

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON**

Name: THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON

District: Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Bradford-on-Avon

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.346382  
Longitude: -2.2463905  
National Grid Reference: ST 82936 60840  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1001233  
Date first listed: 01-Sep-1987

## Details

Mid C19 gardens surrounding a house of c 1610, further improved in the late C19 and in the mid C20.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Hall was built c 1610 by John Hall II, a wealthy clothier well known in the Bradford-on-Avon area (CL 1962). After his death in 1631, the mansion passed to Rachel Baynton of Little Chalfield, Wiltshire. She married William Pierrepont, the son and heir of Evelyn Pierrepont, later the first Duke of Kingston; subsequently The Hall was renamed Kingston House. Four years after Rachel's death in 1722, her son Evelyn succeeded his grandfather as the second Duke of Kingston. In 1769 the second Duke married Elizabeth Chudleigh and after his death in 1773, she inherited the estate. She did not spend much time at Kingston House and during the last years of the C18 it was in use as a farmhouse.

In 1805, Kingston House (The Hall) was bought by Thomas Divett who worked in the City of London. He replaced the old grist mill that stood to the south-west of Kingston House with a cloth mill, a watercolour of c 1850 (CL 1962) showing Kingston House and the mills from the south, across the River Avon. Kingston House itself was used as a warehouse to store the wool. Due to the depression in the Bradford cloth industry, Divett's mill failed and in 1848 Kingston House, with the surrounding land, was put up for sale. That same year it was bought by the engineer Stephen Moulton. Moulton had previously worked as a broker in New York, where he befriended the American, Charles Goodyear (1800-60), the inventor of rubber vulcanisation. On his return to England, Moulton decided to become a rubber manufacturer. To set up his new business, which was to become very successful (Woodruff 1957), he converted the existing mills, including Divett's cloth mill, into the Kingston India Rubber Mills (OS 1887). Moulton worked closely with the railway engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, with whom he collaborated on the use of rubber in the shipping and railway industry, and as an inventor he took out numerous patents (CL 1962). Kingston House (The Hall) was restored and used as his main home and office, a formal garden also being laid out (ibid).

Stephen Moulton died in 1880 and in 1894 his son John, following his elder brother Horatio, took over his father's business and inherited the estate. Under John Moulton's ownership, Kingston House once again became known by its earlier name of The Hall. The house was chosen by Sir Edwin Lutyens as the model for the Prince of Wales pavilion erected at the Paris Great Exhibition of 1900. John Moulton took a special interest in the garden (CL 1899) where he carried out extensive improvements and planted a great variety of flowers, plants, and trees. In the early C20 he extended and converted the stable block (OS 1924), formerly called Kingston Farm (OS 1887), to designs by Sir Harold Brakspear.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON*

In the early 1960s further improvements to the site were undertaken for John Moulton's grandson, Dr Alex Moulton. A drawing office, designed by Robert Townsend of Salisbury, was built on the far side of the stable yard. The stables were converted into engineering workshops where the Moulton bicycles were designed, and a boathouse was erected along the River Avon.

The Hall remains (2000) in private ownership.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The Hall, a site of c 3.5ha, is situated in the centre of the town of Bradford-on-Avon. It is built on a south-facing slope on the north bank of the River Avon. The site is surrounded to the north, west, and south by a wall (listed grade II) which rises in curved steps to a height of c 2m. The setting of The Hall is the densely built town of Bradford-on-Avon, which surrounds it, and the industrial buildings to the south. The wider setting to the east is characterised by farmland along the River Avon which is divided from the site by a fence. The north boundary is formed by Woolley Street, the road to Melksham. Along the west boundary runs a narrow and steep road called Mill Lane. Along the western part of the south boundary runs Kingston Road, which leads to a group of industrial buildings incorporating remains of the former Kingston India Rubber Mills. The eastern part of the south boundary is marked by the Feeder, a branch of the River Avon. Immediately to the north-east of the site stand the buildings of the Engineering Works (outside the area here registered), introduced by Alex Moulton in 1963 to make the Moulton Bicycle, which cover part of the former paddock situated in this area. To the east of the site, on the southern edge of a disused quarry (OS 1887), stands a private dwelling with adjacent garden (outside the area registered here).

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main entrance to The Hall is situated in the garden wall along the south side of Woolley Street, the road that runs along the north boundary of the site. Two ashlar gate piers (listed grade II), each topped with a carved stone eagle, and a pair of decorative wrought-iron gates (listed grade II) give access to a drive that curves in a westerly direction and leads to the courtyard below the north-east front of The Hall.

Some 50m to the east of the main entrance, in the far north-east corner of the site, is a second entrance, set in the wall and flanked by two gate piers. Late C20 metal gates give access to a drive that runs in a south-westerly direction along the paddock in the eastern part of the site, towards the stable block to the east of the Hall. In the stable yard the drive splits in two: one branch leads under a gate in the west wing of the stable block towards the north front of The Hall to the west, the other continues southwards and then leads in a westerly direction towards a third entrance at the east end of the Kingston Road, along the southern boundary of the site. This entrance is flanked by two square stone gate piers with ball finials and has a pair of wrought-iron gates; immediately to its north stands an octagonal C18 dovecote (listed grade II), now (early 2000) in use as a private dwelling. The dovecote was converted into a lodge in the early C20 when John Moulton built the south entrance (OS 1924).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** The Hall (listed grade I) stands on high ground in the western part of the site, where the ground slopes down in a southerly direction towards the River Avon. It is two storeys high, with an attic and basement, and has a stone-tiled roof. The two main elevations of The Hall, constructed in ashlar, face south and west. The north and east elevation are built in coursed rubble. The garden front to the south has three gables, and on the ground floor, in the central square-shaped bay, a doorway and porch give access to a balustraded terrace (listed grade II\*) that runs along the whole width of the south front. Leaded casement windows with moulded stone mullions and double transoms occupy the full width of the facade, and overlook the garden. The south front was rebuilt by Stephen Moulton c 1850, but the terrace possibly dates from the late C17 or early C18. The western elevation has a small central doorway, with four windows on each floor and two in the attic, which overlook the garden. The rear elevation to the north has three gables and irregular fenestration. The east front has no doorway and its windows have semicircular flush relieving arches.

In the north-east part of the site stand the engineering workshops (the converted stable block and formerly Kingston Farm), with the drawing office of c 1960, with c 10m to its north-west an estate cottage (OS 1887).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens can be divided into two areas: one is laid out as formal walled terrace gardens situated in the north-west half of the site, around The Hall, and the other covers the eastern part of the site which is laid out as an informal garden, surrounding the stable block, including a paddock and rockery.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON*

The formal gardens are screened to the north by a belt of trees and shrubs including a straight walk running along its full length. The walk starts at the west side of the main entrance and after c 3m it passes a garden shed built against the north boundary wall. In the far north-west corner of the site the walk turns southwards and follows the boundary wall along Mill Lane to the west. Immediately to the east, and level with The Hall, is a square-shaped garden of just over 0.5ha. It is surrounded by a clipped yew hedge c 1.5m in height. The garden can be entered through a gate from the courtyard to the north of The Hall, and from the east corner of the balustraded terrace to the south of The Hall. The garden is laid to lawn and in the centre is a square-shaped pond. To the west of The Hall, on the same level, lies a rectangular lawn of c 3.5ha with a gravel walk along its north boundary, which is screened by the gardens' perimeter belt of trees and shrubs. To the south the lawn is bounded by a mature yew hedge, in parts replanted in the late C20. The gravel walk leads to a small temple (listed grade II) in the far north-west corner of the lawn, probably introduced in the early C19 under the ownership of Stephen Moulton. The temple is made of ashlar and has a portico with a triangular pediment supported by two Doric columns in antis. Immediately to the north-east of the temple stands a carved stone commemorating the donation and opening of the Bradford Baths in Bridge Street by Stephen Moulton in October 1897. The stone was placed in the garden following the demolition of the public baths in the late C20. The lawn to the west of The Hall, probably the bowling green in the early C17, was apparently extended westwards to its current length in the early C19 (CL 1962; the article states that the information has been deduced from an estate plan possibly made at the time of the sale of The Hall in 1805).

Immediately to the south of The Hall is a large balustraded terrace (listed grade II\*) with central steps that lead into the garden below. The terrace is paved and the open strapwork balustrades are decorated with ornamental urns and carved lions. The walls of the terrace are joined to the retaining walls (listed grade II\*) of the gardens to the east and west of The Hall, creating two terraces on a lower level, laid to lawn. The central steps from the balustraded terrace lead to a gravel walk that runs along the full length of a second retaining wall built in the late C19 by John Moulton (CL 1899). At either end of the walk, steps lead down to a pair of gate piers, which give access to the informal, eastern part of the garden, and a lawn, planted with a mixture of trees and shrubs (late C20), situated in the south-west corner of the site. The latter was laid out in a formal pattern and was possibly used as an orchard (ibid). To the south the walk is screened from the lawn below by a row of thirteen mature conical-shaped yew trees, probably planted by Stephen Moulton in the mid C19 (CL 1899; OS 1887). In the far south corner of the lawn stands the lodge or former dovecote. The lawn is bounded to the south by a thin belt of mixed trees planted from the mid to late C19. They include horse chestnuts, limes, beeches, maples, hornbeams, poplars, cedars, and Californian Redwoods. The site boundary wall along the south side of the site is here raised with an additional, temporary wooden fence (late C20), to obscure the views from and to the former India Rubber Mills on the other side.

To the east of The Hall lie the pleasure gardens which surround the stable block. To the south of the stable block is a lawn planted with a mixture of trees dating from the mid to late C19. Along the lawn's northern side, linked to the stable block, is a pergola, which covers a raised paved walk that runs in a westerly direction for c 8m. This early C20 feature (OS 1924) is constructed of stone pillars on which rest rustic wooden beams. The walk overlooks the lawn to its south, and is screened to the north by mature rhododendrons.

In the far eastern part of the site lies a paddock situated on a hill, defined to the east by a disused quarry. The drive that leads to the stable block runs along the northern base of the paddock hill. Set into the southern slope of the hillside is a temple (listed grade II), with to its east a small rock garden. The temple, possibly of C18 date, has a portico with an entablature and plain pediment supported by four Tuscan columns and two pilasters. A small path that runs through the rock garden splits in two, one branch leading up the hill towards the paddock, the other leading around the hill in an easterly direction to the far eastern corner of the site, from where there are views south to the River Avon down in the valley, and the railway bridge that runs across it. A boathouse constructed of metal and wood is situated alongside the River Avon c 50m north-west of the railway bridge. Introduced in the mid to late 1960s by Dr Alex Moulton, it stands on the site of a former boathouse (OS 1924). Immediately to its north-west is a footbridge that runs across the river. The bridge was formerly situated c 8m north-west of its present position and was probably moved when the new boathouse was built. It is constructed of wood and a piece of railway track and was built in 1924 to provide access to the India Rubber Mills.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*THE HALL, BRADFORD-ON-AVON*

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden, now (2000) derelict, is situated to the south-east of the Hall, along the southern boundary of the site. It is bounded to the north by a stone wall against which stands a lean-to greenhouse. Some 4m to the east of the greenhouse is a semicircular garden seat with a pointed slate roof, situated opposite the location of the former footbridge. The kitchen garden occupies the site of one of the former Kingston India Rubber Mills (OS 1887). By 1899 (OS 1901) the mill had been demolished and a kitchen garden, with a series of greenhouses, had been laid out, possibly including the present lean-to structure.

A second greenhouse, built in 1903 by John Moulton, stands against the north boundary wall of the site, flanked by two mature cedars, to the north-east of the stable block.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 5 (11 March 1899), pp 304-08; 132 (11 October 1962), pp 840-4; (18 October 1962), pp 900-04; (25 October 1962), pp 1020-3 C Holme, Gardens of England in Southern & Western Counties (1907), pls 23, 24 The Studio (1907-08), pls xxiii, xxiv C Jackson, The Hall, Bradford-on-Avon, sometime called Kingston House (reprinted from the Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine 1907), pp 223-61 Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire VII, (1953), pp 14-16 W Woodruff, The Rise of the British Rubber Industry (1957) B Cherry and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Wiltshire (2nd edn 1975), pp 135-6

Maps OS 1:500 1st edition surveyed 1884, published 1887 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1884, published 1887 2nd edition revised 1899, published 1901 3rd edition revised 1922, published 1924

Archival items Aerial photographs (June 1993): NMR 1817/69; 4817/64; 4817/72; 14937/10, 13, 15; (NMR, Swindon) Postcard of The Rubber Works, Bradford-on-Avon, showing The Hall and its setting, 1907 [copy on EH file]

Description written: April 2000 Amended: May 2000, November 2003 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: November 2004

## 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.