

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PRADOE

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Name:	PRADOE
District:	Shropshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Ruyton-XI-Towns
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.816356 Longitude: -2.9556091 National Grid Reference: SJ 35693 24741 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001251 Date first listed: 14-May-1992

Details

Gardens and park laid out in the years after 1804 by a Mr Webb, presumably John Webb, as the setting for a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

When in 1785 the house was rebuilt and the estate improved, Pradoc was owned by the Rev David Pritchard. He however never lived there and in 1795 his trustees sold the 130 acre (54ha) estate to Thomas Cureton of Hordley for £4300. In 1803 the trustees of John Cureton sold Pradoc to the Hon Thomas Kenyon (b 1780), who in the years which followed made great improvements to the gardens, park and house. The estate remains (1999) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Pradoc lies c 8km south-east of Oswestry, c 1km south-east of the village of West Felton. The house stands on high ground, the park falling to the west and south, with views south to the Stiperstones and west to the Welsh Hills and Llanymynech Rock. The main A5 Shrewsbury to Oswestry road bounds the park to the west, an unclassified road west off the A5 to Ruyton-XI-Towns forms the southern limit of the park, while the northern limit is marked by a track and footpath from West Felton to Eardiston. The area here registered is c 50ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main drive, laid out as part of the early C19 improvements, leads into the estate at a lodge of c 1812 on an unclassified road (formerly the A5). It passes through a block of woodland, planted as part of the early C19 landscaping, before emerging into the open south of Foxholes Pool. From here it leads across the park to the south front of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The house at Pradoc (listed grade II*) was built in 1785 to designs by John Dovaston (d 1808) for the Rev David Pritchard, and incorporates an older building. In 1810-12 John Carline (d 1835) carried out improvements to the house for Thomas Kenyon as, four years later, did John Hiram Haycock (d 1830). Pradoc now comprises a generally plain, three-storey brick building, with a canted bay towards the garden.

All the early C19 farm buildings are listed grade II, as a complex that includes dairy, brewhouse, carpenters' shop, pigsties, slaughter house, cow byres, dovecote, flailing shed, hay lofts, bull shed, cart shed, coach house, drift house, dog kennels and a bothy for the stable lads.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Nothing had been done by way of landscaping when in 1804 Thomas Kenyon called in a Mr Webb, presumably John Webb (d 1828), to lay out the grounds. The resultant plans were then implemented over

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a number of years. The Shrubbery began to be laid out in late 1807, and by the time it was completed a year later a thousand shrubs had been planted, all from a Birmingham supplier (name not known).

A range of outbuildings (listed grade II), dating from the late C18 and early C19, lie between the house and the farmyard to the east. Immediately north of this area, and linked to it via the dairy (listed grade II), are the flower gardens which lie north-east of the house between the estate buildings and the kitchen garden. They include an early C19 rockery constructed with Derbyshire stone and known as The Alps, a rose garden cut in turf, a small conservatory (listed grade II), and a 'monastery garden' converted from a walled poultry yard in 1937.

Leading north from the house, and marking the western edge of the pleasure grounds which surround the kitchen garden, is the Grigg Walk, (from the Welsh for heather - grug), so named because it once led to a summerhouse thatched with heather. This building does not survive. The beeches which lined the path were felled in 1961 and have since been replanted.

PARK The park, known as The Lawn, a corruption of the Welsh 'Lawnt', lies to the west and south of the house. Before it was laid out a lane divided the area in two, and the route of this can still be seen running from north-west to south-east across the land west of the house. Much of the surrounding woodland belts, including those along the north and south boundaries, have been replanted and strengthened, but the basic structure of the park remains as laid out.

To the west of the house is the lake, Foxholes Pool, enlarged from an existing pond in the early C19. On the hill to the north of it are the remains of The Museum. This was a thatched building, also known as Arthur's Folly, built in 1833 to house the then owner's collections. The brick back room still stands, but only the knuckle-bone floor of the front part, which housed the collection of artefacts, has survived.

In the park to the south of the house is a second, smaller, pond, Paddock Pool. The water predates the landscaping of the park but its outline was altered as part of the early C19 improvements and a new woodland block was planted on its southern side. A walk leads east from the house to Pradoe church (listed grade II) which was built in 1860 by the Hon Mrs Louisa Charlotte Kenyon. If a park had been created before Thomas Kenyon purchased the estate, little had been done to it. Extensive planting began in 1804 when the gardener from Aston came over to plant the Beech Plantation on the west side of 'the water', presumably Foxholes Pool. Aston lies 5km to the north-west of Pradoe and Webbs' old master, William Emes, who had died the previous year, had laid out the park there in 1780. Two round clumps went in in 1805 and three small plantations on the east side of the water in 1806. Poplar Plantation was planted in 1807. In late 1818 a new approach to the house was begun and associated plantings, including at least a part of the Lodge Plantation, consumed 24,000 trees and shrubs. Other plantings included those of 1831 when Spanish chestnuts were introduced to the Lawn, 1835 when a holly hedge was laid out around Walbrook Cottage (built 1827) and rhododendrons went in near the boathouse, and 1855 when the gravel pit was planted with larch.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden, rectangular and c 90m long from east to west by 60m, stands c 80m north-east of the house. It has pilastered brick walls (listed grade II), put up 1805-6 reusing old bricks. The north wall has heating flues. The garden contains a tool shed, bothy, and heated frames.

REFERENCES

K Kenyon, *A House that was Loved* (1941) P A Stamper, *Historic Parks and Gardens of Shropshire* (1996), pp 54-5, 57
Maps Estate survey, 1812 (private collection) Estate survey, c 1826 (private collection) Tithe map, c 1841 (Shropshire Records and Research Centre)

Archival items Family papers including records of tree planting and building kept by Hon Thomas Kenyon, and the detailed diaries and accounts kept by his wife, Louisa Charlotte, who lived at Pradoe from 1803 until her death in 1869 are held in a private family archive. The archive also includes 'A Grandfather's Reminiscences' (TS by E R Kenyon, 1935) and 'Pradoe, Ancient and Modern' (TS by G E G Kenyon, nd).

Description written: January 1999 Amended: August 2004 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: February 2000

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.