



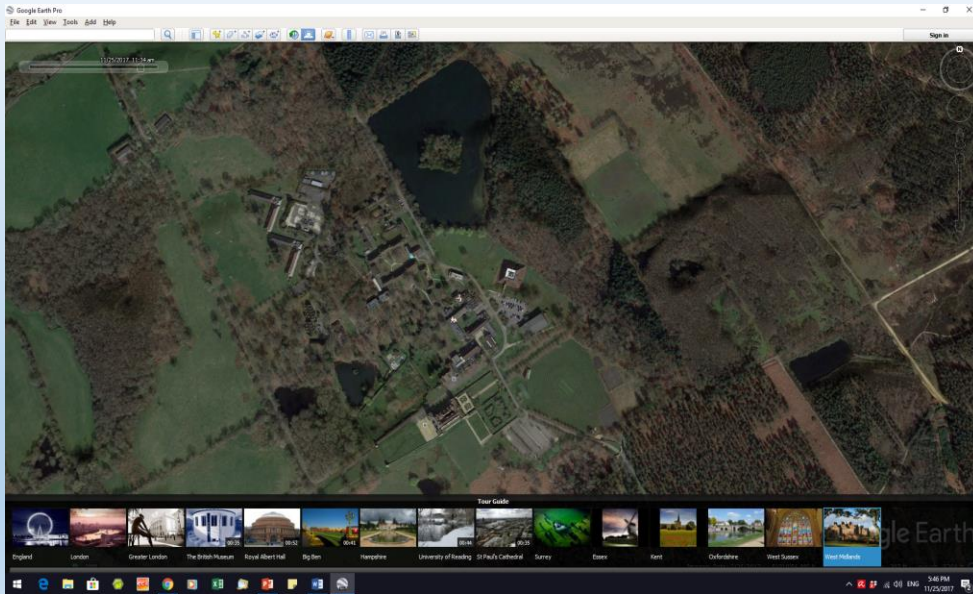
## Bramshill Park, Grade 1

Nationally important surviving Jacobean mansion and park  
Now due to undergo significant re-development

*A presentation at the Historic Landscapes Assembly, Birmingham, 28 November 2017*

*Sally Miller, Hampshire Gardens Trust Trustee and Chair, Research Group*

# Bramshill Park



Bramshill is located NE of Basingstoke, not far from the Surrey boundary. The estate was privately owned until 1952 when it was purchased by the Home Office for use as the national Police Staff College. To this end accommodation blocks, lecture rooms etc. were built in the park to the north east of the Jacobean mansion. In 2013 the College closed and in 2014 the Home Office sold the estate to the City and Country development company.

The Jacobean mansion and associated structures are listed Grade I. and the designed landscape was listed Grade II\*. In 2017 Hampshire Gardens Trust submitted a successful application to Historic England to uplift the designed landscape to Grade I – arguing that the gardens were designed as the setting for the high status house and are an exceptionally legible and important survival. HGT drew on a new reassessment by Paula Henderson and our own knowledge of the site.

## 1605-1612, Edward, Lord Zouche

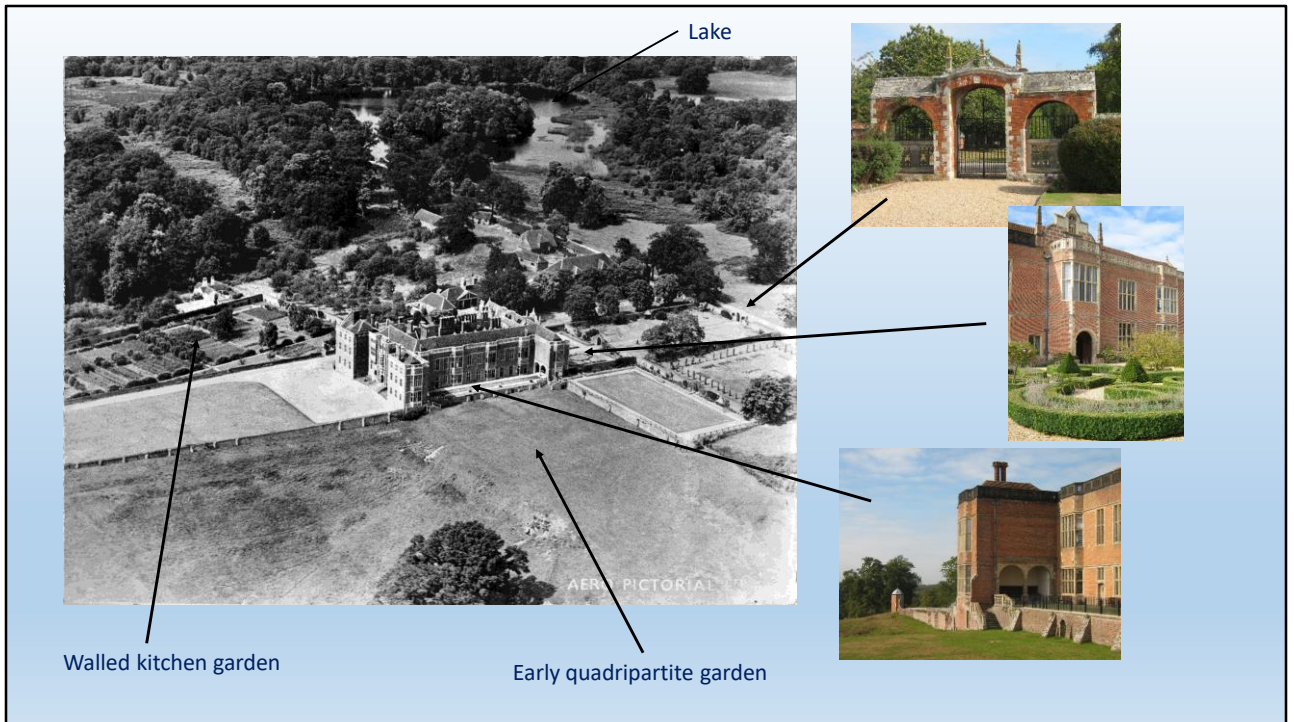


2,500 acres at Bramshill were enclosed in the mid C14 as a deer park. The estate descended through various hands until in 1605 it was sold to Edward, Lord Zouche – diplomat, patron of science and horticulturalist (he created the physic garden at Hackney, London). Zouche was connected to leading statesmen and builders of high status houses and gardens of the period, notably William Cecil, Lord Burghley and Robert Cecil. Aspiring perhaps to establish his place in society he created the present mansion and landscape within easy reach of London. Bramshill is one of only three Jacobean mansions known to include two State Apartments (for King & Queen) the others being Hatfield House and Audley End.



The earliest known plan of the mansion in its setting is shown in the Justis plan of 1699. Note the intersecting avenues on the main axes; the approach to the mansion from the south rises up a steep man-made earth ramp lined with oaks, gradually revealing the mansion which sits on a scarp. This must be one of the most spectacular approaches to a high status house (cf. Hardwick Hall). The courtyard was entered through a pair of octagonal towers which also survive. There are walled gardens and terraces around the house and a system of ponds to the east fed by conduit houses. To the north-east are a very large lake with a square island and a large maze.

In 1699 Bramshill was sold to Sir John Cope and remained in that family until 1930. Through more than two centuries the house and grounds were restored and developed conservatively, building on the existing framework. There followed over fifty years of what could be described as 'benign neglect' resulting (despite the new buildings) in the landscape sinking into some disrepair but nevertheless surviving intact. Therefore the C17 and early C18 landscape at Bramshill is an exceptionally legible and important survival.

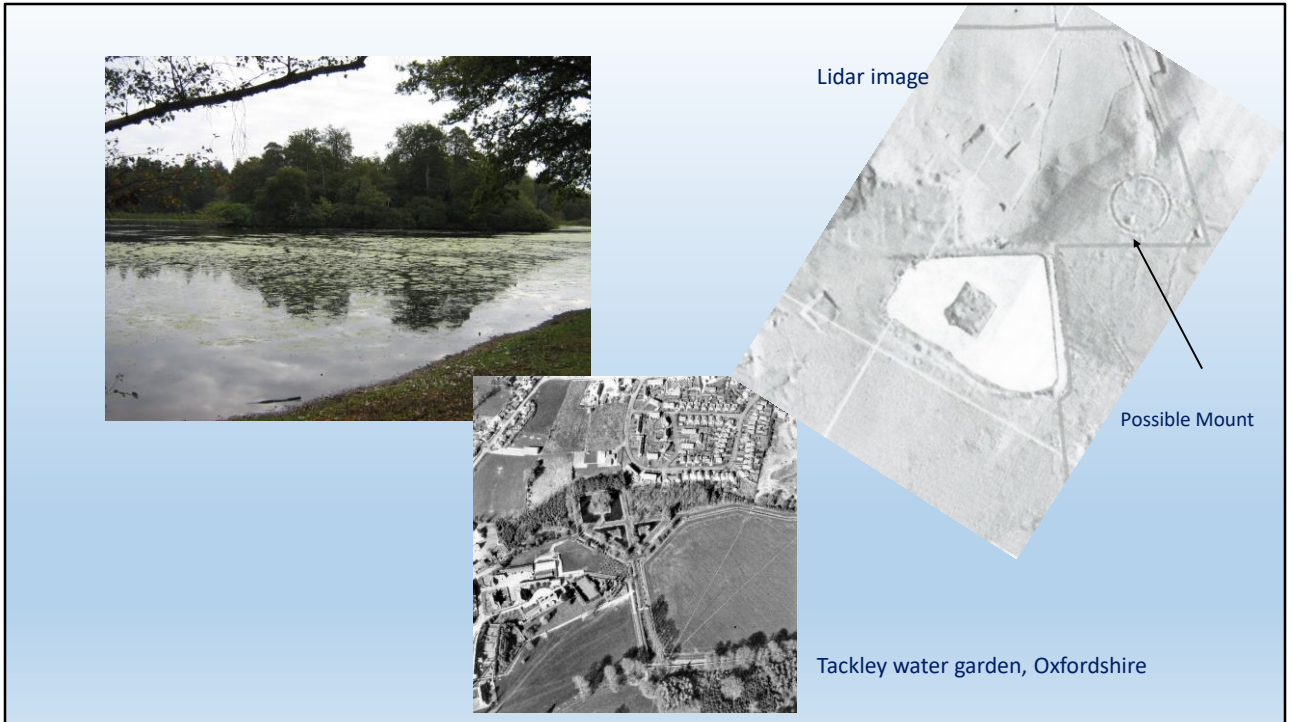


This aerial view shows the mansion, and the surrounding features. The walled gardens (three) on the north front give access to the park through a triple-arched gateway. The east range contains the state apartments giving views over the gardens, traces of which can be seen from the parch marks. The terrace with a loggia at each end gives access to the balustraded bowling-green known as the 'Troco lawn'. The large lake can be seen in the background.





Away from the house and its courtyards and gardens are two major ‘destination’ gardens contemporary with the house. The immense lake and island is now confirmed as a Jacobean water garden which has clear echoes in other known contemporary water gardens. The central square island, built diagonally as a lozenge, with rounded bastions at the corners was perhaps intended to remind Zouche of Dover Castle (he was Warden of the Cinq Ports). The lake would certainly have been intended for recreation – boating and fishing – and there would have been a summer house or similar on the island for refreshments and shelter (footings of an early C17 structure have been found). This is one of the best preserved Jacobean water gardens and as a group with the house, unique. The Maze, clearly shown as such on the Justis plan is unusually large (130 metres in diameter). It survives as legible earthworks, now completely overgrown. Both these destination gardens were designed to offer exercise and entertainment, a walk or a short ride from the house. The Justis plan shows a lodge at a midway point from which both destinations could be seen.



The Lidar image shows the shape of lake which was almost certainly intended to be a square with the square island rotated against it. This was a major project and it seems that time and /or money ran out – Zouche certainly curtailed his plans for the house. A close parallel is the Tackley water garden (Oxfordshire) where the owner was unable to buy the piece of land that would have completed the geometric design.

## Current position

- 2014 Home Office sold the estate to City and Country development
- Applications to build 235 residential units, associated access and parking, replacing many of the Police College buildings
- Future use of the mansion still undecided
- All planning applications so far have been rejected by Hart DC
- Public enquiry opened end of October this year

Between June 2016 – June 2017 City and Country submitted 10 ‘bundled’ pre-planning applications for the mansion and various sections of the park – all refused to date by Hart District Council. Demolition of some of the Police College buildings is underway and Hart DC has declared that permission for this had not been obtained. The developer appealed and an Inspector was appointed to review the appeals. At time of writing we are awaiting his decision.



buildings in red to be demolished

new & retained buildings



This shows the developer's plans to demolish some of the Police College buildings, repurpose others, creating a new housing estate inappropriately close to the mansion (for which a future use has not yet been determined). Our main concern is the proposal to build nine, very large and elevated (therefore very visible) houses on the west bank of the unique Jacobean water garden.