

**CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL
BOREHAM**

NEW HALL

TL 73380 10214

GRADE II

Remains of a C17 garden, remodelled in 1762 by Richard Woods, with C17 wilderness and approach drive.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

New Hall was one of the six manors of Boreham, originally part of the possessions of Waltham Abbey to whom it was granted by Earl Harold in 1062. In the mid to late C15 it was given by the Crown to Thomas Boteler, Earl of Ormond who, in 1491, was given permission to fortify the property and thus began the construction of a Tudor building (Muilman 1769). It descended through the female line to the Bullen (Boleyn) family who relinquished it to Henry VIII in c 1517. The king was so impressed by the beauty of the place he called it Beaulieu and 'greatly adorned and improved' the building (Morant 1768), creating a royal palace with great house, great hall, great chapel, and courtyards. In 1522 William Care was appointed Keeper of the Manor of New Hall, with power to engage labourers to work in the king's garden and orchard. The following year John Ryman was paid £60 'for making a garden at New Hall' (Brewer 1839), which in 1530 was referred to as the 'great garden of Beaulieu' (Harvey 1975). In 1573 Queen Elizabeth granted the manor to Thomas, third Earl of Sussex and the letter patent conveying the gift gives some details of the park and garden. A drawing of 1669 (ERO) shows the Great Garden described in the conveyance, which became the present walled garden. New Hall entered a new phase in 1622 with the purchase of the estate by the Duke of Buckingham, who in 1624 employed John Tradescant the Elder to supervise and possibly design the grounds of both of his country residences: New Hall and Burley (Leith-Ross 1984), and to travel abroad in search of unusual trees and plants. In 1656 John Evelyn visited New Hall, noting in his diary the wilderness and the fine south approach, then planted with four rows of limes (de Beer 1959). After Buckingham's assassination in 1628 his estates passed to his young son but were sequestered following the Royalist defeat in 1648. New Hall was taken over by Cromwell in 1651 but following the Restoration in 1660 was acquired by the first Duke of Albermarle who lived there until his death in 1669. The second Duke died in Jamaica in 1688, New Hall being settled on his wife Elizabeth who subsequently married the first Duke of Montagu. When Sir John Percival and William Byrd visited New Hall in 1701 they found it 'now falling to the ground ... the gardens are quite spoilt' (Tinling 1977). The Montagus sold the reversion of New Hall in 1713 to Benjamin Hoare, but he grew tired of waiting and built himself Boreham House (qv) on adjacent estate land. In 1737 Hoare sold the Hall, gardens, park, and avenue to John Olmius, first Lord Waltham who demolished part of the C16 building, leaving just the north range. He was succeeded in 1762 by his son Drigue Billiers Olmius, who called in Richard Woods to remodel the gardens and create a pond. A painting by James Luttrell (1778) records the new gardens. Drigue died childless in 1787 and New Hall was inherited by his sister, on whose death in 1797 the property was sold. It was purchased in 1798 by the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre, whose

community and school have remained at New Hall ever since. During the C20 several new buildings have been added to the site.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

New Hall lies on the eastern edge of the town of Chelmsford in an increasingly urban setting. Boundaries to the north and east are formed by farmland, while to the south and west a modern housing development is in the process of being built (2000). The c 14ha site occupies level ground, screened from its surroundings by small boundary plantations.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main approach to New Hall is off White Hart Lane, c 1.4km south-south-west of the Hall. The drive runs north-east, parallel to the railway line for c 450m before turning north to enter the south approach drive, which is lined with a double avenue of lime to the inside and oak to the outside. This drive, now c 800m long, was in place by the beginning of the C16 (Nichols 1828) and at that time extended for 1.4km south of the Hall, lined with four rows of lime. These were felled in 1798 and have since been replanted. The avenue was cut across in 1844 by the Great Eastern Railway and again, more drastically, in the 1970s, by the A12, after which time the isolated south lodges were demolished. The avenue ends c 200m south of the Hall, beside the North Lodge, the drive then leading up to the open forecourt below the south front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

New Hall (listed grade I) is the surviving north side of a great quadrangular palace built by Henry VIII in c 1518, incorporating an earlier Tudor building and given the name Beaulieu. It is built of red brick and consists of a long range with seven half-octagonal two-storey bays, and a central Tudor-arched doorway. Smaller wings extend at each end, that to the east including a small courtyard with C18 ranges to south and east. The majority of the king's palace was demolished by John Olmuis in 1737, leaving the north wing which he remodelled internally as a gentleman's residence (Muilman 1769). Following the purchase by the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre in 1798, progressive extensions and developments have been added. Bomb damage to the western half of the Tudor range was sustained in 1943 but restored in 1946, since when extensive additions and alterations have taken place, including substantial new west and east wings. Just beyond the east courtyard is a free-standing red-brick barn built in the C18 of Tudor brick, which was restored in 1986.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The south front of New Hall looks onto a large expanse of lawn, bordered by the main drive and a brick wall to the east beside which stands a very mature cedar of Lebanon. The gardens which lay on the west front are now (2000) converted to a car park beyond which, c 150m west of the Hall, is an area of lawn with mature cedars known as the Cedar Plot which dates from the time of the first Lord Waltham. The western boundary of the Cedar Plot is formed by the east wall of the walled garden. Immediately to the south of the walled garden is the Wilderness, an area of woodland cut through with paths, which includes the private cemetery of the Order. The Wilderness is first mentioned by Evelyn in his diary of 1656 and since garden activity was unlikely to have taken place during the

Protectorate, it was probably extant at the beginning of the C17. On the north side of the school buildings, a path through lawns runs parallel to the northern boundary, beside a small spring pond located c 150m north-west of the Hall, at the western end of a ditch. The ditch occupies the site of Richard Woods' pond, which was partially filled in by the Canonesses in 1799 and then drained in the 1890s following an epidemic of diphtheria. The path leads behind the buildings to an area of lawn edged by mixed late C20 plantings beyond the eastern wings of the Hall. The lawn is bordered to the east by a curved red-brick wall of unknown date. Beyond this garden and the restored barn, c 150m to the east of the Hall, is a small pool, originally a fishpond, which is shown on the 1777 county map (Chapman and Andre). Lawns on the west bank of the pool link back to the forecourt on the south front.

Open areas of grass flank the entrance forecourt to east and west, c 150m south-west and south-east of the Hall. These are used by the school as sports fields and are shown as unplanted areas of grass on the OS 1st edition 25" map of 1874.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled kitchen garden lies c 250m to the west of the Hall. It retains some wall shrubs and a perimeter path although the remainder is covered by hard tennis courts. Immediately beyond the north wall is a mid C20 sports hall and swimming pool. The kitchen garden occupies the site of the Tudor Great Garden although its brickwork appears to be C18.

REFERENCES

Books and Articles

- P Morant, *History of Essex* (1768)
P Muilman, *A New and Complete History of Essex I*, (1771)
J Nichols (ed), *Progresses of James I 4*, (1828), p 880
J S Brewer, *Letters and papers of Henry VIII 3 pt 1*, no 2750 (1839)
Country Life, 36 (24 October 1914), pp 550-4
Essex Archaeol. Trans NS XIV, (1915-17), p 96 E S de Beer (ed),
The diary of John Evelyn (1959), p 372
J Harvey, *Early nurserymen* (1975)
M Tinling (ed), *Correspondence of the Three William Byrds* (1977)
N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Essex* (1979), pp 94-5
P Leith-Ross, *The John Tradescants* (1984)
Garden History XIV, no 2 (1986), pp 114-16

Maps

- J Chapman and P Andre, *A map of the county of Essex from an actual survey ..., 1777* (Essex Record Office)
Coloured sketch map attached to conveyance of 1799 (T/B 165/25), (Essex Record Office)
Tithe map for Boreham parish, 1838 (D/CT 40B), (Essex Record Office)
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1874 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1924

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1874 2nd edition published 1897

Illustrations

Maggalotti, Drawing, 1669 (copy in Essex Record Office)

James Luttrell, Painting, 1778 (private collection)

James Luttrell, Engraving of north front, showing Woods' pond, 1779 (private collection)

Archival Items

Albermarle and Waltham papers (PRO)

Buckingham and Albermarle papers (British Library)

Large deposit of records regarding New Hall at Essex Record Office.

Ground plan and engraving of New Hall (1691) showing banqueting house (copy in Essex Record Office)

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