

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WINDLESTONE HALL

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WINDLESTONE HALL

Name: WINDLESTONE HALL

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Spennymoor

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Windlestone

label.localisation: Latitude: 54.650266
Longitude: -1.5915088
National Grid Reference: NZ 26456 28428
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001407
Date first listed: 27-Nov-1998

Details

Gardens and park probably laid out early to mid C19, around a house of this period, garden terraces of the late C19, park of the late C18 and early C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site was owned by the Eden family who had acquired it through legacy and purchase by 1560. It remained in the family until the mid C20 when it was sold. The Hall and a small acreage was bought by Durham County Council. One of the walled gardens and most of the ancillary buildings have been converted as private residences, and the park is farmed privately (1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Windlestone Park lies c 2km west of Rushyford, on rolling land which falls gently to the south and east. The c 80ha site is in a setting which is rural and agricultural and the boundaries are formed by the old line of the A689 to the north, a road leading to Home Farm and the edges of woodland called The Breaks to the east, the edge of Office Plantation to the south, and West Wood to the west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance is from the north where there are walls, piers and gates (listed grade II), probably of early C19 date. On the west side of the entrance there is a lodge (listed grade II) of 1848 in the form of a Greek temple. It is pedimented on both the east and west ends, so that a temple front could be seen from whichever direction the entrance was approached; these views are now (1998) partially obscured by trees. A drive leads south through wooded pleasure grounds to the east side of the Hall. Another entrance, c 200m west of North Lodge, has a drive running south to the kitchen garden. On the south side of the site a drive runs northwards from an entrance off Middridge Lane and divides, with one branch leading north-west, over a bridge which separates Upper Pond from Middle Pond, and continuing to the kitchen garden, and the other branch running north along the west side of The Breaks before turning west to the east side of the Hall. This route is now (1998) disused.

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PRINCIPAL BUILDING There has been a house on the site since the C16 or before. Windlestone Hall (listed grade II*) was built c 1835 by Ignatius Bonomi for Sir Robert Johnson Eden, incorporating elements of the earlier building. The house was enlarged in the later C19 and was converted into a residential school in the 1950s, in which use it remains (1998).

Some 50m north of the Hall there is a stable block (probably early C19, listed grade II) on three sides of a courtyard, with a massive stone-built clock tower surmounted by a cupola (1815, listed grade II*) at the entrance on the open, east side of the courtyard.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS There are gardens on the east, west and south sides of the Hall. On the east side of the Hall there is a terraced forecourt, now (1998) a car park, with a stone retaining wall and central stone steps leading down to lawns planted with specimen trees. There are views to the east over the park to the North York Moors in the distance. Lawns extend in front (east) of the stables and clock tower and paths lead off to the north through woodland, some leading north-east to Chapel Plantation which was the site of a chapel, shown on the 1898 OS map but not that of 1856, and demolished in the mid C20. The woodland is composed mainly of young trees with a few mature specimens, including mature beech trees, and extends to the northern boundary of the site.

On the south side of the Hall the terrace, which is balustraded on this side, overlooks a steep slope which is terraced down to the south in two stages. The terracing was laid out by Sir William Eden during the late C19/early C20. There are views over parkland to rising land beyond. The terrace continues and on the west side of the building there is a mid C20 extension to the Hall which divides the terrace into two parts. A balustraded terrace in front of the extension overlooks a steeply sloping bank. Stone steps down at the west end of the terrace lead to a path running down the slope to an entrance into the kitchen garden. A grassed enclosure to the rear (north) of the extension is formed by a curved wall (listed grade II) with rusticated buttresses and niches. C19 OS maps show this area with quartering paths centring on a circular area which was probably the site of a fountain shown in C19 illustrations.

PARK There is parkland to the south and east of the Hall. To the south open pasture land with scattered trees is sheltered on all sides by tree belts which are divided from the parkland by ha-has. A series of three lakes runs across the parkland, High Pond is within West Wood, to the east is Middle Pond, and Lower Pond curves to the north-east.

Sir John Eden was described in 1810 as 'one of the older planters ... having paid particular attention to it for upwards of fifty years' (Bailey 1810). Following Sir John's death in 1812, Sir Robert Johnson Eden was probably responsible for forming the park, and there are records of him stopping up roads and footpaths in 1847, presumably resulting in the layout of the park shown on the 1856 OS map. Sir Robert's successors continued to improve the woodland through the C19.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies immediately west of the west terrace. It is a rectangular walled enclosure with a central arched entrance which has Doric pilasters and a triglyph frieze in the north wall (wall and entrance listed grade II). The south side is closed by a ha-ha with flat coping stones (listed grade II). A C19 photograph (Eden 1976) shows that there was a grassed walk ornamented with statues along the top of the ha-ha wall with the kitchen garden divided from the walk by a clipped hedge. The east wall has an arched entrance with ironwork gates (wall and gates listed grade II) leading to a path up to the south terrace. The garden affords views to the south over parkland. C19 OS maps show it divided into rectangular plots. North of the kitchen garden there are a number of ancillary buildings including a C19 coach house (listed grade II) which have been converted for residential use. A second walled garden north of the coach house is in use (1998) as private gardens.

REFERENCES

J Bailey, *General View of the Agriculture in the County of Durham* (1810) C Holme, *Gardens of England in Northern Counties* (1911), pls 132, 133 A Eden, *Another World 1897-1917* (1976) N Pevsner and E Williamson, *The Buildings of England: County Durham* (1983), p 506

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1856 2nd edition published 1898 1923 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1856

Description written: July 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: September 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.