

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

WARNHAM COURT

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

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Name:	WARNHAM COURT
County:	West Sussex
District:	Horsham (District Authority)
Parish:	Warnham
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.082845 Longitude: -0.34584569 National Grid Reference: TQ 15961 32804 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001413 Date first listed: 18-Aug-1999

Details

A garden of formal terraces and informal wooded pleasure grounds which was laid out from the early 1830s, developed in the mid and late C19 by the landscape designer Edward Milner and his son Henry, and later with a pinetum by Harry J Veitch. Extended with a wild garden in the early C20, the gardens are surrounded by a C19 park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The land forming the present Warnham Court estate was part of the manor of Hollands in the C18, which belonged in 1778 to the Rev Samuel Shuckford and to John Miller. In 1802, Shuckford's son-in-law, John Nichol, was recorded as owner with John Miller, but by 1828 the whole had passed to Henry Tredcroft who built the present house known as Warnham Court and established 'extensive and beautiful pleasure grounds' (Horsfield 1835). He died in or before 1844 and the estate was sold by Edward Tredcroft in 1855 to Sir John Henry Pelly Bt, who was probably the client for whom gardens were laid out in 1864 by Edward Milner. Pelly's son sold Warnham Court in 1865(6 to Charles Thomas Lucas, a partner in the building and contracting firm of Lucas Brothers, who extended the house and surrounding gardens. Charles Lucas died in 1895 and after the Second World War the estate was divided. The house and gardens were sold in 1947 to the London County Council, the Lucas family retaining the remainder. Under the LCC's successor, the London Borough of Lambeth, Warnham Court was run as a special school until its closure in 1997, although the property remains in Lambeth's ownership in June 1998. In c 1974, two compartments of the walled gardens and the former gardener's house were leased, then later purchased, and run as a nursery business. These compartments and the Wild Garden were sold again in 1995; a third walled kitchen garden was developed with a dwelling in 1992. The Pinetum and some 8ha of its adjacent parkland were transferred back to the Lucas family in 1998 and, together with the further surrounding parkland and farmland, remain in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Warnham Court is situated on the west side of the A24 and the town of Horsham, and to the immediate south-east of Warnham village. The c 107ha site, which comprises c 17ha of ornamental and kitchen gardens around the house and 90ha of parkland and farmland, rises gently from the east to the west boundary where it reaches a broad, low crest from where there are views southwards over the park and to the distant South

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Downs. The boundaries are mostly enclosed by agricultural fencing and abut roads or minor lanes along almost the entire estate perimeter: to the west, tree-fringed Bailing Hill continues north to meet Warnham's main village; to the east and south, Daux Hill and Robin Hood Lane form the respective boundaries. Gently undulating wooded farmland forms the wider setting except to the east where the built-up edge of Horsham extends to within 1km of the boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Warnham Court is from Bailing Hill in the north-west corner, at the North-West Lodge (listed grade II) which is shown on the OS 1st edition surveyed 1875-6 and which was probably designed by A W Blomfield in conjunction with his extensions to the house between 1866 and 1877 (Colvin 1978). A drive following a gentle curve 400m south-eastwards to the house is lined along its first 150m from the lodge by an avenue of mature horse chestnuts containing some mid to late C20 replacement trees. On reaching the principal, east-facing entrance front, the drive enters between stone piers into a rectangular forecourt enclosed by a stone wall with a balustrade. The principal front was served by a second approach (now a private road) in the mid C19, which entered at a lodge halfway along Daux Hill (known then as Dork's Hill) to the east. In 1899, the entrance to this drive was moved southwards to a new lodge (listed grade II*), built by A W Blomfield's son, Sir Arthur Blomfield, in a Tudor-Gothic style with a round-headed carriage arch with a room above and a two-storey lodge each side (VCH 1986).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Warnham Court stands centrally within the estate on a low crest with views south over the park and to the South Downs. The southern of the two blocks (the only part which is listed, at grade II) which form the present house is a stone-faced, two-storey building with an attic and shaped gables which although following an asymmetrical plan, has symmetrical facades to the west and south. It was built in 1829, in the Elizabethan style, by Henry Harrison (active in the 1820s and 1830s) for Henry Tredcroft. The southern portion of the attached northern block forms part of the large additions made by A W Blomfield between 1866 and 1877 and which included the stables and present tower (Colvin 1978). The riding school block was demolished and replaced by school buildings, which in turn have been demolished to make way for residential development.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Formal terraces extend south from the house, with informal gardens to the west and north. The immediate garden areas around the house, as shown on the OS 1st edition, were 'laid out principally by Milner in 1864 and having been since improved as occasion required by his scarcely less clever son' (Gardeners' Chronicle 1892), this description presumably referring to the landscape designer Edward Milner (1819-84) and his son Henry (c 1845-1906).

The south front overlooks a series of three descending grassed terraces which extend c 140m to the west and which are retained by grassed banks and connected by flights of stone steps. The second level of these, referred to in 1897 as the Grand Terrace (Gardener's Mag), is divided by an east to west balustrade which appears to be that shown on a print of 1835 (Horsfield 1835) and which formed the boundary of the formal gardens with the park until the late C19. The third, lowest level consists of a broad lawn, which was added as a tennis and croquet lawn by Lucas in 1892. Both these terraces continue westwards below the south wall of the adjacent walled kitchen garden, the Grand Terrace forming a linear walk lined with shrubbery against the wall and enclosed on its south side by a hedge, largely of yew. Below the walk, and opening off the west end of the former tennis lawn terrace, is a semicircular garden, added in 1892 as a rose garden, which is enclosed from the park by banks and islands of shrubbery. Westwards again from the walled garden, the Grand Terrace walk continues as a minor drive to an entrance on Bailing Hill, its extension to this point established by the late C19 as a conifer avenue (now gone) terminating in a garden feature. On the north side of the drive, between Bailing Hill and the walled gardens, gently rising slopes are laid out as a Wild Garden, with informally planted native and exotic trees, some recorded as rare on the Tree Register of the British Isles, underplanted with drifts of flowering shrubs and interwoven by grass paths and grassy glades of spring bulbs. Described as 'recently formed' in 1908, an open fronted pavilion 'formed with old oaken timbers and roof tiles ... covered with plants suitable for growing in such position' stands at the north edge of the garden (Gardener's Mag).

The west front of the house opens onto lawns dotted with occasional trees and with a circular stone tank. The lawns are enclosed on the west side by the east wall of the walled kitchen garden which has built against it a small, sunken, rockwork garden with an oblong pool; a stone summerhouse with a Horsham slate roof, dating from the early C20, stands adjacent. Northwards and north-eastwards, to the boundary with the main drive, the lawns are enclosed by mixed ornamental woodland with an

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understorey of shrubbery including rhododendrons, the woodland shown extending over this area in 1876 (OS 1st edition). It contains, north-west of the house, rockwork, now heavily overgrown, which was probably the site of an Alpine rockery described in 1892 (*Gardeners' Chronicle*) and an icehouse with a brick-lined chamber (100m north-west of the house). North of the house, a Pinetum extends from north-east of the main drive into the park. Laid out in 1880 'under the personal supervision of Harry J Veitch' (1840-1924, the owner of Veitch's nursery), its light woodland canopy contains mature conifers and deciduous species above a carpet of grass and bulbs and islands of mixed shrubbery.

PARK The park extends primarily east and south of the gardens. The ground to the north and east (outside the area here registered) which falls gently down to the public roads and Warnham Court Farm, and which was imparked for a period in the late C19 and early C20, has reverted to agricultural use and is currently (1998) under arable cultivation. The former parkland to the south-east of the present park (and outside the area here registered) is now severed from the main site by the A24 dual carriageway. To the south and east of the Court, the gently falling ground, referred to from 1898 as a deer park (OS 2nd edition), is laid largely to pasture and is well-furnished with a scatter of individual trees and clumps, of mixed ages and species including ornamental conifers, and with a number of small woods. Some 300m south of the house The Lake, now (1998) hidden from view by surrounding trees, formed the focus of a vista from the garden terraces (OS). The two adjacent c 4ha woods, Lake Plantation and Charlie's Wood, which are partly planted with commercial softwoods, were established during the late C19 southern expansion of the park. South of Charlie's Wood, the house 'Salmons' (formerly known as Roberts Cottages, listed grade II) stands on Robin Hood Lane.

A print of Warnham Court of c 1835 (Horsfield) shows the slopes south of the house laid out as parkland; by 1877 a park of some 68ha surrounded the house and gardens and by 1898 this had been extended northwards and southwards over former fields towards Bell Road and Robin Hood Lane. The north-east corner to Daux Hill (including the house known as Little Daux, listed grade II) was imparked by 1913 (OS), this last expansion also including land extending 350m south-east beyond the present park boundary, from Blomfield's new lodge to Warnham Mill (the latter demolished by the building of the A24 in the mid C20).

KITCHEN GARDEN A series of three walled gardens stand some 80m to the west of the house. The southernmost of these, abutting the north side of the walk extending from the Grand Terrace, contains a range of largely C20, now-derelict (1998) glasshouses. Adjacent to its north side is a second, double-cube, walled garden, laid out to a paddock and orchard trees. These two gardens probably form the kitchen garden referred to in 1865 (VCH 1986) and shown on the OS 1st edition surveyed 1875-6, the southernmost with extensive glass. Nursery House, the former gardener's cottage, stands in the north-west corner of the double-cube garden. It was built by Charles Lucas by 1897, along with the northernmost of the three gardens which is now (1998) in use as the private garden attached to a house built in 1992 against its north wall.

REFERENCES

T W Horsfield, *The History, Antiquities and Topography of Sussex* ii, (1835), pp 268-9 *The Gardening World* ii, (13 February 1886), pp 373-4 *Gardeners' Chronicle*, i (11 June 1892), p 760, fig 110; ii (28 September 1895), p 364; i (2 May 1896), pp 559-60 *Gardener's Magazine*, (21 August 1897), pp 517-20; (15 February 1908), pp 123-5 I Nairn and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Sussex* (1965), pp 38-43 H M Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* (1978), p 394 *Victoria History of the County of Sussex VI part ii*, (1986), pp 210-16 A Mitchell and V Schilling, *The Tree Register of The British Isles* (founded 1988)

Maps Tithe survey of Warnham, 1840 (West Sussex Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875-6, published 1880 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1913 1932 edition 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1875 3rd edition revised 1909, published 1912 1932 edition

Description written: May 1998 Amended: June 1999; June 2000 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: June 2000

Legal

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