

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Gardens at Petwood

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Gardens at Petwood

Name:	Gardens at Petwood
County:	Lincolnshire
District:	East Lindsey (District Authority)
Parish:	Woodhall Spa
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.157495 Longitude: -0.21830654 National Grid Reference: TF1923063745 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1442113 Date first listed: 12-Dec-2017 Statutory Address 1: Gardens at Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, LN10 6QG

Historique de la conservation

Petwood was built in 1905 for Grace Maple, the wife of Baron Hermann von Eckhardstein, and the eldest daughter and heir of Sir John Blundell Maple whose furniture business on Tottenham Court Road had made him a fortune. After her father's death in 1903, Grace, who had been a frequent visitor to Woodhall Spa, purchased some 40 acres of woodland north of the village and built Petwood House in the Tudor revival style. It is thought that she employed William Goldring (1854-1919) to design the garden with her late father's head gardener, Mr Williams, to supervise the layout. Goldring was a prominent landscape designer and garden writer, and he is associated with seven parks and gardens on the Register, including Doddington Hall in Lincolnshire which is registered at Grade II*. The only evidence of this first garden is a series of photographs that Grace commissioned from the local photographer John Wield. To the north of the house, the area of birch and scrub was turned into decorative walks lined with rhododendrons; and to the west there was a pergola lawn and a sunken garden. The south garden consisted of a large lawn bisected by a central path extending from the terrace and terminating in a round pool; and to the east there was a serpentine walk. By 1910 Grace had divorced the Baron and married Archibald Weigall. The couple expanded Petwood and commissioned the architect and garden designer Harold Peto (1854-1933) to carry out work on the garden. Peto was articled to a Lowestoft architect, J Clements, before joining the office of Ernest George in which he became a partner in 1876. His extensive travels in Europe and the East had a strong impact on his imagination, and the rotundas, temples and pergolas he came across in Italy and Greece came to feature regularly in his own designs. After his successful, nineteen-year partnership with George was amicably dissolved, Peto devoted his time to garden design in England and abroad, notably on the Riviera. His numerous commissions, such as the Water Garden at Buscot Park in Oxfordshire, as well as his own gardens at Iford Manor, in Bath and North East Somerset, were regarded highly by contemporaries. Peto is associated with eighteen buildings on the List, and sixteen gardens on the Register, many of which are highly graded. Peto retained the basic structure of the first garden at Petwood with the sunken garden to the west and the lawn bisected by a central path to the south, but he expanded the gardens further southwards, created many more features, and introduced garden buildings. The grounds were completed in 1912 and Petwood was the subject of an article in *Country Life* (August 7 1915) which provides an invaluable photographic record of the gardens at this

time. Like many large houses, Petwood became a military convalescence hospital during the First World War and was run by the Weigalls at their own expense. The house then returned to being a private home until the early 1930s when high taxes and running costs forced the Weigalls to sell the freehold and the house was run as a hotel until 1940. It was then requisitioned by the RAF, becoming the Officers' Mess for three squadrons, including 617 Squadron, the 'Dam Busters'. Part of a Barnes Wallace 'bouncing bomb' remains as a garden feature to the north of the house. After the war, Petwood reverted to being a hotel which it has remained.

The gardens at Petwood were not well maintained after it ceased to be a private house. When the Weigalls left they dismantled the east-west terrace (which now survives as a raised bank) and re-erected it, along with other statuary, gateways and seating from Petwood, at their home Engelmere in Ascot. The rose garden has since gone, as has the Atalanta Temple. The entrance drive was realigned slightly southwards from its original position in the mid-1980s. A memorial fountain to Diana, Princess of Wales, was added to the gardens between the circular pond and the Temple garden. The gardens are currently undergoing restoration work to reinstate elements of the original design, including the rebuilding of the Atalanta temple.

Details

Formal gardens designed by Harold Peto and completed in 1912.

LOCATION, SETTING, LANDFORM, BOUNDARIES AND AREA

The gardens are located on the north side of the village of Woodhall Spa and are surrounded by woods with pine woods to the south and a larch plantation to the east. They occupy an area of approximately 12 hectares. The gardens are bounded on the south by Coronation Road, on the west by Stixwoud Road and on the north-west by Monument Road, excluding the area of the planned housing development (2017). Approximately 0.27km along Monument Road, the boundary then follows a track southwards to the north-east side of Petwood Hotel. From here it runs eastwards through the woodland for approximately 0.11km and then southwards through the woodland to join up with Coronation Road.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Petwood is approached via a drive, constructed in the mid-1980s, off Stixwoud Road at the north-west corner of the formal gardens, which leads to a large tarmac car park at the rear of the house. At the entrance to the original drive, which is just to the north of the current drive, is a lodge in the same half-timbered Tudor style as the main house. This has ornate iron gates and red brick walls with stone piers.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Petwood (Grade II-listed) was built in 1905 and extended in 1910. It is in a fanciful timber-framed Tudor style with plain tiled roofs, multiple clustered red brick chimney stacks, and timber mullions with leaded lights. The house has a rambling L-shape plan and an irregular facade of two and three storeys with a two-storey oriel over the main entrance. The south side overlooks the formal gardens. It has been extended piecemeal to provide hotel accommodation.

ORNAMENTAL GROUNDS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens form an oblong with a main north-south axis from the centre of the house aligned with the site of the Atalanta Temple at the far extremity of the grounds, crossed by a terrace running east-west and a parallel raised cross walk halfway down the garden.

Along the south front of the house is a broad stone-flagged terrace with a pierced stone balustrade surmounted by urns at the corners. A central opening leads down to a stone-flagged, circular area which has low triangular hedges at each corner and a central circular hedge, the remnants of Goldring's topiary that was altered by Peto. From here, the main axial path leads southwards, flanked by rose festoons, to a circular stone-edged pool with a small fountain statue of a baby Neptune, acquired by Grace from the late C19 Ducel foundry in France. This forms the junction with the east-west axis which originally had pierced balustrading and a paved terrace, now lost, leaving only a raised bank.

The round pool looks southwards over an expansive lawn towards a large round pond, in the centre of which is a statue of four graceful Nereids (copied from a fountain at Versailles), that was also acquired by Grace from the Ducel foundry. Beyond this,

on a raised platform stood the Temple of Atalanta which was a structure of six stone pillars, surmounted by a dome of open iron-work, and flanked by a pillared pergola. This lost feature is currently being reinstated (2017).

To the west of the house there is an apsidal lawn, on the south side of which a long swimming pool was created in the 1930s, surrounded by an ornate ironwork screen with stone steps at either end. The sunken topiary garden, known as the Dutch Garden, on the west side of the apsidal lawn, is surrounded by a stone path from which flights of steps lead down to the flagged-stone centre, containing an oblong pool. The garden is surrounded by topiary. To the west of this, on the other side of the entrance drive, a rustic summerhouse is situated, clad in diagonal timbers, which is aligned with the sunken garden and south terrace. A tennis lawn, surrounded by yew hedges, is located on the south side of the sunken garden.

From the sunken garden, a yew walk leads southwards and opens into a circle which formerly enclosed a rose garden which is now lawned over. The circle has an opening on the east side which is aligned with the Temple garden on the eastern boundary of the gardens. This was designed by Grace herself. The west-facing temple (called as such but is actually a loggia) is reached via three stone steps and has stone pillars supporting a roof with a moulded stone architrave. It is flanked by high red brick walls, punctuated by small stone niches for statues, which continue at right angles before terminating in brick piers. From here, brick pergolas continue eastwards, terminating in a wheel of lintels which are not an original part of the design. On the south return wall a gateway with projecting brick surround and semi-circular arch, leads into a rhododendron walk in the woodland to the east, terminating in a beech tree avenue.

KITCHEN GARDEN

On the north side of the house, the former kitchen garden occupies a long narrow plot, bounded on the north-west side by a high brick wall, against which glasshouses were built. These have since been dismantled, leaving the whitewashed brick as evidence of their former position. The former gardener's cottage is a single-storey, rendered building with a shallow pitched, tile-clad roof.

Summary

Formal gardens designed by Harold Peto and completed in 1912.

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.

Reasons for Designation

The formal gardens at Petwood, laid out by Harold Peto and completed in 1912, are registered at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Historic interest: they were created by one of the most accomplished garden designers of the Edwardian period whose work, characterised by the revivalism of formal styles which increasingly emphasised structure through garden architecture rather than horticulture, is well represented on the List; * Design interest: they are a significant creation in Peto's oeuvre, embodying many of the design elements that are most associated with his work, notably the well-structured composition punctuated by water features, pergolas, a sunken garden and loggia which create visual and textural interest in an otherwise flat site; * Preservation: despite some losses, the majority of the elements have survived and the overall structure remains clearly legible; * Documentation: they are well documented thanks to the evocative description and photographs in *Country Life* which covered Peto's output almost in its entirety up to 1914; * Group value: they have strong group value with the Grade II-listed Petwood House for which they form the setting.

Bibliographie

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