

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

ETON COLLEGE

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

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**ETON COLLEGE**

Name: ETON COLLEGE

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Eton

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.494495  
Longitude: -0.60335445  
National Grid Reference: SU 97054 78208  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000584  
Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

## Details

C15 and later school courts, gardens and park incorporating playing fields.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Eton College was founded in 1440 by Henry VI, who founded King's College, Cambridge (qv) in 1441 and subsequently linked the school to King's in order to supply college scholars. Eton College chapel was begun in 1441. Following Henry's deposition in 1461, the college's income was much reduced, and building work stopped altogether until the later 1460s. The majority of the ranges surrounding School Yard and Cloister Court were finished by 1500. At least two gardens had been laid out by the late C17 (Loggan, 1690): the Provost's Garden and what is now (1998) the Headmaster's Garden, both laid out in simple geometrical style to the north of the main college buildings. At that time the two courts, School Yard and Cloister Court, appear to have been laid to lawn, the former with paths crossing it. By the late C19 (OS 1883) the Fellows' Garden had been laid out east of the main college buildings and the surrounding meadows had been landscaped, incorporating the playing fields to the north. Further playing fields were laid out to the west of the Eton to Slough road in the early to mid C20, and to the north on Agar's Plough fields, which were surrounded by belts of trees and planted with avenues. The site remains (1998) in school use.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Eton College occupies the north side of the town of Eton, adjacent to the north bank of the River Thames. The largely level, c 18ha site is bounded to the north by the B3026 Pocock's Lane linking Eton with Datchet, and to the west by the B3022 Slough to Windsor road, part of which forms the north end of Eton High Street. The west boundary is marked at the northern end by a brick wall, incorporated within the remains of Fifteen Arch Bridge standing c 150m north of the main buildings, to the west of which lie further playing fields and college buildings. The south boundary is marked by village buildings, that to the east being formed by the north bank of the River Thames. The setting is partly rural, to the north-west and east, with views north over Agar's Plough towards the M4 and beyond this the urban centre of Slough. Views also extend east over the river and the long, narrow Romney Island to the northern tip of Windsor

Home Park (qv). The college is directly overlooked by Windsor Castle and its terrace (qv), standing c 1km south of the site on a commanding promontory.

**ENTRANCES, APPROACHES AND COURTS** The historic core of the college consists of two adjacent open spaces in the form of courtyards or courts surrounded by the main building ranges (largely of red brick with stone dressings), with further service buildings and associated open spaces surrounding this core. The main entrance to the college approaches off the B3022 at the north end of the village, set back off the High Street beyond a paved forecourt. The entrance is set in the centre of Upper School, the west range of School Yard, opening into the loggia along the east side of Upper School (late C17, listed grade I). The rectangular School Yard, laid with cobbles and stone paths in 1716 and relaid in the late C20, is further enclosed by the Lower School and Provost's Lodge ranges to the north (C15, listed grade I), the college chapel to the south (C15, listed grade I), and to the east Lupton's Tower (early C16, listed grade I), which is flanked by contemporary ranges. A bronze statue of the Founder, Henry VI (Francis Bird 1719, listed grade II) stands at the centre of School Yard, on a stone plinth surrounded by iron railings. A gateway at the south-east corner leads into Brewhouse Yard, a service yard giving access to the adjacent service buildings, and beyond to the south to Baldwin's Shore lane. West of this lane, and screened from it by college buildings lies the graveyard, the site of the parish church before it was demolished in the mid C15 to make way for the college chapel. It is laid to lawn with several stone chest tombs, open to the west onto the High Street, from which it is separated by iron railings. The gateway at the bottom of Lupton's Tower gives access to Cloister Court (C15, listed grade I), surrounded by ranges enclosing an open cloister around a square lawn, with a small, square, central stone pond and fountain. A passage from the north-east corner leads north into a narrow yard, flanked to west and east by the brick walls of the Provost's and Headmaster's Gardens respectively, leading north out into the north park and playing fields beyond.

The north drive enters 250m north of the main buildings, off the B3022, past a single-storey brick lodge (C19) in Tudor style standing to the south of the drive, with a late C20 cricket pavilion adjacent to the east. From here the drive curves east and south to the brick Sheep Bridge which carries the drive across the Colenorton Brook just before it reaches the Thames. Here the drive meets two paths extending south from the north boundary with Pocock's Lane and Agar's Plough playing fields beyond. The western path enters the north park 0.5km north-east of the main college buildings, north of the cricket ground, via a brick and stone memorial bridge and gateway set up in the early C20 across the Willow Brook. From Sheep Bridge the drive continues south-west through parkland with sports pitches to the west, enjoying views of the river to the east and Windsor Castle above it to the south. The drive arrives at the passage leading north from Cloister Court between the Provost's and Headmaster's Gardens, continuing west and south into Weston's Yard, with access into the High Street past the north-west corner of School Yard.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens are divided into three main sections: the Provost's Garden and adjacent Memorial Garden to the King of Siam, the Headmaster's Garden lying adjacent to the Fellows' Garden, and Luxmoore's Garden, the latter lying on an island in the river at some distance from the main college buildings and other gardens.

Fellows' or College Garden extends east from the east range of Cloister Court. Several doors, set into the bottom of projecting towers in this range, give access to the Fellows' Garden. The Garden is raised above the surrounding parkland and is enclosed to the south and east by a brick wall supporting iron railings, with gateways in the south-west corner and at the centre of the east boundary. The square garden is surrounded by borders, within which gravel paths lie to the west, south and east, enclosing a panel of lawn. At the south-west corner, just beyond the Garden, is an outstanding London Plane, and towards the south-east corner stands a Lebanon cedar. Gravel paths lead north from the northern corners into the Headmaster's Garden, that to the west running alongside a single-storey service range, before turning east to continue along the border below the brick north wall. Here it overlooks an informal lawn to the south bounded on the south side by a low brick wall separating it from the Fellows' Garden. The path continues east along the north wall to a service area, where it is joined by the path from the north-east corner of the Fellows' Garden. A hedge separates the Headmaster's lawn from the service area.

In the late C17 (Loggan, 1690) the Fellows' Garden does not appear to have been laid out to its later extent, only a small garden being present in the north-west corner of the current garden area. The area of the Headmaster's Garden, enclosed by brick walls and service buildings, may at that time have been a kitchen garden, as it was bounded to the east by small yards and an octagonal dovecote, and only the northern half was laid out in a formal geometric fashion. A tent appears to have been pitched in the

southern half. By the late C19 (OS 1883) the Headmaster's Garden was certainly in use as a kitchen garden and the Fellows' Garden had acquired its present form, being planted with scattered trees and containing a perimeter path.

The Provost's Garden lies west of the Headmaster's Garden, separated from it by the narrow passage from the north-east corner of Cloister Court. The Provost's Garden is entered from a garden door at the south-west corner, giving access from the Provost's Lodge. A gateway in the north wall gives access via King Prajadhipok's Memorial Garden from the drive and park to the north, and the passage from Cloister Court to the east. The north-facing Provost's Garden is bounded to the east by a high brick wall, to the north by iron railings set on a brick retaining wall, to the west by C18 and C19 ranges and to the south by the north range of the C15 Cloister Court. The garden is laid largely to lawn with perimeter borders and specimen trees and shrubs, including a large, specimen holm oak in the north-east corner. At the centre lies a circular paved feature (late C20) enclosing formal beds surrounded by clipped box hedges.

The north gateway, flanked by brick gate piers and an iron gate, leads down semicircular stone steps into the sunken garden with a rectangular plan, laid out in 1929 as a memorial to King Prajadhipok of Siam. Raised borders surround two panels of lawn flanking the stone-paved central path which leads north to a further flight of steps in similar style leading up to a lawn and the drive beyond.

In the late C17 (Loggan, 1690) the Provost's Garden appears to have been laid out in simple geometric form, divided by two paths set in cruciform pattern into four equal panels of lawn surrounded by small trees or bushes, the whole being surrounded by perimeter paths below brick walls to the west, north and east. By the late C19 (OS 1883) the formal layout had gone, and buildings had been built on the west and north boundaries, that to the north having gone before the Memorial Garden was built in 1929.

Luxmoore's Garden lies on an island in the Thames beyond the field to the south-east of Cloister Court. A wooden bridge (late C20) leads onto the island to an informal lawn, with a path extending south to the formal rectangular lawn at the centre of the garden, surrounded by gravel paths, borders and ornamental specimen trees and shrubs. A late C19 wooden summerhouse overlooks the lawn at the south-east corner. Further paths extend south towards the remote tip of the island, flanked by borders. The garden was developed in the late C19 by H E Luxmoore (House Master 1871-1902), in a 'natural' style, with winding paths and generally informal planting of trees and shrubs, some now (1998) in impressive maturity, including a notable *Cercis siliquastrum*. Views extend north across the meadow to the college buildings, particularly the upper parts of the chapel.

**PARK** The park surrounds the main college buildings to the south, east and north, being bounded and dominated by the river to the east. The southern section, laid to rough grass with some mature trees, lies to the east and south of the college buildings. It is divided from the northern area by a small inlet from the river, forming a peninsula at the northern tip. Views extend north-east along the river from here.

The northern section is divided into two west to east by the Colenorton Brook. It is laid partly to rough grass with many mature specimen trees, surrounding playing fields. Fellows' Pond, possibly an old fishpond, lies on the south bank of the Brook. A path beneath the northern arches of Fifteen Arch Bridge on the west boundary gives access to further playing fields and school buildings to the west (lying outside the area here registered).

In the late C17 (Loggan, 1690) the southern park seems to have consisted of a series of islands with uncultivated meadow and heathland, separated from the river bank by a curving fence. At that time the southern end of what is now (1998) the northern parkland appears to have been laid to lawn, with an avenue of trees flanking the drive at its southern end as it approached the college buildings (this avenue probably extended north to Pocock's Lane). In the mid C18 (Willis and Clark 1886) the majority of the present southern parkland was still separated into islands: the northern one being College Eyot, with adjacent to it to the south Kitchen Close, named due to its proximity to the free-standing kitchen building which straddled the branch of the river separating the island from the mainland. By the late C19 (OS 1883) the whole of the present park (both north and south sections) had been laid out, amalgamating those islands. Avenue trees remained at the south end of the drive, with to the north of Sheep Bridge a double avenue of trees extending north-east to Pocock's Lane, aligned on the drive to the south.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The former kitchen garden lay on the site of the present Headmaster's Garden, the eastern section of which remains as a nursery and service area.

#### REFERENCES

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Maps W Collier, *Plan of the town and castle of Windsor and Little-Park, town and college of Eton, 1742* (Royal Collection)  
J Rocque, *Map of Berkshire*, 1761  
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1883 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1912  
Description written: November 1998 Amended: March 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 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.