

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

Linton Park

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

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Name:	Linton Park
County:	Kent
District:	Maidstone (District Authority)
Parish:	Linton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.221302 Longitude: 0.51715873 National Grid Reference: TQ7587649911 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000264 Date first listed: 01-May-1986 Date of most recent amendment: 23-Jul-2015 Location Description:Linton Park, Heath Road, Linton, Maidstone, Kent.

## Historique de la conservation

A house known as Capell's Court was recorded on the site in the late C14. It passed to the Baysden and then the Maney families before the estate was plundered during the Civil War. It was owned briefly by Sir Thomas Twysden from 1710 to 1712 and then by Sir George Jocelyn before it became the property of Sir Robert Mann, who built the core of the present house c1730. After his death in 1751 and that of his eldest son, Edward Louisa, in 1775, Edward's brother Sir Horace Mann, diplomat and friend of Horace Walpole, made Linton over to his nephew, who later became Sir Horace Mann II. The Mann family began the planting of the estate, but following Sir Horace's death in 1814, it passed through marriage to James Cornwallis, subsequently the fifth Earl Cornwallis who, from 1825, improved the house and grounds. Lady Julia, daughter of the last Earl, inherited in 1852, married Lord Holmesdale, the third Earl Amherst, and carried out further improvements to the gardens. A cricket ground and pavilion, not shown on the 1872 Ordnance Survey map but shown on an 1888 photograph and appearing on the 1898 second edition, was erected at the north-eastern end of the park. The estate was sold to Olaf Hambro in 1938 and then in 1963 to the Daubeny family who, while retaining the majority of the park, sold the house, stables, and immediate grounds to the Freemasons in 1974. These then became a school for a year before being sold again to an investment company and then to an insurance company. The house lay empty for a period in the early 1980s before being purchased in 1985, with the gardens and the parkland to the north-west, by Linton Park plc. The whole site was, in the late C20, in mixed corporate and private ownership.

## Details

An early to mid C19 garden with significant surviving features influenced by the horticultural writer and designer, J C Loudon, set within a park of C18 and C19 origin.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Linton Park lies off the east side of the A229, c5km south of Maidstone and adjacent to the village of Linton. The registered site, which comprises 12ha of ornamental gardens and a further

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120ha of parkland, woodland, and associated farm buildings and domestic land, occupies the crest and south-facing slope of a greensand ridge which descends steeply at first and then more gently as it approaches the levels of the River Beult valley, 1km beyond the site's southern boundary. The rectangular-shaped site, largely enclosed from view by internal boundary woodland belts, is bounded on all sides by roads: to the west and north by the busy A229 and B2163, and to the south and east by minor lanes from which occasional views of the parkland may be glimpsed. Beyond the roads, the village of Coxheath lies to the north while to the west, east, and south is a farmed landscape of small fields and hedgerows dominated by orchards. The house forms a prominent landmark from the south.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The site is entered from the B2163 to the north through a gateway on the east side of a lodge built between 1841 (Tithe map) and 1868 (OS). The drive loops to the west, then turns south to join the beginning of an avenue which extends, on a line a few degrees east of south, over the crest and down the ridge towards the house.

Field evidence indicates that the avenue, the trees of which never extended northwards of its present limit, was planted in c1755 (Park and Gardens Inspector's Report 1988). Its course is shown on Mudge's map of Kent of 1801 and on the Tithe map of 1841. Its northern section is of beech, the line already fragmented by 1868 (OS) and the remainder largely replanted after the 1987 storm; the southern section comprises a double avenue of semi-mature lime, planted in the 1970s to replace the former elms described in the *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* of 1861. This description suggests that a new entrance to Linton Park, in its extreme north-west corner beside a new lodge (gone by 1997) and with a new length of drive connecting with the north end of the avenue, was in place by that date. This entrance continued in use until at least 1938 (OS), after which the C18 entrance, on the east side of the present C19 lodge, appears to have been reinstated (CL 1946). A third entrance was made, 120m eastwards, in the mid 1960s but was replaced with the present entrance in 1995.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS** Linton Park (listed Grade I) sits at the centre of its surrounding gardens and park and enjoys extensive views south over the Kentish Weald. It is built into the slope of the ridge, the crest of which obscures a view of the house from the northern half of the avenue. The house is built of white-painted stuccoed brick with a slate roof. The central, three-storey section comprises the original two-storey house of seven bays built by Sir Robert Mann in c1730. The present third storey, the wings to east and west, and the balustraded terrace, together with the tetrastyle Corinthian portico and arcaded basement on the south front were alterations carried out by Thomas Cubitt (1788-1855) from 1825. The walled service yard to the north-east survives from the extensive servants' court built at the same time and demolished by Olaf Hambro after 1938. The former stables, a white-painted, brick-built range with a central wooden clock tower built between 1825 and 1829 (in use as garages and workrooms in 1997, listed Grade II), lie 60m to the north-east of the house. Some 23m to their north-west is a brick-lined icehouse chamber, dated 1788 (listed Grade II).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** These surround the house but lie largely in an arc to the north, west, south, and south-east. John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) visited Linton in 1825 and through his report entitled *Remarks on the Improvements proposed to be made at Linton Place* (1825) contributed significantly to the design and planting of the grounds. The character of the landscape which he created and a number of the features survived when inspected in 1997.

From the arcaded basement of the south front, abundantly planted with wisteria, the house opens onto a broad, gravelled terrace (restored late 1980s), enclosed by balustrading and extending 100m to east and west with a small square garden contained within the walls at the end of each wing. A stone staircase (listed Grade II), on the central axis of the terrace and flanked by four levels of steep-faced grass terraces enclosed to east and west by dense banks of shrubbery, descends through three flights of steps to a large oval lawn ringed by a gravel path punctuated by four pairs of Irish yews and with a central sundial (listed Grade II) by Thomas Wright (1711-86). The grass terraces, which are absent in Neale's view of 1829, are shown on the Tithe map of 1841 but it is not clear whether they were part of Loudon's work. By 1861 the central staircase, the planting of the grass terrace faces with clipped laurel, and the complex bedding on and around the oval lawn are described in detail (*J Horticulture*), the planting schemes being the work of the Cornwallis' head gardener, Mr Robson. South of the lawn, a steep grass bank descends to a semicircular ha-ha of dressed stone, built between 1841 (Tithe map) and 1861 (*J Horticulture*).

Eastwards from the house a gravelled path, screened on its north side from the former kitchen garden by a fence and shrubbery, leads from the end of the terrace along the north side of the adjacent Cedar Garden, the present plan of which was established

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by 1841 (Tithe map). The broad, south-sloping lawn is enclosed by shrubbery and framed with serpentine mixed borders and bisected by a north/south axis, containing flights of stone steps and, as a central depression, a fountain basin described in 1859 (J Horticulture). The gravel paths and fountain have recently (2004) been reinstated. The axis is flanked by three pairs of young cedars, planted in the late 1980s to replace mature specimens. At the south end of the axis, a pair of small colonnaded temples frame a viewpoint in the enclosing boundary hedge which is bordered on its south side by a walk, partly lined by drystone walling and planted with shrubbery and a new (1997) Mediterranean border. South of this walk, in an area taken into the garden after 1841 (Tithe map), the lawns level out into two bowling greens before dropping away to the iron pale fence and open views of the park. East of the Cedar Garden, a grazed field with several mature conifers including a pair of Wellingtonias marks the site of the Pinetum. Loudon gave advice on the planting of conifers in his 1825 report and the Pinetum was well established by 1861 (J Horticulture); a substantial cover of conifers was still evident in 1938 (OS). The walk along the north side of the Cedar Garden formerly extended eastwards into the Pinetum and terminated in an octagonal rustic summerhouse (still surviving in 1938 but gone by 1997).

Some 40m west of the house, a straight, gravelled walk leads due south down the slope through a grove of magnolia trees of mixed ages. This area of garden, laid out to its present plan in the late 1980s, was described in 1859 (J Horticulture) as the large principal flower garden but had been redesigned by Mr Robson by 1861 as a rosarium. Immediately south-west of the magnolia walk and enclosed by banks of mature trees and shrubs, is the area known as Jacob's Well. This was under construction in 1997 as a new water and rock garden which will replace a small pool laid out in c1920s.

From a point c 30m north of the magnolia walk, paths radiate in several directions. To the south-west, a path follows the route of Loudon's drive to South Lodge, sited on the A229, 450m south of Linton village. To the west a grass path, formerly gravelled and known as the South Walk, passes along the south side of a two-tier grass amphitheatre with open vistas southwards over the park. This is first shown in 1868 (OS) and was probably laid out as a croquet lawn as part of the garden extension to the west in 1864 (Sell, Wade Postins 1988). Beyond the amphitheatre, the South Walk leads westwards past a semicircle of limes centred on a small obelisk, the site of a former observatory (owner pers comm., 1997) and into a wooded area containing a dell or ravine. On the north side of the South Walk and north-west of the amphitheatre is a second pinetum, containing conifers largely planted since 1987 to replace trees lost in the storm. This pinetum was begun in 1864 (Sell, Wade Postins 1988) and a scatter of conifers is shown on the 2nd and subsequent OS editions. North-east of the amphitheatre, an avenue of mature Wellingtonias runs from a point 60m from the north-west corner of the house for 180m towards St Nicholas' church. This was planted in 1864 (ibid) and still contains the majority of its original trees. At its north-west end, the avenue meets the grassed North Walk which runs 300m westwards from the south end of the northern approach avenue, along the base of a bank planted with trees and shrubbery. It terminates in a Gothic summerhouse (listed Grade II). The North Walk was referred to as an elm avenue (gone by 1997) in Neale's Views of the Seat (1829) and it is shown on Mudge's map of Kent of 1801.

**PARK** The parkland lies to the north and south of the gardens, the area immediately to the north-west of the house with its two C18 avenues being probably the oldest part (Parks and Gardens Inspector's Report, 1988). East of the northern avenue the parkland, enclosed by a belt of woodland to the north, contains only a sparse scatter of trees, similar to the pattern shown in 1868 (OS). A cricket ground with cricket pavilion was separated out at the north eastern edge of the park by 1888 and is shown on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map. West of the avenue, the parkland has a much greater number of both individual trees and sizeable clumps and, towards the north boundary, a 2.5ha sweet chestnut plantation, largely replanted following storm damage in 1987. Field evidence and contemporary plant orders by the Cornwallis family suggest that this planting, the clumps more numerous in 1868 than in 1997, formed part of Loudon's proposals for the park.

South of the gardens, the parkland is laid to pasture and well furnished with clumps and individual trees in a pattern similar to that shown in 1868. The OS Surveyor's drawing of 1797-1801 shows that this southern park existed by the end of the C18. Some 500m due south of the house is a small, irregular-shaped lake of c1ha. The lake and woodland were probably laid out in the late 1820s as they formed part of Loudon's 1825 proposals, as did the suggestion to extend the southern parkland eastwards to the present boundaries by removing two roads which ran roughly from south to north towards the house, c 200m east of the lake, the positions of which can be traced in the field and which are shown on Mudge's map of Kent of 1801.

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**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies c 80m north-east of house adjacent to the east side of the stables. It is c 85m x 50m in area and was established as an enclosure by the end of the C18 (OS Surveyor's drawing, 1797-1801). Along the west side the garden is enclosed by fencing (erected late C20) although remnants of the other walls survive (owner pers comm, 1997). Several houses and gardens, some built in the late C20, occupied the site by 1997.

**OTHER LAND** North and west of the kitchen garden are further small paddocks, areas of woodland, stable buildings, and several houses, laid out on land formerly occupied by the Home Farm.

#### REFERENCES

J P Neale, *Views of the Seats* i 5, (1829) *Country Life*, 5 (11 February 1899), pp 176-80; 99 (29 March 1946), pp 578-81; (5 April 1946), pp 624-7 *J Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, (6 December 1859), pp 143-5; (13 December 1859), pp 160-3; (7 May 1861), pp 101-2; (3 December 1861), pp 185-8; (10 December 1861), pp 218-20; (17 December 1861), pp 238-40

J Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald* (1969), pp 366-7 *Inspector's Report: Linton Park*, (English Heritage 1988) *Linton Park, Appraisal and Proposals*, (Sell, Wade Postins 1988)

Maps W Mudge, *Map of Kent, 1" to 1 mile, 1801 Tithe map for Linton parish, 1841* (Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone) [reproduced in Sell, Wade Postins 1988]

OS Surveyor's drawings, 1797-1801 (British Library Maps) OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1868, published 1872 2nd edition published 1896 3rd edition published 1909 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1909 [part of site only] 1938 edition

Archival items J C Loudon, *Remarks on the improvements proposed to be made at Linton Place, 1825* (No 831), (Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery) Plant orders, catalogues etc are listed in index of documentation accompanying Sell, Wade Postins report (1988).

## Summary

An early to mid C19 garden with significant surviving features influenced by the horticultural writer and designer, J C Loudon, set within a park of C18 and C19 origin.

## 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.

## Reasons for Designation

Linton Park is on the Parks and Gardens Register at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons: \* Date: an early to mid C19 garden with significant surviving features influenced by the horticultural writer and designer J C Loudon; \* Origins: the garden is set within a park of C18 and C19 origins; \* Group value: Linton Park is set around a Grade I listed main house of c1730 with alterations by Thomas Cubitt from 1825, and its gardens contain a number of Grade II listed late C18 and early C19 garden features.