

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HUNGER HILL GARDENS, STONEPIT COPPICE
GARDENS AND GORSEYCLOSE GARDENS

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Name:	HUNGER HILL GARDENS, STONEPIT COPPICE GARDENS AND GORSEYCLOSE GARDENS
District:	City of Nottingham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.968728 Longitude: -1.1413692 National Grid Reference: SK 57763 41608, SK 58186 41690 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001479 Date first listed: 24-Oct-2000

Details

Three related groups of detached urban pleasure gardens retaining many C19 summerhouses and associated structures.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the late C18 and early C19, many larger towns had groups of small rented gardens forming a ring around the densely developed town centre. These pleasure-garden plots were typically subdivided by hedges into individual plots of between an eighth and a sixth of an acre, which were laid out for ornament and the comfort of the owner; the gardens were used to grow a mixture of productive and ornamental plants (Lambert 1994). The expansion of towns in the C19 destroyed the majority of C18 rented garden sites, but a number of gardens of similar size and function were laid out in the first half of the C19, including Hill Close Gardens, Warwick (qv), Stoney Road Allotments, Coventry (qv), and Westbourne Road Town Gardens, Edgbaston, Birmingham (qv). A national survey (*ibid*) has indicated that very few of these sites survive in their original form, or, indeed, at all.

Land including Hunger Hill, which had previously belonged to the Hospital of St John and the Chantry of St Mary, was granted by Edward VI to the Corporation of Nottingham in 1551. Revenue from this property was to be applied to the maintenance of the bridge across the River Trent. Hunger Hill was first enclosed in 1604-5 when plots were let to thirty burgesses and their widows at a total rent of £15 per annum (Gray and Walker 1956). The following year the rent was reduced to £13 per annum as the tenants complained of 'theyr losse thereby, both in respect of the chardge of fencinge and the deere lying in ytt' (*ibid*). Staveley and Woods' Plan of Nottingham (surveyed 1827-9, published 1830) and Sanderson's Map of Nottingham (1835) indicate concentrations of detached town gardens to the north, west, and east of Nottingham, of which the most extensive group was situated at Hunger Hill. Comparison with Jackson's Map (surveyed 1851-61, published 1861) and Salmon's Map (1862) shows that while some sites were lost to development in the mid C19, others, such as Fish Pond Gardens south-west of Nottingham Castle, survived into the late C19. By the 1880s however the only significant concentration of gardens to survive was at Hunger Hill (OS 1886).

Hunger Hill continued as burgesses' parts or plots until 1842, although subdivision into gardens already seems to have taken place as by 1839 some 400 gardens were said to exist on Corporation land (Haynes 1971). In 1840 a toll road, known initially as New Road, and subsequently as Coppice Road and today (2000) as Ransom Road, was laid out linking St Ann's and Mapperley and further gardens were created at that time (*ibid*). William Howitt (1844) noted the high rents demanded for the Hunger Hill

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Inventory of Great Britain
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gardens in 1840, and in the early 1840s the Nottingham Independent Cottage Garden Society petitioned the Corporation for allotment gardens to ameliorate poverty and hardship (Gray 1960). Land was made available to the Society at Hunger Hill. In the mid and late C19 gardens were laid out with boundary hedges or boarded fences (photographs, NLSL), ornamental summerhouses which were frequently used as occasional residences, and glasshouses. In some instances the summerhouses comprised two storeys and resembled small cottages; the last surviving two-storey structure was demolished in 1997 (T Hallam pers comm, 2000). The gardens were used for both productive and ornamental horticulture, and in 1869 the rosarian the Rev Samuel Reynolds Hole (1819(1904) described the extensive cultivation of roses for show both under glass and in the open at Hunger Hill (Hole 1869). The late C19 layout of the plots with summerhouses, glasshouses, fruit trees, and internal paths enclosing geometrical-shaped flower beds is recorded on both the 25" (1881) and 10' (1882) OS maps.

In the mid C19 land to the north-west of the Hunger Hill gardens was acquired by the Nottingham architect T C Hine and his brother, John, for the construction of a residential estate to be known as Alexandra Park. Due to financial difficulties this scheme did not proceed, but a number of substantial villas were built on Albert Road on plots formerly occupied as gardens (Brand nd). In the 1880s the Corporation itself sought to develop parts of the Hunger Hill gardens, using unemployed men to make roads and clear sites. This scheme met with strong opposition from the Independent Cottage Garden Society and had been dropped by 1900 (Gray and Walker 1956). The gardens have remained in cultivation throughout the C20, with a decline in activity in the Stonepit Coppice Gardens and the western areas of Hunger Hill Gardens in the late C20. The valley to the north-east of Hunger Hill, which in the late C19 served as a rifle range, was laid out in the early C20 as Coppice Recreation Ground (opened 1905), while a valley to the west of Hunger Hill, formerly known as Trough Closes, was similarly developed as Sycamore Recreation Ground in 1909. The construction of associated bowling and putting greens entailed the loss of a small group of gardens adjoining Sycamore Road which linked Hunger Hill Gardens to Gorseyclose Gardens. Gardens to the west of Woodborough Road and east of Mapperley Road, which in 1861 formed part of the Gorseyclose Gardens (Salmon, 1862), had been lost to residential development by 1886 (OS). Today (2000), Hunger Hill Gardens, Stonepit Coppice Gardens, and Gorseyclose Gardens remain part of the Bridge Estate, property of the City Council providing revenue for the upkeep of the Trent Bridge.

The survival rate for this type of site is extremely low, with most examples having disappeared under built development. Where they do survive, it is generally as allotment sites with hedges and buildings removed. In area, the group of sites at Nottingham represents the most extensive surviving detached town garden site in England.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Hunger Hill and Stonepit Coppice Gardens are situated c 1.5km north-east of the centre of the city of Nottingham, to the west of Ransom Road; Gorseyclose Gardens are situated a short distance to the west, to the east of Woodborough Road. Hunger Hill Gardens comprise some 21ha laid out in 456 plots, while Stonepit Coppice Gardens, which are contiguous and to the north of Hunger Hill Gardens, comprise c 9ha laid out in 201 plots. Gorseyclose Gardens, which are situated c 100m west of Hunger Hill Gardens, from which they are separated by the early C20 Sycamore Recreation Ground, comprise c 2ha laid out in fifty plots.

Hunger Hill Gardens are bounded to the east by Ransom Road and Coppice Recreation Ground to the north-east, while to the north they adjoin Stonepit Coppice Gardens. To the west Hunger Hill Gardens adjoin the early C20 Sycamore Recreation Ground which was formed from Trough Closes, and to the south the gardens adjoin domestic premises in Broad Oak Close and St Ann's Valley. To the south-east the boundary is formed by Hungerhill Road. The boundaries of the gardens are fenced with late C20 metal railings and security fencing, while on Hungerhill Road the security fence surmounts a south-east-facing concreted slope, at the foot of which early C20 metal railings adjoin the road. Stonepit Coppice Gardens are similarly fenced. To the east and north the gardens adjoin Coppice Recreation Ground, while to the north-west and west the site is bounded by substantial mid and late C19 domestic premises in Albert Road; in some instances garden plots have been leased to owners of adjacent properties to form additional domestic gardens. To the south Stonepit Coppice Gardens adjoin Hunger Hill Gardens. Gorseyclose Gardens, formerly contiguous to Hunger Hill Gardens, are today (2000) separated by the early C20 Sycamore Recreation Ground which forms the eastern boundary of the site. To the west Gorseyclose Gardens are bounded by timber

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fences on Woodborough Road, while to the north they adjoin late C20 flats, Alexandra Court. To the south the site is bounded by early C20 domestic properties and a school, and a late C20 playground situated on Sycamore Road.

Hunger Hill Gardens occupy west-, south- and south-east-facing slopes; a steep-sided valley to the north-east is occupied by Coppice Recreation Ground, while beyond, on the west-facing slope, Ransom Road descends gently from north to south below the grounds of the C19 Coppice Lunatic Asylum. Stonepit Coppice Gardens to the north of Hunger Hill occupy north-east- and south-east-facing slopes above a shallow valley which falls from west to east. Gorseyclose Gardens occupy a largely level site. Hunger Hill Gardens and Stonepit Coppice Gardens are prominent in views from adjacent high ground to the east, south-east, and south. There are wide views across surrounding areas and the centre of Nottingham from the Gardens. Stonepit Coppice Gardens contribute to the setting of mid and late C19 houses in Alexandra Park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Hunger Hill Gardens are entered from Ransom Road to the east at the southern end of Coppice Recreation Ground, and from two points on Hungerhill Road to the south-east and south. There is a further entrance leading into the site from Sycamore Recreation Ground to the south-west: a flight of steps of C19 origin, known as the Donkey Steps, ascends to the Gardens from the Recreation Ground. Stonepit Coppice Gardens have no independent access and are approached from Hunger Hill Gardens to the south, the nearest point of access being from Ransom Road to the east. All entrances are marked by tall, late C20 metal security gates. Gorseyclose Gardens are entered from Woodborough Road to the west where two high timber gates lead into the site from the pavement.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Hunger Hill Gardens, Stonepit Coppice Gardens, and Gorseyclose Gardens are each laid out to a similar plan with individual, rectangular gardens enclosed by high hedges of privet, hawthorn, or holly. Each plot is entered through a timber door, frequently a reused late C19 or early C20 domestic panelled front door, which leads from one of the principal tracks or secondary walks which divide the sites into irregular grids. Many plots on all three sites preserve mid or late C19 or early C20 single-storey summerhouses, typically of brick construction under a pitched tile or slate roof. The surviving summerhouses are of varying degrees of elaboration, examples in Hunger Hill Gardens and Stonepit Coppice Gardens having fireplaces, stoves, chimney stacks, panelled interiors, and remnants of internal painted decoration. Some summerhouses have lean-to glasshouses attached to the south or east facade. A significant number of glasshouses, a feature of these gardens from at least the late C19 (Hole 1869), survive; in many instances these are mid or late C20 metal or timber reconstructions standing on C19 brick bases. At least two circular, brick-lined C19 water tanks (partly reconstructed late C20) survive on Stonepit Coppice Gardens; these were supplied from the roofs of garden structures. Mature fruit trees, particularly standard pears and apples, survive in many gardens. Where the sloping topography of the Hunger Hill Gardens and Stonepit Coppice Gardens requires terracing to provide level gardens, retaining walls are constructed in brick on a local rubble-stone base; similar retaining walls are found on the Gorseyclose Gardens, often supporting hedges on the principal walks leading through the site. Today (2000) plots in the northern half of Stonepit Coppice Gardens and on the west side of Hunger Hill Gardens have lapsed from cultivation; elsewhere, on all three sites the gardens remain in cultivation, predominantly as allotments. Some plots preserve the broad outline of the layout shown on the late C19 25" OS map, but in general these have been modified through changing priorities, and particularly the mid C20 change in emphasis from ornamental to productive horticulture associated with the Second World War. The general plan of the site with hedged gardens served by radiating tracks and subsidiary walks reflects the 'tiny allotments on sunny slopes ... separated by hedges or boards, in size about three to the rood' described by Dean Hole in 1869.

REFERENCES

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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
HUNGER HILL GARDENS, STONEPIT COPPICE

Maps Staveley and Wood, Map of Nottingham, surveyed 1827(9, published 1830 (Nottingham Local Studies Library) Sanderson, Map of Nottingham, 1835 (Nottingham Local Studies Library) F Jackson, Map of Nottingham, surveyed 1851(61, published 1861 (Nottingham Local Studies Library) Salmon, Map of Nottingham, published 1862 (Nottingham Local Studies Library)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1878/1886 2nd edition published 1900 3rd edition published 1920 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881, published 1882 2nd edition revised 1913(14, published 1915 OS 10' to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1882 Archival items Photographs, late C19 or early C20 (Nottingham Local Studies Library) Photograph of glasshouses at Hunger Hill Gardens, c 1920 (reproduced in Lambert 1994)

Description written: August 2000 Amended: September 2000, October 2001 Register Inspector: JML Edited: November 2001

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.