

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

CAMPSEY ASHE PARK

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

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**CAMPSEY ASHE PARK**

Name: CAMPSEY ASHE PARK

County: Suffolk

District: East Suffolk (District Authority)

Parish: Campsey Ash

County: Suffolk

District: East Suffolk (District Authority)

Parish: Tunstall

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.148903  
Longitude: 1.4232662  
National Grid Reference: TM3429855595  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000368  
Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

## Details

The remains of C17 formal gardens, with early C20 additions, standing in a park of possibly mid C17 origins, extended during the late C19.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The construction of High House at Campsey is said to have been started in 1558 by John Glover, servant to Thomas Howard, third Duke of Norfolk, and finished in 1600 by his son William Glover I (DVPN). The Glovers sold the estate to the Sheppard Family in 1648 in whose hands it remained until 1883. The layout of the formal gardens, including the surviving canals, yew hedges and yew-encircled bowling green, together with the two main avenues radiating from the House across the park, date from the C17, being the work of either the Glovers or John Sheppard I. John Sheppard III (1706-42) is attributed with making alterations and improvements to the canals and the gardens (DVPN). The park is first shown on Bowen's map of the county in c 1750 and in greater detail on the 1839 Tithe map; both show it extending mainly to the north of the House. In 1865 High House was destroyed by a fire and John Sheppard VI commissioned Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) to rebuild it. On Sheppard's death in 1883 the estate was sold to the Hon William Lowther who extended the park to the east. His son, the Viscount Ullswater (Speaker of the House of Commons), added numerous Edwardian features to the gardens in the form of a sunk rose garden, a Japanese garden and a rock garden, all within the C17 framework. Lord Ullswater died in 1949 and his trustees sold parts of the estate, including the House with its grounds which were purchased by Lady Delaney. The park remained in the hands of Ullswater's nephew Arthur Lowther. Lady Delaney died almost immediately and the House and grounds were sold to a developer who turned the coach house, stables and squash court into housing. High House fell into a ruinous state and the gardens were divided. The House and its immediate surroundings were bought in 1952 by Richard Schreiber who demolished

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the remains and extended the squash court to become Campsea Ashe House. Part of the walled and ornamental gardens together with the Gardener's Cottage were sold separately and the registered site remains (1998) in divided private ownership.

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Campsea Ashe Park lies to the east of the village of Campsey Ashe on the edge of the Suffolk Sandlings, c 8km north-east of Woodbridge. Its north and east boundaries are formed by Station Road and the B1078 Campsey Ashe to Tunstall Road. The west boundary is marked by a minor country road and the south by farmland. Woodland belts enclose the park to the east and partly to the north. The south boundary is composed of the ornamental Rackham's Grove which extends c 200m east from the garden before joining The Jungle, a broadleaf shelterbelt which forms the rest of the boundary. A high brick wall and garden trees enclose the southern end of the western boundary whilst at the northern end the park is partly screened by a block of woodland known as Allen's Covert. The park is set in a rural, agricultural landscape with a mainly flat topography in the south and gently undulating ground in the north. Views from the house platform, which sits on the edge of the flat land, run north along a double lime avenue and east across the park and adjoining farmland along a vista known as The Lights.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach is from the country road on the west boundary through a new (late C20) unmarked entrance and drive to the stable block. An earlier (C19) drive with lodge north of this entrance formerly ran through the park but has now been grassed. The vestiges of a row of horse chestnut which lined this drive remain in the park. From the east boundary on the B1078 a further drive (C19 or earlier) has also been lost and the accompanying lodge demolished. These old west and east drives converged at the southern end of the existing lime avenue to run south up to the house site, sweeping west to the main front and east through the arched coach house (arch now closed up). A gateway survives in the garden wall to the west of the bowling green, marking the position of the C17 main entrance to the site.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** High House was demolished in 1955, leaving only a C19 coach house and stable block and a separate squash court added by Lord Ullswater in the early C20, all subsequently converted to private dwellings. The house platform is defined by a turf plot with earthwork remains and a set of steps in the lawn. A house had stood in this position since the mid C16, receiving regular refurbishment and remodelling before being redesigned and rebuilt by the architect Anthony Salvin in 1883.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens cover c 5ha and lie to the south and west of the house platform. To the west is a string of individual garden areas running south just inside the western boundary wall. Approximately 100m to the north-west of the house site lie the remains of an early C20 rock garden amongst the mixed ornamental tree and shrub planting created by Lord Ullswater. Immediately to the south of this is a second garden area of the same date, known as the Japanese Garden, which contains remnants of the Japanese style in the form of shrubs such as acers surrounding a central lawn adorned with a rustic summerhouse on its eastern edge. Immediately to the south of this lies the bowling green situated on what would have been the west axis of the house. It is an area of lawn completely surrounded by massive clipped and irregularly shaped yews, thought to be survivors from the C17 formal garden (Williamson). Immediately south again is a sunken rose garden with central pool, another early C20 feature by Lord Ullswater. The south lawn beside the house platform is graced by several very large cedars, planted in the early years of the C18 (ring count of stump in 1993). The eastern boundary of the gardens is marked by the 170m Long Canal, along the east bank of which runs a terraced walk backed by a massive yew hedge and a ha-ha to the park immediately to the east of the house site. The Canal is of C17 origin although its present structure suggests several phases of refurbishment (ibid). The western boundary is defined by a parallel canal of the same period, now in two sections and crossed by a bridge. The small canal is edged by trees to the west, within which stands a brick icehouse of unknown date, with a yew hedge boundary on the east bank. To the south it terminates at the Gardener's (or Garden) Cottage. Between the parallel canals and to the south of the cedar lawn is the walled kitchen garden and south of this, in the grounds of the Gardener's Cottage, are two further early C20 features: the Yew Colonnade or 'Speaker's Corner' consisting of a row of mature, clipped yews joined into rough arches; and the Stone or Italian Garden 20m to the east, which today (1998) comprises a circle of yew trees around a grass lawn with a stone statue in the centre, the radiating paths from this to each tree having been lost.

**PARK** Campsea Ashe Park can be divided into two sections: the north park and the east park. In total it covers c 56ha with c 32ha of the north park remaining under pasture, the rest being arable. The north-west corner has a dense woodland plantation

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known as Allen's Covert beside arable land with occasional oak, lime, pine and one cedar remaining. Closer to the house site the pasture has been retained and the trees here include some very old oak pollards and the remains of the horse chestnuts which lined the old west drive. The north-east corner is rolling pasture with clumps and individual trees, mainly oak with occasional holm oak, plane and cedar. The most striking feature of the north park is the double lime avenue which runs north from the house site to the northern boundary. Whilst the present trees are mainly C19, some are of an earlier age and this feature, along with the rest of the north park, is shown on Hodkinson's map of 1783. It is thought that the avenue at least may be of earlier (C17) origin (ibid). The east park is under arable with fewer trees, mainly oak with two blocks of beech. Up to the time of the Tithe map of 1839 this area was divided, although tree clumps shown amongst the fields are possibly a sign of ornamentation. The boundaries were removed in the late C19 when the park was enlarged. Running east out of the park is a 1.8km long vista known as The Lights, on the east/west axis of the house site. It cuts through woodland and farmland and was originally defined by a row of elm to the north and Rackham's Grove and The Jungle to the south. A possible rondpoint exists where the vista leaves the park and crosses the B1078 and the feature eventually terminates in Light Grove. The Lights is an early feature of the C17 garden, having been painted by Peter Tillemans sometime during the late C17 or early C18 (private collection). The southern boundary of the park is marked by Rackham's Grove, a mid C19 mixed ornamental woodland linked by a path to the gardens. Note: The articles by P F Springlett in *Garden History* (1975) refer to a complex of radiating C17 avenues; because there are few primary references the articles have not been drawn upon or referenced in this description.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The walled kitchen garden covers c 1ha and lies to the south of the cedar lawn. It is enclosed on all sides by red-brick walls of differing heights and ages although the whole is thought to have C17 origins. The west wall appears to be C17, whilst that to the north is late C18 or early C19 and has a central pair of wrought-iron gates. The east wall is of C18 construction and the lower south wall of C19 construction. Inside are the remains of glasshouses and hot beds along the north and east walls. The garden is divided by a gravel path and used for fruit and vegetable production. Some old espaliers remain. Beyond the west wall is a further grassed lawn bordered to the west by the yew hedge alongside the small canal. Beyond the east wall, Long Canal and yew hedge lies an area formerly used as an orchard. The walled garden was highly praised in the sale particulars of 1883, being treated as a highly ornamental part of the garden, filled with herbaceous borders, trained fruit trees and many kinds of glasshouse.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 18 (15 July 1905), p 54 East Suffolk Illustrated (1908) The Garden, (5 September 1914), p 443 The Garden 53 (pt 1), (1928) Deben Valley Place Names Project (DVPN), (Local History Group report, 1980s) Tom Williamson, The park and garden at Campsey Ashe, (UEA report, 1990s)

Maps E Bowen, A Map of the County of Suffolk, 1750 J Hodkinson, The County of Suffolk, 1783 Tithe map for Blaxall, 1839 (P46/30), (East Suffolk Record Office) Estate map, nd (mid C19) (HA H/C9/8), (East Suffolk Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1905 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1883 2nd edition published 1905

Archival items Peter Tillemans, Painting of the view from the house looking east along The Lights, late C17/early C18 (Ullswater private collection) Sale Particulars, 1883 (East Suffolk Record Office)

Description written: December 1998 Amended: June 1999 Register Inspector: EMP

## 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.