

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

INKPEN HOUSE

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
INKPEN HOUSE

Name:	INKPEN HOUSE
District:	West Berkshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Inkpen
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.371199 Longitude: -1.4867635 National Grid Reference: SU 35823 63696 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000328 Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

Details

A late C17/early C18 formal garden, probably replanted in the C19 and with restoration work in the late C20, surrounding a late C17/early C18 former rectory.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

During the C17 (and possibly earlier) the Brickenden family owned property in the Inkpen area, and a succession of Brickendens held Inkpen Rectory (as it was known until the mid C20) from 1618 until c 1760, when the Butler family took it on until 1933 (CL 1943). The present house was built 1690-1710, possibly by Dr Colwell Brickenden, who succeeded his father as Rector in 1703, and in 1710 was made Master of Pembroke College, Oxford. He appears to have been the creator of the formal garden at Inkpen (although there is no documentary evidence of this, or of the C18 layout), but died of apoplexy in 1714, aged fifty (ibid). The layout can be related to advice given in late C17/early C18 books on garden design, particularly a layout in Chapter 6 of *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (John James 1712, translated from Dezallier D'Argenville's French original). The coincidence of undulating ground within the garden, overlaid by a rigid geometrical scheme, is comparable with the layout at St Paul's, Waldenbury, Herts (qv), although on a smaller scale. The garden seems to have been subject to major replanting in the mid C19, and it is possible that it was entirely replanted at this time (Inspector's Report 1988), with further replanting in the late C20. The House remains (1998) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Inkpen House and church lie at the south-west corner of the village of Inkpen, removed from the village centre. The village lies 1km north of the north scarp of the Berkshire Downs and c 5km south-east of Hungerford. The 1.5ha site is bounded largely by agricultural land, with the church and churchyard adjacent to the north, and the lane from the village centre to the north-east. A brick retaining wall bounds the garden next to the drive and road to the north and east. The site lies on a rise, sloping up to the centre and south-east corner of the garden, and steeply down to the south and west beyond the garden. The setting is largely agricultural, with long views extending north, west and south from many parts of the garden, particularly towards Inkpen Hill on the scarp of the Downs to the south.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance, lying c 15m north of the House, is approached from the east off the village lane, along a short drive separating the garden from the churchyard to the north. The entrance, to the south off the drive, is marked by brick piers standing at the north end of a gravel path, edged by panels of lawn, leading up to the front door. The

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
INKPEN HOUSE

piers are flanked by a brick wall which extends south at its west end, to the north-west corner of the House, so that the path and lawn are enclosed on three sides by the House and garden walls, to form an entrance court which is open to the east. A short flight of stone steps with iron hand rails leads up to the central front door, with views north to the church and churchyard.

West of the pedestrian entrance, the drive enters a service court lying adjacent to the north-west corner of the House, separated from the entrance court by its west wall. The northern half is laid to gravel, and the southern half, laid to lawn, slopes up to a range of service buildings standing against a brick wall along the south boundary. The west boundary is formed by an C18, thatched timber barn (listed grade II), and a brick wall bounds the yard to the north, adjacent to the churchyard, alongside which stands the small former stable block, now converted to domestic use.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Inkpen House (late C17/early C18, listed grade II*) stands towards the northern boundary of the site, built of brick in rectangular form, of two storeys with attics. The south, garden side is hung with fish-scale tiles, and the upper floor and attics enjoy views south across the garden to the Downs beyond.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The garden lies to the south and east of the House, entered from the garden door on the south front, which leads directly onto an axial grass terrace extending west and east from here. The terrace extends 50m west from the House, bounded to the north by the brick wall of the service court, and to the south by an earth bank. To the east, the terrace extends 150m from the House, bounded initially to the north by an earth terrace leading down to the level east lawn. This lawn lies adjacent to the east front and is cut out of sloping ground, with an apsidal north boundary retained by the northern boundary wall. This area, bounded to the east by a low brick wall and to the west by the entrance court, is believed to have been partially remodelled in the late C20 by Sir Fred Warner, a previous owner (D Male pers comm, 1998). The east half of the axial terrace is flanked by clipped limes forming the Lime Walk. The Walk terminates with a pair of brick pillars flanking an iron screen above a brick ha-ha, overlooking the lane which extends east from here.

From the axial terrace adjacent to the south front, a concave grass slope, set into the southern bank of the terrace, leads up to the convergence of three allées in goose-foot form. These lead south-west, south and south-east into the garden, extending to the southern boundary. The three allées, cut into the hillside, together with a further allée which crosses the garden transversely from south-west to north-east, divide seven triangular, hedged compartments of unequal sizes set within the rectangular garden enclosure. The compartments, largely laid to lawn, contain ornamental shrubs and several mature trees, each being surrounded by a clipped hedge of mixed species. The allée running south-east from the House is aligned on an earth mount at the south-east corner of the garden, backed to the south-east by mature yews, from which elevated point the garden is overlooked, together with the south front of the House, the views extending north-west to the church and distant countryside. Formerly there may also have been views south from here towards Inkpen Hill. The allées running south and south-west from the House frame views of Inkpen Hill. In the late C19 the interiors of the compartments were planted with individual conifers, possibly yew trees (OS 1883), now gone (1998).

The hedged compartments are enclosed to the west, south and east by a further grass walk, the east arm being flanked by an avenue of limes, and the outer edges of the other two sides being hedged, the hedges interspersed with mature trees. The allée running south-west from the House, the transverse allée, and the southern and western boundary walks meet at the south-west corner of the compartments. A brick ha-ha bounds the southern boundary walk, beyond which lies a lawn with extensive views south to Inkpen Hill, reached from the garden via a small wooden footbridge.

West of the main garden lies an open, terraced area of lawn and borders, running down the hillside, incorporating a tennis court. North of this a further lawn lies adjacent to the west of the barn, bounded to the north by the brick wall of the present walled garden.

KITCHEN GARDEN Formerly (CL 1943) the kitchen garden lay adjacent to the north of the Lime Walk, but only traces of this exist on the ground. The present kitchen garden lies close to the north end of the barn, comprising a small, square area, enclosed by brick walls, presently in productive use, entered from the south-east corner by the barn.

REFERENCES

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
INKPEN HOUSE

John James, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening* (1712), chap 6 *Country Life*, 93 (12 February 1943), pp 308-11; (19 February 1943), pp 352-4 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* (1966), p 159 L Fleming and A Gore, *The English Garden* (1979), pp 75, 77 *Inkpen House*, (English Heritage Inspector's Report, 1988)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1883 2nd edition published 1911 3rd edition published 1926

Description written: June 1998 Amended: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: March 2000

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.