

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WILBRAHAM TEMPLE

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

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Name: WILBRAHAM TEMPLE

County: Cambridgeshire

District: South Cambridgeshire (District Authority)

Parish: Great Wilbraham

County: Cambridgeshire

District: South Cambridgeshire (District Authority)

Parish: Little Wilbraham

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.197535
Longitude: 0.27178074
National Grid Reference: TL 55363 57910
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000397
Date first listed: 16-Jan-1985

Details

An early C19 park and gardens, with late C20 additions, surrounding a house of C17 origin.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Great Wilbraham was owned in the Middle Ages by the Knights Templar, from which the present house derives its name. The manor house was built in c 1600 and, following the Restoration was sold in 1682 to Dr Thomas Watson who enlarged it. At this time the Temple was surrounded by a series of small gardens. Watson was succeeded by his niece Joanna Watson Ward, who left the estate to her son. In 1788 Thomas Watson Ward sold the estate to the Rev James Hicks, who was a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge. Hicks made further alterations to the house and laid out a park in the early years of the C19. He died without an heir in 1825 and the property passed to a distant relative, Mr Edward Simpson, who took the name Hicks. He was for a time MP for Cambridgeshire. His grandson, Captain Reginald Stanley Hicks, a well-known sporting figure in the county, succeeded to the estate in 1900. Captain Hicks' niece married into the Hyde Smith family in 1959 and came to live at Wilbraham Temple from 1962 onwards. In 1980 the site was divided, the house and most of the park being sold to Richard Wright. It remains (1999) in divided private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Wilbraham Temple lies on the north-east side of the village of Great Wilbraham, c 7km east of Cambridge. It is set in a rural part of the county, well populated with small villages, and is surrounded by generally flat agricultural land occasionally punctuated by trees and woodlands. The irregular-shaped c 22ha site is bounded to the west by Great Wilbraham Road, and to the south by the village of Great Wilbraham, being surrounded on all other boundaries by open farmland. Trees enclose the park on all sides with dense plantations to the north and west. A

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stream springs from the south-east boundary and flows north-west behind the house. The park to the south of the house is set on gently undulating ground with a view west towards the top of Great Wilbraham church tower.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach is from the south through simple gates at the end of Temple End in the village. The drive runs north through the park, is carried over the ha-ha and arrives at the south-west front. It divides just before the ha-ha, the west fork running round to a barn complex to the south-west of the house and the east fork continuing through the northern woods as a rough track which emerges on the north boundary, beside a late C19 lodge cottage which marks what was the C19 main entrance to the park.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Wilbraham Temple (listed grade II*) is a three-storey, rendered five-bay house with recessed two-bay wings either side of the main block. The c 1600 core of the house was given this imposing new entrance front to the south-west in the early C19 by the Rev Hicks. The garden front to the north-east has two Georgian two-bay windows rising through two storeys and crowned by gables. A late C20 conservatory has also been added here while an earlier glasshouse (mid C19) is attached to the west corner of the house, facing the south-west lawn. A set of outbuildings lie c 350m to the west of the house. These include a barn and a stable range now (1999) converted to dwellings.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens at Wilbraham Temple surround the house on all sides. The south-west, entrance front looks onto a curved lawn bordered to the east by a mixed shrubbery and to the west by a mixed border beside a wooden pergola with brick piers (1990s). The lawn runs down to the ha-ha beside the drive to the outbuildings, with the park beyond to the south-west. On the south-east front a flag terrace with box-hedged border (1980s) leads from the house to steps which descend to a lawn set with an astrolabe, all enclosed by curved yew hedges and borders, bounded to the south-east by the ha-ha overlooking the park. The flag terrace continues round the main garden front on the north-east side where further steps lead down to a lawn flanked by trees leading to the stream which runs from south-east to north-west through the gardens. Beyond the stream the ground rises to a Temple placed on higher ground. This area is planted more informally with longer grass, trees and shrubs. An upper path, reached via footbridges over the stream, creates a circuit walk along the edge of the Wilderness woodland which forms the north-east boundary of the gardens. The structure of these gardens remains the same as that depicted on the 1817 OS map although they have, since the 1980s, been the subject of developments including the addition of the house terrace, the erection of the Temple, the construction of the ha-has and the deepening of the stream.

On the north-west front is a small courtyard leading to the timber-framed, plaster-rendered and tiled, detached late C15 solar wing of the earlier manor house (listed grade II*), now (1999) used as an outbuilding to the main house. Beyond this to the north-west lies the walled kitchen garden (see below).

PARK Wilbraham Temple has a small (c 22ha) park laid out to the south-west, south and south-east of the house. To the west and south is open parkland laid to grass and planted with a variety of trees, including mature lime and horse chestnut close to the house and a greater variety of species recently (1980s) planted in large clumps across the open park. On the western boundary c 400m west-north-west of the House stands The Grange in its own c 1ha garden. This late C19 three-storey house was erected by Stanley Hicks as a gamekeeper's cottage but became a separate private dwelling when the estate was sold in the 1980s. To the east and north are dense plantations and perimeter belts of trees, that to the north beyond the Wilderness being known as the Star and Garter woodland.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled garden covers c 0.5ha and lies c 15m north-west of the house. The walls are a mix of ages including some late C20 additions, constructed with a range of materials including flint, flint and brick, and brick. A swimming pool has been added (1980s) within a small enclosed inner compartment behind a high, curved, old brick wall on the south corner. The remainder of the garden is being developed (1999) as a flower garden with shrub beds, grass, yew hedges and fruit trees. It also contains a rectangular carp pool of earlier origin, shown in this position on the OS map of 1817, which also records that the area was an enclosed garden at this time.

REFERENCES

H P Stokes, *A history of Wilbraham parishes* (1926) N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (1970), p 398 J Kenworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981) p 28 *Cambridgeshire Parklands*,

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(Cambridgeshire Record Office 1990), p 50 T Way, A study of the impact of imparkment on the social landscape of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire from c 1080 to 1760, BAR Brit Ser 258 (1997), p 279

Maps Enclosure map for Great Wilbraham, 1799 (P174/26/1), (Cambridgeshire Record Office)

OS Surveyor's drawings, 1817 (British Library Maps) OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886 2nd edition published 1903

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1885 2nd edition published 1901

Archival items The Hicks family papers are held at the Cambridgeshire Record Office.

Description written: December 1999 Amended: December 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: January 2001

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.