

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

MINLEY MANOR

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

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Name:	MINLEY MANOR
County:	Hampshire
District:	Hart (District Authority)
Parish:	Blackwater and Hawley
County:	Hampshire
District:	Rushmoor (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.312724 Longitude: -0.80822001 National Grid Reference: SU 83161 57742 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001264 Date first listed: 07-Dec-1992

Details

A fine example of a country estate with buildings and a designed landscape forming an integral composition reflecting late C19 taste. Minley Manor and its pleasure grounds laid out by Robert T Veitch and his landscaper FW Meyer in the 1880s form the centrepiece to the estate. This followed an earlier phase of planting undertaken by James Veitch in the 1860s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By the late C17 the land which was to form the future Minley Manor estate was part of the extensive Tylney family estates in the north-east of Hampshire. Up until the mid-C19 this consisted of a mixture of arable, pasture, coniferous woodland, and heath land (Tithe map, 1846). By the early 1800s it had passed from the Wyndham family of nearby Hall Place, Yateley to the ninth Lord Arundell who sold it to William Robert Burgess and thereafter it passed to his brother-in-law, the Rev Robert Caswell (d 1846).

When Raikes Currie (1801-1881) bought the land in 1846, the manor was in a poor condition and he set about creating a new manor and estate. Currie, a wealthy London banker (a partner in Glyn Mills bank) and former MP for Northampton, commissioned the architect Henry Clutton (1819-93) to design a new house which was built between 1858 and 1860. Formal gardens around the house, a kitchen garden, and part of the pleasure grounds were laid out 1861-4. Currie carried out further developments until his death in 1884.

Bertram Wodehouse Currie (1827-1896) inherited the estate from his father in 1884 and undertook two main phases of work in his lifetime. Between 1884 and 1886 extensive additions to the estate were made by the architect George Devey (1820-1886) and then later, in the 1880/90s, Currie employed Messrs Veitch to lay out a Winter Garden, The Plain, and extensions to the pleasure grounds which included Hawley Lake to the east.

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Upon Bertram Currie's death in 1896, his son and successor Laurence Currie made substantial modifications to the Manor house and grounds, and employed Devey's chief draughtsman, Arthur Castings (1853-1913), to build new lodges, a water tower, and a new complex of walled gardens, and extending the areas of ornamental planting and estate woodland. Laurence Currie died in 1934, and his successor Bertram Francis Currie sold the complete estate of c2500 acres (c1012ha) to the War Department in 1936. In 1971 Minley Manor was taken over by the Royal Engineers.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Minley Manor is sited midway between Fleet and Camberley, the house lying 3km from Fleet, directly on the east side of the B3013 and due north of the M3. The 519ha designed landscape is sited on the south-east edge of a level plateau of high ground. This plateau extends south-west to form a ridge of high ground which falls away from the east down to the south-west corner of the site. These slopes are covered by Minley Wood which forms the main boundary block of woodland along the west side. In the north-west the ground falls away westwards in two broad, gently undulating valleys. The south-facing slopes of the plateau contain a series of small, tightly formed valleys. To the east of the house Minley Road divides the pleasure grounds and house from areas of Hornley Common and Hawley Common, which are heavily wooded surrounding Hawley Lake.

The house commands an area of varied topographical interest. This is best viewed from the terrace along the south front of the house, which forms a formal foreground to views over the southern parklands and long-distance views over the countryside beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach to the house is via the drive which leads west off Minley Road. Passing through the gates in the brick boundary wall at the two-storey, red-brick main lodge (Devey, 1886-7, listed Grade II), the drive takes a direct route past the stables (Devey, 1886-87, listed Grade II) and Orchard Cottage and walled gardens, to Arch Cottage (also by Devey, 1887, listed Grade II*), which it passes under, then curves west-south-west to arrive at the walled forecourt on the north-west front of the manor house. The entrance court comprises a circular carriage drive with central planted bed. Illustrations of 1899 (CL) show an ornate built feature at the centre of the space and a series of clipped trees in boxes flanking the surrounding buildings.

Fleet Lodge (1899, Castings, listed Grade II) marks the entrance from the south-west tip of the estate, 1.8km from the Manor. Passing under the arch of the lodge the drive leads first north and then north-east on a serpentine route through Minley Wood to enter the west side of the forecourt. The main drive continues due north from Fleet Lodge to Minley Farm situated 1.2km to the west of the Manor. The western half of the estate is criss-crossed by a network of drives and tracks radiating from Fleet Lodge, one of which leads to Home Farm (a model farm built to the designs of Arthur Castings in 1900) situated 500m south-east of the Manor.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Minley Manor (listed Grade II*) was built in 1858-60 by Henry Clutton for Raikes Currie. Clutton studied as under William Blore and it is said that his inspiration by the Chateau of Blois resulted in Minley's French Chateau characteristics (Colson Stone 1994), though under the influence of the English Gothic Revival. Further extensive additions took place in 1886-7, when Bertram Currie employed George Devey who added a new entrance and vestibule, clock and stair towers, and the chapel and cloister. Devey also renovated the interior and aggrandised the setting of the house with the orangery and stables, and created new entrance drives with lodges. Further alterations to the house and grounds were made by Arthur Castings after 1896.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The pleasure grounds extend over 24ha and were laid out by Messrs Veitch in the late C19. The planting of rare trees and shrubs was continued by Laurence Currie until the 1930s.

North-westwards from the house, set axially on the main entrance court there is a fine 450m long avenue of alternating Wellingtonias and limes which extends out through woodland and runs parallel to the Minley Road. The avenue creates a wide grass allée which is bounded by hornbeam hedges on both sides. This dates from the Raikes Currie period (1858-84) and was planted by James Veitch. Field evidence shows that originally the avenue extended into Minley Wood beyond its current termination (ibid).

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The principal Dutch Garden (or Winter Garden) lies to the west of the house on the site of the original 'King Croquet's ground' (ibid). The entrance to the Dutch Garden lies through an archway leading from the entrance forecourt into a cloister on the north-east side which links through to the orangery (listed Grade II*). The Dutch Garden was designed by Robert T Veitch (1823-85) and FW Meyer. The area is formally treated, the levelled square being slightly sunken with steps leading down at each of the corners. This is the site of a sunken winter garden which has been described as 'their most innovative geometric garden: a complex parterre, laid out in the form of a family crest, but employing for the purpose a mass of miniature conifers' (Elliott 1986). This original scheme of four triangular beds laid out around a circular basin and statue of Diana has been simplified, as has the parterre design worked out in yews and *Retinospora aurea* and *R squarrosa*, edged with *Euonymus radicans*. The area is now grassed with borders for bedding.

To the north of the Dutch Garden, between it and the orangery, is a grass terrace on which orange trees from the orangery were displayed. At either end of the terrace is a stone seat backed by yew hedging, that at the eastern end being dated 1909, the other, 1861 (listed Grade II, along with the terrace wall). A path leads to the remains of further yew-hedged enclosures.

Beyond the Dutch Garden to the west, lying on a plateau extending to the south-west of the manor, is The Plain, a further area of gardens. The western and southern boundaries are formed by a ha-ha with the woodland of Minley Wood beyond. This area was created during the late 1880s by Messrs Veitch. It was laid out as an informal woodland garden with 'bold beds separated by grass, and devoted each to one description of herbaceous plant, or of flowering shrub' which linked the formal gardens around the Manor with the 'Wild Woodland' and plantations of Minley Wood to the west (Gardeners' Chronicle 1881). A number of mature specimen trees survive and the form of the beds can be seen as indentations in the lawn. To the east, The Plain slopes eastwards to the south lawn, with its specimen trees and dense planting of rhododendrons. A broad grass walk cuts through them and leads to a water tower (Castings, 1896, listed Grade II) which stands in the southern part of this ground. Its purpose was to supply irrigation for the gardens.

The East Garden occupies south-sloping ground between the house and St Andrew's Church (Clutton, 1871, listed Grade II) and is bordered along its north-west edge by the main approach to the house. The area contains specimen trees set in grass with a circular thatched summerhouse (1896-99, attributed to Castings, listed Grade II) sited on a spur of land overlooking the parkland to the south. The summerhouse was restored in the early 1990s.

Bertram Currie employed Messrs Veitch to lay out the area to the south-east of the house, on the opposite side of the Minley Road, as pleasure grounds in 1893. This included the construction of Hawley Lake which is 15ha in extent. The rides to it and its banks were planted up and water-lilies planted in the lake. The largest of the several islands supported a thatched summerhouse, there was a boathouse, now Boathouse Cottage, at the northern tip, and a stone and red-brick bridge (extant) spanning the narrowest part.

PARK The areas of parkland have fluctuated over the years as the pleasure grounds were laid out and extended or woodland was planted. In the late 1880s the south lawn was formed by taking in the enclosed lawn, flower gardens, and pleasure grounds around the Manor laid out by Raikes Currie, and also an area of parkland. The new boundary to the south lawn was formed by a ha-ha, the lawn being mown rather than grazed. Manor Wood Pasture, the parkland separated off by the ha-ha construction, now forms the northernmost area of parkland which previously surrounded even the water tower.

Church Wood, lying to the south of St Andrew's Church, has been allowed to grow up since 1937 on an area of parkland which would have provided clear views up to the church in its elevated position, surrounded by a backdrop of parkland trees. Home Farm Wood, which lies on the west side of Minley Road and to the south of Home Farm, was heathland in 1846 (Tithe map) but by 1847 had been incorporated into the park. By 1900 the area was woodland.

South of the Home Farm/Fleet Lodge drive, the parkland extends down the slope in three long fingers. These areas of parkland were laid out in the first phase of estate development by Raikes Currie and a number of mature hedgerow trees were retained.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden lies to the north of the east drive. The north-west wall of the main kitchen garden enclosure, which supported the potting sheds, has been demolished, as has the glass, but the other internal walls, and the outer slip walls, which incorporate Orchard and Bothy gardeners' cottages, survive. The set of walled enclosures to the north appear in part to have been orchards, but it is probable that they also provided the level grass areas required for tennis or bowls.

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REFERENCES

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Maps Tithe map for Yately parish, 1846 (F7/271/1-2), (Hampshire Record Office)
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871 2nd edition revised 1909, published 1912 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871, published 1875
Archival items Photographs of Minley Manor, 1957 (NMR, Swindon)
Description rewritten: September 1999 Register Inspector: KC Edited: February 2004 Edited: December 2014

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.