

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WADDESDON MANOR

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Name:	WADDESDON MANOR
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Upper Winchendon
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Waddesdon
District:	Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Westcott
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.838531 Longitude: -0.94505159 National Grid Reference: SP7278116073 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: I List Entry Number: 1000446 Date first listed: 30-Aug-1987

Details

A late C19 country house, surrounded by contemporary formal and informal gardens, and an extensive park, laid out by Elie Lainé, incorporating the site of a C17/C18 park and the remains of the formal garden of Winchendon House.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild bought the Waddesdon estate from the Duke of Marlborough in 1874. Born in Frankfurt and raised in Austria, Rothschild was a prominent member of the international Jewish banking dynasty, a British Liberal MP, and passionate art collector. Having levelled the top of Lodge Hill, the Baron employed the French architect Gabriel-Hippolyte Destailleur to build a mansion in the style of a C16 French chateau, incorporating elements from Blois, Maintenon, Chambord and Chaumont. The house and its collections now represent the most complete surviving example of the 'goût Rothschild'. The Parisian landscape architect Elie Lainé 'was bidden to make designs for the terraces, the principal roads and plantations' (Ferdinand de Rothschild, 'Red Book', 1897), and produced a design based on C17 French layouts, modified to the late C19 fashion. The surrounding farmland became parkland. The Baron filled his house with C18 pictures and furniture (much of French origin) and Parisian panelling; similarly, he furnished the gardens with much C17 and C18 French and Italian statuary and other ornaments. Baron Ferdinand died in 1898, leaving Waddesdon to his sister, Miss Alice, who had bought the adjacent estate, Eythrope, in 1875, developing its grounds in tandem with those at Waddesdon. Miss Alice died in 1922, leaving Waddesdon to her nephew, James de Rothschild, who bequeathed the house and gardens to the National Trust in the late 1950s.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Waddesdon Manor park lies south-west of, and adjacent to, the village of Waddesdon, 9km north-west of Aylesbury, in the Vale of Aylesbury. The c 480ha site is bounded to the west by

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agricultural land, to the east by Waddesdon Hill lane (leading from the A41 to Upper Winchendon) and the adjacent Eythrope estate, and to the north by Waddesdon village and the A41 Aylesbury to Bicester road. The east boundary along Waddesdon Hill lane is largely planted with a belt of trees, as is the north boundary where it runs adjacent to the A41. The house is sited on Lodge Hill above the surrounding parkland which covers undulating land, rising up to the south towards Waddesdon Hill. The setting is largely agricultural, with the ornamental parkland of Eythrope to the east, Waddesdon village with its many late C19 estate buildings to the north, and Westcott military establishment to the west. Long views extend from various parts of Lodge Hill, including west towards Wotton Underwood (qv) and the Vale beyond, and east to Aylesbury and the distant Chiltern Hills. Within the wider setting, Waddesdon Manor is one of seven Rothschild country estates within a 10km radius of Aylesbury bought, and usually furnished with a new house and often new grounds, during the second half of the C19.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Several drives cross the park, entering off the A41 or Waddesdon Hill. The main entrance is at the north-east corner of the park, c 2km east of the house, off the A41 at its junction with Waddesdon Hill, giving access from Aylesbury and London past the Grand Lodge (Destailleur c 1880, listed grade II), a classical brick pavilion in French style, with a wrought-iron screen. Two subsidiary drives enter off the A41 in the village, and one opposite the entrance to the Eythrope estate on Waddesdon Hill. The drives run through the park, arriving at a roundabout 250m north-west of, and on an axis with the main front of, the house. At the centre of the roundabout is a circular pool containing a fountain of Triton with Nereids (early C18, listed grade II), surrounded at the edge of the circle by six terms (early/mid C18, listed grade II). From here a broad gravel drive runs, flanked by lawns and two subordinate avenues, to the gravel sweep along the north-west front of the house, focused on the grand central porte-cochère.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Waddesdon Manor (listed grade I), built for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild by G-H Destailleur, 1874-89, lies towards the north end of the park, sited on the broad, artificially levelled plateau of Lodge Hill. It is of two storeys, built of Bath stone in the style of a C16 French chateau, with towers, turrets and dormers. At the north-east end a service wing is attached and a later addition on the south-west end. A central porte-cochère stands on the north-west, entrance front, and along the south-east, garden front, several doors open out onto the gravel terrace above the parterre, with grand views across the park to Aylesbury in the distance.

The stable courtyard (Destailleur c 1884, listed grade II) lies 200m north-east of the house, close to the foot of Lodge Hill; also built in French style, this has roughcast elevations and red-brick and stone dressings. The half-timbered Dairy courtyard (W F Taylor c 1880s, listed grade II) lying 500m north-east of the house, with its associated informal garden with ponds and extensive Pulham rockwork (restored 1990s), occupies level ground further from the foot of the Hill. The Home Farm (Taylor c 1880s, listed grade II) lies on the northern boundary adjacent to Waddesdon village street, 700m north-east of the house, and consists of a rectangular group of buildings surrounding a courtyard, in similar style to the Dairy, with a central, circular, thatched horse shelter.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

NOTE This entry is a summary. Because of the size and complexity of the gardens and pleasure grounds, the standard Register entry format would not convey an adequate description. The user is advised to consult the references given below for more detailed accounts. Many Listed Buildings exist within the site, not all of which have been here referred to. Descriptions of these are to be found in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest produced by the Department of National Heritage.

The garden contains two formal features aligned with the house. To the north-west the formal entrance drive, avenues and lawns are surrounded by ornamental woodland and, to the west, extensive Pulham rockwork sited on a mound probably created during the levelling of the hilltop. On the south-east, garden front of the house a formal parterre incorporating extensive seasonal bedding displays overlooks the park. At its centre is a fountain of Pluto and Proserpine (early C18, listed grade II), the whole being surrounded by retaining walls and balustrades, with broad stone steps (late C19, listed grade II) down to the parterre from the top terrace by the house, and further steps from the parterre down to a small south terrace (late C19, listed grade II) directly overlooking the park as it sweeps down to the south-east. A further formal garden, laid out by Lanning Roper in 1964, lies in front of the aviary (1889, listed grade II), 200m north-west of the house, screened from the entrance avenues by the Pulham

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rockwork and enclosed by clipped hedges. These features, sited on the plateau, are skirted by ornamental, exotic woodland planting on the hillside below, underplanted in places by ornamental shrubs.

PARK The majority of the park lies east and south-east of the house, extending for c 2.5km to Waddesdon Hill lane. Much of the area remains as open pasture, planted with many clumps and single trees framing views, and several areas of woodland and belts on the east and north boundaries. The remains of the village of Wormstone lie towards the north-east corner of the park, consisting largely of Wormstone House and farm, surrounded by woodland including many horse chestnuts. An estate stud farm with associated fields, built in the early C20, lies 2km south-east of the Manor house on the east boundary.

The site of Winchendon House lies at the southern tip of the park, 2.5km south-east of the Manor house. This probably C17 building was largely demolished in 1758, the only remaining part being the service wing, known as The Wilderness (listed grade II). This fragment, surrounded by earthworks, comprises the remains of a notable C17/early C18 formal garden created by the Wharton family and depicted at its zenith in a painting of the early C18 (Harris 1979), possibly with Lodge Hill in the background. The remains of a double avenue survive in the south corner of the park, this being aligned at its south end on the site of the front of the demolished house, and to the north on the summit of Lodge Hill, that is, the garden front of Waddesdon Manor. A survey of 1776 (Fellows) shows the avenue linking Winchendon House with a rectangular plantation on the southern slopes of Lodge Hill, now largely gone (1997).

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen gardens, with a very extensive area of glasshouses, lay west of the Dairy and were largely demolished in the 1960s. A brick-walled area remains north of the site of the main kitchen gardens; currently used as a commercial nursery and garden centre, this was previously a walled kitchen garden and frame yard (Colson Stone 1992), with the Garden Cottage to the west, probably designed by Taylor.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 4 (20 August 1898), pp 208(11; 12 (20 December 1902), p 808 J Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (1979), p 140, col plates XII, XIII J Garden History 8, (1988), pp 228-9, pl XIII Waddesdon Parkland Restoration Plan, (Colson Stone Partnership 1992) B Elliott, *Waddesdon Manor, the Garden* (1994) N Pevsner and E Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (1994), pp 708-12

Maps Fellows, Survey, 1776 (private collection) Tithe map for Waddesdon parish, 1859 (Buckinghamshire Record Office) Auction sale map, 1874 (Buckinghamshire Record Office) Lodge Hill estate, plan and section for drainage of carriage drives and slopes, late C19 (Buckinghamshire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1885 2nd edition published 1900 3rd edition published 1922 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881(2 2nd edition published 1899

Description written: 1997 Amended: April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: September 2000

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 16/07/2020

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.