

The Garth Pleasure Grounds

The Garth, Lingfield is an early eighteenth-century house that was the parish workhouse before becoming a boys' school. It was restored c.1919 by Walter Hines Godfrey (1881–1961) for its then owner Stanley Hazell. The Garth is listed Grade II*, and Godfrey's role in the restoration of the house is acknowledged in the list description.

Godfrey also worked on the gardens at The Garth, and letters, designs and a plan relating to his work there are preserved in the East Sussex Record Office (ESRO Acc 9446). Although the garden is not registered, it is a key part of the setting of the house. Its documented association with Walter Godfrey means that it is an undesignated heritage asset.

Walter H Godfrey

Walter Godfrey was a well-known architect, garden designer, writer and architectural historian. As well as writing extensively for *The Survey of London*, and founding the National Buildings Record (later the National Monuments Record, and now called the English Heritage Archive), Godfrey wrote several books on English architecture and architectural details. He also wrote about gardens, and his book *Gardens in the Making* (1914) was influential at the time.

His architectural practice specialised in restoring historic buildings, and a number of the other buildings he designed or restored are listed at high grades, including, at Grade I Herstmonceux Castle, Herstmonceux (East Sussex); Rymans, Appledram (W Sussex); Old Surrey Hall, Dormansland (Surrey); and Horselunges Manor, Hellingly, (E Sussex). Listed at Grade II* are Leybourne Castle, Leybourne (Kent) and The Garth, Lingfield (Surrey); and at Grade II, the Chapel at Goldings Manor, Goldings (Hertfordshire); and Mackerells, Newick (E Sussex).

Godfrey also designed gardens to go with the houses he restored, as well as undertaking one-off garden designs. Several of his gardens are now Registered Parks and Gardens, including at Grade II* Charleston Manor gardens, Cuckmere (E Sussex) and the gardens at Herstmonceux Castle, and at Grade II Kidbrooke Park gardens, Forest Row (E Sussex). The high grades assigned to Godfrey's gardens demonstrate both their importance and his significance as a garden designer.

It is also important to note that the majority of Godfrey's gardens are located within a rural setting and this plays a critical role in the form, layout and significance of his gardens.

The Gardens at The Garth, Lingfield

Godfrey worked on the gardens at The Garth, Lingfield, and they still preserve key elements of his original design. A set of letters between Godfrey and Stanley Hazell, owner of The Garth, are preserved in the East Sussex Record Office as part of their collection of Godfrey's papers. These include a plan of the garden, and designs for features including a large, octagonal birdbath and garden gates.

As this plan shows, the principle garden front was designed to face east southeast towards the proposed application site. This is still the case today. Historic maps show that the entrance was formerly to the south side, but Godfrey moved the entrance to its present position and reversed the house so that it is entered from the northwest.

The plan shows a terrace (surviving) on the southeast side of the house, and a series of garden features beyond it. To the north, a series of paths lead to the octagonal birdbath (surviving), and the garden is divided into "rooms", presumably by the yew hedges, typical of Godfrey's work, that still survive in these positions.

The pergola or loggia (surviving) is mentioned in a letter with sketches between Hazell and Godfrey, and is characteristic of Godfrey's work, with that at Herstoncoeur forming an important feature of the garden there. The corner arch that forms an important feature of the junction between the house and garden is also characteristic of Godfrey's work. The (surviving) pond at the northeast corner of the property is also featured on the plan. The inter-relationship between the garden and the house at The Garth is characterised by what Godfrey termed spaces that were 'self-contained, sheltered and generally unapproached save by well planned paths and archways' (W H Godfrey, *Gardens in the Making*, 1914). The south/southeast garden façade was key to this, as it was enclosed by the house and outbuildings, with their decorative arch, on one side, and by the pergola or loggia on the north. As early twentieth-century OS maps show, the east side boundary with the application site would have faced an orchard or woodland, creating a sense of enclosure to that side as well. Retaining this sense of enclosure is important to retaining the significance of the garden.

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undertaken by Dr Carol Cragoe (an experienced architectural historian)
and by Dr Chris Miele, MRTPI IHBC FRHS FS

MONTAGU EVANS LLP