

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

MILTON'S COTTAGE

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

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Name:	MILTON'S COTTAGE
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Chalfont St. Giles
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.629656 Longitude: -0.57294104 National Grid Reference: SU 98872 93280 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000604 Date first listed: 30-Aug-1987

Details

The late C19 or early C20 terraced garden of a timber-framed cottage, with adjacent field, the house of John Milton in 1665, where he completed *Paradise Lost* and may have begun *Paradise Regained*.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the spring of 1665 John Milton (1608-74) moved from Bunhill Fields in London to a cottage at Chalfont St Giles for six months, while the Plague was at its height in London. His friend and pupil Thomas Ellwood had taken the cottage for Milton, who by this time was blind, as a refuge from the Plague. Milton had begun to write his epic poem *Paradise Lost* in 1642, but had laid it aside to pursue the Parliamentary cause during the Civil War and Protectorate, becoming Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell. During his six months at Chalfont St Giles, living in the late C16 cottage which later came to be known as Milton's Cottage, he completed *Paradise Lost* and may have begun *Paradise Regained*. Milton returned to London once the worst of the Plague had died down.

In 1887 the cottage was bought and dedicated to the memory of John Milton. The garden may have been remodelled at this time. The Cottage remains in the hands of the Milton's Cottage Trust and is now (2000) a museum to John Milton.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Milton's Cottage stands south-west of the centre of the Chiltern village of Chalfont St Giles, on the south side of Dean Way. The c 1.5ha site is bounded to the north by Dean Way, to the south and east by fields, to the north-east by the adjoining Hampden Cottage and its garden, and to the west by C20 houses and their gardens. The ground slopes gently up to the south. The setting is that of a Chiltern village with C20 development close by.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The garden is entered off Dean Way to the north via a pedestrian gate, several metres west of the Cottage. A short path leads up to the front door on the west front of the Cottage.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Milton's Cottage (late C16/early C17, restored C18, listed grade I) occupies the north-east corner of the site and stands adjacent to Dean Way. It is a small, two-storey timber-framed cottage with red-brick infill and a tile roof. A two-storey C18 wing extends south at right angles and outbuildings extend south from the main building. This is the only surviving house in which Milton lived.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The site is divided into the garden immediately surrounding the cottage, and the paddock to the west and south.

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The garden slopes up to the south from the garden gate on the north boundary in a series of low terraced compartments, with the Cottage standing occupying the eastern half of the lowest, north compartment. The terraces dividing the garden are emphasized by trellis and pergola. The southernmost compartment is laid mainly to soft fruit and vegetables on sloping ground. The central area, separating the southernmost compartment from the Cottage, is laid mainly to lawn. The north compartment, to the west of the Cottage, is divided formally between areas of lawn and herbaceous border. A quickset hedge runs along along the west side of garden, with C19 railings on the outer side, dividing the garden from the adjacent paddock. The date of the original garden is uncertain but the present form may date from the late C19. The garden has been energetically restored since 1975 and most flowers and shrubs date from this period.

REFERENCES

P W Phipps, Chalfont St Giles, past and present (1893), pp 45-9 H Allingham, Cottages in England (1923) Victoria History of the County of Buckinghamshire III, (1925), p 185 C Birch, Chalfont St Giles in Camera (1985), pp 51-2 John Milton's Cottage, guidebook, (Milton's Cottage Trust, nd) N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire (1994 edn), p 217

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1883 2nd edition published 1900 3rd edition published 1926 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881-2 2nd edition published 1898

Description written: October 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: January 2005

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.