

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

LAMBETH PALACE

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Name:	LAMBETH PALACE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Lambeth (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.496422 Longitude: -0.11896830 National Grid Reference: TQ 30673 79175 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000818 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

## Details

C19 and C20 private garden on the site of a medieval park and gardens.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The archbishops of Canterbury first occupied the site in 1197 and the intention was to build a large church. This idea was abandoned however soon after the foundations were laid as the monks of Canterbury cathedral became alarmed by this threat to their position. A compromise was reached in 1200: only a small church was to be built with accommodation near by; the first Great Hall was built before 1234. Sixty years later the usefulness of the Archbishop's manor in Lambeth, with its close proximity to the Palace of Westminster, was accepted and a proportion of the offerings from the shrine of St Thomas in Canterbury was put aside for its upkeep. The 7.5ha of garden attached to the building were, in the Middle Ages, used mainly for practical purposes such as growing food and breeding rabbits. A flour mill was driven by water from the river that ran between the garden and the adjoining parkland. By the mid C16 a pleasure ground was attached to Lambeth House (as the mansion was then known) and Thomas Cranmer (archbishop 1533-56) built a summerhouse there. Detail of the mansion and garden recorded in 1572 on the Civitas orbis terrarium shows a square formal garden enclosed within brick walls situated to the north of the mansion. To the north and east of this garden are small paddocks divided by hedges; the paddocks are separated from parkland by a long canal. The park was well wooded and an abstract from a parliamentary survey of Lambeth Palace and Manor in 1647 list 283 elms, forty-eight walnut trees, and six chestnuts while the Palace yard had seven elms and two willows. The formal garden adjoining the mansion survived relatively unchanged until towards the end of the C18 when glasshouses and a bowling green were added and the canals modified. A plan of the Palace by James Reeves shows the layout at this time (Ducarel 1785). The Best Garden, with wide walks around a rectangular plat, lay immediately to the north of the Palace with the kitchen garden beyond. The Best Garden and the melon ground to the east were enclosed by water as was the large open area of park further to the east. The plan also shows a gardener's house in the north-east corner of the Best Garden. The main changes came in the 1780s when Archbishop Moore filled in the canals and landscaped much of the site. He relocated the kitchen gardens away from the Palace buildings and replaced the greenhouse garden and bowling green with a more informal pleasure garden planted with flowers and shrubs. A plan of 1812 illustrates these changes and in addition shows the parkland extended to the north and divided from

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the pleasure grounds by a wall, the canals replaced by a pond in the south-west corner, and a broad gravel walk around the park. The pleasure grounds were laid to lawn with curving paths with informal plantings. In the late C19 the grounds appeared to be well wooded with curving paths. The OS map of 1870 shows a terrace running east to west to the north of the Palace.

The gardens were used as allotments during the First World War and in the late 1920s Archbishop Lang renovated the garden (photographs, 1930) and flower beds became a feature of the pleasure grounds. During the Second World War, the Palace was severely damaged by enemy action and it took over ten years to restore the buildings and renovate the garden. In the mid 1980s, in advance of the World Conference of Bishops (The Lambeth Conference), Archbishop Runcie and his wife Rosalind took a keen interest in the grounds and many alterations were made. The garden is still (2002) maintained as one of the largest private gardens in London but is opened to the public on an occasional basis.

The 3.5ha Archbishop's Park (outside the area here registered) to the east of the gardens, separated by a high wood and wire-mesh security fence, was formerly part of the Palace grounds but has been used for public recreation since the late C19, initially known as Lambeth Palace Fields, and after 1901, when the land was officially handed over to the London County Council for public use, as Archbishop's Park.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Lambeth Palace and its gardens of 2.5ha is situated on the south bank of the River Thames. Kennington and Kennington Park (qv) lie 1.5km to the south-east, and Waterloo Station 500m to the north. The clock tower of the Houses of Parliament dominates the views of Westminster on the north bank of the River Thames, c 1km to the north-west. The level site is bordered to the west by brick walls (listed grade II) which separate it from Lambeth Palace Road (A3036). The line of the road was altered in the mid 1960s, cutting into part of the north-west corner of the Palace gardens. Archbishop's Park lies to the east and north-east of the gardens. The buildings on the north side of Lambeth Road (A3203) and the Museum of Garden History, housed in the redundant church of St Mary's, Lambeth, provide the boundary to the south of the site.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The entrance to Lambeth Palace from Lambeth Palace Road is through the brick gatehouse, Morton's Tower (listed grade I as part of Lambeth Palace), built by Cardinal Morton in 1490. The gateway leads into the outer courtyard with the early C15 Lollard's Tower (listed grade I as part of Lambeth Palace) to the north and the C17 Great Hall (listed grade I as part of Lambeth Palace), restored after the Second World War, to the east. To the east of Morton's Tower, a second archway, under the muniment room, leads into the inner courtyard with the main Palace apartments to the north. To the west of the inner courtyard, against the east-facing wall of the Great Hall is the ancient White Marseilles fig tree reputedly planted by Cardinal Archbishop Pole c 1555. The grass island in the centre of the courtyard, encircled by a tarmac road, is dominated by the stone and bronze memorial to Archbishop Davidson (d 1930), which replaced a less ornate mid C19 monument.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Lambeth Palace (listed grade I), the home of the archbishops of Canterbury, has medieval origins, the oldest surviving part being the undercroft to the C15 chapel situated to the north of the Great Hall. The chapel itself was gutted during the Second World War. Restoration was completed in 1955, and, although considerably altered, the chapel retains much of its original Early English style of architecture. The residential apartments to the east of the chapel were rebuilt in collegiate Gothic style c 1835 by Edward Blore on the site of the old manor house, Lambeth House. To the north-west of the chapel is the C15 Lollard's Tower used variously as a water tower and a guard room. Today (2002) the Tower provides accommodation (guidebook).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** From the inner courtyard a gravel path leads through an arch in the eastern corner of the Palace to the gardens. The present (2002) appearance of the gardens is largely the result of the renovations undertaken by Archbishop Runcie and his wife in the 1980s.

To the south-east of the Palace a tarmac path leads to the stable and dairy (now, 2002, used for service buildings) and the site of the orchard, replanted as the Duchy Garden by Vernon Russel Smith c 1988. From the Duchy Garden a gravel path runs north for c 20m to the north-east corner of the main building where it divides. To the west a wide gravel path runs for 80m between a narrow grass verge along the north front of the building and a rectangular lawn. In 1999 the lawn was decorated at either end

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with tulip trees and bordered to the north by a long (80m) herbaceous border, planted in the mid 1980s by Beth Chatto against the south wall of the terrace. To the east a lesser gravel path curves around the back of a low grass mound planted with spring flowers; a third path extends north along the length of the gardens, which are mainly taken up with lawn. After c 20m this path crosses the east end of the rose terrace. The rose terrace is first recorded in 1870 (OS) where it appears to be a grass bank sloping to the south. In the late 1920s, as part of Archbishop Lang's garden improvements, the terrace was faced with bricks and planted with herbaceous plants. A newspaper article of the time reported that the garden was in a wild and overgrown condition with masses of privet and weeds abounding on all sides; it goes on to say that anonymous donations had enabled the archbishop, Dr Lang, to renovate the garden (*Morning Post*, 13 August 1929). In 1986, as part of the Runcies' garden renovations, the terrace wall was raised and the top of the terrace laid out with paving stones and grass and decorated with rose beds. Lang's herbaceous borders to the rear of the terrace were replaced with a row of pleached limes. To the east of the terrace is a small sitting area, laid out c 1988, paved with York stone and decorated with the sculpture of a girl with swallows by David Norris.

From the east end of the rose terrace, the gravel path continues north: mature plane trees line the southern part and cut beds decorate the edge of the open lawn to the west. The path is bordered to the east with wide beds planted out with shrubs and herbaceous plants which as yet (2002) do not screen the high wood and wire security fence which has been erected along the line of the brick boundary wall built between the gardens and Archbishop's Park in the C19. From the northern end of the path there are views south across the lawn to the Palace and to a small, white, C20 open-sided rotunda set on a low mound to the west. A path leads up the mound, planted with spring flowers and ornamental trees, to the rotunda. Other than the mound the main part of the lawn is kept relatively free from decoration and the large open space is currently (late C20) used for summer events. Some 120m north of the rose terrace the long gravel walk turns to the west and runs for c 100m between the lawn to the south and an area set aside in the late C20 for development as a parkland-style garden. Adjoining the path, to the west side of the wild garden, is a late C20 pond. The pond was renovated and replanted in 1995. The path turns south c 5m west of the pond and winds through trees and shrubs along the west side of the garden, passing a Chinese garden to the east. The c 0.25ha Chinese garden was exhibited by Faith and Jeff White at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1987 and is enclosed by brick walls pieced by circular openings. The brick and gravel floor provides standing for potted plants and, to the south, a replica Chinese soldier from the terracotta army found in China in the late 1960s. The Chinese garden is screened to the east by bamboo. The serpentine path continues past the mound on which the rotunda stands and the west end of the rose terrace. To the west of the path are a late C20 garden with a brick and wood pergola to the north and a knot garden with box hedges set against the brick boundary wall. At the south end of the gravel path is a kitchen and herb garden, laid out in 1987. The brick-paved garden with curving box hedges is overlooked to the south by the chapel and Lollard's Tower. To the south-east of the garden the serpentine path joins up with the gravel path which runs along the north front of the Palace.

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- OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1901 1932 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1867, published 1870 2nd edition surveyed 1890, published 1901 OS 60" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1915
- Archival items Abstract from a parliamentary survey of Lambeth Palace and Manor, 1647 (*Temporalities TC 9, f155*), (Lambeth Palace Library) Cutting from *The Morning Post* and the *Church Times*, August 1929 (*Lang Papers vol 286, pp 95-6*), (Lambeth Palace Library) Description by Rosamund Fisher of the restoration of the garden after Second World War (MS 3101, f13), (Lambeth Palace Library) Photographs of the garden following renovations, c 1930 (MS3100, f20), (Lambeth Palace Library)

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Flower beds in the Palace garden shortly after Second World War (MS 3101 f11), (Lambeth Palace Library) Photograph album of work undertaken by Rosalind Runcie, late 1986 (Lambeth Palace Library)

Description written: June 1999 Amended: September 2002 (CEB) Register Inspector: LCH Edited: November 2003

## 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.