

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site
LOCKERS PARK SCHOOL

Historic Name
PART OF LOCKERS

Parish / Town: **Hemel Hempstead**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL 050 075

Present Area 23acres

Brief Description

The school is situated on the western side of Hemel Hempstead. It sits within grounds which were once part of the parkland of nearby "Lockers" which is on Bury Hill. The land was purchased from the Collett family in the early 1870's by the founder of the school, Henry Montague Draper. He deliberately chose the site because it was approximately one third of the distance between London and Rugby School and close to the then Boxmoor Station. It is possibly one of the earliest purpose built preparatory schools in the country.

Principal Building: Henry Draper commissioned the architect Sidney Smith to design the school building. Built in 1874 of brick with red brick bands, it is of three storeys under a tiled roof with gables and a polygonal stair turret. Early school literature describes it as being "healthily situated on a gravel and chalk soil". It sits close to the western boundary. As requirements have changed alterations and modernisation have taken place within the building and additions have been made to it. Smith also designed Michell House at Rugby School which bears a striking resemblance to Lockers Park house.

Between 1900 and 1912 a number of new buildings were erected including a new classroom block, a gymnasium and a chapel designed by Sir Gifford Fox with stained glass windows by Douglas Strachen. In 1968 a science lab was built and 1975 saw the completion of a new hall. This was followed by a sports hall and in 1994 another classroom block. All these new buildings are clustered around the original structure and do not seem to have impacted greatly on the surrounding parkland.

The Approach: The tithe map of 1840 shows a tree lined drive leading northwards across open parkland to the property called Lockers. This appears on the 1st edition OS map of 1877 and on the 1897 OS map. Recent aerial photographs show that the tree lined drive today follows the same route. About half way along its length a branch to the left leads to the school buildings. A lodge situated to the right of the entrance was demolished in 1967.

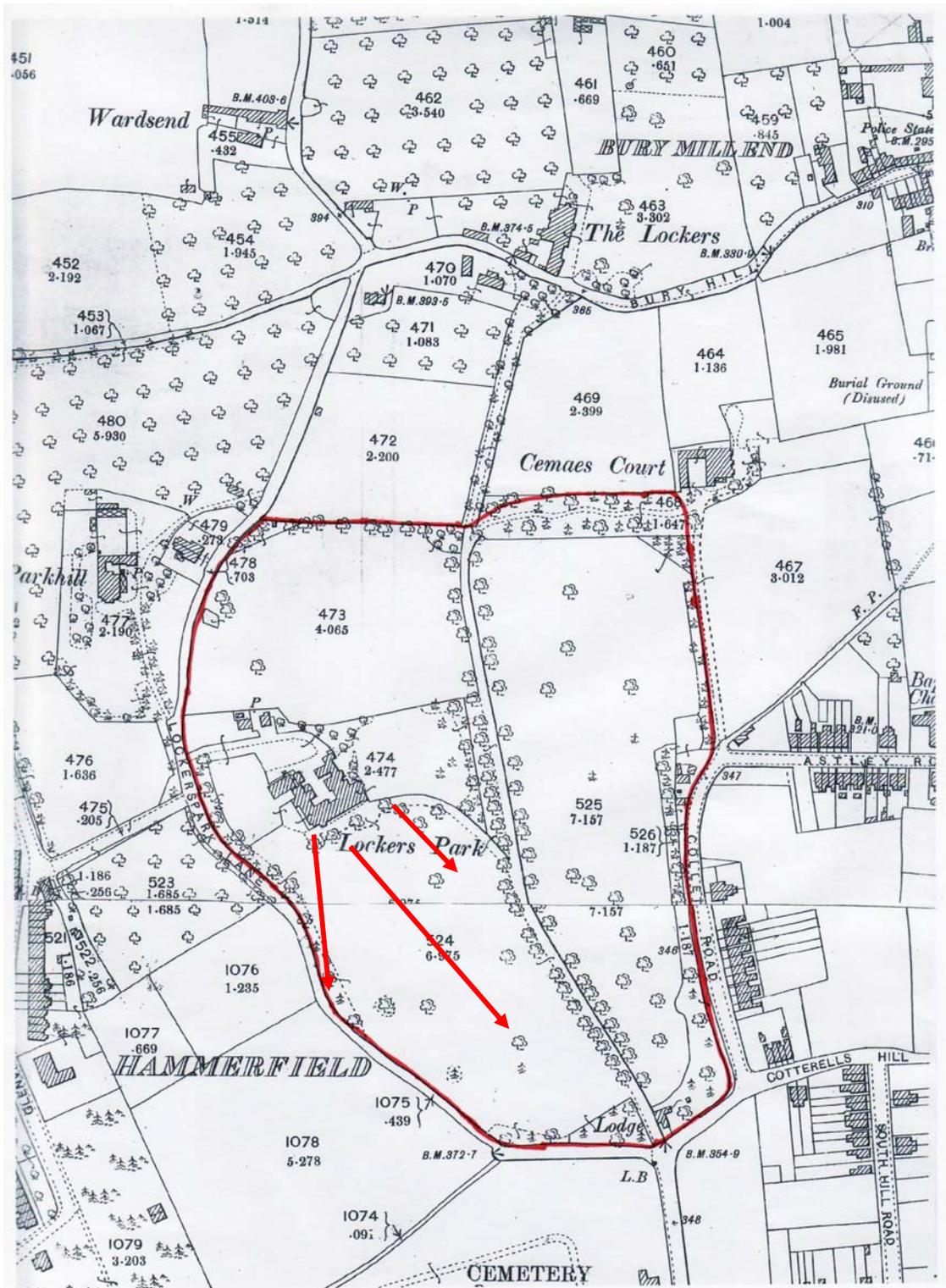
The Grounds: The tithe map shows open parkland bisected north to south by a driveway leading to Lockers. There are wooded areas in the SE corner, along part of the E boundary and a narrow strip to the left of the driveway. The 1st and 2nd edition OS maps show trees edging the boundaries of the grounds. Recent aerial photographs show that the basic nineteenth century layout is still visible today, although there is

probably more woodland than in the nineteenth century. There is a thick belt of trees and shrubs along the eastern boundary and around the southern tip with yew hedging skirting the main entrance. The western boundary is less densely wooded. The boundaries are defined by wire fencing to the east and wooden fencing and hedging to the west

Sport has always been an integral part of the life of the school. In the nineteenth century football and cricket were played. The cricket pitch is situated to the left of the school drive. – An Inspectors report of 1951 states, “The private drive skirts a fine cricket ground overlooked by stately trees and dominated by the main building.” During the early part of the twentieth century a cricket pavilion designed by Captain Noel Hadwen was erected. The football pitches were to the N of the school buildings. In 1904 a swimming pool was built to the E of the drive and just N of the school. A rifle range was added in 1915, and later a putting green, a squash court, hard tennis courts (1971), an all weather Astroturf pitch a 9 hole golf course added in 1994 and an all weather Astroturf pitch. Historically the boys could tend their own gardens which were moved to be close to the chapel in the 1960’s. All these facilities seem to have been absorbed while retaining a park like setting.

Until the 1970’s “the lower field and farm buildings had been let to a local farmer. In 1973 the farm buildings were converted to provide staff accommodation known as The Stables –The architect was John Manning. A staff bungalow was also built within the grounds. The fields which had once been let to the farmer became areas used by the boys for recreation.

<p>People Associated with the site: Architect: <i>Sidney Smith</i> Pupils: Lord Mountbatten, HRH Prince Maurice Mountbatten, Roy Beddington - artist, Sir Paul Channon - politician, Sir Keith Joseph - politician, Guy Burgess - spy, James Lees-Milne - architectural historian Teachers: Laurie Lee – teacher</p>
<p>Assessment of significance: The school is one of the first purpose-built Preparatory Schools in the country and the site chosen as it is within easy access by train of London and Rugby School, for which it was a feeder. The grouping of the school buildings ensures that the park-like nature of the site is retained. The original avenue which led to The Lockers is still in existence, along with many mature parkland trees.</p>
<p>Principal Uses: School</p>
<p>Public Access/Rights of Way: None</p>
<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 Open Land, in Dacorum Local Plan 2004. Several of the trees have TPOs.</p>
<p>Visited: HGT 2009 (outside grounds only)</p>



Ordnance Survey, 2nd Edition 1898 Sheets XXX111.7 and XXX111.11
Scale 25" to 1 mile