

Archaeological Excavation and Survey, Rothley High Lake, Wallington, Northumberland



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McCord Centre Report 2015.2

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Rothley High Lake, Wallington, Northumberland: Archaeological Excavation and Survey

INTRODUCTION

In the Summer of 2015, students from the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, supervised by staff from the McCord Centre, carried out a third season of fieldwork at Rothley High Lake, Wallington Hall. The work comprised survey and excavation to build on previous survey and excavation carried out by Newcastle University in 2012 and 2013 (Aldred 2013; 2014). The focus of the three seasons of fieldwork was on the northern side of Rothley High Lake (centred on NZ 04082 90507), one of two artificial water bodies created in the eighteenth century. The work was undertaken in order to better understand the nature and origins of the designed landscape of Rothley Lakes, and to investigate the extent of the contribution made to it by Capability Brown.

Rothley Lakes form part of the original Wallington Estate. The estate centre, Wallington Hall, lies within the modern civil parish of Wallington Demesne, in Northumberland at NZ 02771 84268, whilst Rothley Lakes lie around 6km, or 4 miles, north east of the Hall in the modern civil parish of Rothley (Figure 1). The Lakes are situated between the small hamlets and farms of Rothley East Shield and Rothley West Shield on the Wallington Estate's far eastern boundary. Most, but not all, of the historic Wallington Estate is now in the ownership of the National Trust. At Rothley Lakes, only the High Lake is in National Trust ownership. Wallington Hall is a grade I listed building (National Heritage list number 1042869) and it is surrounded by a designed landscape park and garden registered as a grade II* (National Heritage List number 1001054). Rothley Lakes, alongside Rothley Park which is around 1.8km or just over 1 mile to the south of the lakes, are outlying parts of the estate. Both are designed landscapes but neither are included on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens and thus are not afforded protection through heritage designation.

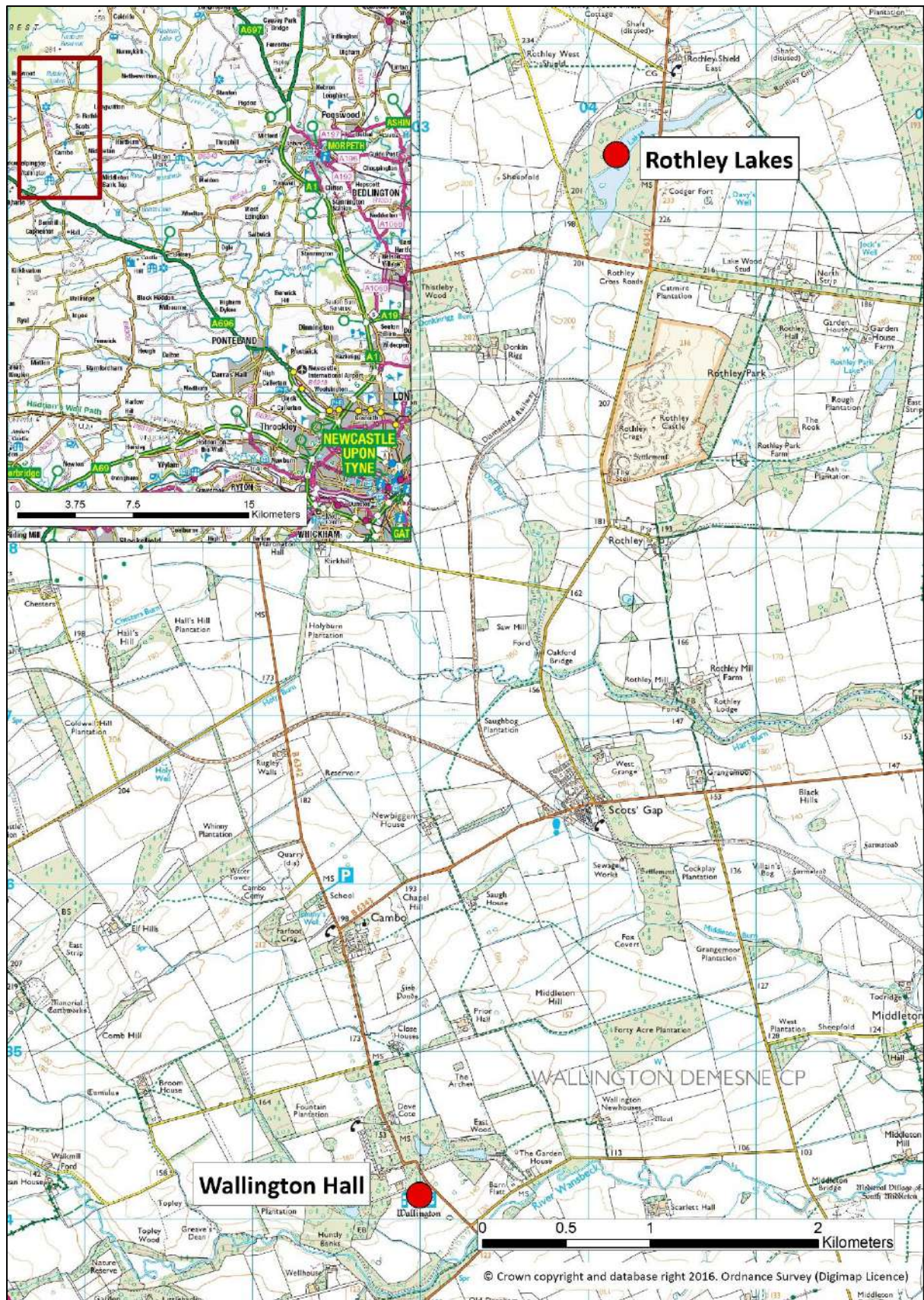


Figure 1: Location plan

PURPOSE

The origins and development of the Rothley Lakes designed landscape are imperfectly understood. Thus, the true significance of this heritage asset is not accurately appreciated. As a consequence, it is difficult for the National Trust to define the best management approaches for the improvement and maintenance of the designed landscape and its features. In particular, the role played by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown is not well understood. Brown’s involvement in Wallington is highly significant historically, because Brown was local to Wallington. He grew up nearby at Kirkharle and went to school in Cambo, on the Wallington Estate. It is likely that the Wallington Estate would have been influential in helping to form Brown’s ideas of landscape appreciation. It is known that Brown put forward designs for Rothley, in particular for the Low Lake, but it is unclear to what extent he may have influenced the design of the High Lake (Aldred 2014).

The purpose of the work undertaken by the McCord Centre was to aid the National Trust’s decision making in the management of the Rothley Lakes area of the Wallington Estate. In particular, the National Trust seeks to undertake conservation management at Rothley Lakes which is appropriate to the historical character and significance of the designed landscape. Moreover the National Trust is concerned to make landscapes in their ownership available, stimulating and valued to a range of audiences, including the academic world. This is especially pertinent because of the 300th anniversary of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown’s birth in 2016.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There were a number of research questions addressed within the Rothley Lakes project and although the 2015 fieldwork was not expected to fully answer these questions, they provide an academic framework for the project’s aims and objectives. The research questions are:

- How much of the 18th century designed landscape at Rothley High Lake survives as identifiable, and potentially restorable, features?
- How many landscape features proposed by Lancelot Brown were implemented and, proportionately, how much of the designed landscape can be attributed to him or considered to be influenced by him?
- How do Rothley Lakes relate to the wider Wallington Estate designed landscape, why were they originally constructed, what was their purpose, how did they develop?
- How are Rothley Lakes linked to the wider, non-designed landscape, how was the Rothley Lakes designed landscape influenced by the pre-existing landscape and how did the lakes influence the development of the surrounding area?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the 2015 fieldwork season were framed both by the National Trust’s management needs and the research questions as outlined above.

The work was carried out to English Heritage's Level 3 landscape survey standard (Bedford *et al* 2011) and comprised an identification survey, a topographic survey of individual features and an evaluatory excavation. This work complemented and enhanced the documentary research already undertaken by Debois (1999) and Gates (2002).

The aims of the survey were:

- to enhance the understanding of the designed landscape of Rothley High Lake within its landscape context, in order to assist the National Trust with the development of management prescriptions;
- to enhance the understanding of the role Lancelot Brown played in the development of the designed landscape of Rothley Lakes;
- to train Newcastle University students in Level 3 landscape survey techniques, including documentary research, identification survey, topographical survey and evaluatory excavation.

The objectives of the current survey are threefold:

- collate all previously gathered data and, where possible, enter the information into a GIS;
- enhance, through accurate ground-based survey, the previous results of the walkover survey undertaken by Debois (1999) and previous work undertaken by Newcastle University (Aldred 2014);
- gather sufficient information to establish the location, extent, character, period, condition, fragility and potential of the surviving or previously extant archaeological and historical features within the Rothley High Lake character area, and plot them at a scale of 1:10,000;
- provide an accurate survey, at a scale 1:100 to 1:2,500 as appropriate, of all key landscape features relating to the designed landscape;
- provide a grading of all recorded sites and features to indicate relative significance in relation to the designed landscape;
- provide an accurate survey basis for the preparation of detailed management prescriptions by the National Trust.

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Rothley Lakes lie between the small settlements of Rothley East Shield and Rothley West Shield on the Wallington Estate's eastern boundary, at around 200m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the land rising gently up from the lake shore to about 210m aOD. Both Codger's Fort (at 233m aOD) and Rothley Castle (at 235m aOD) form viewing points over the Wallington Estate from specially-designed follies, which were meant to be inter-visible with Rothley Lakes (Figure 2 and see below). The land cover is of under-managed, mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland, with areas of overgrown regenerated scrub and trees where commercial forestry plantation has been removed.

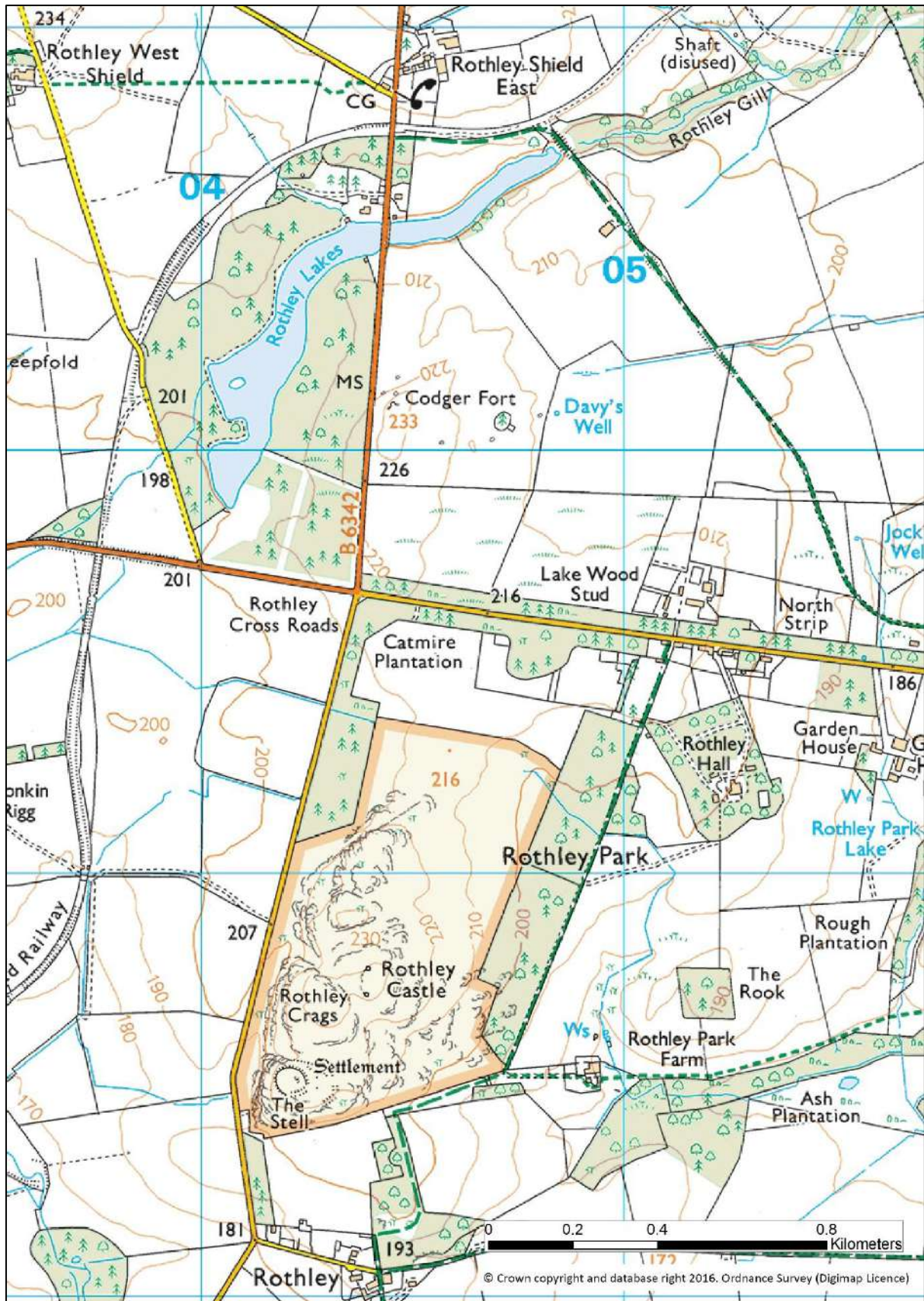


Figure 2: Rothley Lake and its relationship to Rothley Park, Rothley Castle and Codger's Fort

The soils around Rothley Lakes are graded 5, which is the poorest quality in the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (Agricultural Land Classification 2015). According to Soilscape (Soilscape (England) 2015), there are two soil types within the Rothley Lakes study area. In the northern half is a slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soil; to the south, the soil is slowly permeable, wet, very acid upland soils with a peaty surface. Both soil types have generally poor drainage. The soils overlie a solid geology of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone of the Stainmore Foundation, the southern limit of which is marked by the lakes along a fault line (BGS 2013). South of the fault line the solid geology comprises Rothley Grits Sandstone. Overlying the bedrock are deposits of Devensian Till (BGS 2013).

Rothley Lakes, along with the rest of the Wallington Estate, lies within the Northumberland Sandstone Hills National Character Area. The Character Area comprises a series of distinctive flat-topped ridges which run in a band across central Northumberland (Natural England 2013). The Area is characterised by heather and grass moorland with large geometric blocks of conifer in the uplands, whilst the lower slopes have pasture with some arable cultivation areas of broadleaved woodland with some of Northumberland's major rivers flowing through it. The Area also has a number of designed parklands. The Wallington Estate encapsulates the character area, with the higher lying areas, including Rothley Lakes, dominated by grass moorland with blocks of coniferous plantation; at lower elevations there is improved and cultivated agricultural land around the landscape park and garden at Wallington Hall. The boundary of the Wallington estate is delineated on its southern edge by the River Wansbeck.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Wallington Hall and Estate

The current Wallington Hall dates to 1688, built for Sir William Blackett possibly on the site of a medieval house, with alterations in the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The history of the Blackett family and their association with Wallington Hall is well understood and is set out in the Historic England list entry for the park and garden (Historic England 2015). Sir William Blackett bought the estate from the Fenwick family in 1684. The estate passed to his son, also Sir William, in 1702 and on his death in 1728, the inheritance passed to Elizabeth Ord. A survey was carried out in 1728, probably as a result of the estate changing hands. In 1729, Elizabeth married Walter Calverley, who changed his name to Blackett, and it was under his ownership that many of the estate improvements were carried out or initiated (Debois 2011, 7). As well as work to the house and gardens, Blackett's improvements included large-scale agricultural improvements, new woodland plantations and the creation of the deer park at Rothley Park (Historic England 2015), as well as the creation of the designed landscape at Rothley Lakes.

Following the death of Sir William in 1777, the estate passed to his nephew, Sir John Trevelyan, whose main seat was at Nettlecombe in Somerset (Historic England 2015). The survey plan of this date, which is likely to have been carried out as a result of the change of ownership, shows the changes made by Sir William through his ownership of the Wallington estate. Although improvement works to the estate land and buildings did not cease with the change of ownership, there was a clear change of direction, with more emphasis on production through agriculture and industry (Debois 2011, 11-12). This had an impact on the discrete areas of designed landscape at Rothley Lakes and Rothley Park, with the latter ceasing to be a deer park. Areas of parkland were planted up for woodland including around Rothley Lakes (see below). The estate remained in the hands of the Trevelyan family until the mid-20th century. The Wallington estate was gifted by Sir Charles Trevelyan to the National Trust in 1941.

The Hall is a grade I listed building (Pastscape 2015, monument number 21146) and sits within a landscape park and pleasure grounds, covering an area of 125ha and listed on the register of parks and gardens at II* (Historic England 2015, list entry number 1001054). The park and pleasure grounds were laid out in the eighteenth century, and Rothley Lakes should be considered part of the wider designed landscape, along with Rothley Park, Rothley Castle and Codger's Fort.

Rothley Lakes

The exact date of the creation of the designed landscape at Rothley Lakes is unknown. Until the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the area around Rothley Lakes was mainly unenclosed upland, divided between the settlements of Greenleighton and Rothley (Debois 2011, 194-5). Successive estate survey maps dating to 1728, 1742 and 1777 (NT references 582300, 582301 and 582302) reveal how the improvements instigated by Sir William Blackett transformed the area around Rothley Lakes, which was gradually enclosed and improved into a landscape characterised by regular, straight boundaries. Present-day land use around Rothley Lakes is of enclosed permanent pasture, and a number of sheep folds within the enclosed land is indicative of pastoral farming system dating back to at least the 18th century. By 1777, the designed landscape at Rothley was in place. The two lakes, labelled 'The Lake' and 'Low Lake' were complete in their present form, with nearby woodland plantations. A detailed description of the development of Rothley Lakes is given below.

PREVIOUS WORK

Initial desk-based assessment research on Rothley Lakes and the Wallington Estate was carried out by Debois, as part of a management plan (Debois 2011). The objective of the plan was to compile a list of works needed for the conservation, repair and restoration of key features of the historic landscape, and to make recommendations for wider visitor access (Debois 2011, 1). The assessment research for the management plan was partly

based on an earlier investigation (Debois 1999) which had included topographic survey and archival research of the registered park and garden, plus a wider survey of the Wallington landscape including Rothley Lakes. Other existing work used for the 2011 assessment was a woodland survey of the estates woods, and an unpublished document 'Notes on the Wallington estate maps' (Gates 2002), which the National Trust kindly made available to Newcastle University for this phase of the work. The 1999 topographic survey identified features within the area of Rothley High Lake, in particular a hollow way leading down to the ford across the small stream which runs into the north-eastern end of the High Lake, and a winding path through the woodland. This path, subsequently referred to as the serpentine path, was partly surveyed by Debois. It had a meandering route and was observed as a slightly sunken feature with stone marked edges, indistinct in places.

In 2012 the first archaeological project was undertaken by a team from the McCord Centre. The work comprised an assessment of the scope and potential of the documentary evidence (including the previous work by Debois) in order to provide a context for fieldwork. The fieldwork consisted of a walk over survey to identify historic features within the National Trust owned land at Rothley Lakes, specifically the land around Rothley High Lake. This was followed by a measured survey of the serpentine path, using a total station and a manual tape-measured survey (Aldred 2013). Although the survey was hampered by autumnal leaf cover, a total length of 200m of path was recorded, 150m of which was measured and drawn. The path was approximately 1.8m wide and up to 0.4m deep.

In 2013 a second season of investigation was carried out. The objective was to assess the type and date of construction and original dimensions of the serpentine path by means of an excavated section across its width. The excavation took the form of a trench, 2m wide and approximately 4m long, in order to examine the full width of the path and the stone lining on either side (Aldred 2014). The excavation revealed a path slightly cut into the natural subsoil and lined with stones on both sides. There was evidence of silting both between the stones and on the base of the path. A slot had been cut down the centre of the path, presumably to help with drainage. More detail is provide below, in the discussion section of the excavation undertaken in 2015.

FIELDWORK 2015

The 2015 fieldwork season comprised three elements, which aimed to elucidate further the work carried out by the McCord Centre in 2013 and 2014. The three strands comprised a survey of the topographic features within the Rothley High Lake character area, further excavation across the serpentine path in order to define its full extent, and a desk-based assessment to analyse the map evidence to try and determine the extent of Capability Brown's involvement in the creation and development of Rothley Lakes.

Desk-based Assessment

The desk-based assessment re-examined the documentary and cartographic evidence used in the Debois survey, with the aim of trying to tease out more detail concerning the origins, design and development of Rothley High Lake. The results were then used to provide context and help interpretation for the field survey and excavation carried out in by the McCord Centre in 2013 to 2015.

As established by Debois, surveys of the Wallington estate show that the area around Rothley Lakes was known as Rothley Moor (Debois 2011: 194-5), until sometime in the 1730s. The estate survey of 1728 show the land as unenclosed in 1728 (NT reference 582300). The estate plan and survey of 1742 (NT reference 582301) shows the beginnings of improvement and the rationalising of field boundaries, though most of Rothley Moor remained unenclosed. By the time of Sir Walter Blackett's death, in 1777 when another estate survey was carried out (NT reference 582302), Rothley Lakes were in place, along with the plantations around the High Lake. High Lake has the same outline in 1777 as it does today. In essence an area of rough upland pasture, in early post-medieval terms 'waste' had been converted into a designed pleasure ground.

As described in the High Lake character area 31 (Debois 2011) the High Lake was created by damming a small tributary of the Donkinrig Burn, itself a tributary of the Delf Burn all of which form part of the Hart Burn catchment, flowing into the River Wansbeck at Angerton. The 1728 survey map (NT reference 582300) shows that the lake was formed at the headwaters of this small tributary, bounded by the recent turnpike road at its east end. Here, the turnpike road traverses a watershed between the tributary burn and the burn which was later dammed to form the Low Lake. This watercourse is named the Green Burn on the 1728 survey, but is now known as the Ewesley Burn. It too forms part of the wider Wansbeck catchment. The Ewesley Burns flows into the River Font which has a confluence with the River Wansbeck at Mitford.

The first documentary reference to the Lake is in 1767, when John Elliot was paid £44 for mason's work there, and the purchase of a boat the following year may indicate that the lake had largely been completed (Debois 2011, 195). The boat is also indicative of one of the main purposes of the lake to participate in boating (fishing, sailing and rowing) an activity growing in popularity amongst the leisured class in the late 18th century (Menuge 2010). The lake was certainly completed by 1769, when John Wallis described it as, 'a semicircular lake, between two young plantations: a rill entering it from the north, called, White Den-Sike' (Wallis 1769, 524). A year later, Arthur Young described the High Lake as 'a very fine new-made lake of Sir Walter Blackett's, surrounded by young plantations, which is a noble water; the bends and curves of the bank are bold and natural, and when the trees get up, the whole spot will be remarkably beautiful' (Young 1770, 94). By 1778, the lakes were clearly in use as a retreat by Sir Walter Blackett, when William Hutchinson describes Rothley Lakes as

‘a curvated canal presented itself, margined with young plantations, on whose border a tent was pitched. This was one of Sir Walter's retreats’ (Hutchinson 1778, 224).

The Wallington Hall archives contain numerous maps and plans for the estate, of which nearly 30 are directly relevant to the designed landscape at Rothley Lakes. In addition, there were two maps relating to the design of the folly at Codger Crag. The design plans and drawings relevant to this stage of the project are described in more detail, below. A list of the relevant maps and plans are contained in Appendix 1 and, where appropriate, reproduced in Appendix 2.

The First Design for Rothley High Lake, c. 1751 (NT reference 582445; Appendix 2, number 1)

The plan, ‘A sketch for Rothley Shield’ is the earliest known design proposal for what became Rothley High Lake. It is thought to date to around 1751, and was definitely drawn up before the opening of the Hexham to Alnmouth turnpike road in the 1750s (Northumberland County Council 2009, 27). The plan depicts a building in the centre of a lawn on the north side of the lake with a plantation of trees forming the backdrop and the building overlooking a serpentine lake. The design is formal, with a semi-circular area of lawn defined by sand or gravel walks continuing on from the road to the building. The building itself is not drawn in detail but the intention appears to have been a small structure, perhaps a summer or banqueting house. Small copses of deciduous trees are shown scattered about the edges of the lawn, behind the building. A path or drive is shown leading through the belt of plantation woodland to a dog kennel on the eastern edge of the woodland belt. The path parallels the curve of the lawn, it does not meander but rather runs directly to the dog kennel. The aspect from the building across the lake was intended to be open to a belt of firs bounding the southern bank of the lake. The eastern end of the lake terminated at a probable causeway to take the road from the park, though its alignment differed from the turnpike road which was eventually built. Below the road, where Rothley Low Lake was later created, plantations of firs were intended for both sides of the burn.

The author of this plan is not known, however, it is very similar in style to the plan for the China Pond of 1750 (NT reference 582512, Appendix 2, number 8). A comparison of both the writing and drawing styles suggests the same hand, for example, the way in which individual trees are drawn are the same on both plans. Both designs also date to around the same period.

Design for Rothley High Lake (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2)

The second plan is undated and anonymous but seems to have been drawn up after the turnpike road was built in 1753-4, but before 1767 when the lake is first documented (Debois 2011, 195). The plan would have been drawn up at least after the line of the turnpike road had been surveyed, as the road shown at the east end of the lake fits the line of the turnpike road as built. The plan is very similar to the design which was eventually

implemented, with some minor differences. The accuracy of the plan was tested by overlaying it onto modern Ordnance Survey maps within GIS using ArcMap (Figure 3). Even though the result meant some distortion of the original plan through the process of rubber sheeting, meaning it could not be georeferenced with the same accuracy as a plan drawn to modern survey standards, it is clear that the design fits the existing landscape quite closely. The northern and southern banks of the lake and the external boundary of the woodland plantation to the north, for example, follow the modern boundaries. The fit is close enough to suggest that this was the plan that was realised by Sir Walter Blackett.

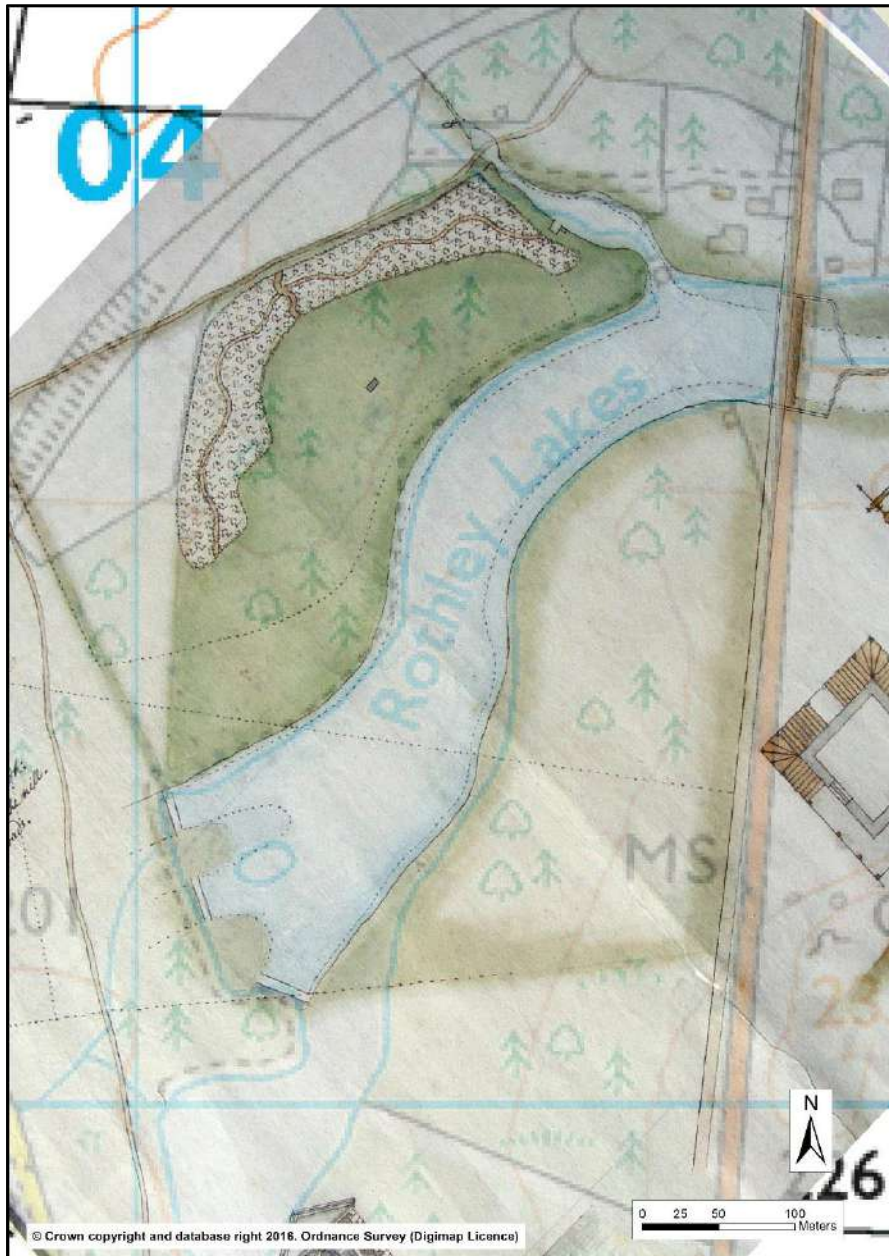


Figure 3: Plan of the High Lake, c 1760, overlain onto modern 1:25,000 OS map. Although there are differences in the historic plan when compared to the modern map, the fit is close enough to suggest that this was the design that was eventually implemented, although with some changes.

The plan has a detailed description for the creation of the lake and the woodland plantation,

‘The plantation Contains 3 acres, 2 Rood[s] and 20 pole. Trinching at one Shilling per Rod, will cost about 18 pound and will require about 700 trees to plant it, at least 15 feet distance. 132 Rod, in the fence at [?] 6 pence per Rod, is nine pound eighteen shilling. There will be about eleven acres and a half of water. The inclosure, between the wood and water, contains three acres, and near a quarter. The water will flow up the Creek to the ford, and a boat-house may be made, at the east end, of the plantation; whose roof, need not be, above the surface, of the ground. The dotted lines shows the old dikes, except those between the water mark; which shows the flat, between the hills. The double lines, shows the roads’.

As with the plan of c 1751, the design shows a large open area of lawn on the north bank of the lake, with a building in the centre opposite the top of the lake’s curve, which would have provided a pleasing view across the water to Codger Crags and Rothley Park. The wide band of woodland plantation is shown as deciduous trees with a serpentine path running the whole length from east to west. The east end of the path terminates at an inlet on the small creek where the proposed boathouse is shown. The creek, as stated in the description, would have been widened by the flow of water up from the newly formed lake. An existing road, which crossed the creek by means of a ford, runs along the northern boundary of the woodland. A second, shorter, serpentine path runs north to south across the longer woodland path, probably providing access from the road onto the open lawn and house.

One of the main differences between the plan and the design that was implemented is at the western end of the lake, where the plan shows the lake terminating in three arms, each with a dam. The lake as built terminates in two arms, covering a larger area than originally intended. The area of the planned three arms is contained within the large northern arm, terminating in an earth and stone dam, with a small island just offshore. If the lake as built is a modification of the original design, then the island may have originated as one of the inlets between two of the dams. The southern arm as built is not part of the original design, but also terminates in an earth and stone dam with a spillway in its north-west corner. The plan states that the lake was to cover about 11 and a half acres of water. The georeferenced plan shows that the lake design would have covered just over 13 statutory acres. As built, the lake now measures just over 18 acres, and this corroborates with the measurement given in the 1777 survey as 18 acres, 3 roods and 29 perches (see above).

The design of the serpentine path also varies considerably from the path as surveyed and excavated (see below). The original path was designed to run the entire length of the plantation woodland, following the curve of the woodland but also meandering. Its eastern end led to a boathouse built on the inlet created from the small stream on the north shore of the lake. The design shows the path crossed by a shorter serpentine path, running north to south and which was almost certainly intended to provide access from the road to the

north onto the lawned area. As built, the path does not run through the entire length of the wood. It terminates where it meets the north-south path, turning north (see below in the section on the survey).

The plan shows an extensive lawned area, with a structure half way between the woodland plantation and the lake. At the bottom of the plan are designs for two buildings (see below). Although not stated explicitly, these were clearly intended to be designs for the building shown in the centre of the lawned area. In one corner of the plan is a small sketch of Rothley Castle in Rothley Park, drawn in such a way as to reflect its position as seen from the building. The clear intention of the landscape design as Rothley Lake was to provide scenic views southwards towards Rothley Park and the eye-catching folly of Rothley Castle.

Debois have suggested that the plan may have been drawn up by Thomas Wright and that the style and the writing are superficially similar to his. Debois, however, only looked at a photocopy of the plan, and a close examination of the original shows that the drawing style and writing are not Thomas Wright's. Indeed, it has not been possible to match the writing and drawing style of this plan with any of the known contributors to landscape designs and buildings for the Wallington estate at this period. Other designs by William Newton, J. Strickland and George Brown all differ sufficiently in style and handwriting to indicate none of them were the authors of this plan.

Rothley Low Lake

In 1770, soon after the completion of the High Lake, Capability Brown submitted designs for the Low Lake, which were completed in 1771. Brown drew two plans, including an amended design for the head of the Lake which was not implemented (NT old reference WAL/Plan/17, Appendix 2, number 3). The main design (NT old reference WAL/D/26, Appendix 2, number 4) shows woodland planting in copses, rather than the continuous belt of woodland designed for the High Lake. The Low Lake plan shows woodland alongside the road at the west end, on a bend on the southern shore and at the eastern end. Between small clumps and scattered trees are depicted. Most of the planting is deciduous with occasional scattered conifers. On the top of the rise on the northern lake shore, a banqueting house (Debois 2011, 214) is shown in plan. Behind is a circular area bounded by a belt of trees. The area is divided into two, with a garden to the east and an area for coach house and stables to the west. The house is served by a drive leading from the turnpike, which gently meanders along the top of the slope and which continues to the woodland at the head of the lake. Although it is documented that the Low Lake was completed 'as designed' in 1771 (Debois 2011, 214), it is clear that the planting scheme and banqueting house were never completed as shown on the plan of 1771.

Structural Features at Rothley Lakes

The second design plan for the High Lake (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2) includes two elevation drawings for the structure shown in the centre of the lawn. Both buildings, probably summer houses, are shown as two storeys in height with steps up to a surrounding verandah. One proposal shows a neo-classical design in brick with stone dressings, with a pedimented roof over a large Venetian window at first floor level. The second proposal, which is also shown in plan view as a square structure with flights of steps to the rear, is a brick structure more Gothick in design. The eclectic design features a tented roof, slightly concave in profile, culminating in a weather vane. The elevations have a decorated brick façade with a contrasting diamond pattern. A plain rose window is shown on the first floor, directly above the doorway.

There are a number of other plans and elevations for buildings and structures at Rothley Lakes (see Appendix 1), including some by Capability Brown which were presumably intended to be part of his designs for the Low Lake. Brown submitted designs for a 'bridge' at Rothley Lakes (NT old reference WAL/D/330, Appendix 2, number 5), in the form of a view showing a rusticated causeway with five arched recesses that would have carried the road, and that were softened with vegetation along the parapet. The form was clearly meant to convey the image of an ancient ruined structure. As with most of the other designs for structures at the lakes, this does not seem to have been implemented. Brown also drew up alternative plans for a house (NT old reference WAL/D/31A; WAL/D/31B) at Rothley Lake, and this is most likely the banqueting house shown on his plan of 1771 (NT old reference WAL/D/26, Appendix 2, number 4). He also appears to have drawn plans for a boat house and round tower (NT old reference WAL/D/238), neither of which seems to have been built. Although Debois suggests that Brown may have designed the boat house shown on the OS map of 1922 (Debois 2011, 216), and which is also shown on OS maps of 1897 (OS 1897) up to 1975 (OS 1975) and which survives as wooden piles in the stream, the evidence indicates otherwise. In particular, the OS map of 1865 (OS 1865) shows no boat house on the inlet, plus the boat house shown on later OS maps is in a different location to the one shown on the design for the High Lake of c. 1760 (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2), which was designed to be built on a small embayment with steps leading down to it, on the western bank of the inlet on the north side of the lake. The serpentine path terminates at this embayment. It would seem most likely that this was the location for an intended boat house, which would presumably have been a 'wet' building where boats could have been taken in straight from the lake. The embayment was constructed by, and is visible on, the OS maps of 1865 and 1897. Even by 1865, however, it is clear that the inlet was silting up as it is shown as a marshy area, and by 1897, the inlet had once again become a small stream with much of the inlet and embayment terrestrialised.

Although the design plan for the High Lake shows some form of building in the centre of the lawn (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2), the only building known to

have been constructed within the area around the High Lake is the Keeper's Lodge, which is shown on the plan for the 1777 survey and which had been taken down by the 1960s (Debois 1777, 196). The design plan shows that the original intention was to have a building on the lawn, as evidenced by the proposed building designs incorporated into the plan. These do not seem to have ever been realised. Documentary evidence does tell us, however, that a temporary structure was erected on the lawn, in the form of a tent. The tent is first referenced by William Hutchinson in 1778, by which date both lakes had been constructed. Although Hutchinson does not describe the exact location of the tent, a position on the High Lake would seem most likely as he describes it as being on the, 'curvated canal ... margined with young plantations' (Hutchinson 1778, 224). Given that Brown's woodland planting scheme does not seem to have been implemented according to his design on the Low Lake, but the planting on the High Lake was carried out, a location on the lawn above the High Lake is favourable. According to Debois (2011, 196), in 1813 John Hodgson remembered a tent pitched near the lakes in the summer, where visitors were entertained by the proprietor. The reference they give for this is Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, Part II Volume I, which covers Rothley, but the date of publication on the version they have used is 1832. Available copies of the History seen by the authors date to between 1820 and 1858 in various editions. The work that Hodgson was involved with in 1813, however, was *The Beauties of England and Wales*, but its only reference is to 'two fine sheets of water, hemmed with shrubberies' (Hodgson and Laird 1813, 181). It is not clear whether the Debois reference to Hodgson's work has been misdated or has been taken from an edition of one of his works unavailable to the authors of this report. In any case, the mention of a tent echoes earlier references.

The Wallington Hall archives contain one design for a building, dating to the late 18th century, on the rear of which is the phrase 'Intended building of stone, where the upper Tent used to stand, at the Upper Lake' (NT reference 582585). The elevation shows a plain, single-storeyed building of classical design, with a small pediment over a Venetian window. The plan provides internal dimensions of 21 feet by 10 feet, enough room to take a long table, with a doorway at one end. The plan shows a small room, five feet across internally, added to the rear and which would have been accessed only from the outside. The design suggests this was intended to be a small banqueting house, with views over the lake supplied by the large window to the front. There is no evidence to suggest that this structure was ever built.

Landscape Assessment and Survey

The landscape assessment and survey was not intended to repeat earlier work by Debois (2011) or Newcastle University (Aldred 2013; 2014) but to clarify areas of uncertainty and to ascertain whether there were other, previously unrecorded landscape features. This work was carried out by a means of a walk over, particularly in discussion with Paul Hewitt, the Countryside Manager for the Wallington Estate, in order to elucidate the origins and nature

of the woodland planting. Landscape features identified by the walk over were located through topographical survey, using a total station theodolite (TST). The results of the assessment are presented below. They have been divided into three main sections: the serpentine path, the woodland planting and the tent.

The Serpentine Path

One of the key features that required further survey was the serpentine path. The fieldwork carried out by Newcastle University in 2013 and 2014 had recorded some parts of the path in detail, by topographic and tape-measured survey. This work, however, was restricted to those parts of the path which could easily be seen as an earthwork and associated stone features but it did not locate either end of the path. The 2015 fieldwork season traced the continuation of the path at both ends of the previously surveyed sections, by partly removing overlying leaf litter to reveal a faint hollow way. Below the leaf litter, occasional edging stones could be seen *in situ*, which served to confirm the line of the path. As the hollow way was identified, bamboo canes were placed along what was thought to be the central line. The canes were then used as markers for a topographic survey, in which a single line was recorded using the total station. The south-western end of the path was then tested through small-scale excavation (see below), to try and identify a terminus.

The survey revealed that the path as built appears to have been amended from the original plan (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2). Whereas the 18th century plan shows the path meandering along the entire length of the woodland, ending at the edge of the plantation at both ends, the completed path was much shorter (Figure 4). No trace of the path could be found beyond the intersection with the shorter north-south path, which connected the road to the lawned area. This shorter path could also be observed as a shallow hollow way, though it was difficult to follow south beyond the intersection of two paths mainly as a result of ground disturbance. Some edging stones were observed at the intersection and appeared to indicate that the serpentine path turned north onto the north-south path. Although much overgrown with saplings and undergrowth, the north-south path could be traced to the northern edge of the woodland and to a gap in the woodland bank which separates Rothley Lakes from the grazing land beyond.

The design on the original plan suggests that visitors to the lakes would have arrived by carriage from the road on the north side of the woodland. The short path would have provided access into the designed landscape, and allowed the visitor to go straight on to the lawned area, turn right to follow the serpentine path to the edge of the woods, or to turn left to follow the path to the boat house. It is the option to have turned left which does not seem to have been built as a defined path. It is possible that the visitor was left to walk to the boat house through the widely-spaced beech trees which, even today, appear to create well-spaced, if informal walks. When designed this may have taken more of the form of an open avenue.



Figure 4: Surveyed features

The Woodland Planting

The area of original planting, in the form of a crescent-shaped band of trees framing the lawn on the north shore of the lake, is still clearly discernible within the wider area of woodland now on the site. This oldest woodland is dominated by veteran beech trees, interspersed with some oak, an occasional hornbeam and, at the eastern end, some veteran Scots Pines. The beeches provide a distinctive woodland character, as the dense canopy shades out most of the undergrowth. This has resulted in well-shaded and mossy ground, scattered with moss-covered stones in the western half of the woods. It is in this area where the serpentine path runs, and the mossy, rock-strewn ground would have provided a romantic atmosphere to the visitor walking along the slightly sunken, meandering path (Figure 5a). It is unlikely that the area had this character in the later 18th century, however, when the plantations were young. The eastern half of the woodland is slightly more open, though still with little undergrowth as a result of the beech canopy, giving the impression of wide walkways leading from the north-south path towards the boat house (Figure 5b). An attempt was made to survey the location of each of the veteran beeches, to try and identify whether there was a pattern to the planting scheme. The difficulty of sighting through the woods, particularly where saplings have grown up to obscure views, and of taking locational readings in a consistent manner, meant that it was not possible to carry out such a survey in any meaningful way.

The intended nature of the original woodland planting has been a matter of some discussion. Debois (1999; 2011) have interpreted the nature of the beech woodland to have been a coppice, at least partly on the habit of many of the trees which comprise multiple stems grown together. They bolster their interpretation by an association with Thomas Wright's liking for coppiced woodland as a means of manipulating views across the landscape (Debois 2011, 199), particularly as Wright's Codger's Fort was built to afford views over the lakes. This interpretation makes some assumptions, however, which on closer inspection can be ruled out. The first assumption is that Thomas Wright was the likely designer of Rothley High Lake. This is based on a comparison of the plan for the lake against known examples of Wright's work. Debois admit, however, that they were only able to examine a photocopy of the plan, which they used to make a comparison, but when analysing the original, there is clearly no resemblance to Wright's style. There is also no reason to associate Wright's plan for Codger's Fort with the design for the High Lake, which was clearly built before Wright's design for the Crag was drawn up in 1769. The Debois report makes specific mention of the first documented reference to the lake being in 1767 (Debois 2011, 195).



Figure 5: The original woodland planting comprises mainly beech. The western half (A) has stonier ground through which the serpentine path runs. To the east (B), the ground beneath the trees is more open. In both areas there is evidence for bundle planting

There is no reference to coppice wood in any of the contemporary, or near contemporary, sources which mention Rothley Lakes. When the woodland is referred to, it is usually as ‘plantations’ (Hutchinson 1778, 224; Young 1769, 524), rather than to coppice, a distinction which writers of the time are likely to have made quite deliberately. There are also references to ‘shrubs’ or ‘shrubberies’ by John Hodgson, which is picked up in the earlier Debois report (Debois 1999, Appendix G, section 3). In *The Beauties of England and Wales* (Hodgson and Laird 1813, 181), the lakes are described as ‘two fine sheets of water, hemmed with shrubberies’, and in *A History of Northumberland* (Hodgson 1823, 306) he says, ‘At first, shrubs were planted by the walks around this sheet, and some of them still remain among the tall grasses, rushes and carexes that have sprung up naturally among them’. Both these descriptions by Hodgson refer to planting around the lake itself, rather than to the woodland which was set back. This may have been a later addition to the landscape, perhaps planted at the same time as the deep plantations of larch and pine as described in Hodgson’s *History* (Hodgson 1823, 306). These plantations were probably made after Blackett’s death, and after the estate survey which followed, as the plan of 1778 (NT reference 582302) shows the original planting scheme set back on the north side of the lake.

The plantation established to the north of High Lake in the 1770s is dominated by beech, a tree that was not favoured for management as coppice, but was favoured as an ornamental timber tree in the 18th century. The beeches do have multi stems that to a degree mimic the growth of coppice from a stool, but no stools are discernible (Figure 5). The multi-stemmed beeches can be explained by bundle planting. This is a process in which two or more seedlings are planted close together. *Veteran Trees: A Guide to Good Management* explains that, 'as they grow the individuals become very closely pressed together. Some single boles show natural fluting and convolutions and it is rarely possible in single species groupings to be confident of their origin by visual inspection' (Read 2000, 20). The beech trees at Rothley show characteristics that indicate bundle planting, mostly as single species, but with one or two example of beech matched with Scots Pine. The reason for planting in this manner may have been accidental, though the number of such trees suggests it was done deliberately. They may have been bundled in order to provide support for each other as they grew in the thin and rather waterlogged soils at Rothley. Bundling for protection may have been especially necessary at Rothley, where beeches in the 18th century would have been an introduced non-native exotic growing in a challenging environment towards the northern limits of their climatic tolerance. Bundles would also have helped to provide a wide-spreading crown more quickly, and was a technique used by landscape designers (Read 2000, 20).

The boundaries of the original plantation can be traced on the ground in the form of earthwork features (Figure 4). The northern edge of the Rothley Lakes designed landscape is marked by a boundary bank, now surmounted with a modern fence, separating it from the pasture to the north. This bank matches the boundary as shown on the design plan (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2). At the south-western end of the boundary bank, the line continues as a shallow depression, suggesting a boundary ditch. The line of the earthwork was surveyed using a TST, although in places it was difficult to follow because of modern ground disturbance, a build-up of leaf litter and waterlogging. Particularly at the southern end, the relationship on this possible boundary was lost in relation to another shallow linear feature which appears to follow the southern edge of the woodland plantation. This was also surveyed using a TST. To test the assumption that these linear features were indeed boundary ditches to the plantation woodland, a trench was excavated across them (see below page 23ff).

The Tent

At least one tent was erected on the lawn at Rothley Lakes, as documented by Hutchinson (1778, 224). The plan (NT reference 582585) which proposes a stone building where the 'Upper Tent' used to be indicates that there was once more than one tent, with an implied lower tent perhaps closer to the shore of the lake. It is assumed that the upper tent would have stood somewhere in the vicinity of the proposed location for a building as shown on the design plan (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8, Appendix 2, number 2). Given that there is

no evidence that a permanent structure ever replaced the tent, any archaeological traces would be very ephemeral. In addition to this, the lawned area was subsequently thickly planted up with conifers in the 20th century. Although the conifers have been clear felled, the area of former lawn is now covered with thick brash, regenerated saplings and rhododendrons, presumably remnants of 19th century shrubberies. The thick vegetation makes negotiating this part of the landscape very difficult. Even so, an attempt was made by the team to identify the likely site of the tent, using a hand-held GPS. The design shows that the building was intended for the centre of the lawn, mid-way between the plantation, where the north-south path emerged onto the lawn, and the lake at the apex of the curve of the north shore. By taking a line from the apex of the lake's northern edge towards the north-south path, the approximate mid-way point lay on a relatively level area of ground of around 0.25ha (Figure 4; NZ 04163 90481). This would have afforded views both to Rothley Castle to the south, and across to Codger's Fort on the crags across the lake.

Access

From the design plan, access to the lake would have been via the new turnpike road, turning off onto a side road which would have provided access across the inlet by means of a ford and along the northern edge of the woodland. There is little sign of any track today in the field to the north of the woods, although the small stream which is all that remains of the inlet can be easily forded in this location and a deep hollow way still runs up the side of the plantation. Part of a paved road was recently uncovered in the garden of Rothley Lake House, to the east of the woodland (pers comm National Trust), suggesting that the original access was a substantial road (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Section of paved road uncovered in the garden of Rothley Lakes House (photo courtesy of the National Trust tenant)

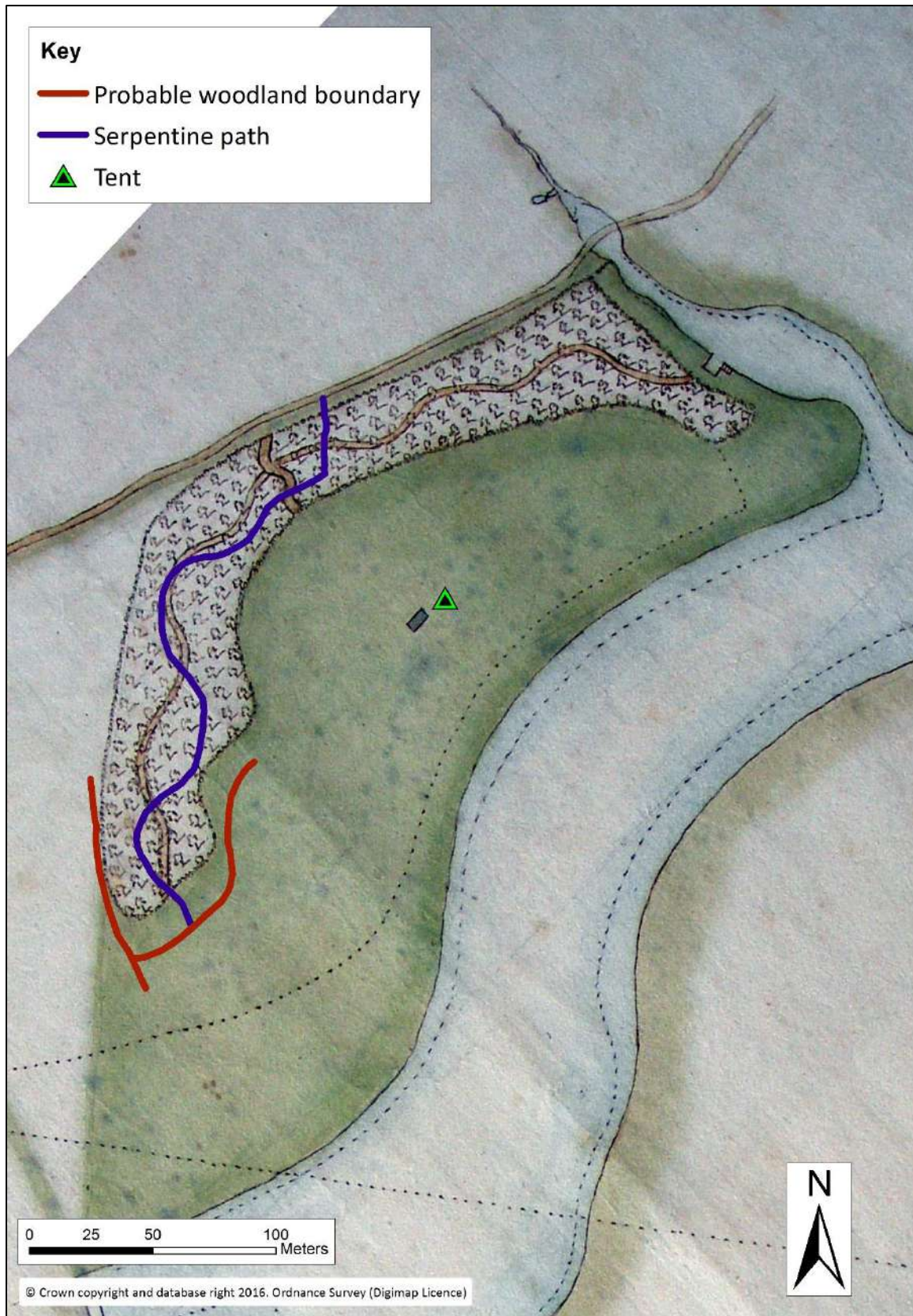


Figure 7: Surveyed features overlaid with the plan of c 1760 (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8). The similarity of the survey features with the original design is evident, even with the difference in accuracy of the historic plan in relation to the modern OS maps.

Excavation

Introduction

Three trenches (Trenches 2-4) were excavated in the south-west of the plantation, two to explore the structure and character of the serpentine path and one to examine a linear earthwork which appeared to equate with the 18th century boundary of the woodland area (Figure 8). One previous trench (Trench 1) had been excavated across the serpentine path in 2013 (Aldred 2014) and the results of that previous excavation are summarised here.

The 2013 excavation was undertaken to examine a section of the serpentine path (Aldred 2014, 12-13) but was unable to date the path. The conclusions were uncertain about the nature of construction. Moreover it was concluded that, 'it would be useful to excavate more trenches across the path so as to assess the design and construction for (in)consistencies' (Aldred 2014, 15).

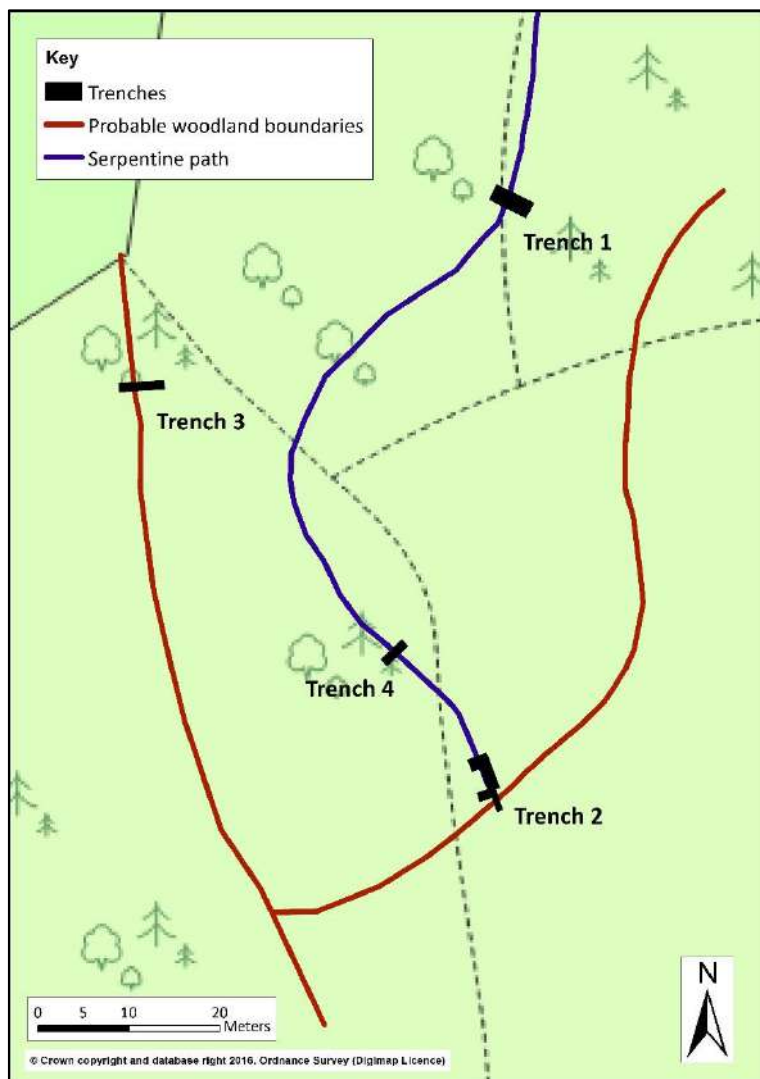


Figure 8: Location of excavation trenches

In addition to attempting to further elucidate the character of the serpentine path and the nature of the likely boundary earthwork, trenches 2 to 4 were excavated to specifically address two of the projects research questions. These are:

- how much of the 18th century designed landscape at Rothley High Lake survives as identifiable, and potentially restorable, features?
- how was the Rothley Lakes designed landscape influenced by the pre-existing landscape?

The excavation trenches were all located towards the south-west of the woodland area established north of the western Rothley Lake in the 18th century. The area is relatively poorly drained and for the most part the soils consisted of a sandy, relatively sterile upland soil overlain by a peaty soil formed from decomposed leaf litter. In trench 2 the southern and lower end of the trench had a base rich loam rather than a sandy upland soil. In all excavation areas, however, the uppermost soils overlay somewhat impermeable clay.

Excavation Methodology

Excavation was undertaken entirely manually with each stratigraphic context removed separately. Contexts were planned as multiple contexts and not as single contexts, as the stratigraphic sequence was insufficiently complex to justify the additional time required to undertake single context planning. All site plans were recorded at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10.

Each context was recorded individually on a context sheet and following an approach adapted from the Museum of London *Archaeological Site Manual* (MOLAS 1994). Throughout, the excavation adhered to the standards set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014). The excavation was undertaken by supervised students from Newcastle University as part of their undergraduate training in archaeological field skills.

Post-excavation analysis of the stratigraphic contexts was aided by the use of the 'Harris Matrix Composer' (downloadable from www.harrismatrixcomposer.com). Each trench is described in stratigraphic sequence, that is from the earliest layer or feature to the most recent. Stratigraphic matrices for trenches 2 to 4 are included in Appendix 3

Trench 1

In 2013 Trench 1 was situated towards the middle of the course of the serpentine path, at OS grid reference NZ 04066 90414 at a height of 210m aOD. It was positioned to investigate the construction and dimensions of the serpentine path and to recover dating evidence (Aldred 2014, 1). In form the trench was rectangular equating to a total area of approximately 8m². In summary the trench revealed a path formed by parallel dry stoned rubble 'revetments' to either side of a clay base with a centrally positioned gully, which was

interpreted as a drain. The path was 1.7m wide and from the top of the stone 'revetments' to the base of the gully was a depth of 0.7m.

Trench 2 (Figure 9)

Trench 2 was situated 55.7m to the south of Trench 1, at OS grid reference NZ 04063 90353 and lies at 206.7 to 207.7m aOD. It was positioned to investigate the southern terminus of the serpentine path. In form it was initially a 1.5m x 4m rectangular trench but subsequently was extended by a 2.2m x 0.8m wide slot to the south and two extensions to the west, one 1m x 1.4m and the other 1m x 1.2m equating to a total area of 10.6m². The irregular shape of the trench was the result of an attempt to maximise its coverage of the presumed route of the path whilst avoiding the dense roots of neighbouring trees. The trees constrained the trench from exposing the entire width of the path in any one part of the trench. The trench extended southwards to a bank (2022) and there was a very obvious difference in soils above and below the bank. Above they were thin upland infertile soils (2002/2003/2015), but below it a much more base rich deposit (2009).

Trench 2 was both the largest and stratigraphically most complex of the excavation areas. Seven distinct stratigraphic broadly phased groups can be recognised. Phase 1 consisted of the soils that lay above the natural clay and existed before the creation of the serpentine path. The soils (2002/2003/2015) above the bank (2022) were thin loosely compacted mineralised soils, dark brownish grey in colour with many root inclusions, but largely stone free. Below the bank (2022) the soil (2009) overlying the natural clay was a loosely compacted, light brown clayey loam at least 0.1m thick, containing numerous stones. The bank created a sharp break in slope with a fall of 0.6m over a distance of 1m. The bank enhanced a pre-existing slope which may have in part originated as a negative lynchet.

Phases 2 and 3 are broadly contemporary and relate to the construction of the path and the creation of a revetted bank and clay platform to the immediate east of the path terminus. The surface of the path consisted of pre-path deposits (2002/2003). To the west the path edge was marked by a small bund of re-deposited yellowish light brown clay (2005/2012) which sat on top of (2002/2003/2015). It was up to 0.8m thick and contained some large stones. To the east the edge of the path appears to have been defined by a stone alignment of loose rubble (2019), which was only partially excavated. It was 0.23m deep, and sat on top of an unexcavated yellow clay (2020) similar to (2005/2012) which formed the bund defining the western path edge. The width of the path between the stone alignment on the east and the clay bund on the west was about 1.4m.

Contemporary with the construction of the path, but unassociated stratigraphically as far as could be established within the excavation limits of trench 2, was a series of contexts related to the revetting of bank layer (2022) and the construction of a platform to the immediate east of the path. Bank layer (2022) was about 0.3m deep and comprised a light brown mix of subsoil and clay, largely stone free and loosely compacted. It was clearly re-

deposited and used to create a bank enhancing a natural slope or perhaps a lynchet (Figure 11). The layer was sectioned but otherwise unexcavated. Cutting soil layer (2009) was a shallow foundation trench [2008], 0.8m wide and 0.08m deep. The foundation trench contained the base of a stone revetment (2018), which was 0.37m deep and comprised large rubble boulders (Figure 10). The revetment was placed at the base of bank layer (2022), that lay to its north and underlay it. Bank layer (2022) was also overlain by (2006), a layer of yellowish light brown clay up to 0.18m thick which formed a platform on top of the bank and was clearly re-deposited subsoil and clay substrate. Revetment (2018) was overlain by loose rubble tumble (2016) which was clearly derived from the more structured and compact revetment rubble. This tumble was overlain by (2007) a loosely compacted, dark grey silty loam up to 0.07m thick. Layer (2007) was overlain by a light greyish brown subsoil about 0.05m deep (2010).

The construction/enhancement of the bank and the creation of the platform took place before the cutting of the gully that had been previously observed in Trench 1 and was also identified in trench 4. In Trench 2, gully [2011/2017] cut (2006), the re-deposited material forming a platform on top of the bank. Moreover, gully [2011/2017] also cut layer (2014/2023) which overlay (2005/2012) the re-deposited clay forming the bund marking the western edge of the path. Layer (2014/2023) consisted of a greyish dark brown moderately compact silty clay with very few pebble inclusions. This deposit, up to 0.10m in depth, formed after the construction of the path and before the cutting of the gully. It was not caused by the erosional use of the path but by material washing in from the topsoil deposits to the sides of the path. The character of the deposit suggests it occurred during a period before the formation of a humic topsoil associated with the decay of leaf litter so before the woodland plantation had become mature and well established.

Gully [2011/2017] was placed broadly in the centre of the path to the north but appeared to be on its eastern edge where the path terminated to the south. It measured 0.07 – 0.09m in width and was 0.08m deep. The gully was filled with a loose, black humic soil (2004/2013) which appeared to have been derived from leaf litter. The gully clearly became choked with leaf litter, however, before the formation of the existing upper soil layers of (2010) and (2001). Layer (2010), which overlay (2004/2013) and is described above, in character, was almost certainly derived from surrounding pre-path soils (2002/2003/2015). Layer (2001) which overlay (2010) was a dark brown humic topsoil that was up to 0.10m in depth and was stone free. It was derived from leaf litter, was of recent origin and had formed in a woodland environment.

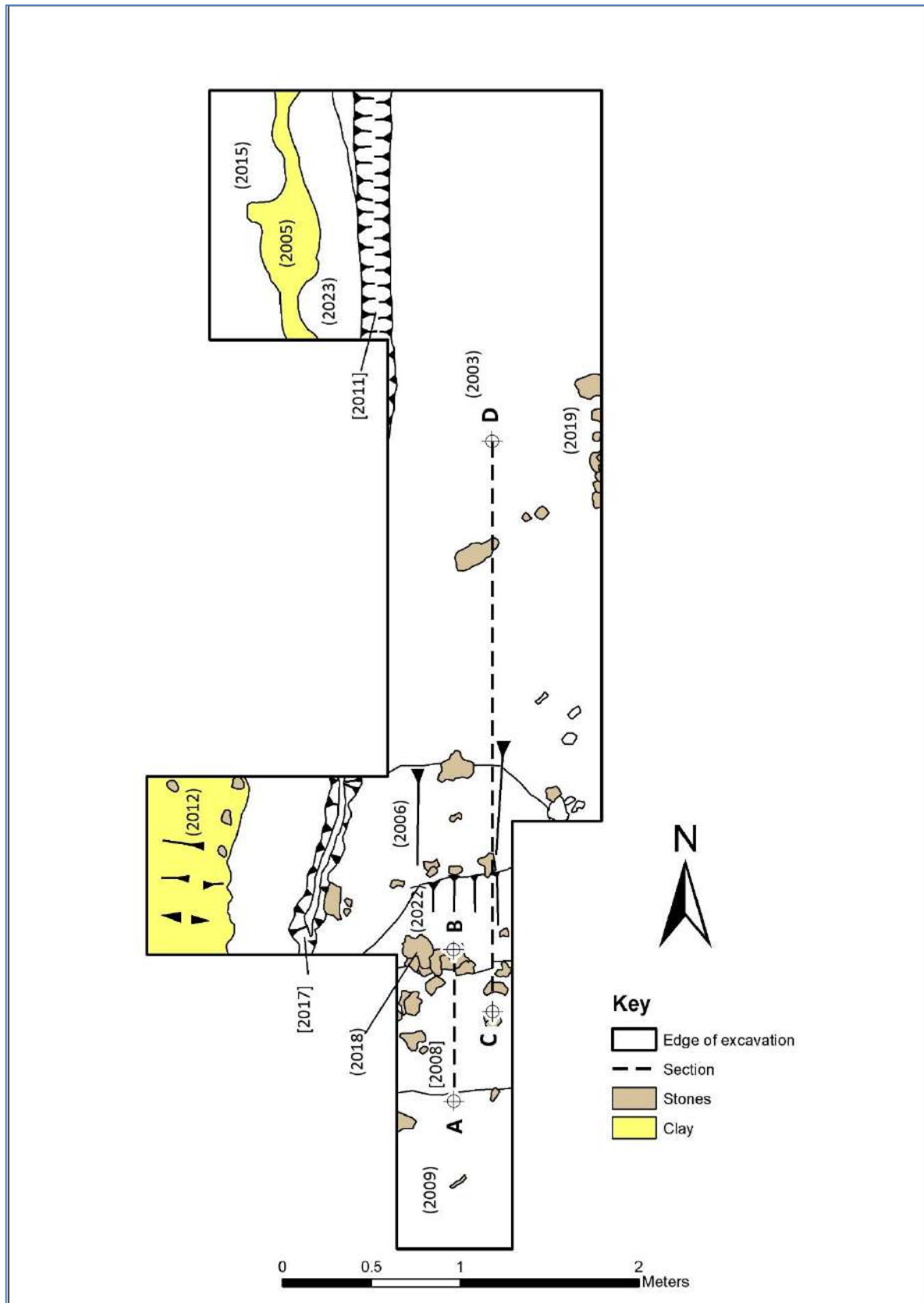


Figure 9: Trench 2. Sections A-B and C-D are shown in figures 10 and 11 (below)



Figure 11: Section A-B in Trench 2 showing revetment (2018) from east



Figure 10: Section C-D in Trench 2 showing bank (2022) and revetment (2018) from west

Trench 3 (Figure 12)

Trench 3 was situated 41.4m to the west of Trench 1 at OS grid reference NZ 04025 90393 and lies at 208m aOD. It was positioned to investigate a depression that was considered to be either a possible boundary ditch or another path. In form the trench was rectangular equating to a total area of 5m². Two seemingly parallel linear cut features were revealed. The feature forming the visible surface depression was revealed to be of likely recent origin, but there was an earlier likely boundary feature found to its east which was largely invisible at the present day surface. A slight ground indentation on alignment with an existing surface boundary feature was the only indication of the existence of the more easterly cut feature.

The earliest feature cut into the natural brownish yellow clay ground surface (3003/3006/3010) was [3008], a cut feature 0.52m in depth, consisting of a wide flaring 'U' shaped ditch, 1m wide at its top, with a slot in the base. The slot was straight sided on the east with an angled side on the west, it was about 0.2m deep and only 0.08m wide at its base. The ditch and slot suggests that this was a palisade trench dug with a spade probably to enclose the woodland area planted in the later 18th century. The slot would have probably taken posts for paling, leaving a scarp slope in front of a wooden fence to the west (outside) and a shallower slope to the east (inside). The slot at the base of [3008] was filled with deposit (3011), a yellowy reddish brown compact loam containing some large stones at the base and streaks of grey clay throughout. Deposit (3011) had the characteristics of rapidly re-deposited material with the larger stones towards its base probably forming post packing. Deposit (3011) was overlain by deposit (3007), a reddish brown loose silty and sandy loam, which appears to have formed the primary fill of the ditch once the paling had been put in place. This in turn was overlain by (3002) a dark grey soft sandy loam which formed across the whole area once ditch [3008] had silted up.

Layer (3002) was cut by a shallow ditch [3005] which lay to the west of ditch [3008]. Ditch [3005] was U shaped in profile, relatively flat bottomed, 1.4m wide and about 0.2m in depth. The ditch contained a single fill (3004), a soft greenish grey clay with a few stones at the base. The fill also contained the only artefact from Trench 3, an intact clear glass whisky bottle of 20th century date. Fill (3004) was overlain by the local topsoil (3001), which also overlay (3002). Layer (3001) was a black/dark brown humic layer formed from decomposing leaf litter and is a woodland soil of recent derivation.

Trench 3 revealed two ditches, the most easterly of which [3008] would appear to have been part of a boundary surrounding the later 18th century woodland plantation which contained the serpentine path. The boundary is visible a few metres to the north as a bank. This ditch probably both defined the plantation area and, as it appears to have contained paling, also formed a barrier to exclude animals from feeding on the young spring as the plantation was established. Ditch [3005] appears to be nothing more than an open drain which rapidly filled in and seems to be of relatively recent origin, perhaps no earlier than

very late 19th century. Ditch [3005] was not dug until after ditch [3008] had filled in and ditch [3008] may not even have been visible or known to the diggers of ditch [3005].

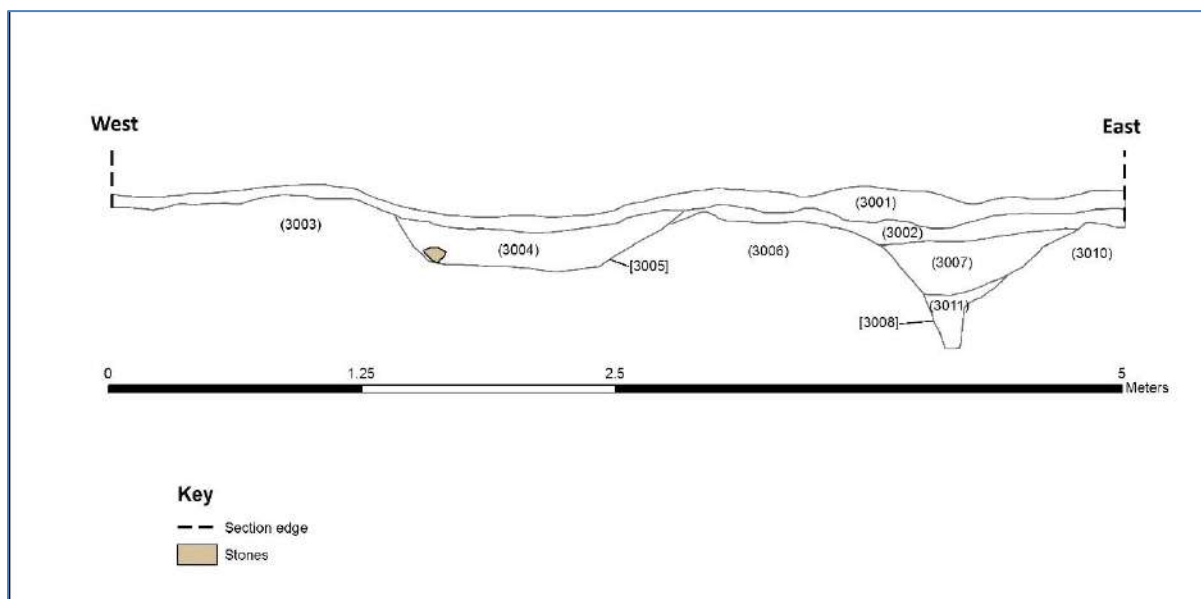


Figure 12: Section through Trench 3

Trench 4 (Figure 13)

Trench 4 was situated 48m to the south of Trench 1 at OS grid reference NZ 04053 90363 and lies at 208m aOD. It was positioned to investigate a further section across the serpentine path between its southern terminus and the section excavated across it in 2013. In form it was rectangular equating to a total area of 3.5m². The stratigraphic sequence revealed was very similar to that previously observed in Trench 1. Throughout the stratigraphy was greatly disturbed by tree roots.

The excavated feature before excavation consisted of a shallow depression with a line of rubble appearing to mark its western extent. Excavation revealed that the depression was formed by a slight cut [4005] that defined the base of the path. The material forming the path base was the natural clay, a largely stone free yellow clay (4008). In the centre of the path, and also cut into (4008), was a gully [4007], 0.2m wide, which may have been part of the original path construction or may have been cut later. Within this trench the former seemed the most likely as the layers filling both [4005] and [4007] are for the most part identical. The one deposit which is within the cut for [4005] but not [4007] is (4009) a grey-mid brown silty loam which developed on the west side of the path where its cut was steepest and appears to represent a primary fill within the cut of the path.

The natural clay removed in cutting the path on the west side appears to have been piled on the side of the path into a small bund of re-deposited natural clay (4010). This formed the base to the line of piled rubble which defines the western edge of the path in this location

(4011). No such alignment was apparent on the eastern edge in this location. Overall the path appears to be about 2m wide in this location, but its eastern edge was extremely difficult to define and may have lain beyond the excavated area. The total depth of the path from the top of the rubble alignment (4011), to the base of the gully [4007] was 0.5m.

The remaining infilling deposits within the cut for the path were (4004), a mid-brown loam lacking stone inclusions, which was overlain by (4003), a black humic deposit of relatively recent origin. Above (4003) on the eastern side of the trench only was (4001), a humic loam formed of decaying leaf litter. One further layer post-dated the construction of the serpentine path this was (4002), a mid-grey silty loam lacking stone inclusions, which post dates the features defining the western edge of the path. This layer overlay clay bund (4010) and abutted the rubble alignment on top of the bund.

No artefacts were recovered from Trench 4 so no datable evidence was forthcoming. The path, appears to have been built in one phase including the central gully, but this cannot be proven stratigraphically and in Trenches 1 and 2 there was evidence to suggest that the gully was dug later. This central gully would appear to be an open drain. There is no evidence to suggest that the path silted up and was then cleaned, rather it would appear that after construction it gradually filled with material derived from a wet woodland environment. The nature of the path in comparison to elsewhere, for example trench 1, indicates that whilst its broad character was the same there were variations across its length in terms of edge definition, depth of cut and path width.

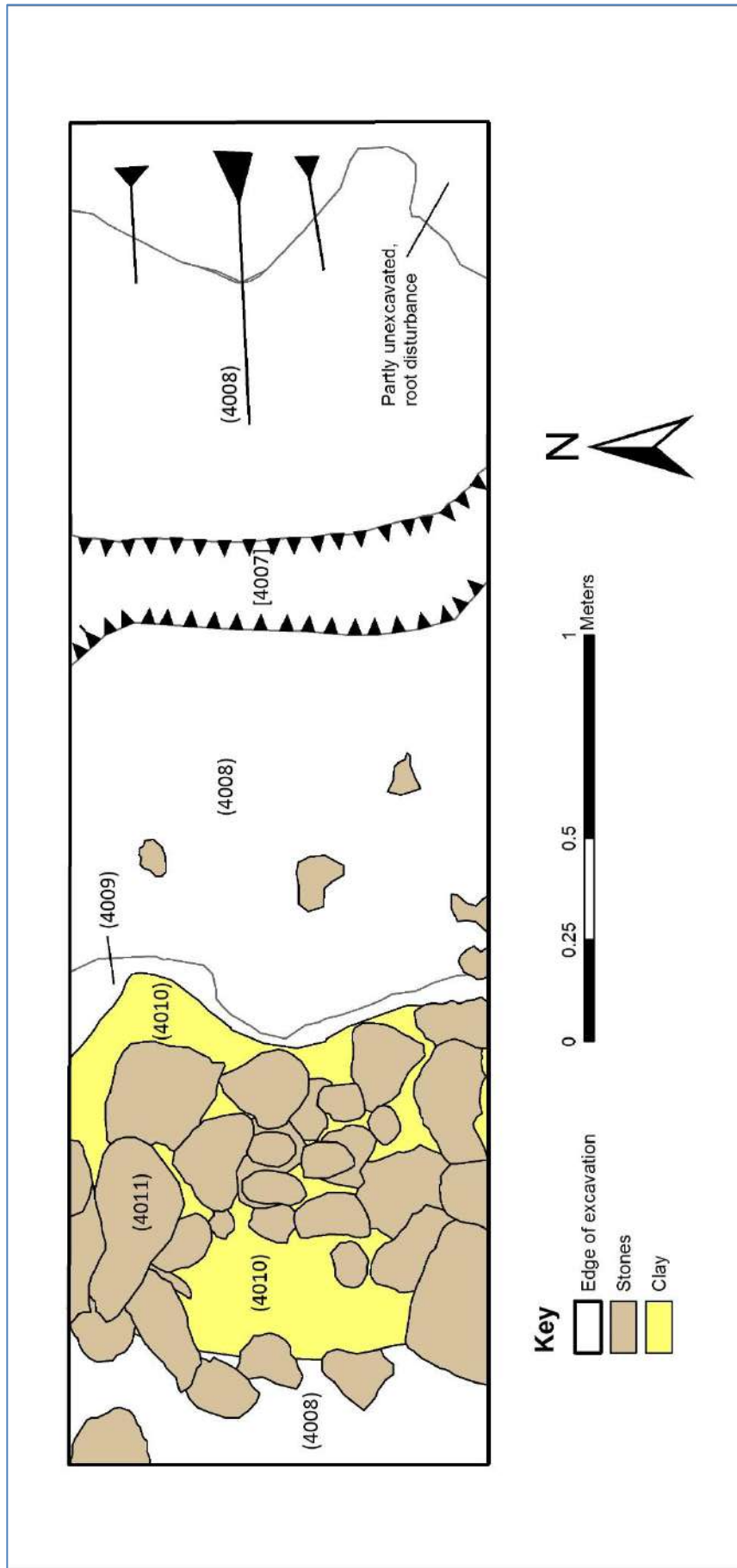


Figure 13: Trench 4

Discussion

The three trenches excavated in summer 2015 towards the southern end of the Rothley High Lake 18th century plantation examined two separate features, the serpentine path and the boundary of the plantation. For the most part the excavated features are not independently datable from archaeological evidence and dating is dependent on reference to corroborating documentary sources. The research questions were, however, answered, at least in part.

With regard to the serpentine path the excavations intended to examine potential variations in construction along the path. It was found that the path did vary in width between 1.4 and 2m. The edge was not always defined by alignments of piled stone but rather in some places just by a clay bund. In the Trench 1 excavations these stone alignments were described as revetments but they were not retaining anything and had little structure. They were simply lines of piled stone and were set on top of the clay bund. It can be assumed that both the clay and the stones were derived from clearing the surface of the path and were set to the sides of the path to define its edges. The stone piles may well have been arranged to look as naturalistic as possible.

The Trench 1 2013 excavations across the path had concluded that the path had a clay surface and that a drain was later cut into it to dewater it. Doubtless the exposed clay surface of the path would have rendered it difficult to use in wet conditions and a drain would have helped. Excavations in Trench 2 in 2015 confirmed that the drain was not part of the original path design but was added later. It seems likely that the period between the path being constructed and the drain being dug, the environment surrounding the path was not especially wooded, in that the soils that began to form on the edges of the path do not appear to have been derived from leaf litter. In contrast when the drain ceased to be cleared and maintained, the drain filled with leaf litter creating a humic soil. It can thus be assumed that the woodland was mature when the path ceased to function. The drain worked by gravity as the serpentine path slowly descended to the south. Indeed across the nearly 56m separating Trench 2 from Trench 1 the surface of the path and the base of the drain falls by more than 2m.

Trench 2 also identified the end of the serpentine path where it reached the boundary of the woodland plantation. When the plantation was established and the path constructed, the end of the path would have reached the edge of the woodland. The view south from the plantation edge would have given a vista across the High Lake to Rothley Castle without any interference from tree cover. The revetted bank with clay platform on top of it, to the immediate east of the path terminus, may have been deliberately constructed to elevate the viewer looking south towards the lake. This would have provided an enhanced panorama at the end of the woodland walk.

There was a clear difference noted in the soils above and below this bank and this difference was stratigraphically demonstrated to predate the construction of the bank. It is possible, therefore, that the bank was an enhancement of a pre-existing feature possibly a lynchet caused by cultivation to the south. Certainly the soil to the south of the plantation was thicker and richer than that to the north and this is reflected in the vegetation present today. The soil to the south had the characteristics of an agriculturally formed tilth, whilst that to the north was a typical relatively sterile upland soil. This may indicate that the southern plantation boundary had previously been the boundary between the uncultivated waste and the cultivated lands. The plantation thus would have been established in the 18th century on traditionally uncultivated land.

The relationship of the southern path terminus to any plantation boundary was not established, nor was any such boundary identified in the area. In Trench 3, however, evidence was recovered that illuminates the character of the likely plantation boundary as established at the time of the plantation's origin. The plantation boundary would appear to have consisted of paling set within a palisade trench. As well as a continuous fence line this would have produced a fall in ground level both in front of and behind the fence.

CONCLUSION

In 2015, various investigative techniques were used to research the Rothley High Lake landscape and to supplement and enhance previous surveys. These techniques were broadly successful in addressing the research questions for the 2015 project.

The Pre-Plantation Landscape

Before the late 1760s and the creation of Rothley High Lake, the landscape of the Rothley part of the Wallington estate was largely upland moor in character. Excavation in Trench 2 indicates that there were differences in soil between the area that became the plantation and the area to the immediate south, which became part of the lawn. The area that became the plantation had thin upland soils, whereas the area to the south had a thicker, richer loam. This suggests that at least part of the area that became lawn may have been cultivated previously.

The Creation and Development of the Plantation

The excavations within the plantation did not recover any datable artefacts. Nevertheless, documentary evidence indicates that the plantation was established by 1769 (Wallis (1769, 524; Young 1770, 94). It was still described as a young plantation in 1778 (Hutchinson 1778, 224). The original plantation appears to have consisted largely of beech trees that were planted in bundles, in order to create the effect of a canopy more quickly than would have been possible with single trees. It would appear that the plantation was intended to become a heavily canopied woodland with little understorey. The aim would have been a shaded,

mossy, rocky and thus picturesque and mysterious landscape, at least at the western end of the wood.

The Construction of the Serpentine Path

The western end of the wood was chosen for the creation of the serpentine path, which would have taken a meandering route through this picturesque woodland landscape. The path was part of the original design and archaeological evidence suggests it was implemented before the wood matured. The path was very simple in construction, consisting of a clay base between two edges marked by loosely piled stones. The whole design would have been intended to appear as naturalistic as possible. It would seem that the clay base of the path soon became claggy in wet weather, requiring the addition of an open drain. The fill of this drain indicates that it remained in use until the woodland was mature enough to create significant leaf litter.

The Role of Lancelot Brown at Rothley Lakes

The involvement of Lancelot Brown in the creation of the Low Lake is well attested; his design plans survive and the construction of the lake is documented. An association with the High Lake has long been speculated. Whilst the landscape of the High Lake, including the plantation and probably the serpentine path, date to the late 1760s contemporary with many of Brown's designs elsewhere, there is no evidence for his involvement in their design. Even so, the serpentine character of the water body and the curving, naturalistic and picturesque nature of the surrounding landscape features, are part of the Brownian milieu of landscape design. Given Brown's local origins, including his brother, George, being estate manager at the time, it is possible that Brown was at least an inspiration for the High Lake landscape.

The Purpose of Rothley Lakes Designed Landscape

The Brownian landscape is characterised by serpentine lines, both in the creation of water bodies and in the lines of drives, paths and encircling belts of woodland in a way that imitated nature. It reflected Man's control over nature, fitting in with ideas of the Enlightenment and the ability to appreciate such landscapes required an educated mind. An appreciation of these serpentine-style landscapes was attained by movement through them, for example on foot, by carriage or in a boat (Mayer 2015). This movement was contrived and constrained by the character of the available routes, which were designed to provide vistas and experiences that promoted the sensibilities of the landscape's owner.

Rothley Lakes landscape was part of the wider Wallington Estate designed landscape, but it was located at a considerable distance from the house. Consequently, it was intended to be experienced as part of a journey. Visiting the lakes was an event that began with a carriage or horse journey of nearly five miles, travelling through a farming landscape undergoing improvement. As the route climbed towards Rothley Lakes, there would have been evidence

of the moors having been tamed and improved and, in the case of Rothley Park, put to productive use as a deer park. The route took the visitor to a causeway, which naturally the visitor would want to cross. On the far side, the visitor turned off the toll road to travel along the edge of the Rothley Lakes landscape, with woodland on the left and coal mines ahead and to the right. This would have enhanced the impression of a landscape put to productive use and would have showcased Blckett's ability to exploit the economic potential of his estate. The whole impression would have been of a previously poorly productive waste being made more profitable, more productive and more beautiful.

On reaching the northern edge of the plantation, the visitor would have proceeded on foot into the woods. There they were presented with choices. To the south they could continue their journey through the woodland to the lawn and towards the upper tent, where they would have been afforded views across the lake to Rothley Castle and Codger's Fort. The original intention here was to provide a permanent structure where visitors could rest, eat and enjoy the view, although the tent does not seem to have been succeeded by a building, as was repeatedly planned. Alternatively, the visitor could progress along the serpentine path, and experience the cool, damp and shaded woodland environment provided by the maturing beech plantation. Having meandered through this picturesque experience, they would have emerged on the edge of the woodland, again to have an elevated view down the lake towards Rothley Castle and across to Codger's Fort. Finally, they could have turned left from the entrance to walk through a more open woodland, possibly along an avenue, towards a boat house. Here, they would be able to embark on a boat and journey onto the lake, where they could appreciate the designed landscape from the water. Boat houses and interest in boating appear to have become more popular in the mid-18th century (Menuge 2010), at the same time as the development of the serpentine style landscape. It is unlikely to be coincidental that the popularity of boating increased at the same time as the development of serpentine water bodies. These water bodies provided the same experience of emerging vistas as could be experienced on serpentine walks and drives.

The Potential for Restoration

The line of the serpentine path has been traced for most of its entire length. It would be possible to restore the route, though in its original form it is fragile and vulnerable. To restore it as a route would inevitably lead to the destruction of the path as a heritage asset, and should thus be avoided. The route, rather than the path itself, could be restored by means of a raised boardwalk. This would enable the route to be followed whilst retaining the original path beneath it, though it would have to be designed carefully in order to preserve the original path.

The character of the plantation can be restored through appropriate woodland management, controlling sapling growth. The main feature of the designed landscape that has been lost, and which could be restored, is the lawn which lay between the plantation and the lake shore. Some area of this lawn were planted up shortly after the estate passed

from the Blacketts to the Trevellyans, but other areas have been planted more recently, particularly the area, now felled, of 20th century coniferous plantation on the central part of the lawn. The area could be cleared of the thick brash left over from the felled conifers and of the regenerating saplings, scrub and rhododendron thickets which choke the open space of former lawn. Clearing the central part of the lawn would help to restore the vistas across the lake to Rothley Castle and Codger's Fort. To restore the vistas more fully would also require clearing some of the plantations on the far side of the lake to open views through to the castle and the fort. This would also allow the recreation of the original vista from the end of the serpentine path.

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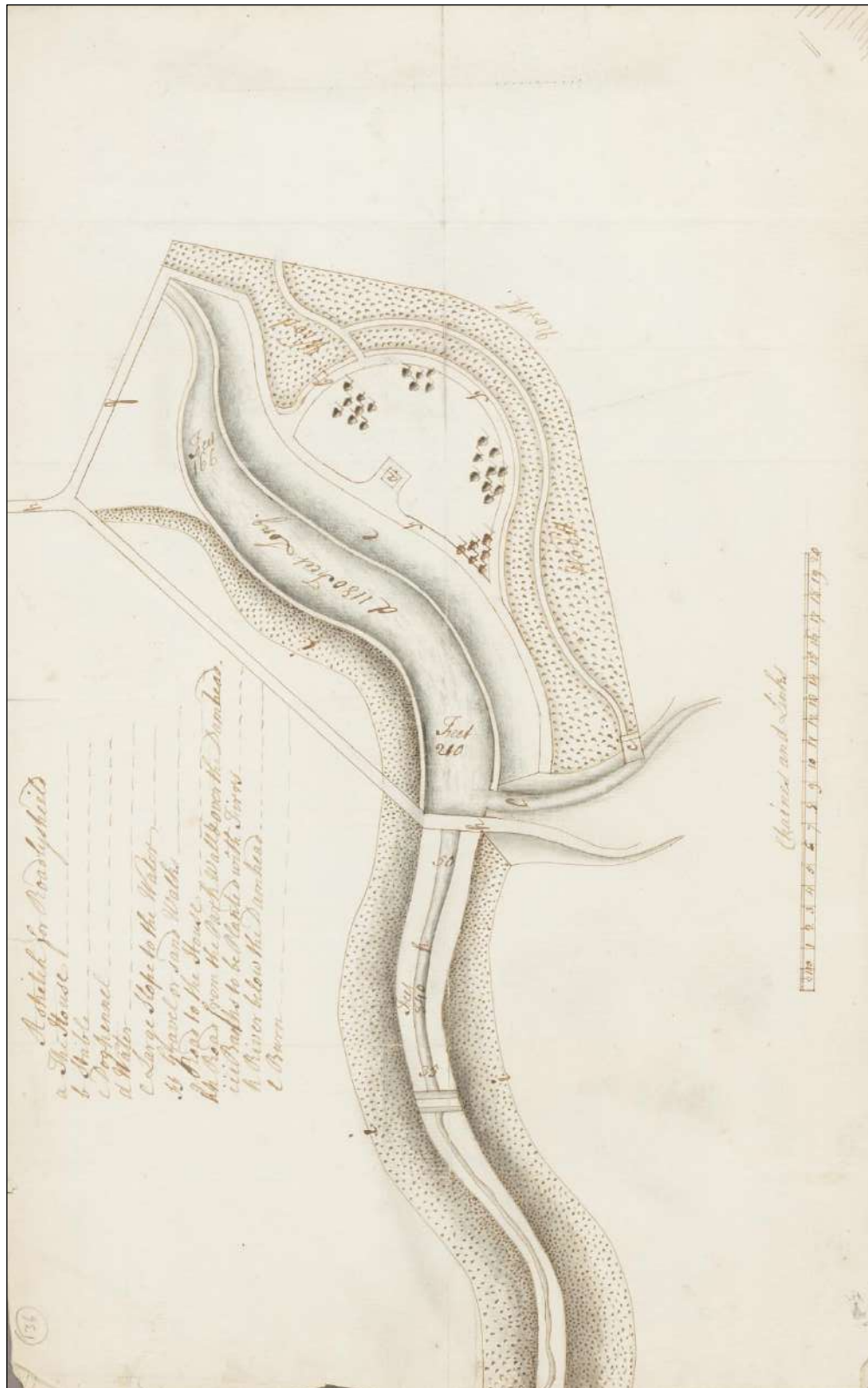
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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF HISTORIC MAPS AND PLANS AT WALLINGTON HALL RELEVANT TO THIS REPORT

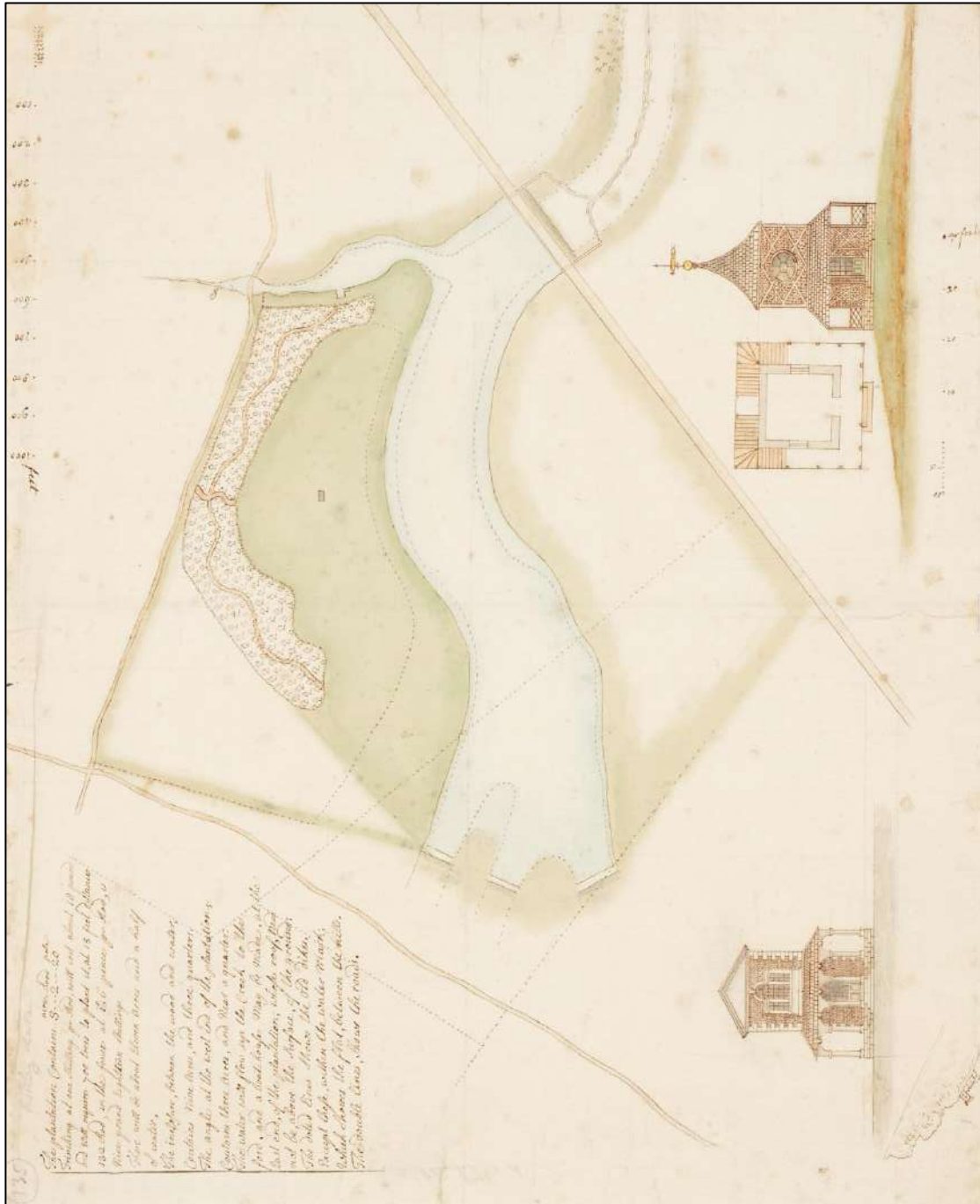
NT New Ref.	NT Old Ref.	Debois Ref.	Name	Description
-	WAL/D/26	P.1769A	Capability Brown	Rothley Low Lake
-	WAL/D/28 & WAL/Plan/14	P.1769.E	Thomas Wright	Codjah Crag design plan and elevation
-	WAL/D/31A WAL/D/31B	P.1769D	Capability Brown	Proposed house at Rothley Lake
-	WAL/D/238	-	Capability Brown	Proposed boat house and round tower for Rothley Lake
-	WAL/D/330	P.1769.C	Capability Brown	A bridge for Rothley Lake
-	WAL/Plan/17	P.1769B	Capability Brown	Rothley Lake (Low Lake)
-	WAL/Plan/8	M.1751B		Plan of Rothley High Lake
70	WAL/Plan/11	P.1769.K	Mr Newton	Rotunda
582300	WAL/D/5	M.1728	John Robertson	Map of the estate of Wallington in the parish of Hartburn in the county of Northumberland. 1728
582301	WAL/D/6	M.1742	H Richmond	Map of the estate of Wallington in the county of Northumberland. 1742
582302	WAL/D/7	M.1777	-	Map of the Wallington estate in the parish of Hartburn, Northumberland. 1777
582445	WAL/D/194	M.1751A	-	Sketch for Rothley Shield, 1751
582487	WAL/D/286	1769.L	Thomas Wright	Plan for a gamekeeper's house near Rothley Lake
582488	WAL/D/287	1769.M	Thomas Wright	Elevation of the south front of gamekeeper's house near Rothley Lake
582489	WAL/D/238	P.1769F	Capability Brown	Design for Rothley Lake (boat house no. 1 & 2 round Tower)
582492	WAL/D/241	P.1769N	Mr Newton	South front of a pavilion at Rothley
582493	WAL/D/242	P.1769P	Mr Newton	Elevation of pavilion
582494	WAL/D/243	P.1769.Q	Mr Newton	Pavilion to be added to south
582495	WAL/D/244	P.1769S	Mr Newton	Gothic building near the Lake
582512	WAL/D/261	M.1750A	-	China Pond, 1750
582577	WAL/D/327	P.1768.B	J Strickland	Buildings for the Lake
582578	WAL/D/328	P1769.A	-	Post and rail at Rothley Lough
582579	WAL/D/329	P1769.X	-	Post and rail fence, Rothley Pond
582580	WAL/D/330	P.1769.W	-	East shed at the Lake
582581	WAL/D/331	P.1769V	-	A house for the lake

NT New Ref.	NT Old Ref.	Debois Ref.	Name	Description
582582	WAL/D/332	1769.U	-	Elevation and plan for a cottage ar Rothley for the gatekeeper
582583	WAL/D/333	-	-	Park keeper's lodge at St James' Park with additions intended for the lake at the west end if the foundation can be made good
582584	WAL/D/334	-	-	Park keeper's lodge
582585	WAL/D/335	P.1769.R	-	Intended building of stone where upper tent used to be
582586	WAL/D/336	P.1769T	-	Building north of Rothley lake
584631	WAL/Plan/13	P.1769.F	Thomas Wright	Battery for five guns at Codjah Crag

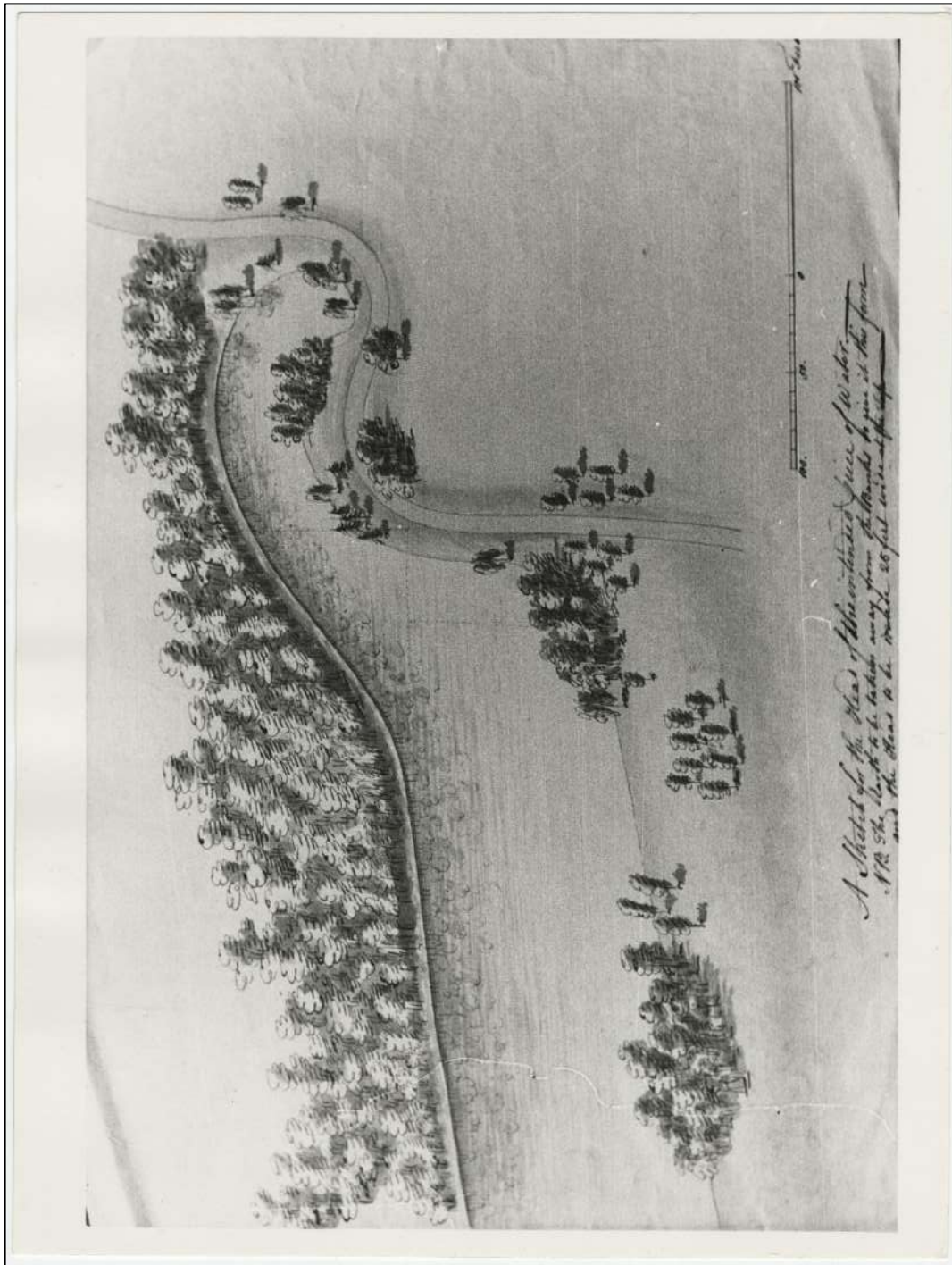
APPENDIX 2: HISTORIC MAPS AND PLANS DISCUSSED IN THE TEXT



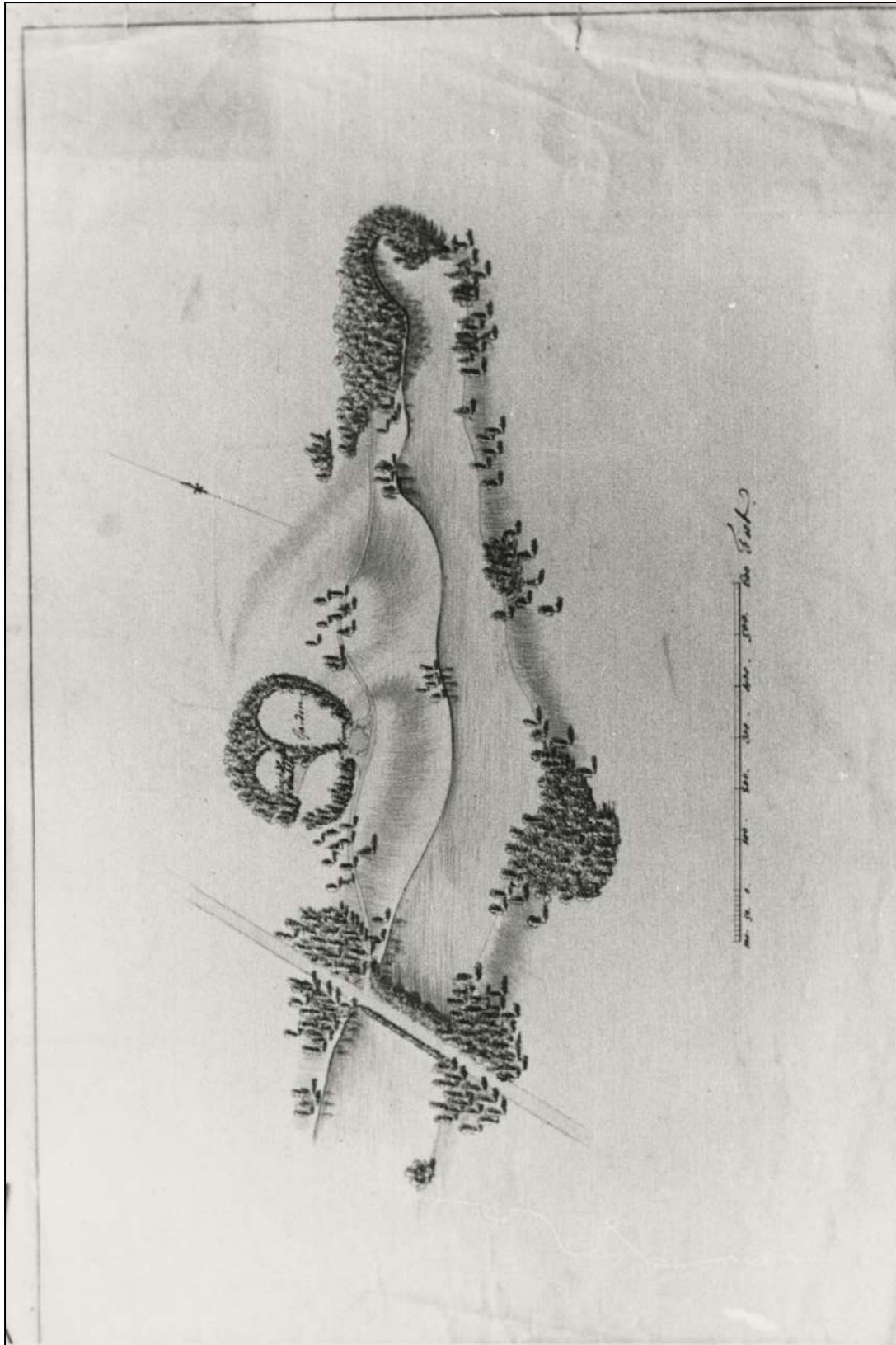
Appendix 2 number 1: A sketch plan for a lake at Rothley Shield dated 1751 (NT reference 582445)



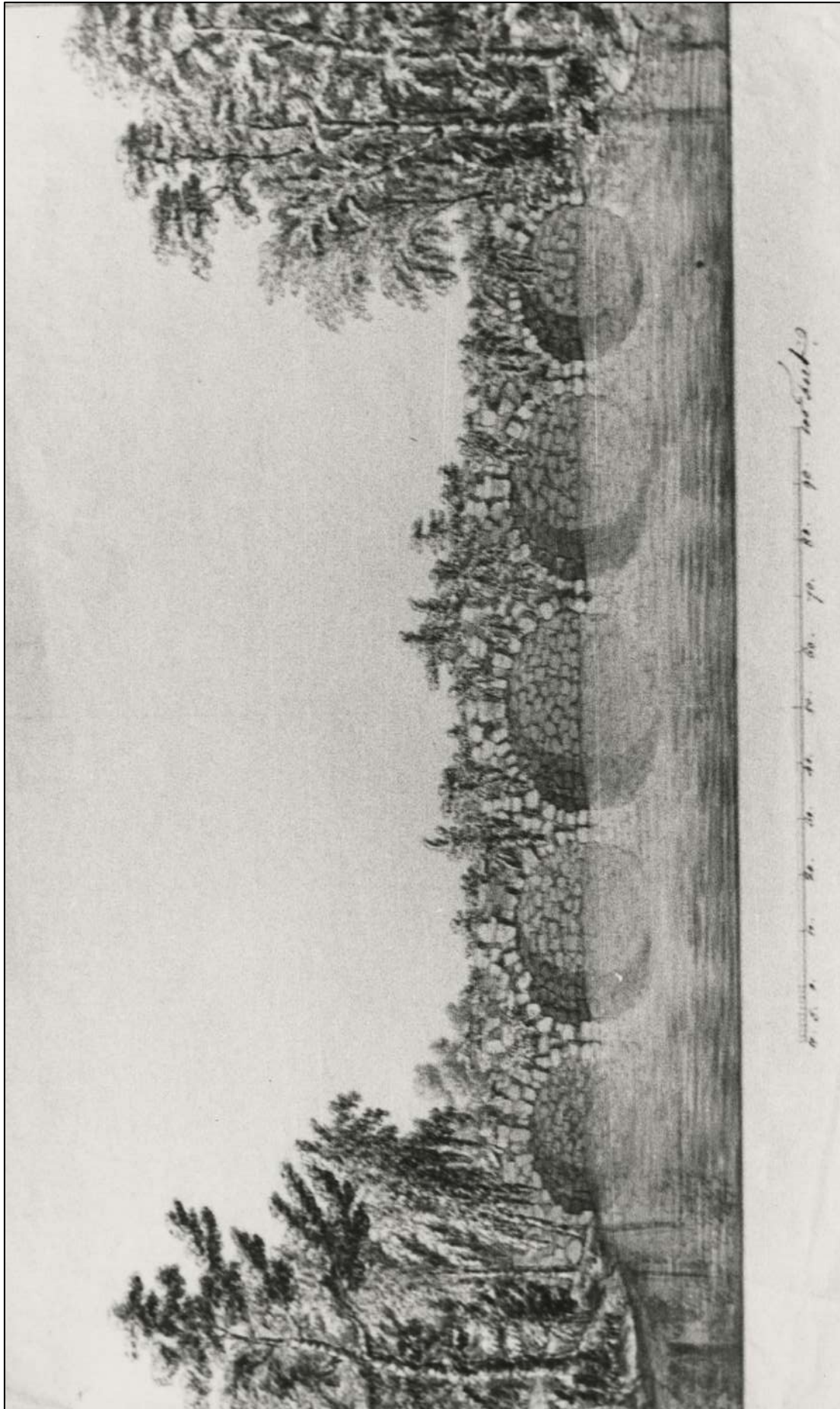
Appendix 2 number 2: Plan for the High Lake, Rothley, dated c 1760 (NT old reference WAL/Plan/8)



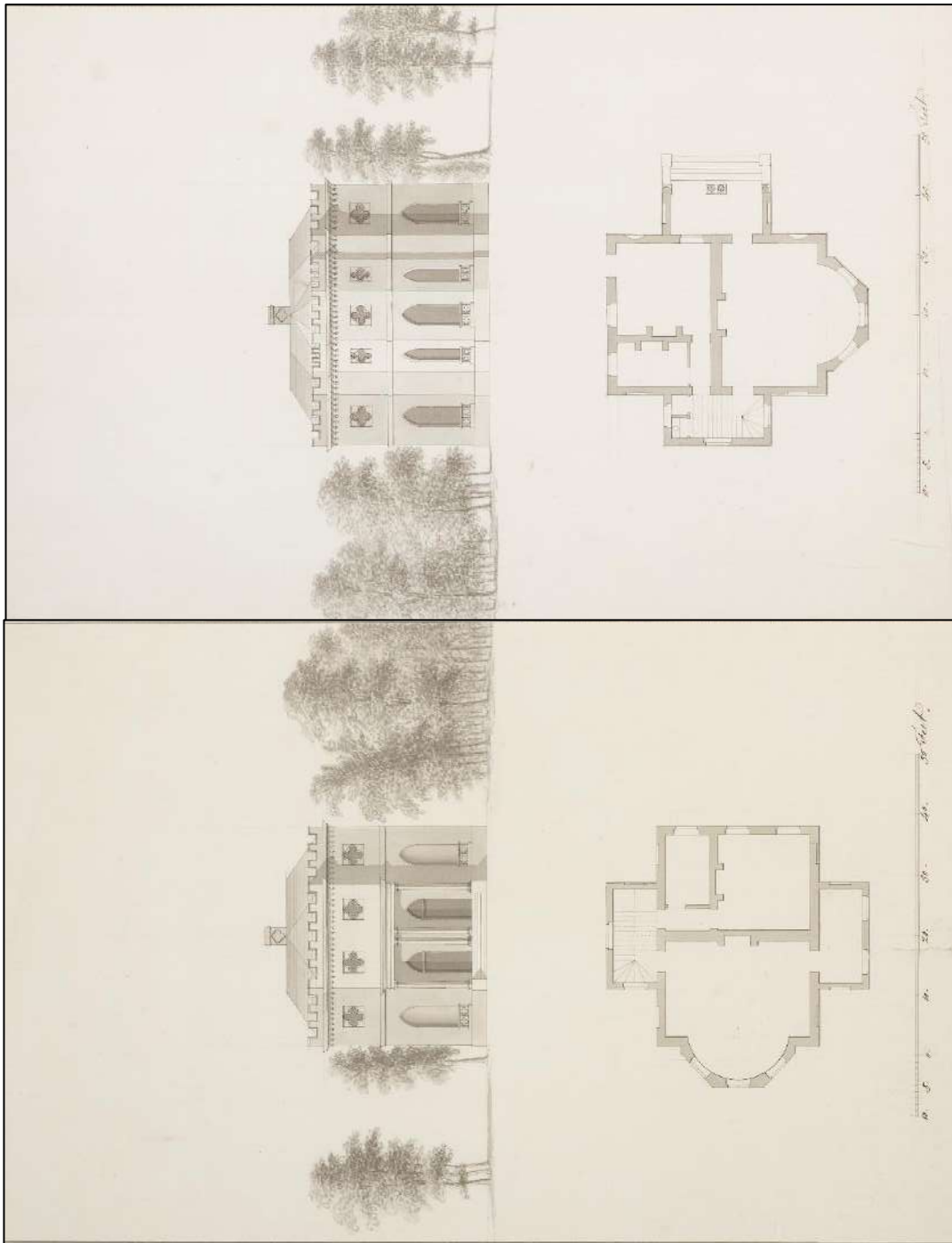
Appendix 2 number 3: Capability Brown's plan for the head of the Low Lake, 1771 (NT old reference WAL/Plan/17)



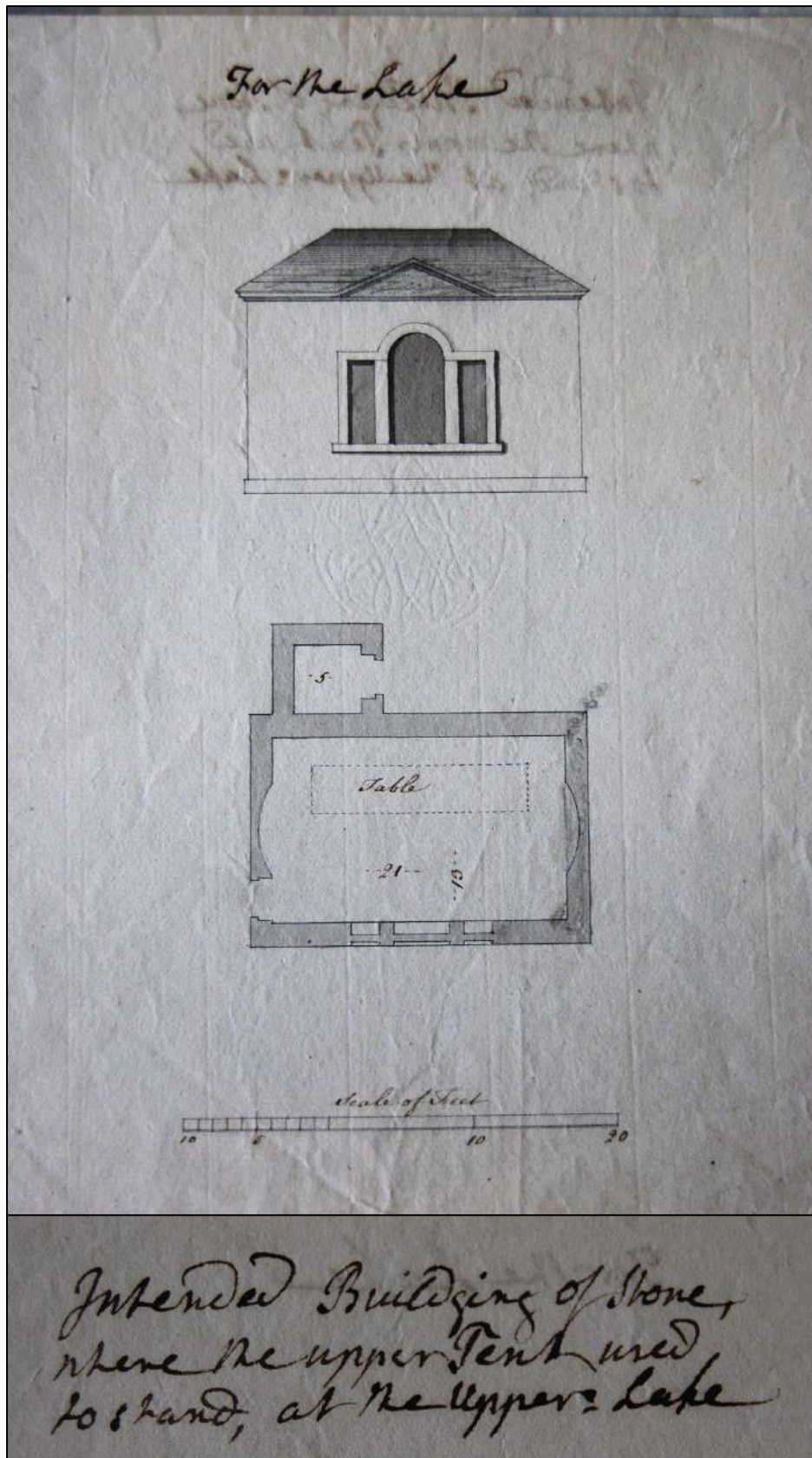
Appendix 2 number 4: Capability Brown's plan for the Low Lake, 1771 (NT old reference WAL/D/26)



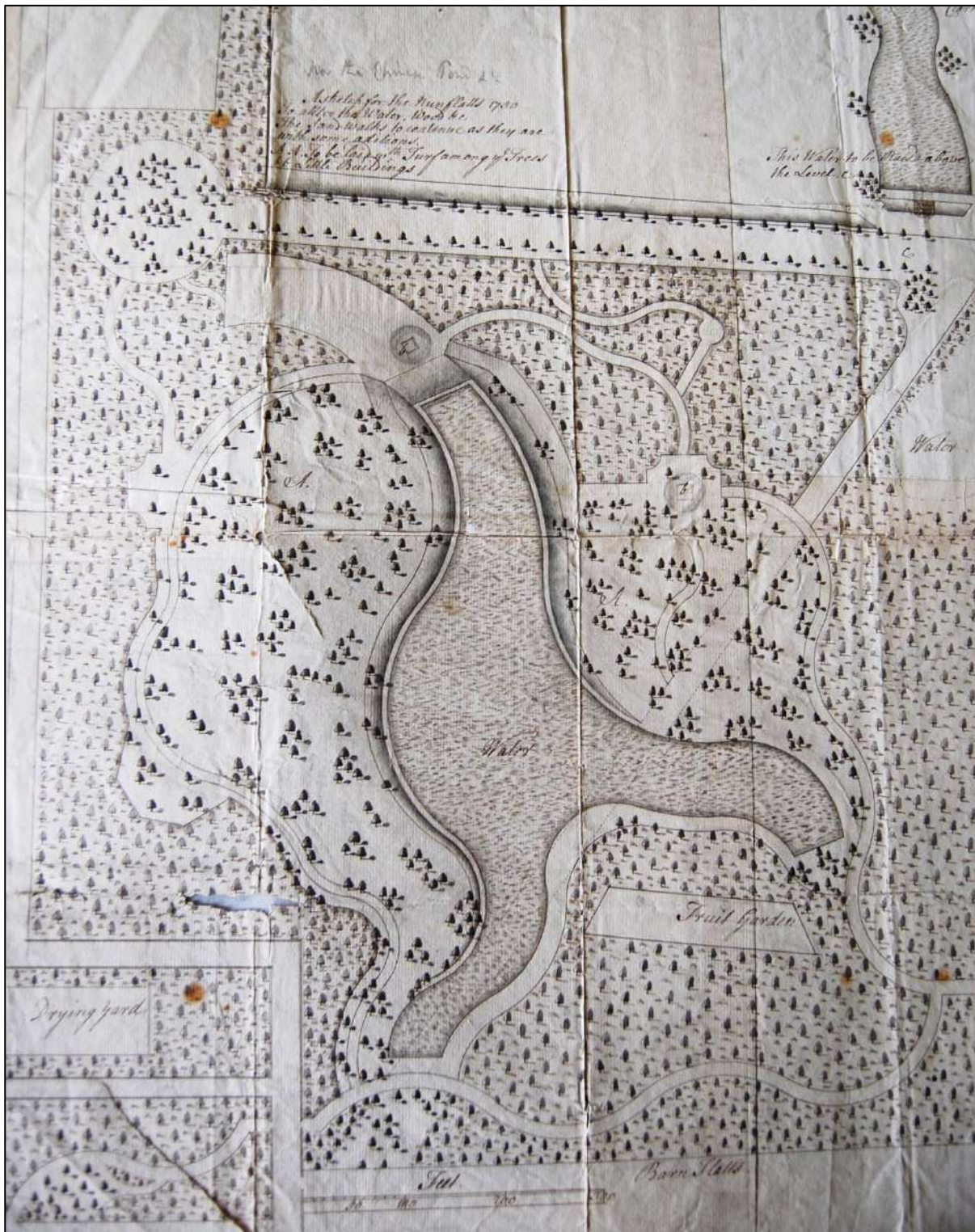
Appendix 2 number 5: Proposed bridge between the two lakes by Capability Brown (NT Old reference WAL/D/330)



Appendix 2 number 6: Two house designs for Rothley Lake, probably the house shown in plan on the design for the Low Lake (NT old reference WAL/D/31a and WAL/D/31b)



Appendix 2 number 7: Plan of proposed building for Rothley Lake with the inscription giving the intended location on reverse, where the upper tent used to be' (NT reference 582585)



Appendix 2 number 8: Plan for the Chinese Pond, 1750 (NT reference 582512)

