

**BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
GREAT BARDFIELD**

**THE GREAT LODGE**

**TL 695 291**

Modest C17 formal garden layout, with vestiges of ancient park chaseways incorporated into the wider setting. Late C20 designs by Rosemary Alexander, mostly executed.

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

The estate, originally part of the manor of Great Bardfield, was established on the site of a medieval deer park, known as Bardfield Great Park, and was owned by the Crown until 1550. Great Bardfield also had a Little Park and the manor house was Bardfield Hall until the Great Lodge mansion was built c 1622. During the C14, Great Bardfield was one of the residences of Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare. She was a cousin of Edward III and was considered one of the most powerful and wealthiest noblewomen of her time. She is reputed to have entertained lavishly and her guests included the Black Prince who visited her three times at Bardfield between 1357 and 1358 (Ward).

In 1460 Great Bardfield became a Royal Manor when Edward IV assigned it to his mother the Duchess of York. In the early C16, according to the list of Lords of the Manor (Dunell), most of the wives of Henry VIII are given, in turn, as owner of the Great Bardfield estate. Manuell suggests that Anne of Cleves actually lived at Great Bardfield Hall c 1540 after her rejection by Henry VIII and it may have been during her stay that the impressive brick barn was constructed near the keeper's lodge. It is possible that the moat also dates from this period, as it has been suggested that owing to the high social status of hunting, some lodges, in addition to housing the keeper, also comprised accommodation for hunting parties and were moated to indicate status as an elite building (Taigel and Williamson). Great Lodge may have been of this type.

In 1550, the manor, lordship and borough of Bardfield were purchased by Sir Thomas Wrothe, having been leased for a while by his father John. It remained in this family until 1622 when Sir Martin Lumley, a prosperous City draper, became the new owner and Lord of the Manor. Between 1622 and 1634 Sir Martin made Great Bardfield his home, the first owner ever to do so, and built himself a mansion on the site of the Great Lodge rather than moving into Bardfield Hall. Morant (1768) tells us that Sir Martin Lumley, "built an elegant house in a delightful situation, where the keeper's lodge had stood". Thus, after about 600 years, the Hall ceased to be the manor house. If the moat had not already been made round the lodge, it was probably created to surround the new mansion, as shown on the 1955 6" OS map as archaeological symbols. Dunell mentions that Sir Martin's [2nd] wife, Mary, was a close friend of Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, whose diary records many visits exchanged between Great Lodge and Leez Priory (q.v. in Chelmsford Inventory).

In 1710 Sir Martin Lumley (the fourth of the same name) died and was succeeded by his second son James who was declared a lunatic. He may have been responsible for the financial mismanagement that was to ruin the family. In 1725 and 1729 the Lumley family was forced to sell their property to settle debts and the Governors of Guys Hospital bought much of the land. It was at this point that the estate was divided: The Great Lodge site was bought in 1729 by Edward Stephenson, former Governor in the East Indies, who is thought to have been responsible for demolishing the Lumley mansion and converting the west end of the magnificent brick barn, which had comprised domestic accommodation, into the main dwelling. Stephenson's estate comprised Bardfield Lodge (as it was

then called), the Great and Little Parks and several manors. The remainder of the estate was retained for the use of Guy's Hospital.

The reason why Stephenson demolished the Lumley mansion and disparked the enclosed lands c 1729 is not known but was probably financial, as it was more profitable to dispense with the herd of deer and lease the land. However, a paddock of 12.5 ha (30 acres) was retained for the grazing of a small number of the animals. This was a trapezium-shaped field and is shown on the Chapman and André map (1777) as a fenced area to the west of the principal building and probably within sight of it. It was called 'The Paddock' in 1755 and 'The Deer Park' in 1802 and 1814, on which map the palisade is shown again. Today a slightly larger field on that site is still called 'Park'. The enclosed garden containing the canal, which had lain to the east of the Lumley mansion, was easily adapted as a setting for the new house. The 1802 map records a simple but effective layout of rectangular canal apparently backed by square or rectangular plain parterres. Beyond these lay another pond parallel to the canal, and finally an orchard. It may be wondered whether the single large tree in the middle of Water House Field was left as a focal point, to be viewed through the funnel-shaped break in the orchard planting at the south boundary.

In 1754, the estate was bought by Jones Raymond, who the following year commissioned Timothy Skynner to map the whole parish. This map shows a wide double avenue running roughly north/south (Saling Walk Field) which appears to have lined up with the main axis from the Lumley mansion. This map also features a long, narrow avenue following the route of the present footpath (known as 'The Walk') to the village, probably originally planted in the previous century as a convenient route between the mansion and church. This avenue still existed in 1769 when Muilman wrote: "From the corner of the paddock belonging to the Lodge, is a most delightful road to the town, on each side of which is a row of trees, forming a pretty visto of half a mile in length, which is terminated by the steeple of the Church".

When Raymond died c 1768, the estate was eventually acquired by his niece Amy Burrell, in whose family it remained until 1808, although tenanted most of the time. As a secondary property, Great Lodge was not 'improved' in the latter half of C18, and the park elements (notably 'chaceways') which had been incorporated into the setting of the house are still visible on the estate survey of 1802, commissioned by Sir Charles Burrell. A survey of 1814 follows the earlier map closely, and they both show a still mainly formal layout of canal, orchards, gardens and parkland. The main avenue survived, but some clump planting suggests a possible attempt to modernise the park. In 1834 a valuation survey (D/DOP/B79) mentions extensive pleasure grounds as well as kitchen gardens, partly walled in.

Great Lodge was occupied by a variety of tenants through the rest of the C19, and was sold in 1907 to Nathaniel Sherwood, passing in trust to his children. In 1951 the estate was bought by Joseph Smith Farms Ltd, who remain the owners to the present. During the 1980s, Rosemary Alexander, Principal of the English Gardening School, lived at Great Lodge and produced design plans for the garden. Most of this work was carried out and evidence of it remains today.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

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

The Great Lodge is situated approximately 3 km (2 miles) to the south-east of Great Bardfield in a rural location. The present estate comprises 405 ha (1000 acres) of which the garden covers approximately three. A productive vineyard has been established to the east of the 'Anne of Cleves barn' and the remaining estate comprises farmed fields and woodland. No parkland survives although some fallow deer still roam the site. The present boundaries appear to follow roughly the same lines as those of the earlier Great Park with the Bardfield to Saling road forming a boundary on the southern

side. The pattern of fields appears to have remained fairly constant from the mid C18 and several of the field names, such as 'Paradise', have been retained.

The estate is surrounded by farmland. From the south, the land slopes gently towards the house and outbuildings and then gradually rises again beyond with a differential of approximately 5 metres in place. A stream called Pod's Brook flows through this 'valley'. The soil is variable and ranges from light and sandy to London boulder clay.

#### ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The only entrance is from the Barfield to Saling road along a fairly straight drive that now also gives access to some farm cottages. There is a small lodge on the south-east side of the entrance splay, with a small garden in a deeply sunk area to the north, possibly a reuse of a former extraction pit. A few mature oaks (possibly former field boundary trees) form part of the south side of the avenue at the north-east end; the remainder of this line is new planting, mostly limes but with the occasional oak and horse chestnut. The north side of the avenue is set wide, beyond a dike, and the intervening ground between north and south lines is occupied by the drive and a cultivated strip. The scale seems to replicate the 'chase' vistas known to have existed on the site. The drive veers north beyond a small wooden bridge, just short of the site of the Lumley mansion, and then bears east to the oval forecourt, constructed in 1988, at the west side of the house. The approach from the north, shown on the 1814 map, no longer exists.

#### PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

The precise date of construction of the Lumley mansion has not been ascertained but it was probably started after 1622 and completed before Sir Martin's [1st] death in 1634. The grassed-over site of the Lumley mansion lies slightly to the south-west of the present principal building (formally part of the extensive range of outbuildings and domestic quarters) and evidence of the moat can be seen clearly in places. The first dwelling on this site was reputedly a keeper's lodge and the moat may date from its construction. The size of the area within the moat suggests that if this was the case, at least one of the buildings housed within the moat had been very impressive.

Great Lodge is listed Grade II\*. The house comprises three storeys and is L-shaped with principal aspects to the south and west. The C16 barn, which is approx. 45 metres east of the house, is Grade I and the wall extending eastwards from the house is Grade II. All are constructed of red brick and, until the mid C20, comprised an integral range of buildings, approx. 225 ft (67 metres) long, which included a clock tower. The Lumley mansion was demolished in the C18 and the western wing of the outbuildings became the principal residence. The west and east ends of the range are still standing but the middle section, which supported a clock tower, was pulled down between 1921 (when New Series OS shows complete range still intact) and 1954 when Pevsner wrote about it. The 6" OS map of 1955 confirms the 'split'.

#### REFERENCES

- DOE Listing – Braintree, Finchingfield and Gt Bardfield (1985)
- W and B Dunell, A History of Great Bardfield 'A Domesday Village in Essex' (1986), p5-14
- C Fell Smith, Bardfield Great Lodge and the Lumleys – Essex Review Vol 9 (1900), p2-19
- W Harrison, The Description of England, nd, p279
- J Hunter, The Essex Landscape (1999) – passim
- P Muilman, A New and Complete History of Essex Vol. II (1769)
- P Morant, The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex Vol II (1768), p519
- J P Manuell, article on Great Lodge in J T Page, (editor) Essex in the Days of Old (1898)
- N Pevsner, The Buildings of England – Essex (1954), p194

Royal Commission of Historic Monuments Vol I (1917), p107 – 108

A Taigel and T Williamson, Know the Landscape: Parks and Gardens (1993)

Victoria County History of Essex, Vol I & II (1903)

J Ward, 'Elizabeth de Burgh and Great Bardfield in the fourteenth century' in K Neale Essex Heritage (1992) p47

T Wright, History of Essex Vol II (1836), p63

### Maps

T Skynner Survey of Great Bardfield 1755 (Reduced photo) ERO T/M 253/1

Chapman & André, Map of Essex, 1777

J Asser A Survey of the Estate of Sir Charles Burrell, Bart, in ... Great Bardfield (1802)

Photograph ERO T/M 254; original in private collection

P Potter Plan of an Estate called Great-Bardfield Lodge (1814) ERO D/DO P8

OS 6" to 1 mile 1st edition surveyed 1876 – showing west side of main avenue, canal and orchard to south of canal. North pond.

OS 25" to 1 mile 2nd edition surveyed 1897 – showing canal, north pond and orchard

OS New Series 25" to 1 mile 1921 – showing canal, north pond and orchard; buildings still intact.

1906 Sales Catalogue ERO B6764. 'Plan of the Great Lodge Farm' showing the canal, north pond and orchard but no remains of avenue.

OS 6" to 1 mile 1955 – gives 'Great Lodge (Site of)' and suggests location of original moat.

County maps: 1576 Christopher Saxton; 1749 Emanuel Bowen; 1750 Thomas Kitchen

### Archival Items

Close Rolls 1234 – 1237 p 415

Court Book (1808 – 1862) ERO D/DU 1043/3

Great Bardfield Survey Book (1551) ERO D/DGh E15/1

Great Lodge Valuation Report (1834) ERO D/DOP B79

Sales Catalogue ERO B6764 (1906)

### Pictorial Evidence

C Fell Smith, 'Bardfield Great Lodge and the Lumleys' in Essex Review, ix (1900), p2-19 two photos & two sketches of different aspects of buildings.

Sales Catalogue (1906) ERO B6764: three photos showing different aspects of the building.

RCHME, I (1917) plate xxiv, photo of south-east front, including the clock turret.

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