The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Dover



St Albans Court

September 2017

St Albans Court

Nonington, Dover, Kent

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The researcher would like to express her thanks to Peter Hobbs for his generosity in allowing her to visit his house and garden and to use photographs of his historical manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

This site description and accompanying dossier have been prepared by the Kent Gardens Trust as part of its wider review of ***The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens.*** This part of the review was carried out for Dover District Council (DDC) from 2015-2017 and covers sites within the Dover local authority area. The reports detail the historic nature, content, current state and significance of the sites currently identified in the ***Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens*** for the Dover local authority area along with others identified by DDC.

Dover District Heritage Strategy.

The Dover District Heritage Strategy 2013 (DDHS) seeks to ensure that heritage plays a clear role in shaping any future regeneration, development and management decisions. To achieve this aim the DDHS contains a series of recommendations intended to promote and enhance the protection and enjoyment of the Districts heritage assets. A heritage asset is defined as a "building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)"[1].

The review carried out by the Kent Gardens Trust supports the following DDHS recommendations:

- *Recommendation 9: Systems should be put in place to ensure that historic environment information and advice is readily accessible to local communities to help them shape the places in which they live.*
- *Recommendation 14*: *a Local List of Heritage Assets should be developed...gardens identified within the Kent Gardens Compendium and any enhancement of the Compendium should be included in the Local List*.
- *Recommendation 23*: *Opportunities should be sought and support given to local communities, groups and individuals in researching their past, develop projects with them that identify, enhance understanding of the Districts heritage assets and involve them in condition assessment, monitoring, management, promotion and interpretation of the assets:*

How was the review carried out?

The review has been undertaken using Historic England's criteria for identifying the significance of local heritage assets to provide a consistent approach[2]. A template for the reports was developed by DDC, building on the experience of previous work by the Kent Gardens Trust. The heritage values of the historic

[1] National Planning Policy Framework 2012
[2] Historic England "Conservation Principles: Policy and Guidance" 2008

park or garden subject to the report are defined within the Statement of Significance.

The extent of the area identified represents the current surviving area of the designed landscape, the boundary line generally reflecting the maximum extent of the historic gardens or parkland (although there are exceptions such as where land has been irreversibly lost to development). The boundary line takes no account of current ownership.

How will the reports be used?

a) The revised list of sites has the potential to support development of a Local List[3] of Heritage Assets in Dover, should the Council progress with the recommendation in the DDHS in the future. The list of sites researched and evaluated in this review would be subject to consultation as part of any Local List development and is therefore not intended to be final.

b) In response to recommendation 9 of the DDHS, the reports will be made publically available both on the DDC website and to the Historic Environment Record held by Kent County Council.

c) The reports will help to inform future funding applications for historic spaces by the identification of significance.

d) The review will help to inform future policy making, conservation and/or any development of sites, and contribute to the understanding, and where possible enjoyment, of these heritage assets by the identification of the significance of key historic character, features and association including that of setting and viewpoints.

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.

Dover District Council
White Cliffs Business Park
Dover
CT16 3PJ
www.dover.gov.uk

Kent County Council
Heritage Conservation
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
ME14 1XX
www.kent.gov.uk

Kent Gardens Trust
www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk

[3] Historic England “Local Heritage Listing”: Historic England Advice Note 7 2016

KENT **ST ALBANS COURT**
NONINGTON
DOVER

TR 2636 5264

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

EVIDENTIAL

Extensive archaeological remains are on the estate, ranging from stone age materials to C17 brick clamps.

St Albans Court (now known as Beech Grove) is an Elizabethan style manor house (listed grade I) completed by 1878 for soldier and Banker William Oxenden Hammond by the gentleman architect George Devey.

Old St Albans Court (listed grade II*), the medieval remnant of the original manor house built in the early 1300s. The site includes an 1869 stable block by Devey, a walled garden dating to the C16 (possibly the earliest evidence of a planned garden on the estate), and an 1877 Fernery and Rocky Banks laid out by the firm of James Pulham.

The impressive terracing, steps and walls, designed by Devey to anchor his new mansion, St Albans Court, to its landscape setting, remain although the detail of the gardens has been lost but the parkland, laid out by the Hammond family, remains fairly unchanged since the end of the C19.

A scholarly restoration of the Pulham Rock Garden and Fernery has been carried out by the present owners.

HISTORICAL

The most notable family connected with the development of the park and garden are the Hammonds, who in 1556 purchased the estate and added to it before finally selling in 1936 when it became the Nonington PE College

There is an extensive archive of prints, photographs, architectural plans and maps.

Devey is now seen as an important influence on the later Arts and Crafts movement

In the grounds of Beech Grove is a Swedish Gymnasium/Dance theatre (listed grade II) dating from 1938, presented to the Principal of Nonington College for her work with Scandinavian Dance.

AESTHETIC

The views of the old manor house and stables as an imaginative (picturesque) complex seen from the mansion are superb. The outlines of the 19th century tree planting in the Pleasure Grounds remain. Beech Grove, an impressive building, can be seen from the Sandwich Road when looking north.

COMMUNAL

The Bruderhof Community, the present owners, who have renamed St Albans Court as Beech Grove welcome visitors to their modern buildings and community but not elsewhere on the site.

Old St Albans Court is in private ownership and opened only occasionally by application from organized professional groups.

There are public footpaths that pass to the north of the mansion.

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

Beech Grove (listed grade I) is a country mansion by George Devey started 1875 and completed in 1878, set around a courtyard. The terrace steps and wall to the south-east and south-west of the house (listed grade II) date from 1875.

A Swedish Dance Theatre circa 1938 (listed grade II) by Jocelyn Adburgen, dating from the time when St Albans Court was owned by the English Gymnastic Society, is to the north-west of the mansion. Old St Albans Court (listed grade II*), incorporating the medieval remnants of the original manor house, stands 90m to the south west of Devey's mansion.

Excavations have revealed evidence of possibly late Bronze Age hut circles and enclosures to the east of Beech Grove.

There is an Anglo-Saxon cemetery to the west of the house and a round barrow, to the south-east of the house. William Oxenden Hammond erected a stone pyramid to the west of the house (Beech Grove) over the Anglo-Saxon skeletons he found in 1875 during the construction of the house.

Old St Albans Court (listed grade II*) dating from the C14, lies 90m to the south-west of Beech Grove and retains a Tudor walled garden and an 1877 Pulham Fernery and Rocky Banks with a Dropping Well and Toad stone, which formed a feature within the garden. At the north-western corner of the sunken garden an existing walk connects it to the walled Tudor Garden passing to the north of the Fernery. This walk was planted either side with Rhododendrons by William Oxenden Hammond and some specimens remain.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The property, now known as St Albans, in Anglo Saxon times formed the eastern

part of Oeswalum, a small estate of some 1200a. It is named as Eswalt in the Domesday Book, the name implying a wooded district.

Eswalt and Eswelle to the west were two of the many manors in Kent held by Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux, given by his half-brother William the Conqueror. The Domesday survey of 1086 records Eswalt and Essewelle and Bedesham (aka Beacham), further to the west as separate estates. When Odo's lands were forfeited after his second rebellion against his brother, Eswalt was given by William to Nigel de Albini, Earl of Albermarle; Eswelle (the spelling has varied and evolved into the current name, Easole) was acquired by bishop Walchelin Mamignot.

In 1096, Eswalt was gifted by Nigel de Albini to St Albans Abbey in Hertfordshire, where his brother, Richard, was the abbot. This link with the abbey led to the use of St Albans in the property name.

Harris in his *History of Kent*, 1719, p221 says *'at a place called Beacham near this St Albans, the tradition goes that there was a nunnery.'* In what is known as 'Ruins Field' an area between the current mansion and Beauchamps Wood, there are the remains of substrate flint and rubble walls, once thought to be this nunnery. However, these have been excavated by the Dover Archaelogical group 2007-2016 and are now thought to be the manor of Eswelle.

The name Beauchamp is thought to have come from the renting of the land (including Eswalt later known as St Albans) by Sir John Beauchamp from 1300 to 1360. Beauchamp was Royal Standard bearer at Cressy, close to the Black Prince, Commander at Dover, later Governor of Calais and one of Edward III's most successful generals. He made his base here at the manor of Eswelle because it is conveniently equidistant from Sandwich where his supplies and ships docked, and Dover which was the port of entry for significant persons.

The manor house foundations of Old St Albans Court date from C14 but the first known reference to the property under the name St Albans is in a will of 1509.

As part of the Dissolution, in 1538 Henry VIII transferred the manor to Sir Christopher Hales, MP for Canterbury. In 1551, the manor passed to Alexander Culpepper, Hale's son-in-law, and then to his elder brother who sold it to Thomas Hamon[d], thus beginning a long association with the Hammond family.
This purchase amalgamated the Hammond family's holdings – they were already local landowners - and they went on to buy the portion of what was Eswelle up the hill further to the north-west. The rest of Eswelle became what is now Fredville.

From 1556, the Hammond family fashionably converted the early manor house to a south-east facing brick mansion, and allowed the Eswelle Manor to fall into ruin. A porch with the Hammond arms over it bears the date 1556.
A probate inventory for Edward Hammond, dated 1616, lists St Albans Court as having twenty-six rooms.

Anthony Hammond came of age and into possession of the estate in 1633. A deed of covenant from this time documents St Albans Court as having two barns,

two stables, one dove house, two orchards, one garden and 225a of arable land, 19a meadow and 165a pasture with an additional 8a of arable and 7a of pasture in different occupation.

An indenture of 1663 records 'reserved for William Hammond all the brick part of the manor house with the kitchen garden lying behind it ---- with the coach house at the upper end of the apple orchard.'

Circa 1665 there was again major rebuilding with a new front being added on the north-east side of the manor house.

Further land purchases were made during the early C18 by the brothers William and Anthony Hammond, who farmed on a large scale. In a lease dated 8 March 1716, William granted Anthony part of St Albans for an annual rent of £230; he was to have use of the courtyard and two walled gardens to the front of the manor house and half of the kitchen garden (KAS – PMP box 27).

The tithe map of 1801 suggests that by that date, William Osmund Hammond owned in excess of 1,205 acres of land, occupying and farming just over 268a. In 1808, he purchased Easole Farmhouse with 123a thus further increasing his land holdings.

St Albans Court's land comprised 6a of garden, 62a of paddocks, 21a of woodland and 7a plantation. There was also a walled kitchen garden further to the south, established in 1790 behind the malthouse which had been built in 1704 and later purchased by Hammond. This is now divided from the estate by the Sandwich Road.

In 1792, Hammond records spending £3,000 on ornamenting and enlarging 'his house and place'. A print of 1792 shows the octagonal additions to the front of the house and heated greenhouses in the walled garden date from around this period. These were demolished during the Nonington College occupancy.

In 1869 Wiliam Oxenden Hammond commissioned George Devey, a friend and an established gentleman architect who had designed other manors locally, to build a stable block and a home farm to the south-west of St Albans Court house and to refurbish the existing house. The architect's drawings of the stable block are held in the RIBA library. These stables and associated buildings appear on the 1873 Ordnance Survey map linked by a series of walls. Photographs from 1870 depict a neatly laid out formal garden in the area surrounded by these buildings. Fruit trees and other edible crops are evident along with herbaceous borders. Some form of hot house or green house appears situated near the south wall of the house.

A further five designs of cottages for Hammond by Devey are held at Sheffield University. It has yet to be established if these were all built on the estate. Devey built at least ten sets of cottages for Hammond, all in pairs except for the one by the church which was designed to house six widows.

By 1875, William Oxenden Hammond had decided to build a new house as the old one had 'fallen into a decayed state' (Hammond diaries held by P Hobbs). He commissioned Devey to design the new house, which took the name St Albans

Court. Thought by many to be the best of Devey's later mansions it was built between 1875-8 on the hill 95m to the north-east of the existing house.
Once the new mansion was complete, the 1665 part of the old house was pulled down leaving an L shaped building with a tower at the angle. Devey considered this picturesque when seen from the new mansion (Hobbs).

The work reduced the size of the old house by more than half, and it became a servants' house. This smaller building became known as Tudor Cottage then, in 1995, with the renaming of the main mansion as Beech Grove, it took the name, Old St Albans Court.

Devey's general plan shows proposed gardens that do not seem to have eventuated.

In October 1875 Hammond ordered work be done to prepare for tree planting near the new St. Albans Court house. During this work fifteen skeletons were discovered in shallow graves cut into the underlying chalk on an east to west alignment. The skeletons were later reburied to the north-east of their place of discovery under a stone pyramid with a plaque with a Latin inscription on its western face, highlighting the mistaken belief in a battle involving the Romans having taken place there.

From 1903 to 1930s the estate was rented out, first to the Slazenger family and then to the O'Brien family, noted equestrians who bred Alsations and Foxhounds. There is a cemetery on the estate where some of the dogs were buried.

After Hammond's death in 1903, the estate passed to his nephew William Egerton Hammond (died 1923). W E Hammond's only son died in 1915 (and is commemorated on the Ypres Menin Gate). His widow Mrs Ina Hammond sold by auction, in 1938, the estate of some 1,000 acres divided into 80 lots. This ended the almost 429 year association of the Hammond family with the property.
St Albans Court estate was advertised (1938) and featured in *Country Life* magazine. Photographs from this period show well-kept gardens with terraces laid to lawn and edged with brick walls. Stone steps lead to lower terraces and herbaceous borders are planted at the base of the walls. Specimen trees and shrubs complete the mature garden.

St Albans Court, with some 50a of parkland plus two Tudor cottages (the former manor house), were bought by Miss Gladys Wright on behalf of the English Gymnastics Society as its headquarters and a training centre for women interested in becoming teachers of movement and gymnastics. The resulting establishment was named Nonington College. The 'Swedish Dance Theatre' was built during Wright's tenure. The many photographs from this period record the beautiful gardens around Tudor cottages and the C19 mansion.

During the Second World War, part of the mansion was used as offices for Eastry Rural District Council. The former manor house was used as the headquarters of the Dover YMCA. All William Oxenden Hammond's sweet chestnut plantings in Ruins Field were chopped down for the war effort and the field used for tank driver training.

Miss Wright retired in 1952 and sold the college to Kent County Council who took the building over, founding Nonington College of Physical Education for the training of PE teachers. There was substantial new building including flats as student accommodation (1960), a new Arts centre, and staff bungalows. A new gymnasium was built in 1959 and shortly after that a swimming pool.

After some 35 years as one of the top teacher training colleges, NCPE was closed in 1985 by KCC owing to a declining birth rate, lower demand for PE teachers, and financial cut-backs. KCC failed to find a buyer other than for the Old Court House (the Dower House on Pinners Hill). This had been an annexe of the college, and in 1986 it became the Promis Recovery Centre, a once renowned private rehabilitation clinic which went into liquidation in 2008. This house was then left empty and subsequently was badly damaged by fire in late August 2009.

In 1991 the remaining site was sold to developers who, failing to secure planning permission for housing, divided it up so that the main buildings went eventually to the Christian Bruderhof, whilst the former manor house, stables and cottage were sold individually as private residences in 1993.

The Tudor Cottage [now Old St Albans Court] was renovated by the Hobbs Family between 1997 and 2001.

Since 1995 the 1870s mansion, St Albans Court, has been known as Beech Grove and used to house the religious community; a school run by the Bruderhof is housed on the site in purpose-built buildings. Much of the land is farmed by them. Some of the former college sports facilities have been replaced by industrial units.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

The parish of Nonington comprises three hamlets on Easole Street and is approximately 11kms west of Deal, 13kms north-west of Dover and 13kms south-east of Canterbury, and is reached by narrow country lanes. Situated on the North Downs, it is a rural community set amidst open arable farm land. The fertile soil has chalk and flint inclusions.

The site here described is approximately 38ha in extent, and lies in the eastern half of the parish, its boundaries formed by the Sandwich Road to the south-east, Beauchamps Lane to the west and agricultural land on the other two sides. The land gently rises to the north across the site.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The main entrance to Beech Grove (as the former C19 St Albans Court mansion is now named), is approached from the Sandwich Road 430m east of the entrance to Old St Albans Court. This access dates from circa 1996 as entrances to the estate were altered when the estate was split up. Set back from the road

are two agricultural metal gates attached to brick pillars. Either side of these pillars is post and rail fencing edging the fields. The road passes through industrial buildings before reaching the house.

The land registry document of 1995 also shows the older curved drive from Sandwich road to Beech Grove used before the present entrance was laid out. This came off the Sandwich Road 278m to the west of the new entrance road and curves up in a north-easterly direction until it bears west going to the rear of Beech Grove. It is still visible but with parts realigned and no longer in use as they were deemed dangerous (pers. com. Hobbs)

The entrance road to Old St Albans Court is also off the Sandwich Road, approximately 160m further to the west. It is of long standing and appears on the 1629 estate map as such. The property is accessed through large green gates in a brick and stone arch which lead to the stable yard. This dates from the Devey works.

An old roadway leading from the 1869 Stable Block going in front of and leading to the rear of the new mansion is also evident on the 1995 land registry document. Although still visible today it crosses two private properties.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The country mansion now known as Beech Grove, and formerly named St Albans Court (listed grade I) was constructed in 1875-78 for William Oxenden Hammond by the architect, George Devey. Planned around three sides of a courtyard, it is ragstone with brick above to create the illusion of something older. The manor house and the substantial later buildings behind it are used to house a religious community and a school run by them.

A Swedish Dance Theatre circa 1938 (listed grade II) by Jocelyn Adburgen, dating from the time when St Albans Court was owned by the English Gymnastic Society, stands to the north-west of the mansion. It was a gift to the Principal for her work notating Ancient Swedish dance for the first time.

The C14 house on the estate, which, with the building of the new mansion became known as Tudor Cottage and subsequently, with the renaming of the C19 mansion as Beech Grove, renamed Old St Albans Court (listed Grade II*), is a timber framed building with jetties fronted in Tudor brick. Of medieval origin, it in part dates from the C16. In 1869, Devey built a stable block and a home farm to the south-west of the original house and refurbished the latter. Further alterations, including the demolition of a substantial portion of the old house fabric, were carried out in 1876. It is about this time that Hammond appears to have lived there until he moved into his new house in 1878. From the south-east end of the north-east elevation of Old St Albans Court, a wall of red brick and some stone runs north-eastwards to meet the north-eastern garden wall, both walls forming part of Devey's alterations. On the south-east side of the intersection between the two walls is a brick wall of earlier construction which runs south-eastwards partly in a curve, terminating in a low wall and gate piers flanking the driveway (garden walls listed grade II).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

Below the south-east façade of the mansion (Beech Grove, formerly St Albans Court), are the brick and stone walls, terracing and steps (all garden structures listed grade II) laid out by Devey as an integral part of his design for the new mansion, keying the building into its landscape setting. Most of these terraced areas in the immediate surrounds of the mansion are now (early C21) laid to grass.

The upper level of terrace runs the length of the mansion forming an approximately 22m wide level platform. In the central area, the width is increased by 6m to form a square, once the site of a garden, the outline of which can be seen on aerial photographs. The terrace is supported by a ragstone and brick wall with brick machicolation and brick and stone piers at the angles supporting the central square garden.

Similar brick and stone walls and piers bound flights of stairs descending from the south-western end of the main terrace. A similar brick wall continues south-west from the bottom of the terrace steps and joins at right angles with a similar wall bounding the north-east side of the north-eastern garden of Old St Albans Court.

The walls remain as originally constructed, apart from one C20 opening in the garden wall south-east of St Albans Court which allows for wheeled access. The grounds below the terrace walls contain some specimen trees, but many were lost in the 1987 gale which brought down large numbers of trees: at least 10% of the total in the pleasure grounds were destroyed.

Photographs from the 1900s-1950s show well-kept gardens with herbaceous borders in front of the Tudor Cottage (Old St Albans Court). The lower terraces below the mansion had neatly cut lawns with specimen trees interspaced.
The new industrial buildings are sited between the old entry road and the new one to the east of the mansion. School buildings are sited to the north-east of the mansion on former garden and parkland.

The garden area which accompanies Old St Albans Court has been restored from the derelict state into which it had fallen after 1986. There is a third of a hectare to the north-east of the house bounded by C19 brick walls, designed by Devey.

To the west and south-west of the house is a walled garden approximately 37m by 27m, known as the Tudor Garden. The wall to the north-west is built in brick dated as 1556 and includes Tudor bee boles; the remaining walls are a mixture of C17, C18 and C19 work including handsome gates commissioned by Devey in 1869. The garden is perhaps that mentioned in the 1349 Rent Roll of gardens associated with the monastic property.

The current planting (2017) is a rose garden with other shrubs. Late C18 walks have been restored with box hedging. An oblong stone-edged pond has been

added at right angles to the L-shaped Tudor building in a north-west direction, the sides of which are the foundations of the basement of the 1665 building demolished in mid C19.

The garden was laid out as a parterre with paths and glass houses in 1790 and boilers installed for heating the new greenhouses. (Hammond Family history). Alterations were made in 1869, as part of the scheme of works being implemented by Devey. There is reference in the 1938 sales catalogue to a formal box edged rose garden, surrounded by a high brick wall, with a fourteen-light greenhouse, sunk plant house and an eight light tomato house, all of which were heated. From the 2nd and 3rd editions of the OS map it would appear that these were sited in the Tudor Garden.

Most of the greenhouses were demolished in the mid/late C20 during the PE college ownership.

58m to the south-south west of Old St Albans Court lies an overgrown sunken garden. This is identified as the Rock Garden in the 1938 sales catalogue and was most probably a quarry left as a result of brick earth removal in the past: mention is made of what is presumably this hole as a *Borsate Pit* in the 1501 Court Roll of the Abbot of St Albans (KAS-PMP box 28). It has also been known, variously, as The Dell, and as the Sunken Garden but referred to as Rocky Banks and Fernery in the text.

The garden was laid out as a rockery and fernery by the firm of James Pulham in 1877 (shown in their business records; St Albans is referred to in the gazetteer of *The Pulham Legacy,* Claude Hitching 2012) and its development formed part of the major improvements and alterations to the estate being made by William Oxenden Hammond at this time. The rocks have been identified as having come from one of the quarries at Maidstone, sent by train to Addisham station and then by horse and cart to Nonington (pers comm (Ian Sayer, last Head Groundsman for Nonington College). The water for the Dropping Well, which formed a feature within the garden, came via a two-inch cast iron pipe from a reservoir in the then kitchen garden, lying 350m to the south. An area of some 80m by 30m was cleared between the north-western end of the sunken garden and an existing walk which connected it to the walled Tudor Garden. This area was planted with rhododendrons after the local alkaline soil had been replaced with a gravel bed, peat and a more acid soil. Some specimens still exist despite the dumping of waste soil in the area during developments in 1990.

The south west side of the Sunken Garden was a shallow sloping grassed area with stones and rockery plants, as can be seen from the 1937 sales catalogue. Areas within the depression were linked by steps and paths of stone slabs. There was a prominent Toad or Frog stone to the west side of the depression, with small round planting areas and another stone overlooking the Dropping Well (information, P Hobbs). This garden was known as '*Granny's garden*' by Ina Hammond's grandchildren who remember the frogs there (pers comm Ian Sayer).

There are photographs showing the rock garden used by Nonington PE college for a musical evening.

There is a cistern between the sunken garden and the stable yard, approx 18m to the south of the house. This is noted on the OS 2nd edition 25' map, although inaccurately placed.

Miss Wright, who had been Principal since the College started in 1938, moved away from St Albans Court in 1952 when the college was sold to KCC. She had her own house built locally and took with her enough rock to start her own rockery from the stone imported by Hammond and used by Pulham. It is estimated that the new rockery absorbed between 10 – 15% of all the original imports (Gareth Daws archaeologist). The resulting cleared area was filled by a large herbaceous bed surrounded by lavender (pers comm Ian Sayer).

In 1972, KCC built four college staff bungalows to the south and south-west of the Sunken Garden, requiring a platform to underpin them. This radically changed the garden and closed it in with yews and conifers cutting out the light. The present owners bought the land in 2000, and from 2008 onwards, much hard work has been done to clear and catalogue the Rock Garden and Fernery, and today it has been re-planted in such a way as to keep to the spirit of Pulham planting although the site is more enclosed than when originally constructed.

A general survey of the plants currently growing in The Dell was carried out by Mr and Mrs Richard Hoskins during 2012/2013. Seventy-five species of plant were identified and listed during these visits. Comparing this list with Pulham's list produced 30 matches of plant species or families. These are unlikely to be all original Pulham plants or even direct descendants thereof since most of the smaller shrubs and herbaceous plants will not have not survived to the present day, but shows a continuity of planting with similar species having been planted and re-planted since then. Some of the original conifers may well have survived, together with a handful of ferns, a few shrubs and climbers, and a small number of the more tenacious flowering plants. Ina Hammond also made her own additions to the plantings. (pers comm Ian Sayer).

The pleasure grounds laid out to accompany the mid C19 mansion, extended some 80m on the east and south sides of the house. To the north side of the mansion which was the original front entrance, there was a greater area of land stretching some 150m from the mansion. To the west there was a view that looked out to the Elm walk that joined up with Beauchamps Lane. This can be seen on 2nd and 3rd editions OS maps.

The horseshoe-shaped planting of trees to the north west of Beech Grove remains but tennis courts to the west and buildings to the south of them are left from when the college occupied the site. Further buildings have been added by the Bruderhof for school accommodation to the north of the Dance Theatre, itself standing to the north of the mansion, and industrial units to the east replace some of the college sports facilities.

PARK

The park extends around the pleasure grounds to the perimeter of the site. The plantings on the north and north-west remain the same as William Oxenden Hammond planted them, apart from the Elm Walk which was destroyed by disease, and Ruins Field which was cleared of sweet chestnuts in 1940.

Much of the tree planting put in place by Hammond in the C19 still exists today with the exception of some to the east of Beech Grove which has made way for industrial units. The horseshoe-shaped plantation to the north-west of Beech Grove as seen on the 2nd edition OS map remains the same.

There appears to have been a Ha! Ha! although this is not visible now. In his diaries William Oxenden Hammond wrote: '*About 1890 I enclosed with an Oak park fence a considerable area laying it down to grass, roughly, with the previous timber covered land 'the Ruins', bringing the whole park up to 200 acres. I commenced making plantation on this ground soon after I succeeded in 1863 and continued to plant up to 1897. I also very considerably enlarged the Lawn and constructed the Ha! Ha! So as to give an unbroken and uninterrupted surface of grass to the end of the glade heading to the church gate.'* The Ha Ha! was part destroyed when the college built tennis courts and finally removed when the college student flats were built in the 1960s. None of the oak fencing remains today, 2017.

An Elm avenue which extended some 300m from a line that went to the north of Old St Albans and west from Beech Grove towards Beauchamps Lane. This appears on the editions 1st, 2nd & 3rd of the OS maps. This feature was all destroyed in the plague of Dutch Elm disease in the mid C20. The timbered area that Hammond mentions in the above quotation, including *'the ruins*' which was located between Old St Albans and Beauchamps Wood, is now cleared as pasture land. The sweeping curved drive that historically went through the park from the road south of Old St Albans to the rear of the new mansion has been replaced with one that directly links with the industrial units. One or two specimen trees remain in the park.

The 1859 Tithe map identifies a chapel on the estate to the north-west of St Albans Court and close to the west perimeter of Beauchamps Wood. This has now been excavated and is established as the ruins of the Manor of Estwelle.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The Tudor garden is assumed to have been a domestic garden from early C14 and the erection of greenhouses built by 1790, confirms its use as such by this date.

The Malthouse, built in 1704, which stands some 400m southwest of Beech Grove was purchased by the Hammond family, around 1790. To the south-east of the main building lies a walled garden, built as a kitchen garden by the Hammond family probably in the late C18 or early C19 (Nonington Village

website). The garden is shown on the OS 1st edition map; later editions show a greenhouse within, but no planting detailed.
A pipe running from the Sunken Garden to the Malthouse supplied water. Although this has been ploughed up in recent years, where it ran is evident on aerial photographs (Google Earth).

The old farm house, barn with adjoining land and malt house were bought by John Harvey & Co. when the St. Albans estate was sold off in 1938.
The 1704 Malt house is now a dwelling and the surrounding land used by small businesses. The garden remains but is unused (2017).

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Andrews/Drury/Herbert map 1769

Hasted – Hundred of Wingham and Kinghamford map 1800
Mudge map 1801
Tithe map 1801
Estate plan 1819
Tithe map 1859
1st edition OS 25"map (1862-1875)
2nd edition OS 25" map (1897-1900)
3rd edition OS 25" map (1907-1923)
4th edition OS 25" map (1929-1952)
Google earth maps 1940,1960,1990,2007 & 2013.

Illustrations

5 repro drawings of cottages at St. Albans by Devey
Engraving of St Albans 1792
Engraving of reshaped NE front of St Albans 1838
Photograph of St Albans Court dated 1860.
Print of St Albans Court pre 1869.
Photograph of Devey stable block. 1869.
SW side of old house stable yard. 1870.
Photograph of St Albans Court pre- 1870.
Photograph of a hunt meet in front of the house circa 1920.
Photograph of new house from old house 1930.
Photograph of old house from new house 1930.
Catalogue picture of house 1938.
Terrace from sales brochure 1938.
Photograph of the Rock garden 1938.
Sunken garden 1946.
2 Photographs of St Albans interior 1971 – *Country Life* article.
Countrylife advertisement for the sale of St Albans 1985.
Photographs taken 2017 of Old St Albans and Beech Grove.
Photographs taken 2017 of the Pulham Garden.
Plan of the sunken garden.
Five cottages designs by Devey held at Sheffield University.
Undated sketch by Captain Hammond (d. 1855)
Devey's Designs for St Albans Mansion – British Library.
Watercolour of Old St Albans by W Oxenden Hammond 1893
Photograph of Elm Avenue before Dutch Elm Disease.

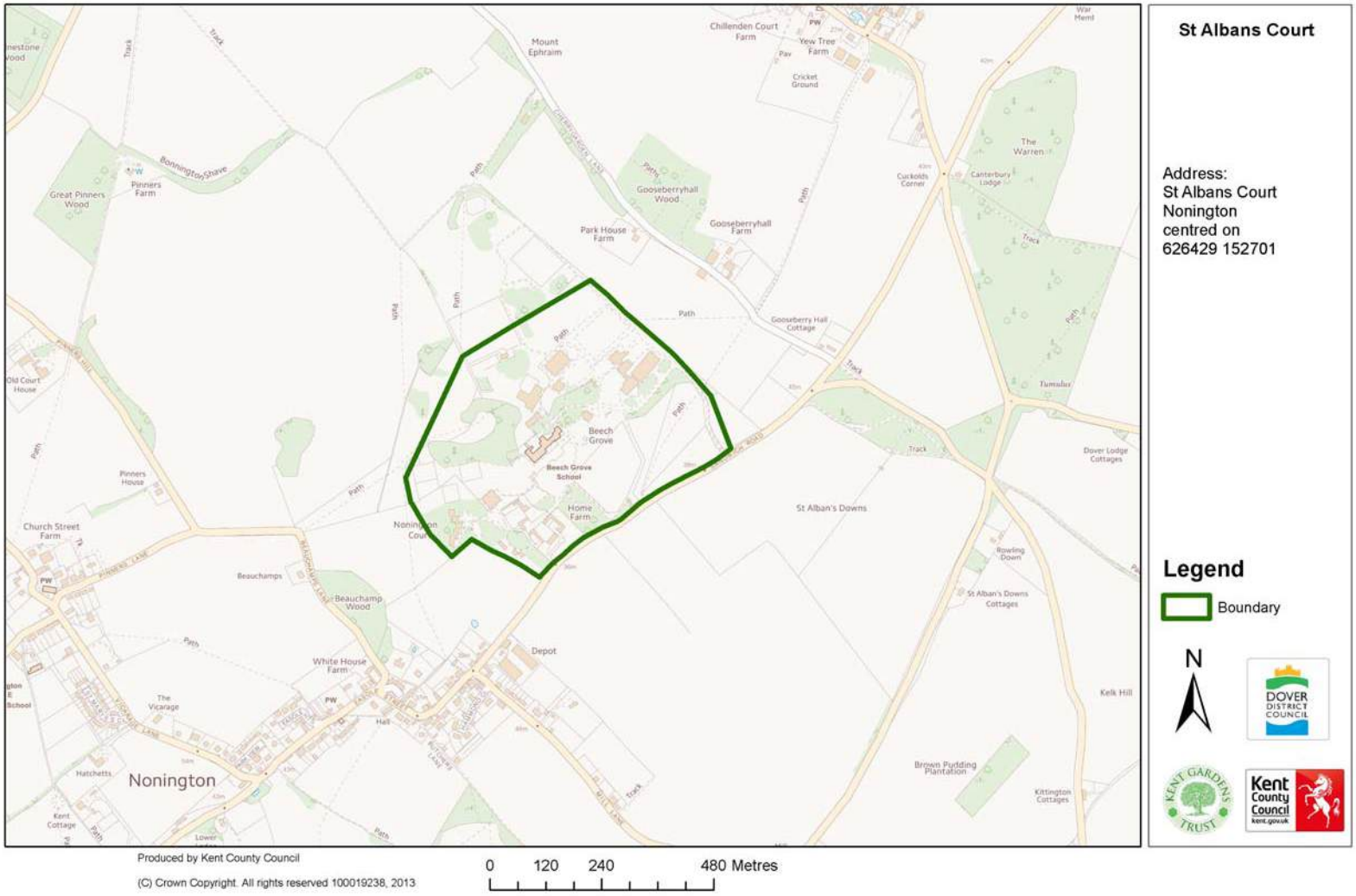
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[Particulars of old deeds from St. Albans Court transcripts of Court Rolls, Red Book of the Exchequer, Close Rolls]
Particulars of a Lease dated 8 March 1716 [box 27]
Particulars of an indenture dated 27th March 1717 [box 27]

Research and written by Barbara Piper
Harriet Jordan (editor)

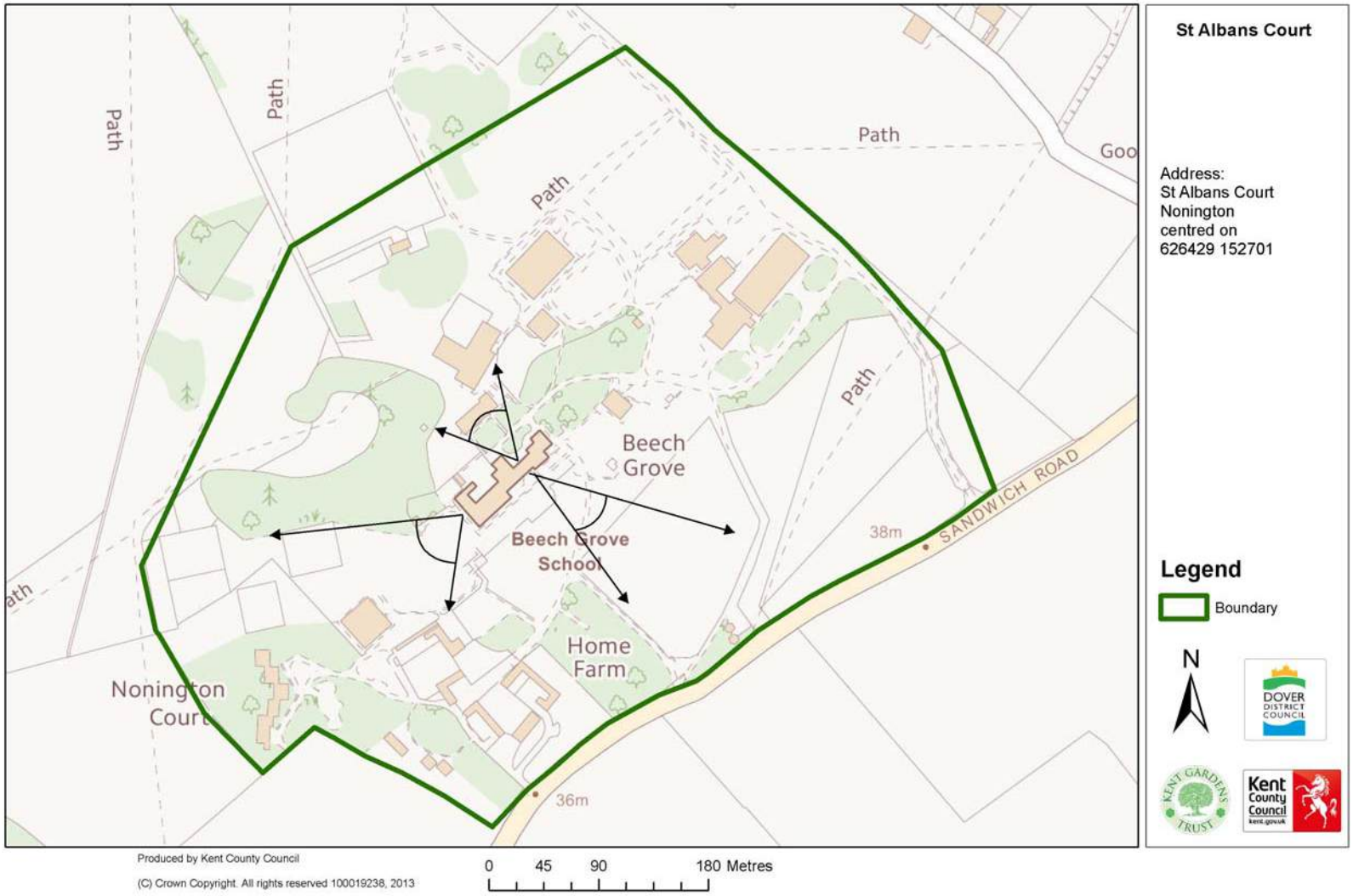
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Fig. 1 Boundary map



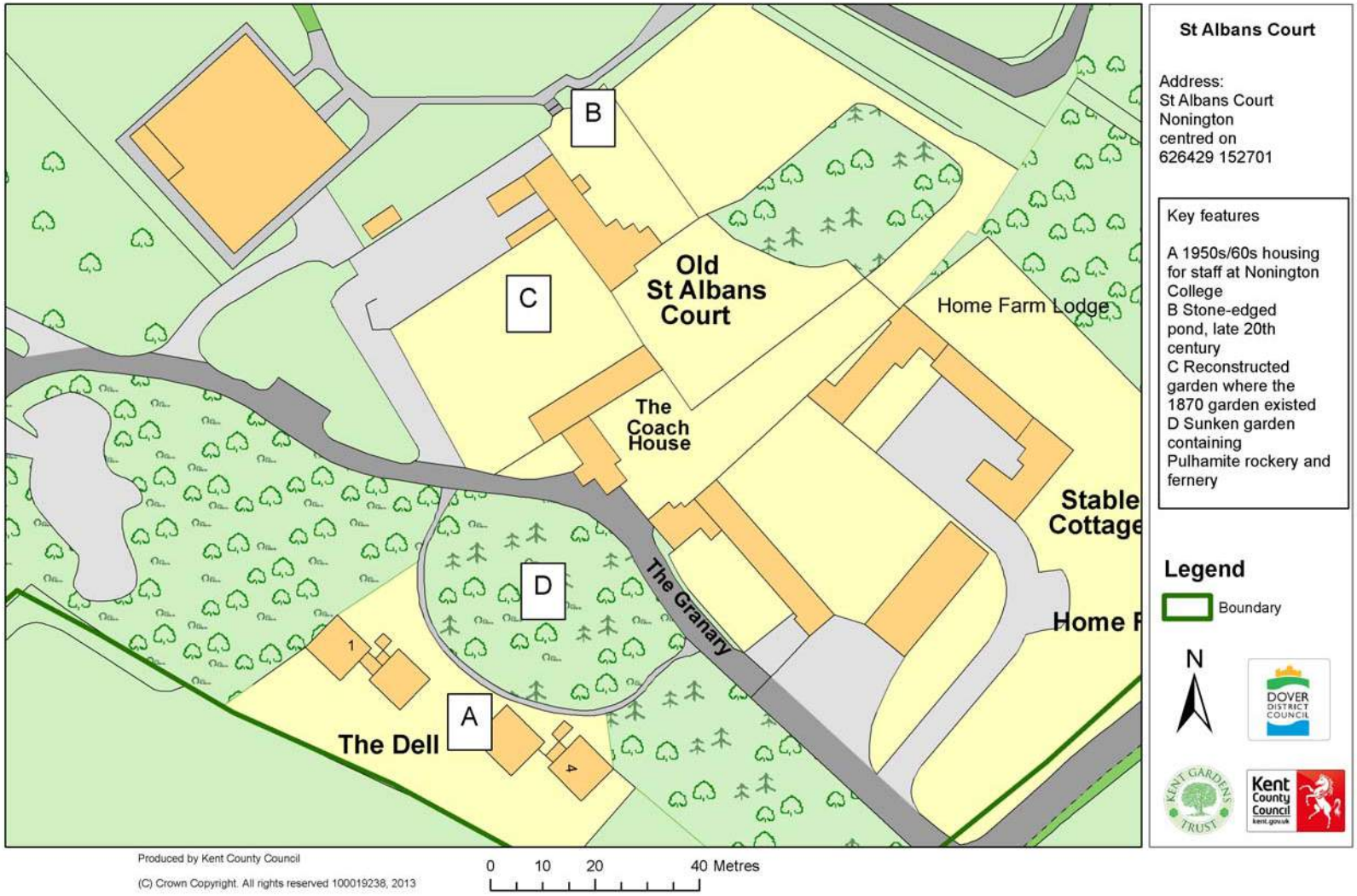
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Fig. 2 Key views map



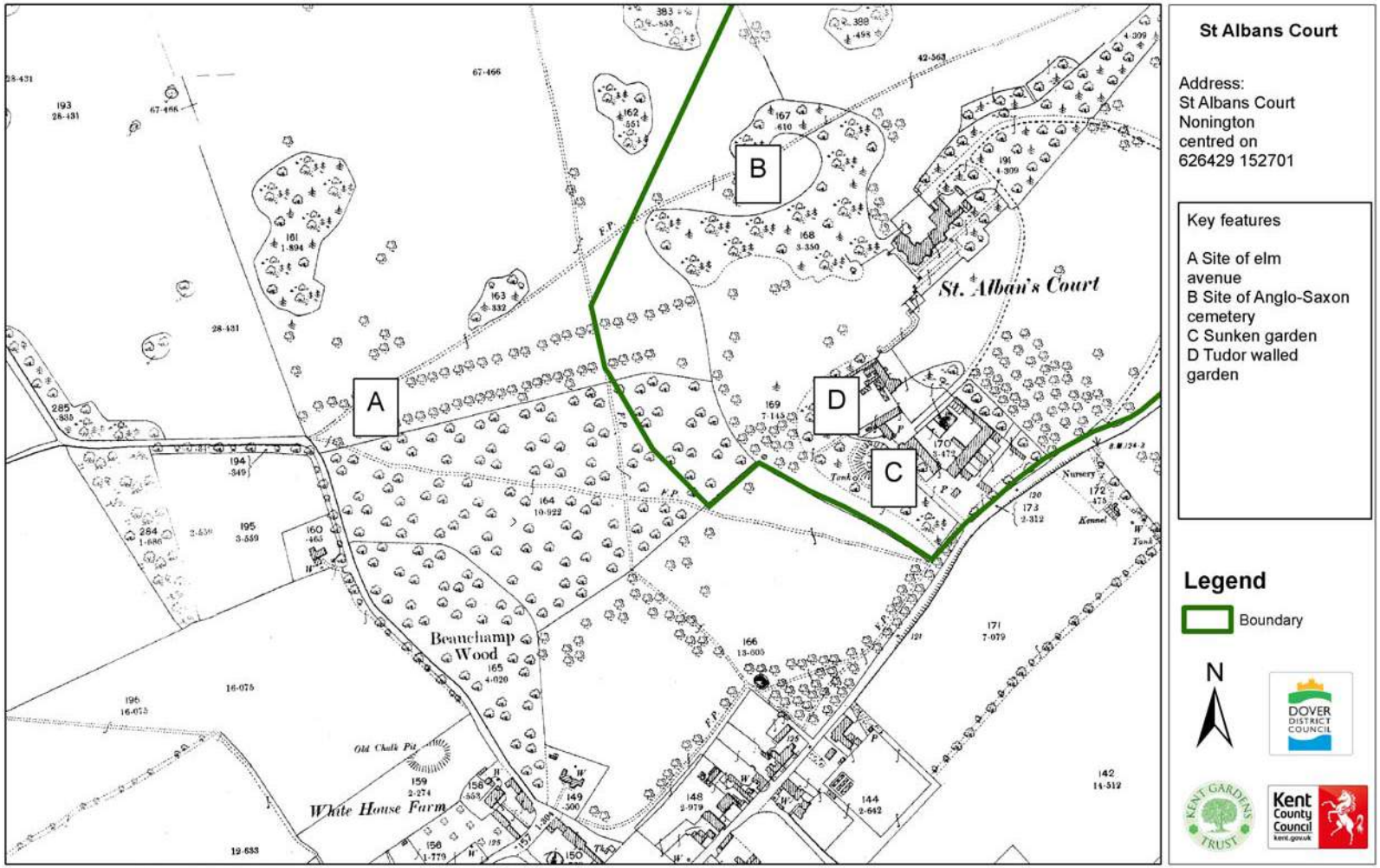
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Fig. 3 Map of key features: 1



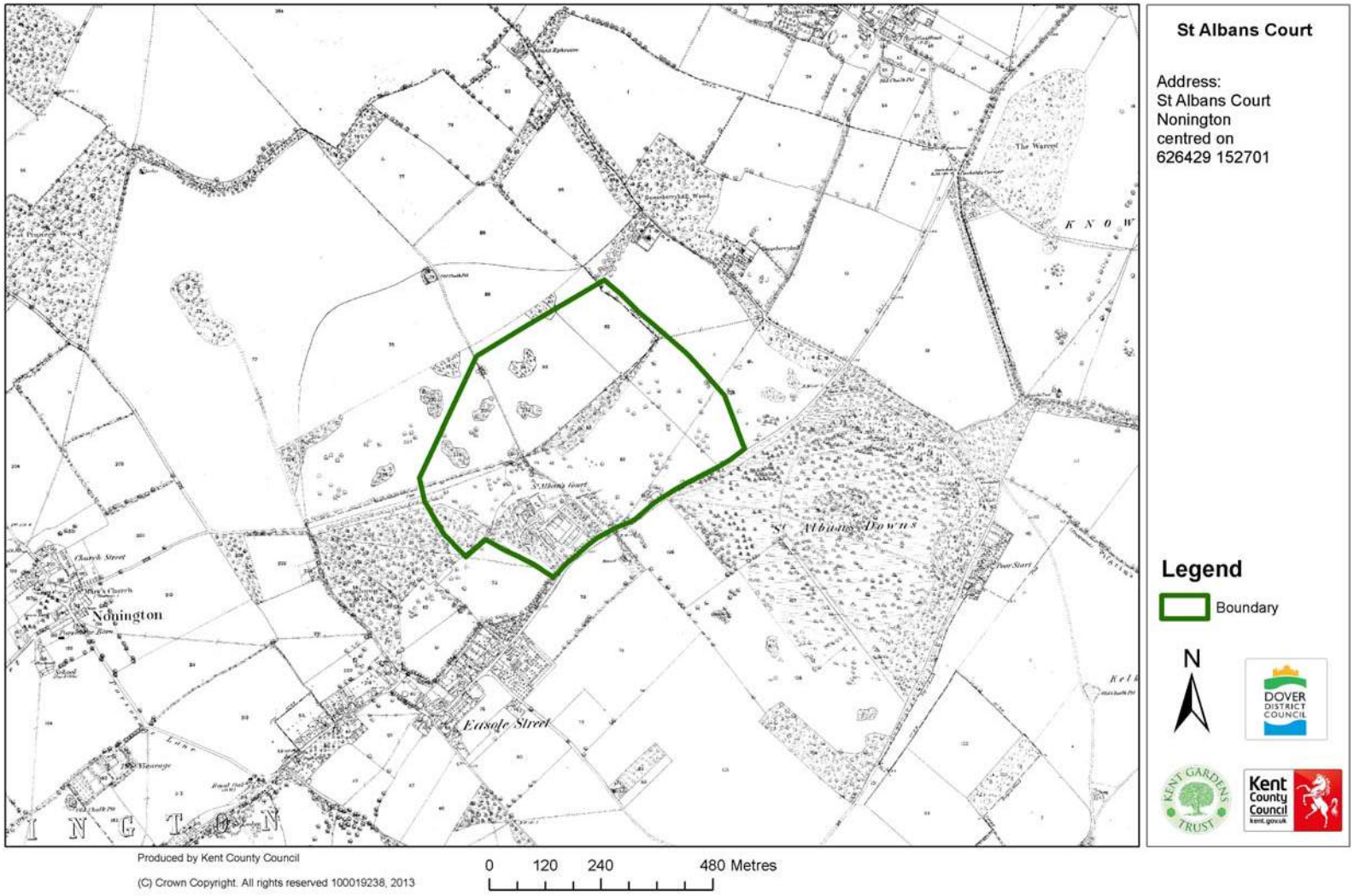
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Fig. 4 Map of key features: 2



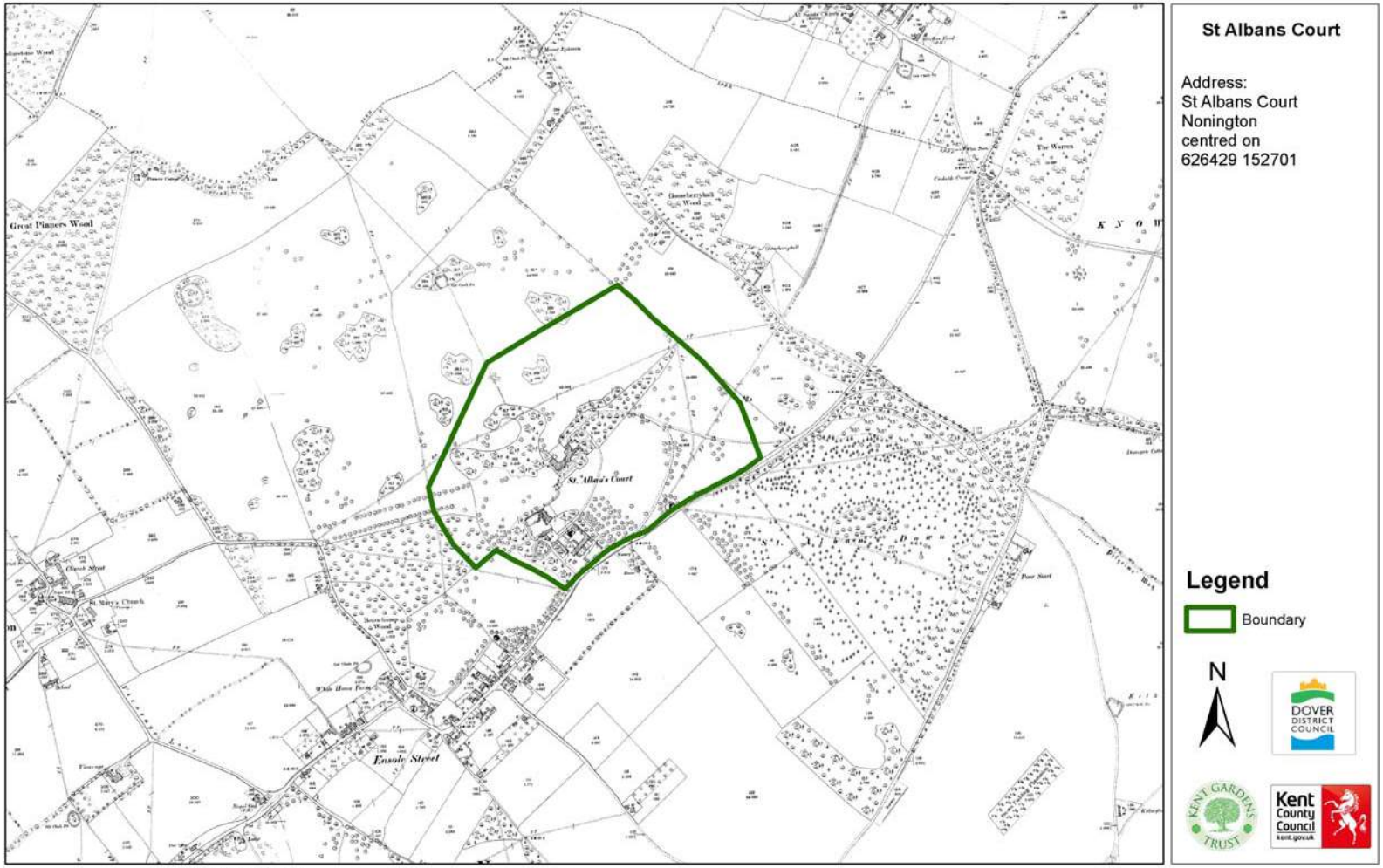
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Fig. 5 1st edition 25" OS map (1862-1875)



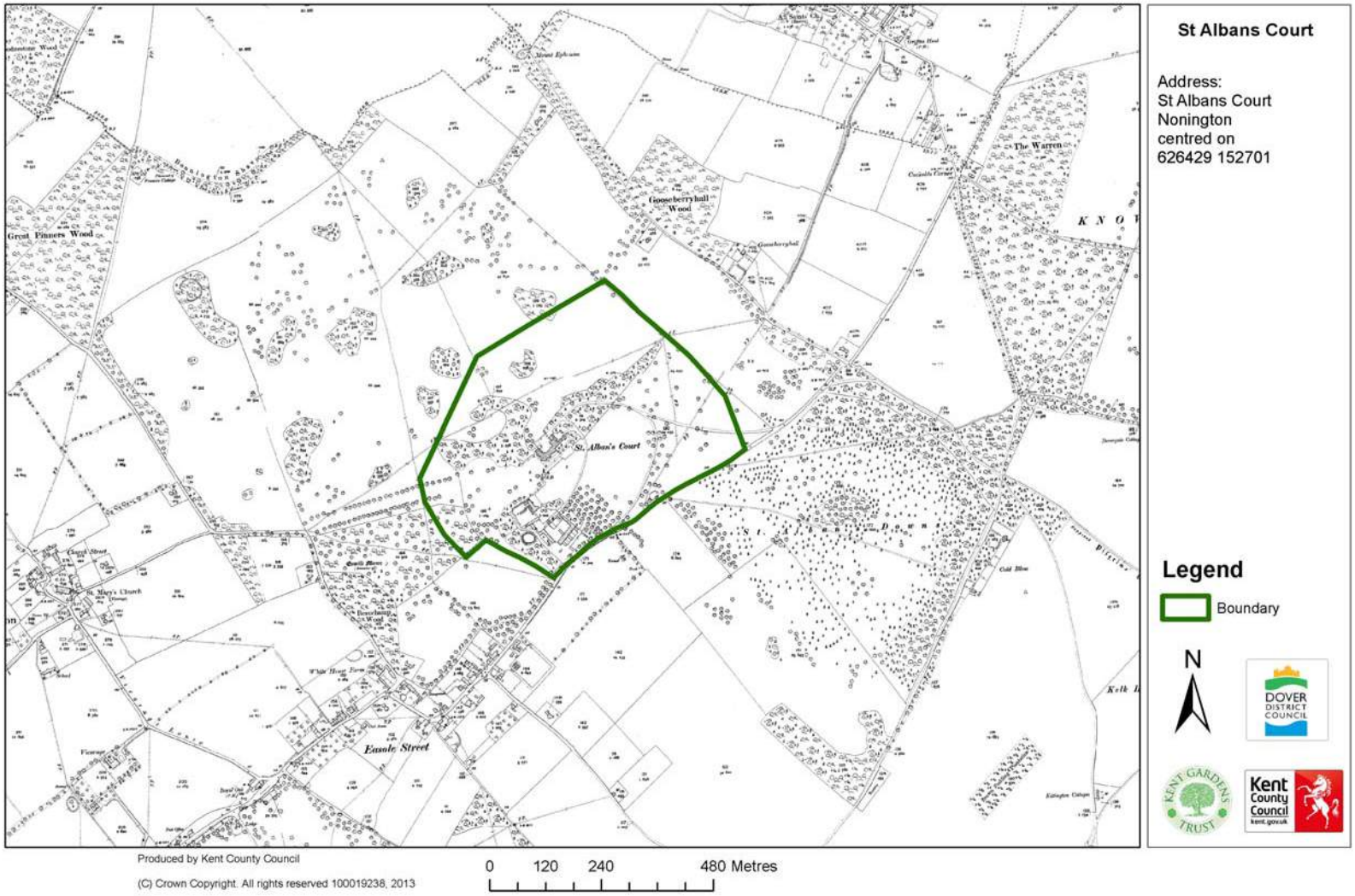
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Fig. 6 2nd edition 25" OS map (1897-1900)



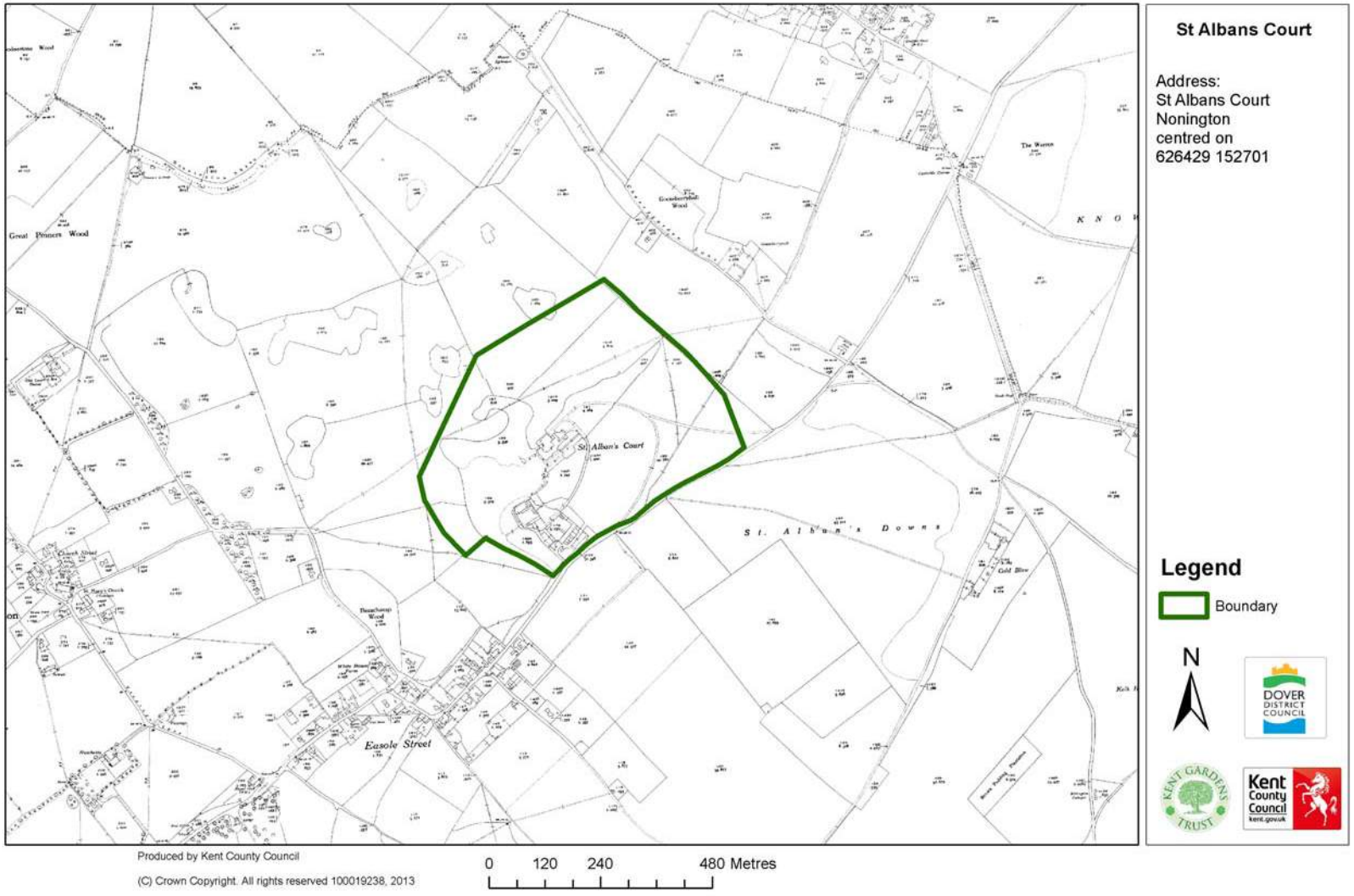
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Fig. 7 3rd edition 25" OS map (1907- 1923)



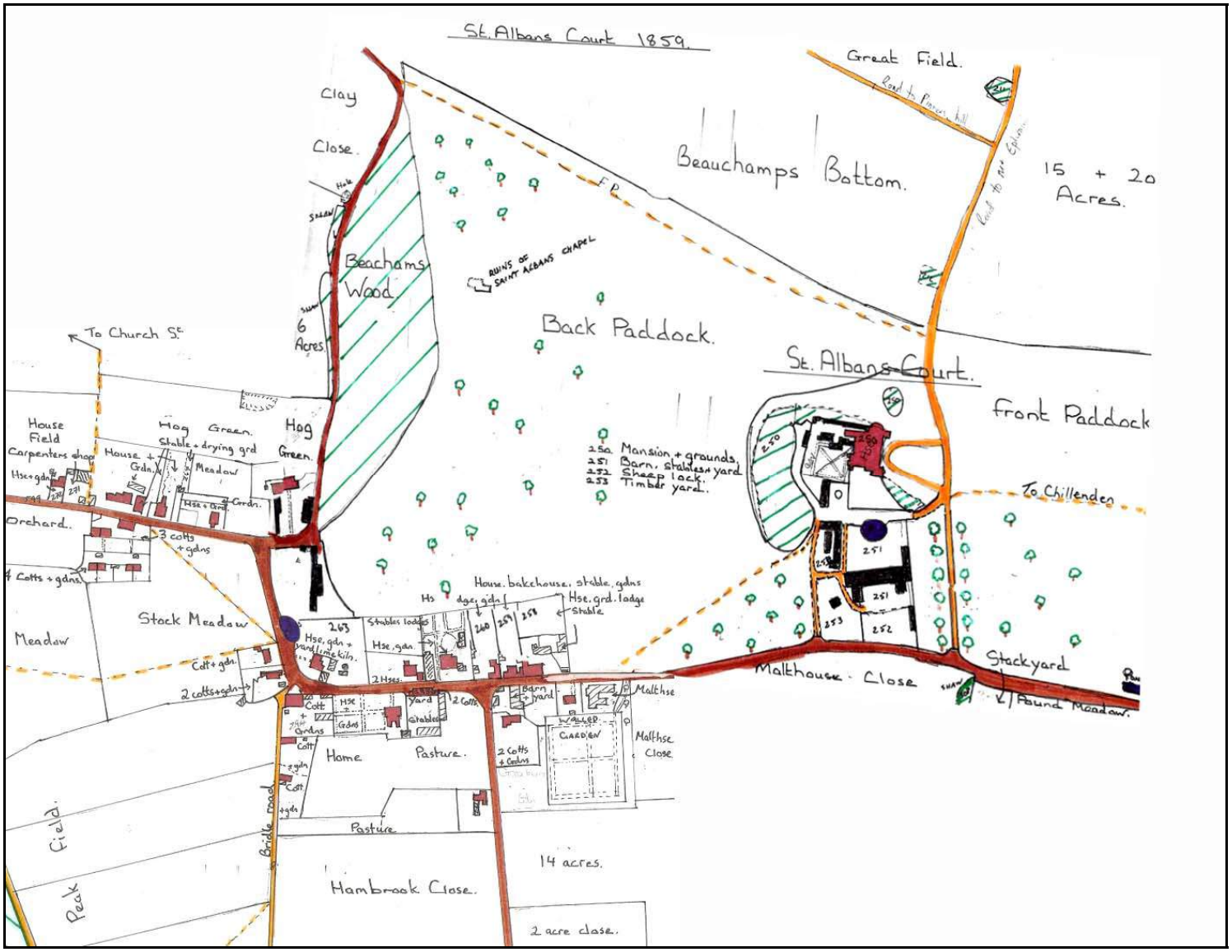
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Fig. 8 4th edition 25" OS map (1923- 1952)



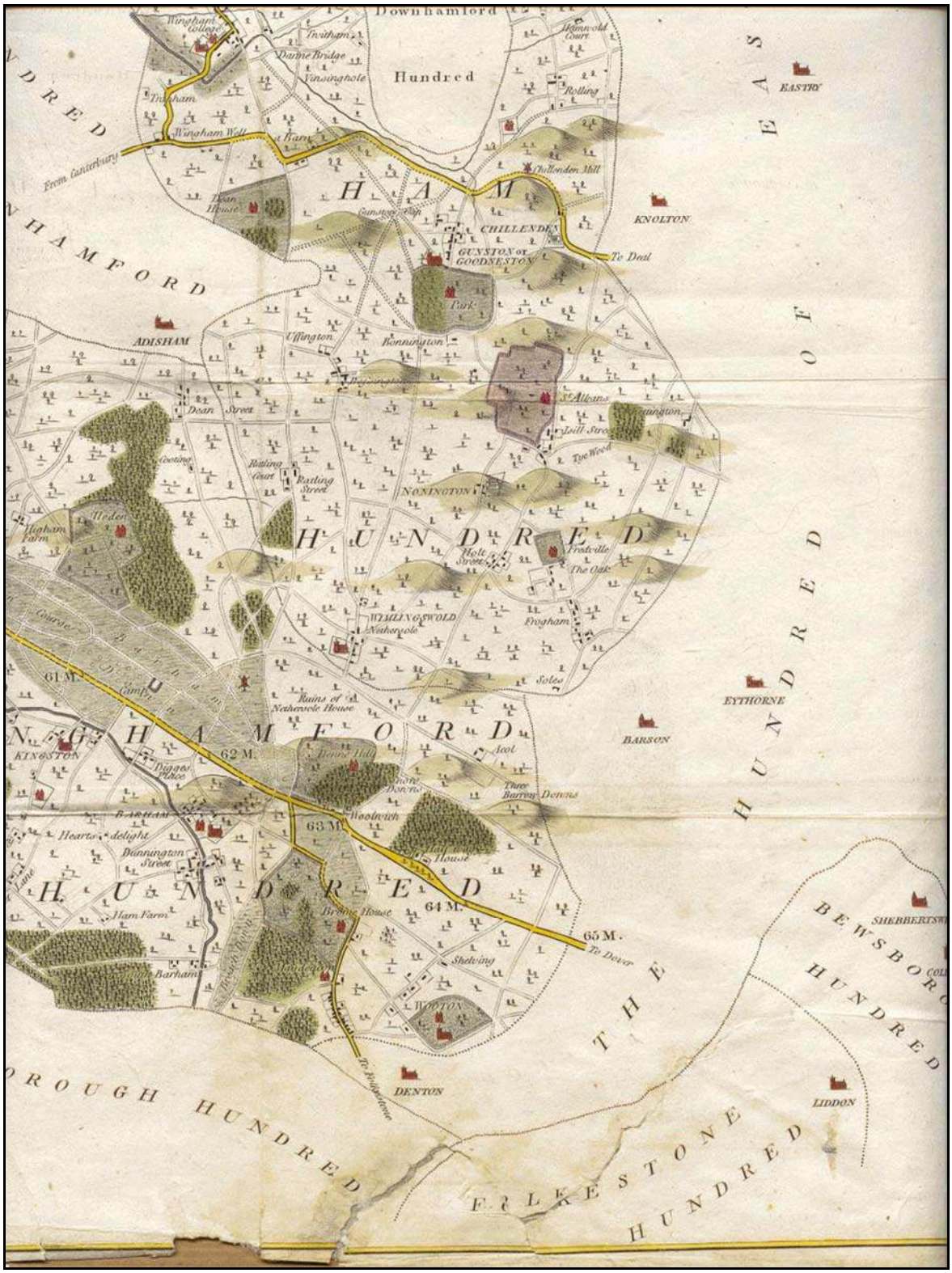
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Fig. 9 Tithe map (redrawn)



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Fig. 10 Hasted, Hundred of Wingham and Kinghamford 1800 map



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Fig. 11 Print of Old St Albans Court 1838



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Fig. 12 Photograph dated 1860



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Fig. 13 St Albans Parkland between 1665 – 1869 north-east front.

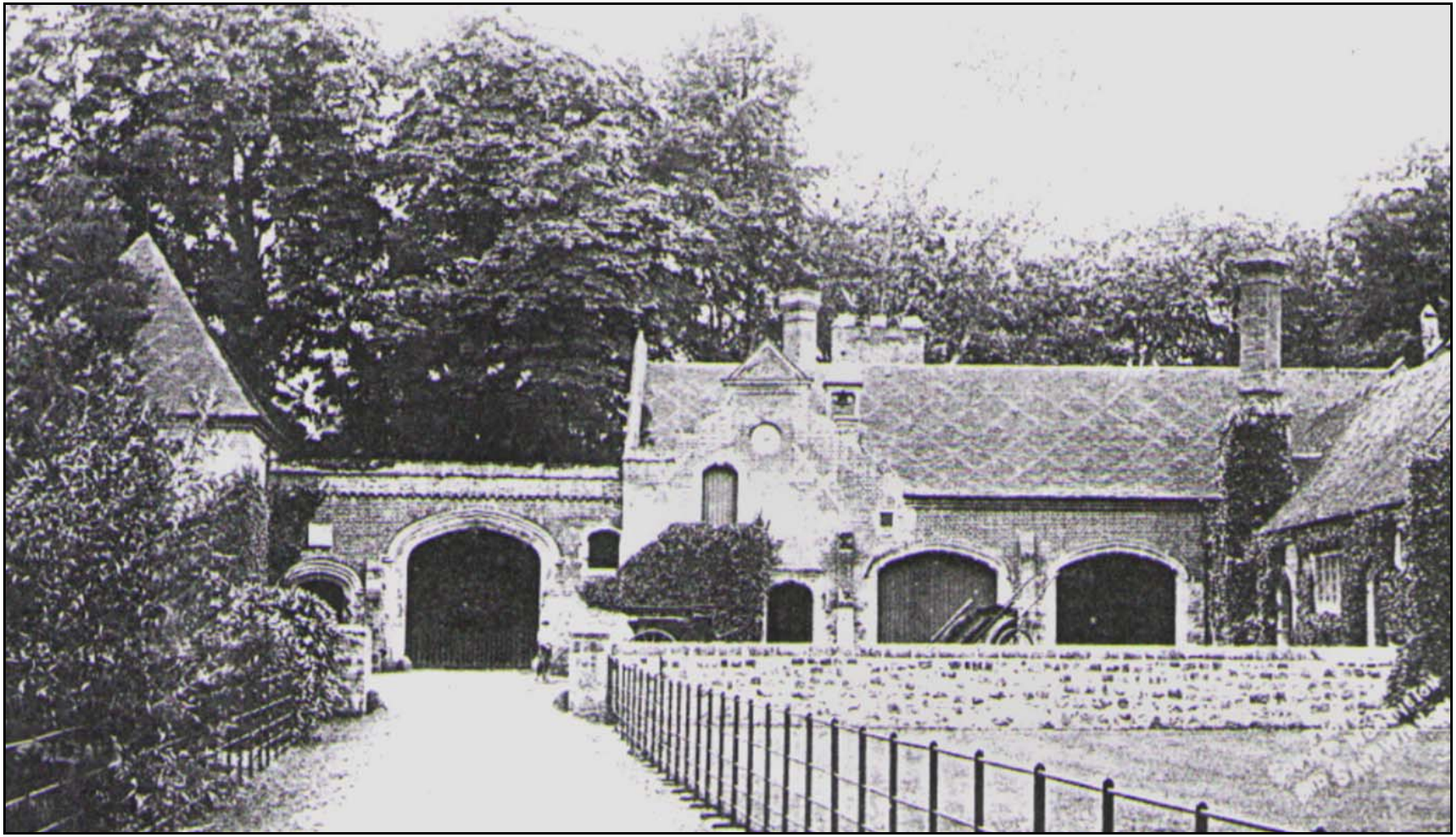


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Fig. 14 South-west side of Old St. Albans Court (c. 1870) before partial demolition when the new house was built. Stable block to right.

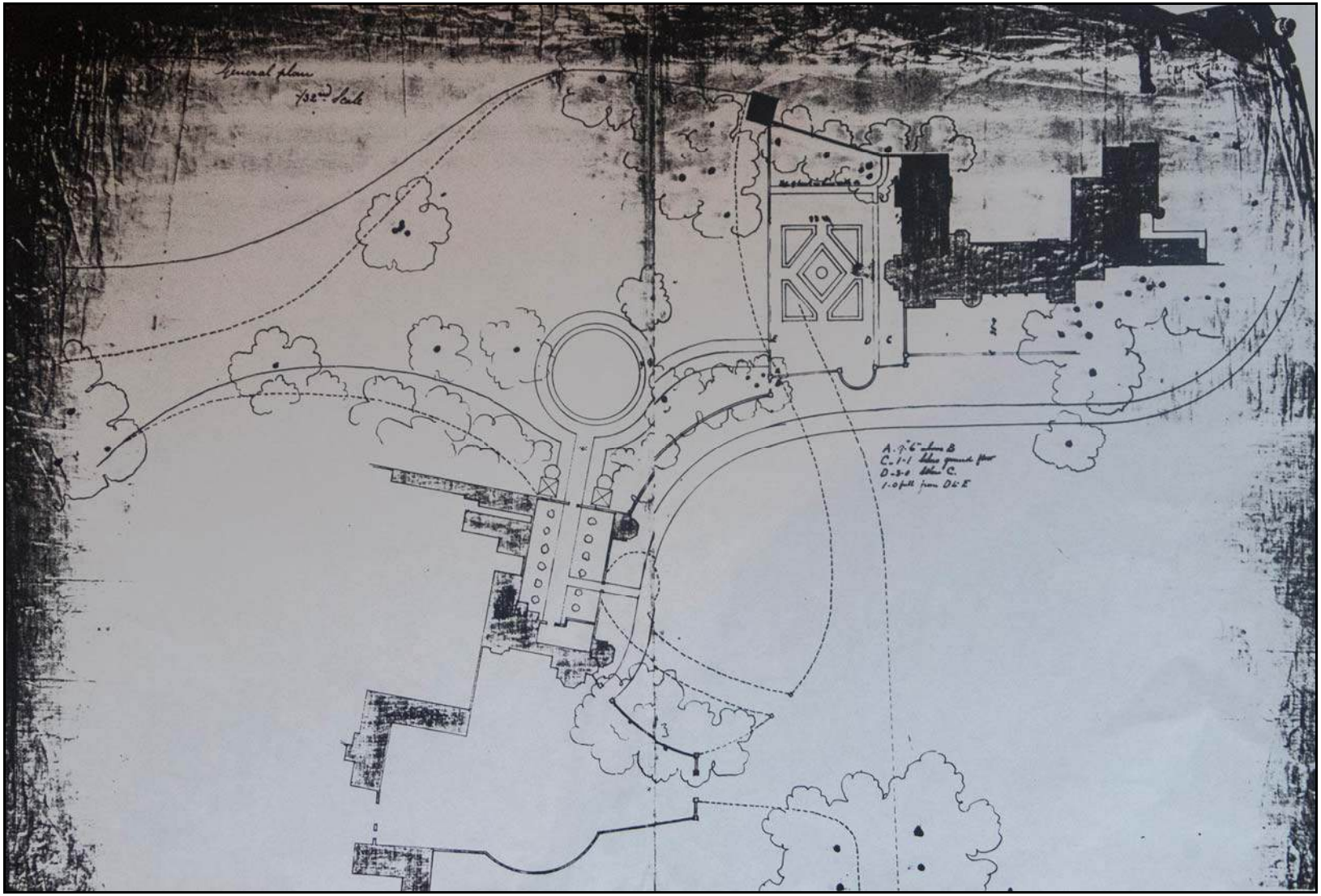


Fig. 15 1869 Devey stable block



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Fig. 16 Devey, general plan for St. Albans



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Fig. 17 A view of Old St Albans from the terrace of the new house 1930



Fig. 18 A view of the new house from Old St Albans 1930



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Fig. 19 The terrace from sales brochures, 1938



View from the Terrace, looking South

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Fig. 20 Rock garden from the 1938 sales catalogue



Fig. 21 The sunken garden, 1946



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Fig. 22 Old Malt House dated 1704 and sited south side of Sandwich Road (2017)



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Fig. 23 The elm avenue before the Dutch Elm Disease



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Fig. 24 Country Life article 8th April 1971, p814



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Fig. 25 Fig. 25 Watercolour by Wm. Oxenden Hammond, 1893



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Fig. 26 Old St Albans Court, Tudor remains from the north-east



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Fig. 27 Old St Albans Court seen from the south terrace of Beech Grove, 2017



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Fig. 28 20th century reconstruction of original garden, 2017

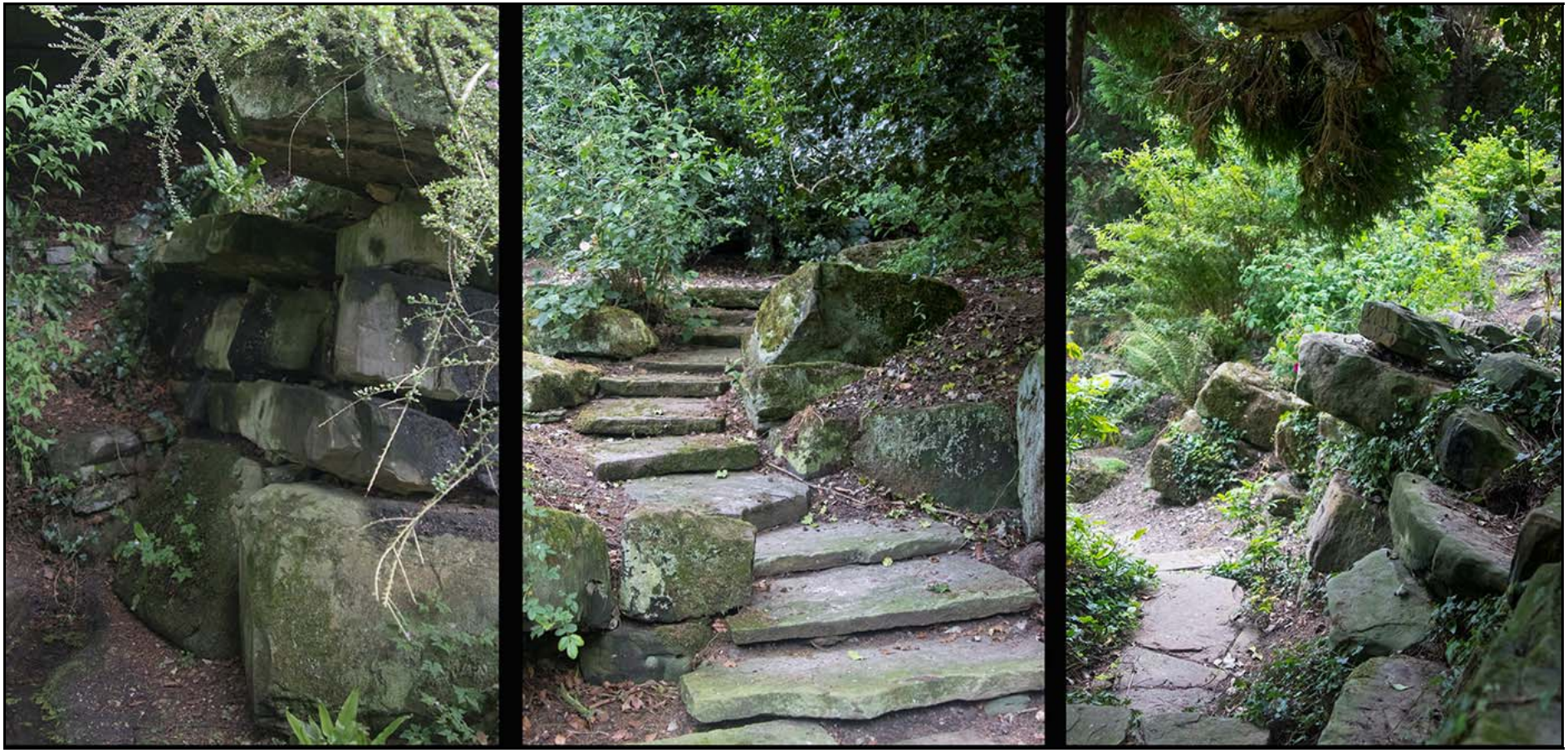


Fig. 29 20th century pond to the north-east of Old St Albans Court



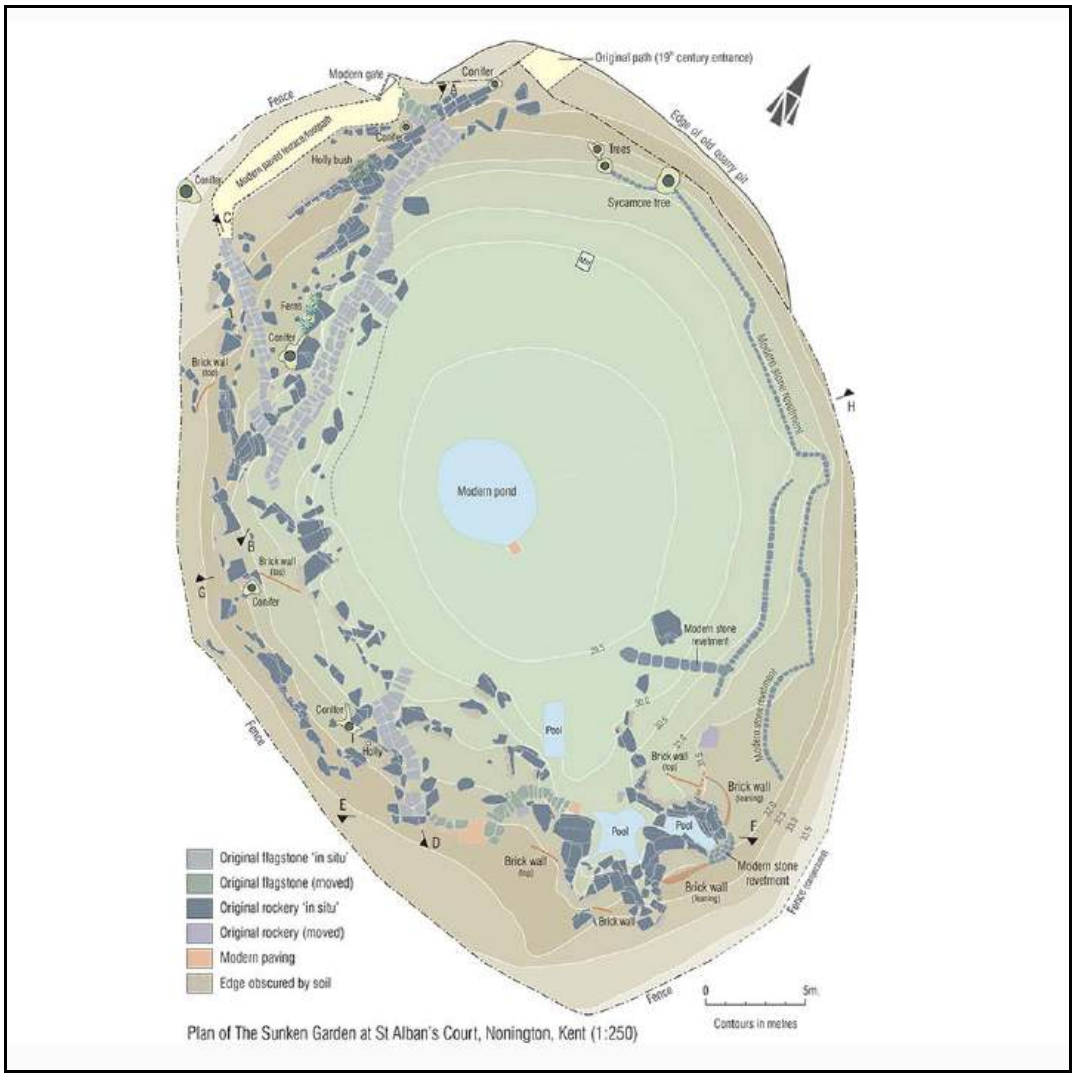
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Fig. 30 Images of Pulhamite rockery and fernery, 2017



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Fig. 31 Plan of the sunken garden



Plan of The Sunken Garden at St Alban's Court, Nonington, Kent (1:250)

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Fig. 32 The sunken garden, 2017



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Fig. 33 West end - Beech Grove walls facing Old St Albans 2017



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Fig. 34 South front of Beech Grove showing transomed and mullioned semi-circular bay window 2017



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Fig. 35 South front of Beech Grove showing terraces 2017



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Fig. 36 The west face of Beech Grove from Old St Albans 2017

