

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

OATLANDS

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Name:	OATLANDS
County:	Surrey
District:	Elmbridge (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.376277 Longitude: -0.44368738 National Grid Reference: TQ0841765285 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000119 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

An C18 informal landscape created from an earlier formal design incorporating the river terrace of the Thames within a Tudor deer park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Oatlands Palace was one of the many residences around London used by Henry VIII, of which Nonsuch was another. The earlier dwelling had been occupied by a family of London goldsmiths, but in 1536 William Rede died and his widow was evicted. In 1537 the king instructed extensions and repairs to the house to begin, materials being brought by barge on the nearby Thames, in particular stone from Chertsey Abbey. The major part of the Palace was completed by Henry's death in 1547. It stood in a home park of 538 acres (c 218ha), well wooded and stocked with deer, under the control of a keeper. Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth all spent time at Oatlands but for James I it was more of a home and in 1611 he made over the Palace and park at Oatlands to his Queen, Anne of Denmark. Inigo Jones (1573-1652) worked intermittently at Oatlands for thirty years: buildings included a silkworm house (Oatlands was the home of James' silkworm industry) and a Great Gate which can be seen in the background of Paul van Somer's portrait of Queen Anne (reproduced in Lindus Forge 1982). Two other gateways were erected at this time, opening into the vineyard and the park. Anne died in 1619, and in 1630 John Tradescant the Elder was appointed 'Keeper of His Majesties Gardens, Vines and Silkworms' at Oatlands. On his death in 1638, Tradescant was succeeded by his son John. In 1650, following the execution of Charles I, Oatlands was bought by Robert Turbridge, who demolished it for the value of its building materials. The park reverted to Henrietta Maria, Charles I's widow on the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. On her death in 1669, the estate was leased to trustees for the Earl of St Albans, who leased it to the Herbert family. On the death of Sir Edward Herbert in 1716, the estate passed to Henry Clinton, seventh Earl of Lincoln, who was probably responsible for building Oatlands House, c 500m east of the site of the Palace, and for laying out the grounds c 1725.

In 1730 Henry Pelham Clinton, ninth Earl of Lincoln, inherited the title and estate on the death of his brother George. Bartholomew Rocque, brother of John, published a plan of the garden in 1737, which shows a formal layout including a terrace and an angular slope down to a cruciform canal. From the 1740s onwards Lincoln redesigned the gardens in the new informal landscape style, assisted by such notables as Lord Burlington, William Kent, Joseph Spence, and Stephen Wright who was

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architect and estate manager at Oatlands for many years, from 1755 and possibly earlier. In 1768 Lincoln became Duke of Newcastle.

In 1788 the site was sold to Frederick, Duke of York, who commissioned Henry Holland (1745-1806) to rebuild the house in 1794 following a fire. In 1824 Oatlands was acquired by Edward Hughes Ball Hughes, the famous wealthy Regency gambler and dandy, known as Golden Ball. Sale particulars suggest few, if any, alterations to the house between 1824 and 1829 but a tennis court was erected. Ball fled abroad because of his debts and in 1829 the property was auctioned in a number of lots. Lot 1, the house and 573 acres (c 232ha) of park and agricultural land was not sold, but was leased to Lord Francis Leveson Gower (later Lord Egerton). J C Loudon in 1837 bemoaned the reduction in gardeners for the upkeep of the estate (*Gardener's Mag*). The property was auctioned again in 1846, when it was divided into building plots because of the construction of the London and Southampton Railway through part of the site in 1838. Lot 1, the house and 97 acres (c 40ha), was acquired privately by a Mr Peppercorn who sold it on to the South Western Hotel Company. The house was converted to a hotel in 1856 and has remained in this use ever since, except in 1916 when it was requisitioned as a hospital for New Zealand forces serving in Europe. The grounds have been steadily reduced in size in the C20 as areas have been redeveloped for housing.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Oatlands Park lies on the north side of the A3050, Oatlands Drive, c 1km east of Weybridge town centre and c 1.5km south of the River Thames. The registered site of 22ha comprises 2ha of formal gardens and pleasure grounds, with 10ha of parkland to the south and adjoining the artificial 10ha Broad Water to the north. The tree-fringed Broad Water lies at the southern edge of the Thames floodplain, the land rising to the south to the river terrace on which is situated the house and grounds. The Oatlands Park Hotel is situated in the centre of the east side of the site, at the edge of the higher land before it slopes steeply to the Broad Water. On the opposite side of the lake is flat agricultural land, divided by drainage channels and trackways. To the east and west of the site are late C20 housing estates. The southern area of the site is enclosed by ornamental 2m high black metal railings dividing the parkland from Oatlands Drive. In the C18 the estate stretched from Weybridge in the west to Walton in the east.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is approached from the A3050, Oatlands Drive where a drive enters at the south-east corner of the site and runs north to give access to the main car-parking area to the south-east of the house. The principal C19 approach was from the south-west corner of the site here registered where a pair of early C19 entrance lodges and gates (listed grade II) front onto Oatlands Drive. The lodges, which are situated behind stone rusticated screen walls, are built of stock brick with stone dressings and pantile roofs and are one and a half storeys high. The central carriage entrance is flanked by arched pedestrian entrances, all with arched cast-iron gates. The square main gate piers are c 6m high with pedimented tops and sphere finials, and arched niches to the front on vermiculated bases. The drive runs north-east for c 130m along the western boundary of the site before turning north-east to approach the south, entrance front of the house where it joins the drive from the south-east. The carriage gates are no longer used and the west drive is now accessed from Churchill Drive on the west boundary.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Oatlands House, now the Oatlands Park Hotel (listed grade II), was designed by Henry Holland for the Duke of York in 1794 following a fire which destroyed much of the early C18 house. Substantial repairs and alterations were undertaken c 1830, and in 1856 it was remodelled by T H Wyatt when it was converted into a hotel and the west wing was added. It is a three-storey building in Italianate style with a tower on the south-west corner, built in yellow stock brick and with slate roofs. There are C20 additions on the east, adjacent to which is a stable block around a rectangular courtyard.

It is possible that John Carter, an antiquarian draughtsman, deputised for Holland in redesigning the house and this may explain the later problems with the building. A survey of the buildings in 1829 reported that the part erected by the Duke of York 'has settled from the original building and cracked down the front next to the river' (*Waltham and Weybridge Local Hist Soc* 1970). Accounts indicate that part of the building was taken down and rebuilt at a cost of c £1600, and the old stable block was demolished and a new one erected in a more convenient location to the east of the house (*ibid*).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Today (2000), the area immediately surrounding the house is simply laid out, with gravel paths, turf, and mature specimen trees. The two main features surviving from the C18 landscape laid out by the Earl of Lincoln are the terrace and the Broad Water. The 39m long gravel terrace runs from west to east immediately north of the

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house and dates from the early C18 or before (Rocque, 1737). Originally much longer, the terrace commands views over the Broad Water and the Thames valley, although these are now partially obscured by mature trees and shrub growth. By 1883 (OS) Oatlands Lodge (outside the area here registered) had been erected at the west end of the terrace, while to the east The Vale, Beechcroft, and The Temple (all except The Vale excluded from the area here registered) were all sited to take advantage of the fine views. A small pavilion at the west end of the terrace is a C19 replacement, possibly of what Joseph Spence in 1766 called 'Kent's pretty building on the old Terrace' (Symes 1988). The land immediately to the south of the west end of the terrace has recently (late C20) been developed for housing and is excluded from the site here registered. On the opposite (north) side of the terrace, the late C19 steps which formed part of the grounds of Oatlands Lodge have recently (late C20) been restored. A gateway designed by Inigo Jones for the Palace was transferred to the east end of the terrace c 1747-8, where it appears on the Sale plan of 1846, but it was later broken up and used in a rockery which is no longer extant. South of the terrace, some of the meandering paths remain in the grounds of the hotel, with specimen trees screening a hard tennis court.

From the terrace, lawns now laid out as a golf course sweep down to the banks of the 1.5km long Broad Water which runs in a shallow arc from west to north-east. The lake was skillfully designed as a *trompe l'oeil*, the east end appearing to flow under the distant Walton Bridge on the Thames. The lake replaced a cruciform canal shown on Rocque's plan of the gardens in 1737. A small area of woodland survives on the south bank of the lake, c 200m north-east of the house.

An arched structure constructed of stone and brick and partially covered in ivy is situated 350m north-west of the house within a woodland area adjacent to the lake. It may be constructed from similar materials to the Grotto (see below). The OS 1st edition surveyed 1868-70 shows a perimeter path leading north from west of the Grotto to the Broad Water, passing under an archway and on to a footbridge over the lake.

The mid C18 landscape laid out by the ninth Earl of Lincoln at Oatlands contained several garden buildings, such as the Temple of Venus and the Temple of Vesta, to north and south respectively of the Broad Water. None survive today but they are well-documented and recorded in contemporary illustrations. The most-famous structure was the Grotto, which was situated c 375m west of the house in the grounds of the old Oatlands Palace (outside the area here registered) and was approached by a broad serpentine walk (Keane 1849). The basic structure was erected in 1762?7, with further decorative work on the internal chambers being undertaken by Joseph Lane and his son Josiah in 1774-8. The Lanes, from Tisbury in Wiltshire, were the most celebrated grotto-makers of the day and Joseph Lane had already worked on the grotto at nearby Painshill (qv) (Symes 1988). The two-storey building had four chambers, one of which contained a Portland stone bath fed by a spring. The principal chamber contained numerous stalactite formations faced in blue felspar (*ibid*). The Grotto, which Keane (1849) noted was 'said to be the finest specimen of its kind in England', was blown up by the Ministry of Works in 1948 as it was considered unsafe. PARK Some 4ha of parkland remains between the house and Oatlands Drive to the south and part is now used for golf. In 1788 the park covered 568 acres (230ha) and accounts for the 1760s and 1770s record large amounts spent on seeds, indicating extensive plantings. These included several types of oak, a variety of pines, cedars, and firs as well as numerous flowering trees (Symes 1988).

KITCHEN GARDEN The c 2ha kitchen garden of Oatlands House lay 500m to the west of the house (outside the area here registered). It was formed from the outer and middle court of the old Palace walls and was divided into three by two internal walls. When described by Keane in the mid C19, the kitchen garden was being used as a market garden and in 1919 it was purchased by Weybridge UDC for development as a housing estate. The area is now part of the Oatlands Palace scheduled ancient monument.

REFERENCES

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Maps B Rocque, A Plan of Garden and house of ... the Earl of Lincoln at Weybridge ..., 1737 [reproduced in Garden Hist 1981]
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1864-70, published 1868-72 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1920 OS
25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1868-70, published 1883 2nd edition published 1896 3rd edition published 1914 1935 edition
Archival items Sale particulars, 1824 (Surrey History Centre) Sale particulars, 1829 (Surrey History Centre)
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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.