

= Eaton Hall , Cheshire =

Eaton Hall is the country house of the Duke of Westminster . It is set within a large estate 1 mile (2 km) south of the village of Eccleston , in Cheshire , England . The house is surrounded by formal gardens , parkland , farmland and woodland . The estate covers an area of about 10 @, @ 872 acres (4 @, @ 400 ha) .

The first substantial house was built in the 17th century . In the early 19th century it was replaced by a much larger house designed by William Porden . This in turn was replaced by an even larger house , with outbuildings and a chapel , designed by Alfred Waterhouse . Building started in 1870 and concluded about 12 years later . By 1960 the fabric of the house had deteriorated and , like many other mansions during this period , it was demolished , although the chapel and many of the outbuildings were retained . A new house was built but its design was not considered to be sympathetic to the local landscape , and in the late 1980s it was re @-@ cased and given the appearance of a French château .

The house has been surrounded by formal gardens since the 17th century , the design of which has changed over the centuries in accordance with current ideas and fashions , as has the surrounding parkland . A variety of buildings are included in the estate , some decorative , others built for the business of the estate ; many of these are listed buildings . The house and estate are not normally open to the public , but the gardens are open on three days a year to raise money for charity , and some of the estate 's buildings can be hired for charitable purposes .

= = Halls = =

Eaton Hall has been the country house of the Grosvenor family since the 15th century . There is evidence of a two @-@ storey house on a moated site in the estate in a 17th @-@ century estate map and an 18th @-@ century engraving . A survey undertaken in 1798 showed that the building was still present .

= = = Samwell Hall = = =

The first substantial house was built for Sir Thomas Grosvenor , 3rd Baronet . He inherited the estate at the age of 19 when he succeeded his grandfather , Sir Richard Grosvenor , 2nd Baronet , who died in 1664 . The new owner commissioned the architect William Samwell to design the house . Building started in 1675 ; much of the stone used was brought from the ruined Holt Castle in north Wales . By 1683 the cost of building the house had risen to over £ 1 @, @ 000 (equivalent to £ 530 @, @ 000 in 2015) . An engraving of the time shows it to have been a substantial square house with three storeys and dormers . The entrance front had nine bays and a portico . The engraving also shows the earlier moated house to the south of the new house .

= = = Porden Hall = = =

By the time that Robert Grosvenor , then the 2nd Earl Grosvenor , and later the 1st Marquess of Westminster , inherited the estate in 1802 , the Samwell Hall had become old @-@ fashioned and in need of renovation . Grosvenor appointed William Porden to plan the improvements . Building started in 1803 and Porden estimated it would take three years to build at a cost of £ 10 @, @ 000 (equivalent to £ 530 @, @ 000 in 2015) . In the event it took just under 10 years and cost over £ 100 @, @ 000 (equivalent to £ 530 @, @ 000 in 2015) . The previous house was encased and surrounded by " every possible permutation of the gothic style " ; including turrets , pinnacles , arched windows , octagonal towers , and buttresses (both regular and flying) . Two new wings were added in the first stage , and in the 1820s more wings were added , by this time under the direction of Benjamin Gummow . The interior of the house was as lavish as the exterior , with more Gothic detailing . The hangings for the state bed included 97 yards (89 m) of purple damask and 103 yards (94 m) of sarsenet (fine silk) trimmed with gold lace . When the future Queen Victoria

visited in 1832 at the age of 13 , she wrote in her journal : " The house is magnificent " . Others described it as being " as extravagant and opulent as the very latest upholsterer @-@ decorators could make it " . A critic found it " the most gaudy concern I ever saw " and " a vast pile of mongrel gothic which ... is a monument of wealth , ignorance and bad taste " . Richard Grosvenor , 2nd Marquess of Westminster , succeeded his father in 1845 and commissioned the Scottish architect William Burn to make alterations to the house . Burn raised the centre of the south front to make it look like a tower , and changed some of the external Gothic features . The architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner described this house as a " spectacular Gothic mansion " .

= = = Waterhouse Hall = = =

The 2nd Marquess died in 1869 and was succeeded by his son Hugh Lupus Grosvenor , initially the 3rd Marquess and from 1874 the 1st Duke of Westminster . He appointed Alfred Waterhouse to design another new hall . Again the core of the previous hall was retained ; parts were refaced and re @-@ modelled , other parts were completely rebuilt . A private wing was built for the use of the family , and this was joined to the main part of the hall by a corridor . Waterhouse also designed the chapel and a clock @-@ house , and rebuilt most of the stabling . The work began in 1870 , took 12 years to complete , and cost £ 803 @,@ 000 (£ NaN in 2016) . The library was 90 feet (27 m) long , the dining room with its ante room was 105 feet (32 m) long , and the octagonal great hall contained an organ . For the interior , Henry Stacy Marks painted a frieze of the Canterbury Pilgrims for the morning room , Gertrude Jekyll painted panels for the drawing room , and in other rooms were paintings by Gainsborough , Stubbs and Reynolds . Pevsner wrote that it " was an outstanding expression of High Victorian originality " , and added " this Wagnerian palace was the most ambitious instance of Gothic Revival domestic architecture anywhere in the country " . The Daily Telegraph described it as " one of the most princely and beautiful mansions that these islands contain " .

During both World Wars , parts of the hall were used as a hospital . In 1943 , the Britannia Royal Naval College moved to the hall from Dartmouth when the college there was bombed . They moved back to Dartmouth in 1946 , after which the hall was used as an officer cadet training school until the end of National Service in 1958 .

= = = Dennys Hall and the present hall = = =

By 1960 the hall needed repair and decoration , and dry rot was found in the roof . Robert Grosvenor , 5th Duke of Westminster , decided to demolish the main part of the Waterhouse building and the private wing , retaining the chapel , clock tower and stables ; this took place in 1963 . A new building was commissioned by the Duke who appointed John Dennys , his wife 's brother @-@ in @-@ law , as architect . Dennys had earlier worked on Saighton Grange on the Eaton estate . The intention was to build a modern , manageable home . The result was a rectangular , flat @-@ roofed building , faced with white Travertine , its " whiteness [being] a stark contrast to the softness of the Cheshire landscape " . Its construction began in 1971 , it took less than 2 1 ? 2 years to build , and cost £ 459 @,@ 000 (£ NaN in 2016) . The exterior had a central porte @-@ cochère on the entrance front . The house followed an asymmetrical plan , with two storeys plus a basement containing a swimming pool . A central two @-@ storey hall gave access to the principal rooms , with the main reception rooms being on the first floor . The decor included wall coverings in silk and woodblock floors .

As the hall was considered to be unsympathetic in appearance to the local countryside , it was decided to change its exterior . This was designed by the Percy Thomas Partnership . Work on recasing the Dennys Hall to make it look more like a French château began in 1989 and was completed in 1991 .

= = = Associated structures = = =

Adjacent to the hall are the remaining structures designed by Waterhouse . To the north is Eaton Chapel ; this , with its clock tower , is a Grade I listed building . The decorative scheme of the interior of the chapel is based on the ' Te Deum ' ; it involves stained glass and stone mosaic , and was developed by Frederic Shields . Immediately to the north of the chapel is the Stable Court ; this is listed at Grade II * . The buildings in the Stable Court are in brick , red stone , and half @-@ timbering , with red tile roofs . The west range has a half @-@ timbered upper storey with two gables , and a central gatehouse with turrets which are polygonal at the base and circular higher up and have conical roofs . On each side of the gatehouse are two @-@ storey arcades with gables above . In the courtyard is a statue of a horse by Joseph Boehm , which is listed at Grade II . At the southeast corner of the stable yard is a postillion 's house , dated 1873 and listed at Grade II * . In a lobby between the stable yard and the chapel is an artificial grotto , listed at Grade II . In the area around the Stable Court are further structures listed at Grade II . To the north is the Coachhouse Court , which consists of a coach @-@ house , a covered court and a riding school . These were designed in the 1870s for the 1st Duke . To the north of this are Eaton Hall Cottages , four attached cottages , which were designed about the same time . In the forecourt between the Coachhouse Court and the cottages is a lodge , with gates , piers and screens . Near to the cottages is the former engine shed of the Eaton Hall Railway . To the east of the stable yard is a chapel @-@ like sandstone game pantry dating from the 1870s .

From 1896 until 1947 , the estate was served by the 15 in (381 mm) gauge Eaton Hall Railway . The line ran from the hall to a depot at Balderton on the Chester @-@ Wrexham line , and a spur went to Cuckoo 's Nest , where there was a repair yard . Part of the old railway route was re @-@ opened in 1996 .

= = Grounds = =

The estate covers an area of about 10 @, @ 872 acres (4 @, @ 400 ha) , within which about 1 @, @ 235 acres (500 ha) of parkland and about 50 acres (20 ha) of formal gardens . These are listed at Grade II * on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens . The boundaries of the estate generally follow field boundaries but on the east side they follow the line of the River Dee .

= = = History = = =

In the 17th century , formal gardens were created around the Samwell Hall ; these included such features as parterres and canals . However they were costly to maintain , and in the later part of the 18th century fashions changed to favour a more informal type of garden layout . Credit for designing the informal gardens at Eaton Hall has been given to Lancelot " Capability " Brown . Although one of Brown 's documents dated 1764 shows that payment was made to him by the estate , it also notes that a plan for the garden had been drawn up by William Emes . From this , Marion Mako concludes that , as Brown was an engineer as well as a landscape gardener , the payment was for an engineering project rather than for landscaping . Emes had been influenced by Brown , although he had not been his pupil . With his clerk of works , Thomas Leggett , Emes worked in the estate for the next 10 years . When Robert Grosvenor (later the 1st Marquess) inherited the estate at the beginning of the 19th century , it had become run @-@ down . The marquess appointed John Webb , a pupil of Emes , to improve the garden and the landscaping . Among Webb 's innovations were new terrace walls behind the house , the levelling of Belgrave Avenue and the planting of 130 @, @ 000 trees along it , and a serpentine lake to the east of the house alongside the River Dee . He also arranged for the construction of greenhouses and a kitchen garden .

Fashions changed again , and in the 1820s William Andrews Nesfield was employed to design new parterres . He also built more terracing and a balustraded wall . Statues , stone urns and vases on pedestals were added to the garden . In 1852 the Camellia House was built ; this was extended in 1870 to its final size of 385 feet (117 m) long , 10 feet (3 m) wide , and 18 feet (5 m) high . The present kitchen garden was created the same year ; this provided the food not only for the hall , but also for Grosvenor House in London . More greenhouses were built and , by about 1880 , 56

gardeners were employed . There were other building works in the grounds . Waterhouse created a grotto between the chapel and the stable yard , and designed the Parrot House and a loggia (now known as the Temple) . The Chester architect John Douglas designed the Dutch Tea House in the Tea Garden , and a number of service buildings in the estate . In 1897 ? 98 Edwin Lutyens started to improve what had been known as the Italian Garden (and is now the Dragon Garden) .

Work continued in the gardens and grounds during the 20th century . The 2nd Duke commissioned Detmar Blow , a pupil of Lutyens , to re @-@ design parts of the gardens . With Fernand Billerey , he removed the parterres , built a canal leading away from the house , added hedged compartments to the terraces , and a pond at the base of the terraces (now the Lioness and Kudu Pond) . During the Second World War , part of the parkland was requisitioned as an airfield , and in 1940 some of the garden buildings were damaged by a cluster of incendiary devices . After the war , improvement of the gardens did not resume until the 1960s , when the wives of the 4th and 5th Dukes worked with the designer James Russell . Since the early 1990s , the gardens have been further developed under the 6th Duke and his wife , Natalia , working with the garden designers Arabella Lennox @-@ Boyd and Vernon Russell Smith .

= = = Formal gardens = = =

To the east of the house a series of terraces leads down to the Fish Pond . The retaining walls at the southern end of the upper terrace are listed at Grade II , as are the retaining walls at the end of the upper terrace and the steps leading down to the middle terrace . Stretching along the middle terrace is a long rectangular pool containing a three fountains . The retaining walls of this pool are listed at Grade II , as are the railings on the north and the south side of the terrace . On each side of the pool are two compartments framed by yew hedges . Between these compartments , on each side , is a statue by Raymond Smith . Both of these were made in 1852 for the 2nd Marquess and are listed at Grade II . The one to the north depicts a stag at bay , and that to the south a hunter on a rearing horse .

From the end of the pool , steps lead down to a smaller rectangular pool at right @-@ angles to the first . The steps and the retaining wall at the end of the terrace are listed at Grade II . The retaining walls of the pool are also listed at Grade II . This area contains two statues by Jonathan Kenworthy . From this pool a path , known as the Broad Walk , stretches to the north and the south . At each end of the Broad Walk is a building designed by Waterhouse for the 3rd Marquess . At the north end is the Parrot House , dating from 1881 ? 83 , which is built in yellow terracotta . It is the form of a round colonnaded Ionic temple with a shallow domed roof . Above the colonnade and the inner drum are concentric balustrades . A flight of eleven steps leads up to the south entrance . The Parrot House is listed at Grade II . At the south end of the Broad Walk is a loggia , dating from about 1880 . This is built in buff and red sandstone . At its front are three arches between Ionic columns . The loggia was built to enclose a Roman altar which was found in 1821 at a spring near Boughton and brought to Eaton in 1822 . The loggia is listed at Grade II . To the east and west of the loggia are reconstructed Roman columns , each of which is listed at Grade II .

South of the loggia is the Dutch Tea Garden , which was laid out by C. E. Mallows in about 1905 . The garden contains the Tea House which was designed by John Douglas . This has a cruciform plan and is a half @-@ timbered building on a sandstone plinth . The roof is of red tiles , and sweeps upwards to a small spire surmounted by a weathercock . It is listed at Grade II . In the centre of the garden is a statue of Mercury and in front of the Tea House are two stone Talbots . To the north of the Tea House , on the path leading to the Broad Walk , is a pair of wrought iron gates made in 1913 for the 2nd Duke . The gates and their overthrow are listed at Grade II .

To the south of the hall is a formal garden known as the Italian Garden . This contains a pool at the centre of which is the Dragon Fountain . The fountain is listed at Grade II . In the Italian Garden are two statues , also listed at Grade II , which were taken from the old hall when it was demolished ; these are a statue of Joan of Eaton , and of the Norman Bishop Odo .

Leading from the north of the house is the Spring Walk , leading to the Kitchen Garden , in which food is grown for the family . To the east of the Kitchen Garden is the Camellia Walk , a long

greenhouse filled with camellias . This is 388 feet (118 m) long and is believed to be the longest glass corridor in the world . It is listed at Grade II . Some of the gates in this garden are believed to have been designed by Lutyens , and are listed at Grade II . Other walls and gates around the garden were designed by Waterhouse in about 1870 , and are listed at Grade II * .

To the east of the house is the forecourt , which has as its centrepiece a pool containing an equestrian statue of the 1st Duke . This depicts the Duke on horseback holding aloft a falcon . It is in bronze and was made between 1870 and 1879 for the Duke by G. F. Watts . It is listed at Grade II * . The retaining walls of the pond are listed at Grade II . To the west of the forecourt are the Golden Gates which , together with their screens and lodges , are listed at Grade I. The other listed building in the gardens is a large stone urn on the east side of the Fish Pool dating from about 1880 . This is richly carved , is 10 feet (3 m) high , and stands on a circular pedestal which forms the final feature of the eastern view from the hall . It is listed at Grade II .

= = = Other features = = =

The grounds can be entered by a number of approaches , each of which contain structures of architectural importance . Belgrave Avenue , some 1 @.@ 75 miles (3 km) long , is a straight drive which leads from the Wrexham Road (B5445) to the Golden Gates and the forecourt on the east of the hall . Belgrave Lodge , on the south side of the avenue was built in 1899 to a design by John Douglas for the 1st Duke . It is built in red bricks with yellow stone plinths , bands and other dressings and is listed at Grade II . The associated lodge gates , piers and wing walls were designed at the same time by Douglas and are also listed at Grade II . Part way along the avenue , on its north side , is Upper Belgrave Lodge . This was also designed by Douglas for the 1st Duke , it is dated 1877 , and is Grade II listed . Further along the avenue is a Grade II listed obelisk in red sandstone with a copper cap , dated 1890 , designed by Douglas and Fordham .

The Aldford Approach leads from the village of Aldford and crosses the River Dee by the Grade I listed Aldford Iron Bridge , which was built in 1824 by William Hazledine for the 1st Marquis . Iron Bridge Lodge , adjacent to this bridge , was designed by Douglas and Fordham in 1894 and is listed at Grade II . Also on this approach is Coachmore Hill Lodge which was designed in the 1880s by Douglas ; it is listed at Grade II . On the approach , near the Dutch Tea Garden are gates with an overthrow , and piers dating from about 1870 in Classic Revival style , listed at Grade II .

From the north of the hall are two further approaches . The Eccleston Approach goes to the village of Eccleston , and slightly to the west , the Chester Approach bypasses the village , going through Eccleston Hill . Associated with these approaches are further listed buildings . Of these , the major structure is Eccleston Hill Lodge which was designed in 1881 ? 82 by Douglas for the 1st Duke and is listed at Grade II * . This is a three @-@ storey gatehouse tower with multiple attached smaller towers and a steeply hipped roof . The other structures are listed at Grade II and comprise Eccleston Lodge which was designed by Douglas and Fordham in 1894 , its associated gates , piers and wing railings , a sandstone balustered causeway south of the lodge carrying the drive , a house called Eaton Boat , designed by Douglas about 1880 , Garden Lodge designed by Waterhouse in 1881 ? 83 , a pair of gates , railings and screen walls adjoining the lodge dating from 1881 ? 83 by Waterhouse , Stud Lodge storehouse and domestic offices , designed in 1883 by Douglas , the Stud Riding School , the Stud Stables , the house east of Stud , Eaton Estate Office , designed by Waterhouse in 1880 , the North Lodge of 1881 by Waterhouse , the North Lodge gate and post from about 1881 also by Waterhouse , the Garden House of 1893 by Douglas and Minshull , and gates and gate piers to the south of Garden House .

= = Present day = =

Eaton Hall is a private residence and is not open to the public , but the gardens are open on three days each year to raise money for charity . In the area of the Stable Court are a number of rooms which are used for exhibitions . The Carriage Museum holds the Westminster Collection of Carriages . The Exhibition Room houses a collection of items relating to the Grosvenor family , and

the History Room contains items about the history of the family and illustrations of the hall at various stages in the past . The Stables include items relating to the family 's horses . In the garden , the Parrot House contains an exhibition of paintings by the Victorian artist Henry Stacy Marks .

Some of the areas in the stable court are available for hire for charitable fund raising . The Long Room , which was refurbished in 1992 and now has the character of a large country house drawing room , can hold 150 people . The former saddle room is now a dining room . The carriage room and adjoining buildings have been converted into the Wolf Room , which has a movable stage and audio @-@ visual facilities . It can seat 200 people and contains eight black @-@ chalk pictures of birds by Joseph Wolf . The chapel is usually reserved for the family but in December each year it is used for carol concerts to raise money for charity .