

Reference

Comment on a planning application

Application Details

Application: 18/2977/FUL

Address: Marble Hill House Marble Hill Park Richmond Road Twickenham TW1 2NL.

Proposal: 1. Marble Hill House: External decoration and repair work (if a window is substantially rotten, partial or full replacement of joinery) and replacement rooflight. 2. Stable Block: External alterations, installation of mechanical plant, timber plant enclosure to the rear and front landscaping (creating an outdoor seating area) to facilitate the refurbishment of the existing café.3. Service Yard: new pedestrian access and associated refuse storage facilities.4. Landscaping: new soft and hard landscaping including restoration of gardens, upgrade of sports pitches and facilities, replacement of seating and new play areas.5. Sports Centre: External ramp for improved access.

Comments Made By

Name: Ron McEwen.

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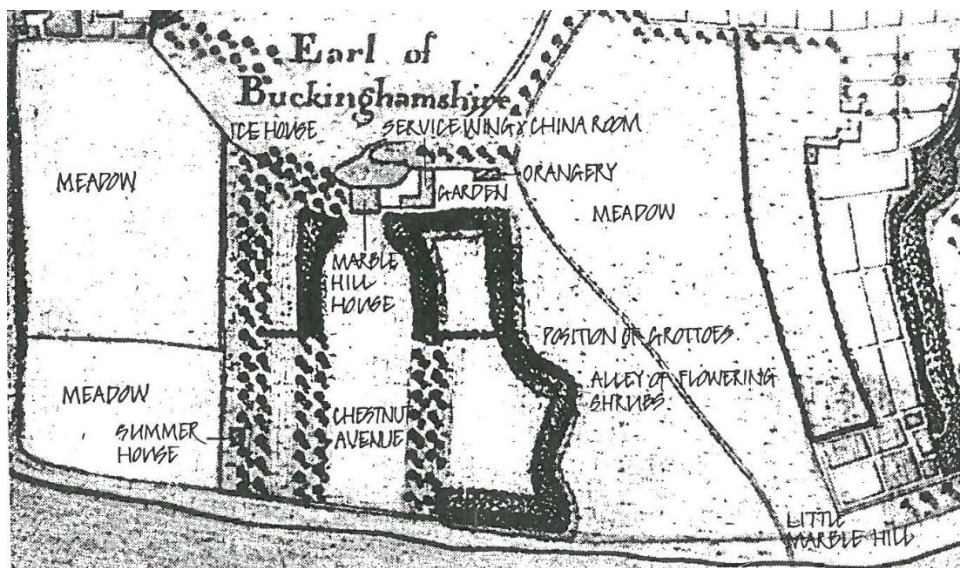
Comments

Type of comment: Object to the proposal.

Comment: See below.

Marble Hill South Lawn: West-East Vista

In order to justify the re-instatement of an unprepossessing garden design that has long since been consigned to the dustbin of history, English Heritage have created a scenario that can be summarised as follows: there has only ever been one garden design and this has gradually deteriorated since Henrietta Howard's time until it reached its current state. There is no place in this scenario for the beautiful west-east vista on the south lawn that we enjoy today. However, there is strong evidence that the garden has not deteriorated but has *evolved*, and that the east-west vista is a design feature that has its roots in Jonathan Peel's early Victorian garden.



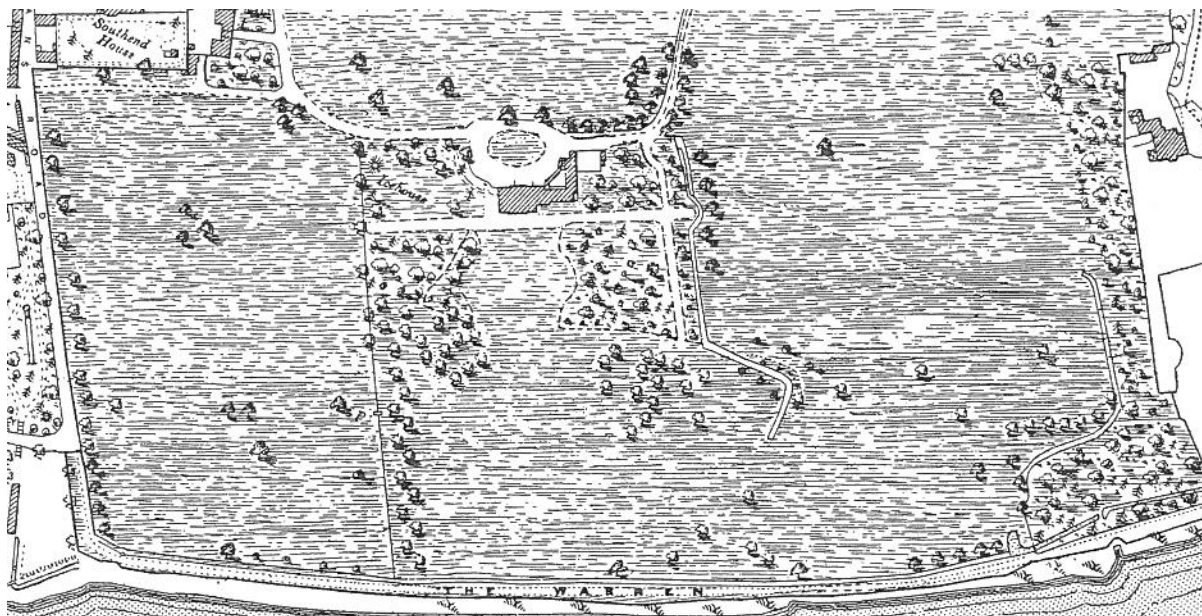
1. C.J. Sauthier map, 1786-87.



2. Ordnance Survey map, 1869.

The OS map of 1869 (Fig. 2 above) show a very significant development during Jonathan Peel's occupancy. English Heritage, with their "deterioration" theory, would have us believe that the western bank of trees shown in the Saulthier map of 1786/7 (Fig. 1 above) has by 1869 survived intact while the whole eastern bank has died off. And, furthermore, that Jonathan Peel, during his five-decade occupancy of the estate, never got around to replacing the dead trees!

There is a vastly more likely explanation. It is known that Peel had a formal Italianate garden immediately to the south of the house. The OS map shows this garden area fenced off from the south lawn. Significantly, for the first time at Marble Hill, an east-west orientation of the south lawn area has appeared with, to the east, a group of trees arranged informally. This is clearly a design, not an historical accident. A lawn in the informal "Capability" Brown style had been created, and Marble Hill had become a typical Victorian estate with a formal garden beside the house and an informal Brownian vista beyond.



3. 1901 map shows the situation when marble Hill became a public park.

If English Heritage get their way, this beautiful panoramic vista will be lost. Their claim that their minimally amended plan will preserve this vista is derisory and unacceptable. What they propose is tantamount to planting banks of trees across the Grecian Valley at Stowe and saying "Don't worry: you'll still get glimpses between the branches".

Ron McEwen (December 2018)