



GORBAMBURY HOUSE
Alterations to the Setting of the East Front

Inskip Gee Architects/Tom Stuart Smith Ltd

Gorhambury Landscape

Installation of stand-by generator and fire-fighting water storage tank, together with relocation of UKPN substation, landscape and surfacing alterations within the curtilage of Gorhambury House (part retrospective)

Design and Access and Heritage Statements together with illustrations

August 2025

Inskip Gee Architects

Tom Stuart-Smith Landscape Designers

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HERITAGE STATEMENT

Gorhambury House

Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, received Queen Elizabeth at Gorhambury in 1572 when she declared that it was so modest for such a great statesman. It passed to the present family in the middle of the 17C and has remained the seat of the Grimstons ever since.

The design of a new house was started in 1777, and Old Gorhambury was transformed to serve as a picturesque eyecatcher in the park after the new building was finished and the family moved out. Fragments of sculpture and joinery were salvaged for reuse.

The new Gorhambury was designed by Sir Robert Taylor (1714 –1788). It is a late Palladian villa, still raised on a high basement storey and approached up a flight of steps. A giant Corinthian portico leads to the double-height hall with the Great Room beyond. It is a product very much of the Grand Tour and the superb chimneypieces incorporating “antique” panels were acquired direct from Piranesi.

Originally supported by two wings, the south wing was demolished in 1826 to allow the enlargement of the garden by Gilpin, whilst the north wing was absorbed into the house with a series of extensions by Atkinson and, later by Burn, to accommodate an ever growing family and large house parties.

Following the depression, the Estate was placed on the market in 1930; but failed to sell. The house was requisitioned during the Second World War, but afterwards a programme of works arrested the decay of the main elevations, replacing the local clunch with Portland stone.

However, the family lived in the Link Buildings and North Wing, and the main body of the house was left dormant with very little use because of the lack of services and little heating.

Over the last decade, Gorhambury has been brought back to life and the main block is again lived in by Lord Grimston and his family.

Setting

The new house was first approached from the south-east, from the direction of Shepherds' Cottages, and the drive was marked by Sweet Chestnuts. A view by Malton illustrates a proposal for stables to the south east of the house.

The catalyst for the removal of the south wing appears to have been the substantial modification of the setting of Gorhambury planned by William Sawrey Gilpin in 1825-27.

The demolition of the wing allowed the extension of the garden with a large lawn that wrapped around the south end of the main building. Gilpin's Walk, constructed at the same time, provided a raised terrace along the west side of the pleasure grounds and its asymmetric arrangement to the main block tied-in the new lawn seamlessly with the existing garden, at the same time as providing views back to the ruins of Old Gorhambury. To obscure the large 17C kitchen garden to the west, Gilpin planted the wood that today is named after him.

As well as recasting the gardens, Gilpin also radically revised the parkland to the east. The 18C drive was removed and the house was approached by a new drive from the north east in 1826 to give better views of the building across the parkland as you entered by Nash's Lodge (introduced by 1830). A belt of trees concealed a new stable yard to the north of the house, presumably designed by Atkinson, together with the ancillary structures built around the dairy yard. However, the cupola/tower over the stable entrance would have been intended to be seen from the park. The parkland drive ran up to a gate which formed the entrance to the forecourt, close to the north wing.

By 1883, a large lawn/cricket field had been enclosed to the east of the house and a ha-ha allowed distant views across the parkland framed with Wellingtonias. By 1924, the boundary of Gilpin's south garden had been formalised with a hedged enclosure.

During and after the Second War, the setting was gradually reduced:

A new service drive, giving access to the west side of the estate, branched off the main drive and ran just north of the stable yard. It cut through the designed woodland walks that had terminated the north end of the pleasure grounds, and lost the Wilderness from the gardens. At the same time, the entrance to Gorhambury was resited away from the house to the new junction with the service drive. The east half of the stable yard and its entrance gate and cupola were destroyed by fire and they became an area of hardstanding.

Gilpin's south lawn was significantly reduced with the east half being returned to parkland. To form a new boundary to the garden, the present yew-hedged enclosure that contains the present kitchen garden was established at the south end of the house in the 1990s.

The restoration of the park was carried out at the beginning of the 21C. During the occupation by the Army in the Second World War, the parkland had lost many of its trees and used as arable or market gardening. However, careful replanting and the generous use of park railings have recovered the quality of both the parkland and the approach to the Gorhambury.

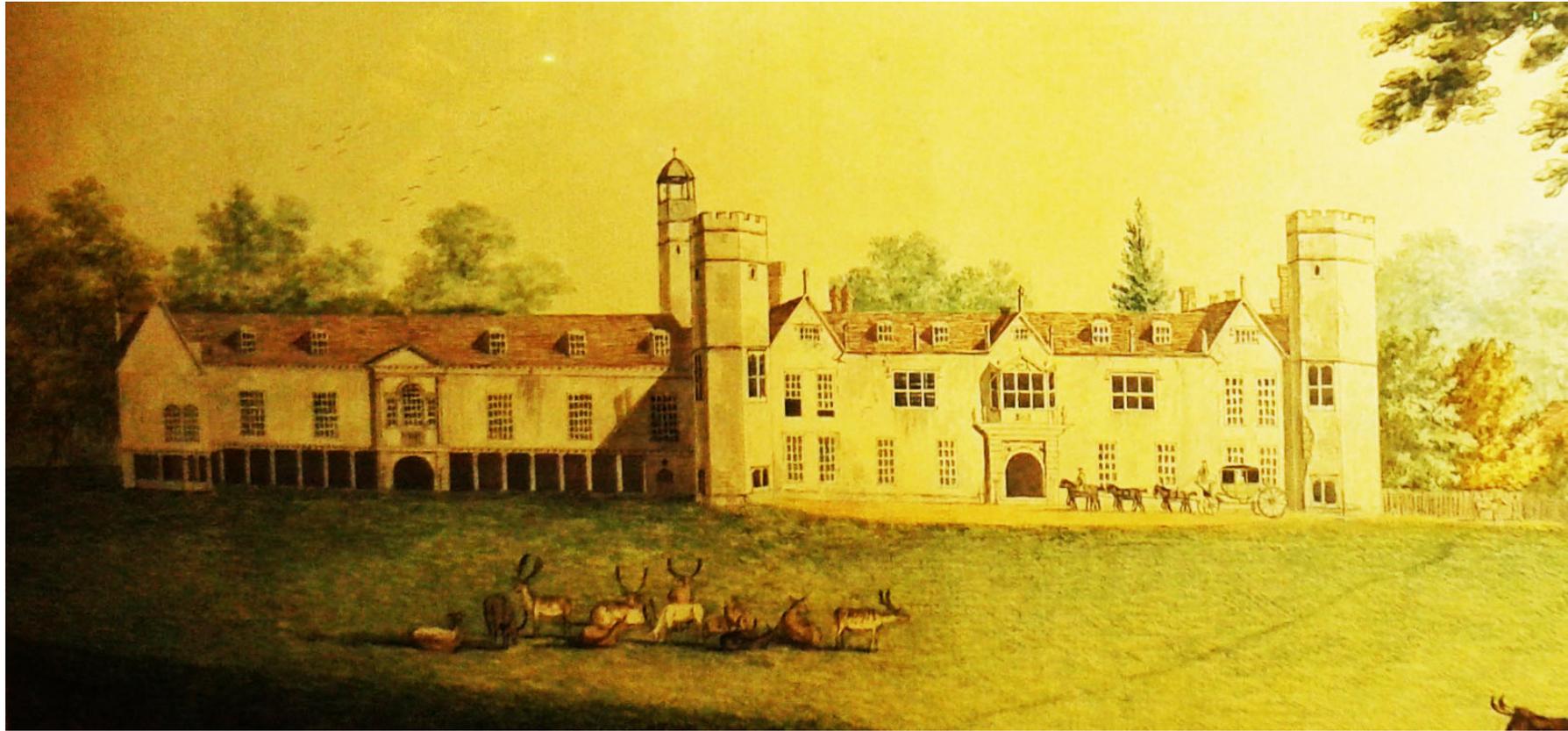


plate i

Old Gorhambury
As existing c1770

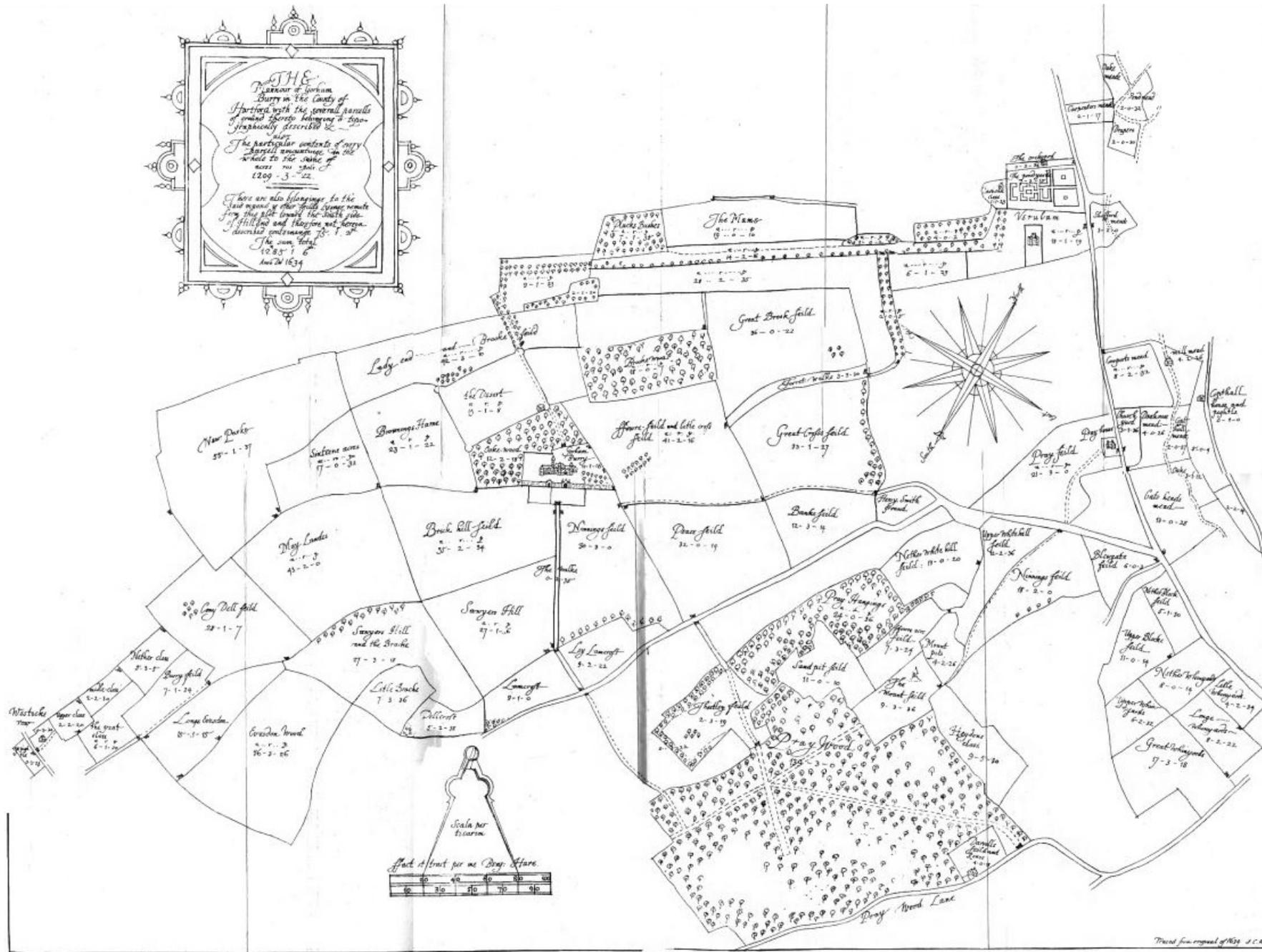


plate ii

Old Gorhambury, 1634
 After Benjamin Hare

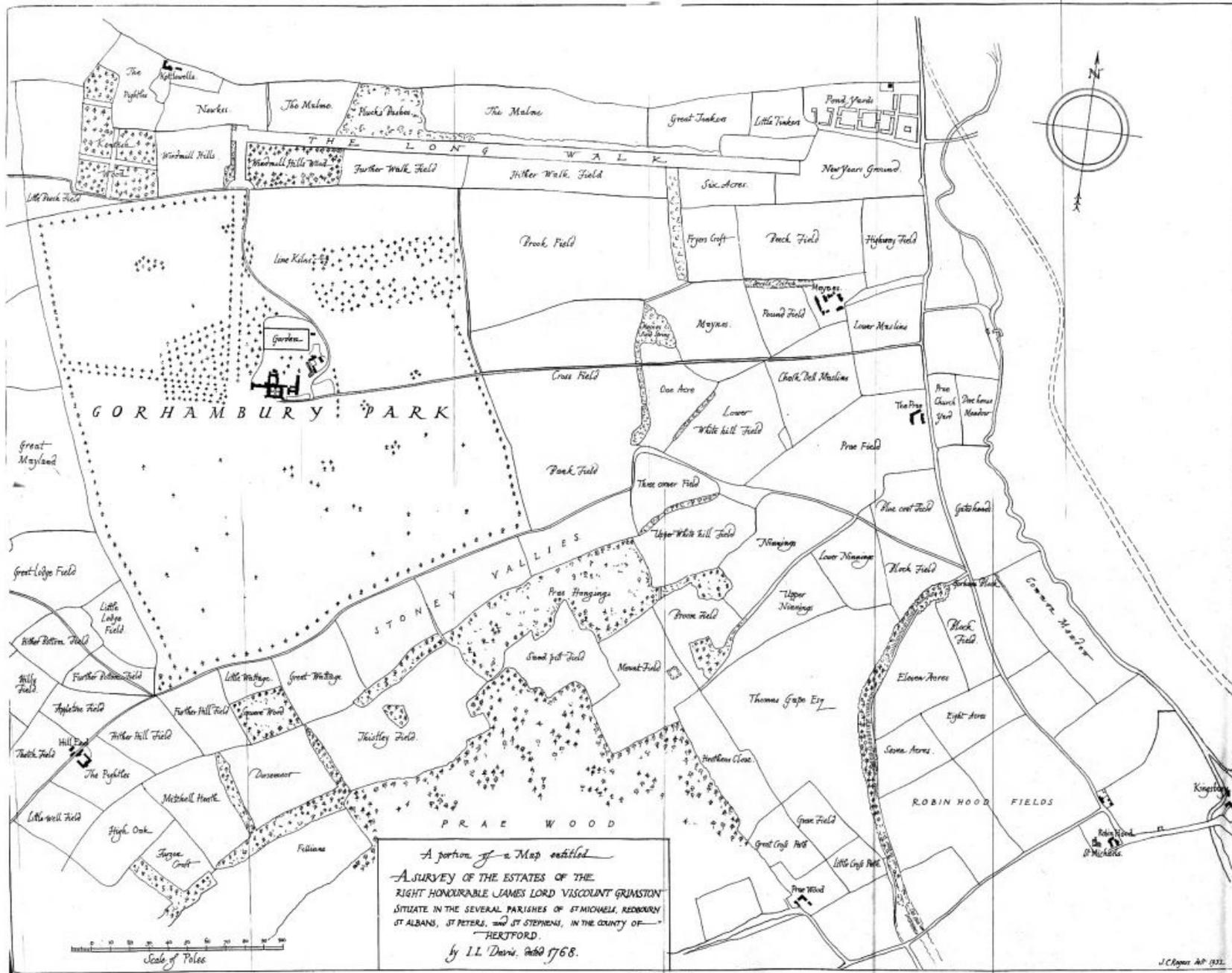
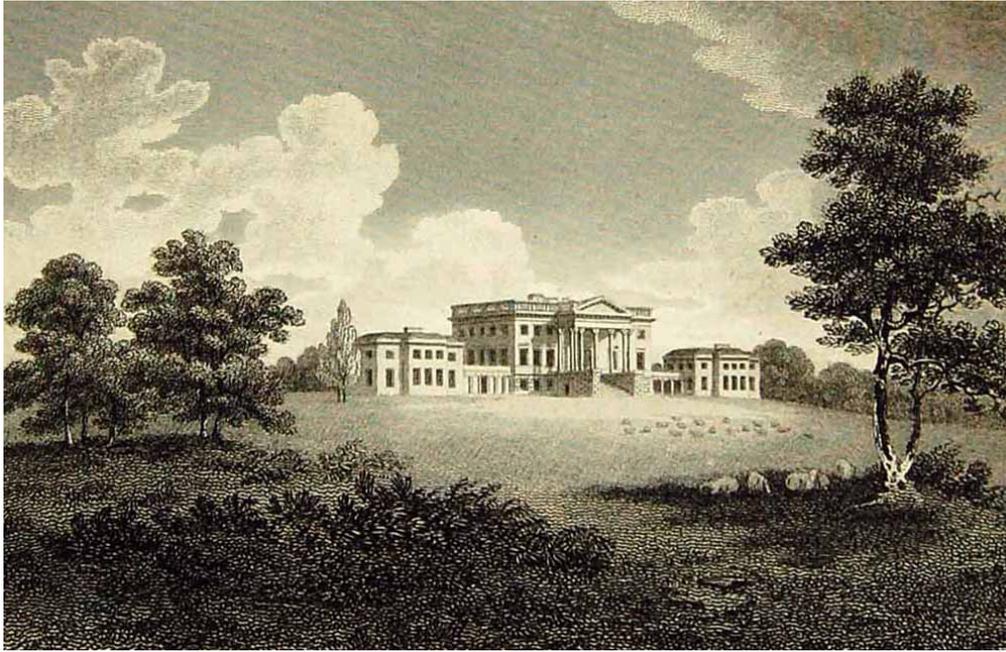
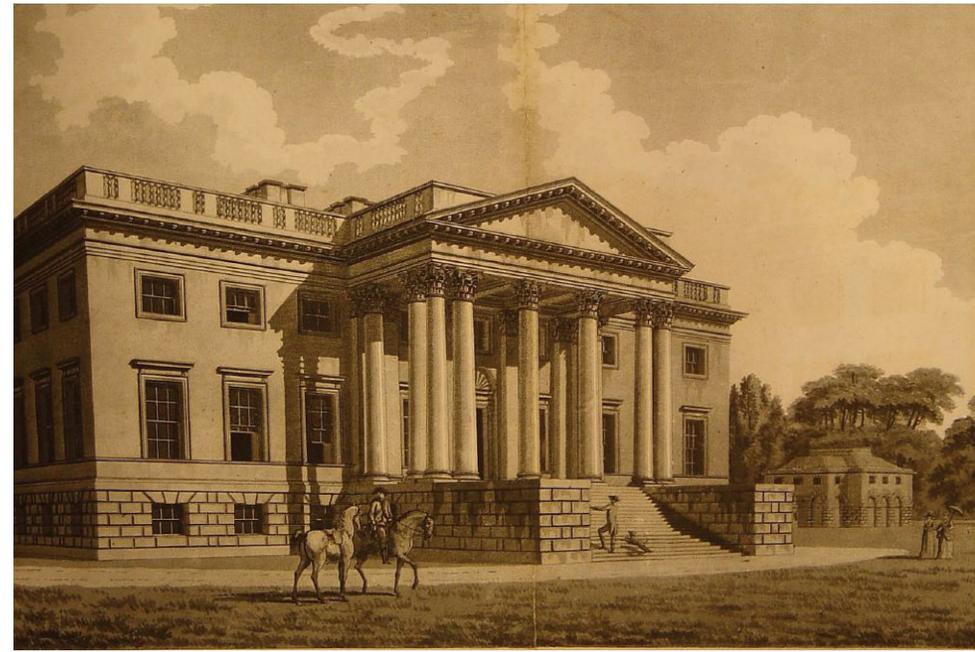


plate iii



1



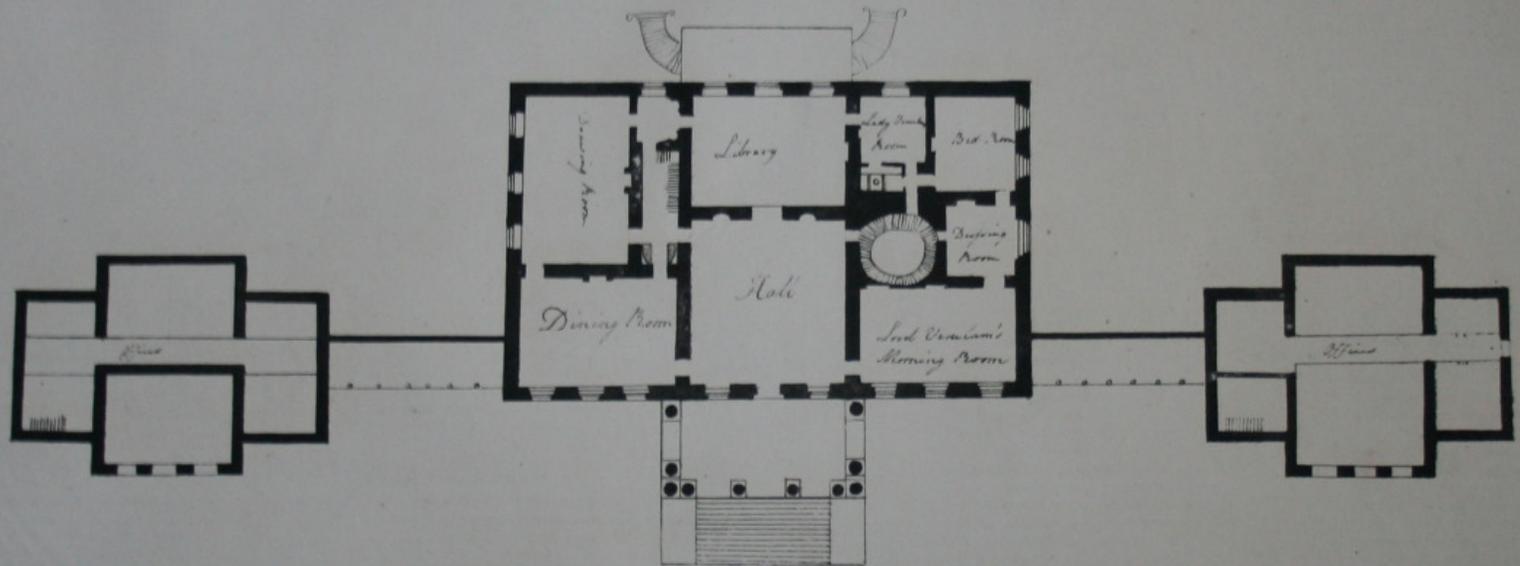
3



New Gorhambury House

1. Post 1784 view of approach from the south east
2. Engraving by Thomas Malton after Michael Angelo Taylor, 1790
3. East Front and North Wing 1863: showing planting in front of the North Wing
4. 1930s Sale Catalogue

*Ground Plan of the Modern House at Gorbamby
built by Sir Robert Taylor*





COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP
APPLICATION BOUNDARY

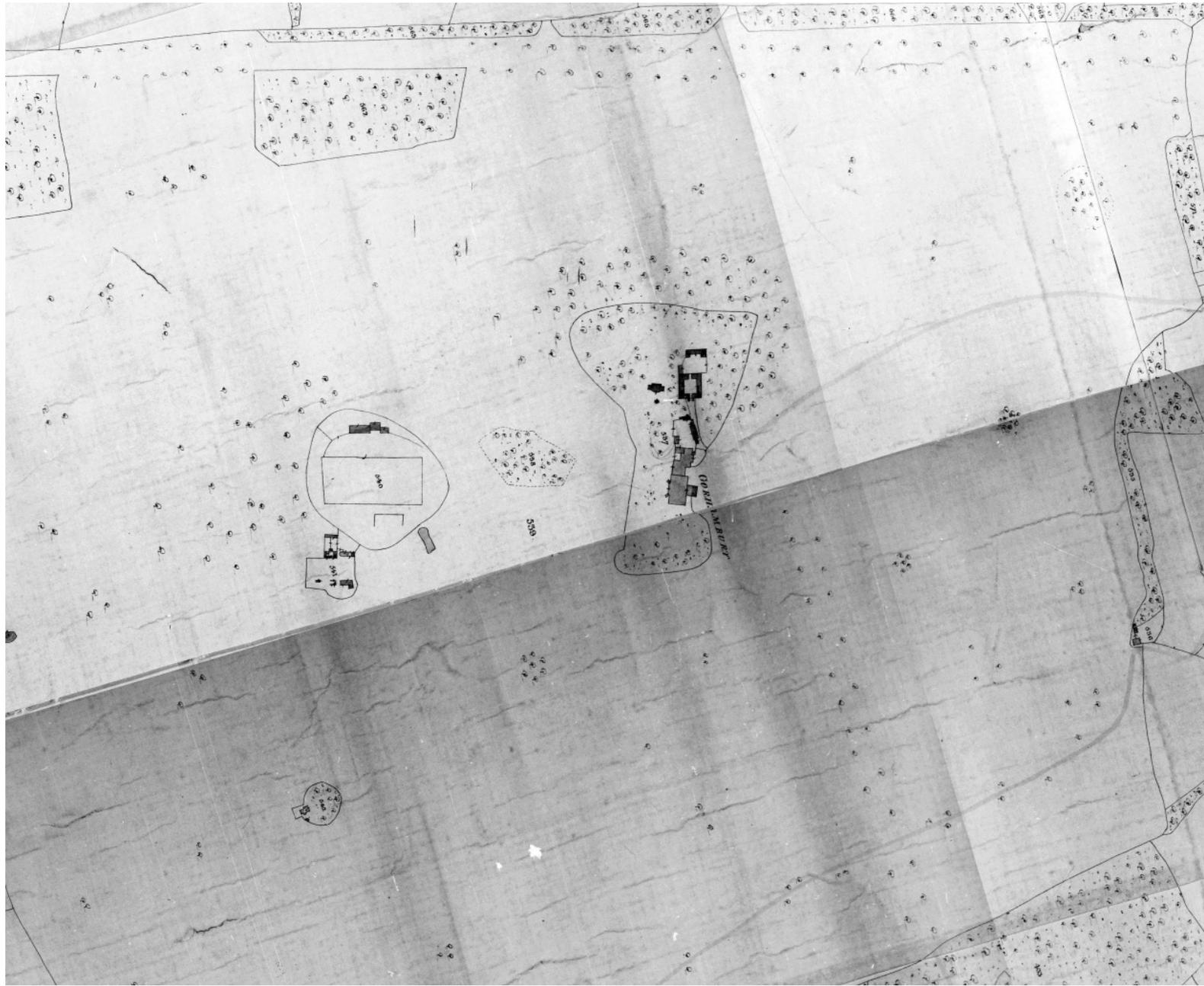


plate vii

New Gorhambury
South Wing demolished
1840 Tithe Plan

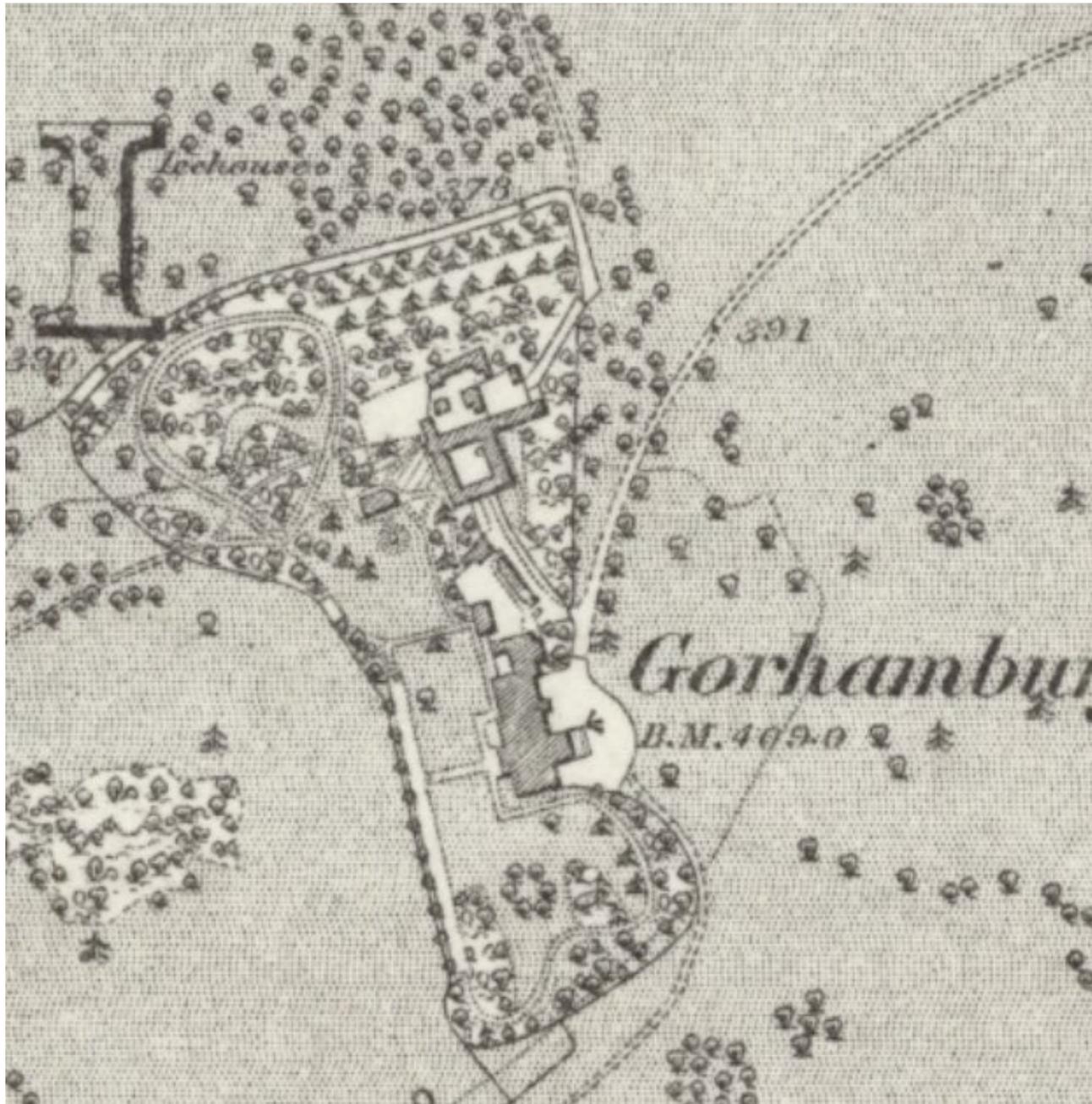


plate viii

New Gorhambury
Extent of Gilpin's landscape
1883 OS map

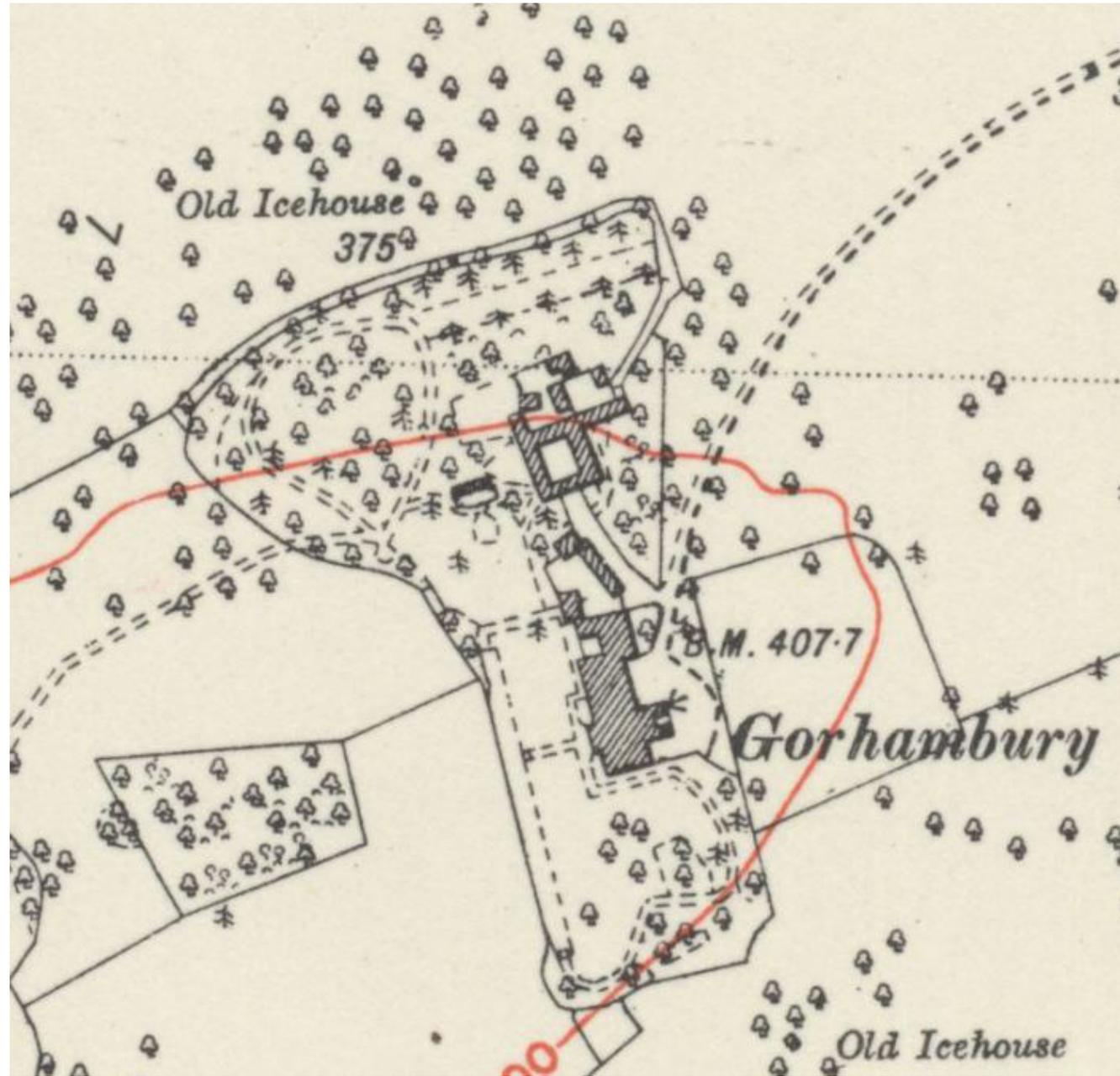


plate ix

New Gorhambury
Prior to reduction of landscape
1938-1947 OS map

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The proposals involve the alteration of the setting on the east side of Gorhambury following the conversion of the mansion into three dwellings. The major part of the house remains the historic home of the Grimston family, and two additional flats have been made in the North Wing. Two semi-detached dwellings (Laundry Cottages) lie to the north and additional housing is accommodated in the west half of the stable block. The house is open to the public.

The application is for the installation of a stand-by generator and fire-fighting storage tank, together retrospective consent for the relocation of the UKPN substation and landscape and surfacing alterations within the curtilage of Gorhambury House. The applicant apologises for the oversight during Covid that resulted in approval not being obtained for the latter prior to their implementation.

New items

Stand-by generator

(see data sheet plate xv)

The proposed standby generator is required because of the particularly unreliable power supply experienced at the area. It will be sited south of the kitchen garden and stand on a concrete foundation, adjacent to the substation . It will be screened by the extension of the yew hedges planted to enclose the substation.

Fire-fighting storage tank

(see data sheet plate xvi)

An additional fire-fighting water storage tank is introduced in the grass to the east of the kitchen garden. The tank is below ground with stand-pipe access. Hertfordshire Fire Brigade advise that existing tanks to the north of the house do not have adequate capacity and that the proposed location provides better cover of the building.

The two, temporary, above-ground storage tanks that have been in service during the building works are to be removed.

Retrospective Items

UKPN Substation

(see data sheet plate xvii)

The previous substation was situated in the parkland south east of the house and installed in the second half of the 20C. UKPN advised that it could not be upgraded to meet the loads for of the three dwellings in the mansion and that it should be replaced on a site with easier access. A new substation with electrical cabinets was installed to the south of the kitchen garden where it is screened from the house by the tall yew hedges that had been planted in 1987. Additional hedges form an extension of those existing and screen the area from the park to the south. The area was laid to gravel and access for servicing was provided by a new path from the forecourt.

The removal of the previous substation had the benefit of recovering views over the park to the south east.

Car parking and drives

Consent was granted for dedicated car parking for the three dwellings within the house: screened by a hedge east of the north wing and contained within the adjacent area the Dairy Yard. (Planning Ref: 5/2020/0420 approved 28 August 2020. Discharged ref: 5/24/0699 dated 22 May 2024)

Because of the number of people working, visiting and living at Gorhambury, more carparking was necessary. The use of the forecourt for parking had proved intrusive on the significance of the porticoed entrance front, and an additional carpark has been introduced concealed within the shelter belt that lies between the stable yard and the west side of the entrance drive. A new drive linking the stable drive and entrance drive not only given access to the carpark, but also simplified deliveries of logs from the Estate forestry to the biomass plant in the Brewhouse. The introduction of a one-way system around the circular route, has avoided congestion and eased turning beside Laundry Cottages.

The parking to the east of the North Wing serving the mansion is screened with a new yew hedge similar to that in historic photographs; its location relates readily to both the portico, side and north doors.

The ad hoc parking on Stable Drive opposite Laundry Cottages has been formalised with new hardstanding.

Whilst the drives and carparking are finished with spray and chip over tarmac , the new arrangements have resulted in the minimal use of the forecourt by vehicles, and it is accordingly laid in gravel as originally.

Rethinking parking on site, resulted in removal of parking from the forecourt in front of the mansion which has returned to a gravel finish.

A new section of drive allows access from the forecourt to the services area by the kitchen garden.

Bin Storage

Adjacent to the new carpark and surrounded by dense evergreen shrubs, a painted timber fence encloses a bin store yard serving the dwellings on the site for waste and recycling.

Landscape

The proposed reconfiguration of the landscape at the entrance front of Gorhambury has the overriding purpose of restoring the primacy of Robert Taylor's grand central pedimented block and reducing the importance in the setting of the less architecturally distinguished north wing. It also serves to move car parking from where it has been traditionally, immediately to the east and in front of the portico, to a position where it is entirely hidden from most important views of the house.

Ever since the demolition of the South (Kitchen) Wing around 1825, there has been a profound imbalance in the architecture of the house. To some extent this was compensated for by the mid-19th century when a shrubbery was planted in front of the north wing, but it did not go far enough. The present works on the house have enabled a more thorough reassessment that also recognises that more people live at Gorhambury and its dependencies than has been the case for a long time and most of them drive a car.

The approach drive leads towards the East Front of the house and planting on the left of the drive directs the view towards the central grand portico.

East Front Planting in front of North Wing

The length of the drive from the gate at the entrance to the grounds to the portico is 175m. For the first 130m the line remains unaltered. From here it takes a slightly wider curve to the existing lawn which offers a finer view of the house on arrival at the large gravel sweep. By moving further away from the house a larger area between the drive and the house is opened up which is enclosed by a large hedge and which will provide parking for about 8 cars. In front of the yew hedge

is a lawn planted with trees. This reduces the presence of the north wing in a manner that goes much of the way to restore the dominance of the central block as shown in all the early views of the house such as that by Michael Angelo Taylor in 1790.

Planting between North Wing and Stables

An extensive and more informal shrubbery planting has been created between the entrance drive and cottages and stables to the north of the house. These plantings serve to provide a partial screen to the buildings, thus allowing them to recede in the scene and setting of the house. They also serve to absorb the associated car parking. The shrubberies are composed predominantly of the type of evergreens found in historic shrubberies and will include *Phillyrea latifolia*, Yew (*Taxus baccata*), *Viburnum tinus*, Lilac, *Philadelphus*, *Osmanthus heterophyllus* and Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*).

Circular Drive route and additional car parking

A new drive is made to enable deliveries to the biomass plant and to facilitate safe movement of cars around the area to the north of the house. A one-way system will be in effect so that the sharp corner in the drive close to the north wing parking and Laundry Cottages is less dangerous than it is at present.

Services area to the south of the House

The area is treated as an extension of the yew hedges that enclose the kitchen garden and the south end of the pleasure grounds that were introduced when the garden was remodelled in the 1990s

Proposed planting

The planting proposal continues the mid-19th century use of evergreen shrubs to conceal functional surrounds at the bases of the North Wing, its car park, and the Cottages and Stables and their car parks. More exotic flowering shrubs like *Rhododendrons* are also included, continuing their use at Gorhambury and tradition of using more floriferous planting nearer to the house.

The landscape supports the primacy of the principal pedimented block on the East Front and further additional trees are proposed to its south (right on the page) to help support this. Trees partially screen the North Wing, Cottages, and Stables.

Landscape Details

The existing limestone edges are reused in the area near the front of house, shown in orange on the drawings; In other locations, hidden concrete kerbs will be used at the edges of the drives to match the existing situation. Shown in dark blue;

In some cases, the kerbs are slightly raised using reclaimed granite setts to intercept surface water shown in purple; Bands of reclaimed granite setts will be used where tarmac surfaces meet gravel drives shown in green.

The loose gravel drive has metal edging to match the gardens path edges. This is shown in turquoise blue.

Arboriculture

see: Barton Hyett Associates *Arboricultural Impact Assessment*, dated July 2025

The existing trees include veteran Sweet Chestnuts and an Oak probably dating from the remodelling of the landscape in the 1830s. It is possible that the Sycamore is also from that time. Where the new drive is proposed near the Chestnuts and Oak, a permeable no-dig drive build-up has been employed over the tree root protection zone. In other areas the existing tarmac drives have been retained and a “spray and chippings” gravel surface layer added to the existing tarmac drives.

Archaeology

See: The Jessop Consultancy: *Archaeological Assessment*, dated August 2025

Archaeological work in relation to south landscape has been carried out in line with the approved WSI for Gorhambury House (ref: 5/2014/1450, approved 9 July 2015. Discharge of Condition 3, ref 5/2017/1461 dated 13 July 2017). It will be extended to include the new proposals for the stand-by generator and the below-ground firefighting water tank.

Ecology

see: Serious Nature: *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*, dated 8 September 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain dated ****

Biodiversity will be increased with the new planting. The planting also includes some native plants like the Guelder Rose and Spindles to benefit local fauna and to add to the native flora biodiversity.

The grass area to the south-east of the house will be resown with a wild flower mix appropriate for clay soils. Yellow Rattle will be sown to reduce the vigour of the grass species and to promote floristic variety.

GORHAMBURY

Alterations to the Setting of the East Front

August 2025

HERITAGE IMPACT TABLE

Listed Structures

- Gorhambury House Grade II*
- Dairy Grade II
- Stables (listed as Garages) Grade II
- Laundry Cottages (curtilage listed)
- Brewhouse (curtilage listed)
- Register of Parks and Gardens Grade II

| <i>Alterations</i> | <i>Historic Context of Setting</i> | <i>Significance</i> | <i>Works</i> <i>Red= Proposed Items not yet implemented</i> <i>Black = implemented works (retrospective items)</i> | <i>Impact on significance</i> | <i>Justification</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drives | 18C Taylor house approached from south east Gilpin 1825-27 New approach from north east introduced with pleasure grounds entered by gate east of the North Wing . Second War and after Drive to west half of Estate introduced through Wilderness north of pleasure grounds. Entrance gate resited from the forecourt to new drive junction. | Med | Revisions to circulation <i>See below</i> | | |
| | 1826 Main Drive and Forecourt | Medium | <i>Realignment of main drive east of North Wing</i> Approach and forecourt adjusted and laid to gravel | Low | Accommodates screen planting to allow parking in front of North Wing and remove parking from the forecourt Provides finer views on approaching the house, improving presentation of the portico and east front. |
| | 1826 area of planting to screen stable yard | Medium | <i>Introduction of new section of drive linking Stable Drive through to Main Drive</i> Construction of new drive with permeable no dig build up over tree root protection zone. | Low | Provides circular route avoiding bottle necks within the site and improves safety. More suited to number of vehicles now using the site. This includes a woodchip delivery vehicle. The drive will be largely concealed by the shrub planting. |
| | 1826 Gilpin's South Lawn After 1948 South lawn reduced and area returned to park. 1990s Vegetable Garden introduced | Medium | <i>New gravelled path east of vegetable garden</i> With Geocel area of hardstanding outside entrance to new services area | Low | Allows discrete vehicular access to proposed service area Gravelled surface extends that proposed for the forecourt. The Geocel facilitates turning into the services area. |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Car parking | North Wing 1774-84 Sir Robert Taylor 1860s Burn | Medium | <i>Introduction of parking area to east side of North Wing and East Link</i> Removal of shrubbery, Introduction of hardstanding fronted by yew hedge and specimen tree set in lawn | Low | Provides parking for occupants of mansion with access to both the formal and secondary entrances. It recovers the East Front uncluttered by cars. The hedge helps the North Wing recede in relation to the East Front. The hedge also conceals the car park. 1863 photo shows a hedge in front of the North Wing. Significant benefit is gained by removing parking from around the portico, recovering the significance of the forecourt. The use of gravel in the forecourt reinforces the division from the spray and chip drives. |
| | East Link 1816 Atkinson | | | | |
| | Stable Drive c1830 Laundry Cottages before 1883 | Medium | <i>Minor works to formalise parking area opposite Laundry Cottages.</i> | Low | Alterations upgrade opportunistic parking area and secures parking for use by adjacent cottages |
| | Stables c1830 Possibly Atkinson East half demolished following fire in 1944 | Medium | <i>Construction of parking area within shelter belt to south east of stable yard accessed by new drive.</i> Hard standing and reinforcement of planting | Low | Car park will be concealed by shrubbery. Parking in relation to subsidiary dwellings and public visitors. replaces previous ad hoc arrangement. |
| Bin storage | Adjacent to site of demolished stabling (constructed c.1830, demolished following fire in 1944.) | Low | <i>New bin store</i> painted timber boarded fencing to form bin storage area. | | Present storage of bins is <i>ad hoc</i> and requirement has grown with additional dwellings in the house and ancillary buildings. Due to the number of properties on the site storage of council waste collection bins is required. |
| Services Area | 18c south of South Wing 1826 South Wing demolished; pleasure grounds extended by Gilpin with south garden Post 1948 Pleasure grounds reduced and released area returned to parkland. Substation introduced into parkland 1987 Yew enclosure introduced outside south elevation, later adapted as kitchen garden. | Low | <i>Services Area</i> Extension of existing yew hedges surrounding the kitchen garden to enclose a services area on its south side. An area of Geosil provides stable ground for vehicle access. Removal of existing substation to SE Replacement UKPN substation and electrical kiosks panels within services area (see data sheet C) <i>Introduction of stand-by generator (see data sheet A)</i> <i>Set on concrete base within services area</i> | Low | Provides screened services area related to existing electrical supplies. Service area concealed by Taxus hedging in the manner of the existing garden. Recovery of historic parkland UKPN substation serves the House and other dwellings. Supply is inadequate for current usage. The present substation's capacity cannot be increased. UKPN confirm that it cannot be replaced in its present location. <i>Stand-by generator required because of the unreliable power supply to the house.</i> <i>The location is adjacent to the UKPN substation and is screened within the new services area.</i> |
| Firefighting Provision | 1774-84 Gorhambury House – Taylor South Wing (dem 1826) 19C pleasure grounds After 1948 pleasure grounds reduced. | Medium | <i>New fire-fighting tank</i> New below-ground water storage tank in grass area to SE of house (see data sheet B) Removal of temporary, above ground, water storage tanks introduced for fire safety during building works | Medium | Firefighting provision for the mansion Hertfordshire Fire Brigade advise that existing tanks to the north of the house do not have adequate capacity and are failing. Tank is below ground with stand-pipe access to minimise impact on historic setting of main house. Location is outside to the plan of the demolished south wing: archaeological monitoring necessary. |
| Fencing | 1987 Park railings realigned | Low | <i>Alteration to park railings.</i> | Low | To allow maintenance and prevent animals grazing hedging. The present boundary is not historic. |

| | | | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Planting | <p>1825-27 – W S Gilpin Setting of East Front redesigned with introduction of north east drive and the South Garden</p> <p>After 1948 Approach from north east modified; entrance gate resited to present location.</p> <p>Additional drive introduced across the north end of the stables</p> <p>1980s South Garden reduced and land incorporated into the park. Kitchen garden implemented.</p> | Medium | Supplementary planting. | Low | The revisions to planting are illustrated in the proposed planting plans and supporting Design & Access Statement. |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



1.1



1.2



1.3



1.4



1.5

plate x

1. Drives

- 1.1 Drive linking new carpark to main approach and stables
- 1.2 Main approach looking north
- 1.3 Main approach looking south towards house
- 1.4 Rearrangement of forecourt and its approach
- 1.5 Path joining forecourt to service are



2.1



2.2



2.3



2.4



2.5

2. Car parking

- 2.1 Parking opposite Laundry Cottages
- 2.2 Stables Carpark looking west to Brewhouse and Stables
- 2.3 Stables Carpark looking east
- 2.4 North Wing carpark with new yew hedge and modified drive
- 2.5 Forecourt looking north from portico with North Wing carpark



3.1

3. Bin Store
3.1 New bin store outside Stable Yard



4.1



4.2



4.3



4.4

4. Services Area

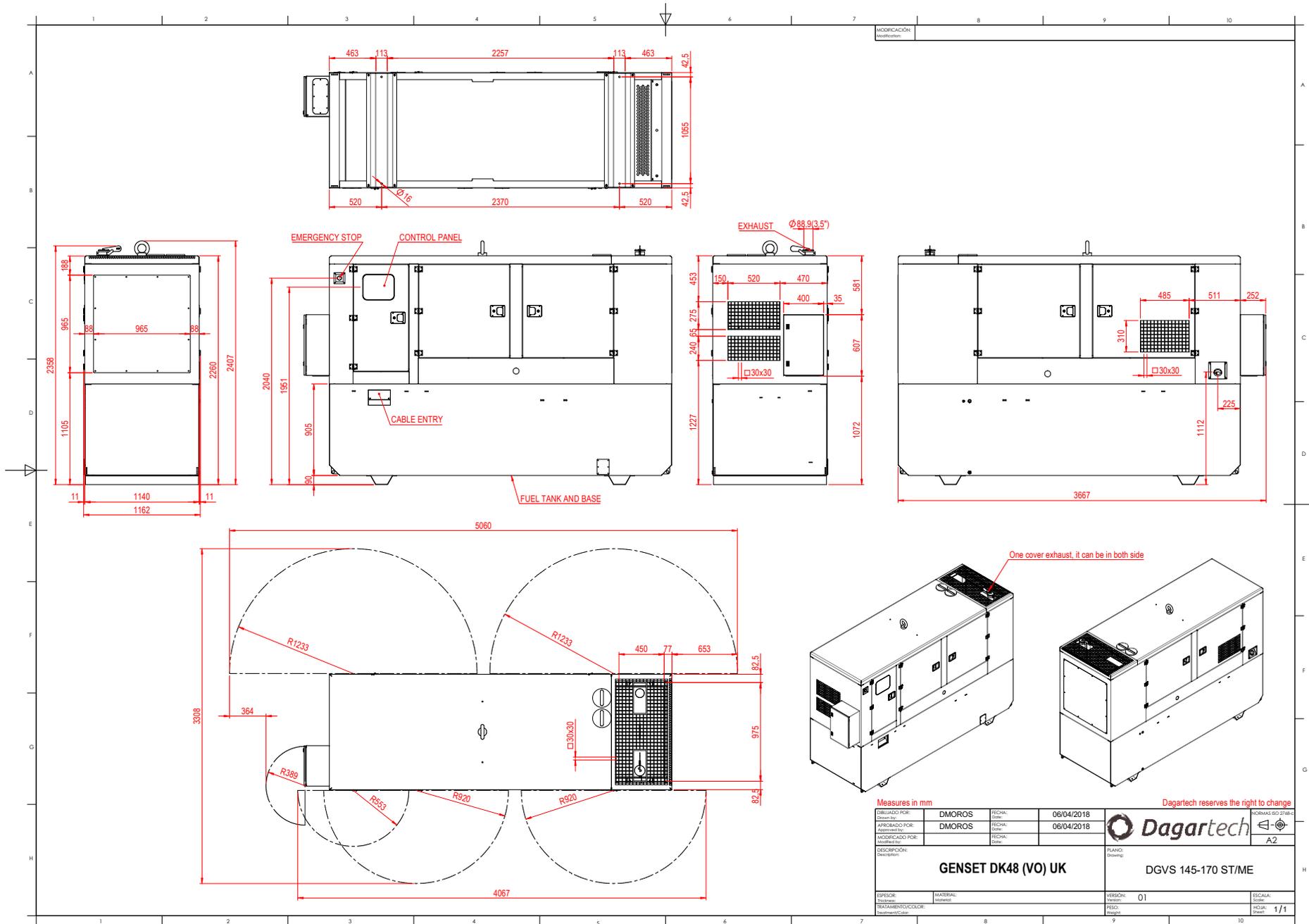
- 4.1 UKPN substation and electrical kiosks to the south of yew hedges surrounding Kitchen Garden
- 4.2 UKPN substation
- 4.3 Illustration of stand-by generator to be sited adjacent to substation
- 4.4 New services area forms an extension of the yew hedged kitchen garden to the south of the house



5.1

5. Fire Fighting Provision

5.1 Below ground water storage tank is sited in the grass to the east of the kitchen garden



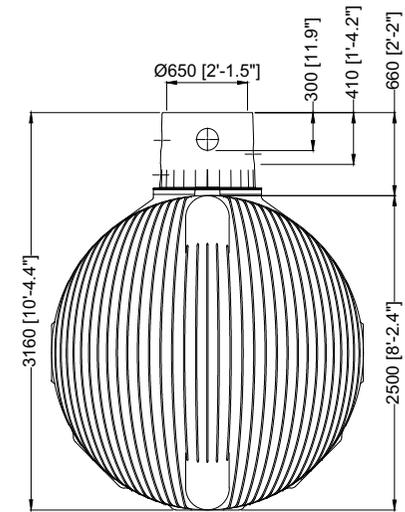
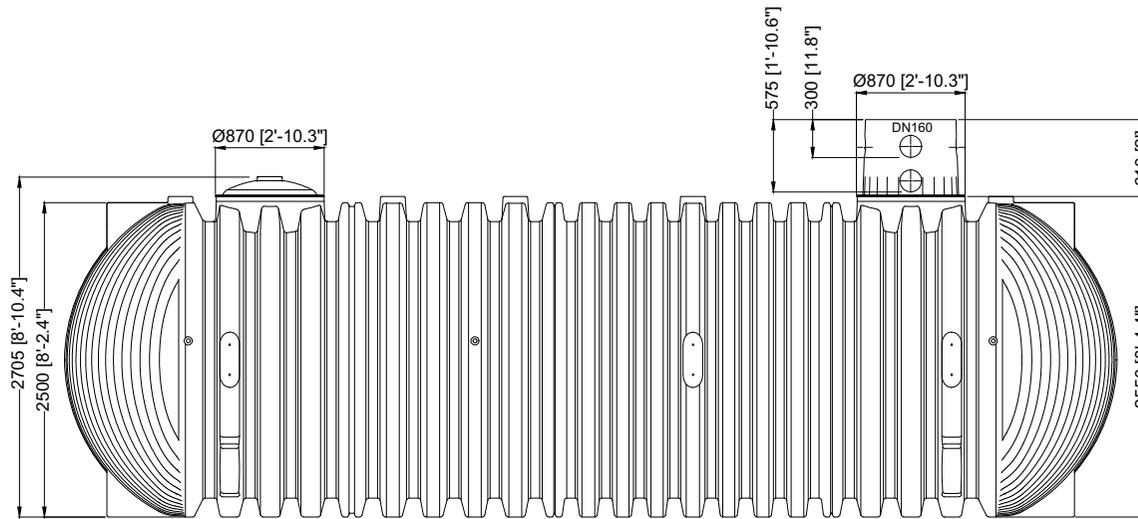
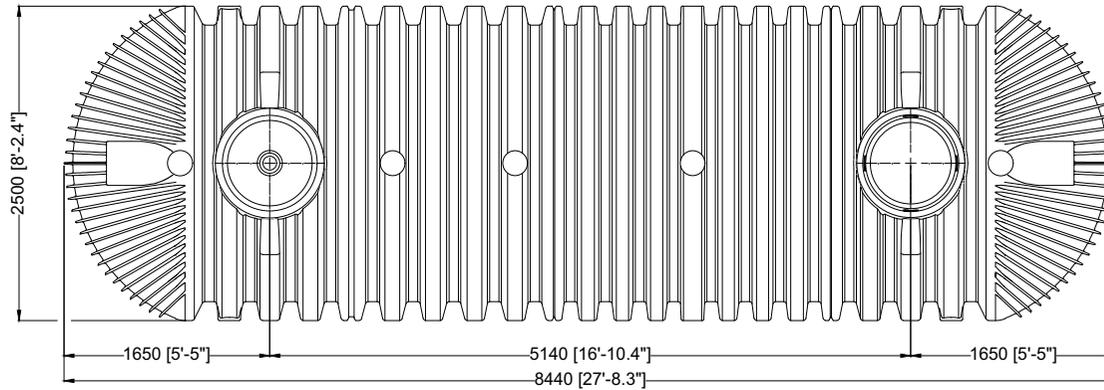
Measures in mm

Dagartech reserves the right to change

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|------------|---------|-----|
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| APROBADO POR: | DMOROS | FECHA: | 06/04/2018 | | |
| MODIFICADO POR: | | FECHA: | | | |
| MODIFICADO POR: | | FECHA: | | | |
| DESCRIPCIÓN: | GENSET DK48 (VO) UK | | | PLANO: | 02 |
| DESCRIPCIÓN: | DGVS 145-170 ST/ME | | | ESCALA: | 1/1 |
| ESPECIFICACIONES: | MATERIAL: | VERSION: | 01 | ESCALA: | |
| TRATAMIENTO DE COLOR: | REVISOR: | FECHA: | | HOJA: | 1/1 |
| Normativa: | Revisado: | Fecha: | | Sheet: | |

plate xv

Data Sheet A
Stand-by Generator



| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GRAF Regenwasser-Erdtank Carat XXL 32000 L / 8454 gal. | | | Artikel-Nr. product no. 380003 article no. (380814 / 371018 / 371065) artículo no. |
| GB GRAF underground tank Carat XXL 32000 L / 8454 gal. | ES GRAF Depósito soterrado Carat XXL 32000 L / 8454 gal. | FR GRAF Cuve à enterrer Carat XXL 32000 L / 8454 gal. | revision |
| gezeichnet drawn EMU | Gewicht weight 1375 kg | Otto Graf GmbH Carl-Zeiss-Str. 2-6 DE-79331 Teningen mail@graf.info www.graf.info | |
| Datum date 2020.08.10 | Toleranz tolerance +/- 3% |  | |
| Maßstab scale M 1:40 | Einheiten units mm [inch] gal. = US gal. | | |



DIN A3

APPENDICES

Listings

House

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1102915
Date first listed: 19-Oct-1953
List Entry Name: Gorhambury
Statutory Address 1: Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill

Location

Statutory Address: Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill
County: Hertfordshire
District: St. Albans (District Authority)
Parish: St. Michael
National Grid Reference: TL 11374 07850

Details

TL 10 NW St Michael Bluehouse Hill (off) (north west side)

9/255 Gorhambury 19.10.53

GV II*

Country house. Begun 1777-84 for the third Viscount Grimston by Sir Robert Taylor. Refaced in Portland stone 1957-67. Originally the house had low wings connecting the main building with side blocks. The low N wing was replaced by a stuccoed 3-storeyed block in 1816-17, the outer N block by a more substantial one in 1826 (W Atkinson). In the same year the S wing and block were demolished. Main block is 2 storeys over basement. Deep hexastyle Corinthian portico with paired outer columns, the rear wall pilastered. 3 sash windows each side with moulded frames, those of ground floor with cornices. Rusticated basement and podium. Long flight of steps to portico. Central double door with shell motif in arch tympanum. Rear elevation with three-quarter column hexastyle portico. N wing is 3 windows with similar detail. N block is 1:3:1 sash windows, the centre 3 projecting.

Interior: Large cube central hall modelled on Queen's House with high bracketed balcony. S wall with stained glass windows and good marble fireplace taken from Old Gorhambury. Yellow drawing room in SW has a richly carved fireplace by Piranesi: white marble with figured red marble panels and medallions. Another Piranesi fireplace in library. Good oval staircase hall on N side with cantilevered spiral stairs and glazed dome. Important collection of family portraits. (C.L. 25.11.33, Pevsner (1977)).

Dairy Cottage

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1175187
Date first listed: 27-Sep-1984
List Entry Name: Dairy, Immediately North of Gorhambury
Statutory Address 1: Dairy, Immediately North of Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill

Location

Statutory Address: Dairy, Immediately North of Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill
County: Hertfordshire
District: St. Albans (District Authority)
Parish: St. Michael
National Grid Reference: TL 11353 07888

Details

TL 10 NW St Michael Bluehouse Hill (off) (north west side)

9/256 Dairy, immediately N of Gorhambury House

GV II

Dairy. Circa 1830, possibly by W Atkinson. Stuccoed single storey building, square plan with a broad slate roof carried on a peristyle of slender cast iron colonnettes. Plastered soffit to wide eaves. 3 windows on E and W sides, the E side with a slightly projecting centre bay. W side has a blocked central opening, a casement window on left and double door on right.

Milestone

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1102916
Date first listed: 27-Sep-1984
List Entry Name: Milestone, Adjoining North West Corner of Dairy, immediately North of Gorhambury House

Location

Statuary Address: Milestone, Adjoining North West Corner of Dairy, immediately North of Gorhambury House
County: Hertfordshire
District: St. Albans (District Authority)
Parish: St. Michael
National Grid Reference: TL 11356 07878

Details

TL 1132 0788 ST MICHAEL BLUEHOUSE HILL (off) (north west side)
9/257 Milestone, adjoining NW corner of Dairy, immediately N of Gorhambury House

GV II

Milestone. Probably late C18. Portland stone square pier, about 1 metre high. Identical inscriptions on S and E sides, partly illegible: 'This ... from London 22 miles to 6 Furlongs 12 Poles'

Stables

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1102917
Date first listed: 27-Sep-1984
List Entry Name: Garage Building at Gorhambury House
Statutory Address 1: Garage Building at Gorhambury House, Bluehouse Hill

Location

Statutory Address: Garage Building at Gorhambury House, Bluehouse Hill
County: Hertfordshire
District: St. Albans (District Authority)
Parish: St. Michael
National Grid Reference: TL 11335 07956

Details

TL 10 NW St Michael Bluehouse Hill (off) (north west side)

9/258 Garage building at Gorhambury House

GV II

Garage building, built as a stable courtyard, now only W range remaining. Circa 1830. Yellow stock brick with minimal stone dressings. Slate hipped roof. U-shaped block, 2 storeys high. Centre range has 6 square sash windows, the ground floor with modern garages. Projecting ends have flush panel doors in arched recesses, the outer ground floors with shallow recesses to take folding gates. The entrance on the S side is flanked by 2 pairs of Tuscan columns, part of original structure and presumably once with pediment or entablature. Low wall on E forms a rectangular court.

Park and Garden

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Name: Gorhambury
List entry Number: 1000417

Location:

| County | District | District Type | Parish |
|---------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Hertfordshire | St. Albans | District Authority | Redbourn |
| Hertfordshire | St. Albans | District Authority | St. Michael |

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II
Date first registered: 11-Jun-1987
Legacy System: Parks and Gardens

Details

A country mansion surrounded by an C18 landscape park created from C16 park and woodland associated with Old Gorhambury house, the remains of which exist as a park feature. Sir Francis Bacon, the writer of the influential essay 'Of Gardens' (1625), created elaborate early C17 water gardens, the earthwork remains of which survive, to surround his summerhouse (now gone). William Sawrey Gilpin laid out formal gardens around the house in the 1820s, much of which well-documented work remains.

Historic Development

Sir Nicholas Bacon (1509-79), Lord Chancellor and Lord Keeper of the Seal, built a house at Gorhambury, 1563(8, which was visited by Queen Elizabeth in 1572 and 1577. Upon Sir Nicholas' death, his son Anthony inherited the estate, it passing in somewhat dilapidated state to Anthony's brother Francis (1561-1626) in 1601. Francis was knighted at James I's accession in 1603, holding a succession of official posts including Privy Councillor (1616) and Lord Chancellor (1618), in which year he was created first Baron Verulam. In 1621 he was created Viscount St Albans and his career collapsed, with charges of bribery and corruption and brief imprisonment in the Tower. From then until his death he spent much of his time at Gorhambury. His highly influential work on the design of gardens, the essay

'Of Gardens', was first published in Essays in 1597, and in final form in 1625 (Spedding et al 1857(74). Bacon began work on the Pondyard water gardens in 1608, building a supplementary house to be lived in during the summer, Verulam House, overlooking them. Old Gorhambury house (as it became known in the late C18) was retained, with a formal, avenue approach (possibly combined with a deer course) connecting the two. A 1634 estate map (HRO) shows the layout shortly after Bacon's death, complete with a viewing mount topped by a pavilion, overlooking the Old House and St Albans cathedral. The water gardens fell into disuse during the mid C17, and were described as such by John Aubrey in 1656. The summerhouse was demolished in 1665-6.

A new mansion was built in the 1770s by the third Viscount Grimston, east of what then became known as Old Gorhambury. A landscape park was laid out around the new mansion using the ruins of Old Gorhambury as an eyecatcher. In the mid 1820s William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843) laid out formal gardens around the house, including a long, straight, terrace walk, and a new approach drive for the first Earl of Verulam. The house remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Gorhambury lies 3km west of the centre of St Albans. The c 230ha site is bounded largely by agricultural land and woodland, and occupies hilly ground with two major valleys running from south-west to north-east close to the north and south boundaries. The setting is rural, with remains of the Roman town of Verulamium lying close by to the east, partly in Prae Wood. Views extend west, south and east from the centre of the site over adjacent agricultural land and woodland.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters off the A4147 Hemel Hempstead to St Albans road, passing St Michael's Lodge, a C19, two-storey, flint and stone cottage in Tudor style. The drive, at this point outside the area here registered, runs north-west through farmland, crossing the Roman Fosse embankment 1.5km east of the mansion, overlooking the River Ver in the valley to the east. North of this the drive is flanked by a mixed avenue of mature trees. Some 1.25km east of the mansion a long view briefly opens up westwards to its east front, along a grass plateau framed by a Wellingtonia avenue. The drive curves west, past Mayne's Farm to the north, arriving at Nash's Lodge (listed grade II), standing 700m north-east of the mansion at the entrance to the park and the area here registered. It is a two-storey, stuccoed and white-painted building of the 1830s-40s. From here the drive continues south-west, ascending a gentle hillside, curving south to arrive at a gravel carriage sweep on the east, entrance front of the mansion, set in informal lawn on a plateau which extends east for 600m, flanked by the Wellingtonia avenue (mid-late C19). A long, broad flight of steps leads up to a deep,

two-storey portico at first-floor level, with broad views back across the park and farmland to the hillside beyond the River Ver.

The main approach was designed by William Sawrey Gilpin in 1827, although actually not carried out until 1829, in order to allow better views of the mansion. Nash's Lodge was built in association with this drive. Formerly the drive had assumed a curving line directly from the east off the approach road, past a group of cottages now known as Shepherd's Cottages standing 650m from the mansion. In the late C19 the course was still visible in outline, marked by a line of trees (OS 1883). The drive arrived at the south-east corner of the mansion (Bryant, 1822).

A second drive approaches from the south via the A4147, passing Hill End Farm, entering the area here registered 900m south of the mansion at Stud Cottages, a two-storey, white-painted, C19 brick building. From here the drive rises up a gentle hillside, passing Temple Cottage (mid C18, extended late C19, listed grade II) 600m south-west of the mansion. The Cottage, built as a Palladian temple, has a Doric portico on its north-east front and is designed to be visible in the view south-west across the park from the mansion and garden (this view now, 1999, obscured by trees). From here the drive continues north to the ruins of Old Gorhambury (1563, extended 1570s, scheduled ancient monument, listed grade I), built by Sir Nicholas Bacon. The brick and flint ruins are dominated by a two-storey porch at the centre of the south front, which formerly overlooked a rectangular forecourt entered via a straight drive from the south (estate map, 1634). From here the drive extends north-east, passing between the walled kitchen garden and Gilpin's Wood lying west of the mansion, arriving at the north side of the stable block, from here running south to the east front of the mansion.

In the late C19 two drives left Stud Cottages. One approached the mansion directly, by crossing the parkland north of the Cottages, while the other gave access to the kitchen garden. From Temple Cottage it ran north, passing the west side of Old Gorhambury, to enter the outer kitchen garden at the south-west corner. An extension of this drive left the north-east side of the kitchen garden, entering the garden west of the mansion (OS C19). A further drive from Stud Cottages provided a direct link to Shepherd's Cottages.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Gorhambury mansion (Sir Robert Taylor 1774-84, listed grade II*) stands at the centre of the park. The three-storey, rectangular, stone-faced building is linked to an adjacent service wing to the north. A service yard lies adjacent to the north of this. When built, the mansion had low wings connecting the main building with side blocks to the north and south. The north wing was replaced by the precursor of the present service wing, 1816-17, and the south wing and block were demolished in 1826. The remaining west range of the c 1830 brick stable courtyard (listed grade II) stands 50m

north of the mansion, the other three ranges having been demolished in the C20. This range overlooks the northern section of the garden.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie to the south, west and north of the mansion. A curved, stone, double staircase leads down from the first-floor garden door at the centre of the west front to a broad gravel path which runs along the bottom of the west and south fronts. The balcony affords long views over the park to the west and south, particularly along a central axis westwards aligned on a ride cut through Gilpin's Wood, terminated by the east wall of the walled garden. The north-east front of Temple Cottage (600m to the south-west) is aligned on, and was formerly visible from (OS C19), the west front and gardens, the view now (1999) partially blocked by a plantation. Beyond the path adjacent to the west and south fronts lie lawns. A gravel path aligned on the centre of the west front leads c 30m west to a short flight of stone steps leading up to a raised garden terrace. The path is flanked by circular beds enclosing stone urns, and beyond this a line of yews clipped into geometrical shapes. To the north of the yews lies a croquet lawn, and to the south a grass tennis court. South of the mansion lies a formal garden (late 1980s), enclosed by clipped yew hedges, set in lawn.

The c 1m high garden terrace runs along the west boundary of the garden, topped by a broad gravel path, with stone steps leading down at the north and south. The terrace overlooks to the east the garden and west front of the mansion, with views south over the south park to woodland on the hillside beyond. To the west it overlooks the west park, the main features in this view being the remains of Old Gorhambury standing 400m to the south-west, and Gilpin's Wood 100m west of the mansion. The north end of the terrace leads down to informal lawns planted with several fine cedars of Lebanon. The Dairy (c 1830, possibly W Atkinson, listed grade II) lies at the north end of the mansion, on the west side of the service yard, overlooking the lawns and north end of the terrace. It is a square, single-storey, stuccoed building, entered from the garden via a central door, with a small verandah created by the overhanging eaves. Beyond the cedars, to the north, lies a further open lawn with a tennis court at the east side. The northern area is surrounded by informal planting, bounded to the east by the stable block and to the north by the drive from the kitchen garden. Beyond the drive lies a wooded area, now (1999) detached but formerly part of the pleasure ground circuit (OS C19).

The garden and pleasure grounds were laid out in 1825 to designs by William Sawrey Gilpin (Piebenga 1994) who designed the terraced walk specifically to give good views of the western park, together with walks in the adjacent pleasure grounds and flower beds (now gone) sited close to the mansion. Gilpin also advised on the siting of Gilpin's Plantation, designed to screen the kitchen garden beyond. By the late C19 (OS) the informal pleasure grounds flanked the formal layout west of the mansion, with serpentine paths enclosed by trees, and a conifer avenue running parallel with the north boundary. A

glasshouse/conservatory stood west of the stables, against a wall to the north (both glass and wall now gone). The south-west drive was driven through the northern pleasure ground in the early C20 (OS), and the eastern section of the southern pleasure ground was taken into the park in the late C20.

PARK The park surrounds the mansion and gardens and is laid to pasture and arable, with scattered woodland blocks together with clumps of trees and singles. The north-west quarter occupies a plateau which extends as an arm east from the mansion, laid to grass and planted with the Wellingtonia avenue. Valleys run along the south boundary of the park, and east from Windmill hill Wood on the north boundary. Part of the west boundary south of Brickkiln Wood is marked by a further line of mature Wellingtonias, visible from the mansion and garden. An avenue of walnut and lime trees runs along the north boundary for 1.2km, flanking a largely level, straight strip of grass formerly known as the 'race course' (OS). This arrangement is shown on the 1634 estate map, the course aligned at the east end on the site of Sir Francis Bacon's early C17 Verulam House at the north-east corner of the park. The exactly one-mile-long feature seems to have been part of a formal avenue approach from Old Gorhambury to the Pondyards, and may possibly also have been a deer course (estate map, 1634; Garden Hist 1995).

The Pondyards, the remains of Sir Francis Bacon's water garden associated with Verulam House (now gone), lie 1.3km north-east of the mansion. The water garden occupies a valley, the sides rising up to the north to the C17, brick Pondyard Cottage (listed grade II), and to the south towards the site of the former house, which stood in what is now parkland c 50-100m south of the garden, and c 450m east of the end of the 'race course'. Verulam House was a square, three-storey brick building, with a cupola and a balustraded viewing platform on the roof overlooking the water garden; as Aubrey (1656) noted 'from the Leads was a lovely Prospect to the Ponds' (Garden Hist 1992).

The Pondyards are now (1999) entered from east of a lodge at the north-east corner, via a lime avenue leading south along the east boundary. A path on a bank leads from the avenue c 70m west between two roughly square ponds with central islands, to a series of water-filled canals enclosing adjacent square 'islands', the area currently (late C20) being planted with poplars. The second 'island' from the east is approached from west and east by earth bridges, with a depression at its centre indicating the site of a 'curious banqueting-house of Roman architecture, paved with black and white marble' (Aubrey 1656). The canals become less substantial towards the west end.

Some 1.1km south-east of Gorhambury mansion lies Lord Bacon's Mount (scheduled ancient monument), a square earth mound with graded sides leading up to a level platform at the top, planted with several mature trees. It stands on a plateau within woodland, formerly within a clearing (OS C19) at the north end of Prae Wood. At that

time it enjoyed views north-west across wooded slopes towards the mansion and Old Gorhambury, and south-east towards St Albans and the cathedral. In the C17 it lay surrounded by The Mount Field, supporting a small viewing pavilion (estate map, 1634). Prae Wood still retains rides radiating from the centre which appear to relate to the course of those shown in similar positions on the 1634 estate map.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled, rectangular kitchen garden (C16 and later, listed grade II) lies c 300m west of the mansion, now (1999) in use as a paddock and laid to grass. It is approached from the drive to the south, and entered through a central gateway in the south wall. A second compartment lies adjacent to the north, reached through a central gateway in the north wall. A brick-built gardener's cottage stands at the north-west corner of the northern compartment, with, to the east of this, the remains of heated, brick, lean-to glasshouse walls. Formerly (OS C19) the walled garden was surrounded by a further enclosure, an irregular oval in shape, which contained a range of glasshouses and service buildings in a yard to the north, and cold frames or pits to the south, the remainder of the space having been cultivated. The walled kitchen garden was erected in the C16 by Sir Nicholas Bacon, when it was associated with Old Gorhambury.

REFERENCES

James Spedding et al (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon VI*, pt ii, (1857-74), p 485 *Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire 2*, (1908), pp 394-7 *Country Life*, 73 (25 November 1933), pp 556-61; (16 December 1933), pp 649-51 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire* (1977), pp 147-8 R Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (1979), pp 126-7, 129 *Garden History* 20, no 2 (1992), pp 116-31; 23, no 2 (1995), pp 133-44 S Piebenga, William Sawrey Gilpin, (*English Heritage Designer Theme Study* 1994)

Maps *The Mannour of Gorham-Burry ...*, 1634 (Hertfordshire Record Office) Dury and Andrews, *A topographical Map of Hartford-shire*, 1766 A Bryant, *The County of Hertford*, 1822

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1883 2nd edition published 1899 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898

Remains of Old Gorhambury

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Heritage Category: | Listed Building |
| Grade: | I |
| List Entry Number: | 1175197 |
| Date first listed: | 19-Oct-1953 |

List Entry Name: Remains of Old Gorhambury
Statutory Address 1: Remains of Old Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill

Location

Statutory Address: Remains of Old Gorhambury, Bluehouse Hill
County: Hertfordshire
District: St. Albans (District Authority)
Parish: St. Michael
National Grid Reference: TL 11029 07616

Details

TL 10 NW St Michael Bluehouse Hill (off) (north west side)

9/259 Remains of Old Gorhambury 19.10.53

GV I

Ruins of the mansion begun in 1563 by Sir Nicholas Bacon and extended in 1570s. Red brick and flint. Stone dressings. Porch and hall remain from the former 2-courtyard house, the entrance court formerly on S and service court on N. The 2-storey porch has good stone classical detail. 3-sided arched entrance on ground floor with flanking Doric columns. Enriched entablature. Tympana with roundels. Upper floor with square mullioned and transomed windows on E and W sides. Ionic columns. Dentilled cornice. Attic above with coat of arms. Hall to rear left retains tall mullioned and transomed window marking dais. Lateral stack to right. Visited by Queen Elizabeth I 1570, 1573, 1577. Scheduled Ancient Monument. (C.L. 16.12.33, Pevsner (1977)).

PLANNING GUIDELINES

This application supports the following planning guidelines set out by St Albans District Council in their 'Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area Statements', Area 97 Gorhambury Estate, page 25-28.

“encourage the development of an enclosure strategy using sympathetic and consistent materials for estate railings/fences, hedges, banking etc.”

The proposal reuses materials from site or materials to match existing on the estate. The proposal creates a more cohesive material pallet.

- Tarmac dressed with a rolled chip dressing to match loose gravel
- All estate railing is reused or replaced to match existing
- All topsoil to be mounded and stored during building work and reused in the landscape

“survey and manage parkland and veteran trees for biodiversity value”

- no dig in root protection areas
- no non-permeable surfaces will be laid in root protection areas

“ensure new planting is encouraged to maintain age diversity. Ensure landscape improvements respect the historic context of existing features and the form and character of parkland and gardens. Ornamental species should only be used to replace damaged or over-mature specimens where appropriate”

- The proposed planting offers the next generation of trees
- A diverse pallet of shrubs is proposed to create continuous cover and succession to the *Buxus* spp. increasingly effected by *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*.

“hard landscape details such as steps, balustrades, pond copings, statuary and urns should be conserved. Replacements should be in facsimile and in natural materials. Lodges, gazebos, follies, grottoes, obelisks, ice houses, terraces, ha-has, boundary walls, railings, fences gates and gate piers should contribute to the planned landscape and its setting. Replacement, renovated or new features should be architect designed and in keeping with their original setting.”

- Estate railings will be repaired and timber post and rail in fill removed
- Yorkstone paving retained and additional paving to match existing

Planning History

in date order

5/2013/1067

22 July 2013

Conversion of shed to biomass boiler plant room including additional flues and associated Works

5/14/1447

2 December 2014

Planning Consent

Replacement swimming pool and associated plant shed, new pool loggia, associated landscaping

5/14/1450

9 July 2015

Planning Consent

Main House. Conversion of five dwellings, conservation and restoration of interior and exterior and provision of disabled access

5/2015/1208

28 July 2015

Planning Consent

Stables 1

Alterations to first floor flat above garaging in stable-yard: replacement of staircase, incorporation of additional space from adjacent store and removal of chimneystack

5/2016/3393

24 February 2017

Planning Consent

Construction of new Pool House

5/2017/1685

17 November 2017

Planning Consent

External Repairs to Main House: New roofing to Mansion and wing roof to match the original design, installation of ventilation insulation, walkways and access hatches, ventilated access dormer windows, raising of parapets, repair of external render, structural repairs to elevations, draught proofing to windows and external redecoration

5/2017/1676/LBC

17 November 2017

Listed Building Consent

External Repairs to Main House: New roofing to Mansion and wing roof to match the original design, installation of ventilation insulation, walkways and access hatches, ventilated access dormer windows, raising of parapets, repair of external render, structural repairs to elevations, draught proofing to windows and external redecoration

5/2018/0294

9 May 2018

Internal and external alterations: Variation of condition 2 - approved plans and condition 4 details and samples - in relation to approved application 5/14/1450 approved 9 July 2015 Planning Consent

5/2018/0295

9 May 2018

Internal and external alterations: Variation of condition 2 - approved plans and condition 3 details and samples - in relation to approved application 5/14/1451/LB approved 9 July 2015 Listed Building Consent

5/18/0368

6 April 2018

Listed Building Consent

North Wing Render: Removal of defective cement-based render from the north wing

5/2020/0420

28 August 2020

Planning Consent

Main House: Conversion to form three dwellings. External, internal alterations and external security strategy

5/2020/0450

28 August 2020

Listed Building Consent

Main House: Conversion to form three dwellings. External, internal alterations and external security strategy

5/2021/0416

13 May 2021

Planning

External security and lighting strategy

5/2021/0466

13 May 2021

Listed Building Consent

External security and lighting strategy

5/2022/1214/LB

21 November 2022

Conversion of three dwellings, conservation and restoration of interior and exterior. Variation of condition 2 (plans) of 5/20/0450/LB approved 28 August 2020

Related Parking:

5/2020/0420

28 August 2020

Planning permission

Main House: Conversion to form three dwellings. External, internal alterations and external security strategy

5/24/0699

22 May 2024

Discharge of Condition 5 ref 5/2020/0420

“Prior to first occupation of the properties hereby approved, the following details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and development shall proceed as approved and be retained as such unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority: A plan and description showing the location and quantum of amenity space and parking spaces adjacent to the properties to be kept permanently

available for the use of future occupiers of the properties hereby approved.

Notwithstanding the details contained in the application form, there shall be space for a minimum of 9 cars kept available on site for future occupiers of the development hereby approved”.