

HOPE END PARKLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Executive Summary

Introduction

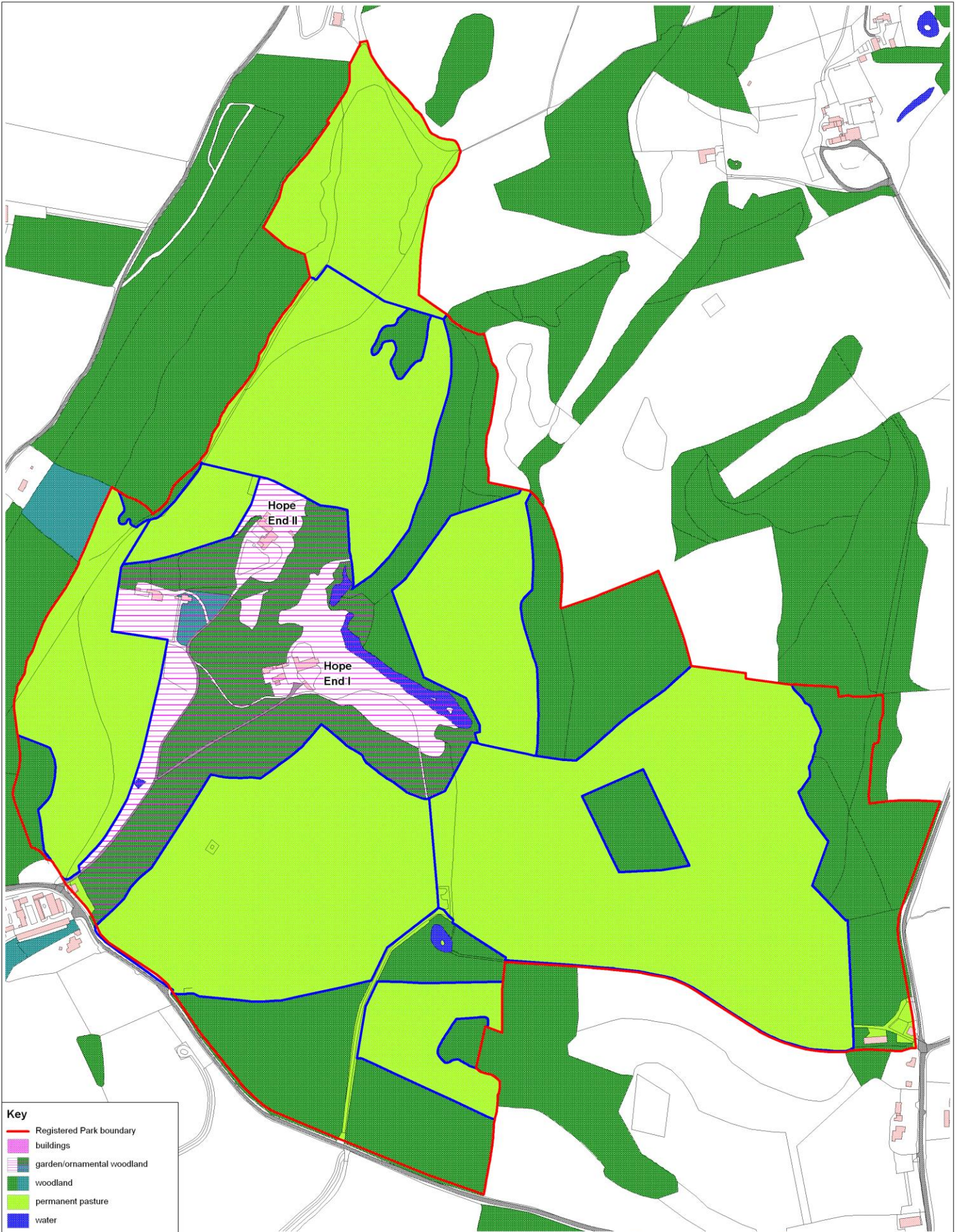
Hope End Park and garden is Grade II listed on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens and comprises approximately 87Ha of woodland and parkland. It is situated on the outskirts of Ledbury near Wellington Heath in the county of Herefordshire and lies in the south west of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Hope End Park is owned jointly by six landowners. The park is particularly notable for its association with the C. 19th landscape designer John Claudius Loudon and poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Chris Burnett Associates (CBA) was commissioned by the Malvern Hills AONB Unit in January 2022 to prepare a Parkland Management Plan (PMP) for Hope End. The principal objectives were to:

- advise on methods of safeguarding the historic park, managing the extensive tree, woodland and grassland resource;
- identify any threats to the historic designed landscape and archaeology and
- promote a vision for restoring, preserving, interpreting and managing the park for the 21st century and beyond.

The PMP also contains the results of extensive research into the history of the park which was carried out by George Demidowicz, a local landscape historian.

Fig 1.0 defines the park boundary and maps the current land use.



Key

- Registered Park boundary
- buildings
- garden/ornamental woodland
- woodland
- permanent pasture
- water

Date	Details	Revision

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Figure 1.0
Hope End Park



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Project	Hope End Park, Herefordshire		
Scale	1:4,700 @ A3		
Date	Drawn	Checked	
17/11/22	JHD	CB	
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HPHPMP21.29			

Historical Development

The early manmade landscape of the Hope End valley was one of open fields and woods and probably common land used for pasture with scattered farmsteads. An archaeological appraisal has found extensive evidence of old field boundaries, lynchets or banks and areas of ridge and furrow. One such farmstead was probably situated on or around the site of the present cluster of buildings which nestle in the valley bottom, close to the site of what is now Hope End House I (a former stable and service block). In the mid-18th century, the Prichard family constructed a new house at this location near the site of the earlier buildings with a park, enclosed for deer, carved into the landscape.

George Prichard died in 1764 and his daughter, Jane, inherited the property. She had married Henry Lambert against her father's wishes. Their daughter, Susannah Lambert, who married the unscrupulous Sir Henry Tempest inherited the estate in turn but signed it away to Sir Henry. It is not known how long Susannah and Sir Henry lived at Hope End, for they eventually separated, Sir Henry establishing a separate household near Hounslow with his cousin, she bearing him a child. Susannah was left living on her own near Worcester. The estate must have been let to tenants at this time before Sir Henry eventually decided to sell Hope End in 1809, to the Moulton-Barretts. They did not find the Prichard house to their taste and called in the celebrated landscape designer JC Loudon to alter both the house and the grounds around it. Detailed evidence of his exact involvement is scant. It is believed, however, that he transformed the existing house by reworking it into a classical, exotic building replete with 3 new facades, minarets, redecorated and embellished rooms and a dome. The image below is of the embellished house.

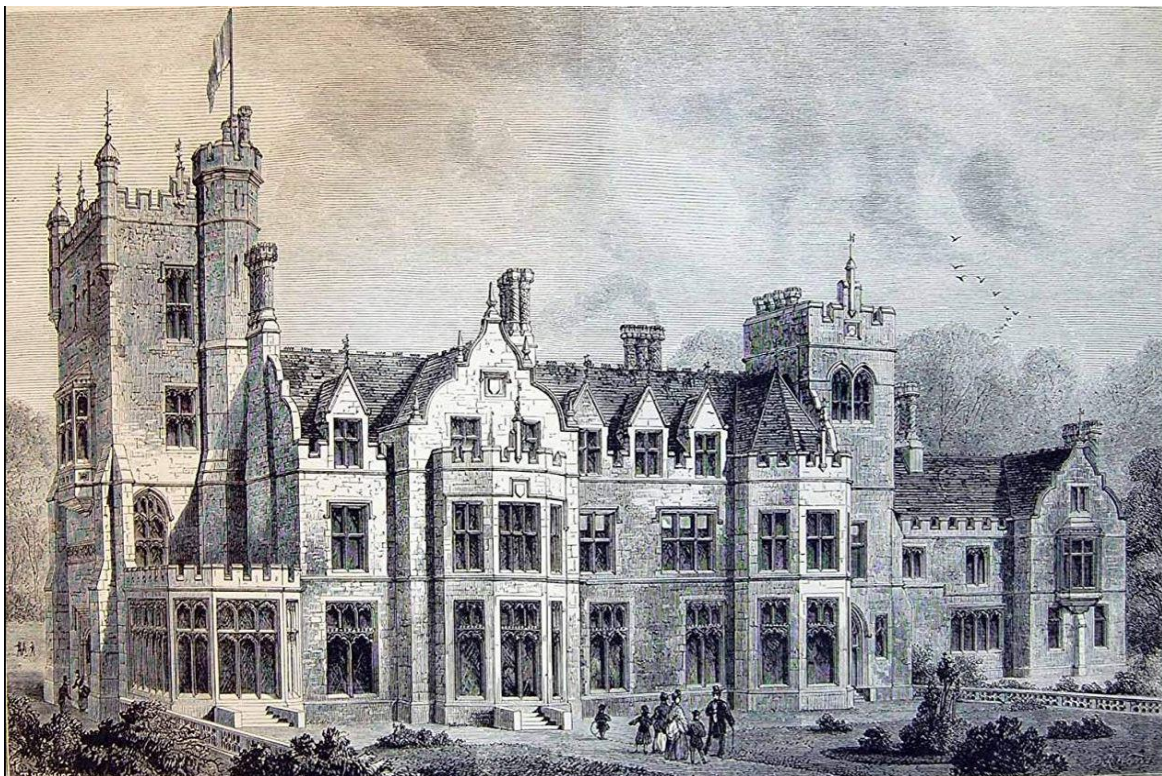


Engraving of Hope End by Paul Ballard c 1810

The line of the formal drive to the house was from the south and east and included a wooded setting and lawn, a bridge and an extended fishpond with views over to the wider parkland. The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning spent her formative years here.

In 1831 the estate was sold to Thomas Heywood a wealthy banker from Manchester. The Heywood's contribution to the landscape design at Hope End appears to have been the introduction of new specimen trees, particularly redwoods, pines and cedars near the house; the planting of an extensive number of parkland trees; planting some new or replacement plantations and the erection of Lower Lodge to mark the entrance of the drive to the house.

In 1867 the estate was sold again to Mr Charles Hewitt who demolished the original house, Hope End I and built Hope End II higher up the valley. An archaeological resistivity survey carried out as part of this study by Chapel Archaeology has confirmed the footprint of the demolished house. The image below is of the new house Hope End II.



Front elevation of the new Hope End House 1871

Unfortunately, fire destroyed much of the house in 1910 such that only the north-east service wing survives today (the wing on the right of the image). A much diminished Hope End estate (less Hope End II) was sold in 1946 to the Ballard family. Patricia Hegarty (née Ballard) inherited the estate in 1971 and converted the surviving former stable block at Hope End I to a hotel in the 1980s. The Hegartys sold up in 1998 and currently the original more extensive Hope End estate is divided between six owners.

Current landscape and condition

Today the park can be separated into 2 distinct areas of homogenous landscape character: 1) The Core area which includes Hope End House I, Hope End House II and the C.19th walled garden containing its new house constructed in 2006 and 2) Parkland.

1) The Core Area contains mature specimen trees set amongst lawns around each of the houses. Trees include species such as beech and oak as well as magnificent conifers such as Coast redwood, Wellingtonia and Monterey pine most of which are in good condition. Woodland encloses much of this area and views out are few as many previous views have become overgrown over time. This area also contains 5 ornamental pools of varying sizes which are the result of dammed interventions to the Cradley brook which flows down the valley. Survey work has found the core area of Hope End to be mostly in good condition but with some aspects of the water bodies in poor condition.

2) The Parkland surrounds the core area and consists of less intensively managed grassland to the north and more intensively managed grassland to the south. Ten small woods adorn this hilly landscape, some of which are ancient with some being new broadleaved plantations. There are also some notable veteran trees in the park, mostly oaks with one notable, massive lime tree which is estimated to be over 400 years old. See photo below:



Photograph of veteran Lime tree. Chris Burnett

Sadly, most of the large number of parkland trees planted at the end of the 19th century were felled immediately after WWII. Using the Natural England Historic Designed Landscape Criteria survey work has found much of the parkland of Hope End to be in poor condition. There is now an imbalance of trees, shrubs and grassland when compared with the original design. The original or modified distinctive historic design of the Park has also been partly lost due to the loss of views to and from Hope End I and Hope End II and the loss of the lower drive.

Management approach and recommendations

One of the primary objectives of the Parkland Management Plan is to establish sound foundations for future management that will ensure that the resources, themes and features at Hope End can be protected, conserved and enhanced for the benefit of future generations. Hope End is a nationally important site recognised by Grade II status on the Register of Park and Gardens. It is associated with one of the major early 19th century influencers in garden design: John Claudius Loudon and was one of a group of early projects he undertook in his career as a designer. It is noted as a picturesque landscape and highly significant as the childhood home of the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning and considered to be highly influential in her subsequent writings.

For this reason, the following features should be protected and conserved as far as possible:

- The pools and associated lawns
- The wooded setting of the house, embellished with exotic conifers
- Views out down the valley
- The wider parkland
- The Kitchen or walled garden

Features that have emerged since the latter part of the 19th century should remain, however, as they are also part of the story of Hope End. These include:

- The naturally regenerated woodland above the Fish Pond
- The south-western extension to Cockshute Grove
- All the young broadleaved plantation woodland planted over the last 30-40 years.

Natural features and habitats

The plan has recommended that natural features and habitats can also be improved as part of an overall programme of nature recovery for the AONB but without affecting its role as a valuable, farmed landscape. The following measures have been recommended:

- To plant over 120 parkland trees to replace some of those lost. Species recommended have been partially selected for their resilience to climate change, for example Sessile oak, Evergreen oak, Turkey oak, Cork oak, Sweet chestnut, Small leaved lime, London plane, Spanish plane, Sycamore and Field maple. Trees should be protected from stock with timber guards.
- To improve the structural diversity of woodlands by thinning to remove aggressive species and allowing more light to encourage the development of a diverse ground flora. Understorey shrubs which are shade tolerant should be planted such as holly or hazel. The woodland edges should be scalloped where feasible and planted with edge shrubs. Both deer and squirrels should be controlled.
- To use aftermath grazing to improve the floristic diversity of hay meadows in parts of the park.
- To review stocking rates and timings of grazing to ensure that areas of permanent pasture are grazed by cattle and/or sheep at a level which generate a structurally and botanically diverse sward, allowing pastures to rest so that herbs can flower and set seed and to promote soil health, water infiltration and carbon storage.
- To plant two new mixed native species hedgerows to connect and buffer key habitats.