

**The revival of the formal garden in the late nineteenth century and the  
contribution of architects George Devey (1820-1886) and  
Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942)**

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Doctor of Philosophy**

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**2022**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been duly acknowledged in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sara Bryony Tenneson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

Sara Bryony Tenneson

15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank the many owners, managers and archivists of the properties that I visited during the course of this research who gave me their time, their knowledge and talked with passion about their gardens and houses. I would also like to thank the many people who answered my queries and questions. They are all mentioned in my footnotes.

I also owe a great deal of thanks to the libraries, archives and local archives who helped and supported me, particularly through the Covid lockdowns: Fiona Orsini, Lauren Alderton and Charles Hind of the RIBA, the team at The London Library, the team at The Lindley Library and Kate Wilcox at the IHR Wohl Library. I would also like to thank Judith Oliver and Natalija Dolgova for their friendship and support throughout this journey. My thanks also go to Clive Norris for his valuable advice.

My sincere thanks go to my Supervisor, Dr Brent Elliott, who joined my journey when nearing its end. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to work with him and his wonderful and extensive knowledge, which he so generously shared with me.

The deepest thanks go to my husband Malcolm, who has driven me around the country, walked the sites with me, never looked bored when listening to my thinking; but above all for his unshakable committed belief that I could do this.

Sara Tenneson  
November 2022

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## Abstract

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From the middle of the eighteenth century the landscape movement had dominated garden making in England, but to many in the early nineteenth century this meant the destruction and loss of the old formal gardens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Using contemporary commentary throughout the nineteenth century from a range of literature, books and periodicals, from a variety of people, some known and some not, the thesis traced, analysed and explained why there was a revival of the formal garden in the later years of the nineteenth century.

Two architects contributed to the revival of the formal garden. George Devey in the 1850s was the first to restore a formal garden from a plan of 1702 at Penshurst Place in Kent. Devey is little known, he did not write about his work and left no personal papers, but he did leave a small number of garden drawings and sketches which to date are unknown. Using these drawings and sketches, site visits and other archive material the thesis traced, analysed and explained Devey's contribution to the revival of the formal garden.

The other architect was Sir Reginald Blomfield who is known, but more for his temperament than his garden making. In the 1940s Blomfield sent all his papers, including his garden plans, for the war effort. Using what little survived with archive material, Blomfield's own writings, perspective drawings, garden plans that remain at some properties, site visits and other research material, the thesis again traced, analysed and explained Blomfield's role as he followed Devey in the revival of the formal garden.

These three elements, the commentary from contemporary literature, the work of Devey and of Blomfield, were analysed and argued to lead to an understanding and explanation of why the formal garden was revived in the later part of the nineteenth century and what was the contribution of Devey and Blomfield to this revival.



## Introduction

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As the landscape movement dominated garden design from the middle of the eighteenth century, many of the old formal gardens of the seventeenth century and before were removed, destroyed and lost. To many people the loss of the formal garden was a cause of deep regret and sadness and felt by both influential and ordinary people throughout the nineteenth century and up to the First World War.

Two architects contributed to the revival of the formal garden. George Devey who was one of the first to restore a seventeenth century garden at Penshurst Place in Kent in the late 1850s. The other, Sir Reginald Blomfield, took on the mantle from Devey in the 1880s going on to continue the revival of formality in the garden.

This thesis examines and traces why the formal garden was revived in the late nineteenth century and explains the contribution of George Devey and Sir Reginald Blomfield.

### 1: Background

#### i) The formal garden to the middle of the eighteenth century

Three eminent garden historians gave their views and definitions of the term formal. Kenneth Woodbridge (d.1988) defined formal 'in the general sense of pertaining to the visible form, arrangement, or external qualities of a garden, regardless of style' and added that formal is often used as a synonym for 'regular' or 'architectural'.<sup>1</sup> David Jacques, in his book on garden design during the period 1630-1730, suggested that the term formal 'is usually taken to denote the period's regular, symmetric, geometric or ancient gardens in contradistinction to the irregular nature of modern gardens that have been generally referred to as landscape gardens or landscape

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Woodbridge, *Princely Gardens, The Origins and Development of the French Formal Garden Style* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), pp. 9, 143.

parks'.<sup>2</sup> Mark Laird asked the question, was it such a clear cut thing? ('It is the opposite of the landscape garden by virtue of its architectural geometry and symmetry.') Further, he asked 'is it the same that we see today or fifty or two hundred or four hundred years ago in form, content or function?'<sup>3</sup> The differing views amongst these historians were not new, in 1892 Reginald Blomfield, said of the 'Formal System of Gardening' that it 'has suffered from a question-begging name'.<sup>4</sup>

In England, from the middle of the eighteenth century to the turn of the nineteenth century, the landscape movement had dominated the design of gardens and parkland into 'Arcadian' landscapes for the aristocracy and large landowners. The new 'Arcadia' was composed of sweeping, smooth pasture running straight from the house, with vistas of temples and eye catchers of ruins high on distant points, clumps of trees and shrubs with vast stretches of water that reflected the sky. These landscapes were created by men who were termed as the improvers, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) and others such as William Emes (1729-1803) and Richard Woods (1715-1793).

Brown and his colleagues only started operating from the 1750s and thus much of the design that existed before this time was still in place. Woodbridge, Jacques and Laird pointed out that there were gardens which used the same principles of formality, symmetry and geometry, not just for the large landowners with their vast estates, but also for the gentry with smaller estates. A description of a garden layout at that time came from Christopher Hussey (1899-1970), architectural historian, who wrote that 'the traditional garden was of modest scale and functional rectangular plan, with its compartmented layout, low terraces, numerous elaborate gate-piers and topiary'.<sup>5</sup> David Brown and Tom Williamson explained that these gardens were influenced by the French and Dutch models and came back to England with the noblemen and landowners who were obliged to exile in Europe during the English Civil War of 1642-

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<sup>2</sup> David Jacques, *Gardens of Court and Country English Design 1630-1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Laird, *The Formal Garden* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Reginald Blomfield, F. Inigo Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (London: Macmillan, 1901), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Hussey, *English Gardens and Landscapes 1700-1750* (London: Country Life, 1967), p. 18.

1651.<sup>6</sup> The features they brought with them were of 'topiary, neat gravel paths, plain grass lawns, bowling greens and parterres of cutwork and boxwork'.<sup>7</sup> These gardens were contained within hedged enclosures or walls and in the smaller estates they would have also included the kitchen garden, the orchard, dovecots, fishponds and in some cases the farmyards.<sup>8</sup>

Although many thought these gardens had been destroyed by the hand of the improvers, which was a cause of deep regret, distress and sadness, a number of these old formal gardens remained into the nineteenth century.

## ii) Gardens in the nineteenth century

As discussed, the dominating factor in garden making at the end of the eighteenth century was the landscape movement, but moving into the nineteenth century brought change, a change of thinking about nature, art, aesthetics and the principles of good taste and the appreciation of beauty. In the early part of the century this change of thinking produced alternative styles of garden making such as the picturesque and the gardenesque.<sup>9</sup>

As the population grew gardens became more for the people rather than the elite few of the eighteenth century and before. New developments brought more change in both perception and attitudes, from the labour saving invention of Edwin Budding and the lawnmower in 1830 to the increased availability of new plants, which were being introduced from the plant expeditions from around the world organised by the plant nurseries. The new plants were on display in the new public parks and botanic gardens that were opened for the people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Brown and Tom Williamson, *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men, Landscape Revolution in Eighteenth-century England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33. For more information on cutwork see Jacques, *Gardens of Court and Country*, pp. 204-208.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, Williamson, *Lancelot Brown*, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> For more information see, Geoffrey & Susan Jellicoe, Patrick Goode and Michael Lancaster, *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 431, 211. Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1986), pp. 7-9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

Manufacturing and architecture were playing their part in the expansion of gardens, as John Betjeman said in 1963, 'English architecture made a notable contribution to the world of architecture, the introduction of cast iron and sheet glass that led to glass buildings such as greenhouses, and the Crystal Palace as well as the railway termini'.<sup>11</sup> These new glasshouses expanded the science, cultivation and hybridisation of plants, particularly the bedding plants which came from the southern hemisphere and were to become popular from the middle of the century. With the expansion of the railways, plants and other horticultural products could be transported around the country bringing gardening to a wider audience. Increasingly the head gardener rather than the landowners or landscape gardeners became more prominent in gardening and this, with the increase in knowledge gained from the growth of books and magazines about gardens, brought gardening to the people.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the century a variety of styles existed. Following the picturesque and the gardenesque, some were based on national themes such as the Italianate, a very ornate style of gardening originating from the renaissance garden of the sixteenth century, and the French garden that was styled on the gardens of Versailles with elaborate parterres.<sup>13</sup> Roy Strong made an interesting comment about style in the late nineteenth century that 'the style of the period was without contemporary substance but more of a digging ever deeper into the dressing up box of the past'.<sup>14</sup> Deep in this dressing up box was the old formal garden.

### **iii) Architecture in the nineteenth century**

The traditional classical style in architecture was still popular for both large and smaller buildings into the early part of the century, but this was to be overtaken by the need for more housing. A second notable contribution of English architecture highlighted

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<sup>11</sup> Peter Ferriday, *Victorian Architecture* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, pp. 16-19.

<sup>13</sup> Brent Elliott, 'Historical Revivalism in the Twentieth Century: A Brief Introduction', *Garden History*, 28.1 (2000), 17-31 (p. 18).

<sup>14</sup> Roy Strong, *The Spirit of Britain* (London: Pimlico, 2000), pp. 561-563.

by Betjeman is the small detached house designed for the rising middle class and the need for municipal buildings.<sup>15</sup>

While the classical style remained popular into the Victorian era, there appeared to have been an expansion of thinking which, as James Stevens Curl suggested, fell into three periods, starting around 1837 to 1855 with the early Victorian style, which broke away from the plain Georgian style, with its Romanesque, Italianate and Gothic influences.<sup>16</sup> This was followed by the mid Victorian style from 1855 to 1875 which has been called High Victorian, with its association with Gothic and eclecticism. From 1875 until the end of the century, as Curl wrote it was about revival: 'The Domestic Revival, Vernacular Revival, the Arts-and-Crafts movement, Queen-Anne Style, and Renaissance Revival'.<sup>17</sup> The styles that made up the earlier periods were difficult to establish, which explains a quote from Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983) who wrote in 1943 that, 'in the early years of the nineteenth century, the fancy-dress ball of architecture was in full swing: Classical, Gothic, Italianate, Old-English with even more styles of Tudor, French and Venetian Renaissance'.<sup>18</sup> As to timing, Pevsner, broadly in agreement with Curl, explained in his essay in *Victorian Architecture*, that the 'Grecian declined after 1840, Gothic turned from fancy details to archaeologically accurate details about that date, remained unchallenged for churches, but also captured the public buildings', adding 'from the Houses of Parliament (designed in 1835) to Street's Law Courts, begun in 1871, to Waterhouse's Manchester Town Hall begun in 1869'. He continued that 'after 1870 Gothic was outmoded' and 'only came back in an Arts and Crafts fancy version about 1900'.<sup>19</sup>

These differing attitudes to style, economic and social developments changed the practice of architecture. The nineteenth century saw an increase in public,

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<sup>15</sup> Ferriday, *Victorian Architecture*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> James Stevens Curl, *Victorian Architecture* (London: David & Charles, 1990), p. 73.

<sup>17</sup> Curl, *Victorian Architecture*, pp. 80, 116. Roger Dixon and Stefan Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 17. Eclecticism is a combination of different styles and in the mid-Victorian period it became possible for several styles to be used concurrently and for them to be viewed as equally important.

<sup>18</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (Middx: Pelican Books, 1966), pp. 378-379.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Ferriday, ed., Nikolaus Pevsner, 'Victorian Prolegomena', *Victorian Architecture*, pp. 19-36, p. 25. George Edmund Street (1824-1881) and Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905) were Gothic Revival architects.

commercial, municipal and private commissions for architects including country houses and churches. By the 1840s the architect had become a recognisable and established profession not only designing buildings but also supervising their construction. They worked with the quantity surveyor who provided accurate figures and with builders in the tendering process.<sup>20</sup> This professionalism led to the foundation of the Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1834 which increasingly regulated the profession and became the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1837 with a Royal Charter.<sup>21</sup> The architect's method of payment was either on a fee or commission basis. In 1862 RIBA issued a leaflet which clarified the question of remunerations and establishing a commission rate of five per cent minimum.<sup>22</sup> The promotion of the architect with ideas and designs was spread wider through the new building journals, the leading publication being *The Builder* from 1842, with *The Building News* from 1860 and later *The Architect* from 1895.<sup>23</sup>

The profession consisted of two elements. Firstly the large offices, such as those of Sir George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) and Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860), with numerous assistants enabling them to compete for the major jobs, such as the Houses of Parliament, the Royal Exchange, the Foreign Office and the Albert Memorial. Secondly, the smaller practices with one or two architects, a few assistants and pupils, which became the pillar of the profession. Once established this was the way both Devey and Blomfield worked.

Devey's business came from the growth of private commissions from members of the aristocracy or the new successful Victorian self-made men, who either wanted their country house renovated or to design a new, grander house. Blomfield similarly enjoyed the growth of the country house work but he also had a large commercial section to his practice.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Dixon, Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Frank Jenkins, *Architect and Patron* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 216.

<sup>23</sup> Dixon, Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

#### iv) Modern literature review of the revival of the formal garden

Since the 1970s there have been reviews of the revival of the formal garden but in most instances these were brief, lacking in depth, clarity and were part of much wider studies into gardens of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These reviews leave much unanswered and to date there has been no specific study, academic or otherwise, on the revival of the formal garden in the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

Brent Elliott, garden historian, addressed the subject in 1986 in *Victorian Gardens*. He argued that 'The Old-Fashioned Garden', a term that was in use in the 1870s, came from the choice of plants, the old fashioned herbaceous plants that were coming back into fashion. To complement this there were recommendations for courts, or gardens divided by hedges.<sup>26</sup> Elliott continued: 'the idea of an enclosed space using hedges had first been introduced with the opening of Elvaston Castle in the 1850s with its hedges as smooth as Axminster carpets'.<sup>27</sup> Elliott's opinion was that architect Devey in the long term was the greatest influence on the revival of the formal garden with his work in the 1850s at Penshurst Place and the recreation of an original garden plan from 1702.<sup>28</sup> Architectural historian Mark Girouard (1932-2022) associated the revival of the formal garden with The Queen Anne Movement, which started around the 1860s, suggesting that the style came from painters, poets and architects, specifically Blomfield and John Dando Sedding (1838-1891). However, Girouard was inaccurate in his timings as Sedding and Blomfield's respective books were not published until 1891 and 1892.<sup>29</sup>

The theme of poets and painters was also put forward by Wendy Hitchmough, who suggested the revival of the formal garden was the forerunner of the 'Arts and Crafts

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<sup>25</sup> Academic subject searches via British Library Ethos, <<https://ethos.bl.uk>> and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses: Global, <<https://proquest.com/pqdtglobal/index>>, and other sources at Senate House Library.

<sup>26</sup> Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> Elliott, 'Historical Revivalism', (p. 19). For information on Elvaston see, Anon, 'Elvaston Castle', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, VI (1876), (pp. 808, 838).

<sup>28</sup> Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, p. 164.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light, The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 152. Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England*. John Dando Sedding, *Garden-Craft Old and New*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1892).

Garden' and was advocated by famous personalities, artists, actresses and writers rather than 'erudite architectural theories', wrongly adding that Devey 'tidied up and set in order' the seventeenth century garden at Brickwall in Kent.<sup>30</sup> David Ottewill wrote that 'the Old-English garden revival was led by Devey and his work at Penshurst Place', further suggesting that the idea of this revival, which he called 'The Old-Fashioned Garden', was promoted by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) and William Morris (1834-1896). This put the timing around the 1860s to 1870s, but Devey started work on Penshurst in the 1850s.<sup>31</sup> Robert Williams, in his article on the later Edwardian garden, did not discuss the roots of this revival but championed Blomfield as leading the way in the 1890s; although interestingly he made reference to a poem from 1839 about 'the preference of the good old system of the formal garden' and seemed surprised that such a comment about the old system was made in 1839.<sup>32</sup>

Anne Helmreich is another who championed Blomfield, writing that his book, *The Formal Garden in England*, with designs dating back to Elizabethan roots, was a key influence on garden design at the time. She proposed that this was an invented tradition as a way to overcome the cultural crisis of the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Returning to the theme of poets and literature at the time, Michael Waters put forward that the recollection of old gardens played an important part in literature, which he suggested is about memory, both remote or in living memory, and that the age of the garden was irrelevant.<sup>34</sup> These widely differing opinions, lack of depth and clarity were summed up by Alla Vronskaya of the Moscow State Institute of Art Research, where she commented that her article on the old English garden was 'rather bibliographical, as there is an evident lack of overall research on this topic'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Wendy Hitchmough, *Arts and Crafts Gardens* (London: Pavilion, 1997), pp. 40-45. Devey did work at Brickwall in Kent from 1873 to 1877, altering the garden front of the house by adding five half-timbered gables. There is no record of him doing any garden works at Brickwall.

<sup>31</sup> David Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 21, 28.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Williams, 'Edwardian Gardens Old and New', *Journal of Garden History*, Vol. 13, Iss. 1, Spring/Summer (1991), pp. 99-103, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> Anne Helmreich, *The English Garden & National Identity, The Competing Styles of Garden Design, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 91-106.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Waters, *The Garden in Victorian Literature* (London: Scholar Press, 1988), pp. 48-49.

<sup>35</sup> Alla Vronskaya, 'The transformation of the concept of the old English garden and interpretations of Garden History during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 26.4 (2006), 267-274 (p. 267).



The study of garden history is a relatively new discipline, arguably only starting in any depth from 1966 with the formation of the Garden History Society, so for the last fifty or so years there has been a haste to research, study and record the history of English garden making, but in this haste what has been missed and what is wrong? Here the literature review leaves doubt as to why the formal garden was revived and what were the reasons. There is some consistency with who made it happen, predominantly Devey and Blomfield, but there is confusion with the timings and little about what was revived.

## **2: Thesis structure, chapter outlines with their research processes**

### **i) The questions and structure**

There are two questions to be addressed, why was the formal garden revived and what was the contribution of Devey and Blomfield? The abstract highlighted three elements to the thesis to answer the two questions. The first question will be answered from the contemporary commentaries which explained why the formal garden was revived; and the second question, what was the contribution of Devey and Blomfield to this revival will come from an examination of their garden making. These three elements have determined the structure of the thesis into three main chapters.

### **ii) Chapter one: The revival of the formal garden**

The modern literature review gave few clues to any material on the revival of the formal garden in the nineteenth century or more importantly why it was revived. Vronskaya gave some ideas as did Blomfield in his book *The Formal Garden in England*.<sup>36</sup> Vronskaya probably got her clues from Blomfield as they both mentioned Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), who in 1826 wrote about a lost garden in the formal style. Scott referred to Sir Uvedale Price (1747-1829), who in 1810 wrote about the loss of his

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<sup>36</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England*, 2nd edn., p. 89.

own formal garden.<sup>37</sup> This led to the questions what were other people saying, what was being written about the destruction and loss of the formal garden, was loss the principal factor and would this explain why it was revived?

The research material came from periodicals and books published throughout the nineteenth century. Using databases and other sources that covered the periodicals, searching started with the terms from the modern literature review such as The Queen Anne Garden, The Arts and Crafts Garden, The Old-English Garden, The Formal Garden and The Old Fashioned Garden.<sup>38</sup> With few or no comments generated from the first three terms, searching was refined to 'The Formal Garden' and 'The Old Fashioned Garden', which produced the commentaries. This pool of comments generated in the date range from the start of the nineteenth century up to 1914 was manageable and therefore sampling was not needed; all the comments were included. Where indicated and relevant the commentaries have been supplemented with books from the period. Interestingly, the searches did not produce any comments in favour of the destruction of the formal garden.

From the start of the nineteenth century the comments came not just from influential people, such as Price and Scott, but ordinary people, who also felt this loss and wrote about it in the periodicals of the time. The comments ebbed and flowed like a tide, dipping a little in the middle of the century and then picking up again from the late 1860s. Then there was a change. An interest in the history of gardens and the old writers, such as Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Parkinson (1567-1650), developed and continued through the rest of the century. Other factors came into play, such as the loss of 'the old fashioned flowers' and 'the tyranny of carpet bedding', with more books and articles about the old formal gardens being published. Examples of the few surviving formal gardens and the newly made,

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<sup>37</sup> Sir Uvedale Price, Esq., *Essays on the Picturesque, as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful and, on the use and studying pictures for the purpose of improving real landscape*, three volumes (London: J. Mawman, 1810), Vol. II, pp. 106-167.

<sup>38</sup> I used a variety of resources at Senate House Library, The London Library and The British Library, together with local county archives and other data sources. Also my own knowledge and extensive library of books, articles and other material on the subject built up over many years. I did experience some difficulties with my research due to Covid restrictions as many of these libraries and archives had limited opening during the restrictions but I was able to source some material via email.

revived formal gardens were being discussed and written about and also illustrated by a group of watercolourists whose work brought these gardens to life.

The contemporary commentaries are presented as *vox populi*, in its literal Latin sense, the voice of the people. Divided into four time periods, covering 1810 to 1914, the commentaries speak for themselves, how people felt, what memories they held, what their interest was and what they wanted for the future. The commentaries are interpreted and analysed to suggest an explanation of why the formal garden was revived.

### iii) Chapter two:

#### **George Devey (1820-1886) – ‘The Gentleman’s Architect’**

George Devey was known as ‘The Gentleman’s Architect’ as his client base was a very wealthy, close and influential circle of Victorian gentlemen, many engaging him through recommendation from members of the Liberal Party. Devey was a private man, he left no personal papers. He did not publicise his work and there were no articles from him or about him in any of the architectural or building journals of the period. His work came to light in the 1970s with two articles in *Country Life* by Girouard and later in 1991 with the publication of *George Devey Architect 1820-1886* by Jill Allibone (1932-1998).<sup>39</sup> Girouard and Allibone were architectural historians and thus their focus was on Devey’s architecture, not on his garden works. Although Girouard made no mention of Devey’s garden works, Allibone did as she had access to his archive of drawings and plans held by Mrs Emil Godfrey (1912-2000).<sup>40</sup> Occasionally in her book Allibone mentioned the odd ‘terrace or walled garden’, with other references in the *catalogue raisonné* as part of her study, but she did not go into depth or detail.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Mark Girouard, ‘George Devey in Kent -I’. *Country Life*, 149.3851 (1971), 744-747. Mark Girouard, ‘Rural Architecture for the Rich, George Devey in Kent -II’. *Country Life*, 149.3852 (1971), 812-815. Jill Allibone, *George Devey Architect 1820-1886* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1991).

<sup>40</sup> Mrs Emil Godfrey was the daughter in law of Walter Godfrey who had collected and saved the Devey Archives. The collection was on long term loan to the RIBA. In 1990 the RIBA purchased the collection.

<sup>41</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 151-179.

The research is presented in two sections. Section one discusses the young Devey, his childhood, his influences and how he became an architect. Section two briefly discusses his client base and architectural work, but its main purpose is to analyse and explain the work of Devey the garden maker and his contribution to the revival of the formal garden.

Since being deposited at the RIBA on loan in the late 1960s, Devey's small collection of garden drawings and sketches has never been fully examined until now. Although the occasional drawing or sketch of a particular site had appeared in publications, these drawings and sketches are little known to garden or other historians.<sup>42</sup> In examining Devey's garden works, the thesis will look at the 15 sites identified initially from Allibone's *catalogue raisonné* and the RIBA catalogue. Allibone cited 21 garden works, either garden features or ground plans, but on further investigation it has been established that six sites cannot be included as the property has been demolished and no records survived, or no trace has been found of any garden work carried out there by Devey.<sup>43</sup>

The evidence presented is a combination of the material from the RIBA collection, which consists of drawings and sketches which in some cases were only suggestions for works and not carried out. Other drawings and sketches which have been executed are discussed and explained. There are just four garden drawings, the walled garden at Penshurst Place, part of the garden around the house at Coombe Warren, a side and entrance garden at Conover Hall and a drawing not carried out for St. Albans Court. The other materials are sketches of areas and features in the gardens as well as ground plans showing the terraces surrounding the outline of the house. Other information has come from Allibone's notes, archive material, site visits, local county archives and record offices, site reports from the Yorkshire and Kent Gardens Trusts, information from present owners and from the memoirs of Devey's clients and of those who worked for him.

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<sup>42</sup> Two drawings appeared in Jane Brown, *The Art and Architecture of English Gardens* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989) pp. 108-109 credited to Devey for the garden at Ascott House. These drawings were by Devey's assistant James Williams who worked at Ascott House after Devey's death and dated 1893. RIBA [PB839/1(64-74)].

<sup>43</sup> These sites are: Brickwall, East Sussex. Denton Manor, Lincolnshire. Rawcliffe Hall, Humberside. Park House, Surrey. Farnborough Hill, Hampshire. Pitchford Hall, Shropshire. Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 151-179.

In the RIBA Devey collection there is a fee counterfoil book with an account book from January 1867 to November 1886 when Devey died. This account book does not break out the costs for house and garden works but presents a total figure.<sup>44</sup> The fee counterfoil book confirmed that Devey charged five per cent commission. This allows the cost of the entire work to be estimated giving an idea of the size and cost of a project. Based on the commission of five per cent of the total costs of the works, the formula used is the commission divided by five, then multiplied by 100 equals the cost of works, e.g. £250 commission, divided by five, multiplied by 100 equals £5000 cost of the works. To get an approximation of historic cost at today's value the figure is entered into the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, e.g. the £5000 in 1886 would be £454000 today.<sup>45</sup> These calculation methods will be used throughout the thesis for both Devey and Blomfield costings.

The summary presents a link to chapter three, Sir Reginald Blomfield.

#### **iv) Chapter Three:**

##### **Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942) - 'The Complete Architect'**

Sir Reginald was a very different character to Devey. Devey was a private and seemingly a modest man, Blomfield was the opposite. He was purposeful, energetic, highly skilled with a towering belief in his own abilities and, not surprisingly, he did not suffer fools gladly. The title 'The Complete Architect' was given to him by one of his pupils, A. Trystan Edwards (1884-1973), in a memorial address after his death.<sup>46</sup> During his long and varied career of 58 years Blomfield carried out both domestic and public works, including educational and institutional buildings. His name was also associated with war memorials after the First World War, particularly the Menin Gate at Ypres in 1922.<sup>47</sup> He was also associated with the design of electricity pylons, in 1926 he was

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<sup>44</sup> RIBA ref. no. DeG /1/1.

<sup>45</sup> Bank of England Inflation Calculator, <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 16.08.2022]. All figures have been checked and updated 16.08.2022. For a more in depth study of the cost of English garden making see, Roderick Froud, *An Economic History of the English Garden* (UK: Allen Lane, 2019).

<sup>46</sup> Richard A. Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield, An Edwardian Architect* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1985), p. 156.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

appointed by the Central Electricity Board to advise on their design.<sup>48</sup> As well as an architect, Blomfield was an academic publishing many works on English, French and Italian seventeenth century renaissance architecture. It was the publication of his book *The Formal Garden in England* in 1892 that projected Blomfield as a designer of gardens.<sup>49</sup>

As with Devey, Blomfield's garden works have not been reviewed in any depth before now, perhaps because during the Second World War Blomfield responded to a call for paper, making a list of his works, and then 'bundled' all the papers and plans up and sent them off for the war effort, very few surviving. A list of his works was published in *The RIBA Journal* of 1943 by his son Austin, also an architect, who worked with his father in the practice.<sup>50</sup> Austin's list details 26 properties where his father either worked on the house and garden or just the garden. Richard Fellows, who wrote about Blomfield's architectural works, mentioned 19 properties where again it was either house and garden or just a garden design.<sup>51</sup> Both these lists contain discrepancies but further investigation and research of these has shown that some of the works were plans never executed, for some there is no trace of the property and for others the design was by another party.

The few drawings and perspectives held at the RIBA, six surviving Blomfield garden plans and designs found at the properties, material held by current owners, articles in *Country Life* and journals of the period, Blomfield's own writings, material held in local county archives and record offices provided sufficient evidence for a discussion and examination of 15 sites. However, no account books or paperwork relating to Blomfield's business have survived.<sup>52</sup> The remaining properties listed by his son Austin and Fellows are compiled in a chart at the end of this chapter detailing what material is held, the outcome of the research and the current status of the property. This chart

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>49</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1892).

<sup>50</sup> Austin Blomfield, 'List of Buildings designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield', *The RIBA Journal*, L.4 (1943), 88-89. The galley proofs of this list of works for the article are held in Blomfield's biographical file at the RIBA Library. Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, pp. 168-174.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Blomfield's great granddaughter Isabel Ryan has confirmed that no accounts or records have survived. Email and telephone conversations September 2020.

also gives the reasons why these sites have not been included in the chapter as examples of Blomfield's garden works.

Using the same format as the Devey chapter, the first section will discuss Blomfield's early life and influences up to the time when he started in practice on his own. Section two briefly discusses his clients and architecture, but its main focus will again be to trace, examine and analyse Blomfield's garden making and his influences in continuing the revival of the formal garden.

**Chapter One: The revival of the formal garden**

**Old gardens beautiful yesterday, beautiful today,  
and beautiful always**

**John Dando Sedding 1892**

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Fig. 1. The Italian Garden at Penshurst Place, Arthur Rowe circa 1902. *Painted Gardens, English Watercolours 1850-1914*, 1988.



**Section I: The early years of the nineteenth century:  
Loss, regret, memory, protest and the interest in gardens of the past**

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**Sir Uvedale Price – loss and regret**

One who regretted the loss of these fine old formal gardens was Sir Uvedale Price, landowner, writer and in his Picturesque style a 'rural improver', whose estate was Foxley House in Herefordshire. The house built in 1717 was in the style of Smith of Warwick (1672-1738) of red brick with formal gardens of the period.<sup>1</sup> Price, who was one of the leading advocates for the Picturesque, 'the study of pictures for the purpose of improving real landscape', had inherited the estate of 3537 acres when he came of age in 1768, seven years after his father's death in 1761 (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

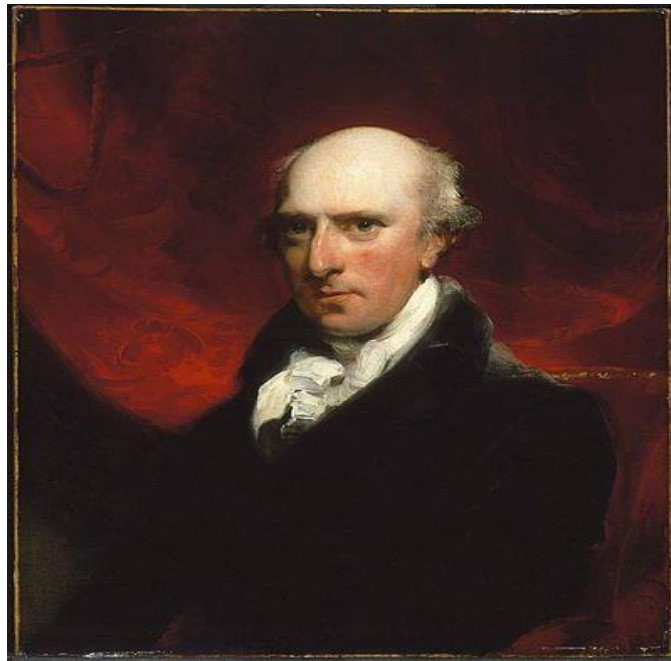


Fig. 2. Sir Uvedale Price by Sir Thomas Lawrence circa 1799. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
<[https://collection.mfa.org/objects/\\*/SirUvedalePrice](https://collection.mfa.org/objects/*/SirUvedalePrice)>

Price regarded the work of the landscape improvers as 'false taste' and thought that every landowner as a gentleman of taste and discrimination should be able to be his own improver. He condemned the improving landowners who, perhaps aided by

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<sup>1</sup> Smith of Warwick was a master builder and architect involved in construction of country houses in the Midlands. Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840* (London: John Murray, 1978), pp. 747-753.

<sup>2</sup> David Whitehead, Sir Uvedale Price, First Baronet, ODNB see bibliography.

Brown, lived within a ring-fence of shelter belts.<sup>3</sup> He expressed these sentiments in a long essay in 1794, *An Essay on the Picturesque as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful: and, on the use of studying pictures for the purpose of improving real landscape*, which he addressed to Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824), his near neighbour and fellow advocate of the Picturesque.<sup>4</sup> As part of his belief in the Picturesque, Price remodelled his estate with his own 'land husbandry' as he saw no reason why the whole estate should not please the eye, rather than just the pleasure grounds around the house. In 1780 he had removed these formal gardens around the house, as seen in a 1791 illustration (Figure 3).<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 3. North East View of Foxley House from the lawn, Monday 19 o'clock 4<sup>th</sup> April 1791. James Wathen (1751-1828) painter and draughtsman.  
<<https://herefordshirehistory.org.uk/archive/herefordshire-images>>.

<sup>3</sup> Whitehead, Price, Sir Uvedale.

<sup>4</sup> Uvedale Price Esq., *An Essay on the Picturesque as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the use of studying pictures for the purpose of improving real landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1794) [Facsimile of the 1796 edition, A. Woodstock, 2000].

<sup>5</sup> Historic England, Foxley, Grade II\* 1000880. Jellico, Goode, Lancaster, *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*, pp. 431, 455.

In 1799, the Revd James Plumptre undertook a journey in England visiting Price's home at Foxley and reported that there were gardens at the back of the house. He went on to mention that to the front is a 'grass plot, with borders of flowers in irregular and picturesque situation'. Some foliage can be seen in the illustration of 1791, so perhaps not all the garden had been removed at that time.<sup>6</sup> In the early nineteenth century John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) on one of his tours of England visited the Foxley estate, writing of this visit in his first *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* published in 1822. He described the house and grounds as 'a plain brick mansion, beautifully varied by creepers, surrounded with a magnificent amphitheatre of woods ... and small pieces of water to act as lights for the eyes... here are fine views judiciously opened in many places'; but he made no mention of formal gardens around the house so by that time they had been removed.<sup>7</sup>

In his first essay of 1794 Price gave a hint of his view on the old style of gardens as opposed to the modern style of the new improvers. However, he did see some merit in the intention of these improvers, 'for they meant to banish formality and to restore nature'. He saw the segments of circles and ellipses, the groups and clumps of planting as similar to the squares and parallelograms of former gardens; so in fact he was saying that it was only the character of the formality that had changed, not the formality of layout. He disapproved that the improvers 'demolished, without distinction, the costly and magnificent decorations of past times, and all that had long been held in veneration'.<sup>8</sup> The one element of the new style that appeared to upset him most, and the greatest general defect, was 'the want of connection, a passion for making everything distinct and separate'. He used the phrase 'bonds of union' to refer to the different parts of the landscape that were connected and were 'now destroyed'.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> James Plumptre, Ian Ousby, Ed., *James Plumptre's Britain, The Journal of a Tourist in the 1790s* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> J. C. Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening comprising of Theory and Practice of Horticulture, Floriculture, Arboriculture and Landscape-Gardening including all the latest improvements; A general history of gardening in all countries; and a statistical view of its present state, with suggestions for its future progress, in the British Isles* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, (1822), p. 1233.

<sup>8</sup> Price, *Essay on the Picturesque*, pp. 247, 249.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

The business of the improvers must have played on his mind over the next few years and hardened his view of their work as in 1810 a fuller version of his essay was published in three volumes. It is the second volume that is of interest with its chapter 'Essay on Decoration'.<sup>10</sup> Price regretted the loss of the old garden; he was particularly hard on himself as he was the one who destroyed his garden but was just as quick to blame Brown and his influence, lamenting that 'models of old gardens are in the country still scarcer in reality than in painting'.<sup>11</sup> He discussed Blenheim Palace and John Vanbrugh's (1664-1726) preparation for a garden, 'a sort of architectural foreground to his building which as a consequence of the modern taste for improvement has been destroyed' and Price questioned the motive for such an act,<sup>12</sup> seeing himself in a similar role 'having done myself what I so condemn in others, destroyed an old-fashioned garden'.<sup>13</sup>

Losing himself in the emotion of his loss he talked of his 'raised terrace, seen sideways from the house', 'a flight of steps with iron rails and an arched recess below', leading down to a 'lower compartment with a mixture of fruit-trees, shrubs and statues'.<sup>14</sup> He then pondered that 'with a little alteration would have richly and happily blended with the general landscape'. Price begged more indulgence from the reader by describing the many walled compartments, the beauty of the brick walls and their safety and seclusion. He suggested that 'all walled gardens and compartments near the house are to be greatly wished for and should wherever possible be preserved'.<sup>15</sup> He continued to explain more of his formal garden, 'an upper terrace that led through to a little wilderness of exotics, a summer house with a luxuriant Virginia creeper, which had to be pulled down as it interfered with the levelling'. Then on to the last boundary of the garden to a 'richly worked gate that led to a solemn grove', which had enriched his view from the house and the home terrace; but now he reflected there

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<sup>10</sup> Price, *Essay on the Picturesque*, pp. 106-167.

<sup>11</sup> Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price on the Picturesque: with an essay on the origins of Taste and much original matter* (Edinburgh: Caldwell, Lloyd and Co., 1842), p. 299. Note this version contains all the material from Price's three volumes published in 1810 and will be used for all further references.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299. John Vanbrugh was an English architect, dramatist and herald best known for the design of Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard.

<sup>13</sup> Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price*, p. 301.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

was only grass, trees and shrubs. Price asked the question, did this give him pleasure; 'certainly not' he informs the reader.<sup>16</sup>

Price's first essay came out in 1794, was augmented in 1810 and thirty two years later in 1842 a further version in one volume was compiled by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder (1784-1848). Lauder was an author, a friend of Sir Walter Scott and a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and, like Price, Lauder regretted and was horrified at the destruction of the formal garden. His shared regret and interest in the Picturesque perhaps explains why he compiled this volume 13 years after Price's death, suggesting that Price's influence was to remain active and important.<sup>17</sup> Price was best known for his views on the Picturesque and the work he did on his Foxley estate to Picturesque principles, but perhaps less well known for his views on the 'destruction of the formal garden'. He was not alone, these views were echoed by his friend and neighbour Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824).

#### **Richard Payne Knight - loss and disapproval**

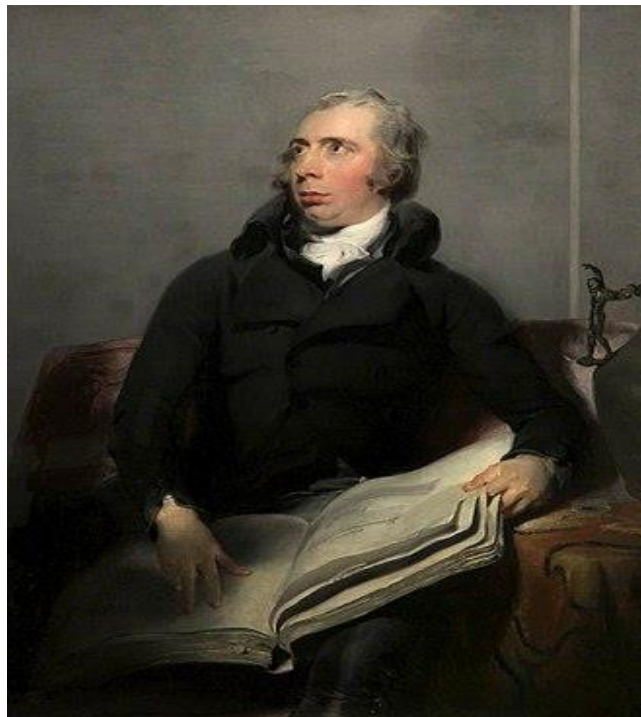


Fig. 4. Richard Payne Knight by Sir Thomas Lawrence 1794. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>17</sup> H. C. G. Matthew, 'Lauder, Sir Thomas Dick, Seventh Baronet', *ODNB* see bibliography. A. A. Tait, *The Landscape Garden in Scotland, 1735-1835* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 207.

Knight of Downton Castle in Herefordshire, a close neighbour and associate of Price, was an arbiter of taste, art collector, connoisseur, poet and writer (Figure 4). Following a *faux pas* with the Society of Dilettanti in 1781 he returned to his estate and concentrated on 'fashioning the landscape into a new Picturesque mode' that would evoke an effect on the spectator.<sup>18</sup> Knight and Price had similar views for their vision of the Picturesque, but their estates were very different. Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins explained that 'if Price's Picturesque emerged from the heartland of Herefordshire, Knight's Picturesque erupted on its borders'.<sup>19</sup>

Knight was also not enamoured with the improvers and was dismissive of the irregular gardens created by Brown. In the same year as Price's essay, Knight published his poem, *The Landscape a Didactic Poem*, addressed to Price.<sup>20</sup> This long and amusing poem in rhyming couplets showed Knight's dislike and sarcastic dismissal of the improvers such as Brown as well as the clients, the landowners. This is evident in the following extracts:

...For well we know this sacrifice is made,  
Not to his taste, but to his vain parade;  
And all it does, is but to shew combin'd  
His wealth inland, and poverty in mind

Though the old system against nature stood,  
At least in this, 'twas negatively good:-  
Inclos'd by walls, and terraces, and mounds,  
Its mischiefs were confin'd to narrow bounds;

...But here once more ye rural muses, weep  
The ivy'd balustrades, and terrace steep;  
Walls, mellow'd into harmony by times  
O'er which fantastic creepers us'd to climb;

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<sup>18</sup> C. Stumpf-Condry and S. J. Skedd, 'Knight, Richard Payne (1751-1824)', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins, *The Picturesque Landscape Vision of Georgian Herefordshire* (Nottingham: Department of Geography, University of Nottingham, Chas. Goater & Sons, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> R. P. Knight, *The Landscape a Didactic Poem in three books, addressed to Uvedale Price Esq.* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1794).

While statues, labyrinths and alleys, pent  
Within their bounds, at least were innocent!  
Our modern taste, alas! No limit knows:-

...Curse on the shrubbery's insipid scenes!  
Of tawdry fringe encircling vapid greens;  
Where incongruities so well unite,  
That nothing can by accident be right;

... Prim gravel walks, through which we winding go,  
In endless serpentine that nothing show;  
Till tir'd I ask, *Why this eternal round?*  
And the pert gard'ner says, '*Tis pleasure ground*'.<sup>21</sup>

With his poem Knight was clearly in favour of the formal garden. Further in his *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* published in 1806 he made an interesting point in favour of the terrace, 'a terrace enriches the foreground, and serves as a basement for the house to stand upon, giving it importance'.<sup>22</sup> He thought such decorations were rather old fashioned but as tastes change, he wrote 'at no great distance this will become new again'.<sup>23</sup> Knight's improvements to his grounds are shown in an illustration dated 1780 (Figure 5) where the foreground looked flat. This was endorsed by a comment made by the Revd James Plumptre who following his visit to Foxley in 1799 went the next day to Downton Castle and wrote, 'the great defect was the flat appearance of the whole'.<sup>24</sup> A more discerning visitor, Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838) of Stourhead also visiting in 1799 said, 'that the house has great variety in its architecture', and that the owner had laid out grounds 'according to the true dictates of nature'.<sup>25</sup> Hoare went on to mention that the house was 'placed on a natural terrace with a broad gravel walk before it commanding a fine view'.<sup>26</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> Knight, *The Landscape Poem*, Book I p. 11, Book II pp. 24, 26, Book III p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (London: T. Payne, 1806), p. 221.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p 221.

<sup>24</sup> Plumptre, *James Plumptre's Britain*, p. 175.

<sup>25</sup> M. W. Thompson, Ed., *The Journeys of Sir Richard Colt Hoare through Wales and England 1703-1810* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983), p. 108.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* I am grateful to David Whitehead for this information.

Neale engraving circa 1824 (Figure 6) showed a natural terrace with a broad gravel walk and was perhaps what Hoare was referring to.<sup>27</sup>



Fig. 5. Downton Castle without the Terrace 1780. *The Picturesque Landscape Visions of Georgian Herefordshire*, 1994.



Fig. 6. The South Terrace at Downton Castle circa 1790s. *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen, in England, Wales and Ireland*, plate 46.

<sup>27</sup> J. P. Neale, *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, Second Series, Vol. 2 (London: Sherwood Jones, 1824-1829), p. 3, plate 46.



In the early years of the nineteenth century here were two influential, wealthy and educated gentlemen with vast estates, which they improved to their own Picturesque principles, dismissing the 'antics' of the landscape improvers and the removal of the old system of the formal garden. Price was more sensitive to the loss of his old garden, as it had been done by his own hand. Knight, although he had a natural terrace, was expecting the formal terrace to become fashionable again, which proved to be the case. Both Price and Knight's views of the old system of making gardens were to have a resonance throughout the coming century.

### **Humphry Repton – the middle ground**

Repton (1752-1818) had a view about the ancient garden; he felt that 'fashion had had its full influences on Gardening as on architecture importing models from foreign countries'. He was specific about Italy and Holland and went on to describe an Italian style of garden, which was in the ancient style, with 'balustraded terraces of masonry, magnificent flights of steps, arcades and architectural grottos, lofty clipped hedges with niches and recesses enriched by sculpture'.<sup>28</sup> His belief was that these gardens had been removed because they were too costly and the climate in England was not suited to this style as he wrote 'no trace remains of these gardens except in pictures of Italian artists'.<sup>29</sup>

Repton nevertheless did contradict himself as later he said, 'there is no part of my profession more difficult and troublesome than the attempt to modernize, *in part only*, those places, which have been formerly decorated by the line and square of GEOMETRIC TASTE'.<sup>30</sup> He explained that there are four requisites for the perfection of 'Landscape Gardening', which were in direct opposition to the principles of 'ancient gardening'.

The first of these principles was that the natural beauties must be displayed, hiding the natural defects, while in the principles of ancient gardening these beauties had no influence as it was the fashion to hide everything behind lofty walls. Secondly, there should have been an appearance of extent and freedom by hiding the boundaries,

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<sup>28</sup> H. Repton Esq., *An Enquiry into the Changes in Landscape Gardening*, (London: J. Taylor, 1806), pp. 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

but in the principles of ancient gardening these walls were never considered as defects but ornaments, with vases, palisades and 'expensive iron gates'. The third was that the interference of art however expensive must be concealed with the natural scenery, giving the appearance that it was a production of nature only; whereas the ancient principles were that the 'costly efforts of Art, by which Nature had been subdued' must be seen, the ground levelled, the water square or rounded into 'regular basins', the clipped trees demonstrating that nature has no place here, this being 'the formal hand of art'. Lastly the fourth, 'all objects of convenience and comfort were removed from near the house if they could not be made ornamental, but in the ancient principles, these offices were placed as near the house as possible'.<sup>31</sup>

This was an astute analysis of landscape gardening versus the formal garden, but as to Repton's stance as to which he favoured, it is difficult to assess as he took the middle ground. He made a comment that suggested the formal garden was right for its time as 'its symmetry in the works of art was perfectly justifiable under that style of gardening which confined within lofty walls the narrow inclosure ( appropriated to ancient grandeur'.<sup>32</sup>

### **Sir Walter Scott – loss, protest and memory**

Influenced by Price, Scott was another who regretted the loss of the formal garden (Figure 7). In March 1828, an article was published in *The Quarterly Review* and credited to Sir Henry Stuart (1759-1836) but it was later confirmed that this article was written by Scott, and by 1836 had been attributed to him.<sup>33</sup> Scott gave an overview of garden and landscape history, admitting he is not an expert but quoted from the poet John Milton (1608-1674) and Horace Walpole (1717-1797), a man of letters,

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<sup>31</sup> Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes in Landscape Gardening*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Sir Henry Stuart, Bart, LL.D F.R.S.E. & Co., 'Art .I.- The Planter's Guide; or a Practical Essay on the best Method of giving immediate effect to Wood, by the removal of large Trees and Underwood; being an attempt to place the Art on fixed Principles, and to apply it to general Purposes, useful and ornamental', *The Quarterly Review*, 37.74 (1828), 303-344. It has been confirmed that Scott was the author of this article. Email Dr Paul Barnaby, Edinburgh University Library to Tenneson, 05.05.2016 and 11.03.2021. The custom with *The Quarterly Review* was that articles were anonymous, but because of Scott's connection with the journal it was known he was the author. In 1836 this article appeared in Sir Walter Scott, *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott Bart, Vol. XXI, Periodical Criticism Vol. V, Miscellaneous & Co* (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1836), pp. 77-152.

whom he commended for his accuracy of information, wit and taste. He then discussed the work of William Kent (1685-1748) and Brown. It was evident that he had his doubts about Brown and his improvements as he said, 'it must be acknowledged that there exist gardens, the work of George London (1681-1714) and Henry Wise (1653-1738) and such persons as laid out grounds in the Dutch taste, which would be much better subjects for modification than for absolute destruction'. He then added in a sharper tone 'we are inclined to enter a protest against the hasty and ill-considered destruction of things which once destroyed cannot be restored'.<sup>34</sup>



Fig. 7. Sir Walter Scott by Sir Henry Raeburn, circa 1808. *The Abbotsford Trust*.

Scott was thus agreeing with both Price and Knight on the loss of the formal garden, and went on to direct his readers to Price's book so they could read for themselves Price's deep sense of loss and regret at the destruction of his own formal garden:

...described in a tone of exquisite feeling which leads that distinguished author to declare in favour of many parts of the old school of gardening and to argue for the preservation of the few remains of ancient magnificence that still exist by awakening the owner to a sense of their beauties.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Steuart, 'The Planter's Guide', p. 309.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

There was one small 'antique' garden, as Scott called it, that was important to him, Barncluith House in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, dated back to 1583 and was laid out by John Hamilton (no dates) of Barncluith. It was a garden of terraces on the banks of the River Avon (Figure 8). The house stood on the top of a high bank rising to a height of three hundred feet above the river. The garden on the west bank was laid out in five terraces running parallel to each other at different elevations. These were cut out of the bank and supported by stone walls.<sup>36</sup> Scott recalled walks of 'velvet turf and verdant alleys of yew, holly and its antique appearance' (Figure 9).<sup>37</sup>

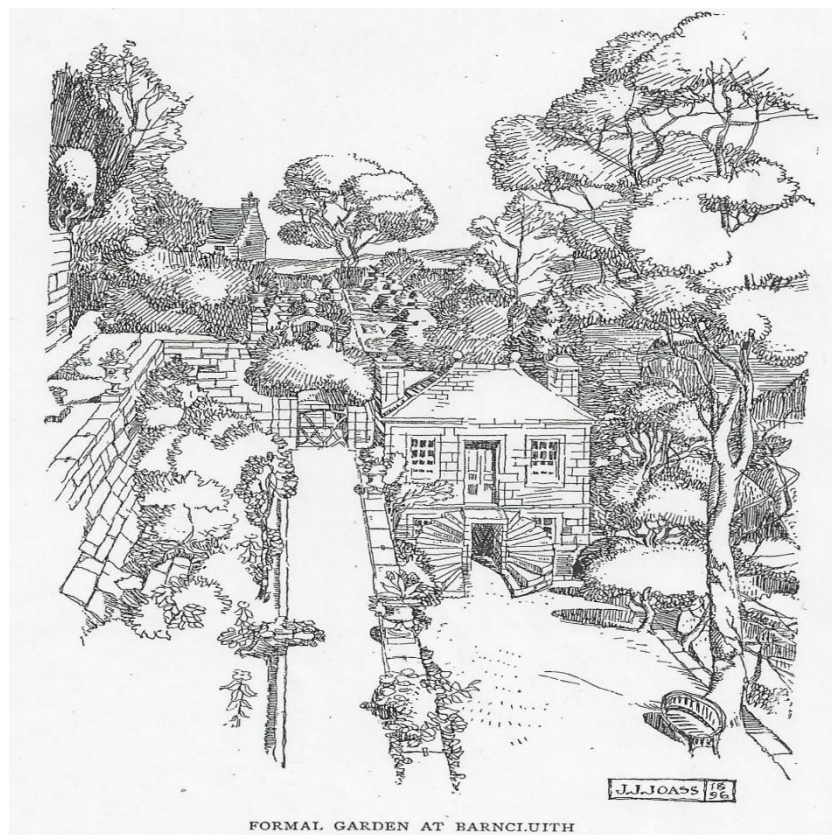


Fig. 8. The terrace gardens at Barncluith. *The Studio*, 1897.

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<sup>36</sup> John James Joass, 'On Gardening: with description of some formal gardens in Scotland', *The Studio*, 11.56 (1897), 165-176 (pp. 167-169).

<sup>37</sup> Steuart, 'The Planters Guide', p. 318.



Fig. 9. Barncluith, terraced gardens. *Country Life*, 1902.

This garden appeared in an 1897 article in *The Studio* on the formal gardens of Scotland by the Scottish architect John James Joass (1868-1952). Joass commented that many fine gardens of the formal style were laid down in Scotland in the seventeenth century and added praise to Scott's description of the garden. To illustrate the steepness and layout of the site he helped the reader with a pen and ink sketch of three aspects of the garden (Figure 10). The garden also appeared in an article in *Country Life* in 1902.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Joass, 'On Gardening', pp. 167,169. 'Barncluith, Hamilton, The Seat of Lord Ruthven', *Country Life*, 12.296 (1902), 303-306 (p. 304).

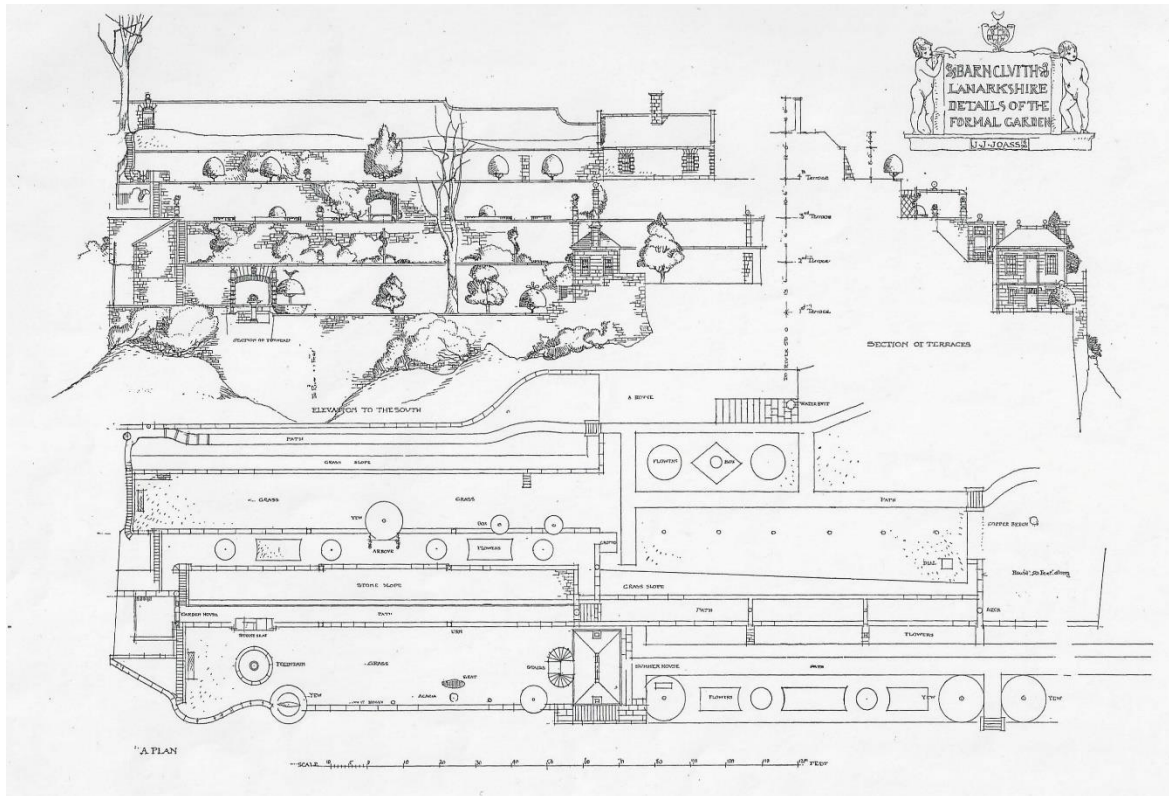


Fig. 10. Joass' pen and ink sketch of the layout of the garden at Barncluith. *The Studio*, 1897.

Barncluith appeared again in 1908 in a book on *Scottish Gardens*, compiled by Sir Herbert Maxwell (1845-1937), Scottish novelist, artist and horticulturalist, with illustrations by Mary G. W. Wilson (1856-1939).<sup>39</sup> Maxwell informed the reader that Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855), with her brother, the poet William (1770-1850) and their friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), visited Barncluith on a tour of Scotland in 1803, adding that she dismissed the garden in just one sentence.<sup>40</sup> Maxwell was mistaken as Miss Wordsworth appeared to have been enchanted with this ancient garden, its terraces one above the other, the box and yew trees cut in fantastic shapes, 'the flower beds, and gravel paths all in perfect harmony with the taste of our ancestors' (Figure 11).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sir Herbert Maxwell, *Scottish Gardens, Being a Representative Selection of Different Types Old and New* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), pp. 186-190.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>41</sup> Dorothy Wordsworth, *Recollections of a tour made in Scotland 1803, Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1803*, <<https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/usebook.wordsworth-scotland/index.html>> [accessed 16.02.2021].



Fig. 11. A watercolour of Barncluith by Mary Wilson. *Scottish Gardens Being a Representative Selection of Different Types, Old and New*, 1908.

Both the garden at Barncluith and Price had an impact on Scott when it came to his own garden at Abbotsford near Melrose. Elliott in *Victorian Gardens* suggested that Scott had initiated a revival by filling the garden with architectural ornaments.<sup>42</sup> This view was endorsed by A. A. Tait, who wrote that Scott 'liked the formal for being old and as a piece of history', and it was this that drove him to 'load his own courtyard garden with bric a brac of architectural history'.<sup>43</sup> Today Kirsty Archer-Thompson of the Abbotsford Trust suggests that Tait's explanation is too simplistic, Scott created a series of linked garden rooms each having its own distinctive character, moral undertones, historical symbolism as well as functional purpose.<sup>44</sup> Archer-Thompson pointed out that Scott had created a formal garden around the house, perhaps

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<sup>42</sup> Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, p. 67. For more on Scott's fictional gardens see, Brent Elliott, 'Gardens in the Waverley Novels', *Hortus*, 130 (2019), 60-76.

<sup>43</sup> Tait, *The Landscape Garden in Scotland*, p. 208.

<sup>44</sup> Kirsty Archer-Thompson, Collection and Interpretation Manager, Abbotsford Trust, email to Tenneson, 25.02.2021.

heeding Price's earlier comment that 'walled gardens and compartments near the house are to be greatly wished for' (Figures 12, 13).<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 12. A photograph of Abbotsford by Fox Talbot 1844. *Getty Open Content Program*. <<https://gettyimages.co.uk/details/new-photo/abbotsford-1844>> [accessed 05.2021].



Fig. 13. Abbotsford 2021.

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<sup>45</sup> Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price*, p. 301.



The memory of an old garden touched Scott as in his *Quarterly Review* article he reminisced about 'a pleasing recollection' of a garden planted around the beginning of the eighteenth century. He continued that it was by 'one of the Millers, related to the author of *Gardeners Dictionary*'; not being sure who had designed the garden he added 'or aught we know by himself', meaning Philip Miller.<sup>46</sup> Scott described this garden in great detail as he said for some time it had been his abode, 'the long straight walks betwixt hedges of yew and hornbeam' and a bower and arbour accessed through a 'little maze of contorted walks called a labyrinth'. He went on to recall the splendid trees, in particular a *platanus*, the oriental plane, and 'other fine ornamental trees which had attained great size', also 'there were seats and trellis-walks and a banqueting house'. The presence of the banqueting house suggests that this was a garden made sometime in the seventeenth century. He continued 'we visited it lately after an absence of many years, the air of retreat and seclusion was entirely gone, the huge *platanus* had died', adding 'like most of its kind the hedges were cut down, the trees were stubbed up and the whole character of the place destroyed, that we were glad we could leave'.<sup>47</sup>

Writing about this old garden Scott was articulate and through this summed up his feelings of loss and protest, but unlike his historical and romantic novels he cannot write a happy ending for this sad lost garden.

### **The Anonymous R – the disappearance of old gardens**

In January 1822 *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* carried an article by the anonymous R on 'An Old English Garden'. It is not known who R is but this three

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<sup>46</sup> Scott, *The Quarterly Review*, p. 309. Philip Miller (1691-1771) was the author of *The Gardeners Dictionary*. Philip Miller, *The Gardeners Dictionary; containing the methods of cultivating... the kitchen; fruit and flower garden, as also, the physick garden, wilderness, conservatory and vineyard;... interspersed with the history of plants,... the name of... the... species in Latin and English, Together with accounts of the nature and use of barometers, thermometers, and hygrometers...and of the origins... meteors, etc.* (London: Printed for the Author, 1733).

<sup>47</sup> Steuart, 'The Planters Guide', pp. 309-310. This abode could be the Garden House at Kelso, the home of his Aunt Jenny. Scott spent summers there and wrote of the gardens with a 'huge platanus-tree in the ruins of what had been intended for an old fashioned arbour'. Kelso & District Amenity Society, *Walter Scott's Kelso*, pp. 1-27, p. 8. <<https://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/publications/criticism/scotandkelsobooklet.pdf>> [accessed 04.01.2022].

page article was a plea and a reminder to save the lost gardens of one's youth. The article was signed off with 'Trust me, a gardener is a very happy man'.<sup>48</sup> He took the reader back to his childhood as his 'earliest play-ground was an old English garden', remembering long green walks, with well-trimmed hedges, like verdant walls, sundials, statues of gods and goddesses and alcoves. 'It is one of my pleasantest amusements though every relic of it is now destroyed' (Figure 14).<sup>49</sup>

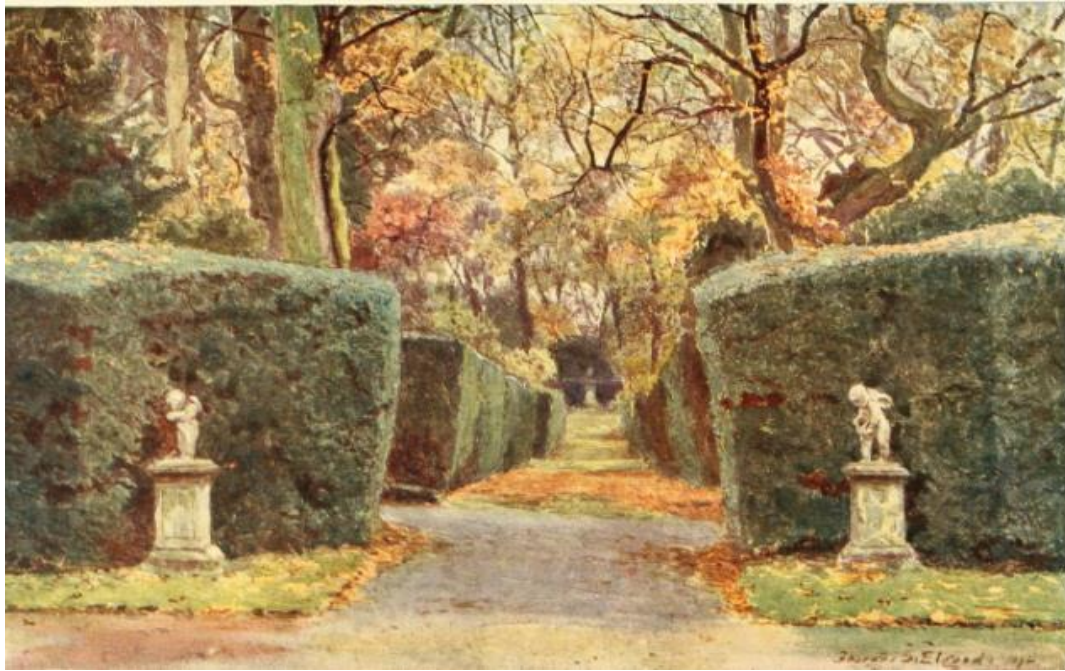


Fig. 14. A suggestion for R's Old English Garden. A watercolour of Melbourne Hall by George Elgood. *Classic English Gardens*, 1904.

R knew about gardens as he mentioned Lord Bacon, 'who first planted a garden; and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures' and Alexander Pope's (1688-1744) celebrated garden at Twickenham 'that has been destroyed through sacrilegious hands', with only the grotto left 'as a true monument to English taste'.<sup>50</sup> He talked of William Shenstone (1714-1763) and his garden of art at The Leasowes 5 and the pillars, urns and fountains that were left, but the 'rectilinear disposition of more ancient times was abolished'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> R, 'An Old English Garden', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 4.13 (1822), 224-227 (p. 224). The Wellesley Index of Victorian Periodicals suggests that R could be Henry Roscoe (1800-1836).

<sup>49</sup> R, 'An Old English Garden', p. 224.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

He then came to the point of his article, the destruction of the old formal garden. R informed the reader that 'towards the middle of the last century, a grievous and visible change took place in our horticultural system', adding that 'the loss of the straight common-sense gravel walks that are now undulations and meanders of a German tobacco-pipe'. He deplored that the 'venerable screens of yew and holly were swept away root and branch' and that 'the ruins of the alcoves served to fill in the sunk fences, leaving the gentry surrounded by grounds which only seems to form a portion of their parks'.<sup>52</sup> He then addressed the editor with 'I have been writing about what many of our readers, in all probability, never beheld, for these fine old places are disappearing year after year'.<sup>53</sup>

Here again was someone in the early part of the nineteenth century mourning the loss of the 'old formal gardens' and could do little about it as he believed they were disappearing. He was another voice, joining Price, Knight and Scott in protest, in regret and in loss.

### **John Claudius Loudon – commentator on the history of gardens**



Fig. 15. John Claudius Loudon. *In Search of English Gardens, The Travels of John Claudius Loudon and his Wife Jane.*

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<sup>52</sup> R, 'An Old English Garden', p. 226.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Another Scot, Loudon, farmer, writer, botanist and landscape gardener, was an important and influential voice for gardening in the first half of the nineteenth century. He devised a style of gardening called the 'Gardenesque' but made his name through his considerable literary output rather than through garden making (Figure 15). The range of his literary works included horticulture, plants, trees and shrubs, architecture, from villas to cottages to greenhouses, how to manage country residences and estates and instruction for young gardeners. He not only compiled but made available this information to the public through books, encyclopaedias, manuals, catalogues and gardening periodicals.<sup>54</sup>

In 1813, keen to understand more about gardening and farming in other countries, Loudon undertook a number of journeys in war torn Europe. These journeys would have been difficult and not have been without incident as he went via Poland to Moscow soon after Napoleon's retreat. At the start of his career Loudon called the formal garden the 'Ancient' style and treated them as 'historical oddities' but after his European tour he appeared to have more respect for them.<sup>55</sup> By the 1820s he had visited many of the great formal gardens of Europe and compiled this considerable knowledge into what could be called an 'historical garden travelogue', 'Book I, History of gardening among ancient and modern nations', which appeared in the first edition of his *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* published in 1822.<sup>56</sup>

Each of the five chapters in the travelogue is presented under headings of design and taste, cultivation of plants, kitchen gardens, the cultivation of trees and of the garden's present stage and progress. He started with the 'fabulous Gardens of Antiquity' and then on to Persian Gardens, to Grecian Gardens, to Roman Gardens and showed an illustration of Pliny's Tuscan Villa (Figure 16), which he claimed gave 'the tone to the European taste in gardening up to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> For a full list of Loudon's works see Elizabeth B. MacDougall, Ed., 'John Claudius Loudon: A list of his publications', *John Claudius Loudon and the early Nineteenth Century in England* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1980), pp. 125-133. The Gardenesque style was a planting design in which individual plants should be planted unaccompanied so that their intrinsic virtues could be best displayed. Patrick Taylor, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Garden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 177-178.

<sup>55</sup> I am grateful to Dr Tom Turner for this observation. Email to Tenneson 22.02.2021.

<sup>56</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1822), pp. 3-118.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

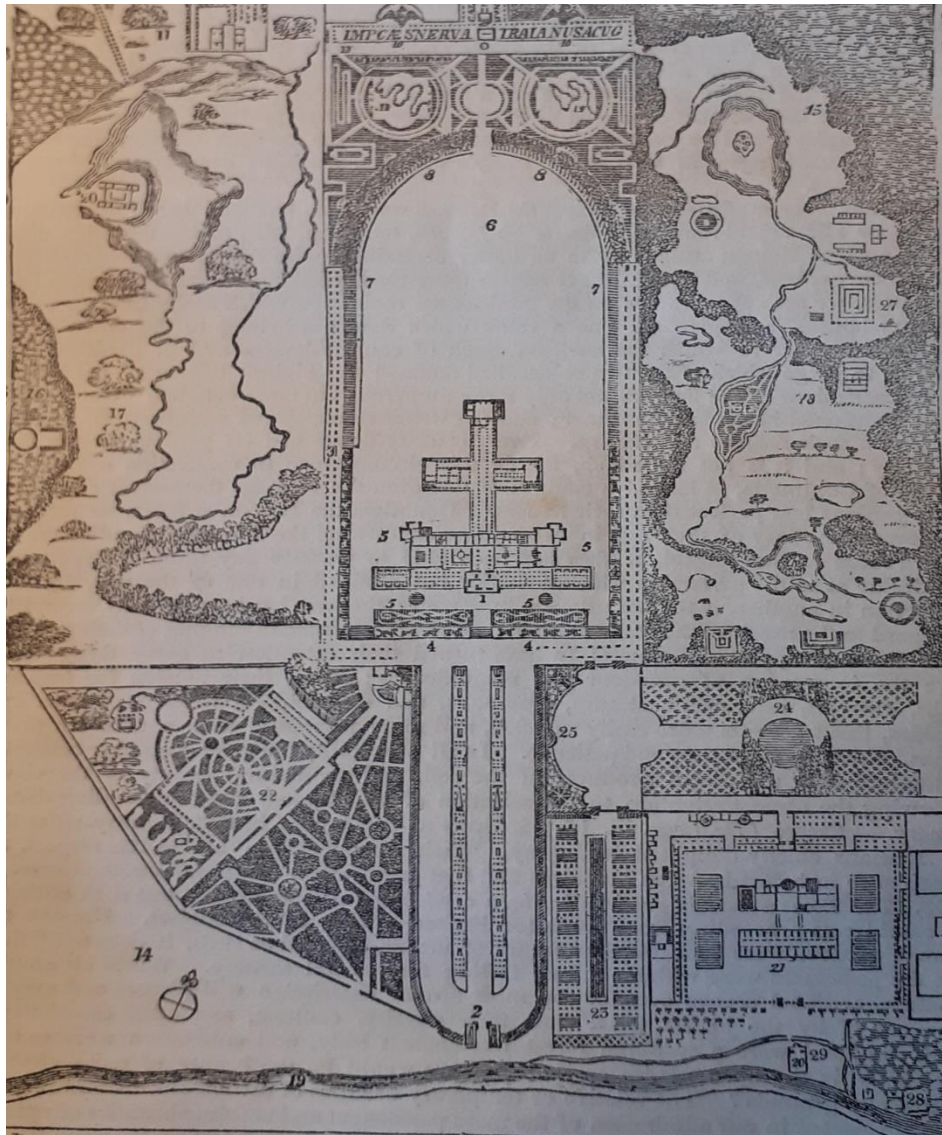


Fig. 16. Loudon used this illustration of Pliny's Villa from Robert Castell, 1728. *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn., 1830.

Bringing the reader to the present state of 'Gardening in Italy', Loudon highlighted the 'ancient celebrity' of Isola Bella on Lake Maggiore, then on to the great gardens at Caserta just outside Naples, to Holland and the botanic gardens of Amsterdam and Groningen, which 'merit particular notice'. To France and the gardens of Le Notre, where he wrote 'Le Notre was the most celebrated gardener that probably ever existed', to Josephine and her garden at Malmaison 'laid out avowedly in the English Style'.<sup>58</sup> Of Germany he informed the reader that 'the French style of gardening has prevailed in Germany from the earliest period of history' but added details of an

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-37.

English style garden, 'Garten de Schwobber', laid out in the 1750s.<sup>59</sup> Still at pace he moved on to Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, saying very little, and then he came to Russia, St Petersburg and Catherine the Great's garden at 'Zarskoje-selo' (Tsarskoe Selo). He recalled an ancient garden near Moscow 'where the hedges and alleys are chiefly formed of spruce fir which are shorn and seem to flourish under the shears'.<sup>60</sup> Then after a quick trip to Poland, Spain and Portugal, coming via European Turkey, he arrived at chapter four 'Gardening in the British Isles'.<sup>61</sup>

In this chapter Loudon gave the reader an overview of garden making from the Romans in Britain to the present day, the 1820s. Yet again he went at pace, Henry VIII's palace at Nonsuch and the royal gardens, quoting the comments of German traveller Paul Hentzner, 'groves ornamented with trellis-work, cabinets of verdure, and walks embowered with trees, columns and pyramids of marble'.<sup>62</sup> From the diary of John Evelyn (1620-1706) he added some pithy quotes about his visits in the 1650s to Ham House, Kew, Wilton and Althorp.<sup>63</sup> There were illustrations from Leonard Knyff (1650-1722) and Joannes Kip (1652/3-1722) and Loudon included a print of the garden at Chatsworth, the home of the Duke of Devonshire, which was laid out by George London and Henry Wise in the early 1700s (Figure 17).<sup>64</sup>

He named the 'authors of the modern style of gardening', the professors and artists who established this modern style, as Charles Bridgeman (1690-1738), Kent, Brown, Thomas Wright (1711-186) and Emes and attributed to them what he termed as 'the partial corruption of the modern style'. Loudon expressed his view that 'the rage for improvement meant that the demand for the artists exceeded the regular supply, thus an inferior and poor article was brought to the market'.<sup>65</sup> Loudon appreciated the art of the 'modern style' but only in the hands of a 'professor or artist'; at the same

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>60</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (1830), p. 56.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. Paul Hentzner (1558-1623) was a German Lawyer who visited England in the late Elizabethan era and wrote about his travels. Paul Hentzner, *A Journey into England in the year M.D.XC.VIII* (Strawberry Hill: 1757).

<sup>63</sup> William Bray, Ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn Esq., F.R.S. from 1641-1705-6 with Memoir* (London: Frederick Warne, 1818).

<sup>64</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1830), p. 71. Johannes Kip, Leonard Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata or Views of several of the royal palaces as also of the principal seats of the nobility and gentry of Great Britain elegantly engraved on ...copper plates*. [Engraved mainly by Joannes Kip, after drawings by Leonard Knyff] (London: 1720, 1740), first published in 1702.

<sup>65</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1830), p. 77.

time he did however endorse both Price and Knight and spoke out at some of the criticism directed at them in regard to the Picturesque.<sup>66</sup> Finally he took the reader to Repton. Loudon was dismissive of Repton's talent which was more 'of cultivation than genius', anxious to follow the fashion of the day rather than to lead; 'to gratify the preconceived wishes of his employers, and improve on the fashion of the day, than to strike out grand and original beauties'.<sup>67</sup>

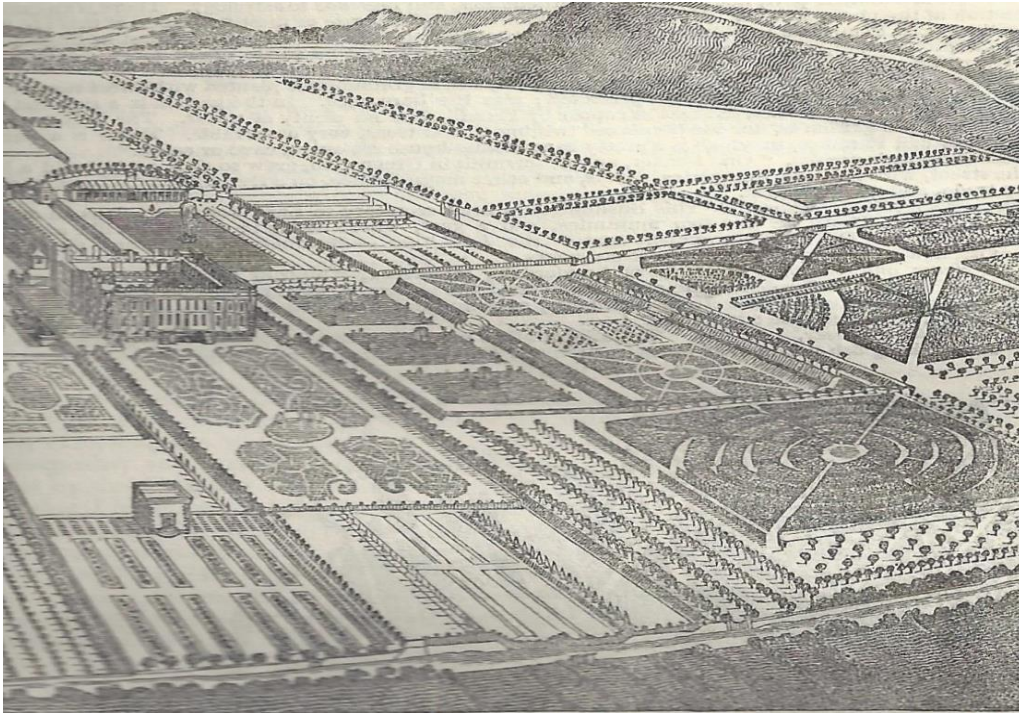


Fig. 17. An illustration of Chatsworth House, which appeared in *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, 1830.

Loudon was keen to educate his readers; not only did he provide all the information on the history of gardens but added a list on the 'British Works on Gardening' with a short biography of each, naming such people as Thomas Tusser (1524-1589) and his *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry* published in 1557, Sir William Temple (1628-1699) and his *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus* in 1685, and George Mason (1735-1806) with his *An Essay on Design in Gardening* published in 1768.<sup>68</sup>

Renowned for changing his mind Loudon did so several times throughout his career. He did have a view on the improvers as he wrote that 'landscape gardening is an

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>67</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1830), p. 80.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 1099-1131.

improvement on geometric gardening is simply a misapplication of language'. So for him it was perhaps just a question of name, as he thought it 'absurd to despise the ancient style' because its beauties were different and he stressed they were 'equally perfect in their kind as those of the modern style'. His original thought was that these formal gardens were 'historical oddities' but having written his first copy of the *Encyclopaedia* it seemed his view became more balanced, not favouring either the modern or the old system.<sup>69</sup>

Loudon's books and periodicals continued to be very successful, his *Encyclopaedia* went into reprint 17 times up to 1878, maintaining his influence for at least 43 years after his death. Elliott pointed out that the historical section of Loudon's 1822 *Encyclopaedia* 'surpassed in scope and insight anything produced before, and most things since'.<sup>70</sup> What Loudon did with this history was to provide gravitas and credibility to all styles and types of gardens, including the formal garden.

### **Samuel Felton – loss and an interest in the gardens of the past**

In 1827, Samuel Felton - and little was known of Felton other than Loudon's comment that he was one of the most enthusiastic and extraordinary men in the gardening way who we have ever met - published a short article in Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine*.<sup>71</sup> Felton's article 'Garden Antiquities' was about a print for sale of Wollaton House near Nottingham, describing the house and garden as from the period of King William and that the architecture was Elizabethan.<sup>72</sup> He dated the illustration at 1696 and that it was for sale at 100 guineas from Wand's in Noel Street (Figures 18, 19). Felton thought that the illustration was of no great monetary value, but he stressed

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<sup>69</sup> Turner, email 22.02.2021. T. D. T. Turner, 'Loudon's Stylistic Development', *Journal of Garden History*, 2 (1982), 175-188 (pp.175,180). For more information on Loudon see Melanie Louise Simo, *Loudon and the Landscape, From County Seat to Metropolis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>70</sup> Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, p. 55.

<sup>71</sup> Conductor (J. C. Loudon), 'Garden Antiquities', *The Gardener's Magazine*, II (1827), 481-482, (p. 481).

<sup>72</sup> Wollaton House was built for Sir Francis Willoughby between 1580-1588 and the 'surveyor' was Robert Smythson. Mark Girouard, *Robert Smythson and the Architecture of the Elizabethan Era* (London: Country Life, 1966), pp. 75-95.



that its real value was as 'a portrait of an ancient garden' which he claimed was now unique.<sup>73</sup>

This print came from a major work called *Britannia Illustrata or views of several of the Queen's Palaces, as also of the principal Seats of the Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain, curiously engraven on 80 copper plates*, published in 1707 by Kip and Knyff.<sup>74</sup> This was the most important topographical publication of this period, as it still is today. Using the highly skilled technique of a 'birds eye' view, it included illustrations of most of the great gardens from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century in England, many of which were laid out by London and Wise.<sup>75</sup>

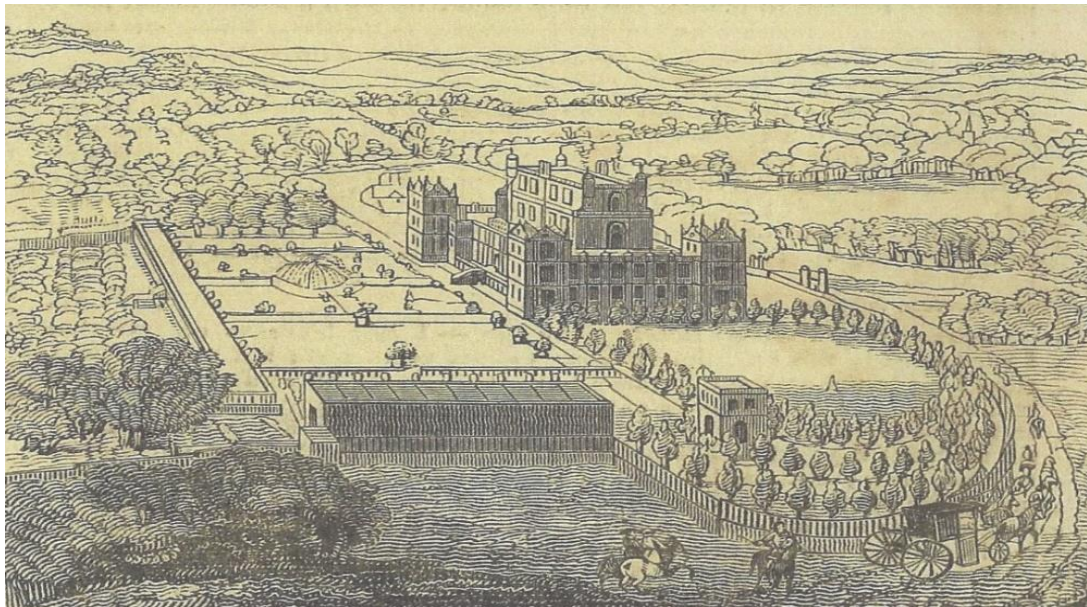


Fig. 18. The illustration of Wollaton House near Nottingham. *The Gardener's Magazine*, 1827.

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<sup>73</sup> Loudon, 'Garden Antiquities', (p. 481).

<sup>74</sup> J. Kip, L. Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata or Views of Several of the Queen's Palaces as also of the Principal Seats of the Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain, curiously engraven on 80 Copper Plates* (London: D. Mortier, 1707), p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> Roy Strong, *The Artist and the Garden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 14.

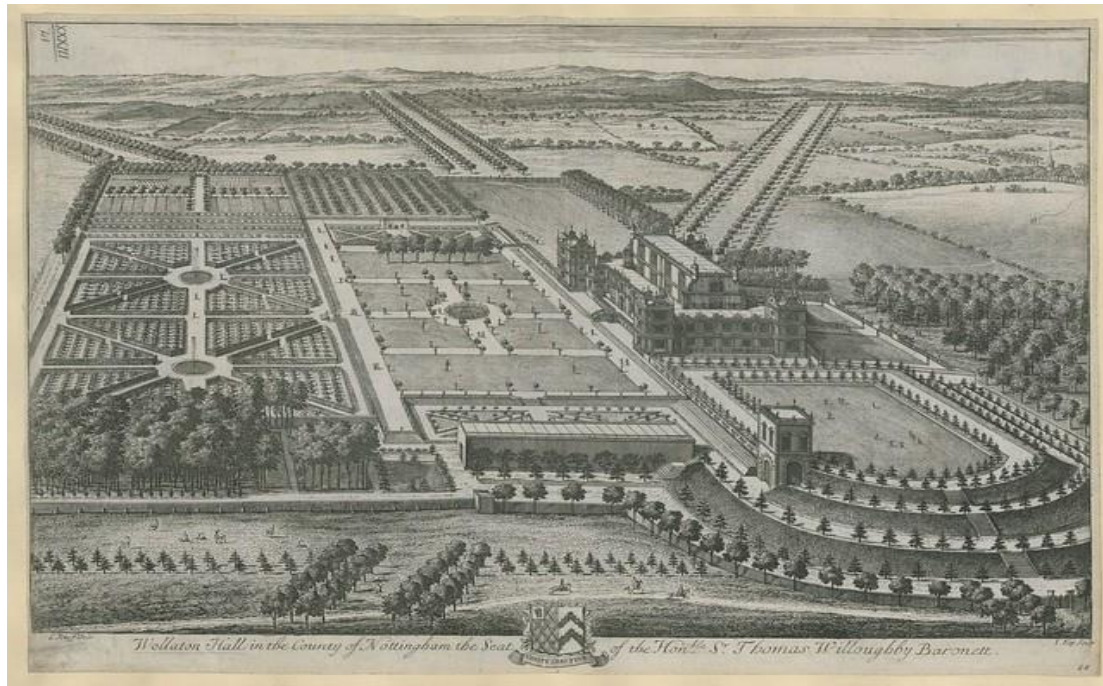


Fig. 19. The Kip print of Wollaton House published by Joseph Smith. King George III's Topographical Collection. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/50265020181>> [accessed 29.06.2022].

Felton was to have a further mention in *The Gardener's Magazine* in 1829 on the publication of his book *Gleanings on Gardens, Chiefly Respecting Those of the Ancient Style in England*. Loudon wrote 'Our excellent friend has here collected a number of curious extracts respecting old English Gardens, Scotch gardens, burial gardens, cottage gardens to Pope's Villa in Twickenham'.<sup>76</sup> Felton in compiling this volume had, as Loudon suggested, taken extracts from many of the old texts, treatises and views on gardens including *Britannia Illustrata*. Also, and this can explain why Loudon found Felton so excellent, he had included much of Loudon's own writings from his *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*. The loss of the old gardens was very much on Felton's mind as in his own text he referred to 'that distinguished writer on the Picturesque, Sir Uvedale Price' and his 'feeling of loss at the destruction of many of our gardens in the old style', Felton was arguing for the preservation of the few remaining gardens in their 'ancient magnificence'.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Conductor, J. C. Loudon, 'Felton's Gleanings on Gardens', *The Gardener's Magazine*, V (1829), 193-194 (p. 193).

<sup>77</sup> S. Felton, *Gleanings on Gardens Chiefly Respecting Those of Ancient Style in England*, (London: privately printed for Arthur L. Humphreys, 1897), pp. 1-2. This had been previously published in 1829. Mr Felton's other book is S. Felton, *On the Portraits of English Authors on Gardening with Biographical Notices* (London: Effingham Wilson, Joseph Onwhyn, 1830).

## The Old Fashioned Gardens – memory

A few years later, in 1838, in a short article in *The Penny Satirist* called 'The Old Fashioned Gardens', another anonymous author recalled the elements of such a garden, 'the terrace broad and arranged at right angles, lawns like emerald green velvet carpets, fountains stood here and there, walks with groups of marble statues and richly ornamented vases cut in purest alabaster. There are verdant alleys formed by green wall like hedges, neatly clipped and leafy to the very earth' (Figure 20). There was little praise for the new school of landscape gardeners as the author was clearly on the side of the designers of the old fashioned garden, writing 'they understood better what was required for the enclosed grounds where a mansion stands'. His memory was fresh as he recalled the features as if he had seen them yesterday.<sup>78</sup>



Fig. 20. A suggestion for the green wall hedges, a watercolour by George Elgood, Melbourne Hall. With kind permission from The John Elsey Collection.

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<sup>78</sup> 'The Old Fashioned Gardens', *The Penny Satirist*, 2.68 (1838), (p. 4).

## Loudon's guide to old English gardens – not all gardens had been lost!

Loudon's influence continued. A further section in his *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* gave readers a guide to important residences and their gardens from county to county. Dating from 1822 this was probably one of the first guides of English gardens and from this section it can be established what still existed in the old formal style, the 'ancient' taste. Loudon on occasions mentioned and praised the work of Brown, Emes and Repton, but there is also regret, for example Bretby Park in Derbyshire. Here he reported 'a fine old structure was taken down recently with gardens disposed after the plan of Versailles, with terraces, statues and fountains'.<sup>79</sup> The gardens Loudon mentioned that are in the 'ancient taste' are listed below and importantly show that not all had been swept away by the improvers:

- Sussex - *Glynde*. A noble pile of Elizabethan architecture with a terrace commanding a fine view of the surrounding country.<sup>80</sup>
- Kent - *Penshurst Place*. A castellated pile of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century; the park now reduced to 400 acres.<sup>81</sup> (Loudon did not mention the existence of any formal gardens, these were to come later in the late 1850s, brought back by Devey who revived the formal gardens at Penshurst Place from a 1702 engraving.)
- Kent – *Knowle Park (Knole)*. The pleasure-grounds, for the greater part remain in their original taste and contain some fine old limes, cedars, and other trees.<sup>82</sup>
- *Hertfordshire - Hempstead Bury*. A neat house and pleasant grounds in a mixed style between the geometric and modern manner.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1822), p. 1240. Historic England, Bretby Hall, Park and Garden, Grade II 1001382. The eighteenth century house was surrounded by a complex scheme of formal gardens. An illustration of the gardens appears in *Britannia Illustrata*, plates 60 and 61.

<sup>80</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1822), p. 1230. Historic England, Glynde Place, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000307. The principal terrace runs north and extends 100m.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1231. Historic England, Penshurst Place, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000153.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1231. Historic England, Knole Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000183.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1233. Historic England, now called The Bury, Grade II\* 1262960, no mention of any gardens remaining.

- *Buckinghamshire - Hall Barn.* The grounds were laid out by Edmund Waller the poet in the ancient style, verging into a sort of wildness at the extremities. At present it is rather neglected.<sup>84</sup>
- *Oxfordshire - Heythrop Park.* A superb mansion in the Italian style. The grounds chiefly in the ancient taste, with curious artificial cascades.<sup>85</sup>
- *Wiltshire - Lake House.* A respectable and truly picturesque edifice with bay windows, gables, Yew hedges, terraces &c in the genuine style of the last age.<sup>86</sup>
- *Staffordshire – Ingestre Hall.* A respectable Elizabethan edifice, surrounded by grounds in the ancient style.<sup>87</sup>
- *Warwickshire – Bilston Hall.* The gardens are extensive and preserved in all formality of the old taste.<sup>88</sup>
- *Rutlandshire - Exton Hall.* A Grand Elizabethan edifice, with a park of 1510 acres, planted in the ancient style by Loudon and Wise. The gardens have long been famous, and the water and cascades much admired.<sup>89</sup>
- *Oxfordshire - Wroxton (Abbey).* A building in the abbey style of considerable antiquity; the geometric style of gardening is kept up in every improvement introduced in the pleasure grounds.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 1233. Historic England, Hall Barn, Grade II\* 1160418.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 1236. Historic England, Heythrop Park, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000489. There is a series of seven cascades dating from the eighteenth century.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 1234. Historic England, Lake House, Park and Garden, Grade II 1001237. The garden was formally laid out with a walled garden. From the 1920s, the gardens were extensively reworked. Loudon and other visitors in the nineteenth century would have seen the 'style of the last age'.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 1239. Historic England, Ingestre Hall, Grade II\* 1242893.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 1239. Not listed. No trace.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 1241. Historic England, Exton Park, Park and Garden, Grade II 1000960. Elements of the garden remain.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 1236. Historic England, Wroxton Abbey, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000466. There is no trace remaining of the geometric style garden.

- *Herefordshire - Holme Lacey*. The grounds pleasant; the old garden on the model of that at Hampton Court, Middlesex, with a spacious terrace, its bounds with yews formerly clipped in shapes.<sup>91</sup>
- *Yorkshire – Bramham Park*. A stately mansion; the grounds laid out in the last century, in the ancient style, afford a good specimen of geometrical gardening.<sup>92</sup>
- *Derbyshire - Haddon Hall*. The park was ploughed up many years ago; the terrace-gardens remain and consist of terraces ranged one above another, each having a stone balustrade (Figure 21).<sup>93</sup>

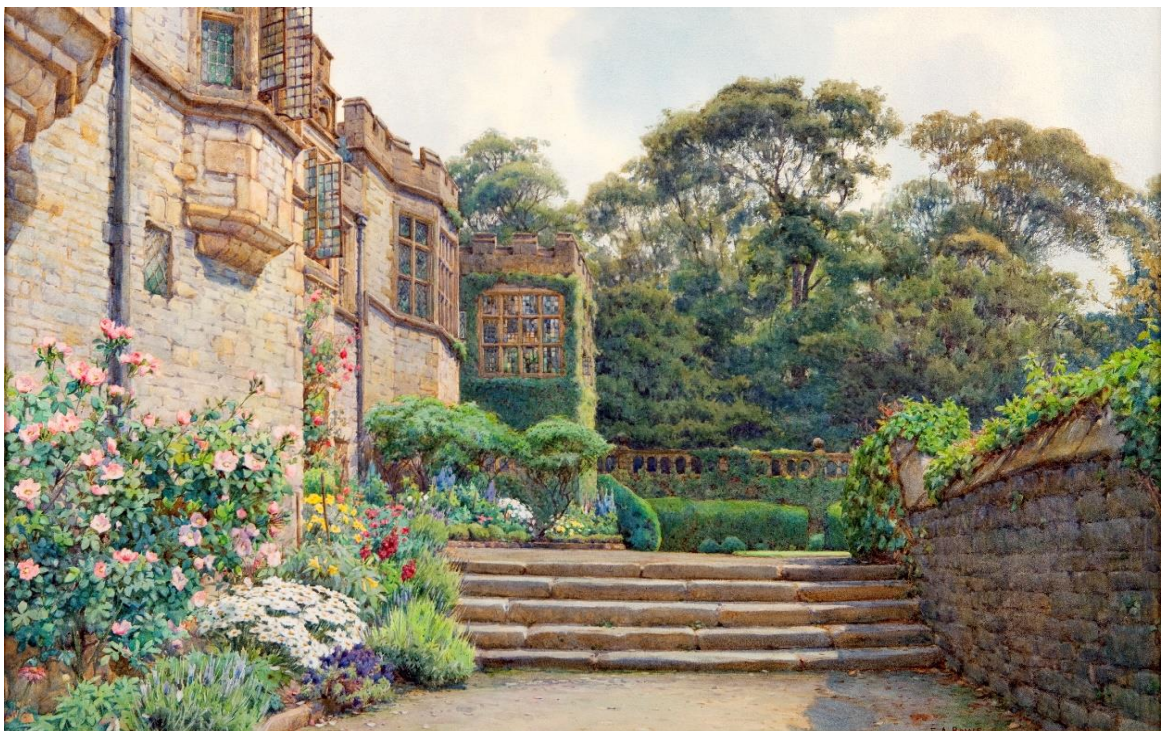


Fig. 21. The terraces at Haddon Hall, a watercolour by Arthur Rowe, 1898. *With kind permission from The John Eisey Collection.*

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1238. Historic England, Holme Lacey, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000500. Terraces and yews remain.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1240. Historic England, Bramham Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000546.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1240. Historic England, Haddon Hall, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000679. The terraces remain.

- Yorkshire - Wentworth Castle. Near the house the grounds indicate the remains of the geometric style and contain some fine cedars and other exotics and a flower garden of embroidery (Figure 22).<sup>94</sup>

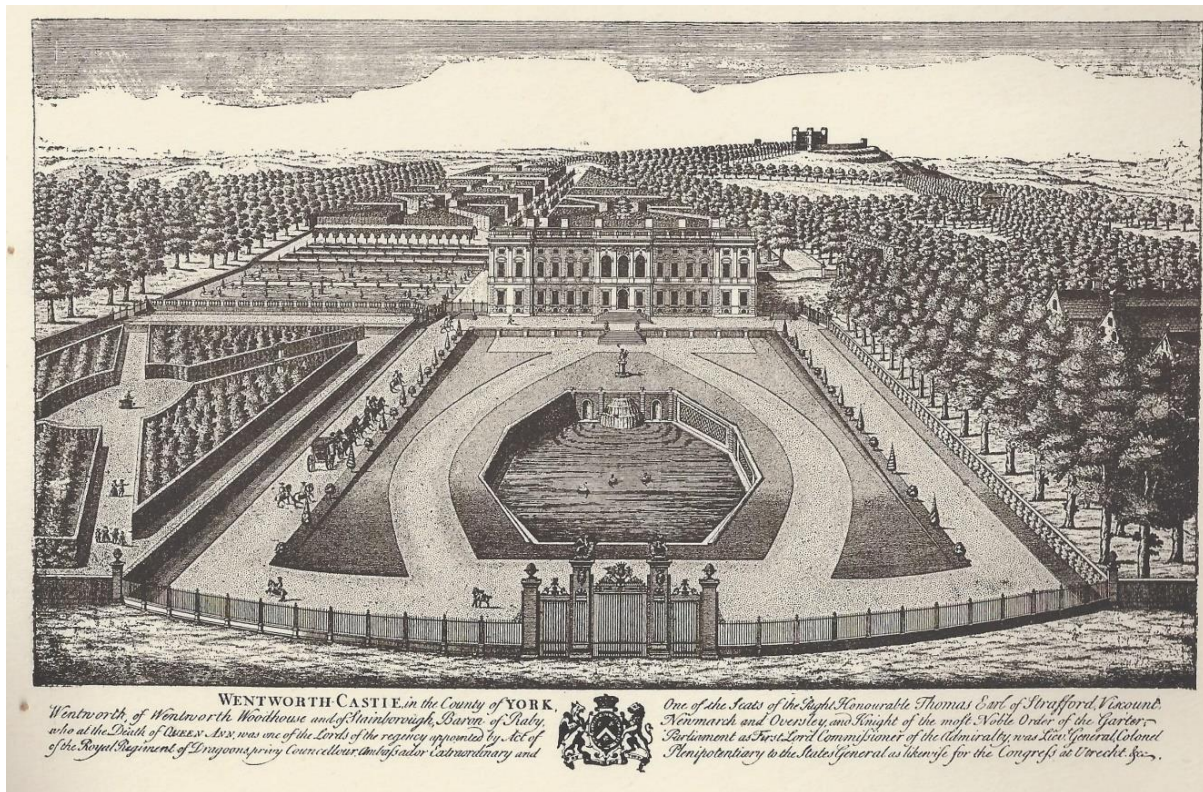


Fig. 22. Wentworth Castle, Thomas Badeslade, circa 1730. *English Houses & Gardens in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, A Series of Bird's-eye Views reproduced from Contemporary Engravings by Kip, Badeslade, Harris and Others, 1904.*

### The travel writers and their recollections of old gardens

Loudon's guide to English gardens in the ancient style was augmented by the recollections of travellers around England during the early years of the nineteenth century.

#### William Cobbett

William Cobbett (1763-1835), farmer, gardener and political writer, took a series of tours around the country between 1821 and 1832 spreading his message of 'universal manhood suffrage' as a way to solve the economic problems following the

<sup>94</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1822), p. 1242. Historic England, Wentworth Castle, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000425.

Napoleonic wars. From these tours, his political thoughts were published in a periodical called the *Political Register* and, for the more social part of his tours, his conversations with gentlemen, farmers, tradesmen, women and children were compiled into a separate volume called *Rural Rides*.<sup>95</sup>

In his *Rural Rides* around the southern counties, although there were only passing mentions of gardens, there was one in Surrey that Cobbett thought was the 'prettiest in England', Albury Park, dating back to the mid seventeenth century. In 1637 the Manor of Albury passed to the trustees for Thomas Howard, second Earl of Arundel (1585-1646) and after his death in 1646 the estate came to Henry, later to be created sixth Duke of Norfolk (1628-1684). Henry enlarged the manor house and made major alterations to the gardens with the assistance of John Evelyn (1620-1706) (Figure 23).<sup>96</sup>

By the early nineteenth century Albury Park was owned by Henry Drummond (1786-1860), banker, politician and founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Cobbett had written that when entering the village of Albury he came to the residence of Mr Drummond. Having heard a great deal of this park and the gardens and, thinking there must be a way through to his next destination, he devised a scheme. He sent a message to Mr Drummond asking for permission to pass through the park and see the gardens; this was not only granted 'but in the most obliging manner'.<sup>97</sup>

'The terrace', designed by Evelyn in the mid seventeenth century, 'is by far the finest thing of the sort that I ever saw' wrote Cobbett when describing the garden, adding 'it is a quarter of a mile long, between thirty and forty feet wide of the finest green sward, and as level as a die' (Figure 24).<sup>98</sup> He talked of a pleached hedge of yew as the bottom branches had been removed leaving a solid head to the hedge a 'quarter of a mile long'. He went on to describe a 'basin' in the middle of the terrace with a spring that flowed under the terrace and across the garden as seen in this illustration from *Country Life* of 1901 (Figure 25).<sup>99</sup> He finished with 'there was taste and

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<sup>95</sup> William Cobbett, Ed., George Woodcock, *Rural Rides* (Harmsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), [first published 1830], pp. 98-100.

<sup>96</sup> Historic England, Albury Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000299.

<sup>97</sup> Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 99. Arthur Oswald, 'Albury Park, Surrey-I. The Home of Helen Duchess of Northumberland', *Country Life*, 108.2797 (1950), 598-602 (p. 598).

<sup>99</sup> Anon, 'In the Gardens...at Albury', *Country Life*, 10.247 (1901), 400-401 (p. 400).



sound judgement at every step in the laying out of this place, everywhere utility and convenience is combined with beauty'.<sup>100</sup>

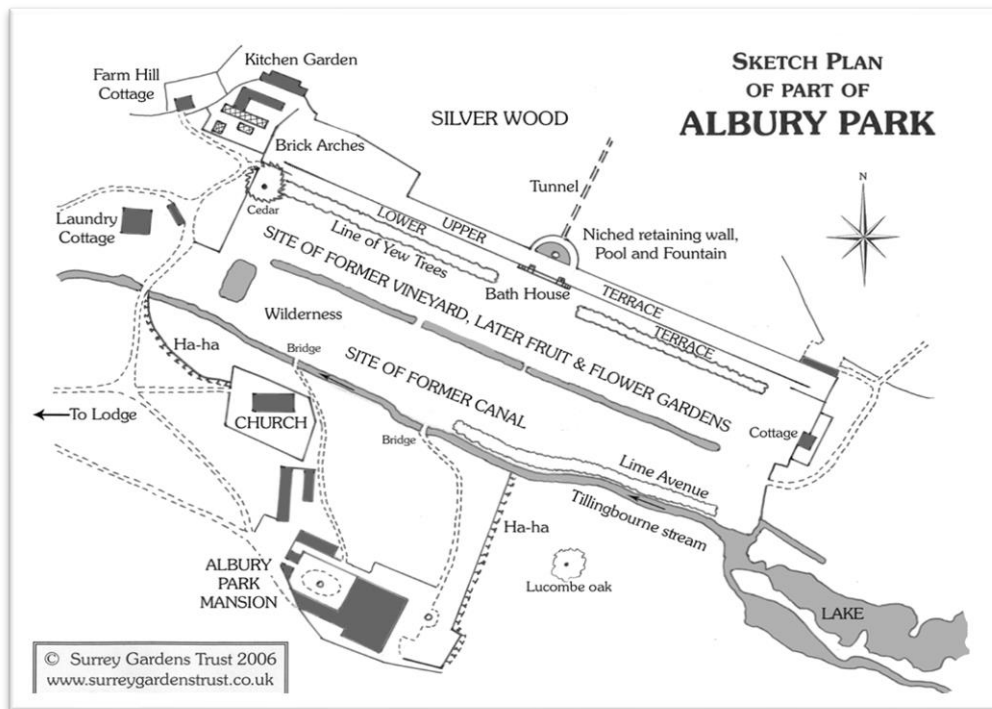


Fig. 23. Albury Park based on the 1701 plan of the garden. Surrey Gardens Trust, 2006.

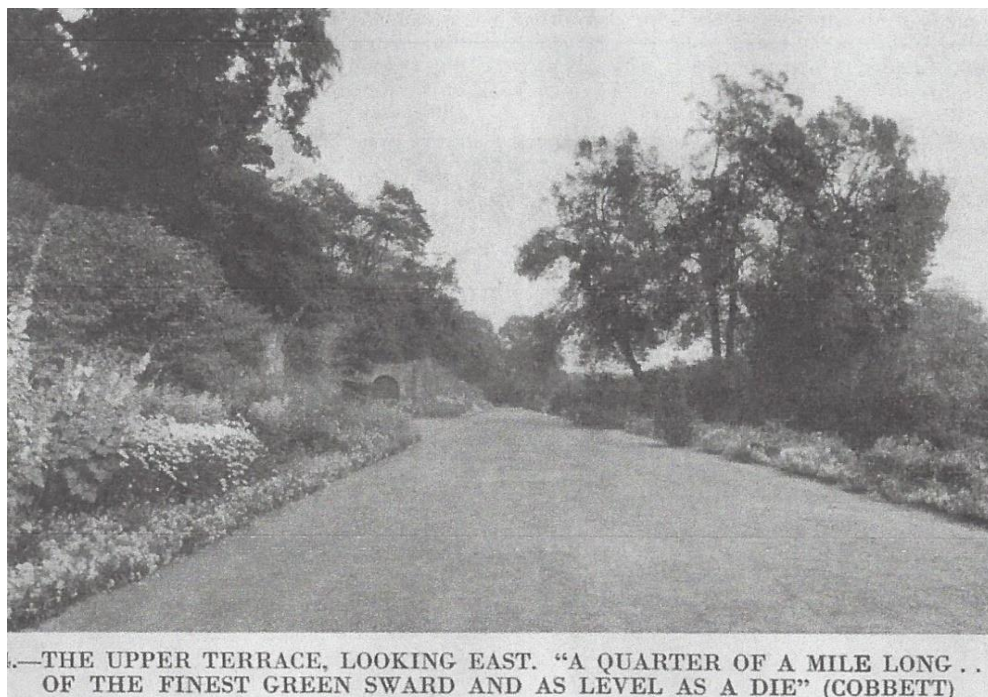


Fig. 24. The terrace at Albury Park, *Country Life*, 1950.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 25. The basin with the tunnel leading to the bath house at Albury Park. *Country Life*, 1901.

Albury Park was another example of a garden in the 'ancient taste' that had escaped the 'hand' of the improver. Cobbett travelled throughout the country and mentioned other gardens but Albury Park had the greatest impact because he remembered the details, particularly Evelyn's great terrace.

### **Edward Jesse**

Edward Jesse (1780-1868), a writer on natural history, published a book in 1847 on his travels from the previous summer, *Favourite Haunts and Rural Studies; including visits to spots of interest in the vicinity of Windsor and Eton*.<sup>101</sup> It was an eclectic mix, not always centred around Windsor and Eton, but including Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, with essays on Windermere, English Cottages, Old Travellers and Layer Marney in Essex. He was accompanied on 'these pleasant excursions' by the Revd John Mitford (1781-1859) who was vicar of the parish of Benhall in Suffolk and editor of *The Gentleman's Magazine* from 1834-1850.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Edward Jesse, *Favourite Haunts and Rural Studies; including visits to spots of interest in the vicinity of Windsor and Eton* (London: John Murray, 1847).

<sup>102</sup> Courtney, William Prideaux, 'Mitford, John (1781-1859)', *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1894), Vol. 38, pp. 78-79.

The intention of his book was to revive recollections of places that were 'probably faded away and almost forgotten in the public mind'.<sup>103</sup> One of his first objectives was to find a place called 'Parlem Park', which was part of an estate called Ritchings Park. Jesse and the Reverend were following some correspondence from a Lady Hertford dated 1741. 'We found it just as Lady Hertford had described it, the house with a large moat around it' and 'from its antiquity thought that Queen Elizabeth might have been nursed there'. Jesse then described the garden (Figure 26):

Then there was the sort of old fashioned garden in front which I delight in – the long grass walks – the *espaliere*d apple trees, if I may call them so – the large tufts of lavender and box – the honest old English rose, now nearly exploded – the sun dial and other characteristics of a garden of bygone times.<sup>104</sup>

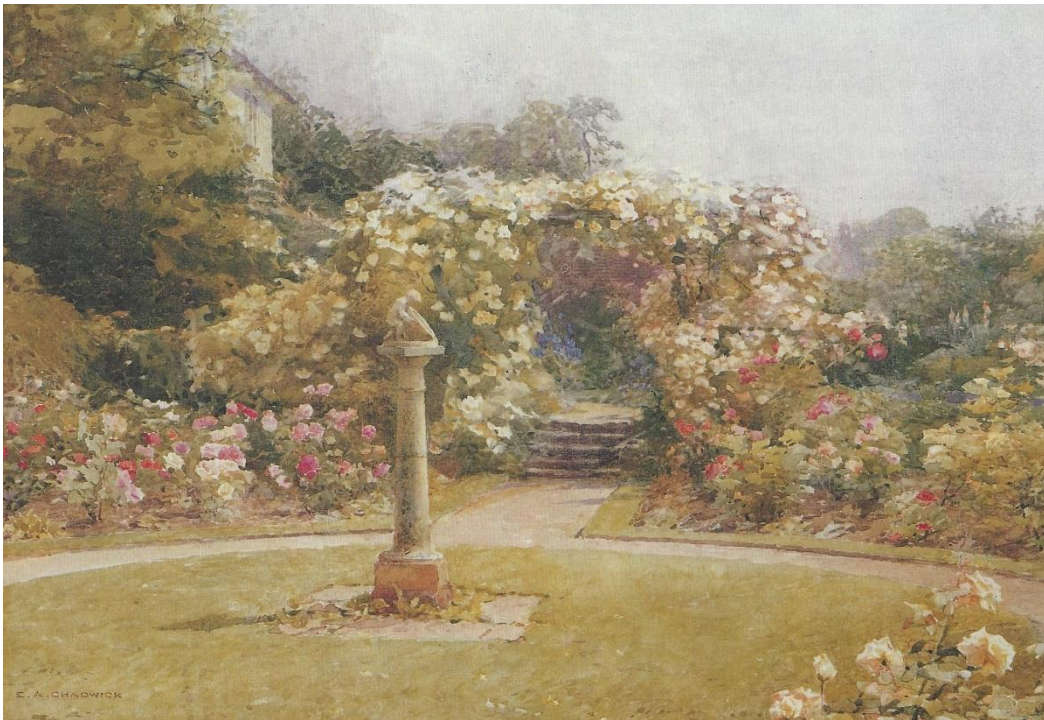


Fig. 26. A suggestion for Jesse's garden of bygone times. Watercolour by Ernest Albert Chadwick. *Victorian Flower Gardens*, 1988.

Jesse and his companion then moved on to Harley and Lady Place, where they reported that adjoining the walls of the old convent was a large enclosure, now a meadow, which formed the ornamental grounds and gardens of Lady Place. Jesse

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<sup>103</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 1. Ritchings Park was once the estate of Lord Bathurst and destroyed during World War II and is now a residential area.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

explained that the seat had taken its name from the Virgin Mary as it was near the abbeys of Medmenham and Bisham on the banks of the Thames.<sup>105</sup> Some of the garden still remained as he described the old fish ponds and the canal with the terrace walk along its banks. There were still 'some fine and handsome cedars of Lebanon' which he hoped 'will be permitted to spread their magnificent shade over these quiet and sequestered lawns for ages to come, uninjured except by the hand of time'.<sup>106</sup>

Going further afield from Windsor and Eton they came to Chalfont St Peter in Buckinghamshire and the garden at Bulstrode Park. Jesse commented that the gardens appeared to have been planted about a century ago and it was thought that Henry Wise laid out the grounds (Figure 27).<sup>107</sup>

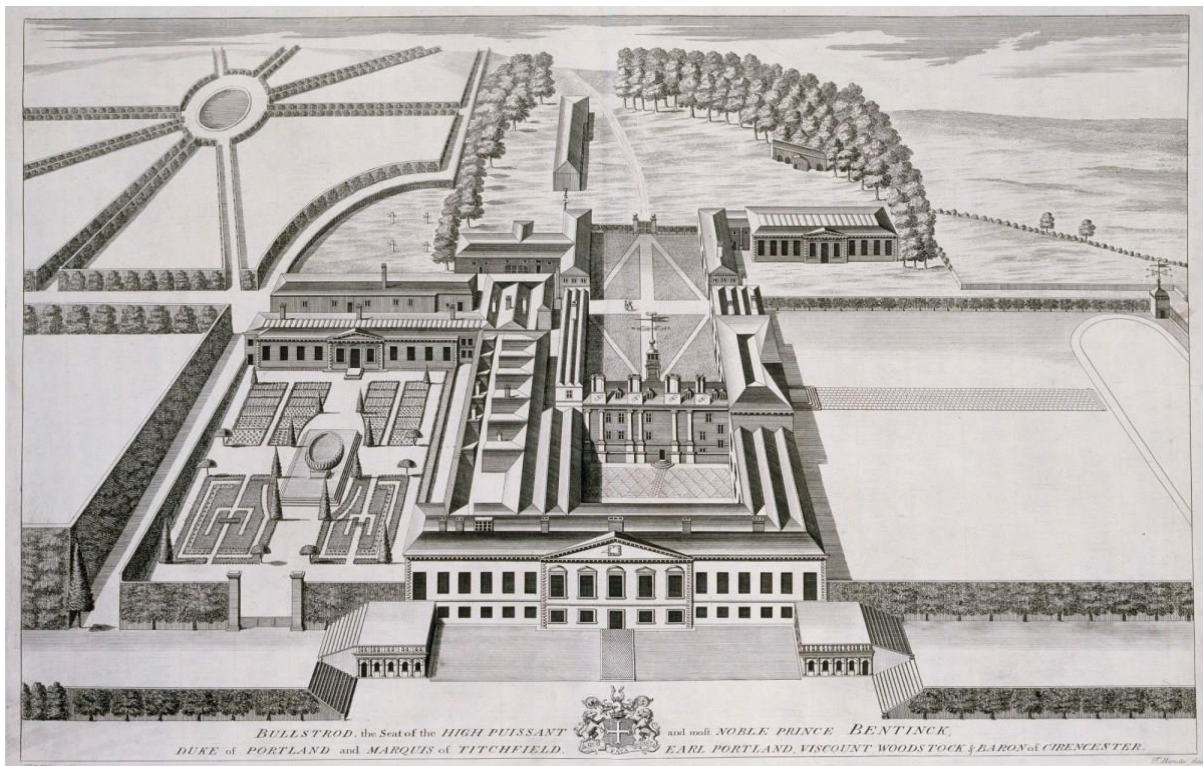


Fig. 27. Bird's eye view of Bulstrode 1720, Thomas Bowle the elder.  
<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/bulstrode-park-buckinghamshire>  
 [accessed 06.2021].

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. For more information on Lady Place, spelling Ladye, see [https://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles.ladye\\_place.com](https://www.berkshirehistory.com/castles.ladye_place.com) [accessed 03.2021]. The house fell into disrepair and was demolished as uninhabitable in 1837.

<sup>107</sup> Historic England, Bulstrode Park, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1001371.

Jesse wrote about some magnificent trees, more fine Cedars of Lebanon, one of which he praised as being remarkable, 'not only for its enormous size but its manner of growth rising from the ground in a cluster of pillared branches', with tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, and a later introduction of catalpas standing in the lawn.<sup>108</sup> He was clearly impressed with the skill and knowledge of the original designer because of the ornamental trees, and this would have been appropriate if Henry Wise had laid out the gardens as he was the proprietor of the famous Brompton Park Nursery.<sup>109</sup>

Of the house he informed the reader that it was taken down and the new structure, which was left at the death of the third Duke of Portland (1738-1809), was now covered in ivy, but he mentioned that a portion of the old building was now a comfortable residence where he and the Reverend were offered kindness and hospitality. Writing of the fine old gardens, and you can feel Jesse's sadness at what he saw when he said, 'to a certain degree they have an appearance of neglect, the once open lawns have grown into a wilderness of trees, and these aged pillars of the wood are mossed by hoar antiquity'. He found it distressing to witness the destruction and decay of a noble residence and added two lines of poetry, although he did not mention the poet:

Stern melancholy sits, and round her throws  
A death-like silence, and a still repose.<sup>110</sup>

Still in Buckinghamshire Jesse paid a visit to 'Hall-Barns', the seventeenth century ancestral home of English poet Edmund Waller (1606-1687), and at the time of Jesse's visit the estate was still the home of the Waller Family.<sup>111</sup> He wrote that it was a handsome square brick house highly ornamented, but it was the garden that interested him. 'The gardens retain much of their original character, consisting of broad terrace walks of gravel or grass. A small lake in the formal shape of the time

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<sup>108</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 183. *Cedrus libani*, first introduced in England in 1645 from SW Asia/Syria. *Liriodendron tulipifera*, first introduced in England in 1688 from East North America. *Catalpa bignonioides* (Indian Bean Tree), introduced in 1726 from East USA. John Watkins, Tom Wright, Eds., *The Management & Maintenance of Historic Parks, Gardens & Landscapes* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), pp. 309-312.

<sup>109</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 184.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184. The couplet comes from Alexander Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard* (London: G. Nicholson and Co, 1794), p. 7. Jesse misquoted, instead of 'Stern' it is 'Black' melancholy.

<sup>111</sup> Jesse spells the name as 'Hall-Barns'.

(this is a canal), and at the bottom of the lake stands a banqueting house surrounded by an extensive lawn and adorned with temples and summer houses'.<sup>112</sup> He found the design to his taste as he continued, 'the design is pleasing and elegant, formed after the taste of those times which admitted a more regular and systematic plan than would be approved of in the present day' (Figures 28, 29).<sup>113</sup>



Fig. 28. Hall Barn, the terrace walk circa 1740. *Country Life*, 1942.



Fig. 29. Hall Barn, the terrace walk 1942. *Country Life*, 1942.

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<sup>112</sup> Historic England, Hall Barn, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000334. Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 214. Christopher Hussey, 'Hall Barn, Buckinghamshire-II. The Home of Major General The Hon. E. F. Lawson', *Country Life*, 92.2357 (1942), 612-616 (p. 612).

<sup>113</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 215.

On to Cliefden and Taplow. At Cliefden, now Cliveden, Jesse was critical of the terrace, which was by William Winde probably from around 1677. While he thought the view 'peculiarly striking' his only regret was that the terrace was disfigured by two skylights which projected at either end of the terrace. 'If these were removed and the terrace decorated with fine orange-trees, a few vases and some seats at each end it would be perfect' (Figure 30).<sup>114</sup>



Fig. 30 Cliveden and Taplow Court by William Tompkins circa 1750. *Cliveden The Place and The People*, 1997.

At Taplow Court Jesse praised 'a noble avenue of cedars of Lebanon has been formed, with great good taste one each side of a fine grass terrace' but then criticised that much needed to be done 'to render Taplow Court perfect'. He likened Taplow to a 'beauteous female, bursting in upon us with all the charms which nature has bestowed upon her, but slovenly in her attire and neglected in her person'.<sup>115</sup> Jesse seemed to be saying to the reader that this was once a great garden which was now

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 200. Historic England, Cliveden House, Terrace Wall to Garden Front, Grade I 1125044. There is no mention of these skylights, nor explanation as to what they were, which were perhaps removed by Charles Barry when he started work at Cliveden in 1851. Thus Jesse was seeing the terrace in its original form. Barry built a new terrace which remains today. For more information see Jane Bradney, 'The Gardens of Sir Charles Barry: Only a Handmaid to Architecture', *Garden History*, 42.1, (2014), 41-63.

<sup>115</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 202. Historic England, Cliveden, Park and Garden, Grade II 1000607. The cedar walk dates from the eighteenth century.

neglected, although this was perhaps tinged with regret that 'its natural beauties had not been more improved'.<sup>116</sup>

Finally he came to Bramshill Park in Hampshire, an early seventeenth century house with formal walled gardens, terraces and avenues set within a park. He wrote, 'I am not sure if I was ever more struck with the first view of a place that I was with Bramshill', 'a splendid mansion and well-cultivated grounds'. When strolling around the house Jesse added 'I was glad to see the old fashioned flower-garden laid out in the most formal style of former times, and the raised terrace, with stone balustrades and stone alcoves and carved seats at the end' (Figure 31).<sup>117</sup> He concluded his report saying, 'the park at Bramshill has that agreeable wildness of character which assorts well with the fine old house'.<sup>118</sup>



Fig. 31. The terrace at Bramshill Park. *Country Life*, 1898.

It is fair to say that Jesse had fulfilled his promise of preserving recollections of some places of interest, particularly those of ancient gardens, which remained well into the nineteenth century no matter their condition. He was aware and knowledgeable of

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<sup>116</sup> Jesse, *Favourite Haunts*, p. 203.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208. 'Bramshill Park-II. Hampshire. The Seat of Sir Anthony Cope, Bart, *Country Life*, 5.119 (1899), 464-467 (p. 465).

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210. Historic England, Bramshill Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000165.



the features of these 'ancient' gardens, the fine ornamental trees particularly the cedars, the fish ponds, the 'sequestered' lawns and the terraces. He was afraid that they would fade from memory but, like those before him, Price, Knight, Scott, Cobbett, Felton and the anonymous R, Jesse regretted and was distressed at the loss of these 'ancient gardens'.

### **Price, his continued influence**

In July 1847 Mrs S. C. Hall, the editor of *Sharpe's London Magazine*, ran an article 'Description of an Old-Fashioned Garden'.<sup>119</sup> The text was taken from Price's chapter 'On Decoration near the House', which had appeared in both the 1810 version of his *Essay on the Picturesque* and the edition edited by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder published in 1842.<sup>120</sup> Through the good offices of Mrs Hall, Price's thoughts on the old style of gardening were being introduced to a new and wider audience, who were also being made aware of his regrets 'at having done what I so condemn in others – destroyed an old fashioned garden'. The text was an accurate account of the chapter, there was mention of the Italian gardens which Price favoured, there was talk of the walled gardens and the warm brick and descriptions of his many terraces. Mrs Hall ended with a quote from Price that one of the greatest losses of the old formal garden is the terrace around the house:

... I have made it look like many other parts of mine, and of all beautiful grounds, with but little mark the difference between what is close to the house and what is at a distance from it, between the habitation of man and that of sheep.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Mrs S. C. Hall, Ed., 'Description of an Old-Fashioned Garden', *Sharpe's London Magazine*, 44. 88 (1847), (p. 159).

<sup>120</sup> Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price on the Picturesque*, pp. 297-327.

<sup>121</sup> Hall, 'Description of an Old-Fashioned Garden', (p. 159).

## Section II: The middle years to the later part of the nineteenth century:

### Loss and fading memory, a growing interest in gardens from the past, their history, the old fashioned flowers and the shame of bedding

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#### The history of gardens past

As the century moved into the 1860s and 1870s, the interest in old gardens and their history was becoming more popular, in particular the Elizabethan era and the writings of Francis Bacon, statesman, philosopher, essayist and gardener.

An article on Lord Bacon and his writings on gardens appeared in *The Builder* of October 1861 and was adapted for *The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* two months later.<sup>122</sup> *The Builder* focused on both his garden and architectural writings, *The Gardeners' Chronicle* was more concerned with his garden writings. There was a discussion of Bacon on gardens in London during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and James I, with 'the large gardens that surrounded York House and the other most noble of residences along the Strand'.<sup>123</sup> *The Gardeners' Chronicle* went on to mention Bacon's essay 'Of Gardening' and quoted the famous first lines 'God almighty first planted a Garden' and 'indeed it is the purest of human pleasures', then added another quote which summed up the garden at the time of Bacon's essay:

... The Green hath two pleasures, the one because there is nothing more pleasant to the eye that green Grass, kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front of a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden.<sup>124</sup>

These two articles informed the reader of the importance of Bacon and his essay, but more importantly, gave the reader an understanding of the layout of a formal seventeenth century garden.

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<sup>122</sup> 'Some Gleanings from Lord Bacon's Essays on Old London Gardening and Architecture', *The Builder*, 119 (1861), (p. 685-686). 'Lord Bacon on Old London Gardening', *The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette*, 21 (1861), (p. 1005).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

## **An Elizabethan restoration or a revival?**

The theme of Elizabethan gardening continued with an article in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* of 1864. This 13 page article was deceptive: at first it appeared to be a useful and interesting commentary on Elizabethan gardens and their history, but reading on it was a plea to the Committee who were restoring the birthplace of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in Stratford-Upon-Avon. The plea was to restore the garden as 'the owner would have been disposed to attempt himself'.<sup>125</sup>

As part of the plea the author, went into great detail about the 'broad characteristics' of the Elizabethan house and garden, perhaps in the hope that the Committee would take heed when restoring Shakespeare's garden. He wrote that 'the Elizabethan is without doubt a style peculiarly well adapted to our English climate and scenery'.<sup>126</sup> He thought it strange that so much attention had been paid to the architecture and residence but so little to the making of a true Elizabethan garden, which he added 'is essential to the design'. On that point the author had what can only be described as 'angry discussion' on both the architect and the landscape gardener not knowing their art.<sup>127</sup> Having expressed himself on that point, he then described an Elizabethan garden:

In more stately mansions, a broad terrace ran along the private front of the house, commanding a view over the whole design. Broad flights of steps connected the garden with the terrace, the principal walks diverged in straight lines, which were intersected by similar walks, broad and gravelled, or turf.

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<sup>125</sup> Anon., 'Elizabethan Gardening', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 70.416 (1864), 179-191 (p. 191).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 179).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 180).

These he said were the main lines of the design and continued that the intermediate parallelograms were filled with 'the meanders or mazes, the beds and curious knots, or with labyrinths, shrubberies, and orchards, or grass plots' (Figure 32).<sup>128</sup>



Fig. 32. An Elizabethan garden, the frontispiece of Thomas Hill's book on gardening, the first to be printed in English 1563. *The English Garden A Social History*, 2001.

As to the planting for this small garden, the author was quite clear that the Committee should consider that this was a 'town-house garden of a substantial educated yeoman of the days of good old Queen Bess', suggesting that 'the plants should be those as were known and ordinarily cultivated in the Elizabethan era'. Wanting to widen the plant selection the author added that 'it would not be at all desirable to limit the selection only to plants mentioned by Shakespeare', the aim should be 'to delight Shakespeare on his return to Stratford in the later years of his life'.<sup>129</sup>

Not only did this article provide good historical information about gardens from the Elizabethan period, mentioning Lord Bacon, but its further importance was that it was probably one of the first serious appeals for a restoration of a lost formal garden.

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., (p. 182).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., (p. 191).

## Interest in the old fashioned flowers and the rejection of bedding plants

From early in the 1870s there was a growing interest in old fashioned flowers, hardy perennial or herbaceous plants, which was a reaction against the fashion at that time for short-lived bedding plants. One book in particular published in 1871 by William Sutherland (1833-1920), who had been the manager of the Herbaceous Department at Kew during the late 1850s, supported the use of these old fashioned flowers.<sup>130</sup> In his introduction he was specific that there was 'little intimate knowledge of this neglected class of plants' and that 'herbaceous plants have been so long banished from gardens of all grades that they have become unfamiliar to those even who once knew them well'. He was hopeful and believed that 'there are many signs of a reaction in their favour at the present time'.<sup>131</sup> Over the next few years Sutherland was proved right.

On bedding plants, one commentator, Mrs Martha Loftie (1838-1914) in *The Saturday Review* of 1875 wrote about the flower bed in Hyde Park that 'in November, the mounds of dark empty earth, give passers by a shudder as they likened them to uncared for graves'.<sup>132</sup> She also quoted Bacon that 'there ought to be Gardens for all the Moneths in the Yeare', adding that these foreign plants 'have almost ousted the flowers of our grandmothers days'. Mrs Loftie seemed heartened that the days of 'ribbon bordering and oilcloth pattern are numbered as fashion has done something to encourage natural beauty and art'. For the reader this conjured up a vision of a garden at that former time, 'proud turncap lilies and stately hollyhocks to plant against a background of moulded brick or melancholy yew'.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> William Sutherland, *Handbook of Hardy Herbaceous and Alpine Flowers* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1871).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>132</sup> Martha Jane Loftie, 'Queen Anne's Flowers', *The Saturday Review*, 39.1008 (1875), 245-246.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 245).

## The loss of old fashioned flowers

'Old-Fashioned Flowers' was the title of an article in *The Sunday at Home*, a family magazine for Sabbath reading, by an East End London vicar who had taken a month off to stay in the country. He described the cottage where he stayed to have a 'rare specimen of an old fashioned garden' and that he liked the 'great charm' and the 'careless order of its old-world, old fashioned flowers' from his boyhood.<sup>134</sup> He commented that most of these old fashioned flowers had been 'cast out of the garden, thrown piteously on a heap of weeds, as I have seen them in some overdainty gardens'. Strolling around the garden he welcomed many of these old friends, 'the old delicious cabbage rose – what an incomparable scent, the lovely old fashioned moss-rose, the good old China rose, the only perpetual known in my childhood' (Figure 33).



Fig. 33. Old China Roses, watercolour by Alfred Parsons. *Painted Gardens*, 2001.

There were more of the old fashioned flowers that excited him, columbines, phlox, chocolate and purple, great wealthy peonies, big clove pinks and carnations, canterbury bells, lupins, blue and pink larkspur, lavenders in bush and graceful love-lies-bleeding dropping to the ground.<sup>135</sup> The vicar was a gardener and of the age

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<sup>134</sup> 'Old-Fashioned Flowers', *The Sunday at Home: a family magazine for Sabbath reading*, 1101 (1875), 356-359 (p. 356).

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 357).

when he could remember the old gardens, so his story was of memory and loss, memory of the old gardens of his youth and loss of the old fashioned flowers that he so clearly loved.

This feeling of loss continued. In January 1875, Archibald Banks, writing on the 'English Flower Garden' in *The New Quarterly Magazine*, was another who was not enamoured with the craze for bedding plants as he seriously urged 'that this prevailing style of garden is wrong in principle, very uninteresting, quite inartistic and compared with the effect produced, extremely expensive' (Figure 34).<sup>136</sup>



Fig. 34. An example of carpet bedding, Victoria Park London circa 1870. *The Victorian Garden*, 2016.

He considered that bedding was wrong in principle as the object of a garden was to give constant pleasure, 'a joy for ever', asking how can this happen when 'a thing of

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<sup>136</sup> Archibald Banks, 'English Flower Gardens', *The New Quarterly Magazine*, January (1875), 373-398 (p. 373). Archibald Banks and John Latouche were pseudonyms for Oswald Crawford (1834-1909), diplomat and journalist, who published this article in *Horses and Riders and Other Essays* (London: Ward Lock, 1888). Latouche wrote in the preface that his article was well received 'in favour of a recurrence to old and true principles in gardening, and I was very glad to see that my views were almost immediately accepted and disseminated in the public press, notably by an important weekly paper', p. iv.

beauty is a joy for hardly three months out of twelve'.<sup>137</sup> He explained there was a time when our gardens were perennial, like the plants that filled them, again holding up Bacon as the example when 'English wits and English taste were confessedly at their brightest and best'. He then detailed for the reader Bacon's idea of what a garden should be and what should be grown month by month.<sup>138</sup>

This article took the reader through some English garden history, starting with the Italian style that the English copied and described the old formal garden with its fountains, terraces with low balustraded walls, broad stone paved paths, beds filled with flowering shrubs, stately alleys and great walls of close-clipped hornbeam, box and yew. He went on to mention the Dutch gardens and their love of straight lines and rectangular paths, 'replacing fountains with fishponds and terraces with stagnant canals!' Banks then talked of the 'English Style', here he meant the landscape movement, and the prevailing fashion for unsophisticated nature, naming 'the high priests of the new religion as Lancelot Brown and Sir Uvedale Price'.<sup>139</sup>

Banks did not want to take sides, he was saying that both styles have merit but he did not want to 'commit ourselves strongly to either side of the controversy on style', although he believed that there will be more said on the subject!<sup>140</sup> His aim in this involved article was really a plea to bring to an end the 'bedding out system', which he also saw as too expensive and short lived with its 'garish and vulgar show', wanting a return to the old fashioned flowers and a return to the old formal style of gardens. Banks' final statement explained his feelings as he was confident that 'a new order of gardening is at hand' and that the 'paradise only of florist, seedsman and nursery gardeners will soon be a thing of the past'.<sup>141</sup>

### **The continued 'tirade' against the bedding system**

The issue of the cost of the bedding out system came up again in an article 'English Gardens', in a weekly journal, *The Sporting Gazette* of June 1876, where the

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., (p. 373).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., (pp. 377-378).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., (pp. 380-381).

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., (p. 382).

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., (p. 398).



anonymous author had the same thoughts on the bedding system as Banks. Before discussing the attributes or otherwise of the bedding out system, he first wanted to provide the readers 'with a slight sketch of the history of gardens as an introduction to its present condition and future prospects'.<sup>142</sup>

Yet again Bacon and Elizabethan gardens came into the story with this author writing that the early garden of the Elizabethan style, a term Bacon called the 'pleasaunce', was 'a place a man may take his pleasure, full of all that was bright in colour and pleasing in perfume'.

The author's 'slight sketch' of the history of gardens started with the Italian influence. Moving on to the French garden he wrote it was 'confined to rigidly geometrical forms, straight lines, parallelograms, everything measured out and docked into uniformity with shears', considering the gardens at Versailles as 'stiff ugliness'. He continued with William III (1650-1702) and wrote that the Dutch influence 'with characteristic ingenuity contrived to graft an even more hideous style on the outlines of the Italians'. He seemed relatively pleased with Sir William Temple's (1628-1699) essay and the 'minute and vivid picture of a model of garden at this time, particularly the garden made at Moor Park by Lady Bedford'. Summing up his 'slight sketch', he came to nature and the work of Brown and Price, where he finished with the comment 'they prided themselves upon being much more natural than Nature herself'.<sup>143</sup>

The author then expressed his true feelings about the bedding out system, 'we take leave here to express our unmitigated dislike of the bedding out system which is so fashionable nowadays'. 'We object to it and we denounce it most emphatically, as opposed not only to good taste but to good sense'. Like both Banks and the vicar, this author mourned the loss of the old fashioned flowers and in his case the 'perfume', as in the modern garden there was an 'absence of the perfume of flowers'. Returning to the barbarism of 'bedding out' and the 'bare brown uninteresting deserts from November to May', his final barb was to quote the poet, essayist and statesman, Joseph Addison (1672-1719), 'the garden is one of the innocent delights in human life'.

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<sup>142</sup> 'English Gardens', *The Sporting Gazette*, XIV.737 (1876), 617-618 (p. 617).

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, the author asked, 'to how many owners of gardens in the present day is a garden either a pleasure or an innocent delight?'<sup>144</sup>

### **The shame of bedding, a tyranny of fashion**

William Morris was another who disliked the bedding plant. On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1880 he presented his paper 'Making the Best of It', under the title of 'Hints on House Decoration', to the Trades Guild of Learning in the lecture hall of the Society of Arts. On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1880 he presented the same paper to The Royal Society for Artists in Birmingham.<sup>145</sup> When talking about gardens and what he called 'carpet gardening' he did not want to explain more, saying to the audience 'when I think of it even when I am quite alone I blush with the shame at the thought'.<sup>146</sup>

Morris had more to say about gardens; he believed that they should look 'both orderly and rich', should be fenced from the outside world and should not imitate either the wilfulness or wildness of nature but always look as if they belonged to the house. Morris was talking from experience as he had made a garden such as he described at Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire which he first rented in 1871 (Figure 35). Thus in his own way, Morris, with his influence and inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Movement, played his part in bringing back the 'old fashioned flowers' and the formal garden around the house.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., (p. 618).

<sup>145</sup> I am grateful to Barbara Lawrence of The William Morris Society for this information. Email Tenneson, 03.06.2021.

<sup>146</sup> William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art. Five Lectures delivered in Birmingham, London & Nottingham*. No detail of publisher or date. The copy seen at the British Library was marked from the British Museum, 18 July 1902, pp. 62-63.

<sup>147</sup> Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, p. 63.

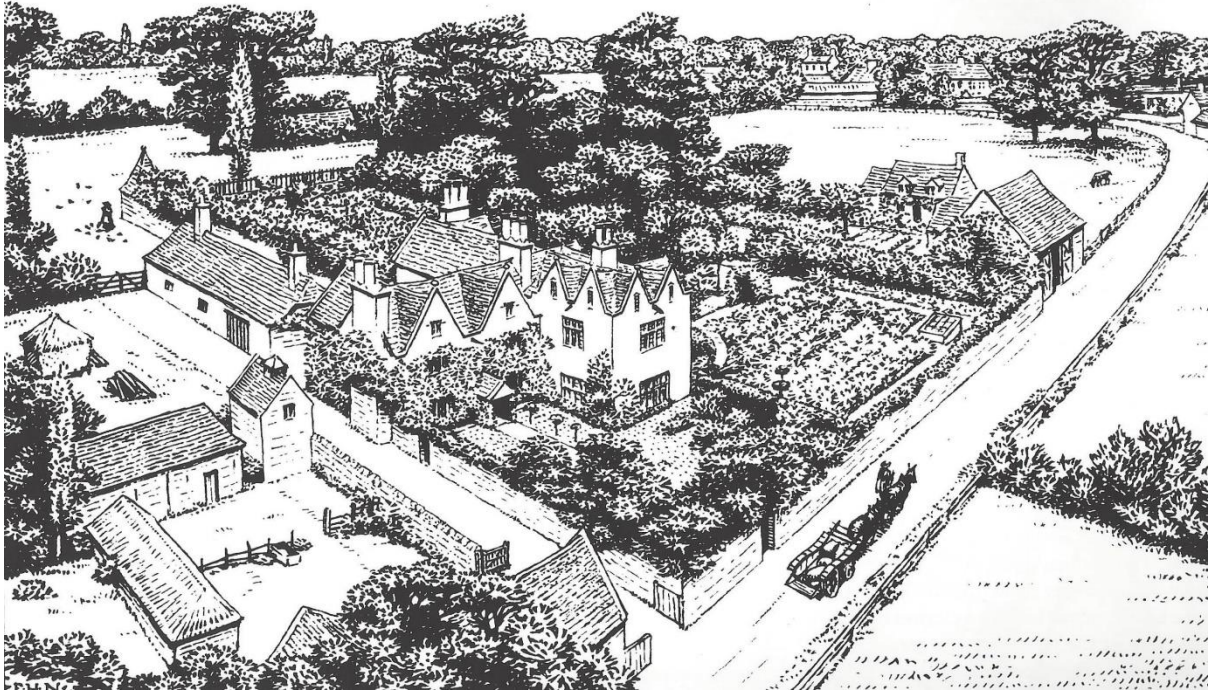


Fig. 35. William Morris' garden at Kelmscott Manor. *The Gardens of William Morris*, 1998.

Coming into the 1880s the 'tirade' against bedding plants continued. Mrs Margaret Paul (1829-1905) wrote an article in 1880 for *The Nineteenth Century* called 'Old-Fashioned Gardening'. Like those before her Mrs Paul was not enamoured with carpet bedding, calling it a 'tyranny of fashion', the flower beds in London Parks blazing with colour during July and August, but remaining brown and barren for the rest of the year.<sup>148</sup> She believed that the 'delightful occupation' of gardening had been 'debased into a skilled art where there was no place for the amateur'. Mrs Paul remembered 'gardens of our youth' where 'the destroying hand has not yet passed'. Here again is another commentator who expressed feelings of loss at the demise of the formal garden.<sup>149</sup>

Old fashioned walled gardens were a particular favourite of Mrs Paul as she mentioned the fruit, peaches, gold drop plums and in a shady corner lilies of the valley; in all 'there were grass alleys, crooked and hoary old apple-trees, with a wealth of pot herbs, and the old brick, covered with a network of delicate and beautiful creeper'. Mrs Paul could remember the smell of 'a hedge of sweet peas, a bed of

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<sup>148</sup> Margaret A. Paul, 'Old-Fashioned Gardening', *The Nineteenth Century*, 7.75 (1880), 128-135 (p.128).

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

clove gillyflowers (pinks or carnations), and the sound of bees humming from a row of straw hives'. She was saddened that such a garden 'must almost be numbered among the things of the past'. Explaining the reason for her 'lament' about the lost glories of our English gardens, she wrote that she had recently been perusing a 'rare and curious folio published in 1629' called *Paradisi In Sole Paradisus Terrestris* by the botanist John Parkinson.<sup>150</sup> Mrs Paul quoted at length passages from Parkinson and particularly enjoyed the 'quaint' illustration of the garden of Eden, mentioning that Eve 'clothed only in her hair is skipping airily downhill to pick up a pine-apple', finding the flowers of 'wonderous proportions, picking out the tulip four times as big as Eve's head' (Figure 36).<sup>151</sup>



Fig. 36. The title page of *Paradisi In Sole Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629.  
 <[www.metmuseum.org/art/collections/search/355128](http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collections/search/355128)> [accessed 20.08.2021].

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., (p. 129).

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Mrs Paul's critique was thorough, while not always agreeing with Parkinson. She did not share his enthusiasm for tulips but was in full agreement with his sentiment on anemones as 'being so fully of variety and so dainty'.<sup>152</sup> In her final comments Mrs Paul thought she had dwelt too long on a 'book curious in itself' and returned to the purpose of her article, that carpet bedding was only for the rich and great and should be looked upon as an appendage of state, such as 'powdered footmen' or 'stables filled with sleek and pampered horses'. For those who love flowers, she was suggesting that there should be a return to as 'old Parkinson advocates, a garden of delight'.<sup>153</sup>

### **The English Flower Garden**

Henry Arthur Bright (1830-1884), a merchant and author, who had written a monthly article for *The Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1874 on 'Notes from a Lancashire Garden',<sup>154</sup> had followed this up in 1881 with a slim volume, *The English Flower Garden*, which had first been published in *The Quarterly Review* in 1880.<sup>155</sup> Bright had taken an interest in the history of gardens and, in both articles and his book, he followed gardens through the ages with their different styles, from the Elizabethan garden, gardens of the poets, the wild garden, to gardens of the future.<sup>156</sup> Bright, like so many others was no fan of 'bedding out', quoting Bacon he wrote of the 'green grass nicely shorn', but here he added 'green lawns all over England were being destroyed and cut up all for the sake of red and yellow patches during four summer months' and, further to his annoyance, 'even the cottagers in many places seem to have forgotten the old English flowers'.<sup>157</sup>

Under the heading 'A Ruined Garden' Bright remembered a garden which he considered to be the most beautiful in the 'soft climate of the west of England, most carefully and adroitly planned'. There were large margins of flower borders with mixed planting of herbaceous and annuals, in one corner of the lawn stood a

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<sup>152</sup> Margaret Paul, 'Old-Fashioned Gardening', (p. 130).

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 135).

<sup>154</sup> Henry Bright, 'Notes from a Lancashire Garden', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, II (1874), (pp. 70, 230, 386, 554, 711). Compiled in a book, Henry Arthur Bright, *A Year in a Lancashire Garden* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879).

<sup>155</sup> Henry Bright, 'The English Flower Garden', *The Quarterly Review*, April (1880), 331-360.

<sup>156</sup> Henry Bright, *The English Flower Garden* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1881).

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

*Magnolia grandiflora* of great size and in another a *Liriodendron tulipifera* laden with hundreds of yellow flowers, and sweeping the grass with its huge pendent branches was an old cedar and various views out to reaches of the river. Bright recalled that a few years ago he revisited the place where 'the improver had been at work, shrubberies had disappeared, the pretty peeps among the trees were gone, herbaceous borders were gone and so too were all the interesting plants, the lawn in front of the house was cut up into little beds of red pelargoniums, yellow calceolarias and the rest' (Figure 37).<sup>158</sup>



Fig. 37. A modern recreation of late Victorian parterre bedding using pelargoniums, the sort of bedding that Bright attacked. Waddesdon Manor 1994. *Apollo*, 1994, p. 63.

In his book Bright gave guidance on other garden subjects such as walled gardens, modern science, flower shows and some practical advice that 'the English flower-garden may afford far greater pleasure than it does at present'. His purpose with this slim volume was to defend and cherish the use of old fashioned flowers, as he saw them as old friends who he welcomed back bringing with them 'pleasant memories of past years'.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

## The passion for old fashioned flowers and their sweet memory

In 1881 another slim volume was published called *On the Art of Gardening* by Mrs J. Francis Foster. There is little information about Mrs Foster but her volume was a 'plea for English gardens of the future'.<sup>160</sup> Mrs Foster started with a quote from essayist Sir William Temple who in 1685 wrote *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus* about gardening being for all 'for which no man is too high or too low'. Mrs Foster was another who talked of Lord Bacon and his 'beautiful Essay On Gardens' and quoted him that 'the garden is best to be a square, he says encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge'.<sup>161</sup> She moved on to discuss the flowers in the garden writing 'surely there is no need of argument to prove that the present system of using such flowers as require *bedding out*, is altogether inartistic, uninteresting and unpoetic'.<sup>162</sup>

She devoted quite a few pages to hardy plants, and asked 'are there any bedding flowers with the blue tints that compare with the tender sky blue of the *Anemone appennina* or with the sapphire hues of the *Scilla sibirica*; and when they have passed away then come the blue *Violas*, *Penstemon glaber* and *Flaxes*, all the *Campanulas*, and later still the spires of *Bee Larkspur*, *Salvias* and *Lupines*' (Figure 38).<sup>163</sup> There was a discussion on walled gardens and fruit trees as well as early English garden history, such as the English gardens of the middle ages and Elizabethan days 'circummed with brick' or 'enclosed by high hedges'.<sup>164</sup> She wrote that it was 'Orlando Bridgeman who first threw down the green hedges and the rose-covered walls and let the rough winds into the gardens'.<sup>165</sup> Mrs Foster deplored Bridgeman's invention of the sunken fence and the *haha* as it destroyed privacy and exposed the flower gardens to the elements.<sup>166</sup>

Mrs Foster was clearly captivated by the old fashioned flowers as she provided an appendix to her book as she thought that her readers would agree with her and

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<sup>160</sup> Mrs J. Francis Foster, *On the Art of Gardening, A Plea for English Gardens of the Future with Practical Hints for Planting Them* (London: W. Satchell, 1881).

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. *Anemone appennina* is now *Anemone apennina*.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>165</sup> Mrs Foster was talking about Charles Bridgeman, an English garden designer who was credited with pioneering the naturalistic landscape style prior to Kent and Brown.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43. Mrs Foster did not explain what, if any, difference there is between a sunken fence and a *haha*. For more information see, Patrick Taylor, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Garden*, p. 207.

would like to create borders of the 'sweete old flowers that gave pleasure to their forefathers'. She gave full instructions with a list of plants on how to make a 'Chaucerian Border' and if that was not to the reader's taste, then there were instructions for an 'Elizabethan Border'.<sup>167</sup> Mrs Foster concluded her book with the comment that she hoped that her 'trifle of help would bring back the highest art into our gardens of truth, economy and beauty'.<sup>168</sup>



Fig. 38. A suggestion for Mrs Foster's blue border. A watercolour by Beatrice Parsons, c.1900. Private collection.

A review of Mrs Foster's 'pleasant and unpretending little volume' appeared in *The Saturday Review* in June 1881.<sup>169</sup> The reviewer, who had some sympathy for Mrs Foster's view, did however think that her plea was not for a garden for the future, but more of a plea for the gardens of the past. The reviewer went on to say that he thought the measure of resulting success was apt to prove very meagre and

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-98.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>169</sup> 'English Gardens', *The Saturday Review*, 51.1339 (1881), (p. 819).



disappointing as 'the shadow will not go back on the sun dial'. He must have had some liking for the old flowers as he wrote that the 'beauty and sweetness of flowers had always been a refreshment and delight for human life'. 'Women have prized and cherish them, and men have valued them for women's sake, if not for their own!'<sup>170</sup>

The memory of an old fashioned garden was the subject of a short piece in *The Graphic* of 1883. The author, another R, was reminiscing about a garden in the north of England that was 'chiefly in his mind'.<sup>171</sup> His description was of a large red bricked walled garden, somewhere between the Cheviots and the sea, with views over the 'German Ocean'.<sup>172</sup> The space within the walls was marked out as four-squares and gravel paths ran in long straight lines leading to a circular space that he thought had been a fountain, but now all that was left was an 'ancient stone basin with moss-grown edges'.

What really seemed to please him were the flowers, 'how shall one picture their wealth and perfume'. R went into detail about the roses, 'the Moss rose with its peculiar and distinctive sweetness, the cabbage rose with their heavy heads breathing out sweetness'. 'There are peonies, crimson, magenta and some faded by the sun, tall foxgloves, beds of pinks of stock and of wallflowers' and as he walked further down the path, the sweet smell of southernwood (*Artemisia abrotanum*, when crushed gives off a lemony smell) and further on 'the air was full of the delicious smell of sweetbriar'. He mentioned the newer modern flowers, clearly referring to bedding plants, as he had noted they are absent in this garden. He considered this to be a garden to dream in with its sweet smells. The low busy hum of bees and the mellow sunshine was a place for leisure, where the busy traffic of life could not penetrate, 'let us not shatter however fleeting the memory of one oasis whose fragrance and beauty will linger as a joy for ever'.<sup>173</sup>

'At the present time there is a growing desire to patronise perennial plants, more especially the many and beautiful varieties known as old fashioned flowers' wrote John Wood (1842-c.1899) in the preface to his book *Hardy Perennials & Old Fashioned*

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., (p. 820).

<sup>171</sup> R, 'An Old-Fashioned Garden', *The Graphic*, 28.715 (1883), (p. 151).

<sup>172</sup> This is in Northumberland and the views would be over the North Sea, which historically has been known as the German Ocean.

<sup>173</sup> R, 'An Old Fashioned Garden', (p. 151).

*Garden Flowers*, published in 1884.<sup>174</sup> Wood considered they needed to be cultivated on their own merits as they 'afford great variety of form, foliage and flower'. He was clear that his book was not scientific but more of practical help to the less experienced amateur. In the following 320 pages Wood listed plants in alphabetical order, some with illustrations, all with a full description and a note of their common name. Helpfully he included a section on 'flowering periods' and in alphabetical order listed hardy perennials that flower in each month. If you wanted to create a colour border, and this became very fashionable, then Wood could help with that, as under a section 'colour of flowers' he listed a rainbow of flower colours.<sup>175</sup>

Here are three individuals, Mrs Foster, R and Wood, with the same dislike almost hatred of bedding plants but with the same passion for the old fashioned flowers, appreciating not only the range of these flowers and their many colours but the memory of their sweet perfumes.

### **The making of a new old garden**

*Days and Hours in a Garden*, published in 1884 by children's author and illustrator Mrs Eleanor Vere Boyle (1825-1916), known as E. V. B., told the story of making a new garden at Huntercombe Manor in Buckinghamshire.<sup>176</sup> Huntercombe Manor had once been the home of George Evelyn, a cousin of John Evelyn, who in July 1679 visited Huntercombe on his way back from seeing His Majesty, Charles II, at Windsor and remarked, 'a very pretty seate in the forest' and about the gardens as 'on a flat with gardens exquisitely kept tho' large'.<sup>177</sup> Mrs Boyle described the garden as she found it in 1871, with a lime avenue that had been there since Evelyn's days, as some of the trees are inscribed with dates from 1668 to 1700. She wrote that little was left apart from 'two symmetrically planted groups of magnificent Elms', which became the backdrop for the garden. There was also a long broad terrace, old brick walls with stone balls on the corners and some old wrought iron gates, 'all in the wrong

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<sup>174</sup> John Wood, *Hardy Perennials and Old Fashioned Garden Flowers* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1884).

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 317-320.

<sup>176</sup> E. V. B., *Days and Hours in a Garden*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn. (London: Elliott Stock, 1884). E. V. B. first published the contents of this book in a series of articles in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* starting in November 1882 to November 1883 under the title 'Notes from a Buckinghamshire Garden'. See bibliography.

<sup>177</sup> William Bray, Ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn from 1641 to 1705-6, with memoir* (London: Frederick Warne, 1818), p. 411.

place'.<sup>178</sup> 'These gardens on a flat are transformed', continuing that there were close-trimmed yew hedges, further yews cut into pyramids and buttresses against the old walls, 'borders filled with the dearest old-fashioned plants', with turf and straight walks, a sundial and a parterre for 'bedding-out things – the sole plot allowed here for scarlet pelargoniums and the like' (Figure 39).<sup>179</sup>



Fig. 39. The Parterre filled with 'bedding-out things'. *Days and Hours in a Garden*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn., 1892.

She talked of the green walks between the yew and beech hedges, the flower borders and a long green tunnel which she called 'Alleé Verte, in remembrance of an old family place that no longer exists'. Mrs Boyle described nooks and corners, a 'grand well-shaded tennis-lawn' and clearly something very special to her, 'a Fantaisie'. Her love of flowers knew no bounds, here she said, 'are all my most favourite flowers growing in wild profusion'.<sup>180</sup> Mrs Boyle illustrated her book with pen and ink drawings and one (Figure 40) showed part of the garden and part of the Fantaisie, which was not marked. *Days and Hours in a Garden* went on to be reprinted eight times to 1892. Mrs Boyle also contributed to and wrote other books on gardening but it was *Days and Hours in a Garden*, with its rough-cut pages and monthly chapters on the progress of her own garden, which helped promote the idea of an old formal

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<sup>178</sup> E. V. B., *Days and Hours*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

garden with yew hedges, green alleys and borders filled with her 'dearest old fashioned flowers'.

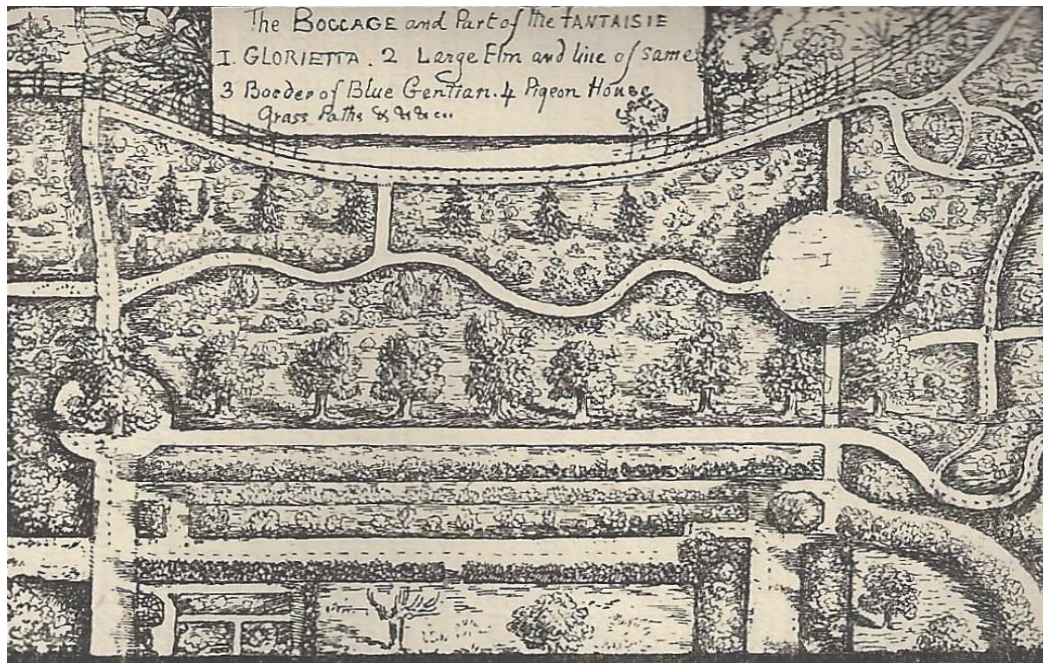


Fig. 40. Mrs Boyle's garden and part of The Fantaisie. *Days and Hours in a Garden*, 1892.

### **The Parkinson Society of Lovers of Hardy Flowers**

Mrs Paul was not alone in appreciating John Parkinson. In July 1884, the children's author Juliana Horatio Ewing (1841-1885) established The Parkinson Society of Lovers of Hardy Flowers, with five aims:

- To search out and cultivate old garden flowers which have become scarce
- To exchange seeds and plants
- To plant waste places with hardy flowers
- To circulate books on gardening amongst the members
- To try to prevent the extermination of rare wild flowers, as well as of garden treasures.

The idea of the Society came from Mrs Ewing and her interest in her own garden. In the preface of her children's book *Mary's Meadow*, originally serialised in the children's monthly *Aunt Judy's Magazine* and later published in 1895, her sister Horatia explained what happened. On a visit to Kew Mrs Ewing saw a copy of *Paradisi In Sole Paradisus Terrestris* by Parkinson and was 'much bewitched by its quaint charm'. Mrs Ewing did not have a copy so an old friend the Revd H. T. Ellacombe (1790-1885)

lent her a copy for reference, also explaining the meaning of the title which inspired her to set up the Society.<sup>181</sup>

The reports of the Society appeared in *Aunt Judy's Magazine* which had been established in the 1860s by Mrs Ewing's mother, Mrs Alfred Gatty (1808-1873), who like her daughter had also been a children's author.<sup>182</sup> Published under the title of *Aunt Judy's Correspondence* these reports were wide ranging from throughout the country. In one there was a review of the Revd H. Friend's *Flowers and Flower Lore*, which was a wealth of information regarding local names.<sup>183</sup> One correspondent wrote of her childhood recollections of the 'Lent Lilly' and her loved Kentish wild flowers, while another wrote that the ox-eye daisy was called magweed in Sussex, and a third that 'Oil of Hypericum is good for bed-sores'. In another report a Miss B. Blair of Staplehurst was offering seeds and asked that a stamp was enclosed with the application. Further contributors reported old names; Rosemary from Kincardineshire sent in some interesting local names, 'Gowans for ox-eye daisies, spinks for scotch primroses and Gowk's-eyes for wild violets'. One report advised that there were forms to record local names priced at threepence a dozen, with the hope that a book of filled up forms could be circulated among the members.<sup>184</sup>

The importance of The Parkinson Society was that there were enough like-minded people who had the same interest and wanted to form a group to save and promote both the old fashioned and rare wild flowers. Mrs Ewing died in 1885, and the Society was then run by the secretary Miss Alice Sargant. When Miss Sargant was no longer able to run the Society it became part of the Selbourne Society.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Juliana Horatia Ewing, *Mary's Meadow & Other Tales of Fields & Flowers...illustrated by M. V. Wheelhouse, Edited by Mrs Horatia K. F. Eden*, facsimile 2009 (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1915), pp. v-vi.

<sup>182</sup> "Aunt Judy's Correspondences." *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, IV.XII, n.d., pp. iv+. *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*, <[link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901402072/NCUK?u=ull\\_ttda&sid=bookmark-NCUK&xid=50dc8455](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901402072/NCUK?u=ull_ttda&sid=bookmark-NCUK&xid=50dc8455)> [accessed 03.04.2021].

<sup>183</sup> Revd Hilderic Friend, *Flowers and Flower Lore* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1883).

<sup>184</sup> "Aunt Judy's Correspondences." *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, IV.XII, n.d., pp. iv+. *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*, <[link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901402080/NCUK?u=ull\\_ttda&sid=bookmark-NCUK&xid=5184f7bf](http://link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901402080/NCUK?u=ull_ttda&sid=bookmark-NCUK&xid=5184f7bf)> [accessed 03.04.2021].

<sup>185</sup> There is no information on this 'merger' from the Selbourne Society, 31.05.2021.

In a section called 'Rural Notes' in *The Graphic* of 1885 there was a short article called 'carpet gardening', which at first glance could have been a favourable piece about carpet bedding; but no, supporting the aims of the Parkinson Society, yet again this was another plea for hardy plants.<sup>186</sup> The author thought that bedding should only be for 'stately mansions and in the more formal parts of our parks', longing for the shady walks 'where one can meditate in the cool arbours embowered by honeysuckle and climbing roses'. The author warned readers of the taste of the carpet gardening for 'vegetable fireworks, and monotonous discords or gaudy colour' and further, if we yielded to it, 'it will sweep away the pinks and the carnations and sheathed gillyvors of Shakespeare, the pansies which stood for thought, the gentians, the polyanthus, the anemones and the phlox and larkspurs'. With a tinge of sadness the author said that 'now for the lover of the old-fashioned garden, they must be their own gardener as they will look in vain to find a professional gardener who really understands the care of hardy plants of the past' (Figure 41).<sup>187</sup>



Fig. 41. An herbaceous border full of hardy plants c.1900 A watercolour by Ernest Arthur Rowe. *Victorian Flower Gardens*, 1988.

Writing an instructional piece for *The Girl's Own Paper* in 1889, Fred Miller took his young readers through the art of gardening saying, 'gardening is not a matter of

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<sup>186</sup> 'Carpet Gardening', *The Graphic*, 32.821 (1885), (p. 238).

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 238).

chance, as some people might imagine, but an art of decorating a confined area'.<sup>188</sup> Miller was another lover of herbaceous plants and he pointed out that this was his style of gardening, 'open-air and hardy plants that are quite capable of taking care of themselves'. He thought it was an excellent move that many people were going 'entirely for hardy herbaceous plants'.<sup>189</sup>

### **An appreciation of Elizabethan gardens**

May Crommelin (1850-1930), a novelist and travel writer, took an interest in early English and Elizabethan gardens with a piece in June 1889 in the *London Society: a monthly magazine of light and amusing literature for the hours of relaxation*.<sup>190</sup> She took the reader through a comprehensive history of these gardens, from the Romans and their gardens, quoting the early name for the Anglo-Saxon garden, 'wyr-tun (plant inclosure)', a discussion on the flowers, such as roses, violets, gillyflowers, marigolds and sunflowers, all as she said were indicators of early gardens. She added some finer details of how the gardens were used in those early days, quoting at length from the poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1340s-1400) and his writings on gardens.<sup>191</sup> Taking 'her leave of Chaucer' and these early gardens she moved on to Elizabethan gardens, 'in the good Queen Bess's still hearty age the love of the garden had by no means died out'.<sup>192</sup>

She made an interesting point that in Queen Elizabeth's day there were two leading ideas concerning the garden. The first was that it should conform in some degree to the architecture of the house, either a square or an oblong, while the second canon was that every inch of the space should be filled with flower-plats, hedges, alleys, often pleached, with roses and other creepers.<sup>193</sup> The Elizabethan taste was for 'greens (lawns), mazes, pleasaunces and what Lord Bacon calls heaths or wildernesses', and that the flower-beds, the knots, were all laid out 'in precise

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<sup>188</sup> Fred Miller, 'Old Fashioned Gardens', *The Girl's Own Paper*, X.495 (1889), (p. 600).

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> May Crommelin, 'Early English Gardens and Elizabethan Gardens', *London Society: a monthly magazine of light and amusing literature for the hours of relaxation*, 55.330 (1889), 591-607 (p. 597).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 600).

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 601).

geometrical patterns' (Figure 42).<sup>194</sup> Mrs Crommelin asked what would 'Truly Adam, the grand old gardener and his wife, have thought of this stiff kaleidoscopic arrangement of flower knots surrounded with hedges clipped and twisted into griffin, impossible birds and chess pieces', which she pointed out could still be seen in some old gardens.



Fig. 42. Leticia Newdigate aged two, unknown artist 1606. To the right showing an Elizabethan garden at Arbury Hall. *The Artist and the Garden*, 2000.

Finally, she consulted 'the best of all authorities on Elizabethan gardens, Lord Bacon, and his delightful essay'. Mrs Crommelin had been given an old copy bound in black leather with yellowing pages which she 'had dipped into with all the pride and eagerness of a discoverer'. Her discovery was the detail that the garden should be near the house and should be square with a stately arched hedge about fourteen feet high surrounding it. For the inside of the square Bacon said, 'it should not be too bushy or full of work, and in the middle should be a mound, thirty feet high, and on the top a fine banqueting house'. 'The fountains should be kept freshly-flowing and clear, there should be a bathing pool finely paved, surrounded by low rails and

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid., (p. 601-602).



statues'. She finished her article abruptly 'and herewith I take my leave of Lord Bacon and of Elizabethan gardens'.<sup>195</sup> Mrs Crommelin was not just interested in the history of gardens but was familiar with and an advocate of these old gardens as she mentioned that she had seen many of their features that still survived into the 1880s.

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, (pp. 606-607).

### Section III:

### The last decade of the nineteenth century: The revival of the formal garden gathered momentum

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#### The return of the old fashioned flowers and old fashioned gardens

Herbert Maxwell published an article on 'Gardens' in *The Nineteenth Century*, December 1891, another 'tirade' against bedding, particularly the displays in the big establishments. In order to make these displays 'it was necessary to clear the ground of plants that had given pleasure to our grandmothers and to their grandmothers before them' (Figure 43).<sup>196</sup> He recalled about twenty years ago, when these fine plants were either 'flung on the waste-heap or at best banished to the kitchen garden', being made a present of a 'barrow-load of roots of the white Madonna lily which beautify his borders to this day'.<sup>197</sup>



Fig. 43. An herbaceous border, watercolour by Theresa Sylvester Stannard. *Painted Gardens*, 1991.

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<sup>196</sup> Herbert Maxwell, 'Gardens', *The Nineteenth Century*, 30.178 (1891), 903-918 (p. 907).

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

Maxwell was upset as for 'five and twenty or thirty years this tyranny of bedding out has endured', writing that nobody enjoyed this form of gardening, they just conformed to it as others vied with each other to produce the 'most fiery conflagrations in the autumn'. He suggested that people were dissatisfied and did not know why they had lost the form, scent and refined colour of the old favourites and had in their place 'uniformity and glare'.<sup>198</sup> Help was at hand through the novels of Lord Beaconsfield (1804-1881) and *Lothair* published in 1870, where there was a description of Lady Corisande's garden, which Maxwell said 'captivated people as it reminded them of what gardens had been when they were children' and because of this people began to think and want the 'long-neglected herbaceous plants'.<sup>199</sup>

Maxwell praised another author, William Robinson (1838-1935), as an 'energetic pioneer' of the new movement for herbaceous plants, who with admirable skill and taste and complete practical knowledge had written a number of books, *Alpine Flowers for English Gardens*, *Hardy Plants* and *The Wild Garden*, as well as starting his own journal *The Garden* some twenty years ago. Maxwell wrote these 'met with so much success that it stimulated the revolt against bedding-out', continuing that long forgotten favourites had been found in such places where they had been thrown and further, much to his pleasure, English gardens were now throwing off the distressing similarity and looking more like the old name for the garden, 'the pleasaunce'.<sup>200</sup>

Like so many of the correspondents, Maxwell referred to Lord Bacon when he discussed the 'one common feature' which was capable of being used in 'a thousand different ways, the green turf'. He gave thanks to our 'benignant' skies, adding that the lawn was not likely to suffer from any 'passing freak of fashion', quoting Bacon that 'nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn'.<sup>201</sup> However, there was one element not to Maxwell's liking, topiary. Although he said it was dominant in the Elizabethan garden he would 'shudder to think of its return to fashion', going on to suggest that 'tortured shrubs and shorn trees are not objects in which the eye finds repose'. What would find favour with Maxwell from the

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<sup>198</sup> Maxwell, 'Gardens', (p. 908).

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., (p. 909). Benjamin Disraeli, *Lothair* (London: Longmans Green, 1870).

<sup>200</sup> Maxwell, 'Gardens', (p. 909). For more information about William Robinson, see Richard Bisgrove, *William Robinson The Wild Gardener* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008). For a full list of Robinson's publications see Bisgrove, p. 250.

<sup>201</sup> Maxwell, 'Gardens', (p. 909).

Elizabethan garden was the 'close or pleached alley', this he believed adds seclusion which for him was the essence of a garden.<sup>202</sup>

Maxwell was another strong advocate for the return of herbaceous and hardy plants and a return to the old gardens that he and others remembered from childhood. This sentiment was echoed in a charming article in *Kind Words for Boys and Girls* of June 1892 by Fanny Barry.<sup>203</sup> Miss Barry recalled a garden of her childhood, which she said had been left to itself 'to linger on sweetly and unostentatiously in out of the way country places'. Her description was as all the other gardens that have been remembered, the smooth lawn, edged with yew hedges, the flower borders where all the sweet flowers grow from childhood; and here she listed all the familiar and loved plants, 'the great bushes of pink monthly rose, white foxgloves, bright blue spikes of larkspur, southern wood, bushes of sweet-smelling lavender, all scenting the air'.<sup>204</sup>

She continued that by the lawn was a great oak, and below a turf seat, where it was 'delicious sitting there with a book on a sunny day and listening to the fountain, splashing onto to the moss covered marble basin'. There was more about the topiary, a close-cropped hedge with climbing roses, and yet again the old luxuriant roses loved by so many, of York and Lancaster and tea roses, 'all left wild and unpruned and revelling in their beauty and freedom'. She mentioned a terrace above the lawn with a flight of old stone steps, there was a sundial standing on a 'quaint stone pillar'

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., (p. 910).

<sup>203</sup> Fanny Barry, 'Old Fashioned Gardens', *Kind Words for Boys and Girls*, 129 (1892), 254-256 (p. 254).

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

and provided for her young readers a drawing of the garden showing the terrace, the flight of steps and the topiary (Figure 44).



Fig. 44. Miss Barry's drawing of her 'Old Fashioned Garden' or 'The Old Pleasaunce'. *Kind Words for Boys and Girls*, 1892.

Miss Barry made a point about the times, 'that human life has changed, and ebbed and flowed but the old garden remains much the same', the sun still shone, the shadows still crept over the lawn, the descendants of the same flowers bloom, the yew trees are taller, the box hedges are thicker, but otherwise 'there has been little change'. So was Miss Barry still in touch with the garden? Perhaps not as she then described the old mistress of the garden whom she knew as a child, 'who has gone to her rest years ago'. Her recollection of the mistress was vivid and fresh as she thought of her as a 'fairy godmother in an enchanted paradise'.<sup>205</sup>

She wore a rustling black dress, with a small silk shawl pinned over her shoulders and a fine frilled muslin cap on her head, on the top of which rested a mushroom hat tied under her chin with silk strings. Leather mittens were on her hands and beside her walked a little long-haired dog, who adapted his pace

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 254).

to hers. As she walked leaning on her stick down the grass walks, she would pick off a dead rose here and there or a caterpillar or blighted leaf and place it in a little basket fastened on to the top of her cane.<sup>206</sup>

Returning to the present Miss Barry wrote that 'as she thinks of this, the picture rolls and shrivels up, the mists of the present blot it out'. This was not surprising as she was sitting in a *modern* garden, full of bedding plants, 'calceolarias, geraniums, petunias and banks of rhododendrons and shrubs'; and here she asked, 'where is the charm of the old fashion', acknowledging that the gardens of that time had more space, more money was spent and greater effort was made. Miss Barry found it 'utterly incongruous and ridiculous that the modern Elizabethan or Queen Anne houses have ordinary modern gardens'. Miss Barry brought to life many of the features of the old fashioned garden and pleaded for its return, to allow her 'a brief space away from the hurry and confusion of the world, a place of rest, peace and refreshment, with a delicate aroma about the green grass walks and shady alleys of the real old fashioned garden'.<sup>207</sup>

### **The contribution of John Dando Sedding**

John Dando Sedding, a leading member of the Art Workers Guild, was not known as a maker of gardens but more as a Gothic church architect with his greatest work claimed to be a 'temple' of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Church of the Holy Trinity in London's Sloane Square.<sup>208</sup> Over a number of years Sedding had collected items on gardening, as he termed it 'his errant thoughts jotted down in the broken leisure of a busy life', which his assistant Henry Wilson (1864-1934) confirmed:

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., (pp. 254-255). Note: the description of dress was probably early nineteenth century and as she was an old lady at that time this possibly dates the garden to the middle of the eighteenth century or before.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., (pp. 255-256).

<sup>208</sup> J. M. Richards, 'Sedding, John Dando (1838-1891)', *Who's Who in Architecture from 1400 to the present day* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1977), p. 294.

he ever had a thought of a garden and there are early plans and sketches of his from old gardening books and existing gardens which show how throughout he studied the subject.<sup>209</sup>

These 'errant thoughts' were first introduced to his 'brethren' at the Art Workers Guild in 1889 with a paper on the techniques of gardening called 'garden-craft'. It was this paper with his other jottings that he compiled into *Garden-Craft Old and New* published in 1891.<sup>210</sup>

Sedding was much in favour of the old formal gardens and in his book he addressed three questions; the first, what is a garden and why? His second was to ask what ornamental treatment was fit and right for the garden and his third question was what should be the relation of the garden to the house? His 'errant thoughts' and study of gardens over the years came to the fore as he answered these questions in an almost romantic tone and in great detail, spread over nine chapters. In essence he had a passion for the old gardens that had been mellowed by time and which he described as a 'sort of repository of old secrets'.<sup>211</sup> Like many others he referred to the writings of Lord Bacon, Sir William Temple and John Evelyn, explaining their taste and inborn love of nature and woodland scenery as being the vindication for the old fashioned garden and gardener.<sup>212</sup>

Sedding was dismayed at the loss of the pleasaunce of the old days and blamed both Kent and Brown, of whom he said, 'all of sudden they stumbled upon the green world of old England and from this sprang the English Landscape garden, what nonsense'. Sedding argued that they discovered nothing new, the green world of old England had been here from time immemorial, 'that piece of horded loveliness, the old-fashioned England garden' and then he described all the features of this 'horded loveliness'; borders, terraces, trellis work, espaliers clipped box hedges, vases,

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<sup>209</sup> Sedding, *Garden-Craft Old and New*, preface iv. Henry Wilson, 'A Memorial of the late J. D. Sedding: being illustrations from some of his works', *The Architectural Association* (London: Batsford, 1892), p. 6. This was a limited edition of 250 copies. These gardening notes and sketches have not been found, although there are plans and drawings in Sedding's book *Garden-Craft Old and New*.

<sup>210</sup> Paul Snell, 'The Priest of Form: John Dando Sedding (1838-1891) and the Languages of Late Victorian Architecture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2006), p. 25.

<sup>211</sup> Sedding, *Garden-Craft Old and New*, pp. 2-24.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

fountains and statuary.<sup>213</sup> He was not clear why these gardens were destroyed but one thought he put forward was the difficulty in accommodating the old with the new, and suggested that the problem was easily solved by the improvers abolishing the old altogether.<sup>214</sup> On the question of the connection of the garden and the house, Sedding believed that the garden should 'curtsey to the house', with dimensions that are proportionate to the scale of the house and that 'the garden should lead the eye out to the distance' (Figure 45).<sup>215</sup>



Fig. 45. Sedding's perspective view of a sunken garden. *Garden-Craft Old and New*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., 1892.

When introducing his book Sedding was clear on its motives, which he set out in the preface, that 'the old fashioned garden represents one of the pleasures of England, one of the charms of that quiet beautiful life of bygone times that I, for one, would fain see revived'. 'Because the old gardens are what they are -beautiful yesterday, beautiful to-day, and beautiful always-'.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., pp. 32-35.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. preface vi.



There is just one garden known to be designed by Sedding, The Downs, in Hale, Cornwall, in 1867, where his brother Edmund designed the house for antiquarian William John Rawlings (d.1890). In 1887, twenty years after its making, the architectural illustrator and journalist T. Raffles Davison (1853-1937) reviewed the garden for *The British Architect*, agreeing with Sedding that 'house and garden are as part of one scheme of design'.<sup>217</sup> He described the garden having a formal gravelled terrace ten yards wide (the height of the house) and three hundred and ten feet long, surrounded by a pierced stone balustrade. The garden then descended down a central axis with a flight of granite steps leading to a geometric garden, which it was claimed was based on the *Hortus Palatinus*, a garden laid out by Salomon de Caus in 1623 in Heidelberg for Frederic V of Bohemia.<sup>218</sup>

The geometric garden in Heidelberg was called 'the bed of seasons', with seventy two individual beds arranged in a circle and planted with a display of plants chosen for their flowering times.<sup>219</sup> Sedding's version of this 'bed of seasons' consisted of thirty nine beds, planted twice a year and laid out either side of a broad central axis as seen in these two drawings (Figures 46, 47).<sup>220</sup> Davison wrote 'that the earlier planting, in the spring would be the best for the mild climate in Cornwall, but gave no details of the type of plants used.'<sup>221</sup> In an article in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* 1898, the author discussed the geometric gardens, saying 'which must in its glory have revelled a child's sampler in artistic significance'.<sup>222</sup> He added, 'Mr Rawlings endeavoured to carry out the ideas and colour schemes formulated in Sir Gardiner Wilkinson's book on colour and taste', which carried nine pages of plants listed in their colours and flowering times.<sup>223</sup> Every year the patterns were submitted to Mr Sedding for approval, with the colour scheme laid out in pigment before planting.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> T. Raffles Davison, 'Down to Land's End', *The British Architect*, 28.25 (1887), 478-482 (p. 480).

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., (p. 480). Salomon de Caus (1576-1626) was a French Huguenot engineer who was associated with garden making in England. During the seventeenth century his name was also connected with two gardens, Wilton and Somerset House.

<sup>219</sup> Monique Mosser and George Teyssot, *The History of Garden Design, The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), pp. 157-158.

<sup>220</sup> Raffles Davison, 'Down to Land's End', (p. 480).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Harry Roberts, 'The Downs, Hayle', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, XI (1898), (p. 219).

<sup>223</sup> John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875). John Gardner Wilkinson, *On Colour and on the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste among all classes. With remarks on layout, Geometrical Gardens .. illustrated by coloured plates, etc* (London: John Murray, 1858), Part III, Dressed or Geometrical Gardens, pp. 361-388.

<sup>224</sup> Roberts, 'The Downs, Hayle', (p. 219).

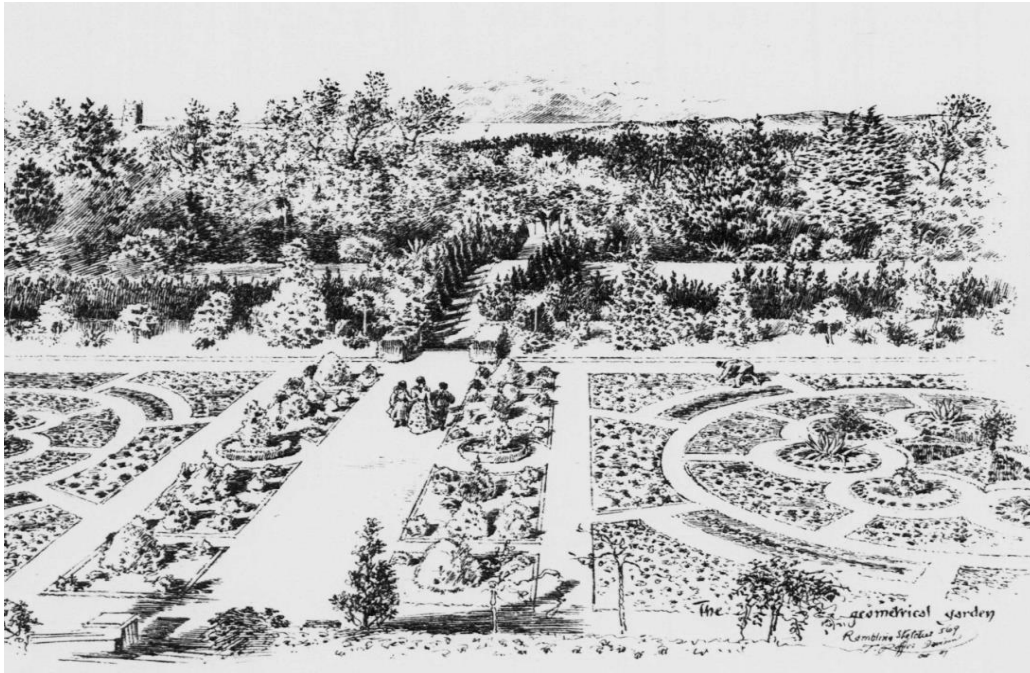


Fig. 46. A sketch by T. Raffles Davison of The Downs and the Geometric Garden. *The British Architect*, 1887.

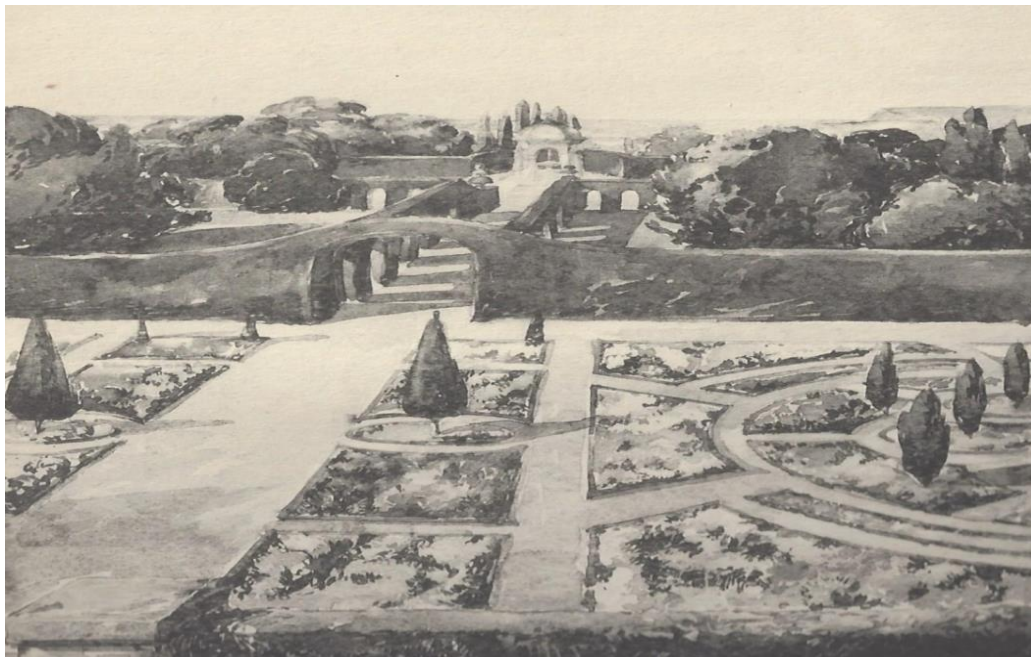


Fig. 47. Sedding's own watercolour of The Downs and the Geometric Garden. *Garden-Craft Old and New*, 1892.

The garden then drops again via the central axis, which was lined with twenty two Irish yews about fifteen feet high, which can be seen in Davison's sketch (see Figure 46) leading to a stone arbour, as seen in Sedding's watercolour, built to imitate St

Gerome's Chair.<sup>225</sup> Davison summed up his thoughts on the house and garden saying that 'an architect's business is to know everything, and bring a house and garden together into one whole scheme of design and this had been accomplished at The Downs'.<sup>226</sup> The garden survives today, although not complete, and is listed Grade II\* by Historic England.<sup>227</sup>

Sedding had a passion for the old fashioned garden and an extensive knowledge of garden history. If he had lived after the publication of his book and been able to promote this passion, then it is arguable that he would have had a stronger role in the revival of his beloved 'Old Fashioned Garden', but his voice, his 'errant thoughts', are useful and valuable to the overall plea to bring back the old fashioned garden.

### **Introducing Reginald Blomfield**

Architect Reginald Blomfield joined the call for a return to the formal garden with two articles that were forerunners to his book *The Formal Garden in England* published in 1892, with illustrations by fellow architect Francis Inigo Thomas (1865-1950). The first article appeared in the artistic journal *The Portfolio* in January 1889, where Blomfield wrote that the best way to get at the 'gist' of a system was to study its history.<sup>228</sup> Known for his forthright manner Blomfield took the opportunity to criticise the landscape gardeners 'who begin their treatise with hearty and indiscriminate abuse of the formal system'.<sup>229</sup>

This first article demonstrated that he understood the 'gist' of the history of gardens with his discussion of the gardens of Henry VIII, adding that gardens had altered little during the hundred years from 1550 to 1659. Like so many correspondents, Blomfield talked of Lord Bacon and his essay but suggested that Bacon's only claim was 'some criticism on plots of coloured earth, and the fantastic shaping of yew trees'. But on the other hand Blomfield added 'that his design is as formal as the very strictest of Le Notre'. He found fault with the Dutch system at the time of William and Mary, 'they were fond of queer little trifles and used to cut their box into every conceivable

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<sup>225</sup> Raffles Davison, 'Down to Land's End', (p. 480).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Historic England, The Downs (St Michael's Convent), Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1001305.

<sup>228</sup> Reginald Blomfield MA, 'On Gardens', *The Portfolio*, 20 (1889), 231-237 (p. 231).

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., (p. 232).

shape'. London and Wise did not fare much better, although he applauded them as they were the 'last thorough-going adherents of the formal system'.<sup>230</sup> One thing that did please Blomfield was that the question of the formal garden was at least being discussed.<sup>231</sup>

The second article appeared in *The English Illustrated Magazine* in December 1891 and was again illustrated with black and white ink drawings by Thomas.<sup>232</sup> Once more Blomfield took the opportunity to promote the formal system against that of the landscape gardener and went into great detail as to why the formal system was the better; 'the object of formal gardening is to bring the house and grounds into harmony, to make the house grow out of its surroundings, to prevent its being an excrescence on the face of nature' (Figure 48).<sup>233</sup>

Reginald Blomfield and his book *The Formal Garden in England* together with his contribution to the revival of the formal garden is the subject of chapter three.

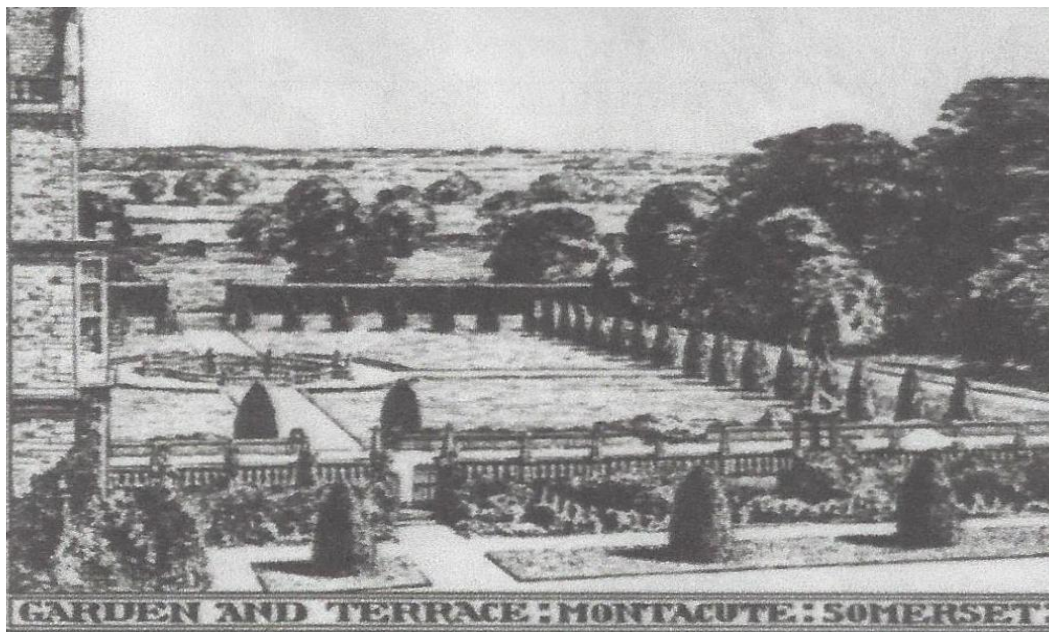


Fig. 48. Montacute by F. Inigo Thomas, an example of an ancient garden in the formal style. *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 1891.

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., (p. 234).

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., (p. 237).

<sup>232</sup> Reginald Blomfield, 'On Gardens and Grounds', *The English Illustrated Magazine*, 99 (1891), 225-231 (p. 225). *The English Illustrated Magazine* was published by Macmillan, the publishers of *The Formal Garden in England*, so this article was probably a promotional piece for the launch of Blomfield's book.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., (p. 225).

## Moving towards the formal garden

E. S. Prior (1852-1932) an architect, garden designer and colleague of both Sedding and Blomfield, reviewed their respective books in an April 1892 article, 'The Design of Gardens', in *The Hobby Horse*, the quarterly publication of The Century Guild of Artists.<sup>234</sup> Like so many of the previous commentators, Prior was pleased that there were signs of change, with people moving away from bedding plants, and found it 'rather distressing to those whose taste in colour is not founded on the products of gas tar!'<sup>235</sup> He then introduced Sedding and Blomfield suggesting that their books 'will lead the newly-awakened desire for garden design in the direction where progress can be assured'.<sup>236</sup>

On Sedding, Prior suggested that his 'Garden-craft' had more interest as it was a posthumous publication and 'an eloquent memorial of his enthusiastic and winning personality', including a 'wealth of pretty and pregnant sayings'. Prior felt Sedding's admiration for the 'genuine garden craft of Bacon and Sir William Temple' and understood Sedding's eagerness to renew their craft. Prior was otherwise dismissive of the book as he found it too much of a 'collection of conceits, too discursive and inconclusive for a practical manual'.<sup>237</sup>

On the other hand, Prior was full of admiration for Messrs Blomfield and Thomas as 'they have given us what is as practical as it is concise'.<sup>238</sup> He found that *The Formal Garden in England* provided 'sound teaching and numberless suggestions for our return to the traditional principles of gardening'. Here Prior showed his feelings about the demise of the formal garden, such gardens 'so rudely set aside last century'. On the history he wrote that Blomfield had traced the garden from its medieval origins with 'perfect continuity' through the fashions of the time, the Italian, French and the Dutch phases. He found favour with Blomfield's 'Formal Garden' as this ordered design was something that is characteristically and distinctly English.<sup>239</sup> He continued

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<sup>234</sup> Edward Prior, 'The Design of Gardens', *The Hobby Horse*, 6.26 (1892), 41-51 ( p. 41). For more information on Edward S. Prior see Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden*, pp. 102-103. Martin Godfrey Cook, *Edward Prior, Arts and Crafts Architect* (Marlborough: The Crowood Press, 2015).

<sup>235</sup> Prior, 'The Design of Gardens', (pp. 42-43).

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 43).

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 44).

to praise Blomfield by linking him with William Morris' ideals for the garden 'that the garden should be well fenced from the outside world'. It was an aspect of Blomfield's design 'to show a clear line of demarcation as it is wiser to confine our ambition within our own gardens'.<sup>240</sup>

Prior finished his article appreciating the illustrations of Thomas as a 'delightful use of architectural device', further praising Blomfield with the comment, 'the charm of the garden of order, the formal garden, is not to be placed entirely in its harmonizing with the lines of the building but may be attached to the house as if it were an outdoor suite of rooms, furnished with living flowers and trees and the changeful skies for their ceilings'.<sup>241</sup> So was it the ordered design of the formal garden, as Prior's interpretation, the outdoor suite of rooms, that led to the formality of the garden room becoming so prevalent and popular in garden design in the early twentieth century?

### **A place for romance**

Prior made a serious comment about the design of the formal garden but for others, like Sedding, there was a sense of romance about these old gardens. In *The Girls' Own Paper* of 1894, in a short story called 'Highway Dick' by H. G. F. Taylor, there was a tale about the love between Phyllis Langton, 'as handsome and stately a maiden as the county can boast' and the Squire's only son, Richard Holyport, 'a dashing young gentleman', who proposed marriage to Miss Langton in:

the most secluded corner of an old fashioned garden, a garden with fair, green turf and spreading cedars; with high, well-clipped, sheltering yew hedges, with tidy gravel paths, long straight terraces and lichen-covered mellow-hued red brick walls amply o'ergrown with ivy.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., (p. 47).

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., (p. 51).

<sup>242</sup> H. G. F. Taylor, 'Highway Dick', *The Girls' Own Paper*, December 1<sup>st</sup> (1894), (p. 40). The tale does not relate if Miss Langton accepted the proposal!

## The continued interest in the history of English gardens

*A History of Gardening in England*, an important book on the history of English gardens, was first published in 1895 by Miss Alicia Amherst (1865-1941), later Mrs Evelyn Cecil and later still Lady Rockley, and how it came to be written was explained in her preface in the first edition.<sup>243</sup> Percy Newberry, the Egyptologist, writer and botanist, had written a series of articles on garden history in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* from 1889 to 1891, from the Roman period up to the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>244</sup> Because of Mrs Cecil's father's connection with the Egypt Exploration Fund, Newberry became a family friend and, knowing of her interest in 'old garden literature', suggested that she should carry on her research using his articles as a start.<sup>245</sup> Mrs Cecil had collected new material so she decided to enlarge on Newberry's suggestion and 'go back to original authorities'.<sup>246</sup> *A History of Gardening in England* was much acclaimed, one review from *The Athenaeum* in 1896 said 'these articles have been revised and much extended by Miss Amherst and they now constitute a highly interesting and accurate historical sketch of a fascinating subject' and that 'among the many gardening books that have seen the light of day in the past few years, this will take its place as a classic'.<sup>247</sup>

The reviewer was right, this was one of the most authoritative and comprehensive books that had been written on garden history at the time of its publication and still is to garden historians today. The contents page listed her chapters starting with the Monastic garden to early Tudor gardens, to Elizabethan garden literature, the dawn of landscape gardening, into the nineteenth century and the modern garden. Mrs Cecil, also provided a very detailed list of English printed gardening books starting with

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<sup>243</sup> The Hon. Mrs Evelyn Cecil, *A History of Gardening in England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., (London: John Murray, 1910), preface to the first edition, p. x. This book was reprinted three times, under her three different names, Miss Alicia Amherst, Mrs Evelyn Cecil and Lady Rockley. Here she will be referred to as Mrs Cecil, using the third edition.

<sup>244</sup> P. E. N., 'A History of English Gardens', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, V (1889), 7, 263, 264, 327, 328, 329, 649; VI, (1890) 12, 293, 294; VII (1891), 74, 197, 258, 259, 417, 418, 482. Percy Edwards Newberry trained at Kew and had an interest in botany. Brian Fagan, 'Newberry, Percy Edwards', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>245</sup> Sue Minter, *The Well-Connected Gardener, A Biography of Alicia Amherst, founder of Garden History* (London: Book Guild Publishing, 2010), p. 19.

<sup>246</sup> Mrs Cecil, *A History*, p. x.

<sup>247</sup> 'Science, A History of Gardening in England, by the Hon Miss Alicia Amherst (Quaritch)', *The Athenaeum*, 3592 (1896), 293-294.

The Grete Herbal by Peter Treveris of 1526, through to Robert Marnock (1800-1889) and The Floricultural Magazine of 1836-1841.<sup>248</sup>

On the return of the 'forsaken hardy plants to a foremost place', Mrs Cecil made a pertinent observation that 'this led people to read what old writers had to say of them' and that 'it was the study of these forgotten books that probably hastened the return of the formal garden'. As for the examples of this revival of the formal garden she added an illustration of the formal garden at Canons Ashby in 1708 (Figure 49) and listed four that had been made during the 1840s to the 1860s in the English style that had been in vogue prior to the 'landscape craze'. These were Penshurst Place in Kent, which was revived by Devey as mentioned earlier in this chapter; the other three being Arley Hall in Cheshire, Blickling Hall in Norfolk and Montacute House in Somerset.<sup>249</sup>

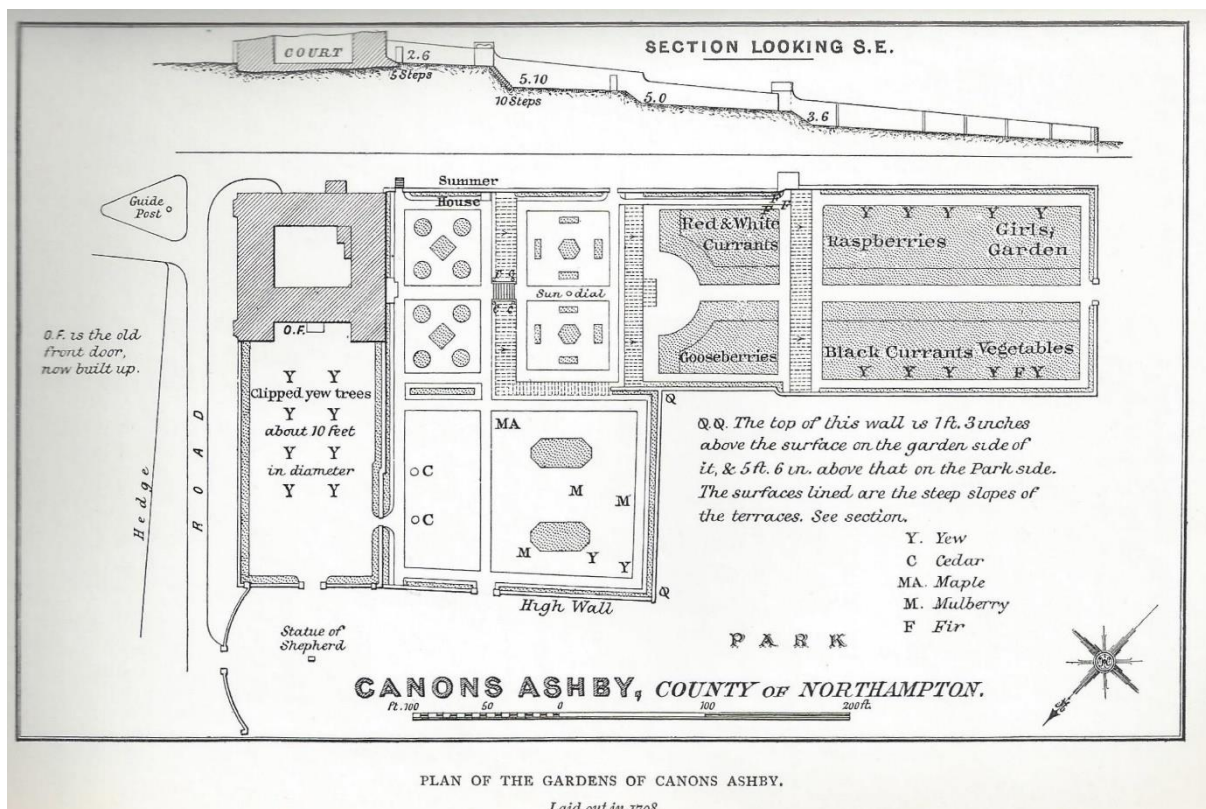


Fig. 49. Mrs Cecil's example of a formal garden. A plan of the formal garden at Canons Ashby laid out in 1708. *A History of Gardening in England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 1910.

<sup>248</sup> Mrs Cecil, *A History of Gardening*, contents page, no page number. Mrs Cecil gave the wrong date for *The Grete Herbal*, it is 1526, not 1516.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.



## Arley Hall

In 1469 Sir Piers Warburton (1430-1480) built an E-plan house on the Arley estate which remained until the first half of the nineteenth century when his descendent, Rowland Edgerton-Warburton (1804-1891), rebuilt the house in 1846 to designs by local architect George Latham (d.1871). A large scale map of 1743 showed there were formal gardens at Arley Hall to the north west of the house. The area of the formal gardens there today was previously marked as orchards and vegetable gardens (Figure 50).<sup>250</sup>



Fig. 50. The arrow shows the old orchards and vegetable gardens in 1743 and where the formal gardens are today at Arley Hall. *Garden History*, 1996.

The fifth Baronet, Sir Peter Warburton (1754-1813), inherited the estate in 1774. In 1781 he married Alice Parker and started to remodel the interior of the house and in 1785 Sir Peter and Lady Warburton called in William Emes to lay out a 'more spacious park'. From 1786 to 1846 other improvements were made to the south-west gardens which were originally the orchards and vegetable gardens on the 1743 map. The improvements included a second walled area known as the Middle Garden, a flower garden at the southern end bounded by hedges, a rose garden created to the south and 'The Alcove' summer house was built. As Elizabeth Ashbrook, the Warburtons'

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<sup>250</sup> Charles Foster, 'The History of the Gardens at Arley Hall, Cheshire', *Garden History*, 24 (1996), 255-272 (p. 255).

great granddaughter, wrote of her great grandparents, 'they were unaffected by fashion wanting to preserve and develop the 18<sup>th</sup> century designs using yew hedges and brick walls to create separate enclosures leading from one to the other'.<sup>251</sup> 'The Alcove' summer house was to be the focal point of what are thought to be the first double herbaceous borders to be created in England as shown on a plan of the gardens dated 1846 (Figure 51).



Fig. 51. The 1846 plan of the gardens at Arley Hall, blue arrow shows the double herbaceous borders. *Garden History*, 1996.

Herbaceous plants were being used at Arley from 1786 as there were invoices from a nurseryman called John Holbrook who sold '86 sorts of herbaceous plants at 3d each' to them.<sup>252</sup> During the 1850s the 'Alcove Walk', as it was being called, was improved with the planting of great yew buttresses which divided each border into five sections and these borders remain much celebrated. They were featured in an article in *Country Life* in 1904 and the doyenne of hardy plants, Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932),

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., (p. 262). Elizabeth Ashbrook, *The Story of a Garden Arley 1831-1991* (Arley: Arley Hall Press, 1991), p. 8.

<sup>252</sup> Foster, 'The History of the Gardens at Arley Hall', (p. 262).

praised the borders writing, 'it would be hard to find borders of hardy flowers handsomer or in any way better done than those at Arley in Cheshire' (Figure 52).<sup>253</sup>



Fig. 52. George Elgood's 1910 painting of the Alcove Garden at Arley Hall. George Samuel Elgood, *His Life and Work 1851-1943*, 1995.

### **Blickling Hall**

Blickling Hall in Norfolk was built for Sir Henry Hobart between 1616 and 1626 on the site of the large medieval moated hall. Set within two deer parks, it had elaborate gardens and a banqueting house. From 1698 the gardens continued to be developed with the creation of a haha and a raised bank surrounding the gardens. In 1720 a Doric Temple was built and statues were purchased from a sale at Oxnead Hall in

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<sup>253</sup> 'Arley Hall Cheshire, The Residence of Mr Piers Edgerton-Warburton', *Country Life*, 16.416 (1904), 942-950 (p. 950). Gertrude Jekyll, paintings by George S. Elgood, *Classic English Gardens* (London: Studio Editions, 1995), pp. 170-175. Originally printed as *Some English Gardens* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1904). Historic England, Arley Hall, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000637.

Norfolk. The garden continued to be developed and at one time Humphry Repton was asked for advice and his son, John Adey Repton (1775-1860), provided plans for flower beds. In 1850, further developments were made to the garden by William, eighth Marquess of Lothian, and his wife Constance.<sup>254</sup>

To the east of the house a large parterre of one and half acres was laid out in 1872. Originally, discussions were held between architect Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820-1877) and Markham Nesfield (1841-1874), landscape engineer, about the design for a buttressed brick wall with a flight of steps and bays for seats. The elaborate pattern of the beds, ribbon borders and hedges, planted with herbaceous perennials and the old fashioned flowers was Lady Constance's own design carried out by the head gardener Mr Lyon.<sup>255</sup>

In 1930, Christopher Hussey wrote in *Country Life* about the garden and the parterre saying 'to the modern eye the patterned area is too small in scale. The lines of the design are lost in a multiplicity of dotted beds, beautifully filled, but without perceptible relation to each other or to the house' (Figures 53, 54). However, he found the avenue beyond far more impressive.<sup>256</sup> During the 1930s the garden designer Norah Lindsay (1873-1948) was consulted and provided plans for planting the moat and for simplifying and remodelling the parterre garden.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Historic England, Blickling Hall, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000154.

<sup>255</sup> Blickling Hall, The National Trust, (1980), p. 59.

<sup>256</sup> Christopher Hussey, 'Blickling Hall-I. Norfolk. A Seat of the Marquess of Lothian', *Country Life*, 67.1737 (1930), 821-841 (p. 821).

<sup>257</sup> Historic England, Blickling Hall. For more information about Norah Lindsay see Allyson Hayward, *Norah Lindsay The Life and Art of a Garden Designer* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007).

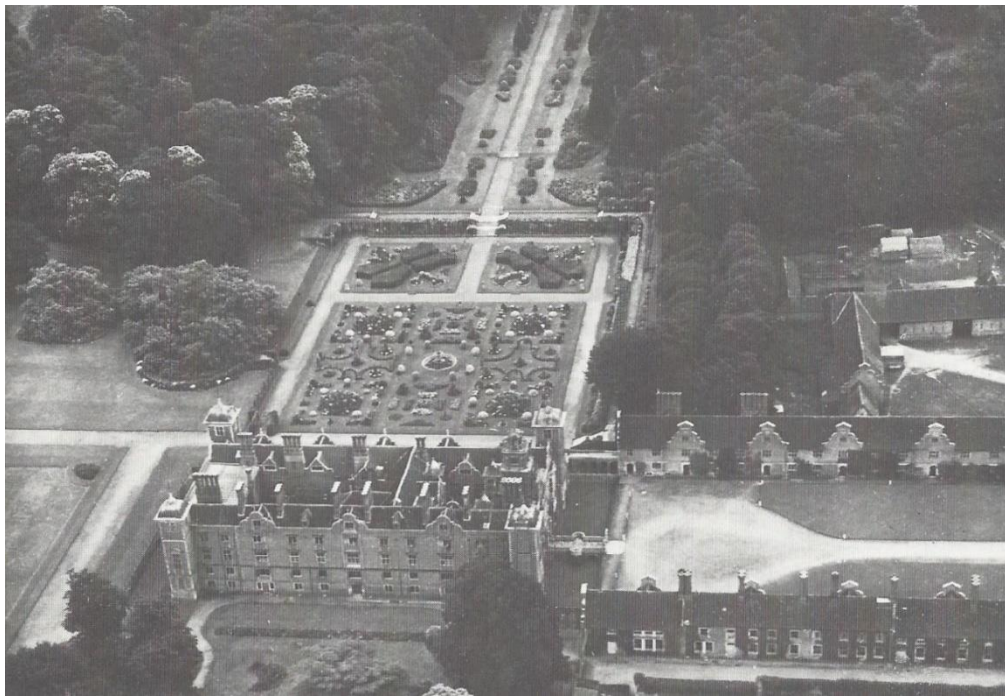


Fig. 53. An aerial view of Blickling Hall circa 1930, showing 'the multiplicity of dotted beds'. *Blickling Hall, National Trust Guidebook, 1980.*



Fig. 54. A 1906 painting by Beatrice Parsons of the parterres at Blickling Hall showing the herbaceous planting. *Painted Gardens, 1991.*

## Montacute House

The origins of Montacute date back to the eleventh century when the Count of Mortain was granted lands at Montacute and built a castle. This structure was short lived and by the twelfth century the site of the castle had been granted to the Cluniac Priory which continued until the Dissolution in 1539. By the middle of the sixteenth century the Phelips family had become established in the town and with inheritance in 1598 Edward Phelips built a new mansion which was completed by 1601. The new mansion stood in an area of formal gardens and as more land became available Phelips established a park. In 1667 there was a survey of Montacute which described very elaborate gardens of terraces, courtyards, walks, walled gardens and 'at each corner of the said Court are 2 faire Turrets with lodging Chambers, all built with Freestone', and 'on the North side of the House a very fair Spacious Garden walled about and furnished with all sorts of Flowers and fruits' (Figure 55).<sup>258</sup>



Fig. 55. Parish map of 1825 showing the north and east garden with the two pavilions (turrets) marked by the blue arrows. *Montacute House Somerset*, 2000.

<sup>258</sup> Historic England, *Montacute House, Park and Garden*, Grade I 1000468. Malcolm Rogers, *Montacute House Somerset*, National Trust (2000), pp. 58-59.

In 1834 William Phelps (1823-1889) inherited the house but William was only eleven so the house was let until he came of age. In 1845 he married Ellen Helyer of Coker Court and the new Mrs Phelps brought with her to Montacute a gardener, Pridham, to help renovate the gardens.<sup>259</sup> Pridham designed an intricate parterre for the north garden, with a central balustraded pool, a photograph of which was taken around the 1850s (Figure 56). Pridham also made alterations to the east garden and the park.



Fig. 56. The north garden to Mr Pridham's elaborate design, circa 1850s. Blue arrow highlights the balustraded pool. *Montacute House Archive*.

After William died in 1889 the estate went into decline and eventually was let to Lord Curzon (1859-1925), a former Viceroy of India. When Lord Curzon died the estate was sold in 1931 to E. E. Cook who passed the property to the National Trust. After the War, the Trust invited Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962) to provide planting schemes for the herbaceous borders in the East Court (Figure 57), which were subsequently replaced in 1951 by garden designer Mrs Phyllis Reiss (1886-1961) of neighbouring Tintinhull House.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Coker Court in South Somerset is a fifteenth century manor house with eighteenth century additions by Sir William Chambers. Historic England, Coker Court, Grade I 1057176.

<sup>260</sup> Historic England, Montacute House.



Fig. 57. The east garden by George Elgood showing the herbaceous border and one of the pavilions circa 1890. *Painted Gardens*, 1991.

During the last years of the nineteenth century Montacute was seen as an original example of an Elizabethan garden. One architect and garden designer who was unaware that the garden had been made by Mrs Phelps and Pridham in the 1850s was Reginald Blomfield, who wrote about Montacute as being an ancient example of an Elizabethan garden. Another who was taken in by the age of Montacute was Henry Avray Tipping (1855-1933) the celebrated writer, architectural historian and garden designer, who wrote of the gardens in *Gardens Old and New* and said of the north garden, 'most beautiful balustraded fountain basin' (Figure 58) and of Montacute in general 'It is an example of gardening both interesting and elaborate and certainly one of our best illustrations of the period to which it belongs'.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> H. Avray Tipping, M.A., *Gardens Old & New The Country House & Its Garden Environment, The Third Volume* (London: Country Life, 1910), p. 92. The fountain was part of Pridham's design and so was not shown on the Parish Map of 1825, see Figure 55.





Fig. 58. A watercolour of the 'most beautiful balustraded fountain basin'. Ernest Arthur Rowe circa 1900. With kind permission from The John Eisey Collection.

It is interesting to note that Mrs Cecil who had thoroughly researched the history of gardens, including Penshurst Place, Arley Hall, Blickling Hall and Montacute House, was not fooled by their 'ancient' appearance, but with Montacute House two of the leading authorities on the old formal gardens, Blomfield and Tipping were. Mrs Cecil recognised the importance of these gardens as they were some of the first to be revived in the old English style that came before the 'landscape craze'. What is of further interest is that three of the four gardens were made and designed by their owners creating their version of an old formal garden. But with Penshurst Place the garden was revived by Devey who based the design on a 1702 plan.

### **At the close of the century**

Two commentators, F. G. Walters in 1898, and Albert Forbes Sieveking (1857-1951) in 1899, summed up the opinions that were expressed by the many correspondents over the previous decades. In *The Gentleman's Magazine* of August 1898, Walters was another who favoured Bacon as a learned and accomplished man who marked the

era of the Tudor garden, describing his essay as an English Classic, and which 'still stands unrivalled in the glory-role of Britain'.<sup>262</sup>

Walters wanted a return to a Tudor garden believing that the nearest example of such a garden, 'on a miniature scale', was that of the 'delightful old-world cottage garden found in remote counties where the wheels of life move slowly'.<sup>263</sup> He was very keen to promote Bacon's views, 'as time went on the science of gardening improved and thus during the Tudor reign successively the systems grew in beauty until becoming that idealised by Bacon'. Walters then gave a description of ancient demesnes that the reader might have seen at that time:

To the square garden with its fruit and flowers was usually added a smooth-mown bowling-green, and very often a fish-pond. Often in such ancient demesnes can the situation of the vanished fish-pond now grassed over be marked by the circular depression in the area of the turf.

Walters went on to discuss the flowers, the roses of various kinds, the musk which was out of fashion but mentioned by Bacon and flowers that were esteemed in a Tudor garden; violets, anemones, wallflowers, gillyflowers, pinks, periwinkles, white, purple and blue, hollyhocks, and tulips, hyacinths and daffodils.<sup>264</sup> It was the 'tyranny of bedding out', as Mrs Paul called it, that Walters wanted changed and returned to 'perennial charm' as Bacon's ideal of a garden from January to December. Like so many others Walters was looking for 'a thing of beauty and a joy for ever'.<sup>265</sup>

In 1899 Sieveking published what he termed the 'Epitome' of the literature of the garden art, *The Praise of Gardens*.<sup>266</sup> This was a comprehensive book for those who were interested in the history of gardens as Sieveking had either written or researched short essays and other writings from a wide range of sources. These included Renaissance, Tudor, Elizabethan and Stuart gardens where he listed not only Lord Bacon, but others such as John Parkinson and John Gerard (1545-1612), the botanist.

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<sup>262</sup> F. G. Walters, 'The Tudor Garden', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 285.2012 (1898), 197-204 (p. 197).

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid., (p. 198).

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., (p. 204).

<sup>266</sup> Albert Forbes Sieveking, F.S.A., *The Praise of Gardens an Epitome of the Literature of The Garden-Art* (London: J. M. Dent, 1899).

Coming to the seventeenth century and the formal garden, Sieveking introduced his readers to the writings of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), poet John Milton (1608-1674) and John Evelyn.<sup>267</sup> The next two chapters dealt with the decline of the formal garden and the rise of the landscape garden with the works of Rousseau (1712-1778), Batty Langley (1696-1751), Kent, William Mason and his poem on The English Garden and Horace Walpole, man of letters, historian and antiquarian.

The final chapters brought the history of gardens up to date with the essay by Price and the poem by Knight on the Picturesque and the loss of the formal garden. For his chapter on the nineteenth century Sieveking repeated many of the written works of others who have already been discussed in this chapter: Scott, Loudon, Morris, Mrs Foster, Robinson, Bright, Mrs Cecil, Blomfield and Thomas.<sup>268</sup>

In his prologue Sieveking thanked 'the three chief Histories of Gardening in English' which had helped him compile his publication. Firstly, Loudon and the preface to his *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 'a masterly and exhaustive treatise which only requires to be brought down to date'.<sup>269</sup> Secondly, George Johnson's (1802-1886) *History of English Gardening* (1829), 'which also strongly merits the honour of a second edition' and thirdly Miss Alicia Amherst's (Mrs Cecil) *History of Gardening in England* (1895).<sup>270</sup>

Mrs Cecil, who continued to make pertinent observations on gardening at this time, wrote that 'during the last years of the nineteenth century gardening was still the passion of the few, now it is the craze of the many, and as people became more knowledgeable about gardens then gardening books became more popular'. She continued 'for every book that came out in 1895 a dozen appeared in 1905'.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid., p. xi-xii.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. xii-xiii.

<sup>269</sup> Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, (1830), pp. 1-118.

<sup>270</sup> George W. Johnson, *A History of English Gardening, Chronological, Biographical, Literary and Critical. Tracing the progress of the art in this country from the invasion of the Romans to the present time* (London: Baldwin & Cradock, 1829). Johnson has not been discussed other than this mention as the history section of his book, was taken from Loudon's *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, while most of the remaining text is to do with horticulture. Elliott writes that Johnson became the principal authority on the history of horticulture. Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>271</sup> Cecil, *A History of Gardening*, p. 306.

## Section IV: The early years of the twentieth century:

### The return of the formal garden

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#### Gardens Old and New

In January 1897 *Country Life Illustrated* was first published with its focus on sport, country pursuits and the social side of land ownership. The founder of *Country Life* as it was later called was Edward Hudson (1854-1936) who, although he did not write or edit the journal, always exerted his authority over its content, style and policy. One element of its success was that it attracted advertising from estate agents in a rapidly growing country house market and this revenue was generated by its weekly feature, a series on old country houses and their gardens, 'Country Homes Gardens Old & New'.<sup>272</sup>

In an advertisement on April 29, 1899, under the title 'Gardens Old and New', it proudly boasted that amongst the principal gardens already illustrated in *Country Life* were the following and listed 78 gardens including Penshurst Place, Blickling Hall and Montacute House (Figure 59).<sup>273</sup> The articles were mainly about the history of the family and the house rather than the history of the gardens but the focus that made these articles so popular was the photographs. As Elliott wrote, '*Country Life* was different not only in its more miscellaneous content but in its visual effect, it was the quality and quantity of the photographs printed on shiny paper that was far superior to any of the other gardening newspapers at that time'.<sup>274</sup> As an example, Penshurst Place was featured three times between 1899 and 1911 carrying a total of 30 photographs, 19 were of the exterior of the castle together with most of the gardens. Some of these photographs are illustrated in the section on Penshurst Place in chapter two.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Clive Aslet, 'Hudson, Edward Burgess (1854-1936)', ODNB see bibliography.

<sup>273</sup> Advertisement, *Country Life Illustrated*, 5.121 (1899), xxiii.

<sup>274</sup> Brent Elliott, *The Country House Garden from the Archives of Country Life, 1897-1939* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1995), p. 7.

<sup>275</sup> 'Country Homes Gardens Old & New, Penshurst Place, Tonbridge, The Seat of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley', *Country Life Illustrated*, 5.115 (1899), 336-338; 'Country Homes Gardens Old & New, Penshurst Place.-I Tonbridge, A Seat of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley', *Country Life*, 30.778 (1911), 844-845; 'Country Homes Gardens Old & New, Penshurst Place, A Seat of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley', *Country Life*, 30.779 (1911), 894-902.

# "Gardens Old and New."

Amongst the principal Gardens already Illustrated in *Country Life*, under the series "Gardens Old and New," are the following :

		C. L. No.			C. L. No.
Berks.	Ascott . . . . .	34	Northampton	Apethorpe . . . . .	70, 71
	Cintra Lodge . . . . .	78		Castle Ashby . . . . .	53, 54, 55
	Lockinge . . . . .	80	Nottingham	Lampport Hall . . . . .	69
Bucks.	Shiplake Court . . . . .	79		Newstead Abbey . . . . .	59, 60
	Bisham Abbey . . . . .	8	Oxford	Broughton Castle . . . . .	102
	Hall Barn . . . . .	92	Surrey	Albury Park . . . . .	49
	Halton . . . . .	24		Claremont . . . . .	50
	Hughenden Manor . . . . .	17		Downside, Leatherhead . . . . .	89
	Stoke Park . . . . .	26		Great Tangle Manor . . . . .	82, 83
	Waddesdon Manor . . . . .	85		Losely Park . . . . .	51
Cheshire	Eaton Hall . . . . .	33		Pain's Hill (Cobham) . . . . .	9, 10
Devon	Mount Edgcombe . . . . .	35		Shirley Vicarage . . . . .	72
Derby	Elvaston Castle . . . . .	106, 107		Sutton Place . . . . .	104
	Hardwicke Hall . . . . .	42, 43	Sussex	Wotton House . . . . .	94
	Tissington Hall . . . . .	109		Battle Abbey . . . . .	44
Essex	Weald Hall . . . . .	46	Suffolk	Aspall Hall . . . . .	97
Herts.	Ashridge Park . . . . .	96, 97		Crow's Hall . . . . .	106
	Hatfield House . . . . .	18, 19		Helmingham Hall . . . . .	101
	Knebworth . . . . .	25	Shropshire	Hengrave Hall . . . . .	48
	Ting Park . . . . .	22		Condover . . . . .	64, 65
Hants.	Heckfield Place . . . . .	100		Lilleshall . . . . .	81
Kent	Charlton House . . . . .	12	Somerset	Weston Park . . . . .	47
	Eastwell Park . . . . .	14		Bishop's Palace, Wells . . . . .	45
	Franks . . . . .	11		Brympton House . . . . .	99
	Groombridge Place . . . . .	39		Montacute . . . . .	67, 68
	Ightham Mote . . . . .	15		St. Catherine's Court . . . . .	103
	Leeds Castle . . . . .	16		Ven House . . . . .	95
	Penshurst . . . . .	21	Staffordshire	Alton Towers . . . . .	76, 77
	Swinford Old Manor . . . . .	13		Ingestre . . . . .	75
Lincoln	Belton House . . . . .	90, 91	Wilts.	Trentham Hall . . . . .	61, 62
	Belvoir Castle . . . . .	86, 87		Bishop's Palace, Salisbury . . . . .	66
Middlesex	Chiswick House . . . . .	93		Longford Castle . . . . .	84
	Holland House . . . . .	23	Warwick	Wilton House . . . . .	88
	Kew Gardens . . . . .	63		Charlecote Park . . . . .	2, 3
	Syon House . . . . .	108		Compton Wynyates . . . . .	29
Norfolk	Blickling . . . . .	56, 57		Guy's Cliff . . . . .	6
	Brome Hall . . . . .	73, 74		Packington . . . . .	30
	Holkham . . . . .	52		Stoneleigh Abbey . . . . .	7
	Oxburgh Hall . . . . .	20		Warwick Castle . . . . .	4, 5

Copies of most of the foregoing numbers can be obtained at the Offices of the Paper :

20, TAVISTOCK STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Fig. 59. The advertisement from *Country Life*. *Country Life Illustrated*, 1899.

## The Formal Garden

*Country Life* was mentioned in a letter from Ambrose North in *The Saturday Review* of 21<sup>st</sup> June 1902, as a follow up to a piece two weeks earlier on the 7<sup>th</sup> June, reviewing the third edition of Blomfield's book *The Formal Garden in England*.<sup>276</sup> North suggested that formality must surely have been fostered by the photographs in *Country Life*. He was surprised that the reviewer thought that informality is coming back, continuing 'that the tendency now is to tire of the unchartered freedom of cows grazing up to the windows, - to revert to balustrades and peacocks and make gardening an appanage of architecture'.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>276</sup> 'The Formal Garden In England', *The Saturday Review*, 93.2432 (1902), (p. 737). Ambrose North, 'The Formal Garden', *The Saturday Review*, 93.2434 (1902), (p. 806).

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

One particular series of books was the three volumes from the publishers of *Country Life*, called *Gardens Old and New The Country House and Its Garden Environment*, with the celebrated photographs of the gardens that North so enjoyed in the weekly *Country Life* magazines. The first volume was issued around 1900 followed by two more, the second edited by John Leyland and the third in 1908 by Tipping, who was architectural editor of *Country Life* at the time and included photographs by Charles Latham (1847-1912).<sup>278</sup> Alice Dryden (1866-1956), photographer, historian and writer, reviewed this last edition by Tipping in *Country Life* in June 1908. She praised Tipping's 'admirable introduction pithily setting out the rise and progress of formal gardening in England' and added a comment with regard to the photographs, 'Mr Latham's photographs are too well known to need words of praise, he unites in his work the eye of the artist and complete mastery of his professional technique'.<sup>279</sup>

To complement this series from the publishers of *Country Life*, Charles Holme (1848-1923), the proprietor and editor of *The Studio*, an illustrated magazine of fine and applied art, published his own series *The Gardens of England* in three editions. The 1907 edition covered the Southern and Western Counties, the 1908 edition the Midlands and Eastern Counties and the 1911 the Northern Counties.<sup>280</sup> In each of the three editions there was an introductory essay on the history of garden making, the use of gardens and the types of gardens. The photographs were taken by W. J. Day (1854-1939) who was already an established photographer of the grounds of country houses before these images were used in *The Studio* series.<sup>281</sup> Both *Country Life* and *The Studio* had similarities in style, a series of black and white photographs with little text, and to add colour *The Studio* reproduced a few of the watercolours from a group of garden painters, Arthur Rowe (1862-1922), George Elgood (1851-

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<sup>278</sup> *Gardens Old & New The Country House & Its Garden Environment* (London: Country Life and George Newnes, no date). John Leyland, *Gardens Old & New The Country House & Its Environment*, the second volume (London: Country Life and George Newnes, no date). H. Avray Tipping, *Gardens Old & New The Country House & Its Environment*, the third volume (London: Country Life and George Newnes, no date).

<sup>279</sup> Alice Dryden, 'The Growth of the English Garden', *Country Life*, 23.596 (1908), civ-cviii.

<sup>280</sup> Julie F. Codell, 'Holme Charles (1848-1923)', ODNB see bibliography. Charles Holme, *The Gardens of England in the Southern & Western Counties* (London: The Studio, 1907). Charles Holme, *The Gardens of England in the Midlands & Eastern Counties* (London: The Studio, 1908). Charles Holme, *The Gardens of England in the Northern Counties* (London: The Studio, 1911).

<sup>281</sup> Historic England. Archive of the William James Day Collection, <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/photographs/w-j-day-collection/>> [accessed 08.08.2021].

1943), Ernest Chadwick (1876-1956), Miss Lilian Stannard (1877-1944) and Miss Edith Helena Adie (1865-1947).<sup>282</sup>

### A 'lighter' version of the history of gardens

At the start of the new century a few books were being published on the old gardens, providing a 'lighter' version of garden history. As with *The Studio* series these books also carried illustrations from the garden painters, George Elgood, Arthur Rowe, Beatrice Parsons (1870-1955) and others, their distinct style giving these gardens a 'romantic' feel. In 1906 Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) published a small volume called *Old Fashioned Flowers* with illustrations by George Elgood.<sup>283</sup> M. R. Gloag (no dates) published *A Book of English Gardens* in 1906 with illustrations from Katharine Montagu Wyatt (1866-1946), a garden and flower painter.<sup>284</sup> This book, with a short introduction on the history of English gardens, also included a number of essays on old gardens. One was on Albury Park in Surrey, with its terrace designed by John Evelyn, which escaped the hands of the improvers and was so admired by William Cobbett in the early nineteenth century (Figure 60).<sup>285</sup>

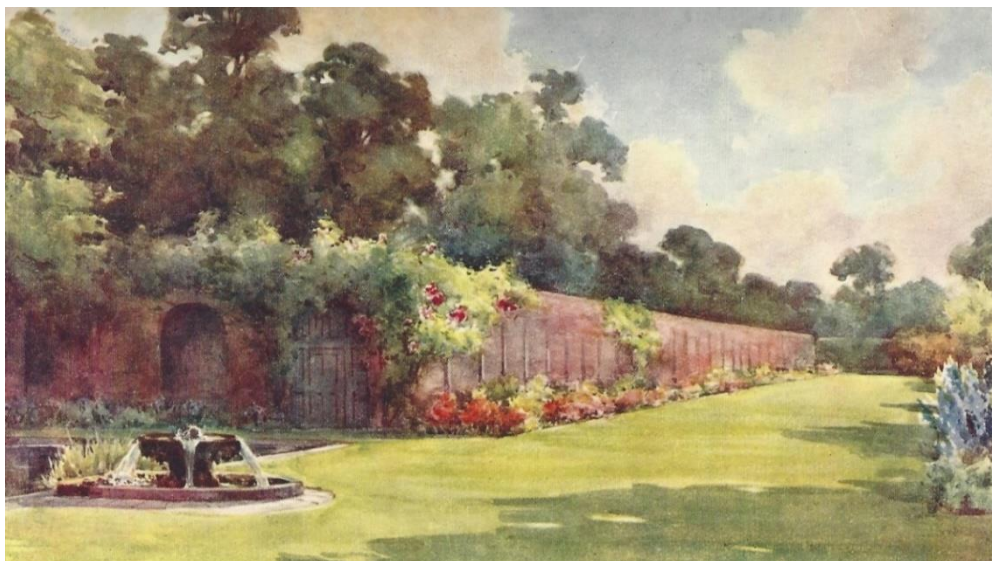


Fig. 60. The terrace at Albury Park by Montagu Wyatt. *A Book of English Gardens*, 1906.

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<sup>282</sup> Holme, *The Gardens of England*, prefatory note, p. iii.

<sup>283</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Old Fashioned Flowers* (London: George Allen, 1906). This essay had come from a collection of essays by Maeterlinck, Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Double Garden* (London: George Allen, 1904).

<sup>284</sup> M. R. Gloag, illustrated by Katharine Montagu Wyatt, *A Book of English Gardens* (London: Methuen, 1906).

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-68.

In an essay on Ham House, Gloag put forward that the design of the gardens at Ham were interesting in that they resembled a house, room after room, as they were built in Elizabethan days. In a further essay on Wrest Park in Bedfordshire Gloag wrote about 'the beauty of the Gardens at Wrest Park, a magic that comes from the touch of a master hand, for the old French Gardens at Wrest were laid out by no other than Le Nôtre' (1613-1700) (Figure 61).<sup>286</sup> Gloag's final words were to quote from the journal of Miss Mary Berry 'we went to Ham House; the house and Gardens are in old style; that is to say, the style of Charles II. I was much pleased with the house and its situation, surrounded as it is by large avenues of trees, with its terraced Gardens (Figure 62) and its great Bowling Green'.<sup>287</sup>



Fig. 61. The canal at Wrest Park by Montagu Wyatt. *A Book of English Gardens*, 1906.

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid., pp. 321.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-194. Mary Berry (1763-1852) was an early nineteenth century writer whose journals and correspondence, published in 1865, are a good source for early nineteenth century social history. Mary Berry, Lady Theresa Lewis, Ed., *Extracts of the Journals and Correspondence of Miss Berry from the years 1783 to 1852* (London: Longmans, 1866).



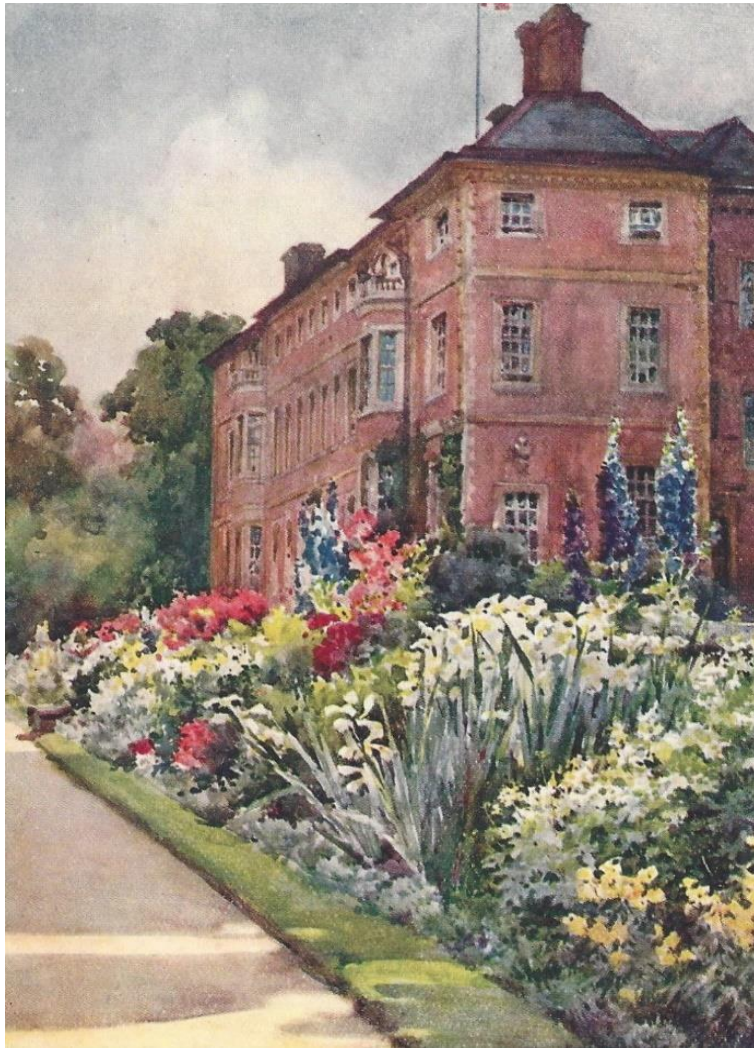


Fig. 62. The herbaceous terrace border at Ham House by Montagu Wyatt. *A Book of English Gardens*, 1906.

### **The practicalities of making a formal garden**

Mrs Cecil was proved right, there was a phenomenal amount of books and articles published from the turn of the twentieth century for anyone interested in gardens, and particularly if you wanted to have the old fashioned flowers in your garden, as Mrs Foster had suggested twenty years earlier. This materialised into what was *de rigueur* in gardening, the herbaceous border, which together with topiary, became essential parts of the revived formal garden.

## Old fashioned flowers

There was a series of handbooks on gardening from the publisher John Lane and one in particular published in 1901 concerned 'old-fashioned flowers'. In the preface the author Harry Roberts (no dates) thanks Canon Ellacombe (1822-1916) who allowed him to browse his collection of old garden books.<sup>288</sup> This browsing was reflected in his first chapter and read as a short history of gardening, with the now familiar mentions of Bacon and Parkinson. Roberts then explained what he meant by an old fashioned garden, 'a system in direct opposition to the prim geometric beds and to the imitation of carpet patterns by arrangements of flowers', so Roberts was another who disliked bedding. As the series suggests it was a practical book, with chapters on the seasons, the summer months, a garden by the sea, how to take cuttings and layer plants; and what was most helpful was a seven point plan with suggestions that borders should be wide, not less than nine to twelve feet, how to cultivate the soil, avoid bare earth and plant bold clumps or masses of individual species.<sup>289</sup>

Another to receive thanks from Roberts was Messrs Kelway's of Langport in Somerset, who had made many presents to Roberts of delphiniums, peonies and pyrethrums.<sup>290</sup> Kelway's & Son was started in 1851 by James Kelway and had gained a reputation for supplying not just peonies but herbaceous plants as well. From the early twentieth century they supplied readymade borders for any size of garden as their advertisement said, 'Kelway's colour borders for cottage and mansion' (Figure 63). Endorsed by Gertrude Jekyll, Kelway's 1909 supplement *Gardens of Delight* listed a range of borders with prices. The border with full instructions and plants ready to plant out would have arrived by train for the gardener to plant. As an example, no. 1 "A" Artistic permanent general border for £5.0s.0d per 100 strong plants or, if you had a precise area, then you could buy the border in square yards, 100 square yards for 250 shillings, designed to give the gardener a 'continuous bloom and colour effect'.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Harry Roberts, *The Book of Old Fashioned Flowers* (London: John Lane, 1901), p. xiii.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

<sup>291</sup> James Kelway, *Gardens of Delight, Supplement to the Manual of Horticulture* (Langport: Kelway's & Sons, 1909), p. 3.

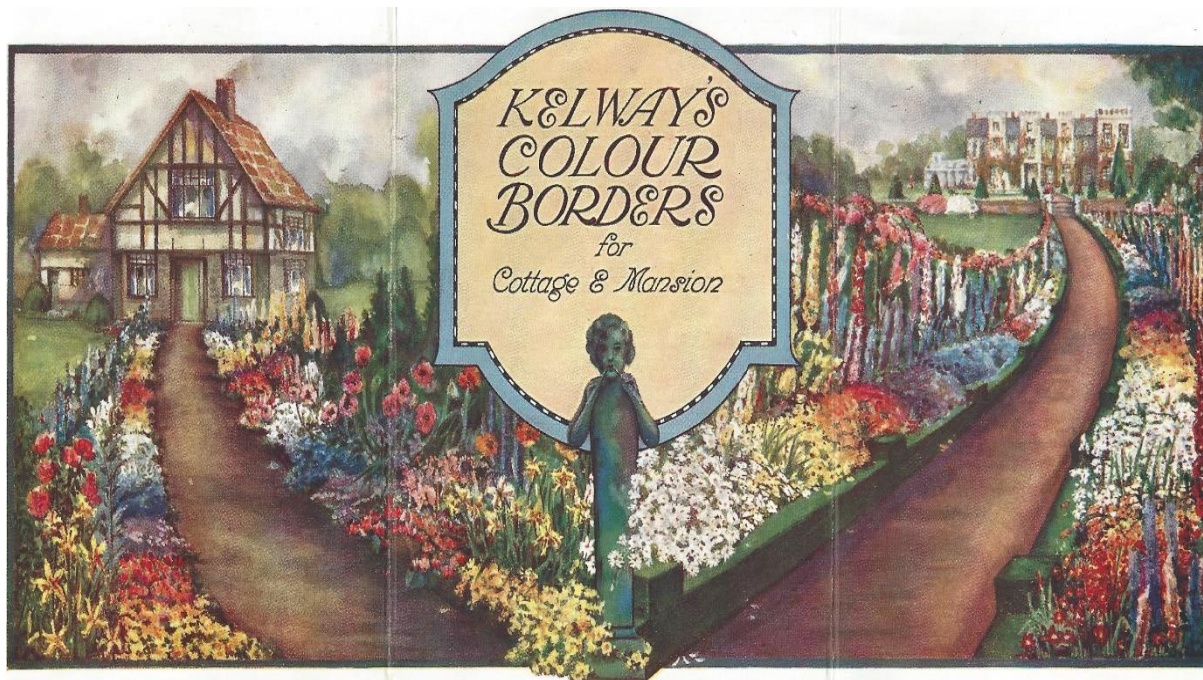


Fig. 63. Kelway's advertising brochure. Author's collection.

### De rigueur – the herbaceous border

In the early years of the twentieth century, the tyranny of bedding had been overtaken by the fashionable herbaceous border, although as E. V. B. was to find out not everyone knew what it meant, writing 'one tires of all the garden-talk of herbaceous borders' and once cried in despair to a young visitor to her garden, 'I don't know what herbaceous is', to which the young visitor replied, 'Oh it means come up again'.<sup>292</sup> The 'come up again' border was a popular subject, one author who wrote about it was Walter P. Wright (1864-1940), who was the Horticultural Superintendent at Kent County Council. Wright's *Beautiful Gardens* published in 1907 was exactly that, chapters full of advice on how to make a beautiful garden, including an herbaceous border (Figure 64).<sup>293</sup> He illustrated his book with black and white photographs, pull out planting plans and a few colour illustrations from the watercolourists, Arthur Rowe and A. C. Wyatt (d.1933). In 1912 Wright published *Hardy Perennials and Herbaceous Borders*, this was everything that the lover of herbaceous plants could possibly want, explaining what herbaceous meant, how to grow them,

<sup>292</sup> Boyle, Eleanor Vere 'Summer', in *Garden Colour*, ed. by Margaret Waterfield (London: J. M. Dent, 1905), p. 62.

<sup>293</sup> Walter P. Wright, *Beautiful Gardens and How to Make and Maintain Them*, 13<sup>th</sup> edn. (London: Cassells, 1913)

what their the enemies were, beds versus borders and lists of the best plants, again with pull out planting plans. Wright illustrated this book as his previous one with a few black and white photographs, but predominately he used tipped in colour illustrations from Parsons, Rowe, Josephine Gundry (1884-1974) and colour illustrations of peonies and pyrethrums from Kelway's & Sons.<sup>294</sup>



Fig. 64. The twin herbaceous borders at Harleyford Manor circa 1900 by Ernest Arthur Rowe. *Beautiful Gardens. How to Make and Maintain Them*, 13<sup>th</sup> edn., 1913.

With an introduction by the celebrated William Robinson, Mrs Alice Martineau's (1865-1956) book *The Herbaceous Garden* was first published in 1913.<sup>295</sup> Mrs Martineau was well connected as there are many black and white photographs of her friends' gardens; Lady Evelyn Cottrell's (no dates) herbaceous borders, the Duchess of Wellington's (1834-1910) garden and Easton Lodge, the gardens of Lady Daisy Warwick (1861-1938). This was another book that would advise and help plan the herbaceous garden, with chapters on the site, how to prepare the ground, colour borders and, as to be expected, a full list of suitable plants. Mrs Martineau also gave some idea of costs, she was rather short with the man who was buying his herbaceous

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<sup>294</sup> Walter P. Wright, *Hardy Perennials and Herbaceous Borders* (London: Headley Brothers, 1912).

<sup>295</sup> Alice Martineau, *The Herbaceous Garden*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1913).

border at so much per 10 square yards, possibly from Kelway's, but praised the man with a £5 note who was content with a small border but had infinite patience.<sup>296</sup>

### **The return of topiary**

Another of John Lane's books published in 1904 was on the history of topiary, *The Book of Topiary* edited by Charles Henry Curtis F.R.H.S. (1869-1958) and William Gibson (1867-1950), the Head Gardener at Levens Hall in Westmorland, one of the most famous and written about topiary gardens at that time.<sup>297</sup> This book told the story of topiary, its art and early history, to its golden age and the crusade against it. There were helpful chapters on the formation of a topiary garden, how to train new trees and the management of old trees, and here Curtis strongly advised that 'only men thoroughly experienced in the work should do the clipping'.<sup>298</sup> What happened to the old topiary gardens is addressed in the chapter on The Revival of the Art, Curtis blaming William Kent for the clearance of topiary work, but did add that several notable collections survived the general slaughter, naming Elvaston Castle and Levens Hall.

The topiary garden at Elvaston Castle was in fact laid out from 1830 for Charles Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Harrington (1780-1851), by William Barron (1805-1891) who was inspired by a seventeenth century design by Dutch architect Daniel Marot (1661-1752)).<sup>299</sup> Levens Hall was believed to be a much older topiary garden made in the seventeenth century from 1689 for Colonel James Grahme, as Curtis reported 'the now famous topiary garden was laid out by Beaumont ...Gardener to James II'.<sup>300</sup> This story was challenged in the 1980s, when the topiary was claimed to date from the nineteenth century. Levens Hall and its topiary garden became well known, particularly as a result of an illustration dated 1849 in Joseph Nash, *The Mansions of*

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<sup>296</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>297</sup> Charles H. Curtis & W. Gibson, *The Book of Topiary* (London: John Lane, 1904). For more information on Levens Hall, see Annette Bagot, 'Monsieur Beaumont and Col. Grahme. The Making of a Garden, 1689-1710', *Garden History*, 3.4 (1975), 66-78.

<sup>298</sup> Curtis, Gibson, *The Book of Topiary*, p. 50.

<sup>299</sup> Historic England, Elvaston Castle, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000404.

<sup>300</sup> Curtis, Gibson, *The Book of Topiary*, p. 17. For information on Guillaume Beaumont (no dates) see Miles Hadfield, Robert Harling, Leonie Highton, *British Gardeners a Biographical Dictionary* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1980), p. 33.

England in the Olden Times (Figures 65, 66),<sup>301</sup> and later was written about and illustrated in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1874 and twice in *Country Life* in 1899.<sup>302</sup>

As for new topiary gardens, Curtis favoured Leopold de Rothschild's 'thoroughly well-furnished and quite modern Topiary Garden at Ascott' and Frank Crisp's new topiary garden at Friar Park.<sup>303</sup> In 1902, H. Inigo Triggs (1876-1923), architect and garden designer, carried a very useful illustration of examples of topiary work in established formal gardens in his book *Formal Gardens in England & Scotland* (Figure 67).<sup>304</sup>



Fig. 65. The topiary garden at Levens Hall by George Elgood, 1892. *Painted Gardens*, 1991.

<sup>301</sup> Joseph Nash, *The Mansions of England in Olden Times, Description of the Plates Fourth Series*, (London: Thomas McLean, 1849), pp. 51-52.

<sup>302</sup> T. Baines, 'Levens Hall Westmoreland', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, II (1874), 263-266. 'Levens Hall, Westmoreland, The Seat of Mr J. F. Bagot', *Country Life*, 6.150 (1899), 624-628. 'Levens Hall.-II. Westmoreland. The Seat of Mr. J. F. Bagot', *Country Life*, 6.151 (1899), 656-658. For a modern assessment of Levens Hall, see John Glenn, 'The ornamental use of yew (*Taxus*) in English parks and gardens (1660-1939)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2005).

<sup>303</sup> Curtis, Gibson, *The Book of Topiary*, p. 36.

<sup>304</sup> H. Inigo Triggs, *Formal Gardens in England & Scotland*, (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1988), plate 106, p. 221. [The original edition was published in 1902 by B. T. Batsford].



Fig. 66. The topiary garden at Levens Hall in 1849. Joseph Nash, *Mansions of England in Olden Times*. Batey and Lambert, *The English Garden Tour*, 1990.

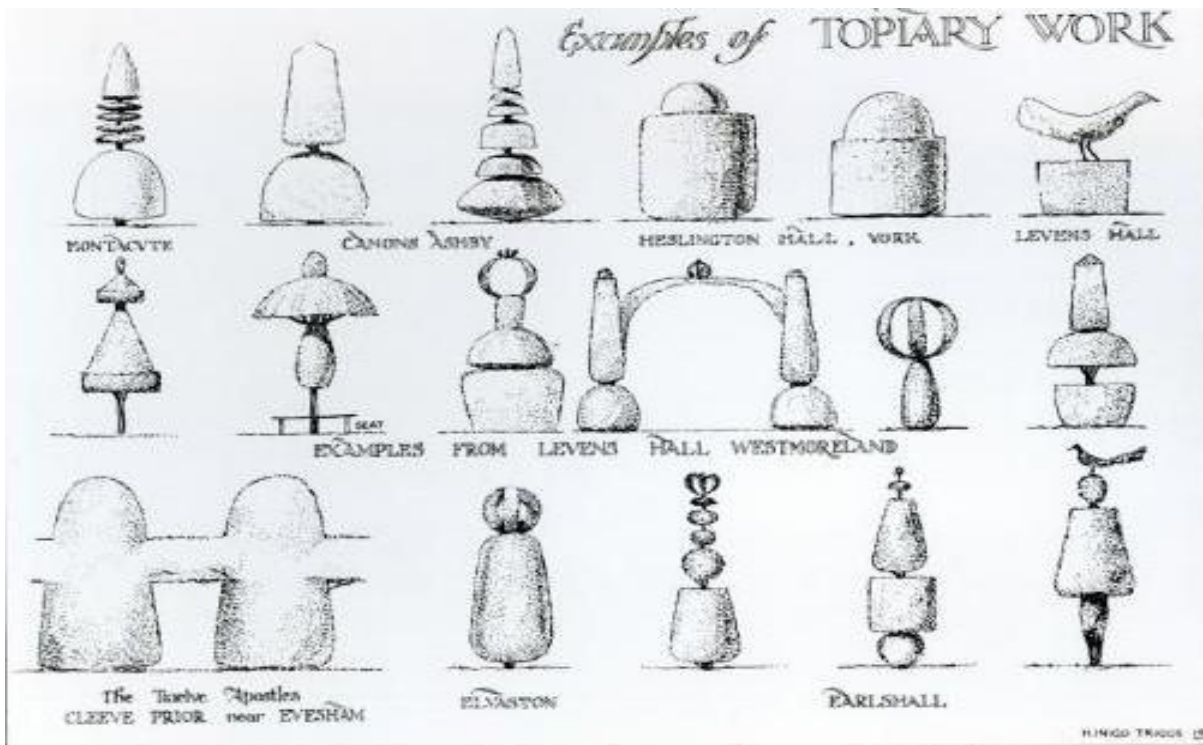


Fig. 67. Examples of Topiary by H. Inigo Triggs. *Formal Gardens in England & Scotland*, 1988.

## Books for lovers of gardens

Founded in 1903, T. N. Foulis, a small publishing house in Edinburgh, started to produce a series of books on varying subjects, including gardens. The series was printed in small volumes, six inches high and four-and-a-half inches wide, with rough-cut pages and illustrations using reproductions of eminent painters tipped in, attached on either cream or grey paper. The Garden Lover series started in 1912 with *Garden Memories*, illustrated by Mary G. W. Wilson, who had illustrated Sir Herbert Maxwell's book *Scottish Gardens*.<sup>305</sup> The purpose of this series seemed to be to give garden lovers an easy way of reading some of the old garden works together with a series of essays and poems. *Garden Memories* included Parkinson's essay on gardening, poems from Robert Browning (1812-1889) and excerpts taken from other books such as Cobbett's *Rural Rides* and his mention of Albury Park.<sup>306</sup>

Two further books in the series were issued one in 1915, *A Book of Gardens*, illustrated by Margaret Waterfield (1863-1953); the other in 1918, *A Book of Old World Gardens*, illustrated by Beatrice Parsons, both in the same format with a series of essays and other writings. In *A Book of Gardens* the offering included 'The Charm of Gardens' by E. V. B. and a short essay on 'Sundials' by Alice Meynell (1847-1922).<sup>307</sup> *A Book of Old World Gardens* included 'The Gardens of the Ancients' by Sir William Temple and 'Of Gardens Old and New' by Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729), an Irish playwright and co-founder of *The Spectator* with Joseph Addison.<sup>308</sup>

There was one book that brought the revival of the formal garden full circle. In 1914 T. N. Foulis published *Corners of Grey Old Gardens*, with a cover designed by illustrator and designer Jessie M. King (1875-1949).<sup>309</sup> The same essay format was used, with 'The Pleasure of an Orchard by William Lawson' (active 1618) and 'Introduction of The "Herball" of John Gerarde'. Why this little book brought the revival of the formal garden full circle was that it included the essay by Sir Walter Scott on the garden he

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<sup>305</sup> *Garden Memories with illustrations in colour by Mary G. W. Wilson* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1912).

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 49, 115.

<sup>307</sup> *A Book of Gardens, illustrated by Margaret Waterfield* (London: The Foulis Books, 1915), Contents Page, pp. 1, 29.

<sup>308</sup> Alfred H. Hyatt, Editor, *A Book of Old World Gardens, illustrated by Beatrice Parsons* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1918), pp. 81, 21.

<sup>309</sup> *Corners of Grey Old Gardens, with illustrations in colour by Margaret Waterfield* (London: T.N. Foulis, 1914).



remembered so vividly, which was part of his essay in *The Quarterly Review* of 1826. But of more importance and demonstrating that from loss can come revival was the inclusion of Sir Uvedale Price's essay written in 1810 about his deep regret, his distress and the loss of his own formal garden.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 63, 73, 117.

## Summary

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This chapter set out to answer the question why was the formal garden revived in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Was loss the predominant factor and was that the reason why the formal garden was revived?

The feeling of loss was immediate from the early writers and commentators in the first half of the century and was almost tangible. Price led the way, his loss was tinged with guilt and regret which he was not afraid to voice. Knight in a more relaxed tone similarly felt loss and regret, but Scott was angry at the loss of the formal garden and was protesting. Repton said little one way or the other, perhaps this was more diplomatic for his business. Loudon had respect for the old gardens and helpfully listed some that had survived at that time, adding his own view as to their condition. Jesse too listed surviving gardens in the old style as he wanted to 'preserve a recollection of some places of interest'. Felton, Cobbett, the anonymous commentators and others, although not as influential, added their voices to the regret and loss of the formal garden.

The commentators provided a consistent description of what had been lost from the formal garden. There was discussion of order and formality, with long grass walks, verdant alleys of clipped hedges, and some hedges smooth to the ground, mellow walls, sundials, statues, fountains, walled gardens, emerald green turf and terraces. On terraces, Price made an important point as he believed in 'the superiority of the terrace walk in its simplest state with a mere parapet, over the gravel walk with its pared edge of grass'.<sup>311</sup> This simple terrace was to become a signature feature for Devey, who in the 1850s was the first to revive the formal garden at Penshurst Place from a 1702 garden plan. Devey and his contribution to the revival of the formal garden is discussed in chapter two.

As the century moved into the 1860s and on to the 1880s, the sentiment of loss was still present but it had changed. The memory of the formal garden was now coming from previous generations, third parties and publications. The formal garden had slipped from first hand memory and replaced with the loss of the old fashioned flowers,

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<sup>311</sup> Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price*, p. 311.

as many thought these had been lost due to the introduction of bedding plants. William Morris joined the discussion by writing that he blushed with shame at the thought of bedding plants. Another factor, part of the loss of the formal garden, was the growing importance of the history of English gardens, particularly the Elizabethan garden and Bacon's essay on gardening. The feeling of loss of the old fashioned flowers led to the creation of the Parkinson Society, whose aim was to save these flowers, the flowers of Parkinson. There was a real desire that came through from all the commentators that they wanted to see a return of the formal garden, to them this was the right place for the old fashioned flowers.

The last decade of the century saw the revival of the formal garden gathering momentum and by the end of the century it had become an accepted style of garden design based on the old ways of garden making. People had not forgotten the old formal gardens as the old writers, particularly Bacon and Parkinson, were still popular together with an increasing number of books and publications that became available into the twentieth century.

It was acknowledged by Mrs Cecil that revival work on 'new old gardens' had been carried out earlier in century from the 1850s at Penshurst Place, Arley Hall, Blickling Hall and Montacute House. This style or genre of garden making, the house and the garden together, was to be promoted by John Dando Sedding and others including William Morris; but the key influencer was Reginald Blomfield with the publication of his book *The Formal Garden in England* in 1892. Both Sedding and Blomfield were advocates of designing the house and garden as an entity; as Sedding said 'the garden should curtsy to the house'. Blomfield's contribution to the revival of the formal garden is discussed in chapter three.

Mrs Cecil pointed out that there was an enormous growth in the publication of garden books into the twentieth century, not just on general gardening but on specific subjects such as topiary and the much acclaimed and desired for herbaceous border found in the formal garden. The idea of the formal garden was further encouraged by the publication of *Country Life's* series on 'Gardens Old and New' illustrated with black and white photographs, together with *The Studio's* series *The Gardens of England*. These black and white photographs were complemented with a series of watercolours of formal gardens, which brought them to life with paintings by Arthur

Rowe, Beatrice Parsons, George Elgood and others. An important point to emphasise is that both the photographs and watercolours showed the distinct elements of the formal garden and what had been revived; the long green walks, the alleys of clipped hedges, canals, topiary, the mellow walls, sundials, statues, fountains, emerald green turf and the terrace.

One publisher, T. N. Foulis, saw an opportunity to produce a series of small hand size books that looked back at the history and writings on old gardens. One in particular, *Corners of Grey Old Gardens*, included the re-publication of Scott's 1824 poignant memory of a lost garden and also carried Price's essay on his regret and distress at the loss of his own formal garden. Over a hundred years later the impact of Price's essay remained and had come full circle. Overall through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century loss was the dominating factor, the continuing and consistent thread of why the formal garden was revived.

## Chapter Two: George Devey (1820-1886) - The Gentleman's Architect

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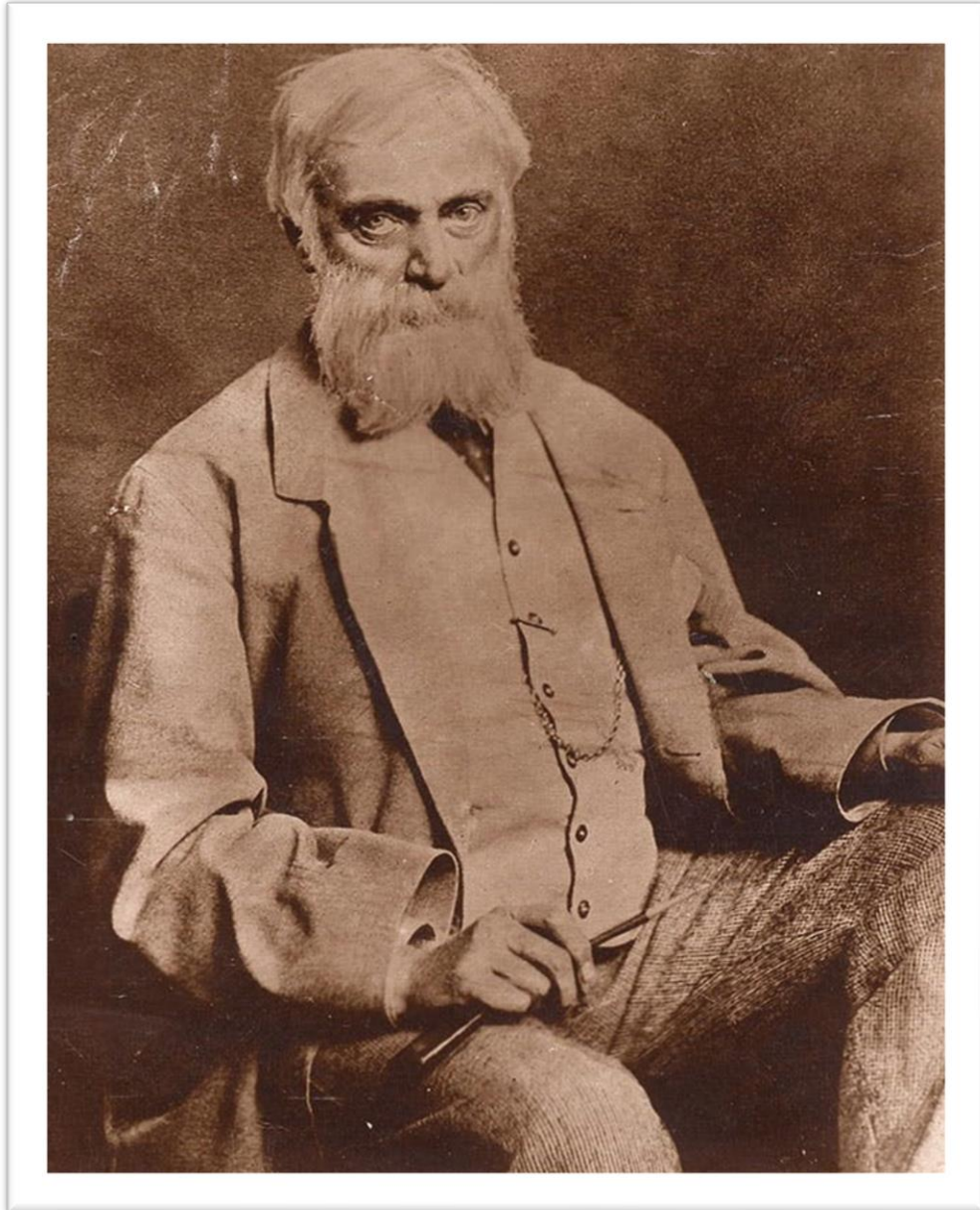


Fig. 68. The only known photograph of George Devey circa 1880s. Note the paintbrush in his right hand. *RIBAPIX 5833*.

## Introduction

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George Devey (Figure 68) was something of an enigma, a private man, who did not write about his architectural works, nor indeed promote himself. His clients belonged to an elite circle of Victorian gentlemen that included Liberal politicians, bankers and members of the aristocracy, who expected those who worked for them to respect both their status and privacy. Devey's work at that time appeared to have come from within this circle, their colleagues and friends, and it was through these connections that he built his business. This could explain why his work was little known during the late nineteenth century as architectural studies had either given just a brief glimpse of the man and his style or had simply not mentioned him.<sup>1</sup> It is through his assistant and later partner, James Leonard Williams (fl.1880-1905), who gave a paper on him to the Architectural Association in March 1909, twenty three years after Devey's death, that some light was thrown on his life and work.<sup>2</sup>

Other brief personal accounts came from members of his staff, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941), who had joined Devey's office in 1880, and Percy Stone (1843-1934), the son of his great friend Coutts Stone (d.1902), who joined Devey's practice in 1875 as a pupil.<sup>3</sup> The most detailed account of his work came from Walter H. Godfrey (1881-1961) who in 1898, 12 years after Devey's death, was articled to the office of James Williams, who had taken over Devey's practice. Having finished his articles, Godfrey left the practice in 1901 to work for the London County Council, returning in 1903 as an assistant to Edmund Livingston Wratten. Wratten had joined the practice in the early 1880s as a pupil and had stayed after Devey's death and later entered into partnership with Williams who had retired in 1903.<sup>4</sup> In 1905 Godfrey formed a partnership with Wratten but business was slow and it seemed that Godfrey used the time to research and write a study on Devey. Godfrey must have gone through all the records and plans of the practice with meticulous care as his study

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<sup>1</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> James Williams, 'George Devey and his Work', *Architectural Association Journal*, XXIV.266 (1909), 95-103.

<sup>3</sup> John Brandon Jones, 'C. F. A. Voysey, A Memoir', *Architectural Association Journal*, LXXII (1957), 238-262. Percy Goddard Stone, *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, <[https://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.phpd=203790](https://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.phpd=203790)> [accessed 22.08.2019].

<sup>4</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 135.

won him the RIBA Essay Silver Medal in 1906.<sup>5</sup> He was to use this study as a 'lead' to promote the business, writing to all of Devey's old clients, which proved to be productive.<sup>6</sup>

Godfrey went on to have a successful career in architecture and garden design with the restoration of buildings, establishing a country house practice with commissions including Herstmonceux Castle in 1932. During the Second World War he was the first salaried director of the National Buildings Record and for the next twenty years until his retirement in 1960 the development of this record was Godfrey's main concern.<sup>7</sup> During his career Godfrey wrote widely about English architecture and the local architecture and archaeology of his home town of Lewes and Sussex, but wrote only one book on garden design, *Gardens in the Making*, published in 1914.<sup>8</sup> There was a personal note in the front of Godfrey's book, a tribute to the work of Devey and his revival of the formal principles of garden making in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Godfrey was one of the first to acknowledge that it was Devey who re-introduced the formal garden with his work at Penshurst Place in the late 1850s, writing that 'none were more steadfast in their support of the older and saner methods of planning than Mr Devey'.<sup>10</sup>

When Edmund Wratten died in 1925 Godfrey continued on his own and moved his practice to Sussex<sup>11</sup> taking the majority of the Devey plans, an account book and other papers with him. Later, despite pleas for paper during the Second World War, when many architects sent their plans for the war effort, Godfrey retained his collection of Devey's plans and papers.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> John Summerson, 'Godfrey, Walter Hines (1881-1961)', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Hinze, 'The Garden Designs of Walter Hines Godfrey, 1881-1961', (unpublished PG Dip Dissertation, 1993, The Architectural Association), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Summerson, 'Godfrey, Walter Hines (1881-1961)'.

<sup>8</sup> Walter H. Godfrey, *Gardens in the Making* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd, 1914).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Summerson, 'Godfrey, Walter Hines (1881-1961)'.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Hind, FSA, Chief Curator of the RIBA Collections and Drawings, told me that once a year Godfrey would lay out the Devey plans and drawings around the stable yard to dry them as he was concerned that they would be damp. He would then return them to the stable for another year. Personal conversation, January 2019.

In 1914 a collection of Devey drawings (95 sketches, plans and drawings with 132 photographs) was offered to Sheffield University by James Williams, keen to deposit his collection where it would be of use. This is now the Devey collection at the University of Sheffield and available online.<sup>13</sup> Previously in 1887 Williams, as joint executor with Devey's brother Frederick to Devey's estate, had passed on a volume of 50 sketches to the RIBA.<sup>14</sup> In 1968 Emil Godfrey, Walter Godfrey's son (Godfrey had died in 1961) deposited the Devey collection on long term loan with the RIBA. In 1990, RIBA, with the assistance of the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund 1990, paid £46000 for over 3800 drawings and plans including a rare group of photographs of Devey's work dating from the 1860s.<sup>15</sup>

RIBA asked Dr Jill Allibone to catalogue this important collection, but this work was not finished. However, Allibone, who was well versed in Victorian architecture and architects with her thesis on Anthony Salvin,<sup>16</sup> published a *catalogue raisonné* in her account of Devey's life and work, *George Devey Architect 1820-1886*.<sup>17</sup> Her focus was on his architecture, his restoration work, the country house practice, the estate cottages and other estate buildings such as stables and schools but not on his garden designs.

To date Devey has not been acknowledged as a designer or maker of gardens, other than the work he carried out reviving the formal garden at Penshurst Place for the Sir Philip Sidney, second Lord De L'Isle (1828-1898), in the late 1850s. Although Allibone briefly touched on some garden works and listed a few of these, she did not address this aspect of Devey's work in any depth. In the collections of sketches, ground plans and drawings at the RIBA to do with gardens there are over 60 that in the main are identified with a Devey house or a restoration of a house. These range from a general plan of house and the immediate grounds around the house to the detail of terraces,

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<sup>13</sup> Devey Collection <<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/special/devey>> [accessed 03.12.2018].

<sup>14</sup> RIBA Devey reference no. 11576.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Coppen, 'Town and Country', *Country Life*, 184.19 (1990), (p. 146).

<sup>16</sup> Jill Allibone, *Anthony Salvin: Pioneer of Gothic Revival Architecture* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 1988). Dr Jill Allibone was an Architectural Historian, Vice Chair of the Victorian Society, founder of the Mausoleum and Monuments Trust in 1997 and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

<sup>17</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 151-179.



fountains, steps, parterres, alcoves, seats, garden walls, finials, vases, urns and garden buildings.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section looks at the young Devey, his early life, influences, suggested inspirations that established his skill as an architect and as a talented watercolourist. The second part will briefly discuss Devey's client base and his architectural style; but the main purpose is to introduce and explain his garden works and his influence on the revival of the formal garden.

## Section I: Devey's Early Life

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George Devey was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1820 in Kentish Town. His father, Frederick Nicholls Devey (1786-1862) was a solicitor practising in London and his mother Ann (b.1785) was the daughter of Durs Egg (1748-1831), who had emigrated from Switzerland to establish his own business in London in 1772, becoming a gunmaker to George IV. Devey was the second of four children, a surviving twin, with an older brother Frederick and younger sister Emma.<sup>18</sup> The boys were educated together, firstly at a school in Stanmore run by the Revd J. A. Baron and then both entered King's College School in the autumn of 1832, Frederick was fourteen and George twelve.<sup>19</sup>

Williams reported that little is known of Devey's early life, other than to say he considered himself 'a not very capable youth' who did not enjoy his school days. Williams added that he was well grounded in Latin and French, which he spoke with great fluency.<sup>20</sup> This fluency won Devey a prize for French, as well as coming fifth for his classwork, and in the following year he came top of the class.<sup>21</sup> One of Devey's aims as a young man was to become a painter; this early influence could have come from his mother's side as her first cousin was the celebrated flamboyant genre and history painter Augustus Leopold Egg (1816-1863).<sup>22</sup> There is evidence that the Devey family was a close one as George and his older brother Frederick lived together until Devey's death. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Augustus would have visited or had contact with his first cousin, Devey's mother Ann, and indirectly have had an influence on a young and impressionable Devey and his desire to become a painter. Not only was this influence around him at home, but his tutor at King's College was another celebrated Victorian painter, draughtsman and watercolourist from the Norwich School, John Sell Cotman (1782-1842).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Hall, 'Devey George (1820-1886)', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>19</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

<sup>21</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> There is some confusion as to the relationship of George Devey to Augustus Egg. Ann, Devey's mother, was the daughter of Durs Egg. Durs Egg's brother was Joseph Egg, and Augustus was Joseph's son. Thus, Devey and Augustus Egg were second cousins. See, Hillarie Faberman, 'Augustus Leopold Egg, R.A., (1816-1863)' (unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1983).

<sup>23</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

Cotman had joined King's College as drawing master in 1834 and his style of teaching could explain why Devey did not enjoy his school days. A quote by William Michael Rossetti, younger brother of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who were both at King's the year after Devey had left, stated: 'Mr Cotman's course of instruction did not extend far beyond giving us pencil-sketches often of his own to copy, fisher folk, troupers, peasants, boating etc'.<sup>24</sup> Allibone's analysis was that Devey was influenced by Cotman, whose choice of subject matter such as ancient and vernacular buildings was to form part of Devey's repertoire as he became more practised as an architect. Williams in his account of Devey's youth also confirmed that Cotman was a strong influence together with J. D. Harding (1797-1863).<sup>25</sup> Harding seemed to have been a much better teacher, more 'user friendly', as he wrote that as a boy he had approached an artist working in Greenwich Park and had been rudely rebuffed and so vowed that if he succeeded as an artist he would teach anyone.<sup>26</sup>

It is not clear when Devey worked with Harding as he left King's in 1835 at 15 and did not start work until he was 17 in 1837, so it is likely that he went to classes with Harding between 1835 and 1837.<sup>27</sup> Harding had become successful as a painter of landscapes, an acknowledged watercolourist, a teacher and was much admired by John Ruskin. He produced numerous drawing books, together with promoting a scheme to train art teachers that had caught the attention of Sir Robert Peel and Dr Arnold of Rugby School.<sup>28</sup> This experience for Devey must have been more productive and brought out the natural artistic talent that he seemed to have inherited from his mother's side of the family, and perhaps strengthened his early wish to become a painter. Devey's father was a professional man, a solicitor, and becoming a painter was not considered a profession. No doubt after lengthy debate and discussion within the family, in 1837 Devey became a pupil with architect and surveyor Thomas Little (1802-1859). Allibone wrote that 'Little had a prosperous, no nonsense sort of practice which would have appealed to a businessman' such as Devey's father.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *His family letters with a memoir by William Michael Rossetti* (London: Ellis & Elvey, 1895), pp. 73-74.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

<sup>26</sup> F. M. Donoghue, revised by Huon Mallalieu, 'Harding, James Duffield (1797-1863)', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>27</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Donoghue, 'Harding', p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 18. 'The Late Mr Thomas Little Architect', *The Builder*, 17 (1859), (p. 855).

According to his obituary, Little was a man of great talent and an excellent draughtsman, with work including churches, schools and the houses and manufactories of Messrs Gillow the upholsterers and Messrs Collins in Oxford Street. Little was often called upon to be an arbitrator in disputes which might also have had some resonance with Devey's father.<sup>30</sup> Williams reported that Little was an architect as well as a surveyor. At that time few men just practiced as an architect, so this would have been a practice 'classic in character'. He went on to suggest that Devey must have had a very dull time as he would have been involved in the 'monotonous calculations of quantities'.<sup>31</sup> He mentioned one building in which Devey was involved, St Mark's Church in Primrose Hill, attributed to Little and built in 1851-2, Williams had seen early drawings of this church and wrote of the 'marked ability' of Devey's work at that time.<sup>32</sup> What was of interest with this church was that, with other churches built in London at that time, it was built of Kentish ragstone and this was to become one of Devey's main materials in his later works. Allibone suggested that Devey had stayed with Little too long for the normal pupillage training and thus became a paid assistant as some of the work from Little was either co-signed or signed by Devey during the years from 1840 to 1846.<sup>33</sup>

Another pupil with Little at that time was Coutts Stone, who was to become a lifelong friend of Devey and at a later time shared an office with him in Great Marlborough Street. It is not known when Stone joined Little nor of his work as a practising architect, but this friendship was built up during their working time together. Devey had been with Little nine years when he and Stone set off on their 'Grand Tour' in 1846. Looking at the sketch books held in the RIBA and at both Williams' and Allibone's analyses, their travels were extensive.<sup>34</sup> They appeared to have started in France then travelled to Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Greece. Williams added some insight into their trip as he wrote that although the journey was a considerable undertaking, it allowed time for observation and sketching which 'our friends enjoyed to the full'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> RIBA Devey sketch books. VOS 308, 310, Devey SKB 68. Williams, 'George Devey', p. 96.

Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

There seem to be no sketches surviving from Stone. The few surviving sketches from Devey of the tour showed an interest in urns, with a selection from Dresden, Genoa and Florence. There are buildings in Heidelberg, chimneys in Gent and Honfleur, sketches of ironwork in Lugano, churches and campanile in Verona and a watercolour of St Mark's Square in Venice (Figure 69). They also travelled to the Borromeo Islands on Lake Maggiore, visiting both Isola Madre and one of the most famous baroque gardens at Isola Bella, where Devey made a drawing of an ornate keystone (Figure 70).<sup>36</sup> Devey's training with both Cotman and Harding was put to good use on his travels as on his return he exhibited two of his Italian and Greek sketches at the Royal Academy: in 1847 *Arch of Titus Rome & co.*, and in 1848 *On the Acropolis Athens 1846*.<sup>37</sup> Exhibiting at the RA was not new for Devey, as his work was shown as early as 1841, in what is known today as the Summer Exhibition, with a design for a *Cottage near Southampton*. In 1842 he was successful when two further sketches were accepted, *Designs for a garden entrance* and a *Mansion Italian style*, and then again in 1843 with a design *Entrance to Cemetery, etc.*<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 69. Devey's watercolour of St Mark's Square in Venice. *University of Sheffield*.

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<sup>36</sup> RIBA Devey sketch book SKB 68/1.

<sup>37</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Personal communication, Andrew Potter, Royal Academy. Email Tenneson 25.07.2019.



Fig. 70. A drawing from the grand tour of a keystone at Isola Bella. RIBA Devey SKB 68/1.

## Section II: Devey, the garden maker

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### The early years and Penshurst Place

Devey was still living with his parents at 34 Ely Place and giving this address when entering his work for exhibition at the RA. A later RA submission gave his address as 16 Great Marlborough Street, which suggested that in 1846 Devey at the age of 26 had set up on his own. In her *catalogue raisonné* Allibone recorded some of the early commissions, in the first year of business he designed a new vicarage for Revd H. R. Lloyd in South Benfleet. The following year of 1847 was most auspicious for Devey and his fledgling practice as he was commissioned to design some alterations for the Revd George Richard Boissier (1791-1858) at Oakfield in Penshurst, Kent. The Revd was to open doors for Devey with an introduction to Lord Hardinge (1822-1894) and the first Lord De L'Isle of Penshurst Place (1800-1851), where Devey worked periodically until his death in 1886.<sup>39</sup> The Revd Boissier, who had been a curate first at Chiddingstone and then at Penshurst in Kent, was described by Williams as 'the reverse of rich' and had been recommended to consult Devey's solicitor father some ten years earlier concerning a matter of the recovery of some property. This property had been given up for lost, Williams reporting that this was partly because of a tangle and partly because the client was poor. Devey's father, apparently with no thought of payment, spent much time in investigating the case and eventually was able to recover what was a large estate for the Revd Boissier which left him very comfortably off.<sup>40</sup> The Revd Boissier was very appreciative of Devey Senior's help and, knowing that his son George had trained as an architect, was in a position to help; Allibone wrote, 'at this point the Revd Mr Boissier came up trumps'.<sup>41</sup> In the Devey collection there is an index of Devey clients compiled by Godfrey, where he noted 'very early work, old friend and intro G D to Lord De L'Isle'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 151.

<sup>40</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 95).

<sup>41</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 23. How Hardinge and Lord De L'Isle knew Boissier is not recorded but the village of Penshurst was likely to be the connection.

<sup>42</sup> RIBA Godfrey Notebook. No page numbers. I viewed this notebook but could not find this reference. Dr Allibone's papers and notes regarding her publication on George Devey did not give any more information.

In 1848 and into the early 1850s Devey had yet to develop his Wealden, vernacular style of architecture, his commissions including a parsonage, a house for a doctor (here were two designs one an Italian villa and the other in the Tudor style) and for Lieutenant General Sir Henry Hardinge he designed a new barn, cow sheds and sties.<sup>43</sup> Following the introduction by the Revd Bossier Devey started to work in 1848 for Philip Charles Sidney, first Baron De L'Isle and Dudley of Penshurst Place.

During the eighteenth century Penshurst Place had been neglected, the house and estate were in a distressed state and had missed the Georgian era of improvements and left in its original Elizabethan style. There had been a failure of the male line in 1743 and the estate had passed to Mrs Elizabeth Perry, niece of the seventh and last Earl of Leicester. From her the estate had passed to her daughters, Mary and Elizabeth Jane. The youngest daughter Elizabeth Jane had married Sir Bysshe Shelley (1731-1815) and her son John took the additional name of Sidney and in 1800 began the task of restoring Penshurst Place. In 1833 his son Philip was created Baron De L'Isle and Dudley and took control of Penshurst Place and it was Philip who in 1848 employed Devey.<sup>44</sup>

Devey's work for the first Baron was for the village and improvements on the estate, including restorations and alterations to Leicester Square at the entrance to Penshurst Place. Leicester Square is a picturesque collection of cottages that lie between the church of St John the Baptist and the Penshurst Road (Figure 71). It is formed of two cottages with a third forming a bridge between them and framing the entrance to the churchyard. Here Devey was commissioned to add a further two cottages to the south extending the Square towards the road.<sup>45</sup> In terms of the architecture, Allibone suggested that at this early stage of his career Devey's knowledge of vernacular architecture was not extensive, as he was making mistakes she termed 'solecism' as some supporting brackets had a 'distinct ecclesiastical profile'.<sup>46</sup> Undeterred by these earlier mistakes or perhaps just not noticed, Lord De L'Isle commissioned Devey to

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<sup>43</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 151.

<sup>44</sup> *Penshurst Place and Gardens*, Guidebook (2001), p. 23. Penshurst Place Seven Centuries of Gardening at Penshurst Place, document from Penshurst Place, undated and no page numbers, received March 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> For a understanding of Vernacular Architecture see, R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987)



continue designing further cottages, two lodges, one by the main entrance gateway, a butchers and saddlers shop and the bridge over the Medway on the Penshurst Road, with as Allibone wrote 'picturesque' additions to other estate cottages.<sup>47</sup>



Fig. 71. Leicester Square at Penshurst Place, circa 1850s. *University of Sheffield*.

When the first Lord De L'Isle died in 1851, Devey continued to work for his son, Sir Philip second Lord De L'Isle, on the Penshurst Place restoration. This programme of works included the addition of a laundry, stabling, outhouses and the restoration of the Buckingham Building. Here Devey exhibited his care for old buildings, when the stones were removed each one was numbered so the masons knew exactly in which order to put them back. Devey also designed the drives and formal gardens.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151. When explaining to Lord De L'Isle how Leicester Square would look after the alterations Devey painted a watercolour, then he and Lord De L'Isle walked down to the bridge to view Leicester Square from the bridge. Devey apparently said that Leicester Square would look better and more picturesque if the bridge and road were moved; this work was carried out. Marianne Thorne, 'Social History of Swaylands', private unpublished research for Swaylands Residential Study Centre, April 2001, p. 4. See drawing for the new bridge, RIBA PB828/7(1-5).

<sup>48</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 152.

Historic England's description of the gardens is:

A sixteenth century and seventeenth century walled garden, restored and developed in the nineteenth century, set within a medieval deer park with additional surviving eighteenth century and nineteenth century landscape features.<sup>49</sup>

The formal garden was first made during the early sixteenth century by Sir Henry Sidney and involved making a flat piece of ground by remoulding the contours of the land in front of the house and creating a lower garden to feed the household with fruit and vegetables. As Christopher Hussey reported in *Country Life* of 1952, Sir Henry Sidney's accounts for 1560 to 1567 referred to levelling and for making the great pond for £23.<sup>50</sup> The great pond does not appear in a c.1701 birds eye view drawing by Dutch draughtsman Leonard Knyff and engraved by Johannes Kip, a fellow Dutch draughtsman, engraver and print dealer (Figure 72). Their illustration showed a very elaborate garden layout. There was a flat area in front of the house to the south showing two parterres, one in the traditional four quarters with a central round area with what looks to be a tree, the other also in quarters. A square pool, a stew pond, was in the lower garden area which was laid out as an orchard and kitchen garden. Hussey believed this illustration was to guide Devey in his planning for re-creating the original garden from the late seventeenth century.

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<sup>49</sup> Historic England, Penshurst Place, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000153 .

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Hussey, 'The Gardens of Penshurst Place, Kent', *Country Life*, 109.2827 (1951), 860-864 (p. 862).

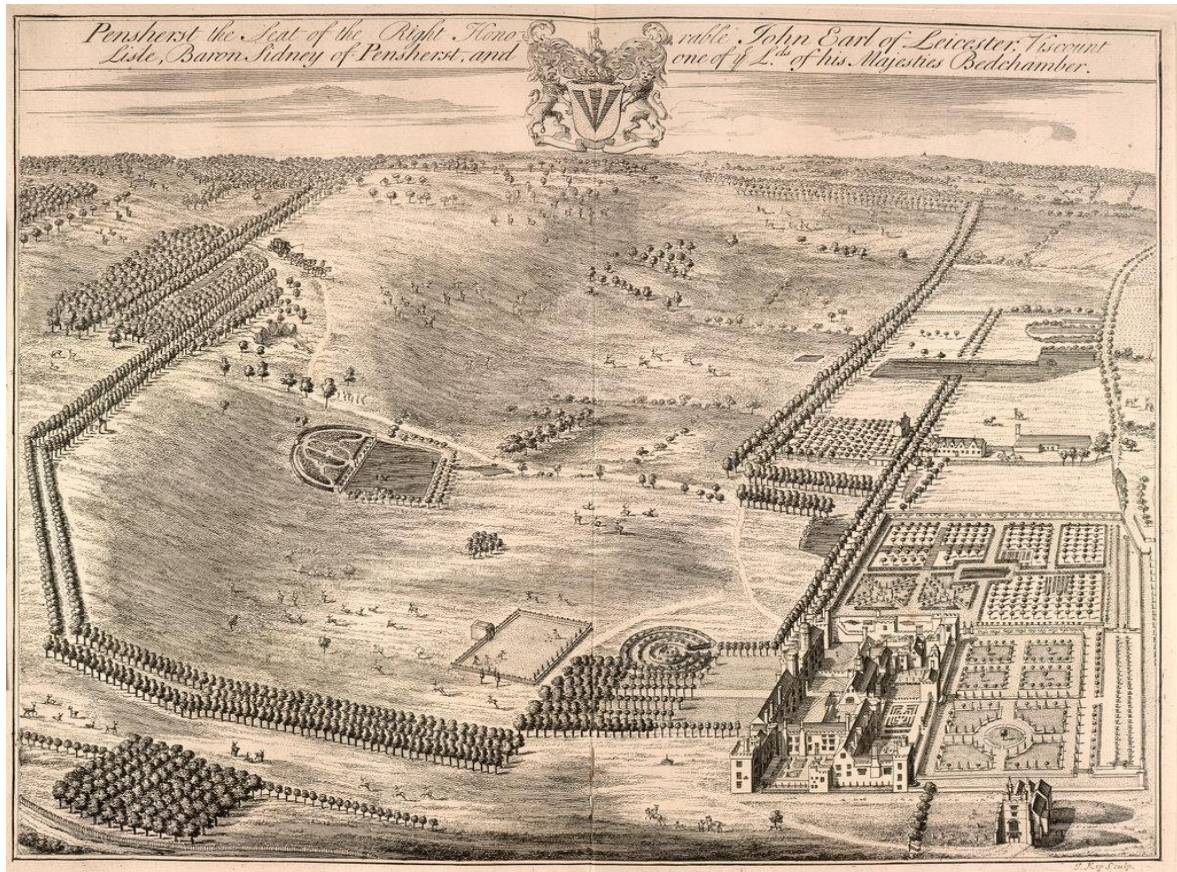


Fig. 72. The illustration of Penshurst Place, Johannes Kip dated 1701. *British Library* 065628. <<https://www.imageonline.bl.uk>>

There is a later plan of Penshurst Place held by the British Museum dated 1744 which showed Penshurst with a much simpler layout (Figure 73). The parterre was again in four quarters, in grass with a central tree, the plan also showed the orchards together with the rectangular pool which is now known as Diana's Bath. This 1744 plan, in pen and ink by George Vertue (1684-1756), was acquired by the British Museum in 1849.<sup>51</sup> What links Devey with this Vertue plan is a copy he did of the plan in watercolour, undated and in the Penshurst collection at the RIBA (Figure 74). Devey's office at this time was in Great Marlborough Street, not far from the British Museum, so it was probable that he visited the Museum and copied this plan. Devey's skill brought this drab illustration to life by his use of colour, although it was unfinished, particularly on the left hand side. From his knowledge of Penshurst Devey had corrected an omission by Vertue by reinstating the church.<sup>52</sup> There is a further version of this plan which was

<sup>51</sup> George Vertue was an English painter, engraver and an antiquarian. It is not known how or why this plan was done and if Vertue visited Penshurst Place.

<sup>52</sup> British Museum print no. 1849,1030.108. RIBA Devey PB826/DEV140.

done for William Perry in 1747 in a colour wash, this time showing the church; this print was published in 1757 after Perry's death with the title re-engraved with the family crest and may have been in the family's possession when Devey was working there (Figure 75).

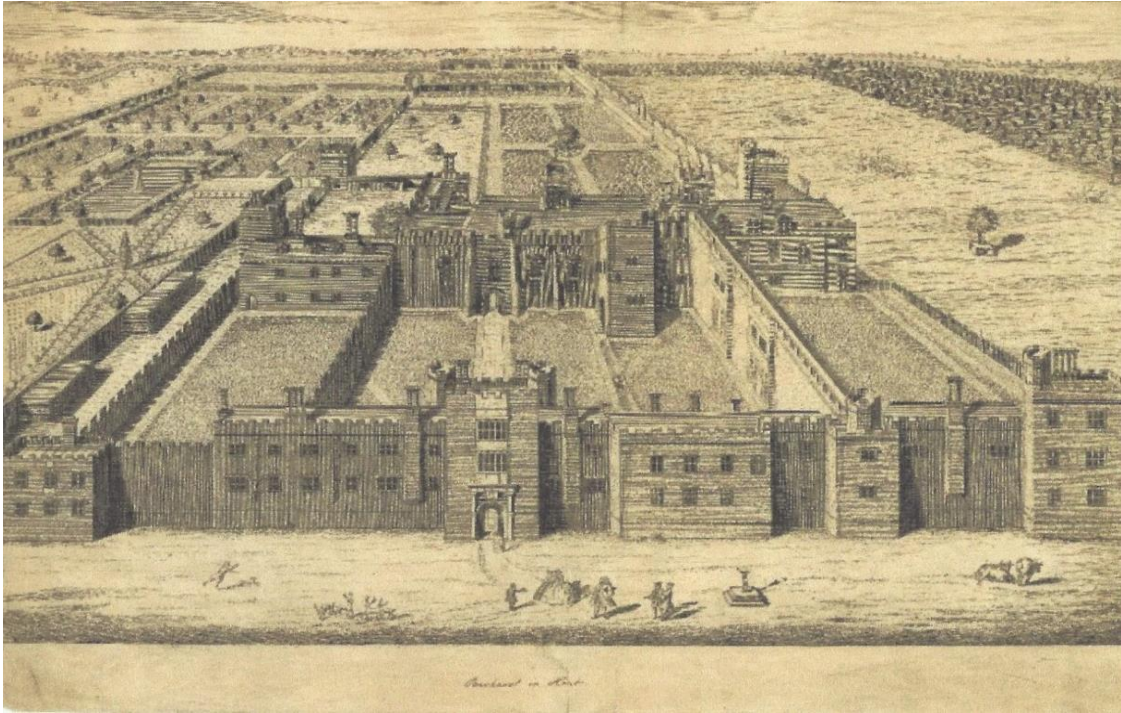


Fig. 73. George Vertue's pen and ink drawing of Penshurst Place 1744, note the church is missing. *British Museum 1849, 1031, 108.*



Fig. 74. Devey's watercolour version of the Vertue drawing of Penshurst Place. *RIBA 828/12.*



Fig. 75. The Vertue illustration of Penshurst Place showing the church.  
[www.grosvenorprints.com/stock.php?keyword=Penshurst+Place&WADbSearch1-go](http://www.grosvenorprints.com/stock.php?keyword=Penshurst+Place&WADbSearch1-go)  
 [accessed 29.06.2022].

The garden and the surrounds were the subject of Devey's own drawing circa 1850s (Figure 76). Clearly he did his research, not only from the Vertue print but he must have looked at the Kip engraving, which again was held at the British Museum and was also available in a publication called *Thirty Six Views of Noblemen and Gentlemen's Seats in the County of Kent*.<sup>53</sup> Marked by the blue arrow to the left of the house Devey had written:

The surface whether sloping towards the house should form into a panel for an embroidered parterre which would cause the walk T to become a terrace. Slopes and steps.

It is not clear what he was referring to but today this part of the estate is private and looks to be laid to lawn. The second area of interest, marked with a red arrow is within the old walled garden and now called the Italian Garden. Devey marked out the

<sup>53</sup> T. Badeslade, etc., engraved by J. Harris and J. Kip, *Thirty Six Views of Noblemen and Gentlemen's Seats in the County of Kent* (London: H. Chapelle, 1720).

terrace which was to be established after the curtain wall was removed; also marked were various steps down to the area of the parterre.

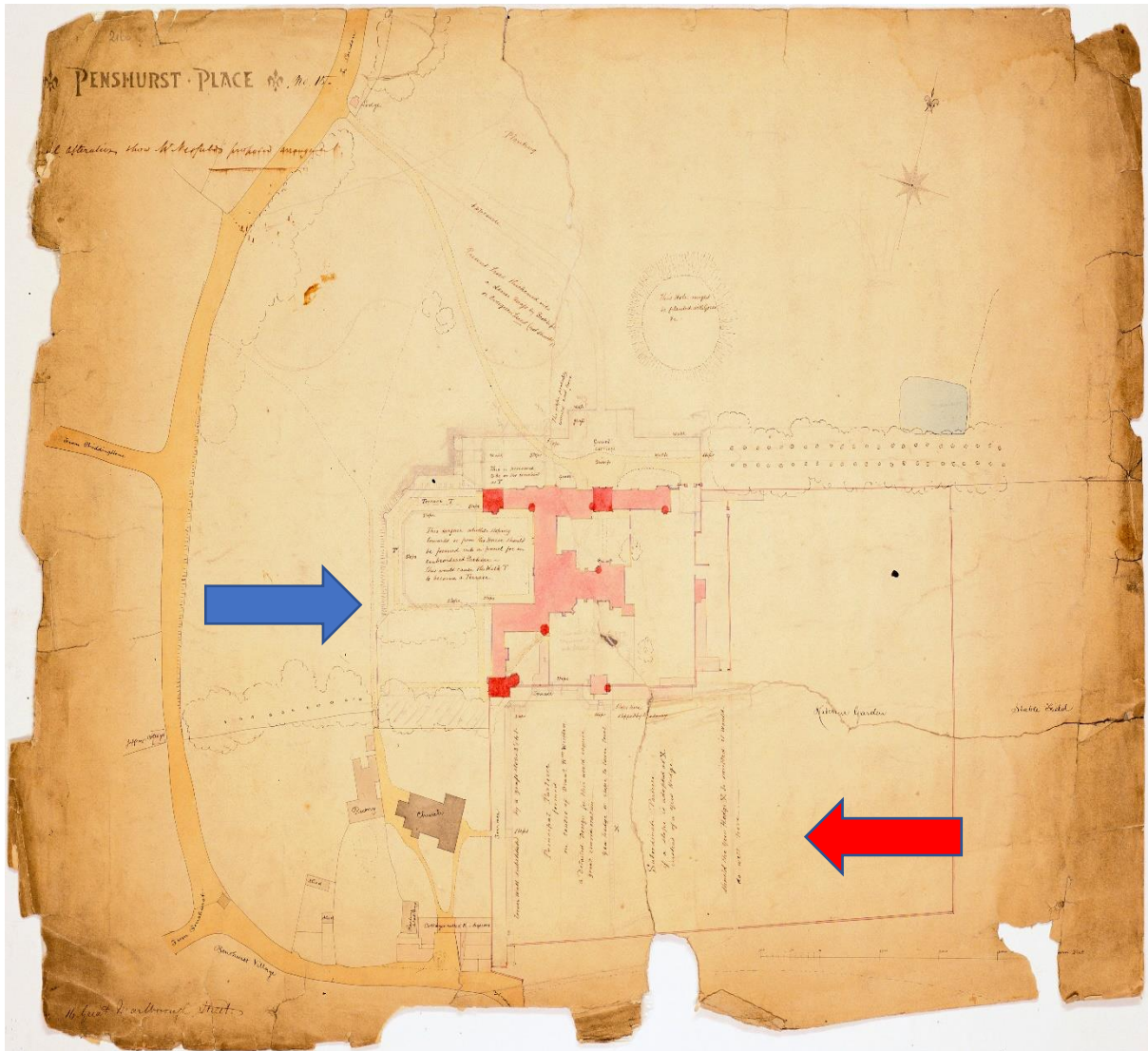


Fig. 76. Devey's garden plan for Penshurst Place circa 1850s. RIBAPIX 13355.

The area to the south of the house, the parterres in both the ornate Knyff and the plainer Vertue version are left blank, by enlarging this section, Devey had written, marked with the red arrow (Figure 77):

Principal parterre formed on the drawing room window a detail designed for this would require great consideration. Subordinate parterre if a slope is adopted at X instead of a yew hedge. Should the yew hedge be omitted it would do well here.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> RIBA Devey PB826/DEV 31.

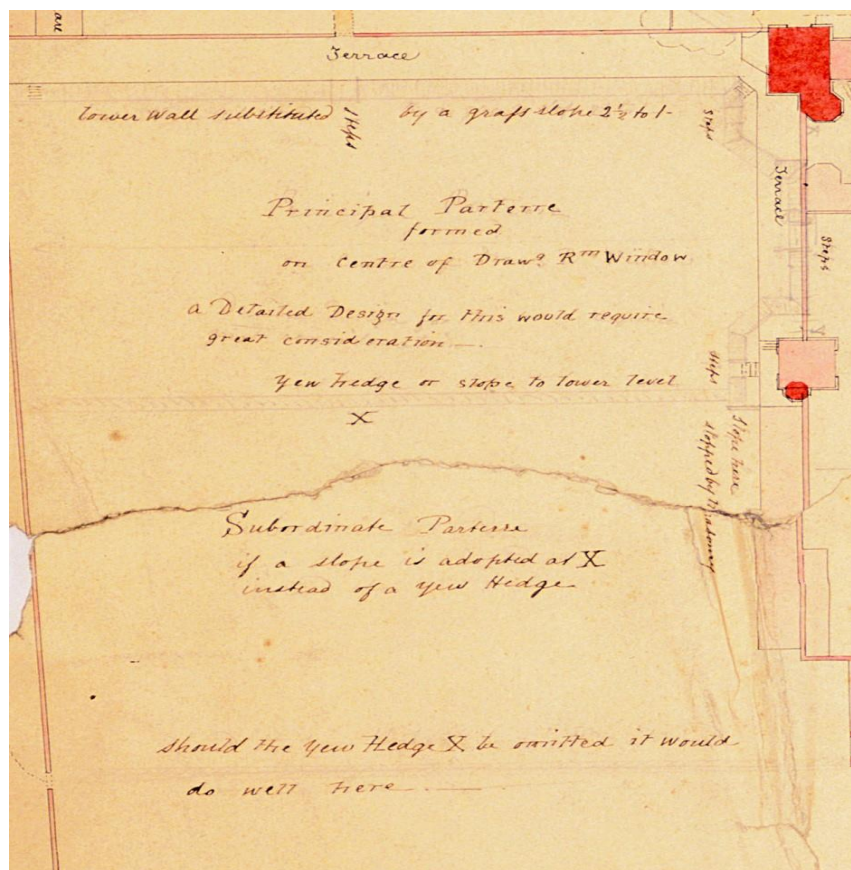


Fig. 77. The section of Figure 76 marked with a red arrow shows more details, note the two faint hedges in the middle and bottom of the plan. RIBAPIX 13355.

Devey did not give an explanation why this required great consideration. However, laying out this area was left for some years as confirmed by a comment from Hussey who wrote that there was a photograph of 1860 showing this area of the garden as uninterrupted lawn.<sup>55</sup> Penshurst Place confirmed this stating that the lawns were often marked out as a tennis court.<sup>56</sup> In the late 1850s to 60s work began on restoring the gardens to their original seventeenth century formality. Devey played an important part in this restoration and together with his plan he removed the curtain wall between the Record Tower and the Garden Tower. This created an open space between the house and the garden revealing the vista over the garden, which can be seen in this photograph dated 1857, which may have been the photograph referred to by Hussey (Figure 78).<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Hussey, 'The Gardens at Penshurst Place', (p. 864).

<sup>56</sup> 'Seven Centuries of Gardening at Penshurst Place'.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 78. Penshurst Place 1857, note the pile of rubble where the curtain wall had been removed and the plain lawns. *Historic England DD67/00047*.

On the west side of the garden was a terrace which ran round to the south which overlooked the garden and at each corner there was a flight of steps, these were seen in the 1857 photograph (see Figure 78). The steps around the garden corresponded to a drawing in the RIBA collection showing the steps in detail with various suggestions for finial designs, diamond faceted, rounded, pineapple, fleur-de-lis and possibly what could be a griffin or bear. Looking at the *Country Life* article on the gardens published in 1899, these elaborate designs appeared to have been rejected in favour of the ball finial design (Figures 79, 80).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> RIBA PB826/17. 'Penshurst Place, Tonbridge, the seat of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley', *Country Life*, 5.115 (1899), 336-338 (p. 336).



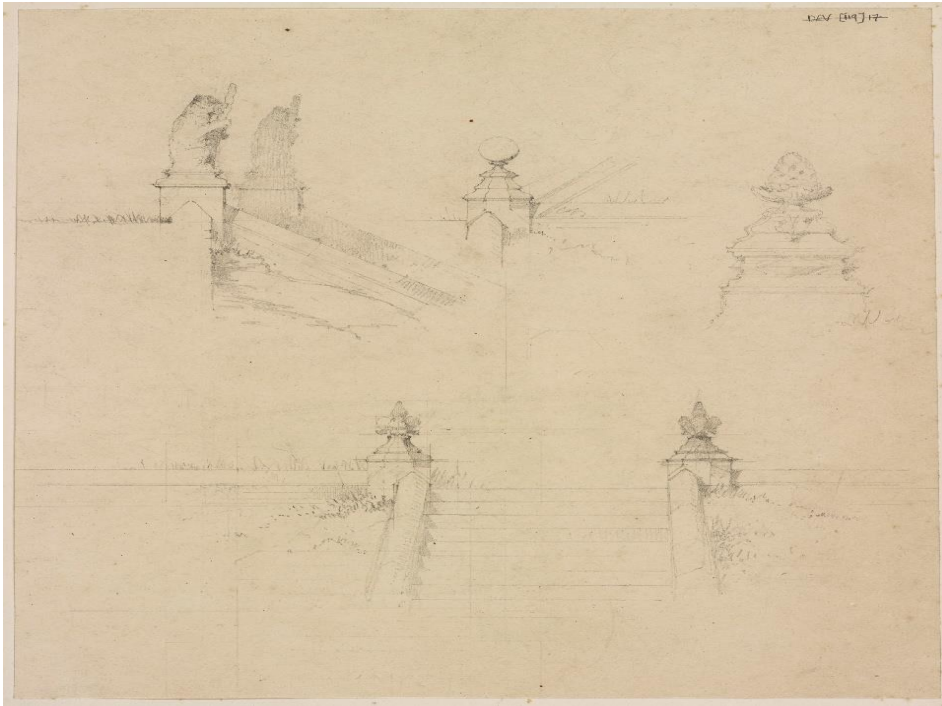


Fig. 79. Penshurst Place, a selection of Devey's finials for Penshurst Place. RIBA 828/12.



Fig. 80. Penshurst Place, the steps down to the Italian Garden, 2019.

An OS map surveyed in 1868 and published in 1869 showed that the Italian garden had been built by 1868 with the oval pool and resembled the original illustration of 1701 (Figure 81).<sup>59</sup>

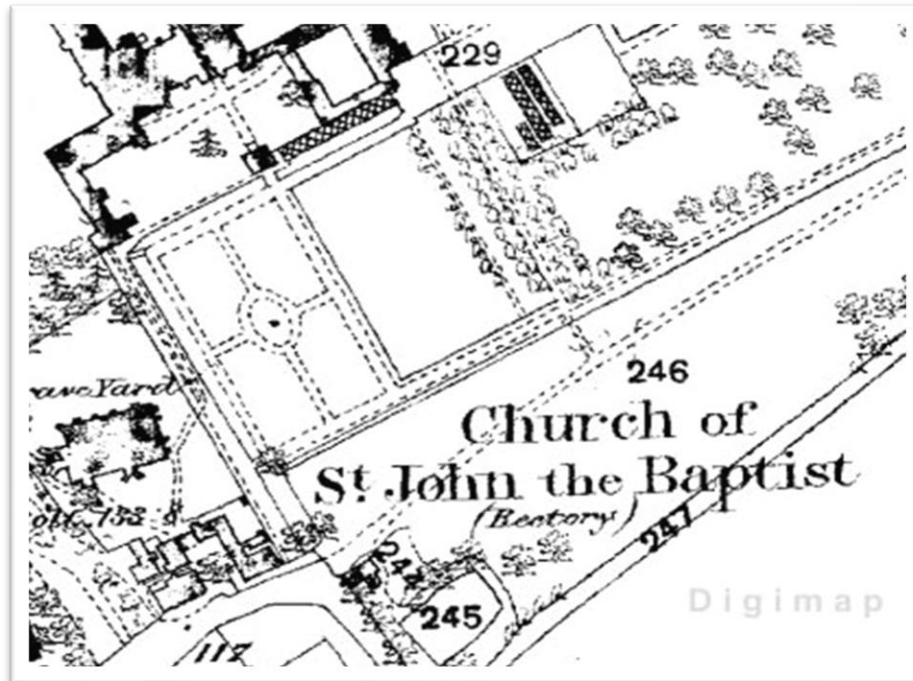


Fig. 81. The OS map surveyed in 1868 published in 1869, the design is as the original illustration by Kip and Knyff with Devey's oval central pool. Kent sheet LX.

Devey had originally written on his 1850s drawing that the concept of the parterre was to be viewed from the drawing room and with the removal of the curtain wall this was now possible. As part of his suggestions for the garden, Devey would have used the existing elements that had survived from the seventeenth century, such as the terraces in the Italian Garden, where he had added the flights of stone steps. He also created the east-west vista ending in a demi-lune where a Venetian sundial was displayed and it was likely that the stone surround for Diana's Pool, the old stew pond, although inscribed 1890 was influenced by Devey's works in the garden.<sup>60</sup> On his 1850s drawing he had marked out an avenue on the north side of the walled garden. This still exists today and is the entry point for visitors.

<sup>59</sup> OS Map, Kent sheet, LX surveyed in 1868, published in 1869.

<sup>60</sup> I am grateful to Anne Bell, Garden Guide at Penshurst Place, for her help and advice, telephone conversation Tenneson, 18.08.2019.

The second Lord De L'Isle wanted to emphasise an 'Italian influence' in the garden at Penshurst and wrote, 'introducing statuary and ornaments with none of the grandiloquence of most other Victorian Gardens'.<sup>61</sup> Here he used the statue of a young Hercules in classical pose, placing it in the middle of the oval pool. The statue had come from the family's house in Leicester Square, which was built in the seventeenth century and demolished in the early eighteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, Hussey wrote that this statue rising out of the oval lily pond was of a 'somewhat crude Apollo', adding that 'statues in large gardens should be crude as this is not the place to appreciate the refinements of sculpture'.<sup>63</sup> Devey's work is still in evidence here, in the RIBA collection there is a watercolour of the Italian Garden, painted on board in landscape looking toward the house. Undated the watercolour shows the statue in the oval pond, sand or gravel paths and other statues which look to be placed on green plats, reminiscent of the Vertue drawing (Figures 82, 83 ,84).<sup>64</sup>



Fig. 82. Devey's watercolour of the Italian Garden at Penshurst Place, 1850 to 60s. RIBA 828/12.

<sup>61</sup> 'Seven Centuries of Gardening at Penshurst Place'.

<sup>62</sup> Bell, Garden Guide at Penshurst Place. Email Tenneson 09.08.2019.

<sup>63</sup> Hussey, 'The Gardens of Penshurst Place', (p. 864).

<sup>64</sup> RIBA PB826/4.



Fig. 83. The Italian Garden at Penshurst Place looking from the House. *Country Life*, 1899.



Fig. 84. The Italian Garden looking towards the house, 2019.

The only note of fees in Devey's commission receipt book for Penshurst was dated 1877 September for £300, today £25000. Using the formula the cost for work done in 1877 would have been in the region of £6000 which today equates to around £490000. The builder for Penshurst was, as Williams put it, 'an interesting and independent old character, an excellent type of builder who used to talk to his Lordship and Mr Devey as he would talk to his men, he was well versed in the old methods'. Working with this builder over the years at Penshurst would have given Devey a wealth of valuable knowledge and skill.<sup>65</sup>

Penshurst Place was a place to visit with visitors coming from as early as 1838.<sup>66</sup> There were mentions in books of the period, *Stately Homes of England, illustrated with engravings on wood*, published in London between 1874 and 1877 discussed a visit to Penshurst Place and walking around the house. Only the park was mentioned so it is not known if visitors saw the gardens, which at that time should have been restored to the Knyff illustration.<sup>67</sup> More importantly, Devey's contribution to the recreation of the gardens at Penshurst was being acknowledged. Blomfield in *The Formal Garden in England* 1892, mentioned Penshurst Place as one of the most beautiful gardens in England and that the late Devey was an architect who 'made a deliberate and very successful effort to design the house and grounds with the full appreciation of the formal method of gardening'.<sup>68</sup> In 1899, the gardens of Penshurst Place appeared in *Country Life* in their series on 'Country Homes and Gardens Old and New', being described as 'old-world' as still the charming gardens of its earlier time, discussing both the history of the garden and its plantings, together with a number of photographs.<sup>69</sup> In 1901 Penshurst Place appeared in *Formal Gardens in England and Scotland* by H.

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<sup>65</sup> RIBA Devey Account Book. DeG1/1. Williams, 'George Devey', pp. 96-97. Williams did not mention the builder but the builder was Hope Constable. Constable built most of Devey's buildings in Penshurst and was so familiar with Devey's style and methods that he was building 'Deveyesque' cottages after Devey's death. Thorne, 'A Social History of Swaylands', p. 5.

<sup>66</sup> Penshurst Place and Gardens, Guidebook (2001), p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> Llewellynn Frederick William Jewitt, *The Stately Homes of England Illustrated with engravings on wood*, Vol. 1 (London: Virtue & Co., 1847-77), pp. 172-191.

<sup>68</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England*, p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> 'Penshurst Place, Tonbridge', (p. 336).

Inigo Triggs, who had created a plan of the gardens at that time featuring the Italian Garden (Figure 85).<sup>70</sup>

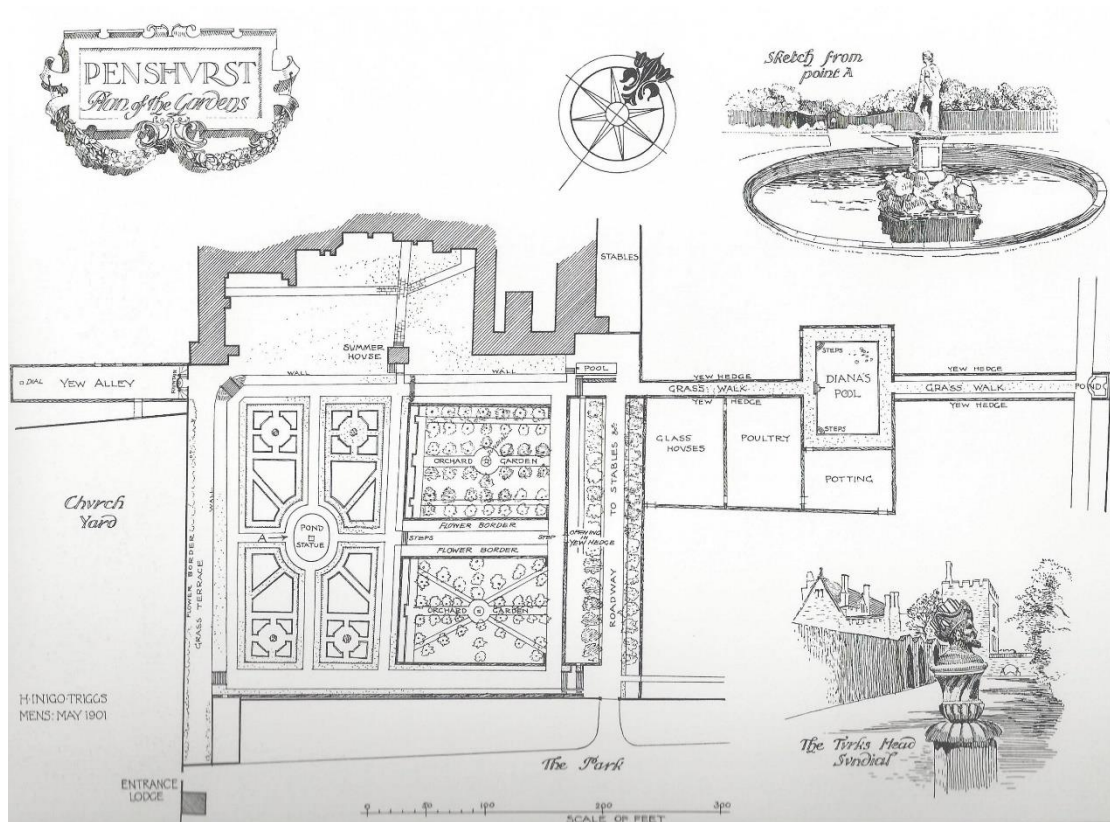


Fig. 85. Trigg's plan of the garden at Penshurst Place 1901, *Formal Gardens in England and Scotland*, plate no. 14.

The most important acknowledgment of Devey's work at Penshurst Place and the recreation of the formal garden was to come from Tipping, in his series of books on *English Homes, Period I*, he wrote of Penshurst Place:

Devey's collaboration with his client in the re-making of the formal gardens on the old lines but with many variations and extensions of an exceedingly satisfying kind must be proclaimed a positive triumph of garden making for, while it was among the first of such efforts, it remains to this day one of the best.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> H. Inigo Triggs, *Formal Gardens in England and Scotland* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1988), p. 81. [First published in 1902].

<sup>71</sup> H. Avray Tipping and Charles Latham, *English Homes, Period I* (London: Country Life, 1912), p. 188.

There can be no doubt that Devey had acquired considerable knowledge on the principles of formal garden making during this early period at Penshurst, a point noted by Tipping . Although Devey left no notes or records of his work, his watercolour of the Vertue illustration established that he would have done his research for the work at Penshurst and, by studying the Knyff and Kip illustration, he was able to recreate the original design for what is now the Italian Garden. This early experience would have equipped him well for his future garden works and for his designs at Betteshanger House, Deal, in east Kent.

### **An accomplished garden maker in the formal style – Betteshanger House**

Devey had been introduced to Sir Walter Charles James (1816-1893), who was to become the first Baron Northbourne, through his client General Sir Henry Hardinge, James' stepfather. Devey started work at Betteshanger House in 1856, just a few years after he began work at Penshurst and was to work there for the next twenty six years. Whereas Penshurst was to teach Devey about architecture, the restoration and care of old buildings and garden making, Betteshanger was to introduce him to the world of powerful politics, as James had been a Liberal MP for Hull from 1837-1847 and was a close friend of W. E. Gladstone (1809-1898).<sup>72</sup>

James, whose father had died when he was two, had been brought up by Hardinge at South Park near Penshurst. When he was old enough, he sold his inherited property in Berkshire and, wanting to settle in the country where he was brought up, rented Redleaf near Penshurst, the former house of the art collector and connoisseur William Wells (1768-1847), while searching for an estate to buy.<sup>73</sup> In 1841 James had married Sarah Ellison, a rich heiress whose father had been a mine owner, owning much of Gateshead and Jarrow. In 1850 they bought the Betteshanger estate with its several thousand acres (now Northbourne Park School) from F. E. Morris. Morris had built the house in 1825 from a design by English architect and engineer Robert Lugar (1773-1855). The house, which Girouard described as a late Georgian villa with bay windows

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<sup>72</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 42.

<sup>73</sup> Redleaf was one of the most celebrated gardens of the 1830s and 40s, for more information see Elisabeth Bond, 'Mr Wells and Joseph Wells', *Country Life*, 160.4147 (1976), 1923-1924.

and elaborate barge-boarded gables, was transformed by Devey's skill into a rambling old country house, which James had originally wanted. In 1854 James had employed architect Anthony Salvin (1799-1881), who had worked for his stepfather at South Park, to carry out substantial work to the interiors of Betteshanger House, the stables and a lodge.<sup>74</sup> He also restored St Mary's Church, within walking distance of the house, in the Norman style. James was not impressed with Salvin's work and knowing of Devey through Hardinge and other associates in Kent employed him to change the look of the house.<sup>75</sup>

Betteshanger was to be Devey's first adventure into his own style of vernacular architecture. Girouard summed up Devey's skill and *raison d'être*, 'if you look at Betteshanger from the garden with half-closed eyes, rising above the green lawns is a rambling and picturesque old country house, the result of several centuries of alterations and enlargement'.<sup>76</sup> The house was the result of alteration and enlargement, not from centuries past but by the hand of Devey over a twenty-year period. This was where he introduced his signature of the 'Dutch' or 'Flemish' gable, characteristic of smaller buildings in Kent and originally borrowed from houses across the Channel. At Betteshanger he also established his art of creating instant age for a building by using a patchwork of various building materials including a particular Devey favourite, Kentish ragstone, a hard grey limestone.

### Area One: The Church Walk

Devey was also charged with laying out the gardens at Betteshanger, which fell into three areas.<sup>77</sup> Firstly, to the east of the house, a south east facing terraced descent of approximately 90 yards led down to St Marys Church marked with the blue arrow on the ordnance survey map surveyed in 1871 (Figure 86).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 42.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Mark Girouard, 'George Devey in Kent-1', *Country Life*, 149.3851 (1971), 744-747 (p. 745).

<sup>77</sup> Historic England, Betteshanger House, Garden Terraces and Plant Tubs, Grade II 1237079. Walls and Gateway to Front Court, Grade II 1264318.

<sup>78</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, LVIII.2 surveyed 1871 published 1873.





Fig. 86. Betteshanger House, OS map surveyed 1871 published 1873. LV111.2

The Church Walk, was on seven levels and at each of the entries into these levels were a pair of brick pillars with vase or ball finials. The walk started with a stone oval pierced balustraded terrace with straight branched steps leading to the second terrace. At the back of these steps was a wall fountain of flint and stone with the water dropping into a small rectangular pool (Figures 87, 88).



Fig. 87. Betteshanger House, the Church Walk 2019.



Fig. 88. Betteshanger House, the wall fountain 2021.

Facing this pool was a further set of steps down to another terrace with a gravel path going from west to east and from the centre of this path were further steps leading into what is now a grass terrace. From this grass terrace further steps led to a level grass square which contained an old well head. From this terrace were three further grass terraces but instead of connecting steps there were sloped grass banks. The lower four terraces were surrounded by low brick and flint walls.

It is not known when Devey created these terraces with their echoes of a formal seventeenth century garden for James, but they could be seen on the 1871 ordnance survey map. The garden was surveyed in 1871 so this terraced descent must have been created between 1856 when Devey started work at Betteshanger and 1871. What links Devey with these terraces were three undated sketches, two in watercolour. These are in the RIBA collection. The first is a pencil sketch of the first level of the descent with steps down showing a curved flat edge to the top terrace, with columns and ornate vases as finials. With this sketch there is an air of quickness and it may have been that whilst Devey was explaining to James how his idea of the walk would work, he started to sketch out his ideas (Figure 89).

The second sketch (Figure 90) shows the fourth level of the walk with an oval pool with a statue surrounded by planting, edged with turf and then surrounded with a gravel path. Steps led into this level from an upper level and a path led down to the next level.<sup>79</sup> *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of August 1903 described this section of the garden as a delightful portion of the grounds with a private approach to the church as a walk passing through a series of grass terraces, past innumerable flowerbeds and round the old well, which was bordered by pergolas and clipped yew hedges. Some of these yews survive today (Figure 91).<sup>80</sup>

The third watercolour in landscape (Figure 92) is a pathway leading to the fourth level of the church terraced walk or perhaps might have been intended as the entry into this walk. To one side was an alcove with a blue striped awning, to the right is trellis and a curved wall led up to a vase finial. There was a gravel path that led to steps

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<sup>79</sup> RIBA PBB03 DEV 9/4 - 10, 9/4 - 9.

<sup>80</sup> 'Betteshanger House', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, XXXIV (1903), (p. 172).

and at the side of the steps is a column with a finial matching that on the curved wall (Figure 93).<sup>81</sup>



Fig. 89. Betteshanger House, the entrance to the Church Walk. RIBA PB803/4.

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<sup>81</sup> RIBA Devey PB864/6.

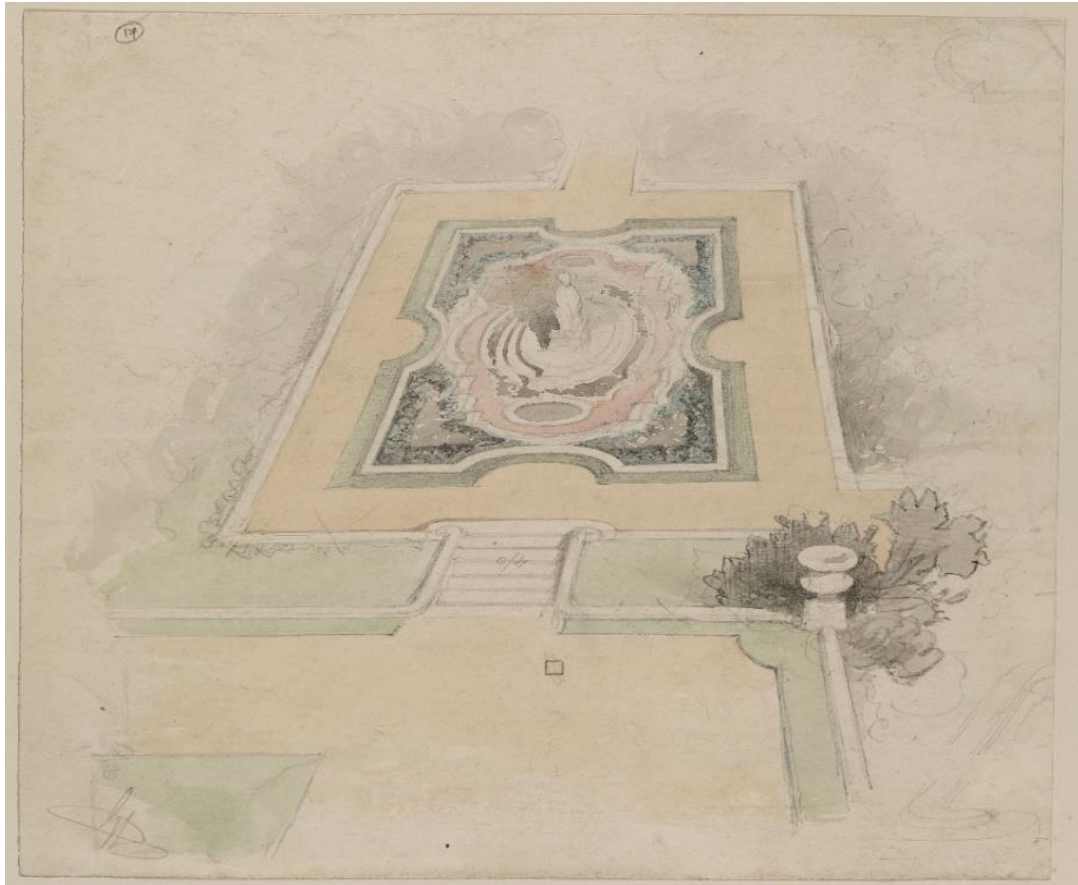


Fig. 90. Betteshanger House, Devey's watercolour of the fourth level of the Church Walk with a fountain. RIBA PB803/4.



Fig. 91. The fourth level of the Church Walk 2021.

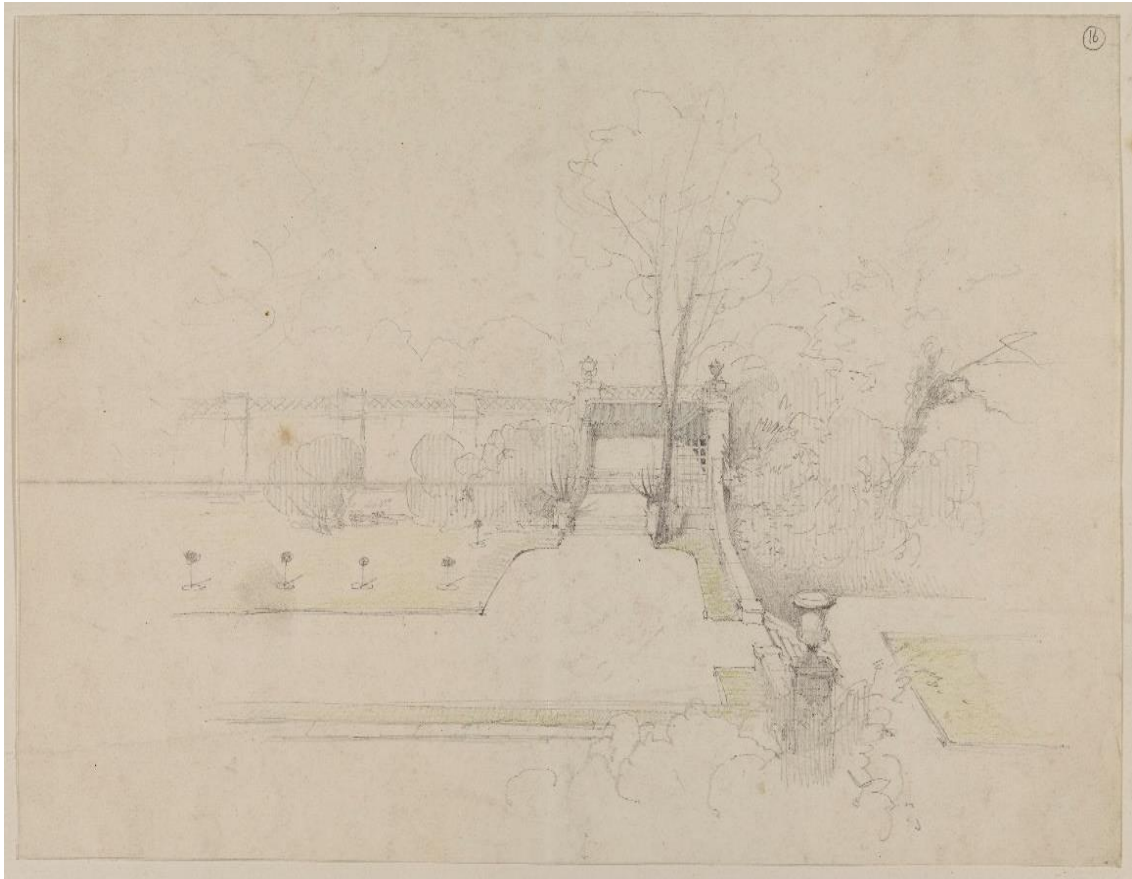


Fig. 92. Betteshanger House, Devey's watercolour of the Church Walk, possibly leading down to the fourth terrace. *RIBA803/4*.



Fig. 93. Betteshanger House, the Church Walk looking back to the first level, 2019.

### Area Two: The Courtyard Garden

The second area was through an archway to the south as you came from the front courtyard of the house. The archway in red brick with a pediment decorated with three ball finials had a wrought iron gate leading to a small sunken garden, and was enclosed by a pierced balustraded wall made of red brick and stone. On the garden side the archway has a stone plaque with the initials 'CWS', but it is not known whose they are. The garden has a central feature of an old well head, is paved and currently planted with roses, which may have been its original design leading out to the lawns.<sup>82</sup> This small area was shown on the 1871 ordnance survey map and again it is not known when Devey created this for James (Figures 94, 95).<sup>83</sup>



Fig. 94. The garden front of Betteshanger House showing the small courtyard. *Northbourne Park School Collection, no date.*

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<sup>82</sup> Williams, 'George Devey and his Work', (p. 98).

<sup>83</sup> Historic England, Betteshanger House, Walls and Gateways to Front Court, Grade II 1264318.



Fig. 95. The courtyard at Betteshanger House 2019.

### *The Third Area: The Terrace*

The third area was the terrace about 100 yards long running north east to south west from the house. The ordnance survey map of 1871 showed the terrace ending in a rectangular shaped area, where to the east stood a conservatory.<sup>84</sup> There were no early photographs of this gravel terrace with lawns to the south ending with steps up to a higher terrace, a rectangular grassed platform. The steps were the same design as those in the Church Walk (Figure 96). These steps had a curved wall to the south ending in red brick piers with terracotta vase finials and to the north a wall leads back to the house. On the south side of the higher terrace there was a bank leading down to the lawns. To the west of this grass platform was a red brick wall, which ran along the end of the terrace area, with a section in the middle of pierced balustrade, ending in a brick pier with a stone vase finial.

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<sup>84</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, LVIII.2 surveyed 1871 published 1872.





Fig. 96. The terrace and part of the wall looking back to the house 2021 .

There is a detailed but undated drawing in the RIBA that could relate to this section of the terrace and the conservatory (Figure 97). This drawing shows steps up and to the east a conservatory is marked out with flower borders to its west and south. There is detail of a wall labelled 'battered wall in Kentish ragstone', together with two brick piers, and this design coincides with the existing wall in this part of the garden. Also marked on the drawing to the west is 'lower terrace walk', which points to a brick pier. The drawing looks as if it was designed for this upper terrace but it was not in Devey's hand but in his chief draughtsman Arthur Castings' (1853-1913), who worked with Devey from 1868 until his death in 1886.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> RIBA PB803/4(1-10). Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 137. The writing is the same as on other drawings by Arthur Castings in the RIBA collection.

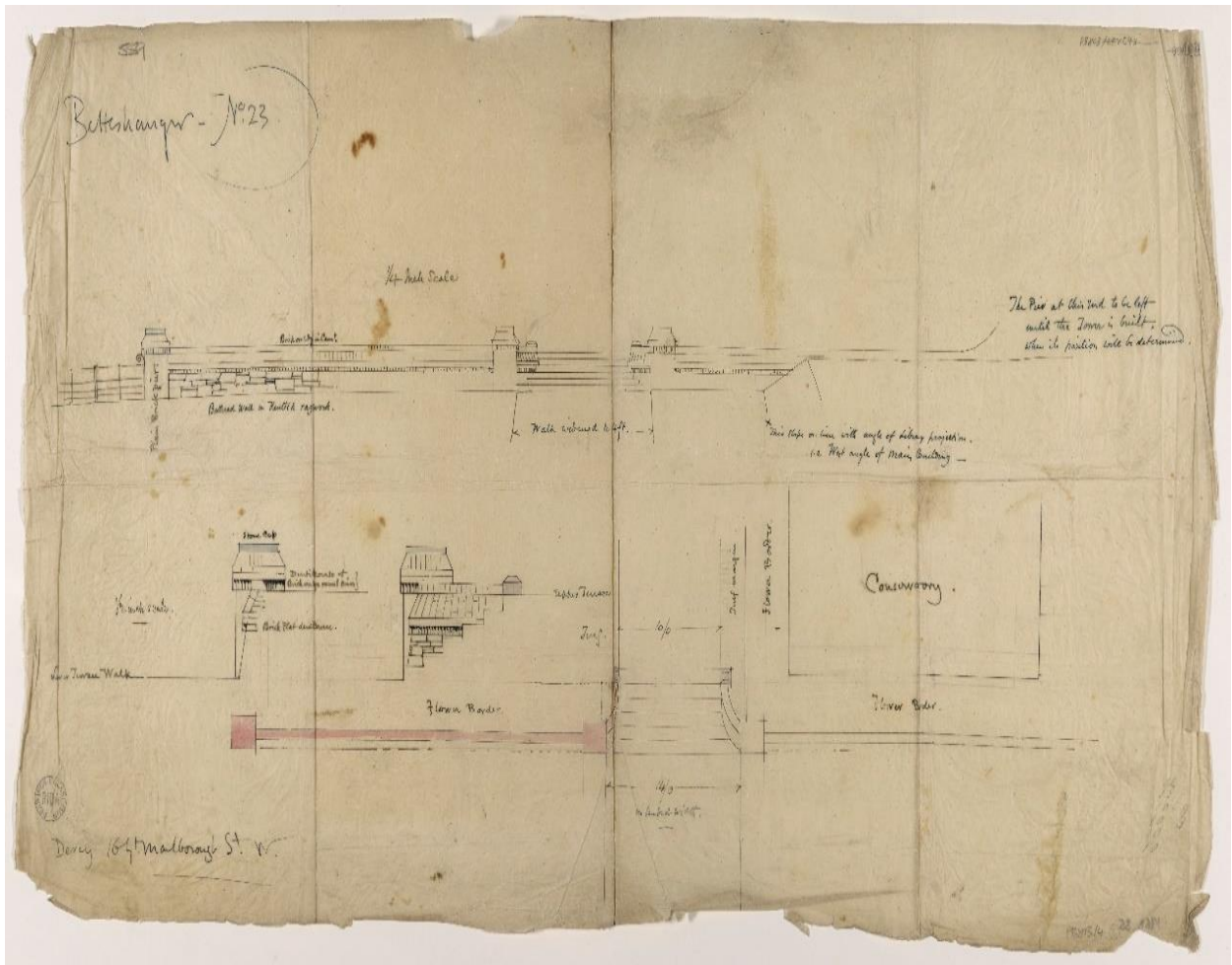


Fig. 97. Devey's sketch of parts of the terrace. RIBA PB803/4.

There is one further pencil landscape drawing in the collection of an Italianate terrace, drawn by Devey, which may have been a design suggestion for this upper terrace (Figure 98). It shows a sundial with sections laid out in a lawn, a central path leading to an upper level, part balustraded and part piers with vase finials, and what is striking are the two Italian cypress, *Cupressus sempervirens*.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> RIBA PB803/4(1-10).

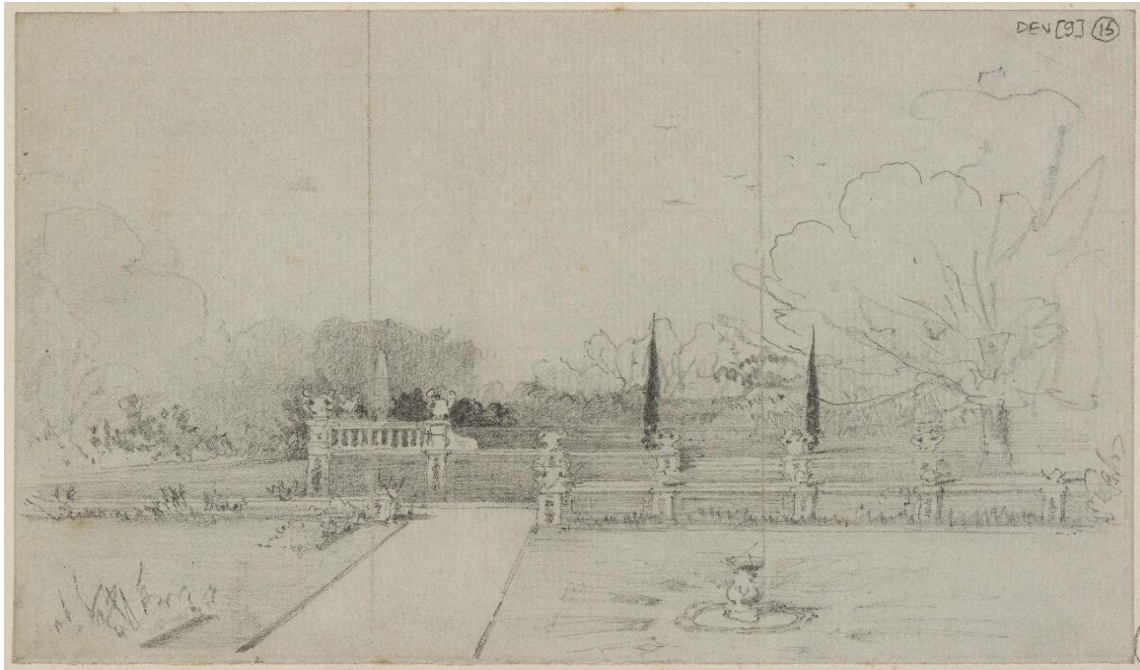


Fig. 98. Betteshanger House, a pencil sketch for a possible 'Italian Garden'. RIBA PB803/4.

Moving back to the terrace there is a run of terracotta urns and flower pots (Figure 99).<sup>87</sup> In two designs, these urns and flower pots alternate down the south side of the terrace facing the lawns. The six octagonal urns have the James crest and badge moulded on them, and are made up of eight panels, with a rounded band on the top, an indent at the bottom and are strapped together in two places with a metal band, standing on terracotta feet on a base of encaustic and flint tiles. The five flower vases are an elegant design with a swagged decoration and stand on a stone base on encaustic and flint tiles. It is not confirmed who designed or supplied these urns and flower vases, but it is possible that Devey designed these for James and commissioned them from one of the terracotta manufacturers operating at the time.<sup>88</sup> One possible manufacturer could have been J. M. Blashfield of Stamford Lincolnshire, who would undertake special commissions and had a London depot at 16 Great Marlborough Street, just one or two doors from Devey's office at number 18. Blashfield wrote that he 'would especially recommend the use of molten lead to affix vases to their standing and generally for the fixing together of terra-cotta work in preference

<sup>87</sup> Historic England, Betteshanger House, Garden Terraces and Plant Tubs, Grade II 1237079.

<sup>88</sup> Pulham and Son did not manufacture urns such as the octagonal urns, which has been confirmed by Claude Hitchin, author of *Rock Landscapes, The Pulham Legacy*, (Woodbridge: Garden Art Press, 2012). A catalogue for Mark Henry Blanchard has not been found. A catalogue by J. M. Blashfield, *A selection of vases, statues, busts &c. from Terra Cotta* (London: John Neale, 1857), does not show anything that resembles either the octagonal urns or the vases. I am grateful to Dr Brent Elliott for his advice.

to cements'.<sup>89</sup> The octagonal urns are joined together with iron or lead straps. Blasfield listed details of his clients, and among those are Lord Dunraven, the Duke of Sutherland and Lord Granville who were also Devey clients.<sup>90</sup>



Fig. 99. The urns and vases on the terrace 2021.

From the account book starting from 1867, the commission to 1882 was £643 which today is £54000. The cost of the works was £13000, equating to £1.1m today. It was likely that the bulk of the costs were from 1856 when Devey started work at Betteshanger.<sup>91</sup> Through this long association with James, Devey was to find himself in an influential political circle, which as Girouard said was to form the 'backbone of his practice'.<sup>92</sup> James, as mentioned earlier, had been MP for Hull and was an admirer and friend of Gladstone, so entertained many of Gladstone's supporters and colleagues at Betteshanger House.<sup>93</sup> Devey formed a friendship with James, one

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<sup>89</sup> J. M. Blasfield, *A Catalogue of Seven Hundred Articles made in patent Terra Cotta and Red Cane coloured Pottery* (Stamford: Henry Johnson Printer, 1860), p. 16.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 152.

<sup>92</sup> Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), p. 214.

<sup>93</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 152.

shared interest being painting and sketching, as James had also been a student of J. D. Harding. As Williams reported, Devey had a 'keen sense of humour' with 'sparkling sallies of wit' and a commanding presence, so perhaps that combination made him a suitable and welcome guest to be included in the Betteshanger house parties.<sup>94</sup>

There was a visitors' book for Betteshanger where the more artistic guests would leave a drawing and, according to Girouard, Devey was a regular contributor, with one particular sketch 29<sup>th</sup> September 1871, showing one of the new terrace vases (Figures 100, 101).<sup>95</sup> Among the circle of Gladstone ministers or followers, who had stayed at Betteshanger when Devey was present, were Lord Granville and William Oxenden Hammond. Devey was to work with both of these gentlemen where he used not only his architectural skills but those of his formal garden making.



Fig. 100. Devey's sketch in the Visitors Book of a vase, September 1871. *Country Life*, 1971.

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<sup>94</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', p. 97.

<sup>95</sup> Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p. 215. Lord Northbourne told me that they do not have any papers or the visitors' book mentioned by Girouard. There are no papers in the Kent Local History Archives. I am grateful to Claire Percy of Northbourne Park School for all her help and assistance.



Fig. 101. The same vase 2021.

### **A booming business**

By the end of the 1860s Devey was entering his most successful period. In 1856 he had become a Fellow of the RIBA and had built a reputation through the association with James and his Liberal connections, winning commissions to build large country houses and restoration work. Allibone detailed Devey's cash book, which from 1867 over a nine year period showed the business grew 700 per cent. In 1867 his billing was £1334 and today that turnover would have been in the region of £104000. Nine years later in 1876 his billing peaked at £9395 which today would be just over £750000 (Figure 102).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 143.

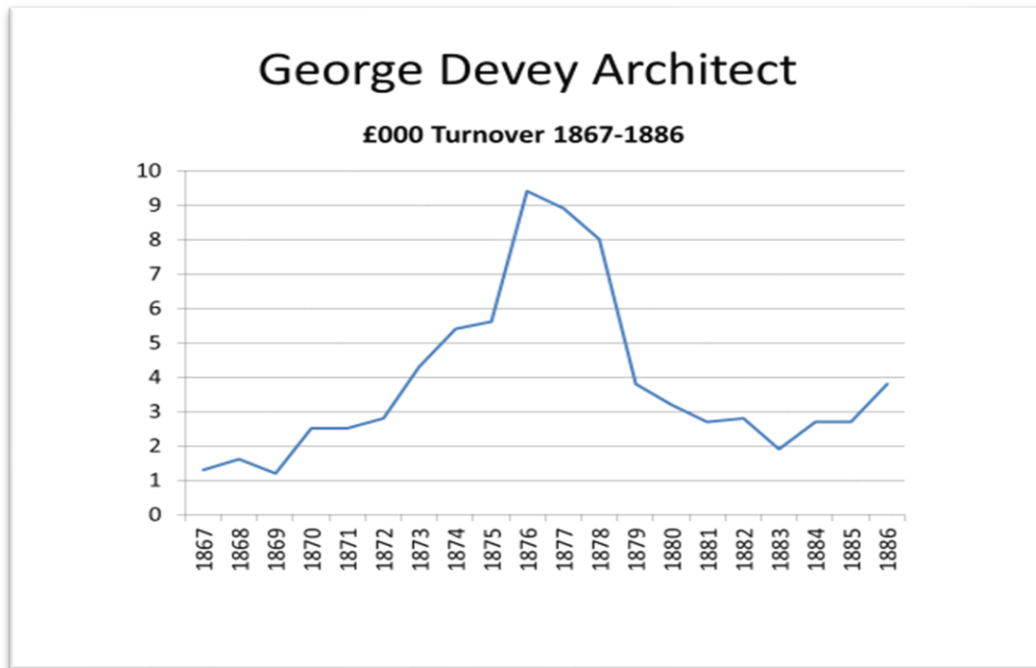


Fig. 102. Chart with Devey's turnover from 1867 to 1886. Author 2019.

For the big contracts, such as Hall Place in Kent, 1871 to 1874, and Coombe Warren in Surrey, 1868 to 1872, Devey worked with George Myers (1803-1875), who was the most successful builder in the middle of the nineteenth century, having completed 55 major contracts for A. W. N. Pugin (1812-1852).<sup>97</sup> Devey was unconventional as Williams wrote that he hated the contract system with 'all the endless bickering and compromises that were so often involved'.<sup>98</sup> It was clear that Devey, a creative man, found this system limiting; if he had a new idea or if he or the client had second thoughts, the contract system would make any changes very difficult. So, from the early 1870s Devey worked to another system that had been successfully employed at Sudbury Hall in Derbyshire for Lord Vernon from 1874 to 1879, where the client built on his own account.<sup>99</sup>

Although Devey continued to work with the contract system he preferred to work where the client was his own builder and, as Williams wrote, many large and important houses were built this way and explained how this worked. Efficiency was the key with good 'superintendence'; the architect arranged the system with the client's foreman, who also engaged the workmen. It was the foreman's responsibility to order the

<sup>97</sup> Patricia Spencer-Silver, *Pugin's Builder, The life and works of George Myers* (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1993), p. 81.

<sup>98</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 99).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 169.

materials which was supervised by the architect. This way of working required the client to have full confidence in the architect and this Williams reported was always commended by Devey. A careful approximate estimate was given, and the client received monthly statements so he was always in full possession of the information, this ideally would remove any possibility of misunderstandings. This system was not without its risks for the architect and created more work so an extra two per cent was added. But Williams was at pains to point out that working in this way the work was done better and at less cost for the client.<sup>100</sup>

With the increase in business Devey was employing more staff in the office in Great Marlborough Street; James Williams had become his assistant in 1870 and later his partner in 1881. The son of his great friend Coutts Stone, Percy, joined the practice as a pupil in 1875 leaving in 1878. Devey employed a surveyor Henry Smith, who became a trusted friend and adviser, and Arthur Castings, chief draughtsman and architect, whose work was evident in many of the Devey drawings.<sup>101</sup> Later in 1880, Edmund Wratten joined the business as a pupil and Voysey joined as an 'improver'.<sup>102</sup>

In his address to the Architectural Association in 1909, Williams said that Devey was one of the first to look at a complete design for a country house as he considered this to be properly within the province and work of every competent architect. It should not just be the house but the setting, with an emphasis on the surroundings and the immediate approaches. The entrance courtyard should present a mystery to what was beyond, Williams quoted 'the walls prevent your seeing everything at once leaving play for romance to picture Elysian fields on the other side'.<sup>103</sup> And here the small enclosed garden off the main courtyard at Betteshanger House was a precursor to others that Devey created. Williams continued, the arrangement of the gardens, the terrace and steps, the enclosing walls and archways all connecting with a well-appointed house was something that Devey took great joy in achieving for his clients.<sup>104</sup> This is evident in the next three houses and gardens to be examined and all commissioned in the practice's boom years. Firstly, Coombe Warren in Surrey in the

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<sup>100</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 99).

<sup>101</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 136.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 98).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 98).



late 1860s to the early 1870s, Goldings in Hertfordshire and Hall Place in Kent both from 1871.

### **Coombe Warren**

Here again Devey was to win this commission because of his Liberal connections. Bertram Wodehouse Currie (1827-1896), was a banker, a partner in Glyn, Mills, Currie and Co and an ardent follower of William Gladstone. A fellow partner, George Grenfell Glyn (1824-1887), also a follower of Gladstone, sat as a Liberal MP from 1857 until he succeeded his father Baron Wolverton in 1873. In the early 1860s, both Currie and Glyn bought houses, Coombe Warren and Coombe Cottage at Coombe near to Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey. These were purchased from the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, a cousin of Queen Victoria, and the then owner of the Coombe Estate.<sup>105</sup>

There are no drawings or images of Coombe Warren when Currie bought the house and engaged Devey to make alterations.<sup>106</sup> How Currie knew of Devey was possibly through Sir Walter James of Betteshanger House in Kent. As a child Currie recalled staying with William Wells at Redleaf in Penshurst, who in the early 1840s had collected a group of artists of the time around him including Frederick Goodall, J. C. Horsey and J. M. W. Turner in regular *soirées* and who would travel around the area sketching and painting.<sup>107</sup> James, who lived with his step father Hardinge at South Park in Penshurst, would probably have been a visitor at Redleaf and met the young Currie.

Work started on Coombe Warren in the summer of 1869 but there was little record of the work that Devey carried out at the house. A reference in Currie's memoirs referred to a visit on the 11<sup>th</sup> October when he arrived late in the afternoon to find the tower 'dismantled of its ivy and with a hole in its middle'.<sup>108</sup> Currie went on to say that Hadler, the foreman, showed him the elevations of the new buildings and wrote, 'well enough, Devey, the incorrigible has introduced a great deal of timber in the gables'.

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<sup>105</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 68.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>107</sup> Barbara Simms, 'The Houses and Gardens of Bertram Wodehouse Currie and his Liberal Friends at Coombe 1860-1900', *The London Gardener*, 15 (2009), 52-67 (p. 56).

<sup>108</sup> Caroline Currie, *Bertram Wodehouse Currie, 1827-1896, Recollections, Letters and Journals*, Vol. I, II (Roehampton: Manresa Press, 1901) (for private circulation), Vol. II, pp. 40-41.

Allibone was 'mystified by the tower' as her evidence indicated that this was an old farmhouse and that Devey was to build a new wing that matched the existing building.<sup>109</sup> In January 1870, as the new wing of the house was nearing completion, the older part of the house was burned down. Mrs Currie noted in the family memoirs, 'Bertram bore the loss of his house very philosophically' and continued 'with his accustomed promptitude Bertram at once entrusted to Mr Devey the task of building a new house'.<sup>110</sup> The new house, as Mrs Currie requested, was not to be built of timber, as she commented 'we have seen what an easy prey timber beams become to fire', but was built of Kentish ragstone, with a superstructure of red brick and stone mullion windows.<sup>111</sup>

Godfrey described the house as holding an 'almost unique' position among Devey's works 'because of the diapered brickwork'.<sup>112</sup> This new house was added on to what was left of the previous house, which was irregular in shape, Devey adding to the irregularity by putting the 'offices' at right angles to the main house (Figure 103). He used Dutch gables with the promised mullion windows, filling the frontage with a selection of 'tondos' and niches holding vases and statues and then covered it with creepers, another Devey device to make any new building look older. The house became known as Coombe Warren II and Devey was asked to lay out the gardens.

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<sup>109</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 69. Allibone does not reference this evidence.

<sup>110</sup> Currie, *1827-1896, Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 40-41.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>112</sup> Walter H. Godfrey, 'The Work of George Devey, Fellow of The Royal Institute of British Architects (1820-1886)', privately published by Messrs Wratten and Godfrey, no date.



Fig. 103. Coombe Warren House, note the diapered brickwork, alcoves and tondos. *The Work of George Devey Architect*, no date.

In the RIBA collection, there are 12 drawings for elements of the gardens at Coombe Warren, eight providing a guide to the garden layout and the work of Devey.<sup>113</sup> The first of these drawings by Castings on tracing paper is small but showed the full layout of the gardens including the kitchen garden, the house in the centre of the site, other buildings which were not labelled with various paths showing the boundaries (Figure 104). There is no scale to this drawing, so it is difficult to estimate the size of the whole estate however, in an article in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* in 1887 it mentioned that the estate was a 'mere 20 acres'.<sup>114</sup>

The second drawing illustrated the formal garden at the rear of the house with terraces and gravel paths, steps leading down to the lawns and further steps leading out to shrubberies (Figure 105). This is seen in a photograph taken from the flower or Italian garden (Figure 106). The third drawing by Godfrey for his book *Gardens in the Making*, showed the entire garden including the path leading to the orangery and the central pavilion or temple that was built to house a bust of Gladstone, a sculpture which is thought to be by James Mabey (Figure 107).<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> RIBA PB805/1 (25-37).

<sup>114</sup> 'Coombe Warren', *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, I (1887), (p. 40).

<sup>115</sup> James Mabey & Sons, sculptors, carvers, modellers and ornamental plastering in all styles of Westminster, did various works for Devey including the tondos which he used to decorate his houses. A tondo is a circular medallion or plaque that is a renaissance term from the

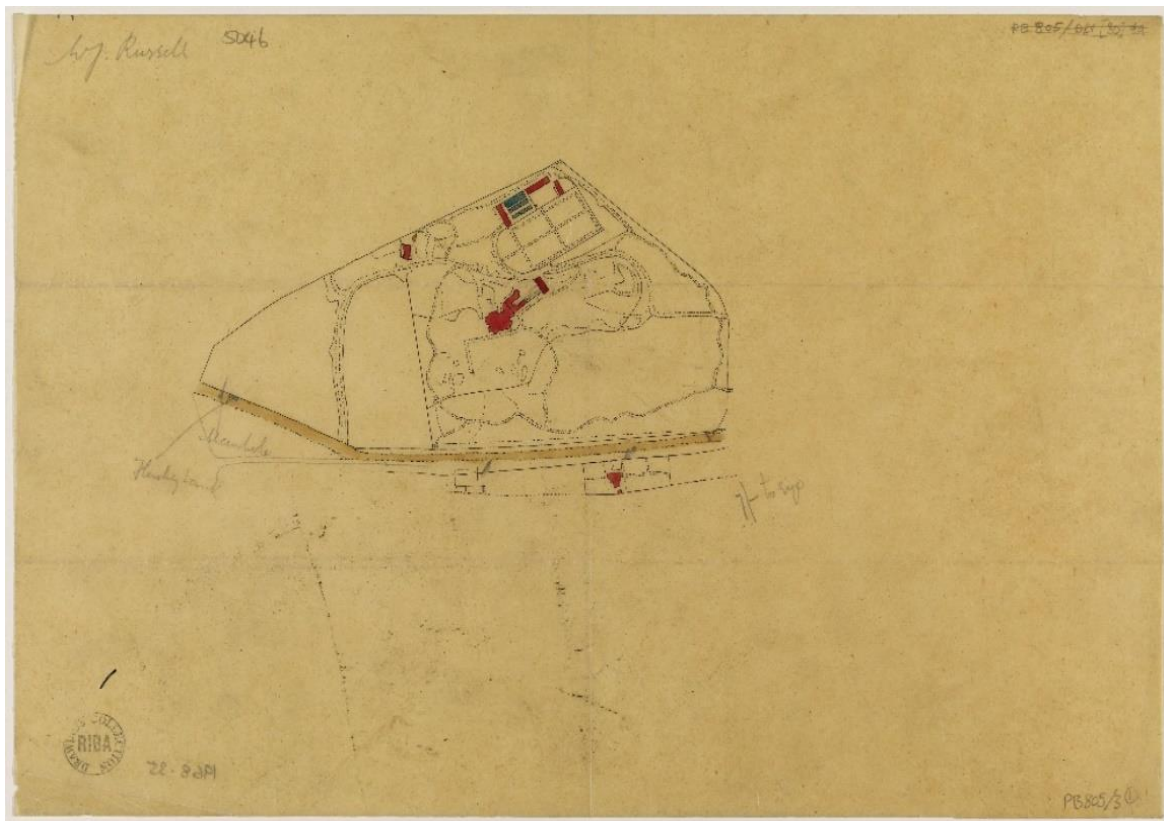


Fig. 104. The plan for house and garden, Coombe Warren. RIBA PB805/1.

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Italian *rotondo*. A photocopy of a bust of Gladstone was found in Allibone's papers and captioned James Mabey (no dates). Gladstone was a frequent guest at Coombe Warren and during March 1874 he became unwell and unable to return to Westminster, the Cabinet came to Coombe for the meeting. There is a design for a commemorative plaque for this occasion in the RIBA collection PB805/1 (25-37) 36. Godfrey, *Gardens in the Making*, plan 61.

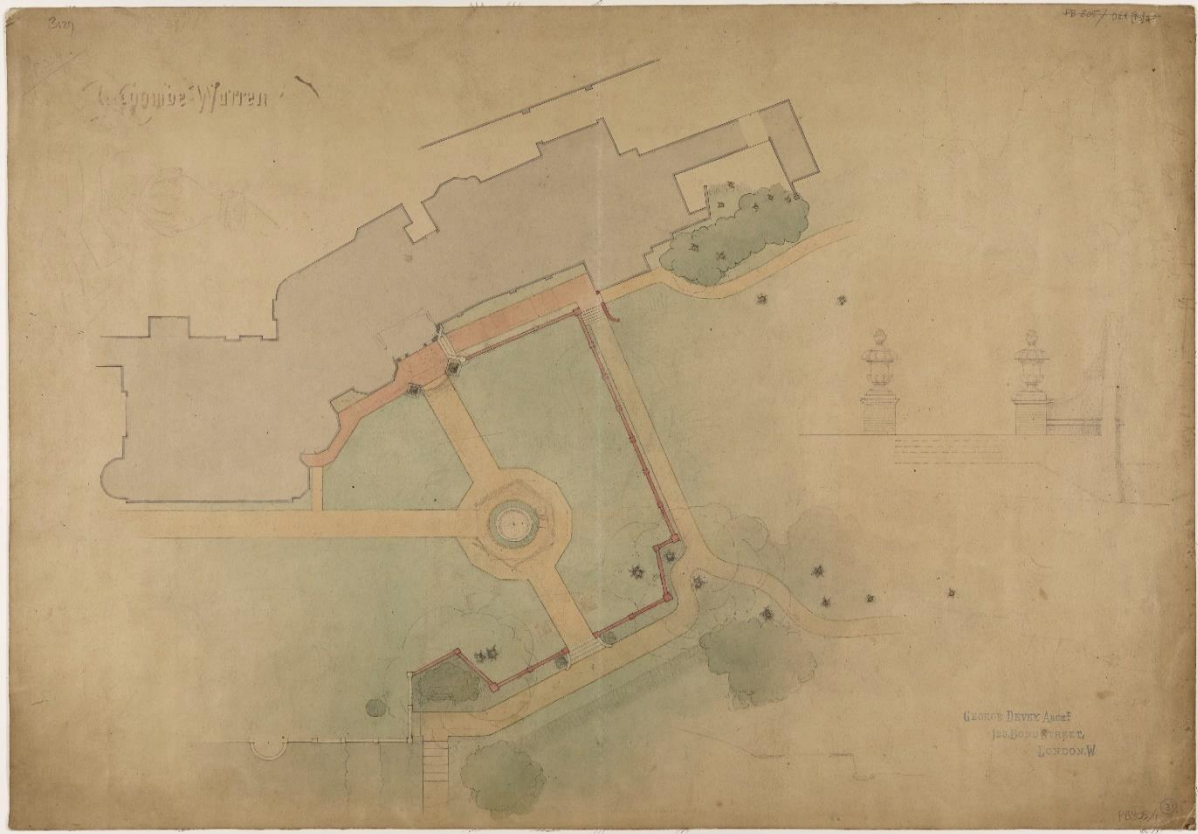


Fig. 105. Devey's garden drawing for Coombe Warren. RIBA PB805/1.



Fig. 106. Coombe Warren, the Italian or flower garden showing the path to the temple to William Gladstone, date unknown. *The Work of George Devey*.

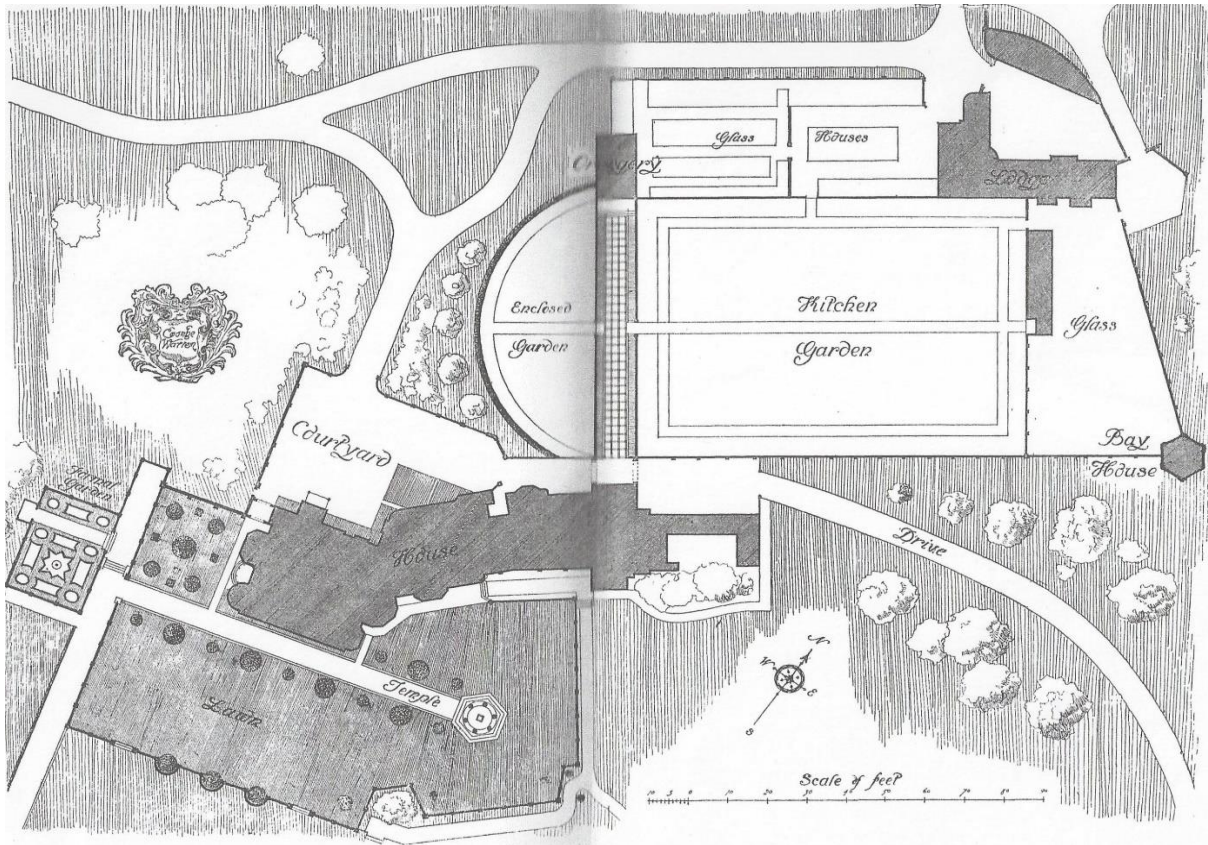


Fig. 107. Godfrey's drawing of the site at Coombe Warren. Note the enclosed entrance courtyard. *Gardens in the Making*, 1904.

The fourth and fifth drawings showed the frontage of the orangery that formed part of the walled garden which was also illustrated by Devey's pupil Wratten (Figures 108, 109). The position of the Orangery was shown on the Godfrey plan (see Figure 107). What is of interest here is the decoration on the pediment on the Orangery, as Devey was to use this Jacobean style on other properties. Also of interest is the sixth sketch of another gateway which leads off the Orangery courtyard into the kitchen garden and this time the pediment is a scrolled open top archway with a wrought iron gate (Figure 110). The seventh sketch related to the garden was a section of wall, which perhaps was part of the front courtyard, as here was displayed a favourite device of Devey's, tondos of a man and a woman (Figure 111). The eighth sketch was a rough plan for part of the terrace in red brick which matched the house, with a set of steps and piers with vase finials (Figure 112).



Fig. 108 . Coombe Warren, Devey's design for the Orangery. RIBA PB805/1.



Fig. 109. Wratten's sketch of the Orangery at Coombe Warren and to the left the entrance to the enclosed garden. *Gardens in the Making*, 1904.

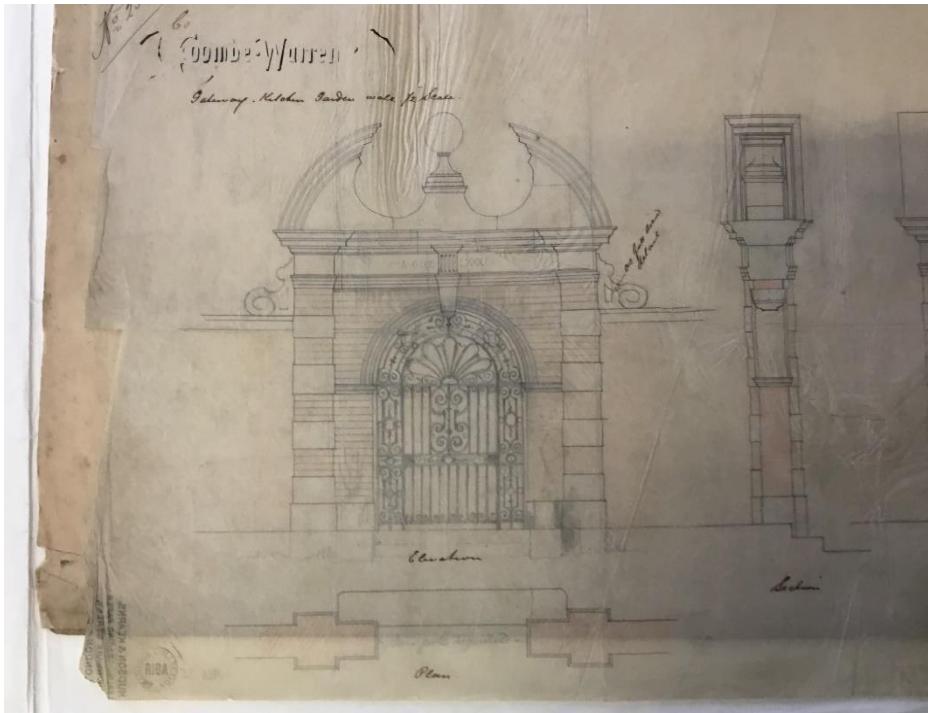


Fig. 110. The gate leading into the kitchen garden at Coombe Warren. RIBA PB805/1.

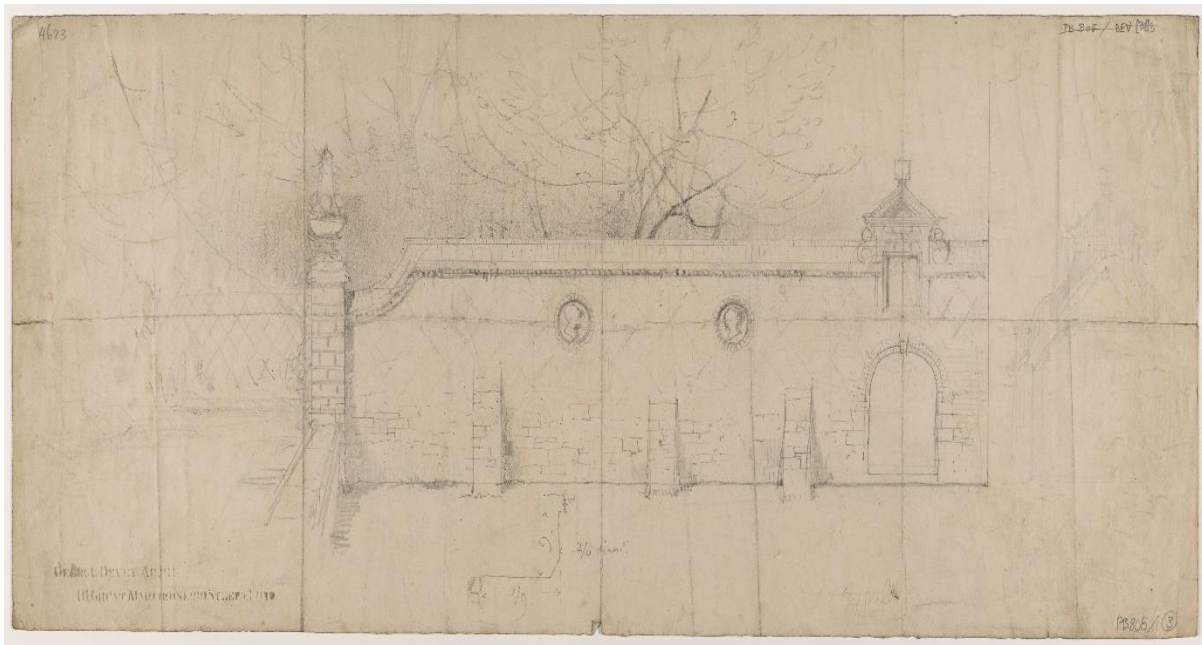


Fig. 111. A sketch of a wall at Coombe Warren with two tondos. RIBA PB805/1.



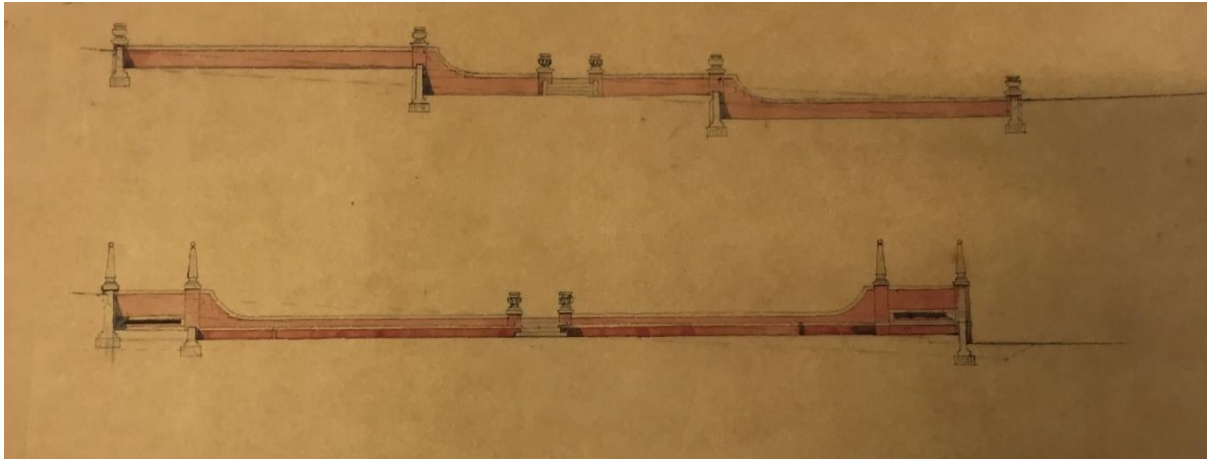


Fig. 112. A drawing of the red bricked terrace walls and steps at Coombe Warren. RIBA PB805/1.

It is not known how much planting had taken place when the new house was built, but over fifteen years later when the gardens had matured they were highly praised. The assistant editor of *The Garden*, William Goldring (1854-1919), reviewed the gardens in 1886, saying that 'the designer' (he did not name Devey) 'must feel what he is doing, he must know how much formality to introduce and above all how little'.<sup>116</sup> He discussed this intermingling of art and nature that was so well blended at Coombe Warren, taking one example of the lawns between the formal garden and the wild garden as 'indeed charming'. He wrote of the 'noble breadth of the terrace garden' with a profusion of pyramidal plants in tubs and describing the great oaks, elms and chestnuts sweeping over the lawns with other trees such as pine and spruce which added to a beautiful skyline. Although there is little evidence to confirm that Devey was a plantsman and whether he would have advised on the plantings at Coombe Warren, Currie did care about his landscape and garden, as Goldring continued that they were designed in keeping with the mansion. He mentioned the mansion as being a modern building irregular in outline, adding that the style of the house fitted well into its surroundings and was enhanced by a profusion of creepers covering the walls (Figure 113).<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> William Goldring, 'Coombe Warren', *The Garden*, XXX.775 (1886), (p. 284).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig. 113. Coombe Warren covered in creepers date unknown.  
<<https://houseandheritage.org/2015/11/1/coombe-warren/>> [accessed 20.10.2021]

A year later in 1887 the garden was again reviewed in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, when the author was much taken with the aspect of the house and its commanding views over the countryside to the Surrey Downs. He also wrote about the 'quaint' house with the architecture being a mix of 'old English and Elizabethan' covered with climbers, adding that another part of the house appeared to have been cut out of 'Old London at the Indo-Colonial Exhibition'.<sup>118</sup>

It is difficult to classify the Coombe Warren garden as there were elements of the formal garden with the terraces, walls, tondos, arches and their pediments, the garden buildings and the design of the orangery, but there were also elements of the fashionable high Victorian garden with a mosaic garden and carpet bedding. Currie who had a long friendship with Devey wrote of his work at Coombe, which he called his humble dwelling, as a rather happy reproduction of the Tudor style, saying of his

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<sup>118</sup> 'Coombe Warren', (pp. 39-41).

friend Devey, 'he had a healthy horror of sham ornament and unstable construction so that his works will live at any rate until they are pulled down'.<sup>119</sup> On that point Currie was right, Coombe Warren II was demolished in 1926. Devey was to go on to work for Currie at Minley Manor, in Hampshire, the home of Bertram's father Raikes Currie.

Devey's commission for the work at both Coombe Warren I and II from 1870 to 1885 was £1839, today that would be £165000, and the building cost of £37000 would be £3.3 million.<sup>120</sup>

## Goldings

In the early 1870s, when Devey was working on Coombe Warren II, his business was nearing its peak and this next commission was to build a new mansion and it is thought to lay out grounds for Robert Smith (1833-1894), a son of the banking family who owned Smith, Payne & Smiths founded in the seventeenth century.<sup>121</sup> Devey had been working for the family at Woodhall Park in Hertfordshire and this was likely to have been the connection for this project. Robert Smith, the second son of Abel Smith of Woodhall (1788-1859), had been given the Goldings Estate which adjoined Woodhall in 1857 when he had married Isabel Adeane. Later in 1859, when his father died, he was given his considerable share in the bank.<sup>122</sup> The existing house, an early eighteenth century two storey house with a pediment, hipped roof and dormers, was not in good order and, as Allibone wrote, 'something of a much greater consequence was required'.<sup>123</sup> This new house at Goldings built in diapered red brick, was to be the largest house built by Devey and again, as at Coombe Warren II, the offices and servants wing were set off to the east.<sup>124</sup>

Having demolished the old house in 1871, Devey produced designs for the new house to be built further up the hill to the north with views to the south overlooking meadows and a water way called the Serpentine River and a canal. In the RIBA collection there are 14 designs for the new mansion with five further designs for lodges on the

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<sup>119</sup> Currie, *1827-1896, Recollections, Letters and Journals* Vol. I, p. 36.

<sup>120</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 60.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>122</sup> Dorothy Abel Smith, *And such a name, the recollections of Mrs Robert Smith of Goldings, (1839-1913)* (Lavenham: Lavenham Press, 2015), p. 11.

<sup>123</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 91.

<sup>124</sup> Historic England, Goldings House, Grade II 1268815.

estate, however there are no plans for the grounds or gardens. The main plan for the house shows the enclosed forecourt to the north, echoing Williams' comment about using an enclosed entry to establish mystery. With the entry at Goldings, visitors came through an archway, decorated with a 'tondo' of Inigo Jones (1573-1652), which perhaps was intended to give the house an air of the seventeenth century. Girouard's comments about Goldings were not kind, as he thought the house was 'depressingly shapeless' and 'seems to dribble on for ever'.<sup>125</sup> Godfrey as always was in praise of Devey, writing about Goldings as representing 'most completely and convincingly the supreme gifts of its designer, which charm the eye'.<sup>126</sup> Godfrey explained the grouping of rooms as shown in his own hand drawn plan of the house, with the main rooms overlooking the terraces and gardens to the south. (Figures 114, 115).<sup>127</sup>

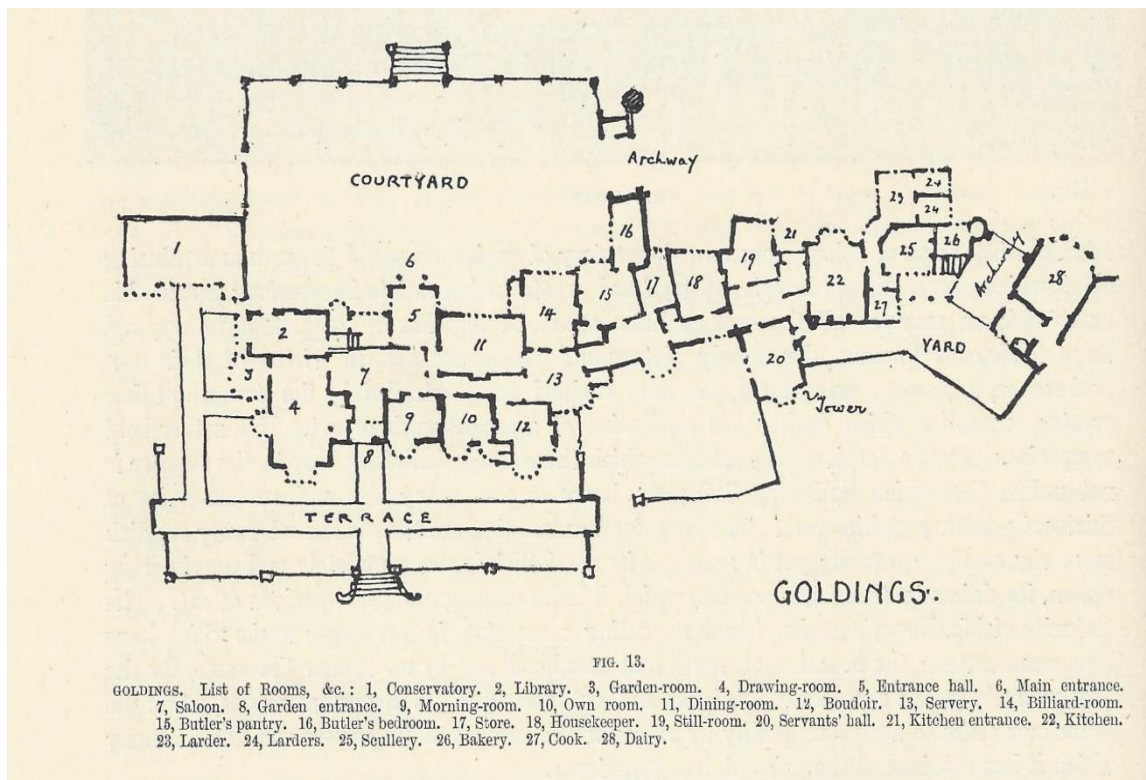


Fig. 114. Godfrey's hand drawn plan of Goldings showing the terrace and enclosed entrance. 'George Devey FRIBA, A Biographical Essay', RIBA, 1906.

<sup>125</sup> Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p. 85.

<sup>126</sup> Godfrey, *George Devey*, p. 517.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig. 115. The entrance archway to Goldings, showing the tondo to the left of the entrance, 2019.

The garden front looking south over the grounds has a series of three terraces, the main terrace in front of the house has a central gravel path, with turf margins with steps down to two further wide sweeping grass terraces. These grass terraces have steps at the sides of a central grass bank, and lead down to a parterre, which was the site of the original house.<sup>128</sup> This main terrace extends both to the west of the house to a conservatory, where originally there had been a small parterre, and east in front of the service wing. It was likely that Mrs Smith consulted with Devey to lay out the grounds around the new house as she had written in her memoirs of the old house that she had laid out the flower gardens near the house.<sup>129</sup> These new gardens were illustrated on an 1875 plan of the estate (Figure 116).

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<sup>128</sup> Smith, *And Such a Name*, p. 131.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.



Fig. 116. The 1875 plan showing the new layout of the gardens and the parterres. *Hertfordshire Record Office, ACC540.*

The garden in the formal style was illustrated in an article in the *Journal of Horticulture & Cottage Gardener* published in 1879, where the main illustration was of the parterre. The author wrote that the garden was 'rather deficient in flower, the general effect is good, and the contrast with the extremely well-kept lawns is very pleasing'.<sup>130</sup> What is of interest here is that the design for this parterre was very similar to one that Devey laid out for the Earl of Kenmare in Killarney just a few years later (Figures 117, 118).

<sup>130</sup> 'A Day in Hertfordshire', *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, XXXX (1879), (p. 213).



Fig. 117. The parterre at Goldings. *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, 1879.



Fig. 118. A similar parterre design by Devey at Killarney House, circa 1870s. RIBA 114989.

Other than the main general plan of the house which showed the terraces there were no further plans or drawings by Devey of the garden. Castings, who carried on working at Goldings after Devey had died in 1886, did a garden layout of a stepped wall with three arches and steps, which may have been for the entrance courtyard,

and a design for an elaborate parterre which looks to have been part of a larger flat area and may have been intended for nearer the house (Figure 119).<sup>131</sup>

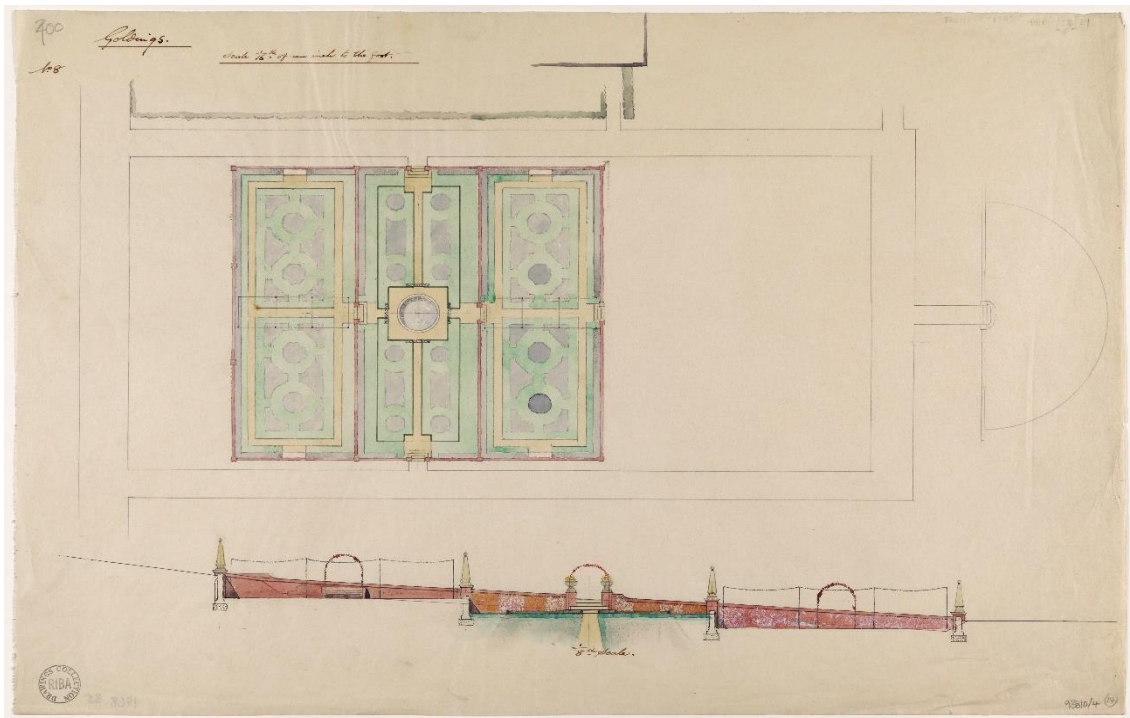


Fig. 119. Castings' plan for Goldings, post 1886. RIBA PB810/4.

Devey's commission for Goldings over the six years of the project from 1871 to 1877 amounted to £3453.<sup>132</sup> The cost of building Goldings in the 1870s is estimated at £69000. Today those costs respectively would have been £280000 and just over £5.6 million.

After a sad history of neglect and local authority use, the Goldings estate was purchased by a private developer in 2001 and turned into a modern country house community, with apartments in the house and houses built in the two walled gardens.<sup>133</sup> The neglected gardens have been restored by the landscape architect Neil Thomson, who has carried out tree replanting to complement the existing trees, recreated the sweeping lawns and grass terraces down to the parterre. Analysing the garden features at Goldings, they are in Devey's style, as can be seen at other properties; the terraces with the central gravel path and turf margins, the steps

<sup>131</sup> Castings' plan for Goldings post 1886. RIBA PB810/4.

<sup>132</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 164.

<sup>133</sup> Penny Churchill, 'Historic Estates get a new lease of life', *Country Life*, 195.7 (2001), 74-75.



following the same pattern as those at Betteshanger House.<sup>134</sup> The multi levels of the grass terraces reflect the church descent walk at Betteshanger House and again there was the mystery element of the enclosed entry courtyard. The analytical drawing highlights Devey's sense and use of space. Moving the house to the north to higher ground, and using the terrace as an anchor, allowed him to create an axial view over the landscape. The view started with the three graded grass terraces down to the parterre, the site of the original house, with the eye moving over meadow to the water and framed with woodland and shrubbery. (Figures 120, 121, 122).<sup>135</sup>

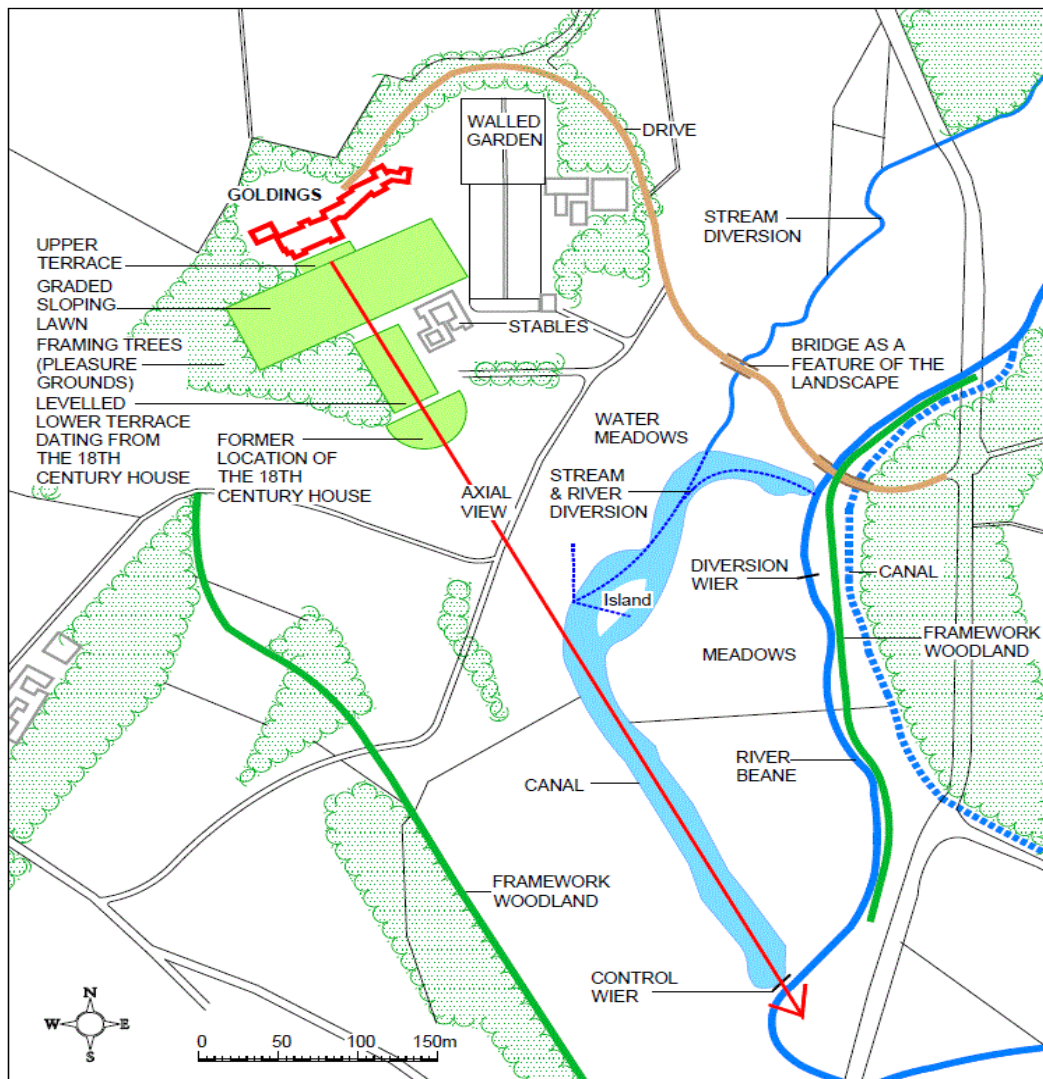


Fig: 120. Modern plan of the garden layout at Goldings 2022. Author's drawing.

<sup>134</sup> Neil Thomson, NT Landscapes, emails to Tenneson September to December 2019. I am grateful to Neil Thomson for his help and arranging the visit to Goldings.

<sup>135</sup> I am grateful to Neil Thomson and Ruth Elwood for their help and advice in preparing this plan.



Fig. 121. Goldings, from the site of the old house looking north to the new house showing the grass terraces 2019.



Fig. 122. Goldings, the axial view from the terrace looking south to the canal 2019.

## Hall Place

The 1870s continued to be a busy time for Devey's practice, with both Coombe Warren and Goldings as major projects. During this period another new house was commissioned in Leigh, Kent for Samuel Morley (1809-1886), the hosiery manufacturer and Liberal MP. Morley bought the Hall Place estate in 1870 from Thomas Bailey, who had employed Devey for work on a property called Park House, and a further house for an 'estate agent' on the Hall Park estate in 1864 to 1866.<sup>136</sup> It is likely that it was through Bailey that Morley employed Devey with perhaps further recommendations from other Liberal clients. The house at Hall Place was a manor house dating back to the Elizabethan period but in poor condition. Morley attempted to repair the house bringing it up to modern standards for that time but, as Allibone reported, Morley spent just under £1000 to do this. The repairs were unsuccessful, thus a new house was commissioned.<sup>137</sup>

In the RIBA collection there are only plans for internal decoration, no exterior or ground plans have survived but there are a series of photographs of the house being built. Devey was one of the first to photograph the building process of his houses and much of this collection has survived and is held in the library at the RIBA.<sup>138</sup> There is also a watercolour of the garden front, together with a photograph from the collection probably taken about a year or so into the build, showing the garden front with the beginnings of the terrace (Figures 123, 124). The house was built in the Devey style with a skyline full of gables, chimneys and a tower at both ends using red brick with large blue headers. It was, as Historic England quoted, designed in the Tudor style and built on higher ground north of the site of the old house.<sup>139</sup> The layout and shape of the house can be seen from an Ordnance Survey map revised in 1907 and yet again Devey has built the offices to the west of the front of the house.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 74, 156.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 163. Today that figure would be £83000.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. Usually the building process was recorded by a series of sketches, but this took time, photography was more accurate at recording small details.

<sup>139</sup> Historic England, Hall Place, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000934. OS map, Kent sheet, IL.10 surveyed 1869 published 1876.

<sup>140</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, L.10 revised 1907 published 1908.



Fig. 123. Building in progress and the start of the terraces, circa 1870s. RIBA 20039/2.



Fig. 124. A watercolour by Devey of Hall Place showing the garden front and terrace. RIBA 828/12.

In a biography of Morley published in 1888, the description of the house mentioned the red brick and stone mansion in a wooded park of over two hundred acres with the house now covered by ivy and other creepers. The author, Edwin Hopper (no dates), wrote that it was difficult to detect that this was a new house because of the many creepers.<sup>141</sup> Although there were some remnants of an old garden for the Elizabethan manor house, much was changed with the new building as seen on the Ordnance Survey maps surveyed in 1869 and revised in 1907 (Figures 125, 126).<sup>142</sup>

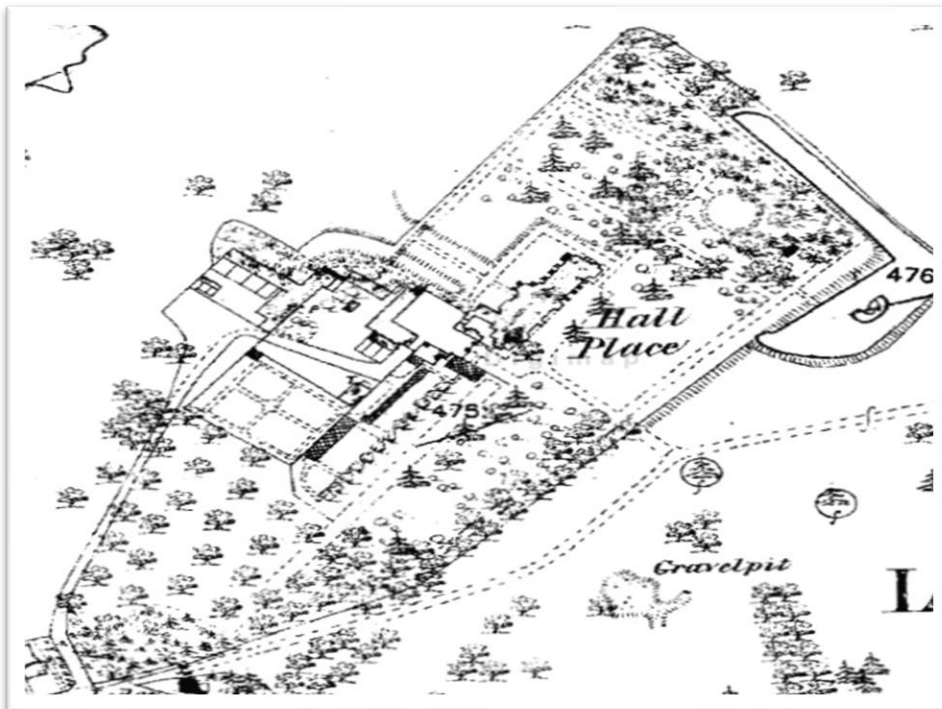


Fig. 125 . Hall Place, OS Map, surveyed 1869 published 1873. Kent Sheet, IL10.

<sup>141</sup> Edwin Hopper, *Samuel, Life of Samuel Morley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888), pp. 280-281.

<sup>142</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, IL.10 surveyed 1869 published 1873. Kent Sheet, L.10 revised 1907 published 1908.

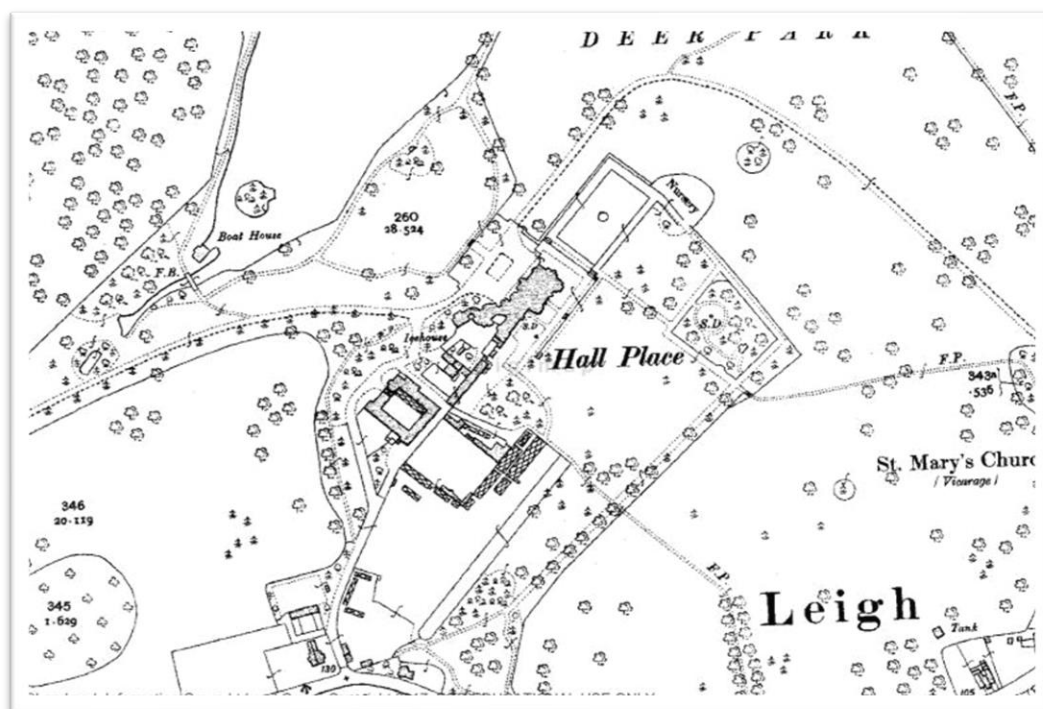


Fig. 126. Hall Place, OS map, revised 1907 published 1908, showing Devey's terraces. Kent Sheet L.10.

An illustration dated 1877 in *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* showed the garden front terraces just a few years after work was finished (Figure 127). The article by an unknown author described little of the garden, but more of the refinement and culture of nature and horticulture, although he did promise a report on the garden at a later stage.<sup>143</sup> From this illustration and a site visit these terraces were by Devey as they are of the same design as other properties, Goldings, and to be discussed later, Swaylands at Penshurst in Kent. The terrace on the garden front faces south east with a central gravel path, turf margins and steps to its lower level. At its north eastern end there is a further set of steps that lead down to the lower terrace on the north eastern side of the house. Each set of steps has brick piers with vase and ball finials. Coming through the formal archway and gate from the entrance courtyard brings the visitor to the corner of the north east terrace which looks over the formal fountain garden (Figure 128).

The watercolour of the garden front (see Figure 124) showed the garden entrance from the house with a path leading to this central set of steps down to the lower level

<sup>143</sup> 'Hall Place', *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, XXXIII (1877), 78-79.

(Figures 129, 130).<sup>144</sup> The layout of this area is seen on the ordnance survey map published in 1908 (see Figure 127) and an aerial photograph (Figure 131).<sup>145</sup>



Fig. 127. Hall Place, the garden with terraces. *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener*, 1877.

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<sup>144</sup> RIBA Devey watercolour of Hall Place. PB811/2(1-13).

<sup>145</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, L.10 revised 1907 published 1908. 'Country Homes and Gardens Old & New, Hall Place, Leigh, Kent, the Residence of Mr. S. Hope Morley', *Country Life*, 8.206 (1900), 776-780.



Fig. 128. Hall Place, part of the enclosed courtyard hiding the formal gardens. 2020.



Fig. 129. Hall Place, the Fountain Garden from the corner of the north east terrace, as you come through the door. 2020.





Fig. 130. Hall Place a view of the lower south eastern terrace. 2020.



Fig. 131. Hall Place, a view of the upper terrace from the north east terrace. 2020.



Fig. 132. Aerial photograph of Hall Place showing Devey's terraces.  
<<https://onthemarket.com/details/1615325>> [accessed 07.2021].

From the evidence it is not clear who designed the 15 hectares of formal and informal gardens at Hall Place. In *The Garden* of 1877 there is a short article and a full page map of the garden, stating it was designed by Robert Marnock (1800-1889). In 1836, The Sheffield Botanic Gardens were opened under the curatorship of Marnock, who had won the design competition and was responsible for carrying out the design. In 1840 he again won a competition for the design of a garden at the Royal Botanic Society in Regents Park, where he became curator until 1862. Leaving Regents Park in 1862 he set up his own business and his style was described as 'natural' or 'picturesque'.<sup>146</sup> The listing for the garden at Hall Place by Historic England makes no mention of Marnock or Devey as the designers of the gardens, but Marnock's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* lists him working for Samuel Morley at Leigh Place, a former name of Hall Place.<sup>147</sup> Allibone visited Hall Place sometime in the late 1980s when writing her book on Devey and was allowed to view papers in the

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<sup>146</sup> Jan Woudstra, 'Robert Marnock and the creation of the Sheffield Botanical and Horticultural Gardens, 1834-40', *Garden History*, 35.1 (2007), 2-36. Gordon Goodwin, revised by Audrey le Lièvre, 'Marnock, Robert', ODNB see bibliography.

<<https://www.parksandgardens.org./people/robert-marnock>> [accessed 23.06.2022].

<sup>147</sup> Historic England, Hall Place, Grade II\* 1000934.

estate office. These papers included a set of accounts from George Myers and Sons, the builders of Hall Place, who would have either been appointed by Devey or won the tender. Among the figures listed are, 'Terrace and garden walls £2,290. 07s. 03p.' and 'Tank on mound and fountain £1,142. 13s. 03p'.<sup>148</sup> The entry in *The Kent Historic Environment Record for Hall Place* states that Devey enlarged and laid out the gardens, with no mention of Marnock.<sup>149</sup> This was further endorsed with an article in *Country Life* in 1989 by Arthur Hellyer (1902-1993), who wrote that he was 'astonished at the lack of attention given to this fine garden' and mentioned the grand design which Morley and his architect Devey started so successfully more than a century ago.<sup>150</sup>

The watercolour and photograph of the garden front is evidence that Devey designed and built the series of terraces around the house. There is a haha that runs to the south of the house topped with a balustrade which is to Devey's style. The lake of 11 acres which was part of the design and created around this time, has been attributed to both Devey and Marnock. What can be confirmed is that the boat house at the eastern end of the lake was by Devey, as Allibone commented, 'a typically Devey arrangement of roof levels and gables'.<sup>151</sup> As mentioned in the Myers account, the formal fountain garden to the north east of the house, through the entrance courtyard and gate, was fed by a brick tank under a huge mound to the east of the gardens and this was also by Devey.<sup>152</sup> In 1874 the bill for Hall Place was £79000, today that would be around £6.2 million, so one of Devey's most expensive commissions. His fee for the two year period was £3948 and today that would be £312000. Hall Place remained in the Morley family until 2015 when it was sold to a

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<sup>148</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 163. For more information on the business of building see Spencer-Silver, *Pugin's Builder*, Chapter 6, Business Methods. The costs of £2290 and £1142 would today be £186000 and £93000 respectively.

<sup>149</sup> The Kent Historic Environment Record for Hall Place. HER number TQ 54 NW 210. <<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCCExploringKentsPast>> [accessed 16.12.2019].

<sup>150</sup> Arthur Hellyer, 'A Place of Perfect Vistas', *Country Life*, 83.17 (1989), 124-127 (p. 127).

<sup>151</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 75.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 75. I am grateful to Dr Brent Elliott who has clarified that it was Robert Marnock who had designed the gardens, and that Historic England's entry has yet to be amended as of 20.01.2022. I am also grateful to Dr Jan Woudstra for information about Hall Place. Historic England, Hall Place, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000934.

private buyer, who has started a programme of renovation to the parkland, gardens and house.<sup>153</sup>

From these first five examples of Devey's garden works, it is possible to see a style emerging, particularly in the creation of terraces and their decoration. There are similarities with terraces at Goldings, three stepped out to the view, and also at Hall Place with two terraces stepped out to the view. Another example of this tier system is the Church Walk at Betteshanger. Coombe Warren appears to be a 'one off', the site was much smaller than the others at just 20 acres and appears to have been 'crammed' with a variety of garden buildings that arguably was the taste at that time, although there were also examples of Devey's style of terraces.

### **A confident architect and garden maker**

With these three big projects taking place during the first part of the 1870s, Devey's office was busy as Williams wrote that Devey was now employing ten men, with one modeller in constant work and six clerks of works. The next properties to be discussed, starting from the late 1860s and into the 1870s, are one complete design for St Albans Court, Kent and four restorations and additions, Swaylands in Kent, Brantinghamthorpe Hall and Byram Hall and Park, both north of the Humber in Yorkshire, and Condover Hall in Shropshire.

### **Condover Hall**

Condover Hall, south of Shrewsbury in Shropshire, is an Elizabethan manor house dating from 1600, built to an E plan design. The house is of red sandstone and, as Historic England states, it is the best large house of its date in the county.<sup>154</sup> What links Devey with Condover Hall are two plans in the RIBA collection of a parterre and a design for the front entrance driveway to the house; the first a colour sketch on tracing

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<sup>153</sup> I contacted Robin Hope Morley descendant of Samuel Morley who had lived at Hall Place. He did not know what had happened to the estate papers. They are not at the British Library or Kent Archives. I am grateful to Geoff Sims the owner of Hall Place for allowing entry to the gardens and to Chris Reilly, Chairman of the Leigh Historical Society, for advice and arranging contact with Mr Sims.

<sup>154</sup> Historic England, Condover Hall, Grade I 1055706.

paper and the other a formal version of the same plan (Figures 133, 134).<sup>155</sup> The parterre to the north of the house remains in part today as does the design for the front entrance driveway.

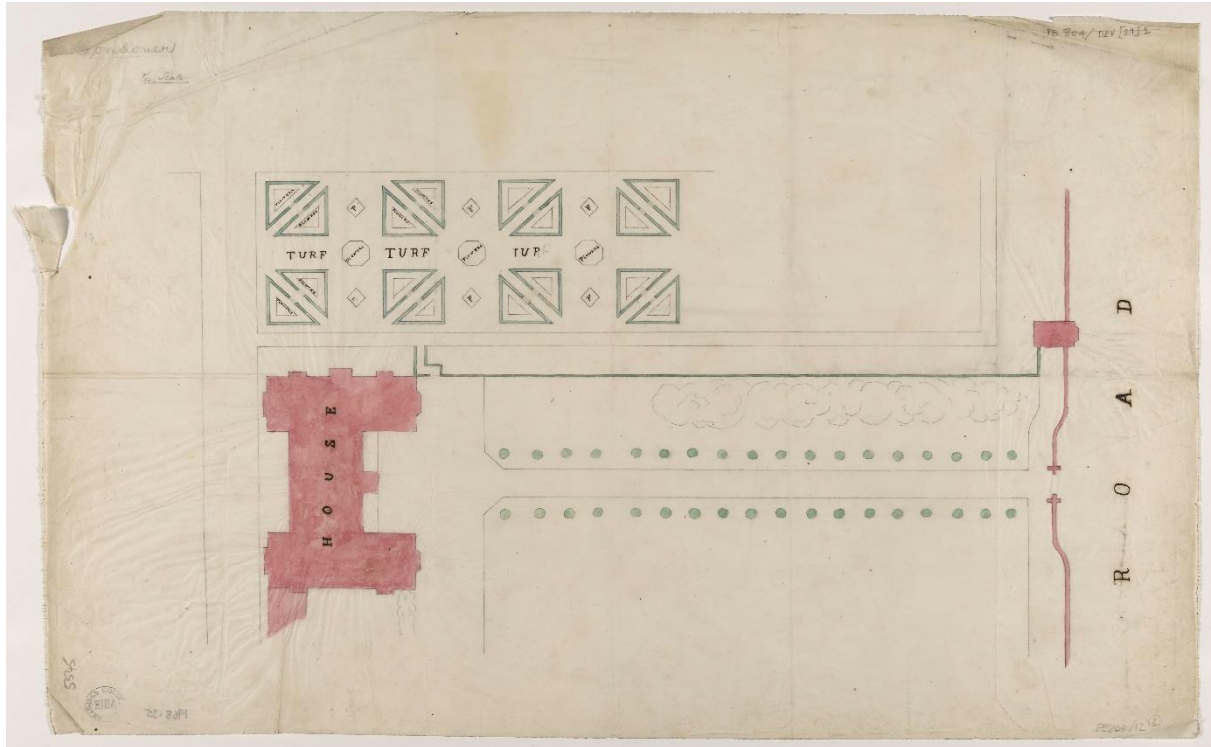


Fig. 133. A sketch in colour on tracing paper of the parterre and driveway, Condover Hall. RIBA PB804, not dated.

<sup>155</sup> RIBA PB804/12 (1-4).

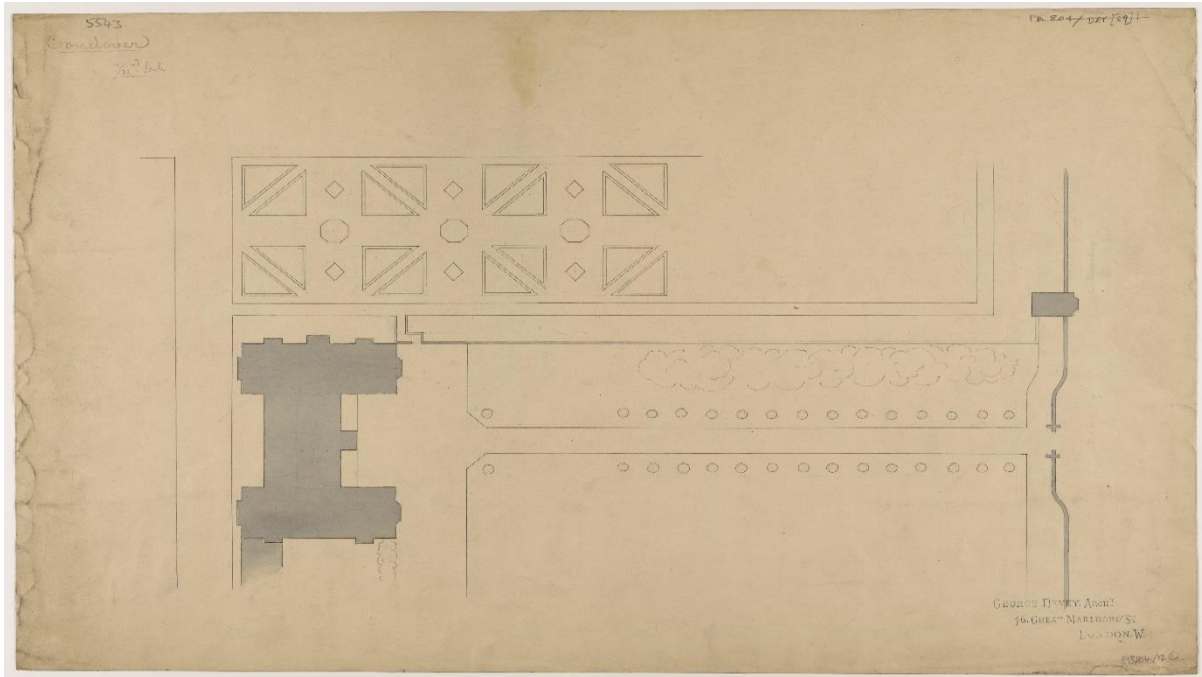


Fig. 134. The formal plan of the parterre and driveway for Condover Hall. RIBA PB804, not dated.

Allibone made little mention of Condover Hall other than to say that these plans are dated circa 1876 and that Devey did garden works with the parterres for Reginald Cholmondeley (1826-1896).<sup>156</sup> Further research has indicated that Devey did much more work for Cholmondeley, probably from the late 1860s, as by the middle of the 1870s Cholmondeley was in financial difficulties.<sup>157</sup> There is no record of an account submitted to Cholmondeley by Devey, nor is there any record of Devey in any of Reginald Cholmondeley's papers held in the Shropshire Archives.<sup>158</sup>

In the early to middle of the nineteenth century Condover Hall had passed to Charles Cholmondeley through a series of heirs. Charles had died in 1863 so the estate was passed to his son Thomas Cholmondeley (1823-1864). Thomas had died on his honeymoon in Florence a year later in 1864, the estate then passing to his younger brother Reginald who employed Devey. Reginald had married Alice Egerton the daughter of William Egerton, first Baron of Egerton Tatton (1806-1883), but the marriage had ended in tragedy with the death of Alice in childbirth. On the death of Reginald

<sup>156</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 171.

<sup>157</sup> Email Tenneson, Alison Mussel, Shropshire Archives, 03.12.2019.

<sup>158</sup> RIBA Devey account book DeG 1/1. Shropshire archive records no. D3651/B/3/6/170, D3651/B/3/6/181.

in 1893 the estate passed to the Revd Richard Cholmondeley (1828-1910).<sup>159</sup> The connection between Devey and Reginald Cholmondeley was not clear. Cholmondeley's father-in-law was a Conservative MP before being elevated to the Peerage in 1859, so there may have been some recommendation through parliamentary colleagues. Another connection may have been Reginald's mother in law, who was related to the family of Sir Tatton Sykes whose second son, Christopher, also a politician, had employed Devey to work on Brantinghamthorpe Hall near Hull from 1868.

The listing for gardens at Condoover Hall by Historic England does not mention a designer, but gives the details of the gardens comprising of formal terraces, lawns and topiary work.<sup>160</sup> The topiary work refers to the parterres as in Devey's plan of eight compartments of approximately nine yards square, each with a box edging and subdivided diagonally with clipped yew. Although the shape of all the parterres remains with some planting, only two of the compartments have survived in their original design. Gertrude Jekyll was 'taken' with these parterres which she called 'a green garden', as a photograph appeared in her book *Garden Ornament* published in 1918, in the chapter on topiary work (Figure 135).<sup>161</sup> Previously she had recorded the garden in her book *Some English Gardens* with a watercolour illustration of the terrace steps by George Elgood.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> John Richard Hodges, *The Story of an Elizabethan Country House, Condoover Hall* (Privately printed, 2012), p. xv.

<sup>160</sup> Historic England, Condoover Hall, Park and Garden, Grade II 1001118.

<sup>161</sup> Gertrude Jekyll, *Garden Ornament* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1982), p. 289. [First published in 1918].

<sup>162</sup> Gertrude Jekyll, paintings by George Elgood, *Some English Gardens* (London: Longmans, 1904), reprinted as *Classic English Gardens* (London: Studio Editions, 1995), pp. 102-104.



Fig. 135. A photograph of the 'Green Garden' at Condover Hall. *Garden Ornament*, 1918.

To the south west of the back of the house sloping down to a pasture where the Cound Brook flows, the three tiered terrace had a formal balustrade to the top level with two further green terraces, or as Jekyll called them 'green plats'. These terraces were illustrated in an article in *Country Life* of 1898 showing the three tiers with the pierced balustrade of the top terrace made in red sandstone, which was designed to match the decorations on the roof line of the house (Figure 136).<sup>163</sup> The top terrace leading from the house had a gravel central path with turf margins either side measuring 110 yards in length. At the southern end was a viewing platform over what was called the Buttery, which perhaps started as an arcaded grotto. At the northern end of the terraces was a set of steps which led down to the second level, where there was an exedra of sandstone with a stone circular seat terminating in square piers with scrolled brackets and looking out to the second level of the terrace.<sup>164</sup> This second terrace had two small square parterres planted with clipped topiary at each end. This view of the garden had also been illustrated in a watercolour of the 1870s which showed that the planting is quite young (Figure 137). Steps then led down to

<sup>163</sup> 'Condover, Shropshire. The Seat of Mr R. H. Cholmondeley', *Country Life*, 3.64 (1898), 368-370 (p. 370). Jekyll, *Classic English Gardens*, p. 102.

<sup>164</sup> Historic England, Condover Hall, Grade I 1055709.



the third level and a path that ran from north to south in front of a red sandstone wall about four foot high. At the end of the south side of the terrace was a further set of steps, a brick staircase that led back up to the top terrace.



Fig. 136. The three tiers of the terrace at Condover Hall, *Country Life*, 1898.



Fig. 137. A watercolour of Condover Hall from the lower terrace, circa 1870. *Condover Hall*.

The layout of the garden could be seen on the ordnance survey map surveyed in 1881 (Figure 138).<sup>165</sup> Historic England states that 'until the new gardens were laid out in the 1850s there was an orangery and flower beds hereabouts'.<sup>166</sup> The 1850s date may have been taken from a reference by M. H. Auden who gave no further details.<sup>167</sup> An illustration in *The Castles and Old Mansions of Shropshire* 1868 showed that there were two grass banks with a small wall on the top bank that separated the garden from the pasture (Figure 139). To the north of the house this illustration also showed an overgrown shrubbery, which indicated that the parterres and the formal terraces were not there in 1868.<sup>168</sup> The evidence of the plans of the parterres and the layout for the front of the house in the RIBA collection, together with the design of the terraces and the steps, does suggest that Devey was responsible for the layout of the formal gardens. These are in keeping with the style of the Elizabethan house and Devey's own experience and knowledge of the formal garden (Figures 140, 141, 142).

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<sup>165</sup> OS map, Shropshire sheet, XLI.11 surveyed 1881 published 1882.

<sup>166</sup> Historic England, Condover Hall, Gardens and Pleasure Grounds, Grade II 1001118.

<sup>167</sup> Email to Tenneson, Alison Mussel, Shropshire Archive, regarding H. M. Auden, Notes on Condover (1932), p. 25. Email dated 03.12. 2019.

<sup>168</sup> F. Stackhouse Acton, *The Castles and Old Mansions of Shropshire* (Shrewsbury: Leake & Evans, 1868), p. 140.

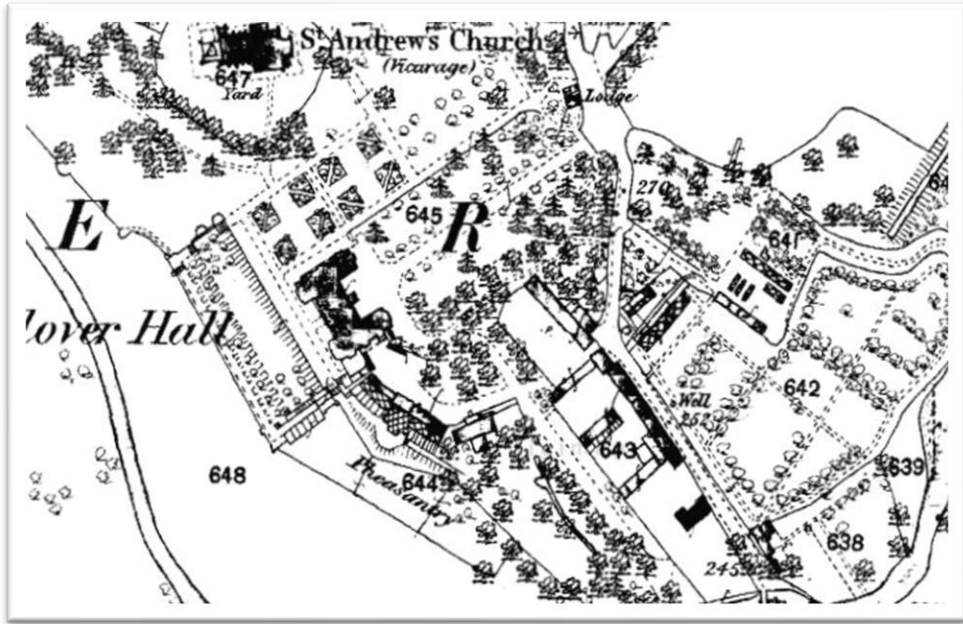


Fig. 138. Condover Hall, OS map, surveyed 1881 published 1882.



Fig. 139. An illustration showing the garden front of Condover Hall. *The Castles and Old Mansions of Shropshire*, 1868.



Fig. 140. The parterres at Condover Hall. 2019.



Fig. 141. The terrace at Condover Hall. 2019



Fig. 142. Condover Hall, looking back to the house from the meadow. 2019.



Fig. 143. The entrance archway at Condover Hall. 2019.

The suggestion that Devey was the designer is enhanced by the main archway at the entrance to Condover Hall. Listed Grade I by Historic England and dated circa 1598, it was built of pink sandstone ashlar (Figure 143). Examining the last pillar where it joins the wall on both sides of the archway, the surfaces of the sandstone are very different (Figure 144). On the seventeenth century wall, contemporary with the house, the growth of lichen reflects the age of the walls. On the pillars of the archway there is little lichen and clearly visible are saw marks in what is known as panelling, indents on the face of the pillars. The carving of lions and double headed eagles on the pediment is of a much finer quality than the decoration over the entrance archway to the house and in other places on the roof line. This Jacobean style of archway is in keeping with other archways and gateways built by Devey at other properties. There are similar designs at Goldings, Hall Place, Betteshanger and Coombe Warren, and to be discussed later, St Albans Court and Brantinghamthorpe Hall. What is interesting looking at the Condover plan for the driveway to the front of the house is that there is no archway drawn (see Figure 134). Further, an illustration of 1868 showed that the front of the house was quite plain, with shrubbery to the sides of the driveway, which could indicate that Devey's design for the parterre and driveway with the arch entrance was built after 1868 (Figure 145).<sup>169</sup> Thus, it is suggested that Devey built the archway at the same time as he laid out the formal gardens for Reginald Cholmondeley between 1868 and 1875.



Fig. 144. The entrance wall, piers and gateway at Condover Hall showing the growth of lichen. 2019.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 142.



Fig. 145. Illustration of part of the entrance drive to Condover Hall. *The Castles and Old Mansions of Shropshire*, 1868.

Following Cholmondley's death in 1896, the estate was sold to Mr Fielden who sold the estate to Mr Cohen in 1927; in 1939 Mrs Florence Cohen sold the estate to Major Abbey who died on active service and never lived in the Hall. During the war Condover was occupied by the Auxiliary Territorial Service and was also used by South Africa House who took over the gardens to grow vegetables. In 1947 the National Institute for the Blind acquired the hall and opened the first school for blind children in Britain. An aerial photograph shows the gardens in 1953 (Figure 146).<sup>170</sup> In May 2011 the Hall was re-opened by JCA as an activity centre for children.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Marcus Binney, Anne Hills, *Elysian Gardens* (London: Save Britain's Heritage, 1979), p. 24.

<sup>171</sup> <<https://www.jca-adventure.co.uk/activity-centres/condover-hall/history>> [accessed 07.2019]. I am grateful to Gemma Broadhurst, Manager at Condover Hall, for her help and assistance.

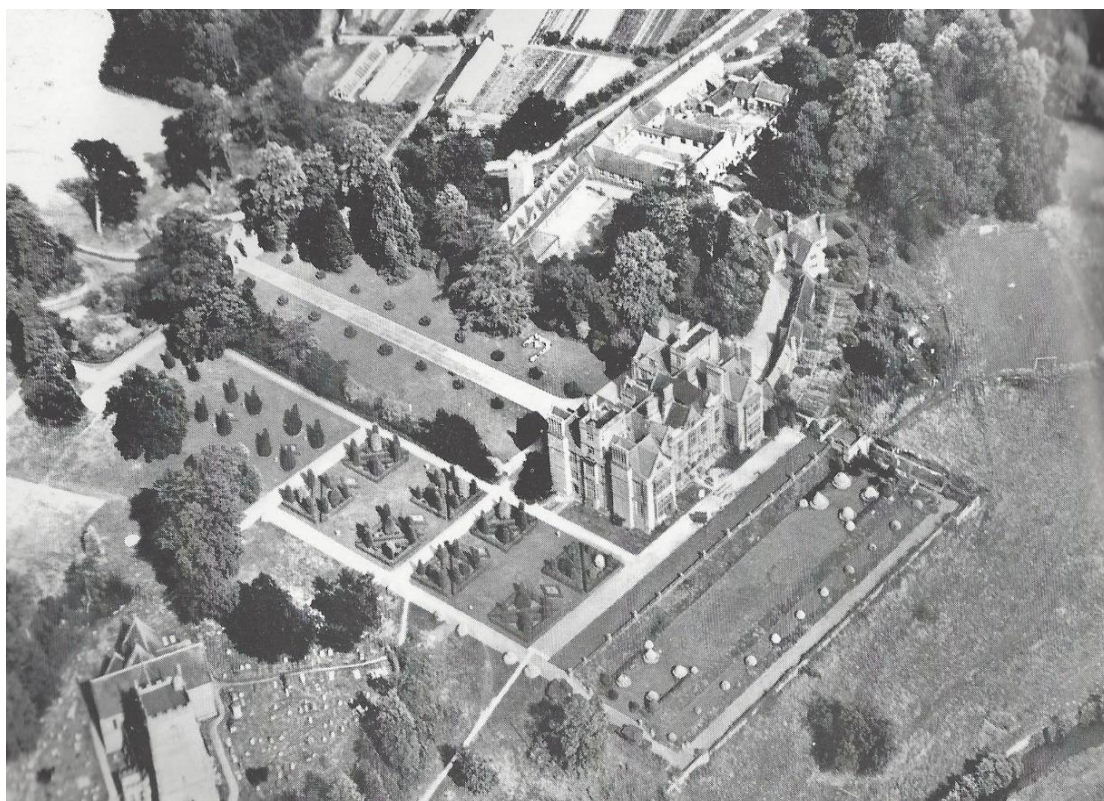


Fig. 146. 1953 aerial photograph of Conover Hall showing the parterres and terraces. *Elysian Gardens*, 1979.

### **Returning to Kent and St Albans Court**

By 1867 Devey had returned to Kent to work for William Oxenden Hammond (1817-1903) at St Albans Court at Nonnington near Dover, a project that continued until 1875. Hammond had been a guest of Sir Walter James of Betteshanger House where Devey continued to work and, as Devey was a frequent house guest, this is probably how the two had met. Allibone often stated that all of Devey's clients became his friends but this is doubtful as Hammond's diaries made no mention of Devey although they shared an interest in painting, particularly watercolours.<sup>172</sup>

Hammond was a wealthy landowner and banker, a partner in the Canterbury bank, Hammond Plumtre & Co., inheriting St Albans Court in 1868, together with over 300 acres of agricultural land. Hammond first engaged Devey to build a stable block

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<sup>172</sup> I am grateful to Peter Hobbs the owner of Old St Albans Court (which he restored and incorporated into Devey's stables) who has collected Hammond's diaries and other papers relating to St Albans Court and allowed me to view these papers.



and estate cottages and then asked him to look at the house, which had been in the Hammond family since 1556.<sup>173</sup> As with many of Devey's restorations and alterations to old houses the restoration work with this house would not have produced a modern house for Hammond, so a new house was commissioned and designed to be built to the north of the original house (Figure 147).



Fig. 147. Photograph of the old house and garden at St Albans Court, undated. *Private collection.*

This new house was built on the top of the hill which gave views over the parkland. The house, built of red brick with Devey's signature of ragstone footings rising unevenly, gave the impression that the house had Tudor origins, reflecting the original house and the ancestry of the Hammond family.<sup>174</sup> Godfrey visited St Albans Court when writing his account of *The Work of George Devey* and drew his own ground plan of the house and courtyard which, like other properties in the Devey portfolio, had an archway leading into an enclosed entrance courtyard. This can be seen on the ordnance survey map revised in 1896 and Godfrey's plan (Figures 148, 149).<sup>175</sup> Hammond was

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<sup>173</sup> Kent Gardens Trust, 'St Albans Court', *The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Dover*, Kent Gardens Trust, Kent Country Council, Dover District Council, September (2017), no page numbers.

<sup>174</sup> Historic England, St Albans Court, Grade I 1070242.

<sup>175</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 98). Godfrey, *The Work of George Devey*, no date, p. 26. OS map, St Alban's Court, Kent sheet, LV11.4 revised 1896 published 1898.

an exacting client who changed his mind often as there are 55 sheets of plans and drawings for St Albans Court in the RIBA collection, but of specific interest are two plans, A and B, for the terraces and gardens (Figures 150, 151).<sup>176</sup>

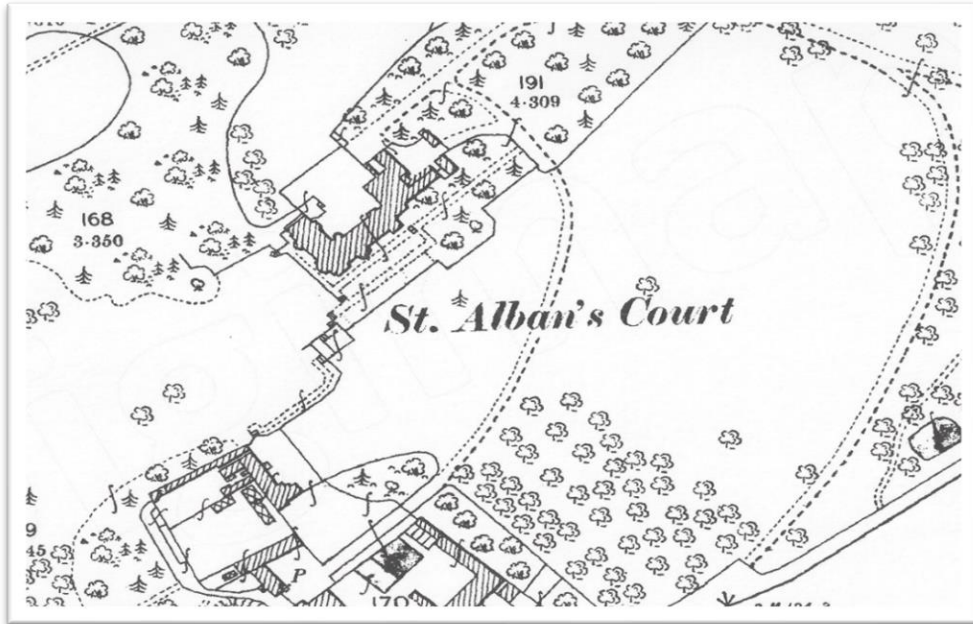


Fig. 148. OS map of St Albans Court, revised 1896 published 1898. Kent Sheet LV11.4

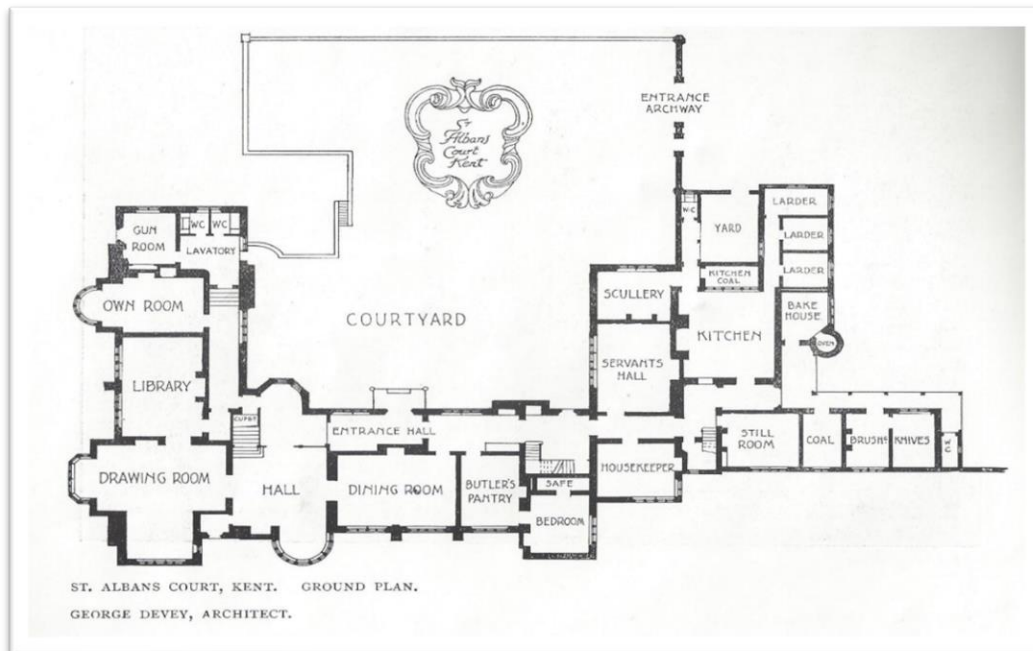


Fig. 149. Ground plan of St Albans Court by Godfrey showing the enclosed entrance courtyard. *The Work of George Devey*.

<sup>176</sup> RIBA Devey PB829/1, PB1243/3.

Plan 'A' of the site was drawn by Castings showing parkland, a double planted avenue and the old house, with a formal garden design leading out to a circle and a path along the west side of the house where there was a parterre. In front of the house were terraces marked at 35ft wide and here Devey was following the Elizabethan principle that a terrace should be as wide as the height of the house.<sup>177</sup> The various notes on the plan showed the height of the front terrace marked as A and standing 9' 6" above the ground. Today there is no indication that the parterre was made by the house as in plan 'B' as this is now a grassed steep bank leading up to a grass and gravel terrace. Examining the photographs that were taken for Godfrey's paper on Devey, it looks as if the parterre was built in the lower garden by the old house, which Godfrey wrote was restored and formed a 'delightful background to the formal rose garden' (Figure 152).<sup>178</sup>



Fig. 150. Plan A for St Albans Court drawn by Castings, circa 1870s. RIBA PB829/1.

<sup>177</sup> The Hon. Mrs Evelyn Cecil, *A History of Gardening in England*, p. 95.

<sup>178</sup> Godfrey, 'The Work of George Devey', (p. 26).

Plan 'B', is in an unknown hand with an address 38 Welbeck Street, which is not far from Devey's office in Great Marlborough Street, but there is no explanation for this (Figure 151).<sup>179</sup> Some of the features of both plans remain: with the garden front there was a double terrace with Devey's characteristic grass margin and central path of gravel. Steps led down to a level lawn and a wall as seen on the plan and acted as a retaining wall. There were various walks around the house, and it is difficult to establish if these were made and have been covered or lost over the years. On plan 'B' there is a gravel circle with a turf centre with a flight of steps dropping down to the old house and stables. As this drop is steep what eventually was built was a walled staircase with landings. On the main landing of grass stood a sundial, which remains today (Figures 152, 153, 154), and around this formal part of the garden is a red brick wall with a small frieze.

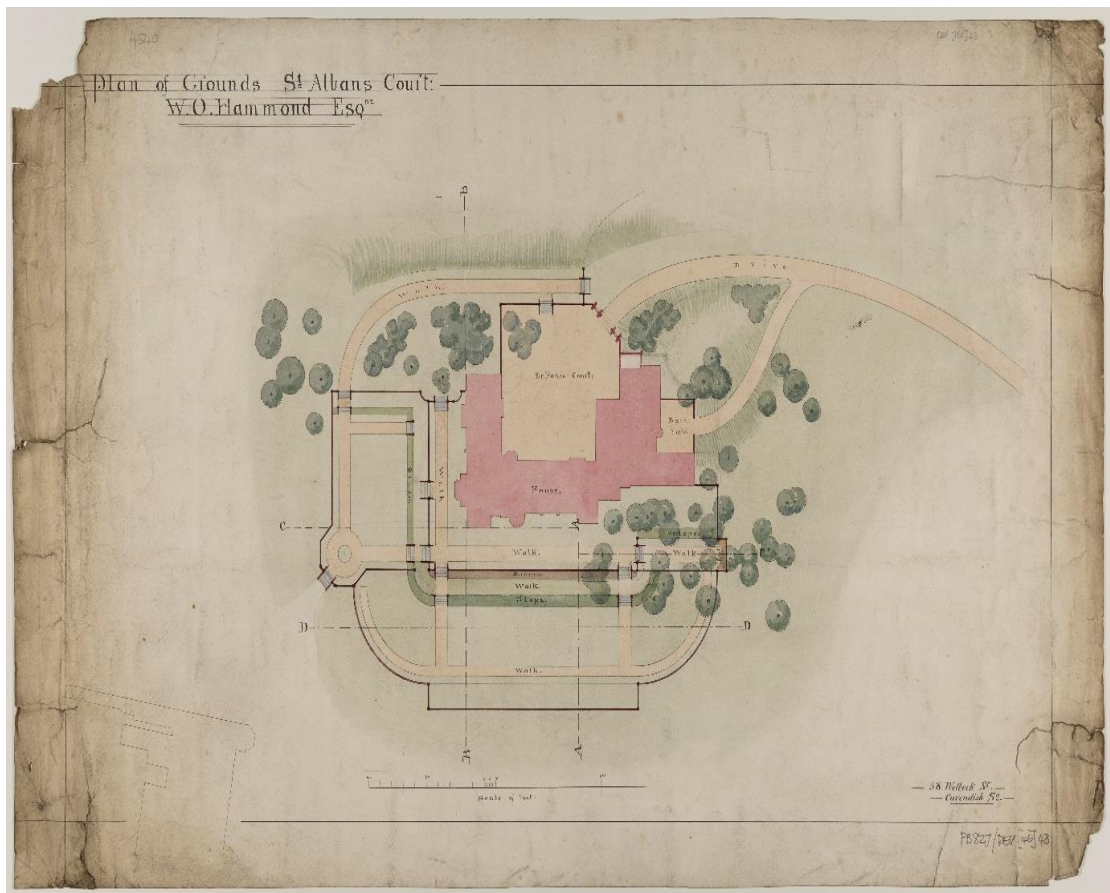


Fig. 151. Plan B for St Albans Court of the grounds and terraces, circa 1870s. RIBA PB1248/3.

<sup>179</sup> Recent research indicates that this plan may have been drawn by Devey's assistant James Williams as it has similarities to a garden plan for Ascott House dated from the 1880s (see RIBA PB839/1). It is possible that Williams worked for Hammond after Devey's death in 1886.



Fig. 152. St Albans Court, Rose Garden, circa 1870s. *The Works of George Devey.*



Fig. 153. St Albans Court, the sundial on the brick staircase leading down to the stables and Rose Garden. *The Works of George Devey.*



Fig. 154. St Albans Court, the sundial. 2019.

The cost of the designs and work at St Albans Court including the stables, a number of estate cottages plus the garden works for the period of 1875 to 1884 in commission receipts, was £2443, which today is £212000. The total cost of the work at £48860 today would be £4.2 million.<sup>180</sup> When Hammond died in 1903 the house was let to Captain R. Slazenger who entertained Godfrey when he visited the property in the early 1900s. In the 1930s St Albans Court became the Scandinavian School of Physical Education. In 1995 it was renamed Beech Grove after it was sold to the Christian Bruderhof Community, who have maintained the steps, the walled staircase, terraces and decorated walls (Figures 155, 156).<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 156.

<sup>181</sup> I am grateful to Peter Hobbs for arranging a visit to Beech Grove.



Fig. 155. St Albans Court, the lower terrace. 2019.



Fig. 156. St Albans Court, looking up to the walled staircase to the upper terrace and the landing with the sundial, note the frieze on the wall. 2019.

## Swaylands in Kent

Devey started work at Swaylands in Penshurst in 1870 for owner Edwin Cropper (1800-1877), a director of the British and Irish Magnetic Telegraph Company and with interests in slate quarries in Pembrokeshire, his father was a director of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.<sup>182</sup> It was likely that this connection was through Penshurst Place, where Devey continued to work.<sup>183</sup> The house, described as a 'modest Tudor villa', was built in 1851 by William Woodgate, who sold it to Cropper sometime in late 1859.<sup>184</sup> Cropper wanted a larger house so engaged Devey to double the size of the original house and add an octagonal battlemented tower.<sup>185</sup> In the RIBA collection are 11 plans for this large extension, cottages, stables and laundry.<sup>186</sup> It appears that Devey was asked to lay out a series of terraces to the south west of the house.<sup>187</sup> Historic England references 1877 sales particulars in which there was a plan that showed a series of terraces and described the 'gothic' finials on the stone piers as matching those at Penshurst Place, adding that the walled staircase at the south east end of the terrace was similar to that built at Nonnington Park.<sup>188</sup>

From the site visit these terraces with their three levels are characteristic of Devey's work. The first level, 475 feet in length, has a central path of gravel with turf margins edged in York stone with flower borders. This principal terrace has a demi-lune alcove at each end with a plinth holding an urn, which are not original but probably replacements for the 'gothic' finials mentioned by English Heritage in 1994. A stone wall with a simple balustrade separates this terrace from the lower one which drops down on the west side with the walled staircase to a similar terrace which measures 450 feet in length. On the east side of this terrace is a set of steps. This level has a central path with turf margin open to the lawns, with a flower border against the wall.

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<sup>182</sup> Marianne Thorne, *Social History of Swaylands*, April (2001), p. 3.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* There is a mention of the builders for Swaylands, called Constable, pp. 4-5.

<sup>184</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 33. 'Lakeside House, Swaylands, Landscape Heritage Statement', October (2018), Askew Nelson Ltd., p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> Historic England, Swaylands School, Grade II 1243018.

<sup>186</sup> RIBA Devey PB829/DEV[158] (1-11).

<sup>187</sup> Historic England, Swaylands, Park and Garden, Grade II 1001280.

<sup>188</sup> Nonnington Park is not on Devey's client list, but was near St Albans Court, where there is a similar walled staircase and from this English Heritage wrote that it was presumed that the terraces were built by Devey. Nonnington Park was demolished and has been replaced with a care home. Historic England list this plan as part of the sales particulars held at Kent Archives. Email from the Kent archive team states they do not hold this plan, Mark Ballard, Archives Service Office to Tenneson, 29.04.2022.



The third terrace is a sweeping grass bank, with steps either side and also measures 450 feet in length. On the west side a path leads to the cricket ground and pavilion and on the eastern side a path with steps leads to the rockery. The path must have been extended at a later date as the rockery was not built until the 1880s as seen on the revised ordnance survey map of 1895 and a recent aerial photograph (Figures 157, 158).<sup>189</sup>

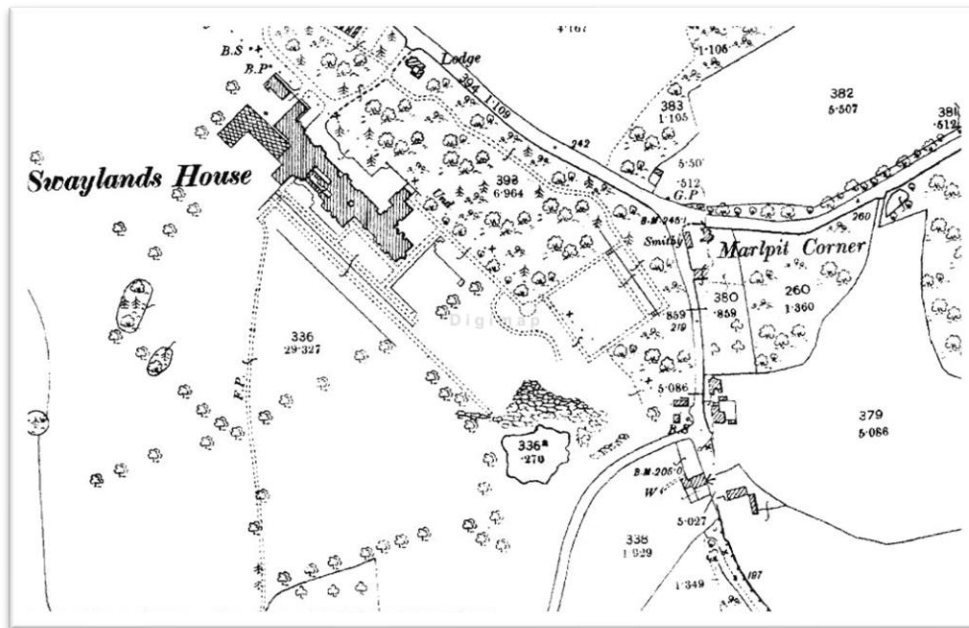


Fig. 157. OS map Swaylands House, revised 1895 published 1897. Kent Sheet LX.1



Fig. 158. Aerial view of Swaylands showing the Devey terrace. Devey's house in red brick is in the centre. Swaylands Estate Management Ltd.

<sup>189</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, LX.I revised 1895 published 1897.

This appears to have been a modest job for Devey as over the three occasions he worked at Swaylands in 1870, 1874 and 1877, the total commission was £184. Today that is £15000 and the contract costs of the work were £3680, which is £300000 today.<sup>190</sup> The house was advertised for sale in 1919 in *Country Life* and became a school (Figure 159).<sup>191</sup> Today the house at Swaylands has been converted into a modern country house community with a series of apartments with two new apartment buildings at either end of the original house. The company has kept all the Devey terrace features but has added a half moon pool to the two upper levels of the terraces (Figures 160, 161, 162).

Supplement to "Country Life"

# COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS.

Vol. XLV. No. 1157 REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER. SATURDAY, MARCH 8th, 1919. Published Weekly. Price ONE SHILLING. Subscription Price per annum, Post Free, United Kingdom, 60s. Foreign, 74s.

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with fine suite of entertaining and other apartments, including music rooms, billiard room, large and small sitting rooms, double drawing room, 20 principal bed and dressing rooms. Winter garden and orangery. Beautiful views are obtained from the principal apartments.  
**ELECTRIC LIGHT. COMPANY'S WATER. TELEPHONE INSTALLED.**  
Well timbered park, magnificent grounds, with unique rock garden and ornamental pond. Ample stabling, rooms for coach. Houses for coachman, electrician and chauffeur.  
**HOME FARM WITH MODEL LAUNDRY AND DAIRY. SEVEN AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS.**  
THERE ARE THIRTY COTTAGES ON THE ESTATE.  
Many country seats and places of interest are within a radius of about ten miles.  
**THE MANSION WOULD BE SOLD WITH A LESS AREA IF REQUIRED.**  
Full particulars of the Sale Agents, Messrs. WALTON & LEE and KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY, 20, Hanover Square, London, W. 1. (2920.)

**WALTON & LEE, AND KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY,** { 20, Hanover Square, W. 1.  
100, Princes Street, Edinburgh.  
78, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow.

Telephone: 2020 Mayfair (4 lines). 144 Central, Edinburgh. 2716 Glasgow.

(For continuation of advertisements, see page v.)

Fig. 159. An advertisement for the sale of Swaylands in 1919 showing the upper terrace and the house covered in foliage. *Country Life*, 18 March 1919.

<sup>190</sup> Allibone, George Devey, p. 162.

<sup>191</sup> 'Swaylands Penshurst', *Country Life*, 45.1157 (1919), (p. v). I am grateful for the help and information from Guy Chatten, Estate Manager of Swaylands Estate Management Ltd.



Fig. 160. Swaylands, the upper terrace. 2019.



Fig. 161. Swaylands, the lower terrace. 2019.



Fig. 162. Swaylands, the upper terrace looking toward the demi-lune alcove. 2019.

### **To the East Riding and The Marlborough House Set**

The next two properties to discuss are north of the Humber in Yorkshire. The first is Brantinghamthorpe Hall for Christopher Sykes (1831-1898), Conservative MP for Beverley, then for the East Riding of Yorkshire and finally Buckrose; in all he sat in the House of Commons from 1868 to 1892 when he retired. The second is Byram Hall and Park near Ferrybridge which was the home of Sir John William Ramsden (1831-1914), a Liberal MP. Ramsden represented various constituencies around the country from Hythe to the West and East Riding of Yorkshire and sat in the House of Commons for 29 years. What links Sykes and Ramsden to Devey remains unclear but Allibone mentioned that they were close friends, this friendship could have come via their parliamentary connection. The other factor that links these clients was that they were members of the Prince of Wales' Marlborough House Set.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Marlborough House Set (1870s-1901)*, ODNB see bibliography.

## Brantinghamthorpe Hall

Brantinghamthorpe Hall was bought in 1867 for Christopher Sykes, youngest son of Sir Tatton Sykes (1772-1863). The house was intended for use as a hunting box to entertain the Prince of Wales when he visited the newly established Doncaster Races. Devey was engaged in 1868, the year after Sykes had acquired the property, in time to make alterations for the first visit of the Prince of Wales in 1869. The original house was eighteenth century Gothic, not impressive enough for royalty, so Devey was engaged to recast the exterior by adding Dutch gables, replacing the battlements with a balustrade and adding new windows with mullions and transoms, as well as extensive interior work. In the RIBA collection are 15 drawings for the house which include designs for the exterior and interior.<sup>193</sup>

Roderick Gradidge, in an article in *Country Life* on the property market in 1992, when Brantinghamthorpe Hall was up for sale, described Devey's work: 'he created a long stone-faced front adding more bays, each crowned with a variety of Dutch Baroque gables and strapwork to create a delightful sub-Jacobean facade'. He went on to mention the 'grand baroque arch' to the front of the house that led to the formal terrace gardens.<sup>194</sup> This archway was a favourite Devey device to create mystery when entering a property. The archway was decorated with a Tudor rose to the right spandrel and fleur-de-lis to the left, with a scrolled pediment and central and flanking obelisks with ball finials matching those on the terraces (Figure 163).<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 67, 159, 169. RIBA PB803/12(1-15).

<sup>194</sup> Roderick Gradidge, 'Local Designs on a Grand Scale', *Country Life*, 186. 8 (1992), (p. 88). Historic England, Brantinghamthorpe Hall, Grade II 1347036.

<sup>195</sup> Historic England, Brantinghamthorpe Hall, Gateway and Garden Walls, Grade II 1103350.



Fig. 163. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, the grand Baroque arch, showing the Tudor rose and the fleur-de-lis, leading to the upper terrace. 2019.

The house, high on the hill, had extensive views to the south over the Humber River and this was where the principal garden was made, a series of three terraces dropping down to pasture. The first level of the terrace was entered via the archway and from old photographs looked to have been a central gravel path with turf margins. The retaining wall approximately 106 yards long was made of stone with a series of piers with ball finials. The second terrace was reached via a central set of stone steps, with piers and ball finials, leading to the lawn terrace. On the east side of this second terrace was a large flat area, which was lawn and flower beds but now has a swimming pool and pool house. The second level was approximately 88 yards, as was the third level, which is grass with a stone paved platform and a set of steps down to the pasture. To the east side of the house was a level area of lawn with

another stepped area of grass and two terraces, again with retaining walls, stone steps and piers of ball finials leading up to woodland. The revised Ordnance Survey map of 1908 showed the layout of the garden (Figure 164).<sup>196</sup>

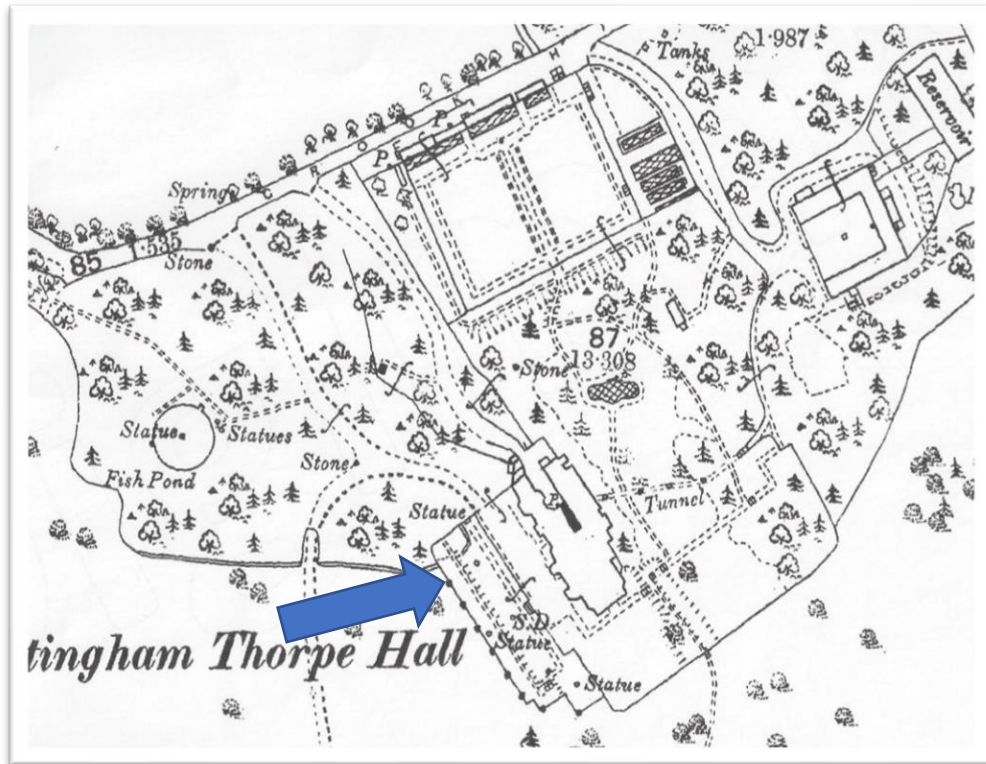


Fig. 164. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, OS map, revised 1908 published 1909. Blue arrow marks the terraces. Yorkshire Sheet CCXXXVIII A.

It is not clear when the terraces were first built but in the RIBAPIX collection is a photograph of Brantinghamthorpe Hall showing the main terrace before the archway was built and dated 1871 to 1878 (Figure 165).<sup>197</sup> There is also a Devey sketch of Brantinghamthorpe Hall undated that showed the terrace (Figure 166).

<sup>196</sup> OS map, Yorkshire sheet, CCXXXVIII A revised 1908 published 1909.

<sup>197</sup> RIBAPIX. RIBA 13787.



Fig. 165. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, before the archway was built showing the main terraces, circa 1870s. RIBAPIX 13787.



Fig. 166. A sketch by Devey showing the terrace, circa 1868. RIBA PB803/12.



More detail on the gardens came from an article in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1878 which illustrated both the top and lower terraces (Figures 167, 168).<sup>198</sup> The article described the terraces and that the first level was converted into a flower-garden in the autumn of 1877 to take the place of a garden on the other side of the hall, and that the garden was designed by Brantinghamthorpe Hall's head gardener Mr R. C. Kingston (d.1895) to a design in carpet bedding of the Prince of Wales feathers.<sup>199</sup>

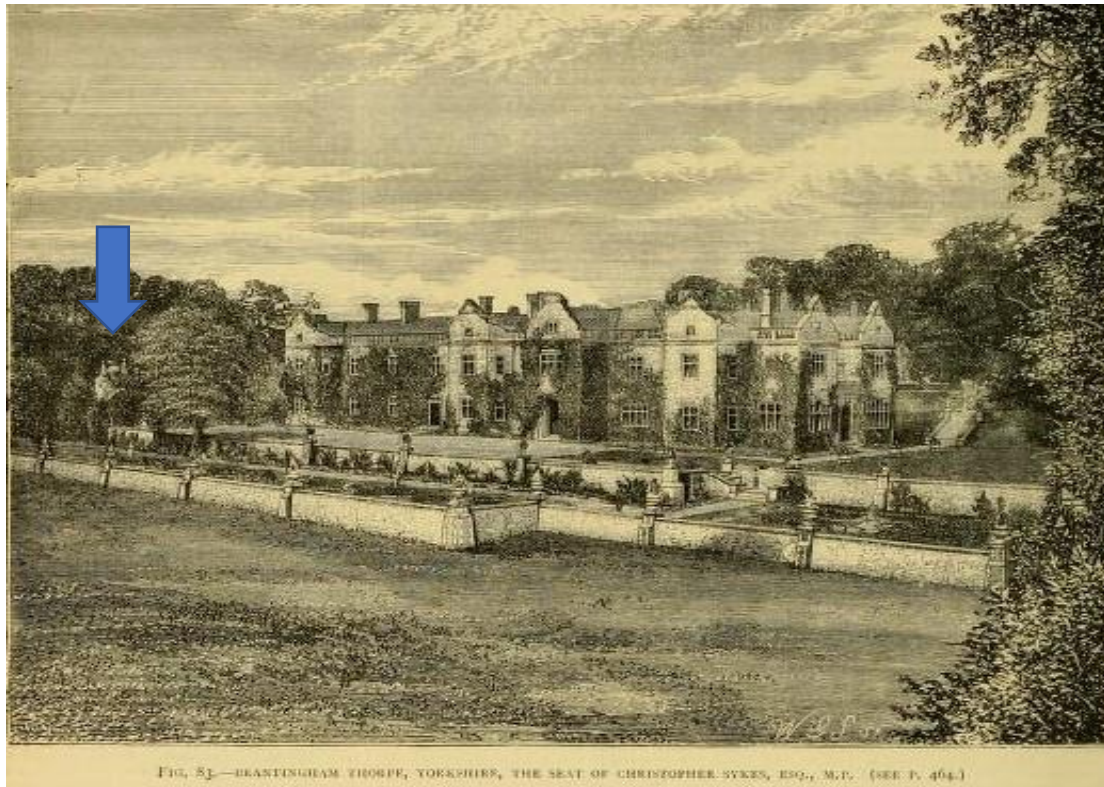


Fig. 167. The illustration from *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 1878. To the left behind the tree are the pinnacles of the archway, marked by the blue arrow. *The Gardener's Chronicle*, 1878.

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<sup>198</sup> 'Brantinghamthorpe Hall', *The Gardener's Chronicle*, X (1878), (pp. 464-465, pp. 468-469).  
<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 464).



FIG. 84.—THE TERRACE GARDEN AT BRANTINGHAM THORPE. (SEE P. 449).

Fig. 168. The lower terrace with the design of the Prince of Wales feathers. *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1878.

These three illustrations demonstrate that the archway and probably the terraces were created sometime between 1871 and 1877 when Kingston planted the terraced gardens. Devey worked at Brantinghamthorpe twice for Sykes from 1868 to 1871, and again in 1876 to 1878, so it is suggested that he designed the archway at the same time as creating the terraces ready for Kingston's design and planting.

The Yorkshire Gardens Trust in their report on Brantinghamthorpe Hall suggested that James Craig Niven (d.1881), the curator of Hull Botanic Gardens, had made the changes to the gardens, as does Nicholas Pevsner in the series of *The Buildings of England*, but in both cases no reference was given and further research has not been able to substantiate their claim.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Yorkshire Gardens Trust, 'East Riding Historic Designed Landscape, Brantinghamthorpe Hall', David and Susan Neave, May (2013), p. 3. Nikolaus Pevsner and David Neave with a contribution from Susan Neave and John Hutchinson, *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire, York and the East Riding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 340.

A 1909 postcard showed new planting on the lower terrace, which today is the swimming pool (Figure 169). The western terrace was seen in an article from *Country Life* dated 1905 (Figure 170) and today the garden's structure remains intact as can be seen in this series of photographs (Figures 171, 172).<sup>201</sup>



Fig. 169. The gardens at Brantinghamthorpe Hall, circa 1900. Note the archway on the left of the photograph. *East Riding Archives, PO/1/15/5*.



Fig. 170. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, the lower terrace to the archway. *Country Life*, 1905.

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<sup>201</sup> 'Brantingham Thorpe Yorkshire. The residence of Mr George Thorpe Wilson', *Country Life*, 17.427 (1905), 342-346 (p. 343).



Fig. 171. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, the lower terrace. 2019.



Fig. 172. Brantinghamthorpe Hall, the archway. 2019.

For his work for Sykes Devey's commission was £938, which would be just over £74000 today. The cost of the work was £19000, which today would be £1.5 million.<sup>202</sup> Christopher Sykes was a sad figure, a bachelor who became the butt of the Prince of Wales' jokes and humiliation, on one occasion the Prince poured a glass of brandy over his head. The Prince, because of Sykes' great height, nicknamed him the 'great Xtopher' but, after years of lavish entertainment for the Prince and Princess of Wales, Sykes was near to financial ruin and to avert bankruptcy in 1890 had to sell Brantinghamthorpe Hall and his London home.<sup>203</sup>

### **Byram Hall and Park**

Byram Hall and Park was a different project for Devey as it was just for garden works. Allibone wrote that he was employed in 1876 by Sir John William Ramsden to landscape the grounds, put in formal gateways and construct a terrace with balustrades, stone benches and steps down to the lake.<sup>204</sup> Byram Hall was a sixteenth century house which had been improved and 'tied' together by the Yorkshire architect John Carr (1723-1807), who had created an 'austere classical dress' to the house in 1762 for the third Baronet Sir John Ramsden (1699-1769) (Figures 173, 174). Carr was also responsible for the stables, the orangery and a number of other buildings.<sup>205</sup> There was little detail in Allibone's account and thus doubt as to what Devey did at Byram Hall and Park. There is a record in his account book dated 4th January 1876 for £329, which today would have been £27000. Working to the usual percentage this would have made the project costs around £6580, £530000 today, so the work would have been substantial. Despite presenting his bill five times over the following eighteen months there is no record that Devey was paid.<sup>206</sup>

There are factors to consider In trying to establish the extent of Devey's work at Byram. Devey was a vernacular architect and not practiced in the alteration or repair of eighteenth century buildings, so it was unlikely that he would have worked on the house or any other of Carr's buildings. There were no estate buildings on the site that

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<sup>202</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 169.

<sup>203</sup> Anon, 'Sykes, Sir Tatton, fourth baronet (1772-1863)', ODNB see bibliography.

<sup>204</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 169.

<sup>205</sup> Dorothy Stroud's Papers, Box 5, Bryam Hall, Ferrybridge, Yorkshire, <<https://www.soane.org/collections>> [accessed 20.08.2019].

<sup>206</sup> RIBA Devey. DeG/1/1.

would fit with Devey's style; if that had been the case then the usual cost for such a drawing or plan would have been around £30 to £50, not £329.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, it is most likely that Devey worked on the gardens.



Fig. 173. Byram Hall, date unknown. <[https://www.lostheritage.org.uk/house/ih\\_yorkshire-byrampark-infor-gallery.html](https://www.lostheritage.org.uk/house/ih_yorkshire-byrampark-infor-gallery.html)> [accessed 09.01.2019].



Fig. 174. An Illustration of Byram Hall 1889. *Some Historic Mansions of Yorkshire and their Associations*, 1889.

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<sup>207</sup> I am grateful to the owners of Byram Park, Mr and Mrs Andrew McCloy, for this information and allowing a visit.

The Ramsden family had acquired the Byram estate in 1618 and created a park and garden to complement the mansion. In 1782 the fourth Baronet, Sir John Ramsden (1769-1839), called in Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to advise on the grounds and prepare a plan. Brown had despatched his 'faithful Spysers' to Byram where he made a 'fair and neat drawing of 373 acres of the estate with proper references to the content'.<sup>208</sup> Brown died the following year and it is not clear how much of the plan was carried out as the archives for that period are now lost.<sup>209</sup> There is a letter in the Sir John Soane Museum from the sixth Baronet, Sir John Frecheville Ramsden (1877-1958), in answer to a letter from Miss Dorothy Stroud (1910-1997) dated 11<sup>th</sup> February 1943. Miss Stroud would have been collecting information about Brown for her book *Capability Brown* to be published by *Country Life* in 1950.<sup>210</sup> Sir John, whose tone was dismissive of Brown, wrote:

There are however at Byram signs of the nefarious ideas of CB and his like. The approach to the house in the seventeenth and eighteenth century had been a fine avenue of Spanish chestnuts 120 feet wide and some 600 yards long with a little false perspective in it. This was partly destroyed in the vicinity of the house and the 'return to nature' signalled by a new approach by a winding beech avenue. (not readable) and a forecourt destroyed and the cows on one side and fallow deer on the other fed up to the windows – my father (the Fifth Baronet Sir John William Ramsden, Devey's client) restored the straight approach, the avenue forecourt etc, yours truly J. Ramsden.<sup>211</sup>

Thus, the question is, was it Devey who had restored the forecourt for Sir John in 1876? Research by The Yorkshire Gardens Trust on Byram Park pointed to William Gilbee Habershon (1818/19-1891) and his partner Alfred Robert Pite (1832-1911) of 28 Bloomsbury Square, London, who in 1860 'built terraces, two being a quarter of a mile in length, parterres, slopes with parapet, piers, bastions and flights of wide steps together with "tasteful" cast iron work in gates and grills'.<sup>212</sup> Interestingly, the archway

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<sup>208</sup> Dorothy Stroud, *Capability Brown* (London: Country Life Ltd., 1950), p. 198.

<sup>209</sup> Louise Wickham, Karen Lynch, Yorkshire Gardens Trust, Selby District Historic Designed Landscape Project, Byram Park, March (2018), pp. 1-3.

<sup>210</sup> Stroud, *Capability Brown* (1950), p. 158.

<sup>211</sup> Sir John Soane Museum, Dorothy Stroud Papers, Box 5.

<sup>212</sup> 'Gateway at Byram Yorkshire', *The Building News*, 8 (1862), (pp. 24-25). Wickham, Lynch, 'Byram Park', p. 6. The RIBA holds the account books for Habershon & Pite for the years 1860-1875 but do not mention any landscape work for Sir John Ramsden in that period. RIBA, PIAB/1.

which was illustrated in an article on Habershon & Pite in *The Building News* of 1862, was also mentioned by Nikolas Pevsner in his series on *The Buildings of England* writing that this archway was one of three elaborate gateways in the 'Jacobethan style' made by Devey as entrances to the service wings.<sup>213</sup> In discussion with the current owners of Byram Hall and Park, whose family bought the estate just after the war, they can only remember there being one gateway (Figure 175).<sup>214</sup> Very little of the original house is left as most was demolished in the 1950s together with the terracing and entrance forecourt seen in the 1889 illustration (see Figure 174).



Fig. 175. Gateway to Byram Hall, circa 1860s. *Private collection.*

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<sup>213</sup> Nikolas Pevsner, Ruth Harmon, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding: Sheffield and the South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 153.

<sup>214</sup> Personal communication with Andrew McCloy, September 2019. Historic England, Gateway to the west of service wing of Byram Hall, Grade II 1132455.



The Orangery built by Carr, probably during his time at Byram in the 1760s, is now a private home (Figure 176).<sup>215</sup> Substantial terracing, steps and garden walls remain around the Orangery with a terrace and steps leading down to the lake and a lakeside terrace with steps and landing areas onto the lake.<sup>216</sup>



Fig. 176. The Orangery and terracing at Byram Hall. *The Garden of England in the Northern Counties*, 1911.

Allibone stated that it was Devey who carried out terracing work around the lake with steps down to the lake in 1876.<sup>217</sup> On a site visit this work does not resemble any previous work that Devey had carried out at other sites. The walls around the Orangery are made of block sandstone with a lipped curved coping stone unlike any other walls or balustrades by Devey. The pierced balustrade on the lakeside terrace is not to his style, nor are the piers or octagonal finials (Figures 177, 178). In the main Devey used ball finials. Byram Hall has a small photograph of the old house taken in the 1950s which enlarged shows that the walls and balustrade that surrounded the forecourt of the house are the same as those surrounding the Orangery and lakeside terrace (Figure 179). Therefore, it is most likely that these terraces and steps were designed and built by Habershon & Pite in the 1860s and not Devey in 1876. In Godfrey's notebook on Devey's clients, there is a very faint question mark in pencil

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<sup>215</sup> Historic England, Byram Park, Orangery, Grade II 1167525.

<sup>216</sup> Historic England, Byram Park, Gateway, Wall, Railings and Piers to the west of Orangery, Grade II 1148535. Ha-ha and retaining wall to south of Orangery, Grade II 1167532.

<sup>217</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 169.

noted against Byram Park, so perhaps he did not know what work had been carried out there either.<sup>218</sup> It is not known on what basis Allibone attributed this work to Devey but if he had carried out this work, it would have been done in his particular style of formal garden making.



Figs. 177, 178. Byram Hall, a finial and section of the terrace wall unlike Devey's work. 2019.



Fig. 179. A photograph of Byram Hall taken in the 1950s. *Private collection.*

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<sup>218</sup> RIBA, Godfrey Notebook GO/1.

## **The beginning of the decline**

The economic downturn starting around 1873 had an effect on Devey's business. The graph (see Figure 102) showed a steady decline in his business from its peak in 1876 for the next ten years. The remaining five properties to be discussed include the last big project of house and garden works by Devey for the fourth Earl of Kenmare and his new house, Killarney House in Ireland. The other properties were restorations and garden works for The Warren at Hayes in Kent, Warren House, part of the Coombe Warren Estate in Kingston, Surrey, 18 Carlton House Terrace in London and Minley Manor in Hampshire for his old friend Bertram Currie.

## **Killarney House in Killarney, Ireland**

Devey won the contract to design Killarney House in Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland, through his Liberal connections as Valentine Augustus Browne, fourth Earl of Kenmare (1825-1905), was a Liberal politician. The Earl held office in every Whig or Liberal administration between 1856 and 1886, most notably as Lord Chamberlain of the Household under William Gladstone between 1880 and 1885 and again in 1886.<sup>219</sup> The original house was called Kenmare House and was said to be a rather old fashioned house of two storeys, which had been altered and designed by the third Viscount.<sup>220</sup> Valentine inherited the estate of 117000 acres in 1871 from his father, Thomas Browne, third Earl of Kenmare. The following year Valentine and his wife, Gertrude Harriet Thynne (1840-1913), the daughter of Lord Charles Thynne of Longleat, decided to build a grand new house further to the north of the original house, with views overlooking Lough Leane, the largest of the three lakes of Killarney. The site of this elevated new house was said to have been chosen by Queen Victoria in the 1860s when she visited Ireland.<sup>221</sup>

In 1877, and it was to take four years to complete, Devey designed what has been variously described as a Victorian Tudor house, an Elizabethan house, a design based on Longleat House in Wiltshire, with another description of it being Anglo-Saxon in

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<sup>219</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 109. Valentine Augustus Browne, fourth Earl of Kenmare, <[www.thepeerage.com/p2765](http://www.thepeerage.com/p2765)> [accessed 29.06.2022].

<sup>220</sup> Mark Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish Country House* (London: Constable, 1996), p. 162.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

flavour and the dome of northern European ancestry, but with one of his trademarks, a covering of creepers.<sup>222</sup> Built of red brick, Killarney House was another of Devey's vast houses with his usual skyline of gables and chimneys and for 40 years was considered one of the wonders of Ireland and its splendour legendary.<sup>223</sup> In the RIBA collection is a set of 32 plans which include early perspectives, contract plans, interior details, drawings for the chapel and a ground plan showing the terraces around the house. Killarney House was a complete project for Devey, designing both the house and the immediate garden around the house.<sup>224</sup>

From an early photograph in the National Library of Ireland (Figure 180) it is possible to see how high the house stood in the countryside and thus the garden was a series of terraces. The ordnance survey map of 1884/5 showed the garden plan in more detail (Figure 181).<sup>225</sup> Devey had designed the principal garden to the south west of the house in the formal manner with three stepped terraces looking towards Lough Leane.



Fig. 180. The garden front of Killarney House, showing its imposing position in the landscape and the terraces, circa 1880s. *National Library of Ireland. Ref: L-CAB\_02189.*

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> RIBA PB814/1(1-32).

<sup>225</sup> <<https://www.osi.ie>> Historic twenty-five inch, circa 1884/5, Killarney House grid ref 495457,590813 [accessed 30.01.2020].

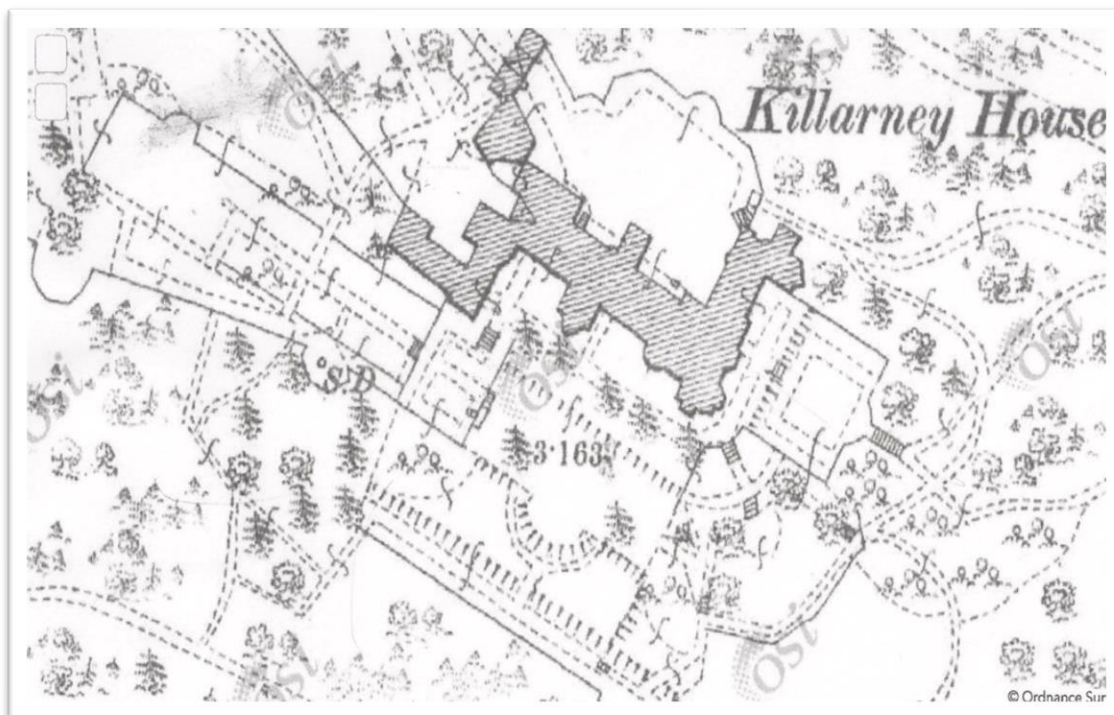


Fig. 181. OS map, Killarney House 1884/5.  
 <<https://geohive.maps.arcgis.com/apps/weappviwer/index.html>> [accessed 07.2020].

The Ordnance Survey map and early photographs of the house showed Devey's usual central gravel path with turf margins had been laid out on the top terrace, with grass banks and sets of steps down to the lower levels. To the west of this area was an 'Italian' garden with a parterre. This higher area was divided from the lower terrace by an ornate balustrade with steps down. In the Devey photograph collection at the RIBA there is a very early photograph of this section of the garden, probably taken by Devey just after the house and garden had been finished as there was little growth to the planting (Figure 182).<sup>226</sup> The design of this parterre was very similar to that designed for Goldings in Hertfordshire (see Figure 117) and was again shown in Godfrey's book, *Gardens in the Making*, where he referred to this as the 'formal flower bed'.<sup>227</sup> The terraces were illustrated on a postcard circa 1880s, and the view over the garden to the lake in an article in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* of 1909 (Figures 183, 184). The design for the top terrace to the south west and north east, together with the enclosed forecourt, is seen on the Devey ground plan where again he used the enclosed entrance courtyard to create mystery. Also seen is an archway and in the Devey

<sup>226</sup> RIBA Devey photographic collection ref. no. 114989.

<sup>227</sup> Godfrey, *Gardens in the Making*, Figure 25, p. 100.

Sheffield collection there is a colourwash sketch marked Killarney of an archway, which is very similar to those seen at other Devey properties (Figures 185, 186).<sup>228</sup>



Fig. 182. The garden front and the parterre, similar to the Goldings parterre circa 1870s. RIBA 114989.



Fig. 183. Postcard of the garden, postmarked October 1907. Author's collection.

<sup>228</sup> RIBA Devey collection PB814/1(1-32) no. 29. Devey Collection, University of Sheffield.

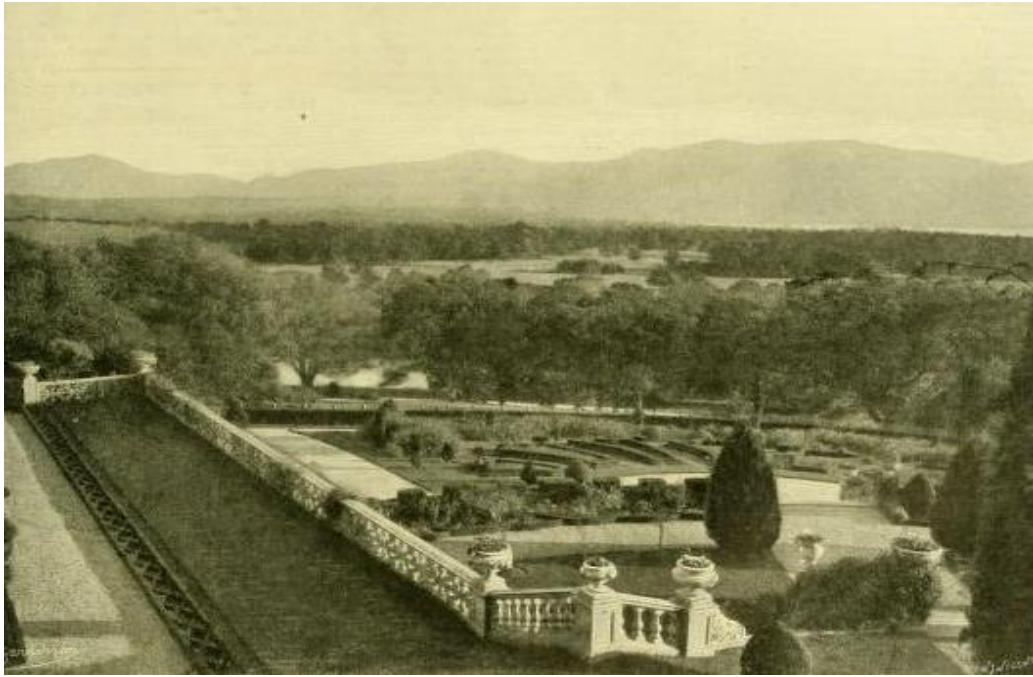


Fig. 184. The view from the terrace to the lakes, Killarney House. *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1909.

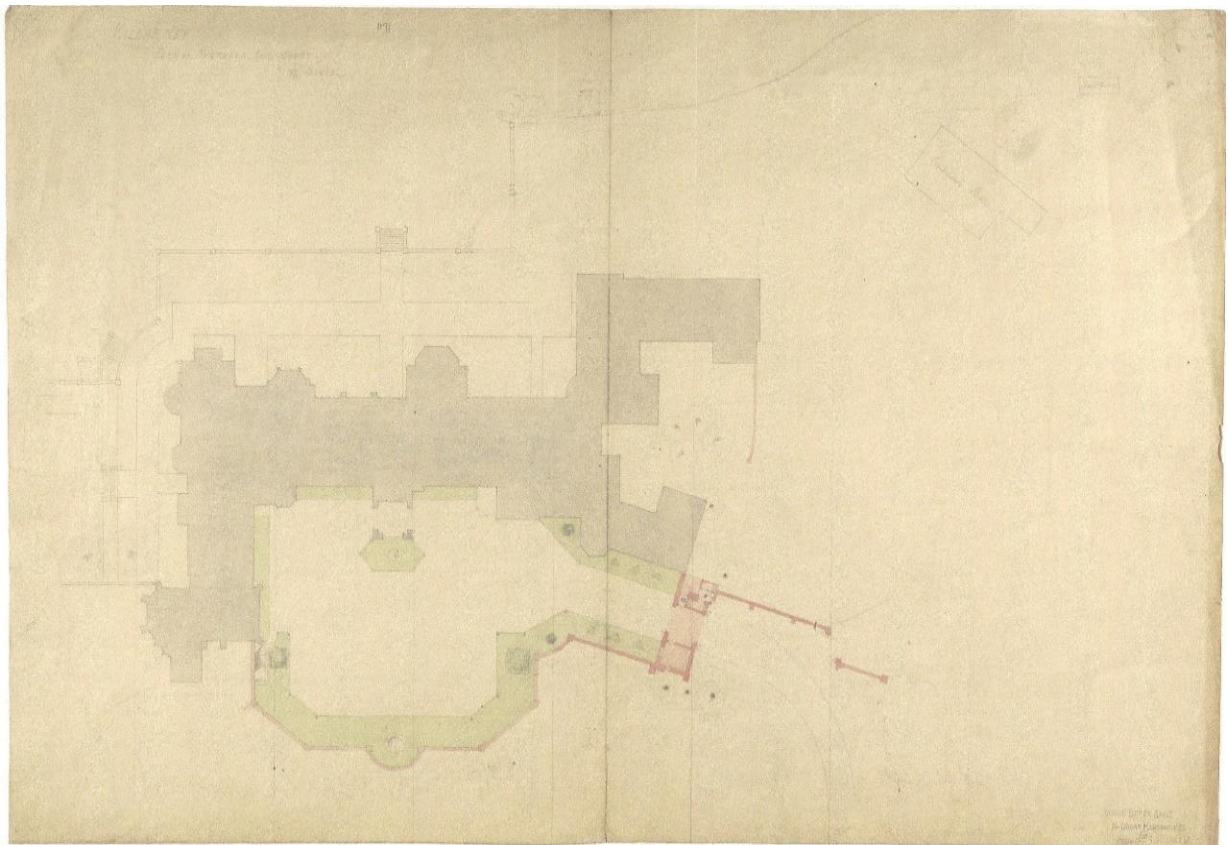


Fig. 185. Devey's ground plan of the terraces and forecourt Killarney House, circa 1870s. *RIBA* PB814/1.



Fig. 186. Entrance gateway Killarney House, colourwash sketch by Devey. Devey Collection, University of Sheffield.

As ever, Godfrey was promoting his mentor Devey and his work and in 1919 had been in discussion with a journalist from *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, who had taken a keen interest in Killarney House. The journalist had quoted Godfrey that 'the planning of this house was the mature work of a great architect that engrossed his whole heart and energy until it was completed'.<sup>229</sup> Devey was not on hand to oversee the building of Killarney and this was left to an architect based in Belfast, William Henry Lynn (1829-1915). Jeremy Williams, an architect and architectural historian, wrote in 1994 in *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland 1837-1921*, that the feeling of being built up over the years, which distinguished Devey's work, was missing, describing 'the supervision of W. H. Lynn as at his most relentless'.<sup>230</sup>

Bertram Currie paid a visit to Killarney House in 1895, nine years after his friend's death and wrote in his diary that 'the house is much finer than I expected, with Devey traceable at every step'. He described the gardens as having too much terracotta

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<sup>229</sup> 'The Architect of Killarney House', *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, I.XI.17 (1919), (pp. 433-434).

<sup>230</sup> Jeremy Williams, *A Companion Guide to Architecture in Ireland 1837-1921* (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1994), p. 43. William Henry Lynn, <[https://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=201869](https://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=201869)> [accessed 15.02.2020].



and concrete with little or no stone, but that the box grew in profusion as well as shrubs of all kinds.<sup>231</sup>

There is misunderstanding about who had designed the garden at Killarney, Ottewill had written in *The Edwardian Garden* that it was the church architect, John Dando Sedding who laid out the garden for 'his friend' Devey between 1877-80. Ottewill's reference did not substantiate this and there was little evidence that Devey and Sedding knew each other.<sup>232</sup> The garden layout for Killarney had all the hallmarks of a Devey design. The top terrace, with its central path and turf margins, the stepped terraces out to the view and the enclosed forecourt to create mystery were all part of Devey's style of creating the unison of house and formal garden.

The costs for Killarney House were the highest in Devey's account book, his commission for the period from 1877 to 1883 was £5394, which today would have been £460000. The cost of the entire works including lodges, a fishing pavilion and the chapel would have been in the region of £108000 and today that would be £9.2 million.<sup>233</sup> Killarney House was destroyed by fire in 1913 and left to ruin as seen in a photograph from the National Library of Ireland (Figure 187). The family moved into the stables which were remodelled as a residence, later being sold to Mr John McShaine, an American building contractor, who donated the entire estate to the Republic of Ireland for a national park.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Currie, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 327.

<sup>232</sup> Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden*, p. 33. Sedding and Devey did work on one property but not at the same time, Netley Castle in Hampshire. Devey worked there in 1883, and Sedding between 1885 and 1890. Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 176. Michael Snell, 'The Priest of Form: John Dando Sedding (1831-91) and the languages of Late Victorian Architecture' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2006), p. 25.

<sup>233</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 173.

<sup>234</sup> Killarney National Park, <<https://www.killarneynationalpark.ie>> [accessed 29.01.2020].



Fig. 187. The ruins of Killarney House, the terracing can still be seen, circa 1950s. *National Library of Ireland, NPS MOR241.*

### **Back to England - Warren House, Coombe Estate, Surrey**

Warren House was owned by Hugh Hammersley (1819-1884), whose wealth had come from banking and who was considered a new member of the rising middle class. The house was built in the 1860s on 14 acres of land bought from the Duke of Cambridge. Hammersley commissioned architect James Pearse St Aubyn (1815-1895), known for his 'rather cheerless early gothic style', to build the house.<sup>235</sup> What seemed to be an inevitable outcome for many Victorian houses, a fire destroyed it in 1865, taking Hammersley a further five years to rebuild. At that time, he acquired some additional land which was between his estate and Coombewood Nursery owned by James Veitch and Sons. During the middle of the 1870s Hammersley laid out Japanese water gardens with ponds, stepping stones, a bridge, a tea house and planted rare trees and other specimens that Veitch's plant hunters had brought back to the nursery.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> V. K. L. Good, *The Warren House Tales, A Social History Since 1865* (London: Third Millennium Publishing, 2014), pp. 30-31.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. See London Gardens Trust, Inventory site record for Warren House (Kingston). <<https://www.londongardenstrust.org.uk-warren-house>> [accessed 17.07.2019]. Graham Pattison, 'Veitch's Water Garden', *The Garden*, 114 (1989), 395-400.

Hammersley died in 1884 and the house was offered for sale. The buyer George Grenfell Glyn, Second Baron Wolverton (1824-1887), a Liberal member of the House of Lords and at that time Paymaster General in Gladstone's second cabinet, was a banker in partnership with Glyn, Mills, Currie and Sons. Devey had rebuilt Coombe Warren for Currie some years earlier and Warren House was almost on the doorstep of Coombe Warren, so it was likely this was how Devey came to work for Lord Wolverton.<sup>237</sup> Devey made substantial alterations to the house on the east front overlooking the lawns and on the west side, which gave him the opportunity to add one of his signature gables, together with a 'curly' bargeboard. Devey was careful to match his work in with the existing building.<sup>238</sup>

There are no exterior plans for Warren House in the RIBA collection other than one design for a fireplace and overmantel which remains in place in the house. Allibone wrote that Devey created terraces and garden walls.<sup>239</sup> In the Sheffield collection of Devey's works there is a sketch by him of Warren House dated 1884 showing the south east front (Figures 188, 189).<sup>240</sup> At the edge of this sketch, to the east there are two piers, one taller than the other, both with ball finials, which mark the beginning of a wall which slopes down to a smaller wall just as in Devey's sketch. This wall exists today and slopes down approximately three to four feet running south east. Made of red brick, this curved perimeter wall with stone coping stretches around this part of the garden for approximately 45 yards to a smaller end brick pier.

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, (p. 33).

<sup>238</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 73. Good, *The Warren House Tales*, p. 34.

<sup>239</sup> RIBA Devey PB819/8.

<sup>240</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 73.

<<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/special/devey/collection>>.

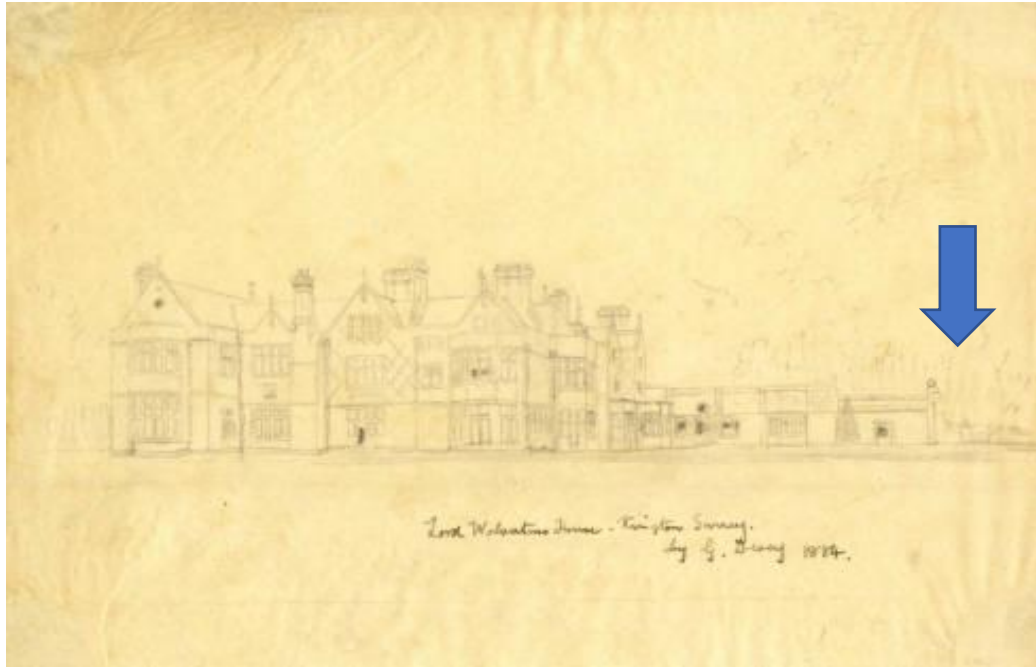


Fig. 188. A sketch of Warren House by George Devey 1884. Note the brick wall with pier to the right of the sketch, marked with blue arrow. *University of Sheffield*.



Fig. 189. The brick pier and sloping wall at Warren House in the Devey sketch of 1884. 2019.

This wall had been built as a retaining wall as there was a steep drop to the other side. Set within this curved wall at either end were two seat recesses that have a terracotta plaque embedded in the brick showing two putti, only one of these plaques survives (Figure 190).<sup>241</sup> This recess faces south west along a Devey terrace walk with central gravel path, edged with stone measuring approximately 115 yards. This terrace walk ended in an alcove with a seat and a further terracotta plaque decorated with two putti and finished with brick piers and ball finials (Figures 191, 192). Behind this alcove was the garden wall of approximately eight feet high made of red brick which formed part of the perimeter wall of the garden. This wall was of the same design as the wall in the south east corner.



Fig. 190. Warren House, the plaque with two putti as backing to a seat, looking down the terrace. 2019.

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<sup>241</sup> It is likely these were made by Mabey & Sons who made tondos for Devey.



Fig. 191. Warren House, looking back to the seat. 2019.



Fig. 192. Warren House, the alcove at the end of the terrace walk. 2019.

The Ordnance Survey map revised in 1894 showed a sunken garden with a fountain to the back of the house (Figure 193). This was probably put in by Hugh Hammersley but there was only a path around the end of the sunken garden and no terrace, so it is suggested that it was Devey who designed both the walls and seat recesses in 1884, together with the terrace walk ending in an alcove. Other features of the garden are listed as Grade II by Historic England and include a grotto by Pulham added later and the fountain in the sunken garden.<sup>242</sup> Devey's accounts showed that his commission over the years 1884 to 1886 amounted to £1047, which today would be £95000. The cost of the work was £21000, which today would be around £1.9 million.<sup>243</sup>

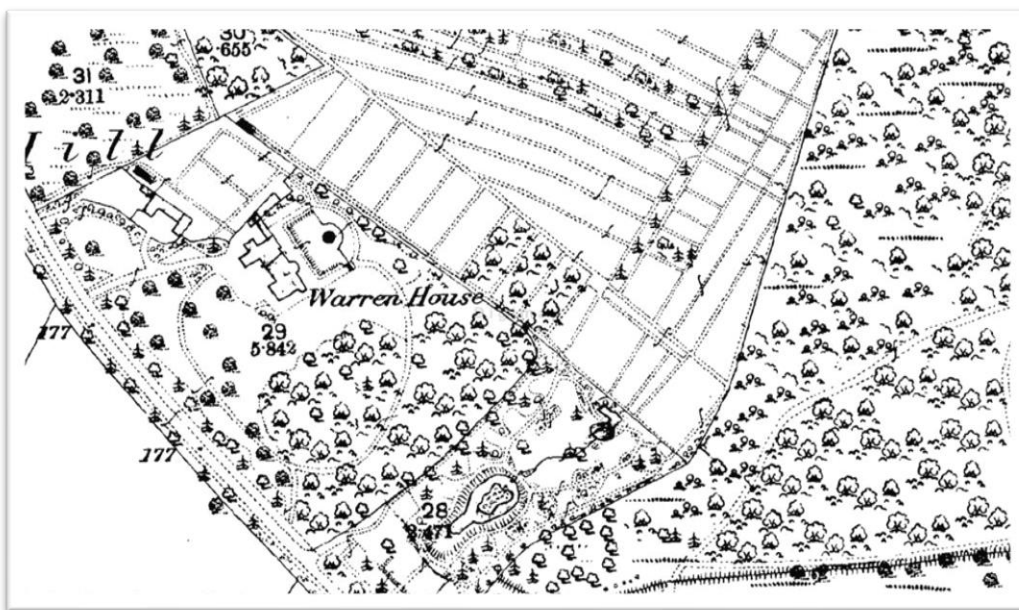


Fig. 193. Warren House, before Devey's garden alterations. OS map, revised 1894 published 1897. Surrey sheet, V11.9.

Warren House has gone through many owners since Lord Wolverton, from private families to a convalescent home and in the 1950s became the property of ICI, the chemical giant. ICI bought the house and its 14 acres for £30,000, converting it into a management training centre.<sup>244</sup> Today Warren House is a meeting venue and country house hotel.

<sup>242</sup> OS map, Surrey sheet, VII.9 revised 1894 published 1897. Historic England, Warren House, Grade II 1379941.

<sup>243</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 178.

<sup>244</sup> Good, *The Warren House Tales*, p. 186.

## **The Warren, originally called Warren House, West Wickham**

Devey created his classic terrace at Warren House and perhaps the first of his alcoves, which he was to repeat at The Warren in West Wickham, Kent. The client was Martin Ridley Smith (1833-1908), a member of the Smith banking family who were previous clients of Devey. The Warren was built in 1882 for Walter Maximillian de Zoete (1845-1934), who was from a stockbroking family in Holland. de Zoete had leased c.2.42 hectares of land from local land owners, Dame Julia Maria Francis Lennard and her husband Colonel Sir John Farnaby Lennard.<sup>245</sup> In 1885 de Zoete assigned his leasehold interest to Smith for £8000 and in that year Smith leased a further 16 acres from Lennard for 93 years at £320 per annum to enlarge the gardens.<sup>246</sup> Devey was employed in 1885 to add to the red brick house, originally built by George Somers Clark (1825-1882), with a library and adjoining conservatory which were both single storey and linked with a balustrade at roof level. Allibone also stated that Devey added a two-storey bay to the dining room, together with some estate cottages and the walled garden.<sup>247</sup>

In the RIBA collection there are no plans other than a watercolour of a red brick alcove, very similar to the one at Warren House in Surrey (Figure 194).<sup>248</sup> The Ordnance Survey map revised in 1894 to 1896 showed the alcove and the walled garden (Figure 195). The drawing, with Devey's new address at 123 Bond Street W, was of the enclosed alcove with an arched pediment, two piers with ball finials and with trellis infill sides and columns. The alcove survives today (Figure 196), together with the walled garden (Figure 197).<sup>249</sup>

Facing south-west and sloping to the west, the walled garden of approximately one acre shows Devey features with pedimented archways and a small alcove of a similar design in the south-east corner. There are other walls and archways to the north side of the house which again are in Devey's style. This according to Thomas Mawson (1861-1933), who came to design gardens for a later owner, was a 'well planned and furnished rose garden, enclosed on its south side by beautiful yew hedges and on the

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<sup>245</sup> The Warren <<https://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/the-warren>> [accessed 29.06.2022].

<sup>246</sup> Bill Prowse, Peter Simmons, *The Story of our Club House, The Warren*, private papers, no date, p. 2.

<sup>247</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 97.

<sup>248</sup> RIBA Devey PB819/7.

<sup>249</sup> OS map, Surrey sheet, XIVA SW revised 1894 to 1896 published 1898.



north by a brick wall, designed by the late Mr George Devey'.<sup>250</sup> Devey's commission in 1886 was £501, which today would have been £45000 with project costs of £10000, today around £908000.<sup>251</sup>

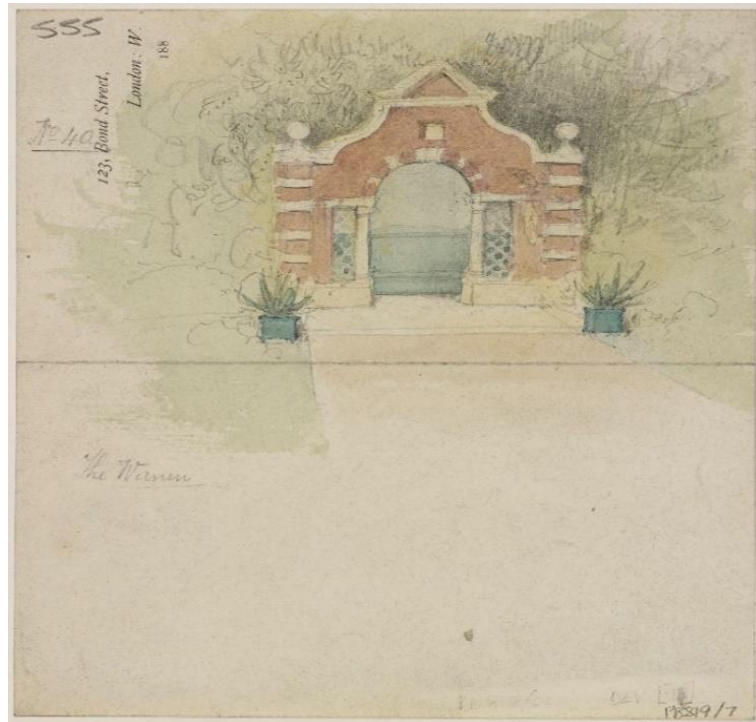


Fig. 194. Devey's watercolour of the alcove for The Warren, 1885. RIBA PB819/7.

<sup>250</sup> Thomas Mawson, *The Art and Craft of Garden Making*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (London: B. T. Batsford, 1926), p. 115.

<sup>251</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 178.

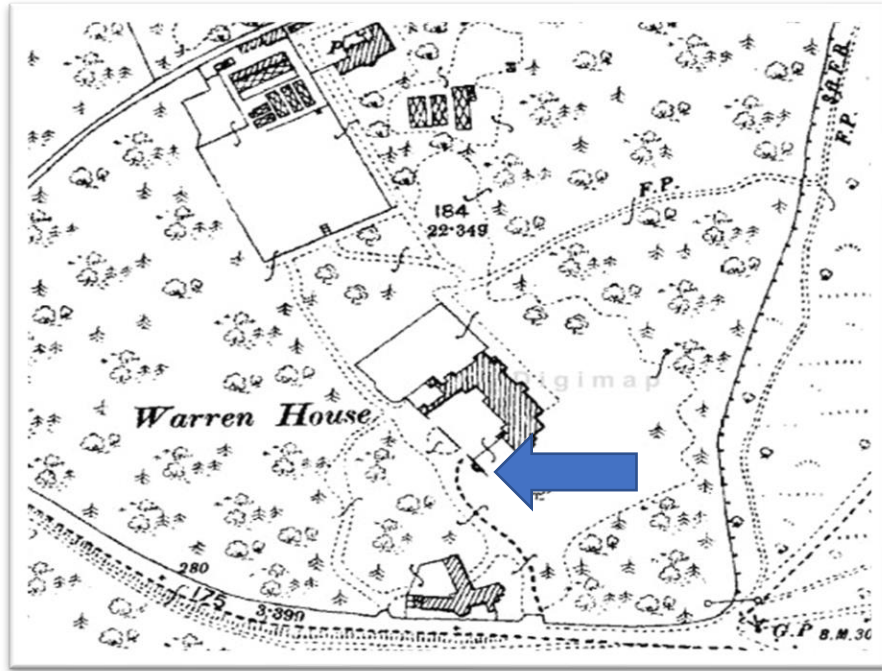


Fig. 195. OS map Warren House, now called The Warren, revised 1894 to 1896 published 1898. The blue arrow shows the location of the alcove. *Surrey sheet, XIVA SW.*



Fig. 196. The alcove at The Warren 2019.



Fig. 197. The Warren, former walled garden, now tennis courts. Note the archway and another alcove in the far corner. 2019.

In 1934 the house was sold to Conservative MP Gordon Ralph Hall-Caine who later that year sold it to the Metropolitan Police, who had been looking for a sports ground. In 1935, The Warren as it was then called, opened as a sports club for the Metropolitan Police. The house is now used as a clubhouse and the grounds have been turned into sports fields, with a bowling green and in the 1960s the walled garden was laid out with hard tennis courts.<sup>252</sup>

### **Lord Granville and 18 Carlton House Terrace**

Devey and Granville, George Leveson-Gower, second Earl Granville (1815-1891), met through Sir Walter James of Betteshanger House. Lord Granville was a Liberal politician leading the Liberal Party in the House of Lords for almost 30 years and was joint leader

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<sup>252</sup> The Warren <<https://londongardenstrust.org/conservation/inventory/site-record/?ID=BRO089>> [accessed 30.06.2020].

of the party between 1875 and 1880. He was also a good friend and loyal 'lieutenant' of William Gladstone. In 1865 Lord Granville became Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and as Walmer Castle, the official residence, needed extra bedrooms for the Granville family, in 1871 Devey was asked to make the necessary alterations. Granville made Walmer Castle the main residence for his family until his death in 1891.<sup>253</sup> Devey carried out other works for Granville in association with his role as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, which included a drinking fountain for the town of Deal and works in Dover Harbour, which no longer stand as they were bombed in the Second World War.<sup>254</sup>

Lord Granville had been looking for a house in the country, or at least some land to acquire to build a house, and in 1879 he asked Devey to produce a design of a house and garden to be called 'Maplewood'. Devey produced a wooden model; this was a usual way of working for him and Allibone wrote it could explain the lack of perspective drawings in his collection.<sup>255</sup> A photograph of two models of Maplewood, the entrance and stables and the garden front, were published in the account of Williams' lecture on Devey to the Architectural Association in April 1909. The model of the garden front showed a Jacobean-style terrace with pierced balustrades, piers with pinnacles, two flights of steps and the beginning of an avenue flanked by pyramidal yews, a true Devey design. The cost for producing these models was a modest £52 which today would be about £4500. The house was never built (Figure 198).<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Walmer Castle <<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/walmer-castle-and-gardens>> [accessed 07.2021]. There is a reference that Devey advised Lord Granville on the gardens at Walmer Castle. It is likely that they discussed the gardens but there is no evidence to support this claim.

<sup>254</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118, 173.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 103).

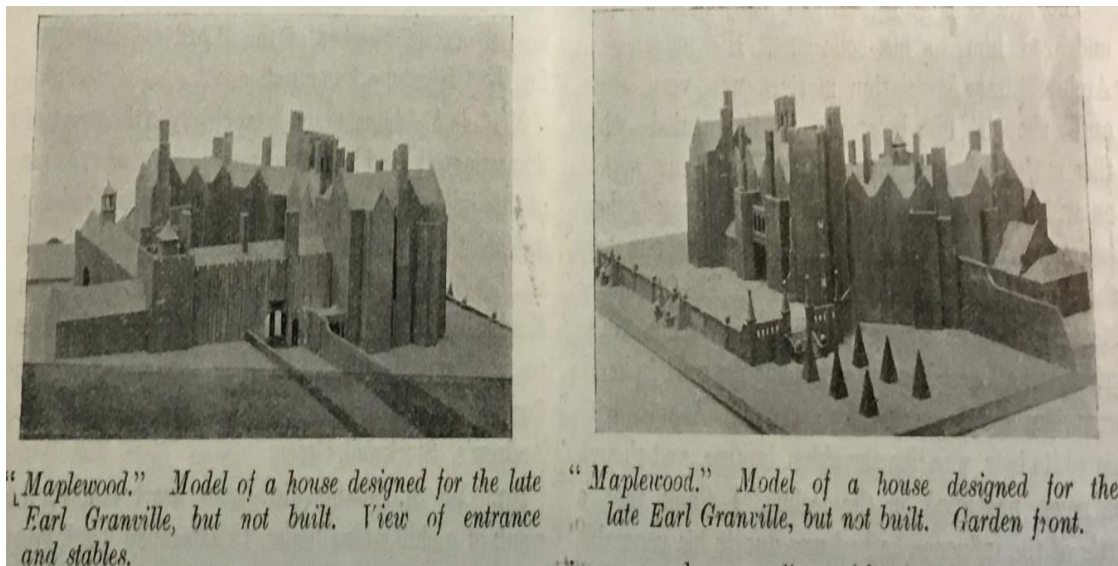


Fig. 198. A wooden model of Maplewood for Lord Granville, 1879. *Architectural Association Journal*, 1909.

It was while Granville was Foreign Secretary that he asked Devey to make some alterations to his London grace-and-favour home, 18 Carlton House Terrace, to include new kitchens, a porch and a design for a small town garden on the podium. Carlton House Terrace was built by John Nash (1752-1835) on the site of Carlton House, the home of George IV. Carlton House had fallen out of favour with the King, so he authorised its demolition in favour of a Nash design of 1827 for two blocks of nine houses each, with a central area between the blocks. Originally this was for a domed fountain but today it is a flight of steps down to The Mall headed by a statue of the ‘Grand Old Duke of York’.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>257</sup> The Royal Society, Homes of the Society <<https://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.1967.0003>> [accessed 30/06/2022].

In the RIBA collection there is a watercolour sketch for this garden which showed a striped awning over a terrace or an area of shade as the podium faces south. There was a lawn, with tubs at its four corners containing trees shaped like 'lollipops' and on the far side of the lawn were planted two pinnacles, probably of yew. To the north were the Corinthian columns of the Nash design with steps leading up to the balcony level, and to the south Nash's Doric columns with a tree showing on the ground level of St James Park (Figure 199). The ordnance survey map revised in 1893 to 1894 showed the porch on the front of the house and the podium to the rear with the Corinthian columns, together with the steps and a fountain which was not on the original design. This does suggest that there was a garden in this area at some time and that it was likely that Devey's design was built (Figures 200, 201).<sup>258</sup> The commission for this project in 1881 was £619, which today would be £53000, with the project costs of £12380, today £1.1 million.<sup>259</sup>

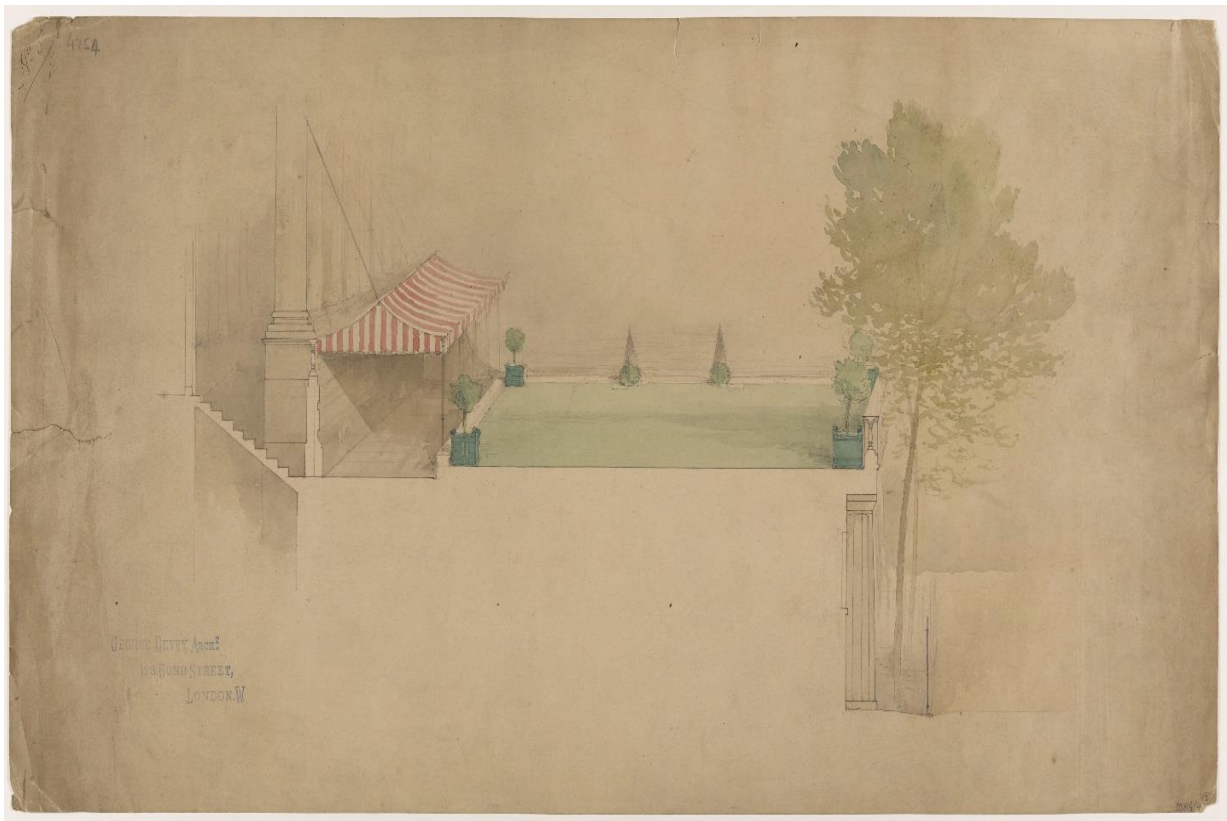


Fig. 199. A watercolour sketch for the garden on the Podium at 18 Carlton House Terrace, circa 1880s. RIBA PB816/4.

<sup>258</sup> RIBA Devey PB816/4 (1-2). I am grateful to The Crown Estate Paving Commission for entry to the east podium of Carlton House Terrace. OS map, London edition, LXXV revised 1893-1894 published 1897.

<sup>259</sup> Allibone, George Devey, p. 175.

Although Allibone again wrote that Devey became great friends with all his clients, this was doubtful as there were no mentions of Devey in the diaries of Morley of Hall Place or Hammond of St Albans Court. However, Lord Granville appeared to have been different, as Williams spoke about their friendship in his address, saying 'he, Lord Granville, would call at the office and walk off arm-in-arm with Devey, consulting him frequently on a great variety of matters of taste'. He went on to say that Devey would dine at Carlton House Terrace and afterward attended receptions at the Foreign Office.<sup>260</sup> This was borne out by a list of very distinguished guests including all the Royal Family, printed in *The Morning Post* for a reception at the Foreign Office to celebrate the Queen's 61<sup>st</sup> birthday in May 1880 and on this list was Mr George Devey.<sup>261</sup>

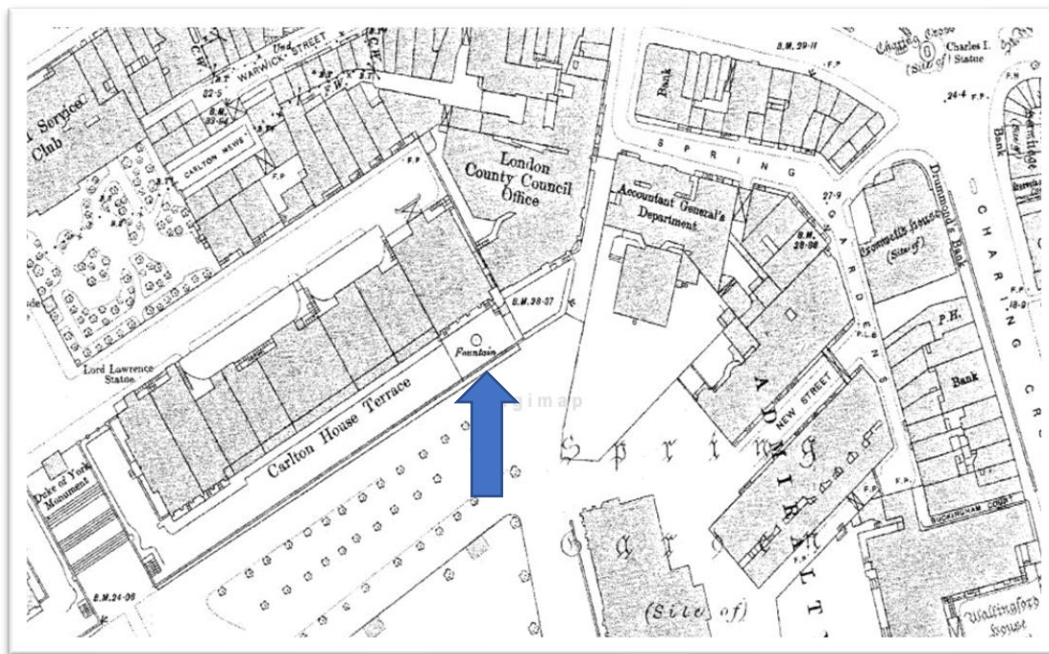


Fig. 200. OS map, revised 1893-1894 published 1897. Blue arrow points to 18 Carlton House Terrace. *London edition, LXXV*.

<sup>260</sup> Williams, 'George Devey and his Work', (pp. 99-100).

<sup>261</sup> 'Reception at the Foreign Office', *The Morning Post*, May 31<sup>st</sup> (1880), (p. 6). The Granville papers were given to the British Library in 2019. The British Library kindly added an alert for any mention of Devey when cataloguing the papers relating to the second Earl. I am grateful to Tabitha Driver, Cataloguer, who looked through the diaries and other papers but found no mention of Devey. Email Tenneson from Tabitha Driver, Cataloguer Modern Archives and Manuscripts, 30.08.2019.



Fig. 201. Carlton House Terrace, the eastern side looking towards the site of Lord Granville's garden at the end of the Podium, 2019.

### **Minley Manor - the last garden project**

In 1855 the Manor of Minley was bought by Raikes Currie (1801-1881), banker and Liberal politician, who commissioned the architect Henry Clutton (1819-1893) to build the house. The house was described by Girouard as of 'brick with stone dressings of widely asymmetrical French Gothic with very tall roofs'.<sup>262</sup> It stood on a plateau with land dropping away to the south, where the principal rooms and main gardens were sited overlooking open parkland.<sup>263</sup> In 1858 at an early stage in the building of the house, Raikes Currie commissioned Messrs Veitch, the leading nurserymen of the period, to lay out formal gardens around the house with pleasure grounds and a kitchen garden.<sup>264</sup> In 1881 Raikes Currie died after a short illness and left the estate

<sup>262</sup> Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*, p. 414.

<sup>263</sup> Historic England. Minley Manor, Grade II\* 1258061.

<sup>264</sup> For more information on Messrs Veitch, see Geoffrey & Susan Jellicoe, Patrick Goode, Michael Lancaster, *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 581-582. Sue Shephard, foreword by Roy Lancaster, *Seeds of Fortune, A Gardening Dynasty* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003).



to his son Bertram Currie of Coombe Warren. Bertram was 'not immediately disposed to take up his residence at Minley' but instead let the furnished house to a fellow banker Mr C. Hoare.<sup>265</sup> When the house became vacant in 1885, Currie together with his wife and daughter, spent some weeks there to decide whether or not they should make this their winter residence. Currie then wrote that 'having resolved this question in the affirmative, Mr Devey was called in to advise upon the necessary alterations and improvements'.<sup>266</sup>

Devey made considerable alterations to the house, new stables were built, a chapel and loggia, and on the west side of the house an orangery with a covered way that as Currie commented 'gives some importance and solidity to the house'. Other works included a water tower, a porch and vestibule and one of Devey's favourite devices, an enclosed walled forecourt, which could be seen in an 1899 photograph from *Country Life* (Figures 202, 203).<sup>267</sup> As this work was taking place in the house, the gardens and pleasure grounds were 'undergoing a transformation', and it may have been that Messrs Veitch were called back to work with Devey on the garden transformation. A 'sunk' panel, approached by steps at its four corners and planted with evergreen shrubs, was modelled after an old French garden (Figures 204, 205).<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Currie, *Recollections*, Vol. I, p. 157. Allibone, George Devey, p. 132.

<sup>266</sup> Currie, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 176.

<sup>267</sup> 'Minley Manor Farnborough, Hants the Seat of Mr Laurence Currie', *Country Life*, 6.155 (1899), 808-811 (p. 809).

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

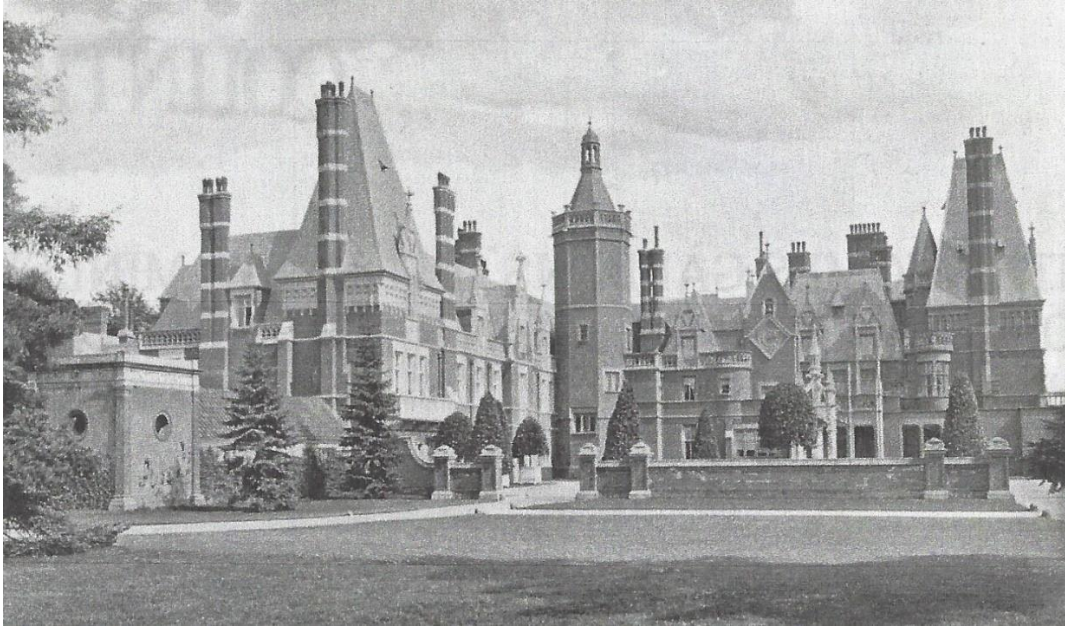


Fig. 202. The 'Grand Entrance' to Minley Manor. *Country Life*, 1899.



Fig. 203. The front of Minley Manor with Devey walls. 2020.



Fig. 204. Minley Manor, the formal garden, showing the Devey Cloister. *Country Life*, 1899.



Fig. 205. The Formal Garden. 2020.

Other works included a terrace and a terrace wall built on the south front and decorated with stone vases and statues of Venus and Apollo made by Mabey, 'a sculptor patronized by Mr. Devey'.<sup>269</sup> The terrace 150 yards long and 15 yards wide (Figure 206) had Devey's signature central gravel path with turf margins. Also seen are the pillars which would have carried the stone vases and sculptures (Figure 207).



Fig. 206. The terrace at Minley Manor. 2020.

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<sup>269</sup> Currie, *Recollections*, Vol. II, p. 178.



Fig. 207. The terrace wall with piers where the vases and statues would have stood. 2020.

In the RIBA collection there are a number of plans for a variety of buildings at Minley by Castings up to 1896. Dated 1886 is a plan for garden works, which was originally by Devey and taken over by Castings (Figure 208). This plan of a garden layout was to the rear of the house; the detail was of a sunken terrace with a patterned floor, possibly of tiles, and with a hedge around its perimeter, probably of yew. On the east of the plan was a brick staircase, which could be similar to the one at St Albans and Swaylands. The staircase looks to be at the highest point of the terrace and would have led down to the grounds. Opposite the staircase there looks to be a viewing platform or a small garden building marked in red. To the west of the plan at the end of the terrace was an alcove with a seat and backed with a hedge, probably yew. This layout can be seen on the ordnance survey map revised in 1894 and on the aerial photograph (Figures 209, 210).<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> RIBA Devey PB212/3(1). OS map, Hampshire and Isle of Wight sheet, XII.II revised 1894 published 1896.

The cost recorded in the account book for Minley in 1886 was for September just before Devey died, Devey's fee of £536 around £49000 today and the project costs of £10720 today £973000.<sup>271</sup>

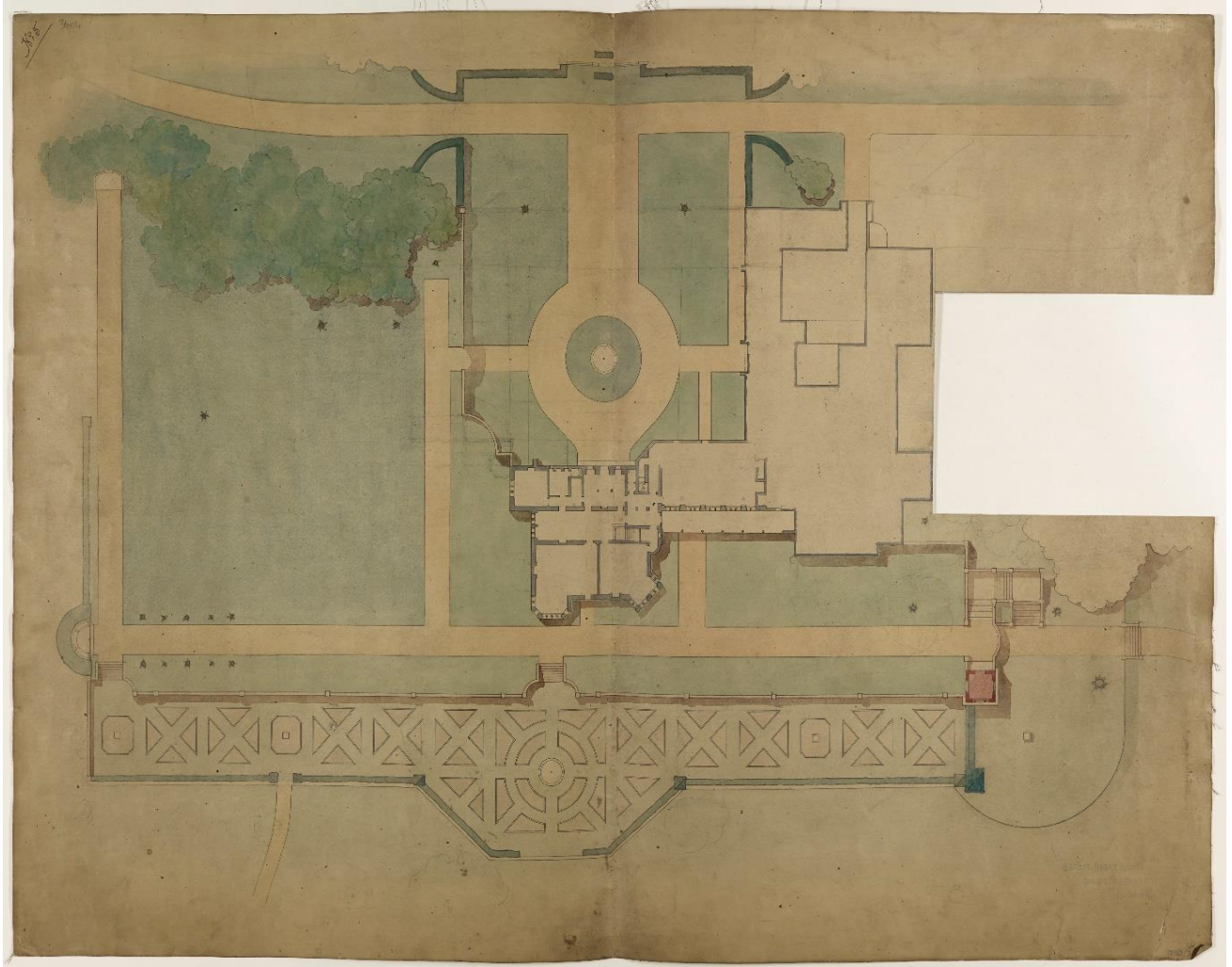


Fig. 208. The garden plan and layout for the terrace at Minley Manor, not executed, 1886. RIBA PB212/3.

<sup>271</sup> Allibone, George Devey, p. 78.

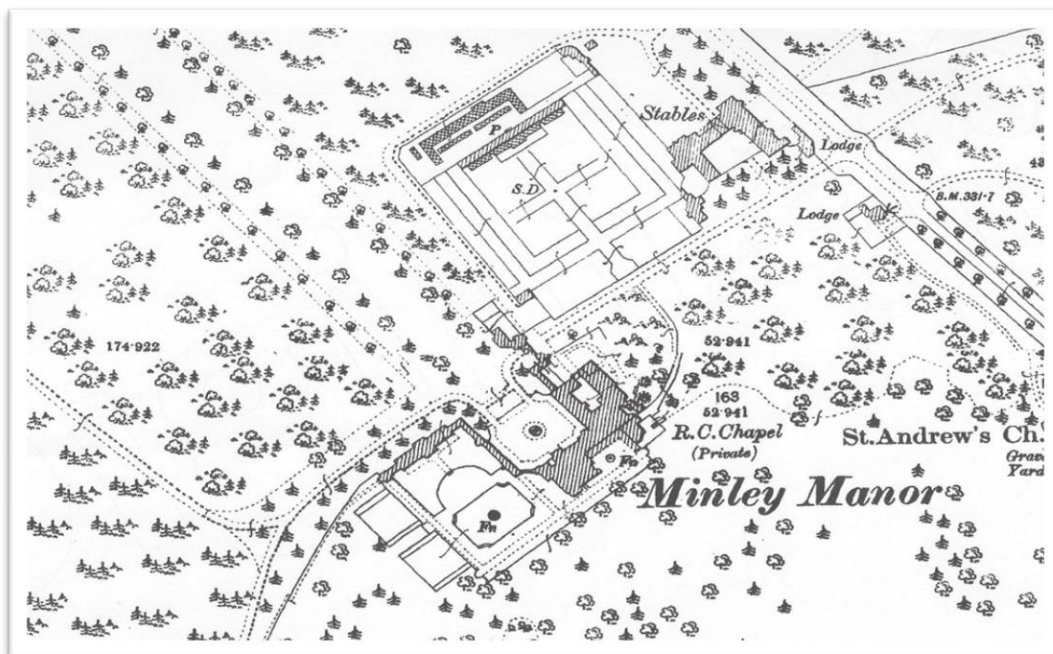


Fig. 209. Minley Manor, OS map, revised 1894 published 1896. *Hampshire and Isle of Wight sheet, XII.11*



Fig. 210. Aerial photograph of Minley Manor showing the terrace, 2015.  
 <<https://houseandheritage.org/2015/11/1/minley-manor>> [accessed 02.04.2020].

The following year, 1886, Devey died while working on Minley Manor, much to the distress of Currie, who considered him to be a good friend. Devey's assistant Castings,

who had worked for Devey for many years and appeared to have drawn the majority of the plans for him, took over the works at Minley Manor and was to continue working for Currie for the next ten years until Currie died in 1896.

Currie was so distressed and grieving for the loss of Devey that in 1887 he had his portrait modelled in stone, probably by Mabey, and placed in the cloister of the chapel at Minley. The plaque was decorated with laurel leaves and showed Devey with his favourite tools, a 'T' square, a plumb line, calipers, paint brushes and a palette. The inscription in Latin roughly translates as 'to the most felicitous talent of George Devey, architect and valued friend, B. W. Currie, 1887' (Figure 211).<sup>272</sup>

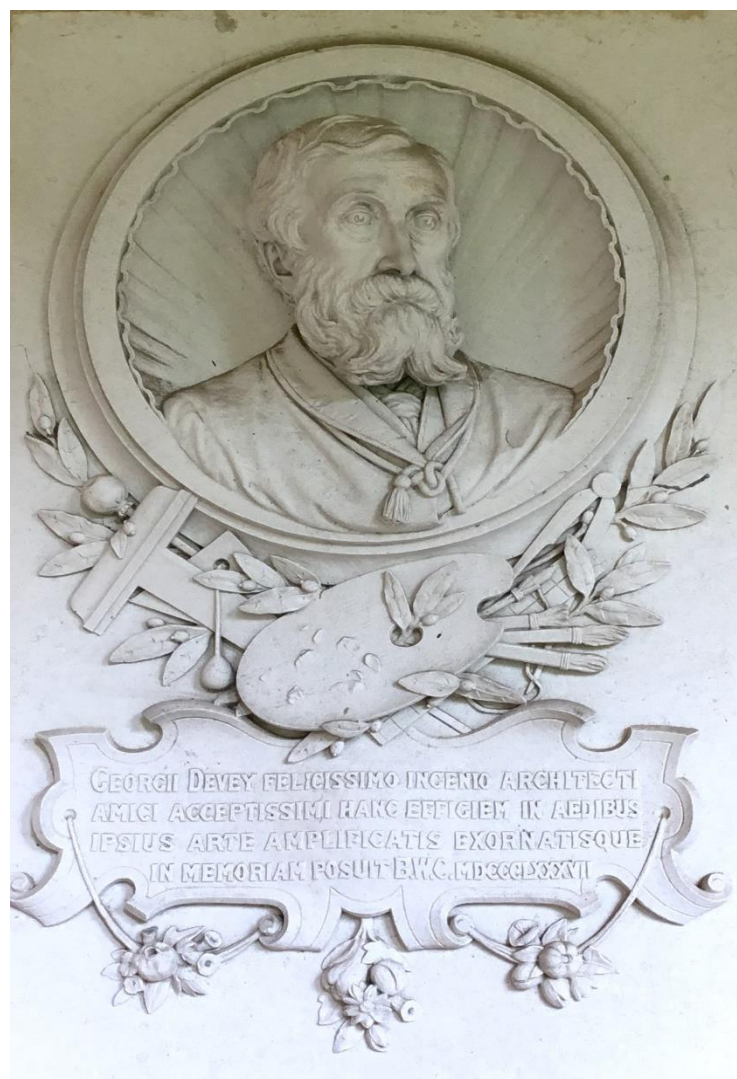


Fig. 211. The plaque commemorating George Devey. 2020.

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<sup>272</sup> I am grateful to Suzzanne Killalea for information and allowing access to Minley Manor.



Following Currie's death in 1896, his eldest son Laurence inherited the estate and in 1936 sold the property to the Army. Minley Manor was the home of The Corps of Royal Engineers, who in 2015 sold the property to a Chinese company, who have opened Minley Manor as a wedding venue.

### **Devey's final year**

Devey's natural talent and love of sketching and painting must have had an influence on winning business. He would do a quick sketch, colour it and discuss it with the client, as he did with the alterations to Leicester Square at Penschurst Place, where to improve the view he suggested moving the bridge. This also appeared to have happened with the sketches for the designs of the Church Walk at Betteshanger House. There was an anecdote from Voysey, who wrote that 'when Devey was asked to join a house-party he would make fascinating catch-penny sketches while dressing for dinner and then present the sketches during dessert', adding 'these sketches charmed everyone'.<sup>273</sup> Williams confirmed that 'drawing and good music were things he never tired of'.<sup>274</sup> What came out of these assessments, from those who employed him, those he employed and worked with him, was that Devey was personable, popular, well-liked and good company; but perhaps the most important aspect of Devey to the elite group of powerful and educated gentlemen, his clients, was that he was highly skilled, professional and discreet.

When summing up in his lecture, Williams spoke of Devey as if he were talking about the loss of a much loved father. He referred to his natural charm, his modesty, at times a little reserved, at times vivacious, full of humour and of feeling and sympathy with the warmest approval of everything that was noble and good. Devey was a good employer, as one of the last comments that Williams made was that under consideration in the office was a profit-share scheme for those who had worked for him for over a year.

On a trip to Ireland in 1886 to see the Earl of Kenmare at Killarney, Devey caught a cold which turned to pneumonia and he died in November at his home in Hastings

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<sup>273</sup> Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 86.

<sup>274</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 96).

where he had lived with his brother, sister and cousin Clara Egg. In his will Devey left over £32000, which today would be around £3 million, with legacies to all his staff, from £100 for his coachman to £500 for Arthur Castings and for his partner James Williams, who was also his executor, he left £1000. Devey also left legacies to others including the sons of the Revd Boissier who had helped him set up his business over thirty years earlier with the introduction to Lord De L'Isle of Penshurst Place.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 103). Allibone, *George Devey*, p. 139.

## Summary

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Devey's career started with an introduction to Lord De L'Isle in the 1850s and through that long relationship with the De L'Isle family he was able to reinstate the formal garden of the seventeenth century, recreating the parterre at Penshurst Place in what is known today as the Italian Garden. This design came from an illustration from Knyff and Kip dated 1702, which later appeared in *Britannia Illustrata*, published in 1707.<sup>276</sup> This first commission was to set a pattern for Devey and his garden making in the formal style.

How Devey came to the formal design of garden making in the first place is difficult to judge as he left no personal writings, architectural papers or notes in relation to his work. However, there are clues, the sketch of the keystone at Isola Bella, the renowned multi-tiered baroque terraced garden on Lake Maggoire, which he visited in the late 1840s on his Grand Tour. His own watercolour of the Vertue plan of Penshurst Place, which he copied from the original drawing, demonstrates that he did his research. Tipping in his first volume, period I on *English Homes*, published in 1912, praised Devey's work at Penshurst Place for recreating the old way of garden making.<sup>277</sup> Further, Hussey pointed out in *Country Life* in 1951 that for Devey to recreate the gardens at Penshurst Place he must have viewed and used the Kip illustration.<sup>278</sup>

Devey developed his own style. His terraces had a clear signature, a central gravel path with turf margins, which was much favoured by Price when writing about the formal garden in 1810.<sup>279</sup> This signature terrace survives at Goldings, Hall Place, St Albans, Conover Hall and Brantinghamthorpe Hall. Where there was an opportunity and sufficient land he would tier the terraces out to the view, such as at Killarney House in Ireland. He would create sweeping tiered lawns and these survive at Goldings, as seen in the analytical drawing, and Swaylands; but where there was less land he created smaller tiered terraces such as at Brantinghamthorpe and Conover.

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<sup>276</sup> Knyff, Kip, *Britannia Illustrata*.

<sup>277</sup> H. Avray Tipping, Charles Latham, *English Homes Period I* (London: Country Life, 1912), p. 188.

<sup>278</sup> Hussey, 'The Gardens at Penshurst Place', (p. 862).

<sup>279</sup> Lauder, *Sir Uvedale Price*, p. 311.

An interesting point was Williams' comment about the 'Elysian Fields', explaining that Devey would enclose a courtyard within the walls preventing the visitor seeing everything at once, 'leaving play for romance to picture Elysian Fields on the other side'.<sup>280</sup> When responsible for designing the house and its immediate surroundings Devey would use this device of an enclosed entrance courtyard, adding mystery so not all was seen at once, and a perfect example of this was seen at Hall Place.

Devey was consistent in his use of decoration. In the main with his steps down from the terrace he would always use ball finials, an urn or a vase placed on a brick and stone pier, which he used at most of the sites discussed. When building garden walls there was always a frieze, never a plain wall. His garden buildings, from orangeries to pavilions, to arches used the Jacobean style of a broken pediment and obelisk finials and nearly always in red brick, striking against a bright blue sky.

Devey's skill for garden making and the work at Penshurst Place was included in *The British Architect* of 1889, three years after his death, in a piece on garden design by the architect Mervyn Macartney (1853-1932). Macartney commended Devey for his skill in following the rules of the 'old work', going on to say 'Mr George Devey in his alterations at Penshurst Place, and in the new house that he built for the late Mr Samuel Morley at Leigh (Hall Place), followed these rules thoroughly'.<sup>281</sup> This praise was to continue as Godfrey, ever Devey's champion, wrote of his mentor in 1910 in *The Architectural Review*, 'Mr Devey blended the charming detail of the Queen Anne garden-architecture with the felicitous planning of the Elizabethan period – a union which has been sanctioned and confirmed by all modern designers'.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Williams, 'George Devey', (p. 98).

<sup>281</sup> Mervyn Macartney, no title, 'By Mervyn Macartney', *The British Architect*, 31.26 (1889), 460-461 (p. 460).

<sup>282</sup> Walter H. Godfrey, 'Modern Garden Design', *The Architectural Review*, 28.169 (1910), 276-281 (p. 276).

One of those 'modern designers' was architect Reginald Blomfield, who had acknowledged Devey and his work in an article in *Artistic Homes* in 1892, where he commented that Devey, 'with conspicuous success' planned the complete project from 'the approach to the house, the forecourts, the terraces to the garden and the general design of the gardens themselves'.<sup>283</sup> That year Blomfield published his first book, *The Formal Garden in England*, which was to promote him as one of the leading garden designers who continued the genre of formal garden making through to the start of the First World War.<sup>284</sup> The contribution of Blomfield to the revival of the formal garden is the subject of chapter three.

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss and explain Devey's contribution to the revival of the formal garden. Devey was not the most famous architect of the middle to late nineteenth century, but his architectural legacy remains with the many buildings from grand houses to estate buildings, stables, gardener's cottages to school houses that are still in use in some capacity today.

His other legacy is his garden making in the formal style, graceful and highly decorative, but still functional, which to this point has not been recognised. Many of his gardens and their features remain today. Devey, in bringing back seventeenth century formality to the garden, was probably unaware that he was leading a revival and the effect and influence his work would have on garden design throughout the rest of the century and onwards.

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<sup>283</sup> Reginald Blomfield, 'Artistic Homes, House Architecture: Exterior', *The Magazine of Art*, January (1892), 79-85 (p. 82).

<sup>284</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden in England*.

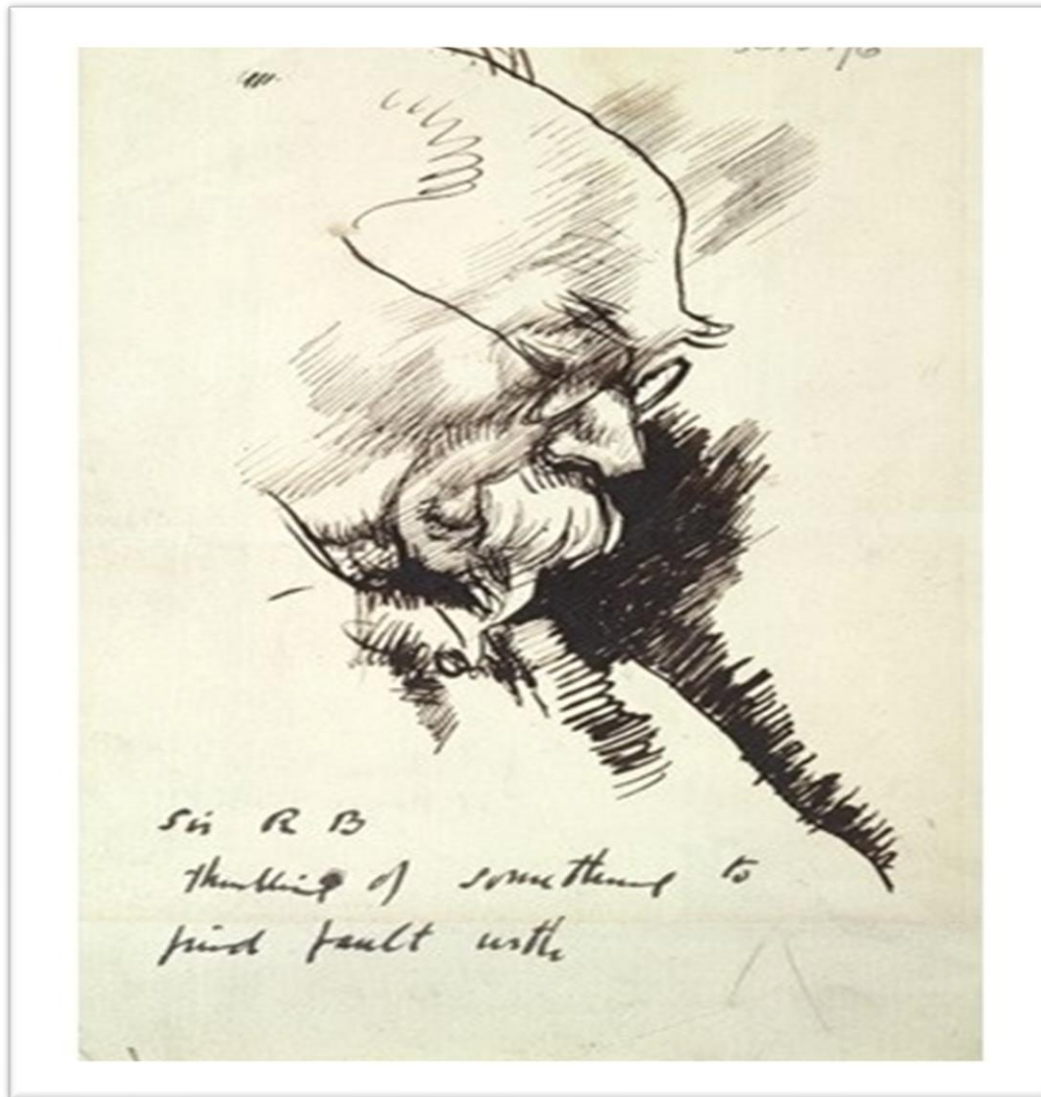


Fig. 212. A sketch of Blomfield circa 1930 by Sir Aston Webb. RIBAPIX, RIBA 21578.

## Introduction

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Alistair Service who compiled *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins* in 1975 said of Sir Reginald Blomfield, 'a notable figure working in the Beaux Arts tradition, an aggressive and unpleasant man but an able neo classical architect' (Figure 212).<sup>1</sup> These sentiments appear to have shadowed and cloaked the view of Blomfield, not only during his working life as an architect and a maker of gardens, but indeed to the present day. When Blomfield's name is mentioned in relation to garden history, the immediate response is to talk of the 'argument' in the 1890s with William Robinson, gardener and journalist, concerning who should design the garden: the architect who could produce a formal unity of plan, or the garden designer who could produce a more natural, freer style of plan. This exchange was carried out in publications at the time and was perhaps more about self-promotion of the parties than a genuine argument.<sup>2</sup>

A softer view of Blomfield came on his death in 1942 where *Country Life* wrote, 'architecture has lost a lovable grand old man'.<sup>3</sup> This was a rare comment as *The Architects' Journal* of 1943, in their obituary wrote, 'a man whom everybody liked and with whom nearly everybody quarrelled – at least in print'.<sup>4</sup> In 2002, Giles Wolsey (1961-2006), the architectural historian, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* in a piece on Master Builders, summed up the general view of Blomfield by saying that he 'was unhampered by personal doubt, enjoyed challenges and loved a fight'.<sup>5</sup> So perhaps it is not surprising that when his name is mentioned the thinking turns to his character rather than to his considerable highly skilled body of work in architecture, in literature, and in garden making.

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<sup>1</sup> Alistair Service, *Edwardian Architecture and its Origins* (London: The Architectural Press Limited, 1975), p. 8. For an understanding of Beaux-Arts see James Stevens Curl, *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden*. William Robinson, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens* (London: John Murray, 1892).

<sup>3</sup> 'English Tradition', *Country Life*, 93.2399 (1943), (p. 66).

<sup>4</sup> 'Sir Reginald Blomfield', *The Architects' Journal*, 97.2502 (1943), (pp. 3-4).

<sup>5</sup> Giles Wolsey, 'Master Builders: Sir Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942)', 30 November 2002, <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/330942/Masterbuilders>> [accessed 01.01.2019].

It was not until 1985 that a review of Blomfield's life and work was published by Richard A. Fellows, architect and then lecturer at Huddersfield Polytechnic. Fellows addressed Blomfield's architectural work with just a brief mention of his garden designs. He listed the categories of Blomfield's works which ranged across domestic to educational, institutional, ecclesiastical, commercial and public works, memorials and monuments, including the Menin Gate at Ypres in 1922.<sup>6</sup> The focus of this chapter will be on his domestic works that involved house and garden and the garden. Fellows lists 21 properties where Blomfield designed the house and garden and carried out new garden works. Just after Blomfield's death in December 1942, in February 1943, his son Austin published brief details of all his father's works in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*,<sup>7</sup> where he listed all his projects, including works for house and garden and new garden designs, with some duplication on Fellows' list, totalling 35. On further research it was found that 20 of the properties could not be traced, that the garden was designed by another party, or it was an unexecuted design, so the number of house and garden and new garden designs that will be examined in this chapter is reduced to 15. Before the chapter summary a table of 26 other gardens is listed with explanations of why they have not been included in this chapter.

Unlike Devey, Blomfield did leave some personal notes of his work in his biography, *Memoirs of an Architect*,<sup>8</sup> but his discussion of his clients tended to be more about the facilities they offered, such as a good day's shooting or providing an excellent mount, rather than detail of the commissions. He left very few garden plans; in all only 20 files are held in the archive at the RIBA with only four collections of drawings, some of which are for the house and garden.<sup>9</sup> There are surviving plans at some of the properties to be discussed but his business and financial records have been lost.<sup>10</sup> He appeared to start writing about gardens in 1889, three years before the publication of his book *The Formal Garden In England* in 1892,<sup>11</sup> with an article in *The Portfolio*, an artistic periodical, where he set out his thoughts and asked the question, 'are we to treat the house and garden as inseparable factors in one homogeneous whole which

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<sup>6</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield an Edwardian Architect*, pp. 168-174.

<sup>7</sup> Austin Blomfield, *The RIBA Journal* (1943), (pp. 88-89).

<sup>8</sup> Sir Reginald Blomfield, *Memoirs of an Architect* (London: Macmillan, 1932).

<sup>9</sup> RIBA collection, RIBA call reference - Blomfield.

<sup>10</sup> Blomfield's great granddaughter Isabelle Ryan has confirmed that no business or financial records survive.

<sup>11</sup> Blomfield, Thomas, *The Formal Garden*.



are to co-operate for one premeditated result?<sup>12</sup> His garden making which is discussed in this chapter will determine if he answered his own question.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section one will look at Blomfield's early life and the influences to become an architect up to 1892 when he published his book *The Formal Garden in England*. This section will look at his association with the Art Workers Guild and his colleagues. Section two will briefly discuss his domestic architectural style as it relates to a house and garden, but the main purpose of the chapter will be an explanation and analysis of his garden works and suggest why Blomfield can be regarded as Devey's successor in the revival of the formal garden.

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<sup>12</sup> Reginald T. Blomfield M.A., 'On Gardens', *The Portfolio*, II (1889), 231-237.

## Section I: Blomfield's early years to the start of his working life

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Reginald Theodore Blomfield, one of eleven children was born in Devon on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1856, the third son of his Reverend father George John Blomfield (1822-1900) and his wife, a distant cousin Isabelle Blomfield (1824-1879), who was the second daughter of C. J. Blomfield, Bishop of London (1786-1857).<sup>13</sup> The following year the family moved to Kent, where his father became Vicar of Dartford. Blomfield described in his memoirs an idyllic early life at the vicarage with its large garden, a fine big lawn where their father taught his three sons the rudiments of cricket, cricket becoming a lifelong passion for Blomfield. He went on to describe the garden with its walls covered in splendid wisterias and a shrubbery haunted by many frogs.<sup>14</sup> In 1863 he was sent to stay with his mother's sister and her husband, the Vicar of Highgate, so he could attend Highgate School with his three male cousins. He admitted this was not a success, he was a difficult child and was sent home quite quickly with a reference saying, 'Reginald has the strength of Hercules and the temper of the Devil'. He seemed to enjoy telling this story as he went on to say that he was a sturdy, hot tempered, red-headed little ruffian, who was sometimes called Jack as he resembled 'John Bull'.<sup>15</sup>

At the age of 12, he followed his brother Charles to Haileybury College in Hertfordshire, a new independent school set up in 1862. Blomfield went into detail about his school days. Clearly unhappy, this 'red-headed little ruffian' was out of his depth; but sport, cricket and football, helped him find his way and by working hard he won 'a leaving exhibition' and that, together with a 'Stapledon' Scholarship and support from his family, he was able to win a place at Exeter College Oxford in 1874.<sup>16</sup> Blomfield was a hard working scholar and gained a first class degree in *Literae Humaniores* in 1879, and again sport was to be important as this chapter of his memoirs talks mainly of playing sport, but he was serious about his time at Oxford, writing, 'the sunshine of Oxford cleared away the clouds, and I was always happy there and left with ideals that have remained with me to this day'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> M. S. Briggs, revised by Richard A. Fellows, 'Blomfield, Sir Reginald Theodore (1856-1942), Architect', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>14</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-20.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

His study of the classics, *Literae Humaniores*, nicknamed Greats, appeared to have been a guiding force for Blomfield, as he wrote that he was keen on the visual arts and used to copy the drawings of Raphael and Michelangelo at the 'Old Taylorian' in Oxford.<sup>18</sup> He even thought to become a sculptor, but that needed private means, and so on discussion with his family it was agreed that he would train as an architect and enter the office of his uncle, his mother's younger brother Sir Arthur William Blomfield (1829-1899), a renowned church architect of the Gothic style.<sup>19</sup> Before settling down to a life of work he had, as he put it, 'one final kick' and went on his own version of the Grand Tour, a travelling tutorship to the continent with a young man only identified as 'W'. The earliest sketch books held in the Blomfield collection at the RIBA start from 1880 and include a sketch of Florence, so this may have been done on this trip as Blomfield mentioned that they visited Italy and the Lakes, France and Germany.<sup>20</sup> It was in 1881 that Blomfield started his architectural training in his uncle's office, his uncle allowing him to train as a pupil without the normal fees. Fellows wrote that Blomfield would have been successful at a number of professions because of the discipline necessary for studying the classics, his talent for drawing and his ability to think clearly and concisely.<sup>21</sup>

Blomfield 'entered the office full of enthusiasm, zeal and ambition' thinking he would find an atmosphere of 'high ideals' but he was to be disappointed, instead he found what he described as 'a depressed managing clerk', two assistants and some fellow pupils whose only interest was the latest news and used to say each morning 'any spice in the papers?'<sup>22</sup> The formal instruction in the theory and history of architecture was limited as the training for pupils was to carry out the most menial tasks such as finishing and inking up drawings, making tracings and producing copies. The young Blomfield was keen to learn and in his first year he was presented with a wider opportunity when his uncle inherited the completion of The Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand. George Edmund Street, the original architect, died in 1881 and Arthur

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33. The Taylor Institute, or the Taylorian, forms the east wing of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

<sup>19</sup> Sir Arthur William Blomfield (1829-1899), Paul Waterhouse, revised by John Elliott, *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>20</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 33-35. RIBA Blomfield collection of sketchbooks, from 1880 to 1937, SKB 31 to SKB 42, 47 sketch books in all.

<sup>21</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginal Blomfield*, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 35-36.

Blomfield, a skilled Gothic church architect, was best placed to finish the work. Blomfield got the laborious and finicky job of scaling down the plans, but there was a bonus to this work as he was allowed on site where he could learn, see detail, understand construction and watch how the work was progressed.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Royal Academy School and early travels**

While working in his uncle's office Blomfield was admitted as a probationer to the junior school of architecture at The Royal Academy on the 5 July 1881, where he attended evening classes two or three times a week. The Academy, under the mastership of Richard Phené Spiers (1838-1916), an author and architect in the Beaux Arts tradition, would invite 'Visitors', and these would be experienced architects of the day and members of the Academy, to set subjects for the students and then critique their work and offer advice.<sup>24</sup> Blomfield listed four of the 'Visitors', all Gothic Revivalist architects. Three of them, Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905), John Loughborough Pearson (1817-1897) and George Frederick Bodley (1827-1907) did not make any impression on him. The fourth 'Visitor', George Edmund Street (1824-1881), he did remember but only for his large feet and vigorous walk.<sup>25</sup> There was one other who impressed the young Blomfield, Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912), known for his domestic 'Old English' style of architecture. Blomfield was to have a connection with Shaw until his death in 1912, further writing his biography in 1940.<sup>26</sup> Blomfield said that Shaw was the only 'Visitor' to whom we 'all attended seriously'.<sup>27</sup> He added that when Shaw criticised a design, instead of getting upset and dismissing Shaw, Blomfield was grateful for the criticism as he said it gave him a glimpse of the meaning of architecture.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39. Blomfield wrote that he attended the RA in 1882. He joined on the 5 July 1881 (ref. RAA/KEE/1/2). Further he would not have attended lectures by Street as these were completed by March 1881. Royal Academy, Mark Pomeroy, Archivist. Email Tenneson 07.12.2021.

<sup>26</sup> Sir Reginald Blomfield, *Richard Norman Shaw, R.A. Architect, 1831-1912, A Study* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1940).

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 316.

<sup>28</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 38.

Blomfield applied himself as he won the junior school prize of £10 in 1882, moving up to the senior school in the autumn of 1883 to complete his training and again winning the prize of £25 for a design of a house based on an existing house in Bloomsbury Square (Figure 213). With unusual modesty, fifty years later he wrote that this design 'was a wretched affair and supposed the others were worse'.<sup>29</sup> At the time of his research in 1986 Fellows reports that there was a letter in the family collection from the Principal, Richard Phené Spiers, to Blomfield's father dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1884 saying that his son's progress at the school had been 'most gratifying' and trusting that his son's practical career would be 'as brilliant as his student's career'.<sup>30</sup> Having completed his training he must have thought that returning full time to his uncle's office would be even duller and the work not to his style of architecture; further, there seemed to have been some sort of disagreement with his uncle and at that point Blomfield decided to strike out on his own.

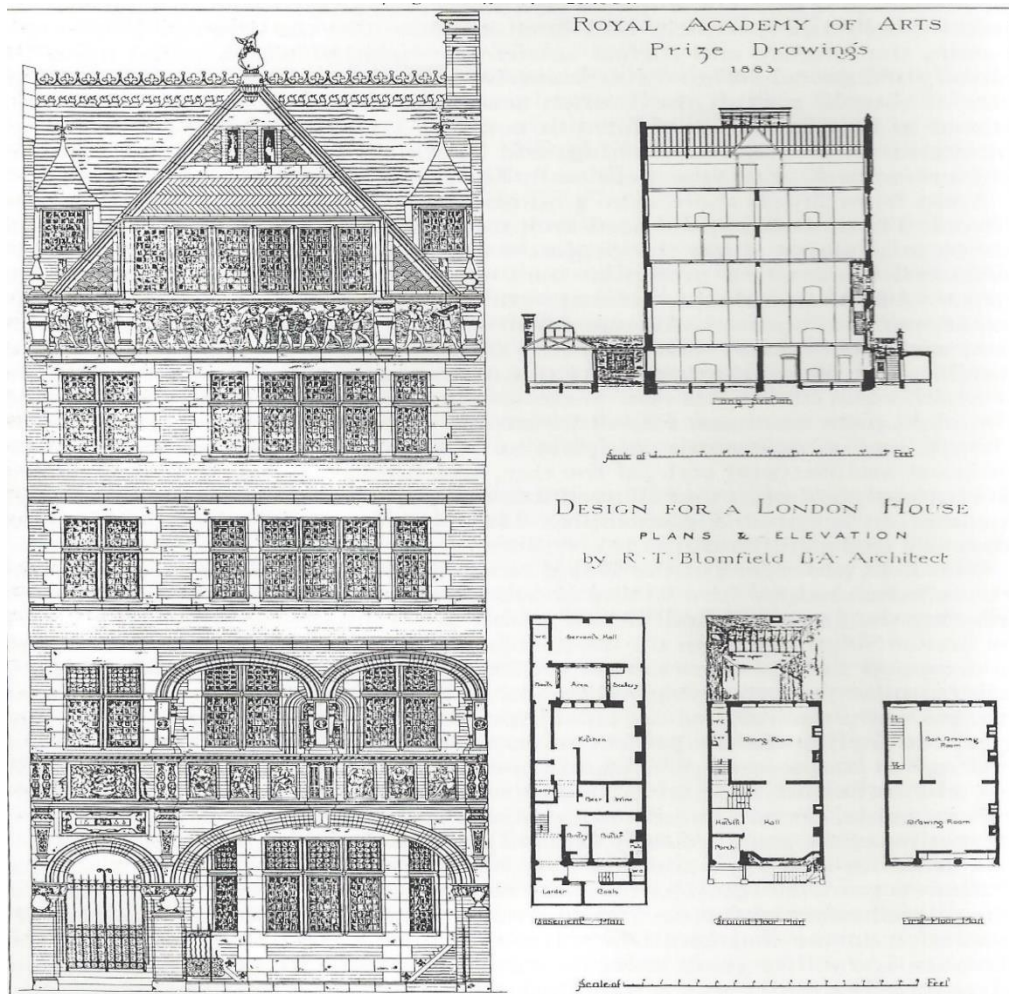
Blomfield, now 27 and with a 'brilliant' career in front of him, was perhaps not quite ready to settle into starting a business and making a career for himself, so he had as he termed it another 'kick' and went on a four month tour of France and Spain. Spiers had suggested places in France that he should visit and study, but Blomfield admitted that he had not yet learned to use his eyes as he was still seeing everything through 'gothic spectacles' and missed so much of the classical architecture. He went into detail of the trials and tribulations of his tour, but what stands out was the regret that he missed so much of the architecture in front of him. He reflected that he did not notice the finer details of François Mansart (1598-1666), an architect who introduced classicism to France, and his work at Blois; he missed the bridge over the Loire in Tours, and he regretted not making a more careful study of the great churches of Clermont-Ferrand and Le Puy. He made the same mistakes in Spain, and reported that after three months on the road his enthusiasm was beginning to wane. Although he continued to build his sketches and notes he considered the rest of his tour was more sightseeing than anything else, visiting the Great Mosque at Cordoba, Seville and Cadiz, where he forgot to visit the Cathedral designed by pupils of José Benito de Churriguera (1665-1725), an architect of the late Baroque style. He was quite honest about what he calls his wickedness and confessed that he never really cared for the

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 17. The Blomfield family have confirmed this letter is lost.

Gothic and seemed to have been more impressed with Romanesque architecture.<sup>31</sup> All was not lost as he came home with over a 100 sketches, which would have improved his skill as a draughtsman and given him his own catalogue of designs for his future work.<sup>32</sup>



1 The Royal Academy Senior School Prize Drawing, 1883

Fig. 213. Blomfield's winning drawing, 1883. *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, 1985.

<sup>31</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 44-50.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47. These sketches appear to have been lost as the first dated sketchbook in the RIBA collection for the continent starts from 1904. In 1907 Blomfield returned to Tours to sketch the bridge. RIBA SKB38.

## To work and the Art Workers Guild

The early years of establishing a new business are the most difficult and it appeared it was no different for Blomfield. In 1884 he took rooms on the second floor at 17 Southampton Street, just off the Strand, and was fortunate as on the floor below was another young architect Edward Schroeder Prior (1852-1932), who had trained in the office of Richard Norman Shaw.<sup>33</sup> Blomfield reported that Prior was a man of considerable ability, a Cambridge Blue in high and long jump and very stimulating company. It was through the company of Prior that Blomfield met and was accepted by other members of the 'Shaw Family', who were or had been ex-pupils, pupils and employees of Shaw, Lethaby (Shaw's chief draughtsman), Macartney, Newton and Horsley. It was this group of young architects amongst others who set up 'The Art Workers Guild' in 1884. The idea of the Guild was 'an honest and sincere attempt to find a common standpoint to bring all the arts together'.<sup>34</sup>

Whether being part of this group of young architects improved Blomfield's business opportunities is not known, but he did make it up with his uncle who recommended him for some church restoration work in 1884. He also carried out some work for his cousin Arthur Brook (no dates) at his house in Weybridge, with another commission for a house in Dorset and in 1886 he designed the Bradby Memorial Hall for his old school Haileybury College. As he was building up the business and his name he used the down time wisely by drawing and measuring old buildings, which was to contribute to his future literary career.<sup>35</sup> During these early years Blomfield had met Frances Burra whose family came from Rye in Sussex, but it would take a further three years before they married in 1886, business was slow and money so tight that he even had to give up his beloved cricket for tennis.<sup>36</sup>

Blomfield was a 'player', he liked to be involved and he clearly wanted to be in the middle of things so, in 1885 he became a member of the Guild. He recollected that the meetings were held fortnightly and sometimes they got quite heated, but in the main the discussions were practical and dealt with the technical process of the

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<sup>33</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>34</sup> The 'Shaw Family' was made up of pupils in Shaw's Office who remained friends and colleagues, these were William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931), Mervyn Edmund Macartney (1853-1931), Ernest Newton (1856-1922), Gerald Horsley (1862-1917). Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 55.

<sup>35</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, pp. 165-174.

<sup>36</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 54.

various arts.<sup>37</sup> The Guild, which was more of a social club for architects and craftsmen, would have given Blomfield the opportunity to mix with a variety of skilled architects and craftsmen, such as Voysey, John Brett (1831-1902) the painter, who was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, Sedding, a church architect who was to write *Garden-Craft Old and New*, which was published the year before Blomfield's own book *The Formal Garden in England*, in 1892.<sup>38</sup> Others included the artist and bookbinder T. J. Cobden Sanderson (1840-1922) for whom he was to build a house and the painter Charles Furse (1868-1904) who also became a client. Business must have improved for Blomfield as members would often dine with the Blomfields at their home in Woburn Square before attending meetings.<sup>39</sup>

Blomfield became Honorary Secretary of the Guild in 1889, coming into contact with William Morris, president of the Guild at that time. Blomfield was not a man who admired others readily but Morris was one whom he did, 'all that I saw and knew of him deepened my admiration for this splendid man', and after an invitation to visit his home in Hammersmith, Blomfield continued, 'my boyish admiration for the author of *The Earthly Paradise* had not been misplaced'.<sup>40</sup> It is interesting to note that out of all the people that Blomfield came into contact with over these early years, Morris and Shaw stood out as the most important to him and this remained with Blomfield until his death. Morris and Shaw were not enamoured with each other as Morris criticised Shaw's architecture, particularly the 'Queen Anne houses at Chelsea' and Shaw thought Morris was too expensive, 'a tradesman whose only object was to make money'.<sup>41</sup> Andrew Saint in his biography of Shaw writes that Blomfield gave a summary of their relationship in his book on Shaw published in 1940, which Saint said cannot be bettered, 'the fact was that the temperaments of Morris and Shaw were radically different, and never could have come to terms. Morris was impetuous and fanciful; he was not called 'Topsy' by his friends without reason. Shaw was a cool headed Scot, of first-rate ability, with immense power of concentration with no strong instincts for poetry'.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 56, 59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 73. Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 28.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, p. 258.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



## Section II: Blomfield, the garden maker

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Fig. 214. Blomfield on Solomon 1902. *Memoirs*, 1932.

In the late 1880s Blomfield (Figure 214) through his involvement in the Art Workers Guild would have met all the architects and artists of the day who would have had an impact on his business. From the list of works published by his son Austin in 1943, the country house building business of his practice for the new wealthy middle class was to come later in the 1890s. Although there are no details on how Blomfield won his business he attributed his domestic business to the publication of his first book *The Formal Garden in England* in 1892.

Since returning from his travels in France and Spain Blomfield had been travelling round the country looking at architecture, and gardens, as he was writing and had published articles in *The Portfolio*.<sup>43</sup> The first of these articles was on half-timbered houses in Kent, followed by pieces on English renaissance architects and the architect Inigo Jones.

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<sup>43</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 52.

In January 1890 Blomfield published a piece on his travels in Somerset, including his own illustrations, but only visited the south east corner as he felt this was the richest part of Somerset for his particular study of old architecture. He talked of two houses and their gardens, the first was Brympton House, which he suggested was built by Inigo Jones, with its broad terrace and a central flight of steps leading to sweeping lawns, which in turn led down to the park. Here he was critical as, 'it has been altered over the last hundred years or so, as no garden designer of the seventeenth century would have been content with anything less than a good solid wall between the garden and the park'.<sup>44</sup> The second, Montacute House, stood out as being his favourite as he devoted a large part of the article to it, he discussed the charm of the gardens which he described as 'being worthy of the house'. He wrote of the great terrace and the straight gravel paths between stretches of grass, the conical yews and the court with its stone gazebos at each corner, finishing his comments with 'taken all in all, Montacute with its gardens is perhaps the most beautiful instance of Elizabethan art in England'. In his sketchbooks at the RIBA are drawings of Montacute House and the garden measured out and it was this layout of the simple grass plats, straight gravel paths, stone balustrades and steps that was to be reflected in his future garden works. (Figure 215).<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Reginald T. Blomfield, 'A Week in Somerset', *The Portfolio*, 21 (1890), 179-184 (p. 179). Historic England, Brympton House, Grade I 1057261.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Blomfield did not realise that part of the garden at Montacute House had been made in the 1850s. Historic England, Montacute House, Grade I 1252021.

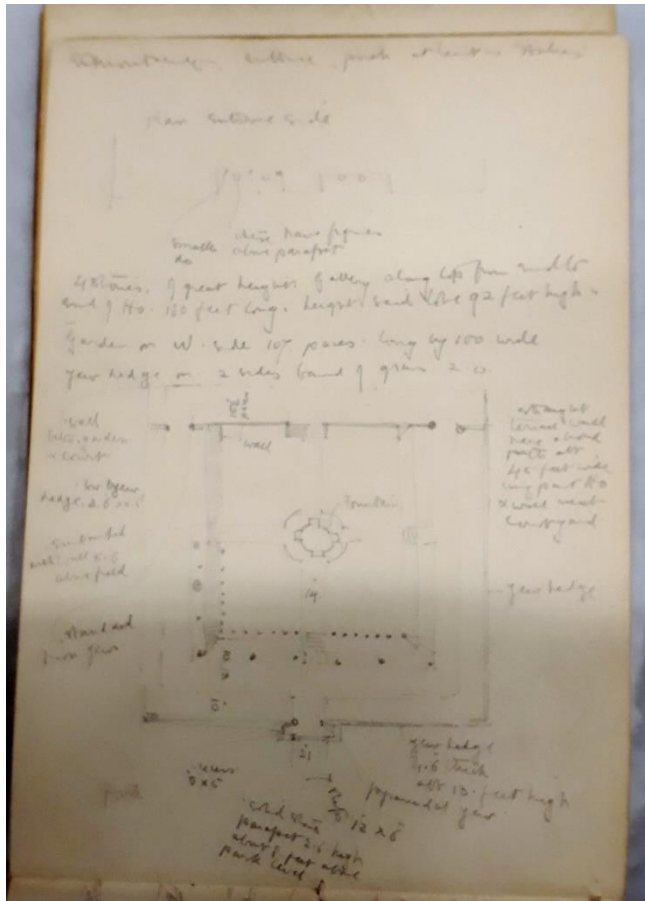


Fig. 215 a. The court at Montacute House.

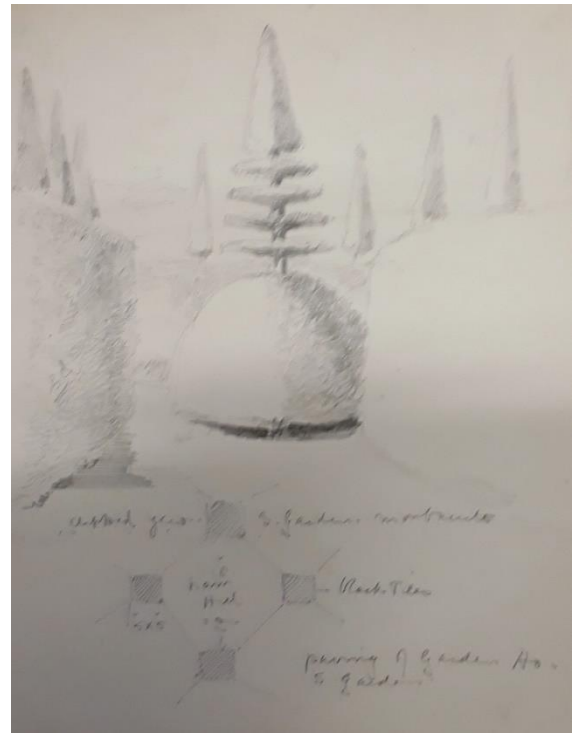


Fig. 215 b. An example of clipped yew.



Fig. 215 c. The balustrade around the central fountain. RIBA SKB31-42.

Blomfield was appreciative of this opportunity to publish his writings and he was grateful to Robert Benton Seeley (1798-1886), the publisher of *The Portfolio*, for this encouragement to persevere with his critical and historical studies of architecture.<sup>46</sup> These first steps into authorship were to become part of Blomfield's life as his study of architecture led to over 14 books and numerous articles on renaissance architecture in England, French architecture, studies on Andrea Palladio (1508-1580), Christopher Wren (1632-1723), and just before his death in 1940, a biography of Shaw.<sup>47</sup>

### **The publication of *The Formal Garden in England***

In January 1892, just prior to the publication of his book, Blomfield's article in *The Magazine of Art* introduced what was to be his consistent theme that the house and garden 'should all form parts of one consecutive scheme', as they had always been designed, and further, the designer should not be limited to the house plan.<sup>48</sup> In this article he mentioned two architects who revived this practice with 'conspicuous success', William Eden Nesfield (1835-1888) at Kinmel Park and Devey for his work at Hall Place and Coombe Warren and here Blomfield added his own drawing of Devey's Orangery at Coombe Warren (Figure 216).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, pp. 175-176. Blomfield, *Richard Norman Shaw, R.A. Architect*.

<sup>48</sup> Reginald Blomfield, 'Artistic Homes. House Architecture: Exterior.', *The Magazine of Art*, January (1892), 79-85.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82. For more information on William Eden Nesfield see Shirley Rose Evans, *Masters of their Craft, The Art, Architecture and Garden Designs of the Nesfields* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2014). Kinmel Park, North Wales. Reference PGW(gd)54(CON) Grade II\*. From 1866 to the 1880s William Eden Nesfield was in partnership with Richard Norman Shaw. Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw*, pp. 50-51.

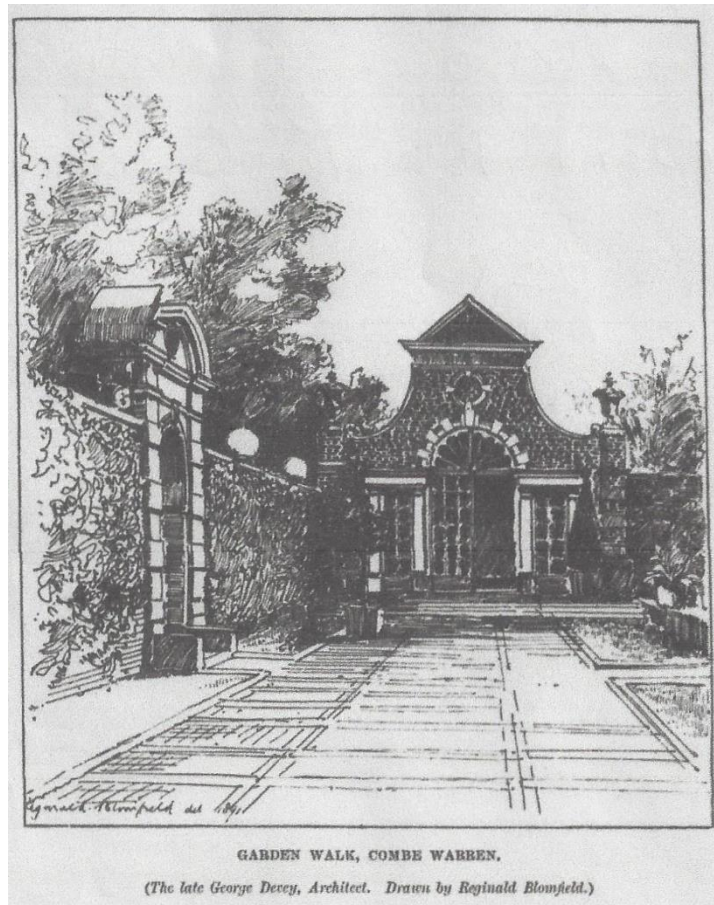


Fig. 216. Blomfield's drawing of Devey's Orangery at Coombe Warren. *The Magazine of Art*, 1892.

It was the article on gardens in *The Portfolio* in 1889 that was to change Blomfield's working life as this early article led to the publication of his first book on gardens in 1892. This was a plea for the return to the older national tradition of making gardens; he was talking about the English formal gardens of the seventeenth century. He had looked at this subject in detail, although he called it a 'short historical sketch'. Blomfield clearly was well informed as he discussed important aspects of English garden history,<sup>50</sup> from Henry VIII's (1491-1547), garden at Nonsuch in the sixteenth century to Bacon and his 1625 essay on gardening. He wrote of Le Nôtre and Mollet (1564-1649) and the great gardens of France and their influence on English garden making, of the 'Dutch' gardens at Hampton Court, moving into the eighteenth century with the landscape movement. The underlying message of the piece was that the old formal way of making gardens needed to be re-considered and not that

<sup>50</sup> Blomfield, 'On Gardens', (pp. 231-237).

'those who advocate this return to the formal garden be abused for their pains'.<sup>51</sup> This had been a constant theme for Blomfield as he noted in his memoirs that in collaboration with Thomas, he had been collecting material for a book on old English gardens for some time. This material was compiled into *The Formal Garden in England* published by Macmillan and Co. with illustrations by Thomas. How Blomfield and Thomas came together to produce this book is not clear; all Blomfield said in his memoirs was, 'in collaboration with Inigo Thomas I had for some time been collecting material for a book on the Old English Garden'.<sup>52</sup> Thomas too said little; all he wrote in his book *Keystones of Building* was, 'since Mr Blomfield and I brought out *The Formal Garden in England* in 1892, there has been steady growing interest in the lay-out surrounding a building'.<sup>53</sup>

The book was published to mixed reviews, Charles J. Robinson (no dates) wrote in *The Academy*, 'a dainty little volume covered in white vellum', but did go on to explain the message of the book, that the garden should be treated in connection to the house, 'to make the house grow out of its surroundings'.<sup>54</sup> Again the message is not lost on the reviewer in *The Critic* who wrote that the book is chiefly interesting as 'tracing the genealogy and history of old fashioned gardens'.<sup>55</sup> The reviewer in *The Field* did not understand the message as he was quite damning about the authors, starting with the title, 'the title is not a wise one nor is the book artistic', moving on to say that the book was not about horticulture or growing plants but 'full of weary quotations from old gardening books'.<sup>56</sup> Neither did the quotations find favour with

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<sup>51</sup> Blomfield, 'On Gardens', (p. 231).

<sup>52</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 60.

<sup>53</sup> F. Inigo Thomas, *Keystones of Building* (London: The Bodley Head, 1907), p. 89. The available material on Thomas does not give any further information on his relationship with Blomfield. There appears to be no archive for Thomas. The Macmillan Archive is split between the British Library, who hold the material for their important authors, and the University of Reading who hold the lesser authors. (Blomfield is classed as a lesser author.) Research in both archives has not shown any information on how they came to collaborate on the book. Although both were members of The Art Workers Guild it was at different times and there is no evidence that they met there. Both Blomfield and Thomas attended Haileybury College, although they would not have met at the school as they were five years apart. I am grateful to Toby Parker the Archivist at Haileybury for this information. Francis Inigo Thomas was an established garden designer. For more information on his work see David Ottewill, *Edwardian Gardens*, pp. 13-21.

<sup>54</sup> Charles J. Robinson, 'The Formal Garden in England, by Reginald Blomfield and F. Inigo Thomas (Macmillan)', *The Academy*, 41.1046 (1892), (p. 486).

<sup>55</sup> 'The Formal Garden in England', *The Critic*, 17.532 (1892), (p. 251).

<sup>56</sup> 'The Formal Garden in England', *The Field, The Country Gentleman's Newspaper*, 310.2044 (1892), (p. 310).

the reviewer in *The Saturday Review* who wrote that, 'whatever the page the desire is not so much to express an opinion as to quote and go on quoting'. Nevertheless, he appeared to understand the message by suggesting to Blomfield that on his next holiday he should visit Scotland, where he would find some fine examples of seventeenth century gardens, adding as an afterthought that the drawings of Thomas were to be commended.<sup>57</sup>

One review of *The Formal Garden in England* that still has resonance today was from Robinson, the other protagonist in the 'argument' mentioned in the Introduction. Robinson, himself a prolific author, had advocated for some years that the garden should not be designed by architects but by gardeners. In answer to Blomfield's book, Robinson published his own book, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, which was an attack on Blomfield and the formal system of garden making.<sup>58</sup> Robinson, known for his pugnacious character, found much to criticise starting in his Preface with a comment that 'books which have lately appeared – books not worth notice for their own sake, as they contribute nothing to our knowledge of the beautiful art of gardening or garden design'.<sup>59</sup> Robinson continued to disagree throughout his book; when Blomfield discussed the house and garden as inseparable factors, Robinson replied 'the house is often so bad that nothing can prevent its evil effect on the garden'.<sup>60</sup> He explained what he believed was the role of the architect and how he could help the gardener 'by building a beautiful house' emphasising 'that is his work, and the true architect would seek to go no further'.<sup>61</sup>

What seemed to be Robinson's issue was definition; his meaning of 'formal' was more to do with the geometric designs full of bedding plants, or other material in the great Victorian gardens such as the upper terraces at Crystal Palace, or at Shrubland Hall or Crewe Hall.<sup>62</sup> This attack was more to do with Robinson's character and skill at self-promotion than any real difference of opinion. Jekyll, who knew both men well, summed it up by expressing the view that 'both men were right and both wrong'.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> 'The Formal Garden', *The Saturday Review*, 73.1894 (1892), (p. 191).

<sup>58</sup> Robinson, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix. By books, Robinson is referring to Blomfield's book and John D. Sedding's book, *Garden-Craft Old and New*.

<sup>60</sup> Robinson, *Garden Design and Architects' Gardens*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Bisgrove, *William Robinson - The Wild Gardener* (London: Francis Lincoln, 2008), pp. 173-174.

Undaunted by these mixed reviews, Blomfield claimed in his memoirs that the publication of *The Formal Garden in England* led to him being 'constantly called in for the designs of grounds and gardens'.<sup>64</sup> From the list of works compiled by his son Austin in 1942 and the list by Fellows in 1985, the domestic side of his business increased substantially from the publication of his book in 1892 up to the First World War.

### **The first assignment, Chequers Court**

Blomfield wrote in his memoirs that he first saw Chequers (at that time it was called Chequers Court) soon after the publication of *The Formal Garden* in 1892. He had been called in by the then owner Bertram Astley (1857-1904) to consult on the gardens.<sup>65</sup> Astley had inherited the estate from his mother, Rosalind Frankland-Russell-Astley (1828-1900) who had inherited the estate from her mother in 1871. The house is an Elizabethan red-brick mansion built by William Hawtrey (c.1520-1597) circa 1565.<sup>66</sup> When Blomfield arrived the house had been Gothicised by Astley's grandfather in the early nineteenth century with the exterior covered in stucco. Blomfield recalled that walking round the house he found a loose piece of stucco; obviously unable to resist picking at it, he soon exposed some beautiful old bricks, the original Elizabethan red bricks, and wrote that with his host, the whole house party joined in and over 100 square foot was exposed.<sup>67</sup> Astley then started to remove the stucco, the Gothic battlements and finials and replaced the windows with stone mullions and returned the exterior of the house to its original sixteenth century design. The house was leased for a period until the Conservative politician Arthur Lee and his wife, Lord and Lady Lee of Fareham, took over the lease in 1909 and brought Blomfield back to carry out extensive works to the interiors of Chequers Court.<sup>68</sup> From this first consultation, it seemed that the only garden work that Astley asked Blomfield to do was to design the terrace on the south front which runs the length of the house (Figures 217, 218).

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<sup>64</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>66</sup> Historic England, Chequers, Grade I 1125879.

<sup>67</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 85.

<sup>68</sup> Norma Major, *Chequers, The Prime Minister's Country House and its History* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 66.





Fig. 217. The original terrace at Chequers Court, date unknown. *Chequers Collection*.



Fig. 218. Blomfield's south terrace. *Country Life*, 1917. The south terrace. 2020.

When the Lees took over Chequers with a life tenancy in April 1909, Lee wrote that 'we are now provided with an ideal home for the rest of our natural lives' and it was at this point that the Lees engaged Blomfield to make extensive alterations to the interiors of the house. Norma Major wrote that 'the changes were so dramatic that it is impossible to relate some of the photographs of Chequers taken at the turn of the nineteenth century to the interiors of today'.<sup>69</sup> The Lees turned their attention to the garden and, as Blomfield was already working with them, it would be supposed that they consulted him. The Lees, having seen some work by Tipping, decided to consult him and not Blomfield. Tipping kept Blomfield's original south terrace but added a sunken garden with pavilions, together with a terrace on the north front similar in style to Blomfield's original south terrace. At the end of this terrace Tipping added a pavilion and created a new entrance court (Figure 219).

<sup>69</sup> Major, *Chequers*, p. 75. H. Avray Tipping, 'Chequers-III. Buckingham. The Future Home of British Prime Ministers', *Country Life*, 42.1085 (1917), 372-379.

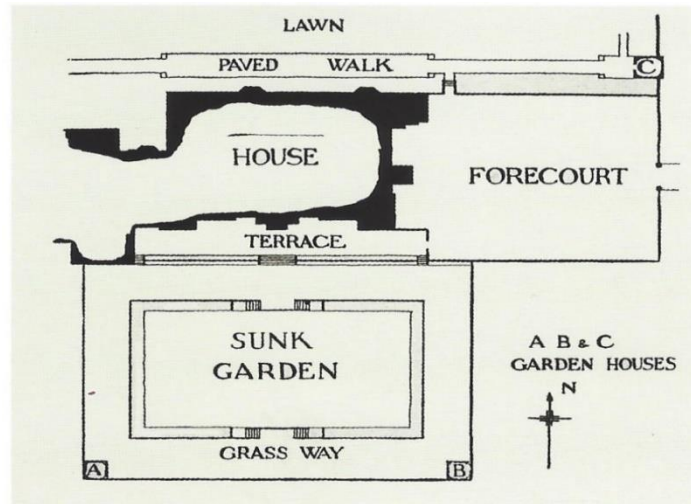


Fig. 219. The Tipping Garden Plan for Chequers 1911. *Edwardian Country Life, The Story of H. Avray Tipping*, 2011.

Throughout this period Blomfield remained working for the Lees on the interior of the house and some external work (Figure 220). It seemed that the Lees were hesitant of the Tipping plan as they consulted Blomfield, perhaps expecting some advice, but instead Blomfield was severely critical of the plan, particularly the forecourt.<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 220. Blomfield can be seen here in shirt sleeves at Chequers circa 1910. *Chequers, The Prime Minister's Country House and its History*, 1996.

<sup>70</sup> Helena Gerrish, *Edwardian Country Life, The Story of H. Avray Tipping* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2011), p. 130. I am very grateful to Katie Duffield, Head Gardener Chequers, for arranging a visit and information.

## Godinton Park in Kent

All Blomfield said of George Ashley Dodd (1841-1917) and his wife was that they gave him an 'excellent day's shooting'. In 1895 the Dodds had bought Godinton House and estate, over 1000 acres, with much of the original contents of the house, from Colonel John Lesley Toke (1839-1911). Dodd, the son of the Conservative MP for Maidstone George Dodd (1800-1864), was educated at Harrow and later went to Oxford, his profession was Barrister at Law, with chambers in Lincoln's Inn. Later in 1911 he became High Sheriff of Kent as well as serving as a JP.<sup>71</sup> The estate had been in the Toke family since Thomas Toke (no dates) married Joan Goldwell (no dates) in 1474. Joan Goldwell had brought the Goldwell inheritance of Goldwell Manor and Godinton Manor to the Toke family on her marriage. The Goldwell family had lived at Godinton since 1405, having bought the original estate from the Champneys Brothers (no dates).<sup>72</sup> Historic England described the house as a large red brick L-shaped house built in 1628 by Nicholas Toke (1671-1746) around a medieval courtyard house. The east front, the garden front, has a range of Dutch gable ends formed from attics, with a single storey porch.<sup>73</sup> Hussey, who wrote three articles for *Country Life* in the 1960s, said of Godinton 'the medieval house was remodelled mainly during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, in a characteristic Kentish style with astonishing ornateness'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Horace Cox, *Who's Who in Kent, Surrey & Sussex, Cox's County Series* (London: The Field Office, 1911), p. 40.

<sup>72</sup> Simon Houfe, *Godinton* (Rochester: Godinton House Preservation Trust, 2002), pp. 13, 19.

<sup>73</sup> Historic England, Godinton Park, Grade I 1000151.

<sup>74</sup> Christopher Hussey, 'Godinton Park Kent I, II, and III, The Home of Mr Alan Wyndham-Green', *Country Life*, 132.3431 (1962), 1396-1400; 132.3432 (1962), 1546-1549; 132.3433 (1962), 1600-1603.

Blomfield's brief was to make alterations to the house and design new gardens in keeping with the character of the house. It appeared that the house and estate had been let to tenants for a number of years and needed updating, so it may have been that the Dodds had heard not only of Blomfield's work on remodelling old houses but knew of his book *The Formal Garden in England*. This must have been the perfect assignment for Blomfield, not only did he have the seventeenth century house to work with, but also the garden from the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1871 (Figure 221) showing just a few paths and little formal design. Here he could exercise all his scholarship, knowledge and passion for the formal garden of the seventeenth century.<sup>75</sup>



Fig. 221. OS map of Godinton Park, surveyed 1871 published 1876, showing the garden area before Blomfield started work. Kent Sheet LXIV.

The gardens at Godinton had changed with fashion from the early seventeenth century before the present house was built. An estate map dated 1621 shows the early house, surrounded with farm buildings, walled gardens, ponds, orchards set in the parkland and woods (Figure 222). An account book from 1618 to 1704, kept by Captain Toke (1588-1680) and his nephew Sir Nicolas Toke, details elements of the

<sup>75</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, LXIV surveyed 1871 published 1876.

garden and garden buildings at that time, the park was enclosed by a 'dike' and a 'hedge about the park wood'. 'There were walled enclosures, with gardens scattered about small buildings, a pigeon house, a banketing house and an orrenge house'. The orchards were planted with crabapple, cherry, pear and apple trees and fishponds were stocked with pike, carp, bream and tench. In all Godinton was a great seventeenth century estate.<sup>76</sup>



Fig. 222. The estate map of Godinton by Samuel Piense dated 1621. *Godinton Guidebook*.

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<sup>76</sup> Houfe, *Godinton*, pp. 44-45.

In the late eighteenth century, John Toke (1738-1819) followed the fashion and swept away all the features of the seventeenth century garden to create a naturalistic landscape, enlarging the park to the east and south with a new carriageway, creating views of the house as seen in this illustration of the new landscape for Godinton painted by John George Wood (no dates) circa 1790 (Figure 223). At some time in the middle of the nineteenth century the family planted the area in front of the east side of the house with a fashionable display of geometric carpet bedding flower beds (Figures 224, 225).



Fig. 223. The new landscape at Godinton circa 1790. *Godinton Guidebook*.



Fig. 224. Godinton circa 1870s, a layout of circular flower beds. *The Godinton House Preservation Trust*.



Fig. 225. The east front of Godinton House, following the fashion with a geometric layout of carpet bedding, circa 1870. *The Godinton House Preservation Trust*.

Blomfield's commission now brought the gardens full circle, with the freedom to design his version of a seventeenth century garden to complement the fine old house. The aerial photograph of the gardens sets out the layout today and compared to his first plan shows how little the garden has changed from Blomfield's original plans (Figure 226). His first plan for the 13 acre gardens, found crumpled at the back of a drawer, is water damaged and so it is difficult to establish its date, which was probably circa 1896. The plan showed to the north a new entrance court of an elongated circle with a path to the west leading to the offices. To the east, Blomfield had drawn a parterre which today is the 'Pan Garden', leading off this to the south was a larger grass plat with gravel paths and a series of stone steps that led down to a circular pond. Surrounding the garden is hedging which remains today. To the west of the plan was a demi-lune lawn area set out with an intricate parterre, again with more hedging. The pink areas of the plan are suggested as planting (Figure 227). There is a further plan of the garden, dated 1900 that showed the garden's lower area with the layout that exists today. Blomfield had written on this plan, 'the gardens as



completed'. The demi-lune area to the west is now lawn and was used as a tennis court. To the south, the circular pond has been reshaped into a rectangular pond edged with stone with a stepped hemicycle at both ends (Figure 228).

In a 1907 article in *Country Life* the author wrote of the old gardens that had been swept away, adding that Blomfield had nothing to destroy 'but much to create and how well this has been done'. He talked of the fine level of grass, the new box-hedge geometric plat with its fine statue of Pan and of the yew hedges already of sturdy size.<sup>77</sup>



Fig. 226. Godinton from the air. Blue arrow indicates the statue of Pan. *Godinton Guidebook*.

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<sup>77</sup> 'Godinton Kent, The seat of Mr George Ashley Dodd', *Country Life*, 21.540 (1907), 666-673 (p. 671).

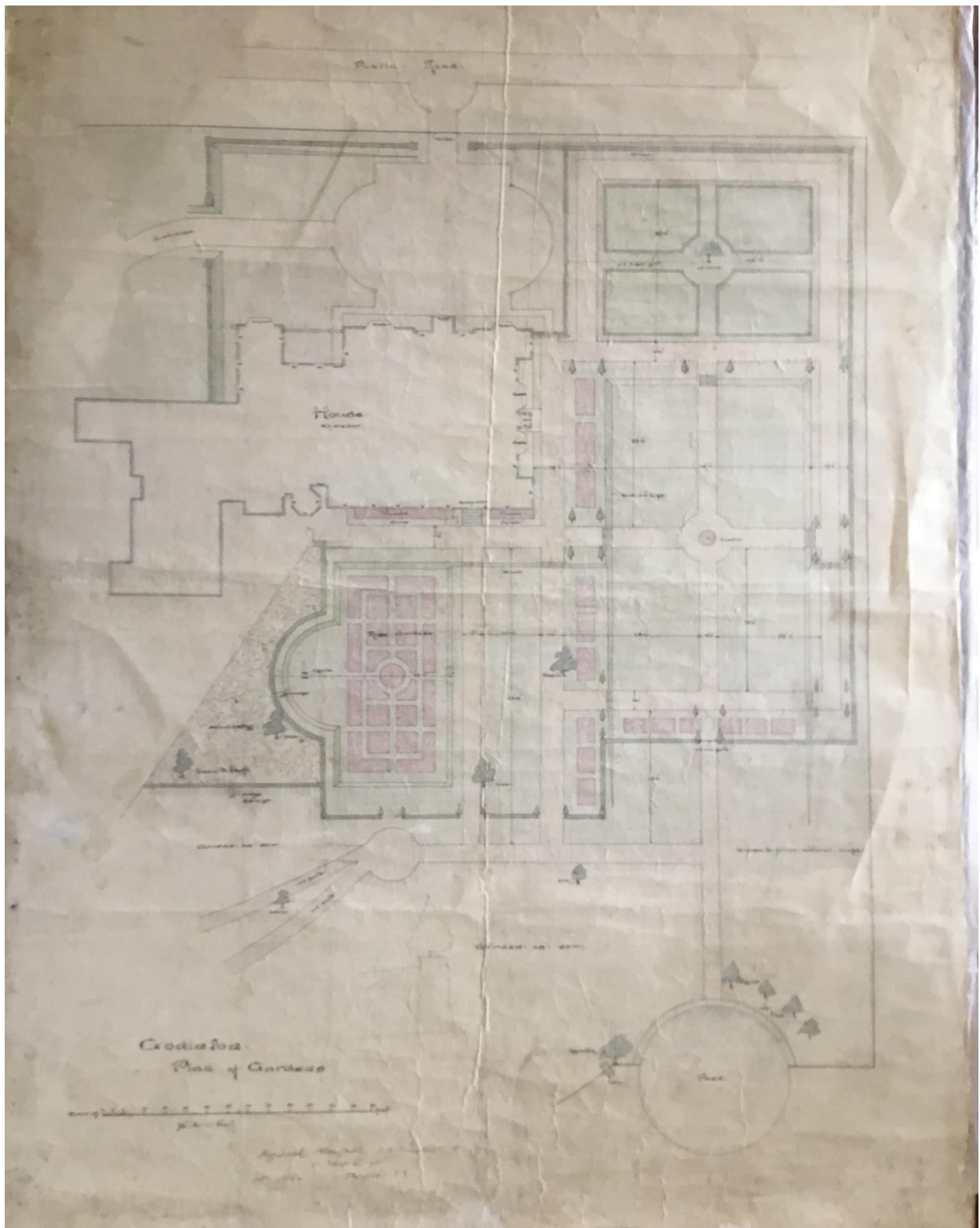


Fig. 227. Blomfield's water damaged plan for the gardens at Godinton 1896. *The Godinton House Preservation Trust.*



Fig. 228. A plan for the gardens dated 1900 shows the new shape of the pool as a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle. *The Godinton House Preservation Trust.*

Today the garden is much simplified as can be seen in the following three photographs. Looking south Blomfield's large grass plat is now a lawn which was used for croquet, also seen to the east are the great yew hedges planted by Blomfield which now surround the garden. The second photograph leads down to the water piece, and the third shows the herbaceous borders originally planted in the grass plat in the 1920s (Figures 229, 230, 231).



Fig. 229. Looking from the north to the water piece. 2019.



Fig. 230. Blomfield's water piece. 2019.



Fig. 231. The herbaceous borders looking towards the house. 2019.

In 1916 during the war Blomfield did another plan for the Dodds. The design produced was for what is now known as the Italian Garden. This was a narrow piece of garden placed between the Walled and the Rose Garden (Figure 232). The original plan was called the Cypress Garden; however, the design, another rectangle with a stepped hemicycle at one end, would have been too big for this narrow space and so when the Hon. Mrs Lillie Bruce Ward (1866-1951) bought the estate in the 1920s, she adapted the plan to what is seen today, a central pool with a fountain replacing the original grass plat as seen in the OS map revised 1930-1946 (Figures 233, 234).<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Godinton Park. OS map, Kent sheet, LXIV.8 revised 1930-1946 published 1946.

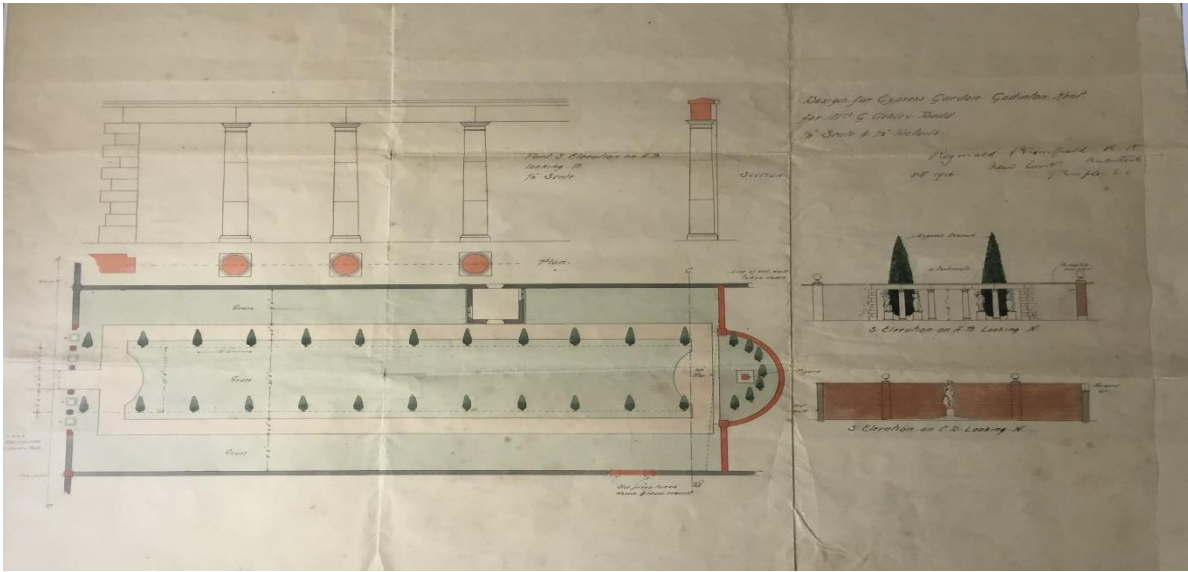


Fig. 232. The design for the Cypress Garden 1916. The Godinton House Preservation Trust.

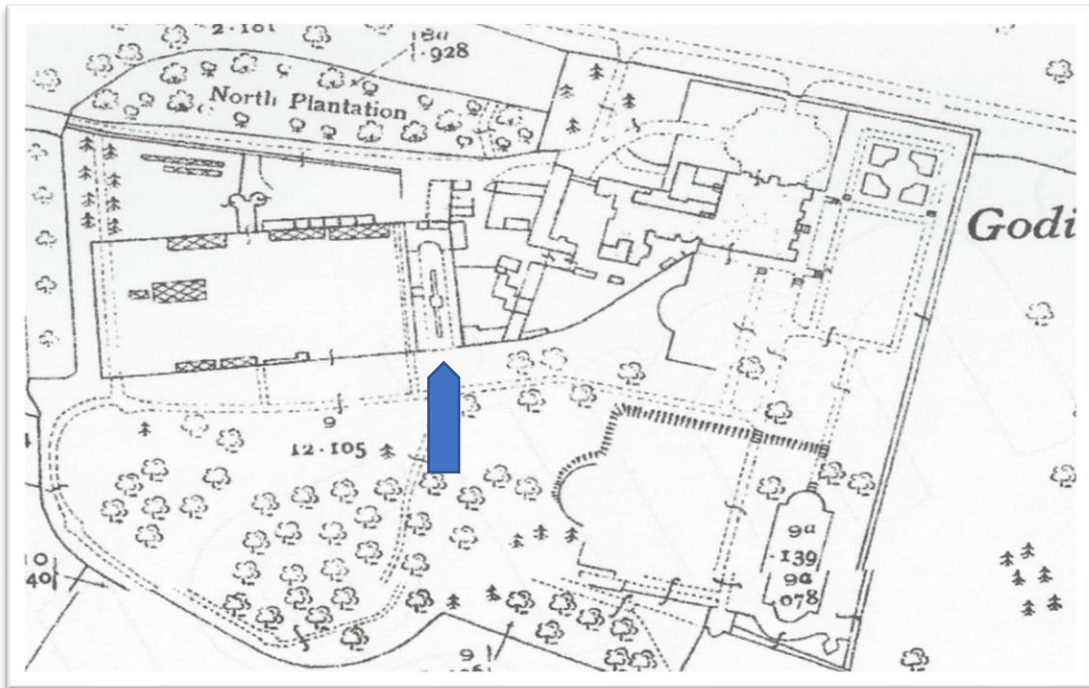


Fig. 233. OS map, revised 1930-1946 published 1946, the blue arrow points to the Italian Garden. Kent sheet, LXIV.8



Fig. 234. The Italian Garden. 2019.

Dodd died in 1917 and the estate was put on the open market and bought by Mrs Ward. Blomfield's grass plats were not to her taste, so she adapted the central large grass plat by adding two herbaceous borders which remain today (see Figure 231).<sup>79</sup> The estate was passed down through her family to her grandson, Major Alan Wyndham Green (1921-1996) who, wanting to preserve Godinton for the future, when faced with a compulsory purchase order in 1974 for part of the park, decided to use the money to set up a charitable trust to preserve Godinton House and Garden for the future.<sup>80</sup>

For Blomfield, this first assignment of alterations to the house and laying out new gardens, just three years after the publication of *The Formal Garden in England*, could arguably have set the future scene for him. At Godinton, not only did he make alterations to the front of the house, which were praised by *Country Life* in 1907, but he put back the seventeenth century garden to complement the house, as he wrote 'putting the house in context'.<sup>81</sup> This was the first time Blomfield used what was to become his signature feature, a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle,

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<sup>79</sup> Houfe, *Godinton*, p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>81</sup> 'Godinton Park', *Country Life*, (p. 61). I am grateful to Sally Connolly of the Godinton House Preservation Trust for help and allowing use of the garden plans and photographs.

what he called a 'water piece'. He next used this feature at Brocklesby Park in Lincolnshire where there is a full discussion of this shape and its possible origins.

### **Wittington House in Buckinghamshire**

Blomfield did not make any mention of Hudson Ewbanke Kearley, later first Viscount of Devonport (1856-1934) in his memoirs, nor discussed the commission to build a new house and grounds by the River Thames at Wittington in Buckinghamshire. Kearley was a self-made man, having founded a tea company in 1876 and retailing his own goods from 1878. In 1890 he had over 200 branches trading as the International Stores and in 1895 combined both the tea company and retail shops to form the International Tea Company, in that year offering shares to the public.<sup>82</sup> This had probably made Kearley, also an MP, very rich and in 1897 he commissioned Blomfield to build a house on the highest part of the site overlooking the river on one of the two chalk escarpments on the Thames, the other site being Cliveden House. Kearley had acquired the 75 acre site freehold from Oxford University.<sup>83</sup>

By 1909 the house needed enlargement and was remodelled to a style fashionable in Edwardian England, what Fellows described as 'a suave essay in the late seventeenth style favoured by Blomfield for domestic architecture', and it has not altered to this day (Figures 235, 236).<sup>84</sup> There is just one colour perspective of Wittington done in 1909 by Stanley Davenport Adshead (1868-1946). Although Blomfield was a fine draughtsman he did employ others to make perspective drawings, allowing them to draw in their own style. The perspective was of the front elevation, to the left showing the position of the house in the landscape. To the right was an inset laying out the downstairs rooms and terraces that look out to the river (Figures 237, 238).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Richard Davenport-Hines, 'Kearley, Hudson Ewbanke, First Viscount Devonport', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>83</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 61. It has not been established how Kearley acquired the site.

<sup>84</sup> Fellows, *Blomfield*, p. 60.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

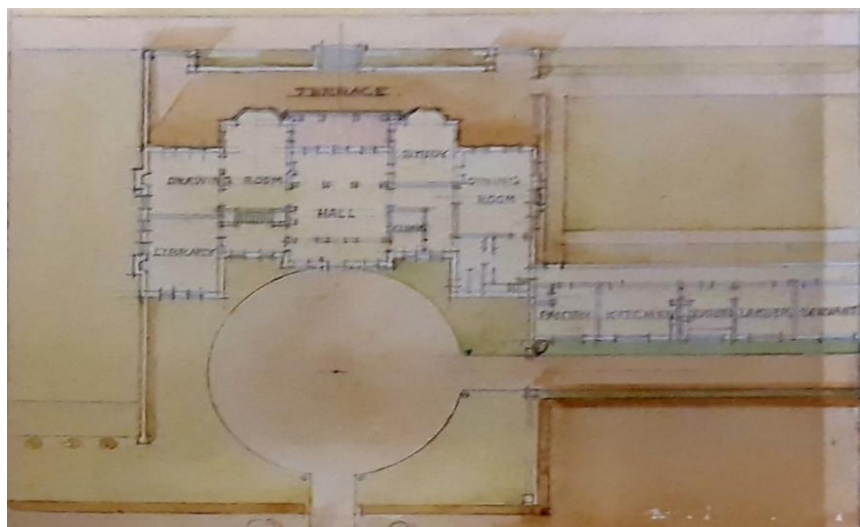




Fig. 235. Wittington House circa 2000. *SAS Group*.



Fig. 236. The garden front showing the yews and terrace. *Country Life*, 1927.



Figs. 237, 238. The perspective drawing and inset by Adsheds in 1909 of Wittington House. RIBA PB447/11.

As the site stood high above the river, by some forty or fifty feet, the garden was planned with three broad terraces down to the river. By now Blomfield had a reputation for garden making and Kearley may have asked him for advice about the terracing of the garden when he first came to Wittington in 1897. The garden may have been laid out at that time as the perspective illustration by Adshead (see Figure 237) showed a matured garden to the left. The clearest guide to how the garden was terraced was the ordnance survey map surveyed in 1910 and a photograph taken in the late 1920s of the rock garden and the boat house Blomfield built circa 1900 (Figures 239, 240).<sup>86</sup>

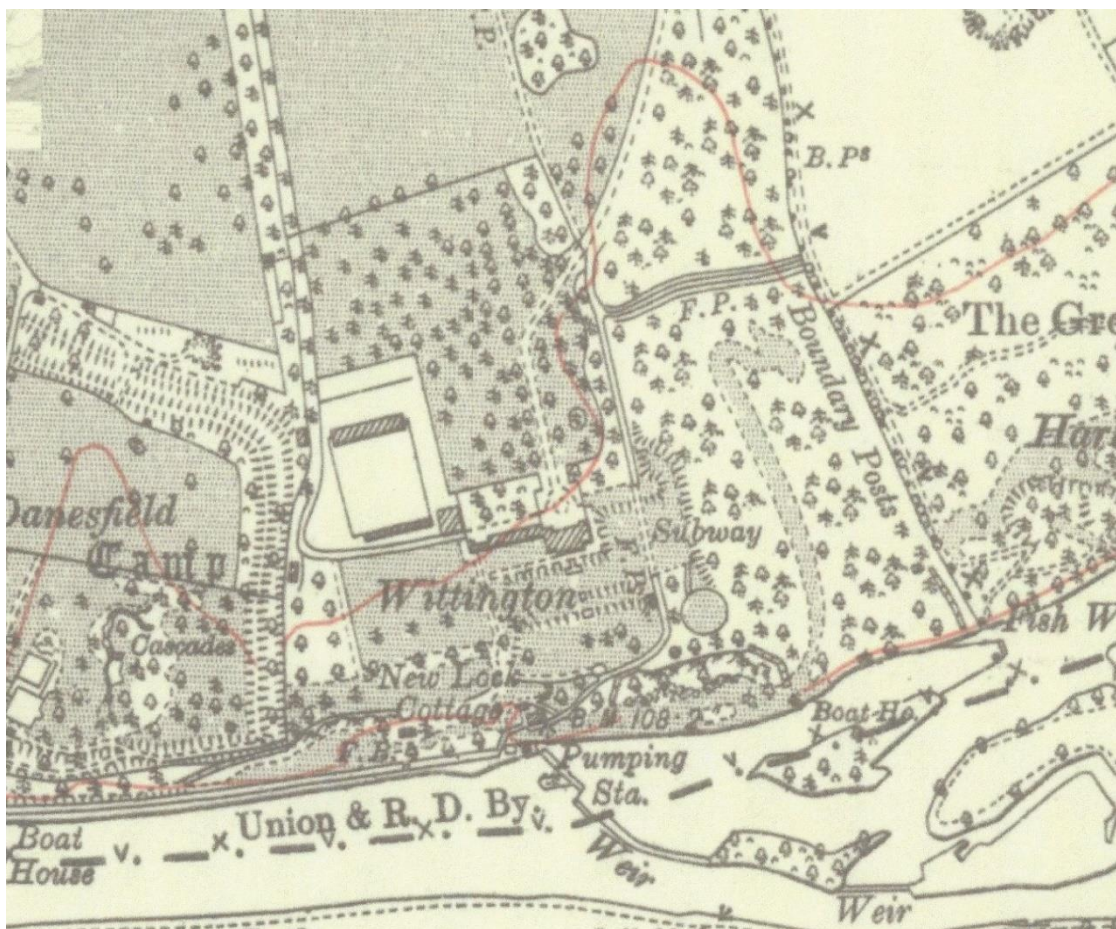


Fig. 239. OS map of Wittington House showing the terraces, surveyed 1910 published 1913. Buckinghamshire sheet, XXI.11

<sup>86</sup> E. H. M. Cox, 'Wittington Buckinghamshire, A Residence of Viscount Devonport', *Country Life*, 62.1591 (1927), 90-95. OS map, Buckinghamshire sheet, XXI.11 surveyed 1910 published 1913.



Fig. 240. The rock garden and a glimpse of Blomfield's boat house circa 1920s. *Reginald A. Malby & Co. / RHS Lindley Collections.*

Kearley seemed to have been a man in the same vein as Blomfield as he wrote in his diary that 'he appreciated alike the interest of the fight, the contact with other men's energetic temperament', but his lifelong passion as he went on to say, 'is my garden at Wittington – the garden that I have made where no garden was before'. Kearley died in September 1934. The estate was split up and sold, and in 1935 Garfield Weston (1898-1978), the philanthropist and Canadian owner of Associated British Foods, bought the estate. In 1948 the Salvation Army took over the house from the Weston family at a peppercorn rent as an Eventide House for elderly ladies. After Weston's death the estate was disbanded and sold in 1985 to Crest Estates who converted the house into offices which were bought by SAS that year. SAS have renovated the house and maintained the grounds and gardens as Kearley would have wanted.<sup>87</sup> The house is listed Grade II\* but the gardens are not listed.<sup>88</sup>

The style of the house at Wittington is classed as 'Neo Classical' which was to become a 'trademark' for Blomfield with other houses he built up to the First World War. In

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<sup>87</sup> I am grateful to Andrew Ford of SAS for information, August 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Historic England, Wittington House, Grade II\* 1125557.

regard to the garden, because of the height of this site towering over the Thames, it was likely that Kearley would have consulted Blomfield's knowledge on the logistics of making these vast sweeping grass terraces, but although he mentioned in his diary the task of clearing the site, his only mention of Blomfield was in relation to the house.<sup>89</sup>

### **Brocklesby Park in Lincolnshire**

Blomfield wrote in his memoirs how he came to Brocklesby Park in 1899. He had been invited by publishers Messrs George Bell & Sons to write a history of 'English Renaissance Architecture in England'. Blomfield had been collecting material on this subject for a number of years and had a few articles published in *The Portfolio*. As part of collecting more material for the book he said that his research 'led me into out of the way corners of history and acquainted me with actual buildings themselves in different places in England'.<sup>90</sup> He mentioned this also introduced him to a number of interesting clients. One in particular was Sir Henry Edwardes, known to his friends as 'the Bart', who at that time lived at Wotton Hall in Derbyshire and had consulted Blomfield about a design for his garden. It was through Sir Henry that Blomfield met Charles Alfred Worsley-Pelham, fourth Earl of Yarborough (1859-1936), of Brocklesby Park in Lincolnshire.<sup>91</sup> Blomfield wrote that 'the Bart' was in his office in the Temple and had Yarborough with him to discuss Sir Henry's garden, Yarborough said little but no doubt was observing Blomfield. Soon after, Blomfield received an invitation to visit Brocklesby Park. In 1898, the east wing of Brockelsby had been burned down and not knowing what to do Yarborough had asked Sir Henry, who recommended Blomfield.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Andrew Ford, SAS, August 2020.

<sup>90</sup> Reginald Blomfield, *A History of Renaissance Architecture in England, 1500-1800*, 2 volumes (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1897). Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>91</sup> Sir Henry Hope Edwardes (1829-1900), tenth Baronet of Shrewsbury. Wotton Hall in Derbyshire was demolished in 1935.

<sup>92</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 81.



Fig. 241. Brocklesby House by George Stubbs circa 1777.  
<<https://www.printandfineart.co.uk/product/9386/george-stubbs-pony-and-hound-in-front-of-brocklesby-park>> [accessed 18.02.2021].

A dwelling was first recorded at Brocklesby in 1585 by Sir William Pelham (d.1587). His son also called William (d.1629) built a new house circa 1603 and surrounded it with fine gardens and groves. In 1692 the estate was inherited by Sir William's descendant Sir Charles Pelham (d.1763), who in 1710 remodelled the house into the Georgian style of a 'U' with short wings of two bays (Figure 241). The estate was then inherited by his great nephew, Charles Anderson (1749-1823) while still a minor aged 14, who later was to assume the name of Pelham to become first Baron Yarborough. In 1771 he commissioned Brown to remodel the house and lay out new grounds and at that time he also employed James Wyatt (1747-1813) to design other buildings on the estate including a Mausoleum to his late wife. During the 1780s, Repton was engaged to design the gardens and prepare a Red Book which is now lost. Further additions and alterations were made to the house and grounds since that time but following a serious fire in 1898, which destroyed much of the house and the east wing, Charles, the fourth Earl, engaged Blomfield to restore and remodel the house and lay out new gardens.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Historic England, Brocklesby Hall, Grade I 1359800. Brocklesby Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000971.

Blomfield wrote that this was the first of his important projects and he was to rebuild the 'fine east wing on the old lines' and make considerable improvements in the plan of the house.<sup>94</sup> Dorothy Stroud (1910-1997) pointed out that it was almost certain that the Great Hall can be attributed to Brown, and here Blomfield reconstructed the hall exactly as it was before, even the plaster frieze of masks and wreaths above the windows (Figure 242).<sup>95</sup>



Fig. 242. The Great Hall showing Blomfield's masks and wreaths. *Country Life*, 1934.

As part of the rebuilding Blomfield was asked to lay out the east garden and the southern approach, to make water pieces and to create a terrace on the south side of the house.<sup>96</sup> From the early ordnance survey maps, the first (Figure 243) surveyed in 1886 showed a terrace to the south of the house but no other garden works.<sup>97</sup> The ordnance survey map revised in 1908 (Figure 244) showed Blomfield's work. To the east was the sunken garden and to the south a grand terrace with a balustraded demi-lune leading down to two rectangular water pieces edged with stone with stepped hemicycles at both ends set in grass. There were further paths crossing the

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<sup>94</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 82.

<sup>95</sup> Dorothy Stroud, *Capability Brown* (London: Country Life, 1950), p. 146.

<sup>96</sup> 'Additions to Brocklesby Park', *The Builder*, 82 (1902), (p. 186). Blomfield drew up plans for these designs for the gardens as the reference refers to architect's designs.

<sup>97</sup> OS map, Lincolnshire Sheet, XX1.NW surveyed 1886 published 1887.

parterre and a path leading to the three-sided pedestal of a Grecian urn creating a vista from the terrace. Hussey writing in *Country Life* in 1934 praised Blomfield, adding that full credit was due to him as this was one of his biggest early works. Hussey was particularly impressed with the rectangular water pieces that flank the approach to what he called the grand parterre.<sup>98</sup>

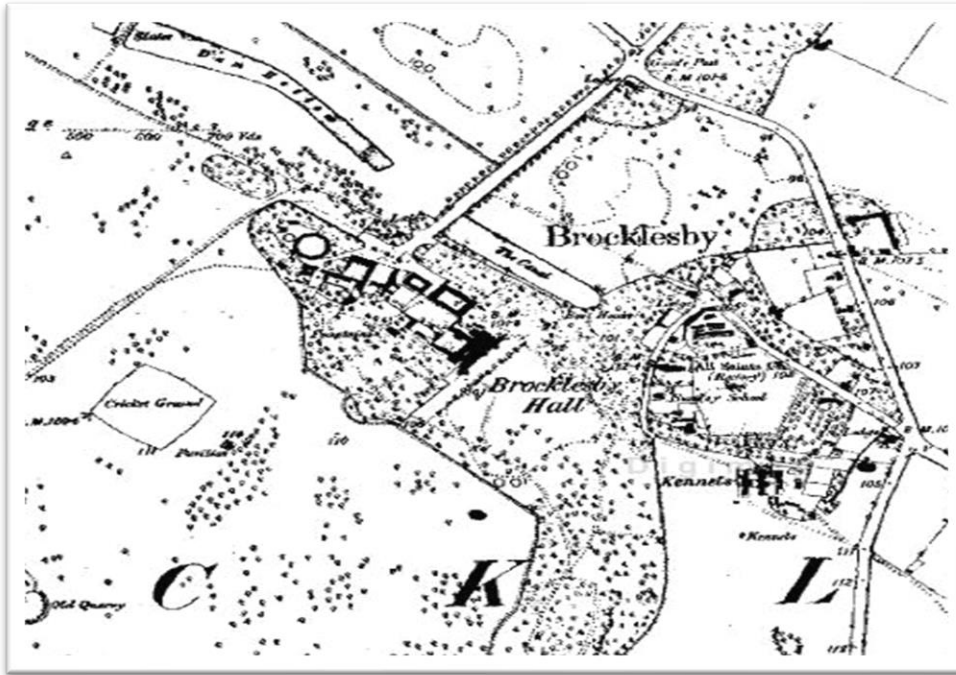


Fig. 243. The OS map before Blomfield, surveyed 1886 published 1887. Lincolnshire sheet, XXI.NW.

The ordnance survey maps and three photographs (Figures 245, 246, 247) illustrated Blomfield's grand parterre and water pieces. The first taken just after completion in 1904 showed the enormity of the project but at this time the yews were yet to be planted. The following two photographs from *Country Life* in 1934 showed the parterre in its full maturity, highlighting the seventeenth century design, and here Hussey continued with his praise, 'particularly happy are the twin oblong pools that flank the approach, mirroring the sky from the upper windows of the house'.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Christopher Hussey, 'Brocklesby Park – I, Lincolnshire. The Seat of The Earl of Yarborough', *Country Life*, 75.1936 (1934), 192-198 (p. 195).

<sup>99</sup> OS map, Lincolnshire sheet, XXI.NW revised 1905 published 1908. Hussey, *Country Life*, p. 195.



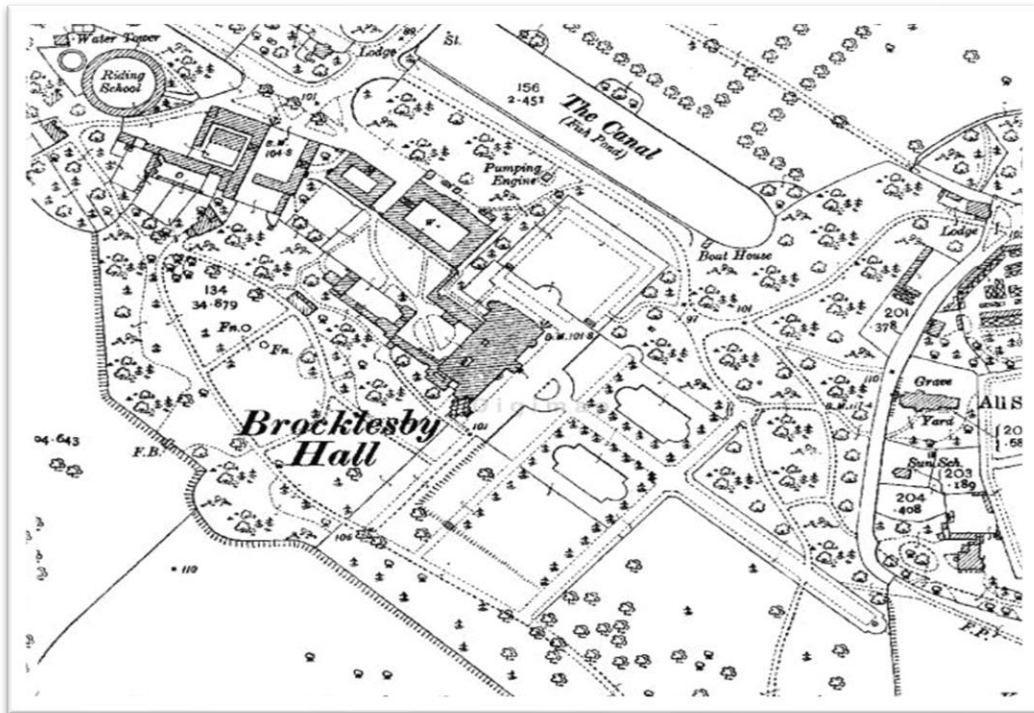


Fig. 244. The OS map showing Blomfield's garden works, revised 1905 published 1908. Lincolnshire sheet, XXI.NW



Fig. 245. Photograph dated 1912, yews to be planted. RIBAPIX. RIBA 14219.



Fig. 246. The south terrace and one of the water pieces. *Country Life*, 1934.



Fig. 247. The southern approach leading to the three sided urn. *Country Life*, 1934.

There is a record of Blomfield's first dealings with Yarborough, when in October 1898 a contract was signed for renovations, rebuilding the house and for laying out gardens on the south east and north east fronts. An initial estimate was given of £42384, which today would be £3.8 million and Blomfield's five per cent commission would have made his fee £2119, today £192000. This was too much for Yarborough and the plans for the house were scaled down although it appeared that the garden plans went ahead.<sup>100</sup> In October 1898 Blomfield wrote to the Earl enclosing his plan for the garden with details of the approach, driveways, retaining parapet walls to the terrace and gardens and a proposal to plant all the hedges with yew trees.<sup>101</sup> Following a further visit, Yarborough decided to go ahead as the estate accounts for 1899-1900 showed a cost for improvements to the pleasure grounds and also the purchase of 2400 yew.<sup>102</sup> Blomfield also prepared a plan for the Sunken East Garden (Figure 248) where he terraced the ground to make it level and surrounded the area with balustraded walls, creating an enclosed formal garden with axial paths meeting at a central statue.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Private papers, I am grateful to James Edgar for a view of these papers. I understand that the original papers are held at Brocklesby Park. I was not granted a visit to view these papers or to walk the site.

<sup>101</sup> Private papers.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

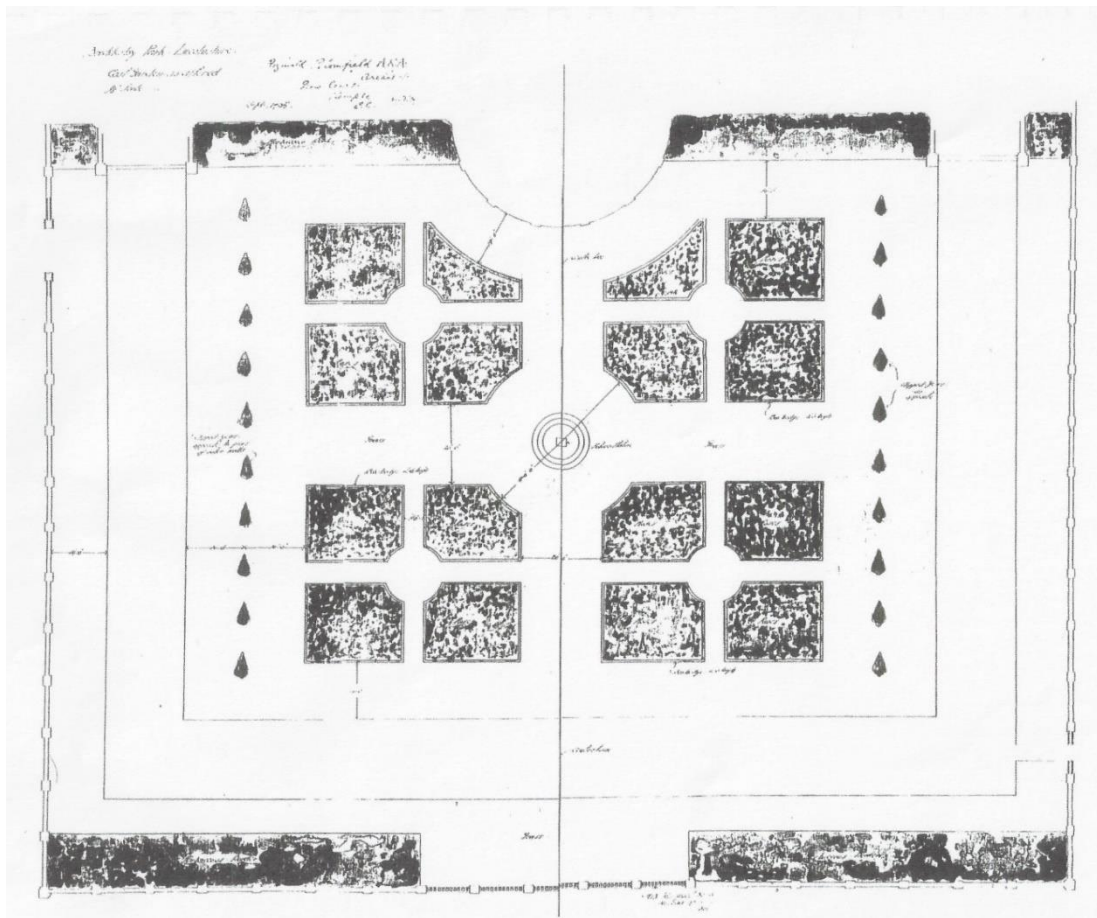


Fig. 248. A photocopy of the plan of the East Garden dated 1906. *Private collection.*

Private papers set out what had survived in 2000, although some areas had been simplified:

- The south east approach, with balustraded slopes to the terrace
- The twin lily ponds – Blomfield called these 'water pieces'
- The clipped yew topiary (this had been replanted)
- The long yew hedged walk to the monument, now grass and was originally gravelled to match the drive
- The croquet lawn
- The balustraded walls and terracing of the enclosed garden to the north east, this was Blomfield's east garden although the internal layout has been changed.

These features can be seen in two aerial photographs from the late 1990s, the blue arrow denoting the east garden (Figures 249, 250).



Fig. 249. Aerial photograph of Blomfield's water pieces and the east garden, circa 1990s. By kind permission of John T. Blakeston.



Fig. 250. Aerial view of Blomfield's water pieces. *John. T. Blakeston.*

In 2008, the estate applied for planning permission to alter the landscape, removing Blomfield's water pieces to be replaced as the planning application stated with 'a more practical space' (Figure 251).<sup>104</sup>

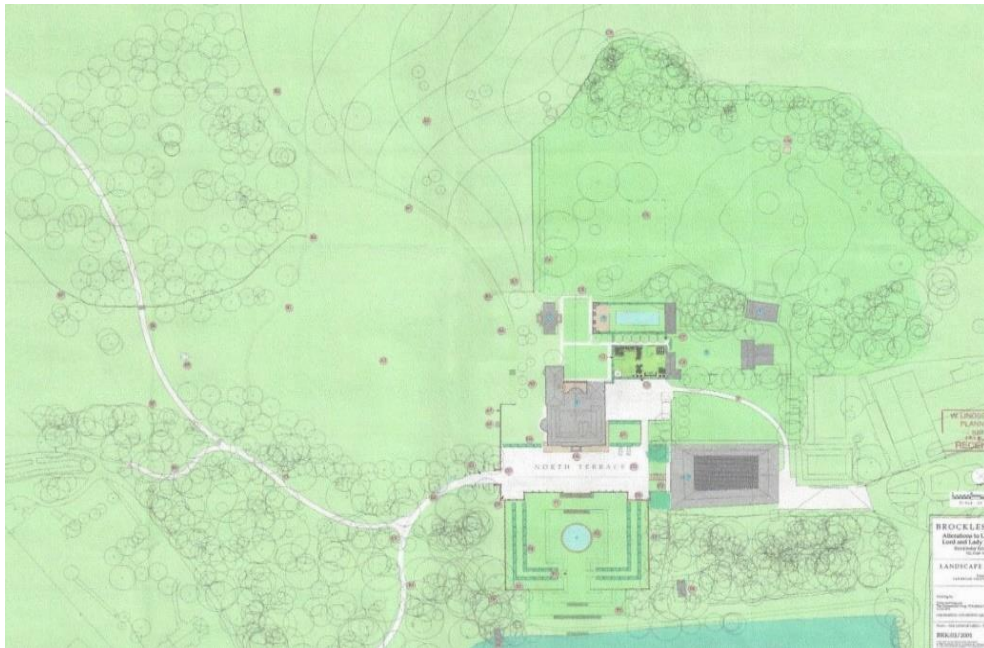


Fig. 251. The new layout for Brocklesby Park, 2008. WLDC.

<sup>104</sup> West Lindsey District Council, Planning Application no 121848, 14.03.2008.

The Blomfield landscape with both the water pieces, the approach and the terrace were removed as seen in this aerial photograph by Historic England dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 2010. The outline of the water pieces could still be seen in the grass (Figure 252).



Fig. 252. An aerial photograph of the new 'practical area' 2010. *Historic England*.

The formal garden at Brocklesby Park was the first large scale formal design by Blomfield and a very bold design, a point that was not missed by Hussey, who some thirty years later applauded him, particularly for the water pieces. This was the second time that Blomfield had used this shape of a hemicycle with stepped sides at both ends of a rectangle, firstly at Godinton and now here at Brocklesby Park, both for water. The garden at Brocklesby Park is listed Grade I and still in 2022 mentions Blomfield's formal design of terraces and 'water pieces', listed as two formal lily pools. These were removed over ten years ago, thus Historic England have yet to update the entry.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Historic England, Brocklesby Park, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000971. Checked 22.01.2022.

Blomfield's signature feature does not appear to have a formal name. The shape has been referred to as an 'exedra', a recess, or an 'apsidiole; in architecture this refers to a small apse, a semi-circular recess. However, these definitions make no mention of the straight lines of the step or shoulder at the edges of the hemicycle in Blomfield's signature feature.<sup>106</sup> There was reference to this shape, again not named, in a design by Henry Wise for the Maastricht Garden at Windsor Castle in 1712, where the central pool was designed as a rectangle with a stepped hemicycle at both ends (Figure 253).

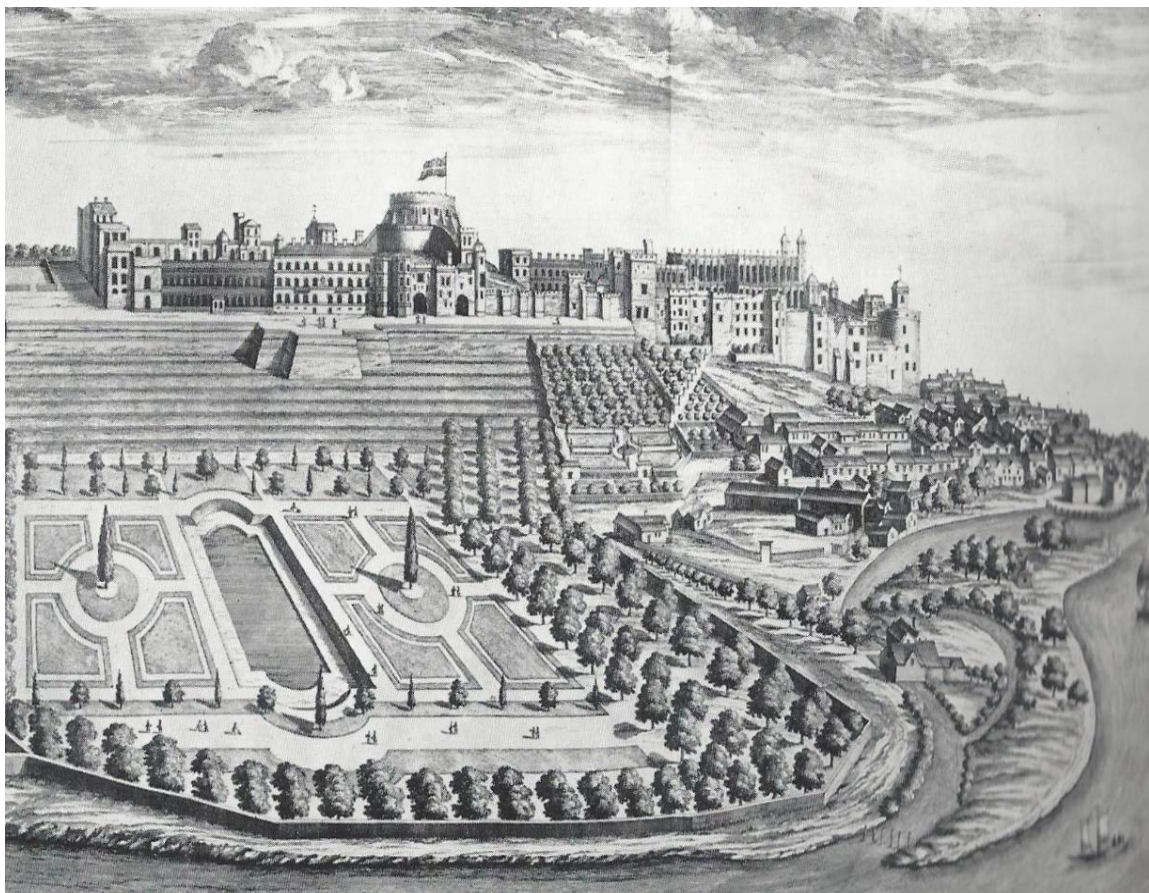


Fig. 253. The Maastricht Garden, Henry Wise, circa 1712. *Gardener to Queen Anne, Henry Wise (1653-1738) and the Formal Garden*, plate 26.

<sup>106</sup> I consulted Garden and Architectural Historians Dr David Jacques, Dr Sally Jeffrey, Charles Hind and The Soanes Museum, who hold a design of the Maastricht Garden by Henry Wise circa 1712. In regard to this shape they made the above suggestions. See James Stevens Curl, *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Apsidiole p. 31, Exedra p. 270.



Why Blomfield adopted this shape is not clear but he found the illustrations by Kip and Knyff published in *Britannia Illustrata* in the early 1700s invaluable as he wrote, 'many of the drawings were made much earlier and are absolutely invaluable for a knowledge of the method of the layout of gardens and grounds on a large scale at the end of the seventeenth century'.<sup>107</sup> In his brusque manner he had already praised London and Wise for their formal designs, so this may have been where his inspiration came from to use this shape as his signature piece as many of these gardens in *Britannia Illustrata* had been laid out by London and Wise. The particular illustration of the Maastricht Garden at Windsor appeared in the 1720 edition of *Britannia Illustrata*.<sup>108</sup> A further example of this shape appeared in a 1707 illustration for Chatsworth House in Derbyshire (Figure 254).<sup>109</sup>

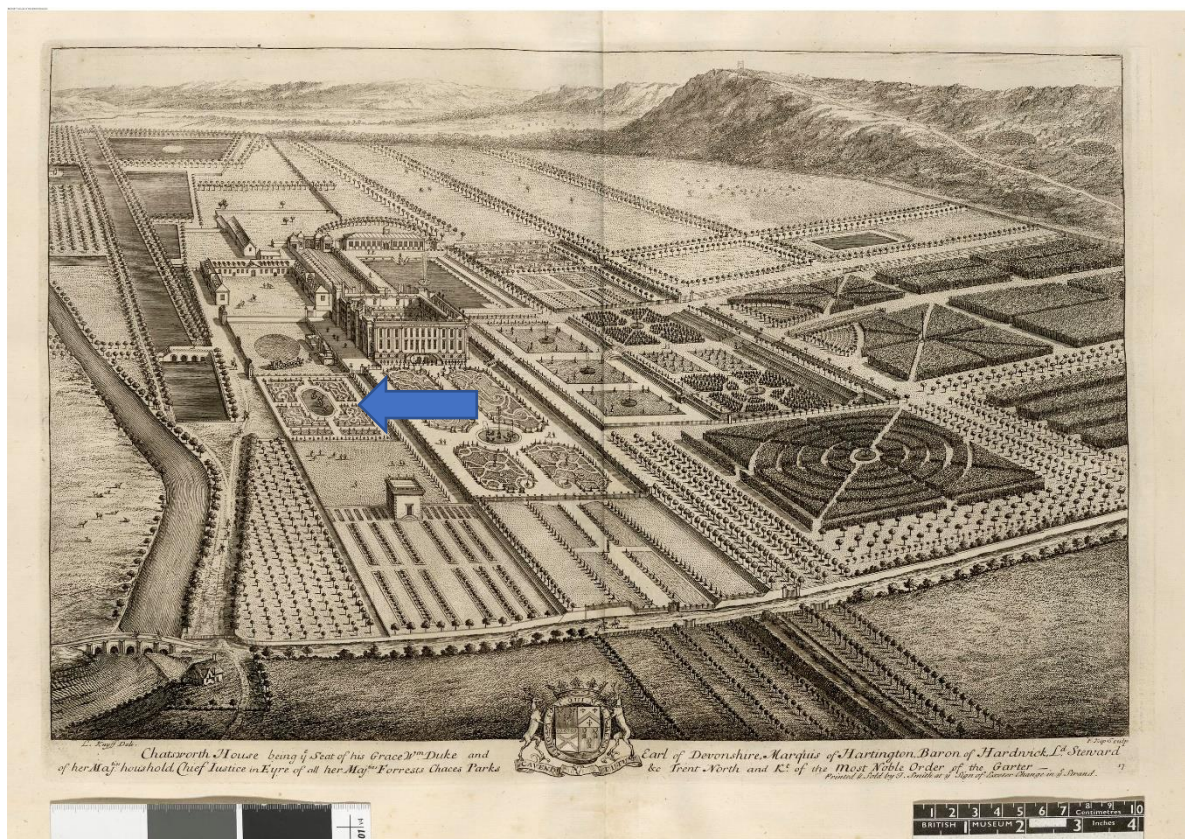


Fig. 254. Chatsworth House, 1707. British Museum, asset number 1613617636.

<sup>107</sup> Kip and Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata*, 1708. Blomfield, *The Formal Garden*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>108</sup> Kip, Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata of Views of Several of the Royal Palaces as also of the Principal Seats of the Nobility and Gentry of Great Britain* (London: David Mortier, 1720), plate no. 99, p. 31.

<sup>109</sup> Kip, Knyff, *Britannia Illustrata* (Bungay: Paradigm Press, 1984), plate no. 17, pp. 42-43.

## Caythorpe Court Lincolnshire

Blomfield made no mention in his memoirs of Major Edgar Lubbock (1847-1907) who in 1899 commissioned him to build a 'shooting lodge' and gardens on high ground overlooking the Vale of Belvoir in Lincolnshire. Lubbock was a great sportsman and his favourite sport was cricket. Educated at Eton, he trained in the law at the University of London, became a Director of Whitbread Brewery and later a Director of the Bank of England.<sup>110</sup> On his marriage to Amy Myddelton Peacock of Great Ford Hall in Stamford in 1886, they moved to Grantham. The lodge he commissioned from Blomfield was built on the site of an old farmhouse just east of the village of Caythorpe, about 9 miles from Grantham (Figure 255).<sup>111</sup>

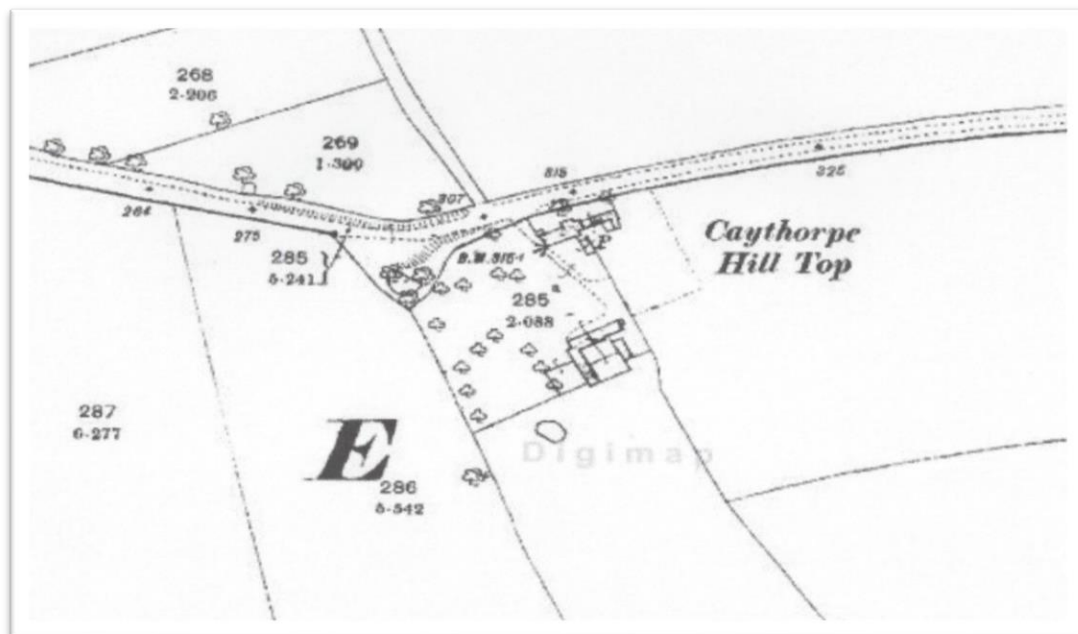


Fig. 255. OS map, surveyed 1886 published 1887, showing the old farmhouse. Lincolnshire sheet, XCVI.SW

It was probable that Lubbock started discussing the project with Blomfield soon after his marriage in 1886 as work started in 1889 and was completed by 1901. In the RIBA collection there is a copy of a perspective reprinted from *The Builder* of 1903 (Figure 256).

<sup>110</sup> Edgar Lubbock, <<https://lubbock.co.uk/edgar-lubbock-1847-1907>> [accessed 27.01.2020].

<sup>111</sup> OS map, Lincolnshire sheet, XCVI.SW surveyed 1886 published 1887.

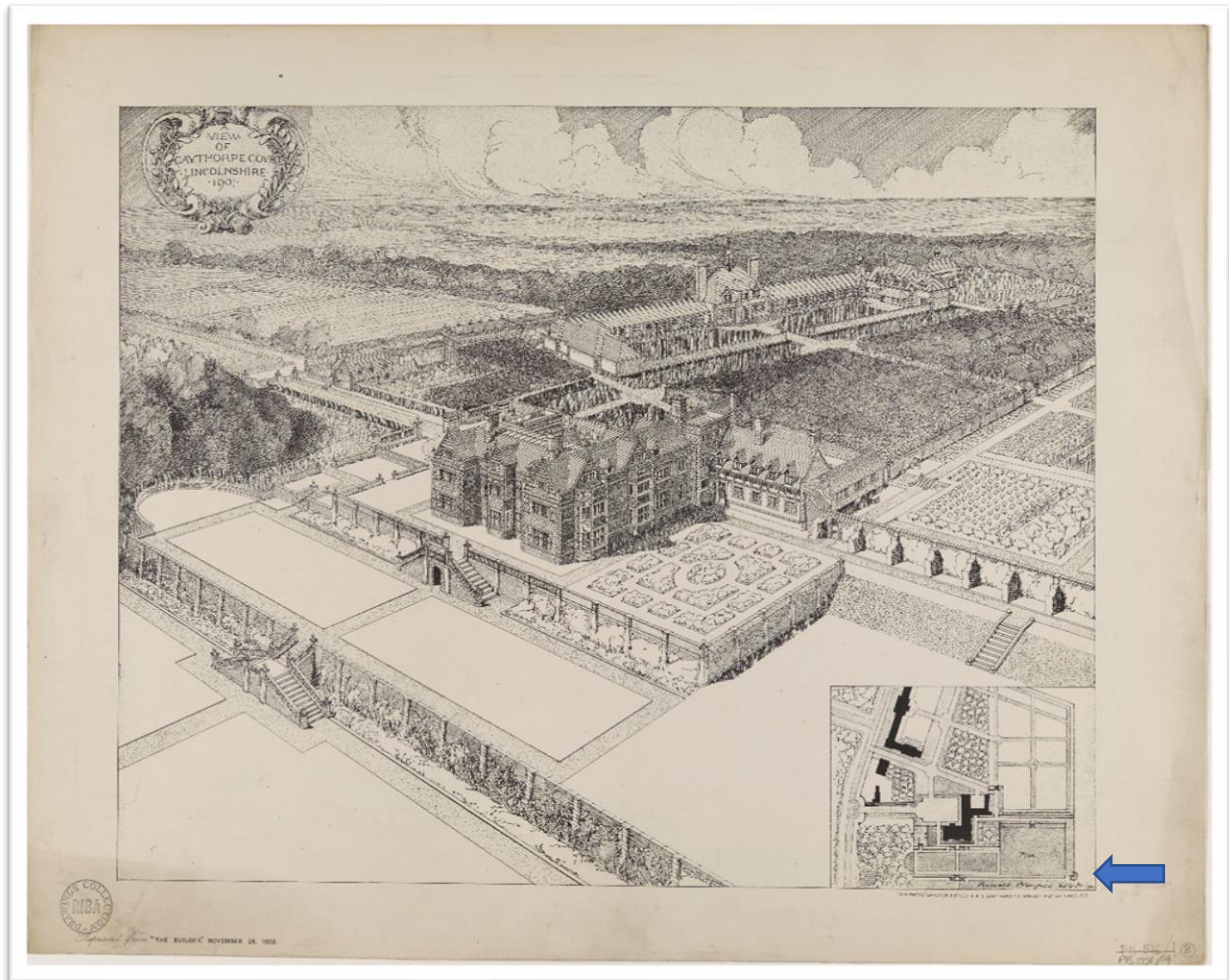


Fig. 256. Blomfield's perspective of Caythorpe Court, 1901. The blue arrow shows steps down to the tennis court. RIBA PB516.

According to Fellows this was a feat of engineering, as the site of the building was on a moraine, loose sediment and rock debris left by a glacier, so the capacity of the soil was not sufficient to take the weight of the structure using conventional foundations of the time. Blomfield, with great ingenuity, sunk deep shafts filled with load-bearing material to take the weight of the building; this process is akin to a modern pile and ground beam system.<sup>112</sup> Fellows must have seen some costs from the Blomfield family for this project as he wrote that the building and the external costs were £120000, a considerable sum at that time, and today that would be just under £11 million. If Blomfield charged the usual five per cent commission, then at the time his fee would have been £6000, today around £538000.<sup>113</sup> The perspective of Caythorpe was L-

<sup>112</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 64.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

shaped with the main garden and the three tiered terraces facing south west. Given its cost the house was quite modest, built of Ancaster stone with banks of local ironstone, slate for the roof and with gables and bays. The style was of a local tradition that was built in Lincolnshire in the seventeenth century (Figure 257).



Fig. 257. The garden front of Caythorpe Court. *PGL Group, undated postcard.*

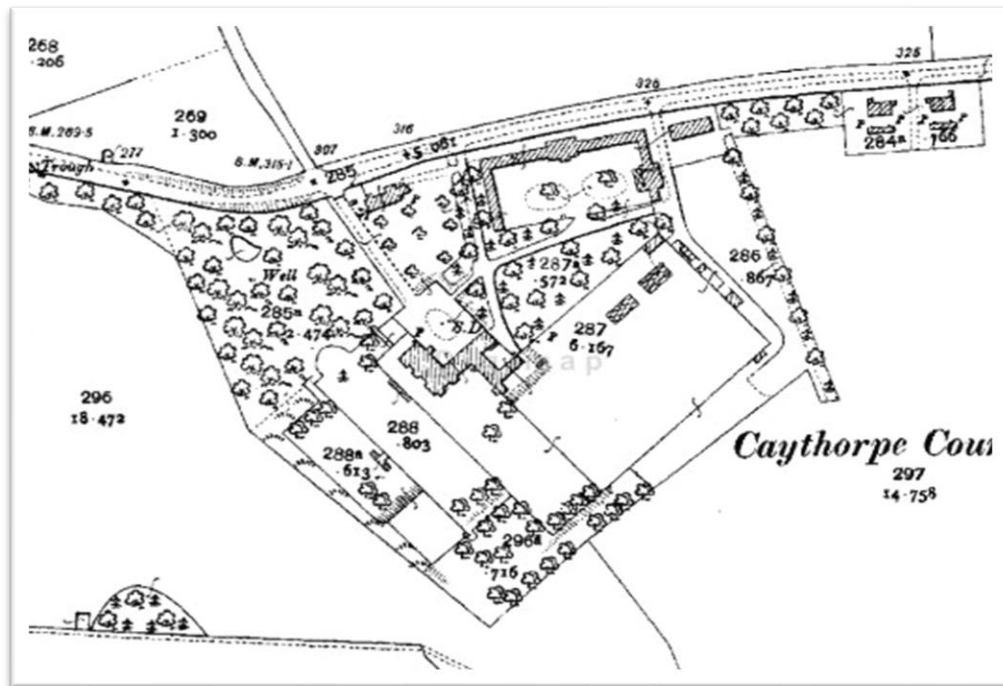


Fig. 258. The OS map revised 1903 published 1905, showing the garden layout with a stepped hemicycle to the west on the middle terrace. Lincolnshire sheet, XCVI.13

The tiered terraces running north west to south east are divided by walls and can be seen in the OS map revised in 1903 (Figure 258).<sup>114</sup> The paved upper terrace runs in front of the house flowing into what was intended as a parterre, which is now grass. The length of this terrace to the end of the house is 142 yards and to its end, past the grass area is 220 yards, with a width of 35 yards (Figures 259, 260, 261, 262). Just off centre is the staircase leading down to the lower terrace, to the west Blomfield had used his signature piece, a stepped hemicycle. This space is grass, and the width of this area is 33 yards, the length of this grass terrace is 127 yards, and again just off centre is a further staircase leading down to the third terrace. The third terrace leads off to the east to a tennis court, which although not shown on the original perspective was intended as there is a curved set of steps leading down to it from the second level. This can just be seen in the lower right hand corner of the perspective (see Figure 256) marked with a blue arrow. The length of this terrace is also around 220 yards.

<sup>114</sup> OS map, Lincolnshire sheet, XCVI.13 revised 1903 published 1905.



Fig. 259. The upper terrace 2019.



Fig. 260. The staircase leading down to the second terrace 2019.



Fig. 261. The second terrace leading down to the third terrace 2019.



Fig. 262. The staircase leading down to the third terrace 2019.

At Caythorpe Blomfield was commissioned to create the entire estate and to use his words he had the 'control of the whole range of work, and thus to produce a satisfying unit of intent and purpose'.<sup>115</sup> What was most impressive with this design was the way the house sits on its site dominating its surroundings, the terraces that support the house are made of limestone rubble with ashlar dressings to match and complement the house. This is followed through with the style of walls used throughout the estate, from the entrance to the front courtyard, around the stepped hemicycle on the second terrace and to a small garden to the west of the house. The walled garden is now built over, but the stables remain, and these are in an 'Arts and Crafts' style, why he designed the stables in this style is not known. From the perspective it is clear that Blomfield intended the two upper terraces to be laid out as grass plats very similar to a seventeenth century design, with an ornate parterre to the east of the house. A parterre was laid out as the faint outline can be seen in the aerial photograph of 2019 (Figure 263). At Caythorpe Court it can be suggested that Blomfield did achieve his aim of creating 'a homogenous whole, a satisfactory unit of intent and purpose'.<sup>116</sup>

Lubbock died suddenly in 1907 at the age of 60. The 64 acre estate was then sold to Mrs Elma Yerburgh who on her death stated it should become an Agricultural College and in 1946 it became the Kesteven Agricultural College. Later in 1980 the college was renamed the Lincolnshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture, becoming the De Montfort School of Agriculture before closing in 2002. The site was then purchased by a property development company, Angel Group Plc, for £2.7 million. They were contracted by the National Asylum Support Service to house refugees and asylum seekers and the intention was to use Caythorpe Court for this purpose. The government apparently changed its mind and the developers reverted to their original plan to develop the site as a residential estate. In 2005 the site was sold to the PGL Group who have developed it over the years into an outdoor education activities centre for children and their parents.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 30.

<sup>116</sup> Blomfield, 'On Gardens', (1889), (p. 232). Heritage England, Caythorpe Court, Park and Garden, Grade II 1000972. Garden Terrace, Grade II 1062430.

<sup>117</sup> Historic England, Caythorpe Court. I am grateful to Paul Russell, Centre Operations Manager of PGL Group, for his assistance and information.





Fig. 263 . An aerial photograph of Caythorpe Court showing the terraces and the impression of a parterre, 2019. PGL Group.

### **Ditton Place in Sussex**

In the late 1890s Blomfield designed gardens for an old house which at one time was the home of the novelist and dramatist Charles Reade (1814-1884). From 1904 a new house on this site was built for Mr A. B. Horne (no dates) and Blomfield's gardens were left intact. Horne did not employ Blomfield to rebuild the house but used architects Smith & Brewer, their plans for the house and elements of the garden are held at the RIBA.<sup>118</sup> On the original site there had been a house called Sunnyside, which was seen on an ordnance survey map surveyed in 1874; in 1911 *Country Life* confirmed that the house had belonged to Charles Reade (Figure 264).<sup>119</sup> The author wrote that 'Professor Blomfield had designed the formal garden on the west side of the old house

<sup>118</sup> RIBA Smith & Brewer, PB398/2 PB491/5.

<sup>119</sup> 'Ditton Place, Balcombe Sussex, The Residence of Mr A. B. Horne', *Country Life*, 30.756 (1911), 18-21 (p. 18). OS Map, Sussex sheet, WV surveyed 1874 published 1879.

and when the new house was built it was left undisturbed and the new gardens were made in the same spirit'.<sup>120</sup> There was no mention of the owner at that time, but Reade had left his residuary estate to his godson Compton Reade (no dates), who was also his executor and, according to the 1891 census he was living at Ditton Place. It is suggested that Reade, the godson, had engaged Blomfield to design new gardens.<sup>121</sup> It is not known when the name of the house was changed but on an ordnance survey map surveyed in 1909 the new structure of the garden was in place and the house was called Ditton Place (Figures 265, 266).<sup>122</sup>

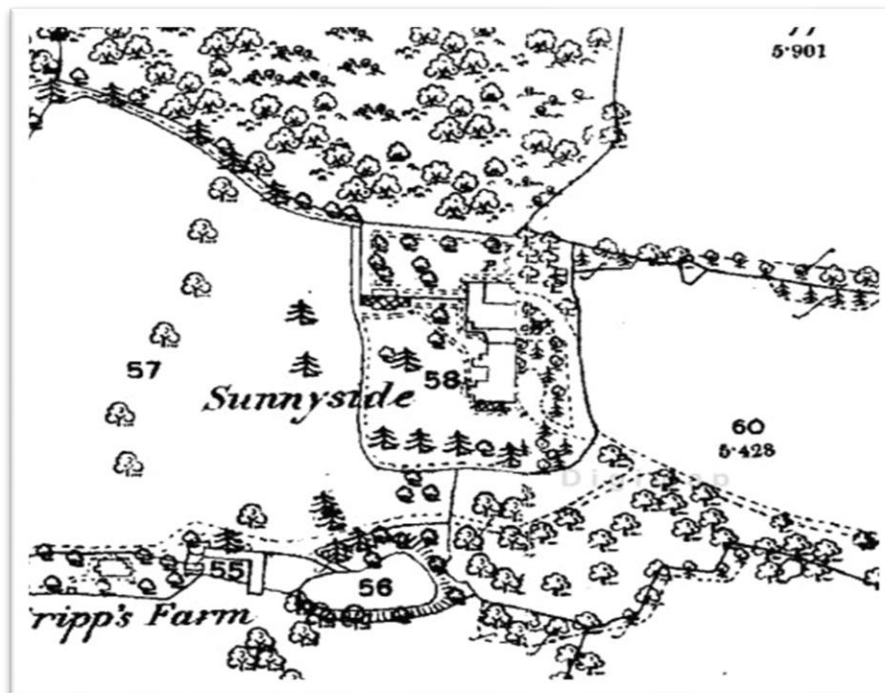


Fig. 264. OS map, surveyed 1874 published 1879, showing the house Sunnyside, with no garden. Sussex sheet, WV.

<sup>120</sup> 'Ditton Place', *Country Life*, (1911), (p. 18).

<sup>121</sup> West Sussex Records Office, Alice Millard, research query AKM/AV7R. Email to Tenneson, 09.08.2021. Charles Kent, 'Reade Charles, (1814-1884)', *ODNB*, (1896) see bibliography. Other searches, East Grinstead electoral registers 1889-1894 (C/C 70/89-04). No name is registered as probably no one was eligible to vote. Also a plan at Sussex Record Office, Plan 15 Sunnyside C Reed Billiard Room 01.07.1889. This could be Compton Reade, although different spelling. I am grateful to the team at West Sussex Record Office and to the Keep at East Sussex for their help.

<sup>122</sup> OS map, Sussex sheet, WV.9 revised 1909 published 1910.

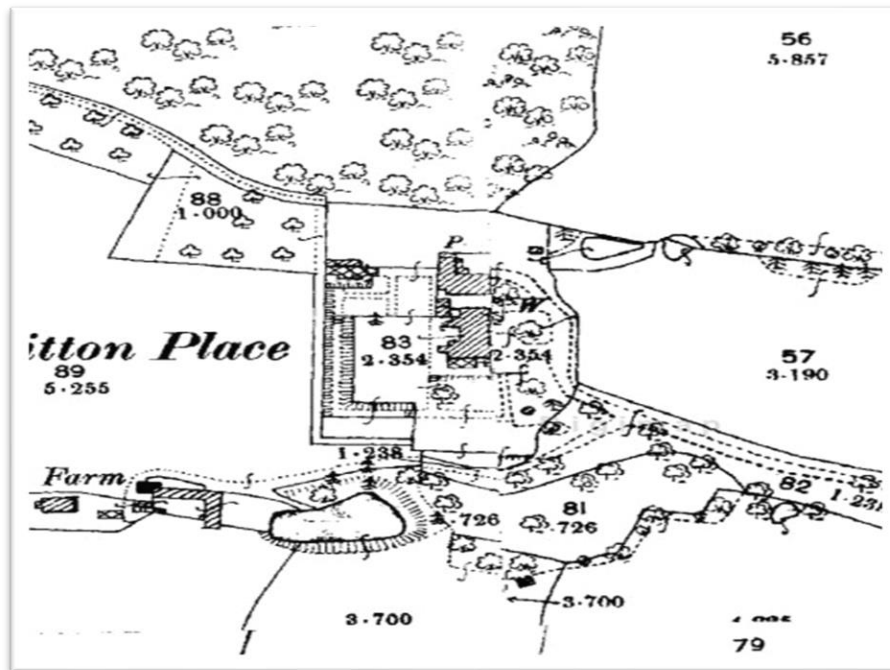


Fig. 265. OS map, revised 1909 published 1910, showing the garden layout. Sussex sheet, WV.9



Fig. 266. Postcard of the new house at Ditton Place dated 1905. Author's collection.

In a 1907 article in *Architectural Review* on the new house built by architects Smith & Brewer the author gave a description of the old house as being a 'small mid Victorian stucco building'. The author also mentioned that the gardens had been 'remodelled sometime ten years earlier when the yew hedges were planted and terraces formed', this would put the date around 1897, fitting with the Ordnance Survey map of that

date (see Figure 265). They also published a plan of the garden, which showed Blomfield's formality of layout with paths, terraces, steps and a small formal garden together with his signature design for the croquet lawn, a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle (Figure 267).<sup>123</sup>

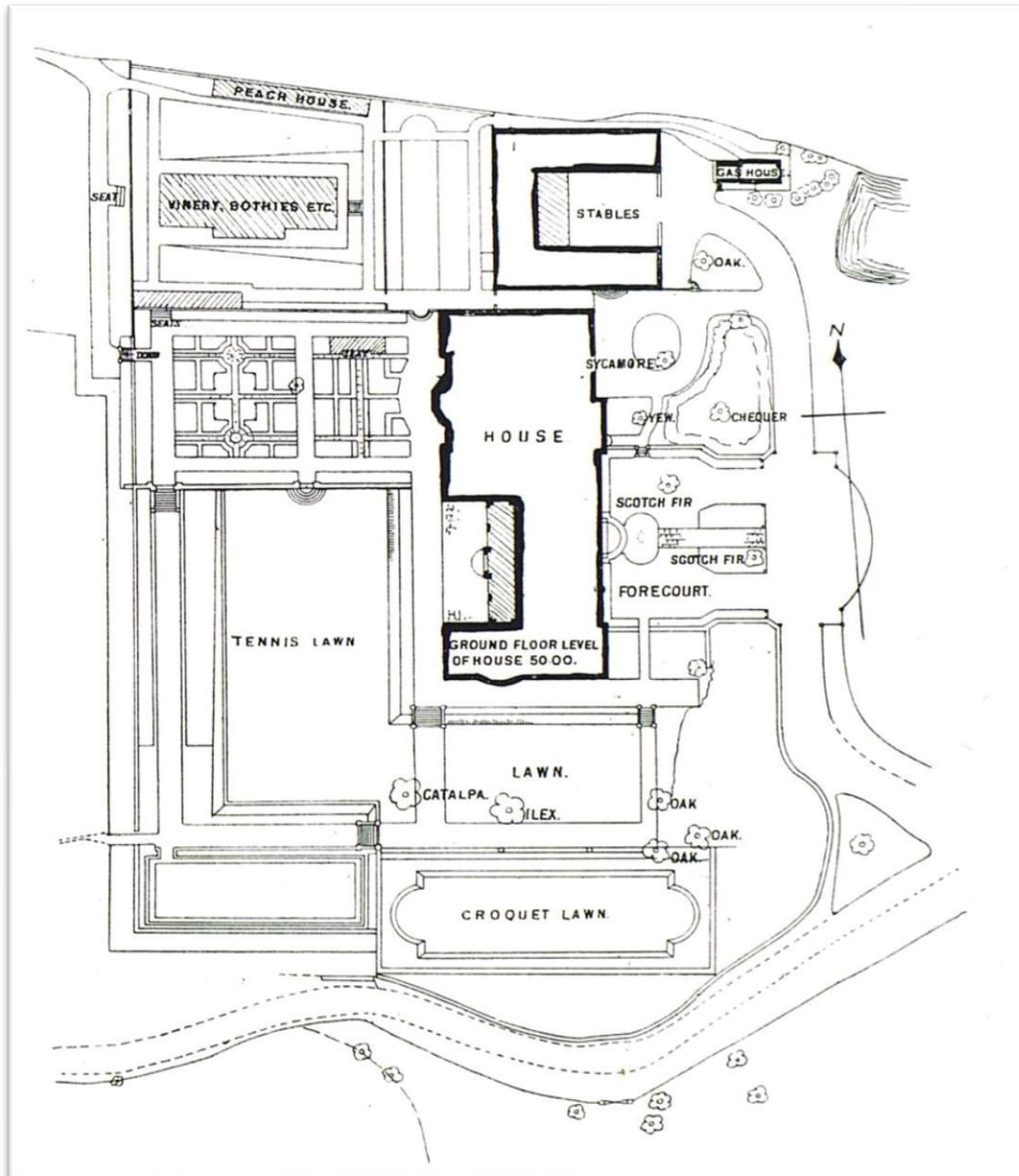


Fig. 267. The garden plan at Ditton Place. *Architectural Review*, 1907.

<sup>123</sup> 'Ditton Place, Balcombe, Sussex, Cecil C. Brewer and A. Dunbar Smith, Architects', *Architectural Review*, 22.131 (1907), 187-197 (p. 187).

Horne must have asked for further works as in 1912 a new plan for the west garden was drawn up. This looked to be for renewal of the hard landscape as little else was altered, as this series of photographs shows (Figures 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274).

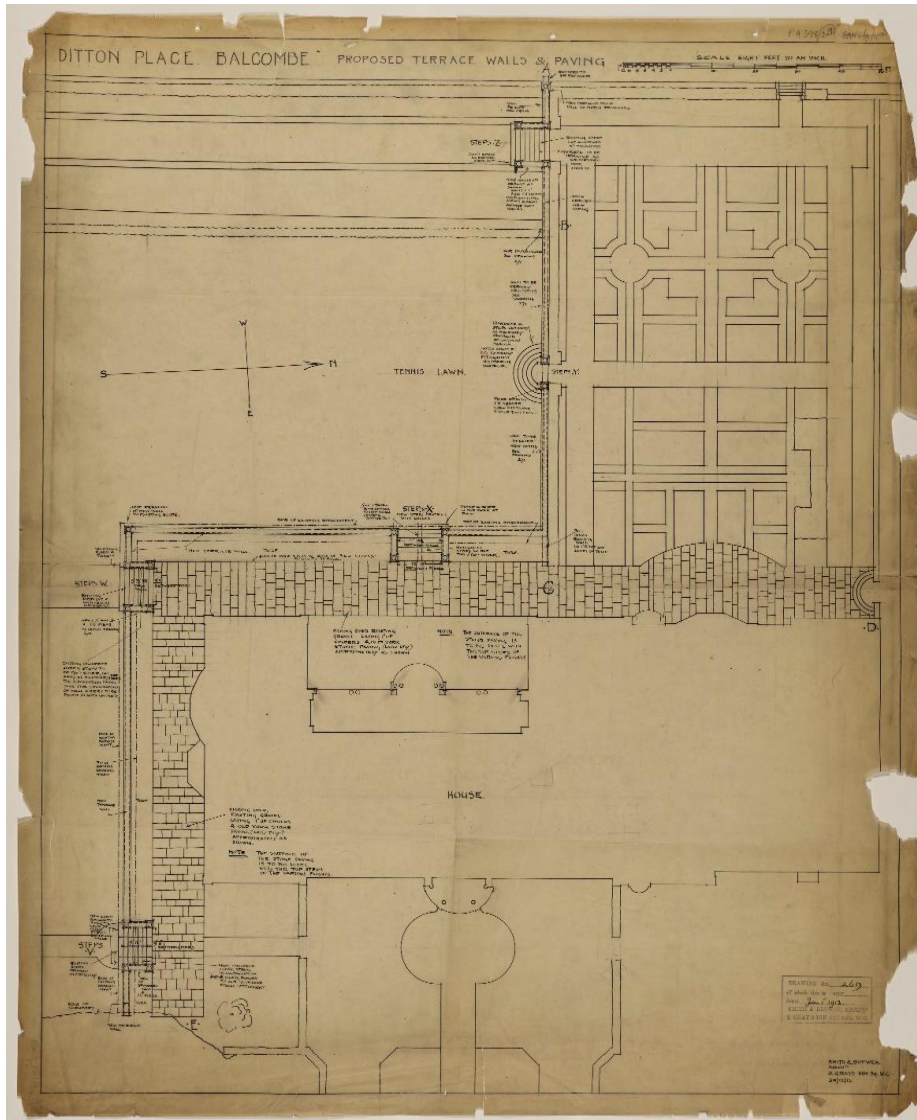


Fig. 268. The plan from Smith & Brewer for Ditton Place, 1912. RIBA PA398.



Fig. 269. The tennis lawn and terrace. *Architectural Review*, 1907.



Fig. 270. The tennis lawn. 2021.



Fig. 271. The steps up to the Formal Garden from the tennis lawn. 2021.



Fig. 272. The Formal Garden. *Architectural Review*, 1907.



Fig. 273. The Formal Garden. 2021.



Fig. 274. Blomfield's croquet lawn. 2021.

Ditton Place was used as a base for the Canadian forces during the war, and then was taken over by the Inner London Education Authority as a special needs school. It has now been converted into apartments and apart from increasing the height of the tennis lawn, which must have been done by the developers, most of the formal garden remains just as Blomfield had designed it.



## Joining the great garden designers at Euston Hall

Euston Hall was not mentioned in Blomfield's memoirs, which is surprising as this is perhaps one of the grandest estates in England, dating back to Charles II (1630-1685). His illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy (1663-1690), with his mistress, Barbara Villiers (1640-1709), inherited the estate in 1672 and was granted the title Duke of Grafton on his marriage to Isabella, the daughter of Henry Bennett (1618-1685), the Earl of Arlington and Secretary of State to the King. How Blomfield came to Euston Hall in 1902 is not known, but it is suggested that by this time he had built a reputation as a designer of formal gardens and had already worked for the aristocracy with the Earl of Yarborough at Brocklesby Park, so this commission may have been by recommendation.

At Euston Hall Blomfield was following in some very grand footsteps. John Evelyn, had visited Euston Hall in 1677 and was asked to design a park to the east of the house, pleasure grounds to the south and a geometric garden, in all an area of 80 acres. Also at that time a canal with a bridge was built by Samuel Morland (1625-1695).<sup>124</sup> In 1730 the second Duke of Grafton, Charles (1683-1757), invited Kent to give the grounds a more natural look around the house, which included removing the canal. Kent designed a folly in the Baroque style and laid out a new park, clumping the trees, many of which remain today. In the 1750s alterations were made to the house, adding more rooms on the north side carried out by Matthew Brettingham (1699-1769), who had worked as clerk of works for Kent at Holkham Hall in Norfolk. In 1767, the third Duke of Grafton, Augustus (1735-1811), invited Brown to make alterations to the river, laying out what is known today as the Broadwater, with a basin and island. Brown also created a weir to maintain the depth of the water as it ran along the western front of the house.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Edward Wortley, *Euston Hall & Pleasure Grounds Guidebook*, p. 2. The only record for a Samuel Morland is the polymath, who may have designed the canal and the original screw bridge. I am grateful to Edward Wortley, Euston Archivist, for his assistance and the use of photographs. Euston Hall gives the painting's date as 1710 but Wijck died in 1677. John Harris, *The Artist and the Country House* (London: Sotheby Parke Berner, 1979) says it is attributed to Wijck circa 1676-77, p. 60.

<sup>125</sup> Wortley, *Euston Hall*, p. 2. For more information on Euston Hall, Arthur Oswald, 'Euston Hall, Suffolk III', *Country Life*, 121.3132 (1957), 148-151.

An oil painting of Euston Hall by Dutchman Thomas Wijck (1616-1677) showed to the left and south of the house a glimpse of a parterre which was probably the geometric garden laid out by Evelyn in the 1670s, and this is where Blomfield was to lay out his parterre in 1902 (Figure 275). The area measures approximately 55 yards long and 75 yards wide, over three quarters of an acre.



Fig. 275. Thomas Wijck's painting, circa 1676-1677. Blue arrow shows the geometric garden. *Euston Hall postcard.*

The ordnance survey map surveyed in 1881 to 1882 shows the layout before Blomfield had set out the parterre and the wing of the house which was removed in the 1950s. The revised pre 1930-1995 ordnance survey map shows where the house was reduced and the area of Blomfield's work with the central fountain (Figures 276, 277).<sup>126</sup>

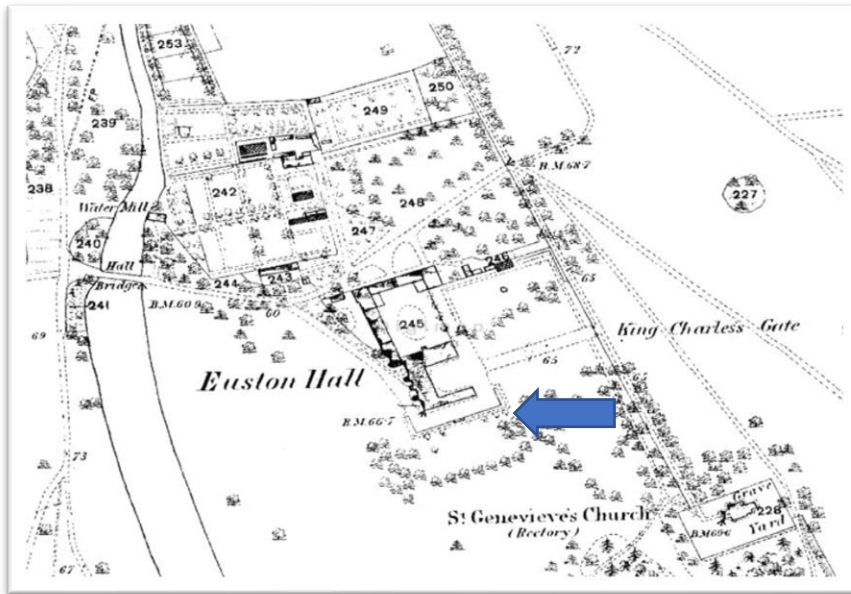


Fig. 276. OS map, surveyed 1881 to 1882 published 1884, showing the full area of the house and to the south of the house is where Blomfield was to make the parterre, see blue arrow. Suffolk sheet, XXIII.NW.

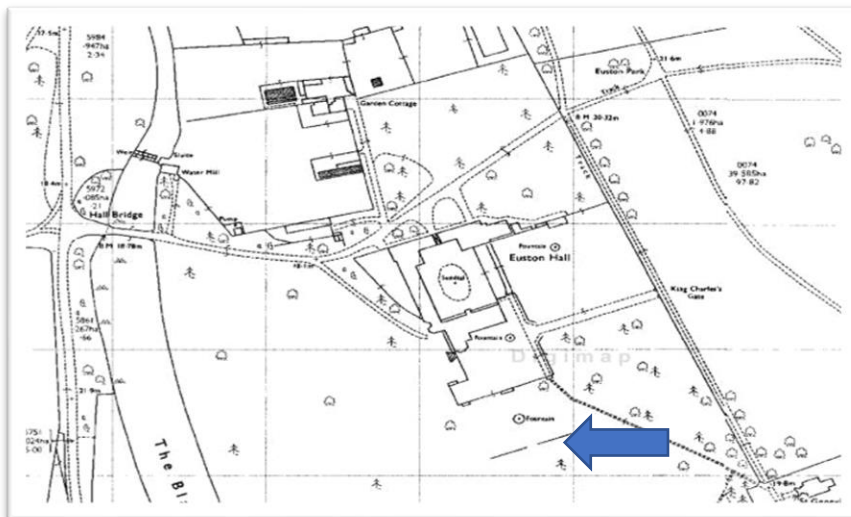


Fig. 277. OS map, surveyed / revised pre 1930-1955 published 1966, showing the site of Blomfield's parterre and the fountain. Suffolk sheet, TN87NE-N.

<sup>126</sup> OS map, Suffolk sheet, XXIII.NW surveyed 1881 to 1882 published 1884. OS map, Suffolk sheet, TN87NE-N surveyed/revised pre 1930-1965 published 1966.

There are no records left from this time as in late 1902 there was a fire that destroyed the west and south wings of the house together with many of the records. There are three photographs that have survived, dated 1902, showing Blomfield's parterre, just after it was made. The full design of the parterre was not shown but there were a number of flower beds, some made into swirls; also to the side of the parterre was yew hedging which again looked to be laid out in swirls. What remains today but cannot be seen in the photographs is a central pool with a fountain. From these photographs this was an elaborate design but the overall shape of the parterre was not clear. (Figures 278, 279, 280).



Fig. 278. Blomfield's parterre 1902. *Euston Hall Archive*.



Fig. 279. The parterre looking south, note the box edging – the path leads to the church. *Euston Hall Archive*.



Fig. 280. The parterre looking back to the house, showing flower swirls. *Euston Hall Archive*.

The photograph of the terrace (Figure 281) shows the retaining wall of the original terrace with steps down and the original urns and gravel paths that would have been set out around the parterre. This was laid to grass in 2012. The grass area above the terrace wall is where parts of the original house once stood.



Fig. 281. The original terrace and surrounding areas. *Euston Hall Guidebook*.

An aerial photograph taken in a dry summer shows the shape of the parterre as a hemicycle and it is possible to make out a number of round flower beds but the swirls have been lost. Given its setting it does suggest that Blomfield created his parterre on part of the site of Evelyn's grand geometric garden of the 1670s (Figure 282).<sup>127</sup> At Euston Hall Blomfield joined an illustrious group of garden makers, but unlike the work of Kent and Brown, all that is left from Blomfield's design is a central water basin and a shadow of the parterre.

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<sup>127</sup> Historic England, Euston Hall, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1376940 and 1000171.

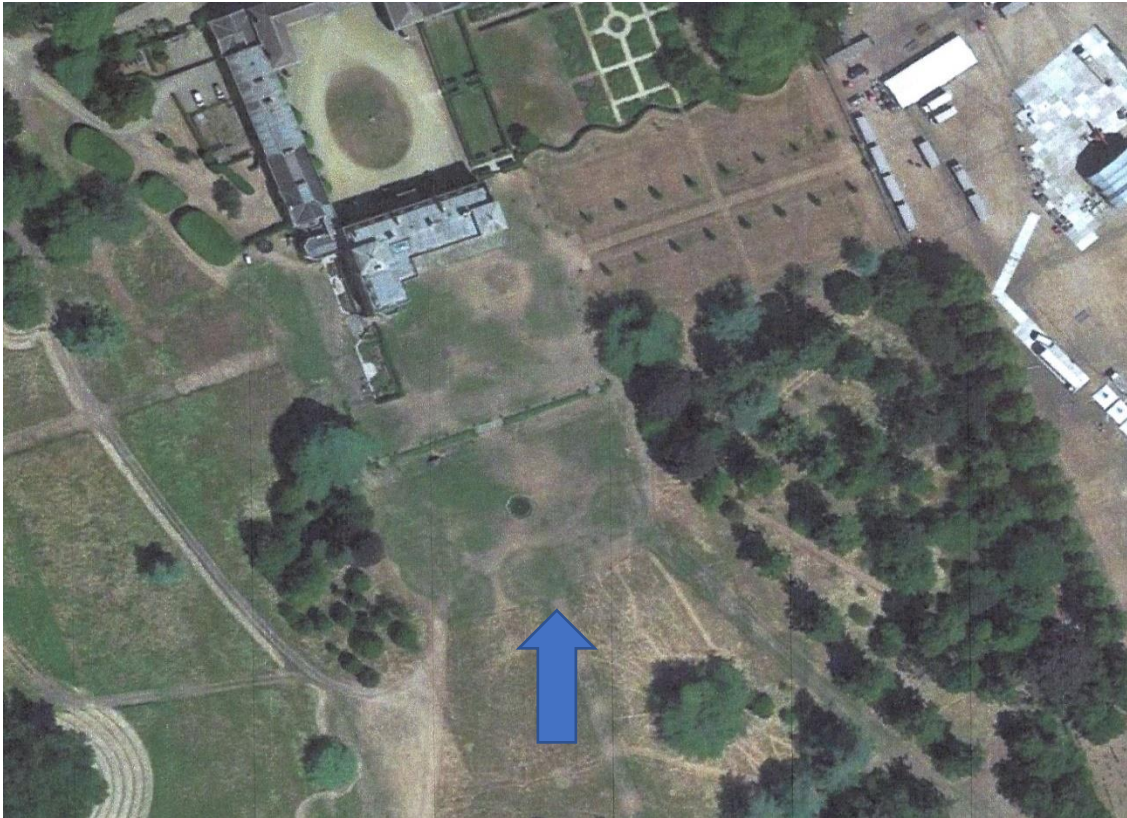


Fig. 282. Circa 2020 view of Blomfield's parterre in the shape of a hemicycle, note the water basin lines up with the steps of the terrace.

<<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Euston+Hall/@52.3720419,0.7876565,62m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x47d9cab6de9ed129:0xb754a17d4aa81dce!8m2!3d52.3732234!4d0.7866118>> [accessed 30/06/2022].

### To Rye in East Sussex

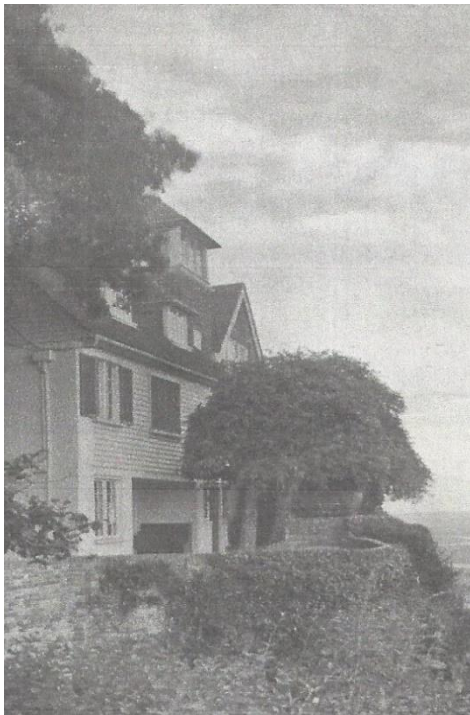
Blomfield had connections with Rye, not just because his wife had originally come from Rye, but in 1895 he bought a holiday home there, a small cottage, Point Hill high on the cliff overlooking the marshes to the sea. Over the years he enlarged the cottage, bought surrounding land and made a garden on the steep hillside. This garden was a source of amusement to the author of a piece on Point Hill in *Country Life* in 1913, where he wrote that the site 'was so precipitous that he, Blomfield, was driven to abjure formality and content himself with little more than a natural rock garden'.<sup>128</sup> It seems that *Country Life* were not the only people to be amused by Blomfield's garden; Jekyll apparently used to relate 'with great glee' that 'Robinson

<sup>128</sup> Lawrence Weaver, 'Point Hill Rye and its enlargement by Sir Reginald Blomfield, A. R. A.', *Country Life*, 34.882 (1913), 8\*-12\* (p. 8\*).

designed himself a garden all squares, and Reggy a garden on a cliff with not a straight line in it' (Figures 283, 284, 285).<sup>129</sup>



Fig. 283. Point Hill a drawing by Blomfield, date unknown. *Private collection*.



Figs. 284, 285. Point Hill, showing the steepness of the site with no straight lines. There is a glimpse of the view over the marsh from the back of the house. *Country Life*, 1913.

<sup>129</sup> Betty Massingham, *Miss Jekyll, Portrait of a Great Gardener* (London: Country Life, 1966), p. 83. Robinson's garden at Gravetye Manor, was in the formal style. This relates to the 'argument' between Blomfield and Robinson.



From his memoirs Blomfield was a sociable man and he and his wife would have got involved in the social life of Rye at that time. He does mention playing cricket at the local ground and this may have been the connection with Sir George (1860-1917) and Lady Maude Warrender (1870-1945), as Sir George like Blomfield was a cricketer. In 1902 the Warrenders purchased Leasam House in Rye.

## **Leasam House**

Leasam House was built between 1798 to 1806 by Jeremiah Curteis (1762-1835), a local businessman, who also became the Member of Parliament for Sussex from 1820 to 1832. The house was built in red brick with painted quoins and a stringcourse above the first floor, with a balustraded parapet and panels of red brick.<sup>130</sup> There was little history about this house and who the previous owners were prior to Sir George and Lady Maude, who purchased Leasam House as their country home around 1900. In 1902 they engaged Blomfield to carry out alterations to the house and to make new gardens, finishing the work in 1904. Sir George John Scott Warrender of Lochend was the seventh baronet, a naval officer, in 1894 marrying Lady Ethel Maude Ashley-Cooper, a daughter of the eighth Earl of Shaftesbury. With a home in London and their family connections Sir George and Lady Maude were prominent in Edwardian society, particularly with Edward VII's set. Warrender enjoyed a high reputation in the Navy, but it was to be realised at the start of the First World War that he was an Admiral for peacetime and not wartime.<sup>131</sup>

In the following two ordnance survey maps, the first surveyed in 1872 showed the house with no gardens, the second map surveyed in 1908 showed Blomfield's layout of the new gardens (Figures 286, 287).<sup>132</sup> In the RIBA collection there is a perspective drawing of the house with an insert of the main terrace and lawns (Figure 288). Here again Blomfield laid out his signature feature as a terrace of a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle in grass and edged with yew trees. The photograph circa 1900 (Figure 289) showed the upper terrace either to be planted, or newly planted,

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<sup>130</sup> Historic England, Leasam House, Grade II 1217594.

<sup>131</sup> Paul G. Halpern, 'Warrender Sir George John Scott of Lochend, seventh baronet', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>132</sup> OS map, Sussex sheet, XCLV.6 surveyed 1872 published 1898. Sussex sheet, XCLV.6 revised 1908, published 1909.

as there is little growth. There is also a very damaged garden plan in the Sussex Record Office where some detail can be seen (Figure 290).

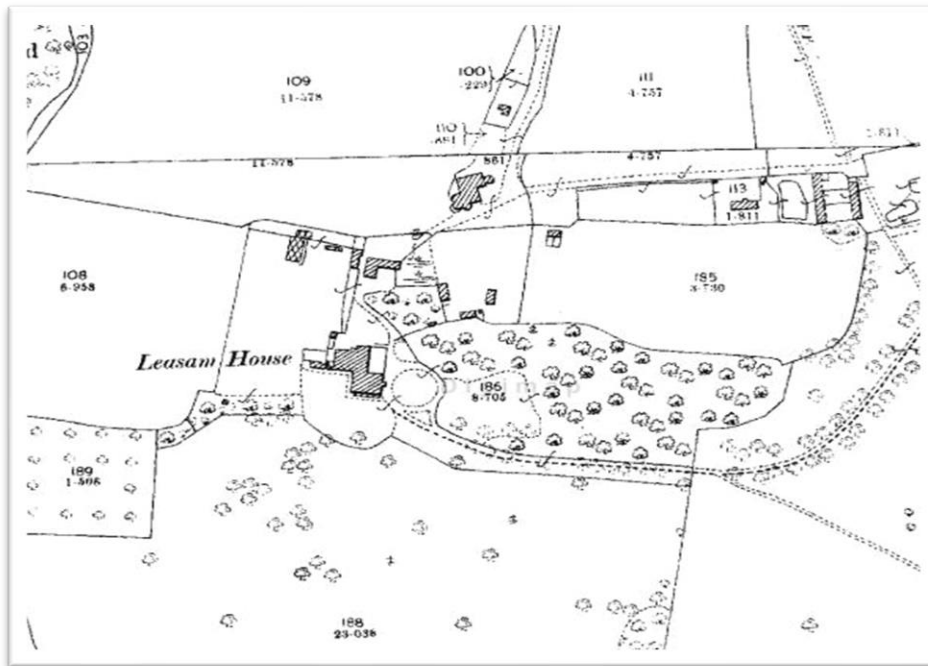


Fig. 286. OS map, surveyed 1872 published 1898, with no garden. Sussex sheet, XCLV.6

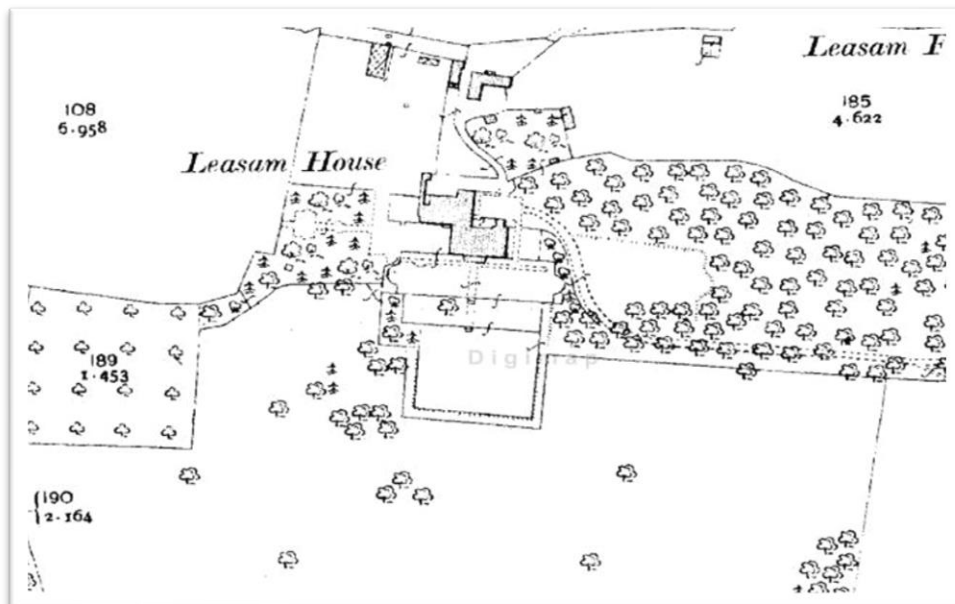


Fig. 287. OS map, surveyed 1908 published 1909, showing Blomfield's terraces and lawns. Sussex sheet, XCLV.6

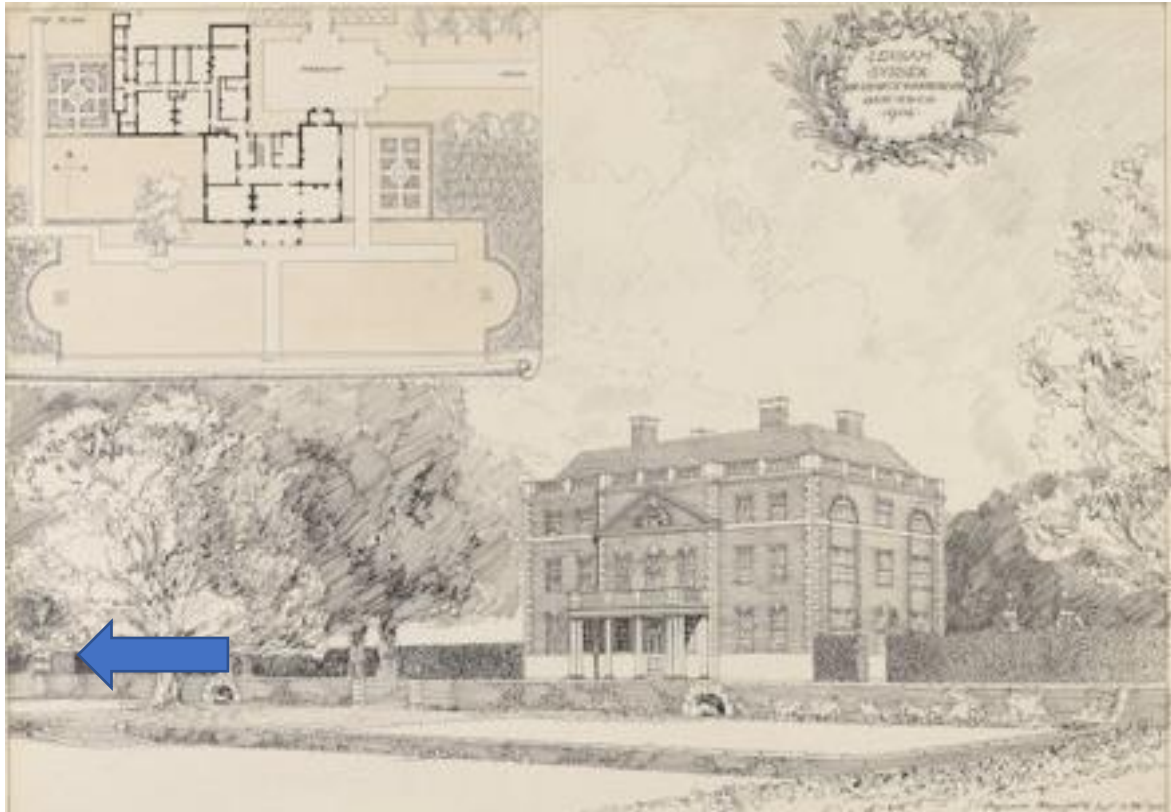


Fig. 288. Perspective drawing with garden layout in inset, dated 1906. Note the brick pier at the end of the terrace to the left, marked with the blue arrow. RIBAPIX. RIBA 54985.

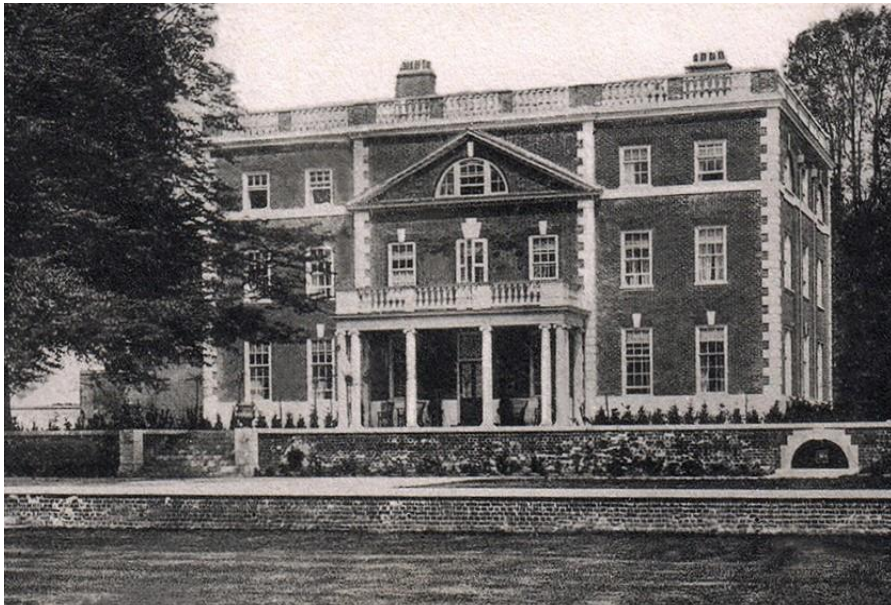


Fig. 289. Three terraces can be seen with the middle not yet planted, circa 1900. <<https://www.francisfrith.com/rye>> [accessed 15.11.2021].

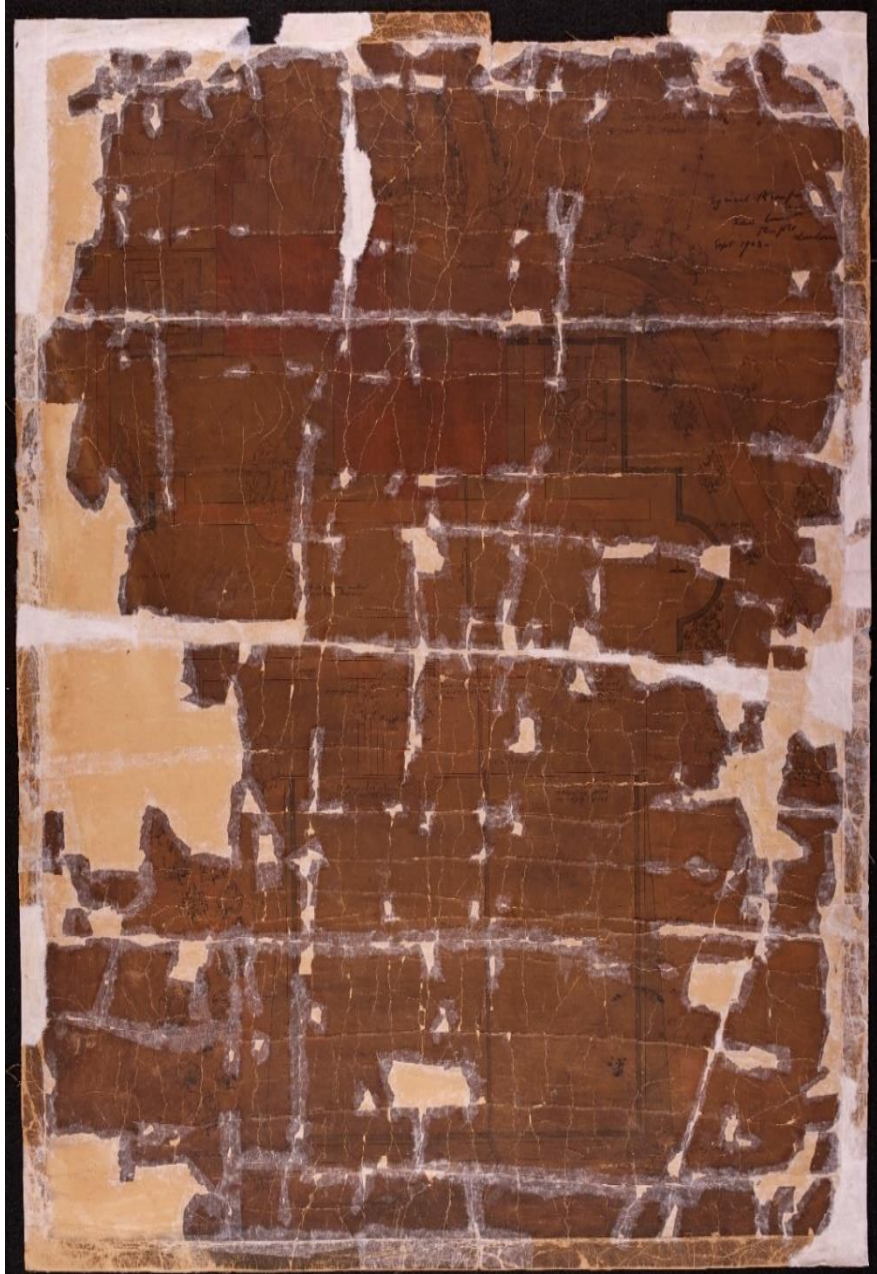


Fig. 290. The garden plan for Leasam House 1903. *Sussex Record Office*.

By enhancing this plan signed by Blomfield in September 1903 it is possible to see more details (Figure 291). The driveway was marked leading to the courtyard north of the house, to the east just below the courtyard was a parterre (today this is the entrance courtyard). The parterre was matched at the other side of the house to the west with a smaller parterre in a different design. The first terrace was designed as a stepped hemicycle, and in the hemicycles at both ends there looked to be a sundial or statue.

These were shown on the perspective and the original plan (see Figures 288, 291). The beech tree in the photograph of 1904 was marked on the top terrace and the plan showed that the square steps down to the second terrace were of Portland stone with measurements of the steps and tread, adding that the coping stones were made of Portland stone.

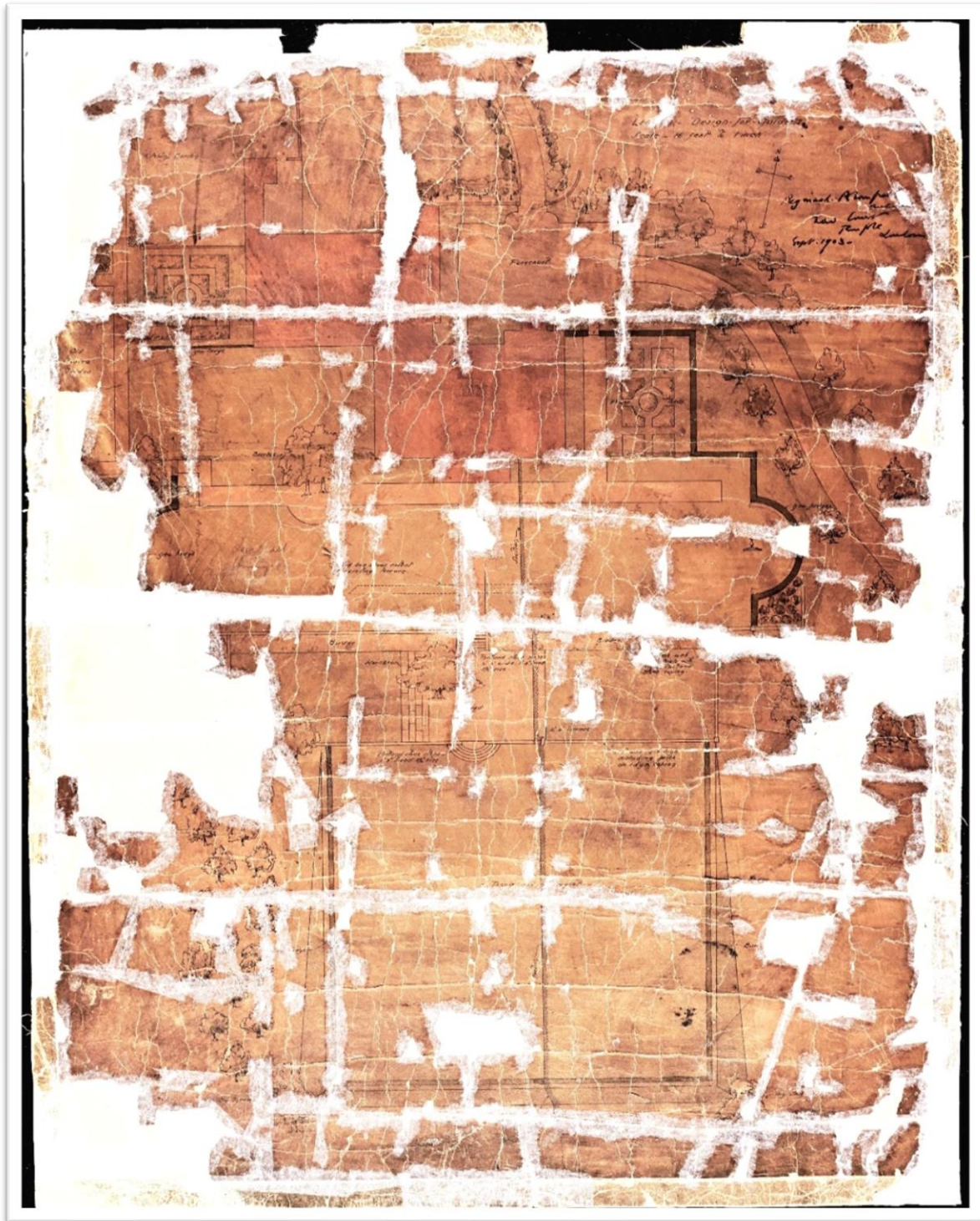


Fig. 291. The enhanced plan of Leasam House, 1903.

More detail can be seen by splitting the plan (Figures 292, 293). Just below the terrace wall was a border and steps that lead down to the second terrace and again these were made of Portland stone in a hemicycle design, leading to the lawn. The ground must have been uneven in this part of the garden as Blomfield had lifted one side to make a flat surface for tennis or croquet and surrounded the lawn with a yew hedge; there was also detail of the tree planting to the west of the plan.

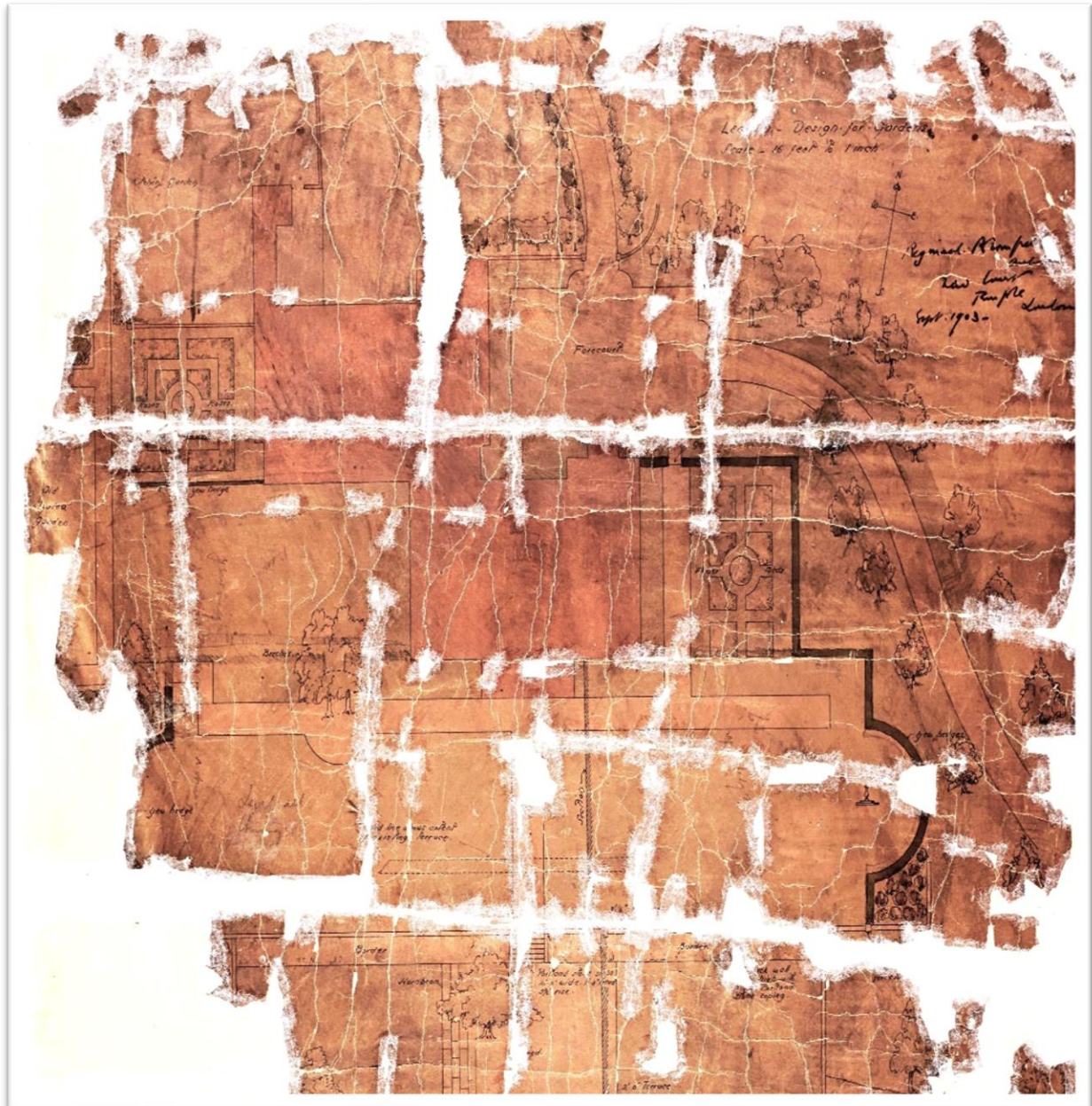


Fig. 292. Leasam House, the top half of the plan enlarged.



Fig. 293. The lower half of the plan enlarged.

Sir George died in 1917 and Lady Maude remained at Leasam House until her death in 1945 when the estate was put up for sale, at that time the estate was about 82 acres. In the early 1950s the estate was bought by the local education authority and was turned into an agricultural college under the post war education development plan for children aged between 13 and 16. The centre was closed in 1972 but became a boarding house associated with the Thomas Peacock School in Rye, closing in July 1992 and was put up for sale again with just 12 acres. In 2006 Leasam

House was sold to a private buyer who has recently put the house on the market priced at £8.5 million with 57 acres of gardens, park and woodlands (Figure 294).<sup>133</sup> The gardens at Leasam House were one of Blomfield's classic designs and, whatever fate the gardens suffered in the interim, they are still in place. With Blomfield's signature piece, terrace walls ending in brick piers and yew hedges it is little changed, apart from the addition of eight rectangular flower beds, illustrating that his idea of creating a homogeneous whole with the house is one of his lasting legacies.



Fig. 294. Leasam House today. Blomfield's gardens with the terraces and yew hedges remains intact together with the brick piers, 2020. <<https://www.savills.com/property-detail/gblhchlac180083>> [accessed 06.01.2021].

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<sup>133</sup> Advertisement, 'Leasam Estate, Rye', *Country Life*, 99.2555 (1946), no page number. East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office, reference E.MA/149. <<https://www.savills.com/property-detail/gblhchlac180083>> [accessed 06.01.2021]. Historic England, Leasam House, Grade II 1217594. I was not able to establish contact with the owner of Leasam House so have not been able to visit.



## Knowlton Court in Kent

Blomfield mentioned Knowlton Court in his memoirs as a 'fine red brick Jacobean house which belonged to Elmer Speed' (1859-1928). He went on to discuss the 1904 commission to carry out alterations to the house and make a formal garden to the south west of the house. Blomfield wrote that 'when we came to dig up the ground the lines of my design were found to follow almost exactly the main lines of the seventeenth century garden'.<sup>134</sup> The illustration by Kip of 1719 showed a formal garden and to the side of the house two parterres where Blomfield was to make the sunken croquet lawn two hundred years later (Figure 295).

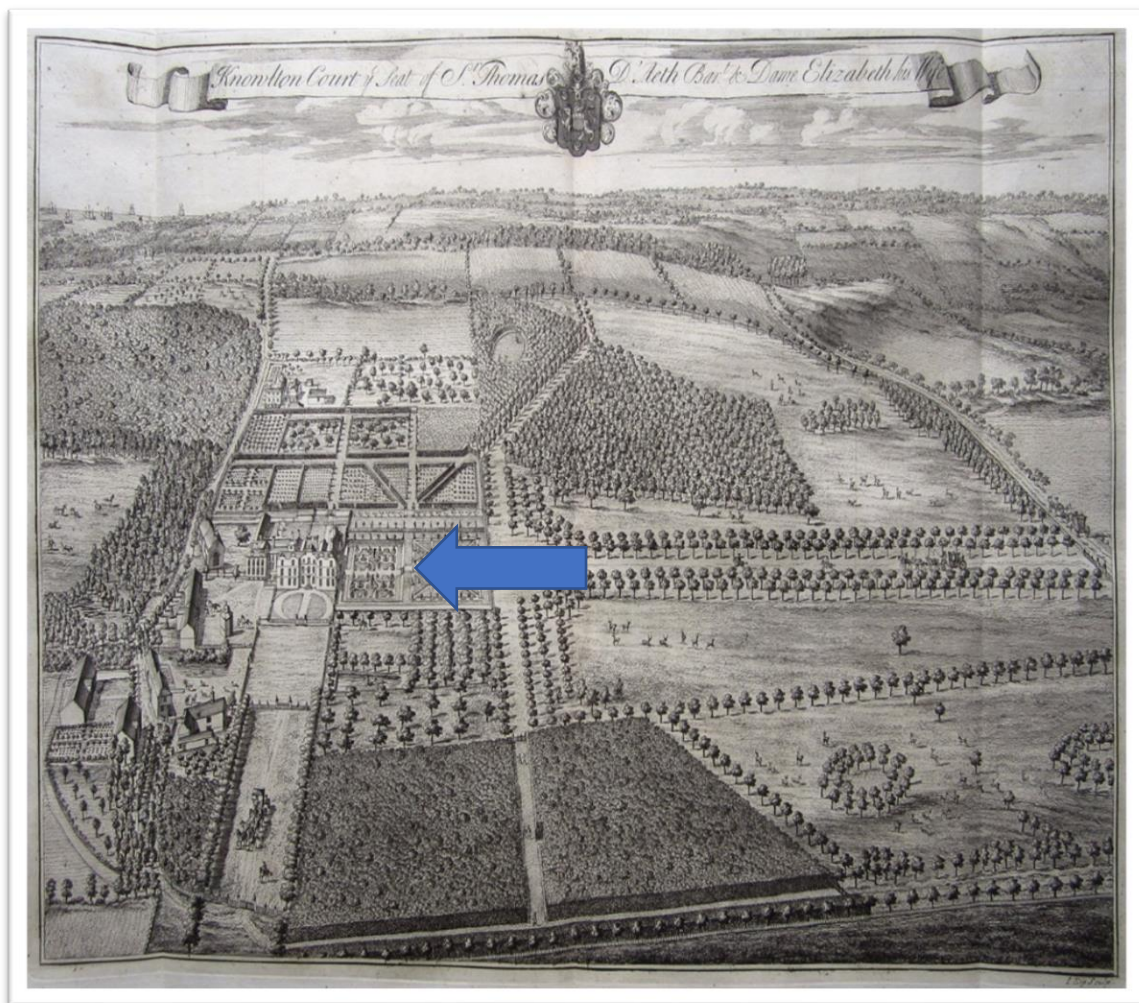


Fig. 295. The Kip illustration of 1719 showing the parterre garden where Blomfield made the sunken croquet lawn, marked by blue arrow. <<https://mapwoman.com/product/harris-kip-knowltoncourt>> [accessed 08.2021].

<sup>134</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

Knowlton Court dates back to the Domesday Book when it was called 'Chenoltone', Knowlton being a corruption of that original name. The estate was owned by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror (1028-1087).<sup>135</sup> The house was built in 1585 by the Peyton family who later were Royalists. Sir Thomas Peyton (1613-1684) was taken prisoner in 1648 and Knowlton ransacked. After his death, the house was sold to Admiral Sir John Narborough (1640-1688), who died at sea, the estate then passing to the D'Eath family in 1707. Sir Thomas D'Eath (1678-1745) had married Elizabeth the daughter of Sir John Narborough in 1701. Knowlton stayed in the D'Eath family until the late nineteenth century when it was sold to the father of Alexander Browne, who in 1904 sold it to Francis Elmer Speed.<sup>136</sup>

How Speed came to engage Blomfield is not known but Blomfield, now in his 40s, had built a considerable reputation in restoring, altering and making gardens in the seventeenth century style for these old houses. Speed was another cricketer and that may also have been a connection as Conway, writing in the *Country Life* 1916 article, mentioned the 'charming' cricket field laid out behind the gardens.<sup>137</sup> Speed was a wealthy businessman as well as a barrister, a Director of Frederick Leyland, a steamship company and Debentures Securities Co., another steamship company also known as the Ellerman Lines. He had been educated at Rugby and in 1899 married the youngest daughter of Fredrick Leyland. In 1911, in *Who's Who in Kent*, it was listed that he owned 1933 acres in the county.<sup>138</sup> The house of red brick in English bond is seven bays wide, with the centre recessed, topped by a wide shallow pediment with Dutch gables, which Blomfield altered to match the sixteenth century design (Figure 296).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Martin Conway, 'Knowlton Court, Kent, The Residence of Major Elmer Speed', *Country Life*, 38.1008 (1916), 534-540 (p. 534).

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 534.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 540.

<sup>138</sup> Anon., *Who's Who in Kent, Surrey and Sussex* (London: Horace Cox, 1911), p. 124.

<sup>139</sup> Historic England, Knowlton Court, Grade I 1336977.



Fig. 296. Knowlton Court. <<https://knowltoncourt.co.uk>> [accessed 06.2021].

An early illustration of the house and the front grounds circa 1825 by J. P. Neale shows that to the side of the house the seventeenth century garden was laid to grass with a sundial. This sundial shows up in later photographs from *Country Life* and is still in place today. This Neale image (Figure 297) matches up with an ordnance survey map revised in 1896 that showed this area had little formal garden.



Fig. 297. A print from J. P. Neale showing Knowlton House circa 1825. *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland* (London: Sherwood Jones, 1825).

This Ordnance Survey map revised in 1898 showed the garden before Blomfield started work (Figure 298), a later map surveyed in 1905 showed the extent of his work, not only to the front entrance court but also to the east garden (Figure 299).<sup>140</sup>

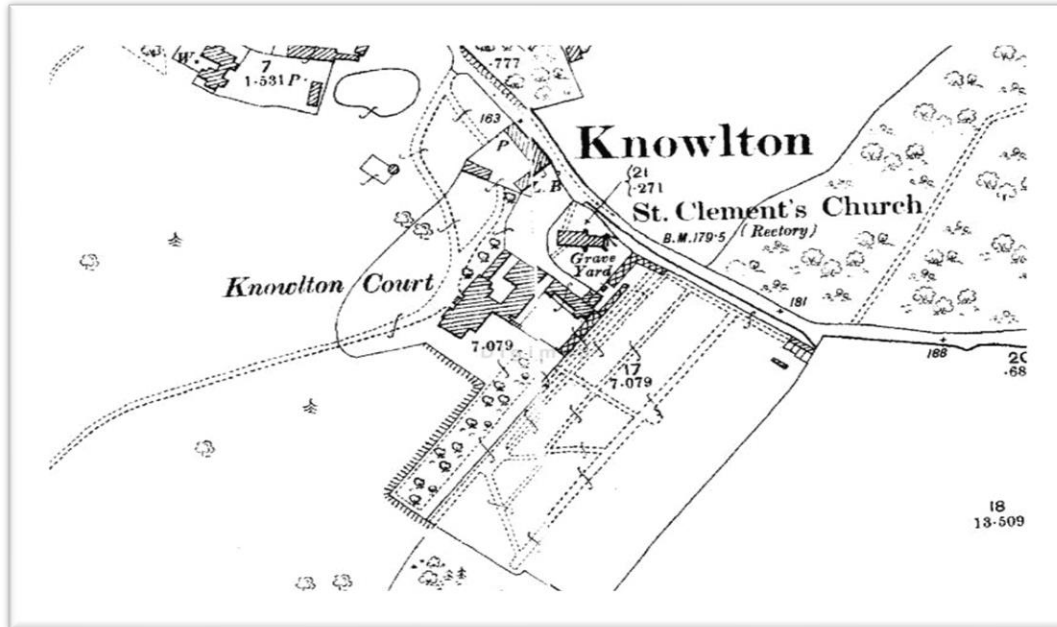


Fig. 298. OS map, revised 1896 published 1898. Kent sheet, XLVIII.SW

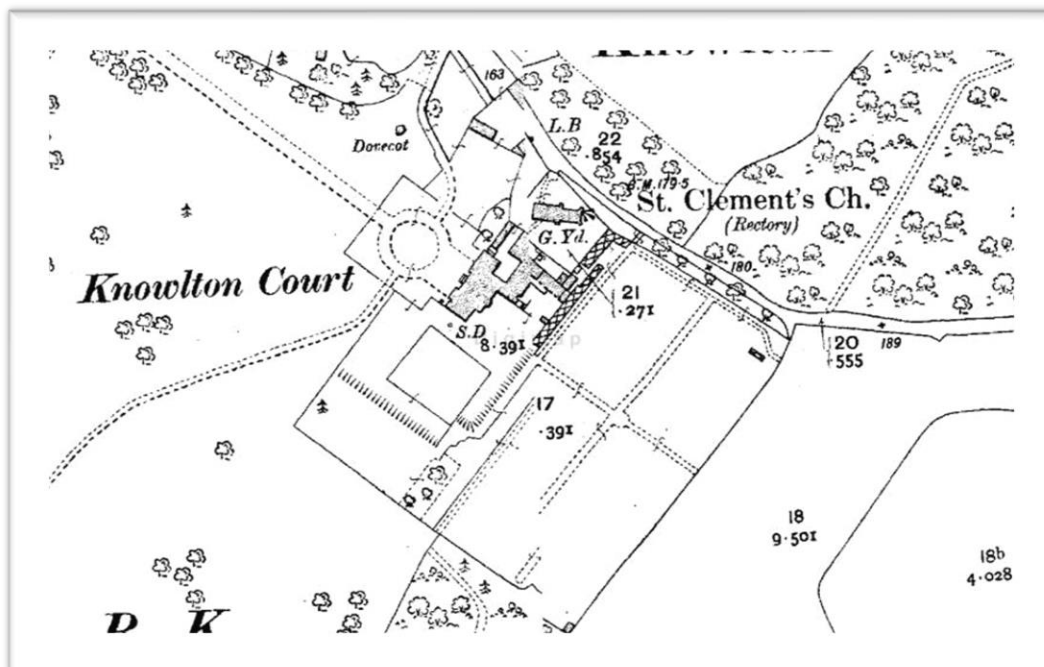


Fig. 299. OS map, revised 1905 published 1907 tracked the changes to the garden. Kent sheet, XLVIII.13

<sup>140</sup> OS map, Kent sheet, XLVIII.SW revised 1896 published 1898. OS map, Kent sheet, XLVIII.13 revised 1905 published 1907.

On the 1896 ordnance survey map there looked to be an original grass terrace possibly dating back to the early garden of the seventeenth century as this was marked as high ground. Conway mentioned in *Country Life* that there was an old bank on the way to the cricket field and this may have been the old terrace.<sup>141</sup> The area just below the terrace was the kitchen garden as in both ordnance survey maps it was laid out with paths, beds and glasshouses. The ordnance survey map revised 1905 showed the work that Blomfield carried out. He added a circle to the front entrance court, which was in keeping with the age of the house adding a grander arrival to the house. To the south west of the house the area has been sunk for a croquet lawn, edged with stone and surrounded with a grass terrace that tied into the existing terrace, as seen in the following series of *Country Life* photographs from 1916, with photographs from 2021 (Figures 300, 301, 302, 303, 304).



Fig. 300. The south west of the house showing the grass terrace, sundial and steps leading up to the higher grass terrace. *Country Life*, 1916.

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<sup>141</sup> Conway, 'Knowlton Court', p. 540.



Fig. 301. Looking through to the sundial. 2021.



Fig. 302. The upper grass terrace. 2021.



Fig. 303. The sunken garden, croquet lawn. *Country Life*, 1916.



Fig. 304. The sunken garden, croquet lawn, showing the hedges. 2021.

Speed died in 1928 and the estate including the house, 'old world gardens', woods and plantations with various estate buildings, in all 1936 acres, remained with the family as the current owner is Speed's granddaughter. The gardens have remained

intact as Blomfield originally designed and, although not shown on any of the maps or plans, he made a lily pool in his signature shape of a rectangle with stepped hemicycles at both ends in a small courtyard to the south east of the house. Blomfield combined his work on the house with that of the garden, making a sunken croquet lawn where a parterre had been made in the seventeenth century. This was a simple design for the garden and one that Blomfield matched to the quality of the house. Today Knowlton Court is used as a wedding and events venue.<sup>142</sup>

## Apethorpe Palace

Blomfield wrote warmly of Sir Leonard (1870-1958) and Lady Violet Brassey (1874-1946), who bought Apethorpe Hall in Northamptonshire in 1904 from the thirteenth Earl of Westmorland, Anthony Mildmay Julian Fane (1859-1922), having been in the Fane family for over three centuries. Blomfield went on to say that Sir Leonard and Lady Violet were always the kindest of hosts, adding that he got some excellent day's shooting!<sup>143</sup> The Brassey family's wealth came from railways. Leonard's grandfather was the railway contractor Thomas Brassey (1805-1870), who became a major figure in civil engineering, and it is thought was responsible for five per cent of the railways throughout the world.<sup>144</sup> This wealth was passed on to Leonard as his grandfather had 'endowed them generously with money and mansions', setting up a £2.25 million trust fund for his three sons, today worth £187 million.<sup>145</sup> This vast wealth was just as well as Blomfield explained the extent of the work and that 'the house was in a bad state of repair and much practical work had to be done in terms of heating and sanitations', adding 'the accommodation had to be entirely reconsidered'. Blomfield was also asked to lay out new gardens.<sup>146</sup> He must have been delighted to get this commission, Apethorpe Hall he wrote was one of 'the most important Jacobean

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<sup>142</sup> I am grateful to Mrs Fox-Pitt for allowing a visit and talking about her mother and the gardens. She remembers a plan of the gardens by Blomfield, but at the time of my visit this could not be located.

<sup>143</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 82.

<sup>144</sup> Kathryn Morrison, Ed., *Apethorpe the Story of an English House* (New Haven: The Paul Mellon Centre, 2016), pp. 297, 402.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>146</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 82.



houses in England and any alteration to its architecture must be done with extreme care' (Figure 305).<sup>147</sup>

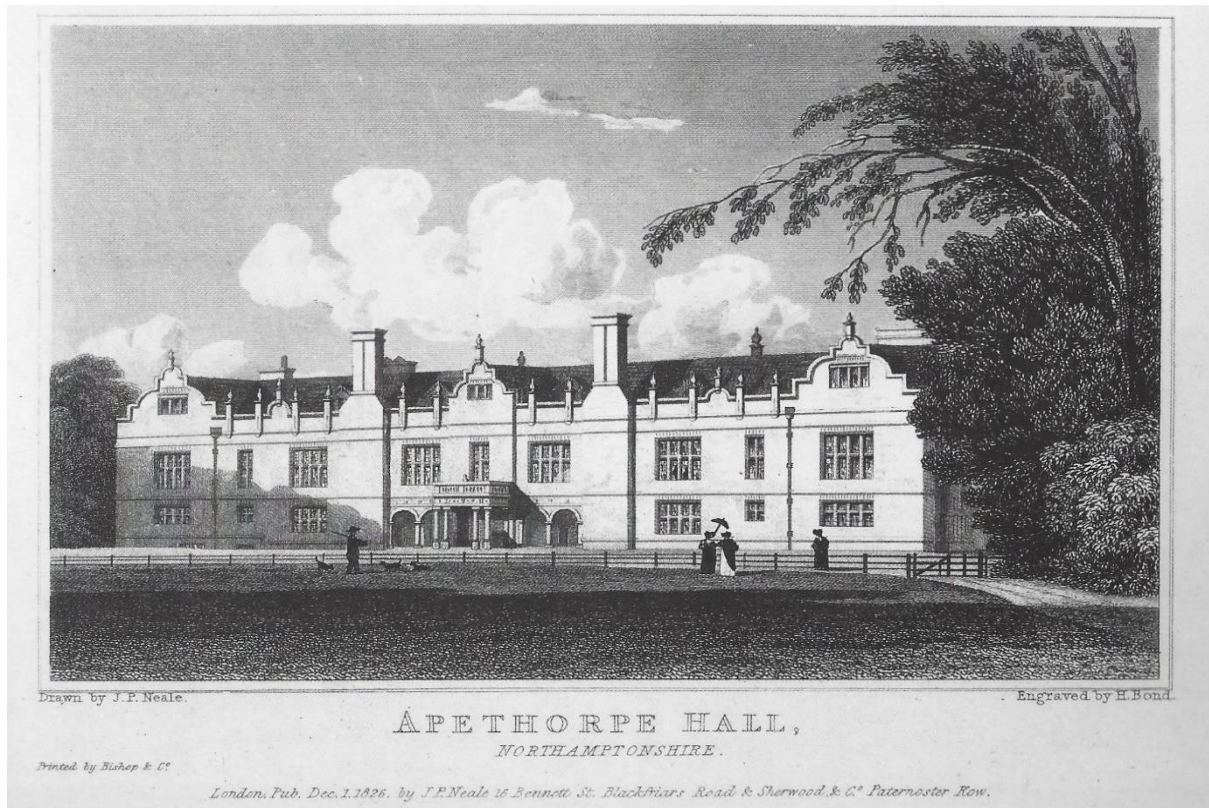


Fig. 305. 1824 illustration by Neale of the front of Apethorpe Hall. *Apethorpe, The Story of an English Country House*.

Apethorpe Hall, now known as Apethorpe Palace, dates back to the fifteenth century. Built of stone, it consists of three adjacent courtyards which have been altered over the years. The Jacobean extension in the sixteenth century was carried out by John Thorpe (1565-1655), financed by King James I (1566-1625), the Neo-Palladian modifications by Roger Morris (1695-1749) in the eighteenth century and later by Reginald Blomfield in the early twentieth century.

In 1543 the manor and parks were sold by Charles, Lord Mountjoy to Henry VIII. In 1550 the estate was granted to Sir Walter Mildmay (1520-1589), a distinguished and prominent servant to the Crown. In 1617 the estate passed to Mildmay's granddaughter Mary Fane (1582-1640), wife of Sir Francis Fane (1580-1629), first Earl of

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

Westmorland, and stayed within the family as the main seat of the Earls of Westmorland until its sale in 1904 to Sir Leonard and Lady Violet Brassey.<sup>148</sup>

There are two plans and an ordnance survey map that traced the development of the garden and Blomfield's work. The first plan is a copy of a nineteenth century copy of an original eighteenth century plan, now lost (Figure 306). The ordnance survey map surveyed in 1885 showed that the garden had now changed from its eighteenth century layout and was a series of grass areas with a rectangular area to the south (Figure 307). The second plan is Blomfield's 1906 plan of the top half of the garden (Figure 308).<sup>149</sup>

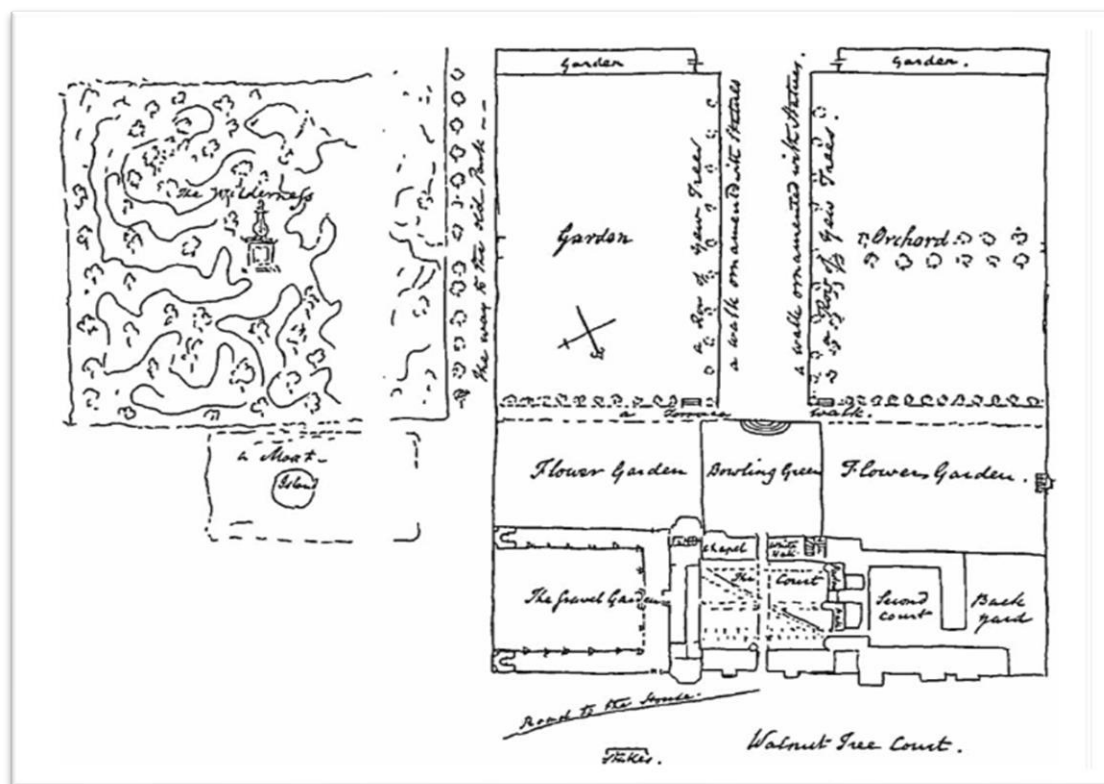


Fig. 306. The copy of the eighteenth century plan of the garden. <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/rchme/northants/vol161pp1-16>> [accessed 20.08.2019].

<sup>148</sup> Historic England, Apethorpe Palace, formerly known as Apethorpe Hall, Grade I 1040083. Park and Garden, Grade II 1001448.

<sup>149</sup> Historic England, Blomfield's plan of the garden, ref: DPO67980. OS map, Northamptonshire sheet, XII.4 surveyed 1885 published 1886.

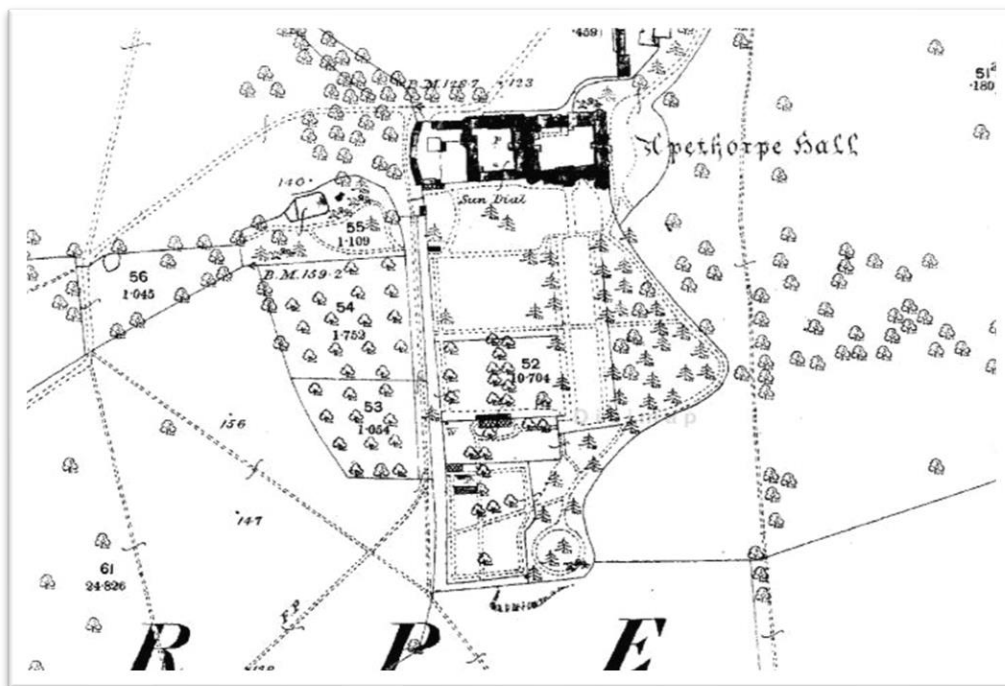


Fig. 307. OS map, surveyed 1885 published 1886. Northamptonshire sheet, XII.4

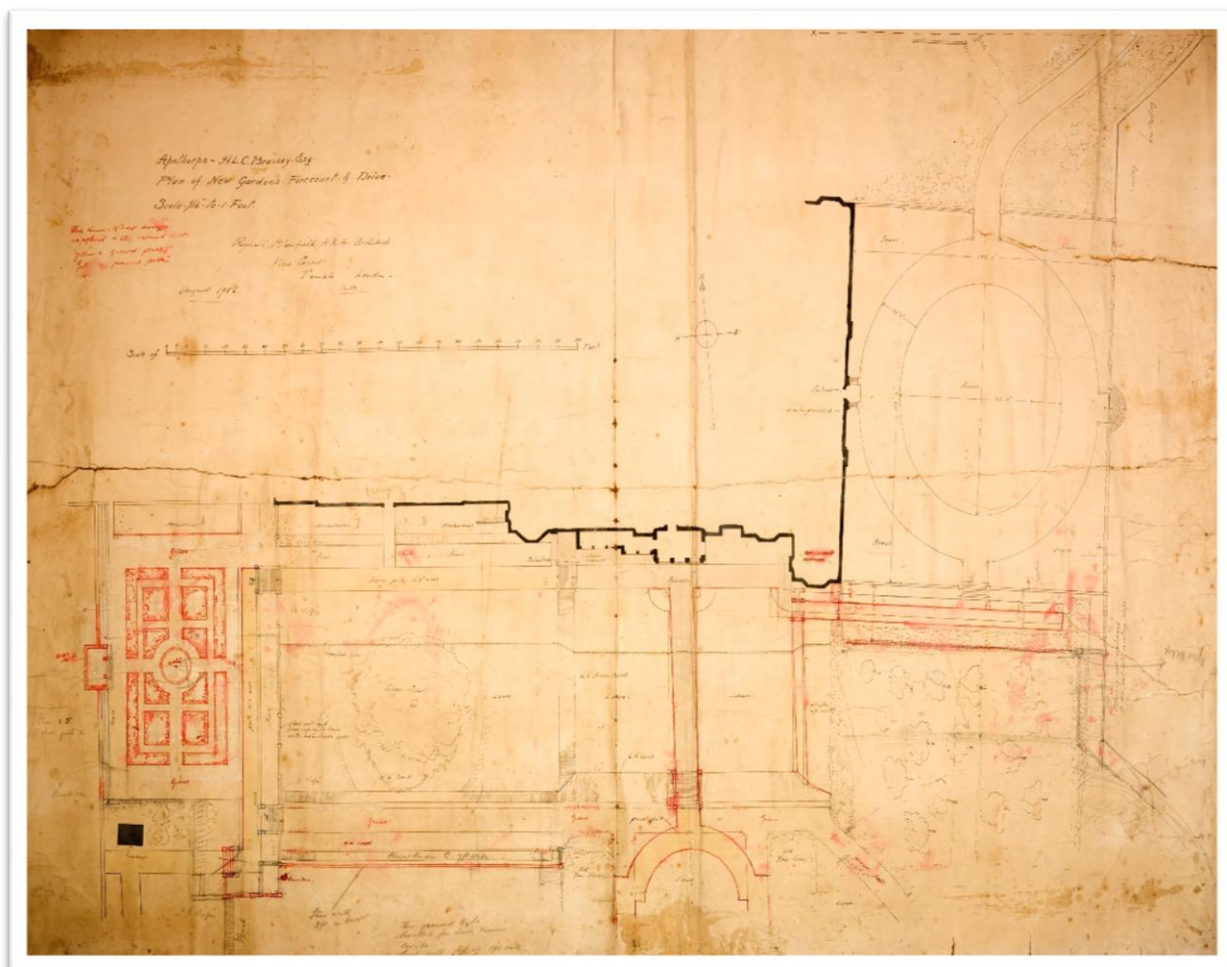


Fig. 308. Blomfield's garden plan dated 1906. *Historic England*.

It is clear from Blomfield's 1906 plan that he used the bones of the earlier gardens and added features that would complement the house and its context, again working to his principle of bringing separate parts together. This plan details the top half of the garden, the black line on Blomfield's plan indicates the line of the house, with the garden facing south and east. On the eighteenth century plan, to the east marked as the gravel garden and entrance court, Blomfield had made an oval in the centre of the court with paths and steps leading to the north and south. This area which looked like a wooded area on the original plan to the north was marked as a 'flower garden'. The entrance court was walled with a yew hedge to the south. On a 1721 print the entrance was walled with pavilions at each of the eastern facing corners (Figure 309). Blomfield's entrance court looking to the south was seen in this *Country Life* photograph of 1909 (Figure 310).<sup>150</sup>



Fig. 309. 1721 drawing of the Apethorpe Hall entrance court – note the corner pavilions. *Country Life*, 1909.

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<sup>150</sup> 'T', 'Apethorpe Hall-1. Northamptonshire, The Seat of Mr Leonard Brassey', *Country Life*, 25.637 (1909), 414-423 (p. 416).

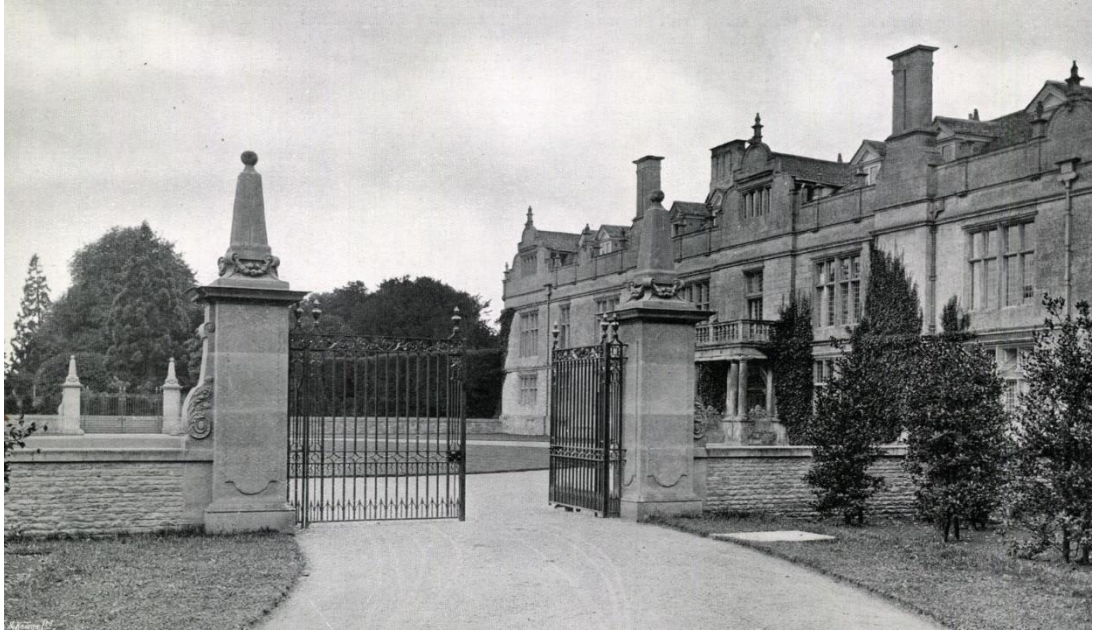


Fig. 310. Blomfield's new entrance court looking to the south. *Country Life*, 1909.

Working with the structure of the original garden, Blomfield used the existing terrace and paths on the south facing side of the house creating a sunken garden and terrace, which on the original plan was marked as the bowling green with steps up to a long lawned area. The sunken terrace could be seen in this 1909 *Country Life* photograph and today (Figures 311, 312).



Fig. 311. The sunken terrace leading to the yew walk. *Country Life*, 1909.



Fig. 312. The sunken terrace with the Cedar. 2021.

In the eighteenth century plan a long rectangular area that led from the sunken terrace was intended as an ornamental walk with statues. This area has not changed as can be seen on the revised Ordnance Survey map of 1885 (see Figure 307). Blomfield adapted this area using his signature design of a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle in grass and planted the surrounds with yew retaining its original purpose as the 'Yew Walk' (Figure 313).



Fig. 313. The yew walk, Blomfield's stepped hemicycle in grass. 2021.

To the west of the garden through a lawned area, marked on Blomfield's plan with a Cedar, *Cedrus libani*, and on the eighteenth century plan as a flower garden, Blomfield created higher ground with a terrace and steps up to a rose garden and pavillon (Figures 314, 315). The pavillon seen in the *Country Life* article of 1909 and the rose garden remain today, with a gravel path leading down on the west side to a small rectangular garden surrounded with sculptured yew hedging (Figure 316). This area was originally called the Millstone Garden created by Blomfield in 1907-8.<sup>151</sup>

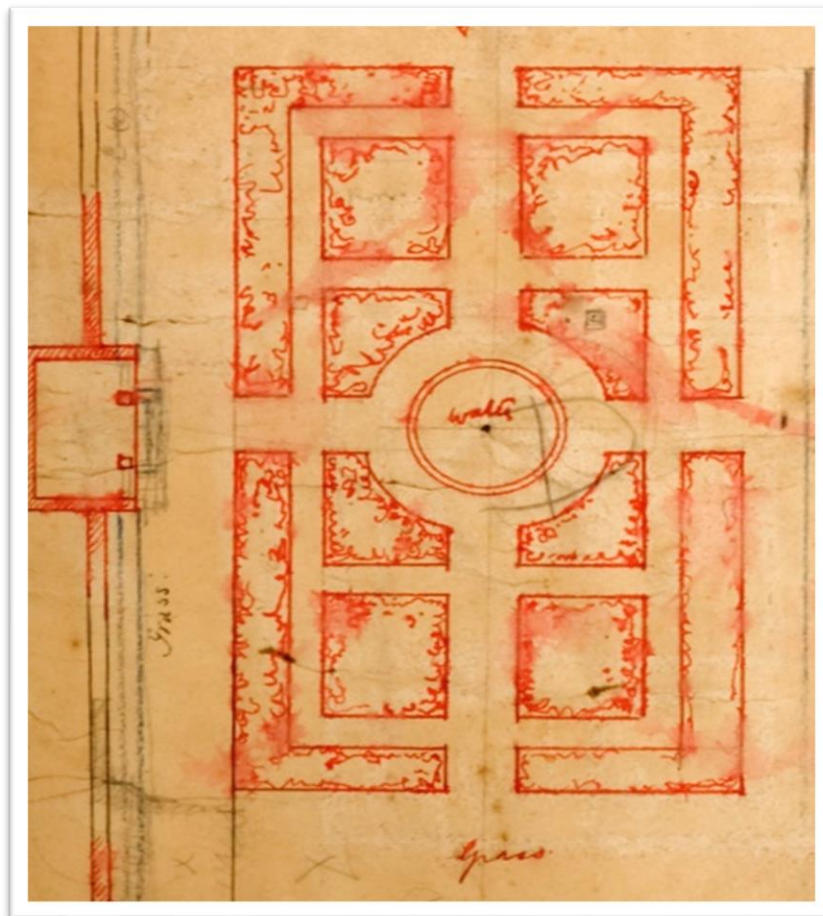


Fig. 314. A section of Blomfield's Plan for the Rose Garden 1906. *Historic England*.

<sup>151</sup> Morrison, *Apethorpe, The Story of an English Country House*, p. 328.

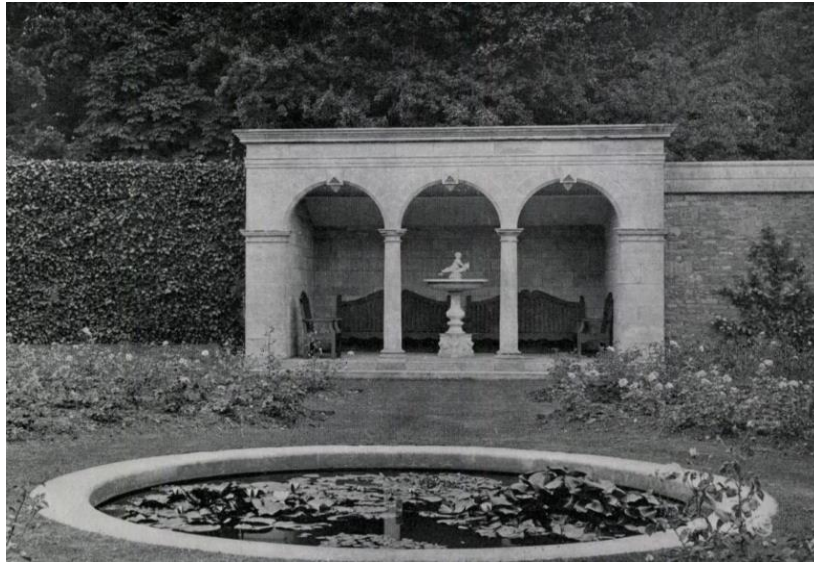


Fig. 315. The Pavilion. *Country Life* 1909.



Fig. 316. The Rose Garden and Blomfield's Pavilion. 2021.

Moving south and east of the yew walk to a sunken garden, originally the Pergola Garden, here Blomfield used his signature feature of a rectangular pool with stepped hemicycles at both ends. Blomfield surrounded this garden with balustraded walls, stone piers with ball finials and steps down to the rectangular pool set in grass. The outer part of this garden was surrounded with sculptured yew hedges and planted with conical yews. This was created in 1912 replacing the earlier Pergola Garden,



which perhaps explains why the Blomfield's garden plan of 1906 did not include his signature feature (Figures 317, 318, 319).<sup>152</sup>



Fig. 317. The Pergola Garden pre 1912. *Apethorpe, The Story of an English Country House*.

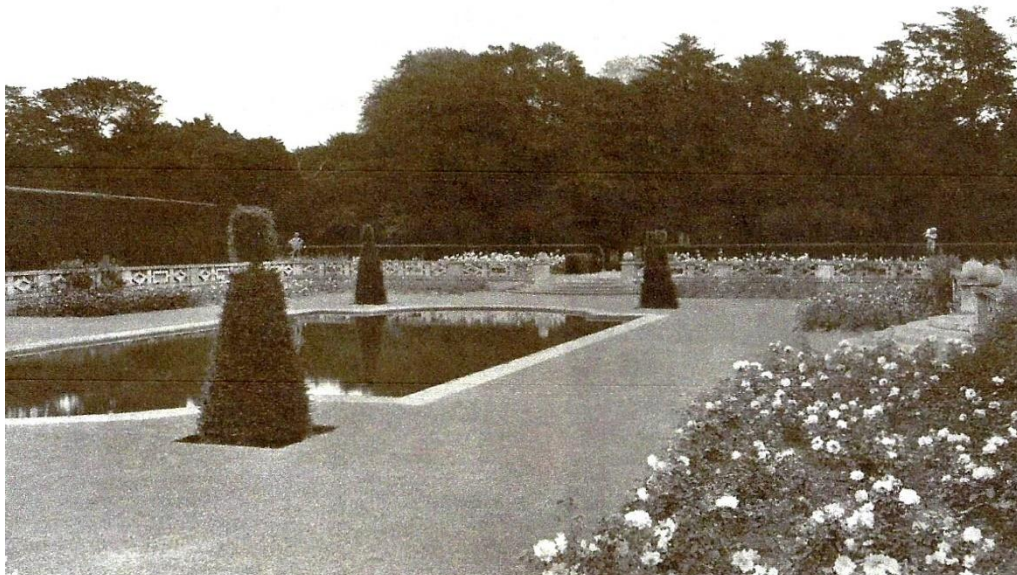


Fig. 318. Blomfield's water garden in 1925 planted with roses. *The Architectural Review*, 1925.

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<sup>152</sup> Morrison, *Apethorpe, The Story of an English Country House*, p. 330.



Fig. 319. Blomfield's water piece. 2021. The surrounding walls look to be in the geometric Art Deco style for which there is no explanation.

Blomfield commenced work on the garden at the time he started altering the house and continued until at least 1912. From the garden plan he must have relished the prospect of making a seventeenth century Jacobean garden using the existing layout and structure of the area. He was probably allowed a free rein to his design, adding two of his now familiar signature pieces, one in water and one in grass where he converted the existing grass walk that dated back to the Elizabethan garden.

Apethorpe Palace has had a difficult history since Lord Brassey sold the estate just after the war in 1948. The advertisement in *Country Life* stated it had all conveniences, electric light, central heating and modern drainage, with gardens easy to maintain, all set in 136 acres.<sup>153</sup> In 1949 the Home Office bought the Hall and turned it into an approved school, as a commentator wrote in *Country Life*, 'yet another of England's country houses passed from private ownership into the care of the state'.<sup>154</sup> At that time the gardens had not changed as the aerial photograph of 1952 showed all Blomfield's features including his 'water piece' intact (Figure 320).

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<sup>153</sup> Advertisement, *Country Life*, Apethorpe Hall, Near Peterborough Northants, 103.2664 (1948), (p. 263).

<sup>154</sup> 'Apethorpe an Approved School', *Country Life*, 105.2721 (1949), (p. 563).

The approved school run by Northamptonshire County Council closed in 1983 and the estate was sold to Libyan national, Wanis Bwella, who allowed the house and grounds to deteriorate over the next nineteen years. In 2002 Apethorpe was placed at the top of English Heritage's 'At Risk Register'. In 2006 the then Secretary of State, Tessa Jowell (1947-2018), put a compulsory purchase order on the estate and after some difficulties Apethorpe Hall came into the care of English Heritage. Having spent £10 million on repairing the Hall, English Heritage eventually put Apethorpe Hall on the open market at a cost of £2.5 million. Baron Pfitzen bought the property in 2015 agreeing to an 80 year commitment of opening the Palace for 50 public days a year and to carry out repairs at his own cost.<sup>155</sup> As part of the arrangement Apethorpe Hall was renamed Apethorpe Palace to reflect its royal connections.<sup>156</sup>

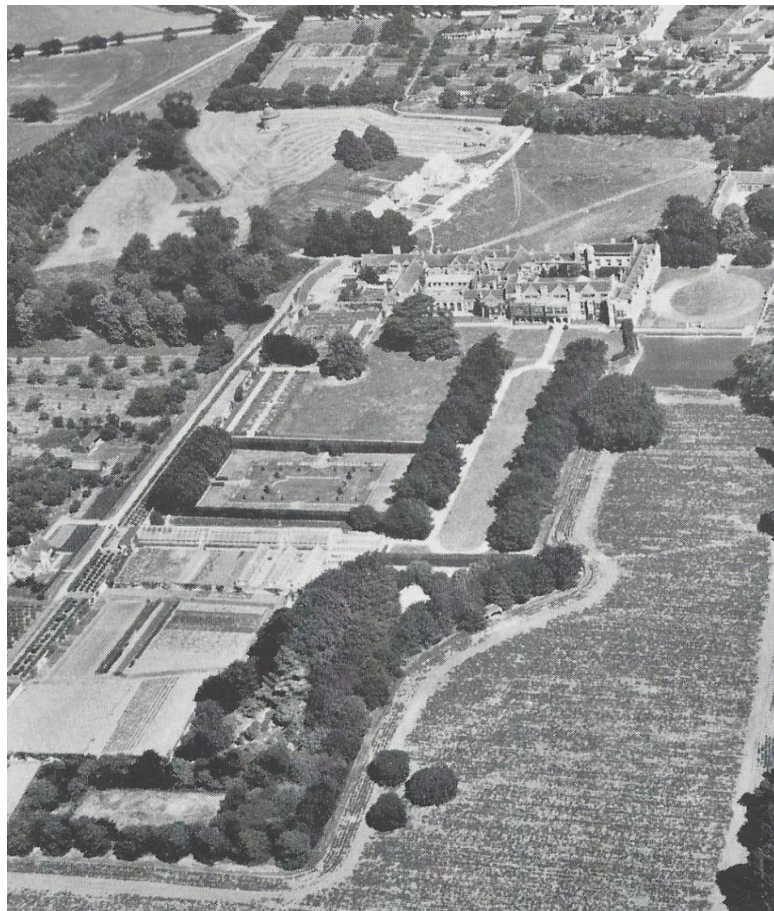


Fig. 320. Aerial view of Apethorpe Hall 1952, clearly showing Blomfield's signature piece, in grass and in water. *Elysian Gardens*, 1979.

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<sup>155</sup> 'Crunch time at Apethorpe', *Country Life*, 197.25 (2003), (p. 148). <<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/apethorpe-palace/future-secured>> [accessed 15.11.2021].

<sup>156</sup> Historic England, Apethorpe Palace, Grade I list nos. 1271465, 1271470, 1271467, 1271472. I am grateful to Baron and Baroness Pfitzen for taking me on a tour of Apethorpe Palace and gardens and for their time and assistance.

## Moundsmere Manor in Hampshire

By 1908 Blomfield, then in his late forties, had built up a considerable reputation in the architectural profession. He had become a leading advocate for architectural education and in 1906 was appointed Professor of Architecture to the Royal Academy. Later he was to become Chairman of the Board of Architectural Education established by the RIBA in 1907, roles in addition to his literary output and his clients, both domestic and civil.<sup>157</sup> On the domestic side he was now renowned for remodelling and or alterations to older houses, but his work at Caythorpe Court, a new house and grounds, meant he was sought after for the complete build, a house set within its own surroundings, as with Wilfred Buckley's (1873-1933) commission for a new house and grounds on the four hundred acre estate of Moundsmere Manor in Hampshire.

The site of Moundsmere Manor was mentioned in the Domesday Book and later became part of the dowry of Anne of Cleves (1515-1557) and then Catherine Howard (1523-1542). On the latter's death Henry VIII granted the manor to Winchester College who needed a place for a sanatorium. Moundsmere with its height of over 500 hundred feet and bracing air was perfect for 'fellows who were suffering from the plague'. Moundsmere Manor remained in the ownership of Winchester College until the site was sold in 1908 to Wilfred Buckley, the second son of general merchant Henry Buckley (1838-1903) of Edgbaston Birmingham.<sup>158</sup> Wilfred was educated at Giggleswick in Yorkshire, worked in the family business handling exports and in 1895 was sent to manage the New York office. There he met his future wife, Bertha (1873-1937), who is described as a 'Fifth Avenue Heiress', daughter of Herbert Leslie Terrell (no dates). They married in 1898 and had one daughter Janet in 1901. Returning to England in 1906 Buckley bought the Moundsmere Manor estate.<sup>159</sup> Blomfield does not record any mention of Buckley in his memoirs, although according to his biography Buckley had a similar temperament to Blomfield, capable of blunt honesty bordering on tactlessness at times. Buckley was a keen sportsman, so no doubt they got on well.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, pp. 112, 121.

<sup>158</sup> Lawrence Weaver, 'Moundsmere Manor, Basingstoke, The Seat of Mr Wilfred Buckley', *Country Life*, 27.688 (1910), 378-385 (p. 379).

<sup>159</sup> Phillip Sheail, 'Buckley Wilfred (1873-1933)', *ODNB* see bibliography.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

The earliest ordnance survey map of Moundsmere Manor revised in 1894 showed a farm and farm buildings (Figure 321). The new house was built to the south of the main farm buildings as shown on the ordnance survey map revised in 1908 (Figure 322).<sup>161</sup>

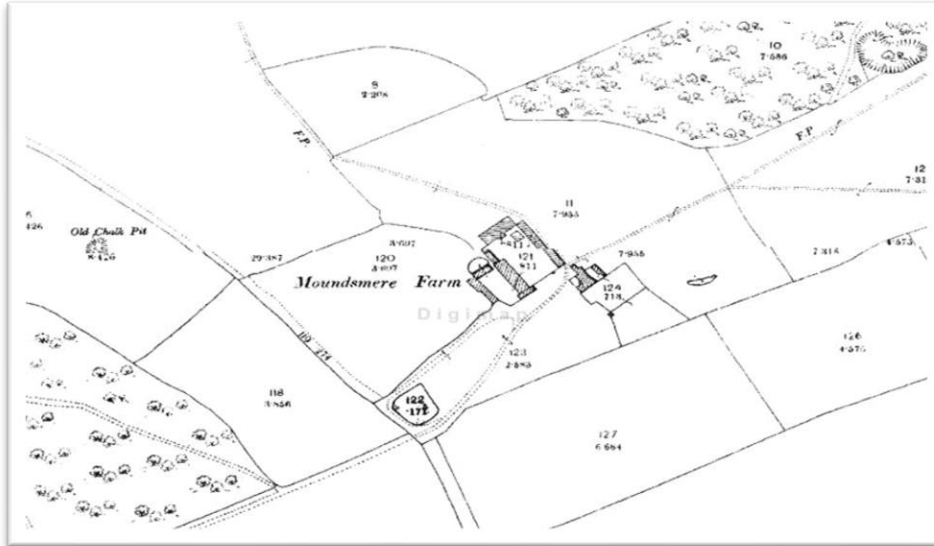


Fig. 321. OS map, revised 1894 published 1896, showing a farm. Hampshire Isle of Wight sheet, XXXIV.15

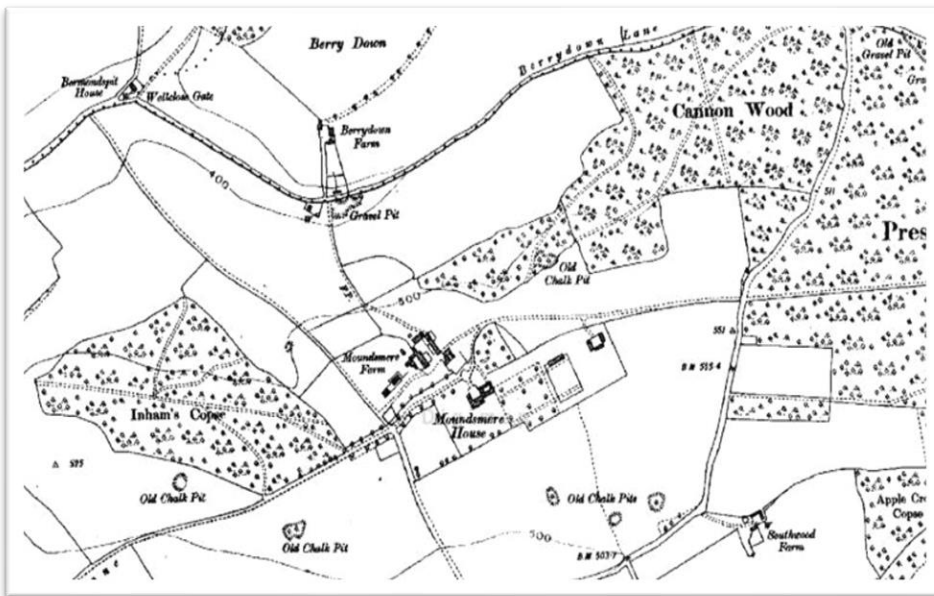


Fig. 322. OS map, revised 1908 published 1911, showing the house but no garden. Hampshire Isle of Wight sheet, XXVI.II

<sup>161</sup> OS maps, Hampshire Isle of Wight sheet, XXXIV.15 revised 1894 published 1896. Hampshire Isle of Wight sheet, XXVI.II revised 1908 published 1911.

No plans or documents remain for Moundsmere Manor other than a perspective drawing looking at the house from the south west by James B. Fulton (1875-1922). As already mentioned Blomfield used draughtsmen to prepare his perspectives and Fulton was an accomplished draughtsman (Figure 323).<sup>162</sup>

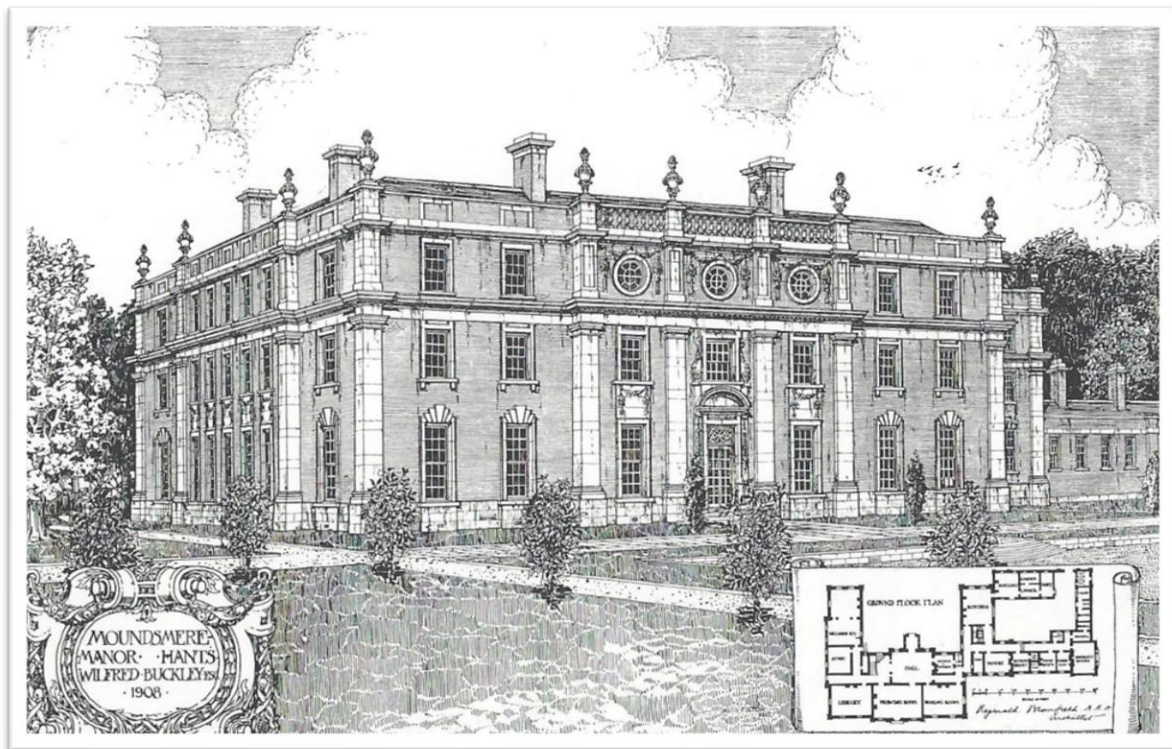


Fig. 323. James Fulton's perspective drawing 1908. *Sir Reginald Blomfield*.

Fellows described Moundsmere Manor as a splendid example of Blomfield's designs for new country houses and, although not typical of his normal design, it was quintessentially Edwardian.<sup>163</sup> A style that was popular in this period was termed 'Wrenaissance', a revival of late seventeenth century architecture based on the work of Wren. Blomfield with his literary output on Renaissance architecture was a keen follower of Wren, as seen in his sketch of Hampton Court designed by Wren. Moundsmere has many similarities to Hampton Court, built in red brick with stone dressings and decorative roundels (Figure 324).

<sup>162</sup>James Black Fulton <<https://www.mackinstosh-architecture.gla.ac.uk/catalogue/jamesblackfulton>> [accessed 04.01.2021].

<sup>163</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 56.



Fig. 324. Blomfield's sketch of Hampton Court, circa 1890s. *A Short History of Renaissance Architecture in England, 1500-1800*, p. 133.

Work started at Moundsmere in 1908, but as Weaver wrote in *Country Life* in 1910, it had taken two years to complete the house and work had only just started on the garden. Weaver continued, 'we are at once impressed by its prevailing qualities of largeness and unity', but he suggested later in his article that 'if Moundsmere Manor is a little heavy, if it lacks in some measure that suavity which belongs to buildings more markedly roofed, the character of the style adopted and the present lack of a garden to frame the house are largely responsible'.<sup>164</sup> The photographs that appeared with this article showed that the garden was in the process of being made, with some new planting of yew hedges, paths and the terrace on the garden front (Figures 325, 326).

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<sup>164</sup> Weaver, 'Moundsmere Manor', (pp. 380, 385).

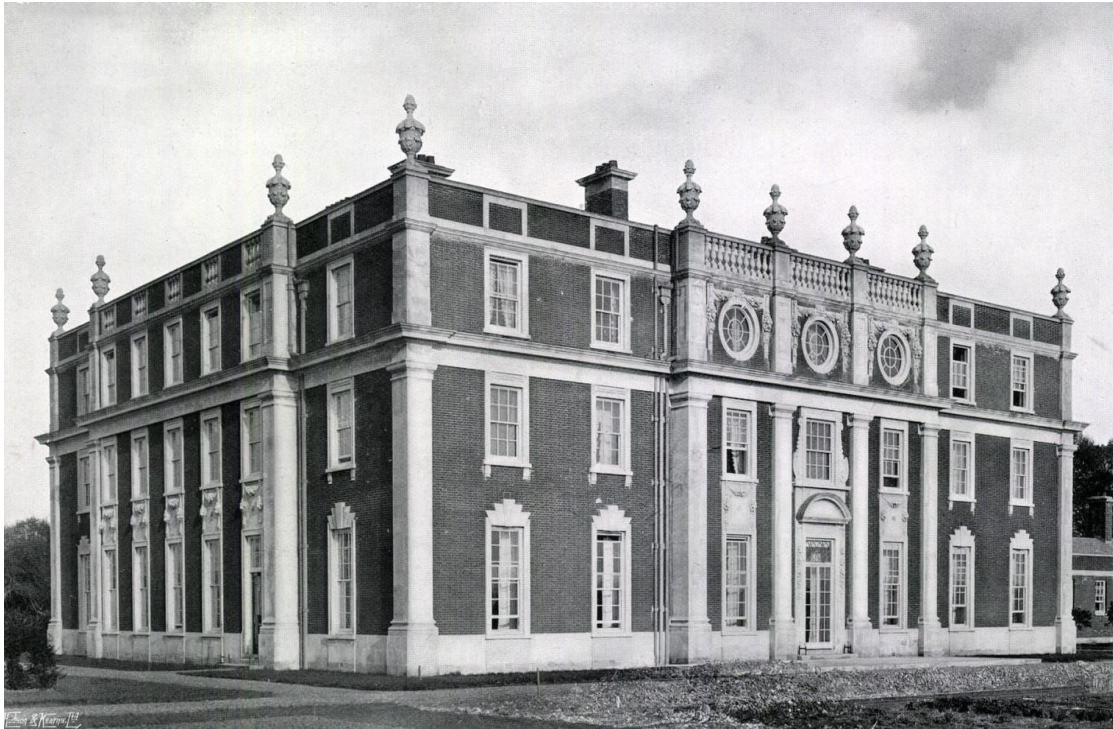


Fig. 325. The south front as Fulton's drawing of 1908, showing the beginnings of the terrace and the sunken area for the pool. *Country Life*, 1910.



Fig. 326. The western side showing the beginnings of a yew hedge and the terrace. *Country Life*, 1910.



Fulton's perspective drawing prepared in 1908 showed part of the design of the garden to the south. There was the main terrace that ran along the front to the walled garden, demi-lune steps leading down to a sunken area and his drawing showed the brick retaining wall. Even at this early stage Blomfield had decided that this area would hold his signature water piece (Figures 327, 328).

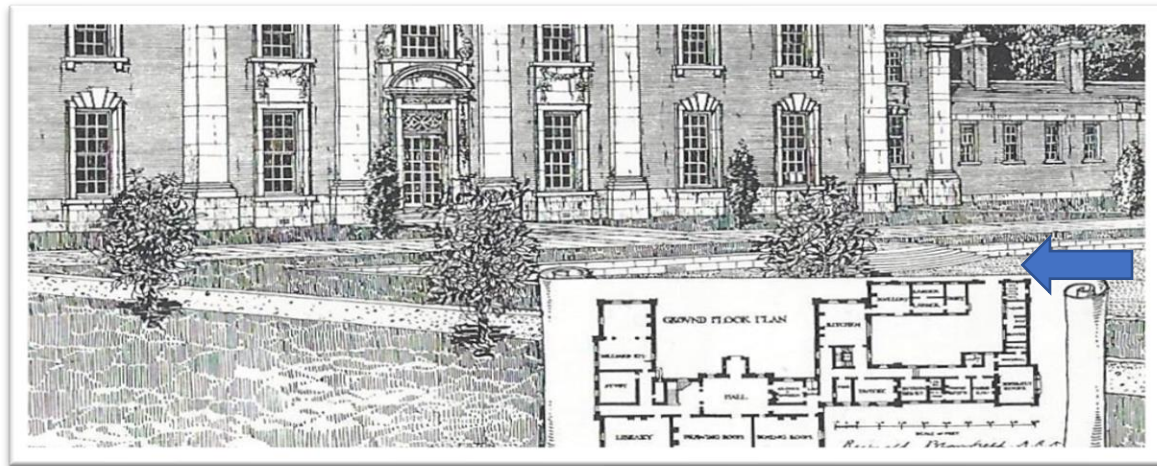


Fig. 327. A section of James Fulton plan showing the sunken area of the garden marked with the blue arrow.



Fig. 328. Blomfield's signature feature of a water piece at Moundsmere Manor. <[https://www.gardenvisit.com/garden/moundsmere\\_manor\\_garden](https://www.gardenvisit.com/garden/moundsmere_manor_garden)> [accessed 21.10.2021].

A recent Google image shows the layout of the garden to the southern front (Figure 329). This area is laid out with two main axial walks running east to west. Originally to the west of the house was a rose garden which is now a swimming pool. To the east of the sunken water piece is a rose garden and a tennis court which was originally grass.



Fig. 329. The Google image of Moundsmere Manor and the garden layout 2021.  
<<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Moundsmere+Manor/@51.1851948,-1.1075534,507m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x487422b80d438f73:0x62d8e778b06fe1c7!8m2!3d51.1852629!4d-1.1054112>> [accessed 30.06.2022].

Buckley died in 1933 and his wife put the estate up for sale in 1935 with 1000 acres.<sup>165</sup> In July of 2007 Moundsmere Manor was up for sale again through Savills for £14 million and remains in private hands.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>165</sup> 'The Estate Market, Moundsmere Manor sold', *Country Life*, 77.2006 (1935), (p. xxxviii).

<sup>166</sup> Historic England, Moundsmere Manor, Grade II 1339602. Park and Gardens, Grade II\* 1000865. Due to Covid restrictions I was not able to visit Moundsmere Manor and since that time the circumstances of the owners have changed and a visit was not possible.

## Mellerstain House in the Borders

Blomfield clearly enjoyed the company of Lord Binning, George Baillie-Hamilton-Arden, eleventh Earl of Haddington (1827-1917), and Lady Binning (no dates) as he devoted almost a page to them in his memoirs.<sup>167</sup> He met Lord Binning, Colonel of the Blues in the Albany Barracks in the late 1890s.<sup>168</sup> Blomfield wrote that Lord Binning was a 'most delightful man, humorous', with an attractive hint of romance, which 'he used to explain as an old legend of a gypsy strain in the family'. He was also a fine rider and an excellent shot who provided Blomfield with a good day's shooting.<sup>169</sup> Blomfield first went to Mellerstain in 1898 at the time when his country house work was reaching its peak and over the next ten years Mellerstain was to be one of his major commissions.

Mellerstain House, a castellated Georgian Mansion near Kelso in the Scottish Borders, dates back to the early eighteenth century and was built in two stages. William Adam (1689-1748) built the two wings in 1725 and his son Robert (1728-1792) built the central block between the two wings from 1770 to 1778.<sup>170</sup> Girouard writing in *Country Life* in 1958 explained why the house was built in two stages. On the death of Charles, Lord Binning (1697-1732), the estate had passed not to his first son Thomas but to his younger son George Baillie (1723-1797) who, inheriting the estate in 1759, 'found himself in possession of a magnificent formal lay-out which was equipped with everything except a house'. William Adam had designed a house which was intended to fill the gap but it had not been built, so George Baillie had inherited an 'empty stretch of grass between the two wings'.<sup>171</sup> Having done the grand tour Baillie was 'imbued' with classical taste and thus engaged Robert Adam to build the house and create the interiors (Figure 330).<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

<sup>168</sup> Blomfield's brother, Charles, was in the British Indian Army, Major-General Charles James Blomfield CB DSO (1855-1928).

<sup>169</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

<sup>170</sup> Mark Girouard, 'Mellerstain, Berwickshire –I, A Seat of the Earl of Haddington', *Country Life*, 124.3215 (1958), 416-420 (p. 416). *Mellerstain, Gordon, Berwickshire*, Guidebook (Derby: Pilgrim Press, 1980), p. 16.

<sup>171</sup> Girouard, 'Mellerstain', (p. 416).

<sup>172</sup> *Mellerstain Guidebook*, p. 16.

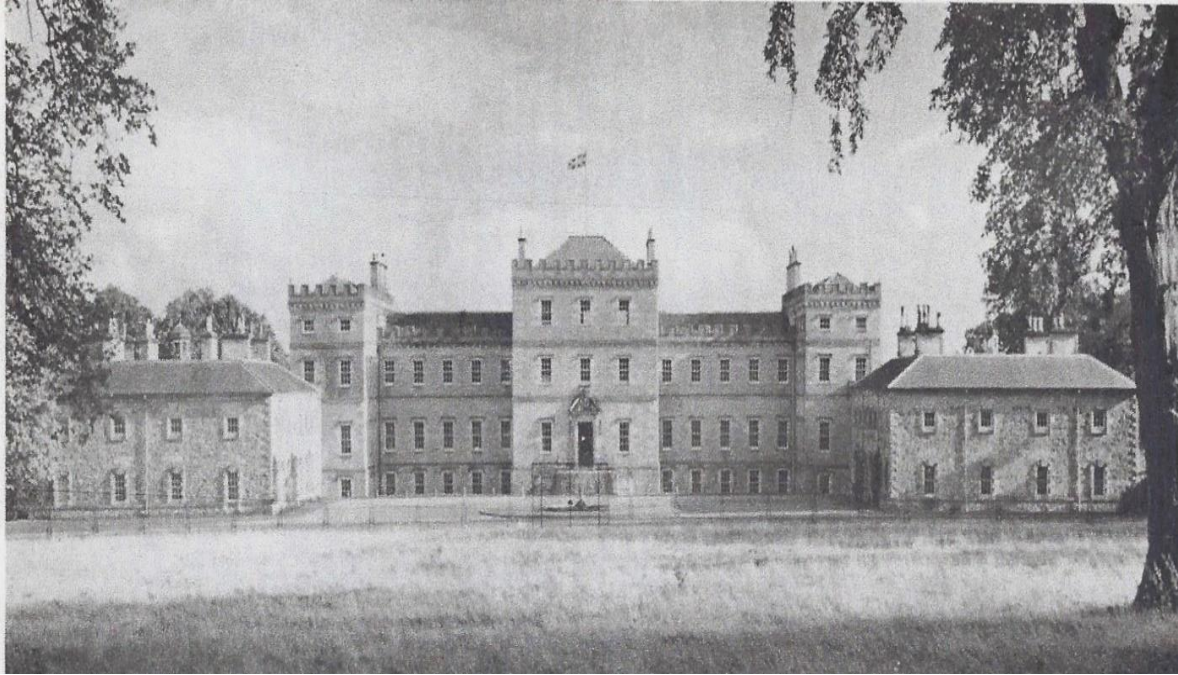


Fig. 330. Mellerstain House, William Adam's flanking pavilions and Robert Adam's central house. *Country Life*, 1958.

An early map of the area from General Roy's Military Survey dated from 1747 to 1755 showed a formal garden layout for Mellerstain with a 'bosquet' to the north, vistas by way of a cross axial path and a central ride leading down to the canal called Eden Water, which was fed by a tributary of the Tweed. It is probable that Robert Adam lined up the house with a vista down to the canal as part of George Baillie's building programme (Figure 331).<sup>173</sup> An ordnance survey map surveyed in 1906 showed the site before Blomfield started work (Figure 332).<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Mellerstain House <<https://www.historicenvironment.sct/designation/GDL00280>> [accessed 18.01.2021].

<sup>174</sup> OS map, Berwickshire sheet, XXVII.13 2<sup>nd</sup> revision surveyed 1906 published 1908.

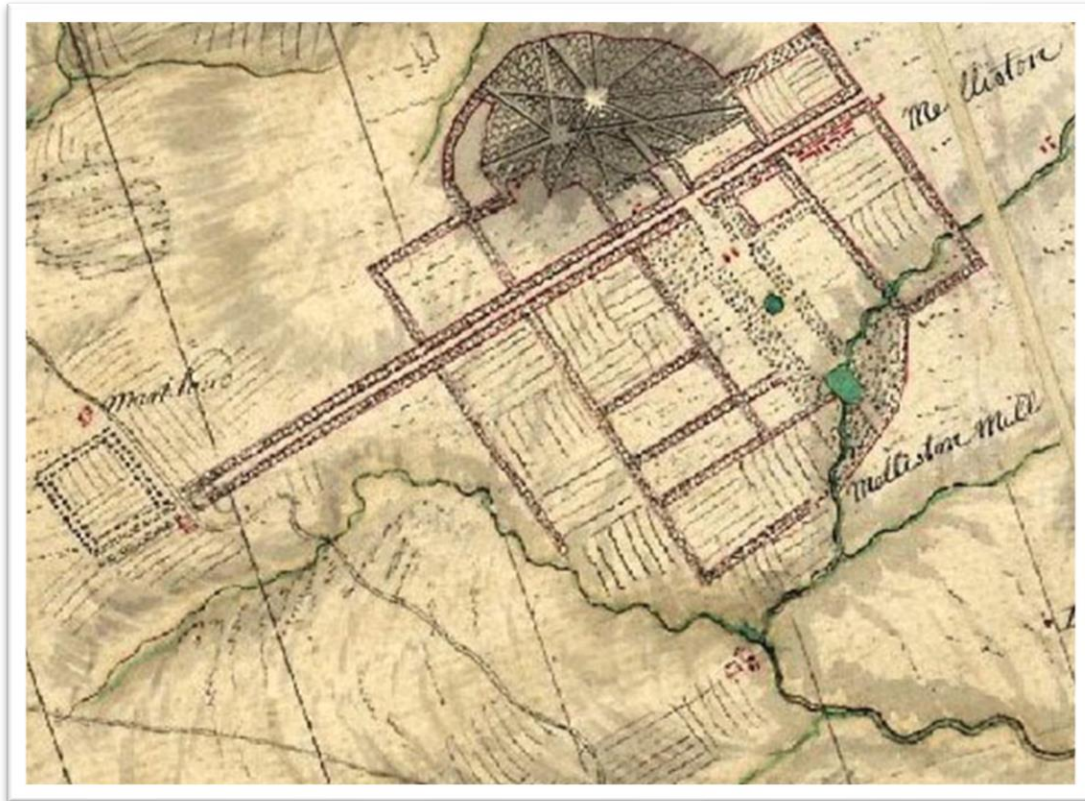


Fig. 331. Map of Mellerstain's formal layout dated from 1747-1755. The two red dots are the two wings of the house, the lower green is the canal. *Scottish Borders Council.*



Fig. 332. OS map, surveyed 1906 published 1908. Berwickshire sheet, XXVII.13

The Mellerstain Guidebook makes an important point that 'fortunately nothing has been done by later owners to interfere with the house as it was completed by George Baillie'; continuing 'but in the time of Lord Binning, Sir Reginald Blomfield was commissioned to transfer the slope which fell from the house to the lake at the foot of the hill into a series of garden terraces'.<sup>175</sup> Blomfield was clearly delighted with this commission as he wrote that Lord and Lady Binning were 'enthusiastic on the matter of garden design' (Figure 333).

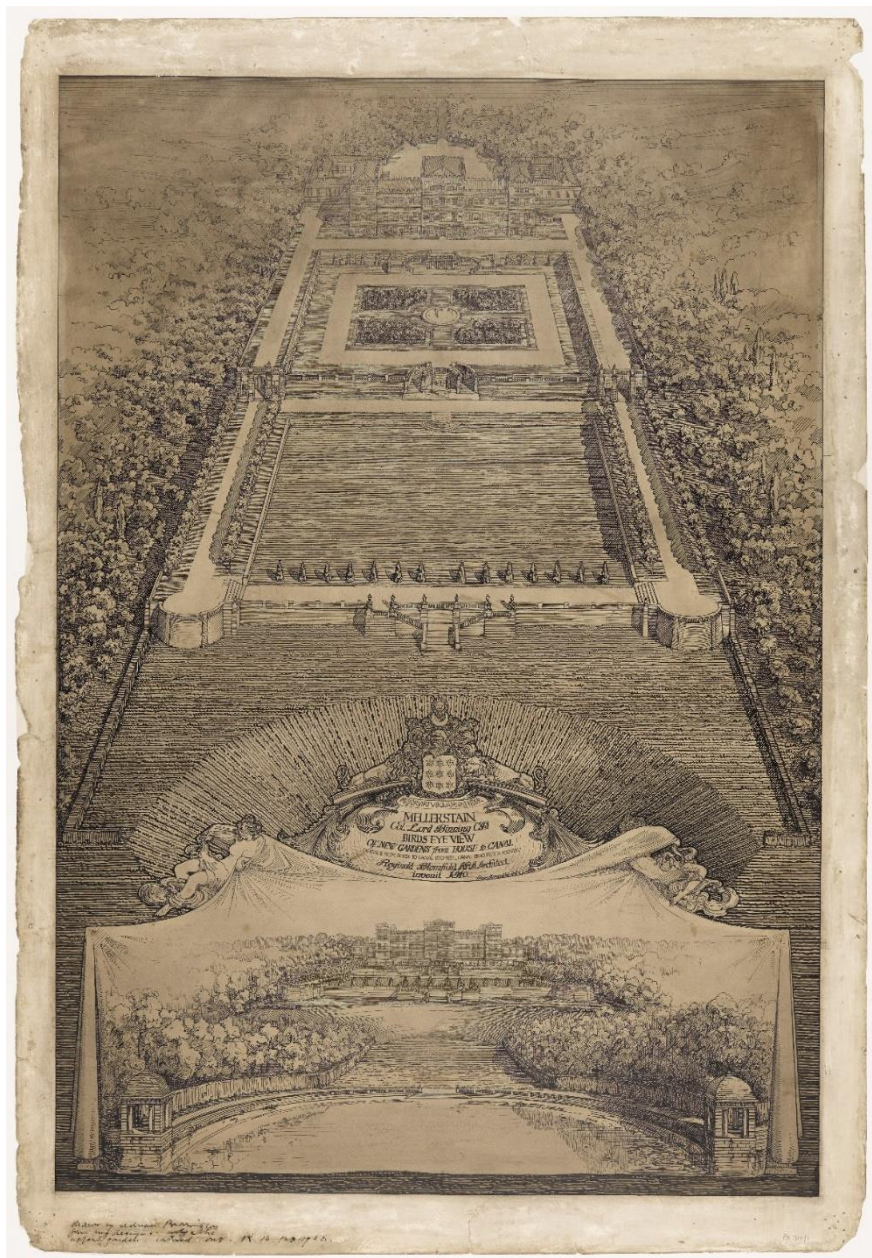


Fig. 333. Blomfield's original perspective for the garden dated 1910. RIBA 125983.

<sup>175</sup> Mellerstain Guidebook, p. 16.



Fig. 334. A postcard, printed after 1902, showing Mellerstain before Blomfield's design. Mellerstain House Trust.

A postcard, printed after 1902, showed the original layout of the grounds before Blomfield started work at Mellerstain (Figure 334). His first design was very ambitious, as he said in the manner of Le Notre, and had been drawn for him by Adrian Berrington (see Figure 333).<sup>176</sup> Cost was the issue with Blomfield's first design. The plan showed two large terraces and what he termed as a 'crypto-porticus', a semi-subterranean gallery under the first terrace, a large parterre with a central fountain and a staircase to the second terrace of a grass plat, which in turn led to another staircase leading down to an 'immense grass hemicycle' overlooking the lake.<sup>177</sup> The final design was simplified and concentrated nearer to the house with three terraces; the largest being the middle terrace laid out with twin symmetrical parterres. A stone staircase with balustrades led to a smaller terrace of lawn which in turn swept down to the lake via a grass hemicycle. On either side of the vast lawn leading down to the canal are beech hedges in perfect symmetry. The main terrace was laid out with what appears to be a design of a parterre taken from *Theory and Practice of Gardening* translated by John James in 1709 (Figure 335, 336).<sup>178</sup>

<sup>176</sup> Adrian Berrington <<https://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1107>> [accessed 19.05.2020].

<sup>177</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

<sup>178</sup> John James, *The Theory and Practice of Gardening: Wherein is fully handled all that relates to Fine Gardens commonly called Pleasure Grounds, As Parterres, Groves, Bowling-Greens, etc.* (London: Geo James, 1712). There were two copies of this book dated 1712 in



Fig. 335. Aerial photograph showing the upper terrace with twin parterres, no date. <[https://www.divento.com/en/historic\\_houses\\_and\\_sites/1067\\_mellerstain\\_house\\_garden\\_berwickshire\\_scotland](https://www.divento.com/en/historic_houses_and_sites/1067_mellerstain_house_garden_berwickshire_scotland)> [accessed 05.2021].

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the Mellerstain Library at that time. It is reasonable to say that Blomfield and Lord and Lady Binning looked at this book together and perhaps chose the design. Further, George Baillie was a subscriber to this book and James had dedicated it to James Johnston, who was George Baillie's uncle. Lesley Abernathy, Archivist, Mellerstain House Trust.



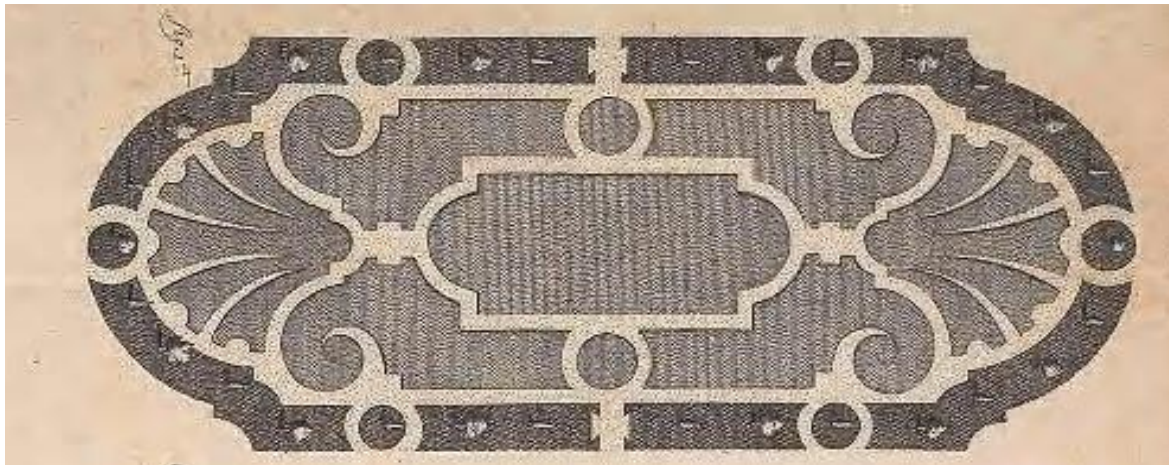


Fig. 336. The plan of the parterre from John James 1712, note the central stepped hemicycle design. *The Theory and Practice of Gardening*.

The building and stonework for the grand terrace was not finished until around 1915, as a postcard dated at that time showed. Only the yews had been planted on the top terrace, so the planting of the twin parterres on the second level did not take place until after 1915 (Figure 337).



Fig. 337. Postcard of the terraces at Mellerstain, with just a grass layout on the second level, postmarked 1915. *Mellerstain House Trust*.

There are few records left at Mellerstain from this period, so they cannot confirm that Blomfield designed the parterres nor the planting date. In the *Country Life* article of 1958 was an image of the top terrace taken from the house that showed the layout of the parterres, which followed the John James design (Figure 338).<sup>179</sup> Further Mellerstain House have a planting plan for the parterres. The parterres measure 55 yards long and 75 yards wide, over three quarters of an acre. This planting plan was drawn up by Head Gardener Robert Kennedy in the 1980s and is still in use today.<sup>180</sup> Again, this plan is almost an exact copy of John James' 1712 design (Figures 338, 339, 340), so it is reasonable to say that it was Blomfield who designed these grand twin parterres with the approval of Lord and Lady Binning.

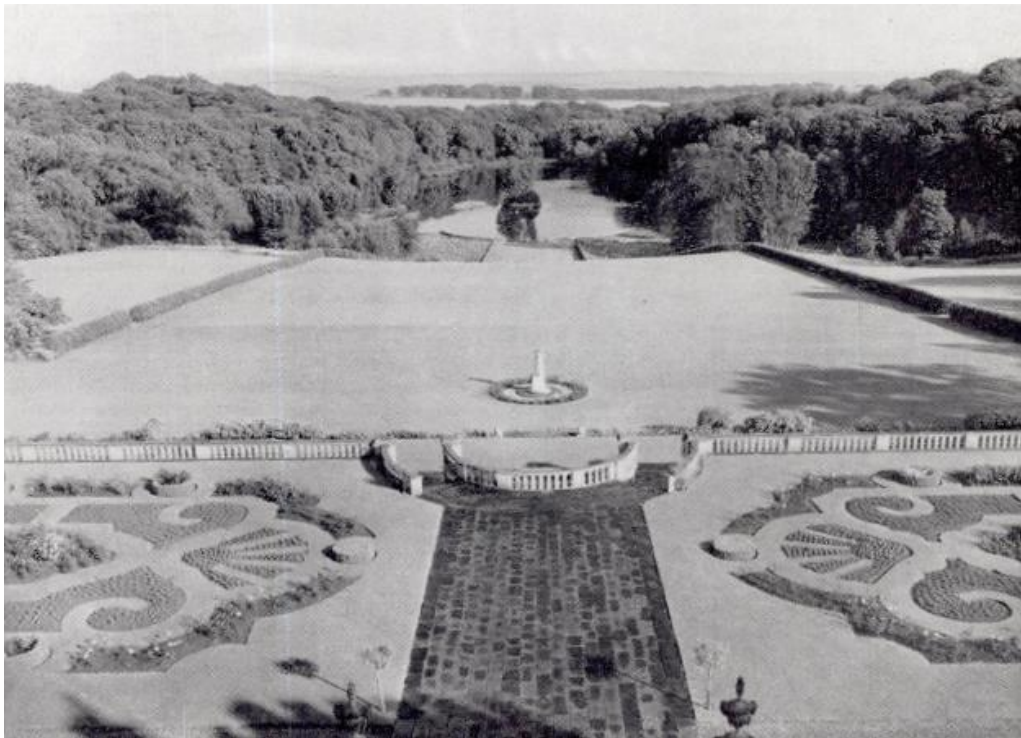


Fig. 338. The parterres dated 1958. *Country Life*, 1958.

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<sup>179</sup> Girouard, 'Mellerstain', (p. 417).

<sup>180</sup> James S. Truscott, 'Glorious Symmetry', *Country Life*, 182.29 (1988), 156-159.

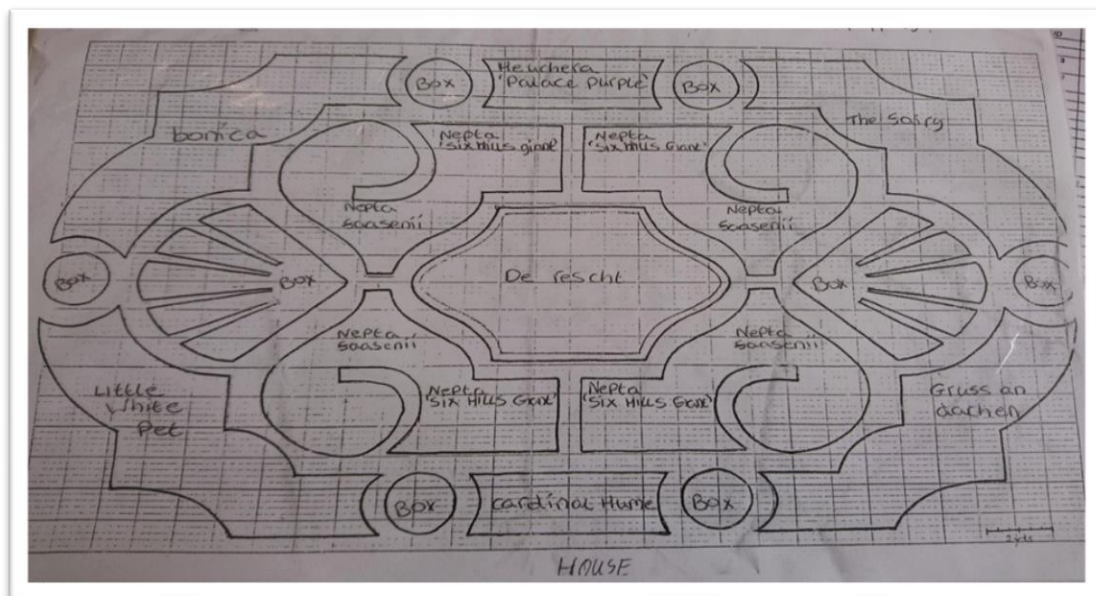


Fig. 339. The Mellerstain hand drawn planting plan for the parterres dating from the 1980s. Mellerstain House Trust.



Fig. 340. The twin parterres 2021.

Blomfield needed a revised design, a vehicle, to take the eye down to the lake from the top terrace. So it is suggested that he took an idea from an original drawing of the landscape by William Adam dated 1756, which has been lost and all that remains is a photocopy of a photocopy held in the Mellerstain Archives. This shows the area immediately below the two wings of the house was clear land, possibly pasture, and that a funnel had been carved out from the shubbery or woodland to lead the eye down to canal (Figure 341).<sup>181</sup>

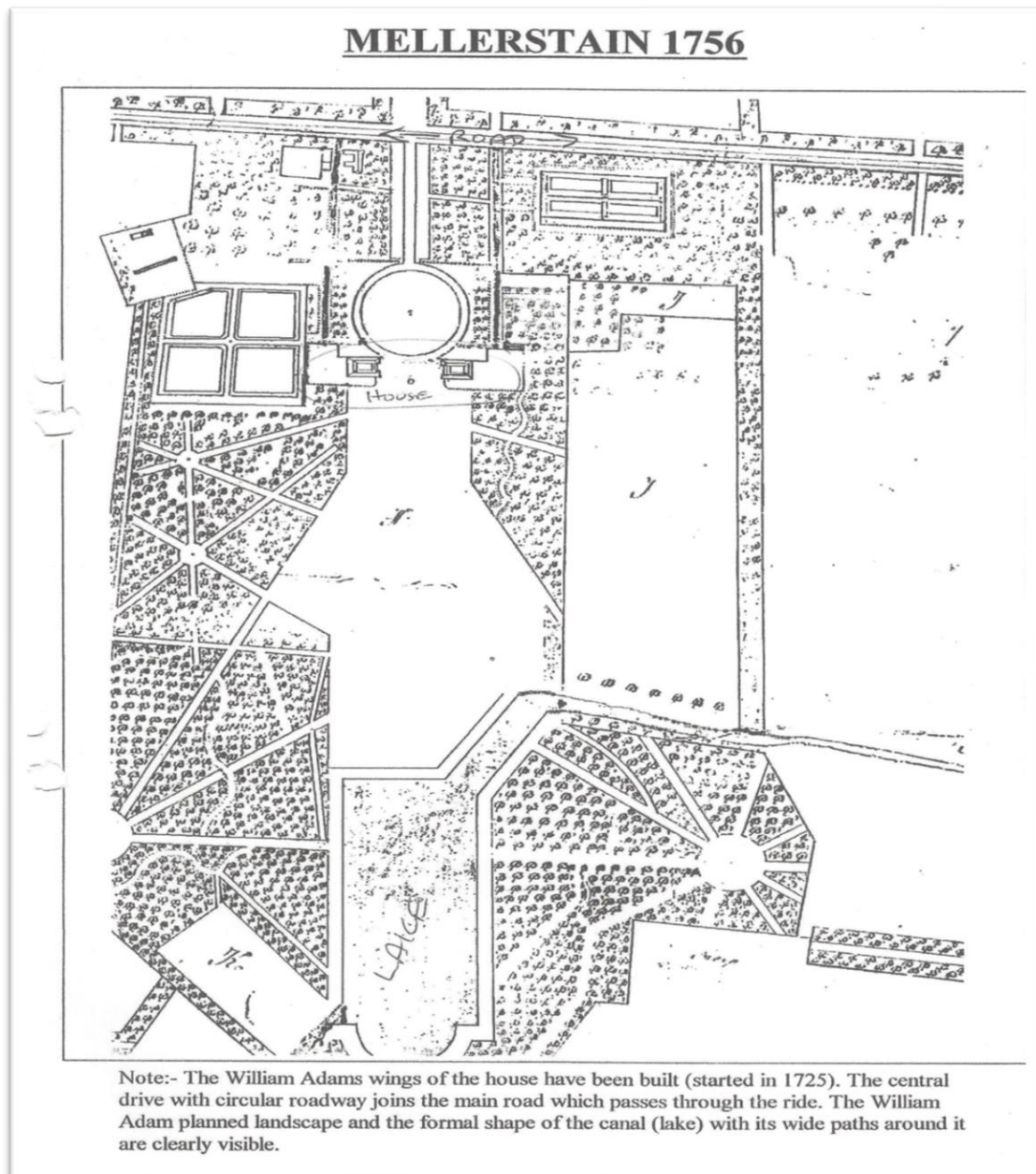


Fig. 341. A photocopy of the William Adam's plan, 1756. *Mellerstain House Trust*.

<sup>181</sup> The original of this plan is lost. The archive at Mellerstain only hold a photocopy of a photocopy of the plan.

A postcard dated after 1911 showed Blomfield's new layout using William Adam's funnel, with symmetrical hedges planted either side in beech. Also seen is the new work carried out to the house end of the canal, with a curving balustraded wall, central steps leading into the water and the funnel as it is today (Figures 342, 343).



Fig. 342. Blomfield's new layout, postcard after 1911. *Author's collection.*



Fig. 343. Blomfield's funnel and the hemicycle 2021. The white church is part of the sculpture exhibition at Mellerstain.

What is of further interest with the William Adam plan is the defined shape at the lower end of the canal to the south, as it is in the shape of Blomfield's signature of a stepped hemicycle leading into a rectangle. The canal shape of the southern end is further confirmed with a series of plans and maps held in the Mellerstain Archives. The first, a drawing by an engineer and thought to have been prepared in 1724, showed the far end of the canal and gave details of the canal's size and depth together with the sluice arrangements (Figures 344, 345, 346).



Fig. 344. The Engineer's canal plan, 1724. Mellerstain House Trust.



Fig. 345. The upper right section of the plan.

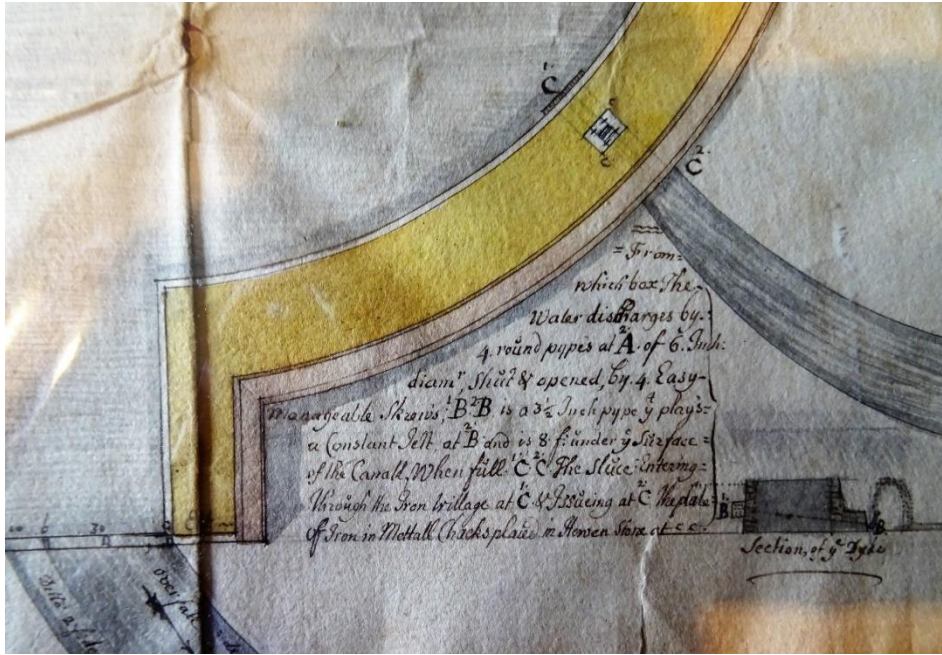


Fig. 346. The lower right section of the plan.

Another plan dated 1765 of an area of the estate called the Sneep confirmed that the canal had been made and the southern end shaped as the engineer's drawings of the 1690s, with turf walks around the canal (Figure 347).



Fig. 347. The Sneep showing the shape of the canal and the grass walks, 1765. Mellerstain House Trust.

From this evidence it is unlikely that William Adam had designed the landscape as his plan is dated 1756. The canal or part of it was either in place or to be built from the 1690s. Lesley Abernethy, the Archivist at Mellerstain, suggested that the design for the canal and the vista, the funnel down to the canal, was from Lord Binning (1697-1732), who had married into the family in 1717. Just before coming to Mellerstain, Lord Binning had visited Marly and Versailles, as his mother in law Lady Grisell Baillie (1665-1746) wrote, 'Binning was exceeding surprised with Mellerstain, he thought it so much better than he expected'. Having walked the grounds he thought it one of the 'finest seats except Marly'. Lady Grisell continued, 'in his imagination he had carved out the finest terraces, sloping banks, the finest waterworks and ponds ... so you see what a fine place Mellerstain is'.<sup>182</sup> There was an account that George Baillie (1664-1738), Lady Grisell's husband, returning from Holland built a 'Dutch Canal surrounded by raised grass walks, and at intervals stood classical statues', but there was no confirmed date for this work.<sup>183</sup>

Ottewill in *The Edwardian Garden* wrote that Blomfield restored the lake to its original shape, enlarging it and relating it in natural landscape style to the adjoining woodland.<sup>184</sup> Blomfield is not usually associated with 'a natural landscape style' as his style was formal; thus, with the evidence of the formal plans from the 1690s and 1750s, what is more likely was that Blomfield formalised the canal. The design of the parterres is formal and symmetrical, the shaping of the funnel down to the canal is symmetrical, to loosen the lake would have been out of character for Blomfield. A Lidar of the layout of the landscape circa 2019-2021 shows William Adam's and Blomfield's funnel down to the canal and confirms that Blomfield created the northern end of the canal to match the original design from the 1724 of the southern end of the canal. The red sight line drawn on the Lidar shows Blomfield lined up the centre of the southern end of the canal with the centre of the house and 'Crypto Portico' on the top terrace, a distance of just under half a mile (Figure 348). This Lidar gives the outline of Blomfield's revised design for the landscape; but it is the analytical drawing that highlights his skill in how he created the design to follow the contours of the land

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<sup>182</sup> Lesley Abernethy, *Lady Grisell Baillie Mistress of Mellerstain* (Beauchamp: Matador, 2020), p. 141.

<sup>183</sup> *Mellerstain Guidebook*, p. 13.

<sup>184</sup> Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden*, p. 26.



(Figure 349).<sup>185</sup> Although it is not clear if the building works of the terraces had been completed at that time, it would seem from his 1910 perspective that he had planned the terraces as the anchor for the axial view. Using William Adam's funnel design which he framed with symmetrical beech hedges, the eye was taken down to the grass hemicycle where he tightened the view which then opened to the canal and beyond.

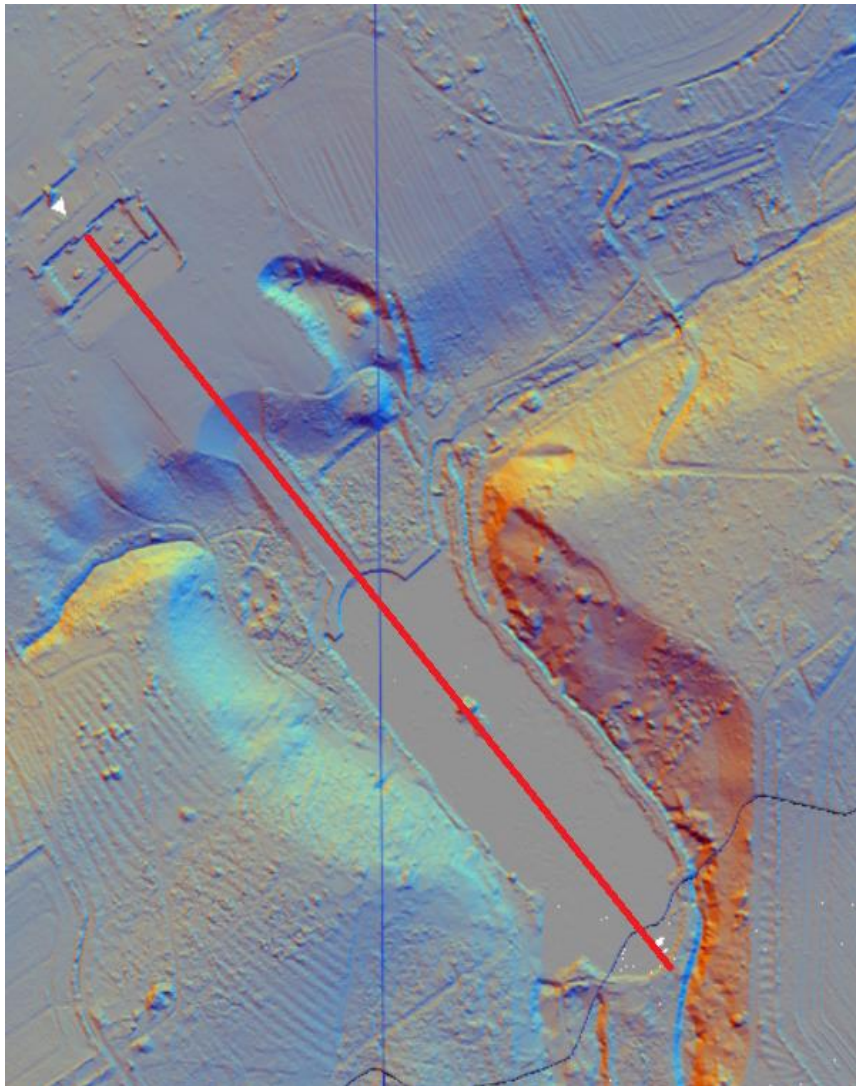


Fig. 348. The Lidar of the layout of Mellerstain circa 2020. *National Library of Scotland*. <[https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=16&lat=55.64215&lon=2.55696&layers=4&right=LIDAR\\_DTM\\_1m](https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/side-by-side/#zoom=16&lat=55.64215&lon=2.55696&layers=4&right=LIDAR_DTM_1m)> [accessed 07.07.2022].

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<sup>185</sup> I am grateful to Ruth Elwood for her help and advice in preparing this plan.

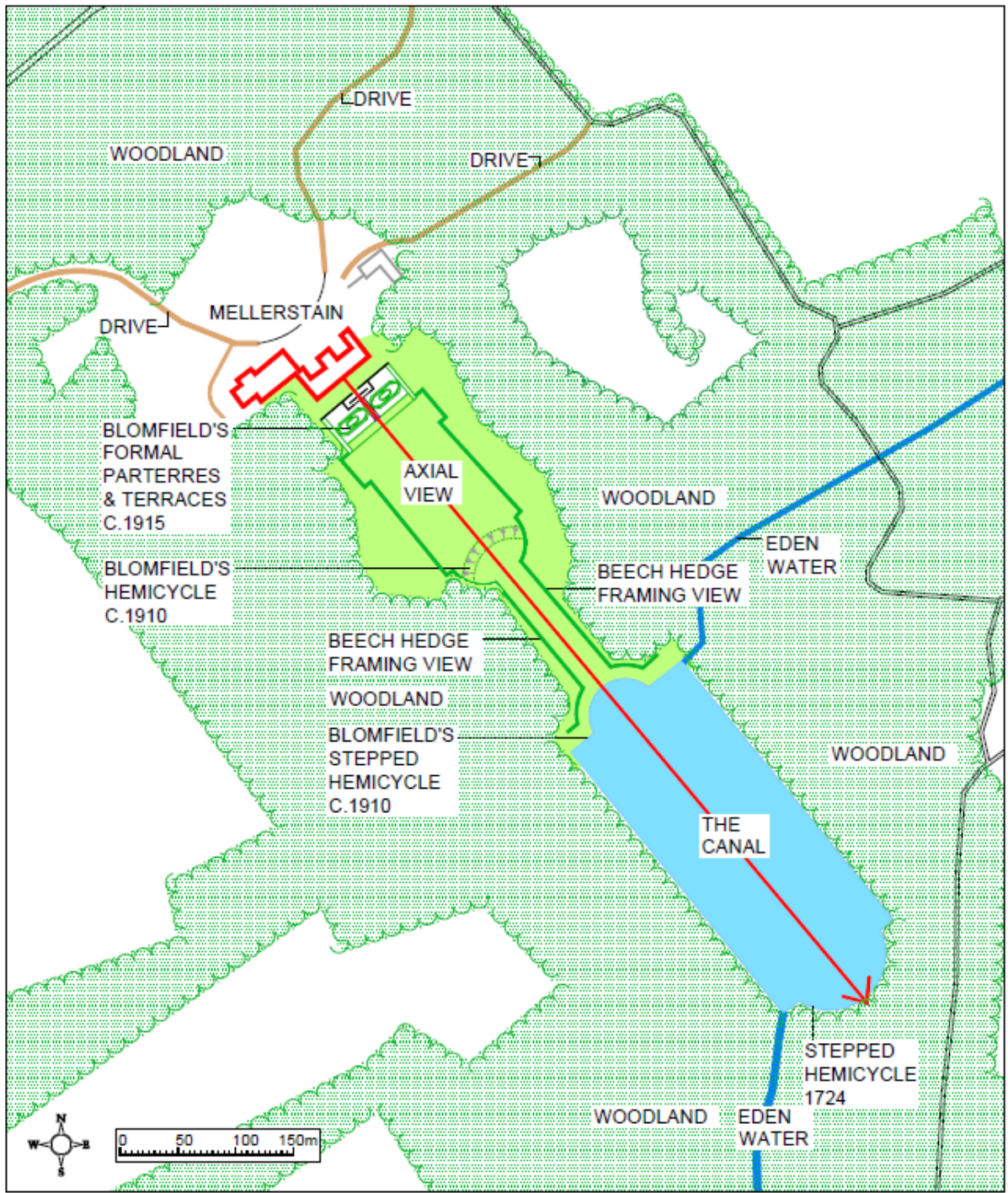


Fig. 349. The garden layout for Mellerstain 2022 confirming Blomfield's new design. Author's drawing.

Mellerstain was the last commission of this scale and complexity for Blomfield before the outbreak of the First World War and is acknowledged as being his greatest work. It was likely that Blomfield would have seen all the Adam plans not only for his own interest but as he was to make alterations to the front of the house, building a portico. So, perhaps here he saw an opportunity to persuade Lord and Lady Binning to let him use his signature piece of a stepped hemicycle at the northern end of the canal to match the southern end, thus adding and completing the early eighteenth century design for the canal drawn in 1724 and the plan by William Adam of 1756, (see Figures 341, 344). Girouard, in his *Country Life* article of 1958 said of Mellerstain, when talking of the terrace gardens, 'these are a magnificent piece of garden architecture in themselves', but he added a barb suggesting that 'the plain lawns they replaced were better suited to the castellated severity of the house'.<sup>186</sup> Girouard had a point, you pass through these grand terrace gardens without really looking at them in detail, as if they were incidental because your eye is lifted and drawn to the vista and travels down Blomfield's funnel to the canal and what lies beyond, the Cheviot Hills.



Fig. 350. Blomfield's signature feature at the northern end of the canal. 2021.

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<sup>186</sup> Girouard, 'Mellerstain, (p. 417).

## Hill Hall In Essex

It is easy to see why Blomfield agreed to work for society couple Mr and Mrs Charles Hunter, who in 1909 had taken a lease on Hill Hall in Essex. The house, a Jacobean mansion, was exactly to Blomfield's style and taste (Figure 351), Hill Hall was built by Sir Thomas Smyth (1513-1577) between 1569 and 1575 and remained in the Smyth family until the early twentieth century.<sup>187</sup> The Hall built of brick with rendered terracotta and cut-brick dressings had been altered over the years. The east front was remodelled in 1714 adding four giant half columns with a pediment over the three central bays carrying the Smyth coat of arms. In 1789 a Tuscan portico was added (Figure 352). During this time the gardens were extended and redesigned with a formal canal on the south side of the garden aligned with the centre of the house, as seen in the ordnance survey map revised in 1895 (Figure 353). In 1791 Sir William Smyth (no dates) commissioned Repton to produce a Red Book but the advice was not followed.<sup>188</sup>



Fig. 351. South front of Hill Hall. <<https://www.onthemarket.com/details/5192030>> [accessed 12.2019].

<sup>187</sup> Historic England, Hill Hall, Grade II 1000315.

<sup>188</sup> Essex Gardens Trust Report on Hill Hall, 2001. No page numbers. OS map, Essex sheet, LVIII.NE revised 1895 published 1898.



Fig. 352. Neale's Illustration of Hill Hall showing the Tuscan Portico, 1820. *English Heritage, Hill Hall.*

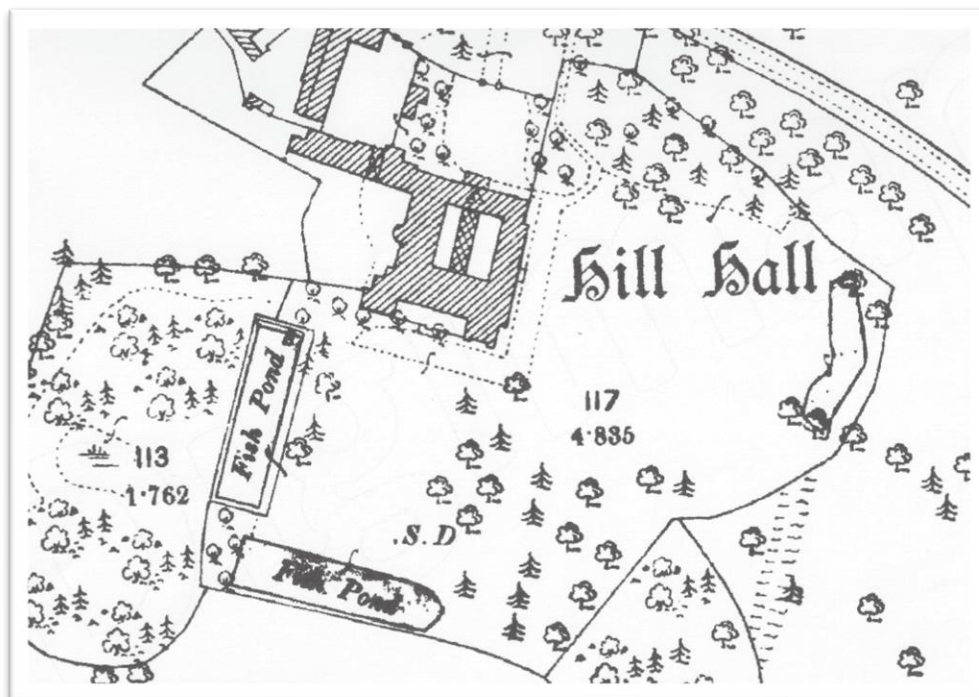


Fig. 353. OS map, revised 1895 published 1898. Essex sheet, LVIII.NE.

By 1900 the Smyth family were no longer living at Hill Hall and had let the estate to the Duc De Moro (d.1921). Tipping, writing about Hill Hall in *Country Life* in 1917, said of the new tenants Mr and Mrs Hunter, 'the twelfth Baronet had the good fortune to find such excellent and improving tenants'.<sup>189</sup> Little is known about Charles Hunter (no dates) other than he was a wealthy coal owner, but his wife Mary (1857-1933) was the sister of Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), composer, writer and suffragette.<sup>190</sup> Mrs Hunter was a well known Edwardian society hostess, associated with the Arts. She was a close friend of and had been painted by John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), the celebrated American portrait painter, who had painted her three daughters in 1902. (This painting now hangs in the Tate.)<sup>191</sup> The Hunters had obviously taken Hill Hall on a repairing lease as in 1910 they had engaged Blomfield to make alterations to the house, including several marble chimney-pieces, and to build a new service wing to the west, which included offices, stables and other working buildings, as well as a 'Fisherman's Hut' in the grounds near the fish ponds.<sup>192</sup>

Mrs Hunter wanted to make alterations to the garden, particularly around the house, and it could be said was fully aware of Blomfield's reputation for garden making. She had asked Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944), a fellow architect and garden maker, for an opinion, Lutyens wrote in his diary of August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1910:

at five I went off to Mrs Hunter's Hill Hall Epping. A delightful old house around a courtyard and arranged in an amusing way. Mrs Hunter a mixture of Lady Battersea and Pamela, Sargents galore...alas Blomfield is the architect and if they do want me to do the garden my position might be a difficult one with Blomfield.<sup>193</sup>

Mrs Hunter obviously thought better of engaging Lutyens as Blomfield was asked to develop the gardens, although it is not clear to what extent he was to alter them other

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<sup>189</sup> H. Avray Tipping, 'Hill Hall -III Essex, The residence of Mr Charles Hunter', *Country Life*, 41.1063 (1917), 496-502 (p. 502).

<sup>190</sup> Elizabeth Kertesz, 'Smyth Dame Ethel Mary', ODNB see bibliography. John Cornforth, *The Search for a Style Country Life and Architecture 1897-1935* (London: Andrew Deutsch, 1988), pp. 166-167.

<sup>191</sup> Information on this painting of the Misses Hunter <[www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sargent-the-misses-hunter-n04180](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sargent-the-misses-hunter-n04180)> [accessed 21.01.2021].

<sup>192</sup> Historic England, Hill Hall and attached service wings to north and west, Grade I 1123963.

<sup>193</sup> Claryre Percy and Jane Ridley, Eds., *The Letters of Edwin Lutyens to his wife Emily* (London: William Collins, 1985), p. 199.

than to lay out the terraces around the house.<sup>194</sup> The terraces can be seen in the photographs from Tipping's articles of 1917 and today (Figures 354, 355, 356, 357).

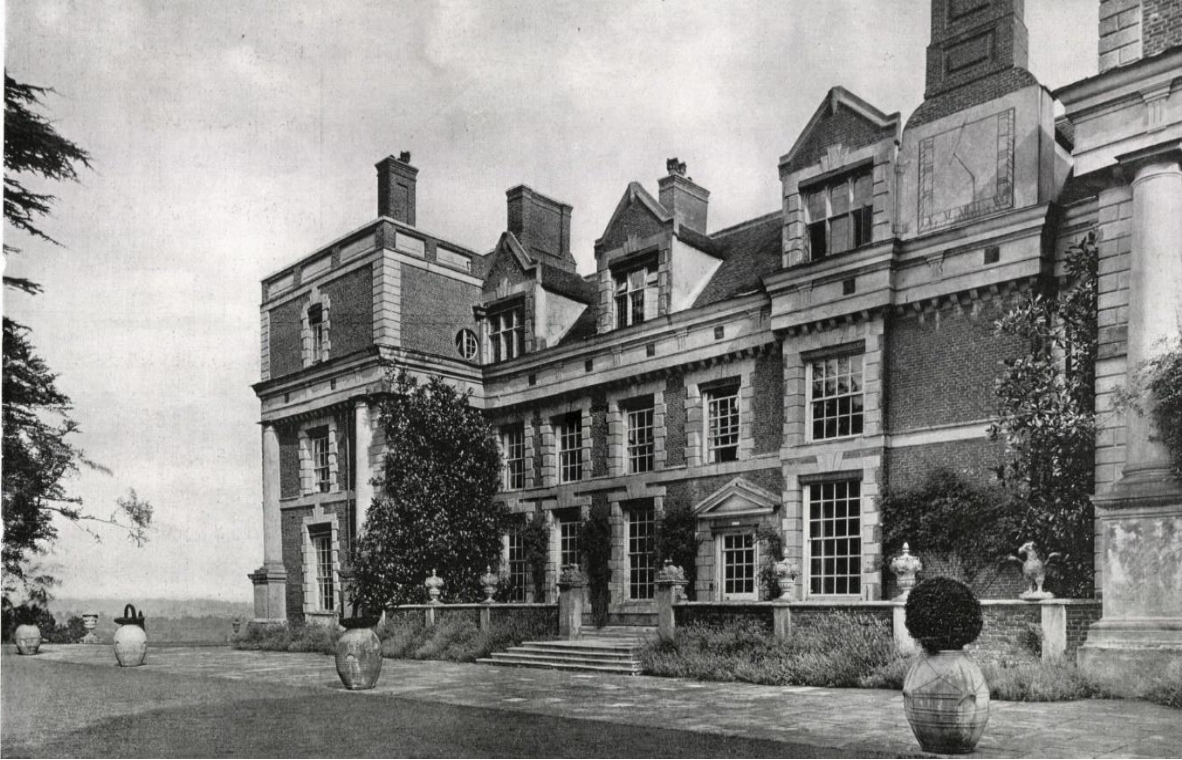


Fig. 354. The south terrace and the view over the Essex Countryside. *Country Life*, 1917.

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<sup>194</sup> Historic England, Hill Hall, Fisherman's Hut, Grade II 1123965.



Fig. 355. Blomfield's east terrace. 2021.



Fig. 356. The south terrace.  
*Country Life*, 1917.



Fig. 357. The south terrace. 2021.



It is not clear when the Hunters gave up their lease of Hill Hall, but there is a record of her selling furniture in 1925.<sup>195</sup> In that year, the Smyth family put the estate up for sale and it was bought by Sir Robert (1864-1927) and Lady Hudson (no dates). In 1927 they commissioned Philip Tilden (1887-1956) to design a bathing pavillion to stand at the southern end of what was a fish pond marked on the revised 1895 ordnance survey map (see Figure 353). In 1932 Lady Hudson sold Hill Hall to Lord Edward Hay (1888-1944), Lieutenant-Colonel in the Essex Regiment, who was also a member of Essex County Council and in 1938 Deputy Lieutenant for Essex.<sup>196</sup> During the war the estate was used by the RAF but suffered bomb damage and was left to deteriorate. In 1952 it became a women's prison. A fire gutted the Hall in 1969 and in 1980 the Hall came into the care of English Heritage as it was then, who restored its exterior. In 1998 they sold Hill Hall for conversion into private dwellings and it is now in private ownership.<sup>197</sup> The terraces remain, although not in original condition. The 'Fisherman's Hut' also remains and can be seen in the google image marked with a blue arrow (Figure 358).



Fig. 358. Google image of Hill Hall 2021, with Blomfield's Fisherman's Hut, the blue arrow marks its placing.

<<https://www.google.com/maps/place/51%C2%B040'26.6%22N+0%C2%B009'09.5%22E/@51.6741702,0.1503266,502m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m12!1m6!3m5!1s0x47d8a284c2b0791b:0xe3e2abf45300bb88!2sHill+Hall!8m2!3d51.6741702!4d0.1525206!3m4!1s0x0:0xc95e0adb19646116!8m2!3d51.6742325!4d0.152277>> [accessed 30.06.2022].

<sup>195</sup> 'The Estate Market', *Country Life*, 58.1487 (1925), (p. xxxii).

<sup>196</sup> Essex Gardens Trust Report.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* I am grateful to Anne Padfield, the guide and key holder of Hill Hall for English Heritage.

## Manoir de la Trinité

Yet again there was no mention in Blomfield's memoirs of the 1909 commission for Manoir de la Trinité in Jersey. This was one of his last domestic projects before the outbreak of the First World War. As Fellows described, it is something of an 'oddity' (Figure 359).<sup>198</sup>



Fig. 359. Manoir de la Trinité in 1890 before alterations. *Sir Reginald Blomfield*.

John Athelstan Riley (1858-1945), hymn writer and translator, had purchased Manoir de la Trinité in 1908, with all the feudal rights and title of *Seigneur de La Trinité*. Riley had been looking for 'an ancient feudal seat' for some fifteen years before finding Manoir de la Trinité writing in his pocketbook of 1904, 'a note in regard to an offer figure for Sark, then followed a valuation for Trinity'.<sup>199</sup> This connection to Jersey may have come through his wife Andalusia (1863-1912), who was the eldest daughter of the eighth Viscount Molesworth (1829-1906) and Georgina Charlotte (no dates), the daughter and co-heiress of George Bagot Gossett (no dates), an old Jersey family.<sup>200</sup>

Architectural historian Binney wrote that Blomfield came to this project through an introduction from Shaw. In Riley's papers there was a letter addressed by Shaw to 'My

<sup>198</sup> Fellows, *Blomfield*, p. 54.

<sup>199</sup> Marcus Binney, 'Trinity Manor, Jersey, The Seat of Major John Riley', *Country Life*, 180.4642 (1986), 420-425, (p. 422).

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

dear White' and which presumably was passed on to Riley. The letter dated December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1908, said:

If I wanted to lay out a fine garden, I should put it in the hands of Reginald Blomfield – he knows far more about it than any of us do - and what is so important, he is one of the few men nowadays to have any appreciation of the *grand manner*... yes he will do a fine garden – I am sure.<sup>201</sup>

This was indeed praise, as the *grand manner* was considered to be the highest style of art in academic theory – 'a style based on an idealised, classical approach'.<sup>202</sup> Blomfield's first perspective lacked an element of the *grand manner* as he kept the facia of the original house and added an attic to the gables as well as two flat roofed wings, a chapel and what appeared to be a conservatory to the south west. This perspective also set out the garden plan, which although simplified, remains in most part today (Figure 360).



Fig. 360. The perspective drawing of Manoir de la Trinité, 1909. RIBAPIX RIBA 21658.

<sup>201</sup> Binney, 'Trinity Manor', p. 423. Athestan Riley's archive is held at Lambeth Palace Library. The letter reference is MS 2345 f. 264.

<sup>202</sup> For more information on The Grand Manner see The Tate Britain's explanation <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art-terms/g/grand-manner>> [accessed 23.01.2021].

The style of the house was to change; the reason suggested by Binney was that both Riley and Blomfield made a visit to St Malo to see the style of the architecture there. Riley had purchased material from a fifteenth or sixteenth century Jersey house that was being demolished. These materials and influences changed the design making it far grander and it now could be termed in the *grand manner*, with a vast hipped French roof with two rows of dormers and tall chimneys. He also added extensions to the front to form a *cour d'honneur*, a three sided ceremonial courtyard (Figure 361).



Fig. 361. The new design entrance courtyard of Manoir de la Trinité, 1912. RIBAPIX RIBA 21671.

Although the front of the house changed, the garden did not alter significantly from the original perspective. To the south east Blomfield made a long terrace retained by granite walls that matched the house. The lawn was his signature of a rectangular area with stepped hemicycles of stone walls and yew hedge at both ends. The lawn was divided by an alley of pleached hornbeams with a central gravel path and on either side were rose beds which led to a terrace. This is called the Belvedere with views over the estate. Below this and to the south was a canal with a small bridge and to reach this canal were two bastions containing staircases from an old Jersey house, probably part of the materials that Riley bought when he started building.<sup>203</sup> Here

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<sup>203</sup> Binney, 'Trinity Manor', (p. 424).

Blomfield originally intended to have a pavilion with a tunnel leading to a further terrace on the other side of the Belvedere. It may have had steps down to the canal or what looks to be a larger piece of water, the path under the pavilion leading to a terrace with two parterres and another piece of water, possibly a pool. In 1971 Arthur Hellyer visited the garden as part of a tour of historic gardens of Jersey, writing that Riley 'very sensibly left Blomfield's formal garden uncluttered but filled the spaces around the garden with a fantastic collection of plants'.<sup>204</sup> Hellyer illustrated his article with two photographs of the formal garden (Figures 362, 363).

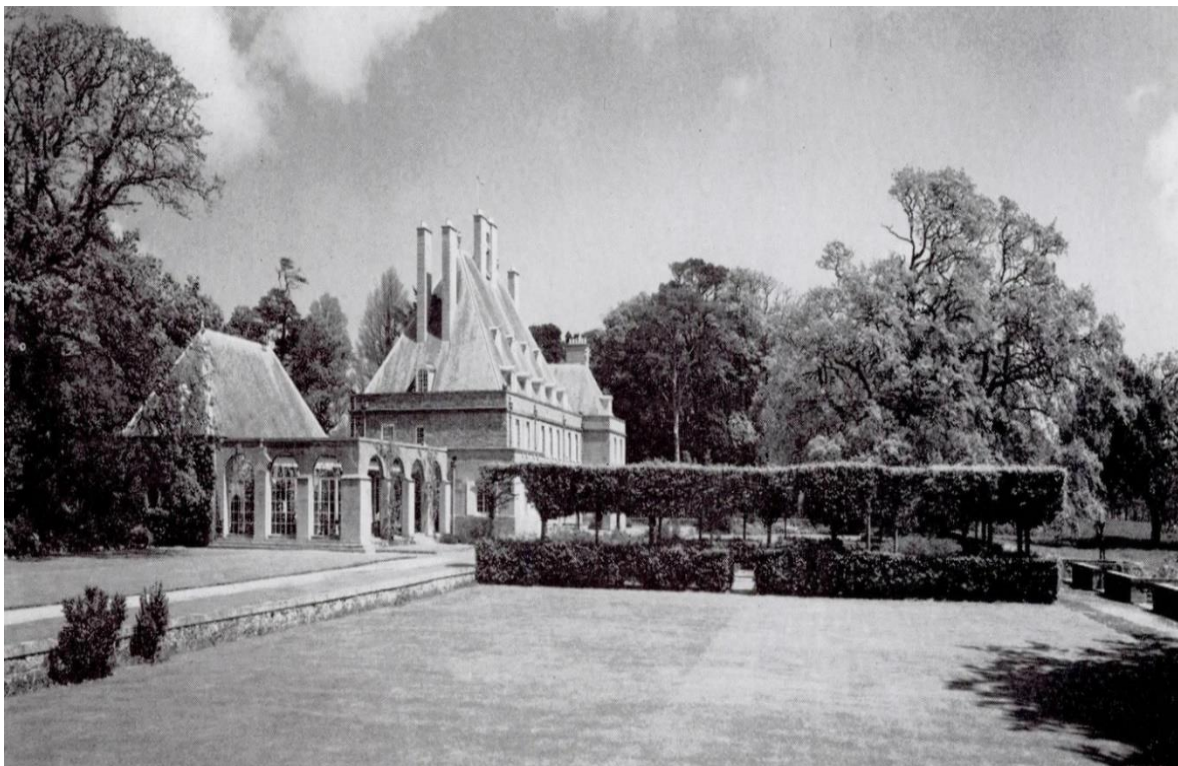


Fig. 362. From the south west looking towards the pleached hedge that leads to the Bastions. *Country Life*, 1971.

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<sup>204</sup> A. G. L. Hellyer, 'Historic Gardens of Jersey -I. A visit to three pre-Georgian properties', *Country Life*, 149.3851 (1971), 732-734 (p. 734).



Fig. 363. The canal from the path via the pleached hedge walk. *Country Life*, 1971.

Overall the garden is 12.5 acres, with Blomfield's signature feature of the grass rectangle with stepped hemicycles at each end measuring about 140 yards long. Two early photographs dated between 1909 and 1912 showed the garden being built (Figures 364 , 365).



Fig. 364. Showing the terrace and the beginnings of the pleached hedge dividing the lawn and the stepped hemicycle, 1909-1912. *Private collection*.



Fig. 365. The beginnings of the terrace and layout for the walled stepped hemicycle, 1909-1912. *Private collection.*

Athelstan's grandson John inherited the estate in 1958. He gave his grandfather's papers to the Lambeth Palace Library and also gave the interview to Binney for *Country Life* in 1986. John lived at the Manor until the 1990s when he put it up for sale. The estate with 139 acres came on the market in 1995 with Knight Frank & Rutley.<sup>205</sup> The only change the new owners have made to the gardens is to the pleached alley through to the far terrace, where the rose beds have been removed and replaced with a central fountain (Figure 365); but as can be seen from these recent photographs the gardens remain almost as Blomfield originally designed them (Figures 366, 367, 368, 369).

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<sup>205</sup> Binney, 'Trinity Manor', (p. 421). Advertisement, Knight Frank & Rutley, Trinity Manor, Jersey, Channel Islands, *Country Life*, 189.36 (1995), (p. 18).



Fig. 366. Leading through the pleached hedge to the far path and the canal. 2021.



Fig. 367. The canal showing the grotto and the pleached alley on the upper level. 2021.





Fig. 368. The north-eastern end of the stepped hemicycle. 2021.



Fig. 369. The terrace 140 yards long looking north east. 2021.

Shaw was right, Blomfield made a fine garden for Riley at Manoir de la Trinité, yet again testament to Blomfield's skill in symmetry, of matching the quality of the house with the garden and his passion for making gardens in the formal style.<sup>206</sup>

### **The war years and after**

In the years leading up to the First World War the domestic market for large country houses had contracted and, although Blomfield kept working for some of his old clients for many years, there were no more country house commissions. During the last years of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century Blomfield had built a considerable commercial side to his business, with educational and institutional buildings, churches, public and commercial buildings, including the Army and Navy Stores in Victoria and, to great debate and bitter opposition in the 1930s, the plan to replace Nash's Carlton House Terrace. He became known for memorials and monuments and was the designer of the 'cross of sacrifice' and built 29 memorials throughout the country.<sup>207</sup>

All his working life Blomfield had played a part in the 'business' of architecture, involving himself in both the politics and the controversies, resigning from the RIBA in 1891 over issues of professional registration, to re-join in 1906 and to be elected president in 1912 (Figure 370). There is a record that at the 1913 ceremony for the gold medal, George V issued a 'cordial approval' of assent to Blomfield's nomination, giving a 'loud and sustained applause' at the presentation.<sup>208</sup> Blomfield became an associate of the Royal Academy where he played an active part in committee work and was elected a full member in 1914. But the pinnacle of his professional and personal life has to have been his Knighthood in 1919. He was awarded the Knights Bachelor for Services to Architecture.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> I am grateful to the Seigneur, Dame Pamela Bell, and Paul Bell for their kind hospitality and information.

<sup>207</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, pp. 168-174.

<sup>208</sup> Liz Walder, *History, design, and legacy: architectural prizes and medals: an academic investigation of the Royal Institute of British Architects' Royal Gold Medal* (Cardiff: Wordcatcher Publications, 2019), p. 74.

<sup>209</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 207.



Fig. 370. The portrait of Sir Reginald Blomfield commissioned by the RIBA on his appointment as President in 1912, by St James Jubusa Shannon. *RIBAPIX*. RIBA 100489.

### **Sulgrave Manor**

There was to be one more garden commission, which started in 1914 and went on until 1927, Sulgrave Manor near Banbury in Oxfordshire, the seventeenth century ancestral home of the first American President, George Washington (1732-1799). The Manor and its grounds were bought as a celebration of one hundred years of peace, the Treaty of Ghent from 1812 to 1912 between America and England, with funds as Blomfield recollected raised in America. The funds of £12000, today £967000, were actually raised by British subscribers to purchase the site at a cost of £8400, today £677000.<sup>210</sup> Blomfield's involvement came following a meeting at the American

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<sup>210</sup> *Sulgrave Manor, the Home of George Washington's Ancestors*, Guidebook (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing, no date), p. 26.

Embassy in 1914 when he joined a party, which included the Duke of Teck (1886-1927), Lord Bryce (1838-1922) and a Mr Stewart, who represented the Committee to inspect Sulgrave Manor. Blomfield recalled that he could not remember what was agreed other than to do some of the repairs as both the Manor and its grounds were in poor condition.<sup>211</sup>

In the early days of the project all did not go well, the funds were not sufficient at that time and it was only later, after the First World War, that the committee were able to 'recondition' the Manor and grounds from Blomfield's designs. Further funds were raised by subscription both in England, the sum of £6000, today £187000, and from America £2500, today £78000.<sup>212</sup> Blomfield wrote that the completion of Sulgrave Manor was due to a Committee of Ladies and his old friends from Chequers, Lord Arthur Lee and his wife Viscountess Lee of Fareham, with Lee chairing the Sulgrave Manor Board.<sup>213</sup> It is unlikely that Blomfield made a charge for his involvement, with his status this would have been inappropriate, given the connection with royalty and the social standing of others on the Sulgrave Manor Board. In the archives at Sulgrave Manor are a number of Blomfield's plans for the garden, which has changed very little to this day. The first is a modern plan of the garden that echoes Blomfield's original plan with a bowling green, yew hedges and an orchard. On this modern plan the bowling green has been replaced with 'formal landscaped gardens' (Figure 371).<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 207.

<sup>212</sup> *Sulgrave Manor, Guidebook*, p. 26.

<sup>213</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 207.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

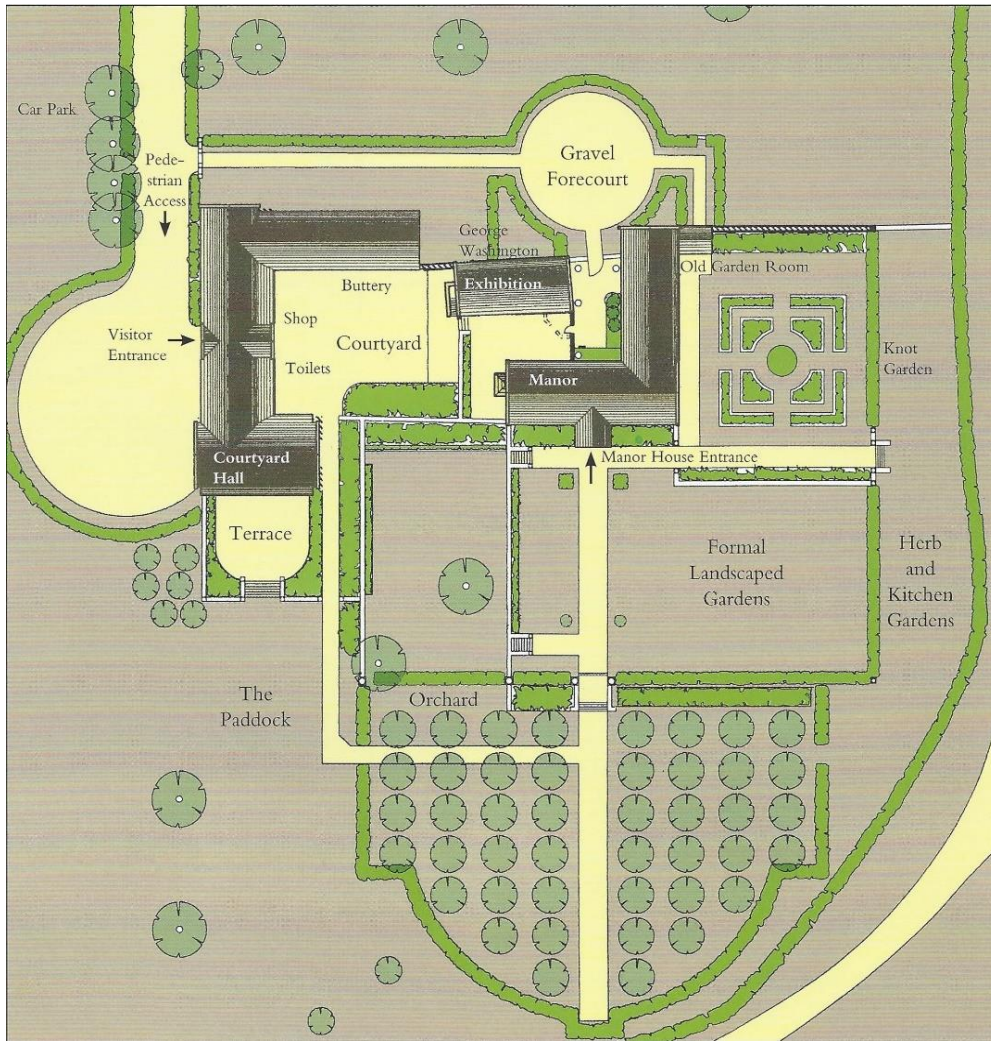


Fig. 371. The modern plan and garden layout of Sulgrave Manor. *Sulgrave Manor & Garden Guidebook*.

The overall plan of the garden prepared in 1927 (Figure 372) showed the house and some outbuildings, the design of the formal garden around the house was to the style of the age of the house, as always Blomfield making the garden in context with the house. The knot garden on the modern plan was originally a rose garden (Figure 373).

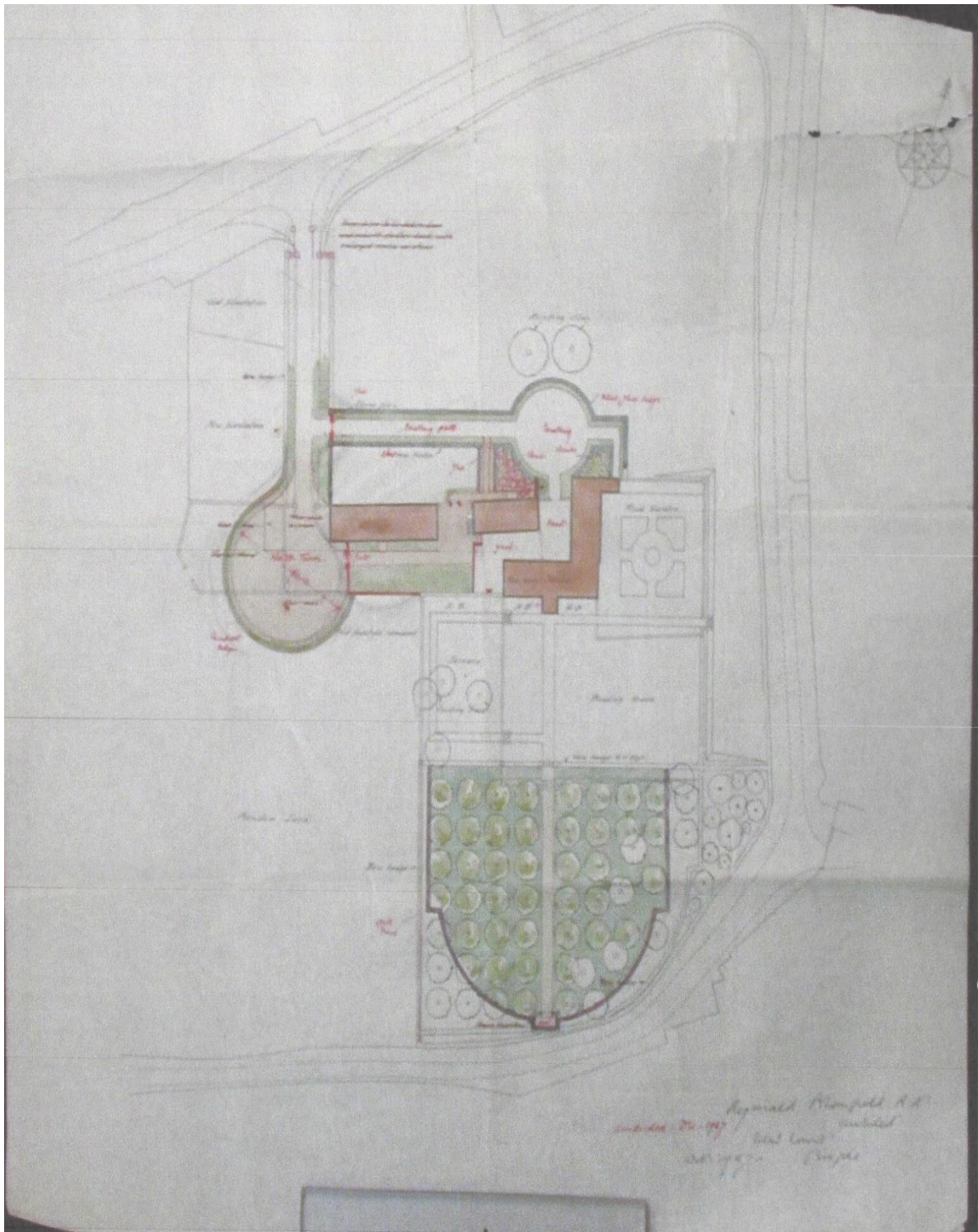


Fig. 372. Blomfield's plan for the garden, 1927. Sulgrave Manor & Garden.

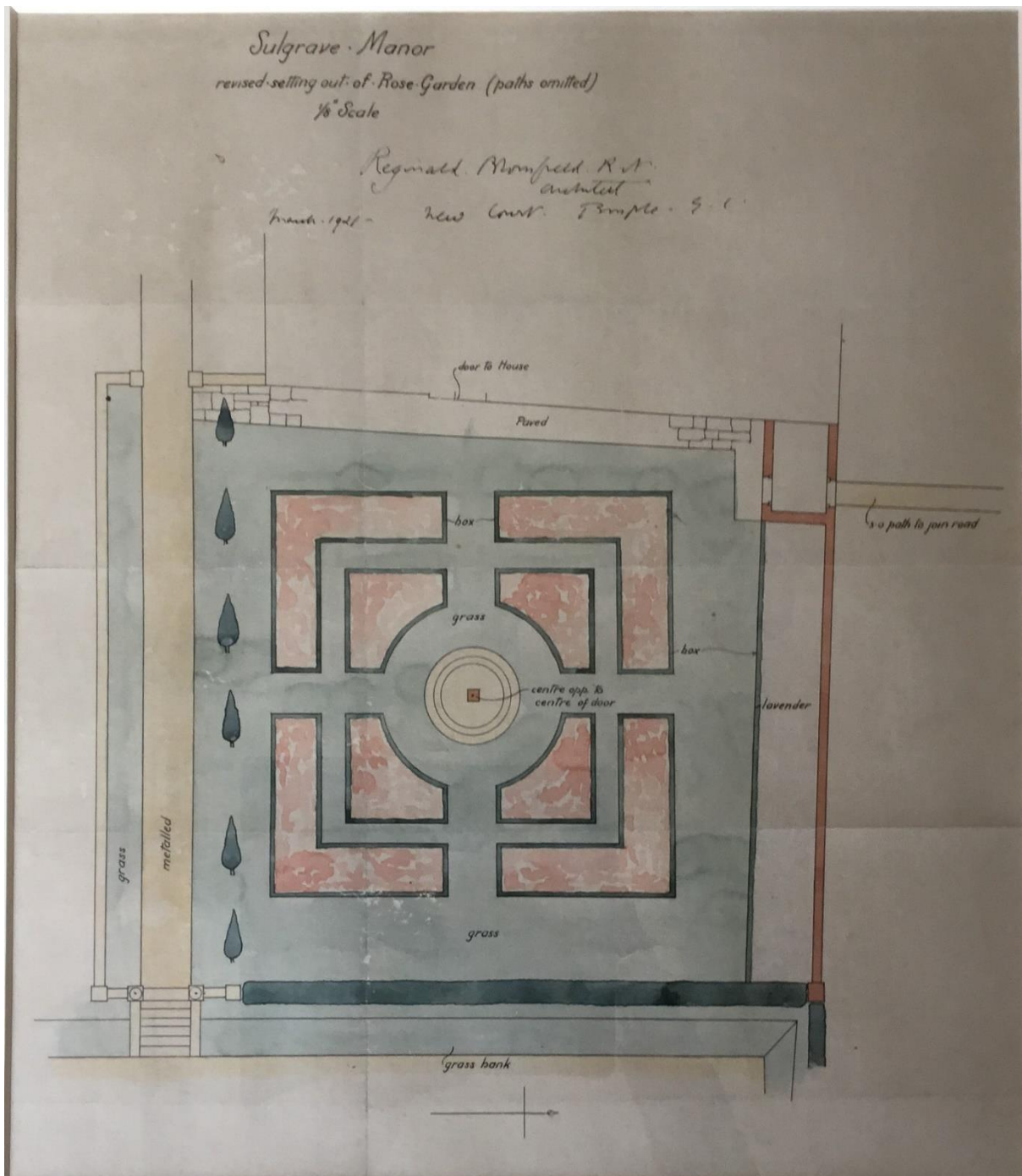


Fig. 373. The Rose Garden plan, March 1928. Sulgrave Manor & Garden.

Although now filled with herbs, the rose garden has retained its layout with the beds designed as Blomfield's original plan (Figure 374) and the steps and the path leading to the house again have not altered (Figure 375).



Fig. 374. The rose, now a herb garden. 2020.



Fig. 375. The steps leading up to the front of the Manor. 2020.



There was another plan dated 1920, so perhaps this was an earlier sketch to show the Board what was possible, but again Blomfield must have got it right as this has not altered but gave more details of the areas of the garden (Figure 376).

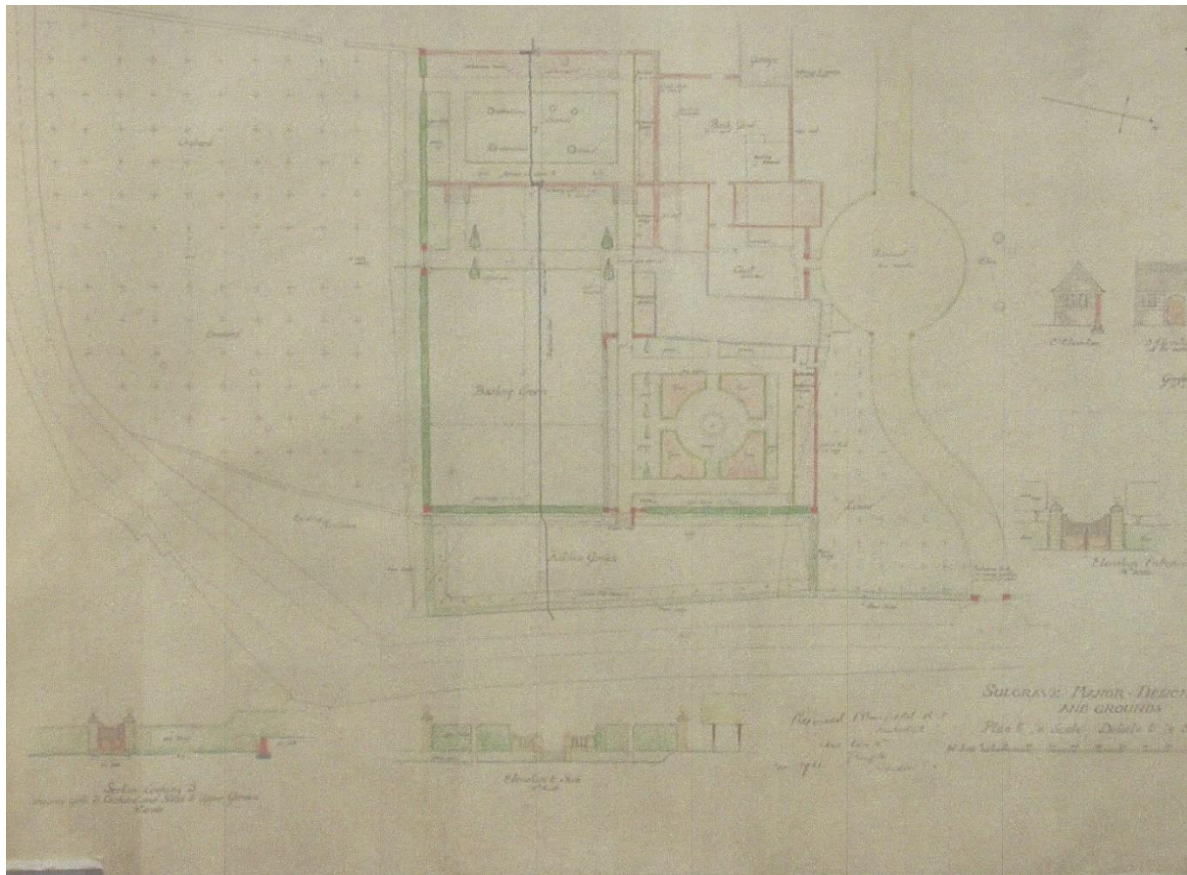


Fig. 376. A 1920 plan showing more detail. *Sulgrave Manor & Garden*.

On this plan were smaller details such as the gate leading into the orchard and bowling green and the steps to the upper garden and the front of the Manor (Figure 377).

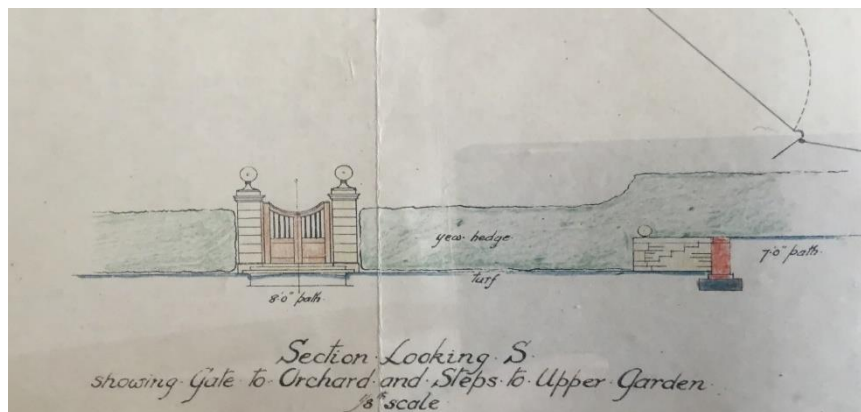


Fig. 377. Detail of the orchard gate from the 1920 plan.

This must have been a labour of love for Blomfield as he was involved with the Manor and its gardens for over twenty years. He was in his 60s, his son Austin was with him in the practice, so perhaps he was now free to enjoy himself with this project. Sulgrave Manor has some of Blomfield's original letters to Lord and Lady Lee where he discussed quick growing hedges, where they should be planted and the cost. In one letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 1927 to Lady Lee he obviously wanted to twist her arm for a 'gazebo' at the southern end of the orchard, writing... 'will some benevolent lady give this?'.<sup>215</sup>

Sulgrave Manor and Gardens is a fitting legacy for Blomfield, it is a 'pocket' formal garden of just two acres that fitted round the Manor, it has the structure of a formal garden softened by the planting of 'old English flowers', all as he would say 'a homogeneous whole' (Figure 378).<sup>216</sup>



Fig. 378. Through the gate to the front of the Manor. 2020.

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<sup>215</sup> Archive of Sulgrave Manor & Gardens. I am grateful to Laura Waters, House and Collection Manager of Sulgrave Manor and Garden, February 2020.

<sup>216</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 208.

**A summary of gardens not discussed in this chapter due to various reasons which are explained in the following chart**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Work Listed: Outcome of research:</b>
<b>1891</b>	Southwater Horsham	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	House and garden: Not found.
<b>1891</b>	Warley Lodge Essex	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	Gardens: No trace of any garden work by Blomfield.
<b>1896</b>	Heathfield Park Sussex	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	Alterations and additions : New terraces see <i>The Builder</i> , 56 (1898), 208-209. I am grateful to James Edgar for this information.
<b>1896</b>	Lady Margaret Hall Oxford	Fellows	Garden Plan held at the Archive of Lady Margaret Hall: See article, Eileen Stammers-Smith, 'Sir Reginald Blomfield's design for the garden of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford', <i>Garden History</i> , 24.1 (1996), 114-121.
<b>1897</b>	Roscote York	Austin Blomfield	Gardens: Not found.
<b>1899</b>	Spearpoint Kent	Austin Blomfield	House and gardens: Not found.
<b>1900</b>	Wyphurst Cranleigh Surrey	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	Extensive additions and gardens. See Perspective at RIBA 3263 and other photographs: No trace, possibly demolished.
<b>1900</b>	Culverthorpe Hall Lincolnshire	Fellows	Alterations and possible remodelling of the gardens: Not confirmed.
<b>1900</b>	Daws Hill House High Wycombe	Reginald Blomfield	Memoirs, page 102. Advising Lord Carrington on a garden design: Historic England, Daws Hill House, Grade II 125200. No mention of Reginald Blomfield.
<b>1901/1907</b>	Yockley Frimley Surrey	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	House and garden for Charles Furse, a friend of Blomfield: House demolished – plan at RIBA [PB446/10].
<b>1902</b>	Old Mansion Boldre Hampshire	Fellows	Alterations and garden: Only alterations see article by H. Avray Tipping, 'The Old Mansion, Boldre, Hampshire, the property of Mr and Mrs H. G. Alexander', <i>Country Life</i> , 60.1546 (1926), 350-356.
<b>1906</b>	Saltcote Place Kent	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	House: Possible garden design, not confirmed Historic England, Grade II 1217649.
<b>1906</b>	Blanckney House Norfolk	Austin Blomfield	House and gardens: Not found.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Work Listed: Outcome of research:</b>
<b>1906</b>	Drakelow Hall Staffordshire	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	Alterations and Gardens: Historic England list Blomfield as designing the water terrace in 1906. It was Francis Inigo Thomas who designed the water terrace on the River Trent in 1902. See Charles Holme, <i>The Gardens of England in the Midland and Eastern Counties</i> (London: The Studio, 1918), p. xxvi. See also, F. Inigo Thomas, 'Gardens', <i>Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects</i> , XXXIII.15 (1926), 431-439. Blomfield carried out some alterations to the house in 1906 and it is thought designed a pavilion in the garden, but this is not confirmed. Historic England, Sunken Gardens, Grade II 1334614.
<b>1907</b>	Hill or Shenley House Hertfordshire	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	House found: No record of any garden work by Blomfield.
<b>1907-1923</b>	Sturry Court Kent	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	Alterations to house and garden buildings, a Pavilion and a Chinese style bridge: See H. Avray Tipping, 'Sturry Court, Kent, a residence of the Viscount Milner, K.G.', <i>Country Life</i> , 51.1324 (1922), 668-676.
<b>1908</b>	Boarzell Sussex	Austin Blomfield	House and gardens: Alterations no garden works.
<b>1910</b>	Kyalarmi Studland IOW	Austin Blomfield	Gardens: Not found.
<b>1910</b>	Abbeystead Lancaster	Austin Blomfield	Gardens: Not confirmed. A plan of terrace steps at the RIBA call ref A01/A/2.
<b>1910</b>	Parnham Court	Austin Blomfield	Gardens: Not found. There are two Parnhams. Parham House in Dorset, which is suggested was designed by Thomas. The other Parnham House in West Sussex has no record of Blomfield working there.
<b>1911</b>	Lockley House Hertfordshire	Fellows	Alterations and new gardens: Drawing at RIBA not executed. Ref PB516, PB501/9 (1-41). See article H. Avray Tipping, 'Lockleys Hertfordshire, A residence of Sir Evelyn De La Rue Bt.', <i>Country Life</i> , 51.1324 (1920), 48-55.
<b>1912</b>	Gilmerston Lincolnshire	Austin Blomfield	House and gardens: Not found.
<b>1912</b>	Wretham Hall Norfolk	Fellows, Austin Blomfield	House and Gardens: House now demolished. See perspective of House and Garden, RIBA [PA310/4(1-4)].
<b>1914</b>	Germaines Lincolnshire	Austin Blomfield	House and plan for gardens: Not found.

Date	Property	Source	Work Listed: Outcome of research:
1919	Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran Scotland	Fellows	Gardens and restoration: No gardens, see article, The Duchess of Montrose, 'The Gardens at Brodick Castle, Isle of Arran', <i>Country Life</i> , 89.2303 (1941), 188-191.
1926-27	Usher Art Gallery Lincoln	Fellows	Garden pavilion and attached terrace wall: Historic England write 'probably by Sir Reginald Blomfield' in connection with the building of Usher Art Gallery. The pavilion and terrace wall is not of the quality of Blomfield's work, and it is suggested that this attribution is wrong.

## Summary

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Blomfield's education in the Classics, studying and sketching on his travels around Europe and his training to be an architect placed him in the right place at the right time. In 1884, when he decided to set up in practice, he rented rooms in Southampton Street and on the floor below were the offices of Prior. Prior was part of the 'Shaw Family', a group of young architects who later were to set up The Art Worker's Guild, and through this association Blomfield had entry into this committed community of skilled artists, craftsmen, designers and architects. During this period Blomfield began his literary career with his first articles on architecture appearing in the monthly magazine *The Portfolio*. In 1889 an article on gardens was published, a forerunner to his first book *The Formal Garden in England* with illustrations by Thomas, published in 1892. Blomfield claimed that the book's publication led him to be 'constantly called on to design grounds and gardens'.<sup>217</sup>

Blomfield's message was a consistent one throughout his garden making, that the old formal way of making gardens needed to be re-considered. He put forward that the house and garden should be treated as inseparable factors in one homogeneous whole, further believing that 'the quality of the house must be found in the garden'.<sup>218</sup>

From *The Formal Garden in England* it was evident that Blomfield studied the history of gardens and developed his own signature feature of a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle. This it can be argued was influenced by the seventeenth century designs of garden makers London and Wise that appeared in Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata*.

In his first major commission in 1895 at Godinton Park, having first suggested a round pond, Blomfield changed the design introducing his stepped hemicycle feature, which he called a 'water piece'. Throughout his garden making career Blomfield's signature feature was not just made for water but was adapted for grass. His next major commission in 1899 was at Brocklesby Park where he made what can only be described as a stunning formal garden, with the central feature of the layout as twin stepped hemicycles of water set in grass.

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<sup>217</sup> Blomfield, *Memoirs*, p. 60.

<sup>218</sup> Blomfield, Triggs, *The Formal Garden*, p. 4.

At Ditton Place in 1900, using the shape of his signature feature, he laid out a croquet lawn and in 1903 a terrace in grass at Leasam House. In 1904 he made a small lily pond water piece at Knowlton Court and at Apethorpe Palace used his signature feature in grass altering a seventeenth century walk, returning in 1911 to make a new water piece. In 1908 at a new house, Moundsmere Manor, he made this feature in water as the central part of the garden design. Today this represents an 'iconic' image of Blomfield's work, bringing together house and garden. In 1909 at Jersey's Manoir de la Trinité his final signature feature was of grass. At Mellerstain, a major commission commencing in 1898 and involving him until at least 1914 or 1915, Blomfield had the opportunity to augment a late seventeenth century design. At the southern end of the canal there already was a stepped hemicycle that had been lost in the undergrowth. In the early twentieth century Blomfield complemented the seventeenth century design by adding his own stepped hemicycle at the northern end of the rectangular canal.

Together with his signature feature Blomfield had his own style for the other garden elements such as terraces and paths. He did not use standard materials but those that fitted with the house and his design, always bearing in mind that the quality of the house must be reflected in the garden. His first terrace at Chequers in 1892 was in simple flagstone, which he also used at Apethorpe Palace in 1904 and for the terraces at Hill House in 1909, but at Wittington House he used grass. Gravel was a favourite and this was used both for paths and terraces at Godinton Park, Ditton Court, Brockelsby Park and Sulgrave Manor. The three terraces at Caythorpe Court in Lincolnshire, where he built the house and gardens in 1899, had a different function, the upper in flagstone with the two lower terraces in grass, made to disguise huge piles sunk in the ground to support the house. Here Blomfield used balustraded stone staircases leading to the two lower levels which had the flavour of Renaissance architecture.

At Mellerstain grass was laid for the top and lower terraces, but for the middle level Blomfield created two seventeenth century parterres, which it is suggested were based on a design from John James, with a central path of flagstones leading to a twin curved staircase. The other parterre that is known to have been laid out by Blomfield is at Euston Hall, Suffolk in 1902 but, although this looks to have been an elaborate design, its exact layout is not established.

Blomfield only used decoration when it was appropriate, for example balustrades with urns decorating the top of a pier but, always with attention to detail, he used materials that matched or related to the house, such as at Leasam House, Ditton Place, Caythorpe Court and at Brocklesby Park with its magnificent balustraded terrace. Yew was Blomfield's tree of choice, using it in all the gardens that have been discussed, either as hedging to enclose or divide the space, to make his signature feature or as decoration shaped as pyramids and other designs. Most of the yew he planted, hedging and decoration remains today in its original position at Godinton, Apethorpe Palace, Ditton Place, Leasam House, Moundsmere Manor, Knowlton Court and Sulgrave Manor.

Two gardens stand out, Brocklesby Park and Mellerstain. Brocklesby Park was a very grand design, which is suggested was influenced by London and Wise, praised by Hussey in the 1930s, sadly now lost with only the photographs as evidence of its style and grandeur.<sup>219</sup> The other, Mellerstain, has always been acknowledged as Blomfield's greatest work; but was that because of an elaborate and costly design on paper which was not executed, or the geometric parterres on the middle terrace or the sweep down to the lake? With the new evidence presented this was a far more complex design than anyone thought. Blomfield had studied an old plan by William Adam dated 1756 and, using the existing features of the landscape, Blomfield drew them together in one design as the sight line on the Lidar and the analytical drawing of his revised layout for the garden show. At Mellerstain it can be said that Blomfield answered his own question by treating both factors as inseparable, the house and the garden, and bringing them into one homogeneous whole.

The view of Blomfield has been centred around his temperament, his personality and the 'argument' he had with Robinson in the 1890s, rather than his considerable skill and attention to the fine detail of his formal garden making. In 1985 Fellows wrote that Blomfield's name, and here it was in connection with architecture, was 'blotted out from critical discussion for virtually a quarter of a century'.<sup>220</sup> The question is had this spread to his garden making? Contributing factors could be the lack of a central archive, the lack of a detailed discussion on his garden making over the years, or

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<sup>219</sup> Hussey, 'Brocklesby Park', (p. 195).

<sup>220</sup> Fellows, *Sir Reginald Blomfield*, p. 162.



perhaps the preconceived opinion that he was difficult and in some way that meant his work was not worthy of study. Maybe he was difficult but his work, as Shaw wrote in 1908, was as 'a maker of fine gardens in the Grand Manner'.<sup>221</sup>

A perceptive view of Blomfield came from Weaver, who had written about Moundsmere Manor in 1910. His words are from a review of Fellows' book on Blomfield by Hermione Hobhouse (1934-2014), who in her piece said Blomfield, in the words of Weaver, 'brought things down from the level of windy controversy into the garden of plain possibility and fact'.<sup>222</sup>

Blomfield's contribution to the revival of the formal garden has been established by taking this practical, analytical and in depth look at his garden works and what physically remains today. Blomfield, following Devey, should now be acknowledged as the other main contributor to the revival of the formal garden in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>221</sup> Shaw's letter. Lambeth Palace Library, MS 2345 f.264.

<sup>222</sup> Hermione Hobhouse, 'Book Reviews, Neglected Craftsman', *The Architects' Journal*, 181.17 (1985), (p. 98). Research into where Lawrence Weaver's quote appeared is ongoing.

## Conclusion

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This thesis set out to find answers to two questions, why was the formal garden revived in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and what was the contribution of architects George Devey and Sir Reginald Blomfield.

When modern reviewers came to the question of why the formal garden was revived, loss was far from their thoughts. The reasons they gave were short term, linked to events, to people and their professions, changes to society and fashion, not looking wider nor deeper. The commentators from the nineteenth century, who were just as educated, knowledgeable and passionate, were clear the revival was about loss. No matter how it was presented, in regret, in protest, in memory, childhood memories, a dislike of bedding plants, a need for the return of the much loved old fashioned flowers, an interest in gardens of the past; loss was the consistent and continuing thread that underpinned the revival of the formal garden in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century.

George Devey is linked with vernacular architecture and to some he is known for his restoration of the gardens at Penshurst Place. This research has broadened that view with the introduction of his portfolio of garden works. There are no personal writings or notes on his work and few clues, so where his inspiration came from can only be speculated. Williams, Devey's assistant and later partner, claimed that Devey was one of the first to focus on the design of both house and the garden; writing that Devey took great joy 'in creating the surroundings, the entrance courtyard, the enclosing walls and archways, the terraces, the disposition of steps and the arrangement of gardens all connected with a well-appointed house'.<sup>1</sup> This is evident in all the gardens that have been examined and discussed.

This research has established Devey as a garden maker in the formal style. Two gardens can now be attributed to him, Condover Hall and Killarney House (now demolished), where it was thought that John Dando Sedding had designed the garden. More recognition and credit should also be given to him for his work at Penshurst Place, Betteshanger House, Goldings, Hall Place, St Albans and

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, 'George Devey and his Work', (p. 98).

Brantinghamthorpe Hall, together with Swaylands, Coombe Warren (now demolished), Warren House, The Warren and Minley Manor. It was only after his death that Devey received some recognition by influencing the architects, Mervyn Macartney, Walter Godfrey and importantly Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Unlike Devey, Blomfield has been associated with garden making, predominately for his book *The Formal Garden in England* and the deflecting argument with William Robinson. Blomfield's book played an important role in the revival of the formal garden, a point made in 1928 by the respected German art and garden historian Marie Luise Gothein (1863-1931), that Blomfield's book made a great impression on England. Further she wrote that 'its effect was all the surer, because the author took no separate steps to arouse men to action but let the result follow as it might'.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis has illustrated how Blomfield used his knowledge, not just about gardens, but architecture, to make 'fine gardens'. It has been argued that Blomfield's signature piece of a stepped hemicycle at both ends of a rectangle was inspired by Henry Wise, suggesting that Blomfield looked to the designs of the seventeenth century and earlier for his inspiration. This was the case at Apethorpe Palace with his design based on an Elizabethan plan. This inspiration and his creativity have been further confirmed with the re-examination of the gardens at Mellerstain House where he used the contours of the land together with historic plans to create a landscape that, as Pope would say, used 'the genius of the place'.<sup>3</sup>

Blomfield was at his peak during the first years of the twentieth century when others had joined the 'formal garden making market'. There seem to be no contemporary articles about his influences, his colleague and fellow writer Thomas, who had designed the gardens at Athelhampton from the 1890s, said little of him. Lutyens and Tipping can be classed as rivals, as can others such as Inigo Triggs, country house architect and garden designer, and Thomas Mawson, garden designer and landscape architect, who all carried on making gardens in the formal style to the First World War. Blomfield's influence and his legacy comes from the many articles and

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<sup>2</sup> Marie Luise Gothein, *A History of Garden Art*, Vol. 2 (London: J. M Dent, 1928), p. 351.

<sup>3</sup> John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, Eds., *The Genius of the Place, The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1988), p. 212.

books on subjects ranging from renaissance architecture to formal gardens and the physical presence of his buildings and gardens.

What should be noted is the similarity between Devey's and Blomfield's garden styles highlighted at two of the properties with the analytical drawings for Goldings and Mellerstain. Both these drawings give a sense of space, of vastness, both used the house and the terrace as the starting point, as the anchor for the view taking it out on an axial line; and both used shrubbery, green hedges to shape the view to water and beyond.

In the light of this research both Devey and Blomfield now need to be considered and acclaimed as founders of the revival of the formal garden in the middle and later part of the nineteenth century.

An interesting aspect of this research has been the use of labels to describe the style of gardens discussed. The *vox populi*, the commentators of the nineteenth century, used simple, relevant terms; antique, ancient, ancient style, geometric taste, the old fashioned garden, old school of gardens, the old taste and the pleasaunce, reflecting the type and style of gardens at that time. They understood what they were seeing and feeling and thus describing, so their labels reflected something old, something from the past. But of these terms it was only the old fashioned garden and the pleasaunce that have been used in the modern literature. Here the reviewers used a new set of labels; the Arts and Crafts garden, the Queen Anne garden, associated with the Queen Anne movement in architecture, and the old English garden. In 1984 Kenneth Woodbridge wrote an essay on 'The Nomenclature of Style in Garden History', where he argued that the problem with labels is that they give a 'ready-made description that may mislead'.<sup>4</sup> Woodbridge makes a further salient point, suggesting that historians and scholars should avoid labels and 'look at each garden in a period as an effort in its own right created in a given situation'.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Woodbridge, 'The Nomenclature of Style in Garden History', in *British and American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century*, Robert P. Maccubbin and Peter Martin (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1884), p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

As with most research there have been limitations. An interesting and useful piece of further research would be to take the garden features mentioned by the commentators throughout the nineteenth century and those found in the 'new old' gardens; and then match them to features in gardens from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. An assessment and evaluation can then be made of how much carried through to the revival in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and how much was adapted or changed.

This thesis has put the revival of the formal garden in context with other gardens of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, highlighting the importance of both influential and ordinary people in garden making by giving them a voice. The reason they gave is clear, that the return, the revival of the formal garden was about loss; the contribution of Devey and Blomfield to the revival was in part to replace that loss with their formal garden making.

Sara Tenneson  
November 2022.

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 Brympton House, Grade I 1057261  
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 Caythorpe Court, Park and Garden, Grade II 1000972  
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 Chequers, Garden, Grade I 1125879  
 Cliveden House, Terrace Wall to Garden Front, Grade I 1125044  
 Cliveden, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000323  
 Coker Court, Grade I 1057176  
 Condover Hall, Grade I 1055706  
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 Daws Hill House, Grade II 1125200  
 Ditton Place, House, Grade II\* 1096143  
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 Downton Castle, Grade I 1081758  
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 Drakelow Hall, Sunken Garden, Grade II 1334614  
 Elvaston Castle, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000404  
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 Exton Park, Park and Garden, Grade II 1000960  
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 Foxley, Park and Garden, Grade II\* 1000880  
 Frant Court, Park and Garden, Grade II 1001178  
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 Knole, Park and Garden, Grade I 1000183  
 Knowlton Court, House, Grade I 1336977  
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