

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ST PAUL'S WALDEN BURY

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ST PAUL'S WALDEN BURY

Name: ST PAUL'S WALDEN BURY

County: Hertfordshire

District: North Hertfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: St. Paul's Walden

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.882597
Longitude: -0.27575204
National Grid Reference: TL1877621853
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: I
List Entry Number: 1000150
Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

An early C18 country house with largely unaltered contemporary formal gardens and wooded pleasure grounds, with associated landscape park. Restoration of the gardens and pleasure grounds in the mid C20 included work by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe from the 1930s to the 1990s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor house of St Paul's Walden and associated ground was sold by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral during the C17, being bought after 1700 by Edward Gilbert (d 1762) who built a house c 1730, constructing ornamented formal pleasure grounds in adjacent woodland. Following Gilbert's death his daughter, Mrs Mary Bowes, the wife of George Bowes who laid out Gibside (qv), County Durham, inherited the estate, and following her husband's death, she employed James Paine (1717-89) to extend the house. Paine was also employed by the Bowes at Gibside. The Bowes' daughter, Mary Eleanor (d 1800), who in 1767 married John Lyon, ninth Earl of Strathmore (d 1776), inherited the St Paul's Walden Bury estate from her father, and the estate stayed with the Bowes-Lyon family during the C19 and C20. Mary Eleanor was a renowned botanist and may have improved the gardens during her occupation. The gardens and pleasure grounds were restored from the 1930s to the 1960s, with work by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-96) in 1975 and 1992. The estate remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING St Paul's Walden Bury lies 5km south-west of the centre of Stevenage, on high ground separating the villages of Whitwell to the south and St Paul's Walden to the north. The c 50ha site is bounded largely by agricultural land and woodland, bifurcated to the south-east by the B651 road connecting St Paul's Walden with Whitwell, with to the north-west the adjacent Stagenhoe landscape park and The Hoo (qv) park lying 2km to the south. The house lies on high ground which falls away to the east and south, with a narrow valley set in woodland to the north, the land rising beyond the valley towards the northern boundary which lies higher than the house. Views extend east across the B651 to Reynolds Wood on the hilltop, and south from the house, south park and east avenue across Whitwell to distant countryside, and towards The Hoo.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters off the B651, 450m east of the house, past a two-storey, mid C20 lodge. From here the east drive extends west, along the south side of the walled kitchen garden, turning south-west at its south-west corner. Here the drive is joined by a track leading through the north park giving direct access from the parish church which stands 550m to the north. From the kitchen garden onwards, the drive is flanked by an avenue as it runs south-west to cross the east avenue 220m east of the house. The drive continues through the south park, curving west and then north, passing the east side of a brick-walled garden (late C19) lying adjacent to the south front of the house. The drive then enters a gravel forecourt (late C19) on the east front, enclosed to the north and east by low brick walls. From here views extend east and north-east across the adjacent valley, overlooking the undulating course of the east avenue. The walled garden on the south front and the forecourt were created when the house was remodelled (late 1880s) and the main entrance moved to the east front (Elizabeth Banks Assocs 1992). The approach south of the walled kitchen garden, at east end of the drive, is a C20 addition. The south drive, presently (1999) disused, approaches from Whitwell to the south, crossing the River Mimram and extending north through a narrow belt of trees, entering the area here registered c 275m south-west of the house. From this point the drive continues north through the south park, turning east to approach the house and service yards from the south. This was the main approach until the C19 (OS C19; Elizabeth Banks Assocs 1992) and the drive occupies part of the former public road connecting Whitwell with St Paul's Walden (Dury and Andrews, 1766).

A third drive, also disused but present in the mid C18 (*ibid*), approaches directly off the B651. The drive enters the park 350m south-east of the house, joining the present (late C19) main drive c 175m south-east of the house. This was the main approach from the 1820s to the 1880s (OS).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The mansion at St Paul's Walden Bury (early C18, additions by James Paine 1760s and Arthur Castings late C19, listed grade II*) stands on high ground at the southern end of the gardens and pleasure grounds, enclosed to the south and east by the park. The two-storey brick house falls into two main sections, the earlier, C18 wing standing to the north, overlooking the pleasure grounds beyond, with the larger, late C19 wing attached to the south. Flanking rococo pavilions designed by James Paine in 1767 project from the north front, each aligned on one of the two outer allées of the *patte d'oie* in the Walk Wood pleasure grounds to the north. A service yard lies adjacent to the west of the house, partly enclosed by several farm buildings, including a granary, brewhouse and the Bury Farmhouse (all listed grade II).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds lie largely to the north of the house, although the 1975 garden enclosed by a brick wall lies adjacent to the south front, and a small herb garden designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe in 1992 lies adjacent to the west side of the house.

A garden door at the centre of the C18 north front leads out to a stone-flagged terrace set into a rectangular lawn which slopes gently northwards for 75m, flanked by pleached lime walks known as the Lime Cloisters. The lawn ends at the edge of the plateau, in a curve broken by the entrances to the three formal grass allées, in *patte d'oie* arrangement, leading into Walk Wood. A gateway giving access from the north side of the forecourt is aligned on the eastern Lime Cloister. From this gateway a stone path crosses the north front, leading west to a grass allée continuing the line westwards. The eastern half of the allée overlooks to the north the ruined brick orangery (early C18, listed grade II) lying 85m north-west of the house and set in the informal lawn of the Flower Garden, this planted with specimen flowering shrubs and island flower beds. The allée is largely flanked by clipped beech hedges, and is aligned on a statue of Cain and Abel (listed grade II*) standing at the west end, 160m from the house, overlooking farmland to the west and south-west and beyond this distant low hills. The long open view eastwards from the statue, along the straight allée and across the north front into the east park, is partly obscured by the polygonal flanking wings, built in 1767, which project from the north front.

North of the main lawn the ground falls away to the pleasure grounds within Walk Wood, an area transversely crossed by a valley. The grounds are dominated by three formal grassed allées radiating in *patte d'oie* formation northwards from the lawn. Each allée is flanked by clipped beech hedges (the hedges restored 1939) and is focused from the house on a viewpoint set above and beyond the intervening valley. The north-west allée is aligned on a statue set in woodland 350m north of the house, and that to the north-east on the tower of St Paul's Walden parish church, 700m north-east of the house. The central, north allée,

significantly broader than the flanking pair, is aligned upon a horse-chestnut avenue crossing the north park. The flanking allées turn inwards 350m from the house, to join the central allée, so forming an irregular kite-shaped pattern of walks.

Two parallel, grass walks, also flanked by clipped beech hedges, cross the main allées 150m and 330m from the house. The southern cross walk, c 230m long, follows the bottom of the valley and is terminated at the west end by the circular Wyatt Temple (James Wyatt 1775, listed grade II) brought from Copped Hall (qv) in Essex c 1950 to replace the Bark Arbour which had formerly stood on the site (Elizabeth Banks Assocs 1992). To the north of the western half of this walk lies a woodland garden enclosing an oval pond, the Swan Pond. The walk is aligned to the east on the Chambers Temple (Sir William Chambers 1773, listed grade II), standing 300m north-east of the house at the east end of the roughly triangular Fish Pond. The Temple was brought from Danson Park (qv), Kent in 1961 to replace a ruined grotto (Elizabeth Banks Assocs 1992). The pond, which separates the north park from the south, is set in an informal lawn, with a further oval pond lying below it to the east, surrounded by trees.

The northern cross walk of the pleasure grounds is terminated at each end by statuary. The west half of the walk runs through an open compartment lying adjacent, and to the west of, the central allée. This roughly rectangular compartment, set within the woodland, is known as the Running Footman or the Secret Garden. Laid to lawn and enclosed by clipped beech hedges, it is dominated by an open, stone rotunda (C18, listed grade II) set on an earth mound at the north end of the compartment, overlooking a series of grass terraces leading southwards down to a stone-edged pool set in lawn. South of this a flight of stone steps leads out of the Secret Garden back to the north-west allée. The Secret Garden, probably part of the early C18 scheme, was restored with the help of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe in the 1930s, when the area was cleared, the ground re-graded, the hedges replanted and the pool regularised in shape. North-west of the Secret Garden, beyond the adjacent allée, lies a rectangular pond set within woodland.

An avenue runs parallel along the east edge of the Walk Wood pleasure grounds, overlooking the north park and valley to the east. The north-east allée and east ends of the two cross walks open onto this grassed avenue, which is terminated to the north by the brick Organ House (early C18, altered 1950s, listed grade II), an octagonal garden building with a pyramidal roof, windows on four of the faces, and glazed doors on the west, south and east fronts. From here a further short cross walk extends westwards to the north end of the central allée, this also aligned on the statue of Hercules.

PARK The park, laid to pasture and containing scattered mature trees, lies to the east and south of the house and pleasure grounds, divided by the pond into north and south halves. An avenue, aligned on the east to west walk crossing the north front of the house, extends eastwards across the valley on the east side of the south park, continuing the west to east axis which begins with the statue of Cain and Abel in the gardens 160m west of the house. The 900m long avenue crosses the B651 in the bottom of the valley, extending up the hillside to the top of the hill, from where there are views northwards across agricultural land and long views south, particularly towards The Hoo (qv), and the countryside beyond. The south park was formerly crossed by a broad double avenue of walnut trees (felled c 1950, Elizabeth Banks Assocs 1992) running south, aligned on the south front of the house. This avenue extended the north/south axis of the central allée of the pleasure grounds.

KITCHEN GARDEN The almost square kitchen garden (C18, listed grade II) lies 350m north-east of the house, situated on a gentle south-facing slope. The garden is enclosed by brick walls, with a further wall across the centre dividing it into two sections. The Garden House (c 1770, listed grade II with the garden walls), a two-storey brick and rendered building with Gothick-style windows and doors, is set into the centre of the west wall.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 119 (15 March 1956), pp 472-5; (22 March 1956), pp 532-5 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire* (1977), p 330 *St Paul's Walden Bury and Stagenhoe Landscape Restoration Plan*, (Elizabeth Banks Associates 1992) *The Gardens St Paul's Walden Bury*, guidebook (1998)

Maps Dury and Andrews, *A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766* Tithe map for St Paul's Walden parish, 1842 (Hertfordshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881 2nd edition published 1897 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ST PAUL'S WALDEN BURY

Description written: March 1999 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: November 2000

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.