

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FRIMLEY PARK

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

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Name:	FRIMLEY PARK
County:	Surrey
District:	Surrey Heath (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.317284 Longitude: -0.74461940 National Grid Reference: SU 87585 58323 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001472 Date first listed: 06-Jul-2000

Details

Formal gardens to a design of 1920 by Edward White of the firm Milner, Son and White, accompanying a country house, surrounded by C19 pleasure grounds and parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Frimley Park mansion house was built for the Tichborne family in the early to mid C18 (Burgess 1999), probably incorporating or remodelling the fabric of an earlier house and possibly with work by Benjamin Latrobe c 1780 (Pevsner; listed building description; see also discussion by Burgess p 17). In 1789 Henry Tichborne sold the Frimley Manor estate to James Laurell (also spelt Lawrell) the Elder for £20,000, which was divided up c 1806 when the c 590ha Frimley Park estate was divided from Frimley Manor and was sold by James Laurell the Younger to John Tekells (Wellard). At this time the Park grounds contained a triangular lake and possibly parkland (Enclosure map, 1801). By 1842 (Tithe map) a garden lay close to the Frimley Park mansion, with c 20ha of pleasure grounds and plantation to the north of the lake, and a network of approach drives. A mid C19 description gives details of the grounds: 'an excellent kitchen garden walled on every side, lawns and pleasure grounds adorned with Silver Firs of magnificent growth, ornamental water with gravelled walks entirely secluded by shrubberies' (The Times, 12 March 1859). Sales particulars of 1858 described how 'The Paddocks surround the Mansion and Grounds, and contain Fine Forest Timber, giving them a parklike appearance ... through which paths lead to two Large Pieces of Water ... amidst many wild and beautiful features'. The sales particulars also mentioned a 'Castellated Cottage' and an 'Obelisk' as being 'Picturesque Objects' amidst the dense foliage of the surrounding plantations.

In the early 1860s parcels of land were sold from the Frimley Park estate, leaving it with c 56ha of land. The reduced estate was bought in 1862 by William Crompton Stansfield who employed the Camberley nurseryman and landscape gardener, John D Craig to lay out the grounds for him (Camberley News, 4 December 1909; Wellard 1995). By the early 1870s (OS 25" surveyed 1871, published 1888) an area of well-treed parkland enclosing the lake had been laid out close to the mansion, a walled garden lay to the north, and formal terraces had been laid out adjacent to the north-east and south-west fronts of the mansion. The main entrance to the mansion lay on the south-east front.

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The estate having passed through several hands, Theodore Alexander Ralli bought it in 1920, and in the same year employed Edward White (c 1873-1952), of the leading design firm Milner, Son and White, to layout a formal Rose Garden and Sunk Garden. In 1947 a further sale reduced the estate to 12ha, when it became the property of the Officers' Association. In 1949 the estate was sold to the War Department and became the WRAC Staff College. In 1959 Frimley Park became the Cadet Training Centre. The northern half of the former Ralli property, depicted in 1939 on a map of Frimley Park drawn by Lindsay Gladstone, Ralli's step-daughter, has since been developed and is largely overlain by the late C20 Frimley Park Hospital. The site remains an Army Cadet training centre, owned by the Ministry of Defence (2000).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Frimley Park lies on the west edge of Frimley, 1km south of Camberley town centre, in an urban setting. The c 10ha site is bounded to the south-west by the B3411, Frimley Road dual carriageway, and beyond this by an industrial estate, and to the south-east by the A325, Portsmouth Road, and beyond this Frimley residential estates. To the north-east stands the late C20 Frimley Park Hospital, occupying a former part of the park and pleasure grounds, and to the north-west the site is bounded by the late C20 Gilbert Road development and beyond this the M3 motorway. The land is largely level, with a slight fall from the mansion to the south and south-west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters the park off the B3411 c 200m south-west of the mansion. From here the south drive leads north through the park, flanked by iron park fencing, to arrive at a grass turning circle on the south-west front of the mansion. From the turning circle a short flight of angled stone steps leads up to the main door, set within a small portico on the south-west front, standing on a formal terrace which extends the length of the front. The mid C19 terrace is laid largely to lawn with a pattern of formal flower beds, and overlooks the park to the south-west. Formerly (OS 1888, 1934) the drive entered 250m south of the mansion, where the roundabout joining the B3411 and Portsmouth Road now (2000) lies, the entrance having been marked by a lodge on the east side. The entrance was moved and the lodge demolished in the mid C20 when the roundabout was constructed.

The Camberley Drive, now (2000) disused, enters the park 175m west of the mansion, off the B3411 via an access road leading to the adjacent Gilbert Road development. It extends east along the edge of the park, leading to a small parade ground (mid C20) 50m west of the mansion. From here a spur leads north along the north-west side of the walled gardens to the former service yard. At the east side of the parade ground the Camberley Drive re-emerges to join the turning circle on the south-west front of the mansion. This drive was in place by the late C19 (OS 1888).

The remains of a third, north-east drive, now (2000) disused and incorporated within the pleasure-ground path system, begins on the north-east boundary, 120m east of the mansion. From here the course of the drive extends south-west as a gravel path to run alongside the north-west bank of the lake before turning north-west to arrive at the south-east front of the mansion. This drive formerly extended for a further c 250m north-east, to where the roundabout now lies, east of Frimley Park Hospital (OS 1888, 1934), the entrance from the Portsmouth Road having been marked by a lodge (now gone).

In the C19 (OS 1888) the main entrance to the mansion was on the south-east front, where there lay an informal turning circle at which the three drives terminated. By 1914 (Trollope) the entrance had been moved to the south-west front of the mansion and the present turning circle constructed. At this time it seems that the southern end of the north-east drive was reduced to a service drive, the north-east end being used as a service drive leading to the north side of the walled garden. It is possible that in the nineteenth century the Camberley Drive formed a service drive linking Park Farm with the service yard and farm buildings north-west of the walled garden. When in the early C20 the main entrance to the mansion had been moved to the south-west front the relative importance of the drives shifted so that the Camberley Drive became more important while the north-east drive was reduced to a service drive (pers comm Kathleen Burgess, 12 Sept 2003).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Frimley Park mansion (C18, listed grade II) stands close to the north-west boundary of the site. Built of brick and covered with whitewashed stucco, it was erected in the early to mid C18, probably incorporating or remodelling the fabric of an earlier house, and with work for Sir Henry Tichbourne in 1760 (listed building description), and possibly further work by Benjamin Latrobe, c 1780 (Pevsner; listed building description; see also discussion by Burgess p 17). The south-east

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and north-east fronts overlook the gardens and pleasure grounds; the north-west front stands adjacent to a service yard and mid C20 buildings.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal gardens lie adjacent to the north and north-east of the mansion, and the pleasure grounds lie largely to the south-east of the mansion.

The garden door in the south-east front, formerly the main entrance to the mansion (OS 1888), opens onto a stone-flagged path, beyond which lies a small semicircular lawn bounded to the south-west, south-east, and north-east by conifers and mature shrubs. The path leads both south-west to join the terrace on the south-west, entrance front, and north-east to the formal gardens. Adjacent to the north-east front lies the square Sunk Garden (White, 1920), laid out with stone paths in cruciform pattern, dividing lawns set with formal flower beds, the whole being encircled above by a gravel path. At the centre of the garden stands an ornamental stone basin set on a decorated stone pedestal. Several mature Irish yews stand on the perimeter of the sunken centre. The north-east side is bounded by an informal lawn leading to a shrubbery, and the north-west side is bounded by a brick wall dividing it from the walled gardens beyond, on which a large wisteria grows. The garden overlooks the pleasure grounds and lake to the south-east. Two mature cedars of Lebanon stand at the north corner.

At the west corner of the Sunk Garden a path leads north-west through a gateway in the wall to the square Rose Garden (White, 1920), which occupies the south-west half of the brick-walled kitchen garden. The Rose Garden is laid to lawn inset with formal seasonal bedding beds. The lawn is surrounded by an octagonal path enclosing two central paths set in cruciform pattern. Along the north-east wall runs a wooden pergola flanking a path, this feature being separated from the rest of the garden by a rose border. Several of the pergola's original ten pairs of circular brick uprights remain, the rest having been replaced by wooden poles. The pergola is aligned on one of the central cross axes of the Sunk Garden, to which it is linked at its south-east end via a doorway (disused, 2000) in the dividing brick wall. The Rose Garden is enclosed to the south-west, north-west, and south-east by brick walls, and divided from the rest of the walled garden to the north-east by a clipped yew hedge with a central gateway and a further gateway at the north corner.

A path, following the course of the former north-east drive, leads from the garden door on the south-east front of the mansion, south-east into the northern section of the pleasure grounds. The path encircles the triangular lake, with further paths leading into and around the surrounding pleasure grounds which are planted with mature trees and ornamental shrubs. The 0.8ha lake contains a small central island and is retained along the south-west side by an earth dam. The pleasure grounds extend south-west from the south tip of the lake, along the south-east boundary of the site, overlooking the park to the west.

By the late C19 (OS 1888), the square formal terrace on the north-east front of the mansion had been laid out. This was modified in 1920 by Edward White to form the Sunk Garden. The area of the Rose Garden was part of the walled kitchen garden until 1920, when White partitioned it off from the kitchen garden and turned it over to an ornamental garden. Until the mid to late C20 the C19 pleasure grounds extended further north-east, flanked by a cricket pitch to the east and to the north-west by a further area of wooded pleasure grounds including a Rhododendron Walk (early to mid C20; Trollope, 1914; Gladstone, 1939).

PARK The park lies west and south of the mansion, bounded to the south-west by the B3411, to the north by the Camberley Drive, and to the east by the pleasure grounds and mansion. It is laid to pasture with many mature specimen trees, and divided into two sections by the course of the south drive.

Formerly an area of parkland lay north-east of the lake, but this has been lost to the late C20 hospital development (Trollope, 1914).

KITCHEN GARDEN The remains of the brick-walled kitchen garden lie adjacent to, and to the north-east of, the Rose Garden, from which it is separated by the clipped yew hedge. A late C20 office building stands in the north corner and a further early C21 building, a fitness centre, in the north-east corner. The garden is laid largely to lawn, with a path running parallel to, and to the north-east of, the yew hedge. The path connects a gateway in the north-west wall, giving access from the former related service yard to the north-west (now, 2000, a car park), with a further gateway in the south-east wall which gives onto the Sunk Garden and pleasure grounds. At the centre of the path stands a stone pillar on a plinth surmounted with a stone basket of fruit. Formerly (OS 1888, 1934) the kitchen garden extended north-east for a further c 50m, but this area was lost in the mid to late C20.

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REFERENCES Sales particulars, Frimley Park (1858) (quoted in Burgess) *The Times* (12 March 1859) *Camberley News*, 4 December 1909 (obituary John D Craig) *Victoria History of the County of Surrey* 3, (1911), p 340 N Pevsner, B Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Surrey* (rev edn 1971), p 248 G Wellard, *The History of Frimley Park Manor House* (1995) K M Burgess, *Frimley Park and Tekells Park Estates: A history of their gardens and grounds*, (report for Surrey Gardens Trust, November 1999)

Maps John Rocque, *Map of Surrey*, surveyed c 1762, published 1768 Tithe map for Frimley parish, 1842 (Surrey History Centre) G Trollope and Sons, *Plan of the Exceedingly Choice freehold residential property known as Frimley Park*, 1914 (private collection) Edward White, *Plan of Sunk and Rose Gardens at Frimley Park for A Ralli Esq*, 1920 (private collection) L Gladstone, *Frimley Park*, 1939 (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1934 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871, published 1888 2nd edition published 1907 1934 edition

Description written: July 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 2003 Revised: Jan 2004, SR

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.