

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

HOLLYCOMBE HOUSE

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

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**HOLLYCOMBE HOUSE**

Name:	HOLLYCOMBE HOUSE
County:	West Sussex
District:	Chichester (District Authority)
Parish:	Linch
County:	West Sussex
District:	Chichester (District Authority)
Parish:	Milland
National park:	SOUTH DOWNS
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.050810 Longitude: -0.79044322 National Grid Reference: SU 84879 28636, SU 84995 29278 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000304 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1988

## Details

Early C19 pleasure grounds and gardens extensively developed as a woodland garden from the 1870s onwards

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The first house at Hollycombe was a cottage ornée, built by John Nash in 1803 for Sir Charles Taylor (1770-1857). Taylor was close friend of the Prince Regent, later George IV, and a member of the 'Carlton Set'. The design drawings and plans survive (RIBA) and were executed by George Stanley Repton, at that time employed in Nash's office. 'New Pleasure Grounds' were laid out to the south of the cottage ornée by 1812 (Cowdray MSS 1698) and Taylor bought up land so that by the time of his death the estate extended to 2,000 acres (c 810 ha).

In 1866, Sir Charles William Taylor (1817-1873) sold the estate to Sir John Hawkshaw (1811-1891), a prominent civil engineer involved in many major schemes including the Suez Canal. In the 1870s he developed the existing pleasure grounds into an arboretum, planting exotics along the wooded slopes above the House, but it was his son, John Clarke Hawkshaw (1841-1921), who was responsible for the major landscaping scheme executed in the late C19. He also extended the arboretum and woodland gardens by bringing areas of farmland into the gardens, as far north as Hillands Plantation.

After a fire in 1892, Hawkshaw extended the House eastwards, aggrandised it with Tudor-style additions and faced it with stone. He added a terrace extending the length of the House which carried on to a bridge eastwards across the public road. By a series of land purchases the estate reached 4,000 acres (c 1620 ha) in extent. His son Oliver Hawkshaw (1869-1929) planted the Azalea Walk in the 1920s with the new Knaphill hybrids.

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In 1936 the estate was sold to Lord Rea (d 1949) purchasing Hollycombe House with some 200 acres (c 81ha). The estate was then sold in the 1950s to the present owners who have continued planting a wide variety of ornamental trees and shrubs set in lawns. In 1990 they sold Hollycombe House and much of the parkland but continue to run the Steam Museum that they set in the arboretum. The property remains (2000) in divided private ownership.

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Hollycombe lies directly to the east of the West Sussex / Hampshire border, some 3 km south-east of Liphook.

Hollycombe house lies on the slopes of Hollycombe Hanger and is sheltered on its west and east by rising ground. The parkland of 104ha, extends along the narrow valley floor which runs north to south. The site affords fine southerly views out over steep southward-facing slopes.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The Liphook to Woolbedding public road lies immediately east of the House. The principal approach laid out in the early C19 to accompany the new house branches off this road c 480m to the north of the House and runs parallel to the road along the valley floor to the north front. To the east of the public road and c 50m to the south-east of the House is the stable-block. A drive leads northwards from the stables to meet with the principal approach.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Hollycombe House (listed grade II) is a large mansion, the exterior of which dates from 1892. The original house was designed by John Nash (1752-1835) in 1803 and executed by George Stanley Repton. It sits in a commanding position across the valley with fine views to north and south. Following a fire in 1892, the earlier stucco was replaced by coarsed stone and ashlar quoins. The House is of two storeys with a castellated three-storey tower to the east. The south, garden front has a three-bay loggia with rounded arches. A conservatory was added to the west in the C20.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** Two walled gardens lie to the west of the House, laid out at the time of the rebuilding. The western garden lies at a higher level to the eastern that directly adjoins the House and is accessed through the conservatory. These gardens are enclosed on their north side by a stone wall (1892, listed grade II) leading westwards from the north façade of the House, and are reached through an arched Tudor-style doorway. A path leads to some rustic steps which descend to a hexagonal stone summerhouse (post 1876, OS), with an opening supported by tree trunks.

To the west of the walled gardens is a rockery, dating to the same period as the formal scheme of walled gardens and summerhouse.

A broad, balustraded paved terrace, constructed as part of the late C19 remodelling, extends along the south front of the House. Beneath this are two terraced lawns dating from the mid C19 which extend down the steep slopes. A Laburnum tunnel (planted 1980s) leads from the lawns down into the valley. The paved terrace leads eastwards from the House to a stone bridge, rebuilt during the 1890s, which spans the public road and which links the formal gardens to the arboretum. The approach from the bridge into the arboretum is highlighted by a stone and thatch summerhouse (c1890s)

The arboretum and pleasure grounds extend to the east of the public road along Hollycombe Hanger, and to the south of Hillands Plantations. The arboretum now incorporates the Hollycombe Steam Collection, developed from the 1980s. A partly subterranean brick structure, known as the 'icehouse', stands in the middle of the arboretum. The majority of mature specimens date to the early 1900s and are laid out in informal beds. The site suffered severe damage in the storms of 1987 and 1990. A Lime Walk, planted after 1876 (OS), extends south-east for 230m; it then continues as the Azalea Walk, planted c1926 by Oliver Hawkshaw using Waterer's new hybrids. The Walk terminates at the summit of Hollycombe Hanger, where the Greensand Ridge projects into Harting Combe. Originally the walk led to a thatched rustic pavilion with bark-covered logs supported on iron saddle stones; only the saddle stones now (2000) survive.

**PARK** To the north of the House, beyond the forecourt, a late C20 ha-ha separates the lawns from the open valley which rises gently northwards beyond.

To the west of the House, set along the valley slopes and along the valley bottom and enclosed by woodland to the west, is an expanse of open land known as the West Park. North of this is Shufflesheeps, woodland planted on what was previously a common, which forms an extension to the Victorian arboretum.

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The South Park, which runs south from the House along the valley floor, is set out with a chain of five small ponds constructed in stages during the C20. To the east the valley has steep wooded sides. On the west side there is a deep hollow-way which leads to the kitchen gardens. This side is also wooded and merges with Wardley Hanger, which also has some ornamental plantings from the early C19.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The early C19 kitchen garden, which lies 0.75km south-south-west of the House, is reached by the hollow-way. It consists of two contiguous enclosures covering an area of a little less than 1ha bounded by sandstone walls. It forms part of the Home Farm complex.

**REFERENCES**

Inspector's Report: Hollycombe (Debois Landscape Survey Group 1988) J M Baldock, *A Dream of Steam. Steam at Hollycombe. A Guide and History*, guidebook, (1995)

Maps Survey of Woolbedding and Linch, 1652 (Add MSS 13.418), (West Sussex County Record Office) Christopher Mason, Survey of Woolbedding, 1724 (Add MSS 13,420), (West Sussex County Record Office) Yeakell, Gardner and Gream, Map of Sussex, 1795 (West Sussex County Record Office) William Barlow, Plan of Commonable land belonging to William Stephen Poynts Esq, 1812 (Cowdray MS 1698), (West Sussex County Record Office) Estates Belonging to C W Taylor, early C19 (Add MSS 2092), (West Sussex Record Office) Tithe map for Woolbedding parish, 1840 (West Sussex Record Office) Tithe map for Linch parish, 1849 (West Sussex Record Office) Sale Plan, 1866 (PAR 159/54/7), (West Sussex County Record Office) OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875-6 2nd edition published 1895 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1876

Illustrations G S Repton, Plans and elevations of Hollycombe House, 1803 (RIBA)

Archival items Dr Trotter, Account of Hollycombe House, nd (MP 1733 vol.2), (West Sussex County Record Office)

Description written: May 1992 Register Inspector: HJ Amended: October 2000 (KC); December 2003 (CAA) Edited: December 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.