

LANCASHIRE

THE WILLOWS

PRESTON
PRESTON
SD2951

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II

A suburban garden laid out by Thomas Hayton Mawson in the early C20.

CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The gardens of The Willows were laid out for W W Galloway, a local businessman, by Thomas H Mawson (1861-1933). Mawson initially worked in partnership with Dan Gibson and the new designs made use of existing garden enclosures. The work was carried out in two stages, separated by a gap of several years. The first phase was between 1899 and 1902, followed by modifications and extensions in 1912. Mawson was given a free hand by his client, and he considered the commission to be one of the most interesting schemes for improving an old garden with which he had been involved.

Around 1930 the house became a hospital in the ownership of the local Health Board, then later a child development centre. The Willows is now (1990s) part of the Whittingham Hospital, Preston.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

The Willows, 1ha, is located in a residential area of Ashton-on-Ribble, immediately south-east of Ashton Park, and north of the River Ribble and the Albert Edward Dock. The site is on the corner of Pedder's Lane, which forms the western boundary of the site. Housing on Ashton Close forms the boundaries to the north and east, and Watery Lane forms the southern boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The short drive leads off Pedder's Lane, through gates, to the turning circle on the west side of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

The house, known as The Willows, is located in the south-west corner of the site. The Willows was built for the Galloway family in the early C19 and was extended during the late C19 and early C20. It is a back-to-front 'L' shape, with the entrance in the internal corner on the north-west side. The south and east fronts look over the gardens. To the north of the house stands the laundry, with the stables beyond, both converted in the C20.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

To the east of the house is an area of lawn, bordered to the south by a screen of trees, and to the north by a walk which leads eastwards from the terrace below the east front. An area of shrubs was planned to separate this walk from the Espalier Walk which runs above (to the north), and parallel to it, east from the laundry block. Further north, a third parallel walk, backed by a stone wall in the centre of which is set a substantial gateway, leads east from the

stable block. The area between it and the Espalier Walk was intended as the Herb Garden with, to the east, the Rose Garden. This ground is now the site of the flower garden, with a pattern of beds cut into turf.

To the east of the lawn and flower gardens lies the tennis court lawn, the two halves of the garden being divided by a stone wall. The wall predates the early C20 garden improvements, but it was made more decorative as part of the new garden work, being pierced through to form a series of arches decorated with stone balls. Two main gateways through the wall join the two sides of the garden, both originally hung with fine iron gates. The 'Spanish Gate' has gone, but the wrought-iron gate made to Gibson's design remains. Some of the stone spheres used to decorate the garden walls survive, although many of these are now also missing.

At the east end of the stone-paved walk from the laundry, a flight of semicircular steps lead up to the gateway with the Gibson gate. This gives onto the centre of the tennis lawn enclosure which forms the eastern half of the garden.

The walk from the stable yard, here backed by a flower border in front of a yew hedge, continues to form the north side of the tennis lawn enclosure. Steps in the north-west corner lead down to the level of the lawn, the retaining wall along the length of the northern side being split to form a stone bench. At the east end of the north walk, at the north-east corner of the garden, is a seat set in a hedged alcove. This is balanced by a seat in the south-east corner at the end of the southernmost walk. Between the two, set into the east wall of the garden, is a double seat.

To the south of the tennis lawn is the remains of a plantation of silver willows which predates the present Edwardian garden. To the east, beyond the buttressed stone wall of the formal garden, the area once planted with flowering shrubs has been infilled with housing and lies outside the area here registered.

The walk leading east from the stable yard divided the pleasure grounds from the kitchen garden and working area of the site (see below).

The gardens were originally encircled by a wooded belt which screened the docks to the south but afforded glimpsed views of the countryside beyond. The wooded belt, an area of informal pleasure grounds beyond the formal garden, and a field to the east have all now gone and the surrounding area has been developed for late C20 housing.

KITCHEN GARDEN

To the north of the main garden is an area formerly used as the kitchen garden, originally equipped with greenhouses, lean-tos, cold-frames, and sheds, but now (1999) developed as a housing estate. It lies outside the area here registered.

REFERENCES

- T H Mawson, *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (1st edn 1900)
Studio, 62 (1914), p 273
Studio Year Book (1913), p 126
T H Mawson, *Life and Work of an English Landscape Artist* (1927)

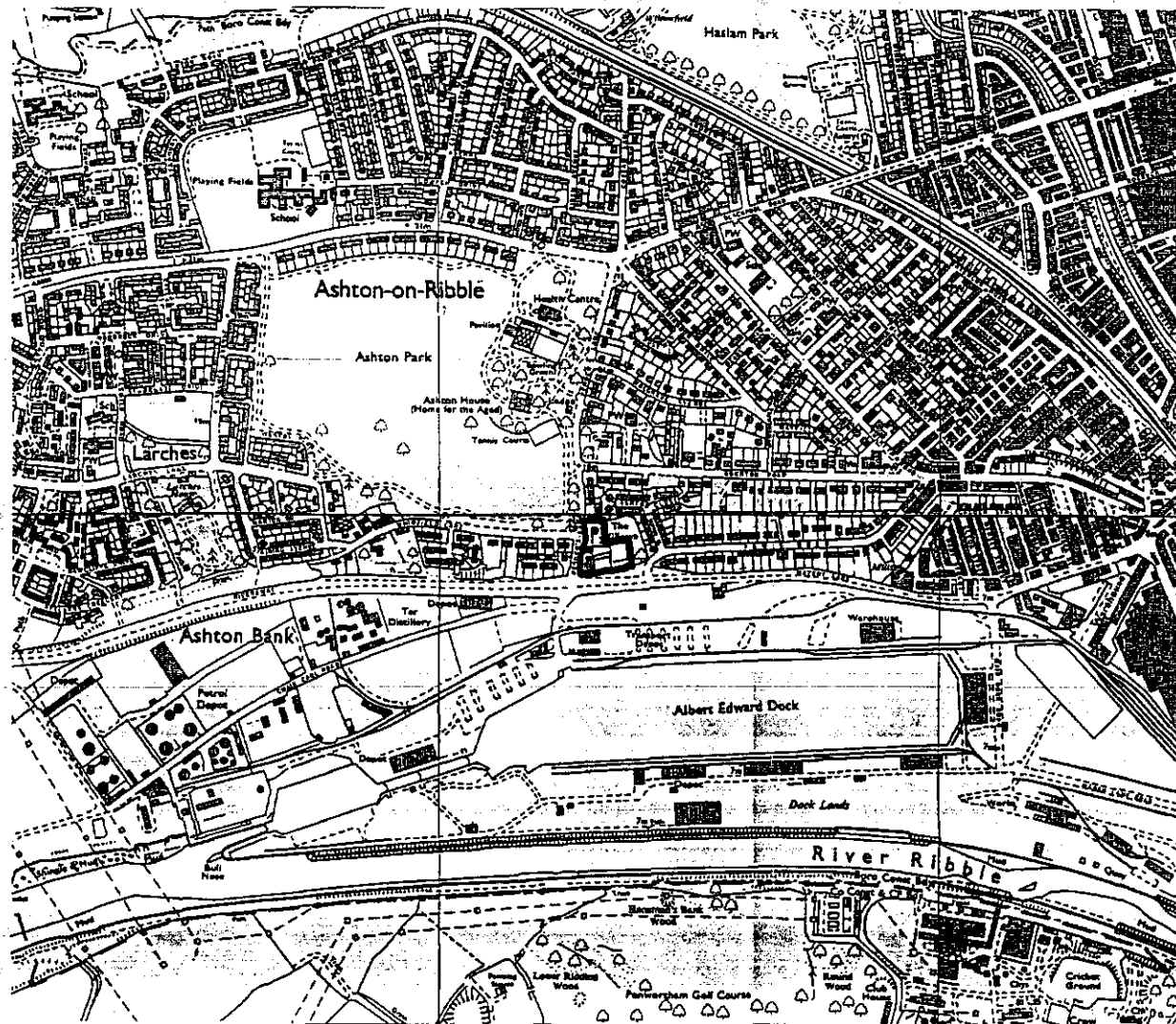
Maps

Plans of the garden (Roll L63), (Kendal Record Office)

Description written: February 1999

Register Inspector: CB

Edited: April 1999



NOTES

The boundary shown may be varied as knowledge of the history of the site improves. It is in any case desirable that the influence of the surroundings on the enjoyment of the site be recognised.

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REGISTER UPGRADE PROJECT

PROVISIONAL BOUNDARY MAP

To be treated as the current site boundary map for planning and consultation purposes pending publication of the new Register

REVISIONS

DRAWING TITLE

THE WILLOWS, PRESTON
LANCASHIRE

Extent of garden and other land
of historic interest.



English Heritage

Historic Buildings & Monuments
Commission for England

Fortress House
23 Savile Row
London W1X 1AB

Telephone 071-973 3000

NORTH



SCALE 1:10,000

OS REF.

DRAWN H. J.

DATE FEBRUARY 1995

DWG NO.