

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

**NORTHBOURNE COURT**

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

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Name:	NORTHBOURNE COURT
County:	Kent
District:	Dover (District Authority)
Parish:	Great Mongeham
County:	Kent
District:	Dover (District Authority)
Parish:	Northbourne
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.221653 Longitude: 1.3472480 National Grid Reference: TR 33829 52264 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000180 Date first listed: 01-May-1986

## Details

A late C16 or early C17 walled garden with formal terraces, with an adjacent C19 park.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Northbourne belonged to Eadbald, a Saxon king of Kent who in AD 618 gave the Manor and land to the Abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury, in whose ownership it was still recorded in Domesday Book. Northbourne Manor became Crown property at the Dissolution and in 1540 Henry VIII gave it in exchange for other property to Archbishop Cranmer. It reverted to the Crown and was gifted to new owners on two further occasions: in 1561 by Queen Elizabeth to her foster brother, Edward Sanders, for his lifetime and in 1604 by James I to Sir Edwin Sandys, who built a mansion on the site and may have constructed the terraced gardens (CL 1925). Sir Edwin died in 1629 and Northbourne remained in the Sandys family until, on the death of Sir Richard Sandys in 1726, the terms of inheritance left the house unoccupied. It was pulled down in c 1750 and the estate sold by a representative of Sir Richard Sandys' daughters in 1795 (ibid). Northbourne had a number of subsequent owners until purchased in 1895 by the second Lord Northbourne. It remains (1997) in private hands.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Northbourne Court lies adjacent to the east end of Northbourne village, c 1km west of the A258, Deal to Sandwich road. The 23ha registered site comprises c 3ha of formal and ornamental gardens and 20ha of parkland with small areas of woodland. It lies on the slopes and floor of a shallow valley which runs north-eastwards from the dip-slope of the North Downs to the levels of the Lydden valley, 4km distant. The site is bounded to the south-west by a high brick wall running beside the lane from Northbourne south-east to Great Mongeham (Bonners Lane) with, at its west end, village houses and a recreation ground. The north-west boundary is lined by the industrial-

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style buildings, yards and screen mounding of the Kent Salads factory which are built on the line of a road known as The Drove, while beyond this and beyond the north and east boundaries, land under intensive arable and horticultural cropping generally abuts the site, except for a narrow area of rough grazing and marshland which extends from the north-east boundary towards the Lydden valley.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The formal approach to the house and gardens is from the north-west corner of the site, a drive curving 250m south-eastwards to the north-west front of the house from a lodge, shown established by 1871-2 (OS 1877), at the junction with The Drove. The public entrance to the gardens is from the south-west, on Bonners Lane, through a rusticated-stone carriage arch in the boundary wall hung with a set of C19 wrought-iron gates (wall and gateway listed grade II\*); this may have formed the entrance to the site of an earlier house (CL 1925). A broad grass path lined with fruit trees runs 50m north-eastwards through a rectangular garden compartment extending nearly 200m uphill to the north-west and c 50m to the south-east, which is walled on all sides except the south-east. It is laid to meadow grass and, largely at the south-east end (shown established as an orchard in 1871-2, OS), groups of fruit trees. Brick piers in the north-east wall mark the gateway to the inner garden compartments; an early C17 red-brick stable and coach house (listed grade II) with Kentish Jacobean-style gables (CL 1925) stands on the north-west side of the gateway and immediately behind its north-west side, the high, buttressed south-west and south-east walls retaining the tiered terraces. To the south-east of the gateway is a two-storey, brick-built keeper's lodge.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS** Northbourne Court (listed grade II) stands on the north-west slope of the valley, on a level platform overlooking the inner walled gardens. The house is of two storeys with an attic and hipped, tiled roof above a parapet and is built of red brick with flint and rubble in the rear elevation. It dates from the early and late C18, with extensions of c 1930 and is possibly built on part of the site of Sir Edwin Sandys' earlier mansion, demolished c 1750 (Hasted 1797-1801) and itself built on the site of a monastic grange of St Augustine's. It may, alternatively, be an adaptation of outbuildings associated with the early C17 mansion (CL 1925). Within 20-30m of the house, further ranges of buildings form an ensemble with it: to the north-east, a C17 red-brick and tile-roofed coach house, stables, and barn (extended and repaired in the C18 and C19 and listed grade II) form an open, south-east-facing courtyard while to the north-west a large, C17 red-brick barn on a flint base (listed grade II\*) faces south-eastwards onto a walled and grassed former farmyard with further outbuildings.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens consist of a series of four walled compartments (all walls listed grade II) to the south, south-west, and west of the house. On its south-east, garden front, the house opens onto two levels of stone-paved terrace with low-growing silver and grey planting, enclosed on its north-east side by a brick wall (listed grade II) extending from the house and on its south-east side by the wall retaining the raised platform. In the south-west corner, a flagged path leads from the terrace through an open-sided brick loggia, converted from an outbuilding and giving views onto the garden compartment enclosure below, into a small, walled herb garden offering a view from a doorway in its south-east wall. From a path running along the north-east front of the house, a long flight of stone steps provides the main access down into the walled garden below. Its north-east end, enclosed largely by flint walls, is raised by a brick retaining wall to form a low, grassed platform flanked by a rose border under the east wall and laid out with abundant herbaceous and shrub planting around remnants of flint walls, steps, and paving which may survive either from the former monastic grange and chapel or from the C17 mansion. The central area of the compartment, which may have formed the court of the mansion, is laid to lawn with a central rectangular lily pool built by 1937 on the site of a former fountain (OS). The south-west end of the compartment is enclosed by a massive, three-tier bank of brick-faced terraces, each c 8m deep with the top level standing some 9-10m above the lawned court and the two lower levels extending north-eastwards to form raised walks against the enclosing north-west and south-east walls of the compartment. The terraces, which form a viewing mount, were probably built by Sir Edwin Sandys in the early C17 (CL 1925) but possibly by his predecessor, Edward Sanders (guide leaflet). A grassed walk along the top terrace overlooking the outer, western, walled compartment, is flanked by a line of cypress trees (planted in the late C20 to replace former mature trees) which continues north-westwards in the compartment below as a 100m long avenue and vista, focused on a gateway in the north-west wall. The two lower terraces and their extended arms are also lined with grassed walks and are abundantly planted with varied mixed borders and edged with lavender. The terraces are connected to each other at each end and to the lawn below by flights of brick or stone steps.

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A gateway and wrought-iron gates in the centre of the south-east wall leads into a further walled compartment, 80m x 30m, divided by a north/south central path and laid out at the south-west end as a flower, vegetable, and propagating garden. A wide grassed path flanked by mixed shrub borders running along the south-east edge of the compartment and terminating in a timber seat (now, 1997, in a ruinous state) forms a continuation of the axial path from the carriage arch in the outer, south-west wall. South-east of the kitchen garden is a further compartment, walled on all sides except the south-east where it is enclosed by woodland, containing a former canalised watercourse and sluice (now, 1997, dry), shown established on Mudge's map of Kent of 1801.

**PARK** The park lies to the north and north-east of the walled gardens, on the north-west and south-east slopes of the valley. The former watercourse running through the garden continues its north-eastward course through the park, its 8-10m wide channel, which opens into a mill pond 160m north-east of the gardens, shown in existence by 1871-2 (OS). Apart from a wide strip of land under arable cultivation on the north-west boundary, adjacent to the Kent Salads factory, the entire open parkland is laid to grazing and dotted with clumps, groups, and individual trees of mixed age and species including a group of mature holm oak 160m north-west of the house beside the drive and new trees planted following storm damage in 1987 to the north and north-east of the stable block. The parkland appears to have been laid out in the C19, between 1801 (it is not indicated on Mudge's map) and 1871-2 (OS), extending at that time 0.5km north-east of its present (1997) boundary.

Some 250m north-east of the house, the boundary of the park is marked by a sunk fence, on a line shown the OS 1st edition, the ditch containing a few remnants of a stone ha-ha wall. At the north-west end of the sunk fence the boundary continues to the course of The Drove through a narrow belt of woodland, established by 1871-2 (and partly replanted in the 1990s) which contains the site of a former lodge (gone by 1937, OS) serving a drive to the stables.

North-east of the kitchen garden wall a loose group of trees, including mature holm oaks, marks the site of a probable former pond (map and field evidence) shown in existence and enclosed by an ornamental tree belt in 1871-2 (OS). An overgrown circular brick bason with a central flint and masonry dome, 35m north-east of the garden wall, appear be surviving features of a former fountain, shown in existence by 1899 (OS).

#### REFERENCES

E Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent ... (1797-1801)* [Facsimile edn 1972] *Country Life*, 57 (13 June 1925), pp 954-61; 128 (11 August 1960), pp 278-9 J Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald* (1969), p 392 T Wright, *The Gardens of Britain* 4, (1978), pp 73-6 *The Gardens of Northbourne Court*, guidebook, (nd)

Maps W Mudge, *Map of Kent*, 1" to 1 mile, 1801

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871-2, published 1877 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1906 OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1906 1937 edition

Description written: August 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.