

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ARLEY HALL

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| Name: | ARLEY HALL |
| District: | Cheshire East (Unitary Authority) |
| Parish: | Aston By Budworth |
| label.localisation: | Latitude: 53.317724 Longitude: -2.4849014 National Grid Reference: SJ 67794 80198 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF) |
| label.overview: | Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000637 Date first listed: 10-Jun-1985 |

Details

C18 and later gardens and pleasure grounds including what may be England's earliest herbaceous border, and a later C18 landscape park laid out by William Emes, associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Arley formed part of the extensive Warburton holdings from the C12. In 1469 Sir Piers Warburton moved from Warburton to Arley and built a new, E-plan, house. That house was cased in the mid C18 by Sir Peter Warburton (d 1774), the fourth baronet, who also laid out new gardens and set out the landscape park. Sir Peter Warburton, the fifth and last baronet (d 1813), further enlarged the park in the 1780s. Dying without issue, he left Arley to his great-nephew, the eight-year-old Rowland Egerton, whose father (Rev Rowland Egerton) added Warburton to his name. Rowland Egerton ran the estate from 1825 until his death in 1891, during that time rebuilding the Hall, laying out its gardens, and undertaking a good deal of estate building. Arley remains (1997) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Arley Hall and its park stand c 8km north of Northwich, east of the estate village of Arley and north of Great Budworth, on minor roads east of the main A559 from Northwich to Warrington. The park, gently rolling in generally fairly level countryside, is bounded to the north by Back Lane, but otherwise its boundaries follow field and wood edges. The registered area is c 200ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Arley Hall is approached via a drive off the estate road to the west, contrived in 1851 to replace a more curving one of 1787 via the stable yard, part of William Emes' (1730-1803) scheme of improvements. The drive passes along the Pleached Lime Avenue planted c 1851, and through an open bay of an early C16 cruck barn (listed grade I), embellished c 1851 with half-timbered gables and a Bavarian-style clock tower by Anthony Salvin (d 1881). From here the drive leads into the Hall's south forecourt, the red-brick walls of which (listed grade II) are decorated with blue diaper work, also by Salvin. Near its centre stands a sundial, moved here in the mid C19, perhaps from the courtyard of the earlier Hall.

A lime avenue leads in a straight line south from the forecourt gates. A grass drive leads down this, turning east before branching north-east to the hamlet of Arley Green, south of which stands the mid C19 Red Lodge, and south through Big Wood, eventually to Willow Lodge. The latter, possibly an C18 building, lies on the southern edge of the park, and is the point of entry for the

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estate road which, 1.5km to the north, passes by the west side of the Arley Hall complex. This road was constructed c 1787; a former spur north-east from it to the front of the Hall was reworked in the 1850s as the Furlong Walk.

Mill Lodge lies on the eastern edge of the park, near Arley Mill. One of the C19 cottages in Arley village on the west side of the park may also have functioned as a lodge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Arley Hall (listed grade II*) is a red-brick building with blue diaper work in the Jacobean style, built in 1832-45 to a design by George Latham, with work on the interiors continuing until the 1860s. Attached to the north-east side of the Hall is a stone chapel (listed grade II*) of 1845, in C13 style by Anthony Salvin, extended in 1856-7 by G E Street (d 1881). In the later C20 the Hall was somewhat reduced in size and remodelled, with a number of houses being created around the courtyard on its north-west side. The house of the 1830s replaced a moated, E-plan, timber-framed house of 1469, which in 1758 was faced in brick, with stone surrounds to windows and doorways.

West of the Hall is the C16 cruck barn across the entry drive, at the north end of which is the Tudor Barn (listed grade II), a red-brick building of c 1604. Former stables, now (1997) a tearoom, lie across a yard to the west.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the east of the Hall is a formal lawn surrounded by low Italianate stone balustrading (listed grade II) of c 1850 by George Latham. In the centre is a circular yew-hedged garden of the 1990s with, to the south, two lines of specimen trees which carry the eye east across the park to the distant Derbyshire hills. The area east of the Hall was first laid out as a garden, for flowers, in 1751. In 1850 a parterre was laid out within the balustraded area based on a design of 1846 by William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881). This was ploughed up in 1940.

The main body of the pleasure gardens lies south-west of the Hall, largely arranged within a series of compartments, including the former kitchen gardens, within a basic north/south grid. The gardens are bounded to the east by the 220-yard long Furlong Walk which leads south-west from the south forecourt. From the Walk there are views east over the park, over a low brick wall of 1851 which runs along the inner edge of Emes's sunk fence of 1764 which first divided the gardens from the park. From midway down the Walk the Herbaceous Border leads west to a late C18 Alcove (listed grade II) with decorative buttresses of 1852 by George Latham. The 90m long Border comprises a broad, straight, grass path (gravel until 1946) with herbaceous borders to either side, divided into a series of bays by yew buttresses of 1851 and with topiary work at either end. It is bounded to the south by a tall yew hedge and to the north by the tall brick wall of the Walled Garden, access to which is gained through a monumental gateway, also of 1851. The Herbaceous Border, generally considered England's first, was created in 1851-2 from a pre-existing walk to the Alcove.

A break in the yew hedge on the south side of the Border opens to the north/south Ilex Avenue, two parallel lines of seven cylindrically clipped 8m high holm oaks planted c 1850. Steps at the south end of the Avenue lead down to the circular Sundial Garden. From here, as from the north end of the Avenue, there is a vista to Game Park Wood.

Within the triangle created by the Furlong Walk, Herbaceous Border and Ilex Avenue is an area of lawns and beds with shrub roses, an arrangement of 1961 replacing a more formal C19 rose garden. On the north side of this area is the Tea Cottage, a cottage-like pavilion with fireplace contrived in 1860 from an earlier building.

From the west side of the Sundial Garden there is access to the Rootery, created in 1857-8 as a fernery. It comprises a shallow quarry-like rock garden with pool and, on its north side, a domed brick shelter with stump work surviving on one side of its doorway. The Rootery bears some resemblance to the Stumpery at Biddulph Grange (qv), owned by Rowland Egerton-Warburton's brother-in-law by marriage James Bateman. On the north side of the Rootery is the formal Fish Garden of 1930 with central square pool. From here a path leads north-west to the Rough, a wild garden with specimen trees and shrubs. East of this, and south of the Alcove, is a tennis court of the 1950s; in the C19 this area and that of the Fish Garden was a bowling green. The Walled Garden north of the Herbaceous Border is quartered, with at its centre a quatrefoil pool moved in 1960 when the pleasure garden was created from the East Lawn. Around the edge of the Garden are beds, and in its northern half some specimen trees. Each quarter is lawned, with at its centre a stone pinnacle removed from the Hall. The door in the centre of the east side of the Walled Garden leads through to the Kitchen Garden, in which (1997) a further pleasure garden is being created, with at its centre a birdcage-like pavilion, possibly C19, brought from Castle Durrow in southern Ireland, home of the present owner's father.

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Three garden compartments lie down the exterior of the Kitchen Garden's east wall. At the north end is the Flag Garden, made in 1900 by Antoinette Egerton-Warburton as an enclosed sanctum. Next is the Herb Garden, previously a children's garden but redesigned in 1969. The most southerly compartment is the Scented Garden of 1967.

The last main element of the pleasure grounds is the Grove, which extends east from the north side of the Hall chapel for c 400m. Extensive planting of specimen trees and shrubs here from 1970 onwards has re-established what was already in the late C18 an area of specimen trees with walks.

Although there is a long, and ongoing, tradition of gardening at Arley, four main phases of activity can be established. The first phase was 1750-65 when gardens were made to the east of the Hall, the walled vegetable garden and hot walls were built and William Emes made the sunk fence and lawn to the south of the Hall. The second phase was 1785-95 when William Emes produced an overall plan for the park and gardens; it seems likely that the key lines of the garden were set out at that time. Then came the decade after 1850 when Rowland and Mary Egerton-Warburton greatly elaborated the existing layout; and most recently since 1960, when the gardens were restored and added to.

PARK Arley Hall lies at the northern end of a roughly oval park 2km long and 1km wide. An eastern extension encompasses the more easterly of Arley's two lakes, clearance of which began in the 1990s. The more westerly lake curves around the west side of the park's main block of woodland, Big Wood. Narrower belts of woodland run around the rest of the park perimeter; only due east of the Hall is there a clear gap in the planting, to allow a view to the Derbyshire hills. Around the Hall the park is pasture ground with specimen trees; the southern and western parts however are under arable cultivation and have far fewer trees.

The first element of the park to be separated from the gardens by a ha-ha, the great lawn to the south of the Hall, was planned by William Emes (1730-1803) who was brought in in 1763. Emes was brought in again in 1785, and drew up a scheme for re-routing the local roads and creating a larger park with plantations around its edge. This plan had wholly, or largely, been implemented by 1791, thereby creating the park which exists today (1997).

KITCHEN GARDEN The area south-west of the Hall given over from the C18 to walled gardens was already being used to grow vegetables, flowers and fruit in 1743. New walls, some heated, were begun in 1751. A south-facing hot wall with short returns to the south at either end - the present north wall of the Walled Garden (listed grade II) - was constructed c 1760. The east and west walls of that garden were added c 1790, while the south wall was completed c 1850. The Kitchen Garden (listed grade II) on its east side was walled before 1846. Along its north side is a 50m long vinery (listed grade II) of 1872-3 designed by Thomas Lewis of Newcastle (Staffs), the curving, iron-ribbed roof of which was replaced by the present sloping, wood-ribbed one in 1921. North of the vinery are brick sheds. On the west side of this walled garden complex is the estate office, previously a gardener's house.

Traditional cultivation of the Walled Garden ceased in 1939. From 1946-60 it was used as a market garden, thereafter being incorporated into the pleasure gardens. The Kitchen Garden was similarly laid out as a pleasure garden in the 1990s.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 16 (24 December 1904), pp 942-50; 160 (7 December 1976), pp 950-2 Arley Hall, guidebook, (C Foster 1982) P de Figueiredo and J Treuherz, Cheshire Country Houses (1988), pp 23-7 Arley Hall Gardens, guidebook, (E Ashbrook, 2nd ed 1989) E Ashbrook, The Story of a Garden: Arley 1831-1991 (1991) Garden History 24, (1996), pp 255-71

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Cheshire sheet 26, 1st edition published 1881 OS 25" to 1 mile: Cheshire sheet 26.6, 3rd edition published 1910

Archival items The Arley Hall archives are held at Arley Hall and (for pre 1814 papers) at the John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester (Warburton Muniments).

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

Legal

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