

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BROCKHOLE

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

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Name:	BROCKHOLE
County:	Cumbria
District:	South Lakeland (District Authority)
Parish:	Lakes
National park:	LAKE DISTRICT
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.399954 Longitude: -2.9426410 National Grid Reference: NY 38901 00908 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001463 Date first listed: 12-Apr-2000

Details

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST Gardens laid out by Thomas Mawson, 1899-1904, in collaboration with Dan Gibson who designed the house, with adjoining park and woodland on the shore of Lake Windermere.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT The site which was to become the Brockhole estate originated as fields and patches of woodland. It is shown divided into plots on a sale map of 1877 but there was no development of the site until 1899 when William Gaddum, a Manchester merchant, had a house built and a garden laid out to designs by Thomas Mawson (1861-1933). The gardens are one of Mawson's early designs and one of the few commissions undertaken during the brief life of his partnership with architect Dan Gibson, who designed the house. This collaborative venture is important and consequently, Brockhole House forms an integral and highly significant part of the designed landscape and indeed contributes to its special historic interest. The house and garden were under construction concurrently and the process was recorded in photographs taken for the Gaddum family (private collection). Following Gaddum's death in 1945 the house was used as a convalescent home. In 1968 the site was acquired by the Lake District National Park Authority as an administrative and visitor centre, in which use it remains (2008).

SITE DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Brockhole lies on the east side of Lake Windermere c 3km north of Windermere on land which slopes down to the west and south to the lake shore. The c 12ha site is in a rural and agricultural setting with boundaries formed by the lake on the west side, fences on the north side, the A591 on the north-east side and a track running from the road to the lakeside on the south-east side.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to the site is from the A591 where there is a set of circular stone gate piers and wooden gates. The gate piers were originally covered in roughcast and the wooden gates are C20 reproductions of the originals which were probably designed by Mawson. A drive leads south-west towards the house which is screened by trees, including a Wellingtonia and pines which are shown as newly-planted saplings on photographs of c1900. The route turns westwards to enter a courtyard in front of the main entrance. Another entrance from the A591, c 80m south-east of the first, was created in the late C20 to serve a visitor car park.

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PRINCIPAL BUILDING Brockhole House stands on a platform on the highest part of the site overlooking the garden and park and enjoying views over the lake. The house was erected 1899-1902 to designs by the architect Dan Gibson, then in partnership with Mawson. The mansion is constructed of stone under pitched roofs of lakeland slate and finished with a white-washed cement render. Chimney stacks are a mixture of cylindrical and square forms. In plan the house forms a central rectangular block with short side ranges forming three sides of a courtyard, open to the north east. Attached to the east are a buttressed orangery and a service wing forming a second courtyard open to the east. The main south elevation overlooking the lake is of three bays with alternating shaped gables and loggias with upper verandas. The left end bay is formed by a recessed gabled range set at right angles to the building. The east elevation is in Gibson's regionally influenced Arts and Crafts style with asymmetrical gables and flush leaded glass windows. An extension housing a café and shop was built on the north side of the building in the 1990s. A former gardener's house and stables, also designed by Gibson in 1899, are ranged around a courtyard on the south-east side of the entrance drive c 100m north-east of the house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The east side of the house is protected by an arc of trees shown as part of the agricultural landscape on the 1858 OS map which was augmented by new planting c 1900. Planting on the north side of the house of c1900 screens the house from ancillary buildings to the north-east. The gardens lie on sloping land on the south and west sides of the house. Planting was designed to frame views but also to offer protection from winds funnelling over the lake. There is a balance between sheltered, more intimate areas and those offering longer views. Formal terracing immediately in front of the house gives way to slightly less formal areas where the stonework of the terracing becomes rougher and natural boulders used to punctuate the flights of steps recall the naturally-occurring boulders of the woodland and lake edges.

A paved terrace with a low parapet wall of roughly coursed rubble with flat capping stones runs along the south-west (garden) front. There are views over the sloping gardens to parkland and Birkett Wood to the west, with glimpses of the lake through a thin screen of trees to the south-west. The terrace connects with a series of linked spaces immediately around the house. Steps lead down to a paved rectangular garden with borders and a central rectangular lawn fronting an orangery attached to the east side of the building. Water tanks beneath this area feed a system of stand pipes disposed around the gardens which are part of the original design, though they are no longer functional (2000).

The terrace continues west of the house into a paved rectangular garden with a pattern of L shaped box-lined beds around a central square bed. These, with their box edgings, are shown on the early C20 photographs. The terrace continues and ends with a bowed viewing point from which there are spectacular long-distance views, framed by trees, of the lake and the Langdale Pikes beyond. A paved rectangular area bounded by yew hedges lies on the north-west side of the house. The early C20 photographs show the terrace and linked areas are as originally laid out, with the exception that paving has replaced the original gravel surfaces.

Steps lead down from each of the north-west and south-east ends of the terrace to a sloping lawn below, where a path runs along the base of the terrace. A line of Irish yews flanks the path. These are clipped into globe shapes and they appear as immature trees in the early C20 photographs. A large Monkey Puzzle tree, probably planted c 1900, stands at the edge of the lawn c 40m south-west of the house, and a shrubbery, probably planted in the mid-late C20, extends in an arc along the edge of the lawn north-west of the tree. The path from the south-east end of the terrace leads south along the edge of this lawn. This was originally the site of a pergola, shown in the photographs as a relatively insubstantial rustic timber structure, which was replaced and subsequently demolished late C20. This path continues and leads to a series of stone terraces ranged down the hillside, the first of which is c 70m south of the house. Immediately west of this area there are sloping lawns with large boulders placed within them. The path continues along the north edge of this lawn and runs along the south and west sides of the kitchen garden (see below). Sets of stone steps, with terminals topped with natural boulders, lead up to a path at the base of a low terrace wall with several seating alcoves which runs along the north side of the kitchen garden. The boulders are a feature of several short flights of stone steps on this side of the garden, and the photographs show that they were part of the original design.

To the south, on level land at the base of the slope, there is a summer house, presumably designed by Gibson, c80m from the main building. It is clad in painted roughcast, like the house, and is of simple design with the big circular chimneys of local vernacular buildings. Paths lead north from it alongside the Kitchen Garden and continue north to the croquet lawn (see

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below) and gardens on the west side of the house. A beech hedge divides the precincts of the summer house and this side of the garden from the park.

Sloping lawns and shrubberies on the north-west side of the house are crossed by paths leading from the base of the terrace in front of the house. The north side of the garden here is sheltered by woodland with a high proportion of pines and other evergreens planted c1900. c 80m west of the house there is a group of pines and hollies shown as saplings in the early C20 photographs. Paths lead down to stone terraces c 100m west of the house. These are set into the natural slope of the land with seating alcoves and flights of stone steps punctuated with big natural boulders, the rough rubble walls contrasting with the cleaner finish of the terrace beside the house. This terracing overlooks a levelled croquet lawn. Trees frame views of the lake to the west. A number of early C20 photographs show views of the house between immature trees from the croquet lawn.

Paths from the croquet lawn lead to the lake shore where a partially rebuilt jetty and landing stage, shown on the 1920 OS map, lies c250m west of the house. A path leads south alongside the lake on the west side of Birkett Wood, an area of woodland shown on the 1858 OS map. The wood is on a low hill so that it screens the house and gardens from the lake. The lakeside path is shown on the 1858 OS map when it led from Ecclerigg House (to the north and outside the registered area) through the wooded lake shores to Crag Wood (to the south and outside the registered area). The path continues around the wood and joins with other routes which lead back to the gardens through the park and along the other (east) side of the wood.

C. Holme, who visited the site not long after completion, wrote that the grounds were laid out 'with admirable judgement and with complete appreciation of the manner in which the beauty of the site chosen could be most adequately developed ... [making] an entirely appropriate foreground to a singularly charming picture' (Gardens of England, The Northern Counties (1911), p xxi.)

PARK Open grassland immediately south and west of the gardens is fringed with woodland, Birkett Wood on a low hill to the west, and woodland called Moss Brow extending along part of the south-eastern boundary. c 120m south-east of the house there is a C20 childrens' playground partly concealed by trees. The grassland is managed as a wildflower meadow. Both patches of woodland are shown on the 1858 OS map, which shows the remaining area divided into large fields.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies within the gardens on sloping land c 80m west of the house. It is defined by the low retaining walls of terraces and beech hedges. A path running east/west across it and central slate sundial were introduced late C20. The early C20 photographs show it divided into small plots. It is currently laid out as large beds (2000).

OTHER LAND On the north side of the entrance drive, c100m north of the house, there is a potting shed, extended late C20, and a small C20 ancillary building. A nursery area immediately north of these has a number of late C20 greenhouses.

A late C20 car park lies in the north-east corner of the site screened from the house and grounds by the band of trees immediately east of the house.

REFERENCES

Published sources Studio, 28 (1903) pp 249, 258 C Holme, Gardens of England, The Northern Counties (1911), xxi, pls 28, 29. T H Mawson, The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect (1925), p 61-2 G Beard, Thomas H Mawson (1876), p 47 Maps OS 6":1 mile, 1st ed., surveyed 1858, published 1862 Sale Map, 1877 OS 6":1 mile, 2nd ed., published 1899 OS 6":1 mile published 1920 Site Plan, 1:500, nd, c1995

Archival Photographs albums, vol 1 1894-1899, vol 2 1899-1902; Miscellaneous undated early C20 photographs, private collection.

Description written: March 2000 Revised April 2000 Register Inspector: CH Revised February 2008 Heritage Protection Adviser: M T-S

REASON FOR DESIGNATION This early C20 landscape is designated for the following principal reasons:

- * Brockhole is a good and representative example of an early C20 landscape influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement
- * It is an early example of the work of the renowned and influential landscape architect Thomas Mawson
- * It represents a collaborative work by Thomas Mawson and Dan Gibson, and is one of very few outcomes of that short-lived partnership

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.