

BECKENHAM PLACE

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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BECKENHAM PLACE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beckenham Place is a Grade II* listed mansion of c1774 with a simple stone faced exterior and a number of important interior rooms. It was extended in about 1810 by the construction of a new entrance front which incorporates a great deal of material from the great house of c1723 at Wricklemarsh. The estate was purchased by John Cator in 1773 and remained in the Cator family until 1926 when it was purchased by the London County Council. The Cators occupied the house until about 1825; it was let to a series of tenants during the remainder of the nineteenth century and was in institutional use in the early twentieth century. Since passing into public ownership the house has provided accommodation for refreshment rooms and golf related uses on upper and lower ground floor levels. Upper floors were in residential use for a time, were briefly occupied by a theatre archive and have now been empty for about ten years.

The mansion is an important building, reflected in its Grade II* listing, principally because of its position in the designed landscape, the interiors of the upper ground floor and the salvaged fragments of Wricklemarsh.

A great deal of the building is presently empty or under-used and sections have been closed off because of defective means of escape in case of fire. Lack of clear beneficial use is resulting in minimal maintenance, generally undertaken on a reactive basis and the mansion is on the English Heritage register of Buildings at Risk

A major investment is required to bring the building back into beneficial use and to secure adequate investment in ongoing maintenance. The cost of basic repair and refurbishment is estimated at £1.5M; the extent of alterations which need to be made to the building depend on proposed uses and may amount to a further £1.1M. These figures exclude fees and VAT.

The most important action now required is to find an appropriate sustainable use for the building, compatible with the location in a public park and capable of funding both the initial investment in repair and conservation of the fabric and the long term maintenance of the building.

BECKENHAM PLACE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This plan was written by Jon Bolter of Rees Bolter Architects, a conservation architect with considerable experience of working with historic buildings and leading a team comprised of Ken Burlton of Burlton Consultancy, Andrew Kirk of Heritage Cost Consultants, Ralph Mills, structural engineer and Chris Currell of Currell & Co, commercial agents.

An Options Report considering potential new uses for the mansion was commissioned and prepared by Burlton Consultancy in parallel with this Conservation Management Plan.

The plan has been developed in consultation with Alison Taylor, Peter Clark and Martin Hyde of LB Lewisham (Regeneration), Phil Ashford and Regina Jaszinski of LB Lewisham (Conservation and planning) and Malcolm Woods of English Heritage. We acknowledge the assistance of John Brushe in analysis of the iconography of the historic plasterwork.

The plan was prepared between April and July 2009.

The plan covers the mansion and takes account of the immediate surroundings and setting of the mansion but not the wider landscape, which was partly assessed in the Land Use Consultants Masterplan of 2007. Consideration of change and of new uses will need to take careful account of the impact on the wider setting of the building including, in particular, the Homestead to the east.

A number of past studies of the building have assumed that the entrance front faces north and for simplicity we have continued this assumption. In reality, it faces north west..

These documents have been formatted for double sided printing, which will generally place the illustrations opposite the relevant text.

BECKENHAM PLACE



The entrance (north) front is largely work of c1810, incorporating material from Wicklemarsh, at which time the approach (now the car park) was raised giving level access to the upper ground floor. The original approach was probably a large external stair to a colonnade or portico.



The 1774 house is revealed from the south. The house was very plain, the starkness emphasised by the small first floor windows set quite far from those of the upper ground floor. The stairs and gallery, dormer windows and chimney pots are of later dates.

UNDERSTANDING

1

UNDERSTANDING

Beckenham Place is a good mid Georgian compact villa with some excellent interiors and a remarkable although ultimately unsatisfactory north wing, incorporating material from the great house at Wricklemarsh, all set within a landscaped park, now used as a public park and golf course

The mansion and park were constructed with wealth generated by the timber trade, remaining in residential use until about 1900, institutional use until 1930 and subsequently used as a public park.



The important parts of the interior include splendid ceilings, the central hall and best stair.

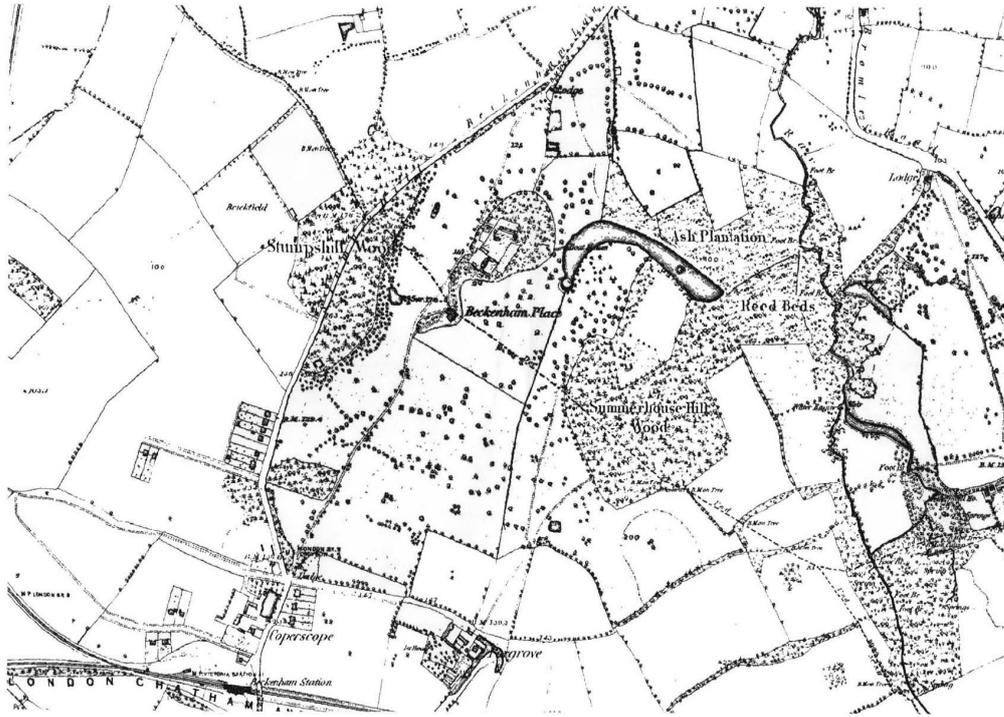
BECKENHAM PLACE



Rocques map of c1745. The area of the present house is shown in red



Cary's map of c1784. Buildings in the location of the present house are highlighted in red



Extract from first edition OS map of the 1860s

HISTORY

1.1 BECKENHAM

In the eighteenth century Beckenham was a small village set in rolling hills and woods in north west Kent, lying between Bromley and Sydenham. First recorded in the Domesday Book, the Manor of Beckenham was held by the St John family during the early eighteenth century. In 1773 Frederick, 3rd Lord Viscount St John sold the manor to John Cator of Bromley. Contemporary maps (opposite) are rather vague on the location and extent of buildings on Stump Hill at the time.

Beckenham remained rural until the later nineteenth century. From the mid nineteenth century onwards the landscape was crossed by a series of railways, developed by rival companies and bringing housing development to the area. The last railway line was that constructed by the London Chatham and Dover Railway in 1892, dividing the parkland unequally into two.

Beckenham Place Park straddled the boundary between the parishes of Beckenham and Bromley and then the counties of Kent and London and the boroughs of Bromley and Lewisham until the whole of the park was included within the Borough of Lewisham in 1973. The construction of the mansion house hard against the parish boundary suggests some past difficulty in locating the house any further to the east.

1.2 BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

Study and analysis of the park attached to the mansion is not part of this study but is nonetheless an important influence on any consideration of the mansion,

Creation of a parkland setting to the first house is clear in Bayly's engraving (page 10). The main blocks of woodland were well established before Cator's time (as shown in the maps by Rocque and Cary) Cator laid out the stableyards set within a large belt of trees, the lake formed by damming the narrow stream and the landscaped grounds around the house.

Some time in the late eighteenth century Cator removed the main road from Beckenham to Southend which ran close to the mansion, along the lines of the present drives, further to the north around the perimeter of the park.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Bayly's engraving of c1785

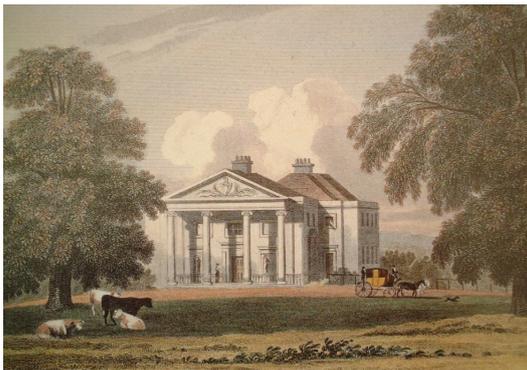


View from the south west in 2009. Note the addition of dormers, chimney pots, the gallery and the projecting north wing



View from a similar point in 2009

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Undated watercolour showing a view across the valley to the mansion, probably c 1830 The hill to the left of the mansion is much exaggerated (Guildhall)



The entrance from in 1821. Chimney pots have been added but there are no dormers. Although the rooflines and pitches are recorded accurately, the portico is given a more correct pediment than actually exists



The entrance front in 2009

UNDERSTANDING

The first Ordnance Survey maps of the 1860s shows the park in more detail. The lake has a boathouse and an island; the pleasure grounds around the house are protected by a fence. In addition to the main drives, protected by the lodges, there appears to have been another approach to the house from the east along a drive with a lodge on the Bromley Road.

The railway which was driven through the park in 1892 has permanently divided the park into quite separate areas. From 1907 onwards the golf course has steadily increased in its domination of the areas to the north of Summerhouse Hill Wood, replacing the parkland tree planting with ribbons of trees separating the fairways. From the late nineteenth century onwards land around the perimeter of the park has been given over to private housing. Athletic grounds were established on the separated eastern part of the estate after the First World War, by which time the lake had been partly filled and the boathouse lost.

By 1956 the lake had been reduced to a small pond and buildings to the east of the stableyard have been cleared to increase the golf course.

The immediate surroundings of the house are now dominated by the fairways and greens of the golf course and by the car park to the north.

Residential development around the perimeter of the estate during the last century, particularly around Foxgrove Lodge has reduced the overall size of the estate. The estate is now approximately 98.5ha in area and, in addition to the golf course, includes formal gardens in the vicinity of the mansion and Homesteads, amenity grassland, fields and ancient woodlands.

The other surviving buildings in the park are the two lodges, listed at Grade II, the homestead (the former stables) also listed at Grade II and the walls and buildings within the former kitchen garden.

BECKENHAM PLACE



John Cator, painted in 1777 by Reynolds

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Music room at 20 St James Square by Adam
(from Survey of London)
Ceilings by the Rose brothers, similar in design to those at the mansion

Ceiling at 9 John St by Adam

Copyright material not included in this version

Drawings prepared by Robert Adam for William Rose at Beckenham Rectory

1.3 JOHN CATOR (1728-1806)

John Cator was born on 21 March 1728 in Ross on Wye, Herefordshire, the son of John Cator and Mary Brough who were Quakers. John was the eldest of four sons and two daughters. The Cators had established themselves in Beckenham and Bromley by the 1760s

In about 1762 John Cator married Mary (1730-1804) daughter of the famous Quaker botanist Peter Collinson (1694-1768). Their only child, Maria died in 1766 at the age of three John and Mary Cator are known to have travelled to Venice in 1770 (Ingamells)

Cator made his first fortune in the timber trade; the business had been established by his father at Bankside in about 1748 and used his wealth to purchase and develop land in South London and Kent, notably at Wicklemarsh, where he purchased the vast estate and house of the late Sir Gregory Page in 1783 and undertook the developments now known as Blackheath Park. Manning suggests that Cator's fortune was enhanced by activities as a financier as well as timber merchant.

Cator also took up residence within the new Adelphi development of Robert and James Adam in 1776. He lived at 5 John Street until 1782 when he moved to 7 Adelphi Terrace, the grandest part of the development.

Cator's circle of friends and acquaintances included Samuel Johnson, Hester Thrale, Fanny Burney and James Boswell and his character is invariably described using the following extracts of their writings about him.

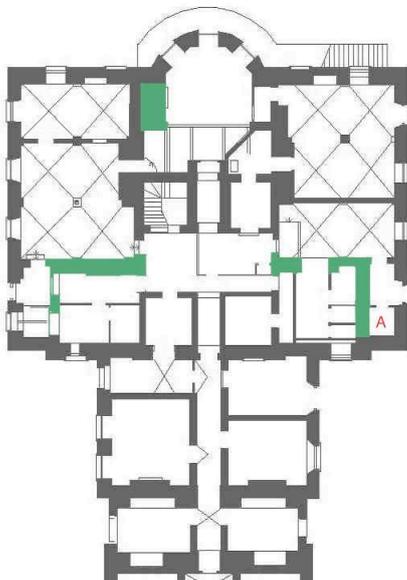
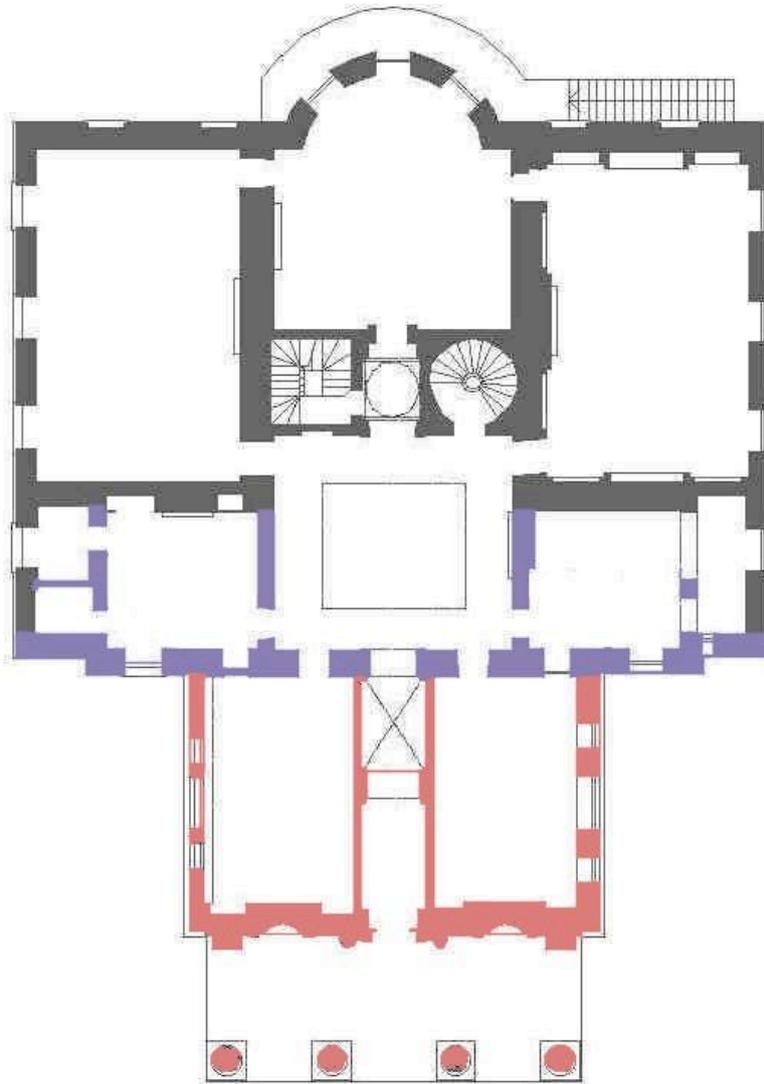
Cator has a rough, manly independence and understanding and does not spoil it by complaisance. He never speaks merely to please and seldom is mistaken in things which he has any right to know. There is much good in his character and much usefulness in his knowledge.
(Johnson)

He (Cator) prated so much, yet said so little, and pronounced his words so vulgarly that I found it impossible to keep my countenance
(Burney)

A purseproud Tradesman coarse in his expressions and vulgar in Manners and Pronunciation; though very intelligent, and full of both money and good sense (Thrale)

Cator had political ambition and stood as a member of parliament for Wallingford, Ipswich and was Sheriff of Kent in 1781. In April 1784 he was elected MP for Ipswich but after a petition was presented to the House of Commons the election was set aside.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Above

Plan of the principal (upper ground) floor. The areas in grey are little altered since construction in 1774. The north wing of c1810 is shown in pink. The intermediate areas, shown in blue, seem likely to have been affected and/or altered during construction of the north wing, but the extent of alteration is not certain.

Left

The key plan adjacent shows the lower ground floor indicating in green those parts of the building which have walls which are either unusually thick or are in unusual positions, which might be explained by retention of parts of an earlier structure. Examination of a section of wall at 'A' suggests that it may once been external.

1.4 THE FIRST HOUSE

John Cator appears to have constructed the main part of the present house soon after acquiring the manor in 1773. Although Cator may have incorporated or re-cased an existing building no evidence has been found for this other than a possible explanation of some of the eccentricities of the plan (opposite). Rocque's map (page 8) does appear to show a building roughly in the position of the present house.

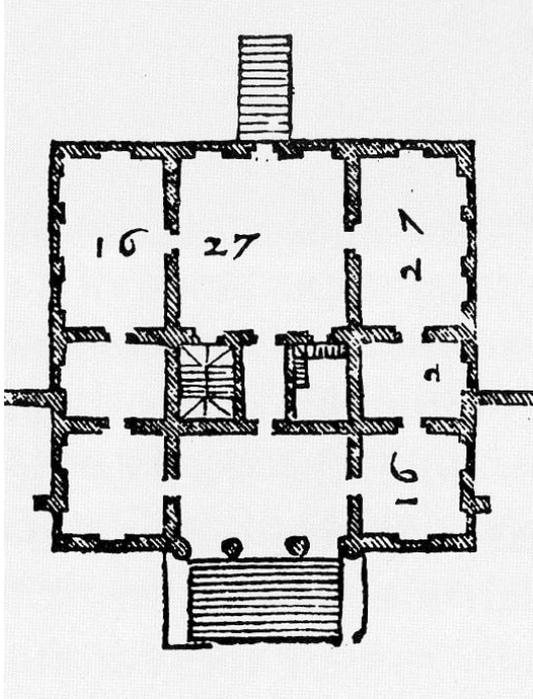
The form and layout of the first house is not certain. Bayly's view from the south east of about 1780 (page 10) is a key piece of evidence; this was included in Hasted's History of Kent of 1792 and was still being published as an up to date view in 1805 (Lysons' Environs of London). This shows a plain house with a semicircular bay on the south side, stone faced and with chimney stacks in their present positions but without the present pots. The ground floor bay windows have dropped cills and the general arrangement of the elevations and windows is similar to the present arrangement. No view of the entrance side of the house has been found.

The plan of the first house cannot be perfectly separated from the plan of the extended house. The extent to which the later alteration remodelled the northern side of the house is not clear but it is not impossible that the present arrangement of staircases is original, despite seeming unusual in having so small a principal stair for a house of this size. Some similarities can be found with the layout of Palladio's Villa Emo (overleaf), a country villa near Venice, which has unassuming staircases, principally because the upper floors were used for storage. The ratio of height, width and length of the principal rooms (13ft: 21ft and 34ft respectively) is also suggestive in that, as with Villa Emo, the proportions appear to be based on the Golden Section. The Golden Section was an ideal proportion, according to the ancient Greeks, much loved by Classical and other architects. The Golden Ratio of approximately 1:1.618 is also found in the Fibonacci series of numbers (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55...)

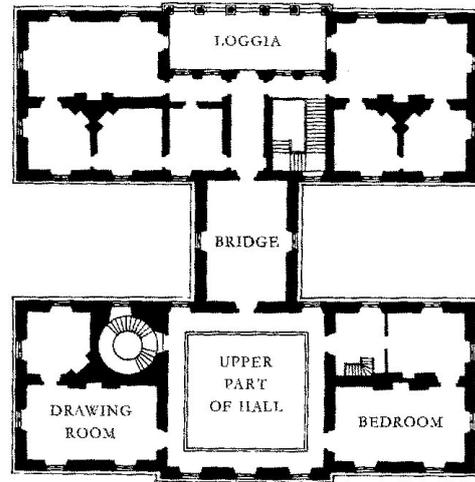
The joinery, ironmongery, decoration and plasterwork of the three principal rooms have clear similarity with the work of Robert and James Adam, whose work was characterised by inventive individual variations on set themes although there is no record of Adams' direct involvement. A great deal of Adams' plasterwork, including work at the Adelphi, was undertaken by the firm of Joseph Rose & Co, and it is suggestive that William Rose (1751-1829), the son of the elder Joseph Rose, was installed as rector of Beckenham in 1778 and that Robert Adam prepared proposals for a new rectory in the 1780s (page 12).

Although the figures and scenes on the decorative plasterwork of the principal rooms are fairly standard cast ornament, they are deployed to suit the uses of the rooms. The library has depictions of the Genius of Writing and Justice, the drawing room has themes associated with the ladies, such as music, and the arts, and in the dining room references to sacrifice, burnt offerings and banquets are to be found. The Cator arms have also been worked into the plasterwork of the bay. The ornament does confirm that the uses given to the principal rooms in the 1906 inventory (referred to later) are indeed the original uses.

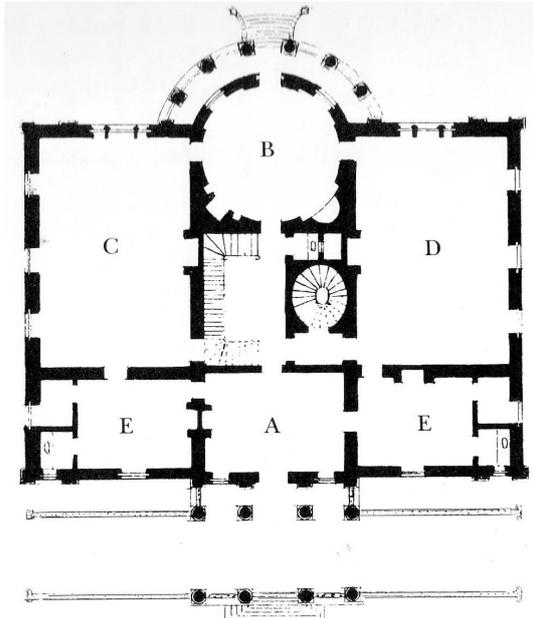
BECKENHAM PLACE



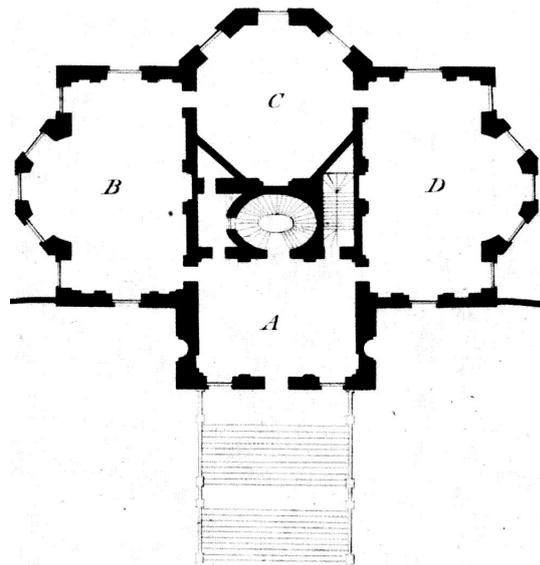
Villa Emo, Treviso 1555-65. Andrea Palladio (1508-80). Plan of the principal floor as shown in *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. Note the absence of a grand staircase, largely because the upper floors were used for storage.



Queens House, Greenwich of 1616-35 by Inigo Jones (1573-1652). Note the juxtaposition of the principal stairway, a spiral stair known as the Tulip Stair, with the double height galleried hall.



Villa at Putney Heath by Robert Adam (1728-92). A typical compact villa plan but of particular interest because of the small service rooms opening off the rooms marked E



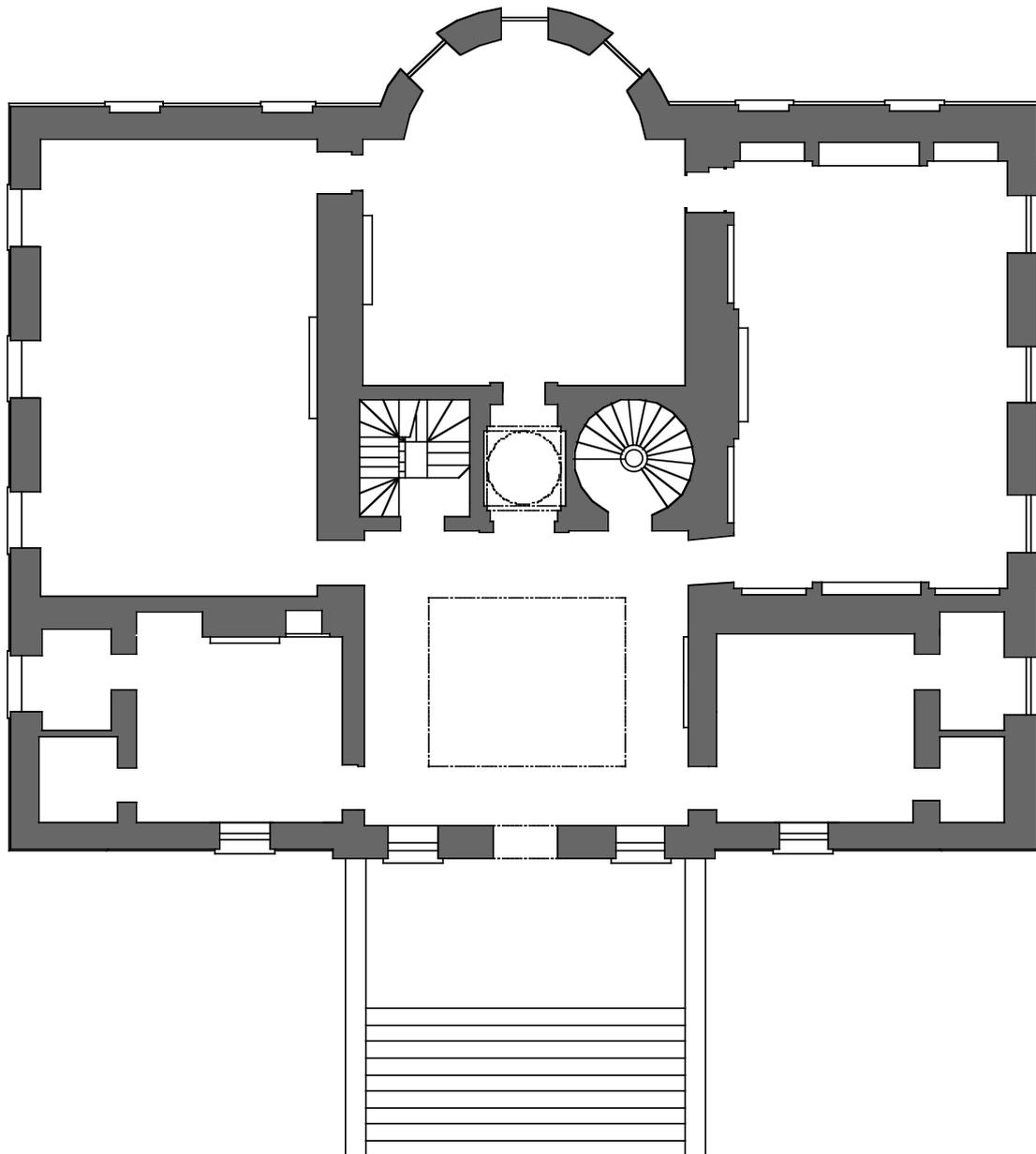
Danson Hill, Bexleyheath of 1762-5 by Sir Robert Taylor (1714-88). Comparisons have often been made between Beckenham Place and Taylor's work. Note the broad stairway leading to the principal storey which is at first floor level and the suite of three principal rooms (marked B, C and D), grouped around a core of stairways.

UNDERSTANDING

The design of the first house is often associated with the work of Sir Robert Taylor (1714-88), architect of nearby Danson House (opposite), but there seems to be little evidence to support this theory other than plans of the compact villa type.

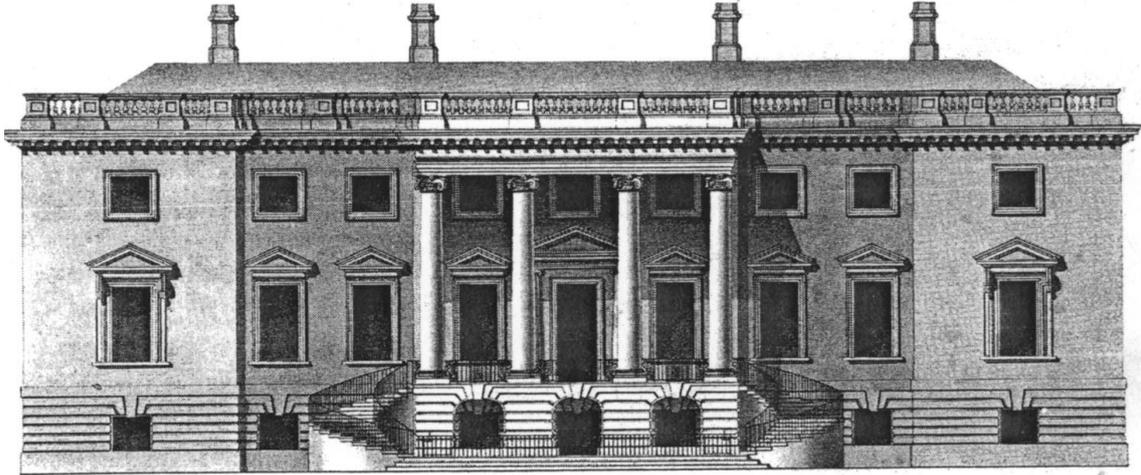
There are a number of clues to the overall plan shape of the first house. A window still visible in the rangers room (refer to the plans on page 24), the early roof timbers and roof boarding visible in cupboards in the second floor, suggest that the central section of the north elevation was approximately on the line of the present wall which separates the first house from the later extension.

A sketch of a possible layout for the original house is given below.

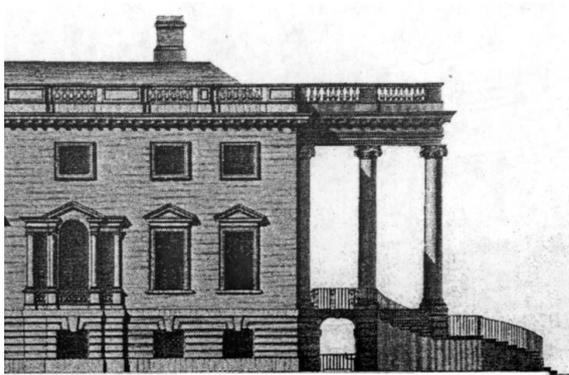


Suggested layout of the principal floor of the first house. The evidence comprises surviving but altered roof timbers, windows in the rangers office, the positions of the chimney stacks in the Bayly engraving. There is currently no evidence on which to determine whether steps, a portico or a colonnade were positioned on the north side of the house.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Wricklemarsh. Elevation of Garden Front as shown in New Vitruvius Britannicus of 1767. Four of the six giant columns are now at Beckenham



Side elevation. Also from New Vitruvius Britannicus
Note the principal central window, basement windows and rustications which are now to be found at Beckenham Place

Copyright material not included in this version
Undated engraving of the ruins of Wricklemarsh (Guildhall)

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JMW Turner Ruins of Wricklemarsh 1790s (Tate)

1.5 WRICKLEMARSH

The house at Wricklemarsh plays an important role in the changes at Beckenham. It was built by the wealthy Sir Gregory Page to the designs of John James (c1673-1746) in the early 1720s. James' career was overshadowed by his more famous contemporaries such as Gibbs, Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor but he remains a significant figure now best remembered for his collaborations with Hawksmoor at St Luke Old Street and St John Horsleydown. John Brushe's account of his career sets his work at Wricklemarsh within its wider context, particularly highlighting the house at Wricklemarsh as being one of the great lost Palladian houses on the 1720s. Page assembled a major collection of art works and was the founder of the Free and Easy dining club (DNB)

Sir Gregory died in 1775; his heirs had no need of such an extravagant house and the estate was auctioned in 1783, the successful bidder being John Cator, whose principal motive was probably to undertake development on the land. After unsuccessful attempts to let the house, Cator decided to demolish it and sell the materials. The first sale of building materials was advertised in the Times of May 1787 but it does seem probable that the much of the shell of the house was still standing in 1810. Lambert, writing 1806 records that "*A great part of it has not yet been removed, and now stands in ruins, a melancholy monument of its former grandeur.*"

It seems well established that the north wing at Beckenham Place was constructed using salvaged material from Wricklemarsh. The columns to the portico are rather too large for the building they guard, but at 25 feet in height are a perfect match for the columns at Wricklemarsh. Comparison of exterior of the north wing with engravings of Wricklemarsh suggests that a substantial amount of material may have been re-used including many of the window surrounds, the rusticated lower storey, the niches and columns flanking the entrance door.

The partial inscription above the entrance door of Beckenham Place, of which 'SANS SOU..' can be deciphered, is probably the phrase "SANS SOUCI" which translates as 'free and easy' and must be another survival from Wricklemarsh

BECKENHAM PLACE



East elevation of the north wing showing many features from Wicklemarsh. The doorway may be from there or may be the original main doorway to the 1774 house.



Portico, The four columns from Wicklemarsh support a new pediment adorned with the Cator arms. The architrave running above the columns is too shallow to be classically correct and creates tension between the powerful columns and the lightweight pediment



The main doorway is likely to be of adapted material From Wicklemarsh. Traces of the words "Sans Souci" can be seen on the entablature.



The niches flanking the doorway contained statues and are likely to incorporate material from the entrance hall at Wicklemarsh

1.6

JOHN BARWELL CATOR AND THE NORTH WING

“At his house in Adelphi, aged 76 and very rich” (Gentlemans Magazine March 1806) John Cator died without issue on 21 Feb 1806. He left the great majority of his assets to John Barwell Cator (1781-1858), the son of his brother Joseph (1733-1818). John Barwell’s life appears to have been transformed by his inheritance. Later that same year he was married at Westport House, the seat of the Marquis of Sligo, to Elizabeth Louisa, daughter of Sir Ross Mahon, Bart of Castlegar, Co Galway and niece of the Marquis of Sligo. Castlegar had recently been rebuilt for Mahon by Sir Richard Morrison.

The following year John Barwell purchased a large sporting estate of 1200 acres at Woodbastwick in the Norfolk Broads and for a period of years spent his time between the two estates.

Although the fabric of the north wing is of considerable archaeological significance, the architectural relationship between the extension and parent is clumsy and it is hard, almost impossible, to believe that the patron of the first house could have sanctioned such work. The survival of the shell of Wricklemarsh into the nineteenth century and the internal character of the extension make it far more likely that the extension was the work of John Barwell Cator, undertaken in the whirlwind of expenditure following his inheritance, to impress his new wife and family. Major expenditure on country houses usually follows a change of ownership. The wing has, within this report, generally been referred to as work of c1810 although no secure dating has been established.

The new wing required the main hall to be approached along a rather long central corridor, with long rooms flanking it on each side. The overall impression of the new wing is that it was conceived as a showcase for masonry salvaged from Wricklemarsh, compromised by the levels existing within the original house. The pediment supported by the columns is visually too light and the rooms on each side of the central corridor are ill-proportioned. The additional accommodation was, presumably, welcome.

The ground levels to the north of the house appear to have been raised during this phase of work to allow more or less level access to the upper ground floor. The contours of the land before this alteration are not certain but it seems probably that the original north entrance incorporated a large flight of steps. This raising of the ground, supported in part on the vaults below, also created sloping banks to east and west which were then concealed below blocks of planting.

MAI, CASTLE OF Blasewitz, near Dresden.

KENT, in the neighbourhood of Beckenham.—For **DISPOSAL**, by private contract, the valuable **LEASE**, for about 16 years (with or without the elegant furniture), of that desirable **MANSION**, known as Beckenham-place, occupying a charming position in a handsomely-timbered park of upwards of 200 acres, within ten minutes' of the Beckenham Station, communicating with all parts of the metropolis and county, and within a pleasant drive of about eight miles of London-bridge. Beckenham-place comprises accommodation for a large family, is approached by winding drives, with two lodges at each entrance, has stabling, carriage-houses, gardens, vineries, green-houses, hothouses, pineries, and every requirement for an establishment of the highest class. There is a lake of large extent fully stocked with fish, and shooting over about 1,400 acres, farm buildings, &c., and it can be safely asserted that the property is one possessing attractions rarely to be met with. Full particulars of Mr. W. B. Snelling, estate agent, 163, Fenchurch-street, E.C., where views can be inspected.

UNFURNISHED HOUSE.—To be LET for a term

The Times Thursday, Aug 17, 1865; pg. 15.; col A

1.7 THE ABSENTEE LANDLORDS

John Barwell Cator and his family did live at Beckenham until at least 1823 but as the century moves on there are more references to other occupants. Cator does seem to have been increasingly located in Ireland and Woodbastwick, pursuing his sporting interests.

John Barwell is usually described as being wasteful and having had financial difficulties as a result of personal extravagance, the wider interests of the Cator family being protected by the care of his brother Peter, who returned from India to help in about 1840 and then his son Albemarle (1813-1868). Elizabeth died in Wiesbaden in about 1847 and John Barwell in 1858, leaving his estates to Albemarle who passed the estate on to his son, also Albermarle (1836-1906).

The tenants and occupiers of Beckenham Place during the nineteenth century include:

Alexander Inglis in 1829

William Peters, a banker, from before 1835 to after 1851

General Sir Walter Raleigh Gilbert during the 1850s (1785-1853) a national hero as a result of his conquest in Northern India (this may not be correct, he seems to have lived in India always. But he did die at St James in 1853

Robert Henry Page, Russia merchant and broker, from before 1861 until at least 1866. Probably died in Yorkshire in 1867 at the age of 39

A sixteen year lease on the house and 200 acres of grounds were advertised in 1865 (opposite)

Sir John Agmondisham Vesey Kirkland, (1820-71), Major general occupied the house in 1869-70

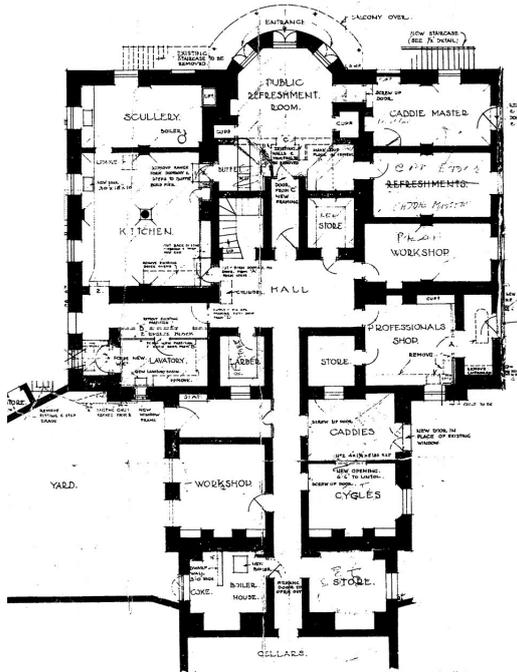
John Fell Christie was in occupation in 1874-6, Spencer Bruton in 1879 and Percy Bicknell, a merchant, in 1881.

A rather longer tenancy was that of Edwin Covell (1835-93) a carcasse butcher who resided there from about 1885 until his death.

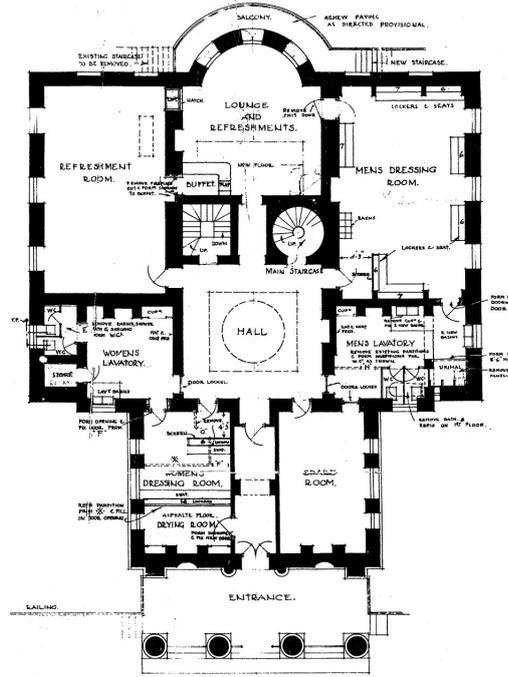
The alterations to the house carried out in the period of the absentee landlord are not clear. William Peters was in residence for a relatively long period and is most likely to have made changes. The other short tenancies suggest a period of little investment and it is certainly clear that few significant changes took place between the construction of the north wing in c1810 and the inventory of 1906, which still describes the house in terms of a country house rather than an institution. From it we can deduce that the following alterations had taken place

- The balcony and staircases serving the ground floor bay had been added. The "Regency" appearance of the surviving fragments suggests an early nineteenth century date for this work

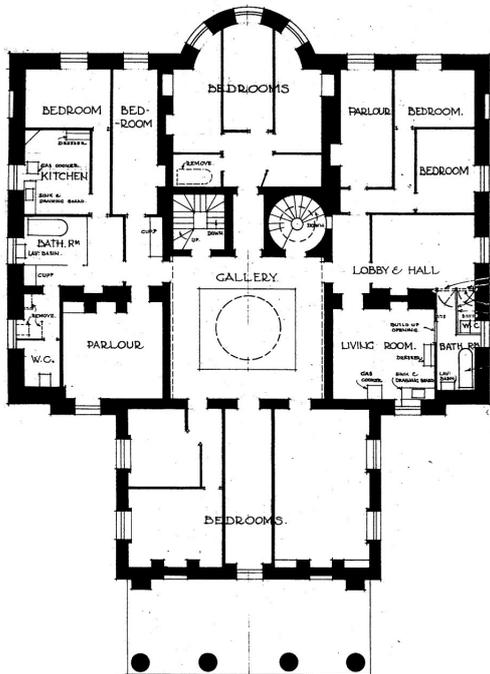
BECKENHAM PLACE



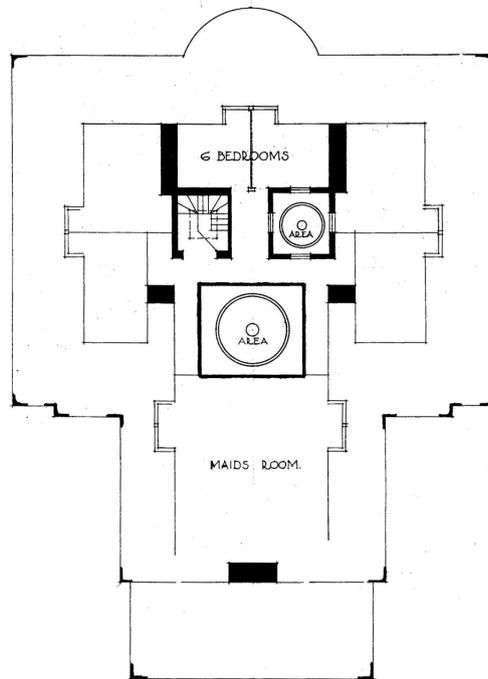
Lower ground floor



Upper ground floor



First floor



Second floor

Floor plans in 1934 showing the extent of the alterations made by the Sanatorium, notably the subdivision of the first floor into many small bedrooms. The lower ground floor plan shows the survival of windows from the north elevation of the 1774 house. The window between the caddies room and the store can still be seen today.

UNDERSTANDING

- The main hall was illuminated by a painted glass lantern. It no longer survives but seems likely to be an alteration of the mid to late nineteenth century.
- The alterations to the lowest flights of the servants stair, presumably to make access easier are likely to be of the C19
- A lift linking the scullery with the dining room had been installed, arriving in the space now forming a lobby between the dining room and drawing room.

1.8 INSTITUTIONAL USE

The last person to use the house as a dwelling appears to have been Edwin Covell. In 1902 the house was used by Craven College for Boys, a fairly brief period lasting only until 1905 when the school moved to Elmer Lodge, Beckenham, following which the house was let for a period of 21 years to Norwood Sanatorium, an organisation who treated the wealthy for drug and other addictions. Comparison of the 1906 inventory with LCC plans of 1934 (opposite) shows that the main alterations of this period of the history of the house were the subdivision of first floor rooms to provide many bedrooms, opening up of blind windows as working windows on the first floor.

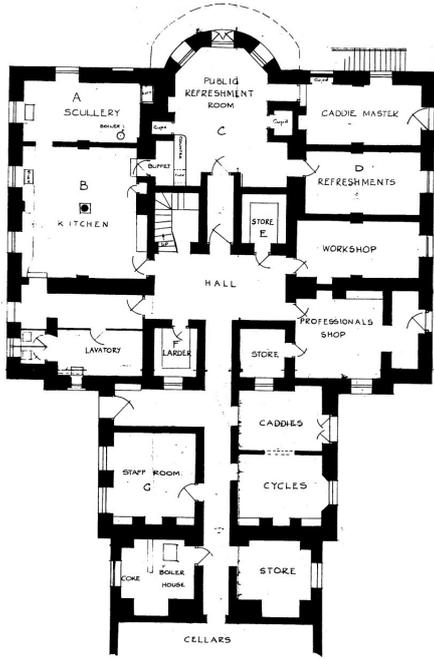
Residents at Norwood Sanatorium during its time at Beckenham appear to have included John Nicholson (1881-1955) mathematical physicist, An advertisement for the sanatorium (Times 29 Aug 1904 1A), dating from before their move to Beckenham stated

ALCOHOLISM-NORWOOD SANATORIUM, Course of treatment six weeks only. No secret remedies, No compulsory detention

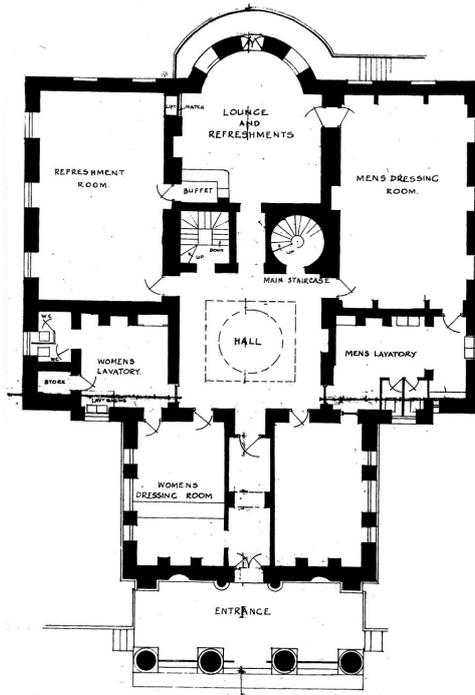
1.9 GOLF

Foxgrove Golf club was founded in 1907, taking a 21 year lease from the Cator estate; the course was presumably laid out after taking a long lease, making it unlikely that the designer was Tom Dunn (1850-1902) to whom the design has been attributed. , After the purchase of the park by the LCC in 1927, the club were granted a further 6 year lease, (Times 7 Dec 1927 16c) after which the golf course became a public facility and the clubhouse was transferred to the mansion in 1934. In the past few decades linear planting has been established to separate the fairways. The course is popular and caters for the economy end of the market.

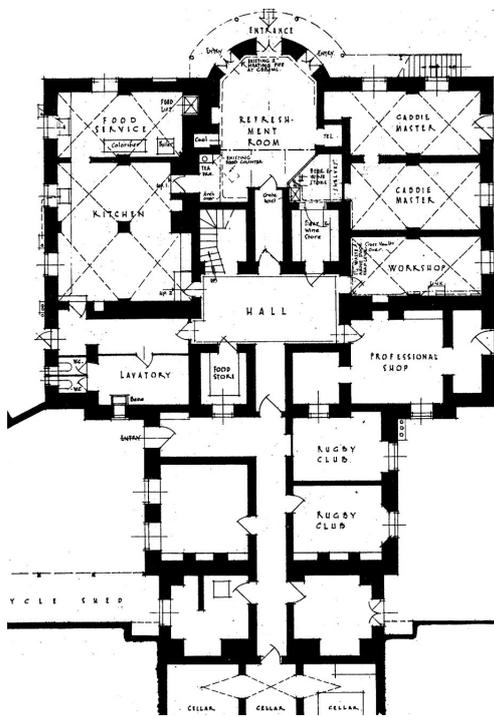
BECKENHAM PLACE



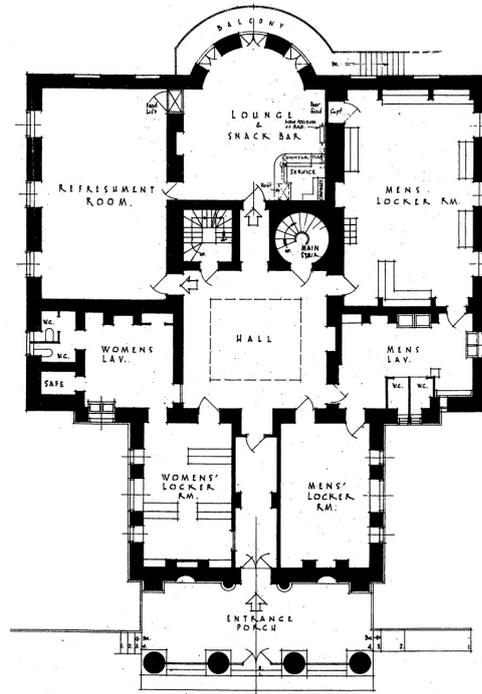
Lower ground floor 1939



Upper ground floor 1939



Lower ground floor 1949



Upper ground floor 1949

Floor plans in 1939 and 1949 showing the minor changes being made during this time and indicating the uses to which the principal rooms were being put. The first floor remained in residential use.

1.10 LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL AND SUCCESSORS

London County Council purchased the freehold of the house and park in 1927. They carried out improvements to the park and minor buildings after the purchase and then in about 1932 regained possession of the mansion. Works were carried out to accommodate the golf club (page 24). The principal rooms on the ground floor were used for changing, toilets and refreshment rooms and bar for the golf club, linked to the lower ground floor kitchen by the service lift. The bay room at lower ground floor level was used as the refreshment room for the park users. The accommodation at first floor level was adapted to provide two self contained flats, one for the golf professional and one for the catering manager. The other bedroom areas at this level and on the floor above were left unchanged, possibly empty. The drawings clearly show the lantern above the main hall set within a sunken external light well. The physical alterations included:

- the removal of the chimneypiece from the dining room in order to insert a door to a servery in the drawing room,
- the enlargement of the lower ground floor bay room, inserting steels at ceiling level where walls were removed,
- the removal of one of the flights of stairs serving the external balcony.
- Formation of a door opening in the west wall of the library

Further drawings of 1939 show little change but the 1949 plans show the insertion of a second service lift through the floor of the drawing room and the relocation of the bar. These alterations appear to have been required by the terms of the alcohol licence for the premises.

The mansion was damaged by enemy action during the Second World War. The extent of repair is not clear but seems not to be major.

There are a number of record photographs of the interior and exterior of the mansion, taken during the war and showing neither war damage or dry rot damage. Fairly substantial repairs were undertaken in the dining room and drawing room adjacent to the external rainwater pipes some time in the 1940s. Reinstatement of the damaged plasterwork was one of the issues dealt with when, in 1951, the LCC appointed an external architect, John E M Macgregor (1890-1984), to oversee work on the house. In the mid twentieth century Macgregor was an influential figure in the development of the repair philosophy of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

BECKENHAM PLACE

Copyright material not included in this version
West elevation

Copyright material not included in this version
South elevation

Copyright material not included in this version
North elevation

Copyright material not included in this version
Main hall

Copyright material not included in this version
Library

Copyright material not included in this version
West elevation

Photographs of the 1940s held at NMR and LMA

UNDERSTANDING

In 1949-54 Macgregor prepared reports and cost estimates for works to the house which appear to have comprised:

- Reinstatement of missing plasterwork to the dining and drawing rooms, and redecoration
- Repairs to windows shutters and external doors and ironmongery
- Removal of a steel downstand beam across the bay
- Removal of partitions in the first floor rooms above the principal rooms
- Construction of a new servery and screen within the dining room

A further phase of work was discussed and was probably only partially implemented, comprising:

- Stripping and relaying of slating to outside slopes
- Recasting of leadwork to roof
- Stack repairs
- Repairs to detached stone facings on south elevation
- Repairs to failing timber beams over main hall. The ceiling was propped from below at this time
- Repairs to portico eaves

In 1963 the park and mansion passed from the London County Council to the Greater London Council, passing to the borough of Bromley in 1971 and to the borough of Lewisham in 1973.

In 1982 the gutters and flats of the main roof were renewed in asphalt. Alterations were carried out in 1984 to allow the use of parts of the upper floors by the Mander and Mitchenson Theatre Collection project. The works included forming fire protected lobbies to the main stair at ground and first floor level. This use continued until 1999, at which time David Lloyd Leisure were also in part occupation, including the use of two self contained flats on the first floor. The theatre collection moved out of the mansion in 1999 and is now located in the Old Naval College in Greenwich.

Records at English Heritage confirm the undertaking of further repair works in 1984-7 including the insertion of the large steel beams above the lantern, repairs to stacks, the aluminium light over the main hall, dry rot repairs. Investigation of the decorations to the ground floor ceilings was undertaken by English Heritage in about 1985. No record of the investigations has been found but they are understood to have been entirely consistent with the ceilings being of late C18 date.

Emergency works to the stone facings were undertaken in 2009.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Second floor.
Small rooms with low ceilings lit by dormer windows.



Substantial steelwork around the hall lantern. Windows that once faced into the open light well can be seen on the left of the picture



First floor
Refurbished in the 1980s, largely stripped of historic fabric



Lower ground floor
Part in use, part storage



The house in 2009. Each floor of the house has a distinct character. The views above show some of the less well known parts of the mansion.

1.11 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The ownership of the mansion and park is vested in the London Borough of Lewisham. Responsibility for the mansion is currently shared between Greenscene (parks) who remain responsible for the activities within the mansion, the golf and the park, and Programme Management and Property (PPM). PPM are responsible for the maintenance of the building, but have no budget for it, although they can access funding for reactive maintenance.

Lewisham's management requirements and standards are set out in their Asset Management Plan of December 2006

The cafe is managed directly by the Council. There are two golf clubs based at the house but the Council has no direct relationship with these; they are linked via the golf course operator Glendale Golf who are involved in a complex deal which ends next year. The Council keeps all income from the golf course but pays Glendale a management fee from this. Income from golf lessons and the pro shop is all retained by Glendale.

The Council maintain the golf course, as well as the formal gardens around the mansion and the woodland. Glendale grounds maintenance maintain the rest of the park, and provide a ranger and litter picking service throughout.

There are no staff based within the mansion other than those staff who work in the cafe and golf operation and who have no general responsibility for the house beyond their own specific remits..

Certain parts of the building are alarmed and there is a CCTV installation covering parts of the lower ground floor but there appears to be no coordinated arrangement for locking and unlocking the building or for checking who is entering the building

Maintenance of the building is currently undertaken by Lewisham Property Services

There is a Working Party which seeks to provide liaison between the council and users of the park and mansion. This was established in 1994 and meets regularly although its remit and powers are not clearly stated. The working party has representatives from the council, Glendale, the Friends the golf clubs and local amenity societies.

The Friends of Beckenham Place Park circulate information about the activities and events within the park, many of which are organised by the Friends, provide a quarterly newsletter, run a website and a Visitor Centre within the north wing of the mansion which is open on Sunday afternoons.

1.12 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Heritage status

The mansion was listed in 1954 and currently has Grade II* status, placing it within the most important 8% of listed buildings. Grade II* status applies to particular important buildings of more than special interest, placing them between Grade 1 (exceptional interest) and Grade 11 (special interest).

The mansion lies within the Beckenham Place Park Conservation Area, designated in 1993 and is not a scheduled monument.

Other associated listed buildings include the homestead, lodges all listed at Grade II

The mansion is included on the English Heritage Buildings At Risk Register assessed as being part occupied, in poor condition (*a building or structure with deteriorating masonry and/or a leaking roof and/or defective rainwater goods, usually accompanied by rot outbreaks within and general deterioration of most elements of the building fabric, including external joinery*) and priority category C (*Slow decay; no solution agreed*). The Homestead is also included on the Buildings at Risk Register.

Use

The mansion is currently considered to be D1/D2 with ancillary offices, with A3 café use in parts of the lower ground floor. The formal status of areas of the building which are currently unused is unclear.

Local planning

Beckenham Place is subject to the planning policies saved from Lewisham Unitary Development Plan adopted in 2004 and which will form part of the emerging Local Development Framework. The general approach of protection for Metropolitan Open Land and listed building is expected to continue.

- Beckenham Place Park is classified as Metropolitan Open Land and therefore subject to policies OS1, 2 3 and 4. The park is also classified as a Green Chain Area, for which policies OS 1, 2 and 3 apply. OS1 is the most relevant.

OS 1 Metropolitan Open Land

The open character of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) in Lewisham, as shown on the Proposals Map, will be preserved. Planning permission will be granted only for appropriate development or change of use where this preserves the open nature of the land.

The Council will be supportive of proposals that enhance these uses and will only permit the limited extension of buildings within MOL where this would not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building. Improved public access to appropriate land uses in MOL will be acceptable where it does not conflict with other environmental objectives.

UNDERSTANDING

- The mansion lies within a conservation area and is therefore subject to policies URB 15, 16 and 17. URB 16 is the most relevant

URB 16 New Development, Changes of Use and Alterations to Buildings in Conservation Areas

The Council, having paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the special architectural or historic character or appearance of its Conservation Areas, will not grant planning permission or Conservation Area Consent where:

(a) new development, or alterations and extensions to existing buildings is incompatible with the special characteristics of the area, its buildings, spaces, settings and plot coverage, scale, form and materials; and

(b) proposed changes of use are incompatible with the preservation of the character of the area, except where they are essential for the preservation of a building of value to that area.

- The mansion is a listed building and therefore subject to policies URB 18 and 19. The park may be subject to OS 15

URB 18 Preserving Listed Buildings

To preserve and enhance Listed Buildings and their features of architectural or historic interest the Council will: (a) only grant consent for the demolition of a Listed Building in exceptional circumstances; (b) only grant consent for alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings which relate sensitively in terms of materials, style and craftsmanship to the important characteristics both internal and external, of the original building; (c) use its powers under Sections 47, 48 and 54 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to ensure that Listed Buildings are maintained to a reasonable standard; (d) have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of Listed Buildings in considering any application in their vicinity in terms of other policies; and (e) continue to identify buildings suitable for inclusion in both the Statutory and Local List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest.

URB 19 Listed Buildings – Changes of Use

In considering applications involving change of use the Council will consider the contribution of existing and proposed uses to the character or appearance of the historic building, and will resist proposals which would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the historic area or building. Wherever possible, the original use of an historic building should continue, particularly if it is residential. If the use has been changed from the original, serious consideration should be given to whether it can revert to that use. In some cases it may be appropriate to find essential other uses, avoiding damage to important features. The new and adapted use must not adversely affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building or its setting. The implications of complying with other statutory requirements such as fire escapes need to be taken into account prior to determining applications for change of use.

OS 15 Historic Parks, Gardens and Landscapes The Council will seek to protect and enhance the parks and gardens of special historic interest included in the Register compiled by English Heritage under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council will also seek to preserve the views and vistas to and from the historic parks and their settings; new buildings on land adjacent to Historic Parks and Gardens will be required to have minimum visual impact when viewed from them.

BECKENHAM PLACE

- The mansion lies within an area of archaeological priority as defined in the UDP and therefore subject to policy APA 20

APA 20 Beckenham Place Park Beckenham Place (Listed Grade II) was built by John Cator c.1773 close to the site of a much earlier manor house. The 18th century mansion was set in parklands, and both survive as a historic entity, although the public golf course intrudes on the historic character and the lake is now little more than a damp depression. Furthermore, there survives evidence of an earlier agricultural landscape from which the 18th century parkland was conceived. Numerous extant features can be identified including field boundaries, wood banks, semi-natural woodland, coppiced and pollarded standards as well as areas of ridge and furrow.*

Regional planning issues

The Lewisham Local Development Framework will be taken in conjunction with the Mayors Development Plan to form the statutory Development Plan for Lewisham. The London Plan contains the following policies relating to the built heritage

Policy 4B.11 London's built heritage

The Mayor will work with strategic partners to protect and enhance London's historic environment. Development Plan Document (DPD) policies should seek to maintain and increase the contribution of the built heritage to London's environmental quality, to the economy, both through tourism and the beneficial use of historic assets, and to the well-being of London's people while allowing for London to accommodate growth in a sustainable manner.

Policy 4B.12 Heritage conservation

Boroughs should:

- *ensure that the protection and enhancement of historic assets in London are based on an understanding of their special character, and form part of the wider design and urban improvement agenda, including their relationship to adjoining areas, and that policies recognise the multi-cultural nature of heritage issues*
- *identify areas, spaces, historic parks and gardens, and buildings of special quality or character and adopt policies for their protection and the identification of opportunities for their enhancement, taking into account the strategic London context*
- *encourage and facilitate inclusive solutions to providing access for all, to and within the historic environment and the tidal foreshore.*

Policy 4B.13 Historic conservation-led regeneration

The Mayor will, and boroughs should, support schemes that make use of historic assets, including the waterways heritage, and stimulate environmental, economic and community regeneration where they:

- *bring redundant or under-used buildings and spaces into appropriate use*
- *secure the repair and re-use of Buildings at Risk*
- *help to improve local economies and community cohesion*
- *fit in with wider regeneration objectives*
- *promote inclusiveness in their design*
- *respect and enhance waterside heritage including the tidal foreshore.*

Policy 4B.15 Archaeology

The Mayor, in partnership with English Heritage, the Museum of London and boroughs, will support the identification, protection, interpretation and presentation of London's archaeological resources. Boroughs in consultation with English Heritage and other relevant statutory organisations should include appropriate policies in their DPDs for protecting scheduled ancient monuments and archaeological assets within their area¹⁰.

1.13 **CONDITION SURVEY**

A condition survey of the building is included as Appendix 3. The key conclusions are:

- A programme of replacement of the **roof coverings** is required. The flat roofs and valleys need replacing urgently. The pitched coverings are currently adequate although much repaired. Roofs do not appear to have an underslating felt, placing the building at risk of water damage through slipped or broken slates and all pitched roofs should be stripped and relaid.
- The **stone facings** are a major cause for concern and have clearly given trouble over a long period of time. Areas which are clearly becoming detached and exhibiting sudden offsets will probably require localised rebuilding. The whole of the stone facing needs to be tied back to the brick core with stainless steel ties at every junction of horizontal and vertical joints
- The **scaffolding** to the west side of the portico, erected some years ago to provide support at the eave has become permanent/ There is no access to the affected area but it believed to comprise defective timber beams and loose stonework, requiring repair.
- The **external stair and gallery** around the south bay are in poor condition and require replacement or removal. They currently provide a secondary means of escape from the upper ground floor but also allow access to the ground floor windows for vandals and potential intruders Wider improvements to means of escape may redirect the escape route in other directions. Consideration should be given to removal of the stair and gallery.
- **Rainwater goods** require some attention. A major downpipe beside the south bay is missing and there are the first signs of water damage to the adjoining ceiling. There are cracks and other defects in other downpipes requiring attention
- The **roof and floor structures** have been heavily repaired in the past, including replacement in steel of most, if not all, of the bearings of the primary timbers. Provided that roofs and rainwater goods are kept in good order (but see above) further major work seems unlikely.
- Inspections have been undertaken during the recent lengthy dry periods. The interior does appear to be reasonably free from **damp** but this might change following prolonged wet weather.
- **External joinery** is in fair condition generally but with some very poor windows which require extensive repair.
- The interior of the **upper ground floor** is in good general order. Some allowance needs to be made for further works to secure the principal ground floor ceilings, which are showing some cracking since their last repair in the 1980-s

BECKENHAM PLACE

BECKENHAM PLACE PARK MANSION
REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS
INITIAL COST ESTIMATES (REVISION C)

Heritage Cost Consultants
26 July 2009

ELEMENTAL SUMMARY - REPAIR WORKS	£
1 Lowering ground levels and/or insertion of French drains around lower ground floor	5,000
2 Floor structure repairs (where damp may have penetrated)	30,000
3 Altering basement floor levels and/or ramps	10,000
4 Roof overhaul	111,000
Alternative of limited roof overhaul, 15% of areas stripped and re-covered, including 30% allowance for new Westmoreland slates: £17,500	-
5 New rooflights, associated gutters, and making good generally	46,400
6 New aluminium rooflight over main hall	25,000
7 Removal of 7 Nr dormers and reinstatement of roof pitches	19,600
8 Repairs to roof timbers generally	15,000
9 Overhauling of timber stairs to servants' staircase	4,000
10 External walls: removal of cement repairs and indents, etc, new indents, and re-pointing of open joints	14,000
11 Stainless steel tie inserts to facades generally	83,000
12 Remove existing and re-build stone face cladding	24,000
13 Remove individual stones, iron cramps, and re-fit with and including non-ferrous cramps	30,000
14 Replacement of defective timbers and stonework on west side of portico	20,000
15 Removal and renewal of all cast iron rainwater goods	10,800
16 Removal of external staircase and gallery and making good of masonry disturbed	6,000
Alternative: remove, renew, and/or repair staircase, gallery, and balustrade, reinstate including making good of masonry disturbed: £24,000	-
17 Conservation of metal balustrade around main entrance	3,000
18 Sealing chutes to cellars	5,000
19 New lath and plaster ceiling to portico soffit	8,000
20 General allowance for cleaning areas of grime-stained masonry	5,000
21 Work to external doors and windows	53,300
22 Minor repairs, etc, and complete redecoration of walls, ceilings, and joinery	250,000
23 Consolidation of ground floor plaster ceilings	30,000
24 Budget allowance for upgrading electrical installations to upper and lower ground floors	20,000
25 Replace all electrical installations including security and fire alarm/detection systems to first floor	39,000
26 Upgrading mechanical installations to upper and lower ground floors	20,000
27 Replace heating system to first floor	34,000
28 Upgrading internal doorsets to half-hour fire rated standard	29,000
29 Create dedicated escape corridor to servants' stair at basement level	20,000
30 Smoke pressurisation system and/or other fire precautions to main hall	50,000
31 Lightning protection installation	10,000
32 External scaffolding, temporary roof, and hoist	<u>120,000</u>
	1,150,100
33 Main contractor's preliminaries	<u>220,000</u>
	1,370,100
Contingency sum @ 10%	<u>137,010</u>
Estimated total (construction cost only) carried forward to Main Summary:	<u>£1,507,110</u>

SUMMARY OF COST ESTIMATE FOR REPAIR WORKS
(REFER APPENDIX 4 FOR FULL DETAILS)

UNDERSTANDING

- The interiors of **lower ground floor and first floor** rooms are in reasonable order but the areas are extensive and will require a fairly major investment in the overhaul of finishes, services, joinery and decorations in order to bring them into a useable condition.
- The interiors of the **second floor** would require substantial works to bring them into a useable condition
- A recent periodic inspection of the **electrical installation** notes that the all installations above upper ground floor level have been isolated and were not tested. Few urgent works were identified in other areas suggesting that present uses could continue on the upper and lower ground floors without major work. Areas which are reconfigured in any proposal will almost certainly require new electrical installations.
- The recent **asbestos** survey identifies a number of locations in which asbestos is present, generally with floor tiles and adhesives and some electrical equipment. The type and extent of asbestos is typical for a building of this age but is unlikely to be a major cost in the overall context.
- A **fire risk assessment** undertaken in January 2009 contains a substantial number of suggested improvements needed to bring the fire risk to a tolerable level. The principal recommendations were the closure of first and second floors, improvements to housekeeping testing and maintenance, additional fire doors at lower ground floor level and additional smoke detectors in remote areas.

The approximate cost of the works outlined above, but assuming that the second floor remains unoccupied, is estimated at approximately £1.5M excluding professional fees and VAT.

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The mansion is a focal point in the landscape



The north wing is important as it is constructed with material from the great house at Wicklemarsh



The toplit hall at the centre of the house



The drawing room



Library



Good plaster ceilings with cast ornament. This tablet from the drawing room is devoted to the Arts, depicting Rhetoric, Poetry, Music and Painting framed by audience figures.

SIGNIFICANCE

The mansion at Beckenham Place Park is of significance as the focal point of the listed landscape of the park itself. Although the landscape quality has been eroded by the golf course, the mansion continues to make an important contribution to the parkland landscape.

The plan of the mansion is of significance, providing a good example of a compact villa. The toplit hall is probably a development of the early C19 but the suite of linked principal rooms grouped around a pair of stone staircases is an important survival.

The best stair is unusually small for a house of this size. This aspect of the plan and the 13:21:34 Golden Section proportions of the two largest principal rooms suggest knowledge of Palladio's Villa Emo.

The mansion and park are significant as examples of the type of late eighteenth century villa and landscape popular with wealthy London merchants, who would have a house of business in the City and who would build or purchase another house within an easy carriage ride, into which they would pour their newly created wealth. The houses are generally relatively small and of the 'villa' type rather than a country house. Many of these houses have been lost, and almost all have been enveloped within the tide of bricks and mortar flowing outwards from the Great Wen, There are perhaps 20 - 30 examples remaining, many of which have survived through institutional use or because the landscaped grounds have become public parks, usually leaving the mansion under-used and with uncertain long term futures.

Key significant heritage features of the mansion include

- The sliding sash windows of the southern part of the first floor are of significance as rare survivals of a type of single hung sash window in which a 6 pane sash slides upwards into a cavity behind the stone arch.
- The open grille and thick inner metal door protecting the small room in the NW corner of the upper ground floor are of significance as a rare survival of a safe store for valuables, presumably plate.

The north wing is of great significance in that it has allowed the preservation of a significant amount of the built fabric of the house at Wricklemarsh, which was one of the most important houses constructed in England in the 1720s by a well established architect. The full extent of stonework salvaged from Wricklemarsh is not certain and some additional material, cut to match, may have been incorporated but the re-use of a substantial amount of fabric is clear.

The interior decoration of the three principal ground floor rooms, principally the coloured decorative ceilings are of great significance and of a quality comparable to the Adams' work at the Adelphi and St James Square.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Good quality joinery and ironmongery



Unusually small best staircase



Doors to strongroom



Unusual single hung sash windows which slide up into wall above

SIGNIFICANCE

The central toplit hall is an important part of the building. In its present form it is believed to be work of c1810 and provides a unifying central element to the interior. The enclosure of the second floor lightwell above the rooflight and the replacement of the rooflight itself with a PVC structure now rather translucent, have resulted in the present rather gloomy appearance.

The joinery and ironmongery of the principal floor are of good quality.

The house and landscape are significant as evidence of the activities of the Cator family during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Cators controlled the development of significant areas of South London, particularly around Beckenham and Blackheath, including the important work at the Paragon

The gazetteer in Appendix 8 expands on the above by providing more detailed information on the significance of the separate elements of the building.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Broken RWP



Failing asphalt to north wing



Base of servants stair



Stair and gallery in poor condition



Cornice and top sections of stonework are lifting

The fabric of the building is in urgent need of repair. Under-investment in the fabric is directly linked to the under-use of the building

3 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of this section of the plan is to identify the issues currently affecting, or likely to affect, the heritage and to look at constraints and opportunities. The policies which are set out in Section 4 relate to the issues discussed within this section.

3.1 Use

Perhaps the biggest threat facing the mansion is the lack of investment in regular maintenance and repair which is directly linked to the uncertainty and lack of clear purpose for the building, the great majority of which is either vacant or under-used.

At present the lower ground floor provides accommodation for uses which run at a loss. Much of the area has been used for storage and other low grade uses.

The ground floor has clear potential for revenue earning uses without the need for significant further investment in facilities and services, but these have been set to one side and outside investment has, effectively, been blocked whilst the wider issues are considered and resolved.

The first and second floors can not, currently, be used, principally because of unsafe use of the area around the base of the main stair at lower ground floor level (opposite)

The present arrangements are clearly not sustainable and change is needed to bring the building in to beneficial use, establishing an income sufficient to maintain and conserve the building fabric.

If changes to the building are proposed in order to provide an enhanced income stream to assist with future repair and conservation work, it will be necessary to set up financial arrangements which ensure that the income is directed to the mansion .

Potential uses for the mansion are considered in the Options Report being prepared in parallel with this plan.

Residential uses which require sound insulation in accordance with Part E of the Building Regulations are likely to have a significant impact on the fabric of the building. Some compromise may be negotiated because of the special character of the historic fabric.

Defective plumbing and drainage installations are a threat to historic buildings. Uses which only require limited plumbing and drainage installations and/or can locate them in less vulnerable areas will be less of a threat than uses which require more extensive installations.

BECKENHAM PLACE



The mansion is approached across a sea of cars



Unsuitable toilet block placed close to the east of the mansion



The fencing and tall evergreen planting to the north of the car park detract from the setting of the mansion.



The greens, tees and other golfing features are uncomfortably close to the mansion

3.2 Landscape and setting

The setting of the mansion within its landscape is currently compromised by a number of issues affecting the immediate surroundings

Parking

The car park for the golf club and park users is located directly in front of the mansion. One of the principal views of the mansion and the first view for almost all visitors is either across a sea of cars or a large apron of whitelined tarmac. Relocation of the car park was a key objective in the LUC masterplan of 2007 and remains a highly desirable outcome. Access will need to be maintained for deliveries and dropping off.

Toilet block

The toilet block to the east detracts from the setting of the mansion. This side of the building was originally the service side, with a yard screened by a wall but, nonetheless, this building is of low quality and is positioned too close to the mansion.

Intrusive golf course

The golf landscape, including several greens and fairways extends right up to the house and the close mown ground forms, which are unlike a parkland landscape, detract from the setting of the house. The putting area and café terrace are uncomfortably close to the building.

Planting

The wings of planting extending east and west from the house and concealing banks are broadly similar to the earlier landscaping,. The planting on the north side of the car park, which was presumably created to screen the car park and to separate the public from an adjoining fairway, is formed with inappropriate planting and detracts from the setting of the mansion.

Pleasure grounds

The earliest maps of the estate clearly shown the location of the pleasure ground immediately surrounding the mansion and, probably, separated from the parkland by estate railing of which fragments remain to the east of the mansion. It is likely that new uses in the mansion will require some dedicated garden areas adjacent and this may offer an opportunity to re-establish the original pleasure grounds.

BECKENHAM PLACE



Cloudy rooflight



Roller shutters



Pots



Dormers



Portico scaffold



Patchy stone

3.3 Vandalism, leaks, fire and theft

The under-use of and under-investment in this relatively isolated building, coupled with lack of control of access to the interior is leaving the building vulnerable to low level vandalism and petty theft and to major disasters such as fire or the theft of historic artefacts such as doors and chimneypieces.

The top two floors are not used and rarely visited; this is increasing the length of time that can elapse between commencement and discovery of timber decay, pigeon infestations and leaks, either from the services installations, which include old water tanks on the top floor, or from rainwater penetration and, therefore, the extent of damage that can result from these events.

Whilst increased use and, particularly, construction work will bring their own increased risks, buildings will generally be at lower overall risk if they are occupied and properly managed. Some element of residential use would further increase natural supervision and security but the impact on the fabric of the reintroduction of residential use may prove unacceptable.

The external stair and gallery on the south side of the building leaves the windows of the upper ground floor bay room vulnerable to similar treatment.

3.4 Appreciation of the building

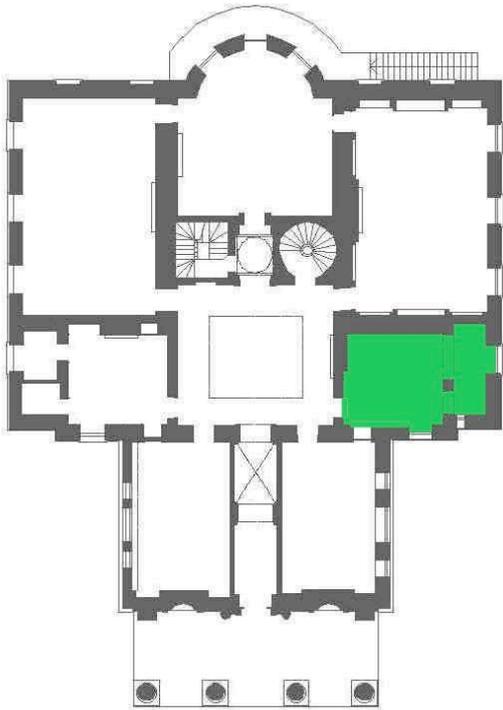
The central hall is currently unsatisfactory in terms of daylighting. The twin levels of rooflight and the clouding of the plastic rooflight are making the hall seem unduly gloomy and, therefore, unwelcoming. Improvements could be made by replacement of the plastic rooflight and improved maintenance of this and the glazed rooflight above.

The use of the lower ground floor for a range of uses, each with their own external door is giving the building a rather fortified appearance, increased by the need to fit bars and other security measures to the windows.

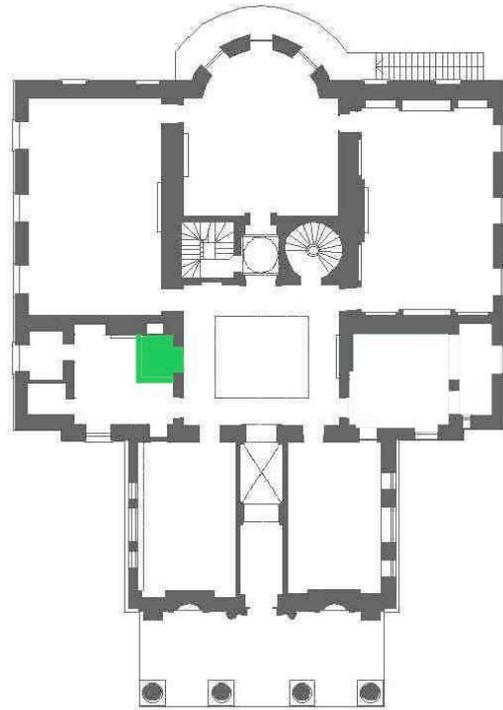
The plan of the lower ground floor has become very disorganised, principally because of the annexing of areas then given sole access from outside. Combined with the lack of natural light, because windows have been blocked up internally, the resulting experience is of disorientation and it is difficult for visitors to gain any understanding of either the historic arrangement of these service areas or even to find their way to the room they wish to reach.

There are a number of elements on the exterior of the building which are intrusive. Any proposal to remove such elements will need to take account of their usefulness but the chimney pots, dormer windows and standing scaffolding under the portico all detract from the appearance of the building.

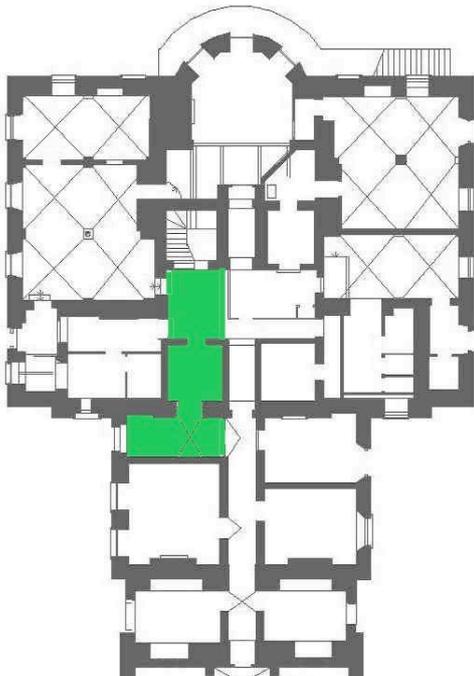
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Upper ground floor plan with suggested location of third stair and lift should they be prove necessary. The current ladies WC retains less fabric of historic interest than the mens WC opposite



Upper ground floor plan with suggested location of a new lift serving all floors, should this prove necessary in a proposal not requiring a third stair. Location within the mens WC allows the lift to be accessed directly from the main hall



Establishing safe escape routes will require a fire protected exit corridor to the outside from the bottom of the service stair as shown on this lower ground floor plan.



The portion of the service stair between upper ground and first floor levels is very steep and contains winders. If this stair is to be used as one of the principal access and escape routes, perhaps avoiding the need for a new third stair, it may be necessary to reconfigure this section.

The stone facings have become very patchy in appearance largely as a result of the extensive range of past stone repairs. It is not clear whether cleaning would result in a more homogenous surface appearance or would simply highlight the different repair techniques that have been used.

3.5 Circulation, access and security

The large central hall, linking upper ground and first floors, creates a considerable obstacle to the creation of a flexible circulation system within the building, capable of accommodating relatively independent co-existing uses. The best stair only links upper ground and first floor level, both doorways being to different levels within the central hall. The service stair is the only stair serving all floor within the building but cannot currently be considered to provide adequate fire escape as there is no protected escape route from the stair to open air; the stair is currently compromised by the use of the lowest storey for storage.

Any proposal to introduce new uses into the building and to make any use of the first and second floors will need to re-establish safe and adequate means of fire escape and manageable circulation routes to the uses within the building. The precise arrangements will depend on the uses being contemplated, but a number of common principles are likely to apply:

Any room intended for more than 60 people would require two exit doors. Based on a notional occupancy of 1 sq m per person (the usual space allowance for rooms such as dining and committee rooms), only the two largest ground floor rooms would fall into this category.

Each storey of the building will require at least two exits leading either to open air or to a protected stairway

Bringing the second floor into use is likely to require a second stair to be brought up to this level. This might be achieved by a new stair from second floor level to the upper gallery of the central hall, or by extending the best stair upwards.

The services stair is very steep, particularly on the section from upper ground to first floor levels and has narrow winders. Depending on the uses proposed for the upper floors, this section of stair may not prove satisfactory as the principal escape and access route. It appears technically feasible to replace the flights with a new stair which could be considered safe; this would imitate the best stair in having two full turns between upper ground and first floors, rather than a single turn as at present, allowing omission of winders and the use of 'normal' risers and goings. The loss of historic fabric would have to be assessed against the impact of alternatives, which might include the introduction of an entirely new stair within a new enclosure.

It may be possible to treat the best stair as an escape stair if the service stair is of a high standard and if the central hall is given appropriate fire protection, which might involve upgrading doors opening off it to fire resisting standard and/or the use of smoke pressurization systems within the hall. It is likely that a fire engineering approach will be required to deal with these complex issues.

It seems inevitable that a protected corridor will need to be established from the base of the service stair to outside air. This will certainly require relocation of the beer storage from the base of the stair.

Some uses within the building are likely to require the construction of a third stair. Building Regulations would normally ask for separate staircases for each use within a mixed use building. If the building is used for a range of purposes united by common management, it may be possible to justify having only two staircases. If quite separate uses are introduced, and particularly if residential uses are considered, it is likely that a third stair would be needed, with protected access to outside at the final exit.

3.6 Conservation and the existing fabric

The mansion requires substantial and ongoing funding for repair and conservation work at a level greater than the funds available to the local authority.

Major repair works have not been undertaken at the house for over twenty years and at the present inadequate level of investment, the backlog of repairs is likely to become critical over the next 5-10 years with certain repairs to roof coverings becoming critical ahead of that time.

The fabric of the building requires substantial and expensive repairs, without which there are risks of damage through water penetration timber decay and decay of masonry elements. The most urgent works are the roof repairs, works to stone facings, improvements to rainwater disposal.

The mansion has substantial areas of lead coverings and flashings. Theft of lead, and damage cause during removal, has become a significant risk to buildings over the recent years. Any works requiring scaffolding will place the building at risk from theft of lead.

3.7 Constraints

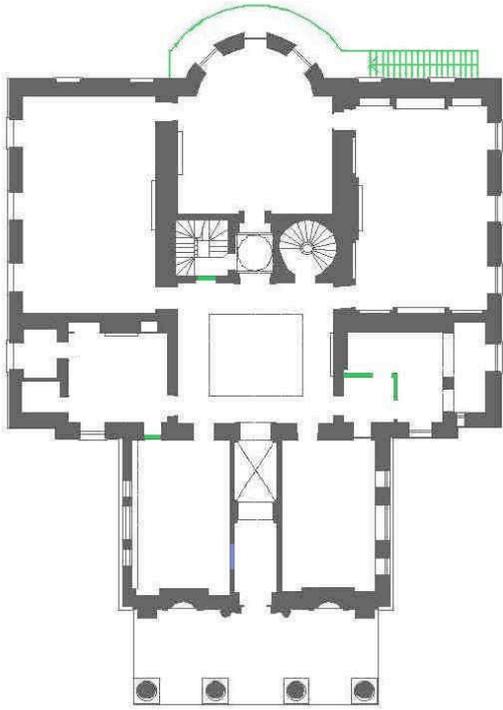
The mansion contains a number of important rooms which cannot be subdivided, notwithstanding past alterations and interventions which have now been removed. This narrows down the possible locations for additional staircases and lifts should they be required.

The mansion contains a number of important ceilings. Additional load placed on the structures which carry the ceilings, and timber decay in those structures would place the ceilings at risk.

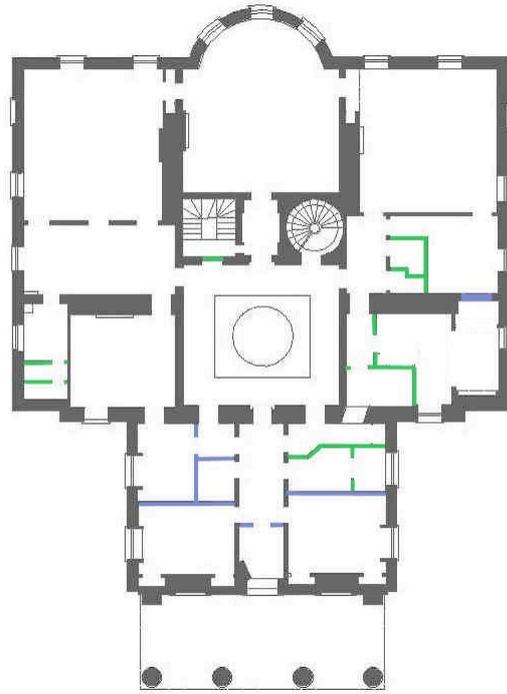
The mansion was designed as an object within the landscape, to be viewed from all sides. Following the construction of the north wing, a small service yard was created on the north east side of the house but the building remains visible in the round and any addition to the building, or independent structure close to the building would have a significant impact on the setting of the historic structure.

Any proposal to bring the second floor into use would have to address a number of major issues, including the general disrepair and loss of finishes, the acceptance of the low floor to ceiling heights, the need to reorganise the means of support given to the floor structure around the aluminium rooflight in order to remove the past repairs using timber trusses and large steel beams, and the need to establish a proper means of escape. In purely commercial terms it seems unlikely that the level of investment required could be justified and therefore that the long term future of this part of the building is as an unoccupied buffer zone which can, nonetheless, be put to use in helping to control the environment in the rooms below.

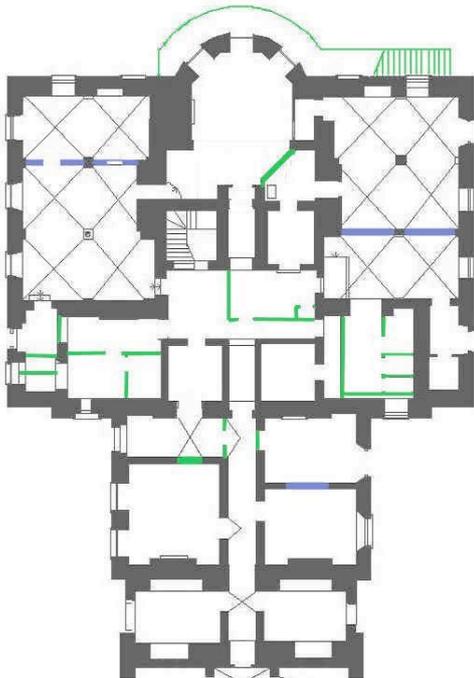
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Upper ground floor



First floor



Lower ground floor

Diagrams of the principal floors showing in green areas which may be removed and in blue areas for which it may be possible to remove fabric if a clear overall benefit can be demonstrated

3.8 Opportunities for change

The principal rooms of the ground floor and the southern rooms of the first floor offer few opportunities for change but a great deal of the rest of the building has been much altered in the past and offers potential for alteration, provided that the principal structural walls are retained without significant alteration.

The diagrams opposite indicate walls that can be removed and the locations of doorways that can be re-opened, distinguishing between fabric where removal is beneficial and fabric which could be disturbed if there are sound reasons for doing so.

Second floor

The scope for alteration is limited by the presence of large chimney stacks and lightwells and the fixed number of dormer windows.

First floor

Uses above the important ground floor ceilings must not apply additional load to the floor structures. Removal of the bathroom and toilet on the west side would be beneficial.. The north wing was laid out as three rooms in 1906, following the plan of the floor below. This implies that the cornices and lobby ceiling are work carried out during the occupation by the sanatorium' a return to the 1906 plan could be justified but it would be preferable to retain the partitions which define the spaces with decorative cornices and ceilings.

Ground floor

If a new lift and/or a new staircase are required in order to make the building functional, the only locations in which to introduce new vertical circulation are in the NE and NW rooms of the original building (see page 48). The NE room would serve best to provide a lift if no third stair is required. The NW room would serve best to house a new stair, lift and lobby at each level.

Lower ground floor

The plan at this level has been much altered already. Further alteration is reasonably acceptable providing that the need can be justified. Subject to detailed technical examination it is likely to be possible to remove further infill walls within the arcaded southern section of the storey in order to create larger rooms. Removal of other structural walls is unlikely to be possible.

3.9 Interpretation

Although there is a useful material within the visitor centre, there is little information available to help visitors and building users understand the significance of the mansion and its setting.

3.10 Climate change and carbon emissions

There is scope to improve energy conservation and reduce the carbon emissions of the house but some measures are likely to conflict with the need to avoid causing harm to the special architectural interest of the building and may not prove to be acceptable. Roof insulation and draughtproofing measures are, for instance, more likely to be acceptable than improvements to wall insulation.

There are some further opportunities to enhance the buildings performance to consider, such as the use of the second floor as a thermal control zone, the large open spaces around the house suitable for heat pump and/or geothermal systems.

Increasing rainfall intensity rates are likely to overwhelm existing rainwater disposal arrangements. The single 100mm outlet which serves the central flat roof area is particularly vulnerable partly because of its small size but also because of the potential for blockage and the fact that, in the event of failure, the water will run within the building.

3.11 Access

There is reasonably safe access for users with disabilities, including wheelchair users, into the upper ground floor. Suitable toilet facilities are available at this level.

Access between floor levels is not possible for wheelchair users.

The doorways into the lower ground floor are narrow and/or have steps. This storey has floors at many different levels making it difficult for wheelchair users to move around.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 BASIS OF APPROACH

The purpose of this section is to recommend conservation policies to act as a guide to the future management of mansion and its setting in a way which takes into account practical requirements for its continued varied use as well as the retention of its significance. The policies are intended to provide general parameters for managing the fabric and against which specific proposals for action can then be assessed for compliance.

The conservation policies are related to issues discussed in the previous section (Section 3 risks and opportunities.). Policies apply to all levels of significance (not just above a certain threshold) and should be read in conjunction with the relevant text in Section 3 since this is intended to explain their origin and assist in their interpretation.

Policies are stated in general terms and given in bold and are supplemented by management guidelines which provide more detailed guidance on the implementation of policies.

Where applicable, more detailed policies and management guidelines relating to specific items within the mansion and its setting are included in the gazetteer.

The Conservation Management Plan should be adopted by the London Borough of Lewisham as a guide to the future management of the mansion.

As a guide to future management of the mansion, the Conservation Management Plan should be reviewed by LB Lewisham as the need arises but no later than five years after adoption

In the event that a long term interest in the building is passed to another party, the Conservation Management Plan should form part of the disposal arrangements.

4.2 STATUTORY CONTROLS

Awareness of the range of statutory and non-statutory controls and the wide range of accompanying guidance is a vital prerequisite to informed management of the fabric of the mansion and its setting. An overview of the main relevant controls is given here.

Background

The mansion is a grade II* listed building. It is not a scheduled ancient monument but lies within an area of potential archaeological interest. Any works which would affect the special architectural archaeological and historic interest of the building will require listed building consent from the local authority.

The mansion lies within a conservation area and any tree with a trunk greater than 75mm diameter is considered to be protected by a Tree Preservation Order and consent from the local authority must be given notice of any proposals to fell, top or lop them.

Any development which would affect the external appearance of the mansion and its setting are likely to also require planning consent from the local authority. Change of use of the building is also likely to require consent from the local authority. The mansion is currently considered to be D1/D2 with ancillary offices, with A3 café use in parts of the lower ground floor but the formal status of areas of the building which are currently unused is unclear.

Construction work will require approval under Building Regulations and is likely to be subject to the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations

All works which affect the special architectural, archaeological and historic interest of the mansion, its setting and associated outbuildings should be planned in accordance with government, local authority and English Heritage guidance on the historic environment

All works which might affect the archaeology and below ground remains, whether or not they require statutory consent, should be planned to minimise their impact on the archaeology

Management guidelines

- Particular attention should be paid to :

English Heritage guidance 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' 2008, and

The Burra charter and

Relevant planning policies of London Borough of Lewisham

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- All proposals should be developed in consultation with relevant authorities, including the local planning authority, English Heritage, the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Georgian Group, and the Garden History Society.
- The advice of an archaeologist should be sought on all proposals involving disturbance to the ground.

4.3 USE

Funding and/or new uses should be sought which will permit the backlog of urgent conservation works required at the mansion to be addressed and which can secure sufficient long term funding to permit the proper care and ongoing maintenance of the building

The local authority do not have access to sufficient funds to address the backlog of repairs and will need to access additional funds, through major grants or by partnership or other arrangement with outside individuals, groups or agencies.

The mansion is currently used only for purposes which are making a net loss a situation which is clearly unsustainable. A great deal of the mansion is either empty or under-used.

Placing the building on a sound footing in beneficial use requires new uses to be introduced and/or the transformation of any established uses into viable concerns.

Management guidelines

- Assessment of any proposed new use will need to take account of:
 - The heritage impact of physical changes needed to accommodate the use(s). Uses which do not require the insertion of an additional staircase, a lift, intrusive sound insulation measures or extensive plumbing and above ground drainage installations are likely to be preferred.
 - Relevant planning policies
 - The long term viability of the proposed use. Each change of use brings its own physical changes, whether through compliance with regulations, repositioning of services, alteration of circulation systems and access control. Cumulative low level change is detrimental.
 - The extent to which public access can be permitted and extent of opportunities for increased education and understanding.
 - The impact of the uses on the parkland, particularly on the parking, access routes, the golf course and pleasure grounds.

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- The impact on the Homesteads and their setting
- The ability of the management to deal with works of conservation and repair, both for any initial phase of alteration and repair and in the longer term.
- The arrangements which can be put in place to ensure that the new uses does actually benefit the historic fabric and that sufficient of the revenue generated is directed to the mansion. It may not be sufficient to simply pass the obligations to another party; suitable arrangements might include an agreed Asset Management Plans which will detail a long term approach to the management of works of repair, conservation , inspection and maintenance. Consideration will also need to be given to the mechanisms for monitoring and, possibly, terminating any arrangements.
- The Council should retain the freehold of the property and accept a long term obligation to ensure that the historic fabric is being properly cared for by any new users of the building.
- Management structures will need to include the activities that can keep the mansion and its setting in good condition, such as having procedures or arrangements for
 - Environmental monitoring
 - preparedness
 - Storage and security
 - Compliance with legislation and obtaining consents or licenses
 - Welcoming visitors or other uses
 - Accessing the specialist skills needed to look after it
 - Developing community involvements
- Any disposal should include sufficient land to allow present and future ancillary uses to be accommodated without affecting the immediate setting of the mansion.

4.4 CONSERVATION

All works to the mansion and immediate setting should be planned and carried out according to the highest appropriate conservation standards.

Management guidelines

- There should be a regular cycle of inspection and repair of the fabric.
- When carrying out repairs, removal of existing fabric should be kept to a minimum.
- All repairs should use appropriate materials and be carried out on a 'like for like' basis unless structural or health and safety factors require otherwise.
- Any proposals to restore or reconstruct missing elements of fabric should require special justification and be based on sound evidence.
- The removal of items which detract from the mansions significance is encouraged. These items include chimney pots, dormer windows, intrusive internal partitions, the semi permanent scaffolding below the portico, the adjoining toilet block, adjacent golf related ground forms, security shutters and bars, the plastic glazed rooflight above the main hall, the car park and planting to the north side of the car park.
- Works undertaken under the direction of an experienced conservation professional by suitably experienced contractors.
- All conservation works should be recorded and records placed in a suitable and accessible archive.
- All construction work should be managed in ways which will minimise the risk of damage, particularly by fire, to the historic fabric during the works. The control of hot working, protection from water penetration and security of the site require particular attention.

4.5 NEW WORK/ CHANGE

New construction should not detract from and should seek to enhance the setting, views and character of the mansion and immediate surroundings.

Alterations to the interior of the building should be planned to ensure that the proposals do not detract from and should seek to enhance the significance of the mansion.

The nature and extent of new facilities should be determined by the extent to which they can be accommodated without causing harm to the significance of the mansion, its associated outbuildings and immediate surroundings.

Management guidelines

- New facilities should not intrude on the principal rooms of the ground floor and the southern rooms of the first floor.
- Interventions should wherever possible be reversible and bear some indication of their date.
- Interventions will ideally be located in areas which have already been altered.

4.6 ACCESS

Access for wheelchair users to the principal floor level of the mansion and to a suitable accessible WC are to be maintained.

Works to improve the quality of access for users with a wider range of disabilities are encouraged.

Works to allow wheelchair users to access the lower ground floor more fully and the first floor are encouraged.

Management guidelines

- Careful assessment of works to provide wheelchair access to ensure that any harm to the significance of the place is minimised and works to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act should seek to minimise adverse impacts on areas and elements of significance.
- The various levels of the lower ground floor will need to be linked and/or adjusted to allow step free passage between the various areas.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- The installation of a passenger lift serving the three principal floor levels is a reasonably likely outcome of an assessment of obligations under the Disability Discrimination Acts for a potential new user of the building and, if so, should be accepted, provided that all reasonable steps are taken to mitigate impact on the historic fabric.
- Each proposal should be tested to assess the impact on the significance of the building, alternatives considered and an informed decision take on whether the benefit to be obtained justifies the effect on significance.

4.7 CLIMATE CHANGE

Rainwater disposal systems should be sized to reflect the increase intensity of rainstorms being experienced as a result of climate change.

Management guidelines

- The increased frequency of intense periods of rainfall, formerly regarded as rare events, is affecting many buildings. A rainfall intensity of 150mm/hour should be used in sizing rainwater disposal arrangements. This is likely to require significant change to the disposal arrangements from the central part of the main roof.

4.8 EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

All work should be undertaken and the mansion should be managed in ways which minimise the impact on the environment.

Management guidelines

- Building operators and managers should monitor how visitors arrive at the site, and work with the local authority to establish some methods for achieving a proportion of visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors to come by public transport, walking or by bicycle.
- Although the significance of the building is likely to limit the scope of energy efficient measures that will be undertaken, there are still areas to be considered, particularly the in the areas of heating and lighting design, heating and lighting controls, roof insulation, ventilation and air infiltration.
- Insulation materials should be made of natural breathable materials or with materials with low embodied energy.
- Energy efficient fittings and equipment should be installed.

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- The use of a ground source heat pump linked to a borehole or trench collector should be considered for low level heating.
- The use of photovoltaic cells should be considered. The inner facing roof slopes are hidden and it may be possible to install cells without harming the significance of the place.
- Electrical installations should include provision of electrical circuits for future photovoltaic technology.
- All water outlets should incorporate flow rate controls.
- Consideration should be given to rainwater harvesting for grounds maintenance and for grey water use within the building.
- The selection of all building materials should consider whole life environmental impact, preferring materials with low embodied energy, traditional materials, locally sourced materials, finishes that are natural, paints and stains which are water based or have low volatile organic compound (VOC) content and materials with a high recycled content.
- A site waste management plan should be adopted for all construction work other than minor maintenance.
- Timber should only be used which comes from verifiable legal sources and sustainably managed forests.

4.9 MAINTENANCE

The present arrangements for maintenance of the mansion and its setting are unsatisfactory. Proper arrangements and budgets need to be established as soon as possible

Management guidelines

- The long term arrangements will follow the search for suitable beneficial uses. In the shorter term, funding is needed to repair defective rainwater goods, and carry out repairs to any sections of the roof which are leaking and to ensure that services installations are in a safe condition.

4.10 MANAGING INFORMATION ABOUT THE HERITAGE

The owners of the mansion should ensure that all responsible for the management of the mansion are aware of the conservation management plan and implement its policies.

The Conservation Management Plan should be reviewed and updated periodically and no less frequently than at 5 yearly intervals

Management guidelines

- A formal process should be set up for the adoption, updating and review of the Conservation Management Plan.
- A complete copy of the Conservation Management Plan, together with an archive of associated documents, should be held by a nominated person or organisation who are able to allow reasonably free access to those people who need to view it.
- Anyone making use of the plan should understand its purpose and format.
- Arrangements should be made to allow new and supplementary information into the gazetteer more frequently than the periodic review and updating of the CMP itself.
- Consideration should be give to whether access to the CMP should be restricted on the grounds of security as information might be of value to thieves.

4.11 INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

Measures which increase understanding of the special architectural, social and historic interest of the place are encouraged, provided that they do not adversely affect the significance of the place.

5 ACTION PLAN

- Carry out further consultation on this Conservation Management Plan, make amendments as necessary and then arrange for the plan to be formally adopted.
- Seek and assess proposals for possible new uses within the building.
- Explore the possibility of obtaining other sources of funds for dealing with the backlog repairs to the building.
- Retain overall arrangements for management and maintenance of the building. Consider local management issues raised within the audience development plan.
- Carry out heritage impact assessment of the physical works recommended in the Access and Audience Development Plans. Modify proposals where required and incorporate into the long term planning for the building.
- Encourage local authority to adopt the Conservation Management Plan in their management of the park as a whole. Explore ways in which the management of mansion and park can be integrated.
- Offer the conservation management plan to the local planning authority as a basis for assessment of proposals affecting the mansion and its setting.

APPENDIX 6 SUMMARY PLANS

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