

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

BROOME PARK

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**BROOME PARK**

Name:	BROOME PARK
County:	Kent
District:	Canterbury (District Authority)
Parish:	Barham
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.193055 Longitude: 1.1708288 National Grid Reference: TR 21650 48538 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001457 Date first listed: 06-Mar-2000

## Details

A landscape park of C17 origin, surrounding a country house of the 1630s, with informal pleasure grounds dating from the C18 or possibly earlier, and early C20 formal gardens designed 1911-16 by the architect Detmar Blow for Lord Kitchener.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1611 John Herdson of Folkestone extended his already substantial estate by the purchase of Broome manor. Upon Herdson's death in 1622, the estate was inherited by his nephew, Basil Dixwell (d 1642), who became Member of Parliament for Hythe in 1626, Sheriff of Kent in 1627, and was created a baronet in 1628. Dixwell built a mansion on a new site in the manor of Broome in the mid 1630s, surrounding it with walled gardens, orchards, and a park. The work was recorded in some detail by his neighbour to the south at Great Maydekin, Henry Oxenden (1608-70) in his Memorandum Book (British Library). Upon Dixwell's death, the estate continued in the family, a walled kitchen garden being built east of the mansion in 1652 (Oxenden Memorandum Book).

During the late C17 and early C18 the third Sir Basil Dixwell (1665-1750) laid out extensive and elaborate new gardens at Broome (the present spelling having been adopted by 1720 (Badeslade)) to the north-west and south-west of the mansion. These were illustrated in a detailed bird's-eye view published by Badeslade (drawn c 1719-20, published 1750s). Following Dixwell's death the estate was inherited by the Oxenden family, in whose ownership it remained until 1911.

In the late 1770s, Sir Henry Oxenden (d 1803) employed James Wyatt (1747-1813) to make alterations to the mansion, and it is possible that the landscape park was modified at this time. His son, the seventh baronet, the second Sir Henry Oxenden (1756-1838), realigned the Canterbury to Folkestone road further to the east of the mansion and gardens shortly after 1803, the park then being extended to the east.

In 1911 the Oxenden family sold the estate for £14,000 to Field Marshal Kitchener (1850-1916, cr first Earl Kitchener of Khartoum and Broome, 1914) who employed the architects Detmar Blow (1867-1939) and Ferdinand [sic] Billerey to substantially remodel the house and provide a formal setting for it. Formal garden features were created on all but the north-west, entrance front, where a formal carriage approach was laid out. Kitchener died in 1916, sunk off the Orkneys, having never

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lived for any length of time at Broome. In 1928 the estate was broken up and parts of the park sold into separate ownerships. Much of the park, including the mansion and gardens, became a golf and country club, in which use it remains (2000).

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Broome Park lies c 11km south of Canterbury, adjacent to the Canterbury to Folkestone road, at the south-east edge of Barham village. The c 200ha site is bounded to the east and south-east by the A260, Canterbury Road, to the south by Agester Lane leading west off the A260, and to the west by Walderchain Wood and agricultural land. The site is dominated by a shallow, curved valley extending from the south boundary north-north-east to the mansion, and turning north-west to the north of this, towards Barham village. The setting is rural with long views extending south-east to distant hills, and south beyond Broome Park to a further park occupying the adjacent hillside (outside the area here registered) to the west of Denton village. The A2 dual carriageway runs close to the north-east corner of the park. An area of former parkland, lying 800m north-north-east of the mansion and adjacent to the A260, is occupied by Barham Crematorium (mid C20; outside the area here registered).

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach enters off the A260, 450m east of the mansion. A pair of brick gate piers surmounted by stone eagles stands set back off the road, flanking the east drive. From here the drive curves west along the northern edge of the wooded pleasure grounds, passing to the south of Broome Court (mid C20) which stands in its own grounds 350m east of the mansion. The drive descends a shallow gradient to the valley bottom where 75m north-east of the mansion it turns south-west, on the axis of the central front door. From here the drive is flanked by broad, rectangular panels of lawn, these in turn flanked by two further arms of the drive, the three arms terminating at a broad rectangular carriage sweep on the north-east front of the mansion. Steps lead up to a porch enclosing the front door. This formal approach close to the house forms part of the early C20 arrangements for Lord Kitchener, possibly by Blow.

The south drive enters the park 400m south-east of the mansion, off the A260, extending northwards down the valley side, passing The Cottage (C17 with later alterations, listed grade II) which stands 250m south of the mansion. The Cottage is thought to have been the gardener's cottage (listed building description). From here the drive continues north-east through the pleasure grounds, joining the main drive 100m north-east of the mansion.

The remains of a further, north-east drive (largely gone) enter off the A260, 1.1km north-east of the mansion, at Eagles Lodge. The entrance is flanked by brick piers, surmounted by eagles, supporting iron gates. The early C20, two-storey lodge is brick-built, with Dutch gables, and was probably built for Lord Kitchener (it is not shown on the OS map of 1908). From here the drive extends south-west through a belt of woodland, now (2000) disappearing at the point where it formerly opened out into the park. From here it extended down the valley side through the park, turning south along the valley bottom c 500m north of the mansion to arrive at the north-east front. This drive was created in the late C19 or early C20 (OS 1876, 1908).

The remains of a former network of further drives and paths cross the park, particularly to the north-west, which gave access to the roads around Barham, and to the south which gave access from Denton (OS 1876).

The south drive appears to occupy part of the former course of the Canterbury to Folkestone road, before it was moved east to its present position by Henry Oxenden in the early C19. Badeslade's engraving of c 1719-20 shows a cottage where the present Cottage stands (2000). The mansion at that time was approached from the north-east via a drive through the park flanked by double avenues, leading to an outer carriage circle enclosing an oval panel of lawn. This compartment, divided from the park by railings, was in turn separated from the square, terraced inner forecourt by a brick wall flanking elaborate gates and piers. A paved path led through the forecourt, flanked by panels of lawn, and ascended via stone steps to an upper level and the main, central entrance to the mansion. Walled service yards stood adjacent to the south-east, with, beyond these, the farm and stables, of which only the stable block still stands, with the adjacent yard. At some point during the later C18 or C19 (OS 1876) an informal carriage sweep replaced the forecourt, this in turn being replaced by the present formal arrangement for Lord Kitchener in the early C20.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Broome mansion (1635-8, remodelled by Wyatt, 1770s, and by Blow and Billerey, 1911-16, listed grade I) stands towards the centre of the site, in a valley whose sides rise up to the north-west and south-east. The three-storey,

brick-built mansion is said to be one of the finest mansions in England built during the reign of Charles I (listed building description).

The stable block (early C17 and C18, listed grade II) stands 40m east of the mansion. The rectangular, brick-built block has shaped, Dutch gable ends, and encloses the north-west side of the stable court. This is the remaining building of an extensive farm and stable complex which stood to the east of the mansion (Badeslade, c 1719-20; Tithe map, 1842) and appears to have been largely demolished by the late C19 (OS 1876).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The mansion is enclosed by early C20 formal gardens, these in turn flanked to the north-west and south-east by earlier informal wooded pleasure grounds.

A garden door on the north-west front of the mansion leads out to a path running alongside the mansion, giving access from the forecourt below to the north-east via stone steps. Beyond the path to the north-west lies a level lawn on which stands a stone moon dial in Jacobean style (?early C20). The lawn is divided into two unequal sections by a low, pierced brick wall with a central break, which extends north-west, aligned on the west corner of the mansion. The south-west edge of the lawn is bounded by a brick retaining wall with stone steps leading down to a swimming pool (late C20). Grass terraces lead up the hillside on the north-west side of the lawn, to the north-west arm of the wooded pleasure ground beyond. From the lawn views extend south along the park valley to distant wooded hills. In the early C18 (Badeslade, 1720) this area was enclosed by a wall surrounding terraces leading up the hillside from an elaborate parterre lying close to the mansion.

From the south corner of the north-west lawn a path extends south-east along the south-west front of the mansion. Adjacent to the path, to the south-west, lies a brick terrace with two panels of lawn flanking a central path aligned on the bow at the centre of the south-west front. The south-west end of the central path terminates at a broad flight of stone steps, flanked by brick piers and stone urns, leading down to the park below. In the early C18 (Badeslade, 1720) this area formed part of an extensive and elaborate axial garden, aligned on the south-west front, which extended into the present park for c 100m and was surrounded by a wall.

The path running along the south-west front of the mansion extends south-east beyond the terrace, leading into the Italian Garden to the south-east of the mansion. The path leads down a flight of stone steps to enter at the west corner of the Italian Garden, and continues, so forming the south-west boundary of the Garden. The path terminates c 80m south-east of the mansion at a flight of brick-balustraded stone steps which lead up to the raised floor of an otherwise lost structure. The floor is supported by brick retaining walls to the north-east and south-west. Within the Italian Garden itself lies a square lawn set at the corners with beds planted with low yew hedges, and at the centre a stone column. The north-east side of the lawn is bounded by a brick wall which also forms the south-west side of the stable yard. At the centre of the wall stands a brick loggia, its three tall stone arches overlooking the lawn to the south-west (Blow 1911-16, listed grade II). The ends of the wall are terminated by elaborate, single-arched brick alcoves enclosing stone statues (Blow 1911-16, listed grade II with the loggia). The south-west side of the lawn is bounded by a brick retaining wall with pierced brick balustrading from which a double flight of stone steps (having lost its brick balustrading (CL 1939)) curves down into the garden. Between the two flights of steps lies a pool enclosed by the brick retaining walls of the steps, fed by an elaborate, tiered stone wall fountain (the whole Blow 1911-16, listed grade II with the loggia). The south-east side of the lawn is bounded by tall curved yew hedges leading south-east to flank a grass path. The path rises up to terminate at a raised open lawn set with a central stone urn aligned with the steps and pool to the north-west. Formerly (OS 1939) a tennis court stood to the north of this lawn, the space now (2000) occupied by an extension of the lawn. The Italian Garden occupies the former site of the estate farm (Badeslade, c 1719-20). It was created for Lord Kitchener by Detmar Blow and was intended to be approached from the south-east front of the mansion, via the roof of a low extension (which is itself enclosed by pierced brick balustrade) which stands adjacent to the top of the staircase. This approach is currently disused (2000).

The wooded pleasure grounds, which were badly affected by the storms of 1987 and 1990, are divided by the mansion into two unequal halves, and occupy the valley sides to the north-west and south-east of the mansion. They frame the view from the mansion and formal gardens to the south-west along the valley towards distant hills. The north-west half of the pleasure grounds is approximately rectangular, but that to the south-east is more irregular in shape, comprising two main areas. The

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eastern area occupies the ground east of the stables and Italian Garden, enclosing the walled kitchen garden and bounded to the east by the A260. The ground between the stable block and the kitchen garden contains many mature yews and is used as a car park with a squash court adjacent (2000). Formerly this eastern area contained ornamental paths and features (OS 1876, 1907), and included the ground presently occupied by the Italian Garden to the south of the stable block. One of the paths, which runs parallel and to the south of the east drive, has been turned into a subsidiary drive (mid C20). The southern section of the south-east half of the pleasure grounds extends south from the eastern section, flanking the south drive. Some 150m south-east of the mansion, on the east side of the south drive, stands the Steward's House (James Gandon 1760s, listed grade II). This two-storey flint house has elaborate detailing and is visible across the park from the A260 to the south-east.

The parts of the pleasure grounds which occupy the valley sides south-west of the mansion were, in the early C18, largely laid out with paddocks surrounded by formal avenues and formal plantations of trees (Badeslade, c 1919-20).

**PARK** The park surrounds the mansion and pleasure grounds to the north, west, and south, occupying the curved valley which leads north-north-east from the southern boundary of the site and turns north-west north of the mansion. The east boundary is largely marked by broad belts of trees, whilst on the west boundary lies the extensive Walderchain Wood (outside the area here registered) which overlooks much of the park. The northern and western sections of the park are overlain by a golf course (late C20), whilst the southern section, overlooked by the south-west front of the mansion, remains pasture. A discrete section of the park to the east of the south drive is at present (2000) under arable cultivation. Many mature trees, including limes, remain, planted in singles, clumps, and copses. Views from the northern section extend north-west towards Barham and surrounding hills and south-west from the eastern valley side, beyond the mansion to the distant hills.

The park was created by Basil Dixwell in the 1630s (Oxenden Memorandum Book), it being enlarged by subsequent owners until it reached its maximum extent in the late C19 and early C20 (OS 1876, 1908). In the early C18 (Badeslade, c 1719-20) the area of parkland which presently lies immediately south-west of the mansion was given over to the formal garden, with, parallel to this, a vast kitchen garden of almost equal size.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The rectangular kitchen garden lies 150m east of the mansion, and is enclosed by the northern section of the pleasure grounds. It is surrounded by a brick wall with entrances set into the north-west and south-west sides. A development of late C20, single-storey apartments within the garden has been arranged close to the walls, leaving a central area of lawn overlain by a network of paths. A kitchen garden occupied a similar position in the mid C18 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert, 1769).

#### REFERENCES

T Badeslade, *Thirty six different views of noblemen and gentlemen's seats in the county of Kent* (1750s), pl 5 *The Genealogist* new sers 8, (1893), p 150; vols 31-8 [transcription of Oxenden's Memorandum Book] *Country Life*, 22 (6 July 1907), pp 18-25; 86 (11 November 1939), pp 494-8 R P Cross, *Broome Park Golf and Country Club Historic Environment Assessment* (1995) Maps J Andrews, A Dury and W Herbert, *A Topographical Map of the County of Kent, 2" to 1 mile, 1769 Tithe map for Barham parish, 1842* (Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1876 3rd edition published 1908 1939 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1907 1939 edition

Illustrations T Badeslade, Engraving, c 1719-20 (published in Badeslade 1750s)

Archival items Commonplace and Memorandum Book of Henry Oxenden, mid C17 (British Library, Add MS 54332) Plans by Detmar Blow for formal gardens surrounding Broome Park, c 1911-16 (RIBA)

Description written: February 2000 Register Inspector: SR 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.