

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

THE MANOR HOUSE, UPTON GREY

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**THE MANOR HOUSE, UPTON GREY**

Name: THE MANOR HOUSE, UPTON GREY

County: Hampshire

District: Basingstoke and Deane (District Authority)

Parish: Upton Grey

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.231403  
Longitude: -1.0019879  
National Grid Reference: SU 69779 48497  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000277  
Date first listed: 23-Aug-1988

## Details

Early C20 gardens laid out by Gertrude Jekyll to complement a small country house designed by Ernest Newton in the Arts and Craft style. Gardens restored from 1984 onwards, following Jekyll's planting schemes.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Charles Holme, after spending his early career in textile manufacture, became interested in the work of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement in the 1870s and 1880s. His success in the wool trade enabled him to retire from business in 1892, aged forty-four, and the following year he founded *The Studio* magazine. He edited this magazine which aimed to show that the applied arts were as valuable and interesting as the fine arts. Holme moved from The Red House, Bexley the house built for William Morris by Philip Webb, to the old house at Upton Grey which he had bought in 1906. In 1907 Holme commissioned Ernest Newton to enlarge the house. The grounds around it were completely reworked by Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) who in 1908-09 provided detailed planting plans and supplied some of the specified plants from her own nursery gardens at Munstead Wood (qv), Surrey. Despite a succession of private owners the design and layout of the gardens have scarcely changed. A restoration scheme started in 1984 involved rebuilding the drystone walls which had become unstable in part and progressively sourcing and replanting the varieties of plant used by Jekyll. The site remains (1999) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The village of Upton Grey lies some 8km east of Basingstoke, on a north-east-facing slope of the North Downs. The Manor House lies immediately to the north-east of St Mary's church, set back off the Tunworth to South Warnborough road. The gardens of 1.6ha surround the House on its west, north, and east sides, being bounded to the west by the Tunworth to South Warnborough road, to the north by the range of buildings and enclosures of Manor Farm, and to the east by open fields.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** A short curved drive leads off the Tunworth to South Warnborough road through an avenue of horse chestnuts to a forecourt on the west side of the House. A footpath from the south side of the forecourt leads through a gate to the churchyard. At the east end of the site, the formal gardens are delimited from a cross-country footpath leading through the village by a mature hedgerow.

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**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** The Manor House (listed grade II) is oriented north to south, in the centre of a roughly rectangular site on an east-facing hillside. Ernest Newton, who lived locally, converted part of an existing building of C16/C17 origin, incorporating it into a new Arts and Crafts house. The entrance front lies on the west side where the tall, central timber-framed entrance porch dominates the forecourt. The garden front on the east side has a central timber-framed bay which provides a focus to the formal gardens.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens fall into three distinct areas on the west, north, and east of the House. To the west lies the Wild Garden. A pair of iron gates opens through the low brick wall of the forecourt into the area. Here a series of three low, curved grass steps lead onto a lawn rising gently westwards to a small duck pond and rockery, with the parish church to the south and the drive to the north. The Wild Garden has been replanted (late C20) following Gertrude Jekyll's design, the only plants there not specified by Jekyll being some modern varieties of daffodil. Snowdrops, primroses, oxslips, cowslips, wood anemones, scilla, muscari, and fritillaria survive from earlier garden plantings. The design is informal and naturalistic with winding paths and island beds laid out following gently flowing and curved lines.

In contrast, the gardens to the east of the Manor House are formal. The gardens are composed of a series of three east-facing terraces which have been replanted using Jekyll's plans (Reef Point Collection). On the top terrace the central axis of the gardens is lined by a simple pergola of wooden oak posts hung with ship's ropes leading from the timber-framed bay of the House. This provides a central focus to the scheme as seen from the lower garden terraces, and from this top garden terrace there are views out over the gardens to the wider countryside beyond. From a terrace running the length of the House, paths lead off at right angles to run the length of long herbaceous borders, sheltered on their outer sides by yew hedges. From this upper level there are also views down onto the lower garden terraces. These main borders have dramatic colouring in late summer, designed by Jekyll with drifts of herbaceous plants whose colours move from cool blues and whites at either end of the borders through warm yellows and oranges to fiery reds situated in the central sections of the borders.

Shallow stone steps lead from the pergola down to the Rose Lawn, which Jekyll designed using formal geometric beds around square, stone-flagged planters. The planting here is in softer colours, soft pinks and greys in the outer borders framing the compartment and the formal geometric rose beds planted with varieties of rose specified by Jekyll. The upper two terraces are supported by drystone retaining walls which Jekyll also specified to be planted to give the effect of vertical flower beds.

From the Rose Lawn a further flight of steps leads to the Bowling and Tennis Lawns, at the lowest level of the gardens. The narrow bowling green is divided from the yew-hedged tennis lawn by a drystone wall (1997), shown on Jekyll's plan but unexecuted by Holme.

The formal gardens are bounded by more informal areas to their south and north-west. In the southern area stands a small nuttery with regularly coppiced hazel trees and to the north-west of the formal gardens there is an orchard.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The late C20 kitchen garden area lies to the north of the formal gardens and also acts as a nursery area for raising plants for use in the formal gardens. The Gardener's Cottage, converted from the former stables, occupies an area to the north of the House.

#### REFERENCES

A Tankard and van Valkenburgh, Gertrude Jekyll: A Vision of Garden & Wood (1989) Hampshire Gardens Trust Journal 8, (1989) R Bisgrove, The Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll (1992), pp 55-63 R Wallinger, Gertrude Jekyll's Lost Garden: The Restoration of an Edwardian Masterpiece (2000) Description & Guide to Gertrude Jekyll's 1908 Garden, guidebook, (Manor House, Upton Grey, nd)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1910

Archival items Copies of Jekyll's planting plans for Upton Grey, 1908-09 are held on microfilm at the National Monuments Record (originals held at Reef Point, USA). Photographs collected by the current owners.

Description rewritten: November 1999 Register Inspector: KC Amended: June 2001 Edited: February 2004

## 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.