

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PUSEY HOUSE

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Name:	PUSEY HOUSE
County:	Oxfordshire
District:	Vale of White Horse (District Authority)
Parish:	Pusey
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.668702 Longitude: -1.4808365 National Grid Reference: SU 36001 96786 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001101 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

A mid C18 country house with pleasure grounds and gardens, including formal work by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe from the late 1930s, surrounded by an C18 landscape park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Pusey family owned the Pusey estate and lived there from at least the C12, in a house probably sited close to the church. Having rebuilt the church in 1745, John Allen Pusey (d 1753) built the present house 1746-8, probably employing the architect John Sanderson (it was formerly attributed to John Wood of Bath (CL 1976)), and apparently laying out the park and pleasure grounds around the same time. A lake is shown by the 1760s (Rocque, 1761), and the mid C18 Chinoiserie bridge presently crossing the lake is close in style to Abraham Swan's designs for Chinoiserie-style bridges published in 1757. Mrs Brotherton's Temple also dates from this period (c 1759). From 1828 the estate was owned by Philip Pusey (1799-1855), the elder brother of Edward Pusey who was the founding father of the Oxford Movement. Philip Pusey made alterations to the gardens, constructing Italianate terraces planted with many species of plants. The garden is shown in a series of photographs of the 1890s (CL). Mr and Mrs Michael Hornby bought the site from the Pusey family in 1935, employing Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe (1869-1944) to form the long, continuous terrace along the south front, and significantly expanding the borders and planting following the Second World War. The site remains (1998) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Pusey House lies in the Vale of the White Horse, 7km east of Faringdon, adjacent to the north and east sides of the small village of Pusey. The c 30ha site is bounded to the north and west by the B4508 to Stanford in the Vale, to the south by the village lane and to the east by agricultural land. The land is largely level, sloping gently up to the south-west from the lake to the village lane and beyond, the lane being sunk below a stone retaining wall which forms the boundary along the lawn south of the lake. The setting is largely agricultural and wooded, with the village of Pusey strung out along the village lane and the B4508. The site is one of a group of landscape parks lying close to the A420 Oxford to Swindon road, including Buckland Park (qv), Hinton Manor (qv) and Kingston Bagpuize House.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach, present by the 1870s (OS 1876), enters off the B4508, 200m north-west of the House, between late C20 stone gate piers supporting iron gates. The drive curves across the west edge of the level north lawn to the north front, arriving at a gravel forecourt, enclosed on the south side by the House flanked by curved quadrant walls terminating in pedimented niches. A small flight of stone steps leads up to the central front door, overlooking the north lawn and the former cricket pitch. A second drive, formerly the main approach drive (Rocque, 1761) and now a service drive, enters 200m west of the House, giving access to the north side of the stable yard lying adjacent to the west front, where it also joins the main, north-west drive close to the House. Formerly an extension to the north-west drive gave access across agricultural land to the north-west from the A420 via the west side of Pusey Common Wood.

A further drive, now disused and partly lost, lying to the north-east, formerly gave access off the B4508, 450m north-east of the House, running through Park Plantation and across the park to the forecourt (OS 1876, 1914). This appears formerly to have extended north through Birch Plantation and The Roundabout wood to give access from the A420 at Hinton Corner (ibid).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Pusey House (John Sanderson 1746(8, listed grade II*) lies towards the south-west corner of the site, on level ground which slopes a little down to the lake to the south. The three-storey main block is flanked by two two-storey, canted wings, the whole being built of stone. The wings are flanked by quadrant walls to north and south which mask further structures adjacent to the west and east fronts. A low service wing is attached to the west front.

The two-storey, stone, former stable block (mid C18, listed grade II; now converted to domestic use) stands 25m west of the House at the west side of the stable yard, with the main door situated below a central clock and belfry set into the roof. The stable block largely bounds the east side of the former kitchen garden.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds lie south of the House, reached from the central garden door in the south front, from where views extend south across the lawn and lake to the hillside beyond the village lane. From here a short flight of stone steps leads down to the long main terrace, with a central paved section flanked by level lawns bounded to the south by a stone terrace wall (?C19, Geoffrey Jellicoe c 1936, listed grade II). Broad stone steps at the centre of the south side of the terrace lead down to a further paved area giving onto the south lawn. A border along the bottom of the stone terrace wall is edged by a gravel path, beyond which the lawn slopes smoothly down to level out by the lake side. The north side of the terrace, flanking the wings of the House, is bounded by curved, stone quadrant walls set with arched niches, at the bottom of which lies a further border. The quadrant walls, terminated by pedimented niches, are in similar style to those to the north which overlook the forecourt. During the mid to late C19 the terrace was broken by a central sunken rose garden, filled in by Jellicoe and replaced by the central paved areas and connecting steps.

A path from the east end of the terrace leads south across the lawn to the east end of the lake, where it is carried across the water by an almost flat, Chinese-style wooden bridge (probably C18 or a later copy), white-painted, with fret-work parapets. The bridge overlooks the length of the lake to the west, and to the east a narrower section of water which serpentine through the informally planted eastern pleasure grounds. The gravel path continues south through the east half of the wooded pleasure grounds, flanked by mature ornamental trees, to the stone church (c 1745, listed grade II*), built in Classical style on the site of an earlier church. From the church path two spurs lead west onto the open lawn lying south of the lake which stretches to the village lane to the south.

To the west lies the western half of the pleasure grounds, entered via a path at the south-west corner of the lawn, 200m south of the House. The path, also giving access to the icehouse lying close to the lawn, curves north-west through the wooded pleasure grounds, arriving at the west end of the lake where it is fed by a small stream. The western pleasure grounds contain a network of grass paths with vistas cut through mature plantings of trees and shrubs, together with a grove of *Quercus ilex*, in similar fashion to the layout of the late C19 (OS 1876). The path is carried across the stream by a local coral-limestone bridge (mid C18, listed grade II) with a central round arch, continuing 15m north to Mrs Brotherton's Temple (c 1759, listed grade II). The Temple, standing 150m south-west of the House and attached to the south corner of the smallest walled garden, is a small stone pavilion with a copper roof, entered by a large, east-facing semicircular arch overlooking the south lawn and lake. The path continues east from here, alongside and sheltered by the south side of the main walled garden, returning to the central steps up to the main terrace.

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PARK The largely level park lies to the north and east of the House, enclosing the north lawn. It is laid to pasture, with scattered single trees and clumps, bounded to the north by late C20 belts of trees, and to the east by Park Plantation, through which a serpentine track runs from north to south. At the southern end of the plantation the track joins a farm track from Pusey Lodge Farm to the east, which formerly continued north-west along the boundary with the eastern pleasure grounds, separated from them by a ha-ha.

An area of former parkland (OS 1911) lies adjacent to the north side of the B4508, north of the House; now incorporated within agricultural land, the remains of a belt of trees runs along the roadside.

KITCHEN GARDEN A series of stone-walled kitchen gardens lie west and south-west of the House, beyond the stable block.

REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Berkshire 4, (1924), pp 471-3 Country Life, 128 (15 September 1960), pp 553-5; 160 (23 December 1976), pp 1902-5 N Pevsner and J Sherwood, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), pp 195-6 J Brown, *The English Garden in our Time* (1986), pp 184-5

Maps J Rocque, *A topographical survey of the county of Berks ...*, 1761 C and J Greenwood, *Map of the county of Berks ...*, surveyed 1822-3, published 1824

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published c 1885 2nd edition published 1911/1914 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1912
Description written: June 1998 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 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.