

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SANDLING PARK

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Name:	SANDLING PARK
County:	Kent
District:	Folkestone and Hythe (District Authority)
Parish:	Saltwood
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.086756 Longitude: 1.0515077 National Grid Reference: TR 13805 36367 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000262 Date first listed: 01-May-1986

Details

A mid C19 to late C20 informal woodland garden with specialist rhododendron collection, and with early C20 formal features designed with advice from Henry Milner, set within a largely C19 park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Sandling Park was developed on the site of the ancient wood of Westenhanger, a property known as Great Sandling being shown on or adjacent to the present park by 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert). The park was owned in the late C18 by the Deedes family who built a house on the site of the present house in 1796. In 1897 it was sold to the Rt Hon Lawrence Hardy MP, who in that year invited the landscape designer Henry Milner (c 1845-1906, son and later partner of Edward Milner) to prepare a plan for the gardens. Sandling passed to Hardy's son, Major A E Hardy and then to his grandson, Captain A Hardy, the Hardy family being responsible for most of the present ornamental woodland gardens. The house, gardens, and park remain (1997) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sandling Park lies to the immediate south of junction 11 on the M20 and to the east of the A20 on the north-west outskirts of Saltwood. The 177ha registered site, comprising c 13ha of formal and ornamental gardens and c 164ha of parkland, farmland, and woodland, lies on the undulating, south-west-facing slope of a greensand ridge, the ground surrounding a central, north-west to south-east stream valley rising at the north end of the site towards a crest beyond the boundary and south-eastwards to the ridge of Black Hill. The site is bounded to the west and north-west by the main A20, the open rolling farmland beyond occupied, within c 200m of the park boundary, by major road junctions and the line of the London to Dover railway, the route of which passes through the north end of the park in a covered cutting. The route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link runs on the north side of the present track. To the south-west, the A261, with Folks Wood on its south side forms the boundary, the park abutting Pedlinge village to the south. Sandling Road runs along the northern half of the eastern boundary with Sandling station and further woodland beyond, while to the south-east, Slay Brook and the wooded lake surrounds in Brockhill Country Park separate Sandling from the built-up edge of Saltwood.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Sandling Park is approached on the north side from Ashford Road, the drive entering beside a single-storey lodge of yellow brick, shown established by 1872 (OS 1st edition survey date), and following a southerly course for 140m along the east side of the covered railway cutting before turning south-eastwards along the north-east wall of the late C18, red-brick stable block. Built by Joseph Bonomi (drawings, RIBA collection), the two-storey central block is extended at each end by a single-storey wing and an attached pavilion at right-angles. Beyond the stable block the drive curves south to arrive on the gravelled forecourt of the house.

A further surfaced drive, now (1997) used for internal access within the park, enters from Hythe Road on the southern boundary, beside Ashford Lodge (similar in design and appearance to the northern lodge), c 0.6km west of Pedlinge. It curves north-eastwards across the park within a central valley, crosses the neck of the lakes on a brick bridge and enters the north-west side of the forecourt through wrought-iron gates set within a balustrade wall. Greenwood's map surveyed in 1819-20 shows the house served by two drives from the south, running either side but parallel to the present route and with entrances at or near the present Ashford Lodge and also further east, from Pedlinge village. The course of the present drive from the south is established by 1872 (OS 1877).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The present house sits on a broad level platform overlooking the two stream valleys to the south-east and south-west below and enjoying extensive views south and east over the park towards the coast. It is T-shaped and of red brick and was built in 1949 by the architect E D Jefferiss Mathews, following the granting of a building licence after the war to rebuild on the site of a former house. This latter, a square, three-storey building with a low pitched roof behind a balustrade and with a mid C19 porte-cochère on the east side, was built by Joseph Bonomi (1739-1808) in 1796 and destroyed by a bomb in 1942, only a yard and outbuildings on the north side surviving. Bonomi's house replaced an earlier house on the site, the location of which is unclear. The present house is intended for demolition in October 1997, to be replaced by a new one, on the same site, to a design by the architect Quinlan Terry.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens lie to the immediate south-east and south-west of the house with extensive informal woodland gardens beyond them to the west, north-west, and south-west. To the south-east, the house looks out to the park over a formal 80m x 28m terrace, laid to lawn and a shrubbery bank and enclosed by a brick wall surmounted by a rendered balustrade wall. Built in association with the former house and shown established on the OS 1st edition map of 1877, the terrace extends as unwallled lawns around to the south-west front, with a small, square stone lily pond, added in 1906, as a central feature. Some 50m north-west of the terrace on the south-west front, and laid out against the south-west-facing wall of the kitchen garden, is the Rose Garden, which was probably part of Milner's work and which was laid out between 1898, when Milner's slightly modified plan was accepted (Hardy archive) and 1909 (OS). Enclosed by further walls at the north-west and south-east ends and along the south-west side by a massive, serpentine yew hedge, planted in 1899 (Hardy archive), the two compartments of the garden are laid to lawn and perimeter shrubbery. The south-east half contains two parallel rose borders with roses trained on chains and the north-west half a central, oval rose bed.

South-east of the Rose Garden a large expanse of lawns, from which the sea can be seen, extends some 80-90m south-west towards the woodland gardens and c 120m south-eastwards to the fenced boundary with the park. The lawns are dotted with islands of azalea and other acid-loving shrubs and with mature deciduous and coniferous species, including cedar, weeping beech, tulip tree, and Monterey pine, the conifers surviving from the significant number planted in 1846 with the assistance of Archdeacon Croft, rector of Saltwood and a noted gardener and friend of Sir Joseph Hooker (Hardy archive); these are shown on the OS 1st edition map surveyed in 1872. On the south-east side of the lawn, some 50m south-west of the terrace and aligned on its north-east/south-west axis, is a c 50m long walk lined with ten pairs of mature Irish yew trees, planted in the early C20. To the west of the formal gardens, within woodland shown as established between 1801 (Mudge) and 1819-20 (Greenwood), and on the lower, south-west-facing slopes beyond the lawn, which is shown as woodland (House Wood) by 1801, the grounds are laid out as a woodland garden threaded by numerous walks and paths, the mature trees including oaks probably of C18 origin (Inspector's Report), underplanted with a comprehensive, specialist collection of rhododendrons and azaleas, other acid-loving shrubs and trees, and a great variety of woodland plants and bulbs. Planting of the woodland garden with rhododendron was begun in 1845, plants again coming from some of Hooker's new introductions; the structure of the main paths is shown on

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the OS 1st edition map. The woodland canopy, much damaged in the storm of 1987, the walks and the rhododendron collection have been continuously developed and replanted by Major and Captain Hardy from c 1919 (CL 1954) until the present day (1997). North-west of the kitchen garden, woodland, comprehensively replanted after storm damage and underplanted with rhododendron, extends up the slopes of the hillock constructed in the mid C19 to cover the railway cutting.

PARK The park extends to the west, south, and south-east of the gardens, on the slopes rising on the north-west and south-east sides of the central stream valley. Further streams rising in Kiln Wood and on the south-west edge of House Wood converge to feed a pair of linear tree-fringed lakes running on a north-west to south-east axis; these were constructed in the early C20. Immediately beyond House Wood to the west and south-west, the slopes are largely open in character and laid to grass or a rotational arable crop. South-east of the house, the central valley and slopes rising to the park boundary are also laid to open grass; the extensive scatter of parkland trees and clumps shown on all OS editions from 1872 to 1939 is now (1997) gone.

Mudge's map of Kent shows no parkland at Sandling in 1801 but by 1819-20 (Greenwood), the whole length of the central valley and the slopes to the south-east had been laid out as a park, incorporating woodland, and by 1872 (OS 1877) this extended northwards to the present boundary. On the slopes north-east above the easternmost lake there is a loose group of pollarded oaks which may be survivors of the ancient wood of Westenhangar (Inspector's Report).

The extreme south-west corner of the park is occupied by Kiln Wood, planted, except for its south-east section flanking the drive which appears to be earlier, between 1819-20 (Greenwood) and 1872 (OS 1877). Its western section is now (1997) largely chestnut coppice while the south-east section contains mature oak standards. South-west of the eastern lake, the high, wooded ridge of Black Hill, largely replanted with hardwoods following devastation in the storm of 1987, rises above the central valley. Although the centre of its crest is shown as wooded in 1872 (OS), the continuation of the planting south-westwards along its ridge appears to be early C20. To the south-east of Black Hill is Chesterfield Wood, shown on Mudge's map of 1801 and also replanted with hardwoods after the 1987 storm.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies 100m to the north-west of the house. It is roughly square in form, c 130m x 140m, extended at the western corner and enclosed by red-brick walls with a two-storey gardener's house built against the exterior of the north corner. There is a range of glasshouses against the south-west-facing wall, the position of the largest one shown occupied by glass in 1872 (OS 1877). The garden is laid to fruit, vegetable, and cut-flower production with trained fruit on the south-east-facing wall and with a further fruit area on the west side of the west wall. The location of the garden, the style of construction, and matching brick suggest a late C18 origin, contemporary with the stables and the former house.

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Maps J Andrews, A Dury and W Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent*, 2" to 1 mile, 1769
W Mudge, *Map of Kent*, 1" to 1 mile, 1801
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 1872, published 1877 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1908
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1872 1939 edition

Illustrations Engraving of house and park from the lake, 1853 (private collection)
J Bonomi, *Designs for stable block*, c 1796 (RIBA collection)

Archival items Diaries relating to C19 planting and garden design (private collection)
The Hardy family archive is held in a private collection.

Description written: October 1997 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: November 2003

Legal

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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.