

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ESTCOURT PARK

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

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ESTCOURT PARK

Name: ESTCOURT PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Long Newton

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Shipton Moyne

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Tetbury Upton

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.618049
Longitude: -2.1456147
National Grid Reference: ST 90015 91035
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001437
Date first listed: 29-Sep-1999

Details

Landscape park developed from the late C18 through into the mid C19 as the setting for a country house (demolished). W A Nesfield provided plans for alterations to the park and lake in 1850.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Walter de la Estcourt acquired the estate in 1303 and it remained in his family until its sale in 1996.

In the early C16, Thomas Estcourt created a park. A large manor house was built in the mid C16 by Edmund Estcourt this being shown in an engraving by Johannes Kip of c 1712 (Atkyns 1712). Kip depicts the house standing in formal gardens and orchards set in a park crossed by avenues, with a lane giving access to the gateway in the south side of the second of two courts which extended from the south front. An estate map of 1770 shows an avenue leading south across the fields to a gateway which presumably formed part of this earlier landscape. In 1769 Thomas Estcourt (d 1818), a distant relative of the original family, inherited. The house by this time was in poor repair, but it was not until 1776 when Estcourt obtained a private Act of Parliament enabling him to sell other property, that money was available for a new residence. The somewhat scattered Estcourt estates were consolidated by exchange and a new park, with a lake and ornamented with fir trees, was laid out within the former

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field system. William Donn, who had recently designed the Abbey House, Cirencester, was invited to prepare plans but he fell into a dispute with Estcourt and was probably not the final architect. The foundation stone of the new house was laid in October 1776, the site being c 1km to the north of the old house, the site of which became Park Farm (outside the area here registered). The old house was pulled down in 1779 and a plan of the park and Home Farm c 1815 shows the park with broadly the same layout that it retained into the late C20.

Thomas' son, Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt carried out works to modernise the house in the late 1820s and early 30s, possibly adding a third storey (Kingsley 1989). There is a payment in the estate accounts to 'Wyatt', probably Lewis William Wyatt, perhaps for further alterations to the house (E Banks Assocs 1997). William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881) was called in to provide proposals for altering the lake, producing two sketches, both dated 1850, one of the proposed treatment of the water, the other a sketch showing possible improvements to the view north from the house. T G B Estcourt's son, Thomas Henry Sutton Estcourt (1801-76; took his wife's family name of Sotheron in 1839, combining the names in 1855 to become Sotheron-Estcourt) inherited on the death of his father in 1853, and immediately employed Thomas H Wyatt to make improvements to the house including the addition of a bow window, billiard room, and conservatory. Wyatt, who had a family connection with the Estcourts (his wife, they married in 1853, was G B Estcourt's sister), instigated improvements which included extensive work to the estate buildings and the rebuilding of the church in 1864-5 (Verey 1970). Nesfield was kept on, and changes to the grounds continued including the laying out of a formal garden in 1854, and the creation of a new waterfall (Kingsley 1992). Following the death of T H Sotheron-Estcourt, the estate passed to his nephew, George Thomas John Estcourt (1839-1915), created Baron Estcourt in 1903, next being inherited by his cousin Edmund Walter Estcourt. Four years later Edmund transferred the property to his son, Thomas Edmund Sotheron-Estcourt in whose hands it remained until his death in 1958. The house was demolished in 1964 under the ownership of T D G Sotheron-Estcourt who subsequently, in 1996, sold the estate. It remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Estcourt Park lies 2km south-east of Tetbury, 2km to the south and south-west of the village of Long Newnton, and 1.8km to the west of the county boundary with Wiltshire. The River Avon flows from west to east in a deep wooded valley through the north side of the site, the parkland falling gently to the north-west, west, and south. Elsewhere, the 87ha park is surrounded by gently rolling agricultural land.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES A track leads west from the church at Long Newnton, turning south to meet the B4014. Opposite this junction, marked by Newton Lodge and Park Cottage (both added by T H S Sotheron-Estcourt in the mid C19), the route continues as a drive leading south-west through a band of parkland, past Grange Farm to its north, to the River Avon (Tetbury Branch) where this enters the estate. Crossing the river via a bridge over the northern end of the lake, it enters the park where it turns southwards then divides. Both forks run the length of the parkland, that to the east curving to approach the north side of the house site, that to the west continuing south to pass down the west side of the estate buildings near the house, between the kitchen gardens, then across farmland as a track to Manor Farm (formerly, OS 1903, Ivyhouse Farm) and Park Farm and so to the Fosse Way. This northern drive was laid out in the 1770s to provide a fitting approach to the new house.

The mid C19 Eagle Lodge (formerly Shipton Lodge, listed grade II), so named because of the sculpted figure of an eagle which surmounts the square gate piers, stands 1.3km to the south-west of the house site, set back between wing walling from the public road which runs south from the A433, past Underbridge to Shipton Moyne. The single-storey lodge is probably of the 1860s and by Thomas H Wyatt (1807-80). From the gateway between them, the drive leads through an oak avenue planted in 1837 (E Banks Assocs 1997), and then across farmland before entering the wooded south-west corner of the park. From here it continues north-east, crossing the west arm of the north drive before joining the east arm close to the house site. The drive is shown on a plan of the park of c 1815.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The site of Estcourt House lies roughly at the centre of its irregularly shaped park, the elevated position on the summit of a knoll affording long views to the north towards the spire of Tetbury church. To the north-east the land falls steeply to the lake.

To the west of the house site is a complex of estate buildings set within grassed enclosures and yards, the whole divided from the parkland to north and south by fencing surmounting a stone-built ha-ha. The buildings include the Bailiff's House, now (1998) known as Estcourt Park Farm (listed grade II), built in Tudor-Gothic style in 1854, probably to the designs of T H Wyatt, and enlarged in the later C19. Of random coursed stone, its roof is tiled in fish-scale pattern with the estate's tiles. The urns on the gateway (listed grade II) which stands to the north served to decorate the mansion and were moved here on its demolition (E Banks Assocs 1997); the stone piers are of C19 date. The buildings between the Bailiff's House and the site of the former mansion include a set of animal shelters (probably early C19, listed grade II), a small barn (probably early C19, listed grade II), the former coach house (listed grade II), now (1999) mainly stables, dating probably from the 1780s, and the ashlar-faced main stable block (listed grade II) to the north of the latter, which is dated 1781.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the south-east of the house site is a levelled rectangular platform, held on its north-east side by a stone-built retaining wall which now (1999) is laid to rough grass with encroaching scrub. Formal gardens were in existence by 1805 (estate accounts) but the formal parterre, with four grass plats around a central circular fountain, shown on mid C20 photographs, may have been the formal garden mentioned in the estate records as having been laid out in the mid C19 with the assistance of Elizabeth Bouverie.

Paths lead from the house terraces westwards through wooded pleasure grounds to the west and south sides of the main kitchen garden. To the north and east, broad terraced walks lead down the valley side to the long sinuous lake which forms the focus of the pleasure grounds. An ornamental lake had been formed by 1798 then, in the mid C19, William Andrews Nesfield was called on to remodel the water. Plans of the estate of 1865 show considerable alteration to the shape of the water, although not to the design shown on Nesfield's plan of 1850, with a dam added 650m from the north drive bridge causing a widening of the northern half and a narrowing of the western part of the southern section. An island was added north of the dam, 200m north of the house site.

From the lakeside, the terraced walks continue eastwards to the lower dam which provides a crossing point. From the south-eastern end of the gardens south of the house, a track leads north-east then eastwards alongside the edge of the park from which it is separated by a c.1.5m high stone wall, before dropping down to join the terraced walks. A walk on the south side of the valley continues eastwards to Shipton Mill (listed grade II), a mid C19 cornmill occupying a far earlier mill site, which stands at the very eastern tip of the site (outside the area here registered). Many of the large conifers, and some of the picturesque routes through the woodland date from the mid C19 improvements.

PARK A narrow strip of parkland leads up from the pleasure grounds and over the skyline, along the length of the north side of the valley. Across the bridge over the lower dam, the walks turn back westwards providing access to the late C19/early C20 (OS) boathouse cut into the north shore of the lake. They continue then along the length of the northern valley side, through Ham Brake, to meet the bridge which carries the north drive where the river enters the park. Walks continue from here both across the park and along the southern shore of the lake, and so back to the house. The estate records indicate that part of the network of ornamental drives across the park were additions of the mid C19.

The strip of parkland flanking the drive from Newton Lodge leads to the main part of the north park which is the major area of parkland in the estate. Formerly more wooded (OS 1903), it is now (1999) less so, but many parkland trees survive. So too do the blocks of woodland shown as enclosing its west side on the survey of c 1815 and later maps: Limewell Plantation to the north, meeting Thorn Covert, then Lamb Lease and, just to the north of the west drive as it enters the park, another woodland block. Indeed, this survey shows the park in much the same form as it retains in the late C19.

The southern parkland, which divides into the area known as Keatings south of the kitchen garden complex, and the South Park east of this, now contains few park trees but some of the veteran oaks here are of considerable age. To the east of the northern half of the South Park lies Shipton Wood, an area of woodland dating back at least to medieval times.

KITCHEN GARDEN Beyond the estate buildings, 200m south-west of the house site, lie the kitchen gardens, two main walled enclosures divided by the drive to Manor Farm which passes between 1m high stone walls flanked by grass verges, possibly once slips. The easternmost of the walled gardens, added in the mid C19 as one of T H S Sotheron-Estcourt's improvements, contains the head gardener's house, set centrally within the brick walls. Walnut Cottage, which stands in its own garden enclosure 100m

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to the south-west, is of the same period. The westernmost walled garden adjoins further walled enclosures, a narrow garden strip to the south, and a broader enclosure to the north, with additional ones to the west, these latter being intended perhaps for keeping stock rather than for horticultural purposes. The enclosures to the west of the drive are screened from the western approach to the house by an arc of woodland, divided off from the parkland to the north by a ditch.

REFERENCES

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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.