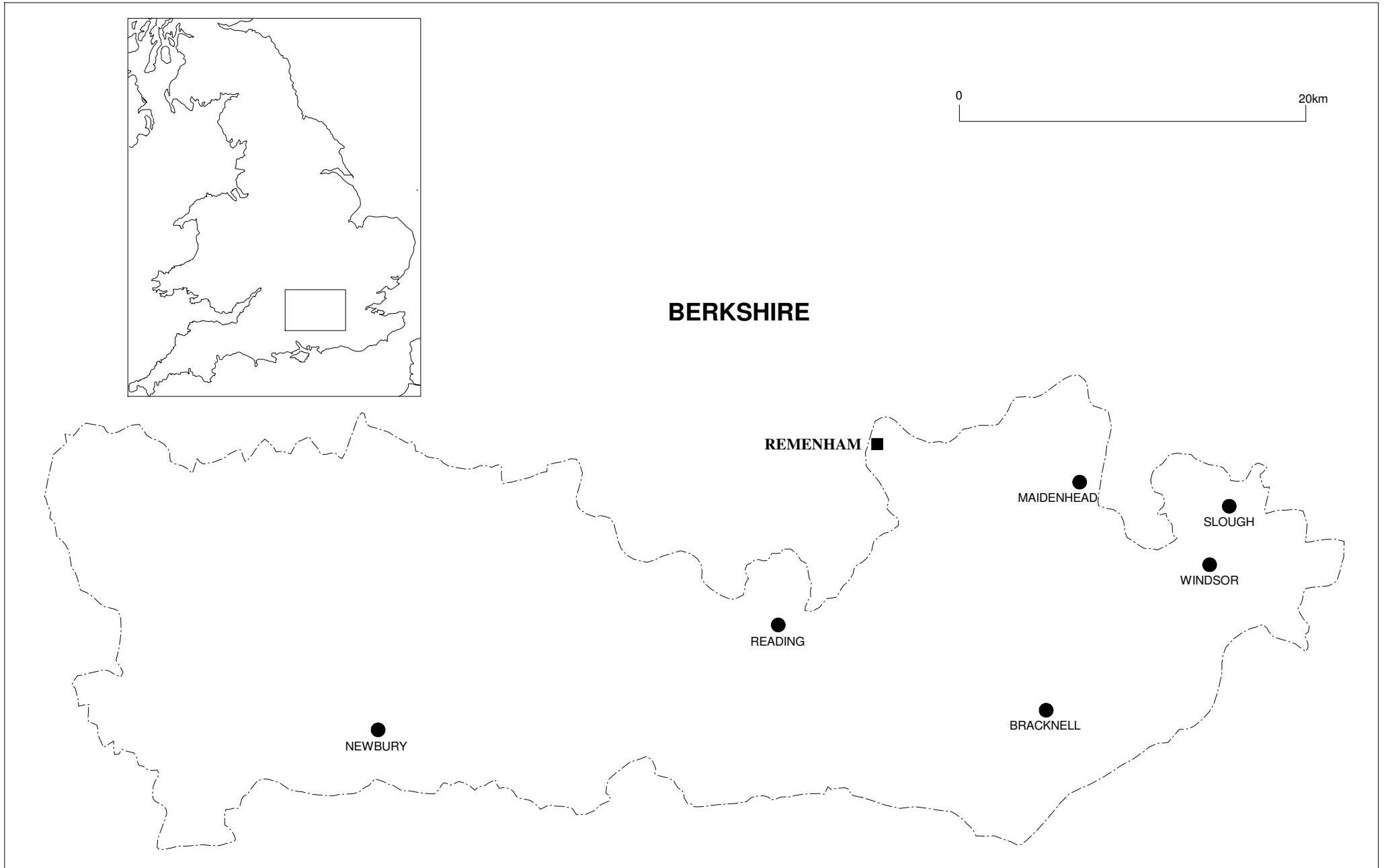


Figure 1 - General location plan

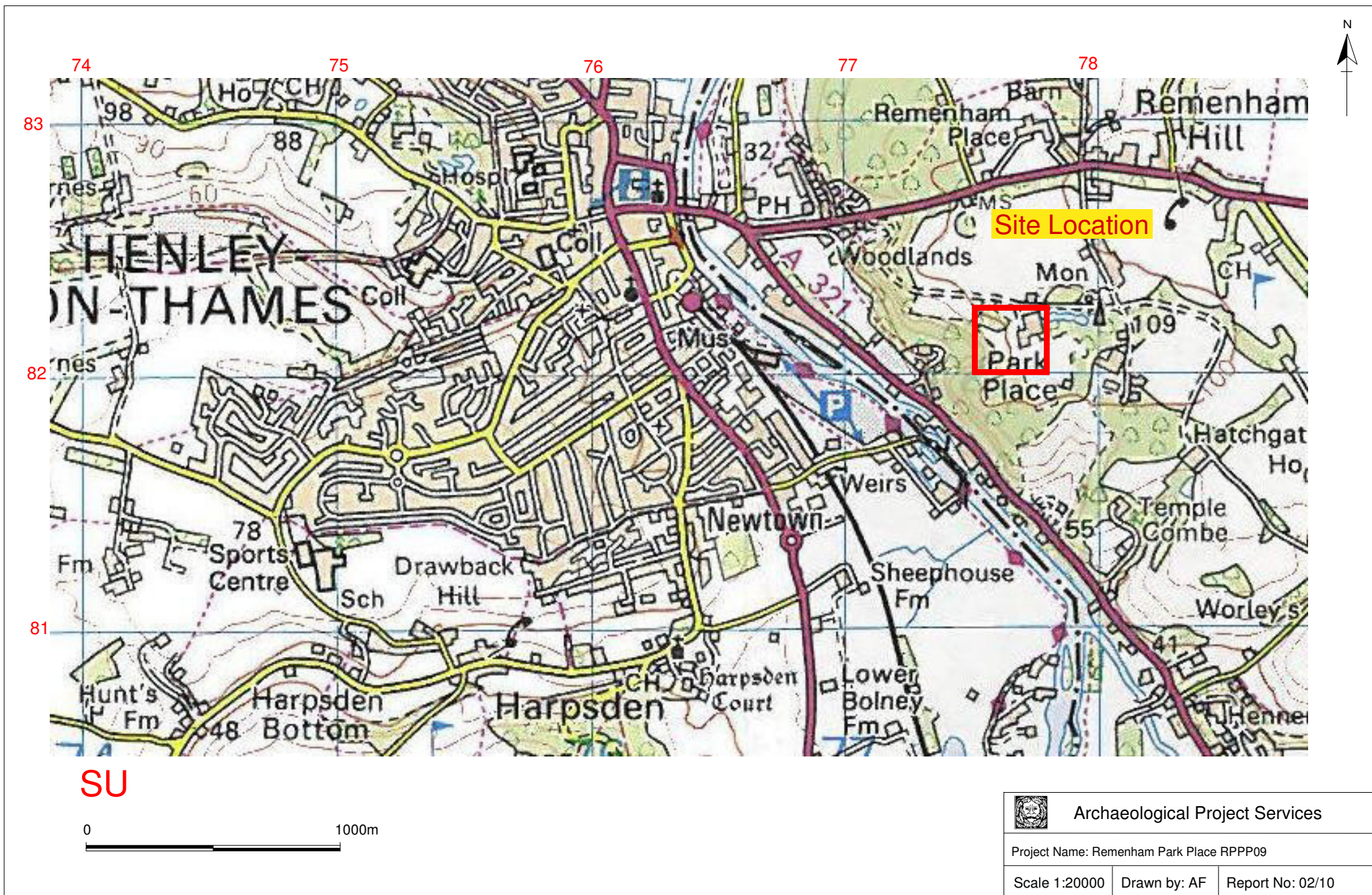


Figure 2 Site Location

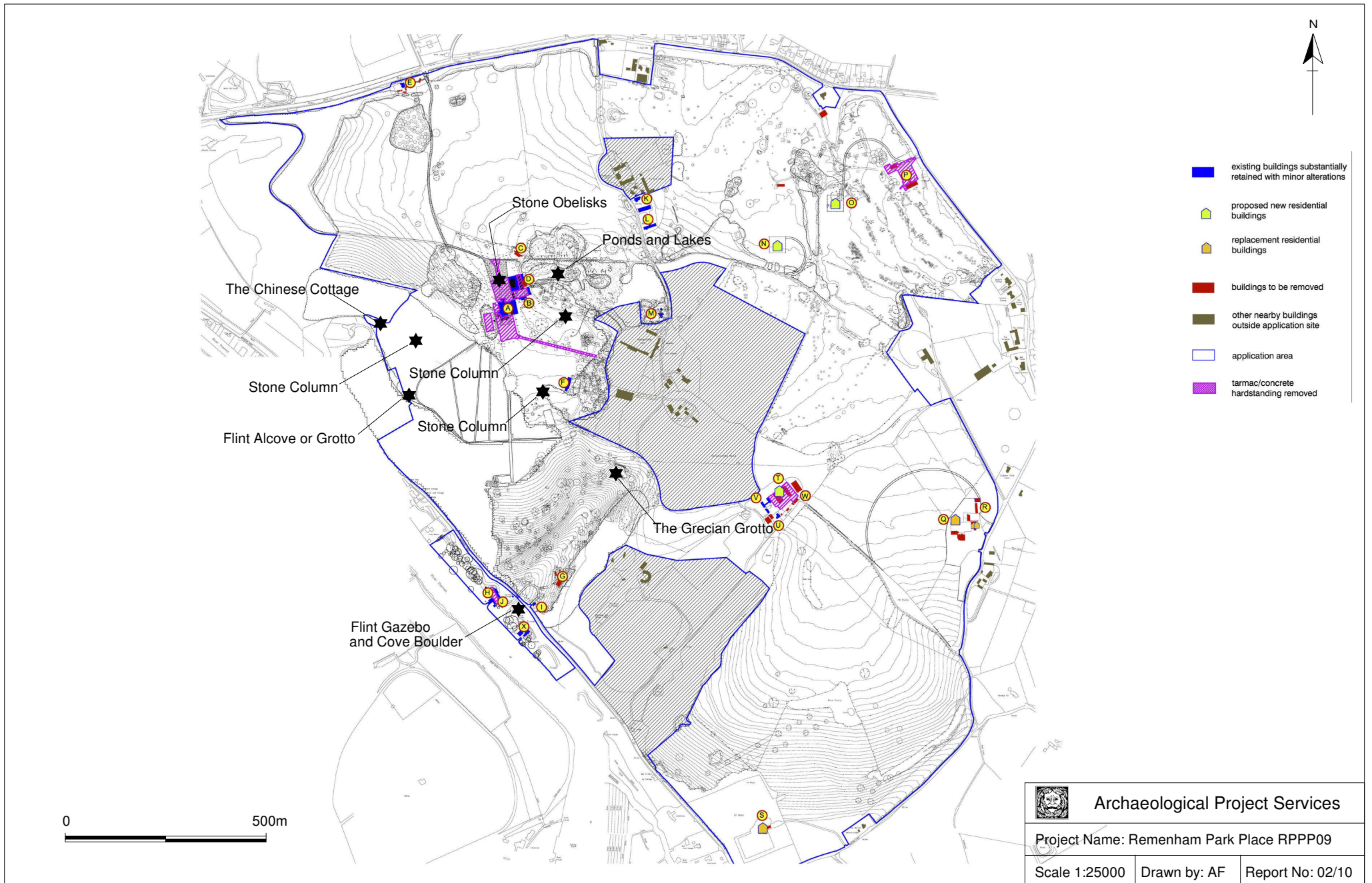


Figure 3 - Location of survey elements


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Plate 1 – Foundations of the Chinese Cottage



Plate 2 – Foundations of the Chinese Cottage



Plate 3 – Foundations of the Chinese Cottage



Plate 4 – Photo of the Grecian Grotto taken c. 1900 showing the original complex series of arches and arcades on two levels



Plate 5 – Grecian Grotto prior to current work



Plate 6 – Grecian Grotto prior to current work



Plate 7 – Westernmost arch (entrance to tunnel) of Grecian Grotto prior to current work



Plate 8 – View of the 6 arches of the Grecian Grotto taken during the current program of reconstruction and consolidation



Plate 9 – Barrel vaulted space within the Grecian Grotto; note the small niche for statuary



Plate 10 – Westernmost arch of the Grecian Grotto (entrance to tunnel) taken during the current program of reconstruction and consolidation



Plate 11 – Entrance to tunnels within the Grecian Grotto with bat grill installed



Plate 12 – Graffiti within the Grecian Grotto



Plate 13 – View of the Grecian Grotto taken during the current program of reconstruction and consolidation



Plate 14 – Grecian Grotto after the current program of reconstruction and consolidation



Plate 15 – View of the Thames framed by Conway's Bridge from the Grecian Grotto



Plate 16 – Flint and Shell Alcove/Grotto within Mill Bank Wood looking south-east



Plate 17 - Flint and Shell Alcove/Grotto within Mill Bank Wood looking south-west



Plate 18 – View of the square knapped flints with ribs of inset conches overlying the brickwork of the Flint and Shell Alcove/Grotto



Plate 19 – Conches with graffiti inside the Flint and Shell Alcove/Grotto



Plate 20 – Entrance to Flint Gazebo



Plate 21 – Southern window of Flint Gazebo



Plate 22 – Flint Gazebo with Cove boulder in the background (to the right)



Plate 23 – View of the Thames through the entrance of the Flint Gazebo with the Cove Boulder in the foreground

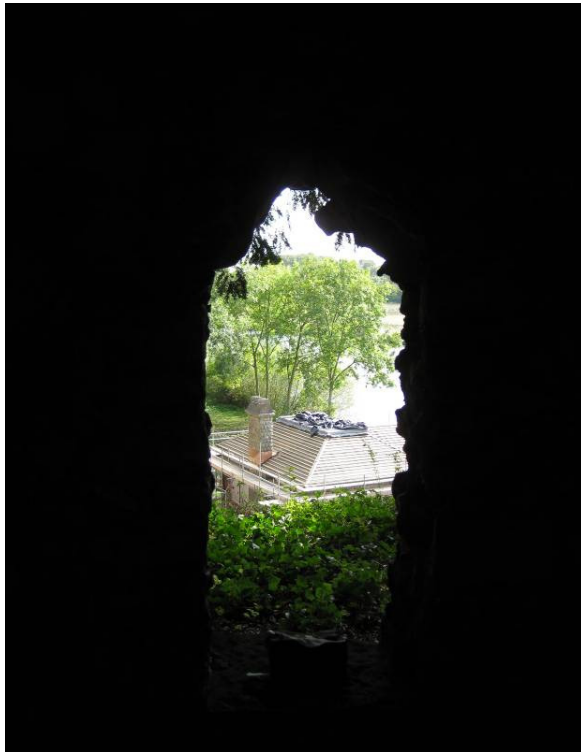


Plate 24 – View through the southern window of the Flint Gazebo



Plate 25 – View through the northern window of the Flint Gazebo



Plate 26 – Cove Boulder with Thames in the background



Plate 27 – View of Cove Boulder from partway down the slope that leads to the Thames



Plate 28 – Pond to the east of the house and south of the east drive



Plate 29 – Pond to the east of the house and south of the east drive after dredging



Plate 30 – View of pond and island to the east of the house looking west (after dredging)



Plate 31 – Photo of the northern façade and entrance to the house showing the four stone obelisks introduced by Fuller-Maitland c. 1833



Plate 32 – Stone obelisks prior to the current development works



Plate 33 – Stone obelisks prior to the current development works



Plate 34 – Stone column located to the east of the house



Plate 35 – Stone column located to the east of the house, showing the squared off top where it was once attached to the west front of the house



Plate 36 – Stone column located to the east of the house, showing the unfinished where it was once attached to the west front of the house



Plate 37 – Stone column with a substantial stone sphere added as a finial, located to the west of the house in Mill Bank Woodland.



Plate 38 – Stone column to the west of the house showing sphere finial and missing section to the left



Plate 39 – Missing section of stone column to the west of the house



Plate 40 – Stone column set at the head of Happy Family south of the house



Plate 41 – Stone column south of the house showing squared off base and unfinished back where it was once attached to the western façade of the house

Appendix 1

GLOSSARY

Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Iron Age	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Mesolithic	The 'Middle Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 11000 - 4500 BC.
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500 - 2250 BC.
Palaeolithic	The 'Old Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 500000 - 11000 BC in Britain.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

Appendix 2

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

Digital Photographs
Black and White Film Photographs

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:

Museum of Reading,
Town Hall,
Blagrove St,
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 1QH

Accession Number: TBC

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: RPPP09

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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