

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE HAZELLS

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Name:	THE HAZELLS
District:	Central Bedfordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Sandy
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.134941 Longitude: -0.26240139 National Grid Reference: TL 19024 49939 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000572 Date first listed: 30-Nov-1986

Details

A country house with C18/C19 formal and woodland gardens, surrounded by a late C18 landscape park, enlarged by Humphry Repton in 1791-2, following work by Nathaniel Richmond c 1760s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Robert Britten bought the former Chicksands Priory grange of Hasells in 1634, and his grandson, Baron Brittain, rebuilt Hasells c 1698. After financial difficulties he sold the house in 1721 to Heylock Kingsley who added two projecting wings to the house. During the 1720s Kingsley bought and enclosed land around the house to create formal gardens and terraces to enhance the south front. He died in 1749, and in 1761 the estate passed to his daughter Elizabeth and her husband William Pym who employed Nathaniel Richmond (fl 1763-85) during the 1760s to create a park west of the old course of the road to Everton; he also added a third walled garden. Francis Pym (1756-1833) inherited the estate from William in 1788, and in 1791 consulted Humphry Repton about remodelling the garden and park. Repton produced a Red Book for the estate, still extant in private ownership, with suggestions for improvements and new features, a number of which were carried out. In 1792 the old road from Everton to Sandy was stopped up, the park extended east as far as the new road and a new drive system created. The house was remodelled at this time. Francis' son, also Francis (1790-1860) made minor alterations to the estate, including building Hazells Hall Farm within the park, and creating a serpentine walk in Lord's Wood. The house was sold in 1981 and subdivided into separate dwellings.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Hazells lies 1.5km east of Sandy and 13km east of Bedford, on the western edge of the low hills called the Greensand Ridge. The 70ha site is bounded to the south and east by the road from Everton to Sandy, and to the north and west by agricultural land, with a sharp drop down the scarp along the west boundary. The land is undulating to the south-west, with a plateau on which the house and garden are sited together with the east and north sections of the park. The setting is agricultural and wooded, with the level Sandy Heath to the east, while from the west boundary there are elevated panoramic views of the flat plain east of Bedford, together with late C20 extensions to Sandy.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance, which lies 600m south of the house on the south boundary of the estate, off the Everton to Sandy road, was moved during the conversion of the house in the 1980s to a point 100m north-east from the late C18 entrance. The C18 entrance, now disused, is marked by Hasells Lodge (c 1850s, listed grade II), a single-

storey, thatched, prefabricated cottage in picturesque style, brought back from Russia following use by the British army during the Crimean War (listed building description). The course of the original (1792) drive curves north-east from the road to join the new drive 50m north-west of the new entrance, from where the drive curves and undulates northwards across the park, with a view west towards the lower Bedford Plain along the valley c 300m south of the house. The drive runs along the east edge of the garden, passing some 50m from the east, entrance front of the house, before returning west and south to arrive at the portico where, before the 1980s conversion, the drive arrived directly at the adjacent carriage sweep. The north drive enters 750m north-east of the house, off the same road, past the single-storey ironstone Stone Lodge (designed Humphry Repton 1791, built c 1800, listed grade II), built in picturesque style with a thatched roof and doorway canopy. The drive, no longer used, is largely grassed over, but its course is still visible, curving south-west through the park to the east front of the house. A spur west off the north drive, just north of the house, gives access to the stable courtyard on the north side of the house and the service court on the west side.

Repton's proposals regarding the siting of the main north and south drives, as seen on the Red Book plan, were carried out, but his suggested entrance lodges to the south, linked by screen walls, and 'covered from the Park by a Plantation in which they would be embosomed' were not implemented. His advice however regarding the construction of the north lodge, now Stone Lodge, was followed.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Hazells Hall (1720s, remodelled 1790s, listed grade II*) lies close to the centre of the west boundary of the site, a two-storey building of red brick dressed with stone. The two main fronts face east and south, built in the 1720s and rebuilt and refaced in the 1790s. The east, entrance front, is relatively plain, with a C19 classical portico overlooking the flat park to the east boundary belt. The longer, south, garden front, embellished with a central pediment framing a coat of arms in stone, overlooks the garden and valley in the southern park and is visible from the south drive as it approaches the house past the garden. The three-storey west wing of the 1790s overlooks an enclosed gravelled courtyard, bounded to the west by one of the garden walls and to the south by the Summerhouse, with a single-storey, brick, hexagonal game larder at the centre. The stables and the two-storey brick coach house of c 1800, with a central carriage arch and clock tower above, lie on the north side of the house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie south and south-west of the house and consist of four parallel features running north to south. They are composed of the Yew Walk, with to the west the Terrace and the walled gardens and enclosed rectangular lawn south of these, while to the east lies the open south lawn. The Yew Walk is terminated at its north end by the Summerhouse, a brick and tiled building entered from the east through a large glazed doorway with a broad fanlight, which gives access to the central of the three walled gardens via its west side and a set of steps down to the garden. The Summerhouse is the sole remaining section of a range of buildings, mainly glasshouses, which ran along the wall joining the south-west corner of the house (OS 2nd edition map published 1901).

The Yew Walk continues south from the lawn on the south front of the Summerhouse as an enclosed woodland path with flanking mature yews, kept as a very tall, formal clipped hedge before World War II. The path is crossed at right angles at the south end of the southernmost walled garden by a broad, tree-lined grass path giving access from the Terrace to the west and the open south lawn to the east. The Walk curves gently south with occasional views of the park, returning north to arrive at a small, stone-faced rustic pavilion with a Gothic entrance arch facing south over the park and Lord's Wood, with views west across the Bedford Plain. A door in the back wall of the pavilion provides access through to its north front, open on the north side, in classical style with wooden pillars and seats around the walls. From here the straight, 1720s grass Terrace opens up, running north flanked by an avenue of mainly lime trees. Beyond to the east is a large lawn enclosed by a holly hedge and, further north, the southernmost walled garden; to the west is a steep drop down the hillside, the view framed by a low holly hedge. A white-painted wooden gazebo terminates the north end of the Terrace. It is open to the south, enclosing a seat, and predates Repton's involvement at the site.

Repton, in 1791, saw the Terrace as 'a frame to an elegant picture', and considered it 'an object of such comfort and convenience that it would be unpardonable to destroy it entirely', particularly if only for reasons of taste (Red Book, quoted in Collett-White 1983). He provided the designs for enhancing the existing south pavilion with Gothic and classical facades.

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The south lawn is largely informal, bounded to the east and south by an iron fence, with several large specimen trees and an avenue of ornamental cherry trees (late C20) on an axis with the south front of the house. The lawn appears to have been extended between 1882 and 1901 (OS) from a considerably smaller, formally laid out enclosed area south of the house, taking in an area of previously open park. Remains of the boundary wall at the north end of this area, close to the house, exist in the form of low brick walls, particularly a semicircular wall enclosing a tree trunk at the south-west corner.

PARK The park surrounds the house to the north, east and south, and is largely pasture, with clumps and specimen trees, bounded by woodland, the whole principally laid out by Repton. A particular feature is the large, old sweet chestnut trees scattered throughout. Lord's Wood to the south, shown in slightly different form on an undated, pre-enclosure, map of c 1790, contains an ornamental serpentine walk created in the mid C19 by Francis Pym II. The entrance to the wood off the Everton to Sandy road, at the south end of the estate, is marked by Lord's Wood Lodge, a brick and tile two-storey building of 1877. From here a track curves north through the wood to meet the serpentine walk.

Whilst working on Lord's Wood in the mid C19, Francis Pym II also built Hazells Hall Farm (mid C19, listed grade II, then known as Park Farm), depicted in a cartouche on the 1855 estate plan. In the late C19 Francis Pym III planted Park Plantation, the square block of woodland 200m south-east of the house which is crossed by rides at right angles. Everton Park house and its surrounding garden, built in the 1960s, lie within the park on the northern boundary.

Until 1792 the course of the Everton to Sandy road ran along the east edge of the park as laid out by Nathaniel Richmond, and therefore south-west to north-east through the centre of what is now park (pre-enclosure map c 1790). The hedged enclosures covering the current east side of the park were drawn into the existing the park when it was doubled in size by Repton through the moving of the road eastwards to its current position. The new drive system was contemporary with this enlargement, and the old straight drive east of the house was realigned to take account of Park Farm. Repton considered it better to construct a screen of trees on the east boundary 'because an attempt to let in a distant flat country is never picturesque' (Red Book, quoted in Collett-White 1983).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden, divided into three sections, lies west and south-west of the house, surrounded by red-brick walls (C18) with stone copings, the compartments being connected by doors in the brick dividing walls. Each section is now largely laid to lawn, the northern two additionally containing flower beds and shrubs, the central one being overlooked by the west front of the Summerhouse. The northern section contained glasshouses and potting sheds until the subdivision of the house in the 1980s.

REFERENCES

D Stroud, Humphry Repton (1962), p 53 G Carter, P Goode and K Laurie, Humphry Repton (1982), p 147 J Collett-White, Hasells Hall, Sandy (1983) J Collett-White (ed), Inventories of Bedfordshire Country Houses, 1714-1830, (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society 1995), pp 73-80

Maps Enclosure map for Sandy parish, 1799 (Bedfordshire Record Office) Hasells Estate as settled 1816 & 1843 (Bedfordshire Record Office) Map of an Estate in the Parish of Sandy ... belonging to Francis Pym, 1833 (Bedfordshire Record Office) Plan of the Hasells Estate belonging to Francis Pym, 1855 (Bedfordshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881 2nd edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1926 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1880

Description written: September 1997 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: May 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.