

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

POUNDISFORD PARK

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Name:	POUNDISFORD PARK
County:	Somerset
District:	Somerset West and Taunton (District Authority)
Parish:	Pitminster
County:	Somerset
District:	Somerset West and Taunton (District Authority)
Parish:	Trull
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.977688 Longitude: -3.1153209 National Grid Reference: ST 21796 20401 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001154 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

Formal gardens of C17 origin set within a medieval deer park, together with further formal gardens associated with a secondary house within the park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Poundisford Park was an appendage of the episcopal castle of Taunton, one of the possessions of the medieval bishops of Winchester. The enclosure of the park is variously attributed to Bishop Henry de Blois and Bishop Peter des Roches; it was certainly in existence by 1210-11 when King John, who had been hunting at Taunton, sent deer from Hereford to replenish the Bishop's depleted herd (CL 1934). The position of Keeper or Verderer of the Bishop's park was highly prized by local gentlemen; in 1487, for example, the post was held by Sir Hugh Luttrell of Dunster Castle, Somerset (qv) (ibid). The Verderer was provided with a lodge within the park which stood on the site of the present Poundisford Lodge.

In 1534 Bishop Gardiner divided the park and leased it as two agricultural holdings (ibid; Bond 1998). The northern section of the park, together with the original lodge, was leased to a Taunton merchant, Roger Hill. The southern area was leased to John Soper, who in 1546 sold his lease to Roger Hill's son, William, who had made a fortune in foreign trade. Roger Hill's younger son retained ownership of the northern park and the lodge, which he began to rebuild at about this time. William Hill also began to build a new house, the present Poundisford Park, on his newly acquired property. The two linked properties descended in the Hill family until the late C17, when the Lodge passed out of the family by marriage. In 1673 the Park was inherited by Sir Roger Hill, who already owned Denham Place, Buckinghamshire (qv) where he had rebuilt the house. In 1704 he sold the Park to Dr Simon Welman, a retired physician who died in 1708. Welman had also acquired the Lodge before his death, but at that

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time the Park passed to his elder son, Simon, and the Lodge to his younger son, Thomas. The latter property passed by marriage to the Hawker family, and thence to the Helyer family, with whom it remains (2002).

The Park continued in the hands of Simon Welman's descendants throughout the C18. In 1813 it belonged to Thomas Welman, who married Charlotte Noel, daughter of Lady Barham. Mrs Welman retained the property after her husband's death and continued in residence until her own death in 1869, when it was sold to the Helyers of the Lodge. The Park and Lodge remained in united ownership until 1928, when the Park was sold to Mr Vivian-Neal, who commissioned A P Methuen to undertake a programme of restoration (CL 1934). Today (2002) the site is in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Poundisford Park is situated to the north of Pitminster, and to the west of a minor road leading north from Pitminster to Trull. The c 180ha site comprises c 2ha of gardens and pleasure grounds associated with Poundisford Park and Poundisford Lodge, and c 178ha enclosed within the medieval park pale, of which c 40ha remains as parkland. The boundary of the registered site continues to be defined by the park pale (scheduled ancient monument) which forms an approximately elliptical shape on plan. The eastern boundary of the site is marked by the minor road leading from Pitminster to Trull, while to the north and west the site adjoins agricultural land, from which it is separated by banks and hedges. The southern boundary is marked by a track extending from Littleham Cottages to the road leading north from Pitminster to Fulwood. The northern tip of the site is crossed from north-east to south-west by the M5 motorway. The site is generally level, with southerly views extending to the Blackdown Hills.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Poundisford Park and Poundisford Lodge are both approached from the minor road forming the eastern boundary of the site. The principal entrance to Poundisford Park is situated at a point c 200m south of the junction of the minor road and Green Lane and comprises a simple gate flanked by laurel hedges, beyond which a drive leads c 100m west to approach the south facade of Poundisford Park. This entrance and drive conforms to the arrangement shown on the Tithe map (1839).

Some 450m north-north-west of this entrance, a further entrance leads to Poundisford Park from the minor road forming its eastern boundary. This entrance comprises a pair of early C19 octagonal stone piers with recessed panels surmounted by carved stone lions (listed grade II). An early C19 lodge stands to the south of the entrance. The north entrance to Poundisford Park was constructed for Mrs Welman after her husband's death in 1829. The entrance, which fell out of use in the late C20, gives access to a drive lined by an avenue which leads south-west for c 240m before crossing a stream and turning south to pass round the west side of the gardens and pleasure grounds; it then turns sharply east to reach the carriage turn below the south facade of the house. The north entrance and drive is shown in its present form on the Tithe map (1839).

The entrance to Poundisford Lodge is situated at a point opposite the junction of the minor road and Red Lane. A simple entrance leads to a drive which extends c 60m south-west, passing to the south of the C18 stables (listed grade II). The house is entered through a C19 gabled porch set on the east facade.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS Poundisford Park (listed grade I) is situated close to the eastern boundary of the site, c 950m north of Pitminster. The three-storey house is constructed in roughcast rubble under pitched slate roofs with attic gables. Quoins, gable-ends, and chimney stacks are constructed in ashlar, as are the mullion windows. The house is approximately H-shaped on plan with entrances placed to the north and south, a dining room wing extending north-east, and a service wing to the south-east forming the south side of a service court. Poundisford Park was built by William Hill after he acquired the property in 1546, and the design of the house is said to have been influenced by the slightly earlier Barrington Court, Somerset (qv) (CL 1934). The north-east wing was added c 1693, while the service ranges were built in 1717 and 1823. As originally constructed, the house was approached from the south through a small courtyard enclosed by a wall extending between the south-west and south-east wings. This wall was removed as part of the 1928 renovations (ibid).

Poundisford Lodge (listed grade II*) is situated c 550m north of Poundisford Park, in the north-east quarter of the site. The house comprises two storeys and an attic and is constructed in roughcast rubble under pitched and hipped slate roofs; it is predominantly lit by C19 Tudor-gothic windows. The central section of the west facade is constructed in brick, corresponding to mid C19 alterations which included moving the entrance from the west to the east front. Poundisford Lodge is approximately

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U-shaped on plan with the hall range extending from north to south and lateral wings extending to the north-west and south-west. To the south-east an C18 wing abuts a two-storey service block. Poundisford Lodge was constructed by William Hill's younger brother c 1550, on the site of the medieval Verderer's Lodge which had been acquired by his father from Bishop Gardiner in 1534.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens associated with Poundisford Park are situated to the west and north-west of the house. Approximately square on plan, the gardens are enclosed by low walls constructed from various materials. Stone-flagged walks divide areas of lawn, while to the west a single-storey C17 brick pavilion (listed grade II) abuts the garden wall. The pavilion has a pyramidal roof surmounted by a weathervane, and is accessed from the garden by a door set beneath a broken pediment. The interior of the pavilion retains C17 plasterwork. The building was intended to provide views across the park to the west, and the gardens to the east. Beyond the western garden wall a terrace walk provides similar views across the park. The gardens appear originally to have been laid out in the C17, and the area in garden cultivation may be contemporary with that enclosed at the time of the construction of the house in the mid C16. The Tithe map (1839) shows the walled garden, terrace, and pavilion, but an informal layout within the walled enclosure. The present formal gardens appear to be contemporary with the 1928 scheme of renovation overseen by A P Methuen.

The gardens associated with Poundisford Lodge are situated to the south and east of the house. To the east of the house an approximately square garden is enclosed by C18 buttressed red-brick walls (listed grade II). At the south-east corner of the house a pair of C18 square red-brick piers support painted timber gates of early C20 origin (listed grade II) which lead to an area of garden to the south of the house. This garden is enclosed from the public road to the east by a further C18 brick wall which extends the east wall of the east garden. This wall is terminated at its southern end by an early C18 pavilion (listed grade II). Constructed in roughcast over brick, the pavilion comprises two storeys under a pyramidal roof. Entered from the west, an internal staircase gives access to a room on the first floor with a window facing west over the garden. A further ground-floor window on the south front is blocked. The pavilion was restored c 1900 but fell into disrepair in the late C20. On the west side of the south garden a terrace walk leads north, passing beneath the west facade of the house, which until the mid C19 was the entrance front. This terrace affords views across the park to the west.

The Tithe map (1839) indicates that the gardens of Poundisford Lodge assumed their present form in the mid or late C19, with the west terrace, which is clearly modelled on the earlier example at Poundisford Park, being constructed on the site of an approximately semicircular lawn, presumably after the entrance was moved from the west facade in the mid C19.

PARK Surviving areas of parkland are concentrated in the east and south-east quarters of the registered site, with a small area of park to the south and west of Poundisford Lodge, and larger areas to the south and west of Poundisford Park. These areas of park remain pasture with scattered trees, many being park pollards of considerable age.

The park to the south of Poundisford Park is bounded to the east by a stream which flows from south to north, parallel to the eastern park pale. To the south-west of Poundisford Park an avenue of limes extends c 270m south into the park, continuing the axis of the western garden terrace. To the north-west the park adjoins two small areas of mixed plantation, while to the north-north-west a similar plantation surrounds a rectangular pond. The pond is indicated on the Tithe map (1839). To the north-west of the house the park is similarly laid to grass with groups of specimen trees; this area appears to have been landscaped as part of the development of the mid C19 north drive.

The park associated with Poundisford Lodge is separated from that attached to Poundisford Park to the south by the north drive and avenue serving the latter house. This smaller area of park remains pasture with scattered trees, while c 140m south-west of the house the stream is dammed to form a small lake. This feature, which is not shown on the Tithe map (1839), appears to be of mid or late C19 origin.

The remainder of the registered site comprising the medieval deer park enclosed by the park pale is divided into field enclosures by hedges. Scattered trees, some being park pollards, survive, together with small blocks of mixed plantation of late C19 origin (OS 1886). Several ponds, predominantly of rectangular plan and presumably of artificial origin, survive within the agricultural landscape. These ponds correspond to those shown on the Tithe map (1839).

REFERENCES

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Country Life, 39 (17 June 1916), p 758; (24 June 1916), p 786; 76 (4 August 1934), pp 116-20; (11 August 1934), pp 142-6 N
Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset* (1958), pp 276-8 J Bond, *Somerset Parks and Gardens* (1998),
pp 25-9, 59

Maps Tithe map for Pitminster parish, 1839 (M5318/1), (Somerset Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1886, published 1889 2nd edition revised 1903, published 1904 1930 edition

Description written: December 2002 Register Inspector: JML Edited: September 2004

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.