

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WALCOT

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

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Name:	WALCOT
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Clunbury
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Edgton
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Lydbury North
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.458118 Longitude: -2.9581342 National Grid Reference: SO 34993 84895 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001321 Date first listed: 12-Jun-1995

Details

Gardens (landscaped in the 1770s by William Emes), arboretum and deer park, in all totalling 180ha, associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Walcot was long held by the Walcots until in 1763 it was sold by John Walcot and his son Charles to Lord Clive. This was during the time Clive spent in England between his second and third terms in India, as he built up a large landed estate around Bishop's Castle. Almost immediately he brought in Sir William Chambers to rebuild the house, and about ten years later, shortly before his death, employed William Emes to undertake improvements to its surrounds. After Clive's suicide in 1774 Walcot was inherited by his son, Edward, who married the heiress of the last Herbert Earl of Powis and in 1804 himself became Earl of Powis under a new creation. He made further alterations to the house, adding the ballroom and hothouse, this interest in horticulture being further evidenced by the large number of specimen trees planted about the grounds, some of which form the basis of Walcot's celebrated arboretum. The Clives sold Walcot in 1933. It remains (1999) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Walcot stands to north of centre of its park, 1km to the south of the village of Lydbury North. From the main (east) facade, there are panoramic views out over Walcot Pool to the Long Mynd, 5km to the north-east. The area here registered is the decorative, core, parkland. It omits a much larger area, once within Walcot's deer park. The registered area is roughly triangular, extending from the north bank of Walcot Pool to a point 200m below Springhead, above the pools on Pigeonhouse Bank. From this core drives, included within the registered area, extend out to public roads. The area here registered is c 150ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach is that from Lydbury North. The drive crosses farmland as a straight track lined with Turkey oaks, then enters the park, passing over the dam across Walcot Pool. From here it continues, turning south-east to become a straight, lime-lined approach to the east front of the house. This is part of an avenue present in the early C18, which ran across what was then farmland.

A second drive leads north from the village of Kempton, 2.2km to the south-south-east of the Hall. This starts at an estate cottage and runs north to arrive at the east front of the house. A second estate cottage, Park Cottage, late C18/early C19 (listed grade II), stands 30m to the north-east. Another approach leads west off the public road to the north of the village, over a late C18/early C19 bridge (listed grade II) past this cottage, then through a plantation, Sally Nursery, to join with the south drive. The south drive was the main approach in the early C18, at which date it appears to have been a tree-lined public road skirting along the eastern edge of the park. New roads were made between Walcot and Kempton in 1786-7.

A pair of early C19 lodges with attached walls, gate piers and gates (listed grade II) stand at an entrance at Brunslow Bridge, on the public road (B4385) to the east of the park, 1.5km north of Kempton. From them, an avenue, Walcot Avenue, leads west across meadows, and over the River Kemp via a probably late C18 limestone rubble bridge with ashlar dressings (listed grade II), continuing into the park to the south of The Dairy, to join with the south drive. To the east of the lodges the drive continues eastwards providing a route to Edgton.

A further lodge, Brockton Lodge, late C18, and remodelled mid to late C19 (listed grade II) stands outside the park, 60m south-east of the village of Brockton which lies 2.2km to the north-west of the house. To the south of the Lodge, a track leads east to the mid C19 Lake (formerly Walcot) Cottage (listed grade II) at the north-west corner of the park, continuing east across the park to join with the north drive.

In the early C18, the main approach to the house was via an avenue from the east which led past the buildings now known as Lower Gardens, and over a dam across a chain of three pools on the site of the present lake. The track then continued west along the then boundary of the park, towards the settlement of Lower Down. The park was later extended north of this track, and the approaches were altered, presumably at the time the lake was enlarged.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Walcot (listed grade II*) was rebuilt after 1763 by William (later Sir William) Chambers (d 1796) for Lord Clive of India. It is of brick, and has an eleven-bay, parapeted, two-storey entrance front with portico to the east, overlooking the lake. A ballroom was added to the west side of the house in the early C19, the west end of which gave access to a long, curving hothouse, also erected in the early C19 (pre-1822) and described by Charles Hulbert of Shrewsbury as 'the most spacious and costly I ever beheld' (CL 1939, 391). The hothouse was demolished in the mid C20, but the brick backing wall survives, linking the house to the stable court (after 1763, probably by Chambers; listed grade II) further to the west. That demolition was probably part of the works undertaken in the mid 1930s, when the house was reduced in size and remodelled. Some 40m north-west of the house is a C19 game store (listed grade II), near which stands a dovecote of C17 origin (listed grade II).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS There is a gravel sweep east of the house. The main gardens comprise lawns, which extend along the south side of the house and westward of it to the terrace ramping up to the east end of Walcot's arboretum. The lawns are bounded to the south-east by a deep, stone-fronted ha-ha which divides the gardens from the park to the south. Walcot's arboretum was developed by Lord Clive's son, Edward, in the early C19. It covers an area of around 10ha and includes a Douglas fir grown from one of the original seeds supplied by Douglas in 1827. On the steeply shelving ground of the pleasure grounds, at the north end of the arboretum and to the west of the kitchen gardens, are two triangular fishponds. To the north of these, and north of the arboretum, is an area of woodland round an open paddock, through which runs a ride known as the Roundabout. A new (late C20) timber-framed house stands immediately outside the south-west corner of the arboretum.

Both John Walcot of Walcot and, in his own right, his gardener Thomas Dobbs, were among the subscribers to Stephen Switzer's *Practical Husbandman and Planter* of 1733-4. The gardens at Walcot at that time are shown on maps of c 1700 and c 1730. They ran south from the house and comprised six compartments arranged 3 x 2 about a central axis, on which, by c 1730, a fountain had been constructed. The area is now beyond the ha-ha and no visible trace of the gardens remains in the park. To

the west of the house was a walled compartment, later partly overlain by the ballroom and hothouse complex, the western part of which survives as grassland running westwards to the base of the steep terrace below the arboretum.

Landscaping and planting work was carried out around the new house by William Emes (d 1803), who in 1774 was paid £133 for 'directing, planning and laying out the pleasure grounds at Walcot, trees planted etc' (SRRC 552/9/295/12, 27 April 1774). Flowering shrubs were supplied by Brunton & Co of Birmingham. Otherwise the precise nature and extent of Emes' scheme is unclear.

PARK The landscaping is principally a late C18 and early C19 reworking of a C17 design.

The western edge of the pleasure grounds is divided from the parkland beyond by a stone wall, from a central entrance in which a sunken track leads to a pair of fishponds set in the pasture.

The park mainly lies to the south of the house but there are also smaller areas of parkland to the north, between the house and the lake, taken in in the late C18; to the west, already imparked in the early C18; and to the east, over which there are the open views from the east front.

The water, Walcot Pool, 2km long and 80m wide, forms a striking feature of the site, stretching eastwards from the north-west corner of the park to the dam which carries the north drive, then curving round to form the eastern perimeter of the park. The whole of the northern bank is moulded to form a contour dam, Pool dam. There are two boathouses, one by the dam carrying the north drive, the second, present by 1822, standing midway along the eastern half of the pool, 40m to the east of the house. The present form of the Pool had been defined by 1822, with French Napoleonic POWs reputedly having been used in its creation. Colt Hoare, in 1799 however noted that there was a 'piece of water' in front of the house, and an early C18 map confirms that the present lake was constructed by the extension of an existing series of pools occupying the central portion of the present water. William Emes may have had a hand in this.

A small wooded valley, Pigeonhouse Bank, lies to the south-west of the house. Its sides are laid out with rides, and on the valley floor are two fishponds, probably created from earlier ponds in the 1820s and 1830s. Some 100m to the west of the upper pool is the site of The Hermitage, an octagonal rustic 'Indian Temple' built in 1802/3 but burned down in the mid C20. The woodland continues eastwards, along Cedar Bank, which forms the south side of the valley and the southern edge of the registered site.

A mid C18 map indicates the knoll to the south of the house as imparked for deer as far south as the parish boundary, the land beyond being divided into fields. This agricultural land to the south of Cedar Bank, extending southwards to Lodge Farm, was later imparked and planted with a scattering of parkland trees and several small plantations including Park Plantation and The Clump. A band of land to the west of the southern approach also formed part of the mid C18 park, and a strip to the east was later taken in when the public road was re-routed and its former line became the south drive.

KITCHEN GARDEN On rising ground to the west and north of the stables are extensive kitchen gardens, enclosed by stone-coped brick walls, which probably date from 1703-6. The gardens are in two irregular compartments, one running roughly west from the stables, with a gazebo (listed grade II*, possibly an adaptation of a pigeonhouse) attributed to Chambers set in the west wall (listed grade II, extending 70m either side of the gazebo). The second, larger compartment adjoins to the north. The cistern in the smaller garden and the fountain basin in the larger may have been connected with the waterworks for a fountain, known to have been constructed in the 1760s.

At the north end of the kitchen garden complex, built onto the external wall of the garden, is an C18 icehouse and vegetable store (listed grade II).

REFERENCES

Country Life, 86 (14 October 1939), pp 388-92 E G Harris, 'Those Good Old Days': A Lifetime of Service on a Large Country Estate (1981) Walcot Hall: A Brief History, guidebook, (J Parish 1991) P A Stamper, Historic Parks and Gardens of Shropshire (1996), pp 28, 40-1, 44, 48, 54-5, 57, 63-4

Maps Map of demesne of John Walcot, c 1700 (private collection) Map of Walcot Demesnes, c 1730 (875/2), (Shropshire Records and Research Centre) Plan of Walcot Demesnes, 1822 (552/8/748(9), (Shropshire Records and Research Centre)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882-3, published 1891 2nd edition surveyed 1901, published 1903 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1883 2nd edition surveyed 1901, published 1903

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Archival items The Powis Collection, including much detailed information with runs of accounts, is held at the Shropshire Records and Research Centre (552). Ashby's papers, including accounts for Walcot and Oakley, are held at the Public Record Office (C109/71-8).

Description written: January 1999 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: February 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.