Heritage Impact Assessment

Outline Application for Residential Development at Highfield Park, Macclesfield Road, Leek

25th September 2018









Melanie Morris Dip. Arch. Cons, IHBC, MRTPI
Mel Morris Conservation
67 Brookfields Road
Ipstones
Staffordshire ST10 2LY
tel: 01538 266516 email: mel@melmorris.co.uk
www.melmorrisconservation.co.uk

IHBC HESPR Quality assured hespr.ihbc.org.uk

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Melanie Morris Dip. Arch. Cons, IHBC, MRTPI
Mel Morris Conservation
67 Brookfields Road
Ipstones
Staffordshire ST10 2LY
tel: 01538 266516 email: mel@melmorris.co.uk
www.melmorrisconservation.co.uk

Heritage Statement

Site at Highfield Park, Leek

Application for Outline Planning Permission for Two Dwellings

1. Introduction

1.1 Mel Morris Conservation has been appointed to undertake a Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed development of land for residential use at Highfield Park. The application is for outline planning permission and any plans showing houses are indicative only and designed to demonstrate feasibility. The application, however, does include access arrangements and these are fixed.

1.2 This assessment is not a justification for the development and it does not address the balance argument or identify public benefits, but it does provide a clear and dispassionate understanding of the history of the site and the nature of what is special and of heritage value, in terms of both its landscaping and the setting of non-designated heritage assets.

1.3 All heritage assets are assessed in terms of their significance and where there may be an impact on their setting, how that setting contributes to their significance. This heritage assessment follows the latest setting guidance – The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) – produced by Historic England (December 2017).

1.4 The following non-designated heritage assets have been assessed:

- Gate Lodge to Highfield Hall
- Entrance Gateway, gatepiers and railings to Highfield Hall
- The historic parkland, gardens and landscape at Highfield Hall

1.5 All non-designated heritage assets are assessed under paragraph 135 of the NPPF, unless they hold archaeological value of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. Paragraph 135 states:

> *135. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

1.6 The Historic England setting guidance (GPA3 - December 2017) recommends a staged approach to proportionate decision-taking and the following steps:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Sections 2 to 6 of this report follow Steps 1 and 2. Section 7 follows Step 3 and 4.

2. The significance of the non-designated heritage assets

2.1 Gate lodge to Highfield Hall (non-designated heritage asset)

Highfield Lodge was recorded in the 1841 census and a gatelodge was first proposed on this site in 1829. The physical evidence indicates a building dating from the mid to late 19th century, rather than a gatelodge associated with a Georgian villa. A gatelodge was recorded on the c.1829 survey drawing as a proposal. The map evidence suggests that the current building is a larger replacement for the earlier gate lodge and that this was rebuilt further back on the site in order that the driveway could be widened and formalised. This would have taken place in the 1880s. The building has been rendered in a pebbledash finish, which can be seen in early 20th century photographs, and this appears to be contemporary with the late 1890s two-storey bow-fronted extension. It is this bow with its leaded-light windows, which gives the gatelodge its presence and distinctive appearance.

2.2 Entrance Gateway, gatepiers and railings to Highfield Hall

The original entrance gateway was a grand castellated stone affair, with a large central carriage arch, built in the 1880s. This is recorded in photographs of King George V's visit in 1911 (see Figure 1). The archway was demolished in the later 20th century and replaced with a pair of stone gatepiers, topped with small ball finials, but the railings and swept semi-circular entrance were retained. In terms of authenticity, therefore, only the curved sections of wall and the southern sweep of wrought iron railings are original to the 1880s phase. They nevertheless have an aesthetic value as part of the setting of the gatelodge and the only surviving formal entrance to the parkland estate.



Figure 1 – the original arched gateway into Highfield Hall, as depicted ca. 1911 prior to demolition (photograph from Leek Cricket Club website). This reveals a wide entrance drive with small yew or cypress, as illustrated in Figure 4 (1925). This represents a re-landscaping of the earlier avenue depicted in 1879 and 1899.

2.3 The historic parkland, gardens and landscape at Highfield Hall

2.3.1 The parkland estate at Highfield can be described and naturally divides into areas of distinct character. This was not always the case, as the map regression undertaken for this report reveals a manufactured informality and open views when the Georgian house was first established, which has given way over a protracted period to a much more compartmented, enclosed and formal character.

2.3.2 The parkland, which survived until the early 20th century, has now shrunk to such an extent that the Cricket Ground now represents the majority of the parkland estate. Large areas of open parkland and parkland trees have been lost since the 19th century and the focus has shifted from the area to the north, to the land to the south and now to a smaller area largely surrounding the Cricket Ground.

2.3.3 The trees running along the south-western boundary of the Cricket Ground are in general recent introductions, in the life of the parkland estate. The blanket TPO number W1 affects an area of tree planting which appears to have been introduced in conjunction with the highway works to improve visibility along Macclesfield Road. Approximately 2 metres of boundary have been removed and the ground cut back and re-graded to increase the area of verge in conjunction with improved visibility. The original 'sunk fence' of 1847 has been removed and replaced, further back, with a post and rail fence. There is one very large horse chestnut tree (T1), which may be a survivor from the late 19th century planting, identifiable on the 1:2500 OS map, and at the foot of this is a memorial tablet to a former young cricketer. This tree is unaffected by the proposed new access drive.

2.3.4 Planting lining the main formal access, in two swathes identified as TPO G1 and G2, comprise a large number of holly, yew and Cypress with other evergreen shrubs. Shrubs and underplanting, which are important elements of the landscaping, are not named in the TPO. This formal drive was altered during its life from a short, meandering picturesque drive with open views, from 1829, to a straight avenue leading directly to the front entrance, by 1880.

2.3.5 The garden now comprises a number of separate compartments although this was not the original design intention. The character areas are:

- Entrance drive – of formal character, now lined by dense shrubberies
- Upper Lawn to former Highfield Hall with serpentine planting
- The cricket ground and Park,
- The formal Pleasure Grounds to the east of the cricket pavilion
- The walled garden
- The outlying compartments of Home Farm
- 250-metres of wrought-iron hooped estate fencing to Macclesfield Road, the extended parkland of c.1829
- 20th century housing compartments and paddock lying between the Coachhouse and Macclesfield Road
- Ancillary 19th century estate buildings lying along the private service drive

2.3.6 The shrubbery created during the 20th century along the entrance drive was designed to screen views of the Hall and its ancillary buildings, to give the impression of

privacy and a high status house and estate. Whilst the original house was not visible from this driveway, the later extension of the Hall in the 1880s brought it firmly into view at then end of the formal entrance, as can be seen in the early 20th century images from the gate lodge entrance (see Figure 1).

3. Description of the Application Site

3.1 The site straddles two areas that fell within the former Highfield Hall Estate; one area was a former orchard, as depicted on the 1879 OS map, and the other was part of a small paddock, which was, when the park was extended in 1827-29, part of a larger field and described in 1847 as 'Park'. The orchard was a later alteration of the mid-late 19th century and was not part of the original design for 'High Field' (the Georgian villa), as a long carriage drive swept around this part of the gardens – earthworks for this carriage drive survive in the raised section of ground within the eastern edge of the paddock. The western part of the application site was developed into the site of the existing house, Highfield, by 1966, whilst the orchard was left unaltered. However, only one apple tree of any age survives from the former orchard (see photo 1). Access to Highfield is currently from a secondary private access drive, which was developed as a service entrance and access to the Home Farm in the mid 19th century. Both garden segments lie to the north-west of the formal entrance drive to Highfield Hall and are screened from the entrance drive by a dense shrubbery comprising mixed woodland of beech, sycamore, ash and whitebeam and large overgrown shrubs, including hybrid rhododendron, holly, yew, Portuguese laurel, Sawara and Lawson cypress. Whilst it is not possible to date this planting with accuracy, the photographic and plan evidence indicates that this planting was introduced after the formal visit of King George and Queen Mary, in 1911, so is now approximately 100 years old.



Photo 1
The application site with an apple tree from the former orchard, looking across to Highfield. The site forms a definite compartment with the 20th century houses

3.2 To the south of the main entrance drive lies the cricket ground, established from 1866, and to the immediate north of the application site is the secondary service drive separated from the field by a row of copper Beech. A stand of Scots Pine in the garden of Highfield form a prominent clump.

3.3 The application site is separated from the garden of Highfield Lodge by a dense shrubbery, of similar character. The shrubberies along the boundary with the Cricket

Ground and the application site both contain large numbers of hollies. These were deliberately planted to provide an evergreen setting, with flowing serpentine lines along the edge with the upper lawn to the former house. The hollies which follow the boundary of the application site, however, are leggy and have lost much of their original low screening effect.



Photo 2 – the wide formal drive was replanted several times. The existing lush planting, incorporating exotics such as hybrid rhododendron seen here in flower, is 20th century and screens the application site from views.

4. Historic Development and Contribution of Setting to Significance

4.1 A brief history of Highfield Hall is set out in the Victoria County History and in "The Lost Houses of North Staffordshire", of 2006.

4.2 Detailed plans in the Stafford Record Office reveal how the estate and the landscaped park and gardens developed and the design intentions of the different owners.

4.3 In 1794 Richard Badnall (VCH - Bednall / Badnall family papers), a Leek silk dyer, was recorded as keeping hounds for the Leek Hunt. Richard Badnall established "High Field", a Georgian villa, on land bought in 1801 by his father, Joseph, on the edge of the 1766 turnpike road and the house was probably erected ca.1810. However, Richard Badnall became bankrupt in 1827 and the estate was put up for sale on 2nd August of that year. It was bought by Matthew Gaunt.

4.4 The first detailed drawing of the estate was drawn by surveyor Charles Heaton in 1827 (D1176/A/11/10), probably as part of the sale, and shows the original park and adjoining fields to the north, with the alignment of the turnpike of 1766. The field boundary to the north is marked as a 'sunk fence' revealing a visual connection between

the house, the park and the wider dramatic landscape towards 'Gun', in the Georgian landscape tradition[1]. To the north of the park were agricultural fields owned by the estate, over which Richard Badnall could survey his domain. Shelter belts are illustrated around the southern and eastern perimeter of the park, alongside land which was in separate private ownership, whilst there were open views to the west along the turnpike road, revealing large, managed public views of the house.

4.5 A sequence of plans dating from 1827 to 1829 show how Matthew Gaunt amalgamated and enlarged the estate and created a much larger parkland. In conjunction with, or following, the re-alignment of the turnpike, a larger slice of agricultural land was acquired by Matthew Gaunt and was incorporated into the extended Park (see Figure 6 – D1176/A/11/7). The old and new road are clearly indicated on this series of survey plans.

4.6 The private estate and the house and parkland which Richard Badnall and Matthew Gaunt developed are recorded in a number of plans dated 1827 to 1847 and on the 1837 first edition OS map (see Figures 3-9). The 1827 sale brochure described Highfield House as a 'spacious family residence with coach house, stables, outbuildings, lawn, garden, shrubberies, pleasure ground and several enclosures of meadow and arable land'. The house, as built, was recorded on the 1879 OS map before alterations, and was also recorded in photographs. Described in the sale particulars as red brick, it was a small villa, of five bays, with a central triangular pediment to the south-west breakfront and a double height central bow frontage to the east front, with three full-length sash windows to the bow, both frontages overlooking lawns. Its stripped down classical charm is typical of buildings of c1810. Two photographs of the entrance front illustrated in "The Lost Houses" show the original house, with its classical two-storey villa form, hipped roofs and central triangular pediment and five-bay frontage. The 'ha-ha' depicted in these photographs, which separated the lawn from the lower cricket ground (now removed) followed the alignment of the original turnpike road.

4.7 The estate was bought by Matthew Gaunt and also allegedly his mother, Sarah Fowler, and brother Josiah Gaunt (both Matthew and Josiah were living on independent means at Horton by 1861). All three were recorded in residence in the 1841 Census at "Highfield House" and the plans in the Stafford Record Office produced for Matthew Gaunt reveal how he amalgamated several of the outlying fields on land belonging to 'Mrs Emerson' in 1829 to create a much larger park to the south (figures 6-8).

4.8 In 1847 a plan of the estate and park was produced (SRO D1176/A/11/17). This reveals the picturesque character of the 72-acre estate, with its flowing lines, clumping of trees, long views across the landscape and sunk fences enabling views from the hall outwards to the wider landscape. This plan represents Matthew Gaunt's vision for the estate. The trees along the carriage drive had been retained but the hedges had been replaced with sunk fences (what we today we might think of as a 'ha-ha'). These

[1] Garden designers, such as Stephen Switzer, sought to reconnect the country house with its wider landscape from which it had been generally removed by Baroque geometry. His highly influential Ichnographia Rustica of 1718 noted:
When we consider the Elevation of a well-contrive'd Seat it requires, that everything appears tall, stately and bold …It also directs, that the adjacent Country be laid open to view, and that the Eye should not be bounded with high Walls, Woods misplace'd, and several Observations, that one sees in too many Places, by which the Eye is as it were imprisoned, and the Feet fetter'd in the midst of the extensive Charms of Nature, and the voluminous Tracts of a pleasant Country

were often ditches although in the case of the revetment wall to the north of the application site it was clearly a 'ha-ha'. The ambitious nature of the plans are clear from the map annotations which explain that the area occupied by the present cricket ground and the area now occupied by the 20th century houses, Lowfield and Highfield, is all "The Park' whilst the former park is described as East, South and West Lawn, all of which were separated from the wider parkland by sunk fences. The reason for retaining the former turnpike as a private carriage drive becomes clear on this map, that it was designed so that a visitor and the owner could see and enjoy as much of his estate as possible, a characteristic of the late Georgian landscaped park.

4.9 The 1851 census records Solomon Tredwell (c1826-1859, a 28-year old railway 'Contractor') in residence, who was presumably building the North Staffordshire Railway (1847-50). His wife Alice was from Leek and they had five servants living at High Field, at which time it may have been let. In 1859 the Tredwells moved to India where they won the contract to lay the Bhor Ghat section of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. Within a month of arriving in India, Solomon had died from cholera and his wife Alice went on to manage the construction of the line.

4.10 By 1861 the Hall was uninhabited and in 1866 it was leased by a Committee of philanthropic Leek individuals for recreational purposes. Pursuit of cricket was a gentlemanly pursuit and it is not unusual to find estates incorporating a cricket pitch, where the owner could engage and enjoy watching a large number of people participating in the sport. Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire is a good example where Elvaston Cricket Club continues to maintain a close relationship with the estate, with access through the estate grounds to the cricket pitch which lies immediately adjoining the gardens. In this instance the land was donated (and leased) by the owner and the club was established on this site in 1866. Free use of land for a cricket ground had been given by John Davenport from 1852 at Beggars Lane but the Leek club moved to Highfield Park in 1866.

4.11 In May 1867 an announcement was made to the local press regarding Highfield Park, Leek, that:

> *"The Committee of Management would briefly call the inhabitants of Leek and the Vicinity to the following facts connected with the above Grounds, viz: - That the House and Grounds have been taken on a Lease for Seven Years, for the sole purpose of forming a Recreation Ground for those who cannot afford to provide one for themselves; a desideratum that is universally acknowledged in all Manufacturing Towns. That in doing so the Committee have no pecuniary object in view, ….. That the Committee are desirous of co-operating with the Gentry, Manufacturers and Tradesmen, in carrying out the object in view, - in providing innocent recreation and amusement for the people, in such manner, and at such periods as may receive the approval and hearty support of all classes of the community;…. That in the opinion of the Committee it is desirable and absolutely necessary, that amusement and recreation should be provided for the humble toilers of their Town, who as yet have to go to other localities during their brief Holidays for a little enjoyment… It is proposed to open the House and Grounds daily (Sundays excepted) at a charge of One Penny each…. Comfortable Private Rooms will be provided daily…..and the opportunity of enjoying themselves with Bowling, Croquet, Swings, Archery, Dancing, & c, &c. Entrance to the Grounds at the Lodge. No person allowed on the Grounds or at the House later than ten o'Clock in the Evening."*

4.12 The aspirations for the public park were very high, although shortlived. In 1867 horse racing was recorded at the newly opened Highfield Park (Staffordshire Advertiser,

26 October 1867). Although established for philanthropic purposes, the lease was surrendered in 1870 and the public use of Highfield Park was afterwards restricted, although Leek Town Football Club also played at Highfield Park on the lower ground close to the Dyeworks in 1892, only moving to its present grounds in the 1940s.

4.13 The cricket ground is first illustrated on the 1879 OS map series. However, a decision in 1874 to return to Beggars Lane led to a dispute and a split and a new club called Leek Highfield was formed by those who wanted to remain on this side of Leek. The two clubs were only reunited in 1919 as Leek Cricket Club, using the Highfield ground for matches and that at Beggars Lane for practice (T. Tipper 80 Years of Leek Cricket 1844-1924.)

4.14 Later Owners

In 1870 the estate was bought by Charles Glover and his descendant E. Cliffe Glover sold it in 1885 to Arthur Nicholson. It appears that it was the Glover family who altered the grounds to formalise and straighten the entrance drive and rebuild the gatelodge. By 1889 Arthur Nicholson had added a large wing to the house in a neo-Jacobean style and changed the sash windows to leaded transoms to unify the appearance. The extensions in a neo-Baroque style more than doubled the size of the original house. There was also a very large and extensive Winter Garden and link glasshouses, later replaced with a sun loggia.

4.15 The 1939 Sale of the Highfield Hall Estate reveals that the estate had doubled in size to 364 acres. The details include 'Lowfields', a detached cottage, and the land following the whole of the Macclesfield Road frontage extending from Leek as far as the northern end of the estate, opposite Foker, is described as eligible for "Building Sites'.

5. Map Regression

5.1 The earliest plan of "High Field" dates from 1827. It reveals that the Georgian house was central to its small parkland. The 1827 plan shows the turnpike road still lying close to High Field (D1176/A/11/10).[2] The old alignment of the 1766 turnpike road is also recorded on Yates County map of 1775 (Figure 2). However, the desire for greater privacy may have prompted the realignment of the turnpike road as it appears to coincide with the sale of the estate to Matthew Gaunt in 1827. The old 1766 road was then retained as a secondary private carriage drive, obliquely approaching the house via two long entrance drives; the snaking avenue of trees were not grubbed out but can still be seen on the 1879 map, approaching the house across the fields (see map annotations in map 1 and map 2). A small pond in the northern corner of the original park is common to both the 1837 1-inch OS and the 1879 OS. The alignment of part of the 1766 turnpike survives in a field boundary to the north which contains a stone revetment, topped with a hedge, described as a 'sunk fence' in 1829. The northern field boundary was a 'sunk fence', creating a seamless relationship with the landscape views to the north, and this boundary alignment also survives.

5.2 The land which now forms the cricket pitch was therefore only incorporated into the park ca. 1827-29; at that time it was 'seen' within an open, semi-parkland

[2] VCH suggest the turnpike was moved in 1820 - (S.R.O., D. 706/4, p. 14; D. 1176/A/11/11; Sandon Rd. acct. bk. 1821-69, 13 Dec. 1828 and later accts. to 4 May 1830 (in possession of Mr. R. Stones of Malpas, Ches., 1994).

pastoral landscape; the enclosed parkland we see now from the Macclesfield Road was developed as a predominantly 20th century phase of planting. Hooped wrought-iron railings from the 1829 phase of the parkland still survive along the Macclesfield Road, for approximately 250-metres, indicating the extent of the post 1827 'estate' (see Photos 3 & 4). There are also the remains of parkland trees quite clearly depicted on the 1:2500 scale map of 1879 in the field to the north-west of the Hall, revealing its former extent to the north-west (see overlay). One large lime survives in the field to the west with others to the east. While the northern landscape clearly now records an agricultural use, the sections of ornamental iron fence, which survive along the northern edge of the pavement, and parkland trees, reveal a conscious landscape composition - the ornamental railings and parkland trees, and glimpsed views of the house to the south of the gatelodge, suggests an appreciation of the landscape setting of "High Field" as an amenity to be enjoyed in the act of travelling alongside it.





Photos 3 & 4 – the wrought iron hooped Estate railings along Macclesfield Road are illustrated on the 1847 plan of the estate, as extended by Matthew Gaunt in 1827-29.

5.3 The 6-inch map of 1888 (Figure 14) clearly shows that the parkland had moved to the south and west side of the Hall, represented by largely darker shaded areas (an OS map notation for parkland) and that the former parkland to the north-west was by this time under cultivation or pasture, certainly farmed, representing a complete shift in emphasis, landscape character and planting. Looking closely at the map evidence we can see several transitions in character as the parkland estate has evolved, probably representing significant changes in ownership and focus. These follow fashions and changes to landscape gardening during the 19th and early 20th centuries, a shift towards Leek, so that there is a greater interaction between Highfield Hall and the town, and a greater increase in public access to the park, a move away from the picturesque to more formal gardening and from more native trees to more exotic specimens and mixed planting. The 6-inch 1879 OS also reveals an informal unfenced drive leading across the western field, north of the current access drive. This indicates an open landscape (it is identified as The Park' on the 1847 plan), and a desire to maintain a pastoral openness in views from the carriage drive and the turnpike road.

5.4 The house was being called Highfield Hall by 1862. The gatelodge which now sits at the end of the entrance drive was built during a second phase of development, after the realignment of the turnpike road, and appears to be rebuilt further back from the driveway, with a further two-storey 'bow' frontage added to the south side of the lodge in the 1890s. The pair of cottages, known as Bumble Bee Cottage and Highfield

Cottage, are also contemporary with the gate lodge and were built within the former parkland to the north of the original hall and do not appear on the 1847 plan, indicating a change in character and demotion of this area to that of a service entrance. This reflects the increased separation of servants and staff from the owner from the mid 19th century.

5.5 The Georgian house named "High Field" illustrated in Figure 5, was approached obliquely via a semi-circular carriage drive. This kind of meandering arrangement, with a long approach to a Georgian house, is very typical of the first decades of the 19th century; for an equivalent example of a private carriage drive of this date, which still survives, the closest example is Cliffe Park of c.1818 at the northern end of Rudyard which has the same looping arrangement lined with trees to provide shade. As a new house, the common fashion c. 1810 was to plant perimeter belts, with carefully managed views of the main house from the public highway, maintaining the public at a respectable distance.

5.6 The ha-ha (now missing) separated the 1766 turnpike road from the main lawn and this predated the construction of the cricket pitch. Figure 12 (1925) shows mixed planting along the edge of the main entrance drive from Macclesfield Road, with a row of conifers to the inside and smaller deciduous trees to the outside. This formal arrangement is visible in photographs of the hall from the entrance drive, which reveal small conical cypresses or yew spaced evenly along the drive. This formality introduced in the early 20th century has been largely displaced by the more florid character experienced today - lack of maintenance has resulted in long trunks to holly trees and cypress and a more open understorey than first envisaged.

5.7 By 1879 the present access drive had been formalised as an avenue of single trees, no longer evident, with a shrubbery with serpentine edge to the northern edge of the upper lawn, which survives largely dominated by holly with clumps of Lawson Cypress.

5.8 By 1970 Highfield Hall had been part demolished and the original house had become the clubhouse, as depicted on the 1:2500 scale 1970 Ordnance Survey map[3].

[3] Porter and Walton (The Lost Houses of North Staffordshire) state that the house was demolished in c.1940, but the map evidence suggests that only the later part of the house was demolished.

MAPS & PLANS

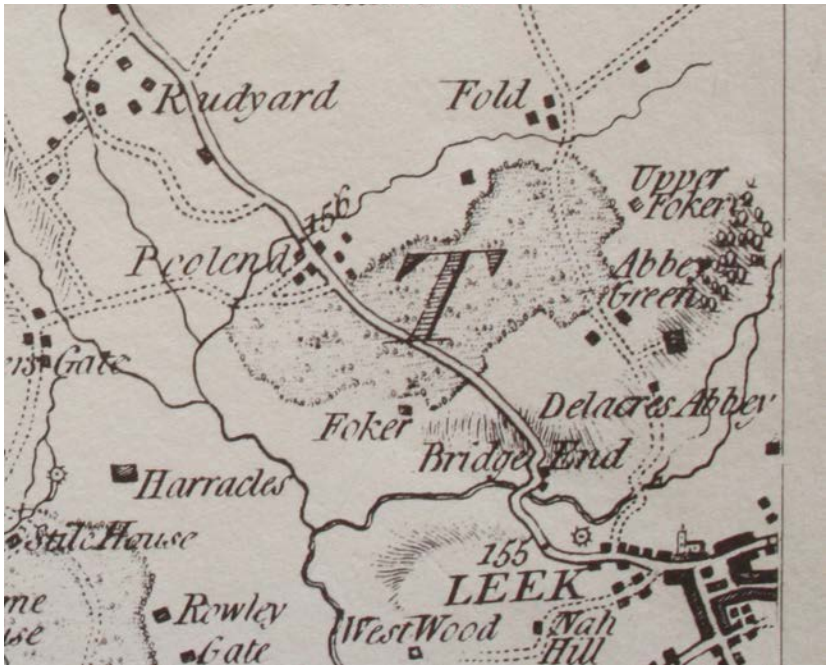


Figure 2 - The 1775 Yates map of the area shows the alignment of the 1766 turnpike road running through Bridge End, later moved in 1829, as depicted on the 1837 1-inch OS and estate plan of 1829



Figure 3 - 1837 1-inch OS (surveyor's copy by Henry Stevens – British Library). The newly aligned turnpike has given High Field a separate carriage drive and greater privacy

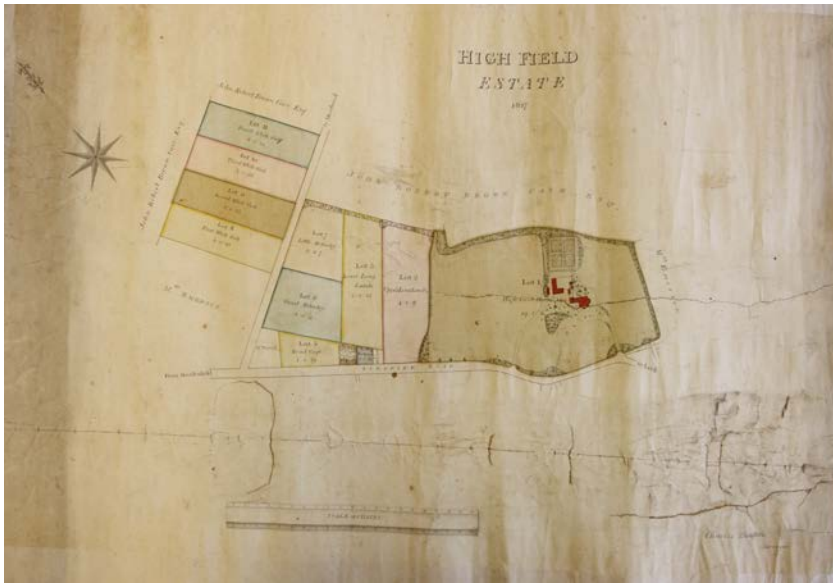


Figure 4 – the earliest recorded detailed plan of High Field, dated 1827, shows the Hall central to its small park and its looped carriage drive, alongside the 1766 Turnpike Road (D1176/A/11/10)

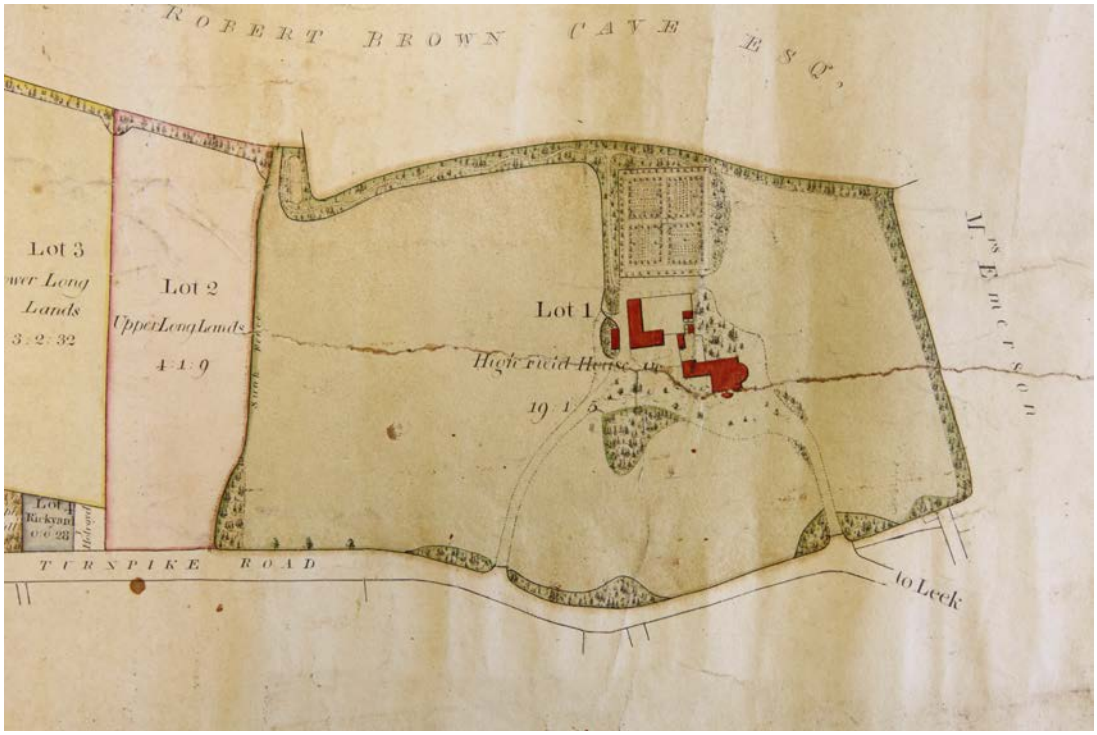


Figure 5 – detail of Figure 4, showing the layout of the perimeter plantations to the east and south and the openness, clumps and managed views of the House from the 1766 road

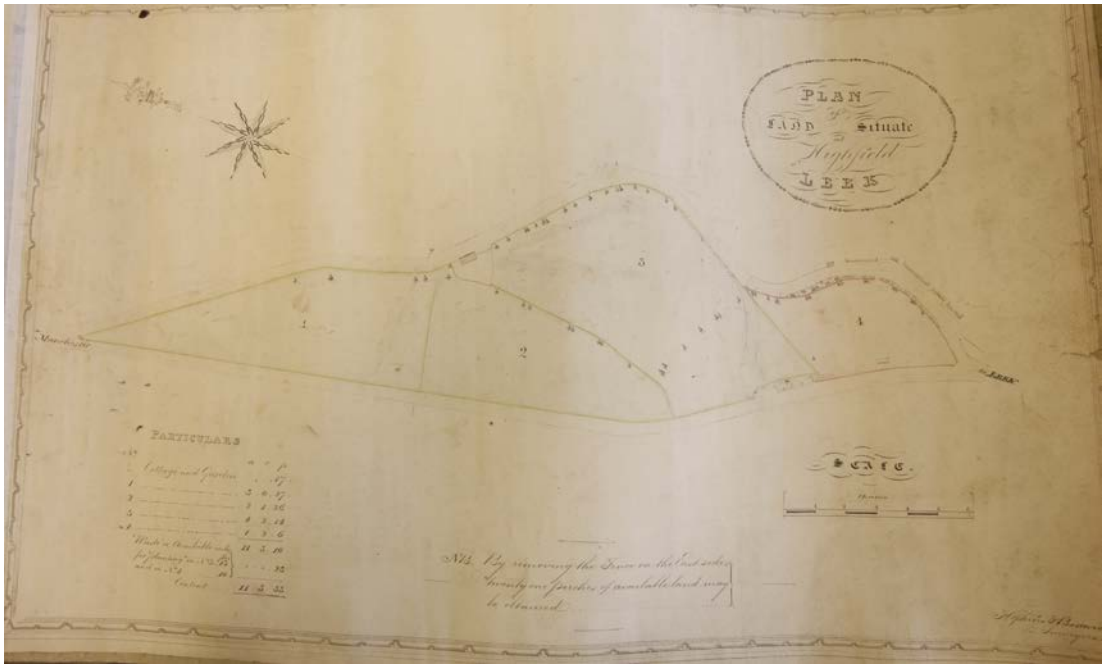


Figure 6 – an undated plan of ca. 1829 shows the area being acquired by Matthew Gaunt for the Highfield Estate lying between the old and new turnpike road (D1176/A/11/7)

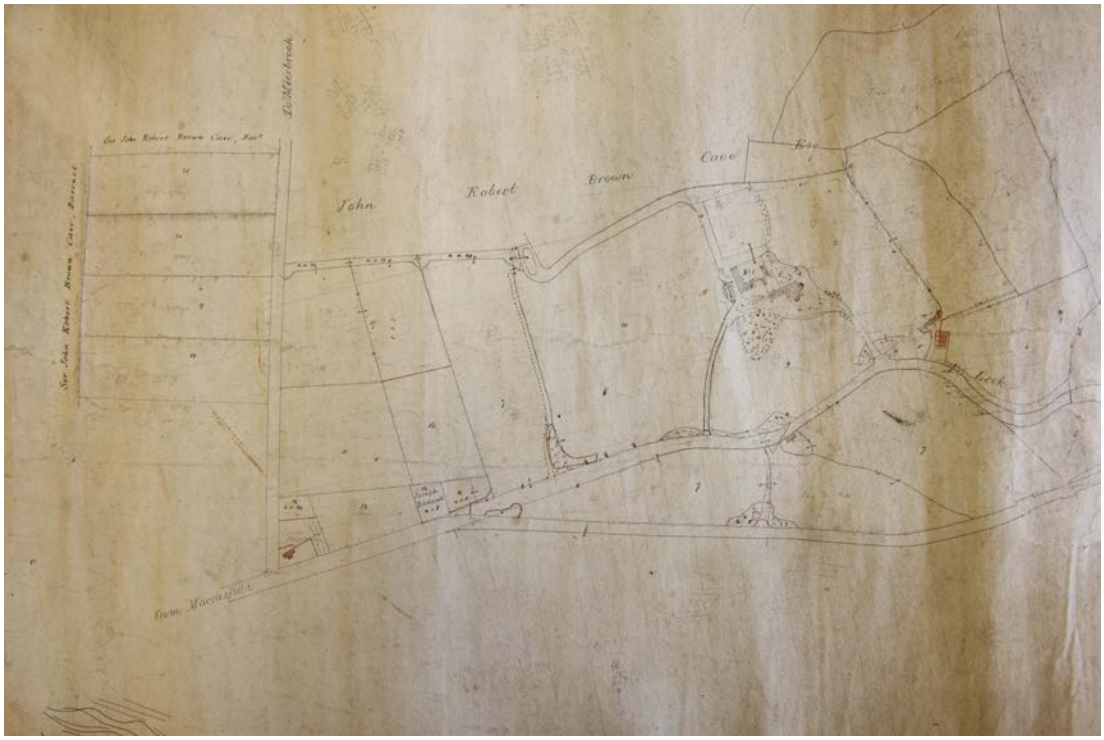


Figure 7 – this survey drawing showing the amalgamated land parcels is an early sketch proposal layout for Matthew Gaunt's extended parkland (D1176/A/11/10 i)

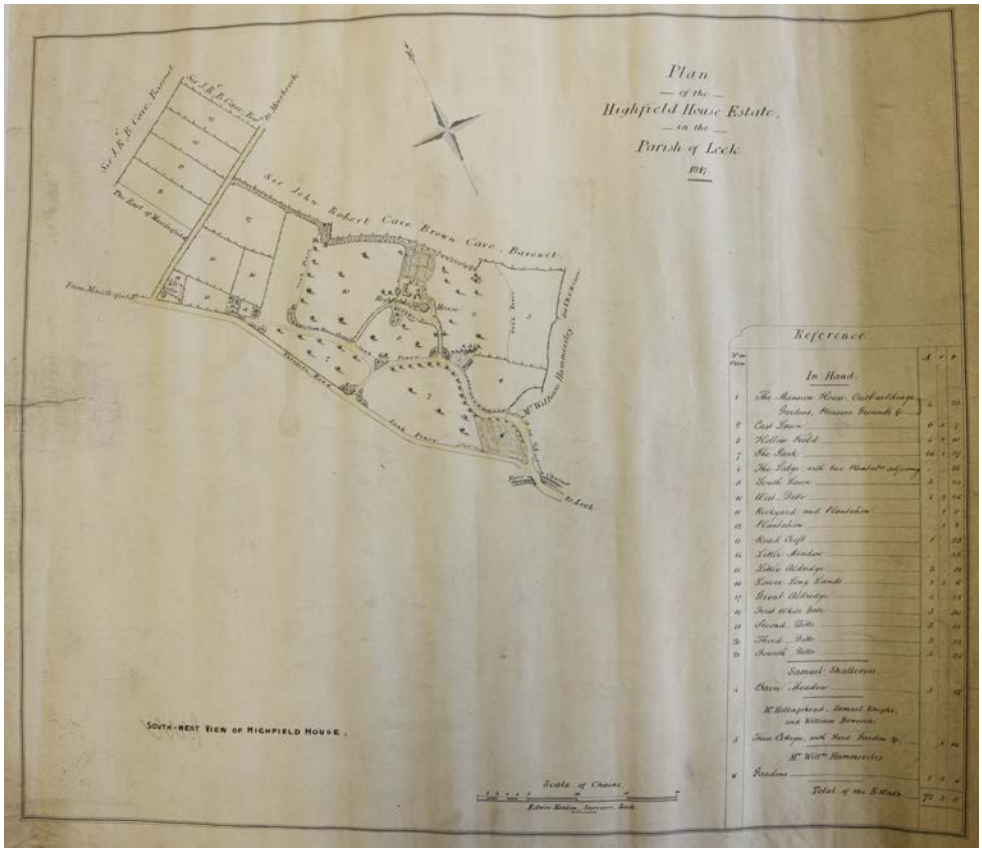


Figure 8 – 1847 plan of the Highfield House Estate, showing Matthew Gaunt's realised plans for the park (D1176/A/11/17)

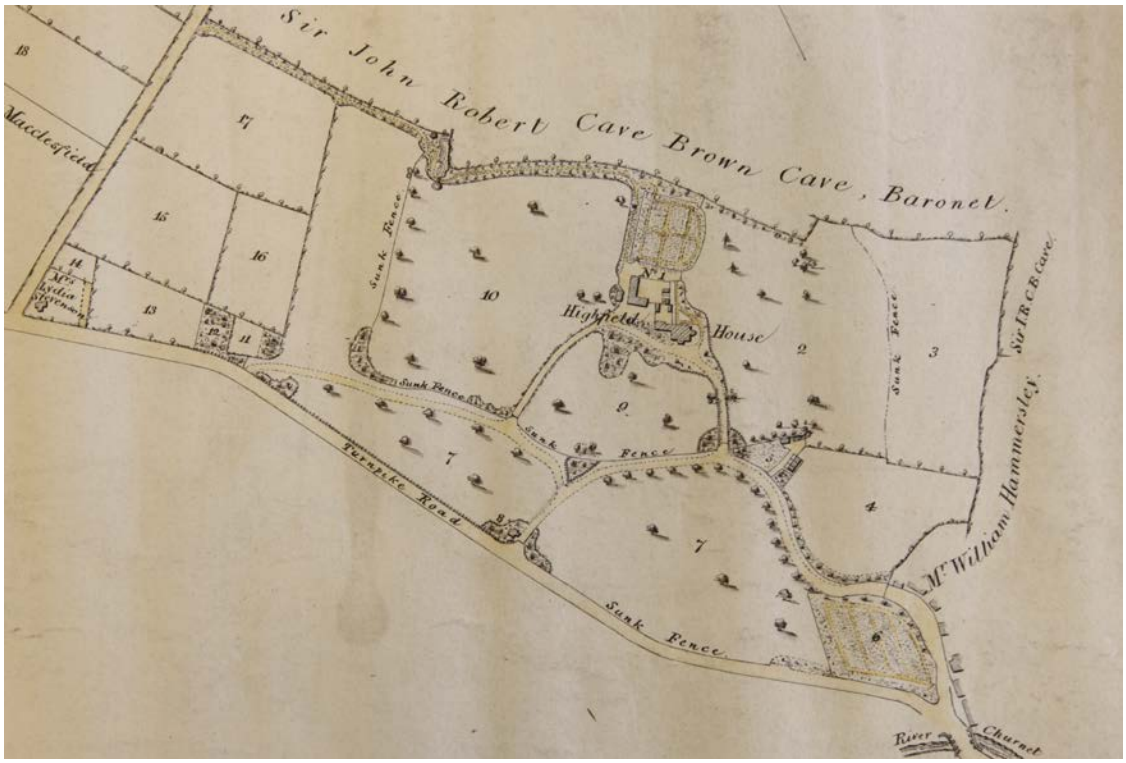


Figure 9 – detail of Figure 8 showing the landscaping in detail, with clumping of trees to manage views of the house. Estate Railings along Macclesfield Road are clearly illustrated and a 'sunk fence' is introduced in a number of places, including the section of Park running to the west of the current cricket ground.

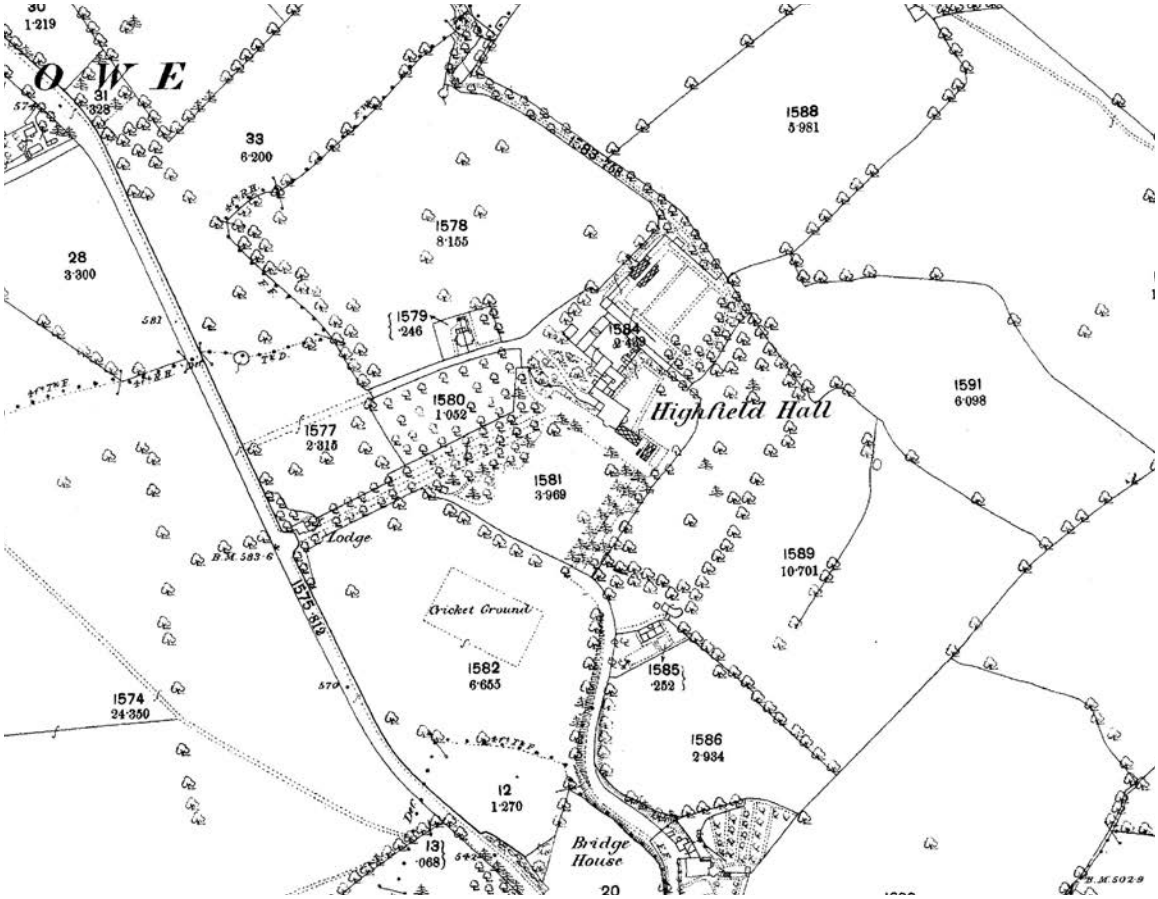


Figure 10 - 1879 Ordnance Survey map (1:2500 scale). The tree-lined entrance drive is shown as a young avenue, and on a different alignment from that illustrated in 1847.

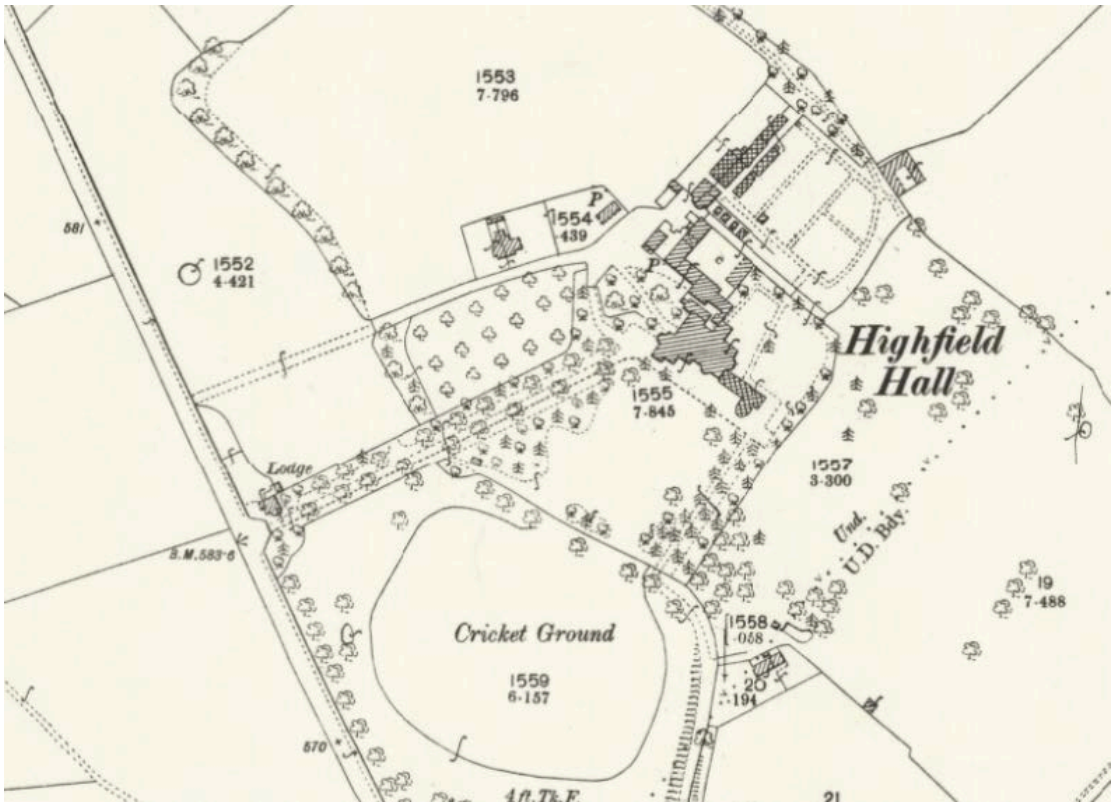


Figure 11 - 1899 Ordnance Survey Map (1:2500 scale). The driveway was widened and the gatelodge rebuilt and set further back to correspond with this widening.

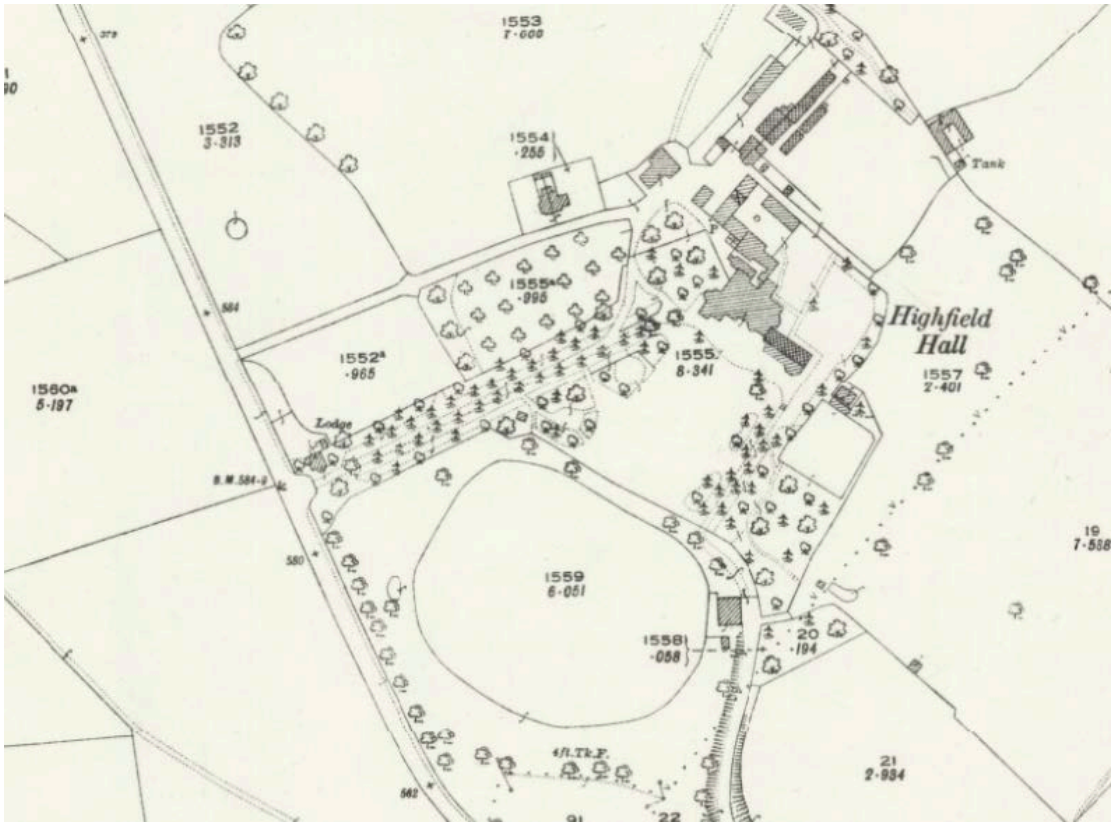


Figure 12 – 1925 Ordnance Survey (1:2500 scale). This is the first map to depict a Bowling Green or Croquet Lawn to the south-east of the Hall and a new cricket pavilion. The deciduous avenue to the drive is replaced with conifers



Figure 13 – 1941 Ordnance Survey (1:2500 scale)

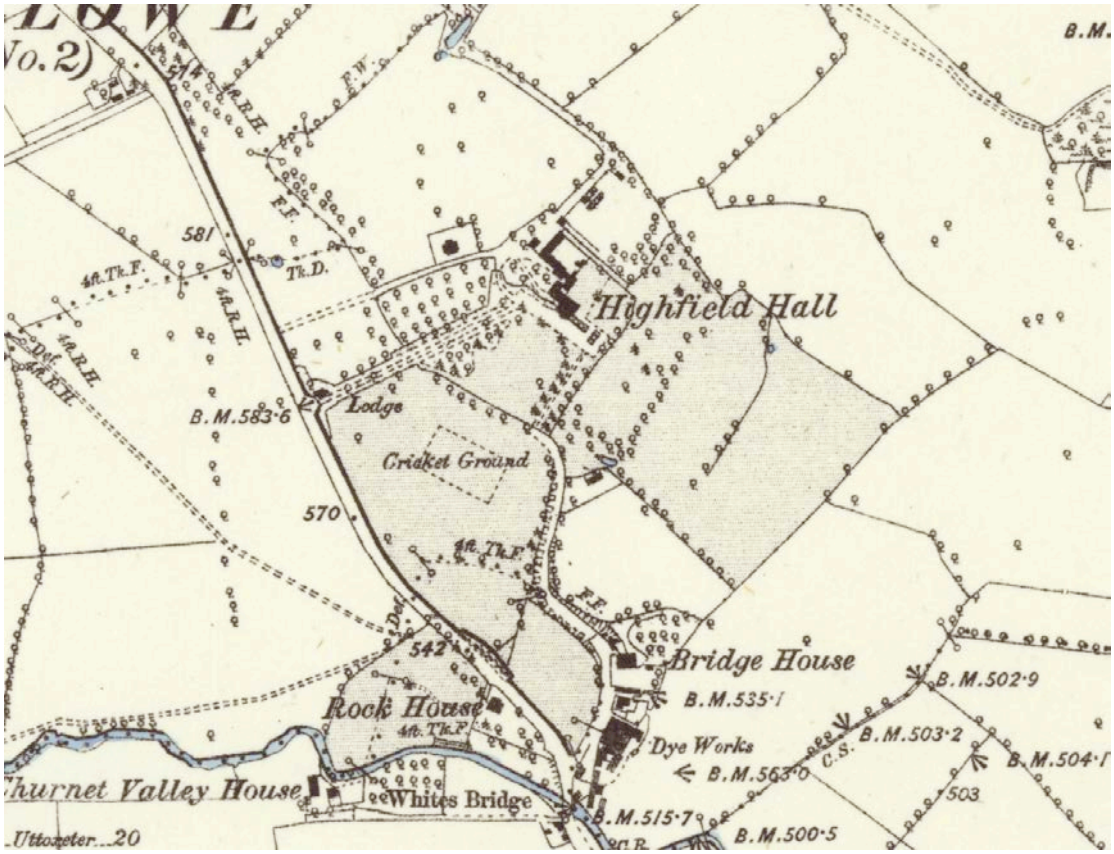


Figure 14 – 1888 Ordnance Survey (6-inch)



Figure 15 - 1925 Ordnance Survey (6-inch)



Figure 16 - Aerial Photograph dating from pre 1970 (reproduced from Leek Cricket Club website). The lack of fence or hedgeline to the Home Farm access drive suggests a date between 1910 and 1920 for this photograph, after which a fence was introduced. There are clear gaps in the tree clumps along the Macclesfield Road and the drive is sparsely planted.

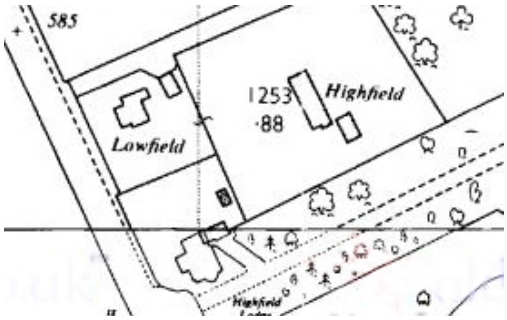
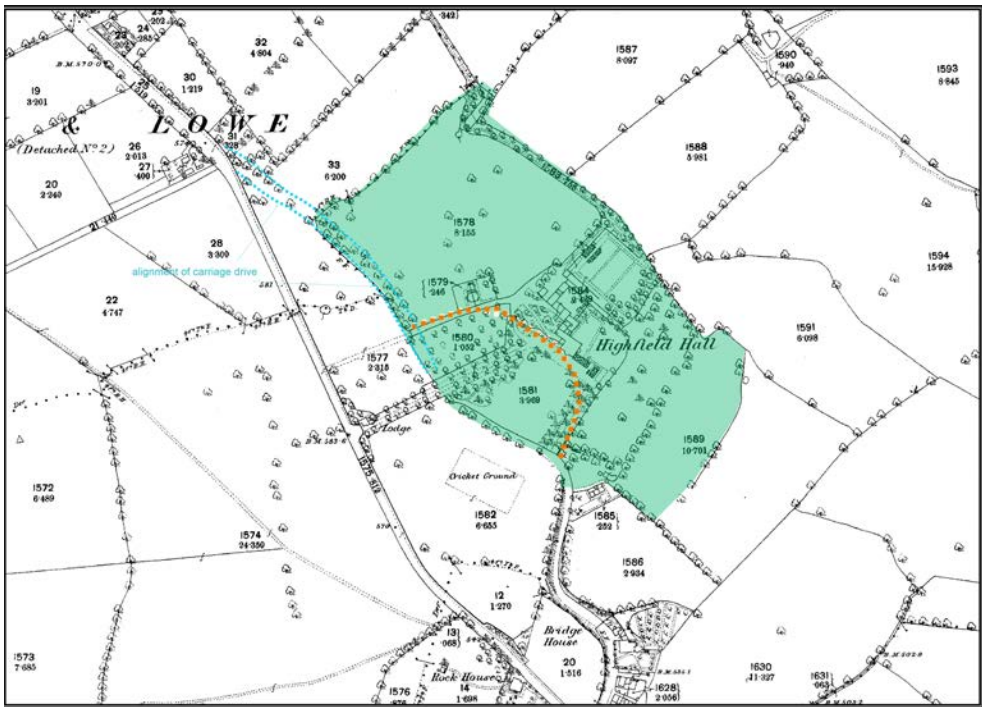


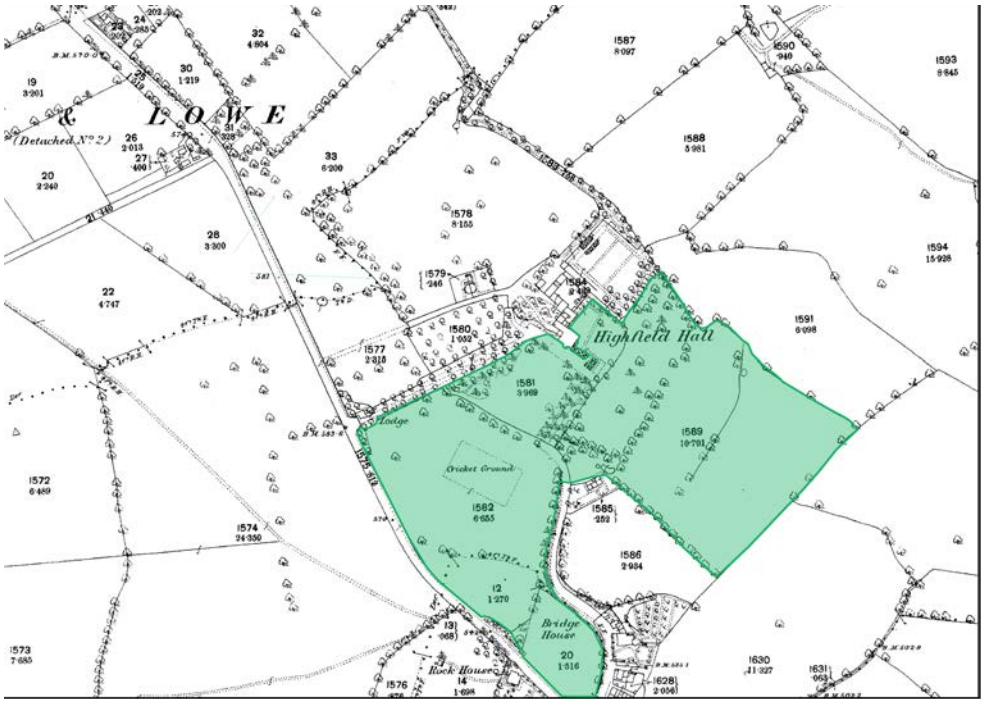
Figure 17 – the 1970 OS map shows Highfield

Figure 18 (below) – extract from the 1939 Sale Catalogue. Plots 9, 10 and 11 running along Macclesfield Road are earmarked for Building land (D4241/12/3)





Map 1 – Phase 1 parkland of c.1810-20 overlaid onto the 1879 OS map, showing the alignment of the original looping carriage drive in orange and the former turnpike, converted into a private carriage drive from the public highway, shown in dotted blue lines.



Map 2 – Phase 2 parkland of c.1860 overlaid onto the 1879 OS map. This shading is repeated on the 6-inch maps

6. The significance of the parkland and the contribution of the application site to its significance - conclusions

6.1 The parkland estate has changed several times, with shifting emphasis, as the gardens and parkland have evolved under different owners. This is no longer a private garden and parkland estate. In 1867 the parkland was opened up for members of the public to enjoy and underwent many philanthropic ventures. Sections of the private estate have been sold off and developed with large houses in large garden settings. The planted perimeter running along the edge of Macclesfield Road has only recently been completely enclosed within the latter part of the 20th century. Until c.1899 it was relatively open, designed with the deliberate intention of being able to see the distant Georgian house in its landscape setting and, vice versa, with views outwards. In 1847 it had a 'sunk fence' or ha-ha, along the edge of the road, which was probably removed during highway works to increase visibility.

6.2 The original design of the landscaped garden and parkland of c1810-1847 can be seen to have its roots in many of the landscape principles of the time[4], but this open character has largely been replaced and it is much less open. The whole of the area north of the entrance drive was demoted during the mid to late 19th century to servicing and ancillary functions, largely screened from the late 19th century parkland and new dwellings were constructed on the former parkland as Highfield Cottages and then Lowfield and Highfield.

6.3 The access drives have changed over the years to accommodate changing fashions of landscape gardening and a move from a manufactured informal picturesque landscape to one with much more formality. This changing landscape character, the growth and evolution of gardens, reflects the fact that parks and gardens are not static heritage assets and have multiple layers of interest. Whilst the house once sat in a position which was central to its parkland, the house has now disappeared and has been replaced by a row of four modern and indistinct detached houses, which have no bearing upon the historic status of this part of the site.

6.4 The most recent formal landscape gardening along the access drive has changed the character of the 19th century planting; this strong character, with wide 14-metre shrubberies and 2-metre grass verge, incorporating mixed planting of native trees, and understorey planting of hybrid rhododendron and Portuguese laurel, is a relatively recent character, which photographs reveal is largely 20th century. Nevertheless it is a good example of this type of shrubbery, and has some individual specimens of high quality, even if it has not been well maintained.

6.5 The character of the most recent phase of development within the grounds - of private detached houses, within large gardens (e.g. Court House and Coach House and the houses being constructed on the site of the Winter Garden), is another phase of development and change. A garden and parkland is not static and this can be seen as

[4] Repton's Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening, 1794 promoted four key principles to be applied to landscape design on the macro and micro scale:
1. The design must display the natural beauties and hide natural defects of the landscape;
2. It should give the appearance of extent and freedom by carefully disguising or hiding the boundary;
3. The design must look natural not artificial;
4. Objects of convenience or comfort (roads, cottages, fences etc.) 'incapable of being made ornamental or of becoming proper parts of the general scenery, must be removed or concealed'.

part of its evolution. This has to be seen in the context that a large part of the enjoyment of Highfield Park has, since 1866, been for public benefit and public enjoyment. The presence of the cricket ground on this site is the one common factor which has had continuity for over 140 years. It will celebrate the centenary of the establishment of Leek Cricket Club on this site in 2019.

6.6 The application site is detached from the primary views of the parkland. In terms of 'prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness' (page 13 of GPA3) the site is largely hidden and unrelated to the primary views. It was divorced from the main views when the access drive was formalised and screened by later copper beech trees and Scots Pine; this part of the estate was divided into regular compartments, with a secondary ancillary purpose. The character of the application site is now dominated by the regular boundaries and the relationship with the 20th century houses on the site and adjoining and it has low intrinsic interest and limited aesthetic interest.

7. Impact and Mitigation

Impact on the Landscaped Estate

7.1 The proposed development of housing on the application site has the potential to directly affect the historic landscape. We consider that paragraph 135 of the NPPF is engaged in so far as it affects the non-designated historic landscape parkland and former gardens at Highfield Hall. This requires any assessment of impact, whether direct or indirect, to be assessed with a balanced judgement, *having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

7.2 The former orchard, now a paddock, no longer holds any relationship with the former house or its service buildings, and no longer has orchard trees of any meaningful extent. This area of land, which is detached from the main formal entrance drive, continues the character of the land to its west, which has been developed for housing during the 20th century for both Lowfield and Highfield. The development of the site of Highfield and its adjoining paddock will not harm the parkland or garden character of the present Highfield Park. As open space, the paddock contains few trees of significance (those of importance are being retained) and it does not hold intrinsic landscape or amenity value. The garden of Highfield has matured and there are some substantial trees, including Scots pine, which will be retained within the development. The loss of an area of former orchard, which no longer has that character, and the redevelopment of the site of a 20th century dwelling, of no special architectural merit, makes no impact on the significance of the heritage asset which is Highfield Park. The character of the park has been completely altered with the construction of detached houses, in large gardens, which started with the construction of Lowfield by 1939 (see Figure 12), continued with the construction of Highfield by 1966 and has continued to the present day.

7.3 The application site falls within the visual envelope of the developed part of the old estate. It is enclosed by the access drive which is part of the old estate drive. It is not bounded by fields. The authors of the Historic Environment Assessment (HEA) Appendix 7 area LLHECZ 7 were not party to the detailed map regression and analysis which has been undertaken for this assessment. The actual area on map 8 illustrated in the HEA incorporates this application site and is hatched in brown as "post 1880s settlement". The HEA states that this "is not the typical planned enclosure to be found to the north" and that "It is possible that an earlier field system was subject to some re-

planning and in the area around Highfield may be contemporary with the establishment of the Hall and landscape park in the early 19th century." In fact, as has been demonstrated from the detailed analysis of earlier plans, this northern area was part of the earlier landscaped park and had a distinctly ornamented character, which remains to this day, despite the change of use to pasture.

7.4 The addition of an access drive to service the new development along the entrance drive will, however, affect the character of the formal drive and will involve the loss of some trees. Options for mitigating these effects have been considered and include utilising the area closest to the laurel hedge which encloses the former coach-house (also confusingly now known as Highfield House). This would retain to a large extent the formality of the access drive and the effect of the lush planting, by pushing the drive to a location where it will not impinge on the main views along the drive. However, the loss of a substantial tree which has an individual TPO (T47) is unavoidable and for this reason a location with less impact on amenity trees has been adopted. The location selected for the drive involves fewer high quality trees, which reflects lack of management and maintenance of the shrubberies. However, the intervention of a drive at the mid-way point will break up the formality of the drive, its planting and its current planting character. For that reason, it will be essential that any drive is treated with great care to avoid urban details, such as concrete kerbs or urban-style edging, or introduce street lighting or inappropriate street furniture into the landscape. Enhancement in the form of re-planted shrubberies and maintenance of a grass verge, carried out by professional landscape gardeners or landscape architects who understand the planting structure and design intent, will also off-set the harm to the extent that we consider, with mitigation, the impact will be negligible.

Design and Character

7.5 It will also be important that the presence of the new houses is screened by the dense shrub planting so that this sense of compartments and separation is maintained. Efforts to re-plant, prune and manage the shrubberies are long overdue and a management plan which addresses the need to screen new development from the formal access drive by enhancing and embellishing the existing planting along the drive can be put in place as a condition of planning permission. An Arboricultural Report has been commissioned for this application. Notwithstanding the recommendations in this report with regard to trees, it is important that the planting maintains the lush character and understorey of the shrubberies and allows for succession planting of shrubs, including for example the Portuguese laurel and hybrid rhododendron, as well as consideration of replacing holly, yew and Sawara Cypress identified for removal, in order to maintain the landscape character. The report is specifically aimed at identifying recommendations for trees, but the lush character of the entrance drive is different from large areas of the parkland estate.

7.6 Likewise, the character of the new housing should follow the grain and character of large houses within garden settings. Large gardens and landscaping continue the garden character and remove any sense of urbanization, to provide a spacious arrangement that is not constrained by the shrubbery screen to the south. The layout plan showing two new houses shows that landscaping can be effectively introduced into the back gardens which will break up and reduce the impact in views from Macclesfield Road to make negligible impact.

Access

7.7 The alterations proposed to the access arrangement into the site are required by the highway authority. They will not accept the existing access into the site of Highfield for any increase in the number of dwellings. The highway authority has, however, historically accepted the intensification of the use of the access drive in the development of four houses on the site of Highfield Hall.

Impact on the Gatelodge and Entrance Gates

7.8 The impact on the setting of either the gate lodge or the entrance gates is negligible and not harmful. It cannot be argued that the development of houses on the application site affects the setting of the gatelodge, as the special interest of the gate lodge relates to its immediate relationship with the gateway, its relationship with the road and access drive and how its is perceived in the round, i.e. it was designed to be seen from all directions. The development of housing on the application site is separated from the gatelodge by dense shrubbery, is not visible in conjunction with the gatelodge, and has no bearing on the significance of the gatelodge or how its significance is appreciated.

7.9 The impact on the setting of the entrance gates is also negligible as these provided the formal entrance to the Hall, as adopted by the 1880s. The original arched gateway seen in photographs dating from 1911, was removed, possibly when the house was demolished, and was replaced with the existing gatepiers and white-painted wrought-iron gate. The significance of the gatepiers, railings and entrance gate are in their formal arrangement, reflecting the high status of the house and the estate. They have lost authenticity, as a result of changes, but they contain the 19th century wrought-iron railings to the south and follow the original semi-circular layout.

7.10 The development of the application site will not have an impact on the significance of this gateway, or how it is appreciated.

8. Conclusions

8.1 The evidence provided in this report shows that the historic parkland has undergone a large number of changes and alterations to its character over its lifetime. It is not a pristine landscape; neither its 1810-27 landscape design, nor a great deal of its 1829-47 extended parkland design survive. Many of the alterations permitted have reduced its value, including the residential development on the site of the original Hall and along ancillary access drives. This started with the development of estate cottages along the northern access drive in the 1870s in what was then open parkland and continued with the development of Lowfield in the 1930s and Highfield in the 1960s. The development of further housing on the application site within a discrete area, of low interest, which does not impinge on the main views, can be seen and understood as part of the evolution of the private 'estate' and was wholly contained within the parkland, and is not within an agricultural setting.

8.2 It is acknowledged that there is some loss of small trees and an impact on elements of formality, but the effects are limited and in accordance with Para. 135 of the NPPF, it is considered that the scale of harm is low overall, affecting areas of the heritage asset of moderate to low significance. There is no harm to either the setting of the gatelodge or the setting of the entrance gateway. Any perception of harm can be

off-set and addressed through mitigation, covered by planning conditions, and there are opportunities here to positively enhance the landscape and the setting of the non-designated heritage assets, though careful landscape design and a landscape management plan which addresses the long-term treatment of the historic planting.