

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PUTTERIDGE BURY

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

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PUTTERIDGE BURY

Name: PUTTERIDGE BURY

District: Luton (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

County: Hertfordshire

District: North Hertfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Offley

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.910999
Longitude: -0.37412407
National Grid Reference: TL 11935 24856
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000917
Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

An early C20 country house with gardens largely laid out by Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, 1911, surrounded by C18/C19 parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In c 1788 John Sowerby of Hatton Garden bought Putteridge and Lilley. The house burned down in 1808, and was rebuilt on its current site in Regency style. The landscape park was laid out c 1820 when it was bounded on the south side by a public road connecting Stopplesley with Offley (which survives as a bridleway). By 1884 (OS) the park had been extended southwards to its present limits. Members of the Sowerby family were renowned naturalists and horticulturists. By the late C19 (OS) the house and adjacent kitchen gardens were surrounded by largely informal gardens and pleasure grounds, in turn enclosed by a landscape park. The 1808 house was rebuilt by Thomas Clutterbuck 1908-11, who shortly before had bought the estate from the Sowerbys. Clutterbuck employed the architects Ernest George and Alfred Yeates to design an Elizabethan-style house and engaged Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) and Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) to remodel parts of the garden. On Clutterbuck's death in 1919 the house was acquired by Sir Felix Cassel, and during the 1920s was frequently visited by George V and Queen Mary with the Prince of Wales. In 1954 the house was occupied by British Celanese and acquired by Luton Corporation in 1965, who converted it into a college of further education. The garden was largely restored to its Lutyens and Jekyll structure in the early 1990s. The house remains (1999) in use as a higher education and conference centre, while the park is in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Putteridge Bury lies 4km north-east of the centre of Luton, adjacent to the outer suburbs. The c 170ha site is bounded to the north-west by the A505, Beech Hill, linking Luton and Hitchin, to the south-west by the mid to late C20 development of the outskirts of Luton, and on the other sides by agricultural land. The undulating ground falls away markedly to the north-east of the main north drive. The setting is largely agricultural, with the

C20 development of Luton visible from the western half of the park, and long views extending north-east across the north-east section. Temple Dinsley (qv), another Lutyens/Jekyll garden of c 1908-11, lies 6km east of Putteridge Bury.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main north drive approaches from the north-west, entering 700m north-west of the house off the A505, past a two-storey, brick and timber-framed, early C20 lodge. The entrance off the road is flanked by a brick screen wall, ornamentally pierced in the upper half, supported by brick piers, these in turn flanked by the brick park wall which runs along part of the north-west boundary. From here the drive, flanked by mown grass in which stands a mature avenue of mainly lime trees, extends south-east across the undulating park. Long views extend north-east down the park to the countryside beyond, terminated by hillsides on the far side of the Lilley Bottom valley. The drive arrives at the rectangular forecourt on the north front of the house, enclosed largely by brick walls ornamentally pierced in the upper half. The broad entrance set into the north, entrance side of the forecourt is flanked by brick piers surmounted by lanterns, and gives access to the main entrance door set in the north front. The forecourt is used for car parking, along with the drive for a distance of 150m from the house (1999). The west drive enters the park 750m south-west of the house, extending north-east and north, passing Home Farm standing 300m from the house, and the west side of the pleasure grounds and kitchen garden. The west drive continues along the north side of the kitchen gardens, giving access to the north side of the stable block situated to the west of the house. A spur 150m west of the house extends north off the west drive to join the north drive 200m from the house.

The south drive enters at Mangrove Lodge, 800m south of the house, curving north across the park with long views north-east across the Lilley Bottom valley, to join the west drive at the point where a pond lies to the south of Home Farm, together with the east drive (now disused) which enters 750m east of the house at East Lodge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Putteridge Bury (E George and A Yeates 1908-11, listed grade II) stands at the centre of the park. It is a two-storey brick building in Elizabethan style, with wings extending north from the ends of the main range, flanking the south side of the forecourt. Attached to the west of the main block is the two-storey service block, of brick with timber framing. The stable block (C18/early C19, listed grade II) separates the house from the kitchen garden to the west, and consists of an irregular group of single-storey buildings, with a painted wooden clock turret.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens enclose the house to the east, south and south-west, and are entered from the centre of the south front of the house via the garden door which gives onto the south terrace. A short stone path from the doorway, flanked by panels of lawn, leads south to a broad stone cross path running the length of the south terrace. The south side of the terrace and cross path is bounded by a pierced brick retaining wall rising from a flower border below, and overlooks the formal south lawns which are reached via a flight of stone steps at the west end of the terrace, flanked by brick and stone piers. The northernmost enclosure of the south lawns, the pond lawn, is flanked by straight, clipped yew hedges, and at the centre lies a rectangular stone-edged reflecting pool (Lutyens 1908-11, listed grade II) with curved north and south ends, and clipped yew specimens standing at each corner of the stone edging path. Statues formerly stood at the corners of the pool, of which only the plinths remain (1999). From here a length of lawn the width of the pool leads south, flanked by further clipped yew hedges, opening out into the circular lawn. This large lawn is largely encircled by a clipped yew hedge, with further entrances cut in the hedge to the west and east, and a gap to the south allowing views over a brick and stone ha-ha into the park beyond, these views deflected by a clump of trees towards the South Lodge.

From the east end of the south terrace a broad flight of steps flanked by brick and stone piers leads down to a gravel walk running north along the east front of the house. The north end of the walk is flanked by recently planted clipped specimen yews, leading to a seat enclosed by a clipped yew hedge. A lawn extends east from the east walk, sloping down to the rectangular rose garden (restored 1990s), which is enclosed by clipped yew hedges and laid to lawn, with two geometric patterns of rose beds flanking a grass path leading to a bench at the centre of the east side. The south end of the gravel walk is terminated by a flight of stone steps leading down to the north-east corner of the south lawns. South of the east lawn and rose garden lies the rose garden wilderness, planted with trees and formerly having contained informal paths giving access to the east side of the south lawns. The west end of the south terrace, together with entrances cut through the hedges on the west side of the south lawns, gives access to the croquet lawns to the west, which are enclosed by paths. A straight path leads from the north-west corner of the pond lawn, west along the north side of the croquet lawns to the south-east corner of the walled kitchen gardens. Here a cast-iron

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arch (restored 1990s) crosses the path, west of which the path continues parallel with the south wall of the walled garden. The path is terminated at the west end by a seat in an alcove set within an extension south of the brick kitchen garden walls. From here a gravel path extends south into an area planted with mature specimen trees, including pines, cedars and Wellingtonias. A further path leads south from the north-east corner of the croquet lawns along the east side of the easternmost lawn. The path turns south-west 75m south of the house, continuing into the area of mature specimen trees in the south-west corner of the garden, and meeting the path leading south from the alcove 250m south-west of the house. To the south lies an open lawn enclosed by clipped hedges, on which stands a small observatory. South of the south arm of the kitchen garden lies an extensive rock garden, now (1999) overgrown, with mature ornamental specimen trees growing in it, bounded to the west by a brick ha-ha separating it from the west drive.

North of the house and walled garden lies an area planted with mature trees, particularly yews, crossed by various arms of the drive system. This area was formerly laid out with paths as part of the pleasure grounds.

Lutyens and Jekyll appear to have taken an extant garden layout and path system, in place by the 1880s (OS C19), and embellished it. In the late C19 a rectangular sunken lawn lay separated from the south front by a (probably) terraced path which led east to a further terraced path on the east front in a similar position to that of the present gravel walk on the east lawn. An informal lawn planted with groups of trees and specimens occupied the area of the present croquet lawns, with a path running along the north side parallel with the south wall of the kitchen garden. Amongst other improvements Lutyens modified the focal south lawn, enlarging a small circular pond and extending the lawn south into the large circular lawn.

PARK The park encircles the house and gardens. It is laid (1999) largely to arable with scattered clumps of trees and single specimens, and several blocks of C19 or earlier woodland, including Great Hayes Wood in the west corner, Icehouse Plantation east of the north drive, and Dick's Gap and Hawleydell Plantation in the eastern half of the park. The belt running along the west boundary effectively screens the western half of the park from the adjacent C20 urban development of Luton. The eastern half of the park slopes down to the north-east, from where long views extend across the Lilley Bottom valley to the hillside beyond. Home Farm stands at the south-west corner of the pleasure grounds. The two-storey, stuccoed farmhouse (C17-C19, listed grade II) in Gothick style has decorative bargeboards. Adjacent stands a dairy in similar style. These two buildings stand at the south-west corner of the farmyard, attached to a range of outhouses extending to the north. The farmyard is enclosed to the south and east by further early C19 ranges (listed grade II) which were part of a regular model farm layout, with the emphasis on views of the south range from the approach from the south. Some 20m south-east of the farmhouse stands an octagonal, Gothic-style brick dovecote (C18, listed grade II) which was encased in stucco in the early C19. At one time a cupola ornamented the top of the pyramidal, scalloped slate roof.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen gardens lie to the west of the house and stables, divided into two main sections. The rectangular east section is the largest. It bounds the north side of the west section of the ornamental gardens and is currently (late C20) used for growing Christmas trees. A range of low service buildings stands along the north side of the north wall. A section of the south wall is lowered by several feet, but not by enough to allow views in or out. In the west wall a gateway leads to the smaller west section which extends south along the west side of the ornamental gardens. This is also largely bounded by brick walls, except to the south where some sections have been lost. The north wall contains a stretch of wooden shutters opening to reveal the hollow wall inside, the function unknown at present. At the west side of this section stands the gardener's cottage, a two-storey, stuccoed building.

REFERENCES

J Brown, Miss Gertrude Jekyll, (Architectural Association exhibition catalogue 1982), pp 28-9 Hertfordshire Gardens Trust/Putteridge Bury, Restoration of the Historic Garden, (appeal document 1992) Notes on the History and Restoration of the Gardens, (Hertfordshire Gardens Trust nd)

Maps Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1901 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1901

Archival items Copies of Jekyll's planting plans are held on microfiche at the National Monuments Record (originals held at Reef Point, USA).

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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.