

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

BRETTON HALL

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**BRETTON HALL**

Name: BRETTON HALL

District: Barnsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: High Hoyland

District: Barnsley (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

District: Kirklees (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Denby Dale

District: Wakefield (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: West Bretton

label.localisation: Latitude: 53.607696  
Longitude: -1.5868047  
National Grid Reference: SE2743712428  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1001217  
Date first listed: 01-Dec-1984

## Details

Pleasure grounds of late C18 and early C19 date, parkland of the C18 with earlier origins. Richard Woods was consulted about improvements in 1764, but it is not known what he proposed and whether it was carried out. Robert Marnock (1800-99) was head gardener for a period prior to his departure in 1834.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The estate was owned by the Dronsfield family in the C14 and it passed by marriage to the Wentworths in 1407. Bretton Hall is marked on Saxton's 1577 map of Yorkshire when there was a house near the site of the present Hall. The estate passed through marriage to the Beaumont family in 1792, and it continued in their ownership until Wentworth Henry Canning Beaumont, second Viscount Allendale, sold it in 1948. The West Riding County Council purchased part of the estate including the Hall, pleasure grounds and much of the park. Parts of the pleasure grounds and the parkland on the east side of the Hall are in use as the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, which was established in 1977 and the Hall is in use as a college (1997).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Bretton Hall is situated c 9km south-west of Wakefield, immediately south of the village of West Bretton in an area which is rural and agricultural. The M1 motorway passes within a few hundred metres of the site's extreme eastern boundary. The c 240ha site is bisected by the valley of the River Dearne which

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runs east/west through it. The north-west boundary is formed by a track connecting Hill Lane with the A636, the west boundary by the A636 and Litherop Lane, and the south boundary by Jebb Lane and fencing around Longsides and Jebb Plantation. A linear earthwork called Oxley Bank runs north from Jebb Lane forming the east boundary, which is continued by the eastern edge of Oxley Bank Wood and by the A637 Huddersfield Road. A stone wall runs along Huddersfield Road and the remaining boundaries have a mixture of walls and fences.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** There are four main entrances with lodges. On the north side of the site, the principal vehicular entrance, there is a lodge (listed grade II) called North Lodge which was probably designed 1811-14 by Jeffry Wyatt (Pevsner 1967). A drive called The Avenue (which currently (1997) has no trees) leads south-east and curves west to the east front of the Hall. It is shown as an avenue on the 1st edition OS map surveyed 1849-51. A second drive leads south-west from North Lodge and then turns south-east to the stables. On the north-east side of the park a track leads west from Huddersfield Road to Archway Lodge (listed grade II\*) which was designed 1805(6 by William Atkinson and is in the form of a giant archway with fluted columns. A track leads south-west and joins with a track running west which is the drive from Haigh Lodge (probably (Pevsner 1967) by Jeffry Wyatt 1811-14, listed grade II), on the east side of the site. The drive leads to stone gate piers at the edge of the park and joins The Avenue. On the south-west side of the site Hoyland Lodge, which has been extensively altered late C20, is on Litherop Lane and a track leads north-east to a set of large stone gate piers which are on the edge of the pleasure grounds c 500m south-west of the Hall.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Bretton Hall (listed grade II\*) was built to replace an earlier building which was partly burnt down in 1720 and is thought to have been situated in the area north of Upper Lake (LUC 1996). The present Hall is situated close to the centre of the site and set into the north side of the valley, with the south front overlooking the valley and rising parkland beyond. The Hall was erected c 1720 and was designed by Sir William Wentworth and Colonel James Moyser. The north range was added in the 1780s by William Lindley and the south range was remodelled 1811-14 by Jeffry Wyatt. Further alterations were carried out in the C19. Some 50m north of the Hall there is a stable range (listed grade II\*) by George Basevi of 1842/3. The Hall was turned into a teacher training college in 1949 and it subsequently became Bretton Hall, a college of the University of Leeds. There are a number of buildings north of the Hall erected in the mid and later C20 in connection with this use. Areas to the north and north-west of the Hall have been turned into car parks.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The south front of the Hall overlooks a terrace (probably early C19, listed grade II) with vermiculated retaining walls and a balustrade with vase balusters and piers with sunk panels with relief carvings of Italianate figures. On the west side the terrace continues and is supported by a retaining wall for a distance of 20m. From this point it continues as a bank which dies away as the slope of the land becomes more gentle. There are lawns with scattered mature trees on the west side of the Hall, and c 80m west of the building is the Camellia House (listed grade II) of c 1812 by Jeffry Wyatt which has diagonally projecting bays and contains camellia trees. C20 tennis courts are situated immediately west of the Camellia House and beyond this shrubs and trees screen playing fields.

The terrace overlooks lawns planted with mature trees which slope southwards down to a large lake, called Lower Lake, which was constructed in 1776. Upper Lake, immediately to the west, is shown on Jefferys' county map surveyed 1767-9 but not on one of 1750 (reproduced in LUC 1996). Jefferys' map shows an avenue running from the west end of the lake north-east to the Hall, but this is not shown on subsequent maps. The River Dearne was used to feed the lakes and it was diverted as a channel called The Cut which runs parallel to the north side of the lakes. This was probably constructed in 1774, before Lower Lake was constructed, as it is described as 'the new cut' in estate records for that year (see LUC 1996). Paths lead across the lawns to the lakeside, one running south across The Cut to a C20 boathouse on the edge of Lower Lake and another leading south-west to a bridge over The Cut. This continues on to a bridge and weir (c 1765, listed grade II), called Cascade Bridge, which divides the two lakes and incorporates a cascade over which water flows down from Upper to Lower Lake. The route over the bridge is a continuation of the Hoyland Lodge drive.

A system of paths leads around the lakes. On the north side of Upper Lake a track on the north side of The Cut leads west into Bridge Royd Wood and continues past an early C19 summerhouse (listed grade II), c 200m north-west of Cascade Bridge. A monument in the form of an unfluted column on a plinth, now (1997) in ruinous condition, is situated in the woodland c 400m

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north-west of Cascade Bridge. At the head of Upper Lake there is a boathouse with four monolithic stone columns supporting a C20 roof. The path curves eastwards to follow the south shore of the Lake and c 200m south-west of Cascade Bridge there is a rustic stone grotto with two entrances and a conical roof, designed late C18 by William Lindley. Inside there are traces shellwork on the walls and ceiling. Woodland called Bath Wood on the south side of Upper Lake is divided from the parkland by a stone wall.

On the south side of Lower Lake there is grassland with scattered trees and clumps which is divided from the park by a ha-ha, a continuation of the wall along the edge of Bath Woods. This runs from a point c 180m south-west of Cascade Bridge eastwards to the edge of Oxley Bank Wood. A path along the south side of Lower Lake affords views of Bretton Hall over the water. Some 300m south-east of Cascade Bridge, Menagerie Wood is the site of a curved lake with an enclosure around it shown on the 1849(51 OS map and marked Menagerie. It does not appear on the 1908 OS map. The path continues past a disused quarry which has a well set into the rock face with an entrance with a partially legible stone tablet above it bearing the date 1685. At the head of the Lake there is a dam which was constructed in compliance with the Reservoirs Act of 1975 and opened in 1992. On the north side of Lower Lake The Cut is crossed by a bridge (listed grade II) with three arches, from which point the watercourse turns to the south and descends a series of three stepped weirs (listed grade II) lined with stone, over which the water falls as a cascade before joining with the outflow from the Lake.

The pleasure grounds north of the Hall have been partially overlaid by late C20 building and car parks amongst thin woodland. **PARK** There are three areas of parkland. South of the lakes Long Side consists of grassland with scattered trees and a belt of woodland, shown on the 1810 estate map, running along Oxley Bank. It is divided into fields by fencing and used for pasture. On the west side of the Hall, Middle Park is of similar character to Long Side. Land north of Middle Park is thought to be the site of a C17 or earlier deer park (LUC 1996). Bella Vista Plantation, in the north-west corner of the park, is shown on the 1810 estate map. It takes its name from a gothic tower, probably built in the late C18, which was demolished during the C20. On the east side of the Hall parkland called Bretton Country Park and formerly known as Broad Ing is open grassland with scattered mature trees and a belt of woodland running along the east and north boundaries, much as shown on the 1849-51 OS map. This area was imparked in 1782 by Sir Thomas Wentworth who described the work in a letter to his sister (quoted in LUC 1996). Sir Thomas had consulted Richard Woods (1716-93) in 1764 and a bridge built to his design in the middle of that year in an unknown location was swept away by a flood a few months after it had been completed. It is not known if any other works were carried out were to his design, but works were being planned at this time according to John Spencer of neighbouring Canon Hall. His diary for July 1764 records a visit to Bretton when he 'din'd at Sir Thomas Wentworth's and walked over the Park and view'd his intended improvements' (ibid).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Some 400m north of the Hall there is a semicircular brick wall with a central stone gardener's cottage which has a balustraded parapet. The north side of the wall has a series of bothies and sheds relating to the kitchen gardens on this side; all these buildings have been converted into exhibition space and a cafe (buildings and wall probably early C19, listed grade II). The semicircular wall overlooks a grassed slope which is enclosed by hedges on each side, and there are views of the Hall and parkland to the south. A late C20 pavilion, used as exhibition space, is situated c 70m south-west of the gardener's house. A yew hedge runs along the base of the semicircle and to the south of this there is a terrace with stone balustrading and steps leading down to a lawn with a circular pond, shown on the 1810 estate map, c 250m north of the Hall. The 1849-51 OS map shows several glasshouses north of the position of the terrace and suggests that the semicircle was enclosed by a wall, forming a D shape. The estate map of 1810 shows the semicircle extending as far as the position of the terrace and suggests that there was a wall at this point. It seems likely that a pre-1810 D-shaped kitchen garden had been reduced in size by 1850 and was opened out to form part of the pleasure grounds between then and 1907, when the OS map shows what appears to be the terrace. Beyond the semicircular wall there is a walled garden of irregular rhombic shape divided into two areas by a brick wall. The southern wall is partly formed by the semicircular wall overlooking the terrace. This is shown on the 1849-51 OS map but not on the 1810 estate map. It is currently (1997) in use as maintenance yards.

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OTHER LAND Bretton estate church (listed grade II\*) is in Bretton Country Park, c 600m north-east of the Hall. It was built in 1744 for Sir William Wentworth and is set in a walled churchyard. It is reached from a track which branches eastwards from the former drive from Archway Lodge.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 83 (21 May 1938), pp 530-5; (28 May 1938), pp 554-9 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire The West Riding* (1967), pp 145-7 G Sheeran, *Landscape Gardens in West Yorkshire 1680-1880* (1990), pp 55-9 *Bretton Hall Park Landscape Masterplan*, (Land Use Consultants (LUC) 1996) L Bartle, *A Short History of Bretton Hall* (1997)

Maps T Jefferys, *County Map of Yorkshire*, surveyed 1767-9, published 1771 Estate Map, 1810 [reproduced in LUC 1996 Appendix Two]

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1849-51 2nd edition surveyed 1891 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1908 1932 edition

Description written: February 1998 Amended: March 1999 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.