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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PRIDEAUX PLACE

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Name:	PRIDEAUX PLACE
District:	Cornwall (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Padstow
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.540862 Longitude: -4.9444988 National Grid Reference: SW 91461 75374, SW 91573 75621 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001249 Date first listed: 22-Nov-1992

Details

Early and mid C18 gardens, pleasure grounds, and park, with early C19 gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Nicholas Prideaux (d 1560), a lawyer, acquired property at Padstow on the dissolution of Bodmin Priory in the mid C16. The estate was inherited in 1560 by Roger Prideaux, who was succeeded in 1582 by his son, Sir Nicholas Prideaux (1550-1628), who in 1592 rebuilt the house. In 1728 the property was inherited by Edmund Prideaux (1693-1745), who in 1716 and 1727 undertook tours in the south-west of England visiting houses and gardens and recording antiquities. Both before and after a tour in Italy in 1739-40, Prideaux undertook a programme of improvements to the house and gardens; these are shown in a series of mid C18 drawings (Prideaux). Edmund Prideaux died in 1745 and was succeeded by his son, Humphrey, who by 1758 had made further alterations to the house and had remodelled his father's formal gardens; these, together with a new deer park, are shown in a view by Borlase dated 1758. The estate was inherited in 1793 by the Rev Charles Prideaux-Brune, who, between 1796 and his death in 1833, carried out further extensions and alterations to the house and gardens. A formal garden and conservatory were built to designs by Charles Glynn Prideaux-Brune in 1878 (Pett 1998).

Today (2000) the site remains in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Prideaux Place stands on high ground above the town of Padstow, with fine views east to the Camel estuary. The c 15ha site is bounded to the south by early C19 rubble-stone walls (listed grade II) which form the north side of Fentonluna Lane, while to the west further early C19 stone walls (listed grade II) front a minor road which leads north-west from Padstow to Trethillick. To the north and north-east the site adjoins agricultural land, while a public road leading from Padstow to Tregirls crosses the site from north to south c 200m east of the house. A further area of gardens, detached from the main body of the site, lies to the south of the principal entrance; this garden is bounded to the north by Church Street, to the north-west by the B3276 road, and to the south by the A389 road. To the south-east it adjoins domestic properties, and to the east, the churchyard of St Petroc's church. The site falls gently to the east, and more steeply to the south-east, revealing views across the town to the Camel estuary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Prideaux Place is entered today (2000) from the minor road which passes north through the site, parallel to the boundary of the gardens and pleasure grounds. A short straight drive extends west from the road, passing

through entrance gates which are flanked by crenellated walls (listed grade I), to reach the forecourt below the east front of the house. These mock fortifications were constructed by Humphrey Prideaux in 1758, and are shown in Borlase's engraving of the same year. The walls were extended northwards in front of the north wing of the house in 1812. This northern wall retains a terrace, the Colonel's Walk, to the east, and screens the estate yard to the west.

The principal drive enters the site from the south, at the junction of Church Street and the minor road which passes along the western boundary of the gardens and pleasure grounds. The south entrance (listed grade II*) comprises a crenellated stone arch flanked by a pair of square turrets which are in turn adjoined by early C19 rubble-stone walls (listed grade II) which return east and west to screen the gardens from the adjacent public roads. The entrance was built in 1796 when the chapel of St Samson was demolished in order to create the south drive. The south drive extends north to reach the south side of the forecourt to the east of the house.

The early C19 stable yard, which stands to the north of the house, is reached by a track which passes under a bridge below the start of the Colonel's Walk, across a gap in the crenellated walls (listed grade II*). A C16 arch of dressed stone is set into the wall to the west side. The stables (listed grade II*) were constructed in the C18 and remodelled in the early C19. To the east, The Rink (listed grade II) is a late C18 stable with a granary above. To the south-west of the stables are the Dairy and an associated grotto (listed grade II*), which were adapted from an earlier building c 1750 and reworked by the Rev Charles Prideaux-Brune in 1812. Rockwork around the stable-yard water trough, and to the rear of the Dairy, was installed by the Rev Charles Prideaux-Brune in the early C19.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Prideaux Place (listed grade I), originally known simply as Place, is a two-storey stone building with C16 origins, which stands on the site of a monastic grange. The house is E-shaped on plan, with its entrance towards the east. The house is lit by large mullion windows and has a crenellated parapet and a hipped slate roof. The C16 house was remodelled in the early C18 by Edmund Prideaux, and again, more radically, by his son Humphrey in the mid C18. The house was extended to the north in a similar style by Charles Prideaux-Brune in the early C19; he also remodelled the south facade, inserting gothic windows, a full-height segmental bay window, and a tower above the library to the south-west. These additions were formerly surmounted by pinnacles and crenellations which were removed in the late C20.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Prideaux Place stands near the centre of its gardens and pleasure grounds. An open lawn lies below the south front of the house, occupying the site of C16 and C17 formal gardens. Along its eastern side extends a straight walk, the South Terrace (listed grade II*), which leads south from the forecourt on the east front to a garden seat (listed grade II*). The Terrace formed part of the late Elizabethan formal gardens, but was adapted in 1738, and then extended in 1758 at which time the original eastern entrance gate was demolished and fitted to the well in Fentonluna Lane, and the Terrace Seat moved to its present position. The Seat was constructed by Edmund Prideaux in 1740 (date stone). An inscription indicates that the Roman artefacts which decorate the Seat were brought back from Italy by Edmund Prideaux.

Below the short crenellated parapet, at approximately the central point of the South Terrace, is a grotto niche (listed grade II*) in the form of a rounded arch with large scattered rocks around it; this dates from the Rev Charles Prideaux-Brune's remodelling of the Terrace in the early C19.

Immediately to the east of the southern entrance to the site, a sunken path leads down to a tunnel. Passing beneath the public road, the path enters a quarry from which stone for the house was cut. The quarry was developed by Charles Glynn Prideaux-Brune in the late C19 as a water garden; the contemporary tunnel was cut to provide a private access from the gardens to St Petroc's church to the south-east.

In the gardens to the east of the Terrace, close to its northern end, stands an C18 lead bust (listed grade II*) set on a granite plinth. . A temple (listed grade II*) stands on the western slope of the pleasure grounds, above the south lawn, on the site of the early C18 wilderness. The temple was built by Edmund Prideaux in 1739 and contains Roman statues brought back from Italy by Prideaux in 1740. An obelisk which was erected at the same time near the east front of the house was moved in 1758 when the boundary of the pleasure grounds was extended by the purchase of adjacent tenements; it was subsequently removed in 1890 when the tunnel to the church was constructed. The remains of the obelisk today (2000) stand by a well at the bend of

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the Colonel's Walk north-east of the house; along with the temple, terrace seat, and some of the walling, it is all that remains of the complex layout of formal gardens developed in the early and mid C18 by Edmund Prideaux.

To the west of the house, behind a bowling green which is known to have existed in 1728, are woodland gardens which are divided by the Green Walk, a broad grass path. At one end of the Green Walk is the site of a bronze cannon (listed grade II*), one of several introduced in 1758 as part of the mock fortifications that formerly stood on the saluting platform to the south of the east gate and which are shown in Borlase's drawing of 1758. A late C19 shell house (listed grade II) stands adjacent to the Green Walk.

To the north of the house and stable yard are terraces and a late C19 sunken garden (listed grade II). Four flights of stone steps lead down through retaining walls to a lawn which surrounds a quatrefoil-shaped fountain pond which forms the focal point of the garden. A late C19 conservatory stood on the terrace at the north end of the garden. The sunken garden was restored in 1992; it is the last surviving garden in a series of similar enclosed gardens which were originally linked by the Green Walk. These gardens were in existence at the beginning of the C20.

PARK The deer park lies to the east of the house, beyond the public road which passes from north to south through the site. A path leading from the north-east corner of the forecourt crosses an early C19 bridge (listed grade II*) over the track leading to the estate yard north-east of the house, and then passes over a further early C19 bridge (listed grade II) across the public road to reach the Colonel's Walk. This Walk passes round the park within boundary plantations which were originally planted as areas of pleasure ground. From the Walk there are views across the park to the estuary and the town below. The park was landscaped by Humphrey Prideaux c 1750, replacing an area of late C16 formal gardens; traces of the main walls associated with these gardens remain today.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden which lay adjacent to Fentonluna Lane c 500m south-east of the house has been developed for housing in the late C20.

REFERENCES

W Borlase, *Natural History of Cornwall* (1758) T Allom, *Cornwall Illustrated*, (1831), p 43 J Horticulture Cottage Gardener NS 40, (1900), pp 289-90 Gardener's Magazine 52, (1909), pp 103(6, 125-7 Gardeners' Chronicle, ii (1911), pp 219-20 Country Life, 131 (1 February 1962), pp 226-9; (8 February 1962), pp 274-8 Architect Hist 7, (1964), pp 33-4, 84-6 N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Cornwall* (2nd edn 1970), p 130 Inspector's Report: Prideaux Place, Cornwall, (English Heritage 1991) D E Pett, *The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall*, (1998), pp 175-6

Illustrations E Prideaux, *Drawings of Prideaux Place and gardens, early and mid C18* (reproduced in Architect Hist 7, 1964)

W Borlase, *Drawing of Prideaux Place from the east, 1758* (reproduced in Borlase 1758)

Archival items Notes on the history of Prideaux Place from Drewitt & Drewitt, Architects, Penzance, August 1992 [copy on EH file]

Description written: September 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: October 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.