

Quex Park:¹

The oldest house in the village, for which we have irrefutably dated evidence, is the one that stood in Quex Park up until 1806. It is first depicted on Thomas of Elmham's map of Thanet, dated c. 1414². At this time the house was known by the name 'Parkers', after the family who owned it at that period. In 1411 John Parker bequeathed £6 to the fabric of All Saints Church Birchington.³ Thomas of Elmham's drawing of the house shows a fair sized building, which appears to have quite a wide façade. By the middle of the 1400s, the Quek family were in possession of the property. They had owned land in the Isle of Thanet since 1334.⁴ It is quite possible that a Quek member married a Parker heiress, but certainly from then on, the house was known under various spellings of the Quek family name. There are seven versions in Quex Chapel, in All Saints Church.

The next portrayal of the house comes on Thomas Hill's map of 1688, which shows a similar, though larger building on the same site, ie. slightly S.E. of the village of Birchington⁵. By now, the façade has become even wider, with the addition of a central tower and at least four chimneys. On the right hand side, the house has a series of five gables in the roof-line. At the entrance on the road, which, until 1815, ran quite close to the house, there are double gates standing between gateposts with ornamental balls topping each of them. The whole place is surrounded by a small wood, butting right onto the roadside. In the panel Hill drew below the house he wrote, 'As touching the Antiquity of Quex, I shall omitt because its more fitt to be in a Mapp of the said Farme, Onely shewing the Syte of the house antiently in the Parish called St Nych at Wood where sometime stood a Church, se Doomsday ___ ___ Book at London.'

¹ See Appendix No. 43 and 44

² Thomas of Elmham, see Appendix No. 3,

and Bibliography and map at Trinity Hall, Cambridge – A.T. Walker, (1999), p. 26

³ Walker, A.T., (1999), p. 26

⁴ Walker, A.T., (1999), p. 26

⁵ See Appendix No. 43

The last picture we have of the original house is dated 1788, showing it only twenty years before it was demolished by the new owners, the Powell family in 1774.⁶ By this time it was in a sorry state, with holes in the roof and the front garden turned into a vegetable garden for the farmer-tenants who then occupied it. We can still see the five gables to the right side of the house that appeared on Thomas Hill's map, as well as the older left hand section. This part may be the part of the house that Thomas of Elmham depicted on his first map.

According to Hasted, writing at the end of the 1700's,

‘The house has been a large and commodious structure, built partly of timber and partly of brick, within these few years pulled down and the rest modernised and converted into a farmhouse. It is pleasantly situated among a toll of trees, which defend it from the winds.’ He adds,

‘There was formerly a vineyard in the gardens which are walled round.’⁷

When the old house was pulled down in 1806, the new mansion was built slightly further south from the original one. It was completed in 1813 and just two years later, the old road from Birchington to Woodchurch, which passed right in front of the house, was closed to the public and a new road opened well to the south, across the bottom of the home farm paddock.

The owners of Quex Park have played a vital role in the management of the village and its affairs from earliest times and their names feature prominently on many of the documents within the Parish Archives. They held positions of authority in the village always contributed the largest amounts when any sess was collected.

⁶ See Appendix No. 44

⁷ Hasted, E., (1800), p.302