

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BERRY HILL

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	BERRY HILL
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Taplow
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.526028 Longitude: -0.69372510 National Grid Reference: SU 90718 81599 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000135 Date first listed: 18-Jan-1992

Details

Mid C19 pleasure grounds and a small park laid out by Robert Marnock between 1856 and 1860 around a modest country house (now gone), with extensive artificial rockwork by James Pulham.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

John Noble bought Berry Hill in 1855; he had moved out by 1871. On his arrival, the gardens, comprising shrubberies and pleasure grounds, covered an area of little more than 1.5ha. Robert Marnock (1800-89) was immediately called in to design a layout which William Robinson was to praise as a fine example of the English or natural style (The Garden 1872). By 1860 over 7ha had been planted with transplanted standard specimen trees and with shrubs and flowers. The house has been demolished and a block of flats stands in its place.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Berry Hill estate lies at the southern edge of the village of Taplow, c 3km north-east of the centre of Maidenhead. The 11ha estate occupies a long, narrow, rectangular site which runs from north to south down the south-facing Taplow Hill. It is bounded to the north by Mill Lane and beyond this the Taplow Court estate, to the south by Bath Road, to the east by Berry Hill lane, and to the west by fields which run down to the nearby River Thames. The setting is agricultural to the west and east, with the village of Taplow to the north and Maidenhead prominent in the views down to the west and south-west. The adjacent designed landscape of Taplow Court (qv) lies to the north, at the southern end of a line of contiguous designed landscapes including Cliveden (qv) and Hedsor House (qv).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the house lies directly off Berry Hill. A lodge stands at the south-east corner of the site but there was never an approach drive from it, neither does the estate cottage standing at the north-east corner of the site appear to have been associated with an entrance.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Berry Hill house, now demolished, stood half-way down the site on the eastern boundary, immediately to the south of the stables. A block of modern flats now occupies its site. A patterned brick wall borders the public road to the north of the house site.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The main focus is a c 2ha lake with gently curving banks, which lies along the western boundary of the southern part of the site. At its northern end is a small circular island, and near to this, on the western bank, is a mid C19 wooden boathouse, now derelict.

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To the north of the boathouse is an extensive area of artificial rockwork which in parts stands over 4m high. Created by James Pulham, who started work on its construction in 1859 and continued during the 1860s, it was originally planted with small shrubs and rock plants. The artificial cliff raised to hide the view of a gasworks, and the cave associated with it, survive, but the waterfalls which cascaded over the rocks, and the jet which spouted some 7m into the air, have ceased to function. A stream which feeds the lake emerges from the rockwork having been piped underground across the fields beyond.

A path, from which there were views out over pasture to the west towards the river, led north from the house to the kitchen garden. The layout of this section of the site has been altered as a result of modern development. The path continued to a woodland walk along the northern boundary where a band of ornamental planting remains. This existed before Noble bought the site but, along with other plantings on the estate, was planted up as part of his landscape improvements. Marnock's work included the levelling of a platform in the north-west corner of the site to support a small reservoir presumably associated with the water system for the rockwork.

PARK The open parkland is laid out in the form of two large paddocks lying to the north-west and south-west of the site of the house. It is planted with a variety of ornamental specimen trees. Some of Marnock's family groupings of tree species still exist although the shorter-lived shrubberies and floral embellishments which were a particular feature of the site have gone. Tree plantings, particularly of evergreens, form screens around the perimeter of the plot.

KITCHEN GARDEN Behind the house was the kitchen garden, a hedged area laid out by Edward Kemp (1817-91) c 1855 on the site of an earlier kitchen garden. The extensive range of glasshouses has gone and the original design, intended for decorative effect, has been lost.

A range of estate buildings, to which several modern houses have been added, stand beyond, to the north of the kitchen garden.

REFERENCES

The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette, (1860), p 815; (1866), pp 759-60 The Garden, (16 December 1871), pp 80-1; (6 January 1872), pp 143-5 B Elliott, Victorian Gardens (1986), p 169 N Pevsner and E Williamson, The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire (1994), p 692

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875

Archival items Sale particulars, 1852 (Buckinghamshire Record Office) Sale particulars, 1855 (Buckinghamshire Record Office)

Description written: February 1999 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: June 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.