

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SCOTNEY CASTLE

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

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SCOTNEY CASTLE

Name: SCOTNEY CASTLE

County: Kent

District: Tunbridge Wells (District Authority)

Parish: Goudhurst

County: Kent

District: Tunbridge Wells (District Authority)

Parish: Lamberhurst

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.092188
Longitude: 0.40652454
National Grid Reference: TQ 68621 35296
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: I
List Entry Number: 1000179
Date first listed: 01-May-1986

Details

An early C19 Picturesque-style landscape garden, set in an early to mid C19 park, which was laid out by Edward Hussey and developed and renewed in the mid C20 by his nephew, the writer and authority on the Picturesque, Christopher Hussey.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Scotney is recorded as owned by Lambert de Scoteni in 1137. It reverted to the Crown in the mid C13 before becoming the property of Roger de Ashburnham who built the Old Castle as a fortified manor house between 1378 and 1380. After the death of Ashburnham in 1392 and of his son in 1418, the manor was bought by Robert Chichele, probably for his brother Henry, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who settled it on his niece, the wife of John Darrell. Their descendants owned Scotney until the 1750s when parts of the estate were sold to settle family debts and, in 1775, the remainder including the Castle was also sold. It was bought by a Mr Richards who sold it in 1778 to Edward Hussey. Between 1783 and 1792 Hussey acquired all the former estate land owned by the Darrells. His grandson, Edward Hussey III, inherited in 1835 and, from then onwards, built the present 'New' Castle and laid out the gardens around the Old Castle in the Picturesque style. Edward Hussey III died in 1894 and was succeeded by his son, who made few changes, and in 1952 by his nephew, Christopher, who did much to ensure the continuity and renewal of the garden's character. On his death in 1970, he bequeathed Scotney to the National Trust, in whose ownership it remains (1997).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The registered site, which lies on the north-east side of the A21, immediately beyond the south-east edge of Lamberhurst village, comprises c 7ha of ornamental gardens and formal terraces, set within c 117ha of parkland and woodland.

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The site extends over the north-west slopes and the lower south-east slopes of the Bewl valley, which rise up quite steeply from the level valley floor and the two north-eastward-flowing water courses of the River Bewl and the Sweet Bourne stream. Woodland, including Kilndown Wood (with planting by Edward Hussey II in 1830), covering the upper valley side encloses the site to the south-east while to the south-west, the tree-fringed A21 forms the boundary. To the north and north-west, the site's parkland and woodland merges into a similar landscape beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Scotney is approached off the A21 in the west corner. The drive enters through white timber gates beside a small, mid C19 stone lodge and runs 1km eastwards, along the ridge above the valley to arrive at the gravelled forecourt on the south-west, principal front of the house. The public entrance to the gardens, through a small, tiled-roofed, late C20 pavilion, lies just to the south of the forecourt and 40m east of the car park on the north side of the drive. The present drive was established in 1837-41 to serve the new house (NT Survey, nd). It was also served by an approach from across the valley to the south-east which entered from the A21 some 0.5km beyond the registered site boundary. This route, now a public footpath, appears to have existed in the early C19 (estate map, 1828) but was extended to the main road by Edward Hussey III in 1833 and provided with the present lodge in 1834. The stone bridges over the Sweet Bourne and the River Bewl (both listed grade II) were also built during this period. The route replaced the former approach to the Old Castle from the south-east, shown on William Clout's map of the Scotney estate (1758) as entering further to the north-east and running around the west side of the moat.

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS The present house known as Scotney Castle (listed grade I) stands on a level terrace on the crest of the north-west side of the Bewl valley, with vistas southwards to the Old Castle within its garden setting and eastwards over the terrace to the park and the distant landscape. The house, unaltered from its original state, was designed and built as the 'New Castle' between 1834 and 1843 by the architect Anthony Salvin (1799-1881), with advice on its siting from the landscape designer William Sawrey Gilpin (1762-1843). The house is in the Tudor style, built of sandstone cut from the quarry below the south-west front and with a multi-gabled entrance front with battlemented towers. The stone-built stable block with a clock tower is linked to the north-west corner of the house by a wide stone gateway.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie on the south-east slopes below the house and are laid out in the Picturesque taste. The house opens to the north-west and south-east onto two levels of terrace, separated by a grass bank, which were laid out by Gilpin (Hussey archive); the lower level is embellished with a sundial and seating by Salvin. The terraces, enclosed by an outer sandstone wall, terminate at the south-east end in a flight of stone steps which leads onto the semicircular bastion (listed grade II) from which the principal view of the Old Castle, framed by trees and shrubs, is gained. A few metres to the south-west of the bastion is a small triangular rose garden, laid out after 1953, with a Venetian font and a lion's-head fountain. To the north-east of the bastion, the Top Walk, screened from the garden by flowering trees and shrubs, runs along the north boundary giving views out over the park and to the distant Goudhurst church.

Immediately below the bastion, the Quarry Garden, abundantly planted with azaleas, ferns, and other flowering shrubs, is reached down stone steps off the path which winds south-eastwards, down the Lime Walk (its trees pre-dating the C19 layout) and across the slopes of the main lawns, a fairly open area called the Warren in the early C19, towards the moat. The lawns, their framing mature and exotic trees substantially reduced by losses in the storm of 1987, are planted with beds of massed rhododendron, kalmia, and other shrubs. Kilndown Walk, a parallel path to the south-west, gives access to the south-west side of the garden which is enclosed from the park at the north end by a brick-walled ha-ha (recorded as built in 1839 in the Hussey archive) and at the south end by the tree-fringed course of the Sweet Bourne which feeds the moat. The walk leads to the stream garden in the south-west corner and then across a Chinese bridge (renewed 1982) over the end of the moat created from former fishponds in 1863 (Hussey archive) and displaying (since 1977) Henry Moore sculpture on an isthmus.

The walk continues along the south-east side of the moat, with views focused on the house above the gardens, then returns along the north-west side to reach the approach to the Old Castle, which lies on the north-east of the two islands in the moat and forms the scenic focus of the garden landscape. The path crosses a stone bridge onto a grassy island dotted with trees and with a timber boathouse (1838, listed grade II) on its south-west side. The path leads across a stone causeway and between remnants of stone gate piers (of C14 origin, reconstructed by Hussey in 1840s, listed grade II) into the Castle courtyard. This contains

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a circular bed enclosed by yew hedges, first made in 1848-9 and loosely based on a design by W A Nesfield, with a central Venetian well-head (listed grade II) brought to Scotney in 1898 and planted with the present herb beds by Lanning Roper in 1975 (Hussey archive). The remains of the Old Castle (listed grade I), built in 1370, are of sandstone, with the single tower of the four possible originals, topped by its C17 conical roof and lantern, standing in the south corner of the curtain-walled island. The Castle was substantially rebuilt c 1635 (Newman 1969), some parts being demolished and others refaced to form a three-storey wing (see views by Mark Vennett and S H Grimm, 1783, in NT Survey, nd) of which much was carefully dismantled by Edward Hussey in the 1840s to achieve a Picturesque form. It ceased to be inhabited in 1905.

PARK Parkland surrounds the gardens to the south-west, south-east, and north-east. On the south-west side, the slopes down to the Sweet Bourne have a light scatter of trees which develops into significant parkland planting of clumps and individuals on the lower slopes of the valley side, south-east of the river and the garden. This part of the park appears to have been laid out in the early C19. Clout's estate map of 1758 shows a pattern of small fields, including hop gardens, which have merged into larger open areas by the date of Edward Hussey's estate survey of 1828 (see NT Survey, nd). The extensive pattern of parkland planting is shown on the 1st edition OS map surveyed 1870-3. There is an intention to develop this, particularly on the north-west slopes down to the river, in the next few years (from 1997).

The woodland along the south-west boundary and the extension north and west of Collier's Wood, the latter developed with woodland walks since 1970, was also planted in the mid C19. North-east of the gardens, the parkland is not so well developed and a pattern of hedgerow field divisions survives. Although there are a few parkland trees, including a mature blue cedar, these are planted near the boundary of the house and gardens, a pattern shown on the OS 1st edition map.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies c 100m north-west of the house. It is octagonal in plan with walls of red brick and wrought-iron entrance gates in the east-facing wall. It is laid largely to grass with some vegetable and cutting beds adjacent to the lean-to vinery along the south-facing wall. The garden was constructed with the new house c 1840 and had an orchard on land outside the south wall, on the site of the present car park.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 11 (31 May 1902), pp 688-93; 48 (3 July 1920), pp 12-19; 120 (6 September 1956), pp 470-3; (13 September 1956), pp 526-9; 146 (16 October 1969), pp 958-63; 165 (17 May 1979), pp 1522-5 J Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald* (1969), pp 486-9 Scotney Castle, guidebook, (National Trust 1979) National Trust Gardens Survey, *A History of Scotney Castle, Gardens and Estate*, (1986/7) National Trust Gardens Survey, Scotney Castle, *Historical Development of the Park and Estate*, (nd) Scotney Castle Gardens, guidebook, (National Trust 1996)

Maps William Clout, *Scotney Estate, 1758* (in NT Survey, nd) E Hussey, *Estate survey, 1828* (in NT Survey, nd)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1870-3, published 1872-8 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1910 1939 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1908 1939 edition

Archival items The main Hussey archive, which includes diaries, estate maps, correspondence etc, is held by Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone (U1776).

Description written: July 1997 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: November 2003

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.