

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

WALPOLE HOUSE

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

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**WALPOLE HOUSE**

Name:	WALPOLE HOUSE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	Hounslow (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.488571 Longitude: -0.24659553 National Grid Reference: TQ 21835 78082 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000846 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

## Details

A C20 private garden with C17/ C18 origins

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The earliest records relating to Walpole House date from the beginning of the C18 when it was the home of Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland and former mistress of Charles II. After her death it passed to the Hon Thomas Walpole, nephew of Sir Robert Walpole (prime minister 1721-42), who gave the house its name. By c 1835 it had become a school for young boys among whose number was the young William Thackeray. By the beginning of the C20 the owner was the actor-manager, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and in 1926 it was sold to Mr and Mrs Robert Benson. In 1927 the architect and antiquarian G H Kitchen made sketches of ideas for the garden at Walpole House. It would appear that Mrs Benson had her own ideas on how the garden should look but Kitchen's sketches are useful in as much as they identify features which existed at the time. The garden was neglected during the Second World War and in 1947 Mrs Benson's grandson and his wife, Mr and Mrs Jeremy Benson took on the task of restoring it. Walpole House remains (1997) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Walpole House is situated in Chiswick Mall, facing south towards the River Thames from which it is separated by the Mall and a small strip of grass alongside the river. The Great West Road (A4) lies 100m to the north, and Chiswick House (qv) 800m to the north-west. The 0.5ha, L-shaped site is bounded to the north by Netheravon Road, with the garden walls of Strawberry House (qv) to the north-east, the back wall of the gardens of The Tides to the south-west, and the boundary wall of the garden of Thamescote to the west.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Walpole House is approached through a fine wrought-iron gate and screen (listed grade I) in Chiswick Mall, the gateposts having ball finials. The garden is approached from the rear of Walpole House.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** The late C17/early C18 Walpole House (listed grade I) is built of brown brick with red dressings and is three storeys high. The porch has Corinthian pilasters on plinths supporting an entablature and enclosing panelled Tuscan pilasters.

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**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The back door of Walpole House leads out onto a York stone terrace which runs the length of the building and was part of the design laid out c 1926 by Mrs Robert Benson. Three shallow stone steps (pre 1927) lead up to the first of two lawns. A broad flagged path (pre 1927) leads north-west across the lower lawn which is enclosed on two sides by the brick boundary walls of Strawberry House to the north-east and The Tides to the south-west. In front of the walls are raised semicircular beds made from stone flags. On the east side is a flagged circular 'sitting' area set into the grass below. A mature mulberry tree grows on the lawn to the west of the stone-flagged path which leads to five broad stone steps and continues across the main garden area. Beds above the stone retaining wall between the two levels are planted with roses. The upper lawn is crossed on the western side by a minor flagged path which extends west for 50m past two mature poplars planted by Mrs Robert Benson to the large formal pond, framed by York stone flags and surrounded by raised beds. The lawn to the north of the pond is decorated with informal beds, shrubs and trees. To the rear of the lawn a yew hedge, grown from seed by the present (1997) owner, extends the width of the garden. The flagged path leads through a gap in the hedge to the wild garden. Mature trees including a large eucalyptus and a snake-bar acer mix with hellebores, euphorbias, and cyclamens; the area is decorated with squares of flags and a brick path which runs along the north side of the yew hedge eventually leads west to another gap in the hedge and so out onto the main lawn again.

**REFERENCES**

J Macgregor, *Gardens of Celebrities ... in London* (1918), pp 188-97 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Middlesex* (1951), p 35 J Brown, *The Art and Architecture of English Gardens* (1989), p 177 A Lennox-Boyd, *Private Gardens of London* (1990), pp 95-101

Maps J Rocque, *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster and Borough of Southwark*, published 1746

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1867 2nd edition published 1894-6 3rd edition published 1915 1921 edition

Description written: December 1997 Register Inspector: LCH Edited: July 2001

## 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.