

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR:
WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

Name: THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

District: Windsor and Maidenhead (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Old Windsor

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.478729
Longitude: -0.59483577
National Grid Reference: SU 97679 76466
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: I
List Entry Number: 1001434
Date first listed: 31-Aug-1999

Details

England's premier castle with moat garden (used as a garden from the C15; remodelled late C19/early C20) and a terrace garden by Sir Jeffry Wyattville (mid 1820s) surrounded by pleasure grounds and a landscape park (in origin a medieval deer park), with intimate associations with the British Royal Family since the C11.

NOTE This site is part of the Royal Estate, Windsor, together with the following six related park or garden areas which are given separate entries within the Register: within Berkshire, Frogmore Gardens (which lies within the Home Park), Windsor Great Park, Cumberland Lodge, Royal Lodge; within Surrey, The Savill Garden and Valley Gardens, Virginia Water.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

William the Conqueror built a new castle two miles from the Saxon royal hunting lodge at Old Windsor, the first stone buildings being erected in the castle precincts by Henry II in the later C12. Ground around the Castle was gradually enclosed from Windsor Forest for a deer park, the Little Park (as it was known until the C19), during the Middle Ages. Major additions were made to the Little Park in the late C14, and by the early C17, in addition to the park and Ranger's Lodge, two separate cultivated enclosures were sited to the south of the Castle, 'The garden Plott' (the site of the King's Garden of the C17 and C18) and 'The orcharde' (Norden, 1607); the total area covered by all these features amounted to 280 acres (c 116ha). During the Civil War in the 1640s the Little Park was used as a training ground for the New Model Army. Following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 the park was substantially enlarged to around 500 acres (c 208ha) from acquisitions by Charles and later William III, who by c 1700 had planned a vast formal garden to the north of the Castle: the Maastricht Garden, designed by Henry Wise. These additions took the parkland to the river front for the first time. The formal, enclosed King's Garden lay to the south of the Upper Ward, overlooked by the early to mid C18 Green House (greenhouse) on the northern boundary. George III and George IV both carried out landscaping work on the Northern Slopes. In the mid 1820s George IV commissioned Sir Jeffry Wyattville to construct the extensive East Terrace Garden adjacent to the Royal Apartments, laid out probably by W T Aiton, Director of the Royal Gardens. The North Slopes area was modified by the Prince Consort following his marriage to Queen Victoria in 1839,

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

enhancing a pleasure ground walk to Adelaide Cottage. William Sawrey Gilpin produced proposals for this area, but following the advent of the Prince Consort these were not carried out. Further substantial ornamentation of the whole park in the form of planting and buildings was carried out under the Prince Consort. During the C20 a golf course was constructed within the parkland to the east and south-east of the Castle. The site remains (1999) the private grounds to Windsor Castle.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Home Park lies adjacent to Windsor, the town forming its west boundary. The north and east park boundaries are formed by the River Thames, the south boundary being marked by the A308 Albert Road connecting Windsor and Old Windsor. The Castle is situated on a promontory above the river on the western boundary of the park, with a steep slope, the North Slopes, descending to the north, and ground sloping gently down from the Castle to the south and east. The North Slopes extend south-east in a curve from the Castle to Adelaide Cottage, dividing the level riverside ground of the park from the higher land to the south. The setting is urban to the west (Windsor and Eton) and east (Datchet), with the playing fields of Eton College (qv) adjacent to the river to the north, and further open riverside land to the east of this. To the south of the A308 lies the Great Park (qv), the two parks being connected by the Long Walk which extends c 5km south from the Cambridge Gate to the equestrian statue of George III.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Today (1999) the main ceremonial approach to the Castle is from Windsor High Street and Park Street, and then northwards through Cambridge Gate to the George IV Gate. A subsidiary route branches off the High Street to go past the Henry VIII Gateway and continues to St George's Gate on the south side of the Round Tower and at the south-west corner of the Upper Ward. Both the George IV Gate and St George's Gate give access to the Great Quadrangle within the Upper Ward, laid largely to lawn with perimeter paths, with a bronze equestrian statue of Charles II (1679) standing at the west end. The George IV Gateway forms the focal point of the Long Walk (laid out by Hugh May for Charles II (d 1685) c 1683-5) within the Great Park to the south, from which Cambridge Gate and Cambridge Lodge (both 1830s, listed grade II), standing 300m south of the Castle, give access to the Home Park. The Long Walk terminates c 300m short of the Castle because at the time of the Walk's construction the former Garden House (subsequently known as the Queen's Lodge) and the extensive formal King's Garden, together with the garden of the adjacent Burford House, stood in the way of the projected line. The Garden House was only removed in 1823 when the view up to the Castle was opened up.

A network of drives traverses the Home Park, some being flanked by avenues of trees, giving access to Frogmore House and pleasure grounds (qv), Shaw Farm, the Prince Consort's Home Farm and the Royal Gardens. Two entrances approach off the southern boundary with Albert Road: Shaw Farm Gate and Lodge lying 1.6km south of the Castle, and Albert Lodge, lying adjacent to the east of Shaw Farm Lodge and giving direct access to the west side of the Royal Gardens. North Lodge (mid C19, listed grade II) lies to the south of Albert Road. To the south-east, off the Datchet Road, are Royal Gardens Lodge (listed grade II) lying 1.8km south-east of the Castle and giving direct access to the Royal Gardens, the Prince Consort's Home Farm and Frogmore; and Albert Bridge Lodge (mid C19, listed grade II), also lying 1.8km south-east of the Castle. Long Walk Gate and Lodge give access to the park 600m south of the Castle, eastwards off the Long Walk.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Windsor Castle (listed grade I) lies on the west boundary of the Home Park, the east half of the Castle enclosure projecting into the park, and the west half projecting into the town of Windsor. The stone castle, dating from the C12, has been much modified in succeeding centuries, but retains its basic layout of central mound, on which stands the Round Tower (the highest point within the Home Park), flanked by the public Lower Ward to the west and the private Upper Ward to the east. George IV embellished and restored the castle fabric in the early C19. Along the north side of the Round Tower and Upper Ward runs the North Terrace, a broad path overlooking the steep Northern Slopes below, first constructed in the C16 as a viewing platform; in the late C17 a bastion (now gone) was added overlooking the low ground below to the north. The Terrace extends eastwards to join the north side of the East Terrace Garden (1820s). The east front of the Upper Ward, bounded by the East Terrace, overlooks the East Terrace Garden.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The main garden attached to the Castle is the formal East Terrace Garden. This irregular hexagonal area, constructed by Sir Jeffry Wyattville in the mid 1820s and probably laid out by W T Aiton, Director of the Royal Gardens, replaced the King's Garden (C17 in origin) which stood to the south of the Castle and was in the 1840s

covered by the Royal Mews. The East Terrace Garden is enclosed by a free-standing, stone-faced, battlemented terrace with a broad gravel path running along the top. Grassed slopes extend inwards from the raised walk to a level parterre, except on the west side which is bounded by the stone terrace below the east front, in which a central double flight of stone steps forms the main entrance into the Garden. A single mirroring flight of stone steps leads up from the Garden to the east arm of the terrace walk; a later flight of steps descends on the east side of the walk to the informal East Lawn. The level parterre is surrounded by a broad, D-shaped gravel path and crossed by two further paths in cruciform, at the centre of which lies a circular pond. The lawns between the cross paths are laid out with a simple pattern of formal rose beds, replacing since the 1950s Aiton's earlier scheme of the 1820s which contained a more complex arrangement of seasonal bedding beds. A line of clipped domes of golden yew is arranged around the outer side of the perimeter path. The lawn slopes down to the north to a former conservatory set into the north side of the terrace. The interior of the Garden has no views out, although views do extend from the east front and the raised terrace walk east over the East Lawn, and from the south arm of the terrace into the Home Park. The East Terrace Garden was constructed on the site of earlier terraced bowling greens created by Charles II in the 1670s.

The Moat Garden is the main garden within the Castle precincts, occupying the western slopes of the Round Tower mound, and is a private garden attached to Norman Tower, the official residence of the Castle Governor. The Garden is entered from the north via the Governor's apartments, overlooked by the Norman Gateway, and from the south via a gateway lying adjacent to St George's Gate leading into the Upper Ward. The Moat Garden is divided into two main sections. The upper half, covering the steep slopes up to the bottom of the Round Tower, is itself divided, with the upper slope planted up and traversed by narrow paths and a terrace, and the lower slopes laid to grass. A rock garden with a small cascade occupies the northern end of the slopes, with a viewing terrace backed by a stone retaining wall facing directly west, overlooking the Lower Ward, lying part way up the slope. The lower half consists of a more level area occupying the bottom of the former moat, enclosed to the west by a raised stone terrace wall. This lower area is largely laid to lawn with a path running around the outer edge, adjacent to a border below the retaining wall. Spectacular views extend from the upper slopes to north and south, and to the west over the Lower Ward.

It appears that the moat (always dry) contained a garden by the early C15 (Plumptre 1981). The slopes and moat are shown extensively planted in Hollar's etching of Windsor Castle, c 1660 (published 1672; in Roberts 1997, 162). In the early C18 (*A Plan of Windsor Castle ...*, c 1730) the bottom of the moat was laid out in panels of lawn, separated by paths and planted with trees. The northern section below the Norman Gateway was depicted c 1770 in a watercolour entitled *The Moat Garden*, again laid to lawn with gravel paths below the wall, with shrubs growing on the slopes above (Roberts 1997). During the C19 the area was largely neglected, but from 1901 it was developed by General Sir Dighton Probyn, Edward VII's Keeper of the Privy Purse, who planted beds of flowers and flowering shrubs around the lawn at the bottom and up the steep slopes of the mound. He also terraced the slopes of the mound, connecting them with paths and steps, and at the north end built the rockery with a stream, using Norfolk car-stone (Plumptre 1981).

A group of Canons' Gardens and Cloisters lies on the north side of the Lower Ward, with records of planting surviving from the C14 (St George's Chapel archive). The areas were depicted in the early C17 (Norden, 1607) laid out formally, particularly the area enclosed by the Horseshoe Cloisters (see also Hollar, published 1672; in Roberts 1997, 162).

A doorway in the north arm of the East Terrace Garden leads out to the top of the Northern Slopes and East Lawn, from where a drive extends around the outer side of the East Terrace Garden leading south and west to the George IV Gate to the Upper Ward. An informal garden lies below the south arm of the East Terrace Garden, laid to lawn with shrub and herbaceous borders, bounded to the south by the drive around the East Terrace Garden.

The North Slopes is a band of pleasure grounds occupying the chalk escarpment on which the Castle stands, extending south-east as far as Adelaide Cottage with the angle of slope becoming gradually shallower the further it runs from the Castle. Informal paths zig-zag down the steep wooded hillside below the Castle to the Broad Water lying parallel at the bottom on level ground, flanked by informal plantings of trees. The North Slopes extends 1.1km south-east of the Castle. The western end of the Slopes was first planted up in the 1780s, the area being extended south-east to the end of the chalk escarpment by George IV in the 1820s. Here it was terminated by a former keeper's lodge, transformed into Adelaide Cottage in the 1830s as a retreat for Queen

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

Adelaide set in its own enclosed gardens nestling into the hillside to the west, reusing picturesque elements of George IV's Royal Lodge in the Great Park. The Prince Consort further embellished the Slopes with structures, walks and planting in the 1840s. Where the land levels out at the bottom of the North Slopes, to the north and north-east of the Castle, a trout stream set in lawn is fed from the Broad Water to the west, the stream being crossed by several small, stone, gothic-arched bridges (the whole by the Prince Consort, 1840s), with beyond this to the north a lawn (used as a school playing field, 1999) encircled by shrub borders. Various features embellish the North Slopes, including two flint- and pebble-lined grotto complexes (Prince Consort, 1840s), the easternmost of which overlooks the Prince Consort's Rockery sited in a former quarry. These features form incidents on walks running along the slope and terminating at Adelaide Cottage, itself the main incident on the walk. Features which have gone (1999) include a lime kiln and associated temple or Lime Kiln Seat, and the waterfall which was part of the rockery. Queen Victoria's Walk, a drive flanked by cedars, runs along the top of the scarp, linking the east side of the Castle with Adelaide Cottage, and proceeding to the Kennels, the Home Farm and Frogmore.

Frogmore House and pleasure grounds also lie within the Home Park and form part of the Windsor complex. Due to their isolated development in the C18 and C19 however they are dealt with as a separate Register entry.

PARK The Home Park surrounds the Castle to the north, east and south, and is laid largely to pasture, encompassing, outside the immediate precincts of the Castle, the North Slopes, Frogmore House (qv), the Royal Gardens, the Shaw Farm complex (1840s, listed grade II) and the Prince Consort's Home Farm complex (1840s, listed grade II). This latter farm stands on the site of the 1670s Ranger's Lodge largely pulled down in 1815 (fragments of this building seemingly incorporated within the Dairy House in the mid C19; Roberts 1997, 159) but which had extensive grounds of its own laid out in the C17 and C18, with a complex garden laid out by Charles Spencer, third Duke of Marlborough, in the mid 1730s (lost later in the C18). The Home Park is bounded to the north and east by the river, with views to the largely rural land beyond, and divided in the northern section by the C19 Datchet road running west to east. The northern section thus created is now (1999) public playing fields, themselves bounded and (at the northern extremity) crossed by a railway line. A golf course has been created on the South Slopes lying south-east of the Castle, and a cricket ground lies c 500m south of the Castle.

By the mid C18 (Collier, 1742) the Castle was bounded to the north by substantial formal terraces (c 1700-8) overlooking the remains of the Maastricht Garden, and to the east by three terraced bowling greens (1670s) overlooking parkland crossed by several formal avenues with ronds-points at their intersections, planted with scattered trees and formal clumps.

The great, formal, ephemeral Maastricht Garden, conceived by William III (d 1702), and begun by Henry Wise in 1701, covered the level area north of the Castle. Queen Anne (d 1714) continued with the construction during her reign, but following her death work was stopped by George I, and the area was left to deteriorate, although in 1766 the design of the garden was said to be clearly visible (Roberts 1997, 182). In the 1780s George III filled in the remains of the great central pond as part of his plans to convert the Little Park to farmland, but lines of trees down either side survived for some decades after this. An aerial photograph of 1964 (Roberts 1997) shows that, despite the construction of a kitchen garden (C18/C19) and the Datchet Road (mid C19), and conversion of much of the area to playing fields (early and mid C20), the outline of the great garden's structure survived at that time in archaeological form.

KITCHEN GARDEN The Royal Gardens (mid C19) lie 1.5km south-east of the Castle, now (1999) disused and largely laid to lawn and pasture. The c 14ha site is divided into compartments of varying sizes by 4m high brick walls. The northern boundary of the walled gardens is marked by a 345m long wall which formerly (until the mid C20) supported a range of lean-to greenhouses with a variety of functions, at the centre of which remains the two-storey, Gothic-style gardener's house. The main gateway enters off the drive from Royal Gardens Lodge, 170m east of the gardener's house, wide enough, like the interior walks and alleys, for the passage of a pony carriage. The gateway is situated at the eastern end of a terrace which formerly had a flower border along its south-east edge. The terrace lies in front of the site of the former greenhouses, linking to a further formal gateway at the western end of the compartment leading to the drive which extends west to Albert Lodge. A gateway in the centre of the southern boundary of this main, 5ha compartment gives access to the five smaller central compartments running west to east along the southern boundary, and beyond these a former orchard compartment, with, at the east end, a compartment which formerly held cold frames, now (1998) converted to a car park.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
THE ROYAL ESTATE, WINDSOR: WINDSOR CASTLE AND HOME PARK

To the north of the north wall lies the former site of a further 2ha of associated structures, including pits, forcing houses, frames, store-rooms, small fruit houses and offices. A commercial greenhouse occupies the western end of this area, the site of the former glasshouses to the east now laid to open lawn with specimen trees. Most of the office buildings survive.

The Royal Gardens were constructed in the 1840s under the supervision of the Prince Consort, after a process of rationalisation of all the other Royal kitchen gardens supplying the Court at London and Windsor, including those at Kensington (qv), Kew (qv), Cumberland Lodge (qv) and the Maastricht Garden. The new gardens were considered to be the most advanced and efficient of their day (Garden Hist 1984). The glasshouses were reconstructed under Edward VII, and the area largely taken out of production after the Second World War.

REFERENCES

N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), pp 266-95 G Plumtre, *Royal Gardens* (1981), pp 106-25 Garden History 12, no 2 (1984), pp 100-19 R Strong, *Royal Gardens*, (1992), pp 92-5, 104-5, 156-7 D Lambert and T Longstaffe-Gowan, *Report on Windsor Home and Great Parks* (1996), pp 16-19 J Roberts, *Royal Landscape, The Gardens and Parks of Windsor* (1997) *Country Life*, no 18 (8 May 1999), pp 90-3

Maps J Norden, *Plan of the Town of Windsor and the Little Park, 1607* (British Library and Royal Collection) J Norden, *A description of the honour of Windesor, 1607* (British Museum and Royal Collection) H Wise, *An Accurate Plan of Windsor Parks and Part of the Forrest, c 1710* (Royal Collection) *A Plan of Windsor Castle and the Little Park, c 1730* (Public Record Office) W Collier, *Plan of the town and castle of Windsor and Little-Park, town and college of Eton, 1742* (Royal Collection)
Description written: May 1999 Amended: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 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.