

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

POLES PARK

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
POLES PARK

Name: POLES PARK

County: Hertfordshire

District: East Hertfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Thundridge

County: Hertfordshire

District: East Hertfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Ware

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.829129
Longitude: -0.040744627
National Grid Reference: TL3511016316
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000220
Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

A late C19 country house with remains of C19 gardens and park

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the mid C18 (Dury and Andrews, 1766) the land later occupied by Poles Park was enclosed agricultural land lying adjacent to Down Field Farm. No mansion house appears to have existed at that time. From at least 1800 the brewer Sampson Hanbury was the occupier, owning the estate from 1818 until his death in 1835 (Lynch 1988). By the 1820s (Bryant, 1822) the majority of the park had been laid out around a mansion in the western half of the park. In 1844 a new house was built for Robert Hanbury, it being sited so that park scenery dominated the view, with a sunken parterre on the south side, designed in the 1840s by Robert Glendinning (Elliott 1986). The 1845 Tithe map shows the new house and belts of trees around the park to the west and north. James Pulham constructed his first glasshouse rockwork with a fernery here in 1865-6. In 1890/1 Edmund Hanbury employed the architect Ernest George to build a new house in Elizabethan style, incorporating fabric from the mid C19 house. The Hanburys sold the estate in 1913, it being acquired by the Order of the Faithful Companions of Jesus as a convent. In the late C20 the house became a hotel (in which use it remains, 1999), a golf course was constructed in the park which was divided by the A10 dual carriageway, and a housing development was sited close to the walled garden.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Poles Park lies 2.5km north of the centre of Ware, at the southern edge of Thundridge village. The c 46ha site is situated on largely level ground with a shallow valley containing a small stream running from north-east to south-west through the park. The site is bounded to the east by the A1170 running along the southern half of the boundary, and the A10 Ermine Street which, as the late C20 A10 dual carriageway, also bisects the park

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
POLES PARK

from south-west to north-east, joining the A1170 c 400m east of the house and continuing along the northern half of the east boundary. The site is bounded to the south by a late C20 housing estate, from which it is divided by a belt of trees, and to the west and north by Poles Lane, a by-way and public footpath. The setting is largely rural, with the outskirts of Ware to the south.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the site is from Ermine Street, entering 700m north-east of the house. On the north side of the entrance stands a two-storey, red-brick lodge. From here a drive extends south-west through the North Belt, opening into the northern parkland, which it overlooks to north and south. The drive enters a C19 arboretum 150m north-east of the house, turning to run along the north-west front and arriving at a forecourt adjacent to the front door, overlooking the open lawn and surrounding arboretum. From the forecourt the drive extends south-west, then turning north and east to curve around the outer edge of the arboretum, before leading back to the main drive.

A drive from the north-west front, passing adjacent to the former entrance to the stables, crosses the arboretum lawn, leading north-west to Poles Lane, which it crosses, extending past Downfield Farm to the north-west. The Farm lies at the east end of a former drive, now (1998) a farm track, at the west end of which, 1.1km west of the house (outside the area here registered), stands a lodge giving access from the A602 road.

The south drive (now a track) enters at a single-storey lodge lying set back off the A1170, 700m south-east of the house. The track curves north-west from the lodge, broken 350m south of the house by the dual carriageway, continuing north-west across the parkland past the south-west front of the house, to arrive at the forecourt on the north-west front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The house, known as Poles (Ernest George 1890s, listed grade II*), lies towards the west boundary of the site. Built for Edmund Hanbury in Elizabethan style to replace a mid C19 structure, it is a two-storey, red-brick mansion, with the main entrance on the north-west front, and the south-east front overlooking the garden terraces sloping down the hillside, and the park beyond. The remains of the former stable block (1913) stand adjacent to the north-east front, with an entrance arch off the main drive. A substantial, late C20 hotel block lies adjacent to, and north-east of this.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens lie to the south-east of the house. The gardens are reached from the garden door set into the north end of the south-east front. From here a path runs parallel to the house along the top of a grass terrace. The south end of the path is joined at the south corner of the house by a further path leading from the drive along the south-west front. From here the path leads south-east to a flight of stone steps leading down the grass terrace bank to a square, sunken parterre laid to lawn. The parterre was formerly embellished by Glendinning's parterre/roserie elaborately laid out in the 1840s (Elliott 1986; J Horticulture & Cottage Gardener 1872). The north end of the path on the top terrace turns south-east, aligned on the projecting north-east wing of the house, continuing along the top of the L-shaped terrace and overlooking the open grassed terrace below. At the south end of this arm of the terrace a further flight of stone steps leads down to the lower terrace. From the top of these steps a gravel path leads north-east, running along a brick terrace, overlooking the park below to the east. A flight of stone steps set centrally in this terrace leads down to the parkland beyond. From the open terraced lawn two further grass banks lead south-east down the hillside, the lower bank flanked by two further flights of stone steps leading down to a second open terraced lawn. From here the lawn opens into parkland.

The pleasure grounds, through which the main drives approach the house, sweep around to the west of the house, enclosing it from the south to the north-east. The area is divided into two main sections by the drive leading north-west from the house to Downfield Farm. The area to the south is laid out as an arboretum, with mature specimen trees set in informal lawns, including cedar, Wellingtonia and other ornamental species. A car park lies within woodland west of the house, close to the site boundary. The northern half of the pleasure grounds continues the arboretum northwards, and encloses the walled kitchen garden. To the south of the walled garden lies an orchard, merging into the arboretum to the south-west. At the east end of the orchard lies a cemetery, created for the use of the convent. To the south of this lies a formal rose garden, enclosed by clipped yew hedges. To the north of the walled garden, beyond a service road running adjacent to the north wall, lies an informal sunken garden with winding gravel paths, this feature present by the late C19 (OS). Here shrubs and mature trees enclose rockwork and a central circular stone pond, this area having recently (1998) been restored.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
POLES PARK

PARK The park encloses the gardens to the south and east, and is now divided into north and south halves by the embanked A10 dual carriageway. The southern half, now visually self-contained, is largely laid to pasture, with scattered clumps of trees and belts along the south and east boundaries.

The northern half is landscaped as a golf course (1990s), retaining scattered mature trees and clumps, and with a belt along the west boundary. A small stream running through the valley from north-east to south-west broadens out in places to form two ponds, one 300m east of the house (created late C19, OS), the other, to the south-west of this, a later C20 creation. The open ground at the northern tip of the park is enclosed to the east and south by the North Belt, to the north by a boundary belt, and to the west by an extension south-east of Home Wood, the woodland and parkland east of the kitchen garden now (1999) partly covered with late C20 housing. A further belt leads south from Home Wood, curving west adjacent to the north-east drive, screening the kitchen garden and adjacent late C20 housing to the west from the drive and parkland.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden, and associated gardens, lie 150m north-east of the house, from which they are reached via a path leading north from the north end of the brick garden terrace lying north-east of the house. This path extends north from the terrace, through the east end of the arboretum, aligned on the central 'moon gate' entrance of the walled garden set into the south wall. Within the red-brick walls the garden is largely laid to lawn, crossed by two central paths in cruciform pattern dividing lawn panels, with borders around the inner sides of the walls edged on their inner sides by a gravel perimeter path. The paths are largely flanked by trained fruit trees. Against the west side of the north wall lies a range of lean-to glasshouses, with, at their north end (this being at the centre of the wall), a projecting glasshouse (late C20) standing in front of a brick building on the north side of the wall. Formerly (OS C19) the area north of the walled garden was occupied by a service yard containing several glasshouses, with orchards adjacent to the west and east. The area to the east is now (1998) occupied by late C20 housing.

REFERENCES

Cottage Gardener 19, (1857), pp 128-30, 143-44 *J Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, 47 (1872), p 527; 48 (1872), pp 14-16
B Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (1986), pp 111, 114, 185
E Lynch, *Thundridge and Wades Mill in Hertfordshire: A Brief History* (1988), pp 26-7

Maps Dury and Andrews, *A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766*
A Bryant, *The County of Hertford, 1822*
Tithe map of Thundridge parish, 1845 (Hertfordshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1899
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1880 2nd edition published 1898

Description written: October 1998 Register Inspector: SR Edited: October 2000

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.