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**THE HOUSE AND GARDENS OF
COMBS HALL, at COMBS,
near STOWMARKET, SUFFOLK**

An Archaeological Survey

March 1994



**The House and Gardens of Combs Hall, at Combs, near Stowmarket, Suffolk:
an Architectural and Archaeological Survey by the
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, March 1994**

INTRODUCTION

In March 1994, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England carried out an earthwork survey of the remains of a formal garden at Combs Hall, near Stowmarket, in Suffolk (NGR TM 0511 5684). This work was requested by Edward Martin, of Suffolk County Council, and is intended to inform future management of the site. The earthworks of the garden include a vista, the site of a parterre and a small ornamental lake. Most of the house was demolished in 1756, but the service range and two outbuildings survive in use; these structures were also recorded.

The site is located on the southern outskirts of Stowmarket, in the parish of Combs, adjacent to the parish church of St Mary. The formal gardens lie on a fairly steep north-west facing hillside overlooking the valley of a tributary of the Rattlesden River, between 35m and 54m above OD, with the site of the manor house itself located just below the crest of the slope at 46m above OD. The hill is formed of boulder clay and the valley bottom is deeply silted.

Most of the area of the formal gardens has lain under pasture since the eighteenth century, and Combs Wood to the north-west has been regularly coppiced; both are now managed as a wildlife conservation site and public recreation area by Mid Suffolk District Council. Between these two areas, a strip some 80m wide lies under arable agriculture, and the earthworks are consequently slight.

Although the main earthworks of the site have been recorded by Ordnance Survey since the First Edition 25-inch map (surveyed 1884, published 1885), their survival was first commented on by the Pasture Survey carried out by Suffolk Archaeological Unit in 1984 (Suffolk SMR COM 007; COM 009). Subsequent documentary and cartographic research by Edward Martin has allowed detailed interpretation of the remains (Martin 1991; unpublished 1993).

BRIEF HISTORY

(after Copinger 1910, Martin 1991 and unpublished 1993)

The manor of Combs is first mentioned in the early fourteenth century. The hall depicted on a plan of 1710 by William Tallemach (Suffolk CRO HA1/EA1/22) was probably built in the sixteenth century; the builder is unknown, since in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the manor underwent several changes of ownership, passing from Lord Willoughby to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c.1526 and from him to the Crown in 1537. The Crown granted the property to Sir Richard Gresham in 1543 and in 1579, it passed by marriage into the ownership of Sir Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey.

In 1687, the property was acquired by William Bridgeman Esquire (Suffolk CRO HA1/EB 3), a successful and wealthy politician, succeeded on his death in 1699 by his son Orlando, who later became Tory MP for Ipswich. Orlando Bridgeman demolished or incorporated the earlier hall, and rebuilt on a grander scale in 1724 (Ipswich Journal 1756), also laying out more extensive formal gardens. On his death in 1731, his son William inherited, but apparently fell into financial difficulty, first mortgaging the manor and then, shortly before his death in 1737, selling it to Mrs Theodosia Crowley (Suffolk CRO HA1/DA2/11). Her son Ambrose, later knighted, had the entire estate surveyed in 1741 by William Collier at a scale of two chains to one inch (Suffolk CRO P638). On his death in 1754, the estate passed to his brother John, who died one year later, and finally by marriage to the Earl of Ashburnham (Suffolk CRO HA1/DA2/11). He appears to have had no use for the house and demolished it, selling off the materials '...very cheap' in 1756 (Ipswich Journal 1756), with the exception of the servants' wing and a number of the outlying farm buildings. These are shown on the Ashburnham estate map of 1772 (Suffolk CRO HA1/HB4/1).

DESCRIPTION

The maps referenced in the history above are subsequently referred to by their dates alone. For names and letters used in the text, see the plan and interpretive overlay at 1:1000; names used on the map of 1741 have been retained and modern names used where none is shown on the earliest map.

The larger scale representations on the two earlier maps make possible a basic analysis of the demolished houses. In addition, the surviving structures which relate to the manor were investigated by the RCHME and are briefly described and interpreted. A number of other buildings survive only as earthworks.

The maps indicate a small, partly enclosed garden at the rear of the house in the same location as the more formal part of the eighteenth century design. The later gardens were added in a single phase, approximately contemporary with the rebuilding of the house in 1724, and their plan is characteristic of early eighteenth century design. They were laid out along an axial north-west to south-east vista, with the manor house sited at its centre facing north-west, overlooking a small ornamental lake in the valley bottom and a tree-lined avenue on the opposite slope. To the south-east, the vista continued through the woodland on the summit of the hill, visible only from the upper storey of the house. Two aerial photographs (NLAP TM 0557/4 and CUCAP AKR 46) record the entire site at different seasons, showing different elements of the archaeology.

THE BUILDINGS

St. Mary's Church

The church is aligned some 25° north of east. The nave of the church is fourteenth century, presumably contemporary with the earliest manor house, with aisles added in the fifteenth century. A large porch built of narrow mid-sixteenth century bricks on the south side was probably built by the one of the owners of the late medieval manor; the doorway was reconstructed with very finely-gauged wide red brick in the early eighteenth century, almost certainly by Bridgeman. The church was not otherwise recorded as part of the RCHME survey, but is recorded in the National Buildings Record (NBR reference TM 05 NE 3/68).

Late Medieval manor house

A survey of the manor in 1581 (Suffolk CRO HA1/EB3/3-4) describes the manor house as consisting of a hall (aula), a chamber (conclave), and divers rooms (camerae), along

with a barn, two stables and other farm buildings. This is a conventional description and shows only that the house had the main rooms that can be expected in a manor house of the time, that is, a hall and chamber. In 1671 the house was rated at six hearths.

A vignette on the map of 1710 shows a modest house with a main range and two cross-wings all of equal height. The cross-wings are both two storeys and attics high, two windows wide and appear to be hipped. The main range has, on the north-west front, three windows and a pedimented door set between the south-western and central windows. Above each window is a circular window of the same width, and in the roof is a gabled dormer. There is a stack on the side wall of each cross-wing, and a large stack on the rear wall of the main range behind the pair of windows to the north-east of the door. There are steps up to the door, and a prominent plinth at floor level suggests but does not prove a brick facing. The circular windows in the main range suggest that this is, or had been, an open hall, now ceiled at eaves level. To the south-east is a lower wing line, of single storey and attic, lit by a dormer window; there is a gable stack and the roof is thatched. The sharp lines used to represent the house roof must indicate a tile covering.

There is little on the vignette to suggest a date, apart from the plan and evidence for an open hall, indicating that it was built before 1600 and perhaps before 1550.

Early Eighteenth Century House

Orlando Bridgeman built a new house at Combs roughly on the site of the earlier manor house in 1724 (Ipswich Journal 1756), but may have incorporated parts of earlier buildings. The map of 1741 includes a convincing drawing of the north-west front. The main building faced north-west and was seventeen bays long, and two storeys high. The central three bays broke forward beneath a pediment and contained the central doorway with bracketed hood. On either side the next two bays were set back, and the single bays beyond them, all under receding hipped roofs, and with an entablature below the eaves. Finally there were another four bays, with slightly lower eaves and no entablature. In the south-west wing, the penultimate bay has a door with bracketed hood. The windows appear to have had architraves, and certainly had keystones and bracketed sills. Attached to the south-west end of the house is a block of almost equal height, consisting of two short sections each of two narrow bays and with hipped roofs. A wing which projects north-eastwards from the main house is entirely hidden behind the church on the drawing; the angle of this structure depicted on the interpretative overlay is inferred from earthwork evidence and known foundations adjacent to the churchyard (Mr P Broom pers comm), although there is only a slight suggestion of this

on the map. A short section of the wall-line of the north-eastern cross-wing survives as a minimal bank adjacent to compartment **m** of The Garden, but most of the foundations have been robbed out (Mr P Broom pers comm).

The forecourt of the house is flanked by the church on the north-east and by a stable block on the west.

An indication of the size of house is that the sale (Ipswich Journal 1756) included 40 square of roofing, some 400 square feet, although the method of calculation is not certain. A comparison of the earthworks of the surrounding garden features with the plan of 1741 indicates that the main part of the house had overall dimensions of some 54m long and up to 10m wide (see overlay).

Present House

The present house of Combs Hall is of single storey with attics, rendered and tiled. The north-east section has brick walls and the south-west timber frame. In both parts the ceiling and wall height is unusually high.

The north-east section has a roof of three bays, with diminished principals, clasped purlins; the rafters are laid flat and pegged to the purlins. Below, the building is spanned by two chamfered beams with 45° stops, the stops at the south end of the one exposed beam being concealed within the thickness of the wall. The bricks of the wall are thick and apparently of eighteenth century date; they presumably replace the original timber frame walls that would have gone with the roof, which on the small amount visible does not appear to be re-set, and is probably of sixteenth century date. This suggests that the north-eastern section of the house was originally part of a building, probably domestic in function, associated with the late medieval manor.

In the south-east wall were two large circular windows with plain wooden frames, c.1.5m across; these are now blocked but originally occupied a large part of the external free height of the wall. A fireplace in the south-west wall has a stack built against the south-west gable, the bricks being carefully pointed. The opening originally had a brick arch, recently replaced by a wooden lintel. The openings in the north wall are now all windows, but formerly included a near-central doorway.

The south-west section is of timber frame, of four bays, with clasped purlin roof. The visible structure consists of unshouldered posts supporting a wall-plate, and chamfered beams with wave-stops. The western beam is morticed on the underside for studs for a partition, which would have separated the present westernmost bay from the rest of

the building, which was a single room. In date, it appears to be seventeenth century. The easternmost bay is occupied by a large fireplace in red brick with wooden lintel resting on thin wooden bearers and bond timbers in the hood. It is placed back-to-back with the stack in the north-eastern section of the building, and dates from the eighteenth century.

The relationship of this building to the early eighteenth century house is probably that of a service range behind the main range. A wing projecting from the front of the present house, shown on the 1772 map, may have connected it to the main building, as indicated on the 1741 map, but it had been removed by 1843 (Suffolk CRO P461/67).

Small barn / stables

Near the present house is a three-bay barn of timber frame 8.0m long by 6.5m wide, possibly the remnant of a stable building, which appears on the 1741 map to be single storey, capped by a decorative cupola with weather vane. The present roof is modern. The end trusses have jowled heads, at least one of which formerly had a brace, and all appear to be re-used. The intermediate framing includes two trusses having posts without jowled heads, tie-beams with mortices and floor joists, and a wall-plate with a vertically-bladed scarf joint that is probably of seventeenth century date and agrees with the character of the studs on the walls.

The present lean-to shed against the south-west wall of the building re-uses earlier timbers and takes the place of a longer structure in the same position. The earlier structure measured some 20m long; its south-eastern end survived until 1884 (Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch (surveyed 1884, published 1885), but had gone by 1903 (Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25-inch (surveyed 1903, published 1904), by which date the present lean-to had been added.

'Combs Hall Barn'

A larger barn of five bays measuring 16m by 6m lies some 70m to the south-west of the present house. It has been converted in recent years and was not inspected in detail by the RCHME. A stockyard had been built at the rear of the barn by 1884 (Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch surveyed 1884, published 1885); this too has now been converted. The gardens in front and to the rear of the house have been landscaped in recent years.

Minor buildings surviving as earthworks.

On the drawing of 1741, what appears to be a dovecote is shown to the south of the manor house. This is probably the L-shaped structure which survives as a slightly

mounded platform up to 0.3m high in the corner between the wall fragment and Combs Hall Barn.

A second building **b** some 18m long by 5m wide survives as a sub-rectangular depression up to 0.2m deep in the surface of a broad platform up to 0.4m high.

A small structure **c**, some 6m square, survives as a slight sub-rectangular mound up to 0.2m high in the southern corner of Pond Meadow, adjacent to the western corner of compartment **d** of the Forecourt.

An 8.5m long fragment of wall of wide brick, dividing the area at the rear of the present house from compartment **n** of the garden, survives to a height of 0.8m; elsewhere the course of the wall survives as a series of scarps between 0.2m and 0.5m high, for a total of 68m.

THE GARDENS

Forecourt

A pair of rectangular compartments, each 40m long by 27m wide, lie side-by-side immediately in front of the site of the house. Their north-western sides are defined by a strong scarp up to 1.1m high, with a ditch up to 0.4m deep along its base, which extends for some 75m along the boundary of Pond Meadow. The southern corner of compartment d is overlain by the embankment of the drive of the present Combs Hall, but its south-western side is defined by the small barn/stables and a scarp up to 0.4m high which survives for 17.0m. The drawing on the map of 1741 suggests that the area was unenclosed and contained a double avenue of trees.

Compartment e, which lies precisely on the axis of the vista, is terraced up to 0.8m into the natural slope to create an almost level area with minimal traces of ditches along the south-west and north-east sides. A broad low bank, up to 5.5m wide and 0.2m high, with slight traces of narrow ditches on either side, extending for 36m along its central axis is interpreted as a path approaching the main front door of the house. The south-eastern end of the bank adjoins the back of the compartment and corresponds to a step in the scarp. The north-west end of the embanked path terminates at the edge of a broad shallow linear depression up to 10.0m wide and 0.3m deep which cuts at right angles across the end of the compartment, embanked downhill to a height of 0.3m. The drawing on the map of 1741 suggests that railings enclosed the compartment as far as the south-eastern side of this depression with elaborate wrought iron gates located at the end of the axial path, probably those mentioned in the advertisement of 1756 (*Ipswich Journal* 1756). To the north-west of the depression, the rest of compartment e seems to have been enclosed by a lower and more simple wooden fence with a gateway opposite the end of the axial path, corresponding to a slight depression 5.0m wide in the embankment.

Bank f, 6.0m wide and 0.4m high on average, extending along the north-east side of compartment e, is shown as a separate compartment on the 1741 map. The bank is interrupted some 8m from its north-west end by a regular cut 3.6m wide and 0.3m deep and its north-eastern side is partly overlain by a scarp up to 0.3m high along the present boundary of the churchyard.

Pond Meadow

Pond Meadow, called 'Carthouse Close' on the 1710 map and now known as Church Meadow, is bisected from south-west to north-east by a track shown on the 1741 map. Lusher vegetation and poorer earthwork survival suggest that the fields may have been

ploughed for a short period, though not within living memory (Mr P Broom pers comm). The area adjoins the north-west end of compartments **d**, **e** and **f** and extends as far as the ornamental lake, bounded on the south-west by the embankment of Church Lane and on the north-east by a broad ditch **g**, up to 4.6m wide and 0.5m deep. The section to the south-east of the transverse track is roughly T-shaped, respecting the western corner of the churchyard and with an approximately symmetrical projection into its southern corner.

The alignment of the sides of compartment **e** is continued by two parallel ditches, both 0.2m deep and 3.2m wide, 37.0m apart, which extend for some 75m to the corners of the north-western circular pond. A minimal linear depression up to 7.0m wide extends approximately along the central axis, but is considerably distorted. Bank **h**, possibly a culvert, measures 6.8m wide and 0.3m high, extends parallel to the south-western ditch. Slight traces of an adjacent depression on its south-western side, measuring up to 8.0m wide and 0.2m deep, extend up to 25.0m north-west of the transverse track. A brick-lined culvert was exposed during the digging of the cesspit in compartment **d** and remains partly visible in the sides of the ditch along the north-west end of this compartment.

The north-western circular pond, which is shown on the 1741 map, is sited on the axis of the vista at the centre of Pond Meadow. It measures 11.5m in diameter and up to 0.5m deep, and is located at the centre of a broader circular depression, 20.0m in diameter and up to 0.7m deep. An irregular embankment up to 15.5m wide and 0.7m high curves for some 50m around the north-west side of the depression, separated by a level berm up to 4.0m wide. There are slight traces of a shallow ditch downhill of this embankment.

A transverse terrace **j** extends north-east of the circular pond for 55m as far as ditch **g** and 35m to the south-west as far as ditch **k**. The terrace measures between 5.0m and 10.0m wide and is formed by slight scarps 0.2m high on average.

The north-western edge of Pond Meadow corresponds to the present fence-line and is formed by a scarp up to 0.5m high, which extends to the south-west of the circular pond as far as the embankment of Church Lane and a ditch up to 6.0m wide and 0.3m deep, which extends to the north-east of the pond as far to join ditch **g**.

The alignment of ditch **k** corresponds approximately to the south-western side of compartment **d**. It is irregular in form, from 5.0m to 8.5m wide and up to 0.3m deep, with traces of an irregular broad bank up to 0.2m high along its south-western side.

South-east of the transverse track are traces of underlying terraces 0.2m high on average, which extend south-west to north-east for 95m between ditches g and k. The remains of other earlier features on the same alignment survive to a maximum height of 0.5m on the edge of Pond Meadow to the north-west of compartment f.

The ornamental lake

A rectangular ornamental lake, shown on the 1741 map, covers the field called 'Reed Pond Meadow' on the map of 1710. It measures 120m long south-west to north-east by 65m wide and increases from 0.4m to 0.8m deep at its north-east end. An oval pond, dug in its eastern corner before 1884 (Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map surveyed 1884, published 1885) has recently been enlarged to encourage wildlife and now has dimensions of 45m north-west to south-east by 25m wide. The ornamental lake is dammed at its north-eastern end by a broad bank, with dimensions of 36.0m wide and 1.5m high, the south-western face of which is divided into a double terrace. The upper walk is 6.0m wide and continues around the other three sides of the lake with a width of up to 9.0m. The lower walk, 11.0m wide and 0.8m lower, extends only along the north-eastern end of the pond. The north-eastern face of the bank is also slightly stepped, but not terraced, and has minimal traces of a ditch running along its base. Two channels connect the northern corner of the lake to the course of the stream; the south-western one, which is 15.0m wide and of minimal depth may be natural, but the north-eastern one, 7.5m wide and 0.4m deep, is probably artificial.

On the same alignment as the south-eastern side of the ornamental lake, a linear feature terraced into the edge of the valley bottom extends for 150m to the north-east through Ranglings Meadow before it is lost under modern housing. The lower and upper scarps both measure up to 0.6m high with minimal traces of a channel 1 running along the 3.0m wide step between them. Towards its north-eastern end, the feature bends to follow the natural slope. To the east of this feature, separated by a level berm from 2.0m to 4.0m wide, a bank up to 0.3m high and 12.0m wide is partly obscured by modern dumping.

The alignment of the south-eastern side of the ornamental lake is also continued to the south-west into Hopyard Meadow by a scarp up to 0.4m high, corresponding to a field boundary ploughed out in 1982. This also follows the edge of the valley bottom, but has been heavily degraded by ploughing.

The canal

The canal is shown on the 1741 map, but Martin (1991, 2) was sceptical as to whether the feature was ever completed. However, slight traces of the original feature survive, severely distorted by the stream, which has eroded an almost sheer-sided channel up to 2.6m deep along its centre. The original canal appears to have been 12m wide and 165m long with a probable depth of c.0.5m. The north-eastern end survives as a pronounced projection in the western bank of the stream channel, but there is no other trace of a dam.

The Garden

The axis of the vista to the rear of the house is mis-aligned by some 7m to the north-east of the vista downhill and due to the natural topography, could only have been fully visible from the upper storeys of the house. The Garden, as shown on the map of 1741, comprises three approximately rectangular compartments terraced into the natural slope immediately to the rear of the site of the house, with a terrace along the south-eastern sides of all three. The relationship of Orlando Bridgeman's garden to the earlier garden shown on the 1710 map will be discussed in more detail below.

The central compartment **m**, 44m long by 31m wide, is aligned along the axis of the vista with indications of staircases at its north-western and south-eastern ends; '...a large quantity of portland stone steps' is mentioned in the sale advertisement (Ipswich Journal 1756), implying that they have been robbed out. The compartment cuts a maximum depth of 0.8m into the hillside so that it slopes very slightly up to the south-east. Two 6.0m square projections, 0.6m high, extend into the southern and eastern corners. The north-western end of the compartment is formed by a strong scarp 1.3m high. To the north-west of this, a broad, low sub-rectangular bank, 21.0m long by 10.0m wide and up to 0.2m high fills the area between the cross-wings of the house.

Between compartment **m** and the present field boundary, lies a level walk 5.0m wide, extending at right angles from the lower terrace **q** indicated by parallel dashed lines on the 1741 map. A double row of pollarded elms shown on the 1772 map standing on either side of the walk was removed between 1946 and 1965 (aerial photographs RAF 3G/TUD/UK62; CUCAP AKR 43-6), leaving a number of slight tree-holes.

To the south-west, compartment **n** is formed by two conjoining rectangular areas, which in 1741 contained eight rectangular beds, surrounded and separated from each other by paths. On the 1710 map the area is marked 'barnyards' and by 1772 it had been planted with lines of trees. The north-eastern end of compartment **n**, an area 65m long by 38m wide, forms the garden of the present Combs Hall. It originally contained six

rectangular beds on either side of a central path, the lower side of which survives as a scarp 0.5m high. To the south-east of this scarp, later cultivation and the construction of a swimming pool have disturbed the earlier garden. The south-western end of compartment **n**, divided off by a scarp up to 0.5m high, now forms most of the garden of Combs Hall Barn. It was originally 24m wide south-west to north-east, extending to the side of trackway **u**; its precise length is now uncertain. It contained two flower beds separated by the central path, of which nothing survives at this point.

Compartment **p** is divided from compartment **m** by a bank 0.6m high, along which runs a level walk 5.0m wide, projecting at right angles from the lower terrace **q**, indicated by parallel dashed lines on the 1741 map. The north-western end of the bank has been almost levelled in recent years to enable vehicular access. A double line of pollarded elms shown on the 1772 map along the top of the bank was removed between 1946 and 1966 (aerial photographs RAF 3G/TUD/UK62; CUCAP AKR 43-6).

Compartment **p** is trapezoidal, measuring 57m long south-west to north-east by between 60m and 35m wide, and lies approximately 0.5m lower down the natural slope in compartment **m**. It is shown on the 1741 map as an elaborate parterre with diagonal paths leading to a central square pond from which walkways with circular terminals project into the centre of the four triangular segments. The central pond has been infilled in recent years and only a short section of its north-western edge can now be seen. A double ring of pollarded elms around the pond, which are not shown on the 1741 map, and which are shown only as a loose grouping on the 1772 map, was removed between 1946 and 1966 (aerial photographs RAF 3G/TUD/UK62; CUCAP AKR43-6).

The earthwork remains within the compartment are very slight with the exception of a broad linear depression, 7.8m wide and 0.3m deep, which extends on a north-west to south-east alignment, on either side of the infilled pond. Together with the slighter scarps, this forms a vaguely cruciform pattern, which does not correspond well to the depiction on the 1741 map. The earthworks have been disturbed by tipping and the removal of an unexploded bomb in the southern corner (Dr A Wankowski pers comm). Compartment **p** is divided from the churchyard by a ditch 6.0m wide and from 0.5m to 1.0m deep which extends for 85m and appears to have been re-cut.

The terrace **q** extends for 160m south-west to north-east along the south-east side of the three compartments. For 100m at its north-eastern end, where it adjoins compartment **m** and **p**, the terrace is double: its lower half up to 1.5m high and 3.5m wide on average, the upper 0.6m high and 8.0m wide. The upper terrace continues to the south-west

increasing slightly in height. It carries an low embankment up to 0.2m high and 5.0m wide, which raises the walk slightly above the level of The Crofts to the south-east. This walk was again lined by a double row of pollarded elms, shown on the 1772 map, eight of which still stand to varying heights at the south-western end of the terrace, separated by an average interval of some 6m.

The Crofts

These two compartments, of which the north-eastern is marked 'Little Crofts' on the 1710 map, are both approximately 80m square, lying on either side of the vista, and were only slightly landscaped. Until ploughing began in the Second World War, the south-western Croft contained pollarded elm trees, planted in a grid at intervals of c. 6m, some of which survived until 1946 (RAF aerial photographs 3G/TUD/UK62). The north-eastern croft originally had the same design but by 1884 (Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map, surveyed 1884, published 1885) the pollards had been removed, apart from isolated trees in the hedge lines.

Both The Crofts are divided from terrace **q** by a ditch, from 1.5m to 3.0m wide and up to 0.4m deep. Their south-western and north-eastern ends are marked by abraded scarps 0.3m high. The vista is carried across The Crofts by an abraded linear depression 12.0m wide and 0.2m deep, with a more prominent embankment up to 23.0m wide and 0.3m high along its south-western side, along which the present footpath runs. The junction of the vista with terrace **q** was formed by a semi-circular exedra, surviving as an irregular fence-line into the twentieth century (Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25-inch map surveyed 1903, published 1904; RAF aerial photograph 3G/TUD/UK62). This section of the vista is clearest on CUCAP aerial photographs ADE 29-31.

Combs Wood

Combs Wood, called simply 'The Wood' on the 1710 map, covers an irregular area of some 15ha, extending mainly to the north-east. The mixed deciduous trees have all been coppiced, probably since the eighteenth century and continue to be regularly managed. The boundaries along the south-western side of the wood and between The Crofts and Combs Wood, are formed by a ditch, re-cut to a width of 0.4m and depth of 1.0m, when The Crofts were first ploughed in the Second World War. Within the wood, immediately beyond the 0.6m high upcast bank of the ditch, a broad linear depression 6.0m wide and 0.5m deep extends on a parallel alignment for a distance of 100m to the north-east of the vista. Another ditch shown on the 1741 map as the south-western boundary of Combs Wood, measures 3.8m wide and 1.0m deep, embanked on the north-east to a height of 0.2m. It is separated by 13m from the edge of the vista, and lies 23m from the present edge of the wood. At the point where the vista crossed into Combs

Wood, brickwork was uncovered during the re-cutting of the boundary ditch (Mr P Broom).

Some 15m within the wood, lies a second well-preserved circular pond, 10.0m in diameter and c.0.6m deep. This is surrounded by a circular embankment approximately 25m in diameter and 0.3m high. This bank becomes the sides of a ride, 12.0m wide, which extends the vista for a further 280m to the south-eastern edge of the wood. At its north-western end this is cut up to a depth of 0.4m into the hilltop and at its south-eastern end it is embanked up to 0.5m high, so as to maintain a level surface. There is no evidence that the vista ever continued any further to the south-east, or that there was any eye-catcher at the edge of the wood. Approximately halfway through the wood, the vista ride intersects at almost a right angle with a second major ride, which extends for 570m to the north-eastern end of Combs Wood. Some 10m to the north-west of the ride, a broad shallow linear depression with similar dimensions to that along the north-western edge of Combs Wood, extends on approximately the same alignment. The second ride is in turn intersected by four smaller tracks at intervals of between 90m and 150m.

The Orchard

The Orchard, part of the 'Great Crofts' on the 1710 map, originally covered an approximately triangular area of 0.7ha and is depicted similarly to The Crofts on the 1741 map. The western edge of The Orchard ranges from 0.3m to 0.8m higher than Church Lane.

In the northern corner lies a sub-rectangular pond, 18.4m long north to south by 11.7m wide and 2.1m deep, which has been slightly re-cut in recent years. An embankment around the north-western corner of the pond has a maximum height of 0.4m and extends up to 25m south-west of the pond.

The south-eastern side of the pond adjoins a terraced trackway r, 4.0m wide, which extends as far as a 3.7m wide break in the embankment along the north-eastern side of The Orchard, shown as a gate on the map of 1741. The scarp along the south-eastern side of trackway r is stronger, up to 0.5m high and extends for 78m southwards to the present field boundary. The track survived in occasional use until the 1960's (CUCAP aerial photographs ADE 29-31).

A second gateway 3.0m wide, lying 23m south-east of the first, is not shown on the 1741 map and gave access to the twentieth century stockyard at the rear of Combs Hall Barn. The part of the orchard to the south-east of this is level and has a disturbed appearance,

probably due to its use as a rick-yard in the mid-twentieth century (Mr P Broom pers comm).

Church Lane

This extends for 250m in a straight line along the south-western sides of the ornamental lake and Pond Meadow as far as gate s before turning south-westwards along the western edge of The Orchard. On the map of 1710, the road turned along the south-eastern side of Pound Field before turning towards Poplar Hill, but it was diverted to its present course c.1724, to avoid the new vista. The road is carried over the lowest part of the valley on an embankment 11.0m wide and 1.2m high, and is terraced up to 0.8m into the hillside around the north-western edge of The Orchard.

Miscellaneous Features

An abraded trackway t, up to 6.0m wide and 0.5m deep, embanked on both sides to a maximum height of 0.3m, extends for a total of 25.0m north of gateway s, as far as the scarp along the boundary of Pond Meadow, which cuts the trackway. The southern end of the trackway has been spread and flattened by later features. In Pond Meadow, an abraded scarp up to 0.2m high, approximately continues the alignment of the trackway for 15m before it is cut by the probable conduit h.

A 24m long section of trackway u survives as minimal traces of two ditches 6.5m apart in the garden of Combs Hall Barn and a single abraded scarp up to 0.3m high in The Great Croft. Until the landscaping of the garden of Combs Hall Barn in recent years, the track ran between compartment n of The Garden and The Orchard, then skirted the south-western end of Combs Hall Barn and joined Church Lane at the same point as the present gateway of Combs Hall Barn. The track survived in use into the mid-twentieth century (Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25-inch map, surveyed 1903, published 1904; Mr P Broom pers comm).

An oval pond v, first shown on the 1772 map, lies in a depression approximately 16m square, cut to a maximum depth of 4m into the natural slope. This is drained by a ditch 3.2m wide and 0.6m deep, which extends for 28m downhill to the north-west and appears to be a later addition. A second pond w, recently re-cut, has similar dimensions. It is drained by a slighter ditch 3.0m wide and 0.2m deep, which extends for 20m to the north to the edge of Pond Meadow, adjacent to structure. Neither pond is shown on the 1741 map but both are shown on the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map (surveyed 1884, published 1885).

Pound Field, called 'Mill Field' on the 1710 map, was investigated for evidence of the

avenues of trees on either side of the broad vista shown on the 1741 and 1772 maps, but no trace survives. The map of 1772 indicates that the land between the trees had already been returned to arable.

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The house and outbuildings

The reason for the initial survival of the service range and out-buildings despite the total demolition of the main house seems to be that these structures had far fewer materials worth salvaging. The sale advertisement (Ipswich Journal 1756) suggests that the Earl of Ashburnham wished to be rid of the property with the minimum effort for the maximum profit. Subsequently, all the surviving buildings were returned to agricultural use.

The interpretation of the layout of the house and gardens of Combs Hall built by Orlando Bridgeman in 1724 is simplified by the map of 1741 (Martin 1991; unpublished 1993) which has already been used in the descriptive text to interpret the earthworks at a basic level. However, interpretation of the map of 1710 is crucial to understanding the development of the site. Martin has accepted the accuracy of the early map, leading him to suggest that the late medieval manor stood downhill from the later house, approximately in the middle of the later forecourt (Martin unpublished 1993). It follows from this, he argues, that the hall house must have been entirely erased and that the gardens represent a *de novo* creation by Orlando Bridgeman.

However, there is strong evidence to suggest that the depiction of the immediate environs of the Manor on the 1710 map cannot be trusted for plan accuracy, although the surrounding field boundaries are extremely accurate. Map North has clearly been adjusted to correspond to the alignment of St Mary's Church, which is in fact misaligned by 25°. The boundaries of the churchyard and manor house have accordingly been drawn rectilinear and aligned north-south and east-west in order to focus the attention of the user of the map; this is a fairly common device on maps of this period. In the case of the churchyard, this is obviously a distortion of the real plan; the depiction of 'a piece of glebe' as a triangle within the churchyard also appears schematic. Although the manor is less obviously distorted, its boundaries on the map suggest a misalignment with the gardens, which is unlikely in itself and is certainly not apparent on the vignette on the top of the map. The depiction of the house on the vignette is probably more accurate than the schematic thumbnail sketch on the map, which differs considerably.

The vignette shows two adjacent garden compartments extending at right angles to the rear of the house, marked 'The Garden', and '?yard'. The depiction corresponds extremely closely to compartments **m** and **p** of the later gardens, suggesting that the late medieval house stood in almost the same position as the later house and was possibly

incorporated into it. In the case of the present Combs Hall it is certain that a late medieval structure underwent changes in the seventeenth century, before it was incorporated into the later house and in general, incorporation of earlier structures is more usual. The late medieval/seventeenth century structure may be either of two buildings shown on the 1710 map: the thatched range shown on the vignette (but not depicted at all on the map) to the rear of the main house, or the large barn shown only on the map, of which the former is slightly more likely. Similarly, the ornate stable block seems to have been adapted from a seventeenth century building, which may have been moved from another location, since it is not indicated on the 1710 map.

In conclusion, there was probably continuity in the siting of, and possibly physical survival of the later medieval manor into the eighteenth century re-design.

The 1710 map shows a number of outbuildings to the south-east of the manor, with the description 'Barnyard'. Though individual structures had possibly changed by 1741, the area seems to have continued as a farmyard. Apart from Combs Hall Barn building **b** also probably had an agricultural function. The Glebe Terrier for 1772 (Suffolk CRO FB211/C1/1) records surviving outbuildings as two large barns and two stables with yards. Martin (unpublished 1993) has identified structure **c** as a dovecote, but it is more likely to be the tall building partially revealed on the drawing of 1741, probably corresponding to structure **a** in the corner of the farmyard. Ponds **v** and **w** are not shown on the 1741 map, possibly because they were not ornamental, but pond **v** is shown on the 1772 map, suggesting that they are contemporary with the later re-use of the buildings. However, they suit the unplanned functional character of the area and may both be of mid-eighteenth century date or earlier. Both may have originated in the medieval period as clay-pits for daub, since the positioning of pond **v** in particular, must have created access problems throughout its existence; they might then have become convenient watering places for livestock.

The farmyard, including the area to the rear of the present Combs Hall was divided from compartment **n** of The Garden by the brick wall, of which only a fragment now survives; the map of 1772 possibly suggests that compartment **d** of the Forecourt may have been similarly protected. It is possible that the north-western side of the farmyard may have been unenclosed; access onto Church Lane and to the south-east may otherwise have been possible via track **u**. Martin (1991,2) has noted that trackway **u** links the adjacent Manor of Badley with the farm buildings at Combs; this may be a development of the 1740's, when both manors came under the ownership of Ambrose Crowley. However, the trackway already seems to have been established by 1741.

Access to the house itself is not explained on either map. Both the late medieval house and the eighteenth century house were clearly approached frontally from the north-west across compartment e; this grand approach was emphasised by Bridgeman's vista and the elaborate gates at the end of the axial path. Beyond the gates, direct approach was impossible due to the steep scarp extending along the edge of Pond Meadow. The break in the wooden fence around the north-western end of compartment d was either purely decorative, intended only to frame the vista, or more probably allowed pedestrian access via a flight of steps, of which no trace survives. The main access route must then have approached from the side, as suggested by the broad linear depression which cuts across the end of compartment e immediately outside the site of the wrought iron gates. The point of departure from Church Lane may have been gate s, which is shown slightly larger on the 1741 map. The scarp along the edge of the modern drive to the present Combs Hall and the truncation of trackway t suggest the position of a track, but there are no definite earthworks associated with it. Another possibility is the entrance to the drive of the present Combs Hall, in which case the later embankment may obscure a more impressive approach heading straight towards the gate. The small square building c, probably wrongly identified as a dovecote by Martin (unpublished 1993), was possibly a gatehouse, though its location at the base of the steep scarp suggests that it was largely ornamental. To the north-east of compartment e the track may have passed through the gap in bank f and across the churchyard, along the line of an existing footpath, to join the present drive to the church and so onto the transverse track across Pond Meadow. The course of the possible track through the churchyard is uncertain; although the earthwork remains suggest that it joined the present track at first, the 1741 map shows it joining the transverse track to the south-west of ditch g, necessitating an awkward deviation and a cut through the scarp around Pond Meadow, which the earthwork evidence does not allow. However, the gap in bank f is quite narrow and may not have allowed exit for carriages. The ornate stable block shown on the 1741 drawing suggests that compartment d probably functioned as a stable yard.

It is certainly deliberate that the transverse track across Pond Meadow would have given guests and passers-by a clear and impressive view of the house above them, framed by the church and the ornate stable block.

The Gardens

There is also evidence for considerably more continuity in the layout of the surrounding gardens than has previously been suggested (Martin unpublished 1993). In front of the house, on the 1710 vignette, dashed lines appear to indicate the edge of a forecourt of the same width as the central hall of the late medieval manor. This may correspond to compartment e of the later Forecourt which is awkwardly narrow in relation to the

great breadth of the house as shown on the 1741 drawing. If this is the case, however, the axial path across compartment **e** must be an addition contemporary with the later house, since the main entrance of the late medieval house was positioned off-centre, presumably adjacent to an earlier cross-passage.

As mentioned above, at the rear of the late medieval house, the 1710 vignette shows two rectangular compartments with an intervening walkway which corresponds closely both to the earthwork remains of compartments **m** and **p** and their depiction on the 1741 map. The existence of staircases at either end of compartment **m** suggests an axial path, which is explicitly shown on the 1710 vignette, flanked by four small rectangular beds, as well as implied on the 1741 map. The limited view of compartment **p** on the 1710 vignette, possibly suggests four large square beds divided by paths, although the area is marked 'yard' on the map and does not appear to extend as far to the north-east as the later compartment. The symmetrical arrangement suggested by the vignette would correspond more closely than the elaborate parterre of 1741 to the cruciform pattern of the surviving earthworks. This suggests that the later parterre may largely have been a cosmetic adaptation of the existing design.

The more massive lower terrace **q** was probably constructed to form the boundary of the two early garden compartments **m** and **p** and therefore does not continue further to the south-west.

This nucleus of the formal garden is at odds with the style of the rest of the design and more consistent with an earlier context. The nucleus in fact appears to have been laid out in relation to the late medieval house shown on the 1710 vignette and may be contemporary with its actual construction. The flower beds seem to have been mostly simple rectangles laid out in symmetrical patterns, though it seems unlikely that these had survived completely unchanged from the sixteenth century. More importantly, the compartments are relatively small and are overlooked by the lower terrace **q** and the walkway between **m** and **p**. This 'cloistered' atmosphere was emphasised in the late medieval period by the enclosure of the garden by walls, but the only form of enclosure visible on the 1710 vignette is a fence along the south-western side of compartment **m**. Gardens of the mid-sixteenth century, such as Canons Ashby in Northamptonshire, laid out in 1540 (RCHME 1981, 35-6; Taylor 1983, 41-2), increasingly began to enclose the compartments with unwallled terraces like the lower terrace **q**, which simultaneously offered views over the formal garden and the landscape beyond.

There are a number of significant changes and additions to the earlier nucleus, consistent with an early eighteenth century context, which can safely be attributed to

Bridgeman's re-design. These developments are generally much grander in scale, reflecting the influence of continental trends and a very different concept of garden design. It is perhaps worth noting that Bridgeman had married Diana Vernatti, of an Italian-Dutch family. In contrast with the intimacy of the earlier compartments, the later elements of the gardens are ostentatious and outward-looking, with the diversion of the road across Pond Meadow deliberately intended to attract admiration of passers-by on their way to church. It would have been considered liturgically correct to enter the church through the south door, where the brick porch newly re-built by the Bridgeman family was also a symbol of their wealth and importance. The house and gardens are integrated by a carefully planned balanced design along the axial vista, pivoting on the grand house at the centre. The step down in to Pond Meadow in front of the house is matched by the step up into The Crofts at the rear. The two circular ponds are approximately equidistant from the house, and the ornamental lake balances Combs Wood.

At the front of the house, Bridgeman's changes to the gardens were, to some extent, determined by the church and graveyard, as was his re-design of the building. Field boundary changes between 1710 and 1741 suggest that he indented the southern corner of Pond Meadow to balance the projecting corner of the churchyard on the opposite side of the vista. Bank f is overlain by a later slight shift in the boundary of the churchyard but even in its original form, the layout appears somewhat cramped.

Bridgeman seems to have been responsible for creating the vista across Pond Meadow and Pound Field as far as the skyline of Poplar Hill, necessitating the diversion of Church Lane to the south-west, to avoid Pound Field. Further innovations included the creation of the north-western circular pond, with its flanking terraces, damming the stream to form the canal and laying out the transverse track across Pond Meadow, none of which is suggested on the 1710 map. The slight underlying terraces in Pond Meadow might be remnants of the earlier garden, but there is no supporting evidence to suggest that it extended this far at this period. Initial interpretation of the site raised the possibility that some of the earthworks might be associated with the shrunken medieval village of Combs (Suffolk SMR COM 010), but this now seems unlikely. The field name 'Reed Pond Meadow' on the 1710 map suggests that Bridgeman may have enlarged or adapted an existing, albeit disused, pond to form the small ornamental lake; the possible date of the earlier pond is discussed in more detail below. The double terrace at the north-eastern end of the pond and surrounding walk are similar in style and scale to the enhancement of terrace q in The Garden. The artificial channel in the northern corner of the ornamental lake has been identified as its outlet channel (Suffolk SMR 007), but the position of any inlet channel cannot be identified.

Martin (1991, 2) has suggested that it is doubtful whether either the small ornamental lake or the canal were ever completed. The lake is now silted to a depth of up to 0.3m above the natural clay which is exposed in section in the recent excavations for wildlife ponds, but the lake as a garden feature was, in any case, probably always intended to be quite shallow. A geometrical ornamental lake of this size is typical of fashionable early eighteenth century design.

Martin (1991, 2) was more sceptical of the canal, observing that the water would have to be raised by a considerable height and then allowed to fall back to its natural level. The limited survival of the earthworks, which indicate that the canal probably was completed, has been described above. In addition, the water supply of the ornamental lake, as well as the creation of the canal, would have depended on the raising of the water level in the stream. Again, the design of this canal, and the possibility of a cascade some 2m to 3m high, are typical of early eighteenth century design; it may be have been Diana Vernatti's Dutch descent which prompted the idea. It is possible that the stream channel has been considerably deepened by erosion since the eighteenth century, possibly as a result of the building of tanneries upstream (NGR TM 046 564), and therefore that its present form is misleading.

At the rear of the house, compartments **m** and **p** would have been relatively unfashionable by the early eighteenth century, but Bridgeman appears to have adapted them rather than remove them completely. The increased elaboration of the parterre in compartment **p** has already been mentioned. Compartment **n** is not shown on the 1710 vignette and is divided off by a fence and marked 'barn yards' on the map, nor do the 'Little Crofts' on the map extend beyond the south-western side of compartment **m**. This implies that Bridgeman was responsible for adding compartment **n**, copying the simple geometric pattern of the earlier style, and the upper terrace **q** which, unlike the earlier terrace, extends the full width of all three compartments. In contrast to compartment **n**, it is typical of early eighteenth century design, in that the top of the upper terrace is physically higher than The Crofts, deliberately emphasising the view of the exterior.

Bridgeman may have added the double rows of pollarded elms along terrace **q** and around compartment **m** and the pond in compartment **p**, which are not shown on the 1710 vignette. However, this may have been done by Ambrose Crowley after 1741, since the trees are not shown on the 1741 map either, which portrays most other planting. The trees are shown on the 1772 map, though the pattern around the pond in compartment **p** is unclear; compartment **n** had been planted with a formal arrangement

of trees by this period, though this may have been an orchard connected with the transformation from manor house to farm.

Bridgeman must have been responsible for the expansion of the former 'Little Crofts' to create the geometrically designed and planted Crofts, since the regimented rows of pollarded elms are shown on the 1741 map. The Crofts seem to have constituted a formal 'wilderness' garden and the area, apparently including Combs Wood, is still known locally as The Wilderness (Mr P Broom pers comm).

There is no evidence for the extension of the vista into Combs Wood, nor the existence of the small round pond, on the 1710 map. The fact that this vista appears not to have been aligned on any specific point and is imperfectly aligned with the vista in front of the house again suggests that its design was determined by the layout of the earlier formal gardens, though the vista itself, especially the cutting and embankment, are typical of the early eighteenth century. Later in the eighteenth century, eye-catchers or follies would be expected at both ends of the vista, but in the earlier part of the century this was not always considered necessary and there is no evidence on the ground to suggest any monument at the south-east end of the vista embankment.

The Orchard was also probably added by Bridgeman and may have been a formal arrangement of fruit trees similar in design to The Crofts. It appears from the 1772 map to have been maintained after the demolition of the manor. Trackway r, which may have been an earlier route (see below), may have been improved to create a walk through the area. The sub-rectangular pond also appears much more regular in plan and profile than the non-ornamental ponds v and w, and is shown as rectangle on the 1741 map, while the other two ponds are not shown at all, possibly because of their functional status. However, the unbalanced position of The Orchard outside the boundaries of the vista would be anomalous, and perhaps suggests that the area was not considered part of the gardens.

The Medieval landscape

The survey of the gardens revealed some evidence for the earlier development of the landscape. The small ornamental lake was originally interpreted as a medieval fish pond (Suffolk SMR COM 007), but the discovery of the 1741 map led to the rejection of this theory (Martin 1991, 2). However, Martin has observed that the field name 'Reed Pond Meadow' implies some presence of standing water as early as 1710, and that the course of the stream has been straightened, suggesting that this may have been the first stage of the construction of the canal. The RCHME survey suggests that the original interpretation may have been partly correct, and that Bridgeman re-used an

existing pond to form the ornamental lake.

The straightened section formerly continued for some 190m upstream to the south-western end of Hopyard Meadow (called Pound Meadow in 1710), where it dog-legged abruptly across the valley bottom, forming the field boundary and deviating from the lowest point of the valley bottom by between 10m and 20m (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 surveyed 1967, published 1968). The dog-leg was infilled in 1982 and the stream channeled along the north-western side of the valley for its entire length (Mr P Broom pers comm), but the earlier course remains visible as a soil-mark. The original diversion had apparently already been carried out by 1710, some fifteen years before the Bridgeman began to expand the gardens; there is also no evidence that the gardens were ever intended to extend further upstream. It is significant that the parish boundary follows the whole of the straight channel, suggesting that it may have been carried out even before Domesday.

Hopyard Meadow is effectively dammed by the embankment of Church Lane, possibly suggesting the existence of a second large rectangular pond in the valley bottom, extending as far as the artificial dog-leg in the stream, with almost identical dimensions to the ornamental lake. Again, the position of Church Lane in the valley bottom was already fixed by 1710, and the fact that the straightened stream channel does not appear to cut through the broad ridge and furrow cultivation, visible on aerial photographs (NLAP TM 0557/1-4) in the field to the north-west, suggests an early date. Modern ploughing has left only a slight trace of an abraded scarp along the south-eastern side of Hopyard Meadow, but the aerial photographs again hint that this former field boundary marked the end of broad ridge and furrow cultivation in Great Stubbs Field to the south-east. A small pond adjacent to the stream in Hopyard Meadow, at NGR TM 0481 5693 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 surveyed 1967, published 1968), was infilled in 1982 (Suffolk SMR COM 007). This may have been retained as a watering-place in the same way that the pond in the eastern corner of the ornamental lake appears to have been. A complex drainage system in the valley bottom (RAF aerial photograph 3G/TUD/UK62; CUCAP aerial photograph AKR 43) is certainly post-medieval but indicates that the field remained wet.

The straightened stream channel also extends for some 100m downstream, again deviating by up to 20m from the lowest point of the valley bottom. Along the south-eastern side of Ranglings Meadow, the earthworks are much better preserved due to an apparent shift eastwards of the boundary of Ranglings Field, which had already taken place by 1710. The broad low bank extending parallel to the linear terraced feature is probably the headland of broad ridge and furrow cultivation on a north-west to south-

east alignment in Ranglings Field, although the possible terminals of the furrows were obscured by vegetation.

The linear terraced feature differs in scale from the garden terraces *q* and along the north-eastern end of the ornamental lake, and again there is no evidence that the gardens of Combs Hall ever extended this far. The evidence for channel *l* is slight, but suggests that the feature may have been a by-pass channel, supplying a third pond in Ranglings Meadow and possibly implying the presence of a fourth pond further downstream.

The arrangement, size and possible number of the ponds is typical of 'Type A' ponds in Northamptonshire (RCHME 1979, lvii), which are characteristically formed by constructing a series of between two and four simple earthen dams up to 2.5m high across a confined valley bottom. Comparable sites are at Dingley (RCHME 1979, 35-6 and Figure 37) and Paulerspury (RCHME 1982, 115-6 and Figure 93), where the original stream course has been diverted to run along the edge of the valley, Silverstone (RCHME 1982, 132-4 and Figure 104), which has a closely comparable by-pass channel, although the pond itself is much larger, and Canons Ashby (RCHME 1981, 36), where the four ponds seem to have been incorporated into the early eighteenth century gardens of Canons Ashby House. This class of fish ponds is usually, but not always, associated with a nearby manor, but the construction dates range between the twelfth century or earlier and the sixteenth century. The possibility of the survival of large and relatively early medieval ponds is therefore of considerable importance.

Slight traces of broad ridge and furrow cultivation on a north-west to south-east alignment are also visible on aerial photographs (NLAP TM 0557/1-4) in The Crofts and The Great Croft, but the area of The Orchard is obscured.

Elements of probable medieval trackways, which are stratigraphically earlier than other earthworks and seem to pre-date Church Lane, also survive. Trackways *r* and *t* appear to be parts of the same route, heading down the valley side towards Stowmarket. This track may have turned off from an earlier course of Church Lane, which now appears to deviate towards the embankment across the valley bottom on both sides of the stream. Possibly the earlier route was more direct, and the change of route was contemporary with the construction of the putative fish ponds. At a later stage, the disused track provided easy access between the farm buildings.

Although stratigraphically earlier earthworks were recorded in Pond Green, they are too slight and disparate to interpret.

METHOD

The archaeological survey was carried out by Alastair Oswald and Jane Kenney of the RCHME. Control points and hard detail were surveyed using a Wild TC1610 Electronic Theodolite with integral EDM. Data was captured on a Wild GRM 10 Rec Module and plotted via computer on a Calcomp 3024 plotter. The details of the earthwork plan were supplied at 1:1000 scale with Fibron tapes using normal graphical methods. The architectural survey was carried out by Robert Taylor of the RCHME. The report was researched and written by Alastair Oswald, with contributions by Robert Taylor, and edited by Peter Topping. The site archive has been deposited in the National Monuments Record in Swindon (TM 05 NE 50, 51, 52, 53). Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.

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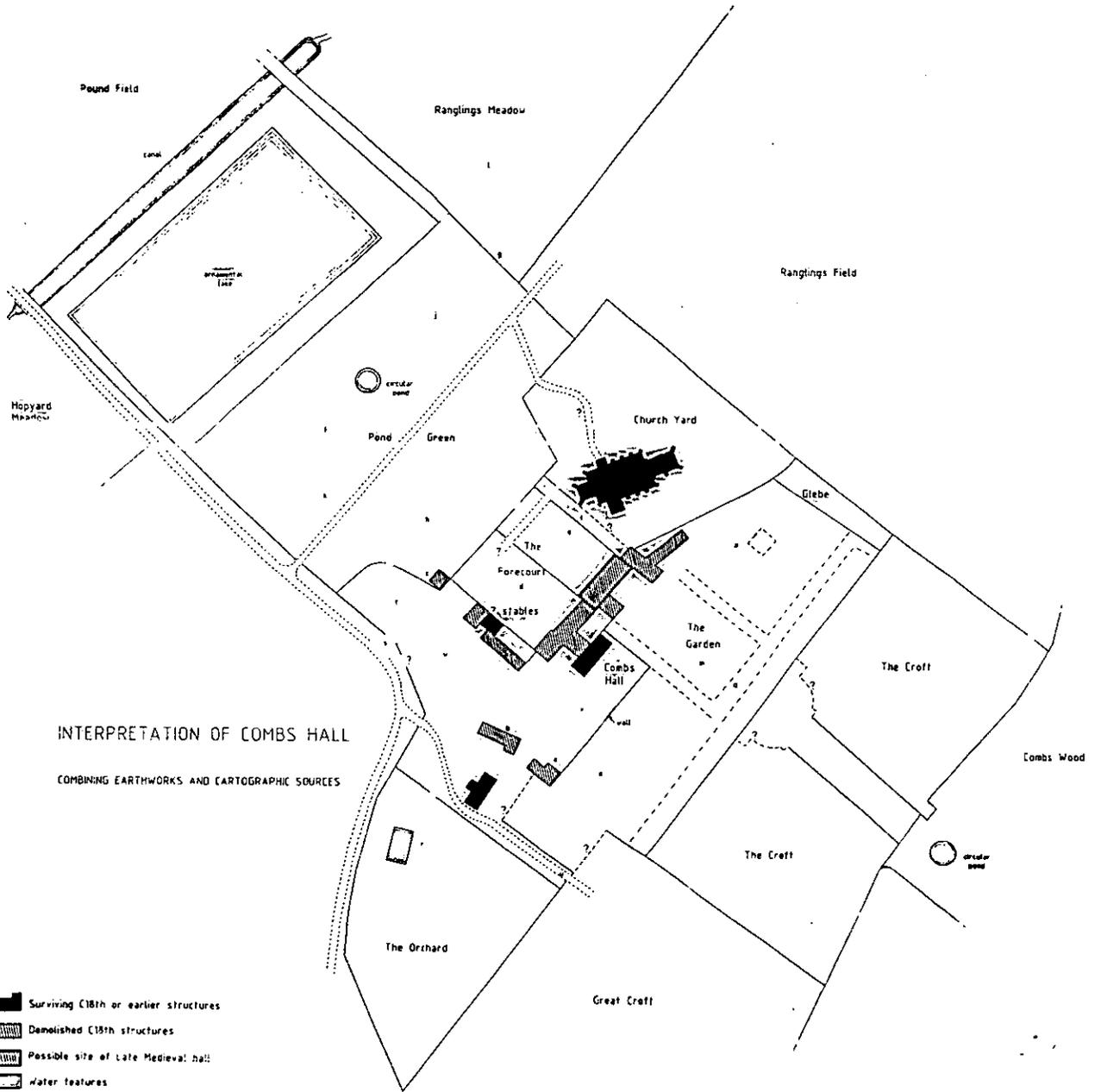
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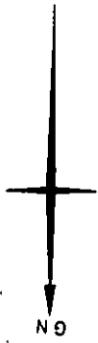
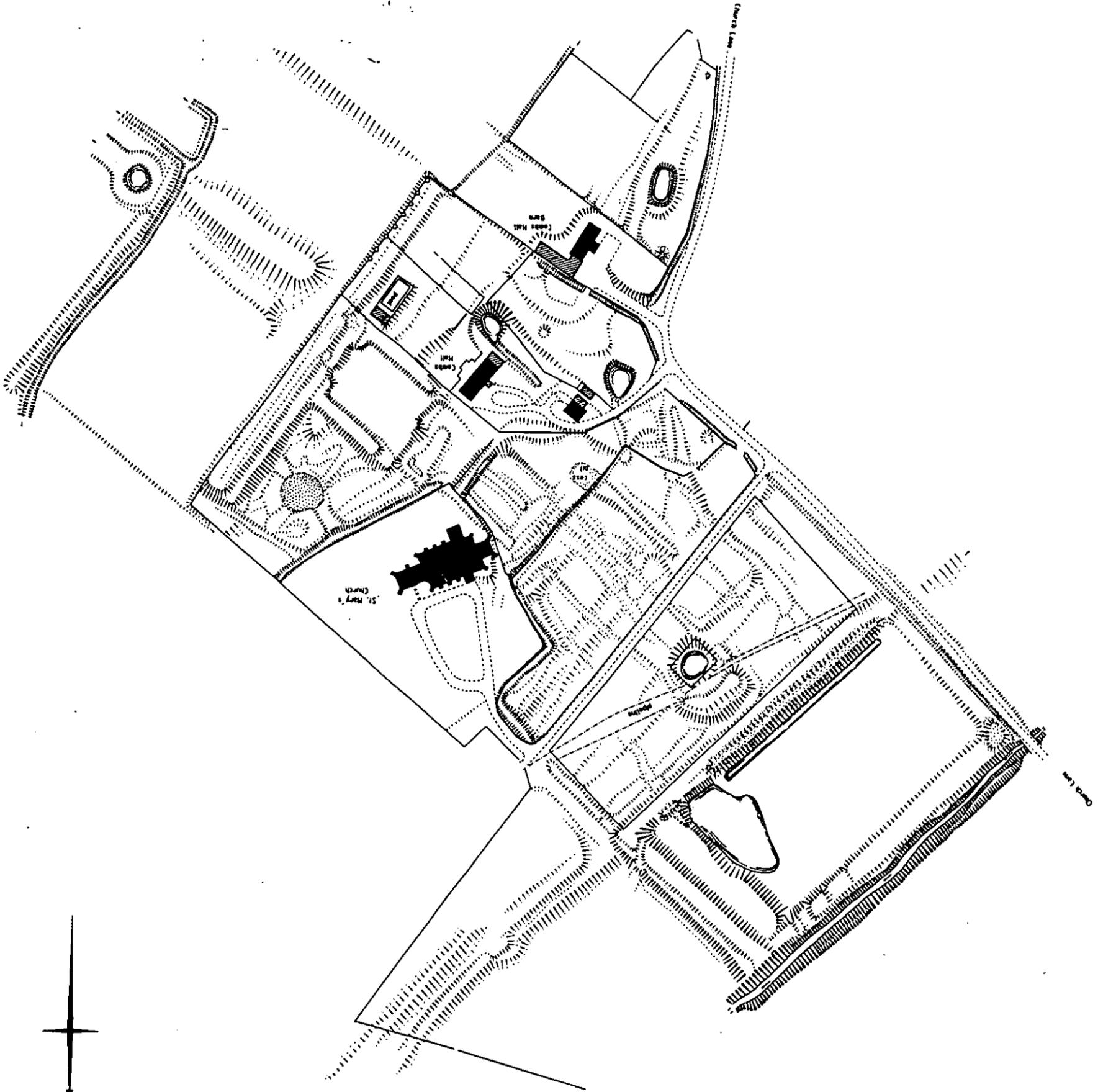
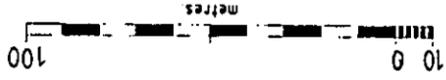
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