

ASHWICKE HALL

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Park and Garden**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1001694**

Date first listed: **03-Apr-2005**

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Location

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: **South Gloucestershire (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **Marshfield**

District: **Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **Colerne**

District: **Wiltshire (Unitary Authority)**

Parish: **North Wraxall**

National Grid Reference: **ST 79389 71886**

Details

Mid C 19 pleasure grounds and landscaped park by Edward Milner improved and extended in the late C 19 and early C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1575, the land at Ashwicke was bought by Nicholas Webb who cleared much of the woodland and created several enclosures. In the late C 18 a house was built on the site and the property passed by marriage to the Horlock family. In 1849 they sold Ashwicke to John Cavendish Orred of Liverpool. He demolished the C 18 house and in 1857-1860 built the current house to designs by James Kellaway Colling, who also designed the stables, two lodges, and a bridge in matching Tudor Gothic style. Edward Milner (1819-1884) designed the pleasure grounds and park. The grounds were laid out with informal walks, woodlands, avenues, specimen trees and a walled garden with two large glass houses (1st ed OS surveyed 1881-85).

After John Orred's death in 1878 the Ashwicke estate was rented out until 1883, when it was sold. It then had several subsequent owners, during which the grounds were neglected, until 1896 when it was bought by HB Firth of Sheffield. Firth, with the assistance of his gardener Jonathon Pentland, extended the pleasure grounds to the south and south-west and added a Rosary including teas and hybrid teas, a Jubilee Flower Garden with stocks, chrysanthemum and dahlias, and an orchard containing up to a thousand fruit trees (see *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1902). The small lakes, first shown on the OS surveyed in 1919, may have formed part of Milner's proposals for the pleasure grounds even though they were laid out later (Phibbs' assessment).

In 1909 Ashwicke Hall was bought by Major Maurice Pope, who lived there until his death in c 1946. He built a summerhouse overlooking a terraced garden in the grounds west of the Hall. The Hall was then sold and converted for use as a girls' convent school. After World War II new school buildings were introduced, including a chapel, built in 1956-1964 and designed by T Cordiner.

In 1982 Ashwicke Hall (by then St Joseph's School) was closed, and the core of the estate was sold to the International School of Choueifat, who in the late 1980s extended the former Hall, and introduced further school buildings in the grounds.

The park is in separate ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Ashwicke Hall, a site of c 275 ha, is situated in the rural parish of Marshfield. To the north and east the site is bounded by farm land. The southern boundary is defined by Ashwicke Road with beyond it to the south Diamond Wood and Bandywell Wood. The eastern boundary is defined by the Fosse Way with to its east Colerne Airfield. The site is mainly level, except to the east and north-east where the parkland slopes down into the wooded valley of the Doncombe Brook.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance lies in the far south-east corner of the site, and is flanked to its north by Fosse Lodge dated 1857 (listed grade II), a Gothic style lodge with a battlemented tower designed by Colling. From here a Lime avenue of c500m runs north-west and then makes a gentle curve in westerly direction leading to a gate hung between two stone gate piers, which give access to a rectangular court yard east of the Hall, which is enclosed by a stone wall topped with balusters. This courtyard was laid out in the late C 19 or early C20 (see 2nd edition OS surveyed 1919), during which the west end of the avenue was re-aligned. The courtyard replaces a former turning circle aligned that was aligned with the avenue (see 1st edition OS surveyed 1881-85).

The second entrance lies to the west, and is flanked to the north by the West Lodge, battlemented and dated 1857. The entrance is marked by two battlemented gate piers and has fine gates. The drive that runs from here in an easterly direction, leads over a bridge, and then runs north of the Hall and the kitchen gardens where it links up with the avenue leading from Fosse Lodge. The double-arched, stone bridge is built in Gothic style, and dates from the mid or late C19 (see 1st and 2^d ed OS). To the north of the West Lodge is a small area of ornamental woodland surrounded by a stone ha-ha. A row of mature Horse chestnuts runs out along the park boundary north of this wood.

A third minor entrance now (late 2004) no longer used, lies at Pixton Green (now, 2004, a private dwelling) along Ashwicke Road to the south. Here a set of mid C 19 gate piers with Gothic style iron gates (listed grade II), gave access to a c 800m long drive (now partly visible) that led in a north-westerly direction through the park and then curved around the pleasure grounds linking up with the drive leading from the West Lodge (see 1st ed OS 1887).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Ashwicke Hall (listed grade II), was built in 1857-60 to a design by JK Colling, in a complex Tudor Gothic style. The narrow south front has a two-storey bay window with on the south-east corner an embattled octagonal tower with attached stair turret projecting into the pleasure grounds. The two-storey west front has a recessed centre (the former library) with to the north-west a late C20 extension. The two-storey

entrance front to the east has a central three-storey square tower. To its left is a four-bay range with a staircase section, and to its right a five-bay range followed by a late C 19 three storey range, with a pitched roof and attached chapel by Cordiner added in 1956-64.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Ashwicke Hall is surrounded to the south and west by a raised terrace with semi-circular bastions (listed grade II). A c1/z m high retaining wall separates the terrace from the surrounding pleasure grounds. Against the retaining wall supporting the terrace is a wide border planted with shrubs and a small rockery (probably early C20). From the terrace are fine views into the pleasure grounds, and central flights of steps to the south and west, marked by gate piers, give access to the remains of a path that lead along the full length of the terrace to the south and west and linked up with a complex network of paths that meandered through the pleasure grounds (still visible in places, 2004). The pleasure grounds, covering an area of c5 ha, lie to the south and west of the Hall, and contain a fine selection of mature specimen trees, planted in small groups, and in some cases on small mounts, creating interesting views and adding depth to the design.

The south-west part of the grounds is mainly laid to lawn, with c 50m south-east of the Hall the remains of a stone built niche or grotto set on a small mount with steps leading to it. These are probably the remains of a quatrefoil shaped garden feature that was laid out on this site, as marked on the 1st and 2nd ed OS 1:2500 scale. About 50m further south are two late C20 tennis courts partly covering the extension of the pleasure ground added by Firth in the late C19 (see 2nd ed OS 1919).

The central steps from the terrace to the west of the Hall lead to a c m long avenue lined on either side by a yew hedge, replacing rows of cedar trees planted in the mid C19 (see 1st ed OS surveyed 1885 1:2500 scale and *Gardeners' Chronicle* 1902). A single tree, introduced in the late C 19 or early C20, marks the end of the avenue (see 2nd ed OS of 1919, 1:2500 scale). The avenue leads to a terraced garden with stone seats, now (2004) derelict, situated c 80m west of the Hall. This is probably the former Jubilee flower garden introduced by Firth in 1897 (see 2nd ed OS surveyed 1919 and photograph in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* 1902, p 263, and assessment by J Phibbs, 2004?). At the top of the remains of the terraced garden, c 80m south-west of the Hall stands a small rectangular summerhouse, probably introduced in the early C20. It is built of stone with columns along the north-west, north-east and south-west sides, supporting its slate roof. Its central steps at its north-west front are aligned with the series of central steps that defined the layout of the terraced garden below it.

Circa 100m north west of the Hall, below the remains of the terraced garden, lie the small T-shaped and serpentine lakes, now both silted up. At the far north-end of the serpentine lake stands the Gothic bridge, a 'sham' bridge, with the ornamental woodland to its north side serving as a screen.

PARK The park of c ha extends to the south-east, north-east, north-west and south-west of the Hall.

South-east of the Hall the park (now, late 2004, mostly farmed), is dominated by the Centre Plantation (mid C 19), an amoeba shaped clump of ornamental trees c... m south-east of the Hall. The lime avenue from Fosse Lodge separates it from The Warren, the park situated to north-east of the Hall. The Warren is dominated by The Raizes, a mid C19 estate house (with late C19 and C20 alterations) standing c 400m to the north-east of the Hall. The Raizes is screened to the north-west by Raizes Plantation, introduced in the early C20 when The Raizes was extended.

In the park, c 800m north-east of the Hall, stands a disused pump house (see Is' ed OS), with to its east a spring which feeds a small stream which runs in a northerly direction down into a steep and narrow valley covered in densely planted woodland: Marshfield Wood and Cloud Wood to the west and Raizes Wood to the east. The small stream runs through this wooded valley, joining the Doncombe Brook before it continues to run under a small stone bridge at the far north east corner of the site.

To the north-west the park, mostly arable and scattered with mature trees, is dominated by the Three Cornered Plantation and the Henley Hill Plantations which form its north boundary. Circa ...m north-west of the Hall stands Sallybrook Cottage (mid C19), which is surrounded by mature trees (see Is' ed OS), and can be approached from the south-west by a track and the south-east by a footpath leading off the west drive. North-east of the cottage the land falls into the wooded valley dominating the north-eastern corner of the park.

The park south-west of the Hall, is now (late 2004), mostly farmed, but still scattered with mature trees. In the far south-west corner of the park stands Ashwicke Home Farm (not included in the area here registered).

KITCHEN GARDEN A walled garden is situated c300m to the north-east of the Hall. It was built in c1857-60 and covers a large rectangular shaped area of c2 ha, with attached to its north-east a U-shaped stable block dated 1857. The garden walls (listed grade II) are constructed of coarse square rubble, with ashlar copings. The main entrance lies to the south-west, marked by a four centred arch with a decorative cast iron gate, with two smaller pedestrian gates to the north-west and south-east walls. Since the late 1980s the kitchen garden has been occupied by an indoor swimming pool. Between the kitchen garden with attached stables and The Raizes, stand a group of school buildings introduced in the late C20.

By the late C 19, as described in The Gardeners' Chronicle in 1902, the walled garden was laid out as a decorative flower garden, and previously, from the mid C 19, it had been used as a vegetable and fruit garden. As shown on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1881-85 and 1919), it was divided into four main sections by a network of paths. It contained two mid C 19 free standing glasshouses, and two others, introduced in the late C 19, stood against the north-west and north-east walls.

REFERENCES The Gardeners' Chronicle (19 April 1902), pp 255-257, 263 Garden History, 5/3 (1977), pp 67-77 S
Harding and D Lambert, Parks and Gardens of Avon (1994), p 79 D Verey and A Brooks, The Buildings of England.-
Gloucestershire I(81h edn 2000), p 472 N Kingsley and M Hill, The Country Houses of Gloucestershire vol iii 1830-
2000, (2001), pp 61-63 T Mowl, Historic Gardens of Gloucestershire (2002), p 126 J Phibbs, Assessment of
Ashwicke Hall, 2004 (copy on English Heritage's file)

MAPS OS 6" to 1 mile: 1 st edn 1887

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edn surveyed 1881-85, published 1886 2^d edn revised 1919, published 1921

ILLUSTRATIONS A view of the south-east front of Ashwicke Hall published in the: Civil Engineer, xxiv (1861), p 315
A series of photographs of the pleasure grounds and the walled garden published in: The Gardeners' Chronicle
(19 April 1902), fig 80, 81 & 82

Description written: Jan/Feb 2005 Register Inspector: FDM

Legacy

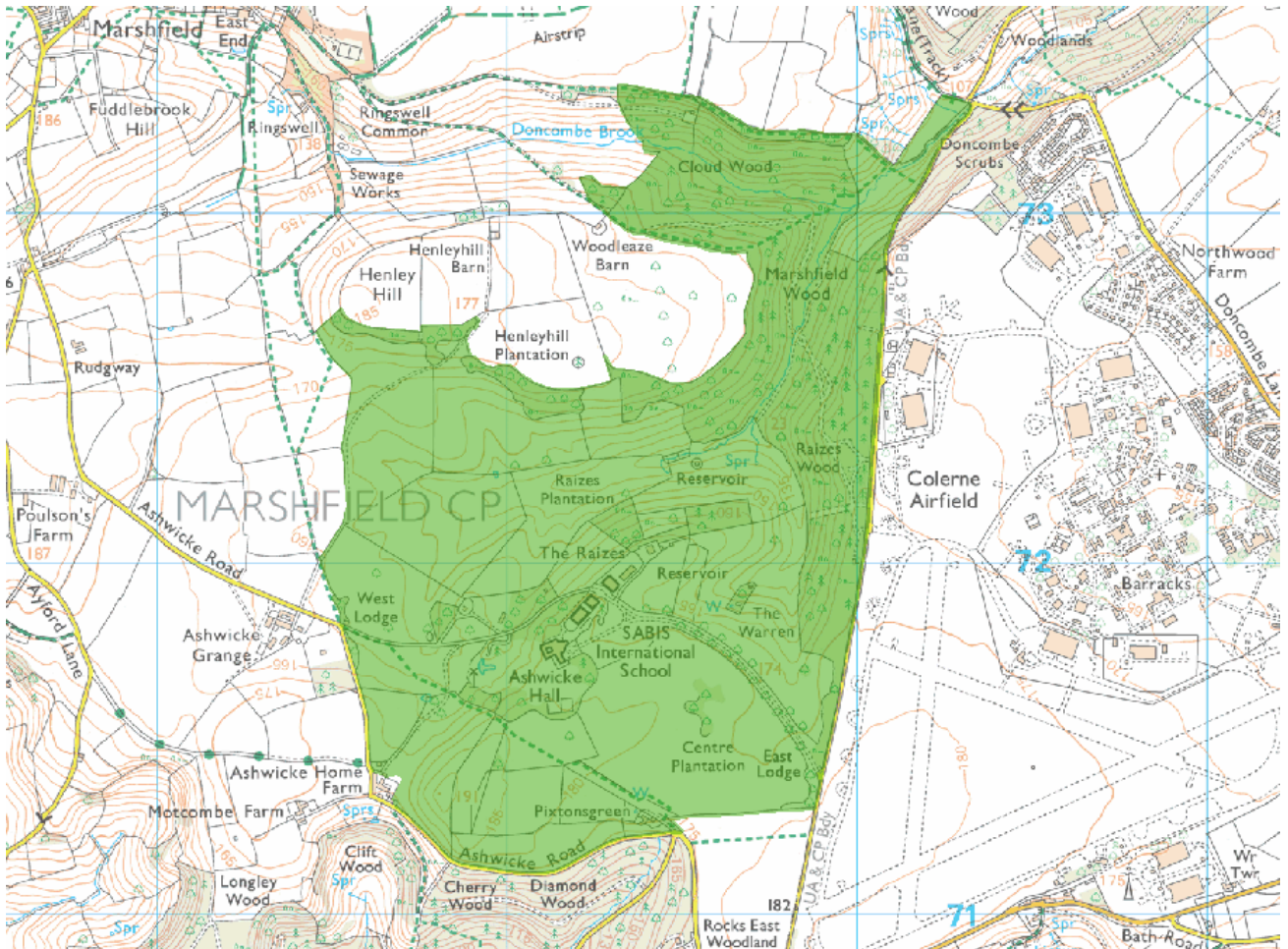
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Map

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