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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WHINBURN

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Name:	WHINBURN
District:	Bradford (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Keighley
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.880077 Longitude: -1.9277393 National Grid Reference: SE 04848 42656 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001643 Date first listed: 02-Sep-2002

Details

Gardens and pleasure grounds partly laid out in c 1897 with additional formal landscaping and features dating from 1912 to 1938, with some design work in the latter period by T H Mawson and Son.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Whinburn was built in 1897 for Prince Smith III (1869?1940), a partner in the textile machinery manufacturing business of Prince Smith and Son which had been founded by his grandfather in the late 1860s. Prince Smith III later changed his name to Prince Prince-Smith and inherited a baronetcy from his father, Prince Smith II, in 1922. By the beginning of the C20 the business was the largest of its type in Europe (Sheeran 1993). Whinburn was described in 1902 as a large modern mansion with well-kept gardens (Scott 1902).

In 1912?13 the house was redesigned and extended (Sheeran 1993), and by 1919 (OS) a setting of formal terraces had been laid out to the north-east of the house. By 1934 (OS) the area of formal terracing had been extended and a small area of additional land to the south-east incorporated into the grounds. A number of drawings in the archive of the Lancaster firm of landscape architects T H Mawson and Son (CRO), founded by Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933), show proposals for various areas of the grounds, including alterations to the carriage court and the upper garden pavilion on the revised south-east boundary. Some of these drawings are titled as work for Sir or Lady Prince-Smith and thus date from after 1922. Within the period 1925-32 Lady Prince-Smith commissioned etchings of Whinburn from Frederick J Mitchell who described the house as set in a series of terraced rose gardens and with a natural stream running through grounds which were landscaped for the outlook across the Aire valley (Dalesman 1974).

Following the death of Sir Prince Prince-Smith in 1940, Whinburn was used as a training centre by the National Institute of House-workers and in the early 1950s was purchased by the Local Authority for use as a school, initially residential. The school closed in mid 2002. The property is now (August 2002) vacant and in the ownership of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 3ha roughly rectangular grounds lie c 2km north-west of Keighley town centre. To the north-east the grounds adjoin Hollins Lane with the boundary marked by a high random rubble wall. Other boundaries generally adjoin open farmland with, to the north-west, a small triangular wooded area (outside the area

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here registered) adjacent to Whinburn Farm (formerly Burnside) and, separated from the grounds by an access track, late C20 housing on Hollins Lane to the south-east. The boundary to the wooded area and part of the north-north-west field boundary is marked by early C20 iron stock fencing and the farmland boundary to the south-east by mid C20 iron railings. Elsewhere farmland boundaries are generally marked by drystone walls.

The site occupies steeply rising ground on the south-west side of the Aire valley with the river c 0.8km to the north-east. The surrounding area is in mixed agricultural and residential use with farmland to the south, west, and north-west and late C20 housing immediately to the north-east.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance (listed grade II with entrance lodge) lies on Hollins Lane at the eastern corner of the grounds. It is set back from the road between low serpentine dressed stone walls and is marked by a carriage entrance with a late C20 vehicle barrier between tall, square stone piers with openwork ashlar finials topped by small balls. The junctions of the low serpentine walls with the boundary wall are marked by piers in similar but plainer style topped by large balls. Immediately south-west of the entrance is a two-storey lodge (listed grade II with the entrance). The lodge, in dressed stone with ashlar dressings below stone slate roofs, dates from 1912 and was designed by Simpson and Ayrton. From the principal entrance an approach drive curves northwards, rising parallel to a wooded embankment adjacent to the Hollins Lane boundary, before returning westwards towards the stable block. Some 30m north-east of the stable block the drive divides, with the southern arm curving southwards to lead into a stone-setted carriage court adjoining the east front of the house on the wide central terrace. The carriage court is bounded by low stone walls, that to the north-east being the coping of a coursed rubble wall retaining the central terrace and topped with stone bollards with chains between.

A second entrance on the north-west farmland boundary, 140m west-north-west of the principal entrance, is marked by an early C20 iron field gate between iron posts. Early C20 OS plans indicate that this entrance was served by an approach drive leading off a track from Hollins Lane to Burnside (now Whinburn Farm) to the north-west. On the same farmland boundary, c 100m westwards, is an iron pedestrian gate. This gate, now (2002) disused, leads onto a tree-lined track leading westwards to Whinburn Farm which in the early C20 formed part of the track leading from Hollins Lane (OS). On the south-south-east boundary a further disused pedestrian gate, 190m west-south-west of the principal entrance, gives access to farmland to the south. It is understood that in the late C19 and early C20 this farm property and the farmland adjoining Whinburn were in the ownership of Prince Smith III (Anne Tupholme/Jane Furse pers comm, 2002).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Whinburn house with its attached stable and coach-house block (the whole listed grade II) is situated c 120m west of the principal entrance on a terraced area at the centre of the site with the north-east entrance elevation facing across the Aire valley. The two- and three-storey house is in coursed rubble with ashlar dressings and stone mullioned windows below a stone slate roof. A galleried great hall is marked by a tall canted bay on the entrance elevation. At the north of the entrance elevation is a tower topped with square corner turrets and irregular battlements around a platform from where there are views out over the grounds, across the Aire valley to the north-east and over the surrounding countryside, with Victoria Towers, a local landmark dating from 1887 and also known as Steeton Towers, prominent to the north-west. The lower U-plan stable and coach-house block which adjoins the house to the north-east is built into the rising ground around a level courtyard. The stable block and part of the house, designed by James Ledingham, a Scottish architect based in Bradford, date from 1897. In 1912 Prince Smith commissioned a firm of London architects, John W Simpson and Maxwell Ayrton, to redesign and extend the house (Sheeran 1993). Building work, supervised by architects Moore and Crabtree of Keighley, was carried out during 1912/13 and the completed scheme was described and illustrated in *The Building News* in June 1915.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The steeply sloping grounds are divided at their centre by a wide terrace which in part forms the site of the house and stable block, with ground to the north-east falling away from the buildings and largely laid out with a series of formal terraces. Rising ground to the south-west is largely wooded and laid out with embanked terraces and an informal stream garden. The whole is now (2002) much overgrown.

To the south-east of the carriage court two flights of shallow stone steps, forming a V, lead down between stone walls to a landing from where a single wide flight of steps leads down to a terraced walk and a further flight to a lower terrace. The top landings of the two upper flights are marked by stone paving in an octagonal motif with that to the north interrupted by the hall

bay. These landings are linked by a stone-paved path which returns adjacent to the southern elevation of the house to terminate at the south corner with a similar paved octagonal motif laid out as a compass. The carriage court, with similar bollard detail, together with the steps and landing paving layout are shown on post-1922 Whinburn drawings in the Mawson archive.

To the south-east of the house the central terrace is tarmacked and is the site of two late C20 single-storey classroom buildings. Beyond these buildings, adjoining the south-east boundary, is a garden pavilion in coursed rubble below a pyramidal stone slate roof, built on two levels into the rising slope. The upper level, accessed by external stone steps and an arched entrance, has an ornate painted plaster ceiling and large wall openings from where there are views out over the grounds and the countryside beyond. At the lower level a shallow recess, with remnants of a similar painted ceiling, lies at the head of a wide stepped stone path leading 38m north-east adjacent to the boundary where it terminates at a further, single-storey garden pavilion. The stepped path is flanked by pairs of tall square pillars of coursed rubble. The single-storey pavilion is in irregular coursed stone below a gabled stone slate roof, with arched door openings to the western pergola path and to a terrace walk to the north, the latter flanked by projecting stone piers with finials. Openings in the other two elevations allow views out towards the principal entrance, farmland, and the countryside beyond with the southern of these openings containing a decorative cast-iron grille. There is evidence of similar inserts to other viewing openings in both garden buildings. Alterations to the upper pavilion, together with the pairs of square pillars forming part of a pergola, are detailed on drawings of Whinburn of c 1920s in the Mawson archive. To the north-east of the central house terrace is a series of six descending formal terraces laid out across the slope and about an axial line running north-eastwards from the centre of the V-plan steps to a break in the tree line on the eastern boundary. This break provides views out over the Aire valley from the higher levels. The upper three terraces, divided by coursed stone retaining walls, are bounded to the south-east by the pergola walk from which they extend for c 82m. The highest is a 4m wide walk, the second a wide terrace in four linear compartments linked by a pair of stone steps to a further terrace walk lined by a wide planting bed adjacent to the upper wall. This latter walk terminates to the south-east at the lower garden pavilion. The four compartments of the middle terrace are on differing levels linked by short flights of stone steps with stone handrails and balusters, with a lower rectangular compartment being symmetrical about the axial line and laid out with stone-paved paths enclosing formal planting beds. This rectangular area is flanked by one square compartment to the north and two to the south. The southernmost compartment, adjacent to the pergola walk, contains a bathing pool constructed in the 1970s and the other two are each planted with a formal arrangement of four fruit trees.

To the north-east of the lower garden pavilion is a late C20 bungalow. To the north-west of the bungalow a sunken path, flanked by low embankments with rhododendrons, leads from the lower terrace walk to meet the approach drive to the west of the lodge. To the north-west of this sunken path are the lower three formal terraces, divided by hedges above stone retaining walls. The upper wide terrace of these three is grassed and accessed from the lower terrace walk via axial stone steps comprised of two curving flights leading down off a central landing. Below this wide grassed terrace two narrower terraces are each laid out with axial water features set in grass. On the higher one is a formal canal comprising a small rectangular pool with planting ledges flanked by narrow rills which each terminate in a small circular pool. A low arched recess in the retaining wall adjacent to the rectangular pool has evidence of a former wall-mounted water feature. The canal is indicated on the 1919 OS map. On the lower terrace is a formal pool with a single central fountain jet. In plan this pool is rectangular with two symmetrical apsidal ends. To the south-east of this pool stone steps lead up to a circular stone-walled feature within which a circular path encircles a low, round, coursed stone wall, formerly a raised planting bed or fountain basin. This arrangement is in turn encircled by two sets of stone steps, each in two flights, enclosed within the outer coursed stone wall with planting pockets. The two upper flights of steps join at a short balustraded stone bridge backed by an evergreen hedge. From the bridge a hedge arch leads onto the canal terrace with the arch axial with a lower path leading into the feature from the approach drive to the north-east. In the stone wall below the bridge is a low arched recess. This circular feature and the formal pool on the lower terrace are both indicated on the 1934 OS map.

To the south-west the central house terrace is bounded by an embankment curving north-west from the higher garden pavilion on the south-east boundary to the stable block where it terminates at a short flight of stone steps. Low stone walls to the south-west of the stable block are evidence of former glasshouses indicated on the 1908 and 1934 OS maps. At the southern corner

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of the house stone steps leads up to a grassed terrace, with small pool, running parallel with the house. From the southern end of this grassed terrace stone steps lead up to the south-west to a rising path flanked in part by evergreen shrubs which forms the southern boundary of two further embanked terraces. The lower is a terrace walk lined with mature trees and rhododendrons which at its northern end intersects with a winding path leading south-west from the stable block. This junction is marked by a circular feature formed by low drystone walls and curved steps with the broken remains of a central stone pedestal. This circular feature is indicated on the 1934 OS map. The higher terrace is a largely open area, sloping gently down to the north-east, enclosed by hedges and bounded to north and south by rising paths. It is very probably a former kitchen garden. Ground to the south-east and south-west of this open area is wooded with some fruit trees. Orchard planting is indicated in these areas on the 1934 OS map.

On high ground adjacent to the south-west boundary, 250m west-south-west of the principal entrance, is a rectangular reservoir, set into the slope with a stone-paved surround and iron railing enclosure. To the north-east the reservoir wall is retaining with a wide outlet forming a waterfall to a pool below. Above the waterfall the retaining wall is topped by a parapet of ornamental rockwork which forms a balustrade to the reservoir surround which here serves as a viewing platform over the stream valley leading north-east below. Immediately north-east of the waterfall pool the stream is culverted for c 22m at which point it emerges as a low cascade. From here the rockwork-lined stream bed, partly concreted, continues north-eastwards via a series of low cascades and small pools to a larger irregular pool to the north-west of the stable block from where it is culverted. The lower pond is partly constructed in late C20 concrete blocks. This arrangement is largely as indicated on the 1908 OS map with a natural stream (OS 1853) utilised to create the series of water features, except for the lower pool which is first indicated on the 1934 edition.

A part of the upper concreted stream bed is now (2002) dry and in poor condition with the water flowing underground. Traces of paths lined with rockwork lead up the slope on either side of the stream and a tree-lined path leading westwards from the lower pond, along the north-west boundary, is partially evident. Ground to the south of this latter path, and north of the stream, is wooded with occasional evidence of further rockwork-lined paths and short flights of stone steps.

Immediately north of the reservoir is a large grassed terrace set above a low embankment to the east and below a steep wooded embankment to the west and north-west. At the foot of this embankment a raised stone walkway, with occasional recesses into the slope, encloses two sides of the terrace from where there are views out over the falling wooded slope and stream to the east. A post-1922 Whinburn drawing in the Mawson archive shows proposals for a formal garden on this terrace, formerly a tennis court, which do not appear to have been implemented.

The grounds of Whinburn, with many mature trees, very largely retain the layout and principal formal landscape features indicated on the 1934 OS map with the western area of the grounds remaining generally as indicated on the 1908 edition.

REFERENCES

W H Scott, *The West Riding of Yorkshire at the opening of the Twentieth Century*, Contemporary Biographies, (Pike's New Century Series no 6, 1902), pp 68, 335 *The Building News*, (16 June 1915), pp 690-3 *Yorkshire Observer*, 3 July 1940, p 3 *The Dalesman* 36, (December 1974), pp 717/18 *Keighley News*, 21 February 1975 G Sheeran, *Brass castles: West Yorkshire new rich and their houses 1800-1914* (1993), pp 97?8, 134-7 *Yorkshire Gardens Trust Newsletter*, no 11 (Autumn/Winter 2002)
Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1852 1909 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1908 1919 edition 1934 edition

Archival items Whinburn drawings are held in the archive of T H Mawson and Son, Lancaster at the Cumbria Record Office, Kendal (WDB 86/M21). These include: portion of drive and carriage court; gate piers; garden house, existing and proposed; proposed arrangement of carriage court; survey, identifying trees; ponds and streams; suggested treatment of site of old tennis court showing planting. Late C20 and early C21 photographs, (Yorkshire Gardens Trust)

Verbal information given in August 2002 by Anne Tupholme and Jane Furse of the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

Description written: August 2002 Amended: October 2002 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: November 2002

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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.