Bury Knowle House in Context: its History, Design, and Architecture

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SUMMARY

The period between the late 1700s and late 1800s was marked by the construction of a considerable number of small country houses or villas in and around the village of Headington, east of the city of Oxford. Built as private residences by men of commerce or those associated with the university, many of these have subsequently been turned to other uses. Bury Knowle House provides an example of this, having been built at the start of the nineteenth century by Joseph Lock, twice mayor of Oxford, and having been in public ownership since the 1930s. Its internal and external architecture strongly reflects fashionable design of the period of its construction, as well as changing social and economic criteria since then. Set within what is now a public park, the house and its outbuildings provide a valuable insight into the world of the newly emerging middle class of the nineteenth century, who used architectural ostentation to advertise their position within the local community.

Bury Knowle House was built about 1800 in Headington, then a village some three miles east of the city of Oxford, for a prominent Oxford businessman, Joseph Lock. Having gone through various changes of private ownership, as did other similar grand houses within the area, Bury Knowle and its parkland retain a significant place within the community of Headington, now a busy Oxford suburb. Since 1930 they have belonged to the City of Oxford. Part of the house serves as the local library, and the pleasure grounds are a public park.

This paper looks at the history and architecture of Bury Knowle House, a Grade II listed building, within the context of the development of villas in Headington that took place from the late 1700s until 1914. The architectural style of the houses built during this period, mainly by people who were either successful in commerce or who were in positions of authority within Oxford University, reflected their often new-found prosperity and station; not for them the grand houses of the established aristocracy, but more modest – yet carefully ostentatious – properties that advertised their position satisfactorily, and where they could live the life of a country gentleman but with all the advantages of easy access to the city.

CONTEXT: THE RISE AND FALL OF HEADINGTON'S VILLAS

The choice of Headington as a preferred location for wealthy tradesmen and professionals to build their new houses stemmed initially from its elevated position above the city. The attractions of building a house there, with its fine views of the city and the advantage of free-draining land above the flood-prone water meadows within the Thames and Cherwell valleys, were obvious to the wealthy townsmen. As early as 1551 the Oxford printer Harman Evans had a house in Headington, and William Finch created a gentleman's residence (later known as The Rookery) from a sixteenth-century house in about 1660.[1] Aside from Headington, other more favoured areas around the city included Iffley and Littlemore, while many substantial villas were developed in North Oxford and Summertown during the mid-nineteenth century.

Bury Knowle House was built during the earlier of two phases of development of these small country houses – gentlemen's villas – that took place in Headington during the period in question.

[1] *VCH Oxon.*, 5, pp. 164–5.

Fig. 1. Location of Bury Knowle and other villas in or near Headington village at the time of enclosure (1802). (*Drawn by author.*)

The first phase, which continued until the mid-nineteenth century, focused on the old village of Headington and its surroundings and included properties such as Headington House, Headington Manor, The Rookery, and Bury Knowle itself (Fig. 1). A second phase in villa development continued until the start of the First World War, with a number of small country houses set within pleasure gardens being built along the ridge at the top of Headington Hill. Here land at Brockleys Field and Bushey Piece, which were situated along what is now Pullens Lane and Cuckoo Lane and formed a part of the Headington estate, had become available after the Headington Manor estate was sold by Thomas Henry Whorwood in 1835. This area was particularly appealing to wealthy townsmen and members of the university as it offered rural privacy, but was within walking distance of the city.

Even today, despite many changes in ownership, structural alterations, and in some cases complete redevelopment, Headington's villas remain a major feature within their environment. Indeed, Pullen's End (formerly Torbrex) in Pullens Lane achieved national media focus in 2006 at the time it was being considered as a potential residence for the Bishop of Oxford, with the asking price of £2.5 million clearly demonstrating the size and standing of this type of property in the twenty-first-century market.[2] Sadly, very few of those houses built between 1780 and 1900 remain in private hands. Most have been adapted to some other use, and several have disappeared without trace.[3]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, after the Industrial Revolution, the old social order of power and privilege that seemed to be the natural inheritance of those with the right combination of money, land, and title was threatened, and a new elite, whose wealth was based on commerce and industry, began to emerge. Since ownership of land and property has traditionally been seen as a symbol of social and economic power and success, the pinnacle of social ambition for this new middle class was to copy the example of the established aristocracy and landed gentry and invest much of their newly acquired wealth in land and building.

The eighteenth-century villa had been popularized by arbiters of taste such as Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, whose villa at Chiswick was built in 1725. These small country houses surrounded by gardens were originally used for entertainment, relaxation, study, and contemplation. By the early nineteenth century the idea of such a building was being taken up enthusiastically by the emerging middle class, who saw the villa as the ideal residence. On the fringe of every town in England, bankers and lawyers, successful industrialists and tradesmen were beginning to build detached residences surrounded by gardens that were large enough to provide suitable accommodation for families, house guests, and a growing retinue of servants. They were close enough to the town in which they could still enjoy the cultural benefits of urban centres, while at the same time satisfying increasing demands for privacy and the pleasures of an idealized country life.

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Oxford the wealthy citizens were the brewers, bankers, and lawyers who were able to capitalize on secure university business. The Morrell brewing family, Joseph Lock, and William Jackson, proprietor of *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, all eventually acquired small country estates in Headington, which although still very rural, was only two miles east of Oxford (Fig. 2). Access to the city improved when the Stokenchurch Turnpike Trust opened a route up Headington Hill in 1789.[4] This replaced the earlier road along Cheney Lane to Shotover and Wheatley, and the steep climb up Headington Hill was no deterrent to those who could afford

[2] Oxfordshire Archive, '£2.5M pad fit for a bishop': http://archive.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/2006/1/20/90684.html (accessed 2006).

[3] For further information on these villas see Rhona J. Walker, 'The Villas of Headington' (Oxford University, Department for Continuing Education, dissertation, 2002), pp. 6–22, and Headington community website: http://www.headington.org.uk/history/pullens_lane/index.htm.

[4] *VCH Oxon.*, 4, p. 285. The turnpike trust was abolished in 1878. See Annual Turnike Acts Continuance Act, 36, 37 Vic. c. 90.

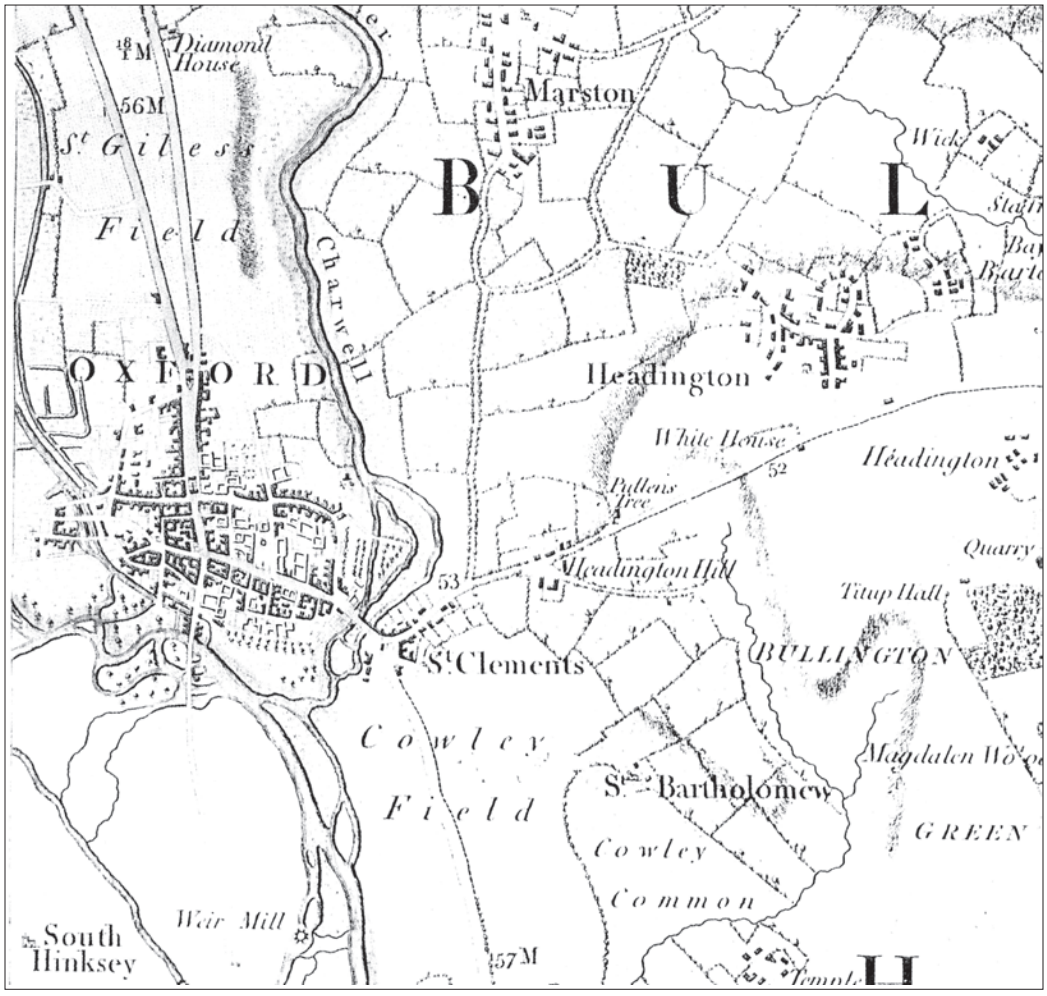

Fig. 2. From Davis's map of 1797, showing Headington as a separate village.

not only a sprung carriage that allowed them to make the journey in some comfort, but also the expense of tolls and annual licences.[5]

The medieval manor house in Headington having long disappeared, the Whorwood family (then lords of the manors of Headington and Holton) took over the Manor House which had been built by Sir Banks Jenkinson in about 1770. Of the other villas built in Old Headington, The Rookery, in Dunstan Road, is probably the oldest, the original medieval house now hidden behind a plain three-storeyed ashlar frontage of about 1810. Construction materials varied in quality and availability: brick from the Shotover brickworks was expensive, while two types of stone were extracted from the local quarries, a very durable hardstone and a softer freestone that was to prove particularly susceptible to erosion from atmospheric pollution. The rapid expansion of the canal network, including the Oxford Canal, which opened in 1789, followed by the arrival in Oxford of the railway in 1854 gave builders access to a much greater range of building materials than had previously been available locally.

Before the mid-nineteenth century there is no record of architects for any of the Headington villas. However, the first owner of Bury Knowle House, Joseph Lock, is likely to have had access to the architectural pattern books that were becoming increasingly common as a result of improved printing techniques and greater awareness of architectural taste. One could speculate as to whether he was inspired by illustrations of architectural features such as the grand entrance to the villa at Brooklands, near Weybridge, Surrey, designed for George Payne, in John Crunden's book of patterns first published in 1767.[6] In any event, he had premises in the High Street and is likely to have had contact with intellectuals at the university who had a knowledge and understanding of architecture. He must also have been aware of significant buildings around him. Houses such as the Warden's Lodgings at All Souls College, designed by George Clarke in 1706,[7] displayed an architectural perfection that must have been appealing to an aspiring man of taste.

Although the mid-nineteenth century was a golden age for the upwardly mobile middle class, who continued to build large villas surrounded by several acres of land on the edges of towns throughout England, alternative uses were being sought for some Headington villas as early as the 1830s. In 1835, the Manor House was let to a Mrs Butler, who used it as a ladies' seminary,[8] and The Rookery was used as a boys' preparatory school from the 1860s.[9] The agricultural slump of the late nineteenth century, which caused a collapse in land prices, and rising income-tax rates and the introduction of death duties in 1894 meant that there was an increasing financial burden for those who had previously enjoyed unfettered wealth.

By the early twentieth century, industrialization was beginning to change the face of Oxford. The carnage of the First World War, democratization, increased choice of employment, particularly for women, and the opening of factories such as Morris Motors and Pressed Steel in Cowley, which were able to offer their workforce higher wages, increased the problems of finding and retaining the staff needed to run such large establishments. Requisitioning and subsequent lack of maintenance during the Second World War meant that many villa owners never returned to their houses in 1945.

Headington itself was absorbed into the Oxford City boundary in 1929, and villas were increasingly adapted for alternative uses. The demands of the ratepayers for amenities such as

5 There was a toll gate at High Bush Cross, where Windmill Road now joins London Road. In 1785 a licence cost £7 a year for every four-wheeled carriage, plus an extra £1 for the footman's licence: John Copeland, *Roads and their Traffic 1750–1850* (Newton Abbot, 1968), p. 144.

6 John Crunden, *Convenient and Ornamental Architecture, Consisting of Original Designs for Plans, Elevations and Sections, Beginning with the Farm House and Regularly Ascending to the Most Grand Villa, Calculated for both Town and Country and Suitable to Persons in Every Station of Life*, new edn (London, 1785), plate 36.

7 Geoffrey Tyack, *Oxford: an Architectural Guide* (Oxford, 1998), p. 195.

8 *VCH Oxon.*, 5, p. 161.

9 'The Young Noblemen's School, Taylor, Rev. J. W. A. MA, The Rookery, Old Headington', *Webster's Oxford, Wallingford, Abingdon and Banbury Directory* (Oxford, 1869), pp. 148, 202.

TABLE 1. OWNERSHIP, CONSTRUCTION, AND MODIFICATIONS AT BURY KNOWLE HOUSE

Date	Owner	Construction and modifications
*c.*1800	Sir Joseph Lock	Original house and later extension to the drawing room
*c.*1880	Maria Ballachey	Acquired barn and built stables
Late 1880s	Edward Fielden	Rear extension to house
1899–1920	Charles Miskin Laing	Ballroom and conservatory
1923–1930	Henry Beaufoy	None
1930	Oxford City Council	Conversion of house to library and clinic
1932	Oxford City Council	Conversion of lodge to public conveniences
1939	Oxford City Council	Construction of sports facilities and changing rooms
1980s	Oxford City Council	Construction of sheltered accommodation to rear of house
1990	Oxford City Council	Conversion of coach house to office space

open recreation space was satisfied by the purchase of Bury Knowle by the local authority in 1930. The house and grounds of The Manor are now occupied by the John Radcliffe Hospital. Headington Hill Hall, which served as a wartime hospital, was subsequently used as a Red Cross rehabilitation centre, and in 1953 was sold to Oxford City Council for £13,700.[10] Headington Hill Park was created out of land on the lower slopes of the hill. The house and stables, together with a number of office buildings erected in the gardens, were leased by Pergamon Press in 1959, and the villa became the administrative offices for Oxford Brookes University in 1992. Other villas too have been converted into educational establishments: Ruskin College occupies The Rookery, while Fairfield, in Pullens Lane, was demolished to make way for new buildings for Plater College, and the site is now occupied by a language school.

BURY KNOWLE: THE OWNERSHIP TRAIL (see Table 1)

Bury Knowle House (Plate 5) was built in about 1800 for Joseph Lock, a wealthy goldsmith and banker to the University of Oxford. The Locks are a classic example of the way in which ambitious families could rise from humble origins within a couple of generations. Joseph was born in 1760, the only son of Hannah and Edward Lock, goldsmiths of All Saints' parish in Oxford. He was Mayor of Oxford in both 1813 and 1829 and was knighted in 1814.

Joseph Lock's wealth was gained through commerce rather than land. He gradually acquired land and property within the City of Oxford, and further land in Iffley purchased at the time of the Iffley enclosure. He maintained a house in Oxford, possibly above his goldsmith's shop on the High Street, and for a while he lived with his family at Denton House, in Iffley. His tastes were urban and cultural, and ownership of a large agricultural estate would have been a drain on his resources that he would not have countenanced. However, the opportunity to build a mansion within its own pleasure grounds in Headington, which was sufficiently far from Oxford to be viewed as a country retreat, but was nevertheless easily accessible, is likely to have been seen as a step up the social ladder for a man of ambition. In addition, Headington, on the free-draining heights above the city, was considered a far healthier place to live than Iffley, and this may well have been an important consideration for Joseph and Elizabeth Lock, who had already lost several children, a toll that was to rise to seven by 1806.[11]

In October 1795 Joseph was able to procure land in Berry Knowle furlong in Headington. When Headington was enclosed in 1804 he was granted a further seventeen acres: plots 54, 55, 57, and 57a, which roughly follow the boundaries of the present park, plot 58 at the southern

[10] B. Allen, *Morrells of Oxford: the Family and their Brewery 1743–1993* (Stroud, 1994), p. 131.
[11] Anne Natalie Hansen, *Oxford Goldsmiths before 1800* (Columbus, OH, 1996), p. 105.

end of Old High Street, and plot 28 in what is now Windmill Road, on the other side of London Road.[12] He continued to accumulate land in Headington after the enclosure, and added further buildings to the Bury Knowle estate as they were needed. In 1809, for example, he leased from Magdalen College the coach house and stables belonging to The Hermitage, an adjoining house at 69 Old High Street.[13]

The house appears to have remained much as Joseph Lock built it for most of the nineteenth century. In his old age he retreated back to the city, where he died in 1844. He bequeathed Bury Knowle to his only surviving daughter, Maria, while his son Edward, who had been living in Headington at the time of the 1841 census, took over the Oxford estate. Maria lived at Bury Knowle with her husband, George Baker Ballachey for the rest of her life, remaining there after his death in 1858.[14] A much-respected member of the Headington gentry, she continued to consolidate her property almost until her death. A conveyance of 14 May 1880 records that she paid £650 to Magdalen College for the barn (on the corner of North Place) alongside the present stable block.[15] She died in 1884, leaving the Bury Knowle estate to her nephew, Edward Seppings Lock. He had no desire to live in Headington, however, and in 1887 he sold the property (Fig. 3) to Edward Brockenhurst Fielden, a member of the Fielden spinning dynasty from Todmorden, in Yorkshire. In order to accommodate his large family and staff, Edward Fielden added a large brick extension on to the rear of the building (Plate 6).

During the Fieldens' time in residence the house was known as Brocklehurst. Although business commitments soon called them back to the north of England, they appear to have retained ownership of Bury Knowle House, which was let to a Colonel Howard Kingscote, commander of Cowley Barracks, and his wife, Adeline, author of numerous works of fiction (under the pen name Lucas Cleeve) and a lady of charm and extravagance. Adeline Kingscote was eventually declared bankrupt, with debts of £100,000, and the entire contents of the house and its outbuildings were auctioned on 6–9 June 1899.[16]

Having experienced such difficulty with his tenants, a month after the auction Edward Fielden sold Bury Knowle House to Major Charles Miskin Laing, a barrister, for £5,000. He lived there with his wife and daughter until 1923, when the house, together with gardens, pleasure grounds, entrance lodge, barn, stable, outbuildings, and pieces or parcels of land amounting to 19 acres 2 perches, were sold for £8,500. The buyers were Oliver Dayrell Paget-Cooke and Ernest Alfred Sanders Alexander, but they may have been trustees for Henry Beaufoy, a vinegar manufacturer, as it was he, together with his wife and daughter, who lived at Bury Knowle during the 1920s.[17]

In 1930 the opportunity to buy up land for investment was a recognized policy of the local authority. The Beaufoys wished to dispose of Bury Knowle at a time when there was demand for an open space that would provide a public park for the growing suburb of Headington. A search for suitable premises for the establishment of a lending library in Headington had begun in December 1929, so that the availability of the house and pleasure gardens at Bury Knowle seemed opportune, and the entire estate was thus sold to Oxford City Council in June 1930 for £11,600.[18] The opening of the Headington branch library took place in February 1932, and despite repeated threats of closure it remains open in 2007.[19]

[12] ORO, MS d.d. par Headington a1(r), Headington Inclosure Act relating to the Act of 1802, enrolled in the Court of Common Pleas, Westminster, on 23 Jan. 1805.
[13] OCA, MS Bury Knowle deeds.
[14] ORO, MS Cla.I/vi/1, Heriot 12 Oct. 1858.
[15] OCA, MS Bury Knowle deeds.
[16] Bodl. G.A. Oxon, 4°320, Auction Catalogue, J. R. Mallam and Son, Oxford (1899) (hereafter Auction Catalogue).
[17] OCA, MS Bury Knowle deeds.
[18] OCA, MS Bury Knowle deeds.
[19] OxS, OXFO 352, City of Oxford Council Reports, Library Committee (1932).

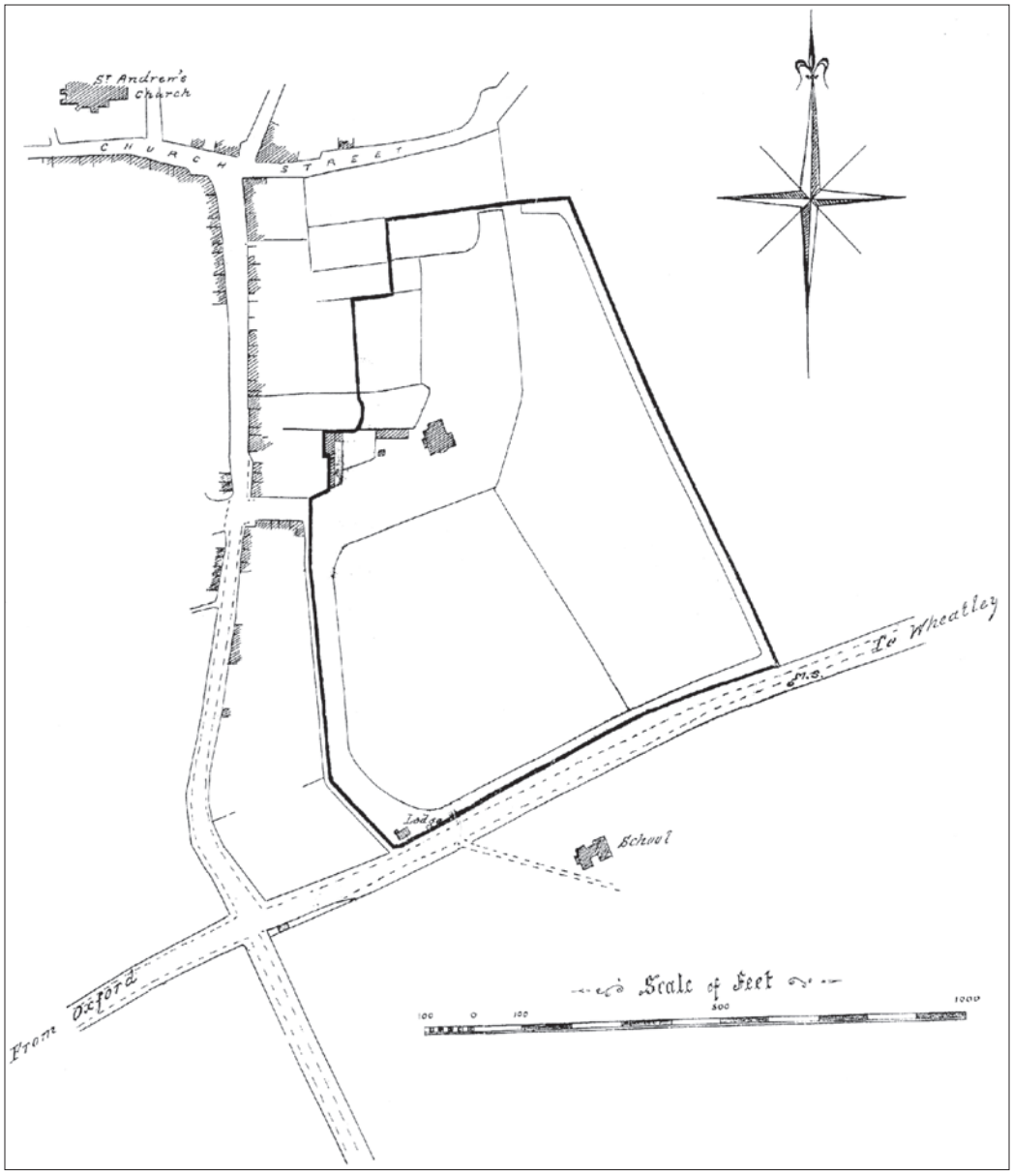

Fig. 3. Plan of Bury Knowle House and grounds in 1887. (*OCA, Bury Knowle deeds.*)

THE EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURE OF BURY KNOWLE HOUSE

The earliest part of the villa that Joseph Lock built at Bury Knowle in about 1800 is a two-storeyed, neo-classical building on a semi-basement. Although it is not known who the architect was, the classic proportion of windows to wall space helps to create a sense of order and proportion that was typical of architecture of this time. High-quality ashlar was used on the main east, south, and west elevations, and although some building materials may not have been local, the fact that some of the original stone has been replaced, particularly on the west facade, would seem to indicate that Headington stone – with all its attendant problems of weathering – may well have been used for some of the initial building work. An inferior rubble-stone was used on the original north-facing wall, which is now mainly hidden by the later brick extension.

The south elevation of the central two-storey, three-window block features a moulded, modillioned eaves cornice beneath the stone parapet. The six-over-six sashes have thin glazing bars and no horns, showing them to be early nineteenth century in date. The ground-floor windows are set into recessed stone arches, and all the windows have stone sills. The symmetry of the south elevation is broken by an upper bay window to the left, which sits on a stone base supported by brackets. The sash windows are late-nineteenth- or early twentieth-century replacements, and it may be that the entire window is a later addition. Over the centre of the south front there is a pedimented, recessed centrepiece, with a sash window which opens to a platform. The front doorway (now fitted with glass) has a stone frame, with enriched fluted cornice with paterae, scrolled brackets, and a pediment.[20] The cluster of windows round the entrance door have interior ornate cast-iron bars. A double curved stair to the front door has original cast-iron railings that have, unusually, survived the Second World War, presumably because they were considered essential from the point of view of safety (Plate 7). The central stone at the base of the stairs covers the shaft that allowed coal to be unloaded directly into the basement.

At the rear of the house the east and west elevations have shaped stone gables. The north-eastern sash windows on the east elevation, which include a double sash at ground-floor level, are set within a full-height recessed stone arch, but because of the position of the bedroom fireplace, the window at the south-east corner is missing, the symmetry being preserved by a blank stone recess. The flat, lead-roofed extension to the ground-floor room below appears on the earliest plans of the building and was probably built fairly soon after the original house was constructed. The south wall of this extension is of ashlar, which blends well with the earlier building, but its other external walls have been pebble-dashed. The remains of wooden window blinds are attached to the windows on the south and west elevations of the original stone house.

An estate map of 25 July 1850 indicates the existence of a smaller extension behind the main building, which must have been demolished when the full-width, three-storey extension was built on to the north wall of the house in the 1880s.[21] An allowance had to be made for the sub-basement in the original block, and an extra mezzanine floor was thus created in the new building. This double-pile extension is of red brick, under a valleyed slate roof, and the two-light sash windows have stone lintels and sills. On the east elevation a full-height brick chimney protrudes above the wall, between the windows of the south-east rooms.

INSIDE BURY KNOWLE

The front entrance at Bury Knowle House leads to a square hall and inner hallway with a simple fireplace (Fig. 4). The main staircase, lit from a round skylight window set into a roof lantern, leads up from this to the principal bedrooms. This staircase is particularly interesting. As travel

[20] Bury Knowle House, Headington, Schedule Grade II listed building, SP 5407 18/59.
[21] OCA, MS Bury Knowle deeds.

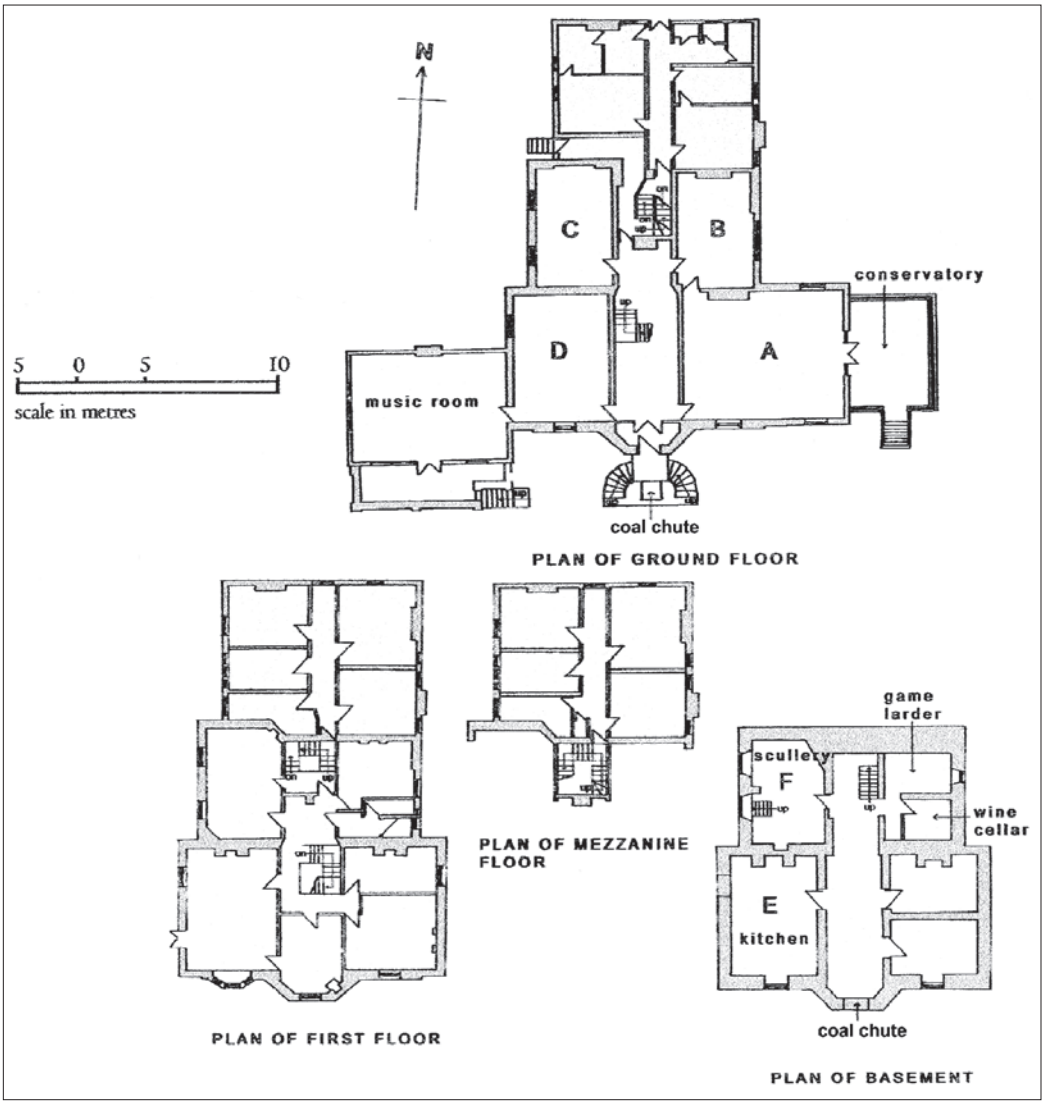

Fig. 4. Floor plans of Bury Knowle House. (*Drawn by author.*)

and exploration increased, architectural design was influenced by new and exciting ideas brought back from far-flung corners of the world. Hindoo or Indian style, and chinoiserie, were popular architectural features in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The pagoda at Kew Gardens, for example, was designed in the Chinese style by Sir William Chambers in 1763. These new ideas were taken up with enthusiasm by the rising middle classes, and this seems to have happened at Bury Knowle, where the design of the newels and ball finials on the staircase clearly resembles the detail on Chinese lanterns (Plate 8).

The main reception room (room A on Fig. 4) appears to have been the room to the right of the entrance, where there is an ornate painted fireplace and classical moulding in the architrave of the door. A wide beam in the ceiling is fixed at the point where this room has been extended to the east, and the frame for the shutters on the sash windows in the north and south walls of this extension are much deeper than those on the earlier south window. Although the pattern for the ornate plaster coving work continues into the extension, the later workmanship is much more precise and has clearly been worked by a different hand – or possibly even machine-tooled.

A connecting door into the adjacent room (room B on Fig. 4) opens up a larger space for entertaining, and the similarity of the panelling in the door opening to that covering the extension ceiling beam suggests that this work was all carried out at the same time – probably within Joseph Lock's lifetime. Although the northern room also has an ornate moulded coving and a particularly fine marble fireplace, it is smaller in scale than the main reception room. The window here is particularly unusual, comprising a central six-light sash, flanked by two-light sashes, all within a continuous frame. The rare, early nineteenth-century internal 'sash shutters' do not fold, as elsewhere in the house, but are in two sections and pull up from the sill.

The reception rooms on the opposite side of the entrance hall (rooms C and D on Fig. 4) are less ornate. Rediscovery of a medieval past, with its hints of ancient lineage and identity, encouraged men of aspiration to create family crests – to which they were not always entitled! Although it has not been possible to link the carved coat of arms in the fireplace in the south-facing room to Joseph Lock – or indeed to any subsequent owner of the house – he may well have felt entitled to create one, especially after being knighted. Its presence in the fireplace, and the fact that the room is close to the front door and thus convenient for receiving visitors, suggests that this room (room D on Fig. 4) was his personal library.

Lock appears to have been a man of many talents. The large number of pictures, including an oil portrait of Dr Crotch, drawings, seven cartoon prints, and a frame of miniatures, together with busts, vases, and other ornaments mentioned in his will,[22] suggests an interest in the visual arts, and contemporary accounts suggest that he was an able musician, regularly entertaining the local gentry with his cello[23] and also owning a grand pianoforte, organ, harp, and Spanish guitar. As was so typical in men of his generation, he had an interest in science, collecting and classifying everything around him in an attempt to understand the world in which he lived. His obituary in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* in 1844 records that he was the president of the Oxford Mechanics' Institute from its formation in 1829, a member of the Oxford City Book Club, and chairman of the Oxford Medical Dispensary.[24] One assumes that his daughter, Maria Ballachey, shared his interests, as the list of items that he bequeathed to her in his will included a solar microscope, optical, philosophical, electrical, magnetical, and chemical machines and apparatus, a glass-blowing machine, and a collection of minerals, fossils, shells, coral, ores, and stalactites – possessions that he might well have kept in his library at Bury Knowle.[25]

The 1841 census shows that one male and three female servants were living at Bury Knowle

22 TNA, PRO, PCC Will, Prob. 11/1995.
23 ORO, MS P407/J/1, Diary of Elizabeth Mary Jones Latimer, 2 Oct. 1821.
24 *Jacksons Oxford Journal*, 20 Jan. 1844, p. 3: Obituary of Sir Joseph Lock.
25 TNA, PRO, PCC Will, Prob. 11/1995.

at this time.[26] By 1891 the records show that, despite a growing shortage of good servants brought about by factors such as emigration to the colonies and the increasing lure of alternative employment, particularly for women, Edward Fielden, his wife, May, and their three children still found it necessary to employ a cook, kitchen maid, housemaid, parlourmaid, butler, and two nurses.[27] Major Charles Miskin Laing is recorded in the 1901 census as having five servants, and a gardener who lived at the lodge on the London Road.[28]

As well as providing extra space for the family, the new extension at the back of the house provided additional servant accommodation. The servants' quarters appear always to have been at the back of the house and in the attics. An original piece of wallpaper of naturalistic floral design, which was popular from the 1880s until the 1920s, lies hidden within a fitted cupboard in one of the attic rooms,[29] providing an insight into the decorative tastes of the time. The back stairs, accessed through a door beside the fireplace in the inner hall, allowed the servants to move around the house without coming into contact with their masters – a distinction that was to become ever more important during the nineteenth century. The stone stairs lead down to the service rooms in the sub-basement, consisting of a kitchen and scullery (rooms E and F on Fig. 4), and storage rooms for such necessities as wine and coal. A single flight of steps (now lost) gave direct access from the scullery to the well in the yard at the side of the coach house.

Since Adeline Kingscote had furnished the rooms of the house in a manner that reflected not only her own inimitable style, but also that of the world in which she lived, the auction-sale catalogue from June 1899 gives a fascinating insight into the materialistic and cultural preferences of life in a late-Victorian, middle-class villa. Thus, for example, the Indian artefacts with which Adeline had decorated her boudoir reflect the imperial outlook that was almost universal at a time when the British Empire was at the height of its power. The abundance of needlework and tapestry in this room reveal a feminine taste, suggesting that this was the private retreat for the ladies,[30] while on the other side of the hallway the masculine artefacts that are listed as being in the billiard room indicate that this was the male preserve.[31] The substantial dining-room suite, which included an oak-framed dining table with four extra leaves and twelve walnut dining chairs, implies regular entertaining,[32] while the presence of three pianos, located in different parts of the house,[33] indicates the continuing importance of music-making within the home – before the mass entertainment of the twentieth century.

The sale catalogue lists the large number of domestic offices required for the numerous staff. There were four servants' bedrooms, and the butler required not only a sitting room and bedroom, but also a pantry, where he could guard the best glasses, china, and cutlery.[34] Downstairs, in the sub-basement of Joseph Lock's original house, could be found the kitchen, servants' hall, butler's pantry, scullery, larder, housemaid's closet, boot room, dairy, and laundry, the last housing a Bradford washing machine – modern indeed in 1899.[35] Fig. 5 illustrates the copper used for heating water for washing.

Although a high-level storage reservoir had been built at Headington in 1878, this was in order to improve the water supply to the city, rather than to Headington. On remembering his childhood at Pollock House in Pullen's Lane at the turn of the century, H. W. C. Vines recalled that

[26] 1841 Census, HO 107/877/1, fol. 37, p. 30.
[27] 1891 Census, RG 14/1292, fol. 96, p. 21.
[28] 1901 Census, RG 13/1378, fol. 92, p. 21.
[29] G. Saunders, Senior Curator, Dept of Prints, Drawings and Paintings, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, personal communication of 16 July 2002 to the author.
[30] Auction Catalogue, pp. 19–20.
[31] Ibid., pp. 16–18.
[32] Ibid., p. 18.
[33] Ibid., p. 7 (Broadwood in school room); p. 20 (Ibach in billiard room); p. 22 (Broadwood grand in drawing room).
[34] Ibid., pp. 2–4, 33–6.
[35] Ibid., pp. 14–16, 37–9 (washing machine, no. 1104, p. 38).

Fig. 5. The copper used for heating water in the basement. (*Photograph by author.*)

the house had its own cesspit and water supply pumped from a well.[36] The location of the cesspit at Bury Knowle is not known, but the marble-topped washstands, chamber ware, and water cans listed in the auction catalogue imply that the servants were still drawing water from the pump at the side of the coach house in 1899.[37] The large number of oil lamps and candlesticks listed in the catalogue suggests that although the Oxford Gas Light and Coke Company (in which Joseph Lock had a share at the time of his death in 1844)[38] had been supplying some gas to Headington by 1869, it had still not reached Bury Knowle at the turn of the century.[39]

LATER OWNERS' ADDITIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Later owners of Bury Knowle made various alterations which reflected both their personal interests and the changing uses of the building. An autochrome of the house taken in about 1910 by Etheldreda Janet Laing, who lived there in the early twentieth century, shows it without either the conservatory or music room, so presumably these were built after this time.[40] The south elevation of the music room, which was added to the south-west corner, is of fine ashlar (Plate 9), which blends well with the rest of the house. The west and north elevations are of brick under pebble-dash, with stone mullions and window surrounds, string course, and quoins.

Entry to this room was through the library, and in order to gain access, the south-west sash window was replaced with a grand doorway with painted porcelain door furniture, the architrave being similar in style to that surrounding the door in the drawing room. At the western end of the

[36] H. M. Harris, *Between the White Gates* (Oxford, 1975), p. 45. The reservoir on Headington Hill, built in 1878, supplied water to Oxford. An additional reservoir was opened at Shotover in 1903 to supply water to Headington: *VCH Oxon.*, 4, p. 355.

[37] Auction Catalogue.

[38] TNA, PRO, PCC Will, Prob. 11/1995.

[39] VCH *Oxon.*, 4, p. 356.

[40] See www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/autochrome/Notable_Photographers_detail.asp?

room are two tall, flat-topped windows with stone lintels on either side of a semi-circular-headed central window, the three standing on a continuous stone sill. A grand Adam-style fireplace with Corinthian columns dominates the north wall, the chimney rising from the flat lead roof, and in the south wall a set of doors opens on to a wide stone balcony, with steps leading down to the garden in front of the house. Although the ceilings in the rest of the house are unadorned, here ornate plaster work, with a central motif, and a highly polished wood floor reflect the room's use as a ballroom.[41] One corner of this room was damaged by fire in November 1978, with the possible – but unconfirmed – loss of some of the papers relating to Bury Knowle.

Amongst the bequests that Joseph Lock left to his daughter, Maria, was his greenhouse and all the plants in it. Exotic plants were greatly coveted by the Victorian middle classes, and the innovative use of glass and iron in the construction of buildings such as the Pavilion for the 1851 Great Exhibition and the Great Palm House at Kew Gardens created the right conditions of light and heat to enable such plants to survive. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the building of a conservatory, which combined the pleasures of sitting and entertaining with the raising of luxurious plants, became increasingly popular, reflecting both the wealth and status of the builder and his knowledge and understanding of botany.

Although it is not clear where the original greenhouse was at Bury Knowle, a purpose-built conservatory (Plate 10) was added to the east side of the house in the early twentieth century. In order to gain access to this room, part of the east wall of the drawing room was knocked down and the existing window removed. This was replaced with single-pane sash windows on either side of French doors in a new stone wall, allowing access through to the conservatory. Beneath the brick base and continuous casement windows that spread around three sides of the conservatory, low shelving is supported on turned wooden legs that reflect the Chinese-influenced carving of the main staircase. The outside walls are decorated with fluted pilasters, and there is an external set of iron steps in the middle of the south elevation. The hipped roof is of slate and is supported by cast-iron rods and brackets.

Further alterations were made when the estate passed into Oxford City Council's ownership in 1930. The firm of Hinkins and Frewin was appointed to carry out essential building work, such as the insertion of glass panels into some of the doors of the house to increase the light.[42] Bury Knowle Library (renamed Headington Library in 1999) moved into the ground-floor front reception rooms in 1934,[43] but the basement and attic rooms remain unused. The rear brick extension, which was surplus to requirements, was also converted into three flats at this time, and tenants were found for the stables, pigsties, greenhouses, and kitchen gardens.[44]

In November 1930 the Council was forced to look for new premises for the Headington baby clinic, after it had been given only two weeks' notice to evacuate the British Workmen premises in Old High Street, where it had been since 1915. The first-floor rooms at Bury Knowle being vacant, the firm of Elliston and Cavell provided suitable furniture, and the clinic moved here in June 1931. A nursery for older children was made available, together with rooms for the doctor, mothers, weighing, teas, and mothercraft lessons. Where once Adeline Kingscote had lived her life of luxury, a team of doctors, nurses, and health visitors from the Radcliffe Infirmary, and six volunteers, now looked after the needs of mothers and babies in the biggest centre of its kind in Oxford.[45] A doctors' surgery remained here until it moved to new premises outside the park in the 1990s. The rooms are now used as offices.

41 Bury Knowle Library, note prepared by Mrs S. Howells, librarian, during the 1970s.
42 OxS, OXFO 352, City of Oxford Council Reports, Property and Estates Committee (1932).
43 Ibid., Library Committee (1931–3).
44 Ibid., Property and Estates Committee (1931–9).
45 ORO, MS 0108/A/2, Headington Baby Clinic.

BURY KNOWLE'S OUTBUILDINGS

There were a number of outbuildings at Bury Knowle, including pigsties, a greenhouse, stabling, and coach houses. Joseph Lock's will of 1844 suggests that at the time of his death he housed a coach, a phaeton and an old chariot, three carts, and a pony carriage on the estate.[46] The original coach house and stables that he leased from The Hermitage must have been insufficient for his needs, since in August 1838 he leased another coach house, alongside Bury Knowle House, together with garden and arable land from Thomas Godfrey. The lease refers to 'the coach house and stable erected several years ago', which suggests that the earliest part of the building (the west end) is early nineteenth century, and was probably built at the same time as the main house.[47]

The west end of the coach house is of random rubble-stone, with dressed quoins. The slate roof has regular timbers and is probably twentieth century, although some of the roof trusses may be original. Sufficient space under cover was necessary in order to clean and maintain the vehicles used at the house, and the double-height doors at the west end suggest that the larger vehicles were likely to have been kept at this end of the building. By 1899 transport requirements had changed. The auction catalogue records the coach house containing a small pony gig, dogcart, station cart, and a French buggy.[48] Stabling was provided for three horses, and much of the timbering for the stalls remains, as do the hay racks that were built into the walls.

About 1870 the east end of the coach house was extended to provide storage for tack on the ground floor and a dwelling for the groom on the upper floor, with a fireplace in the north wall. The extension is mainly of rubble-stone, but the ground-floor north wall is of very poor-quality bricks that are badly weathered. These are laid in rat-trap bond (a low-cost variant of Flemish bond, in which the bricks are laid on edge, usually found only on relatively minor buildings) and may originally have been part of a garden wall. This wall has subsequently been reinforced with further brickwork.

The coach house, which gradually became derelict after Bury Knowle was acquired by the local authority, was eventually renovated by Peter Reynolds Associates in 1990 (Plate 11). Much of the east end had to be rebuilt, as salt and fertilizer stored against the walls had rotted the stone. Reinforced blast screens had been built against the south and east walls of the groom's cottage to provide a bomb-proof shelter during the Second World War. These were removed, revealing the original well, which was set into the east wall, close to the kitchen door of the main house.[49] The hayloft doors were replaced by round-arched windows, and a wood-and-glass vestibule replaced the high carriage doors. The coach house was originally open to the roof, with access to the hayloft being gained either by ladder from the gallery above the carriage house or through the cottage. A new floor with a metal spiral staircase at the west end was therefore fitted, and the building is now used for commercial office accommodation.

In 1880 Maria Bellachey bought land to the west of the house where Joseph Lock had had stables since 1809.[50] The back wall of the stable block makes use of the stone wall that separates the barn yard from the old infants' school in North Place, opened in 1848. Six courses of red bricks were subsequently placed on top of the stone to give additional height. While the same has been done on the gable wall, the front is built entirely of brick comparable with that used in the rear extension to Bury Knowle House and suggests that the stables may have been rebuilt in the 1880s during the ownership of Edward Fielden, who was Master of the South Oxfordshire Foxhounds.

The six stables are mainly lined with tongue-and-groove timber, and have iron mesh ventilators in the roof. The partition wall has been demolished between the two central stables, and one of

46 TNA, PRO, PCC Will, Prob. 11/1995.
47 OCA, Bury Knowle House, Deeds.
48 Auction Catalogue, p. 40.
49 Fred Jewell, conversation with author in June 2002.
50 OCA, Bury Knowle deeds. This land had originally formed part of the grounds of The Hermitage (69 Old High St.), which was owned by Magdalen College. The Hermitage was sold at auction on 28 Jan. 1880.

the doors has been filled in, creating a single space and a small inner room. The stables were well used, particularly by the Beaufoys, who lived in the house in the early twentieth century. They kept a number of horses for both riding and racing, the grass in the grounds being cut using a pony-drawn grass mower.[51] During the 1990s the stables were used as offices for Oxford Film and Video Makers, but they have been empty since 2002. The adjoining barn, which is of rubble-stone under a tile roof, has been used as a store by the park groundsmen, but in 2007 both the barn and stables were semi-derelict (Plate 12).

THE PLEASURE GROUNDS, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC

Having built himself a grand house, Joseph Lock set about developing the pleasure grounds, removing internal fences and hedges to create a park within the seventeen acres of land that he had been awarded in the Headington enclosure. It was at this point that he fell out with the local population, for the high stone wall[52] that he built around the park (Plate 13) cut off an ancient path along which the people of Headington Quarry had traditionally carried their dead to be buried at St Andrew's Church. On finding their way blocked, the infuriated Quarrymen knocked down the wall, which Lock immediately rebuilt. Three times the wall was knocked down and rebuilt, and in 1805 James Palmer, curate of St Andrew's, wrote to the Bishop of Oxford in support of the Quarrymen who, 'for the accommodation of one upstart fellow … were to be distressed … Mr Lock, whose improper conduct has made no inconsiderable disturbance in this parish, is a person in whose estimation the possession of money is a compensation for the absence of almost everything else …'.[53] The matter was eventually resolved, the wall rebuilt, and the Quarrymen abandoned the fight, building their own church in Headington Quarry in 1849.

When planning his park Joseph Lock appears to have been much influenced by the romantic picturesque movement and the idea that all nature is a garden. By the mid-eighteenth century a growing interest in antiquarianism, together with the publication of engravings of ruins, resulted in the rediscovery of a medieval past, with its hints of ancient lineage and identity. Thus, for a person of taste, the discipline and rules of classical architecture had to be set against imagination and sensitivity. Joseph Lock's will also records that he kept cattle and other livestock.[54] The ha-ha prevented the animals in the park from straying on to the area around the house without interrupting the view with a fence or wall, thus giving the illusion of cultivated lawns being absorbed into the pastoral landscape.[55] The visual impact of Shotover Hill in the distance helped to create a natural background for a romantic landscape.

Joseph Lock's will records that he had a greenhouse at Bury Knowle,[56] and there is documentary evidence from 1857 of an orchard, probably to the west of the house.[57] Some kind of building (now lost), possibly a summer house or pavilion in the centre of the park, is shown on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899. However, there is nothing to suggest there were any formal gardens, and the landscape appears to have been little changed by subsequent owners, since the 1910 aquatint shows the front of the house covered with creeper and surrounded by mature trees.

Although Maria Ballachey and subsequent owners of Bury Knowle occasionally provided tea

51 Bury Knowle Library. Information from Mr Johnny Coppock who worked for W. Yates (builders) at Bury Knowle House (then known as The Beeches) during the time that the Beaufoys were in residence. He helped to plant the large walnut tree in the kitchen garden, then opposite the front door.

52 Bury Knowle boundary wall, Schedule Grade II listed structure, SP5407 18 59A.

53 *VCH Oxon.*, 4, p. 166.

54 TNA, PRO, PCC, Will, Prob. 11/1995.

55 Heather A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (London, 1982), p. 64.

56 TNA, PRO, PCC, Will, Prob. 11/1995.

57 ORO, MS Cla.Ivi/1 Heriot, George Baker Ballachey, 12 Oct. 1858.

on the lawn for the local schoolchildren and other worthy Headington citizens,[58] for the most part the grounds remained inaccessible until the estate was bought by the local authority in 1930. The old private pleasure gardens were then equipped with five hard tennis courts, two grass tennis courts, two hockey pitches, playground equipment, and a pavilion,[59] and the new public park was officially opened by the Mayor of Oxford in April 1932.

Throughout the nineteenth century the old lodge on the London Road had been home for the lodge-keeper and his family. This stone building appears to have had three rooms and a pedimented portico on the north-east elevation. In December 1932 the firm of J. E. Billings was employed to convert it into public conveniences. The brick chimney stacks and pediment were demolished, and the fireplace, range, and windows were removed. Further alterations in the 1990s mean that only the stone walls of the original building remain.[60] The entrance by the lodge was widened, and stone pillars with ornate wrought-iron gates were installed, but sadly these gates were sacrificed to the war effort in 1940, and by the time they were replaced there was no longer such a strong civic pride in public parks. More pressing financial commitments meant that the replacement gates were a poor substitute. A path from the east gate to the library was added in 1936, and in January 1939 changing rooms with a verandah were built by the firm of Hinkins and Frewin beside the tennis courts. These are of western red cedar weatherboard and shingles and provide men's and women's changing rooms and an attendant's store.[61]

During the 1930s in particular Bury Knowle Park was a popular recreation ground. A portable bandstand brought by horse and cart[62] provided a suitable venue for regular concerts given by the Headington Silver Prize Band and the City of Oxford Military Band.[63] By the end of the twentieth century, however, public use of parks had waned, as choice of leisure activities increased, and improved transport allowed greater access to the countryside. In the 1980s an area of the park behind the coach house was developed to provide sheltered housing (Plate 14), and a small arboretum was planted on the hockey pitches. However, the park continues to provide a well-loved facility for the people of Headington, and it seems paradoxical that a place to which common access had previously been denied by those who had risen from the common ranks (Joseph and Elizabeth Lock) should have subsequently been made freely available to them.

BURY KNOWLE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Amongst Headington's villas Bury Knowle remains an important feature in both the landscape and community life. While its construction was not without contention and led to social strife between Headington people and the Locks, for much of the twentieth century the house and its grounds have formed a focus for the community as a whole.

While in private ownership, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the house and its outbuildings were developed in a clearly recognizable sequence that reflected the social requirements of the times. More recently, unwanted or unused parts of the property have been given different functions, both for accommodation and commercial use, including the development of sheltered housing on land behind the house during the 1980s.

During the past twenty years there have been repeated threats to Bury Knowle's continued use as a public centre. The removal of the doctors' surgery certainly reduced its importance in this respect, while unresolved issues relating to the installation of an access for disabled users, as well

58 St Andrew's School, Headington, log book, 9 July 1874.
59 OXFO 352, City of Oxford Council Reports, Property and Estates Committee (1932).
60 OCA, Bury Knowle deeds.
61 Ibid.
62 M. Ford, Headington Homeware, conversation with author in May 2002.
63 OxS, OXFO 352, City of Oxford Council Reports (1932).

as financial constraints, have led to uncertainty over the future of the local library there. These appear to have been laid to rest, at least for the moment.[64]

What is needed now is an imaginative concept that can reinforce Bury Knowle's position as a true community centre. Apart from the library, much of the building remains either unused or under-used, and as such is a drain on the Council's resources rather than being an asset. The park, on the other hand, is well used, not only for day-to-day recreation, but also for events such as fairs and special events, with the sculpture created from one of the park trees providing a new visual focus. However, the park and house remain essentially separate entities, so there is a need for uses that could bring the two closer together again. Possibilities include the house being designated as a wedding venue, or the provision of a café to serve the needs of park users.

Built as a means of retreat from Oxford city, Bury Knowle's purpose changed over time as Headington became increasingly urbanized. In common with other surviving villas, however, its architecture remains as evidence of its owners' ambitions and abilities, not only in funding its construction, but also in being able to obtain materials and ideas from sources beyond the immediate locality. For this reason, if for no other, it needs the implementation of a sympathetic long-term plan to ensure its survival as a key feature within Headington.

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64 Stephen Tall, 'Headington Library safe in Bury Knowle House!', www.stephentall.org.uk/news/289.html (accessed April 2006).

Plate 5. Bury Knowle House, front view, 2002. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 42.]

Plate 6. The brick extension at the rear of the original house at Bury Knowle. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 43.]

Plate 7. The main entrance to Bury Knowle House. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 45.]

Plate 8. Staircase detail, showing Chinese influence in arch heads and newel-post turning. (Photograph by author.) [Walker, p. 47.]

Plate 9. The music-room extension. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 49.]

Plate 10. The conservatory. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 50.]

Plate 11. The coach house following renovation. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 51.]

Plate 12. The unrestored barn. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 52.]

Plate 13. The boundary wall along London Road. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 52.]

Plate 14. Sheltered accommodation built behind Bury Knowle House during the 1980s. (*Photograph by author.*) [Walker, p. 53.]