

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

MILTON HALL

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Name:	MILTON HALL
District:	City of Peterborough (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Bretton
District:	City of Peterborough (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Castor
District:	City of Peterborough (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Marholm
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.583636 Longitude: -0.30450445 National Grid Reference: TL 14973 99775 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000628 Date first listed: 16-Jan-1985

Details

C19 flower gardens and pleasure grounds on the site of C17 formal gardens, surrounded by an early C18 park for which Humphry Repton prepared a Red Book in 1791.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the Middle Ages Milton was a village in the parish of Castor with its own open-field system, which was enclosed as early as 1576. A map of 1582 (Northampton RO) shows six closes, three of them very large, covering the entire area of the village. The manor of Milton was bought from Robert Wittlebury in 1502 by William Fitzwilliam, a wealthy merchant from an old Yorkshire family. He was knighted in 1522 and died in 1534. It was thus at the hands of the Fitzwilliam family that the land was enclosed. The earliest sections of the Hall were built in the 1590s by William's grandson, the third William Fitzwilliam and Lord Deputy of Ireland, who also began to lay out grounds. He was succeeded in 1599 by his son, the fourth William who continued to work on the Hall and possibly developed the landscape. A map dated 1600-25 (Northampton RO) is described in the catalogue as showing 'closes taken into the park', although nothing on the map itself states this. On his death in 1618 he was succeeded by his son, later to become the first Baron Fitzwilliam, whose granddaughter Jane married Sir Christopher Wren. A plan dated 1643 records the grounds at this time enclosed by a moat and containing courtyards, fishponds, orchards and gardens. The third Baron was elevated to Viscount Milton and Earl Fitzwilliam and it was he who added the imposing stables in c 1690, choosing William Talman and John Sturges as his architects. John Fitzwilliam, the second Earl succeeded in 1719 and the following year completed an extension to the stable block and continued the work his father had started on enlarging the park and altering the gardens to the south of the Hall to include the walled enclosures which survive today (2000). John's son, William, the third Earl, married Lady Anne Wentworth, daughter of the first Marquess of Rockingham. In 1750, after abortive

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projects commissioned by his grandfather and father from Talman, Gibbs and Brettingham for modernising the Hall, the third Earl engaged Lord Rockingham's architect Henry Flitcroft to begin the process and a new south front was added. Following the death of the third Earl in 1756, the work on the Hall was completed by Sir William Chambers for his son William, the fourth Earl, in 1773. In 1782 however the fourth Earl succeeded to Wentworth Woodhouse (qv) on the death of his uncle the second Lord Rockingham and this became his principal seat, the family moving to Milton only in the winter for the hunting. To facilitate this he commissioned Humphry Repton (1752-1818) to offer advice on improvements to the park and a Red Book was prepared in 1791. The fourth Earl died in 1833 at the age of eighty-five leaving his properties to his only son, Lord Milton. With Wentworth Woodhouse the principal seat of the family, the fifth Earl left Milton to his younger son, George Wentworth Fitzwilliam, in 1857. George lived at Milton until after 1912 and is thought to have commissioned Harold Peto to produce plans for a garden within one of the C18 walled enclosures (Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust). After the occupation of the Hall during the Second World War, Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam returned to Milton to make it their home. The Earl died in 1979 and the Countess in 1995, at which time the estate passed to Sir Philip Naylor-Leyland. The site remains (2000) in single private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Milton Hall lies in the parish of Castor on the western edge of the city of Peterborough. The park covers c 315ha, of which c 16ha are gardens and pleasure grounds. The park is heavily wooded, with plantations running along most of the boundaries. The gardens of late C20 housing developments form much of the eastern boundary; the A47 dual carriage runs along the southern boundary, and farmland adjoins the park to the north and west, the latter boundary partly formed by Castor Road and enclosed for most of its length by a stone park wall. The gently undulating ground has a slight fall to the south towards the valley of the River Nene which flows from west to east beyond the A47 on the southern boundary. The setting of the park remained rural until the second half of the C20 and although this is retained to the west and north, the growing city of Peterborough has now (2000) reached the eastern boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Drives enter Milton Park from the west, east and south boundaries. The main entrance today (2000) is from the southern end of the east boundary, past twin late C20 lodges and the late C20 estate office. Heronry Drive runs from here west into the park for c 450m until it meets the Peterborough Drive beside Gothic Lodge (1791, listed grade II*), a polygonal two-storey building of ashlar and slate by William Wilkins Snr in accordance with an illustration by Humphry Repton in the Red Book. Peterborough Drive enters the park at the eastern end of the south boundary, beside the single-storey stone Thorpe Lodge (dated 1867) which in the C19 served as the main entrance. From Gothic Lodge the Peterborough Drive continues north through the park, passing the stone and late C19 Chauffeur's Lodge c 450m south-east of the Hall to arrive at Piccadilly Circus, a convergence of four park drives c 300m east-south-east of the Hall. These include Kennel's Road, which runs east to the Kennels and terminates at the Huntsmans Lodge on the eastern boundary (exit to the park now blocked, 2000); Park Farm Road which runs north to Park Farm on the north boundary and through the farmland beyond to the Marholm Lodges c 1.5km north of the Hall; and Stamford Lodge Road which runs north-west to the gravelled north front and on to the Stamford Lodge (late C20) on the west boundary where it leaves the park past a pair of late C19 ashlar gate piers (listed grade II). At the western end of the south boundary a further drive enters the park beside Ferry Lodge which was repositioned in the late C20 slightly north of its original site when the A47 was widened. The Ferry Drive runs north-east past Ferry House (listed grade II), a large C17 two-storey stone building with stone mullion windows. To the north-east of Ferry House is the estate joinery yard. Some 250m further north along Ferry Drive stands the modern mid C20 Greenchair Lodge. Ferry Drive continues north-east to meet Peterborough Drive beside the Chauffeur's Lodge. The OS Surveyor's draft maps of 1814 show the Peterborough Drive from Gothic Lodge, and Ferry Drive both in place. The south-east corner of the park was taken in in the mid C19 and Peterborough Drive extended to the new Thorpe Lodge in 1867, while the 1901 OS map records the late C19 addition of Park Farm Road and Stamford Lodge Road.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Milton Hall (listed grade I) is a large country mansion built of ashlar under a stone roof. The north, entrance front has eight bays with a central porch and embattlements which retain the character of this part of the Hall which dates from c 1600. The south front, by contrast, which is in the Palladian style, has nine bays with canted bay windows and a

Venetian first-floor window. This was added by Henry Flitcroft for the third Earl Fitzwilliam between 1745 and 1750, the attic with its mansard roof being completed by Sir William Chambers for the fourth Earl in 1773.

Adjoining Milton Hall to the east is a two-storey coursed-stone stable complex (listed grade II*) ranged around three sides of a courtyard. The central doorway is topped by a central clock turret with pediments and cupola. It was built in c 1690 by William Talman and John Sturges for the first Earl Fitzwilliam. The stables were extended with a further range and smithy (listed grade II*) in 1720 and a late C18 octagonal harness house with a pyramidal slate roof (listed grade II) was added in the centre of the stable courtyard.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds lie to the south and east of the Hall. To the south a broad lawn, flanked by mature trees including beech, is bordered by a curved ha-ha which offers open views to the south park. In the late C19 this lawn was cut into a formal parterre filled with bedding. A vista from the south terrace extends out of the gardens through Salter's Wood to the west of the gardens, the view terminating in a classical temple, rebuilt in the 1980s on this site using materials salvaged from a derelict garden building which was designed by Chambers and erected in 1770 on Temple Hill in the south-west corner of the park. A broad yew-lined walk runs south-south-east off the southern end of the terrace to the tip of a small bow-shaped lake. The walk makes a circuit of the lake through C19 mixed exotic pleasure-ground plantings, a yew-lined branch turning south-east off the eastern bank leading to the Orangery (listed grade II*), built on the outside of the south wall of the walled gardens. A seven-bay colonnaded conservatory built by Carr of York, the Orangery looks out over the South Lawn to the park beyond and was extant by 1791 since Repton mentions it in his Red Book. The Coade stone figures on the parapet which are dated 1791 were possibly added on Repton's advice (CL 1951). Further garden areas are located within the walled gardens (see below).

PARK The park, which can be divided into three areas, is well covered with trees and bordered by large plantations including the Heronry to the south-east, Ferryhill Plantation to the south, Salter's Wood to the west and Thistlemoor Wood to the north. The eastern half of the south park is known as Sheep Park. It contains a string of three lakes, called Thorpe Watering, fed via a water channel from the lake in the pleasure grounds, this entire system of waterworks being shown as extant on the 1814 OS map, by which time the park had already reached almost the size it covers today (2000). North of the lakes, c 750m east-south-east of the Hall is the Kennels (listed grade II*), a U-shaped range of buildings created as a sham medieval ruin and probably built in 1767 when the Fitzwilliam Hunt was formed. It is shown as already existing on Repton's plans of 1791.

The western half of the south park is called Crickety Park, a named given to it in the early years of the C20 when the Fitzwilliam family created a private golf course here. This is now (2000) the home of the commercial Peterborough Milton Golf Club, with greens running right up to the ha-ha bordering the lawns off the south-west front of the Hall. Beyond the golf course in the south-west corner of the park stands the C17 Ferry House, used by the family as the Dower House, together with its complex of working buildings.

North Lawn or Deer Park occupies the land to the north of the Hall. A large number of ancient pollard oaks are situated here, particularly c 200m to the east of the Hall along the north-east side of the Stamford Lodge drive, and this represents the oldest part of the park. Family legend records that these veteran oaks are survivors of the C16 deer park and that following a visit to Milton by Cardinal Wolsey in 1530 which infuriated the king, Henry VIII ordered all the tops of Fitzwilliam's oaks to be cut off (The Fitzwilliam Family of Milton Hall). On the northern boundary of the Deer Park stands Thistlemoor Wood which contains crossed paths in an arrangement unchanged since the beginning of the C19. The drives were used by the family to ornament their journey to Castor church each Sunday.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled gardens lie immediately to the south-east of the stable block and run south-east alongside the pleasure grounds to the Orangery and South Lawn. The high red-brick walls (listed grade II) enclose a series of five compartments of varying size and shape, the walls dating from the Tudor period to the early C18 (CL 1912). The north-west compartment contains some early C20 training fruit trees on the walls and is laid in a late C20 box knot. The compartment to the south of this contains a flower garden known as the Italian Garden, with a central sunk pool surrounded by clipped yews and deep herbaceous borders, and ornamental iron gates leading off the south-west wall into the pleasure gardens beside the lake. These date from 1720 but were moved to this position in the late C18 when the walled garden was extended. The Italian

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Garden may have been designed by Harold Peto (Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust) although its layout is not shown on early C20 OS maps, while in the 1960s Percy Cane includes it in his book on garden design (Cane 1966), without reference to the designer. The north-east compartment retains some of its mid C19 working buildings while the compartment to the south of it is currently (2000) used as a horse paddock. On the outer side of the north-east wall is the late C18 Dairy (listed grade II), with a segmental rusticated central arch.

REFERENCES

Gardeners' Chronicle, i (25 February 1882), p 267 The Garden, (31 October 1891), p 391 Country Life, 32 (9 November 1912), pp 638-48; 129 (18 May 1961), pp 1148-51; (25 May 1961), pp 1210-13; (1 June 1961), pp 1270-4 Victoria History of the County of Cambridgeshire II, (1948), p 177 D Stroud, Humphry Repton (1962) P Cane, The Creative Art of Garden Design (1966), pp 96-7, pl 61 N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the county of Huntingdon and Peterborough (1968), pp 291-4 G Carter et al, Humphry Repton (1982) The Fitzwilliam Family of Milton Hall, (Bretton Local Studies Group 1983) [transcript of a lecture given by the Earl Fitzwilliam on 11 April 1978] Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust Newsletter (1997) S Daniels, Humphry Repton (1999), p 264

Maps Site plan of Milton House, 1643 (published in VCH) Tithe map for Milton and Castor parish, 1846 (Northampton Record Office)

OS Surveyor's draft drawings, 1814 (British Library maps) OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1927

Archival items Humphry Repton, Red Book for Milton Hall, 1791 (private collection)

Description written: June 2000 Amended: December 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: January 2001

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.