

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HALL PLACE

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Name:	HALL PLACE
County:	Kent
District:	Sevenoaks (District Authority)
Parish:	Leigh
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.201251 Longitude: 0.20981619 National Grid Reference: TQ 54483 46991 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000934 Date first listed: 01-May-1986

Details

A late C19 formal, terraced garden with an adjoining ornamentally planted lake, laid out on the site of earlier formal gardens by the architect George Devey and set in a park of C18 origin with additional C19 planting.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hall Place formed part of the manor of Hollenden until it was conveyed by Henry VIII to William Waller, passing from him to his son Richard and gaining the name of Hall Place at about the same time. The estate passed through the hands of a number of owners including those of Robert Burges who rebuilt the house before his death in 1794. During the late C19, the estate was owned by Samuel Hope Morley MP, for whom the architect George Devey built the present house in 1870-2 on an adjacent site and enlarged and laid out the gardens. The estate passed to the descendants of Samuel Hope Morley and remains (1998) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Hall Place is situated in the Medway valley, c 4km west of Tonbridge on the B2027 and on the north-west side of the village of Leigh. The 100ha registered site, which comprises c 15ha of formal and informal gardens and c 85ha of surrounding parkland and woodland, lies on level ground which rises gently towards the north-west. The southern boundary is enclosed from the B2027 and village housing by close-boarded fencing along the western half and by a high wall of red brick with blue-brick diapers on a stone plinth (listed grade II) along the remainder as far as St Mary's church. North-east of the church, a low stone wall encloses the site from the road and from open farmland to the south-east while to the west, north, and north-west, agricultural fencing marks the boundary with a landscape of wooded farmland beyond.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The site is approached from the B2027, at the western end of Leigh High Street. A gravelled drive enters between the walled gardens of an adjacent cottage and lodge (listed grade II), the eastern one, known as Old Lodge, built of red brick with diapers in blue brick and with a projecting octagonal turret and high pitched roofs with swept eaves. Old Lodge, which is shown as a lodge in 1871 (OS), is by George Devey, his work dating from the later C19. The drive, which formed the service route to the former house (OS 1871), bears northwards, passes around the west side of the

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stable block and enters the rectangular forecourt on the north-west, entrance front of the house. The forecourt is constructed as a raised terrace which is laid to lawn and gravel and enclosed by walls to the north-east and south-west and from which steps lead down to lawns and the lake on the north-west side (ensemble designed by George Devey in 1870-2, listed grade II). From wrought-iron gates hung on stone gate piers in the north-east wall, a further drive, lined by a number of mature oaks, loops north-eastwards into the park then runs 400m south-east to East or Leigh Lodge (listed grade II) on the B2027. Another of Devey's lodges built of red and blue brick, it has an extended screen wall to the north with an arch and a pair of timber gates. This eastern drive, and a further one from Penshurst Lodge West Lodge on OS (Devey, listed grade II) at the western corner of the site, which is partly overgrown and not now (1998) in use, were laid out in the late C19 to serve the new house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Hall Place (listed grade II) stands on slightly raised ground, south of the centre of its park and with views south-eastwards over the park and north-westwards over the lake. It is a large mansion of two storeys with an attic and many gabled ends, built in the Tudor style of red brick with large diapers in blue headers and with a three-storey battlemented square tower. Built in 1870-2 by the architect George Devey (1820-86), it replaced the former house of 1794 which stood some 60m to the south-east, on the site of the present lawn, and which was demolished soon after 1870 (it is shown on the OS 1st edition). The northern portion suffered fire damage in 1940 and was considerably reduced in size in 1975-6. The surviving walls of this wing now (1998) form the setting for an enclosed paved and shrub-planted garden.

To the immediate south-west, a single-storey red-brick range forms an estate office and workshop with, at its northern end, a brick pavilion with a pyramidal tiled roof which is a former Peacock House (both listed grade II). South-west again and adjacent stands the stable range (listed grade II), a single-storey block with attic which forms a complete courtyard and which has a two-storey tower at its eastern angle. Built by Devey in 1870-2 of matching red brick with blue diapers, it is now (1998) converted to residential, garage, and storage use.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens lie to the north-east and south-east of the house and are enclosed from the park on both these sides by a brick ha-ha wall topped by a balustrade, the south-eastern length of which is shown established as the garden boundary in 1871 (OS). The raised, entrance front terrace continues around the north-east and south-east fronts where it is laid out to lawn, borders, and a broad gravelled walk. Steps lead from the south-east terrace down onto the principal lawn. This extends 100m south-east to the ha-ha and is framed with specimen trees of mixed ages and species, gravelled paths, and rhododendron shrubbery. From the north-east terrace, steps each end lead north-eastwards down into a rectangular garden aligned on the house. This is enclosed by clipped yew hedges with topiary cones and laid to lawn bordered by low, box-edged beds filled with mixed planting, this structure shown in a photograph of 1900 (CL). A large stone basin and fountain head form a central focal feature. Adjoining to the south-east is a rose garden, laid out with geometric beds of roses and lavender and with, running c 85m along its north-west and north-east sides, a rose-covered timber pergola. Built in the early C20, the pergola features a rustic timber summerhouse at the angle. South-east from the rose garden, within ornamental woodland, mature trees of late C19 origin are interspersed with exotics and informal islands of shrubbery set in grass, to a planting design by Lanning Roper dating from the 1970s.

From the south-west side of the principal lawn the grassed Long Walk, which in the late 1860s (OS) was aligned on the south terrace of the former house, now (1998) runs c 65m south-west to a curved stone seat. South-east of the Long Walk and the ha-ha, a raised square of c 1ha, constructed between 1908 and 1937 (OS), is laid out with a central sunken tennis court, a pavilion, and two sunken stone basins; formerly laid out as a rock garden and a pool, the area is now (1998) overgrown.

From the north-west terrace, the lawns sloping down to the lake are planted with bulbs and framed by islands of shrubbery. The roughly triangular, 5ha lake with three islands, which was constructed in the early 1870s, is fringed with ornamental shrubbery and trees of mixed ages and species and has a perimeter lakeside walk. Three stone bridges, recorded as footbridges on the OS edition of 1908, cross inlets at the north, east, and south-west corners and a boathouse also stands in the south-west corner. Several timber summerhouses and shelters are dotted along the lakeside walk, that sited 120m north-west of the house built with five gables of rustic timbers and trellis-work.

PARK West of the lake and to the north-east and south-east of the house, as far as the public footpath which runs north-west from East Lodge, the park is planted with scattered individual and clumps of mixed mature trees. These areas formed the extent

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of the park in 1801 (Mudge), the land west of the lake densely planted by the late 1860s (OS 1871) and the line of the footpath planted as a double avenue; this had gone by 1898 (OS). The park to the south-west, between the house and Penshurst Lodge, which was planted as parkland in stages between 1801 and 1898, is now (1998) open in character, a few trees surviving from the scatter shown in 1937 (OS). To the east, between the footpath and the Home Farm (outside the registered boundary), land imparked and planted between 1801 (Mudge) and 1866-9 (OS 1871) is now (1998) open arable and meadowland while north of the lake is a block of mixed woodland (Home Covert).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies to the south-west of the house, its c 48m x 38m brick-walled enclosure (walls listed grade II) shown on the OS map of 1871. It contains both buildings in the south corner and is largely laid out to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Immediately beyond the south-east wall is a further nursery area with a range of glasshouses surviving from the larger number shown established by the end of the C19. Part of this area is now (1998) laid out to a heather and conifer garden.

REFERENCES

E Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent (1797-1801)* [Facsimile edn 1972], pp 262-3 *Country Life*, 8 (15 December 1900), pp 776-81 J Newman, *The Buildings of England: West Kent and the Weald* (1969), pp 360-1 T Wright, *Gardens of Britain* 4, (1978), pp 56-8

Maps W Mudge, *Map of Kent*, 1" to 1 mile, 1801

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1866-9, published 1871 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1909 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1870 3rd edition published 1908 1938 edition

Description written: May 1998 Register Inspector: VCH 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.