

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

KENTCHURCH COURT

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KENTCHURCH COURT

Name: KENTCHURCH COURT

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Garway

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Kentchurch

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.926932
Longitude: -2.8413132
National Grid Reference: SO 42245 25714
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000888
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

A medieval deer park with some late C18 landscaping associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Scudamore family has been seated at Kentchurch since the C15. In 1741 the estate passed to John Scudamore, a member of a junior branch of the family, who in 1756 married Sarah Westcombe, an heiress. In 1795, the year before he died, he commissioned John Nash to alter the house, the next major phase of work thereon being undertaken in the 1820s after the marriage of his grandson John Lucy Scudamore. The estate remains (1997) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Kentchurch lies 3km from the confluence of the Dore and Monnow rivers and the crossing place of the Abergavenny to Hereford road. It lies roughly equidistant, c 15km, from the two places, Abergavenny lying to the south-west and Hereford to the north-east. The hamlet of Kentchurch stands at the north end of Grosmont Bridge which crosses the Monnow with, a kilometre to the east, the parish church of St Mary (rebuilt 1869). This lies on the drive to Kentchurch Court, the Court standing in a valley setting a further 400m to the north-east. The park is bounded to the north-west by the minor road leading west to Kentchurch and to Grosmont Bridge; to the north by a stream which flows past the west side of Kentchurch Court to the Monnow; to the south by a watercourse leading from Garway Hill to the Monnow; and to the south-west by the Monnow itself. The registered area comprises c 135ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach to Kentchurch Court is from the west, along a kilometre-long drive, lined with trees planted in the later C20. In 1878 the drive was lined with a 'very old' elm avenue (The Garden 1878, 73). At the west end of the drive, on the edge of the hamlet of Kentchurch at the north end of Grosmont Bridge, is an early C19 castellated, stone, gothic gatehouse lodge with arch (listed grade II). Three-quarters of the way along its length the drive crosses the public road which passes St Mary's church. On the east side of the road, where the drive enters the inner park, are later C19 iron gates and piers.

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In the later C19 a drive swept south and west to the west of the kitchen garden from the public road along the north-west side of the park. By the late C20 the drive was grassed over and disused.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Kentchurch Court is a hidden house, lying out of sight of public roads in a shallow valley. It looks south-east to the lower, wooded slopes of Garway Hill and its deer park, while 4km to the south rises a second visually dominant hill, Graig Syfyrdin.

Kentchurch Court (listed grade I) is a stone castellated building facing south-east with (as faced) a gatehouse range to the left, a hall with porch to the centre, and a four-storey tower to the right.

Parts of the gatehouse range and the lowest three storeys of the tower which dominates Kentchurch Court are probably C14. Part of the east range is C16. A substantial internal modernisation was undertaken after 1773 to designs by Anthony Keck. Kentchurch's external appearance, however, dates largely from between 1795 and 1825 when it was subject to restorations and alterations in the gothic style by John Nash (1752-1835) and (after 1822) by the Scudamore's agent Thomas Tudor. To Nash can probably be attributed the refurbishment of the east range, the addition of battlements to this and to the tower, and some refenestration. Under Tudor the south front was refronted in a more sober gothic style.

To the south-west of the house is a stables block and other outbuildings (listed grade II), mainly early to mid C19 but incorporating the above mentioned mid C14 gateway.

Some 400m south-west of the house, and 150m south-east of St Mary's church, is a square moated site; this may mark the site of the early medieval manorial site.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The house faces south-east onto a gravelled forecourt. At the north end of the forecourt are grass terraces with stone steps, further terraces lying to the east of the forecourt. The parkland begins immediately beyond. About 110m east of the house and parallel with it and the stables is a 300m long ha-ha.

North of the lawn to the north of the house, and either side of the stream which then runs behind the house, is an area of ornamental woodland. A stream runs southward through the wood; late C19 maps mark stepping stones and a waterfall, suggesting that the stream had been modified and made more attractive.

It seems probable that the terraces, forecourt and ha-ha form part of a landscaping scheme which went hand-in-hand with the rebuilding of the house in the late C18 and early C19. Later in the C19 there was some formal bedding, but that was much simplified in the C20.

PARK Between Kentchurch Court and St Mary's church the park has a landscaped character, comprising permanent pasture with specimen trees. West of the church, however, the park is under arable cultivation.

East of the house, on the high ground rising onto Garway Hill, is the deer park. This is roughly circular in plan, and 1km in diameter. The 500m of parkland east of Kentchurch Court is largely open with scattered mature trees. The eastern part of the registered area, on the hillside rising towards the Common, is more heavily wooded. There are lesser belts of woodland west and north of Kentchurch Court and around the north side of the park. A pair of fishponds lies 300m south-east of the house, on a small stream descending in a valley from a spring on Garway Hill Common. In the southern part of the park are various old quarries and at least one limekiln.

From the higher ground in the park there are extensive views over Monmouthshire, Brecknockshire and Herefordshire, notably to the south and west to the Sugarloaf, Skyrrid, Bloreng, Black Mountains and the Hattered Hills, and with Grosmont Castle in the middle distance and the River Morrow at and just beyond the south boundary of the park.

The park was already established by c 1500. In the C19 it was said to be of 120-160ha, and to contain a herd of c 130 fallow deer.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden lies south-west of the stables block and occupies a narrow strip of ground c 90m north/south by 20m east/west.

REFERENCES *The Garden*, (26 January 1878), p 73 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (1963), pp 200-1 *Country Life*, 140 (15 December 1966), pp 1632-5; (22 December 1966), p 1688; (29 December 1966), pp 1734-7 *Trans Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club* 47, (1992), pp 215-17

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 44 SE, 1st edition published 1887 Herefordshire sheet 45 SW, 1st edition published 1887 Herefordshire sheet 49 NE, 1st edition published 1888 Herefordshire sheet 49 NE, 1922 edition Herefordshire sheet 50

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NW, 1st edition published 1888 Herefordshire sheet 50 NW, 1922 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 49.9, 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items Catalogue of the Kentchurch Court Estate Papers, including accounts, maps and garden records from 1740 to 1820 (National Library of Wales, 3 vols, 1976), (copy in Herefordshire Record Office (AL40)) The Foley Collection, including estate improvements (E12), (Herefordshire Record Office)

Description written: 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: August 1999

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.