

DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT BATCH NUMBER: 11565

FILE REFERENCE: AA 32035/1

SCHEDULE ENTRY COPY

ENTRY IN THE SCHEDULE OF MONUMENTS COMPILED AND MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979 AS AMENDED.

MONUMENT: Formal and water gardens at Shireoaks Hall

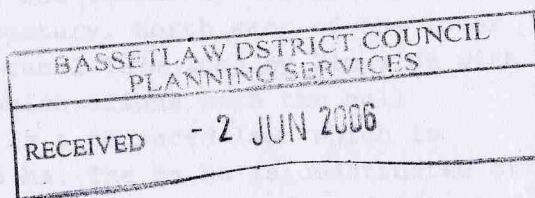
PARISH: SHIREOAKS

DISTRICT: BASSETLAW

COUNTY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 35610

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK5487680428



DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the buried, standing and earthwork remains of the formal and water gardens of Shireoaks Hall. Shireoaks Hall and the associated stable blocks are protected as Listed Buildings Grade II* and Grade II. The monument lies immediately south west of Shireoaks village and is aligned roughly south west to north east on ground which slopes slightly to the east. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry VIII granted Robert and Hugh Thornhill the manor of Shireoaks. Thomas Hewett acquired the manor in 1546 and it is likely that his grandson, also named Thomas Hewett, built Shireoaks between 1612 and 1617. It is believed that the house was designed by Robert Smythson and that the courts and terraces to the north east of the house were laid out at the same time. Sir Thomas Hewett, the King's Surveyor General, inherited Shireoaks in 1660 but did not live there until 1689. It is understood that he remodelled the south west front, added the north west wings, the pavilions and outbuildings, refitted the interior and soon after began to lay out the water garden.

When Sir Thomas Hewett died in 1726, the estate was left to the Thornhagh family of Osbertson who later adopted the name Hewett. When John Thornhagh-Hewett died in 1787, his cousin John Hewett inherited the estate, and the Hall was partially demolished and gutted in 1811. John Hewett's nephew and heir, Richard Wheatley, sold the reversion to the Duke of Norfolk in 1812 and external and internal alterations were made. The estate was sold to the Duke of Newcastle in 1840, whose family owned Shireoaks until 1945 when it was sold to a local farmer.

The formal and water gardens survive as a series of earthwork, standing and buried remains surrounding Shireoaks Hall itself. To the north east of the

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DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued.)

hall are terraced gardens which descend from the north east face of the hall. The upper terrace is at the same height as the Hall and is linked by a gravel path and stone steps to the adjacent broad terrace. This axis is continued by a further flight of steps which lead north east to a narrower terrace which is also grassed. The whole complex is enclosed with stone and brick walls. It is understood that the walls and terraces date from the construction of the hall in the early 17th century. North east of the lower terrace is the Fountain Pool, a rectangular canal 127m long by 21m wide with a semi-circular bay in its north east bank which aligns with the hall. Adjacent to the south west face of the Hall is a terraced lawn which is retained on the south and west sides by a ha ha. The ha ha is constructed of fine irregularly coursed squared rubble with ashlar coping and is designated a Listed Building Grade II. To the north and west of the hall are Lady Pond and Kitchen Pond respectively, both of which date from the late 17th or early 18th century. The stone lining of the ponds is clearly visible in the margins of the water but has in places been breached by fluctuating water levels. The inlet and outlet leats and sluices associated with the water management system for the ponds are also included in the scheduling. These are particularly apparent in the north east corner, where channels link the Kitchen Pond to the River Ryton. On the north west corner of the Kitchen Pond is a semi-circular, stone built, stepped cascade. This is fed by an open, brick and stone built, rectangular shaped channel which runs roughly south west to north east immediately north of the cascade. The western end of the channel runs underground, passing beneath the building now known as the Hewitt Arms.

To the north and south west of the Hall lies parkland. The park is designated as a Registered Park and Garden (Grade II*) but only that part of it which retains evidence for the formal water gardens is included in the scheduling. Aligned with the south west front of the Hall is a linear water feature. It was created for Sir Thomas Hewett in the late 17th century and comprises a 250m long canal fed by a series of 34 cascades. The canal is punctuated with 12 small pools, in total measures 450m long, and is fed by the Great Basin. The Great Basin is 122m in diameter and is situated 880m south west of the Hall. A path follows along the south east side of the canal with views out over the fields of the former parkland. Flanking the canal and cascades are a line of mature lime trees interspersed with yews. The Great Basin is fed via a fine stone culvert. The culvert is in part vaulted and in part slab roofed and carries the water supply to the Great Basin from the village of Netherthorpe. The culvert is visible through an inspection cover situated in the field to the north west of the Great Basin. Immediately north of the Great Basin are the remains of Shireoaks Park Wood. Historical documents,

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DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued.)

including a plan of 1790, show that this once extended further north. The land to the north is now under cultivation. These are not therefore included in the scheduling. To the south west of the Great Basin is the remnant of Scratta Wood which, again, originally extended further to the south west. A banqueting house once stood in Scratta Wood but its remains are no longer visible on the ground surface and its precise location is unknown. Documentary evidence records that it was a rectangular building with flights of steps to entrances at each end and, inside, a different classical order in each of the three rooms.

The area of parkland to the north of the Hall includes the approach road from Thorpe Lane. The driveway leads south for 150m to what is now a car park for the Hewitt Arms Public House, a converted stable or coach house. From here the track passes between the Lady Pond and the Kitchen Pond before approaching the north east front of the Hall. The southern approach from Steetley Lane is now marked along most of its length by a public footpath, but this lies outside the area of protection.

All modern fences and path surfaces, Shireoaks Hall, the east and west stable blocks and the ha ha are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Post-medieval formal gardens are garden arrangements dating between the early 16th and mid-18th centuries, their most characteristic feature being a core of geometric layout, typically located and orientated in relation to the major residences of which they formed the settings. Garden designs of this period are numerous and varied, although most contain a number of recognisable components. For the 16th and 17th centuries, the most common features are flat-topped banks or terraces (actually raised walkways), waterways, closely set ponds and multi-walled enclosures. Late 17th and 18th century gardens often reflect the development of these ideas and contain multiple terraces and extensive water features, as well as rigidly geometrical arrangements of embankments. Other features fashionable across the period include: earthen mounds (or mounts) used as vantage points to view the house and gardens, or as the sites of ornate structures; 'moats' surrounding areas of planting; walled closes of stone or brick (sometimes serving as the forecourt of the main house); and garden buildings such as banqueting houses and pavilions. Planted areas were commonly arranged in geometric beds, or parterres, in patterns which incorporated hedges, paths and sometimes ponds, fountains and statuary. By contrast, other areas were sometimes set aside as romantic wildernesses. Formal gardens were created throughout the period by the royal court, the aristocracy and county gentry, as a routine accompaniment of the country seats

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ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE (Continued.)

of the landed elite. Formal gardens of all sizes were once therefore commonplace, and their numbers may have comfortably exceeded 2000. The radical redesign of many gardens to match later fashions has dramatically reduced this total, and little more than 250 examples are currently known in England. Although one of many post-medieval monument types, formal gardens have a particular importance reflecting the social expectations and aspirations of the period. They represent a significant and illuminating aspect of the architectural and artistic tastes of the time, and illustrate the skills which developed to realise the ambitions of their owners. Surviving evidence may take many forms, including standing structures, earthworks and buried remains; the latter may include details of the planting patterns, and even environmental material from which to identify the species employed. Examples of formal gardens will normally be considered to be of national importance, where the principal features remain visible, or where significant buried remains survive; of these, parts of whole garden no longer in use will be considered for scheduling.

The formal and water gardens of Shireoaks Hall are a relatively well preserved example of a late 17th century landscaped garden. The standing and buried remains of the Hall, water gardens, formal gardens and parts of the parkland owe their survival to the relatively low impact of later land use practices. As such the potential for the survival of more fragile remains such as flowerbeds, parterres and pathways, particularly in the walled garden area, is very high. The survival of the built features, including the pond linings and cascades, ensure the preservation of important above and below ground archaeological deposits. These remains offer the potential to establish the material construction and development of features within the gardens. The silts within the ponds, where they survive, will also preserve important palaeoenvironmental evidence. Potentially this could provide considerable information about the use of the pond and the vegetative history of the wider post-medieval landscape. The historical maps and documentary evidence records the development of the gardens and the genealogy of the families who lived in the Hall. Taken as a whole the surviving remains of Shireoaks Hall, gardens and parkland contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the construction and development of post-medieval parks and gardens. Its survival illustrates the elaboration of residences built for the upper echelons of English society.

MAP EXTRACT

The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

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SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 18th May 1983 as:
Early eighteenth century formal and water gardens at Shireoak Hall
COUNTY/NUMBER: Nottinghamshire 182

The reference of this monument is now:
NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 35610
NAME: Formal and water gardens at Shireoaks Hall

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 14th January 2005

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under
batch no: 11565

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