

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

MARSH COURT

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

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**MARSH COURT**

Name: MARSH COURT

County: Hampshire

District: Test Valley (District Authority)

Parish: Kings Somborne

County: Hampshire

District: Test Valley (District Authority)

Parish: Stockbridge

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.102347  
Longitude: -1.4926011  
National Grid Reference: SU3562333794  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000149  
Date first listed: 31-May-1984

## Details

Formal gardens laid out by Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1901-04, surrounding a house by Sir Edwin Lutyens of the same date.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By 1730 Marsh Court was owned by a Mr Holms, and then shortly afterwards by John Pollen. Pollen's son and heir, also John, was created a baronet in 1795 and died in 1814. The estate passed to his son, Sir John Walter Pollen, who sold it in 1815 to James Edwards. Edwards left the estate by will to Henry Edwards, whose trustees sold it c 1882 to Dr Wickham. Wickham sold it in 1892 to Herbert Johnson.

In 1901 Johnson employed Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) to rebuild the house and Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) to landscape the grounds. The work was completed in 1904, with an extension by Lutyens in 1924-6. Johnson lived at Marsh Court until the beginning of the Second World War, when it was used as an evacuation home for children, and then later as a convalescent home and hospital. In 1948 Marsh Court Preparatory School was established at Marsh Court. The school sold the property in the late C20 and it is now (2000) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Marsh Court and its surrounding landscape of c 12ha is located 1.5km south of Stockbridge, 2.5km north of King's Somborne, and 13km west-north-west of Winchester. The landscape is bounded by a lane running between Stockbridge and King's Somborne, with the River Test beyond, to the west, and woodland and farmland to the north, east, and south. Marsh Court and its gardens occupy a spur of a hill, with the ground falling beyond

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the gardens to the west down to the Test, and rising to the east. There are good views from the garden to the west and south over the Test valley.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** A straight drive lined by trees leads east from the Stockbridge to King's Somborne lane for c 300m and then curves southwards into a tight 'U' bend through steeply sloping banks. The drive then leads west for c 200m, with Marshcourt Copse (largely hazel) to the south and open ground with mature trees to the north and west. The drive then turns and leads south for c 200m, in a straight, formal approach aligned on the house, with Marshcourt Copse to the east and open lawns to the west planted with scattered mature trees, especially oak. The northern end of this part of the drive is flanked by two L-shaped brick buildings (together listed grade II), formerly the garages and power house, designed by Lutyens in 1905. The southern end of the drive passes by a balustraded bridge over a dry moat to a large rectangular paved forecourt, enclosed by the house and its wings to the south, yew hedges to the west and east, and the dry moat to the north. The forecourt is laid out with a piazza of paving around a central plat of grass.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Marsh Court house (listed grade I) is laid out on an 'H' plan but with the omission of one arm at the south-west corner and a service wing attached to the north-east arm. It is constructed of chalk blocks decorated with panels of red-brick tile and black flint, and has a steeply pitched tile roof with tall brick chimneys. An internal courtyard, known as the Mulberry Courtyard, is enclosed between the house and the ballroom. It is laid out as a lawn bordered by a box hedge and paved around two sides. A mulberry tree has been planted (late C20) to replace an early C20 tree.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** From the centre of the west side of the forecourt, a path leads through the yew hedge and descends a flight of steps to the dry moat (walls, balustrades and bridges of moat all Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II). The moat is lawned and is the same width as the house wings and encloses the far (north) side of the forecourt, mirroring the house. A flight of steps adjacent to the north-west corner of the house, and opposite that on the other side of the moat, leads down to a narrow walk. The walk is paved in bricks in a herringbone pattern bordered with stone and is flanked by borders, these backed by a hedge to the west and the walls of the moat to the east. At the northern end of the walk there is a double flight of semicircular stone steps (Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II), firstly convex and then concave beyond the stone retaining wall, which leads up to a square lawn known as the 'rendezvous'. This is at the same level as the entrance forecourt and from it there are good views to the south, back along the walk and beyond the gardens. Returning to the walk, the path leads south, passing along the west wall of the house and leading by a flight of steps (Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II) to a paved area surrounded by high yew hedges and backed to the west by yew trees. At the southern end of this area is a further flight of steps (Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II) leading up to the main level of the gardens to the south of the house. To the west of the walk and forming the west side of the gardens is a simple lawn, used in the early C20 as a bowling green, which is bordered by a hedge, with a retaining wall along the west and south sides.

The walk continues past a sunken garden (listed grade II\*) to the south of the house, which is glimpsed through a hedge and then hidden from view, and then turns east and continues along a terrace on the south side of the gardens from where the land falls steeply to the south. The western end of the walk is lined by clipped yew hedges, with occasional breaks to give glimpsed views into and out of the garden.

The sunken garden lies below the principal rooms of the house, within high balustraded walls, and is glimpsed from the long walk to the west and viewed from the southern end. Stone and brick steps descend on all sides down to a rectangular lily pond which has a central fountain and is flanked along each length by four square raised beds, standing proud of the steps and planted (2000) with clipped cubes of box. Between the steps and the surrounding walls are raised beds (not planted today (2000) but planted in the early C20 by Jekyll with China roses and lavender-cotton) and the walls are planted with climbing plants. Semicircular steps at the southern end lead through two stone piers in the surrounding wall, giving a framed view southwards beyond the garden. A further flight of steps leads back onto the south walk. To the east of the sunken garden the yew hedge ends and the walk is lined by large cylinders of clipped yew which frame views to the south of the Test valley. Set within the clipped yews to the south and retaining walls to the north is a pergola (Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II with the pools), the massive oak beams supported by square stone and tile pillars. Immediately north of the pergola is a small garden laid out in a recess in the retaining walls (Lutyens 1901-04, listed grade II) which support the upper level of the garden. The recess is

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surrounded by the stone and flint retaining walls to the north, west, and east which are decorated with brick niches at the west and east ends, and is open onto the pergola to the south. The garden consists of six symmetrical lily pools set in stone paving. At the eastern end of the pergola, a double flight of stone steps leads up to the level of the house. The main garden, known as the Piazza, is centred on the south front of the house and consists of a lawn flanked by stone paving, narrow borders, and a stone balustrade. The stone paving in front of the house extends along a path to a central sundial (listed grade II), the bronze dial of c 1900 by Pilkington and Gibbs set on a stone pedestal by Lutyens. From the lawn there are extensive views to the west and south, with the pergola and lower level of the garden hidden from the view. A short flight of stone steps in the south-east corner of the lawn leads up to a further lawn with large areas of stone paving. A path in the south-east corner of this lawn leads along the south wall of the ballroom, an extension on the south-east side of the house (Lutyens 1924-6), and under a pergola (Lutyens 1926, listed grade II) of six tile piers on stone plinths supporting timber beams which rest on stone corbels on the ballroom wall. At the east end of the pergola clipped hedges open out onto an extensive lawn on the east side of the house, enclosed on the north side by massive clipped double hedges and on the south and east sides by yew trees.

On the north side of the east lawn is the service drive with an area of lawn beyond, backed by Marshcourt Copse to the north. A clearing runs north-east through the copse to the site of the early C20 tennis court, an area planted informally by Jekyll in 1915.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 33 (19 April 1913), pp 562-71; 71 (19 March 1932), pp 316-22; (26 March 1932), pp 354-9 L Weaver, Houses and Gardens by E L Lutyens (1913), pp 75-93 N Pevsner and D Lloyd, The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (1967), pp 312-13 J Brown, Gardens of a Golden Afternoon (1982), pp 72-8 K Bilikowski, Historic Parks and Gardens (1983) D Ottewill, The Edwardian Garden (1989), pp 80-2

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1910

Description written: July 2000 Register Inspector: CB Edited: February 2004

#### 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.