

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ENGLEFIELD HOUSE

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

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Name:	ENGLEFIELD HOUSE
District:	West Berkshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Bradfield
District:	West Berkshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Englefield
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.440516 Longitude: -1.1048721 National Grid Reference: SU 62312 71660 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000583 Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

Details

A country house surrounded by C19 and C20 formal and woodland gardens within an C18 and C19 landscape park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Englefield family, which was resident in Englefield from the C9, owned the manor of Englefield from the C12 until the estate was seized by Queen Elizabeth c 1560. The estate and manor house then passed through various hands, always by inheritance and not by purchase. In 1597 Lord Norris became tenant of the house and part of the estate and seems to have incorporated the old house within a new one erected c 1600. One Dudley Carleton reported in 1600 that Sir Edward Norris was making a park about his house, and in 1601 Sir Edward is quoted as saying that 'If you help towards Englefield garden either in flowers or invention you shall be welcome thither' (Inspector's Report 1990).

John Paulet, fifth Marquess of Winchester acquired the estate in 1635, it remaining in the Paulet family until passed by marriage to the Benyon family in the late C18. In the early 1760s (estate map, 1762) a formal layout existed, including a long main axis connecting the house with what is now the north end of Cranemoor Lake which was divided by formal canals surrounding several islands. This area seems to have been landscaped shortly afterwards, as a painting of 1777 by Nathaniel Dance (Harris 1979) shows Paulet Wrighte standing in front of the house set in landscaped parkland. Paulet Wrighte (d 1779) employed the designer Richard Woods, who in 1781 was paid by Wrighte's executors 10 gns for a survey, but seemingly no further work was carried out by Woods, Wrighte instead employing a surveyor, Clement Read, who was paid £150, c 1781 (again by Wrighte's executors), probably for improvements to the landscape park (Garden Hist 1987). The house was altered in the 1820s, and again in the 1850s-60s, when the formal garden terraces were also added, possibly by the architect Richard Armstrong during his work on the house. A series of maps (held at the Berkshire Record Office) and pictures shows the development of the landscape through the C18 and C19. In 1935 a woodland and heath garden was laid out to the north of the terraces by R Wallace of Tunbridge Wells. Lanning Roper gave advice on modifying the plantings in the 1960s (Inspector's Report 1990). The estate remains (1998) in private ownership.

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DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Englefield Park lies 9km west of the centre of Reading, with the estate village of Englefield adjacent to the north-east. The 150ha site is bounded partly by an estate wall, along the south and east boundaries, with the A340 Pangbourne to Theale road adjacent to the east, and the Theale to Bradfield lane adjacent to the south and south-west. The estate is bounded to the north by agricultural land, that area to the north-east through which The Street runs being formerly ornamented agricultural land (OS 1882). The park straddles a ridge running south-west to north-east, with the summit running through the Old Deer Park which enjoys extensive panoramic views at various points. The house stands on the slope down to the south-east, below which the land flattens out towards Cranemoor Lake and the surrounding park. The setting is largely rural, with the River Kennet and its valley to the south, and various industrial buildings associated with Theale visible to the south.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the park lies 1km south-east of the house, set back off the A340 road, flanked by two stone lodges joined by a connecting screen and round-arched gateway dated 1862, the whole being in Jacobean style (Richard Armstrong, listed grade II). The drive runs west through the park, curving north-west, lined in parts by a C19 iron park fence in criss-cross pattern. The drive continues north-west, bounded to the north by open lawn, overlooking Cranemoor Lake and the park to the south, and the house to the west. The church (C13, G G Scott 1857, 1868, listed grade I), with its prominent spire, stands towards the north end of the drive, the northern half of which was flanked by village houses in the C18 (Rocque, 1761), these having gone by the 1870s (OS). Having passed the church to the north, the drive turns south-west, 100m north-east of the house, approaching in line with the north-east front. The drive enters a square, tarmacked forecourt enclosed by stone walls, the entrance being flanked by stone gate piers and iron gates, arriving at a porte-cochère on the north-east front (the whole listed grade II* as part of the house). A spur off the drive running parallel to the forecourt gives access to the service yard to the rear of the house on the north-west side, entering the service yard via an archway in a rear wing. A further parallel spur to the north gives access to the car park to the north-west of the house, this spur being joined 100m north of the house by a former drive from the west. Now a track, this drive originates at Bradfield Lodge and gateway (C19, brick, in similar style to the main entrance lodges), 700m west of the house. The track runs along the top of the ridge, through the Old Deer Park, with views to the north-west.

The entrance to a further former drive, which ran up to the south-east front of the house, lies 700m south of the house, flanked by two stone gate piers set in the brick boundary wall. This former drive, present in the 1820s (estate map, 1829) and gone by the 1870s (OS), was probably removed during the construction of the formal garden elements. It ran north across the park to the house along an avenue, traces of which remain. Another drive still enters at this southern gateway, running north close to the west bank of Cranemoor Lake to join the south end of The Street. This drive was formerly flanked by several buildings, when it seems to have formed the southern extension of the main village street (Rocque, 1761).

Up until the C19 the house was approached directly via the north-west front, off a public road which ran along the slope of the ridge and was used as a winter course of the old Bath Road (Rocque, 1761). This appears to have been the mid C18 main entrance to the house, until the park was landscaped.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Englefield House (C16, C19, listed grade II*) lies towards the centre of the park, situated on the south-east-facing slope of the ridge which crosses the park. The three-storey, H-plan house is built in Jacobean style of ashlar, with brick wings to the rear (north-west), and work by the architect Richard Armstrong from the mid C19. It overlooks the c 1850s formal garden terraces to the south-west and south-east, with beyond these long views across the park, particularly to the south-west over the River Kennet. The stone stables stand 200m east of the house, set back off the main drive from which they are reached by a spur running along the churchyard boundary.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie to the west and south of the house, with substantial formal terraces (1850s, probably Richard Armstrong) merging into a 1930s and later woodland garden lying on the hillside to the north. The garden is entered from the west, garden front of the house, the door opening directly onto the main terrace, aligned west to east on the garden front, and largely laid to lawn with C20 shrub beds and specimen trees. The 180m long terrace continues past the south front, with a spinal gravel path extending the whole length of the terrace, separated from the park below by a stone

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retaining wall. At the east end of the main terrace, two gateways with low, white-painted wooden gates lead out into the park, the gateways flanking a large stone seat placed against the stone boundary wall, overlooking the park to the south and the forecourt to the north. A lower terrace lies below the main terrace where it passes the south front, reached from the top path by two sets of stone steps at either end of the lower terrace. This lower terrace, also raised above the park, is enclosed by stone balustrading, with large bastions at the outer corners (1850s, the whole listed grade II) linked by a broad gravel path along the centre.

At the west end of the main terrace, c 130m west of the house, a set of broad stone steps leads up a grass slope to a cross terrace, partly laid to gravel. This terrace is also bounded by stone balustrading, and carries a further stone seat aligned with that at the east end of the main terrace.

West of the house the north boundary of the main terrace is formed by a tall, stone retaining wall surmounted by balustrading, at the foot of which lies a herbaceous border. A central, projecting balustraded bastion stands 90m from the house; at the foot of this lies a projecting raised stone pool, flanked by two sets of stone steps leading up from the main terrace to a parallel gravel walk running along the top of the retaining wall. From here a central set of short, stone steps leads north up a grass bank to a broad, open grass terrace, bounded to the north by two lengths of curved balustrading set into the hillside, flanking a central set of steps leading up to the woodland garden. This level area was formerly the site of a large, rectangular, C19 glasshouse (now gone). An informal grass path leads straight up the hillside from this upper flight of steps, the path being flanked by mature woodland with informal curving paths and plantings of flowering shrubs and trees. This area encompasses the work carried out by R Wallace and Co in 1935. An informal pond (removed late C20) formerly lay at the south corner, probably a survivor of a chain which lay in this area in the mid C18 (estate map, 1762). The woodland garden has been the site of a pleasure ground of sorts since at least the mid C18, when a grove lay adjacent to the east of this area, with paths radiating from a central point (Rocque, 1761).

The site of the terraces appears to have been part of the landscape park in the later C18, probably being drawn into the present formal arrangement in the 1850s, when the former glasshouse was built, and the lawn on the main terrace below the glasshouse was divided into two formal rectangular areas surrounded by paths (now gone).

PARK The park surrounds the house and gardens, being divided into two, with the Old Deer Park to the north-west, in use as such since c 1600, and the more recently laid out area of landscape park to the south-east. The Old Deer Park, largely composed of woodland with open areas of pasture still containing deer, straddles the ridge, traversed by several tracks and the remains of former drives, with extensive views from the east side of Beech Hill, east towards the hill which hides Reading. The landscape park to the south-east runs down the hillside from the Old Deer Park and the house, levelling out as it reaches the lake and beyond. Still stocked with deer, it is laid to pasture, and is dominated by Cranemoor Lake which bisects it north to south, lying c 500m from the house. The lake contains several islands, and is bisected by a bund running west/east (late C20), such that the southern half is now (1998) largely dry. The lake, then reached from the house by a formal avenue, existed in the mid C18 (Rocque, 1761; estate map, 1762), when it took the form of formal canals separating several islands. The lake was subsequently enlarged to the north, the canals being removed and the islands reformed, and the surrounding area was landscaped, probably in the 1770s for Paulet Wrighte. (Garden Hist 1987).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies 250m east of the house, enclosed by brick walls. It is divided into several sections, partly filled with a nursery and associated modern glasshouses.

REFERENCES

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Maps Rocque, Map of Berkshire, 1761 A plan of all the lands belonging to Powlet Wrighte in his manor and parish of Englefield, 1762 (Berkshire Record Office) T Pride, A topographical map of the Town of Reading and the County adjacent to an extent of 10 miles, 1790 The Parish of Englefield, 1829, (Berkshire Record Office) The Englefield estate of R Benyon de Beauvoir, 1844, (Berkshire Record Office)

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1877-8, published 1882 2nd edition published 1913 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1911

Description written: May 1998 Amended: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 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.