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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BASING HOUSE

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

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Name:	BASING HOUSE
County:	Hampshire
District:	Basingstoke and Deane (District Authority)
Parish:	Old Basing and Lychpit
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.269119 Longitude: -1.0532048 National Grid Reference: SU6614952644 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000138 Date first listed: 31-May-1984

Details

The grounds and walled garden of a demolished Tudor house which were laid out in the C17 and C18 as vineyards and pleasure grounds, with the addition of a C20 parterre garden.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT The site of Basing House has been in virtually continuous occupation since the Iron Age period. In 1066 the manor of Basing was given by William the Conqueror to Hugh de Port who built a motte and bailey castle some 1.5km to the north of the present site. By the end of the C12 the de Ports had changed their name to St John, moved to the site of Basing House, and built a new ringwork and bailey castle. This was inherited in 1428 by the Paulet family (VCH 1908). Sir William Paulet, later to become the first Marquess of Winchester, carried out extensive building works, erecting in 1531 the first of his two houses on the site. He received licence to crenellate what subsequently became known as the 'old house' or Citadel the same year (Garden Hist 1987). Gardens and a dovecote formed part of these works. Some twenty years later, on achieving high office and wealth (he became Lord Treasurer), he embarked upon a 'new house' which, together with the 'old', was 'even larger than most of the king's palaces' (guide leaflet). During the Civil War and following a series of sieges, the houses were sacked and burned by Cromwell and his troops and the site became a source of local building materials. At the Restoration, the Paulets regained Basing but chose to demolish the houses and build a new house nearby (close to the present Great Barn or Grange on the immediate north of The Street). The ruins of Basing and its Tudor garden were repaired and improved by the sixth Marquess (ennobled as the first Duke of Bolton) for productive kitchen use as orchards and vineyards (Morris 1947). Following the new house being burned down and, by 1740, demolished, the Paulet family moved to their newly built house at Hackwood (qv) which had formed part of the hunting park to Basing and which was linked to it by chestnut avenues and other park rides (Garden Hist 1987). During the mid to late C18, the ruins and their setting were transformed into a picturesque landscape with walled walks around the Keep and a new lodge was built; these are shown on Brown's survey of 1798. The site was further altered and the ruins damaged by the construction of the Basingstoke canal to the north-west in the 1790s. Having acquired the name Orde Powlett and the Bolton baronetcy in 1797, the family maintained connections with Basing through their use of the lodge which became known as Basing House. Archaeological interest in the site began in the 1870s (guide leaflet) and was actively encouraged in the early C20 when Lord Bolton permitted systematic excavation of the

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site by Charles Peers in 1914. In 1908 Lord Bolton also built a small museum, known now as The Bothey, beneath the site of which walls were found which are possibly those of Sir William Paulet's C16 banqueting house (ibid). The lodge was extended and lived in permanently by the Orde Powletts and tenants during the Second World War when the Tudor garden was used as a kitchen garden. The whole site was bought by Hampshire County Council between 1972 and 1974 and part of the 'new house' excavated in 1990. In 1989-90, a new formal parterre in early C17 style by Elizabeth Banks Associates was laid out within the Tudor walled garden. The site remains (1999) in local authority ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Basing House lies on the south-west edge of Basing, some 2km due east of the centre of Basingstoke. The c 9ha site occupies ground which rises gently south-eastwards from the valley floor of the River Lodden. To the west the site is enclosed by walls and bounded by the former (now dry and partially tree-covered) course of the Basingstoke canal and the adjacent Redbridge Lane, beyond which is the flat valley of the River Lodden with its lightly wooded landscape of meadows and ponds. To the north are further sections of wall, dating from the C16 to C20, which enclose gardens or form the fronts of dwellings on The Street and Crown Lane (Garrison Gate Cottage, Turret and Mews Cottages, all listed grade II). To the east and south, beyond the boundary hedgerows, lies the open level grassland of Basingstoke Common and, to the east, further housing in Basing.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The entrance to the site is at the north corner from The Street lane at the Garrison Gate (listed grade II). This single-carriageway arched opening comprises a tall rectangle of red-brick walling, surmounted by stepped brickwork and surmounted by decorative castellations. It is the only surviving Tudor gateway on the site although its castellations were added in 1900 (guide leaflet). From the gateway, a crushed-stone drive leads south to the Keep, crossing en-route the course of the canal on a bridge with a red-brick parapet (1797; listed grade II). In the Tudor period, this entrance led to the stores and stables north of the house which itself may have had its main entrance on the south side (guide leaflet).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The 'old' and 'new' houses (listed grade II and a scheduled ancient monument) lie to the south and east of the Garrison Gate and survive only as a series of earthworks and excavated built structures. The remains of the 'old house' built from 1531, lie in the centre of the site, occupying the entire area within the circle of the steeply banked, grassed earthwork of the ringwork (known as the Citadel) of the C11 and C12 castle. Destroyed in the Civil War in 1645 and demolished subsequently by the first Duke of Bolton in 1690, the surviving remains of the 'old house' include the brick bridge spanning the dry moat on the north side and, within the Citadel, open cellars and level areas representing several of its former courtyards including a fan-shaped one with a flint-cobbled surface. Sections of walls above the grass bank survive from the walkway the first Duke built when using the Citadel as a vineyard. To the east and north-east of the castle bank lies the site of the 'new house'. Built some twenty years later and forming a connected whole with the 'old house' (Hollar engraving, c 1644), its partial excavation in 1990 revealed the walled basement of the north wing. The 'new house' was destroyed and demolished with the 'old' in the C17.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens lie north-west of the Citadel and comprise a c 150m x 50m rectangular enclosure, truncated at the north end by the Basingstoke canal and surrounded by red-brick walls ranging from 2m to 4m in height and averaging c 1m in thickness (listed grade II). Built into the west corner is an octagonal pigeon-cote tower with a conical tiled roof (listed grade II*); there is a further similar tower with a thatched roof some 100m further north along the wall (listed II). These, converted in the C17 and C18 from Tudor battlemented turrets, and the garden walls, are contemporary with William Paulet's C16 houses, the north-west wall forming part of the curtain wall built in 1531 and originally extending almost a mile in length (guide leaflet). The south end of the garden is filled with a square, slightly sunken box and gravel parterre, laid out in 1989-90 using designs based on heraldic devices drawn from the Paulet family's arms and decorated tiles found on the site. The parterre is surrounded by a gravelled walk which on the south-east side climbs higher to run along the top of a steep earthwork bank. The toes of the surrounding banks to the parterre are edged with a dwarf wall, reconstructed on Tudor foundations which form the only evidence of garden activity before the C18. Following the Restoration, the walled gardens were used for fruit and vineyards (Morris 1947) and by 1798 the sunken area was recorded as a kitchen garden (Brown survey, 1798). The garden is overlooked at its south-east corner by a two-storey red-brick dwelling with a tiled roof known as

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Basing House (listed grade II). Its eastern wing has gothic windows and a porch with decorative bargeboards. Built as a lodge in the mid C18 by the dukes of Bolton, it has been extended in the C19 and C20. Some 35m further south and connected by a line of mature yews stands The Bothey (listed II), a small, rustic red-brick building erected in 1908 for the then Lord Bolton as a museum. Its older foundations may be those of a Tudor banqueting house (guide leaflet). Northwards, in a triangle of land formed by the south-east garden wall and the lodge and Bothey, a few fruit trees in grass stand on the site of an orchard, recorded on Brown's survey (1798). The orchard served as a burial ground for Royalist soldiers.

PARK The site of the two houses is set within largely open grassland which was known as Basing Park from at least 1872 (OS). Immediately surrounding the Citadel is the dry ditch and bank, the latter topped by a clipped hedge, which formed the outer bailey defences to the C11 and C12 castle. A level area within this, to the north of the bridge and entrance to the Citadel, was referred to in the mid C18 as a bowling green (Pococke 1754). To the north of this lies the dry course of the Basingstoke canal. To the south and south-east, the outer Norman bailey bank is surmounted by further earthworks of the Civil War period. The south-west corner of the park has a light tree cover and contains the site of a former car park.

REFERENCES

R Pococke, *Travels through England II*, (1754), p 159 *Victoria History of the County of Hampshire IV*, (1911), pp 115-21
C Morris, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (1947), p 59
N Pevsner and D Lloyd, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1967), pp 88-9
Garden History 15, no 2 (1987), pp 94-109
Basing House, guide leaflet, (nd)

Maps Basing Enclosure map, 1797 (Hampshire Record Office)
William Brown, *Survey of Basing*, 1798 (Bolton Papers), (Hampshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1871-2 2nd edition published 1896 3rd edition published 1910 1932 edition
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1872 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1913 1932 edition

Archival items The Bolton Papers are held at the Hampshire Record Office, Winchester.

Description written: April 1999 Amended: July 2001 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: January 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.