

THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE AT HENRY TATE MEWS, STREATHAM

Landscape management guidelines



Prepared for English Heritage

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on behalf of The Garden History Society



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Henry Tate Mews, Streatham
(previously known as Park Hill / St Michael's Convent)

Landscape Management Guidelines 2012

1. Summary

The gardens at Henry Tate Mews (previously known as Park Hill) are not only amongst the most beautiful and interesting in London but are also of great national importance for their special historic significance.

This is a beautiful and interesting landscape created in the 19th century by two internationally-famous figures – architect JB Papworth and landscape designer Robert Marnock. At the time, it was a well-known site, admired in print. It was home successively to two great and influential Victorian businessmen and philanthropists – William Leaf and then Henry Tate.

Today, some areas of the garden have been built over but what remains is a stunning survival of a 19th century pocket villa landscape with terrace, lawn, lake and boathouse, circuit walk, folly and impressive Pulhamite ravine.

It is hoped that this document will help residents of Henry Tate Mews to appreciate and conserve the fabulous asset that they hold in their historic garden.

Much could be done to conserve, restore and enhance this national asset as held by the residents, and this is set out in the following pages. The priorities are:

- Resolving water flow and drainage issues
- Restoring the terrace structure
- Restoring the Pulhamite ravine
- Restoring and maintaining, or continuing to maintain, built garden structures such as walls, bed-edging, urns, alcove seat, folly and boathouse

- Clearing and maintaining the lake, including views of the lake
- Ensuring that the route of the circuit walk is retained
- Managing the trees and shrubs, especially in the lake area, particularly to recreate the historic vistas
- Working towards managing the historic landscape as a whole, despite it being in split ownership

2. About this document

The English Heritage (EH) Landscape Architect for London is working with the London Heritage at Risk team to develop a process to stimulate conservation management planning through providing briefs, outline research and management aims as needed for individual sites.¹ It is envisaged that this information will be presented to owners as a short ‘prospectus’, thus opening up discussions on future conservation management and encouraging owners of designed landscapes at risk to engage with their site.²

English Heritage has commissioned The Garden History Society (GHS) to conduct a London-based pilot scheme on a small number of designed landscapes, whereby, using primarily desk-based research, the GHS provides the EH Landscape Architect with the background information needed to help get the site off the Heritage at Risk Register. The information provided will include the following:

- clear guidance on the important components of the designed historic landscape;
- a general description of condition, vulnerability and conservation aims for each component/ group;
- a concise but high-level assessment, with a strong emphasis on analysis and interpretation;
- summary background history and research only if it is original.

The site dealt with in this document is the designed landscape at Henry Tate Mews, historically known as Park Hill (London Borough of Lambeth).³

¹ Managing, developing and adapting historic designed landscapes usually involves making choices. Current needs and resources may drive such choices but these should be underpinned by a thorough knowledge of the site backed up by historic research, recording and survey.

² In the longer term users would find it of benefit to commission and work from a fuller Conservation Management Plan with attached Historic Landscape Assessment. A CMP is a more detailed version of these guidelines, and will guide decision-making relating to the historic designed landscape in the immediate future and longer term, at all levels, based on a thorough understanding of the site’s history provided by the HLA.

A Historic Landscape Assessment would be of great benefit for this heritage asset, as it could address in detail subjects that will be of particular interest to residents but are not dealt with here, such as changes to the landscape by the Convent, surviving landscape features in the environs of Henry Tate Mews, and the location of various ‘lost’ garden buildings described in reference material.

3. Site significance

The garden at Henry Tate Mews is a relatively intact 19th century designed landscape, despite chunks having been lost to development

It is rare as a pocket villa landscape in a seeming-rural setting despite in reality being sited in one of London's most urban boroughs.

The site is of particular interest for features such as a terrace, Pulhamite rockery, folly, circuit walk, lake and boathouse.

Originally known as Park Hill, the garden was first designed by JB Papworth (1775–1847) before being reworked by Robert Marnock (1800–89). Both were leading designers of international repute so the survival of their work at Park Hill is of great importance.

Park Hill was home to two of the 19th century's most influential men, with Henry Tate in particular being a great opinion-former in the sphere of the arts and education and convinced of his responsibilities to enrich the nation's cultural life.⁴ It is therefore fascinating to be able to see the place that was their home during their respective periods of influence – not least of all to see an example of their own taste.

⁴ Perhaps most notably, Tate established the National Gallery ('Tate Gallery'), bestowing it and the nation with his own Park Hill art collection.

4. Brief history

4.1. William Leaf and JB Papworth (mid-19th century)

The villa at Park Hill was built in 1835 by J B Papworth for William Leaf (a successful merchant and philanthropist, supporting the development of homeopathy in particular) and the gardens included a lake, decorative garden buildings, a Pulhamite ravine, lawns, evergreen shrubs, vineries, conservatory and a kitchen garden with a wide range of heated glasshouses.

Papworth was primarily a very successful architect, one of the most acclaimed of his day and responsible amongst other things for St Bride's Avenue in Fleet Street, but additionally worked on landscapes such as Alton Towers in Staffordshire, Claremont in Esher and Basildon Park in Berkshire. He also authored *Rural Residences...interspersed with some Observations on Landscape Gardening* (1818) and *Hints on Ornamental Gardening* (1823).

4.2. Henry Tate and Robert Marnock (late-19th century)

Sir Henry Tate, an immensely successful businessman and founder of the Tate Gallery, commissioned Robert Marnock to rework the gardens in the 1880s, also redesigning the house. (Marnock was highly-acclaimed and coming to the end of a successful career, during which time he had also designed sites such as Alexandra Park, Hastings; Dunorlan Park, Tunbridge Wells; the Rose Garden at Warwick Castle for the Earl of Warwick; and the Flower Garden at Ragley Hall for the Marquis of Hertford.

4.3. St Michael's Convent (20th century)

After 1923 Park Hill became known as St Michael's Convent for the Congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. The convent built a chapel on the south-eastern corner of the mansion.

In the 1930s the garden land to the east was sold for redevelopment as Benhurst Court.

4.4. Henry Tate Mews – multiple ownership (21st century)

In the early 21st century Park Hill was bought by a developer. Land to the north and east was used for new housing and the mansion was split into multiple lots. The gardens to the west were retained (albeit in divided ownership) for use by the residents of these dwellings. The site was renamed Henry Tate Mews.

5. The present situation

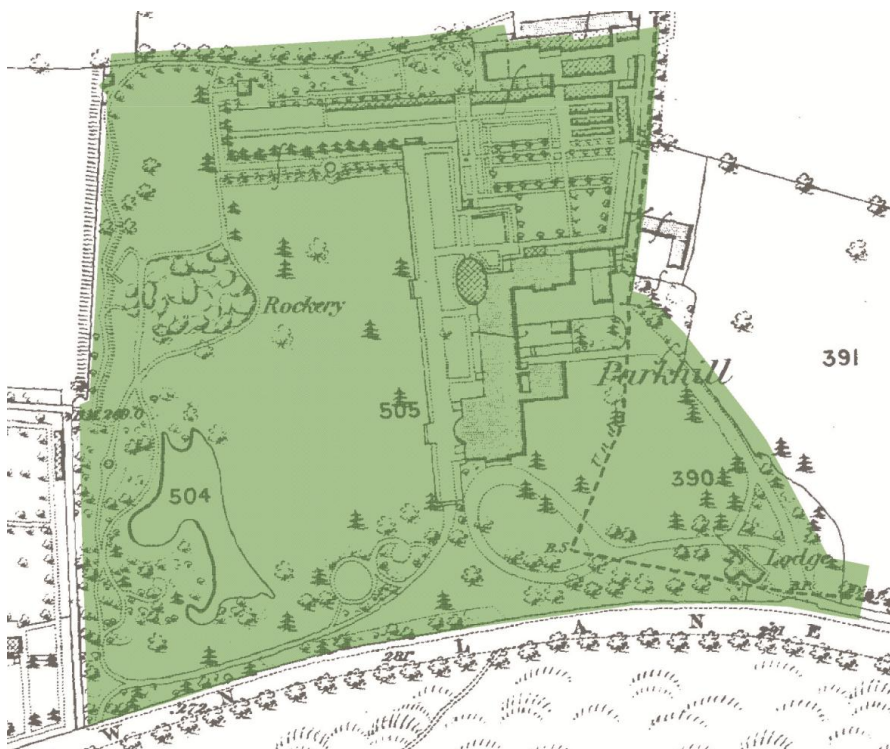


Figure 1 The Henry Tate Mews landscape today (above), as recorded in the English Heritage Register description. The 1843 OS map is run alongside (below) for easy comparison – it is clear to see that the design of the historic landscape is still very much intact.

The historic landscape suffered blows first with the sale of gardens to the east of the house for the construction of Benhurst Court in the 1930s (a small part of the Park Hill designed landscape survives within the Benhurst Court curtilage); and then with the construction of Henry Tate Mews housing to the north of the house in the first years of the 21st century, on the site of the kitchen gardens.

The remaining landscape is now in multiple ownership and the gardens surviving to the south and south-west of the mansion are owned and managed separately to the rest of the surviving garden to the west.⁵

The gardens are on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II.⁶ The house, entrance gates, terrace walls, steps, small Doric summerhouse at the north end of the terrace are all listed grade II.⁷

The gardens are on the Heritage At Risk Register, with their condition being described as having ‘extensive significant problems’ but their vulnerability as ‘low’ and their trend as ‘improving’, which is thanks to the hard work of the residents of Henry Tate Mews.

The site has currently 2 full-time gardeners, assisted by residents.

It is evident that standards are rising and there is an informed enthusiasm and determination to maximise the quality of the gardens, particularly with reference to the site’s history.⁸

⁵ This document largely deals with the western gardens which remain intact and are in open shared ownership of the residents of Henry Tate Mews, coming under the control of Henry Tate Management Ltd. It will however make reference to the other surviving parts, in order to pursue the conservation priority of taking a holistic approach and dealing with historic designed landscapes as a whole wherever possible.

⁶ There are only 1619 Registered landscapes in England, of which only 1052 are Grade II, making the landscape at Henry Tate Mews an extremely special heritage asset of national importance.

⁷ See Appendix for listing entries.

⁸ The folly has already been successfully restored and removed from the Heritage At Risk Register, thanks to the hard work of the residents, and there are signs that the Pulhamite ravine can expect similar treatment. Residents are particularly concerned with the need to resolve drainage issues and the congested lake.

6 Key components of the historic landscape with proposed management strategies

6.1. Terrace and summerhouse

6.1.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The long terrace is one of the gardens' most striking features – providing the opportunity to walk from one end of the property to the other, enjoying views of the garden and wider setting, without having to stray far from the mansion.

It was described in 1849 as: *'a handsome balustrade adorned with vases, a plot of ground laid out as a parterre.'*⁹

In 1886 it was described again: *'The chief part of the garden lies on the western side of the house. There is an admirably designed terrace garden treated geometrically, as the circumstances necessitated. This garden contains the only display of bedding about the place and, confined as it is to a limited area close to the mansion, it does not in the least mar the natural aspect of the other part. Already the borders are gay with showy bedding and carpet plants, and later on, when the weather is more genial, these will produce a brilliant effect. The garden is bounded on two sides by walls clothed with Magnolias and Camellias, which flower well and need no protection. The piers of the walls are capped by ornamental vases, and these just now are garlanded with Wistaria bloom – a beautiful picture. An old Wistaria planted at one end sends a huge limb along the top of the wall, and at each pier it gives off a branch which entwines itself round the vase. Another uncommon feature in the terrace garden is the single Dahlias, which are already in full bloom, and will continue to flower till October. Although they remind one of autumn, there is no other flower that could produce such a pretty effect at this season in the position they occupy. ... a profuse array of bloom – scarlets, yellows, and whites, and a hundred intermediate shades. The scarlet Cactus Dahlia is in bloom already, and its bright effect against the background of Magnolias may be readily imagined.'*¹⁰

⁹ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

¹⁰ The Garden, June 19 1886 p568:



Figure 2 The terrace in 1939. (Copyright London Borough of Lambeth, postcard held in Landmark collection, #1155.)

6.1.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The summerhouse and terrace are broadly speaking in good condition although the terrace structure itself needs repair.

Stretches of terrace have varying ownership and access arrangements but this situation is minimised visually and so the impressive length of the terrace can still be viewed as a visual whole.



Figure 3 There are different ownership and access arrangements for various stretches of the terrace but this distinction is successfully and importantly kept to a near-minimum, visually.

Although the bedding displays have been lost, the historic design is largely intact and the landscape is well-maintained.

6.1.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.1.3.1 Planting

When choosing plants for this area in future, residents may wish to be mindful of the above description, with references to camellias, magnolias, wisteria and dahlias.

6.1.3.2. Structural condition

The terrace structure itself is in need of urgent expert repair – residents have this in hand and English Heritage (EH) have suggested that an application be made to EH for a grant towards funding this work.



Figure 4 The terrace walls, showing the need for repair.

6.2. Lawn

6.2.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The open lawn provided the foreground of the main view from the mansion and terrace, sloping downwards to the west from the mansion towards the lake.

It was admired in 1886 in *The Garden* magazine: *‘The front lawn is one of the prettiest examples of garden landscape that could be seen about London. It slopes gently from the retaining wall of the terrace to a miniature lake, behind which rises a group of ornamental trees, and it is one broad expanse, interrupted only by a few fine old trees, among them being some lofty Elm and spreading Yews, carpeted beneath with Ivy.’*¹¹

The Garden also described planting around the edge of the lawn, with grouped rhododendrons and azaleas, underplanted with oriental poppies (and we can reasonably speculate on other flowering perennials too).

*‘Groups of Rhododendrons and Azaleas are planted along the outskirts of the lawn. Just now the lawn is lit up by a great mass of Oriental Poppies planted among Ghent Azaleas, but the Poppy flowers overtop them by a foot or more.’*¹²

6.2.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The lawn area is largely intact, although an orchard was planted on the northern part in the 1930s.

It is generally well-maintained, although divided ownership has resulted in varying management approaches in different parts.

Detrimentially, a hedge has been planted down the middle of the lawn, presumably in order to demarcate the division of ownership between one end and the other and create some privacy.

A wood framed wire fence demarcates the division of the lawn and orchard from the rest of the gardens (this fence is continued along the lake bank).

¹¹ *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568

¹² *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568

6.2.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.2.3.1. Orchard

This is well-maintained and valued so its retention is reasonable. However, when the trees reach the end of their natural lives residents may wish to consider not replacing them, given that their presence is at odds with the lawn's historic character as an open sweep.

6.2.3.2. Mowing

The lawn receives different maintenance regimes depending on who owns each area. Efforts should be made to mow it as a whole so that, notwithstanding the hedge, it can be seen as a single sweep.

Residents may wish to aim for a relatively close-cut “fine smooth turf” that was described as being the view in 1849.¹³



Figure 5 The lawn clearly receives two different management regimes – to the left of this picture is closely cropped lawn, and to the right is a longer meadow.

6.2.3.3. Hedge separating north and south ends of lawn

This undermines the important historic unity of the site and its design, creating a visual disturbance and undesirably emphasising that the site is no longer in single ownership. Owners should consider whether the hedge is absolutely necessary, or whether options such as a discreet single rope or chain would serve as well.

¹³ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

6.2.3.4. Fence separating east and west ends of lawn

The fence is a visual distraction in what was intended to be an open view of the lawn stretching from the terrace through to the rest of the gardens. However, it forms a useful purpose in reminding residents of the sensitivity of the garden features within its boundaries (it demarcates the upper lawn and orchard from the lower lawn where residents like to play football, hold parties etc).

A desirable long term aim would be to make residents more fully aware of the sensitivity of the landscape and to foster an understanding so that the fence is no longer needed and could be removed.



Figure 6 A fence demarcates different areas of the garden, creating a visual obstacle and being at odds with the gardens' 'gentleman's residence' character.

6.2.3.5. Planting

When making choices for new plants around this area, it would be good to reintroduce the 'Groups of Rhododendrons and Azaleas along the outskirts of the lawn' as described in *The Garden* magazine of 1886.¹⁴ These could be underplanted with perennial and annual flowers, such as the Oriental Poppies also described in 1886.

¹⁴ *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568

6.3. Circuit walk

6.3.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The gardens to the west of the mansion were enjoyed primarily as a circuit walk, by which visitors and residents could stroll through the entire site on a carefully designed circular route that would take them past key views and features in a predetermined order.

Visitors could walk from the south front of the house, round the back of the lake (taking in views of it on the way), along the western perimeter, through the Pulhamite ravine, along the Bowling Green to the folly, and back up past the kitchen gardens to the terrace. Along the way would be little ‘incidents’ such as flower beds and urns.

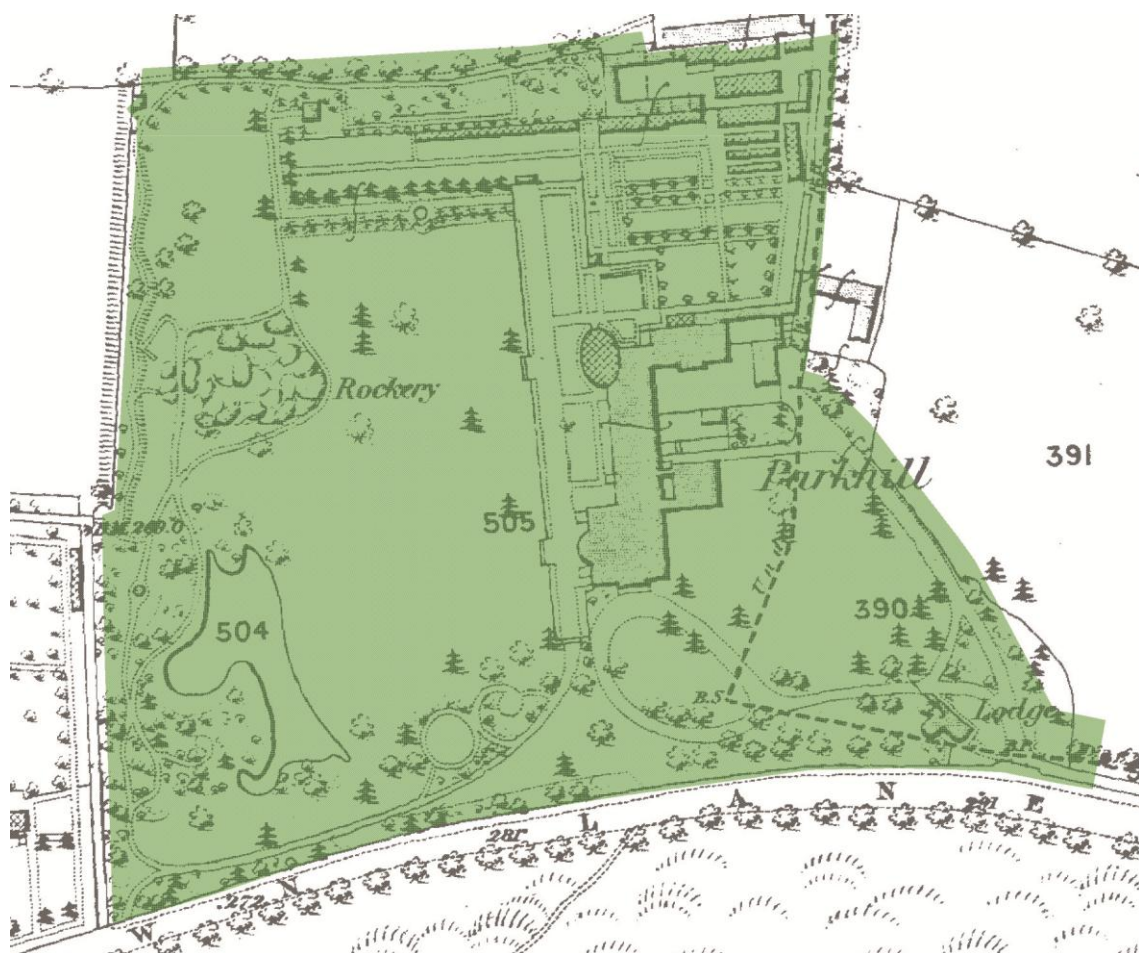


Figure 7 The historic circuit walk can clearly be seen in the 1843 OS map (path marked along the outer edges of the area marked in green).



Figure 8 Circuit walk detour leading to a viewing mount for enjoying the scene of the lake with mansion beyond.

This was described by William Keane in 1849: *‘Descending from the south-side of the terrace to the pleasure grounds of five acres backed by evergreen shrubs and giving views of the fine smooth turf, tastefully laid out with groups of shrubs and embellished with an Araucaria imbricate¹⁵ ten feet high, a Cedrus deodora¹⁶ twenty feet high, and a pretty piece of water, the gravel walk leads to the Rose garden, then to a flower-plot with a column in the centre, surmounted by a vase – further on is a deep dell arched with massive rockwork formed into caverns and planted with Arbutus and other evergreen shrubs; the walk to the right, through a vista of evergreens with a Summer-house and small flower garden, conducts by a flight of steps to the terrace; the walk to the left, to a Gothic Summer-house at the end of the Bowling-green’.*¹⁷ This was largely retained after Marnock’s work, although with some alterations, particularly to the features encountered along the way.

¹⁵ *Araucaria imbricate* = Monkey Puzzle tree

¹⁶ *Cedrus deodora* = Deodar Cedar, only recently introduced to Britain from the Himalayas

¹⁷ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

6.3.2. CURRENT CONDITION

Although the incidents on it may have changed, this walk is still very much intact, with the paths still largely present and in the same locations, thus the designed ornamental landscape can be enjoyed as it was in the 19th century.

Of particular interest is the survival of the viewing mount, and the intricate paths up it, by the lake, even though the view itself has been partially obscured with tree growth.

Split ownership has however made it difficult to follow the path as a complete whole.

6.3.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.3.3.1. Adherence to historic path lines

The paths still follow their historic lines, thus keeping the circuit walk intact. It is important to continue this by not altering the route.

This will be particularly simple at this site because the path is framed with a stone or clinker border. This should be retained and, where appropriate, maintained.

6.3.3.2. Path surfacing

In some places the walk is surfaced with tarmac and bound gravel would be an appropriate replacement in due course.

6.3.3.3. Blocked access

There is a small section of boarded fencing erected across the path at the boundary of the separated southern garden, thus making the circular walk incomplete. (When the site was split by modern developers a small access strip of land was left open at the southern perimeter, allowing the walk to still be open, albeit with the southern garden incidents unreachable.)

The owner of the southern garden should be encouraged to reopen this route.



Figure 9 Recent boarding prevents access to the circuit walk at the southern entrance.

6.3.3.4. Attention to small incidents

It is notable that not only does the circuit walk ‘take in’ high profile features such as the lake, terrace and ravine, but also includes more understated incidents such as circular flowerbeds along the path (including in the separately-managed south-western portion). These should be maintained, conserved, and planted attractively.



Figure 10 A circuit walk flowerbed requiring attention.

Other understated but important incidents include the path detour to a viewing mount from which the lake and mansion can be viewed.

6.3.3.5 Restoration of viewing mount

The lakeside viewing mount survives in good condition, with the paths having been well-retained. There are some difficulties however with fallen debris and unmanaged tree growth obscuring both the mount and its important view.

A significant conservation gain could be made relatively easily in this area if residents were to clear the debris and growth.

6.4. Southern gardens

6.4.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The 1843 OS map shows this area to have been an important part of the historic circuit walk, with paths around circular flower beds.

6.4.2. CURRENT CONDITION

It was not possible to visit this area during the compilation of these guidelines so these are comments made without the benefit of a site visit.

However, it is clear from the perimeter that this area has become extremely overgrown and that vegetation and trees are rampant and dilapidated.

6.4.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.4.3.1. Division from rest of historic landscape

It is regrettable that split ownership and lack of access means that this part of the site can no longer be included in current enjoyment of the historic circuit walk.

A desirable long-term aim would be for the owners of this portion to maintain the grounds as part of a single and important historic designed landscape, and in accordance with a high quality regime that unifies the landscape. This would be an appropriate goal even if access for the other residents remained unachievable.

6.4.3.2. Gardening regime

It is clear from the perimeter that this area is now minimally gardened. Vegetation is increasingly rampant and many trees are requiring specialist works.

A garden area of this size and value should receive frequent horticultural attention, most appropriately by a professional gardener (rather than a contracted maintenance team).

6.4.3.3. Maintenance and protection of hard landscaping

Historic hard landscaping such as steps, path edging and probably even ornamental flowerbed edges and urns, designed as incidents on the circuit walk (see 6.3.3.4) are likely to survive in this area but it is clear that these will be vulnerable amongst the increasingly dense vegetation.

Attention should be paid to ensure that these are appropriately protected and maintained, not least of all given the encroaching undergrowth.

6.5. South-western woodland shrubbery

6.5.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Beyond the lake in the south western corner of the gardens is an interesting area of dense woodland and shrubbery. Historically, this would have been a naturalistic but carefully-designed woodland walk. The presence of edged paths demonstrates that this area is not simply a wild corner but was carefully designed with a level of ornamentation.

The planting and appearance from the house is described in 1886 in *The Garden* as being a careful composition of poplar, birch, beech, spruce, laburnum and arbutus.¹⁸



Figure 11 Attractively-edged historic paths.

¹⁸ 'The tallest trees consist of a Lombardy Poplar, a black Poplar, Birches, and a Copper Beech. Next in size are some Laburnums, Hemlock Spruces, and Arbutus, whose gaunt limbs stretch out over the water in a most picturesque way; while in the foreground are Pampas Grasses, Water Irises, and other aquatic plants. Both in sky-outline and colour this group is charming, and whoever planted it must have had a cultivated taste for such work.' *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568

6.5.2. CURRENT CONDITION

This area has become cluttered and overgrown with self-sown trees and shrubs so that the historic views to and from the house and lake have largely become lost, and the circuit route is difficult to appreciate.

A solid hedge screens the compost and vegetable patch area but this blocks potentially attractive views and intrudes upon the flow of the designed walk in this area.



Figure 12 A hedge block the view through the south-western woodland garden, visually obstructing the attractive scene.

Intended as an ornamental attraction, this corner has instead become the functional engine of the gardens, accommodating the compost heaps and vegetable patches.

6.5.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.5.3.1. Planting

Many of the original trees survive but the area is overgrown with shrubs and so the views through the trees and especially those back to the lake and house have largely been lost.

With reference to the Tree Survey commissioned from Tim Moya, the self-seeded or modern introductions could be judiciously removed in order to restore the views and other trees would benefit from careful pruning.

Especially desirable is the removal of the hedge around the compost heaps – this is an unfortunate obstacle preventing the intended scenic glimpses through trees.

The quality of planting in this area could be improved with the addition of new trees and shrubs, working from the list given in the 1886 *The Garden* article.

6.5.3.2.

Use

The heart of this area is currently used to house the compost heaps and also as a small vegetable patch. Residents should consider relocating these functions (the vegetable patches could be most appropriately moved to the surviving part of the kitchen garden, currently known as the ‘Herb Garden’) in order to restore the historic design intention of this area as an ornamental albeit naturalistic woodland walk.

6.6. Lake, lake views, boathouse

6.6.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The lake and the view across it to and from the house would have been one of the most important features of this landscape in the 19th century. The view of the lake from the house is described here in 1886: *‘The group of trees which forms a background to the lake deserves special notice, as it is the nearest approach to perfection in the way of artistic tree-grouping that could be seen. The tallest trees consist of a Lombardy Poplar, a black Poplar, Birches, and a Copper Beech. Next in size are some Laburnums, Hemlock Spruces, and Arbutus, whose gaunt limbs stretch out over the water in a most picturesque way; while in the foreground are Pampas Grasses, Water Irises, and other aquatic plants. Both in sky-outline and colour this group is charming, and whoever planted it must have had a cultivated taste for such work.’*¹⁹

Likewise, the view back to the house from across the lake was clearly a very important component of the landscape experience here as an artful viewing mound was created (and still survives) on the circuit walk.

6.6.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The important view of the lake from the mansion is still intact, with no modern development visible in the setting behind.



Figure 13 The important lake view from the house and terrace is still largely intact and as intended in the 19th century – a rare survival given the site’s modern urban location.

However, the quality of the planting behind the lake has deteriorated: excessive growth and other clutter partly obscure the views across the water.

The lake itself is silted and overgrown with undesirable plants.

An interesting boat house survives at the southern tip of the lake, with steps curving down to it. This is currently semi-buried under leaf debris and undergrowth.

6.6.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.6.3.1. Lakeside clutter

The lawns edge of the lake is cluttered with fencing and excessive growth, obscuring the view from the mansion. The lake edge should be cleared to restore views.

(The fence is presumably in place to prevent residents' children from falling in the lake. EH would encourage serious discussion amongst the residents as to whether the barrier is really necessary, or alternatively consideration should be given to replacing it with a less visible design such as a plain chain link fence.)

The north-western tip of the lake the bank is heavily planted with bamboo. This is an attractive feature that is currently attentively gardened and much-valued by residents. It does however block many potentially attractive and historically appropriate views of the lake so consideration could be given to thinning it in places in order to open up some views.

6.6.3.2. Planting on far side of lake

As discussed in 6.5.3.1, planting here should be judiciously maintained, removed and refreshed, with reference to the 1886 description and the Tree Survey.

6.6.3.3. Lake

The silted lake requires specialist advice on clearance work.



Figure 14 Lake in early 20th century (above), and in 2012 (below).
 (Archive picture taken from <http://www.ideal-homes.org.uk/lambeth/lambeth-assets/galleries/streatham/st-michaels-convent>)

6.6.3.4.

Boathouse

The boathouse could be cleared with relative ease and would once more be an attractive and entertaining feature on a walk around the gardens.

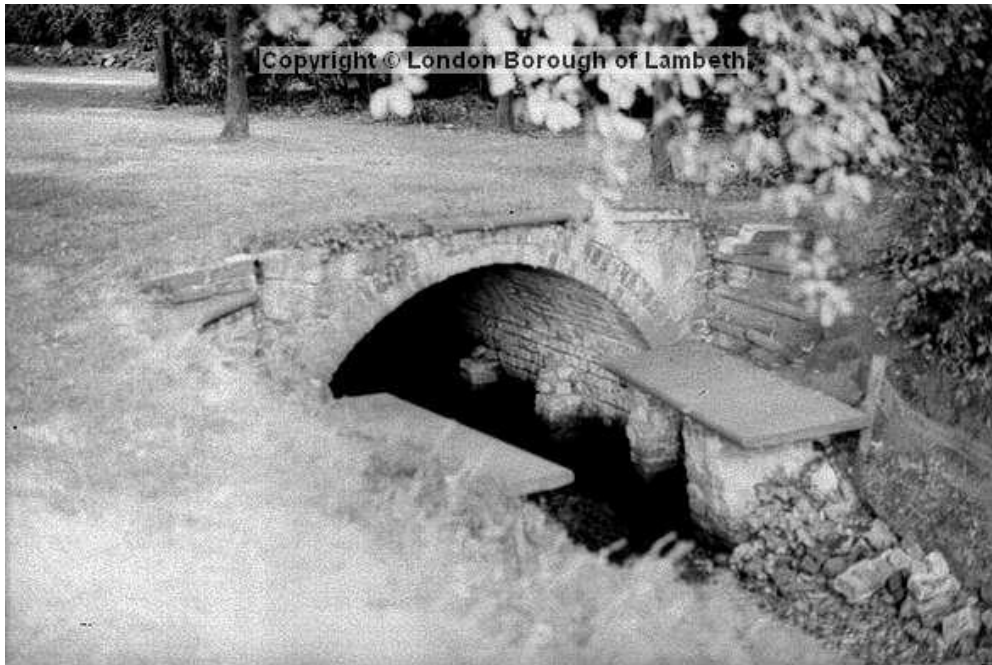


Figure 15 The boathouse when clear, and obscured in 2012.

(Archive photograph from Landmark –landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, Gower Collection, #4673, copyright London Borough of Lambeth)

6.7. Pulhamite ravine

6.7.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The ravine is a fine and largely intact example of the use of Pulhamite to achieve the fashionable 19th century feature of a rock grotto or ravine. If natural rocks were not available at an economic cost, the Pulham craftsmen would fashion their own through coating arrangements of rubble and old bricks with their own proprietary brand of cement ('Pulhamite'), that was crafted into shapes and textures that would simulate the colour and texture of natural rock.

The ravine is believed to be one of the Pulhams' finest pieces of work, with Park Hill being described by leading Pulhamite expert Claude Hitching as: "very interesting gardens from a Pulham point of view".²⁰

6.7.2. CURRENT CONDITION



Figure 16 Debris of earth and leaf fall has in some places obscured the original Pulhamite formations and would benefit from being cleared.

The ravine is strikingly intact, albeit obscured in some places by leaf debris. It is however threatened with tree roots which are splitting the structure in some places.

The water flow is now largely absent.

²⁰ Pers comm. Claude Hitching, 18th July 2012. Please see Appendix for Claude Hitching's Blog entry on Park Hill - <http://pulham.org.uk/2012/07/01/14-july-2012-park-hill-streatham/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog>

6.7.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.7.3.1. Fallen debris

It would be beneficial to clear the leaf and earth debris away carefully from around upper rockwork to uncover the original structures. When clearing debris from the Pulhamite, the workforce needs to be aware of its unusual composition as it can be difficult to recognise what is Pulhamite, and what is later debris.²¹

6.7.3.2. Repair of stonework

The efforts of Henry Tate Mews' gardeners and residents should not be underestimated but because the Pulhamite here is such a special feature, consideration should be given to engaging a professional conservator.²²

6.7.3.3. Tree canopy and roots

Even in the 19th century the heavy tree canopy caused difficulties²³ and now the whole area would benefit from the thinning of tree canopies so as to reduce leaf fall and improve light below.

²¹ *'Artificial rockwork structure is essentially a masonry core of overburnt bricks, waste stone, slag or other cheap, locally available filling material, amassed and modelled in mortar or concrete to replicate natural contours. Quality bricks and stone were also used where structural strength was important. The Pulhams also added overhangs created from slate or sandstone slabs, and often incorporated plant pockets into their designs. All of these structural forms were then finished with two coats of render, each typically 6 to 15mm thick. The base coat commonly consisted of a cement, and the finish coat a proprietary compound such as Pulham's Stone Cement, providing the trademark natural finish. The success of the rockwork's appearance depended on the ability of trained artisans to skillfully mimic the natural colours, textures, stratigraphy and lithology of the rock form ... A characteristic feature of Pulham rockwork is the use of intrinsically coloured aggregates and inorganic pigments such as ochres and iron oxides, crushed charcoal, chalk or lime to imitate natural colour variations in the finish render. Surfaces were worked and modelled while the material was wet, and various textures and inventive special effects were achieved using brushes, combs or damp sacking, and aggregates such as crushed stone or shells, pebbles or brick burrs. There is evidence of the mixing of peat into the render surface to give the appearance of tufa, with the peat rotting to create the rock's characteristic spongy finish (C Hitching, pers comm).'* *Durability Guaranteed*, (2008), p8

²² There is a list of contractors with Pulhamite experience at <http://pulham.org.uk/links/craftspeople/>

²³ This was historically the case too: *'even Mr Pulham, who always likes to see his work mistaken for Nature's work, would not probably praise this particular mass of unclothed and unnatural-looking rocks under trees where plants, even the shade-loving Ivy, struggle in vain for existence.'* *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568



Figure 17 Tree roots damage the Pulhamite in places.

Additionally, some tree roots are causing damage to the Pulham structures and should be removed in accordance with the Tree Survey. This needs to be done with care so as to minimise ensuing damage to the Pulhamite, which may subsequently need to be repaired.

6.7.3.4. Waterflow

The watercourse through the Pulhamite ravine is sporadic and residents are doing good work in investigating the cause of the supply difficulties. It is likely that this needs to be resolved in conjunction with other drainage issues – see 7.3.

6.7.3.5. Planting

Once the various repairs and tree works have taken place, it would be appropriate to improve the planting in this area. In their brochures, the Pulhams themselves offered planting suggestions and it is worth dissecting these to compile a shopping list for Henry Tate Mews. The Pulhams suggested: ²⁴

²⁴ *‘the most choice hardy plants, shrubs, conifers and flowers, having either beautiful foliage, colour, or variegation – all hardy and suitable to grow on, or about, or between the rocks, either erect, drooping, creeping, or trailing down them, the shrubs being chiefly the dwarf kinds ... also, of Alpine flowers, chiefly such as are attractive, or have variegated foliage, and bloom in the autumn or winter months, or for a long time ... Most ferneries may have*

- Hardy plants, shrubs, conifers and flowers.
- Chiefly dwarf varieties
- Alpine either with variegated leaves or that bloom either in autumn or winter, or for long stretches
- Focus on beautiful foliage, colour or variegation.
- Erect, drooping, creeping or trailing amongst the rocks (on, about or between the rocks).
- On the top of the ravine heights there can be shrubs or climbers.
- Specific plants suggested include:
 - Periwinkle, Cotoneaster, Carpet Savin (Juniper) – trailing over the rock edges
 - Weeping Birch, small – only a few
 - Heath plants, hardy – in dry and exposed areas,
 - Ferns – in shady parts.
 - Saxifrages, sedums and houseleeks – grown alone on small rockworks.

Specifically at Park Hill, an 1849 account describes the nooks and crannies of the Pulhamite ravine being planted with ‘Arbutus and other evergreen shrubs’.²⁵

*a sunny side or exposed parts, which enable us to have a greater diversity than is usually the case Shrubs and climbers, though not always typical rock plants, could be used to crown the heights. Beneath these, in the ravines and glades, it is desirable to have apparently fallen masses or debris, at or about the base of the cliff. In this, many plants will thrive better than on the ledges above ... a great number of small alpine may be thus grown near the eye for close inspection ... imagine a broad rocky ledge, with a variegated Periwinkle, Cotoneaster, Carpet Savin (Juniper), or other trailers, drooping over the rocky brow, and some of the numerous evergreen or variegated climbers growing up the face of the rock, with golden and other Hollies or Shrubs; also, now and then, a small Weeping Birch, &c, which are all beautiful in mid-winter Hardy heath plants were used in dry and exposed areas, and ferns in shady parts. Saxifrages, sedums and houseleeks could be grown alone on small rockworks.’ James Pulham, *Picturesque Ferneries and Rock-Garden Scenery, in Waterfalls, Rocky streams, Cascades, Dropping Wells, Heatheries, Caves or Cavernous Recesses for Boathouses*, (Broxbourne, c.1877), quoted in *Durability Guaranteed*, (2008), p9*

²⁵ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

6.8. Bowling green and folly

6.8.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

A smaller lower lawn sits below the orchard, and in 1849 this was used historically as a bowling green, with a gothic summerhouse at the northern end.²⁶ In later decades (between 1875 and 1889), a folly was built in what is now the north-western corner of the garden.²⁷



Figure 18 Lower lawn, historically used as a bowling green.

6.8.2. CURRENT CONDITION

This area is intact and in good condition, although no longer in use as a bowling green. The summerhouse has been lost but the folly survives and is in good condition following recent restoration.

The wall bordering the east side of the lawn (adjacent to the kitchen garden) is in need of repair.

²⁶ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

²⁷ *Heritage List Entry Summary*, 1981, <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1386202>, see Appendix.

6.8.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.8.3.1. Lawn

Given its previous role as a bowling green, it is appropriate to continue to maintain this area as an open, closely mown lawn with an amenity use.

6.8.3.2. Summerhouse

The summerhouse has been lost, although its foundations may still survive in the undergrowth or garden of the lowest new house. Residents may like to carefully investigate the potential survival of these foundations, but this is not urgent work.

6.8.3.3. Folly

The folly has been restored by residents in recent years and is in good condition although will require ongoing maintenance, for which provision should be made to prevent a lapse into the decay–restoration–decay cycle.



Figure 19 The folly in 2012.

6.8.3.4. Wall

This should be done using historically appropriate materials and techniques, reusing the original stones wherever possible. In order to preserve the quality and value of this historic asset, residents may wish to consider employing a specialist heritage craftsman for this work.

In addition, EH encourage the Management to apply to EH for a grant towards the cost of these works.



Figure 20 The wall is in need of serious and careful repair.

6.9. Alcove border

6.9.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

This walk provided an elegant route linking the formal terrace to the rest of the gardens. A highly ornamental area, it includes an alcove seat and a circular pool now in use as a flowerbed.

6.9.2. CURRENT CONDITION

This attractive area is intact – historic border shape, path line, walls, alcove and circular flower bed/pool are still all present – but a little ‘tired’. The planting needs to be refreshed and structures and path surfacing need repair.

However, it is clear that residents are well aware of this and have works in hand.

6.9.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.9.3.1. Border planting

The border running alongside the base of the wall is carefully gardened and residents are improving the planting within it. They may wish to consider using a mixture of evergreen flowering shrubs underplanted with herbaceous perennials, such as the azalea and poppy combination described in *The Garden* article of 1886.

6.9.3.2. Path

The line of the historic path has been maintained but is now surfaced in tarmac, which is in most places cracked and uneven. It will need to be replaced in the near future, and EH would be glad to advise on a more appropriate material.



Figure 21 An appropriate replacement will be needed for cracked tarmac.

6.9.3.3. Alcove seat

The alcove is in need of some repair to the stonework and also repairs to the seat itself are already underway. Parts of the stonework have fallen away and lie nearby the alcove: these should be retrieved and kept securely whilst awaiting repair.



Figure 22 The stonework and seat of the alcove are in need of repair.

6.9.3.4. Flowerbed

The walls of this feature require some repair and residents may wish to take this opportunity to reinstate its historic use as a water feature.



Figure 23 Historically, the round flowerbed in front of the alcove was a water feature.²⁸ (Archive photograph from Landmark –landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, Postcard Albums collection, #1156, copyright London Borough of Lambeth)

²⁸ *Heritage List Entry Summary*, (1981), <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1386203>, see Appendix

6.9.3.5. Wall

This should be done using historically appropriate materials and techniques, reusing the original stones wherever possible. In order to preserve the quality and value of this historic asset, residents may wish to consider employing a specialist heritage craftsman for this work. This task should be done at the same time as repairing the portion adjacent to the bowling green, see 6.8.3.4.

6.10. Kitchen gardens

6.10.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Park Hill was noted for its fine kitchen gardens and the innovative horticultural techniques practised in them.²⁹

6.10.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The kitchen gardens were almost entirely built over with housing in the 1990s but a small parcel survives immediately behind the alcove border. This is now labelled as the Herb Garden and is mainly laid to lawn with a path down the middle along the historic line.

A portion of wall still survives, in good repair, as the back wall of some of the modern housing.



Figure 24 Surviving part of the kitchen garden

²⁹ Much-admired here was a splendid vinery which has been lost (reportedly due to wartime bombing) and replaced with housing. William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82–83

6.10.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.10.3.1. Use

The Herb Garden is currently laid to lawn but vegetable growing to the area behind the lake demonstrates an enthusiasm for such activity amongst the residents. Vegetable growing would be a fitting use for the Herb Garden, if residents agree to move the vegetable patch from the south-western woodland, thus revitalising this part of the garden as an area of ornamental productivity.

6.10.3.2. Path

The original path line has been retained and the modern surfacing and edging is in good condition, but if residents seek its replacement in future then this would be an opportunity to investigate whether the original path survives underneath.

6.11. South front

6.11.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Gardens to the immediate south front of the house provided visitors with their first impression of the property and were designed to be simple, smart and impressive to maximise the view of the house. The driveway curved round to a turning circle with grassed centre and a splendid feature tree in the middle.



Figure 25 South front of the house in 1939.

(Archive photograph taken from landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, Streatham Antiquarian Society collection, #3131, copyright London Borough of Lambeth.)

6.11.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The south front is now in separate ownership and is managed separately from the rest of the landscape.³⁰ It has not been possible to visit this area and so these guidelines cannot address it in detail. It is clear however that the experience of making an impressive approach has been lost, largely because these grounds are surrounded by a heavy metal fence and gate.

The south garden area to the east of the forecourt has largely been covered by the chapel and related car parking added during the occupation of St Michael's Convent. A portion remains as the garden of the chapel flats.

The flats have further separated this area out into individual marked garden curtilages, defined by hedges and fencing.

³⁰ As previously described, also the southern part of the terrace and lawn, and south western part of the perimeter shrubbery and woodland.

6.11.3.SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.11.3.1. Division

It is regrettable that the division of the landscape is so visually obvious, and that it is so clear that the grounds are managed as many small portions rather than as a single important heritage asset. Multiple ownership need not necessarily prevent a single management regime and a cohesive approach would significantly improve the value of this heritage asset. Therefore, the residents of these dwellings should be encouraged to adopt a ‘working together’ approach.



Figure 26 The south front in 2012.



Figure 27 The south and east front of the house in 1886. *The Garden* 29, (1886). p569

6.11.3.2. Boundaries

To reduce the loss of visual integrity, residents of these properties – south front of the villa and also chapel flats – could be encouraged to use only minimal fencing, or a less visually-dense design, and to avoid the addition of hedging if at all possible.

6.11.3.3. Maintenance

It is clear as viewed from the boundary that the south front garden is suffering from neglect, in particular with important and valuable historic trees being in need of professional attention.

6.12. Entrance and drives

6.12.1. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The 1843 OS map shows two entrance drives to the mansion, both stemming from a gateway and lodge on the Streatham Common North road but then parting so that one curved round to the mansion's main door on the south front, with the other continuing to the east of the mansion.³¹

6.12.2. CURRENT CONDITION

The lodge³² and wrought-iron entrance gates survive in good condition.

Today the left fork of the drive way ends in a gate marking a part of the gardens in separate ownership. It is bounded by modern railings and dense hedging.



Figure 28 The left approach is now bounded with hedging, fencing and a gate, which serves to regrettably sever it from the rest of the historic landscape.

The right fork continues up through the 1990s development of Henry Tate Mews. Modern planting along the right drive is of a high quality, augmented by being punctuated with mature historic trees.

³¹ 1843 Ordnance Survey map

³² *Heritage List Entry Summary*, 1981, <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1386199>, see Appendix.

6.12.3. SUGGESTED CONSERVATION WORKS

6.12.3.1. Boundaries

It is understandable that the owner of the southern part of the mansion wishes to demarcate his property, however in terms of the historic landscape it is unfortunate that the demarcation is a gate that interrupts the flow of the historic drive.

The heavy fence around the chapel and south front gardens compounds the visual obstruction to the historic views and travel flow.

However, an improvement would be achieved by removing the hedge that runs alongside the fence. This measure would partially restore the designed historic views, notwithstanding that division of ownership would still be evident.

6.12.3.2. Trees

The right hand carriage drive now passes through modern development and its setting is clearly very altered. Mature trees from the original design do survive and these should be protected and maintained in accordance with the Tim Moya Tree Survey.

6.12.3.3. Surfacing

The drives are surfaced in tarmac that is in good condition. This is perfectly serviceable but a bound gravel would be more in keeping with the historic surfacing and should be considered as and when the tarmac needs replacing.



Figure 29 Drive with serviceable but inappropriately modern and municipal tarmac and concrete edging

6.12.3.4. Edging

The drive is edged in concrete edging which again is perfectly serviceable but a discreet iron or wooden edge would be historically more appropriate and should be considered as a replacement in due course.

6.12.3.5. Gates and lodge

The entrance lodge is now a private residence outside the management of the Henry Tate Management Company. Its curtilage is kept in such a way that disguises its separation from the rest of the site (there is no private hedging and fencing and it is painted in a colour to match the rest of the entrance structures) and this should be encouraged and continued.

7. Other historic landscape conservation issues

7.1. Gardens to the east

Historically, land to the east of the mansion was also included within the gardens. From the 1843 OS map it can be seen that near to the house this was a lawn planted with specimen trees, extending out then into a more natural paddock.³³ The lawn area has been absorbed by the chapel and its associated curtilage (discussed under 6.1. South Front), whilst the paddock has been consumed by Benhurst Court.

There are some surviving mature ornamental trees from this design to be seen along the entrance drive and these should be maintained and protected and, where appropriate, replaced with the same species.



Figure 30 Mature trees from the historic designed landscape survive along the drive.

³³ 'Here [east side of house and carriage drive] may be seen a broad stretch of lawn, uninterrupted except by fine trees, some of which are remarkable for size. For instance, there is one of the finest specimens of the Willow-leaved Cockspur Thorn (*Crataegus Crus-galli salicifolia*) to be seen anywhere. It has a diameter of stem of about 18 inches, and the spread of the branches measures fully 40 feet. It is a beautiful tree with a rounded head, the slender branches of which droop gracefully on all sides.' *The Garden* 29, (1886), p568

'A long walk around a pasture field, planted on one side with evergreens and flowers in front, will give a circuit of about one mile from, and to, the house.' William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p84

Furthermore, within the grounds of Benhurst Court there are other elements of the Park Hill designed landscape still existing, particularly trees and paths immediately adjacent to the fence. Clearly these are in entirely separate ownership from that of the Henry Tate Mews portion of the historic designed landscape, but the Henry Tate Management Ltd may wish to make residents of Benhurst Court aware of these remnants and encourage their conservation.



Figure 31 There are some parts of Park Hill's historic gardens still surviving within the grounds of Benhurst Court.

7.2. Views out and setting

Henry Tate Mews historically enjoyed a semi-rural setting and views. Keane describes it as commanding views of *'the beautiful landscape of the park, the long avenue of old Elms, and a prospect of the hills of Highgate, Harrow, and St Paul's Cathedral.'*³⁴

There are no longer views of park and further-afield landmarks such as described by Keane in 1849 but nevertheless the views out from Henry Tate Mews remain remarkably unspoilt by modern development beyond the gardens.

The exception is the Bishop Thomas Grant school buildings on the western boundary of the site, which are an unfortunate intrusion on an otherwise intact view. Taking into account the structural integrity of the folly, consideration should

³⁴ William Keane, *The Beauties of Surrey*, (1849), p82

be given to careful tree planting on the boundary to screen this view. Trees could be taken from the palette described as being in the 1886 lake backdrop – lombardy poplar, black poplar, birches, copper beech, and the smaller laburnums, hemlock spruces, and arbutus.



Figure 32 The view to the west is largely intact but the school buildings are intrusive and could be screened with mixed tree planting.

7.3. Drainage

The historic drainage system on this site is a complex and interesting one demanding further investigation and understanding.

Poor drainage is a problem within the west garden and needs to be addressed as the site floods quickly in wet weather. (It is likely that the poor drainage results from a combination of the old drainage structures needing repair and the complex historic water supply network having been disrupted during 20th century building works.)



Figure 33 The water management and drainage system at Henry Tate Mews is complex and sensitive.

Resolving the drainage problems should be taken in conjunction with works to improve water supply to the Pulhamite ravine and to lake restoration activities. Professional help should be employed to conduct a drainage survey, which will dictate the way forward.

It may be useful to contact the local authority's Flood Management Officer for advice, particularly if there has been flooding and poor drainage in the area around Henry Tate Mews.

7.4. Western boundary

Walls bordering the gardens to the west of the site have in places fallen into disrepair and are in need of mending. In some places the stones and bricks are missing but it is likely that these are scattered around the garden, either in the undergrowth or possibly re-used elsewhere. Efforts should be made to locate and reuse masonry in repairing the walls.

Beyond the western boundary wall is an alleypath, from which a gate leads into the gardens. The alley is currently clear but access is closed.

Following development of the school adjacent to the western boundary and housing to the northern boundary, the flow of the alley and access to the gardens has become confused, especially in the north western corner.

It would be good to see the role of this alley clarified and potentially reinstated, subject to the resolution of any related security issues.

7.5. Lost garden buildings

Local archives and other historic records show that there were a number of garden buildings at the site, now lost. It is likely that the footprints or foundations of these still exist and that the materials are scattered or re-used around the gardens. With a view to building up evidence and an accurate record of these, residents may wish to be vigilant for these when working in the gardens, even though actual recreation and reinstatement is unlikely to be a realistic option.

Further research into the history of the garden and these buildings is recommended and it might be useful for residents to contact the local authority archive service – Lambeth Landmarks, <http://landmark.lambeth.gov.uk/default.asp> - to discuss the following archive pictures, their source, and to discuss the basis on which their captions were written.



Figure 34 This photograph was taken from landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, where it is said to be 'Ornate summer house in the grounds of Park Hill'. Streatham Antiquarian Society collection, #3140, copyright London Borough of Lambeth.

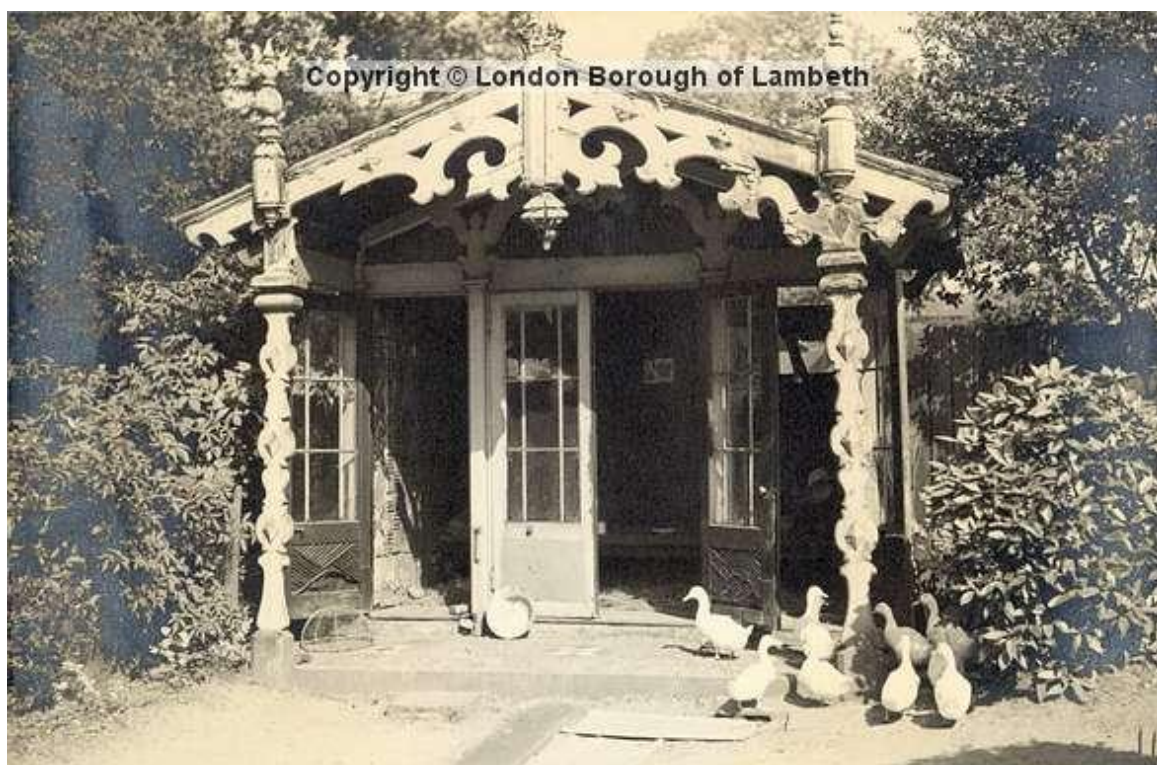


Figure 35 Photograph was taken from landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, where it is said to be ‘Ornate summer house in the grounds of Park Hill’. Gower Collection, #4670, copyright London Borough of Lambeth.



Figure 36 This photograph was taken from landmark.lambeth.gov.uk, where it is said to be ‘The remains of the entrance lodge built in 1835’. Streatham Antiquarian Society collection, #3146, copyright London Borough of Lambeth.

6. Further reading

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Tim Moya Associates; *Tree Risk and Condition Survey: Henry Tate Mews*; Oct 2011; 211010-GD-01

9. Appendix: Relevant texts

Goldring, William, 'Park Hill, Streatham', *The Garden* 29, (19th June 1886), p568

568	THE GARDEN.	[JUNE 19, 1886.]
<p>strips of deal, one about 18 inches from the ground, and the others at the same distance apart, the topmost being fastened neatly to the top of the stakes. Besides supporting rows of strong canes, it also much simplifies the operation of netting over the plantation, in order to protect it from birds. The netting, being well supported by the framework above the fruit, greatly facilitates the work of collecting the crops, which promise to be heavy this year in most localities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">W. I. M.</p>	<p>The scarlet Cactus Dahlia is in bloom already, and its bright effect against the background of Magnolias may be readily imagined.</p> <p>The front lawn is one of the prettiest examples of garden landscape that could be seen about London. It slopes gently from the retaining wall of the terrace to a miniature lake, behind which rises a group of ornamental trees, and it is one broad expanse, interrupted only by a few fine old trees, among them being some lofty Elms and spreading Yews, carpeted beneath with Ivy. The group of trees which forms a background to the lake deserves special notice, as it is the nearest approach to perfection in the way of artistic tree-grouping that could be seen. The tallest trees consist of a Lombardy Poplar, a black Poplar, Birches, and a Copper Beech. Next in size are some Laburnums, Hemlock Spruces, and Arbutus, whose gaunt limbs stretch out over the water in a most picturesque way; while in the foreground are Pampas Grasses, Water Irises, and other aquatic plants. Both in sky-outline and colour this group is charming, and whoever planted it must have had a cultivated taste for such work. Groups of Rhododendrons and Azaleas are planted along the outskirts of the lawn. Just now the lawn is lit up by a great mass of Oriental Poppies planted among Ghent Azaleas, but the Poppy flowers overtop them by a foot or more. The effect of hundreds of great scarlet Poppy flowers rising from a dense group of pale green Azalea foliage is very fine. This combination is well worth taking note of by those who have an eye to tidiness in their gardens, for, as everyone knows, the Poppy has an untidy look after flowering, but the Azaleas in this case hide all this, and, moreover, the two plants grow harmoniously together. Another beautiful combination here is a bed of Pyrethrums and white Japanese Anemones. The Pyrethrums are in full bloom now, double and single, and very fine they look. In a few weeks their bloom will be past, and then the stems are cut down, and by this time the Anemones will be throwing up their flower-stems, while the ferny leaves of the Pyrethrums serve as an undergrowth. This bed is in a sheltered nook in company with the hardy Palm (<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>); therefore the Anemone thrives to perfection, and nothing could be finer than this group was last autumn; the flower-stems were a yard high, and so plentiful were they, that the bed was a mass of white bloom.</p> <p>A sunk path in imitation of a rocky ravine forms a boundary on one side of the garden. This was the work of Mr. Pulham years ago, and it is a decidedly important feature of the place, now that the growth of shrubs and other plants has added to its picturesqueness. The profusion of rocks, however, in one part arouses suspicion as to its artificial origin, and even Mr. Pulham, who always likes to see his work mistaken for Nature's work, would not probably praise this particular mass of unclothed and unnatural-looking rocks under trees where plants, even the shade-loving Ivy, struggle in vain for existence. An artificial rockery must be carried out with consummate taste when amidst surroundings that do not suggest a natural outcropping of rocks. A little of it in the home landscape is invaluable, but in excess it is harmful. An instance of this occurs in the conservatory here adjoining the house. A natural-looking rocky Fern cave is what was evidently aimed at; but the result is anything but satisfactory. In the centre is a huge incongruous mass of stone (or stucco), and the heavy shade created by this mass renders it impossible for Ferns to grow as they should do at the base of it, and even the fish in the pool below do not seem happy. In rockery building the chief consideration should be how</p>	<p>little material to use in order to make the work look natural.</p> <p>The rest of the garden here is in keeping with the importance of the place. There is a capital open-air fruit garden, good walls for Peaches and the like, and excellent examples of standard fruit trees. There is a crowd of hot houses, containing a varied collection of plants selected chiefly with the view to their suitability for affording a large supply of cut blooms and for room and table decoration. The plant stove contains some very fine examples of Ferns and other fine-foliaged plants, and in the fernery there is a remarkable example of that graceful Fern, <i>Goniophlebium subauriculatum</i>, measuring about a yard through, and with fronds from 4 feet to 5 feet in length hanging gracefully on all sides of the basket. A corridor with the roof covered with <i>Lapageria</i> is a pretty feature, and in a handsome dome-roofed conservatory adjoining the house are grand specimens of fine-leaved plants. As a fruit garden it is chiefly remarkable, and particularly for Grapes, which every year are the centre of attraction at the chief London fruit shows. It is the Black Alicantes that are the most remarkable, and with these Mr. Howes, the gardener, invariably heads the prize list. Some of the bunches shown by Mr. Howes last year weighed 10½ lbs. each, and were coloured to perfection. These huge bunches were the produce of one old Vine, which alone fills a lean-to house 30 feet by 12 feet. This year it is carrying no fewer than eighty bunches, none of which will weigh less than 4 lbs., and several will weigh 8, 9, and 10 lbs. This old Vine is in vigorous health, but, of course, is fed liberally so as to enable it to carry such enormous crops. A great variety filled with Muscat of Alexandria is scarcely less remarkable, as it is as fine an example of skillful Grape culture as could be seen anywhere. Other vineries include those devoted to Black Hamburgh, just coloured, while the early Peach houses contain a fine crop of ripe fruit; indeed, Peach and Grape culture are two of the chief features of the place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">W. G.</p>
<p>PARK HILL, STREATHAM.</p> <p>At one time there were, perhaps, more first-class residences in the neighbourhood of Streatham than in any other locality about London. Before railways intersected the place it was the resort of rich merchants and bankers, being within an easy drive of the city. Some fine houses and gardens still remain, but many have long since been swept away—transformed into streets and houses. Mr. Tate's residence, Park Hill, is unquestionably one of the finest in the suburbs of London, and, though not an estate of great extent, is typical of a first-class place. It is a noble house, and surrounding it is a garden laid out in the charmingly natural style which characterises all Mr. Marnock's work. The most is made of the limited area, for when in the grounds one little suspects the nearness of the common, which is only separated by the high road, so skilfully has the boundary been concealed.</p> <p>The annexed engraving shows the east side of the house and the carriage drive. Here may be seen a broad stretch of lawn, uninterrupted except by fine trees, some of which are remarkable for size. For instance, there is one of the finest specimens of the Willow-leaved Cockspar Thorn (<i>Crataegus Crus-galli salicifolia</i>) to be seen anywhere. It has a diameter of stem of about 18 inches, and the spread of the branches measures fully 40 feet. It is a beautiful tree with a rounded head, the slender branches of which droop gracefully on all sides. It is shown on the right in the engraving. Near it is a Lebanon Cedar, but this is apparently feeling the effects of the great town which is stretching towards it. Indeed, almost all the Conifers are beginning to show signs of distress, although the vigorous Pines, such as <i>excelsa</i> and <i>austriaca</i>, thrive and seem to make good growth.</p> <p>The chief part of the garden lies on the western side of the house. There is an admirably designed terrace garden treated geometrically, as the circumstances necessitated. This garden contains the only display of bedding about the place, and, confined as it is to a limited area close to the mansion, it does not in the least mar the natural aspect of the other part. Already the borders are gay with showy bedding and carpet plants, and later on, when the weather is more genial, these will produce a brilliant effect. The garden is bounded on two sides by walls clothed with Magnolias and Camellias, which flower well and need no protection. The piers of the walls are capped by ornamental vases, and these just now are garlanded with <i>Wistaria</i> bloom—a beautiful picture. An old <i>Wistaria</i> planted at one end sends a huge limb along the top of the wall, and at each pier it gives off a branch which entwines itself round the vase. Another uncommon feature in the terrace garden is the single Dahlias, which are already in full bloom, and will continue to flower till October. Although they remind one of autumn, there is no other flower that could produce such a pretty effect at this season in the position they occupy. The roots are started in heat in February and hurried on, and after being hardened off are planted out at the end of May, and they soon produce a profuse array of bloom—scarlets, yellows, and whites, and a hundred intermediate shades.</p>	<p>The scarlet Cactus Dahlia is in bloom already, and its bright effect against the background of Magnolias may be readily imagined.</p> <p>The front lawn is one of the prettiest examples of garden landscape that could be seen about London. It slopes gently from the retaining wall of the terrace to a miniature lake, behind which rises a group of ornamental trees, and it is one broad expanse, interrupted only by a few fine old trees, among them being some lofty Elms and spreading Yews, carpeted beneath with Ivy. The group of trees which forms a background to the lake deserves special notice, as it is the nearest approach to perfection in the way of artistic tree-grouping that could be seen. The tallest trees consist of a Lombardy Poplar, a black Poplar, Birches, and a Copper Beech. Next in size are some Laburnums, Hemlock Spruces, and Arbutus, whose gaunt limbs stretch out over the water in a most picturesque way; while in the foreground are Pampas Grasses, Water Irises, and other aquatic plants. Both in sky-outline and colour this group is charming, and whoever planted it must have had a cultivated taste for such work. Groups of Rhododendrons and Azaleas are planted along the outskirts of the lawn. 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G.</p> <p>Eurybia argophylla.—This is the old scented Aster (<i>A. argophyllus</i>), and is a half hardy shrub worth a few feet of sheltered wall space in even the best of gardens. The musky fragrance of its silvery-backed leaves is liked by some people, who consider it worth cultivating especially for its perfume, and its leafy shoots are also useful for arranging with flowers in pots or vases indoors. As a wall shrub it is effective, and after rain, or when crushed in passing, its musky fragrance is quite enjoyable. Planted in deep rich soil the plant grows very rapidly, and even if cut down to the ground level by a more than usually severe winter, it pushes young shoots up from the root-stock in the spring, and so takes up a new lease of its life. Cuttings of the young wood root freely if inserted now in sandy soil, under a bell-glass or handlight, or it may be propagated in quantity from seeds sown as soon as they ripen. Its small white Aster-like flowers are not so showy as those of <i>B. chinensis</i> and other species, but, as before suggested, the plant is worth growing for its leaves alone. H</p> <p>Veronica Hulseana.—I agree with "Veronica's" note in reference to this being one of the best of the dwarf hardy Zealand shrubby Veronics, but the colour-pale blue is rather undecided. The bright rose-coloured variety with long, shining lanceolate leaves, and the deep blue with white leaves, both much harder, and blooming from the first of right through the winter if sheltered, are to my mind much more effective, but at least requiring double the space and height of <i>Hulseana</i>. Some years ago "Veronica" gave me cuttings of this <i>Veronica</i>, which rooted freely in a moist bed. They were planted out at the foot of a sunny wall, and without protection have been frost-proof since. I have not terna, about which inquiries are made, is equally happy with me.—W. J. MORPHY, <i>Clonmel</i>.</p>

Vines in full bloom, a good crop on the short spur system. This range is glazed with sheet glass, which is much approved of. In front is a pretty flower garden on grass, in a small dell, entered by a flight of steps to a small terrace flower-plot, leading to the kitchen garden of one acre and a quarter walled round. On the west aspect are Peach trees trained on Seymour's system. In the Melon ground is a range of pits, fifty feet long by six feet six inches wide, heated by hot water with bottom heat produced by two three-inch pipes in tanks and drain pipes to admit steam to the pits, in them were good Pine, Cucumber, and Strawberry plants. Another pit, twenty-four feet long by six wide, in two divisions, also heated by hot water, was filled with Pines and stove plants, amongst them was a splendid plant of *Ixora coccinea* with sixty-four corymbs of bloom, an *Allamanda cathartica*, and a *Stephanotis floribunda* tied over the balloon-shaped trellis as it grows, by which treatment it flowers beautifully and regularly all over the trellis. To the west front of the house is a terrace-walk, eighty yards long, terminated at the north end by a Summer-house, with a very fine prospect of Epsom, Wimbledon, Wandsworth, and Streatham Church. This well-kept place is known to fame, as it has furnished some beautiful specimens to the Metropolitan Shows, and to the Horticultural Rooms, Regent Street, the best testimonials of the abilities of the intelligent head-gardener Mr. Taylor.—*March 22.*

THE SEAT OF WILLIAM LEAF, ESQ.,

STREATHAM.

This beautiful edifice is of the Grecian style of architecture. To the south-west front is a terrace-walk, eighty yards long,

H

with a handsome balustrade adorned with vases, a plot of ground laid out as a parterre, and the large iron culvilinear-roof Conservatory which is said to have cost one thousand pounds. It is sixty feet long, twenty-five wide, and twenty-five high. In it is a handsome plant of *Acacia pubescens* towering to the roof, and a *Wisteria sinensis* trained around the inside of the house. Descending from the south-side of the terrace to the pleasure grounds of five acres backed by evergreen shrubs and giving views of the fine smooth turf, tastefully laid out with groups of shrubs and embellished with an *Araucaria imbricata* ten feet high, a *Cedrus deodora* twenty feet high, and a pretty piece of water, the gravel walk leads to the Rose garden, then to a flower-plot with a column in the centre, surmounted by a vase—further on is a deep dell arched with massive rockwork formed into caverns and planted with *Arbutus* and other evergreen shrubs; the walk to the right, through a vista of evergreens with a Summer-house and small flower garden, conducts by a flight of steps to the terrace; the walk to the left, to a Gothic Summer-house at the end of the Bowling-green, commands the beautiful landscape of the park, the long avenue of old Elms, and a prospect of the hills of Highgate, Harrow, and St. Paul's Cathedral. The first kitchen garden entered is one acre walled round, rows of pretty Pear trees studded with flower buds, and trained in the *en quenouille* manner, lined the main walk and the walks around the quarters. The second kitchen garden is about one acre walled round. Against the north walls are the ranges of glass, heated by hot water. The first Vinery is thirty-two feet long, fourteen wide, and sixteen high; the Vines planted outside and pruned on the very close spur system are very large canes and promising for a

good crop. The second Vinery is twenty feet long, fourteen wide, and sixteen high. The third Vinery is thirty-two feet long, the same width and height as the others, planted principally with Cannon Hall Muscats. The front sashes of the Vineries extend from the border to the back wall; in one or two of them Fig trees were planted and trained up the trellis in the centre, and all available parts were filled with plants of all sorts, useful for bedding out or for the decoration of the Conservatory. A span-roof house, twenty-eight feet long by twelve wide, fitted up with slate shelves, contained two strong plants of *Clivia nobilis*. The Orchidee, a span-roof house with slate shelves, is twenty feet long by twelve wide, furnished with a large plant of *Passiflora Bonapartia* and a small collection of Orchidee plants. The Cucumber-house is eighteen feet long by ten wide, heated on the tank system, fruit had been cut from it all the winter and some twelve inches long were then to be seen. The Fruiting and Succession Pine Pits are forty-eight feet long by fourteen wide, filled with strong healthy Pine plants. The early Vinery is sixteen feet long, twelve wide, and fifteen high; the crop of grapes was half swelled and would be ripe about the middle of May, a month later than the crops of former seasons. In another Vinery, twenty-eight feet long by seven wide, was a good stock of young Vines in pots. A Strawberry-house, twenty-eight feet long by seven wide, was filled with Strawberry plants. Well-grounded complaints are heard in all places where Strawberries are forced, against the sunless weather of March at the critical time when the fruit was setting. With such a laudable spirit of improvement is everything arranged here, that even the Mushroom-house is favoured with hot-water pipes; the abundant produce of

Mushrooms, Rhubarb, Sea-kale, &c., to be seen proved the advantages of the plan. In the Melon ground is a Pine pit, twenty-four feet long by ten wide, stocked with Pine plants; and a cold pit, thirty feet long, was filled with Calceolarias, good stocky plants. A long walk around a pasture field, planted on one side with evergreens and flowers in front, will give a circuit of about one mile from, and to, the house. As another instance of the liberality with which improvements have been carried out in this superb place, more than three thousand loads of soil have been brought from a distance to form the gardens, and to judge from the healthy and productive state of all the fruit trees, shrubs, and vegetables, they are very grateful for the supply of food and the attention given to them. This large forcing establishment is very successfully managed by Mr. Butcher, with the assistance of eight men. The park is one hundred acres.

As a sort of episode before visiting BEDDINGTON PARK, the principal place of attraction in this neighbourhood, I shall describe a few small but interesting places, pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Wandle. The first on the road from Croydon to Carshalton is

Beddington House,

THE SEAT OF SIR HENRY BRIDGES, BART.

The large Cedars of Lebanon and evergreen Oak, seen in the pasture field, create a desire to know more of the place. To the east front of this commodious house are four acres of pleasure ground surrounded by a walk and planted with trees, shrubs, and flowers, in the manner

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: GATES, GATES PIERS AND FLANKING WALLS AT MAIN ENTRANCE TO ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT

List Entry Number: 1064937

Location

GATES, GATES PIERS AND FLANKING WALLS AT MAIN ENTRANCE TO ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT, STREATHAM COMMON NORTH SW16

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Lambeth

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 27-Mar-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 204697

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

STREATHAM COMMON NORTH SW16

1.

5023

Gates, gate piers and
flanking walls at main
entrance to
St Michael's Convent
TQ 3171 35/337

II

2.

Central double and side single ornamental cast iron gates hung from rusticated
stucco piers, those at sides with urn finials, those in centre taller with lampholders
and crowns on top. Convex quadrant walls run to outer flanking piers.

Listing NGR: TQ3112571094

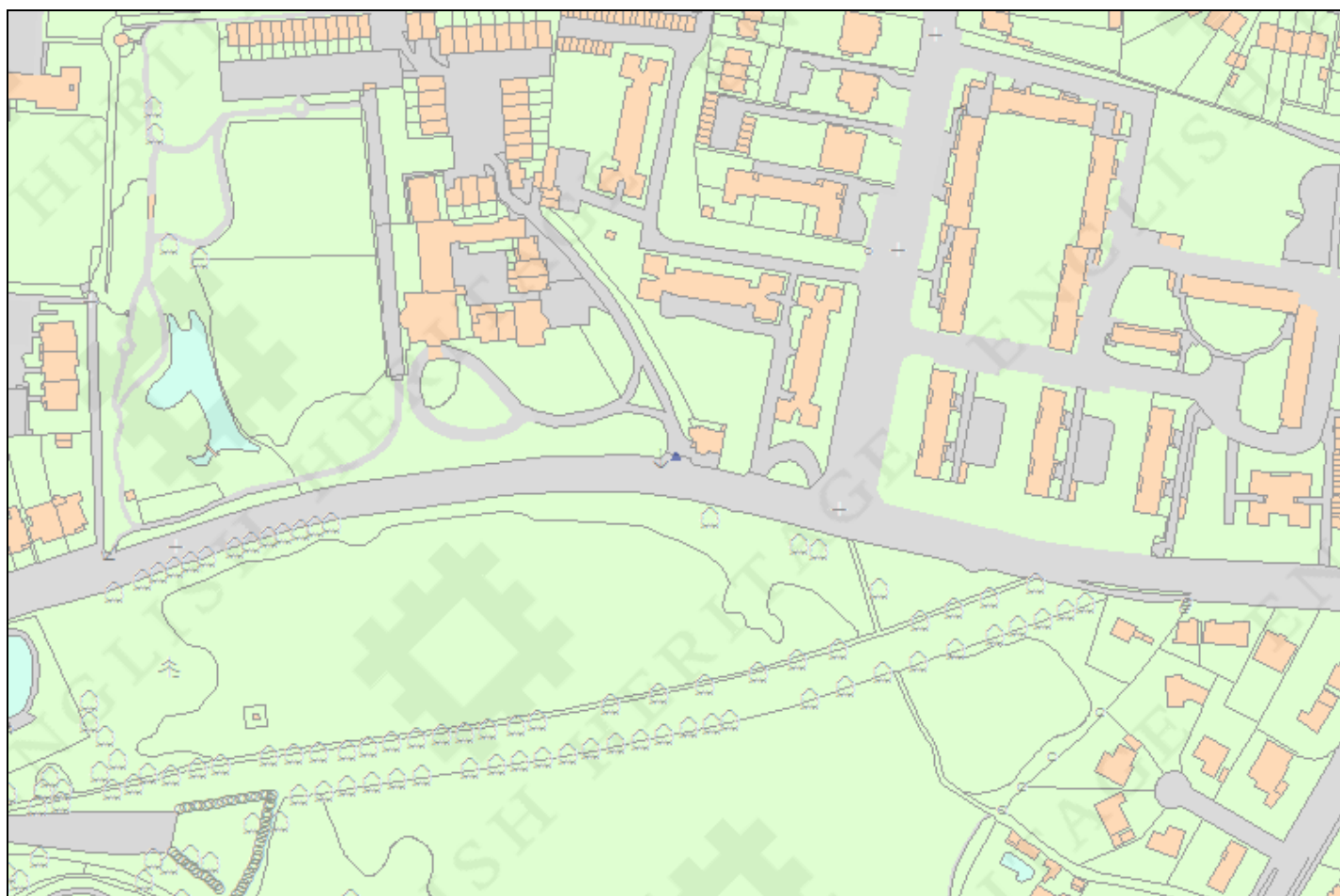
Selected Sources

1. **Article Reference** - *Title:* Part 17 Greater London - *Journal Title:* Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England

Map

National Grid Reference: TQ 31125 71094

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1064937.pdf](#)



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List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: TERRACE WALLS AND STEPS TO WEST OF ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT

List Entry Number: 1100278

Location

TERRACE WALLS AND STEPS TO WEST OF ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT, STREATHAM COMMON
NORTH SW16

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Lambeth

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 27-Mar-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

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Legacy System: LBS

UID: 204696

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List Entry Description

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Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

STREATHAM COMMON NORTH SW16

1.
5023
Terrace walls and steps
to west of
St Michael's Convent
TQ 3171 35/335

II GV
2.
Early-mid C19 low stuccoed walls have square plinths at intervals bearing krater-shaped

urns. Three flights of steps lead down to garden, each flanked by sphinxes on plinths. A similar flight of steps at south end of terrace.

Listing NGR: TQ3100971207

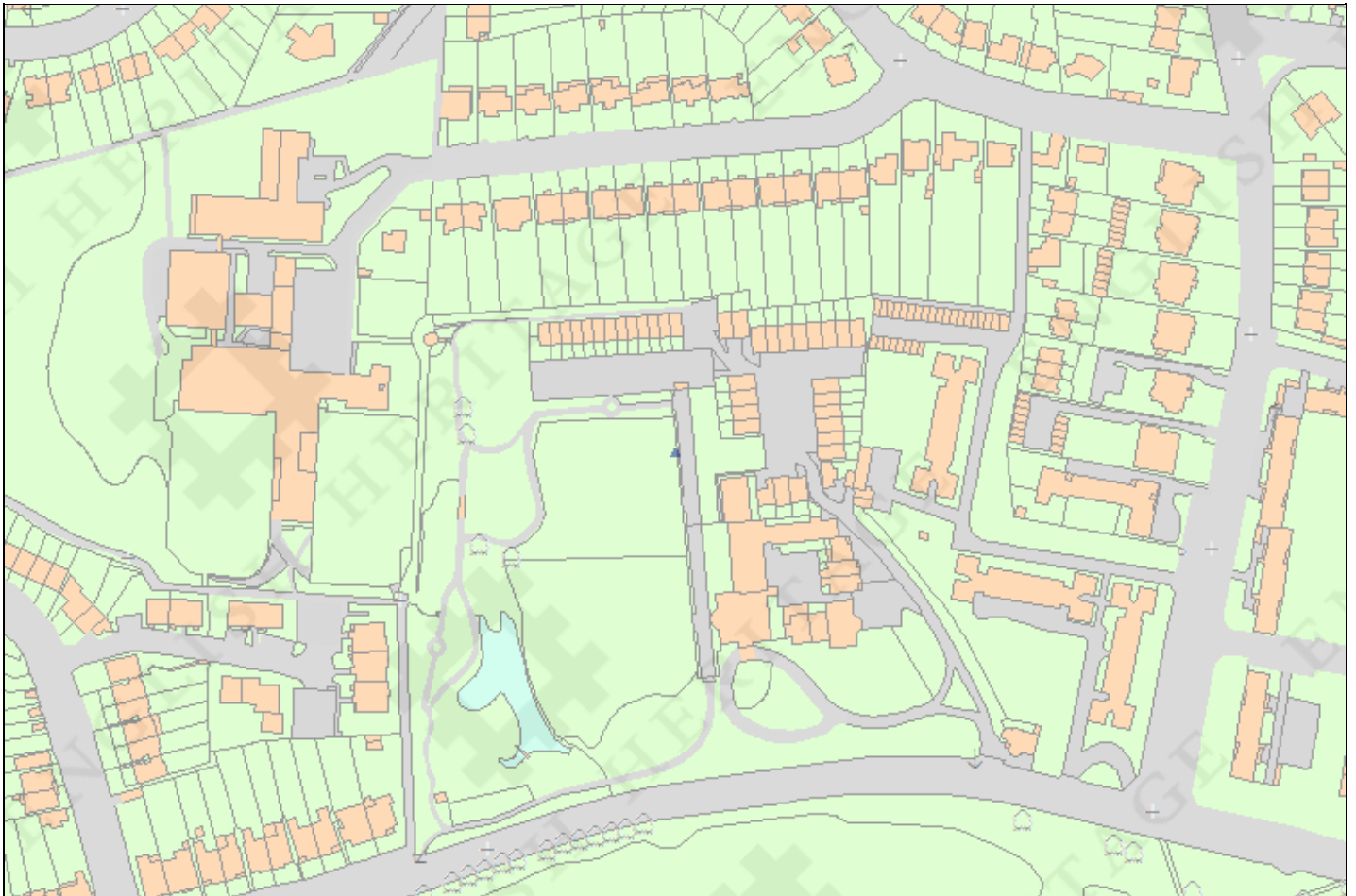
Selected Sources

1. **Article Reference** - *Title:* Part 17 Greater London - *Journal Title:* Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England
-

Map

National Grid Reference: TQ 31009 71207

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List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: GARDEN HOUSE AT NORTH END OF TERRACE TO WEST OF ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT

List Entry Number: 1357937

Location

GARDEN HOUSE AT NORTH END OF TERRACE TO WEST OF ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT,
STREATHAM COMMON NORTH SW16

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Lambeth

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first listed: 27-Mar-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 204695

Asset Groupings

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List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

STREATHAM COMMON NORTH SW16

1.
5023
Garden house at north end
of terrace to west of
St Michael's Convent
TQ 3171 35/334

II GV

2.
Early-mid C19 simple Doric cell in stucco. Fluted columns in antis; entablature and pediment.

Listing NGR: TQ3101171231

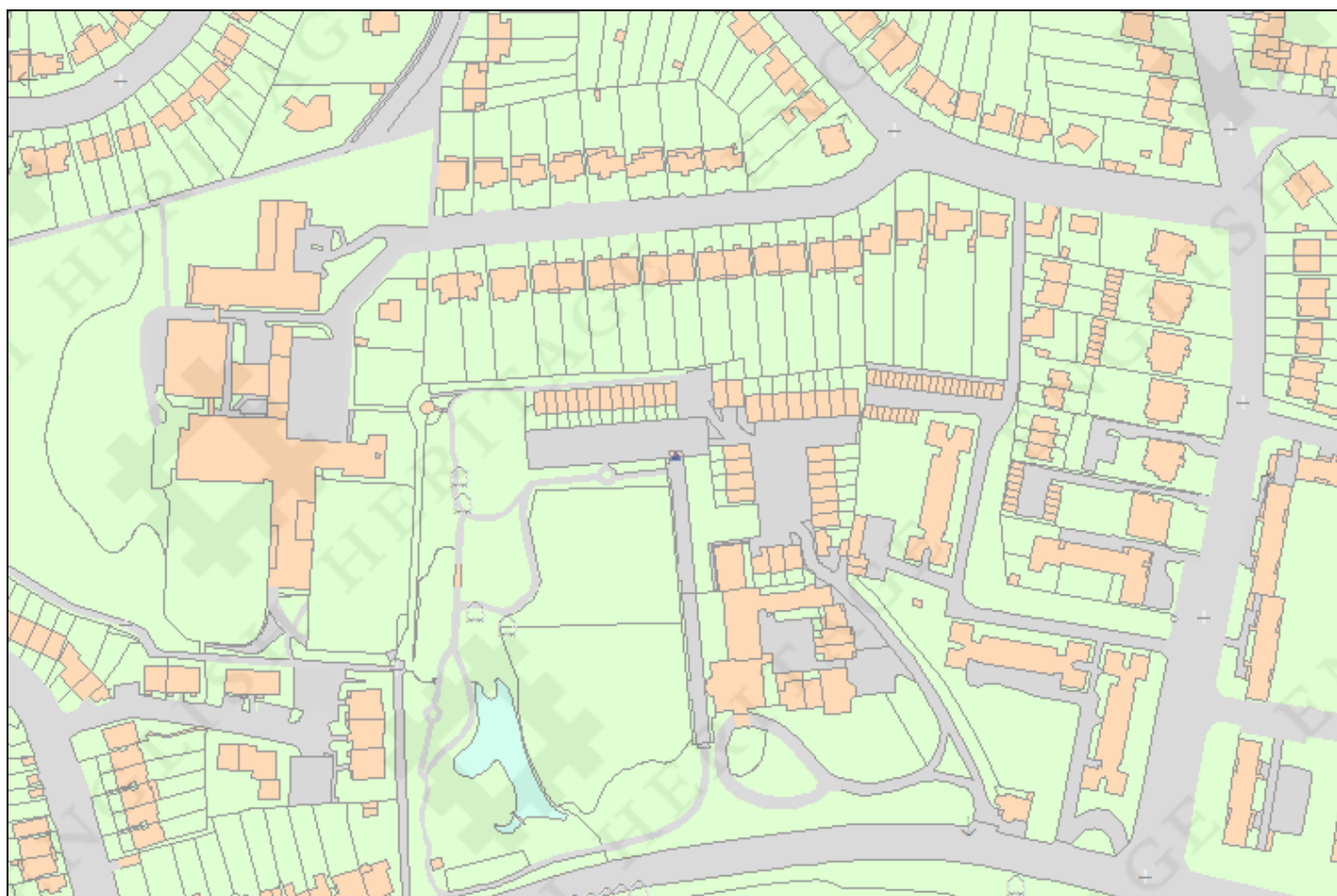
Selected Sources

1. **Article Reference** - *Title:* Part 17 Greater London - *Journal Title:* Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England
-

Map

National Grid Reference: TQ 31011 71231

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List Entry Summary

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Name: ST MICHAEL'S CONVENT (formerly PARK HILL)

List Entry Number: 1000836

Location

The garden or other land may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Greater London Authority

District: Lambeth

District Type: London Borough

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first registered: 01-Oct-1987

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens

UID: 1831

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Garden

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

A rare example of a surviving C19 villa garden in south London. This 2ha garden was designed by J B Papworth for William Leaf in the mid C19 and improved by Robert Marnock for Sir Henry Tate in the late C19

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The villa at Park Hill was built in 1835 by J B Papworth for William Leaf. The garden is described by William Keen in 1849 and included a gothic summerhouse, a deep dell arched with massive rockwork, lawns, evergreen shrubs, and a kitchen garden with a wide range of heated glasshouses. The house was modified in 1880 for Sir Henry Tate who also commissioned Robert Marnock (1800-89) to redesign the gardens. A description of the garden was published in Garden magazine in 1886.

Since 1923 Park Hill has been known at St Michael's Convent for the Congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God. A chapel was built to the east of the villa in the mid 1920s and land to the east was sold

for redevelopment (mid 1930s) as Benhurst Court.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

St Michael's Convent is situated on a high point to the north of Streatham Common. It is separated from the common by a major road, Streatham Common North, which acts as the southern boundary. The mid 1930s development of Benhurst Court provides the east boundary, and residential development fronting Streatham Common North and the Catholic comprehensive school, Bishop Thomas Grant, the boundary to the west. Property in Belltrees Road forms the boundary to the north. The main garden lies to the west of a north/south terrace and slopes gently to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The approach drive from Streatham Common North leads past the lodge house through C19 wrought-iron entrance gates (listed grade II) and curves first west and then north-west through shrubberies and lawn up to the house (listed grade II), where it passes through the porte-cochère before curving south and east to rejoin the approach drive. In 1864 the OS 1st edition shows two drives sharing the same entrance gates, one curving in an arc around the west front of the house, the second curving past the east front before joining up with the main path. In 1886 the approach was described as a broad stretch of lawn uninterrupted except by fine trees, some of which were a remarkable size.

A large part of the ground to the east was built over c 1950 and trees and shrubs screen the front of the house from the road.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The two-storey stucco villa was built c 1835 for William Leaf by J B Papworth. The protostyle porch had a classical porte-cochère added in 1880. The Conservatory that was attached to the north side of the house and housed the mid C19 Pulhamite rockwork and a fernery was damaged during the Second World War and has since been replaced by a modern building.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The pleasure grounds lie on the west side of the house and are approached from a path 10m to the west of the porte-cochère. The path leads up a flight of three steps flanked by sphinxes to a terrace c 74m long which runs north/south and is supported to the west by a mid C19 low stuccoed wall with square plinths bearing krater-shaped urns set at intervals along its length. Three flights of steps, each flanked by sphinxes on plinths, lead down from the terrace to the garden. The terrace walls, steps, and the small Doric summerhouse at the north end are all listed grade II.

A high yew hedge partially screens the late C20 domestic buildings to the north-east of the terrace, but not the mid C20 additions to the villa to the east.

Below the terrace the main lawn slopes gently to the west with mature trees, including the remains of an orchard (c 1930s) divided from the main lawn by a low hedge, two Wellingtonias, and a large oak. Holm oaks and hollies thrive in the garden especially on the southern boundary. A small lake is set at the south-west corner of the lawn.

Parallel paths run east/west to the north of the site, one through the remains of the kitchen garden on the northern boundary and one from the steps at the north end of the terrace between the kitchen garden wall and the remains of the grassed orchard. Some 20m along the path which leads down from the north end of the terrace is a small covered oval seat set against the south side of the kitchen garden wall. Below the lower of the two Wellingtonias is a set of steps leading to a smaller lower lawn. At the steps the east/west path turns to the north and meets up with the path from the kitchen garden; it then continues west until it meets with a wrought-iron gate and stone wall which enclose a small compound. To the south of the path is an octagonal, castellated, Pulhamite gothic castle of the mid C19. Access to the first floor is by way of a flight of stone steps over a gothic arch. The approach to the ground-floor entrance is through the gothic arch. Three gothic windows look out from the first floor over the western boundary wall and into the grounds of the neighbouring school. The remaining three sides have slit openings. The ground floor has a window in the westernmost side and slits in all the others.

A serpentine path leads south away from the castle, separated from the western boundary wall by evergreen trees and shrubs. This path is paved with stone slabs, some of them obviously reused. Part way along the path divides around a small bed and then continues until the scene changes with Pulhamite rocks (mid C19) made to resemble a gorge, topped with a pretty wrought-iron bridge to the east. An unpaved path leads from the main lawn to the east, under the bridge, the path bordered to the south by stone-edged rills. The artificial stonework continues to the south with a small cave and a niche on the west side.

The serpentine path passes through the rockwork and continues to the south where it runs along the side of an irregular piece of water (mid C19) bordered with bamboo. To the south-west of the water the path, which is edged with industrial slag or furnace blocks, leads to a mound from which there is a fine view of the house and the rockwork to the north-west. Shortly after leaving the mound, the serpentine path turns east and continues parallel with the adjacent road, Streatham Common North. Much of the boundary planting of evergreen trees and shrubs to the west and south, which were described in the Garden in 1886, remain and help to screen the garden from the school and the road. As the path nears the house it branches to the north where it circles a round bed with an interesting collection of ornamental trees and shrubs before continuing east to join up with the south path and the main drive.

KITCHEN GARDEN

To the north-east of the terrace and north of the house are the remains of the walled kitchen gardens but the Vineries and Hot Houses described in 1849 and 1886 (Keane; Garden) have been replaced by modern domestic buildings.

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Garden 29, (1886), pp 568-9
Garden History 16, no 1 (Spring 1988), pp 96-7

Maps

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1865
1933 edition
OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1891

Description written: February 1997
Amended: May 1998
Register Inspector: LCH
Edited: July 2001

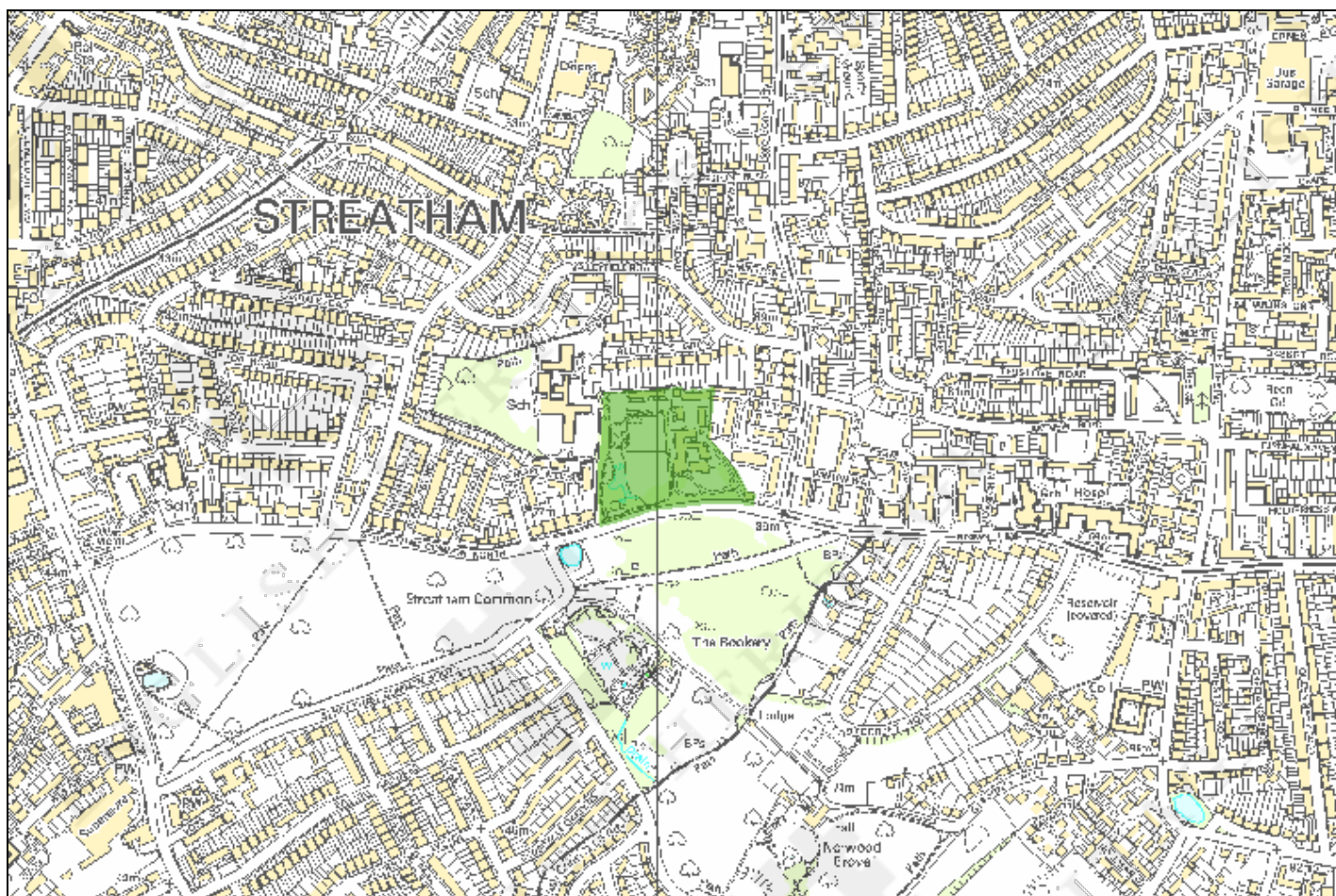
Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map

National Grid Reference: TQ 31027 71177

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1000836.pdf](#)



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The Pulham Legacy

Rock Gardens, Ferneries, Follies, Grottoes and Fountains

14 – July 2012 – Park Hill, Streatham

Posted on [July 1, 2012](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

1873-80 – ‘Park Hill’, Streatham, London

‘Park Hill Mansion’ was one of several very large properties situated on Streatham Common North, in southeast London. They were once the homes and estates of some very wealthy people – providing, as they did, a commanding view over Streatham, and to the heights of Wimbledon and the Surrey Hills beyond.

The owner of ‘Park Hill’ during the early 1870s was William Leaf - a successful London soft goods merchant who specialised in silks and ribbons – who made extensive additions and alterations to the house and grounds before he died in 1874. Many entrepreneurs of those days dreamt of owning a house on a hill, with its own grounds, a lake, and a folly, so, given that he already had a house on a hill, with its own grounds and a lake, it is hardly surprising that he should want to complete the set. At ‘Park Hill’, his folly took the form of a ruined mediaeval gateway and tower.

He turned to the Pulhams for help, and the characteristically brief notes in James 2’s booklet describe the features as:

‘Fernery and Artificial Ruin of Castle gateway and Tower for summer retreat and view.’

He assigns the date of 1873-74 for this work, which means that William Leaf never lived long enough to enjoy it. He died soon after the work was completed, and, in 1880, the estate was purchased by Henry Tate, founder of the Tate Gallery, and proprietor of the famous sugar company that is now known as Tate and Lyle Ltd.

Tate almost immediately commissioned Robert Marnock – just before he retired – to redesign the gardens, so this was presumably the time when James 2 was called in to do additional work. James 2 had previously worked with Marnock at Berry Hill, Taplow, and Danesbury Park, Welwyn, and the work included – in another part of the grounds from the folly – reshaping the small lake and constructing a long sunken walkway, lined with rocky cliffs and grottoes, and with a stream flowing through it that was fed from the lake.[\[i\]](#)

Henry died in 1899, in his 81st year, and his wife, Lady Amy Tate, continued to live at Park Hill until her own death in 1919. The estate was put on the market in very good condition, but it was not until 1923 that it was eventually acquired by the Congregation of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, an organisation dedicated to the training and education of some of the growing number of young girls with learning difficulties. They carried out laundry work for local hotels, residential homes, and the local community, and visitors from all over the U.K. and abroad came to Park Hill to study and learn about their teaching methods.^{1e}



Fig 1 - The ruined tower and gateway at Park Hill, Streatham



Fig 2 - The bridge over the 'rocky ravine' at Park Hill. (Photo by Desireé McDougall)

All but roughly 5½ acres of land surrounding the house were sold off over the years, but improvements to the girls' living accommodation were made during the 1970s. Funding and support for such large residential establishments as Park Hill ceased in the mid 1990s when the Government introduced its 'Care in the Community' legislation, and the Nuns were eventually left with little option but to find something smaller.

The property was on the market for some time before its eventual sale to a consortium of property developers in 2002, but the Grade II* listing of the mansion as a building of special architectural and historic importance ensured its survival, and it has now been extensively renovated and refurbished as a private residence.



Fig 3 - Rustic stone steps leading down into the 'rocky ravine' at Park Hill

Some of the garden features – including the folly and the sunken walkway – were also listed as features of historic interest. Part of the Planning Consent stipulated that there must be public access to the grounds on at least two days per year, so, although this is essentially private property, it does at least ensure that the public will have some limited opportunity to explore this beautiful estate, which has been described as

'an oasis of peace and tranquillity in a country house setting which is unrivalled in South London.'

These are the words of Daphne Marchant, co-author of *Park Hill, Streatham*, a booklet published by The Streatham Society in 2004, and on which the above historical notes are based.

I first became aware of Pulham's work at Park Hill when I read Sally Festing's article about St Michael's Convent in the *GHS Newsletter*.[\[ii\]](#) At first sight, it did not seem to be an overwhelming endorsement:

'Not all Pulham's work met with unanimous approval from his contemporaries. Henry Tate's Streatham residence was voted noble by Robert Marnock, and his garden charmingly laid out in the 'natural style' by Marnock, with fine specimen trees, and lawns sloping to a miniature lake. But the sunk path, in imitation of a rocky ravine which formed one of the boundaries, was not considered a success by William Goldring of The Garden in 1886-88. It was a 'decidedly important feature,' and enhanced by the growth of trees and shrubs, yet the 'profusion of rocks' looked undoubtedly artificial.



Fig 4 - Part of the bank of the rocky ravine

‘He doubted that ‘even Mr Pulham, who always likes to see his works mistaken for Nature’s work,’ would praise this particular mass of rocks. The . . . Pulham garden remains much as it must have been laid out, so viewers can decide its merits for themselves. Known by the present occupants of the School as ‘The Caves,’ it forms a network of deeply set paths lined in pinkish, pebbly artificial rock, an arched bridge . . . with an acer on either side. Perhaps Goldring missed the climax of the Pulham garden, for he does not mention the ruined tower, its steps pitted with plant pockets on either side.’

Whilst browsing the internet, I came across another short article about the gardens at St Michael’s Convent. This was written by Cheryl Markovsky, [\[iii\]](#) who wrote that one of the Nuns’ design contributions was to turn the woodland ‘secret garden’ into a Garden of Gethsemane grottos, complete with a statue of the crucified Christ.

The ‘ruined tower’ is in a separate corner of the grounds, and, as can be seen from Fig 1, is now covered by overgrowth and not easy to photograph, but the walls of the tower have traditional mediaeval ‘cross slit’ windows, and it is possible to enter the single rooms on both floors. Unfortunately, most of the panoramic views from the upper floor are now obscured by nearby buildings, but it is intriguing to imagine what a vantage point this must have been all those years ago.

It is a short walk from here to the arched bridge over the ‘rocky ravine,’ which can be seen here in Fig 2. There are planting pockets along the top of the bank, and in the cliffs themselves, and there are also the remains of some – but not much – ashlar surfacing to the brick facing of the bridge itself. The railings are a faithful replacement copy of the original balustrading, which is thought to have been designed especially for William Leaf by John Bounaroti Papworth.



Fig 5 - One of the grottoes that the Nuns of St Michael's Convent adorned with religious statues, and used as shrines

From here, one descends into the ravine itself, which is not as difficult as it may look at first sight. It is possible to enter via a gentle slope at the far end from the bridge, or down a flight of rustic stone steps, shown in Fig 3. Looking along the walkway is very reminiscent of many other Pulham scenes – a pathway winding away into the distance between random outbreaks of huge rocks – some with massive overhangs. As Sally Festing commented in her article, they had a slightly pinkish hue, and Fig 4 shows a typical glimpse along the 'ravine.'

One or two of the rocks have terrible splits and cracks in them, caused by the growth of trees that, in most cases, will have self-seeded many years ago. It is difficult to know what best to do for them at this stage, because to leave them will inevitably result in the damage getting worse over time, whereas to try and remove the tree roots might destroy the rock altogether.



Fig 6 - An area of cement has broken away to reveal its brick base



Fig 7 - The rocky bank and remains of the stream that used to flow beneath the bridge at Park Hill, Streatham (Photo by Desireé McDougall)

A short way further along is the section of the walkway that Cheryl Markovsky says the Nuns referred to as ‘The Caves.’ It is a collection of grottoes that they converted into religious shrines by adorning them with statues, and it is easy to imagine how peaceful, and how suitable for their meditations it would have been for them here. The statues have naturally all been removed by now, but one of the empty grottoes is pictured here in Fig 5.

Rounding a corner, on the way back towards the bridge, there is an area of rockwork from which the top surfacing has broken away. It is shown here as Fig 6, and it is noticeable that the bricks used in the base structure of these rocks are slightly smaller than the house bricks that are normally used today.

Finally, back at the bridge itself, one can clearly see the rockwork beneath, and extending away up the slope beyond. The remains of the channel along which ran the stream that was fed from the lake can also be seen clearly in Fig 7. From here, one can return to the grand terrace along the front of the mansion, but almost all of the vases and sphinx-like models that now top the boundary wall are copies or the originals that were stolen a few years ago. It is impossible to claim positively that the originals were by Pulham, but it must be a strong probability.

This site is still in quite good condition, and is well worthy of some proper restoration and subsequent regular maintenance. One can only wish all the residents of Park Hill Mansions every possible success in bringing this particular piece of our Pulham heritage back to life.

[i] *‘Park Hill’ House and Gardens* by Brian Bloice and Daphne Marchant, from *‘Park Hill’ Streatham*, published by The Streatham Society in 2004

[ii] *‘Great Credit upon the Ingenuity and Taste of Mr Pulham,’* by Sally Festing. *Garden History* - +Society Newsletter 1988 Vol 16/1 Pages 96-97.