

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT
THEYDON GARNON
TL 465004

COOPERSALE HALL

C19 garden, painted by Lucien Pissaro; altered and extended in C20 by Lord Lyle.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Not to be confused with Coopersale House, Coopersale Hall was possibly formerly known as Little Gregories and was occupied by the Cheveley family in the C17 and C18. In 1777 the house was approached from the N by an avenue. Just north of the house, two short avenues ran to the east and to the W. The house was 'U' shaped, with pleasure grounds to the east and a small park or garden to the south. In 1800 there was a similar layout, but two short avenues or walks appear to have been added on the east and west sides of the garden. A series of leases to various tenants, between 1844 and 1871, show that the house and the adjoining farmland (let separately) totalled just over 118 acres.

By 1872 the carriage drive ended in a turning circle, planted with trees or shrubs, on the west side of the house. Pleasure grounds were laid out to the east, with domestic offices to the north. A long tree-lined avenue ran south from the house, not quite in the same line as the entrance drive. This arrangement persisted to the end of the century at least. At this time there was an avenue, a walled garden, an orchard and a greenhouse with hot water pipes. By the 1890s the property was owned by Mr Flux (a London solicitor) and the artist Lucien Pissaro did several paintings of the garden.

The house and estate (now of 126 acres) was sold in June 1912. The sales particulars mention the approach along a fine avenue of elms, a 'fine old walled-in kitchen garden', a fruit and flower garden, a rosary with grass walks, a fig garden, a greenhouse and two tennis courts. The area of the garden appears unchanged from the earliest map of 1777. A photograph of the south front shows much of it covered in wisteria in flower, with a large greenhouse or conservatory attached to the east side of the main building. At about this time, it passed into the ownership of Lord Lyle, director of Tate and Lyle, and MP for Epping in 1923. Jacobean features were added to the house, and it is likely that alterations were made to the garden. During the Second World War the house was used as a convalescent home for wounded officers and was visited by Sir Winston Churchill. In 1988 it was purchased by Mr Nicholas Hagger and opened as a school in the following year. Additions and alterations have been added to meet its new requirements.

The surviving house is mainly C19 (a bell in the bell-cote on the roof is dated 1816) but may incorporate parts of an earlier building. The cellar is said to be Elizabethan.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM & SETTING

Coopersale Hall is 2 kms south of Epping. The house and gardens are set in open countryside, and occupy about 2 hectares on the top and the S facing slope of a ridge running east to W. The land falls away to the N, S and E. The M25 lies just to the S, and the M11 to the E, with their interchange nearby.

ENTRANCES & APPROACHES

There is no lodge. The approach from the north (from Stewards Green road) is by a long access road lined on both sides with poplars (replacing the elms recorded in 1912). The poplars have recently started to die back due in part to the expansion of width of the driveway.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

The main house is covered with white-painted plaster, of two storeys, and is of early C19 appearance. The south façade has a projecting central bay and is joined to a conservatory to the east by a link building in brick and timber of 1920s appearance. The conservatory has been converted to school use, and its glazing appears to have been altered. Between the conservatory and the walled garden is a single storey red brick extension built by the school. Separate two storey buildings to the north (formerly domestic offices, now much modified) appear to be of C19 date.

REFERENCES

Essex Review xxxv p.198

Morant P *History of Essex* i (1768) p.161

Victoria County History of Essex iv (1956) p.260

Maps

Chapman & Andre map of Essex (1777)

OS map 1' 1st edition (1800)

OS map 25' 1st edition (1872)

OS map 25' 2nd edition (1895)

Archival Items

Leases of Coopersale Hall and Farm (1844-1871) ERO: D/DB/T989

Sales particulars (1912) ERO: A 1044

Hagger, Nicholas: pers. com.

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Site visit on 10 February 2004 by Dr Twigs Way and Michael Leach; Dr Twigs Way and Sally Anne Turner
May 2004

Edited by Twigs Way 06/09/04