

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

HALL BARN

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

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**HALL BARN**

Name:	HALL BARN
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Beaconsfield
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.593945 Longitude: -0.65015684 National Grid Reference: SU9360189207, SU9429789783 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000334 Date first listed: 30-Aug-1987

## Details

C17 and early C18 pleasure grounds around a country house, with surrounding landscape park and woodland; the creation of the C17 poet Edmund Waller, with subsequent embellishment by his grandson.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Hall Barn estate was conveyed to the poet and statesman Edmund Waller (1606-87) and his mother in 1624. He was banished from England in 1644 for his role in the Oxford or 'Waller Plot', which tried to secure Oxford for King Charles I, subsequently living on the Continent and visiting places such as Venice and Paris with the diarist John Evelyn, until he was pardoned in 1651 and returned to Hall Barn. Waller is thought to have started his gardening activity soon after his return, continuing until his death in 1687, and building himself a new house before 1675. His son, Edmund II, lived at Hall Barn 1687-1708, but did not carry out significant alterations to the landscape. Edmund II's son, Edmund III, carried out a significant phase of landscape improvements from c 1713, when John Aislabie (who created Studley Royal, North Yorkshire, qv) married Edmund III's mother. Edmund III inserted a range of garden buildings and ornaments into Edmund I's established landscape framework, continuing until c 1740. He died in 1771, to be followed at Hall Barn by his son and grandson, Edmund IV and V respectively. In 1832 the estate was sold out of the family to Sir Gore Ousley Bt, of Claremont, Hertfordshire, who carried out further developments to the house and estate until his death in 1844. Edward Levy-Lawson, first Lord Burnham, bought the estate in 1880 and immediately began to enlarge the house and rework the gardens, continuing work until c 1910. The M40 motorway was sunk across the northern park in the early 1970s, separating the main entrance from the house and the majority of the site, now joined only by a bridge across the motorway. The storms of 1987 and 1990 felled many mature woodland trees, to devastating effect, particularly in The Grove, and the landscape is currently (1997) undergoing restoration. The estate remains in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Hall Barn is located on the southern edge of Old Beaconsfield, high in the Chiltern Hills. The 200ha site is bounded to the north by the A40 London to Oxford road, to the east by the old course of the A355 Beaconsfield to Slough road (pre 1970s), and Burnham Road which spurs off it, and to the south and west by agricultural land and woodland. The land is gently undulating, with a small stream running through the site from north to

south. The setting is largely agricultural and woodland, with Old Beaconsfield to the north but not visible except for the church tower, and the motorway, audible but not visible from most of the park, splitting the park into two.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The house is approached from two main drives across the park, to the north and south. The north entrance provides direct access from Beaconsfield to the north and also from London and Oxford off the A40 running through the town, and from Slough off what was the A355 before it was diverted when the motorway was constructed in the 1970s. Low walls of red brick and taller gate piers, together with wrought-iron fencing and gates (C19, listed grade II) lie at the entrance, next to Oak Lodge (C19, listed grade II), a brick building almost completely covered with real and copied Early Renaissance and later wooden panelling. The drive curves south through the park for 0.5km, crossing the sunken motorway via a modern concrete bridge, to arrive at the large gravel apron by the north, main front of the house. The serpentine line of the drive has been altered either side of the motorway bridge to become straight whilst on the bridge. The south entrance off Green Common Lane, 1.8km south-west of the house, is marked by delicate, ornate, wrought-iron gates and gate piers (C19, listed grade II) and the substantial Tudor-style Dipple Wood Lodge, an early C19 building enlarged in the late C19. From here Dipple Drive runs straight for 1.5km, first through Dipple Wood, then into the open parkland of the old park, aligned on the obelisk in The Grove. The drive in Dipple Wood is lined by clipped laurel hedges set on low banks, probably of C19 origin. Having passed through a short stretch of lime avenue within a clump of trees west of The Grove, Dipple Drive curves north-east at the obelisk, following the northern edge of The Grove past Home Farm, continuing on to the north front of the house. Two drives cross the east, 'new' park, providing access from the east, one entering off Burnham Road, and the other from the Slough road.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** The house (c 1675, listed grade II\*) lies near the centre of the site, at the north-east corner of the pleasure grounds, above a service yard to the west. It was built for Edmund Waller in a Dutch-influenced style, of brick with stone dressings, three storeys high with a hipped roof and lantern, and has a porte-cochère by George Devey, added c 1865. An early C18 quadrant wall screens a corridor running north-west to the former stable block, possibly a C17 service wing in origin, now domestic accommodation. A large C19 addition was removed 1968-70, returning the house to its compact C17 proportions. The house has views north into the old park, to the south obliquely towards the pleasure grounds, and across the rising informal lawn to the east.

Home Farm is a three-sided, red-brick stable yard, built c 1890 by Lord Burnham, 100m west of the house, on the west side of the service yard. Its open east side has two massive stone gate piers at the entrance, possibly moved from elsewhere in the site, with iron railings on low brick walls flanking them, and matching cottages at the east ends of the open wings.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The pleasure grounds are divided into two main sections: the mainly open areas closest to the house to the south-west, south and east, and the area of ornamental woodland adjacent, known as The Grove. The house lies at the north-east edge of the pleasure grounds, but is not directly visually linked into the main part of the design. A lawn, which may once have held a parterre (Elizabeth Banks Associates 1993), links the south front of the house with the sunken area to the south-east which held the C17 Little Canal. This was drained in the early C19 and now carries a lawn with a swimming pool at the east end. To the north of the sunk area is a terrace with, at its east end, a flint and stone pedimented alcove (C18, listed grade II) in the form of a small temple. Large yews surround the area on all sides but the west. A path at the west end leads south into the large, open, Great Terrace, a broad gravel path laid out along the top of a grass slope which runs west down to the Great Canal. East of the Great Terrace is the 1.8ha Yew Grove with many mature yews, some possibly dating from the C17/C18, and further low terraces on its west side. A clipped laurel hedge separates the Great Terrace from the Yew Grove along their whole length. The Terrace runs parallel with the 180m long, 45m wide Great Canal, which is terminated at the north end by the remains of Colen Campbell's stone Great Room of 1724 (listed grade II), much reduced and remodelled after a fire in 1840, and at the south end by the Fishing Temple (early C18, probably Colen Campbell, listed grade II\*). A massive clipped yew hedge connects the Great Room with the house to the north and may have disguised the great length of the Room, which originally stretched back almost as far as the house. The Great Canal was originally fed by a stream which runs through the estate from north to south and is dammed at the south end of the Canal with a substantial earth bank. It is now fed by run-off from the motorway. West of the Great Canal, Pigeon House Close, a large, open, square area of lawn, runs up a slope to the west with scattered C19 and later specimen trees, and the remains of one or possibly two bowling greens at

the top, level, west end. The rendered brick, castellated Gothic Pavilion, c 1740, lies on the west boundary of Pigeon House Close, overlooking a large bowling green, flanked by the tall clipped yew hedge which separates the Close from The Grove to the west. At the south-east corner of the Close, a statue of Aesculapius terminates the ride from the Temple of Venus 0.5km south-west on the southern edge of The Grove.

The Grove, 20ha of woodland in the centre of the park, is laid out around a patte d'oie of formal rides. The apex is the open, domed, circular Temple of Venus (early C18, probably Colen Campbell, listed grade II\*), with Doric columns and delicate plaster decoration inside its dome. Two wide main rides radiate from here. The north-eastern Temple Ride slopes gently and evenly down towards the canal.. The north-western, largely level Obelisk Ride, 400m long, terminates in the tall, slim, stone obelisk (early C18, probably Colen Campbell, listed grade II\*) on a bastion projecting into the park, backed by parkland, with designs of contemporary tools at the base and a wrought-iron fence and gate separating it from the ride. Both rides are edged by clipped laurel and rhododendron hedges, and have been levelled by cutting and filling naturally undulating ground to create the desired smooth levels. The third, Hedgerley ride, is a subsidiary, shorter ride from the apex to the west edge of The Grove, aligned on the now-ruined, folly eyecatcher Hedgerley Church, 350m away at the far west side of the old park. A cross ride connects the west and east boundaries of The Grove, between a projecting bastion at the west end and the Up and Down Temple to the east. The central walks connect a perimeter terrace walk, now overgrown, on the west and north boundaries of The Grove, raised above a sunk fence and giving views into the park and north-east to Beaconsfield church. A triple-arched alcove lies on the north walk, facing out into the park, with a view of the church. A terrace walk on the east boundary was partially planted with yews in the C19, and the adjacent ditch filled in. A circuit leads from the Up and Down Temple south to Waller's seat (Milton's Cave) in the south-east corner, a partly ruined C18 flint grotto set into the hillside, surrounded by mature yews, and reached across the stream via a ruined C19 brick bridge. The sunken parts of a roofless icehouse remain c 75m south of the Great Canal. The Grove suffered severe damage in the storms of 1987 and 1990, when many mature trees were lost; a restoration plan was made and replacement planting has been implemented, but it is now open in large areas which would have had mature tree cover.

**PARK** The park can be divided into two sections: the c 40ha old park, of late C17 or C18 origin with C19 additions, to the west and north of The Grove, and the 50ha new park, formed c 1810 to the south and east. The old park connects Beaconsfield at the north end with Dipple Wood at the south end. The kitchen garden stands at its north-east corner, and both main approaches to the house lead across it. The motorway runs through the northern part (occupying 12ha), separating the northern edge from the bulk of the parkland, both visually and physically. The old park is open and undulating, largely arable, with clumps scattered throughout, and a belt of trees extending down its west boundary. Hedgerley Church on the south-west boundary, set against part of Dipple Wood at the end of the vista from the Temple of Venus, was destroyed in the 1990 storm, and only the back wall of this eyecatcher remains, with no indication of its earlier brick and stucco appearance. There are views into the old park from The Grove, and various structures in The Grove, are visible from the old park, including the obelisk on its bastion, the alcove at the north end of The Grove and the bastion on the west boundary. The only view outside the old park is to Beaconsfield church, and this may be obscured by a high bund and fence at present (1997) being erected on the motorway edge. A medieval hunting park is thought to have been situated in the northern part of the park, just south of Beaconsfield town (Records of Bucks 20). Dipple Wood, in existence by 1763 (Survey of the estate of Edmund Waller, 1763) and possibly much older in parts, lies at the south end of the old park. Mostly replanted since 1920, it is made up of mixed species, including some mature oak and beech. A hedge bank weaves through the west half of the wood, marking the C18 boundary of the historic site. The north end was badly damaged in the 1987 and 1990 storms and has been clear felled and replanted. The straight, southern part of Dipple Drive bisects the wood.

The new park is bounded on the east by the old Slough road, now a track, and Burnham Road. It is similar in character to the old park, sited on undulating, arable land with clumps of trees, but with no important structures of note or views out, and no strong visual relationship with the old park or The Grove. It was created from small enclosed fields c 1810.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The 2ha kitchen garden, c 300m north-east of the house at the north junction of the old and new parks, is surrounded by an irregular pentagon of red-brick walls. The northern extremity was lost to the motorway, but an earlier inner brick wall now forms the north-east boundary. All other internal walls were removed c 1970. A low range of bothies and the

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gardener's cottage lie on the exterior of the north-west wall. The east wall drops in its centre to accommodate an iron screen with brick piers, constructed c 1890, in the same style as Oak Lodge gate, providing a view out to the new park. The remains of ornamental shrub planting and iron bow-top fencing lie outside this wall and the southern walls.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 4 (8 October 1898), pp 432-5; 26 (21 April 1909), pp 260(6; 37 (23 January 1915), p 118; 91 (20 March 1942), pp 564-7; (27 March 1942), pp 612-16 C Birch (ed), *The Book of Beaconsfield* (1976), pp 60-71 Records of Bucks 20, (1977), p 448 Landscape Restoration Plan, (Elizabeth Banks Associates 1993). N Pevsner and E Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (1994), pp 361-4

Maps Survey of the estate of Edmund Waller, 1763 (Buckinghamshire Record Office) Tithe map for Beaconsfield parish, 1846 (Buckinghamshire Record Office)

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)

Description written: 1997 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: June 1999

#### 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.