

# The Nuneham Estate

## Parkland Management Plan

Volume I

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# The Nuneham Estate: Parkland Management Plan

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## **Volume II: Maps and Plans (A3 format)**

### **Appendices (each in a separate volume)**

- Appendix A Tree Survey (Tree & Woodland Company, May 2019)
- Appendix B Archaeology & Heritage Report (BSA Heritage, May 2019)
- Appendix C Ecology Scoping Appraisal (James Johnston Ecology, Nov 2017)

[front cover: View of Nuneham Courtenay from the Thames, Paul Sandby 1775-80]



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Aims of the Parkland Management Plan

The Nuneham Estate is seeking to enter the park at Nuneham into a five year Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreement with Natural England. A requirement of the application is that a parkland management plan be prepared in order to gain a greater understanding of the historic landscape and to inform future management. In February 2019 Askew Nelson Ltd were commissioned by the Nuneham Estate to prepare the plan.

Natural England's CS scheme aims to deliver significant environmental enhancements to wildlife, landscape, the historic environment and resource protection. The purpose of this parkland management plan is to:

1. Gain an understanding of the development and significance of the designed landscape at Nuneham;
2. Complete a detailed survey of the existing landscape within the study area, i.e. the land owned by the estate, part of which is a Grade I registered landscape (see Fig. 2);
3. Provide policies and proposals for enhanced future management of the land within the study area.
4. Target CS grant funding under the five year agreement. The scope of the management plan is not however restricted to the five year CS period but will set out recommendations for improved management over a longer 10-20 year period.

### 1.2 Methodology

The methodology follows the brief provided by The Nuneham Estate (December 2018). The analysis of the designed landscape includes all land owned the Nuneham Estate, part of which lies within the Grade I registered park (see Fig. 2), however the condition survey, detailed analysis and recommendations for conservation and enhancement are made only for the wider parkland areas, where registered on the Rural Land Registry. Reference is made to the gardens, kitchen gardens and domestic areas only to provide context and a complete understanding the historic landscape.

The Plan follows Historic England's (HE) guidance '*Conservation Principles – Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*' (HE, June 2008). It is structured as follows:

**Section 2 (Context):** provides information on the current ownership, management and land use; statutory designations, relevant planning policy, rights of way, management restrictions etc.

**Section 3 (History):** includes a chronology of the history of the park and gardens at Nuneham, identifying key phases of development.

**Section 4 (Analysis):** includes a review of the design influences, key people involved in shaping the landscape, analysis of the design in context of contemporary landscapes, and an analysis of views and drives.

**Section 5 (Statement of Significance):** a short statement of significance of the designed landscape at Nuneham.

**Section 6 (Condition Survey):** provides a detailed examination of the current condition of the existing landscape within each of the four character areas. It includes the historical development, condition of the landscape, trees and woodland, archaeology, ecology, key views, circulation, historical significance, threats and opportunities. The condition of buildings and structures is only considered in outline (Level 1 survey).

**Section 7 (Vision):** sets out our overall vision for the future management of the property followed by management policies.

**Section 8 (Management Recommendations):** includes detailed recommendations for future management of the park and agricultural landscape (not gardens, walled gardens or domestic areas). Priorities are given for each recommendation, with suggested sources of funding (e.g. from Natural England through Countryside Stewardship). Schedule of recommended capital works and annual management and maintenance operations is provided separately to this report, with Countryside Stewardship codes where applicable.

### **1.3 The Team**

The authors of this parkland management plan are Max Askew and Sarah Cotter Craig of Askew Nelson Ltd, Camilla Beresford, Andrew Bowman Shaw of the Tree and Woodland Company and Ben Stephenson of BSA Heritage.

### **1.4 Acknowledgements**

We are of course enormously indebted to The Nuneham Estate, Nick Parslow and Alison Muldal of Natural England.

## 2.0 SITE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Landscape Context

Nuneham Courtenay is situated on a high river terrace, east of and overlooking the river Thames, rising to Windmill Mill, the highest point in the park, at 97m AOD. The park lies to the west of Nuneham Courtenay village, 6km south of Oxford, and is located predominantly within that parish of Nuneham. The A4074 Oxford to Reading road runs along the east boundary.



Fig. 1 Location Plan



Fig. 2 Site Boundary outlined in red and area of registered parkland shaded in green

### 2.2 Geology and Landscape Type

The park geology consists of Cretaceous Sands resting on Shotover Grit Sands of the Upper Kimmeridge age (32).

The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study identifies the park at Nuneham as lying within Natural England's Joint Character Area (JCA) 109 and Regional Character Area: Midvale Ridge. The Midvale Ridge is described as a low, irregular outcrop of limestone separating the low-lying clay areas of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Vales to the north and the Vales of the White Horse and Aylesbury to the south.

#### Landscape Type: Wooded Estatelands

Wooded Estatelands landscape type is described as having the following key characteristics:

- *Rolling topography with localised steep slopes.*
- *Large blocks of ancient woodland and mixed plantation of various sizes.*
- *Large parklands and mansion houses.*

- *A regularly-shaped field pattern dominated by arable fields.*
- *Small villages with strong vernacular character.*

The key landscape strategy for Wooded Estatelands is “Safeguard and enhance the characteristic landscapes of parklands, estates, woodlands, hedgerows and unspoilt villages.”



Fig. 3 Soils Map

Green shaded area (Soilscape 18): Slowly permeable seasonally wet, slightly acid but base rich loamy and clayey soils. Moderately fertile.

Red shaded area (Soilscape 10): Freely draining, slightly acid soils. Low fertility.

[www.landis.org.uk](http://www.landis.org.uk)

## 2.3 Ownership and Occupation

The study area is owned by Nuneham Estate Ltd (NEL). The land is farmed in-hand by NEL with a contract farming agreement in place with Nick Parslow (contractor). Nuneham House is leased to the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University as a Global Retreat Centre attracting about 10,000 visits a year.

Lock Wood, Black Wood, Keeper's Cottage, New Cottage, New Barn Farm, The Rectory, Rectory Cottage, Old Town House and the Church of All Saints and its churchyard, are all separately or privately owned.

### Existing Land Use and Management

Nuneham's parkland is predominantly arable farmland. Crops include beans; typical rotation is beans, wheat, barley, oil seed rape. There are limited areas of permanent grassland which are cut for hay.

The pleasure grounds around Nuneham House are maintained by residents of the Global Retreat Centre..

Other residential estate buildings and small workshops adjacent to the walled garden are let by the Estate.

The estate is now supplied with mains water to a holding tank. Historically, a spring-fed pond in the park supplied the estate including the walled garden and lake. It is understood that this system may survive partially, but it is not maintained and the lake can dry out in exceptional dry years. A diesel pump at Ferry Cottage once supplied the estate's reservoir from the river, but this system has been dismantled.

## **2.4 Conservation Designations**

Nuneham Park is protected by the following designations.

### ***Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest***

The park at Nuneham is registered as a Grade I landscape. It is therefore one of the top 10% of the 1450 landscapes on the Register which are considered to be of international historic importance. The Register entry is a material planning consideration, but is not a statutory designation. Not all of the study area lies within the Registered Park boundary, ref to Fig. 2).

### ***Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area***

The Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area includes Nuneham House, the pleasure grounds and parkland. This designation gives rise to additional development controls, administered by the local planning authority, to preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character of the area. Controls are applied to tree works, new buildings or extensions, views, layout and street pattern.

### ***Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)*** (refer to Plan A in Vol II for location)

The Carfax Conduit and a metre strip around the conduit is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, number 30836. In the schedule entry, the conduit's importance is identified as:

*A fine example of early civic clean water provision and marks an important stage in the development of the city [Oxford]. Despite having been moved and re-erected in the 18th century, Carfax Conduit represents an important part of Nicholson's system. Its significance was already apparent in 1786, when it was saved and re-erected as both an important piece of civic history and a fine ornamental structure.*

Scheduled Monuments have statutory protection and any repairs, restoration work, or nearby activity affecting the conduit must be carried out with consent from Historic England.

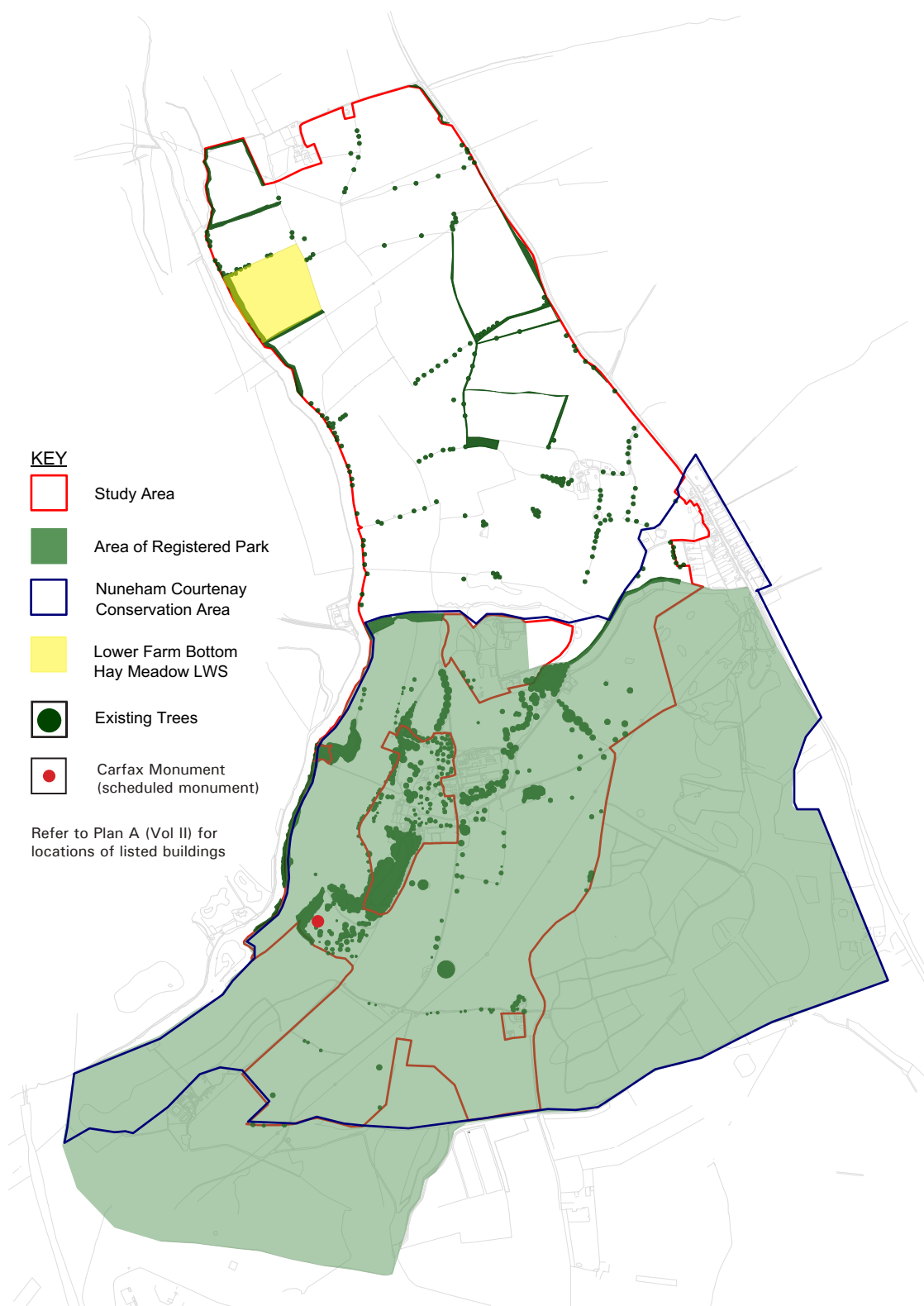


Fig. 4 Designations Plan



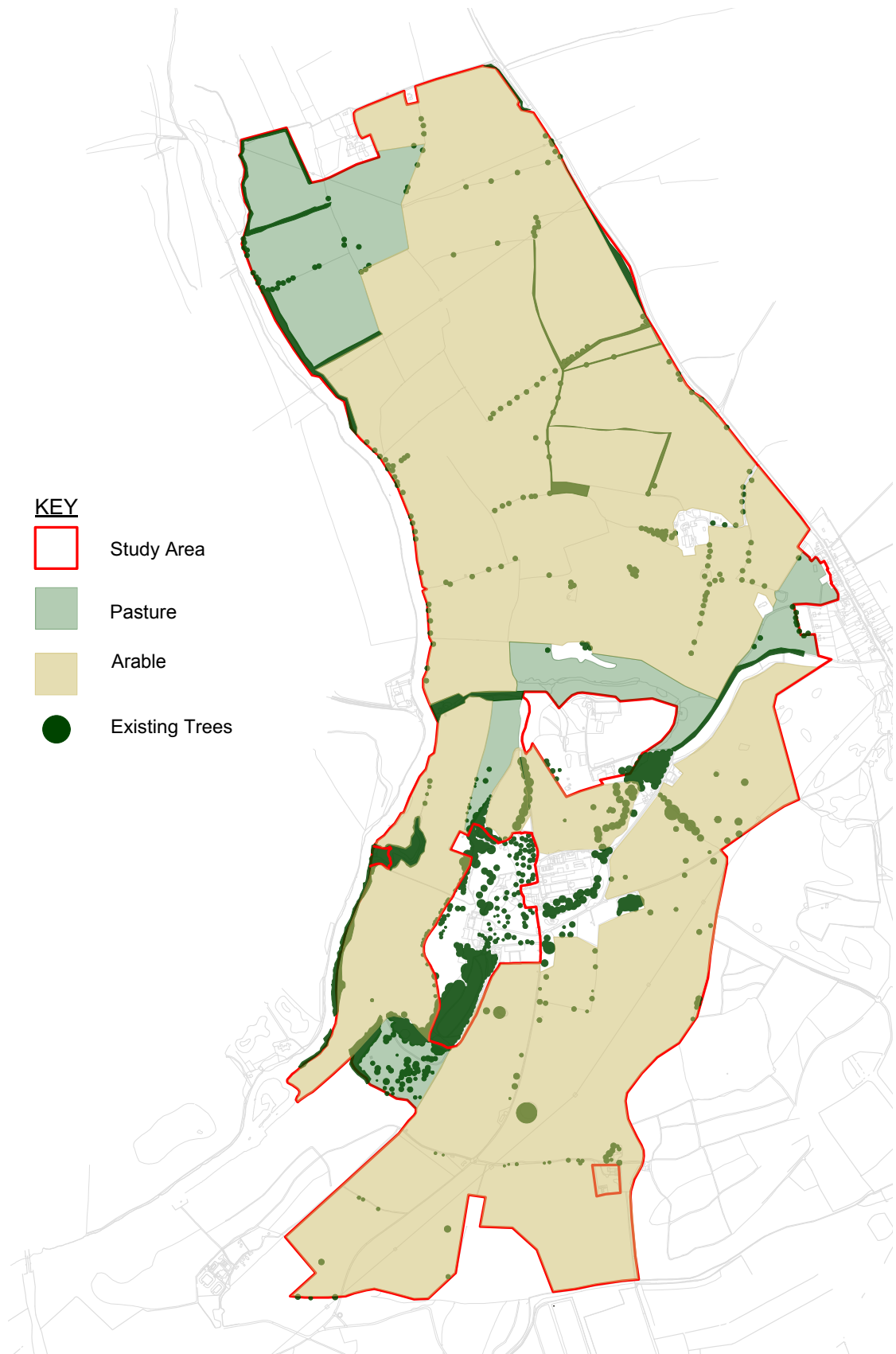


Fig. 5 Current Land Use Plan

## Listed Buildings

The park at Nuneham includes the following listed buildings, which are subject to the statutory controls of listed building regulations. Refer to Plan A (Vol II) for location

Grade I	Carfax Conduit
Grade II*	Nuneham House Church of All Saints
Grade II	Terraces to south, west and north of Nuneham House Northern section of forecourt wall and part of northern terrace at Nuneham House Central section of forecourt wall at Nuneham House Southern section of forecourt wall at Nuneham House Well head approximately 5m northwest of Nuneham House Well head approximately 50m west south west of the Temple of Flora Temple of Flora approximately 160m northeast of Nuneham House Urn approximately 70m northwest of Nuneham House Urn approximately 40m northwest of Nuneham House Gate to walled garden approximately 400m east of Nuneham House Oxford Lodge, (also known as Peacock Lodge) Entrance Gates to Nuneham Courtenay Arboretum, A423 Dairy Cottage Keeper's Cottage (outside study area) The Rectory (outside study area) Venison House Walled Garden approximately 20m east of The Rectory (outside study area) Ice House approximately 140m southwest of The Rectory Column and vase approximately 20m southwest of the Temple of Flora Grotto and Rockery approximately 40m south of the Temple of Flora Pollard Memorial approximately 15m east of Church of All Saints Rockery approximately 40m south of the Temple of Flora Statue of Dr Fell approximately 130m northeast of Church of All Saints The stable block, including 1 and 2 North Wing, Coach House, Laundry and Stable Flats; Home Farm; Town Cottage; estate workshops; the Orangery; Garden House and the walled garden walls are not listed. However, they receive a degree of protection by being within the curtilage of listed buildings and structures.

## *Tree Preservation Orders*

There are no known Tree Preservation Orders within the site boundary, however trees and woodland are protected under the Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area designation. Refer to Tree and Woodland Survey (Appendix A).

### Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

A public footpath (Oxford Greenbelt Way) runs north-south across Nuneham Park. This connects the village with the Thames Lane Path and bridleway, which runs along the southern boundary of the Grade I registered park.

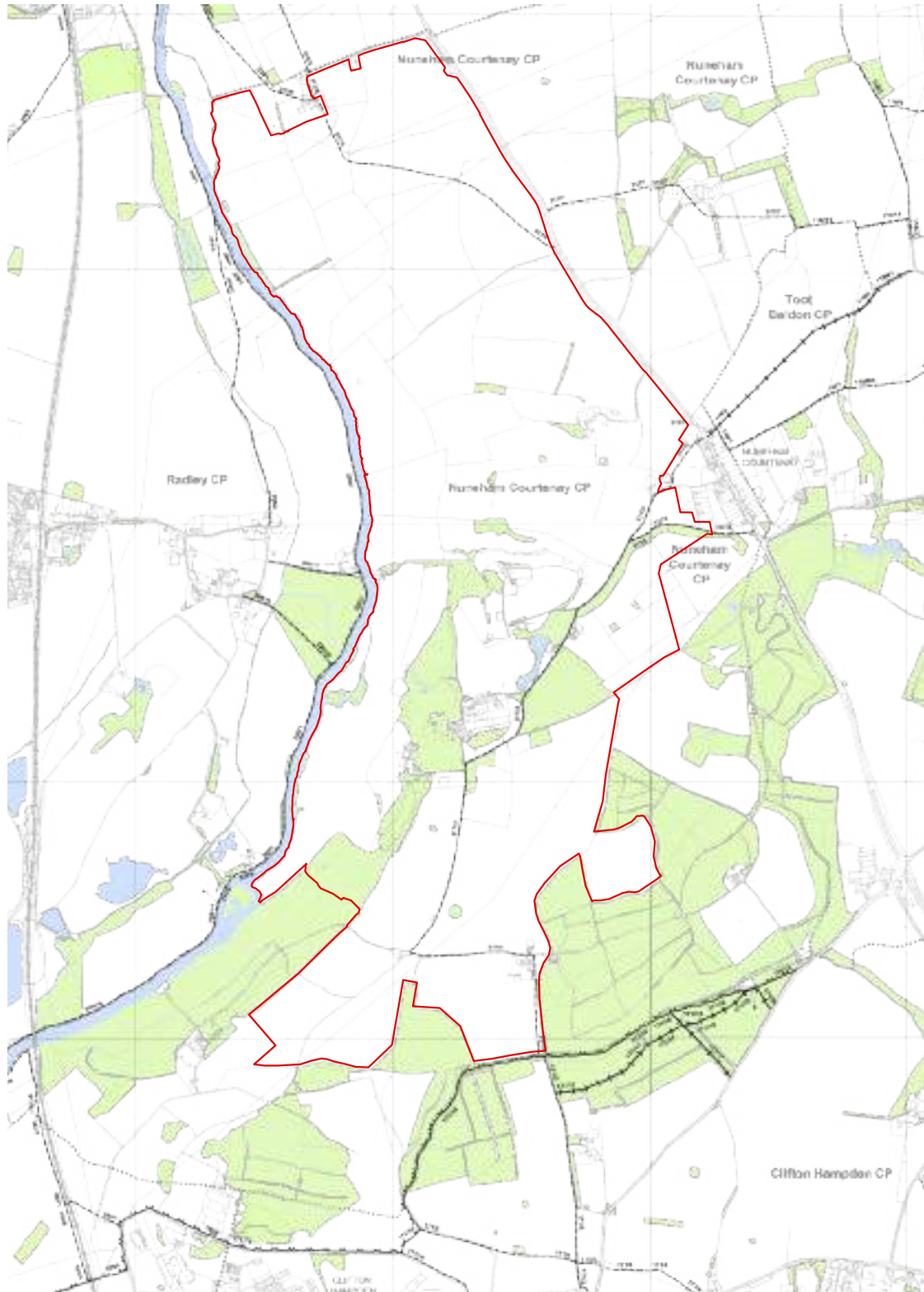


Fig. 6 Oxfordshire County Council - Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way

## Nature Conservation Designations

There are no statutory designations (such as SSSI) within the study area or within a kilometer.

There is one local non-statutory wildlife designation within the study area (ref. to Fig. 4), Lower Farm Bottom Hay Meadow (site ref. 50P08). It has been designated as an excellent example of an MG4 community traditionally managed neutral hay meadow, very species rich with lots of snakeshead fritillaries, an even cover of great burnet, also adders tongue, pepper saxifrage – and good old hedges around it (mainly blackthorn plus some pollarded willow) supporting good breeding bird assemblages.

## 2.5 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. It replaces the previous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance notes. The NPPF requires that the planning system contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and re-mediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

With regard to the historic environment the NPPF seeks *"a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance."* (Paragraph 126)

The NPPF also seeks to *"promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan."* (Paragraph 117)

With regard to setting, the NPPF states *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed*

*includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.” (Paragraph 128)*

*“Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal”. (Paragraph 129)*

Paragraphs 133 & 134 highlight the required balance between assets of particular significance and public benefit when determining planning applications. This also applies to non-designated heritage assets, which are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (paras 135 & 139).

### **Historic England ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’, 2nd edition December 2017**

This document sets out Historic England’s (HE) guidance, against the background of the National Planning Policy Framework and related guidance given in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.

HE define the setting of a heritage asset as *‘..setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.’*

*‘....Settings of heritage assets change overtime. Understanding this history of change will help to determine how further development within the asset’s setting is likely to affect the contribution made by setting to the significance of the heritage asset. Settings of heritage assets which closely resemble the setting at the time the asset was constructed or formed are likely to contribute particularly strongly to significance but settings which have changed may also themselves enhance significance, for instance where townscape character has been shaped by cycles of change over the long term. Settings may also have suffered negative impact from inappropriate past developments and may be enhanced by the removal of the inappropriate structure(s).’*

*‘....Because the contribution of setting to significance does not depend on public rights or ability to access it, significance is not dependent on numbers of people visiting it; this would downplay such qualitative issues as the importance of quiet and tranquillity as an attribute of setting, constraints on access such as remoteness or challenging terrain, and the importance of the setting to a local community who may be few in number. The potential for appreciation of the asset’s significance may increase once it is interpreted or mediated in some way, or if access to currently inaccessible land becomes possible.’*

**Buried assets and setting:** *'Heritage assets that comprise only buried remains may not be readily appreciated by a casual observer. They nonetheless retain a presence in the landscape and, like other heritage assets, may have a setting.'*

**Designed settings:** *'Many heritage assets have settings that have been designed to enhance their presence and visual interest or to create experiences of drama or surprise. In these special circumstances, these designed settings may be regarded as heritage assets in their own right, for instance the designed landscape around a country house. Furthermore they may, themselves, have a wider setting: a park may form the immediate surroundings of a great house, while having its own setting that includes lines-of-sight to more distant heritage assets or natural features beyond the park boundary. Given that the designated area is often restricted to the 'core' elements, such as a formal park, it is important that the extended and remote elements of the design are included in the evaluation of the setting of a designed landscape. Reference is sometimes made to the 'immediate', 'wider' and 'extended' setting of heritage assets, but the terms should not be regarded as having any particular formal meaning. While many day-to-day cases will be concerned with development in the vicinity of an asset, development further afield may also affect significance, particularly where it is large scale, prominent or intrusive. The setting of a historic park or garden, for instance, may include land beyond its boundary which adds to its significance but which need not be confined to land visible from the site, nor necessarily the same as the site's visual boundary.'*

## 2.6 Local Planning Context

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2033 was adopted in October 2017. This document sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and over-arching policies to guide development throughout South Oxfordshire to 2033

The relevant planning policies which may affect future development and the conservation, ecology, landscape setting and heritage assets within the registered park include:

- Landscape C1, C2, C3, C5 - C9
- Oxford Green Belt GB1 - GB4
- Historic Environment CON1, CON4, CON5, CON7, CON15



## **3.0 CHRONOLOGY OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE AT NUNEHAM**

- 3.1 As this commission excluded any detailed historical research and the writing of a new written history of the park, the text below is largely taken directly from the 2009 Conservation Management Plan (CMP) by Nicholas Pearson Associates. We have added in our own text where additional information has been sourced. The following section (Section 4) includes an analysis of the designed landscape, which is largely our own work but draws extensively on the 2009 Pearson CMP.

### **Key Phases of Development**

- 3.2 The key phases of development of the designed landscape can be attributed to four members of the Harcourt family.

#### **Early History**

The Historic Environment Record (HER) shows a landscape which was probably occupied from the Romano British period, although there is little evidence other than finds of pottery to confirm this.

#### **Early 18th century**

Simon Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt (1661-1727) bought the manor of Newnham in 1710 which included a rambling manor house associated with a small private estate. The 1st Viscount's grandson, Simon Harcourt, 2nd Viscount Harcourt (1714-1777) inherited Newnham in 1727 and subsequent accounts record activity on the estate including repairs and planting.

#### **Mid 18th century**

Simon Harcourt was created Earl Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt in 1749 and commenced work on a new villa and park in 1755. In c.1760, Newnham village was demolished and re-located to either side of the Oxford Road (existing village of Newnham), followed by the rebuilding of All Saints' Church in 1764. A kitchen garden was in existence by this date. The landscape park was created in 1768 and a Terrace Walk from the north of the church laid out, probably designed by Harcourt himself.

#### **Late 18th century**

The 1st Earl's son, George Harcourt, Viscount Nuneham (1736-1809), laid out a flower garden in the late 1760s, which was influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. William Mason was employed to redesign the garden in the early 1770s, and this was recorded in the paintings of Paul Sandby (1731-1809). George Harcourt succeeded as 2nd Earl in 1777 and in that year he completed and modified his father's landscape, employing Capability Brown. Brown produced a proposal plan in 1779 for the gardens and park. The Carfax Conduit was erected in Nuneham Park in 1786. Nuneham House, pleasure grounds and parkland continued to develop and remained influential through the late 18th century.

### **Early 19th century**

Edward Vernon Harcourt (1757-1847), Archbishop of York, made various alterations to the pleasure ground and park in the 1830s including adding a pinetum and a new terrace around the house, possibly engaging William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843) to design the terraces. Although the flower garden was reported in a bad state by John Loudon in 1833-34, large numbers of plants were purchased in the c.1830s-40s and horticultural journalists praised Nuneham from the 1850s.

### **Early 20th century**

The final major phase of landscaping was by Lewis Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt (1863-1922) in the c.1900s and included new terraces around the house, boathouses, water gardens and new footpaths, partially influenced by his international connections.

## **3.3 MAP AND IMAGE ANALYSIS**

The development of Nuneham Park has been well mapped since the late 18th century. This is an invaluable resource for understanding the evolution of the landscape and how the park was developed and used. The plans includes:

- Robert Smith, Map of Newnham Manor, 1707 (Fig. 7)
- Jefferys', Map of Oxfordshire, 1768 (Fig. 8)
- Plan of Alterations by Lancelot Brown, 1779 (Fig. 9)
- Mason's design for the Flower Garden, date unknown (Fig.11)
- Richard Davis, Map of Oxfordshire, 1797 (Fig. 12)
- Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1811 (Fig. 14)
- Andrew Bryant, Map of the county of Oxford 1824
- Tithe Map, 1838 (TNA IR 30/27/100) (Fig. 15)
- 1st ed. Ordnance Survey, 25" to the mile, surveyed 1872, publ. 1878 (Fig. 16)
- 1st ed. Ordnance Survey, 6" to the mile, surveyed 1875, publ. 1883
- 2nd ed. Ordnance Survey, 25" to the mile, rev. 1898, publ. 1899 (Fig. 17)
- 2nd ed. Ordnance Survey, 6" to the mile, rev. 1898, publ. 1900
- 3rd ed. Ordnance Survey, 25" to the mile, rev. 1910, publ.1912 (Fig. 18)
- 3rd ed. Ordnance Survey, 6" to the mile, rev. 1910-11, publ. 1914
- Land Utilisation Survey of Britain Sheet 105 Oxford & Henley, 1940 (Fig.19)

The main site features are shown on Plan A in Volume II.

### 3.4 CHRONOLOGY

Traces of Romano-British settlement have been found in the Nuneham area, but the 1066 place name *New Ham*, suggests the village was a later riverside settlement.

- 1066 From 1066 an established settlement, including a watermill, is documented and owners of the manor of 'Newnham' from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries included Richard de Courcy and his descendants; Gundreda de Warenne and her descendants; Baldwin de Riviers; Earl of Devon and his sister Isabel de Forz; and in 1316, Hugh de Courtenay, Earl of Devon, adding 'Courtenay' to the place name.
- 1396 The cow mead was described as lying next to Nuneham Park. This, together with later place name evidence for Park Wood and Coneyberry suggest a medieval park or warren south of the manor house.
- 1391 Sir Peter Courtenay had sold his interest in Nuneham manor to Sir Hugh Segrave, Treasurer and Chancellor of England. Following his mother's death, Nuneham passed to Segrave's second cousin, Sir John Drayton, who lived at Nuneham.
- 1400 In between periods of disputed inheritance and temporary reversion to the Crown, the manor of Newnham remained in the hands of various prominent owners throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the chaplain of Elizabeth I and James I, Robert Wright, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield; and John Robinson, a highly successful statesman, businessman, nephew of the notorious Archbishop Laud and Lord Mayor of London. It was John Robinson's son-in-law, the privy councillor, Earl Wemyss, who sold Nuneham to Sir Simon Harcourt in 1710 beginning the 200-year Harcourt family ownership.
- 1707 Robert Smith's Map of Newnham (Fig. 7) records the estate landscape for the first time with accuracy, with the village surrounded by an agricultural landscape; areas of common and heathland (furzewood); and two substantial woodlands, Park Wood and Black Wood. Close to the manor house are the Lord's Meadow and Coneyberry Hills – probably the medieval lords' rabbit warren. Access to the village was via the Oxford Road from the north, Abingdon Road from the south-west and a further road up Long Meadow from the south, and two roads connecting the village to the London road to the east. The hatching is believed to indicate open arable fields. Smith's map is of considerable importance as a record of the vernacular landscape before the Harcourts' ownership.
- 1710 Anne and Earl Wemyss sold the manor of Newnham to Sir Simon Harcourt (1661-1727) for £17,000. Harcourt was Solicitor General and Lord Chancellor to Queen Anne, involved with some notorious cases including the prosecution of Daniel Defoe and defence of Henry Sacheverell. He did not live at Nuneham, spending most of his time at Cokethorpe. The Harcourts were close friends with Alexander Pope (1688-1744), and Pope wrote some lines for the tomb of the 1st Viscount's son, the Hon. Simon Harcourt (1684-1720).

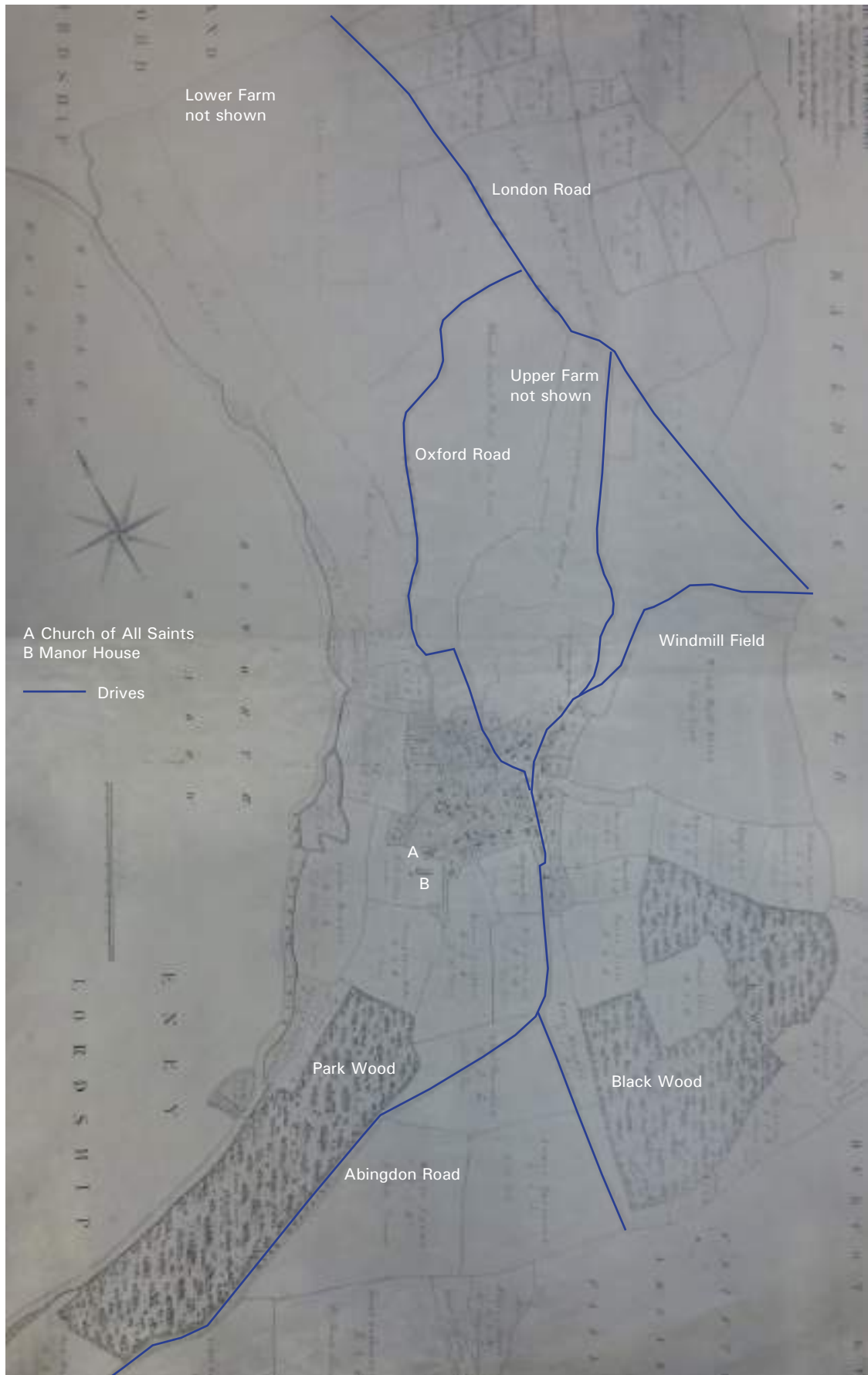


Fig. 7 Robert Smith's Map of Newnham Manor, 1707, with annotations

- 1727 Simon Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt died. His son had predeceased him and his grandson, Simon Harcourt (1714-77), inherited the estate. He was married to a granddaughter of the famous diarist, John Evelyn.

Estate accounts for the 1720s are marked 'Clarke's Accounts' after Edward Clarke, who signed himself 'Recr.'. He was presumably the estate administrator or steward, and probably the son of John Clarke, listed as the only freeholder in the village of Newnham in 1707.

The estate disbursements included:

*Paid for Oatts to feed the pheasantts in the snow*

*5 days stopping of Gaps Round the wood and about the Ground*

*3 days stopping of Gappes Round the Coppes next to Clifton heath (Black Wood) and at the kiln yard*

*Ditching and hedging of 23 poll of ye woodmound at parkwood*

*Ditching and hedging of 23 poll of ye woodmound at Blackwood next to Palmers lodge  
Further stopping of gaps in hedge or pale boundaries, and hedging were listed suggesting some reinvestment in the traditional boundaries. The mowing and making of hay in the Covett is also listed.*

- 1728 The estate disbursements included evidence of new planting:

*3 men each 3 days taking up trees in the nursery at \_\_\_ and planting of them and bushing and staking of them and bushing of the trees at Alder hill and Coome Botom.  
Pruning of young oaks in the Coppes.*

Alder hill was unenclosed land in 1707, north of the village, alongside the Oxford Road.

- 1727-8 Estate accounts listed '*repairs at and about place, House, garden fishponds*'. This was presumably work carried out on Newnham manor house and its grounds. It included chimney sweeping, employment of a glazier, door mending and hay making, plus *mending of pails round of Gardin and G\_\_ court and Making West Trough for \_\_\_ and Fishponds and laying them. Expenses in ye nursery and coppices of planting and expenses for \_\_\_ Game etc. for powder and shott for destroying vermin.* Further Repairs of mounds and fence about woods and land in hand were also being accounted for.

- 1734 Lord Harcourt helped found the Dilettanti Society to promote classical culture in England, following a Grand Tour to Italy.

- 1735 Lord Harcourt was made Lord of the Bedchamber to George II.

- 1749 Lord Harcourt was created Earl Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt. He had two sources of wealth – the Chancellor's inherited lands and fortune, and investments in the East India Company.

1750 A view of the old manor house, attributed to Paul Sandby, records a rambling house, probably medieval with later additions including an impressive Tudor chimney. The manor house was on the site of the future flower garden.

1751 Lord Harcourt was appointed Governor to the Prince of Wales.

1755 By October the site for a new house, near a large clump of elms (in Coneyberry Hills), had been chosen with the help of the poet William Whitehead (1715-1785).

1756 Lady Nuneham wrote to her son about the new house -

*...[the] design we have of building a villa at Nuneham, and not a seat, as was talk'd of: for beside the immense sum such a thing would cost, there is absolutely not a spot upon the whole Estate, as my Ld., Mr Fanquier, and several others think, so proper for a house, as near a clump of elms, which you are sensible cannot contain a large building. However, I think the situation will make amends for the smallness of the building...*

In the following July Lady Harcourt sent her son full details of the new house, with dimensions. He intended to also send a drawing of the elevation, but Stiff Leadbetter (1705-1766), the architect, was too busy to draw it out. By December, the walls were above the level of the first floor windows and Lady Harcourt had the domestic quarters relocated to either side of the east front. Stones from the ruins at Stanton Harcourt were floated down the Thames and used for the foundations. Lady Harcourt visited Nuneham every week to monitor progress on the site.

The old main road through the village was closed, and turned into a private drive, possibly leaving the turnpike across the field behind the Harcourt Arms, following the line of today's footpath.

1757 Newnham was changed to Nuneham, probably to avoid confusion with Newnham Murren in Oxfordshire. William Whitehead was made poet laureate. The old name continued to be occasionally used.

1759 The Rectory was built. A new lodge and arched gateway were built after 1759, probably designed by Stiff Leadbetter. An agreement was made with the Bishop of Oxford about an exchange of glebe land with Lord Harcourt.

1760 The Harcourt seat was moved to Nuneham Courtenay. The last remaining resident of the old village, namely Barbara Wyatt, died and her cottage was pulled down.

1761 Earl Harcourt went to Mecklenburg as the Prince's proxy to marry Princess Charlotte. Horace Walpole disliked the 1st Earl Harcourt, calling him *a marvel of pomposity and propriety who was unable to teach the prince other arts than what he knew himself – hunting and drinking.*

1760s The old village of Nuneham was demolished and relocated along the Oxford to Henley turnpike road. Wings were added to the original villa design to meet Lady Harcourt's requirements. The north wing provided offices and the south, further family accommodation. Rooms were also built over the link corridors.





Fig. 8 Jefferys' Map of Oxfordshire, 1768. Jeffery's map is the first to show the development of the park at Nuneham. The park is fenced and house and walled kitchen garden are shown in their current location. There are two drives shown, one from the Abingdon Road, which has been moved into the centre of the park from the south edge of Lock Wood with a Lodge at the entrance to the park. A second drive is shown leading north west from the house to the London Road. The relocated village is not shown on this plan.

Stable buildings were built north-east of the house, probably designed by James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713-88).

1760-4 Earl Harcourt employed the architect James Stuart to design a chimney piece in the dining room and drawing room ceiling.

1761 Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) published *La Nouvelle Heloïse*, a novel which describes the creation of a garden, *enclosed by thick shady trees, flowering shrubs and creepers mingled with fruit trees, and the grass was mixed with herbs, flowers and mosses.*

1763 Earl Harcourt was made Lord Chamberlain to Queen Charlotte.

1764 The 1st Earl pulled down the medieval church and remodelled it as a classical temple. Harcourt submitted his proposals to James Stuart, who slightly adjusted and modified the design for the building, possibly adding the semi-circular porch. Lord Harcourt also devised a long north terrace walk, providing a vista and direct approach to the house.

The present spelling of 'Nuneham', rather than 'Newnham', was suggested in a letter from William Whitehead to Lord Harcourt, conflicting with earlier evidence.

Labourers in the garden were listed as William Witchell, Joseph Malam, Edward Bayley, John Bradshaw and Edward Sheppard, and around four were employed each month.

- 1766-7 The 1st Earl's son, George Simon Harcourt, Viscount Nuneham, went to meet Rousseau on his arrival to England, and invited him to stay in a cottage on the Nuneham Court estate for a short while during his self-imposed exile from France.

During his stay, Rousseau planted many foreign wild flower seeds. Rousseau's theory that landscape gardens should be complimented with the intimate details of a flower garden was expressed in an inscription on a garden seat – *Si l'Auteur de la nature est grand dans les grandes choses, il est tres grand dans les petites.*

- 1767 A sketch of a pair of cottages for Nuneham Courtenay village was executed by Lord Harcourt.

Labourers in the garden included three women, Dinah Lister, Sarah Gillett and Ann Coverly, probably employed as weeder women.

- 1768 As Ambassador to Paris and then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Harcourt spent most of his time abroad. His son, Lord Nuneham, requested an acre for a flower garden, and was given the old churchyard. While the Earl was away in France, he laid out a garden inspired by Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*.

Jefferys' *Map of Oxfordshire* (Fig. 8) plotted the transformation of the estate in the first half of the 18th century to a remarkably complete landscape park. Two avenues or planted ridings are depicted, but otherwise the overall layout changed little after this date.

- 1770 Oliver Goldsmith's poem based on Nuneham Courtenay, *The Deserted Village*, was published, with a sentimental defence of the old, unenclosed village:

*Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;  
Amidst thy bowers, the tyrant's hand is seen,  
And desolation saddens all thy green:  
One only master grasps the whole domain,  
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain...  
...The man of wealth and pride  
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;  
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
Space for his horse, equipage, and hounds...*

- 1771 Earl Harcourt returned from France, and, disliking his son and Rousseau's garden, had plans drawn up for a more formal flower garden.

Garden accounts show a peak in the labourer wage bill of £17 in August and September, as opposed to a around £10 the year before. The Temple of Flora, grotto and rockery were built.

Plates of Nuneham Park were published in John Woolfe and James Gandon, *Vitruvius Britannicus V* (1771). The elevation of the east front records Leadbetter's classical design, with a raised entrance to the first floor, or piano nobile.

William Whitehead wrote a poem entitled *The Removal of the Village at (or Late Improvements at) Nuneham*.

1771-2 Lord Nuneham asked his friend William Mason to design an informal flower garden (Fig. 11). A letter from Mason to Harcourt confirms that alterations were taking place to the flower garden plan, although the plan itself has yet to be found or has not survived. Mason wrote to Lord Nuneham, *your plan of the Flower garden and another traced from it in which I have drawn a gravel walk round it and altered the form of the beds and also (with horticultural green wash) notified what ought to be grass*.

Furthermore, black dots indicated positions of detached flowering shrubs – arbutus and small magnolias – and that the beds could be varied at will. Mason is also concerned about what Walter Clarke, the head gardener, would make of the alterations, suggesting that he had a hand in the original design.

Mason and Lord Nuneham were both extreme Whigs and republicans, opposed to the views of the king. Nuneham was a supporter and patron of Rousseau, who believed Man was at his best in a state of Nature, and *that nature in a garden, is not the same: she has more brilliance, but she does not move me as much. Men say, they make nature more beautiful – but I believe they disfigure her*.

A bust of Flora at the entrance to the flower garden was inscribed with lines from Geoffrey Chaucer's translation of *Romaunt of the Rose* (originally by Guillaume de Lorris, c.1230) and a medallion of Flora in the Temple was inscribed with lines from Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532). Lines from *Thoughts in a Garden* by Andrew Marvell (1621-78) were inscribed at the back of Mason's Bower - *Fair Quiet, have I found thee hear; With innocence thy Sister dear*. Lines by Milton were inscribed in the Grotto – *Musing Meditation most affects; The pensive scenery of desert cell*.

1772 Debois Landscape Survey Group suggest that Brown's Walk was first planted in 1772.

Garden labourer wage bills for the first half of the year are £13, £15, £14 and £12, and then settle to £10 or £11 from August 15th onwards. Garden disbursements included the purchase of 800 asparagus plants in July, William Clayton was paid *36 Nights in ye plantations at 3d each and John Polly 31 evenings ditto, and the purchase of 2 Orleans Plumbs, 2 June Native(?) Plumbs, 2 Perdrigon Plumbs*.

An estate account records paying the Gardener *Mr Simmons on Acct £120 per year and paying Richards Nurseryman in full for Trees*.

1773 Lord Harcourt wrote to his agent -

*I wish to have the last made plantations in Windmill field kept clear of weeds this year; which I hope will secure them for the future. I want to know how they grow. I desire the young beech plantation in Coneyberry Hill, near the house, may be attended to, and that the weeds there may be kept down; and that the nettles below the church in the parsons old orchard may be pull up and the docks cleared away. Let Joseph keep a watchful eye to the mounds that the cattle may not get into them.*

Garden labourer wage bills were between £10 and £13. £2 3s was paid to Mr Child for pine plants and their wharfage and carriage from Barbadoes.

In September, Horace Walpole (1717-1797) described a recent visit to Nuneham in a letter to William Mason – *By the way have I told you that I have been at Nuneham? no I did not, I was strangely disappointed at my arrival and thought it very ugly. The next morning totally changed my ideas; it is capable of being made uncommonly beautiful. Lord Nuneham's garden is the quintessence of nosegays; I wonder some mac-caroni does not offer ten thousand pounds for it — but indeed the flowers come in their natural season, and take care to bring their perfumes along with them. Do you know that the Muses have a little cabinet there? and a female votary who writes with great facility and genteelly. I was trusted with the secret, and mind I don't betray it. Adieu.*

1774 Garden labourer wage bills were between £10 and £13 once again, except for the period August 20th to October 8th when the bill reached £18. Garden expenses for the year included Scotch firs supplied by Corr from Oxford; paying Thomas Milson for 34 Nights in plantations; and a 3d payment was made for a Letter from Kew on August 24th.

1775 Garden labourer wage bills were higher overall, ranging between £11 and £16.

A view of the house from the south by Sandby depicts the house before the addition of the south wing and other modifications, with cattle grazing along Brown's Walk.

Paul Sandby's three views of All Saints' (Figs. 22 & 23) record the new church sitting proudly in the landscape, with a foreground of lawn and a background of trees in the flower garden, combining the roles of a great classical garden temple, a garden seat, and parish church. A gravel walk, raised by the natural topography of the site, provided a direct vista of the church, framed by trees. A glimpse of the west front porch from the south-west, also depicted by Sandby, was cleverly designed to create the image of a classical garden rotunda in the parkland around house.

1777 The 1st Earl retired to Nuneham Courtenay. A few months later he died trying to save his dog, which had fallen into a well while he was marking out locations for new plantations.

The first Earl's son, George Simon Harcourt (1736-1809), married to Elizabeth Vernon, inherited Nuneham and the earldom. Being very 'republican' in his views, he removed the coronet from the family carriages, gave away Royal portraits, erected a statue of Rousseau in the garden and wore a Brutus ring with a cap and dagger seal. The bust of

Rousseau became the third item on the Flower Garden walk, between Flora and the poet, Abraham Cowley (1618-1667). The second Earl also added the bower and grotto around this time.

The 2nd Earl consulted Carr of York (1723-1807) about alterations to the villa and Lancelot Brown (1716-1783) about improving the gardens. Carr was cancelled to avoid excessive personal expenditure during the American War of Independence. William Mason was also consulted on changes to the grounds, and the formal avenue between the house and the church was broken up into picturesque groups of trees with views in between.

William Mason wrote to Horace Walpole in October while staying at Nuneham, saying *Here am I with the Isis before me drawing its line of silver through the greenest meadow in the world, a glorious wood to my left, and another glorious wood to my right, Abingdon spire there, Radcliff library there, &c. &c. &c. &c.*

Mason subsequently (*the day after his Majesty's happy accession, 1777*) wrote again to Horace Walpole saying *Lord Harcourt has fancied my presence so necessary towards completing some alterations he has made on his terrace, that I have not been able to persuade him to let me leave this place before next Wednesday or Thursday.* Sandby's views of the Flower Garden depict a mature and ornamented garden. Irregularly-shaped island beds are abundantly planted with flowers and shrubs arranged to peak in height at the centre. Each bed also appears to be edged in box or bedding plants. Trees include a variety of deciduous and conifer specimens, and dwarf conifers are shown planted on the lawn, in-between the beds.

Busts, statues, garden buildings and the dome of All Saints' provide eye-catchers. The orangery is recorded as a trellis-covered wall, with a door at the centre, and a gravel path runs alongside.

- 1778 Lord Harcourt wrote to Lord Jersey (George Villiers, 4th Earl of Jersey) *...In a few days I shall stake out the boundary of the intended garden, that it may be enclosed with hurdles when Mason comes; the temporary Park is made. Deer are bespoke; and I have seven beautifull fauns in a stable ready to be turned out. A small part of the deer park is paled, and paling prepared for a mile more; you find I am going to work in earnest.*

Lord Harcourt discussed the grotto in a letter to William Whitehead, *The cave is not near completed and will be a tedious and costly business; to have it well done and to secure the brains of those who will most frequently use it ...I have been obliged to send for a person on a purpose, who has been employed in making artificial rocks. It will be a pretty thing when completed and dry and cool and yet sheltered from cold winds and rain. It is lighted from the top by a bell glass, blown flatter on purpose than usual.* Lady Harcourt had lined the grotto with spars and petrifications, some of which had been sent by Lady Spencer at Althorp. The dripping water effect was achieved with a hand-operated pump.





Fig. 9 Plan of Alterations by Lancelot Brown, 1779. Brown's Plan for the alterations to the grounds at Nuneham include the retention of the drive from Abingdon Lodge, a new drive from Newnham Lodge (Newnham Lodge not constructed?) and a proposed new drive through Black Wood to the London Road.

In August, Brown wrote to Harcourt explaining that *he was delayed from waiting on your Lordship due to illness and not a man to spare at that time to have put into execution anything we might determine.*

William Watts' engravings of Sandby's views of Nuneham, were published in the *Copperplate Magazine* increasing the landscape's national profile and influence.

- 1779 *A Plan of the intended Alterations at Newnham in Oxfordshire the seat of the Earl of Harcourt, by Lancelot Brown* (Fig. 9) shows proposals for a new serpentine circuit ride through Park Wood, the southern park and Black Wood, with projections and parkland plantings to break up the linearity of the park belts and avenues. A new drive and entrance is proposed from the south-east, across the old brickworks. Notably the north end of Park Wood is shown as carved up circuit walks to form Brown's Hill, linked to the pleasure grounds by Brown's Walk. The plan does not appear to show dramatic extensions to the landscape, and even indicates a retreat from the southern extent plotted in 1768, screening Gadberry's Leyes from the rest of the park. Brown also provides the earliest plan of the Flower Garden found to date, recording its large number



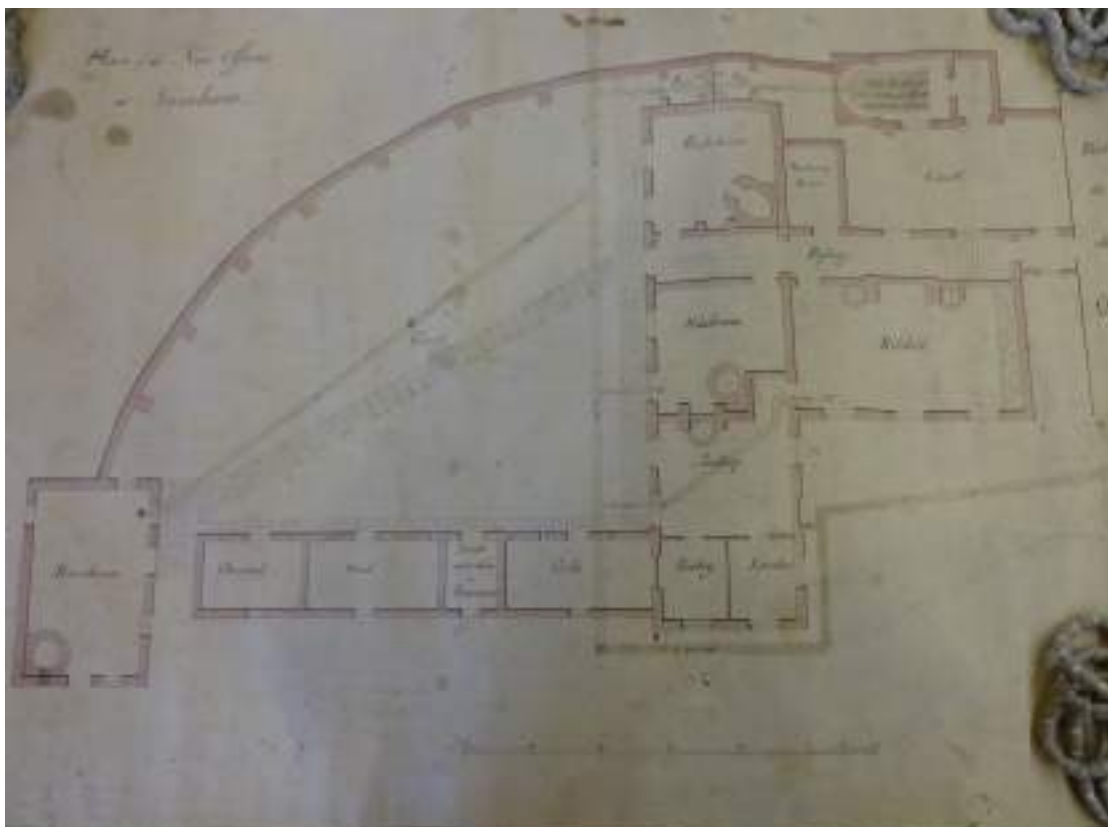


Fig. 10 Map of the New Offices at Nuneham, Lancelot Brown date unknown

of small island beds, and, apparently, all the area to the east screened off as service yards.

In Stroud's analysis, she concludes that Brown's proposals did not require any major earthworks, but improvements to the old deer park to create a tree-sprinkled lawn, and the laying out of the new ground to the south, were required. An undulating walk was laid out through thick plantations, with designed vistas to the River and a small timber Doric temple. The walk opened out on to a plateau, where it was intended to have a gothic feature, which William Mason offered to design.

Mason wrote to Lord Harcourt that summer – *I see plainly from your Lordship's that you wish me to be at Nuneham when Brown is there, that relying on my conciliatory and soothing arts, you may have the pleasure of putting him out of humour every moment and treating him en grand seigneur, and yet for all that get all the good you can out of him, thro' the medium of my politesse.*

- 1780 Horace Walpole and William Mason tried to meet and stay at Nuneham together, although this seems to have been prevented by other events. They do visit Nuneham independently, however, and in November Walpole wrote *I wish you had told me if you did not find Nuneham in more beauty than ever. I do not know the Paradise on earth I prefer to it, with its Adam and Eve: who may comfort themselves with having no*

*children, when they recollect that the first born committed murder with the jaw-bone of an Ass, a deadly weapon I am sure!.*

A watercolour by Sandby (Fig. 23) depicts the house set in lawns and mature trees, with the glimpsed view of All Saints' immediately to the north. The south wing service buildings appear to be screened by bedding and conifers in a similar style to the Flower Garden.

- 1781 William Mason published Book 4 of his didactic poem, *The English Garden*. It is thought that his description of Alcander's flower garden was inspired by the flower garden at Nuneham, where exotics (oranges) and natives (woodbine bowers) combine.

Garden accounts imply a lot of kitchen garden activity, particularly related to melon cultivation. The expenses for the year included:

*86 Squares Melon Frames etc*  
*24 Squares Cucumber etc*  
*43 Squares Hothouse etc*  
*Carriage of plants from London was also paid.*

Garden labourers working in the Kitchen Garden and the Gardens were listed as John Baker, William Otewell (?), Joseph Bennet, Elizabeth Falkner, Mary Lever, Mary Cross, Edward Field and, working specifically in the Pleasure Grounds, Mary Savil, Elizabeth Shakespear and George Harbard.

Brown and his son-in-law, the architect Henry Holland (1745-1806) altered the villa and designed new offices (Fig. 10). Repton lists Nuneham as one of twenty sites where Brown worked as an architect (*Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1803). The servants quarters were moved to a new block beyond the south wing of the house; the original wings were raised to three stories; the north wing was altered to accommodate a library and private suite for Lord and Lady Harcourt; a top-lit staircase was made at the centre of the house; and rooms on the lower level of the west side were converted to living rooms with direct access to the gardens. Work on the house and gardens was virtually complete by the autumn.

Walpole wrote to Mason in October *I go to Park-place the day after to-morrow, but think I shall not proceed to Nuneham. I have not heard from Lord Harcourt, but Mr. Stonhewer called here a few days ago and says the house is pulled to pieces, and consequently in great disorder, which I conclude is the reason of my not being summoned.*

William Whitehead's poem *Late Improvements at Nuneham* imagined a conversation between Mother Nature and Brown:

*Dame Nature, the goddess, one very bright day,*  
*In strolling through Nuneham, met Brown in her way:*  
*'And bless me' she said, with an insolent sneer,*  
*'I wonder that fellow will dare to come here.*

*What more than I did has your impudence plann'd;  
The lawn, wood, and water, are all of my hand...'*  
*[Brown's reply to Dame Nature was to point out his improvements:]*  
*'That ground of your moulding is certainly fine,  
But the swell of that knoll and those openings are mine...  
The ridges are melted, the boundaries gone:  
Observe all those changes, and candidly own  
I have cloth'd you when naked, and, when overdrest,  
I have stripp'd you again to your bodice and vest;  
Concealed ev'ry blemish, each beauty display'd,  
As Reynolds would picture some exquisite maid...'*  
*[Dame Nature had accepted defeat, but ended:]*  
*'For a lucky conjecture comes into my head,  
That, whate'er he has done, and whate'er he has said,  
The world's little malice will balk his design:  
Each fault they call his, and each excellence mine.'*

1782 An elevation of the east front engraved by Walker depicts an additional floor on each wing, screened service buildings to the south and north, and a classical porch suggesting that the main entrance went straight into the ground floor. The approach consists of a large turning circle and lawn.

1783 'Capability' Brown died. Outstanding bills were settled by his son-in-law and business partner, Henry Holland. Accounts reveal payments to Holland for work done at Nuneham. Stroud has identified payments totalling £1700, with £700 going to Henry Holland.

Brown's Drummonds bank account records a payment of £300 from the 2nd Earl Harcourt. William Whitehead, wrote some verses to commemorate the improvements. In February, Walpole wrote to Mason complaining *How could you forget to tell me of Mr. Whitehead's verses on Nuneham; I am charmed with them. They are the best he ever wrote, except Variety.*

In July Walpole wrote to Mason saying - *Lord Harcourt, by a letter I have received to day says, you are sitting on a rafter and dining out of a hod of mortar; no matter, you are at Nuneham and can stroll about Elysium. Whenever you are tired of it, you will be gladly received at Strawberry, and will find a saucer of hautboys for your dinner. Pray settle the plan for the castle, and bring the measurement of the windows that we may fit the painted glass to them, and above all, torment Lady Harcourt to send me her poems that I may begin printing. I shall be gathered to Caxton and my ancestors if she does not make haste.*

And again, in August, Walpole writes - *Nay I do not perceive that your presence at Nuneham advances any work there, I have neither received Lady Harcourt's MS. nor a design for the Gothic building, which my painted glass is to deck. Does your being within the vortex of Oxford benumb all your faculties?.*

1783 Seeds were purchased from Taggs (an Oxford nursery).

1783-4 Alterations were made to the Flower Garden planting.

1784 John Trusler published *Elements of Modern Gardening* and recommended the form of the flower garden at Nuneham:

*Grass with beautiful clumps of shrubs and flowers scattered with taste, are generally most pleasing, with a hard terrace of gravel for the benefit of walking after a shower of rain, when everything in bloom gives out its fragrency; or, the form and disposition of the clumps or flower beds, may be very irregular, but not appear broken into too many disjointed patches.*

Countess Harcourt became Lady of the Bedchamber; she was an intimate friend of the Queen.

Lord Harcourt's gardener, Walter Clarke, died. A memorial near the Grotto was erected to commemorate Walter Clarke, the gardener of the 2nd Earl Harcourt who made the flower garden. The inscription was composed by Whitehead.

1785 On 12th September the King and Queen, with the Princes Ernest, Augustus, and Adolphus, their Majesties' fifth, sixth, and seventh sons; the Princess Royal, the Princess Augusta, and Princess Elizabeth, attended by the Right Hon. Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave, lady of the bed-chamber to the Princess Royal, General Harcourt and Colonel Manners, aides-de-camp to his Majesty, and Mr. Hayes, governor to the young Princes, paid a visit to Lord and Lady Harcourt at their seat at Nuneham.

*A Plan of the Flower Garden at Nuneham*, now in the National Archives (TNA WORK 38/349), was drawn up for Queen Charlotte who wanted a Nuneham style flower garden at Frogmore. The attractive coloured plan records a large number of circular and kidney-shaped flowerbeds, some with more flowers than others. A note on the back of the plan stated The Clumps coloured Red and Yellow are Flowers only – The rest are Shrubs, except the Clumps on each side of the Temple, which are Flowers backed with Shrubs. The orangery was known as the Conservatory and the Temple of Flora and Bower are shown as small, square garden buildings. There are three entrances in the north-west, north-east and south-west corners, the latter through the rockery around the grotto. The main gravel walk around the garden is laid out as a simple perimeter path, and the entrance to the grotto is shown extending out onto the lawn to the north.

1786 On the 12th of August their Majesties, the Princess Royal, Princess Augusta, and Princess Elizabeth, arrived at Nuneham, on a visit to the Earl and Countess of Harcourt. Here their Majesties spent the day, and took a view of the new improvements in the gardens, pleasure-grounds, &c. They were accompanied by Fanny Burney.

Lord Harcourt refers to a new drive in Black Wood, in a letter to Lady Harcourt.

Six vine plants were purchased.

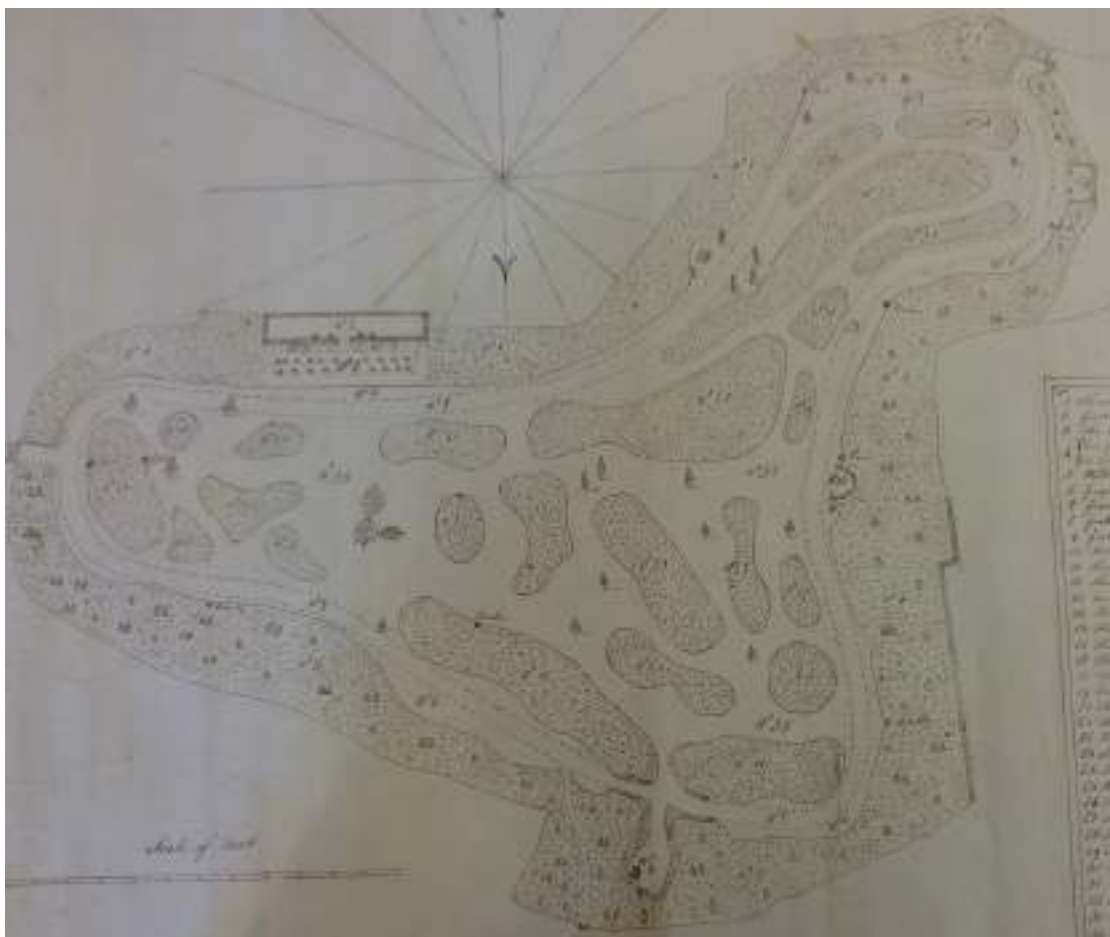


Fig. 11 Mason's design for the Flower Garden, date unknown.

The Carfax Conduit was removed from Oxford to widen the city centre road. The conduit was part of a gift of several conduit houses and a pipe system given to city around 1600 by Otho Nicholson to provide clean drinking water. Nicholson's initials and coat of arms formed part of the ornamentation. The conduit was offered to Lord Harcourt, who asked William Mason to design a plinth to replace the old tank house.

1787 The following purchases were listed in the garden account:

*Parcel of figgs from Yorkshire*

*Parcel of Antwerp Raspberries*

*A pare of from \_awn Coronation Tree (?)*

*24 Queen annanas plants*

*11 Black Antigua annanas*

*2 Sugar annanas*

*1 Black Brasil annanas*

*1 Antigua Queen annanas*

*1 St Vincent D°*

The young J. M. W. Turner (see Fig 27) painted a view of Nuneham House from the north-west, depicting it set in a parkland landscape with a fence or ha-ha separating the pleasure grounds from the wider landscape.

1789 The Carfax Conduit was erected in the park where Brown recommended a ruined castle or tower.

1790 Earl Harcourt became Master of the Horse. George III and his family frequently visited the Harcourt family at Nuneham Courtenay.

Christopher Stevenson was referred to as Gardener to the Earl Harcourt in a list of subscribers to William Speechley's *Treatise on the Culture of the Vine*.

1792 The 2nd Earl Harcourt and William Mason persuaded Rev. William Gilpin (1724-1804) to publish his *Tours*. The Earl had previously offered the living of Nuneham to the Rev. Gilpin.

1793 Joseph Farington (1747-1821) made views of the house and park that record the landscape in a Claudian, classical manner, with picturesque parkland trees, distant views of the Thames valley, rustic fencing, and eye-catching local peasants.

1794 In *An History of the River Thames*, William Combe (1742-1823) described Nuneham as a place of the first beauty with a flower garden that transcends all rivalry and is itself alone. He concluded that only the genius of poetry could compose it.

The 2nd Earl made changes to Mason's flower garden.

New plans were produced for the flower garden, and Christopher Alderson, Mason's curate and the Queen Charlotte's garden advisor at Frogmore, directed work and received Royal plants on behalf of Mason due to his worsening health.

*A Plan of the Gardens at Nuneham...* (original at Stanton Harcourt), has been dated to around 1794 by the academic, Mark Laird. In comparison to the earlier plan of 1785, this plan shows a smaller number of larger flower and shrubbery beds, with a freestanding large elm surrounded by circular pitching. The Conservatory is referred to as the Greenhouse with the area in front, the Orangery, which was an open stone pavement in the summer but in the winter an elegant conservatory is placed over the Orangery. The perimeter shrubbery is thicker, and referred to as wilderness. A flower nursery and house for garden implements are located to the west of the garden. The Temple of Flora is shown as a semi-circular building, perhaps suggesting this was a plan showing proposals that were not all carried out. The gravel path has lost some of its sinuosity, and appears straighter and more direct, and a number of busts have been relocated including Apollo and Venus.

A second undated and anonymous plan in the Harcourt papers collection in the Bodleian Library's Department of Special Collections is very similar in its detailing, and was, perhaps, a draft version. Notably it lacks the decorative ornament, neatness and title block of the 1794 plan. Similarly, a third plan, in the papers of the Montagu family (Duke



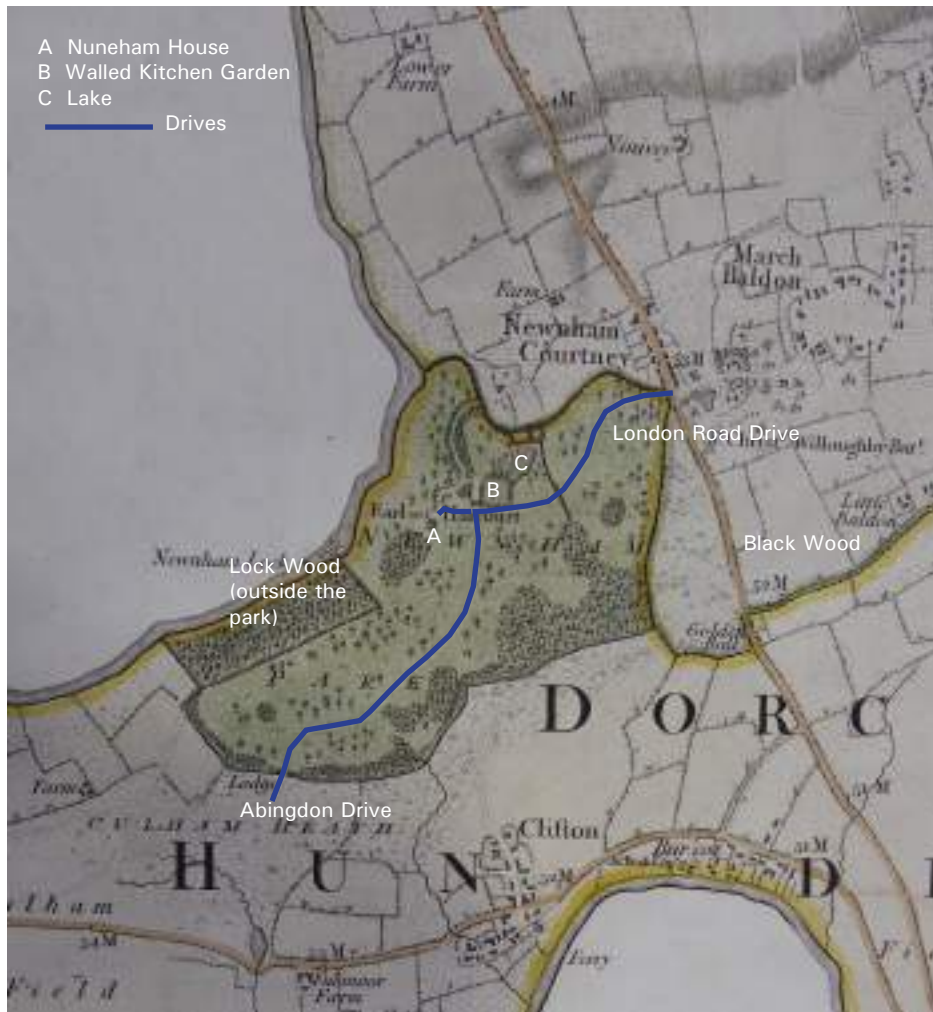


Fig. 12 Davis's Map of Oxfordshire, 1797. Additional tree planting can be seen throughout the park. The alignment of drives is similar to that shown on Jeffery's plan of 1768 suggesting that Brown's proposed drive through Black Wood had not been implemented. The relocated village is shown on the plan.

of Manchester) papers in the Huntingdonshire Archives, provides a further sketch plan of the same layout. All three plans share the same references and identical wording, however the location of the busts of Rousseau, Cato and Locke vary between the two sketches and the finished plan.

- 1795 When grain shortages reached a critical low level during the war with France, Lord Harcourt was described in Parliament as giving an example well worthy of being followed by others of nobility and owners of large enclosures as he was ploughing up a great part of his park to raise grain. Harcourt grant-aided the villagers to grow grain in the area of park nearest the village. Earl Harcourt and his parson also devised a Nuneham loaf with reduced wheat content.

A view of the east front published by W. Angus presents a romanticised view of the parkland with deer, peasants and an invented rolling topography.

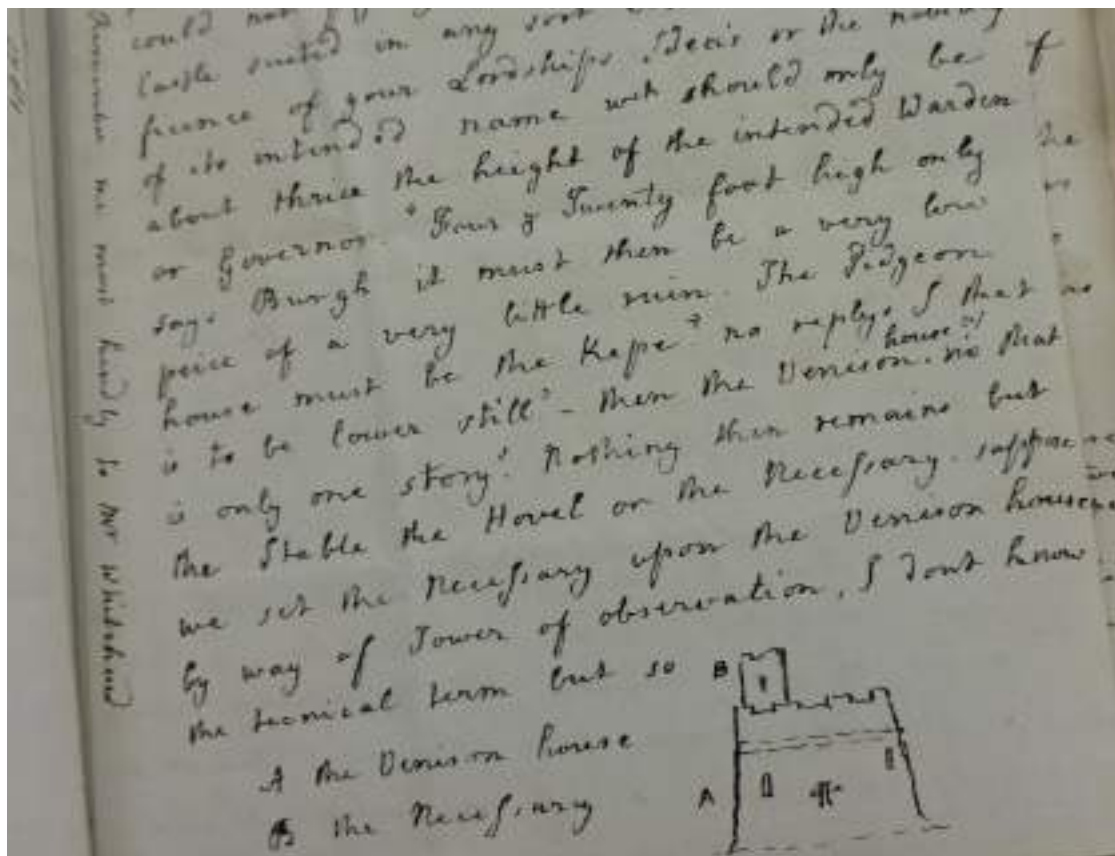


Fig. 13 William Mason's drawing for the ruined castle proposed by Lancelot Brown. The castle was to have 4 towers, 3 occupied by the Warden and the 4th for Earl Harcourt. The design included windows on the top floor to view the prospect and to have a Venison House built into the walls.

1797 *A Description of Nuneham* (attributed to the 2nd Earl Harcourt) provides a detailed account of the park and gardens. Comments of note include:

The park contains twelve hundred acres

The home part of the park consisting of lawn with more wild and forest-like landscape beyond

The eastern prospect from the park was broken into two distinct views by the Wittenham hills

From the house, views of the river, Oxford and the higher ground of Blenheim Park

The Carfax Conduit was amidst a grove of oaks

View of Radley, the seat of Sir George Bowyer

Lady Harcourt's oak – a noble tree, which is peculiarly striking

A highly ornamented seat of the Corinthian order, designed by Saunders

The general character of Nuneham is cheerfulness and amenity; its distinguishing feature, variety of surface

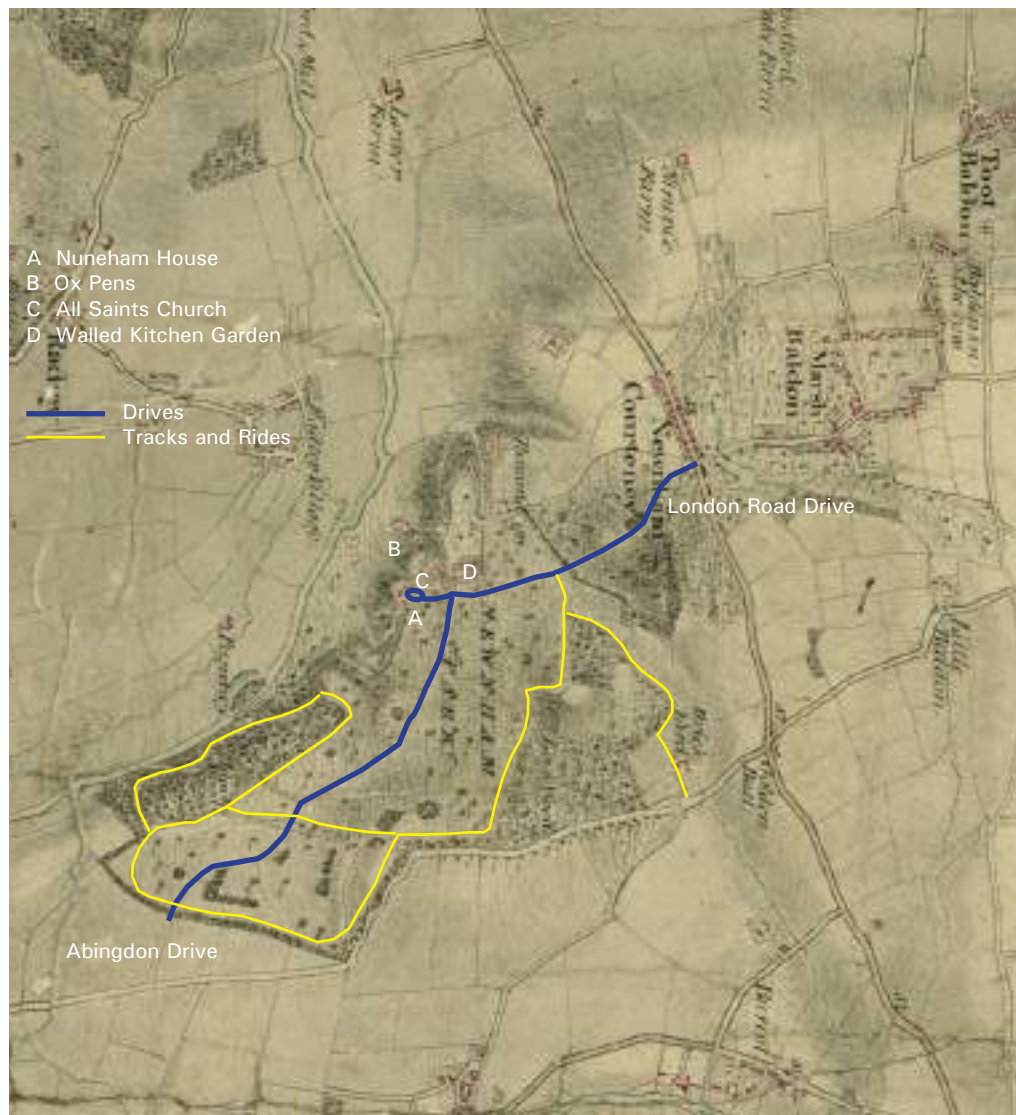


Fig. 14 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1811. Additional tracks and rides are shown, including a track along the edge of Lock Wood (incorrectly labelled Black Wood), which also appeared on the R Smith plan of 1707 (Fig. 7). The main drives remain in the same location. (BL Maps Sheet 157 - William Stanley)

The flower garden has no visible connection with the pleasure ground. The entrance is from the path which ascends towards the Church, beneath the pediment of a Doric gate, on which the following sentence, from J. J. Rousseau, is inscribed, so beautifully allusive to the world of flowers: *Si Auteur de la nature est grand dans le grandes choses, il est tres-grand dans les petites.*

A picturesque elm, large spruce-fir and cypresses in the flower garden

The temple of Flora was based on a design of a Doric portico at Athens

After the temple, the path led to the bower, which is a square building with a coved ceiling, and painted green. The front is a treillage of the same colour, interwoven with jessamine, woodbine, and other creeping plants. On either side are busts of Venus and Apollo...the view through the arches across the centre of the garden is gay with 'shrubs

and flow'rets of a thousand dies', backed by a plantation of very high elms beyond its boundary

The back wall of the Conservatory is covered with treillage.

Davis's county map (Fig. 12) shows little more than Jeffery's and may be mainly a copy of the earlier map.

- 1798 Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and his son stayed at Nuneham. Two views are said to derive from this visit, one published in *Peacock's Polite Repository* in 1800. Both illustrate a more mature, relaxed and picturesque Flower Garden than that painted by Sandby in the 1770s (Figs 28 & 29).
- 1799 A view of the north front published by S. Ireland records ornamental ironwork on the house, an unenclosed, simple gravel terrace around the foot of the building, and a gravel path running out of the view, presumably to the Flower Garden, on the left.
- 1800 Bishop Beilby Porteus (1731-1809) recorded a visit to Nuneham in his diary and, in reference to the old village, wrote ...*this was Goldsmith's Deserted Village – so Lord Harcourt told me.*
- 1803 Repton described Nuneham's flower garden in his *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*:

*The flower garden at Nuneham, without being formal is highly enriched, but not too much crowded, with seats, temples, statues, vases, or other ornaments, which being works of art, beautifully harmonise with that profusion of flowers and curious plants which distinguish the flower garden from natural landscape, although the walks are not in straight lines.*

In a footnote he adds:

*Earl Harcourt, although possessing great good taste, gives the whole merit of this garden to Mason the poet, as he does of his pleasure grounds to Brown. Thus superior to that narrow jealousy which would deny the just tribute of praise to the professor, his lordship is satisfied with having been the liberal friend and patron of merit.*

- 1804 The prolific garden designers and horticultural writers, John Loudon (1783-1843) and his wife, Jane Loudon (1807-1858) visited Nuneham for the first time.
- 1806 *A Description of Nuneham* by George Simon Harcourt provides a further detailed account of the park and gardens. Comments of note include:

A view to Shotover-hill

The gardens were laid out and planted by Brown, except for the flower garden and north terrace, which were designed and advised upon by Mason.

A seat placed with advice of Mr Repton who first discovered the picturesque view from that point.



The description ends with two poems, written at Nuneham, by Dr Bacon and Horace Walpole.

- 1809 Arthur Young's *Annals of Agriculture* was published and stated – Lord Harcourt has a mill and 2 horse power which cost £120 and threshes 5qts of wheat in a common day's work.

George, 2nd Earl died without issue and Nuneham was inherited by his brother, William (1743-1830). *The Times* described the 2nd Earl as the patron of struggling artists, a champion of human rights and a public benefactor. The 3rd Earl rarely visited Nuneham and had little interest in estate management.

- 1811 The Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing (OSD, Fig. 14) indicates that the landscape park retained traces of the 1707 field pattern such as the boundaries of Gadberry's Leyes, Palmers Leyes and Stuble Ground, Windmill Field, and the eastern road to old Nuneham village from the London Road. The Stuble Ground brick yard was also still in use, indicating that Brown's southern ride and south-east approach had not been adopted. Pleasure grounds, outbuildings and other enclosures are indicated to the north and south of the main house, and a cottage had been built alongside the river below Park Wood (named Black Wood in error). A track, later named the Green Drive, ran rather functionally around the perimeter of the parkland, without the sweeps and curves of Brown's proposal.
- 1815 A visitor's book for Nuneham Gardens was started, and lasted for the next ten years. It was very roughly filled in, with many illegible signatures. Closer analysis may prove informative; a rapid view suggests that many of the entries were by groups on boat trips from various Oxford colleges including Christ Church, St Johns, Trinity and Pembroke.
- 1824 The rectory was built to designs of the Oxford architect, Daniel Evans (1769-1846).
- 1827 Labour accounts for the garden list the individual gardeners at work on the kitchen garden and separately on the flower garden. In 1827 the kitchen gardening team included Powell, Mills, Cowdrey, Alliwel, Baker, Simon, Hiscock and Ann Devis. In the flower garden, the gardeners were Henwood, Bencham, Alliwel, Davis, Eliza Devis, Catherine West, Samuel Henwood, and Jennings, plus two unnamed gardeners' daughters. An average of six gardeners a month were working on the kitchen garden and flower garden, with the flower garden team rising to eleven individuals in December 1827. Flower garden Disbursements included Mills for 30 weeks mowing and Mr Tagg (the nurseryman) by bill.
- 1828 Kitchen garden disbursements included a payment for removing 92 wasp nests, and four hornet nests, and Flower Garden expenses included repairing locks, To Bates for 100 Spruce Firs, To \_ for 48 Spruce firs and 24 York Roses and To Hall by bill. Bates was an Oxford nurseryman, and Hall may have been J. Hall, London nurseryman.
- 1829 Kitchen garden expenses included the cost of removing 120 wasp nests and the list of gardeners working in the flower garden each month peaked at thirteen in August.

A note written in a different hand to the rest of the accounts, and possibly that of Harcourt, stated It having been observed that the expenses of the Garden have very considerably increased, they must in future be reduced to what they were in Stephenson's time.

- 1830 The 3rd Earl died without heir and Nuneham passed to the brother of the 2nd Earl's wife (Elizabeth Vernon), Edward Venables-Vernon, Archbishop of York (1757-1847).

Edward declined the title of 4th Earl Harcourt, and instead changed his name to Vernon-Harcourt. He was married to Anne Leveson-Gower, daughter of the Marquis of Stafford.

Seeds of Earliest frame Peas and best winter beans were purchased from Nathaniel Penson, seedsman, High Street, Oxford.

- 1830s Brown's Walk was cut to the ground and allowed to regrow, and new trees were planted. This work was undertaken by the gardener Bailey, probably with the involvement of William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843).

Building accounts for the 1830s record a large number of payments for general building activities such as slating, paving, bricklaying and glazing.

- 1832 Sir Robert Smirke (1780-1867) extended the house for Edward Vernon Harcourt. Works included the removal of the Brown's portico, court of offices and extension of the south wing.

W. S. Gilpin was employed to lay out a picturesque pinetum on newly acquired land by the Oxford road, and modify Mason's flower garden. The flower garden's busts and urns, together with the statue of Rousseau, were removed; flower beds were removed and changed in shape; and shrubs such as rhododendrons were planted. A rose garden was planted outside the flower garden, which was then considered to be too shaded by mature trees to grow flowers. Gilpin was probably also responsible for the rockwork extension beyond the grotto into the perimeter walk, reflecting the mineralogical and geological interests of his son, William.

In letters to Ralph Sneyd of Keele Hall and Sir Rowland Hill of Hawkstone, Gilpin refers to going to stay at Nuneham. A note in the Harcourt Papers (Bodleian Library, MS. D.D. Harcourt) states that he was employed by the Archbishop to advise on improvements to the garden and park. Lord Vernon, Edward's cousin, had also employed William Sawrey Gilpin on his estate of Sudbury Hall.

William Smith was paid £7 for Thatching Ice House and coals were purchased for the brick kiln.

Henry le Keux's view of Brown's Hill records the parkland well-stocked with deer, views of the house and a surfaced path around the Carfax Conduit.

- 1833 John and Jane Loudon revisited Nuneham and describe how the flower garden trees, once covered with flowers and fruit, no longer existed, principally due to the carelessness



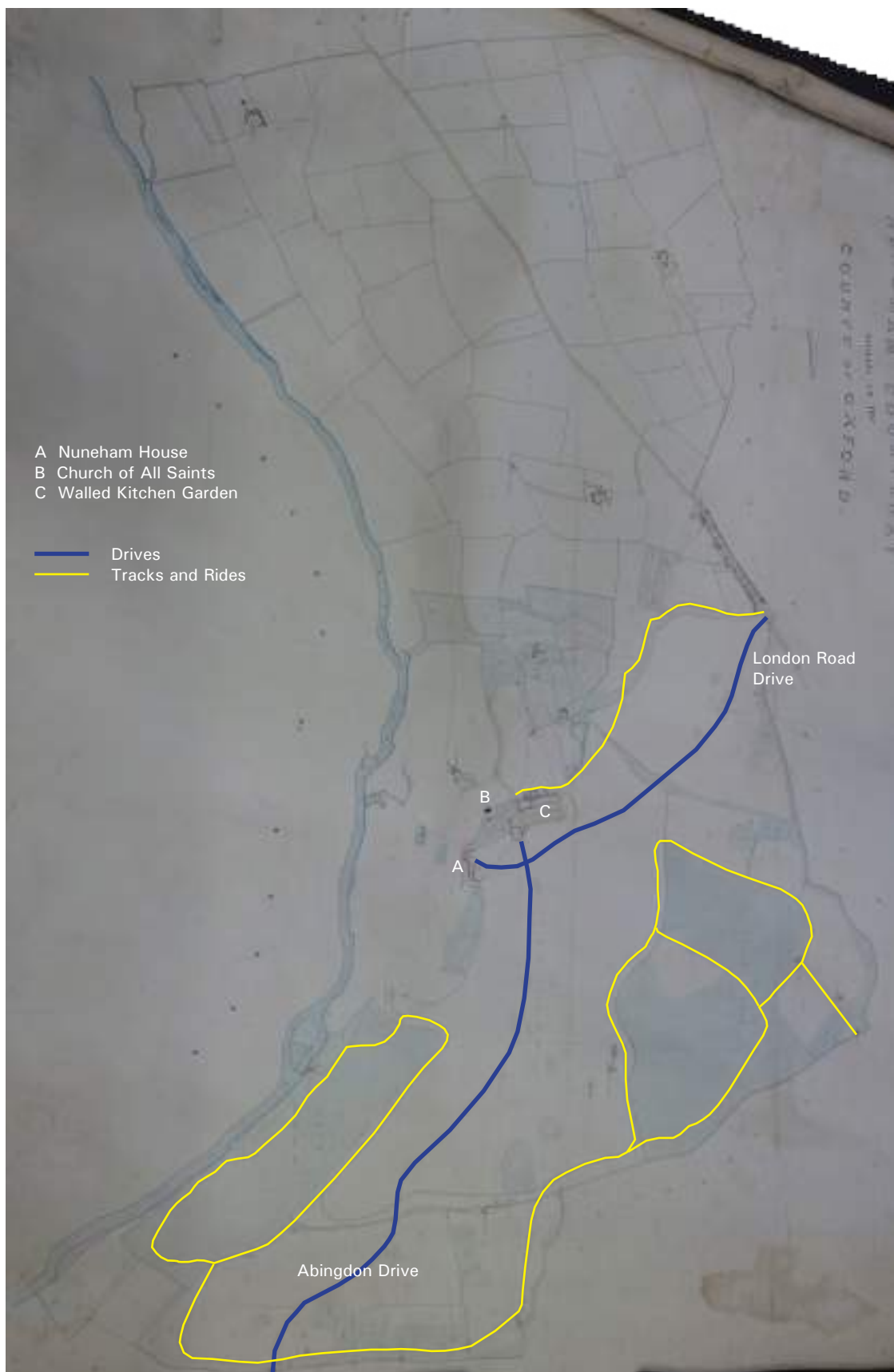


Fig. 15 Tithe Map, 1838 (TNA IR 30/27/100)

of the gardener, who succeeded the worthy old man who had charge of them in 1804. The gardener at the time was named as Mr Brodie. Loudon described how the flower garden was overgrown with elms and other common trees. Covered seats, statues, busts and therms had been removed or were in a dilapidated state. However, the Loudons recognised the scene at once by the three low arched entrances of a small summerhouse. John Loudon also commented on the commencement of improvements to the kitchen garden and that the new terrace added in front of the house was badly contrived.

- 1834 Loudon described the orangery as it was in 1804, *stating that the roof, front, and two ends of the orangery were movable; and the orange trees, being planted in the soil, when the framed was removed, and the ground turfed over, appeared as if growing in the open lawn. The carelessness of a recent gardener was said to be the cause of the orange trees' subsequent failure.* The improvement works in the kitchen garden commenced in 1833 had started with a good gardener's house.

*The new terrace was badly contrived due to its relation to the pleasure ground - the outlet from it to the grounds is badly placed...the walk takes a sudden turn, and ascends; two of the most undignified and unartistlike circumstances that can be imagined in such a situation. The arrangement of going and returning walks in the pleasure-ground at Nuneham has always been unsatisfactory, and we recollect the old gardener, Stephenson, who showed us the original plan for laying out the grounds by Brown, acknowledging that this was allowed to be the case.*

Loudon went on to criticise the park – *One of the worst features about the park is the approach road; which, from the lodges, first ascends a hill by a direct line, and then descends to the house, having it full in view...the evil can only be avoided by circuitous sweeps, disguised by scattered trees, so that the house shall not be seen at all, till the stranger arrives within a few yards of it....the steepness of the road should in no part exceed one in forty. There are some formal unconnected clumps and belts, bounded by straight undisguised clipped hedges in the outer part of the park, and various other deformities there, which, of course, will be done away with as the improvement of the place proceeds.*

- 1834 Detailed records of plant purchases from leading local and national nurseries from 1834-1861 document the development of the gardens, grounds, and pinetum at a very active period, through the garden accounts.

The Scots pine at the entrance to Mason's flower garden was planted (ring dated after it blew down in the 1980s). William Clarke was paid for making drain from the Ice House.

- 1836 Carriage bills from the ports for the pine trees start to appear. J. Clarke was paid for fitting up the pipes in the Greenhouses. Thomas Fairburn was paid £18 for Magnolia grandiflora trees and sweet briars, and Tagg nurseries supplied azaleas, lilacs, dwarf almonds and brooms.

- 1837 Fossils were delivered to Nuneham from Headington quarry.

The pinetum was laid out on eight acres of land next to the turnpike. The area was formerly part of the unenclosed waste of Marsh Baldon, and owned by Queen's College.

The Nuneham Courtenay Tithe Map (Fig. 15) records the modest impact of these changes on the overall layout of the park, but does plot the house and park in more detail. The following features are of note:

- Pinetum area is still shown as unenclosed and unplanted waste, part of Marsh Baldon.
- A substantial extension had been built on the south wing of the mansion.
- Pleasure Grounds and Flower Beds formed the north-east wing of planting around the house, with Lawn, Plantation and Groves forming the southern wing.
- Buildings and yards ran along the northern boundary of the kitchen garden which included a timber yard, farm buildings and house and yard; an orchard and yard filled the plot of land to the north of the kitchen garden, and the coach house was located to the south-west.
- The Terrace and Pleasure Grounds formed a ribbon of planting running from the flower garden to Alder Hill Plantation, between Side Land to the south and Old Town Close to the north.
- To the south of Side Land were ox pens and a further plantation and pond.
- Alder Hill Plantation consisted of walks and an ice house.
- On the east side of Old Town Close was a house and garden, and beyond this, the Rectory, its pleasure grounds, kitchen garden, orchard, farm buildings and fields called the Paddock and The Croft.
- The London Road drive ran across Windmill Hill (described as grass) and past Kidney Plantation; perimeter belt plantations known as Long Plantation and Knowle Plantation enclosed Windmill Hill; a small lodge was located on the south side of the drive entrance.
- The Park ran from the Rectory paddock, where it included a lake and cattle pens, across to the southernmost corner by Lock Wood; land west of the house was known as Park Meadow; in the south-east corner of the park was the Keeper's Lodge, Dog Kennel and Venison House, located on an island in a pond; on the southern boundary was a Deer Shed and the Lower Barn; the Abingdon drive ran up the middle of the park, leading directly to the coachhouse yard.
- To the south of the park, as far as the Abingdon lodges, were a number of plots, a mixture of grass, wood, furze and arable; the Green Drive ran around the perimeter, following the line of a belt plantation and the boundary of the estate.

- To the east of Black Wood was the Sheep House Barn and Rough Lodge incorporating two cottages; and the old areas including the brick kiln and clay pit field, a long narrow plot of the estate boundary.
- The cottage on the river is labelled Newnham Cottage on the map, but referred to as Lock Cottages and gardens in the Tithe Apportionment (TNA IR 29/27/100).

- 1838 The entrance gates and lodge designed by Smirke were built as the new approach from the Oxford road. The Marsh Baldon Tithe map showed the area of the new pinetum enclosed for the first time.
- 1841 Queen Victoria stayed at Nuneham when Prince Albert received an honorary degree from Oxford University. Archbishop Harcourt had assisted at their wedding.
- 1843 In the garden account summary, £31 was also paid for carting peat, alterations and planting in the Park.
- 1847 Edward Venables-Vernon, Archbishop of York, died. His eldest son, George Granville Harcourt (1785-1861), inherited Nuneham. George was married to Lady Waldegrave of Strawberry Hill. It has been conjectured that she may have tried to restore the eighteenth century flower garden so admired by Walpole.
- 1850 A view of the Carfax Conduit by Percy Roberts records the existence of metal spikes on the four corners of the conduit.
- 1854 R. Fish wrote about his visit to Nuneham in the Cottage Gardener:

*...On entering the gates the signs of good keeping were at once apparent; at first sight, it looked as if haymaking had commenced. A number of men and women were collecting the dry tufts of grass that had previously been cut, so that the park had all the greenness of a lawn...Though possessing abundance of fine timber, the park is not so much distinguished for that as for the excellent manner in which the trees are grouped... The pleasure grounds, stocked well with the finer kinds of timber and evergreens, are, therefore, exceedingly varied, and the walks that traverse them are beautifully undulated...The difficulty of managing such walks during torrents of rain has been obviated by a thorough and complete system of drainage...*

Following discussion of the peeps of scenery observed from particular points on the walks, Fish then stated that he found the terraces and flower gardens disappointing, although he admired an ivy-treed arbour. The terrace garden was laid out in beds with box and gravel and he described an oval bed surrounded by four circles, decorated with vases. The rosary was laid out with the tallest roses at the centre and fastened to poles, and roses were combined with bedding plants successfully. The main range of glass extended for some 350 feet in length and Fish noted the peculiar method of training geraniums, the abundance of fruit, particularly vines, and a magnificent fig-tree of the brown Ischia kind, occupying the whole of the back-wall of a house. Fish also reported on a range of pits and frames, cool glasshouses and lean-to houses.

- 1855 Nuneham is described in *The Florist* as one of the very best kept gardens in the kingdom, superintended by Mr Bailey. *The English and Wych elms in the deer park are praised – of the English Elms, every tree would form a study for a painter. Throughout the grounds, specimens of new kinds of ornamental trees have been introduced, including some fine Conifers. The article concludes with the Pinetum, made a few years back in a piece of rough ground...In planting them, Mr Bailey followed the divisions into which Conifers are usually divided; that is to say, the two, three, and five-leaved sections of Pinus are planted together; and again the varieties of any one species form subordinate groups. Abies and Picea have likewise there apportioned allotments. This mode of grouping is very interesting as it enables a close examination of the varieties without much travelling about; and moreover, shows the different affinities of each at a glance. Noted species included: Abies Menziesi, A. amabilis, A. nobilis, Pinus Fischeri, P. Pyrenaica, P. Lambertianan, Monticola, and Hartwegi, P. Cembra, Brutia, insignis, Taurica, Banksi, Inops, and Mughi, plus fine Deodars – Altogether this is a choice collection, and what is more satisfactory, in the best of health, and reflects the great credit of Mr Bailey's management.*
- 1857 A view of the rose garden by Brooke depicts an ornate formal garden with bedding plants, dwarf and standard rose plants, statues, a perimeter gravel path and a distant view through to two urns in the flower garden.
- 1861 Nuneham passed to George Granville Harcourt's brother, the Reverend William Vernon Harcourt (1789-1871). William Harcourt had founded the British Association for the Advancement of Science, was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a close associate of Davy and Wollaston. He was also a close friend of Professor Charles Daubeney (1795-1867), who was in charge of the Oxford Physic Garden in 1834, working with his curator William Baxter (1787-1871). Baxter specialised in willows and American conifers. Daubeney and Baxter probably influenced Harcourt's arboretum development.
- 1863 The Reverend Charles Dodgson (1832-1898) went on an expedition to Nuneham with Alice Liddell and her family. This was one of a number of trips often including Charles's close friend, Augustus William Vernon Harcourt (1834-1919) of Christ Church, nephew of William Harcourt. Nuneham was to inspire scenes in Lewis Carroll's books, in particular, *Through the Looking Glass*.
- 1867 An article in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* reported on a visit to Nuneham:
- The gardener was Mr Stewart. Near his cottage a Pelargonium-house, Orangehouse, stove, and Heath-house were described. Four houses and four vineries were just about to be fitted with pipes and two of Marriot's tubular boilers. Other features included a Fern-house, the start of an orchid collection, Camellia and Azalea houses, pits and frames, fruit rooms, mushroom house, potato stores, stokehole heating the peach houses, winter Cucumber-house, pineapple and melon pits, the Nuneham Park Onion, pots of Strawberries; a large tank with an underground pipe conveys to it the water, forced thither by horse-power machinery, which is fixed in the orchard or eastern slip,*

*and through other stopcock pipes to the mansion and all parts of the grounds. The supply is derived from a pool in the park, but there is also adjacent to the machinery a deep well, from which spring water is pumped up to the house; vegetables growing in the south slip, including the Nuneham Brown Cos Lettuce; eight acres of kitchen garden and 33 acres of pleasure grounds.*

*The rosary was in the form of a large circle, having for its centre a triangular trellised seat or bower, with iron uprights supporting chains covered with climbing roses...stone statuettes, other formal beds and a circular gravel walk are also mentioned. A delightful part of the pleasure grounds contained specimen trees with beds and statues.*

*The back wall of the former orangery supported arbour seats, ornamented with trelliswork, covered with...Clematis. The walk in front was surfaced with stone slabs, and flanked with carved stone balustrades. Fish also describes the north-terrace geometrical flower garden, the view of a large oval croquet ground looking over the balustrade, further symmetrical bedding patterns on the south terrace centred on two vases, and 26 fine stone vases planted with Scarlet Pelargoniums along the length of the mansion.*

1871 Reverend William Vernon Harcourt died. His son, Colonel Edward Harcourt (1825-1891) inherited Nuneham.

1872-80 Notes of Supplies to Nuneham Garden listed the standard requirements of a working garden including, hay, dung, straw, oats, keep of a horse and keep of a donkey.

1875 The 1st edition 25" to the mile Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 16) recorded the most significant changes in the landscape since the last 1830s: the planting of the Pinetum as Knowle Plantation, and the realignment of the London Road drive; demolition of the old lodge; and erection of a new lodge house, garden and gates. Other developments and features of note included:

The replacement of the belt plantation along the south-west boundary of Windmill Hill by a sunk fence, bringing Palmers Ley into the visible house park.

The development of a plantation, consisting mainly of conifers, screening the kitchen garden, which now contained a Gas House.

The labelling of Whitehead's Oak and the Cenotaph in the southern pleasure grounds.

Lower Barn renamed Old Barn and much of the adjacent land amalgamated to form a large plantation known as The Gorse.

A building had been erected in the south-west corner of the park, alongside Lock Wood.

Sheep House barn renamed New Barn, and the small complex of farm buildings enlarged.

Further tracks shown running through Black Wood, and a building erected in the wood near keeper's lodge.



Greater detail around the house identifies the Grotto and the cattle tunnel under the North Terrace walk.

A boat house had been erected on the bank of the river west of the house.

The first two of these are regarded as the probable result of work advised by W. S. Gilpin in the 1830s.

- 1880 All Saints' Church was rebuilt for a third time. This was in a neo-gothic style and was built near the village by Edward Harcourt.

At about this time, the classical church was converted into a Harcourt memorial chapel, starting as a specific memorial to Sir William Harcourt. The chapel also included an altarpiece depicting The Good Samaritan, painted by William Mason, together with a barrel organ set with his hymns and responses.

- 1882 A contributor (H.E.), described a visit to Nuneham in the Gardeners' Chronicle: *The head gardener was Mr Watson. The Brown Ischia fig tree was once again praised and other noted features included five vineries; 40 acres of pleasure ground and 1200 acres of park; a delightful lawn on one-side of the house, and extensive walks, shrubberies and pleasant walks on the other; clumps of rhododendrons; a grotto and rockwork and an artificial stalactite cave; very large stone pines in the shrubberies; the elm being the characteristic tree of the park, some with girths of 17 feet; and a grove, fenced and well-sheltered, where conifers of large size flourish, as at Dropmore.*
- 1882 Photographs taken by Henry Taunt provide a high quality record of the gardens and park at the end of the nineteenth century. A photograph of the west front records the immediate parkland before levelling for terraces, a number of mature parkland trees blocking the axial view of the house from the west, and a bridge across the ha-ha.
- 1883 Edward Harcourt published a catalogue of books in the library at Nuneham. The various horticultural books dating from 1654 to 1870 included W.S. Gilpin, *Practical Hints on Landscape Gardening (1832)*, as well as works by William Gilpin, Humphry Repton, John Evelyn, John Claudius Loudon, William Marshall and Jean-Baptiste de La Quintinie.
- 1884 When Edward William's Harcourt Papers were published, the 1806 description of the park and gardens had been updated. Mentioned were the addition of the Archbishop's formal terraces to afford dryer walks nearer home; the creation of a rosary and ornamental dairy; the removal of busts and verses; the building of ornamental houses for the agent, bailiff, masons, carpenters, gardeners etc.; and the addition of large quantities of glass to the kitchen garden.
- 1885 Photographs of the Flower Garden by Henry Taunt record the mature rose garden and rose arch, W.S. Gilpin's terrace to the orangery, together with view of the Carfax Conduit before railings were erected.

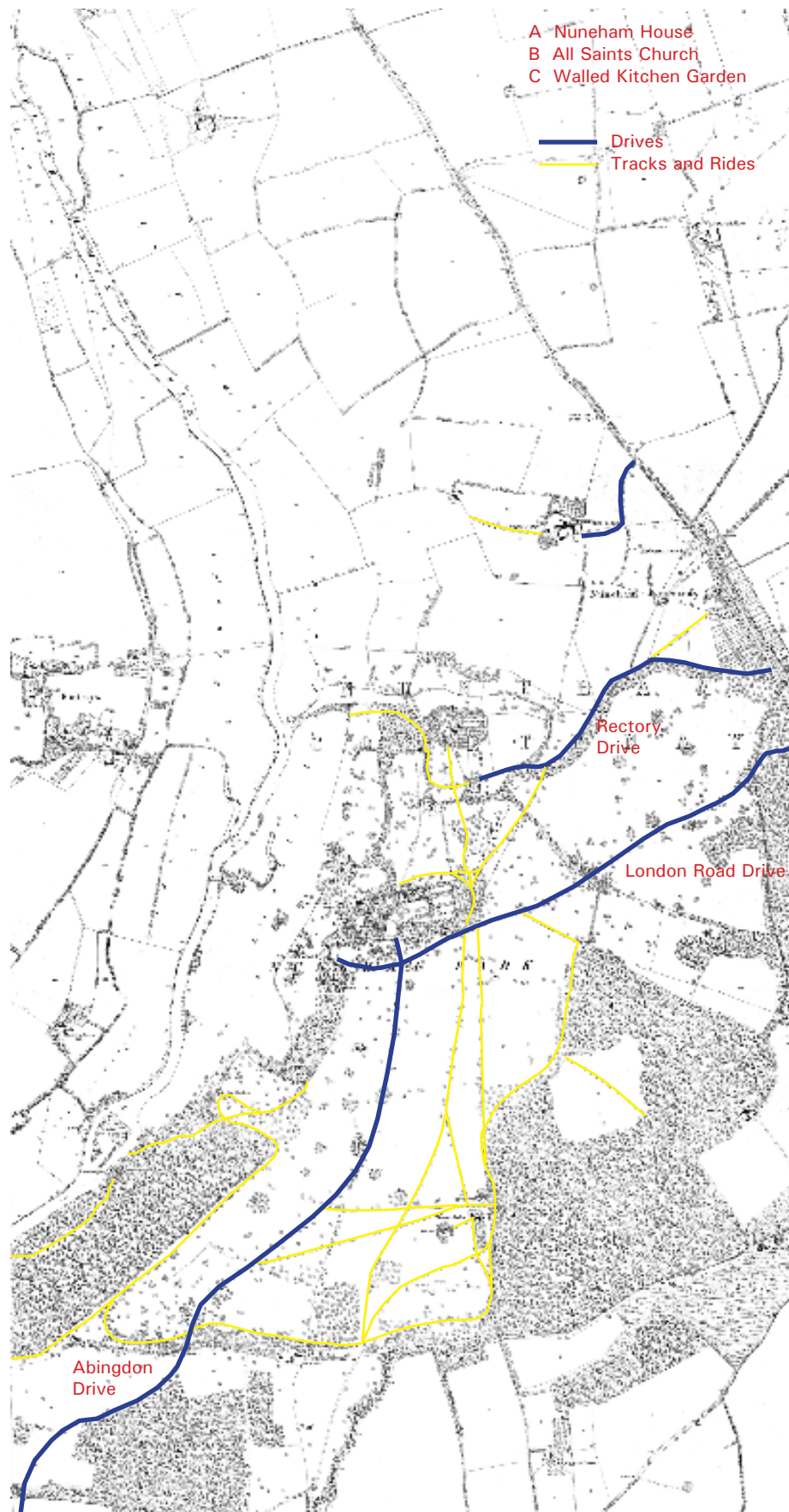


Fig. 16 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1875 (25" to the mile)

- 1889 Nuneham Park mentioned in Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat: Nuneham Park is well worth a visit. It can be viewed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The house contains a fine collection of pictures and curiosities, and the grounds are very beautiful.*
- 1890 An article in *The Gardening World* describes some of the parkland trees, including horse chestnuts, hawthorns, limes, elms, Scotch firs and choice conifers and magnolias in the vicinity of the house, together with two Judas trees. Most of the glasshouses were devoted to fruit culture. The gardener was Mr Nickols.
- 1891 Edward Harcourt died and his son, Aubrey Harcourt (1852-1904) inherited Nuneham.
- 1897 Mr C.E. Munday became head gardener.
- 1899 The 2nd edition of the Ordnance Survey 25" to the mile map (Fig. 17) records only minor changes to the landscape including:
- a cricket ground;
  - additional pheasantries around Keeper's Lodge;
  - a new track or drive from the kitchen garden to Alder Hill Copse and the new ferry over the Thames to Radley;
  - a new fence dividing Windmill Hill in two;
  - a new lodge guarding the approach from the new All Saints Church.

The parkland perimeter Green Drive linking Black Wood, Old Barn, Lock Wood and the Carfax Conduit appears to have been abandoned, and a new lodge had been built on the Abingdon Drive, implying the redrawing of the southern park boundary in the same way as recommended previously by Capability Brown. Together, these changes imply a more prosaic, functional approach to the landscape.

- 1900 The gardener and journalist, William Robinson (1838-1935) wrote to Mr Harcourt in 1900: *Your pretty viburnum is Sieboldi; the little bushy pyrus is whitifolia; I think it a loveable little bush and the flowers very pretty in the house.* He went on to praise the gardens at the Harcourt family's Hampshire home of Malwood.
- 1902 Two photographs by Henry Taunt record a Sunday School picnic by the Carfax Conduit and game of cricket with the parkland as background.
- 1904 Nuneham was inherited by Aubrey's uncle, Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer (1827-1904) and, following his death in the same year, passed to William's son, Lewis, 1st Viscount Harcourt (1863-1922). Lewis was married to the daughter of the late Mr Walter Burns of New York and North Mymms Park, Herts. Before Nuneham, his country seat was Malwood in the New Forest, Hampshire. The inheritance of Nuneham was unexpected for Sir William and his son Lewis, and they were dismayed when they discovered the extent of work needed to repair both Nuneham Courtenay and Stanton Harcourt. Roses were planted in the graveyard in memory of Sir William.

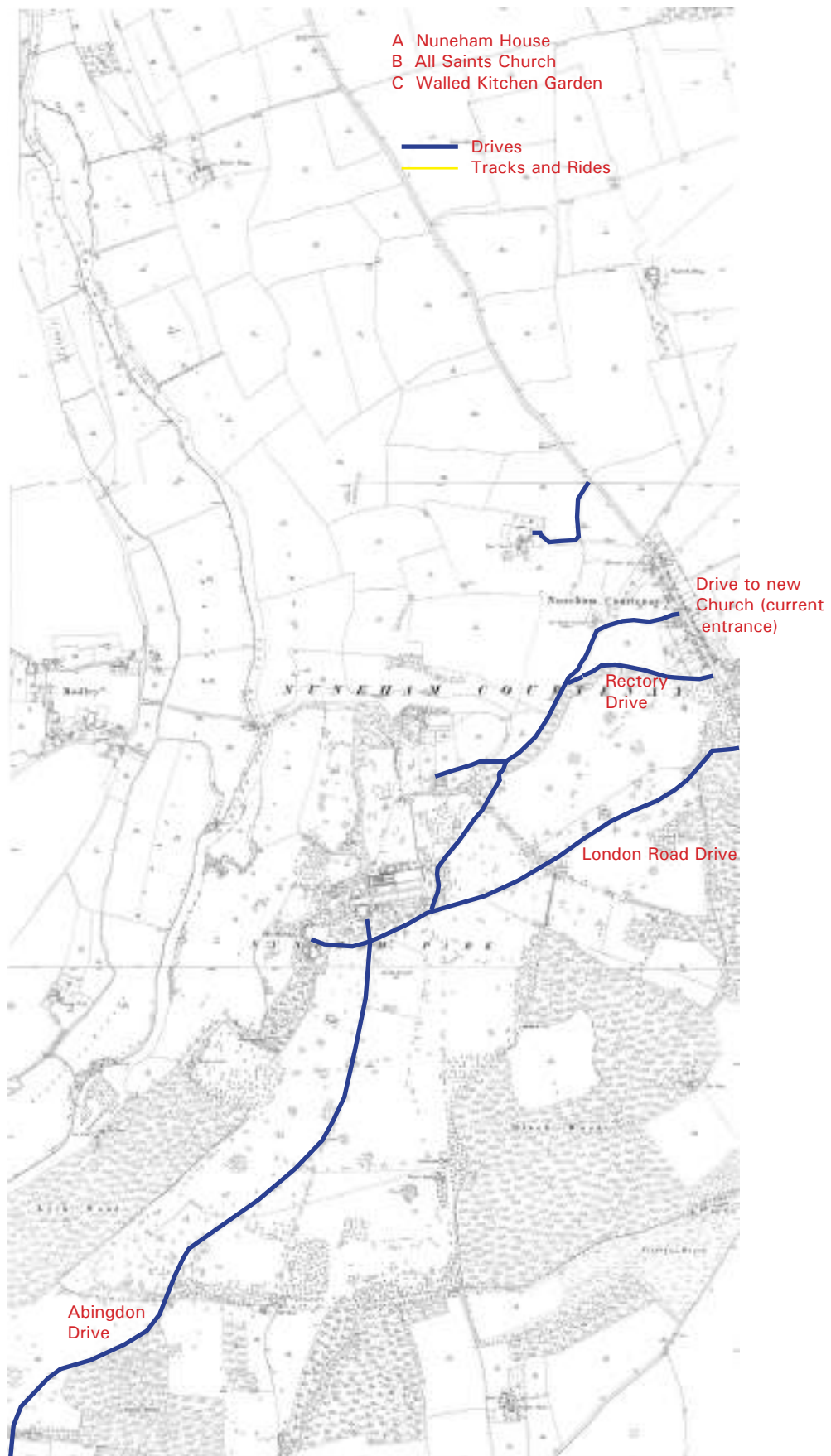


Fig. 17 2nd ed. OS map, 1899.

The entrance front was remodelled, dormer windows formed and a storey added to Smirke's extended entrance hall. Viscount Harcourt also laid out the Dell below the church, following the ideas of William Robinson, joined to the rest of the garden with a rock walk. He also restored Mason's flower garden. Manor Lodge was built.

King Edward VII was a frequent guest of Lewis Harcourt. The Liberal Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and his family also became regular visitors to Nuneham.

The Improvement and Building Accounts record a £16 payment to Rawlins and Co for cleaning out the pond in the dell and £83 to C. Bossom for building Bridge at Lock Cottages.

- 1905 Lewis Harcourt was made First Commissioner of Works, and was responsible for Royal parks and gardens. He created some children's sandpits in Kensington Gardens, which became known as 'Loulou's sand pits', after his nickname.
- 1906 A photograph by Henry Taunt recorded the classical Abingdon or Culham Lodge and gates.
- 1907 The rockery wall was built, using wedge shaped pieces of stone obtained from Abingdon, designed by the head gardener, Mr Munday.
- 1908 A contributor with the initials W.H.C., described a visit to Nuneham in the *Gardeners' Chronicle*: *The gardener was Mr Munday. Plants growing on the walls of the mansion are described in detail. Mosaic paving of handsome and irregular design surfaces the upper terrace and ten beds of roses were laid out in front of the mansion; the third terrace was known as The Nymphaea Garden with a central square pond, and in line with this was the croquet or tennis lawn; descending from the Nymphaea Garden arrived at walk bound with a herbaceous border and sloping parkland; the walk led to 'wall-walk', dell, water, pond, and swamp gardens, a novel grass and box sundial and, off another path, the bowling green. The choice shrubs of the Dell are described, as are a grass walk and avenue of almonds.*
- 1910 Lewis Harcourt was made Colonial Secretary. Over the next five years in this post he received exotic plants as gifts.

Two photographs from around this period record the newly planted carpet bedding coat of arms in the turning circle east of the house. The view of the crest from the house shows the extent of tree cover on the forecourt lawn.

- 1911 In Lewis Harcourt's role as Colonial Secretary, an Imperial Conference was held at Nuneham Courtenay from 23 May to 20 June. Exotic animals were presented by some of the colonial governors.

The lower pool of the water garden was designed and planted.

The Improvement and Building Accounts included payments to the Iron and Hardware



Company for Tubing for Garden arches, to Cobb for concreting water gardens in dell and for work on the old church as well as various improvements to the Cow Yard.

1912 An article in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* described a further visit to Nuneham:

*...the park proper is entered through an arched lodge. Here...the grass was just ripe for the scythe, and when we returned an hour or two later three mowing machines had done so much work that the landscape was altered...woods composed chiefly...of Beech...Larch...Elm... Amongst the more solitary park trees there are many old Thorns... Giant emus and rheas also find home...in this portion of the park, whilst in another place kangaroos may be seen carrying their progeny in their pouches. The mansion is reached through a pair of hammered gates...immediately in front of the mansion the family crest is displayed in dwarf shrubs...*

*Wall shrubs growing on the mansion were listed; a bronze statue on the terraces was noted; the Wall Walk was 700 feet long and contains a variety of alpine and other plants; the "Pools of Silence" are described as a series of small ponds culminating in a beautiful garden of Japanese Irises with recently planted Japanese shrubs on the left; a bog garden had been made in an open glade and the writer paused to watch the brilliant flamingoes stalk majestically around the plants; a heath garden was located beyond the church; and a brick pergola surrounding a small Lily pond was located in front of the gardener's house.*

1912 The third edition of the Ordnance Survey (25" to the mile, Fig. 18) plots the extensive new terraces, fountain and sundial; extensive new planting in the northern pleasure ground; demolition of the ox pens; sewage tanks in Side Land; a second boathouse at the ferry crossing; a new lodge on the front drive; and an island was plotted in the lake.

1913 A *Country Life* article described the grounds above the chapel as being full of rhododendrons, and the Water Garden as an ingenious artificial swamp with a bronze crane at its centre. The real focus of the grounds was identified as being the new terraced Italian garden in front of the house, recently completed by Mr Harcourt. *The main terrace is supported by a curved bastion of massive stone...From it stretch other terraces and enclosed plots.* Strawberry, tufts, wall-plants and creepers were planted in the masonry and vases and figures were erected for ornament. A view of Oxford from a terraced walk had been marked by a seat, at the suggestion of Edward VII.

Another article, by C.H. Curtis in *The Gardener's Magazine*, praised the estate's fine trees including noble specimens of oak, elm, Scots pine, Wellingtonia and *Abies Nordmanniana*. It also detailed the plants on and around the house, and terraces. The church yard contained a rose garden. The dell included examples of many of Mr E.H.Wilson's plants, collected in China and rough-flagged pathways led down to the lower water garden. A little tea-house is described in Mason's flower garden. The nearby formal rose garden was criticised for being too shut in by tall trees and evergreen shrubs.

1914-19 Nuneham was used as a convalescent home for officers during the first World War.



c1916 Reginald Farrer wrote to Lord Harcourt –

*Two years and more have not erased in mind the interest you took in my proposed Tibetan expedition. Now that it has succeeded in all ways, beyond my warmest hopes, it is with special joy that I have picked you out a thank offering of some comely small plant of Viburnum fragrans which I hope may duly reach you and long be a pride and pleasure to the walls and parterres of Nuneham. It is really a lovely thing.*

Farrer continued, requesting that Harcourt use his influence among the powers that be to prevent any ill-advised steps being taken against the RHS, which appears to have been receiving some criticism at this stage.

1917 A number of photographs dating from 1917 and around this period provide a detailed record of the appearance of the terraces and gardens around the house. Of particular note is the extensive planting to the north of the house around the rockery walk and the slightly dishevelled formal planting in the front turning circle.

1920s Further alterations were made to Brown's Walk, and bamboo was planted.

1922 William, 2nd Viscount Harcourt (b.1908) inherited Nuneham.

1940-45 Nuneham Courtenay was occupied by the Air Ministry and part of the park was sold to the Admiralty for its aircraft base at Culham. A photograph of a model of Nuneham Park (Fig. 20) during the war shows a large number of buildings, including accommodation, mess halls, offices, a cinema and guardroom, in the southern and eastern parkland, principally along the drive.

1941 A *Country Life* article provides detailed planting lists for the terrace and pleasure grounds, and includes pre war photographs of the terraces and two views of the Dell, with a Japanese lantern, crane, and a distinctive white-painted bench.

1944 Troops camped in the park before D-Day destroyed the seventeenth century Old Barn farmhouse.

1948 William, 2nd Viscount Harcourt sold Nuneham Courtenay to the University of Oxford.

1950 The farm tenant, Mr Benson, kept dairy cattle until the 1980s.

1950s An aerial photograph of the walled garden records the pergola, cultivation of the southern and northern division, and half of the central area. The eastern section of the central walled garden and the eastern slip garden appear to be unused.

1951 A photograph of the Temple of Flora shows the temple in a poor state of repair, with loss of interior plaster.

1953 A photograph of the Carfax Conduit shows it in a poor state of repair, with considerable damage to the balustrade, and a line of barbed wire around the top of the railings, presumably dating from the Second World War.

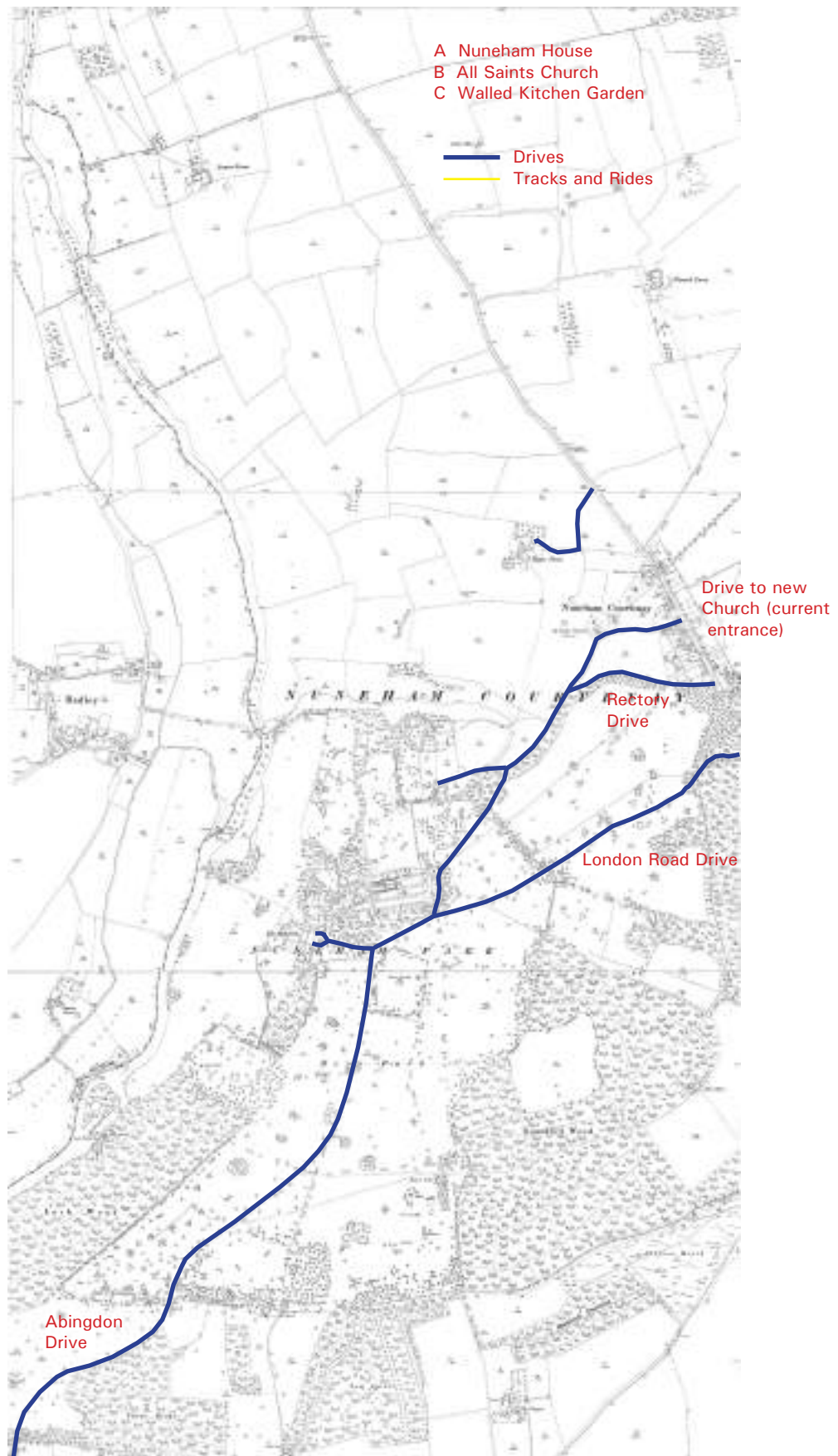


Fig. 18 3rd ed. OS Map, 1912. The only change to this landscape since the publication of the 2nd ed. OS map is the extension of the terraces to the west of the house.

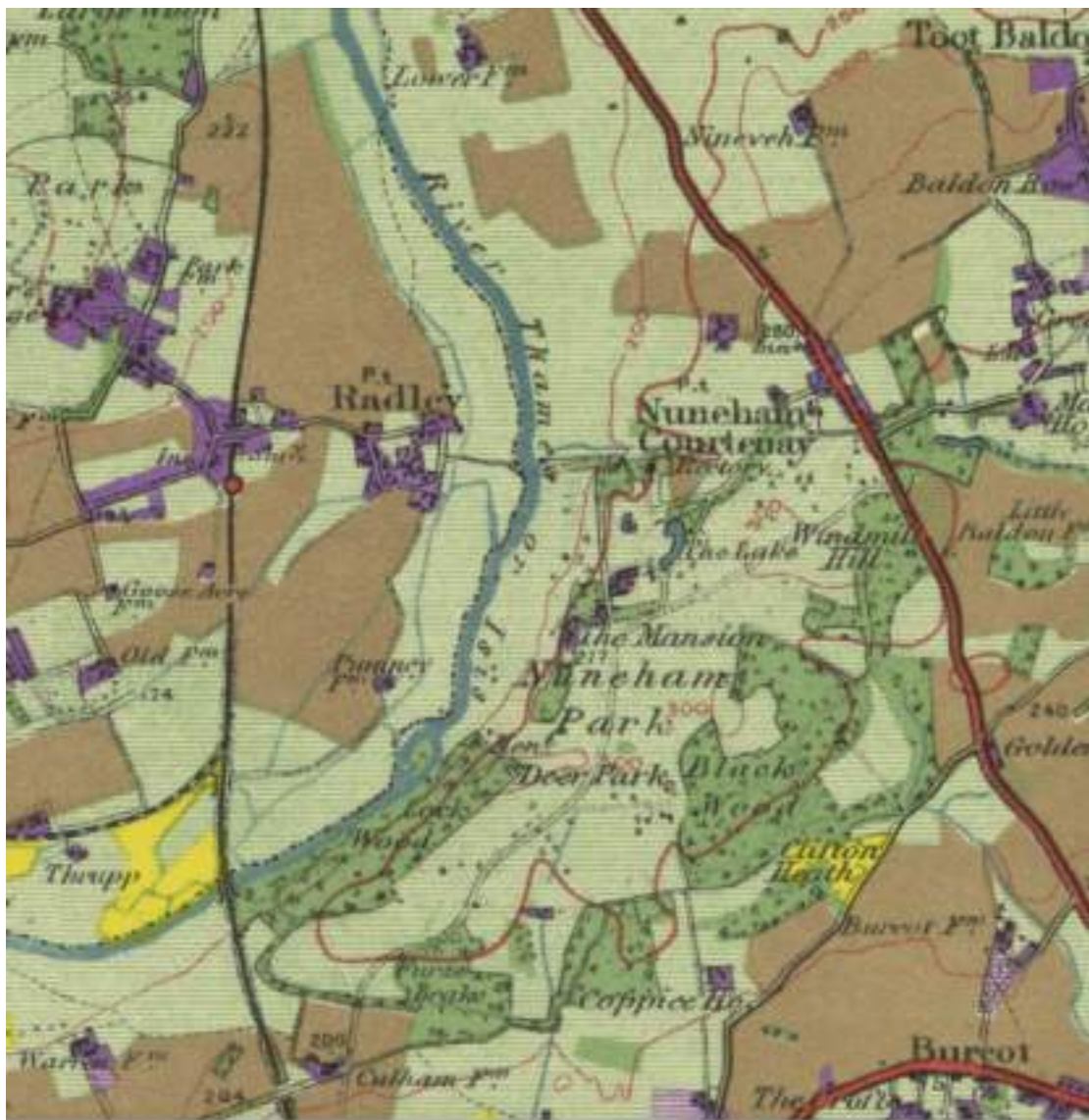


Fig. 19 Land Utilisation Survey of Great Britain, 1940. The agricultural use of the Nuneham Estate is shown as largely pasture, with pockets of arable fields between Upper and Lower Farm. Sheet 105

1954 Lock Wood was replanted with hardwoods.

1960s The Acer Walk and Magnolia Glade were planted in the Arboretum. The Edwardian rose beds were replanted because they were rose-sick. Photographs provide an invaluable record of the central stable block before its demolition and show how rapidly the terraces and landscape surrounding the house had become run-down and overgrown.

At about this time, the ford across the Thames at Ferry Cottage was dredged out.

1963 The Harcourt Arboretum was incorporated into Oxford University's Botanic Garden. Alec Garford was the arboretum foreman, and cleared extensive sycamores and *Rhododendron ponticum*.

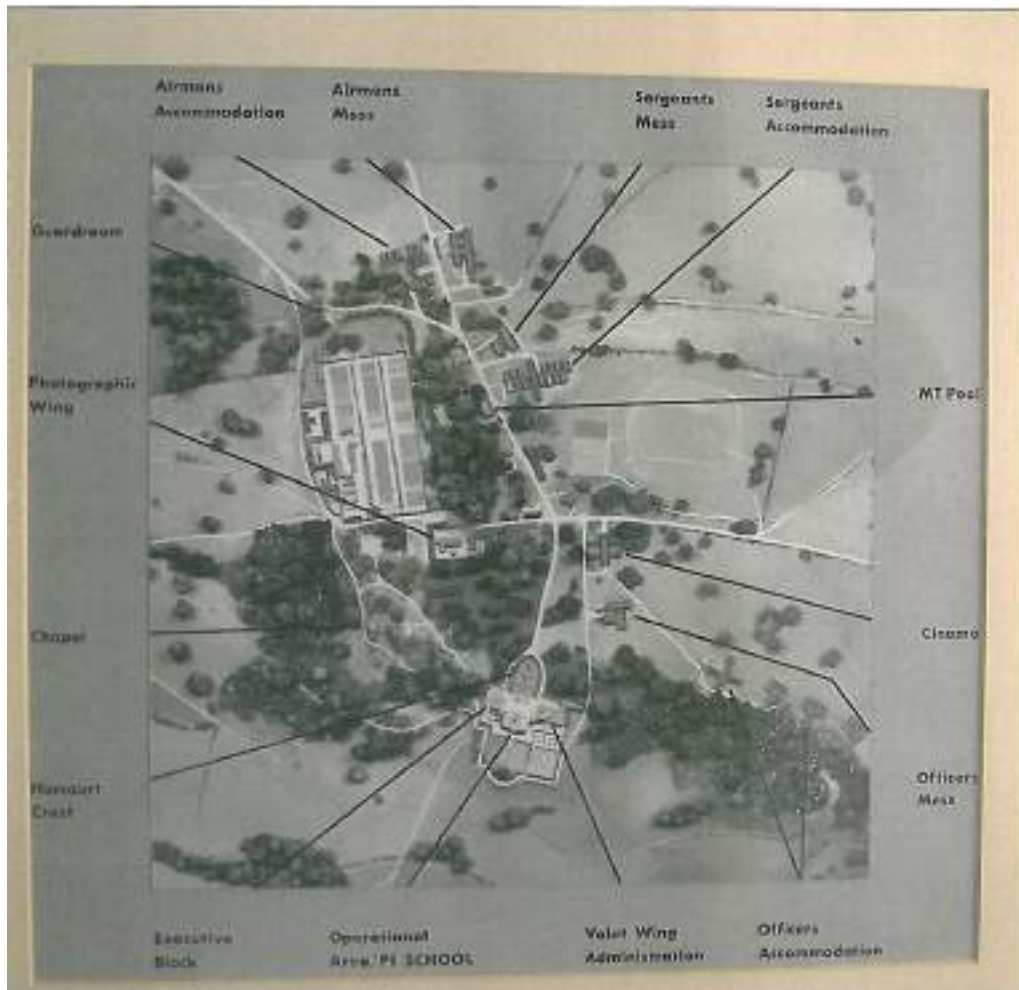


Fig. 20 Photograph of a model showing use of the park during WWII

1967 Howard Colvin's report on the garden ornaments at Nuneham listed 24 items, which included:

- *Female figure in Rose Garden...appears to be made of artificial stone and must be of modern date...crack across the legs...would not be worth while to spend any considerable sum on general restoration.*
- *Statue of John Fell...17th century sculpture removed from Christ Church...good specimen of provincial work in the baroque manner...*
- *Memorial to Whitehead. Removed by Lord Harcourt (now at Stanton Harcourt)*
- *Vases and other ornaments...modern, like the terraces which they decorate...It would hardly be a justifiable use of money to repair*
- *Column...now preserved in mansion...Coade stone...probably relic of 18th century garden*
- *The Dell...two 'Japanese' ornaments...modern...no importance*



- *Vase...19th century...interesting as a specimen of Grimsley's Oxford terracotta*
- *Iron tripod...early neo-classical ornament...almost certainly designed by James Stuart...likely to have been cast at the Soho Manufactory of James Boulton...should be removed forthwith to a place of safety...preserved from further corrosion by rust...original situation is not known*
- *Marble Vases...removed to mansion*
- *Two figures...inferior modern...should both be removed*
- *Temple of Flora...one of the earliest buildings of the Greek Revival in England (or indeed in Europe)...restoration may be regarded as more important than that of any other garden ornament at Nuneham. The fluted columns have been stolen, but as they were of wood they should not be difficult to replace.*
- *The Grotto...to be tidied and preserved from further collapse, together with preservation of the Clarke memorial.*

The Memorial Urn to Viscountess Palmerston and the Whitehead Urn were also removed to Stanton Harcourt.

- 1968 The University of Oxford undertook an extensive restoration programme and the hall was converted into a hall of residence for Culham College of Education.

Mavis Batey recalled that the gardens had been allowed to decay during a period after 1957, when the mansion was let. Alterations were made to the old orangery and the grotto was boarded up.

Only part of the pinetum had been acquired in 1948, but it was now enlarged to the full 50 acres.

- 1971 The gardens opened to the public through the National Gardens Scheme.

- 1973 A photograph of the Carfax Conduit shows the ornamental conduit removed, leaving only the plinth. It is understood that, immediately following restoration works, the conduit was struck by lightning, requiring a further round of repairs. An undated photograph, probably of similar date, records the rustic seat with classical elements including a pediment.

- 1974 A *Country Life* article was accompanied by pre-war photographs of the terraces in their heyday, and of the restored terrace planting in photographs of the early 1970s. The article described the house standing in a sea of weeds and brambles following its lease to Culham College of Education in 1968; only the lawns were regularly maintained. Restoration of the terraces was considered a priority and it was decided in consultation with the University that the rotten balustrading of the lowest two levels should be removed and these areas graded and grassed to link in with the surrounding park land. Other changes included the replacement of crazy paving with pea gravel. The article goes on to describe the informal planting by the College.

- 1976 A photograph of the Carfax Conduit records the newly restored conduit stonework.
- 1979 Rothmans International leased Nuneham Courtenay as a conference centre. Lime trees were planted near the Robinsonian wild garden.
- The Garden History Society obtained a grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust for renewal of Mason's flower garden based on Sandby's 1777 view, with Richard Bisgrove acting as supervisor.
- 1980s The bamboo glade was added to the arboretum. The W. S. Gilpin terrace was replanted to a design by John Brookes. The parkland, which had supported sheep and a dairy herd, was largely converted to arable use. Dead parkland elms were cleared and the land drained. At about this time, the lake was last dredged and the sunk fence or ditch was piped.
- 1981 After 1981, the southern lodge and arch, also known as the Culham and Abingdon Lodge, was demolished.
- 1982 Clearance and general planting had taken place with the Stanley Smith grant, however, the island bed scheme had not been restored.
- 1984 Nuneham was registered grade I on the Parks and Gardens Register.
- 1985 Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area was established with support from the Garden History Society.
- 1988 Planning permission was sought by Ashfords to convert the mansion into a hotel. A Garden Committee was established including representatives of the Oxford University Chest and tenants, and Richard Bisgrove. The University Estates Committee commissioned a park and gardens survey and management plan.
- 1989 The Debois Landscape Survey Group were commissioned to produce a Survey of the Gardens, which included an index of trees and shrubs. Plans accompanying the report illustrate surviving and lost historic features and planting within the gardens.
- Ashfords withdrew their planning application and the Brahma Kumaris Global Retreat Centre took on a long lease. Richard Bisgrove continued to advise on the gardens.
- 1990s An area of plants from high places was added to the arboretum, and the Acer Walk was extended. Book repositories were built in the southernmost section of the walled garden, and involved the demolition and rebuilding of the garden walls at the east and west ends.
- 1995 Proposals for a hall were discussed with South Oxford District Council, and the possibility of building on the tennis courts was raised with English Heritage. Both proposals were discouraged.
- 1999 The arboretum ownership was expanded to manage adjacent areas of previously cultivated parkland, on the retirement of a previous farm tenant. The fern glade was laid out.



2003 A planning application was made for the extension of the book repository. The plans were subsequently dropped.

The Global Retreat Centre sought funding for the conservation of Mason's flower garden, and the Garden History Society provided some supporting statements for the application. The Society also recommended the production of a conservation plan for the whole park.

2005/6 Palmer's Leys were purchased by the Oxford Botanic Garden with grant aid from The Friends of Oxford Botanic Garden and charitable trusts, and part of the area was planted with trees.

2017 The University of Oxford sold the Nuneham Estate to Nuneham Estate Ltd.

## 4.0 ANALYSIS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

### 4.1 Early history

Traces of early activity within and in close proximity to Nuneham Park suggest that the area has been occupied since at least the middle Iron Age. Settlers were presumably attracted by the river and the quality of the land. Roman industrial activity in the area seems to be particularly prevalent, with extensive finds at Lower Farm to the north of Nuneham Park.

Nuneham Courtenay's Anglo Saxon origins are evident through pottery finds and, it is thought, through the place name of 'ham', dating it after Romano-British occupation. The medieval and Tudor periods appear to have left a limited imprint on the present-day character of the landscape, with the major exceptions of the two medieval woodlands, Lock Wood and Black Wood.

### 4.2 The Harcourts

Sir Simon Harcourt continued Nuneham's long tradition of ownership by eminent political and religious figures of high social standing. This implies that the manor of Newnham was an attractive investment property, presumably valued primarily for the estate income, supported by its location between London and Oxford and good accessibility via the Thames. Despite these assets, it would seem that none of the Tudor or Stuart landowners invested greatly in the estate as a home. Smith's map of 1707 (Fig. 7) records the village and a manor house (Fig. 21) with only a small private estate including the Lord's meadow and Park Wood. Sandby's view of the manor house prior to its demolition suggests a rambling structure, a product of a number of building phases over the centuries.



Fig. 21 View of the old Manor House, Paul Sandby 1750

It is not until the mid 18th century that the Harcourt family started to develop the property into Nuneham Park, one of the most influential landscapes in the country.

Simon Harcourt, 1st Viscount Harcourt, was a close personal friend of the renowned poet, writer and garden designer, Alexander Pope. The 1st Viscount's son, the Hon. Simon Harcourt went on a Grand Tour to Italy, attending Padua University in 1706. His son, Simon Harcourt (created Earl Harcourt in 1749) was brought up in a cultured household but was only six when his father died. Pope wrote the verses for his father's tomb in 1720. The 1st Viscount's grandson succeeded to the title and inherited Nuneham in 1727 when he was still a minor, aged thirteen. He went on an extended Grand Tour from 1730 to 1734 and was a founding member of the Society of Dilettanti. On coming of age in 1735 he became Lord of the Bedchamber to George II, holding positions at court and diplomatic roles for the rest of his career. In recognition, he was created Earl Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt in 1749.

Lord Harcourt embraced the Age of Enlightenment, exchanging ideas with members of the Society of Dilettanti, who included Richard Grenville, Earl Temple and Sir Francis Dashwood. The Society consisted of like-minded gentlemen who were inspired by their Grand Tours to Italy to continue their study of Greek and Roman art and architecture, and to commission new work. The Society was a hotbed of ideas for architecture, landscape design, poetry and literature, and it is from this rich cultural background that Simon Harcourt's vision for Nuneham must have evolved.



Fig. 22 The Villa, designed by Stiff Leadbetter, *Vitruvius Britannica*

#### 4.3 The Demolition of Newnham and the Creation of Nuneham

Through his inheritance and investments in the East India Company, Simon Harcourt accumulated great wealth. His social standing and elevation to the earldom in 1749 may have prompted him to embellish his country seat.

The 1st Earl turned his back on the family seats of Stanton Harcourt and Cokethorpe, and instead focussed his attention on Newnham Courtenay. Consulting a poet, rather than an architect or surveyor, the Earl selected a location for his new house on a hill above the Thames. From this point on, the Poet Laureate, William Whitehead, featured prominently in the design and development of Nuneham Park, and also tutored 1st Earl's son, George.

The 1st Earl desired a substantial private house, set in private, extensive, informal parkland. The old village of Newnham Courtenay was in the way of these plans, and like other landowners of the period Harcourt swept away the entire settlement, relocating the residents to new cottages built on the London road. Such acts of subjugation by ruling landowners caused much reaction amongst certain members of society. Oliver Goldsmith mourned the demolition of Newnham Courtenay in a poem some fifteen years later, suggesting that the subject remained politically contentious.

In 1756, Lady Harcourt bemoaned that the Earl was building a villa rather than a seat. Although this was partly due to the restricted size of the site, Earl Harcourt presumably saw a villa as being far more appropriate to the classically inspired scene he was seeking to create. Conceived by the ancient Romans, villas became popular again during the Italian Renaissance, culminating in the work of Palladio during the 1570s. With the spread of Palladio's *Quattro Libri*, and travel to Italy, English landowners and builders began to adopt the Palladian villa style, perhaps most famously exemplified by Lord Burlington's Chiswick Villa (1726-9). Earl Harcourt's architect at Nuneham, Stiff Leadbetter, was a popular architect of the period. His main practice was in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire where his work included Bulstrode Park (for William Bentinck, 2nd Duke of Portland), Langley Park (for Charles Spencer, 3rd Duke of Marlborough), Shardeloes (for William Drake), Syon House (for Percy, 1st Duke of Northumberland), Taplow Court (for Murrough O'Brien, 1st Marquess of Thomond), the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford, and an Ionic rotunda at Ditchley (for Robert Lee, 4th Earl of Lichfield). He became known for his Palladian villa designs, often with side wings as at Nuneham. Leadbetter's design for Nuneham (Fig. 22) was illustrated in John Woolfe and James Gandon's *Vitruvius Britannicus V (VI)* (1771), a later addition to Colen Campbell's volumes of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, a treatise or catalogue of English Architecture published in 1715-25. This treatise had a large number of subscribers, and would have done much to disseminate Leadbetter's ideas and reveal Harcourt's fashionable home.

Harcourt also employed James 'Athenian' Stuart, a member of the Society of Dilettanti who had made his name as an artist and antiquarian, and, in 1763, was appointed portrait painter of the Society, only to be quickly replaced by Reynolds. He was respected as an arbiter of taste, and advised Josiah Wedgwood amongst others. However, as an architect, Stuart had a poor reputation for reliability. Consequently,

his main commissions were acquired through fellow members of the Society and their friends, explaining his involvement at Nuneham with All Saints' Church, possibly the stables, Culham lodge, and work on the interiors of the house.

Stuart published *Antiquities of Athens* in 1762, which became a significant source for architects studying Classical architecture. As an architect, he was the first to design buildings using the Greek orders; examples include the Temple of Theseus at Hagley, 1758, for Lord Lyttelton, and the Doric Temple at Shugborough, c1760 for Thomas Anson. In 1967, Howard Colvin described the Temple of Flora at Nuneham as one of the earliest buildings of the Greek Revival in England (or indeed in Europe), and so one imagines this was influenced, if not designed, by Stuart. The early development of a villa at Nuneham was, therefore, at the forefront of architectural innovation and fashions, influenced by cultural connections at the highest level.



Fig. 23 The Villa. A View of Nuneham, Paul Sandby 1760





Fig. 24 View towards Oxford, Paul Sandby, 1775 - 1780



Fig. 25 View from Lock Bridge, Paul Sandby, 1775 - 1780 (extract from original)





Fig. 26 View of the New Church at Nuneham in Oxfordshire in The Virtuosi's Museum by James Fittler 1780 (BM 1870,1008.577)



Fig. 27 View of Nuneham Courtenay from the Thames, JMW Turner, 1787

#### 4.4 The First Earl's Landscape

The demolition of Newnham Courtenay village, completed by 1760, and erection of the classical temple of All Saints' Church (1764) (Fig. 26), were the first steps in establishing an Arcadian landscape setting for the villa. Estate activities accounted for in the 1720s and 1730s record basic maintenance, some tree planting and provisions for pheasants. However, by the 1760s, specific garden account books are being kept, suggesting at least the existence of a kitchen garden, if not further pleasure grounds. No specific landscape designer is cited during this period, but the design of the Terrace Walk north of the church by Lord Harcourt suggests that he may have been responsible for the initial layout of the landscape, undoubtedly influenced by the members of Society of Dilettanti. Certainly, by 1768, the transformation of the vernacular village and estate into a private landscape park had been completed.

By 1763, Harcourt had become Lord Chamberlain to Queen Charlotte. Queen Charlotte was passionate about plants and gardens, devoting much time to the development of Kew Gardens and Frogmore, Windsor. She may well have encouraged Lord Harcourt's taste and contributed to his plant collection. Certainly, Nuneham contributed to hers in the 1780s when she requested that her own flower garden at Frogmore should be designed in the style of the one at Nuneham.

During Earl Harcourt's periods abroad, his son, George, seems to have had a degree of freedom at Nuneham, inviting the exiled Jean-Jacques Rousseau to stay in 1766. Rousseau was a controversial philosopher of the eighteenth century, advocating that Man had been corrupted by society and civilisation and should return to Nature. His book, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Hèlène* (1761) was a best seller, but he criticised religion and was exiled from France and Germany. The description of a garden in the novel, with wild flowers and untamed climbers, is thought to have inspired George Harcourt to lay out a flower garden at Nuneham following Rousseau's visit. It would seem that the 1st Earl disliked his son's wild garden and in the early 1770s discussions are had with the poet William Mason to arrive at a more formal flower garden design (Fig. 11). The Earl's initial thoughts were more in line with a parterre garden at Kew, designed by William Chambers. Mason however, softened this design so that, in the end, a compromise was reached between the informality sought by George and the more traditional formality proposed by his father. Once again, a poet influenced the design of Nuneham. William Mason was a successful poet, musician, painter and gardener who turned down the role of Poet Laureate in 1785. The 2nd Earl described his involvement at Nuneham, which included the production of an altarpiece and composing music for church services, as in a very small space we have specimens of his genius, in music, painting and poetry and in improving the beauties of nature. Mason wrote a didactic poem on the garden called *The English Garden* (1772-83) and in this work extols the virtues of Nature, encourages the use of flowers in the landscape, and, in Mavis Batey's view, bridges the gap between classical and romantic attitudes.

David Jacques described the result of the collaboration between Mason and Lord Nuneham: 'Although they included a Temple of Flora and various busts, of which



Fig. 28 Engraving of the Flower Garden, painting by Paul Sandby, engraved by William Watts, 1777



Fig. 29 Engraving of the Flower Garden, painting by Paul Sandby, engraved by William Watts, 1777

Rousseau would not have approved as showing the hand of man, their flower garden was irregular in outline and layout. There was a honeysuckle bower and trailing plants between trees. The flower beds were irregular in shape and planted promiscuously, as if they were the unaided product of Nature, probably the first time this had been done. The urns and inscriptions were desirable for reinforcing the sentiments of melancholy and love of nature that the garden was supposed to arouse. The garden's romantic charm was a quite new interpretation of Nature at a time when the great parks were being extended over hill and dale in Her name.'

Sandby's views of Nuneham (Figs. 28 & 29) provide an invaluable record of the appearance of the Flower Garden in the 1770s. Irregularly shaped beds are densely planted with flowers, laid out with mown lawn around and surrounded by specimen trees. Nuneham's Flower Garden has often been cited as the first of its kind, the return to gardening with flowers after the rise of the English Landscape movement, and the beginning of the Regency or Gardenesque style. However, as Batey and Laird have highlighted, the use of irregularly shaped flowerbeds was not new. Thomas Wright was already working on such gardens in the 1760s at Netheravon in Wiltshire for the Duchess of Beaufort, and kidney-shaped beds appear on a 1762 plan of the Earl of Ilchester's garden at Redlynch, Somerset.

Placing Nuneham's Flower Garden into context, Laird points out many similarities with the Elysian Garden at Audley End, illustrated in a plan by Richard Wood of 1780. He considers that Nuneham also represented a re-creation of Elysium, a beautiful area of the Underworld of Ancient Greek mythology, the final resting place of heroic and virtuous souls. Elysium was also associated with Christian heaven and paradise. The fashion for Elysium can be seen expressed in other eighteenth century landscape gardens including the Elysian Fields at Stowe, and Elysian Plains at Painshill. Elysium Britannicum was the title given to a treatise on trees by the second Earl's great-great grandfather, John Evelyn.

Meanwhile, Earl Harcourt continued to develop the wider landscape. Garden accounts record extensive activity in the kitchen gardens, including the importation of pineapple plants from Barbados, and the creation of plantations in the park. In 1773, the politician, writer and architect, Horace Walpole paid a visit to Nuneham and was duly impressed, despite describing the 1st Earl as a marvel of pomposity ten years earlier. The first Earl had therefore created a classical English landscape that was nationally influential.

#### **4.5 The Second Earl's Landscape**

The 1st Earl Harcourt's untimely death in 1777 placed Nuneham rather unexpectedly into the hands of his son, George. The 2nd Earl immediately set about improving the house and estate, stripping away the symbols of Royal connections, and defiantly erected a statue of Rousseau. Mason was consulted once again, to create picturesque pleasure grounds around the house, and to break up a formal avenue between the house and the church. The 2nd Earl also undertook the tedious and costly business of completing the grotto, apparently reluctantly. It was, perhaps, a project of his father's, and, either





Fig. 30 View of the Flower Garden, Paul Sandby 1775-1780



Fig. 31 View of Abingdon from Nuneham Park. Paul Sandby. 1775 (BM1904,0819.39)



Fig. 32 View from Nuneham towards Oxford J Boydell after J Farington 1793 (BM)



Fig. 33 View of Carfax & Abingdon from Whiteheads Oak J Boydell after J Farington 1793 (BM)





Fig. 34 View of Nuneham from the wood J Boydell after J Farington 1793 (BM)

way, indicates the continued development of the Flower Garden throughout the later eighteenth century.

The 2nd Earl's next contribution to Nuneham Park was the appointment of Lancelot Brown who, under the supervision of Mason, developed proposals for part of the park by 1779 as well as designing changes to the house (Figs. 9 & 10). His plan shows evidence of a strong appreciation of the topography of the landscape and the views from it. A walk had been laid out, known as Brown's Walk, making greater use of the grounds, Coneyberry Hill and north section of Lock Wood to the south of the house. Brown's work to the park appears to have been for the most part enhancement of the existing parkland, rather than large-scale earthworks, and many of his wider proposals appear not to have been adopted. He made no proposals for the agricultural land between the Walled Kitchen Garden and Lower Farm, suggesting this area of land was never part of the designed landscape. His suggestion for a gothic eye-catcher in the landscape triggered the assistance of Mason and Walpole: Mason to design the edifice (Fig. 13) and Walpole to fit it with coloured glass. However, such plans were aborted when the Earl acquired the early seventeenth century Carfax Conduit from Oxford city centre in 1786.

The 2nd Earl's republican leanings clearly subsided and the Royal family stayed at Nuneham in 1785, 1786 and during the 1790s, following Lord Harcourt's promotion to Master of the Horse. As Lady of the Bedchamber, Lady Harcourt was particularly close to Queen Charlotte, and the avid horticulturalist Queen was particularly taken with the Flower Garden, requesting a plan of the garden to recreate it at Frogmore. Nuneham's influence can also be seen spreading to the general public, in particular through the paintings of the Flower Garden by Paul Sandby, which were engraved by William Watts, James Fittler, and M.A. Rooker and published by George Kearsley in *The Copper Plate Magazine*. It was also described in the poetry of William Whitehead and by John Trusler in *Elements of Modern Gardening* (1784). Humphry Repton recorded in his 1803 *Observations on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* that Lord Harcourt admirably attributed the Flower Garden to Mason and the pleasure grounds to Brown. Repton made a small contribution to the landscape himself, advising on the location of a bench at a picturesque viewpoint. Furthermore, Nuneham Park began to feature in publications on the history and geography of the river Thames; William Combe's *An History of the River Thames* (1794) described Nuneham as the product of poetry.

Also of significance during the 2nd Earl's ownership of Nuneham was his relationship with the artist, writer and commentator on the Picturesque, the Rev. William Gilpin. Harcourt clearly admired the thoughts and theory of Gilpin, offering him a living at Nuneham Courtenay in 1792 and encouraging the publication of his *Tours around picturesque parts of England, Scotland, and Wales*. Although Gilpin did not take up the position, it seems likely that he was inspired by, or had an influence on, the development of Nuneham Park. Gilpin's circle included Mason, Walpole, and the poet and scholar, Thomas Gray (1716-1771). In the meantime, garden accounts recall the more practical management of Nuneham throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. The kitchen garden continued to develop with fashionable fruits and vegetables of the

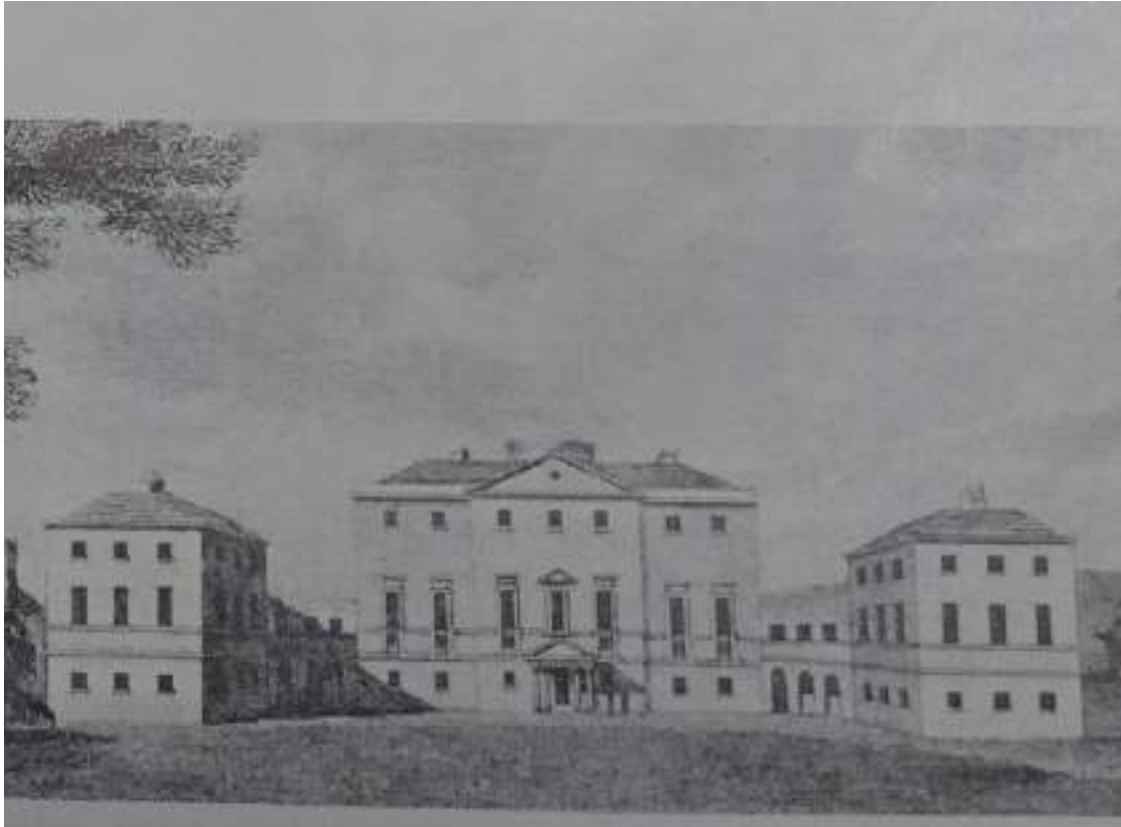


Fig. 35 The Villa, after alterations by Lancelot Brown 1782

day, including melons, cucumbers and pineapples. By 1781, a list of labourers in the pleasure grounds is noted, suggesting higher maintenance requirements. Head gardeners included Walter Clarke (d.1784), greatly esteemed for laying out the Flower Garden, and Christopher Stevenson (1780s-90s), a subscriber to Speechley's treatise on vines in 1790. Accounts suggest that the 2nd Earl was a considerate landlord to the villagers relocated by his father in the 1760s. During the grain shortages of the 1790s part of the park nearest the village was reverted to cultivation, a precedent, perhaps, for today's arable landscape. However, it is the 2nd Earl's more revolutionary and artistic approach to politics and gardening which gained him Royal praise, and a landscape seen as a work of art, created by some of the greatest landscape designers of the time.

#### 4.6 Victorian Nuneham (Figs. 36-47)

The 3rd Earl does not seem to have been interested in developing Nuneham but the next heir, Edward Vernon-Harcourt, Archbishop of York commissioned further significant changes in the landscape in the 1830s. These altered the landscape at Nuneham in line with some of the fashions that were to dominate subsequent Victorian landscapes. The changes included a pinetum (now Harcourt Arboretum), a new terrace, alterations to the Flower Garden, exotic shrub planting, a rose garden, rockeries, and further works in the kitchen garden. Much of this work is thought to have been by the painter, landscape designer and writer, William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843). W.S. Gilpin was the son of the animal painter, Sawrey Gilpin (1733-1807) and the nephew of the Rev William Gilpin





Fig. 36 The Terrace, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 37 Park fenced with estate railings, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 38 East front of the house, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 39 View of house from Thames, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 40 View of the Temple of Flora, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 41 The Terrace, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 42 Temple, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 43 Bridge over ha-ha, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 44 Entrance to the Grotto, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 45 Rockery Walk, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 46 The Orangery in Flower Garden, 1885 (Taunt)



Fig. 47 The Rose Garden, 1885 (Taunt)



(1724-1804), whose school he was educated at. He practised as an artist and drawing master until 1820, when at the age of nearly sixty he became a landscape gardener. He secured prestigious commissions at sites including Audley End, Sudbury Hall (for Lord Vernon, Edward Vernon Harcourt's cousin, Lord Vernon), Wolterton Hall, and Scotney Castle. His work blended the formal and the informal with terraces, straight walks and geometric flower beds balanced by cloud shaped shrubberies. The highly successful and popular neo-classicist architect, Robert Smirke, was also brought in to design alterations to the House.

Interestingly, Edward Vernon Harcourt's contribution to Nuneham seems not to have impressed John and Jane Loudon, who visited Nuneham in 1833 and 1834. Perhaps arriving with higher expectations of what had been, in the eighteenth century, one of the most important gardens in the country, John Loudon's account is one of disappointment: the Flower Garden had suffered poor upkeep by the gardener; the new terrace was badly contrived; and the approach road was one of the worst features of the park. The approach drive Loudon refers to appears to be that from Abingdon, through the southern parkland. His criticism may explain, in part, the realignment of the London road drive later in the nineteenth century.

The garden accounts and vouchers of the nineteenth century provide a detailed record of plant purchases and suppliers to Nuneham. Newly introduced and exotic trees, flowers and shrubs were pouring into Nuneham. Suppliers originated from all over the country, including local Oxford and London-based nurseries. They also included some of the leading plantsmen of the day, at the cutting edge of contemporary horticulture, including Veitch, Lucombe and Pince, the Waterers, and Perry.

By the 1850s, accounts of Nuneham in the increasingly popular horticultural press were once again highly favourable, although the terrace and flower garden remained a disappointment for a Cottage Gardener journalist in 1854. A valuable account of the pinetum (now Harcourt Arboretum) in 1855 describes the head gardener, Mr Bailey, being responsible for the planting. The layout was botanical in its approach, arranging groups of pines in their two, three and five-leaved sections of *Pinus* and placing the varieties of one species in a single group. The same was done with firs and spruces. This highly scientific approach to a pinetum is an example of the Victorian taste for collecting, understanding the natural world, and displaying plant acquisitions from around the world.

Certainly, such an approach would have appealed to the brother and later heir of the then owner, George Granville Harcourt, the Rev. William Vernon Harcourt. While the eighteenth century Harcourts had been at the forefront of the artistic and literary world, William was involved with the latest developments in science. His close relations with Daubeny and Baxter at the Oxford Physic Garden may well have influenced the development and planting of the pinetum at Nuneham. William was also a close friend the Rev Charles Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll, and his visits to Nuneham with Alice Liddell ensure that Nuneham retained a literary role into the nineteenth century. While it could be said that there were limited fundamental changes to the layout at Nuneham, and that





Fig. 48 View from the Terrace of the River Thames to the north. *Country Life*, 1913



Fig. 49 View from the Terrace of the River Thames to the north 2019 (To be taken)

the landscape no longer led the way, the influence of W.S. Gilpin has been long lasting, especially in the Harcourt Arboretum.

#### **4.7 Edwardian Splendour (Figs. 48 - 61)**

Inheritance by the 1st Viscount Harcourt in 1904 stimulated the next, and final, major phase in the development of Nuneham's landscape by the Harcourt family. The Royal family and the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith made regular visits to Nuneham, undoubtedly encouraging significant investment into the house, pleasure grounds and park. Building accounts, Country Life articles, a good selection of photographs and comparison of the 1899 and 1912 Ordnance Survey maps reveal the revisions and additions Lewis and his wife made to Nuneham's pleasure grounds, including new terraces, boathouses, water gardens, and additional paths through the Flower Garden.

Like Mr Bailey before him, the head gardener, Mr Mundy, appears to have designed much of the work carried out during this period, including the rockery wall walk with alpine plants that led to the new Dell garden, beyond the church. Richard Bisgrove has also cited the involvement or influence of William Robinson (1838-1935) on Edwardian Nuneham, based on Robinsonian features such as rose beds carpeted with his 'tufted pansies', the wild and woodland garden and cacti in dry walls. The Robinson link is reinforced by correspondence between Lewis Harcourt's cousin, Aubrey Harcourt, and Robinson in 1900; Robinson's involvement with the gardens at North Mymms Park, family home of Lady Harcourt; and Robinson's great admiration for the gardens of the Harcourt's Hampshire home, Malwood – where Lewis would have settled had it not been for the unexpected inheritance of Nuneham.

Robinson was a practical gardener and writer, who wrote numerous books. His two best-known works were *The Wild Garden* (1870) and *The English Flower Garden* (1883), both of which were highly influential on garden design and planting over the succeeding decades. *The Wild Garden* focused on the naturalization of hardy exotic plants and *The English Flower Garden* covered the style, position, and arrangement of flower gardens with a description of the best plants to be arranged within them. He noted in the introduction that 'Hitherto I have mostly dealt with the flower garden in relation to rock-gardens, plants of fine form, those we may grow without care in the wild garden, and the many beautiful things included among the hardy flowers of Northern countries. [but that a book in the form of a Dictionary] embracing all the plants, hardy and half-hardy, in our British flower gardens, seemed likely to best meet the wants of the time. Robinson also wrote about Alpine and sub-tropical plants, mixing exotics with natives but preferring perennials to bedding plants. Although his advice directly or indirectly influenced numerous gardens, his own garden at Gravetye Manor in Sussex was the place where his ideas were most closely put into practice.

Lewis's upbringing may explain the eclectic mix of elements and features introduced to Nuneham during the first decades of the twentieth century; alpine rockeries and naturalistic Robinsonian planting were mixed with traditional high Victorian design and fashionable Italianate and Oriental features. In a photograph of c1890, oriental-style



Fig. 50 View of the River Thames from the Terrace, *Country Life*, 1913



Fig. 51 View of the River Thames from the Terrace, 2019, with terraces removed.





Fig. 52 Carfax Conduit, Taunt 1904



Fig. 53 The Dell Garden, Taunt 1907



Fig. 54 The Dell Garden, Taunt 1907



Fig. 55 Lower Pond in the Dell Garden, Taunt 1907



Fig. 56 East front of the House, Parker 1917



Fig. 57 The east front of the house with initials of Lewis Harcourt laid out in box, Taunt 1907



Fig. 58 Lower Terrace, 1907 Taunt



Fig. 59 Upper Terrace, 1907 Taunt



Fig. 60 View across Riverside field, 1907 Taunt



Fig. 61 Walk to the Walled Kitchen Garden, 1907 Taunt

ceramic pots are visible on the terrace, suggesting his predecessor's similar taste for the newly fashionable Far East.

Increased access to Japan saw a rise in the importation of garden features and exotic plants. At Nuneham, the Dell garden is influenced by the Japanese style, including stone lanterns, Japanese irises and shrubs, and a bronze crane. Lewis Harcourt was also in correspondence with the plant collector Reginald Farrer (1880-1920) who lived in Tokyo in 1903 and published *The Garden of Asia* in 1904. Harcourt's enthusiasm for Farrer's Tibetan expedition resulted in the gift of a viburnum in 1916. A further oriental connection was through the use of plants collected by Ernest Wilson (1876-1930) in the Dell. Wilson was the Chinese plant collector for Veitch nurseries and made a number of trips to China between 1902 and 1910. A Japanese Garden had been laid out at Stowe as early as 1820 but the majority of Japanese gardens were laid out in the 1920s, with early examples from the late 19th century. Harold Peto (1854-1933) designed a number of Japanese gardens, including one in his own garden at Iford Manor, Wiltshire and another at Heale House for his client Louis Greville, who had worked in the British Embassy in Tokyo. Perhaps the most influential Japanese Garden was the one at Batsford, Gloucestershire, laid out by Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford; also a former attaché in the British Embassy in Tokyo. His Japanese garden (sometimes known as the Wild Garden) was developed in the 1890s and had Japanese bamboos and specimen trees, publicised through his book *The Bamboo Garden* (1896). He also contributed to William Robinson's *The English Flower Garden* (1883).

In contrast, the classical style of the house was fully embraced with the extension of its balustraded terraces in an Italianate style, complete with a formal pond, similar to Robinson's lily pond at Gravetye. Balustraded terraces and Italianate gardens had become fashionable from the mid 19th century after Charles Barry and William Andrews Nesfield (1794-1881) laid out gardens in this style. Important examples included Harewood House, Clumber Park, Bowood, Cliveden, Witley Court, Regent's Park, and Alton Towers. Thomas Cubitt also designed Italianate terraces at Osborne, Queen Victoria's summer retreat. The style remained fashionable through the second half of the 19th century, with Harold Peto designing gardens in an Italianate style into the 20th century, albeit on a smaller scale.

This quintessentially Edwardian landscape at Nuneham was then ornamented with two novelties, more akin to the Victorian period – a living sundial and giant family crest planted on the front lawn, both involving detailed carpet bedding. Langley points out that the living sundial, with its yew gnomon (the part of the sundial that casts the shadow), was very similar to that planted by Countess Warwick at Easton Lodge in Essex, during the 1890s. These are seen in a 1920s aerial photograph taken in 1928 (*Britain from Above*), which also shows the formal gardens in some detail.

A final dose of eclecticism in Nuneham's Edwardian landscape was introduced through Lewis's appointment as Colonial Secretary. This resulted in visits from various foreign dignitaries, in particular those attending the Imperial Conference of 1911 in London. Not only was this a source of further exotic plants, but Harcourt was also presented with





Fig. 62 The Dell Garden, *Country Life* 1941



Fig. 63 View of the Church of All Saints from the lawns to the north of the house. *Country Life*, 1941



Fig. 64 Carfax Conduit with views north to Nuneham House,  
*Country Life* 1941



Fig. 65 Carfax Conduit with views north to Nuneham House, 2019

a range of exotic animals, and so by 1912, when the Gardeners Chronicle paid a visit to Nuneham Park, they came across emus, rheas, kangaroos and flamingos. While this phase of work was the 'last complete phase' at Nuneham, its significance is reduced by the fact that many of the gardenesque elements and much of the terracing has since been lost and, despite the Robinson involvement, the gardens appear to have been influenced by, rather than have influenced, other sites.

#### **4.8 Twentieth century change of ownership and decline**

1940 marked the end of Nuneham's celebrated days as a private house and the beginning of a rapid decline. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed major changes, firstly by the erection of various wartime structures and occupation of the house and park by the Air Ministry, and then by the sale of the estate to the University of Oxford in 1948. Nuneham house was in institutional use and, with this, regular parkland and garden maintenance was lost, together with the traditions of private estate management.

Changes after 1948 included:

- Removal of the Edwardian terraces by the University around 1970 to reduce maintenance;
- Removal of garden ornaments by the Harcourt family to Stanton Harcourt;
- Adoption of the pinetum by Oxford Botanic Garden, becoming the Harcourt Arboretum;
- Initial damage to, then removal, restoration and re-erection of the Carfax Conduit;
- Demolition of some eighteenth century estate buildings, including part of the stable block and Abingdon Lodge;
- Conversion of the parkland firstly to grazed pastures and then almost entirely to arable farmland;
- Erection of National Grid electricity pylons across the park;
- Development of University storage facilities in the Walled Kitchen Garden;
- Development of facilities for residential tenants such as service buildings, sewage works, bore holes, tennis courts and a car park;
- Sale of parts of the estate and letting of estate buildings;
- Adoption of All Saints' by the Churches Conservation Trust;
- Abandonment of the walled kitchen garden after a failed commercial garden centre venture.

These significant changes have removed much of the character of wider landscape quality at Nuneham. What remains is, in part, a sense of former glory, albeit with potential for improved conservation, partial restoration and enhancement of the Nuneham landscape.

However, Nuneham's past has been preserved in mind, where not in practice. Mavis Batey's years of research maintained Nuneham's reputation and resulted in attempts to restore the Flower Garden in the late 1970s and 1980s, in consultation with Richard Bisgrove. Nuneham's historic significance was also championed in 1984 and 1985 when the park and garden were entered on the English Heritage (now Historic England) register as a Grade I registered park and incorporated into the Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area.



Fig. 66 View of the River Thames from Brown's Walk, Private Collection c. 1909





View of Nuneham House from the banks of the River Thames, 2018



View north to Oxford from Church of All Saints, 2019

## 4.8 Analysis of Views

The site for Nuneham House was chosen by 1st Earl Harcourt with help from his friend William Whitehead, the Poet Laureate. It was on a high point of land overlooking the River Thames, with long views of Oxford to the north and Abingdon to the south. The 1st Earl Harcourt's travels and his involvement in the Dilettanti Society to promote classical culture in England, following his Grand Tour to Italy, were influential in siting the house above the Thames and creating his vision for the landscape.

In 1756 Lady Nuneham wrote to her son about the new house -

*...[the] design we have of building a villa at Nuneham, and not a seat, as was talk'd of: for beside the immense sum such a thing would cost, there is absolutely not a spot upon the whole Estate, as my Ld., Mr Fanquier, and several others think, so proper for a house, as near a clump of elms, which you are sensible cannot contain a large building. However, I think the situation will make amends for the smallness of the building...*

In 1777 William Mason wrote to Horace Walpole in October while staying at Nuneham, saying *Here am I with the Isis before me drawing its line of silver through the greenest meadow in the world, a glorious wood to my left, and another glorious wood to my right, Abingdon spire there, Radcliff library there, &c. &c. &c. &c.*

The artist Paul Sandby captured the main views from the house, gardens and River Thames. On his death in 1809 Sandby was described in his obituary as '*the father of modern landscape painting in watercolours*'. Sandby's paintings (see Figs. 23-25, and 30-31) all illustrate Nuneham set within a classical Arcadian landscape with the River Thames at the centre. The views shown in Figs. 23, 24 and 31 are now compromised by the addition of 20th and 21st century buildings, infrastructure and some inappropriately placed trees (Figs 48-49), but the shorter views of the house (Fig. 25 and view used on the front cover of this report) from the east bank of the River Thames remain. Currently views of the river from and to the house are obscured by bank-side vegetation, a photograph by Country Life in 1913 (Figs. 50 – 51) shows the lack of vegetation on the banks of the River Thames and confirms the important role the river played in the setting of the house and park.

Sandby also captured Mason's flower garden (Figs. 28 – 29) and the view from the terraced walk of the new Church of All Saints (Fig. 26), allowing an important record of planting and view lines across the garden.

A young JMW Turner (Fig. 27) also painted Nuneham House from the River Thames in 1787 which illustrates the extension of the house completed by Lancelot Brown and Henry Holland.

In 1779 Lancelot Brown was commissioned by 2nd Earl Harcourt to extend the house and make proposals for the improvement of the gardens and Park. A Plan of the Intended Alterations at Newnham in Oxfordshire the seat of the Earl of Harcourt, by Lancelot Brown (Fig. 9) shows his proposals for parkland plantings to break up the



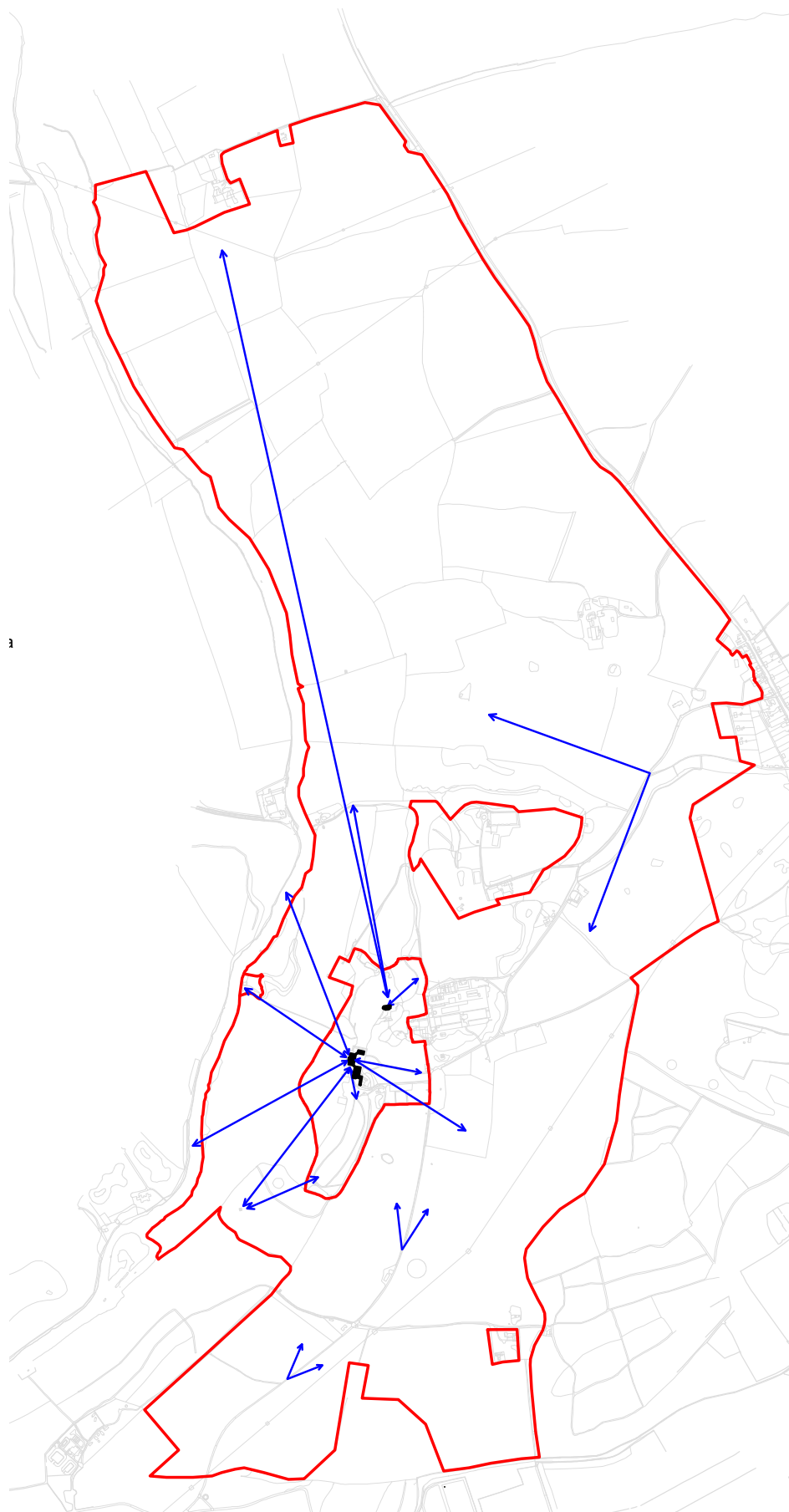


Fig. 64 Main views from Nuneham House, the River Thames, Church of All Saints, Carfax Conduit and drives in the park. Study area outlined in red.

linearity of the park belts and avenues and create dynamic views from the Abingdon Drive. He also opened out the north end of Lock Wood felling trees to create a plateau of wood pasture where he proposed to build a Gothic sham castle. The sham castle was never built as Earl Harcourt was offered the Carfax Conduit by Oxford Council, which he placed on the eastern tip of the plateau where it could be viewed from the house, Brown's Walk and River Thames. In the gardens Brown designed a Walk, named after him, which allowed glimpsed views of the river and at the south end wider views towards Abingdon, across the Thames Valley, as well as the Carfax Conduit.

The tree planting designed by Brown in the south is largely lost, and with it the dynamic views when journeying along the old Abingdon Drive. Shorter views from House to River, House to Carfax Conduit, Brown's Walk to River and Church of All Saints across the Dell garden remain but are compromised by maturing vegetation and some inappropriate planting.

#### **4.8 Analysis of Drives within the Park**

##### **Pre 1755**

Prior to Earl Harcourt rebuilding Newnham Manor and moving the village to the outskirts of his new park, a network of roads ran through the village of Newnham. See Fig. 65.

South from the village the Abingdon Road ran along the south west edge of Lock Wood, before turning north to the centre of the village.

To the north, the Oxford Road left from the north west corner of the village to join the London Road (now Oxford to Henley Road) between Upper Farm and Lower Farm. A further road (not named) left the village at the south east corner and joined the London Road north of Upper Farm. This road forks and joined the London Road below what is now the southern end of Nuneham Courtenay village.

##### **1755 - 1768 Jefferys' Map of Oxfordshire**

On the creation of the park and the removal of the old village, changes were made to the road layout, however no formal Act of Parliament has been found for the diversion of the Abingdon Road. The road was moved to the south of the park joining the London Road opposite the turning south of the village to Little Baldon.

Earl Harcourt built Abingdon Lodge on the south boundary of the park and created the Abingdon Drive which meandered through the centre of the park towards the house. Abingdon Drive is no longer the main entrance into the park but remains in use for estate use and tenants. This drive made use of the undulating topography and later tree planting by Lancelot Brown to create dynamic views as you journeyed along the drive.

The old Oxford Road through Upper Farm were removed. A new drive was created (Oxford Drive) through the park from the southern end of the newly built Nuneham Courtenay village (probably the same point where the old road from Newnham village met

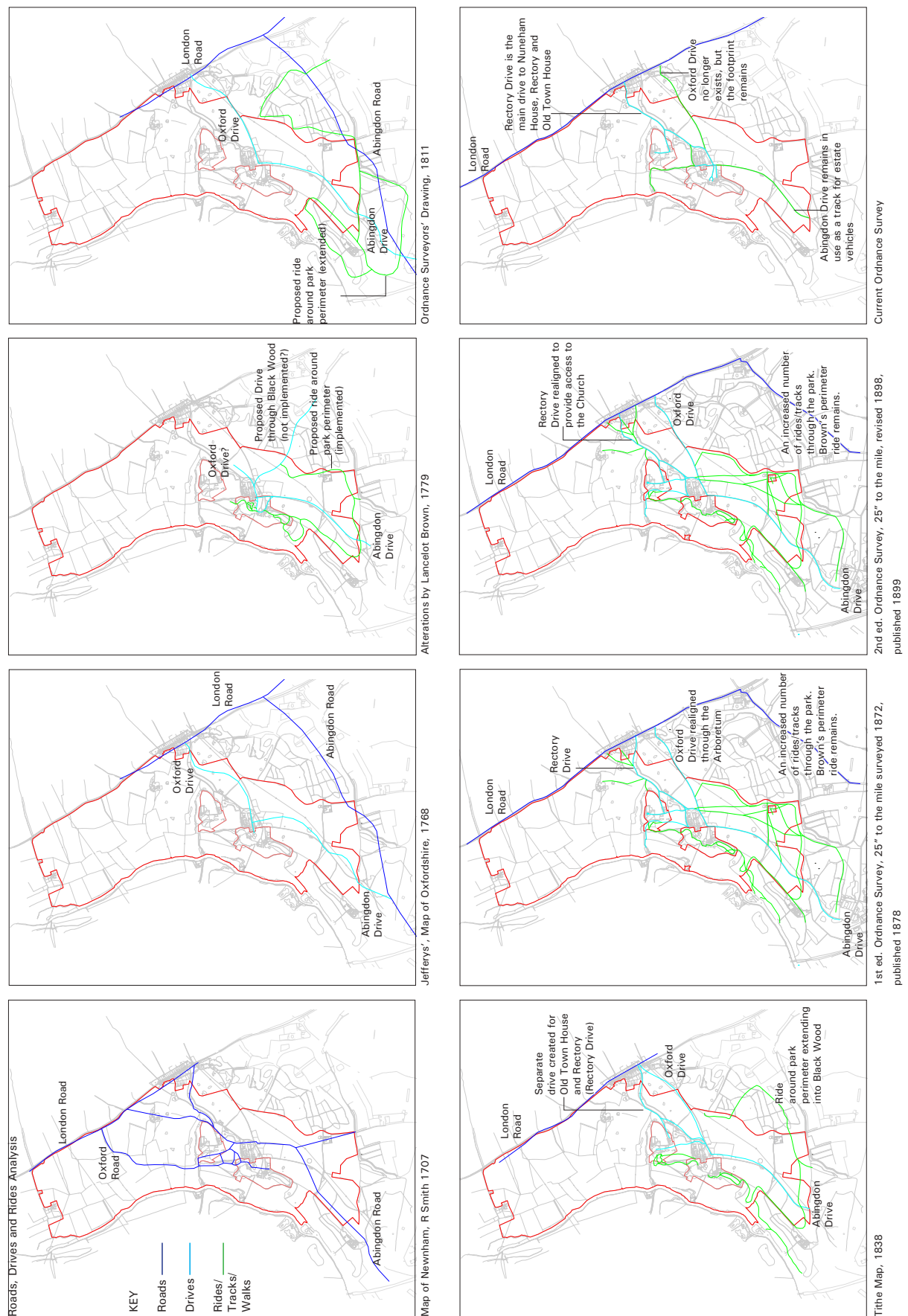


Fig. 65 Analysis of drives

the main road), passing to the south of the new walled kitchen garden. See Fig. 65.

### **1779 - Alterations by Lancelot Brown**

Lancelot Brown was invited by the 2nd Earl Harcourt to make proposals for the garden and park in 1779. He retained the Abingdon Drive but proposed a new drive through Black Wood. This proposed drive appears not to have been implemented but his proposal for a southern perimeter ride was implemented. He also shows a drive passing north east from the walled kitchen garden towards Newnham Lodge but it's not clear which route this is. No evidence of a building named Newnham Lodge has been found.

### **1838 – Tithe Map**

The Tithe Map shows Abingdon and Oxford drives. The alignment of the Oxford Drive is the same as that shown on Jefferys' map and the OSD (1811), and probably the same as that shown on the Davis plan of 1797 although the alignments do appear to differ. The drive to the Rectory followed the old road to Newnham village (ref Smith's Plan of 1707).

### **1878 – 1st ed. Ordnance Survey**

In 1832 Edward Venables-Vernon Harcourt, Archbishop of York (1757-1847) commissioned WS Gilpin to lay out a Pinetum on newly acquired land next to the London Road. A new pair of lodges (Oxford Lodges) were built at the entrance to the park (now Harcourt Arboretum) and a new Oxford Drive was created through the Pinetum across Windmill Hill, joining the previous Oxford Drive to east of the walled kitchen garden. Windmill Hill is the highest point in the park and dramatic views across the Thames valley are captured on exiting the pinetum continuing to Nuneham House.

### **1899 – 2nd ed. Ordnance Survey**

In 1880 All Saints Church was rebuilt for a third time. This was in a neo-gothic style and was built near the village by Edward Harcourt. This church required access from the village and the Rectory drive was realigned to leave the Oxford-Henley Road from the centre of Nuneham Courtenay village, i.e. the existing route to Nuneham House via the 1880 All Saints Church.

### **Current**

Neither the original Oxford Drive nor the 'new' Oxford Drive created in the mid 19th century through the Pinetum and across Windmill survive in use but remains of the latter are visible as a grass track through the estate (it joins the path network through the Harcourt Arboretum).

The only drive now in use to access Nuneham House is the drive from the centre of Nuneham Courtenay village via All Saints Church, passing the right turn to the Rectory. This is not a satisfactory approach to the house and was never one of the designed approaches to the house (it runs along the north side of the tree belt which forms the



Old Abingdon Drive, 2019



Old London Drive taken from Windmill Hill, 2019



Current entrance drive past Church, 2019



northern edge of the park, and appears to have been intended as a service route and access to the Rectory). Views are obscured by hedges and woodland, and there is no appreciation of the former park.

There is no longer access from the Estate from the south along the old Abingdon Drive due to separate ownership and the Culham Science Centre. The Abingdon Drive survives as an internal drive used by tenants and estate vehicles.

A long term aspiration should be to restore one or more of the former drives through the park (Oxford Drive and/or Abingdon Drive), or if this is not possible consideration should be given to creating a new drive through the park (Brown's suggested route through Black Wood?) or possibly from the north (Upper Farm).

## 5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

*'The Bard retires, and on the Bank of Thames  
Erects his flag of triumph; wild it waves  
In verdant splendor, and beholds, and hails  
The King of Rivers, as he rolls along'*

William Mason The English Garden

Earl Harcourt's vision for his villa at Nuneham was inspired by his tour of Italy and his membership of the Society of Dilettanti where, with like-minded friends he pursued the study of the Greek and Roman arts. Consulting William Whitehead, Poet Laureate, rather than an architect or surveyor, the Earl selected a location for his new house on a hill overlooking the Thames: *"... advantageous and delicious as can be desired, being seated on a hillock of most easy ascent, at the foot of which lies a navigable river and on the other side surrounded by several hills that seem to form an amphitheatre."*

With the River Thames as inspiration, Harcourt fused poetry and art in the pastoral tradition and created the designed landscape at Nuneham. Voltaire, who visited Pope in 1726 went home, a visitor reported, to cultivate his own garden in the English Taste. *'There, says he, is the Thames - and there is Richmond Hills - no french Gewgaws - All is Nature'*. Nuneham encompassed this tradition, as was captured in the paintings by Paul Sandby and J.M.W. Turner and Boydell.

Nuneham House, gardens and park was to become one of the most influential landscapes in British garden history, with a flower garden conceived by Rousseau, William Mason and others; pleasure grounds and parkland embellished by Lancelot Brown; and contributions by W.S. Gilpin and William Robinson in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Nuneham Estate has a rich agricultural, archaeological and ecological heritage. Prior to ownership of the estate by the Harcourt family and the development of the influential designed landscape, the manor clearly held high agricultural value, both as pasture and arable land.

The exceptional significance of the gardens and landscape at Nuneham have been recognised by Historic England's Grade I entry in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

### **Evidential Significance**

There is archaeological evidence of Roman settlement within the northern section of the estate. Excavation has revealed an extensive Romano-British pottery production site, used from 2nd – 4th century. Also discovered were ring ditches, ridge & furrow, as well as 17 flints and a greenstone axe fragment. An Iron Age banjo has been located to the south east of Nuneham House.

The Harcourt Archive in the Bodleian Library provides comprehensive primary sources detailing the development of the park.

Since R Smith's Map of Newnham was published in 1707, the park has been mapped and surveyed regularly. This provides excellent evidence for understanding the changes in the park over the last 250 years. A rare surviving design for the park by Lancelot Brown remains in a private collection.

Evidential significance is therefore high.

### **Historical Significance**

Nuneham was at the forefront of garden and landscape design in the mid to late 18th century. Later additions in the 19th century were more influenced by current taste rather than influencing taste, however the layers of design provide a comprehensive history of garden design. This was brought to light in the 1960s and 70s by the garden historian Mavis Batey who lived at Nuneham.

### **Aesthetic and Associative Significance**

The Flower Garden conceived by the 2nd Earl Harcourt, Rousseau, William Mason was one of the first flower gardens at the beginning of the Regency/Gardenesque periods. Lady Harcourt was particularly close to Queen Charlotte, who visited Nuneham with King George III. Queen Charlotte was an avid horticulturalist and particularly taken with the Flower Garden, requesting a plan of the garden to recreate it at Frogmore. The gardens continued to evolve in the 19th and early 20th century work including the development of the terraces probably designed by W.S. Gilpin, the creation of a Japanese garden and a 'wild garden' by William Robinson.

The pleasure grounds and parkland were improved by Lancelot Brown, whose plan for the design remains with the Harcourt family. Brown remodelled the planting in the park, dramatising views and the gently undulating topography. The extensive walled kitchen garden is first illustrated on Brown's Plan of Alterations and may have been designed by him.

The development of the park and gardens was recorded by artists including Sandby, Turner and Boydell, and photographer Henry Taunt. Sandby's paintings of the Flower Garden were engraved by William Watts, James Fittler, and M. A. Rooker and published by George Kearsley in The Copper Plate Magazine. The gardens, parks and views were also written about in The History of the River Thames, Three Men in a Boat by Jerome K Jerome, gardening journals and County Life. Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) visited the gardens many times whilst living in Oxford.

### **Nuneham House, Garden and Park Buildings**

Nuneham House was designed by Stiff Leadbetter with James 'Athenian' Stuart contributing to the internal design, as well as the internal design for the new Church of All Saints. Lancelot Brown and Robert Smirke both designed extensions to the house.

The Carfax Conduit, installed as an 'eyecatcher' on Brown's Hill is recognised as a rare survival of Oxford's early seventeenth century fresh water system, and an unusual example of an eighteenth century parkland folly. It is designated a scheduled monument.

Aesthetic and Associative significance is therefore high.

### **Communal Significance**

Nuneham House was a destination for river traffic and tourists walking along the river Thames. The house, the remains of the park, Carfax Conduit and the distinctive boathouse continue to be local landmarks.

Public Rights of Way through the park allow visitors to walk across parts of the park and events held by the The Brahma Kumari Global Family, bring many new visitors to the garden.

Communal significance is therefore high.

### **Ecological Significance**

The estate supports a range of habitats which are of high ecological value. There is one Local Wildlife designated as an excellent example of an MG4 community traditionally managed neutral hay meadow, very species rich with lots of snakeshead fritillaries.

Within the estate is a range of notable fauna including badgers, barn owls, lapwings and the potential for bats, deadwood invertebrates, great crested newts and reptiles.

Ecological significance is therefore high.

## 6.0 CONDITION SURVEY OF NUNEHAM PARK

### 6.1 Introduction

The park has been divided into four character areas for ease of reference, and to facilitate future management (see Fig. 65). For each character area, we provide a summary history, a location plan and a description of the current condition of all features within each area. For buildings and structures a basic external appraisal of the general condition is provided. Issues addressing the vulnerability of each character area and feature are included at the end of each section.

NB: This condition survey excludes the gardens and the land leased to the Brahma Kumaris; it also excludes private and domestic gardens on the estate.

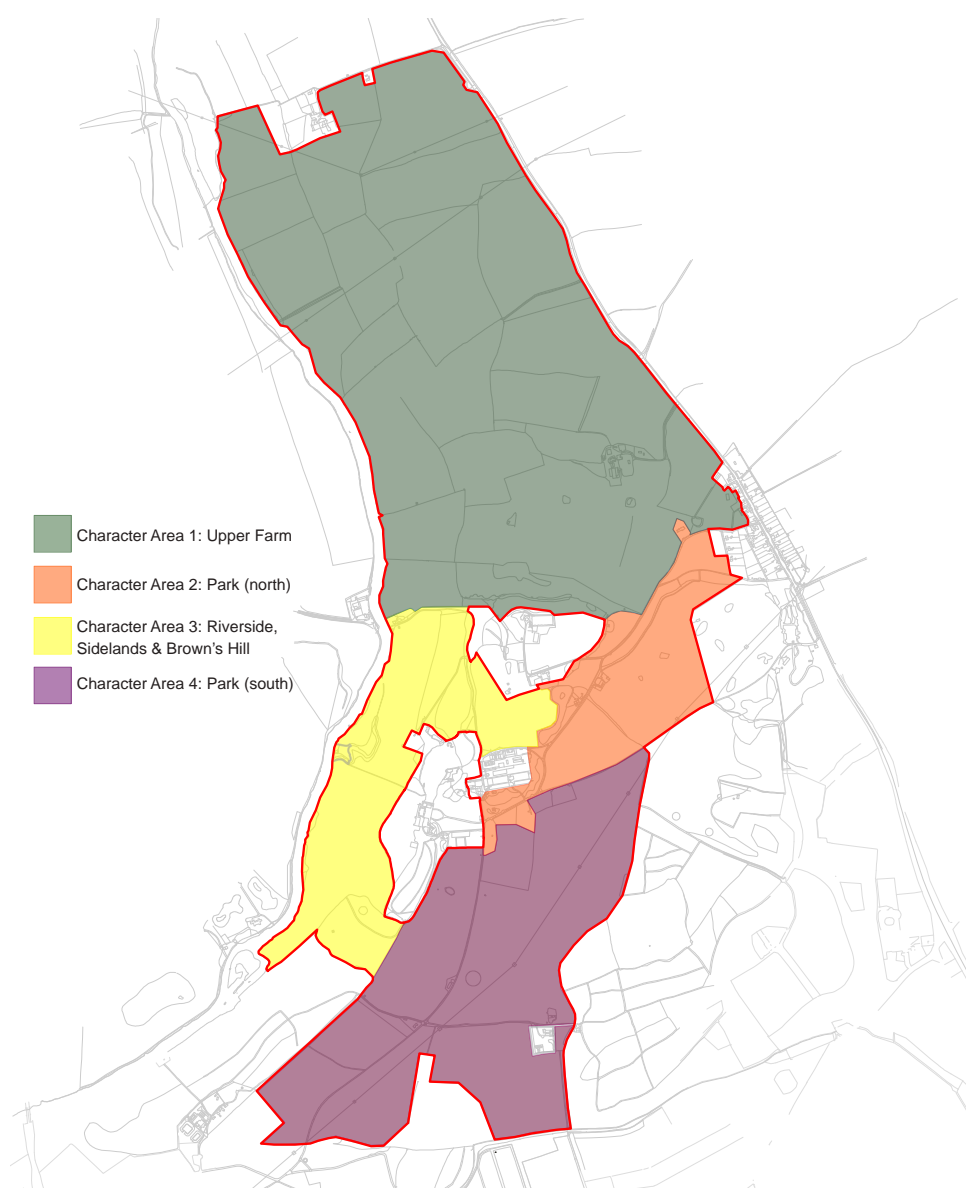


Fig. 65 Character Area Plan



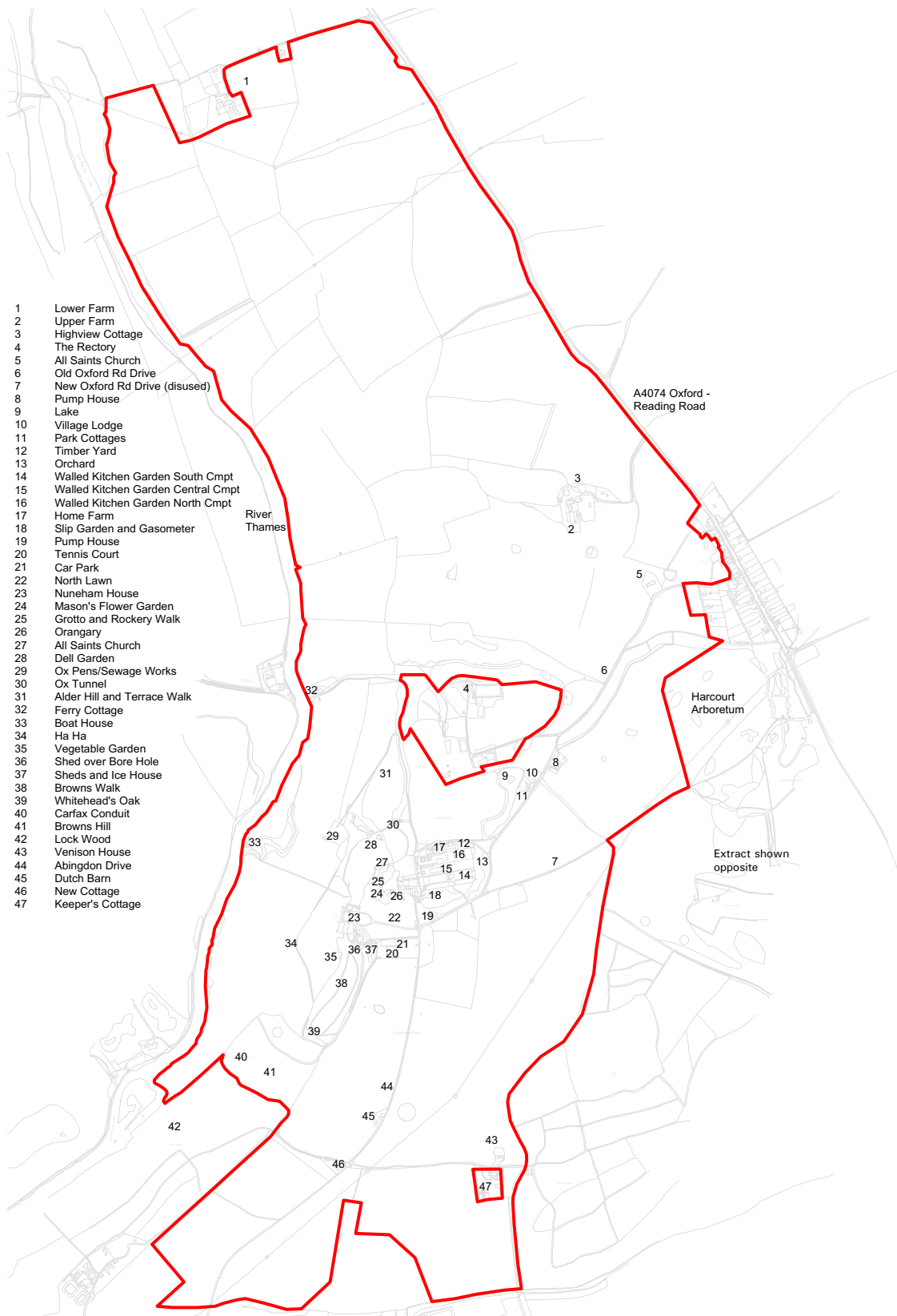


Fig. 66 Features Plan

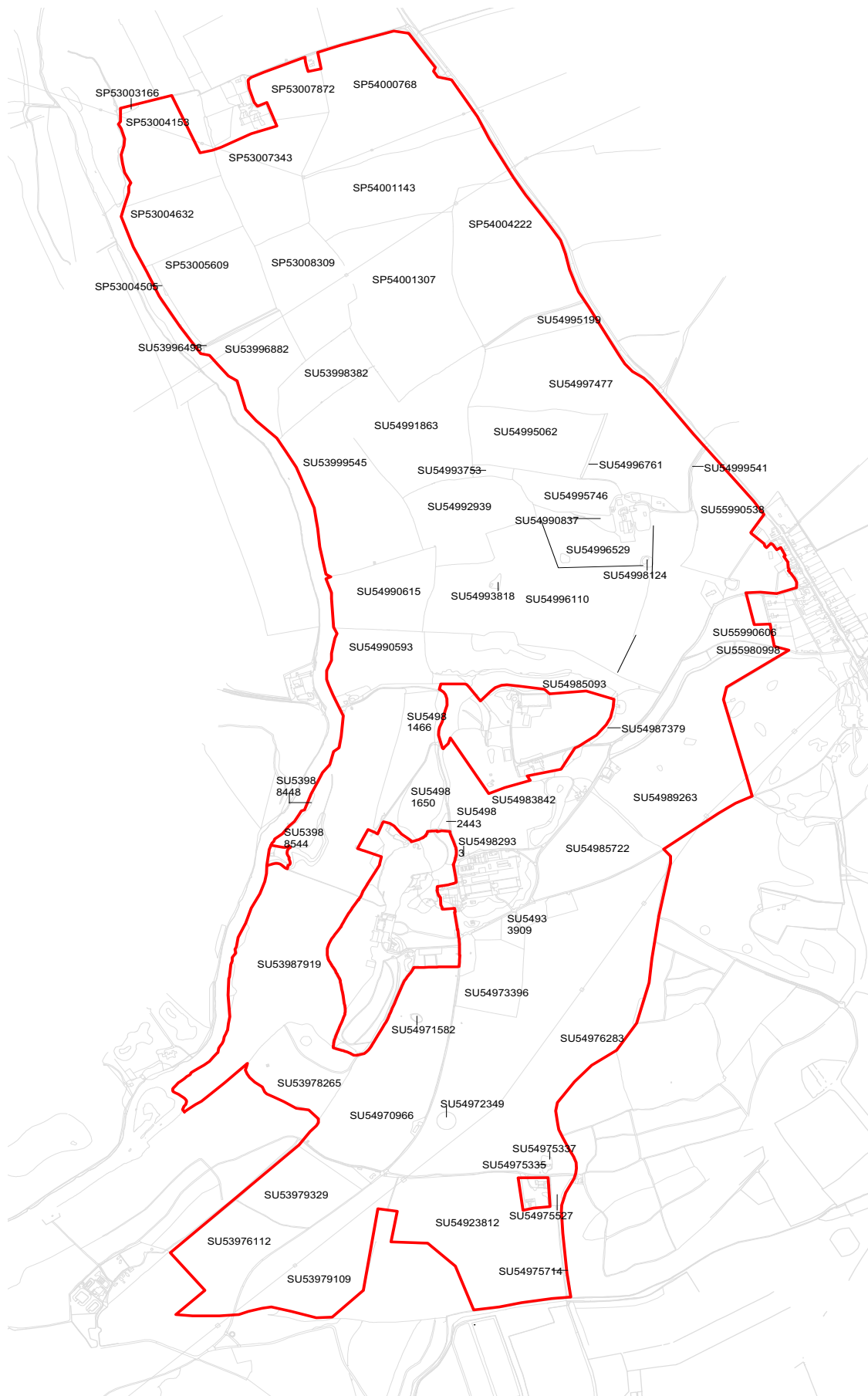


Fig. 67 RLR Field Numbers

## 6.2 CHARACTER AREA 1: UPPER FARM



Fig. 68 Character Area 1: Upper Farm



Fig. 69 Smith's Map of Newnham 1707. Upper Farm is not shown; the plan shows an agricultural landscape with the Oxford Road exiting the [old] village and crossing NE across the character area. A further road exits the village and joins the London Road at Upper Farm.



Fig. 70 Davis's Map of Oxfordshire, 1797 shows Upper Farm for the first time. The two roads from the old village to the London Road have been removed. The new village is shown on either side of the London Road.



Fig. 71 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing (1811) shows Upper Farm, with small orchard to north of house. A barn/stock pens is shown to the north west of Upper Farm but no evidence was seen during current survey.



Fig. 72 Tithe Map, 1838. Upper Farm and Lower Farm shown; field pattern similar to today's.





Fig. 73 1st ed. OS (1875) shows Upper Farm with small orchard; field pattern similar to that shown on the Tithe Map. Scattered tree planting along field boundaries with few field trees.

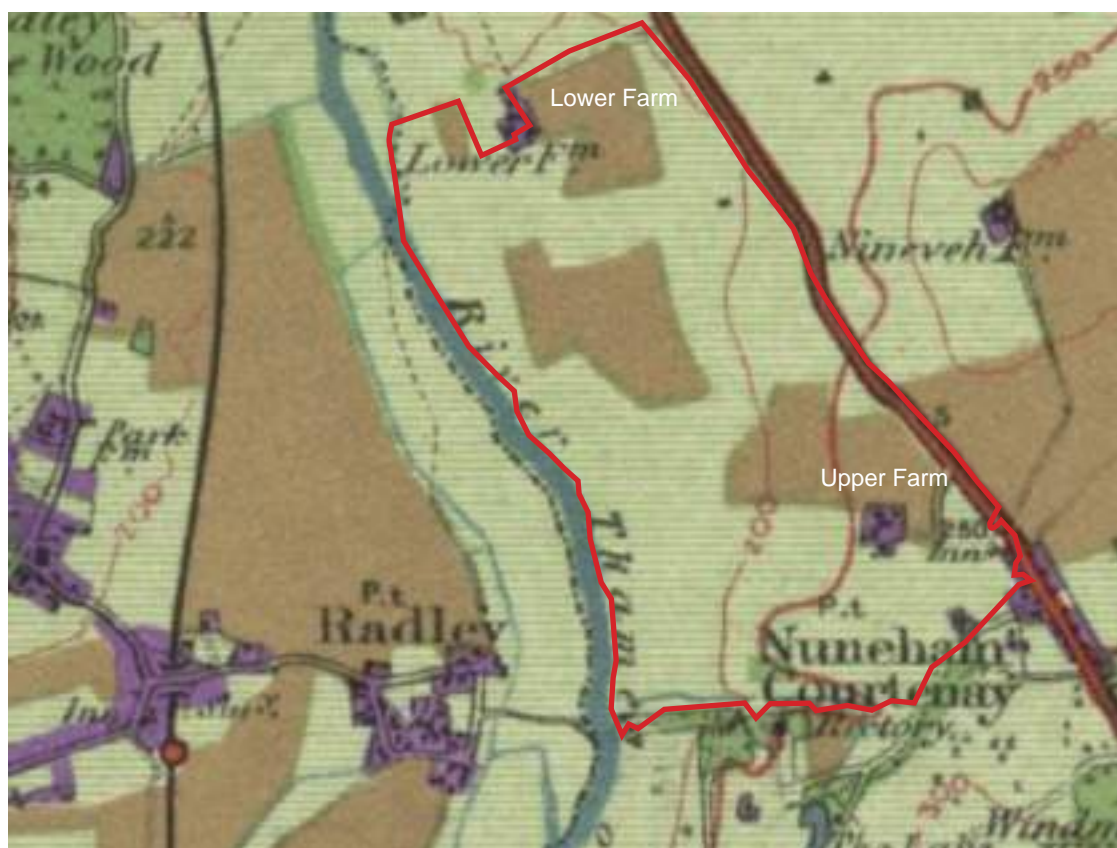


Fig. 74 Land Utilisation Map, 1941. Shows the North Park mostly under pasture with some arable land, coloured brown.

**Significance** - Long history of agricultural use; remnant field pattern and boundaries. Important archaeological sites.

***Key Significant Features in North Park***

**Site of Romano-British Pottery Works** - High Archaeological significance

**Evidence of long agricultural use - ridge and furrow and lynchets** - High Archaeological significance

**Upper Farm** - Not listed, however illustrated on Davis 1797 map - Medium significance

**Farmbuildings** - Not listed, however probably late 18th/early 19th century - Medium significance

**Local Wildlife Site - Lower Bottom Meadow** - High ecological significance

**The farmland plays an important role in the economy of the estate** - High economic significance

**Field margins, field and hedgerow trees** - High ecological significance.

**Hedgerows** - High ecological significance.

**Views** - Extensive views across the Thames Valley.

### **6.2.1 North Park: *History & Significance***

The North Park is shown on Davis's map of 1797 in agricultural use, not dissimilar to today. Upper Farm is shown on the same map; the farmhouse and associated farm buildings are not listed on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and are not included within the designated Grade I landscape. The old farm buildings survive but are currently unused; modern farm buildings have been constructed and are in use. The farm is the main base for the estate's farm operations.

North Park has never been formerly part of the designed landscape, other than its agricultural setting within views from the house and gardens at Nuneham. The existing field boundaries remain similar to those delineated on the 1838 Tithe Map. The 1st ed. OS (Fig. 73) notes that the fields to the east of the river were liable to flooding. The farmland to the north of Upper Farm continues to play an important role in the economy of the estate.

### **6.2.2 North Park *Condition Survey***

The house at Upper Farm appears in fair condition viewed from the outside and the farmyard still acts as the centre of the estate farm operation. Surrounding old farm buildings, some of which have been converted for modern use, some are not suitable for modern farming requirements. Barns A & B (see photos on p.107) are in poor condition

and from the outside Barn C appears in fair condition. The barns all have potential for bats.

Modern farm buildings have been erected to the west of the farmhouse and are in good condition. The tarmac track leading to Upper Farm is in fair condition, with some potholes. The farmyard is a mix of surfaces, compacted earth, hard standing and grass.

There is no current evidence of the orchard shown on the 1st ed. OS map (Fig. 73). A conifer hedge has been planted on the north side of the farmhouse, presumably to screen the farmhouse from wind. The tree and shrub planting surrounding the farmyard and on either side of the entrance to Upper Farm is of poor landscape quality.

Upper Farm sits on a high plateau above the River Thames allowing long unobstructed views across the valley. There are excellent views across the upper farmland, the Thames valley from the west and south of Upper Farm.

Land is largely in arable production and the current field pattern reflects that shown on the Tithe Map and 1st ed. OS. There are two areas of pasture, one in the north west which contains the Local Wildlife Site at Lower Farm bottom (RLR no. SP53005609) and the remains of Romano-British Pottery Workings (improved grassland RLR no. SP53007343).

The Local Wildlife Site is an ancient floodmeadow supporting rare herbs and flowers including approx. 10,000 snakeshead fritillary. Two fields to the north (improved grassland RLR no. SP53004153, 4632) and one field south (arable RLR no. SP53006882) are designated Conservation Target Areas with published long term objectives for ecological enhancement.

The extensive Roman site was excavated in the 1990s which revealed the richness of the remains which had been partly protected beneath medieval ridge and furrow. The excavation revealed the remains of kilns, paved drying floors and stone lined clay stores, waste pottery dumps and related settlement remains dating from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. Subsequent geophysical survey confirmed numerous kilns and a series of enclosures lying west of an access road, as well as circular features which may be earlier. It appeared that although the features petered out to the west and north, they continued as far as the A483 to the east and an uncertain distance to the south. Currently under pasture which is the most benign form of management for this site.

Several oblique photographs held by Historic England's archive show faint cropmarks south of Upper Farm which appear to form at least one enclosure (RLR no. SU54996110). The shape of these features indicates that they may reflect a field system or settlement which is most likely of prehistoric date (albeit a Romano-British date is also possible). Currently under pasture which is the most benign form of management for this site.

Ridge and furrow in field to the east of Lower Farm (RLR no. SP53007872), earthwork features are likely to indicate earlier farm buildings. Currently under pasture which is the most benign form of management for this site.

To the south of this area are two attractive fields (RLR no's. SP54987379 and 5093). Field no. 5093 is accessed from the drive, an undulating field with improved grassland which leads into Field no. 7379, which then drops into a narrow enclosed valley of semi-improved grassland below the north side of the Rectory. A small stream runs along the valley bottom with old pollarded willows, the land then rises up with evidence of ridge and furrow at the west end of field no. 7379. Lynchet/terrace banks are evident on the slope below the Rectory, they are covered in scrub, causing erosion of the features. Vehicle track ruts were recorded on the downward slope into the valley. These two fields effectively define the interface between the agricultural landscape and the parkland landscape to the south.

The earthworks in field no. 5093 may be the remains of ridge and furrow and quarry pits and may include an older road/route to the A4074.

Two Public Rights of Way (nos 31772 and 31775) cross this area. Both are well maintained and with good signage.

Arable fields have little or no grassland margins and in field trees are ploughed well under the canopy of the tree.

There is an extensive drain system running throughout the area. It is well maintained and the water runs freely.

Fencing, generally post and wire, is in bad condition across the area and particularly along the Oxford Road (A4074).

Two lines of electricity pylons run east - north west and east- south west across the park, and are visually intrusive.

The western half of the character area lies within Flood Zone 3 which the Environment Agency defines as land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding

### **6.2.3 Trees and Hedgerows**

The field boundaries are largely defined by hedgerows with occasional early to middle-mature overstorey ash, field maple, oak and willow; there are a few remnant late 18th century Oak and Ash scattered along field boundaries in the north and south-west of the character area, and to the south and east of Upper Farm.

Most of the hedges are trimmed, have gaps and are in variable condition; some are species-poor. The typical hedgerow species mix on the estate includes field maple, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, elm and spindle. Most have an adjacent ditch; there is only one notable field corner copse to the west of Upper Farm. During the winter 2017/2018 a new hedgerow, with hedgerow trees, was planted along the northern boundary adjacent to the A4074. This will help screen the land from the road and possibly reduce traffic noise.

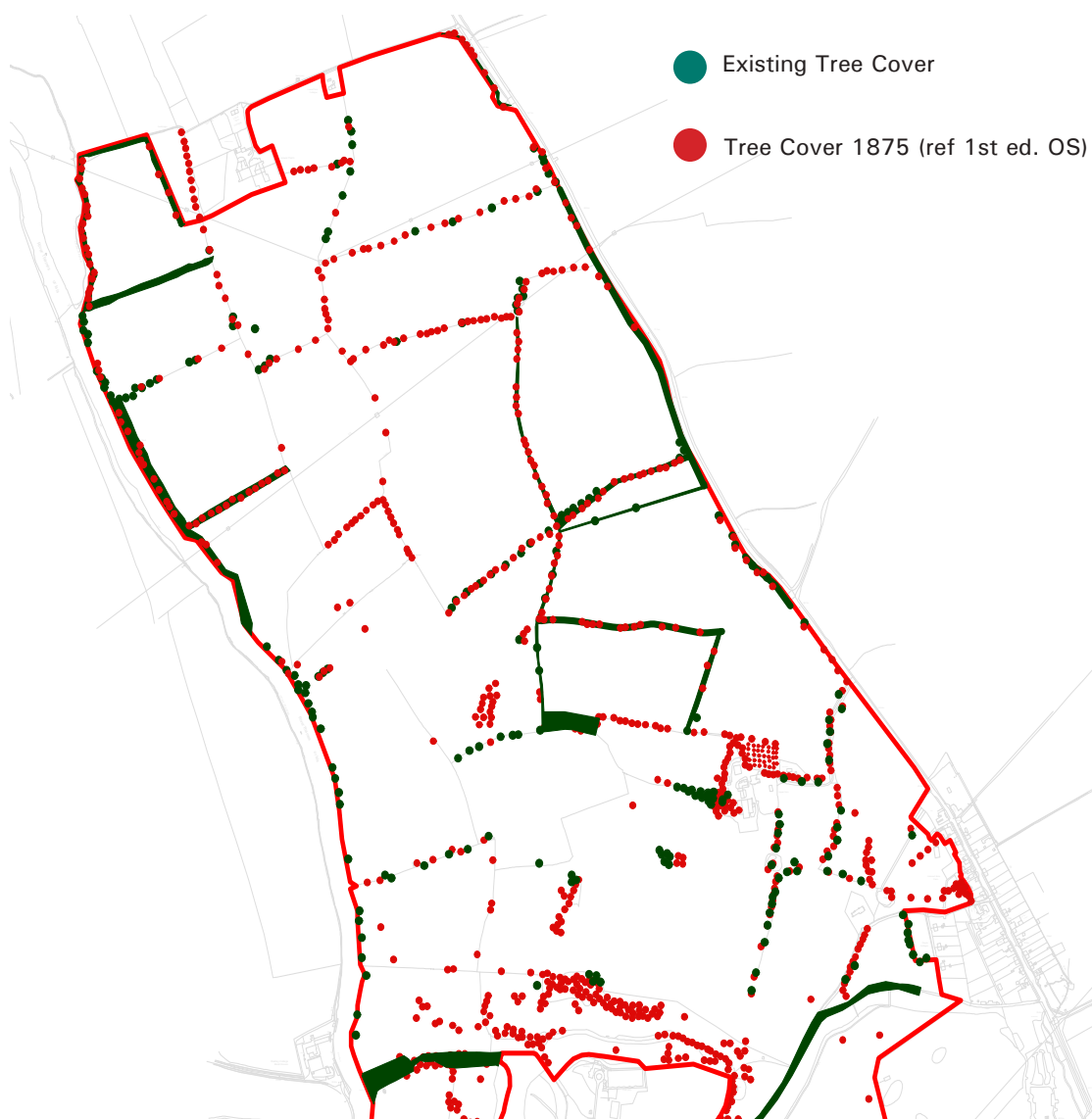


Fig. 75 Analysis of the existing tree cover compared with tree cover in 1875. The existing tree cover remains largely similar to that in 1875, although there is a reduction across the central section of North Park.



On the west edge of this character area, a dense row of crack willow with some ash borders the River Thames; these are well established trees including many over-mature lapsed Willow pollards in need of restoration. The tree line obstructs historic views from Nuneham House towards Oxford as painted by Paul Sandby, and of the river itself from the farmland. There is a fair amount of debris from the Thames on the riverside margins. There is a clump of C18/19 mixed broadleaves (oak, sweet chestnut, beech, lime) stand on the northern slope of a picturesque narrow grass valley to the north of The Rectory RLR SP54987379 and 5093. There are several lapsed Willow pollards and patches scrubby habitat along the brook in the bottom of the valley.

#### **6.2.4 Notable Trees and Tree Groups (see Tree and Woodland Survey Appendix A)**

- A veteran ash (T26) in field boundary hedge
- Several mature oak trees along a field boundary looking south (Trees T4-T10)
- Lapsed pollard crack willows on river bank
- Good example of a varied age structure tree group with individual tree (T79) in the foreground
- Two Turkey oaks & one pedunculate oak (T87-T89)
- Two common lime trees (T105 & T107)



Broken gate on west boundary of north park



View across north park from Lower Farm Lane



Modern farm buildings



Upper Farm - farmyard (Barn C)



Extensive views west from Upper Farm



Barn A

Derelict (18th century?) farm building (Barn A)



Barn B

Barn B currently used to store old farm equipment



Narrow field margins against hedge



Seasonally wet pond in field containing Romano British pottery works. Excellent habitat for invertebrates and newts.



Well maintained drain in North Park



Vehicle damage in field no. SU54985093



Picturesque field no. SU54987379



Terraces on north bank of field no. SU54987379



View of Nuneham House and Church of All Saints from Lower Farm



Extensive views north across North Park from Upper Farm



## **North Park: *Opportunities***

### ***High Priority***

Prevent further deterioration of older farm buildings.

Increase width of field margins to improve farmland habitat.

Increase root protection area around field trees and hedges.

Improve the species mix of hedges, gapping up where necessary and planting.

Plant additional field boundary trees and corner clumps of trees, see Tree and Woodland Survey (Appendix A) and section 8 for detailed recommendations.

Conserve the archaeological sub surface resource, remove scrub from lynchets/terrace in field RLR no. SU54995746).

Undertake ecological survey of the Local Wildlife Site (last survey was 2010).

New parkland tree planting, refer to detailed recommendations in Section 8.

Start re pollarding programme of willows on riverside banks.

### ***Medium Priority***

Consider possibility of re-using the old Oxford Road or road leading to Upper Farm as new entrance to park (existing drive is unsatisfactory). Undertake geophysical survey of remains of road.

Provide new use for buildings no longer suitable for farming operation.

Improve track and planting at entrance and surrounding Upper Farm.

Revert to pasture field no. (SU53996882) and improve habitat including field nos (SP53004153 and 4632) along lines proposed under Conservation Target Area.

Undertake a geophysical survey/trial trenching of the earthworks in fields RLR no's. SP54987379 and 5093, SP53007872 and SU54996110 and their surroundings might be an efficient means of evaluating these sites.

### ***Longer Term Aspirations***

Replant orchard adjacent to Upper Farm.

Pylons could be removed and electrical lines laid underground.



### 6.3 CHARACTER AREA 2: PARK (NORTH)

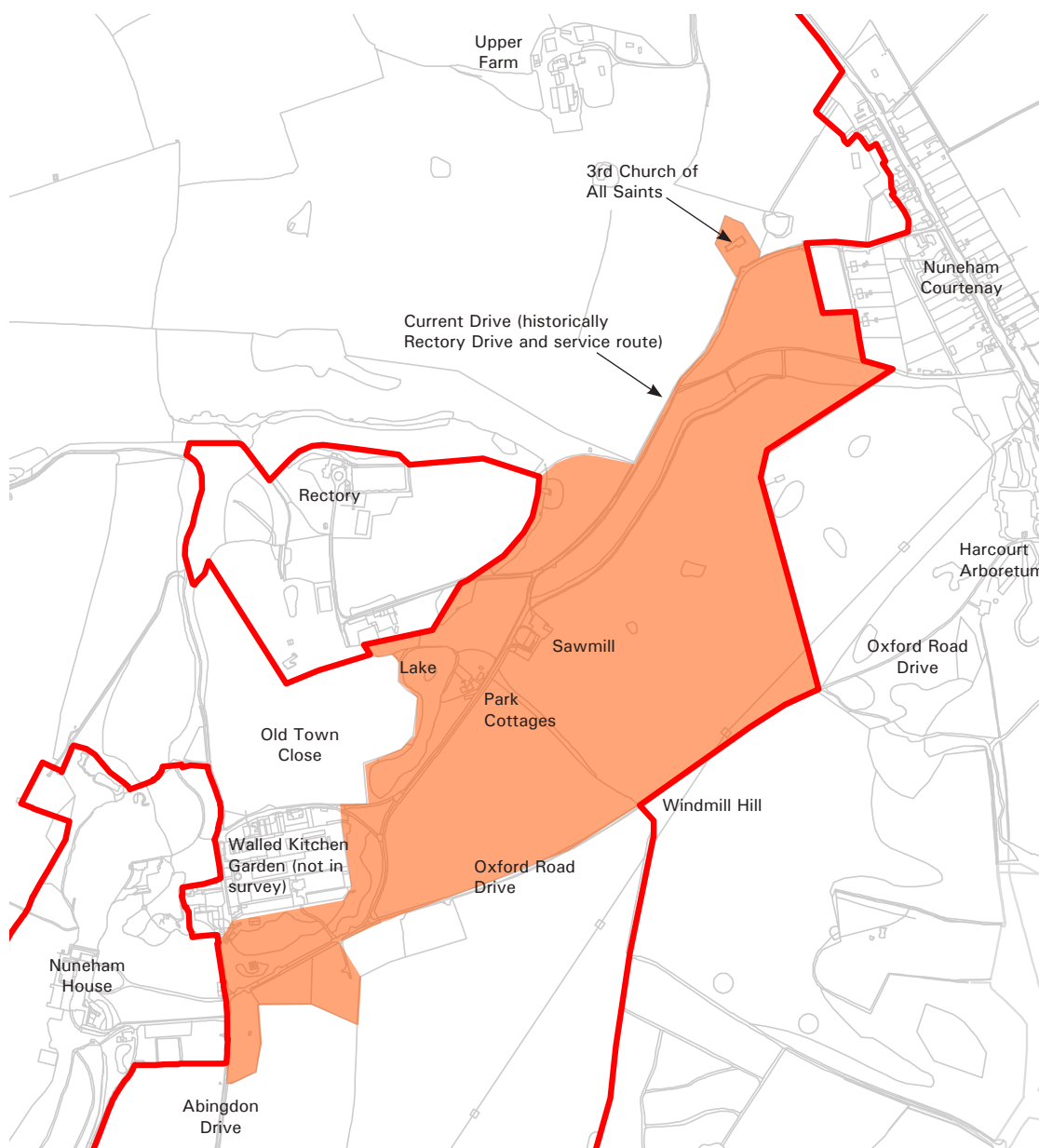


Fig. 76 CHaracter Area 2: Park (North)



Fig. 77 Smith's Map of Newnham 1707 showing drive/road from north east corner of village to what would become the south of the new village. NB red line is approximate fit only.

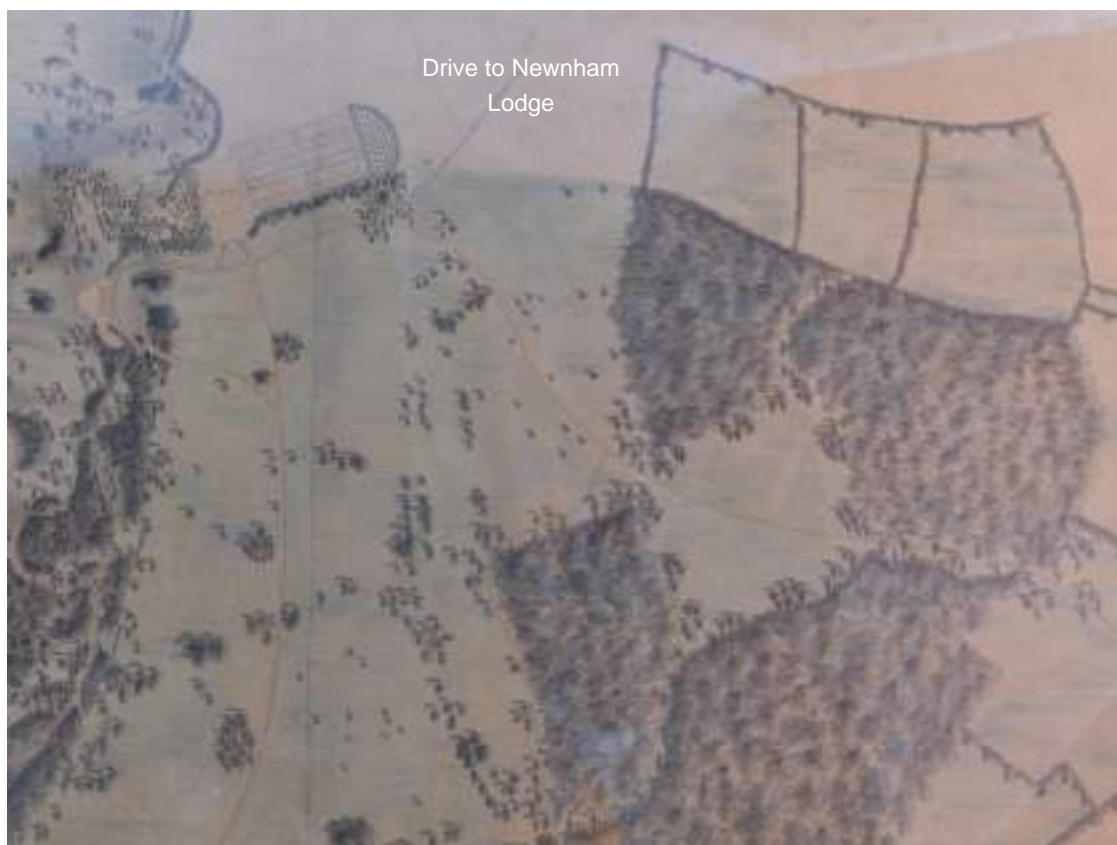


Fig. 78 Plan of Alterations by Lancelot Brown, 1779 showing part of this Character Area. Brown shows the walled garden and a drive to 'Newnham Lodge'. It is possible that this is Park Lodge and would mean the drive on the previous plans was retained. Brown only provided a plan for the souther part of the park.



Fig. 79 Davis's Map of Oxfordshire, 1797 shows a serpentine drive to the house from the southern end of Nuneham Courtenay, passing the south of the walled garden. The lake is shown to the north east of the walled kitchen garden. The northern park boundary may follow the old road (Smith 1707).



Fig. 80 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1811 The drive runs from the southern end of the Nuneham Courtenay (as Davis) but its alignment appears different (turning to the south as one enters the park from the village).



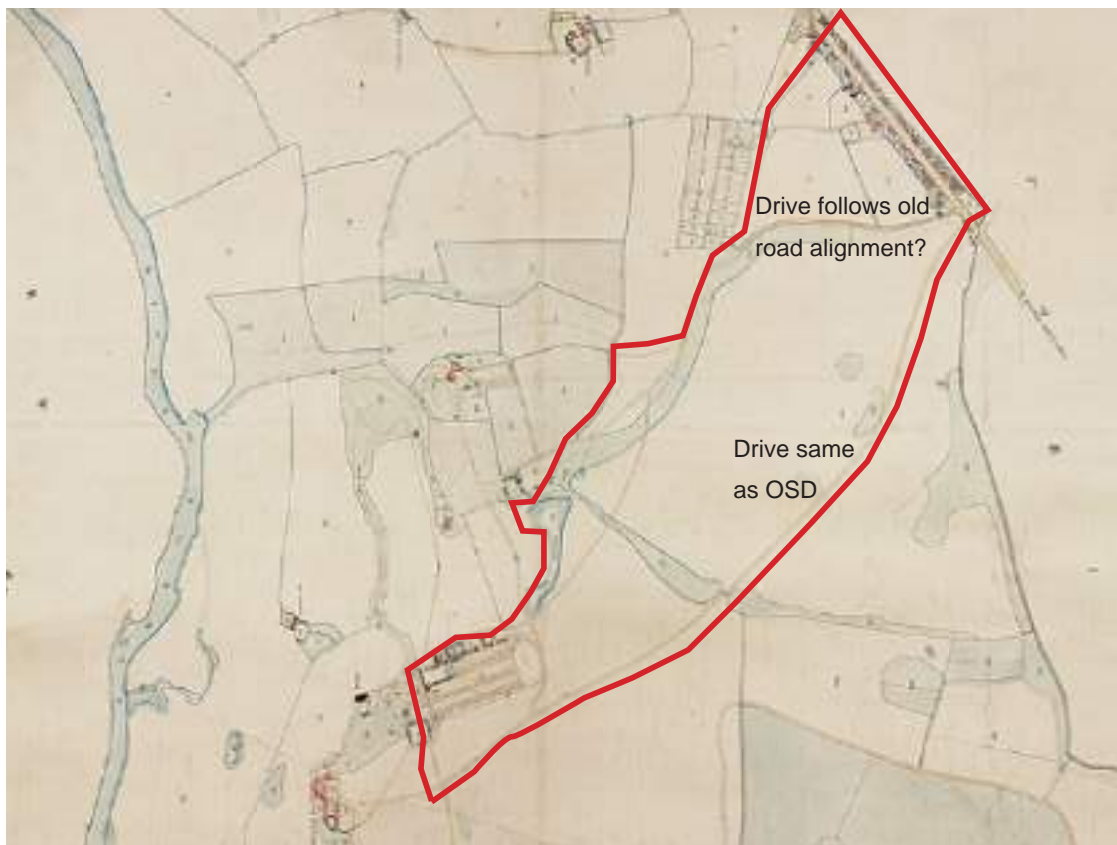


Fig. 81 Tithe Map, 1838. The drive is shown as previous map and a new drive towards the Rectory on the north side of Windmill Hill. The lake is shown with an island at the north end and a woodland belt is shown on the southern side of the drive.

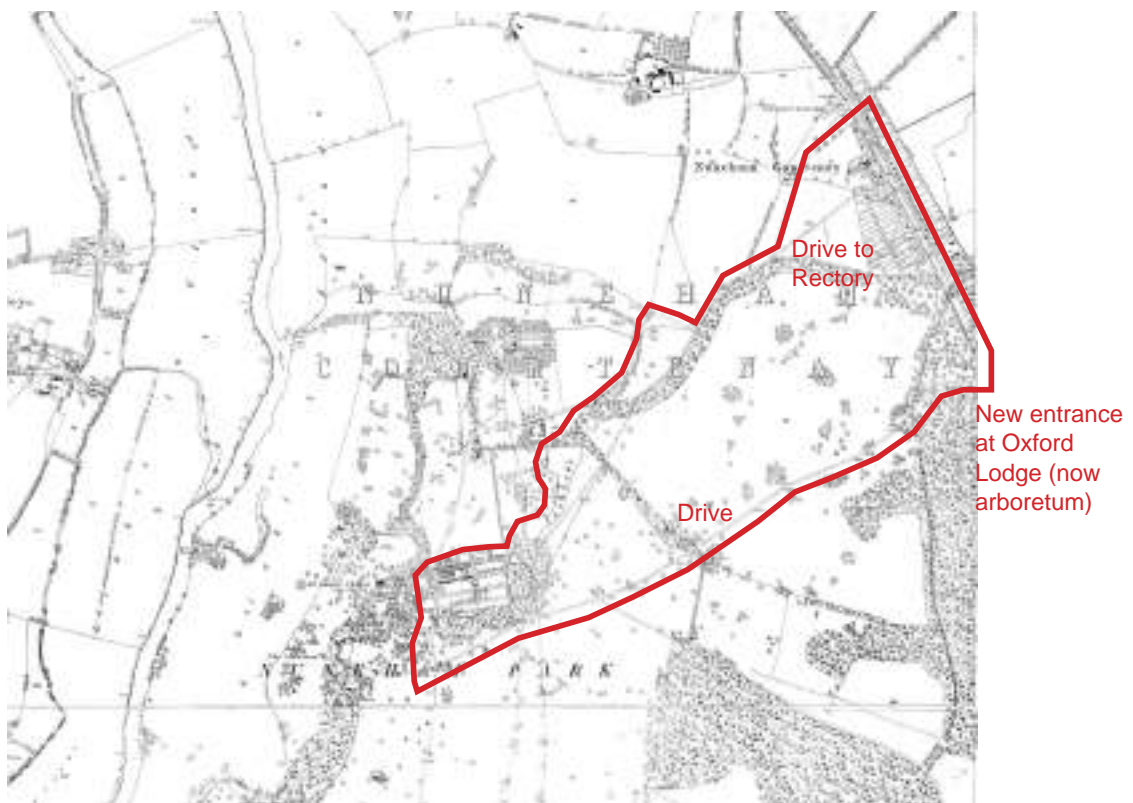


Fig. 82 1st ed. OS map, 1875. A new drive is shown crossing from Oxford Lodge (now Harcourt Arboretum) over Windmill Hill to Nuneham House. The drive to the Rectory (former service route? now current drive to Nuneham House) shown along north side of woodland belt (park perimeter).

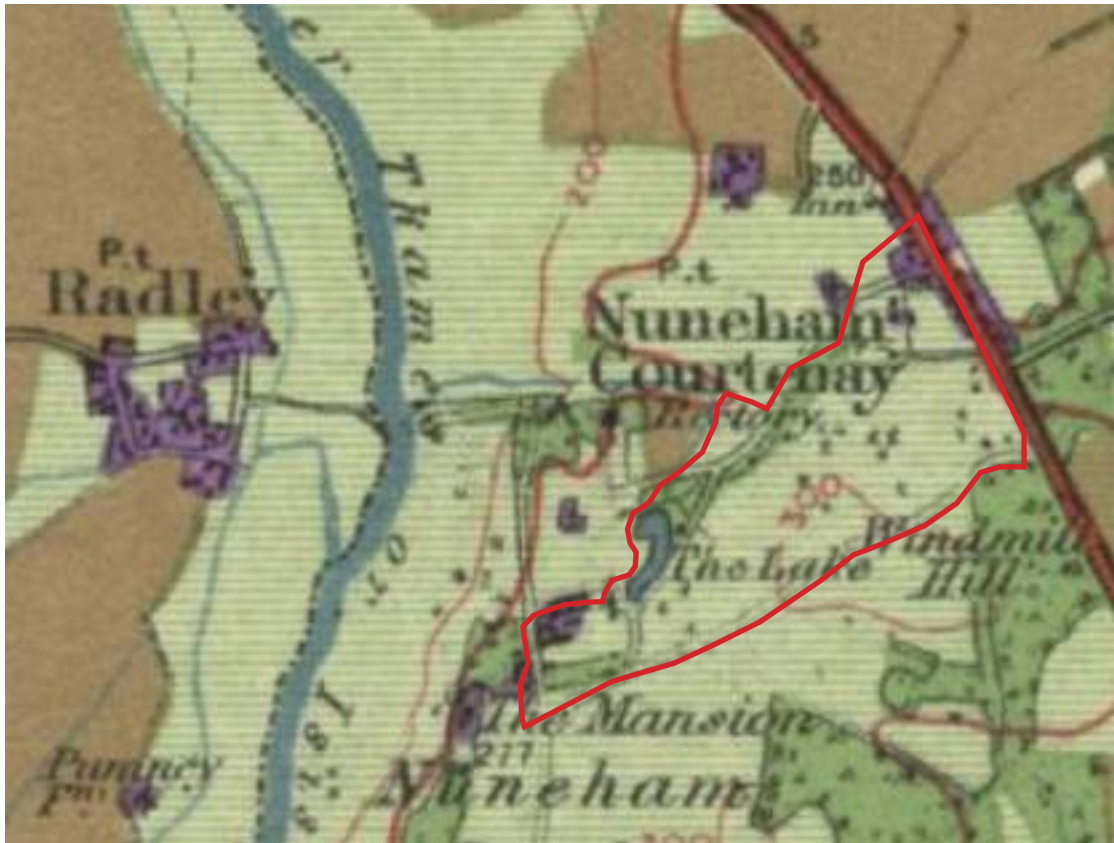


Fig. 83 Land Utilisation Survey, 1941. The drive to the Rectory has been realigned to give access to the 3rd Church of All Saints. The Windmill Hill drive remains.

### 6.3.1 Park (North): *History & Significance*

R. Smith's plan of 1707 shows a road running west from the London Road to the old Newnham Village, along the north boundary of Windmill Field.

In 1779 Lancelot Brown was commissioned to prepare a design for the park. The plan only covers Nuneham House, gardens and Pleasure Grounds and South Park suggesting the North Park (CA1) was never part of the designed landscape. He showed a drive leading to Newnham Lodge past the south of the walled kitchen garden but it may not have been implemented, certainly there is no record of Newnham Lodge.

Davis shows a serpentine drive entering the park at the southern end of Nuneham Courtenay passing to the south of the walled kitchen garden. The northern park boundary may follow the old road (Smith 1707).

The OSD, 1811 shows a drive which runs from the southern end of the Nuneham Courtenay (as Davis) but its alignment appears different (turning to the south as one enters the park from the village).

The 1838 Tithe Map shows a drive around the northern boundary of the park towards the Rectory, presumably following the old road from the village to the Oxford-Henley Road. The drive to Nuneham House remains as shown on the OSD. The lake is shown



with an island at the north end and a woodland belt is shown on the southern side of the drive.

When the Pinetum was designed in 1830s the drive to Nuneham House was realigned through to enter the park at Oxford Lodges, through the pinetum and across Windmill Hill, joining the previous drive and passing to the south of the walled kitchen garden.

The 3rd All Saints Church was built nearer the village in 1880 and Rectory Drive was realigned to give access to the church as well as the Rectory. This is now the only entrance to Nuneham House.

The drive from Abingdon will be discussed in section 6.5.

The lake, which may be an extension of the former village pond, is first shown on Davis's Map of Oxfordshire. There appears to be only scattered parkland tree planting until the Tithe Map in 1838 when the woodland belt along the southern edge of the drive is first shown.

#### **Group Significance - High**

The drives, lake and parkland belt have high historical significance as the surviving elements of the 18th and 19th century landscape. The lake was a key functional component of the historic estate's infrastructure, possibly created from a village pond.

Old Town Close is the site of the village and as a former area of parkland, is of cultural, archaeological and aesthetic significance as a key element in the story of the eighteenth century landscape.

#### *Key Significant Features*

**New All Saints Church** (not listed) - mid 19th century. Significance Medium

**Sawmill** (not listed) - late 19th century. Significance Low

**Rectory Drive** - sections pre 1701. Significance High

**Oxford Lodge Drive** - mid 19th century. Significance High

**Lake** - originally village pond pre 1707. Significance High (Historical and Ecological)

### 6.3.2 Park (North): *Condition Survey*

*Drives:* The drive currently used as the main drive to Nuneham House is tarmac'd and in good condition, but an unsatisfactory approach to the house (it was never a designed approach to the house; only a service route and access to the Rectory). There is extensive signage to the Global Retreat Centre along the drive; the timber signage is well maintained but inappropriate aesthetically. Access is narrow and visibility poor.

The 1830s drive, entered at Oxford Lodge (located outside Estate ownership, now part of Harcourt Arboretum) has been incorporated into the path network through the Arboretum and from the point it enters the park is evident as a grass track. The electricity pylons crossing the park are particularly dominant and visually intrusive.

The 3rd New All Saints Church (not listed) is located to the north of the current drive, surrounded by a drystone wall, with mature yew trees planted around the church. The drystone wall and trees are in good condition. The church is no longer in use.

The old sawmill (not listed) and storage area (with stone from an Oxford college and of potentially high value/significance?) are screened on the south west side by a row of conifers (*Thuja* sp., western red cedar) which although in good condition are not appropriate parkland trees and obstruct the openness of this part of the former parkland. The drive splits just after the Sawmill, the left hand drive goes towards Nuneham House, right fork to the Rectory.

Where the drives converge, north of the walled garden there is an area of hard standing, probable foundations of WWII RAF buildings. The walled kitchen garden (not included in this survey) is glimpsed through trees.

*Park:* The park on either side of the drive is either fenced or hedged from the drive to secure the field boundaries. The fencing is in poor condition and in places completely broken down. The hedges are maintained in good condition but obscure views and openness across the park.

The field to the north of the drive as you leave the village (RLR no. SU55990606) is improved grassland; a public right of way (no. 31772 PRoW) crosses the field, is well marked and in good condition. A further PRoW (no. 31773) enters the park at the southern end of the village and follows the northern boundary of the woodland belt, it is well signposted and in good condition, and joins the PRoW no. 31772.

The field opposite (RLR no. SU54983909) the walled kitchen garden is not cultivated because of the surviving WWII foundations; it has been designated semi improved grassland. The fields to the south of the drive are mainly in arable production.

A large part of Old Newnham Village was located in the field between Home Farm and the Rectory. This field is in arable production which is potentially damaging any archaeology that remains .

Arable field margins are narrow and rooting areas around trees are encroached by cultivation. The majority of field trees are oak many of which are dying or in poor condition as a result ploughing into the root zone. Concrete blocks have been placed around the trunk of one of the field trees in the arable field opposite east side of walled kitchen garden.

The grass on the north side of the drive from the lake to entrance to Nuneham House gardens is regularly mown and in good condition.

*Lake:* The lake is located on the north side of the drive. The south bank of the lake is overgrown with bramble scrub, obscuring views of the lake from the drive and the lake is heavily shaded by trees. The north bank has dense tree cover which screens view of the arable fields to the north. The trees and ground vegetation on the island at the north west end of the lake are in poor condition. Water quality in the lake hasn't been tested as part of the report though appears turbid and the lake appears heavily silted up.

### **6.3.3 Trees and Woodland**

The hedges either side of the existing drive to the house contain a few 18th and 19th century notable individual oak. The original London drive access ran further south hugging the 18th century woodland belt which forms the backdrop (north side) to the parkland. The belt contains many mature oak and sweet chestnut with occasional ash overstorey trees and a mix of understorey regeneration which is sparse in some areas, of poor quality and with inappropriate species such as sycamore.

The lake is surrounded by mature Willow and Poplar forming an almost continuous canopy cover around the water's edge. The condition of Poplars and Willows around the Lake is varied; many display defects typical for these species such as branch/stem failures with associated wounds cavities etc. A few Poplars are in poor condition. Life expectancy of the group as a whole is 30-50 years.

Tree cover around the walled garden and alongside the drive is an eclectic mix of conifer and broad-leaved clumps, individual ornamental specimens, orchard trees, and parkland edge Oaks. The majority of trees were established in the early to mid 20th century although there are some 19th century components that include several mature Oak, Lime, and Plane. The overall condition of trees is good to fair however the main walled garden groups include some poorly formed and suppressed trees due to close spacing, but many quality trees are present and have good long-term potential.

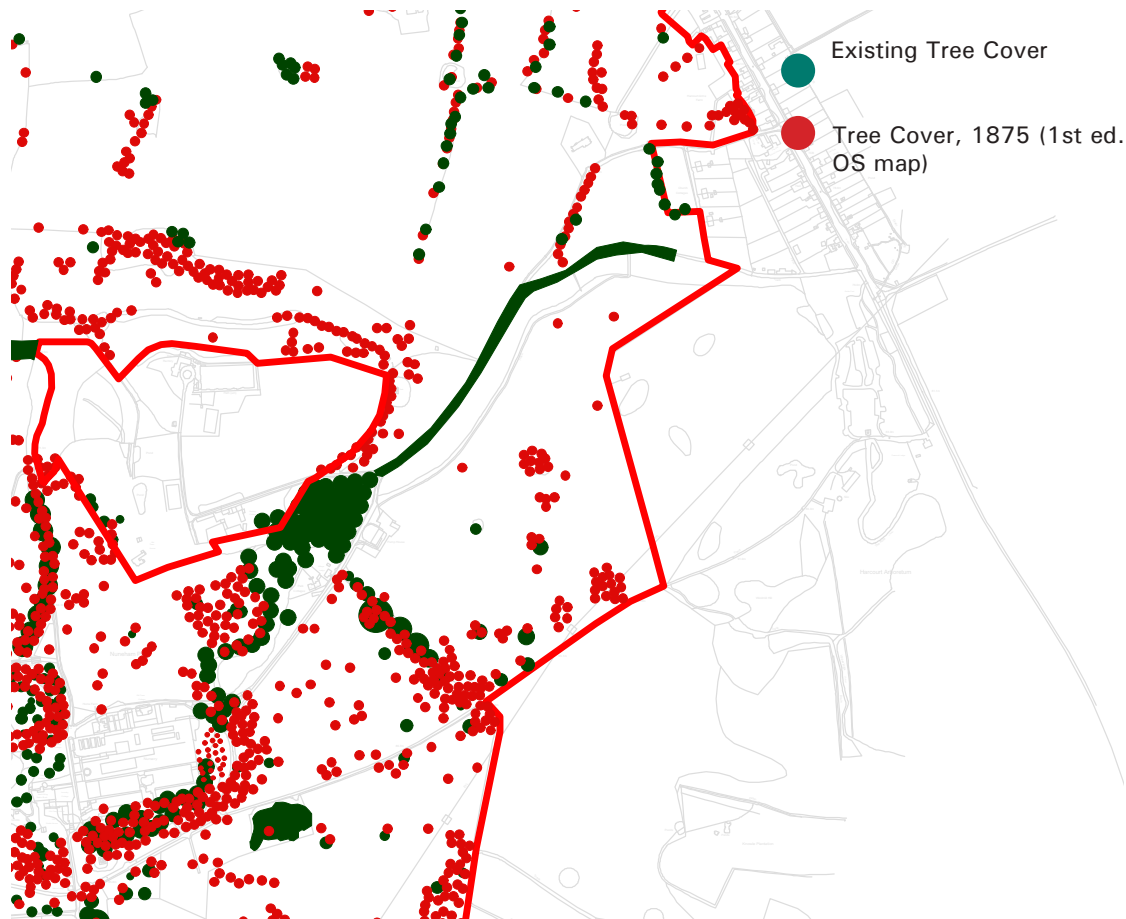


Fig. 84 Analysis of existing and 1875 tree cover. Notable loss of parkland trees.



Entrance to Nuneham House from Nuneham Courtenay



Fencing in poor condition along the drive





Yew trees screening the 3rd All Saints Church



Broken remnants of estate railings on north side of drive



Woodland belt adjacent to drive (north perimeter of park)



View from drive to Upper Farm



Well maintained plantation on the north side of the drive



Old Sawmill





The lake



View from drive View across arable fields to the north west



Park Lodge (could this be the cottage Brown referred to as Newnham Lodge?)



Broken wooden fencing opposite the walled garden



The new Oxford Road drive now disused



The grassed over drive and pylons crossing the park



View from the apex of Windmill Hill across the Thames Valley



Concrete piled under tree.



Compost area located at the union of the two drives. Hidden behind trees.



Ploughing under the tree canopy of parkland trees in arable fields. This is common practice across the farm.



Entrance from the village with signpost for Global Family Centre



Tree planting screening the walled kitchen garden.

**Park (North): *Opportunities***

***High Priority***

Investigate options for new drive to Nuneham House, away from the village, to improve access and create more dramatic entrance to the house. Consider 18th & 19th C drive routes (former Oxford drives & old roads shown on R Smith Map 1707).

Increase the size of field margins in arable fields to improve habitat.

Increase the plough zone around field trees, at least to edge of tree canopy.

Consider future use of the old Sawmill.

Dredge the lake. Clear the lake banks of brambles to allow water to be seen from drive. Clear island of fallen trees and start repollarding programme of willow trees.

New parkland tree planting, refer Tree and Woodland Survey Appendix A and detailed recommendations in section 8.

Remove inappropriate trees (groups of Thuja sp.) and replace with holly and yew for screening once trees have been felled.

***Medium Priority***

Consider replacing hedge/fencing along drive with iron estate railings. These have previously been used as fencing between park and garden.

***Long Term Aspiration***

Improve the quality, with appropriate species, of woodland belt east of drive.

If the farm economy allows, revert the arable land within the former parkland to pasture.

Consider removal or burial of the electricity pylons crossing the park.

**Notable Trees and Tree Groups (Tree and Woodland Survey Appendix A)**

- A group of 3 pedunculate oak (T153-T154 & T156) within arable field. This is typical style of planting in small groups by Lancelot Brown.
- A group of 6 Scots pine within the arable parkland (G57).
- The Woodland belt to east of village approach drive (W1-2) forming northern backdrop to parkland. Mature trees are mainly English / sessile oak, sweet chestnut, and some ash. Several oaks are of 18th century origin – probable Lancelot Brown trees.
- Tree T322 a London plane, probably planted by Lancelot Brown.
- G91 and T333 is a notable clump of 18th century horse chestnut on the northern fringe of the Lake.



#### 6.4 CHARACTER AREA 3: BROWN'S HILL, SIDELANDS & RIVERSIDE

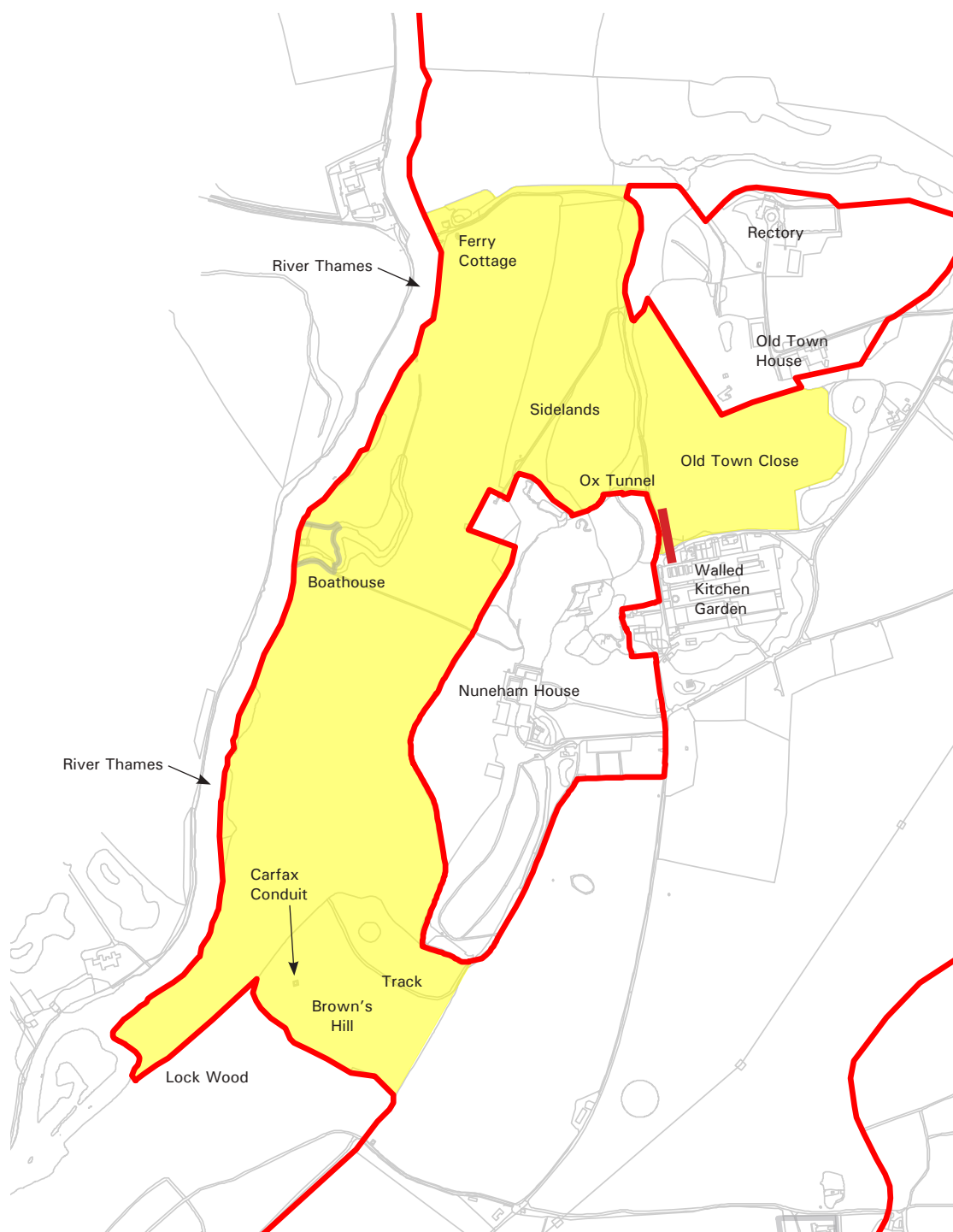


Fig. 85 Brown's Hill, Sidelands & Riverside Character Area



Fig. 86 R Smith's Map of Newnham 1707. The plan shows the extent of the old village which occupied Sidelands, meadows by the river and Lock Wood before it was thinned to create Brown's Hill.



Fig. 87 Plan of Alterations, Lancelot Brown, 1779, including Brown's proposals for the redesign of riverside fields and Brown's Hill. Brown includes the riverside park landscape, and his design for Brown's Hill connects the Hill to the Pleasure Grounds and through designed views to the House.



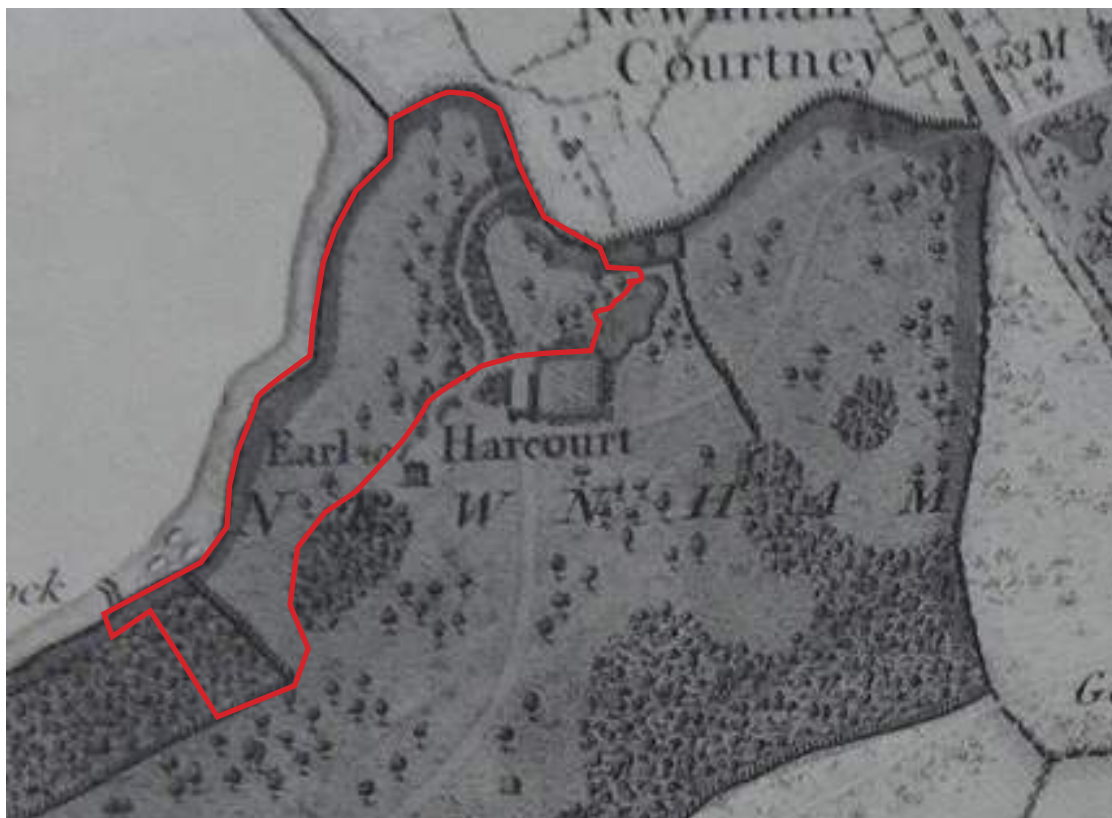


Fig. 88 Davis's Map of Oxfordshire, 1797. Davis shows Brown's Hill still outside the park.



Fig. 89 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1811. Brown's Hill has been incorporated into park

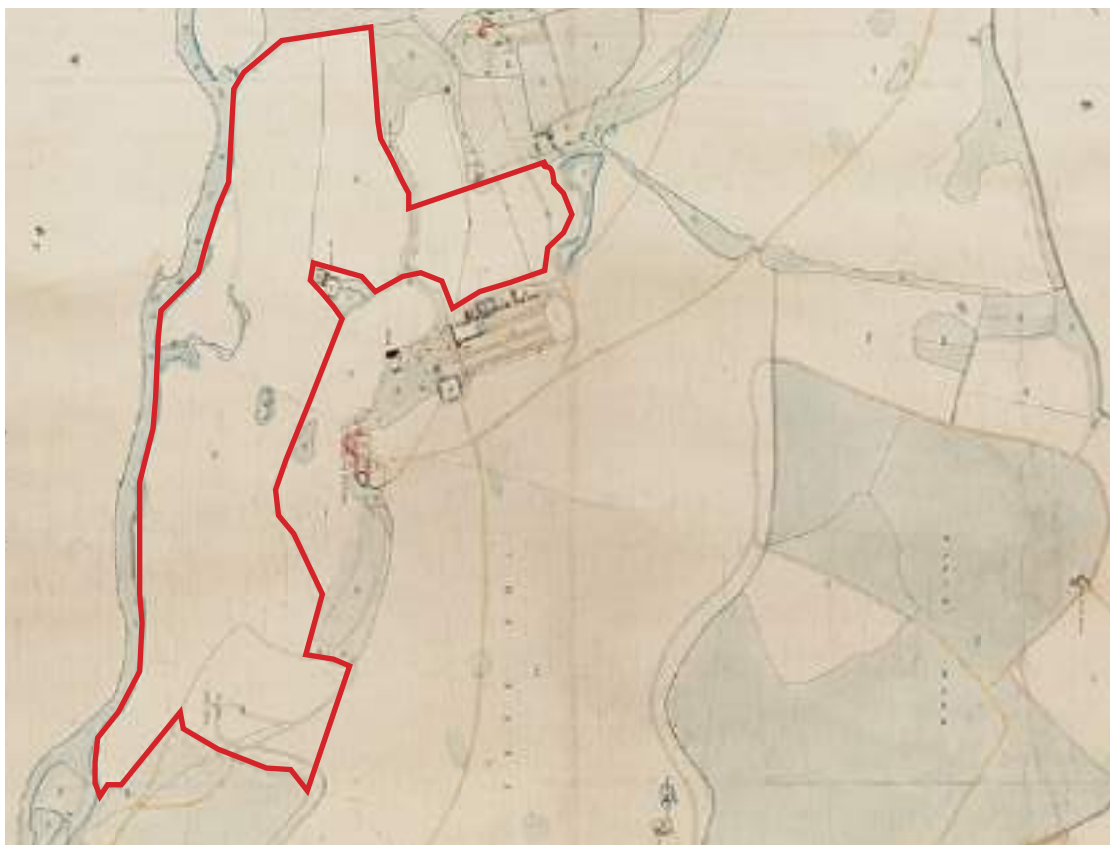


Fig. 90 Tithe Map, 1838. The Tithe Map shows the ride/drive connecting Brown's Hill to the Pleasure Grounds



Fig. 91 1st ed. OS map (1875) gives a clear picture of the tree planting in the area. Note much clearer banks of the Thames, also scattered parkland trees.





Fig. 92 Land Utilisation Survey, 1941 shows the whole area under pasture.

#### 6.4.1 Brown's Hill, Riverside and Sidelands: *History & Significance*

Brown's Hill was once part of Park (later Lock) Wood as shown on R. Smith's Map in 1707 and was carved out as parkland following Brown's plan of 1779. Originally a 'ruined Courtenay Castle' was to have been built as an eyecatcher on the hill, however the 2nd Earl was given the Carfax Conduit which had stood in the middle of Oxford in 1787 and decided to place it on the hill. A surfaced path alongside the Carfax Conduit is shown on the 1834 Tithe Map. Paths to the Conduit are not shown on plans after 1875. Railings were erected around the Conduit by 1902 and repaired in the 1920s. The Conduit was photographed in a poor condition in 1953. The top half removed and restored between 1973 and 1976. The Carfax Conduit is a scheduled monument.

The Glen between the Brown's Walk and Brown's Hill was planted with ornamental shrubs. The date of planting is unknown, judging from the plants used it could be mid - late 19th century.

Riverside field is shown in R Smith's 1707 Map as Lord's Meadow and Tunvey Eaight. Records inform that they were grazed by cattle in 1775. Sidelands was shown partly in the village and partly as farmland. By 1843 the Tithe Map shows the Ox Stalls with pond to the north and farmland to the south, with an Ox Tunnel connecting the riverside fields with the fields to the north. A boat house was added to the river inlet plantation by 1875. The river inlet plantation was extended by 1912 and the boat house rebuilt

### **Group Significance of the Character Area - High**

Brown's Hill is a largely intact part of the eighteenth century parkland. It is also as significant as the setting of the Carfax Conduit, an ancient monument.

The River Thames as part of the setting of the designed landscape and one of the main reasons for Earl Harcourt's decision to build Nuneham House and his desire to create an Arcadian pastoral setting surrounding it.

The 18th century parkland has been compromised by 20th century modification and changes in land use. Ferry cottage is a significant historic estate building and Riverside field is important as the foreground to views to and from the house and river.

#### *Key Significant Features*

**River Thames** - Significance Very High (historically and ecologically)

**Carfax Conduit** (Grade I and AM) - 16th century. Significance Very High

**Ferry Cottage** (not listed within curtilage of Nuneham House) - 19th century. Significance Medium

**Brown's Hill** (within Grade I registered Park) - 18th century. Significance High

**Ox Tunnel** (not listed within curtilage of Nuneham House - late 18th early 19th century. Significance Medium

with a footpath from the house across the meadow to the boat house. An additional building was later added at the ferry crossing and a sewer tank excavated in the Sidelands, by 1912.

The River Thames was central to the decision to build Nuneham House in this setting in order to take in views along the river to Oxford and Abingdon and of the river itself.

#### **6.4.2 Brown's Hill, Riverside and Sidelands: Condition Survey**

*Brown's Hill:* Brown's Hill at the southern end of the character area is a significant remaining feature of the 18th century parkland landscape, and retains a good collection of mature and veteran oaks. There are a few individual 20th century oak, horse chestnut and sycamore, and dense groups of regeneration hawthorn, oak and willow on the sloping ground and around the small pond. Many of the oak trees display a degree of crown dieback, minor/moderate branch failures, and associated wounds and cavities. Overall, they are in fair condition and c.30 of the 42 Oak have a life expectancy of 50-100 years. A few oak have suffered major crown/stem failures and have limited live crown or severely impaired structural condition. Approximately 12 trees have a life

expectancy of less than 50 years and 6 have less than 30 years. The varied condition and age-related features of the trees provide valuable habitat resource for mammals, birds, invertebrates and fungal colonisation.

Brown's Hill is not grazed and the grass is cut with a hay-cut mowing regime. An access track, continuing on from the concrete track from the car park, runs east west across the north end of the Hill starting at the south end of Brown's Walk down the slope to the river side field, the track is in fair condition. No tracks/paths remain to the Carfax Conduit, however evidence remains in the form of earthworks of the former designed walks to the Conduit. There is currently no public access to Brown's Hill.

There are two ponds at the bottom of the glen, both in poor condition. The upper pond is heavily shaded and the banks denuded of vegetation. The lower pond is less shaded, however the banks of the pond are in very bad condition and denuded of vegetation. The ponds are fenced off with low electric fencing to protect water fowl and pheasants. There are bird feeders stationed throughout the north section of the Hill.

Carfax Conduit (Grade I and Scheduled Monument) appears in good condition as does the fence around it. The vegetation is maintained reasonably short between the fence and Conduit.

The views from the Conduit to Nuneham House are open and clear. However the self-set trees and scrub on the bank below and on the banks of the Thames semi-conceal views back to the Conduit from the river.

The Glen was not accessible at the time of survey as it was heavily overgrown, however it appears to have been planted with ornamental woodland plants.

At the entrance to the riverside field, there are remains of iron estate fencing in poor condition.

#### **6.4.3 Riverside and Sidelands**

Riverside field (RLR no. SU53987919) is in arable production and is subject to seasonal, sometimes prolonged, flooding and lies within Flood Zone 3 which the Environment Agency defines as land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding. A pipeline runs north south across the field with series of manholes, field margins are minimal except on the riverbank. A small area of improved grassland (RLR no. SU54981466) is located at the north east side of the riverside fields.

Riverside groups of willow, poplar and alder in places block the views from the house to the river and vice versa. There are several lapsed willow pollards in these groups in need of restoration.

A bridge at Nuneham Lock no longer survives but footings remain evident. This is outside the ownership of the Nuneham Estate.

The arable floodplain is largely devoid of trees, although there are more on the higher





Two views of the bridge at Nuneham Lock (top 1811; bottom early 20th C)



View down the Glen



Carfax Conduit with view towards Abingdon



Mature oak trees on Browns Hill



View from the Conduit to Nuneham House



View of Carfax Conduit from the bank of the Thames (zoomed photo). NB Large rock in foreground of picture.





View of Nuneham House across arable field from boat house



Sewage works



View of Nuneham House painted by JMW Turner, 1787



View of Nuneham House from the bank of the Thames (zoomed photo)



Fig. 93 Analysis of the existing tree cover (green) and tree cover in 1875 (red). Note significant increase in tree cover along the river, and loss of framed views. Also significant loss of parkland trees & boundary planting in the South Park.

ground to the north of the house. The latter are late 20th century linear groups of oak, sycamore, poplar, ash and willow along the field boundaries, and a few mature individual Willow. A narrow tree belt borders the track running down to the Ferry Cottage, mainly early-mature broadleaves and conifer with some 18th century individual oak and two very large 18th century London plane, which may have been planted by Lancelot Brown.

Lapwings have been recorded on the riverside fields by members of the Brahma Kumari community.

A concrete track runs across Sidelands, providing access to modern sewage treatment plant on site of the Ox Stalls. The 1912 sewage tank has been removed and infilled. The treatment works detract from the aesthetic of the park and impinge on views from the Rock Walk in the garden.

There are noticeable terrace earthworks to the north of Sidelands (RLR no. SU54981466), possibly thought to be a medieval field pattern, and to the south east

a small arable field (RLR no. SU54981650). The road to Ferry Cottage is ornamentally planted woodland with box, holly and elder in the understorey.

Old Town Close (RLR no. SU54983842) lies between the walled kitchen garden and Old Town House. Part of the old village was located in this field however it is not known what sub surface footings and foundations of the village may remain. It is currently used for an arable crop.

The entrances and roof of the Ox Tunnel are overgrown with vegetation, making access through the tunnel difficult. The stonework is in poor to fair condition as a result of roots working their way between the stones.

*Views:* The views most often painted or photographed of Nuneham House are from the River Thames across riverside field to the house, the field is always painted as pasture. Hence their high significance. Tree and shrub growth on the banks of the Thames obscure views of the river from Nuneham House and vice versa.

#### 6.4.4 Notable Trees and Tree Groups (Tree and Woodland Survey Appendix A)

- Two London plane trees (T121-T122) adjacent to the road to Ferry Cottage.
- Three mature oak (T254-T256) near to the Carfax Conduit.
- English yew (T130) in dense understorey south of Ferry Cottage.
- Two pedunculate oaks T145 & T146 on Sidelands.
- Two hybrid poplar (T141-T142) and a dawn redwood (T143) on the riverside.



View from the Bank of the Thames looking south east towards Nuneham House.



### **Brown's Hill, Riverside and Sidelands: *Opportunities***

#### ***High Priority***

Open permissive access to Brown's Hill to allow access to the Carfax Conduit.

Increase tree planting across Brown's Hill to improve the age density of trees.

Retain and plant additional groups of thorn in the tree collection.

Retain remnants of 19th century iron estate railings remaining between Brown's Hill and riverside fields.

Introduce a grazing regime to the hill rather than taking a haycut.

Increase the root protection area around field trees.

Fell or repollard riverbank trees to reinstate views to and from Nuneham House and the River Thames.

Consider arable reversion of the Riverside field in the long term if economical viable.

#### ***Medium priority***

Improve the condition of the two ponds at the north end of Brown's Hill. Thin overshadowing trees from the upper pond.

Manage scrub on bank below the Conduit to ensure views to and from the Thames remain open.

Consider removing the game birds from the field and feed elsewhere on the estate.

Consider undertaking a geophysical survey of Old Town Close to determine if there are any remains of the old village.

## 6.5 CHARACTER AREA 4: PARK (SOUTH)

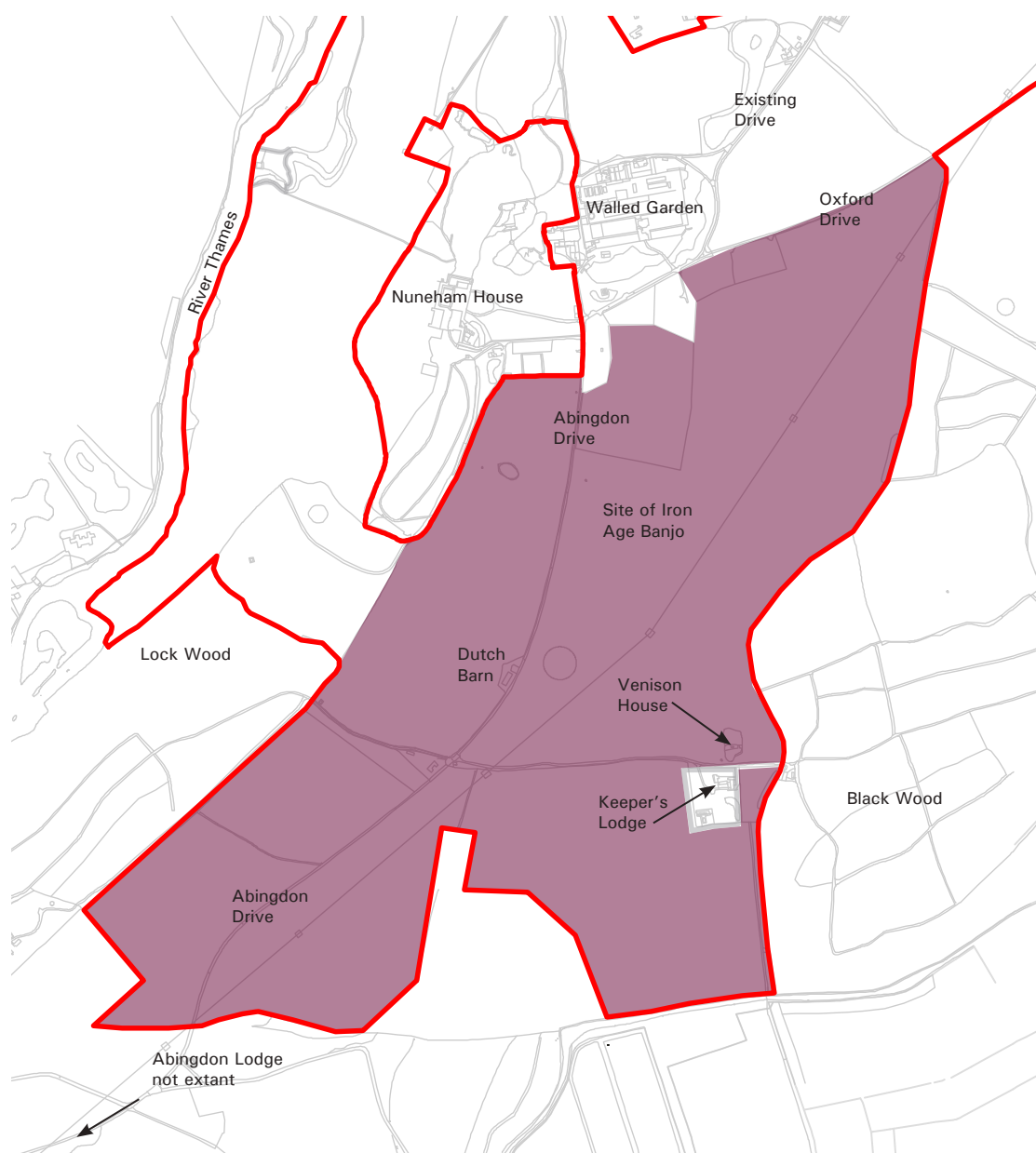


Fig. 94 Character Area 4: Park (South)

### 6.5.1 Park (South): *History & Significance*

The Park (South) area is shown as agricultural land and gorse on Smith's 1707 Map of the Estate. It was cleared and transformed into parkland by 1768. The Abingdon Drive crossed South Park by 1768. The South Park is the focus for Brown's Plan of Alterations 1779, and the 1st edition OS (1875) shows that his planting proposals had been implemented. Scattered individual parkland trees and groups of trees created dynamic views across the park. Comparison between Brown's plan and Smith's map shows that Brown also appears to have utilised existing field boundary trees within his designs, probably to give a sense of maturity to the park.



Fig. 95 Smith's Map of Newnham 1707, showing the area divided into fields and a more open landscape. Red line is approximate fit of the Character Area.



Fig. 96 Brown's Plan of Alterations (1779) shows an open parkland landscape without the field boundaries, and a more sinuous drive through the park, from the newly built Abingdon Lodge. Proposed drive through Black Wood (not implemented), boundary plantations and extending Black Wood. Red line is approximate fit of the Character Area.



Fig. 97 Davis's Map of Oxfordshire, 1797 shows Brown's plan for this area had been largely implemented with the exception of the drive through Black Wood.



Fig. 98 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1811 shows a small building, possibly Keeper's Lodge with a pond to the north with the Venison House located in the centre.





Fig. 99 Tithe Map, 1838. Few changes since 1811. New dog kennels beside Keeper's Lodge.

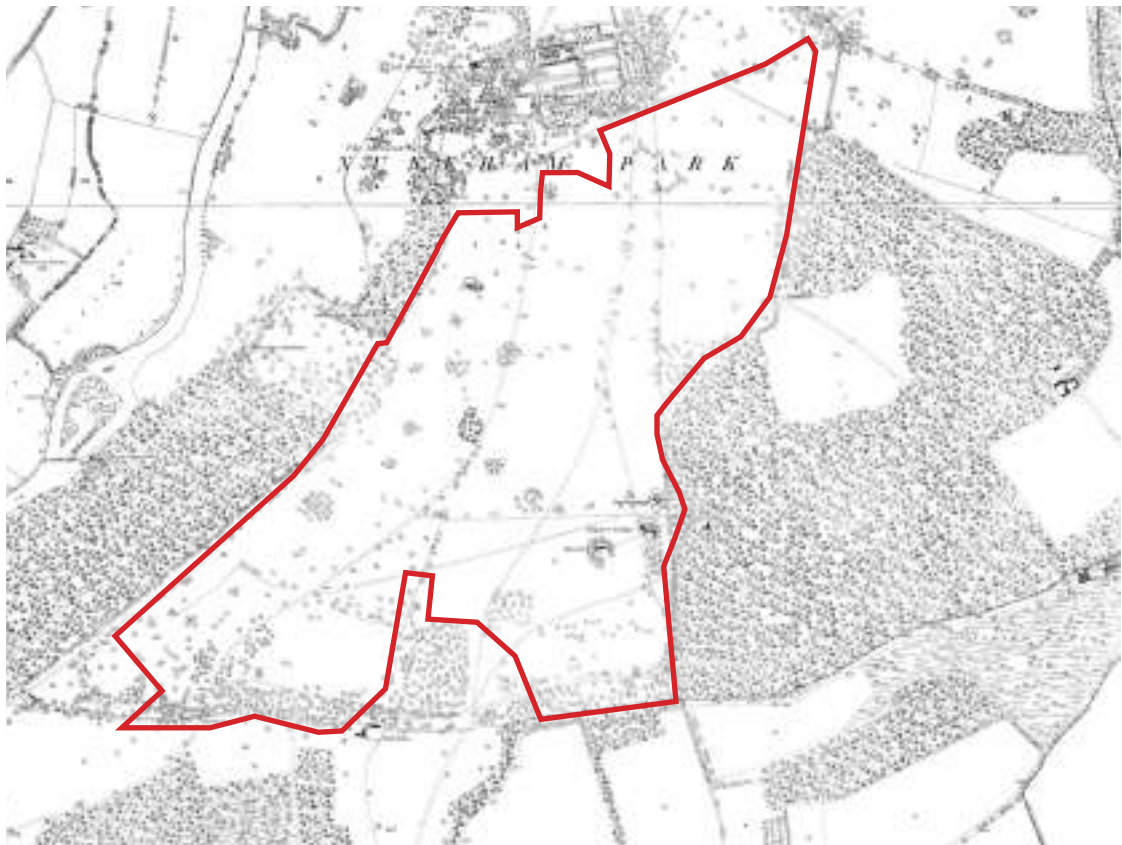


Fig. 100 1st ed. OS map, 1875 shows the mature Brown landscape.



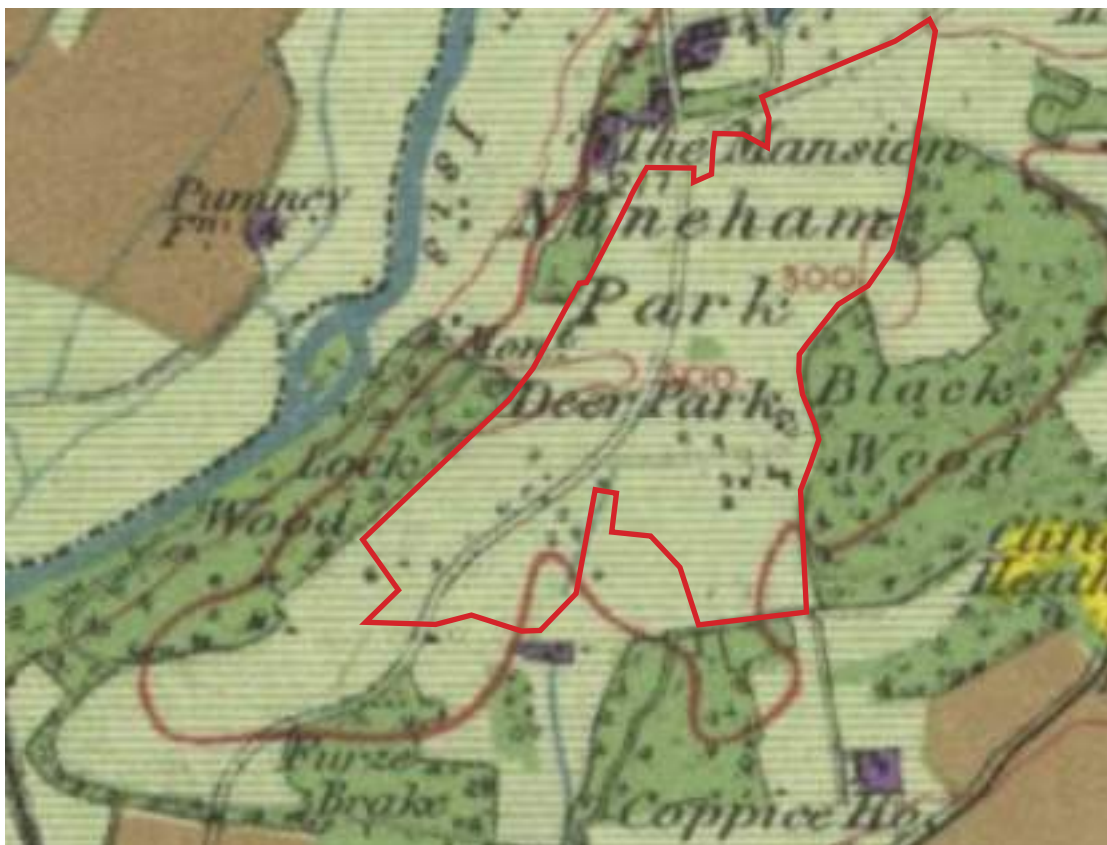


Fig. 101 Land Utilisation Survey, 1941 shows the area under pasture.

Keeper's Lodge is first shown on the OSD (1811) with the Venison House located in centre of pond to the north of the Lodge, with kennels built by 1838.

The Cricket Ground was in place by 1899, and photographed in 1902, but it no longer survives. Further pheasantries and a circular conifer clump were added by 1933. Electricity pylons were erected in the late 1960s (presumed to be contemporary with the building of Didcot Power Station, completed 1968). New Cottage is first shown on the OS map 1960.

#### 6.5.2 Park (South): *Condition Survey*

Currently the area is managed intensively as arable farmland, and the majority of the 18th/19th century parkland trees have been lost with a hard woodland edge around the south. There are only a few surviving mature or veteran parkland oaks scattered within the fields, along with several along the fringes of Black Wood on the east edge of the park. Some 20th century broadleaves are spread along the remaining field boundaries and the access from the south (the former Abingdon Drive). Three tree groups survive, one in the centre just to the east of the south access track, and a couple of pond side clumps near Brown Pleasure Garden ha-ha and around the moated Venison House.

Many of the trees have heavily ploughed rooting areas and several oaks are displaying retrenched crowns, stag headed upper crown and associated cavities and branch tear out wounds, also linked to ploughing too close to tree trunks.

There are strips of cover crop 10m deep adjacent to the old Abingdon Drive.

The Abingdon Drive, now a farm track, is in very bad condition.

A modern Dutch barn has been erected alongside the old Abingdon drive on the skyline, and the existing grain-drying shed lies on the edge of Roundhill Wood, alongside another shed used for storage for the shoot. These buildings are all in fair condition.

The Venison House remains intact and in good condition, the vegetation has been cleared around it and the moat is in good condition, however there are too many trees surrounding the moat closing up views from the old Abingdon Drive of the house. Keeper's Lodge and adjacent land are not in the Estate's ownership.

Visually intrusive electricity pylons cross the park.

In field (RLR no. SU54976283) remains of an Iron Age Banjo are seen as cropmarks. Another set of crop marks close to the Iron Age Banjo in the shape of an arrow may be an addition prehistoric site or could relate to a WWII airfield which lay to the south in Culham.

#### **Significance - High**

Crop marks of the remains of an Iron Age Banjo.

This area constitutes the main area of the 18th century parkland and is therefore a historically significant area. However the majority of the parkland trees have been lost and the land use is all now arable. Surviving parts of the parkland such as the Venison house, Keeper's cottage and the field boundaries have high significance. The Venison house, in particular, is a rare example of its type and is a significant marker of the history of the estate.

Iron Age Banjo - Significance High (archaeologically)

Venison House (Grade II) - Late 18th early 19th century. Significance High

Keepers Cottage (Grade II) - Late 18th century. Significance High (not within ownership boundary)



View across field towards Lock Wood



New Cottage



Pylons crossing the Park



Road to Keeper's Cottage; note narrow field margins



Venison House surrounded by moat



Dutch Barn on skyline





View from old Abingdon Drive looking north east towards Windmill Hill and Harcourt Arboretum.



View towards Black Wood from drive to Keeper's Lodge



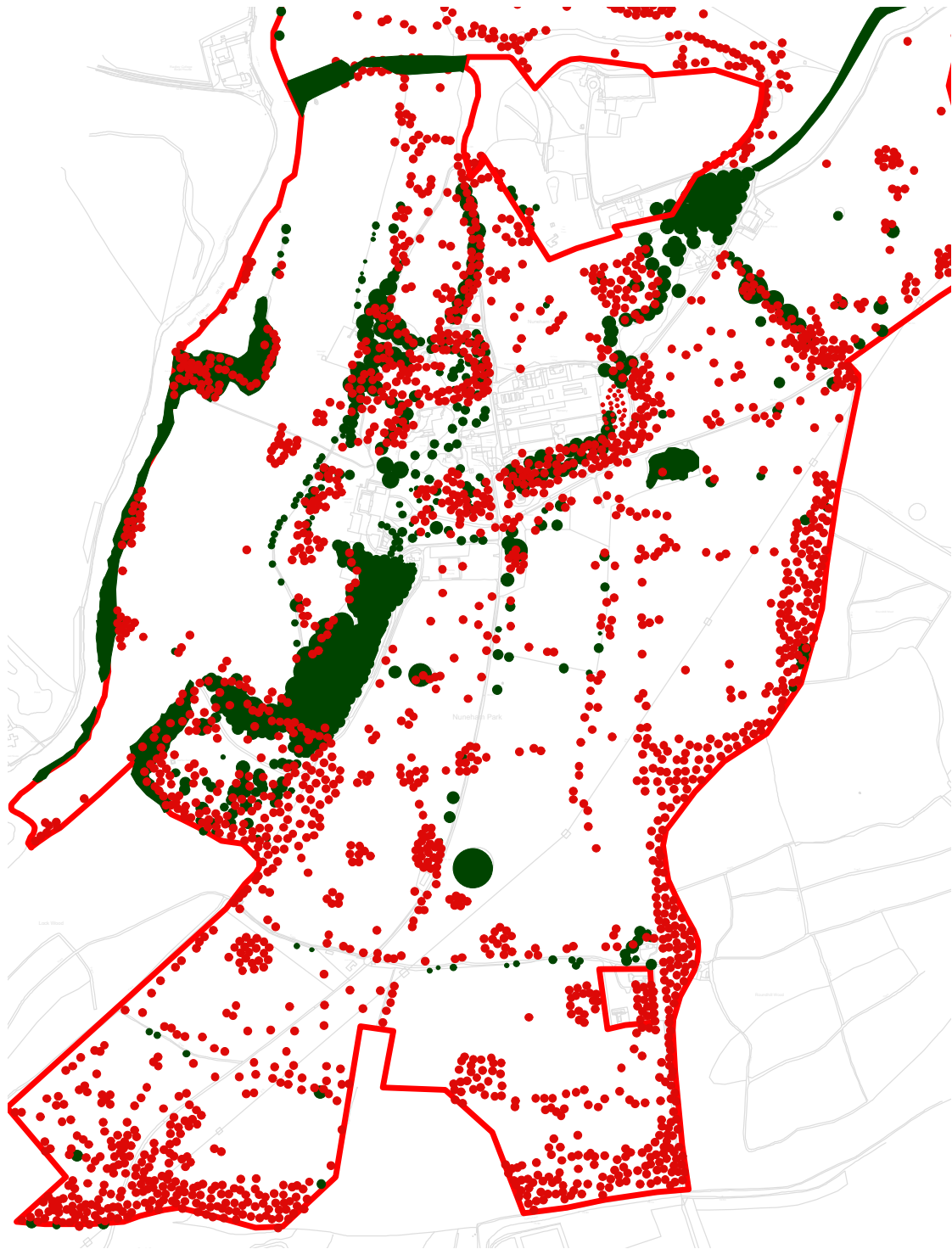


Fig. 102 Analysis of the existing tree cover (green) and 1875 tree cover (red) shows significant loss of trees in the park since the late 19th century.

**Park (South): *Opportunities***

***High Priority***

Increase field margins and root protection areas around field trees.

Improve the surface of old Abingdon Drive.

Remove the Dutch Barn on the west side of Abingdon Drive.

Conserve the Venison House and consider undertaking full condition survey.  
Make repairs as recommended.

Conserve archaeological sites by implementing a 'No Till' method of cultivation

***Medium Priority***

Increase tree planting across South Park to improve the age density of trees.

***Long Term Aspirations***

Consider long aspiration to restore the parkland (pasture, parkland tree planting).

Consider long term removal of the electricity pylons crossing the park.

**Notable Trees and Tree Groups (Tree and Woodland Survey Appendix A)**

- There are several parkland Oaks of late 18th to late 19th century origin along the eastern edge of the arable farmland bordering the northern end of Black Wood (T186-T199).
- Trees T202-T222 are field-edge trees along the southern edge of Black Wood of early to late 18th century with some specimens of mid-19th century origin.
- There are scattered individuals within the arable fields. The stand out trees within this locality are T176, T184, T185, T189, T225, T228, T229 & T299.
- Early-mature Oak and other broadleaves align the remaining field boundaries and track edges ( G67-71).
- Mature Wellingtonia's within arable landscape (T288 & T291-T292)

## 7.0 VISION AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

### 7.1 Vision

The vision for the parkland and wider estate at Nuneham is to reinstate the spirit and aesthetics of the Arcadian landscape, as developed by the Harcourt family during the mid – late 18th century, and influenced by poets, designers and artists including Whitehead, Rousseau, Mason, Lancelot Brown, Sandby and Turner. The landscape continued to evolve throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century and the aim is to conserve and enhance the character and features of the landscape which evolved through almost 200 years of ownership by the Harcourt family. The vision includes the conservation and enhancement of the diverse ecological habitats, the protection of the archaeological resource, whilst protecting the economic resource which the agricultural estate provides.

The distinct elements of the Nuneham landscape to be conserved and enhanced are:

- Reconnecting Nuneham House, gardens and park with the River Thames. The river, the topography and the character of the natural riverine landscape were key drivers in the design of the 18th century landscape at Nuneham.
- Recreating key and significant views represented in the paintings of Paul Sandby, JMW Turner, John Boydell, after Joseph Farington and the photographs taken by Henry Taunt and Country Life.
- Reinstating the parkland landscape, as embellished by Brown.
- Improving the existing hedgerow network across the park, including planting hedgerow trees and increasing field margins. The enhancement and expansion of the Local Wildlife Site at Lower Farm.
- Reverting arable land to pasture, where possible and feasible.
- Improving access to the park and circulation around it, by recreating drives and rides, with the possible connection to Harcourt Arboretum.
- The ecology of the park is of great significance with its diverse habitats, notably the grasslands, riverside and marginal habitats, and the parkland trees and woodlands. These habitats were all part of the 18th century Arcadian landscape developed by the family and captured in the paintings of Paul Sandby, and should be conserved and enhanced.
- Protection of the archaeological resource.

The improvements to the park will in part be funded by the success of the agricultural enterprise and it will be important to strike a balance between the implementation of the above vision and the farming operation.

## 7.2 Guiding Policies

The guiding policies for the Parkland Management Plan for The Nuneham Estate are:

- To conserve the archaeological interest within the park. This includes largely ridge and furrow, Romano British Pottery Production site, Iron Age Banjo, former site of village, cropmarks and various findspots, as well as the landscape structures and features. Conservation of arable and grassland is important as these areas may hold hitherto undiscovered sub-surface remains of prehistoric or later date. Standard approaches to the archaeological resource should also apply, with suitable consultation with the Oxford County Council archaeologist/advisor ahead of any changes to land management or development which would have an impact on built structures or archaeological remains. Shallow till cultivation is recommended to protect the archaeological resource in arable fields, and reversion to pasture is the ideal aspiration.
- To conserve and enhance existing ecological habitats and to create new ones, with greater connectivity.
- Improve the management of the water bodies and to achieve a successful balance with the ecological and historic/aesthetic benefits. Desilt the lake and ponds across the site.
- Consider restoration only where there is sufficient archival or archaeological evidence; where there is no such evidence of lost features, consideration may be given to commissioning new and appropriately sympathetic pieces.
- Improve the interpretation of the historic landscape and nature conservation; encourage exploration, enjoyment and understanding. This will give future generations an appreciation of the long history and distinct qualities of this designed landscape which has been active for such a sustained period since its creation in the 1760s.

## 7.3 General Management Policies

Conservation and, where appropriate, restoration should also account for the parks agricultural and archaeological heritage: Iron Age banjo; Roman – British pottery works; ridge and furrow, and the use and management of the park as setting and contrast for Nuneham House and gardens.

**Archaeology:** Future management of the park should take into account the sensitive archaeological remains above and below the surface of the park and their preservation. An assessment of archaeological maps, plans, aerial photographs and LiDAR survey for the entire park should be undertaken before any tree planting, or changes in cultivation are made. If the area under management change is considered sensitive an archaeological watching brief is recommended during the works.

New archaeological features discovered in the park should be reported to the County



Archaeologist and Historic Environment Record as soon as they are discovered.

Before carrying out any work involving ground disturbance (including the planting of trees), seek professional archaeological advice as to the potential interest and how best to manage the proposed work, protect the archaeological assets and record any findings. Archaeological recording to take place during restoration of the lakes and to take into account any surviving palaeoarchaeological evidence.

***Landscape Structures:*** Extant features must be prevented from further deterioration at the very least, with the ultimate goal of restoring features and structures of historical interest. Appropriate professional advice should be sought before undertaking repair and conservation.

***Ecology:*** Seek to improve the biodiversity of the various existing habitats (woodland, trees, grassland, hedgerows, ponds, riverine, lake and ditches) thereby improving the ecological value of the park landscape.

Pasture should be grazed rather than mown. Low grazing densities are recommended and a mix of sheep cattle will help diversify the sward.

Water bodies are generally silted up and are encroached and over-shaded by trees and marginal vegetation. Desilting and selective management of vegetation are needed. It is important that vegetation and silt are managed on a regular basis, in order to conserve the historic design and enhance nature conservation value. During silt removal care is required to preserve water fauna, pond and ditch edges. Statutory licences may be required for desilting and deposition.

***Trees and Woodland:*** The existing management of trees and woodland could be improved. Where possible deadwood should be allowed to lie where it has fallen to develop into deadwood habitat. Allow the mature individual parkland trees to continue to veteran status. Maintain broadleaf edges to Black and Lock Wood.

Trees and woodland planted to recreate the parkland design should be managed to reach veteran age where possible and not included within commercial woodland management, to ensure a continuation of important ecological habitats.

It is generally advised, to avoid pests or diseases attacking one species, that where possible woodland planting should contain mixed broadleaf and/or conifer species, with sufficient spacing, once the woodland canopy closes at approximately 15 -20 years to encourage air movement.

***Views:*** The channelling of views from drives across the park into and out of the garden, to and from the River Thames, Carfax Conduit and towards Oxford and Abingdon are important elements of the design. Views should be retained, and restored. New planting should take into account dynamic views journeying along the Abingdon Drive and Oxford Drive over Windmill Hill. Repollarding and thinning trees along the bank of the Thames to reconnect the House, gardens and park to the river.

**Fencing:** The choice of fencing will be driven by historical precedent, aesthetic and stock/land management objectives. Where there is evidence of the original fencing, the same should be replicated where needed, as between gardens and park where iron estate fencing was used. For less visible areas and where there is no evidence of the historical fencing used, modern alternatives such as post and wire may be used if aesthetically appropriate.

**Access:** Improve access across the park through the reinstatement or way-marking of the historic drives. Primarily this relates to the existing public rights of way which cross the site, but consideration should also be given to creating further permissive access. Reduction in fencing to promote wider access should be considered but this needs to be managed in partnership with the tenant farmer, bearing in mind crop growth and managing livestock. Where public access is to be created or promoted within ecological sensitive areas, paths may need to be fenced to restrict the impact on important habitats. Policies for the control of dogs is required across the estate.

#### 7.4 General Considerations and Standards of Work

As a Grade I registered park all conservation, restoration, repair and management work must be of the highest standard and undertaken following national guidance on the restoration and conservation of the historic environment. Appropriate professionals and qualified persons should be used where applicable (conservation landscape architect, landscape manager, conservation architect, surveyor, archaeologist, ecologist, engineer, with experience of working in the historic environment).

All archaeological surveys, investigations and evaluations must follow the codes, standards and guidelines set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).

All ecological surveys must follow the codes, standards and guidelines set by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

Historical references and the plant guidance tables in the Historic England handbook 'The Management and Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes' (2007) is a useful guide.

The effects of climate change on new planting must be considered, also prevalent diseases such as horse chestnut Leaf Miner and Bleeding Canker, Acute oak Decline, *Phytophthora ramorum*, Chalara dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) and *Sirococcus* Blight.

Any future decisions regarding conservation, repair and restoration should be in keeping with the history and significance of the landscape, as defined in the Statement of Significance and the restoration vision for the landscape. Where necessary detailed design should be based on further research, using traditional techniques and materials and should be prepared to follow the codes, standards and guidelines set by the National Trust, Landscape Institute and Historic England.

## **7.5 Consents, Permissions and Licences**

Before undertaking any conservation work within the park, advice should be sought from the relevant statutory body as to whether consents, permissions and licences are required. The park (i.e. the study area excluding Upper Farm and Lower Farm) is a registered Grade I, and although a non-statutory designation, this is a material consideration in planning. Much of the estate is however within the curtilage of the many listed buildings, and as such do hold statutory protection. The Grade I registered landscape also lies within the Nuneham Courtenay Conservation Area and thus affords statutory protection.

Any tree works within the Conservation Area will require consent from the local planning authority. Depending on the scale of work proposed a felling licence from the Forestry Commission may be required across the Estate.

Any proposals which may affect protected species or their habitats may require a licence from Natural England. Advice should be sought before undertaking any such works.

As noted above, desilting water bodies and the deposition of silt may require consent from the Environment Agency or County Council.

Archaeology: seek professional advice for further investigation and protection of archaeology. Any work to the Scheduled Carfax Monument will require Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic England.

## **7.6 Financial Sustainability**

Suitable agri-environmental schemes should be regularly researched to assist with the sustainability and appropriate management of the park, also checking for the most suitable option (e.g. Countryside Stewardship and its successors).

## **7.7 Archive, Recording and Monitoring**

A copy of this Parkland Management Plan should be stored in the Estate archives and the HER. The Gardens Trust and the Hestercombe Gardens Trust should be notified on this report. All restoration work undertaken in the park should be fully documented and archived in the same places.

All archive material collected during the production of this Parkland Management Plan must be retained in a secure and dry environment. Archive catalogues should be reviewed regularly to ensure all documentation remains in the archive and in good, stable condition. Digital archives should be stored in at least two separate locations in a stable format. A copy of this Parkland Management Plan may be lodged at Hestercombe in The Gardens' Trust archive, subject to the Estate's approval.

## **7.8 Future Development Proposals**

Any future development proposals should take account of the history and significance of the designed landscape at Nuneham, and the recommendations set out in this Parkland

Management Plan.

Future conservation work undertaken must take full account of the principles for conservation set out in this Plan, or its successors and the HE 'Conservation Principles'.

This Parkland Management Plan should be used to inform relevant local, regional and statutory bodies to reinforce the importance of the landscape at Nuneham and to protect it from intrusive and inappropriate development. This includes the protection of historically important views and the setting of listed buildings, the Conservation Area and the registered park. Refer to HE Guidance notes 'Seeing the History in the View' and 'The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

## **7.9 Further Research and Surveys**

Consideration should be given to undertaking the following research and surveys:

Investigate through geophysics and trial trenching the location of drives/roads and rides shown on the R Smith Map of Newnham 1707 and Lancelot Brown's Plan of Alterations 1797.

The Medieval village: understand precise location and what remains, and provide further advice as to protection of the archaeological resource.

Investigate further how much of Brown's plans were implemented, especially in the gardens.



## **8.0 MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1** Detailed recommendations for the park can be found in the table overleaf and on Plan P in Volume II.

## THE NUNEHAM ESTATE - PARKLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of all management proposals including priorities

Priority Descriptions: H = 1-2 years, M = 3-5 years, L = 6-10 years, LT = 10+ years

### Refer to Plan P Landscape Master Plan

Recommendation number	References used in Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
<b>Character Area</b>		<b>Upper Farm</b>			
		<i><b>Vision and Aims:</b> To improve ecological habitats across Upper Farm, plant hedgerow trees and implement a pollarding programme for riverside willows to recreate historic views of the Thames.</i>			
1		Update the ecological survey for Lower Farm Bottom Meadow	Arranged by NE	H	The last survey was completed in 2010
2		Improve the species diversity of the grass in field no's SP53004153 & 4632, using green hay from Lower Farm Bottom Meadow	CS	H	To enhance and improve the Lowland Meadow habitat
3		Consider reversion of field no. SU53996882 to grass, using green hay from Lower Farm Bottom Meadow	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To enhance and improve the Lowland Meadow habitat
4		Keep the remains of the Romano - British pottery works under pasture	CS	LT	The most benign method of managing the sub-surface remains
5		Remove scrub from the lynchets/terraces in field no. SU54985093. Do not pull out but cut at ground level. If necessary cut new growth or spray off if permitted.	CS	H	To preserve the remains of the lynchets/terraace
6		Gap up hedges and consider replanting new hedges (refer to nos 1- 10 on Landscape Master Plan). Specify length?	CS	H	To enhance and improve the hedgerow habitat, creating green corridors across the farmland
7		Increase the width of field margins (4-6m) across Upper Farmland. Specify area/length?	CS	H	To improve the ecological habitat
8		Seek removal of pylons running east-west across the area (re-route or bury)	Estate	LT	To improve views across the area.
9		No ploughing under tree canopies (full extent of tree canopy plus 2m additional margin)	CS	H	To improve the health of the trees
10		Prevent further deterioration of historic farm buildings at Upper Farm, (refer to Barns A & B on page 107 and Barn C on page 106). Consider future alternative use for the buildings to ensure their long term survival.	Estate	H	To retain the historic farm buildings
11		Consider possibility of creating a new entrance and drive to Nuneham House from the north through Upper Farm. Options to consider are the old Oxford Road and road to the south shown on R Smith's Map of Newnham 1707, also two old alignments of the Oxford Drive (18th C).	Estate	H	To create a more satisfactory entrance into the park
12		To inform the above recommendation, undertake geophysical survey and trial trenching across track on northern boundary of RLR field SU54995199	Estate	H	To determine if it is the Oxford Road shown on R Smith's Map of Newham. 1707
13		To inform the above recommendation, undertake a geophysical survey/trial trenching of cropmarks and earthworks in fields SP54987379 and 5093, SP53007872 and SU54996110 and their surroundings.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To gain a greater understanding of the archaeological resource.
14		Replant the orchard to the north of Upper Farm using local heritage species. Manage ground as species-rich hay meadow.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To create additional habitat on historic site of orchard
15	T26	Reduce weight of over-extended limbs of ash tree by 5-6m	CS	M	To reduce potential of failure of tree
16	T28	Repollard crack willow to previous pollard points	CS	M	To manage in long term health of tree
17	T40	Reduce crown height on ash tree by 5m	CS	M	To reduce the mechanical stress on the tree
18	T98	Selectively halo around oak tree	CS	M	to reduce suppression on oak tree
19	T105-107	Fence around trees (post & wire)	CS	M	To limit livestock access and browsing damage

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
20	G8	Repollard two crack willow.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of trees
21	G11	Repollard all crack willow along culvert.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree and improve historic views along the Thames
22	G14	Repollarding of crack willow along edge of river.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree and improve historic views along the Thames
23	G17	Remove willow growing in pond and establish pollard regime on remaining Crack willows.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree
24	G18	Repollard two crack willow along edge of field boundary.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree
25	G21, G22, G23	Repollard all crack willow within group.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree and improve historic views along the Thames
26	G31	Fell dead Elm within group.	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To improve the appearance of the group
27	G33	Repollard and establish pollard regime on all crack willow.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage the long term health of the trees
28	G36, G37	Repollard all willow along edge of river bank.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage in long term health of tree and improve historic views along the Thames
29	G38	Remove poor sycamore and scrub in understorey, and replant with 15-20 English oak, beech, small-leaved lime, sweet chestnut as replacements for overstorey trees. Revert the ground layer to grass to integrate the tree group with the grass valley it sits above.	CS	M	To maintain this important group of trees in the landscape
30	G40	Repollard all willow along stream.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To manage the long term health of the trees
31	G92	Continue maintenance to establish hedge (Weed control, cleaning out spirals, replacing losses/broken bamboos and spirals).	CS	H	To create a dense thick hedge along the roadside
		<b>Future Tree planting</b> (refer to Appendix 5 in Tree and Woodland Survey)			
32	FP11	Plant 4-6 English oak and Small leaved Lime as individuals on northern slopes, keeping the valley bottom open. See 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1875 for locations.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in this attractive field
33	FP12	Plant 6 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
34	FP13	Plant 4 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
35	FP14	Plant 8 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
36	FP15	Plant 4 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
37	FP16	Plant 6 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
38	FP17	Plant 4 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
39	FP18	Plant 6 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
40	FP19	Plant 12 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
41	FP20	Plant 4 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
42	FP21	Plant 3 English oak & Field maple at irregular spacing as individual hedgerow trees.	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
43	FP22	Plant triangle in field corner with mixed broadleaf trees and shrubs (English oak, Small-leaved Lime, Field maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Spindle, Crab apple).	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
44	FP23	Plant triangle in field corner with mixed broadleaf trees and shrubs (English oak, Small-leaved Lime, Field maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Spindle, Crab apple).	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
45	FP24	Plant triangle in field corner with mixed broadleaf trees and shrubs (English oak, Small-leaved Lime, Field maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Spindle, Crab apple), to extend G27 into a small woodland.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
46	FP25	Plant triangle in field corner with mixed broadleaf trees and shrubs (English oak, Small-leaved Lime, Field maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Spindle, Crab apple).	CS	L	To increase the tree cover in the Upper Farmland
		<b>Park (North)</b>			
		<b>Vision and Aims:</b> To restore the 18th/19th C character and appearance of the park as represented on the 1st edition OS; to improve the approach to Nuneham House, whether this involve improving the existing drive, restoring one or more of the 18th/19th drives or creating new drive(s).			
47		Consider creation of a new drive across Upper Farm. See Recommendation 11 above.	Estate	H	To improve access and create a more dramatic drive
48		Fencing - Replace broken fencing along current drive (RLR no. SU54933909). Use of iron estate fencing.	Estate	M	Remnant iron fencing remains in short sections along the drive suggesting that this was used to define the boundary between park and gardens
49		Dredge the lake. Permission required from OCC/EA for deposition of silt.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	The lake is heavily silted and dredging will improve water movement through the lake
50		Remove the scrub from the lake edges	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve the appearance and create better views of the lake
51		Remove tangle of fallen branches and trees on the island. Repollard willow	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve the wildfowl habitat
52		Increase the width of field margins	CS	H	To improve the farmland habitats
53		Increase the no plough area under trees to the canopy edge	CS	H	To improve the health of the trees
54		Sawmill: historically there was no building here. If retained and converted for re-use, ensure the building is concealed with appropriate planting and integrated into the landscape.	Estate		This derelict building is visually intrusive being so close to the drive
55		Should the farm economy allow, revert all arable fields in this area to pasture	Estate	LT	To recreate the parkland
56		Consider opening the old Oxford Drive through Harcourt Arboretum, possibly as a walk, or even as a vehicular drive, perhaps for the limited use only if the University agrees. Historically there was no fencing on either side of this drive. As an alternative consider reinstating the previous drive from the southern end of Nuneham Courtenay village (ref OSD/Tithe Maps).	Estate	LT	To recreate the 19th century entrance to the park
57		Remove pylons crossing the park, burying the lines underground	Estate	LT	To improve views across the park
58	T157-158	Remove limbs from dead oak trees to create 'monolith' trees. Stack fallen wood around base	CS	M	Excellent habitat value

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
59	T148-152	Replant this group of oak to form a clump of 10-15 trees: Use English / sessile oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime. Locate the new planting in the gaps between the existing mature trees.	CS	M	To retain this important group of trees
60	T163	Remove limbs from dead oak tree to create 'monolith'. Stack fallen wood around base	CS	M	Excellent habitat value
61	T308, T318	Remove ivy growth.	Estate	M	To stop suppression of tree by ivy
62	T324	Clear vegetation around oak tree to create 'halo'.	CS	M	To remove suppression from the upper crown and improve it's long term health
63	G58	Remove a group of 12 Lawson cypress and replant with mixed broadleaves.	CS	M	Lawson' cypress are inappropriate parkland species.
64	G84	Selective thin removing poor quality trees on south side of the Walled garden, remove sycamore component.	CS	M	To improve the aesthetic quality of the group
65		Replant orchard to east of walled garden. Plant heritage fruit tree species local to area.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	Replant old orchard on historical footprint, also screens walled garden from drive(s)
66	G85	Group of 20 lime trees, drawn form and ovy clad. Selective thin of group by 30%.	CS	M	To improve the quality of the trees
67	G88	Fell group of 5 western red cedar and Lawson's cypress and replant with lime trees	CS	H	Inappropriate parkland trees
68	G90	Lake by Drive: Selectively fell trees, to re- open views of water from drive. Pollard mature willows. Replant parkland clump (FP7) in parkland as a lake backdrop, and re-open view into parkland to the east of the drive by removal of all or part of drive side hedge.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve views across the lake and park
		<b>Future Tree planting</b> (refer to Appendix 5 in Tree and Woodland Survey)			
69	FP5	Plant 15-20 individual broadleaves (use English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, field maple), and locate these to frame and give perspective and depth to long views from the drive across the parkland through gaps in field boundaries (G61-62). See 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1875 for guidance on location.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover across the park to historic levels
70	FP6	Plant three infield broadleaf clumps (English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, large-leaved lime) with 10- 20 trees in each. Plant 10-15 individual broadleaves (use English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, field maple), with 2 or 3 single species clusters of 2-3 trees. See 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map 1875 for guidance on location.	CS	M	To increase the tree cover across the park to historic levels
71	FP7	Consider replanting 30-50 mixed broadleaves (English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved/large-leaved lime, hornbeam, field maple) as a backdrop to the lake. See 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1875 as a guide to layout. Plant 5- 7 individuals in remainder of parkland; use English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, and 1 or 2 cedar of Lebanon.	CS	L	
		<b>Woodland Belt around norther edge of park</b> (refer to Tree and Woodland Survey).			
72		Prepare Woodland Management Plan for woodland belt as over 2ha	CS (2nd application 2025)		To protect the long term futureof the woodland belt
73	W1	AIM: Mixed broadleaved dominated woodland on existing footprint consisting mainly of English oak/sweet chestnut/small-leaved lime/hornbeam/sycamore. ACTIONS: Selective felling to create 1-2 canopy gaps at east end. Replant these and natural canopy gaps at west end with mixed broadleaves ( English oak, sweet chestnut, small- leaved lime, hornbeam).	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt
74	W2	AIM: Mixed broadleaved dominated woodland on existing footprint consisting mainly of English Oak/sweet chestnut/small-leaved lime/hornbeam/sycamore. ACTIONS: Clear all poor understorey (sycamore, wild cherry). Retain any decent specimens growing into suitable canopy gaps. Underplant with mixed broadleaves ( English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved lime, hornbeam).	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt
75	W3	AIM: Mixed broadleaf / conifer woodland with improved ecological value. ACTIONS: Selectively thin overstorey, favouring best specimens. Clear areas of understorey, and replant canopy gaps with oak, hornbeam, alder. Use conifer (western red cedar, grand fir, Douglas fir) to replant at later interventions.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt



Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix XX	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
		<b>Brown's Hill, Riverside &amp; Sidelands</b>			
		<i><b>Vision and Aims:</b> To manage to Brown's Hill as grazed wood pasture; open controlled permissive access to the Carfax Conduit and restore the parkland setting along River Thames, opening up historically significant views of the river and long views to Oxford and Abingdon.</i>			
76		Allow controlled permissive access to Brown's Hill and the Carfax Conduit	Estate		To allow the public greater access across the estate
77		Introduce a grazing regime on Brown's Hill rather than taking a haycut. Stock at low densities and ideally with both cattle and sheep	CS	M	To improve the species diversity of the grass
78		Increase the width of field margins and increase the no-plough zone around field trees (full extent of canopies plus 2m exclusion area)	CS	H	To improve farmland habitat and improve the health of the trees
79		Relocate sewage treatment works from field (RLR no. SU53987919)	Estate	LT	Visually intrusive; its removal will improve the parkland setting
80		Retain remnant iron estate railings on north side of the Glen and around south west side of Brown's Hill. Clear away vegetation to prevent further damage; conserve as a minimum, ideally reinstate to match original.	Estate	LT	To reflect the historic style of fencing and possibly use it as a template for new iron fencing
81		Manage the scrub on the slope beneath Carfax Conduit: cut back to open up and retain key views over the Thames and back towards the house.	CS	H	To ensure views of the Conduit from below and the Thames remain open
82		Game bird feeding: if possible relocate, otherwise hide from view and ensure game birds and shooting operation do not damage historic landscape (planting, ponds, fences, etc.)	Estate	LT	Game birds are damaging the edges of the ponds
83		Geophysical survey of Old Town Close to determine if there are any remains of the old village. Record findings, preserve archaeology following archaeologist advice.	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To inform future management of the field
84		Arable reversion of the riverside fields (RLR no's SU53987919 & SU54981650)	CS	LT	To restore the historic parkland setting to Nuneham House
85		Undertake a condition survey of the Ox Tunnel. Conserve the structure, making sympathetic repairs as necessary. Remove invasive vegetation and check for potential falling branches from trees overhead.	Estate	LT	To restore this historic feature and bring back into use
86		Consider rebuilding the 'Chinese style' bridge adjacent to Lock Cottage.	Estate	LT	To restore this historic feature and connect the park to the Thames Walk
87	T116	Remove hanging branches from oak tree.	CS	L	To improve the health of the trees
88	T121	London plane - Reduce end weight of south & eastern primary limbs by 5 metres	CS	H	to reduce stress on fractured union.
89	T124-T125	Remove limbs to form 'monolith' oak trees at 5 metres.	CS	M	Retain for their habitat value
90	T131-T132	Undertake selective halo-ing of midstorey & understorey trees around yew and beech	CS	M	To stop the trees being suppressed
91	T133	Monolith beech tree at 5 metres.	CS	M	Retain for its habitat value
92	T138, T139, T140	Repollard crack willows to previous pollard points.	CS	M	To improve their long term health
93	T144	White poplar - reduce 4-5m to reduce stress on fractured union.	CS	M	To improve its long term health
94	T244	Storm damaged oak tree, reduce end weighted subdominant stems.	CS	M	To improve its long term health
95	T246	Oak tree in poor health. One low limb could be layered by mounding up with soil to support low limb for layering.	Estate	M	To improve its long term health
96	T259	Halo around oak tree	CS	M	Crown is being suppressed
97	G42	AIMS (G42-44): manage as MB / MC woodland strips alongside track to Ferry Cottage as backdrop to parkland with key hole views out into park. ACTIONS (G42): repollard all willow around Ox Bow; remove leylandii under plane and fallen willow on south side of track by fence line.	CS	M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
98	G43	Selectively thin mixed broadleaves on north side, and formatively prune retained trees. Clear scrub on south side, retaining well-spaced trees to enable views into parkland to south.	CS	H	To improve the quality of the woodland belt and open views into the parkland
99	G44	Selectively thin Douglas fir / poplar/ remove elm scrub at top east end on south side to open view into parkland from track.	CS	M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt and open views of the parkland
100	G45-G46	AIMS (G45-46): retain as discontinuous tree / shrub belt along track with openings for views of Thames. ACTIONS (G45-46): Clear scrub, retaining any good sycamore / beech / yew/ /box & London plane. Replant cleared areas with native broadleaf hedging shrubs and trees. Create 2 keyhole gaps for views to Thames by not replanting two sections.		M	To improve the quality of the woodland belt and recreate views of the Thames
101	G47	Replace young trees, aiming to create mixed broadleaf tree strip along track.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve the quality of the group
102	G48	Selective thin by 30% of stems to favour best oak, lime, poplar specimens, formative prune retained trees.	CS	H	To improve the quality of the group
103	G49-G50	Selective felling of broadleaf tree rows along field boundary to remove linearity. Retain 20% of current trees at irregular spacing, positioned to frame view lines created from track above the parkland and river.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve the quality of the group and recreate views of the Thames
104	G51	Clear up fallen willow on garden edge.	Estate	M	To improve the aesthetics of the garden
105	G52	Repollard all willow along edge of river bank.	CS	M	To manage the willow for its long term health and open up views across the Thames
106	G53	Repollard five crack willow.	CS	M	To manage the willow for its long term health
107	G54	Consider restoration of the Ox Bow behind the Boathouse. Clear the willow & scrub selectively along the water's edge, and all willow in the water. Dredge the pond to de-silt, to create more depth, allow more light to the water and visibility of the feature. Respace the young ash stand on the west side and pollard the mature waterside willow. Retain some fallen wood for habitat value.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the habitat
108	G55	Re pollard all willow along edge of river, and halo around these where necessary by removing adjacent trees. Selectively thin remainder of riverside tree belt.	CS	M	To manage the willow for its long term health and open up views across the Thames
109	G56	Carry out further clearance of bankside scrub down to large poplar (T141) at south end, to extend and improve views of the river from the house. Retain some alder if not visually intrusive.	CS	M	To open up significant views of the Thames
110	G79	Brown's Hill - Aim to preserve as scrubby habitat bank with MB (mainly oak) overstorey. Thin out natural regeneration to select long term oaks and hawthorn clumps. Remove Poplar, and replant 10-15 oak, sweet chestnut in gaps where no regeneration.	CS	M	To provide long term tree cover
111	G80	Brown's Hill - thin out to select long term oaks and hawthorn clumps.	CS	M	To provide long term tree cover
112	G81	Ponds at the north end of Brown's hill are in poor condition and over shaded, selectively thin around pond edge. Dredge ponds to remove excess silt.	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To improve the quality of the ponds
		<b>Future Tree planting (ref to Appendix 5 in Tree and Woodland Survey)</b>			
113	FP8	Plant 15-20 individual broadleaves (English oak, sweet chestnut, small-leaved Lime, London plane) irregularly through this sloping ground. Locate these to frame and not obscure views from the garden and the track over the parkland and river. Consider planting 1-2 Cedar of Lebanon as eyecatcher trees in view line from the garden vista.	CS	M	
114	FP9	Plant 7 infield broadleaf clumps with 7-15 trees in each; Use English oak, hornbeam, small-leaved lime, field maple. Locate the clumps to frame views to and from the house gardens, and Brown's Hill; locate on drier ground for these species, avoiding the wet strip which floods regularly across the field centre. Consider the use of Alder and Black poplar in groups on overly wet ground. Plant 20-30 individual broadleaves (English oak, hornbeam, small-leaved Lime, field maple) irregularly over the rest of Riverside, with the same location considerations.	CS	H	

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
115	FP10	Replant Brown's Hill with 15-20 English/sessile oak and sweet chestnut as long-term replacements for the existing tree cover. Locate to frame views to the river and gardens, and the vista from the garden to Carfax Conduit. See Plan of Alterations by Brown 1779 and 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map 1875 for guidance on layout.	CS	M	
		<b>Park (South)</b>			
		<i><b>Vision and Aims:</b> To reinstate the late 18th C park, as embellished by Brown and as shown on the 1st edition OS.</i>			
116		Arable reversion of fields (RLR no's SU54976283, 0966, 3812, SU53978109,83296112)	CS (2nd application 2025)	LT	To recreate Lancelot Brown's design for Park (South)
117		Geophysical survey of the cropmarks and Iron Age Banjo in field (RLR no. SU54976283)	Estate	H	To determine location and what remains
118		Reduced depth non inversion cultivation method where there are known archaeological sites in field (RLR no. SU54976283)	CS	H	To protect the sub surface archaeological report
119		Investigate re-opening of Abingdon Drive as the main entrance into the park. Drive now crosses land outside ownership of the Estate so land may need to be bought or leased. If original alignment not possible, consider new entrance to the east of the science park, through the SE corner of the estate.	Estate	LT	This drive was always the principal drive into the park.
120		Resurface Abingdon Drive (either loose gravel or tarmac with a bonded gravel)	Estate	LT	To improve the quality of the drive
121		Increase the width of the field margins	CS	H	To improve the farmland habitat
122		Increase the no plough zone around field trees to the outside edge of the tree canopy plus 2m exclusion zone	CS	H	To improve the health of the trees
123		Detailed condition survey of the Venison House and carry out any recommended repairs	CS	H	To ensure the long term survival of this rare example of a venison house
124		Demolish modern farm building on crest of hill	Estate	M	No building there historically; visually intrusive
125		Remove pylons; bury lines or re-route	Estate	LT	To improve the quality of views across the park
126	T197	Reduce crown of oak tree to natural lower retrenched crown at 8 metres	CS	M	To improve the long term health of the tree
127	T211	Halo around oak tree on Black Wood edge	CS	M	To stop suppression of the tree
128	T206	Halo around oak tree on Black Wood edge	CS	M	To stop suppression of the tree
129	G61-62	Selective felling of young and early mature trees and shrubs in hedgerow	CS	M	To open up historic views into the north east corner of the park
130	G63	Create and informal broadleaf clump bordering the track/potential new access; remove all conifer and eyesores/rubble/building foundations and revert ground to grassland. Retain selection of best sycamore and field maple as the basis for the clump, and restock with oak, lime & sweet chestnut as required.	CS	H	This will create a more attractive group of trees
131	G64	Selective felling of scrub and any poor trees to remove visual linear barrier	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To recreate views across to parkland below Windmill Hill.
132	G65	Moated venison house: Coppice willow on banks of moat to allow more light to water and hut. Remove willow growing in water to restore moat. Dredge the moat to remove excess silt	CS	M	To improve the setting of the Venison House
133	G66	Selective felling of oak alongside track to reopen views into parkland to south and hills beyond. Retain and formative prune best oak.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To reopen historic views across the park.
134	G69-70	Formative prune oak along field boundaries.	Estate	H	To improve the form of the trees

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
135	G72	Halo around mature oak. Remove scrub around pond edge to allow light into pond. Selectively fell young trees to favour best specimens and pollard willows. Dredge the pond to remove excess silt	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the quality of the group and the pond
136	G73-74	Selective removal or relocation of young broadleaves (oak, ash, willow) to open views from drive and garden edge south-east into parkland. Retain four to six mature trees only, which will frame views.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To reopen historic views across the park
137	G76	Remove sycamore scrub south of G76 between mature sycamore and weeping lime	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To open view into wider landscape.
138	G77	Selective thin to favour best specimens, aiming at mixed broadleaf dominated clump with some conifer.	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	To improve the quality of the group
139	G82	Brown's walk (east side): Selectively fell gaps into linear edge of oak and sycamore to re-open views into parkland from woodland garden walk, and to remove linearity of tree row.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To improve the appearance of the east edge of Brown's Walk
140	G83	Consider removal of scrub along garden edge east of tennis court	CS (2nd application 2025)	M	to re-open views into parkland to the south, especially if the garden is improved in this area.
		<b>Future Tree planting</b> (ref to Appendix 5 in Tree and Woodland Survey)			
141	FP 1	Plant two infield clumps of broadleaf trees: use English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime – 30-50 in each.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
142	FP 1	Plant one clump in south-east corner, broadleaf dominated with 10-15% conifer; use English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir 100-150 trees.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
143	FP 1	Plant 20-30 individual use English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir in informal layout. Use Plan of Alterations by Brown 1779 and 1st edition OS map 1875 as a guide to layout.	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
144	FP2	Plant a mix of infield broadleaf clumps, 30-50 trees (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir).	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
145	FP2	Plant two woodland edge clumps alongside Lock Wood, broadleaf dominates with 10-15% conifer (English oak, Sweet chestnut, Small leaved lime, Large leaved lime, scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir). Use 80- 100 trees in each.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
146	FP2	Plant 70-80 individual trees, some in loose clumps (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir). Use Plan of Alterations by Brown 1779 and 1st edition OS map 1875 as a guide to layout.	CS (2nd application 2025)	LT	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
147	FP3	Plant one infield broadleaf clump with 30-40 trees (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir).	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
148	FP3	Plant one field corner clump in south-west corner by Lock Wood, broadleaf dominated with 10% conifer use 60- 70 trees (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir).	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
149	FP3	Plant one clump split by southern approach track: use 60- 80 trees, broadleaf dominated with 10% conifer (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir). Position the clumps to frame and not obscure views into landscape from Brown woodland garden.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
150	FP3	Plant 10-15 individual broadleaves (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir) and position these to frame views from Brown woodland garden. Use Plan of Alterations by Brown 1779 as a guide to layout.	CS (2nd application 2025)	LT	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
151	FP4	Plant three infield broadleaf clumps, with 3050 trees in each (English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir)	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown
152	FP4	Plant two field edge clumps alongside Black Wood, broadleaf dominated with 10-15% conifer – use 150- 200 trees in each including English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir 100-150 trees.	CS (2nd application 2025)	H	To recreate parkland as designed by Lancelot Brown

Recommendation number	References used in the Tree Appraisal report - Appendix A	Description of Work	Funding	Priority	Reason
153	FP4	Plant 30-40 individual broadleaf trees scattered throughout parkland area: use English oak, sweet chestnut, small leaved lime, large leaved lime, Scots pine, Corsican pine & Douglas fir 100-150 trees. Position these informally to frame and give perspective and depth to long views across the parkland from the gardens to Black Wood and Windmill Hill. Do not use the Plan of Alterations by Brown and 1st edition OS map as a guide; these show trees retained from the boundaries in the early C18 landscape (see Robert Smith's map of Nuneham 1707), which are consequently in lines north-south across the landscape and tend to shorten and obscure views east from the gardens.	CS (2nd application 2025)	L	To increase the number of individual trees within the parkland, planted in the style of Lancelot Brown.
155		Control of Japanese Knotweed in fields (RLR nos SU54976283 and SU54981466)	CS		Japanese Knotweed is pernicious and notifiable weed