

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ST MARY'S HOSPITAL, STANNINGTON

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Name:	ST MARY'S HOSPITAL, STANNINGTON
District:	Northumberland (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Stannington
label.localisation:	Latitude: 55.123620 Longitude: -1.7165456 National Grid Reference: NZ 18175 81063 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001478 Date first listed: 24-Oct-2000

Details

The grounds of a medium-sized, echelon-style psychiatric hospital, opened in 1914, and laid out from 1910 by the Gateshead Borough Cemetery Superintendent and the Borough Surveyor.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Gateshead Borough Lunatic Asylum was designed in 1910 by the architect and asylum designer George T Hine. The asylum was intended to serve the pauper industrial population of urban Gateshead and for this purpose the 300 acre (c 121ha) West Duddo farm was acquired in the remote parish of Stannington, Northumberland in 1909 at £31 per acre. Hine produced a design to accommodate 400 patients in ward pavilions laid out in echelon arrangement to form a broad arrow plan, with the intention of extending the building to accommodate 500 patients. The echelon style, developed in the 1870s and 80s, had by this date become the common pattern for asylum buildings. The wards were each intended to be occupied by a different medical class of patient, including sick and infirm, recent and acute, and epileptic. The airing courts were arranged adjacent to the wards as in earlier C19 asylum designs, and the parkland, including a large kitchen garden, enclosed the building and courts. The asylum opened officially in 1914.

The Minute Books of the Visiting Committee of Gateshead Borough Asylum (1907 onwards, Tyne and Wear Archives) provide information on the period during which the building was erected and the grounds were laid out, the latter starting in 1910 and continuing until 1916. The Minutes detail the initial report in 1909 of Mr George Cooper, Gateshead Borough Cemetery Superintendent, who gave advice on the layout and planting of the grounds and roads over the following four years, in conjunction with the Borough Surveyor where structural advice was required (Minute Book, September 1910). Much of the landscaping, particularly the planting, was carried out from 1914 by the male patients as part of the therapeutic regime, as had been the case in many other asylums.

Several peripheral buildings were added during the later C20, including a nurses' home. The asylum, renamed St Mary's Hospital in the mid C20, closed in the mid 1990s; it is at present (2000) awaiting redevelopment.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING St Mary's Hospital stands at the southern end of Northumberland, 4km north-west of the village of Stannington, c 25km north of Gateshead. The c 43ha site lies on largely level ground, in a remote rural setting, and is surrounded principally by agricultural land and woodland. To the north the site

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is bounded by the Catraw Burn, to the north-east by a group of staff houses, and to the east by the Duddo Burn. Much of the boundary is marked by belts of trees and woodland.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The east approach to the hospital enters the site 350m east of the main, north entrance to the hospital building, at the point where Green Lane (providing access from Stannington to the south-east) meets Bet's Lane (providing access from Tranwell and Morpeth to the north). Just west of the junction of Green Lane and Bet's Lane, a pair of brick gate piers stand to north and south of the broad entrance to the site, straddling Green Lane. From here the drive extends west. Two brick houses stand 15m west of the entrance, flanking the drive. To the north stands the two-storey, brick-built, early C20 Lodge House. To the south and set back off the drive stands the two-storey Royston Lodge, considerably larger than Lodge House and formerly the Medical Superintendent's residence, set in its own substantial grounds. The drive leads directly into a forecourt on the west side of Royston Lodge, giving access to open lawns to the south and west, the garden being enclosed by mature trees and hedges. A mature monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) stands immediately to the north-east of Royston Lodge.

From the Lodges the east drive curves west, flanked closely by mature trees underplanted with shrubs. Some 50m north-east of the main north entrance to the hospital building, the drive arrives at the broad, semicircular north lawn. This lawn is enclosed to the west and north by a semicircular band of closely planted mature sycamore and horse chestnuts, in front of which stands a c 2m high clipped beech hedge. Two mature weeping ash trees stand as specimen trees on the lawn. The drive runs through the lawn to the north front of the hospital building, giving access to service yards. It arrives at a turning circle enclosing a circular panel of lawn which lies adjacent to the main, central entrance on the north front.

From the main entrance on the east boundary, Green Lane extends north-west through the site close to the north boundary, giving access, via several rows of early to mid C20 staff housing (OS 1921; outside the area here registered), to Saltwick Moor to the west of the site. Green Lane was rerouted from a more southerly path during the mid C20 to accommodate the Burnholme Hospital building.

A second, south drive enters the site 250m south of the hospital, giving access, via a track to the south through fields, from West Duddo Farm (1.3km south of the hospital; outside the area here registered), which stands on the Stannington to Saltwick lane. The drive, lined by mature trees including a line of Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*) and clipped beech hedges, extends north flanked by the former kitchen garden to the west and playing fields to the east. The south drive turns north-west 100m south of the hospital to encircle the two westernmost airing courts. Some 50m west of the main entrance to the hospital, the drive turns east to run along the north side of the building, arriving at the turning circle by the north entrance. A further, largely tree-lined north-west drive extends north-west from the turning circle, bisecting the north lawn. It runs through the line of sycamores and horse chestnuts bounding the north lawn, passing the chapel standing 100m north of the hospital, giving access to the former isolation hospital located 250m north-west of the main building.

The drive system was laid out from 1911, to a plan by George Cooper and the Borough Surveyor, Mr Pattinson (Minute Book, 1910).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The two-storey hospital building (G T Hine 1910-13) stands towards the centre of the site, built of brick as a series of pavilions set in echelon form. The Tudor-style administration block projects from the centre of the north front, with a water tower close by to the south-east. The administration block terminates the north end of a central, spinal service block, including kitchens and a recreation hall. This service block is in turn flanked to the east by the three former male accommodation pavilions, linked by corridors, and to the west by the three former female accommodation pavilions, linked in similar fashion. On the north front, to the west and east of the administration block, lie service yards and former drying grounds, some of which are separated from the ornamental grounds to the north by brick walls. The south, west, and east sides of the building overlook the airing courts and grounds beyond.

The isolation hospital, built at the same time as the main hospital building, stands 250m to the north-west, set on a south-east-facing terrace. Further buildings including villas and a nurses' home were added to the periphery of the main hospital building and to the north half of the site during the C20.

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GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens consist largely of a series of former airing courts for the patients' recreation. Six of these lie to the south of the pavilion wards, which open directly onto them. To the south of the four central wards, flanking the central service block, lie the four original main airing courts. These are largely laid to lawn and planted with scattered mature trees including sycamore, aspen, and beech, and are enclosed by further mature trees and flowering shrubs. Each contains a formal path system, surrounded by a perimeter path, at the centre of which stands an octagonal wood and iron shelter. Each airing court retains much of the original iron boundary fencing, sunk into ha-has now (2000) largely filled in. Two further airing courts flank these four main courts, to the west and east, to serve the furthest west and east ward blocks which were added in the 1920s or 30s. These courts are laid out in similar manner, largely to lawn with perimeter paths and perimeter planting, the east one containing two late C20 prefabricated blocks. Each of the four earliest courts contains the remains of an outdoor privy block, placed in pairs adjacent to the southern boundary. The privy buildings have gone, but the concrete bases remain. The airing courts overlook the adjacent grounds and playing fields. Four further airing courts lie enclosed by elements of the hospital building. They are largely laid to lawn set with scattered shrubs, with perimeter paths.

To the south of the central service block, separating the two central exterior airing courts, lies an avenue of horse chestnuts, flanking a central grass path. The avenue is flanked in turn to the west and east by the iron fences of the two central external airing courts and further mature trees, including a line of pine trees. This path allows access from the two central external airing courts and central service block to the playing fields to the south. The avenue was laid out with broadleaved and coniferous specimens (OS 1921).

The airing courts were laid out according to the recommendations of the Commissioners in Lunacy's Suggestions and Instructions (1856, revised 1887, 1898, 1911), that they 'should be of ample extent so as to afford proper means for healthful exercise [for the patients]. They should all be planted and cultivated, and any trees existing within them should be preserved for shade.' This was amplified in H C Burdett's influential text *Hospitals and Asylums of the World* (1891): 'The courts should be laid out as gardens, and orchards, and lawns. The walks should be twelve or fifteen feet wide, and laid down to asphalt or concrete. All the courts should have sun-shades and kiosks.' The result of Cooper and Pattinson's plan, drawn up in 1910 and laid out over the following four years (Minute Book, December 1910) is illustrated on the 1921 25' OS map. In 1913 a dialogue between the architect Mr Hine and the Visiting Committee centred on the wet nature of the subsoil of the site and the difficulty in keeping the sunk ha-has, in which the airing court fences were to be constructed, free from water. The Committee insisted on retaining the ha-ha construction, as they found this a very good way of fencing airing courts, and provided Hine with a method of overcoming the drainage problem (unstated) (Minute Book, March and May 1913).

PARK The park is divided into northern and southern sections by the east drive, and by the hospital building itself. The southern half of the site contains the former playing fields, extending south from the exterior airing courts. The playing fields are bounded to the south and east by belts of trees including pines, and to the west by the south drive and beyond this the kitchen garden. A bowling green (now overgrown) lies in the south-east corner of the playing fields, with the remains of tennis courts adjacent to the west. A wooden cricket pavilion stands in the north-east corner. A block of woodland lies adjacent to the north-east of the playing fields, from which it is divided by a lawn in which stands a mid C20 villa. To the east of the playing fields lies an open field, bounded to the south by a pine belt and to the east by Duddo Hill Plantation.

The north half of the site is bounded to the west by a belt of coniferous woodland, to the north by the Catraw Burn and to the east by staff housing known as The Villas (standing outside the area here registered). It is divided into several open compartments by belts of trees and blocks of woodland and contains several early C20 buildings, including the chapel, and the isolation hospital which formerly stood in its own enclosed grounds (OS, 1921). The site of the former Deputy Medical Superintendent's house lies adjacent to and within the northern boundary, set within a large rectangular garden. It is now (2000) known as Strathmore, the house having been rebuilt in the late C20. Further buildings within the site include a nurses' home (mid C20) standing 150m north-west of the main hospital entrance and a single-storey, former army psychiatric unit standing 200m north of the main hospital entrance, as well as several scattered patient villas. In the northernmost paddock, 300m from the main hospital entrance, formerly stood the mid C20 Burnholme Hospital, now (2000) demolished, with the foundations and floor slab left in position.

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KITCHEN GARDEN The c 2ha, rectangular kitchen garden and nursery, now disused (2000), occupies the south-west corner of the site, to the west of the south drive and playing fields, lying 100m south-west of the main building. Largely enclosed by hedges and mature trees, it is approached from the south drive, from which a straight path, bounded in part by pear trees, leads west to the associated buildings, including workshops, frames, and other structures. A pair of semi-detached gardeners' cottages stands on the east boundary adjacent to the south drive.

In 1910 a nursery was formed to grow-on trees required for the planting of the estate, including several thousand young sycamore. In 1911 a quote from Matheson's nursery for trees and shrubs was accepted at £148, and these were planted in the nursery to await transferral to their final planting sites during and after construction of the asylum. The nursery ground subsequently formed the kitchen garden. The kitchen garden formed an important element of the therapeutic regime for the male patients, as in all pauper asylums.

The asylum farm, West Duddo Farm lies 1.3km south of the hospital building (outside the area here registered). The male patients in particular were given farm work as part of the therapeutic regime.

REFERENCES

Commissioners in Lunacy, Suggestions and Instructions (1856, revised 1887, 1898, 1911) H C Burdett, Hospitals and Asylums of the World (1891)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1924 OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1921

Archival items Visiting Committee Minute Books and Annual Reports, 1907 onwards (1957), (Tyne and Wear Archives, Newcastle) Hospitals file 102631, NMR, Swindon

Description written: October 2000 Amended: January 2001 Register Inspector: SR Edited: July 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.