

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

YARNTON MANOR

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

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YARNTON MANOR

Name: YARNTON MANOR

County: Oxfordshire

District: Cherwell (District Authority)

Parish: Yarnton

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.800663
Longitude: -1.3121153
National Grid Reference: SP 47531 11559
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001248
Date first listed: 17-Nov-1991

Details

Late C19 formal gardens laid out within the framework of an early C17 layout, and a park of 10ha. The late Victorian gardens were laid out by Thomas Garner to accompany his restoration of an early C17 manor house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

At the Dissolution, Henry VIII removed Yarnton Manor from ecclesiastical ownership, granting it to his physician, George Owen. The Manor, having been owned by a Rutland family called Durant, was sold c 1580 to William Spencer, third son of Sir John Spencer of Althorp (qv). William Spencer (d 1609) was knighted in 1592, and following his death a new house was built by his son Thomas, Member of Parliament for Woodstock 1604-11. Thomas Spencer pulled down much of the manor house soon after the Restoration in 1660, possibly as a result of the financial losses incurred by his family in the Royalist cause. The family gradually sold their portions to Sir Thomas Dashwood in the early C18, whose family remained in possession until the 1890s, when R F Franklin bought the property, restoring the very dilapidated house and grounds. The house is now (1999) a study centre.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The 10ha site lies at the southern tip of the village of Yarnton, bounded to the north, west and south largely by agricultural land and to the east partly by the parish church and churchyard.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The house is approached via a lime avenue which leads from the entrance gates, down the south side of the churchyard, entering at the east corner the walled forecourt on the north-east front of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Yarnton Manor house (listed grade II*), now (1999) used as a college, stands at the centre of its gardens. Originally a large courtyard house built in 1611 for Sir Thomas Spencer, the north and south wings were pulled down in the late C17 and the remaining west wing used as a farmhouse. In 1897 the buildings were carefully restored by Thomas Garner for R F Franklin, head of the building firm which carried out much of Garner's work.

GARDENS Garner was also responsible for reinstating gardens round the house using the bones of an existing, probably early C17, layout, as the basis for his design.

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The main gardens (listed grade II), formal, walled and in Jacobean style, lie to the south-west and south-east of the Manor. Steps lead down from the south-west front to a level lawn surrounded by raised walks, beyond which a stone gateway leads to a pleached lime alley. The levels here predate Garner's involvement and presumably remain from the gardens which surrounded the original C17 house. At the southern corner of the garden, set into the perimeter wall, is a stone gazebo. An iron gate and overthrow, dated 1907 and flanked by stone gate piers, leads out from the gardens to the poplar avenue which runs westwards from the site. A yew-enclosed, sunken flower garden lies beneath the south-east front; beyond this is a farm building which has been converted into a library by the college.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen gardens occupy the north-west corner of the site.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 110 (21 December 1951), pp 2096-9; (28 December 1951), pp 2162-5 N Pevsner and J Sherwood, *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (1974), pp 867-8 CPRE, Information sheet (1990)

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1876 2nd revision 1936

Description written: May 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 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.