

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SHOBROOKE PARK

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

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Name:	SHOBROOKE PARK
County:	Devon
District:	Mid Devon (District Authority)
Parish:	Shobrooke
County:	Devon
District:	Mid Devon (District Authority)
Parish:	Upton Hellions
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.799764 Longitude: -3.6278154 National Grid Reference: SS 85382 01286 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000702 Date first listed: 12-Aug-1987

Details

Mid C19 formal gardens and pleasure grounds set in a park with C16 origins, developed and extended in the early C19, with further improvements in the mid C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A deer park is said to have existed at Shobrooke since the early C16 (Debois 1992). The earliest documentary evidence for the park is Donn's Map of Devon (1765), which shows a pale-enclosed area corresponding to the northern section of the present site. This is confirmed by a Plan of Fulford House, Gardens and Lands drawn in 1768. This early park was associated with Fulford House, a substantial gabled mansion built by Sir William Peryam on a site south of a public road which ran from west to east across the park from Crediton to Little Silver. The mid C18 plan suggests that Fulford House stood in enclosed gardens and orchards, with an avenue of limes leading east to Shobrooke church, and a further avenue, possibly of London plane, aligned on the south-east facade. In 1768 the deer park was separated from the house by the public road and agricultural land. During the second half of C18 the park was extended south to the road. Richard Hippisley Tuckfield inherited the estate in 1807, and in 1811 commissioned Henry Hakewill to build a house, known as Little Fulford, on a new site to the north within the old deer park. John Henry Hippisley succeeded in 1845 and successfully petitioned for the closure of the road. At the same time a programme of improvements to the house and gardens was initiated, possibly guided by the artist F R Lee (ibid). The structure of the designed landscape was essentially complete by the time of Sir John Shelley's succession in 1880. Occupied by a school during the Second World War, the house burnt down in 1945, after which the site remained empty until c 1975 when the present house was built at the south-east corner of the terrace on which the C19 house stood. The site remains (1998) private property. A restoration and management plan for the parkland planting and the gardens has been implemented since 1992.

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DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Shobrooke is situated c 1.25km north-east of the town of Crediton and c 250m west of the village of Shobrooke, to the south of the A3072 road which runs north-east from Crediton to Tiverton. The c 80ha site comprises some 6.5ha of formal and informal gardens set within 73ha of parkland, woodland and lakes. The site is enclosed by public roads, with the A3072 forming the north-west boundary, a minor road leading from Creedy Bridge to Shobrooke Cross to the south-west and south, and a minor road leading from Nomansland Cross to Shobrooke Cross to the east. The boundaries are generally fenced with trees and hedges lying within the site, while to the south sections of C19 iron deer fencing survive. The site rises to high ground to the north, east and south-east, from which there are wide views west across the park and Crediton towards Dartmoor.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The approach to the site is from the A3072 at a point c 200m north-west of the house. A painted timber gate closes the entrance, with North Lodge, an early or mid C19 two-storey lodge cottage to the south-west. The gravel drive, originally the early C19 service drive, runs c 100m south-west parallel to the site boundary through oak woodland underplanted with ornamental shrubs before sweeping south-east and east to arrive at the terrace which was the site of the C19 mansion. Mid C19 wrought-iron gates are supported by monumental Portland stone gate piers with rusticated bases, swagged decoration and vase finials. Enclosed by mid C19 Portland stone parapets ornamented at regular intervals by carved stone vases, the terrace is largely laid to lawn with a tarmac drive leading to the south-east corner, the site of the late C20 house. Stone steps ascend north-west between stone piers with ball finials to the pleasure grounds, while a semicircular stone bench stands north-east adjacent to a further flight of stone steps ascending north to the formal garden. There is no direct link between the terrace and the park which it overlooks to the south. The former south approach joins the present drive c 100m south-west of the house. Descending c 300m south through the park, the drive, now a grass track, crosses the lower lake on a mid C19 ashlar bridge (listed grade II) comprising three equal segmental arches and stone parapets. Some 200m south of the bridge the former drive emerges onto the minor road forming the south boundary of the site at South Lodge (listed grade II), a mid C19 Italianate lodge built by Donaldson in Portland stone. Immediately adjacent stands an ornate mid C19 gateway with monumental Portland stone piers with carved swag decoration and urn finials from which are hung wrought-iron gates with scrolled cresting (listed grade II). The gateway is flanked by quadrant plain cast-iron railings with spear finials set on a stone plinth (listed grade II). The carriage drive through the park emerges onto the road forming the eastern site boundary at East Lodge (listed grade II), a picturesque thatched, two-storey, early or mid C19 cottage orné of stone construction. East Lodge stands some 500m north-east of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Known until 1845 as Little Fulford, Shobrooke House was built in 1811 to the designs of Henry Hakewill (1771-1830). Shobrooke was a plain, two-storey, neo-classical villa with a single-storey portico on the south facade, and it is likely that Hakewill was also responsible for the terraces shown west, south and east on the Tithe map (1841). The early C19 house was remodelled, cased in Portland stone and provided with new decorative details c 1845 by Professor James Donaldson. This house burnt down in 1945 and was not rebuilt. The present house is a single-storey late C20 structure in dark brick which stands at the south-east corner of the mid C19 terrace constructed for the previous house. The coach house c 15m north of the present house survives from Hakewill's early C19 work, and stands adjacent to a C19 brick and slate-roofed structure which housed the gas plant supplying the house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Formal and informal gardens lie to the north-east, north and north-west of the house. Steps ascend north-east from the carriage court to a mid C19 shrubbery walk leading c 50m north to a circular stone-edged fountain pool set in a circular lawn enclosed to north and west by steep banks planted with shrubs. Portland stone steps flanked by carved urns descend east to the mid C19 Sundial Terrace (listed grade II), a monumental series of three east-facing terraces c 80m in length, linked by axial flights of stone steps and grass banks. Below a narrow grass upper terrace, the broad middle grass terrace is terminated to the south by a high-backed carved stone bench seat backed by evergreen shrubbery above a flight of stone steps, and to the north by an elaborate stone shell seat, also approached by a flight of stone steps and surrounded by evergreen shrubbery. The third grass terrace is retained by a Portland stone wall and parapet which rises north and south breaking forward in square projections with an axially placed semicircular bastion containing an octagonal plinth of three steps.

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The terrace parapet is ornamented with ball finials and obelisks round the central bastion. There are wide views from the terrace east across the park to the Shell Seat and East Lodge which act as eyecatchers. West of the terraces and north of the fountain garden a rectangular formal rose garden with gravel walks, box-edged geometric beds and metal and chain supports for climbers has been restored from c 1996. Above the rose garden and terminating the shrubbery walk is the Heather Mount, a circular lawn enclosed by yew hedges, originally laid out with segmental beds of heather.

The informal pleasure grounds comprise the mid C19 American Garden c 200m north-east of the house, an area of mature conifers, rhododendrons and mixed shrubs, and the woodland garden, an area of mature oak woodland underplanted in glades with ornamental shrubs to the north and north-west of the house. Some 100m north-west of the house a rustic timber and thatch late C19 summerhouse stands adjacent to a mown grass path which joins a formal east/west walk leading east to steps descending to the former carriage court.

PARK Lying north-east, east and south of the house, the park rises to mixed plantations on the east and south-east boundaries. A series of three ponds descends in a valley south-east of the house, the upper pond c 100m south-east being of possible C16 origin (Debois 1992) and the largest, lower pond c 250m south-south-east dating from c 1811. The middle pond c 200m south-east formed part of the mid C19 improvements and is contemporary with the large lake c 400m south-west which has a late C19 rustic timber and tile-roofed boathouse on its north bank c 450m south-west of the house. The Lime Avenue, a feature of late C17 or early C18 origin c 500m south of the house rises c 800m east-north-east from South Lodge to mid C19 wrought-iron gates hung from cast-iron piers and flanked by contemporary railings at Shobrooke Cross. The Avenue continued some 300m east beyond the site to Shobrooke church, and some trees survive by the public road. Below the Lime Avenue, Keeper's Cottage (listed grade II), an early C19 rubble-stone and brick cottage with gothic first-floor windows and two ground-floor recessed porches possibly formed part of Hakewill's 1811 scheme and stands adjacent to the barns forming Home Farm near the head of a lightly wooded valley. The course of the road closed in 1845 survives as a hollow-way south of Keeper's Cottage, and C19 brick kennels stand north-west of a pool c 20m west of Keeper's Cottage. The mid C19 park carriage drive ran along the Lime Avenue and round the head of the valley above Keeper's Cottage before passing below the mid C19 Shell Seat (listed grade II) c 500m east of the house. This canopied seat is of related but simpler design to the Shell Seat on the Sundial Terrace in the formal garden, and is of brick and stucco construction with Portland stone dressings. Flanked by ball finials, the Seat is set within an enclosure planted with evergreen shrubs and pines, surrounded by low stone walls with ball finials (removed 1998), and entered through low wrought-iron gates. The park remains (1998) grazed pasture with scattered mature trees and groups of ornamental trees concentrated particularly near the site of Fulbrook House c 650m south-west of the house and on the west boundary c 260m from the house.

KITCHEN GARDEN Lying c 200m north of the house, the kitchen garden is enclosed by mid C19 brick walls c 3m high with wooden doors in the north, west and south walls. A derelict late C19 vinery stands against the north wall, and a central, circular, stone-edged dipping pool remains with a single standard apple tree. The garden is now laid to grass, but the outline of four large beds and a cruciform path can be seen. The bothy and sheds on the outer north-facing wall and the adjoining frame yard have been adapted to late C20 agricultural uses, but to the west a small brick shed survives, together with wall-trained figs and a plum on the outer west-facing wall. On the outer south-facing wall mature camellias grow in the remains of a C19 brick and glass span-roofed camellia house.

REFERENCES

J Lysons, *Topographical and Historical Account of Devonshire* (1822) Crewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser, 13 November 1845 Worthington Jukes, *Shobrooke* (1924) B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (1989), pp 728-9 *Shobrooke Park: A Survey of the Landscape*, (Debois Landscape Survey Group 1992) T Gray, *The Garden History of Devon An Illustrated Guide to Sources* (1995), pp 202-3

Maps B Donn, *Map of the County of Devon, 1765 A Plan of Fulford House Gardens and Lands therto adjoining ? the Estate of Henry Tuckfield Esquire, 1768* (private collection) C and J Greenwood, *Map of Devon, 1827 Tithe map for Shobrooke parish, 1841* (Devon Record Office)

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OS Surveyor's drawing, 2" to 1 mile, 1807 OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, surveyed 1801-7, published 1809 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1886-7, published 1891 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1888, published 1889 2nd edition revised 1904, published 1905

Illustrations W Cartwright, Fulford, The Seat of Henry Tuckfield esqr, c 1750, (Devon Record Office) F R Lee, RA, painting of the Lime Avenue, Shobrooke, 1839 (private collection) Print, Shobrooke Park, c 1850 (Devon Record Office)

Archival items Shobrooke Road Closure Order, 1845 (113a/173/1), (Devon Record Office)

Description written: December 1998 Amended: May 1999; July 1999 Register Inspector: JML Edited: July 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.