

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LEDSTON HALL AND PARK

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	LEDSTON HALL AND PARK
District:	Leeds (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Ledsham
District:	Leeds (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Ledston
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.756715 Longitude: -1.3403808 National Grid Reference: SE 43588 29130, SE 44753 30939 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001221 Date first listed: 01-Dec-1984

Details

Walled gardens and terraces probably of late C17 and C18 date, elements of a garden designed by Charles Bridgeman of 1716 and a park with C17 origins.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor was owned by Ilbert de Lacy in the C11. It subsequently reverted to the Crown and free warren was granted to Prior Godfrey of Pontefract. In the C16 it was granted to the Earl of Shrewsbury who alienated it to Henry Witham. The Witham family held the manor for three generations and sold it to Thomas Wentworth in 1639 who in turn sold it to Sir John Lewis of Marr (created baronet in 1660). It passed to his daughter Elizabeth who married Theophilus Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon in 1672. Their daughter, also Elizabeth, inherited, and it eventually passed to the Wheler family, descendants of her half sister. A set of plans by Charles Bridgeman (d 1738) for Lady Elizabeth Hastings of 1716 shows a scheme for the gardens to the east of the Hall. A series of three paintings of 1728 by John Settrington (Harris 1979) show the Hall and grounds and a fourth painting shows Ledston Lodge.

The estate continued in the Wheler family and remains privately owned (1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Ledston Hall lies immediately north and east of the village of Ledston, while Ledston Park, to which it is attached by a ride, lies to the north, on the north-west side of the village of Ledsham. The park is on high land which slopes down to the south, with fences dividing it from agricultural land. The Hall, gardens and North Park lie on land which slopes down to the south and west. Back Newton Lane forms the north boundary and the drive from Ledston and its continuation running east from the stables, the south boundary. Fences divide the east and west boundaries from agricultural land. The c 170ha site is in a rural setting.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Ledston Hall is from Hall Lane in Ledston which runs north-east from the village to an entrance with gate piers, gates and paired lodges (late C17 and C18, listed grade I). This is joined by a

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second approach, shown as an avenue on a county map of 1771, which leads north-westwards from an entrance on Back Newton Lane. An entrance (disused 1998) on the north side of the site from Back Newton Lane has stone gate piers (early C19, listed grade II) from which the 1845(7 and 1908 OS maps show a drive running south-east through North Park. A second set of stone gate piers (early C19, listed grade II*) lie on the south side of the park and a track runs from them to the east front of the Hall. Ledston Park has a number of informal entrances and the principal access to Ledston Lodge is from a track leading west from New Road, north of Ledsham.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Ledston Hall (listed grade I) is the product of successive rebuilding and contains part of the undercroft of a C13 chapel on the west side of the Hall. The Witham family incorporated this into a courtyard house, c 1560, and successive schemes by Thomas Wentworth and Sir John Lewis enlarged the building in the C17. Lady Elizabeth Hastings undertook remodelling in the early C18. The Hall has been partially converted to flats (1998) and is in private ownership.

Some 50m east of the Hall there is a stable block (C17, listed grade I) by William Thornton. A barn (listed grade I) on the east side of the stable yard has been incorporated into a C20 riding school and stables.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens to the south and west of the Hall are walled in stone apart from part of the north wall, which is of brick. To the south there are grassed terraces running down to the south and a path leads to iron gates and a set of stone steps (probably C18, listed grade II) at the south-west corner of this part of the garden which leads down into the west gardens. A path running along the south front of the Hall leads through an opening in a clipped hedge to a terraced walk which runs along the west front of the Hall. The terrace has a parapet wall of red brick rising from the retaining wall which projects slightly to the west at each end. There are views from the walk across the terraces and gardens below. The south end of the terrace terminates with railings and at the north end there is a brick pavilion (early C18, listed grade II), which is shown on one of the 1728 paintings, with a Venetian entrance of stone in the south elevation and sashed windows in the west and north elevations.

The gardens below the terrace have two grassed terraces which stretch north/south across the width of the garden immediately west of the retaining wall of the top terrace. The south end of this wall has a garden building (listed grade II) incorporated into it consisting of two linked barrel-vaulted chambers entered from arched openings. An opening in the north wall of the northern chamber leads to a tunnel which may connect with the medieval undercroft on the west side of the Hall. Two similar arched openings at the north end of the retaining wall are blocked with stone. The arched openings at each end of the wall are shown on one of the Settrington paintings which also shows three arched openings in the centre of the wall: this exhibits signs of successive repair and rebuilding, and there is no obvious sign of the central arches.

Stone steps (probably early C18, listed grade II) lead down the grass terraces in two stages. The steps are aligned with the centre of the top terrace in front of the Hall, thus they are not aligned with the centre of the west front nor are they at the mid-point of the grassed terraces, instead they are slightly to the north of the mid-point.

To the west of the grassed terraces the garden slopes gently westwards and c 80m west of the Hall on the north side of the garden there is a levelled sunken garden with the remains of stone walls around it and steps, restored or built in the C20, leading into it from the north-east corner.

The west garden is divided transversely by a yew hedge, immediately west of the sunken garden. Aligned with the steps down the grass terraces the yew hedge breaks and there is a beech hedge arbour, with the yew hedge continuing south of this. The area west of the hedge is an orchard.

The 1728 painting shows that the garden had two inner walled compartments on each side of the axis aligned with the terrace steps, and two irregular enclosures west of these. Part of the sunken garden and various low banks may relate to these subdivisions.

A smaller walled enclosure with a house in its south-east corner is attached to the north side of the west garden, much as shown on the 1728 painting.

On the east side of the Hall there is a turning circle and to the east of this grass terraces slope upwards to the east with two sets of stone steps (both listed grade II) leading up them to a grassed platform called The Grove from which there are views to the east across a ha-ha. On the north side of the platform there is a grass bank with stone steps leading up to an area of woodland, and the

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south side is walled. On the east side the wall returns and runs as far as the ha-ha from which point it is fenced. A second ha-ha lies on the eastern perimeter c 300m north-east of the Hall, and fencing divides the woodland to the north-east from North Park. The grassed central vista aligned with the east front of the Hall is lined by beech hedges and these step back to form rectangular compartments on each side of the vista c 150m east of the Hall. Each side of the vista is planted with a system of beech hedges forming alleys, groves and serpentine walks with a mixture of long views and narrow serpentine routes suddenly opening into grassed enclosures so that a series of surprising views unfolds. The hedges were planted in 1967 as a re-creation of a scheme by Charles Bridgeman of 1716 for which Lady Elizabeth Hastings made payments in 1731, while the banking, terraces and steps which are shown on the 1908 OS map appear to be part of the original scheme, partially shown in one of the 1728 paintings. An estate map of 1802 shows the area, marked The Grove, with groups of trees suggesting that the Bridgeman scheme had been replaced, or simplified, to give a less formal arrangement by that time.

PARK North Park, north of the Hall, is open pasture with scattered trees and clumps. An oval patch of woodland called Crispin Plantation occupies the north-west corner, on the site of a quarry marked on the 1802 map. Scattered trees along the east side may be the remnants of an avenue shown on both the 1802 estate map and the 1908 OS map which links with a track running north of Back Newton Lane across fields, also shown as an avenue on both maps but with few surviving trees (1998), which runs north for a distance of c 1.1km to Ledston Park. The latter is open grassland and fields with areas of woodland on the north and east sides and belts of woodland to the south, much as shown on the 1845-7 OS map. The only substantial area of woodland shown on the 1802 map is a belt sheltering the north side of the park. Ledston Lodge (C17, listed grade I) lies close to the centre of the park and is an ornamental former hunting lodge, probably built for Sir John Lewis, which commands long-distance views to the south. On the north side of the building there are gardens, and to the south a ha-ha divides a lawn from the park, much as shown on the 1845-7 OS map. In Settrington's painting the lodge is shown in grassland surrounded by woods and there is a view of the Hall, now obscured by trees.

The 1802 map shows the projected line of Back Newton Lane, marked New Road, which was to replace the old road which ran along the west side of Crispin Plantation and continued south-east along the line which divides the pleasure grounds from North Park, around the eastern edge of The Grove to join with an existing route which rejoins Back Newton Lane south-east of the site. The area north of this route as far as the southern boundary of Ledston Park is marked South Park, shown divided into small fields, while the area occupied by Ledston Park is marked North Park and divided into larger fields. A county map of 1771 shows the whole of this area surrounded by a pale. The land between Back Newton Lane and the south edge of Ledston Park is outside the registered area.

REFERENCES

J P Neale, Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen 5, (1822) *Country Life*, 21 (29 June 1907), pp 942-50 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire The West Riding* (1967), pp 304-6 P Willis, Charles Bridgeman (1977), p 61, pl 48b J Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (1979), pp 192-3 G Sheeran, *Landscape Gardens in West Yorkshire 1680-1880* (1990), pp 37, 84

Maps T Jefferys, County Map, 1771 T D Bland, Estate Plan, 1802, (2400, no 7), (West Yorkshire Archive Service)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1845(7 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1908

Archival items C Bridgeman, Garden schemes, (2400, nos 1(5), (West Yorkshire Archive Service) [one of the schemes is reproduced in Willis 1977, pl 48b]

Description written: September 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: November 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.