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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CRANBORNE MANOR

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Name:	CRANBORNE MANOR
District:	Dorset (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Cranborne
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.918021 Longitude: -1.9250076 National Grid Reference: SU 05368 13176 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000715 Date first listed: 19-Dec-1986

Details

C19 and C20 gardens developed within the surviving framework of early C17 formal gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Cranborne, and the associated hunting ground of Cranborne Chase, belonged to the Crown in the medieval period. King John built a hunting lodge, the forerunner of the present house, in 1207-08 (CL 1973). This house was depicted by John Norden on a survey of the manor of 1605, by which time it was apparently in a state of disrepair. The medieval building comprised a main block containing a hall and solar, and a projecting tower range to the south-west.

Towards the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, probably c 1601, Robert Cecil, the Queen's Principal Secretary of State from 1596, second son of Lord Burleigh, the Queen's Lord Treasurer, purchased Cranborne from the Crown. Following the accession of James I, Cecil was created Viscount Cranborne in 1605, and Earl of Salisbury in 1606. Between 1608 and 1612, he spent some £3000 improving and extending Cranborne Manor and laying out new gardens. The mason responsible for this work was William Arnold, who also worked at Wadham College, Oxford (qv) and Montacute House, Somerset (qv). Salisbury's work at Cranborne proceeded in parallel with the construction of Hatfield House, Hertfordshire (qv), which he began in 1607, and the gardeners employed at Hatfield, Mountain Jennings and John Tradescant (c 1570-1638), were commissioned to design and plant gardens to accompany the new house (Oswald 1959). An anonymous early C17 plan shows formal gardens whose divisions broadly correspond with what survives today (2004). The new house was visited on several occasions by James I, who enjoyed hunting in Cranborne Chase. The first Earl of Salisbury died in 1612, and was succeeded by his son, who during the Civil War supported Parliament. A Royalist force under Prince Maurice sacked the house in 1643, and in 1647 Thomas Fort was sent to Cranborne to survey the damage and report on necessary repairs. Some of this work, including the hipped roof of the west wing, appears to have been designed by Capt Richard Ryder (d 1683), who from 1668 was Master Carpenter to the King (Oswald 1959). After the Restoration the house was kept in repair but was seldom visited by the family; the sixth Earl was created Marquess of Salisbury in 1789. In 1863, the second Marquess of Salisbury (succeeded 1823) repaired the house which now resumed its role as one of the family's principal residences, often being occupied in the late C19 and C20 by successive Viscounts Cranborne. The gardens were restored and replanted within the surviving early C17 framework in the late C19 and early C20, and are illustrated in photographs published by Country Life in 1901 and 1924. Extensive planting and restoration

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was carried out from 1954 by Lady Salisbury, and more recently this work has been continued by Lord and Lady Cranborne. Cranborne Manor remains (2004) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Cranborne Manor is situated to the west of the B3078, Wimborne Street which passes through the centre of Cranborne, running north from Wimborne Minster to Fordingbridge. The c 13ha site comprises c 3ha of formal gardens and pleasure grounds, and c 10ha of parkland. The south-east boundary of the site is formed by Wimborne Street, from which it is separated by walls and hedges. To the east, the site adjoins the parish church of St Mary and St Bartholomew, while to the north-east it adjoins domestic premises on the west side of Salisbury Street. To the north, west, and south-west the site adjoins agricultural land and woodland, while to the south the boundary is marked by the B3081 road leading west from Cranborne to Fivepenny Handley, from which it is separated by hedges and fences. The site is crossed by the River Crane, which flows from west to east through a shallow valley c 150m north of the house. The ground to the north and south of the house rises towards the site boundaries, while there are westerly views from the gardens across surrounding agricultural land.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The present (2004) public entrance to Cranborne Manor is from Wimborne Street at a point c 140m north of its junction with the B3081 road. Simple timber gates lead from the road to an area of car park which extends parallel to the eastern boundary of the site. Visitors enter the gardens through the walled gardens situated to the north of the car park.

The principal entrance to Cranborne Manor is from the B3081 road to the south, at a point c 150m west of its junction with Wimborne Street. Simple timber gates lead to a straight drive flanked by a double avenue of mature beech which extends c 260m north to reach the early C17 gatehouse (listed grade II*) which leads to the walled forecourt (listed grade II*) south of the house. The brick gatehouse comprises a pair of two-storey, square-plan lodges surmounted by pyramidal tiled roofs, which are set at an angle to the drive and linked by an arched gateway surmounted by a crenellated parapet. The gatehouse is shown on an anonymous early C17 plan of the Manor. A secondary drive, now a track (2004), leads south-east from the avenue at a point c 260m south of the gatehouse to emerge at the junction of Wimborne Street and the B3081 road.

The south avenue corresponds to a feature shown on the anonymous early C17 plan of Cranborne Manor. The C17 approach does not appear to have followed the avenue, but rather was from a road which led west from Wimborne Street along the north side of the walled gardens, to provide access to farmland west of the Manor. This arrangement survived to be recorded on the Tithe map (1844) and the late C19 OS map (1886), although by the late C19 the present south drive had been formed within the avenue, together with the secondary south-east drive. By 1900 (OS), the eastern section of the east drive had been re-routed to its present course further north, emerging onto Wimborne Street c 100m south of its junction with Church Street. This was made possible by the rearrangement of the buildings of Manor Farm. The western section of the drive remains unchanged since the C17, with a spur leading north to the stable and service yard immediately east of the Manor. From the stable yard a further drive sweeps north-east through a lime avenue to reach a gateway leading to Swan Street and The Alley north of the churchyard. This arrangement of drives remains unchanged since the late C19 (OS 1886), and probably assumed its present form in the course of the second Marquess' renovations after 1863.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Cranborne Manor (listed grade I) stands on an artificially levelled terrace towards the centre of the site, overlooking the valley of the River Crane to the north. Comprising three storeys with basements and attics, the house is constructed in rendered rubble and flint with ashlar dressings under tiled and stone-slatted roofs. The south or entrance facade is recessed between a pair of three-storey towers surmounted by pyramidal roofs. The facade is lit by mullion and transom windows and has a centrally placed porch comprising a three-arched loggia surmounted by a mullion window, a pair of niches, and recesses containing the symbols of Libra and Virgo. The facade is crenellated and incorporates a massive buttress and stair turret from the C13 hunting lodge. The symmetrical north facade is articulated by four massive buttresses disguised with C17 strapwork decoration, and has a further centrally placed arcaded loggia. The facade is lit by mullion and transom windows and has a partially crenellated parapet. The east facade, overlooking the service and stable yard, is more irregular, while to the west, a mid C17 two-storey wing projects from the body of the house under a steep hipped roof.

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The principal portion of the house assumed its present form in the early C17, when William Arnold remodelled and extended King John's C13 hunting lodge for Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. The mid C17 west wing was built by Capt Richard Ryder (d 1683) as part of a programme of repair and improvement undertaken after damage sustained during the Civil War. The second Marquess of Salisbury undertook further repairs and improvements from 1863.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Formal gardens are situated to the south-east, south, west, and north of the house, with areas of informal pleasure ground lying principally to the north and south.

The forecourt to the south of the house is enclosed by early C17 brick walls (listed grade II*). Mixed borders extend beneath the walls, while climbing plants are trained against the walls and the gatehouse. A brick- and stone-flagged walk encloses a central circular lawn, the focal point of which is marked by a circular pool containing a modern fountain by Angela Connor. Further areas of lawn separate the circular walk from the perimeter beds. The forecourt probably assumed its present form in the late C19 or early C20. Buckler's 1828 drawing of the south front (CL 1973) shows no garden within the forecourt, but by 1900 the OS records a circular drive and lawn. The drive was originally gravelled (CL 1901), and its present treatment appears to be early or mid C20. It appears from the anonymous early C17 plan of the Manor that the forecourt was originally treated as a garden with a cruciform arrangement of walks separating four square parterres.

A doorway at the north-west corner of the forecourt leads west to the Lump Garden, a small, mid C20 topiary garden laid out by Lady Salisbury below the south facade of the west wing. A stone-flagged walk which extends beneath the west facade of the wing separates the Lump Garden from the Croquet Lawn, an approximately square level lawn enclosed to the north, south, and west by grass banks. The lawn is open to the south, while to the north the bank is surmounted by a yew hedge which forms the south side of a yew walk. The western bank is similarly surmounted by a yew hedge, while a series of lower yew hedges descend the bank to form buttresses. The north-east and north-west corners of the lawn are marked by circular yew arbours. A flight of stone steps flanked by low yew hedges ascends from the central point of the west side of the Croquet Lawn to an arch cut in the western yew hedge leading to the Sundial Garden, a rectangular area enclosed by yew hedges with a central mount. The mount is adjoined by a series of box-edged beds, low box hedges, and topiary yews, while an opening at the centre of the western yew hedge contains a wrought-iron gate supported by a pair of stone piers. This gateway forms an axis with the west facade of the house, while a further north/south axis extends through the Sundial Garden from a flight of stone steps on its south side, to an opening leading to the yew walk on the north. The yew walk extends along the north side of both the Sundial Garden and the Croquet Lawn, and is terminated to the west by a mature beech. The Croquet Lawn and the Sundial Garden correspond to two garden enclosures shown on the early C17 plan of the Manor. At that time the Croquet Lawn is shown laid out with four parterres or formal gardens and a central circular pool or bed, separated by cruciform walks, while the Sundial Garden contained an elliptical mount. The mid C19 Tithe map (1844) shows a single enclosure to the west of the house, but gives no indication of its internal layout. By the late C19 (OS 1886), the area to the west of the house had assumed its present form, and it is reasonable to conclude that the basic form of the Croquet Lawn and the raised Sundial Garden relates to the early C17 formal garden.

A flight of stone steps descends north from the western end of the Yew Walk to reach the West Walk, a broad grass walk lined by irregularly spaced mature beeches and enclosed to the south by a grass bank and the northern hedge of the Yew Walk, and to the west by further yew hedges. The West Walk extends c 200m westwards from the North Court and is terminated to the west by an early C20 stone bench seat. To the north of the West Walk the ground drops away towards the River Crane. This area is planted with cob nuts and scattered standard fruit trees which are underplanted with spring bulbs, ornamental shrubs, and herbaceous plants. The north bank of the River Crane is planted with further ornamental shrubs and moisture-loving plants, while a mixed yew and box hedge encloses the garden from agricultural land to the north. A path follows the outer side of the hedge, with 'windows' cut in the hedge allowing views south across the informal garden. A late C20 circular sculpture, the Mollusc Mirror by David Booth, is set in one of the openings, reflecting a vista through the informal garden. The area occupied by the West Walk and the southern half of the informal garden corresponds to an orchard shown on the anonymous early C17 estate plan, and to a shrubbery on the OS map of 1900. The present garden was developed in the mid and late C20, taking in an area of ground adjacent to the River Crane which in 1900 (OS) fell within the park.

A path leads east from the riverside garden to a rectangular lawn enclosed to east and west by clipped beech hedges and planted with an avenue of planes. This late C20 avenue, which replaces an earlier Cornish elm avenue (CL 1973), is aligned on the north facade of the house, and also projects northwards into the park. The avenue is terminated to the south by the north wall of the North Court, also known as the White Garden, which lies immediately below the house. This garden is enclosed by early C17 flint and rubble walls (listed grade II) and is entered from the avenue through a pair of simple wrought-iron gates supported by a pair of C18 rusticated stone piers surmounted by ball finials (listed grade II). The garden is laid out to a symmetrical plan with a central grass walk leading from the gateway to a flight of stone steps (listed grade II) which ascends to the North Terrace. The walk is flanked by mature espalier apples set in rectangular planting beds, while beyond are rectangular lawns and perimeter planting beds beneath the garden walls. The North Terrace is enclosed to the north by C17 stone balustrades (listed grade II) and is laid out with a stone-flagged walk flanked by panels of lawn. The balustrades and the walls of the house are lavishly planted with roses and other climbers. John Norden's early C17 plan shows two enclosed courts to the north of the house, each entered through elaborately arched gateways or triumphal arches; it is not known whether these were constructed in the form shown. The anonymous early C17 plan also shows two northern courts, although no detail is provided of the gateways. The original terrace balustrades and gateways are said to have been destroyed by Parliamentary troops during the Civil War, and to have been rebuilt in their present form in 1643. The garden layout is principally mid and late C20.

A gateway leads east from the South Forecourt to reach an area of level lawn to the east of the service drive. The lawn is enclosed to the north by the cob and rubble wall of the kitchen garden, to the south of which extends a cobbled walk adjoined by beds of iris beneath a timber pergola. A yew hedge to the east separates the lawn from the stables, while to the south the lawn is bounded by the east drive. An early C20 timber summerhouse stands on the east side of the lawn. The lawn and pergola are visible in an aerial photograph published by *Country Life* in 1924, and it appears that this area assumed its present form in the early C20 (OS 1900).

Areas of informal pleasure ground comprising lawns planted with mature beech and limes, ornamental shrubs, spring bulbs, and wildflowers extend to the south of the Forecourt and the formal gardens. A further area of lawns lies to the north-east of the house and is crossed by the north-east drive and lime avenue.

Three further formal gardens are situated to the south of the walled gardens south-east of the house. The western garden, the Green Garden, is entered from the pleasure grounds to the north, and is enclosed by beech hedges. A parterre of low clipped box hedges surrounds a central pool, while a stone figure set against the western hedge terminates a vista extending through the tree gardens. The second garden, the Chalk Walk, is enclosed to the north by the walls of the walled garden, and to the south by a scalloped yew hedge with 'windows' cut in it allowing views out across the paddock. Borders extend beneath the north wall, and further rectangular beds planted with shrubs and specimen trees are set in the lawn to the south. The third garden, the Herb Garden, is entered from the Chalk Walk by a yew arch, and is enclosed to the south and east by further yew hedges. The garden is laid out with a series of rectangular beds separated by grass paths. A doorway set in a yew arch in the eastern hedge leads to the car park and visitors' centre. This group of formal gardens was developed by Lady Salisbury in the late C20 (CL 1973) on ground which had formerly been part of the paddock (OS 1900).

PARK Two areas of park or paddock associated with Cranborne Manor are included in the registered site. To the north of the River Crane the south-facing sloping meadow is planted with a late C20 avenue of planes which replaces the earlier avenue of Cornish elm aligned on the north facade of the house (CL 1973). The present avenue corresponds to the north avenue shown on the anonymous early C17 plan of Cranborne. The avenue is not recorded on the Tithe map (1844), but the present meadow corresponds to the enclosure recorded in the mid C19.

A further area of paddock is situated to the south-east of the house and to the south of the walled garden. This approximately triangular-shaped area is now (2004) pasture, but in the late C19 formed a series of allotment gardens (OS 1886, 1900).

KITCHEN GARDEN There are two areas of kitchen garden associated with Cranborne Manor, one lying immediately east of the house and the other comprising the walled gardens south-east of the house.

The garden to the east of the house is an approximately rectangular area enclosed by cob and stone walls under tile coping. A slightly raised grass walk, the Church Walk, extends along the south side of the garden, separated from the cultivated area by a

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low brick wall and line of espalier fruit trees. The walk is terminated to the east by a wrought-iron gate leading to the churchyard. A further brick-paved walk extends along the east side of the garden beneath a simple timber pergola. The enclosure is divided into two equal areas by a gravel walk beneath fruit arches which extends north from a flight of stone steps descending from Church Walk. To the west of the gravel walk the ground is divided into rectangular planting beds separated by gravel paths, while to the east it is laid to grass and planted with standard fruit trees. A photograph published in *Country Life* in 1924 shows the kitchen garden laid out in its present form.

The walled kitchen garden lies c 200m south-east of the house and is enclosed by roughcast brick and stone walls under tiled coping. The garden is divided into two compartments by a lateral wall. The compartments are linked by a centrally placed arched doorway in the lateral wall, while further doors in the west and north walls lead to the pleasure grounds and the east lawn. The smaller, western compartment is laid out as a late C20 ornamental vegetable garden with geometrical planting beds divided by gravel walks, and areas of lawn planted with standard fruit trees. A range of C20 glasshouses stands against the inner face of the north wall. The larger, eastern compartment is used as a late C20 garden centre and nursery. A further range of early C20 glasshouses remains against the north wall of the compartment.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 10 (7 December 1901), pp 732-41; 55 (7 June 1924), pp 910-18; (14 June 1924), pp 964-72; 153 (3 May 1973), pp 1218-22; (10 May 1973), pp 1298-1302; (17 May 1973), pp 1350-3 A Oswald, *Country Houses of Dorset* (2nd edn 1959), pp 123-7 J Newman and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Dorset* (1972), pp 171-4 T Mowl, *Historic Gardens of Dorset* (2003), pp 33-7

Maps J Norden, *Plan of Cranborne Manor, 1605* (reproduced in Mowl 2003, fig 13) *Plan of Cranborne Manor, early C17* (Ph312c), (Dorset Record Office) *Map of the Tithing of Cranborne in the Parish of Cranborne in the County of Dorset, 1844* (Dorset Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1886, published 1891 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition revised 1900, published 1901

Illustrations J C Buckler, drawing of the south front of Cranborne Manor, April 1828 (reproduced in CL 1973)

Description written: September 2004 Register Inspector: JML Amended: December 2004 (PAS) Edited: April 2005

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.