

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL

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SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL

Name: SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL

County: Greater London Authority

District: Wandsworth (London Borough)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.437802
 Longitude: -0.17318962
 National Grid Reference: TQ 27072 72561
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

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label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
 Grade: II
 List Entry Number: 1001601
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Details

The grounds of an early county lunatic asylum, opened in 1841, which was extended and remodelled during the later C19.
HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

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The Surrey County Lunatic Asylum was initially designed to contain 294 patients and erected c 1838-41 to designs by William Moseley, the County Architect for Middlesex (Hearn 2000). It was the fifteenth county-funded asylum to be erected. Minor alterations were carried out to Moseley's plans during construction by the County Surveyor for Surrey, Edward Lapidge. The asylum was intended to serve the pauper population of rural Surrey, and for this purpose the 97 acre (c 40ha) Springfield Park estate, lying on the edge of Wandsworth Common, was acquired in the late 1830s for £9750 (Financial statement of construction 1837-42). The building was erected along a long spinal corridor, off which ward wings radiated at right angles, each ward being intended for occupation by a different medical class of patient. The enclosed airing courts for patient exercise were arranged adjacent to the particular class of wards they were designed to serve, and farmland and kitchen gardens surrounded the building and courts. The farm buildings of the former Springfield estate were reused to serve the farmland in which the male patients worked for therapeutic purposes. The asylum opened in June 1841 and could accommodate 350 patients. At this point several elements within the asylum regarded by the Visiting Committee as essential for its proper functioning remained financially unprovided for, including some of the fittings, and the furniture and bedding. Work on several proposed elements of the landscape had not been started, including the drive, porter's lodge, and the cultivation of the farm and garden (Report of Surrey Justices, 1841).

By 1842, £1981 had been spent on levelling the ground for the building, removing excavated earth, making roads, gravelling and turfing the airing courts, and erecting an oak fence, the latter presumably marking the estate boundary. The kitchen garden wall, enclosing 8 acres (c 3ha) cost £1574 (Financial statement of construction; Annual Report 1843). The hospital building was extended several times during the C19, and the number and size of the airing courts was increased to reflect the increase in patient numbers.

The outer estate was also increased in size during the C19, and several peripheral buildings were added during the late C19, including a cottage hospital (known as White Lodge) in 1872, and in 1897 an Annexe for Idiot Children (Elizabeth Newton Wing). The asylum was transferred to Middlesex County Council c 1889. Housing was built during the C20 along the south-west boundary and over the kitchen garden north-east of the building. The remaining farmland is now (2002) a golf course. The asylum, renamed Springfield Hospital in the mid C20, is still partially in use and owned by the South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, but is at present (2002) awaiting reuse.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Springfield Hospital stands in Upper Tooting, c 4km south-west of central London. The c 20ha site occupies largely level ground which slopes down slightly to the south-west, and is set at the south tip of Wandsworth Common. The site is bounded to the north-west by Burntwood Lane, marked by a line of trees and iron bow-top fencing; to the south-west by Burntwood School and late C20 housing; to the south and south-east by Streatham Cemetery and further hospital buildings; and by housing on the other sides.

The north-east boundary formerly lay adjacent to Beechcroft Road but intensive C20 development on the ground between the main hospital building and this boundary, including the area of the former kitchen garden, has cut it off from the hospital site. A short length of C19 brick boundary wall survives to the south-east of the north-east lodge. The south-west boundary also formerly lay further from the hospital and ran beyond land on which stood the former Springfield Park Farm; this area has now largely been redeveloped for Burntwood School although an icehouse (listed grade II) remains (outside the area here registered). To the south and south-east White Lodge (1872, listed grade II) and the Elizabeth Newton Wing (Rowland Plumbe 1895-7, listed grade II) stand in their own grounds which were formerly part of the main asylum grounds (outside the area here registered), these grounds having been encroached upon by later C20 buildings.

Long views extend south-west, west, and north-west from the main hospital building, airing courts, and farmland across the valley of the River Wandle which was formerly a rural landscape, now (2002) much urbanised.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach to the hospital enters the site off Burntwood Lane, 400m north-west of the main, south-west entrance to the hospital building. The entrance is marked by a two-storey lodge (C20) standing on the west side of the drive, some 20-30m north-east of the site of the original lodge built in 1844 (OS 1865; Hearn 2000). From here the north-west drive curves south-east through former farmland (now, 2002, a golf course), before turning south 225m

north-north-west of the entrance to the main building and continuing through lawns flanked by mature trees, curving around the west corner of the building. The drive curves north-east 100m west of the entrance to the main building, entering the large forecourt and running through lawns to arrive at the main entrance. A short flight of stone steps leads up to the main door at the centre of the south-west front. The drive continues south from here, mirroring its passage through the other half of the forecourt, but passing a small turning circle enclosing a circular panel of lawn lying 50m south of the main entrance (mid C19; Plans, 1859). The forecourt lawn is planted with two mature cedars flanking the front door and has in the late C20 been laid out with a cruciform pattern of paths intersecting at a circular pool. Other scattered mature trees also clothe the forecourt.

The lowest storey of the wings furthest south and west from the main entrance is sunk below the level of the drive and lawn. The ground is graded down to the bottom of the wings, and the lawns extend down to stone-flagged paths running along the bottom of the walls. On the south side of the forecourt the remains of ornamental iron fencing enclose one of these sunken areas. The south-east end of this area is enclosed by a raised path set upon a brick causeway giving access from the drive to the north-west side of this part of the wing.

The drive re-emerges at the south corner of the forecourt and curves south-east and then north-east around the female airing courts, passing between lawns and to the north of White Lodge. The drive passes between the south-east tip of the main building and the north-west side of the Elizabeth Newton Wing, from here continuing north-east before turning south-east towards a tile-hung two-storey lodge (1897), emerging on Glenburnie Road c 400m south-east of the main entrance to the hospital building. The remains of a further, north-east drive, now (2002) disused, formerly gave access from the north, off Beechcroft Road. On the east side of the entrance to this drive, c 350m north of the entrance to the main hospital building, stands a white-painted, mid C19, two-storey lodge. From here the north-east drive, flanked by mature trees, extends south-west through the late C20 College Gardens residential development (along the north-west boundary of site of the former kitchen garden, OS 1865) to enter the current hospital site 250m north of the main entrance to the hospital building. After a further 100m the drive turns north-west to curve around the former Medical Superintendent's house (1870s) before joining the north-west drive 225m north of the entrance to the main building.

A further drive leads west from the west tip of the forecourt across the former farmland to the south-west boundary. This formerly gave access between the main building and Springfield Farm (now, 2002, the site of Burntwood School), which was originally the site of the Springfield mansion. This route seems to have been the earliest approach to the asylum, reusing the approach to the mansion from Aboyne Road to the south-west and predating the north-west drive by several years (Hearn 2000). The north-west drive was the first drive to be laid out specifically to serve the asylum, and formerly followed a straight course south-east from the 1844 lodge, which stood 400m north-west of the main entrance to the hospital building, to the forecourt (Plans, 1859). The course of the south-east end of this drive was somewhat re-routed in the later C19 (OS 1896), as a result of the extension of the building and airing courts in several campaigns during the mid to late C19. A section of this drive appears to survive, running north-west from the course of the present north-west drive to the sports pavilion standing 150m south of the north-west entrance off Burntwood Lane.

The north-east drive was laid out in the later C19, probably in the 1860s as a result of the purchase of further land through which it ran, and was lined with an avenue of trees (Plans, 1859; OS 1865, 1894). The 1859 plan of land for sale shows the course of Beechcroft Road labelled as 'proposed new road'. The east drive was laid out in the late 1890s (OS 1896; Hearn 2000).

PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS The hospital building (W Moseley and E Lapidge 1838-41, listed grade II) stands at the centre of the site, built in Tudor style of red brick with stone dressings. Two- and three-storey wings extend off a central spine running north-west to south-east. Further wings were added c 1850, and further extensions were made during the later C19 and early C20.

Behind the building to the north-east are a series of ancillary buildings including a chapel and service court (listed grade II with the main building). These were largely erected during the C19 after the main building was first built and cover part of the original kitchen garden (Lapidge plan, 1842; Plans, 1859; OS 1865).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens consist largely of a series of airing courts for the patients' recreation. The remains of six of these courts surround the outer perimeter of the ward wings, which open directly onto them. They are largely laid to lawn and planted with a variety of mature trees, and overlook the former farmland beyond. The three to the south-

east of the main building were constructed for female patients and lie adjacent to the wings originally allocated to them. Those to the north-west were for male patients, reflecting the axial division of the building into male and female halves.

Each of the three airing courts to the south-east contains a formal path system, and one contains a central rectangular pavilion (mid C20) on the site of an earlier covered seat (Lapidge plan, 1842). Another contains a small building also on the site of an earlier shelter. The south-west court contains a central iron pergola (late C20), and at the north-west end is stepped down to the base of the main building in two grassed terraces. Three octagonal privies are set into the walls, two on the south-west outer wall, and one (in ruinous condition) on the north-east wall, which is shared with the court beyond. These walls were built sunk into ha-ha-style ditches, but the ditches were largely filled in the later C20 (OS 1962) and covered with shrub beds; a flight of steps formerly connected the south-west female court with those adjacent to the north-east (OS 1962), but this was lost when the ditches were filled in. At the east corner of the south-east female airing court is a doorway allowing access across the south-east drive to the Elizabeth Newton Wing. A vehicular gateway marked by brick piers allows access between the south-west and south-east female courts. A mid C19 iron post marks the parish boundary on the exterior of the south-east wall of the south-west female court.

The male courts to the north-west have lost their internal dividing walls and their path system is no longer visible, but they retain scattered mature trees. They were laid out in similar style to the female courts, including sunken walls and octagonal privies surrounding a formal and informal path system. Much of the path system appears to have been grassed over in the late C20 (OS 1962).

The two groups of airing courts are surrounded on their outer sides by red-brick walls which were formerly sunk into open ditches.

The airing courts predate the recommendations of the Commissioners in Lunacy's Suggestions and Instructions (1856) on the construction of asylums, which stipulated that the courts 'should be of ample extent so as to afford proper means for healthful exercise [for the patients]. They should all be planted and cultivated, and any trees existing within them should be preserved for shade'.

The airing courts were originally laid out two on either side of the building, reflecting the segregation of male and female patients, and surrounded by brick walls. The external brick walls were set in deep ditches, in the fashion of a ha-ha, and a laundry and drying court lay to the rear, north-east of the female courts (Lapidge plan, 1842). It was considered of benefit to the patients to provide extensive views beyond the asylum confines where possible, whilst at the same time providing a secure environment to prevent escapees, and thus the ha-ha device served this purpose. By 1850 (Plan) the building had been extended to the south-west on both male and female sides, and, to accommodate the rising number of patients, the airing courts had been increased to three each for male and female patients. The extra one on either side was constructed to the north-west and south-east respectively of the two original pairs of courts. Again the walls were sunk in deep ditches, and octagonal privies were set into the outer walls, reached via steps set into the ha-ha banks. By this time the courts were laid out with formal arrangements of paths and panels of lawns and covered seats for the patients. By the late C19 (OS 1896) the hospital building had been extended still further, the airing courts having been remodelled to accommodate the extra patients. The three courts were thrown into two, and a further, new court was constructed on both male and female sides, to the south-west of the site of the earlier courts, their structure being in similar style to the earlier ones provided.

The former Medical Superintendent's house stands at the north corner of the main asylum building, to which it is connected by a corridor. The north, entrance front is approached off the north-east drive via a short drive across a lawn, which formerly led to turning circle enclosing a panel of lawn (OS 1921). The garden extends west and south-west from the house and is enclosed by the male airing court walls to the south, and to the west by the north-west drive. It is laid largely to lawn, arranged in several shallow terraces extending down to the west, these probably having been constructed as tennis courts. The Medical Superintendent's house was built in the 1870s to replace accommodation which had formerly been provided at the centre of the main hospital building. The garden was enclosed on all sides, with an informal lawn encircled by a perimeter path and a belt of trees. The north-west drive appears to have been adapted to run around the north-west side of the garden (OS 1865, 1920).

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PARK The remaining parkland lies to the south-west and north-west of the main hospital building and is now (2002) laid out as a golf course set with scattered mature trees. The parkland originally incorporated the buildings of Park Farm (formerly the site of Springfield Park mansion and associated estate buildings), and its associated farmland, these now being partly covered by C20 housing and other development (outside the area here registered).

KITCHEN GARDEN The c 6ha kitchen garden formerly occupied the area to the north-east of the building and service yards (outside the area here registered) (Lapidge plan 1842; OS 1865). It is now (2002) largely covered with late C20 development, including College Gardens, but a strip on the extreme south-west side remains open, lying adjacent to the former glasshouse and frame yard. Of this latter the only remains are a C19 lean-to glasshouse and single-storey service buildings standing 175m north-east of the entrance to the main building adjacent to the service yard. Part of the original 4ha kitchen garden was built over in the mid C19 when the service buildings were extended to the north-east, but the remaining area was extended with the inclusion of land acquired adjacent to the newly constructed Beechcroft Road (Plans, 1859).

REFERENCES

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Maps J Rocque, Map of Surrey, 1745 Tithe map for Wandsworth parish, 1841 (in Hearn 2000) E Lapidge, Plan of the Surrey County Lunatic Asylum and land at Springfield in the Parish of Wandsworth, December 1842 (in Hearn 2000) Plan of Surrey County Asylum, 1850 (in Hearn 2000) Plan of the Springfield Estate at Garratt, Surrey, 1858 (in Hearn 2000) Plan of Present Asylum and Land for Sale, 1859 (QS 5/6/1/75), (Surrey History Centre) Surrey County Lunatic Asylum, Plan of the Springfield Estate Tooting shewing the position of the present and proposed buildings, 1859 (QS 5/6/1/75), (Surrey History Centre)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1865, published 1874 3rd edition published 1920 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition surveyed 1894, published 1896 3rd edition published 1921 1940 edition OS 1: 2500: 1962 edition

Illustrations The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction 37, no 1046 (13 February 1841), frontispiece

Archival items Quarter Sessions records (QS5/6/1/1?84) at Surrey History Centre, including: QS5/6/1/3, Financial statement of construction 1837-42; QS5/6/1/1, Report of Surrey Justices, 1841. Hospitals file 101087 (NMR, Swindon) Aerial photograph, 1955 (in Hearn 2000)

Description written: February 2002 Register Inspector: SR Edited: November 2002

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.