

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

PITSHILL AND THE MANOR OF DEAN

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**PITSHILL AND THE MANOR OF DEAN**

Name:	PITSHILL AND THE MANOR OF DEAN
County:	West Sussex
District:	Chichester (District Authority)
Parish:	Tillington
National park:	SOUTH DOWNS
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.996536 Longitude: -0.65135949 National Grid Reference: SU 94738 22770, SU9473822542 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000349 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

## Details

This List entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 13/02/2017

Mid to late C19 informal gardens, laid out around a late C18 house and set within a mid to late C19 park, with a subsidiary manor house surrounded by mid to late C19 kitchen gardens, woodland gardens and mid C20 courtyard gardens.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The early history of the Pitshill estate is uncertain, owing to the absence of deeds and plans. It appears to have once been part of the adjacent manor of River, then passing through various hands under the earlier names of Wholmes, Holmes and Newhouse until in 1705 or 1706, it was sold, under the name of Pitshill, by Charity Palmer to Edward Madgwick. In 1760, it passed to a Madgwick cousin who sold the mansion house, buildings and six acres to William Mitford of New Grove, Petworth. Mitford and his son, another William, remodelled the house, for which Sir John Soane (1753-1837) supplied some drawings. During the late C18 and early C19, the Mitford family enlarged the estate through the purchase of adjacent farms and land which included the Manor of Dean. This was owned from the early C15 by the Aske family, then in 1588 by John Kyme and in 1611 by John Taylor, who appears to have built the present house which although still known as the Manor of Dean, has been recorded on the OS since 1874-5 as Dean House. The Manor passed through the hands of numerous owners until eventually in 1880, after being sold to the Earl of Egremont in 1782, it became part of the Pitshill estate by an exchange of property with the Petworth estate (qv). The entire Pitshill estate remained in the Mitford family until the house, gardens and park, excluding the Manor of Dean, adjacent cottages and Keepers Wood, were sold in 1959 to Sir Colville Barclay and subsequently, in 1998, sold again. Both properties remain in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Pitshill is situated 0.25km north of the A272 Petworth to Midhurst road, c 1km north-west of Tillington village. The 38ha registered site comprises c 7ha of informal gardens surrounding both the principal house, Pitshill and, 0.8km to its south, the Manor of Dean, and c 31ha of parkland and woodland. The site lies

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on the high crest and south-facing slopes of an east to west sandstone ridge which dips in the centre to enclose a deep, south-facing combe known as Dene Dip. From the ridge crest there are extensive views south over the farmland of the Rother valley to the South Downs and northwards over a landscape of well-wooded ridges to the crest of Blackdown and towards Surrey. Pitshill and its park are largely bounded to the east, north and west by agricultural fencing (or, where woodland extends beyond the site, are unfenced) while to the south and separating it from the Manor of Dean runs River Lane, which, west of Dene Dip, is retained on its north side by a drystone wall and hedge. Except on the south side where paddocks abut the grounds, the Manor of Dean is bounded by lanes on all sides, the western boundary along Dean Lane being retained by stone walling.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Pitshill is approached on the east side from New Road. Some 0.7km north of its junction with the A272, a drive enters at Lower Lodge, a single-storey building in coursed stone ashlar (listed grade II), and follows a winding, north-westerly course along the upper, eastern edge of Dene Dip, then passes the north side of the house to arrive on a gravelled forecourt on the west front. A further drive, which enters at the north-east corner of the site at Upper Lodge, a similar, single-storey, coursed stone ashlar building (also listed grade II), serves both the house and the late C18, single-storey, half H-shaped, stone-built stable and coach house block with its octagonal turret (230m east of the house and listed, as Pitshill Stud, grade II). New Road, the two drives and the lodges, all of which are shown on the OS 1st edition, were constructed in the mid C19 by William Townley Mitford (guidebook), the house at Pitshill previously being approached from the south by a route leading from Dean Lane northwards through Dene Dip. The southern 120m of this lane survives as the access lane to, on the west side, the former estate office now known as Dene Cottage (listed grade II) and on the east side, Malthouse Cottages (listed grade II).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Pitshill (listed grade II\*) stands on the crest of the ridge near the northern boundary of the site. It overlooks Dene Dip and enjoys extensive, panoramic views to north and south although it is hidden from the western half of the park by rising ground and an enclosing tree belt. The rectangular house, of two storeys with an attic and basement, has a main, east front built in limestone ashlar with a rusticated ground floor and a balustraded parapet over the side portions. Its three central window bays project with a pediment over containing a lunette. The remaining elevations are of brick and render. A property known as New House (or Newhouse) existed on the site in 1666, an illustration of which by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, dated 1785, shows a two-storey building with shaped gables. This was remodelled or rebuilt as a three-storey house by William Mitford from 1760, the east front being constructed in that year to a design by John Upton, Petworth's estate surveyor (Pevsner 1965). The house was completed in the 1790s by Mitford's son, another William, for whom Sir John Soane supplied plans, two of which survive. These were not, apparently, used by Mitford although Soane's suggestions probably influenced the appearance of the house (Mitford archives). The house was extended to the north and given a verandah and conservatory on the south front in the C19, these being removed in the mid C20.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The south and east fronts of Pitshill open onto lawns laid out on the gently sloping south face of the upper end of the combe. These are enclosed along the south side, c 60m from the house, by a random-coursed stone ha-ha, and along the east side by a rising bank planted with azaleas and other acid-loving shrubs with occasional trees. A high stone wall encloses the lawns from the service courtyard to the north. North-eastwards beyond the drive and eastwards towards the stables and Upper Lodge, areas of light woodland of mixed age and species are underplanted with further groups of azaleas set in grass with bulbs. Within the woodland on the west side of the drive from Upper Lodge is a small walled enclosure containing mid C20 Mitford family graves.

West of the house and lawn, the ground rises up a steep bank running north to south. The southern section, west of the lawn, is cut roughly into two levels of terrace which are densely planted with mature holm oaks and a line of yews and which contain, on the lower level c 50m from the house, a circular, rendered shell-house with a domed, oak-tiled roof, its walls and roof pierced by windows filled with coloured glass and its interior decorated with informal patterns of shells. This appears on the large-scale OS edition of 1875 and is said (owner pers comm, 1998) to have been created by three Mitford sisters in c 1800. North of the house, the bank rises to form a single terrace which is laid to grass and overhung by several mature trees including plane and holm oak. The terrace is retained across its north end by a stone wall topped by a clipped hedge, north of which further clipped hedges flank a path leading north-westwards to a straight walk cut through the wood along the northern site boundary.

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The Manor of Dean (listed grade II\*), a small, plainly built house of stone rubble walls with two large gables and a two-storey gabled porch on the west front, is surrounded by a series of courtyard gardens created from former farm use from 1943, with further informal and kitchen gardens extending northwards to the boundary on Dean Lane. The west-facing entrance front of the house is approached from the west up a flight of semicircular brick and stone steps which lead into a paved and planted walled courtyard. South of the house is a rose garden, laid to lawn and rose beds with a central sundial brought from Pitshill in the mid C20. North of the house, further stone steps lead up from the entrance court into a rectangular enclosure laid to lawn with tazze brought from Pitshill and with a rock garden along the foot of the north wall. A door in the north wall leads into the Grass Walks, a 250m long woodland garden, its mature, mixed ornamental trees, originally planted in the mid to late C19, underplanted with a variety of shrubs and bulbs set in grass. Replacement planting was carried out following storm damage in 1987.

**PARK** The park at Pitshill lies south of the house within the combe formed by Dene Dip and to the south-west, on the south-facing slopes of the ridge. The combe is open in character and grazed, with a few isolated clumps of trees along its upper rim and with, c 220m south of the house in the combe bottom, a pond partially fringed with trees, this surviving from the two shown on OS editions between 1874-5 and 1910. The south-western parkland is also open in character and laid to grazing with a few isolated, mature oak trees. The park was laid out sometime between 1823-4 and 1874 (Greenwood; OS 1st edition), probably during William Townley Mitford's ownership, and is shown in the mid 1870s as planted with scattered clumps and, south of the house, with several large groups of conifers (now, 1998, gone). By 1895 (OS 2nd edition), tree planting over the whole of the south-western parkland had increased and included the present grove of a dozen or so mature monkey puzzles and a few other exotic conifers which now (1998) stand within a fenced belt of woodland which forms the park's northern boundary. Much of the belt was replanted following the storm of 1987. In the extreme north-west corner of the park, on the southern edge of the woodland belt, stands a brick tower with a stone base containing an arched seating niche.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies to the north of the Manor of Dean, on the east side of the Grass Walks. Its 74m x 54m, red-brick-walled compartment, which is intensively cultivated for fruit and vegetables, was laid out in the mid to late C19 by William Townley Mitford to replace a former kitchen garden which lay to the south-east of Pitshill (unsigned watercolour in private collection). The garden sits within the northern half of a further walled enclosure, the southern half of which is shown planted as an orchard and nursery in 1874(5 and which is now laid to grass with a nut walk framing a central, north to south walk. South of the walled gardens are further areas laid to vegetable production.

#### REFERENCES

T W Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities and Topography of the County of Sussex* (1835), p 181 D G C Elwes, *The Castles and Mansions of Western Sussex* (1876), pp 239-40 W T Pike (ed), *Sussex in the Twentieth Century: Contemporary Biographies* (1910), p 176 *Sussex County Magazine* 5, (1931), pp 81-5 F W Steer (ed), *The Mitford Archives: A Catalogue*, (West Sussex County Council 1961), pp V(X; pls ii, vi [West Sussex Record Office Library 5603] I Nairn and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Sussex* (1965), pp 352-3 *The Manor of Dean*, guidebook, (The Manor of Dean nd)

Maps W Gardner and T Gream, *A Topographical map of the County of Sussex.....*, 1" to 1 mile, 1795 C and J Greenwood, *A Map of the County of Sussex from an actual survey ....*, 1" to 1 mile, surveyed 1823(4

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1874-5, published 1880 2nd edition surveyed 1895(6, published 1898 3rd edition surveyed 1910, published 1913 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875 3rd edition surveyed 1910

Illustrations S H Grimm, *Pitshill, Tillington*, in 1785 (British Museum) [reproduced in Steer (ed) 1991]

Archival items The Mitford archives date from 1760 to the late C20 and include title deeds, estate maps and plans, two plans for the house in Sir John Soane's hand and papers on taxation during the Treasurership of William Mitford I and II (West Sussex Record Office).

Description written: May 1998 Amended: January 2000 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: June 2000

## Legal

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