

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

GREAT TEW

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

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**GREAT TEW**

Name:	GREAT TEW
County:	Oxfordshire
District:	Cherwell (District Authority)
Parish:	South Newington
County:	Oxfordshire
District:	West Oxfordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Great Tew
County:	Oxfordshire
District:	West Oxfordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Sandford St. Martin
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.957788 Longitude: -1.4166177 National Grid Reference: SP 40185 28972, SP3992230025 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001550 Date first listed: 08-Aug-2001

## Details

A landscape park originating in the C17, attached to an early C18 country house with large C19 additions, with informal pleasure grounds and a series of C17 walled gardens. A further area of parkland, laid out in the early C19, lies detached from the earlier park, its siting and layout influenced by Humphry Repton who visited in 1803 and provided advice in a Red Book of 1804. Elements of this area were laid out by John Claudius Loudon who managed much of the estate between 1808 and 1811 at the beginning of his career, and it was subsequently embellished during the rest of the century.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By the end of the C16 a park at Great Tew had been created, divided into Inner, Middle, and Outer Parks. Further related enclosure took place in the early 1620s, when Sir Lawrence Tanfield enclosed land including Cow Hill. By this time Great Tew was almost all in single ownership (VCH). In 1626 Lucius Cary (?1610-43) inherited the Great Tew estate from Tanfield, his grandfather, and in 1633 inherited his father's title, becoming the second Viscount Falkland. Falkland was a poet and renowned philosopher who was influential at nearby Oxford University, and it is likely that the three linked, stone-walled gardens which were erected close to the manor house were constructed and laid out under his direction. The C17 manor landscape, which

included the manor house, walled gardens, The Grove, and the park, enclosed the parish church and churchyard (Lambert 2001). A great avenue was probably created at this time, running northwards from the centre of the park across the valley below to high ground beyond. Falkland died at the age of thirty-three at the Battle of Newbury, fighting for the Royalists, and his heirs sold the estate in 1698 to Francis Keck. After Keck's death in 1728 his nephew John Tracy, who took the name Keck, inherited the estate and was responsible for the enclosure of the remainder of the parish in 1763. This resulted in many small parcels of land being amalgamated under his management and ownership. John Keck died in 1774, and subsequently a substantial part of the estate was bought by the nabob George Stratton, who bought the remainder in 1793, amassing an estate of several thousand acres. Following Stratton's death in 1800, his son, George Frederick, inherited what was generally considered to be one of the finest estates in the county and quickly demolished much of the manor house which stood on a platform north-west of the church. G F Stratton moved into the Keck dower house to the north, which at that time stood at the top of the street running up from the village green (VCH). In 1803 G F Stratton consulted Humphry Repton (1752-1818) about improvements to the estate, particularly on the construction of a new mansion. Repton's advice was presented in a Red Book dated 1804 containing written suggestions and watercolour illustrations of his suggestions. He suggested that the new mansion should be built in the centre of the walled park, aligned very close to the south end of the old avenue. His principal landscape improvements concerned the south-facing valley-side to the north of the park, as this would form such a prominent feature in the view from the new mansion. The new house was never built, and it appears that Repton's landscape suggestions were not immediately implemented. In 1808 Stratton leased much of his farmland to the young John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) for a demonstration of 'Scotch husbandry', having read Loudon's treatise *An immediate and effectual mode of raising the rental of landed property* (1808). Loudon only stayed until 1811, and his tenure was not a success, with Stratton spending large sums for little return. Loudon did however lay out a series of substantial farm roads on the north side of the valley, north of the house and main park, centred on Tew Lodge, a model farmhouse built for him by Stratton and demolished by the 1830s (OS 1833). Loudon may also have laid out the adjacent Cow Hill and its environs as parkland, incorporating Repton's general suggestion, and widened a brook into a narrow lake close to the Lodge. The Lodge Ponds, as the lake was called, had also been suggested by Repton, but Loudon's purpose was to form the reservoir for a threshing mill. Loudon went on to become the foremost influence of his day on landscape design.

Matthew Robinson Boulton, a Birmingham industrialist, bought the estate in 1816, making extensions to the dower house, by now the main residence, together with improvements to the gardens, village, and wider estate, before his death in 1842. After his death, his son, Matthew Piers Watt Boulton, continued to improve the estate, enlarging the house, constructing The New Gardens as kitchen gardens, and reworking the C17 Grove. Following M P W Boulton's death in 1894 the estate continued in the Boulton family. His great-nephew, Major Eustace Robb (d 1985), took up residence in 1952 and inherited the estate in 1962. The estate remains (2001) in private ownership.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Great Tew lies in north Oxfordshire, approximately equidistant from the A4260 Oxford to Banbury road to the east and the A44 Oxford to Stratford-upon-Avon road to the west. The c 150ha site is bounded to the east and north by agricultural land, to the west partly by the village of Great Tew and partly by further agricultural land, and to the south largely by a lane linking Ledwell to the east with Little Tew to the west. The site is dominated by a valley running from west to east containing a small stream. The south side of the valley dividing the two areas of the designed landscape contains much of the village, the rest being laid to agricultural land, and lies outside the area here registered. The setting is rural and includes the rest of the Great Tew estate, which extends northwards to the A361 Chipping Norton to Banbury road and to the B4031 which leads east off the A361 to Deddington. This estate land is now largely agricultural but retains many belts, clumps, and copses, laid out as both functional and ornamental features during the C19, from Loudon's time onwards, including Round Hill which was formerly laid out as parkland (OS 1880, outside the area here registered). Long views extend north from the old park and pleasure grounds on the south side of the valley towards the north side of the valley and the detached parkland and other agricultural land, and north-east across the course of the former avenue to distant hills.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach enters off the village street, 50m west of the mansion. The drive leads east to a forecourt on the north front of Tew Park house, in which is set the main door. Long views extend northwards from the forecourt and north front over a sharp drop down to the village green, and across the village towards Cow and Horse Hills. From the north front the drive continues east around the house, turning south to enter the north-west side of the stable court which stands 50m south-east of the house.

This approach may have been laid out in the early C19 when the former Keck dower house became the main residence of the estate. The street leading south from the village green was stopped up in order to allow more privacy for the area around the house.

The approach to the former manor house, which stood north-west of the church, may have partly occupied what is now (2001) the main approach path to the church. This path leads east off New Road, 250m south of the current house, through an elaborate stone gateway (early-mid C17, listed grade II) with a C19 gate. From here the path is carried for c 120m on a causeway lined by walls between The Grove to the south and the C17 walled gardens to the north, before entering the main, rectangular churchyard, which is itself enclosed by a stone wall to the north and east (C16/C17, listed grade II) and screened from the surrounding park and pleasure grounds by mature trees. A doorway in the north wall of the churchyard gives access to the pleasure grounds, the site of the former manor house, and the present house to the north.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Tew Park house (listed grade II) stands at the west edge of the site, overlooking the centre of the village to the north. The small, central, early C18 core which was originally the Keck dower house was greatly extended to west and east, in 1834 by Fulljames for M R Boulton, and in 1856 by Fulljames and Waller for M P W Boulton. The house is built of stone, largely of three storeys, its garden front facing south. The earlier manor house (shown together with the stable block in an illustration of 1764), which was demolished in the early C19, stood c 100m south-east of the present house. Its site remains visible, together with a level platform, laid to lawn, to the north.

The stone-built stable court (c 1700, extended early C19, listed grade II) stands 50m south-east of the mansion and is open to the north-west, allowing access from the drive to the north. The stable court is also entered via an impressive gateway (c 1700, listed grade II) standing 10m south of the south range. Large stone piers topped by vase finials flank iron railings and open-work iron piers with an iron overthrow, giving access across a yard to a double-height archway at the centre of the south range leading into the stable court. At the west end of the south range stands an octagonal, stone-built dovecote of two storeys (listed grade II). The gateway may have provided access when the old manor house, which formerly stood c 30m to the south-east, was still in use, or may have been re-sited following the demolition of the manor house.

The stone-built parish church (medieval, restored C19, listed grade I) stands c 250m south-east of the present house, and c 50m south-east of the site of the former manor house, at the centre of the churchyard. The churchyard contains many C18 headstones and some mature trees including a fine cedar.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The house stands at the west edge of the gardens and pleasure grounds, which largely comprise a large open lawn to the south of the house and The Wilderness to the east, a series of three walled gardens to the south of the lawn, and beyond these, to the south, The Grove.

A garden door on the south front of the house leads out to the remains of a rectangular terrace which runs along the length of the south front, now (2001) laid to lawn. Stone steps lead from the south side of the terrace up to a large, informal lawn containing many mature specimen trees, particularly cedars. The lawn is bounded by shrubs to the west and the stable court to the east, and leads up a gentle slope to the C17, stone-built walled gardens (listed grade II) standing 120m south-east of the mansion. An ornamental doorway at the centre of the north wall leads into the northernmost of the three rectangular walled gardens, which are now largely overgrown. A further doorway in similar style, at the centre of the dividing wall on the south side of this compartment, gives access to the south to the second, central compartment, with a further doorway in the south wall of this compartment giving access to the southernmost walled garden. This third compartment contains several mature conifers, including a monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*). A doorway in the south side of the third walled garden gives access to the church path, and beyond this to the south, to The Grove. The walled gardens were formerly laid out with a formal pattern of paths (OS 1880).

South of the churchyard and walled gardens lies The Grove, enclosed to the north, west, and south by a stone wall and entered via a doorway in the north wall off the church path. Seemingly part of the C17 layout, it was formerly laid out with formal walks (Loudon 1812), but by the late C19 (OS 1880) it had been laid out in similar style to The Wilderness with mature trees and informal paths and open glades. The Grove retains many mature trees, but is now (2001) largely overgrown.

Between the three walled gardens to the west and the church to the east lies a lawn, at the northern end of which is the site of the old manor house (demolished early C19), which overlooked the park to the east. A stone-built ha-ha forms the boundary between the pleasure grounds and park to the east at this point. To the north of this lawn lies The Wilderness, probably laid out in the 1830s by M R Boulton, incorporating an earlier pond. It contains many mature trees, between which were formerly cut informal paths and glades (OS 1880) but it is now (2001) largely overgrown. View formerly extended east from The Wilderness across the old park, and north-east towards distant hills.

**PARK** The almost square old park lies to the east of the house, pleasure grounds, and village and is enclosed by a stone wall which has been breached in places. A gateway flanked by tall stone piers stands at the centre of the north wall, providing access to the agricultural land to the north. At the centre of the old park lies a small wood, The Warren, which is surrounded by parkland laid to pasture with many trees scattered in singles and in clumps. A broad avenue, probably laid out in the C17, formerly extended northwards from the centre of the park for c 2.5km, terminating at the B4031 (Loudon 1812). It may have been aligned on the gateway in the north boundary. The avenue was shortened in the early C19, its northern end terminating after that time at the stream which runs through the valley bottom. All trace of the avenue trees has been lost in the late C20. Long views extend northwards from the park across the valley to the detached parkland of Horse, Cow and Walker's Hills, and east and north-east towards distant hills. Repton's suggestion for rebuilding the house was to place it close to the west side of what is now The Warren, with the attached garden adjacent to the east of the house, leading into The Warren, and aligned on the south end of the avenue.

The park is separated by the village and an area of agricultural land to the north (through which formerly ran the avenue; outside the area here registered) from the early C19 parkland on the opposite side of the valley on which Horse, Cow and Walker's Hills run contiguous from west to east respectively. This detached area of parkland is laid to pasture with mature trees and copses, and contains a network of broad tracks laid out by Loudon which largely follow the contour at the level of the stream. The detached parkland is bounded to the south-west by Mill Lane, and immediately to the south of this by the stream in the valley bottom, along which stand several mature yews. Mill Lane leads south-east as a path from the B4022, c 1.2km north-west of the house, and is overlooked by the parkland of Horse and Cow Hills to the north. Some 700m north of the house, having broadened out into a track, Mill Lane meets The Avenue, a lane giving access from the village to the south. Mill Lane curves around to the north-east at the bottom of Cow Hill meeting the west end of Groveash Lane, another estate track, 1.3km north-east of the house. Close by to the east, Groveash Lane crosses the remains of Lodge Ponds, a series of narrow ponds, now largely silted up and enclosed in trees, which were formed by Loudon from widening the stream for c 500m. The Ponds provided water to power his mill (Lambert 2001). The parkland extends north from Groveash Lane, bounded to the west by the continuation northwards of Mill Lane. At the north end of Lodge Ponds formerly stood Loudon's Tew Lodge, which was demolished by the 1830s. North of the site of Tew Lodge stands the C19 Cottenham Farm, set in undulating parkland which extends north to a point adjacent to the B4031.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The rectangular, c 1ha kitchen garden, known as The New Gardens, lies 600m south of the house, set within c 5ha of mature coniferous and broadleaved woodland. The New Gardens are approached from the north off the Little Tew to Ledwell road via a track which leads south through the woodland to the north-east corner of the main enclosure. The formerly elaborate kitchen garden complex is largely overgrown, with the remains of glasshouses which stand at the north and south ends of the main enclosure, and further enclosures surrounding this central area. The New Gardens were laid out c 1852 by M P W Boulton, and by 1866 there was an associated gardener's cottage. Plans of 1872 (ORO) probably refer to a rearrangement of the gardens at that time.

#### REFERENCES

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Description written: July 2001 Register Inspector: SR Edited: November 2001

## 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.