

**BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
KELVEDON HATCH**

BRIZES PARK

Grid Ref: TQ 570 985

The mansion of Brizes is the focal point of the park designed in 1788 by Richard Woods (1715-1793): the outline of the park remains largely as Woods designed it.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Peter Muilman in his 1771 *A New and Complete History of Essex* describes 'Bryces' as 'a good old house in this parish about a mile and a half east from the church. It was built by, and took its name from, Thomas Bryce, citizen and mercer of London in about 1498, who in 1515 sold it to John Allen, alderman of London, and lord mayor in 1620, and his daughter Mary carried it in marriage to Ralph Pettus, who being a great royalist during the civil wars in the last century, and sequestered for £800, was obliged for the raising of that sum, to mortgage this estate, which he never could redeem. It was afterwards in the Glassock family'. The earlier house was replaced c1720 by the present mansion, built by the Glassock family. The exact site of the previous house is not known. Thomas Wright in his 1836 *History of Essex* also charts the owners of the house from the time of Thomas Bryce but also says that 'In 1356 John Pegbrigg has a park here, as appears from the forest rolls of that period'. P. Morant stated in 1768 that Brizes Park was named after Thomas Bryce who built a house there in 1498. Although the exact site of this house is unknown it is probable that it stood on the moat island and will survive as a buried feature. Historic England has listed the moat and its island as a scheduled ancient monument.

There is little historical evidence of garden design at Brizes before the late eighteenth century. Chapman and André's 1777 map of Essex shows a simple walled garden within the estate, with no park boundaries marked: the estate was named on the map as Bryces.

The estate passed from the Glassocks to Charles Dolby, and then to his brother, William. William commissioned extensive modifications to the building and grounds and the remodelling plan was drawn up by Richard Woods in 1788. Richard Woods (1715-1793) was a prominent landscape designer and Brizes Park was his last known commission for full-scale garden improvements. Only the plan survives (Essex Record Office D/DFa E 43/38) but the 1873 first edition Ordnance Survey map shows that most of Woods' ideas were implemented, and even now the skeleton of the design is visible. The 1788 plan shows the entrance 'from Knave Stock', a 'Cottage by way of Lodge', an 'Alcove seat or a Temple', the 'Plantation of oak, chestnut, firs', a 'Plantation of oaks, elms and ash', a 'Plantation of common fruits and shrubs', the 'Ladys Walk Inrich'd', the 'truss Paladian [sic] Bridge', 'sunk fences with quick hedges, 'Rude Arches'. The 'Lady's Walk' winds through what probably was pre-existing woodland: benches were placed along the walk and opposite one an oval herbaceous bed was suggested giving views to the parkland beyond. Woods 1788 plan also depicts a causeway or bridge across the north-eastern arm of the moat, of which there is no visible evidence today.

William Dolby's children inherited the estate in turn until their deaths: Charles in 1826, Jane in 1855, and Louisa in 1868. The 1838 Tithe Award Map gives Miss Jane Dolby as owner of plot 9 'Mansion, park, etc'. There were no children to inherit the estate, so by the terms of William Dolby's will, the estate passed down his wife's family line to a John Royds. John set about purchasing further properties and land in the area and enfranchising the copyhold land he already owned. He also added two long greenhouses to either side of the mansion. The greenhouses either side of the mansion are shown on the 25" to the mile Ordnance Survey map. After John Royd's death in 1884 the estate passed to his brother, the Revd Charles Leopold Royds. Charles, with his wife Catherine, moved into Brizes and in 1887 hosted the Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations in the grounds. Charles Royds died in 1896 and his son, Charles Duncan Royds succeeded to the estate. Alan Royds inherited Brizes in 1931 from his father and took down the long greenhouses either end of the house, substituting them with two smaller ones.

Brizes was sold in 1949 to the Hon. Simon Rodney who was first cousin once removed of Sir Winston Churchill, who was a frequent guest at Brizes. The Hon Simon was a descendant of Admiral Rodney, the victor of the famous naval battle of St Kitts in the West Indies in 1782. During Simon Rodney's ownership of Brizes many of the later additions to the house were removed and the house was restored to its Georgian character. Ashok Gupta visited Brizes Park c1975 and wrote an article for *Country Life* where he commented on 'the fine walled garden still perfectly intact, and well stocked as an orchard kitchen garden. The formal landscape provides a romantic wooded setting for the fine old house'. The Hon. Simon Rodney died in March 1980.

In 1980 Brizes was advertised for sale by Strutt and Partners (ERO SALE/C745) and was described as a magnificent early Georgian house situated within its own park. The approach to the house was described as from two drives: 'the principal drive is to the south and passes the lodge and water garden, continuing through the park over the ha-ha to the front entrance forecourt. This drive divides to the east, joining the rear entrance drive which passes through a belt of woodland.' The gardens were described as being situated to the south-west of the walled kitchen garden and containing many fine trees including evergreen oak, chestnut, yew, cedar, holly and plane. Lawns were divided by gravel walks and beneath the old red brick walls clad with flowering shrubs were deep herbaceous borders. Also described was the partly enclosed water garden with fountain and well head surrounded by a paved terrace with climbing roses covering the walls in which there were decorative arches. Further lawns to the south were under planted with spring bulbs and sheltered by massive banks of rhododendrons and camellias. Within the walled kitchen garden were soft fruit cages and along the walls were fruit trees of apple, plum, cherry and fig. Adjacent were three greenhouses, a propagating house and cold frames. A hard tennis court was situated to the south-west. The house and gardens in 1980 extended to about six and a half acres. The park, to the south of the house and landscaped by Richard Woods, was described as forming a magnificent setting for the Georgian house: falling away slightly beyond the ha-ha and then rising with belts of trees including holly, oak, ash, cedar and chestnut. Beyond the permanent pasture of about twelve acres were cultivated enclosures extending to about thirty-eight acres. The whole of Brizes Park covered about seventy-four acres.

Since 1981 Brizes Park has been run as an independent school with recent restorations to the grounds. The estate was advertised for sale both in 1995 and 1997 and by this time the stable block had been

converted into kitchens, dining/assembly hall, and three classrooms. A purpose built gymnasium, fourteen prefabricated classrooms and an enclosed swimming pool complex had also been built on the site. The map with the 1995 sales particulars (ERO SALE/D1715) shows only the original drive entering the estate from lodge cottage: although the new drive from Crown Street cutting through the parkland had already been built.

Currently Brizes remains an independent school.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Brizes Park is situated on the west side of the Ongar Road: the mansion sitting within seventy-three acres. Kelvedon Hatch is approximately four miles from Brentwood and three miles from Ongar. The soil in this area is mainly London clay with some patches of boulder clay and Bagshot beds. Two tributaries flow into the River Roding in the north of the parish through shallow valleys.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The entrance was originally from the Ongar Road, but a new entrance and drive were made when the mansion became a school. The original drive is no longer accessible from the lodge where it went past the moated site but is now a spur from the new driveway and, as before, leads to the area in front of the house. The new driveway is from Crown Road through wrought iron gates and cuts through the parkland. It passes two large car parking areas and continues in a circular direction to the side of the house until it meets up with the original drive. The lodge was built at the old entrance to Brizes in 1909.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Brizes sits within seventy-three acres and the house has been designated Grade II by Historic England and is said to have been built in 1720, remodelled in the late eighteenth century, nineteenth century, and twentieth century. It is red brick with a slate roof. It was converted to a school in 1981. The stable block and garden wall form a scheduled group with Brizes. The eighteenth and nineteenth century red brick stables, now classrooms, are on three sides of the courtyard and are to the north-west of Brizes. At the north-west end is the red brick wall that extends to the north-west. The late seventeenth century/eighteenth century red brick barn is also listed as Grade II. At both east and west ends eighteenth/nineteenth century timber-framed and weather-boarded additions have been butted on to the central barn.

MOATED SITE

Historic England has designated the medieval moated site as a Grade II scheduled ancient monument and is sited 210 metres south-east of Brizes, in the grounds of Brizes Park.

Historic England describe the moated site as including a sub-rectangular island measuring approximately 42 metres east-west by a maximum of 22 metres north-south. The island is contained by a water-filled moat or ditch which measures an average of ten metres wide and one metre deep. There are no visible indications of the principal dwelling or ancillary buildings which stood upon the

island, however, the local antiquarian, P. Morant stated in 1768 that Brizes Park was named after Thomas Bryce who built a house there in 1498. Although the exact site of this house is unknown it is probable that it stood on the moat island and will survive as a buried feature. The present house, which was built in 1720, is located 210 metres to the north-west of the moat and may well represent its successor. The moated site is situated immediately to the south-south-west of the original entrance to Brizes Park. The 1788 'Plan for altering and improving the grounds at Brizes' depicts the south-eastern corner of the moat connected to a water-filled extension, similar in width, which continues to the south for approximately 20 metres. The extension is not marked on the 1838 Tithe map of Kelvedon Hatch, indicating that it was infilled prior to this date; however, it still survives on the ground as a shallow depression. The extension is thought to have originated as a fishpond in which stocks of fish could be raised, perhaps separated by a hurdle or a sluice, before being transferred into the moat itself. Low banks, thought to represent upcast from the fishpond, are visible along either side of the pond.

The tithe map of Kelvedon Hatch shows that the moated site has changed little between 1838 and the present day. The fences around the moated site are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

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Maps and Images

1777 Chapman & André's Map of Essex Plate CVII

1788 *Plan for the alteration and Improvements of Brizes* by Richard Woods ERO D/DRo P1

1838 Tithe Award Map for Kelvedon Hatch ERO D/CT 197

1873 (surveyed) first edition ordnance map 25" to the mile sheets 59/6 & 10

Archival Items

1980 Sales particulars ERO SALE/C745

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1997 Sales particulars ERO SALE/D1752

Websites

historicengland.org.uk/registeredparksandgardens

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Site Visit: March 2017