

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FULHAM PALACE

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Name:	FULHAM PALACE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Hammersmith and Fulham (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.471170 Longitude: -0.21439073 National Grid Reference: TQ 24118 76201 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000133 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

Details

Gardens and grounds of C16 origin, with varied subsequent development including the site of notable botanic gardens of the C16 and later C17. Since 1973 a public park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Fulham Palace was built in the early C16 for Richard Fitzjames, Bishop of London (1506-22) on a site with a long history of settlement including C3 and C4 Romano-British settlement in the Palace grounds (Whitehouse 1983). Historical records state that c AD 704 the Bishop of the East Saxons (ie the London area) bought an estate called Fulanham from the Bishop of Hereford; the area included Hammersmith. Fulham achieved fame in the C9 when, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records, a Viking army sailed up the Thames and camped at Fulham for the winter. After the Norman Conquest the bishops became an important part of the government and the earliest recorded date of a bishop being resident at Fulham Palace is 1141. The first bishop known to have resided at Fulham on a regular basis was Richard de Gravesend (bishop 1280-1303). A number of bishops had an interest in horticulture: Bishop Grindal (1559-70) is accredited with establishing a botanic garden in the grounds of Fulham Palace and introduced the first tamarisk tree to England; in the later C16 Bishop Bancroft was renowned for the grapes he annually sent to Queen Elizabeth I; and Bishop Compton (1675-1713) was famed as a horticulturalist and collector of rare plants (Garden Hist 1976, 1981). His collection included species from North America which was part of his See. The diarist John Evelyn remarked on a beautiful Sedum when he visited the garden in October 1681. Bishop Compton was aided in his quest for horticultural excellence by the landscape gardener, George London (1653-1714) and it is possible that the geometric garden layout shown on Rocque's plan of 1746 was the work of London in the 1670s (Management Plan 1999). At first Fulham was only one of several country palaces that the bishop had in his diocese and it did not become the official residence until the mid C18 (Cherry and Pevsner 1991). The gardens made by Bishops Grindal and Compton were largely replaced by a new informal scheme executed for Richard Jarvis in the 1760s.

Bishop Howley (1813-28) paid considerable attention to the grounds and the OS 1st edition map of c 1870 may be presumed to show his improvements by which the grounds were remodelled nearly to their present form. His successor, Bishop Blomfield

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(1828-56), was an ardent botanist, and took special delight in the grounds. The only part of the formal garden retained by this time was immediately north of the Palace and these remains have since gone.

In 1917 the Warren, the area to the north and north-east of the Palace, was converted into allotments. In 1924 the moat around the site was drained and in c 1960, St Mark's Secondary School was built in the north-west corner of the Warren.

The bishops of London ceased residing at Fulham Palace in 1973. In 1975 Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council leased the Palace and its grounds from the Church Commissioners for 100 years and in the following year the garden was opened to the public. The Palace grounds including the Warren are protected as a scheduled ancient monument.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Fulham Palace is located in Fulham, c 6km south-west of central London on the north bank of the River Thames. Putney Bridge lies c 100m to the south-south-east. Situated within the line of the former moat, the c 14ha grounds of Fulham Palace form a rough square and are bounded to the north-west by Bishop's Avenue, and to the north-east by Fulham Palace Road and by the rear gardens of houses on the south side of Fulham High Street. The graveyard and associated buildings of All Saints' church, Fulham (listed grade II*) forms the boundary to the south-east, and Bishop's Park (qv) the boundary to the south and south-west. The grounds are largely enclosed within iron railings which reflect the line of the c 2km long medieval moat which, until the early 1920s, enclosed the site. The results of research and of archaeological excavations since c 1970s indicate that the origins of the moat stem at least from the Roman occupation of the site (Whitehouse 1983).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Fulham Palace is approached along Bishop's Avenue, a 350m avenue lined with mature plane trees which runs west-south-west from Fulham Palace Road. After c 10m the avenue passes, on the south side, the entrance to the Moat Garden and after a further c 50m the entrance to the Warren and a number of school buildings. The school, built in c 1960 as St Mark's Secondary School, now (2000) houses All Saints' Primary School and The Moat School. The Avenue continues along the north-west boundary of the site to the main entrance.

The entrance from Bishop's Avenue is guarded by sturdy C19 gothic gate piers hung with C20 iron gates. The gate piers (listed grade II), made from limestone ashlar with traceried panels, brattished cornice, and pyramidal caps, are attached to the remains of the C15 Moat Bridge (listed grade II). The limestone parapet walls with triangular coping are the only visible remains of the bridge to survive after the moat was filled in c 1921-4. To the north-east of the entrance is the early C19 lodge (listed grade II), built in Tudor-Gothic style. Rendered to imitate stone, the largely single-storey lodge has dormers to the south-east, decorative bargeboards, a circular turret, and colossal twisted chimneys. A second brick-built lodge, to the south-west of the main entrance, was constructed in the late C19 (OS 1894).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The brick buildings of Fulham Palace (listed grade I) are situated to the west of the site and are grouped around two courtyards with the late C15 great hall between them. The west court, dating largely from the early C16, was built with lodgings in the ranges flanking the hall and with an entrance on the west side. The east court was largely rebuilt by Bishop Terrick (1764-87) who used Stiff Leadbetter as his architect. Leadbetter's double-height library and picturesque gothic crenellations were removed and the east range once again rebuilt in the early C19 as part of the alterations carried out for Bishop Howley by S P Cockerell in 1813.

Loosely attached to the south-west corner of the west court is the C19 chapel. Designed by the architect William Butterfield for Bishop Tait in 1886-7, the chapel was built on the site of the medieval kitchens and service rooms (Cherry and Pevsner 1991). To the north of the Palace is the small C19 stable block and coach house (listed grade II).

In 1990 the Fulham Palace Trust was founded to restore parts of the building and to set up and run a museum. The Museum of Fulham Palace, housed in part of the palace building, was opened in 1992.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS From the main entrance a short tarred drive leads between the lodges and then divides into two. The southern branch, the approach drive to the Palace, leads past, to the south-west, the C20 lodge and an adventure play centre for handicapped children. A pioneer project, the play centre was designed by Stephen Gardener and constructed in 1976 on a lawn which fronted the Palace (OS 1867). It is known that by at least the C13, this corner of the site

was separated from the main site by multiple banks and ditches enclosing c 0.5ha (Whitehouse 1983). The drive continues south-east for c 90m to the main entrance of the Palace.

The northern division of the drive leads past the C19 lodge and continues to the north of the stables, across a small car park, the former stable yard, and continues alongside the east wing of the Palace into the pleasure grounds. The pleasure grounds are largely laid to grass and decorated with specimen trees and shrubs, some of them mature. The rectangular lawns are enclosed within straight gravel paths and decorated with occasional island beds; beech hedges screen part of the north-east and south-east sides of the Palace while further to the north-east a yew hedge provides the boundary between the pleasure grounds and the Warren. Bishop's Park to the south-west is screened by dense vegetation planted along the line of the moat. Facing the Palace, from across the c 1ha south-east lawn, is the walled kitchen garden. The tower of neighbouring All Saints' church, partially screened by trees, provides a focal point above the wall of the kitchen garden.

From near the eastern corner of the Palace, a gravel path (the north-east perimeter path) runs south-east, between the boundary with the Warren and the south-east lawn, meeting after c 100m, a further path which crosses to the north-west of the walled garden. The north-east perimeter path then continues for a further c 80m, through an area left aside for wildlife, before terminating at an entrance to the walled garden. The wildlife area, a narrow strip of land, continues around the south-east end of the walled garden and is not currently (2000) accessible to the public. The path to the north-west of the walled garden intersects with a path which runs along the south-west boundary of the lawn, this latter path continuing for c 100m before turning at right angles past the C19 chapel, to complete, in front of the Palace, the enclosure of the lawn.

On Rocque's map of 1746, the lawned areas to the north-east and south-west of the Palace are shown as formal gardens, possibly laid out by George London for Bishop Compton. The area to the south-east appears to have been the kitchen garden with a small meadow, enclosed on two sides, in the south-west corner. The 1st edition OS map of 1867 may be presumed to reflect the changes made by Bishop Howley by which the grounds were remodelled nearly to their present form including the creation of the walled garden.

KITCHEN GARDEN Situated to the south-east of the Palace is the walled kitchen garden. The c 1ha of ground enclosed within brick walls is almost square in plan, although the south-west corner is set obliquely to the adjoining side walls and the northern corner curves outwards. The main entrance, in the north-west wall, is through a red-brick arch with a decorative stepped gable. The entrance and adjoining walls (listed grade II), with blocked-in bee boles, are thought to be in part early C16 and it appears from John Rocque's map of 1746 that this doorway led from the kitchen garden to the small meadow in the south-west corner. The remaining walls are C18 but have major late C20 repairs. There are two additional entrances, both centrally placed in their respective walls; the one to the north-east has a concrete lintel while the entrance to the south-east is hung with a C20 cast-iron gate. The walled kitchen garden is today (2000) largely overgrown. To the south-east the area is divided into compartments with beech hedges. Young orchard trees grow in the centre and part was, between c 1970 and 1980, laid out with botanic beds. The north-east quadrant is screened to the south-east by a C19 pergola decorated with wisteria. A small late C20 herb garden, the beds edged with box, is situated to the north-west of the pergola. The remains of the C19 timber-framed glasshouses (listed grade II) survive, built against the curved north-east garden wall. The associated back sheds, including the boiler room, are set against the outer wall and are in a similarly derelict condition.

OTHER LAND Situated to the north-east of the Palace are the c 8ha allotment gardens. Enclosed within chain-link fences, the gardens are privately cultivated as individual plots. Formerly a game preserve for the bishops of London, the Warren had been bought into use as farmland during the C19 and was made over for allotments in 1917 despite protracted arguments against the proposals by the then Bishop.

To the north of the Warren is a c 1.5ha rectangular strip of ground, the Moat Garden. The banked shrub beds to the north-east largely screen the garden from the adjoining Fulham Palace Road. A serpentine path, lower than the road, runs south for c 250m before curving east and exiting onto Fulham Palace Road. A short earth path at the southern end of the Moat Garden leads into the Warren. Between the Warren and the Moat Garden, enclosed within chain-link fencing is an area of grass planted with young trees which is (2000) set aside as an exercise area for dogs. The Moat Garden was made in c 1970 on the site of the moat which, until it was drained in c 1924, enclosed the site.

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OS 25" to one mile: 1st edition published 1867 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1919

Description written: June 2000 Register Inspector: LCH Edited: November 2003

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.