

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HATFIELD HOUSE

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

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Name:	HATFIELD HOUSE
County:	Hertfordshire
District:	Welwyn Hatfield (District Authority)
Parish:	Hatfield
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.754890 Longitude: -0.20467064 National Grid Reference: TL 24018 07769 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: I List Entry Number: 1000343 Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

An early C17 country mansion surrounded by extensive and complex gardens and park, created from the medieval parks of Hatfield. Robert Cecil's formal, early C17 gardens were created with input from designers including Thomas Chaundler and Salomon de Caus, and planted by John Tradescant the elder, at that time the head gardener. The gardens were landscaped in the C18, but then remodelled and extended in the C19 and C20.

NOTE This entry is a summary. Because of the complexity of this site, the standard Register entry format would convey neither an adequate description nor a satisfactory account of the development of the landscape. The user is advised to consult the references given below for more detailed accounts. Many Listed Buildings exist within the site, not all of which have been here referred to. Descriptions of these are to be found in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest produced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The bishops of Ely owned a house and park at Hatfield from at least the C13 (VCH). Hatfield Palace was built c 1480-97 by Cardinal John Morton, Bishop of Ely and minister of Henry VII, with formal garden compartments along the south side (ibid). Henry VIII acquired the estate during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and it was here that Queen Elizabeth was brought news of her accession in 1558. Her first three Councils were held in the hall of the Palace. The estate was exchanged in 1607 by James I for Robert Cecil's Theobalds Palace (Herts). Cecil (1563-1612, cr first Earl of Salisbury 1605) pulled down three sides of the Palace, leaving the hall, and built a new house close by to the south-east, flanked by gardens to the west and east. The eastern gardens were overlooked by the family's private apartments, and were the main formal gardens, being walled and terraced in an Italianate form which was influential on other contemporary gardens. A vineyard was constructed within a walled enclosure in the park, at some distance from the house.

Cecil's gardener from Theobalds, Mountain Jennings, collaborated with Robert Bell, a London merchant and garden expert, in drawing up garden plans. One 'Bartholomew the gardener' agreed to act as a consultant initially, with Jennings and Bell; various other advisers were used during the course of construction. Thomas Chaundler laid out the splendid East Garden c 1610-11, with waterworks by a Dutchman, Simon Sturtevant. By late 1611 Chaundler had been replaced by Salomon de Caus

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who worked on the gardens until mid 1612. John Tradescant the elder became gardener at Hatfield at this time, supervising the planting of the gardens, the plants including rare specimens from abroad, some collected by Tradescant himself (Strong 1979). Lord Salisbury died deeply in debt in 1612, just before the house was finished.

The estate remained in the possession of the Cecils, the park being extended to the environs of Hatfield House in the late C18 by Emily, the first Marchioness, and the park and gardens landscaped (gardens guide 1989). Dury and Andrews' map shows the estate c 1766 with formal gardens around the House, and the vineyard enclosing formal features; Watts' engraving (1779) shows the park sweeping up to the walls of the House on the south and east sides. In the mid C19 James, the second Marquess, recreated terraces around the House, although these were built higher and wider than the C17 originals. He also laid out new parterres and a maze on the remains of the C17 work to the west and east of the House. In the late C20 Marjorie, the sixth Marchioness remade the gardens, creating several new features, including works in the East Gardens and two sunken parterres in the courtyard on the south front. The estate remains (1999) in private ownership.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Hatfield Park lies c 30km north of the centre of London, adjacent to the east side of the village of Hatfield, and incorporates several former medieval hunting parks. The c 7.5 sq km site is defined to the west largely by the former Great North Road, now (1999) the A1000, apart from a section north-west of the House which is bounded by the village. The site is bounded to the north by the A414, to the east by agricultural land and woodland, and to the south-east by a lane linking the Great North Road with the settlement of Lower Woodside. The ground is gently undulating, with a plateau towards the west boundary, on which stand the House and Old Palace. The setting is rural to the east, with the new town of Hatfield adjacent to the west, and several villages to the south.

Hatfield House (1607-12, listed grade I) stands at the west edge of the park on a level plateau, approached via several drives and avenues. The present main approach (late C19) enters 500m north-west of the House, off the Great North Road, directly from the west side of Hatfield village, opposite the railway station. The broad gateway (late C19, listed grade II), set back off the road and flanked by low, curved brick walls, comprises two carriage entrances, each flanked by carved stone piers surmounted by stone lions and separated by an iron screen in similar style to the gates. In front of the screen stands a tall stone plinth supporting a seated statue of the third Marquess of Salisbury (G Frampton 1906, listed grade II), three times Prime Minister of Great Britain, who erected the gateway in order to provide access to the newly built station. From here the drive is carried 120m east on an embankment to a brick bridge which takes it high across the main village street, Park Street, to the entrance to the park. The drive continues 250m east to join the north drive at a point 300m north of the House. The north drive was, before the west entrance was built in the late C19, one of the principal approaches. The north drive, aligned on the north front of the House, enters the park from the Great North Road 1.2km north of the House, via a brick gatehouse. It extends south flanked initially by woodland, opening out into the park c 500m north of the House, from here continuing southwards flanked by a double avenue. Some 60m north of the House the drive enters the square, gravelled forecourt between terracotta ornamental posts (mid/late C19, listed grade II).

The forecourt (walls and gates 1845 and late C19, by the second and third Marquesses of Salisbury, listed grade II) is enclosed on three sides by ornamental red-brick and terracotta walls, with two further gateways, in similar style to the central gateway, at the west and east ends of the north wall. The fourth, south side is taken up by the north front of the House, at the centre of which a broad stone staircase (C19) leads up to the central front door. Beyond the west and east ends of the north front of the House, set into the south ends of the west and east forecourt walls respectively, stand two pairs of tall, brick and stone, polygonal gate piers with iron gates (listed as part of the forecourt), giving access to the West and East Gardens beyond.

The former south approach (the main C17 approach), is now (1999) disused. The course of the former south drive is aligned on the centre of the south front. The remaining southern section enters off the Great North Road at a lodge, 2km south of the House. The drive extends north through the wooded Millward's Park, crossing, 850m south of the House, a further avenue giving access from the Great North Road to the north-west and the Pepper Pot Lodges (C17, listed grade II) on Woodside Lane to the south-east. This avenue marks the former course of the Great North Road, before it was moved to the south-west side of Millward's Park in the C19. The south drive ends at the cross drive, its former course northwards being marked by a grass

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ride flanked by a broad avenue of lime trees. The ride terminates 60m south of the House at a further forecourt (pavilions C17, restored c 1845; gates and walls c 1845, listed grade II) enclosed by low brick and terracotta walls. The entrance at the centre of the south side is marked by an iron screen and gates flanked by four brick and stone piers. Single-storey brick and stone pavilions are set into the west and east walls. Within the forecourt a broad gravel drive, flanked by late C20 sunken parterres, leads to the carriage sweep on the south front, adjacent to a stone loggia in which is set the central south entrance. Several other drives also traverse the park.

A series of formal gardens, the West Gardens, extends from the west front, overlooked by the C19 west terrace. The Privy Garden, lying below the terrace and bounded by a lime walk, contains the West Parterre. To the west of the Privy Garden lies the lower Scented Garden, occupying the site of a former kitchen garden, with a raised walk running along the west side. The Wilderness Garden extends 350m south from these formal gardens, alongside the south avenue ride, incorporating the remains of C19 wooded pleasure grounds.

At the north-west corner of the West Gardens, 90m north-west of the House, stands the remains of the Old Palace (1480-97), overlooking to the east a garden made amongst the foundations of the three wings which were demolished in the early C17. A forecourt lies on the west side of the Old Palace, bounded to the north by the present stable yard and to the west by the churchyard of Hatfield parish church. A brick gatehouse at the north-west corner of the forecourt provides direct access from the village via Fore Street.

The East Gardens, a series of terraced gardens, lead down a slope from the east front, overlooked by the C19 east terrace. They occupy the site of the main area of early C17 gardens laid out for the first Earl of Salisbury, these having been largely rebuilt in the 1840s and restored in the late C20. A double flight of steps leads down from the east terrace to the east parterre, flanked to the north by a late C20 kitchen garden and to the south by an orchard and the Mount Garden. From the East Parterre a flight of steps leads down to the Maze Garden (maze 1840s, restored mid(late C20), and below this the Pool Garden, containing a swimming pool set in lawn and enclosed by clipped yew hedges. Beyond this to the east lies the New Pond and Wild Garden, an informal area of lawn and trees surrounding the irregularly shaped pond, the pond having been laid out during the initial garden works of the early C17.

Hatfield Park, surrounding the House to the south, east and north, is composed of several earlier parks, drawn together over successive centuries, including Middle Park and Innings Park. The central area surrounding the House and gardens is laid to pasture, with scattered trees, and contains several areas of woodland including Coombe Wood and Conduit Wood. The northern section, Home Park, is largely wooded, bounded to the north by the Hertford Road and bisected from west to east by the broadly curving Broadwater, made from the widened course of the River Lea. The Broadwater is straddled by the early C17 Vineyard, standing 1.2km north-east of the House within the Home Park Woodland. The rectangular Vineyard is surrounded by 4m high red-brick walls (early C17, listed grade II). Brick pavilions terminate the ends of the south wall in the southern half, with a Tudor-style cottage at the centre (these three listed with the walls), overlooking a series of earth terraces running down to the riverside. This section was laid out as a vineyard in the late C19 (OS 1879). The north half, formerly laid out as a kitchen garden (OS 1879), is bisected from west to east by a narrow arm of the river. It contains at the centre of the north side a late C18 Gothick-style pavilion, set into an angled recess at the centre of the wall.

The Lodge House (early C17, listed grade II), formerly the residence of the Ranger of Hatfield Park, stands towards the west side of Home Park, c 800m north-east of the House. The brick and timber-framed house stands within its own enclosure, surrounded by a garden wall with gate piers set into the south side (wall and piers early C18, listed grade II).

Millward's Park, the third (southern) main section of the park, lies south-west of the 2.2km long avenue linking Woodside Lane with the Great North Road. It is largely wooded, and crossed by woodland rides and the south drive, with to the north-west an open area of agricultural land enclosed on the west boundary with the Great North Road by a belt of trees.

The C19 kitchen gardens known as the New Gardens lie c 500m south-west of the House, surrounded by brick walls, with two main service compartments containing glasshouses adjacent to the north. The New Gardens, built to augment the kitchen gardens in the Vineyard in Home Park, have been superseded in the late C20 by a kitchen garden on the north side of the East Gardens, lying adjacent to the east side of the north forecourt.

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REFERENCES

Note: There is a wealth of material about this site. The key references are cited below.

W Watts, The Seats of the nobility and gentry in a collection of the most interesting and picturesque views (1779), pl 53 Country Life, 1 (8 May 1897), pp 491-3; (15 May 1897), pp 519-22; 22 (14 December 1907), pp 872-83; 61 (12 March 1927), pp 390(7; (19 March 1927), pp 426-34; 175 (15 March 1984), pp 662-4; (22 March 1984), pp 770-2 Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire 3, (1912), pp 91-100 R Strong, The Renaissance Garden in England (1979), pp 103-9 Hatfield House, guidebook (1984) The Gardens at Hatfield House, guidebook, (1989) M Batey and D Lambert, The English Garden Tour (1990), pp 40-6 Maps Hatfield estate map, 1607 (private collection) Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766 Tithe map for Hatfield parish, 1838 (Hertfordshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1879 2nd edition published 1899 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898

Description written: June 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: October 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.