

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

GATLEY PARK

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Name: GATLEY PARK

District: County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Aymestrey

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.312871
Longitude: -2.8088170
National Grid Reference: SO 44958 68615
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000882
Date first listed: 28-May-1986

Details

A C17 and C18 park, and formal gardens of c 1900 associated with a country house.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Gatley estate was purchased in 1679 by Philip Dunne (d 1699) following the death in 1673 of the widow of Sir Sampson Eure (d 1644), sometime Attorney General in Wales and MP for Leominster, under whom the house had been rebuilt. The estate has descended in the Dunne family ever since.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Gatley Park house lies 1km north-east of the village of Leinthall Earls; Wigmore lies 3km to the west and Croft Castle 3km to the south. The house lies towards the south-western end of a ridge of high ground running from Ludlow 9km to the north-east, the park occupying a strip of ground on the south side of the ridge which slopes downwards, sometimes steeply, from north to south, into a small valley. A road runs along the bottom of this from Leinthall Earls to Wylde, with the south side of the valley being formed by Dionscourt Hill, overlooked from the rear of the house. The area here registered is c 42ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach in the C19 and C20 is from the south-west, via a drive from the village of Leinthall Earls, at the end of which are rusticated gate piers. The first third of the drive is unlined, the second third lined with mature sweet chestnut and oak trees, and parts of the last third with mature beech trees. The drive, a kilometre long, largely follows the valley side contour and its middle section, where the valley is steepest, is cut back into the hillside.

The main approach before the C19 was probably from the north-east, from Richards Castle and Ludlow. That survives as a 500m long wooded drive, at the end of which is Gatleypark Lodge, a two-storey stone cottage, perhaps C17, with a tall yew hedge to the front. Gates at the end of the drive are wooden and C20.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Gatley Park (listed grade II*) was rebuilt in the later 1630s as a square, gabled, brick building of two storeys and an attic, with mullioned and transomed windows and elaborate brick chimneys. Additions and considerable enlargements to either side of the house were made in brick in 1894 and 1907 to the designs of C D Coleridge.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The entry court to Gatley Park, now lawn, lies on its north side; it is defined to the north and east by probably C18 walls, brick-faced on the inside and stone on the outside and stone-capped. The main gate is in

the centre of the north wall, opposite the main entrance to the house. The gate piers are brick and probably C19; the elaborate iron gates of c 1900. A broad path leads straight from gate to door.

Low drystone walls of c 1900 around the east and north sides of the entry court garden revet walks c 8m wide, with beds with shrubs against the court walls. A circular lead cistern of 1637 (listed grade II) bearing the Ewer arms stands in the extreme south-east corner of the court. In the years after 1890 parallel yew hedges were planted down, and defining, the west side of the court. Those hedges stood c 3.5m high in the late C20, clipped into a crenellated form, the crenellations topped with domes. A grass path leads between the hedges, with steps leading up to a yew alley.

Further clipped yew hedges enclose a small lawn to the east of the house, with a square-ended apse looking south and a semicircular one giving views over the low ground to the east; here is a swimming pool, with tennis court adjoining to the north. Both are late C20.

South of the house the ground falls away quite steeply, and was terraced using drystone walls in the second phase of improvements to create four low terraces connected with flights of stone steps. The terraces are mainly lawned but with some flower beds. Small early C20 terracotta urns bearing Gertrude Jekyll's seal stand along the edge of the uppermost terrace, a pergola (restored in the 1990s) at the west end of the second terrace, while the west end of the third terrace ends in a circular bastion defined by a heather hedge.

West of the house further yew hedges define a small flagged yard. Immediately to the west of that is a vegetable garden, again bounded in part by clipped yew hedges.

The wholesale remodelling of the gardens around the house, essentially creating the landscape seen today, was undertaken by successive occupiers of the house in two phases, the first c 1890-1900 and the second and more important in the years immediately after 1900. Family tradition suggests that Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), a family friend, may have influenced the later improvements.

PARK The park extends along the valley side north-east and south-west of the house. The first 500m of the park extending north-east from the C20 main gate was added to it at an unknown date between c 1780 and c 1880 by enclosing arable land; field boundaries are visible as earthworks in the permanent pasture. South-west of the house the park is mainly permanent grass with specimen trees, approximately ninety of them planted in the 1960s by James Russell (d c 1966). North (Barn Coppice) and east (James Fall) of the house is mainly ancient woodland.

In the Middle Ages, when Gatley was one of the estates of the Earl of March, there was a park here, licensed in 1301. It was probably disparked in the C16, although in the C17 Gatley was reputedly a stud for breeding mares. An C18 estate painting of Gatley showing a fox hunt appears to show a park pale following, at least in part, the bounds of the later park.

In the 1960s a domed, finger-like, three-storey tower was built outside the park (and the registered area), 250m south-east of Gatleypark Lodge, as a folly and dower house. It was designed by Raymond Erith; John Fowler decorated the interior.

KITCHEN GARDEN Between the 1880s and 1903 a beech-hedged kitchen garden was laid out at the bottom of the hillside c 200m south-west of the house. A cottage was later built on the east side of the garden. The kitchen garden lies outside the registered area.

REFERENCES C J Robinson, *The Mansions of Herefordshire and their Memories* (1872), pp 172-3 P Reid, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses: Volume II, Herefordshire* (1980), pp 29-30 L Cantor, *The Medieval Parks of England: A Gazetteer* (1983), p 36

Maps Estate map, c 1780 (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 7 NW, 1st edition published 1884 Herefordshire sheet 7 SW, 1st edition published 1885 Herefordshire sheet 7 NW, 2nd edition published 1903 OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 7.5, 2nd edition published 1903 Archival items Estate records (F76), (Herefordshire Record Office)

Description written: 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: August 1999

Legal

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