

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

NORTHERNHAY AND ROUGEMONT GARDENS

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Name:	NORTHERNHAY AND ROUGEMONT GARDENS
County:	Devon
District:	Exeter (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.725707 Longitude: -3.5307007 National Grid Reference: SX 92055 92905 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001631 Date first listed: 01-Jul-2002 Statutory Address 1: Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens, Exeter

Details

A C19 public park developed from an early C17 public walk, together with the grounds of an C18 mansion converted into a public park in the early C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site of Northernhay Gardens was quarried in Roman times for stone from which to build the adjacent city walls, while in the Norman period it formed part of the defences of Rougemont or Exeter Castle. The name Northernhay, meaning an enclosure to the north of the city, is first found c 1415 (Hoskins 1974). By the mid C16 this area to the north of the Castle was rough ground beyond the city wall (ibid), but in 1612 it was levelled and laid out by the city authorities as a public walk with seats for the use of the elderly (ibid). The walk, which extended round the north and north-east sides of the Castle, was planted with an avenue of elms. These trees were felled in 1642-3 during the Civil War, at which time they were described as being of over one hundred years' growth (Freeman 1906). The walk was restored and the trees replanted c 1664 (Worth 1900), and continued to be a notable feature of the city during the C18 and early C19. The poet Robert Southey (1774-1843) commented that Northernhay was the finest public walk he had ever seen (quoted in Hoskins 1974). Northernhay remained substantially unchanged throughout the C18 and early C19. Charles Tozer's mid C18 plan of Exeter indicates formal gardens to the north of the public walk, but if these were ever present, they had been removed by 1820 (Roper, 1820). In 1860 the London and South Western Railway was constructed in the valley to the north of Northernhay, and new walks were constructed and gardens laid out on the slope above the track. During the mid and late C19 Northernhay was developed with lodges, ornamental planting, walks, and a group of public monuments and statues. In 1911 Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) published proposals in his book *Civic Art* for the improvement of Northernhay, including plans for a new bandstand and the better arrangement of the statuary (Mawson 1911). These proposals were not implemented. In the mid C20 the mature avenue of elms lining the central walk succumbed to Dutch elm disease and were felled. An avenue of Liquidambar was replanted along a length of the walk in the late C20.

Rougemont House to the south-east of Northernhay was built c 1769-70 by John Patch, a surgeon at the Devon and Exeter Hospital, on a site which had formerly been part of the moat and defences for the Norman castle. The House was sold after

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Patch's death in 1787 to a wine merchant, Edmund Granger, who altered the House and improved the gardens, which included the former moat and the south-west slopes of the castle mound, with the advice of William Jackson (Pevsner and Cherry 1989; Hoskins 1974). Rougemont House continued in private ownership until 1910 when it was acquired by the City Council. An intervening property, Northernhay House, which stood to the north of the surviving Roman walls, was demolished and the gardens of Rougemont House were linked to Northernhay.

Today (2002), both Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens remain municipal property.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Northernhay and Rougemont Gardens are situated c 500m north of Exeter cathedral. The site encircles Rougemont or Exeter Castle (scheduled ancient monument) to the north-east, north, west, and south-west. The c 4ha site is bounded to the north-west and north by Queen Street Station and the track of the former London and South Western Railway, from which it is separated by early C20 ornamental metal fences. To the north-east the site adjoins New North Road from which it is separated by low walls and C20 fences, while to the south and south-west it is bounded by the City Library, the Royal Albert Museum, and other commercial and institutional premises. Northernhay occupies an artificially levelled terrace to the west, north, and north-east of Rougemont Castle. To the south and south-west the steep slopes of the castle mound rise above the levelled terrace, while to the north-west, north, and north-east the ground falls steeply towards the railway line, Queen Street Station, and New North Road. There are extensive northerly views from Northernhay across the suburbs of Exeter. Rougemont Gardens occupies a site to the south-west of the Castle which comprises an artificially levelled terrace to the west of an artificial depression forming part of the castle defences. To the east the castle mound rises steeply above the gardens. There are extensive views south-west and south towards Exeter cathedral and across the city centre from the terraced walk which traverses the south-west slope of the castle mound.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Northernhay has entrances situated to the south-west, north, and south-east. The south-west entrance forms the north-eastern termination of Northernhay Street at a point c 20m north-east of its junction with Queen Street. The entrance comprises a pair of C19 ornamental wrought-iron gates supported by a pair of mid C19 stone piers with square caps (listed grade II). To the south the carriage gates are adjoined by a single pedestrian gate supported by a further stone pier (listed grade II), while to the north a further single pedestrian gate is adjoined by a single-storey mid C19 lodge (listed grade II). The lodge is constructed in stone with picturesque Tudor-Gothic-style windows, ornamental bargeboards, and tall chimneys. It formed part of the mid C19 formalisation of Northernhay as a public walk and gardens. The northern entrance leads from New North Road at a point opposite Longbrook Terrace. To the west of the entrance stands a single-storey Tudor-Gothic-style brick lodge with stone dressings and ornamental bargeboards. The south-east entrance provides access to the site from Northernhay Place and comprises a pair of C20 ornamental carriage gates constructed to a C19 pattern, supported by a pair of stone piers surmounted by square caps (listed grade II), which are flanked by C20 spear-headed cast-iron railings. The entrance was formerly surmounted by a wrought-iron overthrow and lantern (listed grade II); these were removed for safe keeping c 1995. Within the site and to the north-east of the entrance stands an early C20 single-storey lodge. Of painted roughcast construction with a pyramidal tile roof and central chimney stack, the lodge is today used as a gardener's office.

Rougemont Gardens are entered from Castle Street at a point immediately south-west of the Castle's C11 Gate Tower (scheduled ancient monument) where a pair of early C19 round-headed archways are set in a stone-coped rubble-stone wall (all listed grade II). The entrance survives from the early C19 development of Rougemont House by Edward Granger and William Jackson. A small postern gate set in the medieval city wall (scheduled ancient monument) forming the northern boundary of Rougemont Gardens connects them to Northernhay to the north. This connecting gate is situated approximately on the site of Northernhay House which was demolished c 1910 after the acquisition of Rougemont House and Gardens by the city.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Rougemont House (listed grade II*) is situated to the south of Rougemont Castle. The principal facade faces north towards the gardens and comprises three storeys, the ground floor with a pair of segmental bow windows which support a first-floor wrought-iron verandah. The House, which is constructed in painted rendered rubble and brick under a hipped slate roof, was constructed in the late C18 for the surgeon John Patch and remodelled in the early C19 for Edward Granger.

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GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A broad, gently curving tarmac walk extends from the Northernhay Street or south-west entrance north-east, east, and south-east through the gardens to reach the Northernhay Place or south-east entrance. This walk is adjoined by areas of lawn with ornamental shrubbery and specimen trees on the north-facing slopes of the castle mound to the south, and on the steep north-facing slopes above the railway to the north. The broad walk was, until the mid C20, bordered by an avenue of elm. An avenue of elm had formed the principal feature of the early C17 public walk, and was replanted in the mid C17 following its destruction during the Civil War. The trees, some of which were believed to have been c 400 years old, were killed by Dutch elm disease c 1970.

Within the Northernhay Street entrance, the broad walk ascends north-east for c 120m through a late C20 avenue of Liquidambar to reach the City War Memorial. This structure comprises a monumental cruciform granite pedestal surmounted by a bronze figure of Victory subduing a dragon. Below, the pedestal is flanked by four bronze sculptures symbolic of war: a soldier, a sailor astride a ship's hull, a VAD nurse, and a prisoner of war. The memorial was constructed in 1921 incorporating sculptures by the Devon sculptor John Angel (Meller 1989). The memorial is set within a formal granite-kerbed enclosure with formal beds for seasonal planting surrounding the base of the pedestal. To north-west and south-east the avenue approaching the memorial is adjoined by areas of gently sloping lawn with a walk leading north-west to a seated stone statue of Sir John Dinham (listed grade II) which was carved by Edward Bailey Stephens of Exeter in 1866. A further walk leads south-east to join a boundary walk which extends parallel to the Roman city walls (scheduled ancient monument) which here form the boundary of the site. Opposite or south-east of this junction stands a stone figure of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland (listed grade II), MP and owner of Killerton, Devon (qv). This statue, which was sculpted in 1861 by E B Stephens, stands against the city wall and is flanked by ornamental shrubbery which extends parallel to the south-east boundary of the gardens. The boundary walk leads north-east to reach a postern gate set in the city wall which gives access to Rougemont Gardens to the south-east. This gate is also reached by a walk extending south-east from the war memorial. To the north-east of the war memorial an area of lawn corresponds to the site of Northernhay House which was demolished c 1912.

The broad walk continues north-east of the war memorial, passing below a rocky bank planted with ornamental shrubs and ilex oaks. A pool and dripping grotto are recessed into this early C20 rockery bank. A walk ascends to the summit of the rockery where a late C19 stone cruciform monument designed by Sidney Greenslade and executed by Henry Hems (listed grade II) commemorates the formation of the Devonshire Volunteers' Regiment by Sir John Burkill in 1852.

To the north-east the broad walk is adjoined by three approximately rectangular panels of lawn which separate it from a parallel walk to the north which follows the summit of the north-facing escarpment above the railway. A simple early C20 pedimented bandstand of timber construction stands on the northern walk at a point opposite the Devonshire Volunteers' memorial, while to the south-east, between the central and the south-east panels of lawn, is a late C19 statue of the Earl of Iddesleigh (listed grade II) sculpted by Boehm. The two western lawns were the site of Thomas Mawson's proposed bandstand, seating alcove, and formal flower beds (Mawson 1911); this scheme was not implemented. Some 50m south-south-east of the lawns, a bronze statue of the Deer Stalker (listed grade II) sculpted by Edward Stephens in 1878 is placed on axis with the gates leading into the gardens from Northernhay Place. To the south-west, the north-east-facing slopes of the castle mound are planted with ornamental trees and shrubs. Walks ascend to the summit of the slope where a further walk extends below the castle wall. The lower storey of the Bastion Tower, c 150m north-west of the Northernhay Place entrance, forms a recessed arbour, now (2001) closed by an iron grille, from which there would formerly have been extensive north-easterly views. An area of level lawns and late C20 ornamental planting to the west of the Northernhay Place entrance occupies the site of early C20 tennis lawns (OS 1905). The north-, north-west-, and north-east-facing slopes below the broad walk terrace are planted with ornamental trees and shrubs. A series of contoured walks linked by zig-zag paths traverse the slope, while the lower walk has a series of recesses for seats set into its rustic stone retaining wall.

The layout of Northernhay Gardens remains substantially unchanged from that shown on the late C19 OS map (1890), while the broad walk corresponds to the public walk and avenue shown on Charles Tozer's mid C18 plan of Exeter.

Rougemont Gardens to the south-west of Rougemont Castle comprise areas of lawns and informal ornamental planting formed on the former defences of the Castle. A deep grassy declivity extends west and north-west from Rougemont House towards the

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city wall which forms the boundary between Rougemont Gardens and Northernhay. To the north-east of this declivity the steep south-west-facing slopes of the castle mound are planted with C18, C19, and C20 ornamental trees and shrubs. A contoured walk traverses this slope, leading west and north-west from a point immediately west of the Gate Tower adjacent to Rougemont House. Some 150m north-west of Rougemont House this walk divides: one branch ascends north to a bastion from which there are extensive views south and south-east across the city towards the cathedral; the other branch sweeps north-west round the north-west end of the grassy declivity to reach the postern gate leading to Northernhay. A further walk sweeps south, west, and north-west from Rougemont House to reach the postern gate. The walk passes to the south of an artificial mound planted with mature shrubbery and specimen trees c 50m west of the House. To the north-west of this mound is an area of lawn in which is set a group of rose beds and other late C20 ornamental planting. A slightly raised terrace incorporating an early C20 rock garden extends parallel to the city wall to the north-west of the lawns. The layout of Rougemont Gardens corresponds closely to that shown on Roper's map of Exeter (1820), and the late C19 OS map (1890). The early C19 garden developed by Edward Granger and William Jackson associated with the late C18 villa built by John Patch was acquired by the city in 1910 and opened to the public.

REFERENCES

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Maps Civitas Exoniae, c 1690 (Devon Record Office) C Tozer, Plan of Exeter, mid C18 (Devon Record Office) J Roper, Exeter, c 1820 (West Country Studies Library, Exeter)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1906 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1883, published 1890 2nd edition published 1905

Archival items Early C20 photographs published in Exeter Illustrated Souvenir of the Visit of the Royal Sanitary Institute (1913), (West Country Studies Library)

Description written: February 2002 Register Inspector: JML Edited: November 2002

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.