

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

PYLEWELL PARK

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**PYLEWELL PARK**

Name: PYLEWELL PARK

County: Hampshire

District: New Forest (District Authority)

Parish: Boldre

National park: NEW FOREST

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.757633  
Longitude: -1.5012694  
National Grid Reference: SZ 35275 95456  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000169  
Date first listed: 31-May-1984

## Details

A late C18 landscape park with woodland walks and vistas which was developed at various periods in the C19 and early C20 with a lake and informal, ornamental planting and with accompanying formal parterres around the house.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The earliest known settlement of the Pylewell estate, recorded in Domesday Book, stood on the site of Baddesley Manor, to the north of the present house which is thought to have been occupied by a Knights Templar Preceptory in the C12 (Wilkie 1990). By the C17 it may have been a fortified Jacobean Lodge (Phibbs 1988). From 1609 Pylewell Ground was occupied by Sir Richard Worsley (Stagg 1979) and by 1677 the Worsleys, whose family seat was across the Solent on the Isle of Wight at Appuldurcombe (qv), had built or remodelled a house on the present site, Sir John Worsley's account books providing evidence of the family being then in residence at Pylewell. Two early C18 engravings (Rocque, c 1700; Badeslade, 1739) show the grounds laid out with formal gardens and with an avenue leading south to the Solent. The design is possibly associated with the gardener and writer John James of Greenwich (1672-1746), who was employed by Sir Robert Worsley at Appuldurcombe in 1710 (Campbell 1987), although it is unclear how much of the layout shown in the engravings was actually planted. From 1777, Pylewell was leased from the Worsleys by Ascanius William Senior, who bought it in 1781. Any elements of a formal garden were swept away by a scheme of informal parkland and ornamental walks, a new landscape that was maintained by Thomas Robbins who owned Pylewell from 1787 to 1801 (Warner 1784; survey by Henry de Bruyn, 1803). In 1801, Thomas Weld purchased the estate for his son Joseph who made extensive improvements to the farms and gardens including the imparkment of North Park by 1818 and the construction of South Lake in 1822. Weld's improvements were continued from 1854 by Pylewell's next owner, William Peers Williams-Freeman. He bought more land and built the Baddesley village school, while in the gardens, a circular parterre was added south-east of the house. William Ingham Whitaker acquired Pylewell in 1874, immediately making significant alterations to the house and adding a new drive and lodge. He died in 1893 but further major extensions to the house were continued by his son, also William Ingham Whitaker, following his marriage in 1903. New parterres were laid out on

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the south-east front with surrounding balustraded ha-has and the pleasure ground developed with Asian and Australasian plant collections, a new lily pond, and bridges brought back from his travels to Japan. A collection of rhododendrons was gradually established on the banks of the lake between 1912 and the early 1920s, at which time the entire gardens had reached their most elaborate stage. William Ingham Whitaker III inherited Pylewell in 1936 and following wartime use of the house and parkland, the early C20 east and west wings were demolished in 1951. Minor additions were made to the terrace walk gardens east of the house from the 1960s, the parterres on the south-east front were simplified, and the walled garden leased as a commercial nursery. In 1988, Lord Teynham, William Ingham Whitaker III's nephew, inherited Pylewell and the estate remains (1998) in private hands.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Pylewell Park is situated c 3km east of Lymington, between the south side of Baddesley village and the Solent. The registered site, which comprises c 17ha of formal and ornamental gardens including a 6ha lake, and 130ha of parkland and woodland, lies on level ground which falls very slightly towards the coast and is set within an open landscape of mixed farmland with occasional small woods and copses. To the north the site is bounded by a minor lane and enclosed by agricultural fencing and intermittent internal tree belts. To the east and west, further fenced tree belts and areas of woodland within the site form the boundary with adjacent open farmland, that on the east side occupied by the Mill House and its fishpond and the buildings of Pylewell Home Farm beyond. To the south, the park's perimeter woodland, cut by vista gaps from the house to the water, is fenced from the channel of the Solent and the mudflats exposed at low tide.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The entrance to Pylewell is from the lane to the north, beside a lodge built in 1889 which stands opposite Baddesley school. A tarmacadam drive, lined by holm oaks planted by William Ingham Whitaker III in the 1950s, follows a gentle curve to a point some 100m north-east of the house. Here it crosses a ha-ha which extends north-eastwards to the fishpond and south-westwards towards the western park boundary. The house appears to have been approached on the north-east side from the early C17 (Rocque, c 1700), although the line of the present drive is a minor realignment by William Ingham Whitaker I of a route established by Joseph Weld during his imparkment programme in 1818. Beyond the ha-ha, the drive turns south-westwards to arrive on the circular tarmacadam forecourt on the north-east, entrance front of the house. A further short section of drive enters the forecourt from the west. This survives from an approach to the house from the west which was built, with the Chain Lodge at its entrance (550m north-west of the house on Shotts Lane), by William Ingham Whitaker in 1881. The ha-ha dates from the same period.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Pylewell Park (listed grade II\*) stands centrally within its park, its south-east, garden front overlooking formal gardens and focused on three vista lines cutting through the boundary woodland belt to give glimpses of the Solent and the Isle of Wight. Built in ashlar stone and yellow brick and partly stuccoed, the central three-storey, three-bay block is flanked by two-storey wings, the late C18 two-storey building with single-storey wings shown in the artist Thomas Rowlandson's drawing of c 1784 (Rowlandson 1784) having been extended upwards by William Ingham Whitaker and his son between 1874 and 1903. The wings, which Rowlandson depicts as a single storey in height, each ending in a classical pavilion, appear to have been mid to late C18 replacements for the turrets shown on Badeslade's engraving of 1739. On the north-east, entrance front, the upper storey of both the main block and the wings is formed by a mansard, added in 1874, and the house is roofed in slate. Further extensions to the wings, added in the early C20, were demolished in 1951. A stable block of C19 origin (it does not appear on de Bruyn's survey of 1803) stands c 100m to the north-east.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The formal gardens lie on the south-east front, the house opening onto two rectangular parterres with, south-east beyond them and axial on the central bay of the house, a large circular open lawn. Both the parterres and the circular lawn are surrounded by perimeter gravelled paths and are enclosed from the park by a low parapet wall and a ha-ha. They were laid out, probably by 1850 (Sale catalogue), over Ascanius William Senior's extensive open lawn, framed by trees, which swept up to the house. His informal landscape, which he created in the 1770s and 80s and which removed any remaining formal garden features as shown in the Rocque and Badeslade engravings, was both described and illustrated by visitors such as the Rev William Gilpin (Gilpin 1794) and the artist Thomas Rowlandson (Rowlandson 1784). South-east beyond the ha-ha, a further rectangular grassed terrace, also axial on the house, extends 70m into the park. Enclosed by a stone

balustrade formerly decorated with lead urns (removed 1990s), which stands above a further ha-ha, this terrace was constructed in 1912 by William Ingham Whitaker to provide tennis courts and a croquet lawn. South-west of the parterres, an area of exotic trees and shrubbery, now (1990s) overgrown, occupies the site of a sunken garden laid out in the 1920s (Gardeners' Chronicle 1923) over a mid C19 bowling green (OS 1867).

North-east beyond the parterres, the path bordering their south-east side leads to informal gardens and the Terrace Walk, a gravelled walk enclosed by camellia planting of the 1960s which runs above a ha-ha along the south-east boundary of the gardens with the park. The Walk appears to have been established as a further feature of the late C18 informalisation of the landscape, both Gilpin in 1794 and Richard Warner in 1793 describing encircling and shady walks around an extensive flat lawn with fine views of the sea and de Bruyn's 1803 survey showing the boundary of the garden with the park following the present line. The gardens on the north-west side of the Terrace Walk, enclosed from the park on the north-east side by a late C19 high brick wall, are laid out informally as the Summer Garden dating from the 1950s. The south-west section, adjacent to the stables, is planted with exotic trees and shrubs and tender wall plants, while the central section comprises an allée of cypress focused on a seat to a design by Sir Edwin Lutyens. The north-east section contains a swimming pool enclosed by a castellated hedge and with a vine-clad pavilion. North-east of the pool, an informal grove of mixed trees contains an early C19 icehouse (listed grade II) with an earth-covered passage and domed chamber.

Beyond the icehouse grove the Terrace Walk continues south-eastwards as a path leading to the pleasure grounds on the east side of the park. South of the walled kitchen garden, a gentle, descending grassed slope, on the site of a former gravel pit, is planted informally with a collection of rare Asian and Australasian trees and shrubs. Mown grass paths lead eastwards to the irregularly shaped Lily Pond which is embellished with several Japanese bridges and planted abundantly on its banks with exotic water plants, trees and ferns. The pond was dug in 1905 by William Ingham Whitaker III as a setting for the bridges he brought back from Japan, the spoil being used to fill the gravel pit (Wilkie 1990). The southern outlet from the Lily Pond flows into South Lake, a 6ha linear sheet of water with four islands which extends south to the Solent. Constructed c 1822 by Joseph Weld on former marshy ground, the lake originally had three islands and, by 1898, two boathouses (now, 1998, gone). A walk encircles its whole perimeter, the section along the east shore running alongside Plummer's Water, the stream which feeds both the lake and the Lily Pond. The lake is set within mixed broadleaved woodland comprising Lake Covert to the west, much of which is shown established on de Bruyn's survey, and Otters Hill Copse to the east. Both woods contain collections of rhododendrons planted in 1912-14 (Otters Hill) and in the early 1920s (Lake Covert).

**PARK** The park extends north and south of the house in roughly equal-sized areas. The South Park, which is probably that indicated as a deer park on John Norden's county map of c 1595, consists of a great expanse of open pasture with occasional tree clumps sited towards the perimeter. This was created as a parkland lawn in the late C18 as part of the informalisation of Pylewell's landscape. The lawn is framed to the south, east, and west by belts of woodland threaded by paths, the woodland also largely of C18 origin and comprising stands of mixed broadleaves and chestnut coppice. The belt along the southern boundary is cut by three gaps to create vistas from the house to the Solent and the Isle of Wight. South Park's landscape was described in 1793 by Richard Warner as 'laid out with great simplicity .. belted by a shady walk with occasional openings to the sea', and the layout is recorded on de Bruyn's 1803 survey. The central vista, axial on the house, is lined at its extreme southern end by a double oak avenue which appears to stand on a similar line to the avenue shown running from the formal gardens to the Solent on both Rocque (c 1700) and Badeslade's (1739) engravings. De Bruyn's survey however shows woodland abutting the vista gap, with individual avenue trees only appearing in the late C19 (OS 1867) when the gap appears to have been widened.

North Park is also largely open in character and under arable cultivation, although with permanent pasture immediately north-west of the house where there are occasional rondels of trees, these replanted in the mid C20. North Park was imparked and planted between 1803 and 1818 by Joseph Weld (Wilkie 1990), but the scatter of trees it contained in 1867 (OS) was mostly removed in 1944 when the park was levelled for the construction of an airfield. Immediately east of the main drive, c 300m north of the house and lying beneath pasture, is the site of Baddesley Manor, the first house built at Pylewell. It was demolished, with its chapel, in 1819, following the removal of adjacent cottages in 1815 (Wilkie 1990). East of the Manor site is a short

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length of mature lime avenue, probably of early C18 origin, which ran eastwards from its curtilage and along the south side of the present Dod's Pond, now tree-fringed and silted up, which was excavated in the early C19 (Phibbs 1988).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden, which stands 450m east of the house, is a roughly rectangular enclosure with red-brick walls which is now (1999) leased as a commercial nursery. Built in the early C19 as part of Joseph Weld's improvements, it replaced a former walled kitchen garden which stood to the north of the stables. South of its south wall is a range of C19 glasshouses, two of which are also leased for nursery use although they are currently (1998) in a dilapidated state. Some 40m north of the garden and adjacent to Weld's Mill House and former farm complex (outside the registered site) is an octagonal brick dairy with a conical roof (listed grade II) built between 1898 and 1907 (OS editions).

#### REFERENCES

Thomas Badeslade and John Rocque, *Vitruvius Britannicus IV*, (1739), pls 102, 103 Thomas Rowlandson, *Tours in a Post-chaise* (1784) Richard Warner, *Topographical Remarks relating to the South Western Parts of Hampshire* (1784) William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views* (2nd edn 1794) Victoria History of the County of Hampshire IV, (1911), p 616 *Gardeners' Chronicle*, (21 July 1923) P Coats, *Great Gardens of Britain* (1967), pp 229-33 A Paterson, *The Gardens of Britain 2*, (1978), pp 135-6 D Stagg, *Calendar of New Forest Documents* (1979) S Campbell, *Research on Pylewell Park*, (unpublished papers, Hampshire County Council 1987) J Phibbs, *Ring count analysis, Pylewell Park*, (unpublished papers, Hampshire County Council 1988). K Wilkie, *Pylewell Park Landscape Restoration and Management Plan*, (English Heritage 1990)

Maps John Norden, *Map of Hampshire*, c 1595 Henry de Bruyn, *A survey of Pylewell Park*, 1803 (D10/C89), (Dorset Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1867 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1909 1931 edition OS 25" to 1 mile 3rd edition published 1908 1932 edition

Illustrations J Rocque, engraving, c 1700 (reproduced in Wilkie 1990) T Badeslade, *Engraving of Pylewell Park*, c 1739 (in Badeslade and Rocque 1739)

Archival items Sale catalogue of Pylewell estate, 1850 (Weld papers D10/E176), (Dorset Record Office) Account books of the Worsley family, 1642; 6, 1677, 1762 (Jer/WA/33/1), (Isle of Wight Record Office)

Description written: November 1998 Amended: July 2000 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: February 2004

## 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.