

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Earthworks: park and gardens which have effectively disappeared, but whose archaeological remains are of importance

Present Name of Site **LANGLEY PARK**

Historic Name
**Childerlangley
Langley Regis**

Parish/Town: Kings Langley

National Grid Reference: Great Park TL065 018 Little Park TL077 016

Present Area (approximate)

Brief Description

The manor of Langley formed part of the honour of Berkhamsted and was acquired by Eleanor of Castile, queen consort of Edward I, in the years following their coronation in 1274. By the mid-1280s a residence fit for the king had been established and this developed into a royal palace which became the favourite residence of Edward II and was much used by subsequent kings and queens during the medieval period. Records in the thirteenth and fourteenth century refer to the manor as Childerlangley (or some variant); it was not until the end of the fourteenth century that it became known as Langley Regis or King's Langley. The first record of a park at Langley was in November 1276 and in the same year 30 does were requested from Odiham, Hampshire, to stock the queen's new park and in 1282 further deer were sent from the king's chase at Rugeley .

By 1290 the queen's park covered at least 188 acres. The extent also recorded a pasture for 'plough-beasts' and cows .

Accounts for 1296/7 recorded a great park and a little park. There was also a reference to 'the park called little London' (*parva London*) which was probably an alternative name for the little park but may have been a third park. Eight acres of meadow was used to grow hay, to feed the deer in winter. Seventy-four pigs were allowed pannage 'in the park and foreign woods'. The hall and chamber in the park called little London underwent major repairs and were re-roofed with tiles brought from St Albans.

In 1305/6 A new lodge was built and a great gate and a water gate were made for the great park, indicating that the great park bordered the river Gade. New gates were also made for the little park and the vineyard and a new bridge was made at little London. The parks were fenced including c. 1000 metres of fence around the great park. Thorns were cut to reinforce a hedge between the great park and the hay meadow to preserve the hay for the deer and thorns were also cut to enclose parts of the boundary of the little park. In 1308 the lodge called Little London was granted to the Dominican Friars whilst the king had a new house built for them, also in the park. It seems that he also granted them the little park itself

On the death of Edward II in 1327 'the manor of Chirder Langeleye, with the park' (together with many manors and parks in other counties) was granted to his widow, Queen Isabella, for life. However, 16 years later in 1343, Edward III changed his mind and made a 'grant to the prior and Friar's Preachers dwelling within [his] manor of Childerlangele of the issues and profits of the manor ' and in 1358 the King made a grant to the prior and Friar's Preachers, 'in aid of their sustenance, of the fishery of the King's water of Childerlangele' and he also gave them a licence to have a weir in the said water by the King's park of Childerlangele .

The Friars preachers appear not to have repaired the buildings, a condition of the grant, however, because in 1360 the king lost patience with them and took back the issues of the manor. A year later he gave them a grant 'in aid of their new work at the manor of Langeley and the enclosure of his park there' and later the same year, workmen were employed on the King's works in the manors of Childerlangele and Little London and for the enclosure of the park of Childerlangele.

This expansion of the park resulted in the enclosure of 160 acres of arable land, for which Edward III gave the parson four marks a year in compensation for lost tithes. Other lands incorporated into the enlarged park were purchased from the abbot of St Albans in 1364, The royal family were still spending much time at King's Langley in the 1360s and surviving accounts for the period record the provision of hay and thorn branches 'for the wild animals in the park' during the winter.

In 1466 Edward IV granted the Holme Park, together with 'le Freres Wode', to a convent in Kent which was under the jurisdiction of the Friary at Langley. The king granted the palace and manor to his mother, Cicely, Duchess of York, and she held them until her death in 1495 when they passed to her grand-daughter, Elizabeth the queen of Henry VII. The estate subsequently passed to three of Henry VIII's queens in succession: Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour. The palace probably fell into decay during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and was in ruins by the late sixteenth century. A survey in 1556 recorded a park of 697 acres which included three meadows covering 51 acres and 646 acres of 'parke like ground'. The survey reveals that the little park lay in one corner of the great park and contained two acres of underwood and 790 oak trees. Growing dispersed in the great park were 180 oaks, 300 ash and 1,420 beech trees.

Later History

The park survived into the seventeenth century. In 1608 a survey of the woods in Langley park recorded a total of 3,727 trees, of which 567 were in the little park and 782 were listed as 'beech and ash'. In 1610 James I gave the park and chase to his son, Henry Prince of Wales and then to his younger son, Charles. In 1626 Charles I leased the park to Sir Charles Morrison of Cassiobury for 99 years together with 'all the deer, marsh, grass, wood and all trees'. The park was then estimated to contain 667 acres and was 'parcel of the Dutchy of Lancaster'. It was sold in 1631, became part of the Cassiobury Estate and was disparted by the Earl of Essex. Balls Pond and Langley Lodge farms were established on the land. By 1652 ten tenants were leasing land in the park. By the eighteenth century the two large farms took up the whole area of former parkland.

In 1900 Balls Pond and Langley Lodge farms were sold by the Earl of Essex and later, 1919, bought by Hertfordshire County Council, Langley Lodge being divided into Moat, Wayside and Broadfield Farms with entrances from the A41 and 8 other farms with entrances from Langley Lane. These eight subsequently were amalgamated to form Langley Lodge, Middle and Berry Bush Farms.

Principal Buildings

Kings Langley Palace (Grid reference TL 065 025) Ruins of a late 13th century royal palace in the grounds of the New School.

Dominican Priory (Grid reference TL 065 026) Founded as a Dominican Priory in 1308 by Edward I, adjacent to the Palace. Dissolved in 1538 and it was the richest Dominican house in the country at the Dissolution. Founded as a Dominican Nunnery in 1557 under Queen Mary but dissolved in 1558 when Elizabeth I acceded. Only one part of the Priory survives, a long rectangular building of 14C date and unknown purpose .

Little London (possibly a Lodge mentioned in 1308) (Grid reference TL 077 018) On the 1947 Aerial Photograph is a rectangular moated island of approximately 5000 sq. m. To the eastern end of the island is a square feature of approximately 1000 sq. m with a circular feature of around 20m in diameter at its centre

Langley Lodge Farmhouse (now called Sunbury Hill Farmhouse) (Grid reference TL 062 015) A late 15th century timber-framed open hall and crosswing house with only the two-storey crosswing surviving. It was enlarged and altered in the 18th and 19th centuries..

Extant Features

Significant lynchets mark the western boundary of the park and the site of Pingel's Gate can be clearly identified where the public footpath enters the park.

A large bank survives in the middle of the park on the south side of the footpath that crosses the park from Pingel's Gate towards the site of the palace. This may mark an early boundary of the great park, forming part of a continuous field boundary shown on the first edition OS map which appears to enclose a quasi-rectangular area, with the Kings Langley Lodge close to its centre, and the long southern border following the parish boundary. The little park, which also seems to have been called the Home or Holme park, probably lay south-east of the church — extending eastwards to the river and southwards to include the moated site identified as Little London

Important people associated with site:
Resident: Medieval to Stuart Kings and Queens (Eleanor of Castile to Charles I)
Assessment of significance. Remains of an important medieval royal palace, wealthy priory and deer park with many extant features
Principal Uses: Agriculture with housing on fringes
Public Access/Rights of Way: FP001,002,003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008
<p>Designations: (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, EH Register of Historic Parks & Gardens, Tree Preservation Orders, SSSIs, Nature Reserve, National Trust, County Wildlife Site, etc)</p> <p>Palace: Scheduled Ancient Monument 84:10939 , Area of Archaeological Significance 46</p> <p>Dominican Priory :Scheduled Ancient Monument 85:10942 , Area of Archaeological Significance 46</p> <p>Little London: Scheduled Ancient Monument 11516: moated site and surrounding earthwork enclosures, Area of Archaeological Significance</p> <p>Sunbury Hill Farm: Grade II*</p> <p>Green Belt</p> <p>Landscape Character Area: 8 Upper Gade Valley</p>
Sources of information: Rowe, Anne (2009) <i>Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire</i> University of Hertfordshire Press
Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Date:

