

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ENDSLEIGH

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ENDSLEIGH

Name: ENDSLEIGH

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Lezant

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Stokeclimsland

County: Devon

District: West Devon (District Authority)

Parish: Dunterton

County: Devon

District: West Devon (District Authority)

Parish: Milton Abbot

County: Devon

District: West Devon (District Authority)

Parish: Sydenham Damerel

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.571903
Longitude: -4.2773780
National Grid Reference: SX 38831 77161
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: I
List Entry Number: 1000428
Date first listed: 12-Aug-1987

Details

Early C19 picturesque gardens, pleasure grounds, arboretum and woodlands for which Humphry Repton produced designs and a Red Book in 1814, with a series of early C19 landscape structures by Jeffry Wyattville.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the medieval period Endsleigh formed part of the estate of the abbots of Tavistock, and had been given to the Church by the Edgcombe family of Cotehele, Cornwall (qv). In 1540, the abbot's 15,000 acre (6250ha) estate was granted to John

Russell, first Earl of Bedford. The abbots of Tavistock had a hunting lodge at Leigh Barton, south-east of Endsleigh, but after the Reformation it fell into disuse, and no permanent residence was established on the estate until the early C19, when John, sixth Duke of Bedford decided to replace 'an irregular farmhouse little better than a cottage' (Repton 1816) which existed near the site of the present house. In 1809 Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and his sons John and George produced a plan and three perspective watercolours for a cottage residence at Endsleigh, but these were abandoned in favour of a scheme by Jeffrey Wyattville (1766-1840). The guiding spirit behind the development of Endsleigh was the Duke's second wife Georgiana, whom he married in 1803, the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Gordon. The Duchess (d 1853) was familiar with two Scottish cottages or lodges belonging to her parents, and it has been suggested that these connections encouraged her to exploit the picturesque potential of Endsleigh (CL 1997). The house was begun in September 1810, with limited work on the grounds taking place between 1810 and 1814, probably to plans by Wyatt (R Stone, in Pugsley 1994). In May 1814 Humphry Repton was consulted on the design of the grounds, and visited the site in August. His proposals for the creation of an extensive picturesque landscape were presented in the form of a Red Book which was completed in late 1814, while a further account was published in Repton's *Fragments* (1816). Following Repton's death in 1818, Wyatt continued to design new structures for the landscape, some of which, such as the ruined Abbot's Castle (1832-4), were not implemented. Despite depleted finances following the sixth Duke's death in 1839, further developments were made in the grounds during the 1830s and 1840s. A series of paintings by J C Bourne (1841) show the grounds as they were completed. Endsleigh continued as an occasional residence for the dukes of Bedford on their West Country estate, and in the early C20, Herbrand, eleventh Duke of Bedford made significant additions to the landscape. Following the death of the twelfth Duke in 1953 in a shooting accident, the estate was broken up. Endsleigh was sold in 1961 to a fishing syndicate, which runs the house as an hotel. Three landscape structures, Swiss Cottage, Pond Cottage and the Dairy were sold in 1977 to the Landmark Trust, while in 1989 the house, gardens and pleasure grounds were vested in a Charitable Trust. Restoration of the buildings was begun in 1987, and a major landscape restoration programme was initiated following serious storm damage in 1990. The site remains (1999) in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Endsleigh is situated c 2km south-west of the village of Milton Abbot and c 8km west of Tavistock, to the south of the A384 road which runs north-west from Tavistock to Launceston. The c 120ha site comprises some 26ha of gardens and pleasure grounds, c 5ha of ornamental meadows or parkland, and c 89ha of ornamental woodland, walks and carriage drives. The site adjoins the A384 road to the east, agricultural land to the north and south, and woodland to the west. Lying in the valley of the River Tamar on the boundary between Devon and Cornwall, the site includes land which slopes steeply down to the water to both east and west of the river. To the north-west of the house a steep-sided valley, the Dairy Dell and Edgcumbe valley, follows a stream north from the Tamar to high ground c 800m north of the river. The site has dramatic views south-east and south along the Tamar valley, while from Swiss Cottage c 720m south-east of the house there are wide views south-west along the river, west to Bodmin Moor, and north-west to Endsleigh and the pleasure grounds. From the house there are extensive views down the Tamar and c 8km south to Kit Hill (scheduled ancient monument), where a C19 mine chimney appears as a classical column and acts as an eyecatcher. An extensive network of C19 carriage drives includes the Duke's Drive on the Cornish (west) bank of the Tamar, extending north from Tutwell to Carthamartha; and the Endsleigh Drive on the Devon (east) bank extending north from Horsebridge to Greystone Bridge north-west of the house. The carriage drives formed part of Repton's proposals in 1814, and afford views of a series of picturesque features including waterfalls and dramatic rocky outcrops such as the Carthamartha Rocks c 2km south-west of the house.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is today (1999) approached from a minor road leading south from the A384 to Horsebridge at a point c 1km south-east of Milton Abbot. The entrance is marked by mature trees set on an informal circle of grass. Splayed stone walls flank the drive which extends c 10m west to simple railed timber gates which are flanked to the south by a pedestrian gate. An early C19 single-storey picturesque lodge cottage (listed grade II, restored 1998-9) stands to the south of the entrance. The tarmac drive slopes gently west, and passes through lawns planted with specimen trees and shrubs. After c 240m it passes to the south of Harragrove (listed grade II), a substantial two-storey brick and stone picturesque cottage, formerly the head gardener's house, which was probably designed by Wyattville c 1810. The cottage garden, described

by Loudon in 1842 (*Gardener's Mag*), lies below the drive and is separated from it by a wire fence. It is today (1999) heavily planted with specimen trees and shrubs. The drive continues c 130m west of Harragrove before turning north-west for c 210m to a point where it is joined by a drive from the south-west which leads c 300m to the Swiss Cottage, and a drive from the north-east which leads c 130m east to the kitchen garden and a service entrance on the minor road north of the principal entrance. A late C20 visitors' car park has been constructed to the south-east of this junction. The drive continues c 80m north-west to reveal a dramatic view west-north-west up the Tamar valley which was planned by Repton in 1814. Continuing north-west parallel to the site boundary, the drive passes c 530m through ornamental planting, with glimpsed views of the Tamar below to the south. Separated from the gardens by a stone wall to the south-west, the drive continues for a further 130m north-west before turning sharply west to enter the carriage court north of the house. The carriage court is enclosed to the north by rubble-stone walls (built 1998-9), beyond which stand the stables (listed grade I) built by Wyattville c 1810. The stables are arranged around a courtyard with a carriage entrance to the south, opposite which, on the north range, is a stone niche containing a trough and wall fountain, with an inscription commemorating the commencement of Endsleigh in 1810. The carriage court is enclosed to the south-east, south and south-west by wings of Endsleigh House, while to the west a drive leads c 350m south-west to give access to the Dairy Dell and to join the Endsleigh Drive on the Devon bank of the Tamar.

In the early C20 the tenth Duke extended the present drive east to join the Tavistock road c 1km south-east of Milton Abbot. Opposite the early C19 entrance, splayed stone walls flank a further timber railed gate and pedestrian gates, to the north of which stands an early C20 two-storey stone and half-timber lodge. The drive passes for c 270m east-north-east through an avenue of beech, before turning north-east for c 670m. Running on a contoured course on the south-east-facing slope of the wooded Hardicott valley, fields to the north-west and south-east of the drive are connected by a series of three early C20 ornamental stone underpasses. Turning east-north-east the drive passes to the south of a pond and area of ornamental planting, before continuing c 290m to reach the Tavistock road. To the north of the road entrance stands a further early C20 half-timbered lodge cottage. A further early C20 carriage drive extends west from the arboretum c 480m north of the house, and passes west along the south-facing slope of the Edgcumbe valley, to join an earlier carriage drive c 1.1km west-north-west of the house. This leads north-west to the Launceston road at the hamlet of Dunterton c 2km north-west of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Endsleigh (listed grade I) was built for the sixth Duke of Bedford to the designs of Sir Jeffry Wyattville in 1810-15. The picturesque cottage orné has a complex plan which takes advantage of its position on the south- and south-east-facing slope above the River Tamar. To the north-west a two-storey wing was designed as a cottage for the Duke's children and their staff, and is connected to the main house by a single-storey rustic verandah which overlooks the children's garden to the south. The main wing faces south, with a rustic verandah paved with sheep's knuckle-bones to the south-east, beyond which the dining room faces south-east. The service wing lies to the north-east of the main wing, and has a service court to the south-east which is enclosed from the gardens by high curved stone walls with mock fortifications. The house is principally of two storeys with attic dormers, and has ornamental bargeboards, sweeping roofs and gables, high chimney stacks, leaded windows and other picturesque details. It survives essentially intact both externally and internally.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens to the south-west and south-east of the house comprise formal terraces and lawns, with areas of informal pleasure grounds and pinetum on the south-west-facing slope of the Tamar valley, and further pleasure grounds and an arboretum in the Edgcumbe valley west of the house.

To the south-east of the house three terraces connected by stone steps ascend the south-west-facing slope and are separated from the drive above by a stone wall. The upper terrace comprises a gravel walk extending c 100m south-east planted with an avenue of Irish yews. To the north-east the walk is bounded by specimen shrubs, exposed rocks and heaths, and to the south-east it is terminated by a stone bench seat. An informal walk extends beyond the terrace to connect with the pleasure grounds to the south-east and steps leading to the lower terraces. The middle terrace comprises a formal gravel walk shaded by mature wisteria trained on early C19 iron arches. Extending c 80m south-east of the house, the terrace leads to a short flight of stone steps which descend to an arbour constructed from similar iron arches, which has views south-east down the Tamar. Further steps descend from the arbour through a small quarry to an alcove seat which also faces south-east to the Tamar. Wyattville's design for the wisteria walk and arbour survives (private collection), while Repton's proposal to use the quarry as 'a grotto-like

receptacle for specimens of fossils and ores' (Red Book) was not implemented. The lower terrace forms an extension of the lawns south of the house, and comprises a simple grass walk retained by a stone wall, originally surmounted by a low trellis fence to the south-west, with a 'pierced wall' ornamented with a series of blind arches designed by Repton (listed grade II*) retaining a bank and late C20 shrubbery to the north-east. Repton's proposals for the lower terrace were largely implemented, and involved the remodelling of an existing feature by Wyattville (Colson Stone 1991); Repton's proposals for a conservatory and fruit garden on the upper slope north-east of the terrace were not implemented. The grass terrace has wide views south-west across parkland and the Tamar.

Curving gently south-south-east c 120m south-east of the house, the terrace leads to the Shell House and grotto (listed grade I) which stands on a cobbled bastion overlooking the river. This early C19 structure was probably designed by Wyattville (ibid), and comprises a single-storey circular, rubble-stone summerhouse with a pyramidal roof which is wired to support climbing plants. The interior is hexagonal with a groin-vaulted roof and is encrusted with shells and minerals, with a small circular pool set in the centre of the cobbled floor. Small lunette windows have stained glass and spider's-web leading, while two large windows in the south side have stained glass and overlook the valley. Adjoining the Shell House to the north a rockwork tunnel and passage form a grotto leading to an arch closed by a timber deer gate giving access to the informal pleasure grounds. South of the house lawns slope down c 50m to groups of shrubs and a wire fence which separates the gardens from parkland. Some 10m south of the house an early C19 sundial (listed grade II*), probably designed by Wyattville, comprises an octagonal stone pedestal with gothic arched mouldings. The lawns continue round the south-west side of the house to reach the drive leading to the Dairy Dell, from which they are separated by ornamental planting above a low stone retaining wall and timber rail fence (restored 1999). The lawns formed part of Repton's scheme of 1814 which remodelled Wyattville's ha-ha and bastion. A late C19 tennis lawn is cut into the south-west-facing slope c 30m south-west of the house, and was used in the early C20 as a site for the twelfth Duke's aviaries.

Above the lawns south-west of the house the early C19 children's garden is retained by a stone terrace wall (listed grade I), the coping of which forms a rill running in a stone channel (dry 1999). The rill is fed by a lion's mask fountain to the west, and in turn feeds a classical mask fountain set in a centrally placed niche adjacent to a gravel walk which follows the foot of the terrace wall. The terrace is enclosed to the north-west by the children's cottage which has a trellis arbour at its south-west corner, to the north by a rustic verandah, and to the east by the main wing of the house, where bay windows of the former Duke and Duchess' sitting rooms overlook the garden. Repton proposed a parterre with segmental box-edged beds centred on a simple jet fountain (Red Book), and this was illustrated in a mid C19 watercolour by Bourne and mid C20 photographs (CL 1961). Today (1999) the parterre is greatly simplified with extended areas of gravel, but the early C19 circular granite fountain basin and circular stone bowl with a single jet survive.

Informal pleasure grounds south-east of the gardens were constructed in the early C19 under the direction of the Duchess Georgiana, and comprise two grass terrace walks, known as the Upper and Lower Georgys, on the south-west-facing slope above the River Tamar. The Georgys were planted from the early C19 with a collection of American conifers and ornamental shrubs which survives today (1999). A network of walks and drives extends south-east and south into Leigh Wood c 800m south-east of the house. A west-facing valley separating Leigh Wood from the Georgys has been used in the C20 as a fish hatchery with an early C20 cottage, Fishery Cottage, at the head of the valley c 670m south-east of the house. The valley retains early and mid C19 ornamental planting, and was the intended site of a 'viaduct' proposed by Repton (Red Book) to overlook the river. Some 720m south-east of the house the Swiss Cottage (listed grade I) stands on high ground with significant reciprocal views to the house, and across the Tamar valley. The Swiss Cottage, an early C19, picturesque, rustic, timber and thatch structure with a first-floor balcony, was designed by Wyattville, and was originally set in an alpine garden (Colson Stone 1991). Following late C20 restoration the cottage now (1999) stands on a simple grass terrace overlooking lawns, with early C19 stone steps leading down the steep valley-side west of the cottage to reach the lower walks. Below the Swiss Cottage a rocky crag is exposed adjacent to the Abbot's Seat, an early C19 rustic seat designed by Wyattville, originally enclosed by a rustic timber verandah. The seat was illustrated in mid C19 watercolours by J C Bourne, and afforded views north-west up the Tamar valley to the house.

The pleasure grounds north-west of the house lie in a steep-sided, south-facing valley through which a stream runs to join the Tamar south-west of the house adjacent to an elliptical late C19 or early C20 swimming bath c 190m south-west of the house. Stone steps ascend from the south-west drive c 30m west of the house to reach the remains of a C19 south-facing conservatory, a late C19 glasshouse and a stone two-storey cottage or bothy c 60m north-west of the house. To the west, and at a lower level approached by stone steps, is an early C19 rockery (listed grade I) composed of picturesquely arranged boulders and quartz stones forming a series of informal cobbled terraces connected by stone steps. An upper terrace contains an informal pool, and the rockwork is planted with alpiners, small shrubs and specimen trees. To the west steps descend to a serpentine, rustic, stone-lined arched tunnel or grotto (listed grade I), which passes north and west to emerge at the head of rustic stone steps descending to the Dairy Dell c 100m west of the house.

The Dairy Dell forms the southern end of the Edgcombe valley west of the house, and comprises a group of early C19 picturesque structures arranged around an early C19 pond retained by a high earth dam and cascade to the south. To the east of the Dairy Pond c 100m west of the house a C19 square stone structure of uncertain function stands east of a carriage drive which connects the Dell to the south-west drive. Immediately adjoining the east bank of the pond is an early C19 rustic stone well-house (listed grade II) which incorporates fragments of medieval masonry removed by the sixth Duke from Leigh Barton south-east of the house (inscription). North-west of the pond, Dairy Dell Cottage or Pond Cottage (listed grade II) stands on a grass terrace overlooking the water. The long, single-storey structure comprises a boarded section to the south linked to a cottage with attic dormers and a rustic porch to the north by an open rustic verandah, and was designed by Wyattville c 1814. Some 30m north of Pond Cottage and c 140m west-north-west of the house the Dairy (listed grade I) stands on a grassy mound north-west of the pond. Sometimes known as the Salmon Larder, this stone structure comprises a five-sided block to the east containing an ornamental dairy with a pyramid thatched roof, and a rectangular thatched block to the north-west, with rustic gothic details. The Dairy is surrounded by a flagged walk enclosed by a stone parapet which stands on a battered stone basement. The basement contains an icehouse or cellar. North of the Dairy Pond the valley is laid out with a series of terraced walks on the east- and west-facing slopes overlooking the stream and pools in the valley. Water is carried in leats along each side of the valley to feed cascades c 120m and 160m north-west of the house, and a rocky outcrop is exposed on the east-facing slope c 180m north-west of the house. An early C19 seat is sheltered by a sloping rock c 180m north-west of the house, and there are further remains of similar seats throughout the valley. Some 300m north-north-east of the Dairy Pond and c 280m north of the house a rustic timber bridge (reconstructed 1997) crosses the stream above a cascade immediately south of an early C19 pool, which until the late C19 lay on the northern edge of the pleasure grounds. The landscape and cascades in the lower valley and Dairy Dell formed part of Repton's scheme of 1814 (Red Book), while many of the specimen trees and shrubs were introduced in the mid and late C19, early C20 and during late C20 restoration.

The upper Edgcombe valley was developed as an arboretum and pinetum by the eleventh Duke from the late C19 with specimen conifers and ornamental shrubs, with walks leading to a lake c 500m north-north-east of the house, which is retained by a high earth dam and an ornamental cascade to the south-west. The north-west and south-east banks of the lake are planted with early C20 specimen conifers, and the arboretum is separated from agricultural land to the north by an overgrown coniferous hedge and bank. Some 100m north-north-west of the lake a small area of C19 woodland ascends to a rocky outcrop where the early C19 Duke's Seat allowed wide views north and north-east to Milton Abbot. The site of the seat survives today (1999).

PARK The early C19 parkland lies on sloping ground to the south-west, south and south-east of the house, and was conceived by Repton in 1814 (Red Book). A wrought-iron and wire fence separated the park from the lawns around the house, and was intended to allow views to the river below. The fence partly survives and was restored in 1999. The park was grazed by cattle, with scattered mature trees on the slope below the gardens. Today (1999) the park remains grazed pasture, but C20 scrub growth along the garden boundary has partly obscured the early C19 views. The meadow west of the Dairy Dell is also included in the park, although it is now separated from the remainder of the park by shrubs and trees around the swimming bath. The south-west park was important in framing views of the Cornish bank of the Tamar, and the Boatman's Cottage.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden is situated on a south-west-facing slope c 800m south-east of the house and c 50m north of the principal drive north-east of Harragrove, the former gardener's house. The kitchen garden is enclosed by early C19

red-brick walls (listed grade II) c 3m high, and comprises two rectangular gardens divided by a transverse brick wall which runs from north-east to south-west. Some doorways in the walls survive, and the garden is today (1999) used as a garden centre and nursery. The former slip gardens to north and south are also used by the nursery. To the east of the garden is a further C19 stone gardener's cottage, and to the south and south-east several stone barns, sheds and associated buildings which adjoin a service drive.

OTHER LAND Areas of woodland on the Cornish bank of the Tamar formed part of Repton's landscape scheme for the sixth Duke (Red Book). Some 400m south-west of the house the early C19 Boatman's Cottage was constructed on the far side of the river to act as a picturesque eyecatcher from the house, gardens and park. Repton had proposed the construction of a weir, carriage ford and cottage on a site to the south-east of the Boatman's Cottage, but only the weir was constructed in the intended position (R Stone, in Pugsley 1994). The Cottage is today (1999) ruined, but substantial remains survive, including the chimney stack from which smoke was intended to drift across the landscape in accordance with Repton's suggestion (Red Book). This practice continued until c 1940 (Colson Stone 1991). Repton's proposed cascade and rustic seat in Wareham or 'Warm' Wood opposite the house do not appear to have been implemented. The site includes sections of the Duke's Drive, an early C19 carriage drive on the Cornish bank of the Tamar, and the Endsleigh Drive on the Devon bank, together with further early C19 walks and drives in Wareham Wood, Carthamatha Wood and Dunterue Wood which provided a picturesque circuit around the wider estate.

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.

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Other

- [Archival items] Humphry Repton, Red Book for Endsleigh, 1814 (private collection)
- [Archival items] Russell family papers relating to the West Country Estates, including C19 garden accounts (W1258 and L1258M), (Devon Record Office)
- [Archival items] Sale particulars for Endsleigh House, 1956 (T1258M/Devon 20), (Devon Record Office)

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[Illustration] J C Bourne, series of watercolour views of Endsleigh, c 1842 (private collection)

[Illustration] Jeffrey Wyattville, perspective drawing of Endsleigh from the south-west, c 1811 (private collection)

[Map] Map of Milton Abbot parish, 1770 (T1258M: E19), (Devon Record Office)

[Map] OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882-3, published 1889

[Map] OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition revised 1905, published 1907

[Map] OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1809

[Map] Tithe map for Milton Abbot parish, nd (Devon Record Office)

Country Life, 130 (3 August 1961), pp 246-9; (10 August 1961), pp 296-9; no 41 (9 October 1997), pp 58-61; no 42 (16 October 1997), pp 62-5

Endsleigh Restoration Plan Draft, (Colson Stone Partnership 1991)

Gardener's Magazine 18, (1842), pp 549-50

The Garden 20, (1881), pp 131-2