

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BATEMANS

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Name:	BATEMANS
County:	East Sussex
District:	Rother (District Authority)
Parish:	Burwash
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.989312 Longitude: 0.37908233 National Grid Reference: TQ 67069 23795 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000734 Date first listed: 25-Mar-1987

Details

A C20 compartmentalised garden, largely laid out by Rudyard Kipling between 1902 and his death in 1936.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The present house at Bateman's was built c 1634, probably by William Langham, born in 1589 the son of John Langham of Northampton, and was occupied from 1687 until 1715 by an iron master, John Britton. The original house of the manor of Burwash is said to have been sited c 800m south of the church in Burwash village (VCH) but no traces remain. The name Bateman's is not contemporary with the building of the house, which seems to have been known as Lane Bridge up to 1760. There is no further record until the house is referred to as Bateman's in the parish annals in 1790. The house became a farmhouse and was also occupied for forty years during the mid to late C19 by the vicar's bailiff (guidebook). In 1902 Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) bought the house, its surrounding buildings, c 3ha of land and Park Mill (c 200m to the south-west), and laid out the gardens. He acquired more land around the gardens, building up an estate of about 120ha and lived at Bateman's until his death in 1936. It was bequeathed to the National Trust by his wife, as a memorial to him, on her death in 1939. The garden was further developed by the Trust's tenant, Mr C Woodbine, and subsequently by the Trust itself.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Bateman's lies c 0.6km down Bateman's Lane which runs due south from the main A265 road from Burwash Common to Burwash. The centre of Burwash village lies c 1km due north-east of the site. The registered site, which comprises c 1.8ha of gardens, is bounded along its entire north-east side by Bateman's Lane and is enclosed from view by high brick walls and yew hedges. The River Dudwell forms the boundary in the south-east corner. Iron park paling defines the south-west boundary while to the north-west, open grass banks and the visitors' car park abut the site. Except for the extreme north-west garden enclosure, which follows the upward slope of the valley side, the site sits on the level floor of the narrow Dudwell valley, on the north side of the river. The valley sides rise quite steeply on both sides of the river, on the north side to the Wealden ridge carrying the A265 and on the south side to thickly wooded crests and the view to 'Pook's Hill'.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The formal and, until the late 1980s only, approach to the house is on its north-east front, directly off Bateman's Lane. Stone piers and a wrought-iron gate (listed grade II) open onto a stone path, flanked by rectangular lawns, which leads south-west to the front porch. The line of this path is shown on the OS 1st edition map surveyed 1875. The lawns are enclosed by yew hedges which separate them from the rest of the garden. The hedges were planted by Kipling although the present gate has replaced his 'wooden gate of good design' noted in 1908 (CL). A similar set of piers with double gates (listed grade II), 25m further north-west on the lane, forms the carriage entrance to the site.

The approach to the house and gardens for the public is downhill from the car park on the north-west boundary, on a path which leads south-eastwards through the walled orchard and the Mulberry Garden. The approach was altered by the Trust in the late 1980s, when the present car park and ticket office was constructed.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Bateman's (listed grade I) lies centrally within its gardens. It is built of coursed ashlar, the sandstone coming from the quarry across the lane to the east of the house (now the Quarry Garden). Built in c 1634, probably by William Langham, the original house was a modified H shape in plan which was then, possibly, enlarged by infilling on the west side between the wings and by additions to the north wing which, with the north wing itself, were later pulled down (Head Gardener pers comm, 1998). The present, asymmetrical, form of the house is shown on the OS 1st edition map published 1875. The entrance is through a rounded arch in the three-storeyed gabled porch and the date of 1634 is set above the pediment over the arch. Kipling's cousin, the architect Sir Ambrose Poynter (1867(1923), supervised improvements to the house in late 1902.

Immediately north-west of the house and linked to it by a C20 passage is a brick-built double oast-house (listed grade II). One was converted to a dovecote in the early C19, with a wooden cupola replacing its cowl (Listed Building Description). The second oast was converted to use as a cottage by Poynter, the roof being reduced to form a Mansard. The oasts, now occupied by the NT shop, form a visual ensemble with the house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The principal garden lies on the south-east front of the house and is enclosed on all sides by clipped yew hedges planted by Kipling. A door leads out onto a wide, stone path which extends c 45m south-westwards beyond the house to a vista point in the enclosing yew hedge, against which spring borders are planted (designed in the 1980s by the Trust). The path is raised slightly above the level, flanking lawns. This part of the garden is known by Kipling's name of 'The Quarterdeck'.

The lawn on the south-east side of the path extends c 15m in that direction to a low, drystone retaining wall with four sets of steps built from un-dressed stone. These lead down onto a large, rectangular, lower lawn. On the north-east half, an avenue of pleached limes runs south-eastwards across the lawn to a niche in the yew hedge which contains an oak seat. The limes were planted in 1898, before Kipling purchased Bateman's (guidebook). The south-west half of the lawn contains a large, rectangular pond planted with waterlilies and, immediately to its south-east, a quartered rose garden with a central pool and fountain. A niche in the south-east yew hedge contains a stone sundial set in stone paving. The north-west side of the pond is screened by a length of yew hedge on top of the retaining wall. A central niche in both frames a curved oak seat. The pond and rose garden was designed by Kipling and his drawing for it survives at Bateman's. His plan shows a border against the south-east yew hedge and also a '140' Hedge of Yellow Roses and Clematis' along the south-west side of the pond but these have not survived. The present fountain was installed by the Trust in the mid 1990s to replace the original which was stolen.

At the south-east corner of the lower lawn and pond garden, the stone path (known as the Garden Walk) which runs from the Quarterdeck, south-eastwards along the yew hedge, passes through a gap in the hedge framed by stone pillars. On the far side is the Wild Garden, extending south-eastwards to the edge of the river and planted with an informal scatter of trees and flowering shrubs and a wealth of spring bulbs in the rough grass.

North-west of the house and the oasts, and enclosed on three sides by brick walls, is the square Mulberry Garden. Along the fourth, west side, the single-storey brick building which was formerly a cow shed now houses the tea room. Brick paths surround the central square lawns which are planted with apple and pear trees and a mulberry planted in 1995 to replace the tree after which the garden was named. Box-edged borders are planted against the walls. The garden was the wagon yard during Kipling's ownership.

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A brick path set with millstones runs north-westwards through the Mulberry Garden to a wrought-iron gate which incorporates Kipling's initials. On its far side and rising up the slope of the valley is the Orchard, enclosed by brick walls and planted with old English varieties of fruit trees and with a herb border between the gravel path and the foot of the south-west wall. The paths and planting were laid out in the late 1980s. On the axis of the gate from the Mulberry Garden, the brick path continues up the slope beneath the iron-framed pear alley. This was designed by Kipling. The orchard was formerly his kitchen garden, the orchard at that time being sited to the south-west, outside the wall.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 24 (15 August 1908), pp 224-33; 79 (25 January 1936), pp 90-5 Victoria History of the County of Sussex IX, (1937), p 195 I Nairn and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Sussex (1965), p 464 G S Thomas, Gardens of the National Trust (1979), pp 101-2 Bateman's, guidebook, (National Trust 1996)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1900 3rd edition published 1910 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1875
2nd edition published 1909

Description written: July 1998 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: February 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.