

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SUNDRIDGE PARK

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
SUNDRIDGE PARK

Name:	SUNDRIDGE PARK
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Bromley (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.417001 Longitude: 0.035380815 National Grid Reference: TQ 41632 70630 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000841 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

Details

C18 landscape park and pleasure grounds. Humphry Repton with John Nash advised the late C18 owners on the siting of a new house and associated landscaping.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1679 Thomas Washers of Lincoln's Inn acquired the Sundridge estate as a country seat. Sundridge became known locally as 'Washers in the Woods' (Wilson, nd), and stayed in the family for over a hundred years. The surveyor John Rocque showed it as the property of Mr Washers with a house set in open parkland surrounded on three sides by woods (Rocque, 1746). In 1792 Thomas Washers' great grandson sold the estate to Edward George Lind who, in the following year, called in Humphry Repton (1752-1818) to advise on the landscape. His recommendations, which included re-siting the house and converting the surrounding farmland to a park, were recorded in a Red Book for Sundridge (1793). In 1797, before any improvements had been made to the estate, Lind sold the property to Claude Scott (1742-1830), a wealthy corn merchant, who accepted Repton's recommendations and had the new mansion built. John Nash (1752-1835) was appointed architect but, before the mansion was completed, he was replaced by Samuel Wyatt. Claude Scott was created Baron Scott of Lytchett Manor in 1821 and when he died in 1830 his son, Samuel, who already lived at Sundridge, inherited the title and the 238ha estate (Tithe map, 1841). Sir Samuel Scott was a keen member of the Horticultural Society of London (the society received royal patronage in 1861) and in the 1820s had a large conservatory built by Henry Ormson of Chelsea, a leading specialist in this type of work. The 100ft (c 9m) long Conservatory had cast-iron framing and an elaborate curved glass roof, and was heated by the latest hot-water heating system (Wilson, nd). Between 1873 and 1874 the firm of Pulham and Son made a Chasm, Fernery, Alpinery, and Cliff in the grounds (Pulham 1877).

The fifth Baron, Sir Edward Henry Scott (1842-83), inherited Sundridge in 1880 and made extensive alterations to the mansion. He introduced pheasant-rearing to the estate and organised shooting parties. A frequent guest on these occasions was the then Prince of Wales, later to become Edward VII. Sir Edward Henry Scott was a magistrate and also High Sheriff of Kent. His influence was such that when the Bromley Direct Railway was built between Bromley North and Grove Park, he had an additional station, Sundridge Park, built by the estate entrance (OS 1898). The last of the Scotts to live at Sundridge was Sir

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
SUNDRIDGE PARK

Samuel Edward Scott (1873-1943), the sixth baronet. Sir Samuel Edward made two unsuccessful attempts to sell the estate and at the turn of the century the farmland to the south-east and south-west was sold off as building plots. In 1901 the park was leased to a company who formed a golf club. The mansion was again put up for auction in 1904 but failed to reach its reserve price and was leased as an hotel, the owners of the hotel eventually purchasing the freehold in 1920. Sundridge Park became one of the premier hotels in the south London area until the Second World War when it was closed for the duration of hostilities. Re-opening in the post-war period, it failed to prosper, and the company went into voluntary liquidation. The entire contents were sold and the mansion remained empty for two years until it, along with 16 acres (c 6.5ha) of surrounding parkland, was bought by Ernest Batten as a management training centre. The first residential course was held in the mansion in 1956. Since that time a number of new buildings have been erected, and the grounds close to the house adapted to accommodate the needs of the trainees.

In 1999 the site continues in divided corporate ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sundridge Park is situated in suburban south-east London. Mottingham lies c 2.5km to the north, Chiselhurst c 1.5km to the east, and Bromley 2km to the south-west. The c 120ha site is bounded by New Street Hill to the north, and the railway line and ancient Elmstead Wood to the north-east. Sundridge Avenue provides the boundary to the south-east, while C20 residential development to the north of Orchard Road and Sundridge Avenue, along with school playing fields, provides the boundary to the south. Small residential roads, Garden Road and Lodge Road, make up the south-west boundary, with Hall's Farm providing the boundary to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The mansion is approached from Plaistow Lane to the south-west where a C19 brick-built lodge guards the entrance to a tree-lined drive. The drive runs east-north-east for c 900m, curving through the parkland to arrive at the mansion and stables. Previously a public road known as Wood Lane (Rocque, 1746), it was by the late C18 'improperly' (according to Repton) known as the Avenue. Repton preferred to call it the Approach and upgraded it, giving it a lodge and a gate.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The mansion, Sundridge Park (listed grade I), stands on a shallow south-facing slope with Elmstead Wood rising behind. It is a large rambling mansion with three giant porticoes, white stucco, and a slate roof. The two-storey house expands towards the south with three bays at forty-five degrees to the entrance front. In the centre is a curved bay of three windows with six free-standing Corinthian columns and a wrought-iron balcony on the first floor. Above the cornice of the entablature is a balustraded parapet and inset within this, an attic storey of three windows surmounted by a lead saucer dome. The east and west fronts are almost identical to each other with shallow flights of steps leading up from the garden through matching Corinthian porticoes. The main portion of the building was built for Claude Scott by John Nash after Humphry Repton advised the former owner Edward George Lind to re-site the mansion. Nash exhibited designs for the house in 1799 and Angus in his *Seats of the Nobility and Gentry* (1804) remarks that 'the form of the house was fixed and planned on the ground at the time when Mr Repton and Mr Nash mutually assisted each other'. The interiors however were largely completed by Samuel Wyatt who had replaced Nash as architect by the beginning of the C18 (Cherry and Pevsner 1994).

To the north-west of the mansion are the stables and the coach house (listed grade II*). Designed by Samuel Wyatt, the semicircular stable block encloses a yard. The three-storey central pedimented pavilion is topped with a cupola and, like the two pavilions at the east and west ends of the curving stable block, housed the carriages. The staff lived in rooms and apartments on the first floor.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The c 9ha pleasure grounds lie mainly to the south, east, and north of the mansion. To the south a gravel path leads east around the mansion to a grassed terrace decorated with herbaceous beds. The terrace, which extends south-east for c 50m, is divided into two, the slightly smaller area to the west being enclosed on four sides by gravel paths. To the south the terrace is supported by a C19 brick wall capped with stone beyond which an area of grass, planted with ornamental trees, slopes down for c 20m to where the remains of an C18 ha-ha separates the pleasure grounds from the park. The north-east side of the lawn is bordered by a c 1m high brick wall which supports a second, smaller, grassed terrace beyond which the wooded slopes of High Grove extend northwards. High Grove, an area of woodland to the north of

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
SUNDRIDGE PARK

the mansion, is first named on the 1st edition OS map of 1870. Humphry Repton's design for the pleasure grounds included a formal garden on the levelled plateau to the east of the mansion. The line of the stone-capped terrace wall however is not recorded until 1898 (OS 2nd edition). When the terrace garden was redesigned by Rosemary Verey in 1992 brick walls were removed, grass re-laid, and the herbaceous beds put in.

At the east end of the lower terrace an informal grass path leads east towards a rectangular strip of land, named since at least 1898 (OS) Botany Bay, before swinging north into High Grove. It is possible that it was in this area that at least one of the Pulhamite features made between 1873 and 1874 was located. Rocks were recorded in the area in 1992 (O'Connor, 1992) but were not apparent in 1999. To the north, on the boundary between High Grove and the northern parkland is a small pond surviving from at least the mid C19 (Tithe map, 1841) and from this point the parkland rises northwards to the boundary of the site with Elmstead Wood. Here, the section of the railway which runs along the northern boundary of the estate is set in a tunnel. The path from High Grove continues west around the back of the stables to the late C20 buildings which house facilities for the training centre. Named after the founder of the management centre, Ernest Butten, the main building was built in 1970 on the site of the C19 conservatory. To the south of this building, the C19 stone steps provide access up to the C19 formal terraces which fronted the conservatory; these are now (1999) laid mainly to grass. To the south of the terraces a road leads south-west to join up with the entrance drive, south of the mansion.

PARK The c 110ha park around the mansion is now made over to two golf courses: an eighteen-hole course and a nine-hole course. The first of these was laid out by John Randall and was formally opened in 1903 by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon A J Balfour. The Kyd Brook runs from south-east to north-west across the parkland to the south of the mansion. Humphry Repton converted an existing pond, made from damming the River Quaggy, to an ornamental lake (Wilson, nd), but by 1910 the lake had gone (OS). In the early 1990s proposals were drafted for the reinstatement of the lake, but it was decided that it would be more practical to reinstate the stream.

An early C19 brick-built icehouse (listed grade II) is situated in the parkland against the southern boundary, 700m south-west of the mansion. It is an unusually large domed subterranean structure with a barrel-vaulted approach passage.

REFERENCES

H Repton, Red Book for Sundridge (1793) [held at the Sundridge Management Centre] Angus, Seats of the Nobility and Gentry...(1787), pl 56 J Pulham & Sons, Picturesque Ferneries and Rock-Garden Scenery, in Water falls, Rocky Streams (etc), (publicity brochure 1877) D Stroud, Humphry Repton (1962), pp 98, 105 G Carter et al, Humphry Repton (1982), p 156 B Cherry and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: London 2 South (1994), pp 170-2 K Wilson, Sundridge Park Words and Drawings (Sundridge Park Management Centre, nd)

Maps J Rocque, An exact Survey of Twenty Miles around London, surveyed 1741-5, published 1746 Tithe map, 1841 Liam O'Connor, Sundridge Park, Kent, Walled Garden site plan, February 1992 [copy on EH file]

OS Surveyor's Drawing, 3" to 1 mile, 1798 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1870 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1910 1930 edition 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1870

Description written: December 1999 Register Inspector: LCH Edited: June 2001

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.