

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site
PENDLEY MANOR

Historic Name (if known)
PENLEY HALL

Parish/Town **Tring**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: SP9425611789

Present Area (approximate) 35 Acres

Brief Description

The manor of Pendley predates the Domesday Book of 1086 but was first enclosed as a 200 acre park in 1440; it had reverted to agricultural use by 1675. The park was partially restored (80 acres) by 1812 and abandoned by 1822. The old house had been demolished by 1822 and the present mansion and ancillary buildings erected in 1874/5 in a picturesque Jacobethan style to the west of the old house. It was owned by the Williams family from that 1864, when purchased from the Harcourts, until 1983, when the racehorse owner and commentator Dorian Williams sold the property to The Grass Roots Company. During World War II it was occupied by the Land Army. From 1947 it was used as an adult education centre. In 1987, the Manor was purchased by an independent hotelier and in 1989 restored to re-opened as an hotel. In 1991, a block containing the ballroom, meeting rooms, and 73 bedrooms was added. The Court Theatre was set up in 1978 in the old riding school on the estate.

The estate originally had a public road running north-south where the present house is situated. This was closed some time after 1766 and the grounds extended to the west.

Principal Building:

Pendley Manor A large asymmetrical 2 ½ storeys Jacobean-style house facing E set in extensive grounds. It was rebuilt to the east of the site of old house c.1874 by Walter F.K.Ryan for Joseph Grant Williams Esq. with '1875' on porch. Red brick with Bath stone dressings, half-timbered jettied top half-storey, tilehung gables, and steep red tiled roofs.

Approaches:

Pendley Beeches Lodge

Gate Lodge. c.1874-5 in similar style. A small decorative Jacobean style gate lodge to Pendley Manor with gable to front facing S and timber framed porch on W side with diagonal boarded door, decorative hinge plates, and C20 panelled outer doors. Tall red brick chimneys. The most decorative of the 3 original lodges. The main approach road drive through the grounds to the house in 1766 met the public road here.

Cow Lane Lodge. c.1875 A small 2-storeys Jacobean style gate lodge facing W with porch set back on N side. Front has canted brick bay on ground floor with stone quoins and window dressings, a tiled pentice over carried on heavy timber braces from stone corbels, and a 3-light oriel window with ogee plastered lower part. Stucco cove and ornamental infill over below moulded bargeboard with pendant. Tall red brick pilastered chimneys with corbelled caps.

Pendley Manor Lodge

c.1874-5 in Jacobean style. Red brick with half timbered 1st floor with steep red tile roofs. An irregular 1 ½ storeys building with 2-storeys gabled part facing road to N and roof carried down over an open timber porch on the W side beside the drive.

The drives converge at the front with a carriage sweep around a small fountain in a stone basin set in grass and yew bushes. In the 18th century the forecourt had was to the west of the house

The **stables**. C. 1875 in Jacobean style to match the house, also by FK Ryan. Red brick with Bath stone dressings, white brick bands. Steep red tile roofs and wooden clock cupola over entrance with ogee dome and wind vane. A rectangular stable courtyard block with single-storeys on north, west and east but 2 storeys on S, and rising to 2 storeys over pointed stone entrance arch in middle of north side. Spiral fluted terra cotta chimney pots on moulded brick bases. Large riding school adjoining on the east dated 1878, which is now used by the Court Theatre and has been extended.

Pleasure grounds: These are now laid to lawn and car parks but in the 19th century were laid out with shaped flower beds in the lawn full of bedding plants and surrounding a central sundial. A conservatory adjoins the main house and would appear to be contemporary with the house. In the 18th century a formal garden was four compartments was situated to the west of the house. The Rose Garden on the south side of the manor is now the site of the Shakespeare Festival performances

This festival, founded by Dorian Williams, started in 1949, and was formerly held on the Glade Stage, a bank flanked by two firs.

Walled Kitchen Garden: This lies to the northwest of the house and in the 19th century had 2 cross paths with a glasshouse range and Gardener's House and back shed range on the north wall. The garden has been converted to grass and shrub pleasure ground for the house, named The Bothy, which has been adapted from the Gardener's House. It is now in separate ownership.

Park: Much of the planting from the earlier house remains: beech-lined drives, and specimen trees including sweet chestnut, Turkey Oak, Atlantic cedar, Wellingtonia. Formerly a ride was cut through Pendley Beeches to the south of the site and an avenue of trees continued the view south of the Roman road (Akeman Street) rising up and terminating in a clump of trees near the Ridway. This clump still remains although the views are now interrupted by the A41 Tring bypass. There are still a few trees remaining from the avenue but the gap through Pendley Beeches has now grown over.

Important people associated with site: <i>Architect:</i> Walter FK Ryan <i>Resident:</i> Dorian Williams, Show Jumper
Assessment of significance. An assemblage of picturesque buildings of a Victorian minor estate on the edge of a town set in woodland planting of the period.
Principal Uses: Hotel and Spa
Public Access/Rights of Way: The Ridgeway on FP
Designations: (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, EH Register of Historic Parks & Gardens, Tree Preservation Orders, SSSIs, Nature Reserve, National Trust, County Wildlife Site, etc) Grade II: Pendley Manor, Cow Lane Lodge, Pendley Beeches Lodge, Pendley Manor Lodge, Stables SAM: AAS Pendley Manor AONB, Green Belt, Landscape Characterisation Area: 114. Tring Gap Foothills
Sources of information: Report available from HGT Conservation Group
Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Date: 2008



Ordnance Survey Scale 6":1 mile Sheet XXV.15 1899

