

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

ORCHARDS

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Name: ORCHARDS

County: Surrey

District: Waverley (District Authority)

Parish: Bramley

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.180185
Longitude: -0.58000931
National Grid Reference: SU 99351 43286
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1001174
Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

An example of a late C19 house and garden in the Surrey vernacular style, resulting from a collaboration between Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site of Orchards, then heathy woodland with fields to the north c 1.2km north-east of Munstead Wood (qv), was purchased in early 1897 by Mr and Mrs (later Sir William and Lady) Chance, he being a successful QC with a deep-rooted desire to live in the country in a self-sufficient and gently philanthropic way, and she being a cousin of Lytton Strachey, a talented sculptress, and a believer in the Arts and Crafts Movement. The architect Halsey Ricardo had been commissioned to design a house, his brief including a north light for Julia's studio and a sunny aspect for William's writing room but his design did not meet with their approval. Walking to the site from Godalming station, the Chances saw 'a house [Munstead Wood] nearing completion, and on the top of a ladder a portly figure giving directions to some workmen. The house was a revelation of unimagined beauty and charm' (Julia Chance, quoted in Brown 1982). Miss Jekyll (1843-1932) encouraged them to change architects and employ Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), which they did. During its three-year gestation, in a workshop set aside for him at Munstead Wood, Lutyens 'used up yards of tracing paper' (Festing 1994). Lutyens' brief was to design a house like Munstead Wood but larger and a little grander and conditioned by its site, in the same tradition of Surrey picturesque, the result being, according to Christopher Hussey, 'a symphony of local materials, conducted by an artist, for artists' (quoted in Festing 1994).

Miss Jekyll was a strong influence not only on the basic use of the site for its light and views but also on the layout of the garden. Her first signed full-length article in *Country Life* in 1901 was on the building of Orchards. The site remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Orchards is situated 2km south-east of Godalming, on Munstead Heath Road which runs from south-west to north-east linking the settlements of Munstead Heath and Shalford. The c 6ha site comprises formal gardens around the house, merging into woodland to the west and south, with meadows to the north-east. The site is enclosed by wire fencing. Miss Jekyll described the setting thus:

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On the sandy soil of the west Surrey hills, where one of their many valley-folds runs up to the edge of a half-mile wide, well-wooded and sheltered plateau, is this newly built house. The twenty-six acres of land on which it stands are for the most part of open forest character, with groups of well grown oaks ... Eastward is an open view towards Dorking and Leith Hill over a rough field, at whose further end the stone for the house has been quarried. (CL 1901).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is entered on the west side by a short drive from Munstead Heath Road, passing the gardener's cottage and a group of garages on the north side. The drive enters the courtyard under a timber arch to approach the main entrance in the south-east wing. Immediately to the north of the drive a second arch leads through the projecting north-east wing to the stable yard.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Orchards (listed grade I) was designed by Edwin Lutyens for Sir William and Lady Chance and built 1897-1900, with alterations in 1909 and 1914. It is a mainly two-storey building on a quadrangle plan with a large inner courtyard, built of coursed sandstone blocks quarried on the site with tile-on-edge decoration, some tile-hung gables, plain tiled roofs, and brick chimney stacks. The north wing was built as Julia Chance's studio and is linked to the main house by a single-storey arched cloister which forms the west side of the quadrangle. The two-storey projecting north-east wing was formerly the stables; it has recently (1990s) been converted to a concert room. A loggia at the south-east corner, accessed from the dining room, was designed to take advantage of the fine views east over the Thorncombe valley.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The house is surrounded to the west and south by oak, beech, holly, and hazel woodland, with an understorey of camellias and rhododendrons and a ground flora of bluebells. From the entrance drive a gravelled footpath runs around the west side of the house, passing a rectangular stone sunken area with upright yews at each corner, probably added in the 1930s. At the south-west corner of the house a semicircular brick feature, backed by a yew hedge, faces east along the south terrace. Beyond the sunken garden and terrace the lawns merge into a fringe of rhododendrons and woodland. The terrace provides a view east over the Dutch Garden to the Thorncombe valley and the North Downs beyond. At the eastern end of the terrace is the small loggia courtyard, surfaced in herringbone brickwork and areas of small pieces of Bargate stone, from which steps lead down to the continuation of the gravel terrace. East of the loggia courtyard and to the north of the path is the rectangular Dutch Garden (listed grade II), enclosed by a 2m high yew hedge. The Garden is paved in stone slabs and areas of herringbone brickwork, the design using semicircles to create steps and seating areas. At its northern end are alcoves and a water basin (listed grade II), built of terracotta tiles with Portland stone trimmings and a lion-head water spout designed by Julia Chance. Within the garden are two rows of large, clipped topiary yews, and rose beds edged with lavender. Lutyens' design sketches for the Dutch Garden and the gateway and flanking topiary peacocks (which no longer exist) still survive (RIBA). To the south of the gravel path is the former shrub garden.

East of the Dutch Garden is a level lawn enclosed by the brick wall of the kitchen garden to the north, and to the east by a double yew hedge between which a path, edged to the west by a flower border, runs north through a large stone and tile-on-edge gateway to the ornamental kitchen garden. East of this path the former croquet lawn (plan, Weaver 1913), with Lutyens-style garden seats and large terracotta urns, gives views to the north-east over a low stone wall and a meadow. Further east, hedged enclosures contain a swimming pool surrounded by palms in pots and ornamental planting and tennis courts.

At the eastern end of the meadow is the quarry from which the building stone was dug; this is now fenced and provides a wildlife sanctuary. It was planted by Lady Chance, guided by Gertrude Jekyll. A mown path through the meadow is part of a circuit around the site that runs through the indigenous woodland to the west of the house, which was reduced by the storms of 1987 and 1990, and encompasses another meadow area beyond the woodland south of the house, where new planting of ornamental trees is underway (1999).

The planting at Orchards was a collaboration between Miss Jekyll and Lady Chance; in her article in *Country Life* (1901), Miss Jekyll comments that Mrs Chance, 'though not much of a practical gardener before settling at Orchards ... has at once apprehended the value of the best ways of gardening'.

KITCHEN GARDEN The c 0.25ha kitchen garden lies c 20m north-east of the house, beyond a 2m high beech hedge, and north of the Dutch Garden. The garden is enclosed by ornamental brick walls (listed grade II) with tile coping and is entered from the south through a large stone gateway. The garden is subdivided into quarters by hoggin paths edged by 3m wide herbaceous

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borders containing posts and chains for lines of climbing and rambler roses. At the centre of the garden is a stone-edged dipping well, also surrounded by roses on chains. Each quarter of the kitchen garden is now mown lawn, in the centre of which is a large terracotta pot holding a clipped standard evergreen tree. Originally the garden produced fruit and vegetables for the house, screened by flower beds adjacent to the paths. On its eastern boundary the garden is enclosed by a 2m high raised walkway, reached by steps at the north and south ends. The walkway allows views to the east over an area of the garden now (late C20) used for growing fruit and vegetables, and where poultry and animals are kept.

North of the kitchen garden is a further enclosed garden, lying east of what was the head gardener's cottage. Some of the original greenhouses still remain in use on the north wall (listed grade II), as does the apple store (listed grade II with the kitchen garden walls) in the south-east corner, which was designed to match the adjoining garden walls.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 10 (31 August 1901), pp 272-9; 23 (11 April 1908), pp 522-31 L Weaver, Houses and Gardens by E L Lutyens (1913, repr 1998), pp 23-34 G Jekyll, Garden Ornament (1918, repr 1994), pp 146, 293, 396-7, 424 F Jekyll, Gertrude Jekyll A Memoir (1935), pp 160-3 J Brown, Gardens of a Golden Afternoon (1982), pp 56-8, 163 J Brown, Lutyens and the Edwardians (1998), pp 32-5 S Festing, Gertrude Jekyll (1994), pp 159-62

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1919 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871, published 1878 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1916 1936 edition

Archival items Lutyens drawings, RIBA Library Jekyll Notebook No 15 (Godalming Museum)

Description written: June 1999 Register Inspector: BJL Edited: October 2002

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.