

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

OWLPEN MANOR

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**OWLPEN MANOR**

Name:	OWLPEN MANOR
County:	Gloucestershire
District:	Stroud (District Authority)
Parish:	Owlpen
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.683741 Longitude: -2.2899781 National Grid Reference: ST 80049 98371 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000776 Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

## Details

Terraced garden possibly of c 1600, with hard landscaping of c 1730, associated with a manor house.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Owlpen was a possession of the de Olepenne family. It was carried in marriage by the heiress Margery de Olepenne, at a date after 1464, to Thomas Daunt; it may have been this marriage which led to the construction of the earliest phase of the present house. It was either Thomas' son Christopher (d 1542), or perhaps more probably Christopher's son Thomas (d 1574), who rebuilt the surviving hall block, while the third main element of the house, the ashlar west wing, was added by a later Thomas Daunt (d 1621). It may also have been in the time of the last that the garden terraces were formed. From the late C16 the Daunts acquired extensive Irish estates, and Owlpen's importance was greatly reduced. In 1719, however, Thomas Daunt (V) refurbished the house and in the early 1720s did hard landscaping work in the terraced garden. He died in 1749 and was succeeded by his son Thomas (VI), after whose death in 1777 Owlpen was unoccupied and fell into decay. Mary, the great niece of Thomas (VI), inherited in 1803 and in 1815 married Thomas Stoughton. They later built a new mansion, Owlpen House, nearby, using the Manor's gardens for picnics. The old house continued to decay until, after the death of Mrs Rose Trent-Stoughton in 1924, her trustees sold it to Norman Jewson, an architect sympathetic to the aims of the Cotswold Arts and Crafts movement. Over the following year he restored the house, before selling it in 1927 to a new owner. It remains (1999) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The hamlet of Owlpen is on an unclassified road 500m east of Uley. Uley itself is on the B4066, 3km east of Dursley. Owlpen Manor stands on the east side of Fiery Lane, to the south of Owlpen church, on the north side of a small valley down which the Manor's terraced garden descends and from which there are views south to the wooded hills on the far side of the combe (or 'bottom', to use the local term). Rising steeply immediately behind (north of) Owlpen is Owlpen Wood. The area here registered is c 2ha.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The approach drive to the Manor departs from Fiery Lane to the west, and runs along the north side of the church before ending at the car park which adjoins the estate office. Another drive, which formerly connected

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*OWLPEN MANOR*

Owlpen Manor and Owlpen House, approaches from a gate on an unclassified road c 1km east of the Manor. This is c 2km south of Nailsworth.

Until the 1980s the gateway at the bottom of the garden terraces opened onto a track (now grassed over and incorporated in the garden) from Fiery Lane to Owlpen Mill.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Owlpen Manor (listed grade I) is an L-plan building of several phases, all in Cotswold limestone and with a roof of Cotswold slates. It faces south over the garden, to which each of the house's three main component parts presents a gable. At the centre is the mid C16 hall block. To the right (east) is the C15 wing, refronted and remodelled after 1719, while to the left is the ashlar wing added in 1616 with its full-height bay window rising through three storeys. After Norman Jewson bought the house in 1925 he restored it according to the principles of the Cotswold Craft revival.

Some 50m east of the manor is a late C15 barn (listed grade II) of random rubble limestone and with a limestone slate roof, in the C18 and C19 a cider mill and now the estate office and a restaurant.

Immediately north of the Manor, outside the registered area, is the churchyard of Holy Cross church (listed grade II), rebuilt and enlarged in 1828-30. The church rises behind the Manor, and is an important element of the view of Owlpen from the south. Owlpen House stood 1km east of the Manor, outside the registered area. It was built in the 1840s, and set in a landscaped park. It was demolished in 1957.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUND** Against the east range of the Manor is a roughly square, stone-walled forecourt, lawned and crossed by a flagged path connecting a gate in the east wall with the door into the east range. East of the forecourt, extending to the estate office, is a gravelled car park.

The Manor occupies the north-east part of a roughly rectangular compartment 52m long from north to south, and broadening in width from 31.5m at its north end to 36m at its south. This is largely surrounded by rubble-stone walls, in part capped (eg on the west side) with ashlar copings. The ground drops fairly steeply from north to south via five terraces of differing width and height, separated by grass ramps. The first, northernmost terrace is c 3m wide, and stands against the 2.5m high wall which separates garden and churchyard. Access between the two is via a doorway with a ?late C19 wrought-iron gate. From this gate an axial path runs south, down the first three terraces (descended via stone steps) and alongside the west gable of the house. The second terrace is 1m below the first, and is c 7m wide. Here the axial path is lined with pleached limes and hornbeams, and there is a small formal garden at the east end of the terrace adjoining the small courtyard in the north-west angle of the Manor. The third terrace, 1m below the second, is c 11m wide, and extends west from the west end of the house. Rows of yews run along the north and south sides of the terrace, the pair at the westernmost end mature and the rest replacements of c 1975.

The fourth terrace is 3m below the third, is c 16.5m wide and extends the full width of the compartment across the south front of the house. At its west end is a small, stone, two-storey building (listed grade II) of the C17, now a cottage but referred to in early C18 accounts (GRO) as the summerhouse. A door opens north onto the third terrace, while facing east is a ground-floor loggia, now glazed. Against the east side of the summerhouse is the Yew Parlour (at various times known as the 'Green Drawing Room', 'Ballroom', 'Dancing Floor', or 'Wilderness'), a rectangular compartment of clipped yew trees internally c 9m x 6m. East of this, extending along the south front of the house, is a formal, quartered, box-hedged parterre garden of 1980 and later. This incorporates four yew trees, intended to replace mature specimens felled in the mid C20. At the south-east corner of this terrace is a mature yew tree. Running through the centre of the parterre garden is the axial path which runs from the centre of the south side of the house south to the gateway on the south boundary of the garden compartment. The fifth terrace, 1m below the fourth, is c 7m wide. Either side of the axial path are groups of four yews, planted c 1980. At the south end of the axial path, on top of the 1.5m high terrace wall of rough stone which defines the south end of the garden compartment, is a gateway with ashlar piers with three fielded panels to front and rear and ball finials. From the gateway a flight of semicircular stone steps (all gateway features listed grade II) descends to the narrow streamside lawn. Until the 1980s a track ran along here, connecting Fiery Lane with Owlpen Mill.

A late C20 stone footbridge leads across the Ewelme Brook (the boundary of the registered area) to a terrace and viewing platform, also late C20, giving views back to the Manor and church group.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*OWLPEN MANOR*

The date of the terraces is not known, although an early C17 one, broadly contemporary with the building of the west wing, is a possibility. Accounts (GRO) record the construction in 1719 and the 1720s of the gates at the bottom of the garden, the palisades which flanked them (they or successors shown in CL 1906), steps, walls, and copings. Most of the outside yews shown in early and mid C20 Country Life photographs, presumably planted and cultivated in the C17 or early C18 as relatively small clipped cones, twists, and so forth, were felled c 1955 and replaced. The gardens became well known after a 1906 Country Life article by Avray Tipping, and those who visited Owlpen and wrote about it included Vita Sackville-West, Gertrude Jekyll, and Geoffrey Jellicoe. A rich vein of symbolic interpretation which developed about the garden in the C20 (the twelve yews of the Yew Parlour representing the twelve Apostles, for instance) seems to have no historical basis.

KITCHEN GARDEN South-east of the house, on the sloping ground running down to the Ewelme Brook, is an irregularly shaped but roughly semicircular kitchen garden with 1.5m high rubble-stone walls on its east, west, and north sides. The northern half of the garden, roughly quartered by gravelled paths edged by stone slates, is cultivated while the southern half contains fruit trees.

Immediately beyond the south-east corner of the kitchen garden is a three-storey stone mill (listed grade II), now a house. The present structure, of three storeys surmounted by a lead cupola and lantern, is largely the product of a rebuilding of the late 1720s. East of it is a mill pool.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 20 (6 October 1906), pp 486-92; 110 (2 November 1951), pp 1462-5; (9 November 1951), pp 1544-7; no 43 (28 October 2000), pp 106-11 G Jekyll and W Weaver, *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (1914 edn) J C Shepherd and G A Jellicoe, *Gardens and Design* (1927) *The Architectural Forum* (August 1927), p 185 D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (2nd edn 1979), pp 354-5 N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume One, 1500-1660* (1989), pp 142-4 Owlpen Manor, guidebook, (1997 edn)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881-2, published 1886

Archival items Plans and accounts by Thomas Daunt, 1719-39 (D979a E3, E6-8), (Gloucestershire Record Office)

Description written: June 1999 Amended: May 2001 Register Inspector: PAS 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.