

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

STONEHURST

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

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STONEHURST

Name: STONEHURST

County: West Sussex

District: Mid Sussex (District Authority)

Parish: Ardingly

County: West Sussex

District: Mid Sussex (District Authority)

Parish: West Hoathly

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.070220
Longitude: -0.077292157
National Grid Reference: TQ 34807 31857
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000326
Date first listed: 01-Aug-1988

Details

Gardens and pleasure grounds laid out in 1907 by Thomas H Mawson, assisted by the architect Norman Searle.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Stonehurst, a new country house and gardens was laid out on the site of an earlier farm, Stone Farm. Part of this earlier estate included two mills, Corn Mill and Stone Mill which were retained, together with the Mill Cottages set next to the mill ponds. John Stewart commissioned Thomas H Mawson (1861-1933) to design the gardens in 1907, Norman Searle being responsible for the architectural details. Mawson's scheme made use of the mill ponds and exploited the valley setting and existing woodlands in the ornamental pleasure grounds. The site remains (2003) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Stonehurst lies some 11km south of East Grinstead and 3km south-west of the village of West Hoathly, directly to the east of Wakehurst Place (q.v.), in the Sussex weald. The western site boundary is formed by Ardingly Road/Selsfield Road (B2028); on all other boundaries the site adjoins farmland or woodland. Stonehurst commands extensive views from the north-east to south-east, standing on the edge of the steep-sided Ouse valley of the Cob Brook. The pleasure grounds and estate woodland extend to 80ha, and exploit the confluence of the Cob Brook and a tributary to the north-east.. The gardens are set on the east-facing valley slopes, and extend north to south parallel to Ardingly Road. The pleasure grounds, set out on the slopes below the house which run down to the Cob Brook, are orientated north/south along the valley and along the north-east valley associated with its tributary.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are two entrances to Stonehurst, both marked by lodges which are equidistant from the house. North Lodge is situated directly 100m north of the house on Ardingly Road and South Lodge is 100m to the south. Drives from the lodges lead into a forecourt which runs the full length of the west front of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Stonehurst, a substantial house, completed c1910, was built by Norman Searle for John Stewart, on the site of an earlier building, Stone Farm. The large building is built of brick and weather-tiles with slate roofs and is principally two storeys with attics. Photographs (c 1920s) show a conservatory at the south end of the building. The house was originally topped by a large multi-stage tower with a balcony which would have provided extensive views over the surrounding landscape; the tower has since been taken down.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A series of formal, enclosed, brick-walled gardens lie to the north of the house, the picturesque roof-line of the garages and stables being visible over the western garden wall. The garden nearest to the house is laid out as a bowling green/croquet lawn. This is separated and screened by a pergola with brick and tile pillars, from an enclosed garden to the north. This was a rose garden which was remodelled to house a swimming pool. The pergola leads to two garden buildings; at its eastern end there is a copper-domed observatory and at the western end, a loggia and dressing rooms. Further to the north, beyond the end wall of the formal gardens, a door in the garden wall leads through to a cross-walk running along the side of a levelled lawn to a viewing bastion situated at its eastern end. The lawn is surrounded by low brick walls and in Mawson's scheme was designed as a tennis court.

On the east front of the house a brick-paved terrace over 50m long is set between a pair of tea chalets, set symmetrically on either side of the house. The formal scheme continues with two sets of stone steps, one on the north side of the terrace and the other on the south leading down to a steep, sloping lawn, set out with groups of shrubs. From the lawn a series of gravel walks leads out into the extensive pleasure grounds.

Directly beyond the east lawn the pleasure grounds lead through an extensive rock garden set out across the valley, with flights of steps giving access down both valley sides. A series of parallel walks link up with one another and exploit the valley slopes, passing under great rock outcrops and along rocky cliffs. The valley slopes are planted with a variety of ornamental shrubs set into the mature canopy of the pre-existing woodlands of Stone Farm. The stream flowing to join the Cob Brook from the north-east feeds a series of ornamental ponds, pools and waterfalls (many designed to be viewed from the house), and then issues out into a lake set at its confluence of the two watercourses. At the southern end of the lake stand the original Mill Cottages. To the north-east is a decorative house, 'Many Waters', built at the same time as Stonehurst and intended as a focal feature in the pleasure grounds.

Chiddingly Wood lies on the east and south side of the two valleys, to the north of the lakes. Within this woodland there are many natural, rocky outcrops, for a long-time a tourist attraction, the Great-upon-Little Stone being particularly famous in topographical accounts of the Weald (eg Cobbett 1853). On the summit of the west facing slopes which look directly onto Stonehurst a central area of land was left open and unplanted (OS 1910). Extensive plantations of Douglas Fir date from c 1910 and are planted amongst oak dating from c 1855 (ring counts, see Inspector's Report, 1988). There are significant specimen conifers throughout the pleasure grounds.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled kitchen gardens are situated directly to the south of the house. They are reached by a path which leads southwards off the top terrace then through an arch in the castellated, brick north wall. The area is walled on three sides and has an open octagonal shelter at one of its corners. It is now let to a commercial nursery.

REFERENCES

W Cobbett, *Rural Rides* (1853) *Building News*, 95 (1908), pp13, 29, 45 Inspector's Report: Stonehurst, (Debois Landscape Survey Group 1988)

Maps Tithe map for West Hoathly parish, 1841 (West Sussex County Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1879 OS 25" to 1 mile: 3rd edition published 1910

Archival Items Knight Frank & Rutley, Sale particulars, 1926 (West Sussex County Record Office) Photographs, c1920s [copies on EH file]

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Description written: August 1998 Amended: March 2000 (KC) December 2003 (CAA) Edited: December 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.