

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BARRINGTON PARK

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Name: BARRINGTON PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Barrington

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Windrush

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.808759
Longitude: -1.7118233
National Grid Reference: SP 19965 12275
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000754
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

Deer park, probably C17, and mid C18 pleasure grounds and parkland landscape, associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Before the Dissolution the manor of Great Barrington was a possession of Llanthony Priory. In 1540 it was sold to John Guise, who in turn sold the estate, in 1553, to Richard Monnington and his son-in-law Reginald Bray. It then descended for over 200 years with the Brays, under whom, probably in the C17, a deer park was laid out to the north of the house. In 1735 Richard Bray sold Great Barrington to Lord Chancellor Talbot (d 1737), who commissioned a new house for his son and daughter-in-law. In 1742 William Talbot (d 1782), Lord Talbot's son, later to be created Earl Talbot and Baron Dynevor, was legally separated from his wife, leaving her at Barrington. It was she, Mary, daughter and eventual heir of Adam de Cardonnel, who laid out the pleasure grounds around and to the south of the house. Since 1735 the estate has passed by inheritance, and remains in private hands (1999).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Barrington Park lies on the west side of the village of Great Barrington, 5km west of Burford. Barrington Park house stands on the north crest of the shallow valley of the River Windrush, the meadowland of whose flat bottom the house's south, garden front overlooks and which was incorporated in the mid C18 in the circuit walk around its pleasure grounds. Immediately north of the house is a walled deer park. This is largely bounded to the east by the unclassified road north to Bourton-on-the-Water, and to the north by the track leading off this to Manor Farm. The southernmost point of the area here registered (100ha) is the gateway 1.5km south-east of the house on the A40 linking Burford to Cheltenham.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The house is approached from the east, via a drive (piers and gates of Park Front Gate listed grade II) along the north side of the walled kitchen garden and the north range of the stables courtyard with views north and north-west over the deer park. A gap in the stables gives entry to the courtyard itself, from where there is access into the east end of the house. The formal drive continues beyond the gap, entering the grounds on the north side of the house via a gate. This stands 100m east of the porte-cochère and gravel sweep on the north side of the house.

These arrangements date from c 1740, when the house was rebuilt. Previously, and as shown on Kip's view published in 1712 (Atkyns), a drive to the north side of the house spurred off the public road which then ran around the north, west, and south sides of the walled kitchen garden. When, c 1740, this was moved to its present line down the east side of the kitchen garden it was set in a deep cutting, revetted on the west by a stone wall which stands up to c 15m high. The north leg of the old public road was retained as the walled access to the churchyard, and this remains in use today (1999).

A second approach was constructed c 1740 from the south-west, from a private estate road between Windrush and Little Barrington across the Sheep Paddock. This drive ran on a fairly straight line to a point c 50m west of the house, via the bridge over the Windrush and a shallow gully up the centre of the pleasure ground west of the house. When, before 1800, the estate road was made public, Waterloo Copse was planted along its north side to screen traffic from the house. Still in use in 1910, the drive was later abandoned. Gate piers survive at its south-west end.

On the skyline 1.5km south-west of the house, on the A40, is the mid C18 Green Drive Gate (listed grade II*), said in the later C18 (A Description of Barrington Park) to be to a design by William Kent. From this an undefined drive usable only in fine weather ran across pasture towards the house. The drive was metalled in the late C19 but abandoned in the earlier C20. The Gate's function as an eyecatcher has been obscured by the Beech Avenue of 1910 which approaches the Gate from the north and now completely conceals it.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Barrington Park (listed grade I), begun c 1737, may have been designed by William Smith (d 1747) of Warwick, who was certainly responsible for its construction. It is of ashlar, with two storeys above a rusticated plinth with a shallow hipped roof of Cotswold limestone. Essentially the house is a five-bay Palladian villa, although coupled Corinthian pilasters are used to divide the north front into only three bays, with a pediment over that to the centre. The south, garden front is also pedimented and pilastered. To either side are wings of 1870-3 by J MacVicar Anderson, who was also responsible for the central porte-cochère on the north side.

Running between the house and the church of St Mary (listed grade II*) 120m to the south-east is a long and narrow service and stables courtyard. Incorporated on the centre of the north side is a twin-gabled house of the C17 retained from the complex shown in Kip's engraving (Atkyns 1712). At this time the main house stood to the south-east, almost abutting the west tower of the church.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The house and its stables courtyard lie on the centre of the north side of a rectangular block of gardens and pleasure grounds c 450m long from east to west and c 250m wide. From the house and the upper part of the pleasure grounds there are views south across the meadowlands of the Windrush valley and to the rising ground beyond (notwithstanding the view is bisected by Waterloo Copse, planted to screen the public road in the early C19), with the Beech Avenue leading to the Green Drive Gate on the distant skyline. To the north the pleasure grounds are bounded by the modern (late C20) wire deer fence (in place of the mid C18 Palladian railing), to the west by a ha-ha, to the south by the River Windrush, and to the east by boundary walls. Immediately west of the house is a hard tennis court. Beyond, west of this, is a lawn with mature specimen trees including cedars of Lebanon, which are balanced by others east of the house where there is a C19 shrubbery with winding paths. Along the south front of the house is a gravel terrace. This continues east of the house, alongside the 10m high ashlar wall which screens the kitchen and stables court behind. Almost immediately south of the terrace along the front of the house the ground falls away fairly steeply to the meadowland alongside the River Windrush. When seen from the south it is clear this wedge-shaped slope is made ground, perhaps derived from the excavations to lower the kitchen court east of the house.

Set around the edge of the pleasure grounds are various seats and structures installed in the years after c 1740 and described in the Description of Barrington Park published in the 1780s. Their theme, and that of inscriptions by David Mallet (d 1765), was

the importance of friendship. The circuit, in the form of a figure of eight lying on its side with the house at the centre, began at the west door of the house and led north-west. First, at the north-west angle of the lawn, was the green-painted Modern Seat (now lost) with an inscription invoking solitude. South of this was an urn commemorating Georgina, Dowager Lady Cowper (d 1780), erected by 1787 and probably that which now stands c 150m south-east of the house. Just inside the ha-ha, c 50m south of the Modern Seat, was a statue of Pan (now lost). At the south-west corner of the pleasure grounds is the Gothic Seat (mid C18, listed grade II*), a stone seat, possibly to a design by William Kent, with yews behind. Some 140m south of the Gothic Seat, across the meadowland, is the C19 bridge (listed grade II) across the Windrush, a replacement of the three-arched mid C18 structure. From here the path (not extant) led north-east across the meadow to an urn (only the plinth survives) at the bottom of the slope south-east of the house. This is believed to be the burial place of Smiling Billy (d 1735), Lady Talbot's favourite horse (family pers comm, 1999). From here one ascends through mature trees up the slope to the pleasure grounds east of the house, although in the mid C18 the path carried visitors south-east over the meadow to give a view back to the house and to the Grecian Temple (mid C18; listed grade II*) before carrying them north, uphill, to emerge through the yew screen behind the Temple. This stands on the crest of the valley (the slope below characterised as the Amphitheatre) at the east end of the pleasure grounds, and from it there is a fine view south-west across the river valley and the countryside beyond. Some 50m to the north, in the shrubbery along the back of the pleasure grounds, was a statue of Diana, possibly from the Van Nost workshop (listed grade II; under restoration 1999). Close to the south-east corner of the house is a small swimming pool of 1972.

The River Windrush follows a sinuous course through the meadows, and c 100m east of the bridge it bifurcates. Its line was recut and cascades introduced in the mid C18. A later C20 boathouse is situated 50m west of the bridge.

The band of fields either side of the Green Drive was treated as pasture ground rather than parkland, and apart from the Beech Avenue of 1910 contains relatively few trees. The field at the north end of this zone, south of the Little Barrington to Windrush road and Waterloo Copse, was known in the C18 as the Sheep Paddock and was considered to be a part of the landscape setting of the house. An alcove seat (not extant) stood at its south-west corner giving a view to the house. Part of this field was partitioned off in the 1950s as the village cricket ground.

The C18 pleasure grounds were created by Lady Talbot, according to Georgina, Countess Cooper (writing in 1760; quoted in Inskip and Jenkins 1999), in the period after 1742 when she was left in sole possession of Barrington Park by her husband's departure. The pleasure grounds are shown on Marshall's plan of 1779 and a detailed Description of them was printed in the 1780s. The gardens associated with the earlier house are shown on Kip's view published in 1712 (Atkyns): a bowling green to its south, with two parterre compartments to the east. Below, on the meadow along the north bank of the Windrush, was a grove. PARK Sloping gently uphill from the north side of the house, beyond a late C20 wire fence, is a deer park. It is roughly square, straight sided, and c 900m in diameter with the house and pleasure grounds set in its south-east corner. The park, which still contains the spotted deer, sheep, and black cattle noted in the 1780s Description, is permanent pasture, and is fairly well studded with parkland trees, including a very few survivors from avenues present in the C18. There are also several short C20 avenues and commemorative plantings. To the east, west, and north it is bounded by a stone wall, broken by several gates and midway down the east side by an C18 clairvoie (present by 1779, listed grade II*). From this there is a view to the C18 Ionic pigeon house (called 'Circular Building' on 1779 plan, listed grade II*) which stands 400m to the west, at the centre of the park. The pigeon house is circular, of ashlar, and with a tetrastyle portico on the east side. The concrete domed roof is of 1922. An earlier pigeon house is shown of Kip's view of c 1712, apparently on the same site.

The extreme south-east corner of the park is known as the Glebe. Here, c 100m north-east of the church, is the site of a vicarage house built c 1700 and shown on Kip's view of c 1712. Following an exchange this was demolished before 1779, and no sign of it is visible on the ground. Some 300m north-north-west of this is the site of a Roman building; again, there is no obvious sign of this at ground level. Nevertheless, there are many earthworks within the park, especially its south-east quadrant, some at least presumably relating to the pre-park, agricultural landscape. These earthworks are confused by those of a Second World War camp.

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When Kip depicted Barrington House c 1712 there was a deer course down its west side. This, and other features of the park's plan, invite comparison with Lodge Park, Gloucestershire (qv), laid out in the 1620s. Barrington's deer park seems likely to also be of the C17.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden (listed grade II), which remains in cultivation, occupies the compartment to the east of St Mary's church, as in 1712 when it was partly depicted by Kip. The garden is roughly square, and measures c 70m east/west by c 90m north/south. The walls, perhaps C17, are of stone, although with a brick internal face along the north side. A range of lean-to sheds along the east half of the north wall is of the mid C19 and of high quality. Glasshouses which stood against this have been removed. At the west end of the south wall an ashlar doorway gives access from the pleasure grounds.

REFERENCES

R Atkins, *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* (1712), pl after p 250 S Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (1779) Victoria History of the County of Gloucestershire VI, (1965), pp 18-19 D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (2nd edn 1979), pp 258-61 N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume One, 1500-1660* (1989), pp 55-7 N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume Two, 1660-1830* (1992), pp 68-70 P Inskip and P Jenkins, *Barrington Park: Conservation Plan* (1999)

Maps William Marshall, Plan of Barrington Park, 1779 (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881, published 1886

Archival items A Description of Barrington Park, c 1780s (Gloucester Local History Library)

Description written: March 1999 Amended: May 2001 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: March 2003

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.