

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

MARKYATECELL PARK

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

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Name:	MARKYATECELL PARK
County:	Hertfordshire
District:	Dacorum (District Authority)
Parish:	Markyate
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.845275 Longitude: -0.46895456 National Grid Reference: TL0556617405 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000915 Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

## Details

An early C19 landscape park surrounding a country house, with an early C20 formal garden designed by George Dillistone c 1910 and enlarged in the late 1910s and 1920s.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Following the surrender of Markyate Priory (founded C12) to Henry VIII in 1537, it was leased to Humphrey Bourchier (d 1540), who built a house on the site of the monastic buildings, 1539/40. The estate subsequently passed through various hands, the house being burnt down several times. The park was laid out in the early C19 by Joseph Howell (d 1825), and the house rebuilt in 1840 by Daniel Goodson Adey (d 1872), who had bought the estate in 1825 upon Howell's death (VCH). Adey's son, Francis William Adey (sic), held the estate from his father's death until c 1908, when it was bought by Mr and Mrs MacLeod who c 1910 called in George Dillistone (1877-1957) of Messrs R Wallace and Co to 'advise them in re-modelling the garden' (Jekyll and Weaver 1913). A formal design was laid out, including a brick and timber pergola running through the walled garden. Further alterations were made to the garden and drive system during the late 1910s and 1920s for Sir John Pennefather. The house remains (1999) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Markyatecell Park lies 4km south-west of the centre of Luton, at the northern edge of the village of Markyate. The c 35ha park is bounded to the south-west by the A5 Watling Street Roman road, to the south-east by the B4540 Luton Road, and on the other sides by agricultural land. The southern half of the boundary with the A5, and the boundary with the Luton Road are marked by a flint and brick wall, c 2.3m high along the A5 and c 1.2m high along the Luton Road. The site is bisected in its south-east half by a valley through which runs the seasonal River Ver. The ground in the north-west half of the park rises generally to the north. The setting is largely rural, with the village to the south, and, 500m to the east, the landscape park of Caddington Hall.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The park is entered off the A5, 500m north-west of the house, via a late C20 gateway flanked by curving brick screen walls and iron gates. From here the drive curves south-east through the park, with views down the valley to the south-east towards the parish church at the south corner of the park. The drive enters the forecourt on the north-

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west front of the house, via a gateway standing 75m from the house, flanked by iron park gates. The forecourt, flanked to the south-west by service buildings and to the north-east by a grass bank with steps leading up to the Old Kitchen Garden, leads via an archway to an inner courtyard and the front door on the north-west front.

Close to the entrance off the A5, 500m from the house, the present north-west drive is joined by the early C20 approach from the north-west, flanked by mature sycamores, which enters at the north-west corner of the park, 700m from the house. Here stands the early C20, thatched New Lodge, set some distance back from the A5, to the east of the gateway which is flanked by curving brick screen walls, built in similar style to the main entrance on the A5.

The former south drive, now (1999) largely lost, entered at the south corner of the park, 400m south-south-east of the house, off the Luton Road. The road was moved south-east in the mid C20, such that it leaves the entrance in a cul-de-sac entered from the north-east off the Luton Road. The gateway is flanked by brick piers supporting wooden gates, with the brick-built, Tudor-style Cell Lodge, of two storeys, standing adjacent (piers and lodge early-mid C19, possibly R Lugar, listed grade II). The drive, now largely lost, curved north across the southern half of the park, crossing the southern end of the River Ver and ascending the valley side flanked by an avenue of limes. Many of the mature limes still survive. The drive formerly entered an enclosed forecourt on the south-east front of the house, where a carriage sweep gave access to the main door on the south-east front. The forecourt has been removed and the area is now (1999) largely laid to lawn as part of the gardens, seemingly incorporated when the south drive was abandoned by Sir John Pennefather in the early C20, after the garden plan was published in 1913 (Jekyll and Weaver) but before the 1924 OS map was published.

A further drive entered off the A5 in the late C19 and early C20 (OS), 250m west of the house, extending east straight across the park to Markyatecell Farm, which stands just beyond the east edge of the area here registered, the drive leading north-east beyond this across agricultural land to Pipers Lane. This drive appears to have been abandoned after the mid 1920s (OS). The east end of this drive remains, leading off the main north-west drive 150m from the house to the farm and beyond.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Cell Park house (1539-40, Robert Lugar 1820s, listed grade II\*) stands towards the north-east edge of the site, enclosed by gardens. The house, set into the valley side, overlooks the park below to the south and south-west, with views beyond the A5 to agricultural land on the opposite hillside. The two-storey house is built of brick in Tudor style, and was mostly remodelled for Daniel Goodson Adey by Robert Lugar, 1825/6, incorporating medieval and Tudor remains. The entrance, which in the C19 and early C20 was to the south-east, was moved c 1915-24 to a service court on the north-west for Sir John Pennefather.

The former stables are incorporated within the inner entrance court on the north-west front of the house.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The garden door, on the south-west front of the house, leads out onto a broad terrace, bounded to the south-west by a brick balustrade, alongside which runs a gravel path. A break in the balustrade close to the doorway leads down steps set into a bank to a level bowling or croquet lawn (OS late C19) running parallel to the terrace. The rectangular lawn is bounded by clipped yews hedges on the other sides, which stand at the top of an earth bank leading down to the park, from which the lawn is separated by iron park fencing.

The gravel path on the main terrace leads north-west to a short line of mature yews, beyond which lies a formal, square sunken garden (1910-20s) with low brick terraces leading down to a central paved area enclosing a circular pond. This feature overlooks the park to the north-west, and is in turn overlooked by a terrace on its north-east side. A path alongside the yews leads south-west to a brick bastion overlooking the croquet lawn, and north-east to the north-west drive and the entrance to the forecourt.

The main terrace on the south-west front leads south-east beyond the house and croquet lawn to a balustraded bastion overlooking the park and church to the south. The terrace runs parallel to the open lawn adjacent to the south-east front of the house which formerly held the forecourt and carriage sweep from the south drive. The brick balustrade continues from the croquet lawn, south-east alongside the southern end of the terrace to the bastion, here turning north-east to bound the south-east side of the former forecourt lawn. The largely level open lawn is separated from the house by a stone-paved terrace. The lawn was created, probably for Sir John Pennefather c 1915-24, from the former forecourt, this apparently having been extended south-eastwards into the parkland and approximately doubled in size, terraced and surrounded by the brick balustrade.

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A grass bank leads north-east up the hillside adjacent to the south-east lawn. A flight of stone steps leads up the bank from the paved terrace on the south-east front to a grass terrace edged with a herbaceous border. From here the steps continue up the bank two at a time, each pair of steps separated by a length of path and flanked by two small, clipped box plants. The path leads through the bank to a cross path which runs along the width of the bank, terminating at each end on the south-west side at small bastions partly enclosed by a brick balustrade, each bastion planted with a central yew tree. To the south-east the path leads into ornamental woodland while to the north-west the path is terminated by the gateway into the Old Kitchen Garden. On the north-east side of the path lies a herbaceous border, backed by a yew hedge.

From the cross path a further flight of brick steps continues the main axis north-east through the herbaceous border, up to the Rose Garden. The entrance to the Rose Garden is flanked by the tall yew hedge, clipped into steps ascending either side of the entrance. The rectangular Rose Garden is laid to lawn, surrounded by stone paths, with two cross paths in cruciform pattern, one aligned on the main south-west to north-east axis. The Garden is enclosed to the south-west by the yew hedge, to the north-west by the walls of the Old Kitchen Garden and to the north-east by a 3m high terrace, with an ivy-covered flint retaining wall supporting the upper terrace. The south-east side opens onto a slightly raised informal area leading into the ornamental woodland beyond. At the north corner of the Rose Garden a doorway gives access to the Old Kitchen Garden beyond. At the east corner a curved flight of steps, retained by a curving flint wall, leads to the upper terrace on which is planted a large purple beech tree, closing the main axis.

The north-west end of the cross path terminates at the gateway in the wall of the Old Kitchen Garden, marked by two large stone slabs set one on top of the other, acting as steps between the two areas and raising the level between them artificially. The gateway and cross path are part of the cross axis running from north-west to south-east along the hillside, which extends into the Old Kitchen Garden where it is flanked by a pergola. Here a stone path is flanked by narrow strips of lawn, in which are set the square brick piers of the pergola, in turn flanked by herbaceous borders and clipped yew hedges. The pergola, with wooden beams (restored late C20) connecting the brick piers, terminates at a gateway set into the north-west wall of the Old Kitchen Garden. The gateway leads out to a gravel path along the outer side of the wall, rising from the entrance to the forecourt to the south-west and leading through trees to the New Kitchen Garden to the north-east. To the south-west of the pergola, a terraced grass bank leads down to the forecourt, with a flight of steps down the bank at the north-west end of the pergola linking the two. To the north-east of the pergola, the open ground of the Old Kitchen Garden is laid to rough grass and rises in grassed terraces to the north-east, enclosed on the other three sides by the brick walls (C16-C18, listed grade II).

Enclosing the garden to the east and south lies an area of wooded pleasure ground, in places underplanted with ornamental shrubs. This separates the garden from the New Kitchen Garden to the north-east.

The garden compartments of the late C19 (OS) were used and adapted in the early C20 by Dillistone for the Macleods, and later by Pennefather in their remodellings of the gardens. The bowling green terrace was constructed in the 1880s or 1890s (OS) adjacent to the existing terrace on the south-west front of the house. To the south-east of the Old Kitchen Garden lay two compartments where Dillistone was to construct his main axis c 1910, the upper one, which became the Rose Garden, having been built as a bowling green (Jekyll and Weaver 1913). Dillistone's c 1910 work is illustrated in plan form with photographs in Jekyll and Weaver's *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (1913), and from this and the 1924 OS map later developments can be determined. An article of 1915 details the planting of the garden, following Dillistone's work, towards the end of the Macleods' ownership (*The Garden*).

**PARK** The rectangular park is dominated by the house standing prominently on the north-east hillside. The park is laid to pasture and contains many mature park trees, including numerous good specimens of lime and sycamore. A mature belt runs along the south-west boundary with the A5, effectively screening it from the park. The River Ver, occupying the valley to the south-west, flows only intermittently. It widens towards the southern end into a narrow lake, also only intermittently full. At the south end of the park stands the parish church (mid C18 and C19), once within the park but now standing within its own grounds taken from the park. A lime avenue runs alongside the north-east side of the drive, from the Luton Road up to the south-east front of the church. This marks the course of a former public approach to the church.

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In the 1760s (Dury and Andrews) the park did not exist and the house was bounded to the south and east by small garden compartments and to the west by a terrace. A public road crossed what was to become the south-east half of the park, from the village to the north of the house. Joseph Howell (d 1825), who bought the estate in the late 1790s, laid out the park in the early C19 (Cutler 1990), and by 1822 (Bryant) it was double its present size, extending north-east across what is now (1999) agricultural land to Caddington Common lane. By the late C19 (OS) the park had been reduced to its present size, the former parkland, which is now agricultural land and outside the registered area, remaining largely surrounded by a belt of trees.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** In the early C20, as part of Dillistone's works, the Old Kitchen Garden was augmented by the New Kitchen Garden, lying 100m north-east of the house and largely surrounded by woodland. This garden, brick-walled to the north-west and north-east, is largely laid to informal lawn with some specimen fruit trees. A range of bothies stands alongside the north-west wall.

#### REFERENCES

Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire 2, (1908), pp 1901 G Jekyll and L Weaver, Gardens for Small Country Houses (1913), pp 20, 23-8 The Garden, (20 November 1915), pp 568/9 B Cherry and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire (1977), p 246 R Cutler, Markyate in Camera (1990), pp 72, 74, 78/9

Maps Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766 A Bryant, The County of Hertford, 1822

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1922 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1924

Description written: June 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.