

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

AMWELL GROVE AND AMWELL POOL

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Name:	AMWELL GROVE AND AMWELL POOL
County:	Hertfordshire
District:	East Hertfordshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Great Amwell
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.795059 Longitude: -0.013029231 National Grid Reference: TL 37123 12579 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000903 Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Details

A late C18 and early C19 picturesque landscape connected with a late C18 country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1794(7 Robert Mylne (1733-1811), an architect and civil engineer, and Chief Engineer to the New River Company since 1767, designed and built Amwell Grove as a retirement residence, overlooking the New River, landscaping much of the surrounding ground. Each summer until the Grove was ready for occupation, Mylne rented Rose Cottage below the stretch of the New River which was at that time being enlarged to become the small lake Amwell Pool (CL 1954).

To commemorate the achievement of Sir Hugh Myddleton, who built the New River system, 1609-13, as an aqueduct to provide part of the London water supply, Robert Mylne set up monuments close to Amwell Grove, and other garden buildings or monuments to commemorate his own family. This late C18 landscaping was centred on the Grove, and encompassed the adjacent complex of church, river, river banks, spring and island. Mylne landscaped the surroundings of the Pool and the river, planting the steep slope between the church and the Pool, and in 1800 erected as a memorial to Myddleton a large Coade stone urn on an inscribed pedestal on the larger island in the Pool. An inscribed stone was set up on the smaller island c 1818, and later another stone was set up to the north of the Pool beside Emma's Well, one of two springs (together with the Chadwell Spring near Ware) from which Sir Hugh Myddleton had originally obtained the water supply.

A map of 1797 shows Mylne's work on enlarging and landscaping the Pool in progress, with the larger island present but the smaller one not yet carved out of the river bank. Amwell Mount, labelled the New House, is depicted on the south bank above the Pool, a small rectangular building with curved end walls, within its own landscaped grounds overlooking the Pool below. The Grove is also shown enclosing a service yard.

In 1811 William Chadwell Mylne (1781-1863), also an architect and engineer, succeeded his father as Engineer to the New River Company. William built for himself Flint House (1842-4), at some distance from the Grove, to take the place of his father's house, the Grove, whose riverside situation he regarded as unhealthy (Colvin 1995). In the garden of Flint House a column from Blackfriars Bridge was erected (the bridge having been designed by Robert Mylne 1759, erected by 1769 and replaced in 1868) and a plaque in the porch of the house records that he laid out and himself planted this garden. W C Mylne

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held his post with the New River Company for fifty years, retiring only two years before his death, when his son Robert William Mylne (1817-90) took over Flint House.

Amwell Grove and Pool, together with Emma's Well, are now (1999) in divided ownership, the Grove remaining in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Amwell Grove and Pool lie in the village of Great Amwell, 2km south-east of Ware and 4km east of Hertford. The c 2.5ha site is divided into west and east halves by Cautherly Lane which links the northern, lower, and southern, upper sections of the village.

The eastern half, in which lies the Pool and its surrounding landscaping, is bounded to the south by the parish churchyard of St John the Baptist (largely C11 and C15, listed grade II*), from which it is divided by St John's Lane. Within the churchyard, which contains many mature trees, 8m east of the chancel, stands the Mylne mausoleum, outside the area here registered (Robert Mylne 1800, listed grade II). This plain, rectangular, brick building has a pedimented stone roof surmounted by a large, square stone pedestal with a fluted urn on top. Several stone memorial plaques to the Mylne family are fixed to the exterior walls. The mausoleum may have been designed to overlook the New River below, although this view is now largely obscured by the churchyard trees and trees growing on the bank below.

The north boundary of the east section of the site is bounded by Amwell Lane which runs along the north bank of the New River and Pool.

The east and west sections are divided by the C20 brick bridge carrying Cautherly Lane. The western section of the site, in which stands the Grove and its immediate gardens, is bounded to the north by the New River, to the west by the remains of an open meadow which has been partially taken into the gardens of C20 houses, to the south by a public footpath, and to the east by Cautherly Lane. The east boundary adjacent to the Lane is marked along the southern half by a steep bank, above which lies the garden.

The site is set within the village of Great Amwell, with several other associated Mylne structures standing in the village (outside the area here registered), including Flint House (William Mylne 1842-4, listed grade II) and the nearby Cottage (early C19, listed grade II), the grounds of both having been landscaped by William Mylne and containing various structures erected by him. A stone pedestal with a ball finial (1769, re-erected mid C19, listed grade II) also stands in the garden of Flint House, formerly part of London's Blackfriars Bridge designed by Robert Mylne in 1759.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Amwell Grove is approached off Cautherly Lane, via a gateway (mid C19, probably W C Mylne, listed grade II) comprising gate piers flanking the entrance to the drive, in turn flanked by curved screen walls, these with terminal piers, and a garden gateway and gate. The walls are of knapped flint with brick piers and coping, with white-painted wooden gates. The garden gateway, set into the northern screen wall, is enclosed by a brick archway, and is aligned on a footpath extending east towards the west end of The Mount house, part of the former estate, standing on the south boundary. From the main gateway a short drive leads west into the rectangular gravel forecourt on the south, entrance front of the Grove. The forecourt is levelled out of the hillside which rises to the south and is retained by a 2.3m high flint wall with a central niche. PRINCIPAL BUILDING Amwell Grove (Robert Mylne 1794-7, extended early C19 and c 1900, listed grade II) stands in the western half of the site, surrounded by gardens. The three-storey, T-shaped house is built of yellow brick with stucco bands, its north, garden front overlooking the New River below to the north, and meadow land.

At the eastern end of the site, 600m south-east of the Grove, stands the Picturesque-style River Cottage (C17, remodelled c 1811 W C Mylne, altered 1891 R Mylne, listed grade II). Probably originally timber framed, this two-storey cottage orné was encased in brick and given ornamental bargeboards in the early C19 by W C Mylne. It was formerly the farmhouse of Thorpe's Farm, figuring in many C18 topographical drawings of Amwell. The Cottage, set in its own small garden, overlooks the Pool to the west and New River to the north, with views to the meadows beyond.

The Mount is a two-storey house set into the west end of the bank lying south of the Pool, standing 50m south-east of the Grove. It was initially built by Robert Mylne in the mid 1790s, and has been rebuilt and enlarged since then. Its early ground plan, together with the surrounding garden enclosure, is shown on a plan of 1797 (HRO).

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GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds are divided into two sections, to the west and east of Cautherly Lane.

The western section surrounds the Grove and comprises the associated gardens, being largely laid to informal lawns enclosed by mature trees, overlying a hillside leading down from the south to the New River to the north.

The eastern section, divided from the western section by the bridge carrying Cautherly Lane, is dominated by the Pool, created by Robert Mylne by enlarging the course of the New River in the mid 1790s. The Pool is approximately oval in shape, with two islands, created as part of Mylne's landscaping. The long, narrow, south-east island is laid to lawn and planted with mature trees, including a weeping willow and yew. Towards the centre stands a Coade stone monument (Robert Mylne 1800, listed grade II) to the memory of Sir Hugh Myddleton, comprising a pedestal and swagged urn with inscriptions in English and Latin on the four faces of the pedestal. The monument overlooks the site of Emma's Well to the north-east. On the approximately circular north-west island stands a further stone monument (1818, probably W C Mylne, listed grade II) to the New River, facing the bridge to the north-west. The monument takes the form of square pedestal inscribed on the upstream face with lines probably composed by Archdeacon Nares, standing on a chamfered base with a ball finial. This island is also laid to lawn with mature trees including a Wellingtonia and yew.

South of the Pool a bank extends up to St John's Lane, the bank being traversed by two paths connecting River Cottage with The Mount. The bank is largely planted with mature trees, and is linked to the islands by two late C20 bridges.

East of the Pool the New River narrows to resume its original course, overlooked to the south by River Cottage set into the adjacent bank. A C20 bridge crosses the east end of the Pool, carrying a public footpath linking St John's Lane and the church to the south directly with Amwell Lane and the fields beyond to the north. The footpath is divided from River Cottage garden to the east by a tall flint wall.

On the north side of the Lane, included within the registered area, lies Emma's Well and memorial stone (late C18 or early C19, listed grade II). Here, a brick revetted basin contains the spring from which the village takes its name. The D-shaped pool contains an island, and has a weir, sluice and overflow, although the spring often runs dry (1999). On the slope between the road and the spring, overlooking the pool to the south, stands an upright white stone memorial slab inscribed with verses from the poem Amwell by the Quaker poet John Scott of Ware (qv Scott's Grotto, Ware).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies in the south-east corner of the western section of the site, adjacent to Cautherly Lane, 50m south of the Grove. The south corner is bounded by a brick-piered gateway flanked by short lengths of wall.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 116 (30 September 1954), p 1080 H Colvin, A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840 (3rd edn 1995), pp 679-86

Maps Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766 Amwell Great Pool, 1797 (66856), (Hertfordshire Record Office) A Bryant, The County of Hertford, 1822 Tithe map for Great Amwell parish, 1839 (Hertfordshire Record Office) OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1925 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898

Description written: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: October 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.