

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

HAMMERWOOD PARK

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

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**HAMMERWOOD PARK**

Name:	HAMMERWOOD PARK
County:	East Sussex
District:	Wealden (District Authority)
Parish:	Forest Row
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.127998 Longitude: 0.056077738 National Grid Reference: TQ 43971 38534 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000306 Date first listed: 25-Mar-1987

## Details

A late C18 landscape park, possibly in part the work of the architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, with additional C19 and early C20 formal terraces and informal ornamental gardens.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Early deeds show that the land which became the Hammerwood estate was known in the C13 as 'The Bower'. In the mid C16 it was purchased by Hugh Botting who established an iron forge in 1588. In 1628 the estate became the property of the Payne family although they were not recorded as living in the house (known as The Bower) there until 1711, the Bottings apparently continuing to occupy it until towards the end of the C17. The Paynes remained in ownership throughout the C18 until in 1792 the estate was purchased by John Sperling, who commissioned Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the neo-classical architect later to forge a career in America, to build the present house, known as Hammerwood Lodge. Sperling also began the improvements to the landscape which were probably continued by the banker, Magens Dorrien Magens, when he acquired the estate in 1795. In the mid 1860s, the estate was sold to another banker, Oswald Augustus Smith (cousin to Augustus Smith, the founder of Tresco gardens in the Isles of Scilly, qv). He enlarged the house and was probably also responsible for laying out the ornamental gardens to the east of the house. From 1901, the estate was owned by the Rev George Ferris Whidborne until the sale of the outer parts in 1918 and the remainder, including the house, in 1921. The house and 133ha of park and woodland were bought by Lt Col Stephen Hungerford Pollen and renamed Hammerwood Park. These passed to the Kirwan Taylor family in the 1930s and, after wartime use and an unsuccessful attempt at division into apartments, the estate and house were bought in 1973 by the rock band, Led Zeppelin. Further fragmentation of the estate's park and woodland took place after 1976 until the house and the immediate parkland and gardens were purchased by David Pinnegar in 1982. The entire registered site remains (1998) in a number of private ownerships.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Hammerwood Park lies c 0.8km to the south of the A264 East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells road, about 3km west of East Grinstead. The registered site comprises c 5ha of formal terrace and pleasure gardens surrounding the house and a further 75ha of parkland and woodland lying largely to the south. Hammerwood

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
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Park straddles the broad northern and southern slopes of a valley containing a small, west to east-flowing stream. A further small stream flows northwards into the central valley, the resulting landform of ridges and valleys creating an enclosed bowl with extensive, principal views focused on the horizon on Cansiron Lane, some 2km away to the south. On the north side of the central valley, the site is largely bounded by woodland: Stubbs and Wet Wood to the west, Steadleaze Wood to the north and Hammer Wood to the east. The hamlet of Hammerwood lies at the north-west corner of the site. Beyond the rising southern slopes of the valley the parkland merges into a landscape of farmland and small woodlands.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The present approach to Hammerwood Park is from the eastern edge of the hamlet of Hammerwood. The drive enters the site at the north-west corner, to the south of a pond and follows a line south-eastwards between the north edge of Stubbs Wood and the cricket ground, laid out in the early C20, to the north. Some 280m from the site boundary, a short spur of drive heads southwards down the valley side before turning eastwards and passing through the gate piers and gates (hung by the present owners) to reach the large gravelled forecourt on the north-west side of the house. This route was adopted as the principal approach in the mid 1860s when the house was enlarged. During the C18 and early C19, the drive entered at the extreme south-west corner, beside Dog Gate Lodge, swung eastwards for c 250m and then turned north to cross both the stream and the feeder channel to the lake before climbing the slope of the park to the south front of the house (OS drawing, 1808). Both the stone bridge over the feeder channel, of which the south-west parapet survives, and the route of the drive, which survives as a fenced track up the northern valley slope, were part of the landscape laid out in the late C18 in association with the new house. There were also two secondary entrance drives to the house, from the north-west and north-east, now gone but shown on the Tithe map of 1841.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Hammerwood Park (listed grade I) is the focus of its park landscape. It sits on the upper, northern slopes of the bowl-like landform, on a promontory between two tiny, south-flowing streams, and commands an arc of extensive views from south-west to south-east. The present house was built as a hunting lodge by Benjamin Henry Latrobe (1764-1820) and is one of only two of his surviving domestic houses in England. It was built around the nucleus of a previous house on the site, thought to have been erected in 1693 and known by the early C18 as The Bower. The present house consists of a large, three-storey central block flanked by two two-storey wings, these both terminating on their south front in a temple portico detailed with four columns each supporting a plain pediment. Latrobe's original Hammerwood Lodge consisted of a two-storey central block with both wings probably single-storey, although a second storey was an early addition to the west wing. The house was gradually transformed into a mansion during the C19. The principal entrance was given its porch and moved to its present position on the north front as part of work in c 1864 by Samuel Sanders Teulon (1812-73) or perhaps by his brother, William Milford Teulon. The second storey to the east wing and the north-east servants' quarters wing were also built at this time (Blandford 1994).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The formal terraced gardens lie below the south front of the house with informal pleasure grounds to the north and east.

The south front opens onto a wide gravelled walk from which two central flights of stone steps lead down onto a series of grass terraces. The second, principal or South Terrace is bisected by an axial stone path, contains a central stone fountain basin and is flanked to the east and west by extensive rhododendron clumps. These upper terraces were constructed in the mid C19, probably in association with the remodelling of the house (*ibid*); they replaced the former sweep of parkland up to the frontage shown on maps up to the date of the Tithe map in 1841. In 1910, the principal terrace is shown laid out with island flower beds (*ibid*, pls). Further steps, the upper flight built in the 1990s, lead down through two more levels of terraces, the upper one bordered with remnants of a yew hedge, onto a broad lawn. This is enclosed on its south side by yew hedging in the form of a bastion. The lower terraces were added between 1910 and the early 1930s, when their banks were also more elaborately planted.

South and west of the terraces, informal, ornamental trees and shrubbery, largely established in the mid to late C20, separate the gardens from the park. The house is also enclosed to the north and north-west by mature tree and shrub cover including a number of large exotic conifers surviving from the more extensive planting shown on the OS 1st edition map surveyed 1873. Bracken Cottage and the Coach House, converted from the late C18 stables and the late C19 coach house, lie to the north of the ornamental woodland, 100m from the house.

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**HAMMERWOOD PARK**

To the east of the house, the banks of the upper terraces drop steeply to two further terraced areas which were constructed as tennis courts in the early C20. The upper level is now (1990s) planted as an informal shrubbery with a central sundial while the lower level is laid out as an Italian garden with a central stone fountain and seats arranged around the perimeter.

Immediately east of the Italian garden and running southwards along the western edge of Hammer Wood is the stream valley containing the Rhododendron and Water gardens. The tiny stream connects an upper pool with a lower pool (130m further south). Both pools are now (1990s) silted up and the gardens heavily overgrown, with a number of fallen trees remaining from the storm of 1987. The gardens were probably laid out by Oswald Augustus Smith in the 1860s; a photograph thought to date from c 1870 (Blandford 1994) shows them newly planted with specimen trees and gravelled paths. The path network is clearly shown on the OS map of 1873. A path cut through the undergrowth in the 1990s leads southwards down the stream valley to the footbridge, erected in the late C20 to replace an earlier bridge, which crosses the east end of the lake.

**PARK** Open parkland extends from the formal terraces southwards down to the lake and beyond it onto the rising slopes of the south side of the valley. The park seems to have been designed as a whole with the house and laid out to exploit the views to the surrounding landscape. It is likely that Latrobe was involved in its creation (Blandford 1994). The parkland north of the lake is laid to pasture and dotted with newly restored tree clumps (planted in the 1990s but to the pattern shown on the OS map of 1873). It is known as The Meadow and appears to have been created from previous woodland (shown on Gardner and Gream's map of 1795); field evidence and its appearance on the OS drawing of 1808 suggests that it was laid out soon after 1795 (ibid). Its trees, still shown on the OS 1st edition, were cleared in the 1950s for agricultural purposes. The Meadow is framed on the west side by the hard edge-line of Stubbs Wood. Its former C18 irregular edge, cut into to form glades and recesses for tree groups, is still clearly shown on the OS edition of 1910.

The lake is linear in shape and is heavily silted up, particularly at its western end around the island although significant areas of water have been established since 1994 (ibid, comparative pls). The lake is fed from a feeder channel running north of the tree-lined stream. It may have been formed from an existing lake associated with iron-working; it is not shown however on Gardner and Gream's map of 1795 but is clearly visible on the OS drawing of 1808.

South of the lake the parkland on the valley slopes is now under arable cultivation, for which it was largely cleared of trees in the 1950s. A few scattered trees remain from the extensive pattern shown established on the map of 1808 and still substantially unchanged up to the mid C20.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Some 40m north of the house is a rectangular area partly enclosed by hedging, containing glasshouses and frames in use now (1990s) for propagation and workshop purposes. It is shown on the Tithe map of 1841 and on the OS map of 1873 as an enclosure but there is no field evidence of it ever having been walled. Northwards again, c 180m from the house, is a brick-walled area built as a kitchen garden in the 1920s.

#### REFERENCES

I Nairn and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Sussex* (1965), pp 515(17 Hammerwood Park, guidebook, (Hammerwood Park 1992) Hammerwood Park, Restoration and Management Plan, (Chris Blandford Associates 1994)

Maps W Gardner and T Gream, *A topographical map of the County of Sussex...*, 1" to 1 mile, surveyed 1795 Tithe map for East Grinstead parish, 1841 (East Sussex Record Office)

OS surveyor's drawing, 1808 (British Library maps), [copy in East Sussex Record Office] OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1873 2nd edition published 1911 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1873 2nd edition published 1910

Description written: July 1998 Register Inspector: VCH Edited: March 2000

## 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.