

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

EMBLEY PARK

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

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Name:	EMBLEY PARK
County:	Hampshire
District:	Test Valley (District Authority)
Parish:	Wellow
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.984835 Longitude: -1.5399406 National Grid Reference: SU 32390 20704 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000215 Date first listed: 31-May-1984

Details

A C19 and early C20 informal woodland and shrub garden, of late C18 origin, surrounding the home in the C19 of Florence Nightingale, with additional mid C19 and early C20 formal terraces. House and garden are set within a park, also of late C18 origin, which was extensively planted as parkland and with woodland during the C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Embley belonged to the abbey of Romsey in the C10, passing into Norman hands in 1087. John Shottere was recorded as owner in 1431 but by 1500 it had passed to the Kirby family in whose hands it remained until passing by marriage to the Ashley family in the early C17. During the C18, Embley passed by marriage and in divided ownership to the Wyndham family and to John Thorpe until the two parts were reunited in 1783 under the ownership of Sir William Heathcote of Hursley Park, Winchester (VCH 1908). He and his son Thomas enlarged the estate, added to the house, and laid out drives and gardens (Chapman 1995). Following Thomas's death in 1825, the estate passed to William Heathcote who sold Embley to William Edward Nightingale, the father of Florence Nightingale. The family made extensive alterations and enlargements to the house in 1837 and laid out a formal terrace to the south. Embley remained with the Nightingales until the death of William's nephew in 1894 after which it was sold, in 1895 to Mr Archibald Coats, in 1898 to Major Spencer Chichester, and in 1921 to John Joseph Crossfield, the last two owners further developing both the formal and the woodland gardens. After the Second World War the estate was divided and sold, a school being established in the house and surrounding grounds; in the late 1940s this was replaced by the present Embley Park School. Subsequent division and sale in the late C20 has enabled the school, which is a registered charity, to purchase the lease on the house, gardens, and a part of the adjacent park, and the Wellow Golf Club to build the present course which lies both within and to the south-west of the park. The remainder of Embley is now (1998) in the hands of more than a dozen private owners.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Embley Park is situated on the south-east side of the A27, Romsey to Salisbury road, some 2km east of Romsey. The c 126ha registered site, comprising 8ha of formal and woodland gardens and 118ha of golf course, open agricultural and school land, and woodland, lies on gently undulating ground which

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rises from the south-west to the north-east. Roads or lanes, fringed by internal woodland or tree belts, bound the site to the north-west (Embley Lane), the north-east (A27), the east (Gardeners Lane), and the south (Ryedown Lane), beyond which is a landscape of wooded, largely agricultural land. To the west, agricultural fencing encloses the site from the adjacent golf course. **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The site is approached from the A27 to the east, a drive entering through C20 wrought-iron gates and gate piers (listed grade II), flanked by a pair of early C19 lodges of yellow brick (listed grade II). The drive follows a 600m course south-westwards and then westwards down a long slope flanked on the south side by mown lawns, before turning south to arrive on the forecourt at the north, entrance front of the House. By the late C19 (OS 1866-7), the parkland and woodland were threaded by an extensive and complex network of drives and walks of which only short sections of track survive. Milne's map of 1791 shows the north, entrance front of the House served by a drive entering roughly at the site of the present lodges and also by a short spur from Embley Lane by the Home Farm, 300m to the north-west. By 1810, the OS Old Series map records three main drives to the north front: two entering from Embley Lane on the northern boundary and a further one entering in the south-east corner, at the junction of Ryedown Lane and Gardeners Lane which then ran northwards through the wood (east of Ice House Pond) to join the east drive east of the House. Beyond the park, these three drives continued through the wider estate, the two northern ones running northwards to Shootash Common and the southern one southwards through Embley Wood, crossing Ryedown Lane on a bridge known as the Sounding Arch which was demolished in the mid C20 (D King, School Bursar pers comm, 1998).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Embley House (listed grade II; formerly listed as Embley Park School) stands to the north-west of the park centre, on level ground and with views south-westwards towards the wooded ridges of the New Forest. Built of red brick with stone dressings and with a plain tiled roof, it has a core dating from the C16 and was remodelled in the C18. William Edward Nightingale's alterations and additions from 1837 to 1840 included the present three-storey west and east wings, the gables to the north side of the three-storey central block, and the bays and gables to the garden front. He also built a kitchen range east of the House. The north front gained a single-storey extension topped with a balustrade in the mid C20 and the present school has made further additions and alterations since the late 1940s.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The south, garden front of the main house opens onto a rectangular, 100m long terrace, retained by a wall of red brick with a stone coping. The west wall extends northwards to form a further 12m deep terrace on the west front. The main terrace is laid to lawns, broad gravelled walks, a central group of mature copper beech and cedar and, at the south end of the central axis, a pair of wrought-iron gates hung on stone piers. The terrace was constructed in two stages: the northern third (nearest the House) was laid out by William Edward Nightingale in the early 1840s, following his alterations to the House (Chapman 1995) and although it is not shown on his estate plan of c 1840, it is illustrated in an undated sketch of Embley from the south-east by Florence's sister, Parthenope (HRO). A further sketch also illustrates the gates. The extension of the terrace to its present length, over an enclosed garden area planted informally with trees, occurred between 1911 (OS) and 1920 (Sale plan), the gates also, apparently, moved then to their present position.

From the terrace, an east to west axial gravelled walk extends for 430m eastwards through the informal woodland gardens which lie to the east and south-east of the House and which were established by the early C19 (Estate map, c 1840). Immediately east of the terrace, the walk passes south of the kitchen garden and beneath mature cedars. On its south side and set within lawn framed by mature mixed trees is a former rose garden, its present plan shown on the OS map of 1866-7 and the beds now (1998) planted largely with heaths and conifers. The central bed formerly contained a fountain-head of rustic stonework, the base of which survived until at least 1981 (contemporary photographs, private collection). On the north side of the walk, immediately east of the kitchen garden wall, is a c 30m x 5m, late C20 pond with informally planted margins and adjacent shrubberies. East of the pond, an open lawn extends some 100m up a gentle slope, its margins framed by azaleas and other exotic shrubs and trees, the shrubbery being developed in the early C20 from a more extensive lawn shown in the 1860s (OS). East of the lawn, the garden is laid out with a series of grass and gravelled paths winding through grassy glades and exotic shrubberies planted beneath a light canopy of native and exotic trees. A stream garden and a rockery dell of natural stone, laid out in the early C20 (Chapman 1995), survive in a now (1998) overgrown condition. The eastern end of the axial walk, some 430m from the

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terrace, is terminated by Cromwell's seat (listed grade II), a semicircular solid brick seat with a stone top and stone coping to its back; this was reputedly used by Florence Nightingale.

PARK South and south-west of the House, the park is open in character and laid out for golf in a combination of a small school course and a public course, the latter planted with trees in the mid 1990s and containing a lake. This, now completely tree-fringed and in use as a fishing lake, was laid out between 1791 (Milne's map) and the first decade of the C19 (OS 1810). To the immediate north-east and north of the House, the park is also open in character and laid out as school playing fields, rough grassland, and fields of vines. Beyond these, as far as the site boundary on Embley Lane and the A27, the land is occupied by nursery and poultry production set within belts of woodland. The former Embley Home Farm farmhouse, now (1998) two cottages known as Embley Coign and Embley Thatch (both listed grade II), has additional buildings to the south in use as industrial units.

A small enclosed park is shown established to the south-west of the House by 1791 (Milne), which by 1826 (Greenwood) had been extended in that direction to encompass the lake and also north and north-east to the present boundaries on Embley Lane and the A27. The 1st edition OS map surveyed 1866-7 shows both these areas of park, plus the present open fields to the south-east, extensively planted as parkland with tree clumps, belts, and individuals. Much of this planting survived until the mid C20 (OS 1941) but is now (1998) completely gone or has been absorbed into present woodland belts.

South-east of the House the site is largely woodland, established progressively from the early to mid C19 and now containing a mixture of deciduous and coniferous plantations including coppice. The eastern boundary strip is occupied by private properties with gardens, largely dating from the mid C20, while some 580m east-south-east of the House is Ice House Pond with, on its west side, the remnants of the mound of a former icehouse. In the south-east corner of the site, 1km from the House on Ryedown Lane and now incorporated into Grotto Cottage (listed grade II), are the walls of a flint grotto, described in the Bill of Sale in 1825 as 'finished with stones and shells and having in front a pyramidal fountain and an American Garden'.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies to the immediate east of the House and comprises two adjacent rectangular, connecting enclosures. The southernmost, now (1998) containing a sports hall, is surrounded by high red-brick walls with an entrance on the west side framed by brick piers with ball caps. The plan of this enclosure is shown on the estate plan of c 1840 although the brickwork suggests an earlier origin. The northern enclosure, of which sections of the east and north walls survive, had acquired its present form by 1909 and is now also occupied by school buildings.

REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Hampshire IV, (1911), pp 535-6 Country Life, 78 (6 July 1935), pp 5-7 N Pevsner and D Lloyd, The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (1967), p 205 D Chapman, The History of Embley, (Embley Park School 1995)

Maps Thomas Milne, Hampshire or the County of Southampton, 1" to 1 mile, 1791 C and J Greenwood, A Map of the County of Southampton, 1" to 1 mile, 1826 William Edward Nightingale, Estate map, c 1840 (Hampshire Record Office) Embley Park Estate (map with Sale catalogue), July 1920 (Hampshire Record Office)

OS Old Series, 1" to 1 mile, published 1810 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1866-7 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1909 OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1909 1941 edition

Illustrations Bonham Carter Collection of sketches and other illustrations of Embley Park in the C19 (94/M72), (Hampshire Record Office)

Archival items Sale catalogue for Embley Park, 1825 (58M71/E/B82), (Hampshire Record Office)

Description written: July 1998 Amended: July 2001 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: January 2004

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.