

The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough



Finchcocks, Goudhurst



December 2008

Finchcocks

Goudhurst, Kent

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to Lynda Shepherd, head gardener at Finchcocks, for sharing her research findings and to the owners for allowing access to the garden and commenting on the text.

INTRODUCTION

This site dossier and description has been prepared as part of the **Review of The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough 2009**, and should be read in conjunction with the full project report which can be found at <http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/>. This site is one of many sites that have been researched, visited and written about across the Borough and as a consequence has been included in the revised list of Historic Parks and Gardens covered by the Borough Councils Planning Policies. The list is not conclusive and further gardens may be added over time as research continues or information comes to light

The review for Tunbridge Wells Borough was a pilot project to establish a partnership and methodology for the review of the compendium across Kent and provide an example of good practice across the County and the region. The research was largely carried out by volunteers of the Kent Gardens Trust with support and training from the project consultants Virginia Hinze and Dr Barbara Simms.

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.

Planning Services Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN1 1RS 01892 526121 www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk	Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Invicta House County Hall Maidstone ME14 1XX 01622 696918 www.kent.gov.uk
Kent Gardens Trust www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk	High Weald AONB Unit Woodland Enterprise Centre Hastings Road Flimwell East Sussex TN5 7PR 01580 879500 www.highweald.org/

SITE DESCRIPTION

KENT

FINCHCOCKS

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

GOUDHURST

TQ 7004 3646

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC INTEREST

A formal compartmentalised garden laid out from the early C19 to the south-west of an early C18 Baroque mansion with surviving elements of an C18 ha-ha and parkland.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Finchcocks, in the hundred of Marden, takes its name from the family who built a farm house on the site in 1256 (Hasted). Ownership had passed to the Horden family by the early C15. On his death in the 1560s, Edward Horden, Clerk of the Green Cloth to Edward VI, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, left the property to his daughter Elizabeth, who married a Paul Bathurst of Nordiam. Finchcocks remained in the Bathurst family until 1796, Paul's great grandson Edward, who inherited the estate in 1718, building the present mansion by 1725, possibly to a design by the architect Thomas Archer (date on the rainwater pipes). Edward resided there until his death in 1772, before which he conveyed the estate of 'New Finchcocks with gardens, orchards, closes etc. 210 acres [85ha] in the parishes of Goudhurst, Horsmonden and Lamberhurst' (1765 lease) to Charles, son of his second marriage. Charles died in 1767 and Finchcocks passed to his brother, the Revd Richard Bathurst of Rochester, who sold it to Robert Springett of Hawkhurst in 1796.

In 1863, when Richard Springett sold the property to his neighbour Edward Hussey of Scotney Castle, it comprised 184ha, including a farm, cottages, lodge houses and '344 acres [139ha] of arable, pasture, hop and wood land', the roads to North and South Lodge marked by avenues of trees (Sales Particulars). During the Hussey ownership, the estate was tenanted; Kelly's Directories list the Revd J. C. Allen (1867), Mrs Harrison Blair (1874) and Sir James Stirling (1882), the poet Siegfried Sassoon describing visits during the latter's occupancy (*The Weald of Youth*). In 1919 the Husseys sold Finchcocks with 10ha to Captain A. W. J. Cecil for £12,000 (sale document), retaining the home farm and remaining land. The new owner made internal alterations to the mansion and created a terrace on the south-west corner (*Country Life*, 30 July 1921).

In 1935 Francis Lycett Green acquired the mansion to house his collection of early Italian and Dutch C17 paintings, their display necessitating further internal modifications (*Country Life*, 12 April 1946). Under head gardener Harry Bland new features were also developed in the garden, including the planting of a double herbaceous border to replace a rose walk (photographs in private collection). During the Second World War, Finchcocks became a boarding

house for junior boys from King's School, Rochester, and, subsequently, it was requisitioned by the Army. Due to ill-health, after the War Lycett Green moved to South Africa and sold Finchcocks; subsequent owners were David and Antonia St Clair Erskine (1950-60), the Legat Ballet School (1960-70) and Mr and Mrs Martin Page (1970-71).

The mansion, outbuildings and gardens of approximately 6ha remain in single, private ownership. The current owners have restored the property (led by architects Judith Bottomley and Laurence Peskett), which is now in use as a museum of musical instruments, open to the public since 1976, with some outbuildings converted to workshops and staff residential accommodation. Much of the C19 and C20 garden layouts remain intact, but now (2008) with modern planting.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Finchcocks stands on a slight natural prominence amid the low-lying land surrounding the hamlet of Riseden, close to the valley of the River Teise. It is approximately 1km north of Kilndown, 2km west of Goudhurst and 9km south-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The c.6h site is south of the A262 (Station Road) leading west from Goudhurst towards Lamberhurst, with the main Tunbridge Wells-Hastings road (A21) about 1.5km to the west. It is bordered to the south by Rookery Wood (once part of Finchcocks estate), to the north by Finchcocks Farm (in separate ownership since 1919), to the west by hop gardens and to the east by pasture. The house is set back from the road and framed by ancient trees, with wide views west and east over the surrounding landscape.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Finchcocks is approached from the A262 via a narrow tarmac lane which winds for 1.6km in a south-westerly direction, fenced on both sides by post-and-wire from the surrounding pastureland. The frontage of Finchcocks mansion, framed by trees, comes into view to the south-east approximately 1.4km along the lane, which then continues 2km south-west to Little Scotney Farm and Scotney Castle. A service drive is 100m further along the lane and, 200m further, the entrance to Finchcocks Farm.

The main entrance to Finchcocks is through a five-bar gate and along a gravel drive, shown as a curving carriage drive in a print dated c.1830. This is the remains of an approach road, partially lined by chestnut trees, that by 1863 ran approximately 1km from a North Lodge due south to the mansion (Sales Particulars). From the mansion the road continued for another 0.5km to reach South Lodge to the south-east. An East Lodge was built due east from the mansion on the main A262 and now, replaced by a new building in 1913 (now in separate private ownership) marks the entrance to Finchcocks from that main road. South Lodge is also now in separate private ownership, but the other two lodges have been demolished. The entrance front to the mansion looks out over a large, open lawn bounded on its east side by a steep bank with a canalized stream at its foot. A 1769 map (Andrews, Dury and Herbert) and a series of

1829 prints by John Adams (*Country Life*, 31 May 1946) show that the house had an axial approach to its front from the east from a public main road running in a north-south direction. This main road, shown on the 1840 tithe map, can still (2009) be traced as a faint track running along a ditch approximately 180m east of the mansion.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

Finchcocks mansion (listed grade I), built by 1725, is a three-storey house seven window bays wide with an attic and basement and with curved and projecting two-storey wings possibly added at a later date (*Country Life*, 30 July 1921). Its red brickwork in Flemish bond with light red brick dressings, darker red brick parapet and tall chimneys with painted mouldings, has been described as in a 'full blooded Baroque style' (listed building description). The northern wing contains the kitchen and offices with a small courtyard, formed largely of C19 single-storey buildings.

Five moulded steps provide access to the main, east-facing front door, its Tuscan surround surmounted by a large central triangular pediment containing the coats of arms of previous owners. Immediately below the pediment is a rubbed-brick niche containing a C17 statue of Queen Anne, thought to be from the Guildhall or Royal Exchange, but reportedly not placed in position until the late C19 (listed building description). Although it has been suggested that Finchcocks was constructed to a design by the London architect Thomas Archer (1668-1743), its vernacular features and similarity to other buildings in the area e.g. Matfield House, Goudhurst, point to the more likely involvement of a local architect/ builder (Oswald).

Forty metres to the north-west of the mansion is a two-storey red brick coach house (listed grade II), now partly converted to accommodation and workshops. Built in the C18, but with a C20 two-storey rear extension, it has a tiled roof and lunette windows with brick surrounds. At a forty degree angle to the coach house is a converted C18 brick stable block with tiled roof and weather-boarded rear elevation (listed grade II). Immediately to the west and south-west of these buildings is Finchcocks Farm, its C16 timber frame barn and attached outhouses (listed grade II) now converted to private houses. Thirty-five metres to the north-west of the mansion is a C19 square brick dovecote with a tiled roof, now used an electricity sub-station.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The main formal compartments of the garden, first laid out from the C19, lie on the south and west sides of the mansion with a brick-walled kitchen garden to the south-west. The west garden front opens onto a large lawn with views over pastureland beyond. The lawn is surrounded by perimeter gravelled paths partly lined on the west and south sides by mature limes. They were reputedly planted in the mid-C19 to mask the view of the property from Scotney Castle (personal communication). The lawn is bounded at c.75m west from the mansion by a ha-ha (listed grade II), constructed in the C18 with a 1m high dressed sandstone wall. In the early C19, the ha-ha was extended in brick to reach its present length of over 100m north to south, with an inward (eastern) curve at each end. The brick wall was also raised above the level of the lawn to form a low

enclosure and from the 1830s the ha-ha is shown filled with water (Tithe Map, mortgage documents, Sales Particulars). By 1905, a footbridge crossed the ha-ha a few metres north-west of the walled garden (3rd edn OS map), its position still being visible.

The current main access to the gardens is from the gravelled drive on the mansion's principal east front approximately 40m south of the front main door and via a blue-painted solid wood gate set in a 1m high brick wall. When in use as a private residence, access to the gardens was from the west front through a central door with a similar Tuscan surround to that on the east front. The drive's gravel surface continues through the garden gate into a small seating area immediately adjacent to the south end of the mansion. To its south is a lawn enclosed on its eastern side by a latticework fence with an herbaceous border below and on its west side by a 2m high yew hedge. Laid out on the site of a C19 rose walk, this lawn contains a brick-laid rectangular terrace (40m x 15m), and is now arranged with seating to accommodate visitors. The rose walk and yew hedges were added by at least 1897, as they are depicted in a painting by William Grylls Addison, and the terrace later featured an armillary sundial, now replaced by a modern sundial (4th edition OS map). An ancient yew, possibly from an earlier C18 gardening phase, forms a feature at the south-east corner of the terrace.

From the centre of the southern end of the lawn surrounding the terrace, a broad grass path leads due south between a 100m double mixed border backed by grass paths and a 1.5m-high yew hedge. Laid out from the mid-1980s, this replaced an early C20 walk to a woodland garden. In the C19, the walk had been lined with lime trees (Sales Particulars). A cross path approximately halfway down the border terminates at its west end in an arch cut in the hedge. This cross path leads to a slip garden, an area of young trees of mixed species in rough grass bordering the 2m high brick wall forming the east side of the walled kitchen garden. At the south end of the double border its eastern yew hedge curves westwards, continuing to run a few metres south of the south main entrance side of the walled garden. To the south of the yew hedge is a stream, the current property boundary, along which the earlier woodland garden has been reinstated by the current owners.

Attached to the exterior south-west corner of the walled garden is a single-storey brick summerhouse (2m x 2m) with pyramidal tiled roof with finial designed by the architects Gerard Wellesley and Trenwith Wills in the early C20 (listed grade II). There is a raised grass walkway with narrow flower beds beneath the south garden wall and wooden posts to support climbing plants. A rolled gravel path runs below the raised walk, turning northwards immediately beyond the summerhouse to continue between the west garden wall and the southern end of the ha-ha. The gravel path continues in a curve north-eastwards towards an early C19 single-story brick cottage with a tiled hipped roof which stands a few metres west of the mansion (now, 2009, used for staff accommodation). Some 100m south of the mansion there is a large fish pond (approximately 40m x 20m), shown on the Tithe Map, but probably of earlier origin.

PARKLAND

The parkland to the east of the mansion's entrance front is managed as grazed pasture with a few trees and retains the picturesque appearance depicted in early C19 century paintings (Adams). In 1863 it was described as a park 'studded with ornamental timber and forest trees of large growth in the most thriving and healthy condition'.

Approximately 10m south-east of the pond, set well back behind its sunken garden, is a C19 gamekeeper's lodge with wooden outbuildings, now in separate ownership. A few metres south-east of the outbuildings, a five-bar wooden gate marks the beginning of a horse chestnut avenue, part of the C19 approach from South Lodge, but replanted in the C20. The avenue extends to the south-east corner of the current (2008) Finchcocks estate, the row on the south now enclosed by a 1m post-and-wire fence within a paddock adjoining Rookery Wood on the south-east property boundary. In the late C19, both approach roads from North and South Lodges were lined with horse chestnut trees (Sales Particulars).

KITCHEN GARDEN

The early C19 brick-walled kitchen garden (listed grade II) lies 40m to the south-west of the mansion (Tithe Map). The 3m high walls with coping and plinth enclose an area c.40m x 40m with doorways in the centre of the east and south sides and two doorways on the north side. The doorway on the east side was constructed following collapse of the south-east wall (rebuilt in 2001 with the original bricks). The layout of the walled garden was redesigned in 1992 by students from Hadlow College with a central circle of young whitebeams and corner flower and shrub borders. In the 1860s it was shown divided into two sections with perimeter paths, a central water tank and building attached to the exterior north-west side (1st edn OS map). At that time it was described as 'well stocked with fruit trees' and with a 'lady's flower garden' (Sales Particulars). Glass houses were later added on the interior north-west wall and an additional building constructed on the exterior wall (2nd, 3rd and 4th edn OS maps). Only the foundations and wall markings now show their original positions.

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Maps

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Tithe map (Goudhurst Parish) 1840 CKS ref IR30/17/153 (1)
Plan of Finchcocks Estate from Sales Particulars 1863.
OS 25" to 1mile: 1st edition 1870 (Sheet 69/4)
OS 25" to 1mile: 2nd edition 1895 (Sheet 69/4)
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Finchcocks: the seat of Richard Springett, Esq print c.1830 in Burnett (2003), p. 11.
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Photograph of house front late C19 in Burnett (2003), p. 13.
Photograph of house and the hall from Oswald (1933), figs. 188, 190.
Photographs of mansion and herbaceous walks (1981/2). KCC.
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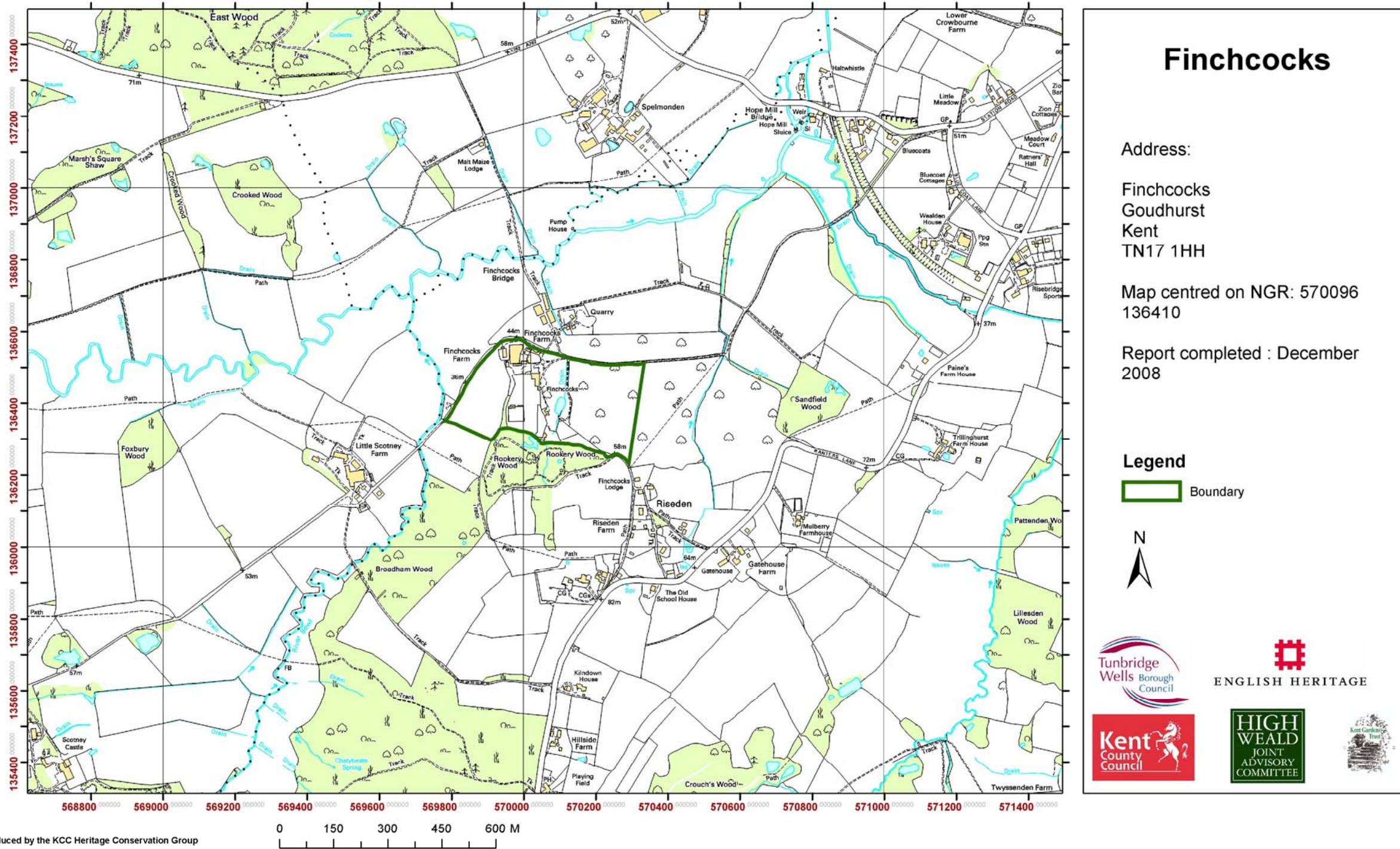
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Research by Hugh Vaux
Description written by Barbara Simms
Edited by Virginia Hinze
December 2008

Kent Compendium of Historic Parks & Gardens – 2009 review of Tunbridge Wells Borough

Fig. 1 Boundary map



Finchcocks

Address:

Finchcocks
Goudhurst
Kent
TN17 1HH

Map centred on NGR: 570096
136410

Report completed : December
2008

Legend

 Boundary

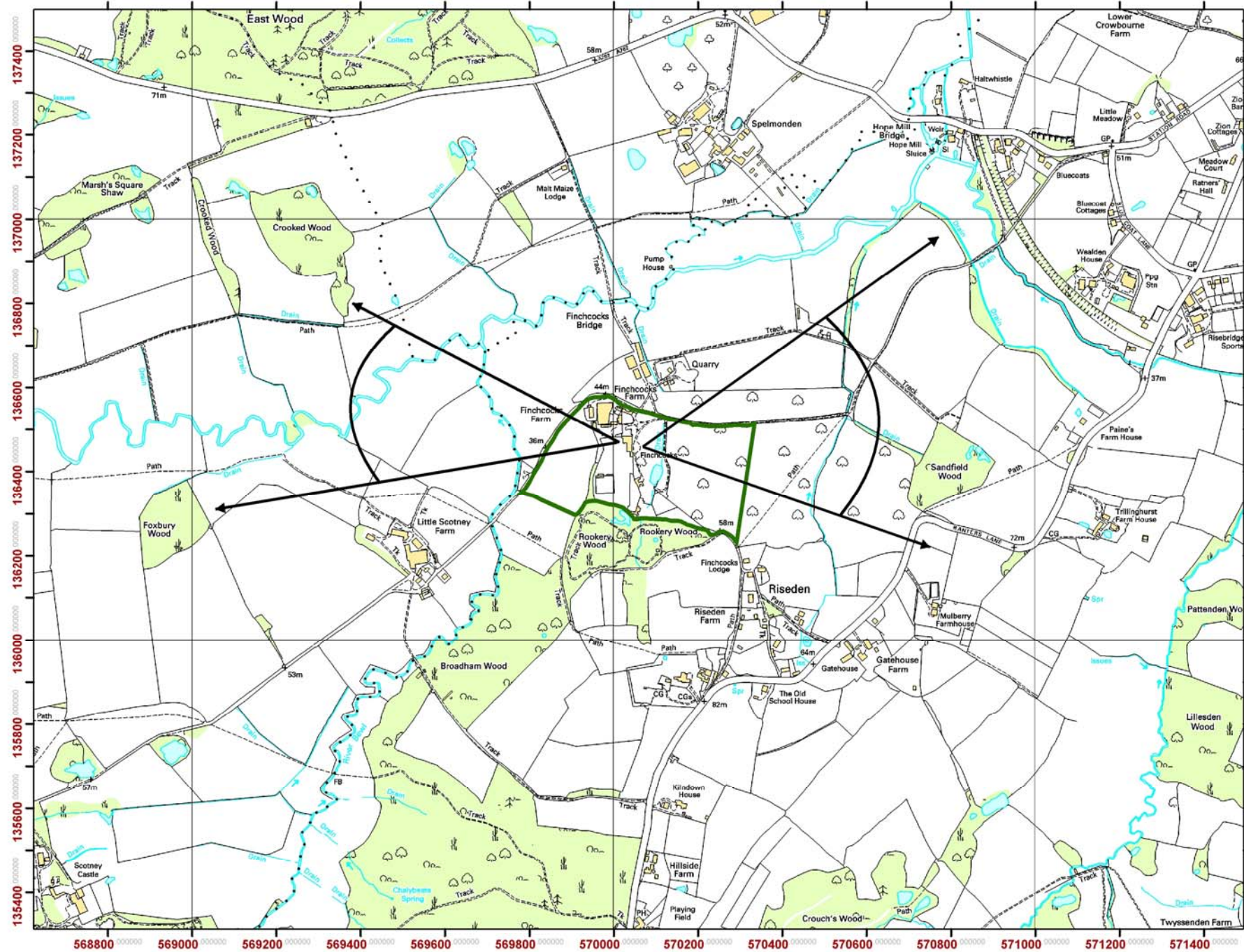


Produced by the KCC Heritage Conservation Group

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Fig. 2 Key views map



Finchcocks

Address:

Finchcocks
Goudhurst
Kent
TN17 1HH

Map centred on NGR: 570096
136410

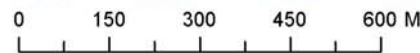
Report completed : December
2008

Legend

 Boundary

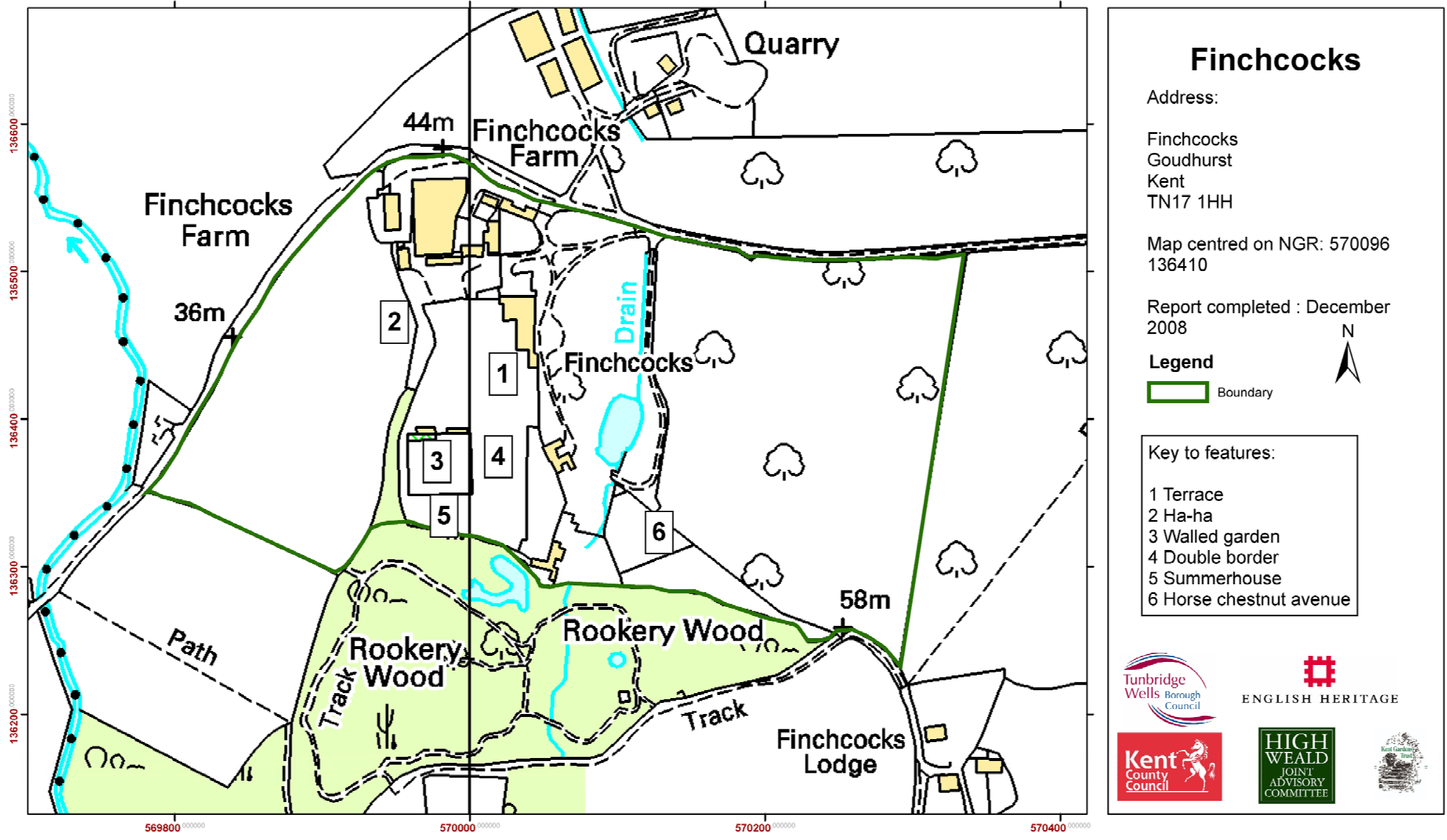


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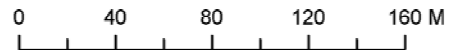


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Fig. 3 Key features map



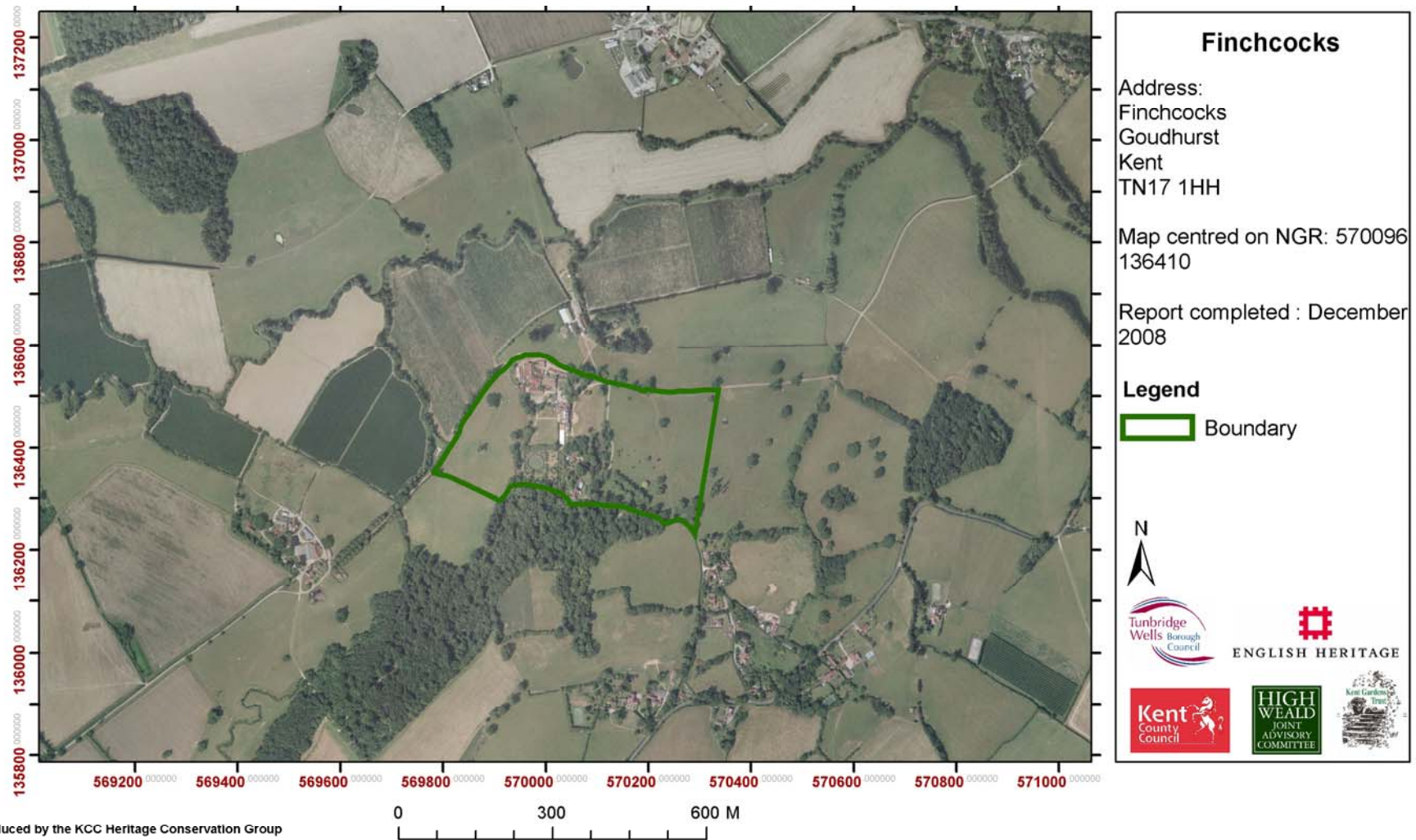
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Fig. 4 Aerial photograph

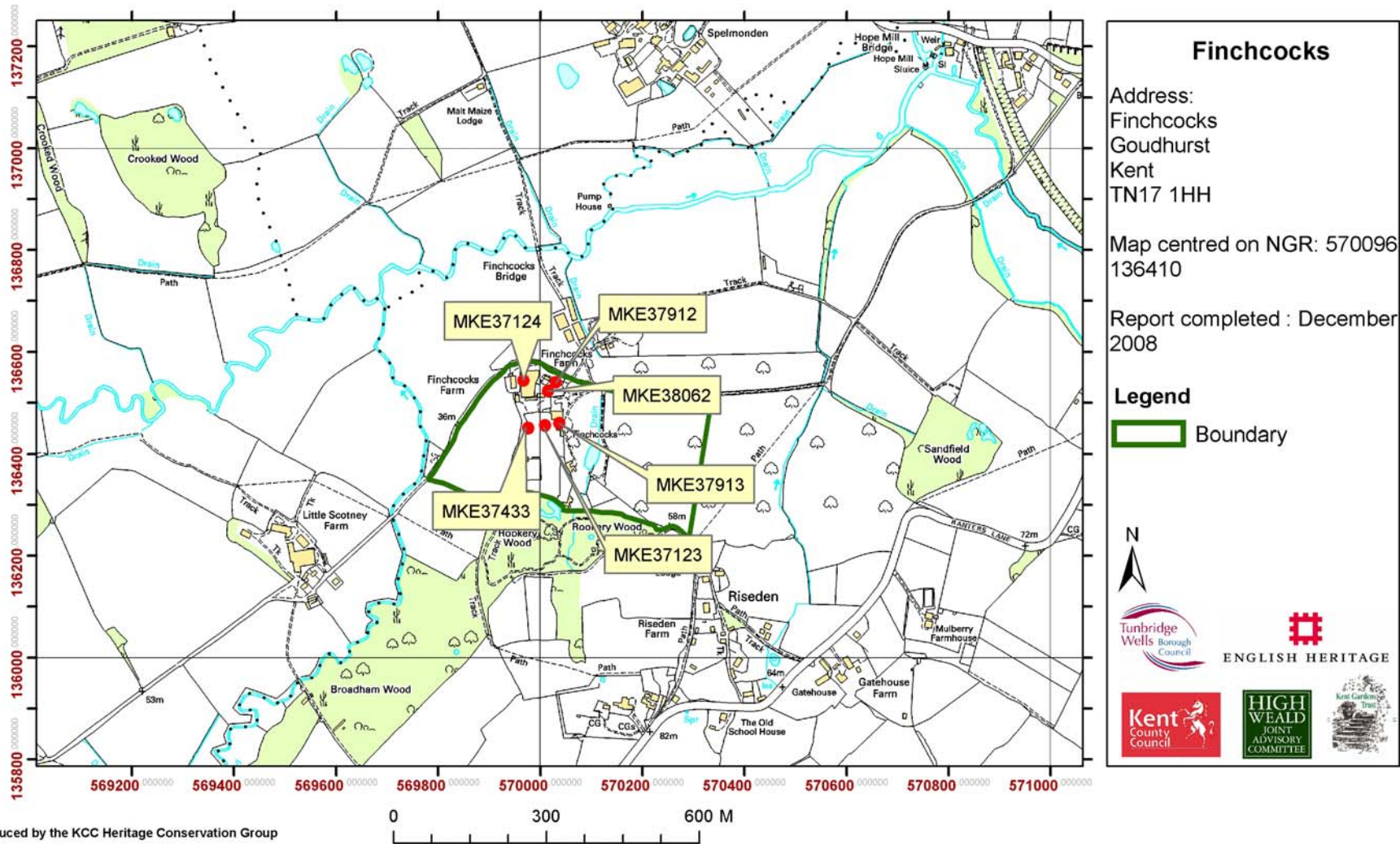


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Fig. 5 Map of listed buildings



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Fig. 6 Listed buildings at Finchcocks (from the Kent Historic Environment Record)

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37123

GOUDHURST FINCHCOCKS TQ 63 NE 4/170
Walled Garden and summerhouse about 50 metres south east of Finchcocks
GV II Walled garden. Early C19, summerhouse added mid C20. Red and blue brick. The walls, about 10 feet high with coping and plinth, enclose an area about 50 yards by 50 yards square, the corners ramped to attenuated piers. with simple doorways to centre of north and south walls, greenhouses attached to north wall. On the south-west exterior corner is a brick summerhouse, with plain tiled roof. single storey, with pyramidal roof in 2 pitches with finial. Open site with scrolled consoles to lintel; cornice to ceiling. Designed by Wellesley and Wills.
Listing NGR: TQ7003836457

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37124

GOUDHURST FINCHCOCKS TQ 63 NE 4/172
Barn and attached out-houses about 100 metres north-west of Finchcocks
II Barn and attached outhouses, C16 extended c.1700 and C19. Timber-framed and weather boarded with weather boarded and tile-hung extensions on red brick bases. Plain tiled roofs. Barn half-hipped with 2 hipped midstreys and outshots to front and to rear. Interior: 10 bays in all, the right hand 2 bays separately framed and earlier; clasped purlin roof throughout. Gabled rear wing c.1800, with open arcaded ground floor, and projecting at front right another, later gabled 2 storey range, with open-arched ground floor.
Listing NGR: TQ7003836457

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37433

GOUDHURST FINCH COCKS TQ 63 NE 4/171
Ha-ha about 75 metres west of Finchcocks
GV II Ha-ha. C18 and extended early C19.
Sandstone and extended with red brick. About 3 feet high, and extending over 100 metres in a sinous course north to south, and returned to the east at both ends. Buttressed and with additional brick retaining wall at southern end by adjacent walled garden.
Listing NGR: TQ7003836457

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37912

GOUDHURST FINCHCOCKS TQ 73 NW 5/169
Stables about 50 metres north of Finchcocks
GV II Stable range. C18. Red and blue brick
with plain tiled roof, with weather boarded rear elevation (present entry).
Original entrance front to south: 1 storey with hipped roof, with 3 pairs of
gauged round headed openings, now all blocked in. Present entry now in rear
elevation by garage doors in weather boarded catslide outshot.
Listing NGR: TQ7003836457

Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE37913

GOUDHURST FINCHCOCKS TQ 73 NW 5/167
Finchcocks 9.6.52 GV I House. Dated 1725, for
Edward Bathurst. Red brick with light red brick dress- ings, and darker red brick
parapet and chimneys, with painted mouldings. Elon- gated rectangular main
block with curved and projecting flanking wings in full blooded Baroque style.
Entrance front: 3 storeyed, attic and basement main block with 2 storey flanking
wings, the whole disposed to central emphasis. Main block with plinth, plat
band and painted moulded cornice supported on Tuscan corner pilasters with
moulded bases and entablature blocks with triglyphs. Centre 3 bays projecting,
with pediment filled with Bathurst Arms and martial rapliers. Above the cornice
level is the 3rd storey, with corner pilasters, cornice and panelled parapet to
hipped roof with segmentally headed dormers. 3 panelled stacks (originally
with a fourth dummy stack of wood and plaster to rear right to complete the
symmetry) and arched stacks to left and to right. Seven window bays wide, with
2 segmentally headed glazing bar sashes on each floor in recessed flanks,
each floor with progressively smaller sash heights. Centre projections with 2
roundels on 2nd floor and 2 round headed glazing bar sashes on ground and
1st floor, and gauged and rubbed semicircular niche to centre on 1st floor with
statue of Queen Anne (C17 and said to be from the old Royal Exchange, set
hoe late C19). Central double round-headed doors with raised and fielded
panels at head of 5 moulded steps in broad Tuscan door surround. Segment
headed basement windows. Flanking wings with plinth, plat band and
cornice on smaller examples of the Tuscan pilasters with entablature blocks on
the main block. (Panelled para- pet, with hipped roof to right hand wing, all the
horizontal features carried round the curve of the quadrant with the main block.
Three segmentally headed glazing bar sashes on each floor (2 only to left wing
ground floor) and round headed glazing bar sashes to quadrants. The left hand
wing is only in fact 1 storey high, the upper floor containing false windows.
These wings were added somewhat later, being of lesser quality brick and not
bonded in to the main block. Projecting to left and to right are panelling brick
walls, ramped down from house and extending 25 yards or so. Garden
elevations: simpler composition of red and blue chequered brick with plinth, plat
band, cornice and cornice to panelled parapet with pilaster-corners. Seven
glazing bar sashes to 1st and 2nd floors, the centre 3 projecting and round-
headed, with 6 on ground floor and slightly reduced versions of front door and
doorcase to centre. The wings play very little role in this facade, nor to the side
elevations, of 3 unadorned bays only, their main purpose being to emphasise
the composition of the entrance front. The northern wing (to left of entrance
front) contains the kitchen/offices, with a small courtyard formed largely of early

C19 single storeyed blocks, 2 hipped ranges project from the left of the garden front, originally laundry/bakehouse etc, now with columned arcade. Projection to the north of this service courtyard are lengths of brick wall partly enclosing the courtyard, with a ramped and buttressed wall about 6 feet high terminating after some 20 yards in a dovecot, hipped with boarded door, casement window and dove holes, at time of survey housing electricity generator. Interior: in plan a central hall the full depth of the house, the stair running straight out of this, with 2 rooms either side. Wings at lower levels, the upper floor originally not communicating at all with main block (reflecting the 2 periods of building). Extremely large fireplace in hall, possibly from an earlier house on site, originally with framed and fitted painting of Bathurst family by James Manbart, now sadly removed. The wooden surround made of the same Tuscan pilasters as the outside elevations. Large panelled wainscoting about 7 feet high with moulded surrounds to main doors with keyed semi-circular heads, the doors with large, simple and very fine brass L-hinges and fittings. Hall-landing stair with moulded wreathed and ramped handrail with 3 turned balusters to each a scrolled tread, leading to upper landing with balustrade and single Tuscan column at stair head. This landing with fireplace for use as an upper parlour. Other rooms with simple oak panelling, some possibly C17 and removed from earlier house on site, with bolection moulded fireplace. Dog leg stair with turned baluster to wing. Cellar of painted brick, vaulted on piers with stone caps and springers, with passage through base of main stack, and flanked by barrel-vaulted secondary cells. The cellars were said to have been so extravagantly built as to have delayed the erection of the wings. No architect is known for the house. Traditionally the design is assigned to Thomas Archer on stylistic grounds, the execution to a local builder who fitted the plan as best he could to the main elevations. Remarkable similarities with a number of contemporary houses in Kent and East Sussex (Rampyndene, Burwash, East Sussex 1699; Matfield, Brenchley, 1728; Bradbourne, East Malling, 1713 etc). The only name associated with the house is that of a Mr John Hodgskin, "The Architect" who eloped with Mary Bathurst in 1740. (See BOE Kent I, 1980, 285-7; see also Country Life, vol 50, 132 and Oct 99 pp.670 and 716; all Country Life material by Christopher Hussey.

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Kent Historic Environment Record Reference: MKE38062

GOUDHURST
Coachhouse about 50
Finchcock

FINCHCOCKS TQ 73 NW 5/168
metres north-west of

GV II Coachhouse, now part converted to accommodation. C18. Red brick and plain tiled roof. Two storeys to hipped roof with stack to left. Central coach-entry surround projecting, with keyed arched recessed carriage doors with lunette over, with lunettes also to left and to right on 1st floor, and round-headed casements on ground floor, with glazed door to left, boarded to right with round-headed fanlights. Second carriage doors to right with round-headed surround in outshot. All openings with gauged brick surrounds. Two storey C20 rear extension. Interior with re-used timbers of same scantling, part converted to house and workshop.

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