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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

GARNONS

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Name:	GARNONS
District:	County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Byford
District:	County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Mansell Gamage
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.090071 Longitude: -2.8856269 National Grid Reference: SO 39419 43895 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000881 Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

A park and pleasure grounds around a country house improved following submission of a Red Book by Humphry Repton in 1791.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Garnons estate was inherited in 1790 by John Geers Cotterell, who in 1791 married a local heiress Frances Isabella Evans. James Wyatt (1747-1813) and Humphry Repton (1752-1818) were soon after consulted about possible improvements to house and grounds, with Repton submitting a Red Book in 1791. The estate remained in the family in 1996.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Garnons lies 11km west of Hereford on the main A438 road to Hay-on-Wye which bounds the park to the south. To the north-west it is defined by the B4230 via Mansell Gamage, the former church of which lies at the northern tip of the park. Alongside the A438, the main southern boundary of the park comprises a post and rail fence, slightly sunken and largely concealed from the house. To the west and to the east the park is bounded by a stone wall.

The house lies on a terrace at the foot of the now wooded Garnons Hill, which rises above it, eastwards, to 233m. In front of the house, west and south of it, the park (c 88ha) falls away gently, with extensive views being enjoyed both across it and to the landscape of the Wye Valley and the hills beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main drive enters the park close to its south-eastern extremity, where there is an ornate, single-storey lodge (mid C19). From here the drive approaches the house on a rising and curving line, Garnons only being fully revealed as the drive breasts the line of the old turnpike road (moved when the park was created) and passes clumps planted to form a screen. The drive then continues to the lower terrace below (south of) the house. The approach to the house from the south-east is as recommended by Repton, and presumably forms part of the improvements put in hand after 1791.

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A fork from that drive leads north-east to join the back drive, which approaches the rear of Garnons via the Home Farm, near the Gardener's Cottage. That back drive then continues north-west, as a metalled track, to an entrance to the park below (south of) Mansell Gamage church. Close by that entrance, to the south, is Mansell Lodge, of like date and style to the front lodge, which lies at the end of a different, and now abandoned, carriage road across the park.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Garnons (listed grade II) was rebuilt in the Picturesque style suggested by Repton in 1815-22 to designs by William Atkinson (c 1773-1839). A three-bay range of that building was retained in the mid C20 when the remainder was demolished, leaving as the main house a castellated block which had been added to Garnons c 1860. That block was remodelled internally by Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942) c 1907.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS On the south-west (hereafter south for descriptive purposes) side of the house is a terrace on two levels, giving views across the park and delimiting in the case of the lower terrace (listed grade II) the pleasure grounds. East of the house is a flagged courtyard, occupying the site of the demolished portion of the C19 house. Running around and behind (north of) the house from the west end of the lower terrace are wooded walks through shrubs and specimen trees, that zone extending for c 400m east of the house and screening from view the kitchen garden and the Gardener's Cottage. That screen planting also continues south and west of the kitchen garden to conceal it from the main approach to the house, it here being separated from the park by a stone-walled ha-ha.

Also now wooded is the greater part of the strip between the road which forms the rear approach to the house, continued as the track to Mansell Gamage church, and the park boundary at the foot of Garnons Hill.

PARK The parkland falls in three main zones. The greater part, in front of the house and crossed by the main drive, is permanent grassland heavily dotted with specimen trees and clumps, especially to either side of the drive. Although most of the trees are very mature a considerable amount of replanting was undertaken in the late C20. A cricket ground with pavilion, present in the late C19, was reintroduced in the late C20. That part of the park, however, was reputedly ploughed during the Second World War, and the earthworks of former field boundaries and other features are relatively indistinct. In the second zone, north-west and west of the house and between it and Mansell Gamage church, there are in the permanent grassland very well-defined earthworks of the former turnpike, carriage roads, former field boundaries and, adjoining the church, the reputed site of a castle. The western, third, zone of the park, west of a boundary between Mansell Lodge and the northern part of Crump's Coppice, was arable in 1996 and had long been so.

The three main blocks of woodland in the park, Crump's, Shortlands, and Stocking Coppice, all lie in the western part of the park, and all were probably established c 1800. The east end of Crump's Coppice now partly envelopes the small, amorphous, so-called fishpond which, since at least 1826, has occupied the site intended by Repton for his more crescent-shaped 'piece of water'.

After visiting Garnons earlier in the year, Repton produced a Red Book in July 1791. The grounds had already seen some improvement, and Repton mentions recently made walks west of the house. For the park he proposed to create the appearance of uninterrupted unity of domain. That was to be achieved by moving the turnpike road which passed c 150m in front of the house to a new line outside the park c 400m to the south. A new entrance was to be contrived and plantation screens and clumps introduced both to hide unwanted views and to enhance others. The latter included the prospect of the house from the south, which was to be enhanced by some additional planting on Garnons Hill (in 1996 largely commercial woodland; outside registered area). A formal canal in front of the old house was to be filled in, while a piece of water, intended to deceive the viewer into believing it to be a part of the River Wye, was to be created in an area of waterlogged meadow on the southern edge of the park. Grass carriage roads were to be created leading to the most interesting points of view. Most, if not all, these suggestions seem to have been acted upon, and since the early C19 there have been no substantial changes to the park.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen garden lies c 300m south-east of the house. The garden was present by 1791; architectural evidence suggests it was then probably fairly new. The garden, which slopes slightly southwards, is half-octagonal in plan, the long south boundary being formed by a yew hedge, overgrown in 1996, with a ha-ha beyond. Well-built brick potting sheds with stone details to the windows and doors lie behind the north wall. In the late C20 the walled area remained

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divided into quadrants, partly defined by box hedging, and with a central basin. Only a small area, however, was gardened, and the south-west quadrant was given over to a tennis court.

Gardener's Cottage, north of the garden, is an ornate, two-storey building of the mid C19.

REFERENCES Garden History 22, (1974), pp 162-74 L Fleming and A Gore, The English Garden (1979), pp 150-5, pls 93-4 R Sidwell, West Midland Gardens (1981), pp 53-5 G Carter et al, Humphry Repton (1982), p 73 S Daniels and C Watkin, The Picturesque Landscape (1994), p 81

Maps Map of Garnons and Byeford Estates ..., 1826 (Herefordshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 32 NE, 1st edition published 1886 OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 32.7, 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items Copy of Red Book; Survey with notes 1793, Atkinson's plans for house etc (AH16); Large collection of estate papers and correspondence including Repton's (D52), (Herefordshire Record Office)

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