

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Horton Hall Park

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

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Name:	Horton Hall Park
District:	West Northamptonshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Hackleton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.177741 Longitude: -0.79533214 National Grid Reference: SP 82471 53960 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001316 Date first listed: 14-Nov-1994 Date of most recent amendment: 02-May-2012 Location Description: A 115 ha registered park and garden centred at SP 82304 53912 Statutory Address 1: Hackleton, South Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire

Historique de la conservation

The registered park overlies the remains of the medieval village of Horton, which lay to the south, south-east and east of the now demolished Horton Hall. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England survey of 1979, indicates an extensive settlement comprising roads, crofts and tofts south of the hall and a former pond (remodelled in the 1740s to create a landscape feature), ditched enclosures to the east and tracts of ridge and furrow cultivation across the park. Enclosure probably took place initially in 1584 when Robert Lane received licence to enclose a park with a fence and ditch taking in 200 acres (c83ha) of wood and 300 acres (125ha) of arable and pasture in the south of the parish and including Horton Woods. This park is not related to the registered landscape. To the south of the hall, the village appears to have been deserted by the early C17 and was cleared to the east in the early C18.

Formerly the property of the Parr family, in the mid-1620s, the manor passed into the possession of Sir Henry Montagu, created Earl of Manchester in 1626. An estate map of 1622 shows the Hall to have been surrounded by formal gardens at this date. Horton remained in the Montagu family until the late C18. The house was extended with a new wing by George Montagu, created Earl of Halifax (d.1739) in 1715. The Earl seems also to have been responsible for alterations to the gardens and pleasure grounds around the Hall. An illustration by Peter Tillemans in 1721 shows a formal parterre garden within a large walled court east of the Hall, which stood centrally across the court's west end. This garden was probably created when a wing was added to the hall in c1700. A broad, axial gravel walk ran down the centre of the court from the door to the wing with other walks around the edge of the court and crossing the centre. Running around the edge of the grass plots defined by the walks were clipped cones and globes in the Dutch style. Fruit was grown up the walls of the court. Earlier, in the early C17, there was an orchard and fishponds west of the hall, and a Cherry Yard lay on the south side of a canal located in the park to the south of the Hall, which was later remodelled to form serpentine lakes. Elements of the C17 gardens and pleasure grounds survived into the early C18, including the parterre, orchard and fishponds and the form of the Cherry Yard. In the 1720s, George Montagu, Earl of Halifax, landscaped the park, necessitating the removal of that part of the village remaining to the east of the Hall. An estate map of 1728 shows a triple avenue extending northwards. A second avenue, planted in a treble row near to the Hall then

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reduced to a double row, led south across the fields. Although still a prominent feature in the early C20, the avenue is no longer extant. Extending from the Hall's east court was a third avenue, which led across the site of the cleared village and over the adjoining fields. The avenue crossed a large pond which lay to the east of the village, a feature that was landscaped later to form an exactly circular pool, which survives as a distinct depression.

The second Earl (d.1772), George Montagu Dunk, after his marriage to an heiress, Anne Dunk, commissioned Daniel Garrett (d.1753) to encase the Hall and construct the eye-catchers, The New Temple and The Arches, on the north side of the park and, it is presumed, the Temple of Venus Cloacina (demolished in 1894) on the southern side, described by Sanderson Miller in his 1750 letter to Charles Lyttleton as 'paved with marble and wainscoted with mahogany'. In Miller's letter he further states that Garrett was at Horton in 1750, designing 'gothic bridges etc'. Thomas Wright, known as the Wizard of Durham, to whom payments were made by Halifax in 1754, 1756, and 1757 (Harris 1970), is said to have completed the design of the park and garden in the English Rococo fashion. In Wright's scheme, the north avenue of trees, shown on the estate map of 1728, was subsumed into a shrubbery: a wooded pleasure ground through which ran a serpentine drive along the northern boundary of the park to The New Temple. The stream which supplied the canals was dammed to form an upper and lower serpentine lake which snaked through the park, noted by Horace Walpole writing in 1763, as 'a fine piece of water'. At the east end of the lower lake, 500m to the south-east of the Hall site, the rusticated Green Bridge also served as a dam. Thought initially to have been the work of Garrett, it has been latterly suggested by Eileen Harris that it could be a piece by Wright, as the bridge was contrived so that the water would have flowed over a cascade built beneath it, a particularly Rococo feature. To the west of the bridge, in the mid C18, an ice-house was constructed in a ditched plantation, known as Icehouse Spinney, and, on the shore of the lake, a brick-arched boathouse with the remains of a rusticated fronting was built; both of these structures remain. The boathouse is presumably the feature shown in the c1760 view of Horton Park attributed to James Blackamore. On the south-east boundary of the park, the New Plantation was established. An artificial volcano, constructed on a raised mound was said to have featured beside the lake; its origin is uncertain and there is no documentary evidence to support its existence. The Green Bridge carried the drive leading to the Menagerie, designed by Thomas Wright in about 1750 (listed at Grade II*) on the south side of the park. Walpole, writing in 1763, makes mention of the feature describing it as 'a little wood, prettily disposed with many basons of gold fish'. Various wild creatures were kept here but the building also served as a dining room, sumptuously decorated, with kitchens beneath, apparently linked to the ice-house by a tunnel. It was restored from a derelict state in the mid-1970s by Gervase Jackson-Stops, the architectural historian, who lived there until his death in 1995. Jackson-Stops recreated a smaller scale version of a Wright-designed garden for Badminton here in the C20, in addition to a lavish shell-grotto.

The New Temple was converted to housing and extended in the late C19 and The Arches was turned into a dwelling in the early C20. After the demolition of the hall in 1936, the gardens and pleasure grounds were covered by lawn and late-C20 development including housing. The park, however, remains mostly as permanent pasture with some of its C18 features, including five listed buildings, the archaeological earthworks of the village and associated features. The upper lake has been drained since the 1920s; the lower lake is greatly silted up and neither the cascade nor the putative volcano can be clearly discerned.

Details

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING: Horton Park lies 10km to the south-east of Northampton, to the east of the village of Horton and close to the border with Buckinghamshire. The B526, the old London road, forms the western edge of the site. To the north, the park is contained by a lane, the road to Ravenstone, which now becomes a track at its eastern end. To the east, the boundary is formed by a stream which crosses from east to west across the site and which is dammed to form the lake, and, south of this, a band of woodland known as the New Plantation. To the south there is no strong divide between the park and the fields, the park finishing at the perimeter of a natural bowl, in the bottom of which stood the Hall. The area here registered is of c115ha.

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ENTRANCE AND APPROACHES: mid-to-late-C20 houses line The Drive, the Hall's north drive, which leads south-east from the fork in the B526 at the north end of the village. At the north-west end of the drive is a pair of ornate, mid-C19, limestone ashlar lodges (listed at Grade II), two-storeyed, cruciform, and with giant Ionic pilasters.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING: the Hall, which stood to the east of the present village, was demolished in 1936 and a number of new houses, bungalows and their gardens now occupy its site. To the north-west of the site of the Hall stand the C18 brick stables and coach house (Grade II) and converted to housing, known as Captain's Court. Three other park buildings remain. The Menagerie (Grade II*) on the southern edge of the park was built to the designs of Thomas Wright in the late 1750s. Its main facade, a single-storey with corner pavilions and a raised centre with a semi-domed canted bay and a broken top pediment, faces the Hall site. To the north is a ha-ha, which has, at its eastern end, the stone portal to a tunnel said to lead to the ice-house. To the south is a 1ha moated enclosure, presumably associated with the animals. Four circular ponds survive, incorporated into the late-C20 garden design. The Stratford-on-Avon to Towcester Midland Junction Railway (disused) cuts through the southern tip of the Menagerie enclosure.

Along the north rim of the park The Arches (Grade II), Garrett's dual lodge and eye-catcher remodelled in the C20, takes the form of a tripartite triumphal arch with Ionic pilasters and stands in a small plantation closing the avenue where it met the Ravenstone Road. To the west, the New Temple, likely to date from the 1740s or 1750s, has been converted so that the portico now forms the centre of a larger dwelling, Temple House (Grade II).

Strong sight lines between the hall and each eye-catcher provided a framework for the design, but curiously the Menagerie cannot be viewed from the north rim of the park.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS: very little survives of the gardens and pleasure grounds associated with the Hall. A few trees of the shrubbery remain amongst C20 housing and along part of the north boundary of the park to the east of Horton Lodge.

PARK: the boundaries of the registered park were presumably established in the mid-C18 as part of the second Earl Halifax's landscaping. Beneath Wright's landscape lie the earthworks and buried remains of the medieval village of Horton and its associated enclosures and ridge and furrow cultivation. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) survey suggests that a complex of prominent earthworks to the north-east of the lake, including a possible hollow way leading to the remodelled pond, are probably associated with the village, rather than being relict landscape features.

The principal surviving feature of the mid-C18 is the serpentine lake at the centre of a natural bowl, crossed by two listed bridges, both of which survive. The Green Bridge to the south-east is in a poor state and has partially collapsed. Both the Icehouse Spinney and New Plantation remain in the mid-C18 form; some specimen trees are evident, but ash and sycamore have self-sown in considerable numbers. The ice-house lies within the spinney and close by, on the shore of the lake, is a brick-arched boathouse with the remains of a rusticated fronting. Along the north rim of the park, east of Horton Lodge and on either side of The Arches are ditched, circular enclosures which may represent the position of smaller plantations intended to serve as vantage points, as evidenced in the Eyre Map of Northamptonshire, revised by Jeffery in 1791. A number of slight raised areas around the perimeter may have been prospect mounds. Part of the ha-ha near to the site of the Hall is said to remain, but it is not clear to what extent there is evidence for an artificial volcano.

Few parkland trees are retained; the park has been used for agricultural purposes since the hall was demolished, part of it being ploughed recently, but it is now under pasture. Towards the east of the park, lies the Manor House, approached by a straight avenue. The building is represented on the 1728 Estate map, lying next to the warren, of which no trace is apparent, and is thought to have been the warrener's lodge. It is now a farmstead in its own right.

KITCHEN GARDEN: west of the former stables and coach house is the site of the kitchen garden, a feature dating back to the early C17, which is no longer extant.

Summary

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Landscape park laid out mainly in the mid-C18, designed by Thomas Wright as the setting for a country house (demolished 1930s), with the earthwork remains of an early-C18 landscape scheme overlying the site of a former medieval village and its associated ridge and furrow cultivation. The park is now used principally for pasture.

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

Horton Hall Park, principally a mid-C18 landscape by Thomas Wright but with earlier origins, is designated at Grade II on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest for the following principal reasons: * Historic Interest: as a notable, partially relict Rococo landscape, probably the work of Thomas Wright for the 3rd Earl of Halifax, retaining serpentine lakes and some mid-C18 landscape features in addition to listed estate buildings; * Archaeological Interest: the designed landscape overlies, and accommodates, the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Horton and the ridge and furrow cultivation of its open field system.

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Other

Title: Map of Northamptonshire Source Date: 1791 Author: Publisher: Surveyor:

Title: Survey Map of 1622 and 1728 Source Date: Author: Publisher: Surveyor:

View of Horton Park c 1760 attributed to James Blackamore

(Northamptonshire Record Office),