

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

The Alameda

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

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Name:	The Alameda
District:	Central Bedfordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Amphill
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.029146 Longitude: -0.49928509 National Grid Reference: TL0305537811 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1431149 Date first listed: 16-May-2016 Statutory Address 1: The Alameda, Woburn Street, Amphill, Bedfordshire, MK45 2HX

Historique de la conservation

The Alameda was laid out across open common and an area of heathland, on the south-west edge of Amphill, between 1821 and 1827 by Henry Vassall Fox, 3rd Baron Holland (1773-1840), and his wife, Elizabeth Vassall Fox, Baroness Holland (1771-1845). Influenced by the almeidas, the tree-lined roads that the Hollands' had admired on their travels in Spain, it was planted with a double avenue of beech trees and presented to the people of Amphill as a public promenade. It was designed to rise gently from its entrance on Woburn Street with the end of the walk being a circular area on the low-lying Cooper's Hill on the Greensand Ridge. Imposing wrought iron gates, set within a brick screen wall, were constructed at the entrance. However, these were pulled down in 1882 on the instructions of the Duke of Bedford, who had purchased the Amphill Park estate in 1842. They were subsequently replaced by a wooden field gate and railings, while the original gates were re-erected at the entrance to Bedford School in c 1891, where they still stand, being listed at Grade II in 1971.

On 17 May 1921, a war memorial, designed by Sir Albert Richardson (1880-1964) who had moved to Amphill in 1919, in partnership with Charles Lovett Gill (1880-1960), was unveiled by HRH Princes Beatrice at the south-west end of the Alameda. As part of the commemorative scheme a new gateway designed by Richardson was constructed at the entrance on Woburn Street. It comprised wrought iron gates hung from sandstone piers, with some of the ironwork coming from the parish church of St Andrew, being donated by W T Sharpe, a local builder, and adapted and extended by Percy Saunders, a local blacksmith, at his Woburn Street forge. The gateway's central piers were topped with late-C18 Coade stone urns, bought by Amphill Urban District Council from an unknown source for £20, while the end piers were topped with stone ball finials, given by Edward Coleman, a town councillor and local grocer. In 1934 the sandstone piers were replaced with more substantial brick-built piers. In 1937 the Duke of Bedford donated land to construct a second avenue to join the Alameda with Station Road as a memorial to commemorate the coronation of King George VI in 1936. It was planted with a single avenue of beech trees in the 1950s and is known as Sweetbriar (Coronation Walk).

The south-west end of the walk was built on Cooper's Hill, originally an area of heathland. In the 1820s it was planted as a pine plantation, with the majority of trees being removed to aid the war effort during the First World War. It has now reverted back to heathland, it being the largest such area in Bedfordshire and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Details

A town walk, laid out between 1821 and 1827 by Henry Vassall Fox, 3rd Baron Holland, and his wife, Elizabeth Vassall Fox, Baroness Holland. It was extended in the 1950s to commemorate the coronation of King George VI.

LOCATION, SETTING, LANDFORM, BOUNDARIES AND AREA The Alameda lies 10km to the south of Bedford, at the south-west corner of the centre of Ampthill. The original walk lies on a north-east to south-west alignment and extends for a distance of circa 0.5km from its entrance on Woburn Street to Cooper's Hill on the Greensand Ridge. A 1950s extension runs from Station Road in a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment for a distance of circa 0.36km to join the original walk at a point circa 0.28km along its length from the Woburn Street entrance. The C19 walk is bounded on the north side by the grounds of buildings fronting Woburn Street and the playing fields of Alameda Middle School, with wooden picket fences forming the boundary. Enclosing its southern side are the gardens of houses standing on Alameda Road and Briar Close and the grounds of Alameda Middle School, with a combination of wooden picket fences, wooden panelled fences and brick walls forming the land division. The circular area at the south-west end of the walk is enclosed by the heathland on Cooper's Hill, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The western boundary to the mid-C20 extension is also formed by the school grounds, again with wooden picket fences dividing the two, while its eastern side is bounded by the gardens to houses standing on Lyme Road and The Pines, along with the grounds of Clevedon Nursery and an access road to the Lime Tree Court housing estate at its southern end.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the Alameda is through the Alameda Gate (listed Grade II) on Woburn Street. It comprises a central gateway with wrought-iron gates hung on brick piers with flat concrete caps and Coade stone urns. Flanking pedestrian gates have brick end piers topped with late-C20 ball finials. The entrance to the extension on Station Road is open to the street.

PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE The principal structure is now the First World War Memorial (listed Grade II) which occupies the centre of the circular space at the south-west end of the walk. Erected in 1921 to the designs of Sir Albert Richardson, in partnership with Charles Lovett Gill, it is constructed from Portland stone and takes the form of a cenotaph, raised on a two-tiered plinth, which in turn stands on a polygonal plinth.

PLEASURE GROUNDS The public walk starts at the main entrance on Woburn Street and comprises a non-metalled footpath that proceeds gently uphill in a north-east to south-west alignment in a long straight avenue for a distance 0.5km before terminating in a circular area with the First World War memorial at its centre. The walk is flanked on each side by a grassed areas planted with a double avenue of lime trees, probably the original planting scheme, while the circular area is bounded by a line of Scots pine behind which is a line of holly trees. A wooden kissing gate at the south-west end of the walk, set within in the line of holly trees, provides access onto the heathland of Cooper's Hill. A second linear walk, laid out in the 1950s, starts from Station Road and proceeds gently uphill in a north-north-west to south-south-east alignment for a distance of 0.36km to meet the early-C19 walk at a point circa 0.27km along its length from the entrance. On its west side is a grassed area planted with a single avenue of lime trees while a non-metalled footpath lies on its east side. Running parallel with the footpath on its east side is a small stream. This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 08/06/2016

Summary

A town walk, laid out between 1821 and 1827 by Henry Vassall Fox, 3rd Baron Holland, and his wife, Elizabeth Vassall Fox, Baroness Holland. It was extended in the 1950s to commemorate the coronation of King George VI.

Legal

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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.

Reasons for Designation

The Alameda, a town walk laid out between 1821 and 1827 by Henry Vassall Fox, 3rd Baron Holland, and his wife, Elizabeth Vassall Fox, Baroness Holland, with a 1950s extension, is registered at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Design interest: as a relatively simple but highly effective design which uses the natural fall and rise of the ground surface and tree canopy to provide considerable visual interest;
- * Rarity: as a rare example of an early town walk, especially one situated in a small rural town;
- * Intactness: it survives in relatively good condition, retaining its original design and boundary delineation;
- * Historic interest: as the setting for a First World War memorial, which gives it added poignancy;
- * Group value: it has strong group value with the First World War memorial at its south-west end (listed Grade II), the entrance gates on Woburn Street (listed Grade II), and Amptill Park (registered Grade II).

Bibliographie

Other

Bedfordshire County Council, Bedfordshire Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review Exercise, Site Description and Information: The Alameda, March 1996

Bedfordshire Times and Independent, 18 June 1937, p3

Bedfordshire Times and Independent, 19 August 1938, p2