

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PATSHULL HALL

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Name:	PATSHULL HALL
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Boningale
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Worfield
County:	Staffordshire
District:	South Staffordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Pattingham and Patshull
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.608911 Longitude: -2.2959972 National Grid Reference: SJ8005301278 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000552 Date first listed: 29-Jul-1991

Details

Late C17 formal gardens and pleasure grounds, extensively reworked in the mid and late C18, and again in the mid C19, forming the setting of a country house and surrounded by a park of 550ha.

The Patshull estate lies on the county boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire, the greater part of the estate, including Patshull Hall, being in Staffordshire.

The Hall (I) occupies an elevated site enjoying views particularly to the east and south. It is approached by several drives. To the north, a straight drive leads from Shropshire Lodge. A gently curving drive runs from Albrighton Lodge a little to the east, both lodges being on Rushey Lane which forms the northern boundary of the site. The drives merge before leading to the screened forecourt (II*), presumably dating from the later C17, which extends from the north side of the Hall.

A drive from a lodge on Patshull Road, south of the house, leads across the park, over the dam which divides Church Pool from The Great Pool, and enters the forecourt from the west side. Several other lodges stand round the perimeter of the park. The moated manor house which stood on lower ground below the present house, was owned by the Astley family from 1451 until 1765. Sir John Astley inherited as a minor (aged 1) when his father, Sir Richard died in 1688. Both spent large sums on landscaping the grounds and the property was considered by Plot to be 'the most accomplish't and delicious Mansion in the whole County'. Patshull Hall (II) was rebuilt c.1750 by James Gibbs (d.1754) for Sir John on a new site, and completed 1754-58 by William Baker. Baker was responsible for the parlour, library, stables and chapel and presumably designed the forecourt which contains these buildings. The entrance gateway is also his work.

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The estate was bought by Sir George Pigot (1719-1777), in 1765, on his return as Governor of Madras for the East India Company. He too was responsible for extensive works in the grounds, probably in consultation with Lancelot Brown. There is an undated entry in Brown's account book under 'Lord Pigot', of £52 10s for 'a general plan for the Place and Journeys'. Work on the grounds continued under Pigot's brother, Sir Robert (d.1796) and his son, George (d.1841).

Further alterations and additions to the house were carried out in the later 1850s by William Burn, for the 5th Earl of Dartmouth, and Burn also designed lodges, farm buildings and cottages for the estate. The main building was further extended in the early 1880s with minor alterations continuing into the C20. The property remained in the Pigot family until the death of the 7th Earl in 1958 when most of the estate passed to the Crown in lieu of death duties. The house, garden, and 230a, were retained, and, in 1972, Patshull Properties Development Company Ltd was formed to develop the estate as a recreation centre. The house has served as a hospital during the latter part of this (C20) century until this usage ceased in 1990.

To the west, south and east of the Hall are extensive garden terraces, those to the south giving on to an expanse of lawn, and those to the west and east leading out into pleasure grounds. Constructed in the mid C19 by William Burn, they replaced the C18 terrace and balustrade. On the lawn below the west wing are the remains of a canopied wellhead brought from Pepperhill in Albrighton by Lord Dartmouth c.1880.

The main area of pleasure grounds are on Wilderness Hill to the north-east of the Hall. This was presumably the site of the late C17 grove, a formal arrangement planted with evergreens and cut through with straight walks. A good collection of conifers has since been planted, probably in the mid C19, amongst many earlier lime trees.

A band of ornamental plantings leads down the western edge of the gardens to St Mary's Church. The church was built in 1743 by James Gibbs, for Sir John Astley, and reconstructed 1874-78 by W C Banks. The two pillars surmounted by game cocks, recorded c.1800 as standing below the south front, might be those surviving to the south-east of the churchyard. They would seem to date from the C17 gardens.

By the later C17, there were elaborate gardens next to the house including an extensive arrangement of formal walks and enclosures, with prospect mounds, statuary, knots and waterworks. These gardens were highly praised by visitors including Celia Fiennes and Robert Plot, both of who left descriptions of them.

The park is divided from the pleasure grounds by a ha-ha. It is dominated by The Great Pool which stretches from a point level with the house, south across the length of the park to its southern boundary. Digging of the south end of this lake was started in 1768 and possibly incorporated an earlier mill pond. Lancelot Brown may have been involved with its design.

By the end of the C18 the pools on either side of the house had been extended to form a Y-shaped lake, the western branch of which is called Church Pool. The Doric temple was built, possibly by Gibbs, in the mid C18, on the west bank of the southern tip of the lake. Brick wings were added c.1840 and in 1980 it was incorporated as part of Temple hotel.

To the east of the lake is the Old Park and, beyond this, the High Park, now used as a golf course. To the west the park is divided into fields and edged with plantations.

Woodland was thinned to remove formal clumps and to create openings, as part of the mid C18 improvements. In 1796 Pitt observed that the estate 'still contains large quantities of timber although considerable quantities have been cut away of late years'.

The extensive brick-walled kitchen garden, with its impressive collection of greenhouses (now ruinous) and outbuildings, stands to the north-west of the Hall. To the west of this complex is Patshull Farm.

REFERENCES: Plot, R., 'The Natural History of Staffs', 1686, 338-39,359,381,387, pl.facing 390 Pitt, W., 'General view of agriculture of ...Stafford', 1796, 96 Nightingale, J., 'Topographical .. description of Staffs', 1810, 856 'Gardening World', v.7, 1890, 42 'Gardeners' Chronicle', i 1891, 701-02; i 1895, 273 Fiennes, C., 'Journeys', 1949, 228-30 Stroud, D., 'Capability Brown', 1975, 235-36 'Victoria County History', 165-67

MAPS: Yates' map of Staffordshire, c.1771

Legal

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