

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

WERRINGTON PARK

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

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**WERRINGTON PARK**

Name: WERRINGTON PARK

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Launceston

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: St. Stephens By Launceston Rural

District: Cornwall (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Werrington

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.656949  
Longitude: -4.3624229  
National Grid Reference: SX 33111 86805  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000514  
Date first listed: 01-Jul-1990

## Details

A mid C18 park which was further developed in the late C18, with an early C20 arboretum.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the medieval period Werrington was one of the estates of the Abbot of Tavistock; at the Dissolution it passed with many of the abbey's other estates to the Earl of Bedford. From the Earls of Bedford the estate passed to the Drake family, and in 1650 was purchased from Sir Francis Drake's nephew by William Morice. Morice was created a baronet for his services to Charles II, and was made Secretary of State and a Privy Councillor at the Restoration. The late C17 and early C18 landscape is recorded in a view by Edmund Prideaux (1716).

Sir William Morice's son, Nicholas, and his grandson, another William, undertook extensive alterations to the house and grounds in the early and mid C18. Sir Nicholas Morice was married to Catherine, daughter of the eighth Earl of Pembroke and sister of the ninth Earl (1693-1751), who with the third Earl of Burlington (1694-1753) was a noted amateur architect who worked at Castle Hill, Devon (qv). On the strength of these family connections, it has been suggested that the architect for Nicholas Morice's work at Werrington may have been William Kent (c 1685-1748) (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). In 1750 Werrington was visited by Dr Richard Pococke (1704-65), who commented on the beautiful improvement 'in wood and lawns' which had been made (Pococke 1888-9). Pococke's description also noted features including a ruined castle, a temple of the sun, a 'very fine terrace', a triumphal arch inspired by that at Lady Morice's cousin's seat, Highclere Castle, Hampshire (qv), and a hermitage 'like that at Richmond' [Richmond Park, Surrey (qv)], which had been designed by Kent in 1730. Other features noted included a 'model of what is called the Tomb of the Horatii, near Albano', a large alcove trellis seat near a serpentine stretch of river, a small building known as the Warren House, and the gothicised tower of the parish church. Pococke concluded that, 'this park

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is to be looked on as one of the most beautiful in England'; some of its mid C18 features are shown on a drawing of 1757 by William Borlase (DRO).

Sir William Morice died without issue in 1750, and in 1775 the estate was sold to the first Duke of Northumberland (1714-86), whose interest in the property was principally connected with political patronage (Pett 1998). The Duke did however make improvements to the estate, including enclosing an extended park and building two bridges and a temple. The kitchen gardens were constructed by the third Duke in the early C19, but by the mid C19 the family's interest in the property had waned. In 1865 it was sold to Alexander Hey Campbell, while in 1882 it was again sold, this time to John Charles Williams (1861-1939) of Caerhays Castle, Cornwall (qv) (Gray 1995). Werrington was acquired as a sporting estate, but an arboretum in the grounds was developed with original introductions from Far Eastern expeditions led by Ernest Wilson (1876-1930), George Forrest (1873-1932), and Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), for which Williams had acted as sponsor.

Today (2000) the site remains in private ownership.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Werrington Park is situated c 2km north of Launceston, to the east of the B3254 which runs north-west from St Stephens to Yeolmbridge. The c 157ha site is bounded on all sides by agricultural land, from which the park is separated by a late C18 stone wall. The River Ottery flows from north-west to south-east through the site towards its confluence with the River Tamar c 1km east of the house. The river valley affords fine views to the south-east, while to the south of the river well-wooded land rises steeply. The park encompasses hills to the south-east and south-west of the house, and three combes which branch off the main valley. Smallacombe Wood, a plantation to the south-south-east of the house (outside the site here registered), forms part of the setting of the site and contains a folly, the Sugar Loaves (listed grade II) which was described in an C18 poem, *The Doom of Morice*, concerning Sir William Morice, third Baronet. This structure may correspond to the 'model of the Tomb of the Horatii' noted by Pococke in 1750 (Pococke 1888-9); Pevsner however suggests that the design may be derived from Thomas Daniell's (1749-1840) Indian drawings (published 1795-1808), which would indicate a date of c 1800 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). The reciprocal vista to the Sugar Loaves from the park and house is today (2000) obscured.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The mansion is today (2000) approached through mid C19 gates (listed grade II) adjacent to the late C19 North Lodge (listed grade II) which is situated in Werrington village to the north. The north drive extends through agricultural land to the north of the house before passing along the north-east boundary of the pleasure grounds to reach the east side of the house, immediately to the west of the kitchen garden. A further drive enters the site from a minor road to the east, adjacent to East Lodge (listed grade II). This drive passes west through agricultural land and to the south of the estate farm, before turning north-west to join the north drive to the east of the house.

The principal drive enters the site from the B3254 St Stephens to Yeolmbridge road to the south-west. The drive passes between mid C19 gate piers (listed grade II) adjacent to the early C19 South Lodge (listed grade II), before winding down the wooded hillside south-west of the house. The drive crosses the River Ottery on the late C18 White Bridge (listed grade II) and sweeps north and east through the park to pass beneath the south front of the house. The White Bridge and south drive formed part of the first Duke of Northumberland's improvements to the park undertaken c 1775.

The drive from West Lodge in Yeolmbridge to the north-west of the house is marked by a line of early C18 lime trees c 400m long which crosses the park and then passes along the south-west boundary of the pleasure grounds. The lime trees are shown on Edmund Prideaux's early C18 drawing of Werrington (1716).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Werrington Park (listed grade I) stands at the top of a south-facing slope to the north of the River Ottery. The house is constructed to a courtyard plan, with a C16 range to the north being linked to an early C18 range to the south by east and west wings. The north range is constructed in rubble stone, while the symmetrical, two-storey south range is built from stuccoed brick under hipped slate roofs. The south range contains significant mid C18 rococo plasterwork and joinery.

The north range was remodelled in 1641 by Sir Francis Drake (nephew of the admiral) from the early C16 residence of the Abbot of Tavistock; further work was undertaken by Sir William Morice, first Baronet c 1650. The south range was constructed

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in the early C18 for Sir Nicholas, second Baronet, or Sir William, third Baronet, possibly to designs by William Kent (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). Further changes were made to the building in the late C18 and early C19 by the Dukes of Northumberland. Immediately to the east of the house are the C18 stables and arched entrance to the estate yard (all listed grade II), while to the north-east of the house is a late C18 or early C19 icehouse (listed grade II).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** A grass terrace extends below the south facade of the house and is separated from the park by a ha-ha. Immediately to the west of the house a level lawn, the bowling green, is bordered by the remains of a formal planting of limes which may date from a late C17 or early C18 garden scheme; these trees are shown on Prideaux's drawing of 1716. Further informal pleasure grounds to the north and west of the house are separated from the park to the south and west by a C19 ha-ha (listed grade II) which is c 2m deep and lined with rubble stone. A low segmental-arched stone bridge leads west across the ha-ha to the park. The pleasure grounds to the west of the house occupy the site of the medieval parish church and churchyard which were removed by Sir William Morice in 1740.

**PARK** The park lies to the south and west of the house, and comprises the well-wooded valley of the River Ottery which flows from north-west to south-east through the site. To the north of the river an approximately rectangular-shaped lake, known as the Pond, is fed from the river by the Old Mill Leat; this continues to the east of the Pond to reach Ham Mill beyond the eastern boundary of the site. The lake was created in the early or mid C19 as part of the improvements made by Sir Nicholas or Sir William Morice and is shown in a drawing of 1757 by Borlase. The structure shown by Borlase on its north bank does not appear to survive (2000).

On the north-facing wooded hillside to the south of the Pond and the River Ottery is an early or mid C18 folly, the Terrace House (listed grade II); this structure may correspond to the hermitage described by Pococke in 1750 (Pococke 1888-9). The terraces of two cockpits also survive within the park. A terraced track which extends through the woodland east from the South Lodge to the Terrace House corresponds to the mid C18 terrace; beyond the Terrace House it continues as a track leading east and north-east to a ford on the River Ottery south-east of the house. A late C18 or early C19 footbridge, the Duchess's Bridge, which lies to the west of the ford, also links the park on each side of the river.

To the east of South Lodge is the Arboretum which was laid out by John Charles Williams in 1908. It contains many original plant introductions, particularly rhododendrons, from expeditions to the Far East sponsored by Williams, together with hybrid rhododendrons and camellias bred by Williams himself.

Many of the landscape structures recorded by Pococke in 1750 (Pococke 1888-9) do not survive above ground today (2000). These include the temple of the sun, the triumphal arch, and the large trellis alcove near the river. The ruined castle stood on Castlehill to the south-west of the site here registered and no trace of this structure survives above ground.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Two contiguous kitchen gardens on the south-east-facing slope to the east of the house are enclosed by brick walls (listed grade II). The gardens were constructed in the early C19 for Hugh, third Duke of Northumberland (1785-1847). Some early C20 glasshouses survive within the kitchen garden.

**REFERENCES** R Warner, *A Walk through some of the Western Counties of England* (1800), pp 145-7 C S Gilbert, *Historical Survey of Cornwall* ii, (1820), pp 522-3, *frontispiece Gardener's Mag* 13, (1837), p 121 R Pococke, *Travels through England ... during 1750* i, (1888-9), p 133 O B Peter, *The Manor and Park of Werrington* (1906) *Architect Hist* 7, (1964), pp 38, 108 B Jones, *Follies & Grottoes* (1974), pp 301-2 *The Cornish Garden*, 32 (March 1989), pp 15-25 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (2nd edn 1989), pp896-7 *Inspector's Report: Werrington, Cornwall*, (Elizabeth Banks Associates 1990) T Gray, *The Garden History of Devon An Illustrated Guide to Sources* (1995), pp 231-4 T Gray (ed), *Travels in Georgian Devon* i, (1997), pp 125-6 D E Pett, *The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall* (1998), pp 212-15 *Werrington Gardens*, guidebook, (Werrington Park nd)

**Maps** Map of the manor of Werrington, 1761 (T1258M E27), (Devon Record Office)

**Illustrations** E Prideaux, *Werrington Park from the south-west, 1716* (reproduced in *Architect Hist* 7, (1964), pl 18) W Borlase, *Werrington Park from the south-west, 1757* (Devon Record Office) J Swete, *View of Werrington Park, 1792* (reproduced in Gray 1997)

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Archival items The Morice family papers, including deeds, personal and estate papers (3750), are held in the Devon Record Office. The Williams family papers (WW1(799), including sale particulars, 1882 (WW 141), draft description of the estate, 1882 (WW 144), and accounts 1903(9 (WW 788), are held in the Cornwall Record Office.

Description written: September 2000 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: October 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.