

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD

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

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Name:	LEIGHTON BROMSWOLD
County:	Cambridgeshire
District:	Huntingdonshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Leighton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.362853 Longitude: -0.36056899 National Grid Reference: TL 11732 75131 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000625 Date first listed: 16-Jan-1985

Details

Earthwork remains of an early C17 formal garden, laid out for a house of c 1605 which no longer survives.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Sir Gervaise Clifton purchased the manor of Leighton in the late C16 and began the construction of a new manor house in 1605 on a site to the south-east of the church, to designs by John Thorpe. At the same time he began the construction of an embanked formal garden and in 1616 added an impressive moated gatehouse to mark the entrance to the new house. A village plan dated 1680 shows the gatehouse with the manor standing to the south-east of it, on one side of a large walled court. By 1750 however the manor house had been demolished and the gardens abandoned, only the gatehouse surviving, to be converted into the vicarage house in 1904. The site is now (1999) in divided ownership, the gatehouse being a private dwelling and the area of earthworks used by the parish as a cricket field.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Leighton Bromswold lies c 2km to the north of the main A14, midway between Huntingdon to the east and Thrapston to the west. The site here registered, which measures c 190m x 130m, is located on flat land in the south-east corner of the village, which is itself set in a generally flat, open agricultural landscape. The boundary to the south-east, and the lower half of the south-west and north-east boundaries are composed of raised earthwork banks covered with trees. The upper half of the south-west boundary is defined by a track known as Church Lane running alongside the walled enclosure of the gatehouse garden, while the upper half of the north-east boundary is enclosed by a fence. The church lies to the north-west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The gatehouse, now known as Castle House, is entered from the west off Church Lane, past a modern (late C20) cottage beside the drive which is bordered to the south-east by a line of mature yew. The drive leads to a parking area, defined by a low brick wall, located to the north-west of the house. A footbridge over the moat leads to the entrance front. The cricket field to the south-east of Castle House is entered through a field gate from Church Lane.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Castle House (listed grade II*) is a red-brick and stone building with a tiled roof, sitting in the north-west half of the site here registered. The original gatehouse is rectangular in plan with a central carriageway and a square three-

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storey tower at each angle. The archway was blocked up during C17 alterations and in 1904 a porch was added to the south-west front and service rooms to the north-west. Castle House was formerly a vicarage and originally a gatehouse, built in 1616 by Sir Gervaise Clifton to designs by John Thorpe. It was altered into a dwelling in the mid C17, and underwent further modifications and additions in c 1904 by the Church Commissioners, reusing material from Stow Longa Manor House.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Garden areas lie within the moat surrounding Castle House, the dry arm to the south-west being developed as a sunken garden reached by steps. These gardens and the moat are themselves enclosed to the north-east and south-west by low brick walls. The date of origin of these features is not known. To the north-west, the remains of an avenue link the church to Castle House, the land to either side being grass, that to the north-east divided from the grounds of the House by a low red-brick wall.

A further red-brick wall divides the Castle House gardens from the cricket ground and pasture field to the south-east where the earthwork remains of the early C17 gardens, the manor house and village survive. The earthworks of the garden itself comprise a high terrace walk defining three sides of a rectangle, with prospect mounds at the two outer corners. Within this area a number of low rectilinear scarps and banks define former paths, while four shallow ponds lie towards the four corners. The banks are now (1999) covered with self-set trees and shrubs, whilst the enclosed grass area is partly grazed and partly managed as a cricket pitch.

REFERENCES

Roy Comm Hist Monuments of Engl Inventories: Huntingdonshire (1926), p 180 Victoria History of the County of Huntingdonshire III, (1936), pp 86(8 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the county of Huntingdon and Peterborough* (1968), p 282 Proc Cambridge Antiq Soc 67, (1977), pp 85-8

Maps Thomas Norton, Plan of the parish of Leighton, c 1680 (British Library Add MS 18030 B) Tithe map for Leighton Bromswold parish, 1839 (RO91), (Huntingdon Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1902 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1901

Archival items Plan of Sir Gervaise Clifton's House from a drawing by J Thorpe, c 1605 (Thorpe Collection, Sir John Soane Museum)

Description written: November 1999 Amended: December 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: January 2001

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.