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F. Hill Farm (photograph c.1950)

As well as plans for the landscape, Brown prepared schemes for matching wings to the house, a gothic folly and ice house, but it is thought the existing north and south pavilions were built as part of refurbishments by Sir William Chambers during 1760s or 70s. Looking out from the front of the mansion across the dry valley, long views extend across the park northeast towards Cheverells (**B**) and southeast towards Hill Farm (**F**) built in the 1740s as an eye catcher, but now hidden by trees and inaccessible.



G. Kennels Lodge from the south-west



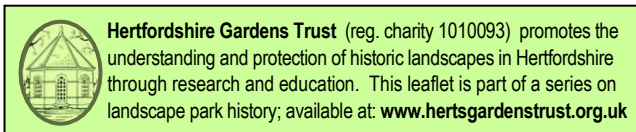
Continue along the track until Kennels Lodge (**G**) and the edge of the park. At this junction turn right and with Beechwood Home Farm on your left, follow the track along the park boundary, marked in part with nineteenth century black metal railings in the hedge row. Passing Gravel Pit Wood, proceed to the much-



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J. Capability Brown's plan of 1754 (walk in red)

extended Hollybush Lodge (**H**) and turn right into Roe End Lane, which will take you back to Cheverell's Green. A footpath leading off to the left between Roe End Farm and Feveralls Farm (**J**) is an alternative route back via Markyate and refreshments. Sebright House in the High Street, formerly the Sebright Arms, was a mid-eighteenth century inn on the London to Wroxeter highway.



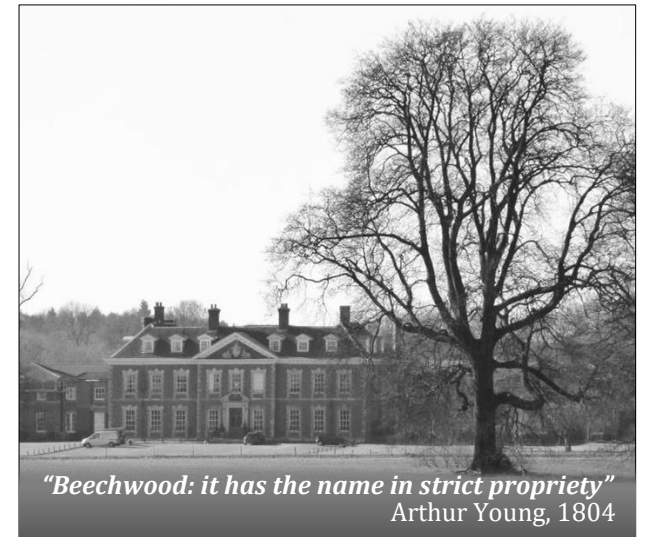
Hertfordshire Gardens Trust (reg. charity 1010093) promotes the understanding and protection of historic landscapes in Hertfordshire through research and education. This leaflet is part of a series on landscape park history; available at: www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk

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Hertfordshire Landscape Parks



Beechwood



A. Beechwood Park and Mansion

The Walk is a circuit of about 3 miles (5 km), on and off road, passable all year round. OS Explorer Map 182 Grid Ref. TL 054154.

Parking on the roadside at Cheverell's Green, near the junction with Roe End Lane. There are several pubs (🍺) and cafés in Markyate.

Beechwood Park was originally the site of a Benedictine nunnery called St. Giles in the Wood, established in 1150 and dissolved in 1537. It was bought by Thomas Saunders in 1628 and remained in the family until 1961. Beechwood Park is significant as the only Hertfordshire site with both a surviving Lancelot 'Capability' Brown survey of the existing c.77ha layout made in 1753, and a plan, dated 1754, with Brown's suggestions

for the improvement of the park and gardens. This included a seat, temple, barn with an ornamental front, ha-ha or ‘sunk fence’ and a new planting design for areas of the park and gardens. Since 1964 the house has been used as a school and the parkland largely returned to agricultural use.



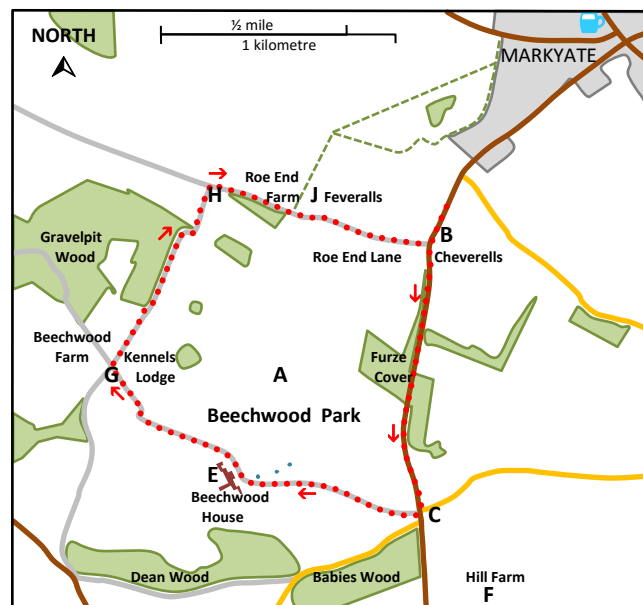
B. Cheverells House

Walk south along the road, Cheverells (**B**), can be seen set back from the road through wrought iron gates on the east side of Cheverell’s Green. It was built by Thomas Saunders c.1693, as a Dower house, to be used by his widow. It would originally have had reciprocal views with Beechwood House to the southwest, but these are now obscured by vegetation.



C. Park entrance with 19th century Peacock Lodge

Before the ground falls away, and under a large oak where the hedgerow thins, look right across the Park (**A**) for a glimpse of the Mansion. Follow the road for ¾ mile to the entrance gates to Beechwood Park, next to Peacock Lodge (**C**). Enter the park through the gates and flanking walls (c.1760), probably by Sir William Chambers, who was then working on interiors at the mansion.



Notice the gently undulating parkland on either side of the drive. Brown’s 1754 plan (**J**) for Sir Thomas Sebright shows this as the main entrance to the park with a double avenue and clumps of trees in the park. The avenue has been replanted in recent years but only a small number of the magnificent trees for which Beechwood Park (**D**) was known have survived. In 1804 Arthur Young recorded that he had ‘rarely seen finer trees...the number of stately beeches is great...the cedars are immense; the oaks very large; the ash straight and beautiful’



D. Beechwood Park (JP Neale c.1820)

Remains of a couple of the small ponds marked on Brown’s plan lie in the field on the right hand side of the drive. Approaching the mansion, some of the kitchen garden walls will be visible to your left. The remains of an ice house and the ha-ha are in the private gardens of the school. Sir Edward Sebright added the splendid east façade to the house (completed in 1702), which his wife Anne (née Saunders) inherited from her father. A pair of large terracotta urns (c.1860) on 18th century Portland stone pedestals grace the front lawns. On the south side of the mansion (**E**), the massive chimneys of the earlier house, probably built for Sir Richard Page (d.1548) are clearly visible.



E. View of the mansion with chimneys and urn