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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BEAUCHIEF HALL

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

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Name:	BEAUCHIEF HALL
District:	Sheffield (Metropolitan Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.329525 Longitude: -1.5075584 National Grid Reference: SK 32894 81514 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001670 Date first listed: 30-Apr-2003

Details

Late C 17 formal gardens and pleasure grounds.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Beauchief Abbey was founded in c 1175 for Premonstratensian or White Canons by Robert FitzRanulph, lord of Alfreton and Norton (VCH 1907). The abbey land amounted to c 800 acres (324ha) with the abbey set in a park of c 200 acres (81ha) with several fish ponds fed by a small stream (Pegge 1801). Beauchief was surrendered, as part of the dissolution of monasteries, and in April 1537 granted by Henry VIII to Sir Nicholas Strelley for the sum of ^223 (ibid). The description of the property granted was of 'the house and site of the abbey or monastery De Bello Capite' and included gardens, orchards, ponds and parks plus a further 259 acres (IOSha) of agricultural land (ibid). A son or grandson of Sir Nicholas settled at Beauchief but did not occupy the abbey as a house and lived at the Grange (ibid).

The estate descended, through marriage, to Edward Pegge who built a new mansion in 1671 on a site to the south-west of the abbey described as 'a gentle descent on the brow of the hanging wood, the bellum caput or Beau Chef (ibid). This site is also thought to be the site of the Grange where the monks formerly made their butter and cheese (Tilley 1899). Stone from the abbey, by then ruinous, was used for the new mansion and Pegge, at about the same time, restored a part of the abbey chapel for use as a church (Glover 1833). After the death of Edward Pegge in 1679 the estate remained in the ownership of the family, by direct descent, until the death of Edward's great-grandson Peter in 1836.

An early C18 account of the mansion and grounds (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833) provides a description of the principal entrance, the gardens and courts adjacent to the Hall, a tree-lined walk to a point where the ruined Abbey might be viewed, the location of the kitchen gardens and stables and a deer paddock. An engraving of the Abbey as it was in 1727 (reproduced in Pegge 1801) shows the chapel with fields beyond with, and adjoining remnants of stone walls of the abbey buildings. These walls, together with the upper part of the tower, are shown in a picturesque semi-derelict condition. A plan of c 1810 indicates an arrangement of formal gardens to the south of the Hall with formal ponds beyond, the tree-lined walk to the north-east, domestic offices and an orchard to the west, the arrangement of fields, paddocks and woodland around the Hall and the line of the approach drives.

On the death in 1836 of Peter Pegge, whose principal residence was Winkburn Hall in Nottinghamshire and who on marriage had taken the surname Pegge-Burnell, Beauchief passed to his sister's son, Broughton Benjamin Steade (Tilley 1899). Broughton

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Steade was in residence at Beauchief in 1835 (Pigot and Co 1835) and, following the death of his uncle, also assumed the name Pegge-Burnell. Alterations were carried out to the Hall in 1836 (Pevsner 1967).

The 1875 OS shows the layout around the Hall to be generally in accordance with the early C 17 description and the c 1810 plan with additional features. These include woodland walks in High Wood and Ladies' Spring Wood (marked Lady Wood on the c 1810 plan) to the north and north-west, the formal geometric laying out of a former bowling green and garden to the south-east of the Hall and an area with glasshouses to the north of the Hall. The ponds to the south of the Hall are also shown on the 1875 OS: but enlarged and with irregular outlines.

In the late C 19 the Hall was leased to the Wilson family of Sheffield manufacturers who subsequently purchased the Hall and a part of the estate from the Pegge-Burnells in 1923 (Craven and Stanley 1991). In 1958 the Hall, gardens and grounds were purchased by De La Salle College for use as a school (De la Salle 2003), were sold again in 1982 for conversion to office use and are now in the ownership of EDP plc. Land to the south-east of the Hall was also sold in the 1950s, on the death of the last Miss Wilson, (Craven and Stanley 1991) and is now occupied by Abbeyvale Golf Club Ltd.

A part of the estate to the north-east of the Hall and including the Abbey, was sold in 1923 to Frank Crawshaw who subsequently gifted it to Sheffield Corporation in 1932 (Beauchief Muniment notes). This land is now occupied by Beauchief Municipal Golf Course and is in the ownership of Sheffield City Council. Other Beauchief estate land was sold in the C20, by descendants of the Pegge-Burnells, for housing (Craven and Stanley 1991). DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The c 24ha site is located c 5.5km south-south-west of Sheffield. To the west of the site Ladies' Spring Wood occupies the head of a rising slope, forming a shallow concave line of enclosure to the west and south-west. To the north-east of Ladies' Spring Wood the wooded headland continues north-eastwards with High Wood occupying a spur of high ground and thus extending the curving line of enclosure to the north of the Hall.

Former Beauchief estate land, to the north-east and south-east of the Hall grounds comprises two irregular expanses of generally open ground, now (2003) laid out as two golf courses (outside the area here registered). The southern approach arm of Beauchief Drive leads south-west at the centre of land to the south of the Hall grounds which is enclosed by a deep belt of trees along the south-east boundary and woodland to the north-west boundary. These wooded areas include and extend parts of Old Park Wood, some of which was developed for housing in the C20. To the south-west boundary a narrow belt of trees extends the line of enclosure provided by Ladies' Spring Wood on high ground to the north-west. These boundary plantings serve to enclose views within the estate to the south-east from the Hall and to serve as a base line for distant views to the south. An early C17 description of (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833) refers to the view from the main south entrance to the Hall as 'a fair prospect adorned with wood'. From a point c 330m south-south-west of the hall a shallow grassed ditch runs directly south-eastwards for 280m, the line occasionally broken by late C20 landscaping. This ditch is on the line of the south-western boundary of a field named 'Great Paddock' on the c 1810 plan and marked as an embanked field boundary on the 1875 OS. In the early C17 it was noted that there was 'a pretty large walled paddock for deer, well wooded, before the front of the house, adjoining the outyards' (ibid). At the centre of the estate land a wooded stream valley, Gulleys Wood, forms a wide finger of woodland extending c 300m into the site from Park Bank Wood to the north-west. This wood together with High Wood to the north provide a frame for views to the north-east from the terrace walk, from high ground to the south-west of the Hall and from the woodland walk in Ladies' Spring Wood towards the Abbey. The wood is indicated in part on the c 1810 plan where it is marked 'The Gulleys'.

The northern area of the estate land is divided by Beauchief Drive and Beauchief Abbey Lane and is enclosed by Parkbank Wood to the south-east, the wooded valley of Abbey Brook to the north-west and High Wood to the south-west. At the centre of this area are the C 18 farm buildings and cottages which form a group with the Abbey. To the east of these buildings are a series of three irregular large ponds in a north-south alignment descending northwards with sloping ground. These are possibly in the location of medieval fish ponds (Merrony 2001) and ponds are noted in this area in the Fairbank survey of 1759-61. Only the lower pond is indicated on the 1875 OS with two ponds shown on the 1898 OS and all three on the 1923 OS. Ground within the site rises generally to the south with steep, curving wooded slopes forming strong lines of enclosure to the east and west. In the east of the site Parkbank Wood occupies the steep convex eastern valley side to two streams which feed the ponds to the

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south-east of the Abbey. From these ponds a stream runs north to join Abbey Brook which runs from east to west through the north of the site. The surrounding area is generally residential with mid-late C20 housing.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal approach to the Hall is via Beauchief Abbey Lane, on the line of a c C 14 causeway leading across Abbey Brook, which leads south off Abbey Lane thus dividing the northern area of former estate land. Some 190m south of Abbey Lane are an adjoining carriage and pedestrian entrance marked by low stone piers. This entrance is sited immediately to the west of a pair of mid C18 stone cottages with stone slate roofs (listed grade II) and c 25m north-east of the Church of St Thomas a Becket (listed grade II*) which is generally known as Beauchief Abbey. The cottages are marked as a lodge on the 1875 OS. From the entrance an approach drive, Beauchief Drive, generally flanked by low hedges with occasional sections of C 19 iron estate fencing, rises gently southwards with, c 70m south of the entrance a track leading off to the east. This latter, c 80m south of Beauchief Abbey, comprises the two-storey Farmhouse (listed grade II) dating from the mid-C 18 and a range of stone farm buildings (listed grade II) dating from the late C18.

From the approach drive, to the west of the Abbey and farm, there are views out to the west, over the lower lying River Sheaf Valley and beyond. These views are framed to the south by the steeply rising spur of High Wood and, to the north, by the wooded Abbey Brook valley. To the south of Abbey Farm there are views out from the approach drive to the ponds lying to the south-east of the Abbey and the stream valley at the foot of Parkbank Wood. Some 390m south of the entrance a gated track leads south-east off the approach drive, through a stream valley occupied by Gulleys Wood, towards Cockshutt Farm, c 500m south-south-east of the Abbey. Some 70m south-west of this junction a further track leads off towards High Wood to the north-west. From this junction the approach drive rises gently to the south-west for 320m to a vehicle entrance, marked by C20 stone piers, into the grounds of Beauchief Hall. This section of the approach drive (within the area here registered) is generally flanked by a low hedge to the north and the stream valley of Gulleys Wood to south.

From the entrance to the Hall grounds Beauchief Drive turns to lead south-eastwards to form a second southern approach drive leading off Hemper Lane, c 950m south-east of the Hall. The junction with Hemper Lane is marked immediately to the south-west by a small single-storey stone entrance lodge (listed grade II) dating from the early C 19. Generally this southern approach drive is an un-metalled track bounded in part by C 19 iron estate railings and in part by a low stone wall with hedging and C20 fencing elsewhere. Some 300m south-south-east of the Hall a track leads west off the southern drive to Cockshutt farm. At the side of the drive, c 180m south-east of the Hall, is a small marker stone inscribed "1/2 mile". A stone is indicated in this location on the 1875 OS together with a second stone at the side of the drive c 370m to the south.

The approach drive leading from the Abbey to the Hall is as shown on the 1875 OS but not as suggested by the 1759-61 Fairbank survey or as indicated on the c1810 farm plan and was possibly laid out in the early C19 in conjunction with the 1836 alterations to the Hall. Immediately to the south-east of the section of drive adjacent to Gulleys Wood is a parallel shallow embanked ditch which is possibly evidence of an earlier track or boundary. At the side of the stream in Gulleys Wood, c 250m east-south-east of the Hall and accessed from the approach drive by a flight of stone steps, is a well in the form of a small stone grotto. A well in this location is noted in the Fairbank survey of 1759-61 and both well and steps are indicated on the 1875 OS. A part of the southern approach drive is indicated in part on the c 1810 farm plan, where it is named Park Lane. This plan also indicates that from what is now (2003) the entrance to the Hall grounds the drive widened and continued north-north-west for c 130m at which point, again narrowed, it turned north-north-east to lead towards the Abbey. This latter section of drive, running to the south-east of and parallel to the 'Fir Walk' is marked on the c 1810 plan as the 'Road to Sheffield'.

In the south-east of the former estate land Twentywell Rise gives access to the club house of the Abbeyvale Golf Club and, in the north-west a short drive off Abbey Lane leads to the club house serving Beauchief Municipal Golf Club. A number of informal footpaths also lead into the former estate land from adjacent roads.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Beauchief Hall (listed grade II*) is situated c 600m to the south-west of the Abbey on a level platform set into sloping ground leading up to the north-west where Ladies' Spring Wood and High Wood provide a backdrop. The Hall commands long views out over the former estate and distant countryside in an arc from the south-west to the north-west with Norton Church, c 3km distant, prominent on the skyline to the east-north-east. The three-storey stone building was constructed in 1661 by Edward Pegge, altered in 1836 and restored in c 1989 for office use. The principal entrance with open porch is central

to the south elevation at first floor level and is approached via stone steps, in two flights, from a walled garden. The upper flight leads to a landing in the form of a bridge over a wide archway which links the two halves of a lower paved terrace running the length of the south front. From either side of a landing between the two flights, segmental steps lead down to the lower terrace in a symmetrical arrangement. Below the bridge, a winding, narrow, stepped passage gives access to the walled garden. The whole construction is in stone, with substantial balustrading to steps, landings and lower terrace, and is in accordance with an early C17 description (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833). On the east elevation a further canopied first floor entrance is also approached via stone steps, with solid balustrade, with a short landing bridge over a narrow flagged path. This entrance was also mentioned in an early C 17 description (*ibid*) together with a similar entrance on the west elevation which no longer (2003) remains. Before the 1836 alterations it is thought that the hipped roof had dormers and a rooftop balustraded promenade (Craven and Stanley 1991).

Some 70m south-west of the Hall is a range of stone outbuildings (listed grade II) sited around a courtyard with a U shaped range to the west and a detached building to the east. The outbuildings are linked to the south-west corner of the Hall by a C 17 stone wall with gate piers (listed grade II). The detached outbuilding dates from 1667, is indicated on the c 1810 plan as a brewhouse and was remodelled in 1836. The western range is not indicated on the c 1810 plan and possibly formed part of the 1836 works. The whole of the outbuildings were converted to office use in the late C20.

Two adjoining single-storey stone buildings forming an L-shape are situated c 70m west-north-west of the Hall. The shorter southern leg is indicated on the 1875 OS and the longer northern leg is mid C20 and associated with the former school use.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The grounds immediately surrounding the Hall are laid out in a series of walled gardens with, to the north-west, a formal walk leading to a view point. To the south of the Hall the formal garden areas overlook an area of lawn beyond which there are a series of ornamental ponds. To the north and north-west of the Hall grassed paddocks slope up to High Wood and Ladies' Spring Wood respectively where a woodland walk and a further view point command views out to the Hall, former estate land and beyond.

Immediately to the south of the Hall, to either side of the entrance steps, is a wide paved terrace with views through a stone balustrade over a rectangular formal garden. This garden enclosed to east and west by high stone walls, in line with these elevations of the Hall and extends c 60m to the south. The southern boundary is marked by low stone walls, topped with ornamental wrought-iron railings, flanking a central carriage entrance with ornamental wrought-iron gates between tall ashlar piers. From these gates a pair of wide lawned paths lead north between perimeter planting beds and a large central bed, planted with tall evergreens, before rejoining at the Hall entrance steps. This area is named 'Front Garden' on the c 1810 plan and the layout and central planting are as indicated on the 1875 OS. In the early C 17 (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833), however, a large pair of wrought-iron gates are described as leading to the entrance via a wide walk through the centre of the garden. In the north-east of the garden an entrance in the east wall, marked by tall stone piers with pyramid finials supported by four balls, leads to a wide gravelled terrace walk.

The terrace walk, leading c 65m to the east, forms the upper level in a series of three terraces extending c 60m down to the south and adjoining the Front Garden to the east. The upper terrace retaining wall is in stone with the lower ground divided to form two wide lawned terraces by a brick retaining wall. The whole of the terraced area is enclosed by stone walls, a high wall to the north, a low wall to the south, with a central opening, and to the east by a high stone wall with splayed and incised coping stones topped with wrought-iron railings of similar design to those to the Front Garden. The southern boundary opening is axial with a set of stone steps in the brick terrace wall, a break in the stone terrace wall, presumed to mark former steps, and a small single storey pavilion set into the north boundary wall. The pavilion is generally in brick with coursed random stone and window detail to the north elevation only. The eastern wall boundary wall steps up to the north in line with the retaining wall between the two lower terraces. Thus the east end of the terrace walk commands views out, through railings, over the adjoining lower ground to the east. The terrace walk and a small building in the location of the pavilion are identified on the c 1810 plan which also shows the middle terrace as a bowling green with the lower terrace marked as a garden. The 1875 OS shows formal planting beds on both the middle and lower terraces laid out in a symmetrical design with a central axial path, linked by steps terminating at the pavilion.

To the north of the terraced walk, and adjoining the Hall to the east, is a roughly square garden enclosed by stone walls and generally laid to lawn, sloping up to the north. At the south-west corner of this east garden there is access from the terrace walk and from the paved terrace to the south of the Hall with each entrance marked by a small pair of late C20 ornamental wrought-iron gates. A further access from the terrace walk leads, via a stepped path between high stone walls, from west of the pavilion into the south-east corner of the garden. To the north, a low mid-late C20 stone wall separates the garden from a deer paddock to the north. The 1875 OS shows an area immediately north of this garden and the Hall laid out with paths and glasshouses but no evidence of these features appears to remain. A c mid C 19 drawing, for Pegge-Burnell Esq, of a heated conservatory set into sloping ground was possibly sited in this northern area. A c mid C 19 plan of the east garden, for Pegge-Burnell Esq, shows a formal geometric layout of planting beds with details of plants but it is not known whether this scheme was implemented.

In the eastern stone boundary wall to the east garden is a wide entrance marked by tall square stone gate piers, one with a cup and ball finial. This entrance leads to a wide path, lined with narrow belts of trees and holly, which extends c 170m to the north-east. This finger of woodland, now (2003) largely incorporated into the deer paddock to the north, is enclosed to the south by a stone wall with the remnants of a further, roughly parallel, stone wall to the north marking the former boundary. The north-east end of the path, where a short flight of stone steps flanked by low stone walls leads down, commands views, through woodland, over lower ground towards the Abbey and associated group of buildings c 70m to the north-east. This view together with the walk, lined with fir trees, is detailed in an early C 17 description (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833) and the 'Fir Walk' is marked on the c 1810 plan. Adjoining the Hall to the west is a further roughly square garden set into rising ground and enclosed by stone walls which are retaining to the west and north. This west garden has an entrance at the south-east corner, in the south wall, marked by tall square stone gate piers with cup and ball finials (wall and piers listed grade II). From the north-east corner of the garden stone steps lead up to the deer paddock to the north. The 1875 OS indicates that a range of small outbuildings and an ice house were sited on this higher northern ground, but no evidence of these features appears to remain. At the centre of the west retaining wall a flight of stone steps with substantial stone balustrades leads up out of the garden. This feature is not indicated on the 1923 OS and is very probably a mid-late C20 addition. The balustrade, however, is similar in design to those to the south of the Hall and has possibly been re-sited. The west garden is laid to lawn with formal planting beds on either side of an axial path, leading from the steps to the Hall, which divides at the centre around a three-tier stone fountain set in a wide circular basin. The steps from the west garden lead up into a roughly square car park, generally enclosed by low stone walls and adjoining the former stable courtyard to the south-west. This area is named on the c 1810 plan as an orchard. To the south of the west garden and adjacent to the Front Garden is a further car park laid out with late C20 planting beds. From this car park a drive winds eastwards across a lawned area to the entrance to the Hall grounds c 150m south-east of the Hall. An early C17 description (Brailsford MS quoted in Glover 1833) refers to 'a spacious outer green yard' and the c 1810 plan shows this adjoining car park and lawned area as part of an L shaped piece of open ground set around the Front and terraced gardens to the north-west named 'The Green'.

To the south of the lawned area, 70m south of the Hall, is a series of three irregular ponds descending with the sloping ground to the south-east and backed by trees to the south. The ponds are in a line roughly parallel with the south elevation of the Hall. The lowest pond to the east has a stone edging and a small island and is separated from the centre pond by a narrow strip of land which is accessed from the north by a small C 19 iron gate with cast-iron pier set within C 19 iron estate fencing. The most western pond is roughly L shaped enclosing on two sides a small level lawn. Ponds are indicated in this location on the c 1810 plan but are shown as two narrow formal canals to the east and a circular pond to the west with a small square building, or platform, and a further small pond to the west. The 1875 OS indicates two irregular ponds with a platform area to the west enclosed on three sides by a ditch.

From the north-eastern end of the Fir Walk, c 210m north-east of the hall, an informal path leads c 100m north-west into High Wood. The line of this path follows a field boundary marked on the c 1810 plan. On entering High Wood the path turns to wind south-westwards generally following the high ridge of ground along the south-eastern boundary of High Wood and Ladies' Spring Wood. The path thus forms a woodland walk commanding occasional views out over grassed paddocks to the Hall and beyond to the south-east and across the River Sheaf valley to the north-west. The woodland edge adjoining the path, for a depth

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of c 6-8m, is under-planted with rhododendrons and holly with occasional sections of C 19 iron estate fencing marking the extent of this planting within the wood. Within High Wood, c 75m north-west of the Hall, a short flight of stone steps with dressed stone edging leads down off the woodland walk to the north-west. These steps are on the line of a path indicated, with the woodland walk, on the 1875 OS. Within Ladies' Wood, c 200m west of the hall, is a rectangular raised viewing platform constructed in coursed random stone and with evidence of steps leading up from the woodland walk. The platform, which is indicated on the 1875 OS, is sited adjacent to the north-west corner of a large sports field to the west of the Hall. The sports field is bounded by low stone walls to the north and east and is named 'Deer Paddock' on the c 1810 plan.

Some 450m south-west of the Hall a path leads off the woodland walk for c 260m to the east and then c 280m north-east to join the southern approach arm of Beauchief Drive adjacent to the entrance to the Hall grounds. The first section of this path, leading east, commands long views out to the north-east, with Norton Church visible on the skyline and is on the line of a field boundary indicated on the c 1810 plan. The second section of the path follows, in part, the line of a route indicated on the 1875 OS which led back to the Hall, thus completing a circuit.

On lower ground immediately north-east of the terraced gardens is a large roughly rectangular area of ground which is a former local authority nursery. It is bounded to the north by the Fir Walk, to the south by the northern approach arm of Beauchief Drive and is divided at the centre, from north-west to south-east, by a line of tall conifers. To the north-east this land is bounded by a track leading north-west from Beauchief Drive towards High Wood and running along the head of a low embankment to the north-east. Along the south-west side of the track is a ditch and a low stone wall, which is in part retaining, and which has possibly been reduced in height (Chris Dunn pers comm). The track is partially lined with trees to the south-west and largely with holly to the north-east. The track is on the line of a field boundary noted in the Fairbank survey of 1759-61 as being marked by a fence and ditch with 'Upper Flatt', the former nursery area, to the south-west and 'Nether Flatt' in the possession of S Pegge Esq' to the north-east.

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Legal

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