

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HIGH WALL, HEADINGTON

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
HIGH WALL, HEADINGTON

Name: HIGH WALL, HEADINGTON

County: Oxfordshire

District: Oxford (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.759238
Longitude: -1.2277101
National Grid Reference: SP 53400 07010
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001408
Date first listed: 02-Dec-1998

Details

Early C20 suburban house by Walter Cave, with formal garden laid out by Harold Peto c 1912, and later work by Percy Cane c 1920s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Miss Katherine Feilden (1864-1954) of Witton Park, Lancashire bought a plot of sloping agricultural land lying adjacent to Pullen's Lane in Headington c 1910-11, employing the architect Walter Cave to erect a substantial Tudor-style house close to the lane. Harold Peto was employed c 1912 to lay out the garden, and in the 1920s Percy Cane worked at High Wall, but little is known about his exact input. Miss Feilden lived at High Wall until her death, and in 1970 the estate was split up, the western section being used for housing development which covered Peto's rose garden. The house and remaining garden continue in private ownership (1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING High Wall lies on the west side of the Headington suburb of Oxford, 2km east of the city centre. The c 1ha site is bounded to the east by the privately owned Pullen's Lane, reached via London Road to the south. The east boundary is marked by a high, red-brick wall with a flat stone coping, and the west boundary is marked by an estate of 1970s housing, with further substantial C19 and early C20 houses lying to the north and south. The land slopes down to the west, with a terrace at the east end of the site, on which stands the house with its surrounding formal garden. The setting is suburban, with several other large enclosed gardens nearby. Presently there are no views out of the site, although it is possible that when the house and garden were built there were views west down the hillside towards the city centre (CL 1917)

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters off Pullen's Lane, 20m east of the house, between brick gate piers set into the east boundary wall, supporting wrought-iron gates. The gateway leads into a square, tarmac courtyard, enclosed by brick boundary walls except on the west side which is bounded by the entrance front of the house. On the west side the projecting north and south wings of the house enclose a small, stone-paved inner court, divided from the higher main court to the east by a low, curved brick wall with stone coping, the two courts being connected by a central flight of stone steps. The

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
HIGH WALL, HEADINGTON

house is entered via the front door set into the south-west corner of the inner court. A gateway in the south wall of the main, upper courtyard gives access to the garden.

Some 30m north of the main entrance and separated from it by the Spinney, a curving service drive, Jean Cottage Lane, enters off Pullen's Lane, running south-west through trees to the north, service front of the house and an informal service court. From here the drive continues west along the north boundary, stopping at the boundary with the former garden of Jean Cottage, into which garden it formerly ran when the Cottage was domestic quarters for High Wall, and its garden was the kitchen garden.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING High Wall (Walter Cave c 1910-11) is a U-plan house, built in C17 style upon land sloping down to the west, and constructed of brick with stone dressings. The west front overlooks the west terraces and lawn beyond, with access onto the upper terrace via a central door, whilst the south front opens onto the croquet lawn via an arched loggia.

GARDENS The garden is divided into several sections, most of which are laid out in formal style close to the house. Until the 1970s a formal rose garden and tennis court lay close to the present west boundary, but these have now been lost to development. The garden is entered from the south front via the loggia, from which stone steps descend to the stone-paved Upper Terrace which encircles the south and west fronts. On the west front a central door and stone steps give access to the west arm of the Upper Terrace, it being bounded to the west by a stone balustrade with a central platform projecting to the west. On the south front the path extends east to a flight of stone steps, flanked by brick planters, leading up to a stone-paved terrace enclosed to the east by the boundary wall and to the north by the south wall of the entrance courtyard, with a flight of steps leading up to the gateway into the courtyard. From the southern end of this triangular terrace, a further, narrow, terrace extends south-west, supported to the west by a brick retaining wall, upon which a path leads to the pergola.

Steps down from the centre of the southern arm of the Upper Terrace lead to a stone path extending south to the east arm of the pergola, standing c 40m south of the house. The path is flanked to the east by the narrow terrace and to the west by the rectangular croquet lawn, beyond which views extend down the informal west lawn. The path continues west beneath the stone-pillared pergola standing on low brick walls with stone coping, the pillars linked at the top by wooden beams. A steep, brick stairway flanked by brick walls rises from the south-east corner of the pergola to a gateway allowing access to Pullen's Lane beyond. At the centre of the of the pergola the columns encircle The Temple, a roofed octagonal gazebo enclosed on the south side by a stone wall, overlooking, beyond the croquet lawn, the south front and garden terraces. The Temple is aligned with the west arm of the Upper Terrace. The path emerges from the west arm of the pergola, continuing north flanked by the croquet lawn to the east and the top of a brick retaining wall to the west, below which the archery or bowls lawn runs parallel, partially sunk into the hillside and enclosed to the west, south and east by brick retaining walls.

The north-west end of the path encircling the croquet lawn terminates at a stone staircase leading down to a stone-paved landing, here joined by a further staircase to the east giving access from the Upper Terrace and the west and south fronts. The corners of this landing are filled by square, brick planters. From here a central flight of steps descends between brick retaining walls to the brick- and stone-paved Lower Terrace, overlooked by the west arm of the Upper Terrace which is supported by a tall, brick retaining wall. Stone paving is set in cruciform pattern across the central axes of the terrace, with the interstices being filled with brick herringbone-pattern paving, which replaced flower borders and lawn after the 1920s (Cane 1927). The central, projecting portion of the Upper Terrace is faced with stone on the west side, in which is set a small fountain basin positioned over a pool set into the paving below. On the north side of the Lower Terrace lies a small octagonal pool set into the stone paving.

From the centre of the west side of the Lower Terrace broad stone steps, flanked by brick planters, lead down to an extension north of the archery lawn, bounded to west and east by low stone retaining walls at this point. A further set of steps, again flanked by brick planters, leads west from this lawn to the informal west lawn. The lawn retains traces of a former path, now grassed over, which led south-west to the oval rose garden and adjacent tennis courts (now gone), situated c 125m south-west of the house. One fastigiata conifer remains adjacent to the former path, the last remaining specimen of a former avenue of cypresses which flanked the path to the rose garden. The gently sloping west lawn is enclosed by trees to the north, west and south. A small stream flanked by rockwork runs along the north side of the lawn, possibly the remains of a rockery (perhaps created by Percy Cane in the 1920s), overlooked by a stone summerhouse.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
HIGH WALL, HEADINGTON

Harold Peto (1854-1933) laid out the garden c 1912, creating two formal areas (the rose garden and the area around the house) connected by informal lawn. This layout is shown in a series of Country Life photographs (NMR) taken in 1917, from which the present structure around the house differs only in minor ways. The pergola Temple was open on the south side, with a view across the garden to the west and the field to the south, possibly to the city beyond. A stone well-head stood at the centre of the croquet lawn. The retaining wall of the platform projecting west from the Upper Terrace was faced in brick rather than the present stone, and a seat was placed below, where the basin now is, overlooking the west lawn down to the rose garden. Parts of the garden were illustrated by Percy Cane in *Modern Gardens* (1927), including part of the former stone-paved rose garden and the view up the west lawn to the house. The field adjacent to the south (now built on) appears to have been important in views from the pergola and croquet lawn at this time.

KITCHEN GARDEN The former enclosed, rectangular kitchen garden and the gardener's cottage, Jean Cottage (now gone) lay at the north-west corner of the site. The area is now covered by 1970s housing development.

REFERENCES

Country Life, (10 November 1917), supplement; (17 November 1917), supplement Percy Cane, *Modern Gardens*, British and Foreign (1927), pp 26-8 H M Harris, *Between the White Gates* (1975), pp 39, 48-51 *The Wingfield League Magazine* (1989), pp 32-6 D Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden* (1989), pp 157, 213 note 62, 222

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1878(80 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1921

Archival items Sale particulars, 1970 (private collection)

Description written: August 1998 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 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.