

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THORNBRIDGE HALL

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Name:	THORNBRIDGE HALL
County:	Derbyshire
District:	Derbyshire Dales (District Authority)
Parish:	Ashford in the Water
County:	Derbyshire
District:	Derbyshire Dales (District Authority)
Parish:	Great Longstone
National park:	PEAK DISTRICT
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.234239 Longitude: -1.7016312 National Grid Reference: SK 20013 70842 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001275 Date first listed: 03-Sep-1993

Details

Late C19 and early C20 gardens and park forming the setting of a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Thornbridge was part of the estate of the Longsdon family of Little Longstone and was held by them from the C12 until 1790, when James Longsdon sold it to his business partner Andrew Morewood, a Manchester merchant. Morewood began to rebuild the house in the Classical style, his son John Morewood continuing the work which he complemented with a modest park. John Morewood was succeeded by his brother, George, and after his death, by his son-in-law, James McConnell, who in 1859 sold it back to the Longsdons. The Longsdon family retained much of the estate but put the Hall and its grounds up for sale, these being purchased by John Sleigh, a Leek manufacturer. In 1871 Sleigh sold the Hall and 185 acres (c 77ha) of land to Frederick Craven who commissioned the architect J B Mitchell-Withers to rebuild the Hall in the Jacobean style, with stained-glass windows by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. In 1896 the Hall was again sold, this time to George 'Jobson' Marples, who immediately enlarged the estate to over 400 acres (c 166ha) and then commissioned Charles Hadfield of Sheffield to alter the Hall, add stables and build lodges on the boundary of his new park. He also laid out formal gardens around the Hall to designs by Simeon Marshall of James Backhouse and Son's nursery in York, and in 1903 built the private railway station known as 'Woodlands'. When Marples died in 1929 the estate was sold to Charles Boot of the construction firm Henry Boot. Boot embellished the Hall and gardens with an assortment of artefacts acquired during the course of his business, hence the presence of balustrading, urns and a fountain from Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire, and marble statues which came his way

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while working on a land reclamation scheme in Greece. When Charles Boot died in 1945 the Hall, with 185 acres (c 77ha), was purchased by Sheffield City Council, who developed it as a teacher training college and later a conference and education centre. The Hall was put up for auction in 1997 and was bought by a private purchaser, the Council retaining one of the lodges for use as a training centre. The site remains (2000) in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Thornbridge Hall occupies a rural setting c 7km north-west of Bakewell, on the south side of the village of Great Longstone. The registered site covers an area of c 48ha, bounded to the north partly by the village and partly by the disused railway line, to the east by the A6020 Ashford road, to the west partly by Longstone Lane and partly by farmland, and to the south by fields bordering Greaves Lane on the northern edge of Ashford-in-the-Water. The Hall stands on a high plateau in the north-west corner of the park, looking over its grounds which fall away to the south and east.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main drive turns in off the A6020 at South Lodge, c 550m south-south-east of the Hall and runs north-west across the park. Constructed in the late C19 it involved a substantial amount of work in order that the gradients would be even and was planted up with mature trees for immediate effect. The drive passes the west side of the Hall between high rubble limestone walls (listed grade II) to join with the northern end of Longstone Lane which partly forms the western boundary. Longstone Lane runs through the north-west part of the park and leads to the gate and piers at North Lodge (listed grade II) on the northern boundary. From here the lane links to 'Woodlands', the private railway station which stands to the west of the public station and, with its wooded grounds, forms an integral part of the overall design of the site. At the north-east tip of the park, where the A6020 meets the road to Great Longstone, stands a set of gates and railings, but the drive which was to link this entrance to the Hall was never constructed. A gate on the eastern edge of the park, to the north of the main entrance, marks the line of a footpath across the park.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Thornbridge Hall (listed grade II) is a large, late C19 mansion built of squared limestone with sandstone dressings and quoins. It is built to a square ground plan with a northern tower joined to a quadrangular stable block, all in the Jacobean style with mullioned windows and castellated parapets hiding the roof line. The garden front faces east and has a polygonal projecting corner bay to the south corner. The earlier house, as sold to the Morewood family in 1790, was in the Classical style but when the estate was sold to Frederick Craven in 1871 he rebuilt it completely using J B Mitchell-Withers as architect. George 'Jobson' Marples commissioned further alterations which were undertaken by A and C M Hadfield between 1897 and 1914 and included the addition of the stable block.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The walls beside the drive on the west front, form the western edge of a walled forecourt. A gate in the south-east corner of the forecourt leads into the main area of gardens which lie on the south and east fronts. The main terrace runs along the foot of the east front and from it are far-reaching views to the south and east out over the countryside. This paved walk is supported by a retaining wall with flights of steps at either end leading down to a parallel paved walk flanked by turf strips set with urns. Below this to the east is the Dutch Garden, known since Charles Boot's time as the Italian garden. Now gravelled, this is set with raised boxes planted with clipped evergreens. Below the Dutch Garden is the bowling green, overlooked by a stone seat set into the terrace wall, a feature which predates the Marples garden.

At the south end of the formal gardens is a wooden, and formerly thatched, summerhouse. South of this steps lead down to a panel rose garden surrounded by balustraded walls. Through an iron gate in the south-east corner, steps lead down to the park. More steps link the southern end of the top terrace with the level lawn which lies below the south front of the Hall, while a further flight leads off the centre of this lawn, down to the croquet lawn. The terrace wall which separates garden from park offers a firm baseline for extensive views south over the park to the farmland on the distant hillside. A gateway in the south-west corner of the lawn leads out to the statue courtyard on the west front.

Below the formal terraces on the east front, an informal lawn runs down to a pool and extensive rock garden, separated from the park by estate fencing. The water occupies much the same position as the pool shown on mid C19 maps, but otherwise this area, formerly the rectangular kitchen garden, was completely reworked in the early C20. Rockwork steps and paths lead through the rocks, with stone slab bridges over the cascade which marks the outflow of the pool, and two seats in alcoves (listed grade

II), one lined with petrified rock, the other stone-built, giving views over the gardens. Above the rockwork, running north-west to south-east, is the alpine walk, a straight path on the line of the northern edge of the earlier kitchen gardens. It is flanked by rhododendrons down the south side, and has a drystone retaining wall to the north (listed grade II). Above the walk is an informal grassed area and a higher path, the Beech Walk, flanked by a set of herms of the Four Seasons (listed grade II), which were brought back from Greece by Boot. Higher again, a fountain bowl and four urns linked by a stone quatrefoil (listed grade II) are set within mature fruit trees and form the foreground for a classical temple (listed grade II), brought here from Clumber Park. Sales particulars from 1854 describe the mansion as being set in large pleasure grounds, but a map of 1871 (sale catalogue) shows only a limited area of shrubbery and lawn to the west and south, the walled kitchen garden to the east, and fields immediately to the south dotted with park trees. The main structure of the formal gardens around the Hall first appears on the 2nd edition OS map (published 1900). Of the informal work beyond the terraces, only the northern part, the alpine garden mentioned by the *Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1898, is drawn, the area to the east of the terraces being of a later date, appearing for the first time on the 3rd edition OS map of 1923.

PARK The park, laid out by the removal of stone field boundary walls in the late C19, falls south-eastwards from the Hall and gardens. The stone walls of the existing fields were removed by Marples who dug a string of pools along the eastern boundary, the northern and southernmost of which remain.

KITCHEN GARDEN The main garden terrace on the east side of the Hall leads north, through a rockwork arch formed from great boulders, into the kitchen garden area. Here the ground is terraced for fruit growing, and there are the remains of a range of glasshouses. The rectangular, hedged vegetable ground lies to the east of the glass, joined to it by a walk which leads from the south side of the main range, east across the plot to a second classical temple (listed grade II) which bears the arms of the Duke of Newcastle.

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.

Bibliographie

Other

[Archival sources] Sale catalogue, 1854

C Mate, Thornbridge Hall - a brief history, (private report July 1993) [copy on EH file]

Gardeners' Chronicle, ii (1898), pp 221-3

J Carder, Notes for a Victorian Society visit, (July 1989) [copy on EH file]

Map to accompany the sale catalogue of 1871

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1880

OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1900

OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1923

Sale catalogue, 1871

The Derbyshire Countryside, (January 1937), pp 7-8