

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CLIFFORD MANOR

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Name: CLIFFORD MANOR

County: Warwickshire

District: Stratford-on-Avon (District Authority)

Parish: Clifford Chambers and Milcote

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.164813
Longitude: -1.7091948
National Grid Reference: SP 19988 51878
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001188
Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

Details

Early C20 arts and crafts gardens attributed to Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Clifford was given to Gloucester Abbey c 1099 by Roger de Busli, the revenues of the property being used to support the monastic chamberlain (VCH). The abbey established a grange at Clifford Chambers, and in the late C15 or early C16 a timber-framed farmhouse was constructed (Tyack 1994). In the early C16 the manor was let to William Rainsford. At the Dissolution the property passed to the Crown, the Rainsfords continuing as tenants until 1562 when it was purchased by Charles Rainsford. Following the death of Charles Rainsford in 1578 Clifford Chambers passed to his son, Hercules (d 1583), and subsequently to his grandson, Henry (d 1622). Henry Rainsford's grandson, also Henry, supported the Crown in the Civil War and suffered heavy financial penalties in 1646 which led, in 1649, to the sale of the manor to a sitting tenant, Job Dighton. Dighton died in 1659 leaving Clifford Chambers to his second son, Henry (d 1687). The property remained in the Dighton family until 1807 when Henry Dighton's grandson, Lister, died without issue. The manor was inherited by Lister Dighton's nephew, Arthur Annesley, Rector of Clifford Chambers. At the Rev Annesley's death in 1845 the estate passed to his children, who in 1869 sold it to James Roberts West of neighbouring Alscot Park (qv). In 1890 Arthur Annesley's grandson, the Rev Francis Annesley, bought back the manor house, and in 1903 sold it to John Gratrix. Tudor Owen was employed to remodel the house in 1903-9. In 1909 the house was sold to Kathleen Wills, daughter of Sir Frederick Wills. With her first husband, Dr Edward Douty, Kathleen Wills made extensive alterations to the house and gardens in 1909-11, and repurchased much of the land originally associated with the house. Douty died in 1911, and his widow subsequently married Lt Col G B Rees-Mogg. In 1918 the house was seriously damaged by fire; Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) was commissioned to undertake the reinstatement. Further changes were made to the gardens which have been attributed jointly to Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) (Brown 1982). This work was described in *Country Life* (1928). When Mrs Rees-Mogg died in 1949 the estate was divided, the manor house being sold to Mr C Bradshaw, who c 1951 sold it on to Major J P P Taylor. Clifford Manor has changed hands several times in the mid and late C20 (CL 1951, 1971, 1986), and today (2000) remains in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

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LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Clifford Manor is situated at the south-east end of the single street which constitutes the village of Clifford Chambers, c 2km south of Stratford-upon-Avon. Clifford Chambers was situated in Gloucestershire until 1931, in which year it was transferred to Warwickshire. The c 3ha site comprises formal gardens, orchards and pools, and is bounded to the north-east by the River Stour. To the north-west the site is enclosed by a stone wall c 2.5m high which separates the pleasure grounds from the village street, while to the south-west hedges separate the site from a public footpath. To the south-east the site adjoins agricultural land. The site is generally level, with a slight slope towards the River Stour to the east and south.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Clifford Manor is approached from the village street of Clifford Chambers to the north-west. The entrance is marked by a pair of C18 stone piers (listed grade II) surmounted by ball finials set in the stone boundary wall; the gateway forms a terminating feature to the village street. The piers support a pair of wrought-iron gates which give access to a formal gravelled drive which extends c 80m south-east to reach a gravelled forecourt below the north-west facade of the house. The north-east and south-west corners of the forecourt are marked by a pair of C19 urns on pedestals.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Clifford Manor (listed grade II*) stands on a level site to the south-west of the River Stour. The house is today (2000) approximately L-shaped on plan, with an entrance wing facing the village to the north-west and a north-east wing extending at right-angles to the entrance wing. A timbered south-east wing of medieval origin, parallel to the entrance wing, was rebuilt by Lutyens in 1918-19, and was demolished c 1950 (Tyack 1994).

The early C18 two-storey entrance facade is constructed in brick under a hipped stone-tile roof, with projecting cross wings to the north-east and south-west. A centrepiece containing the front door below an ornamental niche is surmounted by a shallow pediment. The facade is lit by tall sash windows, with a pair of oeil-de-boeuf flanking the centrepiece on the first floor; stone quoins and a string course articulate the facade. The C18 facade concealed medieval timber construction; the north-west wing was restored by Lutyens in 1918-19 following extensive internal damage by fire. The north-east cross wing is similarly of C16 or C17 rendered timber construction under a tile roof; it was also restored by Lutyens in the early C20. The demolished south-east wing was of exposed half-timbered construction under a stone-tile roof, and comprised three storeys and an attic. The wing originated as the C15 monastic grange, and was entirely rebuilt and extended by Lutyens in 1918-19. Lutyens' proposal for a chapel linked to the north-east corner of the house by cloisters was not implemented (SBTRO).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The formal and informal gardens lie to the north-west, west and south of the house. The area to the north-west is crossed from north-west to south-east by the drive. The drive is flanked to the south-west and north-east by simple lawns with mixed borders to the north-west. To the north-east an early C18 brick wall screens the buildings of the stables, while a similar brick wall to the south-west screens a paddock. A small timber door at the south-west corner of the forecourt gives access to the paddock. On a lawn to the north-east of the house is a mature mulberry tree said to be c 350 years old (Bagenal 1914). An early C20 photograph (Holme 1908) shows a rustic tree house designed by Tudor Owen and described as 'an amusing eccentricity' in this tree.

From the forecourt a gravel walk extends south-west for c 30m to reach a shallow flight of stone steps which ascends to an C18 wrought-iron gate supported by a pair of contemporary rusticated stone piers surmounted by pineapple finials. Beyond this gate a stone-flagged walk flanked by mixed borders extends c 15m to an early C20 single-storey brick summerhouse. This was designed in an early C18 style by Dr Edward Douty in 1911 (CL 1928). A niche above the door contains a statue carved by Alec Miller (ibid) while the building is lit by tall sash windows and has stone ornamentation including quoins under a pyramid stone-tiled roof. To the south-east of the summerhouse is a rectangular lawn enclosed to the south-west by an early C20 brick wall which extends c 80m south-south-east to a pair of early C20 timber gates supported on rusticated piers with vase finials. The wall, which is articulated by brick piers which formerly supported urn and vase finials (missing, 2000), was designed by Douty in 1911. The lawn is enclosed to the north-west by a brick wall which screens the summerhouse walk. An open entrance, approached by a shallow flight of stone steps immediately north-east of the summerhouse gates, also leads to the south-west lawn. Below the south-west facade of the house a formal garden is partly enclosed by early C20 low stone walls and yew hedges. Early C20 photographs show the entrances to the garden marked by pairs of brick piers supporting single rustic-timber horizontal beams; these were removed c 1918 as part of Lutyens' improvements. The garden is laid out with geometric lawns

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and flower beds separated by stone-flagged walks which converge on a centrally placed stone sundial. To the north-east of this garden an C18 gateway set in a stone wall and supported by stone piers surmounted by ball finials leads to a flight of stone steps which descends to a stone-flagged terrace, formerly a courtyard enclosed to the south-east by Lutyens's early C20 half-timbered range. Early C20 photographs show this courtyard ornamented with a carved stone well-head (*ibid*) and a timber dovecote. To the south of the courtyard an approximately square lawn is enclosed to the south-east by a yew hedge which extends c 60m from north-east to south-west, parallel to the site of the south-east wing. At the centre of the south lawn is a circular stone-edged pool flanked by four symmetrically arranged clipped box domes.

Below the yew hedge a grass slope and a flight of stone steps flanked by a pair of Irish yews descend to a grass terrace which extends c 60m from north-east to south-west. The terrace is retained by a drystone wall, below which is a mixed border. The south-east terraces overlook a pool which forms part of a medieval moat c 50m south-east of the house. Approximately L-shaped on plan, the moat is fed by the River Stour c 200m south-east of the house, with an outflow c 70m east-south-east of the house. The moat and the river enclose an approximately triangular island which is approached from the north-west by a footbridge. The island is laid to grass planted with scattered trees and shrubs. To the south the moat and island are screened by early C20 woodland, while at the southern corner of the site there is a further, early C20 brick and stone summerhouse under a pyramid tiled roof.

Sir Robert Atkyns noted that Richard Dighton (inherited 1687) was possessed of a 'pleasant seat with delightful gardens on the River Stour' (Atkyns, quoted in CL 1928). The form of the early C18 gardens, presumably contemporary with the rebuilding of the north-west wing, is not known. By the mid C19 gardens were concentrated to the north-west of the house, with an orchard to the south-east (OS 1886); the 'delicious old garden' was described by Miss Kingsley in the *English Illustrated Magazine* (1866). Formal gardens were laid out around the house by Tudor Owen working for John Gratrix between 1903 and 1909. Dr and Mrs Douty made changes to these gardens between 1909 and 1911, including constructing the summerhouse south-west of the house (Bagenal 1914). Further early C20 development of the gardens including the construction of the south-east terraces overlooking the moat and the refinement of the formal gardens immediately south-west of the house is attributed to Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll in 1918-19 (Brown 1982). No planting plans by Jekyll have survived.

KITCHEN GARDEN Early C20 kitchen gardens and glasshouses were created adjacent to Manor Cottages c 80m north of the house (outside the site here registered). An orchard shown immediately to the east of the south-east wing (OS 1914) was removed as part of Lutyens' improvements in 1918-19. The Home Farm (excluded from the site here registered), in separate private ownership since the mid C20, lies c 45m north-north-east of the house.

REFERENCES

R Atkyns, *The ancient and present state of Glostershire* (1712) *English Illustrated Magazine* (1866) [quoted in Bagenal 1914, p 91] C Holme, *Gardens of England in the Midland and Eastern Counties* (1908), p 25, pl 37 P H Bagenal, *Clifford Manor* (1914), pp 76, 89-91 *Country Life*, 64 (4 August 1928), pp 168-75; (11 August 1928), pp 200-7; 109 (18 May 1951), supplement; 149 (29 April 1971), supplement p 9; 180 (30 October 1986), supplement *Victoria History of the County of Gloucestershire VI*, (1965), pp 209-10 N Pevsner and A Wedgewood, *The Buildings of England: Warwickshire* (1966), p 234 P Reid, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses II*, (1980), p 137 J Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* (1982), p 173 G Tyack, *Warwickshire Country Houses* (1994), p 238

Maps OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1831 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1903 3rd edition published 1913 1922 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886 2nd edition published 1914

Illustrations W Quartermain, entrance facade of Clifford Manor, c 1900 [reproduced in Bagenal 1914] Early C20 photographs [in Bagenal 1914]

Archival items E L Lutyens, Plans for the rebuilding of Clifford Manor, 1918-20 (DR436/33), (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office) Sale particulars, 1989 (NMR)

Description written: June 2000 Amended: July 2000, September 2000 Register Inspector: JML Edited: December 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.