

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ASHTEAD PARK

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ASHTEAD PARK

Name: ASHTEAD PARK

County: Surrey

District: Mole Valley (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.311910
 Longitude: -0.28902321
 National Grid Reference: TQ 19348 58367
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

<p>label.localisation: [51.311295703786,-0.290309280195926], [51.3110691407419,-0.29009906165922], [51.3108656372543,-0.289919826597928], [51.3106824492122,-0.289765320161861], [51.3106223987656,-0.289661419422722], [51.3106990086429,-0.289259519103543], [51.3107759942978,-0.289065609529548], [51.3108455289941,-0.288725524009578], [51.3108475072545,-0.288678746887614], [51.3108438237539,-0.288608835838297], [51.3108641676398,-0.288544401455135], [51.3108541679925,-0.288315531664007], [51.310866694487,-0.288261991367991], [51.3108498109768,-0.288198942162601], [51.3108608433091,-0.288134854116041], [51.3108426916096,-0.288076099260342], [51.3108417920344,-0.2880145644523], [51.3107820228527,-0.287475516749174], [51.3107118005485,-0.286858317622119], [51.3107360761891,-0.286880758048466], [51.3108319419555,-0.286976951115455], [51.3110501039376,-0.287157750782445], [51.3111330398901,-0.287279894750645], [51.31113361130192,-0.287429419654894], [51.31116172146784,-0.287457163911919], [51.3111601816155,-0.287950191173063], [51.31115247459656,-0.288320293898561], [51.3111516441937,-0.288844909473361], [51.3114569932225,-0.289237699516248],</p>	<p>[51.3111837015294,-0.290200937788668], [51.3109679567754,-0.290003059387771], [51.3107524904071,-0.289824269890309], [51.3106498920048,-0.289721950861245], [51.3106718297216,-0.289402734707587], [51.310741680449,-0.289266411906435], [51.3108351444136,-0.288742884278247], [51.3108518697885,-0.288704052677795], [51.3108361528011,-0.288630356612399], [51.310866179992,-0.288591030074852], [51.3108533400276,-0.288532063064768], [51.3108590854692,-0.288287742666539], [51.3108570421475,-0.288239005981221], [51.3108533584188,-0.288169094957626], [51.31084970564,-0.288101306315137], [51.3108474850964,-0.288039835055028], [51.3108215931024,-0.287815789689834], [51.3107468545107,-0.28716267202243], [51.3107250623593,-0.286855700201355], [51.3107781007779,-0.286934376219241], [51.3109905076495,-0.287085674500292], [51.3110774342661,-0.287207669589609], [51.3112007323501,-0.287360164215978], [51.3114496832955,-0.28746340119937], [51.31116047049512,-0.287693245933352], [51.31115257745509,-0.287936047183315], [51.31115194094702,-0.288774749964751], [51.3114616630396,-0.289192945294618], [51.3114638919686,-0.289254417111031],</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ASHTEAD PARK

[51.3115157136646,-0.289341636688584], [51.3116954982124,-0.289445333562782],
[51.3119802604775,-0.289540880358392], [51.3121527431694,-0.289600269259095],
[51.3121583119004,-0.289617051009507], [51.312077683134,-0.290199546827165],
[51.3120245710076,-0.290570868405697], [51.3120181059482,-0.290583850233257],
[51.3119479426124,-0.290607679272755], [51.3118281867779,-0.290605758944979],
[51.3117185991355,-0.290571635780882], [51.3115640800812,-0.290466995469245],
[51.3113863992204,-0.290325006937648], [51.3113804607289,-0.290374055265091],
[51.3113616302113,-0.290359890211108], [51.311295703786,-0.290309280195926]

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001490
Date first listed: 01-Mar-1999

Details

A C17 park, developed during the C18 and C19 by successive owners.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By the late C13 the manor of Ashtead was held by the earls of Surrey. In 1397, Richard, Earl of Surrey and Arundel was attainted and beheaded and his estates seized by the Crown. These were later returned to the family, eventually passing by marriage to the Mowbrays, the dukes of Norfolk. In 1680 Sir Robert Howard, sixth son of Thomas, first Earl of Berkshire bought the manor of Ashtead from his cousin Henry, Duke of Norfolk, to be his chief residence. The old manor house, adjacent to St Giles' church, was not demolished when a new house was built some 350m to the south-east. John Evelyn (1620-1706), the diarist, who visited in 1684, writes of the 'newly built house, which stands in a very sweet park upon the down, the avenue south though downhill to the house, exceedingly pleased me' (de Beer 1955). Sir Robert was succeeded by his son Thomas, who died in 1701. The estate then passed to Thomas' widow, who remarried to become Lady Diana Feilding and lived there until her death in 1733, having restored the estate to the Howards. The property was then owned by absentee members of the Howard family until 1789 when Richard Bagot, who took the name of Howard, moved to Ashtead with his wife Frances. The house was rebuilt in 1790, to a design by Joseph Bonomi (1739-1808) executed by Samuel Wyatt (1737-1807), together with a stable block to the west. The Howards died in 1818 and were succeeded by their daughter Mary, who married Fulke Greville Upton, who also took the Howard name. John Loudon (1783-1843) visited Ashtead in 1829, and described both the east garden and the kitchen garden in the *Gardener's Magazine* of 1829. Following Mary's death in 1877, the estate passed to her cousin Lieut Col Ponsonby Bagot, who in 1880 sold it to Thomas, later Sir Thomas, Lucas, who re-routed the road that ran through the park. In 1889 the property was bought by Pantia Ralli who was probably responsible for extending the house to the east and west. He was responsible for the semicircular formal garden on the north front and the removal of the east garden and continued to keep deer in the park (JHCG 1900). On his death in 1924 the estate was put up for sale, divided into fifty-one lots. The main house and surrounding parkland to the south of the site was purchased by the Corporation of London for use as a boarding school, in which use it continues (1999). The remainder of the site has been fragmented by residential development along road frontages, but the northern part of the park remains as open space owned by Mole Valley District Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Ashtead Park lies on the south side of the A24, 2km south-west of Epsom. The site is 54ha in area, of which c 2ha is formal gardens and pleasure grounds, surrounded by a park of which c 30ha is wooded. The site is at its lowest at its most northerly point, and rises gradually over the whole of its length, so that its

southern point is just below the ridge of the Epsom Downs. The southern half of the site is enclosed by a 2m high brick wall along its boundary with Farm Lane which runs south-east along the east boundary, and Park Lane which runs south-west and then north-west to enclose the southern end of the site. The north-west boundary to Epsom Road is a post and wire fence and the boundary to the north-east is formed by the gardens of residential properties along the west side of Farm Lane. The small residential development to the north of Rookery Hill is excluded from the site here registered.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The park is bisected by Rookery Hill, a public road which crosses between Park Lane on the west and Farm Lane on the east, with a lodge at each end. The single-storey East Lodge was built before 1880 (Sale particulars), and the two-storey West Lodge (outside the area here registered) was built for Ralli c 1890. Two sets of gate piers and gates (listed grade II; outside the area here registered) grace the western entrance to Rookery Hill and the drive to St Giles' church. The east end of Rookery Hill is closed by mid C19 iron gates hung on ashlar piers (listed grade II) immediately north of the Lodge. The carriage entrance has a wide single gate hung on the south pier, with the pedestrian entrance to the north. At the centre of Rookery Hill a drive runs south to the main house, now the City of London Freeman's School; St Giles' church is on the west, and south of the church are modern school buildings. The drive continues south past the western service wing of the main house and swings round to a turning circle below the south front, in the centre of which is a stone sundial (late C19, listed grade II).

From Rookery Hill, a track runs north joining the A24 adjacent to North Lodge (illustrated in the Sale particulars, 1880) via the impressive northern gateway (listed grade II) standing c 1.1km north of the house. Built of Portland stone and wrought iron, the gateway has recently (late C20) been restored. Gate piers c 4m high support large wrought-iron gates which incorporate the date 1882. Pedestrian access is via a similar, but simpler gate to the west which is matched by a screen to the east.

John Evelyn writes of approaching the house from the south (de Beer 1955), and Rocque's map (1768) indicates access via an avenue from the south. The Wyburd Survey of 1802 (reproduced in *A History of Ashtead*, 1995) also shows only a southern access but an 1802 'Survey of roads proposed to be altered' indicates a road running east/west across the park, from the gardener's house on the east (now the Headmaster's House) to the south of St Giles' churchyard. A footpath on the line of the present Rookery Hill is annotated 'to be done away'. At the south-east corner of the park stands an elaborate entrance, the William III gateway, with urns on brick gate piers. Built for Sir Robert Howard in the late C17, this gave access to Epsom racecourse c 1.5km to the east. The south-east drive to the house through the gateway appears on the OS map of 1871, as does the drive from the north of the park.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Ashtead Park House (1790, listed grade II*) stands in the centre of the southern half of Ashtead Park, the main entrance protected by an early example of a porte-cochre with Tuscan columns (Pevsner et al 1971). The house is of yellow stock brick with Portland stone dressings and is three storeys high, its flat roof concealed by a balustraded parapet with corner urns. The plan is rectangular, on an east/west axis with single-storey pavilions at each end, the eastern end built as a conservatory and a service wing attached to the western pavilion which was formerly the billiard room. Balustrades protect the basement area to the front and rear of the house and define the semicircular formal garden to the north and the turning circle to the south. The two-storey rectangular stable block, built c 1790, stands c 100m west of the house; it is now classrooms.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the north of the house is a formal garden, created by Pantia Ralli c 1900 by adding a lower gravel walk to the north of the existing terrace and enclosing the area within a semicircular balustrade (listed grade II). The garden is now (late C20) lawn with green and gold yews clipped in a variety of shapes, including balls and two large baskets. An elaborate stone surround in the centre of the garden contains smaller topiary balls and seasonal bedding and may at one time have held water.

East of the house is a sunken lawn area, now used for cricket nets, beyond which is a group of mature cedars and rhododendrons fronting woodland. In 1829 (*Gardener's Mag*) Loudon described the geometrical garden surrounded by a gravel walk which lay below the east front, the article including a diagram of the central section and a list of plants. By 1849, the east flower garden had been extended southwards, as described in Keane's *Beauties of Surrey* (1849). It included a rosery with a sundial and was screened by rhododendrons. Pantia Ralli removed the east garden c 1900 when a conservatory was added to the east end of the house. In 1914 *Gardeners' Chronicle* noted that an area of c 150 acres (62.5ha) was 'devoted to gardens and pleasure grounds'.

A rectangular garden planted with herbs and enclosed by yew hedges lies c 80m to the north-east of the house; beyond to the north and north-east is an area of shrubs and trees, with the remains of meandering paths, all that remains of Ralli's Wild Garden described in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1914 .

On the west side of the house and service accommodation, a footpath runs north-west towards St Giles' church, flanked by pleached limes. This avenue is credited to Sir Robert Howard and appears on a survey plan of c 1706. The traveller and diarist Celia Fiennes also visited at this time, and although her description is mainly about the house she also mentions 'severall courts at the entrance', 'the hall which opens to the garden', and 'severall gardens walled in' (Morris 1952). To the east of the house, a large building which contains an indoor swimming pool screens views of the house from the north. Most of the school buildings, including the converted stable block, lie in the area to the west of the house and south of the church.

PARK The parkland lies to the north and south of the house, and in both directions the landform has been altered to create level sports pitches. Beyond the pitches, c 150m to the south of the house, a lime avenue has been planted to replace trees felled in the storm of 1987. An avenue appears on Rocque's map of 1768 extending south outside the walled park, beyond Park Lane. The line of this avenue can still be traced, extending to Shepherd's Walk (outside the area here registered). Paths lead through the woodland (replanted late C20) to the east and west of the avenue and around the south and east of the park. Within the wood, south-east of the house, lies the school sports complex. A soil bund inside the eastern boundary wall has been planted with trees as screening for nearby properties.

North of the house the ground level has also been altered to provide sports pitches, with a few specimen trees remaining. The old manor house, which abutted the east wall of the churchyard, continued in use as a dairy and was not demolished until after the end of the C18. There was also a Well House, an important feature since John Evelyn's one fault with Ashtead Park was 'that there is no water but what is drawn up by horses from a very deep well' (de Beer 1955). The Well House was demolished in 1997, but the two wells and connecting tunnel were incorporated in the new Science Building in 1998..

To the south of Rookery Hill the school grounds are edged with white parkland fencing. West of the junction with the school drive, Rookery Hill passes over an ornamental bridge (listed grade II) with balustraded parapets, constructed for Thomas Lucas c 1880 over a shallow dry valley. North of the road, the parkland is managed as a nature reserve containing a mix of scrubby woodland and open grassy glades with some mature pollard trees. In the north of the park is a detached dwelling, 'The Cottage in the Park'. There are also two ponds; the southern one, Island Pond, may have been dug for Sir Robert Howard as an item in the Ashtead Park accounts for the early C18 refers to 'clearing the Island Pond of mud'. Swete's *Handbook of Epsom* published in 1860 comments that 'This demesne has ever been celebrated for the abundance and quality of its deer, who gather in large herds around the lake and give life and animation to the scene'. The northern pond, which has a more irregular shape, was created for Pantia Ralli and is edged with remnants of the ornamental planting described in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardening* in 1900. At the south-west corner of the pond are the remains of a brick-built boathouse.

A park was inclosed at Ashtead before 1650, when it was included in a conveyance of the manor; it remained a deer park into the C20 (JHCG 1900).

KITCHEN GARDEN The rectangular, brick-walled kitchen garden is situated c 300m north of the house, to the north of Rookery Hill. Attached to the south side of the south wall is the former gardener's house (listed grade II), dated 1734 on a sundial on the front elevation. To the east of the house, and on the line of its rear wall, is a south-facing greenhouse, and on the lawn south of the greenhouse is a mulberry tree. Inside the walled garden the remains of a row of cordon apples run parallel with the rear of the house, and on the north wall are glasshouses (now, 1999, derelict). A doorway in the north wall leads to an area which contains the vacant Bothy and one free-standing greenhouse. A further brick-walled enclosure (late C18, listed grade II) to the north-east is now (1999) leased to an adjacent nursery business. Loudon, on his visit in 1829, praised the kitchen gardens which he thought the best he had seen on that tour of Surrey and Sussex. He makes mention of the stove houses and their pineapples, the melon grounds, vineries, fruit trees against the walls, and the abundant flower borders providing cut flowers for the house (*Gardener's Mag* 1829).

REFERENCES

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
ASHTEAD PARK

Gardener's Magazine, (October 1829), p 525 W Keane, Beauties of Surrey (1849) C Swete, Handbook of Epsom (1860), p 119 J Horticulture and Cottage Gardening, (22 February 1900), pp 160-2 Victoria History of the County of Surrey 3, (1902? 12), pp 247-9 Gardeners' Chronicle, (24 October 1914) C Morris (ed), The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes 1685-1712 (1952), p 23 E S de Beer (ed), The Diary of John Evelyn 4, (1955), p 376 N Pevsner et al, The Buildings of England: Surrey (1971), pp 98-100 Proc Leatherhead District Local Hist Soc 4, no 2 (1978) Leatherhead and District Local History Society, A History of Ashtead Park (1995)

Maps Survey of Ashtead Manor, c 1706 (copy held by Leatherhead and District Local History Society; location of original unknown) J Rocque, Map of the County of Surrey, surveyed c 1762, published 1768 Survey of roads proposed to be altered from Epsom to Ashtead, 1802 (203/17/1), (Surrey County Record Office) Wyburd Survey, 1802 [reproduced in A History of Ashtead Park (1995)]

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1866?9, published 1871 2nd edition revised 1894, published 1897 3rd edition published 1915 1932 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1866

Archival items Ashtead Park Accounts (particularly 1704?10) (G1/53/4ff), (Surrey History Centre) Sale particulars, 1880 (Guildhall Library)

Description written: March 1999 Amended: June 2003 Register Inspector: BJL Edited: June 2002

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.