

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PEOVER HALL

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Name:	PEOVER HALL
District:	Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Peover Superior
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.255978 Longitude: -2.3400504 National Grid Reference: SJ 77411 73273 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000643 Date first listed: 10-Jun-1985

Details

An C18 landscape park and C20 formal gardens associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Over Peover was held by the C13 by the Mainwarings, who continued as lords until 1919 when the estate was sold. Among the Mainwarings was Sir Randle (d 1612), sheriff of the county in 1605, under whom the present building was refaced in 1585; his grandson Philip (d 1647), whose widow Ellen (d 1656) built the family chapel on the north side of the church in 1648 and the fine stable block in 1654; Sir Henry (d 1797), who in 1764 added a large, three-storey extension (demolished in the 1960s) to the house and for whom the landscape park was probably created, possibly by William Emes (1730-1803) and the Rev Thomas Sherston; and Sir Philip Tatton Mainwaring, for whom the gardens were redesigned in the years after 1890. The Mainwarings sold Peover in 1919; the estate remains (1997) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Peover Hall stands c 1km south-west of the hamlet of Over Peover, c 5km south of Knutsford. The north-west tip of the park abuts the main A50 Knutsford to Holmes Chapel road, and other short sections of the park boundary follow minor local roads and tracks. For the most part however the boundary of the registered area follows field edges. The area here registered is c 125ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Peover is approached via Long Lane, which bounds the park to the south. Until burnt down during the Second World War a lodge, similar to that at the north-west corner of the park, stood at the east end of the lane, where it joins Grotto Lane. Some 200m west of the lodge site, 3m tall rusticated stone gate piers stand either side of the approach road. At the turn north, into the Hall grounds, are simple wooden gates. Some 100m further north the drive passes through tall mid C18 gate piers and iron gates (listed grade II), brought to Peover in 1960 from Alderley Park (Chesh). The drive's final, 100m long, approach to the south side of the Hall is tree lined.

Knutsford Lodge (listed grade II), at the north-west corner of the park, is a single-storey building of the later C18 with gothic bay windows and originally a thatched roof. A track or drive runs south-east from it through the park to the Hall's north forecourt.

A third lodge lies 300m west of Longlane Farm and 1km west of the registered area.

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PRINCIPAL BUILDING Work on Peover Hall (listed grade II*), intended to be a large E- or H-plan building, was begun in 1585. When work ceased however in 1590 only one cross wing, containing services, of the proposed three-storey brick structure had been completed. This forms the greater part of the present house. In the 1650s some of the attics were raised and their gables replaced by a level parapet. The main entrance is on the north side of the Hall, in a brick facade of 1964 by R B Wood-Jones contrived when a large wing of 1764, which had doubled the size of the house, was demolished.

South of the Hall is a large brick stables complex. At the west end is the stables range (listed grade I), built in 1654 by Ellen Mainwaring as a gift to her son Thomas. This contains stalls and other woodwork of very high quality and innovative design. On the east side of that building is a coach house (listed grade II) of 1764 and the home farm buildings. The farmhouse (listed grade II), an early C18 brick building, stands c 100m south of the south-east corner of the kitchen garden. One hundred metres west of the Hall is the church of St Lawrence (listed grade I), of C15 to early C19 date.

Until the late 16th century the location of the chief house of the Mainwarings was c 250m south of the present Hall. Its moat still survives; within are estate buildings including a saw mill.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens around the Hall were laid out between 1890 and 1905 for Sir Philip Tatton Mainwaring, remodelled in the 1920s by Hubert Worthington, and further developed in a sympathetic and complementary style from the 1960s by the owners Mr and Mrs Randle Brooks. To the immediate north and east of the Hall, and enclosed by low brick walls of 1925, are formal lawns with clipped drum yews and gravel paths and the approach drive from the north and its turning circle.

The main gardens, a series of formal compartments, lie west and especially south of the Hall, and north and west of the church. South of the Hall, three compartments lie along the north side of Church Walk, which leads from the west end of the C17 stables to the kitchen garden and the church (south of which the walk continues as the Hornbeam Walk). First, at the east end, is the Pink Garden of 1982. A brick arch leads to the central compartment, probably laid out in 1920 and redesigned as the White Garden in 1982. The third yew-hedged compartment, the Lily Pond Garden, c 40m east/west by 30m north/south, is roughly four times as large as the first two. In its centre is a rectangular lily pond and along its west side the Aviary, a stone-columned, verandah-like building of 1920 with three brick arches at either end. To its front are spirally clipped yews. On the north side of the Lily Pond Garden are further early C20 yew topiaried compartments, the Rose Garden and, to its east, the Herb Garden. East of the Herb Garden, along the south front of the Hall, is an Elizabethan knot garden, designed c 1980 by Rory Young. A further compartment conceals a C20 swimming pool. The final garden of the series, with the Purple Border, and the Blue and White Border, lies north of the Rose Garden, between the west side of the Hall and the east wall of the churchyard.

The second series of compartments runs north-west from the west side of the lawn to the front of the Hall, and is 180m long and 60m wide. First is a lawn bordered by yew hedges planted in 1925, with pleached lime avenues of c 1960 down either side. This leads to the Theatre Garden, again contained within tall yew hedges of 1925, at the end of which is a circular hedged compartment c 12m across with, on its north-west side, a small temple which looks back up the axis of these compartments. The temple was built in 1996, incorporating as its main element a pedimented doorcase from the demolished C18 wing of the Hall. Bounding these compartments to the north and west is the wall of 1925, which continues eastwards around the lawn to the north of the Hall.

A gap in the hedge around the Theatre Garden leads through to a shrubbery with specimen trees which lies between the churchyard to the east and the kitchen garden to the south. Within it is a sunken Rockery and Azalea Dell, probably created in the later C19. Rough stone steps lead out of this back towards the Hall. The shrubbery continues to the west side as The Wilderness, which is separated from the kitchen garden by a 200m long and 8m wide straight grass walk, L'Avenue de la Grand Armée. The walk was created in 1960, when the beech hedge down its west side was planted and the C18 gates at its south end were brought from Alderley Park. East of that walk, and running along the south side of the kitchen garden, are the Rhododendron Walks.

PARK The present parkland occupies a roughly triangular area c 2km long from south-east to north-west and c 900m wide, with the Hall and church complex lying in the south-western apex. It is laid to permanent pasture with many parkland trees, both mature and the products of a planting campaign since c 1960. The main feature of the park is a 400m long lake situated 400m north of the Hall. Fossilized in the grassland to its south is a landscape of narrow ridge and furrow.

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The origins of the park are uncertain, although it has been claimed on stylistic grounds (CL 1985, 904) that William Emes (1730-1803) was responsible for its design. A tree planting list of 1749-68 seems likely to relate to the park's creation; as already noted, the Hall and stables were greatly enlarged and added to in the 1760s. The park's extent in the later C19 was similar to that of the registered area (although some land south of Long Lane was also included), but there are indications that in the C18 a more extensive landscape may have been embraced. Three points of that, to north, east and west, may be indicated by the Hall's three lodges, while Grotto Lane, Grotto Wood and Grotto House (or Farm), east and south-east of the east lodge, may reflect the presence of an otherwise lost park feature.

KITCHEN GARDEN The C18 brick-walled kitchen garden measures c 115m east/west by c 60m. Against the centre of the north wall is a glasshouse of c 1900; a bothy and boiler house of similar date lie on the outside of the wall.

REFERENCES

G Ormerod, *The History of Cheshire i*, (1816-19), pp 368-75 *The Field*, (2 March 1985) P de Figueiredo and J Treuherz, *Cheshire Country Houses* (1988), pp 138-42

MAPS OS 6" to 1 mile: Cheshire sheet 35, 1st edition published 1882 OS 25" to 1 mile: Cheshire sheet 35.10, 1st edition surveyed 1870s

ARCHIVAL ITEMS Tree planting list [not seen] (John Rylands Library, Manchester)

Description written: September 1997 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: April 1999

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.