

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site
SHENDISH MANOR

Historic Name (if known)

Parish/Town

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL058 044

Present Area (approximate) 160 Acres (golf course and hotel)

Brief Description

The Shendish estate was purchased by Charles Longman, the nephew of John Longman, who had been the sleeping partner of John Dickinson (owner of Abbots Hill). The pleasure grounds, park and walled garden were laid out by Edward Kemp who used the design as an illustration in his book *How to lay out a small garden* (2nd Ed 1858). Kemp was a pupil of Paxton who also worked at Chatsworth and was executive landscape architect at Birkenhead Park. He was chosen as the judge for the competition to lay out Central Park in New York, which was won by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Some of his ideas were drawn from John Claudius Loudon. The estate was sold by the Longman family in 1930 and in 1937 was purchased by John Dickinson as a Guild of Sport.

Principal Building: The house was built for Longman in 1854-6 with a garden room wing dated 1871, new entrance porch 1902, garden porch dated 1910. Grey brick with Bath stone dressings and chimneys. Portland stone plinth, and steep graduated slate roofs. 2 storeys, attics and basement. A large L-shaped Jacobean style house facing E. Near symmetrical 5-part E front with corresponding stepping of roofline and separate stone gable parapets and end chimneys to each part. Slightly projecting 3 windows wide centre with large canted bay window to ground floor rising from basement area with stone balustrade. Grey brick S front to walled garden with 3 Tudor arched entrances and pilasters alternating with piers.

The **approach** is from the west along a drive through tree studded undulating parkland.

Pleasure grounds: The plans were drawn up in 1853/54 and much new planting was required both here and in the park. Much of the major tree planting has survived. There was an elaborate formal mounded bed close to the house and the former chalk quarry was laid out as a rock garden. The gardens, as depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps, were at their most intricate at the end of the 19th century with wooded areas and winding paths which were simplified in the early 20th century. The Dutch pipe garden and rock garden survived until 1946 although the conservatory disappeared between 1908 and 1913. The rock garden still has vestiges of planting, including an outgrown yew hedge around the perimeter and rocks of interest, probably through Longman's interests in geology (and Fellow of the Geological Society of London). Paths and steps within the rock garden can still be traced and these paths can still be detected in places under the grass of the pleasure gardens around.

Walled Kitchen Garden: This is situated to the northwest of the house accessed by an iron gate of 1898. There is a (listed Grade II) octagonal summerhouse at its SW angle with mosaic floor (damaged) and carved stone decoration. This has been re-developed in recent years. A second walled garden, smaller than the first and lying to the west of it once contained glasshouses but it now derelict

Park: Three hundred hectares. Although now laid out as a golf course there are still areas of parkland with mature cedars and pines.

Farm: Apsley Manor Farmhouse is 130 metres to northwest of Shendish House. Built c. 1853 for Charles Longman in uncoursed knapped flint with grey brick dressings under a red tiled roof. With ornamental bargeboards to the gables. Two storey- H plan house.

Important people associated with site:

Resident: Charles Longman

Landscape Designer: Edward Kemp

Assessment of significance: An estate laid out by an eminent 19th century garden designer for a member of an important local industrial concern. It is also important as a Group with Nash Mills and Abbots Hill as important industrial-influenced landscapes of the 19th century. The importance of this as part of the local heritage is reflected in the PaperTrail project which highlights the paper industry in Hemel Hempstead (www.thepapertrail.org.uk)

Principal Uses: Golf Course and Club House

Public Access/Rights of Way:

Designations

Area of Archaeological Significance: 52, Apsley Manor

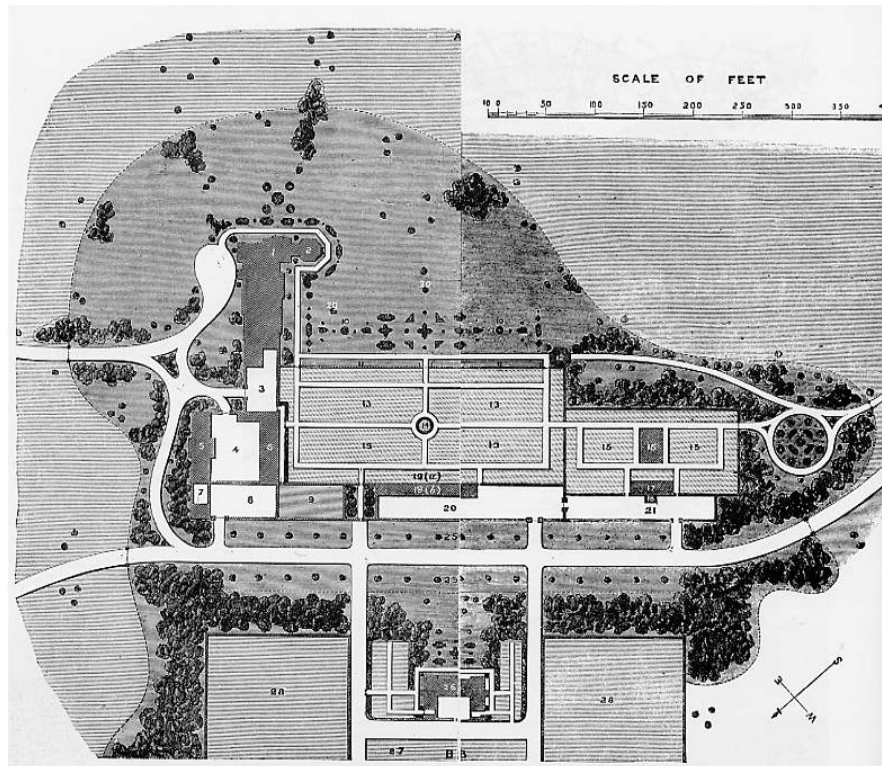
Listed Buildings: House, walled garden and octagonal summerhouse II

Landscape Characterisation Area: 8, Upper Gade Valley

Green Belt

Sources of information: Report available from HGT Conservation Group

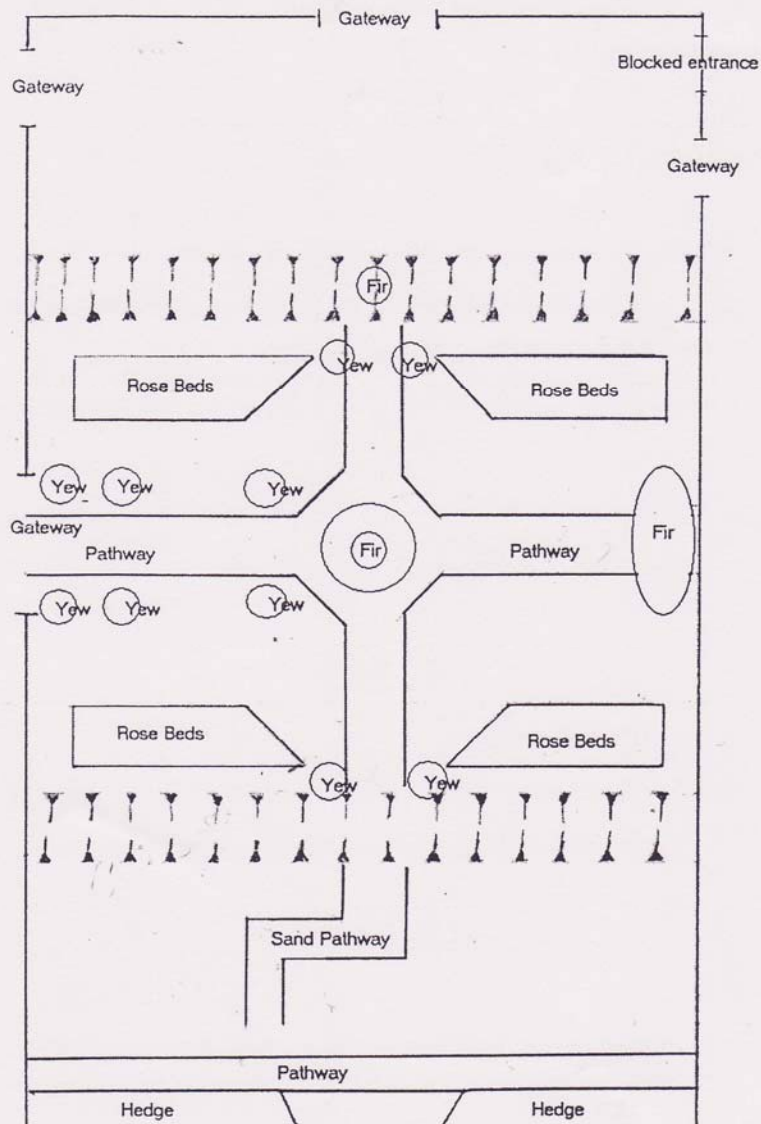
Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Date: 2007, 2011, 2012, 2103, 2014



Plan of Gardens at Shendish taken from Edward Kemp: *How to lay out a small garden* (2nd Ed 1858).

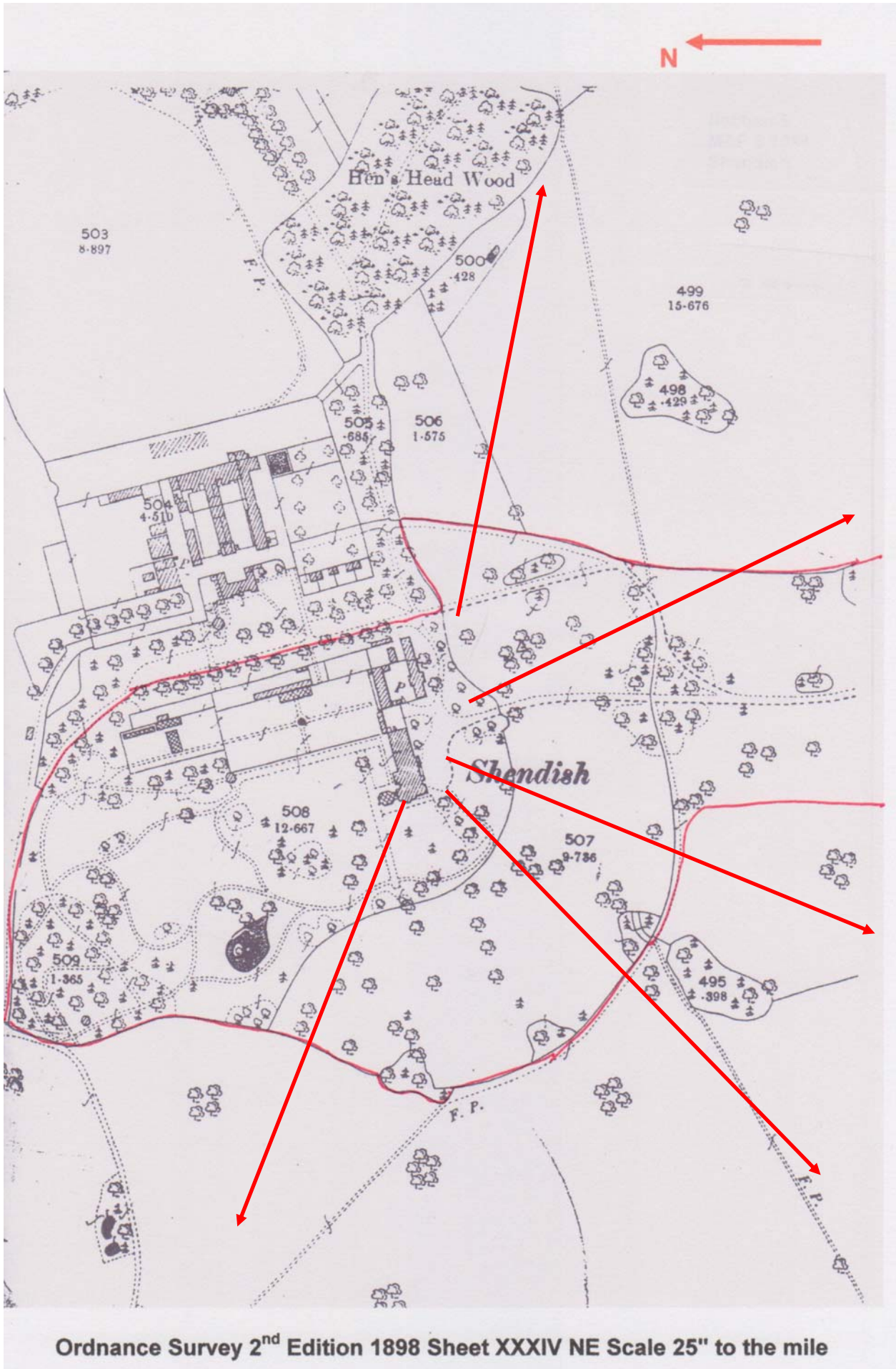
WALLED GARDEN

An independent survey of the main walled garden was undertaken and is shown in diagram format below. As can be seen much of Kemp's plan is still surviving.



Not to scale

From: *Abbots Hill, Shendish and Nash Mills* researched by M Stanyon for Hemel Hempstead Local History Society and HGT 1999 in HALS:



Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1898 Sheet XXXIV NE Scale 25" to the mile