

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

INNER TEMPLE

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Name:	INNER TEMPLE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	City and County of the City of London (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.511784 Longitude: -0.10961656 National Grid Reference: TQ 31278 80900 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000842 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

Details

Gardens of medieval origin, developed in the C16, C17 and C18, with C19 and C20 layout and planting.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the late C12 the Knights Templar moved from Holborn to the Temple area and it is likely that there were gardens associated with the monastery that they built there. The Knights Templar were suppressed in 1312 by Pope Clement V and the Temple passed firstly to the Earl of Pembroke and then, in 1324, to the Knights of the Order of St John. By 1346, when the Knights took full possession of the Temple, it was already leased to students of law and it was later granted to them in perpetuity for use as a place of study and residence.

The gardens were renowned for their roses and Shakespeare set the dispute which led to the War of the Roses in the (undivided) Temple gardens (Henry VI Part 1, Act 2):

'This brawl today, / Grown to this faction in the Temple-garden, / Shall send, between the red rose and the white, / A thousand souls to death and deadly night.'

By the mid C15 the Temple buildings and gardens had been separated into the Middle and Inner Temple (although the formal division did not take place until 1732). The division approximately followed the line which divided the consecrated land to the east from the unconsecrated ground. At the Dissolution of the Monasteries the Temple was seized by the Crown which, in 1608, granted the freehold to the Benchers of the Temple.

During the C15 and C16, the Inner Temple gardens were divided into various enclosures, which included the Great Garden and three smaller gardens or courts. The Great Garden was walled off from the river in c 1528, approximately on the line of the southern end of Harcourt Buildings, Paper Buildings and No.10 King's Bench Walk (Rocque, 1746; OS 1873). The line of the wall was indented and it protected the Garden from flooding by the Thames, which at high tide reached up to the wall (Ogilby, 1676; engraving of 1720 in Taylor 1953, pl 7; Rocque, 1746). In 1533 walls were built around the west and north sides of the Great Garden and houses were erected on the east side, on the site of Paper Buildings, in 1610 (Cecil 1907). This cut the Great Garden in two and the eastern part was called Benchers' Walk or King's Bench Walk, with the Lower Walks to the south (Ogilby, 1676), and was formally planted with trees in rows (Taylor 1953). In the C17, the remaining portion of the

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Great Garden, which constitutes the northern part of the registered site, was redesigned and planted (fruit trees and jasmine on the walls, standard evergreens and flowering trees on the lawns, paths of crushed shells, and orange trees along the terrace).

The Garden was redesigned again in the early C18. The work started in 1703 and included new gates and steps at the north end, a greenhouse at the west end of the terrace for over-wintering the orange trees (used as a garden house in the summer months), and redesigning and planting the garden to a design proposed by the gardener (Cecil 1907, 271).

By the early C19 the gardens had been redesigned to the present (late C20) layout in the northern and central sections (Holwood, 1813), with the terrace, a large expanse of lawn and planting around the perimeter. The construction of the Victoria Embankment in 1870 resulted in the Garden being expanded to the south, and the planting and layout of this additional area dates from the late C19. Between 1888 and 1913 the Royal Horticultural Society's Great Spring Show was held in the Garden. It was moved in 1913 to Chelsea (Royal Hospital, Chelsea and Ranelagh Gardens, qqv), as the Chelsea Flower Show.

On the undertaking that the Benchers would preserve the Garden and squares as permanent open spaces, they were exempted from the provisions of the London Squares Preservation Act, 1931.

The Garden was described at that time (London Squares Preservation Act, Appendix III) as 'a large and attractive ornamental garden of irregular shape'.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Inner Temple Garden, c 1.5ha, is located to the south of Fleet Street, north of the River Thames, and east of Middle Temple (qv), in the City of London. The Garden is irregular in shape and is laid out on ground which slopes southwards to the Thames. The Garden is surrounded by railings along Crown Office Row to the north, Victoria Embankment to the south, Middle Temple Lane to the south-east, and King's Bench Walk to the north-east, and by buildings along the other boundaries.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The entrance to the Garden is from Crown Office Row to the north, through wrought-iron gates (1730, listed grade II*), with curving steps to the south. There is a vehicular service entrance from King's Bench Walk to the east and from Victoria Embankment, to the south-east, through a late C19 gateway (listed grade II) consisting of five tall, Portland stone piers supporting outer gates and a central double gate.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The following buildings border the Garden and are important to the setting: Harcourt Buildings (a neo-Georgian, post-war brick range by Sir Hubert Worthington) and Temple Gardens (E M Barry 1878(9, with an archway through it for Middle Temple Lane, listed grade II) to the west; Paper Buildings (1838, a plain five-storeyed building by Sir Robert Smirke, the southern end (No.5) altered in 1848 by Sydney Smirke, listed grade II) to the north-east; and the southern end of King's Bench Walk (which consists of No.7 (late C17, brick, listed grade I), No.8 (C18, brick, listed grade II*), Nos.9(11 (1814, in yellow brick, listed grade II), and Nos.12(13 by Sir Robert Smirke (1814, stone-faced, listed grade II) and Hamilton House (1880, an ornamented gabled building in Portland stone, listed grade II)) to the east.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS On approaching the Garden from the north, down the circular flight of steps (Thomas Scott 1729), the northern end of the Garden is levelled as a Terrace (a survival from the C16 Great Garden, and upon which orange trees were set out in the summer months in the C17), with a gravel walk and a central stone sundial (Edward Strong 1707). Benches and tubs of plants are set on the walk, which is backed by a shrubbery (shown on Rocque, 1746) and the wall to the north and by a lawn to the south. In the C17 and early C18 the walls had jasmines, roses and fruit trees upon them. The area of lawn on the Terrace is set out with beds of roses, predominantly red and white, which traditionally mark the place where the emblems of the War of the Roses were plucked. From the sundial, there are steps which lead down to the gardens to the south. On either side of the steps there are low shrubberies, with bedding displays around the edges.

The rest of the Garden consists of an extensive sweep of lawn, with scattered trees including catalpa, ailanthus, thorn, whitebeam, flowering cherry, sorbus, cedar, magnolia, and ginkgo. In the C17 and early C18 the lawns were arranged as rectangular grass plats, with paths running between and along the lengths of them, and formally planted with standard evergreens (yew trees in pots, box trees in the grass plots, variegated phillyreas, standard laurels, junipers, holly, pyramid box and laurel) and with beds of Dutch bulbs. During the C17 the western portion of the lawn had been densely planted with formal rows of trees (Newcourt and Faithorne, 1658; Leake and Hollar, 1667; Ogilby, 1676) but by the early C18 buildings had been built

along the western side and the remaining portion had been laid out to the same design as the rest of the Great Garden (Taylor 1953, pl 7; Rocque, 1746). The eastern side of the gardens is planted with trees and shrubberies (shown on C19 plans: Holwood, 1813; OS 1873) and there are scattered beds of roses and bedding plants along the east and south-east edges of the Garden. The Garden is enclosed on the south side by a raised east/west walk, lined by notable mature plane trees. The southern end of the Garden was taken in and laid out in the late C19 after the Victoria Embankment was built. Set in the lawn, just south of the centre is a paved circular pool surrounded by bedding, with a fibreglass statue of a youth (Margaret Wrightson, 1971) on the eastern side. The statue replaced a lead figure of 1775, which was set up in the Garden in 1928 to commemorate Charles Lamb (stolen late C20). The line of plane trees to the north of the pool marks the limit of the Garden before the river was confined by the Embankment in 1870 (OS 1873).

The north-east end of the Garden is semicircular, with an Italian lead-work sundial, supported by a crouching Moor (c 1700), in the centre of the lawn (moved here from Clement's Inn, Strand, in 1884 (Pevsner 1985), and shrub planting (shown on C19 plans: Holwood, 1813; OS 1873) and wisteria against the wall and railings at the southern end of King's Bench Walk.

REFERENCES

E Cecil, *London Parks and Gardens* (1907), pp 264-75 London Squares Preservation Act (1931), Appendix III G Taylor, *Old London Gardens* (1953), pp 28-35 B Weinreb and C Hibbert (eds), *The London Encyclopaedia* (1983), pp 418-19 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 1: the City of London*, (3rd edn (revised) 1985), pp 343-53

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OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1873 2nd edition published 1894 3rd edition published 1913

Description written: June 1998 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.