

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE ROSE GARDEN, BUSHEY

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

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Name:	THE ROSE GARDEN, BUSHEY
County:	Hertfordshire
District:	Hertsmere (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.644112 Longitude: -0.36060679 National Grid Reference: TQ 13532 95196 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001649 Date first listed: 04-Nov-2002

Details

An early C20 formal garden designed by T H Mawson for Sir Hubert von Herkomer RA.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hubert von Herkomer (1849-1914, knighted 1907), who had been born in Waal, near Landsberg am Lech and spent his early childhood (1851-7) in Cleveland, Ohio, moved to live at Bushey, Hertfordshire in 1873. This move was inspired partly by the proximity of one of his patrons, C E Fry. Ten years later, in 1883, a neighbour, Eccleston Gibb, invited Herkomer to tutor his ward, Annie Salter. Herkomer persuaded Gibb to found a school of art on a site immediately adjacent to Gibb's home, The Cloisters, in Bushey. This school was intended to allow Herkomer to put into practice his philosophy of art education, and also provide an education for women who wished to pursue a career as an artist (Longman 1999). The school, known as the Herkomer School of Art, occupied the east side of an irregularly shaped plot extending north from High Street. To the west of the buildings was an area of garden, while to the north there was a separate, rectangular garden enclosure (OS 1898; Sale plan, 1912). The School developed a high reputation and included many eminent artists such as Sir William Nicholson (1872-1949), Algernon Talmage, and Lucy Kemp-Welch among its students. Herkomer, who had been appointed Slade Professor of Art at Oxford in 1885, continued as Principal of the School until 1904, when he retired. Lucy Kemp-Welch reopened the School under her own name the following year and it continued to function in the original buildings until 1912, when it moved to new premises in Rudolph Road, Bushey. The property was initially offered for sale, but was immediately acquired by Herkomer, who demolished the buildings.

In 1886, Herkomer had commissioned designs for a new house from the American architect H H Richardson (d 1886). This house, called Lululaund after Herkomer's second wife, Lulu Griffiths, was constructed on a site which adjoined the rear of the Art School premises (OS 1898; CL 1973). Having acquired the site of the School, Herkomer wished to incorporate it into his garden.

In 1912, the landscape architect Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) was looking for suitable studio premises near London, and was informed that the School of Art at Bushey had been closed. Mawson's enquiry to Herkomer regarding the school buildings (which had already been demolished), led to an invitation from Herkomer to advise on the design of a rose garden which he

wished to lay out on the site (Mawson 1927). In his autobiography, Mawson describes visiting Herkomer at Lululaund and discussing the design of the garden with the artist:

My famous client proposed at once that we should go into the garden and view the site of the proposed rose garden, which was covered from end to end with old building material. However, the character and extent of the site were easy to grasp, as were the essential features which should dominate its design. The garden was to be separated from the kitchen garden by a brick-built pergola, with a handsome garden pavilion at one end. The centre of the panel rose garden was to be sunk two feet, with a fountain in the centre, and considerable spaces of ground were to be planted as foils against adjoining properties. (Mawson 1927)

The rose garden was constructed according to Mawson's scheme, and by way of fee, Herkomer offered to paint Mawson's portrait; this was reproduced as the frontispiece to Mawson's autobiography (ibid). Mawson regarded the commission as significant within the context of his career, and commented that Herkomer was 'the most versatile man I ever met', and that during their short acquaintance, 'we were drawn closely together' (ibid).

When Herkomer died in 1914, his third wife, Margaret, Lady Herkomer, sister of his second wife, Lulu Griffiths, moved out of Lululaund to another property nearby. The house was requisitioned during the First World War, and subsequently remained largely unoccupied (CL 1939). During the 1920s and 1930s the surrounding estate was gradually broken-up and sold for development. Lady Herkomer died in 1934, and the trustees of the Herkomer Estate offered the rose garden and kitchen garden to Bushey Urban District Council. In 1937 the rose garden was transferred to the ownership of the Council. Lululaund was almost completely demolished in 1939 (CL 1939; B Wood pers comm, 2002), with only a remnant surviving to become the frontage of a Royal British Legion Club. Today (2002), the rose garden and former kitchen garden remain municipal property.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Rose Garden is situated to the north-east of the A411, High Street in the centre of Bushey, c 75m north-west of the junction of High Street and Melbourne Road. The c 0.5ha site is bounded to the south-west by the High Street, from which it is separated by a C19 stock-brick wall c 2m high. To the north-west the site adjoins the C19 United Reformed church, the premises of which are bounded by brick walls, and a late C20 development of two-storey houses, from which it is divided by a clipped laurel hedge. To the south-east the Rose Garden adjoins the grounds of The Cloisters, a late C20 development which replaces a C19 villa, from which the gardens are separated by brick walls, while to the east the site adjoins the gardens of mid C20 houses which occupy the site of the gardens of Lululaund. These domestic gardens are separated from the site by C19 and early C20 brick walls and hedges, while to the north the site is separated from the gardens of mid C20 properties in Castle Close by beech hedges and fences. The site is generally level and well-screened from surrounding properties by shrubberies and boundary planting. There are views south-west across the golf course to the south-west of High Street, which occupies the grounds of Bushey House, a C19 mansion situated c 300m south-west of the site.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The Rose Garden is entered from High Street at a point c 100m north-west of the junction of High Street and Melbourne Road, and c 100m south-east of the junction of High Street and Koh-i-Noor Avenue. The entrance comprises a painted wrought-iron gate supported by brick piers under a tiled roof, which is set in the boundary wall at the western corner of the site. There is a further entrance to the site from Herkomer Road to the north-west, at a point c 95m east of the junction of Herkomer Road and Koh-i-Noor Avenue. Late C20 metal security gates lead to a tarmac walk flanked by rose borders which extends c 75m south-south-west to reach the body of the garden.

The early C20 entrance to the garden was situated at the eastern end of the pergola which separates the rose garden to the south from the kitchen garden to the north. The pergola was terminated to the east by a large, free-standing bronze relief of a female figure representing Lululaund (stolen 1976, B Wood pers comm, 2002), which served to screen a gateway in the boundary wall providing access to, and from, the gardens of Lululaund to the east.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The remnants of Lululaund (listed grade II*) are situated to the north-west of Melbourne Road, c 40m east of, and outside the site here registered. The surviving fragment of the house comprises a large entrance porch with a heavily battered plinth and a carved sandstone arch, flanked by a short, three-window range to the south. The building is constructed in Bavarian grey tufa with rock-faced red sandstone dressings which are lavishly carved with acanthus ornaments.

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The south range has a coped parapet, while the porch, which is the truncated base of a four-storey tower, is surmounted by a stepped parapet. Today (2002), the building serves as the frontage to a Royal British Legion Club.

Lululaund, named for Herkomer's second wife, Lulu Griffiths, was constructed between 1886 and 1894 with elevations designed by the American architect H H Richardson. The interior plan and the lavish ornamentation of the free Romanesque-style building were designed by Herkomer himself (CL 1939, 1973). Following Sir Hubert von Herkomer's death in 1914, the house was not occupied by the family, but was used occasionally by a variety of organisations, including the Bushey Film Corporation, which had grown from Herkomer's pioneering interest in cinematography (CL 1973). Having failed to persuade Bushey Urban District Council to accept the house for use as an arts centre, the developers of the estate demolished the bulk of the house, the only European work by H H Richardson, in 1939.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens are divided into two sections, with the formal rose garden situated to the south, adjacent to High Street, and an area of lawns and shrubberies to the north on the site of the early C20 kitchen garden. A brick-paved walk extends c 30m east-north-east from the High Street entrance to reach a flight of stone and brick steps which descends to the central, sunken area which forms the focal point of the formal garden. The walk is partly edged by low clipped box hedges, and is adjoined by areas of mature mixed shrubbery and specimen trees. Some 10m west of the steps descending to the sunken garden, the walk crosses a further brick-paved walk, the south-west section of four walks which form a square-plan outer walk surrounding the sunken garden. The outer sides of this square-plan walk are planted with clipped topiary yew hedges, while brick-paved walks lead from each angle of the square to a flight of brick and stone steps descending to the central sunken area. The walks leading east and west from the central sunken area are terminated by geometrical brick and stone paving which describe a semicircle. The approximately triangular spaces between the outer walk and the sunken garden are planted as rose beds. Photographs from the 1930s indicate that these beds were formerly edged with low box hedges and divided into small geometrical rose beds by grass paths; the beds were simplified in the late C20.

The central, sunken area of the garden is retained by low brick walls and is paved with a radiating pattern of stone flags, the interstices of which are paved in brick. The focal point of the garden is a fountain (dry, 2002; listed grade II) constructed in Bavarian grey tufa, which comprises a quatrefoil-shaped base, originally forming four semicircular basins but today planted as flower beds, which surround a central square-section pedestal flanked by four free-standing columns which support a cornice beneath a block top. The walks, sunken area, and fountain were designed by Thomas Mawson in 1912 for Sir Hubert von Herkomer as a formal rose garden; much of the surrounding shrubbery and specimen trees including variegated hollies and the box and yew hedges survive from Mawson's scheme. It has been suggested that the plan of the fountain and surrounding paving may reflect Buddhist symbolism (listed building description).

Walks leading north and south from the rose garden form a vista through the formal garden. The southern walk is flanked by mature mixed shrubbery and is terminated c 25m south of the fountain by a column (listed grade II) which stands on a slightly raised circular terrace surrounded by low brick walls. The terrace is paved with bricks laid in a radiating pattern, while the column itself is octagonal in section and is constructed in coursed brick and tiles under an ogival lead-covered cap. Designed in 1912 by Mawson, the column stands near the south-south-east corner of the site and commemorates the site of the entrance to Herkomer's School of Art which occupied this land between 1883 and 1904, succeeded by the Kemp-Welch School 1905-12. The north walk extends c 20m north of the fountain to reach a garden house (listed grade II) which itself forms the western termination of a pergola which encloses the north-east side of the rose garden. The garden house is square on plan with a gable on each facade, and is constructed in brick and roughcast under a tiled roof. The interior has a stone-flagged floor laid in a geometric pattern, a coved ceiling, and plasterwork panels. It formerly had a fireplace on its western wall which was served by a surviving brick chimney stack. The building is entered from the rose garden by an arched doorway which was formerly glazed. A similar arched doorway leads north to the former kitchen garden, while a further, square-headed doorway leads east to the pergola. The pergola itself comprises seven pairs of square-section brick piers which support a late C20 timber superstructure which replaces the slightly arched, early C20 timbers. The pergola is planted with ivy and climbing roses. The garden house and pergola were designed by Mawson in 1912; the pergola formed a link to the existing gardens associated with Lululaund to the east, the gateway being situated at the eastern end of the pergola, screened by a free-standing bronze relief (stolen 1976).

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To the north-east of the rose garden, and separated from it by the garden house and pergola, is an approximately rectangular area of lawn encircled by an elliptical, late C20 flagged walk. The lawn is adjoined to the north-east by mixed borders and a beech hedge, and to the south-east by further mixed borders, while to the north-west there is a laurel hedge and a group of mature pines and Douglas firs. At the northern corner of the lawn a pair of mature beech flanks the end of the tarmac walk leading to the northern or Herkomer Road entrance, while at the eastern corner a section of late C19 red sandstone Romanesque-style arcade has been re-erected to form an ornamental structure. This arcade originally formed part of the cloisters in the forecourt of the School of Art, sections of which were salvaged at its demolition in 1912 by Mrs Cridland, who formed them into a rose arbour in her garden at Bushey Heath. The fragments were discovered and re-erected in the Rose Garden in the 1990s. A carved stone Art Deco-style bird bath stands in the south-east border.

The lawn and borders occupy the site of an early C20 kitchen garden which appears to have formed part of Mawson's scheme of 1912. This kitchen garden itself took the place of an area of garden associated with the School of Art which comprised a rectangular walled enclosure with a perimeter walk (OS 1898).

REFERENCES

T H Mawson, *The Life and Work of an English Landscape Architect* (1927), pp 211-13 *Country Life*, 86 (16 December 1939), p 636; 153 (25 January 1973), pp 222-4; (1 February 1973), pp 280-1 N Pevsner and B Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire* (2nd edn 1977), pp 121-2 G Longman, *The Herkomer Art School (1883-1904) A Re-assessment* (1999)
Maps Valuable Freehold Property known as the Herkomer School of Art, Bushey, Herts, Sale plan, c 1912 (Bushey Museum)
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1898 2nd edition published 1914 1934 edition
Archival items Photographs of the Rose Garden, c 1930 (Bushey Museum)
Personal communication from Graham Saunders and Bryan Wood
Description written: September 2002 Amended: May 2004 Register Inspector: JML Edited: July 2004

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.