

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Marlborough College

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Name:	Marlborough College
District:	Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Marlborough
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.416560 Longitude: -1.7358925 National Grid Reference: SU1846368649 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.localisation:	[51.415342680516,-1.73679376181907], [51.4153434419009,-1.73679286879409], [51.4153423019739,-1.73679376399072], [51.415342680516,-1.73679376181907]
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001239 Date first listed: 01-Sep-1987 Date of most recent amendment: 16-Jun-2014 Location Description: Bath Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1PA

Historique de la conservation

The site of Marlborough College was formerly occupied by Marlborough Castle, first mentioned in documents of 1138, although it is thought to have been built soon after 1066 (VCH 1983). The mount situated in the centre of the site formed the castle's motte. Recent radiocarbon dates obtained from two soil cores taken through the Marlborough Castle mount show the main body of it to be of Neolithic origins, contemporaneous to nearby Silbury Hill, and dating to the second half of the 3rd millennium cal BC (Leary, 2013).

By 1541 Marlborough Castle was ruinous, and a house probably occupied the site by then or soon after. Sir Francis Seymour constructed a new house on the site before 1621, perhaps set within formal gardens with the mound possibly in use as a garden mount. In 1642, considerable damage was done to the site when parliamentary soldiers used the mount for defence purposes, and also in 1644, when Charles II took possession of Seymour's house and fortified it. Two years later, Seymour was allowed to rebuild his house, by then called Marlborough House. In 1654 John Evelyn visited him and noted the mount, which was certainly in use as a garden feature at that date (Bray 1898).

In the early-C18, under the ownership of Lord and Lady Hertford, further improvements were undertaken to the house and grounds at Marlborough. In 1705, possibly in order to create formal gardens to the south-east of the house, a section of Bath Road (now, 1999, called Pewsey Road), was diverted further east (VCH 1983), as recorded by Stukeley on a plan in his *Itinerarium Curiosum* of 1776. The latter includes three illustrations of the gardens at Marlborough House, the earliest being a bird's-eye view dated 6 July 1723. This shows formal gardens that include the mount, terraces, parterres, a wilderness, canals, and various garden buildings. Stukeley probably visited the gardens at Marlborough on various occasions in the first half of the C 18, when he was also engaged with studies of nearby Wilton House (qv) and Avebury (Field and Brown 1999). Sometime before 1726, Lady Hertford created a grotto at the base of the mount, and subsequently, in the late 1730s, further improvements to the garden were undertaken which involved the widening of parts of the moat, the building of a ruinous arch, and the addition of cascades.

From 1751 until 1843, the house was in use as the Castle Inn (later Hotel), with the gardens being used by its guests. Several visitors described them in letters and travel reports, and although neglected, the layout of the gardens seems to have remained unchanged during this period (guidebook).

In 1843, Marlborough House became part of Marlborough College, and in the C20 it was renamed C-House. Shortly after 1843 various new school buildings, designed by the architects E Blore, G E Street, and A W Blomfield, were built around the existing courtyard, incorporating the various C17 outbuildings of Marlborough House. In 1883--6 the chapel of St Michael and All Angels was built by G Bodley and T Gamer to the north of the mount, replacing a chapel built by E Blore in 1848. Under the educationalist Cyril Norwood, headmaster from 1917 until 1925, the college grounds were expanded to the north-west of the mount by the creation of the Memorial Hall and garden-square of 1921-5, designed by W G Newton in memory of those Marlburians killed in the First World War. In the late 1930s a small formal garden was created to the south of the chapel. Of the group of mid-C19 buildings around the courtyard, the dining hall was replaced in 1961-2 by Norwood Hall, designed by David Roberts. Further school buildings were introduced immediately to the south of the mount in the second half of the C20, covering the site of the former wilderness.

Details

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Marlborough College, a site of circa 9ha, is situated immediately to the south-west of the town of Marlborough.

To the north-west the site is bounded by Bath Road (A4). Along the north-east boundary runs Pewsey Road (A3455), with the town of Marlborough and the parish church beyond it. To the south the site is embraced by various arms of the River Kennet which curves around the site. The site slopes gently eastwards in the direction of the river. From the mount, which is situated in the western part of the site, there are fine views in a southerly direction towards Granham Hill, and the Preshute White Horse, which was cut in the hill in 1804 by local schoolboys.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Marlborough College is flanked by gate piers, gates, and railings (listed Grade II) lies to the north-west of the site along Bath Road. To its east stands the Porter's Lodge (listed Grade II), built in 1876-7. The entrance leads into the north-west end of a rectangular courtyard, around which are ranged the main school buildings, including the chapel of St Michael and All Angels. The centre of the courtyard is laid to lawn with a perimeter drive. The location of the entrance and the courtyard itself dates back to the mid-C17, when Marlborough House was built. By 1723 the courtyard was probably surrounded by a wall with the stable block and various outbuildings to the north-east (Stukeley 1724). An aerial photograph of 1921 shows the courtyard with a tree-lined avenue running from the entrance to Marlborough House. This was probably planted in the mid-to-late C19 and was removed in the late-C20.

A second entrance is situated on Marlborough High Street to the north-east of the site. From here a straight walk runs along the south-east front of Marlborough House in south-westerly direction to a school building called Leaf Block (late-C20).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Marlborough House (listed Grade I), known since the late-C20 as C-House, stands at the far south-east end of the entrance courtyard. It is constructed of brick and has a hipped roof. Both the north-west and the south-east facades have fifteen bays, with the three central bays recessed. The north-west front looks onto the courtyard and the central bay with the main entrance is covered by a passage which is screened by a colonnade of paired Ionic columns. The south-east facade, with central steps that lead up to the entrance set in the central bay, overlooks the garden.

Since the mid-C19, C-House has formed part of a group of buildings associated with school use which surround the courtyard. They include A-house (listed Grade II), the Art School, Norwood Hall, the Bradleian Building (listed Grade II), the Museum Block (listed Grade II), and B-House (listed Grade II). To the north of C-House are the remains of the late-C17 stable block, incorporated in the C19 school buildings situated in this area. To the east of C-House stands the Master's Lodge of 1845-50 designed by E Blore, which overlooks the Master's Garden. The latter possibly incorporates the remains of the early-C18 garden in this area.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens at Marlborough College can be divided into four main areas: the gardens to the south-east of C-House, which includes the Master's Garden and the Common Room Garden; the Mount and the grotto; the memorial garden square in the north-west corner of the site; and the garden to the south of the chapel.

The gardens to the south-east of C-House cover a rectangular area that slopes down in an easterly direction towards the River Kennet. Immediately south-east of C-House is a semi-circular lawn surrounded by a raised bank planted with mature yews. Behind the yews is a raised area with various mature trees, now (1999) overgrown. Immediately to the south-west of C-House is a sunken brick-paved garden with a square pond in the centre, created in the late 1960s. From this area a straight, raised gravel walk lined by a brick wall along its north-east side leads in south-easterly direction. Below the wall is a border with mixed plants. The raised walk, which overlooks a lawn to the south, probably dates from the early-C18, when it formed part of the formal gardens laid out in this area (Stukeley 1724). The raised walk and the lawn below it, are now called the Common Room Garden. At the far south-east end of the raised walk, recently (1999) installed steps lead to a square lawn surrounded by a tree belt, with the River Kennet beyond it, and the Master's Garden situated to its north. The Master's Lodge stands to the north of the Master's Garden, which has two terraces and is laid out to lawn. Central steps from both terraces lead down to a large square lawn where there are two square beds, flanked by two clipped yews. Immediately south-east of the Master's Lodge is a second square lawn surrounded by a beech hedge.

The cone-shaped Mount (scheduled ancient monument) stands to the west of the courtyard and is surrounded by a tarmacked road. It is circular in plan, 31m high (Field 1999), and is planted with a variety of trees. A spiral walk, flanked by mature yew trees, possibly of early-C18 date, gradually leads to the summit. Concrete steps on the south side, installed in the late-C20, also lead to the top of the Mount. Here stands a water tank, now (1999) out of use, in a flat-bottomed depression circa 15m in diameter (ibid), which is surrounded by an earthen bank that overlies the spiral walk. To its west is a brick chimney that formerly served a boiler house at the base of the Mount. On the east side of the Mount, just below the summit along the spiral walk, are the remains of an arched brick feature, circa 3m long and 2m deep, possibly a former gazebo. On the south-east side, next to the concrete steps set into the base of the Mount, is the early-C18 grotto of flint with a stone band (listed Grade II) created by Lady Hertford. A flat, corrugated-iron roof replaces a former domed vaulted roof. In a letter to the Countess Pomfret, Lady Hertford mentions, 'the grotto which we have made under the mound, and which ... I think is itself much prettier than at Twickenham [Alexander Pope's Grotto, qv]'. The grotto was repaired and restored in the late 1980s.

The memorial garden square (1921-5), is situated in the north-west corner of the site. Newton's Memorial Hall of the same date stands to its south, and the chapel of St Michael and All Angels of 1883-6 (listed Grade II) to its east. The garden square is bordered to the north, along Bath Road, by a grass bank with a row of mature trees situated behind a retaining wall, and is flanked to the east and west by two grassed terraces on either side. The garden square itself is surrounded by a brick wall, and on its north-east side a flight of steps, flanked by clipped yew trees and hedges, leads up to the chapel of St Michael and All Angels, which is situated on a higher level and is surrounded by a small churchyard. The chapel was specifically incorporated in Newton's design for the Memorial Hall and the garden square, on the request of Cyril Norwood, Headmaster at the time (guidebook). There is a circular stone of remembrance laid in the paving in front of the west doors of the chapel. It used to bear the inscription, 'Let us make earth a garden in which the deeds of the valiant may blossom and bear fruit', but this has worn away (Hamilton 1986). The Memorial Hall, built in the Greek style, is described by Pevsner as being 'as near to the American campus style of the same years as anything this side of the Atlantic' (Pevsner and Cherry 1975). Along its north front is a row of eight large Doric columns and a terrace paved in large natural stone slabs, from which steps lead into the square. The square itself is paved with red brick, laid in a geometrical pattern. In the centre of the square is a hexagonal pond; this formerly had a fountain but is now (1999) filled in. Central steps on the west side of the square lead to Bath Road and the footpath along the west boundary of the site.

Immediately north of the Mount, below the chapel of St Michael and All Angels, is a small formal rose garden. It was laid out in the late 1930s (OS 1943) and its ground plan follows that of the chapel, with a rounded apse at its east end. The garden can be entered through a brick loggia with three arches situated at its west end. Attached to the north is a small gatehouse with a tiled roof. Along the north side the garden is surrounded by a yew hedge clipped into alternating square blocks, some with

wooden seats between them, and along the south side by a serpentine hedge. The central part of the garden is laid to a lawn, bounded by square rose beds and lined with a natural stone-paved path.

Summary

The remains of an early-C18 formal garden designed for Marlborough House, incorporating a motte of an C11 castle (adapted from a prehistoric mound), which by the mid-C17 was adopted as a garden feature. Since 1843 the garden has formed part of the grounds of Marlborough College, with a memorial garden square added in 1921-5 designed by the architect W G Newton.

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.

Reasons for Designation

Marlborough College is included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Representative example: it is a good survival of an early-C18 formal landscape, that consciously incorporates important earlier archaeological features into its design, including the C11 prominent former castle motte;

* Documentation and influence: the historic landscape development of the site is well documented; * Group value: it has strong group value with the castle motte (scheduled ancient monument), and the associated listed buildings, including the early-C18 grotto (listed Grade II).

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