

## **Greys Mallory: evaluation of the grounds as part of consideration for inclusion on the District Council Local Plan List of Historic Parks and Gardens.**

An early C20 formal garden designed by the influential Edwardian architect, Percy Richard Morley Horder to accompany a country house built to his design.

### **Historic Development**

The house and garden occupy a previously undeveloped site taken from land formerly part of Red House Farm in 1903. It consisted of 16 acres of former farmland and four acres of wood (Half Moon Plantation, dating from the early C19) which was incorporated into the pleasure grounds of the house at an early date. All were previously part of the Warwick Castle Estate. The house was initially called Greystoke, and is frequently referred to as such in the literature.

The house was built to designs by P Morley-Horder (1870-1944) in 1904-5. (Land Tax Returns). Horder had studied (like his older contemporary CFA Voysey) in the office of George Devey, and like Voysey, was a proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Until the outbreak of WWI his output was principally houses in the vernacular idiom for the gentry classes.<sup>1</sup> These are found principally in the south and east of England. Like Voysey, Lutyens, and other architects of the Edwardian period, Horder was frequently commissioned to execute the gardens for his houses, creating terraces and formal compartments to form a series of outdoor rooms as a continuation of the design of the house. For some of these he directly commissioned Gertrude Jekyll to provide planting plans. (DNB, Jekyll).

Greys Mallory and its gardens received early attention in an article in the prestigious *The Studio*, and was also mentioned in the article on Horder in the *Dictionary of Edwardian Architecture* as an example of his domestic style. The house was probably the inspiration for his later commission by JT Holt of Mallory Court, also in Bishops Tachbrook (1914) which, with its gardens, is now better known than Greys Mallory through its use as an hotel, and is registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Other registered gardens of country houses, wholly or partially created by Horder are Waterston Manor, Dorset, Nether Lypiatt, Stroud, Glos., and Rockbeare House, Devon. Other notable gardens attached to his houses are Little Court, Charminster, Dorset, Stone House, Sedburgh, North Yorkshire, and Glyde House, Stroud, Glos. In his later work for public institutions, his most notable landscape is Highfields Park, created for Jesse Boot to be a Public Park and the grounds of Nottingham University, for which Horder designed the Trent Building. This park is also registered at Grade II.

Horder's client at Greys Mallory was Alan E Batchelor, a retired barrister and officer in the Duke of Lancaster's yeomanry. By 1920 the occupant was George Ward Grazebrook. By 1929 the house had been bought by Brig. Gen EA Wiggin, whose widow and son sold it in 1949 to Group Capt FG Argyle Robinson in whose family it remained until 1998.

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<sup>1</sup> Though one of his earliest recorded commissions was 52-4 Brook Street for the Grosvenor Estate, 1895 and by 1913 he had designed 3 congregational churches at Fetter Lane, Waltham Forest (1899), Bushey, Herts (1904) and Penge (1911-12) as well as several reproduction facades for chemist's shops for Jesse Boot prior to the latter's sale of his drug company in 1920.

## **Description**

### **Location, area, boundaries, landform and setting**

Greys Mallory is situated in the parish of Bishops Tachbrook c 3 km south of Warwick to the west of the A452. It occupies 16 acres together with four acres of woodland, Half Moon Plantation, which lies to the north of the house giving shelter/screening. To the east, west and south, the boundary is marked by a narrow tree belt. To the north, south and west the site adjoins agricultural land. The house occupies an artificially levelled terrace from which the ground falls away to the west, allowing extensive views, now crossed by the M40 motorway.

### **Entrances and Approaches**

The original principal approach is through an arch linking two entrance lodges 115m to the east of the house. (Listed in their own right) These are roughcast rendered with steeply pitched hipped plain tiled roofs. There are wrought iron gates. The straight drive is lined by lime and chestnut trees which are part of the original layout. (Studio, 1907) The avenue and drive are fenced from the surrounding paddocks by iron estate fencing. The drive reaches the entrance court to the east of the house through a gateway in the perimeter wall. The court is entirely enclosed and square in plan with a central garden feature, octagonal on the original plan and photographs of 1907, with a central sun dial (not present in 1998), now quartered into flower beds. To the south and east it is bounded with low brick walls with brick copings. The entrance is marked by stone piers with ball finials. To the left (south) the wall forms the boundary of one of the garden compartments entered by an arched gateway with rusticated stone dressings and ball finials. A further gateway in the north east corner has stone piers with ball finials. To the right (north) is the stable yard, entered by an archway between the service buildings, having double wooden doors in 1907 and 1998. The octagonal entrance porch is aligned on the main entrance from the road. This access is now little used. A service drive leading from the corner of Half Moon Plantation to the stable court was formerly entered informally through the boundary hedge, but recently (post 2,000) it has acquired a pair of brick gate piers and has become the most used entrance. A small cottage to the south-east of this drive (white roughcast render and plain tiled roof with gable ends) is later than 1925 but was present in 1945. The space between the service drive and Half Moon Plantation may originally have been the kitchen garden (glazed structure shown in 1925) but is now turf.

### **Principal Building**

Greys Mallory (Listed Grade II) stands on an artificially levelled terrace slightly east of the centre of the site. It consists of two storeys and is constructed in brick, rendered in roughcast with stone dressings under a steeply pitched tiled roof with many gables and high chimneys, following C17 vernacular style. The house is lit with leaded mullion casement windows set in stone frames. The main range, containing the principal rooms, runs North-south, while the service rooms occupy an L-shaped wing to the north, forming the stable court.

### **Gardens and Pleasure Grounds**

The formal gardens are situated primarily to the west and south of the house. To the south of the entrance court are two compartments, bounded to the South by crenellated yew hedges. These compartments were originally approximately square and similar in size. The westerly, a sunken garden, was originally entered down steps from the gate from the entrance court. An open loggia, now closed in, under a cat-slide roof led and still leads,

from a boudoir (sitting room by 1998) at the southern end of the principal range, with wide steps also leading into the sunken garden, while another flight of steps led and leads into it from the terrace. At some time between 1907 (photo in *The Studio*) and 1925 (OS) the size of this compartment was reduced by moving the division to the west. This now-rectangular space is quartered by brick paths at right angles to the boundary and was a rose garden in 1998. Steps in the middle of the brick retaining wall of the western side of this garden lead up to the lower terrace.

The compartment to the east of the sunken garden is now entered by the two gateways from the entrance court, mentioned above. A strip of ground formerly part of, and on the same level as, the sunken garden, has a central flight of steps leading up to the remainder of the compartment on a level with the entrance court. This space is currently turf and was described in 1998 as having formerly been used for clock golf. This was a game popular in the Edwardian period, but it has not been possible to establish if this was the only earlier use of the space.

A gravelled terrace runs the length of the main range of the house, supported on a brick retaining wall with buttresses, planned with a wide border on the outside. It forms part of the platform on which the house is built, and had already been constructed at the time of the survey for the 1905 OS, a time when the house was probably barely complete and no other garden features apart from the entrance drive are shown. Its primary access was from a loggia in the centre of the main range, immediately in front of which a flight of steps led to the lower terrace. The loggia is now glazed in.

The lower terrace is a wide space possibly originally occupied by flower beds, but possibly always intended for tennis and croquet. It is now largely turf. It is edged to the west by a crenellated yew hedge, with a semi-circular bastion aligned on the central loggia and steps. In 1998 the south west section of this terrace was occupied by a tennis court. At the north end of the terraces, the triangle before Half Moon Plantation was filled with shrubbery and tree planting at an early stage to create a woodland garden, with paths leading from steps at the end of the upper terrace to walks through the plantation to the earlier pond.

Half Moon Plantation is a plantation of the early C19 and consists of both native hardwood and some softwood.

## **The Park**

Surrounding the pleasure grounds, a number of paddocks, within the designated site, form part of the property originally associated with the house. These contained a few trees, mainly remaining from an earlier hedge. The paddock to the north of Half Moon Plantation contained, by 1925 a pig sty (built c.1909) and the pump house which supplied water to the house and cottages until later than 1945. By 1998 the pig sty had been extended and joined by a second brick buildings, both described as fodder/storage buildings (25' x 15' and 9' x 15'). There was also a corrugated iron Nissen shed. There is now (2008) also a large agricultural hangar.

## **Sources**

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Michael Tooley, 'Jekyll, Gertrude (1843–1932)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37597>]

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### **Archival Records**

Warwickshire County Records Office,

Warwick Castle farm rentals CR1886 box 691

Land Tax Returns, Bishops Tachbrook CR863/154

Planning application for cottage,(1945) CR2487 Box 76/71 (1945)

### **Maps**

Plan of house and garden in *The Studio*, cited above

Ordnance Survey Sheets 39/6, 1905, 1925

### **Illustrations**

Aerial views on Microsoft <http://maps.live.com> and Google Earth

Sale catalogue (1998) WCRO EAC 0521

Photographs in *The Studio* cited above.