

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BLACKDOWN PARK

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Name:	BLACKDOWN PARK
County:	West Sussex
District:	Chichester (District Authority)
Parish:	Lurgashall
National park:	SOUTH DOWNS
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.050059 Longitude: -0.69477505 National Grid Reference: SU9158628667 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001207 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

An early to mid C19 garden, with surviving C18 and possibly earlier features and with early C20 additions, set within mid C19 parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The present house appears to date from 1640 when an estate at Blackdown was owned by the Yalden or Yaldwyn family, who were iron-masters. William Yaldwyn is recorded as becoming MP for Midhurst in 1659. The estate remained in the family until sold in 1840 to James Henry. After his death it was acquired by Sir Frederick Phillipson-Stow whose son, Sir Elliot, succeeded him in 1908. Blackdown remained in the family until the mid C20. A sale of the estate farmland took place in 1950 and in the 1980s the buildings of Blackdown Farm were converted to dwellings. Blackdown House and the surrounding gardens changed hands again in 1997 and was re-named Blackdown Park. The whole estate remains (1997) in several private ownerships.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Blackdown Park lies c 4km south-south-west of Haslemere, midway between the villages of Fernhurst, to the west on the A286 and Northchapel, to the east on the A283. The registered site comprises c 7ha of formal and ornamental gardens around Blackdown Park and within Blackdown Copse and c 47ha of surrounding parkland with several small woods.

The site lies on the lower, south-facing slopes of Black Down, a high sandstone promontory which projects southwards, affording panoramic views over the Rother valley to the South Downs. On its eastern side the parkland is cut by a shallow, south-east-running stream valley.

A narrow lane running west to east beneath the steeply rising wooded slopes of Black Down forms the site's northern boundary. To the west, agricultural fencing and boundary tree belts enclose the site from the wooded farmland beyond while to the south and south-east the parkland merges into farmland with hedges and copses. A belt of pasture and the buildings of Blackdown Farm abut the eastern boundary with woodland on rising ground beyond.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is entered from the lane to the north, through stone gate piers. The drive sweeps south-eastwards down the slope of parkland before swinging westwards to approach the gravelled forecourt on the south, principal front of the house. A route in from the north is shown as a constant feature on maps since the late C18, although in 1841 (Tithe map of Lodsworth), it followed a course hard-up against the east edge of the garden. J C Loudon arrived from this northerly direction on his visit in 1829. At the point of its westward swing to the house, a branch from this drive continues south-eastwards, becoming a track through the farmyard of Blackdown Farm before following a stone-surfaced straight course east of the stream towards a lodge, built by 1840 (Tithe map of Lurgashall), in the south-east corner. Gardner and Gream's map of 1795 and the OS Old Series, published 1813, show a further drive from the south, now gone, which ran up the valley on the west side of the stream.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Blackdown Park (listed grade II*) lies on the south-facing slope of Black Down, in a fold created by a knoll which rises steeply immediately from the forecourt on the south front and which largely encloses the house from the park. The nucleus of the house, which is constructed of sandstone with a C20 tiled roof, was probably built by William Yaldwin (incised panel over the entrance arch) in 1640. It consisted in plan of a simple square with outbuildings on the west side in the form of a south-facing open court. Alterations were made in 1844-6 by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) in which the house was extended by the addition of wings at both the south-east corner and along the west elevation (OS 1st edition 1875; Nairn and Pevsner 1965). Further additions were made in 1891 in which a large extension to the west wing was built on the site of the outbuildings, the southern parts of these being demolished at the same time (OS 1912). The house is currently (1997) undergoing restoration and repair.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The ornamental gardens to Blackdown Park are laid out in a narrow band of terraces on slopes north of the house and on the knoll to the south. From the south forecourt, the grass knoll rises steeply in a broad band of five shallow terraces, connected by central, short flights of stone steps. The terraces, now framed by trees and shrubs, were described by Loudon in 1829 as lined by 'an avenue of very old silver firs' and leading to a prospect house. The firs, now (1997) gone, were still recorded on the OS 3rd edition map published in 1912, while the prospect house, shown on the 1841 Tithe map, had apparently gone by 1875 (OS 1st edition). The summit of the knoll is now crowned by an open, grassy platform, offering extensive distant views; paths from it lead into an informal garden of fine mature exotic and native trees (with some mid/late C20 replacements) underplanted with rhododendrons and open glades and with several pools, added in the late C19 or early C20, in the south-west corner. The whole garden, pear-shaped in plan, is enclosed from the park within a wall, some 1.5m high and largely of stone but with brick sections on the east side. This walled garden is shown established, with paths and a number of tree clumps, on the Tithe map of 1841.

Some 25m east of the south forecourt of the house, on the drive entering from the east, the garden wall terminates in a pair of stone gate piers and wrought-iron gates. North of the drive, a gravelled path from the forecourt leads, on the east front, through a sunken terraced garden (established by 1875, OS 1st edition), enclosed on its east side by a bastion wall and by balustrading. From the north front of the house, the lawn rises in two terraces, the upper one containing a fountain and basin in 1875 (gone by 1912, OS 3rd edition). A detached conservatory, built by 1875, is sited in the north-west corner of the terraces (15m from the house). Beyond the terraces the lawn follows a gentle upward slope, framed by a path on each side and enclosing shrubbery (the shrubbery bank on the east side marking the parish boundary). At the top of the slope are two further grass terraces. From the north-east corner of the upper one, a former tennis court, a path leads northwards through a bank of rockwork into a stream garden, enclosed by shrubbery and with a rockwork watercourse and pool. Both the terraces and the stream garden, laid out between 1895 and 1912 (OS 2nd and 3rd editions), were the sites of ponds in the early C19 (OS Old Series, published 1813). A remnant of the lower pond survives (1997) below the west side of the tennis court. The stream garden is terminated at the north end by the dam of the topmost pond, which survives from the three in 1841. The pond is enclosed to the north by a steep grassed bank with ornamental shrubbery and is overlooked by a small pumphouse, linked to the pond by a series of rocky waterfalls. West of the tennis court terrace and its pond (100m north-west of the house) is a small brick-built dovecote with a tile roof, shown as part of a more extensive building on the OS 1st edition of 1875. It is built on the site of the former kitchen garden,

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shown laid out in four quartiles on the Tithe map of 1841. There is a brick-built icehouse in the bank, c 25m to the south-east of the dovecote.

PARK The parkland lies to the west, east and south-east of the ornamental gardens. The western area contains only two or three parkland trees and is laid to pasture. It is not shown as parkland until 1896 (OS 2nd edition) and was not extensively planted then, only a few conifers having been planted by 1912 (OS 3rd edition).

The parkland east and south-east of the gardens, either side of the stream valley, contains three ponds, all in existence in 1840 (Tithe map). Tree cover consists of a scatter of individual trees and clumps, including several exotic conifers, surviving from more extensive late C19 clumps, in the northern area around the entrance drive to the house. This parkland is shown established on the OS 1st edition of 1875 and appears to have been laid out between 1842 and 1875 and, as with that to the west of the house, does not appear to have been extensively planted. The site of surviving parkland trees to the east of Little Warren wood was still enclosed as a wood in 1840 (Tithe map). The drive north from the lodge, planted in sections with avenue trees in the late C20, also does not appear to have been planted as an avenue previously (OS 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions).

Blackdown Copse, in the north-east corner of the site, is partly planted as an ornamental, exotic garden. The wood is shown on Greenwood's map surveyed 1823-4 and by 1875 already contained groups of conifers and a path system, one branch of which connected buildings in the north-east corner of the wood (now, 1997, converted to dwellings) with garden buildings on the north side of Blackdown Park.

REFERENCES

Gardener's Magazine 5, (1829), pp 579-81 D G C Elwes, A History of the Castles, Mansions and Manors of Western Sussex (1876), p 141 Victoria History of the County of Sussex IV, (1953), pp 72-3 I Nairn and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Sussex (1965), p 106 Sussex Archaeological Collections 105, (1967), p 46

Maps W Gardner and T Gream, A Topographical Map of the County of Sussex ..., 1" to 1 mile, published 1795 C and J Greenwood, Map of the County of Sussex from an actual survey ..., 1" to 1 mile, surveyed 1823(4 Tithe map for Lodsworth parish, 1841 (West Sussex Record Office) Tithe map for Lurgashall parish, 1840 (West Sussex Record Office)

OS Old Series, 1" to 1mile, published 1813 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1874-8 2nd edition published 1895 3rd edition published 1913 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1875 2nd edition published 1895 3rd edition published 1912

Archival items Sale catalogue for Blackdown Estate, 1950 (E460), (West Sussex Record Office) Photographs of house, c 1870s (E460), (West Sussex Record Office) S H Grimm, Mr Yalding's house on Blackdown nr Farnhurst, (Add Mss 5675 fos 1, 2 & 5; 7, 4 & 6), (British Museum) Newspaper article, October 1969 (copy on EH file)

Description written: July 1997 Amended: January 2000 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: June 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.