

THE SETTING OF KNIGHTSHAYES PARK AND GARDEN

A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT



**A REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST
BY
THE PARKS AGENCY**

SEPTEMBER 2007

**THE SETTING OF KNIGHTSHAYES
PARK AND GARDEN**

A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

**A REPORT FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST
BY
THE PARKS AGENCY**

SEPTEMBER 2007

Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 7 |
| 2 | Planning context | 8 |
| 3 | Outline history | 9 |
| 4 | Knightshayes and Tiverton | 23 |
| 5 | The nature of setting | 28 |
| 6 | Towards a definition of setting | 31 |
| 7 | The setting of Knightshayes park and garden | 35 |
| | Visual envelope | 35 |
| | Hierarchy of views | 38 |
| | Proposed setting: commentary | 48 |
| 8 | Conclusion | 52 |
| 9 | References | 53 |

Introduction

Knightshayes is a designed landscape of outstanding national importance, as recognised by its Grade II* status on the English Heritage *Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest*. While there are no additional statutory controls attached to the *Register*, Government planning advice is that ‘the effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application’ (PPG15 para.2.24), and in line with that advice Mid Devon’s adopted local plan has a policy for the protection of Knightshayes and its setting.

English Heritage however defines only the registered land not its setting, and so assessing the effect of proposed development on the setting of a registered site can be problematic. This report has been commissioned by the National Trust with the aim of mapping key views to enhance our understanding of the relationship between Knightshayes and its environs, and identifying and mapping the setting of the historic landscape at Knightshayes.

The historical development of the Knightshayes landscape is set out in the Knightshayes Park Survey Plan by Land Use Consultants (LUC), 1998, to which we are indebted. The present account concentrates on elements of the site’s history relevant to the question of its designed views and its setting.

Planning context

The new development plan structure will eventually consist of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Mid Devon Local Development Framework (LDF). The draft RSS has just been subject to an Examination in Public, and the Mid Devon LDF is at the stage where only the Core Strategy has so far been progressed to any degree: it is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be adopted in July 2007.

The transitional arrangements before the new development plan structure is established currently comprise the 'saved' Devon County Structure Plan and the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan (First Alteration), July 2006. A number of policies in the Mid Devon Local Plan are relevant to this report.

First, the Local Plan has a welcome policy for the protection of historic parks and gardens. Policy ENV10 notes that Knightshayes is 'of national importance,' and, in line with the advice in PPG15 (para.2.24) that 'the effect of any proposed development on such a park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application,' states that: 'In determining planning applications, there is a presumption that the character of historic parks and gardens or their settings will be preserved.'

The Plan also allocates three sites for residential development on the north side of Tiverton which may have a detrimental impact on the setting of the registered park and garden at Knightshayes. TIV7 allocates 10.2ha. at Oakfields, Waylands and Bolham Road; this has now been substantially completed. The two other sites, 3.2ha. west of Park Road (TIV8), and 10ha. at Farleigh Meadows (TIV10), are both expected to be subject to development briefs. It is recommended here that the development briefs for both these sites should assess the impact on the setting of the registered park and garden, including the views described in this report.

We would also point out that, apart from the development of these allocated housing sites, other development, including retail and office, or telecommunications proposals, might also impinge on the setting of the registered park and garden.

Outline history

The origins of the park at Knightshayes are uncertain but may lie in a deer park belonging to the Courtenays, Earls of Devon, who built Tiverton Castle in the thirteenth century. The white quartz boulder north of the walled garden, at the foot of the old turnpike up Whitestone Hill, is said to have marked the northern boundary of 'the great park of Tiverton.'¹ If there was a mediaeval deer park it was probably disparked in the early sixteenth century when the male line of the Courtenays died out and the estate reverted to the Crown. The castle was let out and a smaller park created nearby, while a court roll entry of 1507 for Knightshayes refers to its houses and ditches, implying that it had been converted to enclosed farm land.² A number of veteran trees in the southern and western park clearly pre-date the eighteenth-century mansion, and these may account for the nineteenth-century notion that the park was the oldest in Devonshire.³

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Knightshayes and the neighbouring Zeal estates were let out in parcels. By 1610 there were two farms at each, and ownership tended to be connected with the commercial trade of the town; latterly it seems to have been transferred frequently. Keene and Butler suggest this was due to the slump in the woollen trade during the reign of George III, with the mortgage being transferred from anxious businessmen to others still feeling wealthy.⁴ The old lane to Zeal Farm is still marked by an avenue of veteran Oaks running off west from the present approach to Knightshayes.⁵

With the rapid growth of the textile trade in Tiverton in the early eighteenth century, the land around Knightshayes and Zeal began to attract the attention of wealthy merchants for aesthetic reasons. In 1720, one of those merchants, George Thorne, built a pleasure house, described in 1790:

*In a field by the 2 mile stone, from the town towards Bampton, is an extensive prospect of the vale and town of Tiverton, and the adjoining hills, the serpentine curve of the river Exe and the slow progress of the Lowman. On the summit of this field stood a pleasure house, built by George Thorne Esq., an eminent merchant of Tiverton, about the year, 1720, the foundations of which are not to be seen.*⁶

The pleasure house was probably an ephemeral structure designed as a place to enjoy the view and *al fresco* meals, no more than a gazebo. Its location has not been identified from early maps and Dunsford states above that it had disappeared by 1790. In 1718, Thorne had built a country house, which is now Allers Farm, 'for a place of occasional retirement from business,' and the pleasure house was part of the walks designed for that house, commemorated in the name of Pleasurehouse Wood. The prospect would have been similar to the main vista at Knightshayes, over Tiverton to the hills and beyond. However, Benjamin Donn's county map of 1765 contains no indication of either Allers or the pleasure house, nor does it distinguish Knightshayes in any way from the surrounding farmland. As it does show the gentry houses at

¹ Dunsford, 1790, quoted in LUC 1998, 8.

² LUC, 1998, 9.

³ *Journal of Horticulture*, 1889, 174.

⁴ Keene and Butler, 1997, 8.

⁵ LUC 1998, 9.

⁶ Dunsford, 1790, quoted LUC 1998, 10.

Beauchamp and Worth, this implies that Allers had reverted to a minor farm by this date.

In 1766, Knightshayes was advertised in the *Exeter Flying Post* as ‘a very agreeable spot for a gentleman’s seat.’⁷ Clearly, the aesthetic interest of the site had by then been established, by a mixture of the surviving parkland trees and the potential for a picturesque view of Tiverton and the hills, illustrated by Thorne’s gazebo.

By 1785, Benjamin Dickinson a prominent merchant and banker of Tiverton, and three-times mayor of the town, was building a new house at Knightshayes, completed in 1787.⁸ This was located slightly lower than the existing house. While the estate he acquired was enclosed farmland, it evidently, given the veteran trees which survive to this day, contained vestiges of parkland wood pasture. No images of the Dickinson house have come to light, although Butler and Keene report that its south front was said to be white and some 45’ long.⁹ Like the present Court, it was located to command views of Tiverton and the hills beyond, and over the years Dickinson seems to have amalgamated fields to create a relatively spacious area of parkland running south to its boundary as a foreground to his view of Tiverton.¹⁰

Under the Dickinsons however, enlargement of the Knightshayes estate was limited. Zeal Farm was owned in 1766 owned by William Gamlen of Creech St Michael in Somerset, and Gamlen expanded his holding when in 1774 he also bought Hayne to the north-west. Both were let to farming tenants, but it is clear that Knightshayes continued to be a comparatively small land-holding despite the Dickinsons taking opportunities to expand as they arose, acquiring for example two fields from the Zeal estate in 1828.¹¹

This was the age of the Picturesque, and Tiverton and its surroundings were much admired. In 1800, the great Devon traveller, the Reverend John Swete, wrote: “I should conceive that a ride from Tiverton to Cove bridge on the Eastern bank [of the Exe] and a return on the Western – a circuit of about 10 or 12 miles, must be superior in rural and picturesque beauty to any other in the Country.”¹² Swete also noted that ‘it received additional embellishment from several Gentlemens seats, one or two of them pleasantly situated,’ admiring Collypriest immediately south of the town, Beauchamp and Worth west of Knightshayes and Knightshayes itself (‘Mr Dickenson’s handsome brick house’).¹³ He also included the town itself as a picturesque object: ‘few scenes that I had met with were more picturesque than this: the trees, the winding River, part of a tower of the Castle, a house or two of the town, and above all the beautifull Church tower rising above the Woody steep, in the centre, formed altogether a group of more than common attraction.’¹⁴ (Fig.1)

⁷ LUC, 1998, 10.

⁸ Knightshayes Estate Office, summary, Butler and Keene, 1997, 10. See also Sampson 2004.

⁹ Butler and Keene, 1997, 10. On the contrary, the Rev. Swete refers to passing ‘a handsome brick house belonging to Mr Dickenson on his journey up the Exe from Tiverton in May 1796 (Swete III, 46; DRO 564/M/F9).

¹⁰ Tithe map and award, Tiverton, Pitt, 1841 (Devon Record Office)

¹¹ LUC, 1998, 11.

¹² Swete, IV, 206.

¹³ Swete, III, 49.

¹⁴ Swete, I, 47; III, 46.

The Knightshayes estate was entailed by Benjamin Dickinson to the eldest son of each generation, and thus continued in the family's ownership despite repeated efforts to sell it, notably by his grandson Benjamin Bowden Dickinson around 1845, and by the latter's son, John Walrond Walrond in 1852 (Benjamin Bowden had married Frances Walrond of Bradfield House and in 1845 had changed his name to Walrond).¹⁵

The first edition 1" Ordnance Survey, 1809 gives no indication of the house or any associated enclosure. However, the Ordnance Surveyors Drawing, 1802, drawn at a larger scale than the printed version, show some details of the late eighteenth-century landscape (Fig.2), including a narrow band of plantation or shrubbery running south along the Bampton road, and a turning circle adjacent to the house; there is no sign of the serpentine drive up through the park shown on the 1842 tithe map; indeed it appears that the lawn was half that width. This suggests that the process of creating a spacious lawn to the south of the house took a considerable time, presumably acquiring individual fields and taking out hedgerows as the opportunity arose. However, it is evident that planting would have served to direct views southward to Tiverton from as early as 1802.

In 1794, Mr Vetch is recorded to have been 'lately employed at Knightshayes about the new house'.¹⁶ John Veitch (1752-1839) began his career as a nurseryman's apprentice in London, from whence his first commission was advising on the laying out of the park at Killerton for Sir Thomas Acland; Acland became his patron, and helped him establish a nursery at Budlake. During 1785 and 1808, when work at Killerton was in abeyance, Veitch developed 'a flourishing business as a landscape consultant and tree contractor'.¹⁷ The line between the two is blurred: Loudon is for example clear in attributing the laying out of the grounds at Luscombe near Dawlish to Veitch, even though Humphry Repton had produced a design;¹⁸ other commissions included Bicton, Nettlecombe and Poltimore. The tree-planting in the south garden, which includes several large Turkey and other hybrid Oaks, in which the Veitch nursery specialised, appears to date from his involvement.¹⁹ This would confirm that the framing of the view to Tiverton in the picturesque style was a key consideration at this time.²⁰

Further evidence of the landscape's development is shown on the 2" county map by Christopher Greenwood of 1825 (Fig.3). This shows the Dickinson landscape as relatively modest in scale, with plantations east and west of the view southward, backed by plantations to the north, with clumps on the south lawn, a plantation or shrubbery along the southern boundary with Bolham Lane; and the turnpike to Bampton running along the eastern boundary.

¹⁵ LUC, 10.

¹⁶ Bourne, *Georgian Tiverton*, 1986, quoted in LUC, 1998, 12.

¹⁷ Heriz-Smith, 1988, 42.

¹⁸ Heriz-Smith, 1988, 42.

¹⁹ Conversation with John Lanyon, 7 June 2007.

²⁰ LUC, 1998, 13.

Fig. 1 Tiverton, 1796, by the Reverend Swete (Devon Record Office)



Fig. 2 Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1802 (British Library)



Fig. 3 Detail from Greenwood's map of Devon, 1825.



Fig.4. Detail from tithe map for the Pitt district of Tiverton, 1842 (Devon Record Office)

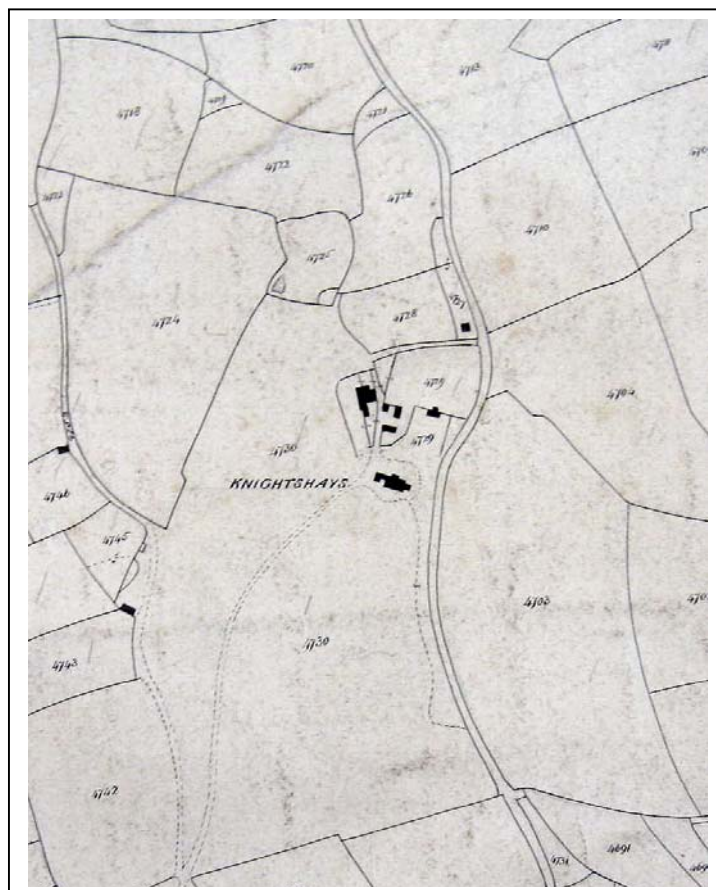
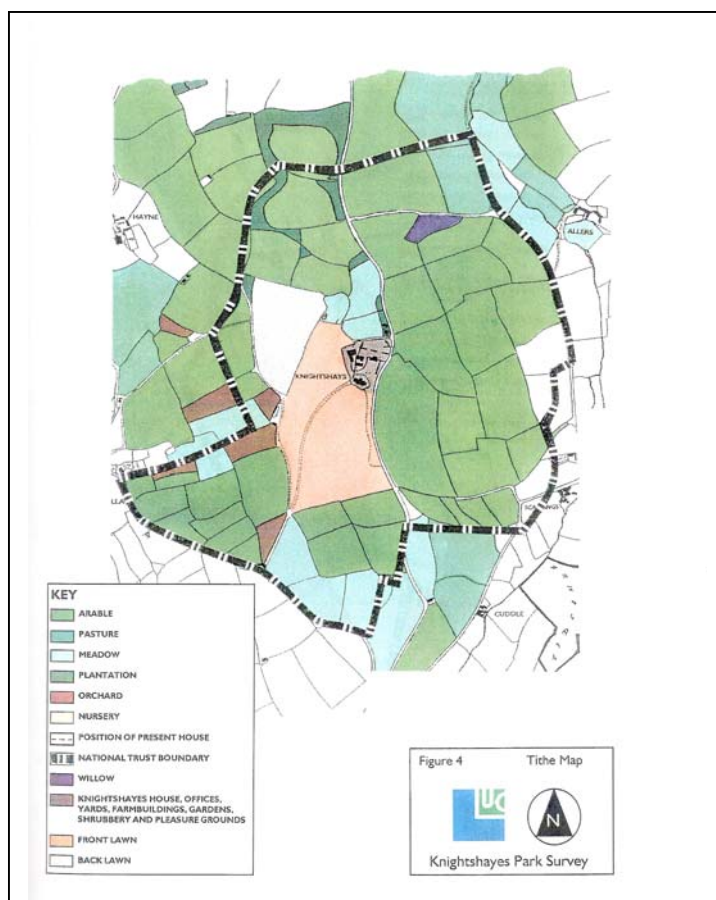


Fig.5. Diagram of tithe map showing plantations (Land Use Consultants, 1998)



More detailed information of the landscape of Knightshayes in the first half of the nineteenth century is afforded by the tithe map of 1842 (Fig.4). This shows the Dickinson house with two 'Lawns' south and west, together with gardens, shrubbery and pleasure grounds. The Lawns contain some 30 acres, with a winding drive approaching from the south, while the Bampton road passed close by the house to the east. The map shows the outline of the late eighteenth-century shrubbery running down the eastern boundary with the Bampton road, but shows the lawn or park extended by the acquisition of a number of enclosures, and the removal of their hedges. Two small enclosures, one arable and one orchard, south of the lane to Zeal are noted as 'added to the lawn,' confirming this map evidence. According to an 1839 valuation, Lower Knightshayes at that time was let separately from the main estate, but two enclosures either side of the Bampton road were recorded as 'park,' while a tree nursery was also noted as part of the farm.

Several existing fields were turned into plantations, and there were smaller plantations fitted into the corners and margins of other fields but with the exception of the two lawns, where hedgerows were removed to create a parkland landscape, the tithe map indicates an adapted agricultural framework rather than the clumps and belts of a more ambitious landscape scheme (Fig.5). This notably does not show any woodland plantation at the southern boundary of the estate, so either the woodland shown on Greenwood had been removed by this date, or the Greenwood plan records only a shrubbery-belt.

The Dickinson house features in a number of views of Tiverton from the south. Although only a background detail, these representations all indicate that the house, while backed by plantations, was open to the south (Figs.5-12).

In 1866, Benjamin Bowden Dickinson's widow, Frances Walrond, died at Knightshayes, and in 1868, after a delay caused by the entailment of the estate, John Heathcoat Amory acquired the estate as well as those of Zeal and Hayne. Heathcoat Amory had been living at Bolham House at the time, and the family had considerable land-holdings around Tiverton and Knightshayes. By 1868, he had already applied to the Turnpike Trust to re-route the road to Bampton which passed close to the house at Knightshayes. The new road up the valley between Knightshayes and Allers was completed and the old turnpike closed in 1869.²¹

Heathcoat Amory was the grandson of John Heathcoat (1783-1861) who had moved his lace business from Loughborough to Tiverton around 1816, and had rapidly risen to prominence in Tiverton. In 1844, Heathcoat commissioned a survey of his lands around Tiverton, and it reveals an extensive estate, which included not only much of what later became the Knightshayes landscape but also a significant number of properties which fell within the view from Knightshayes (Fig.13).²² On his death

²¹ LUC, 1998, 17.

²² 'Survey of the Lands of John Heathcoat Esq. M.P. in the Parishes of Tiverton and Halberton, W Richards, Tiverton, 1844, completed by J M Unwin, London, 1870' (Knightshayes Estate Office). While the dates are ambiguous, most of this estate atlas, excluding surveys of the town properties which seem to be in a different hand, appears to have been compiled in a single exercise. No attempt at updating after 1861 when Heathcoat died, by including Knightshayes or the relocation of the



Figs.5-6. 'View of Tiverton from the Hills above Ashley', 1819 (West Country Studies Library, WCSL). with detail

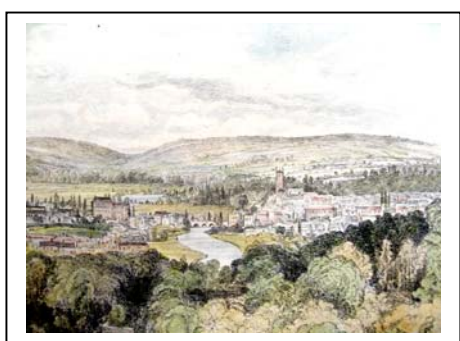


Fig.7-8. 'Tiverton, looking over from Collypriest,' F C Lewis, 1827, with detail (WCSL)



Fig. 9-10. Tiverton, after W Willis, c1850, with detail (WCSL).

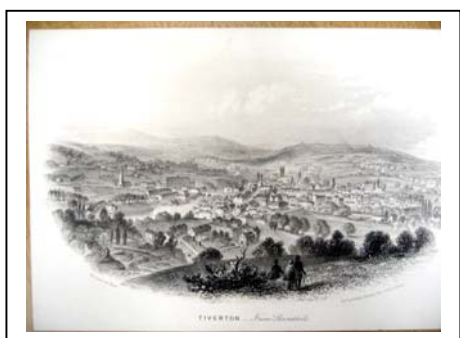


Fig.11-12. Tiverton from Skrinkhills, after G Townsend, 1854, with detail (WCSL)

turnpike for example, was made, and although annotations appear to have continued, it seems that it was meant to stand as a record of John Heathcoat's holding in 1844.

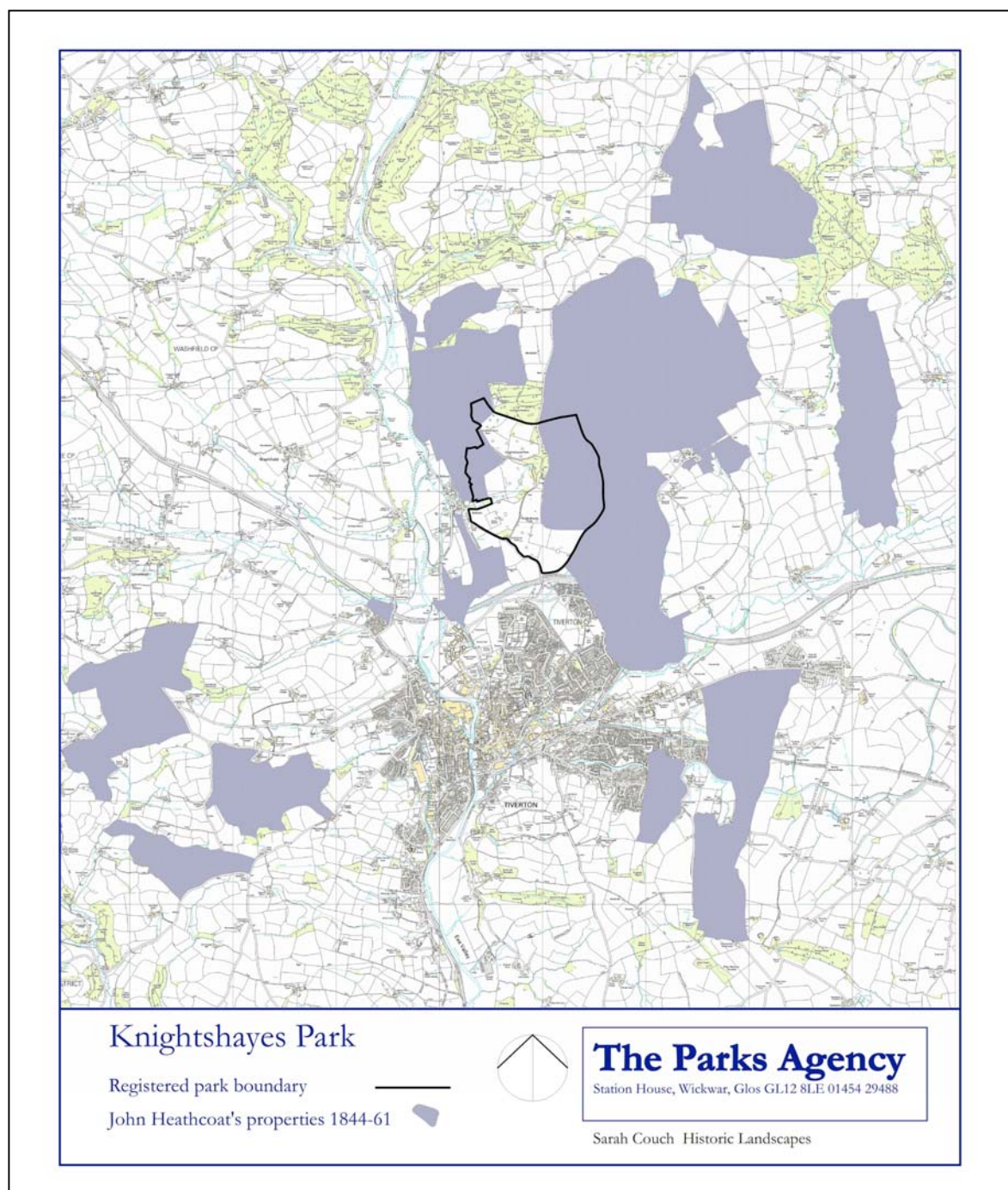


Fig.13. Diagram showing estates recorded in the estate atlas of John Heathcoat, c1844 (Knightshayes Estate Office). Knightshayes, Zeal and Hayne were only acquired 1866-68, after the death of Frances Walrond.

without a son in 1861, the estates were inherited by his grandson, John Amory, who took the name John Heathcoat Amory, becoming a baronet in 1874. Although Heathcoat Amory seems to have taken a back-seat in the management of the company, nevertheless the factory and the town were central to sustaining Knightshayes; a business in which the family could take pride and a town which everywhere showed the benevolence of the family.

Having finally acquired Knightshayes, Heathcoat Amory immediately demolished the old house and in a sign of his ambition commissioned a design from the fashionable and brilliant William Burges. The new house was built slightly north of and above the site of the Dickinson mansion, on the footprint of the former kitchen garden, and the laying of the foundation stone was reported in the local press in April 1869. With the closure of the old Bampton road, and the incorporation of the former arable land to the east and south-east into the estate there was scope not only for the creation of Knightshayes Plantation, but also for new views south. The former Bampton road was incorporated in the plantation which flanked the east side of the main vista: eastward of the plantation to the new Bampton road and south of the Knightshayes Plantation a new area of parkland was created. This incorporated old trees surviving from the field described as 'Zeal Garden and Orchard' on the tithe award.²³

The *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1882 ascribes the layout of the gardens and grounds 'in the last few years' to Edward Kemp, a major figure in Victorian garden design.²⁴ This presumably took place in the 1870s, although no record of Kemp's work has come to light. Published descriptions make repeated references to the mature trees, which indicates that the new house and gardens was fitted in to the Dickinson framework of older trees.²⁵ The landscape of Heathcoat Amory and Kemp is recorded on the 1889 Ordnance Survey which shows the park in a form recognisable as today's albeit with some notable twentieth-century overlays and alterations (Fig.14). The scatter of trees at the southern end of the lawn below the house is quite dense, and by 1905 has been thinned out, presumably to ensure that the vista is maintained (see Fig.15).

Published descriptions of the Knightshayes refer admiringly to the American garden, which was located in the combe immediately north-west of the house, now occupied by the willow collection of the late twentieth century. This planting, arranged around the only watercourse in the gardens, comprised Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Bamboo, Kalmias, Syringa along with trees including a weeping Ash, and specimen conifers including *Cryptomeria japonica*, *Picea Menziesii*, *Abies cephalonica*, *Cupressus Lawsoniana* and *Lambertiana*.²⁶ It meant that today's wide pastoral western view from the Court's top terrace and south-west from the route between the car park and the Court would have largely been obscured, giving greater importance to the main vista and the view of Tiverton.

²³ LUC, 1998, fig.6.

²⁴ *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 22 July 1882, 116.

²⁵ LUC, 1998, 16.

²⁶ *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 22 July 1882, *Journal of Horticulture*, 1889.

The acquisition of Hayne allowed for the construction of a new approach to the house leaving the main road along the Exe valley at Lythecourt, coming up the hill in a gentle serpentine to Hayne, which became the home farm, and then following another serpentine line along the contours to the Court. This created a classic landscape garden feature, an approach which allowed for a long unfolding of the landscape in a sequence of designed views, progressing through the tenanted farmland, the park and finally the pleasure grounds. The main prospects from this approach are southward, in which the view to Tiverton emerges as the approach rises over the slope leading up from the home farm. It is notable that this view of the town is less narrow than the main vista; although still bounded by the pastoral skyline, the approach was designed to command the whole of the town in a single prospect.

The landscaping to the west also included a path along the southern edge of Horsepark Plantation. The plantation utilised the boundaries of the former arable fields, as evinced by the substantial Beech trees on a remnant bank which is a notable feature of the woodland edge. A footpath follows this edge, commanding wide views over the parkland from this higher vantage point. The path appears to have led to Backerdown Cottage, the *cottage orné* north of Hayne Farm.

Equally important is the walk along the southern edge of the Knightshayes Plantation shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey (Fig.16). This was planted on both sides with conifers, but while on the north side it was backed by plantation, on its south side was open to views. The parkland was augmented with fenced oval clumps which framed a series of views of Tiverton and the hills. The reference to a new gravel path to the church in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1889 may refer this path, or to the existing Church Path, added immediately after the OS, which was surveyed in 1887.

By the time of the second edition of 1905, the formal conifer planting has been removed and replaced with an enclosure of mixed planting which however only extended about two-thirds of the length of the boundary with the park; at the eastern end a clear view southwards was opened up (Fig.17). A second walk, which is now known as Church Path, parallel and to the north, and aligned with the south front of the Court, had also been added by this date.

An aerial photograph of 1946 shows both paths clearly visible from the air, implying they were far more exposed than currently, and thus far more open to the southward views (Fig.18.). An aerial from the 1960s after the creation of the glades that formed the Heathcoat Amorys' woodland gardens shows the extension of the woodland into the park, with a strip ploughed ready for planting, the extent of which can be judged against the position of the parkland trees (Fig.19).



Fig.14. Knightshayes from the Ordnance Survey, 1889



Fig. 15. Knightshayes from the Ordnance Survey, 1905

By 1969, the Ordnance Survey records only the eastern end of the lower walk with mixed planting having filled in that southward view (Fig.20), while the 1998 OS shows an additional band of plantation on former parkland to form a screen to the south (Fig.21). Thus during the twentieth century, views of Tiverton from Church Path have gone from being a distinct feature in their own right, equal in importance to the main vista from the house, to being blocked off.

However, while this thickening up of the woodland south of Church Path is a clear historical trend, nevertheless views southward from the woodland gardens remain important. There are a number of peephole views from the upper parts of the woodland gardens which are considered significant by the Head Gardener and by the NT Gardens Panel, and these clearly contribute significantly to the character of the woodland gardens. In addition, the English Woodland Walk, developed in recent years along the boundary of the wood and the parkland, has a number of wider views southward towards Tiverton.

It is clear then that in the original nineteenth-century design for Knightshayes, there were three main components to the views. The main vista from the house was a narrow framed view, originating in the design of the Dickinson planting recorded on the OSD and maintained to the present. On the west, the approach constructed after the acquisition of Hayne Farm in the mid-1860s, and first recorded on the 1889 OS, was created to enjoy views southward across the park over Tiverton and the pastoral skyline. To the east, the predecessor of the present Church Path was created first as a conifer-lined route along the southern edge of Knightshayes Plantation, and subsequently as a route with a burst of framed prospect at its eastern end, which appears to have been screened off by new planting probably in the second half of the twentieth century. This too would have enjoyed wide prospects of the park, Tiverton and the backdrop of skyline hills.

In addition, at the very end of the nineteenth century, between the 1889 and 1905 Ordnance Surveys, the landscape potential of the Church Path, where it emerged from the Plantation in a field above Chettiscombe was realised, with the felling of the orchard which had previously occupied the field. The Church Path had been established by the Heathcoat Amory family early on as a pedestrian route from their new house to the church at Chevithorne where there is a family chapel and monuments to the family; the vicarage to the rear is by William Burges, and Chevithorne Barton was another family house, all testifying to the importance of the village to Knightshayes. When Chettiscombe was acquired by John Heathcoat, the field below Knightshayes Plantation was an orchard, which it remained until the late nineteenth century. By the time of the second edition OS, 1903, it had been reduced to a single row of trees around its perimeter, opening up the views in a wide arc to the east and south, in a classic burst of prospect, embracing not only the picturesque new estate buildings in the hamlet but also extensive views south and east of the pastoral landscape. It is significant that the 1905 Ordnance Survey records the extension of the parkland eastwards, south of Chettiscombe, to form the foreground of this view.

Fig.16. The edge of Knightshayes Plantation and the new parkland clumps to the south, from the 1889 Ordnance Survey.

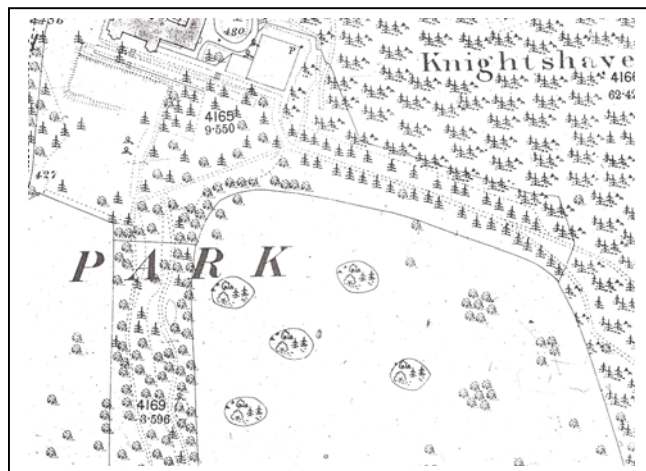


Fig.17. The same area as recorded on the 1905 Ordnance Survey.

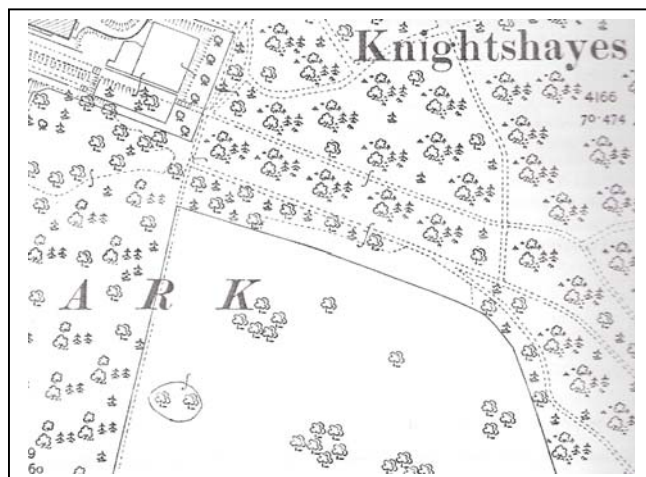


Fig.18. The same area from an aerial photograph of 1946 (English Heritage).



Fig.19. The same area from an undated aerial photograph, c1960s (English Heritage).



Fig.20, The same area recorded on the 1969 OS.

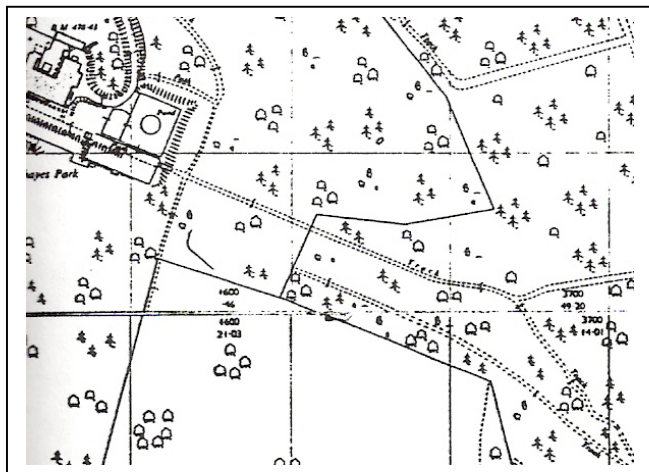
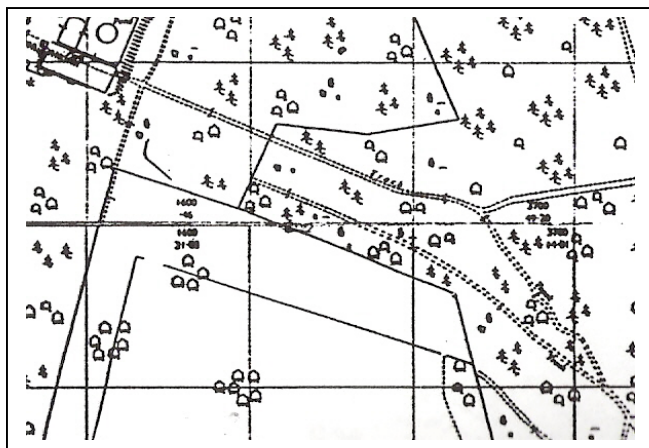


Fig.21. The same area recorded on the 1998 OS.



Knightsayes and Tiverton

The eighteenth and nineteenth-century aesthetics of villas and mansions on the edge of conurbations are only gradually being understood.²⁷ It is clear however, that for many self-made men, their relationship to the town where their fortune was made was highly significant, especially in terms of how it affected the design of their houses and their gardens. They were not old country landowners, but *arrivistes*, linked economically and socially to the town, and the structures of industry and commerce were, prior to widespread concerns about poverty or pollution, objects of unalloyed personal and national pride.

Of course a prospect of a distant city was recognised as capable of being picturesque in its own right. It could be a classical topos – Nuneham with its distant view of Oxford for example, inspired Lord Harcourt with thoughts of classical Rome, while Mount Edgcumbe commanded a view of Plymouth across the Sound, rendered picturesque rather than squalid by the distance and the intervening shipping. Saltram's gazebo was designed to enjoy views both towards the parkland, and in the opposite direction to the Citadel and town of Plymouth. At Brandsbury, 1789 for Lady Salusbury, and at Kenwood, 1793 for Lord Stormont, Humphry Repton's layouts included views in which the London skyline was an object, with St Paul's echoing St Peter's as depicted by artists such as Claude Lorraine and Richard Wilson.²⁸ At Ashton Court, ancestral home of the Smythe family, Repton designed a distant view of the city of Bristol, for 'the country gentleman who never visits the city but to partake of its amusements.'²⁹

But a different relationship could be enjoyed by those whose fortunes were made in the expanding towns of the Industrial Revolution. At Catton in 1788, Repton's landscape design for Jeremiah Ives, mayor of the city, incorporated designed views of nearby Norwich. At Moseley Hall, 1791, his Red Book for the banker John Taylor, shows an improved view focused on the skyline of Birmingham; Repton even contrived to write eloquently of the smoke, 'which gives that misty tone of colour, so much the object of Landscape-painters.'³⁰ At Armley, his client, the cloth manufacturer, Benjamin Gott, insisted that the view from the house include his new mill as 'a beautiful and interesting object;' the mill was a tourist attraction in its own right, and was proudly incorporated in views of the house from the adjacent road.³¹ Some industrial owners in fact built their villas in extremely close proximity to their works – Josiah Wedgwood's Etruria in the Potteries for example, or William Reeve's Arnos Vale in Bristol, where the owner would walk home from his smoke-belching copper works and stop en route to bathe in his exquisite Gothic bath-house, or Richard Champion's Warmley in the same city with its grotto pools fed by the zinc factory's reservoir. In the same spirit, the Quaker merchant, Thomas Goldney, built a tower, a gazebo and a terrace walk to command views over the Bristol docks and his

²⁷ See Daniels, 1999; Lambert, 2002.

²⁸ Daniels, 1999, 225.

²⁹ Daniels, 1993, 238.

³⁰ Daniels, 1999, 208.

³¹ Daniels, 1999, 247-49.

shipping.³² These merchants had their new houses constructed ‘close enough to the town to maintain their position in civic society.’³³

In 1787, when Benjamin Dickinson built his house at Knightshayes, he made Tiverton an object in his designed views, not only because he wished to overlook the town from which his fortune derived and of which he was the leading citizen, but also because, as Swete makes plain, in eighteenth-century terms, the town was picturesque in its own right (Fig.22).

Dickinson also acquired a good deal of farmland around the Tiverton area though never on the scale of John Heathcoat. It is notable that according to the 1841 tithe award, Benjamin Bowden Dickinson owned two fields, Lower and Middle Skrinkhill, Hornhill Farm, on the high ground at Cranmore Castle, which he let as pasture. In addition, he also owned the farm known as Crowdens, on the north side of the canal east of the town. He owned Allers which he let, but he retained occupancy of three portions which he turned into plantations, and to the north-east he owned Little Colcombe Farm but retained four portions which he turned into plantations, which now comprise the core of Sunnyside Plantation south of the modern Colcombe Farm.³⁴ While many of his estates were doubtless investments, it is particularly significant that he owned land on the Cranmore bluff: given that it was not a substantial land-holding we can assume this was at least in part because of its visual relationship to Knightshayes.

When John Heathcoat arrived in Tiverton, he took over the large new cotton mill which had been built in the centre of the town in 1793 (also, notably, admired by Swete).³⁵ In addition to developing the business, Heathcoat bought up land in and around the town, built a school, Heathcoat Square and workers’ housing, while his partner and brother-in-law, Ambrose Brewin built St Paul’s Church and the double-fronted houses in St Paul Street (Fig.23). The firm continued to thrive throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, managed it appears with an enlightened paternalism, the owners setting up a Heathcoat Trust for the benefit of workers, introducing a system of co-partnership in 1915 and in 1906 one of the first two pension schemes in the country.³⁶

The prospect of Tiverton was clearly a major consideration in determining the site of the new house. As reported in a report on the laying of the foundation stone in the *Gazette and East Devon Herald* for 20 April 1869:

The site on which this noble mansion is to be erected is one which commands no ordinary view of nature’s most charming scenery. The spot selected is considerably higher up the hill than where the old house stoodAt present, owing to the trees not being arranged as it is ultimately intended they shall be, the view of the country from the site of the new dwelling is, perhaps, not as good as it will be when all is finished. But peeping through the few trees, one might scan an almost endless range of the hills, those most in front being in the neighbourhood of Newte’s hill, and away from the opposite side of the town. The town itself is plainly visible, and had a very pretty appearance from that distance.

³² Lambert, 2002, passim.

³³ Daniels, 1999, 207.

³⁴ Tiverton tithe award, Pitt and Tidcombe portions, 1841.

³⁵ Swete, III, 45.

³⁶ Cornforth, 1985, 163.



Fig.22 . ‘Tiverton from the fields near Prescott’, c1830 (WCSL)



Fig. 23. The lace mill and school in Tiverton, from Harding’s *History of Tiverton*, 1847.

It should be noted that the trees were yet to be ‘arranged’ to frame and enhance that view, although even at this stage the town was plainly visible.

Whether or not Edward Kemp approved of his clients’ wish to command a view of the town is unclear. Perhaps reflecting growing unease about urbanisation among his clients generally, Kemp is cautious on the subject in his book, *How to Lay out a Garden*. He agrees that ‘it is far from being desirable that only the features of Nature should be seen from a place. The better parts of detached neighbouring houses, good public buildings, places of worship, &c., will, if nicely brought into view, give an air of habitation and sociality to a district.’ He continues, ‘a *distant* view of a town or of a portion of it, where there is any irregularity of surface, or where the principal buildings serve to compose a picture, which is framed by nearer trees and plantations, may occasionally be rendered attractive and even striking.’³⁷

Whatever Kemp’s professional opinion, the town was to be the focal point of the garden layout and the orientation of the house; for Heathcoat-Amory the industrialist’s pride in his works, and the paternalist’s pride in the town as a whole, made the linkage essential. *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* noted that the house was ‘charmingly situated within sight of Tiverton, but not too near it’, and praise the view across the park ‘to the half-hidden town whose several shafts and towers are seen among the trees.’³⁸ And as his descendants became more gentrified and rurally minded, the business link developed into one of philanthropy and a long-standing paternalistic involvement in the town.³⁹ The visual relationship of Knightshayes and Tiverton has been described as ‘a classic statement about the Industrial Revolution, about the inventiveness, drive and idealism of John Heathcoat, ... who founded the family fortune and brought prosperity to Tiverton in the years after Waterloo, [and] expresses the continuity of the family’s interests in the business and the welfare of the town.’⁴⁰

However, as described above, it is clear that this key but narrow vista was not the only designed view of the town. Not surprisingly, given the location on the hillside, southern views dominated the landscape, and the account of Knightshayes in the *Journal of Horticulture* the following year referred to how, from ‘the new gravel walk, 7 feet wide, from the Court to the church, and known as “Church Walk”, a fine view of hill and dale, wood and water, including the ancient and industrial town of Tiverton southward, is obtained.’⁴¹

Tiverton not excepted, given the house’s location halfway up a south-facing slope, the pastoral landscape up to and including the skyline of the hills was always going to be an important part of the site’s ‘borrowed views’, and *The Gardeners’ Chronicle* picks this up, referring to the ‘country southwards – a beautifully wooded, rich and pastoral country’ as well as the view to Tiverton.⁴²

³⁷ Kemp, 1864, 17.

³⁸ *Gardeners’ Chronicle*, ii, 22 December, 1888, 723.

³⁹ *Country Life*, 1985, 160.

⁴⁰ Cornforth, 1985, 160.

⁴¹ *Journal of Horticulture*, 28 February 1889, 174.

⁴² *Gardeners’ Chronicle*, 1888, 723.

In the post-war period associated with the revival and remodelling of the garden by Sir John and Lady Joyce Heathcoat Amory, this interest in Tiverton as an object in designed views, clearly wanes. The main vista is of course maintained, but accounts of the development of the woodland gardens to the east along the Church Path notably contain no reference to views southward.⁴³ Neither Sir John, nor Arthur Hellyer nor Lanning Roper refer to views out from the woodland gardens in their essays on Knightshayes. This was partly because the woodlands are essentially plantsmen's gardens with a close focus on individual plants and their arrangement. But also, with post-war urban reconstruction, a very different aesthetic with regard to the age-old dichotomy of country and city emerged. No longer was the town seen as complementary to the estate in aesthetic terms, as it expanded, in some cases onto land sold by the estate, it was judged to be less attractive as a feature, and views instead focused inwards on new internal vistas. The current head gardener, John Lanyon, has confirmed that the Amorys designed their vistas internally, and did not consider Tiverton a particularly picturesque object.⁴⁴ The NT Gardens Panel however, on their visit in 2004, did stress the importance of retaining at least one view of Tiverton church from the far end of the Church Path by minor clearance work.⁴⁵

⁴³ See Heathcoat-Amory, 1960; Hellyer, 1990; Lanning Roper, 1960.

⁴⁴ Telephone conversation, 25 May 2007.

⁴⁵ National Trust archives, Heelis.

The nature of setting

The principle of the desirability of protecting the setting of listed buildings is enshrined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 16 and 66, and subject of planning guidance in PPG15 (1994). Setting is likewise understood to apply to ancient monuments and sites. There is however no definition of what comprises ‘setting’: PPG15 advises that ‘the setting is often an essential part of the building’s character’; that ‘the setting may be limited to obviously ancillary land, but may often include land some distance from it’; and ‘in some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of the building’s surroundings’ (PPG15, paras. 2.16-17).

The principle that there is a setting to registered historic parks and gardens, such as Knightshayes, is also well-established, although, with the registering of parks and gardens only having begun in 1984, it is a more recent consideration. PPG15 advises that: ‘The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application,’ and local authorities are advised that they ‘should protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and determining planning applications.’ (PPG15 para.2.24).

Many local authorities have consequently included in development plan policies for the protection of registered parks and gardens a reference to the desirability of protecting their setting as well as the land within the boundary of the registered land.

It can be noted that the setting of a building has been defined by a planning inspector in 1996 as ‘the environs of a building or other feature which directly contribute to the atmosphere or ambience of that building or feature.’⁴⁶ However, this definition begs more questions than it answers, and those are discussed below. In general, it is widely acknowledged that there is a ‘lack of any agreed professional framework for considering issues of setting.’⁴⁷

However, Cadw does map the setting of each site on its *Register of landscapes, parks and gardens of special historic interest in Wales*, showing it as a stippled area, along with arrows to indicate ‘significant views’ both inward and outward. Cadw has produced a definition which is included in the *Register* has been tested at public inquiry:

The Essential Setting is a concept developed for the register in order to safeguard areas adjacent to the historic parks and gardens which, although outside them, form an essential part of their immediate background and without which, in their present state, the historic character of the site in question would be diluted or damaged.

In a recent appeal decision concerning the registered historic landscape at Margam in South Wales, the Inspector rejected a proposed wind farm just outside the essential

⁴⁶ 8 February, 1996, Leeds City Council, Institute of Historic Building Conservation archives (http://www.ihbc.org.uk/context_archive/63/law/appeals.html)

⁴⁷ Planarch, 2005. Atkins 2006 states, ‘there is no agreed definition of what constitutes the setting of a cultural heritage feature or what the word “setting” actually means’ (Atkins, 2006, 5)

setting, on the grounds that setting should be understood not as bound by a line on a map but instead as a ‘layered concept’.

However, English Heritage has not attempted to define setting in such detail for the *Register* in England. This leaves owners, development control officers and other decision-makers to determine case-by-case what constitutes the setting to be protected.

In 2005, the European Regional Development Fund, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and English Heritage funded the Planarch 2 report, a review of how cultural heritage was covered in Environmental Impact Assessments.⁴⁸ The report advises that understanding of setting needs to be more subtle than simply a question of visual or noise intrusion, and that key factors contributing to the character of setting include:

- the character of the feature itself,
- its location in relation to surrounding landform,
- surrounding vegetation,
- character of nearby buildings and structures,
- archaeological context,
- scale and character of visual envelope,
- views to and from the feature,
- visual ambience of surroundings especially approaches,
- character of noise environment.

In addition to visual and noise intrusion, it recommends that,

- ‘loss of context’

should be assessed, and it distinguishes between,

- ‘*direct* physical loss of setting and visual and noise intrusion’ and
- ‘*indirect* effects of exacerbating existing problems of fly tipping and loss of amenity on the [site] itself’.

It has been argued that setting ‘strongly implies intent, whether on the part of the original “setter” or on that of the “setter” of some later feature impinging upon the settling of the original feature.’⁴⁹ However, this has been challenged as a somewhat narrow understanding of the word, and it has been proposed that setting can be defined as ‘having both intentional elements (eg the placement of features to create a garden around a house) and more descriptive elements (eg the general environment in which a feature is situated).’⁵⁰

In terms of intent, there is little doubt that for both Dickinson and Heathcoat-Amory, and for the owners up until the post-war period, the view southward of Tiverton and its embowering hills, was a key design feature, towards which the main views and vistas were directed. From the point of view of the more general environment, the

⁴⁸ Oxford Archaeology, ‘Planarch 2: A Review of Cultural Heritage Coverage in Environmental Impact Assessments in England’, 2005.

⁴⁹ Colcutt, 1999, 498.

⁵⁰ Atkins, 2006, 6.

siting of the house and garden, on a south-facing slope with a wide angle of vision to the east and west, means that the land from south-east to south-west is the dominant characteristic of views whether designed or fortuitous.

Towards a definition of setting

A recent analysis of the setting of the Saltaire World Heritage Site by WS Atkins suggested that, in the absence of a legal definition, the following considerations should be taken into account in defining setting:⁵¹

Visual aspects

Setting is not synonymous with the visual envelope; land outside the visual envelope may be historically linked to the heritage asset, and development on land outside the visual envelope (for example a tall building) could yet damage the setting of the heritage asset. In assessing the visual aspects, both views from and to the heritage asset should be considered. The views to be considered can be broken down into sub-sets:

- designed views out of a site e.g. park and garden vistas
- views with historical precedents, eg paintings;
- views out of a site which structure visitors' experience of the site;
- views from outside the site with direct historical or cultural connections;
- general views of the site which allow people to appreciate the form of scale of site; and
- views of notable iconic elements within a site.

The analysis concludes that it is appropriate, in defining setting, to develop a hierarchy of views into and out of the site.⁵²

At a site such as Knightshayes, the principal designed views are from within looking outward. Some of these have been lost to more recent plant-growth, but in addition, others have been opened up which contribute significantly to visitors' experience. There are one or two views from outside which either have cultural importance, such as the view from the mill, or indications of a designed relationship, such as Hensleigh House. In addition, Knightshayes is a landmark site for many miles around, in views which epitomise its form and scale. Views of iconic elements within the site are largely a matter of the important internal vistas, and so do not affect the question of its setting.

Significances and characteristics of the site

The historic nature of a site will also have a bearing on defining a site's setting: for example, in a landscape park the 'borrowed views' outwards into the surrounding countryside are likely to have been an important factor historically, whereas a historic farm will probably only have a historical relationship with its surrounding fields.⁵³

Knightshayes' historic development and character is inextricably bound up with its relationship to Tiverton, a relationship that the design celebrates. In addition, the

⁵¹ Atkins, 2006, *Saltaire Environmental Capacity Study*, Appendix: Overview of Setting, 2006.

⁵² Atkins, 2006, 7-8.

⁵³ Atkins, 2006, 8.

widely admired picturesque character of the surrounding countryside means that the design features ‘borrowed views’ prominently.⁵⁴

Topographic relationships

Topography governs in part the visual envelope of a site, but in many cases, sites have an intentional relationship with topography, eg stone circles, hill forts, or garden follies.

At Knightshayes, the topography is integral not only to the design of the landscape but also to any definition of its setting.

Historical relationships

The setting of a heritage asset can be described as comprising a definable area of land which contributes to the asset’s historic interest, or which is integral to its visual appreciation. Because the latter can sometimes be at some distance, it is sometimes desirable to define in addition, what can be considered key views both inwards and outwards.

As referred to above, PPG15 advises that ‘in some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of the [site’s] surroundings. Atkins notes that ‘this would indicate that historical relationships and past land uses can be a valid element of a site’s setting. This is particularly relevant where those relationships and uses remain.’ Atkins suggests that ‘greater weight may be given to views from features that have a historical relationship with a site. At Saltaire, it was suggested that the canal and river, which were key reasons for the location of the historic development, even though not visible from the site, could be included, although admitting that case law is unclear on this point.’⁵⁵

At Knightshayes, the historical relationship to Tiverton is beyond question, as is the relationship to Chettiscombe in the east and a number of properties that fall within the designed views from the house and the registered landscape.

Context

The Atkins analysis usefully expands on Planarch’s reference to ‘context’, advising that it is a concept recently developed, principally at the A303 Improvement inquiry for the Stonehenge World Heritage Site. The Highways Agency in its proof of evidence defined context as:

*commonly used to describe the concept that allows one thing to be related to others. By doing this, different things can be given relative values. These relationships may be physical or esoteric, the latter relating to concepts of time (historical context), society (social context), economy (economic context) and so fort. The wider use of the term also depends upon knowledge beyond what may be seen or felt on a site. The concept of context is vital to modern cultural heritage studies for without it individual components could only be studied in isolation and their value could not be gauged in relation to other landscape components.*⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Atkins, 2006, 8-9.

⁵⁵ Atkins, 2006, 9-11.

⁵⁶ Atkins, 2006, 10.

There is little in case-law on the subject of context as a planning consideration, and it is not referred to in this sense in PPG15. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that an understanding of context enriches our understanding of heritage.

At Knightshayes, one recent visitor remarked to us that to see Tiverton in the view was 'slightly weird'. In other words, the aesthetic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which made of Tiverton a picturesque object in the view, was inscrutable. Interpretation of this contextual relationship is thus critical to an understanding of Knightshayes.⁵⁷

Importance of a site

Finally, Atkins suggests that the cultural importance of a site, as signified by its designation, contributes to assessment of its physical setting.⁵⁸

As a Grade II* registered historic park and garden, Knightshayes is a site of national importance. As a II* site, it is in the top 40% of registered sites, of which in total there are only some 1500.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while setting cannot easily be defined, a number of factors contribute to that definition:

- the visual envelope of the site, which can be either simply visual or theoretical;
- views into and out of a site, especially those that relate to its characteristics or significances;
- historically related features around the site;
- the general environs of a site that contribute to its sense of place;
- topographic relationships, and
- areas that retain a land-use that is broadly the same as contemporary historic uses.

Within these areas, particular weight can be given to

- elements that are related to the site by intention, eg designed views and known historical connections.⁵⁹

Assessing impact

Atkins suggests that even if setting extends as far as a theoretical visual envelope, not all development within that setting would have an equal impact. The main issues to

⁵⁷ Cornforth, 1985, is unusual in picking this up, seeing the view from the house 'over the formal garden and down the park to the tall chimneys of the factory' as an important way of interpreting the site and its importance and his articles set out to 'consider Knightshayes in a rather broader context than usual.'

⁵⁸ Atkins, 2006, 11-12.

⁵⁹ Atkins, 2006, 12.

consider are proximity and impact on key characteristics. It would be possible for a development on the edge of the setting not to affect a key characteristic, or for a development on the edge to have a significant impact on a characteristic. Equally, it is possible to conceive of a development within close proximity which nevertheless did not significantly harm any key characteristics.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Atkins, 2006, 12-13.

The setting of Knightshayes

While the Atkins analysis suggests, in line with PPG15 , that the setting of a historic site or monument can extend beyond the visual envelope, the situation at Knightshayes requires a different approach, because the visual envelope of the designed landscape at Knightshayes is so extensive, with designed views stretching many miles. This section therefore starts by defining this visual envelope and then goes on to identify a boundary within that visual envelope to define setting. Setting is defined in terms of an assessment of the views into and out of the site and their designed or opportunist nature, and by correlating those views with a topographical analysis and an understanding of known historical, cultural and economic connections.

Visual envelope

In basic terms, the visual envelope at Knightshayes has clear and relatively tight skyline boundaries north and south, but east and west it is much more extensive.

Given its situation on a south-facing slope backed and flanked by woodland, the southern aspect of the visual envelope is the most important. The central feature in the view is Tiverton, but equally important is the skyline of pastoral fields, hedgerows and plantations. The wooded valley of the Exe stretches due south beyond the town.

However, the plantations north and west above the house are also important, both as shelter to the gardens, and in views of the designed landscape from outside. From a wide range of viewpoints to the south, east and west, the Court and the park are crowned by the spectacular skyline of the plantations with their Douglas Firs, Redwoods, Scots Pine and Beeches.

To the east, the emerging Church Path commands a view of Chettiscombe in the foreground, and a wider view south-east over the eastern edge of Tiverton to the skyline at Warnicombe and beyond towards Sampford Peverell. Further north up the Bampton road, the Back Drive emerges at the lodge in a valley dominated by the Knightshayes Plantation and Allers Plantation on the east side of the road.

To the west, the view stretches many miles towards Exmoor. Nearer, the ground rises from the Exe to a ridge at Washfield on the north side of the A361, while further west the woods above Calverleigh form a clear intermediate focal point below the distant skyline.

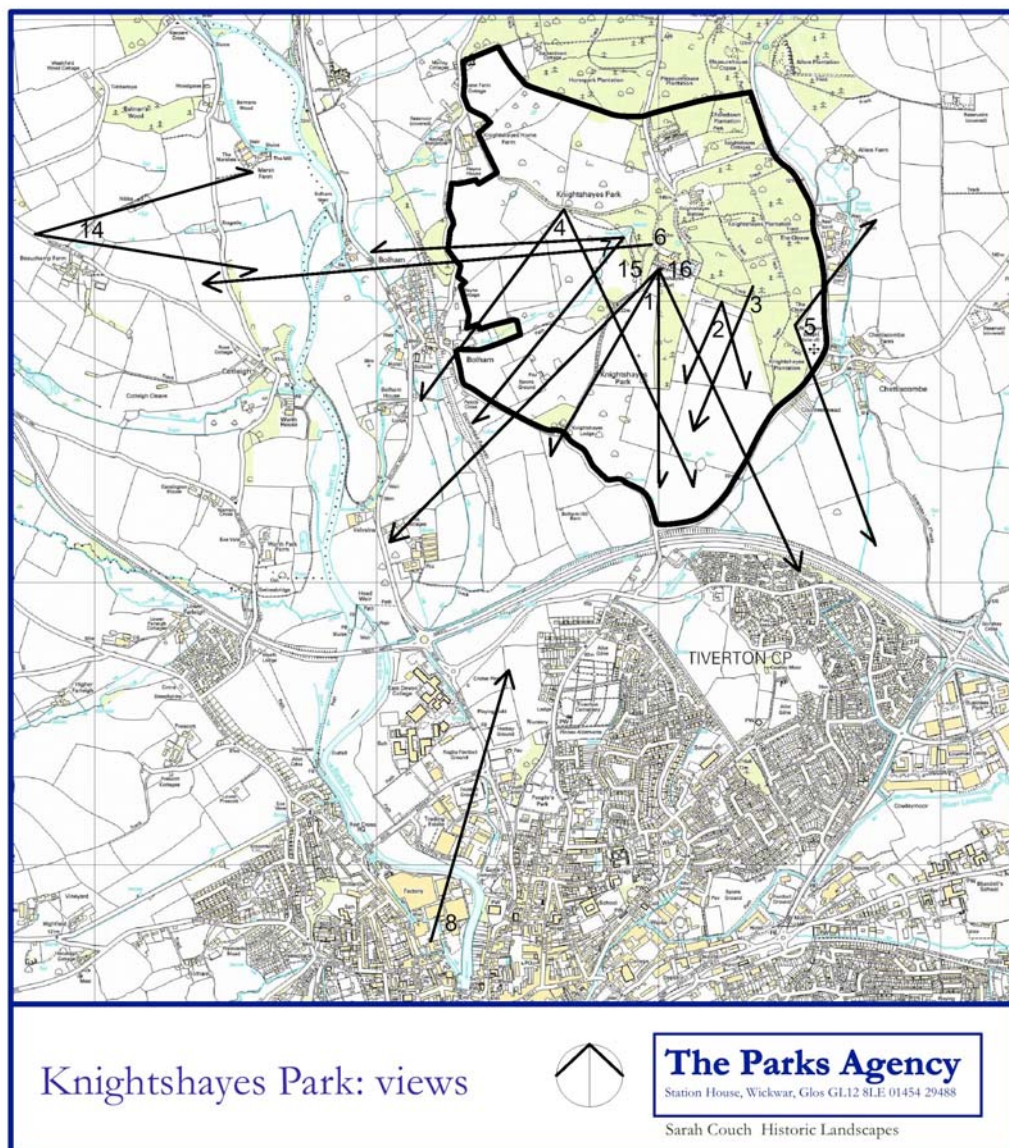


Fig.24. Key views to and from Knightshayes.

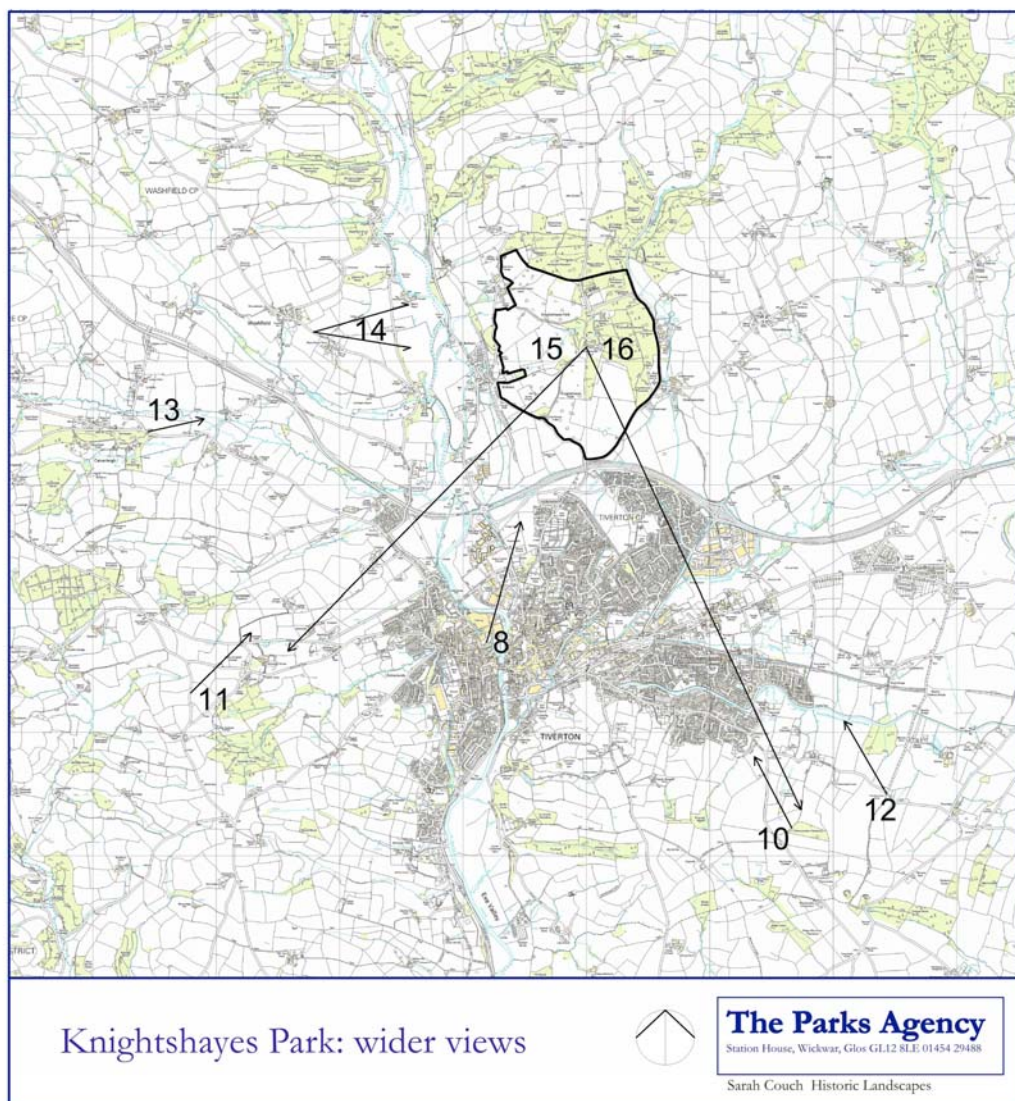


Fig.25. Key views to and from Knightshayes in the wider landscape.

A hierarchy of views

In support of the proposed definition of the setting of Knightshayes park and garden, an analysis of views has been carried out, and a hierarchy is proposed with four broad categories (see Figs.24-25):

1. views out with historical precedents, in this case surviving designed views from within the registered park and garden: **historic designed views out**;
2. other views out which structure a visitor's experience, in this case comprising other views from within the historic landscape which have arisen as a result of tree-loss: **opportunist views out**;
3. views from outside the site with historical or cultural connections; these include views which have featured in artists' views of the area, and views from the town or other locations which are likely to have been important to the owners in the nineteenth century, e.g. from the mill: **historic views in**
4. general views of the landscape from outside which allow people to appreciate the form of scale of site: **opportunist views in**.

The greatest weight in establishing the setting of a historic designed landscape is given to surviving designed views out (1). Views in (2) are important but these will come and go over time, as trees are lost or as others grow up. (3) and (4) are considered important but secondary: there are notable views of Knightshayes from many locations to the east, south and west and those with a historic interest are rated higher than those with no such association. In distinguishing between opportunist and historic views in, we have noted cultural considerations, such as prints and drawings; economic considerations, such as land-ownership; and social considerations, such as estates owned by family or friends. The least weight is given to opportunist views in as these are frequently from minor roads, through field gates or over hedges, or from private land.

In addition to visual linkages, historical research has shown a number of social and economic connections between the Knightshayes estate and some of those external viewpoints. John Heathcoat's landholdings 1844-61, as recorded on his estate atlas, include a number of properties intervisible with Knightshayes, for example Hensleigh, where his daughter and son-in-law lived,⁶¹ and Ducksmoor and Warnicombe, which he owned. Woodland planting in these locations would have been designed to enhance the view from Knightshayes, and views back to Knightshayes from such locations are categorised as historic rather than opportunist.

Historic designed views out (1-5)

The three key nineteenth-century views from the immediate environs of Knightshayes are all southward. In addition, the view from the Church Path where it emerges above Chettiscombe from Knightshayes Plantation, created later, should also be considered a historic view out.

⁶¹ Pevsner, 2004, 811.

View from the terrace (1)

(Fig.26) This view (1), tightly framed by planting, focuses on the centre and west of Tiverton, principally on the bulk of the mill, rebuilt, but not significantly enlarged, after the fire in 1935, but also on the sixteenth-century tower of St Peter's and the Victorian spire of St Paul's, the church built on land donated by Heathcoat and paid for by his daughter and son-in-law Ambrose Brewin. From Knightshayes, the town nestles beneath the slopes of the Exe valley. Cranmore Castle forms a distinctive bluff east of the centre of the town, while the spurs of the hills which descend to the Exe recede into the distance.

There are also two narrow oblique views (15 and 16) from the first floor south-east and south-west towards Cowleymoor, the site of Heathcoat's Higher and Lower Dairy Farm estate, and Farleigh, where Heathcoat owned the mill, respectively (Fig.27). These are subsidiary to the main axial vista, and it is not possible to say whether these are designed, although it appears that they are formed by gaps in the nineteenth-century tree-planting (Fig.28).

Views from Knightshayes Plantation (2 and 3)

The southern edge of Knightshayes Plantation has always afforded views southward over Tiverton and the hills east and west, originally from a conifer walk and subsequently from a point towards the eastern end of this edge (Fig.29). The woodland has been extended post-war but there are still important views from the new English Woodland Walk (2).

The view from the landscape drive (4)

The approach from Lythecourt was a key element in the creation of the nineteenth-century designed landscape. Being located halfway up the slope, its views are all directed southward and include a wide view of Tiverton and the hills to the west of the town, across the older parkland and its veteran trees (Fig.30).

The views that unfold along the approach from Lythecourt are echoed by views from the path along the southern edge of Horsepark Plantation to the north. This path follows the woodland boundary, and is marked by substantial Beech on a former field bank: it affords wide views over the park and the town to the skyline southward.

The view from the Church Path (5)

The picturesque group of buildings which comprise Chettiscombe, includes a number of Knightshayes estate buildings, constructed as part of the estate improvements after 1866 (Fig.31). To the south, the view stretches to Warnicombe, across former agricultural land of which Heathcoat owned a considerable amount including Hay Park, Pool Anthony and Putson; the neighbouring gentry house, Tidcombe Hall, remains a notable feature in this view (Fig.32).

Opportunist views out (6-7)

The clearing away after the War of the remains of Kemp's American garden in the combe immediately west of the house, opened up long views southward to the hills west of the town, and westward towards Exmoor, from both the length of the terrace (6: Fig. 33), and also from the approach to the house from the stables (7: Fig.34). The latter makes the lawn above the combe a favourite picnic spot for visitors.

In addition, there are southward peephole views from within the woodland gardens: these come and go as trees grow or are felled, but are recognised by the NT Gardens Panel and the Head Gardener as a desirable feature of the otherwise inward-looking design (3: Fig.35).

Historic views in (8-11)

The view from the mill (8)

The most important historic view in is that from the mill building (Fig.36). The importance of this view derives from the economic relationship between the mill and the owners of Knightshayes, both the Dickinsons and the Heathcoat Amorys.

Other historic views from the town, notably from Dickinson's house in Fore Street have been obscured.

The view from the hills above Ashley (9)

This viewpoint, along with Cranmore Castle, was one of the key picturesque locations for views of the town. In a number of these, Knightshayes, with its distinctive plantations, appears in the background. As these were published and circulated, they have cultural importance (see Figs.5-12). The view from Cranmore has been obscured by tree growth, but from the hills above Ashley a number of locations afford a view little changed since the nineteenth-century (Fig.37).

The view from Warnicombe Plantation (10)

This wood was part of the Warnicombe estate owned by Heathcoat and appears to have been planted in the nineteenth century for effect in the view from Knightshayes. It is skirted by a public footpath which gives a wide view of Knightshayes in its setting (Fig.38).

The view from Hensleigh (11)

Given that Hensleigh House was owned and occupied by Heathcoat's partner and son-in-law, Ambrose Brewin, it is highly likely that views were enjoyed and enhanced back and forth across the valley (Fig.39). Hensleigh and its ornamental planting are a notable feature in views from Knightshayes, and the view back to Knightshayes would have been equally important in the context of the family relationship.

Opportunist views in (12-14)

The view from Thurlescombe Cross (12)

This old crossroads commands a view back to Knightshayes across farmland largely owned by Heathcoat, including Pool Anthony, Higher and Lower Dairy Farm, and Prowses and Chettiscombe to the north of the A361. However, although a notable view, it does not appear to be designed (Fig.40).

The view from Calverleigh (13)

The present Calverleigh Court was built for Joseph Chichester Nagle by G Wightwick in 1844-45. However Greenwood records the earlier house and plantations which would already have been a notable landmark by the time Heathcoat Amory started to build Knightshayes. The plantations are a notable feature in views from Knightshayes, and the intervisibility is clear in views from the old lane adjacent to the property (Fig.41). In addition, although now largely obscured by the roadside hedge, the view of Knightshayes from the point where the drive meets the public road is significant but unless further information establishes a social or economic link, it should be regarded as an opportunist view in.

The view from Beauchamp Farm (14)

While Washfield is hidden from Knightshayes by the rising ground to the east, there are notable views from the road leading over the brow and east towards Knightshayes (Fig.42). Although Heathcoat did not own land in this area, a gentry house here is noted by Swete.⁶² It is possible that some social link exists but again, in the absence of further information, the view while spectacular, should be regarded as opportunist.

⁶² 'The distant scenery was uncommonly picturesque; amid a thick grove of trees, which crested the top of a hill appeared a cluster of farm houses which were called "Santram" [OS – Stanterton], while somewhat further to the West, lay on the summit of the eminence Beauchamp seat of Nibbs Esq', May 1796, Swete, III, p 49.

Fig.26. The main vista south from the main terrace and house.



Fig.27. The oblique view towards Cowleymoor, on the east of Tiverton.



Fig.28. The oblique view towards Farley, on the west of Tiverton.



Fig.29. View from the English Woodland Walk along the southern edge of Knightshayes Plantation.



Fig.30. View from the landscape approach towards Tiverton.



Fig.31. View of Chettiscombe from the Church Path as it emerges from Knightshayes Plantation.



Fig.32. View south and east from the Church Path: Warnicombe Plantation is a significant feature on the skyline; Tidcombe Hall is just visible above the roof of the cottage on the left.



Fig. 33. The view west along the main terrace.



Fig.34. The view south from the path between the stables and the Court.



Fig.35. One of the peephole views from the woodland gardens, southward towards the mill and church tower in Tiverton .



Fig.36. Knightshayes from the top floor of the former mill.



Fig.37. View from Middle Hill Farm (private land).



Fig.38. View to Knightshayes from near Warnicombe Plantation; the plantation is on the left in the middle distance.



Fig.39. The view of Knightshayes from just above Hensleigh House.



Fig.40. The view to Knightshayes from Thurlescombe Cross.



Fig.41. Knightshayes from Calverleigh plantations.



Fig.42. The view to Knightshayes from the Washfield road, above Nibbs Farm.).



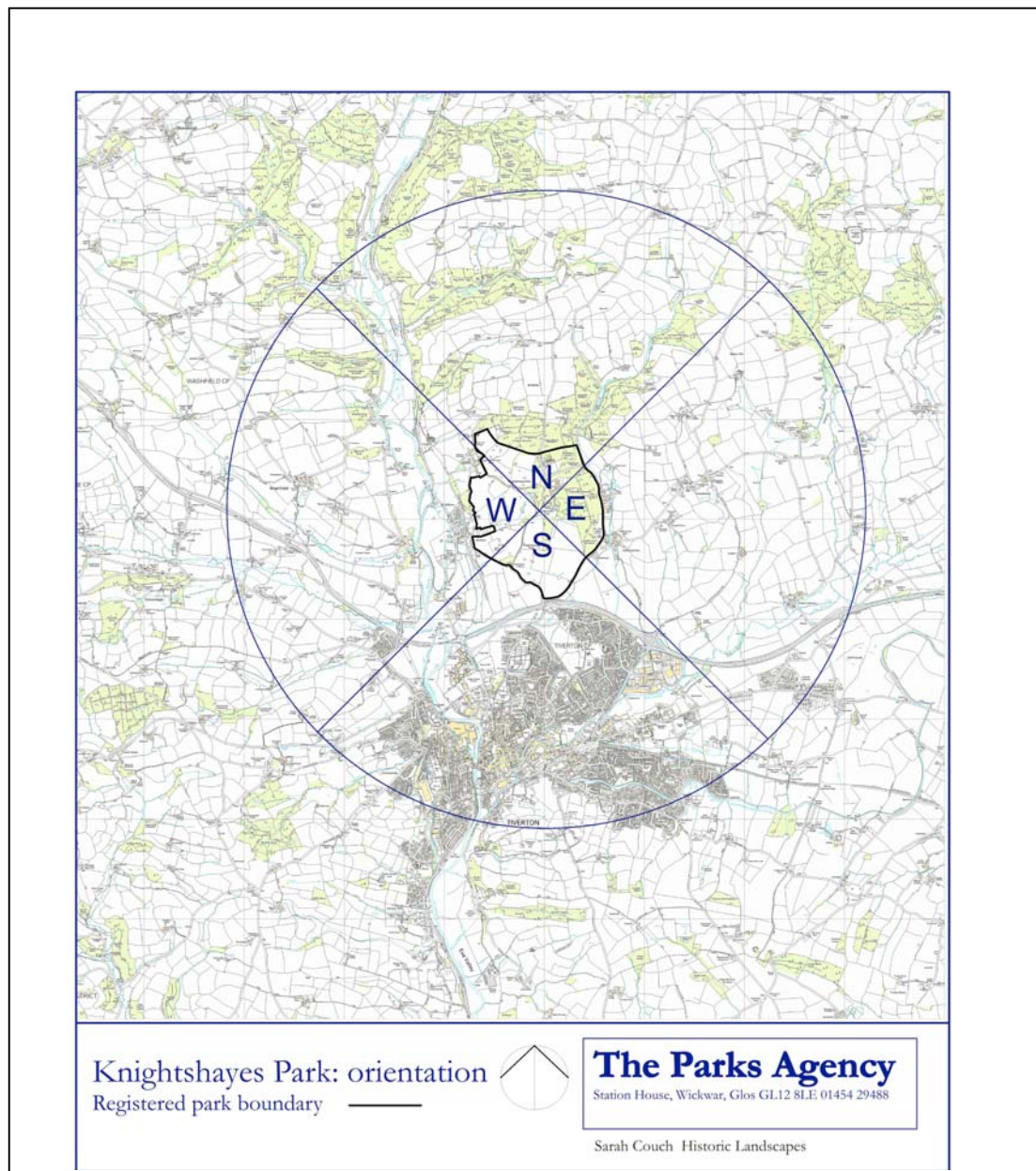


Fig.43. Orientation around Knightshayes.

Proposed setting

To assist with this discussion and for ease of reference, the accompanying plan divides the area around Knightshayes into quarters (Fig.43). A map of the proposed setting follows the discussion (Fig.48).

South

In the main vista from Knightshayes, Tiverton is still a relatively compact feature. Its buildings do not punctuate the skyline of woods and fields, and are contained within a predominantly pastoral and wooded framework. The town clearly forms part of the setting of the registered landscape, given its key importance in the site's historic development, both economically and aesthetically. Cranmore Castle on its bluff, and with its northern planting of Beeches forms a distinct feature on the east of the Exe, and forms an appropriate boundary to the proposed setting. In the nineteenth century, when it was known as Skrinkhills it was a favoured location for picturesque views of the town and the countryside to the north (Fig.44), and Benjamin Bowden Dickinson owned pasture land on the slopes.⁶³

West of the Exe, a number of spurs fall to the river, visible from Knightshayes, but the prominence of Middle Hill Farm in the vista, and the distinctive straight lane immediately above the building, make this ridge an appropriate limit to the setting. In addition, it appears to be close to the location for the 1819 view of Tiverton 'from the hills near Ashley' used as the frontispiece of *Picturesque Views on the River Exe* (see Figs.5-6 and 37).

West of Middle Hill Farm, the boundary of the setting follows the contours. There is a notable view to Knightshayes from private land at Patcott, and as Heathcoat owned the adjacent Burrige estate the boundary takes in the corner of Burrige at Seven Crosses. It then follows the lane to Hensleigh Farm, also owned by Heathcoat, which forms the skyline in views from Knightshayes.

Between Middle Hill Farm and Cranmore Castle, the wooded slopes of the Exe valley's eastern side contribute significantly to the view from Knightshayes.

East of Cranmore Castle, the boundary follows the thick hedges of Exeter Hill before picking up the skyline that ascends to the Crown Castle telecommunications mast at Gogwell, which is a prominent skyline feature from Knightshayes (Fig.45). It then runs along the skyline to include the conspicuous clump of Warnicombe Plantation, owned by Heathcoat, before following the hedges of the old lane northwards to Thurlescombe Cross. From this point it descends to the east of the plantation beside the Great Western Canal west of Manley Dairy. The visual envelope of Knightshayes extends many miles along the ridge in this direction, but the thick hedges of the old lane together with the landmark clump (see Fig.32) afford a distinctive and historic limit to the setting in this direction.

⁶³ Tithe award, Tiverton, Pitt, 1841.

East

From West Manley the boundary follows the line of sight towards the Church Path viewpoint. South of Chettiscombe this meets a gentle ridge which runs between the A361 and a point just east of the village on the road to Chevithorne. The hill north-east of Chettiscombe forms a skyline close to the Church Path at this point and restricts views due east. To the north east, the shallow valley which includes the reservoirs rises to a skyline which the proposed boundary follows to the high ground west of Higher Pitt, also owned by Heathcoat. The setting includes Allers Plantation, which was again owned by Heathcoat and which forms a continuation of Knightshayes Plantation (Fig.46).

North

The line of the proposed setting runs relatively close to the house and gardens here due to the steeply rising contours. It follows the line of the high ground through Horsepark Plantation, including Backerdown Cottage and then follows the contours down to Lythecourt, another Heathcoat acquisition, which was important in affording a route for the new landscaped approach from the west.

West

Views west from the house are extensive, running far up the shallow valley beyond Templeton. However, a distinct ridge below the skyline is afforded by the hills rising from the Exe valley. The proposed boundary line therefore follows the top of this ridge which runs from the high ground above Washfield Weir, south-west above Washfield to Beauchamp Farm and the spur immediately south. At this point a narrow valley runs west to Lower and Higher Pitt farms, and from Long Lane immediately above Lower Pitt, the view back to Knightshayes is notable (Fig.47). The shortest route possible across the invisible low ground at Lurley is followed to the next prominent feature in this direction, the woods at Calverleigh.

A thickly hedged old lane runs south up the slope from Calverleigh to continue this defined line to Bunkersland and Duxmoor, both owned by Heathcoat and featuring notable plantations. Coombutler Plantations form a distinct feature in views from Knightshayes and are included for that reason.

Fig.44 The distinctive silhouette of Cranmore Castle, seen from Knightshayes, in the centre of the frame.



Fig.45. View from Knightshayes towards the Crown Castle telecommunications mast at Gogwell.



Fig.46, Back Lodge and the road between Allers and Knightshayes Plantations.



Fig.47. The view of Knightshayes from Long Lane above Lower Pitt Farm.



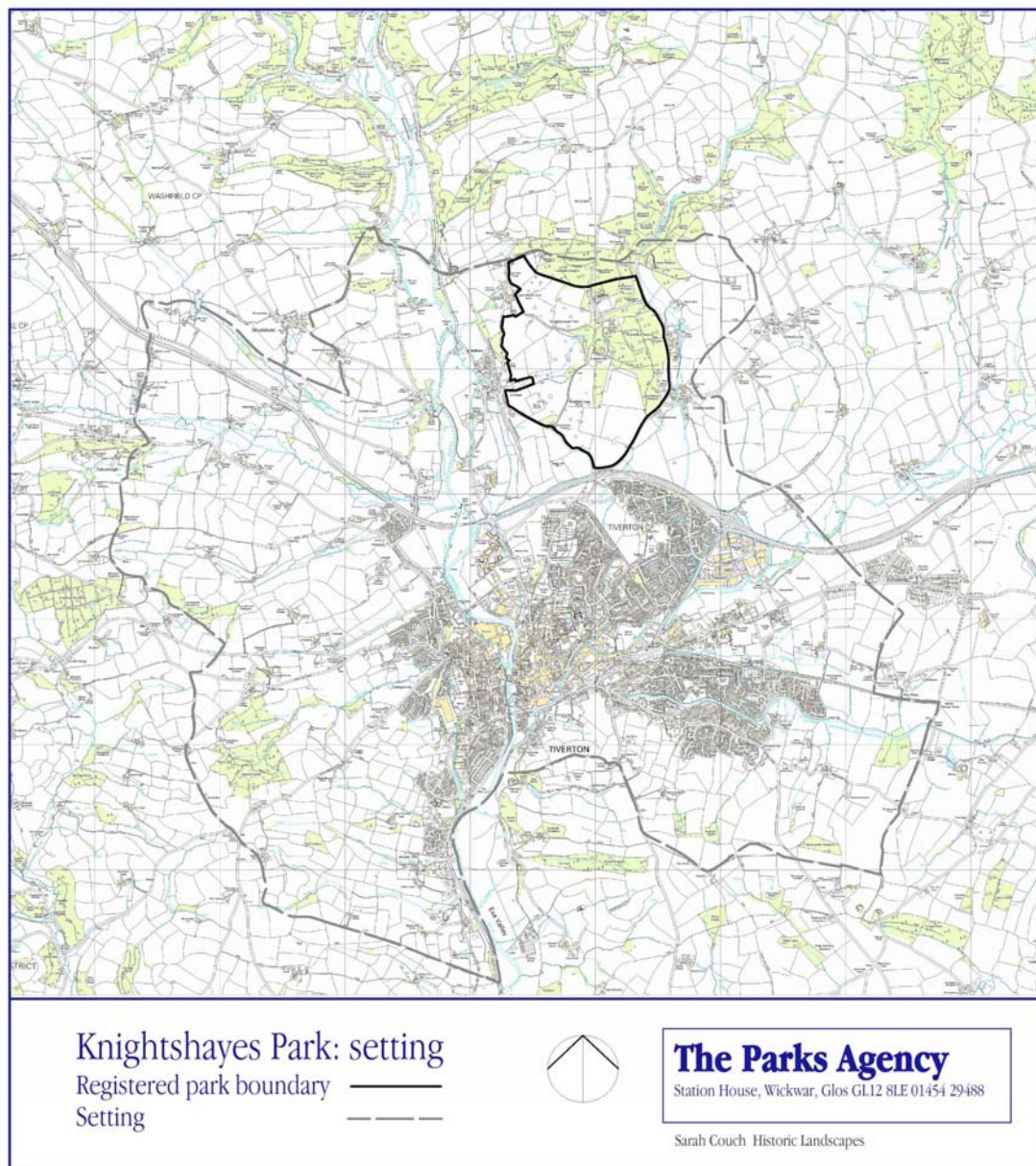


Fig.48. The setting of Knightshayes.

Conclusion

The historic interest and the historic character of Knightshayes is closely bound up with views outward. The design of the registered landscape is unusual but by no means unique, in the extent to which it makes a feature of the nearby town as well as the pastoral landscape, and this illustrates an important aspect of eighteenth and nineteenth-century culture. These views remain a significant part of the visual experience to this day.

If the character and appearance of Knightshayes is to be preserved, it is necessary that, as far as is reasonable, this setting be protected from intrusive development, and that the effect of any development on that setting be a material consideration in the planning process. This is recognised in the adopted Local Plan.

It is desirable therefore that a defined setting is mapped and agreed. Setting is not defined in planning law but, as practised by Cadw, a process of historical research and landscape analysis can propose such a boundary.

This report is intended to aid in the interpretation of policy ENV10 in the adopted Local Plan, and an anticipated LDF policy that replaces it, by mapping spatially an area that particularly contributes to the setting of Knightshayes, and identifying significant views.

While this document can usefully support the existing policy, or any replacement policy for the protection of registered parks and gardens and their settings, we would suggest that it would be best adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document within the LDF, and the defined area should be considered for inclusion within the Proposals Map Development Planning Document.

References

- WS Atkins Ltd., 2006, *Saltire Environmental Capacity Study*, Appendix: Overview of Setting, 2006.
- Colcutt, S, 1999, 'The Setting of Cultural Heritage Features', *Journal of Planning and Environment Law*, June 498-513.
- Cornforth, John, 1985, 'Knightshayes Court, Devon I-III', *Country Life*, 18 July –1 August, 160-318 passim.
- Daniels, Stephen, 1999, *Humphry Repton: landscape gardening and the geography of Georgian England*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 207-54.
- The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1888, ii, 22 December 723-24.
- Dunsford, Martin, *Historical Memoirs of the Town and Parish of Tiverton*, Tiverton, 1790.
- Lt-Col. Harding, 1847, *The History of Tiverton*, 2 vols., Tiverton.
- Heathcoat Amory, John, 1960, 'A Garden in a Wood: Knightshayes Court', *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, vol.85, 431-41.
- Hellyer, Arthur, 1990, 'Out of the Wood,' *Country Life*, 8 March 80-85.
- Heriz-Smith, S., 1988, 'The Veitch Nurseries of Killerton and Exteter, c1780 to 1863', *Garden History*, 16:1, 41-57.
- Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, 1889, 28 February, 174-76.
- Keene, Barbara and Butler, Dot, 1997 *Knightshayes Court: from Knightenhaie to National Trust*, Tiverton: Devonshire Association.
- Kemp, Edward, 1864, *How to Lay out a Garden*, 3rd edition, London: Bradbury and Evans.
- Lambert, David, 2002, 'The Prospect of Trade: the merchant gardeners of Bristol in the second half of the eighteenth century' in Michel Conan, ed., *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550-1850*, Dumbarton Oaks, 123-46.
- Land Use Consultants (LUC), 1998, *Knightshayes Park Survey Plan*.
- Pevsner, Nikolaus and Cherry, Bridget, 2004, *The Buildings of England: Devon*, Yale: Yale University Press.
- Planarch 2, 2005, *Review of Cultural Heritage Coverage in Environmental Impact Assessments*, Oxford Archaeology, sponsored by ERDF, ODPM, English Heritage, EIA Centre et al.

Roper, Lanning, 1960, 'A Distinguished Devon Garden,' *Country Life*, 29 September 664-66.

Sampson, Mike, 2004 *A History of Tiverton*, Tiverton.

Swete, Revd. John, *Travels in Georgian Devon: the illustrated journals of the Reverend John Swete, 1780-1800*, ed. Todd Gray and Margery Rowe, 1997-2000.