

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

GATCOMBE PARK

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

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**GATCOMBE PARK**

Name: GATCOMBE PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Avening

County: Gloucestershire

District: Stroud (District Authority)

Parish: Minchinhampton

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.691147  
Longitude: -2.1728590  
National Grid Reference: ST 88148 99169  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000765  
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

## Details

A late C18 landscape park with an adjacent lake and woodland.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manors of Minchinhampton and Avening formed the basis of the later Gatcombe Park estate. After the Dissolution they were granted to Lord Windsor. The Windsor family sold them to Philip Sheppard in 1656. Samuel Sheppard succeeded to the estate but, when he died without issue in 1770, it passed to his brother Edward. In 1771 Edward Sheppard, a successful clothier, had Gatcombe Park built a mile south of the old manor house at Minchinhampton, to reflect the family's new-found wealth. In 1797, the park was enlarged by the diversion of nearby roads and may have been landscaped at this time (Kingsley 1992). On Edward's death in 1803, his son Philip (1766-1838) inherited the estate but, due to living consistently beyond his means, was forced to flee to France in 1812 to escape his creditors.

In 1814, the manor of Hampton, including Gatcombe Park, was sold to the MP and political economist David Ricardo, who had made his fortune on the stock exchange. He employed George Basevi, c 1820, to improve and add to the house. Gatcombe has been very little altered since the 1820s. It remained in the Ricardo family until 1937, when Colonel Ricardo sold it to Samuel Courtauld, who left it to his son-in-law, RA Butler. Gatcombe was let during the 1950s and in 1976 was sold to its present (2000), private owner.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Gatcombe Park house stands at the centre of the north-west edge of its linear park (c 35ha), between the villages of Minchinhampton and Avening. The site lies on the slopes of a small valley which joins the valley of a branch of the River Frome, c 1km south-west of the house.

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**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Gatcombe Park is approached principally via the north drive which extends south-west from the north entrance through the park to the house, continuing south-west through the park to the south entrance.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Gatcombe Park (listed grade II\*) is a rectangular house built of ashlar limestone with a stone slate roof and balustraded parapet. The main block, of two storeys with attic, is flanked by single-storey wings. A curving conservatory extends west from the west wing to a summerhouse. The main entrance is set into a Doric porch in the centre of the south facade. Gatcombe Park was built 1771-4 by Francis Franklin of Chalford (although he may not have been the architect) for Edward Sheppard. In c 1820 David Ricardo employed George Basevi (1794-1845) to remodel and enlarge the house (Verey 1970). Basevi's additions included the conservatory, single-storey wings, and the porch. He also built the polygonal stables and coach house (listed grade II), c 80m east of the house.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** A curving terrace runs for 200m on the south side of the house.

**PARK** The parkland extends around all but the north and north-west sides of Gatcombe Park, which is sited at the head of a south-facing valley. Belts of trees edge the eastern and northern boundaries of the park, and clumps and single mature trees are scattered throughout the park. A small stream flows south-west through the centre of the park and has been dammed to create two small lakes. After leaving the park, the stream meets Gatcombe Water, 1km south-west of Gatcombe Park (and outside the area here registered). A tall conical monument (late C18 or early C19, listed grade II) of dry-built rubble limestone stands c 300m south of Gatcombe Park and is a prominent landscape feature.

The site was imparked in the late C18 by Edward Sheppard, who probably created one of the lakes (Kingsley 1992). The park was enlarged by the diversion of local roads in 1797 and the landscaping may have taken place at this time.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** A walled kitchen garden lies 300m north-west of Gatcombe Park (outside the area here registered).

#### REFERENCES

R Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* (1712), p 452  
A Playne, *A History of the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening* (1915), pp 37-72  
D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (1970), pp 253-4  
Victoria History of the County of Gloucestershire XI, (1976), p 191  
Inspector's Report: Gatcombe Park, (English Heritage 1986)  
J Johnson, *The Gloucestershire Gentry* (1989), p 168  
N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume Two, 1660-1830* (1992), pp 149-50

Maps Isaac Taylor, *Map of the County of Gloucester*, 2nd edition 1800 (1st edn 1777)  
Tithe map for Minchinhampton parish, 1839 (Gloucestershire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881, published 1887  
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882, published 1885

Archival items Oblique aerial photographs, 1999 (NMR, Swindon)

Description written: May 2000 Amended: November 2000 (SR) Register Inspector: TVAC Edited: April 2003

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 26 January 2021 to corrected spelling of a name.

## 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.