

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL

COPTFOLD HALL

MARGARETTING

(formerly Cold Hall or Colde Hall)

TL 658 030

Coptfold Hall has remnants of the 18th century layout depicted on Chapman André's 1777 map of Essex. The richly timbered woods date from at least the 19th century and the gardens show remaining Victorian features.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Coptfold Hall was previously known as Colde Hall and Cold Hall: both John Norden's map of 1504 and Joannes Blaeu's map of 1645 refer to the property as Colde Hall.

The principal manor was held in the year 1166 by John de Sandford, and came by marriage, to the family of the De Veres. This mansion belonged to the Countess of Oxford, in the year 1360, and to William Cheyne, esq., in 1371. Edward Clovile inherited Coptfold Hall in 1515-1516 and the manor carried on in the Clovile family until John Tanfield inherited Coptfold Hall in 1554. Daniel Tanfield, who also held the Manor of Peverels in West Hanningfield, was the last of the family to hold the manor and his wife was a widow by 1713.

Richard Benyon bought the manor of Coptfold Hall in 1728 and Morant in *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex* wrote that he had made 'great improvements and additions to the house'. Richard Holden bought the estate, including the old manor, on 21 November 1755 and seems to have begun building a new house designed by Sir Robert Taylor at once. By 1777 it was the residence of Mrs Ann Holden and at this time Coptfold Hall's parks and gardens were impressively depicted by Essex map makers Chapman and André showing avenues of trees and formal planting. In David Hughson's 1809 book *London; being an accurate history and description of the British Metropolis and its neighbourhood to thirty miles extent* the manor of Coptfold Hall is describes as having 'an exceedingly pleasant mansion: being situated on an eminence, it commands an extensive view over Gallywood Common, Stock, etc. as well as towards Danbury. It is an elegant modern building, with gardens laid out in pretty taste'.

Richard Vachel was Coptfold's owner by 1826-7 but a year later the estate was auctioned. The sales catalogue for 30 September 1828 (ERO D/DC27/588) refers to the estate as being the late residence of Richard Vachell, Esq., deceased, and had a well timbered park, a capital kitchen garden, and extensive stabling. Coptfold Hall was described as being delightfully seated on a considerable and very pleasing eminence, in a beautiful park containing 166 acres, very richly ornamented with uncommonly fine stately oak timber. The 'walk' or 'avenue field' was ten acres. In front of the house was a spacious

area with numerous extensive vaults in which was an ice house. The kitchen garden was enclosed with lofty walls with fruit trees, a range of grapery and orangery, and an aviary in the centre. At the rear of the north wall were a range of gardeners' sheds, a pinery, and a melon pit. The estate also had a malting house with dove house over which was timber built and tiled. An enclosed courtyard had a Clock House with a cupola and an extensive range of premises. The plan of the estate accompanying the sales catalogue shows the formal parterres behind the house and the richly timbered woods through which the carriage drive passed. The timber was valued in 1829 at £9,402 which included over 3,000 oak trees, ash, elm, hornbeam, beech, walnut, fir, chestnut and poplar. The Priests Walk, in the same position as it is today, is also shown on this plan

John Attwood of Hylands was the next owner and pulled down the fine old mansion c1850. D.W. Collier in his *The People's History of Essex* 1861 was scathing about John Attwood and wrote 'All the cottages around were demolished: the mansion of Coptfold Hall was pulled down, public roads were bought and blocked up with plantations and a grim baronial solitude was created'. Eventually, Attwood overreached himself and his assets were seized by creditors and his estates were broken up.

In 1861 the Hon Arthur Petre purchased the manor of Coptfold and embarked on the construction of a new house set deep in the Writtle woods and approached by half mile drive from the Margaretting Road. The new Coptfold Hall was built in 1862 in the heart of the twenty-eight acres of Bosmoor Wood and from 1870 until 1882 Coptfold Hall was the residence of the Hon. Arthur Charles Petre, J.P. and the Hall continued in the Petre family for many years. Subsequent owners were Lloyd Mitford, Esq. in 1894 and Mrs. Jupp in 1898. The 1874 25" 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows the large walled garden with greenhouse in the same position as the dilapidated one is today. Outside the bothies are shown and a gravel pit.

A sales catalogue held in the Essex Record Office (D/DMa/B71/15) dated 14th June 1906 refers to Coptfold Hall as a family mansion with private chapel. The sales catalogue describes the 'heavily timbered woods and parklands and, from the high road, the carriage drive was over half a mile long and of a serpentine character, passing through a wood of exquisite beauty, abounding with rhododendrons, fir trees, and evergreen flowering shrubs of mature growth. The carriage drive terminated in a broad sweep before the house. The walled in kitchen garden and orchard covered two acres and was well stocked with apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, and other wall and standard fruit-bearing trees, while the vegetable ground produced more than sufficient for a large establishment. The vinery was heated by hot water pipes and contained two full-bearing vines of the 'Black Amber' and 'White Sweet' varieties. Surrounding the residence was a charming terrace walk, tennis lawn and flower parterres. Sylvan woods formed a belt around the whole area with secluded walks, beautiful oak trees, interspersed with blooms of innumerable rhododendrons'. The estate was advertised as covering c365 acres, taking in Furness House, newly erected Coptfold Farm, a lodge, and a gardener's cottage. The hall itself was given as at an elevation of 340 feet and approached by two carriage drives, one of them serpentine in character. The estate also had a tennis lawn and a cricket ground with pavilion.

Major Edward James Upton D.L. became the owner in 1907 and the estate has remained in his family. For a period of time the Uptons lived at nearby Park Lodge and developed in c1946 two gardens there, one of them wild, and later opened to the public as part of the National Gardens Scheme. Climbers,

camellias and roses abounded with a profusion of other flowers and shrubs. Over 40 species of wildfowl could be seen on the Lodge's pond and there were hundreds of free flying budgerigars. Birds and aviaries could be seen in the gardens up to the 1970's. The National Gardens Scheme advertised the garden of Park Lodge as open to the public in June 1970 and described it as a 'small garden, roses, herbaceous borders. Collection of wildfowl and budgerigars flying at liberty'.

The Women's Institute held garden meetings at Coptfold Hall where a huge marquee was erected, and delicious teas served on the terrace. There would be folk dancing or some other entertainment and then a walk around the lovely gardens to admire the superb rhododendrons.

Mr Stuart Martin was asked to design a new country house at Coptfold, Essex for Simon Upton after he took over the 1,200-acre estate from his parents. New Coptfold Hall, begun in 2002 and completed in 2005, occupies the old park, originally created for a villa designed by Sir Robert Taylor in 1751. Taylor's house had been demolished in the 1850s and replaced with a gaunt, red-brick Gothic house for the Petres. The 19th-century stables and small chapel survive on the far side of the new entrance court and help to root the new building. The main part of the Victorian house was demolished in the 1960s and the new house occupies part of the site, with fine views over the mature grounds planted with oak, beech and early 20th-century rhododendrons.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM & SETTING

The soil is of mixed character, subsoil, loamy. The estate today comprises several hundred acres including Furness and Coptfold Hall Farms. To the east it extends some distance over the byroad leading to Writtle, formerly called Coldhall Lane, and on the west adjoins Writtle Park: the two Edney Woods lie to the north. Coptfold Hall is four miles from Chelmsford and two miles from Ingatestone. The Hall is in the parish of Margaretting which is on the B1002 road and bypassed by the A12.

ENTRANCES & APPROACHES

The main and original drive is from the Writtle Road: the approach to the hall being very long and winding and passing Coptfold Hall Farm. The first section of the drive passes over open land until it reaches woodland and an avenue of horse chestnuts, it then continues winding through woodland until reaching the carriage drive of the house. The house can also be approached from a less winding drive from Ivybarn Lane passing Furness Farm.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

The current Coptfold Hall was built between 2003 and 2005 in a Georgian style. The coach house and neo-Gothic chapel remain from the earlier house and are adjacent, but not attached, to the new house. The barn immediately north west of Coptfold Farmhouse is listed Grade II and is mid-late 18th century with walls of soft red brick and lime mortar in Flemish bond.

REFERENCES

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Maps and Images

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- 1862-76 25" 1st edition ordnance survey map sheet 52.14
- 1870's 6" 1st edition ordnance survey map sheet 52
- 1906 Sales document ERO D/DMa/B71/15
- 1923 6" new series ordnance survey map 63NW
- 1900's Spalding photographs of the gardens

Archival Items

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- 1871 Census
- 1884 Confirmed apportionments ERO D/DDw B51
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Site recorder: Jill Plater

Site visit: Jill Plater 2nd July 2012