

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

COOKE'S HOUSE

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

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Name:	COOKE'S HOUSE
County:	West Sussex
District:	Chichester (District Authority)
Parish:	Bury
National park:	SOUTH DOWNS
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.915842 Longitude: -0.57839541 National Grid Reference: TQ0003113893 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001209 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

A formal, compartmentalised garden laid out in the 1930s, with surviving early C17 elements.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Cooke's House, previously known as Hall Place, and the manor of West Burton, was occupied by the Cooke family from the late C16 when Richard Cooke married the daughter of William Hall, the last male descendant of the Hall family who had held the manor on long lease from the lord of Arundel. In 1680, Nicholas Cooke assigned the house to Elizabeth Strudwick, she assigning it in turn to the Stump family who remained in ownership until John Stump sold it in 1765 to Clement Upperton (*Sussex County Magazine*). The Uppertons still owned it in 1876 although in the early C20 it was the home of the pianist and friend of Gertrude Jekyll, Leonard Borwick. In 1927-8 the estate was bought, and the house then extended by Major J S Courtauld for his brother-in-law, Wilfred Holland, then living at nearby Burton Park (qv). The structure of the present garden was largely the work of Mr Holland. On Major Courtauld's death in 1940, his widow and daughter came to live at Cooke's House and it remains (1998) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Cooke's House is situated in the south-east corner of the hamlet of West Burton, which lies c 1km to the west of the main A29 Arundel to Pulborough road. The c 0.75ha registered site, which lies at the foot of the wooded, north-east-facing scarp of the South Downs and enjoys extensive views to the south and south-east along their crest, occupies generally level ground which falls gently at the far eastern end. The site is enclosed and hidden from the minor lane along its west side by an early C17, high ragstone retaining wall. To the north, east and south, a mixture of mid C20 clipped beech hedging, thorn hedging, paling and wire fencing enclose it from village houses and orchards lying immediately adjacent and from the wooded farmland beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The approach is from the lane on the west side, a brick and stone ramp, built parallel to the boundary wall, leading up to an archway surmounted by a pediment with stone ball finials (listed, with the boundary wall,

grade II), with a timber door which opens into the 20m by 15m forecourt of the house. This, which was probably created by Allan Cooke in c 1610, together with the enclosing wall and gateway, is laid to lawn bisected by an east to west stone-paved path lined with low clipped yew domes (shown established on photographs of 1947, CL) which leads to the front porch. On the south side, the lawns are edged with a shrubbery border and enclosed by further walling (also listed grade II) and in their extreme south-west corner feature an immense, mature cedar, shown as a well-established tree in a photograph of 1909 (CL). PRINCIPAL BUILDING Cooke's House (listed grade II*) sits adjacent to the southern site boundary, with its principal, entrance front facing west over the forecourt. It is a two-storey building with an attic in the gable end, built of local ragstone with brick quoins, stone-mullioned casement windows and a pitched roof of Horsham slate. The main, L-shaped portion was built in 1588 either by Richard Cooke or by his son and probably incorporated parts of the former house, Hall Place, within its southern end. The entrance porch was added in c 1610 by Robert's son Allan (initials on porch). In 1929, an extra bay and a gabled extension were added onto the east side by Major Courtauld.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens comprise a series of small, formal compartments enclosed by evergreen hedging, which lie to the west, north and east of the house, those along the immediate north side of the house being linked by an east to west axis.

Along the north side, the forecourt lawn is enclosed by a drystone retaining wall with, at each end, a short flight of stone steps which lead northwards up into the rectangular rose garden, laid out in 1929 by Wilfred Holland. A circular pattern of stone and pebble paving, forms the focus for the surrounding geometric beds edged with dwarf box and filled with roses. On its west side, the garden is enclosed with tall (4-5m) hedging of holly and bay planted against the site boundary wall which, as a focus at the west end of the axis, is cut to form a niche containing a seat. North of the rose garden, two further flights of stone steps rise through arches in the enclosing yew hedge into the Green Garden Room, shown established in its present form in photographs of 1947. This is laid to lawn set with two pairs of yew topiary, cut into cubes set on pedestals, a third pair replaced by young trees in the late C20.

East of the rose garden, low iron gates lead into the square Wall Garden, excavated in the 1930s in association with the extension at the north-east end of the house. It is laid to lawn and enclosed on the north and east sides by two-tier stone walls, the lower tier planted with a narrow border of low shrubs and herbaceous plants. On its east side, on the east to west axis, stone steps lead up onto the Border Walk, also laid out by Holland. The c 22m long, central grassed walk is lined with 3m wide herbaceous borders and enclosed to north and south by 2m tall clipped yew hedges cut into taller, square towers at each end. Near the mid-point, a north to south cross axis leads northwards through a sculpted arch in the hedge into a further compartment, divided by a short north to south gravelled path which is flanked by two pairs of topiaried yews. On the east side of the path is a small square herb garden, laid out in the 1930s with a geometric pattern of stone and pebble paving and planting beds and with, to its north-east, a kitchen garden enclosed by clipped beech hedges. West of the path and extending westwards to the Green Room are lawns, laid out around the topiary figures with informally shaped rose beds.

At the east end of the Border Walk, shallow steps lead eastwards onto a large open lawn, framed by shrub borders, a few trees and a small grove of nut trees, which extends c 100m eastwards to the boundary of the garden. South of the Border Walk, the east elevation of the house opens onto a courtyard surfaced with a pattern of stone and pebbles and decorated with terracotta pots.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 25 (26 June 1909), pp 942-7; 102 (31 October 1947), pp 878-81; (7 November 1947), pp 926-9 Sussex County Magazine 3, (1929), pp 356-9 T Wright, Gardens of Britain 4, (1978), pp 134-5

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875-6, published 1880 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1914 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875-6 3rd edition revised 1910, published 1914

Description written: January 1998 Register Inspector: VCH. Edited: June 2000

Legal

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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.