

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BURGHLEY HOUSE

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Name: BURGHLEY HOUSE

District: City of Peterborough (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Barnack

District: City of Peterborough (Unitary Authority)

Parish: St. Martin's Without

County: Lincolnshire

District: South Kesteven (District Authority)

Parish: Stamford

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.636664
Longitude: -0.45573429
National Grid Reference: TF 04601 05443
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000359
Date first listed: 16-Jan-1985

Details

C19 and C20 formal gardens and pleasure grounds, developed from those originally designed by Lancelot Brown, surrounded by a park of C16 origins for which Brown provided extensive plans between 1754 and 1777.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Burghley House was built by William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer to Elizabeth I, who was created Baron Burghley in 1571. Building began in 1555 and continued for a long period, into the 1580s. Today it represents one of the most impressive C16 buildings surviving in England and has remained in the hands of the Cecil family throughout its history. William Cecil enclosed a park of c 132 acres (55ha) around his new house. He died in 1598 having completed his great work, which passed to his son Thomas, who was created first Earl of Exeter in 1605. Thomas died in 1622 and was succeeded by his eldest son William, the second Earl, during whose time the estate was surveyed by Thomas Thorpe, the survey noting that the park had increased in size to 448 acres (c 186ha). Little work is recorded on the landscape until John, the fifth Earl succeeded in 1678. He made several journeys through Europe, commissioning fine works of art, statuary and furniture for Burghley. In 1683 he turned his attention to the landscape, employing George London (d 1714) and Moses Cook to lay out elaborate formal gardens, including a west court, pond garden and terrace. The main garden areas lay to the south of the House where canals, terraces, ponds, a maze and a vineyard were being constructed in 1700 when the fifth Earl died. George London's work was completed by the planting of the mile-long double bank of limes known as Queen Anne's Avenue under the sixth Earl in 1702. Over the next fifty-two years the estate saw the succession and death of the seventh and eighth Earls, the ninth Earl, Brownlow Cecil taking

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his place at the head of the family in 1754. The surveyor John Haynes was immediately employed to record the ninth Earl's seat. His map was produced in 1755, the year after Lancelot Brown (1716-83) was first commissioned to remodel the landscape. Over the next twenty-three years Brown and the ninth Earl made sweeping changes, removing the George London gardens and creating shrubberies, a park and small lake. The tenth Earl, Henry, succeeded in 1793 and was elevated to Marquess in 1802. Between these two dates, following the Enclosure acts for the adjoining parishes, Henry greatly increased the size of the park to 1400 acres (c 583ha) and spent £4000 walling it. He also commissioned W Legg of Stamford to design the Bottle Lodges at the main entrance. Brownlow, the second Marquess, held Burghley from 1804 to 1867, during which time he entertained and spent lavishly, made changes to the gardens and planted avenues in the park. He was succeeded by his son William, the third Marquess, who made further alterations to both park and gardens and more than doubled the size of the lake before his death in 1895. His son Brownlow held the title of fourth Marquess for only three years. William, the fifth Marquess succeeded in 1898 and recreated some areas of formal garden around the House, most notably an Edwardian rose garden in front of Brown's orangery. His son David became the sixth Marquess in 1956, having achieved national and international recognition as an Olympic hurdler. David's brother Martin left England for Canada as a young man but succeeded to the title of seventh Marquess on David's death in 1981 and from him it passed to his only son Michael, the eighth and present Marquess. The site remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Burghley Park lies on the east side of the village of Stamford which sits at the point where the four counties of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire meet, c 15km north-west of Peterborough. The site covers an area of c 500ha, all enclosed by a park wall. The Great North Road (now partly the A1) runs along the western boundary, the B1443 Stamford to Thorney road bounds the park to the north and the minor county road known as Barnack Drive borders the wall to the south. The eastern boundary is formed by farmland and much of the perimeter of the park is enclosed by plantations. The ground at Burghley is general level from the south boundary to the course of Ermine Street, a Roman road running from north-west to south-east through the south park. It then falls gently to the House and the lake which crosses the centre of the park. The land rises towards the northern boundary and then falls away again towards the River Welland (which is situated outside the area here registered).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three main entrances to Burghley Park: from the north, west and south-west. The grand entrance to the west of the House enters the park off the Great North Road on the southern edge of Stamford. The grand triple-arched gateway flanked by the tall, three-storey Burghley Lodges (or Bottle Lodges) with octagonal second floors (all listed grade II) was designed by W Legg of Stamford in 1801 in the Elizabethan style. The drive runs east through the park in a gentle curve to arrive at the courtyard on the north front. The Pilsgate Lodges (listed grade II) stand at the north-east corner of the park. The two stone lodges, built in c 1840 and enlarged in 1876, stand either side of cast-iron gates which lead onto a tree-lined drive running south. On the eastern boundary, c 150m to the east of a fork in the drive, stands the Queen Elizabeth Gate (dated 1797, listed grade II). From the fork, the drive turns south-west to arrive at the stable courtyard on the east side of the House. At the southern end of the Great North Road, the late C19, two-storey stone and tile picturesque Carpenter's Lodge marks the entrance to a straight double-tree-lined drive running north-east as far as Ermine Street where the late C18 Queen Anne's Gate (listed grade II) stands. From here the drive runs north, to cross the lake over the ashlar three-arched bridge (listed grade I) designed by Lancelot Brown and erected in 1775. The bridge is ornamented with four Coade stone lions, added in 1844. The drive then turns east to join the Burghley Lodge drive up to the north front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Burghley House (listed grade I) lies in the north-east quarter of the park and is one of the largest Elizabethan mansions in the country, erected by William Cecil Lord Burghley between 1555 and 1587. It is built of Kingscliffe limestone in three storeys around a rectangular courtyard, with square corner towers topped by octagonal turrets with ogee cupolas. The entrance on the north front looks onto a semicircular forecourt enclosed by wrought-iron railings (listed grade I), the forecourt having been remodelled by Brown after he demolished the west wing of the Elizabethan house. The imposing west front is arranged in nine bays, the central gatehouse consisting of a four-storey projecting bay flanked by four tall octagonal turrets either side of the ornate Golden Gates, made by Jean Tijou in 1693. The garden front to the south was altered by Lancelot

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Brown in 1763-5 for the ninth Earl when he raised the second-storey windows to give an even skyline. Set back from the south front and projecting from the east front is the gothic Orangery (listed grade I), added by Lancelot Brown in 1756. Its eleven bays with octagonal turrets face south and south-east over the gardens. In the 1820s the architect J P Gandy-Deering was commissioned by the second Marquess to make further alterations to the courtyard within the House.

Brown is also responsible for adding the stable block (listed grade I) to the east of the House between 1756 and 1778. The Gothic-style buildings are two storeys high, of Collyweston stone, and are ranged around three sides of a courtyard. They are attached to the House by a C17 servants' wing with mullioned windows and hipped dormers.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds cover c 15ha and lie to the south and east of the House. A formal rose garden enclosed by yew hedges (late C20) stands on the south side of the Orangery, beside lawns which overlook the lake to the south and south-west. On the west lawn is a lime reputed to have been planted by Elizabeth I, with an oak and a lime planted in 1844 by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. A shrubbery, originally designed by Brown and currently (1999) being restored, runs south-east from the House to the neo-Jacobean banqueting house (listed grade I), set on a sloping lawn c 300m south-east of the House overlooking the lake. This was built by Brown as part of his master plan for the site and is framed by large cedars. To the east of the House, on the north bank of the lake are wooded walks leading to a former quarry planted as a dell. T At the eastern end of the lake, just below the dell garden, stands a boathouse by Blashfield of Stamford, added in 1871 to replace an earlier building. Nearby stands the family Mausoleum. The waterfall from this end of the lake into the dell garden beyond has been abandoned (1999).

The early formal gardens which occupied this site before Brown made his great changes lay mainly to the south of the House and are well documented, particularly by Celia Fiennes in 1699 (Morris 1947).

PARK The park at Burghley is divided into the Upper, Middle and Lower Park. Upper Park covers the southern section of the site from the boundary wall as far as the course of Ermine Street. It is now (1999) mainly under arable production with the Burghley Park Golf Club occupying the south-west corner and is enclosed by perimeter plantations, including some notable conifers. Queen Anne's Avenue, consisting of a double row of limes, runs north from the southern tip of the park, through Upper Park to the lake to focus on the south front of the House. Originally planted in 1702 by George London, the replanting of this feature was completed in 1996. The western half of Upper Park was added by Henry, tenth Earl at the end of the C18 when the park was extended to cover 1400 acres (c 583ha).

Middle Park covers the land from Ermine Street up to the lake. It is partly retained under pasture with some trees close to the lake but also contains the working buildings of the park. Dairy Farm and its associated buildings, the wood yard and the Maltings all occupy land in Middle Park, as does a pair of disused (1999) poultry houses. The serpentine lake which divides Middle Park from Lower Park was initially created by Lancelot Brown in the mid C18 out of the Great Pond which is shown by Haynes as a feature of the earlier formal landscape. Brown's lake covered c 11 acres (c 4.5ha). The lake was more than doubled in size at the end of the C18 by the tenth Earl when he expanded the park. Lower Park, the oldest part of the landscape, occupies the land from the lake to the northern boundary. It has a strong parkland character, scattered with the remains of a radial layout of formal avenues of limes and chestnuts planted from the C16 onwards. The axis of Queen Anne's Avenue continues on the north side of the House out to the north park boundary wall and is crossed by Queen Elizabeth's Avenue which runs east/west north of the House. Remains of radiating avenues survive from the western end of the lake towards the Bottle Lodges. Lower Park contains the Burghley Park Cricket Pavilion and cricket ground which sits in the north-west corner of the park, and the Burghley Horse Trials course. The remodelling of Middle and Lower Park were part of one of Lancelot Brown's biggest and most important commissions, for which he produced a master plan in 1756.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden lies c 1.5km south of the House, on the east side of Queen Anne's Avenue, and is known as High Park Gardens. The 4.6ha site is enclosed by a sunk fence and is partly walled into four compartments. These are currently (1999) uncultivated or let for nursery production. The gardens are shown in this position on the 1755 Haynes' survey although Till records that the sunken fence was not added until the end of the C18 (Garden Hist 1991).

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1899

Archival items J Haynes, Series of drawings to accompany the 1755 survey (private collection) Many of the original documents relating to Burghley House are held in a private collection.

Description written: June 2000 Amended: December 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: January 2001

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.