

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## Stoke Place

03 November 2015



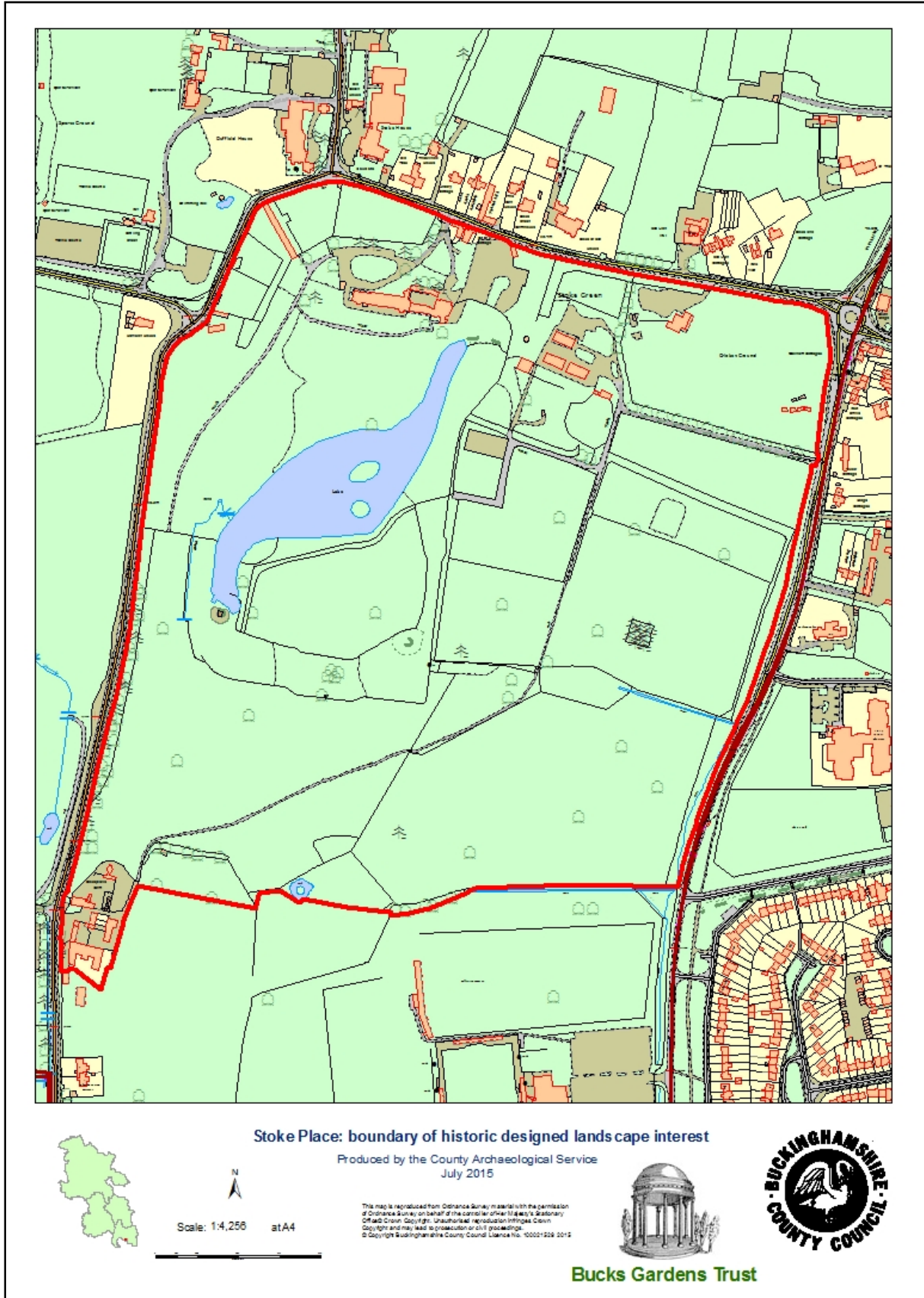
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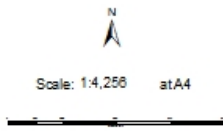


Association of  
Gardens  
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# HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY





**Stoke Place: 2011 aerial photograph**

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service  
July 2015



**Bucks Gardens Trust**



## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not conclusive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

### Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- A map showing principle views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

### Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Association of Gardens Trusts and funded by BGT with a significant grant from The Heritage Lottery Fund. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>STOKE PLACE, STOKE POGES</b>  <b>BCC HER 1232102000</b>
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	SOUTH BUCKS	
<b>PARISH:</b>	STOKE POGES	
<b>OS REF:</b>	SU 983 822	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Overview

A mid-C18 pleasure ground by the nationally renowned designer Lancelot Brown while at his most productive, as the setting for a C17 Chiltern country villa, for career soldier General Howard. The pleasure ground was enlarged and embellished in a further phase in the early C19 by Howard's grandson, adding features, enlarging Brown's lake, and creating the park to the east and south. It was unusual for Brown to design only a pleasure ground, but for his work he was paid £800, indicating a significant commission. The most important elements of the layout, those established by the mid-C19, largely survive in the 40 ha. 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 possibly by Brown) have gone but their positions are evident and their settings remain. The extent and survival of villa gardens 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 simplified.

**Key features:** Brown's mid-1760s pleasure ground lake altered in the early C19, associated landscaping and mature trees, and the sites of the lost rotunda and orangery.

### Archaeological interest

The identified archaeology is of local significance as far as it is understood to date. The most important archaeological potential is connected with lost features of the ornamental layout, particularly lost structures (rotunda on mound, orangery, building on mound at south-east corner of Brown's pleasure ground, glasshouses, frames, etc), paths, etc. The 1690s house had gardens, probably including a formal layout to the south, now occupied by the south lawn, before the 1760s phase by Brown.

### Architectural interest

A typical country villa ensemble focussed on a late C17 country house with 1760s wings apparently by Stiff Ledbetter. Associated surviving structures include adjacent service buildings, brick garden boundary walls, extensive early C19 walled kitchen gardens and gardener's house, entrance

gateways, lodge cottages and home farm. Two of the key ornamental structures seen in a view of the 1820s (orangery (probably by Brown) and rotunda) at the north end of the lake have gone but their positions are evident; a further structure has gone, located on a mound overlooking the lake at the south-east corner of Brown's pleasure ground. A boathouse set into a mound at the south end of the lake survives in ruinous condition; a further smaller boathouse in a mound lies at the lake's north end.

### **Artistic interest**

The pleasure ground of a country villa laid out in the mid-C18 by Lancelot Brown, the foremost landscaper of his day, including an Orangery probably by him (gone). This was developed and extended with a park enveloping it in the early C19.

The most important feature, Brown's lake, survives, widened by the Head Gardener Mr Patrick in the 1820s. This focal feature formed the climax of Brown's design. The garden areas close to the house retain much of their early-C19 character, with informal lawns and shrubberies. The park has suffered some damage from late C20 sports structures and abandonment of the park drives, but overall the landscape design as established in the early-C19 remains largely intact.

### **Historic interest**

Culturally the site is notable for its close association with a dynasty of renowned military men of the Howard and Howard Vyse families (C18-C20), two of whom created the landscape in the 1760s and 1810s-20s much as it survives today. The historic interest of the landscape is increased by the survival of documentation from the family archive (at CBS), mapping and C19 published articles (*Gardener's Magazine*).

### **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

In 1668, Richard Windsor of Stoke Poges, esquire, sold a messuage (a dwelling house and its site) called Boone Jordans (with the Chantry House adjoining), to William Astley, of St. Martins in the Fields, Middx., esquire for £1,444 (D-HV/A/2; D 121/79). This was the nucleus of what became known as Stoke Place.

In 1680 Patrick Lambe of St. Martins in the Fields acquired an interest in Boone Jordans and the Chantry when it was mortgaged to him by William Astley, of St. Brides, London, Clerk, to secure £1,000 and interest (total £1,420) (D-HV/A/5).

In 1683 Patrick Lambe bought the property outright for £2,328 (D-HV/A/2 & 7) having earlier acquired an interest in it, and acquired various other parcels of land nearby during the 1680s and 1690s. It is thought that he built the central three-storey section of the house during the 1690s. (<http://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/stoke-poges-history/historic-buildings/stoke-place/>; Pevsner 2<sup>nd</sup> edn) He laid out gardens but their form is unclear (D-HV/A/44). In 1723 the estate, focussed on the mansion and grounds 'lately built by Patrick Lambe, dec'd.', was sold by Lambe's son William to Dame Frances Stapleton (D-HV/A/22). By 1761 Sir Thomas Stapleton owned the property (D-HV/A/40). In 1763 the property passed to Hannah Sedgely (D-HV/A/23).

In September 1764, George Howard acquired the 18 acre property from Hannah Sedgely for £4,300. The property included the 'Capital messuage built by Patrick Lambe' with courtyards and gardens, various parcels of land and the farm house, barn and other buildings on the west side of the main house and between it and the lane or road leading from Stoke Green to Forty Green, 'now a ha-ha including a water source ...' (D-HV/A/44, 45, 47). (A Capital Messuage was the most important house of the estate) Howard, from an established soldiering family in Surrey, in 1747 had married the wealthy Lady Lucy Wentworth (*d.* 1771), the sister and coheir of William, 3rd Earl of Strafford of Wentworth Castle? (*DNB*). Lady Lucy came with a substantial £4,000 marriage portion, £3,000 of which was at Howard's disposal (CBS D-HV/C/3).

Howard immediately began a major campaign of improvement to his new property. Initially he employed the foremost landscaper of his day, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-83), to lay out an informal lake and pleasure ground near the house. This was presumably initiated during the winter 1764/65 as Howard first paid Brown for work in June 1765 (£200), then again in March 1766 (£400) with a final payment in May 1767 (£200) bringing the total to £800 (Brown Account Book). This sum and its payment over a number of seasons for advice is comparable with other estates such as Ickworth, Suffolk for design and supervision of works rendered by Brown (Brown Account Book). Brown was at the height of his career at this point. Also at this time (1765-66) it seems that Howard employed Stiff Ledbetter, possibly to design the wings of the house (Colvin, 604) who was coming to the end of his commission for William Drake at nearby Shardeloes House. In the 1760s and 1770s Howard was acquiring piecemeal more land in the parish, presumably to add to his new landscape (D-HV/A/48, 49, 50, 51). He was governor of Minorca 1766-68, during which time he was likely absent from England.

Howard was a renowned soldier by 1764, a veteran of the Seven Years' War and other campaigns with the 'Buffs', having also fought at Fountenoy, Falkirk and Culloden (1746). He was Equerry to Queen Charlotte and well liked by the King who with his family visited a number of times during outings while staying at Windsor (1788, 1789, 1793) as reported in various newspapers.

George Howard died in 1796. His deceased daughter Anne's son and heir Richard William Howard Howard-Vyse (1784-1853) inherited Stoke Place. A lifelong soldier, in 1810 Richard William married Frances Hesketh of Newton, Cheshire. Stoke Place was his residence for nearly 60 years and he developed the landscaping begun by his grandfather in the 1810s-20s. Having moved Grays Road some distance further west of the house in 1813 (Q/H/38), in 1814 he obtained designs from one 'WA' (possibly William Atkinson who was then working at nearby Ditton Park) for works to the house, including colonnades on the north, entrance front, and for a layout for the forecourt and flower and kitchen gardens to the west (D/121/11-12). This scheme was superseded after in 1817 he was able to move the road still further west to its present course (Q/H/46). Acquisition of land by the mid-1820s within the new course of the road to the north and west of the house, including part of Stoke Green, enabled Richard William to create the present kitchen gardens around the forecourt and pleasure ground (D121/10; D-HV/A/94). A plan of 1818 shows Brown's pleasure ground, with circuit walk and garden buildings, a new park layout and the site of the new kitchen gardens in outline (D/121/11/3).

Stoke Poges Enclosure Map (1822 CBS IR138 Q) shows the divisions of the site around the pleasure ground, just before its enlargement. (<http://www.stokepogeparishcouncil.gov.uk/stoke-poges->

[history/historic-buildings/stoke-place/](#)) By 1824 the parkland wrapped around two sides of Brown's pleasure ground: to the east towards Wexham Road, and south towards Stoke Park Farm, as per the 1818 plan (Bryant). The kitchen garden walls were built c.1825 and head gardener Andrew Patrick's works in the grounds during this period were approved of in J.C. Loudon's popular *Gardener's Magazine* in the 1830s. In 1833 it was reported that Patrick enlarged Brown's water and used the spoil to undulate the ground to a height of 4-8'. Pudding stone was used to line part of lake edge and make springs. The kitchen garden was admired for its development since 1828, with a 12' high wall around it. Cedars of various forms were noted 'in front' of the house. There were many garden ornaments, images of some of which he published in 1835. Lipscombe (1847) noted how the pleasure grounds on the south front were 'enlivened by a sheet of water' and that on the lawn stood some 'very remarkable cedars' which species grew well in the area.

Richard William died in 1853 and Stoke Place was inherited by a succession of fathers and sons, all of whom continued the military tradition. The Ordnance Survey 1875 shows the landscape design at its most extensive. In 1962 the last family owner, Major General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse, died. The property was purchased by South Bucks District Council and it became a nursing home. In the 1990s? the property became a hotel and conference centre, under lease from South Bucks District Council, in which use it remains.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING**

Stoke Poges parish is set on the dip slope of the Chiltern Hills in a predominantly wooded area which leads south towards the Thames at Eton and Windsor. The largely level 40 ha. site lies 0.5 mile south-east of the parish church and Manor House. It is roughly rectangular, extending some 700m north-south and 600m west - east. It slopes gently to the south-west of the lake below the dam. It is bounded to the west by Stoke Road, to the north by Stoke Green and to the east by Wexham Road. A red brick boundary wall (listed Grade II) encloses the north and west roadside boundaries for c. 500m alongside the pleasure grounds and kitchen garden incorporating the main, north gateway off Stoke Green. These roadside boundaries were established by 1822 (Inclosure Map) following the 1817 road diversion (Q/H/46). The site is enclosed to the south by agricultural land as the setting for the ornamental design and was part of the Howard-Vyse estate after Enclosure in 1822.

The area around Stoke Poges developed as a series of scattered villages and settlements in Chiltern heathland and woodland (including the nearby Burnham Beeches) in the C18 and C19. Within this rural setting, close to the royal court at Windsor, grew a group of significant country house landscapes that survive largely intact, including Stoke Park, Court and Place, Stoke Poges Manor House, and others nearby including Lancelot Brown's Langley, Chalfont, Latimer and possibly Ditton Parks, and Richings. These are influential in the wider setting of Stoke Place. The Thames was important as it was the easiest approach from London and Oxford rather than by road. In the C20 much residential development occurred between these parks, expanding Stoke Poges, but avoiding Stoke Place.

Stoke Place lies 0.5 mile south-east of the parish church, immortalised by the mid-C18 poet Thomas Gray in his highly influential 'Elegy Written in A Country Churchyard' (published 1751) and Stoke Manor House. These two form the historic heart of the village, with the estates of late C18/early C19



Stoke Park to the west set in a large and impressive park, and to the north, Stoke Court with its Gray family connections.

## **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

There are three main drives.

The main approach enters from the north, off Stoke Green, 100m north-east of the front door of the house. The gateway, flanked by brick pillars, is set back off the road and flanked by curved and rendered wing walls which themselves are terminated by a further pair of pillars, in similar style, these much rebuilt (listed Grade II). Adjacent to the east, a pair of single-storey C19 brick cottages is hidden from the road by a continuation of the boundary wall. From here the drive curves south-west to a turning circle below the north, entrance front of the house, enclosing a broad panel of lawn. The front door overlooks the brick wall of the east kitchen garden area, which encloses the north side of the forecourt. This approach was created following the 1822 Inclosure when the long east-west strip of Stoke Green was acquired by Howard-Vyse, enabling him to extend the grounds by c.90m as far north as the Stoke Green road.

The south-west drive enters off Stoke Road c.650m south-west of the house, at Stoke Place Farm. The disused north-facing gateway is set at right-angles to the road adjacent to the farmhouse and yard. C19 brick piers support tall wrought iron gates and overthrow (listed grade II; photograph in Rigby, p.60). From here the remains of the former south-west drive lead north through the park, entering the pleasure ground 300m south-west of the house, to the west of the lake. The drive continues through the pleasure ground to join the turning circle below the north front of the house. The south-east drive formerly also entered at Stoke Place Farm, crossing the park to the north-east of the pleasure ground. The southern section survives as a track and runs through the east half of the park but no longer links through, as it did, to the east side of the forecourt between the former frame yard and pleasure ground. The south-east park drive had been created by Richard William Howard-Vyse by 1846 (parish map, PR 198/28/8/R) and the south-east drive by 1875 (OS).

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

Stoke Place is a long, narrow country villa now (2015) in hotel use. It developed in a number of phases since at least the 1690s, incorporating Lambé's fine red brick 1690s central block, General Howard's 1760s-70s wings believed to be by Stiff Ledbetter (Colvin, 604) and later alterations. Further development was contemplated by Howard Vyse in 1814 by 'WA' including colonnades on the north front and a conservatory on the west (D/121/12) but these plans were not implemented. The long north entrance front overlooks the main drive and turning circle and the red brick wall of the kitchen garden (1820s). The garden front to the south overlooks a narrow terrace, and informal lawns and a lake beyond, framed by trees. Formerly, a view apparently extended further south over the park towards Windsor Castle (1818 plan D/121/11/3; late C19 OS), but southerly views are obscured by vegetation.

The service yards and buildings are adjacent to the east of the house with access via a spur off the main, north drive. These are now used for hotel purposes and include modern additions/replacements. The buildings and yards were screened by planting from the approaches and pleasure ground to the south, some of which survives including mature yew.

The stable yard and block were moved from the east end of the house in the early C19 to a yard 140m further east (1818 plan D/121/11/3; 1846 plan 198/28/8/R). The area now (2015) contains modern sheds.

## **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The 9 ha. rectangle of gardens and pleasure grounds occupies the north-west quarter of the site. This area is shown on the 1811 OSD and the 1818 plan (D/121/11/3) with Brown's sinuous lake of the 1760s before it was widened to its present form in the early C19 and the park was laid out around it to the east and south by Howard Vyse.

To the south of the house an informal lawn leads to the lake beyond. This south lawn forms the starting and finishing points for a circuit walk around the lake and enjoys views of the water, although these are somewhat obscured by C20 trees. This area was elaborated in the early C19 by head gardener Andrew Patrick for Richard William Howard-Vyse, and remains similar inform, with his low mounds around the lake on which are planted various trees including a fine common oak; nearby are a mature scarlet oak and two mature sweet chestnut, also a fine Atlantic cedar. By the 1930s the areas near the house contained various horticultural features in Victorian style, including intricate circular 'basket beds' scattered on the lawn below the terrace (photograph, 1933, BCC phStokePages52). The remains of a path cross the lawn west to east, 20m south of the house, linking the northern ends of the circuit walk.

The 400m-long lake is overlooked by the house, terrace and south lawn and is surrounded by a wooded walk and lawns. Informal lawns and shrubberies planted with mature trees lead from below the house around the lake. The lake is enclosed by a path which enjoys views over the water and pleasure ground pasture to the east. The lake is contained on the west side by a steeply sloping dam of c.100m length with, towards the centre, an outlet leading into a rocky ravine.

From the central south, garden door of the house, a gravel terrace leads east towards the north end of the lake and a lawn enclosed to the north by a semi-circular red brick wall which divides the gardens from the former frame yard (now a car park) to the north. A pedestrian gateway at the centre of the curved wall is flanked by brick piers. This east lawn formerly contained the free-standing Classical orangery shown by Gendall (1820s) in a view from the south shore of the lake (1898 photograph, Rigby, p.62). This was very similar to Brown's design for an orangery at Ashburnham Place, Sussex (1767, ESRO ASH 2/1/3) and a lost orangery at Compton Verney, Warwickshire (illustrated in *Country Life*, 1903 or 1915). It survived until the mid-C20 but was apparently blown up by a bomb in WWII (OS 6", bomb sites, CBS). Nearby to the east, below the eastern garden wall, is a sunken boathouse with a rustic masonry façade framing an arched opening. It terminates the former north tip of the lake (now dry).

From the east lawn the path crosses this now dry tip of the lake, leading south to a mound on the east side of the lake, 100m south-east of the house, planted with mature yew. This is the position of the former rotunda present by the 1820s (Gendall 1820s, OS 1897). A circular structure survived in this position until the late C19 (OS, 1875, 1897). The paths on this mound are shown on the late C19 OS but have since been lost.

The lakeside path continues south-west following a C20 route close to the shore, with views across the lake to the west and the pleasure ground paddock to the east, to the south tip of the lake. Formerly, the path left the shore south of the rotunda and ran directly south through a belt of trees that survives, passing a mound at the south-east corner of the pleasure ground (OS, C19/C20). Map evidence shows that from the early C19 until the 1930s (OS) the mound, which survives, was the site of a structure. At this point the perimeter path turned west leading back through a wooded belt south of the lake, such that the area south of the lake was left as an open paddock with views north towards the house. The path may have enjoyed a view southwards towards Windsor Castle in a central gap that was left in the belt.

At the south tip of the lake, 350m south-west of the house, are the ruinous remains of a larger, masonry boat house within an artificial mound, its tunnel entrance leading to a partly sunken chamber. It is set back from the water and the path passes in front of it alongside the water, framed by mature yew. The boathouse is enclosed by further mature yew on the other sides. The remains of a dock or similar structure lie nearby at the water's edge to the north-west. A structure was present here by 1818 (D/121/11/3). The path continues through mature trees along the west shore of the lake carried on the flattened top of the high dam, passing a C19 iron gateway and fencing before reaching the lake outlet. Here a rocky ravine has been created leading to a pool, now dry. The path continues northwards across the lawns back towards the house. A group of mature conifers, the remains of a pinetum, stands to the west, south of the kitchen garden (OS, late C19).

Brown's 1760s sinuous lake is shown on the 1818 plan together with the surrounding planting and pleasure ground path, a building on the site of the rotunda, the mound and building at the south-east corner of the pleasure ground, and the southern boathouse. Gendall's view of the mid-1820s shows a view from the south bank of the lake towards the house, with to the east a rotunda on a mount on the east bank at the north end, and an orangery. The lake was broadened from its initial narrow sinuous outline by Mr Patrick in the late 1820s (*Gardener's Magazine*, 1833), when it was thickened at its central 'waist' by extending two bulges in opposite directions, to the north-west and south-east respectively, and adding two islands.

## **PARK**

The park extends south and east of Brown's pleasure ground. It remains largely pasture broken up by fences and hedges, planted with scattered mature trees and enclosed by a narrow belt around the roadside boundaries to west, north along Stoke Green, and east. The north-east paddock remains a cricket pitch as it was by the early C20 (OS 1932) with associated later C20 buildings and car park in the north-west corner. A group of late C20 buildings stands to the west of the cricket pitch on the site of the former stable yard. The C18/C19 Stoke Place Farm, the home farm, lying 650m south-west of the house, occupies the south-west corner of the park against Stoke Road (farmhouse, large barn and sheds, listed Grade II). This formed a feature at the entrance to the two C19 park drives. The south-east drive crossed the farmyard to reach the park (OS, 1875). Formerly an orchard occupied two paddocks immediately to the east (CBS PR 198/28/2/R 1846; OS C19/early C20). A further area of ornamented agricultural land enclosed by a belt lies still further south (OS, 1897) (outside the historic boundary). This remains largely agricultural land and forms the setting for the park.

The park was established during the 1820s following Enclosure for Richard William Howard-Vyse. It was divided into two main sections, to the east and south, through which the two park drives ran with further fenced subsections (CBS PR 198/28/2/R 1846; OS C19).

## **KITCHEN GARDEN**

The 1 ha. kitchen gardens lie some 50-60m north and west of the house beyond the pleasure ground reached through gateways in the south-east walls. The gardens are bounded on the north and west sides by a high red brick wall against the public roadside boundary and on the other sides by further brick walls, and are divided by two brick cross walls.

The kitchen garden curves around this north-west boundary and is divided into three successive sections: south, central and east. The areas remain open and laid largely to grass with a productive garden in part of the central section. The south and central sections are dominated by the early C19 gardener's house, built into the cross wall and overlooking both sections. It is of brick with a hipped roof and a bell cote on the roof. The wall into which it is set has a range of modern hotel rooms and paving along its north side. Detached to the east beyond the main drive lie the remains of a glasshouse and frame yard. It is enclosed to the north by the brick boundary wall along Stoke Green with a large fig growing against it and evidence of lean-to glasshouses. To the south it is bounded by the curved pleasure ground wall with a pedestrian gateway flanked by brick piers giving access to the east lawn and the site of the former orangery. The former yard contains a car park.

The kitchen garden and yard areas were built in the 1820s for Richard William Howard-Vyse after the site was extended following the rerouting of the road further west and enclosure of Stoke Green to the north in 1822. They replaced a rectangular walled garden adjacent to the service buildings at the east end of the house, and north tip of the lake (1818 plan). This area was incorporated into the pleasure grounds and a second orangery built there overlooking the lake.

## **LANCELOT BROWN'S WORK**

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was active as a freelance landscaper throughout England from 1751 until his death in 1783. He was continuously occupied with commissions throughout this time for clients from the king, 6 Prime Ministers, half the House of Lords and the wealthiest men of Britain to less wealthy merchants and nouveau riches. General Howard was a typical newly-wealthy gentry client whose funds came from his aristocratic wife. Brown's commissions ranged from tens of thousands of pounds designing and implementing schemes for clients such as Lord Coventry at Croome Court and the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim, to £35 for a visit by him and a ground survey by one of his men, such as at nearby Chalfont Park c.1760. The £800 paid by General Howard is typical of several seasons' advice to the clients' men, such as at Ickworth, Suffolk, carried out 1768-73.

In the vicinity of Stoke Place, i.e. along the Thames near royal Windsor, Brown worked for a number of clients. His account book (at the RHS) shows that during the 1760s he was paid £2,800 for work at nearby Langley Park (1763-64) for the Duke of Marlborough, where another long, sinuous lake was laid out. He is believed to have worked at Stoke Poges Manor House for the Dowager Lady Cobham who in 1751 retired from Stowe (where Brown himself had recently left after 10 formative years of his career) after the death of her husband, but the extent of his work is unclear. The grounds were limited in size. He worked at the adjacent Stoke Park (west of Stoke Place) in 1758 according to John

Penn (1813), designing the lake with the appearance of a natural river by linking five rectangular ponds. This park was modified by Humphry Repton. Brown may have worked at Ditton Park, but it is hard to see his hand, and in any case the attribution of works totalling £3,450 may refer to another client of similar name at Cowdray Park, Sussex.

The 350m long pleasure ground lake at Stoke Place is the site's clearest Brownian feature. It is the prestigious focus of the pleasure ground, and surrounded by a circuit path through lawns and ornamental woodland. The other local Bucks sites he worked at had similarly narrow, sinuous, but longer, water bodies. The two lakes at Stoke Park total some 780m long and lie out in the park. An even longer chain of park lakes is at Latimer (based on the widened River Chess) where the upper one is 825m long, the lower 450m, totalling 1,275m. The narrow, sinuous lake perched just above the bottom of the valley in the park at Wycombe Abbey is 1000m long. The park, at Stoke Place came after Brown's work, only once Inclosure in 1822 unlocked the surrounding land. Stoke Place lake as he designed it in its narrow sinuous, river-like form, was more of the scale and character of Chalfont Park, as the focus of an informal pleasure ground near the house, although that at Chalfont Park is longer at 600m. Like Chalfont, at Langley Park the 500m long lake divides the pleasure ground from the wider park. The widening of the Stoke Place lake in the 1820s by Mr Patrick made it less sinuous but retained Brown's original concept of it as the main pleasure ground feature.

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Page, W (ed), *A History of the County of Buckingham*: vol. 3 (1925), 302-13 (VCH).

Penn, J, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Stoke Park in Buckinghamshire* (1813), 66.



Mid-late C17 sales of land, main sale Boon Jordans from Richard Windsor to Wm Astley, then Astley to Patrick Lambe who built core of Stoke Place house, D-HV/A 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16.

Early- mid-C18 sales of land, Patrick Lambe's son to Dame Frances Stapleton, then to her son Sir Thos, then to Hannah Sedgely, D-HV/A 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 28, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43.

1764 Sale of estate, Hannah Sedgely to George Howard, D-HV/A/44, 47.

Late C18 land acquisitions by Howard, D-HV/A/48, 50, 52, 87 (abstract of title, George Howard).

Relevant early-mid-C19 deeds, etc, D-HV/A/87, 94, 95, 106, 109.

D-HV/C Deeds for properties beyond Bucks, and other material:

D-HV/C/3 Marriage apportionment to George Howard 1749

D/121 includes further early deeds for various parcels of land: D 121/77, 79, 81, 82, 88 (1657-1723).

Correspondence: Sir George Howard got Mr Penn Lord of the Manor to rail off that part of Stoke Green in front of the house, i.e. Stoke Place (1764-96) D/121/10/1.

### Illustrations

Buckinghamshire County Council: Photograph 1933, garden by south front of house phStokePages52

Ackerman, *Repository of Arts* (1826) [view by John Gendall]

Orangery in 1898 in Rigby (2000), 62.

SR, 17July 2015

Edited: ??

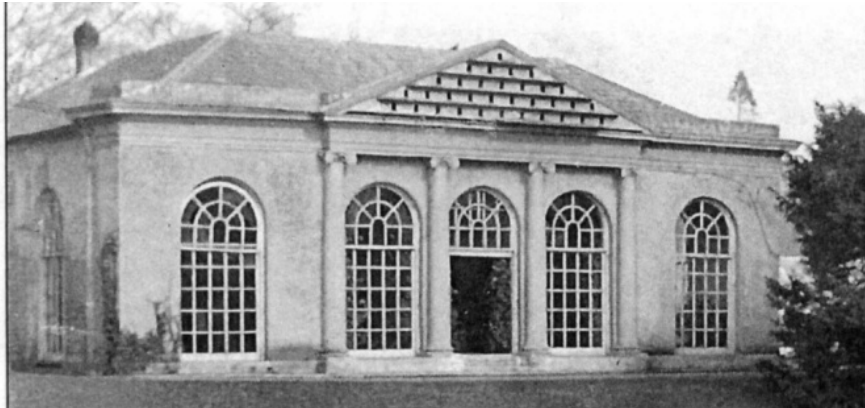
## HISTORIC IMAGES



Gendall/Ackermann view north across Brown's lake mid-1820s. Note rotunda and orangery to right.



C19 layout of the south lawn below the terrace and garden front, 1933 (BCC phStokePages52)



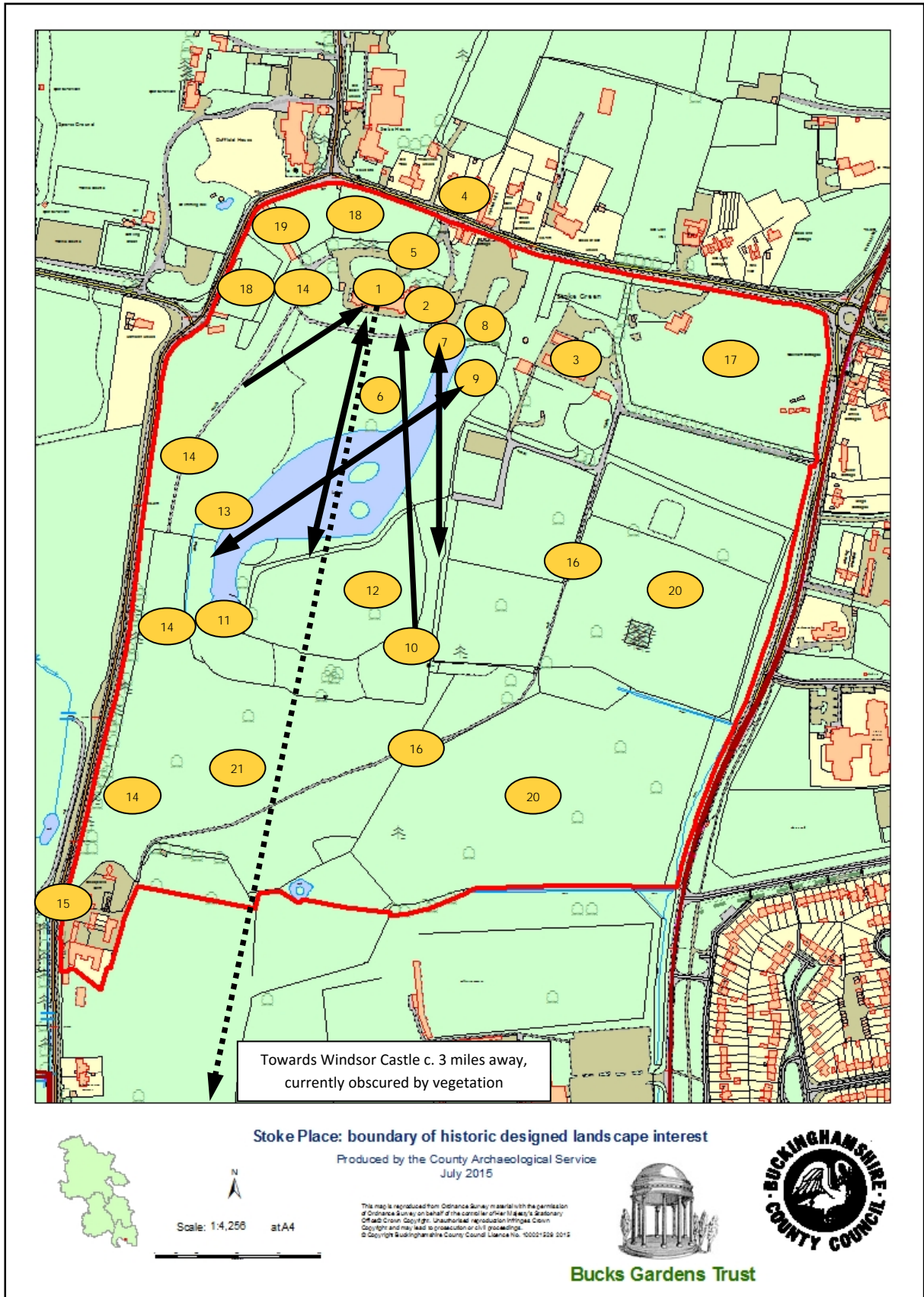
Lost lakeside orangery, taken in 1898, possibly designed by Lancelot Brown (Rigby, 2000).



2003 aerial photograph showing parch marks around house, probably flower beds.



# KEY HISTORIC VIEWS & FEATURES



### Key to numbered features

1. House & forecourt	2. Service yards
3. Site of former stables and yard	4. Main entrance off Stoke Green
5. North drive to N front	6. South Lawn
7. Site of Orangery	8. Small boathouse and walled garden
9. Mound and site of former rotunda	10. Mound and site of former summerhouse
11. Large boathouse	12. Pleasure ground paddock
13. Lake outlet and rockwork/cascade	14. South-west drive (south end disused)
15. South-west entrance by Stoke Park Farm	16. South-east drive
17. Cricket pitch	18. Walled kitchen garden (3 compartments)
19. Gardener's House in kitchen garden	20. East Park
21. South Park	