

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SQUERRYES COURT

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Name:	SQUERRYES COURT
County:	Kent
District:	Sevenoaks (District Authority)
Parish:	Westerham
County:	Surrey
District:	Tandridge (District Authority)
Parish:	Limpsfield
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.259960 Longitude: 0.064985098 National Grid Reference: TQ4418253225 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000223 Date first listed: 01-May-1986

Details

A late C18, C19, and C20 formal garden, laid out on the surviving structure of an early C18 garden with surviving late C17 features, surrounded by C18 and C19 pleasure grounds and set within an C18 park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Squerryes was a lesser manor of the manor of Westerham, which was recorded in Domesday Book. It was occupied by a family called de Squerie in the C13 after which it had many owners, becoming Crown property during the reign of Henry VIII and passing through the hands of the Cawarden and Beresford families between the C15 and early C17. It was in the possession of Sir John Strood in 1635 and later was sold to the diarist Sir John Evelyn's son-in-law, William Leech, Evelyn visiting him at Squerryes in 1658. In 1680 it was purchased by Sir Nicholas Crisp who built the present house, his son selling it on in 1700 to Edward Villiers, Earl of Jersey, who was Lord Chamberlain and Queen Mary's Master of the Horse. He probably developed the extensive formal gardens shown on Badeslade's early C18 engraving (Harris 1719). The second Earl's son sold the property in 1731 to his friend John Warde, whose descendants still live at Squerryes. The house, gardens, and estate land remain (1997) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Squerryes Court is situated on the immediate south side of the A25, on the south-west edge of Westerham. The 69ha registered site, which comprises 9ha of formal and ornamental gardens and 60ha of parkland and woodland, lies on the north- and east-facing slopes of a greensand ridge, the land falling from high points on the south and south-west side of the site towards the narrow valley of the upper course of the River Darent which forms the boundary to the north-east and east. The northern boundary, enclosed by fences and lined with hedgerows or narrow

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fringes of trees, abuts the A25 and, at the east end of the site, the housing of Westerham. Some 2km northwards beyond the A25 and the parallel M25, the horizon is formed by the east to west wooded ridge of the North Downs. To the south-west, post and wire-fenced boundaries abut open farmland and, to the south and south-east (beyond the River Darent), the densely wooded rising slopes of the greensand ridge. The western third of the site is separated from the house and gardens by Goodley Stock Road, a minor lane which runs south from the A25 to the village of Crockham Hill.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is entered through timber gates beside a lodge on the east side of Goodley Stock Road, some 80m south of its junction with the A25. A gravelled drive curves gently eastwards and uphill to the forecourt on the principal, west-facing front of the house, from which it then descends south-westwards to exit onto the road, on the north side of Squerryes Home Farm. The present approach is shown established by 1801 (Mudge), the lodge being constructed between 1869 and 1909 (OS). An estate map of 1686 by Arthur Hewes shows the west front of the newly built house approached on its central axis, part of which, on the west side of Goodley Stock Road, is shown lined with a short length of a double avenue, probably remaining from the formal approach to the former house on the site (owner pers comm, 1997). The axial approach appears to have survived into the early C18 (Badeslade, in Harris 1719) but had gone by 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert) and the Goodley Stock Road diverted westwards to accommodate the present lake on the west front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Squerryes Court stands centrally within the registered site, on a platform cut into rising ground on the east side of Goodley Stock Road and with extensive views westwards over the lake and parkland to the North Downs. It is a compact, oblong house, of two storeys with red-brick elevations and a steep, hipped slate roof with pedimented gables and dormers. It was built by Sir Nicholas Crisp between 1680 and 1686 on the site of a former manor house. In the early C18, three pavilions were added on the north and south sides of the forecourt, between the west front and the lake, to provide kitchens, larders, and servants' quarters (Badeslade, in Harris 1719). These were removed before 1818 (CL 1968) but in 1852 Charles Warde built a three-storey extension onto the east end of the south front and added the present porch to the west front. During the extensive restoration works after government and military use in both the First and Second World Wars, the mid C19 additions were removed.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The principal, formal gardens lie to the east of the house and are enclosed from the park to the north, east, and south by a wide fringe of wooded pleasure grounds, threaded with a late C19 winding walk, the woodland established by 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert) and damaged in the storm of 1987. Further informal ornamental grounds lie on the west side of the house.

From the terraced west front forecourt, shown established by 1869 (survey date of OS 1st edition), a flight of stone steps leads down a broad, open grassed slope to a lake, its eastern shore flanked by clumps of limes. The trees, some of which were replaced after losses in the storm of 1987, date from both the late C18 and early C19 (ring counts) and are planted on the site of formal rows of limes shown on Badeslade's view (Harris 1719). The west shore of the lake, open to views from the park, is enclosed along its north and south shores by ornamental and native trees of mixed ages and species including (on the north side) a group of large, mid C19 cedars and other conifers (OS 1871-3; Hall 1995). The eastern half of the lake is constructed on the course of a former stream which, by Badeslade's view (Harris 1719), appears widened into a formal canal and in use as a fishpond. By 1735 (painting by John Wootton), the canal had been extended westwards to create a larger but still formal area of water; by 1869 (OS) this had been further enlarged to its present size and informal outline.

On the east, garden front, the house opens onto a gravelled walk and a rectangular level terrace which is enclosed on its north, east, and south sides by clipped yew hedges (planted 1990s) incorporating, at regular intervals, taller drums of late C19, clipped Irish yews. The terrace, which occupies the site of the early C18 bowling green (Badeslade, in Harris 1719), is bisected by a broad, C19 axial gravelled walk (shown on OS 1st edition) flanked by lawns set each side with a pair of square, box-edged parterres, based on designs shown on Badeslade's view and planted in 1989 (guide leaflet 1997). North and south of the parterres, long mixed borders, their positions established by 1869 (OS), run parallel to the enclosing yew hedges.

Eastwards, beyond the bowling-green terrace and a gravelled, north to south cross-walk, a level area of grass occupies the site of an oval water basin (cross-walk and basin both shown on Badeslade's view). East of the basin site, the ground rises in a broad grassed slope, framed with lime trees planted in a semicircular 'wine glass' form and bisected by the central axis which

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is lined with hornbeam hedging and terminates, some 130m from the house, at a wrought-iron screen and gate, erected in the mid 1990s. The structure of limes (intended for future pleaching) and hornbeam was planted in 1992 on the site of the similar C18 layout shown on Badeslade's view.

On the north and south sides of the hedges enclosing the bowling-green terrace, gravelled walks occupying the site of early C18 raised walks extend eastwards and intersect with the north to south cross-walk. South of the south walk a grass slope, on the site of a terrace shown on the estate map of 1686 and now dotted with a few trees, rises to meet a parallel raised walk, shown on both the 1686 estate map and Badeslade's view and now terminated some 100m east of the house by a sweet chestnut felled by the storm of 1987 and retained as a feature lying across the path. North of the north walk, a tall yew hedge with a wide mixed border at its foot extends c 30m northwards from the corner of the house to the late C19 dairy and octagonal game larder, which are built on the site of the Orangery garden shown on Badeslade's view. The present brick and tile-roofed Orangery, which is also shown in Badeslade's 1719 view and appears to be contemporary with the house (*ibid*), lies 15m north of the dairy and has an icehouse on its north side. From the east end of the Orangery, a linear Victorian rockery, replanted in 1996 (*ibid*) and enclosed along the north side by a rock wall topped by C20 topiary, extends c 50m towards the north-east edge of the pleasure grounds. From the south elevation of the house and beyond a small lawn, a southerly axis leads through a small garden with a central, box-edged roundel surrounded by gravel and enclosed by banked beds of mixed planting, shown established in this form by 1907 (OS) but replanted from the former rhododendron cover in the 1990s. Rising flights of stone steps flanked by rhododendron and yew hedging continue the axis 100m southwards up to the Cenotaph (listed grade II), a stone memorial urn on a pedestal erected in c 1759 (Hall 1995) to commemorate General Wolfe receiving the news of his army commission.

PARK The park, shown established to the extent of the present registered area by 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert), is divided by the north to south Goodley Stock Road. On the west side, it is laid to grazing and largely open in character, the scattered trees shown in 1869 largely gone by 1909 (OS) with the exception of two limes marking the line of an avenue shown on the estate map of 1686. From level ground parallel to the A25, slopes rise steeply southwards to a ridge crowned with several woods, the largest being Lodges Wood which was established by 1686 and replanted after storm damage in 1987. On the crest to the east is a small stone gazebo (listed grade II) with arched, open sides, built c 1735-40 to view racehorses on training gallops (guidebook 1986).

East of Goodley Stock Road, the parkland falls away from the house and gardens on their north, east, and south sides, reaching its greatest extent to the south-east. To the north and north-east, the parkland slopes are grazed and scattered with mature lime and chestnut, a line of mature and replanted (1990s) limes marking the route of a former carriage drive to the house from Park Lodge to the north-east (drive and lodge built between 1898 and 1909, OS). In the north-east corner of the park, running south-eastwards from Park Lodge, a series of former mill ponds, restored in the mid C20, are now (1997) used for trout fishing. To the immediate south and east of the gardens and of Squerryes Home Farm, much of the park is bare of trees and under arable cultivation. Some 45m east of the farm is an C18 circular dovecote with a conical roof (listed grade II). Further south-east, on the crest and south-east slopes, the park contains small areas of woods and large, loose clumps of trees interspersed with open grass, the location of the woods broadly indicated on Andrews, Dury and Herbert's map of 1769. On the south-east boundary, along the course of the River Darent, are two further linear ponds, also shown on the 1769 map.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies 500m west of Squerryes Home Farm, on the south-facing slope below Lodges Wood, on the west side of Goodley Stock Road. Shown on Andrews, Dury and Herbert's map of 1769, it is a 120m x 65m rectangle with red-brick walls and a small, square, brick and tile-roofed garden house built up from the walls in the south-east corner. The garden is now in equestrian use.

REFERENCES

J Harris, *The History of Kent* (1719) *Country Life*, 143 (13 June 1968), pp 1580-3; (20 June 1968), pp 1682-5; (27 June 1968), pp 1152-6; 153 (15 February 1973), p 386 J Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald* (1969), p 597 Squerryes Court, guidebook, (1986) Inspector's Report: Squerryes Court, (English Heritage 1988) [includes analysis of ring counts and field archaeology] E Hall, *The Garden of England, Kent* (1995), pp 25-7 Squerryes Court, guide leaflet, (1997)

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Maps Arthur Hewes, Map of the Squerryes estate, 1686 (private collection) J Andrews, A Dury and W Herbert, A Topographical Map of the County of Kent, 2" to 1 mile, 1769 C Greenwood, Map of the County of Kent from an actual survey made in the years 1819 and 1820, c 1" to 1 mile, 1821

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1869-70, published 1871-3 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1910 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1869-70 3rd edition published 1909

Illustrations T Badeslade, View of Squerryes Court (in Harris 1719) John Wootton, Painting of Squerryes Court entitled The Family Warde, 1735 (reproduced in Hall 1995)

Description written: September 1997 Amended: June 1999 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: November 2003

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.