

= Eastcote House Gardens =

Eastcote House Gardens is an area of public parkland in Eastcote , within the London Borough of Hillingdon . The site covers 3 @. @ 63 hectares (9 acres) and incorporates the walled garden , dovecote and coach house of Eastcote House . The house was demolished in 1964 by the Ruislip @- @ Northwood Urban District Council (RNUDC) , the predecessor of the London Borough of Hillingdon . At the public 's request , the garden and outbuildings were retained and are now maintained by a group of volunteers , the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens , in partnership with the local authority .

Eastcote House was one of three largest in Eastcote , together with Highgrove House and Haydon Hall . All came to be owned by the RNUDC , but only Highgrove House remains in its original form ; Haydon Hall was demolished in 1967 by the RNUDC 's successor .

The coach house , dovecote , and garden walls received Grade II listed status on 6 September 1974 . Ecological surveys have found fifty types of trees in the gardens , and numerous species of birds , mammals and insects have been recorded . The gardens received the Green Flag Award in September 2011 following an earlier inspection .

= = History = =

= = = Eastcote House = = =

Eastcote House is first recorded in 1507 , when it was known as " Hopkyttes " , under the ownership of the Walleston family . In 1525 , Ralph Hawtrey married Winifred Walleston , and they made Hopkyttes their marital home , renaming it Eastcote House . The house was extended by either Ralph Hawtrey or his son John , and the brick exterior added . The original timber framework was not revealed again until the house was demolished . John Hawtrey built the dovecote without applying for the required licence . After his death in 1593 , his nephew Ralph Hawtrey applied retrospectively , and the licence was granted . During the 18th century , the dovecote was substantially rebuilt , leaving only the original first few rows of bricks . The Hawtrey family , later the Hawtrey @- @ Deanes , continued to live in the house until Francis Deane moved to East View in Uxbridge in 1878 . Eastcote House was then let to tenants and parts of the estate sold for housing developments .

The Ruislip @- @ Northwood Urban District Council purchased the house and grounds , totalling 9 @. @ 1 acres (3 @. @ 7 ha) , in 1931 after it became endangered by the proposed new housing development by the builders Comben & Wakeling . Eastcote House became a public building for the use of the Scouts , Guides , Women 's Institute and a welfare clinic , though under the ownership of the council , the condition of the house deteriorated . In 1962 the house was declared unsafe , and it was demolished two years later after the council ruled there were no features of the house worth retaining .

The Eastcote Billiards Club began using the coach house in 1938 . The club 's lease of the building expired in 2005 , but the club remained in residence , rent @- @ free . In 2013 , the club had moved to nearby Haydon Hall .

= = = Gardens = = =

The narrow bricks in the garden walls have been dated to around the 17th century . The walled garden would originally have been used predominantly for growing fruit , vegetables , and herbs for the household 's consumption , as well as flowers to exhibit at shows and for pleasure .

The walled garden , coach house , and dovecote were retained at the public 's request when the house was demolished . On 6 September 1974 , the garden walls and remaining buildings were awarded Grade II listed status . The herb garden was planted across the four centre beds in 1977 to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Elizabeth II . These included Artemisia , catmint , Santolina and curry

plants . To keep the plants within the beds , each was lined by box in 1983 .

The eastern wall was rebuilt in 1981 , at which point the northern wall was reduced by seven layers of brick . An area of topiary with seven specimens was planted in 1983 with box , behind the coach house . Lilacs , weeping cherries and hibiscus were planted in 1984 along the garden wall near the coach house . A pergola covered with laburnum and wisteria was introduced in 1986 leading to the entrance into the walled garden . Between 1986 and 1988 , two iron gates and a sundial were added . In the 1990s , the orchard near the walled garden was supplemented by black mulberry , walnut and quince trees .

A footbridge crossing the River Pinn and leading to Long Meadow was replaced in 2007 ; the original had been built in 1977 . In 2008 , the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens was formed to care for the gardens and ensure they remain protected . The group received a £ 24 @, @ 000 grant from the Big Lottery Fund for the replanting of the gardens , which went ahead in April 2010 . The Mayor of Hillingdon officially reopened the gardens on 17 July 2010 .

A survey completed in November 2009 found 50 types of trees in the gardens . Bats were found in the coach house during an ecological survey , but were not believed to be nesting there long @-@ term . Species of birds observed in the gardens have included song thrush , jay , wren , robin , kingfisher and tawny owl . Mammals regularly observed include hedgehogs , grey squirrels and foxes . Butterflies including the holly blue and painted lady have been recorded .

Hillingdon Council provided a £ 150 @, @ 000 grant in September 2010 for the restoration of the buildings . In April 2011 , the council joined with the Friends to seek funding of up to £ 1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund , to support restoration work . It is planned that the coach house could be converted into a tea room .

The gardens received the Green Flag Award in 2011 following an earlier inspection . The flag was raised in a ceremony on 14 September 2011 .