

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

CATCHFRENCH

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**CATCHFRENCH**

Name:	CATCHFRENCH
District:	Cornwall (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Deviock
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Parish:	St. Germans
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.411233 Longitude: -4.3839280 National Grid Reference: SX3071359535 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001314 Date first listed: 19-Dec-1994

## Details

Late C18 gardens and pleasure grounds for which Humphry Repton produced a Red Book in 1793.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the late C16 Catchfrench, principal house in the manor of Bonyalva, passed by marriage from the Talverne family to George Kekewich (Pett 1998). Kekewich, whose family had originated in Essex, rebuilt the house in 1580 following a fire (inscription). In 1646 Dorothy Kekewich married Francis Fox, and subsequently moved from Catchfrench to Fowey. Their descendants moved to Falmouth and Wadebridge, creating gardens at Glendurgan (qv), Penjerrick (qv), and Trebah (qv). During the mid and late C17 Catchfrench passed through several hands including Hugh Fortescue, Lord Clinton of Castle Hill, Devon (qv), before being sold in 1728 to Julius Glanville. The house was remodelled in the late C18, and in October 1792 Francis Glanville invited Humphry Repton (1752-1818), who was working at neighbouring Port Eliot (qv), to advise on the improvement of the grounds. A Red Book which was produced following this visit is dated 1793. Repton considered the site and surrounding scenery to be of such high quality that little improvement was required beyond screening the public road which, although conveniently close, detracted from the sense of importance of the estate. Repton explained in his introduction that:

'Having marked with stakes upon the spot, the lines both of the roads and plantations, the following pages will only serve to call back the remembrance of the several matters I had the honour to mention in conversation, and of course be useful in the completion of the general plan of improvement, as it is intended to be carried into execution by degrees, at your leisure'. (Red Book 1793)

The effect of Repton's improvements were described by Gilbert in 1820, who commented on:

'A terrace and shrubbery, tastefully laid out, with abundance of plants and flowers ... A lawn gently unfolds itself from hence, through an easy descent, to the banks of the Seaton, surrounded with hills, which, through their different windings, let in many distant and interesting objects'. (Gilbert 1820)

The estate remained the property of the Glanville family until 1930, when it was sold and passed through several hands before being acquired in 1987 by the present owners who have undertaken a programme of restoration. The site remains (2000) in private ownership.

Catchfrench is one of a group of sites in Cornwall at which Repton advised in the late C18 and early C19. These include Antony House (qv), Port Eliot (qv), Tregothnan (qv), and Trewarthenick (qv); the owners of these estates were connected by family and political ties.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Catchfrench is situated c 2.3km north of Hessenford, to the south of the A38 road. The site is bounded to the north by the A38 road which has been widened during the late C20, while to the east, south, and west it adjoins agricultural land from which it is separated by traditional hedge banks. The ground rises to the south of the house, while to the west the ground is generally level until the steep-sided valley of the River Seaton is reached, c 750m west of the house and beyond the boundary of the site here registered. There are views north towards Tinker's Lake framed by hanging woods to the east, and west towards a cottage; these views formed part of Repton's late C18 scheme.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal drive enters the park from the A38 road at the West Lodge (listed grade II), some 650m north-west of the house. The drive passes north-east along a serpentine route through Black Alders Wood where its line has been slightly modified (late C20) by the widening of the A38 road, before turning sharply to the south. It then climbs rising ground, sweeping across the park, a long clump bordering it to the west, to arrive at the west front of the house. The course of the drive follows that proposed by Repton in his Red Book (1793).

Catchfrench is today (2000) entered from the south-east. A track leads north-east from the public road across open farmland to reach Highpark Wood, where it divides. This track follows the line of a former public road which, before its closure, continued north-west to join the track which today passes along the north-east edge of Shippingpark Wood; this leads in turn to the West Lodge.

The drive leaves the line of the former public road where it meets Highpark Wood. The lodge which Repton proposed for this site, with a covered seat to enjoy the view to the north-east, was not implemented. The approach then runs parallel to the line of the road, passing through pleasure grounds as advised by Repton. It passes the point where a back road leading to the offices and stables from the public road crosses its path; Repton devised a system of gates for this point, but again, they do not appear to have been constructed. The east drive also leads round to the west front of the house.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Catchfrench Manor (listed grade II) comprises a two-storey range of late C18 construction with gothic windows and other decorative details, which stands to the north of the ruins of a late C16 manor house. The southern end of the late C18 house was demolished in the late C20, reducing the house in size. The late C18 house was constructed to the design of Charles Rawlinson of Lostwithiel (Pett 1998), and was originally surmounted by a castellated parapet. This was removed in the early C19, when further work was carried out to rectify defects in the original structure (Gregor Memoirs, CRO).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** Lying principally to the south-east, east, and north-east of the house, the gardens and pleasure grounds are informal in character. Walks lead c 100m north-east from the house through the pleasure grounds to a quarry which was developed as an ornamental feature in the late C18 or early C19; this formed part of Repton's 1793 scheme (Red Book). The quarry is entered through a slate-built narrow tunnel which leads into the west side of the rock-cut bowl. The main walk through the pleasure grounds continues north from the quarry to run parallel to a water course which has been widened to form a small lake (Tinker's Lake); this in turn joins the stream which flows along the northern boundary of the site. From the west front of the house there are views to the west across farmland, where a cottage acts as an eyecatcher. Repton commented in his Red Book (1793) on the potential for this 'wonderful improvement' through relatively minor alterations to the levels of the foreground. To achieve the desired effect, Repton advised the removal of around six feet (c 1.8m) of earth to form a dip in place of an existing mound. The plantation to the north was established to accentuate the height of the knoll on which it stands, to provide shelter, improve the approach, and to afford variety to the walks (ibid).

From the north front of the house the ground falls steeply to Tinker's Lake, offering fine views across the valley, framed by hanging woods to the east. Repton found this 'deep glen' to be 'perfectly in character with the Gothic style' of the house. He

recommended a terrace or platform below the house rather than any levelling of the ground, and advocated the planting of low-growing shrubs on the slope which would not grow to hide the hanging wood beyond (ibid). The balustraded terrace proposed by Repton was not constructed.

Highpark Wood to the south-east forms a backdrop to the house. The southern edge of the Wood is separated from fields to the south and west by a stone-built Cornish hedge. Although now mostly overgrown (2000), there are traces of walks through the Wood.

**PARK** The park lies to the north-west of the house and pleasure grounds and is today (2000) in mixed agricultural use, with the area to the north-east of the west drive remaining pasture with scattered specimen trees. The park is enclosed to the south-west by Shippingpark Wood, through which runs a track on the line of the former public road closed c 1820 (Debois 1995). To the north and north-west Black Alders Wood forms a boundary plantation, while to the north and north-east Tinker's Lake forms the boundary of the park. The Knoll Plantation to the south-west of the west drive forms part of the westerly vista from the house proposed by Repton in 1793 (ibid).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden is situated c 125m east of the house and is enclosed by stone walls c 3m high. The associated structures along the north wall of the garden have been converted to domestic use in the late C20. The garden predates Repton's involvement at Catchfrench, and his 1793 scheme included proposals to strengthen the plantations to screen it, particularly when seen from the northern approach. To the south of the garden are the remaining trees of a cider orchard; this reflects the arrangement shown on the late C19 OS map (1882).

Immediately to the north-east of the kitchen garden is a farm complex which is reached by a side branch from the east drive which passes through Highpark Wood.

#### REFERENCES

C S Gilbert, *Historical Survey of Cornwall* ii, (1820), p 41 D Gilbert, *Parochial History of Cornwall* ii, (1838), p 77 E Twycross, *The Mansions of England* (1846), pp 71-2 Lake's *Parochial History of Cornwall* ii, (1868), pp 54-5 D Stroud, Humphry Repton (1962), p 77 G Carter et al, *Humphry Repton, landscape gardener, 1752-1818* (1982), p 150 Catchfrench Manor, A survey of the landscape, (management plan, Debois Landscape Survey Group 1995) D E Pett, *The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall* (1998), pp 222-3

Maps Plan of Catchfrench, c 1800 (private collection) C Greenwood, *Map of Cornwall*, 1827

OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1809 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1865, published 1882

Illustrations Watercolour views of Catchfrench, c 1810 (private collection)

Archival items Humphry Repton, *Red Book for Catchfrench*, Cornwall, 1793 (private collection) *Memoirs of Sarah Loveday Gregor* (nee Glanville), c 1850 (G/1952), (Cornwall Record Office) *Photographs of Catchfrench*, c 1900 (private collection)

Description written: September 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: October 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.