

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

STANDEN

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Name:	STANDEN
County:	West Sussex
District:	Mid Sussex (District Authority)
Parish:	East Grinstead
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.103126 Longitude: -0.017519040 National Grid Reference: TQ 38896 35627 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001695 Date first listed: 06-Mar-2007

Details

The contemporary formal and informal gardens which provide the setting for one of Philip Webb's most important late C19 country houses. These are based on designs by the landscape gardener G.B. Simpson c.1891-92, with advice from Webb and developed by the owner, Mrs Beale, and with work by Backhouse and Sons of York in 1896-97 and Cheals of Crawley in 1910. **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT** In 1890 a successful London solicitor, James Beale (1840-1912), bought three farms, which until 1889 had been part of the Saint Hill Estate. Beale sited his new country house adjacent to the modest, timber-framed, C15 farmhouse of Hollybush Farm which was renamed Standen (the original Standen farmstead lay a short distance to the south and was demolished). Beale immediately began to plant the garden and in 1891 commissioned the landscape gardener, G.B. Simpson, who had offices in London's Fleet Street and Horsham, Sussex, to survey the site and produce a layout. He produced a survey plan and developed the landscape layout as shown in three surviving plans c.1891-92 (at Standen). In March that year Beale asked the architect Philip Webb to develop Hollybush Farm as a family home; Webb's notes of site visits and other details survive (private collection), including references to his work with Simpson. The main buildings on the site were incorporated into the new house and its model farm. Webb was towards the end of his career and at the height of his reputation as an Arts and Crafts country house architect, and this is the most complete surviving example of a country house by him. He produced an influential country house using a variety of materials in vernacular styles, decorated using Morris and Co. textiles. The house and its gardens and the world beyond were intended to flow one to another with, for instance, vines trained up the south front mirroring the pattern of Morris & Co.'s wallpapers within.

Webb positioned the house further into the hillside than had been anticipated; Simpson's landscape design was modified, particularly the terrace below the garden front, overlooked by Webb's large conservatory. Webb opened the adjacent quarry to provide stone to construct the house, and this subsequently became a quarry garden (1897). Many of the agricultural landscape features were consciously incorporated into the designed landscape to enhance its rural (even verging on the bucolic) character. The appropriated features including the farm yard (as Goose Green), the lane to the farm (as the main drive), and the green lane which divided the garden in two and continued to be used to allow cattle access between the farm and fields.

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In 1898 Webb designed a vernacular summerhouse for the end of another terrace, Terrace Walk, and advised Beale's wife, Margaret (1847-1936), on the planting for the garden. Mrs Beale was a keen gardener who corresponded with the influential garden writer William Robinson, who owned nearby Gravetye Manor (qv). Her interest in new plants and the influence of Simpson together ensured that the garden at Standen had a less subdued and occasionally more exotic character than Webb might have wished. Many plants were supplied by the Yorkshire firm of James Backhouse and by Waterer's of Surrey, and receipts detail the numbers and varieties. Mrs Beale kept a garden diary and weather diary from 1890 to 1935 which record the plants used and form a key part of the extensive property archives with much material relating to the gardens. In 1910 Cheals of Crawley created several features, including a further terrace and summerhouse in similar style to Webb's earlier work (West Sussex Records Office).

After Mrs Beale's death in 1936 her daughters changed the garden little. During the Second World War it was used for convalescing officers, but still remained a family home. In 1972 Helen, the last surviving Beale daughter, died and the National Trust acquired the property. It was subsequently opened to the public, and remains so today (as at 2006).

DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Standen lies on a south-facing valley side, 3km south of East Grinstead in the Sussex Weald. The c.6ha site is enclosed by agricultural land and woodland which comprise the wider agricultural estate bought by James Beale in 1890 (outside the area here registered). The ground generally slopes steeply from north-west to south-east towards the distant Weir Wood Reservoir which was flooded in the 1950s. The setting is rural, with extensive views to the valley to the south and east to Ashdown Forest beyond, and along the hillside to the south-west, including towards West Hoathly church spire. The adjacent agricultural land and woods, although not highly ornamented, were intended to frame the garden, and their tranquil, rural nature was highly valued by the Beales.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters from the north off West Hoathly Road, giving access from East Grinstead and Saint Hill. 150m north-west of the house the drive passes an ashlar, partly tile-hung, lodge on the west side (Webb, mid-1890s, listed grade II). Immediately south of this is a pair of one-and-a-half storey stone cottages, perhaps C18 or early C19. The drive then leads south, bounded to the west by woodland and exposed outcrops of quarried rock (these quarries predating Webb's time). To the east it is lined by paddocks which fall away, with a series of long views along the valley beyond. The drive descends past the back of the stable block to enter the north-west corner of Goose Green at the north-east side of the house. This, originally the working farmyard, is now reminiscent of a village green, with views to the east over falling ground. The Green is bounded on the north side by farm buildings (listed grade II), and on the west by the original Hollybush Farm house (mid-C15 with later work, listed grade II), a timber-framed and tile-hung building with a Horsham slab roof. The Green is defined on its east side by three mature plane trees (1890s). At the south-west corner of the Green the drive turns sharply, beneath an archway which links Hollybush with the main house to the south, into the entrance court. The court is enclosed by the house on the south and east sides and by a high stone retaining wall to the north, above which is the stable block. The entrance to the house is at the centre of the south side of the court, via a deep porch. The line of the drive follows the course of the lane which connected Hollybush Farm with West Hoathly Road (cf. Ordnance Survey map cited).

A spur leads east off Goose Green to the kitchen garden and beyond this to a car park in agricultural land (outside the registered area). A sunken farm track leads south from the Green through the garden, lined by banks of mature shrubs, and linking the farm buildings with agricultural land beyond. The track led to the original Standen farm (1km to the south, demolished, outside the area here registered) and was retained by the Beales who valued it as a rural feature, principally to provide access for the dairy cattle from the farm buildings to the pasture.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Standen (1892-94, Philip Webb, listed grade I) stands at the centre of the site, overlooking gardens to the south and beyond this fields and woodland. The two-storey country house is L-shaped in plan, with the main wing facing south. This is linked by a tower to a service wing at the north-east corner which is joined to Hollybush farm house (listed grade II) to the north via the courtyard entrance arch. The south, garden, front is dominated at the west end by a large conservatory with the garden door set into a deeply recessed porch with a seat. The house is built in a varied vernacular style using a selection of local materials and decorated in Arts and Crafts style with many Morris and Co. patterns. It was Webb's last major work

and reflects his continued concern to link both house and garden in design terms, and his use of vernacular materials. It is the most complete surviving example of his country houses.

The stable yard stands on a bank north of the entrance court and was built shortly after the house. It contains many original fittings, although the south range was modified as a motor house. On the north side of Goose Green stands the Beales' model farm, based on the C18 weatherboarded barn (listed grade II) which was restored and extended in 1893 by Edward Vigers, an associate of Webb.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens, approached from various points around the house, lie to the south, west and east of the house. They are composed of a series of interlinked formal and informal compartments enclosed by woodland and agricultural land. These elements are linked by a broad terrace which runs along the south front of the house.

The garden door at the west end of the south front opens from the conservatory into the porch and out to the gravel terrace which runs along the south, garden front of the house. The terrace is supported by a brick retaining wall with a wooden trellis projecting above it, the trellis similar in style to that in Morris and Co.'s Trellis wallpaper. The terrace overlooks the south lawn, which is bounded at its far side by a stone ha-ha dividing it from the paddock beyond. Views extend south-west, south and east from the terrace across the south lawn, framed by the gardens on the hillside to the west, and by various mature specimen trees to the south-east.

At the west end of the terrace a path, bounded on the west by a high stone retaining wall, leads south from the conservatory porch. It leads to the north-south Terrace Walk, set into the hillside, and terminated at its south end by a wooden summerhouse in vernacular style (Webb, 1898). The summerhouse enjoys views back towards the house across the south lawn and towards the valley. A further path leads west from the conservatory porch and the main terrace to the quarry garden. The quarry provided stone for the house, creating a high-sided bowl. At the centre is a rectangular pool enclosed by a stone slab path, from which various stepped paths lead up the steep, rocky sides. A narrow gorge opens into the quarry from the north, with an upper garden path carried across it via a wooden bridge. The quarry was initially planted with alpine shrubs, and after the First World War with a notable collection of ornamental ferns. From here paths lead to the upper path which links the entrance courtyard with the New Terrace Walk to the south-west.

The New Terrace was designed by J. Cheal and Sons of Crawley (1910, West Sussex Records Office), one of several features they created here at that time. It comprises a grass path leading south-west flanked by a low retaining wall to the east and a shrub border and belt of trees to the west. It is terminated by a brick summerhouse with a large entrance arch and windows in the south and east sides; views to the south are aligned on West Hoathly church. New Terrace Walk and its summerhouse are the highest garden features in the site and enjoy extensive views south and east across the valley. Views originally extended back to the house, but are now obscured by mature trees (as at 2006).

Beyond the east end of the main terrace, lies Mulberry (also known as Lavender) Lawn, overlooked by the tower and servants' wing of the house. It contains a roughly square lawn planted with a central mulberry, and nearby a yew which predates the house and was preserved by Webb. The lawn is enclosed by a gravel path which gives access to Goose Green to the north and the south lawn to the south. From here a path skirts the east edge of the south lawn, running parallel with the green lane from which it is screened by mature shrubs including rhododendrons, leading to a crossing at the lane. This provides access to the lower gardens to the east.

From the crossing the path leads east, flanked on the south by the Bamboo Garden (originally the rose garden), which contains a concrete-lined pool forming part of a rocky cascade system, now disused. North of the path is the Croquet Lawn which was used by the Beales as a tennis and croquet lawn. The square, terraced lawn is set into the hillside to the west which is planted with mature rhododendrons and other shrubs and trees. A small wooden summerhouse (1901) stands on this side of the lawn. Below the lawn, to the south-east is the Rhododendron Dell, planted with mature rhododendrons including notable specimens of *R. loderi* collected by Mrs Beale, and to the east is an orchard.

The north side of the Croquet Lawn is bounded by a straight path leading east from Mulberry Lawn across the farm lane and down the hillside. This path was formerly enclosed by a wooden pergola and laid with stone steps and is bounded to the north

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by a clipped hedge, and beyond this the kitchen garden. The path leads to an informal pool in a bowl enclosed by a circuit path, set in a neglected rock garden, and beyond this through agricultural land to woodland walks.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies below Mulberry Lawn, overlooked by the east end of the house; it is prominent in the garden design. It is bounded to the west by the green lane, to the south by the Croquet Lawn and to the east by the rock garden and pool, these sides largely enclosed by clipped hedges. To the north it is enclosed by a brick wall which formerly supported a range of lean-to glasshouses, now gone, but a new small glasshouse has recently been constructed in this position. The kitchen garden is divided into several sections, the northernmost one providing access from Goose Green to the car park beyond to the east. The two southern compartments are cultivated and divided by a clipped hedge into east and west sections. Several mature espalier fruit trees remain.

REFERENCES Gardening Illustrated (23 Sept. 1911), pp 567, 569, 571; 25 Nov. 1911 (685). Country Life, 27 (1910), pp 666-72; 147 (1970), pp 494-97, 554-7; 173 (1983), pp 1100-02. S Kirk, 'Philip Webb (1831-1915): Domestic Architecture', 2 vols, Doctoral thesis, University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1990. National Trust, Guide Book (2004) S Kirk, Philip Webb Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture (2005), pp 93, 150-60.

Maps Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing, 1808 OS 6" to 1 mile: 3rd edition, surveyed 1908, published 1911 (Sussex sh. V SW) Revised edition, surveyed 1929, published 1932 (Sussex sh. V SW) OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition, surveyed c.1874 2nd edition, surveyed 1897, published 1899 (Sussex sh. V.13) revised edition, surveyed 1929, published 1931 (Sussex sh. V.13) Plan of Hollybush and Standen Farms (1776) (British Library) Tithe map, East Grinstead parish, 1841 (West Sussex RO) G.B. Simpson, Surveys and Plans of Hollybush Farm (Standen) n.d., c.1891-93 (National Trust)

Archival items Hollybush Farm (Standen) plans and elevations, Philip Webb, 1892-94 (RIBA/V&A). See Catalogue of the Drawings Collection of the RIBA, T-Z (1984), pp184-89 Mrs Beale's Garden Diary, Standen, 1890-1934 (National Trust) Mrs Beale's Weather Notes, Standen, 1892-1935 (National Trust) Receipts for plants, 1890s-1930s (West Sussex RO and National Trust) Correspondence with Cheal's Nursery regarding design, 1910 (West Sussex RO) Philip Webb, Site Notebooks, 1891-94 (private collection)

Description written: March 2006; amended September 2006.

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.