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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PELL WALL

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Name:	PELL WALL
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Sutton upon Tern
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.894836 Longitude: -2.4818900 National Grid Reference: SJ 67678 33152 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001402 Date first listed: 25-Sep-1998

Details

Early C19 gardens, pleasure grounds, kitchen gardens and park associated with one of Sir John Soane's finest country houses.
HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

An estate was put together by purchase in the later C18 by Samuel Davies, a Market Drayton banker. His business however failed, and in 1820 the 296-acre (123ha) Tyrlay Heath farm - what became the Pell Wall estate - was purchased by Purney Sillitoe (1772-1855), a London-based iron merchant who in 1812 had married Davies' daughter. In 1822 he asked Sir John Soane (1753-1837) to build a new house to the south of the River Tern, Soane also supplying designs for many of the ancillary structures. Sillitoe remained at Pell Wall until his death when it passed to his great-nephew Alfred William Griffin (d 1861) who was succeeded by his brother Marten Harcourt Griffin. He had it until 1902 when it was sold to a Liverpool brewer, James Munroe Walker, who lived there until 1917. In 1928 Pell Wall and 49 acres (20ha) was sold to the Brothers of Christian Instruction who ran a school here. This closed in 1962. After its acquisition in 1965 by a private individual the house was allowed to become derelict, and in 1986 was gutted by fire. In 1988 the house and some of the surrounding land were compulsorily purchased by North Shropshire District Council, from which it passed in 1995 to the Pell Wall Preservation Trust. Phase I of a restoration plan began in 1997.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Pell Wall lies c 1km south of the town of Market Drayton in north-east Shropshire. It lies within a park running southwards and uphill from the River Tern, the east boundary of the park being the main A529 Market Drayton to Newport road (Newport Road) and that to the west Sandy Lane, which runs south from Walkmill Bridge. The area here registered is c 60ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Historically the main approach to the Hall was along a drive which enters the grounds to the north-east of the house off Newport Road. At the end of the drive is Soane's Triangular, or North, Lodge (listed grade II*), an hexagonal, grey sandstone ashlar building, at the rear of which is a large addition of the later C20. Along the east side of the drive are several large limes, with an understorey of laurel and holly. Also off the same road are several secondary entrances. The first leads down to the forecourt to the north-east side of the main house, with a fork leading to Soane's former Coach House and Stables (listed grade II), now converted to form three separate dwellings. The second leads to the Laundry House, which was probably built by Monro Walker in the early C20, before the drive continues west to the kitchen garden, eventually

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leaving the estate where it meets Sandy Lane at the south-west corner of the estate. Here stands Soane's Brick Lodge (or Old Lodge), a single-storey, red-brick structure with hipped roof (listed grade II). A bungalow was erected alongside this in 1997. North of Brick Lodge stands Keeper's Cottage, built by Walker c 1905. The third entrance, further south along Newport Road (outside the area here registered), gives access to the drive leading to the pheasantry in Pell Wall Wood and thence to Home Farm and Pell Wall Stables, built by Walker c 1902. At the same date a large, red-brick, half-timbered lodge (now Pell Wall Court) was built beside Newport Road for Walker's agent.

A further lodge stands at the north-west corner of the C19 park, south of Walkmill Bridge across the River Tern. From here a drive ran south-east through a shrubbery or plantation belt south of the river, before curving across the park to the south of the house to join the main drive from the Triangular Lodge. This approach and the lodge may have been among the work of M H Griffin.

These access arrangements apparently supplemented Soane's initial approach from the North Lodge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Work on Pell Wall (listed grade II*) began in 1822 to a design by Sir John Soane for Purney Sillitoe, who moved in in the late summer of 1828. The builder was John Carline of Shrewsbury. In grey sandstone ashlar it is a villa-style building of two storeys and an attic over a basement, with a hipped, slate, Mansard roof. The north-east, entrance front is of three bays, the north-west bowed front overlooking the park is of five bays, as is the south-west garden front, while the south-east front is of seven bays. Pell Wall was Soane's last country house, and marks the culmination of his career as an architect.

The house was altered and extended for M H Griffin 1872-5, and further enlarged for J M Walker from 1902.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The ha-ha which separates the gardens from the parkland beyond may have been constructed in the later 1820s.

The pleasure grounds extend through the woodland between the house and the kitchen garden, and down the valley extending north towards the River Tern. The woodland contains many mature specimen trees and shrubs, and is cut through with hoggin-based paths. Midway between house and kitchen gardens is a rustick, south-facing summerhouse (listed grade II). Of octagonal plan, the summerhouse has oak posts at the angles, ling-covered cedarboard walls, and a pyramidal tiled roof which overhangs to form a verandah. There are cedar roller blinds to the three-bay front opening, to the side gothick windows and to the rear a circular one. Inside is fixed rustick, probably nut wood, furniture, while around the edge of the summerhouse is a narrow, pebble-work path. Although the blinds are probably of c 1900 the summerhouse is documented in 1860 and stylistically may even be of c 1830, the date suggested by maps and drawings for the laying out and planting of the pleasure grounds.

The most dramatic section of the pleasure grounds is the valley or dingle extending north from the main pleasure grounds. At the south end of the valley is the original Pell Wall Pool, which may well have been enlarged by quarrying, and which was certainly dammed on its north-west side. Shaped like a rounded triangle the pond measures c 80m from north to south. Traces can be seen of a boathouse. Rhododendron-dominated planting clothes the steeply rising ground to the east, west and south. There are also some mature beeches and sweet chestnuts in this part of the garden, all probably planted in the earlier C19. A path runs around the edge of the pond, above and south-west of which there is a sandstone viewing platform. South of this is a crude grotto or shrine of the mid C20, of concrete smeared over brick.

Below the dam another viewing platform looks down the rest of the valley, over a lower pool and especially the Italian Garden which occupies the next and lowest section of the valley. That, built c 1909 and revealed by clearance work of the 1980s, comprises a narrow linear canal with a central circular basin. The mature planting of the valley to either side included monkey puzzle trees. Linking the south end of the canal with the north end of the lower pool is a yew avenue, planted c 1994.

It is unclear who was responsible for laying out the grounds around Pell Wall in the years after the house's construction. There is evidence that Soane himself had some interest in landscape gardening, while Lambert (1995, 8) suggests that advice may have been forthcoming to Sillitoe from William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843).

PARK Imparkment, and the planting of clumps, had taken place in front of (north-west of) the house by 1843. This area, running down to the River Tern, remains permanent pasture today, with parkland and specimen trees. Between 1843 and 1880 the park was extended to include the area west of the ponds, as field boundaries were removed and roundels planted. It seems likely

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that the clumps of Wellingtonia and Scots pine, and the other conifers along the western boundary of this section of the park, all date from that forty-year period.

South of the east/west drive linking Newport Road with Sandy Lane, which forms the boundary of the pleasure grounds, is Pell Wall Wood (outside the area here registered). This was less extensive in the late C20 than eighty or a hundred years previously, since 1929 a triangular slice having been cleared from the south-east corner of the Wood. Houses had been built hereon (eg Manor Lodge), as they had on the Market Drayton road frontage further to the north (eg Pell Wall Court). Towards the centre of the Wood is the Home Farm of the early C20, developed from an existing pheasantry. On its north side is Pell Wall Stables, a stables (locally believed to be racing stables) and coach house block of 1902 by Fred Lynde of Manchester.

At some stage in the twenty years prior to 1902, and possibly when Pell Wall was acquired by J Munroe Walker, the park was extended to the west by c 750m, to take in Salisbury Hill. That area is excluded from the parkland here registered.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen gardens (whole complex listed grade II) lie c 350m south-west of the house, and were built 1826-8 to Soane's designs. They are of playing card plan, c 80m by 45m, with tall, stone-detailed entrances giving access through the walls: two in each of the short sides and one in the south wall. An integral gardener's house (Garden House) is incorporated in one of the shorter walls, to the west. Abutting the gardener's house to the north is a single-storey fruit store, while along the outside of the north wall is a row of brick and slate potting sheds, also of 1826-8. At the east end of these is a later C19 water tower.

Against the north wall, which was raised to support them, is an E-plan range of tall, curvilinear glasshouses, at least partly devoted to vine cultivation. The range is probably of the 1870s or 1880s. That wall was heated via a later C19 boiler house 100m to the north-west. Heat was also supplied to four smaller glasshouses of similar design and date which lie parallel with each other in a holly-hedged enclosure on the north side of the walled garden.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 182 (7 April 1988), pp 134-7 D Lambert, Pell Wall Hall: Notes on the Historic Landscape ... for the Pell Wall Preservation Trust (1995) P A Stamper, Historic Parks and Gardens in Shropshire. A Compendium of Site Reports Compiled 1994-1997 (Shropshire County Council 1996) D E Jenkins, The History of Pell Wall (unpublished study for Pell Wall Trust 1998)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1888 2nd edition published 1902 3rd edition published 1929 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1902

Archival items Sir John Soane Museum, London: plans, drawings, accounts, correspondence etc 1822-8 Frith photos of Pell Wall, c 1911 (Shropshire Records and Research Centre)

Description written: August 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: February 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.