The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Sevenoaks District



Jessups, Hever/Cowden

Sevenoaks District Council

Kent Gardens Trust

English Heritage

Supported by

Kent County Council

April 2012

Jessups

Sevenoaks, Kent

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SITE DESCRIPTION

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Boundary map.

FIGURE 2: Aerial photograph.

FIGURES ONLY ON CD

FIGURE 3: J.Andrews, A.Drury and W.Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent in Twenty Five Sheets (1769)*

FIGURE 4: Tithe map (Cowden parish)

.

FIGURE 5: Tithe map (Hever parish)

FIGURE 6: Tithe map apportionments (267, 268, 605, 606, 607)

FIGURE 7: Ordnance Survey 1st edn 25" map (1862-1875)

FIGURE 8: Ordnance Survey 2nd edn 25" map (1897-1900)

FIGURE 9: Ordnance Survey 3rd edn 25" map (1907-1923)

FIGURE 10: Ordnance Survey 4th edn 25" map (1929-1952)

FIGURE 11: Extract from 'Land & Landscapes' (Brenda Colvin), p92

FIGURE 12: Jackson Stops Sales Particulars, 1971

FIGURE 13: Aerial Photo of site (Denison-Pender)

FIGURE 14: Photographs, c. 1980s (Denison-Pender)

FIGURE 15: Photographs, c. 1999 (Denison-Pender)

FIGURE 16: Photographs, c. 2003 (Denison-Pender)

FIGURE 17: Photographs, c. 2004 (Denison-Pender)

FIGURE 18: Photographs, c. 2011

FIGURE 19: Owners and tenants records since 1840

INTRODUCTION

This site dossier and description has been prepared as part of the **Review of The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Sevenoaks District 2011 - 2013.** This site is one of many sites that have been researched, visited and written about across the District and as a consequence has been included in the revised list of Historic Parks and Gardens covered by the District Council's Planning Policies. The list is not conclusive and further gardens may be added over time as research continues or information comes to light

The research was carried out by volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust with support and training from the project consultant Virginia Hinze. The project was supported by English Heritage and Kent County Council.

The extent of the area identified represents the remains of the designed landscape and does not necessarily cover all remaining elements or the historical extent of landscape changes and takes no account of current ownership. Further Information is available from the contacts listed below. The partnership would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much of their time, effort and hospitality to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Age, rarity and survival: The site exhibits a few surviving features from its main phase of layout in the 1930s although with significant later alterations: terraces, sweeping lawns, informal tree planting, shrub and herbaceous borders together with a partly walled kitchen garden from the same period.

Historic association: Jessups is featured in Brenda Colvin's book *'Land and Landscapes'* (Colvin was a founder member of the Landscape *Institute*); during the late C20 it was the home of Robin Denison-Pender, High Sheriff of Kent

SITE DESCRIPTION

KENT JESSUPS (JESSOPS)
SEVENOAKS
HEVER/COWDEN
TQ4645 4270

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

A mid-C20 informal garden of terraces, lawns, shrub and herbaceous borders surrounding an early C20 house of C18 origin.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site takes it name from Jessups Mead, a meadow beside the Cowden Pound Road in the hamlet of Mark Beech near Edenbridge in Kent. This land together with a pond and shaw belonged to the Burfoot family from at least the mid C18 (Tim Boyle, *Mark Beech - The Unknown Village*). In the 1840s it was tenanted by a Thomas Harris who also rented the adjacent two fields of arable land and pollard wood from the same landlord. These two parcels of land lay either side of the parish boundary between Cowden and Hever. By 1841 (Tithe maps of Cowden and Hever) two semi-detached cottages with gardens are recorded at the south end of Jessups Mead.

Mark Beech acquired its own church in 1851 when the new ecclesiastical parish of Mark Beech was created thus incorporating both areas of the Jessups site into the same parish. By the 1870s the cottages have become one house, occupied by at least three tradesmen and their families over the next 50 years, with the site name varying from Jessops (or Jessups) Cottage to finally just Jessops or Jessups. In 1924 a private resident, John Davison, is recorded as living in the house which by this time appears to have been extended (3rd ed. 25" OS map). Two pig breeders follow in 1927 and 1930 during which period a staff cottage, the present Jessups Cottage, was probably built. It was certainly part of the estate when the Beddy family bought Jessups around 1933 (Electoral Rolls of 1930 and 1931 in the Hever District). Edwin S L. Beddy had been a Civil Engineer in India where he had enjoyed a considerable garden and bought Jessups with the express intention of developing a garden in his retirement (pers.com E P S Beddy, grandson). He employed a full time live-in gardener and by 1952 the house had been much enlarged and the pleasure garden extended with formal tree planting in the paddocks beyond (*see note to 'Other Land 'section*). A large glasshouse was built plus various other outbuildings (4th ed. 25" OS).

After Mr. Beddy's death, the house was bought by Richard and Sybil Hammond and their family in 1958. Mrs Hammond was a keen gardener and further developed the garden. From 1958 she employed a full time gardener, Ken Dann, who lived in the existing staff cottage built between the wars. In 1971 Robin Denison-Pender (future High Sheriff of Kent) and his wife Clare bought Jessups, installing a tennis court and swimming pool. Although Mr. Dann continued to live in the staff cottage, he only worked part-time at Jessups.

From 1992 to 2000 the house was open every Easter Sunday under the National Gardens Scheme and occasionally in the summer in aid of the local church. After the death of Robin Denison-Pender in 2003, the house was sold in 2004. It remains in private ownership.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Jessups is located equidistantly between Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead, some 5km south of Edenbridge. The site is on the north side of Cowden Pound Road, immediately to the east of its junction with the B2026 Hartfield to Edenbridge road, and on the outskirts of the hamlet of Mark Beech.

The property extends to 6.35 ha of which the garden covers 1.16ha. It lies in the open country of the High Weald and is surrounded by gently sloping pastureland to the east and north with the remainder of its western boundary abutting properties that line the eastern side of the Hartfield Road. The boundaries are formed by hedges with hedgerow trees. The house is situated close to the road on the highest part of the property with the land at the rear sloping gently down northwards towards the North Downs visible about 12km away across the Eden valley.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The entrance to Jessups is from the south, on Cowden Pound Road. A gravelled drive leads through a pair of ornamental wooden gates hung on wooden pillars set in a gap in the hedge. Immediately on the west side is a turning to Jessups Cottage, a former gardener's cottage. The drive leads north for 20m past a recently rebuilt wooden garage on its west side opposite which a branch turns eastwards to encircle a large mixed bed in front of the main entrance to the house on its western façade. The drive continues northwards for about 50m passing the stable block on its east side and following the boundary of the kitchen garden on its west side. It ends beside brick-built pig sties (now in use for composting) situated in front of a potting shed built against the north wall of the kitchen garden.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The present brick-built, two storey house is an extensive enlargement of a pair of semi-detached cottages which possibly date back to the C18 (Andrews, Drury and Herbert map, 1769). The oldest part may have been extended around the turn of the century with a two storey addition on the front, south, façade, but a further considerable extension with higher ceilinged rooms to the rear was also added probably after the First World War (3rd and 4th Ed. OS 25"), the whole building then forming a slightly hollow E as seen from the east. The windows are sash. The roof, partly slate, is surrounded by a parapet and incorporates a mock Dutch gable on the slightly projecting eastern section of the north (garden) façade. There is a conservatory (built 1999*)* to the west of this façade where formerly there was 'a glass protected paved terrace' (1971

sales particulars). The south facing, roadside façade was rebuilt in 2004 after a change in ownership, raising the roof level and generally enlarging this wing which now extends further towards the road. It now comprises a double row of six matching neo-Georgian sash windows with the final pair at the east end bricked up, the whole under a slate roof with parapet.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

In front of the conservatory on the north, garden, side of the house, there is a terrace laid to lawn. This was formerly a rose garden which was grassed over in 1972 for ease of maintenance. An old mulberry tree growing on the north-east corner of this terrace was brought down in the 1987 storm and replaced with a Viburnum (pers.com former owner*).* A paved path is laid northwards from the house across the middle of the terrace to a gap in the retaining wall where steps flanked by Mediterranean shrubs lead down to a larger lawn sweeping down to a paddock to the north. A hard tennis court laid out in 1971, occupies flat land in the north-west corner of the garden, beyond the main lawn, but screened from it by trees and surrounded by grass on its east and south. A swimming pool enclosure lies to the east of the terrace. When the pool was dug in 1971, the spoil was used to fill in small azalea-surrounded pond featured in Brenda Colvin's '*Land and Landscapes'* which lay further east of the house nearer to the road in an area now managed as rougher grass with a variety of mature trees including willow, Lombardy poplar, oak, elm, larch and flowering cherry. A slight dip in the ground is all that survives of Colvin's pond. A path leads from below the terrace along the western edge of the lawn towards the tennis court and paddock. Up to the 1970's it featured a rose-covered pergola, later removed.

Beyond the house and garden to the north, south-west and north- east are three paddocks, the largest of which, to the north of the house, includes a large pond and, beyond the south-west paddock, 1.5ha of mature oak and beech wood (all lying outside the boundary of the local listed site). In the 1960s the woodland had rides cut through it (1971 Sales Particulars) although it is not known whether these survive.

KITCHEN GARDEN

A mainly walled kitchen garden is situated on the west side of the drive, south of the tennis court. A potting shed is built against the back of the north wall. A large greenhouse built in 2004 forms the western side, replacing an extensive glasshouse heated by a hot air system, probably built in the early 1930's *(*4th ed. 25"OS). Brick built, former pig sties in front of the potting shed were used as compost containers at least until 2004 (pers.com. John Dunn, son of gardener). The main areas of the kitchen garden are laid to lawn with shrub borders and a specimen tree.

REFERENCES

Books, articles

Brenda Colvin*, Land and Landscapes*
Tim Boyle, *Mark Beech - The Unknown Village*

Maps

J. Andrews, A. Dury & W. Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent in Twenty Five Sheets (1769)*
Tithe Map for Sevenoaks, 1940 (Kent History and Library Centre): Hever Parish; Cowden Parish
Ordnance Survey 1st ed. 25" map (1862-75)
Ordnance Survey 2nd ed. 25" map (1897-1900)
Ordnance Survey 3rd ed. 25" map (1907-1923)
Ordnance Survey 4th ed. 25" map (1929-1952)

Illustrations

2003 Aerial photograph (KCC)
Photographs 1971-2004 (private collection)

Archival items

Sales Particulars Jackson Stops & Staff (1971)

Personal Communication

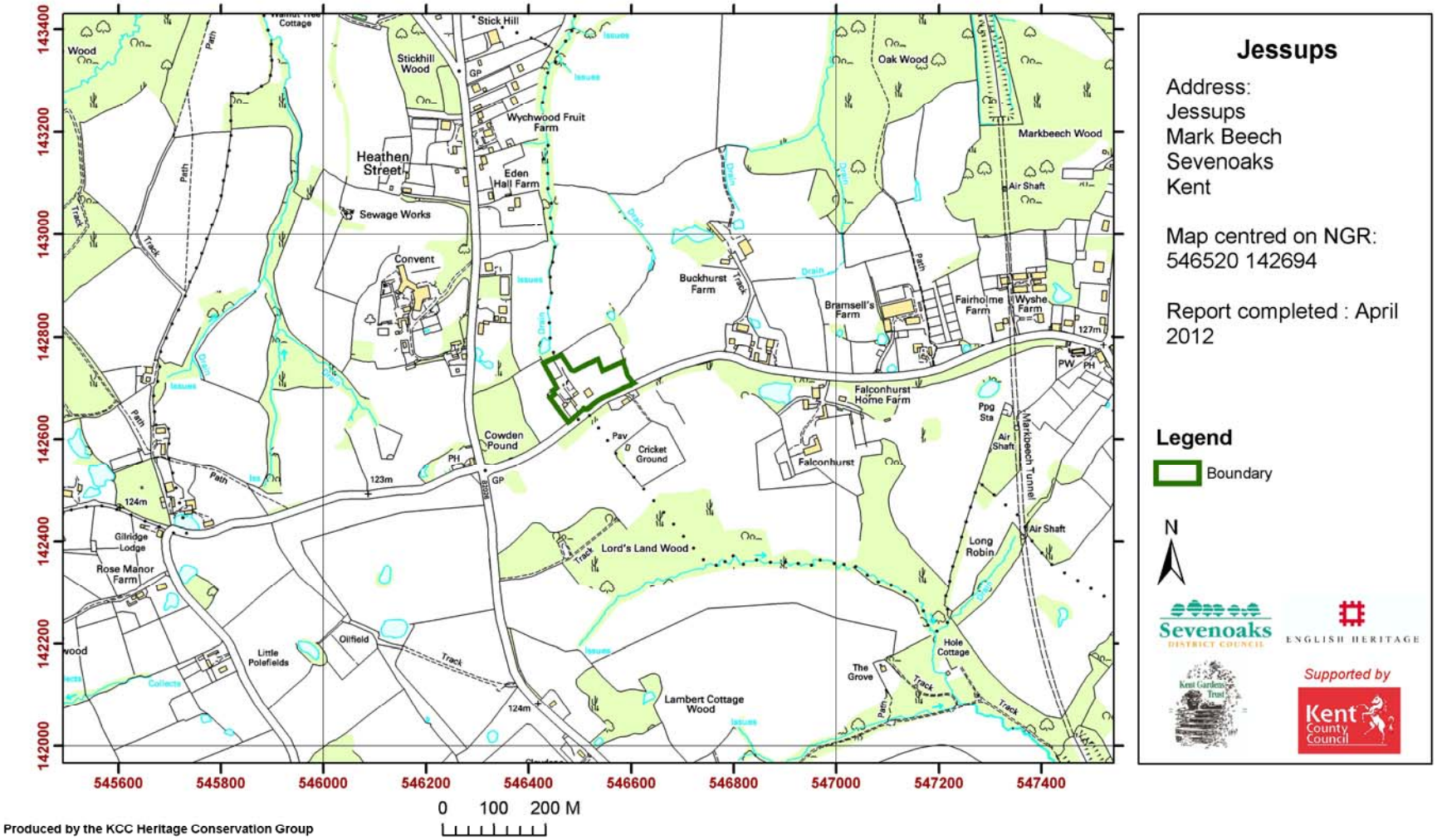
Mr. E.P.S. Beddy (grandson of Edwin S.L. Beddy)
Mrs. Clare Denison-Pender (owner 1971-2004

Research by Peta Hodges

Virginia Hinze (editor)

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Fig. 1 Boundary map

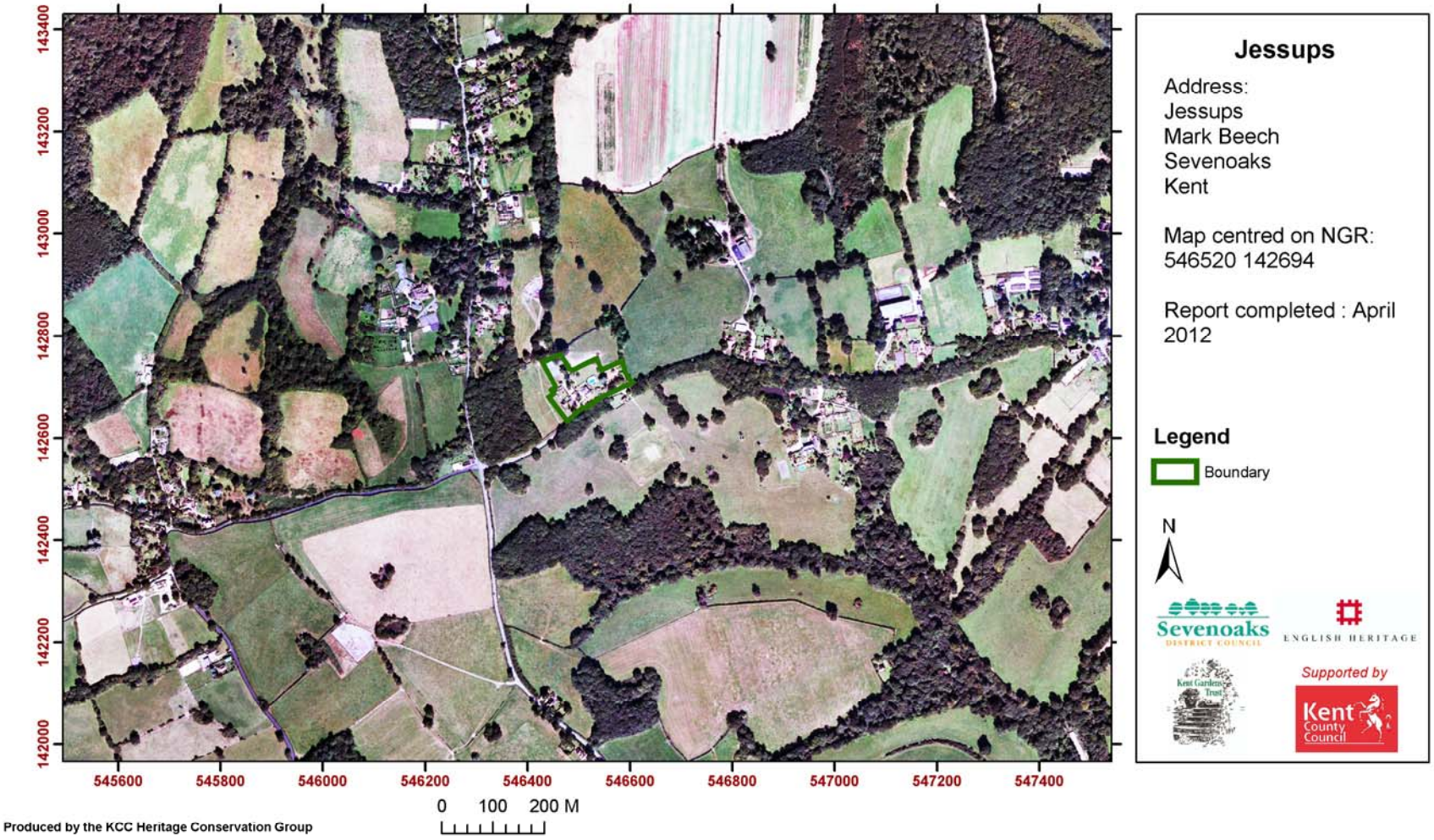


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Fig. 2 Aerial photograph (2006)



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