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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LAKE HOUSE

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Name:	LAKE HOUSE
District:	Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Wilsford cum Lake
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.148085 Longitude: -1.8118101 National Grid Reference: SU 13260 38775 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001237 Date first listed: 01-Sep-1987

Details

Early C20 gardens surrounded by a small park originating from the early to mid C18, belonging to a C16 house altered and extended in the early C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Lake House, also called the Manor of Lake, was built in 1578 for George Duke, a wealthy clothier. An estate plan of Lake, dated 1752, shows the House enclosed by formally laid out walled gardens, with three avenues extending from the south-west front of the House (Doidge, 1752). The Duke family lived at Lake House until 1897, when it was sold to Mr J W Lovibond. Lake House was severely damaged by fire in 1838 but by the late C19 it had been restored by the architect Detmar Blow (1867-1939) in consultation with Phillip Webb and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. At this time parts of the walled gardens to the south-east of the House were still intact and c 300m north-east of the House was a walled kitchen garden (OS 1876). After a second fire in 1912, the House was again restored and partly rebuilt by Blow. Shortly after, Colonel Bailey bought the House and from 1922 he carried out further alterations with advice from the architect Darcy Braddall. During this period the gardens were extensively reworked and extended. By 1937 the walled gardens near the House had been removed, a water garden and a formal fan-shaped garden had been created, a semicircular aviary had been built, and a new approach had been laid out to the south-west of the House (OS 1876, 1939; CL 1937).

Lake House was sold in 1991 and remains (2002) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Lake House, a site of c 26ha, lies in a rural area on the southern edge of the village of Lake in the parish of Wilsford. The main public road that runs through Lake, connecting Amesbury and Salisbury, runs along the south-west front of the House and cuts through the centre of the site. To the north-east the site is bounded by the River Avon and its side streams, and to the south-east the boundary is formed by a plantation called The Sling. To the south the site is enclosed by woodland called Staircase Plantation and Ham Plantation. To the north the boundary is formed by a track that leads westwards off the main road that runs through Lake village and the site. The grounds at Lake House slope generally to the north-east towards the River Avon. The area to the south-west of the House (west of the public road) lies in a minor valley sloping down in a northerly direction towards Lake village and the River Avon beyond. There are

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several scheduled ancient monuments situated both within the site and in the surrounding area, including the site of a medieval village and prehistoric field systems.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Lake House lies to the north, to the east of the public road through Lake. The entrance gate is flanked by a pair of C18 ashlar limestone gate piers (listed grade II) with ball finials, and gives access to a short drive that leads to the south-west front of the House. Another pair of C18 gate piers (listed grade II) is situated c 360m south-west of the House in the far west corner of Ham Plantation. From here a tree-lined drive, created in the early C20, runs east-north-east through the eastern part of the park and then curves in a northerly direction, leading to the south-west front of the House (OS 1939). The C18 gate piers at Ham Plantation were probably moved here from elsewhere on the site when the new approach was laid out (they are not shown in this position on the OS map of 1876).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Lake House (listed grade I) is situated in the north corner of the site. The two-storey house, with attic and cellars, is built of Chilmark limestone combined with decorative flint chequerwork and has a tiled roof. Its main front to the south-west has five gabled bays with a central two-storey crenellated porch with round-arched door. The L-shaped ground plan of the House dates from the early C20 restoration, which included various alterations and extensions to the north, east, and south-west. Attached to the north side of the House is a single-storey stable wing of rendered brick which curves around a service yard.

Some 100m north-west of the House lies Lodge Cottage (listed grade II), a former additional stable range built c 1900 and converted in the late C20 into a flat and garage. Opposite lies another range of outbuildings with a curvilinear ground plan, introduced in the late C20.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens at Lake House lie immediately to the north, east, and south-east of the House.

Immediately to the north of Lake House and its attached stable wing lies a fan-shaped garden. To the west it is enclosed by a wall, with an attached circular summerhouse halfway along its length, and in the north corner an C18 ornamental pier topped with an urn, set on a plinth of ashlar limestone (listed grade II). To the east the garden is enclosed by a yew hedge clipped in a wave pattern. The garden, now (2000) laid to lawn, was previously laid out as a rose garden with the flower beds radiating eastwards from the summerhouse. A central walk led from the summerhouse eastwards into the other areas of the garden north and east of the House (CL 1937).

In the far north corner of the site, beyond the fan-shaped garden, lies a water garden laid out on a piece of wetland situated between the River Avon and its carrier stream. The garden's main approach starts at the north-east front of the House, where steps lead down eastwards, crossing a lawn and running towards an early C20 ornamental footbridge (listed grade II) situated c 30m north-east of the House. The limestone bridge links up with a network of paths, the main one leading north-westwards through the centre of the water garden towards All Cottage (listed grade II) (CL 1937). This former watermill dates from the C18 and was much altered in the early C20 and again in 1979 (OS 1876, 1939). The network of smaller paths leads to various other, smaller footbridges crossing minor streams. From the main bridge a path leads eastwards towards a large, early C20 bridge (listed grade II) situated on the junction between the main carrier stream and the River Avon. The latter leads to a late C19 boathouse situated along the Avon, in the far north-east corner of the water gardens (OS 1876, 1939). By 1937 the water garden had been planted with grasses and water-loving plants, and flowers had been planted along the various streams in the garden (CL 1937).

To the south-east of the House lies a rectangular piece of lawn enclosed to the north-east and south-east by shrubs and trees.

PARK The park at Lake House is divided into two areas by the public road that leads south from Lake village; these are situated to the south-west and south of the House.

The park to the south-west of the House is lined to its south-west by Staircase Plantation, a mature woodland created after 1752 (Doidge). The plantation's name is derived from the series of steps which, as shown on the OS map of 1876, were situated along its western boundary and linked up with a walk leading along the park's southern and eastern edge. The main features in the park are an informal serpentine lake in its northern part, and a tumulus, or ditched bowl barrow (scheduled ancient monument), situated c 320m south-west of the House. During the early to mid C18 this part of the park had a formal layout

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with two long avenues leading from the House along the lakeside, one of them leading towards the tumulus situated at its far south end (Doidge, 1752).

The park south of the public road is lined to its south-west by two mature woodlands called Ham Plantation and The Sling. Ham Plantation appears to have been planted along an earlier hedge line, and The Sling along either side of a former avenue (Doidge, 1752; OS 1876, 1939). To the north the park is separated from the gardens to the south-east of the House by a tree-lined track leading south-east off the public road from Lake village towards The Sling. The park is crossed by the southern tree-lined approach to the House, introduced in the early C20 (OS 1939).

KITCHEN GARDEN The two kitchen gardens are situated c 100m to the east and south-east of the House, with a large lawn extending to the south.

The rectangular walled garden (listed grade II) nearest to the House dates from the late C19 (OS 1876). The 2.5-3m high walls are built of cob rendered with chalk, and covered with tiled copings. Outside the walled garden, built against the south-west wall, is a semicircular colonnade, a former aviary introduced in the early C20 (CL 1937). A large mature yew hedge lines the outside of the north-west wall of the garden. Inside this wall stands a white lean-to greenhouse or conservatory (a building at this site is first shown on the OS map of 1939). In front of it, to the south-east lies a rectangular swimming pool surrounded by a lawn and enclosed on all sides by mature yew hedges (OS 1939). The remaining north-eastern part of the walled garden, beyond the swimming pool area, is in use as a vegetable garden.

The second kitchen garden lies immediately to the south-east of the above garden. It too is rectangular in plan, but is enclosed on one side only by an early C20 crinkle-crinkle wall (listed grade II), built of rendered cob on flint footings with tiled copings. Attached to its south-east end is a semicircular open-fronted summerhouse. The summerhouse overlooks two tennis courts situated to its south-west and south-east (OS 1939). The one to the south-east is lined to the west by a mature yew hedge. The other tennis court, now (2002) laid to lawn, is enclosed to the south by a mature yew hedge and lined to the north and south-west by a c 50m long arbour of pleached lime. The kitchen garden is in use as a vegetable and fruit garden with a series of late C20 glasshouses and temporary plastic greenhouses along its north-east end.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 23 (8 February 1908), pp 198-203; 81 (27 March 1937), pp 326-331; (3 April 1937), pp 352-7 Victoria History of the County of Wiltshire VI, (1962), pp 213-17 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (2nd edn 1975), p 576 'We walk through fields of gold', *The Daily Telegraph*, 25 September 1999, p 10

Maps W Doidge, *Plan of the Manor of Lake in the Parish of Wilsford in the County of Wilts belonging to Robert Duke Esq, 1752* (Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office)

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1876 1939 edition

Archival items Aerial photographs of Lake House, 9 January 2000 (NMR 18659/11, 18666/06), (NMR, Swindon)

Description written: November 2002 Amended: January 2003 Register Inspector: FDM Edited: November 2004

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.