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The garden mounts of Little Moreton Hall: their histories, and new discoveries

NATHAN ATHERTON & BEN EDWARDS

Abstract: This article discusses the findings of an archaeological survey conducted in 2022 by staff and students from Manchester Metropolitan University on behalf of the National Trust-owned property of Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire, England. As part of this survey, two garden mounts, also known as prospect mounds, underwent a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey and photogrammetric 3D reconstruction. The results of this survey suggested that both mounts were much more intricate features of landscaping than they first appeared, with terraced designs undetectable to the naked eye due to overgrowth and the loss of their original shape through weathering. This paper not only focuses on the survey's findings but also the histories of the mounts and how their usage and interpretation have changed over time by examining descriptive, illustrative, and photographic sources since the nineteenth century, to bring attention to these underappreciated landscape features of the property.

Keywords: National Trust; garden mount; early modern garden; archaeology; geophysics

Introduction

Little Moreton Hall ([figure 1](#)) is a sixteenth-century timber-framed gentry manor house located in southeast Cheshire, close to the Staffordshire border; with its crooked profile and third-floor long gallery, it represents one of the most well-preserved, well-recognised, and most-photographed buildings of its type in England.¹ The property was owned and named after the Moreton family, who had lived at the site from at least the thirteenth century and built the majority of the current hall in phases during the sixteenth century. A combination of the Moretons' finances declining in the mid-1600s and letting the property in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in the hall undergoing minimal architectural change. After the death of the last of the Moreton family, Elizabeth Moreton (1821–1912), the property was bequeathed to her cousin, Charles Abraham, Bishop of Derby, who donated it to the National Trust in 1937, which acquired it the following year.

Little Moreton's architecture and interiors have received considerable attention from researchers, particularly for its long gallery and the rediscovered Elizabethan wall painting in the little parlour room.² In comparison, studies of its gardens remain slim. Scant physical evidence remains aside from two early modern garden mounts which have drawn little scholarly intrigue, whilst early modern archival material of the hall, admittedly large, generally only provides us with a mid-seventeenth century snapshot of the gardens. This is not an issue unique to Little Moreton, but rather a near-universal problem when attempting to study gentry landscapes of this period.³ In contrast, royal, aristocratic, and college gardens tend to leave a larger pool of early modern archival material relating to their construction and maintenance, illustrations, paintings, and descriptive accounts, as reflected in Karin Seeber's study into the mount at New College, Oxford; or Pete Smith's analysis of the detailed garden plans for Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire.⁴



FIGURE 1. South front and entrance of Little Moreton Hall (photography by authors).

The findings of a recent archaeological survey conducted by Manchester Metropolitan University of the two garden mounts have allowed the opportunity to understand their designs and address the varied interpretations that have been applied to them, which have not always considered them as intentional garden features. The article begins by describing the mounts and how they have changed from the seventeenth century to the present day, before considering previous understandings of them from nineteenth-century antiquarians to the National Trust itself. The archaeological survey of the mounts is then explained, which revealed lost terracing to their designs, providing clear evidence they were intentional garden features. With this discovery in mind, the article concludes by comparing the mounts to other examples and early modern gardening

literature to better understand how those at Little Moreton may have been used and furnished.

The mounts of Little Moreton

Little Moreton has two mounts: a low, roughly 1.5 m high and 6 m in diameter mount within the northwest corner of the moated platform, and a larger 4 m high and 15 m in diameter mount (figures 2–3) located outside the moat to the southwest of the property (referred hereon as the inner and outer mounts, respectively). The dating and origin of the mounts have long been a source of speculation. If we tie the development of the mounts with that of the construction of the property — early modern garden features for an early modern building — it is possible that the outer mount was designed to showcase the south wing (c.1560–62) and long gallery (c.1560–1600), making them Elizabethan-era additions by John Moreton (c.1541–1598), who had also included garden themed interior decorations within the property too, with the little parlour wall painting depicting the biblical story of Susanna and the Elders, which took place in a garden.⁵

Archival material relating to the property and the Moreton family has yet to yield substantial information about the two mounts. Small details of land usage in and out of the moated area are provided by examining the account books of Philip Moreton (1611–1669).⁶ Philip handled the day-to-day management of the property for his older brother Edward (1599–1674), and the survival of his accounts offer a valuable glimpse into the daily running and maintenance of a gentry estate.

Philip mentioned a mount on 29 November 1658, recording a memorandum to ask his brother Edward for 10 pence to cover the costs of the labour and diet of ‘Jo: Shaw for mending the wall att the mount yard door & mending the planks in the stables (about 3 weekes since)’.⁷ It is believed that this refers to the outer mount.⁸ The mention of a wall and door, as opposed to a fence and gate, may suggest sturdier, more substantial forms of architecture in the garden spaces outside the moat, yet we cannot rule out that he meant the latter either. Philip’s other entries concerning the estate’s gardens and orchards paint one typical of a gentry house in the mid-seventeenth century, with a focus on produce rather than aesthetics. On 10 June 1661, Philip recorded counting iron hooks on a garden wall for growing espaliered fruit trees, and a pear tree near the little parlour.⁹ The little parlour is located in the northeast corner of the property, with

THE GARDEN MOUNTS OF LITTLE MORETON HALL



FIGURE 2. Above: the inner mount. Below: the outer mount (photography by authors).



FIGURE 3. Site map of Little Moreton Hall (image by authors).

north-facing windows that today look out towards the recreation of a knot garden, from this we can speculate that the inner mount was used to provide a better view of the garden here.¹⁰ Philip also makes reference to taking trees out of a garden and setting them within an orchard, as well as a stable orchard, and repairing a wall in a kitchen garden.¹¹ The orchard is believed to have been located on the west side within the moat, where the current orchard stands today, and so both mounts would have provided views of this.¹² Philip refers to the sections of the garden as quarters — a term meaning a subdivision within a garden — this along with the references to walls (which, again, in actuality may have just been pailing fences), suggests that the garden inside the moat would have been clearly compartmentalised.¹³ These spaces were not entirely focused on the cultivation of fruits and vegetables, as Julyflowers (gilliflowers), known for their scent, were also present.¹⁴

The surge in antiquarian and historical interests in the nineteenth century provided accounts of Little Moreton at the time. Whilst these focused primarily on the property's architecture, the mounts and gardens did feature



FIGURE 4. Drawing of the west side of Little Moreton from the northwest, with a ruined sundial at the forefront. Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, DCC/43, 'Two hours at Little Moreton Hall' by James West, 1849 (image provided courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

occasionally, which may allude to their usage and form in the centuries prior. James West produced a set of sketches and watercolours of Little Moreton

based on his visit to the hall in November 1847.¹⁵ These include a painting of the outer mound with a tree on top of it and two sketched views of Little Moreton from the northwest, which would have been close to the inner mount. These drawings show a ruined sundial with rubble around its base, which would have been directly east of the inner mount (figure 4). If this sundial was the remnant of the original early modern gardens at Little Moreton, then the earlier views provided by the inner mount may not have been as wholly produce-focused as suggested in Philip Moreton's accounts.

Others elaborated on this sundial in further detail. A talk given by Frank Renaud to the Rosicrucian Society of Manchester, republished in *The Manchester Guardian* in 1855, noted the northernmost section of the garden was being used as an orchard and in its centre was placed 'an Elizabeth sun-dial stands carved in stone, and ornamented after the renaissance fashion. Nearer to this is a small watch mound, now planted with young fruit trees'.¹⁶ Samuel Carter Hall, in his *Baronial Halls, Picturesque Edifices, and Ancient Churches of England*, claimed that 'In front of the house there formerly stood the steps of an old cross, which have been removed. It is probable that they now surround the cross piled up in the garden, and upon which is placed an old-sun dial', and included a small sketch of the sundial by Henry Lark Pratt roughly matching with the one drawn by West.¹⁷ This potential origin of the sundial must be questioned, Hall's claim that the steps had first been removed from the front of the house can be traced back to George Ormerod's discussions of the nearby Great Moreton Hall in his history of the county, suggesting he conflated the history of the halls by mistake.¹⁸ By 1883, James Croston reported a sundial had been placed on the inner mount, suggesting the dial described by Renaud and Hall had been relocated.¹⁹ This relocation would prove to be temporary; a photograph taken across the moat by G. E. Thompson in 1893 shows the mount having a table and seating placed on it (figure 5), used as a spot to serve tea to visitors to the hall as attested to in recounts of visits.²⁰ In a relatively short time frame, the use of the inner mount had gone from a productive, to a decorative, and finally to a catering function, no doubt informed by the increasing interest in the property.

The outer mound was characterised from at least the nineteenth century until the early 2010s by a large sycamore tree that grew on top of it.²¹ A photograph by George Davies in the 1880s is one of the earliest taken of

THE GARDEN MOUNTS OF LITTLE MORETON HALL



FIGURE 5. Photograph by G.E Thompson of Little Moreton taken from the northwest outside the moat (1893). The inner mount (centre right) can be seen with seating and a bench placed on top of it (image provided courtesy of the National Trust).

the outer mount, showing the bare sycamore growing on top, with a bench placed around it (figure 6). Like with the inner mount, this bench might have been implemented by the current residents of the hall for the benefit of visitors. Based on the tree's size in the photo, it would have already been of a considerable age. This tree is present in the 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the estate and is also visible in a photograph taken in June 1914, when a mock Elizabethan pageant was held at the property; fittingly, spectators used the contemporaneous garden feature to observe the event (figure 6).²² In these photos and the OS map, the tree appears to be an isolated growth with no others growing close by, in the mid-twentieth century another photograph shows numerous trees had since grown behind it, which remains wooded to this day, concealing the carpark.²³ Early photographs of the outer mount, like the inner mount, showcase that it was not simply left to



FIGURE 6. Above: photograph by George Davies of Little Moreton with the outer mount at the forefront (c.1890s). Cheshire Image Bank, ref. c13093. Below: photograph of the Elizabethan pageant held at Little Moreton in June 1914. In the distance, spectators can be seen sitting on the outer mount. Cheshire Image Bank, ref. c04873 (images provided courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

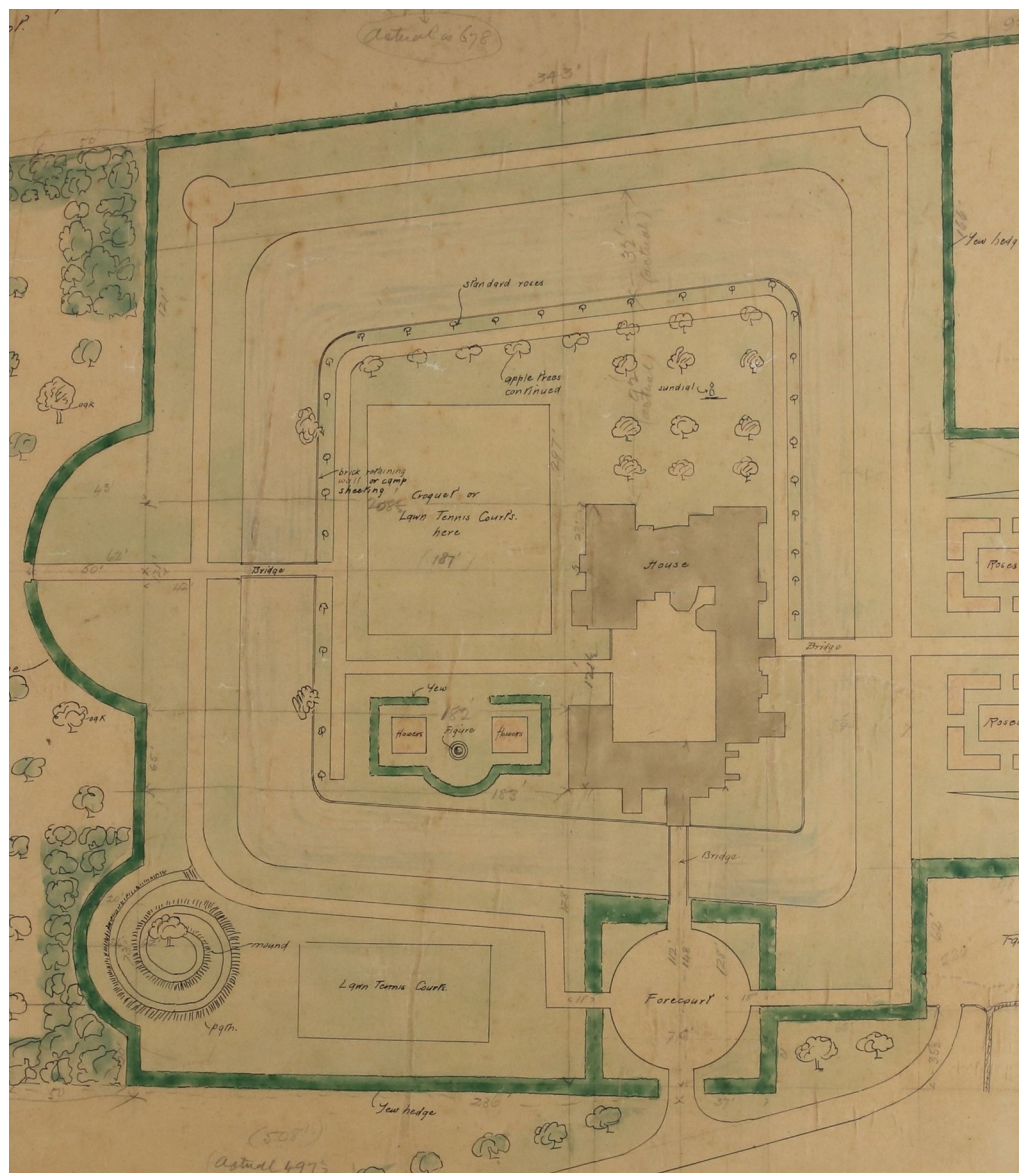


FIGURE 7. Detail from proposed plan for the redesign of Little Moreton's grounds (c.1890s). Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, D6906/1, 'Moreton Old Hall, Cheshire, Scheme for Laying out of Grounds round House' (image provided courtesy of Cheshire Archives & Local Studies).

ruin following the Moretons' vacating of the property as their residence or after the features had fallen out of favour in terms of contemporary garden trends. Instead, subsequent generations who lived at and visited Little Moreton Hall still found use and enjoyment from the mounts beyond their early modern heyday.

By 2009, the aged sycamore was dying back, a point of concern for the National Trust and English Heritage worried that high winds could topple the tree, causing its root ball to damage the morphology of the mount. To prevent this, the tree was removed, and steps were added for safe, directed guidance up the mount for visitors, as a series of desire lines had been causing erosion to the site. The location for the new steps was chosen based on the most used desire line path, as shown in [figure 2](#).²⁴

Worth noting is a plan ([figure 7](#)) for an unexecuted redesign of the gardens and orchards surrounding the property dating to the 1890s, making Elizabeth Moreton likely its commissioner after she inherited the hall following the passing of her sister Annabella in 1892. The plans suggest a redesign rather than restoration of the estate's gardens, which Timothy Mowl and Marion Mako claim reflected 'the late-Victorian passion for flowers, the emerging Edwardian predilection for yew-hedge enclosures and contemporary interests in outdoor leisure pursuits'.²⁵ In this plan, the inner mount would have seemingly been flattened to make way for croquet or lawn tennis courts (a sundial is placed in the north-eastern section of the garden, potentially indicating another relocation of the Elizabethan sundial). The outer mount and its sycamore would survive, with the implementation of a counter-clockwise spiral pathway running up it and, directly east of it, additional lawn tennis courts, for which the mount would act as an ideal observation spot. Just as the National Trust designed a new pathway based on pre-existing desire lines for the outer mount, it is possible that the designers of the 1890s plan chose a spiral path as a reinstatement of an original path that had lost its definition over time.

Previous interpretations

Though the mounts are generally agreed upon today to be early modern garden features, scarce contemporary information regarding their origin made them a source of speculation for a considerable time. George Ormerod, in his history of Cheshire, believed the mounts would have been part of a defensive element which predated the current property and would have supported watch towers; such

theories remained pervasive into the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁶ Tudor properties are often associated with tales of secret passages and escape tunnels, real or fictitious, and Little Moreton was not immune to such stories. Residents and property agents of the house would tell visitors how a shaft in the brewhouse chamber was said to lead to a subterranean passage that went under the moat towards the outer mount.²⁷ Acceptance of such stories was not wholesale; Hall claimed the validity of the tunnel had 'no higher authority than that wild fancy which thus gilds, to its own delight, antique and curious buildings in all parts of our country'.²⁸ These interpretations of the outer mount serving a defensive or covert purpose would be merged by Lionel Angus-Butterworth, claiming that the alleged tunnel would have been a remnant of days of an earlier fortified Little Moreton, allowing guards to reach the tower undetected by enemies.²⁹

Henry Avray Tipping dismissed such claims, believing the distance between the mounts was too far for them to be defensive and that the shaping of the inner mound would not have been able to support a tower. Instead, recognising the mounts as early modern garden features, he speculated that John Moreton, as part of his alterations to the property, may have used excavated earth from the digging of the moat to create them.³⁰ The building of a mount simultaneously with the creation of moated gardens was not uncommon. However, the date of the moat's construction at Little Moreton is unknown and may predate the existing property, which would make the mounts very early examples, not just for gentry gardens, but also in comparison to royal and aristocratic estates.³¹ It is plausible they were built well after the creation of the moat, when the trend for garden mounts had been firmly established amongst the gentry in the late-Tudor and Stewart periods, still making John Moreton the likely commissioner of the mounts. The moat itself may have still served a function in this in that its dredged material may have contributed towards building the mounts.

Within the National Trust itself, the mounts have been a source of debate as to whether they were intentionally designed as garden features by the Moreton family. John Sales, Head of Gardens at the National Trust from 1973 to 1998, and who had been involved in the creation of the knot garden at Little Moreton, doubted the intentionality of the mounts, particularly of the inner mound, believing that the long gallery and bedroom windows would have made it a redundant feature, and attributed their formations to the dumping of dredged silt from the moat gradually over the centuries.³² More broadly, however, the National Trust believed both mounts were intentional features. The guidebooks for the property include an artistic impression of the hall

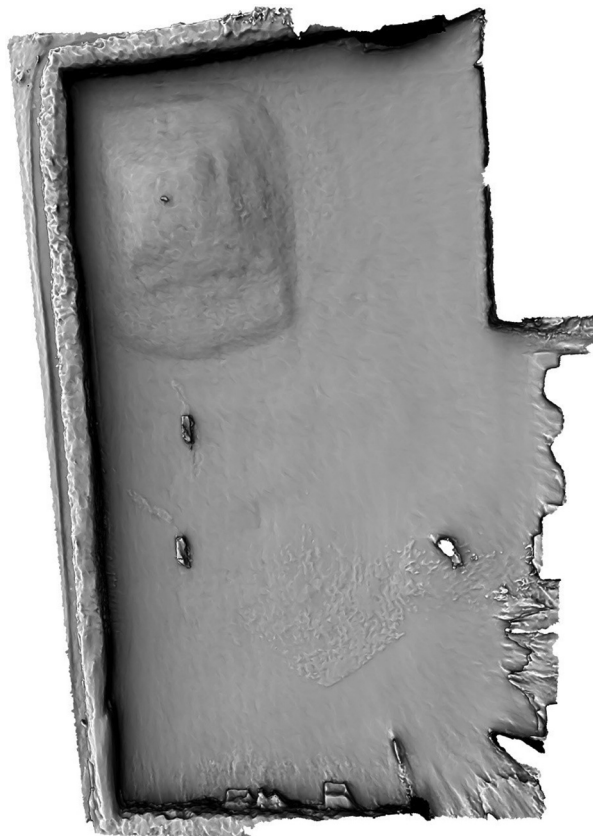


FIGURE 8. *The 3D model of the inner mount (image by authors).*

c.1550, with the mounts depicted as equal in size and conical.³³ In 2009, the grounds within the moat underwent geophysics and test pitting surveys, which reinforced the belief that the inner mount had been an intentional feature. The geophysics survey detected probable revetting along the inner mount's south and west sides, and the lack of magnetic activity detected within it dispelled speculation that the formation may have been the result of the piling of iron slag from a bloomery.³⁴ Likewise, in the test pitting survey, a test pit dug on top of the mount revealed four postholes speculated to have been left by

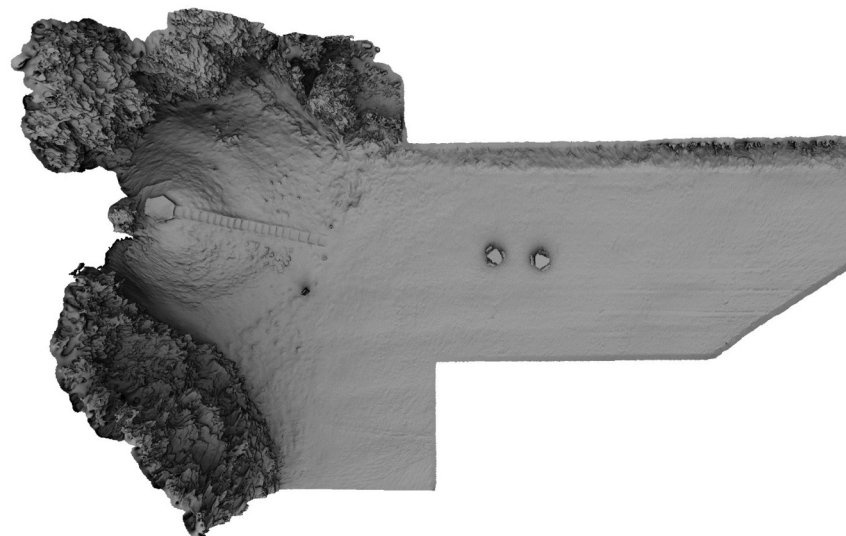


FIGURE 9. *The 3D model of the outer mount (image by authors).*

a summerhouse.³⁵ However, with the knowledge that the inner mount had seating and a table in the later 1800s, this may be the cause of the findings.

Surveying the mounts

Given the uncertainty over the genesis of the inner mount, and the lack of clear evidence from Philip Moreton's accounts, a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey and photogrammetric reconstruction was undertaken in order to better understand the internal structure and external form of both. The inner mount was subject to both a GPR survey and 3D reconstruction, but the outer mount could not be GPR surveyed due to the unsuitability of the terrain. The 3D reconstruction was undertaken using overlapping vertical photographs taken from a UAV (drone) platform, then combined in photogrammetric modelling software to create an accurate three-dimensional model of the mounts and the surrounding terrain.

Figure 8 displays the results of the 3D modelling for the inner mount. The photographic colours have been removed, leaving the underlying terrain model, as the variations in texture obscure appreciation of the

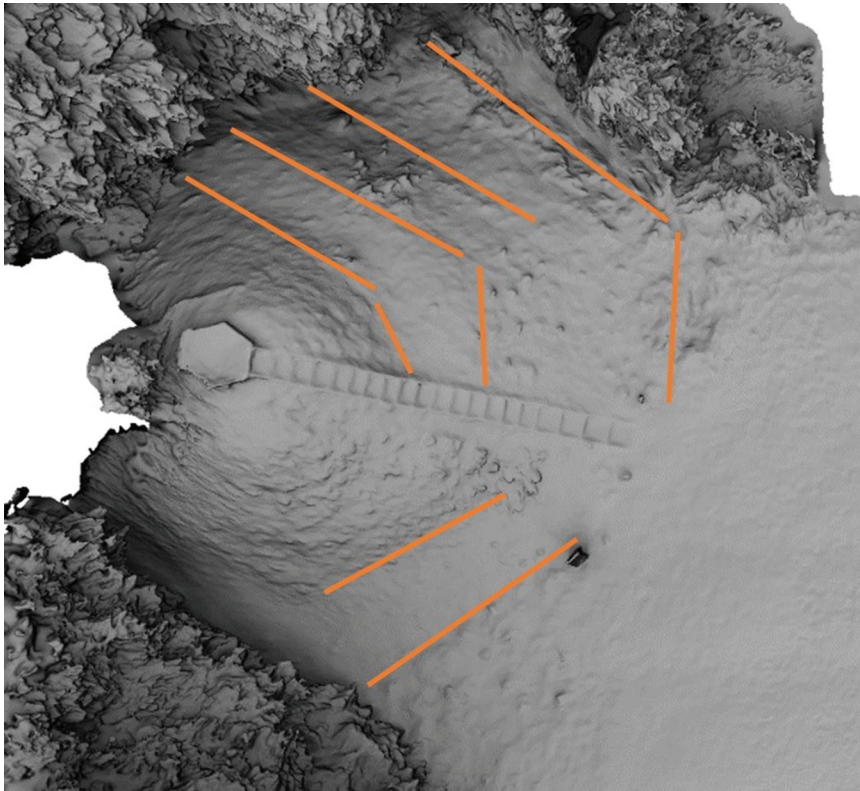


FIGURE 10. *The outer mount showing terracing and linear elements (image by authors).*

fundamental form of the structure. The topographic model of the inner mount makes clear that the mound is both rectangular and clearly terraced in form, as had been partially detected in the 2009 geophysics survey.³⁶ These features are not immediately apparent at ground level but become obvious when the confusing factor of photographic texture is removed. Each level of terrace can also be clearly associated with the results of the GPR survey, explored below. The presence of deliberate terracing indi-

cates that the feature is unlikely to be the result of haphazard dumping of dredged material from the moat.

A similar terraced form was observed for the outer mount (figure 9), although the overall shape is different. Here the terracing is harder to discern, probably due to disturbance caused by the growth and subsequent removal of the sycamore tree. However, it does appear that this larger mount originally may have been circular or spiral in shape (figure 10), which the proposed garden designs of the 1890s had potentially sought to restore definition to (figure 7). The terraced form of this mount further strengthens the interpretation that the terracing on the inner mount was deliberate, and thus that terracing implies deliberate construction, rather than the chance results of dredging.

The final step in securely identifying the man-made character of the inner mount was to undertake the GPR survey over the feature and the adjacent lawn area. Figure 11 shows the annotated and unannotated versions of two horizontal 'slices' through the mount and lawn. Together, these represent the top 25 cm of the turf. The total depth of the survey was 3.5 m, but the top two slices suffice to reveal the necessary subsurface features. The anomalies relating to probable features are annotated A to G on figure 11. Anomalies A and B appear to be spatially associated, with A appearing as a circular anomaly, visible between 0 and 0.26 m below the ground surface, diameter 1.2 m; and B a rectangular or anomaly, visible between 0 and 0.26 m below the ground surface, size 2.5×3 m. Together, these features in the centre of the top level of the mound, potentially represent a constructed element placed on the summit during use and the top level of terracing. Anomalies C, D and E are a series of concentric subrectangular features of increasing size between 5×6 m (C) and 11×12 m (E). It appears that these three anomalies represent constructional elements of the mound, potentially revetment to create the terraced appearance of the feature apparent from the topographic survey (above). Anomaly F is larger and subcircular in shape, and most likely represents the limits of the spread of soil that has eroded down from the mound onto the surrounding lawn. This is also visible on the topographic survey (figure 8). Finally, anomaly G is a strong linear feature of uncertain origin. It extends to greater depth than the other anomalies discussed here but does not appear to represent the course of a potential modern drain crossing the lawn, as it is too shallow. It may represent another feature integral to

the layout of the gardens, either a path or wall, as such compartmentalisation was common to early modern designs.³⁷

Contextualising the mounts

The archaeological survey presents clear evidence that the Moreton family designed the mounts as deliberate pieces of landscape architecture, allowing us to more readily speculate how they might have been used and furnished based on contemporary gardening literature and known mounts locally and further afield.

Early modern writers of garden literature emphasised the role which mounts had in both providing better inward views of gardens and orchards and outward views of the surrounding landscape. Francis Bacon, in his essay ‘On Gardens’, whilst recommending the building of a 30-foot tall circular mount for the centre of a garden — certainly, beyond the scope of lesser gentry like the Moretons — also recommended mounts at the ends of a walled garden to provide a view of the surrounding landscape.³⁸ William Lawson’s *A New Orchard and Garden* suggested creating mounts ‘covered with fruit trees, Kentish Cherries, damsons, Plums, &c. with staires of precious workmanship; and in some corner (or moe) a true dial or clock, and some Antickworks, and especially silver-sounding Musick, mixt instruments and voyces’.³⁹ Ralph Austen’s *A Treatise of Fruit-trees*, recommended mounts be placed specifically in orchards to ‘behold round about a multitude of severall sorts of Fruit-trees, full of beautifull Blossomes, different in their *shapes* and *colours*, ravishing the sence with sweet Odors, and within a while, turned into faire and goodly fruit of divers *Colours and Kinds*, the fruit-trees gorgeously array’d with green leaves, and various colour’d fruits, and with so many pretious *Jewles, and Pearles*’.⁴⁰ In relation to these latter authors, we know Little Moreton’s mounts looked onto the moated orchard and that the inner mount was used to grow fruits according to Renaud’s account, which may have been a centuries long practice.⁴¹

Mounts were included in a section concerning ‘Arbors, and Places of Repose’, in John Worlidge’s *Systema Horti-culturæ*, which he claimed provided ‘the advantage of Air and Prospect, and whereon you may erect a *Pleasure or Banquetting-house*, or such like place of Repose’.⁴² Lawson, Austen, and Worlidge’s writings demonstrate how the inclusion of mounts

at Little Moreton would have not just provided a visual experience, but an olfactory one, through the intake of air fragrant by the plants within the gardens and orchards, and potentially even an audible experience according to Lawson. Worlidge also suggested that it ‘was not unusual to raise a Mount with the waste Earth or Rubbish, you may otherwise happen to be troubled withal’, so while the timescale for the mounts at Little Moreton being developed from the moat are uncertain, certainly they may have been erected from the unearthed material of other projects from around the wider estate.⁴³

Other mounts indicate how those at Little Moreton may have been furnished. A squared mount, though not terraced, at Boscobel, Shropshire, is a similar size to the outer mount and is located within a corner of a fenced garden which had an arbour on top of it, as depicted in a 1651 wood engraving, which would have provided views of a formal garden.⁴⁴ Tiered mounts with the inclusion of hedging seem to have been rare and squared terraced designs in general are less common today than other designs because erosion has resulted in a loss of their definition.⁴⁵ It is also possible that the lower terraces of Little Moreton’s mounts were left bare, whether as a stylistic choice or because the space within each tier did not provide room to adorn them with plantings. Such a mount is depicted in the Moorfields copperplate map of London (c.1559); a squared, three-tiered terraced mount in this style is visible with only a tree growing on top of it.⁴⁶ For the terraces to have been bare aside from grass turfing would have reflected contemporary notions of garden style. Mounts not only allowed those standing on top of them to appreciate well-ordered, geometric designs in a garden, but creating mounts in these geometrical shapes would have also been a complimentary extension of these trends.

Examining other mounts within the county, surviving and lost, attests to their popularity as a garden feature in the early modern period. In Nantwich, a walled garden, likely constructed by Thomas Wilbraham (1589–1643) following his inheritance of the property in 1612, included a mount located within the garden’s orchard in 1631.⁴⁷ The large, formal walled gardens of Gawsworth Hall contained two conical mounts in its south-eastern and south-western corners (with the former removed in WWII for the use of its sand), standing 4 m high and 20 m in diameter.⁴⁸ Unlike at Little Moreton, these mounts complimented each other in both the symmetry of their location and design. A large, four-tiered circular mount was also at Dunham Massey, which included a small building on top of it and is

believed to have been built around 1616, when the estate's owner, Sir George Booth (1566–1652), made alterations to the property and grounds.⁴⁹ The mount still survives, though in a much-reduced state. At Peel Hall, a now destroyed mount was located beyond the property's southern walled garden, acting as a focal point; Sharon Varey has suggested that it, too, had a building on top of it and potentially overlooked a pool of water in the garden.⁵⁰ Whilst these local designs vary, previous studies have noted that they provided good vantages of the surrounding landscape, which may have been a conscious decision by their creators. At Gawsworth Hall, the mounts provide views of the Cloud, a large hill on the border of Cheshire and Staffordshire, whereas at Peel Hall, the lost mount would have afforded views of Beeston Crag, and the Welsh hills.⁵¹ Like these, looking southeast from Little Moreton's outer mount shows views of Mow Cop, a 335-m hill marking the southern tip of the Pennines, so while a sense of a uniform design for mounts in the region cannot be attained, certainly, there was similar usage.

Conclusion

An aim of this combination of geophysical and topographic survey work was to establish whether the inner mound was, indeed, a deliberately designed 'prospect' mount, and therefore part of the garden architecture, rather than a dump of material dredged from the moat in more recent history. Given the internal evidence from GPR and the external evidence from the UAV survey, it is clear that the form of the mound is deliberately both terraced and rectangular, and it seems highly unlikely that these features would have resulted from simply dumping dredged material. This interpretation is further strengthened by the evidence from the topographic survey of the outer mound. Here too we have found evidence that the original form of the mound was terraced and possibly spiral in shape. This form subsequently became obscured by the growth and removal of a large mature sycamore tree, damaging the architecture, though the north-eastern aspect still retains this original form.

The revealing of the lost terracing of Little Moreton's mounts highlights that even at lesser-gentry estates there was a clear appreciation of geometric, ordered shaping to hard landscaping. While we cannot be certain, it is worth considering how the inner mount's squared terrace shaping may have complimented the designs of the rest of the gardens and orchards at Little Moreton, if they too were neatly laid out in square beddings or neat rows. This discovery should be seen as an encouragement for similar surveys on other mounts, providing the opportunity to develop an even richer categorisation of these structures.

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4. Karin Seeber, 'Ye Making of ye Mount': Oxford New College's Mount Garden Revised', *Garden History*, 40/1 (Summer 2012), pp. 3–16; Pete Smith, 'The Sundial Garden and House-Plan Mount: Two Gardens at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire, by Robert (c. 1535–1614) and John (–1634) Smythson', *Garden History*, 31/1 (Spring 2003), pp. 1–28.
5. Henry Avray Tipping, 'Country Homes, Gardens Old & New: Little Moreton Hall — I. Cheshire. The Property of Bishop Abraham' *Country Life*, 66/1715 (30 November 1929), p. 761; Timothy Mowl, Marion Mako, *The Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire* (Bristol: Redcliffe, 2008), pp. 16–17.
6. British Library, Add. MS. 33941; a microfilm copy is held by Cheshire Archives & Local Studies as mf 77. Vol. IV (ff. 225).
7. British Library, Add. MS. 33941, f. 77 v.
8. Jeremy Lake, *Little Moreton Hall* (Swindon: National Trust, [1995] 2011), p. 26.
9. British Library, Add. MS. 33941, f. 101 v.
10. Whilst mounts are commonly associated with knot gardens to provide better views of their intricate patterns, the one at Little Moreton is not based on any previously known example at the property. It instead represents an early attempt at recreating a historical garden by the National Trust; as such, it will not be considered in depth here.
11. British Library, Add. MS. 33941, ff. 79 v, 104 v, 118 r.
12. Lake, *Little Moreton Hall*, p. 24.
13. British Library, Add. MS. 33941, f. 74 r; David Jacques, 'The Compartment System in Tudor England', *Garden History*, 27/1, Tudor Gardens (Summer 1999), p. 33; Lake, *Little Moreton Hall*, pp. 23–24.
14. Lake, *Little Moreton Hall*, p. 24.
15. Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, DCC/43.
16. 'Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire'. *The Manchester Guardian* (31 January 1855), p. 8.
17. Samuel Carter Hall, 'Moreton Hall', *The Baronial Halls, Picturesque Edifices, and Ancient Churches of England*, I (London: Chapman and Hall, 1845), I, 3–4.
18. George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, III (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, and Jones, 1819), p. 26. Other writers attribute this story as originating from the antiquarian Lysons brothers, though they never mentioned it in their descriptions of either Little or Great Moreton, Daniel Lysons, Samuel Lysons, *Magna Britannia; being a Concise Topographical Account of the Several Counties of Great Britain*, II (London: printed for T. Cadell, and W. Davies, 1810), pp. 457, 492–493; these include James Croston, *Historic Sites of Lancashire and Cheshire: a Wayfarer's Notes in the Palatine Counties, Historical, Legendary, Genealogical, and Descriptive* (Manchester, London: John Heywood, 1883), p. 447; and Edward Walford, *Pleasant Days in Pleasant Places* (London: Hardwicke & Bogue, 1878), p. 179, with the latter claiming it originated from Lysons (singular) in his 'Topographica Britannica', itself likely another error, as this must surely mean John Nichols' *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* series, which did not cover Cheshire.
19. Croston, *Historic Sites of Lancashire and Cheshire*, p. 447.
20. A. M., 'Summer Pilgrimages. Moreton Old Hall'. *Widnes Examiner* (11 September 1909), p. 9.
21. The tree had occasionally been misidentified as an oak, see Joseph Nash, *The Mansions of England in the Olden Time*, re-edited by J. Corbet Anderson, IV (London: Henry Sotheran & Co., 1872), p. 73; 'Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire'. *The Manchester Guardian*, p. 8.
22. Ordinance Survey, *Staffordshire Sheet VI.NE, Six Inch England and Wales, 1842–1952* (Southampton: Ordinance Survey Office, 1888). For more details on the 1914 pageant held at Little Moreton Hall see Angela Bartie, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, Paul Readman, 'Old Moreton 1589–1914', *The Redress of the Past*, <http://www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/1301/> [accessed 13 December 2024].
23. Historic England Archive, UXC01/01/01/0062/15, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/item/UXC01/01/01/0062/15> [accessed 13 December 2024].
24. National Trust, 2024, personal communication.
25. Mowl, Mako, *Cheshire*, p. 20.
26. Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, III, p. 28; Nash, *The Mansions of England*

- in the Olden Time*, IV p. 73; Fletcher Moss, *Pilgrimages to Old Homes, Mostly on the Welsh Border* (Didsbury: Self-published, 1903), p. 218; 'Country Homes: Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire, the Residence of Mrs. A. Dale', *Country Life*, 15/381 (23 April 1904), p. 598; A. M., 'Summer Pilgrimages. Moreton Old Hall'. *Widnes Examiner*, p. 9; Lionel M. Angus-Butterworth, *Old Cheshire Families & Their Seats* (Didsbury: E. J. Morten, [1932] 1970), p. 184.
27. Henry Taylor, *Old Halls of Lancashire and Cheshire* (Manchester: J. E. Cornish, 1884), pp. 126–127; 'Little Moreton Hall and its Story, By our special commissioner. Sketches by our own artist. II'. *The Manchester Weekly Times* (25 August 1893), p. 5; 'A Visit to an Old Cheshire Mansion'. *The Chester Courant* (2 May 1888), p. 4; T. A. C., 'Historic Cheshire'. *The Manchester Guardian* (16 March 1929), p. 11.
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 29. Angus-Butterworth, *Old Cheshire Families & Their Seats*, p. 190.
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