

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WOOLSINGTON PARK

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Name:	WOOLSINGTON PARK
District:	Newcastle upon Tyne (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Woolsington
label.localisation:	Latitude: 55.026400 Longitude: -1.6875731 National Grid Reference: NZ 20071 70252 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001322 Date first listed: 18-Nov-1994

Details

A late C18/early C19 landscape park and pleasure grounds providing the setting for a C17 and later country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

John Robertson's map (1727) shows a formal garden to the south and east of the late C17 Woolsington Hall. A central path ran from the Hall past formal beds to a pair of gates on the south boundary of the garden, which projected slightly into a field to the south which was enclosed by a line of trees. West the Hall stood a grove of trees, with an orchard of fruit trees planted to the north-east in a kitchen garden. Armstrong (1769) shows the Hall approached from the west, standing within a compact, rectangular enclosure with no parkland indicated.

By the early C19 (Plan of Woolsington Township) wings had been added to the Hall which stood at the southern edge of a belt of pleasure ground, part of a landscape park laid out during the late C18 or early C19. At that time the Hall overlooked the park, which was planted with clumps of trees and enclosed by a perimeter belt of trees, and led south to a lake, formed from the Ouse Burn. Since then the landscape has been little altered (1999), with the exception of a C20 development of houses which has been inserted at the south-west corner of the park, extending north along the west boundary.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Woolsington Hall stands just beyond the north-west edge of Newcastle upon Tyne's outer housing estates, west of Gosforth, at the south-east boundary of Newcastle Airport. The c 120ha site is bounded largely by agricultural land, with the south-west boundary marked by C20 housing occupying the former south-west corner of the parkland, and beyond this the A696 Ponteland Road which runs through the village of Woolsington. The north boundary and the remains of the C19 west boundary are marked by Middle Drive which forks off the A696 900m south-west of the Hall.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES At the southern tip of the park the south drive enters off Ponteland Road, 1.3km south of the Hall. The entrance is marked by a lodge, accompanied by a pair of early C19 gate piers and walls (listed grade II), through which the main drive leads directly north, across the centre of the park, to approach the south front of the Hall. There is also a pair of cast-iron gas lamps from the early C19 (listed grade II). A longer route was provided by a ride which led through South Lodge Plantation, across a stone bridge over the waterfall at the east end of the lake, along the eastern edge of the park, through into the pleasure grounds east of the Hall (Plan of Woolsington Township).

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A second lodge, Bee Croft, stands outside the area here registered, to the north of Woolsington Bridge, 900m south-west of the Hall, where the A696 forks on its way northwards, the eastern branch, Middle Drive, forming the western boundary of the park before turning due east to form the northern boundary.

A further entrance, now the main entrance, lies 100m to the north-west of the Hall, between it and the kitchen garden.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Woolsington Hall (listed grade II*) stands at the northern end of the site and possibly occupies the site of the medieval village of Wulsingtona. The Hall dates from the late C17, and may have been built by the Errington family of Ponteland. In 1748 it was bought by Mathew Bell. The wings are additions of the late C18 and early C19, John Dobson having worked on improvements in 1828. To the north-east is an early C19 wing (listed grade II), incorporated into the Hall. Stables and a coach house (late C19, listed grade II) stand to the north of the Hall.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the east of the Hall, and also facing south, is an orangery (listed grade II) dated 1797 on a rainwater head. Lawns below the south front are separated from the park by a ha-ha; on them stands a revolving summerhouse (early/mid C20). This is the site of gardens shown on John Robertson's map of 1727, which shows a formal scheme to the south and east of the Hall. Mature trees now form screens to the west and east of the south lawn.

The main area of pleasure grounds lies to the west of the Hall, a gravelled walk passing through a low ornamental fence into the formal gardens which lie to the south of the kitchen garden. A long walk runs parallel to the kitchen garden wall, at the eastern end of which is a small paved garden. At the centre of the garden, box hedges trace a pattern of formal beds, the focus of which is an iron-work rose-arbour and circular seat. Some of the decorative ironwork fences which divided up the garden survive, but the sundial shown on the 1st edition OS map of 1861 has gone. The south-west corner of the garden area is occupied by a tennis court and accompanying pavilion put in presumably early this (C20) century and probably contemporary with the adjacent area of rockwork.

PARK The park, the layout of which remains much as in the early C19 (Plan of Woolsington Township), is encircled by a broad shelter belt through which run the west and east rides. A strip of housing has encroached into the western shelter belt, and a small housing estate now occupies the south-west corner of the site. The park, now partly under arable cultivation, is planted with a number of large clumps. It contains several standing stones in the eastern half.

A lake lying 800m south of the Hall, and at least in part stone-edged, divides the southern third of the park from the northern two-thirds. The feature is formed by the damming of the Ouse Burn which runs from west to east across the site, from Woolsington Bridge to the weir and waterfall which are located some 900m south-east of the Hall in the eastern shelter belt, at the north end of South Lodge Plantation,. At the centre-point of the lake, where it is crossed by the line of the south drive, is the site of a boathouse. Some 150m to the north-east of the dam is a Bath House, and 100m to the east of this structure is the site of the icehouse.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen garden stands 150m west of the Hall, set within a plantation. At the centre of the garden is an artesian well, pool and pump, and a number of trained fruit trees survive. A range of glass lines the north wall, on the outer, north side of which is a row of bothies and potting sheds; a gardener's house stands just outside the north-east corner of the garden.

REFERENCES

W Hutchinson, *A View of Northumberland ... anno 1776 (1778)* E Mackenzie, *View of the County of Northumberland (1825)*
Dodds, *History of Northumberland (1930)* A Guide to the Historic Parks and Gardens of Tyne and Wear, (Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team 1995), pp 21-2

Maps J Robertson, *A Plan ... of Woolsington, 1727* (Northumberland Record Office) *Plan of Woolsington Estate, 1744* (private collection) Armstrong, *A Plan of Northumberland, 1769* (Northumberland Record Office) *Plan of Woolsington Township, early C19* (Northumberland Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1861 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1897

Description written: November 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: September 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.