

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SHELDON MANOR

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

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Name:	SHELDON MANOR
District:	Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Chippenham Without
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.466258 Longitude: -2.1641467 National Grid Reference: ST 88694 74156 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001243 Date first listed: 01-Sep-1987

Details

A C20 formal garden, incorporating an enclosed garden probably of early C18 date, surrounding the medieval manor of Sheldon.
HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The first owner of Sheldon Manor was Sir William de Beauvilain, who lived there from c 1180 to 1230. The Manor formed part of the medieval village of Sheldon which formerly lay to the west of the Manor. The Manor was owned by Sir Walter de Godarville from 1231 until 1250, when his daughter Joan de Godarville married Sir Geoffrey Gascelyn. Sheldon Manor remained in the ownership of the Gascelyn family until 1424, when it was sold to Sir Walter Hungerford, whose family sold the Manor to Sir Richard Kent in 1684. Kent sold it on to Sir Richard Hart of Hanham only three years later after he went bankrupt. In 1711 the Manor was bought by William Norris, who altered and extended it and probably built the garden walls enclosing the garden immediately south of the Manor. The Manor remained in the ownership of the Norris family until the mid C19. In 1854 it was bought by Sir Gabriel Goldney, whose son lived there until 1911. In that year Captain F Bailey became the new owner, and he created a small paved garden with a central fountain to the north of the Manor (CL 1913).

In 1917 the Manor was sold to Henry Martin Gibbs, as a home for his eldest son Martin. Under their ownership the garden was extended to the south of the drive and c 1935 a water garden was created in this area. During the Second World War the Manor was tenanted and afterwards fell into decay. It was reoccupied in 1952, by the son of Henry Martin Gibbs, Martin Gibbs. The latter was a keen plantsman, and he and his wife improved the Manor and gardens, extending the gardens further eastwards. A swimming pool was constructed in the early 1960s, on the site of the water garden of c 1935, and a notable rose collection has been developed. The Manor remains (2000) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sheldon Manor, a site of c 3.4ha is situated 2km to the west of Chippenham. Immediately to the south-east of the site lies Sheldon Farm and to the north-east the site is bounded by arable land. To the north and west lie the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Sheldon (scheduled ancient monument), near Corsham Wood and Sheldon Wood.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Sheldon Manor is approached from the south-east by a drive, planted with trees in the late C20, which leads off the country lane that runs to the south-east of the site and which links up with Bristol Road to the north. The drive passes Sheldon Farm to the south-west, after which it runs adjacent and to the south of a small ticket office

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and car park. It enters the site here registered and after c 50m divides into two branches, the main branch leading first south-west past the enclosed front garden of the Manor, before turning north past a range of outbuildings and cottages which lie at right-angles to the Manor. It then turns north-east to approach the north-west front of the Manor. The other branch of the drive leads north-east to the north front of the Manor.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Sheldon Manor (listed grade I), the early C18 barn to its west (listed grade II), the late C18 granary to its north-east (listed grade II), and the C15 chapel on its south-east corner (scheduled ancient monument, listed grade II*), are situated in the western corner of the site and form an L-shaped plan embracing the garden to the south. The Manor shows evidence of various building phases that took place in the C13, C15, c 1660, c 1710, and 1911. Its irregular south front, which overlooks the enclosed front garden, is characterised by a porch of c 1300. The north front, built in the early C18, has paired gables, with a staircase gable of c 1660 in the north-east corner.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal garden immediately to the south of the Manor is enclosed by an early C18 rubble-stone wall (listed grade II). It is divided into two terraces by an early C20 drystone wall (OS 1923). Two mature yews, flanking a central path, stand on the upper terrace, c 3m to the south of the entrance porch of the Manor. A third yew fell during a storm in the early 1990s and now (2000) only a stump remains. Both the upper and lower terraces are laid to lawn and are bisected by a stone-paved path which leads from the entrance porch of the Manor in a southerly direction to the entrance in the retaining south wall of the garden, from where steps lead to the drive. The gateway (listed grade II) is flanked by two ashlar gate piers with large ball finials and is attributed to William Norris (Sales 1980). It has a pair of early to mid C19 decorative iron gates. Adjacent to the west (along the east side of the barn) lies a second terraced garden, also laid to lawn, created from an earlier enclosure (OS 1900). To the south-east of the drive is a garden dating back to the early C20 (OS 1923), partly laid out on a former orchard (OS 1900). The latter is enclosed to its north-west by a wall with central steps which are aligned with the gateway described above. The central steps lead to a straight walk, flanked by a yew hedge on both sides, that runs in a southerly direction. To the west of this walk lies a triangular-shaped sunken garden. It is laid to lawn and is screened to the south by various shrubs and trees. To the east of the walk lies a square lawn planted with a variety of trees and shrubs. To the south-east this area is screened by a beech hedge broken halfway along its length by a circular pond with a central statue of Mercury. Beyond this, situated in the far southern corner of the site, lies a further lawn. The latter is surrounded to the south, east, and west by a wall. Against the east wall is a rectangular swimming pool built of natural stone in the early 1960s, with to its south-east a late C20 summerhouse.

To the north of the Manor is a small sunken garden laid out in the early C20 which is accessed via a flight of steps to its east. It is laid to lawn and has a central circular fountain. A photograph of 1913 (CL) shows this area was formerly covered in crazy paving.

The gardens to the east of the Manor are divided into two areas: an orchard, dating back to the late C19 (OS 1900), and an arboretum with a pond created in the late C20, situated to the south-east of the Manor next to the drive.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies in the far northern corner of the site and contains the remains of two early C20 greenhouses (OS 1923). The kitchen garden is bounded to the north-east by a late C20 concrete wall.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 34 (8 November 1913), pp 638-45 N Pevsner and B Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (2nd edn 1975), pp 468-9 J Sales, *West Country Gardens* (1980), pp 241-2 Sheldon Manor, guidebook, (E Gibbs 1982) 'A new garden for an ancient house', *House and Garden*, October 1984 'Medieval Magic', *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 1987 'The manor of friends', *The Independent*, 29 April 1989 'Obituaries: Major Martin Gibbs', *The Independent*, 19 July 1994 'Old Manor wins a new conquest', *The Times*, 29 October 1994

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1900 2nd edition published 1923

Description written: January 2000 Amended: May 2001 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: April 2005

Legal

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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.