

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HANBURY HALL

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Name:	HANBURY HALL
County:	Worcestershire
District:	Wychavon (District Authority)
Parish:	Hanbury
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.275512 Longitude: -2.0879513 National Grid Reference: SO9409664155 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000883 Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

C18 and mid C19 garden and grounds associated with a country house of c 1701 set within a landscape park. A formal garden of c 1700 reconstructed in mid 1990s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the Middle Ages Hanbury was one of the manors of the Bishop of Worcester. On the deprivation of Bishop Pates the manor passed to the Crown, by whom it was sold in the 1590s to Sir Thomas Leighton. In 1631 Edward Vernon, eldest son of a family well established in Hanbury, purchased the manor and advowson from the Leightons. Edward's grandson Thomas (d 1721), who amassed a considerable fortune as a London lawyer, invested in enlarging the family estate at Hanbury and in rebuilding over a period to create an impressive new house there c 1701. It remained the home of the Vernons until 1962 when on the death of Lady Vernon it finally passed to the National Trust to which it had been granted in 1953 under the will of her husband, Sir George Vernon (d 1940).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Hanbury lies within the bounds of the medieval forest of Feckenham, c 6km east of Droitwich and c 7km south of Bromsgrove. Hanbury Park lies 2km west of Hanbury village, and south-west of Hanbury's isolated hilltop church. The park, of c 50ha, is bounded to the south-east, its longest side, by the minor road from Hanbury to the B4090 Droitwich to Alcester road. A minor road north off the former marks the east end of the park. Otherwise its bounds follow field edges. The local topography is mostly level, and overlooked from the low rise on which the Hall sits. The lowest part of the park is to the north-west; here the tendency for the underlying clay to produce waterlogging is most marked.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The curving main drive approaches the forecourt of Hanbury Park from Pumphouse Lane, the minor road leading south-west from Hanbury village. An unusually large, three-bay lodge, probably late C18, of brick with ashlar details (listed grade II) marks the entrance. Near the Hall the drive swings to approach the forecourt up the centre of the avenue of trees which leads south-east from the Hall. In the early C18 the drive presumably ran straight down

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the avenue to the Hanbury road. The date of the change of alignment is unknown although it probably took place c 1770 when the formal landscape was swept away.

West Lodge, a brick cottage of C19 date, lies at the south-western extremity of the park. In the late C19 an avenue ran north-east from the lodge almost to the ha-ha around the Hall's grounds, but there is no evidence that this was ever an approach route. A secondary approach lies east of the main drive, leading off the Hanbury road opposite Beck's Farm and leading to the rear of the Hall. Lines of trees were planted to either side of that drive in the late C20 along the first section off the public road. The approach was created before 1880; it presumably replaced a track to the Hall c 100m to the west, present in 1830.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Hanbury Hall (listed grade I) was rebuilt and fitted out between c 1679 and c 1715. It replaced an earlier building; a pond immediately west of the Hall may be a section of the moat round the medieval house. Although designs by three men exist the Hall's architect remains unknown. Of brick with stone dressings, the main, south-east front is of two storeys and eleven bays, the centre five recessed and with a pediment supported on half columns over the centre three. The date 1701 appears between the front door and a richly framed centre window. The side elevations are also of eleven bays, those to the centre recessed to create pavilions to each corner. Extensive alterations and restoration works took place 1856-9. A Long Gallery (listed grade II*) of c 1701 lies c 30m to the north-west of the Hall, and linked to it by a 6m high brick wall. Service buildings to the rear (north) of the Hall include early C18 stables (listed grade II) and an C18 brick game larder (listed grade II). **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** Hanbury's main, south-east facade faces a forecourt with walls, gate piers and Moorish gazebos, all designed c 1855 by R W Billings (1813-74) (listed grade II). Until the C20 the walls incorporated ironwork whose elaboration matched that of the brick and stone work. Beds around the edge of the forecourt and a statue in the centre represent a mid C20 re-ordering and softening of the interior of the court, replacing a path and a fountain. In the early C18 and until c 1770 (when they were removed) there was a different arrangement, of a short inner court with statuary and a longer outer one, both with elaborate gates and screens. In the 1850s Sir Thomas Vernon reinstated the present forecourt. The gates installed at that time may have been replaced by the present ones in 1923.

The gardens around the house were apparently designed by George London (d 1714) at about the time the Hall was completed (c 1701). Early C18 views show those gardens which lay principally on the south-west side of the Hall and which were apparently destroyed by the later 1770s when a more naturalistic landscape was contrived. In 1993 a restoration of the early C18 layout was undertaken based on the contemporary views and archaeological investigations. As reconstructed the gardens comprise a sunken, quartered, parterre garden against the south-west front of the Hall, abutted by a fruit garden to the north, a segmented parterre to the south, and a woodland garden cut through with rides (the Wilderness) to the west. A pair of trellis pavilions (early 1990s) lie at the far (north-west) end of the Fruit Garden.

The main element of the early C18 gardens to survive the clearance works of the 1770s was the Cedar Walk, which led north-west from the formal gardens, continuing the main axis through them. One cedar remained in 1997; otherwise the Cedar Walk comprises a double avenue of oaks, perhaps of late C19 date. Further planting in the late C20 extended the line of the Walk to close to the west boundary of the park.

In the mid C18 the garden area was apparently extended to the west, and c 1745 a nine-bay brick orangery (listed grade II*) with stone details and a low pediment, embellished with a finely carved basket of fruit and flowers, was built beyond the Wilderness. A mushroom house of c 1860 abuts the rear of the orangery.

It was probably when the early C18 layout was swept away in the 1770s that the ha-ha (listed grade II) was constructed, sweeping around the south-east side of the Hall before turning up its north-east side and enclosing some 9ha. A Buckler drawing of 1833 showing deer close to the Hall is probably fanciful. The main planting of the pleasure grounds within the ha-ha probably took place in c 1860 following the reconstruction of the Hall, and many of the specimen conifers date from that time.

PARK The park is permanent pasture in 1997 and little of it appears to have been ploughed since the early C18. Extensive areas of relatively narrow ridge and furrow of C18 or early C19 date survive underlying the parkland features, especially in the northern part of the park and in the area south-west of the kitchen gardens. The park was probably created c 1700, at the time the house was rebuilt and the formal gardens laid out. Its easternmost section, between Beck's Farm and St Mary's Church, was added to it 1830 - 1884. Deer were last kept in the park in the 1920s.

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A number of avenues were laid out c 1700, and as with the gardens, George London may have been involved. The principal avenues were those which approached either side of the forecourt from the south-east, flanking the main approach. About 1970 the elm avenue in that position was replaced by one of lime; at the same time the avenue was carried south-east of the Hanbury road by c 300m, reintroducing a mid to late C19 extension of the avenue. Little if any trace remained in the late C20 of the other avenues and tree-lined walks laid out in the early C18: the 584 yard Lime Tree Walk running north-east to the park boundary, and the 633 yard Long Walk. The latter, north of the Hall but not aligned on it, led north-north-east to the park boundary past the north side of the fan-like Semicircle. The Semicircle (for which a design by London survives) was set on a slight promontory on the highest point of the park and intended to give distant views to hills and church steeples. A mature, widely spaced plantation covered the area of The Semicircle in 1997.

A good deal of planting in the park appears to have gone on in the second half of the C19. The continuation of the Cedar Walk has already been mentioned, probably of a similar date being a line of oaks which runs parallel with and west of the west wall of the kitchen gardens. The park as a whole contains numerous mature specimen trees, largely oaks, scattered, in clumps, and as the survivors of shelter belts. It also contains specimen coniferous trees, again probably mid to late C19; especially notable is a clump of Wellingtonia c 150m north of the Cedar Walk.

Other features in the park include numerous ponds and marl pits, among the former Brick Kiln Pool, c 300m north of the Hall and reputedly the source of the clay for its bricks. West of that pool is a brick and stone monument to the horse 'Pulpit' (d 1857), with at its foot a grave marker of 'Allan' (d 1872). Further west still, adjoining the west boundary of the park, are the earthworks of the kennels present in the late C19 and early C20.

A medieval deer park in the eastern part of the parish (and not impinging on the later park) was inclosed in the C17.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled gardens lie c 200m west of the Hall, and are approached from the area to its rear by the straight, evergreen-hedged, Primrose Walk (later C19) which enters the main garden compartment through an arched gateway. The Primrose Walk vista was originally carried across that garden and out to the park beyond through a gate, later blocked, in the west wall of the garden. The gardens were apparently developed in this area only after the 1730s, and the walls (listed grade II) are of the C18 and especially the C19. A range of sheds of c 1860, adapted c 1990 for use by the National Trust, runs across the interior of the main compartment. No glasshouses survive, and the interior is grass. Abutting that compartment to the south, and separated from the park by railings, is Kyte's Orchard. The main orchard area, newly replanted in the 1980s, lies north of the Primrose Walk. Immediately north of that is the Gardener's Cottage, a substantial mock half-timbered and tile-hung house of c 1860.

North of the kitchen gardens and orchards is a further, five-sided, walled and iron-railed compartment of probably C18 date, with Ice House Cottage (listed grade II) of like date at its south-east corner. Immediately to the west of the compartment is a series of three ponds, the lowest where ice was made for storage in the C18 icehouse (listed grade II) east of the cottage. In the C18 called Lower Menagerie, and adjoined to the south by an enclosure called Upper Menagerie, the compartment may at some stage have been a kennels court. The Listing description records a tradition that Ice House Cottage was built as a garden pavilion. Eight tons of Westmorland slate are recorded in the Vernon family archives as having been bought for the Menagerie in 1780. REFERENCES T R Nash, Collections for the History of Worcestershire I, (1794), p 548 and facing pl The Victoria History of the County of Worcester 3, (1913), pp 372-5 Country Life, 39 (22 April 1916), pp 502-8; 143 (4 January 1968), pp 18-22; no 50 (12 December 1991), pp 48-51 Studies in Worcestershire Local History I, (1980) C Dyer, Hanbury: Settlement and Society in a Woodland Landscape (1991) Hanbury Hall Garden Restoration. Application for EC Support for Pilot Project to Conserve European Architectural Heritage, (National Trust 1993) Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire, guidebook, (National Trust 1994) Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire: Garden Guide, guidebook, (National Trust 1994) S Lacy, Gardens of the National Trust (1996), pp 133-4

Maps Hanbury Hall and Park, 1830, (BA7335/143 (f 705.7)), (Worcestershire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: Worcestershire sheet 22 SE, 1st edition published 1884 Worcestershire sheet 29 NE, 1st edition published 1884 Worcestershire sheet 22 SE, 1930 edition Worcestershire sheet 29 NE, 1930 edition

Archival items Vernon family archives (705:7BA7335, including vouchers in boxes 23-4), (Worcestershire Record Office)

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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.