

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

BRIDWELL

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**BRIDWELL**

Name:	BRIDWELL
County:	Devon
District:	Mid Devon (District Authority)
Parish:	Halberton
County:	Devon
District:	Mid Devon (District Authority)
Parish:	Uffculme
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.904522 Longitude: -3.3402884 National Grid Reference: ST 05855 12528 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000688 Date first listed: 12-Aug-1987

## Details

A late C18 landscape park and pleasure grounds with a lake and several late C18 or early C19 landscape structures which survives in the form shown on proposals of 1779 attributed to Thomas Gray.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Bridwell was leased by Richard Clarke, a wealthy yeoman in 1610, and subsequently purchased in 1628. A chapel, dedicated to St Bridget and possibly associated with a holy well, stood north-east of an earlier dwelling, now known as Old Bridwell, until its demolition c 1774 (Polwhele 1793). The present house was constructed on a site north-east of Old Bridwell in 1774-9 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989) for Richard Hall Clarke, who inherited the property in 1774. No architect has been identified for the house, but it is possible that the owner, Richard Hall Clarke may have been responsible (CL 1981). A Plan of Intended Alterations dated 1779 attributed to Thomas Gray (ibid) shows the house set at the centre of a landscape park with pleasure grounds to the north, a lake to the south and walled gardens adjacent to the old house south-west of the new building. Garden buildings to the north-west of the lake and north-east of the house shown on the proposal Plan do not appear to have been executed. The park shown on the 1779 proposal Plan corresponds closely to the site as it survives in the late C20, with the Uffculme to Halberton road forming its southern boundary. A painting of c 1780 formerly in the house (ibid) shows the house across the lake from the south-east, while both the Tithe map (1838) and the OS 1st edition (1887) reflect the landscape which survives today (1999). Richard Hall Clarke added a chapel (also known as the Museum) north-east of the house in 1809, and at least two monuments in the park. The estate continued to be owned by the Clarke family until 1980, when it was sold to a property developer. Passing through several private hands, a serious fire damaged the house in the late 1980s. Following comprehensive restoration it was sold again in 1997 and today (1999) remains in private occupation.

## DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Bridwell is situated c 0.25km west of the village of Uffculme, to the north of the B3391 road leading west from Uffculme to Halberton. The c 33ha site comprises some 2ha of gardens and pleasure grounds, and 31ha of parkland, woodland and lake. The site is enclosed by high late C20 metal fencing, with a minor road, Bridwell Avenue, forming the west boundary, and the B3391 forming its south and south-east boundary. To the east a belt of woodland known as Long Shrubbery separates the park from an adjoining footpath, while to the north the site adjoins agricultural land. The ground fall gently away to the south of the house towards the lake and, c 1km south the River Culme, while to the north, east and west the site is generally level. The house and parkland enjoys wide views to the south and south-west across the Culme valley.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The site is approached from the B3391 to the south-east of the house at a point 160m west-south-west of the Congregational Chapel on the western edge of Uffculme. Late C20 brick gate piers with ball finials support late C20 wrought-iron gates with side pedestrian gates, and are flanked by late C20 brick convex wing walls. A late C18 or early C19 lodge stands within the site to the north-east of the entrance. The tarmac drive sweeps c 320m north-west from the entrance across parkland to the north-east of the lake, rising to reach the carriage circle south of the house. A service drive leads to the red-brick stables (listed grade II\*) which were built immediately north-north-east of the house in 1779. A further drive extends south-west from the south front of the house, passing through the park north-west of the lake for c 250m, before turning west to reach a gateway leading to Bridwell Avenue on the south-west boundary of the site some 430m west-south-west of the house. This gateway has late C20 brick gate piers with ball finials and late C20 wrought-iron gates and pedestrian gates. The east and west drives reflect the arrangement shown on the proposals of 1779, and are little changed since their original construction by Richard Hall Clarke.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Bridwell (listed grade I) stands on a level terrace above south- and south-west-facing slopes towards the centre of the site, with wide views across the southern park and beyond across the Culme valley. The plain, symmetrical, pale-stuccoed house comprising two storeys and an attic above a basement was constructed in 1774-9 for Richard Hall Clarke. The central bay of the south facade projects slightly and is lit on the first and second floors by centrally placed Venetian windows below a pedimented gable. The stone porch supported by clustered pilasters dates from 1913, and replaced the pedimented door case shown in a sketch by F W L Stockdale of c 1840. The north wing was also added to the original house c 1913 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). The house was restored c 1990 when a conservatory was added to the north-west corner of the building, and the stables were altered.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** South of the house a large square lawn is enclosed by C19 or early C20 stone balustrades. The pleasure grounds lie principally to the north, north-east and east of the house, and comprise lawns, shrubbery and specimen trees, with a circuit of walks leading from a terrace on the west side of the house. The walks lead to two late C18 or early C19 garden structures, the Monument north of the stables, and the Chapel or Museum c 130m north-east of the house. The Monument comprises a lump of stalagmites mounted on a triangular base set with knucklebones, while the Chapel (listed grade II\*) dates from 1792 and incorporates a re-used medieval timber roof brought from near Plymouth (ibid). The building, now (1999) a games and music room, is constructed from rubble stone and dark volcanic rubble, with a round-headed entrance to the west, and square-headed windows to the west and south. The pleasure grounds are separated from the adjacent park by C19 metal estate fencing.

**PARK** The park is generally pasture with scattered mature trees particularly concentrated to the north-west and south-east of the house, while to the north-east the Cedar Walk forms a boundary plantation, with Long Shrubbery continuing the boundary planting and perimeter walk along the eastern boundary of the park. There is further boundary planting to the north-west containing a pool c 400m west of the house, while plantations adjoining the west drive screen Old Bridwell and the kitchen garden c 270m south-west of the house, and cover the site of St Bridget's chapel, demolished by Richard Hall Clarke c 1774 (Polwhele 1793). Some 250m east of the house stands a pyramid composed of stalagmites, which incorporates a trefoiled piscina (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). A narrow lake or artificial river extends some 450m east to west, c 130m south of the house, and is constructed by means of an embankment along its south side. Today (1999), the banks of the lake are planted with mixed trees

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which partly obscure the water, while a triple-arched rustic bridge shown at the west end of the lake in an engraving published by Polwhele (1795) does not appear to survive. The parkland south of the lake, shown as part of the park on the proposals of 1779, is pasture with scattered mature oak trees which may survive from earlier hedgerows.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Standing some 250m south-west of the house and adjacent to Old Bridwell, the kitchen garden is enclosed by walls constructed from a mixture of cob, stone and brick, with a C17 carved stone coat of arms placed above the entrance on the north side (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). The garden is no longer in cultivation.

#### REFERENCES

R Polwhele, *The History of Devonshire II*, (1793-1806) D and S Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Devon II*, (1820), p 252 Country Life, 169 (19 March 1981), pp 710-12 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (1989), pp 213-14 T Gray, *The Garden History of Devon An Illustrated Guide to Sources* (1995), pp 57-8 'Phoenix rises for a new era of parties', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 January 1998, p 12

Maps Thomas Gray (?), *A Plan of Intended Alterations, 1779* (3321), (Devon Record Office) Tithe map for Halberton parish, 1838 (Devon Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1887, published 1890 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1888, published 1890 2nd edition revised 1903, published 1904

Illustrations R Polwhele, *Bridwell from the south-east, 1795* (in *The History of Devonshire*) F W L Stockdale, pencil sketch, c 1840, (vol 1, Royal Institution of Cornwall)

Archival items F W L Stockdale, *MS History of Devon*, early C19 (ff 799-800), (Devon and Exeter Institution) The following items are all held in Devon Record Office: Clarke family papers, including deeds and unlisted estate papers (3321) Sale particulars, 1980 (3372M/1) Sale particulars, 1984 (3372M/31) Sale particulars, 1993 (3372M/153)

Description written: April 1999 Amended: May 1999 Register Inspector: JML Edited: July 2000

## 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.