



Beckenham Place Park

Second round application to the HLF Parks for People Programme

Prepared by London Borough of Lewisham and LUC
August 2016



Summary of aerial photograph evidence for Beckenham Place Park

WWII remains

The 1940s photographs, mainly verticals from 1946 and 1947, with a few from 1945 and one from 1944, provide valuable evidence of WWII remains. The prisoner of war camps in Crab Hill Field and Summerhouse Field are clearly visible, and the camp in the eastern part of Crab Hill Field occupies more than half of the field. The anti-aircraft battery in Summerhouse Field is also a substantial feature, comprising six gun emplacements arranged in a horseshoe shape. This shows very clearly from 1944 through to 1947. The Greater London HER records another anti-aircraft battery in Crab Hill field, and although there are traces of features on the 1940s photographs that may relate to this, there is nothing definitive. If there was an anti-aircraft battery located in Crab Hill field, it was either not as substantial as the one in Summerhouse Field, or it was not in operation as late in the war. On photographs from 1951, the prisoner of war camps are both still visible but the anti-aircraft battery has gone, and by 1958, the camps have been demolished as well, leaving no surface trace.

Golf Course Layout

The 1940s photographs show the layout of the golf course before all the golf-course-related linear plantings of Birch trees along the fairways to the southeast of the mansion, giving an indication of what the parkland would once have looked like. In the 1960s and 1970s these linear plantings are still not visible, although by the 1970s there is evidence of recent tree planting along Carriageway Drive and along the pathway to the west of the mansion. The 1980s photographs don't show this area, but by the 1990s the linear plantings are clearly visible to the southeast of the mansion.

Lake

The former extent of the lake is apparent on the 1940s photographs, particularly on aerial photographs nr. 2 and nr. 5. The area of the lake that is now wooded willow carr within Ash Plantation is still open, and its former extent within Ash plantation is demarcated by lines of larger trees, presumably veteran trees or trees of different species from the surrounding woodland. The extent of the lake is still discernible in the 1960s (aerial photograph nr. 10 in particular) right through into the 1990s.

Woodland Extent – Summerhouse Hill Wood

The 1940s photographs clearly show the swathes that have been cut into the areas of Summerhouse Hill Wood to the north of the Foxgrove Club in order to extend the golf course holes, and photographs from the 1960s (aerial photograph nr. 9) demonstrate the amount of damage that has been done for this, and also presumably to provide access to the club house. Photographs from the 1950s also show buildings in the woods in this area, to the northeast of the club house.

Aerial photograph nr. 10 from the 1960s shows substantial buildings lying between the site of the lake and the cleared area now called The Paddock. These buildings are marked on the OS plan of 1976, and the area is marked on the current map as 'Old Burning Ground'. By the 1980s, the Old Burning Ground is free of buildings, and is just a clearing in the woods.

Woodland Extent – Ash Plantation

A small amount of the woodland of Ash Plantation still extends over the railway line to the east in the 1940s and 1960s. By the 1980s, it has reduced in size slightly, but it is still present in the 1990s, and on the photos from 2000.

Ridge and furrow

The ridge and furrow in Railway Field can be seen in most of the 1940s photographs, and is discernible on photographs through the decades. The ridge and furrow to the east of the Lodge on Golf Course East shows up particularly clearly in the 1940s, on aerial photograph nr. 2, and on the 1960s on aerial photograph nr. 10. The latter photo also shows ridge and furrow on Golf Course West.



Aerial photograph 1: 7th August 1944



Aerial photograph 2: 10th November 1945



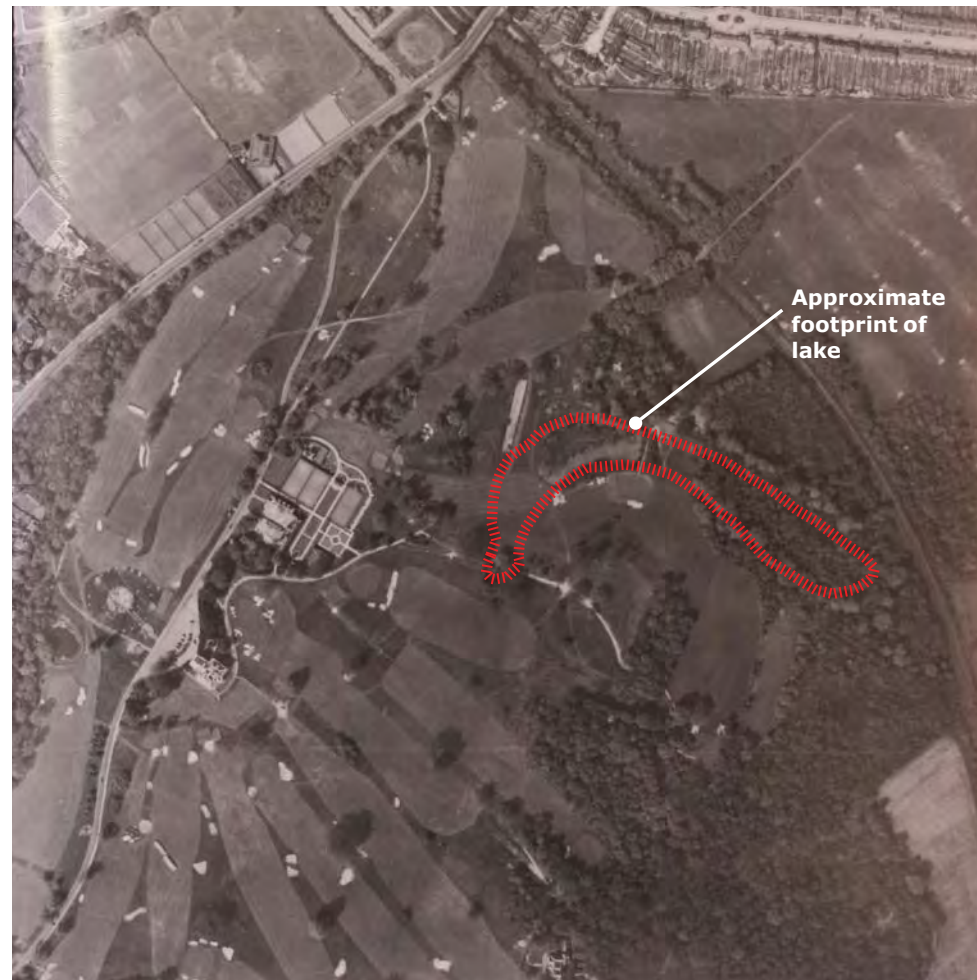
Aerial photograph 3: March 1946



Aerial photograph 4: 7th May 1947



Aerial photograph 5: 7th May 1947



Aerial photograph 6: 7th May 1947



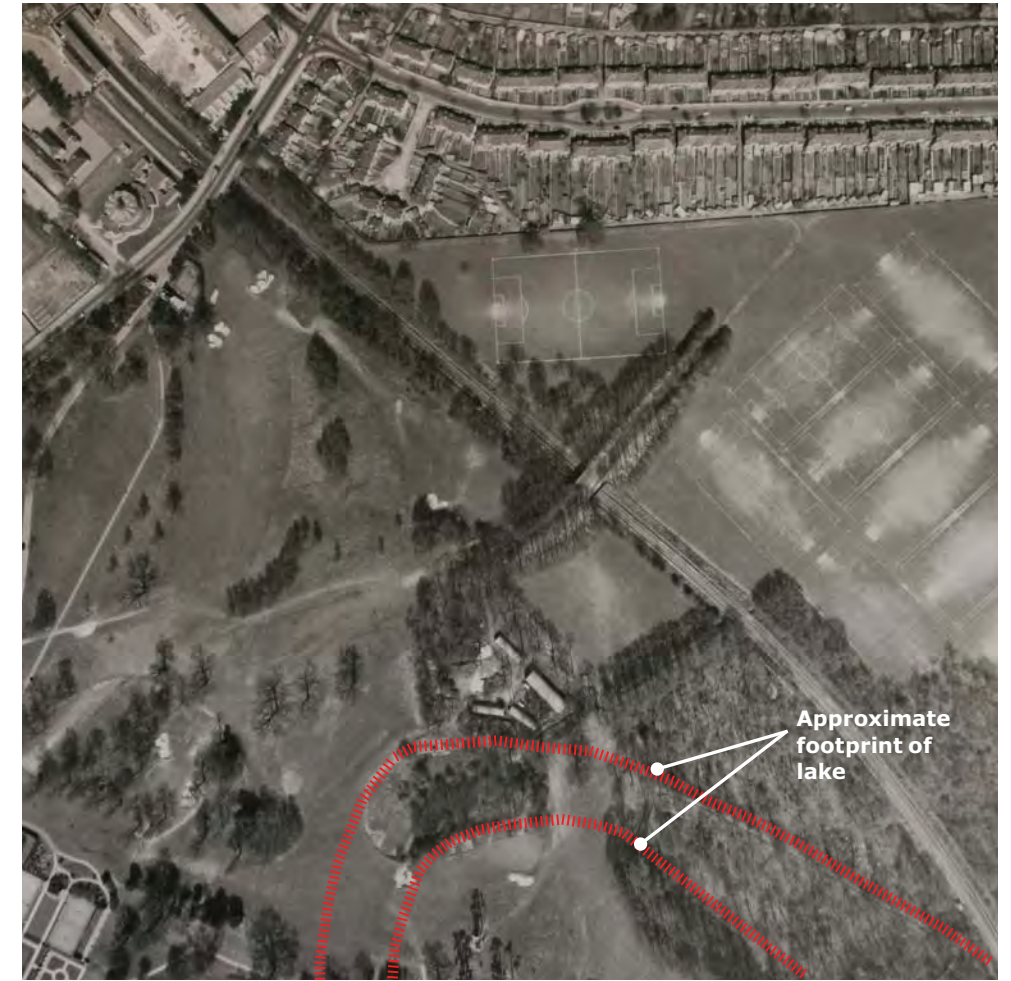
Aerial photograph 7: 22nd April 1951



Aerial photograph 8: 16th June 1958



Aerial photograph 9: 9th April 1969



Aerial photograph 10: 9th April 1969



Aerial photograph 11: 2nd June 1971



Aerial photograph 12: 12th July 1984



Aerial photograph 13: 1st June 1994

Current condition and character

This section describes the historic character and existing condition of Beckenham Place Park. The park has been divided into 10 character areas, with the boundaries being defined by the similarities in historic and current physical characteristics together with current use. The character areas are shown in the figure opposite and are named as follows:

A: West Parkland

B: Pleasure Ground

C: East Parkland

D: Ash Plantation

E: Summerhouse Hill Wood

F: Crab Hill Field

G: Summerhouse Field

H: The Common



A : West Parkland

West Parkland is bound by Beckenham Hill Road and Stumpshill Wood on the west, and the former park driveway on the east. It represents the area of open parkland that lay to the west of the mansion house. The southern part of the character area is included within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area.

Historic development

Early history

Little is known about the early history of this character area, possibly due to the lack of recorded archaeological events within it. 18th century maps show the land to the west of the character area, outside the park boundary, to be an agricultural landscape of woodland and fields that were probably derived from the enclosure of waste. Remnants of this former landscape, with its origins possibly dating back to the Medieval period or earlier, still survive within Stumpshill Wood and on the golf course, in the form of areas of ancient woodland, veteran trees, earthwork boundary banks and traces of ridge and furrow. Further research would be required to establish if the site of a Medieval manor house (HER record MLO1853), recorded as being in the near vicinity of the 18th Century mansion, is located within this character area, and if any buried remains are likely to survive.

18th Century

On the 1799 OS drawing, the character area is bounded on the eastern side by the main driveway through the park. Cator made use of existing elements in the landscape by closing the old Beckenham to Southend road and using it as the driveway, which passes the stable block and the mansion, excluding public access to the park. A new road was created running through the middle of woodland (now Stumpshill Wood), linking the north and south lodges and bounding the northwestern side of the character area. The area of woodland to the east of the road borders the southwestern side of the character area. The rest of the area is shown as the parkland laid out by Cator, with the northern gatehouse (Southend Lodge, Listed Grade II) is marked on the map in the north of the area. Two L-shaped buildings are depicted lying at some distance to the south of the mansion. These buildings are probably farm buildings pre-dating the establishment of the park, although they could possibly be associated with the former Medieval manor house. Further research would be required to confirm this.

19th Century

The John Cator Estate map of 1833 depicts the edge of the woodland more clearly, and also shows a perimeter woodland belt extending up the towards the northern gatehouse, and a circular pond lying on the exterior eastern boundary, in line with the mansion to the east. This pond could be a surviving element of the agricultural landscape that existed prior to the establishment of the park. A belt of woodland is shown along the perimeter to the north of the woodland. The woodland has two roughly parallel eastern boundaries, with the easternmost of these marked as a dotted line, indicating that the understorey in this section may have been grubbed out, leaving just the trees. The Parish of Beckenham Tithe Apportionment of 1838 records this area as a plantation, but many of the surviving trees clearly pre-date this period, with some oak trees that are more than 300 years old. The Wood is likely to have been coppiced woodland in the past, the stumps being left each time it was cut over, and Cator is



likely to have planted amongst the trees that were retained, presumably to provide instant maturity. This provides another example, along with the driveway and the pond, of Cator's incorporation of existing elements in the landscape into the parkland. The buildings to the south of the main house are no longer extant by this stage, and the area where they were marked on the previous map is shown as an enclosure.

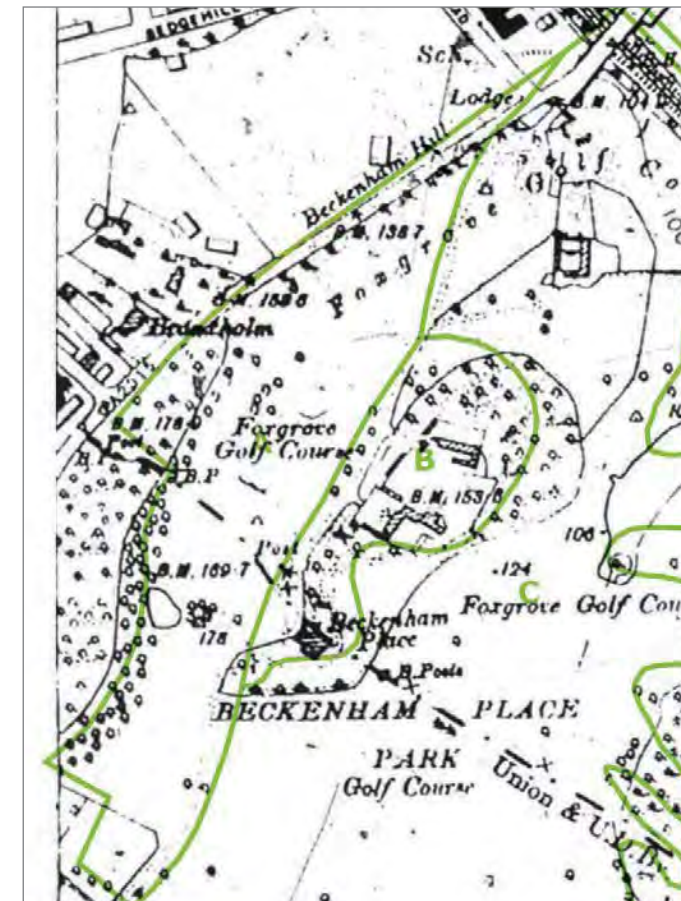
By 1860, the pond is shown on the 1st Edition OS map as oval-shaped, and lies on the edge of a belt of unbounded trees fringing the wood, which is now named as Stumpshill

Wood. The parish boundary between Beckenham and Bromley is shown running northwest-southeast across the area, and an oval planting of trees stands to the north of the boundary. This feature continues to be discernible on the 1864 Albermarle Cator Estate map and the 1897 OS 25" map, and still survives today, albeit in a modified form, and incorporates trees that are earlier than the establishment of the parkland.

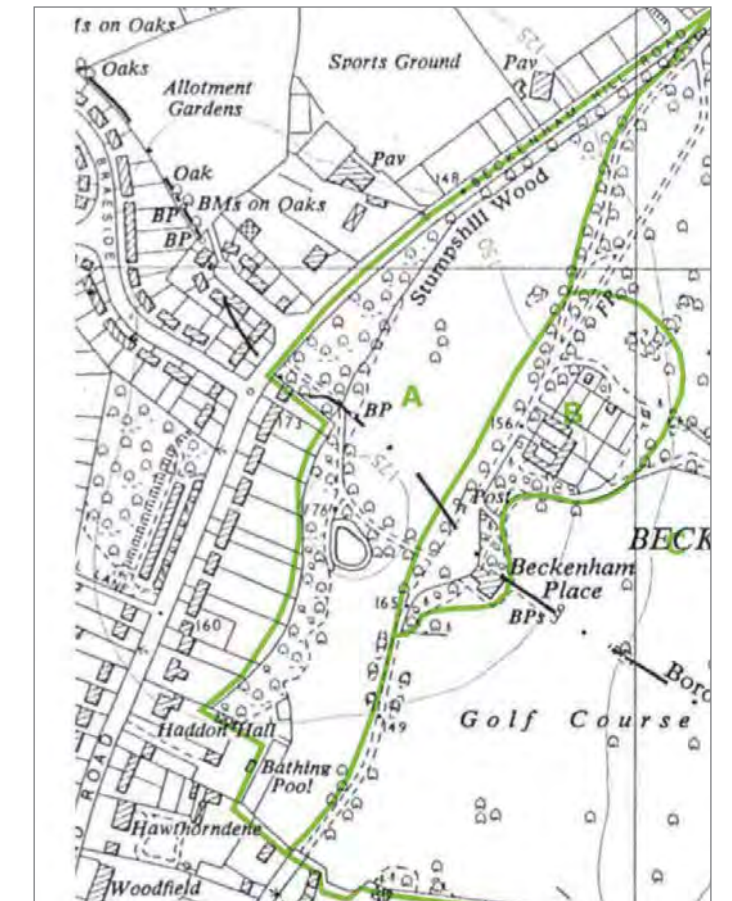
20th Century

Increasing urbanisation of the immediate surroundings is apparent by the Early 20th Century. The 1915 OS plan shows that the western half of Stumpshill Wood has been felled, and the unbounded belt of trees fringing the wood is much reduced, whilst the oval planting appears less coherent. The area is marked as Foxgrove Golf Club, which was formed in 1907, taking a 21 year lease from the Cator Estate. This was presumably laid out after taking the lease in 1907, and it is worth noting in this context that Tom Dunn, to whom the design has been attributed, died in 1902 (John Bolter (2009)).

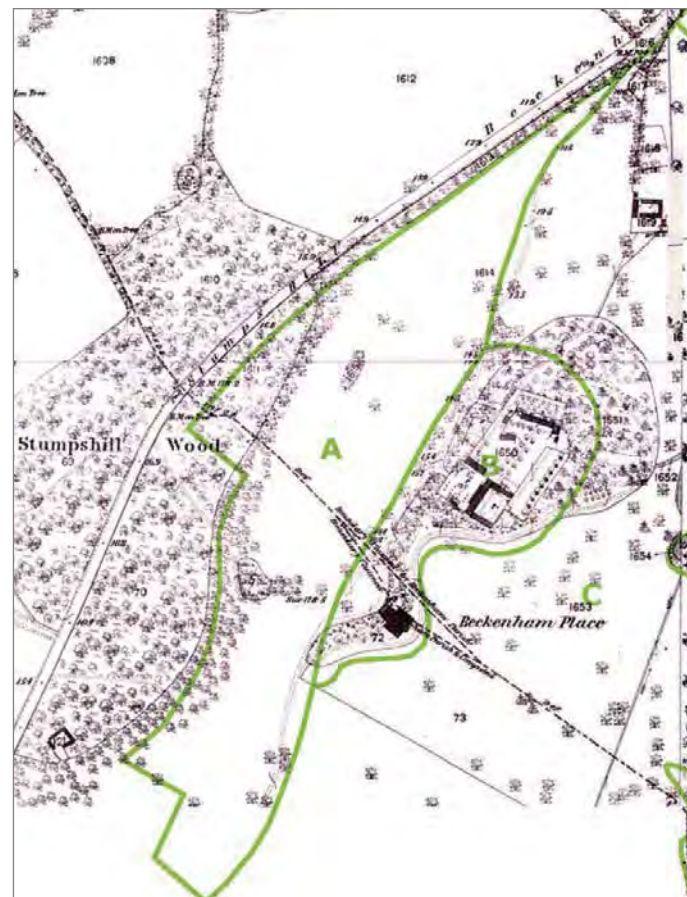
By 1935, the OS map shows that housing has been built up against the western boundary of the wood and by 1956, only a narrow triangular section of the wood remains, fringed by the unbounded belt of trees. A bathing pool lies at the southern end of the character area, and the pond still survives, although flanked by pathways and linear bands of trees planted for the golf course.



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan



1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan

Current character and condition

The configuration of this character area on the 18th and 19th Century maps, of woodland on the west, with pond and open space to the east, and the driveway down the eastern side, is largely the configuration that remains today. To some extent, this area still retains its parkland wood pasture character of dotted and clumped trees. Elements of the historic pattern of plantings, some of which include pre-parkland veteran trees, have been retained, and the continuity of the historic landscape is emphasised by surviving earthworks of pre-parkland boundaries and cultivation features, both within the woodland and on the fairway.

Two earthwork boundary features can be seen in the golf course green to the south of the pond, one of which is quite substantial, and faint traces of possible Ridge and Furrow earthworks are visible in several areas of the green, from south of the pond up towards the 8th hole of the golf course. These ridge and furrow earthworks are very slight, and are only just discernible in the closely-mown grass of the golf course.

Stumpshill wood contains evidence of possible pre-parkland earthwork boundary banks in association with alignments of veteran and mature trees, both within the main body of woodland, and just outside its eastern boundary. Further veteran trees line the driveway leading down from Southend Lodge, and lie within a clump of trees that are marked in the same location on the 1860 map. The veteran trees in this character area probably pre-date the establishment of the park, and were retained and incorporated within the parkland plantings and boundaries. Stretches of estate rail are still present within areas of Stumpshill wood.

Removal of some of the parkland tree plantings, and the introduction of lines of 20th Century tree plantings for the golf course have eroded the historic character to some extent. Also, there have been considerable groundworks around the holes of the golf course, which have reduced the coherence of pre-parkland landscape features such as possible ridge and furrow and boundary features. It is not clear how much the golf course designer made use of, and modified, existing earthwork features and topography to create flat terraces, tees and bunkers, and generally make the ground a suitable shape for the fairways nor to what extent groundworks were undertaken for drainage purposes. There is no discernible trace of any earlier golf course design in this area.

The area is subject to high levels of golfing and passive recreational use with key access points from the west, the north near Southend Lodge and at the centre near the car park and principal house. As a result, intensively managed grasslands dominate the area. However species poor neutral grassland with scattered trees is also present in sections.

Along the western margin a corridor of semi-mature broad leaved woodland with mature oak is found and to the centre of the character area a pond is located which has the potential to support Great Crested Newts. Reduction of shading along the southern edge of the pond would be beneficial to the ecological value of this feature.



(j) The creation of the golf green likely involved re-grading ground levels possibly disturbing earthwork features.



(k) Late 20th century additions to the golf course together with inappropriate planting detracts from the historic character of the park.



(c) Chain link fencing now defines the boundary between Beckenham Place Park and surrounding residential areas.



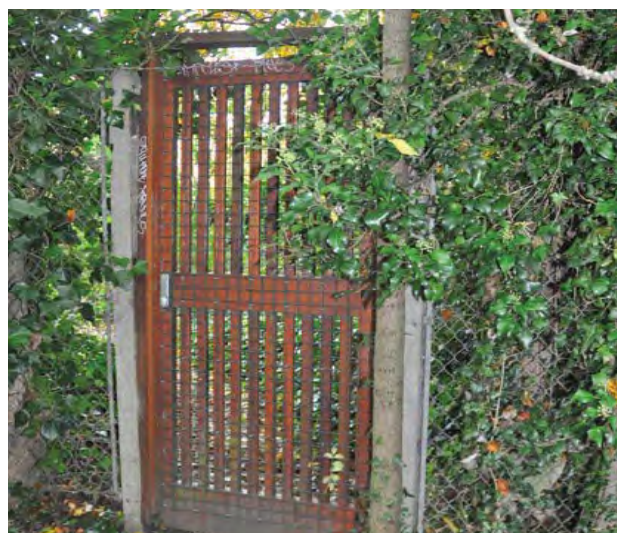
(e) Linear earthwork feature extending across golf fairway possibly relates to a former field boundary. Oak tree in distance may relate to this feature.



(a) Remnant estate rail which once defined the edge of Stumphill Wood.



(b) Dense and staggered tree planting along line of estate rail possibly intended to managed as a hedge.



(f) A new entrance from an adjacent residential property has on the western boundary.



(g) Stumphill Wood is shown on 18th century mapping and the area contains a number of veteran and mature trees.



(h) Traces of ridge and furrow can be seen across the fairway.



(i) Veteran trees may relate to former field boundaries and wood pasture shown on the 1st Edition OS of 1860s.



(l) Former parkland trees and clumps were removed during the creation of the golf course.



(m) The pond can be traced to 18th century but is now enclosed by chain link fencing due health and safety concerns relating to deep water.



(n) Dense tree planting along carriageway drive obscures views to the house.



(o) A public right of way extends through the northern section of the boundary woodland belt.



(p) Tree clump in the northern section of the character area relate to the 19th century parkland landscape and possibly former field boundaries.



(q) Linear depression across fairway possibly related to remnant field boundary or ridge and furrow.

Significance

The West Parkland is significant for historic and ecological reasons, and has high evidential value.

It is part of the core parkland setting for the mansion house and pleasure gardens. It still retains the historic character of open parkland, its significance enhanced by the quantity of mature and veteran trees still present in the area, and by some retention of parkland planting patterns, and historic patterns of approaches and routes. However, Late 20th century additions to the golf course together with inappropriate planting detracts from the historic character of the park, and dense tree planting along Carriageway Drive obscures views to the house.

The existence of pre-emparkment historic features in Stumpshill Wood and on the golf course demonstrates a degree of continuity in the historic landscape and is very significant in an urban area where survival of such features is relatively rare. This is reflected in the designation of the park by Lewisham Council as a locally important Area of Archaeological Priority. A more detailed survey of Stumpshill Wood in winter conditions when the vegetation has died down could provide more information about the character, extent and significance of these features. This could provide valuable information about earlier land organisation, and enhance the sense of place for the local community. The features on the golf course are potentially vulnerable to ground disturbance relating to maintenance of the golf course. There may be potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains pre-dating the 18th Century, as the area has remained open since that time.

Stumpshill Wood, although much reduced in area since the 18th century, has high ecological value, containing the largest collection of old trees, both in the park and in Lewisham Borough, including oaks that are more than 300 years old, and is designated as ancient woodland.

The pond appears on a map from 1833 and on the First Edition OS map of 1863. It is not currently known the reasons for the creation of the pond but it may be much older than mid-19th Century and possibly relating to the pre-emparkment of the site. However it is heavily silted up, highly eutrophic, very deep and along with the neighbouring woodland is enclosed with a chain link fence, which detracts from its historic character.

The parkland habitats within the character area are likely to be of value for birds, bats and invertebrates in particular, with the numerous mature trees.

B: Pleasure Ground

The Pleasure Ground is located in the western centre of the park, surrounded by the golf course. It represents the main house, associated buildings and pleasure grounds. The southern part of the character area is included within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area.

Historic development

Early History

Beckenham Place was built by John Cator around 1773, who purchased the Manor of Beckenham at that time. Beckenham Place was said to have been built close to the site of an earlier Medieval Manor House. The house was apparently 'rebuilt with much taste and elegance shortly after 1773' (Friends of Beckenham Place Park website), implying that there was a previous house in the vicinity, but it is not clear if this was the Medieval manor house. Further research would be required to establish a more precise location for the Medieval manor house, and to establish if any buried remains are likely to survive. John Cator established the landscape park, including the pleasure grounds in the late 18th Century, developing it out of the existing agricultural landscape of woodland and fields.

18th Century

In the 18th Century, the park and pleasure grounds are already largely in the form which survives to some extent today. The 1799 OS Drawing shows the mansion, and the stable block to the north, lying in landscaped wooded grounds separated from the open parkland by a demarcated boundary. The pleasure grounds are situated midway between the two main areas of woodland within the park (now known as Stumpshill Wood and Summerhouse Hill Wood). The house may have been built by Robert Taylor, with architectural fragments from Wricklemarsh House at Blackheath incorporated during remodelling at some time in the late 18th century (Friends of Beckenham Place Park website).

19th Century

The John Cator Estate map of 1833 shows the buildings in more detail, surrounded by sinuous belts of woodland within the pleasure grounds. The woodland around the stables extends almost to the edge of the lake, but there is no woodland to the east of the mansion, which would have been designed to enable views from the mansion across to the lake and Summerhouse Hill Wood.

The 1st Edition OS map of 1860 and the 1864 Albermarle Cator Estate map show detail of the landscaped grounds, especially around the stable buildings, including walled gardens, avenues of trees, and further buildings to the north of the stable block – cottages known as The Homesteads. The parish boundary between Beckenham and Bromley is marked immediately adjacent to the mansion house.

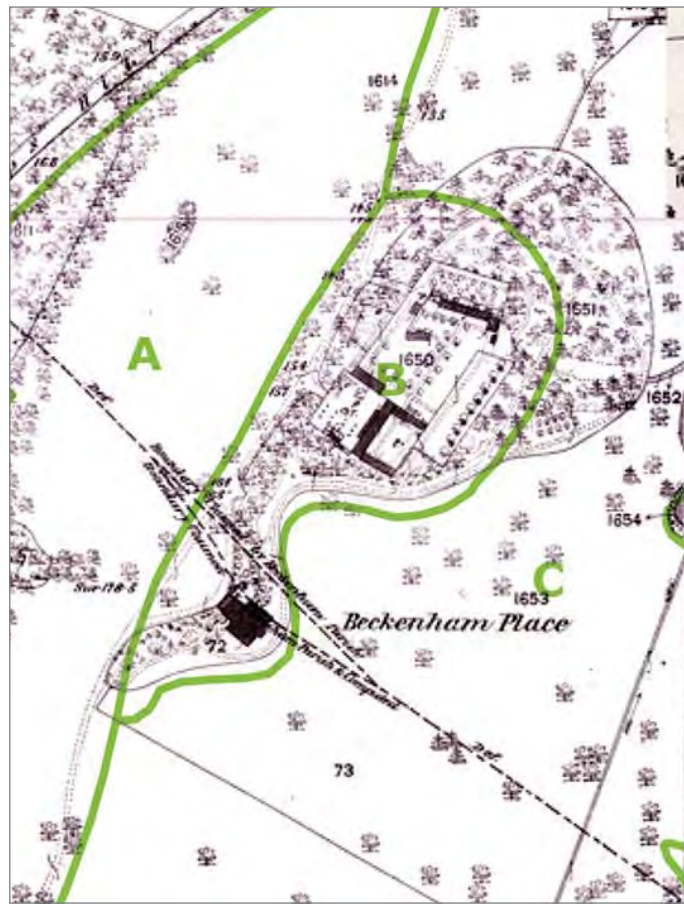
On the 1897 OS 25" map, the boundary of the pleasure grounds has been extended in the southeast, around the mansion, and less detail of landscaping is depicted. Several buildings within the walled gardens are depicted as glasshouses.



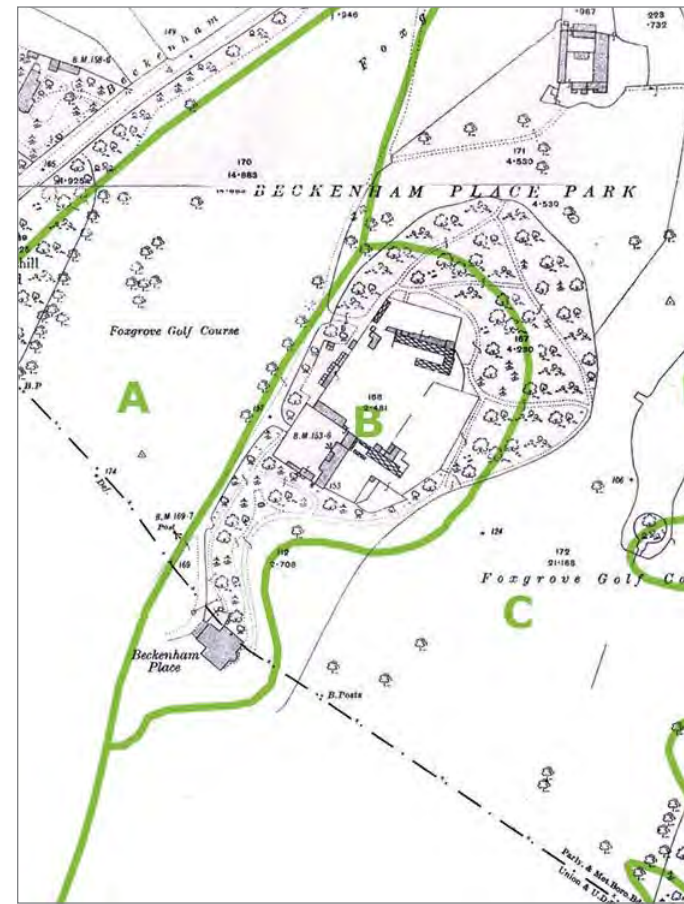
20th Century

There is little change in the layout of the pleasure grounds by 1915, but the open parkland surrounding them is now marked as the Foxgrove Golf Course. The mansion house was used for various purposes in the early 20th Century, including as a private boys school (Craven College) from 1902-1905, as an alcohol and drug treatment centre (the Norwood Sanatorium) from 1905-1933, and subsequently as the clubhouse for the golf course.

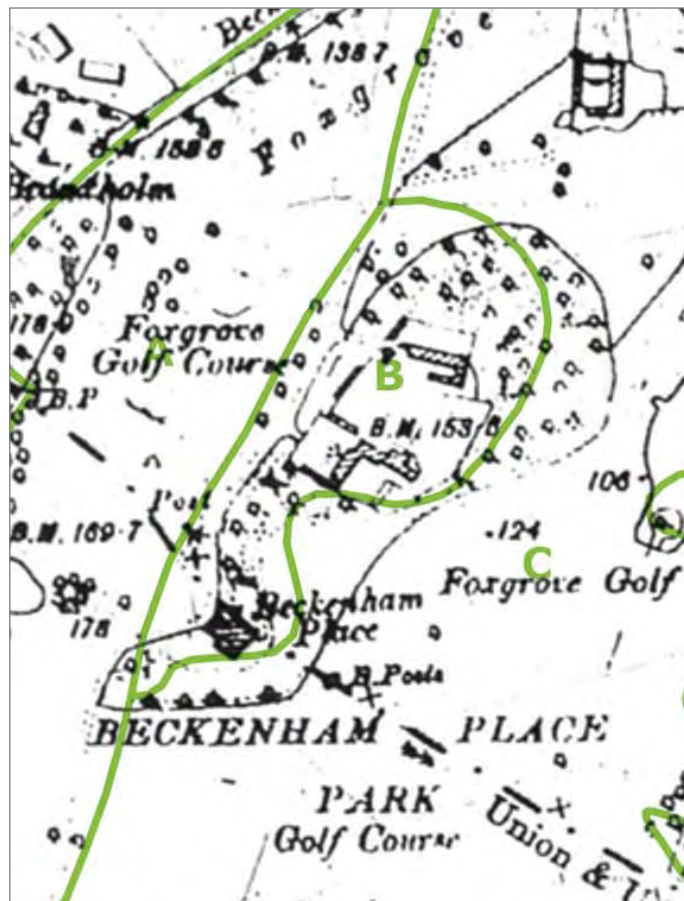
The mansion house, and the stable block, outbuildings and garden walls were listed in 1954. By 1956, the boundary of the pleasure grounds is less clearly demarcated, and the woodland has been cleared in the north and replaced with linear plantings, presumably for the golf course fairways. Tennis courts have been laid out to the north of the stable block. By 1976, the 19th Century pleasure garden boundary is no longer discernible.



1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan

Current character and condition

The historic character of the pleasure grounds has been significantly and detrimentally affected by 20th Century developments, including the blurring of the boundary of the gardens, the encroachment of the golf course, the siting of the car park directly in front of the main entrance to the mansion house and damage to the buildings, including a fire in the Homestead in 2011.

The historic structures and ornamental gardens are a popular space for visitors. This character area consists of formal amenity grass, introduced shrub/mixed scattered trees within the south and adjacent hardstanding. A small pocket of semi-natural broad leaved woodland is located to the far south with oaks (possibly veteran) which could have high bat roost potential.

Main stable block (eastern range)

External

The two storey eastern range is the largest and most significant building within the homestead. It dates from the 1770s when the stable block was laid out and is the oldest remaining structure in the complex

The building is two storeys, and thirteen bays in elevation facing northwest into the courtyard, its most prominent elevation. The roof was originally hipped at either end with protruding gables either side of the central three bays. The central area between the bays had a protruding roofline with a crown roof fronted by a timber fascia, providing a covered area in front of the doors below. The walls of the stable block are stock bricks in Flemish Bond

Unfortunately the building remains in a perilous state following years of being unused and a fire in 2011 which gutted the vast majority of the building. It is on Historic England's Building at Risk Register.

The main plan of the building had one long ridge line with two, two bay protruding gable ends flanking the three central bays.

The central three bays consisted of three barn doors to the ground floor and three timber doors to the first floor. From historic data the walls between the first floor doors were brickwork panels. The ground floor barn doors were of a size that only a timber gate post separated them. The remainder of the ground floor window and door openings have semi-circular stepped brick arched heads and a connecting horizontal rendered band tying into the springing point of the arches.

The first floor has a series of square window openings, matching the ground floor in elevation, but simpler in detail with rubbed flat brick arches. The openings to the southern end of the elevation were constructed as blind openings. Circular openings are positioned beneath each protruding gable end.

In the earlier part of the 20th century, the main house was used as a school and a sanatorium. The 1911 Census lists medical staff, servants and patients/ inmates and at this time it is possible the northern end of the stable block was adapted into residential accommodation on both levels. The windows to the north end were adapted to metal Crittall style casement windows as against timber sash windows to the remainder of the property. Due to the size and configuration of the openings to the rear elevation, and the fact this elevation also originally had garden buildings abutting it, it is believed these windows openings were made or adapted at the time of the conversion to residential use in the 20th century.

The rear elevation (southeast) in contrast is very irregular in fenestration, with a series of window openings at both ground floors with the majority being square or rectangular with brick heads. Towards the southern end of the elevation, there is a taller arched window.

The northwest elevation has no openings although there is evidence of a bricked up arched opening at lower level. The southwest elevation has one large arched window, which like the taller window to the south east elevation opens onto the large room internally. These are surprisingly grand windows for a stable block and implies the importance the original owners put on this room

The original clock was positioned over the central portion of the stable block. It is believed to originally have come from another property owned by the Cator family, in Clock House Beckenham. The Clock House at Beckenham Place Park was enlarged compared with its previous incarnations with a clock face to each side. The cupola itself was an open arcade which would have originally had housed a bell, and was constructed in timber with a lead roof. The base, which housed the clock faces, was timber framework with a metal external skin (believed to be lead).

Four brick chimney stacks are present, two on the eastern side, one on the western side and one to the ridge.

Internal

The only remaining part of the original building is to the southern eastern end which originally consisted of a double height room, subsequently subdivided with timber stud partitions and a lower ceiling which cut across the large windows to the southwest and southeast elevations. The room itself is in a poor state of repair but does contain some timber vertical boarding which is about 1000mm high to the one end and a timber enclosure at high level

The central portion of the building collapsed entirely after the fire and only the rear wall remains.

The remainder of the building is roofless and only the original external walls remain. The first floors have collapsed and some clinker plastered walls remain where the residential accommodation was provided.

A significant amount of scaffolding currently holds the building up, and access is very limited.

Stable yard Cottages (Northern range)

External

A building was constructed on the north side around the early 1830s, and the current building has this original building at its core.

The structure is a single storey building with attic level accommodation within the roof space with dormer windows. The central portion protrudes out with a gable to the south. The internal layout of the building consisted of three individual dwellings

The south elevation is symmetrical in fenestration with the central gable having a splayed bay window at ground floor level and the only first floor window within the brickwork. Either side of the central gable are four bays at ground floor level, one bay consisting of the entrance door to each cottage, and a corresponding dormer window within the roof space.

The window openings include flat gauged brick arches over and the brick is a yellow London stock. The roof is in slate with two brick chimney stacks.

The north elevation is irregular in fenestration with ground and first floor windows, as well as three sets of dormer windows.

At the eastern and western ends of the building are brick links to the main range and outer walls.

The building is derelict although generally in sound structural condition. The roof is covered by a temporary membrane although this offers limited weather protection. All the windows are boarded up.

Courtyard

The remainder of the courtyard consists of low lean-to structures utilised by the parks staff or remaining in derelict conditions, to the southern and western sides. The southern side are generally of older building stock, with the remains including a weather boarded three bay horse hospital abutting the 18C garden wall. The remaining structures consist more of open sided corrugated canopies used for park storage below.

Gardeners Cottage

To the north east of the stable yard cottages, the 18c garden wall includes a round arched opening leading to the detached gardener's cottage. The cottage consists of a two storey portion with symmetrical 3 bay south elevation, and a lean-to single storey to the north. The south elevation is rendered whereas the remainder of the building is brick. The roof is a low pitched hipped slate roof and over the central entrance door a segmental hood. The windows are sash windows with plain reveals. The cottage lies unused and in a semi derelict state.



(a) The main house



(b) The stable building with the walled garden in the foreground.



(c) Timber summerhouse



(d) The garden cottage



(e) Footpath lined with estate rail fence.



(f) Homestead building with tennis courts.

Significance

The Pleasure Ground is significant for historic reasons, and has high evidential value.

The Pleasure Ground is central to the designed landscape, around which views, settings and access were designed. It includes buildings that have been designated as of national importance - the mansion (Listed Grade II*), and the stable block, outbuildings and remains of the walled garden (Listed Grade II). The mansion lies within the Beckenham Place Conservation Area. The immediate setting of these buildings has been degraded by the blurring of the Pleasure Ground boundary, particularly to the north, the siting of the car park immediately in front of the main entrance to the mansion, and the proximity of the golf course. The wider setting has been adversely affected by the loss of views to and from the mansion caused by inappropriate plantings for the golf course. There is potential to re-create these views through the restoration of the parkland landscape.

The significance of this character area is enhanced by the historical association of the mansion with John Cator, and his marriage connections with the well-known botanist Peter Collinson, one of the most important importers of rare and exotic plants into English gardens. John Cator also had friendships with historical figures who visited Beckenham Place, including Samuel Johnson, Linnaeus, the great botanist, and the actor David Garrick. Beckenham Place is linked with Blackheath Park, which John Cator also owned.

The diversity of habitats, including built features, are likely to provide value for birds, bats and invertebrates in particular.

C: East Parkland

The East Parkland is located in the centre of the park, running from Southend Lodge in the north down to the road known as Beckenham Place Park in the south. It represents the main area of open parkland that lay to the east of the mansion house. The southern part of the character area is included within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area.

Historic development

Early history

The Greater London Historic Environment record does not specifically record any sites of archaeological or historic interest within this area, apart from the site of a Medieval Manor House known to have been in the vicinity, but currently imprecisely located on the boundary of the character area. As already mentioned in Character Area A, further research would be required to establish a more precise location, and to establish if any buried remains are likely to survive within this character area.

An earlier desk-based assessment (Management Plan (1996)) recorded an area of possible ridge and furrow on the golf course east of the Lodge, and areas of terracing on the slopes opposite the mansion. These features are still visible within the golf course, and represent remains of the former Medieval and Post-Medieval farming landscape that still existed prior to the creation of the parkland.

18th Century

This area represents the landscape setting to the 18th Century mansion. The 1799 OS drawing depicts the lodge in the north (listed Grade II), and to the east of the lodge are a group of small, subdivided fields. The area of ridge and furrow near the lodge appears to coincide with the location of these fields, which supports the interpretation of the earthworks as ridge and furrow, of Medieval or later origin.

The rest of the area is depicted as open parkland, dotted with individual trees and clumps, and incorporates the western part of the artificial lake, with a watercourse running southwards from it along the western side of the woodland later known as Summerhouse Hill Wood. It is possible that some of the woodland that had once been present in this area was felled in order to open up views of the lake from the mansion, although the evidence of terracing to the west of the woodland suggests that at least some of this area had been cleared and used for agriculture before emparkment.

19th Century

The subdivided fields in the north are still marked on the 1833 John Cator estate map, and an island is depicted in the western part of the lake, with views across from the mansion. The parish boundary between Beckenham and Bromley is shown running northwest-southeast across the area, and the former watercourse running from the lake now appears to be a field boundary.

The 1860 1st Edition OS map and the 1864 Albermarle Cator Estate map show more detail of



scattered and grouped trees that are so characteristic of parkland wood pasture. The subdivided fields in the north are no longer depicted as individual fields, but their boundary pattern is still clearly discernible as linear belts of trees. It is possible that other linear stands of trees shown elsewhere in this area of the park may also have incorporated trees from former field boundaries. A building complex, probably the buildings for the new home farm, is shown to the north of the stable block, in the area of the former subdivided fields, and a boat house is now marked at the west of the lake, to the north of the island.

Increasing urbanisation of the immediate surroundings is already apparent, with the 1864 map showing land adjacent to the character area on the south proposed for residential development.

By the time of the 1897 25" OS map, the traces of former subdivided fields in the north of the area no longer discernible, cut through by the London, Chatham and Dover railway line, and boundary trees lost. The railway has been screened by a perimeter belt of trees.

20th Century

The 1915 OS plan marks the former open parkland as Foxgrove Golf course, established in 1907. There are less trees marked, and boundaries have been altered, especially around the

buildings in the north of the area. The island in the lake is still depicted, but the boat house is no longer shown.

By 1956, the lake has largely dried up and the character of the golf course, with its linear ribbons of trees separating the fairways is more pronounced. The buildings between the stable block and the lodge, which may relate to the Home Farm, have gone by this time, and aerial photos taken in 1960s show remains of the foundations of buildings in this area. Housing now abuts the southern border of the character area.

Current character and condition

Although the use of the former open parkland as a golf course has eroded the historic character of the area, the open nature of the golf course still reflects the broad historic pattern of the open parkland. There is still some retention of the parkland wood pasture character of scattered or grouped individual trees, woods and clumps of trees, some of which include trees that are clearly earlier than the establishment of the park.

Surviving earthworks of pre-emparkment agricultural activity in the character area serve to emphasise the earlier origins of the present-day landscape. Traces of ridge and furrow are visible in the short grass of the fairway to the southeast of Southend Lodge. North-south aligned terraces can be seen on the slope facing the stable block, to the northwest of Summerhouse Hill wood, and further linear earthwork features are discernible between the lines of golf course tree plantings, including a ditch, and more terracing and/or ridge and furrow. Carriageway Drive, which extends through the northern part of the character area, is in poor condition.

The former line of the watercourse which was dammed to form the artificial lake in the 18th Century, and subsequently became a boundary, can still be traced southwards from the former lake into the woodland belt at the south of the park. Near the lake, this survives as a straightened waterfilled ditch which was excavated in 1995, exposing the formerly culverted watercourse, but further south it becomes a dry ditch demarcated with veteran trees, opening into a depression, which may be the remains of a former pond. There is little surface trace of the stretch of lake that lay in this area.

No obvious traces of the former Home Farm buildings are visible, although there are slight undulations in the ground surface all around the general area. A veteran tree in the vicinity may mark the position of one of the old field boundaries that are marked on earlier maps.

The historic character of the area in the south of the golf course has been degraded by the removal of some of the parkland plantings, and the extensive 20th Century linear plantings for the golf course. These lines of trees stretching southeast across the area cut across the historic patterns and emphasise the presence of the golf course, channelling views along the fairways and blocking the wider vistas from the east side of the mansion.

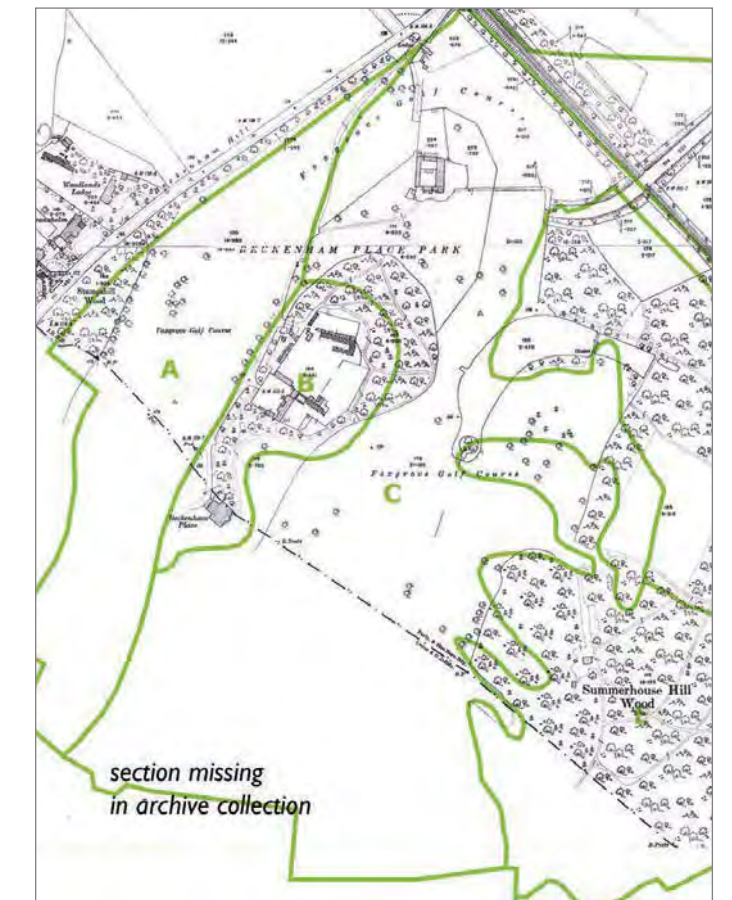
The golf course also dominates the southwestern part of the character area. More extensive golf course-related ground works are apparent here, and no coherent earlier landscape features have been identified in this area.

There is no obvious trace of any earlier golf course feature apart from a possible infilled bunker in the south of the area.

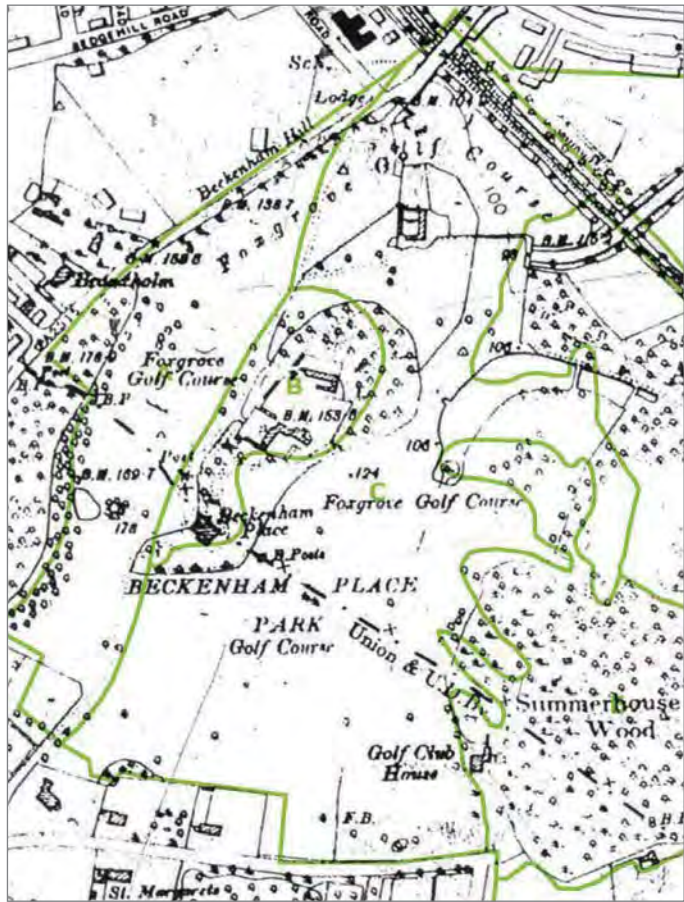
This area comprises the core of the main golf course and is frequently used by golfers. The majority of the area comprises broadleaved scattered trees (some possibly veteran) and amenity grassland. Occasional dense scrub is within the character area and small pockets of semi-improved grassland could be areas for acid grassland enhancement. These are located within the central area (towards the east) and towards the south. These areas of grassland are vulnerable given the presence of small trees/scrub (resulting in shading and nutrient enrichment), and also from trampling and dog fouling with desire lines criss-crossing these grassland areas.



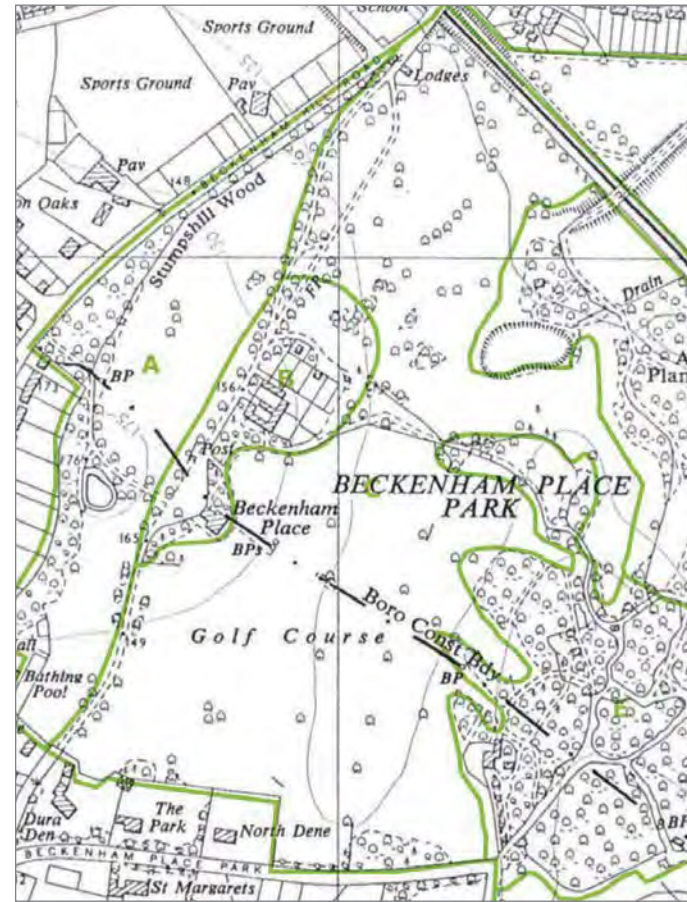
1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan



(a) View looking northwards with wooded ridgeline in the distance.



(b) Undulations on surface of fairways possibly relate to ridge and furrow.



(e) Veteran trees require sensitive management to conserve these features which are of historic and ecological values whilst ensuring the health and safety of park users.



(f) A narrow stream flows along the valley and once fed the lake which can be seen on the OSD Plan, 1799.



(i) Terracing is evident on west facing slopes opposite the house.



(j) Linear depression may relate to former field boundary.



(c) Veteran trees possibly relate to former field boundaries and would have been retained during the creation of the parkland landscape.



(d) Inappropriate tree planting detracts from the historic setting of the character area.



(g) The extension of the golf course resulted in the in-filling of the lake.



(h) Undulations in fairways could relate to ridge and furrow.



(n) View from approximate location of summerhouse shown on 1st edition OS from 1860s looking north towards former lake.



(o) Remnant sections of estate rail lining former walking trails through the 18th/ 19th century parkland to take in former lake and summerhouse.

Significance

Due to the presence of veteran trees and linear earthwork features, the East Parkland character area is significant for historic and ecological reasons, and has high evidential value.

It is the main core of the parkland setting for the mansion house and pleasure gardens. It incorporates key features of the historic parkland estate, including the North Lodge at the north entrance (Grade II listed) established as part of the Cator estate in C18, and the area that would have been covered by the western part of the lake. This area would have provided most of the key views within the parkland from the mansion across to the lake and the woodland.

It still retains the historic character of open parkland, particularly in the north of the area, where its significance is enhanced by mature and veteran trees still present in the area, and by some retention of parkland planting patterns in open grassland, and historic patterns of approaches and routes. However, the lake has now dried up, and the linear plantings undertaken in the 20th Century to create fairways have eroded the historic character and the visual quality of the parkland landscape, particularly the key views in the south of the area. The undeveloped wooded ridgeline visible to the west and northwest enhances the setting of the character area.

The existence of pre-emparkment historic features on the golf course demonstrates a degree of continuity in the historic landscape and is very significant in an urban area where survival of such features is relatively rare. This is reflected in the designation of the park by Lewisham Council as a locally important Area of Archaeological Priority. Further investigation could potentially more firmly establish the extent, character and date of these earthworks. This could provide valuable information about earlier land organisation, and enhance the sense of place for the local community. These features are potentially vulnerable to ground disturbance relating to maintenance of the golf course. There may be potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains pre-dating the 18th Century, as the area has remained open since that time.

There are occasional standing monoliths which provide high bat roost potential. In addition there is a range of dead wood habitats including stag-headed oak trees which provide an important habitat for saproxylic invertebrates. The presence of areas of acid grassland are of particular significance for their ecological values.



(k) Veteran pollard located above linear earthwork which possibly relates to former stream (possibly linking to photo (f)) and parish/ field boundary.



(l) Carriageway drive (and former highway) extends through the north of the character area but is a poor condition and metal container detracts from historic character.



(m) View from the tee of the second hole of the golf course looking northwest towards the house. 20th century tree planting to create fairways has fragmented the landscape, disrupting intended views associated with the parkland landscape and limiting the understanding of the historic setting of Beckenham Place Park. Wooded ridgeline along west/ northwest boundary provides a wooded backdrop to house. Lack development beyond the wooded ridgeline adds to the setting of the Beckenham Place Park and belies its location within Greater London.

D: Ash Plantation

Ash Plantation is located in the centre of the park, bounded on the east by the railway line and lying to the north of Summerhouse Hill Wood. It represents the northern block of woodland and lake within the former parkland estate.

Historic development

Early history

Little is known about the early history of this character area. The Greater London Historic Environment record does not specifically record any sites of archaeological or historic interest within this area. 18th Century maps show that blocks of woodland were already present within a landscape of agricultural fields before Cator built the mansion in the late 18th Century.

18th Century

The 1799 OS drawing shows the curving lake to the east of the stable block, forming a central element of the parkland. It is not known whether there was a pre-existing water feature here before the establishment of the lake in this form, which was created by damming the stream. The lake is surrounded by open parkland, and there is no evidence of woodland within the character area at this time .

19th Century

The 1833 John Cator estate map depicts the lake as largely the same shape, with woodland planted around the east and north, joining up with Summerhouse Hill Wood, and with the woodland to the east adjoining the Ravensbourne River. The area to the south of the lake is unwooded apart from an avenue of trees leading from Summerhouse Hill wood. The woodland boundaries still respect pre-existing field boundaries to some extent.

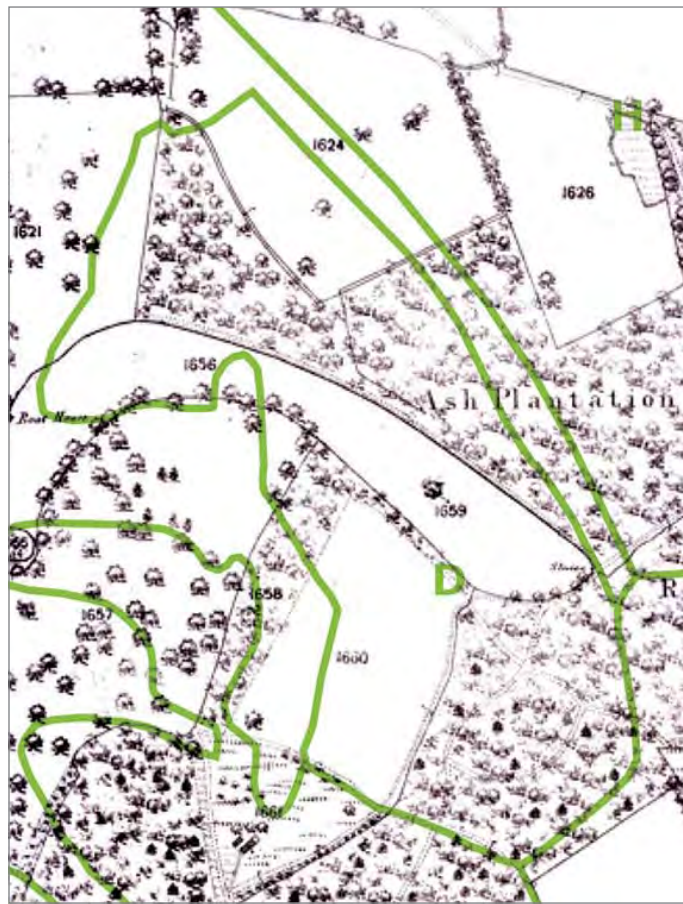
On the 1860 1st Edition OS map and the 1864 Albermarle Cator Estate map, the woodland is marked as Ash Plantation. It has been extended, and the area to the south, at the eastern end of the lake, is marked as reed bed. Internal boundaries are visible which may be pre-existing field boundaries. An avenue of trees runs northwards from the northernmost point of the wood, along a former field boundary towards Beckenham Lane.

The 1897 25" OS map shows a significant change of character in the area, as the London, Chatham & Dover railway line has been constructed through the park, cutting Ash Plantation in two. A large bridge with an embankment has been built over the railway line in the north of the character area, apparently with the expectation that housing would be developed in the area, and the northward avenue of trees has gone. Despite this significant change, the housing failed to materialise and the shape of the woodland is largely intact, with an unwooded area still present to the south of the lake.

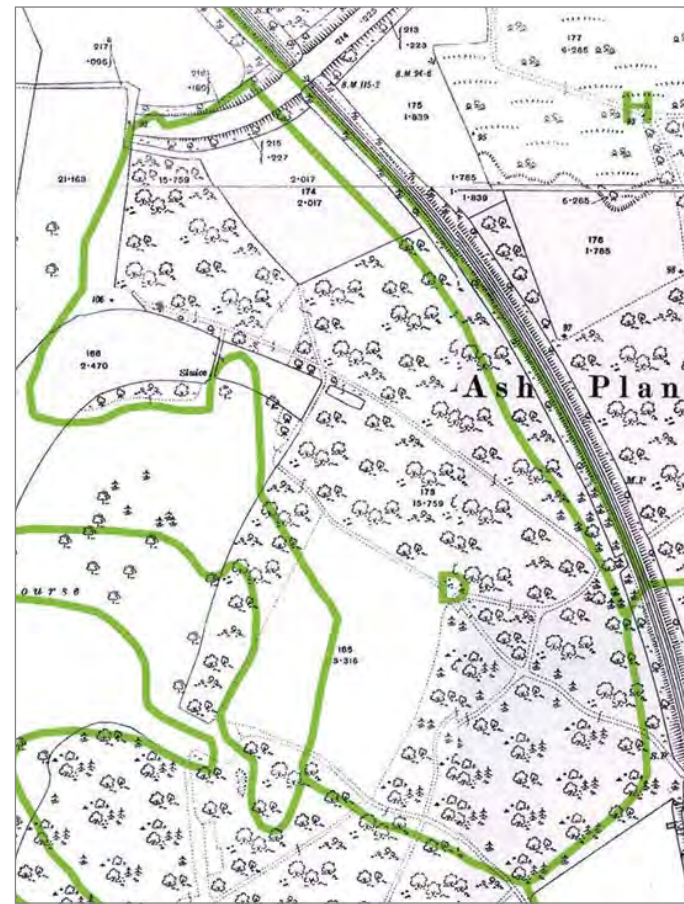


20th Century

The influence of the golf course on the character area is apparent by 1915. The shape of the lake has been modified, with the eastern end truncated and squared off. A sluice gate is marked across it near the truncated end, and the former lake area is now wooded. By 1956, the golf course has extended into the area, and only the northern part of the lake remains as a small oval. By 1976, the northern-most part of wood has been lost, and buildings have been constructed near the railway bridge. It is unclear what these buildings relate to.



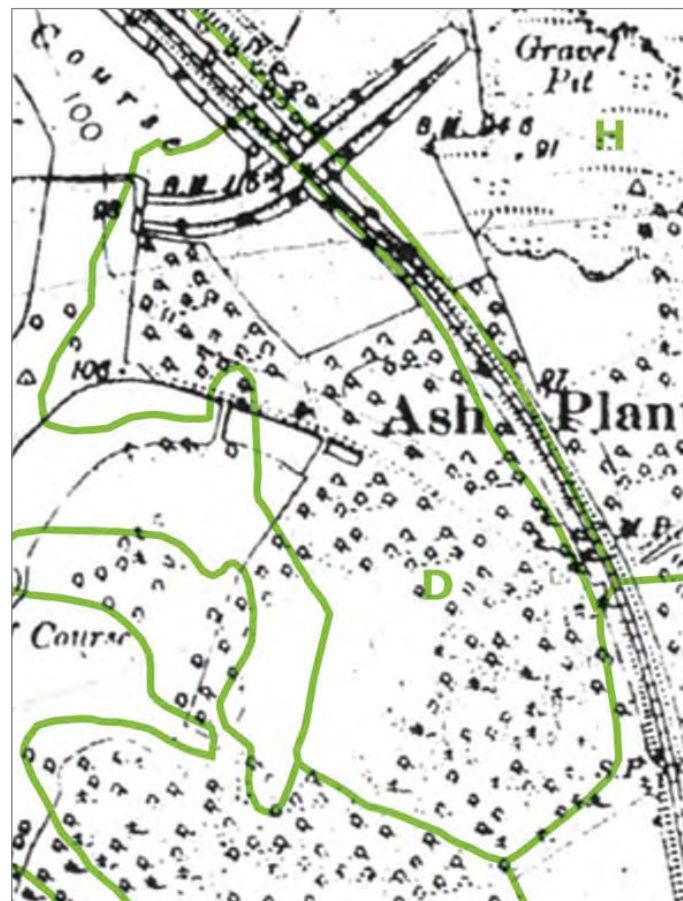
1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



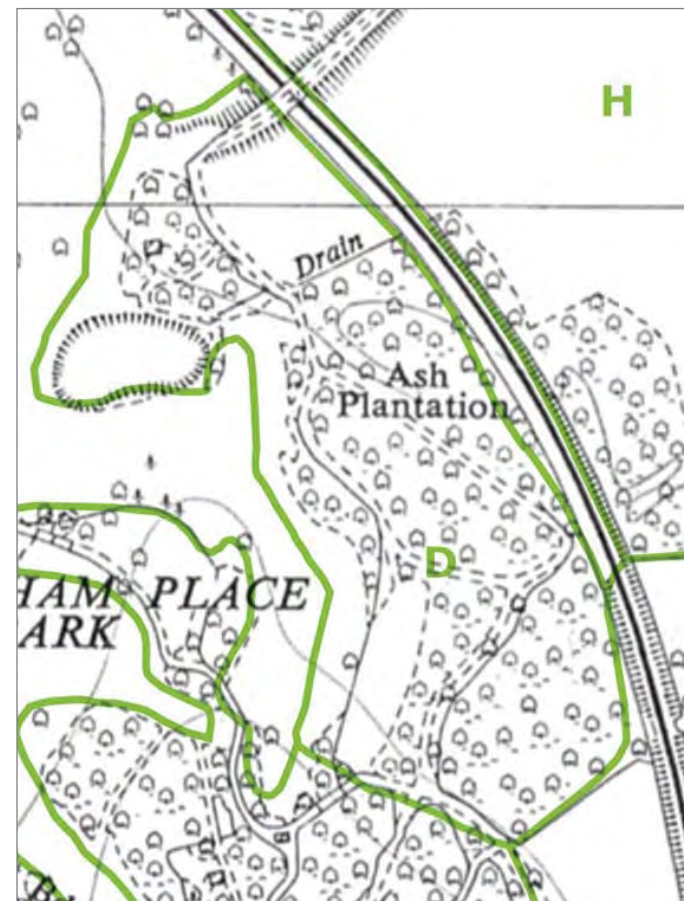
1915 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan

Current Character and Condition

Despite the effect on the character of the area by the construction of the railway line and the shrinking and ultimate disappearance of the lake for the extension of the golf course, this part of Ash Plantation, to the west of the railway line, retains much of its 19th Century shape and extent. The artificial lake has dried up, and is reduced to an area of wet woodland/ alder carr, but it is still visible as a sizeable curvilinear depression, both on the ground and in LiDAR data. The feature is very overgrown, and has been bisected by a substantial pathway leading towards the bridge over the railway line.

The woodland itself does not appear to be ancient, and this is supported by the map evidence that shows it to have been largely planted in the early 19th Century and later. However it is one of the largest areas of woodland in the park. Ant hills have been identified within open glades to the north. There are also pockets of amenity grassland and semi-improved grassland. The woodland itself supports a relatively diverse structure including understory/scrub layer.

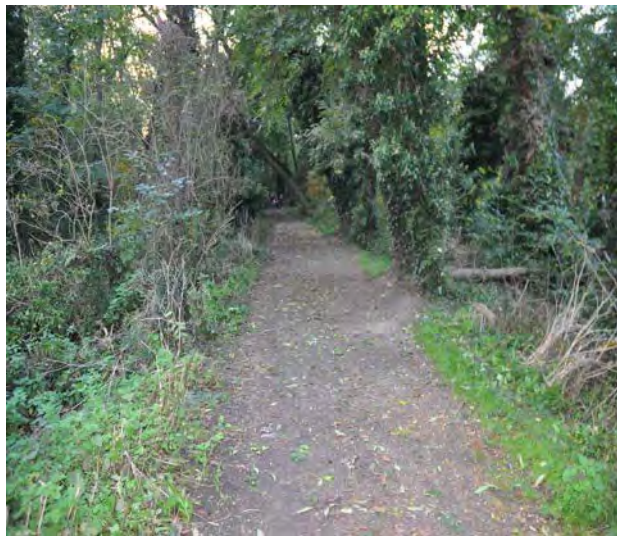
The proximity of golf course holes to the south and west, and the railway line to the east reduce the tranquillity and detract from the historic character of the area.



(a) Former stream, which may have linked with lake, is now dry.



(b) The Paddock appears to relate to the former agricultural use of the park was left unplanted at the time of the creation of Ash plantation.



(c) The former extent of the lake is visible through a large depression in the ground surrounded by footpath. This area is included within the ancient woodland designation but was clearly free of vegetation until the mid-point of the 20th century.



(d) A closely mown glade towards the southeast edge of Ash plantation may have formed part of a walking trail from the pleasure grounds and lake to the summerhouse.

Although the wood was planted in the 19th Century, it is possible that pre-emparkment features may survive within it. A more detailed survey of this woodland in winter conditions when the vegetation has died down could lead to the identification of such features.

This area provides a valuable resource for wildlife (in particular birds, bats and invertebrates) given the mosaic present, predominance of semi-natural habitat types and relatively low levels of formal recreation (although the western part is used as a regular walking route with the Capital Ring long distance route and Green Chain Walk).

Significance

This area is significant for its ecological and historic value.

It includes the major part of the former lake, which was the central designed feature within the 18th Century parkland landscape laid out by John Cator. The character of the lake has been severely degraded and it has now largely dried up. However, much of the western part is still a visible feature within the woodland, and alder carr has formed within it although this is now in unfavourable condition.

The western half of the area is designated as ancient woodland, and as such, would have significant ecological and educational value. However, the map evidence indicates that it was planted in the 19th Century, and the area of the lake was not wooded until the latter half of the 20th century. It seems the extent of the designation was made in error.

E: Summerhouse Hill Wood

Summerhouse Hill Wood is located in the southeastern part of the park, from the Crab Hill entrance northwestwards towards the centre of the park. It represents the central block of woodland within the former parkland estate. The southwestern part of the character area is included within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area.

Historic development

Early history

Little is known about the early history of this character area, possibly due to the lack of recorded archaeological events within it. The Greater London Historic Environment record does not specifically record any sites of archaeological or historic interest within this area. 18th century maps show that blocks of woodland were already present within a landscape of agricultural fields before Cator built the mansion in the late 18th Century.

18th Century

Summerhouse Hill Wood is shown as part of Langstead Wood on Roque's map (Management Plan (1996)). The 1799 OS drawing depicts the character area as a large block of woodland with a wedge-shaped gap on the northern side, bounded by parkland on the north, west and south, and agricultural fields to the east. The lake lies to the north of the character area.

19th Century

The 1833 John Cator estate map shows the woodland in a roughly similar shape, with an avenue of trees running northwards towards the lake, and the parish boundary between Bromley and Beckenham running through the middle of it.

The 1860 1st Edition OS map and the 1864 Albermarle Cator Estate map depict more extensive trees to the north of the woodland, which is now named as Summerhouse Hill Wood. The wedge-shaped gap contains scatters of trees, and buildings are depicted within it, one of which could well be the eponymous summer house. Pathways and driveways are marked throughout the wood, and the 1864 map shows a proposed road looping through it, extending from Downs Road back down to West Gate Road, which was never built.

It has been suggested that there would have been an ice well in the 19th century, possibly in Summerhouse Hill wood. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that this may be located under a mound outside Garden Cottage (Friends of Beckenham Place Park website).

By 1897, the wedge-shaped gap to the north of the wood has become more incorporated into the woodland, and is now only a small clearing. Some of the buildings have been demolished by this stage, and it is likely that building foundations identified in the wood (Management Plan (1996)) are the remains of these buildings. A pheasantry has been established to the north of the demolished building.

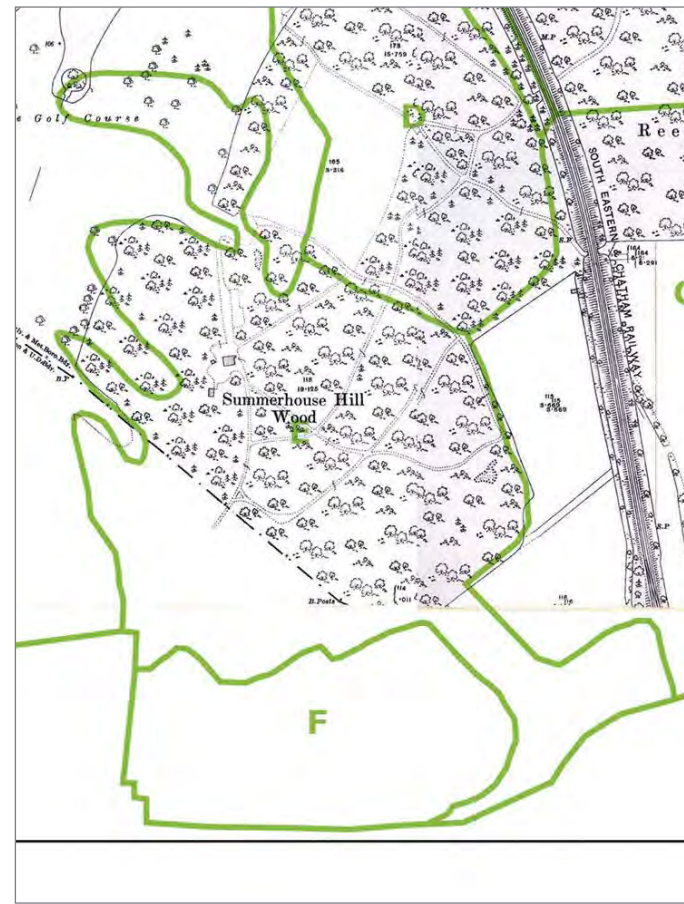


20th Century

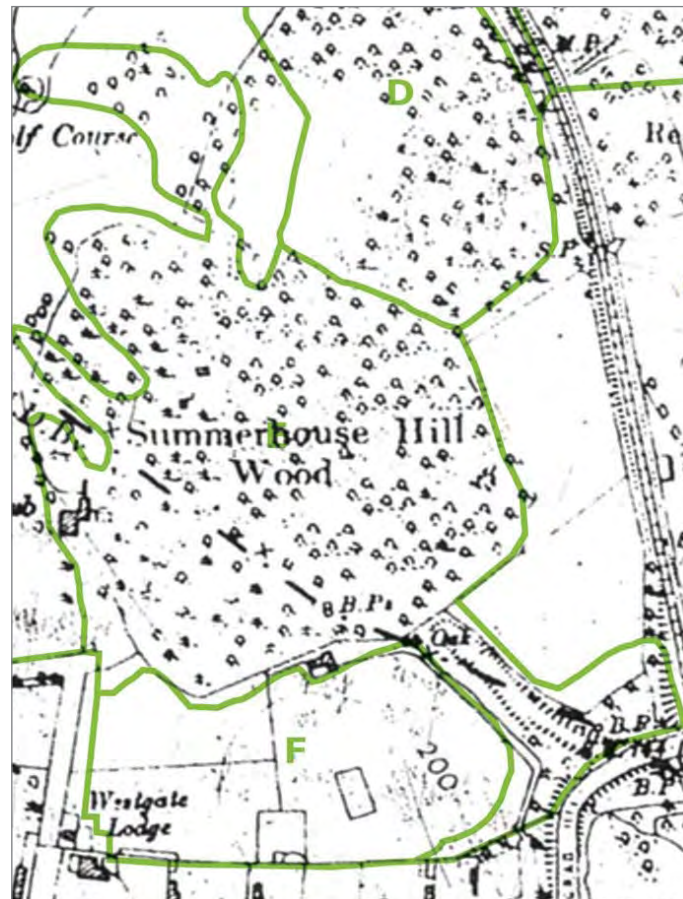
The 1915 map shows the gap now infilled, and a building still present in the wood. A pit, presumably a gravel extraction pit, is depicted just inside the southeastern border. However, by 1935, the presence of the golf course is increasingly influencing the character of the area, with the Golf Club House (the 'Foxgrove Club') constructed just inside the southwestern border, and by 1956, two linear areas of woodland on the western side have been felled in order to extend the golf course.



1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan

Current Character and Condition

Although this character area has been affected by the establishment of the golf course, mainly due to the reduction of the woodland on the western side, the wood still remains relatively intact, and the southern and eastern boundaries have clearly retained their historic character. The eastern boundary, on a steep slope, is demarcated by a ditch and bank, and includes several veteran trees. A particularly large tree stands near the northeastern border between Summerhouse Hill Wood and Ash Plantation. The southern boundary also includes numerous veteran trees, and the entrance way leading to the wood at the southeast consists of a substantial sunken trackway or Holloway lined by veteran trees. This trackway reflects the line of a field boundary that has persisted since at least 1799, and possibly much earlier, and also partially follows the line of the old parish boundary between Beckenham and Bromley.

Within the wood, features that clearly pre-date the establishment of the park are visible, including former boundary features represented by lines of veteran trees standing on linear banks. There are also features that post-date the park, including the former gravel pit marked on the early 20th Century maps, which survives as a large, circular, scrub-filled depression. Sections of estate rail are still visible within the woods.

The historic character of this area has been degraded on the western and northern sides, where the boundary morphology has been affected by the felling of trees in linear tracts to create fairways, the construction of the Foxgrove Club in the Early 20th Century and the loss of the lake and associated island feature.

This compartment supports a large expanse of semi-natural woodland habitat in the south, currently supporting a relatively diverse structure with a dense shrub layer.

An old dried out pond was identified to the south with potential to restore. There is also a need for increased tree and scrub thinning regimes as there is currently little ground flora and large areas are overshadowed by the large numbers of mature vegetation present. The wider woodland is likely to be of relatively high value for birds and bats.



(a) Hollow way, deep in places, possibly relates to former parish boundary.



(b) The area contains numerous linear earthwork features relating to possible parish/ field boundaries.



(c) Timber fencing surrounds location of gravel pit.



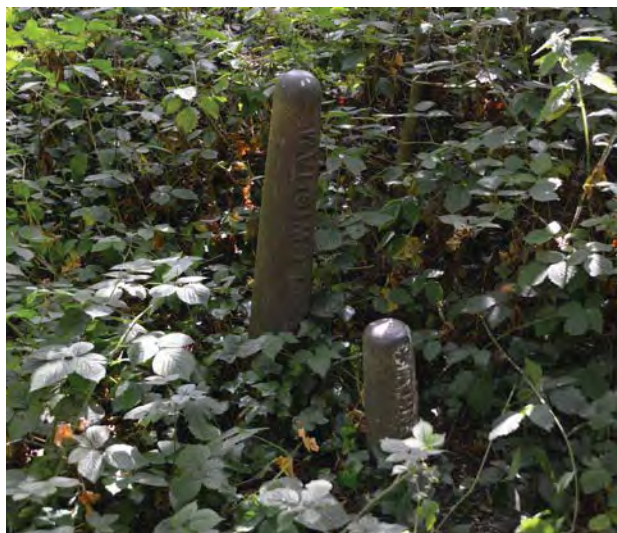
(d) Large depression, covered in low growing scrub, relates to former gravel pit.



(e) The area contains significant veteran and mature oak trees. However much of the woodland is evenly aged with little sign of active management.



(f) The Foxgrove was once the former clubhouse for the golf course but more recently has been the home for a private members club.



(g) Example of parish boundary markers located within the park.



(h) Conglomerate rock located towards the southern boundary of park.

Significance

This area is significant for its historic and ecological value.

Summerhouse Hill Wood is an important survival of woodland that pre-dates the establishment of the park. It is a substantial area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland, designated as ancient woodland and thus of significant ecological and educational value. It is also a good example of how the historic landscape framework of the park has changed over time. Some areas of existing woodland were thinned out and became wood pasture and open parkland, and conversely, areas of former open parkland have become part of the woodland. The character area also includes the southern end of the former lake, with its associated island, which would have been a key element of the 18th Century parkland landscape.

The historic character of the area has been eroded by the encroachment of the golf course and the disappearance of the lake and island. The felling associated with the extension of the golf course has also led to the loss of important ecological habitat. Some of the woodland growth appears to be relatively recent, which is surprising given that the central area has been continuously wooded since before emparkment in the 18th Century, and is designated as ancient woodland.

The existence of pre-emparkment historic features within the wood demonstrates a degree of continuity in the historic landscape and is very significant in an urban area where survival of such features is relatively rare. This is reflected in the designation of the park by Lewisham Council as a locally important Area of Archaeological Priority. A more detailed survey of the wood in winter conditions when the vegetation has died down could provide more information about the character, extent and significance of these features, and could also reveal more ephemeral features that may not be visible under such dense vegetation growth. This could provide valuable information about earlier land use, and enhance the sense of place for the local community.

The character area also includes the Foxgrove Club, an Edwardian building, semi-enclosed by woods and the home of the original golf clubhouse in the early C20. The Foxgrove Club has now closed and Lewisham Council is considering new uses of the building to complement the park and to generate additional revenue.

The Wood is very popular with walkers and dog walkers today, and winter views of this character area are possible from the mansion.

F: Crab Hill Field

Crab Hill Field is located in the southern part of the park, immediately to the south of Summerhouse Hill Wood, bounded by Westgate Road to the west and housing to the south. It represents an area on the southern periphery of the park. The character area is included within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area.

Historic development

Early history

An earlier desk-based assessment (Management Plan (1996)) recorded areas of possible ridge and furrow and terracing in Crab Hill Field. These earthworks have not been fully investigated or dated, but they are likely to be remnants of the Medieval and Post-Medieval farming landscape from which the parkland eventually developed.

18th Century

The 1799 OS drawing shows this area lying within a larger field immediately to the south of woodland, although significantly there are no strips marked in this field, unlike the surrounding fields to the south and east, showing that it has probably been incorporated into the parkland by this time.

19th Century

There is little change to the area on the 1833 John Cator estate map. By the time of the 1860 1st Edition OS map, stands of trees can be seen along the western and eastern boundaries and by 1864, a proposed extension of Downs Road is shown running along the eastern boundary towards Summerhouse Hill Wood, which was never built, whilst the area immediately to the south is proposed at this time for residential development. Industrial development is starting to encroach by the end of the 19th Century. The 1897 25" OS map shows a gravel pit and Ravensbourne Station, both close by the eastern boundary of the character area.

20th Century

The 1935 OS map shows housing against the southern border, and Westgate Lodge in the southwest corner. The area has been subdivided and a few small buildings have been constructed around the edges, probably relating to the recreational use of the area following the acquisition of the estate as a public park. Football was played on the summit of the hill and changing room and toilet facilities were built, which were demolished in 2003.

During the Second World War, the park was used for military purposes, a very common use of parklands at this time. Potatoes were grown within Crab Hill Field and a heavy anti-aircraft artillery site was located within it (HER MLO68311).

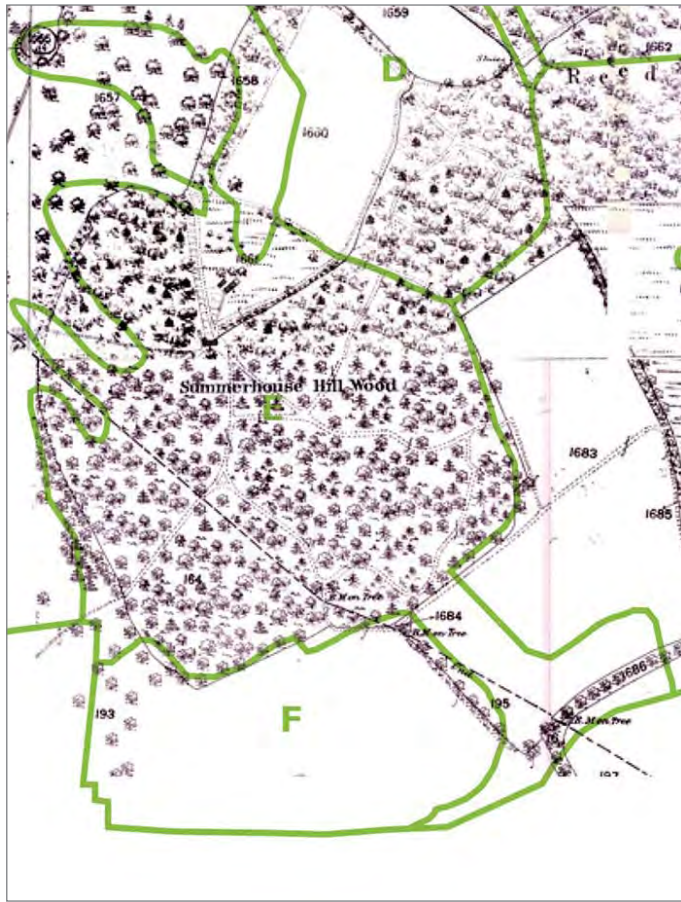


Current Character and Condition

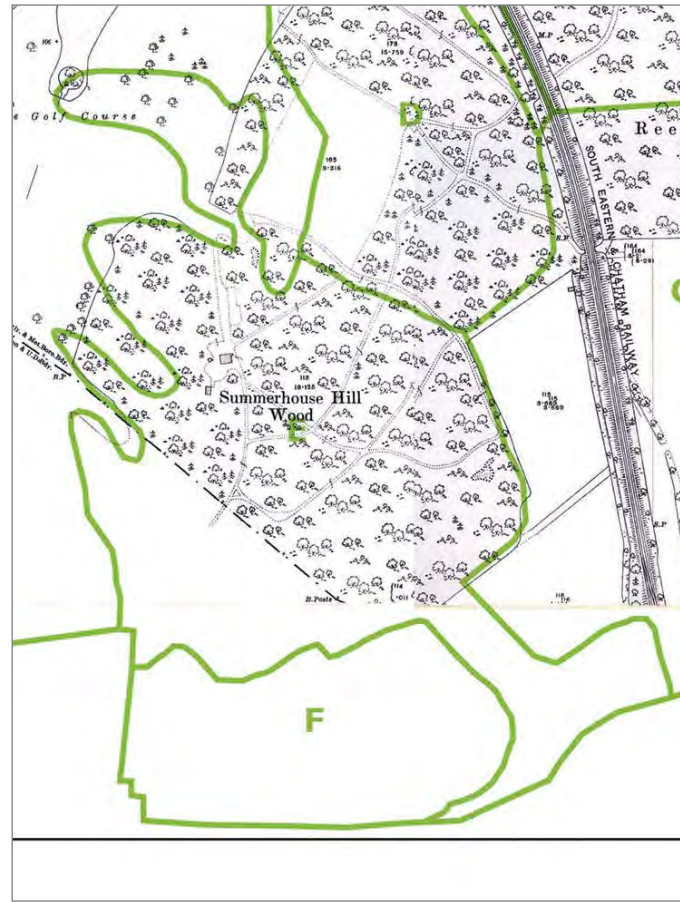
The character area is now being managed as a hay meadow. It is on a substantial hill making it a popular destination for sledging when it snows, from the top of which the tower of St George's Church in Beckenham can be seen. The historic character of this area has been retained to some extent in the boundaries. There is a marked difference between the character of the northern and eastern boundaries and the southern and western boundaries. The former are shared with Summerhouse Hill Wood, and are old boundaries that have retained their historic character, both in terms of boundary morphology and presence of mature trees. The latter are more recently-established boundaries and do not reflect historic origins.

Very ephemeral traces of possible ridge and furrow or terracing are just about discernible in the north of this field, but they are so slight that it is not possible to confirm their interpretation, and they do not show up in LiDAR data of the area, probably because the resolution is too low to show such slight earthworks. It is also likely that potato planting during WWII will have destroyed earlier earthworks in parts of the field.

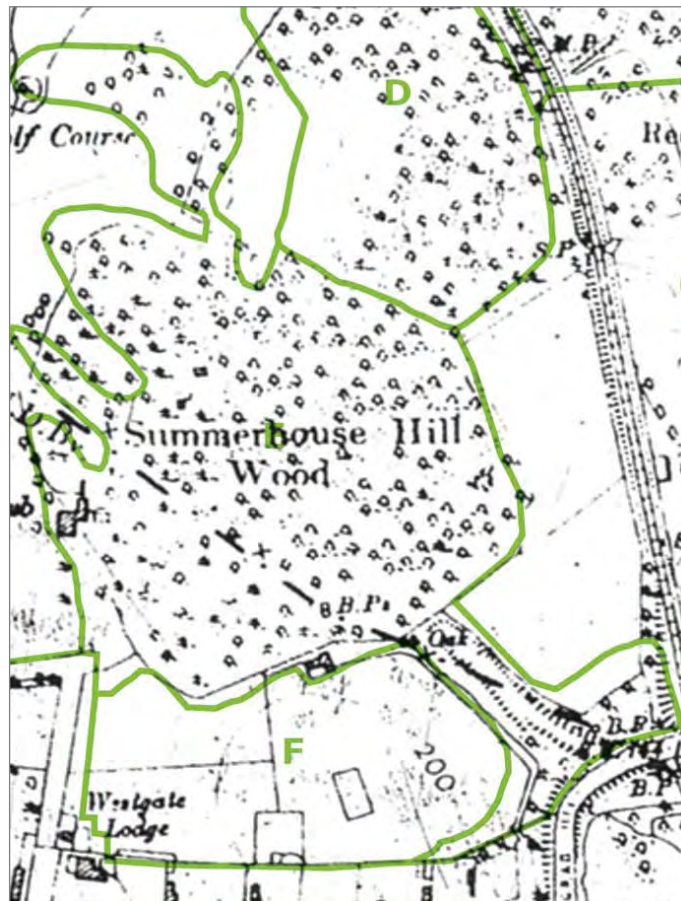
This area is a focus of informal recreational use of the semi-improved neutral grassland with various desire lines for walking criss-crossing the site. A likely wildlife movement corridor and a valuable foraging resource for bats are located in the form of woodland along the western edges and southern boundary over grassland with scattered scrub.



1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan



(a) Area appears to be largely undisturbed for centuries and is currently managed as wildflower meadow.



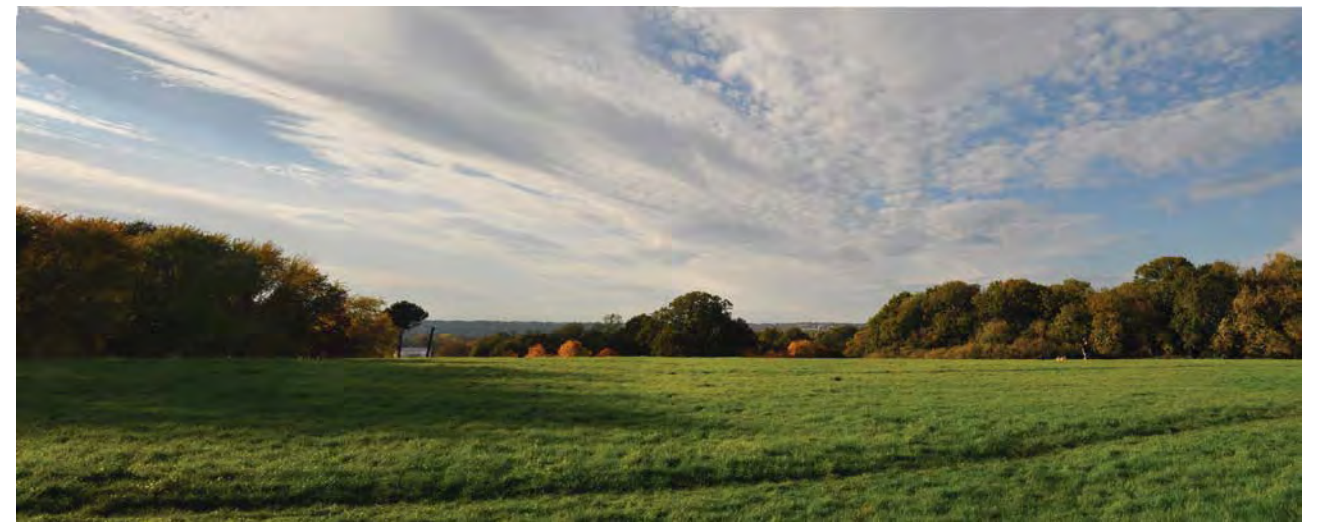
(b) Topography affords views out to the surrounding area including to landmark buildings such as St. George's Church in Bromley.



(c) Dwellings on the southern boundary of the park are partially screened by planting.



(e) Linear, evenly spaced and aged trees along boundary with Summerhouse Wood suggest these features may have been planted.



(f) View to the north from Crab Hill field. The topography allows for long uninterrupted views with the undeveloped ridgeline significantly contributing to the setting of the park.

Significance

The significance of Crab Hill Field lies in its communal and recreational value, and ecological potential.

This area was not part of the historic core parkland area, and there is little parkland character apparent today other than the historic character of the north and west boundaries. There is some evidence for the survival of pre-parkland cultivation features such as ridge and furrow in the area. Further investigation is needed to establish more firmly if coherent earthworks survive, in order to be able to assess their significance. There may be potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains pre-dating the 18th Century, as the area has remained largely undeveloped since that time.

The character area is relatively secluded, with the housing to the south screened by trees. The prominent hilltop offers key views of the undeveloped, wooded ridgeline, thus enhancing the setting of the area, which is now popular for walking and informal recreation.

The existing habitat is neutral semi-improved grassland but the area is being managed as hay meadow and its ecological value is likely to increase over time. The parkland habitats are likely to provide value for birds, bats and invertebrates in particular, with the numerous mature trees possibly supporting bat roost potential (to be confirmed subject to ecological survey).

G: Summerhouse Field

Summerhouse Field located in the southeastern part of the park, bounded on the west by Summerhouse Hill Wood and on the east by the Ravensbourne River. It represents an area on the eastern periphery of the park.

Historic development

Early history

Little is known about the early history of this character area. The Greater London Historic Environment record does not specifically record any sites of archaeological or historic interest within this area that pre-date the 20th Century. However, the area immediately to the east of what is now Summerhouse Hill Wood, currently known as Railway Field, is depicted on the 18th Century map with the parallel strips characteristic of Ridge and Furrow.

18th Century

The 1799 OS drawing depicts the area as a group of fields, with a block of woodland on the east side of the Ravensbourne River. There is no indication that this area forms part of the parkland at this stage.

19th Century

The 1833 John Cator Estate map still shows the same pattern of field boundaries, with a linear belt of trees demarcating the field boundary running northwest-southeast down the middle of the area. Trees from Ash Plantation are beginning to spread from the north.

The area in the north is marked as reed beds on the 1860 1st Edition OS map, and the area to the south is depicted as rough, uncultivated ground. The area of woodland in the east has now extended west of the river. The field to the west of Summerhouse Hill Wood remains open, and retains the same boundary shape as shown on the 1799 map.

By 1879, the London, Chatham & Dover Railway line cuts through the character area, and the southern part has been affected by the construction of a bridge over the railway line and an embankment running northwards from the bridge, reducing the amount of woodland in this area. Part of the northwest-southeast field boundary has been obliterated by the railway line, but otherwise, the boundary pattern of the character area remains largely intact.

20th Century

Recreational sports use dominates the character area in the 20th Century. An athletic ground occupies the area to the east of the railway by 1915, and includes a sports pavilion, although reed beds are still marked to the north, which survive in 1935. During the Second World War a heavy anti-aircraft artillery site was located within the sports ground (HER MLO68310), a characteristic 20th Century use of former parkland.

By 1956, the woodland is gone from the area, several buildings have been constructed in the



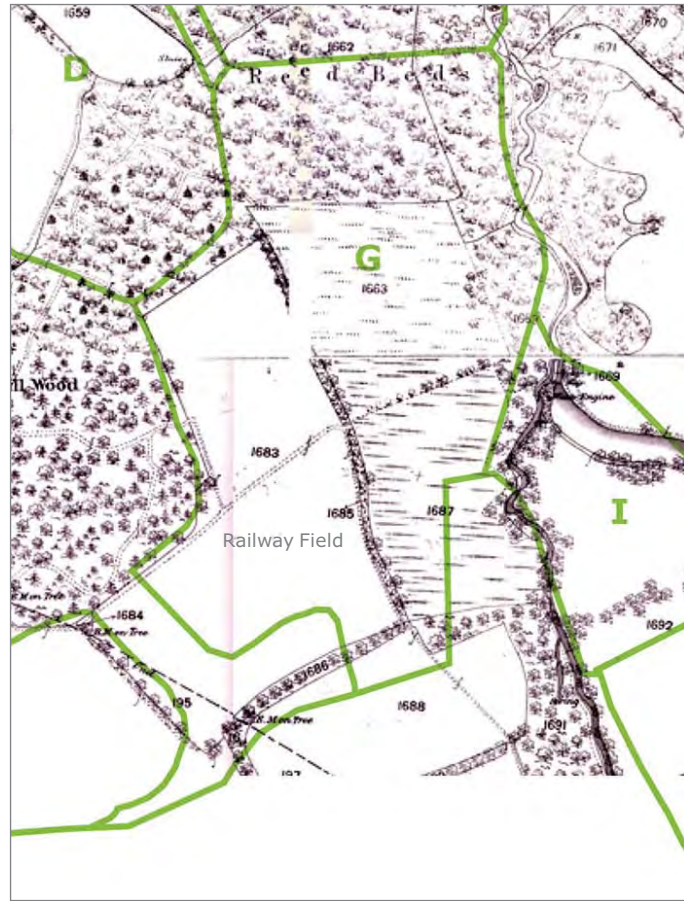
south, and the course of the river has been straightened. The river bed may have been lowered and the surrounding land raised (Management Plan (1996)). The area to the west of the railway is unchanged, although it appears to have been used informally for sports.

Current Character and Condition

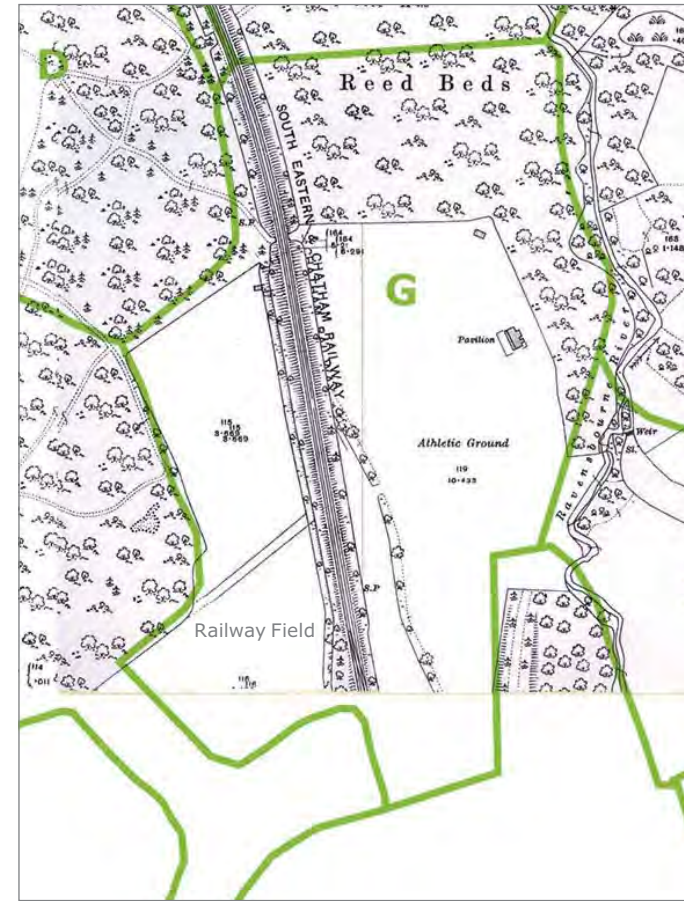
The historic character of this area has been significantly affected by subsequent development and recreational use, including the construction of the railway, the loss of the reed beds and woodland to sports use, and substantial modifications to the river along the eastern boundary, which has been straightened. The east of the area is now a flat field with short mown grass, and little remains of either the pre-emparkment agricultural character or of the woodland plantation character of the 19th Century. The visual impact of the railway has been reduced by screening with trees.

However, although the eastern part of the character area has been significantly affected, traces of the pre-emparkment landscape still persist in the boundary morphology of Railway Field on the west, largely unchanged since at least 1799 apart from slight modifications in the line of the eastern boundary when the railway was constructed. The area also contains traces of ridge and furrow, reflecting pre-emparkment agricultural use of the area.

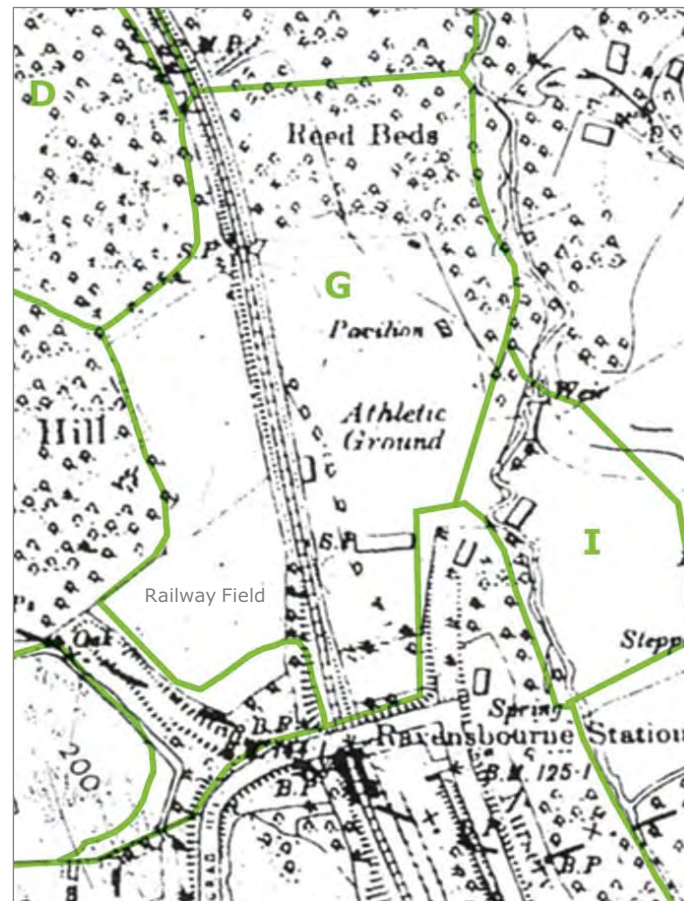
This area largely comprises improved grassland at its centre. The semi-natural habitats which provide opportunities for wildlife are largely restricted to the boundaries, with woodland margins, poor semi-improved grassland to the north-west and below this near the railway line a section of semi-improved acid grassland bordered by scrub. These areas of grassland are vulnerable to overshadowing by scrub and nutrient enrichment therefore regular cutting back of scrub is recommended.



1st Edition OS Plan, 1860



1915 OS Plan



1935 OS Plan



1956 OS Plan



(a) Railway field contains important acid grassland habitat.



(b) Having been largely undisturbed, the area appears to contain remnants of ridge and furrow linking to former agricultural use of this land.



(c) Topography allows views to the east and northeast. Development has largely been kept beneath the height of the wooded ridgeline in the distance. The railway (foreground) has largely been disguised by tree planting.



(d) In contrast to the railway field, the eastern part of the character is flat and formed of short mown grass. A perimeter footpath is popular with dog walkers.



(e) The River Ravensbourne flows along the eastern boundary. This section of the river appears to have been straightened at some point and has steep banks.

Significance

The significance of Summerhouse Field lies in its communal and recreational value, and ecological potential.

There is little parkland character apparent today other than the historic boundary morphology of Railway Field, but there is some evidence for the survival of pre-parkland cultivation features such as ridge and furrow. Further investigation is needed to establish more firmly if coherent earthworks survive, in order to be able to assess their significance. There may be potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains pre-dating the 18th Century, as the area has remained largely undeveloped since that time.

The area was once an ecologically rich environment containing extensive reed beds to the north and hay meadow to the south, and Railway Field now contains important acid grassland habitat.

Key views are afforded to the east and northeast towards the largely undeveloped ridgeline, enhancing the setting of the area, which is now used for informal recreation, and is popular with walkers and dog walkers.

Summary of the significance of the Historic Landscape at Beckenham Place Park

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations, because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

Current national guidance for the assessment of the significance of heritage assets is based on criteria provided by English Heritage (now Historic England) in the document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008). Within this document, significance is weighed by consideration of the potential for the asset to demonstrate the following value criteria:

- **Evidential value** - Deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;
- **Historical value** - Deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative;
- **Aesthetic value** - Deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; and
- **Communal value** - Deriving from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects.

An initial assessment of the relative significance of the principal historic landscape components within the Site has been made based on its contribution to one or more of the heritage values of the park. Each component is assigned an overall significance score based on the following criteria:

1. **A negative or intrusive element** which detracts from the special character, or obscures the historic interest of the property, and whose removal or alteration would enhance the understanding and heritage value of the property.
2. **Is of no intrinsic heritage interest**, and contributes little to the special character of the place, but is of neutral impact. Removal would not result in the loss of heritage interest, but could allow development which would have a positive effect.
3. **Is of low intrinsic heritage interest**, but makes a positive contribution to the overall character and interest of the property, and may be an important element in the understanding of a key phase of development of the property. Retention is generally desirable.
4. **Is of moderate intrinsic heritage interest** but makes a key contribution to the special character and interest of the property. All efforts should be made to retain and enhance these elements.
5. **Is of high intrinsic heritage interest** and makes an essential contribution to the special historic character and heritage value of the property as a whole. Alteration of these elements should generally be avoided except where there is opportunity for enhancement.

Assumptions and limitations

Data used to compile this report consists of secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purposes of this Study. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.

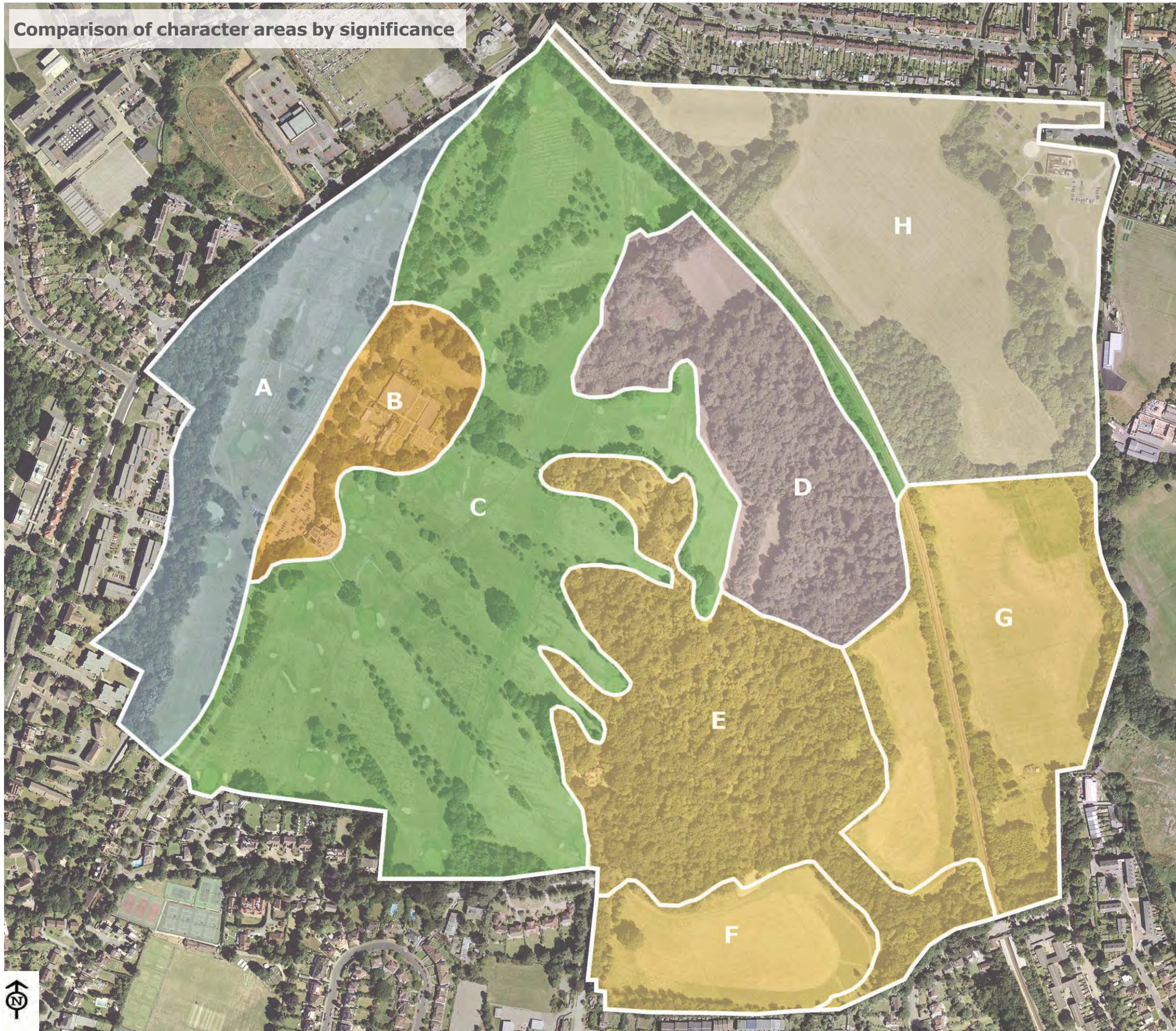
The table below summarises the assessment of the key heritage values and significance of the principal groups of historic landscape components (character areas) identified in this survey. Character areas are identified on the following page.

Name of feature		Heritage values						Comments
		Evidential	Historical	Communal	Aesthetic	Ecological	Overall	
A	West Parkland	4	4	3	1	2	14	Aesthetic qualities are limited due to 20th century additions associated with the golf course.
B	Pleasure Grounds	5	5	4	4	2	20	Aesthetic qualities are limited due to poor condition of built heritage features, overgrown vegetation and inappropriate 20th century additions.
C	East Parkland	4	4	3	1	3	15	Aesthetic qualities are limited due to 20th century additions associated with the golf course.
D	Ash Plantation	3	3	2	2	2	13	The area is significant for its historic value with the footprint of the former lake is evident. Although the area contains areas of woodland, much of this even age and in poor condition.
E	Summerhouse Wood	5	4	3	2	4	19	Ecological, historical and evidential values are moderate and high as surviving ancient woodland.
F	Crab Hill Field	4	4	4	3	4	19	The area is of moderate heritage interest due to it having largely remained undisturbed. It was also the location for WWII prisoner of war camp.
G	Summerhouse Field	4	4	4	3	4	19	The area is of moderate heritage interest due to it having largely remained undisturbed. It was also the location for WWII prisoner of war camp.
H	The Common	2	2	3	2	2	11	Ground disturbance in this area limits the historical and evidential values in this area.



Location of features of notable historic interest

Comparison of character areas by significance



- A: West Parkland
- B: Pleasure Ground
- C: East Parkland
- D: Ash Plantation
- E: Summerhouse Hill Wood
- F: Crab Hill Field
- G: Summerhouse Field
- H: The Common

