

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LUPTON PARK

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Name: LUPTON PARK

District: Torbay (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

County: Devon

District: South Hams (District Authority)

Parish: Kingswear

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.383748
Longitude: -3.5501578
National Grid Reference: SX8988754911
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000696
Date first listed: 12-Aug-1987

Details

A late C18 parkland landscape and mid C19 formal gardens associated with a late C18 mansion remodelled in the mid C19. A mid C20 country house designed by Oswald Milne is set in mid C20 formal gardens within the park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Lupton was recorded as 4 acres (1.6ha) of woodland in the Domesday survey (1086). Little evidence survives for the development of the landscape up to c 1760, but the remnants of a possible formal layout have been identified to the west and south of the present house (Debois 1996). Evidence of field boundary banks, ridge and furrow, and quarrying has been traced within the park, indicating its pre-ornamental phase. By 1765 Lupton had been acquired by Charles Hayne, who served as High Sheriff in 1772. Hayne extended an existing house adjacent to a cross roads c 1770 to form the core of the present mansion. The roads which crossed at the south-west corner of the House ran from Brixham to the Dart ferry at Kingswear, and were not finally stopped-up until the 1790s. Hayne sold the estate to Mr Justice Francis Buller, whose family owned neighbouring Churston Court, in 1788. Created a baronet in 1789, Buller began a programme of planting and landscape improvement, which probably continued work set in hand by Hayne (ibid). The Rev Swete visited Lupton in 1793, praising the effect of the wooded valleys which ascend from the south and west fronts of the House and the wide views of Tor Bay from the upper slopes of the park. In 1804 Lupton House and the surrounding grounds were let for seven years, and no further improvements appear to have been made until the 1820s. Account books and the Tithe map (1839) reflect the early C19 development of the landscape which included further extensive tree planting. Sir John Buller Yarde Buller (created Lord Churston, 1858) commissioned George Wightwick to make alterations to the House c 1840. At the same time formal gardens, terraces and an aviary were constructed to the south and east of the House, and a new south drive was laid out, and cedars and pines planted in the park (ibid). Further remodelling of the House was undertaken c 1860 by Anthony Salvin, but by this time the landscape, as shown on the 1869 OS map, had achieved essentially its present form. Severely damaged by fire in 1926, Lupton House was subsequently rebuilt.

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LUPTON PARK

The estate was occupied by the US Army during the Second World War and much mature timber in the park and woodland was felled. Following the War a long-projected new house, Lupton Park House, was constructed for Lord Churston in the park south-west of the C18 mansion to the designs of Oswald Milne. The original mansion was initially let as an hotel, and is today occupied by a school. The Lupton Estate was divided and sold in November 1960, the mansion, park and new house being sold to Mr Rowland Smith of neighbouring Coleton Fishacre (qv). The walled garden was already run as a commercial nursery and was sold separately, while the Churston family retained Churston Mill Field to the north of the House. The estate today (1998) retains the pattern of ownership established in 1960, with the C20 house and associated parkland remaining in private occupation. The present owner is (1998) undertaking a programme of restoration and consolidation which will re-establish areas of woodland damaged during the War and late C20 storms.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Lupton Park is situated c 2km west of the coastal town of Brixham, and 0.5km south-east of the village of Churston Ferrers on the south side of the A3022 road from Paignton to Brixham. The c 120ha site comprises c 12ha of formal and terraced gardens to the east, south-west and north-west of Lupton House, and c 108ha of parkland and woodland. The site is bounded to the north by a belt of deciduous woodland adjoining the Brixham road, while elsewhere boundaries are formed by traditional hedge banks which separate parkland and plantations from the surrounding agricultural land. Lying some 2km inland from Tor Bay, Lupton House stands at the confluence of steep-sided valleys which run west and south from the House. The upper slopes of the valleys are generally wooded and enjoy long views across the park to Tor Bay from a series of C18 and C19 carriage drives.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is approached from the A3022 Brixham road at a point c 700m north of Lupton House. A pair of white-painted, rendered, single-storey, neo-classical lodges designed by George Wightwick c 1843 and doubled in depth by Keith Proctor 1983-5 stand east and west of the entrance behind a pair of wrought-iron gates hung from square open-work iron piers decorated with flowers, foliage and pine cones. The gates and piers are flanked by curved railings which extend to rendered piers and a length of stone wall adjacent to the road (all listed grade II). The tarmac drive runs c 670m south from the lodges to reach the late C18 and mid C19 former stables, coach house, brewhouse and kennels north-west of Lupton House (all listed grade II), and then continues c 30m to a carriage circle enclosing a lawn to the west of the House. To the west the principal drive is adjoined by Garden Plantation, and to the east by late C18 and mid C19 shrubbery and trees which frame views east across parkland and meadows to Barn Copse. The present principal approach appears to have been developed from a public road in the late C18, and was established as the main approach to the House by 1793, when the Rev Swete noted that the north drive passed through 'newly planted grounds' and 'a most luxuriant shrubbery' which included a variety of flowering shrubs. A further entrance leads from the A379 Kingswear road c 1.2km south-west of Lupton House. A Tudor-gothic lodge designed by Wightwick c 1840 stands to the north-west of the entrance adjacent to a pair of octagonal stone gate piers with shallow pyramidal caps (all listed grade II). Immediately opposite the south entrance and standing in an ornamental plantation is a mid C19 kennel block (listed grade II) designed in a similar Tudor-gothic style by Wightwick. The mid C19 south drive replaces an earlier southern approach passing through West Ground (Debois 1996). Today (1998) the tarmac drive runs c 500m north-east and north to Lupton Park House. The continuation to Lupton House is now blocked, but originally turned north-west to pass along the valley west of the House, approaching the carriage circle from the south-west through a late C19 avenue of oak.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Lupton House (listed grade II*) was rebuilt in the Palladian style for Charles Hayne c 1772. Reconstructed after a serious fire in 1926 without the third storey which had been added in the mid C19, the House now comprises two pale stucco-finished storeys under a roof concealed by a balustraded parapet. The entrance to the House was, until c 1840, on the south facade, which now faces the mid C19 formal gardens. The west facade, now the entrance front, was remodelled by George Wightwick c 1840 with a mid C19 Doric porte-cochère. It was further remodelled c 1860 for Lord Churston by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881). The former service quarters lie to the north of the House and adjoin the stables and a series of stores built into the hillside to the north-east.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens and terraces lie to the south and east of Lupton House, with further areas of informal pleasure ground and shrubbery lying to the west and north. The mid C19 formal garden below the

south front comprises a level terrace partly enclosed to the east and south by stone balustrades, with an axial stone-flagged walk leading south from the garden door for c 25m separating two rectangular areas of lawn ornamented with geometric-shaped beds. Beyond a lateral flagged walk lies a semicircular area laid out with quadrant-shaped, box-edged lawns, the outer circumference to the south being marked by a low stone kerb supporting cast-iron finials linked by chains and low cast-iron railings, beyond which is a semicircle of mature Irish yews and shrubbery. The focus of the formal garden is a circular stone-kerbed fountain basin (dry in 1998) containing a C19 cast-iron fountain c 2m high comprising a pedestal and tazza, above which rises a further tazza supported by three entwined dolphins. The stone balustrades are in poor condition with some sections missing, but other C19 features including granite benches. South-east of the House a series of three grass-banked terraces rises towards Barn Copse. Stone steps rise beyond low cast-iron gates at the south-east corner of the House and at the east end of the lateral path in the south garden to a north/south walk on the first terrace. This is enclosed to the west by stone balustrades, while to the east centrally placed stone steps ascend to the second terrace which is similarly enclosed by balustrades. To the north this terrace is aligned on a mid C19 Bath stone aviary (listed grade II), the south facade of which is designed as a portico with Doric pilasters supporting an entablature and pediment, within which is a tall recess containing a stone pedestal. The structure to the north of the portico was extended and converted into a dwelling in the late C20, but is now (1998) derelict. The aviary is surrounded by ornamental shrubbery, and the slope above the second and third terraces is planted with C19 ornamental trees, conifers and rhododendrons which merge with the south-west end of Barn Copse, an C18 ornamental plantation c 100m north-east of the House. The pleasure grounds west of the House comprise a lawn enclosed by the carriage circle which is planted with a mature Lucombe oak, while ornamental planting frames a vista south-west up a wooded valley which is closed by a late C19 plantation on the A379 Kingswear road c 1km south-west of the House. North of the House Garden Plantation, an area of mixed woodland on the east-facing slope above the principal drive, was planted in the late C18 as an ornamental plantation with a fringe of flowering shrubs. It contains an early C19 quarry garden c 80m north-west of the House, and a series of walks which led 500m north to the mid C19 kitchen garden. East of the drive a further area of late C18 shrubbery which framed views east towards Barn Copse was supplemented in the mid C19 by conifers, while a small lake shown on Greenwood's county map (1827) c 200m north of the House was removed by the mid C19, and replaced in the late C20. It is now (1998) heavily silted. The shrubberies to the west and north of the House have been identified as the extent of the late C18 pleasure grounds at Lupton (Debois 1996).

PARK The park at Lupton exploits the natural landform of valleys running west, south and south-east from Lupton House, with evidence of manipulation of the natural ground forms in the late C18 to the west and east of the House. The valley floors are generally open parkland, now managed as permanent pasture, while the upper slopes and the crowns of the ridges separating the valleys were planted with deciduous woodland in the late C18. Much of this woodland was been replanted in the mid C20 as commercial plantation, and extensive storm damage was sustained in 1987 and 1990. Rockarts, an area of high ground between West Ground and Big Wood c 670m south-west of the House but obscured from it, was developed as part of the ornamental landscape in the early C19, with the new south drive passing through this area c 1840. The former south approach through West Ground was retained as a picturesque walk which forms part of a surviving late C18 network of carriage drives and walks in the park and plantations (ibid). A drive in Big Wood leads to C19 wrought-iron gates supported by hollow square-section wrought-iron piers c 450m south-south-east of the House which allows a 'burst' view down the valley to the south facade of the House from the head of Lupton Park. The Rev Swete noted that to the east of the House the hillside was being 'scooped away and smoothed into order' (Swete 1793). In Barn Copse, a late C18 ornamental plantation north-east of the House, drives lead to a stone linhay c 300m to the north-east which may have been converted into a garden building with an associated enclosed garden c 1839 (Tithe map). Continuing above the north-facing slope of Barn Copse the drive allows views to Tor Bay across Churston Mill Field which was incorporated into the ornamental landscape c 1840 when field boundaries were removed, the boundary planting along the Brixham road established, and four ornamental clumps planted. The mid C20 Lupton Park House stands in Rockarts some 500m south-west of Lupton House on rising ground with extensive views north across the park to Tor Bay, and south to parkland enclosed by West Ground to the west, Kennel Woods to the south, and Big Wood to the east. Designed by Oswald Milne in 1954, Lupton Park House stands in contemporary formal gardens with yew hedges enclosing lawns and drive to the north, and formal terraces and lawns separated from the parkland by a ha-ha to the south. As at neighbouring Coleton

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LUPTON PARK

Fishacre (qv) which he designed in 1925-6, it is likely that Milne was responsible for the structural outline of these gardens, which are conceived in the Arts and Crafts tradition.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden lies c 530m north of Lupton House, and is approached by a walk leading from the House through Garden Plantation, or by an independent entrance from Alston Lane to the north of the site. Enclosed by rubble-stone walls c 3m high, the kitchen garden appears to have been established in its present location c 1840 as part of the mid C19 improvements to the estate. The garden, run as a commercial nursery in separate, private ownership, retains the substantial gardener's house at its centre, and is divided into two rectangular areas by a lateral wall. Slip gardens survive to the north, beyond which lies an orchard with mature standard apple trees.

REFERENCES

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Illustrations J Swete, *View of Lupton House, 1793* (564M, F4, 140), (Devon Record Office)

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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.