

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR GREAT PARK

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR GREAT PARK**

Name: THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR GREAT PARK

District: Bracknell Forest (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Winkfield

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Old Windsor

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Sunningdale

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Sunninghill and Ascot

County: Surrey

District: Runnymede (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.410123

Longitude: -0.58395563

National Grid Reference: SU 98582 68851, SU9817469308

[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden

Grade: I

List Entry Number: 1000592

Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

## Details

A royal park of medieval origin containing many ancient trees. The park was later landscaped, and contains gardens attached to four principal residences within the park: Cumberland Lodge (qv), Royal Lodge (qv), Cranbourne Lodge and Forest Lodge. NOTE This site is part of the Royal Estate, Windsor, together with the following six related park or garden areas which are given separate entries within the Register: within Berkshire, Frogmore Gardens, Windsor Castle and Home Park, Cumberland Lodge, Royal Lodge; within Surrey, The Savill Garden and Valley Gardens, Virginia Water.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Windsor Great Park was created out of Windsor Forest as a royal hunting park from the C11, and by c 1365 had evolved approximately to its present, late C20, size and shape. The late medieval/early modern park, which developed northwards from the Virginia Brook, contained internal divisions, visible in the C17 (Norden, 1607), probably reflecting the various parts which had been joined together, each with its own lodge and keeper. The park as shown by Norden forms the core of the present (late C20) Great Park. Further additions were made subsequently, mainly to the north-west and south-east. During the Commonwealth (1649-53) land was sold to private individuals, one of whom, Col James Byfield, constructed a house known as the Great Lodge at the centre of the park (known from the late C18 as Cumberland Lodge, qv) which, following the Restoration (1660) when the land reverted to the Crown, became the Ranger's official residence and principal residence of the Great Park. The early C16 Cranbourne Lodge, a hunting lodge, was rebuilt as a substantial residence in 1665, its gardens embellished c 1700-10 by Henry Wise for the first Earl of Ranelagh, creating a series of terraces and formal gardens, with avenues radiating across the park (Wise, c 1712). Hugh May began the Long Walk for Charles II in 1680, connecting Windsor Castle with the heart of the Great Park. The Duchess of Marlborough, joint Ranger of the Great Park from 1702 to 1744 created significant gardens around Cumberland Lodge, and the c 5km long Queen Anne's Ride was laid out 1700-08, probably by Henry Wise, as part of a network of avenues between the Park and Windsor Castle. In the mid C18 both Cumberland and Cranbourne Lodges and their gardens were further embellished when responsibility for the Great Park and Cranbourne were combined for the first time, under the Rangership of George II's son William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (Ranger 1746-65). In the 1790s George III employed the agricultural improver Nathaniel Kent to make recommendations about the land within the Great Park, resulting in extended farming of the park and the construction of new farm buildings, including Flemish and Norfolk Farms. George IV built the picturesque cottage orné Royal Lodge (qv) c 1814 as his private residence, developed from a gardener's cottage situated to the north of Cumberland Lodge and set within its own grounds. During the 1820s he commissioned an enormous equestrian statue of his father, George III, for the southern end of the Long Walk, erected in 1831. In the 1840s and 1850s the Prince Consort addressed farming matters, overseeing the general revitalisation of the park with the development of farms and the estate workshops. From the 1930s to 1950s the gardens of the Royal Lodge and The Savill Garden (qqv) were developed. The estate village was built following the Second World War, designed as a model village by Sydney Tatchell. The park remains (1999) in the ownership of the Crown.

## DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Windsor Great Park lies immediately to the south and south-west of the town of Windsor and Windsor Home Park (qv). The main, central area is within the parish of Old Windsor (to the north-east), and the south-eastern extremity is in the parish of Egham (Surrey) (see Roberts 1997, pl 554). The c 2500ha site (including the areas of The Savill Garden, Virginia Water, and Cumberland and Royal Lodges, qqv) is bounded to the north by Windsor and the Home Park; to the south the setting is largely wooded and rural, with various landscaped parks scattered around the south boundary, including Titness Park, Coworth Park, Buckhill Park, Wentworth Park and Ribblesdale Park. To east and west lie further landscape parks, woodland and villages. The land is hilly, with views from the northern half, particularly Snow Hill, parts of Cranbourne Park and Forest Lodge, northwards to Windsor Castle, Home Park and the town, and to the Chiltern Hills beyond. The A332 Windsor to Ascot road bisects the western half of the park.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The park is entered via a series of gates around the boundary, and via entrances off the A332 road, the principal ones being described below.

The main formal approach from the north is from the Castle via the Long Walk (laid out by Hugh May for Charles II (d 1685) c 1683-5), on which is aligned the 1820s George IV Gateway set in the south front of the Upper Ward of the Castle. This gateway forms the focal point of the Long Walk from the Great Park. A drive south from the gateway extends down the South Slopes, leaving the Home Park via Cambridge Gate and Cambridge Lodge (both 1830s, listed grade II), which stand 300m south of the Castle, at this point entering the Walk. The Walk begins c 300m south of the Castle because at the time of the Walk's construction the former Garden House (subsequently known as the Queen's Lodge) and the extensive formal King's Garden, as well as Burford House and garden (then the home of Nell Gwynn; extant, 1999), stood in the way of the projected

line, the Garden House only being removed in 1823 when the view up to the Castle was opened up. The 5km long Walk is flanked by lawns, bordered in turn by a double avenue of a mixture of horse chestnut and plane trees, replanted in the 1940s following the death of many of the elm trees of the original C17 avenue. The Walk enters the Great Park at Double Gates Lodge (1909, on the site of a lodge since the C17; Roberts 1997, 503), 2.2km south of the Castle. Towards its southern end, the Walk rises up the slope of Snow Hill, to the large equestrian statue of George III (R Westmacott late 1820s, erected 1831, listed grade I) which stands on a rustic stone plinth on a knoll. The Walk terminates at the centre of the northern half of the park, 1km north of Cumberland Lodge.

Queen Anne's Gate lies 500m north-west of Double Gates Lodge, giving access from Windsor to the north to Sheet Street which crosses the Great Park to the south-west.

A further major entrance to the park, Sandpit Gate, lies on the west boundary, 1.5km west of Cumberland Lodge, on high ground mid-way between the northern and southern extremities of the park. In existence since at the least the C14 (Roberts 1997, 361) this entrance is reached via a drive running south-east from Forest Gate past Forest Lodge, and is marked by Sandpit Lodge (James Wyatt c 1800), a two-storey, Gothick-style building. From here several drives cross the park, giving access to The Village 700m to the north-east, and Cumberland Lodge and Bishop's Gate to the east.

A further important entrance to the park is at Bishop's Gate, lying 1.2km north-east of Cumberland Lodge on the east boundary of the park. This entrance was in existence before c 1600 (Norden), and has been linked since the mid C17 (Roberts 1997, 371) to Sandpit Gate 3km to the west by the road (formerly a public road) running via Cumberland Lodge.

The main southern entrance to the park, at Blacknest Gate, enters off the A329, passing a single-storey, stuccoed gothick lodge (Sir Jeffry Wyatville, dated 1834, listed grade II) and leading 300m north-east to the stone High Bridge (Sir Jeffry Wyatville 1826-7, listed grade II), a five-arched bridge spanning Virginia Water (qv). From here the drive continues north-east into the centre of the park via Breakheart Hill.

**PRINCIPAL BUILT FEATURES** Apart from Cumberland and Royal Lodges and Fort Belvedere (qqv), there are two further principal buildings in the Great Park: Cranbourne Tower and Forest Lodge (formerly known as Holly Grove). Cranbourne Tower (c 1808, listed grade II\*) stands towards the western park boundary set within the former Cranbourne Rails. It is the last element of the former Cranbourne Lodge, the home of the Windsor Forest Ranger. Initially an early C17 building, it was rebuilt in the later C17, with the surviving brick-built, three-storey Tower added as part of a substantial rebuilding by George III. Panoramic views extend in all directions from the roof of the Tower, particularly north towards Windsor and the Castle, and beyond to the Chiltern Hills and Stoke Park, Buckinghamshire (qv).

Forest Lodge (1772; 82, listed grade II; known as Holly Grove until the mid C20) lies 500m west of the Prince Consort's Workshops. The central three-storey brick block is flanked by two-storey wings, it having been rebuilt on the site of an enlarged C17 cottage. Long views extend from the north front towards Windsor Castle and beyond to the Chiltern Hills.

The park contains several farm complexes, including Flemish Farm (1758 and later) in the north-west of the park, and Norfolk Farm (1790s and later) lying south of Cumberland Lodge towards the centre of the southern half of the park. The Village, a mid C20 model settlement designed by Sydney Tatchell, lies at the centre of the park, adjacent to the Prince Consort's Workshops (1840s-50s).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The remains of the two principal gardens in the Great Park (not covered elsewhere in this Register) surround Cranbourne Tower, standing on high ground towards the west park boundary, and Forest Lodge, standing close to Forest Gate on the west boundary where the A332 leaves the park.

Cranbourne Tower stands at the centre of a series of rides crossing Cranbourne Chase, the former Cranbourne Rails deer enclosure. Rides through woods and farmland which extend west, south and south-east from the Tower were formed in the early C18, probably by Henry Wise who also constructed a series of elaborate formal parterres and terraces around the house c 1700-8 for Lord Ranelagh, the occupant at the time (Roberts 1997). In the mid C18 William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland further developed the gardens. The formal garden elements fell into disuse in the early C19, although the kitchen garden, one brick wall of which still stands, continued in use into the C19.

North of the Tower a narrow grass terrace leads to a steep wooded slope extending down to an open pasture field containing the earthwork remains, in particular pond basins and terraces, of the substantial early to mid C18 formal gardens. A hillside with scattered earthwork terraces rises westwards from the remains of the three ponds on the east side of the area to a wooded plateau overlooking the garden site below to the east. The woodland contains mature limes and plane trees which may be the remains of C18 avenues laid out on this plateau (Plan of Cranbourne Chase, c 1752, in Roberts 1997, 287). Long views extend north from the northern edge of the wood towards Windsor and the Castle.

Forest Lodge is approached from Lime Avenue via a C19 lodge standing 200m to the south-west. From here a serpentine drive set in lawn leads to a gravel carriage sweep on the south-west front. The carriage sweep is set in lawn separated by an earth ha-ha from the paddock beyond, which divides the Lodge from Lime Avenue to the south-west. From here the drive continues north-east, passing the C19 stables, and emerging into the Great Park 150m north-east of the house. A spur off the drive 50m west of the Lodge leads through lawn, planted with specimen trees, to the north-east front, continuing east to leave the pleasure grounds 50m east of the Lodge, where it joins the drive from the south-west front. Lawns extend north and west from the Lodge to the pleasure ground boundary which is marked in places by trees and a further earthen ha-ha. Some 150m south of the house lies a pond, the upper one of a former chain, the central ones now (late C20) diminished to a stream which leads east forming a link to Isle of Wight Pond, 350m east of the Lodge. An C18 brick-walled kitchen garden, presently (1999) used for pheasant rearing, lies 75m south-east of the Lodge.

Forest Lodge developed from a small part of Cranbourne Chase and lay outside the Great Park until 1829 (Roberts 1997, 302). A cottage was first built on the site in the C17, the estate and house being gradually increased in size during the C18. By the 1770s (Sandby, 1778, in Roberts 1997, 298) the estate was more or less complete, with an informal lawn with shrub planting adjacent to the north of the house, a kitchen garden to the south-east and beyond this a series of fishponds, with open parkland to the south-west and north-east of the house, much as exists today (late C20). A new house was built 1772 to 1782 and Lady Jennings Clerke employed Humphry Repton to improve the house and estate in the 1790s (Roberts 1997, 301). Little detail is known however of his landscape work here, but he is thought to have laid out a flower garden with serpentine paths and garden ornaments. The royal gardener, W T Aiton was employed to design and build an impressive new greenhouse flanked by peach houses c 1805 (now gone). By 1813 the estate covered c 20ha. The property was sold to the Crown in 1829, becoming the official residence of the Deputy Ranger of the Great Park until 1937.

**PARK** The Great Park, covering undulating, hilly ground, is divided into two unequal halves by the A322, and contains many ancient oak trees, including some which are up to 1000 years old. The west half contains Cranbourne Park to the south, and is laid (1990s) to agricultural land and woodland with rides cut through. Cranbourne Tower stands towards the centre. To the north lies Moat Park, formerly a separate area within Windsor Forest, ornamented during the early C18 as landscaped parkland. In the 1750s William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland built a pleasure pavilion (demolished in 1896, Roberts 1997, 276-81) on the island of the medieval moated site, which was ornamented with flowering shrubs. In the 1790s Nathaniel Kent, George III's agricultural adviser, laid out Flemish Farm in Moat Park. It is now (1999) largely laid to arable land with areas of woodland and clumps of trees, Star Clump (1690s-1700s), in particular, remaining from the late C17/C18 landscaping. Views extend west from the western half of Moat Park/Flemish Farm towards St Leonard's Hill.

The east half of the Park is largely laid to pasture and scrub, with blocks of woodland and clumps of trees. It contains various features including Virginia Water and its surrounding landscape, which occupies the southern quarter, Royal Lodge and Cumberland Lodge and their associated landscapes, and the Savill and Valley Gardens (qqv). Queen Anne's Ride, a grass ride flanked by an avenue of trees, extends 5km south from the Queen Anne's Gate entrance to the park from Windsor, crossing undulating ground, passing through the middle of The Village, to terminate at Leiper Hill, close to the south-west park boundary. The Village and the Prince Consort's Workshops lie towards the western side of the east half of the park, the Workshops having been developed in the 1850s and 1860s on the site of the C18 and later Carpenter's Yard. Ranger's, Lodge (1790s, C20) lies c 700m north of the Workshops at the north end of Prince Consort's Drive, within its own grounds, having been built as Shaw Lane Lodge and in the 1930s becoming the Deputy Ranger's residence.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR GREAT PARK**

Smith's Lawn lies south-east of Cumberland Lodge, south of Bishopsgate on the eastern boundary. The large, open lawn is surrounded by belts of trees, which were planted initially in the 1740s by the Greening family of nurserymen who also worked elsewhere in the park (Roberts 1997, 396). The lawn, now (1999) largely used as a polo ground, lies on a plateau with, to the east Obelisk (formerly Hurst) Pond (created for the Duke of Cumberland 1749-50), into which flow the two ponds from The Savill Garden to the north. Obelisk Pond is separated from the contemporary pond immediately to the north by the Stone Bridge (1750), a single-arched brick bridge with stone dressings and parapet, carrying Obelisk Ride (Hurst Avenue) south-east from Cumberland Gate along the north-east side of Smith's Lawn. Adjacent to the east of the pond, on the summit of Hurst Hill, stands the Obelisk (c 1750) erected by George II to commemorate his son, the Duke of Cumberland's victory at the Battle of Culloden (1745). A bronze equestrian statue of the Prince Consort (Boehm 1887, listed grade II) stands on a pink granite plinth on the western edge of Smith's Lawn.

#### REFERENCES

W Menzies, *The History of Windsor Great Park and Windsor Forest* (1864) N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), pp 295-8 D Lambert and T Longstaffe-Gowan, *Report on Windsor Home and Great Parks* (1996) J Roberts, *Royal Landscape, The Gardens and Parks of Windsor* (1997)

Maps J Norden, *A description of the honour of Windesor*, 1607 (British Museum and Royal Collection) H Wise, *An Accurate Plan of Windsor Parks and Part of the Forrest*, c 1710 (Royal Collection) H Wise, *A Sketch plan of part of Windsor Great Park*, c 1712 (Royal Collection) J Vardy, *Plan of Windsor Great Park*, 1750 (Public Record Office) *Plan of Cranbourne Chase*, c 1752 (Royal Collection) J Rocque, *Map of Berkshire*, 1761 T Sandby, *Plan of the Holly Grove estate*, c 1778 W Faden, *Plan of Windsor Great Park*, 1789-91 (Public Record Office) *Windsor Park and part of the Forest*, 1800 (Berkshire Record Office) W J Smith, *Plan of Windsor Great Park*, c 1830 (Royal Collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1912

Description written: May 1999 Amended: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 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.