

**UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
HATFIELD BROAD OAK**

BARRINGTON HALL

TL 550 176

Formal C18 garden layout, considerably modified during the second half of the C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Barringtons were a long established Essex family, recorded with the hereditary appointment of Keeper of the Forest of Hatfield since the Conquest. They lived nearby at Old Barrington Hall, shown on a 1624 estate map as a substantial property with stables, orchards, several fish stews, brickyards and numerous buildings, a site now occupied by Little Barrington Hall Farm.

The Barringtons left Old Barrington Hall after the purchase of the Priory at Hatfield Broad Oak in 1564, thus indicating their rising status as country squires. During this period, documents provide evidence of legal battles fought by the family to secure position and property. In 1576 they claimed woodwardship rights over Sir Richard Rich, Lord Chancellor, who had been given most of the Hatfield Forest estates by the Crown in 1547. The Barringtons insisted that they had held those rights since before the Conquest. The arbitration resulted in the division of the rights and area of the Forest, so that Sir Thomas Barrington (knighted by Queen Elizabeth I) gained ownership of the trees (but not the soil) of the north eastern third of the Forest, and common rights of pasture over the whole of the Forest. The Riches eventually sold the lordship of the manor to Sir Francis Barrington (knighted by James I at Theobalds on 7 May 1603 and included in the order of baronets in June 1622). Interests in the Forest were excluded and were sold separately to Lord Morley and Mouteagle. This was the start of a 200 year dispute over rights to the Forest. Sir Francis was active in government, and was supported by his wife, Joan Cromwell, aunt of the future Lord Protector.

Family letters and accounts in the British Library give some clues about the C17 garden of which Lady Barrington 'was justly proud'. There was a 'terris' with a seat and arbour 'in the mounte'. Canon Galpin identified the probable site of 'the mounte', a mound which is still visible in the southernmost part of the park, near the churchyard. There was an octagonal dove house, apparently built in 1639 when there was payment to a bricklayer for 'the building of the Dovehowse, 2s. 6d.', and to 'Marrables' brother for endeavouring to flore the new Dovehowse, 2s. 6d.' This building is shown on the 1874 OS map but was pulled down c. 1900. The accounts and letters also provide details of the types pf plant and produce that was being grown.

As well as public service, the family had financial interests in the New World. Sir Thomas Barrington succeeded to the baronetcy in 1628, was a member of Parliament for Essex, and would go on to enter into a scheme to form a settlement in New England in the first half of the C17. Sir Thomas also invested in buying forfeited estates in Ireland. The Priory remained the main family home but by 1700, it was deemed in need of repair. Sir Charles Barrington sent a surveyor from London to inspect the building;

finding it in a bad state, he had it pulled down without his employer's consent. This 'misunderstanding caused the family to relocate to their other property at Great Waltham.

The family seat at Hatfield Broad Oak was not rebuilt until the succession of John Shales Barrington, Sir Charles' nephew, who came into all the Essex estates in 1734. However, because of a disappointment in love, John Shales Barrington left the house unfinished and became a recluse. His obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of July 1788 refers to this; 'Mr. Barrington began to rebuild Barrington Hall in a handsome manner, but on some dispute about tithes with Trinity College, Cambridge, who are impropiators, or, as others say, on a matrimonial disappointment, he gave up all design, and retired to a house in Waltham Cross, where he passed a long life in obscurity.' The new Hall was designed by John Sanderson in the neo-classical style and described having a nine bay Palladian façade in brick, with an attached portico facing south. Muilman observed in 1771 that the property '...had it been finished in the manner in which it was begun, would have been inferior to very few houses in this country...'

The next reference to work on the property is in the 1790s when the estate was held by Sir John, 9th Baronet, who intended to finish the Hall. He was unmarried and on his death he was succeeded by his brother, Sir Fitzwilliam, 10th Baronet, who died without male issue in 1833, bringing an end to the Barrington line. The property particulars, dated 18 October of that year, listed the Barrington estates with two manors, totalling about 1200 acres.

The estate was bought in the mid C19 by George Alan Clayton Lowndes who made extensive alterations to the house and the grounds. He employed the architect Edward Browning of Stamford to remodel the house in a heavy neo-Jacobean style. An article published in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* (14 January 1882) provides an expansive description of the layout and planting of the grounds. The author also credited the influence of Mrs. Lowndes whom he describes as '..a real gardener at heart.' He mentioned the principal entrance avenue lined with elms of 'ripe old age'. Another avenue ran south towards the parish church, and included a large circular feature circumscribed by trees, clearly shown on the 1766 estate map, Chapman and Andre's map of 1777, and discernible on the first OS map, but no longer in existence. He described various trees in plantations, and as specimens; and also mentions an old oak by the side of the drive, measuring 30 feet in circumference at 30 inches above ground level. Other substantial oaks were noted to the east of the flower garden.

In 1907 the house was bought by A. H. Gosling. Seventy years later it was sold to the British Livestock Company, and is currently owned by CPL Aromas plc. The park to the south and east is now in separate ownership, as is the area formerly occupied by the kitchen garden.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, BOUNDARIES, AREA, LANDFORM & SETTING

The original park is bounded by the Pincey Brook to the west, by the Hatfield Broad Oak to Takely road to the east, by Hatfield Broad Oak itself to the south and by farmland to the north and covers about 98 hectares. Most of this is now in separate ownership, and the area round the house (the subject of

this report) covers about 12 hectares. The land falls gently to the lake, most of the parkland beyond is level but would have been visible from the house.

ENTRANCES & APPROACHES

The entrance from the village to the south, and its long avenue have disappeared under farmland. The present entrance, with a lodge, is from the north east corner of the park. The drive runs west before curving south. At this point there appears to be an amphitheatre of trees, part of a plantation on the north side. There is no cartographic evidence of this feature. The drive ends in a square area, enclosed by a yew hedge, in front of the house. The southern part of the drive is lined with London plane trees. There is a vast ancient oak pollard near the end of the straight section of drive, heavily burred and difficult to measure (girth approximately 30 feet). A second drive cuts diagonally across the curve and may be of more recent date.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

The heavy neo-Jacobean exterior, with shaped gables, a roofline balustrade and a calculated asymmetry conceals the earlier C18 structure. The service wing and stables to the east retain their largely C18 form.

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[An unpublished MSS commissioned by CPL Aromas, and prepared by Property Historians of Crowborough, Sussex, is held at Barrington Hall]

Archival Items

Barrington archives in BL Egerton MSS 2643-2651

Maps and Images

Chapman & Andre, 1777, *Map of Essex*

MacKoun, John, 1766, *Map of Barrington Hall*. ERO D/DQ 14/38

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition, 1874-5, sheet 32

Hatfield Broad Oak tithe map, 1841. ERO D/CT 166B

Barrington Hall, pencil sketch 31 July 1832. Buckler architectural drawings, vii (Essex & Glos), BL Add. MSS 36362, f.16

Engravings (?early C19). ERO Mint Binder

Photograph (?early C20). Essex Review p.1 ?

Research by Cassy McCleave. Site visit on 26 June 2003 by Cassy McCleave and Michael Leach.