

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ARBURY HALL

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ARBURY HALL

Name: ARBURY HALL

County: Warwickshire

District: North Warwickshire (District Authority)

Parish: Astley

County: Warwickshire

District: Nuneaton and Bedworth (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.500121
Longitude: -1.5124236
National Grid Reference: SP 33196 89247
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1001185
Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

Details

Early and mid C18 gardens and pleasure grounds, partly developed with advice from Sanderson Miller, together with parkland of C17 origin.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

An Augustinian priory was founded at Arbury in the parish of Chilvers Coton by Ralph Sudeley in 1154 (VCH). At the Dissolution the priory was granted to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and after the Duke's death in 1545 the property passed to his daughter, and subsequently to his cousin, Francis Kersey, who in 1567 sold it to Sir Edmund Anderson. Anderson, a lawyer and later Lord Chief Justice, demolished the monastic buildings and constructed a new house around the site of the cloisters (Dugdale 1730). In 1586 Anderson exchanged Arbury for an estate at Harefield, Middlesex with another lawyer, John Newdigate. John Newdigate's son, Richard, was also a lawyer who became Chief Justice of the Upper Bench in 1660; resigning at the Restoration he returned to private practice and in 1677 was created a baronet. In 1674, using part of the fortune brought by his wife, Juliana Leigh, Newdigate purchased the neighbouring property of Astley Castle as well as the family's former home at Harefield. Sir Richard's son, also Sir Richard, made significant changes to Arbury Hall and grounds, laying out formal gardens in the late C17 which are recorded in a view by Henry Beighton (1708). Sir Richard's garden notebooks survive, indicating that in the late C17 and early C18 plants were supplied by Jacob Bobart at Oxford and London and Wise at Brompton. The second Baronet died in 1710 and was succeeded by his son, another Sir Richard, who died in 1727. Arbury was inherited by his son, Sir Edward, fourth Baronet, who died aged nineteen in 1734. The estate then passed to Sir Edward's younger brother, Roger, who succeeded as fifth Baronet. Sir Roger Newdigate served as MP for Middlesex between 1742 and 1747, and subsequently for Oxford University from 1751 to 1780. Sir Roger completed a Grand Tour in 1742 and on his return began the alteration of

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the grounds and, from 1750, the house; this work proceeded with advice from Sanderson Miller (1716-80) of Radway Grange, Warwickshire (qv), who with Sir Roger was a member of a circle of Warwickshire virtuosi. Arbury is one of a group of sites in Warwickshire at which Miller advised which includes Alscot Park (qv), Farnborough Hall (qv), Honington Hall (qv) and Packington Hall (qv). Lady Sophia Newdigate (d 1774), Sir Roger's first wife, recorded developments in the grounds and impressions of neighbouring estates which she visited with her husband in her *Journal* (WCRO); Sir Roger's diaries for the period 1751 to 1806 also survive (WCRO). Sir Roger derived income from coal fields in north Warwickshire, and between 1770 and 1790 he developed a canal system begun by his grandfather both to improve the transport of his coal and for pleasure (Meir 1995). Sir Roger, described by Horace Walpole as a 'half-converted Jacobite' (Tyack 1994), was used by George Eliot, Mary Ann Evans, (daughter of Sir Roger's agent), as the model for Sir Christopher Cheveral in *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857). Sir Roger died without issue in 1806, when the baronetcy became extinct; Arbury passed to his cousin, Francis Parker, who assumed the name Newdigate. Francis Newdigate died in 1835, leaving the estate to his great nephew, the Rt Hon Charles Newdigate Newdegate, MP for North Warwickshire 1843-85. Charles Newdegate died unmarried in 1887 when Arbury was inherited by his cousin, Lt General Sir Edward Newdigate Newdegate, Governor of Bermuda 1888-92. Sir Edward died in 1902 and was succeeded by his nephew, Sir Francis Newdigate Newdegate, MP and Governor of Tasmania 1917-20 and Western Australia 1920-4. At Sir Francis' death in 1936 the estate passed to his elder daughter, the Hon Mrs L CS FitzRoy Newdegate, who in 1950 made the property over to her son, Mr Humphrey FitzRoy Newdegate, who succeeded his uncle as third Viscount Daventry in 1986. The site today (2000) remains in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Arbury Hall is situated c 3.5km south-west of Nuneaton, to the south of the B4102 road. The c 180ha site comprises c 10ha of gardens and pleasure grounds, and c 170ha of parkland, plantations and lakes. The site adjoins agricultural land and woodland on all sides, with extended drives projecting from the body of the site to the north, west and south-east through surrounding agricultural land. To the north-east and east the site is bounded by an C18 canalised stream, while to the south it adjoins the buildings of South Farm, childhood home of the novelist George Eliot (1819-80). The boundary to the north-west is formed by a footpath which passes to the south of Temple House and Park Farm. The north drive adjoins Spring Kidden Wood to the east and North Wood to the west. The site occupies a shallow valley which runs from north-west to south-east and which contains a stream which has been dammed to form a chain of pools to the south and west of the Hall. A further stream flows from north to south on the eastern boundary of the site; this is dammed to form a series of canals and to provide power for a water mill at Arbury Mill Farm. There is a complex series of views within the site, and further views across surrounding agricultural land particularly to the north-west and west from the park. The principal views from the Hall and pleasure grounds are south and south-east across the pools and park towards boundary plantations.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Arbury Hall is approached from the B4102 road to the north. The entrance is marked by North Lodge (listed grade II), a late C18 rubble-stone structure comprising a pair of round towers linked by a large, four-centred carriage arch. The towers are lit by small leaded lancet windows and have small domestic ranges to the south which were extended in the C19. The North Lodge was one of the last structures built by Sir Roger Newdigate (d 1806). The tarmac drive follows a straight course south for c 1km through a mixed avenue. Some 270m south of North Lodge the avenue widens to form a circular plantation which may correspond to the terminal feature of the north avenue shown on an estate plan by Thomas Ellis (1664). Some 240m south of this circular plantation the drive passes immediately to the east of a mid or late C18 bath house (listed grade II). Of rubble sandstone construction, the bath house comprises a square dressing room with an arched projection containing a bench seat facing the drive, and an adjoining circular bath chamber, the vaulted roof of which is partly collapsed. The bath house formed part of Sir Roger Newdigate's mid and late C18 improvements. Approximately 1km south of North Lodge the drive sweeps south-west; the axis of the north avenue is projected south as a vista cut through Spring Kidden Wood and aligned on the Hall c 750m to the south. The drive continues south-west for c 400m, running parallel and to the south-east of a canalised stream which forms the outflow of Seeswood Pool c 1.3km north-west of the Hall (outside the area here registered). Sweeping south and south-east, the drive crosses the stream on a small mid or late C18 stone bridge and continues for c 300m south-east, to the south-west of the stream. At a junction c 240m north-west of the Hall the principal drive

sweeps east, passing to the north of the kitchen garden before turning south to approach the carriage court and porte-cochère on the north side of the Hall. The north drive was developed in the mid C18 by Sir Roger Newdigate from an existing avenue aligned on the north facade of the Hall. The north avenue is shown on Ellis' survey of 1664. Yates' map (1793), reflecting the arrangement shown on the early C18 plan of Arbury Demesne, shows the north avenue cut by a public road, Kidding Lane, running west from Chilvers Coton to Astley Lane. The course of this road survives (2000) as a track on the north boundary of Spring Kidden Wood. Yates' map shows the drive leading south on its present course from Spring Kidden Wood to the Hall. Some 240m north-west of the Hall a secondary drive turns south-south-west for c 130m, to reach a late C18 or early C19 stone gatehouse (listed grade II) c 130m north-west of the Hall. The gatehouse is constructed in Perpendicular Gothic style with a single carriage arch; it formed part of Sir Roger Newdigate's C18 and early C19 improvements to the estate. Beyond the gatehouse the drive continues for c 50m east to the late C17 stables (listed grade I). Constructed in red brick with an elaborate centrally placed classical portal beneath a painted sundial clock, the stables comprise two storeys under a pitched roof. Approximately E-shaped on plan, the projecting wings have ogee gables. The design of the stables is attributed to Sir William Wilson; Sir Christopher Wren provided two designs for the portal in 1674 but these were not implemented (listed building description; Tyack 1994). To the south the stables overlook a courtyard which is today (2000) laid out with wide gravelled perimeter drives enclosing four panels of lawn divided by cruciform walks which intersect at a circular stone-kerbed pond. The courtyard is enclosed to the west by the late C17 brick coach house and associated walls (all listed grade II), while to the south it is enclosed by a C17 brick wall (listed grade II) which was altered in the mid or late C18 to provide a stone crenellated parapet; C16 architectural fragments and re-sited Jacobean balustrades are incorporated into the south wall. At the south-east corner of the courtyard a mid C18 gatehouse (listed grade II) comprising a pair of square towers flanking a central perpendicular arched gateway beneath a crenellated gable leads to the gardens south of the Hall. The gatehouse is said to be dated 1754 (listed building description) and formed part of Sir Roger Newdigate's alterations to the Hall and grounds, and was probably undertaken with the advice of Sanderson Miller. To the east the courtyard is enclosed by late C17 or early C18 brick and stone coped walls (listed grade II), at the north end of which a pair of elaborate early C18 wrought-iron gates and overthrow are supported by a pair of stone piers surmounted by pineapple finials (all listed grade II). This gateway leads east to the carriage court and porte-cochère on the north side of the Hall.

From the gatehouse west of the stables a drive leads c 430m south-south-west, crossing the dam between Garners Pool and Hall Pool to reach a junction c 430m south-west of the Hall. Here the drive divides, one branch leading c 1.75km west and north-west along the south-west boundary of the park and through adjacent agricultural land to reach Astley Lodge, a mid or late C18 stone lodge on the B4102 Astley Lane c 2km west of the Hall. Astley Lodge stands opposite an entrance to Astley Castle which was acquired by Sir Richard Newdigate in 1674, and which in the mid C18 was used as a dower house for Sir Roger Newdigate's widowed mother (Tyack 1994). The west drive and Astley Lodge form part of Sir Roger Newdigate's late C18 development of the estate, and were intended to link Astley Castle and its associated park and gardens with the grounds surrounding Arbury Hall. Yates' map (1793) shows the west drive as a public road leading to Astley.

A further drive leads south-east from the junction c 430m south-west of the Hall. This drive follows a serpentine course for c 1km south-east through the park to reach a mid or late C18 single-arched rusticated stone bridge (listed grade II). Beyond the bridge the drive continues for c 700m through a plantation, Coventry Wood, to reach the late C18 Griff Lodges (both listed grade II) on a minor road c 2km south-east of the Hall. The Griff Lodges comprise a pair of single-storey stone cottages with gothic windows, pyramid tiled roofs set behind open-work parapets and cornices ornamented with carved figures and grotesques. The east drive, bridge and Griff Lodges form part of Sir Roger Newdigate's late C18 improvements. Yates' map (1793) shows the east drive as a public road leading to Griff.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Arbury Hall (listed grade I) stands towards the centre of the site. The house, constructed in sandstone ashlar, is built around a central courtyard which occupies the site of the monastic cloisters. Extensively remodelled in Gothic Revival style between 1750 and 1806, the three-storey house has crenellated parapets with pinnacle finials, traceried windows and other gothic ornaments. The north or entrance facade has a centrally placed, single-storey porte-cochère flanked by a pair of chimney stacks modelled as low towers; the north facade was rebuilt by the Coventry mason John Alcott in the 1790s. The east

facade is of similar design with a single-storey rounded bay window to the south; this facade was built to Sir Roger Newdigate's design in the late C18. The south facade is more highly ornamented with projecting wings to east and west lit by two-storey canted bay windows which are related in design to those built by Sanderson Miller at Radway Grange (qv) in 1746. Between the wings an elaborately ornamented two-storey, three-bay projection contains three tall gothic windows which light the mid C18 dining room. The south facade was remodelled between 1750 and 1773 with the advice of Sanderson Miller and Henry Keene. The west facade, which overlooks the stable court and, at the south-west corner of the Hall, the kitchen court, is a plain stone structure completed in the late C18. The Hall contains some of the finest gothic revival plasterwork and interiors in England (Pevsner and Wedgewood 1966; Tyack 1994). The Hall as remodelled from the mid C18 incorporates a building of mid C16 origin. This Hall is shown in an early C18 view by Henry Beighton with a central courtyard and a south facade which was E-shaped on plan. The south facade was, until the mid C18, the principal entrance to the Hall. The mid C18 dining room on the south side of the Hall occupies the site of the C16 great hall.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The informal pleasure grounds lie to the north, east and south of the Hall, with an area of walled formal garden to the north-east.

To the west of the Hall and stable court an area of informal lawns planted with specimen trees and shrubs is bounded to the west by a canalised stream which feeds Hall Pool c 20m south-west of the Hall. A walk extends along the north bank of Hall Pool to reach further lawns which fall away to the south and south-east of the Hall. Hall Pool was created c 1750 from two existing fishponds as part of Sir Roger Newdigate's improvements undertaken with the advice of Sanderson Miller (Meir 1995). Hall Pool is retained to the east by an earth dam, below which is a rectangular pool. To the north, some 30m south of the Hall, a rocky cascade descends to a further informal lake. The cascade was constructed in 1751, while the lake to the east was created from a formal canal which is shown in Beighton's early C18 view. These improvements were undertaken with advice from Miller (*ibid*), and are shown in views of c 1800 (Aylesford Collection). To the east and north the east lake connects with a system of mid and late C18 canals which formerly connected with the Coventry Canal c 2km east of the Hall. The east canal sweeps north-west enclosing an area of informal lawns and specimen trees together with an early C19 cottage, Swanland; c 150m north-east of the Hall the east canal joins the north canal which extends c 150m north and north-east in a cutting from the east lake. This canal and cutting form the east boundary of lawns and shrubberies to the east of the Hall. To the south, the east lawn drops steeply to the south lawn and east lake, while an artificial mound c 75m east-south-east of the Hall is planted with ornamental trees and shrubs. A further mound c 70m east of the Hall contains a late C18 or early C19 brick-lined icehouse (listed grade II). Informal walks border the lawns to the south, east and north, while a late C18 ornamental stone footbridge c 100m south-east of the Hall crosses the north canal and leads c 150m east to Swanland. To the north of the Hall a level rectangular lawn is enclosed by the carriage turn. A group of four early or mid C18 stone terms surmounted by white marble busts of Roman emperors (all listed grade II) is arranged against the north facade of the service court immediately west of the Hall; this arrangement dates from the early C20 when a group of yards attached to the east wall of the stable courts were cleared and laid to grass (OS 1913, 1925). Beyond the carriage turn a further rectangular area of lawn tapering to the north is bounded to east and west by drives. This lawn is aligned with the north avenue and forms the foreground to a vista extending from the Hall to the avenue.

Some 45m north-east of the Hall a formal garden is enclosed by early C18 brick walls c 3m high. This garden is screened to the west by evergreen shrubbery. Approximately rectangular on plan, the garden is laid out as a rose garden with rectangular beds divided by a central stone-kerbed gravel walk which extends from a gateway in the south wall north to a rondpoint which contains a circular fountain pool. To the north of the rondpoint stone steps ascend to a further walk which leads north to the site of the late C18 orangery against the inner face of the north wall. Tall brick piers support lead urns, while the site of the orangery forms a terrace ornamented with classical fragments. The walled garden corresponds to a garden shown on Beighton's early C18 view. The orangery shown by Beighton at the north end of the garden was rebuilt by Sir Roger in 1772; orange trees were supplied by Alberto Ghecco of Genoa in 1775 (Meir 1995). Lady Sophia Newdigate recorded details of the mid C18 planting of the flower garden in her notebooks (WCRO). To the east and north of the walled garden are further areas of informal lawns planted with ornamental trees and shrubs.

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Some 400m north-east of the Hall, a further artificial, informal lake is retained to the north-east by earth dams, on which stands a mid C18 Tea House (listed grade II). This stone and brick single-storey structure, built by David Hiorn in 1748 (Tyack 1994), comprises a domed summerhouse entered through double doors surmounted by a pedimented doorcase supported on rusticated half-columns. The interior comprises a single circular room. To the north a late C18 or early C18 rendered brick cottage is attached to the summerhouse. The Tea House, which formed part of Sir Roger Newdigate's mid C18 improvements, may have been modelled on the Pantheon in Rome.

PARK The park lies to the north, south, west and north-west of the Hall and is in mixed agricultural use. To the south of the Hall mixed plantations adjoin the east drive, while to the west and north the park is characterised by scattered individual and small groups of trees. A drive c 450m south of the Hall which leads from the south-east drive to South Farm on the southern boundary of the park (outside the area here registered) follows the line of the south avenue which is shown on a mid C17 estate plan (WCRO). The avenue north of the east drive had been removed by 1787 (Yates 1793). A chain of four pools extends west from Hall Pool to the south-west of the Hall. Each pool is approximately triangular on plan, and is retained to the east by an earth dam. An early C18 estate plan shows Park Meadow to the south-east of the Hall (WCRO), while by 1787 the park had assumed its present extent (Yates). The development of the park formed part of Sir Roger Newdigate's improvements undertaken from the late 1740s and completed c 1800. During the Second World War the park accommodated a prisoner of war camp; it was restored to mixed agricultural use after 1945 (guidebook).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies c 60m north-west of the Hall and immediately to the north of the stables. Approximately rectangular on plan, the garden is enclosed by late C17 or early C18 brick walls c 3m high, while to the south-west a screen comprising wrought-iron railings supported by stone piers surmounted by ball finials separates a slip garden from the west drive. The kitchen garden is entered from the east through a late C17 or early C18 gateway comprising a pair of stone piers surmounted by pineapple finials which support wrought-iron gates and side panels (all listed grade II). The south-west slip garden is entered by gates set at the centre of the screen which are supported by similar stone piers with pineapple finials. A further gate (listed grade II) immediately west of the stables gives access to a service yard north of the stables. The kitchen garden remains (2000) in cultivation.

A further area of former kitchen garden lies to the west of the stable court, and is enclosed to the west and south by late C17 or early C18 brick walls with stone coping c 3m high (west wall listed grade II). This garden is approximately L-shaped on plan and is divided into two compartments by a transverse wall. The garden is no longer in cultivation as a kitchen garden.

REFERENCES

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Maps T Ellis, *Plan of the Manor of Astley, 1664* (CR136/M97a and b), (Warwickshire County Record Office) *An Exact Map of Arbury Lordship, c 1700* (CR136/M11), (Warwickshire County Record Office) *Arbury Demesne Park and Manor and Griff, early C18* (CR136/M10), (Warwickshire County Record Office) H Beighton, *A Map of Hemlingford Hundred, surveyed 1725*, published 1729 W Yates and Son, *Map of Warwickshire, surveyed 1787-9*, published 1793

OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1834 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1905 3rd edition published 1925 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886 2nd edition published 1913 3rd edition published 1925 1937 edition

Illustrations [All held in the Aylesford Collection, Birmingham Reference Library Archive] Drawing, *Arbury Hall* [from the south] from a drawing by Beighton 1708 in the possession of Sir R Newdigate Drawing, *Arbury Hall from the south*, c 1800 Drawing, *Arbury Hall from the south-east*, c 1800

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Archival items [All held in the Warwickshire County Record Office] Newdigate family papers including estate and garden accounts, early C18-C19 (CR136) Garden Memorandum Book, C18 (CR136A/246) Sophia Newdigate's Garden Notebook, mid C18 (CR136A/282) Sir Roger Newdigate's diaries, 1751(1806 (CR136A/582(637) Accounts, including garden and estate items, 1606-1814 (CR136B/2411(2515)

Description written: June 2000 Amended: August 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: December 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.