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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

TREWITHEN

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TREWITHEN

Name: TREWITHEN

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Probus

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.290504
Longitude: -4.9330638
National Grid Reference: SW 91172 47510
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000510
Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

Early and mid C18 pleasure grounds which form the setting for an early C20 woodland garden, together with C18 and early C19 parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Trewithen, in the late C17 the property of Courtenay Williams, was purchased in 1715 by Philip Hawkins of Pennans. Philip Hawkins made improvements to the existing house in 1723, and in 1730 employed James Gibbs as his architect. This programme of improvement included planting in the pleasure grounds and park. When Hawkins died without issue in 1738 the estate passed to his nephew, Thomas Hawkins, who continued the development of the pleasure grounds and park, and in 1745 wrote a short treatise, *The Care and Cultivation of Trees (CRO)*. A plan of 1747 (CRO) shows the extensive landscape developed by Thomas Hawkins before his death in 1766, while an account written by Hawkins' father-in-law, James Heywood, in 1757, and an engraving by William Borlase published in 1758 provide further evidence for the appearance of the house and grounds in the mid C18. Hawkins also made changes to the house, employing the Greenwich architect Thomas Edwards in 1738, and Sir Robert Taylor in the 1760s. Thomas Hawkins was succeeded in 1766 by his son, Sir Christopher Hawkins, who extended the property and in 1824 commissioned a plan from Henry St Aubyn to extend the park to the north, east, and west of the house, producing a picturesque circuit ride (E Banks Assocs 1990). At his death without issue in 1829 Trewithen passed to his nephew, Christopher Henry Thomas Hawkins, whose father, John Hawkins, owned Bignor Park, Sussex (qv) and managed Trewithen during his son's minority. On coming of age in 1843 C H T Hawkins spent some time at Trewithen and in the mid C19 commissioned plans for parterres from W A Nesfield (Pett 1998) but these appear not to have been implemented. After c 1850 Hawkins spent little time in Cornwall, and at his death in 1903 the estate was inherited by his nephew, John Heywood Johnstone, who died the following year and was succeeded by his son, George Horace Johnstone (1882-1960). During the First World War the government requisitioned timber from the pleasure grounds, the clearance of which allowed the establishment of the early C20 woodland garden planted with collections of rhododendrons and camellias, many derived from Cornish gardens including Caerhays Castle (qv) and Trengwainton (qv), and Borde Hill, Sussex (qv). In the early and mid C20 notable hybrid rhododendrons were raised at Trewithen.

Today (2000) Trewithen remains in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Trewithen is situated to the south of the A390 road c 0.75km east of the village of Probus and c 2km west of Grampond. The c 80ha site comprises some 6ha of gardens and pleasure grounds and c 74ha of parkland, and is bounded to the north by the A390 road and a public footpath which follows the course of a road which was diverted to the north in the late C20. The eastern boundary of the site is formed by a minor road leading south from the A390 road to Tregoney, while the southern boundary is formed by a further minor road which leads west from the former road towards Probus. To the west the site adjoins agricultural land. The site is undulating, with the house standing on a level area towards its centre from which the ground drops away to the east, south, and south-west. There are extensive views south and south-west from the pleasure grounds and park, which are framed by woodland c 270m south-east of the house and outside the registered site; specimen trees c 270m east-south-east of the house and outside the registered site are also prominent in views south-east from the park. From the north entrance to the site there are wide views north across adjacent agricultural land.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Trewithen is approached from the A390 road to the north, where the entrance is marked by an early C19 ornamental wrought-iron gate supported on a pair of open-work wrought-iron piers (all listed grade II). The tarmac drive extends c 160m south-east through the north park before passing through a further early C19 ornamental wrought-iron gate supported on wrought-iron piers (all listed grade II) and turning east-south-east for c 240m to reach a junction north of the stables. A secondary drive leads south to enter the stable and service yard north-west of the house. The principal drive leads south-east from this point, passing through an early C19 wrought-iron gate flanked by a series of granite bollards linked by two rows of chains (all listed grade II) to enter the carriage court north of the house. The drive encloses a circular lawn, while to the east and west the court is enclosed by a pair of mid C18 brick pavilions (listed grade I), that to the east having been built as a carriage house and that to the west as stables. The hipped slate roof of each pavilion is surmounted by a lead-covered cupola. To the north of the carriage circle is a lawn retained by a ha-ha which allows views north across the park. The lawn supports a flagstaff, and is bordered to east and west by specimen trees and shrubs.

A further drive approaches the site from the minor road forming its eastern boundary at a point c 800m south-east of its junction with the A390 road. The entrance is marked by a pair of early C19 stone piers with pyramid caps ornamented with acroteria which support an early C19 ornamental wrought-iron gate (all listed grade II). The drive extends c 450m south-west across the east park, passing to the south of the kitchen garden and Home Farm which are approached by a service drive c 100m east-north-east of the house. Some 50m north-east of the house the east drive passes through an early C19 wrought-iron gate supported by a pair of open-work wrought-iron piers (all listed grade II) to approach the carriage circle from the north-east. Adjacent to the wrought-iron gate a secondary drive leads west below the ha-ha wall retaining the north lawn to reach a junction with the west drive north of the stables.

The present arrangement of the west drive and carriage court north of the house broadly reflects that shown on a sketch plan of c 1730(5 (CRO) and the 1747 Plan (CRO); the east and west drives assumed their present form as part of improvements made under the direction of Henry St Aubyn in 1824 (Plan, CRO).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Trewithen (listed grade I) stands towards the northern end of a levelled platform near the centre of the site. Constructed in a mixture of Pentewan ashlar and stuccoed brick and stone under hipped slate roofs, the house comprises two storeys with attics lit by dormers. The north or entrance facade is symmetrical, with a pair of projecting wings flanking a recessed central section with a centrally placed door set within an arched rusticated stone door case. The east facade has a centrally placed canted bay window, and is terminated to north and south by a pair of pilasters which support the moulded cornice. The symmetrical south or garden facade comprises a central block five bays wide with a centrally placed door case with a moulded cornice supported by a pair of carved stone brackets; the central block is flanked by a pair of slightly lower wings two bays wide. The west facade is of irregular plan and adjoins the service quarters.

Trewithen possibly incorporates elements of an earlier house which was rebuilt by Philip Hawkins in 1723, to plans provided by James Gibbs. This work comprised the central block of the present mansion, together with the pavilions flanking the carriage court to the north; this arrangement is shown on the plan of c 1730(5 (CRO). Further alterations were made for Thomas Hawkins by Thomas Edwards c 1738, while in the 1760s Sir Robert Taylor made additions to the house for Sir Christopher Hawkins. Plans of c 1790 by Matthew Brettingham for remodelling the house were not implemented (E Banks Assocs 1990). In the

early C19 Henry Harrison may have further altered the house for C H T Hawkins, having also worked for his father at Bignor Park, Sussex.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The informal woodland gardens and pleasure grounds are situated principally to the south and west of the house, with an area of lawns on the east-facing slope to the east of the house, and a walled garden to the west.

The walled garden is situated immediately south of the service and stable yard, and is enclosed by C18 brick walls c 3m high under slate and ridge-tile coping (listed grade II). Approximately rectangular on plan, the garden is laid out with brick perimeter paths and a central rectangular lawn in which are set two groups of geometric flower and rose beds. To the east there is a rectangular brick-edged pool, while to the west a brick path leads to a semicircular flight of brick steps flanked by stone eagles which ascends to a raised terrace and pergola. The pergola is terminated to the south by a single-storey summerhouse under a pyramidal roof. The walled garden was developed in the early C20 by George Johnstone from an C18 laundry yard (guidebook); it is not shown on the 1747 Plan.

To the south of the house a gravelled walk extends below the house and returns below the east facade. A level lawn extends c 75m south from the house, and is flanked to east and west and enclosed to the south by mature deciduous trees which are underplanted with extensive collections of rhododendrons, camellias, magnolias, and other predominantly Asiatic shrubs; this planting forms an irregular edge to the glade. The lawn and associated planting was created by George Johnstone in the years following the First World War when some 300 beech trees were felled to the south of the house. This woodland, which developed in the late C18 and early C19, replaced a rectangular lawn shown on the 1747 Plan extending from the house to the southern boundary of the pleasure grounds, creating a vista framed by trees.

The gravelled walk south of the house leads east to join a terrace walk which extends c 100m south along the boundary of the pleasure grounds, allowing views east across the park; this walk is screened from the south lawn by mature trees and shrubs. The walk is crossed by a ha-ha which runs from east to west in a serpentine line across the pleasure grounds c 100m south of the house. Beyond the ha-ha the east terrace walk continues for c 80m through an avenue of sycamores to reach the southern boundary of the pleasure grounds which is marked by a further ha-ha, below which a late C20 mixed shelter plantation extends west parallel to the boundary of the pleasure grounds. The 1747 Plan shows the east terrace extending c 100m south from the house to reach a square bastion, from which a walk of similar width led west across the south lawn to reach further pleasure grounds south-west of the house. A narrower walk is shown extending south of the square bastion along the south-east boundary of the pleasure grounds before returning west along the southern boundary to reach a circular bastion at the south-west corner of the pleasure grounds. The east terrace and sycamore avenue reflect the mid C18 plan, but neither the square bastion, the south walk nor circular bastion survives in its C18 form; these features are not shown on St Aubyn's Plan of 1824, or an estate plan of 1841.

To the west and south-west of the south lawn mature deciduous woodland is divided by a series of gravel walks and cherry laurel windbreaks; each area is planted with further specialist collections of ornamental shrubs. Some 250m south-west of the house, at the south-west corner of the pleasure grounds, an old quarry known as the 'Cock Pit' is planted with magnolias, rhododendrons, and tree ferns; this feature is shown on the 1841 estate plan. From the north-east corner of the quarry garden a gravel walk leads c 100m north-north-west through the woodland garden to reach a junction where walks lead east across the south lawn, and west along the north side of a meadow planted in the mid and late C20 with specimen trees and shrubs to reach the water garden in a valley c 400m south-west of the house. To the north of this junction the walk continues c 130m north-north-east, passing through a series of glades divided by further cherry laurel and conifer hedges. A circular glade c 100m south-west of the house contains a late C20 circular fountain and pool; this feature echoes a circular enclosure shown in the wooded pleasure grounds on St Aubyn's Plan of 1824, and the estate plan of 1841. The early C18 wilderness with serpentine walks and a circular feature containing a statue of Pomona which is shown in this area on the sketch plan of c 1730-5 and the Plan of 1747, and which is described in James Heywood's Diary of 1757 (private collection) does not survive (2000).

The water garden in the valley south-west of the house comprises a stream which has been dammed to form a chain of three ponds c 530m west-south-west of the house. A walk descends c 200m from the pleasure grounds following the course of a

small stream to reach a further stream in a valley which ascends north-west to the chain of ponds. A gate leads to the minor road forming the southern boundary of the site adjacent to the stream. The walk follows this stream, crossing the valley on a causeway below the ponds before ascending c 200m to enter an avenue of beech. This avenue allows views north into the park and south across a west-facing sloping meadow; it leads c 200m east-north-east to join the west drive c 240m north-west of the house. A ride or walk is shown on the 1747 Plan leading south-west from the pleasure grounds into the valley to reach a gate on the minor road forming the southern boundary of the site; this corresponds to the present walk leading to the water garden. St Aubyn's Plan (1824) shows the circuit walk leading through the valley past a single large pond and returning to join the west drive; this area of the pleasure grounds was developed in the early C19 as part of St Aubyn's scheme of improvement for Sir Christopher Hawkins. The estate plan of 1841 shows the circuit in its present form, with a chain of three ponds west-south-west of the house.

A further area of mid and late C20 ornamental planting adjoins an irregularly shaped pond c 130m north-east of the house and immediately west of the drive leading to the Home Farm. The pond is not shown on the Plan of 1747, but is indicated on St Aubyn's Plan (1824).

PARK The park is situated on undulating ground and surrounds the house and pleasure grounds on all sides. To the north and north-west of the house the park remains pasture with scattered specimen trees and clumps. To the north-west the A390 road is screened by a mixed boundary plantation, while there are further boundary plantations c 400m north and c 370m north-north-east of the house. The north and north-west park was developed from agricultural land by Sir Christopher Hawkins c 1824 following the Plan drawn by Henry St Aubyn in that year. Many of the ilex oaks which are a feature of the north park were introduced by John Hawkins after the succession of his son C H T Hawkins in 1829, and were grown from acorns gathered at Bignor Park, Sussex (E Banks Assocs 1990). The 1747 Plan shows this area divided by hedges into large agricultural enclosures, with a vista formed by irregularly sized clumps of trees extending north from the house.

To the north-east of the house the park is today (2000) in arable cultivation, with boundary plantations to the north-east and east-north-east enclosed by sunk fences; this area was developed as park from agricultural land c 1824 as part of Henry St Aubyn's scheme of improvements for Sir Christopher Hawkins. The east-facing slope below the house and pleasure grounds remains pasture with scattered specimen trees; it descends c 320m from the house to a small stream which flows from north to south through the east park. The 1747 Plan shows a double avenue aligned on the east facade of the house descending to an approximately elliptical pond; these features do not survive today (2000) and it appears that St Aubyn's proposed serpentine water in the valley east of the house was not implemented (Plan, 1824). The park to the south, south-east, and south-west of the house and pleasure grounds is in mixed agricultural use, and is divided into four large enclosures; these broadly correspond to the divisions shown on the 1747 Plan. The minor road forming the southern boundary of the site is screened by a narrow plantation of pines c 450m south-west of the house.

A park was enclosed at Trewithen before 1758 (Pett 1998), at which date Borlase showed the enclosures to the south and south-east of the house stocked with deer. By 1814 Lysons described the park at Trewithen as a 'paddock' (Lysons quoted by Shirley 1867). It assumed its present form and extent in the early C19 as part of a scheme of improvements for Sir Christopher Hawkins which is shown on the Plan of 1824.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden is situated c 190m north-east of the house, immediately east and south-east of the C18 and early C19 buildings of Trewithen Farm, the home farm. The garden is approximately rectangular on plan and is enclosed to the north by a brick wall, while the east wall is of stone construction. The southern boundary of the garden remains open but is screened from the house and park by trees and evergreen shrubbery. The garden is divided into three compartments by lateral and transverse brick walls. The north-west compartment is bounded to the north-west by the farmhouse and coach house, while the north wall is formed by the plain rear elevation of the C18 implement shed. This wall is terminated to east and west by a pair of two-storey pedimented brick pavilions, that to the west with a single high-roofed chamber and fireplace, and that to the east with a corner stair ascending to an upper chamber (all listed grade II). A C20 lean-to glasshouse has been constructed against the south-facing wall linking the pavilions, while there is a further late C19 or early C20 timber and glass three-quarter-

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span glasshouse and a range of frames against the south-facing wall to the north of the north-east compartment. The south-west compartment is today a nursery area with a range of late C20 glasshouses and polytunnels.

The kitchen garden is shown on its present site on the 1747 Plan, although at this date it comprised a single enclosure with the pair of pavilions and implement shed forming a central symmetrical feature on the north wall. The garden was altered in the late C18 or early C19 when the construction of the pond to the west caused the farm buildings to be rearranged. It is shown in its present form on St Aubyn's Plan of 1824 and the estate plan of 1841.

REFERENCES

W Borlase, *The Natural History of Cornwall* (1758), pl 23 C S Gilbert, *Historical Survey of Cornwall* ii, (1820), p 830 F Hitchens and S Drew, *The History of Cornwall* (1824), p 570 E Twycross, *The Mansions of England and Wales ... Cornwall* (1846), p 49 E P Shirley, *Some Account of English Deer Parks* (1867), p 88 Lake's *Parochial History of Cornwall* iv, (1872), p 98 *Country Life*, 113 (2 April 1953), pp 1512-15 N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Cornwall* (2nd edn 1970), p 231 N Holman, *Trewithen Gardens A History and Guide*, guidebook, (1980) *Trewithen Landscape Restoration Plan*, (Elizabeth Banks Associates 1990) *Inspector's Report: Trewithen, Cornwall*, (English Heritage 1990) D E Pett, *The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall* (1998), pp 146-8

Maps Sketch plan of Trewithen, c 1730(5 (DDJ(2)/48/3), (Cornwall Record Office) J Gibbs (?), Plans for Trewithen House, c 1730 (DDJ(2)/1), (Cornwall Record Office) A Plan of The Barton House Plantations and Gardens of Trewithan The Seat of Thomas Hawkins Esqr, 1747 (DDJ/2279), (Cornwall Record Office) Sketch plan of the forecourt and drives, c 1760 (DDJ (2)/48/7), (Cornwall Record Office) H St Aubyn, Plan for the alteration and Improvement of Trewithen Park in the County of Cornwall The Property of Sir Christopher Hawkins Baronet ..., 1824 (Cornwall Record Office) Tithe map for Probus parish, 1840 (Cornwall Record Office) R Symons, Plan of Trewithen and other Lands in the Parish of Probus, Cornwall, The Property of C H T Hawkins, 1841 (DDJ/1464), (Cornwall Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1908

Illustrations Watercolour view of Trewithen from the north, c 1750 (private collection) Watercolour view across east park from east terrace, c 1820 (private collection) Watercolour view of Trewithen from the south, c 1830 (private collection)

Archival items The Hawkins and Johnstone family papers, including plans, estate and garden accounts, building records and surveys, are held at the Cornwall Record Office (DDJ and DDJ(2)). Plans and designs for garden and park buildings at Trewithen, early C19 (DDJ(2)/50/1(9), (Cornwall Record Office) Thomas Hawkins, *The Care and Cultivation of Trees* (1745), (Cornwall Record Office) James Heywood's Diary, with account of pleasure grounds at Trewithen, 1757 (private collection)
Description written: December 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: October 2001

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.