
Summaries of papers presented at the Spring Conference
12 March 2005, Law Faculty, Cambridge

Garden History and Archaeology in East Anglia

Derek Booth

The archaeology and history of the designed landscape and moated garden at Shelley Hall, Suffolk

Evidence for medieval and early Tudor gardens associated with moated sites was explored, with particular reference to examples from Suffolk, such as Westthorpe Hall and Mettingham Castle. The use of ancillary moated sites for structures such as dovecotes and banqueting houses, or for separate gardens or orchards was next examined at places such as Rishangles Lodge, Letheringham Lodge, Kentwell Hall and Helmingham Hall.

Shelley Hall, the main subject of the talk, was a large brick house built in the 1520s by Sir Philip Tilney (d. 1533). He was a member of an ancient knightly family who gained additional status by the marriage of first his cousin, and then his sister, to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. By the first marriage he became a cousin of the future Elizabeth I. Only a part of Tilney's house has survived, but the layout suggests a courtyard-plan house that had an axial relationship to a square moated site to the east. This moated site had been postulated as the site of an earlier house, but the fortunate existence of a manorial survey dated 1519-33 clarified the set-up by describing a 'gardeyn' on the east side of the manor buildings that was 'motyd on every syde'. Analysis of the survey and the present topography suggest that the moated site adjoined an area of marshland and that the approach to the house was contrived to present views of the garden to visitors, but that actual access to it was limited to a favoured few.

A geophysical survey of the moated island in 1999, funded through the involvement of the 'Lost Gardens' TV programme, revealed a central square structure and a cruciform pattern of marks around it. Subsequent trial trenching established that the central feature was caused by a substantial deposit of white chalky material with numerous peg-tile fragments, probably indicating the remains of a building, and the other marks were associated with spreads of gravel.

The 1519-33 survey mentions a 'duffe hous' in the garden area and it most likely that the central square structure was actually a dovecote and the gravel

spreads represent paths that divided the island into quarters, with, presumably, ornamental plantings and/or features in the quadrants. The use of heraldry to supply garden ornaments and colour is recorded elsewhere and the numerous surviving heraldic items at Shelley, both at the Hall and in the church, strongly suggest that heraldic ornaments would have played an important part in Sir Philip's garden.

For further information on Shelley Hall and its moated garden, see: *Procs Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 39 pt. 2, 1998, 257-64 and pt. 4, 2000, 528; also J Potter, *Lost Gardens*, Channel 4 Books (Macmillan), London 2000, 32-53.

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Recreation of the Moated Gardens at Shelley Hall

This brief paper explored the methodology of this particular garden recreation but also sought to set this within the wider context of the media and its involvement in restoration and recreation.

Shelley Hall Tudor Garden was chosen by Channel 4 as part of a series on garden restorations. Sites were of various periods and styles, with Shelley being the oldest. The programme explored professional issues and approaches including methods and aims in garden restoration, archaeology of gardens, documentary research both of the specific sites and of contemporary Tudor garden sites, the use of palynology in garden research, and the restrictions placed on restoration by wildlife and surviving archaeological remains. It also explored period correct planting in its planting scheme and difficulties of incorporating surviving plants (mainly trees) on a site.

The aim of creating a period correct restoration was realistically balanced by the needs and wishes of the garden owners. Issues common to restorations in

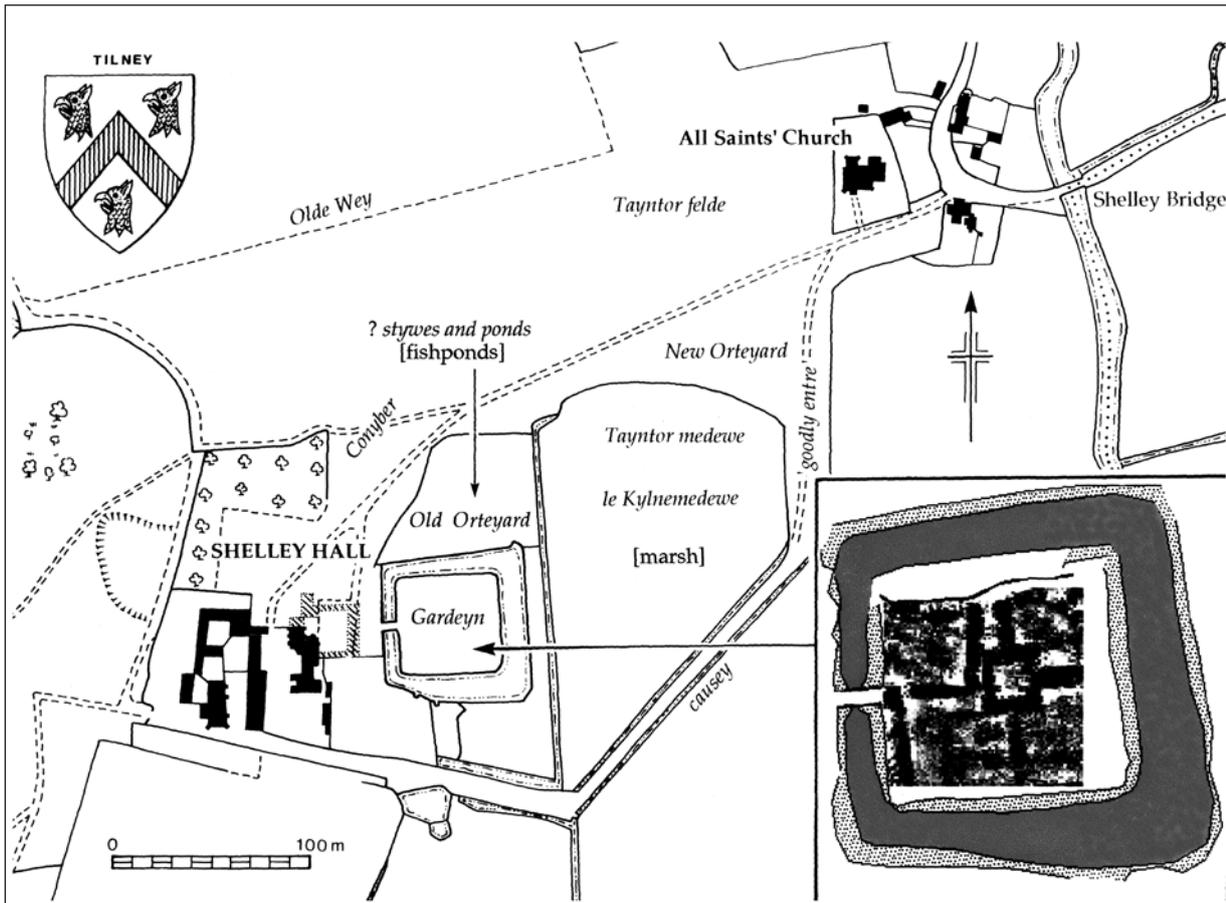


Figure 1. Plan of Shelley Hall, Suffolk.

private gardens included: outlay costs (period correct garden buildings are expensive); on-going maintenance costs; desire for all-year round attractiveness (difficult with period restricted plants); lack of desire to take on fishponds, dove-houses or other wildlife; and also a less tangible preference for a garden they liked.

This balance between period correct restoration and modern needs is one that is realistically met in all garden restorations and recreations. The restoration of the site at Shelley Hall was an opportunity to explore those issues within the wider context of the popular media.

See also:

Potter, J 2000 *Lost Gardens*. Channel 4 Books
 Way, T 2000 'In defence of Lost Gardens' *Historic Gardens Review* Autumn 2000.

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Chippenham Park and Gardens: history and archaeology

Chippenham Park was created at the very end of the 17th century as an 'Anglo-Dutch' designed landscape comprising canals, park, and formal gardens. It was subsequently informalised by 18th and 19th century designers including William Eames and Samuel Lappidge, who swept away much of the formal gardens, naturalised the main canal, but left in place some formal waterways on the periphery of the park. Plans and maps survive from several of these later phases of landscaping, including the design proposals submitted by Eames (1792 private coll.).

The paper presented to the CAS had several aims:

- To highlight the wealth of landscape archaeology within Chippenham Park;
- To emphasise the important role of estate maps in research on historic designed landscapes;
- To give a brief overview of the creation and development of the designed landscape and gardens at Chippenham Park from the late 17th century into the 20th century;
- To highlight features of the gardens and park which have remained relatively static until the present day;

- To discuss features that, despite the wealth of cartographic and other documentary evidence, remain an enigma within the context of the overall design.

Chippenham Park contains a wealth of upstanding earthworks and extant waterways and routeways which relate to the parkland and garden landscapes and to the village settlement which pre-dated the park. Some, such as the old routeways, are easily interpreted, whilst others are more obscure. In particular, 'humps and bumps' near the informalised waterway may indicate spoil from alterations to the formal canal.

Almost immediately after its creation the park was recorded on a detailed estate map of c.1712 by Heber Lands (CRO R58/16/1, Plate). This map has formed the basis for several studies including that by Margaret Spufford on the pre-parkland village settlement; the creation of the formal designed landscape (Way 1999), and an assessment of the informalisation of the landscape in subsequent periods (Way *ibid*). The map contains information on the house, gardens, canals and waterways, and the planting. Features that have remained surprisingly static include the walled kitchen garden, the formal waterway on the east side of the park; and complex waterways south of the kitchen garden. Some of the trees, including those marking the original route in from the west, clearly survive, although at the ends of their lives.

Spufford, M 1965 *A Cambridgeshire Community: Chippenham from settlement to Enclosure*. LUP

Way, T 1997 *A Study of the Impact of Imparkment on the Social Landscapes of Cambridgeshire*. BAR Series 258

Twigs Way

Some 19th century leisure gardens in West Cambridge

This paper describes the existence and enjoyment of seven sets of detached leisure gardens in Cambridge between c.1830 and 1925. Gardens for 'leisure', ie tending flower beds and a lawn, for picnics and just sitting in the sun, as opposed to allotments for the labour-intensive growing of vegetables, are a little known phenomenon in Britain, and more common on the continent, especially in Holland and Denmark.

Only a very few British sites had been recognised, notably the Edgbaston Guinea Gardens in Birmingham which are included in the English Heritage register of historic parks and gardens (Grade II, 1997).

The existence of these Cambridge sites, located and researched by a working party of Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust therefore came as a surprise: three of the sites are close to the Madingley road, three relate to the south end of Grange Road, with one at Newnham Croft. They are of interest in three contexts: [1] in the intermediary development of the Cambridge West Fields, [2] in the relief they afforded to tradespeople

and college servants whose lives were confined to virtually medieval conditions in the town, and [3] for their actual design and 'gardening' which was enjoyed through the social spectrum from college servants to senior academics.

This paper is an edited version of the Note 'We Shall Have Very Great Pleasure' published in *Garden History* 31:1, pp 95–108. A version has also been printed in *Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust Newsletter* No. 16 May 2004, and copies of this will be available.

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Fieldwork and garden archaeology

The techniques of analytical field archaeology, using detailed ground survey, aerial photographs and other remote sensing devices, were developed in the early to mid 20th century and were used primarily on prehistoric, Roman and later medieval archaeological sites. However, in the early 1960s these techniques were used to identify, record and interpret sites of abandoned post-medieval gardens in Cambridgeshire. The work revealed that such abandoned gardens, together with the traces of earlier gardens fossilised within later existing ones, were extremely common and led to many more similar discoveries all over Britain. Subsequently the remains of medieval gardens were found and, soon afterwards, the sites of extensive designed landscapes, also of the medieval period. Many of these discoveries were also the result of work in Cambridgeshire. The county can thus perhaps be seen as the birthplace of this form of archaeological research on parks and gardens of all periods.

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Death by Design: Historic Designed Cemeteries of Essex

Public municipal cemeteries set up under the Burial Acts 1853–1906 are among the high achievements of Victorian municipalism. Commercial and denominational cemeteries already existed by the middle of the 19th century but only a minority could afford to use them, and traditional graveyards and vaults were full up and insanitary. The Burial Acts allowed local 'burial boards' to obtain land for cemeteries, commission architects to design the necessary buildings and have the cemeteries laid out and planted, which was done in many cases within a few years of 1853. Some of the hundred or so cemeteries in Essex (within its pre-1965 boundaries) were large, like the City of London Cemetery at Ilford, and Mersea Road Cemetery, Colchester, but most were small and local many no more than an acre or two. Histon Road, Cambridge,

was designed by JC Loudon and illustrated his book (originally published 1843) on laying out cemeteries.

All burial board cemeteries were divided into consecrated and unconsecrated halves, the former reserved for Church of England burials. If there were two chapels they were of equal size and quality, the Anglican differing only by having a bell-turret. Mortuaries were obligatory, before the undertaking business expanded. The boundary was walled or fenced, and the main entrance from the public road was often elaborately treated, sometimes up a commanding slope and usually flanked by a sexton's lodge. Paths were often curvilinear about a central axis of symmetry. Clipped yews and other evergreens, and specimen ornamental trees, were usually planted, while flower beds seem to have been rare. Grassland was mown. When first opened, when only a small proportion had yet been filled with graves, these cemeteries were expected to be places of public recreation and moral education.

Milestones in the development of municipal cemeteries have included the dismal shadow of the first world war, which brought the war cemetery as a design influence, the advent of cremation from 1885 and its overwhelming public acceptance since the second world war, and the legal acknowledgement in the 1970s that it was no longer physically possible to continue to create permanent graves and monuments in the setting of a public cemetery. In Essex, unlike many parts of the country, they are not yet full, but will be in the foreseeable future. We can now see these cemeteries as a specific cultural and historical phenomenon, and a unique resource, unlikely to be reproduced or extended indefinitely.

Sarah Green