

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

AMPORT PARK

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

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Name:	AMPORT PARK
County:	Hampshire
District:	Test Valley (District Authority)
Parish:	Amport
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.191754 Longitude: -1.5757914 National Grid Reference: SU 29741 43700 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000858 Date first listed: 31-May-1984

## Details

Formal terraces with water features, designed in 1923 by Sir Edwin Lutyens to complement a mid C19 house and planted by Gertrude Jekyll, with adjacent mid C19 pleasure grounds and overlooking parkland of late C18 and early C19 origin.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Amport was held as a seat of the Paulet family from the mid C17 when it was acquired from the Goldston family. The first Paulet to own Amport was Lord Henry, the fourth son of William, fourth Marquess of Winchester and brother to the fifth Marquess, John, who died defending the chief family seat of Basing House (qv). On Lord Henry's death in 1672, he was succeeded by his son Francis and then by his grandson Norton, during whose ownership Amport is clearly shown as a country house with a formal approach (Taylor, 1759). Following the death of the eleventh Marquess, Norton's youngest son, George Paulet, inherited the title in 1794 and made Amport the principal family seat. He was probably responsible for laying out the park south of the house as far as the Portway, as recorded on Greenwood's county map of 1826, the house then standing to the north-east of the present house and laid out on the west side by 1839 (Tithe map) with pleasure grounds containing long walks and garden features. By 1846 (Enclosure map) further land had been acquired by the Paulet family and the park had been extended south of the Portway, and in 1857 the fourteenth Marquess commissioned the architect William Burn to build the present house. In 1919 the Paulet family sold Amport and the estate was split up. The house was purchased by Captain Philipson and then sold on in 1922 to Colonel Sofer-Whitburn, whose commission to Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) to remodel the gardens resulted in the present water terraces, areas of which were planted by Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932). Amport was requisitioned for military use in 1939 and finally purchased by the Ministry of Defence in 1958. Subsequent sales of land in the early 1960s have left the Ministry in ownership of the house and immediate gardens and pleasure grounds. For many years they were occupied by the RAF Chaplains' School until this was succeeded by the tri-service Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre. The parkland is now (1998) privately owned farmland.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Amport Park is situated some 6km west of Andover and 1.5km south of Thruxton village, off the main A303, Andover to Amesbury road and adjacent to the south-west edge of Amport

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village. The 99ha registered site, which comprises c 8ha of formal terraced gardens and informal pleasure grounds and c 91ha of parkland and woodland, lies on gently undulating ground which falls south-eastwards from the house to incorporate a shallow, south-west to north-east dry valley. North-west of the Portway, a Roman Road which cuts through the south-eastern third of the park, the site is bounded by minor lanes largely fringed with internal tree belts or woodland, with further lightly wooded farmland beyond. To the north-east of Furzedown Lane, St Mary's church and village housing, including that within the walls of Amport Park's former kitchen garden (excluded from the registered area), form the boundary and setting. South of the Portway the park is enclosed by narrow boundary tree belts with wooded farmland beyond.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance to Amport Park lies in the north-east corner on Furzedown Lane, some 100m west of The Green. A drive enters through wrought-iron gates hung on stone piers designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967) which stand beside East Lodge (1871, listed grade II), a two-storey building of yellow brick with a steeply pitched roof and ornamental bargeboards. The drive follows a gently curving course in a south-westerly direction to arrive on the tarmac forecourt on the north-east, entrance front of the house. The present drive from East Lodge appears to have been established by the end of the C18 (Milne, 1791) and served both the former house, which stood to the south of St Mary's church, and the present one. A further short arm of drive, entering the north side of the forecourt from Furzedown Lane, forms a service route. Its entrance gate piers stand on the axis of a former track, lined by an overgrown tree belt and containing riding school premises at the southern end, which extends northwards onto Hay Down. This belt was established by the early C19 (OS 1817) and is shown planted with formal rows of trees including conifers by 1873 (OS). By this date, the present belt curving north-westwards along the foot of Hay Down had also been planted and London Lodge (c 800m north-west of the main house) built.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Amport Park (listed grade II), known in the C19 as 'The Mansion, Amport St Mary', stands centrally on the north-west boundary of the park, on the axis of the tree belt running north to Hay Down and with the south-east, garden front overlooking the terraces and the park within the valley beyond. It is built in the English style of c 1600' (listed building description), in yellow brick with stone dressings, the main house being of two storeys with an attic and gables and the attached, northern service courtyard, one storey with attic. The upper floors of both have gabled, semi-dormer windows. The main door, at the southern end of the north-east, entrance front, has a porch with Tuscan columns and pilasters and an arched entrance. The house was built in 1857 by the architect William Burn (1789-1870), on the site of the pleasure grounds of a former house which stood to the immediate south of St Mary's church. A two-storey extension on the south-west side overlooking the parterre garden was built in 1998-9.

A courtyard range of stables and coach houses, also in yellow brick with stone dressings, stands some 80m north-east of the house. Now (1998) converted to eight private dwellings, the south-east range, built by William Burn with the house in 1857, contains a central carriage arch surmounted by a stone clock tower. This range was extended to form a south-west side in the late C19 (the two wings both listed grade II) while the range closing the courtyard on the north-west and north-east sides (listed grade II) was added c 1900. The entrance to the courtyard on Furzedown Lane, which stands between the two ranges, is framed by a pair of massive gate piers of yellow brick and rusticated stone topped with ball finials (listed grade II).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The formal terraced gardens designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and partly planted by Gertrude Jekyll lie on the second and lowest levels on the south-east side of the house (all hard structures listed grade II). Further informally planted pleasure grounds extend north-eastwards to East Lodge and south-westwards towards Furzedown Wood.

The south-east, garden front opens onto the uppermost of three terraces, this extending c 100m in length north-eastwards and south-westwards of the house and terminating at each end in a broad flight of stone steps, the north-eastern flight longer and split by a landing. The terrace, which is laid to a central paved apron flanked by narrow strips of lawn and retained by a wall and an upstanding balustrade, was constructed between 1896 and 1910 (OS editions) along with the central axial stone staircase leading down to a second terrace. This and the third, lowest level of terrace, the two again connected by a central axial flight of stone steps (added during the 1960s, photographs at Amport) and terminating abruptly at the south-east boundary with the park in a stone ha-ha wall, comprise Lutyens' water terraces which were added to the garden in 1923 (Brown 1982) and planted by Gertrude Jekyll (drawings held at Reef Point, USA). The focus of the design is a large oval pool set centrally and within lawn on

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the second terrace, its double-rimmed stone edge incorporating a narrow rill planted with water plants. Following a symmetrical arrangement, further straight, narrow stone rills take the water from each end of the pool c 15m along the long axis of the terrace into small square pools, these set within a pattern of yew topiary and equal-sized square rose beds planted originally by Miss Jekyll with roses from Dickson's of County Down. The rills continue their course from the south-east side of each square pool to take the water over the retaining wall and onto the lowest terrace. The rills then turn again through a right angle to run towards, and terminate in, small square pools at each side of the terrace, the water being collected here for recirculation. Both water terraces contain borders at the foot of their retaining walls and are enclosed along their short south-west and north-east sides by tall clipped yew hedging topped by geometric topiary, perimeter paved paths, further steps, and shrubbery. A grassed walk, separated from the lawn by paving, runs along the south-east side of the lowest terrace above the ha-ha wall, the ends of the walk intended by Lutyens to be decorated with twin garden houses which were never built (Brown 1982).

From the north-east side of the lowest terrace, flights of steps descend to a 45m x 35m rectangular garden enclosed by a combination of tall yew and beech hedging. Divided north-west to south-east by a low wall, the north-eastern half is laid to lawn and the south-western half has an inner, part-sunken square of raised drystone walls planted with shrubs and herbaceous plants and a central square pool (now, 1998, dry). The present layout appears to have replaced that of the rock garden designed and planted by Miss Jekyll in the 1920s (plans at Reef Point, USA).

South-west of the water terraces and running in that direction for some 100m are two arms of lime avenue comprising both young and mature, clipped cordon trees, one arm extending from the long axis of the top terrace and terminating in an urn, the other, a double avenue, axial on the water rill on the lowest terrace. The avenues are linked at their south-west end by a further double avenue at right angles. These are not recorded as the work of either Lutyens or Gertrude Jekyll and do not appear on OS editions until the mid C20. South-westwards beyond the lime avenues, paddocks and rough grass contain a scatter of trees including exotics which survive from the planting shown in 1873 (OS). North-eastwards beyond the terraces, a narrow belt of lawn, planted informally with a mixture of mature and C20 native and exotic trees including conifers, flanks each side of the drive to East Lodge, the belt on the north-west side shown established on the OS map of 1873 and south-east side taken in from the park between 1896 and 1910 (OS editions).

North-west of the top terrace, and enclosed and overlooked by the south-west elevation of the house, is a c 30m square box parterre, laid out between 1896 and 1909 (photograph in CL 1909) to represent the Winchester coat of arms around a central stone pool (a sundial is shown in 1909) and embellished with spirals, crowns, and domes of topiary.

**PARK** The park at Amport lies south, south-west, and south-east of the house and gardens and is largely open in character and under arable cultivation. The area as far south as the Portway, which formed the extent of the park until the mid C19, was established as parkland with trees by 1791 (Milne). It has a sparse scatter of individual trees and one or two clumps, with two more extensive clumps straddling the Portway, the present trees surviving as fragments of the extensive parkland planting established by 1839 (Tithe map) and shown in detail on the OS map of 1873. This pattern and density existed up to the early C20 (OS). The park in the early C19 was enclosed with a boundary tree belt, described in the Tithe survey (1839) as a 'shrubbery' and containing a walk. Between 1826 (Greenwood) and 1846 (Enclosure map) the park was extended south of the Portway and similarly planted with parkland trees, the OS map of 1873 showing a high proportion of conifers. This area is now open farmland with four or five scattered trees and clumps, although the boundary belt, shown established by 1873 (OS), survives intact. At either end of the section of the Portway through the park are two lodges, Keeper's Hill Lodge at the north-east end and West Lodge at the south-west end, these having been built by 1873 (OS). The farm buildings of Fox Farm (due for conversion to residential use in 2001) were brought within the park in the mid C19 (Enclosure map, 1846) when Hay Down Lane was diverted from the east side of Fox Farm to its present course on the park's south-west boundary.

#### REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Hampshire IV, (1911), pp 337-9 Country Life, 25 (13 February 1909), p 251 N Pevsner and D Lloyd, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1967), pp 78-9 J Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* (1982), pp 141-5, 174

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Maps Isaac Taylor, A Map of Hampshire , 1" to 1 mile, 1759 Thomas Milne, Hampshire or the County of Southampton, 1" to 1 mile, 1791 C and J Greenwood, A Map of the County of Southampton, 1" to 1 mile, 1826 Tithe map for Amport parish, 1839 (Hampshire Record Office) Enclosure map, 1846 (Hampshire Record Office)

OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published c 1817 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1872-3 2nd edition published 1896/7 3rd edition published 1911/12 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1873 2nd edition published 1896 3rd edition published 1910 Archival items Copies of Gertrude Jekyll's garden drawings (folder 173) are held on microfilm at the National Monuments Record (originals held at Reef Point, USA). Photographs, c 1960s (at Amport Park)

Description written: November 1998 Amended: May 2000; July 2001 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: January 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.