

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site

Historic Name (if known)

GADDESSEN PLACE

Parish/Town **Great Gaddesden**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL038 111

Present Area (approximate) 124 Acres or do you just want the 7.2 acres sold with the house kate.

Brief Description

Country House built between 1768 and 1783 for Tho Halsey Esq (inscribed in plaster in the NE ground floor room).and occupied in 1774. Park created at the same time.

Principal Buildings:

The House: A Grade II* Neoclassical villa, traditionally in the style of James Wyatt (and if so then this is his earliest dated work), set on a hill slope commanding the Gade valley to the west. The house was gutted by fire in February 1905 and rebuilt in 1908 by Cole A Adams for the Halsey family within the old shell. The North pavilion and quadrant link was demolished in 1955 and the south pavilion and east wall of the quadrant link was demolished in 1963 for dry rot. Today the house is 5 windows wide, 4 at the ends, two storeys high with an attic and basement and is entered through a central C19 porte cochere at ground level. The base storey survives of quadrant corridors and 2 former pavilions to NE and SE. A terastyle Ionic full height portico fronts the 3 middle bays of the west front with triangular pediment and 16 stone steps.

Conservatory: Added to original house in 1881 against the convex west face of the SE quadrant corridor and has dentilled entablature breaking forward over Composite order columns with urns over and transomed tall 2 light windows between.

The Entrance Lodge: N from A4146: Grade II built in 1870 in Polychrome brick with Bath stone dressings and half timbering to the upper parts and white brick infill. There are steep red tile roofs with bands of scalloped tiles. The Lodge is 2-storeys in the centre with single storey wings to north and south and faces east onto the drive by the entrance gates.

Approach : From the east, past the Lodge along a tarmacadam drive through Birchley Wood and the Park, terminating in a gravelled forecourt to the north east of the house.

Stable block/other utilitarian buildings: Stables with attached walled enclosures, now a riding school. C18, probably 1768 James Wyatt. A symmetrical 3 sided courtyard of single storey buildings open to the N and with 2 2 storey square corner blocks rising a little higher than the rest at the junctions of the sides with pyramidal roofs. 11 bays south range, 6 bays eastern range and 2 bays corresponding with west range. Coachhouse with 2 pairs of double doors occupying northern part of west wing. Also dairy and derelict potting shed.

Pleasure grounds:

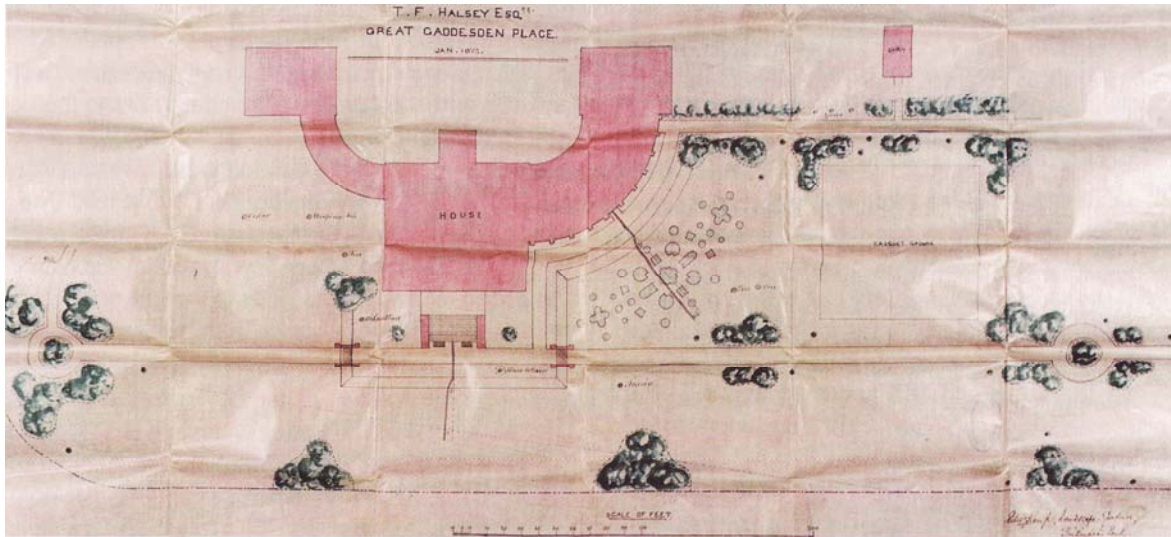
Plan prepared by Edward Kemp in 1872 featuring a raised terrace immediately in front of the house, a geometric parterre consisting of flower beds cut into the lawn below, a straight gravel path, a croquet lawn and some specimen trees. The path is now grassed over as are the beds although faint traces survive as undulations in the lawn but a number of trees on his plan still survived, including a black walnut tree which is still bearing fruit, an ancient weeping ash, 2

Atlas cedars and 2 small leaved limes. An area of the croquet lawn survives and there is a stone seat in place there. To the south there is a sunken garden and pond. The map of 1901 shows an Ice House

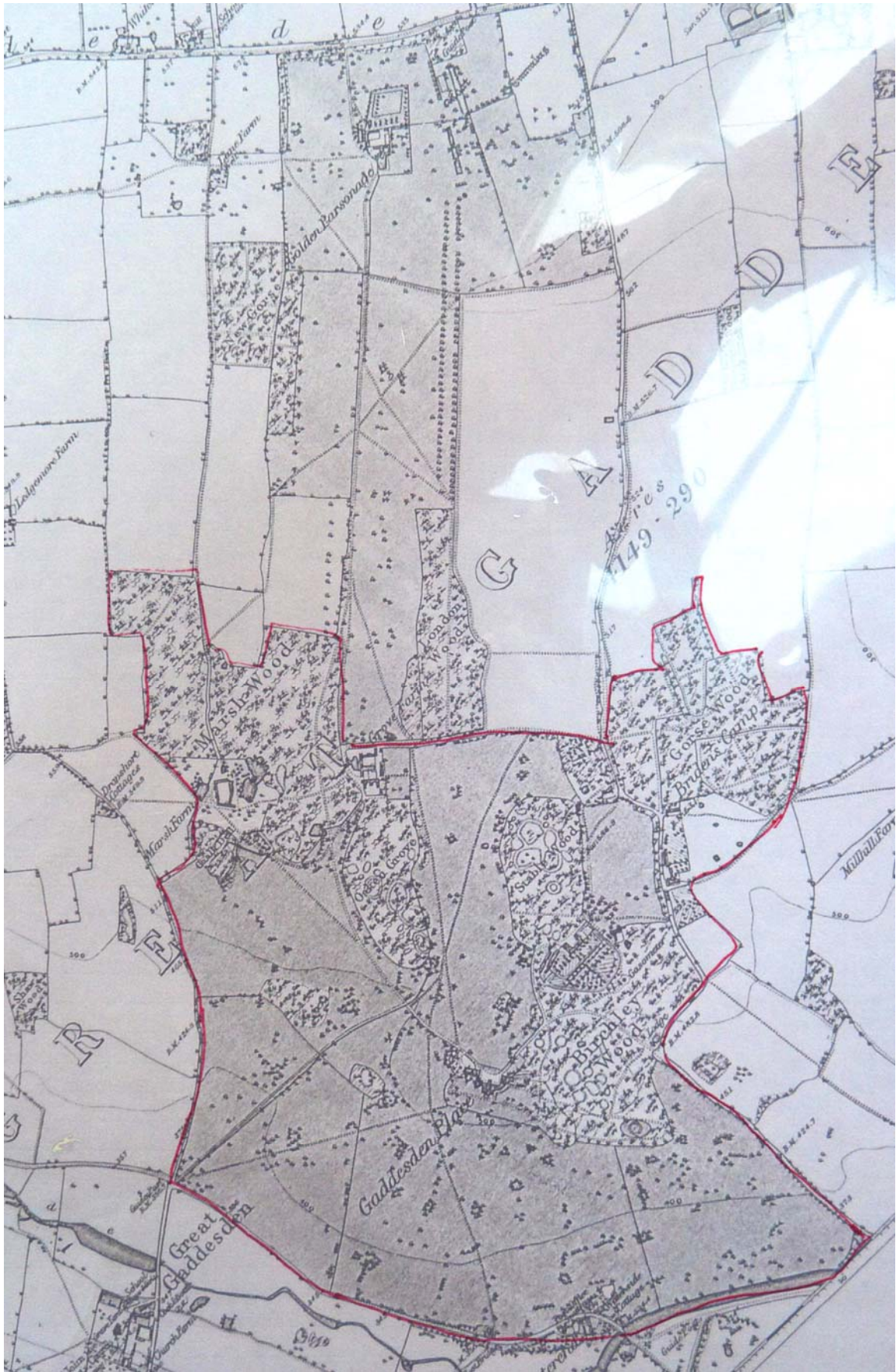
Walled Garden: The walls of the kitchen garden are Flemish bond capped bricks. There is a gravel path aligned to the entrance and all is now set to lawns, beds, shrubs and trees and some vegetables with a modern greenhouse on the south facing wall.

Park: Begun at the same time as the house in 1768. Much of the parkland timber came from earlier hedgerows and a pre-existing area of woodland was also incorporated and at least two public roads closed to make way for the open pastures. A good deal of the park has been ploughed up but the remains provide an impressive setting.

<p>Important people associated with site: Resident: Built for Thos. Halsey and still forms part of the Halsey Estate which remains one of the oldest estates in Hertfordshire in single family ownership. The house and 7.2 acres was sold on a 250 year lease in 1979. It is linked, by family and geographically to Golden Parsonage (q.v.) Architect: Ascribed to James Watt Designer: Edward Kemp</p>
<p>Assessment of significance. House and garden design by eminent architect and landscape architect with many elements of the 19th century layout still extant. Built in a commanding position on the high ground to the west of the Gade Valley, it forms a focal point for the valley landscape.</p>
<p>Principal Uses: Residential , some commercial, shooting rights over woodland</p>
<p>Public Access/Rights of Way: FP18, 20, 21</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) Gaddesden Place Grade II* The Lodge Grade II Gaddesden Place Stables and attached walls of 2 enclosures Grade II Green Belt Area of Archaeological Significance Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Alpine Meadow SSI Landscape Character Area: 123 High Gade Valley</p>
<p>Sources of information: Original report of Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in ACC 3898 in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.</p>
<p>Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Date: 1999.</p>



Edward Kemp's Design for Gaddesden Place 1872 (courtesy HALS)



Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII 1883-4 Scale 6": 1 Mile. Also showing relationship to Golden Parsonage