

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ADLESTROP PARK and HOUSE

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Name: ADLESTROP PARK and HOUSE

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Adlestrop

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.937858
Longitude: -1.6482607
National Grid Reference: SP 24278 26653
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000750
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

A country house, and a former rectory, with integrated pleasure grounds and a landscape park of c 1800 by Humphry Repton.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Adlestrop Park Adlestrop, formerly monastic land, has been owned by members of the Leigh family since 1553. Soon after he succeeded his father in 1623 William Leigh (d 1690) took up residence here, perhaps converting a barn south-east of the church into a house. From this time until the early C19, when James Henry Leigh MP (d 1823) inherited Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire (qv), the family were usually resident here. From William Leigh it passed to successive elder sons: Theophilus (d 1725), who may have laid out formal gardens; William (d 1757), for whom Sanderson Miller enlarged the house and Samuel Driver laid out gardens; James (d 1774); James Henry (d 1823), who with his uncle Thomas Leigh, the rector, brought in Humphry Repton (1752-1818) in 1798 to improve Adlestrop; and Chandos, created Lord Leigh (d 1850), for whom W A Nesfield (1793-1881) made alterations and laid out a parterre. Thereafter the manor descended with the peerage until c 1960 when Lord Leigh made over the estate to his eldest son. It remains (1999) in private ownership.

Adlestrop House Adlestrop was only a chapelry of Broadwell but it was here, from 1540 until 1937, that the rector had a house. From 1699 onwards the rector was a member of the Leigh family or one of their connexions. The Rev Thomas Leigh (d 1813) was the uncle of the novelist Jane Austen, who first visited in 1794, and again in 1799 and 1806. It has been suggested (LUC 1993) that in Austen's Mansfield Park (1814), improvements suggested for Thornton Lacey were based on what was done at Adlestrop House, while a recently landscaped estate at Compton was modelled on Adlestrop Park. When Austen was at Adlestrop in 1806 on another visit the Rev Leigh unexpectedly inherited Stoneleigh Abbey. Repton was brought in there by Leigh in 1808, and after Leigh's death in 1813, his nephew J H Leigh and his family removed from Adlestrop Park, making Stoneleigh Abbey the family's main seat. Thereby the rector and the Rectory assumed the dominant role in Adlestrop village. In 1937 the Church Commissioners sold the Rectory to the Leighs and it became part of the Adlestrop estate which it has since remained.

DESCRIPTION

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LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Adlestrop Park stands within its park on the north side of the A436, c 5km east of Stow-on-the-Wold. Unclassified roads loop off the A436 around the east and west sides of the park, serving the village of Adlestrop which lies north of Adlestrop Park. Adlestrop House, formerly the Rectory, stands 200m north-west of Adlestrop Park, on the north side of the village churchyard. Both houses are set on a ridge, with the church between them very much part of the overall composition, with long views south-west over gardens, pleasure grounds, and parkland. The area here registered is c 75ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Adlestrop Park The main approach to Adlestrop Park today (1999) is from Adlestrop village, via a road down the east side of the churchyard. This approach, as probably since c 1800, kinks east to run along the outside of the north-west forecourt before entering the forecourt via a gate with tall piers close to the house. In 1759 it entered the forecourt through a gateway in the centre of its north-west side, adjoining the corner of the churchyard. A back drive begins at a gate 300m south of Adlestrop Park on the A436, and runs to the service buildings east of the house. Formerly, between c 1849 and the earlier C20, the formal approach began at a lodge of 1849 700m south-west of the main house, from which a drive (grassed over 1999) took a curving line to the forecourt on the north-west side of the house. W A Nesfield was working at Adlestrop at this time and lodge and drive may be part of his improvements. The drive of 1849 replaced Repton's main drive of c 1803, which approached from the south-west along the line of the closed turnpike from Chipping North to Stow.

Adlestrop House The entrance to Adlestrop House is from the south-east, off the village street.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Adlestrop Park Adlestrop Park (listed grade II*) is a C17 building with later additions, notably those resulting from building campaigns of c 1700 when the north-west front was added, 1750-62 to designs of Sanderson Miller (d 1780) who added the main three-storey gothic south-west front, and of 1796-9 when an east wing (demolished post-1946) was added. Until 1937, when the name transferred to the old Rectory, Adlestrop Park was known as Adlestrop House.

North-east of the house is a row of three stone houses, Laundry Cottages. Some 50m north-north-west of the house (outside the registered area) is a large square dovecote of c 1800, possibly converted from an 'old summer house' paved in 1762-3 (LUC 1993).

Adlestrop House Adlestrop House (listed grade II) incorporates the greater part of a six-bay, eight-hearth house constructed by the rector, Richard Johnson, in 1672. Thomas Leigh, rector 1762-1813, moved the entrance from the south side to its present position on the west front.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Adlestrop Park On the north-west side of the house is an informally lawned court with gravelled turning circle. The court is bounded by tall stone walls, possibly of c 1700. That to the north-east is pierced by an entrance with square stone piers, while the wall to the north-west continues around the south side of the churchyard. It has two ashlar niches inset in it facing the house, possibly survivors from the rococo garden of c 1760. The court lawn continues along the south-west front of the house, separated from the park by railings; there are several mature specimen trees including a cedar of Lebanon, two Scots pine, a mulberry, a variegated sycamore, and another cedar. Some 20m south-east of the house steps at the end of a path (now removed) along the south-west front rise onto a raised lawn to the south-east of the house.

A water garden, part of Repton's work here c 1800 (he referred to it as a 'flower garden'), leads south-west from the garden around the house as a lush wooded walk down a stream with low stone splashes. At the head of the garden, 150m west of the house, is a small pool with rockwork, the east bank of which is the location proposed by Repton for a striped, canvas-covered bath house (whether this was ever constructed is unknown).

Theophilus Leigh, who inherited in 1690, probably created a canal parallel with the north-west entrance front. This was retained by the nurseryman and garden designer Samuel Driver who worked at Adlestrop from c 1750 until the early 1760s. He designed new rococo gardens, principally south-west of the house, with serpentine paths and a small serpentine pool adapted from the existing canal and spanned with a Chinese bridge. Most, if not all, of this work was carried out. A summerhouse was built in 1763 on a circular mound (largely scarpd away c 1800) 50m south-west of the house, at the south corner of Driver's new garden. There was also much new planting. Repton was employed a generation later to sweep away this garden with its 'expensive showy summerhouses' (Kingsley 1992) in favour of a new, simpler and single scheme for this house and the Rectory, which largely survives today. He first visited Adlestrop in 1798, and work payments continued for fourteen years. He created a unified

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design for Adlestrop Park and House, while at the same time retaining a discrete identity for each property. No Red Book is known, although that for Stoneleigh Abbey mentions the planting at Adlestrop. There was further planting at both Leigh properties in the 1820s. William Andrews Nesfield made various minor changes c 1848 and laid out a parterre (no longer extant) against the centre of the south-west front and, presumably, the path across the front.

Adlestrop House South-west of the House is a lawn, with a narrow tongue of ornamental garden and a fountain extending c 300m to the west backed by a clipped tapestry beech hedge. At its east end is a summerhouse, at its west a tennis court.

The garden of Adlestrop House was 'improved' by Humphry Repton under the supervision of the rector, Thomas Leigh, between 1799 and 1812, concurrently with the landscaping of Adlestrop Park over whose park it has a fine view towards the River Evenlode. The Rectory garden extended to the upper of the park's two artificial lakes, and was large enough to be known later on as the Little Park.

PARK Adlestrop Park The parkland associated after 1803 with Adlestrop Park extends principally north-east and south-west of it, with the house standing midway along the north-west side. The ground slopes downhill from north-east to south-west. This part of the park is permanent grassland and retains a small number of over-mature parkland trees as well as having some more recent planting. The park is rich in earthworks, with extensive areas of broad ridge and furrow, apart from in a 200m wide zone around the house where it has apparently been levelled, and to the east of the north end of the main lake, occupied by Adlestrop's cricket ground and small pavilion. Running across the park and through the ridge and furrow are hollow-ways of roads stopped up in 1803. Most prominent is the old turnpike from Chipping North to Stow. This begins c 100m south-east of the south end of the lake, and runs on a straight line north-east for c 500m before turning south-east, below a slight rise in the ground, parallel with the south-west front of the house. In the mid C18 two avenues ran off in straight lines from the edge of the pleasure grounds across the park, one south-west from the base of the summerhouse mound, the other south-east on the main south-east axis of the house. A short section of the former was replanted in the 1990s in oak, and a longer section of the latter in lime.

North-east of, and above the house, and east of the kitchen garden, is The Nursery, mature woodland with some specimen trees. The water garden west of Adlestrop Park leads to the north-east end of the larger of Adlestrop's lakes, 400m long, aligned south-west to north-east, and describing a shallow reversed S. It is retained by a contour dam along its north-west bank. This is visible from Adlestrop Park, glimpsed through the woodland which envelopes its south-west end. A walk leads around this lake, with views uphill across the park to Adlestrop Park.

Adlestrop House The lawn west of Adlestrop House runs down to a sinuous, 250m long, north/south lake which lies 200m west of it. The south end of this lake is close to the south-west end of the water garden and the north-east end of the larger, Adlestrop Park lake. The parkland west of the two lakes was arable in the late C20.

The parkland around Adlestrop Park and House was created by Repton c 1803. There was apparently no Red Book. Imparkment was preceded, and facilitated by, inclosure (1775), exchanges, and a reduction in the number of tenants. These changes made easier the closure in 1803 (following proposal of 1798) of local roads and footpaths running south-west to north-east via Adlestrop village, and the movement south by c 200m of the turnpike road to its present route (as the A436) along the southern boundary of the park. The upper lake was reworked, the lower one created, and bridges and boathouses constructed. Shelter belts and clumps were planted.

KITCHEN GARDEN Adlestrop Park In the mid 1760s Samuel Driver made a new walled kitchen garden on the west side of the churchyard. New kitchen gardens 200m north-east of Adlestrop Park (outside the area here registered) formed part of Repton's improvements there c 1800.

REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Gloucestershire VI, (1965), pp 8-11 N Kingsley, The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume Two, 1660-1830 (1992), pp 46-9 Adlestrop Park: Restoration Plan, (Land Use Consultants 1993)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1883, published 1884

Description written: May 1999 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: March 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.