

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FORTY HALL

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Name:	FORTY HALL
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Enfield (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.671436 Longitude: -0.067124687 National Grid Reference: TQ 33757 98731 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001357 Date first listed: 10-Jun-1996

Details

Late C18 pleasure grounds overlying C17 gardens, providing the setting for a mansion house, accompanied by C17 and C18 parkland within which lies the site of a Tudor palace and the remains of its associated water gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site was originally that of Elsynge Palace (scheduled ancient monument), acquired and enlarged by Sir Thomas Lovell in 1492. Lying adjacent to the Royal Enfield Chase, the Palace attracted many royal visitors and, after 1539/40, became a royal residence housing the children of Henry VIII. In the first half of the C16, c 375 acres (c 156ha) of the Chase were imparked to form the New Park. Towards the end of the C16, its use as a Palace declined and the estate passed out of royal ownership. In 1624, Sir Nicholas Rainton (d 1646), later Lord Mayor of London, began building a new house, Forty Hall, on a ridge to the south of the old palace (completed by c 1636). By 1656, Rainton's nephew and heir, also Nicholas, had acquired the Palace, which shortly after he was to demolish.

The Palace, as acquired by Rainton, stood surrounded by 'Court yardes Gardens Orchards and Courtyard with the field adjoining called the Walks' (LMA: Acc 16/8). Early C17 sources refer to a Portland stone sundial in the garden round the Palace, and the building of an arbour and latticed seats. These gardens were probably cleared at the time of the demolition of the Palace.

The grounds, including the drive and pond, are shown in much their present form (1999) on surveys of 1773 and 1785 when the estate of Eliab Breton (d 1785), the then owner, was sold. The estate passed through a number of different private ownerships until purchased by Enfield Urban District Council from Derek Parker Bowles in 1951 and converted into a museum, in which use it remains, with much of the grounds forming a public park.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Forty Hall lies to the west of Forty Hill, 10km north of Enfield, the surrounding area being mainly residential to the south but with more open country to the north. The public road, Forty Hill, forms the east side of the 19ha site. To the north the ground falls to the boundary here formed by the Turkey Brook; to the west the park gives onto farmland; to the south a lane divides the Hall site from the grounds of the Dower House (listed grade II).

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance is via the gateway (c 1800, listed grade II) adjacent to the lodge on Forty Hill, at the north-east corner of the pleasure grounds. From here the drive crosses the lawns to arrive at the north side of the Hall, continuing to the north side of the stable block. A car park has been constructed within the parkland to the north of the lodge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Forty Hall (listed grade I) stands at the centre of the west side of its pleasure grounds. Built in 1629-36 for Sir Nicholas Rainton, it is a square, three-storeyed house of light red brick with a high pitched, hipped, green slate roof. To the west of the Hall stands the stable court (C17 but much altered for modern requirements, listed grade II), entered via a gateway between flanking pavilions in the embattled screen wall (c 1630, together listed grade I).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the north of the Hall, beyond the drive, a lawn slopes down to an irregular pond, described in 1773 (sale catalogue) as 'a fine sheet of water'. At its western end is a wooded area, within which is a mound formed from the spoil from the lake. On the edge of the north lawn, close to the Hall, are two stone lions: one from Broomfield, placed here in the 1980s, the other an older feature of the site, appearing on an early C19 drawing. Excavation trenches on the lawn, dug by the Enfield Archaeological Society in 1993, revealed evidence of brick terraces, the brickwork suggesting an early C17 date. To the south of the Hall, beyond a stone-paved terrace the flags of which were laid c 1951 to replace the earlier gravel surface, is a rectangular lawn held by a retaining wall. To the east of the Hall, a brick wall supports the continuation of the terrace. The ground beyond is levelled turf, and a magnificent cedar, mentioned in the sale catalogues of 1773 and 1787, stands on a slight bank which forms the southern edge of this lawn. Further east lies grass planted with specimen trees, and a perimeter belt of planting along the east and south sides of the gardens to screen the site. A path winds through the belt, leading from the east end of the drive round to the south side of the Hall.

PARK To the north of the Hall, beyond the retaining wall of the pleasure grounds, lies the park, with the ground sloping gently down towards the Turkey Brook. On an axis with the north front of the Hall is a double lime avenue, a feature which formerly continued on the far side of the water. A clear depression confirms that the Brook was once widened to form a basin on the line of the avenue.

The main park, known as the New Park or Little Park, was taken out of Enfield Chase after 1547; the lane west from the Hall is believed to have its origins as the southern boundary of the deer park (Gillam 1997). By the time of the 1785 estate map, the park occupied the ground between the pleasure grounds and the Maiden Brook known as the Great Field, with Primrose Hill, the land to the west, divided into two large fields.

At the north-west corner of the park, lying partly within woodland labelled 'Pond Groves' on the 1773 sale plan, is a complex of earthworks. The text of the sale catalogue states that these 'canals' are 'fortunately placed for Embellishments and form Cascades that rush impetuous', while Lysons (1811) subsequently describes them as the remains of fishponds. It is possible that they formed C16 water gardens accompanying the former Palace. The 1787 sale catalogue suggests that, 'to augment the natural beauties of the Vale in front of the Home, a Magnificent Lake could be easily formed' out of the 'running Brook and successive Ponds'. The wood containing the fishponds and associated earthworks is cut through with walks, and a walk leads along the narrow causeway between the long rectangular main pond set with islands, and the Brook. The Brook itself runs through a deep cut and appears formerly to have been dammed at a point just to the east of the line of the north avenue.

KITCHEN GARDEN South-west of the Hall and stable block stands a brick-walled garden dating from the C17. A little under 1ha in extent, it is currently (1997) laid to grass with specimen trees and shrubs, but was identified in the 1773 sale particulars as containing fruit and as being 'capable of producing vegetables in vast profusion'. At its northern end is a complex of farm buildings.

OTHER LAND The main drive continues as a lane westwards from the stables across farmland towards the New River. The enclosure to the south of this track, and to the west of the gardens, is called 'The Warren' on the 1773 sale plan and the 1785 estate map.

Off the lane to the north, a substantial ditched bank, serving as a raised walk, up to 2m high in places and hedged on both sides, leads towards the Brook. At its southern end, flanked to the east by a strip of plantation, is a square pond at the eastern end of which is the site of a summerhouse. This building is marked on the 1785 estate map, the summerhouse with gabled roof

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and sash windows which then occupied this position having been demolished in the 1950s. Also marked on the estate map, at the northern end of the walk near the Brook, is a second building, while on the lane further to the west are the remains of a third building, both of which having possibly been summerhouses. To the west of the last-mentioned spot, two further raised walks branch off the lane, one leading north to join with a walk alongside the Brook, the other leading south to the old course of the river. Both are shown on the late C18 plans of the estate and form part of the set of similar walks across the estate fields described in the 1787 sale particulars as 'The Walks and Double Hedges'.

REFERENCES

D Lysons, *The Environs of London II*, (2nd edn 1811), p 298 W Keane, *The Beauties of Middlesex* (1850) I Jones, and I Drayton, *The Royal Palaces of Enfield*, (Enfield Archaeological Society 1984), pp 8-17 G Gillam, *Forty Hall, Enfield 1629-1997*, (Enfield Archaeological Society 1997)

Maps Sale plan, 1773 (696/1), (Greater London Record Office) T Bainbridge, *Plan of Forty Hall Estate, 1785* (Enfield Local History Unit)

OS 25" to the mile: 1st edition published 1865 2nd edition published 1895 3rd edition published 1913 1936 edition

Archival items Sale particulars for Forty Hall for 1773, 1786, 1787, and 1799 are held in the Enfield Local History Unit.

Description written: March 1999 Register Inspector: CB Edited: May 2000

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.