

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WASING PLACE

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

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Name: WASING PLACE

District: West Berkshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Aldermaston

District: West Berkshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Wasing

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.375076
Longitude: -1.1725829
National Grid Reference: SU 57688 64327
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000511
Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

Details

An C18 country house and landscape park, with C19 informal gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Wasing was acquired through marriage by the Verney family c 1638. Following several other owners during the 1720s to 1750s, in 1760 John Mount bought the manor, and in the early 1770s John Hobcraft designed and built a new manor house, possibly on a new site, after which the remains of elements of the former formal landscape were swept away (Cobham 1990). The park was enlarged during the C19. The house suffered a severe fire in 1945, being rebuilt in smaller form in the 1950s. The estate remains (1998) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Wasing Place lies 10km east of Newbury, 1km west of the village of Aldermaston. The 125ha site is bounded largely by agricultural land, with Wasing Wood to the south and the Aldermaston to Brimpton lane, known as Wasing Lane, to the north. The house lies on a plateau towards the west edge of the site, from which a skirting hillside stretches down to the outer parts of the park which lie on level ground in the valley of the River Enbourne. The setting is rural, with long views north across the Enbourne valley towards a hillside on which are visible the ornamental plantings of several parks, including Midgham Park and Woolhampton Park.

Wasing Wood lies adjacent to the south boundary of the site, outside the registered area. It formerly contained a park (1680s map) enclosed by a fence, but this was a deer park surrounded by a paling fence, enclosing heathland containing the two southern lakes which seem to have been fishponds.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approaches enter off Wasing Lane. The north-east drive enters 1km from the house, at the north-east corner of the park, past a two-storey brick lodge, and curves south-west through the level parkland, rising up the hillside on which the house stands as it leaves Breaches Gulley wood, passing the kitchen garden to the south. The drive curves west at the top of the rise, entering the gravel forecourt through a clump of mature trees, to arrive at the south,

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entrance front of the house, overlooking the valley to the south and east, beyond which lie Garden Piece and Howell's Wood on the hillside opposite. The north-west drive enters from close to the junction between Back Lane and Wasing Lane, 900m north-west of the house, at the north-west corner of the park, past a two-storey brick lodge built in similar style to that at the head of the north-east drive. The drive curves south-east, initially across the level outer area of the park, then rising up the hillside, adjacent to Dairy Copse, to reach the plateau on which the house stands. The drive then curves east, passing Wasing Farm, and north-east, past the parish church adjacent to the north, with glimpses of the gothic brick barn which stands in the maintenance yard, and of the tower of Aldermaston Court (qv) to the east, continuing past the stables to the north, arriving at the forecourt by the south front.

Two further former drives, now tracks, enter and cross the park from 700m north-east of the house, and 1km south-west of the house (Cobham 1990), joining the north-east drive.

The north-east drive seems to have been constructed in the late C18 or early C19, with several other approaches, including the former drives, existing to the north, west and south of the house. The north-west drive was constructed in the mid C19.

South Lodge, a small brick cottage with a hipped roof, stands 1.6km south of the house, at the head of a former drive giving access off the B3051. The drive, still extant in the woodland, ran north through Wasing Wood, close to the east side of the two fishponds, emerging from Howell's Wood to cross the north side of the lake at the south end of the park, before rising up the hillside to join the south end of the north-west drive close to the church.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Wasing Place (John Hobcraft 1770s, listed grade II) stands towards the west of the park, situated on a plateau overlooking the surrounding parkland and countryside beyond to the north. Rebuilding in the 1950s following a severe fire reduced the house to the present central block, of two storeys, built of brick in Palladian style. The rebuilding also meant that the house became detached from the range of adjacent buildings, including stables and estate office, now separated by a sunken courtyard bounded to the north by the brick garden wall. The house overlooks the garden to the north, with access via a centrally placed doorway.

The rectangular stable block (late C18, listed grade II) stands 40m west of the house, built of brick, with gothic windows, and entered from the south side via a service drive linking the service yard to the west with the south front of the house.

The service yard lying 150m west of the house is bounded to the north by the brick wall forming the southern garden boundary and to the south by the churchyard and a small copse. It contains a circular, brick dovecote (late C18, listed grade II), a timber-framed granary with brick nogging (C18, listed grade II), and towards the west end, 180m west of the house, a red and grey brick barn (C18, listed grade II), with a large, blank, gothic brick arch to the south, a gothic arched entrance to the east and battlemented parapets.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie north and west of the house, laid out informally and bounded to the south by the brick wall which extends 200m west of the house and to the north by the remains of a brick ha-ha set into the parkland beyond. The remains of a serpentine circuit path curve around the outer edges of the roughly rectangular garden, passing at the west end a small white summerhouse and at the east end a small rustic loggia. The garden is laid largely to lawn with island beds containing ericaceous shrubs and other plants, a swimming pool towards the west end, and many mature trees including cedars and yews, especially along the south boundary. Views extend north and east beyond the garden, particularly across the park to the north, over the Enbourne valley to the hillside opposite.

PARK The park encloses the house and garden. It is in part laid to pasture and in part is in arable use. It contains clumps of trees and specimens. The valley to the south of the house contains a lake, the lowest of a series of three, the other two lying to the south within Wasing Wood. The lake, visible from the house, was present by the C17 (estate map, c 1680s), but has been successively enlarged, most lately during the mid C20. The eastern edge of the park contains a broad belt of woodland rising up the hillside, and, within Howell's Wood, the remains of a brick icehouse, this having lost its entrance tunnel. Kennels and an associated cottage formerly stood close by (OS 1913). The north half of the park, running down the hillside north of the house and onto the level ground below, enjoys long views across the valley and to the hillside to the north. It contains a cricket ground in the north-east corner with a thatched pavilion.

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KITCHEN GARDEN The square, brick-walled kitchen garden lies 250m north-east of the house, the main central area continuing in productive cultivation. It appears to have been sited on undulating ground which has been levelled, and is enclosed by inner and outer brick walls. The inner wall is lower on the south side, which wall is broken by a central pedestrian gateway flanked by brick piers. The west wall contains a similar, but slightly larger pedestrian gateway at the south end, giving direct access from the house. Service access, via a gateway at the east end of the north wall, enters from an outer yard, giving access from the range of bothies and sheds built against the north side of the north wall. Two glasshouses remain against the south side of the north wall, containing C19/C20 features, with evidence of further ranges, now lost, to the west and east. Two detached, curved brick walls, 1.2m high and probably formerly used as fruit walls, stand side by side several metres south of the glasshouses, running across the garden, and divided by the central path running north/south.

North of the walled area runs a further brick wall enclosing service yards and the range of bothies. To the east, the once productive ground (OS 1882) is now largely laid to lawn with a hard tennis court. A path from this eastern area extends along the outer, south side of the south wall, with, at the west end, a brick temple with a wooden portico supported by rustic wooden pillars. The path is flanked to the north by a border, originating in the early C19 and known as the American Border, lying adjacent to the south wall, and a lawn to the south, leading to a ditch which separates this area from the park beyond. The gateway in the south wall gives access to this area. West of the central walled garden, from which it is divided by the garden wall, lies a further compartment. This is bounded to north, west and south by tall, clipped yew hedges. A stone-flagged path runs north/south, flanked by strips of lawn.

REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Berkshire 4, (1924), pp 114-15 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), p 259 A study and proposals for the restoration of the parkland landscape at Wasing Place, (Cobham Resource Consultants 1990)

Maps Estate map, 1680s (private collection) J Rocque, *Map of Berkshire*, 1761

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1882 2nd edition published 1913 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1911

Description written: May 1998 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 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.