

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

RESEARCH AND RECORDING PROJECT 2016–17

SARAH RUTHERFORD

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

BGT's Research and Recording Project pilot phase in 2014–15 was introduced in *Records* 56 (2016) and our progress into the main phase (2016) was also published in *Records* 57 (2017). Our volunteers continue working on researching and recording parks and gardens in historic Bucks that are generally not included on the Historic England *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest* (denoting national significance). To add to the 34 sites summarised in the previous two editions of *Records*, we here add summaries for 15 sites throughout the county which are the fruits of our work in 2016–17. This work has been funded with generous assistance from several donors, including The Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust, The Finnis Scott Foundation and help in kind from Bucks County Council HER.

The following summaries set out the historic interest of these 15 designed landscapes, and are taken from the individual site dossiers. Rather than address nationally important sites which are generally relatively well understood, we mainly target some of the 400 locally significant sites identified by Bucks County Council in 1996 in their County Register Review, prioritising those which are at risk of change. These sites of at least local interest are especially vulnerable to inappropriate management and developmental change due to a lack of information about their historical significance and the extent of their survival.

DESIGNED LANDSCAPES APPRAISED 2016–17

The site overviews are arranged by broad site type (although not all fit neatly into categories and some overlap several) and their key historic and surviving interest is described. A pattern of historic interest and current significance is begin-

ning to emerge. Even though it is early days to start drawing conclusions we can see patterns emerging in types of sites such as villas, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century country houses which were designed as a piece with Arts and Crafts-style gardens. We hope to draw more informed conclusions over the coming years as the body of information swells, and we will publish these in *Records* in due course. Over 50 of our dossiers are available on the BGT web site: <http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/locally-important-sites/>

Villas

The term villa is a broad one, covering houses of varying scale. In this context it is taken to mean a country house and ornamental grounds built without a wider country estate to support it. A number were built in the folds of the Chiltern Hills, taking advantage of dramatic views and sheltered positions.

Stoke Place, Stoke Poges (HER 1232102000)

A fine mid-18th century pleasure ground (now Registered Grade II) by the nationally renowned designer Lancelot Brown, the foremost landscaper of his day, while at his most productive, as the setting for a 17th-century Chiltern country villa. Brown was commissioned by career soldier General Howard, his work probably including an Orangery and other garden buildings. It was unusual for Brown to design only a pleasure ground, but for his work he was paid £800, indicating a significant commission. The pleasure ground was developed and extended with a park enveloping it in the early 19th century by Howard's grandson, adding features, enlarging Brown's lake, and creating the park to the east and south.

The most important elements of the layout, those established by the mid-19th century, largely

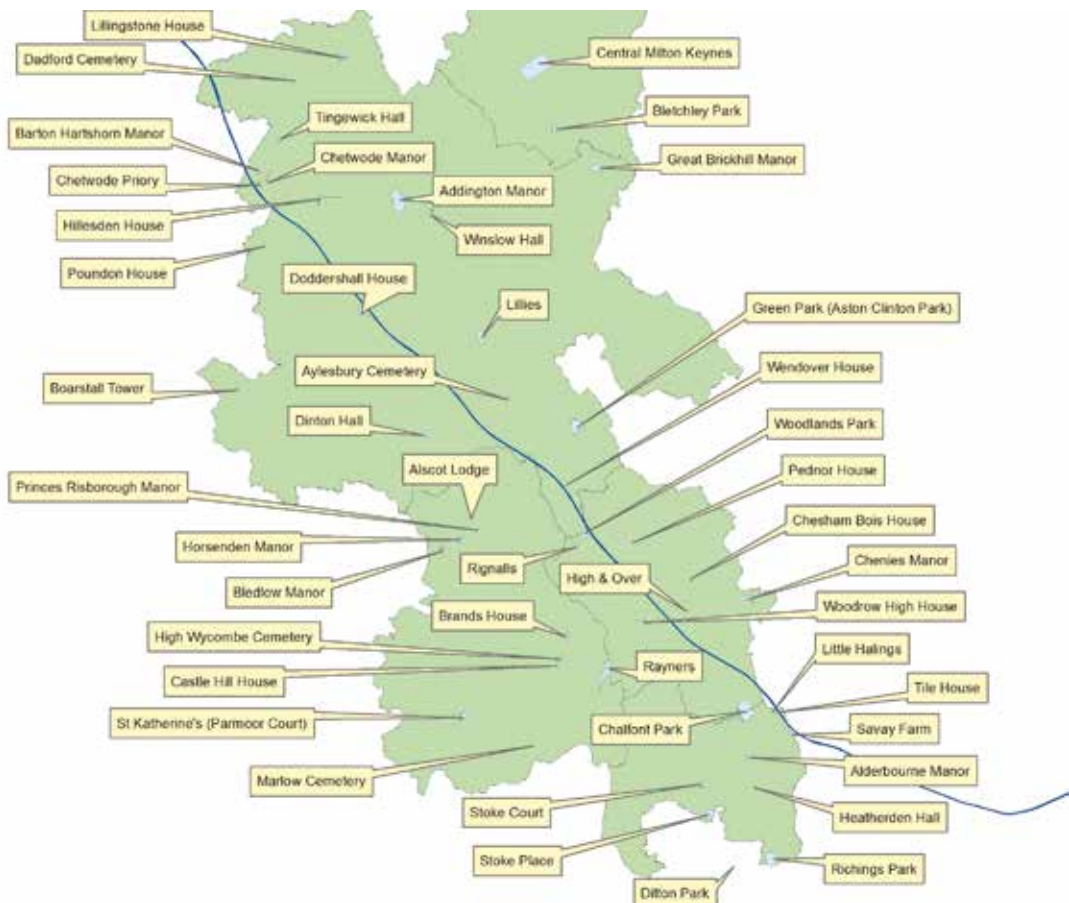


FIGURE 1 Map of historic Bucks (pre-1974) with the site dossiers completed for the Research and Recording Project, 2013–17. Sites affected by HS2 (marked in blue) have been prioritised.

survive in the 40ha. site, including the essence of Brown's work of the mid-1760s, but also an extensive kitchen garden in three compartments with gardener's house, and the remains of former structures around the lake. The layout made good use of the Chiltern setting, originally including views from the pleasure ground towards Windsor and Eton (now obscured by vegetation). Two key ornamental structures present by the 1820s (orangery and rotunda, probably by Brown) have gone but their positions are evident and their settings remain. The extent and survival of villa grounds is not well recorded and this is a good example at this larger scale, with a typical ensemble of features which survive largely intact, although the layout has been somewhat simpli-

fied. It is part of a major group of designed landscapes of the 18th and 19th centuries that survive in and around Stoke Poges including Stoke Park (Grade II*) and Stoke Place.

Key features: Brown's mid-1760s pleasure ground lake and the early 19th-century alterations, associated landscaping and mature trees, the large kitchen garden, and the sites of the lost rotunda and orangery, set within the parkland and approaches as an ensemble.

Alderbourne Manor
(HER 052460000)

A typical mid-19th century Chiltern villa ensemble, with lawns and pleasure grounds, parkland and

associated lodge in the form of a *cottage orné* and main drive set in woodland. The 16ha. layout enjoys elevated views over characteristic rolling Chiltern landscape, including a boating lake in the park; a winding woodland drive approaches the house. Many mature trees forming part of the ornamental scheme from the mid-19th century onwards survive. However, they are diminished by the impact of the motorway constructed through the park and other more recent changes. These include the loss of the kitchen gardens, and new developments and car parking along the north-west boundary.

Key feature: The gardens, pleasure grounds and parkland including the lake, as a largely intact ensemble.

Lillingstone House, Lillingstone Dayrell
(HER 1073401000)

A typical mid-19th century country villa landscape developed c.1840s on a new site, including a park, pleasure grounds and kitchen garden which survives largely complete, with many mature trees. Typically the 27ha. layout is focussed on pleasure ground terraces and informal lawns surrounding the villa within parkland containing many mature trees, framing two main vistas to the west and south. The walled kitchen garden survives but is no longer productive and is laid to lawn. In 1910 Gertrude Jekyll advised on a modest sunken garden, the remains of which survive in simplified form. Jekyll was one of the most prolific and influential early 20th-century garden designers, but it is unclear to what extent her scheme was executed. The extent and survival of villa gardens is not well recorded and this is a good example at this scale, with an ensemble of typical features which survives largely intact.

The layout apparently dates largely from the 1840s when villa grounds were becoming a major part of landscape design, both in rural and urban situations. At this time the prolific writer JC Loudon published much advice for the expanding middle classes on designing villa gardens at various scales, principally emulating at small scale the pleasure grounds of country house landscapes. In his *The Suburban Gardener, and Villa Companion* (1838, pp. 170–71) he set out four classes of villas and how the gardens of each should best be laid out. Lillingstone House

corresponds to the first class, which varied in extent from 50 to 100 acres including a ‘park and farmery’.

Key feature: The mid-19th century villa landscape ensemble which survives largely intact.

Manor Houses and Similar Rural Gardens

Hillesden House
(HER 0017603000)

The 17.5ha. remains of the formal gardens of a former mid-17th century manor house, including garden terraces and wilderness, a rectangular canal and extensive avenues, set within former parkland, now agricultural land. The relict landscape incorporates the likely site of gardens associated with a previous house built in the 1490s for Sir Hugh Conway, a close aide to Henry VII. By the late 18th century the layout incorporated outer and inner forecourts, garden terraces, a wilderness, approach avenues, boundary bastions and a kitchen garden, mostly apparently initiated in the mid-17th century, but perhaps with later alterations. The site declined following the demolition of the house in the 1820s, until the late 20th century when a new house was built in the south-east corner with associated gardens, and some restoration works were undertaken. A further house was built in the walled kitchen garden.

The framework survives as it was abandoned with the demolition of the house, either upstanding or in relict form. This includes a considerable number of mature wilderness and occasional avenue trees, canal-type pond, terracing, ha-ha and two avenues; lost features include the house, orchards and a northern avenue (1763 map). The garden commands views across the Vale of Aylesbury: east and south-east towards Steeple Claydon, and south, and is overlooked by the outstanding Perpendicular parish church (known as the Cathedral in the Fields). The village and extensive rural setting including nearby former parkland is of high significance to the design.

Key features: The surviving Tudor and Stuart elements within the layout by the late 18th century, particularly the canal, ha-ha, kitchen garden, earthwork landscape features, and the avenues, all closely associated with the church in the immediate setting.



FIGURE 2 Hillesden House. The spectacular east avenue was established probably in the 17th century. The formal layout for the country house was developed from the 1490s to the early 18th century and, since the house was demolished in the 1820s, survives in relict form, including major earthworks, trees, drives and walls, adjacent to the parish church known as the ‘Cathedral in the Fields’ (*Adrian Jackson*).

Doddershall Park

(HER 0034305000)

A garden and small park, associated with a notable partly moated, early 16th century and later manor house. With Tudor origins, the 20ha. layout is mostly from later phases that survive largely intact. The formal and informal mid-19th century garden layout incorporates earlier elements including two arms of the moat, and is the essential setting for the Tudor house. The park has lost most of the mature trees it had by the early 20th century. The rural Vale of Aylesbury setting makes a strong contribution, including views towards the wooded Lodge Hill, Waddesdon. 19th-century railway developments necessitated the alteration of the main approach from the south-east, which included building a substantial Arts and Crafts-style lodge near the entrance c.1900. The late 19th-century avenue beyond the park framing the view south-west has gone, but the site enjoys broad views south-east towards the wooded Lodge Hill, Waddesdon,

and the late C19 Waddesdon Manor. The kitchen garden survives but has lost its historic productive layout and structures, and is in part laid out with a recent formal design.

Key features: The early landscape features, the 19th-century layout and the approaches.

Great Brickhill Manor House

(HER 0097305000)

The remains of a typical park, garden and pleasure grounds laid out in the early and mid-19th century around a lost 18th and 19th-century country house, probably on the site of an earlier manor house. The framework of the 31ha. site survives largely intact, particularly the boundary, entrances, park features including The Shrubberies, an extensive belt, and elements of the garden layout, with many mature trees surviving including in the pleasure ground, but the principal buildings and some of the drives and paths have gone. Even so, the site

of the former house remains the focus of the landscape. A detached approach from Watling Street to the north-east through Duncombe Wood survives, terminated at either end by two sets of lodges.

Key features: The ensemble of perimeter features, walls, gateways, lodges etc, together with the drives and surviving and relict garden and pleasure ground features.

Addington Manor

(HER 0281405000)

An extensive mid-19th century landscape park, pleasure grounds and formal gardens associated with a flamboyant contemporary country house in French chateau style. The house was rebuilt in the 1920s in the same position and footprint, but with little alteration to the grounds. The complex 128ha. landscape survives largely intact, although with some simplification of the pleasure grounds and development in part of the north park. The extensive park, divided into two halves by the pleasure grounds, includes typical boundary belts, walks and two lakes. Many mature trees are scattered in the pleasure grounds and belts, with a few remnants of specimen trees and clumps in the park. The leading mid-19th century designer William A Nesfield advised in c.1854, possibly on the siting of the new house.

Key features: The surviving and relict pleasure ground features, also the extensive park and its features including the perimeter walks and lakes, and drives, gateways and lodge and views across the park and south over the Vale of Aylesbury.

Tingewick Hall (formerly Rectory)

(HER 0490002000)

The gardens of a typical mid-19th century rectory, including a kitchen garden and park paddocks, with much 19th-century woody planting, incorporating the site of an earlier rectory. The single phase of structures (by John Tarring) and 8ha. layout survive largely intact, with long views north across the Ouse valley to the skyline of Stowe, and later garden features added within the 1850s framework without significant alteration to it. The designer is unclear but the framework was probably by Tarring. The ensemble makes the most of elevated views over characteristic rolling landscape above the Ouse valley. The

nearby church, particularly the tower, is a feature in views from the house and garden. Notable surviving features include informal lawns, kitchen garden, and park paddocks. Several mid-19th century mature trees include roundels of Scots pine and specimen chestnut in the paddocks, and in the garden boundary trees, avenues of mature chestnut and yew in the north garden, and a copper beech south-east of the house. A magnificent oak between the two paddocks probably predates the 19th-century layout.

Key feature: Features of the mid-19th century rectory garden layout.

Twentieth-Century Layouts

Pednor House

(HER 1240304000)

A country house and gardens developed 1911–12 in the Arts and Crafts style by architect Edwin Forbes, incorporating and sensitively converting existing farm buildings, with some areas possibly planned by Gertrude Jekyll, including in 1919. The focus of the design is the forecourt and its approaches via the public lane which bisects it, enclosed by the house and former service buildings. The complex use of materials, particularly brick, in the forecourt and related structures is of particular note. The 1ha. layout remains largely intact. While the garden incorporates features typical of the Arts and Crafts movement including a terrace and loggia, it is the forecourt including gate piers, walls, gateways along the lane and a dovecote which is the most impressive feature. An undated planting plan survives for a circular sundial garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll (1919), who was also asked to suggest planting for a small paved area, although the extent to which her work was executed is unclear. Some mature trees including oaks predate this phase.

Key feature: The Arts and Crafts-style garden layout and materials, particularly the elements surrounding the house, including the complex forecourt, with elements of the planting associated with iconic garden designer Gertrude Jekyll.

Orchard House, Olney

A mid-19th and early 20th-century market-town garden for two 18th-century terrace houses united



FIGURE 3 Pednor House, near Chesham, is an Arts and Crafts garden. The fine ensemble of buildings surround a forecourt across which the public lane runs. The dovecote is the focus of the forecourt (S Rutherford).

and remodelled in Arts and Crafts style c.1904–10 for J.W. Mann, a local boot and shoe manufacturer. Based on two long-established burgage plots united c.1904, it is focussed on an early thatched cottage as a *cottage orné* towards the centre of the garden design which divides the garden into two separate compartments. The relatively large and fine greenhouse designed and built by W.S. Revitt of Olney has been recently restored. It is set on a terrace in the smaller compartment near the house, and has a central projecting canted bay. The ensemble established by c.1910 survives well, including enclosing garden walls, motor house, an early electricity generating house (c.1904), mature trees and shrubs, and paths, along with an ornate iron Arts and Crafts front fence to make this a good example of a complex town-house garden.

Key feature: complex town house garden layout with associated buildings (*cottage orné*, glass-house, coach house, garden walls, etc), layout and planting that survives intact.

Savay Farm, Denham (HER 0030005000)

The 1920s-30s garden for a renowned medieval house, with work by notable designers Marjory Allen and Norah Lindsay, including vestiges of earlier garden phases, occupying 9ha. The c.1926 layout by Marjory Allen, with contributions by the owner Cynthia Mosley (d.1933) and the society garden designer Norah Lindsay, occupies a medieval, formerly moated, riverside site. The compartmentalised garden, drawn tightly around the house, survives largely intact, but the moat and other water features of the old manor house that framed the garden were filled in after World War II. Notable features include the Statesman's Walk adjacent to the house, associated with Sir Oswald Mosley when he was most prominent as a politician. Also significant is the detached woodland setting of Lady Mosley's tomb by Lutyens (1933–34), originally within a formal garden probably by Lady Allen with advice from the Mosleys' friend and society designer Norah Lindsay. The



FIGURE 4 Orchard House, Olney. This fine market-town garden combines two burgage plots and was laid out in two phases: in the mid-19th century and c.1904–10. It is dominated by the 17th-century cottage, later remodelled as a *cottage orné* garden feature, and the large glasshouse designed and built by W.S. Revitt of Olney c.1904–10 (*Ken Edwards*).

immediate agricultural and river setting is of high significance. The river Colne and views across it over farmland were formerly prominent to the east, north and south, with an associated drive/road, but the river is now screened by vegetation and the area beyond is a lake.

Key feature: The 1920s-30s layout within the earlier framework.

High and Over, Amersham
(HER 124600001)

The core survival of the garden of an extraordinary small country house of international significance, one of the first houses built in the Modernist style in England (1929–31). The house is “*of outstanding*

importance as the first truly convincing essay in the international style in England..... It is the first work by Amyas Connell who with Basil Ward and Colin Lucas formed the most important architectural practice designing modern movement houses in the inter-war period.” (Historic England) The strongly geometric 5ha. garden design, now surviving in part only around the house, was integral to the design of the house in providing an extended living space in similar formal style, with structures such as the water tower as a viewing platform as well as the roof and windows of the house overlooking the Chiltern valley far below. It was extensively written up in the architectural press during building and afterwards, in which the garden was also noted for its close relationship with the building.

Much of the 5 ha. estate was developed in the 1960s so that housing now surrounds the site, but the vestiges of long views over the Misbourne valley can still be discerned. The 0.75ha core of Connell's garden design, as executed in modified form by the owner Ashmole and his gardener George Marlow, survives with white-walled terraces, tiered rose beds, circular swimming pool and series of steps surrounding the Y-shaped house. These complement the Modernist style of the house. The contemporary Lodge and four Sun Houses in similar style, all within their own gardens, are a key part of the collective setting of the house and garden.

Key feature: the surviving garden features and remnant views over the Misbourne valley, together with the Sun Houses and lodge in the contemporary setting.

Bledlow Manor
(HER 0065102000)

A complex modern country house garden where strong design in a variety of styles, character and appearance is matched by adventurous and colourful planting. The 12ha. site is the vision of Lord and Lady Carrington from the 1950s to the present, commissioning designer Robert Adams from the late 1960s onwards in a series of designs, to make the most of the opportunities relating to the 17th to 18th-century Manor House and its surroundings. The many linked compartments adopt a variety of styles with both traditional and innovative planting. It has been widely reported and represents one of the best later 20th-century gardens of its type, comparable with others such as Rosemary Verey's Barnsley Manor and Highgrove, both in Gloucestershire. The garden divides roughly into three contrasting areas: around the house in formal compartments, the less formal Sculpture Garden and the detached Lyde water



FIGURE 5 Bledlow Manor for Lord and Lady Carrington with work by Robert Adams. It is a fine example of a garden developed since the 1960s (*June Timms*).

garden, a feature of high-quality design and innovative planting very unusual particularly in the Chilterns. The modern sculpture collection is of considerable interest in the garden setting. The contemporary park with clumps of trees forms the wider designed setting. The 1980s Lyde is a rare detached water garden of this period in informal style, of particular interest. The whole garden, a sequence of contrasting linked compartments, survives complete and in good condition, and is still undergoing development alongside a small contemporary park.

Key feature: The late 20th/early 21st-century layout within the earlier framework.

Cemetery

Dadford Burial Ground (HER 0764300000)

A late 19th-century rural Anglican parish burial ground, well preserved, with strong links to the adjacent Stowe Park and its late 19th and early 20th-century owners. The 0.5ha. (1 acre) site is focussed on a central polychrome brick chapel by the clerk of works to the Stowe landowner, the 3rd Duke of Buckingham. The layout was designed by the Duke's steward and was closely overseen by the Duke, who is said to have paced out this example of 'God's Acre'. Planting includes mature specimen trees typical of late 19th-century ceme-



FIGURE 6 Dadford Parish Burial Ground was financed and opened in 1883 by the 3rd Duke of Buckingham for the parish of Stowe. He paced out the boundaries of this example of 'God's Acre' himself, before it was designed by his steward with an unusual oval carriage sweep flanked by yews. It is a little-known but notable part of the former Stowe estate (*Ken Edwards*).

teries including yews lining the drive and main path, and limes at the boundaries. The unconsecrated oval forecourt is an unusual feature for such a modest site, as it takes up a considerable proportion of the area and overlooking Stowe Park to the east, divided by the chapel from the burial ground which is laid out in a standard grid pattern. Long views on the other three sides beyond the iron boundary fencing overlook the surrounding rolling farmland.

Key features: The 1883 layout including structures, drive/ path system, early planting and the rural setting of the Stowe estate.

Twentieth-Century Urban Design

Central Milton Keynes (CMK)

A particularly fine, possibly the best, example of mid to late 20th-century British town planning, designed as the focus of a new city, which survives intact. Milton Keynes is the most advanced and arguably successful of the British mid to late 20th-century new towns and continues to be regarded as a model for planners as far afield as China. As its civic, public and business heart CMK is surrounded by satellite residential and industrial areas and linear parks, all linked by the innovative grid system of main roads. CMK occupies 250ha,



FIGURE 7 Central Milton Keynes lies at the heart of the city and was part of the celebrations in 2017 of 50 years since Milton Keynes was founded in 1967. It has largely grown to an established masterplan to become a world-renowned example of urban planning with many designed open spaces. The detailing of the landscape design, including these sheltering *porte cochères* leading visitors to the distinctive shopping building, is essential to the historic character (*Jill Temple-Stansfield*).

being c.2.5 km long, west to east and 1km wide, north to south. The layout is studiously formal, with the right-angle as an ordering principle, contrasting with the informal wider cityscape. This is still embraced as a design principle as Milton Keynes celebrated its 50th anniversary (21 January 2017) and is the UK's fastest-growing city. The design framework and principles which impart much of its character survive very largely intact, and have been adhered to in the continuous development of the area, as does much of the characteristic landscaping and planting that was as carefully planned, overseen by Neil Higson of MKDC, to complement the public planting in the rest of the city and is now maturing in its intended form and unity.

In an urban context what is striking about Milton Keynes (and what those who have never visited would not necessarily appreciate) is the extent of the landscaping within this civic centre and the degree to which it is integrated with the wider urban environment. This includes the extensive and deliberate planting schemes both externally and within key buildings. Although the extensive landscape framework, hard landscape detailing and planting are of integral significance, there are focal points of intensive landscaping.

The original landscape concept is of the highest significance for its vision in dealing with such a large-scale civic scheme uniting so many individual sites with hard and soft landscaping. The detailing of the execution including hard landscaping and planting is integral to the historic

design and its success. It survives largely intact, including the associated palette of plants which is now maturing to its intended character, and harmonises with the public spaces in the wider city, although somewhat degraded by neglect and thinning of plants. The focal points of intensive landscaping which help to characterise the site include, externally, the three formal access boulevards, and key public open spaces including Fred Roche (formerly City) Gardens, Grafton Park, Bouverie Square, Station Square and around the Library/Civic Offices; internally, the Shopping Building, and the CBX winter garden. However, the significance of these should not be taken in isolation as they are integral with the rest of CMK design. Modern sculpture formed a key part of the landscaped spaces, developing a collection in spaces public, private, internal and external, some by renowned artists such as Frink. Although the design deliberately avoided wide-reaching views, localised views are enjoyed, including east from the station up towards the shopping centre, others along the boulevards framed by the avenue trees, one through Fred Roche Gardens east up to the Church, and another west down Grafton Park.

Key features: The 1960s-70s design concept as the framework for the integral combination of buildings and landscape design, together with the early materials detailing, planting palette, sculpture, views where they contribute to the historic character.