

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BOVERIDGE HOUSE SCHOOL

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

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Name:	BOVERIDGE HOUSE SCHOOL
District:	Dorset (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Cranborne
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.929731 Longitude: -1.9024497 National Grid Reference: SU 06952 14480 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000711 Date first listed: 19-Dec-1986

Details

Early C20 formal gardens designed by Thomas Mawson and planted to a scheme by Gertrude Jekyll, together with C19 pleasure grounds and parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A mansion designed by William Evans of Wimborne was built at Boveridge, a small hamlet in the parish of Cranborne, for Henry Brouncker in the late C18. Brouncker had acquired the property, comprising a farm on the site of an older mansion and several cottages, in 1788. Little is known about the setting of Brouncker's house, but the OS Surveyor's Drawing (1807-08) shows the house set in a strip of pleasure grounds and woodland extending from north-west to south-east. The OS Drawing also shows that areas of woodland which form the setting of the site, including High Wood to the north, Perry Copse to the south-east, and Burwood to the south, were already established by the early C19. Boveridge was inherited in 1825 by Henry Brouncker's nephew, Richard (1801-62), and subsequently passed to Richard's son, Henry Francis Brouncker (1841-95). Directories suggest that in the mid C19 the property was let or unoccupied (Post Office Directory, 1859; Harrod's Directory, 1865). Henry Francis Brouncker's son, Francis Henry Ernest (b 1865), was living at Boveridge in 1885 (Kelly's Directory, 1885), at about which time the House was extended and renovated (RCHME 1972). The late C19 OS map (1887) shows Boveridge House set in an area of parkland with lawns to the east, a terrace to the south, and an area of pleasure grounds in woodland to the north-west with a kitchen garden beyond; this plan remained unchanged in 1902 (OS). In the 1890s the estate was sold to George Thursley (Kelly's Directory, 1911), and was later sold again to Charles Wilfred Gordon. Further extensions to the House were made for Gordon in 1920, these works coinciding with a programme of improvement in the gardens (Mawson 1927). In 1920, Charles Gordon and his wife, an enthusiastic amateur gardener, commissioned Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) to provide plans for new formal gardens around the House. Mawson refers to this commission in his autobiography (*ibid*), where he describes the formation of the terraces to the south and east of the House and the loggia to the south-west of the mansion. No original plans for these features appear to have survived in Mawson's practice archive (Cumbria Record Office), although payments in connection with work at Boveridge are recorded in accounts for 1920 and 1921 (CRO). It is not known whether Mawson produced a planting scheme for the new gardens at Boveridge, although in his autobiography he refers to the limitations of the chalk soil; what is known however is that the Gordons approached Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) to provide planting plans which were implemented in the 1920s (Jekyll 1934). The surviving Jekyll planting plans (NMR) provide evidence not only

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for the planting of the site, but also the elements which formed part of Mawson's scheme. It does not appear that Boveridge represents a genuine collaboration between Mawson and Jekyll; rather Jekyll was invited to plant-up the already implemented Mawson scheme. Boveridge appears however to be an unique example of a site at which these two leading, but antipathetic, early C20 garden designers were simultaneously employed.

Boveridge remained the property of the Gordon family until 1961 when it was purchased by Viscount Cranborne, owner of neighbouring Cranborne Manor (qv). The House and grounds were let to a special needs school, and today (2002) remain in institutional use. A programme of renovation was begun in the grounds in 1998 under the direction of the head gardener, Alison Smith.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Boveridge is situated c 1.75km north-east of Cranborne, to the north-west of the B3078 road which leads north-east from Cranborne to Damerham forming the south-east boundary of the c 83ha site. The site is separated from the road by a ditch and bank, beyond which lies Perry Copse, a mixed plantation with underplanting of mature yews. The south-west boundary of the site is formed by a minor road which leads north-west from the B3078 road to St Aldhelm's chapel before joining a further minor road which leads north from Cranborne to Boveridge hamlet. To the west the site is bounded by a public footpath which separates it from adjacent agricultural land, while to the north-west it adjoins the mid C19 buildings of Boveridge Farm (farmhouse listed grade II). The northern boundary of the site is formed by a drive leading east from Boveridge Farm to Boveridge House, while to the north-east the site adjoins High Wood, Boulsbury Wood, and agricultural land. Boveridge House stands on the crest of a ridge which extends from north-west to south-east. The ground falls away to the north-east towards Boulsbury Wood, and south-south-west through the park. There are significant views south-west across the park towards Castle Hill Wood which are framed by Perry Copse to the south-east, Park Row to the south-west, and Burwood (outside the site here registered) to the south-west. There are also views north towards Boulsbury Wood.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Boveridge House is approached from the B3078 road to the south-east at a point c 1.25km north-east of Cranborne, immediately adjacent to a white-painted cottage known as White House. Beyond the simple entrance leading from the road, the tarmac drive extends c 270m north through Perry Copse before emerging into pasture and parkland south-east of the House, from which it is separated by C20 fences. The drive continues c 270m north before sweeping north-west to pass along the north-east boundary of the gardens east of the House. The drive is separated from the garden by C19 and C20 fences and a dense belt of specimen trees and evergreen shrubbery. Some 20m north-west of the House the drive divides, one branch continuing c 700m north-west to reach Boveridge Farm, and beyond, c 1.2km west-north-west of the House, a minor road which leads south to Cranborne. The other branch of the drive leads south from the junction to reach the carriage court to the west of the House. The carriage court comprises a central circular lawn enclosed by a circular gravel carriage turn. The carriage turn is separated from corner shrubbery beds by low clipped hedges of box and yew. To the west an arch set below a pediment gives access to the early C19 stables, while to the south an elaborate wrought-iron gate supported by stone piers surmounted by flat caps gives access to the gardens. On stylistic grounds the design of the gate and piers is ascribed to Thomas Mawson. To the south-west of the carriage court a further drive, today an agricultural track, extends c 160m through the wooded pleasure grounds south of the stables, before emerging into the parkland south-west of the House. The drive continues for c 375m through the park, affording views south-east across the park towards Perry Copse. The drive enters a further area of woodland, Park Row, before turning west and emerging onto the minor road forming the south-west boundary of the site at a point c 40m south-east of St Aldhelm's chapel (listed grade II). The church (outside the area here registered) was built in 1838 in Classical style using brick and flint with ashlar dressings; the building serves as a picturesque incident in the landscape associated with Boveridge. A mid C19 brick lodge stands to the south of the drive c 10m east of its junction with the road. In the C19 and early C20 the south-west drive served as the principal approach to Boveridge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Boveridge House (listed grade II) comprises two storeys and an attic, and is constructed in white brick under slate roofs which are largely hidden behind parapets into which are set dormer windows. The entrance or west facade has a single-storey Greek Doric portico which serves as a porte-cochère. The south, or garden, facade has a central two-

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storey canted bay window, while at the south-west corner of the building an open arcaded loggia extends across the western end of the upper terrace. This loggia was constructed c 1920 as part of the improvements to the gardens planned by Thomas Mawson. The east facade assumed its present form c 1920 when the House was extended by two bays in order to balance the central bay window on the south facade. A service wing extends from the north-west corner of the House, with a yard and stores beyond adjacent to a service drive.

Boveridge House was originally constructed in red brick to the design of William Evans of Wimborne (c 1764-1842, County Surveyor for Dorset from 1824) for Henry Brouncker between 1788 and c 1800. This house was extended, cased in white brick, and reroofed for F H E Brouncker in 1887 (date on weathervane), while a further extension comprising the east drawing room was made for C W Gordon in 1920.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The early C20 formal gardens are situated to the south and east of the House. Six terraces descend below the south facade of the House. A stone-flagged walk flanked by panels of lawn extends below the south and east faces of the House, and is terminated to the west by the early C20 stone loggia designed by Mawson for Charles Gordon. Stone steps placed on the central axes of the south and east facades descend from this upper terrace to a further terrace retained by stone walls topped by a series of staddle stones, which is laid to lawn. A mature specimen horse chestnut grows at the south-east corner of the terrace. Centrally placed stone steps descend from the south terrace to reach a terrace which is laid out as a grass walk flanked by borders planted predominantly with herbaceous subjects. This terrace extends c 140m from west to east, and is terminated to the east by a clipped arch of yew leading to the Mercury Garden, a circular area enclosed by clipped yew hedges with a central circular stone-kerbed pool (dry, 2002) which formerly contained a fountain in the form of a metal figure of winged Mercury. This statue was removed to the USA in the mid C20 (Alison Smith pers comm, 2002). Metal rose arches lead north and south from the Mercury garden to areas of informal woodland garden. To the west the Herbaceous Terrace is terminated by a rectangular gravelled area enclosed by low clipped box hedges, to the west of which stands a pair of mature beeches. From this gravelled enclosure a sloping gravel path with cobbled gutters ascends north between further low clipped box hedges through a group of mature beech underplanted with shrubs to reach the wrought-iron gate leading to the carriage court. The Herbaceous Terrace is retained to the south by brick walls rendered to resemble stone. The borders to the south are backed by yew hedges, while to the north the retaining wall of the upper terrace is constructed of random stones with provision for planting pockets (Mawson 1927). A flight of stone steps placed on the axis of the south facade descends from the Herbaceous Terrace to the Canal Terrace which comprises a rectangular lawn surrounded by herbaceous borders. To the north the high retaining wall of the upper terrace incorporates a pair of symmetrically placed panels surmounted by stone balustrades, with wall-mounted mask fountains playing into a pair of antique stone baths. A stone-edged rectangular canal extends from west to east across the terrace. The canal broadens at each end and in the centre to form octagonal pools, while rectangular stepping-stones cross the canal immediately east and west of the central pool. To the west of the terrace, and aligned with the canal, a shallow flight of stone steps ascends to a summerhouse, while to the east a further shallow flight of stone steps ascends to a pergola which is also placed on the axis of the canal. The pergola extends c 80m east from the pool terrace, its timber superstructure being supported by stone piers comprising three conjoined colonnettes. To the east the pergola terminates in a circular lawn surrounded by posts linked by ropes supporting climbing roses. Known as the Sundial Garden, this lawn was formerly enclosed by clipped yew hedges (Alison Smith pers comm, 2002) and gives access to the informal woodland gardens to the east, and to the Herbaceous Terrace to the north. From the Canal Terrace centrally placed shallow stone steps descend south to the Bowling Green Terrace, a narrow rectangular lawn enclosed to the north by a low random stone wall with provision for planting, and to the south, east, and west by clipped yew hedges, which to the east and west are curved to form semicircular enclosures. A pair of topiary yews in the form of pyramids flank steps which descend from the bowling green to a large rectangular lawn separated from the park beyond by fences; today (2002) this is used as a football pitch, but it was designed by Mawson as tennis lawns (Mawson 1927). The terraced gardens to the south of the House were designed by Thomas Mawson in 1920 and are described in his autobiography (*ibid*), where he suggests that prior to 1920 there was little if any garden on the south side of the House; this is supported by the early C20 OS map (1902).

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Four terraces descend below the east facade of the House. The two upper terraces, comprising a stone-flagged walk and grass panels immediately adjacent to the House and a broad lawn, both return below the south facade. The terraces are linked by stone steps placed on the central axis of the east facade, and the upper terrace is retained by a low brick wall with stone coping. The second terrace is separated from the third terrace, which is laid out as a gravel walk extending c 140m from north to south, by a grass bank. The gravel walk is flanked at its northern end by a pair of mature weeping hollies, while to the south it joins the Herbaceous Terrace to the south of the House. To the east of the gravel walk are two rectangular areas of lawn planted with a pair of mature cedars. These areas of lawn are separated by a flight of stone steps which descends to the lowest or Pool Terrace. Laid out to a cruciform plan with yew hedges enclosing its north, east, and south sides, the terrace is laid to lawn with a central stone-edged rectangular pool extending from east to west. The stone border of the pool incorporates planting beds for moisture-loving plants. The yew hedge to the east of the terrace forms an apsidal enclosure with a timber seat placed on the central axis of the garden. The hedges, in common with most of the yew hedges in the gardens, are cut to a wave-pattern. To the west and south the terrace is edged by brick and stone-coped retaining walls, while to the south a centrally placed flight of stone steps ascends to a further rectangular lawn enclosed by yew hedges which leads south to the Herbaceous Terrace. The east terraces were designed by Thomas Mawson in 1920 on the site of existing gardens (Mawson 1927).

Areas of informal pleasure grounds are situated to the south-east and east of the formal gardens. These comprise mown grass walks and glades interspersed with mature specimen trees and ornamental shrubbery. These areas appear to have been developed from c 1920, in part following planting plans by Gertrude Jekyll. Further informal woodland pleasure grounds lie to the west of the House and stables in Noddle Hill Wood and Rookery Wood. These areas are today (2002) overgrown, but some walks remain including one leading c 400m west from the south drive to the kitchen garden and the site of a small structure, perhaps a summerhouse, with a sundial, which is shown on the OS map of 1902 to the north of a terraced walk. The woodland pleasure grounds west of the House correspond to those shown on the early C19 OS Surveyor's Drawing (1807-08).

PARK The park is situated principally on the south-facing slopes to the south, south-west, and south-east of the House and gardens and remains (2002) pasture with scattered mature specimen trees and conifers. The park is partly enclosed by areas of woodland which help to frame views out across the surrounding landscape. The park does not appear to be shown on the early C19 OS Surveyor's Drawing (1807-08), but the surviving configuration of parkland and woodland remains substantially unaltered from the late C19 (OS 1887). It is likely that the park was developed in the early C19, and by 1920 Mawson was able to describe it as being 'in such orderly stateliness as to suggest the work of Capability Brown or Repton' (Mawson 1927).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden is situated c 400m west-south-west of the House on the southern edge of Noddle Hill Wood. The garden is today (2002) uncultivated and laid to grass. To the north-west, north-east, and south-east the garden is enclosed by brick walls of varying height. The south-west side of the garden facing the park is open, and appears never to have been enclosed by walls. Traces of a walk extending across this boundary of the garden survive. At the north-west corner of the garden are the remains of two or more brick and timber glasshouses, while outside the garden, reached by a doorway set in the north-west boundary wall, are the remains of a further glasshouse and a flight of stone steps ascending to the woodland pleasure grounds. The kitchen garden appears to be of C19 construction, and is shown in its present form on the late C19 OS map (1887). Mawson commented that the garden lay at some distance from the House and did not impinge upon his garden scheme (Mawson 1927). Jekyll's planting scheme included plans for herbaceous borders and a herb garden in the kitchen garden.

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Maps OS Surveyor's Drawing, 2" to 1 mile, 1807;08 (Dorset Record Office) OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1811 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1886, published 1887 2nd edition revised 1900, published 1902 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition revised 1900, published 1902

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Archival items T H Mawson, accounts for work undertaken at Boveridge, 1920-1 (Mawson Archive), (Cumbria Record Office)
G Jekyll, Planting plans for Boveridge, c 1920 (NMR, Swindon) Photographs of the gardens at Boveridge, c 1920 (Mawson Archive), (Cumbria Record Office)

Description written: February 2002 Register Inspector: JML Edited: April 2005

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.