

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SEZINCOTE

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

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SEZINCOTE

Name: SEZINCOTE

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Bourton-on-the-Hill

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Sezincote

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.979838
Longitude: -1.7516694
National Grid Reference: SP1715331293
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: I
List Entry Number: 1000433
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

Early C19 landscape garden with C20 developments, in a park of the same date, surrounding an early C19 Indian-style country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1795, Colonel John Cockerell (a grandson of the diarist Samuel Pepys' nephew, John Jackson) returned from Bengal and bought the estate of Sezincote from the third Earl of Guildford. He started some building work on the estate, including the remodelling of the original house, but died before it could be completed. After John's death in 1798, his youngest brother Charles (MP for Evesham, created baronet in 1809), who had been with him in the service of the East India Company, inherited Sezincote. In c 1805, Sir Charles had a new house built at Sezincote, around the original house. It was designed by his brother, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, with advice from Thomas Daniell and his son William, the Indian topographical artists, and is thought to be the only surviving Mogul building in Western Europe (guidebook). Samuel was a surveyor to the East India Company and an architect of some standing, having already built nearby Daylesford (qv), also in the Indian manner. The park and lake were probably designed by Humphry Repton (1752-1818) c 1804-5, who may have collaborated with Thomas Daniell (ibid). In 1807, the Prince of Wales visited Sezincote and was inspired to press forward his plans for the Indianisation of the Brighton Pavilion. Sezincote remained in the hands of the Cockerells until 1884, when it was bought by James Dugdale, of Lancashire. The poet John Betjeman used to visit James' son and daughter-in-law, Colonel and Mrs Arthur Dugdale, from Oxford and included a description of Sezincote in his poem *Summoned by Bells*.

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Sir Cyril Kleinwort bought the estate in 1944 from Mrs Dugdale. With his wife, he restored the house. The garden had become neglected during the Second World War and the present planting is largely due to Lady Kleinwort, helped by Graham Stuart Thomas. Lady Kleinwort also laid out the South Garden, c 1965. Sezincote remains in private hands today (2000).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sezincote stands to the east of a minor road which leads south, parallel with the A424, from Bourton-on-the-Hill to Longborough. It is 4km south-west of Moreton-in-Marsh and 6km north of Stow-on-the-Wold. The registered area, of c 100ha, is roughly rectangular, with an extension from its south-east corner. It is bounded to the west by a minor road and to the south by Icehouse Lane, a minor road running eastwards which peters out into a track. Drystone walls run along most sections of these boundaries. Elsewhere the boundaries are marked by post and rail fencing. The house stands in the south-west quarter of the park and is surrounded on all but its east side by pleasure grounds. These are divided from the park by a coursed stone wall, running west of the house; by post and rail fencing; and, east of the house, by a mid C20 ha-ha. The ground slopes fairly steeply from west to east then levels out at the lake. From the house, there are views east, to Moreton-in-Marsh and beyond, but in other directions the view is obscured by belts of trees.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach to Sezincote is from the A44, which runs east/west north of the park. Sezincote Lodge (listed grade II) marks the entrance to the park c 1.7km north-east of the house. This two-storey building of coursed squared and dressed limestone was built by S P Cockerell, c 1805. To its east, a white five-bar gate marks the start of the drive. Directly opposite, across the road, stone piers mark the entrance to Batsford Park (qv). The drive winds south-west through farmland, and passes through two tree-lined sections, before coming to Diamond Lodge, at the north-east corner of the park. Diamond Lodge (listed grade II*), also by S P Cockerell, c 1805, is a two-storey building of ashlar limestone with a slate roof. Again, a white five-bar gate stands to its east. The drive continues south-west from the lodge, through the north part of the park. It reaches the pleasure grounds c 200m north of the house and crosses the stream via the Indian Bridge. The drive widens to a gravel forecourt, separated from the east front of the house by blue-green-painted cast-metal railings. From the forecourt, a back drive passes north of the kitchen garden, then winds through the Home Farm, to exits in the west and south boundaries. At the north-west corner of the park is Tuckwell Lodge, a two-storey building of coursed limestone. There is no longer a drive from this lodge but a track extends for c 100m, south-east into the park. Thornery Lodge, 350m north-west of the house, is a rendered, two-storey building. To its south, another white five-bar gate set between ashlar piers marks the start of a drive which leads south-east into the park, then divides, one arm continuing east to join the main drive, just north of the pleasure grounds, and the other going south, west of the pleasure grounds, to the Home Farm. A gateway (listed grade II) in the west wall of the pleasure grounds c 100m north-west of the house gives access to the southern track. A solid wooden gate is set in an ashlar limestone arch, squared off towards the apex.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Sezincote (listed grade I) was built 1800-5 by S P Cockerell, Thomas Daniell, and Humphry Repton. The main block is a rectangular, two-storey building, of orange-stained ashlar limestone with a slate roof and copper dome. Mogul and Hindu elements of architecture are combined in the design, including octagonal corner minarets with copper domes, a chaja (projecting cornice with deep brackets below) and 'peacock tail' arches crowning the first-floor windows on the south front. The main door is in the centre of the eleven-bay east front and is contained by an arched porch which reaches to the eaves. The main block of the house is asymmetrically extended by the curving orangery wing (listed grade I) to the south and to the north by another extension (listed grade I), ending in the Tent Room, a pavilion originally occupied by Sir Charles Cockerell's bedroom. The facade of the orangery comprises an arcade of fifteen pointed arches, each with double glass doors. Stone steps lead up to the far right (north) of the conservatory wing and to the octagonal former aviary at the far left.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the north of the main body of the house, the north lawn, c 1ha, planted with trees and shrubs, is enclosed between the drive and a wall which runs north/south, west of the house. A narrow, 2m high grass bank runs along the east side of the north wing of the house then turns north-west, merging into the slope. Winding gravel paths lead north-west from the drive to the north-west corner of the Thornery (or water gardens). Some 200m north of Sezincote house is the Temple Pool, a formal circular pool, c 20m in diameter, with a central, moss-covered, projecting fountain. At its north-west side, semicircular stone steps lead up to the Temple of Surya (early C19, probably by Thomas Daniell, listed grade

II with the pool), a small square building of grey marble with a stepped pyramidal roof and an open front, containing a figure of the sun god Surya, in relief against the rear wall. To each side of the Temple, a curving rockery, with twelve regularly spaced indentations (six each side of the Temple), runs part way around the pool. Some 40m north-west of the pool is a row of three grottoes (early C19, listed grade II), hollowed out of a curving bank of limestone rubble, set into the natural slope. North of the grottoes, on a tree-planted bank, stands a small stone building, with the date 1951 and the initials CHK and EKK (Sir Cyril and Lady Kleinwort) carved above the doorway.

The stream and woodland gardens of the Thornery extend eastwards, downhill, from the Temple Pool for c 350m, dividing the parkland in two and terminating at the north-west end of the lake. The stream flows in a rocky gully, occasionally widening to form small pools; at the narrowest points, stone slabs bridge the water. A gravel path follows the line of the stream and crosses it periodically. Herbaceous borders, shrubs, and occasional clumps of bamboo line the edges of the stream and lawns planted with specimen trees extend north and south from this planting. Some 80m south-east of the Temple Pool, the stream is crossed by the Indian Bridge (Thomas Daniell 1800-5, listed grade II*), an ashlar limestone bridge supported by two rows of four octagonal columns. Stone stepping stones lead under the bridge, past a stone bench, to the Serpent Pool, a small circular pool directly east of the bridge. On an island in the centre of the pool is an early C19 fountain (probably by Thomas Daniell, listed grade II), consisting of a bronze three-headed snake curving around an upstanding tree trunk.

The Rock Pool, a small pool c 50m east of the Serpent Pool, is edged to the north by a planted rock outcrop, built c 1800. From this pool, the stream runs east, between lawns, to the Island Pool, a large, kidney-shaped pool with a juniper-planted island, crossed by a long C20 wooden bridge. Just east of this is a smaller, late C20, wildlife pond. From this, the stream continues east, under a track, to the lake. Four mature cedars of Lebanon stand along the southern boundary of the lower stream gardens, from where there are views, across the southern parkland, back to the house. The cedars are thought to date from c 1728 (Forestry Authority Tree Register, owner pers comm, 2000). A weeping hornbeam near the Island Pool is said to be the largest in England (guide leaflet).

The Thornery was originally much more of an arboretum than it is today (2000). The 4ha of stream gardens were replanted by Graham Stuart Thomas, garden adviser to the owners of Sezincote for thirty years. Thomas planted weeping trees and shrubs along the stream (taking inspiration from the original weeping hornbeam) to emphasise the running water.

The steeply sloping bank behind (west of) Sezincote house supports woodland from 200m north to 150m south of the house. The wood is penetrated by winding paths and, 150m west of the house, contains an early C19 memorial to Wellington (listed grade II). The memorial consists of the former chimney of the orangery and is a tapering pillar of coursed squared and dressed limestone with a battlemented top and a cast-iron memorial plaque.

South of the house, between the orangery wing and the drive, enclosed to the south by a tree-planted bank and to the east by a low stone wall, is the Indian Garden. This sub-rectangular lawn is quartered by paths lined by Irish yews. The north/south stone path has a narrow canal (C20, listed grade II) running along its centre and stone steps (1965, listed grade II) lead up from its southern end to a gravel path which curves around the south and south-west sides of the garden. The east/west gravel path is aligned on the former aviary at the south end of the orangery. Where the paths cross there is a raised, octagonal stone pool (Thomas Daniell early C19, listed grade II) and fountain. In the centre of the eastern entrance to the garden, c 6m east of the fountain, is a C19 stone sundial (Thomas Daniell, listed grade II). Before the mid C20 this area was a rose garden. In 1965, Lady Kleinwort, with advice from Graham Stuart Thomas, laid out the present garden, around the earlier raised fountain pool. A tennis court is set into the hillside which forms a stepped grass bank to its west and south c 100m south-east of the house. On the bank, at the north-west corner of the court, is an Indian-style tennis pavilion with a copper dome. An inscription on its north side reads: 'Erected 1961 by Cyril and Betty Kleinwort who cared for this house and garden with much love from 1943 to 1976'. Below this, a little way to the north-west and c 60m south-east of the house, is an ashlar limestone grotto (Thomas Daniell 1800-5, listed grade II) consisting of two rectangular columns supporting a lintel with moulded capping. Inside is an Indian white marble water maze. The whole is set into the bank with rockeries curving in towards the grotto on either side.

PARK The narrow, 350m long lake was designed, probably in the early C19, to give the impression of a river, flowing north/south at the bottom of the hill, c 400m east of the house. A thick belt of mainly deciduous trees extends around its north and

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east sides and west of its southern end and another belt extends along the western edge of the southern parkland. There is an open view west, from the lake, to the house, across the largely unplanted southern park. The parkland also continues east of the lake. The parkland to the north of the Thornery contains earthworks (possibly ridge and furrow) and is more densely planted with trees than the southern part.

The appearance of the park is similar in style to other work by Repton but, although he was consulted about Sezincote (guidebook), there is no Red Book or other evidence to suggest that Repton actually designed the park, lake, or gardens.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden, c 1ha, lies c 200m south-east of the house, east of the Home Farm. It is roughly rectangular and is enclosed by brick walls c 2-2.5m in height. It is divided by gravel paths into fruit and vegetable beds. A greenhouse stands along the west wall. At the north-east corner is the gardener's cottage (listed grade II), an early C19, two-storey ashlar, slate-roofed building, with a squat octagonal tower forming the upper storey.

OTHER LAND Home Farm stands c 150m south of Sezincote, largely hidden from the house by trees. It is a collection of stone buildings, built in a simplified Indian style, including a farmhouse and attached farm buildings (listed grade II*), two barns (listed grade II), a clock tower (listed grade II*), Home Farm Cottage (listed grade II), and Stables Cottage (listed grade II*). The main compound is enclosed by long buttressed walls which give the impression of a Mogul fort. Most of the farm buildings were constructed 1800-5 by Samuel Pepys Cockerell and Thomas Daniell for Sir Charles Cockerell. The use of pale-blue paint on the woodwork links the buildings together visually. An area of c 4ha at the south-west corner of the registered area is covered by mainly C20 farm buildings.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 85 (13 May 1939), pp 502-6; (20 May 1939), pp 528-32; 160 (2 September 1976), pp 600-2 D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (1970), pp 392-404 P Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (1979), pp 121-4 J Sales, *West Country Gardens* (1981), pp 99-102 G Jackson-Stops, *The Country House Garden: a Grand Tour* (1987) Gloucestershire and Avon Life, (April 1988) M Batey and D Lambert, *The English Garden Tour* (1990), pp 257-62 N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume Two, 1660-1830* (1992), pp 225-8 Sezincote, guidebook, (Sezincote nd) *Sezincote Garden: a walk with Graham Thomas*, guide leaflet, (Sezincote nd)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882-3, published 1884

Archival items Aerial photographs, 1996 (NMR, Swindon)

Description written: March 2000 Amended: February 2001 Register Inspector: TVAC Edited: April 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.