

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

PLYMPTON HOUSE

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

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**PLYMPTON HOUSE**

Name:	PLYMPTON HOUSE
District:	City of Plymouth (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.385498 Longitude: -4.0459673 National Grid Reference: SX 54645 55958 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001267 Date first listed: 22-Feb-1993

## Details

An early C18 garden forming the setting of a town house.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site of Plympton House was assembled over a period of years in the late C17 by Sir George Treby (1643-1700), a lawyer who was appointed Lord Chief Justice in 1689. Existing buildings on the site were cleared, and in the last years of the C17 Sir George began to build a new house. Following his death in 1700, his son, also George (1684-1741), continued the work, and the House was completed c 1720. In the mid C18 Nicholas Pococke noted Plympton as 'a good house and gardens' (Pearce Chope 1967). It was inherited by George II's eldest son, and then passed to his younger brother, Colonel George Hele Treby, who died a bachelor and intestate. Plympton subsequently passed to Mrs Ourry, a daughter of the second George Treby, and was later inherited by her son Paul, who assumed the name of Treby in 1785. On his death in 1830 the House was sold to Mr Copleston Lopes Radcliffe, whose son in turn sold it, in 1835, to Dr Charles Aldridge, for use as a private lunatic asylum. In 1850 William White described Plympton as 'a handsome mansion with tasteful grounds'. The property was acquired by the Roman Catholic Church in the C20, and remains in institutional use today (1999).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Plympton House stands to the north-east of the parish church and remains of Plympton Castle in the village of Plympton, some 5.5km east of Plymouth. The c 3ha site comprises formal gardens around the House, and is bounded by brick walls adjoining George Lane to the west, Longcause to the south, and the Ridgeway to the north, while to the east a field separates it from houses on Wain Park. The site rises gently to the north-east, while from the summit of the mount south-west of the House there are views down into the village, and particularly south-west across the remains of Plympton Castle and south to the church tower.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Plympton House is approached from Longcause to the south. Two pairs of tall stone gate piers (listed grade II) set in a concave red-brick boundary wall with up-swept coping (listed grade II) are surmounted by stone heraldic beasts (one severely damaged, 1992). The central pair of gate piers support simple wrought-iron gates which give access to the south drive. This follows an S-shaped course across the south lawn to reach stone steps below the south facade of the House. A back drive enters the site from George Lane, passing the remains of the early C18 stables and other outbuildings to reach the west side of the House.

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**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Plympton House (listed grade I) was begun in the late C17 by Sir George Treby to the design of an unknown architect, and was completed c 1715-20 by his son. Accounts for 1720 refer to William Veale as the mason then working on the House. The principal or south facade is of Portland stone and comprises two storeys above a basement. A central pediment is ornamented with a carved coat of arms, and the facade is articulated by rusticated quoins. Due to the lie of the land, the basement storey is exposed to view on the west side of the building, which is constructed in brick with stone quoins and segment-headed windows. Externally the House is largely unaltered since the early C18, except for the construction of a late C20 east wing.

The early C18 stables stand to the north-west of the House, and formerly contained an early C18 tiled dairy (CL 1933). To the north-west there are further walled enclosures and courts, one of which formerly served as a wood yard (ibid).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** Early C18 walled garden enclosures surround the House, and the rectangular plot is divided into two unequal halves by the service drive and the House. The main garden lies below the south facade of the House and is of about the same width as the building. It runs down to the principal entrance on Longcause. West of it, and parallel to it, lies the kitchen garden, between the north end of which and the south elevation of the stables is the Mount Garden. To the north of the House is a court, set into rising ground, which is laid down to grass. Parallel to the west facade of the House, and separated from it by a brick wall, is a narrow walk which extends the length of the kitchen garden, from which it is screened by a second high brick wall (listed grade II). At the north end of this walk a gate leads into the north-east corner of the Mount Garden which lies to the south-west of the House and to the north of the kitchen garden. This walled enclosure is dominated by a large mount c 3.5m high, which occupies most of the area. The south face of the north wall of the Mount Garden is constructed with recessed arcading for espaliered fruit trees.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The walled kitchen garden lies to the south-west of the House and to the south of the Mount Garden. The rectangular area with its perimeter walk was originally subdivided into three sections by two internal walls running from east to west across it. The kitchen garden walls contain further recessed arcading for fruit trees. The north wall has been demolished. The present wall which screens the garden from George Lane is a late C20 reconstruction, necessitated by widening of the road beyond.

#### REFERENCES

T Risdon, *The Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon* (1811), p 394 W White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire* (1850), p 556 *Country Life*, 74 (12 August 1933), pp 146-51 J Broking Rowe, *A History of Plympton Earle* (nd) R Pearce Chope (ed), *Early Tours in Devon and Cornwall* (1967 edn), p 187 T Gray, *The Garden History of Devon An Illustrated Guide to Sources* (1995), pp 178-9

Maps Tithe map for Plympton St Maurice parish, 1843 (Devon Record Office)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1866 2nd edition revised 1905, published 1906

Archival items Treby family papers, including diaries and estate records are held at the West Devon Record Office (864).  
Photograph c 1900 (West Country Studies Library)

Description written: August 1999 Amended: October 1999 Register Inspector: JML Edited: July 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.