

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

UPTON HOUSE

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

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**UPTON HOUSE**

Name:	UPTON HOUSE
County:	Warwickshire
District:	Stratford-on-Avon (District Authority)
Parish:	Ratley and Upton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.105320 Longitude: -1.4587307 National Grid Reference: SP3716945359 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001197 Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

## Details

C17 and C18 formal gardens, remodelled in the early C20 by Kitty Lloyd Jones and Percy Morley Horder, set in an C18 park developed with the advice of Sanderson Miller.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the late C12 Upton, a township within the parish of Ratley, was owned by the Arden family, who were succeeded by the de Upton family in the C14; this family remained in possession until the late C15. By 1500, the small medieval village had been enclosed for sheep farming, and the houses demolished (Hodgetts 1999). At about the same time, Upton was purchased by Sir William Danvers, in whose family the estate remained until the late C17. Sir William built a substantial house, but in 1678-9 his heir was forced by debt to sell the property to Simon Archer of Tysoe (ibid). Archer in turn sold to Sir Rushout Cullen, a London merchant, in 1688. Cullen rebuilt the Danvers' house, completing the core of the present house by 1695 (guidebook), and created formal gardens, for which a small area of additional land was purchased c 1695. Dying without an heir in 1732, Upton was sold to William Bumstead, who was also a London merchant. Bumstead made additions to the house and developed the park with the advice of his neighbour, Sanderson Miller (1716-80), of Radway Grange (qv). At Bumstead's death in 1757, Upton was sold to the banker, Francis Child, of Osterley Park, Middlesex (qv). Francis, and his son, Sir Robert, used Upton as a hunting box rather than a principal residence, and made only limited changes to the house and grounds, again with the advice of Miller; the layout of the gardens and park were recorded on an estate map of 1774. Following the elopement of Sir Robert's only daughter with the Earl of Westmorland in 1782, Upton and Sir Robert's fortune was left in trust for his granddaughter, Sarah Sophia (d 1867), who in 1804 married George Villiers, who succeeded as fifth Earl of Jersey in 1805 (d 1859). Lord and Lady Jersey visited Upton in 1806, and their son, Lord Villiers lived there in the mid C19, but for much of the C19 the estate was let, while the family resided at Middleton Park, Oxfordshire (qv).

In 1894 the estate was sold to Lord Chesham, and again in 1898 to Andrew Motion, chairman of the Cannon Brewery. In 1927 Upton was sold to Walter Samuel, second Viscount Bearsted, who had purchased neighbouring Sunrising House in 1918, and whose fortune derived from the Shell Transport and Trading Company, founded by his father. As Director of the company, he was also a philanthropist, art collector and prominent member of the Anglo-Jewish community. Lord Bearsted commissioned

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Percy Morley Horder to remodel the house in 1927-9, and make improvements to the gardens; further changes were made under the supervision of Kitty Lloyd Jones (1898-1978). The House was used to accommodate Lord Bearsted's significant art collection, much of which, with the House and gardens, he left to the National Trust at his death in 1948. The third Viscount continued to live at Upton until his death in 1986, and was succeeded by his daughter. In 1988-90 a new family home, Upton Viva, was built to the south-east of Upton House to the design of Julian Bicknell. Today (1999), the site remains in divided ownership

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Upton House is situated c 5.5km south-east of the village of Kington, and c 6km north-west of Banbury, to the south of the A422 road which runs north-west from Banbury to Stratford-upon-Avon, on the border between Warwickshire and Oxfordshire. The c 92ha site comprises some 12ha of formal and informal gardens and pleasure grounds and c 80ha of parkland, lakes and woodland. The site is bounded to the north and east by a stone wall which follows the A422 road, while to the south-east and south it is separated from adjacent farmland by areas of woodland. To the west the site adjoins agricultural land east of Sugarswell Lane. The site has a dramatic landform, with a deep valley dropping away to the south of the House and extending south-east beyond the site boundary; there is a further deep valley immediately to the west of the House. To the west and north the site rises to a plateau above the Edge Hill escarpment which lies c 1km to the west of the House. There are extensive views south-east from the gardens and terraces south of the House across the park, Temple Pool, and beyond into Oxfordshire, framed to the east by Heath Wood which extends c 250m south-west beyond the county boundary. A vista south from the House, south lawn and terraces extends across agricultural land and the former Shenington Airfield to Shenlow Hill and Epwell Hill c 2km and c 3km south-south-west of the House.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Upton House is approached from the A422 road to the north. A pair of tall stone piers surmounted by square caps support elaborate wrought-iron panels and overthrow (gates removed, 1999), and are flanked by concave panels of spear-headed iron railings set on low stone walls. The railings terminate in the returns of stone wing walls which extend c 40m east and west of the entrance, in which are set a pair of wrought-iron gates in carved stone architraves. Lawns east and west of the entrance are retained by low, convex stone walls which extend north from the gate piers. This entrance, designed by P Morley Horder in 1927-8 (CL 1936), leads to a level tarmac drive which is aligned to the south on the entrance facade of the House, and to the north on a specimen horse chestnut to the north of the A422. An avenue of pines set on mown grass, originally planted in three rows to east and west of the drive, but today (1999) largely reduced to a double avenue, extends c 130m south from the entrance. Beyond this point, yews and evergreen shrubbery under mature trees are brought close to the drive, which continues for c 210m south to reach the forecourt on the north side of the House. The forecourt is enclosed to the north, east and west by a tall yew hedge and low stone and brick walls. A pair of yew topiary acorns flank the entrance from the drive into the forecourt, while within the hedged enclosure a rectangular area of tarmac is bordered to east and west by narrow lawns and beds. A flight of stone steps ascends to the front door, and is flanked to east and west by a pair of stone mounting blocks (east block listed grade II). Rusticated stone piers flank an entrance at the south-east corner of the forecourt leading to the service court to the east, and a similar pair of stone piers to the south-west leads to an early C20 monumental flight of stone steps which descends to the west service drive. To the north-east of the forecourt a pair of early C20 rusticated stone piers flank a further entrance to the service court. A similar pair of stone piers to the north-west leads to a service drive which zig-zags north and south below a monumental, buttressed drystone wall retaining the drive, to reach early C20 estate cottages c 50m north-west of the House, and Upton Farm c 210m west of the House. The service drive continues c 320m west to reach Sugarswell Lane, while another drive extends south from Upton Farm for c 270m to reach the park south of the House. To the north-east of the forecourt a further service drive runs c 160m south-east through informal late C19 conifers and shrubbery to reach the late C19 stables. This drive serves as access to the late C20 visitors' car park which lies c 100m north-east of the House, and which is separated from the drive by metal estate fences and is laid out with a row of deciduous trees along its southern boundary. From the stables the drive turns north-north-east and extends c 270m to the A422 road; this drive now (1999) gives access to the late C20 house, Upton Viva.

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The 1774 estate plan shows the principal drive and service drives conforming closely to the arrangement which survives today (1999), while the forecourt assumed its present form in the early C20 as part of Morley Horder's remodelling for Lord Bearsted. The planting, with the triple avenue of pines to the north and the shrubbery avenue to the south, reflects complex early or mid C18 underlying earthworks. To the east of the drive a terrace breaks forward c 30m north of the forecourt, and recedes c 190m north. This arrangement is echoed to the west of the drive, but here the ground drops sharply into a valley west of the House c 190m north of the forecourt. The wide lawn north of the terrace and south of the entrance is planted with the avenue of pines, each row of trees being planted on a shallow terrace (now eroded, 1999).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Upton House (listed grade II\*) has been developed from the house built by Sir Rushout Cullen in 1695 which replaced a C16 house on the site built by Sir William Danvers. The design of the central block, which formed Cullen's house, has been ascribed to the Smiths of Warwick (listed building description). This building was altered in the early C18 for William Bumstead (d 1757), and in the mid C18 single-storey wings with canted bays to the south were added to the east and west of the original range for Francis Child. Late C19 alterations including a pair of low towers on the north facade were removed by Morley Horder in 1927-9. Horder also raised the two canted bays on the south facade to full height and constructed a new gallery to the west of the House, on the site of earlier service quarters, which were replaced to the east of the House. The House is built in local Hornton stone, with hipped stone slate roofs. The north or entrance facade has a mid C18 broken segmental pediment above a mid C18 doorcase set in the central, late C17 block. The two principal floors are lit by tall sash windows and there are attic dormers. The south or garden facade retains a central late C17 doorcase with slightly projecting east and west wings flanking the recessed central range, while to the east and west are mid C18 and early C20 wings with full-height canted bay windows. The south facade is of two storeys, with attic dormers set above an early C20 timber cornice.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** Formal gardens lie to the south of the House, with further informal pleasure grounds to the south-east and in the valley to the west. Stone steps with wrought-iron balustrades descend from the garden door in the south facade to two early C20 terraces designed by Morley Horder in 1927-9 and planted c 1930 by Kitty Lloyd Jones (Berger and Burns 1998). The upper terrace has a flagged walk running from east to west between panels of lawn, with a flower border below the House. To the east, south and west the terrace is retained by stone walls and balustrades which sweep down from the east and west. The west balustrade allows views down to a small formal garden, Lady Bearsted's Garden, at the south-west corner of the House. A central flagged walk extends south from the House to a flight of stone steps which descends to the lower terrace which comprises a wide grass walk flanked to north and south by flower borders. To the south the terrace is retained by a low stone wall with saddle coping, while axially placed stone steps flanked by a pair of stone urns descend south to the lawn. To the west, the lower terrace leads to a short flight of stone steps which descends to a short grass walk, from which steps ascend south to the lawn, and descend north to a paved formal garden. The paved garden at the south-west corner of the House was designed to be seen from Lady Bearsted's bedroom above (ibid), and comprises two divisions separated by a yew hedge. To the east a roughly cruciform area of paving separates four borders of low shrubs, while the west compartment has a central circular area of geometric paving with a central saddle stone and corner beds planted with fuchsias. To the north is a stone bench seat set in an alcove in the south wall of the early C20 gallery, on which figs are trained, while to the west a stone balustrade allows views down to the Banqueting House and Bog Garden in the valley west of the House. A walk leading south-west from the paved garden into the valley survives from those shown on the 1774 estate plan. The early C20 terraces replace simple grass banks, steps and a geometric parterre set in grass which were shown in early C20 photographs (CL 1904).

From the second terrace, stone steps flanked by stone urns replacing C18 French bronze urns stolen c 1970 descend to a level lawn which extends to the full width of the House and some 60m south from the terraces. To the west the lawn is enclosed by four mature cedars dating from c 1740 (guidebook), and by yews which stand to the west of a C19 tiled base for a seat or summerhouse c 40m south-west of the House. To the east, a shallow grass bank ascends to an early C20 rock garden designed and planted by Kitty Lloyd Jones (Berger and Burns 1998). The rock garden extends along the east side of the lawn, returning at the south-east corner to enclose a mid C20 rectangular swimming pool on its north and east sides. To the east of the pool a wide flight of stone steps ascends to a semicircular lawn and painted timber seat which are sheltered by shrubs planted on the rockwork. Informal steps and paths lead through the rock garden to join a walk which leads south-east through mature

evergreen shrubbery and pines to reach an area of informal shrub and herbaceous planting on the south-facing slope east of the garden terraces. The south lawn with the cedars and shrubbery to the west and the shrubbery walk to the east are shown on the 1774 estate plan.

To the south, the lawn is retained by a brick wall which acts as a ha-ha, revealing wide views across the surrounding land and south-east down the valley to Temple Pool and beyond to Oxfordshire, and south across the valley to the park. The steep slope below the south lawn is laid out in four parallel terrace walks. The upper terrace comprises a grass walk with shrubs and roses trained on the brick retaining wall to the north, and a low hedge of rosemary and lavender to the south. A grass slope at the east end of the terrace is flanked by yew topiary and descends to the second terrace which is aligned on a doorway in a high, late C17 or early C18 brick wall (listed grade II) which encloses the terraces to the east. The second terrace comprises a grass walk flanked to the north by a low drystone wall which retains the south-facing bank between the upper and second terraces, which is planted with shrubs. To the south a slope descending from the second terrace is similarly planted with specimen shrubs. The third terrace has a grass walk with the shrubbery bank to the north retained by a low rockwork wall, and a wide border to the south. The border is backed by a high, late C17 or early C18 brick wall (listed grade II), to the south of which lies the fourth terrace which overlooks the kitchen garden below. The south face of the brick wall is planted with tender shrubs and climbers, with a border below. The terraces are linked to the west by a monumental stone staircase which descends the slope from the south-west corner of the lawn in alternating single and double returning flights. Constructed in Hornton stone with balustrades and drystone retaining walls which incorporate planting pockets, the staircase was designed in outline by Morley Horder (CL 1991), but correspondence shows that its detailed design and execution was supervised by Kitty Lloyd Jones (Berger and Burns 1998). Stone walls flanking the upper flight of the staircase are surmounted by stone ball finials which replaced a further pair of C18 French bronze urns which were stolen in the 1970s.

Below the terraced gardens lies the kitchen garden, to the east of which is a sloping grass walk flanked to east and west by herbaceous borders planted by Kitty Lloyd Jones in the 1930s using a colour scheme of blue and yellow. To the west of the kitchen garden are three terraced garden enclosures of varying size. To the north, a narrow enclosure aligned on a curved, painted wooden seat is planted with standard hibiscus. Below, a square garden, known as Her Ladyship's Garden, has cruciform stone-flagged walks separating geometric mixed beds, with a standard wisteria in a central circular bed. The southern terrace, enclosed by yew hedges (that to the west planted c 1995), is a rose garden with flagged walks separating geometric beds. A lead figure surmounts a tapering pedestal at the centre of the garden. To the south of the kitchen garden, and separated from it by a row of mature standard apple trees and specimen shrubs, lies an approximately rectangular fishpond of C17 or earlier origin (estate plan, 1614). This pond, retained to the east by a high earth dam planted with trees and shrubs, is the lowest within the gardens of a chain which, in the late C18 (estate plan), comprised five ponds in the valley to the west and south of the House. The pond is surrounded by grass walks, and to the south by a late C17 or early C18 brick wall which marks the southern boundary of the gardens. To the west, the slope forming the dam to the lowest pond in the valley west of the House is planted as a nuttery. The pleasure grounds in the valley west and south-west of the House are enclosed by late C17 or early C18 brick walls (listed grade II) to the south, west and north, while to the north, the valley is overlooked by a late C17 two-storey brick banqueting house (listed grade II) which stands c 60m west of the House. The Banqueting House, now (1999) known as Bog Cottage, has a ground-floor loggia to the south, while above, four tall, sash windows look down the valley. The late C18 estate plan shows five ponds, of which four were approximately rectangular in plan, while the second pond from the north was of a more complex 'H' plan. Today (1999), of this chain of ponds, only the western half of the second pond from the north survives, c 100m south-west of the House. The southern pond, a narrow canal, is now (1999) filled in and forms a broad grass walk to the south of the second pond from the south, c 150m south-west of the House, which survives as a steep-sided rectangular depression, the outer edge of which is marked by a single row of flowering cherries. These were planted by Kitty Lloyd Jones c 1950 (Berger and Burns 1998). To the north of the cherry garden uneven areas of lawn planted mark the outline of the H-shaped pond. The rectangular depression of the northern pond was utilised by Miss Lloyd Jones in the 1930s to form the Bog Garden. Here a spring rising in the 'Monk's Well', an early C18 brick vaulted chamber (listed grade II) c 100m west of the House, feeds a pond of rocky, irregular outline, which in turn flows into a naturalistic stream whose concrete channel is disguised by rockwork and planting.

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A network of grass paths runs through the Bog Garden, carried over the stream on a rustic stone bridge south-east of the Monk's Well, and the stream broadens into a pond at the southern end of the garden, where a further rustic stone bridge crosses the outflow. The west-facing slope above the Bog Garden and below the south lawn has two terraced walks running from north to south, and a further transverse walk which ascends north-east to Lady Bearsted's Garden at the south-west corner of the House. The lowest terrace is retained by a coped stone wall, above which are several mature yew trees to the west of a gravel walk. The second terrace is retained by a brick wall with stone coping, with further yew trees lining the west side of the walk above. The gardens today (1999) represent an early and mid C20 remodelling of an existing late C17 or early C18 structure under the supervision of Kitty Lloyd Jones, with architectural elements designed by Percy Morley Horder. The 1774 estate plan shows that the chain of fishponds, walled garden and Banqueting House in the west valley, the terraces on the west- and south-facing slopes and the south fishpond formed part of the layout of the late C17 and C18 gardens. The terraces on both slopes are shown with ramped transverse walks linking the horizontal walks, which may relate to a 'theatre' mentioned in Sanderson Miller's mid C18 correspondence (Hodgetts 1999). Early C20 photographs show that with the exception of the upper south terrace, the south-facing terraces had reverted to shrubbery, the site of Her Ladyship's Garden was occupied by glasshouses, while the rose garden was a frame yard enclosed by yew hedges (CL 1904). The south-facing terraces were reformed under the supervision of Miss Lloyd Jones in the 1930s, and the modification of the ponds and terraces is reflected on the late C19 and early C20 OS maps.

**PARK** The park at Upton comprises a series of pasture enclosures on the slopes to the south and the valley to the east of the House. The surviving arrangement of field boundaries reflects the C18 landscape shown on the 1774 estate plan, which was essentially a ferme ornée with rides and walks linking a series of ornamented areas. On the north-facing slope of the enclosure c 400m south of the House, an avenue of mature sweet chestnuts frames the extensive vista south towards Shenlow Hill; an outer avenue has been planted in the late C20. To the south-east of the gardens, c 250m south-east of the House, water flows from the garden fishpond into a semicircular stone trough. A depression with a concrete dam to the south-east marks the site of a narrow rectangular pool which is shown on the 1774 estate plan. A stream (now culverted, 1999) flows south-east from the site of the pool down the valley to a rectangular pool to the north-west of the Temple Pool, c 960m south-east of the House. The Temple Pool is rectangular, with an apsidal north-west end, and is enclosed to the west by a plantation, and to the east by a single row of trees. To the north-east a steep-sided valley contains slight remains of a chain of four pools linked by cascades, which are shown on the late C18 estate plan. To the south-east the lake is retained by a high earth dam which is planted with trees, while in the middle of the dam stands a single-storey, late C18 stone temple (listed grade II). The temple has a north facade comprising a pediment supported by two single, and two pairs of, Tuscan columns, while the south facade has a tall, round-headed arch which is now blocked. The Temple Pool survives in essentially the form shown on the late C18 estate plan, with the exception of the temple, which is there shown as a structure at the north-west end of the lake with a channel flowing under it to a pool to the north. A temple is shown to the north-west of the lake in a painting by Anthony Devis (1729-1816), tentatively dated to 1803 (National Trust Collection), but the details of this building do not match those of the present structure. A temple is shown at the south end of the lake on an estate plan of 1819 (Hodgetts 1999), making the attribution of the structure in its present form and position to Sanderson Miller (listed building description) impossible. A group of some seven circular clumps of trees, including Scots pines, are arranged on high ground to the north of Temple Pool, reflecting the arrangement shown in 1774 (estate plan). Some 200m east-south-east of Upton House, the late C20 mansion Upton Viva stands within the C18 park, set in gardens developed from c 1990.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies on the south-facing slope c 110m south of the House and below the formal terraced gardens. It is enclosed to the east and west by clipped yew hedges, and to the south by mature standard apple trees and ornamental shrubbery. To the north its boundary is formed by the drystone retaining wall of the fourth and lowest of the formal terraces. The garden is divided by a central grass walk which crosses from east to west, with further perimeter grass walks lying to the south, south-east and south-west. The beds occupy the south-facing slope, with vegetables being concentrated to the north of the central walk, and soft fruit to the south. The kitchen garden remains in full cultivation (1999).

A further area of productive and flower garden lies c 130m north-east of the House and immediately to the north-west of the stables. Enclosed by privet hedges to the south, east and west, there is a range of glasshouses, including a late C19 or early C20



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timber and brick house constructed against a south-facing brick wall to the north of the garden. A range of stores and sheds remains behind the wall. This garden also remains in cultivation (1999). To the east of the House and to the north-east of the gardens is an orchard, planted with standard apple trees. The orchard is overlooked by a single-storey loggia supported on stone columns, which is built against the east wall of staff cottages to the west of the orchard.

**OTHER LAND** Three areas of woodland are included in the area here registered. Blackwell Wood, to the west of the formal gardens and c 190m south-west of the House, is an area of deciduous woodland, roughly rectangular on plan, which includes land acquired by Sir Rushout Cullen in the late C17 (Hodgetts 1999). Of the formal layout comprising a cruciform arrangement of walks with a central circular glade and a boundary walk to the north-west which is shown on the 1774 estate plan, only the central north-east to south-west walk survives today (1999) as a ride. Heath Wood lying c 1km south-east of the House extends c 1km south-west from the A422 road, and is planted on the west- and north-west-facing slopes of the valley to the east of Temple Pool. Heath Wood is today (1999) an area of mixed woodland and plantation with areas of C20 replanting, which is significant in views from the south lawn, and within the park. The Wood is shown in its present form on the 1774 estate plan and forms part of the C18 landscape. Some 400m north-north-west of the House a belt of mixed planting adjacent to the wall adjoining the A422 road and extending west c 450m from the drive to Upton Farm as far as the junction of the A422 with the road leading north to Edge Hill is included in the registered site. Now (1999) reduced to a scatter of mature trees including several cedars, this plantation is shown on the 1774 estate plan and formed part of the C18 landscape.

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Illustrations Anthony Devis, *Upton House and Temple Pool from the south, c 1803 (?)* (National Trust Collection)

Archival items Sale particulars, c 1894 (CR 157/21), (Warwickshire County Record Office) Jersey Estate papers, late C18 and C19 (L), (Warwickshire County Record Office) Sanderson Miller, correspondence and diaries, mid C18 (CR125), (Warwickshire County Record Office)

Description written: November 1999 Amended: May 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: January 2001

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 15/07/2020

## Legal

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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.