

Heritage Assessment

Boughton Mount, Boughton Lane, Maidstone ME17 4NA

Introduction

1. This Heritage Advice Note has been prepared on behalf of Kent County Council (KCC). It is intended to provide initial advice based on a visit to the former Boughton Mount, Maidstone (hereafter referred to as 'the Site') undertaken 6 June 2018, and desk-based research.
2. This Note provides comments on the following:
 - Quality and heritage value of the existing buildings;
 - Contribution made by the buildings, as existing, to the character of area;
 - Key considerations;
 - Relevant heritage planning policy considerations;
 - Comments to inform proposals.

Summary Assessment of Significance

3. The Site covers approximately 11 acres formerly part of the Boughton Mount Estate, one of the principal seats in Boughton Monchelsea from at least the C16¹ (figure 1). The main house, of uncertain date but at least pre-1842 according to map regression (figure 2), was lost in a fire shortly after the Second World War. The entire Site was originally gifted to KCC in 1948 by Henrietta Foster Wheeler and Joan Foster Pickering with a covenant restricting the use of the Site to "the education of delicate children". In 1963 this restriction was broadened to include use as a residential hostel and training centre under the National Health Act 1948

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1413736>

and Mental Health Act 1959 including horticultural training purposes. There is a prohibition against building within the gardens and woodland. In the 1970s a Special School and Adult Training Centre was built on the site with other associated buildings mainly based in the north western part of the site. It has been vacant for at least 5 years. Within the northern part there are also various walled areas which were the former kitchen gardens for the original Mansion house on the site before KCC ownership, together with a water tower and associated barn/building. The southern half of the site is separated by a Listed Ha Ha and nearby Folly, and comprises woodland with a rare tree species.

4. The Site is within the context of two listed buildings. A grade II Ha Ha with footbridge (figure 3), list description as follows:

*"The ha-ha with footbridge in the grounds of Boughton Mount is listed for the following principal reasons: * Date: early C19 date from map evidence; * Monumental Scale: it rises to ten feet in height on the south side, very high for a ha-ha wall; * Intactness: it survives substantially intact with the additional interest of an Edwardian green sandstone footbridge over the ditch; * Group Value: it has group value with the folly in the grounds of Boughton Mount; * Historic interest; it is a surviving garden feature from Boughton Monchelsea from at least the C16. Since the fire destroyed the main house it is one of the only reminders of Boughton Mount's long and interesting history and connection with John Braddick and George Foster Clark, two prominent local figures."*

There is also a grade II listed folly (figure 4), the list description of which reads:

*"The folly in the grounds of Boughton Mount is listed for the following principal reasons: * Date: early C19 from map evidence; * Architectural interest: an early C19 'Gothick' style garden building in Kentish ragstone rubble, resembling a church with a squat square tower; * Intactness: appears substantially intact apart from bricked up entrances; * Group value: groups with the ha-ha wall to the south; * Historic interest: it is a surviving garden feature from Boughton Mount which was one of the principal seats of Boughton Monchelsea. Following the loss of the main house to fire after*

World War II it is one of the only reminders of Boughton Mount's long and interesting history and its connexion with John Braddick, a prominent local figure."

5. The Site is not within a conservation area, neither does it fall within the setting of any conservation areas.
6. The Site's main building has been removed and replaced with an assemblage of 1970s educational buildings and other piecemeal outbuildings, added in the intervening years. These changes have detracted from the architectural interest of the Site - the original arrangement, scale and form of which is no longer appreciable because of the replacement of the primary estate building.
7. In terms of heritage value, the Site retains some features which speak of its earlier history as a prominent estate in the area. These are the grade II listed early 19th century folly and ha ha, the somewhat neglected garden and woodland, surviving walls to walled garden (circa early-mid 19th century, figure 5) and stone barn (circa mid-19th century) with circa early 20th century water tower (figure 6).
8. Based on initial observations and desk-based research, along with a review of historic mapping, the buildings on the Site hold a range of heritage values – from the special architectural and historical interest of the grade II listed folly and ha ha, to the localised interest of ancillary buildings associated historically with a prominent estate. These ancillary buildings do not yield any particular architectural interest.

Key considerations

9. The following points need to be considered moving forward:
 - i. **The heritage value of Boughton Mount:** The heritage value is confined to those ancillary buildings that act as reminder of the former Boughton Mount Estate. Only the folly and ha ha are recognised as having sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant inclusion as statutory designated heritage assets. The setting of these assets, within the garden and woodland of the original estate, is important in appreciating their significance. The other structures, including the

remaining walls to the walled garden and stone barn are of local interest and reinforce the understanding of Boughton Mount's past as a prominent estate. The main 1970s educational building, and other 20th century buildings on the Site are of no local heritage value and make a negative contribution to the setting of the designated heritage assets. The 20th century buildings have an incongruous and complicated layout which makes the original Site arrangement difficult to interpret.

- ii. **Setting of nearby designated heritage assets:** The Site contains two designated heritage assets, the 19th century folly and ha ha, both listed at grade II. These features are sensitive to change, however their context has been altered with the removal of the original main estate building and replacement with a large educational facility considered to make a negative impact to their setting.
- iii. **New development:** With reference to the point above, a considered replacement building could be of benefit to the setting of the listed structures on the Site, improving upon the negative impact the existing 1970s building has upon the designated heritage assets.

Comments to inform future use

- 10. This Advice Note concludes that the designated heritage assets on the Site are of architectural and historic interest and are sensitive to change. As the 1970s educational facility makes a negative contribution to the setting of these designated assets, its replacement with a more sensitive building would most likely be supported.
- 11. The other remaining ancillary buildings of the original Boughton Mount Estate, including the remaining walls of the walled garden and stone barn with water tower are of local heritage interest, and help to inform the history and form of the Site.

12. New or replacement buildings on the Site would ideally be confined to the northern part of the site to avoid harm to the setting of the ha ha and folly and the important connection to the gardens and woodland they have.



Figure 1 –Site boundary

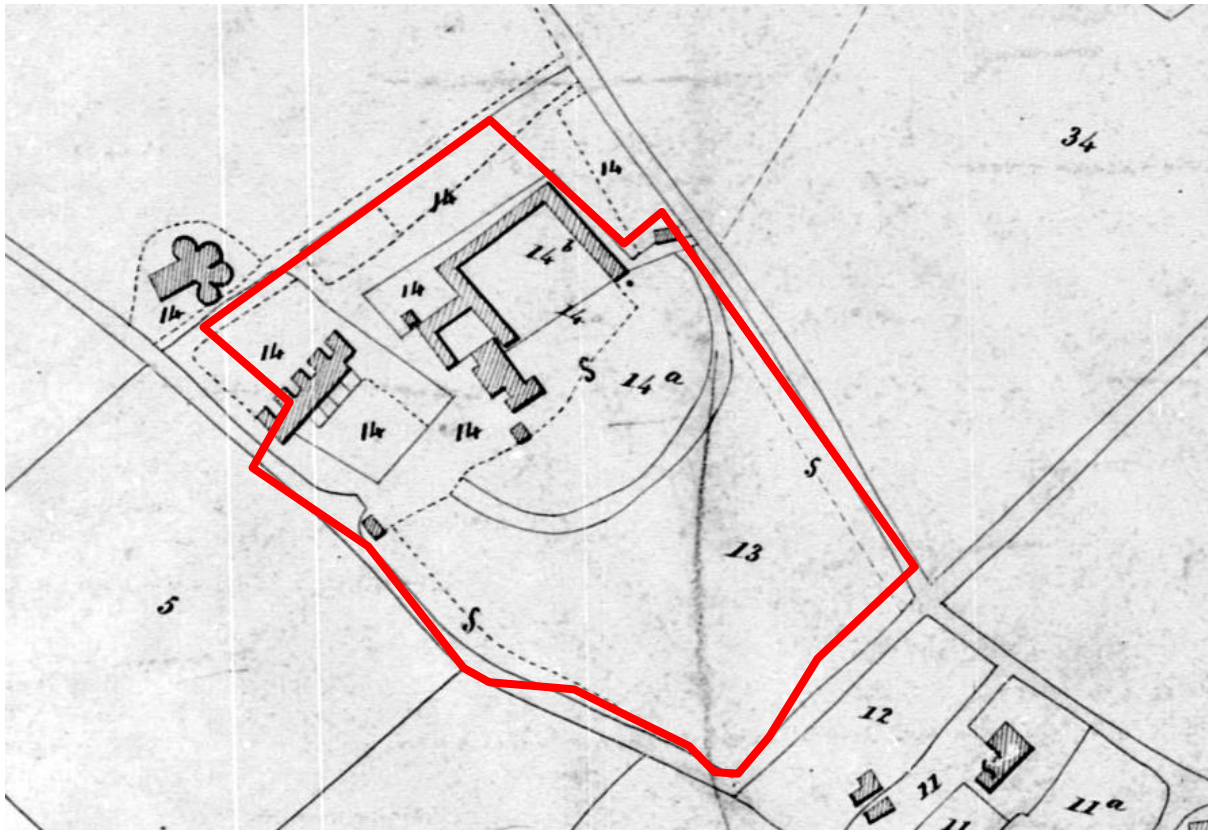


Figure 2 – Boughton Monchelsea Tithe Map of 1842.



Figure 3a – Ha ha with Edwardian bridge.



Figure 3b – Wall face of ha ha.



Figure 4a – Folly with overgrown foliage.



Figure 4b – Folly with modern brick infill of doorway



. Figure 5a – Northern edge (outer) of walled garden



. Figure 5b – North-east corner (outer) of walled garden.



Figure 6 – Barn and water tower.