

Cuerden Hall

Landscape Statement  
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Cuerden Hall - northern facade, 2021

Cuerden Hall is a Grade II\* listed house with extensive dependent buildings which forms the hub of a historic estate. The estate lies 5 miles south of Preston, Lancashire and is surrounded by the M6, M65 and M61 to the west, north and east respectively. The hall is accessed via the old secondary carriage drive off Shady Lane to the west. To the north and east of the property boundary is the historical estate parkland, now owned by Cuerden Valley Country Park. To the west and south the property abuts onto the residential Cuerden Close and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust Centre.

The house sits on a topographically raised area of land that provides views across the parkland to the east. The Hall is only visible from this eastern aspect and is otherwise surrounded by dense woodland.

Cuerden Hall has had a variety of uses over the last century, both clinical and administrative, with the house transformed in the early 19th century by Lewis Wyatt. During this transformation, Wyatt also created raised garden terraces surrounded by large stone battered walls around the eastern extension of the property.

## Landscape Proposal Statement

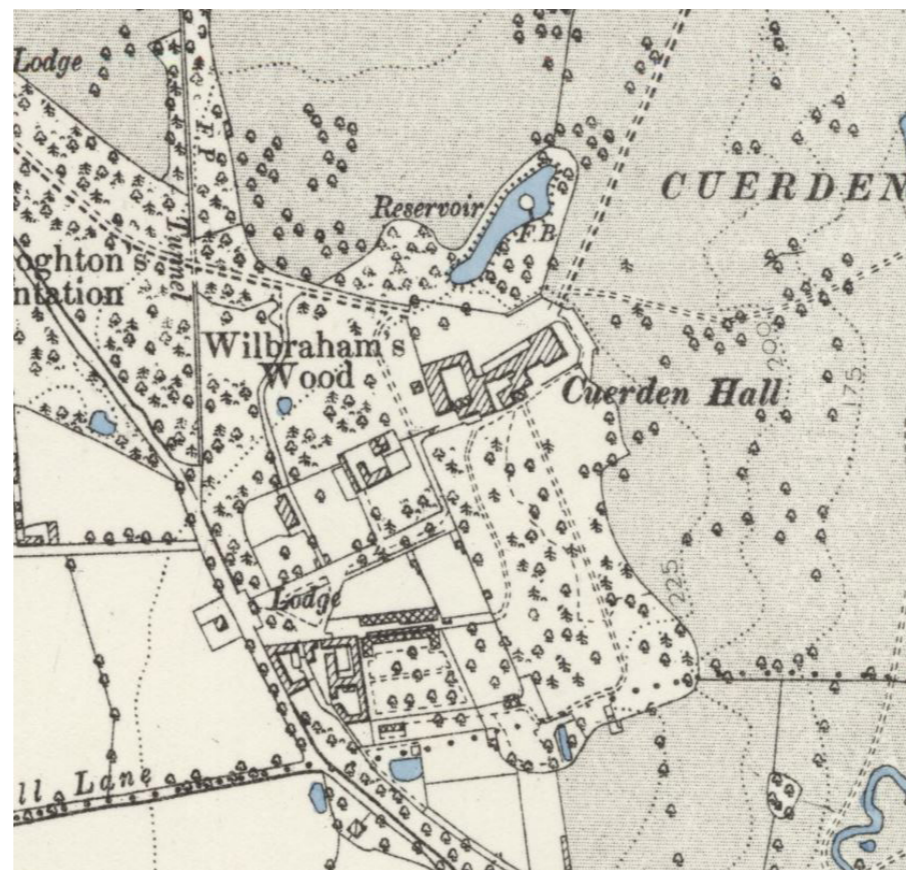
Current plans to convert the property to a residential home under the direction of Purcell Architects look to restore a key historical feature of the Chorley and wider Lancashire area, to rescue it from a state of institutional torpor and give it a thriving new life as a private family home.

As part of this, the garden needs to undergo a process of rejuvenation to provide a setting appropriate for 21st century living and also appropriate to the reduced extent of land ownership around the house.

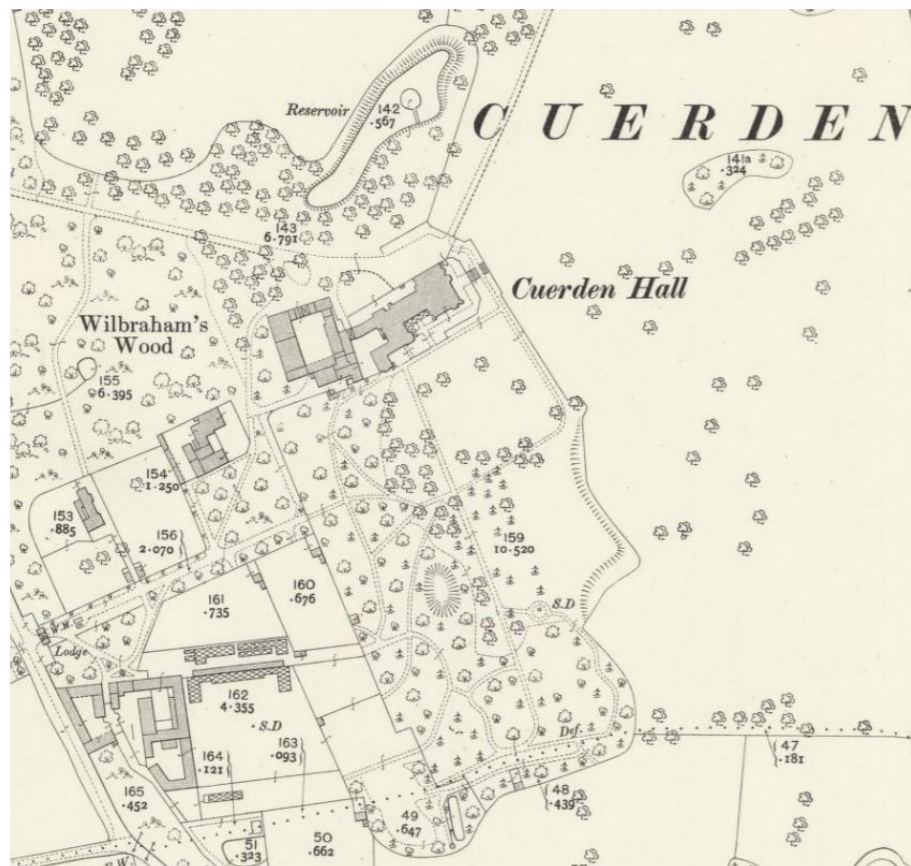
## Historical background



1848



1894



1911



Drawing of Wyatt eastern wing and porch, Cuerden Hall, c. 1819

The original 16th Century house built on the site of the present Cuerden Hall no longer exists. The oldest part of the present house was built between 1717-19 by Robert Banastre. In 1794, Robert Townley Parker inherited Cuerden Hall and commissioned Lewis Wyatt in 1815 to modernise the house and enhance the surrounding parks. Most notably Wyatt added a large 'plain classic' wing to the east side of the 1717 house, which contained the new house's principal rooms.

Little is known of the landscape immediately surrounding the house, by the late 19th Century the wider estate included a walled garden, park, water pastures and wood plantations. The 1848 OS map shows plantations up to the west side of the house, contrasting with open park to the east.

By the end of the 19th Century, the OS 1894 map shows further alterations to the landscape around the Hall. These include the clearance of woodland to the immediate north of the property where the family would receive guests. Plantations up to the west and south west of the property were still present, as well as a new plantation surrounding the newly constructed reservoir to the north. To the south, the map shows indications that the pleasure grounds were being elaborated around this time.

In the early 20th century, under Reginald Tatton, the orchard was removed but the productive garden retained. During this time it is understood a pergola, gazebo and formal planting beds were introduced to the main garden.

During World War I, Cuerden Hall was used as an Army hospital and subsequently in World War II as an education centre and Army headquarters by the Ministry of Defence, who purchased the property from the Tatton family in 1967. In 1985, works commenced on converting the estate building into a Sue Ryder care home which was in use until 2019.

Drive and Approach

The driveway and main approach to Cuerden Hall is dominated by large expanses of tarmac hard-standing, used as an area for car parking and service access during the property's time as a Sue Ryder care home.

Entrance Porch

The area immediately in front of the Lewis Wyatt porch extension has been used for staff car parking but also as a visitor drop-off area. The levels here had been significantly increased to create more of a level threshold for guests, covering up the original stone steps up to the porch.



Tarmac driveway



Lewis Wyatt porch extension



Tarmac covering original porch stone steps



Curved ramp to main entrance



Existing walls along northern elevation

#### Northern Facade

This area includes a curving disabled access ramp with metal balustrades to the main entrance. The levels across this elevation of the building have been drastically changed to accommodate the ramp. Vegetation along this section is very overgrown but the original walls and their copings seem to be in good condition and shouldn't require too much restoration.

#### Pond

The pond has been unmaintained for, what is estimated to be, half a century and the water level is very low due to either a leak or the quantity of large trees and overgrown vegetation within it.



Pond in disrepair



Internal courtyard

#### Internal courtyard

The courtyard's surface is entirely tarmac and has gradient of about 1:45 from north to south. There is no planting apart from overgrown ivy and the four cottages that face onto the courtyard all have varying level thresholds. There is a ramped access out through the wall to the rest of the garden.



Concrete pavers



Stone balustrade and urns

#### Terraces and Circulation

Around the house and the lower levels of the southern garden, the main circulatory paths are comprised of concrete pavers and gravel. Many of the pavers are broken and overgrown with weeds and grass.

#### Existing Walls, Balustrades and Steps

The Hall boasts impressive original stone walls, balustrades and an imposing two level set of steps that face east. The structures appear to be sound however there is a significant amount of restoration and replacement of elements to be done.



Narrow planting beds



Stone steps and ornate gates

#### Existing Planting Beds

Throughout the site the planting beds are confined to narrow strips along walls and around the Hall. These planting beds are all tired, overgrown and include a mismatched collection of trees, shrubs and perennials that have been accumulated over the 20 years the Hall was used as a care home.



Southern facade of Cuerden Hall and sloping southern lawn



Stone Ha ha

#### South Lawn

Outside the confines of the existing walls that run around the Hall is a large expanse of sloping lawn, approximately 5,000m<sup>2</sup>. The lawn has a significant level changes from west to east. There are no trees or planting beds within the lawned area. To the south of the lawn is a wooded area of mature deciduous trees. On the west side of the south lawn the tree belt is in poor condition with several over-mature Beech trees.

#### Ha Ha

A large stone Ha ha runs along the eastern boundary of the property and is in good condition. The Ha ha separates the property from the surrounding Cuerden Valley Park which can be accessed by the public. There is a public footpath that runs through the park and is visible from the garden.



View of the Hall halfway between garden and public footpath



Stable yard

#### Stable Yard

Within the stable yard there is no soft landscaping, the area is surfaced with tarmac which is in a poor condition.