

# Wimpole Hall Oil Spill Remediation



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



November 2016

**Client: National Trust**

OA East Report No: 2009

OASIS No: oxfordar3-268403

NGR: TL 3355 5096

## Wimpole Hall Oil Spill Remediation

### *Watching Brief*

*Site Code:* WPLWSA 16  
*CHER No:* ECB4839  
*Date of Works:* 8th November 2016  
*Report No:* 2009  
*Excavator:* Michael Webster  
*Author:* Michael Webster  
*Editor:* Aileen Connor  
*Project Manager:* Matt Brudenell  
*Client:* National Trust  
*Report Date:* November 2016

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## **Summary**

*An oil spill on the south Apron gravel approach to the main (south) entrance to Wimpole Hall Cambridgeshire (TL 3355 5096) (Fig 1) required remediation work resulting in removal of contaminated surface materials. Due to the sensitive location of the oil spill an Archaeological Watching Brief was required. This watching brief was carried out on the 8th November 2016, by OA East. Removal of the contaminated gravels and underlying sub-base revealed the remains of a former stone paved surface. A full record was made of the exposed surface which was left in situ and re-instated with new clean sub-base and gravels.*



## 1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The geology and topography taken from Fairbairn. J. 2015.
- 1.1.2 The southern part of Wimpole Park lies on flattish ground over Gault clay, rising gently from the River Rhee towards Wimpole Hall. North of the hall, the land rises more steeply into a low but locally dominant ridge of Lower Chalk, which, at the northern edge of the park is capped by Boulder Clay. The site was located within the curtilage of Wimpole Hall.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background is based on Thatcher 2016.
- 2.1.2 Wimpole Hall (Grade I Listed) is the largest house in Cambridgeshire. Over the centuries, many notable architects have worked on it, including its first owner, Thomas Chicheley (1640-1670), James Gibbs (1713-1730), James Thornhill (1721), Henry Flitcroft (c.1749), John Soane (1790s), and H.E. Kendall (1840s).
- 2.1.3 Before the present Wimpole Hall was built in c.1640, there was a moated manor house set in a small park of 81 hectares (200 acres). Situated to the north and south of this were three medieval villages: Bennall End, Thresham End and Green End. Wimpole Hall's grounds were laid out and modified by landscape designers such as George London and Henry Wise (1693–1705), Charles Bridgeman (1720s), Robert Greening (1740s), Capability Brown (1767) and Humphry Repton (1801–1809). The parkland as it exists today is an amalgamation of the work of these landscape designers and gardeners, and was completed under the ownership of Elsie and George Bambridge. Elsie, the daughter of Rudyard Kipling, reworked and revitalised the house.
- 2.1.4 Bridgeman's formal grand avenue sweeps away from the south front of the house for two and a half miles, in contrast with the remainder of the park which was "naturalised" by Capability Brown (Adshead 2007). The North Park is particularly attractive, with its belts of woodland and gentle rolling hills with individual trees and clumps of trees. The central feature of the North Park is the Gothic Folly and the restored lakes in the valley below.
- 2.1.5 The Cambridgeshire HER records a number of known archaeological features and significant remains within the designated Wimpole Hall Park (CHER DCB 504). To the west are the remains of designated Deserted Medieval Villages (DCB 468, MCB 11405) and a possible Roman structure (MCB 11404). East of the area is the designated medieval moated site at Cobbs Wood (DCB 222) and undesignated moated site (MCB 14620) to the north.

## 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to make a full record of any archaeological features exposed during remediation works associated with an oil spill at Wimpole Hall. To this end, and as far as possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits would be determined.
- 3.1.2 An oil spill on the South Apron in front of the south entrance to Wimpole Hall had contaminated surface gravel and the underlying sub-base. Remediation work involved the removal of these materials in an area of 14m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2) to a depth of 150mm using a tracked mechanical excavator. Clean materials were used to re-instate the modern surface. All works were monitored by an experienced archaeologist.

- 3.1.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.4 Site conditions were good, the weather was cold but dry and sunny.

## 4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The remains of a stone paved surface (**3**; Plates 2 and 3) was revealed across the entire extent of the excavated area. The paving comprised dressed pale grey stone setts laid in close jointed north to south aligned courses. The thickness of the individual setts was not exposed but their surface measurements were between 260mm (10") by 190mm (7½") and 200mm (8") by 140mm (5½"). The surface continued beyond the edges of the excavated area in every direction and it was not possible to establish its full dimensions.
- 4.1.2 Overlying the paved surface was a layer of hoggin (mixed sand and gravel) approximately 80mm to 100mm thick (**2**) finished with a 70mm thick top dressing of fine gravel (**1**).

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The paving survives in good condition and had formed part of an earlier approach to the main entrance to the House from the south. The date that the paving was laid is unknown but the north to south alignment of its courses suggests it may have formed part of the main approach to the house from the south prior to the addition of the Apron as shown on the Johannes Kip map of 1707 (Fig. 3).

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank the National Trust who commissioned and funded the archaeological work and in particular Lee Fish. The site contractor Groupbridge and their machine operator M Nunn. The project was managed by Matthew Brudenell, site work by the author and site survey by David Brown, all from Oxford Archaeology East.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ashhead. D 2007 Wimpole. Architectural drawings and topographical views. The National Trust
- Fairbairn J 2015 4th Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation at Wimpole Park, Cambridgeshire. OA East Report no 1898.
- Thatcher C 2016 Late Iron and Roman Settlement at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire. Archaeological Evaluation. OA East Report no 2000.

## APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-268403			
Project Name	Wimpole Hall Oil Spill Remediation			
Project Dates (fieldwork)	Start	08-11-2016	Finish	08-11-2016
Previous Work (by OA East)	Yes		Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	WPLWSA 16	Planning App. No.	
HER No.	ECB 4839	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt

### Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Wimpole Hall Surface	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901		None
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)	
District	South Cambridgeshire	Wimpole Hall Arrington, Royston,	
Parish	Wimpole		
HER	Cambridgeshire		
Study Area	14m Squared	National Grid Reference	TL 3355 5096

## Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	
Project Design Originator	OA East
Project Manager	Matthew Brudenell
Supervisor	Michael Webster

## Project Archives

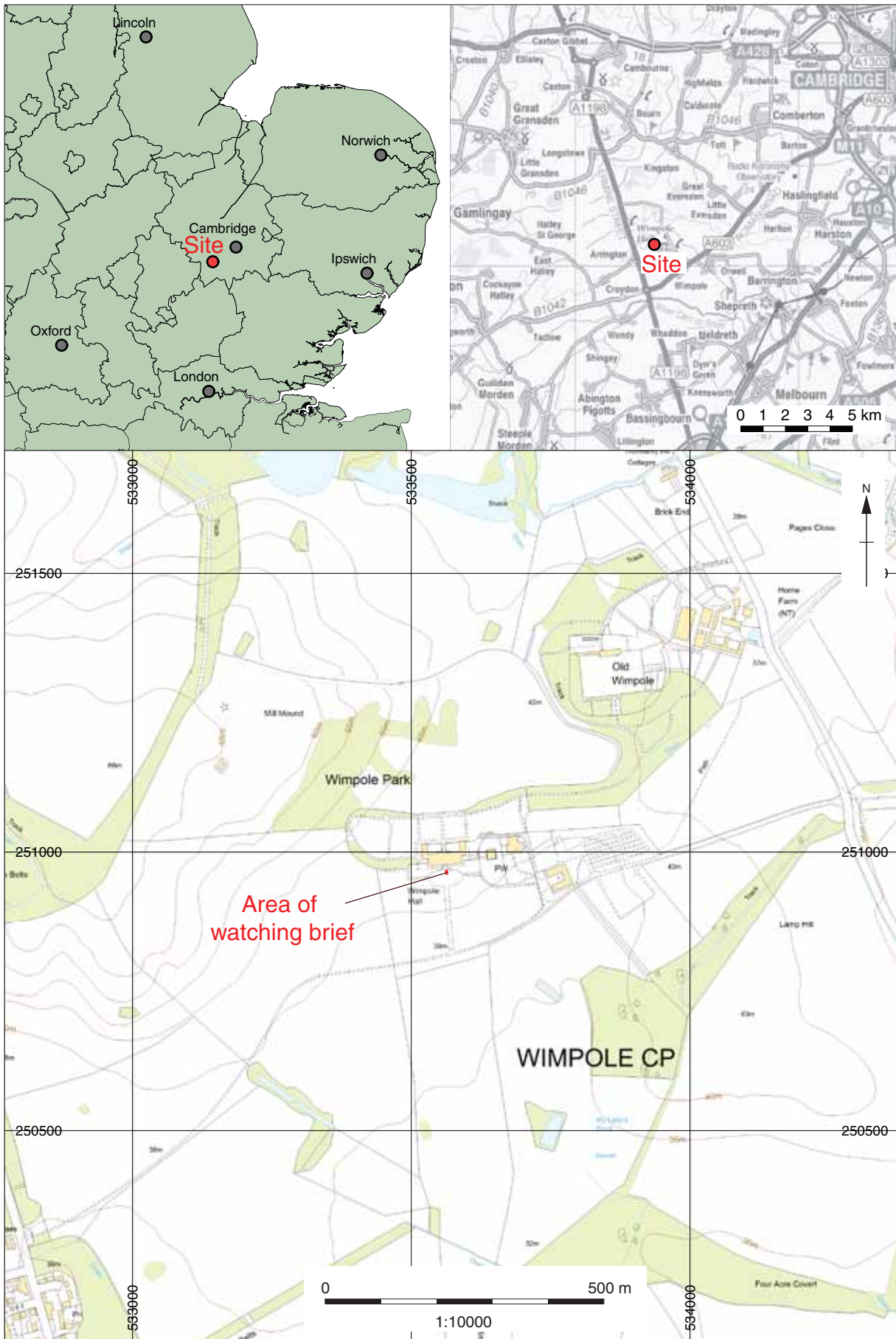
Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Stores	OA East	CCC Stores
ECB4839	WPLWSA 16..	ECB4839

## Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

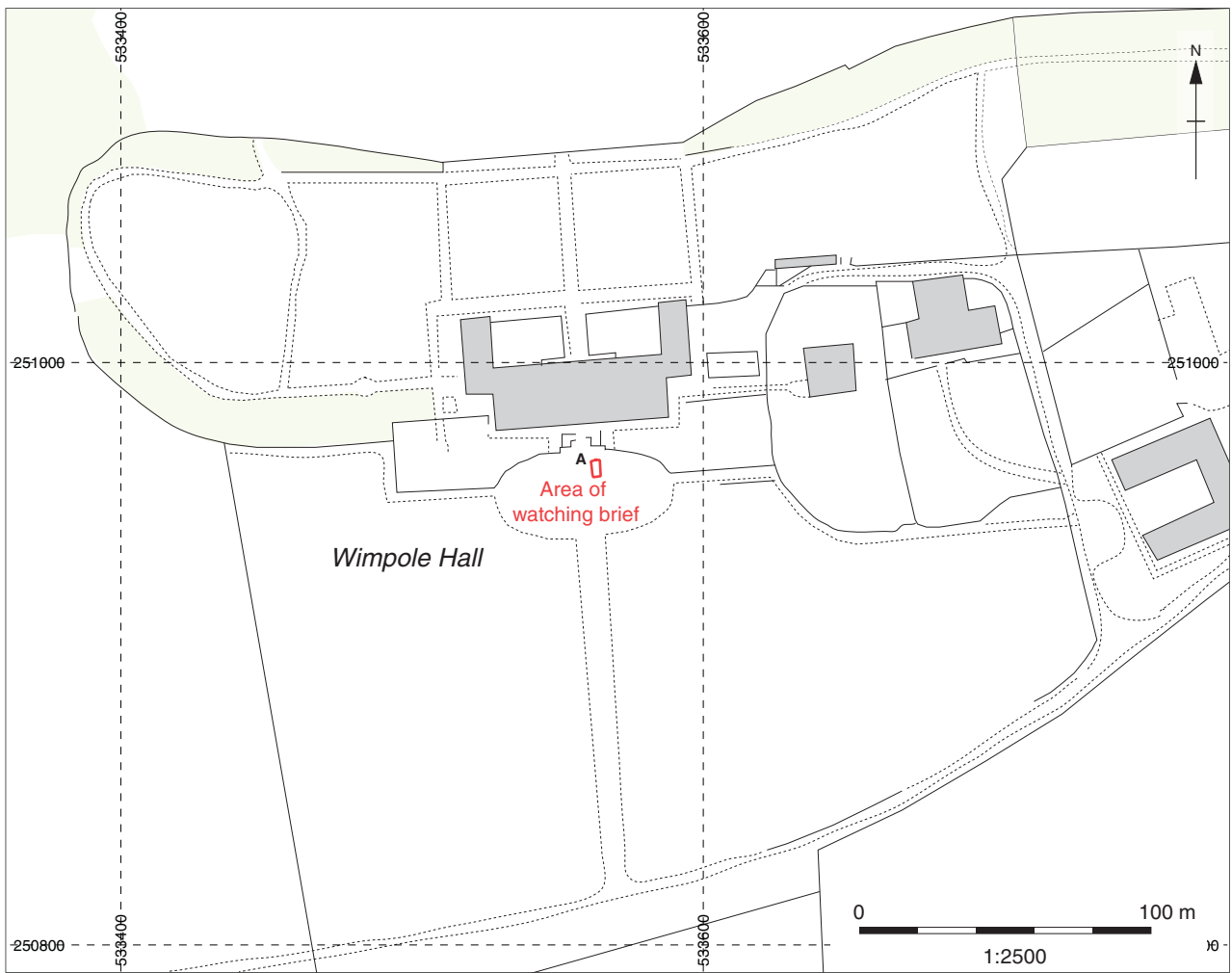
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<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

### Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location



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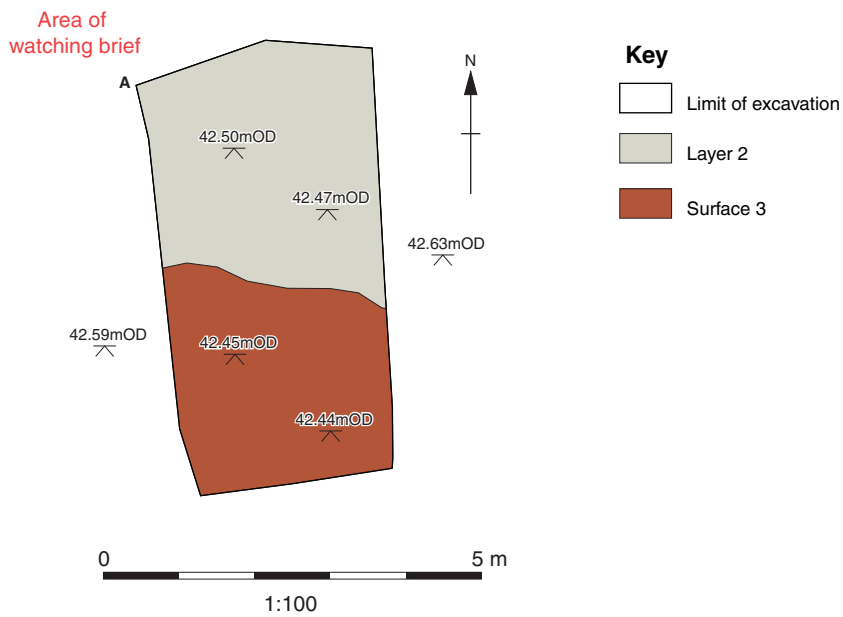


Figure 2: Detail site location and area of Watching brief

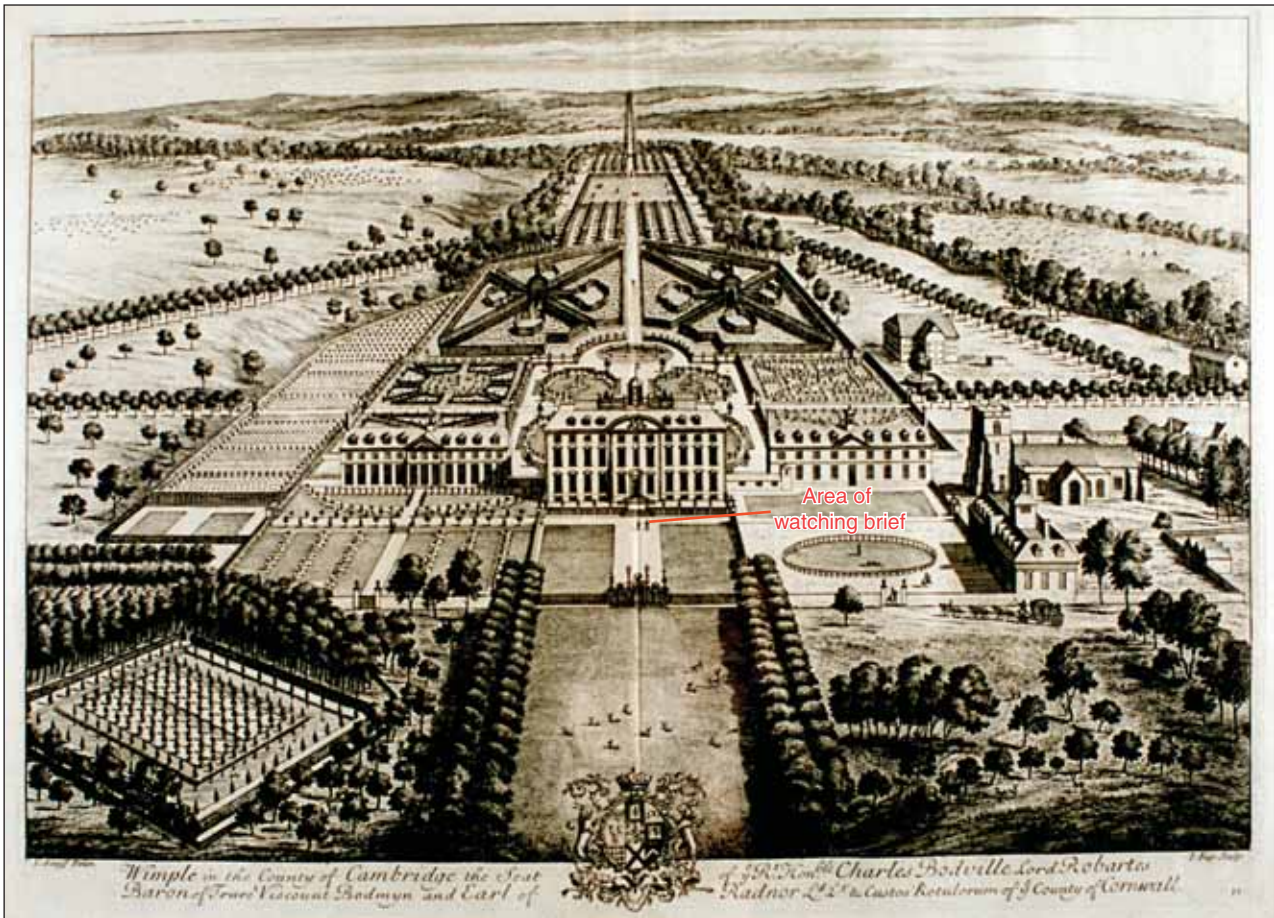


Figure 3: View of Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire 1707. Johannes Kip. Courtesy of © National Trust



Plate 1: Pre-excavation showing oil spill, from north



Plate 2: Stone paving 3, from west



Plate 3: Stone paving 3, from south



Plate 4: Reinstatement in progress, from east





Plate 5: Reinstatement in progress, from east



Plate 6: Reinstatement complete, from south



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