# Appendix 1: The Development of Roxton Park




**Figure 1.1: Aerial view of Roxton Park** showing boundaries and Key features, including specific tree planting arrangement (circled)

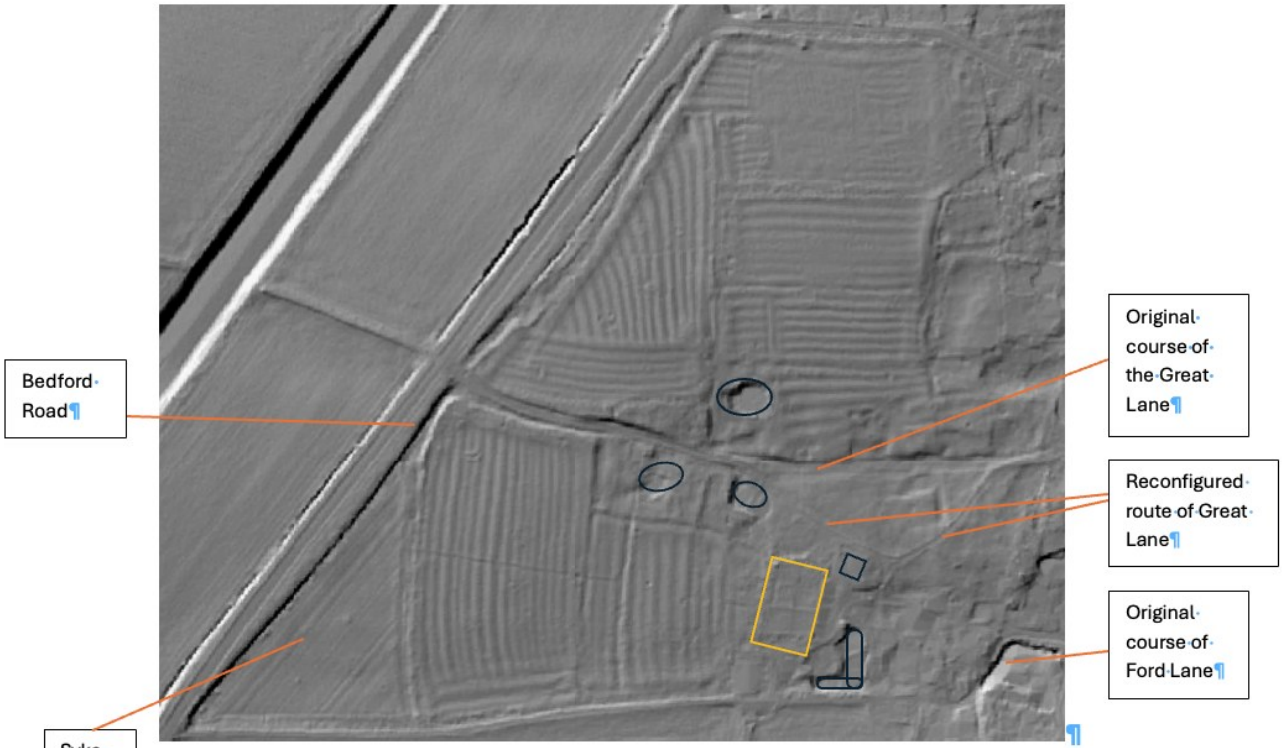



**Figure 1.2 LiDAR Map of Roxton Park** showing ridge and furrow and earthworks together with garden features

*Source: Archi Uk. Available online at: https://www.archiuk.com*

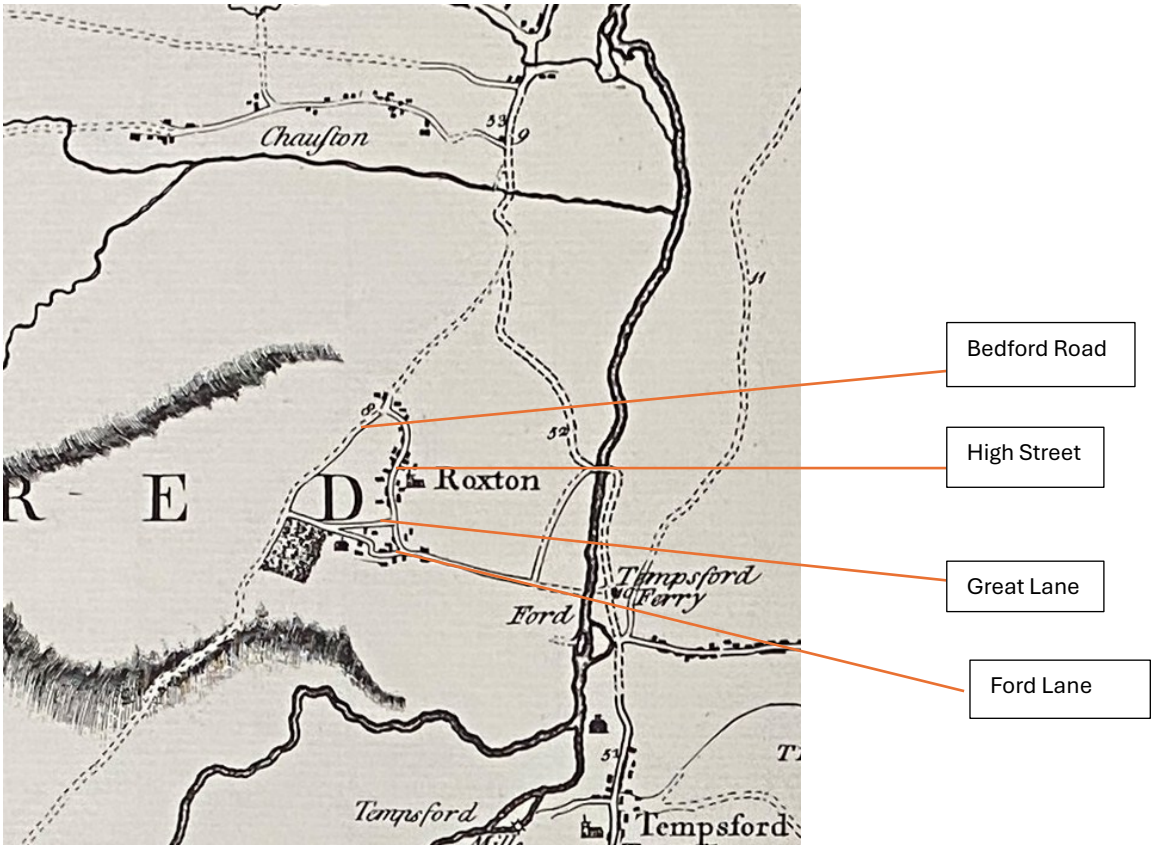



**Figure 1.3: Jeffreys Map of Bedfordshire, 1765.**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*

Neither Roxton Park nor Roxton House are recorded on the map, but an area of dense woodland is depicted located on the eastern side of the Bedford Road (the Bedford Turnpike Road from 1772) with what appears to be a large house located on its eastern border. The Bedford Road provides a boundary to the woodland area on its western edge.

The configuration of the two main roads within which the present-day Roxton Park is located are identifiable on Jeffrey's map: Bedford Road and High Street but the configuration of Ford Lane and Great Lane differs from the arrangement of roads depicted in the later 1810 and 1813 maps (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). The present-day Park Road, which links Bedford Road to the High Street and forms the northern boundary of Roxton Park is not shown on the map, presumably as the road/carriage way did not exist at this time.

At the south end of the High Street lies Ford Lane, which today forms the southern boundary of Roxton Park. The Jeffrey's map however plots a different course for what is assumed to be Ford Lane, as it is shown intersecting and joining with Great Lane, which connects Bedford Road with the High Street in Roxton. Here Ford Lane is shown as an important route linking Tempsford and the Great North Road with Roxton and Bedford.

If the house and woodland shown on Jeffrey's Map could be considered to represent Roxton House and its parkland, then the configuration of Great Lane and Ford Lane needs to be reviewed alongside the representation of the 'woodland' depicted on Jeffrey's map.

The LiDAR map (Figure 1.2) clearly shows the original route of 'The Great Lane' which traversed Roxton Park, linking the Bedford Turnpike Road in the west to Roxton High Street in the east. Evidence of a change in the configuration of Great Lane and the construction of a sweeping curve in the approach to and away from Roxton House is also discernible in the LiDAR image. Ford Lane, shown in the bottom right-hand corner of the map is also visible but its 'original' intersection with Great Lane is not apparent. At the bottom of the High Street, Ford Lane travels in a southeasterly direction towards the ford on the River Great Ouse at Tempsford and at the time of the publication of the Jeffrey's map would have been an important route for local inhabitants providing access between the Bedford Road and the Great North Road, so it would be feasible to assume that Ford Lane would have linked to Great Lane during this time.

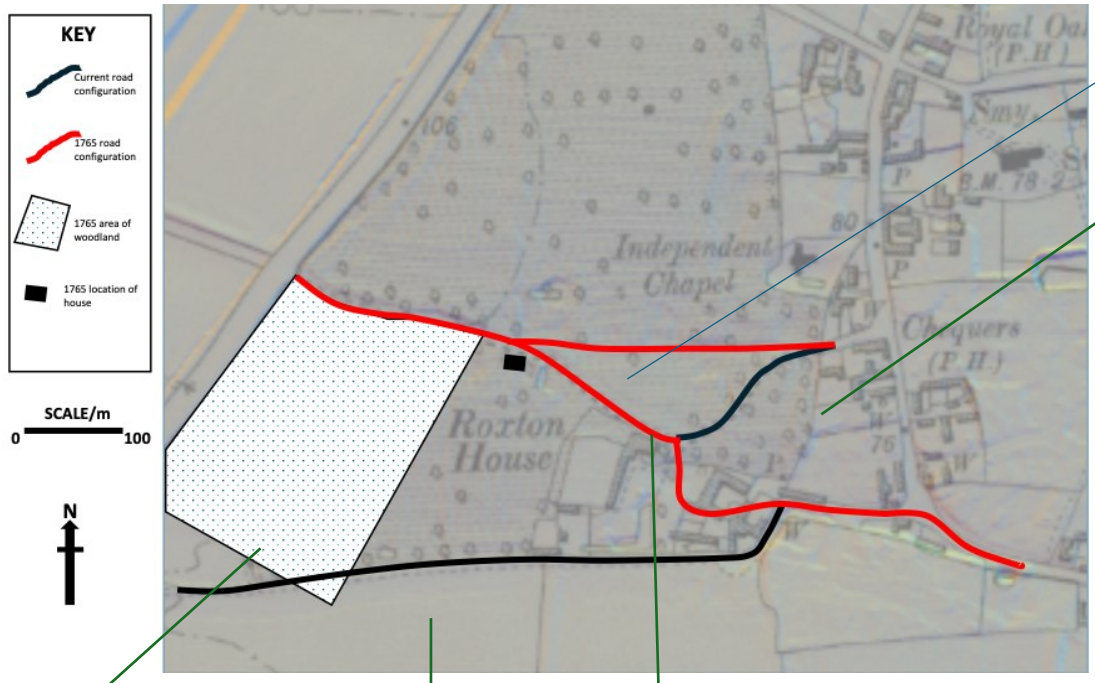
Figure 1.4 below superimposes an interpretation of the configuration of roads, house and woodland as depicted on Jeffrey's map with the following added layers:

- Lidar Map of Roxton Park LiDAR DTM 50cm-1m England, Scotland, Ireland
- OS Map 6inch 2nd edition, Ireland, Scotland and England and Wales, 1888-1915.

By plotting the Jeffreys Map configuration onto the OS base map it is possible to compare and contrast the locations of the park and Roxton House. In terms of the woodland/park location an immediate issue is identified. The woodland area depicted in the Jeffrey's Map covers the whole of the parcel of land known as 'Sykes Field' which was only allocated to the Lord of the Manor, Charles James Metcalfe in 1810 as part of the enclosure process, with Sykes Field only being incorporated into the parkland in the late 20th century. In the Roxton estate map of 1810, while woodland areas are identified and marked accordingly, the whole of Sykes Field is devoid of woodland and the only trees depicted relate to field boundaries. The Jeffrey's map depiction of the woodland area is unlikely to be accurate, but could be seen as indicative of a parkland landscape.

**Figure 1.4:** Interpretation of Jeffrey's map of 1765, showing configuration of roads, house and woodland.

*Source: National Library of Scotland*



In the Jeffrey's map the location of Roxton House is shown to the east of the wooded area and south of the intersection of the two roads (Great Lane and Ford Lane) which linked Bedford Road to Roxton High Street. By 1810, on the Roxton Estate map, Roxton House is shown south of the 'Great Lane' but located further across to the east, lying southeast of the 1765 house. Thomas Fisher's painting dated c.1820 entitled 'Roxton, old park house 1750, since pulled down' suggests that the estate did undergo changes and renovation and it is feasible that Roxton House was rebuilt in a different location.[1]

In March 1793 at a special session held at Roxton, the Quarter Sessions Rolls recorded that Sir Philip Monoux, bt., and William Gery ordered the diversion and turning of a road in Roxton, to which James Metcalfe (father of Charles James Metcalfe) consented, as the proposed new road would be routed through his land. It was noted that:[2]

> *'…a certain highway in the parish of Roxton leading from the Chequers in the parish of Roxton to the road leading from the Great North Road to the town of Bedford of the length of 460 yards and breadth of 30 feet may be diverted and turned so as to make the same more commodious to the public.*
>
> *The proposed new highway to be through the lands of James Metcalfe leading from the street in Roxton nearly opposite the Blacksmiths shop through the stack yard and close in the occupation of William Freshwaters and along the North side of a close in the occupation of James Metcalfe into the road leading from the Great North road to the town of Bedford of a length of 340 yards and a breadth of 27 feet.'*

No plan of the proposed changes can be found in the archives but it is known that the Chequers was the public house/inn situated on the High Street corner where the road intersects with the Great Lane (current driveway into Roxton House) and in 1884 the 'Smithy' was located at the northern end of the village, to the west of the High Street (Figure 1.8). The description appears to match the route of the modern roadway now called Park Road, which forms the northern boundary of Roxton Park. The roadway is depicted in the 1810 estate map (Figure 1.5) which suggests that the Metcalfe family complied with the order, either before or following the death of James Metcalfe in June 1793.[3]

[1] BA, Z102/64

[2] BA, QSR1793/1, Order by Sir Philip Monoux bt., and William Gery for the diversion of a road at Roxton, March 1793; BA, QSR1793/2 Certified by James Metcalfe, esq., Roxton, agreeing to the road being diverted over his land.

[3] BA, X166, Roxton Estate Map of Charles Metcalfe, surveyor Anthony Jackson, c.1813.

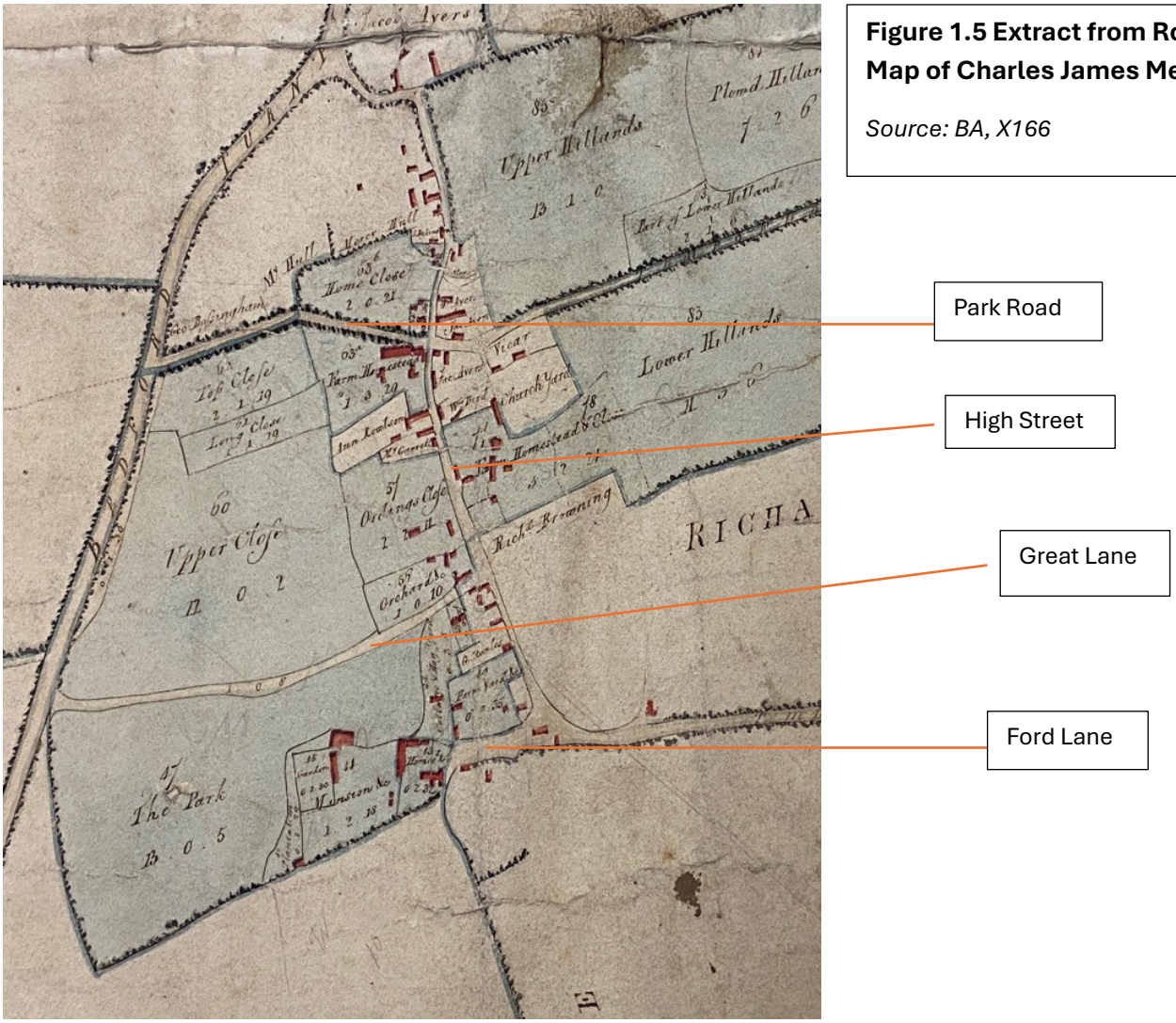



**Figure 1.5 Extract from Roxton Estate Map of Charles James Metcalfe, 1810.**

*Source: BA, X166*

This map is the first document which refers to the existence of Roxton Park. At this point in time 'The Park' covers an area of 13 acres and 5 perches and is located south of the path/carriage way that connects the Bedford Turnpike Road to the High Street in Roxton Village. [4]Although this route is not named, the Roxton Enclosure Award Book identifies it as 'Great Lane'. In this map Great Lane is shown as being located at a distance from Roxton House with the road only displaying a slight irregularity bending slightly to the south halfway across the enclosure. The curving sweep of the roadway in front of the house has not yet been constructed.

Although not named, Roxton House is recorded as a mansion, with a 'Garden' consisting of 1rood and 30 perches set within a walled structure is shown located to the SE corner of the mansion house and at its rear a building located on the eastern side of the walled garden. A 'Plantation' on the western side of the garden enclosure (3 roods and 29 perches) shields the walled garden running from the southern border of the estate across to the main residence. The 17th century barn located to the southeast of the residence is marked on the map.

With the passing of the Roxton Enclosure Act in 1810, proposed changes to the road configuration within and around Roxton are announced. In August 1810 a notice placed by the Enclosure Commissioners in the Cambridge Chronicle and Journal announced the intention to set out and appoint public carriage roads and highways within the parish of Roxton, one of which was described as follows: [5]

[4] BA, X166, Roxton Estate Map of Charles Metcalfe, surveyor Anthony Jackson, c.1813.

[5] *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal,* 24 August 1810.

*'..from the said Great north Road, at or near Tempsford Bridge , in a westward direction over Bridge Field, to old inclosures called Hilliards, belonging to the said Charles James Metcalfe; and, with the consent of the said Charles James Metcalfe, in consideration of setting aside the road hereinafter expressed to be stopped up, the road now describing is continued in the same direction across the said old inclosures called Hilliards to the east of Church Lane, and after passing along part of the village street of Roxton and in a south direction along part of the village street of Roxton, the same road is continued, with the coherent aforesaid, in a westward direction through the garden and along the south side of the Home Close belonging to the said Charles James Metcalfe, in the occupation of John Saville, and in the same direction across another inclosure called Fair Close, belonging to the said Charles James Metcalfe, to the Bedford Turnpike Road.'*

This description of the road route accords with the road proposal first described in 1793, with the route itself being depicted on the 1810 estate map and the 1813 enclosure map, albeit unnamed on both. Today, this road is named Park Road and forms the northern boundary of Roxton Park.

As part of this agreement for this new public road, the Commissioners refer to 'stopping up' another roadway, an action that would be beneficial to Charles James Metcalfe, the new Lord of the Manor. The road in question was Great Lane, with the commissioners specifying that it was proposed *'to set aside and stop up a certain ancient lane in Roxton aforesaid called the Great Lane, from the north west corner of a garden and homestead belonging to Sarah Smith in a northward direction to the Bedford Turnpike Road.'*

Ford Lane is depicted on the 1810 map but the lane is shown as no longer connecting to Great Lane (as shown in the Jeffrey's Map), coming to an abrupt stop at the edge of the south east corner of Metcalfe's estate just after it connects with Roxton High Street. The future of Ford lane was ultimately decided upon by the Enclosure Commissioners, when in 1813 a notice was presented in the local papers confirming plans for Ford Lane, 'from the southeast end of the village of Roxton, in its present course, to Tempsford Ford' to be appointed as a private carriage road. [6]

The Bedford Turnpike Trust map of 1813, in addition to depicting the route of the road also shows buildings and bridges along the road as well as all roads leaving the turnpike road and their destination. For Roxton to major roads are shown: The road from Roxton and the road from Tempsford, the latter being the road now known as Park Road (which forms the northern boundary of Roxton Park) and connects via the crossroad in the village with School Lane. [7]

[6] *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal,* 24 August 1810.

[7] BA, MTR2, Bedford Turnpike Trust-Map: Bedford and Cardington to Roxton on the 1inch OS maps in the County Atlas, 1813.

**Figure 1.6: Extract from Roxton Enclosure Map, 1813**

*Source: BA, MA44 1813 Enclosure Map of Roxton; and Award Book L*




As part of the enclosure process taking place in Roxton, Charles William Metcalfe exchanged land and was allocated several parcels of land (or allotments) which helped shape the site and extent of Roxton Park at the start of the nineteenth century:[8]

- By exchange of land between Charles James Metcalfe and Jacob Ayres, Metcalfe received 1 plot of land in an ancient lane called GREAT LANE containing 1 acre and 8 perches;
- By exchange of land between Charles James Metcalfe and the estate of Richard Browning , Metcalfe received the ancient enclosure called LONG CLOSE containing 1 acre, 1 rood and 29 perches;
- Allocation of 1 plot of land in SYKE FIELD in Roxton containing 7 acres, 3 roods and 32 perches;
- Allocation of 1 plot of land in Roxton being part of the waste containing 1 rood and 30 perches

Post enclosure, with Great Lane now no longer a public road and being in the ownership of Charles James Metcalfe, work could be undertaken to alter the original course of the Great Lane to make a more suitable and appropriate private approach to Roxton House, the home of the Lord of the Manor By 1826 the work was complete, with the addition of a new picturesque lodge at the Bedford Turnpike Road entrance to Roxton Park and a pronounced sweeping curve in front of the house. A very different landscape to that first mapped by Thomas Jeffreys in 1765. If the configuration of roads in Roxton, as shown in the Jeffrey's map (figure 1.4), is

[8] *BA, Award Book L, Clerk of the Peaces' inrolled office copy for: Cardington, Farndish, Ravensden, Barton Le Clay, Shillington, Harlington, 1801-1821.*
*BA, MA44/1, 1813 Enclosure Map of Roxton; and Award Book L*

correct, it is possible that part of the new curved driveway may have been constructed on part of the original footprint of the Ford Lane route from its intersection with Great Lane.

In Bryant's 1826 Map (Figure 1.6), Roxton House is clearly marked with Roxton Park Lodge also identified. The carriageway/approach (Great Lane) from Bedford Turnpike Road to the house through the park via the Lodge is also depicted, with the route of the Great Lane shown with a more pronounced curvature towards the front of Roxton House and as it moves away heading towards the eastern entrance to the park. The first appearance and naming of the lodge and the reconfigured approach confirms that Roxton Park underwent significant change and renovation during the period 1813-1826. Although no records exist it is possible that within this period changes to Roxton House also took place.




**Figure 1.7: Extract from Bryant's 1826 map showing Roxton House and Lodge.**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*

Although Roxton Park is not named, the shaded area bounded by Park Road in the north, Bedford Turnpike Road to the west and High Street in the east indicates that by this time Roxton House and its Park was a significant part of the landscape at the centre of Charles James Metcalfe's extensive estate as Lord of the Manor. The map also shows that the southwest corner of the park boundary still did not extend across to the Bedford Turnpike Road, even though by this date the necessary land to complete the park (plot in Sykes Field) had been allocated via the enclosure process.

Roxton Congregational Chapel can be seen on the eastern side of the park (located just below the letter 'n' of Roxton House.




**Figure 1.8: Extract from the 1850 Sales map of the Roxton Estate**

Source: BA, X478/20

In this sales map of 1850, the park is depicted as an established landscape park with a row of trees lining the main approach to the house on its eastern entrance. [9]

The walled garden is shown with 6 internal sections with a footpath around it, but with no information about what was grown within. Although difficult to distinguish it is possible that the pond at the back of the house exists, but at this point in time there appears to be no ponds in the park landscape and there is no mention of any ponds in the sales notice. The original plantation on the western side of the walled garden is recorded but with no details provided. The property sales description in the advert placed in the local newspapers only provides generic picture of the park and its gardens:[10]

> *'…a family residence of a neat elevation, containing well-arranged suite of rooms, all requisite offices, coach house, stabling, walled garden and shrubberies; a Park of 38 acres ornamentally timbered, approached by lodges from the village and the Bedford Turnpike Road.'*

The sales map also provides confirmation that Syke field (labelled as 7) was not yet incorporated into the area of Roxton landscape park

[9] BA, X478/20, Map. Plan of the Roxton park estate for sale by auction by W. Medland at the Auction Mart, London, on Friday 28 June 1850 in one lot.
[10] *Stamford Mercury,* 14 June 1850.

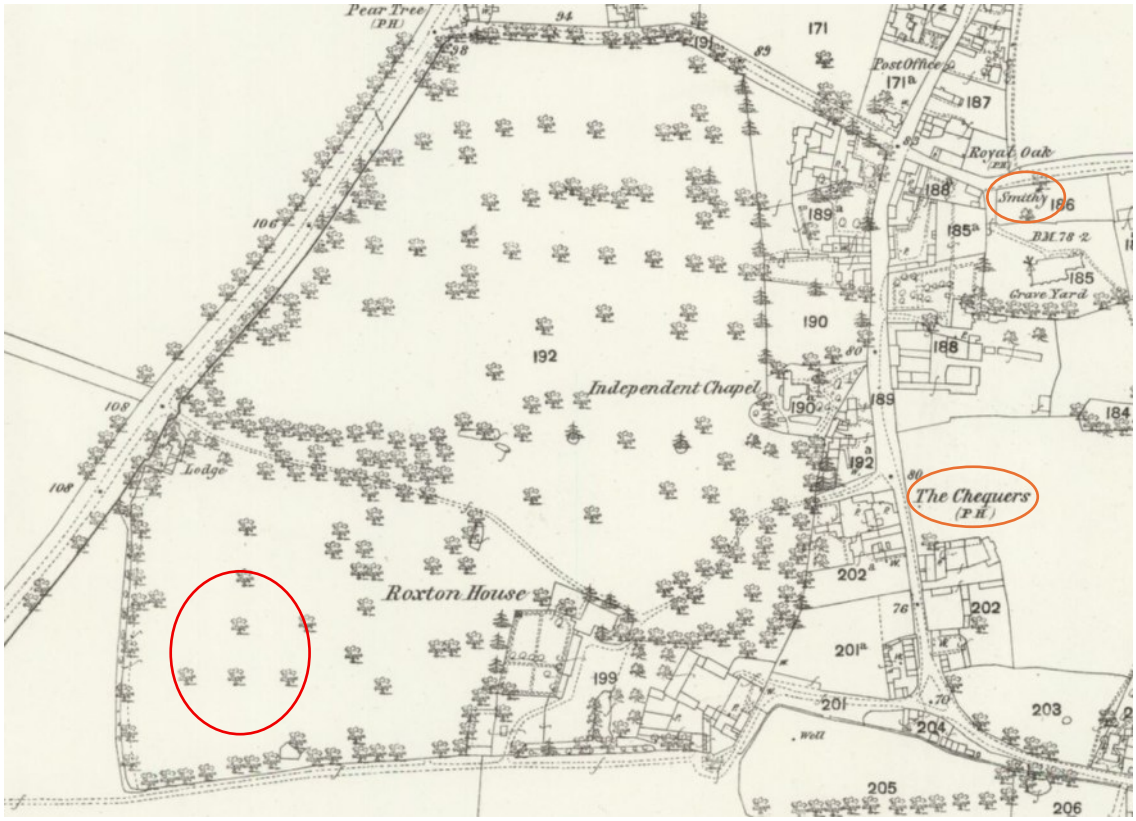



**Figure 1.9: Roxton, Beds XII.4 OS 25 inch. Surveyed 1882, published 1884**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*

The 1884 OS Map (Figure 1.8)depicts Roxton Park at the time of the ownership of the Delap family, when the estate and additional famlands were being leased to tenant farmers. The parkland is shown scattered with a variety of trees, with trees demarcating all of the park's boundaries. The driveway accessed via the eastern entrance on High Street is lined with trees on both of its sides, while at the front of the house are pine trees. The walled garden is shown with four unequal compartments with pathways. The south entrance providing access to the park and house via Ford Lane appears to be functioning as paths/roads are clearly marked, with additional buildings now constructed at the entrance (where the present day cattle shed is now located).




**Figure 1.10: Extract OS Map Roxton, Beds., Sheet 204 one inch, Biggleswade, pub 1906.**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*




**Figure 1.11: Roxton Beds XII.NE OS 6 inch. Revised 1924, published 1927**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*

The southwest corner of the area of the present-day Roxton Park still remains incomplete. Fewer trees recorded within the park, but the tree planting arrangement (circled)is evident with some of the park boundaries marked by trees. The ponds created in the landscape are recorded on the map.

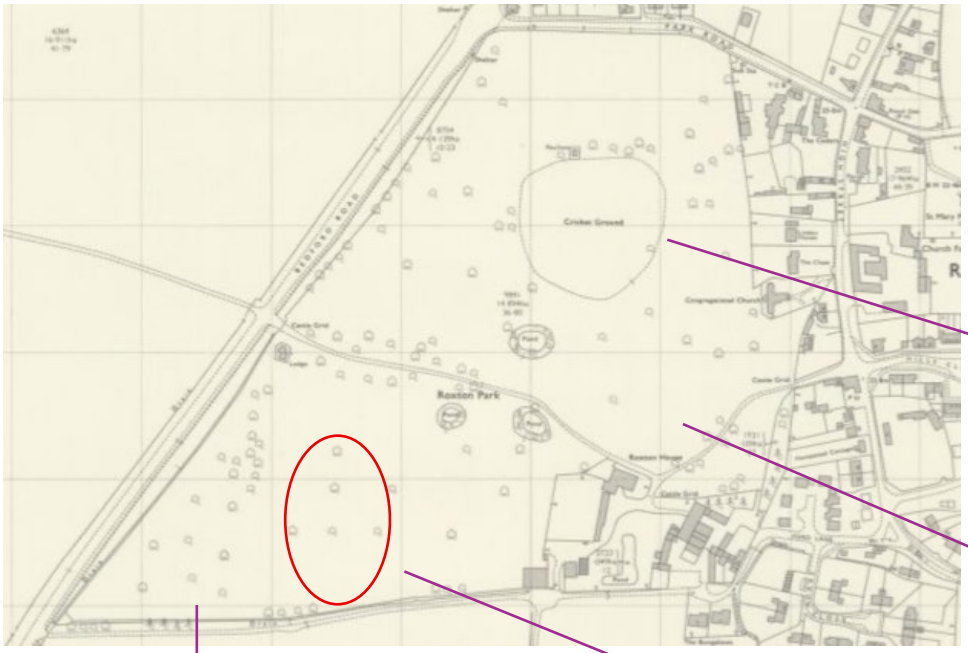



**Figure 1.12 Mid Bedfordshire, National Grid Maps 1944-1975, Rev 1972, Pub 1973**

*Source: National Library of Scotland*

Roxton Cricket Club Pitch. The present-day cricket pitch and pavilion are now part of a formal recreational space allocated at the northern end of the park

Overall reduction in the number of trees recorded in the Parkland. Park boundaries are not necessarily defined by trees

Fewer trees line the driveway entering the park

Sykes Field plot allocated to Charles William Metcalfe in 1813 now incorporated into Roxton Park



View taken from Ford Lane looking north -westerly across the parkland

This tree planting arrangement was first recorded on the Roxton, Beds XII.4 OS 25 inch. Surveyed1882, published 1884 (see Figure 1.8). The present day aerial view of these trees is shown in Figure 1.1