

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

GROVE HOUSE

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

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Name:	GROVE HOUSE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Wandsworth (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.454689 Longitude: -0.24671380 National Grid Reference: TQ 21917 74314 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000419 Date first listed: 13-Mar-1990

Details

Mid C18 gardens and pleasure grounds of a villa, altered in the C19, laid out within a wider setting dating from the late C18 and early C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By 1624 David Papillon, a French Huguenot builder and developer, had built a great house in the hamlet of Roehampton, on a piece of land then known as Mortlake Way. The house, Roehampton House, along with 5ha of land, he sold on to Richard Weston (1577-1635). Weston acquired another 45ha from Papillon in May 1626 and nearby Putney Park from the Crown in March 1627. With these purchases he was able to enclose 182ha in a new park, receiving a licence for this from Charles I in 1634. The park was stocked with deer. Weston became one of Charles I's most-favoured ministers and in 1628 was made first Lord Weston of Neyland and five years later first Earl of Portland. Weston employed the Dutch architect and connoisseur, Sir Balthaser Gerbier to work on the interiors of the house and on the gardens. In a letter to Weston dated 19 January 1630, Gerbier describes the setting of the house and how he expected the Great Chamber to have fine views over the four parterres. The letter also implies that the four parterres already existed but as these were too small for so fine a setting, four longer parterres, but of the same width, should be laid out to reach the end of the garden. By this time Weston had already commissioned the French sculptor Hubert Le Suer to make a bronze equestrian figure of Charles I for the garden. The statue was cast and set up in the gardens by 1633. It was removed in 1644 by order of Parliament but was saved from destruction and has stood on the south side of Trafalgar Square (qv) since 1675 (Survey of London). By 1634 Portland was a sick man and he died in March 1635, leaving a severely encumbered estate to his son Jerome, who succeeded as second Earl. Five years later the Roehampton estate was sold to Sir Abraham Daws, apparently in trust for his son Sir Thomas. Sir Thomas resided at Roehampton House for much of the 1640s and his diary for this period survives (Surrey Archaeol Collect 1926). In 1648 the property was let (and later sold) to Christian, second Countess of Devonshire. The estate remained in the Devonshire family until 1689, when it was sold to Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys, alderman of London.

Little is known about the house in the late C17 and early to mid C18 but it seems to have become separated from much of the land accumulated by Weston. In 1746 the immediate gardens and grounds appear to have covered a relatively small area,

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approximating to the present grounds of Grove House (Rocque). During the late C18 the then owner, Thomas Parker, a lawyer of the Inner Temple, was selling off plots of land from the estate for development and in 1785 the freehold of the property was sold to Joshua Vanneck. By 1787 (Corris) Vanneck had replaced the house with a much smaller villa (Manning and Bray 1814). By 1804 Roehampton Grove, as it was then called, had passed to William Gosling, a banker. An engraving of the house published in that year shows it roughly the same shape as today (1999). The engraving also shows the lake and the sham bridge. In the early 1840s the estate was purchased by Charles Lyne-Stephens (1764-1851), a wealthy entrepreneur. The estate and mansion (by this time known as Upper Grove House), stayed in the family until 1894, during which time Lower Grove House was built to the north of the site and the gardener's cottage to the west. Lyne-Stephens' widow, Yolande, continued to live at Grove House and on her death in 1894 the property passed to Henry Alexander Stopford, the youngest son of a family friend. Stopford died soon after inheriting and his widow married one Raoul Bedingfeld. A number of changes were made during the Bedingfelds' ownership including the construction of an artificial grotto. After Mrs Bedingfeld left the house in 1911 it was then taken over by Charles Fischer, a merchant, who made improvements including alterations to the main house. After the First World War the freehold of Grove House was auctioned and purchased by the Froebel Educational Institute, in whose hands it remains today (1999). The Institute transferred their school from West Kensington to Grove House after the Second World War.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The level 7ha site is situated in the outskirts of west London. Barnes is 2km to the north, Wandsworth town 4km to the east, Wimbledon Park (qv) 3km to the south-east, and Richmond Park (qv) c 1km to the south-west. Grove House is bounded by Roehampton Lane to the east and Clarence Lane to the south. Buildings of the convent of the Sacred Heart (Digby Stewart College) provide the boundary to the north-east, and the grounds of Roehampton Golf Club (the former parkland) the boundary to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The drive remains as laid out in the late C18, entering the estate at the early C19 lodge (listed grade II) and gates (listed grade II but possibly not original) which stand at the south-east corner of the site, off Roehampton Lane. The drive leads north-west to the south front of the House, beyond which it curves south-west to join Clarence Lane at a mid C19 lodge c 250m west of the House. This lodge is possibly the 'gardener's cottage', for which sketches by William Wilkinson Wardell, dated 1854, exist. Several late C20 buildings occupy the area between the south-west arm of the drive and Clarence Lane.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Grove House (listed grade II*), originally Roehampton Grove and subsequently Upper Grove House, replaced a C17 building, Roehampton Great House. It was built by James Wyatt for Joshua Vanneck (d 1816) sometime after his marriage in 1777 and before 1787. The two-storey house has a pedimented centre and balustraded portico at ground-floor level. The garden front (to the north) has a three-storey, three-windowed splayed bay to the centre which is surmounted by a balustraded parapet which is echoed in the east and west wings.

Overlooking the lake to the north, Grove House was little altered until the C20 when, c 1912, the owner, Charles L Fischer, undertook extensive alterations which included re-casing the whole of the north front in stone and adding an arcaded walk along its eastern section. Minor alterations were also made to the eastern front, and it could be that it was at this time that this side of the House was stuccoed.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Between the House and the southern boundary is an area of lawn, bordered by mature trees (which include a collection of conifers) and shrubs, the main gardens being on the north side of the House. These were laid out in the mid C18 to accompany the new house (Manning and Bray 1814). Immediately below the House to the north is a stone-paved terrace, edged with a balustrade, from which three sets of steps lead north down to the gardens. These form a rectangular area, extended on its northern edge by a semicircular bow, the whole being enclosed by a low stone wall decorated with urns. A raised walk leads down the eastern side, and the main area is laid out with gravel walks through grass plats. At the centre of the semicircle is a round pond and fountain, and from here a path leads north across the surrounding lawns.

A straight path extends east from the top terrace. A little further to the east of this is a lightly wooded pleasure ground which provides the setting for the mausoleum (listed grade II), built in the early 1860s by William Burn for Yolande Lyne-Stephens, in memory of her husband (d 1860). The stone-faced mausoleum has fine Romanesque-style detail.

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A path extends north from the pleasure grounds to the east end of the kidney-shaped lake. This was enlarged by Vanneck in the late C18 from an existing smaller body of water, and the balustraded sham bridge (listed grade II) at the west end was built at the same time. The inlet at the eastern end of the lake is marked by 'Rooks Grotto'. Constructed in the late 1890s by T B Harpham, horticultural builder, of Edgeware Road, for the then-owner Raoul Bedingfeld, the Grotto, made from a variety of natural and artificial stones, originally included caverns, rocky paths, and a waterfall running into the lake. At the northern tip of the lake the path forks, one branch continuing north as a walk through a strip of woodland alongside Roehampton Lane, the other looping round the northern edges of the water and so back to the west side of the gardens.

Leading south from the south-west corner of the House to the southern boundary is a yew hedge, incorporating stone piers at intervals along it. This boundary probably dates from the mid C19 alterations to the House and grounds.

OTHER LAND To the west of the House (outside the area here registered) are a number of free-standing late C20 buildings associated with the present Institute. Beyond (also outside the area here registered) is an area of playing fields.

The former park, which lies to the north-west, is now a golf course and, like the playing fields, is outside the boundary of the registered site from which it is screened by a band of mature woodland.

The kitchen garden, now infilled with C20 buildings, stands on Roehampton Lane c 100m to the north-east of the House and is outside the registered boundary.

REFERENCES

Manning and Bray, History of Surrey I, (1814) Surrey Archaeol Collect 37 pt 1, (1926) Survey of London XVI, (1937), pp 263-6 Wandsworth Borough Council Report, (1990) Inspector's Report, (English Heritage 1992)

Maps J Rocque, Twenty Miles around London, 1745 J Corris, 1787 (Wandsworth Local Studies Centre) Milne's Land Use map, 1800 (Wandsworth Local Studies Centre) Tithe map for Putney parish, 1849 (Wandsworth Local Studies Centre)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1865 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1916

Illustrations William Wilkinson Wardell, sketches of 'gardener's cottage', 1854 (Mitchell Library, Sydney, NSW) [copies in Wandsworth Local Studies Centre]

Description written: September 1999 Amended: March 2001 Register Inspector: LCH Edited: November 2001

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.