

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

MERROW GRANGE

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

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Name: MERROW GRANGE

County: Surrey

District: Guildford (District Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.243985
Longitude: -0.53820227
National Grid Reference: TQ 02132 50438
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001172
Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

Mid C19 formal gardens, with late C19 and early C20 picturesque pleasure grounds and associated artificial rockwork by Messrs James Pulham and planting by James Veitch and Son.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

A house was built on the site in 1868 for the Pengilly family and gardens were laid out around it. The house was later owned by Lord Percy (the eldest son of the Duke of Northumberland), before being sold in 1895 to Francis Baring Gould (1839-1927). From 1895 until his death in 1927, Baring Gould carried out extensive improvements and alterations to the house and gardens, including the construction of terraces to the west and north-west of the house, a sunken garden, and a rose walk. In c 1907 he commissioned Messrs James Pulham of Broxbourne and Brixton to build a series of features in Pulhamite stone (artificial stone formed from the Pulhams' own mix of Portland stone cement, which was poured over a base of clinker and brick and modelled into shape). Merrow Grange is a late, and extensive, example of the use of 'Pulhamite' stone and the work included a fernery-grotto (with associated tunnel, mound, seat, and rockwork), a two-arched cave, a single-arched cave, a rockpool with associated water and rock features, and a well. These were connected by a network of paths mostly edged with Pulhamite. The Pulhams also worked in terracotta and at Merrow they provided balustrading for the gardens, which was advertised in their catalogues as the 'Merrow' pattern. The planting in the gardens was carried out by George Nicolls of James Veitch and Son, who was then employed by Baring Gould as his head gardener.

The house and gardens were put up for sale in 1928, when the property included c 45 acres (18ha) of land. By the mid C20 the property was owned by a Catholic convent (Order of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, also known as the Ladies of Mary) and was used until 1971 as an independent girls' school. After 1971 the house was leased by the convent to Surrey County Council for use as part of St Peter's School. By the early 1980s the site was reduced to less than 4ha, the remaining land having been sold off for housing development. In the mid 1980s, the remaining property was divided into two parts, and a three-storey block of flats (Fairlawns) was built in the centre of the gardens. The house and immediately surrounding gardens continued to be used as a school until the mid 1990s, when the house and lodges were restored and converted into flats, and a further development

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of flats (Pengilly House) was built adjacent to the house. Some of the late C19 specimen trees were lost in the 1987 and 1990 storms, including trees listed in a tree survey by Guildford Borough Council in the 1970s.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Merrow Grange, is located in Merrow, to the east of Guildford. The c 1.4ha site as here registered is bounded by Epsom Road to the south, Horseshoe Lane East to the east, the gardens of the houses along Laustan Close to the north, and the gardens of the houses on Horseshoe Lane West to the west. The ground at Merrow Grange slopes gently down from south to north. The boundaries are marked by walls and fences.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Merrow Grange and Pengilly House are approached from Horseshoe Lane East on the east side. A drive enters at the south-east corner of the buildings and leads along the south side of the house, from where it continues to the south-west (now blocked by a fence) to the Epsom Road. This drive was the main C19 entrance. The main vehicular entrance was made in the late C20 and is on the north side of the buildings (outside the area here registered). This leads west to an entrance forecourt and car parking, redesigned in the late C20.

Fairlawns is approached from the north, off Laustan Close. A late C20 drive leads south to car-parking areas and then south-west, passing three blocks of garages, before terminating at a car-parking area located c 10m east of Fairlawns and c 20m west of Merrow Grange.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Merrow Grange was built in 1868 for the Pengilly family in a mock-Tudor style. It was enlarged in various phases between 1895 and 1927 by Francis Baring Gould. The 1860s part of the house stands on the west side of the present building and has ornate gables and an octagonal tower. The late C19 and early C20 additions are to the east. The house was restored and converted into flats in the mid 1990s and the adjacent Pengilly House development was built at the same time. The C19 house and late C20 development are situated in the north-east corner of the gardens described here.

Fairlawns was built in 1985/6 and consists of a three-storey building containing flats. It is situated in the centre of the gardens described here, c 25m west of the south-west corner of Merrow Grange.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens are now divided between the two developments by a close-boarded wood fence which runs approximately north/south on the west side of Merrow Grange house. The gardens associated with the house include a small terrace immediately north-west of the house, and an area of garden to the south of the house. The gardens associated with the Fairlawns development include most of the pleasure grounds with the Pulhamite rockwork.

Adjoining the house on the north-west side is a raised terrace, laid out as a lawn, and since the late C20 fenced on the west side, blocking the view of the gardens to the west. The surrounding C19 to early C20 balustrading has partly been replaced by late C20 artificial stone balustrading.

To the south of the house lie a gravelled drive and an extensive lawn, with specimen trees and a boundary plantation of mature trees and shrubbery, edged with rockwork. On the south side of the lawn is a statue, and on the east side a pond, under the canopy of a large copper beech. The pond was filled in in the late C20 and is planted with bedding plants. In the south-west corner of the lawn is a cave (listed grade II), 40m south-south-west of the house. The cave is built in Pulhamite stone and has a kidney-shaped recess with stepped flanking walls and an irregular arched entrance. The entrance is in the Merrow Grange gardens but most of the structure is in the Fairlawns gardens, the fence line between the two buildings passing across the structure.

The Fairlawns development lies at the centre of the main part of the gardens. Immediately to the east of the development is a sunken garden, with a central lily pond (filled in 1980s and used as a flower bed) with lawns to the east and south. Until the 1980s the pond was surrounded by lawn but the land to the north is now the car park and that to the west has been built over. As laid out, a path (grassed over in the 1980s) led down from the terrace to the north-west of the house and ran from west to east across the sunken garden and around the pond. The terrace is no longer accessible from the garden because of a fence along its west side.

To the south, west, and north of the Fairlawns development are informal woodland areas with various Pulhamite features connected by serpentine paths. The specimen trees include yew, redwood, Chusan palm, Wellingtonia, deodar, purple beech, larches, spiny castor oil trees, and a Katsura. The south-east corner of the Fairlawns garden is fenced off and includes the former main drive along the north-west side and woodland with dense undergrowth to the south-east. On the east side is the back of the

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Pulhamite cave, with the opening in the Merrow Grange part of the gardens. An ornamental Pulhamite pond lies on the south side of the Fairlawns building with associated rockwork (listed grade II) to the south, c 80m south-west of house. The area is planted with Chusan palms and bamboos. This feature was built in c 1907 by the Pulhams in randomly laid rocks around the pond, which has an island in the centre. A cascade in the rockwork to the south no longer works. A sinuous path lined with Pulhamite rockwork leads to the west, connecting with further paths leading north, south-west, and south. Those to the south-west and south connect with the Long Walk which runs parallel to the southern boundary between the former entrance from the south along to the west boundary of the Fairlawns property. It then continues (through what was in the late C19 part of the Merrow Grange gardens) to Horseshoe Lane West. The Walk is bordered by low walls in a smooth artificial stone, with low piers along its length; until the late C20 these were mounted with stone balls (now missing).

A two-arched Pulhamite cave lies c 3m to the south-west of Fairlawns, with an opening to the south-west and another to the north-west, with views over the gardens. The west side of the garden is more open, with specimen trees surrounded by shrubs, perennials, and bulb planting, and connected by a series of six paths (including the Long Walk to the south); all run approximately west/east and some are lined by rockwork. The northernmost path leads around an oval clearing, the site of a conservatory (demolished mid to late C20). To the west of this is a Pulhamite well, which was filled in in the late C20.

To the west of Fairlawns a path leads north to a large artificial mound, approached by steps on the south side. At the summit is a Pulhamite seat, with a rocky overhang, looking east to a Fernery, with the house beyond. The ground between the Mound and the Fernery is landscaped with Pulhamite rockwork in increasing height and complexity, forming cliffs along the western approach to the Fernery. The Fernery is also approached from the east, now from the car-parking area but until the 1980s from a path which ran from west to east between the Fernery and the north side of the terrace on the north-west side of the house. The Fernery has a ground/upper level conservatory (of which the metal frame has been restored but the glazing is missing), with a sunken/lower level grotto (listed grade II as Conservatory and Grotto, c 1907 by Messrs James Pulham), and is situated c 10m west of house and 10m north of Fairlawns. The approaches to the west and east are through arched entrances, connected by a causeway bridge which runs across the structure. On the south side of the causeway there is a curved staircase which descends down to the oval grotto chamber. The grotto has terrazzo and tiled floors, with hot-water heating pipes along the centre of the paths, covered with decorative cast-iron grilles. The base of the causeway and the surrounding walls are in Derbyshire or Gloucester tufa on a yellow Bargate sandstone and brick structure, and have planting pits for ferns (now only hardy British ferns). A tunnel, decorated with chips of mica, leads west from the north-west side of the lower level, under the rockwork features, and emerges on the west side of the mound.

Along the north-east boundary of the Fairlawns gardens is a stretch of balustrade, now backed by a late C20 fence on the south side of the gardens belonging to the houses on Laustan Close. This is all that survives of a Rose Walk, with 'Merrow' pattern balustrading in Pulham terracotta.

An area of open lawns on the north side of the pleasure grounds (outside the boundary of the gardens described here), was developed in the late C20 for housing along Laustan Close. A dell garden with a stream, pools, and bridges (also outside the boundary of the gardens described here), is situated c 150m to the north-west of the house. It survives as a garden but is totally detached from the Merrow Grange and Fairlawns sites and divided by late C20 housing.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen gardens no longer survive. They were located to the north-east of the house, with a range of glasshouses along the north wall. The area was developed in the mid 1990s as Pengilly House, with its associated entrance forecourt, car park, and garages.

REFERENCES

M Binney and A Hills, *Elysian Gardens* (1979), p 43 *Garden History* 11, no 2 (1983), pp 157-66 *Country Life*, 184 (5 January 1984), p 31

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1913

Archival items Sale catalogue, 18 July 1928 (Guildford Museum)

Description written: February 2000 Amended: July 2001 Register Inspector: CB Edited: April 2003

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.