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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

AWBRIDGE DANES

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Name:	AWBRIDGE DANES
County:	Hampshire
District:	Test Valley (District Authority)
Parish:	Awbridge
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District:	Test Valley (District Authority)
Parish:	Sherfield English
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.002869 Longitude: -1.5434678 National Grid Reference: SU 32130 22708 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001287 Date first listed: 14-Dec-1993

Details

Pleasure grounds, follies, and a park laid out on a new site to complement a gothic mansion of c 1820 by the architect William Garbett.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Embley estate (qv) passed by marriage into the Heathcote family and became the residence of Thomas Freeman Heathcote, heir to Sir William Heathcote, third Bt (1746; 1819), whose Hampshire seat was at Hursley Park, 9km south of Winchester (Heathcote 1897). He undertook extensive works at Embley, turning it from a manor house into a large country mansion with 'highly improved Pleasure Grounds' (Awdry 1906). The land which comprises the Awbridge Danes estate was originally bought by Freeman Heathcote to add to the Embley estate. This land was enclosed from Awbridge Common (Milne, 1791) and added to farmland purchased from the Bernard and Atkins families (Marriage Settlement, 1844 HRO). On his father's death in 1819, Thomas succeeded his father as a childless widower of fifty years old (Awdry 1906) and offered to adopt his nephew William, son of the Rev William Heathcote, but this offer was refused as his mother did not wish her son to be much under his influence; the refusal grievously offended Sir Thomas who thereupon adopted another child, the son of his butler (ibid). Upon Sir Thomas's death in 1825 the Awbridge portion of the Embley estate was settled on the Rev Thomas Heathcote Tragett, the adopted son whom he had educated.

Between 1822 and 1825 a new mansion, Awbridge Mount, was built and a landscape park set out (Tilbrook, 1825; Greenwood, 1826). The house was designed by William Garbett (c 1770; 1834), a Hampshire architect who was principally an ecclesiastical architect and for twenty-five years surveyor to the Dean and Chapter of Winchester. He designed various rectories in the area

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and another major country house at Heron Court, Hampshire for the first Earl of Malmesbury. He may have advised on the landscape as he also provided designs for the Greek Revival-style boathouse and temple at Awbridge Mount.

By 1859 the property had become known as Awbridge Danes, on account of the Danish encampment at Dunwood Hill to the west of the park. The property remained in the family until 1923 when George Lane Tragett sold it at auction to Captain Charles Kelvyng Greenway, owner of the nearby Stanbridge Earls estate. The site remains (2000) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Awbridge Danes lies 5km north-west of Romsey and 1km south of Awbridge village, on the east side of Danes Road. The grounds slope eastwards down towards the River Test, the 57ha site being formed along the valley of a tributary of the Test which joins the river some 2km to the north-east at Timsbury.

The site is bounded on all sides by woodland, which has increased considerably in relation to the original extent of open parkland.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES A short drive leads directly eastwards off Danes Road up to the principal entrance on the north-east front. A short length of drive leads off to the walled service court, offices, stables, and a circular dovecote situated on the north-west side of the house. A lower drive leads in from Coombe Lane to the east, past the hamlet of Lower Ratley and around the south of Awbridge Danes Lake, then across the park to Dunwood Hill Bottom.

The original entrance drive led in from Danes Road (some 50m north of the entrance to Danes Farm) to a carriage circle on the south-west front of the house. A spur led north off this drive and through an ornamental gothic arch directly into the walled courtyard. This arrangement had been altered by the 1850s (Estate map, 1859).

To the south-west on the junction of Danes Lane and Old Salisbury Lane stands the Round House (early C19, listed grade II), a picturesque pair of cottages, now combined into one, which marked the southernmost point of the Awbridge estate (Tilbrook, 1825), outside the area here registered.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Awbridge Danes House (listed grade II*) was built by William Garbett in the Neo-Gothic style in 1825, for the Rev Thomas Heathcote Tragett. Shortly after the 1820s, an additional bay was added to the north end, and an aviary to the south.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS An early C20 brick terrace along the south-east front leads to the lawn. At the northern end of the terrace is a pergola, and to the south is a brick-built alcove. The eastern edge of the lawn is lined by a high conifer hedge (1990s) which obstructs the views to be had from the house and terrace.

To the south-west of the service courtyard, which lies on the west of the house, is a folly (early C19, described as a shrine, listed grade II), built into a high mount. Steps lead up to a central platform with a stone seat backed by a stone wall. Central to the wall is a stone arch with a large single keystone, carved as a bust of a man with scrolled initials over and below a crown.

The pleasure grounds were separated from the park by a low park railing which remains in part. This enclosed an area of lawn curving around the south-west and north-east fronts.

PARK The parkland, now reduced in extent from the 30ha shown on the map of 1859, lies immediately to the south-east of the house and slopes down to the 3.5ha lake. The lake is broadly crescent-shaped, formed at the confluence of two streams, one flowing from the west and the other from the north with a sluice at its southern corner from where the water issues out towards Coombe Lane. It may have been formed out of a series of public sandpits quarried on Awbridge Common (Marriage Settlement, 1844). The northern arm of the lake lies in thick woodland with an underplanting of laurel and holly. The southern part, once relatively open parkland and described in 1859 (Estate map) as 'Broomy Ground', is now also wooded.

Rides lead through the woodland to and around the lake. The remains of a boathouse, rebuilt as a loggia in 1925 (listed grade II), stand on the east shore of the northernmost arm of the lake. William Garbett, whose drawings survive in the RIBA drawings collection, designed the original boathouse, built in 1822. It consisted of a Doric temple with portico over three rusticated arches springing from piers, with flanking walls running back to rusticated end piers. This underlying section formed the boathouse, which is located on a very picturesque spot with views southwards along the length of the lake.

KITCHEN GARDEN The rectangular walled kitchen garden and gardener's cottage were built as an integral part of the early C19 scheme. The walled garden stands, screened by a plantation, on the west side of Danes Road and was reached by a drive

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opposite the main entrance drive to Awbridge Danes House. The gardener's cottage has been demolished and a new house (late C20) erected within the walled garden.

REFERENCES

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Maps Thomas Milne, *Hampshire or the County of Southampton*, 1" to 1 mile, 1791 Awbridge, *The Property of Rev'd TH [Tragett]*, Drawn by T Tilbrook, Horningsham, 1825 (187 M84/13/1-2), (Hampshire Record Office) C and J Greenwood, *A Map of the County of Southampton*, 1" to 1 mile, 1826 Estate map accompanying *Proceeds of Sale* document, 1859 (16M57/127), (Hampshire Record Office) Awbridge Danes Estate Sale plan, 1923

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1872 2nd edition published 1911 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1867

Illustrations William Garbett, Pen and monochrome wash, Doric temple and boathouse on Awbridge Danes Water (RIBA drawings collection)

Archival items Settlement on the Marriage of the Revd Thomas Heathcote Tragett and Miss Louisa Lane, 1844 (16M57/119), (Hampshire Record Office) Apportionment by the Reverend Thomas Heathcote Tragett & Mrs Tragett of the proceeds of Sale and Exchange of Hereditaments, 1859 (16M57/127), (Hampshire Record Office) Awbridge Danes Estate Sale particulars, Knight, Frank and Rutley, 1923 (copy on EH file)

Description rewritten: September 2000 Register Inspector: KC Edited: January 2004

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.