

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HINTON HOUSE

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HINTON HOUSE

Name: HINTON HOUSE

County: Somerset

District: South Somerset (District Authority)

Parish: Dinnington

County: Somerset

District: South Somerset (District Authority)

Parish: Hinton St. George

County: Somerset

District: South Somerset (District Authority)

Parish: West Crewkerne

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.898694
Longitude: -2.8396924
National Grid Reference: ST 41046 11360
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001147
Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

A mid C18 park and pleasure grounds with C16 origins.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Following the Norman Conquest, Hinton St George was acquired by William, Count of Eu, and subsequently passed to the earls of Pembroke. The estate belonged to the Denebaud family in the C14, and shortly after 1429 Elizabeth Denebaud married William Poulett, with whose descendants the estate remained until the late C20. In the late C15 and C16 successive members of the family distinguished themselves as soldiers and servants of the Crown, including Sir Amias Poulett (d 1588) who served as Keeper of Mary, Queen of Scots (VCH 1978). In 1627, John Poulett (d 1649) was created Baron Poulett, while in 1706 his great-grandson, who had served as a Commissioner for the Union of England and Scotland, was created Earl Poulett.

A medieval manor house, which was accompanied by several gardens and courts (ibid), was rebuilt in the early C16 by Sir Amias Poulett (d 1538). In the mid C17 the first and second Lords Poulett made significant alterations and improvements to this house, including the construction of a banqueting house by the bowling green. In the 1660s Cosimo, Grand Duke of Tuscany, visited Hinton, noting the park 'three miles in circumference, shut in by a thick plantation of trees' (Bond 1998). A

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'cedar lawn' was created in 1684 (ibid), while in the early C18 the first Earl of Poulett extended the park, laid out avenues, and erected a statue of Diana (ibid). The third Earl continued the improvement of the park, which reached its maximum area with the completion of the diversion of the road to Roundham Common in 1772 (VCH 1978). The early C18 formal gardens around the House were removed and an ambitious programme of planting continued into the early C19. The completed park is shown in detail on the Tithe map of 1838; by this time however it had been divided into a series of grazing enclosures.

During the 1960s and 1970s Hinton House and its outbuildings were gradually divided to form separate dwellings and apartments. The eighth and last Earl Poulett died in 1973 and today (2003) the site is in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Hinton House is situated c 6km north-west of Crewkerne, to the north of the A30 road which links Crewkerne and Chard. The c 500ha site comprises some 6ha of informal pleasure grounds around the House, and c 494ha of parkland, ornamental plantations, and pools. To the south the site is bounded by the A30 road, from which it is separated by banks and hedges, while the western boundary is formed by a minor road leading north from the A30 to Dinnington. The northern boundary is formed by a further minor road, Pit Road, which leads west from Hinton St George to Dinnington, and the eastern boundary is formed by a minor road which leads north from the A30 to Hinton St George. To the north-west the site adjoins agricultural land, while to the north-east it abuts properties in the village of Hinton St George, from which it is separated by stone walls. The pattern of roads forming the boundary of the park developed during the mid and late C18 as the result of a series of diversions and closures effected by successive Earls Poulett. The boundary of the registered site corresponds to the park at its greatest extent, which was reached c 1772 (ibid).

The site is gently undulating, rising to a ridge of high ground on the southern boundary and with other high points to the north-east adjacent to the House, and towards the western boundary. Due to its topography, the majority of the views are confined within the extensive boundary of the site.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to Hinton House is from New Road to the north, at a point adjacent to the junction of New Road and Pit Road. The entrance comprises a pair of timber carriage gates supported by stone piers with pineapple finials and flanked by pedestrian gates and further piers set in a stone wall (all listed grade II). To the north-west of the entrance stands Broom Lodge (listed grade II). The north entrance became the principal approach to the House after 1766 when New Road was formed. From the entrance the drive leads south, parallel to the western boundary of the pleasure grounds, before dividing c 90m north-west of the House. The principal spur of the drive turns sharply east from the junction, and passing through a further gateway (listed grade II) arrives at the early C18 porte-cochère to the north-east of the House, which formerly served as the principal entrance to the building. The former kitchen court (now called Wyatt Court and converted to domestic use late C20; listed grade II) is situated to the south of this drive. A secondary spur of the drive leads south-east, passing to the west of an early C18 Portland stone statue of Diana the Huntress (listed grade II), to enter the pleasure grounds and reach a C20 carriage turn below the west facade of the House. The statue of Diana was originally erected in the park by the first Earl in 1704, and after being moved to a new location in the mid C18, was finally relocated to its present site in 1984 (inscription). An entrance from Gas Lane to the north-east of the House leads to the former stables and riding house (listed grade II), now known as Brettingham Court and converted to domestic use in the late C20.

There are several informal entrances to the park from the surrounding roads which provide access to a network of rides and drives within the boundary plantations and park. The east entrance is marked by the mid C19 Harford Lodge, while the north-west entrance is marked by North Lodge. The other entrances are unmarked.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Hinton House stands on an artificially levelled terrace at the north-east corner of the site. Constructed in Ham stone ashlar under low-pitched slate roofs, the House has a complex plan resulting from successive remodellings which began in the early C17. The south range (listed grade II*) comprises two storeys with a late C18 or early C19 Gothic-style west facade framed by octagonal corner turrets. The early C17 south facade is lit by a series of cruciform casement windows set beneath pediments. The architect of this facade is unknown, but stylistically it is related to elements of Brympton d'Evercy, Somerset (qv) and Ashton Court, Avon (qv) (Bond 1998). The south range is adjoined to the north-east by the former stable

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court and riding house now known as Brettingham Court. A range projecting to the north comprises a Tudor-gothic-style tower, formerly the porte-cochère and principal entrance to the House, which was designed by Jeffrey Wyatt (1766-1840) in 1814.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS An area of informal pleasure grounds comprising lawns, ornamental shrubbery, and specimen trees is situated to the north and north-west of the House and to the east of the north drive. A brick wall with Ham stone dressings and pineapple finials (listed grade II) extends westwards into the pleasure grounds north of the House from the northern end of the north-east range. This corresponds to the southern wall of the south compartment of the kitchen garden shown on the Tithe map (1838). The south-west and west walls of this compartment had been demolished by the late C19 (OS 1886), and the area formerly within the walls incorporated into the pleasure grounds.

Lawns extend to the west and south of the House, separated from the park by a curving ha-ha which affords wide views across the park. The ha-ha may correspond to the one described by John Loveday in 1736 (Bond 1998), and, with the exception of an early C20 realignment to the south-east, follows the course shown on the Tithe map (1838). Immediately below the south facade of the House, a sunken formal garden is enclosed by Ham stone ashlar walls surmounted by balustrades articulated by piers with pineapple finials (listed grade II); this garden was created in 1913 for the seventh Earl Poulett.

PARK The extensive park lies to the south and west of the House and pleasure grounds and is largely enclosed from the surrounding roads and agricultural land by perimeter plantations. Today (2003) the park is in mixed agricultural use and many of the scattered parkland trees shown on the Tithe map (1838) have been removed since c 1960. Larger blocks of woodland survive within the body of the park, including Harvant Wood which extends west from the eastern boundary plantation, and Keeper's Quarry Plantation which extends south-west from Beech Copse which forms the northern boundary plantation. Other plantations, such as Thorny Clump, Drake's Ground Clump, and Paddock's Plantation, occupy knolls of high ground in the park. Old Warren, c 1.4km south-west of the House, probably corresponds to the warren owned by the Denebaud family in the C14 (VCH 1978). Some 1.5km west of the House, Keeper's Lodge stands against a block of woodland. This building may correspond to the 'banqueting room' within the wilderness in the park described by John Loveday in 1736 (Bond 1998). A late C18 plan (*ibid*) shows a series of rides radiating from a circular grove cut within a plantation to the south of Keeper's Lodge. This woodland probably corresponds to the early C18 wilderness, the focal point of which was the statue of Diana erected by Lord Poulett in 1704. The statue was moved to a site c 620m east of Keeper's Lodge by the third Earl in the 1760s, and encircled by three concentric circles of limes; these trees were removed in the late C20 and the statue relocated to its present position south-west of the House. The configuration of the wilderness plantation was significantly altered in the C19 (OS 1885), and no trace of the rides now survives (2003).

Croft Farm, also known as Oaklands Farm House (listed grade II), c 1km south-west of Hinton House, is the sole surviving building from the hamlet of Croft or Craft, which was cleared and absorbed into the park in the C18. A further farm, Hinton Park Farm, lies c 450m south of Croft Farm.

A park associated with Hinton House existed in the early C16, when Leland recorded that Sir Hugh Poulett 'hath of late made a park not far from his house at Hinton on the side of a hill' (quoted by Bond 1998). This park was gradually extended, so that by 1569 it was estimated to have a circumference of 4 miles (c 6.5km). A park is recorded at Hinton on both Saxton's map of Somerset (1575) and Speed's map (1610). Expansion continued into the mid C18, taking in much of the former South and West Fields in the parish of Hinton, and land in the parish of Dinington (Bond 1998). Road diversions effected between 1766 and 1772 and the clearance of the hamlet of Croft allowed the park to achieve its present size (VCH 1978). Ornamental planting in the park began as early as 1652 when cherry trees were purchased in London (Bond 1998), and continued until c 1817 when 'American' clumps were formed near the house (*ibid*). The present configuration of plantations within the park appears to date from the early C19 programme of improvement. Late C18 proposals for the creation of a lake south-south-east of the House were not implemented.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden is situated to the north of the House. Enclosed by brick walls c 3m high, the garden comprises two compartments, the northern compartment being irregular on plan, while the southern compartment is approximately rectangular. A further compartment to the south of the surviving garden was partly opened out to the pleasure grounds in the late C19 (OS 1885). The kitchen garden appears to be of C18 construction.

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REFERENCES

J Collinson, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset II*, (1791), p 165 J P Neale, *Views of the seats IV*, (1828)
N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: South and West Somerset* (1958), p 198 *Victoria History of the County of Somerset IV*, (1978), pp 38-43 J Bond, *Historic Parks and Gardens of Somerset* (1998), pp 53-8, 64, 70, 90-1
Maps C Saxton, *Somersetensis*, 1575 J Speed, *Somerset Described*, 1610 Plan of Hinton Park, late C18 (reproduced in Bond 1998, p 91) Tithe map for Hinton St George parish, 1838 (M5201/1), (Somerset Record Office)
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1884-5, published 1886
Illustrations J Bonner, engraving, Hinton St George (in Collinson 1791)
Archival items The Poulett family archive, including estate records, accounts, and planting books, is held at the Somerset Record Office (DD/PT).
Description written: December 2003 Amended (PAS): April 2004 Register Inspector: JML Edited: September 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.