



Historic Building Record

Temple Dinsley
Preston
Hitchin
Hertfordshire
SG4 7RT

24th July 2024

SUMMARY

A house of the Knights Templars was founded at Temple Dinsley before 1147 and the property passed to the Knights Hospitallers in 1324, becoming a house of that order after 1338, and a preceptory in the reign of Richard II. The preceptory was one of the most important in south-eastern England. Human remains, a coffin lid and chalice were found when the kitchen and scullery block at the present house was built, probably marking the site of the Templar chapel. The manor passed into secular hands after the dissolution of the Hospitallers in 1540 and was granted in 1542 to Sir Ralph Sadleir, whose family appear to have rebuilt or modernised the house.

Sir Ralph's descendent, Edwyn Sadleir, the 1st baronet Dinsley, (c. 1620-1672), built the next house, a much larger building, in the mid-17th century. This was located to the rear of the current house and was initially retained alongside it.

In 1714 the estate was purchased by Benedict Ithell who built a two storey (and attic) brick and tiled house, of three bays with a central front door, in a symmetrical style. This survives together with the remains of its two-storey coach house and stables immediately north-east of the house. This was originally surmounted by a clock tower but was severely damaged by a fire in 1888 and now much rebuilt.

In 1787 ownership passed to Joseph Darton, whose premature death led to his son, Joseph junior inheriting Temple Dinsley at the age of eighteen in 1795 and it was he who was responsible for the final demolition of the remains of Sadleir's mansion and the remodelling of Ithell's house to its present form.

During the 19th century, the Daltons rented the house to tenants and from 1839, it was leased and then refurbished and extended by Thomas and Frederica Halsey between 1839 and 1840. They had an extension built on the eastern end, since demolished, and a ground floor bay window on the northern (rear) side. It seems likely that during the Dalton's' occupation the kitchen garden, ice house, associated ponds, and well house were built and the parkland served by a new main drive. From 1869 to 1879 John Weeks, a retired builder, greenhouse entrepreneur and Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, leased the house and gardens and carried out additional alterations, providing the kitchen garden with glasshouses and building a large extension to the southern side of the house (since demolished). His alterations to the house included enlarging the size of window panes to two panes over two sashes.

During the tenancy of John Weeks, the Temple Dinsley estate was sold at auction in 1873 to Major Henry Pryor, who continued to lease it, firstly to John Weeks and then to Henry Brand MP and Frederick MacMillan. In 1901 Major Pryor sold his estate to an Irishman, James Barrington-White, who in turn sold it in 1908 to Henry G. Fenwick, who with his wife Violet commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to extend and remodel the main house, and then to construct numerous new buildings within the gardens, Hill End and Preston village.

This work was carried out in phases. In 1908-1909 the old house was extended with two symmetrical wings and a service range to the east. Collaborating with Gertrude Jekyll, gardens were laid out and garden building constructed. In 1910, a garage was added with a petrol store disguised as a dovecote and in 1911, the service areas and east wing were re-ordered to provide additional accommodation. From 1913 to 1914 an extension linked the main house to the stable range and the boundary wall and park entrance gates were added, together with additional garden structures. In 1913 Lutyens also designed a new Home Farm south-east of the application site at Minsden Farm, making Temple Home Farm redundant.

After their divorce, Temple Dinsley became the property of Violet Fenwick and she sold it in May 1918 to Douglas Vickers (1861-1937) MP and Director of Vickers Limited, industrial engineers. He had Temple Home Farm demolished and continued to employ Lutyens as architect for Crunnells Green House and numerous cottages within the village. He had Temple Home Farm demolished in 1920s. Almina, Countess of Carnarvon and her second husband, Lt Col Ian Dennestoun owned Temple Dinsley from 1929 to 1935, when the estate was purchased by Princess Helena's College for Girls.

The first alterations of 1935-6 for the school were carried out by the architect Felix Lander and comprised remodelling and extension to provide kitchen and dining rooms and raising the roof of Lutyens west wing to provide dormitories in the roof. After Felix Lander died in 1960, his son Sean Lander (still practicing as Welch and Lander) was responsible for raising the roof of the east wing and for extensions to the Art Studio and kitchen wing. The former garage block and attached walls were reconstructed as the Teaching Block and in the 1970s dormitories were inserted in the roof. Then in 1981 the Gymnasium (Sports Hall) was added via a link corridor at the rear and in 1990 a 3-storey residential block was attached to its east end. In 2003, The Science Block was built, designed by TE Neville of Luton.

The school closed permanently in 2021 due to Covid and financial difficulties. The Door UK bought the site in 2023.

Site Name:	Temple Dinsley
Address:	Princess Helena College School Lane Preston Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7RT
National Grid Reference:	TL 181782 4799
Planning Authority:	North Hertfordshire District Council
Planning Application Numbers:	Historic Building Record to accompany applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion and alteration of the building to residential use.
Funding Source	Private client
Status of the Buildings	Temple Dinsley grade II* (list entry nos.1307766) Registered park & garden II*(1000919) Park walls & Gate piers (1102432) Ice House (1176789) The Piggery (1347448)
Heritage Environment Record	n/a
OASIS Record	johnselb1-526856
Report Compiled by:	John Selby
Date of Recording	12 th April 2023 and 8 th June 2024

Contents

List of Illustrations	3
List of Maps	3
Introduction & Site Location	5
Scope & Methodology	6
Historical Background & Map Regression	6
Description of the Main Buildings	66
Discussion & Conclusion	73
Archive Deposition	73
References	74
Appendix 1 Photographs	75
Appendix 2 Drawings of the Buildings	137
Appendix 3 Listed building descriptions	137
Appendix 4 OASIS Form	145
Appendix 5 Hertfordshire HER Summary Form	146

List of Illustrations

i	Aerial view
ii	Site of deserted mediaeval village
iii	The first house at Temple Dinsley. Annotated "Temple Dinsley partly pulled down".
iv	Temple Dinsley in 1700.
v	Painting c1787-1797 by Thomas Baskerfield, showing the Old House, the Sadleir Mansion and the Coach House and Stables with clocktower
vi	Circa 1790 after demolition of the side wings. Reconstruction by Philip Wray.
vii	View from the East in 1832
viii	Detail from 1832 painting
ix	View from the West in 1832.
x	Reproduced from The changing facade of Temple Dinsley 1541-1907 P. Wray
xi	South elevation and entrance courtyard showing the c1873 extension with veranda service wing and the outbuilding
xii	South elevation showing window alterations & part removal of the verandah
xiii	North elevation circa 1880
xiv	Circa 1894-1898 view of the Entrance Gate and Courtyard
xv	Old House c1901-1908 with James Barrington-White.
xvi	Before work began Circa 1901-1908
xvii	South front circa 1901-1908
xviii	View from the fish pond
xix	House and stable coach house range
xx	Stable range with 19th century extension, wall and gateway on the eastern end
xxi	North Elevation from the upper lawns
xxii	North Elevation details including the bay window and the rear of the verandah.
xxiii	North elevation from the lawns
xxiv	1908 Ground Floor Plan
xxv	The workforce at the north elevation 1908
xxvi	Details by Lutyens of the West Wing and Link (1910)
xxvii	Entrance Gateway to the front courtyard (Weaver 1911)
xxviii	The Entrance Front (Weaver 1913)
xxix	South Front Old House East Link, East Wing and Coach House Stable
xxx	South Elevation detail. (Weaver 1913)
xxxi	West Elevation. (1911)
xxxii	Gateway and steps alongside East Wing gable (1911)
xxxiii	The Kitchen Wing and the Lower Pool (1913)
xxxiv	North elevation on completion (1911)
xxxv	Circa 1915 postcard of the North Elevation
xxxvi	1911 Main Entrance Hall
xxxvii	he Main stair prior to Lutyens' changes. 1894-1898 pen and ink drawings by E H New
xxxviii	Link from the hall looking to the west wing
xl	Drawing Room and Smoking Room drawings by E Lutyens.
xli	Smoking Room Fireplace
xlII	Smoking Room
xlIII	Smoking Room looking south towards the Drawing Room
xliv	Drawing Room fireplace detail
xlV	Drawing Room display cabinet and vent detail
xlvi	Secondary stairs before the attic floor alterations
xlVII	West wing first floor bedroom with bed designed by Lutyens
xlVIII	Sitting Room. Possibly First Floor Old House SW corner Room above Entrance Hall
xlIX	Drawing Room 2.
l	Bathroom First Floor West Wing North end
li	Bathroom likely First Floor West Wing

lii	Lutyens extension elevation drawing (V7A Collection)
liii	Fireplace within Housekeepers' area circa 1890
liv	Ground Floor Plan prior to the extension linking house to stables
lv	Country Life postcards ca. 1920
lvi	Pen and ink drawings for Princess Helena College
lvii	Planning application drawing for the basement extension to the Arts Block
lviii	College buildings
lix	Phasing Plan of the main buildings at Temple Dinsley
lx	Extent of Mr Weeks gardens 1884
lxi	Contrasting photographs of the front court pre-1890 and 2023
lxii	North elevation circa 1860 with garden walls and fir trees
lxiii	Views of the Rose Garden circa 1901-1908
lxiv	Examples of lost statuary
lxv	Paved Rose Garden with steps leading up to the Herbaceous Garden 2023
lxvi	Pool & diamond Garden
lxvii	West terrace, rose garden and pavilions with linking loggia 1913
lxviii	Pavilion (garden room) from the west
lxix	Loggia and pavilions floor plan
lxx	Garden steps 1913
lxxi	Summer house and shelter 1913
lxxii	Pergola Garden
lxxiii	Farmstead circa 1909
lxxiv	Surviving Park Buildings
lxxv	Pumping Station c.1913 with Tank House
lxxvi	Pump House floor plan
lxxvii	Tank House 1913 & 2014
lxxviii	Tank House drawings
lxxix	Lodge c.1909 (left and 2023 (right)
lxxx	Main entrance gates, walls and piers
lxxxi	Gates to pumping station
lxxxii	Walled garden
lxxxiii	Entrance to Summerhouse Plantation & Maintenance Building
lxxxiv	Extract from Lutyens drawing
lxxxv	Ground floor plan of Lutyens East (service) Wing

List of Maps

a	Location
b	Saxton's Map 1577
c	Dury & Andrews Map 1714
d	Tithe Map 1841
e	Tithe map detail showing the house and surrounding buildings
f	1869 Lease from William Henry Darton to John Weeks.
g	1884 OS map
h	1898 OS map
j	1898 map detail
k	1922 OS survey
l	1878 map showing the farmstead
m	1897 showing farm and ponds
n	1924 OS map

Introduction & Site Location

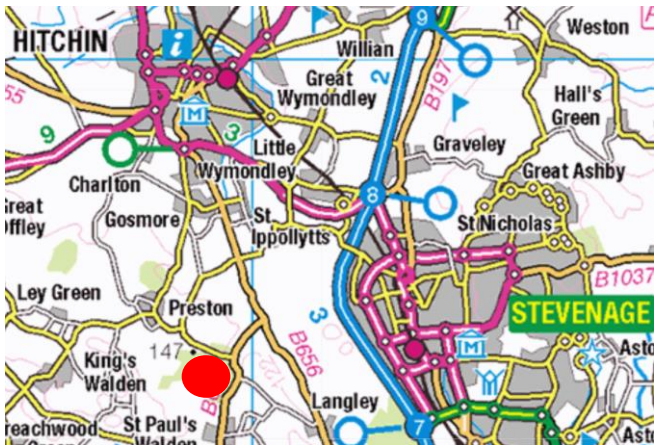
1.1

Temple Dinsley is a grade II* listed building (list entry nos.1307766 & 1000919) located within its park (registered grade II* 1000919)) which contains a number of grade II listed buildings, including Park walls & Gate piers (1102432), Ice House (1176789) and The Piggery (1347448). This Historic Building Record (HBR) was commissioned by The Door PHC Ltd, to accompany applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion and alteration of the main and ancillary buildings to residential use. The work has been carried out to Historic England's Level 3 standard to compile a historic building record of the buildings in their current state prior to works being carried out. The HBR includes the following buildings

- Temple Dinsley House including Old House, West Wing, East Wing, East Annexe (former Stable Coach House) and West Spur (Art Block and the Pavilion).
- Teaching Block (former outbuilding)
- Belvedere and associated designed garden structures.
- Tank House and Pump House.
- Piggery, Ice House and (restoration of landscape structures).

1.2

Temple Dinsley is a former country house, located south-east of the village of Preston, Hertfordshire (centred at NGR TL 18650 24471). It was used as a private boarding school, The Princess Helena College, from 1935 until its closure in 2021, since when it has remained vacant.



map a. Site location



fig. i Aerial view

Scope & Methodology

2.1

The aim of the building recording is to provide a detailed record and assessment of the Buildings at Temple Dinsley prior to conversion. The building recording was carried out to Historic England Level 3.

2.2

In particular the record considered:

- Plan form of the site and its landscape setting.
- Materials and method of construction.
- Dates of the structures, including major additions and alterations.
- Function, room status and internal spatial layout
- Fixtures and fittings, decoration, paint and plasterwork.
- Phasing of the building and function.
- The context and significance of Temple Dinsley

2.3

The site was visited by John Selby on the 12th April 2023 and accompanied by Corrie Newell on the 8th June 2024 in order to carry out the recording work and provide a photographic record.

2.4

The drawn record comprises plans of each floor of Temple Dinsley and parkland buildings to illustrate the layout and construction. The floor plans were prepared by and Kay Pilsbury Thomas Architects of Radwinter, Saffron Walden, Essex.

Documentary History and Map Regression

Mediaeval Occupation

3.1

At the time of the Domesday survey, the manor of Dinsley had been seized by King William who gifted it to Ilbert his sheriff for his term of office. When Ilbert's appointment ended, he failed to relinquish it and it was seized by his successor, Peter de Valoines, who attached it to the King's manor of Hitchin with which it remained until Bernard de Baliol granted 15 librates of land to the Master and Brothers of the Knights Templar during the reign of King Stephen, before 1147. Other grants of land were made to this order, which together formed the manor of Temple Dinsley.¹

3.2

Dinsley became an important Templar base, but at what date the preceptory was founded is not known. That it was already established at the beginning of the thirteenth century is certain, since a chapter was held here between 1200 and 1205. Not much is known about the preceptory, though it seems to have been of national importance and its jurisdiction extended as far as

¹ VCH vol III p.3

Baldock. At the time when the Templars were all arrested by the king's order in January 1308 there seem to have been six brothers at Dinsley, who were imprisoned in Hertford Castle².

3.3

After the suppression of the Order of the Temple in 1312 the manor was let before 1338 to William de Langford and The Knights of St. John had meanwhile become the owners under the Statute of 1324. Eventually they placed members of their order there, for the preceptory of Dinsley is mentioned in the reign of Richard II, but the preceptory was never re-established. The manor was leased out from around 1400 and tenants were obliged to provide the chaplain and maintain for two days and nights the officials sent once or twice a year by the Prior of St. John to survey the property.

3.4

When the Order of St John was dissolved in 1540, it appears to have made little difference to Dinsley. Temple Dinsley was granted in 1542 to Sir Ralph Sadleir, whose family appear to have rebuilt or modernised the house.

3.5

No remains of the Knights' preceptory remain above ground and the estate contains no scheduled monuments, though it is considered to be an Area of Archaeological Significance. The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) notes that before 1902 a thirteenth century coffin lid of *Purbeck 'marble' carved in relief with a slender cross and foliated crosshead* was found. (It was removed to Preston parish church during the time of Sir Edwin Lutyens involvement). Further finds over the years equate to the Preceptory chapel and include floor tiles, skeletons and a pewter chalice and jug of fourteenth century date; the chalice was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries by William Ransom in 1887 and the jug resides in the North Hertfordshire Museum in Hitchin.³

3.6

The site of the preceptory appears to be beneath the existing house, the rose garden to the west and the sports hall to the north. Survey and small-scale evaluation work in the grounds found that terracing and landscaping during the twentieth century have largely removed or concealed any archaeological evidence, apart from beneath the house itself and the area in front of it.

3.7

Earthworks of an apparent hollow way and house platforms have been found in the park south of the house and Anglo-Saxon pottery has been found here, although all in residual contexts, as well as medieval and post-medieval finds, also in the vicinity of Temple Home Farm. The finds indicate the presence of a mediaeval settlement within a later park and Preston itself developed at the park gate⁴. The Dinsley Archaeological Project was founded in 2000, aiming to research the origins and history of Preston and Dinsley. Their investigation of the site uncovered the remains of the deserted mediaeval village (DMV), pre-dating the Templars, and the presence of a post-mediaeval carriage way.⁵

² VCH vol IV p.445

³ HER 2883

⁴ HER 1835

⁵ *Elders Report on archaeological works undertaken by the Dinsley Archaeological Project on earthworks in the grounds of the Princess Helena College, August-October 2000*

3.10

Despite Weaver's dismissive remarks and Sadleir's undoubted preference for Sandon, there was a house at Temple Dinsley. Local historian Philip Wray, who manages the Preston history website, notes that a coloured representation of Temple Dinsley is included in the collection by Hitchin antiquarian WB Gerish (1864 - 1921), which is captioned "Temple Dinsley partly pulled down": Wray notes that *There is no further description or information about this image. It is completely unlike the illustrations we have of the mansions of Sadleir and Ithell (which were built of brick) in every detail. Was this a drawing of the pre-1640 Temple Dinsley?*⁷



Fig. iii. The first house at Temple Dinsley. Annotated "Temple Dinsley partly pulled down".

2.11

The baronetcy of Temple Dinsley was created in 1661 for Edwyn Sadleir (c. 1620-1672), descendent of Sir Ralph. He built the next house at Temple Dinsley, during the mid-seventeenth century, and this was a grander affair than its predecessor, illustrated by J. Drapentier around 1700. Weaver suggests it may have been built just after the Restoration (around 1660), *though the casement windows and the pedimented gables may be held to suggest a builder of some twenty years earlier*.⁸ If so, it may have been built around the time of Edwin's ennoblement. The mansion sits within a walled garden with service buildings to the east. The mansion and garden are within a paling fence, suggesting that the park beyond the pale had hunting purposes.



Fig. iv Temple Dinsley in 1700. Reproduced by Lawrence Weaver 'Temple Dinsley near Hitchin Herts', *Country Life* 22 April 1911 p. 572

⁷ Wray *The History of Preston in Hertfordshire* website <https://www.prestonherts.co.uk/>

⁸ Weaver op. cit, p.564

18th Century

3.12

The property was inherited by his son, Edwin, 2nd baronet, who died in 1719, but the house seems to have been vacant since around 1712 and it was purchased by Benedict Ithell in 1714

3.13

In 1714, Benedict Ithell built a new mansion at Temple Dinsley and rainwater heads still bear that date. He was the deputy treasurer of Chelsea Hospital and in 1727 was appointed Sheriff of Hertfordshire. His new house did not replace Sadleir's mansion initially. For some reason the earlier house was kept and the new one was built just to the south. The Dury and Andrews map of 1766 appears to show this.



Map c. Dury & Andrews Map 1714

3.14

Philip Wray argues convincingly that the two buildings stood side by side for around eighty years until around 1790. Thomas Baskerfield's painting of between 1787 and 1797 (below) showing the 'new' house and stables, with the earlier house in darker shading to the rear⁹. When Laurence Weaver visited the house in 1911, he commented that *One odd characteristic of the old house is apparent from a glance at the plan. The entrance hall was to the south and the garden front to the north, instead of vice versa*¹⁰.



Fig. v Painting c1787-1797 by Thomas Baskerfield, showing the Old House (left centre), the Sadleir Mansion (rear centre) and the Coach House and Stables with clocktower (right). (Weaver op. cit. p.568)

⁹ Wray op. cit.

¹⁰ Weaver op. cit. p.568

3.15

Weaver also records that *It is interesting to note that the old walls of the seventeenth century house were uncovered when the foundations for the walls of the present west wing were being excavated.* These were the remains of the west wing of Ithel's of 1714 and accounts for the finds resulting from the excavation by the Dinsley Archaeological Project, which revealed masonry thought to be that of Sadleir's seventeenth century house. They were part of the remains of the west wing which was demolished, along with a matching wing on the east side, between the date of Baskerfield's painting of around 1790 and the extract from a painting of 1832 shown below.

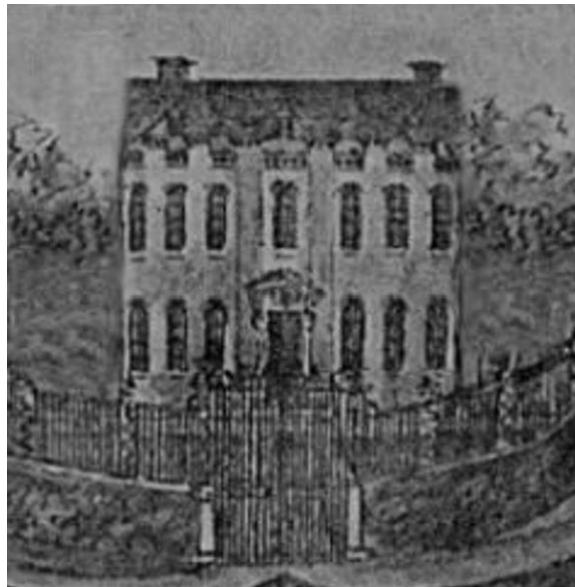


Fig. vi Circa 1790 after demolition of the side wings. Reconstruction by Philip Wray.
www.prestonherts.co.uk/templedinsleychanges19th.htm.

19th Century

3.16

Ownership of Temple Dinsley passed eventually to Benedict Ithel's daughter, Martha who on her death in 1767, left Temple Dinsley to her 'faithful friend and steward', Thomas Harwood. He died in 1787 and ownership passed to his nephew, Joseph Darton, whose premature death led to his son, Joseph junior inheriting Temple Dinsley at the age of eighteen in 1795.

3.17

Joseph Darton jnr. was responsible for the final demolition of the remains of Sadleir's Tudor mansion and for the reconstruction of Ithel's house of 1714, removing the two wings and remodelling the front elevation. He began acquiring property around Preston and he died in 1812, leaving his property to his wife, Elizabeth who died at Temple Dinsley in 1852.

3.18

The property is shown in the painting of 1832 with the Sadleir house removed and the side wings demolished. The two storey bays on the front have also been removed, together with the castellated parapet. The windows have been altered and provided with limestone keystones. An octagonal dovecote is sited in the right foreground with the stable block and clock tower behind.



Fig. vii View from the East in 1832. Source: Hitchin, Temple Dinsley House, the seat of Darton from Views of Hertfordshire, A Collection of Drawings by JC Buckler (1793-1894). Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies CDEBg32312.



Fig. viii Detail from 1832 painting



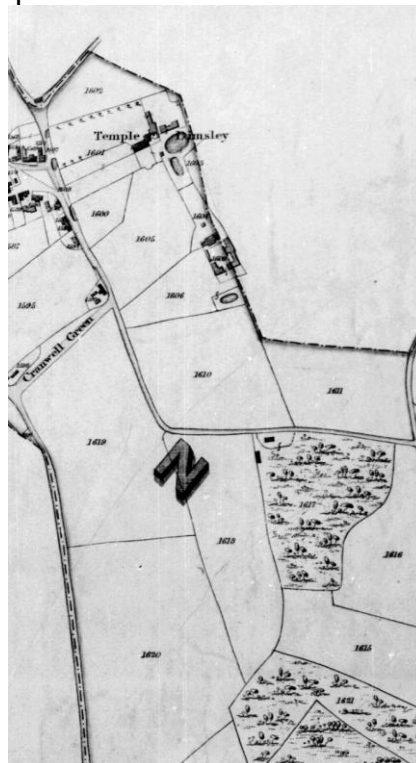
Fig. ix View from the West in 1832. Source: Hitchin, Temple Dinsley House, the seat of Darton from Views of Hertfordshire, A Collection of Drawings by JC Buckler (1793-1894). Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies CDEBg32312

3.19

The Dartons were not continually resident at Temple Dinsley and through much of the nineteenth century leased it to various tenants. Henry Crabbe lived in the house between around 1818 to his death in 1830. In May 1832, the property was advertised in The Times newspaper as being available again for renting. This provides a detailed description the property. It was described as a family mansion in an elevated and airy situation, delightfully sheltered by timber. On the ground floor were a breakfast parlour, dining and drawing rooms and a gentleman's dressing room with adjoining bathroom. On the first floor were three large bedrooms, each of which had its own dressing room. There were six large attics. In the grounds there were two double coach-houses, stabling for seven horses (above which were four servants' rooms) and large walled gardens. Near the stables was a large brick dovecote¹¹.

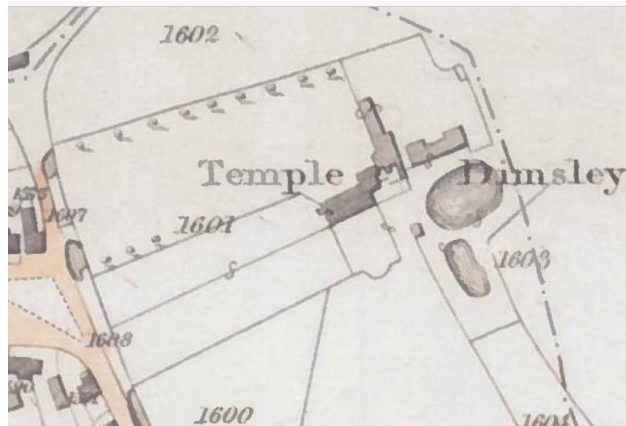
3.20

The tithe map of 1841 shows the house clearly within its park setting with an opening on the roadside shows the former main entrance from the village centre leading the north side (now the rear) of the house. The tithe apportionment records that plot 1601 was the 'Temple Dinsley Homestead' owned by Elizabeth Darton and occupied by Thomas P. Halsey. The map shows a farmstead, Temple Farm (Plot 1609, now lost) which was occupied separately by John Foster, the small square building to its north and the woodland to the south called Kiln Wood, (plot 1617) which was also owned with a Furze Field by Elizabeth Darton. The emergence of ponds within this woodland on later maps correspond with later periods of building and therefore hints at Kiln Wood being the source of the red bricks used at Temple Dinsley. The map shows the Old House (black) and either a lost service wing or the Sadleir Mansion perpendicular to it. An opening on the roadside shows the former main entrance from the village centre and north elevation, now the back of the building. The detached coach house and stable range is to the right of the house and a former dovecote to the left of the pond.



Map d. Tithe Map 1841

¹¹ Wray op. cit.



Map e Tithe map detail showing the house and surrounding buildings

3.21

Thomas Halsey and his wife, Frederica began a refurbishment (1839-40), with new fittings and furnishing affecting the drawing room, dining room, library, family bedroom, closet adjoining, spare bedroom, best spare room and a dressing room. They also made arrangements for several alterations and two additional rooms. Shortly after, they moved out and eventually the property was rented out again to John Weeks. The advertisement of 1853 showing that the house had been extended.



Fig. x Reproduced from The changing facade of Temple Dinsley 1541 – 1907 P. Wray op.cit

3.22

The extensions by Thomas Halsey of the 1840s were to the east of the house and the photographs below of around 1860 show the extension with the stable block and its clock tower beyond. The extension enlarged the service wing.

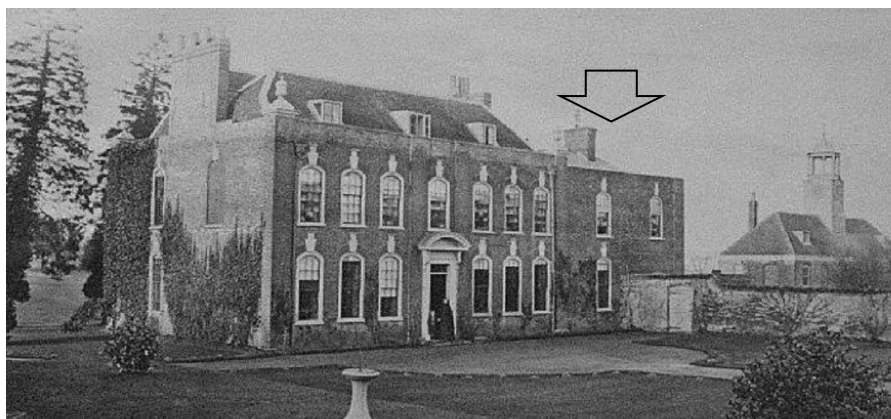


Fig. xi South front circa circa 1860 showing the Halsey extension to the right of the Old House.



Photograph circa 1860s with coach house and clock tower to the right

3.23

Thomas Harwood Darton who had succeeded his mother, Elizabeth, died in 1858 and the house seems to have been let once more to John Weeks (a retired Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society and greenhouse entrepreneur) who repaired and redecorated the property. The lease of 1869 has a map showing the layout of the house and surrounding buildings. It annotates the Well House next to the Temple Farm Homestead



Map of 1869 Lease Map from William Henry Darton to John Weeks. The Well House near Temple Farm is annotated.
Sources Philip Wray 'the History of Preston in Hertfordshire' website www.prestonherts.co.uk with annotation;
Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies

3.24

While Mr Weeks was still a tenant, Temple Dinsley was offered for sale in 1873 as a *fine, old mansion*. It had a spacious hall, drawing room (24'3" x 17'6"), billiard room (20'6" x 20'), dining room (22'8" x 21'), morning room (14'7" x 14'6"), study (15'1" x 13'9") and gun room on the ground

floor - all of which were centrally heated. On the next floor were seven bedrooms, three dressing rooms, a bathroom and two toilets. The roof space was occupied by six attics. Adjoining the house were a laundry, wash-room, coal cellar and a wood-house. The illustration below was drawn before in 1888 a fire destroyed the coachman's residence, stabling, coach house, and the clock tower, known locally as the Temple Clock' (a local landmark). The drawing shows Mr Weeks's extension to the west of the house, complete with verandah and windows with shutters. It also shows that windows on the south elevation had been altered and provided with larger panes and a single storey outbuilding on the east side of the front garden, obscuring the view to the stable. This does not appear on the earlier photographs. Shortly after the drawing was produced, a set of further drawings show the verandah had been reduced in size and the window shutters removed.



Fig. xi South elevation and entrance courtyard showing the c1873 extension with veranda (left), service wing (right) and the outbuilding



Fig. xii South elevation showing window alterations & part removal of the verandah 1894-1898 pen and ink drawings by E H New. Reproduced by Philip Wray 'The History of Preston in Hertfordshire website www.prestonherts.co.uk/viewsofndinsley1913.htm.



Fig. xiii North elevation circa 1894-1898 showing the bay window extension to the dining room, which is shown on E.N. New's drawing of between 1894 and 1898.

3.25

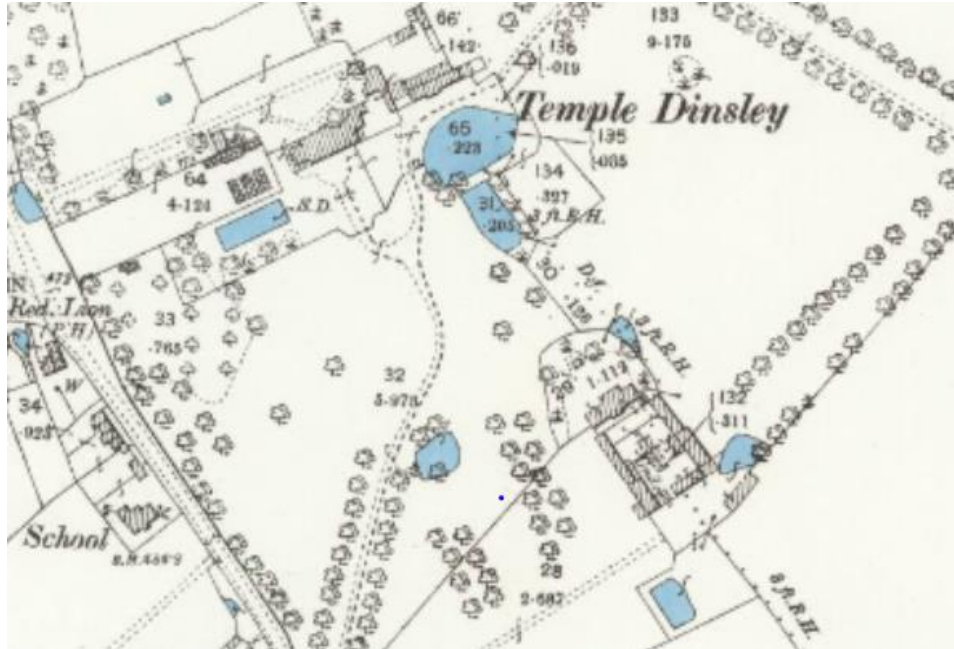
The Ordnance Survey map of 1884, prior to the fire, shows the extended house with its outbuilding projecting southwards on its east side, together with the stable range further to the north-east with buildings around a stable yard. The garden is situated in front of the house and to the west, where a cluster of buildings is shown. These are glasshouses, presumably erected by Mr Week, the greenhouse entrepreneur.



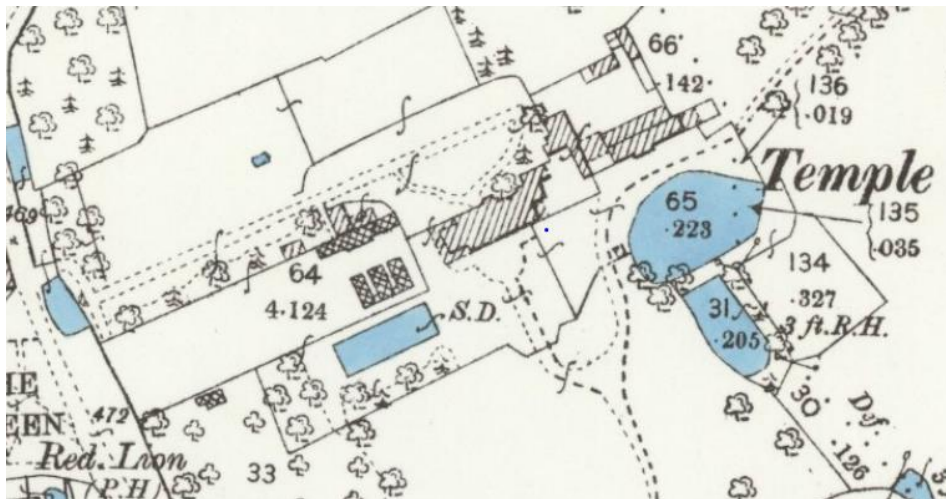
Map g 1884 OS map

3.26

The 1898 edition shows the property more clearly and differs principally from the earlier edition by showing a different configuration to the stables, which had been restored after the fire and extended to the north with additional small yard buildings. In front of the stables is a pond, which appears also on the 1840 tithe map. It is linked further south to a series of smaller ponds and ultimately to the Well House and the buildings of Temple Farm.



Map h 1898 OS map



Map j 1898 map detail

3.27

A further pen and ink drawing by E.N. New shows the front entrance gates.



Fig. xiv Circa 1894-1898 view of the Entrance Gate and Courtyard

3.28

During the tenancy of John Weeks, the Temple Dinsley estate was sold at auction in 1873 to Major Henry Pryor, who was a soldier in the same regiment as William Darton, son of the owners of Temple Dinsley at that time. The Pryors didn't occupy the mansion, but continued to rent it, firstly to John Weeks and then to Henry Brand (MP and magistrate) and Frederick MacMillan.

3.29

The property was sold by Pryor in 1901 to an Irishman, James Barrington-White who became the High Sheriff of Armagh. Kelly's Directory of 1908 records the house as *a very perfect and beautiful example of domestic architecture of the reign of Queen Anne. Temple Dinsley is now the property of and occupied by James Barrington-White Esq. J. P.¹². The property was sold in August of that year to Henry G. Fenwick.*



Fig. xv Old House c1901-1908 with James Barrington-White. Front (south) with plate glass windows to main front and Halsey extension (right). Extension west after removal of Weeks' veranda.

Reproduced by Philip Wray 'the History of Preston in Hertfordshire website www.prestonherts.co.uk/historypt4.htm.

Ref 114.

¹² Kelly's Directory & Gazetteer of Hertfordshire 1908 p.142

20th Century

3.30

Herbert George Fenwick married Violet Edith Perkins in August 1895. She was from a wealthy family who owned the Consett Iron Company and coal mines and invested in horse racing in Northumberland. He was from a family of Northumberland bankers. At the time of their marriage, Herbert Fenwick was described as a 'land agent and colliery manager'.¹³ When Violet's father died in a car crash in 1905, she inherited considerable wealth and probably on the strength of this, the couple acquired Temple Dinsley and almost immediately appointed Sir Edwin Lutyens to remodel and extend the mansion. Lutyens, who was also commissioned to build houses in Preston village, had worked on Abbotswood at Stow in the Wold in 1901-2 for Mark Fenwick, who served as a director on the board of Consett Steel with Charles Perkins, Violet's father. Much of the funding for Temple Dinsley came from Violet's inheritance.

3.31

The phasing of Lutyens work at Temple Dinsley was carried out as follows:

- 1908-1909 first phase to alter and extend the Old House with 2 symmetrical wings and a service range to the east, and to work with Gertude Jekyll to create garden buildings, pergolas and terraces, including the Pavilion and the Belvedere. This work was recorded in photographs and partial plan layout by Sir Lawrence Weaver for *Country Life* in 1911. It was also included in Weaver's 1921 book *Lutyens Houses and Gardens* chapter X11 pp 138-144.
- 1910 drawings by Lutyens at the Victoria and Albert Museum show a Garage Building and a petrol store disguised as a Dovecote. These probably formed the basis of the Teaching Block.
- 1911 re-ordering of the service areas and East Wing, to provide additional guest accommodation.
- 1913-1914 extension to provide garaging and to link the main house to the Coach House Stable range. He also constructed additional service buildings and garden structures, including the Pump House, the pyramid of the Tank House and the boundary walls and entrance gates. He also designed a new Home Farm to the south-east of Temple Dinsley at Minsden Farm, making Temple Home Farm redundant.

3.32

The following photographs show Temple Dinsley before Lutyens began work and are taken from Benedict Fenwick private photographic collection and are reproduced by Philip Wray in *The History of Preston in Hertfordshire* website www.prestonherts.co.uk/viewsoftdinsley1913.htm.

¹³ Philip Wray's account of the Fenwicks on the Preston website, op. cit.



Fig. xvi Before work began Circa 1901-1908



Fig. xvii South front circa 1901-1908



Fig. xviii View from the fish pond



Fig. xix House and stable coach house range (right) with projecting central bay and simple roof without the clock tower, rebuilt after the fire of 1888



Fig. xx Stable range with 19th century extension, wall and gateway on the eastern end



Fig xxi. North Elevation from the upper lawns. Weeks extension right with veranda



Fig. xxii North Elevation details including the bay window and the rear of the verandah.



Fig. xxiii North elevation from the lawns

3.33

Lutyens approach was described by Weaver:

*The old work has been respected in all faithfulness and the new rhymes with it delightfully, but does not fail of showing the individuality of its creator.*¹⁴

3.34

Respect for the 'old work' did not extend to the nineteenth century additions. Mr. Halsey's 1840s extension on the east side and the service wing were demolished as was Mr. Weeks's 1860s wing on the west side. These were replaced by extensions, projecting southwards, to provide a new service wing on the east with a garden room wing to the east; both were two storeys with hipped roofs and attached to the old house with three storey recessed links. The work also included the removal of the single storey building sited to the south of the house on the east side of the front court which resulted in opening the view to the stables.

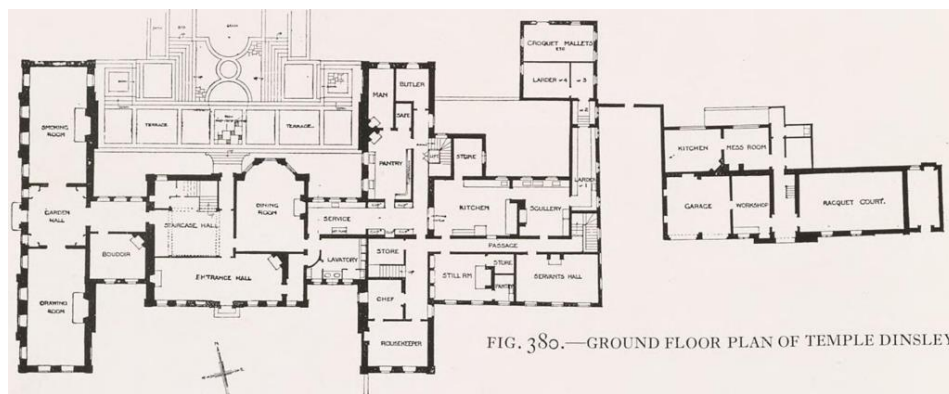


FIG. 380.—GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF TEMPLE DINSLY

Fig. xxiv 1908 Ground Floor Plan. Lawrence Weaver, Houses and gardens by Sir Edwin Lutyens, R.A. 1925.

3.35

The list description of Temple Dinsley notes that the contractors for Lutyens work in 1908-9 were Norman and Burt of Burgess Hill, Sussex. The house is described in chapter XII of Sir Lawrence Weaver's book of 1921, *On a site of the Knights Templars—Quadrupling an Old House—Creating Sunny Aspects—Corner Aviaries—Lead Garden Ornaments—A Racquet Court.*¹⁵



Fig. xxv The workforce at the north elevation 1908

¹⁴ Weaver op.cit. p.568

¹⁵ Weaver *Lutyens Houses and Gardens* ch.XII pp.138-144

3.36

Weaver continues

The only part of merit, but it has great charm, was the middle block with a trio of windows on either side of the central doorway. The interior of this has been remodelled. A good many years ago there was added to the dining-room an unattractive bay window, which has been retained, and wisely, for it plays its part in the pleasant-ness of the room within. True, it destroys the balance of the north front, but some owner of last century tried to retrieve it in very amusing fashion by trimming yew trees on the other side of the garden door to match the bay window in shape exactly. This rather engaging conceit has also been retained.

3.37

The first phase of Lutyens work (1901-1908) comprised internal remodelling of the old house and the provision of symmetrical wings to replace those of the 19th century. On the west side, his two storey wing provided grand rooms on the ground floor with bedrooms above, looking out to the gardens created in collaboration with Gertrude Jekyll which contained garden buildings, including a pavilion with pergolas, terraces and a belvedere on the north lawns. On the east side, he provided a service wing.

3.38

He returned in 1911 to re-order this service wing and provide additional accommodation, whilst also adjusting some of his earlier work, for example within the entrance hall.

3.39

The Victoria & Albert Museum holds in its archive Lutyens drawings of 1910. These show a garage building and a petrol store disguised as a dovecote. Weaver also provides photographs in both his Country Life article of 1911 and his later book *Houses and Gardens by E.L. Lutyens* published in 1913. The drawings and photographs are reproduced below.

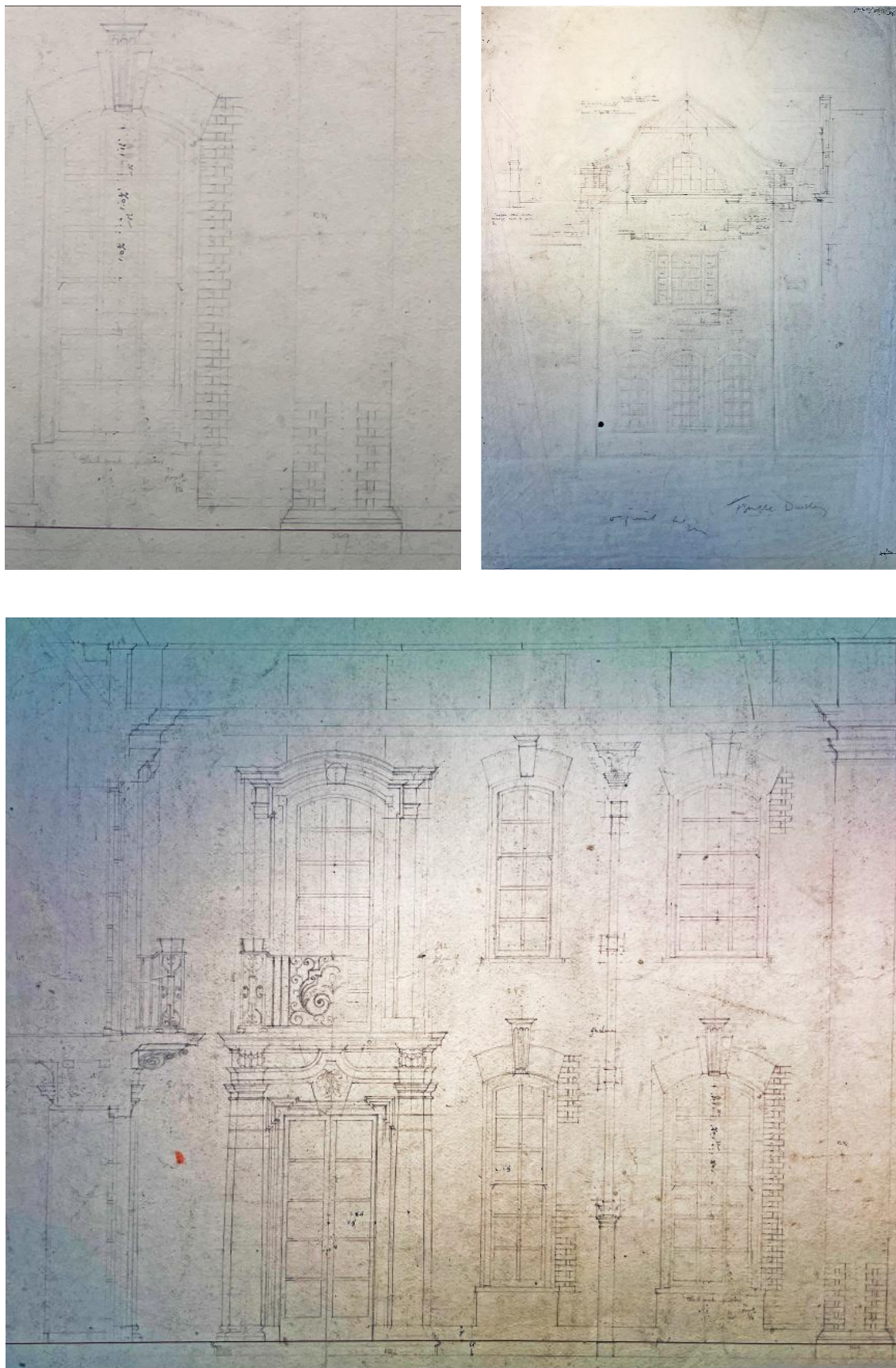


Fig. xxvi Details by Lutyens of the West Wing and Link (1910).
Victoria and Albert Museum Archive.



Fig. xxvii Entrance Gateway to the front courtyard (Weaver 1911)



Fig xxviii The Entrance Front (Weaver 1913)



Fig. xxix South Front Old House (left), East Link, East Wing (centre) and Coach House Stable (right). This predates the additional window for the reconfiguration of the Housekeeper area. (Weaver 1913)



Fig xxx South Elevation detail. (Weaver 1913)



Fig. xxxi West Elevation. Country Life photograph in Benedict Fenwick photographic collection



Fig. xxxii Gateway and steps alongside East Wing gable (1911)



Fig. xxxiii The Kitchen Wing and the Lower Pool (1913)



Fig. xxxiv North elevation on completion (1911)



Fig. xxxv Circa 1915 postcard of the North Elevation later showing the garden planting and additional ivy. Reproduced by Philip Wray 'the History of Preston in Hertfordshire website www.prestonherts.co.uk.

3.40

Weaver also supplies a number of photographs of the interior. The main hall was originally designed by Lutyens as a single space, but then created a smaller main entrance hall with a doorway leading into the staircase hall. The entrance hall was panelled and provided with a corner fireplace.



Fig. xxxvi 1911 Main Entrance Hall. Lutyens' entrance looking towards the corner fireplace (centre now lost). Front door (right) and doorway to the Staircase Hall (left). Country Life Collection.

3.41

The main staircase hall was altered by Lutyens, adding an additional flight to the bottom of the and altering the former arched door opening leading into the link to the west wing. The panelling was all painted and a new stone floor provided. Lutyens designed many of the fittings, including ceiling lights, door knobs and locks and radiator grilles.



Fig. xxxvii 1911 Main Stair Hall.



Fig. xxxviii The Main stair prior to Lutyens' changes. 1894-1898 pen and ink drawings by E H New. Right: c1901-1908 Stair Hall photograph. Benedict Fenwick photographic collection.



Fig. xxxix Link from the hall looking to the west wing

3.42

A wide passage, with a small 'boudoir' room on its south side, passed from the west side of the staircase hall, through Lutyens connecting building to his garden rooms. The boudoir matched the east reception room with panelling and corner fireplace. The garden rooms, extolled by Weaver, are a masterpiece comprised three separate but connected spaces all giving views across the rose garden on the west side of the house.

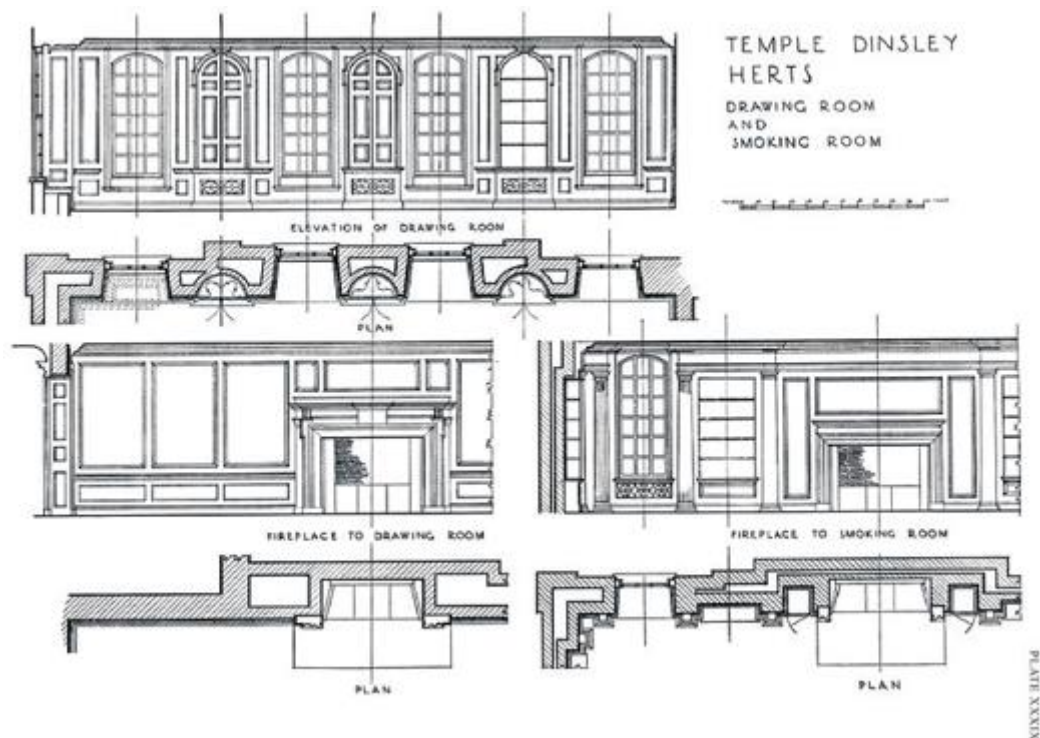


Fig. xl Drawing Room and Smoking Room drawings by E Lutyens. V&A Collection

3.43

Weaver describes the suite as follows

We go by the door that appears in the staircase picture through a passage which is illustrated below it into the garden hall. This white and enticingly cool-looking apartment is turned into an octagon on two sides by cornet cupboards, one of which is old and painted with cherubs, now much darkened by age. The outer corners are windowed and fitted as aviaries, a pretty thought. But birds and their houses are popular at Temple Dinsley, as is clear from the several beautiful old cages of the Chippendale period which are to be seen there. Left and right of the garden hall are the drawing and smoking rooms. In the former is a fine mantelpiece of red and white marble and below big logs burn merrily, and, better still, without paying toll to the smoke fiend, who is apt to be busy with such big open hearths. Between the windows are glazed china cupboards with engaging wooden tracery, and the whole room takes on an air of breadth from the great simple white-painted panelling. Standing here and looking across the octagon hall into the smoking-room we note as a conspicuous feature the long range of hanging candelabra in clear glass lustre, which emphasise the vista. The smoking room is very interesting by reason of its unpainted panelling of pine, left clean and _ untouched from the tool and looking very fresh and pleasant. No little of the wall space is shelved and hospitable to books.

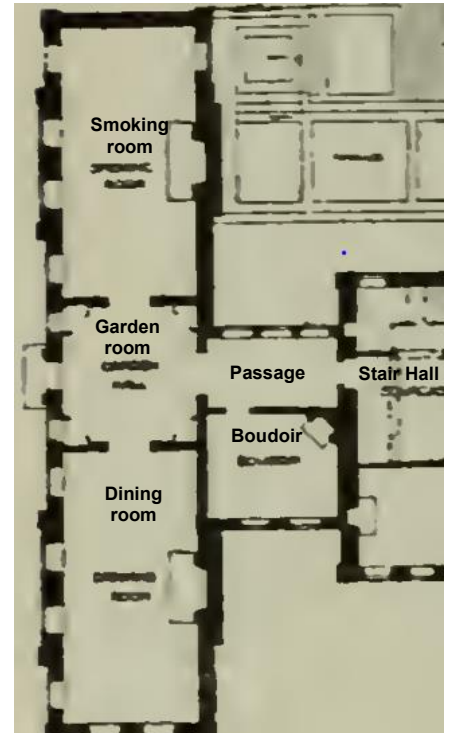


Fig. xli Smoking Room Fireplace (Country Life 1911)



Fig. xlii Smoking Room



Fig. xliii Smoking Room looking south towards the Drawing Room



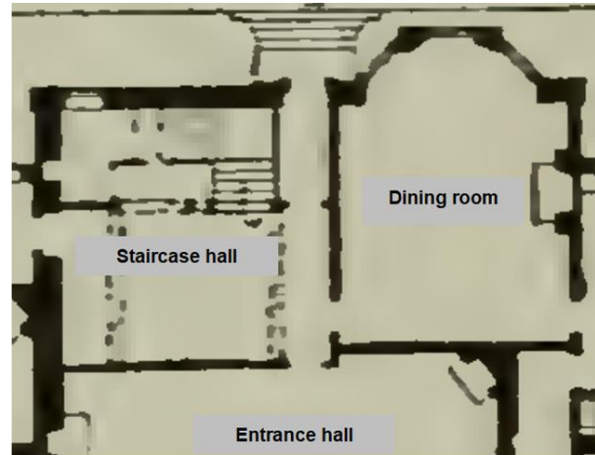
Fig. xlv Drawing Room fireplace detail. Weaver notes this is 'a fine mantel-piece of red and white marble. Country Life Collection



Fig. xlv Drawing Room display cabinet and vent detail. Country Life Collection.

3.44

The dining room was located to the east of the staircase hall. This formed part of the eighteenth century house and was extended by a bay window on its north side in the 1840s. Weaver notes that its southern end was cut off by a wooden partition which formed a passage-way from the staircase hall to the old kitchen offices¹.



3.45

Above the entrance and staircase hall were principal bedrooms with a passage on their north side linking the rooms above the garden hall, to the first floor rooms of the service wing, running along the main staircase landing. A separate service stair served the bedrooms.



Fig. xlvii Secondary stairs before the attic floor alterations 1911

3.46

The bedrooms above the hall survive largely intact with panelling and fireplaces, whilst above the garden rooms in the west wing, rooms have been compartmentalised and although fireplaces survive, they do not all serve the rooms intended. The altered rooms above the garden wing have windows facing west with views down the formal garden.



Fig. xlvii West wing first floor bedroom with bed designed by Lutyens (possibly at the north end of the wing)



Fig. xlviii Sitting Room. Possibly First Floor Old House SW corner Room above Entrance Hall 1911



Fig. xlix Drawing Room 2. Country Life Collection.



Fig. l Bathroom First Floor West Wing North end. Country Life Collection.

3.47

Weaver makes particular mention of bathroom fittings and in his 1921 book features a bath, sadly no longer in place.

Upstairs the bedrooms are planned on ample lines, and the treatment of one of the baths with white marble top and an ebony case of open fretwork, hung behind with a gay-coloured fabric, represents an unusual idea.¹⁶



Fig. li Bathroom likely First Floor West Wing (current Shower Room). 1913

3.48

Lutyens east wing replaced the 1840s service rooms with a new service block. It is this side of the house which has undergone most alteration. At the east side was an additional stair, serving additional bedroom accommodation, A linen cupboard and bell survive at first floor level. To the north of the stairs were a croquet mallet store and a larder.



¹⁶ Weaver 1921 op. cit. p.142

3.49

Lutyens next phase 1913-14 provided an extension for garaging and to link the main house to the stable range. He also constructed additional service buildings and garden and parkland structures, including the entrance gates.

3.50

The earlier stables, coach house and the coachman's residence and the clock tower were partially destroyed by fire in 1888 and then rebuilt. These were adapted and extended by Lutyens forming the east side of the kitchen yard and containing a garage and workshop and, as Weaver puts it, more interesting, a racquet court.

3.51

Lutyens returned to Temple Dinsley in 1913, after Weaver's visit for his Country Life article of 1911. He extended the garage block to link to the service wing. The two were previously only linked by a wall at the north-west corner of the stables which had a doorway into the rear yard.

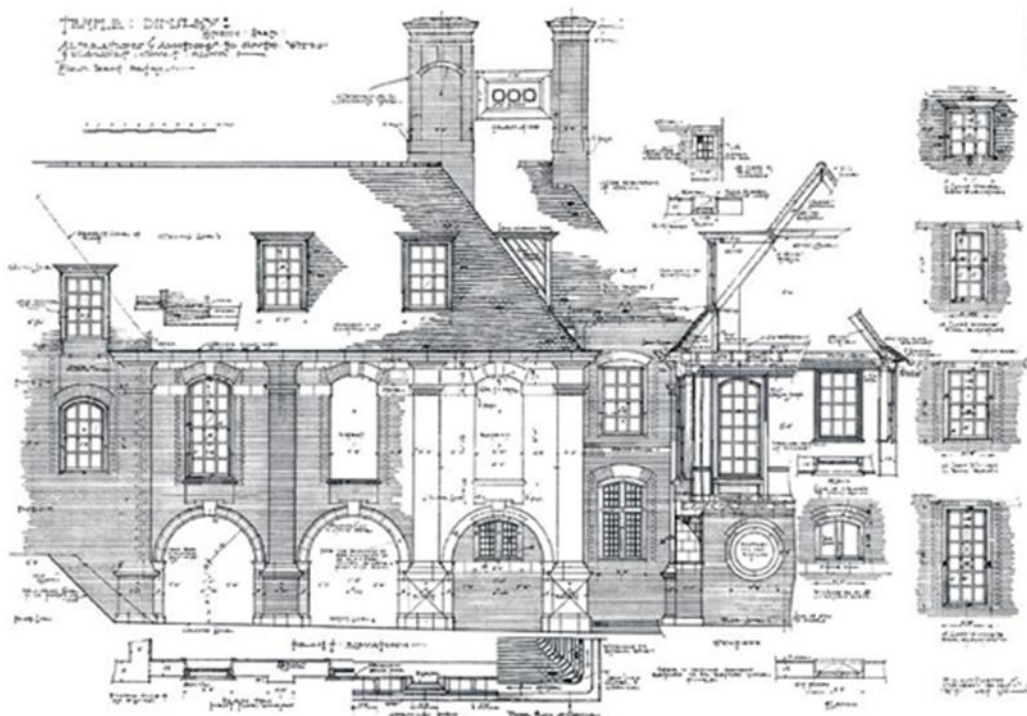


Fig. Iii Lutyens extension elevation drawing (V7A Collection)

3.52

The housekeeper's area with its 19th century fireplace, comprised three rooms for store, chef and housekeeper. This was altered to provide a single space

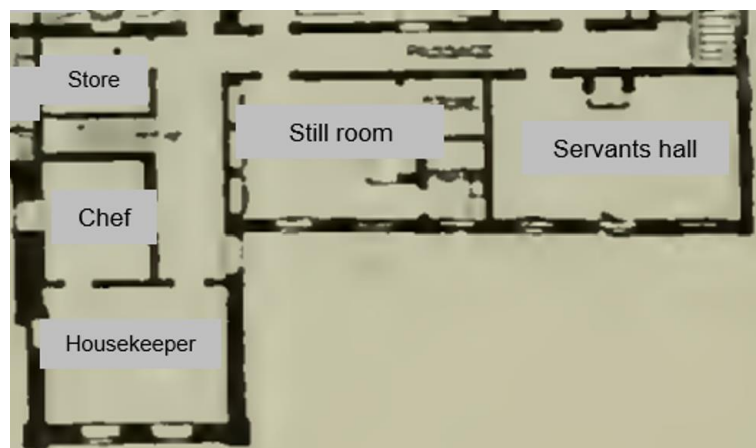




Fig. liii Fireplace within Housekeepers' area circa 1890
(The layout of this area was altered to remove partitions and open the room to a single space)

3.53

Around this time, the Fenwicks were having financial problems. Herbert Fenwick had acquired Temple Dinsley from Barrington-White in 1908 by means of a loan and further loans followed in 1913 and 1914 and then, in June 1916, by formal agreement, the full debt was transferred from Herbert to his wife Violet. Their relationship had become strained and culminated in a divorce in October 1917. During this time, Violet continued to live at Temple Dinsley. The mansion was then sold in 1918 and Lutyens had no more to do with it.

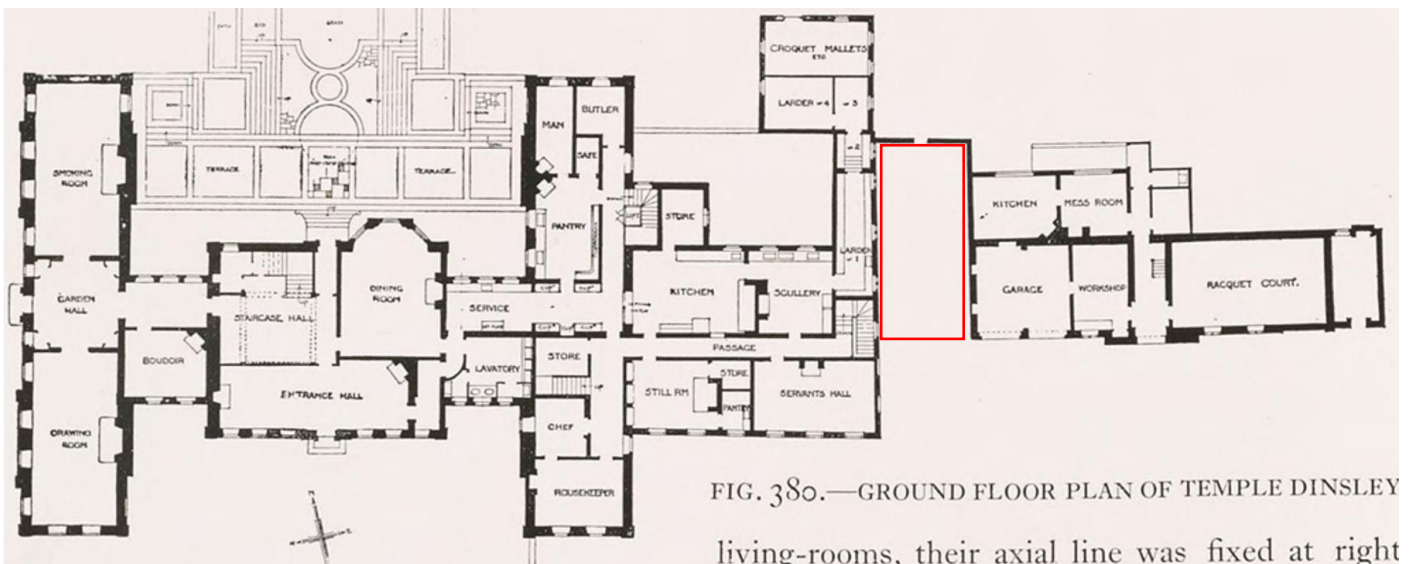


Fig. liv Ground Floor Plan prior to the extension linking house to stables (position marked red)
(Country Life 1911 p.272)

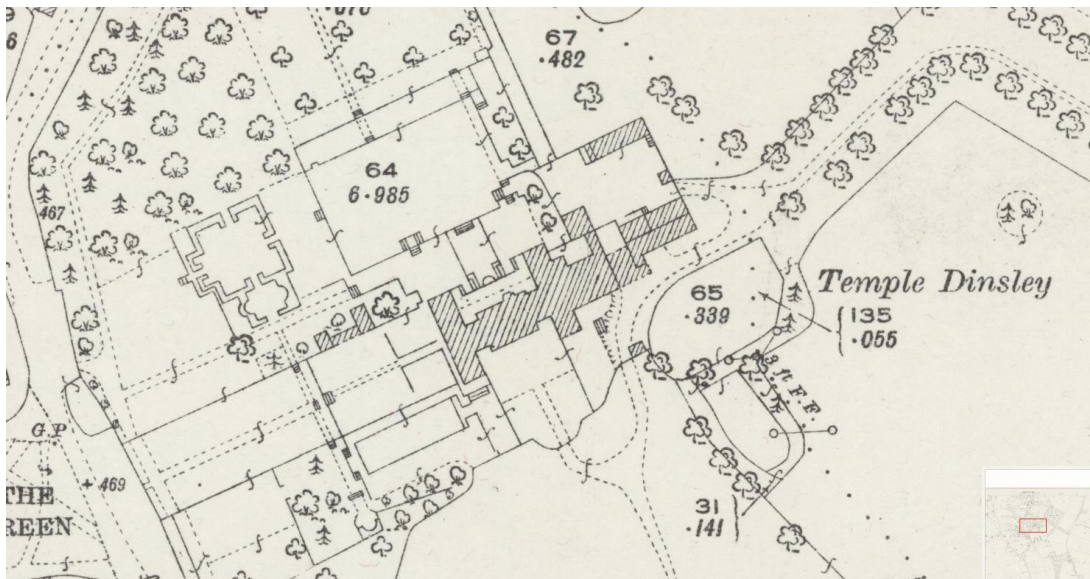
3.54

The estate was sold to Douglas Vickers who owned the Vickers engineering and armaments company. He retained business interests in Sheffield and his stays at Temple Dinsley were intermittent. The estate was put up for sale in 1927 and was eventually purchased by Almina, Countess of Carnarvon in 1929. A remarkable woman whose first husband was the Earl of Carnarvon of Tutankhamun fame, she seems to have spent little time at the house. She acquired a number of properties which were run as nursing homes and she removed two fireplaces from Temple Dinsley, placing them in her property on the Isle of Wight. She eventually sold Temple Dinsley in 1935¹⁷.



Fig. Iv Country Life postcards ca. 1920 showing pool & west terrace and north elevation

1935 – 2021 Princess Helena College



Map k 1922 Ordnance Survey

3.55

The Temple Dinsley estate was purchased by the Princess Helena College, a boarding school for girls. The college was founded in 1820 by Princess Augusta and Mrs Sophia Williams and was first known as The Adult Orphan Institution catering for daughters of officers who had served in the Napoleonic Wars and daughters of Anglican clergy. It was originally established in Mornington Crescent, London, before moving to Regent's Park and then Ealing. Queen Victoria and Prince

¹⁷ Wray op.cit.

Albert's third daughter, Princess Helena, became the school's President in 1874 and five years later, it changed its name to Princess Helena College for Young Ladies and High School for Girls. (It began welcoming boys from September 2019).

3.56

Royal patronage continued throughout its existence, the late Queen being its Patron and the Duchess of Gloucester its President. As numbers increased a new venue outside of London was sought and the seclusion of Temple Dinsley in 'quiet Hertfordshire' was selected and purchased in 1935.

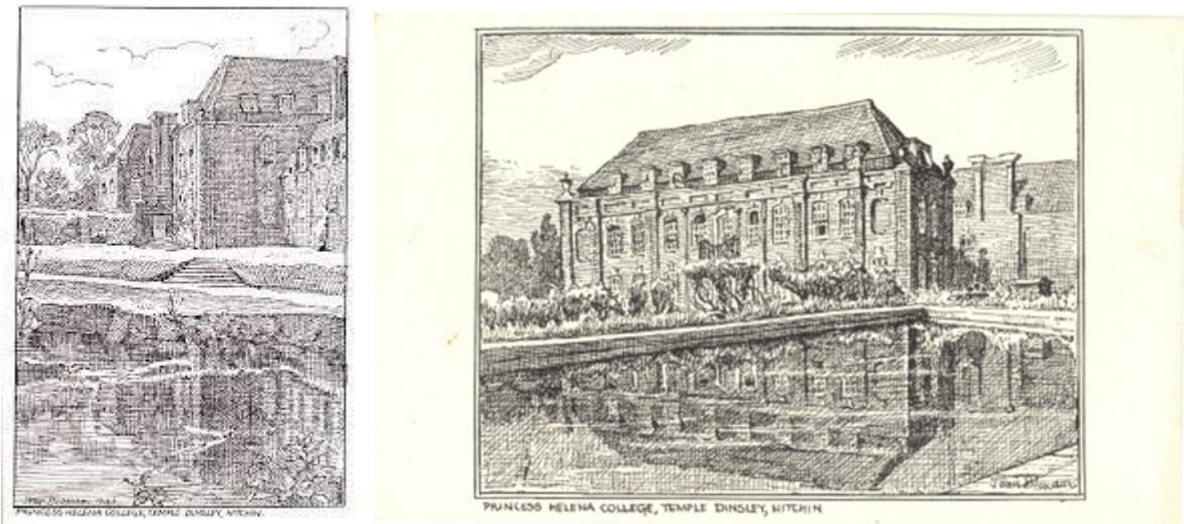


Fig. Ivi Pen and ink drawings for Princess Helena College
(Reproduced by Philip Wray 'the History of Preston in Hertfordshire website')

3.57

Philip Wray notes that when the new headmistress, Miss Vyvyan Prain, arrived, she had to contend with *a house of noise and dust; she had no hot water or electric light and eight short weeks to lick the house into shape. The upstairs was converted into dormitories, kitchen and dining rooms were installed and in the following year the west wing roof was cranked up to provide still more accommodation. An art studio and music wing followed – the total cost of purchase and renovation being £48,712.*¹⁸

3.58

The architect involved was Felix James. Lander FRIBA (1897-1960) who worked with Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin at their office (Parker and Unwin) in Hampstead Garden Suburb, Louis de Soissons in Welwyn Garden City and Charles Holden. In 1935 he was in partnership with Herbert Arthur Welch (1889-1953) as Welch and Lander. From 1953, he ran the practice with his son, Sean Felix Folke Lander (1930-2010). His work at Temple Dinsley was inspired by that of Lutyens and he reproduced many of the details. He raised the roof of the west garden wing to provide bedrooms in the attic lit by four-light dormer casements and remodelled and extended the service wing to provide kitchen and dining rooms. The white painting of Lutyens interior was removed and the panels taken back to bare wood before being stained, creating a 'baronial atmosphere'

¹⁸ Wray op.cit. *Princess Helena College at Temple Dinsley*

3.59

Shortly after the school moved in, the Second World War intervened. Temple Dinsley's cellars were whitewashed and used as bomb shelters and the gardeners roofed over a chalk pit in a nearby wood to be stocked with tinned food and christened, 'Hitler's Hall'. Parts of the house provided temporary accommodation for evacuees in the Art Studio and for airmen. In 1942, Temple Dinsley was almost requisitioned to serve as part of the war effort but an outbreak of measles prevented it.¹⁹



Fig. Ivii Wartime photograph
(Reproduced by Philip Wray 'the History of Preston in Hertfordshire website')

3.60

After the war, school life resumed and the college expanded. After Felix Lander died in 1960, his son Sean Lander (still practicing as Welch and Lander) was responsible for raising the roof of the east wing and for extensions to the Art Studio and kitchen wing, covering the former kitchen yard and projecting northwards. The extension was required to provide a large dining room and improved kitchen facilities which in turn have been upgraded to satisfy, amongst other things, hygiene regulations

3.61

The former garage block and attached walls were reconstructed as the Teaching Block and in the 1970s dormitories were inserted in the roof. In 1981 the Gymnasium (Sports Hall) was added via a link corridor at the rear and in 1990 a 3-storey residential block was attached to its east end. Sean Lander retired in c1990. In 2003, The Science Block was built, designed by TE Neville of Luton.

¹⁹ Wray op.cit.

3.62

Within this complex and also lit by an overhead lantern was the school hall. Traditionally furnished with a parquet floor and panelled walls, it retains a suitably sombre appearance and it still retains parts of the school honour boards, many sadly removed.

3.63

In the 1970s a music block extension was added to the north end of Lutyens west wing and this was in turn extended westwards with a single storey arts studio, formerly a science block, which attached to Lutyens garden loggia.

3.64

Whilst the design of the mid-20th century additions echoed Lutyens aesthetic, though clearly being modern, the arts block was less sympathetic. In 1988 proposals were made for additional accommodation at basement level of the arts block with glazing to the basement and to the basement of the West Wing extension.

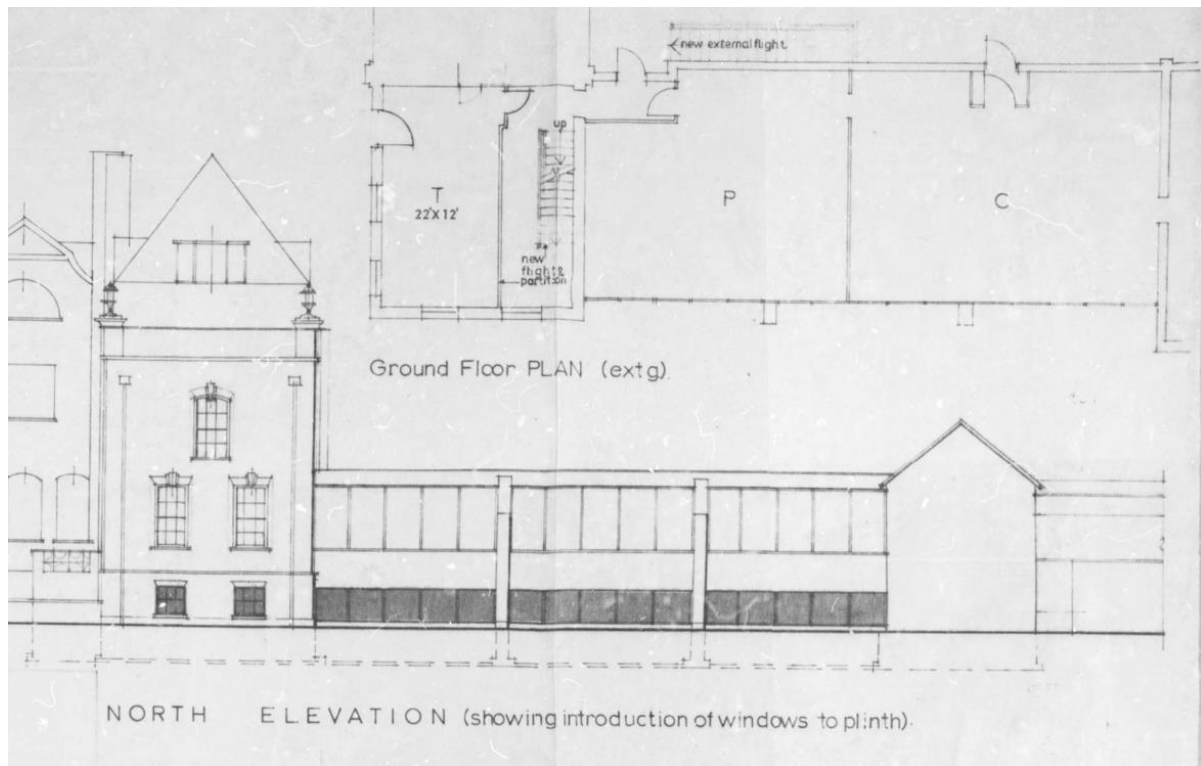


Fig. Ivii Planning application drawing for the basement extension to the Arts Block

3.64

In 1983-4, the Gosling Sports Hall was added, with the teaching block following in 1990-92 with a three storey accommodation block and then the science block in 2001. The sports hall contrasts with the other college buildings; it is a timber building of some style.

3.65

In 1988 the listing of Temple Dinsley was upgraded to II* and in 1994 bedrooms within the second floor of the service and west wings were refurbished and new showers, wash room and staff accommodation provided, together with central heating and rewiring. Further works took place in 1988 to satisfy fire regulations. In 2015 consent was granted for the installation of solar panels to the south roof slope of the sports hall.

3.66

Following persistent financial difficulties that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the College finally closed at the end of August 2021 and the property has remained vacant since then.

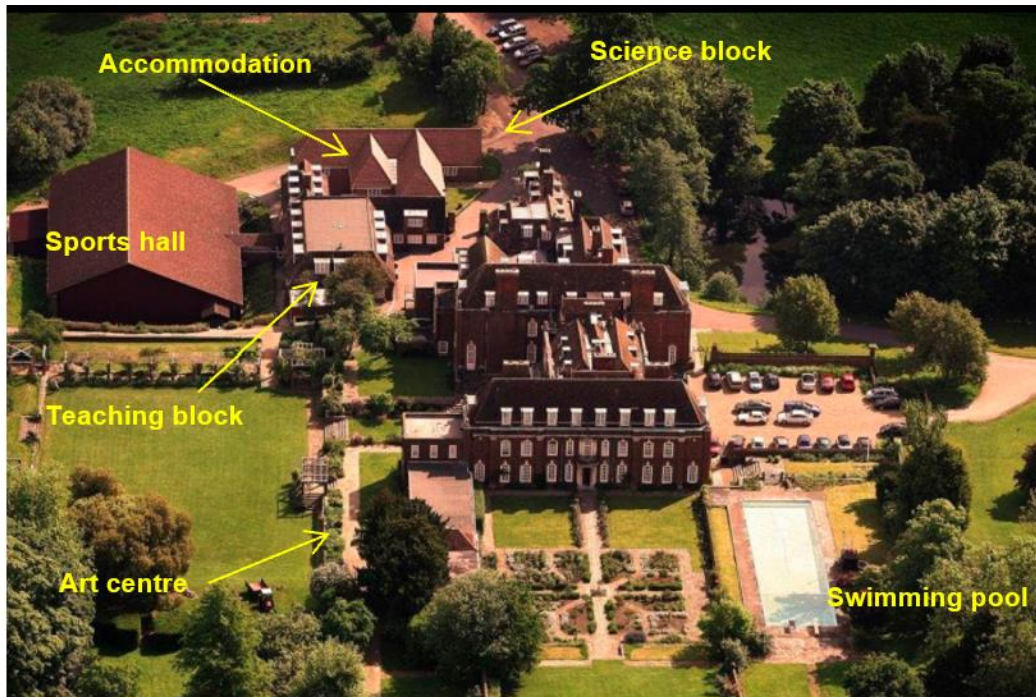


Fig. Iviii College buildings

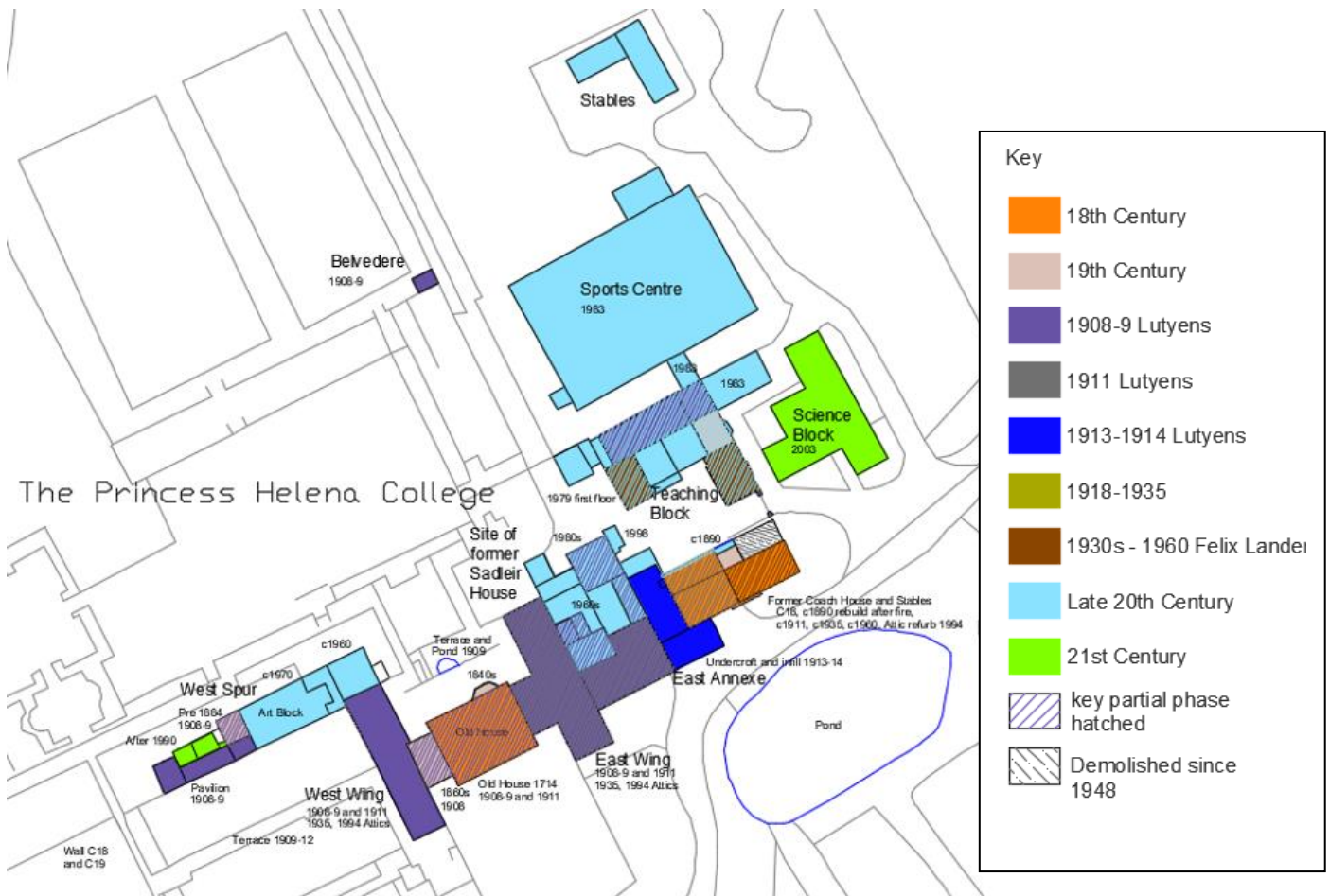


Fig. lix Phasing Plan of the main buildings at Temple Dinsley

Garden Buildings & Descriptions

3.67

The gardens are divided into a series of interconnected compartments largely related to the west and north fronts of the house, laid out by Lutyens with planting designs by Gertrude Jekyll, c 1909-10. The garden structures are listed grade II* with the house.

3.68

The front courtyard to the house is now a gravel parking area surrounded on the front by a curved low brick wall surmounted by railings and with wrought iron gates with an overthrow. On both east and west sides of the house are red brick walls with gates at their northern ends giving access on the west to gardens and on the east, down stone steps, to the stables. The east wall, with bricks in a Flemish garden wall bond, has burnt purple bricks within the mix. It is earlier than the west wall, probably of the eighteenth century. These walls contained a garden to Ithel's house of 1714. Sadleir's earlier house was a more formal affair as shown in the drawing of around 1700 (see fig. iv). Ithel's garden extended to the west and the house appears surrounded by lawns enclosed by walls with occasional groups of specimen trees with a parkland background (see fig. v).

3.69

Philip Wray notes that when the mansion was offered for leasing in 1832, the advertisement included the description, *the mansion (was) in an elevated and airy situation, delightfully sheltered by timber' and had 'large walled gardens.*²⁰

3.70

This late eighteenth century garden formed the basis for subsequent alterations and variations, retaining the overall form in the manner of a palimpsest. For much of the 19th century, Temple Dinsley was owned by the Darton family and tenanted. The late nineteenth century tenant, John Weeks was a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society and was responsible for much work to the garden at Temple Dinsley. He added an extension to the west side of the house with a verandah and installed greenhouses further to the west. Additional gardens were created to the north-west and rear of the house. The flavour of Weeks gardens can be seen in the map of 1884 below with the kitchen garden immediately west of the house.

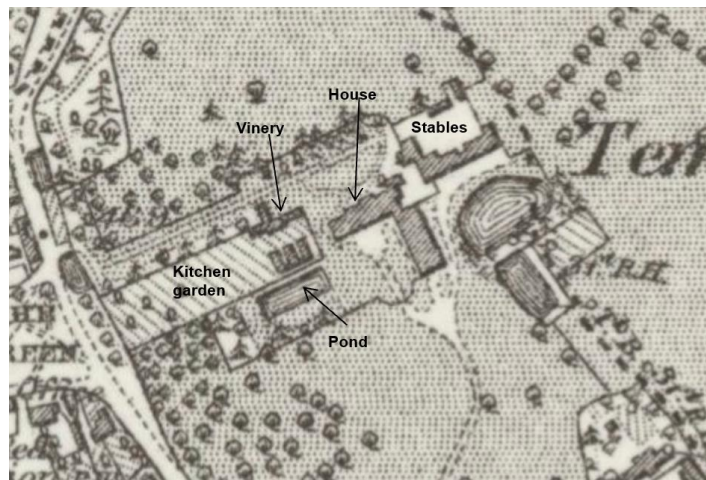


Fig. ix Extent of Mr Weeks gardens 1884

3.71

Further alterations took place in the late nineteenth century. Sketches by E H New, dated between 1894 and 1898, portray aspects of this new scheme which included the removal of the kitchen garden with its glasshouses (see figs. xii and xiii above). The changes to the garden between 1896 and 1908 post-date Mr Weeks's tenancy. By that time Temple Dinsley was owned by James Barrington-White who was probably responsible for the modifications/.

3.72

Benedict Fenwick collection of photographs, depicted on Philip Wray's website, show these changes. But the photograph below, pre-1890, shows the front courtyard garden, contrasting markedly with the 2023 photograph from a similar angle.

²⁰ Wray op.cit. *The Gardens of Temple Dinsley*



Fig. Ixi Contrasting photographs of the front court pre-1890 and 2023

3.73

The photographs below from Benedict Fenwick's collection reproduced from Philip Wray's website, pre-date the acquisition of Temple Dinsley by the Fenwicks and the works of Sir Edwin Lutyens.



Fig. Ixii North elevation circa 1860 with garden walls and fir trees



Fig. Ixiii Views of the Rose Garden circa 1901-1908

3.74

Lutyens was not just responsible for extending Temple Dinsley; he also laid out terracing and remodelled the gardens. The gardens were divided into a series of interconnected compartments, following the line of the pre-1909 form, but separated from the front courtyard by the west wall built by Lutyens.

3.75

Weaver describes the gardens in his account of the 'newly extended' house.

The garden terrace enclosed by the new wings is sunless, but that is the fault of the old builders, who placed the house so oddly on its site. We walk round, therefore, by the north-west corner, to seek the most gracious part of the garden, which stretches away from the new west front. This elevation, seen in part to the left of the photograph in Fig. 102, is gravely elegant. The general character of the old house is maintained, the keystones being based on the old work, but improved in their proportion. Facing it from the midst of a little paved rose garden is Father Time, an old leaden figure, silvery white and armed with scythe and hour-glass. Running westwards from the north corner is a pair of garden-houses divided by a pillared loggia, and the ground rises into a lawn flanked by raised terraces, which turn into paths under the trees and bring us to the upper pool. Fig. 102 shows the south-west corner clearly mirrored in it, and the graceful lead vases crowning the angles. Some of these are original ornaments of the house; others are faithful copies. One or two have been kept in the garden, which is fortunate, for their drums are gay with little classical scenes in clear relief. In a quiet house like this, where the effects are won by sheer Tightness of proportion, little incidents, like the dancing of garden gods on the side of a vase, give a sense of pleasure altogether out of proportion to their intrinsic merit.²¹

3.76

The list entry makes reference to the involvement of Gertrude Jekyll in the garden design and certainly the design of the formal pleasure gardens at Temple Dinsley have close similarities with other gardens laid out by Lutyens and Jekyll in collaboration. Yet Weaver makes no mention of her involvement at Temple Dinsley and no planting scheme survives. (I wonder whether the garden layout was almost formulaic and that it simply followed design and planting schemes used elsewhere). Nonetheless, the result is a fine garden layout in Arts & Crafts style.

3.77

The register of historic parks and gardens entry, dated the 11th June 1987, describes the gardens at the time the estate was occupied by the Princess Helena College. Since its closure, the gardens have had minimal maintenance and although still discernible, they have become overgrown and former statuary is no longer there.

²¹ Weaver 1921 op.cit. pp.142-3



Fig. Ixiv Examples of lost statuary from Benedict Fenwick's collection

3.78

The list entry reads as follows, firstly describing the Paved Rose Garden and then the Diamond & Pool Gardens.

A doorway at the centre of the west front opens out into the formal Paved Rose Garden. A stone-paved path, flanked by narrow borders and beyond this, panels of lawn, leads to a square parterre laid out with a geometric pattern of rose beds surrounded by further stone paving. The south side of the garden is bounded by a brick retaining wall, beyond and above which lay the Diamond Garden and Pool Garden. The north side is bounded by a brick wall into which is set a covered loggia, overlooking the centre of the rose beds, separating two garden houses. The loggia is supported on the south side by white pillars and flanked to west

and east by the garden houses: square, brick garden pavilions with pyramidal roofs, each with a door opening out into the loggia.

The west side of the Paved Rose Garden is bounded by a low, brick retaining wall with a flight of stone steps at the centre leading up to an open lawn enclosed by brick walls, the former Herbaceous Garden. In the early C20 this area contained broad herbaceous borders running west from the steps to the west wall along the north and south walls. The borders flanked a central path aligned on the door in the west front. The contours of the path are still visible (1999). The garden wall enclosing the former Herbaceous Garden is of C18 origin, and enclosed the former walled kitchen garden, the east wall of which stood close to the site of the west front of the adjacent cross wing of the house.



Fig. Ixv Paved Rose Garden with steps leading up to the Herbaceous Garden 2023

A second east to west axis runs parallel and adjacent, overlooking the Paved Rose Garden and Herbaceous Garden from the south. At the east end of this axial layout, the Diamond Garden is entered from the western forecourt gate, and also from the south-east corner of the Paved Rose Garden. From a stone path connecting these two entrances a broad flight of stone steps with tile risers leads south up to a raised lawn flanked by rose borders. This lawn overlooks the forecourt to the east, and the park to the south, being bounded on these two sides by brick retaining walls. From the top of the steps a stone path leads west between raised brick and stone rose beds to a further short flight of stone steps up to the Pool Garden. This is dominated by a swimming pool with a concrete surround set in lawn overlooking the Paved Rose Garden and loggia, below to the north. Formerly, as laid out by Lutyens, the body of water was an informal ornamental reflecting pool, and was enclosed by stone paths set in grass. At the west end of the Pool Garden a flight of steps set in a low, brick retaining wall leads up to the Spring Garden, laid to lawn with a stone path leading west into the Small Herbaceous Garden, now (1999) laid to lawn and partly enclosed by clipped hedges. Formerly a path led west across the Small Herbaceous Garden, flanked by herbaceous borders.



Fig. lxvi Pool & diamond Garden after Weaver 1911 and the Pool (College Swimming Pool) 2023



Fig. xlvii West terrace, rose garden and pavilions with linking loggia 1913 (Benedict Fenwick collection)



Fig. lxviii Pavilion (garden room) from the west (B. Fenwick collection)

3.79

The pair of pavilions with the interconnecting loggia survive in virtually their original 1908 form. A tall red brick wall, at pavilion eaves height, links the eastern pavilion to the north end of the garden wing and the wall runs along the back of the loggia. The linking wall is partly of later brickwork and forms the rear wall of the 1960s Art Block. The loggia roof is supported on the south side by two pairs of Doric stone columns. Each pavilion is entered by an arched door at each end of the loggia. The west pavilion has a door to the north garden, whilst the east pavilion has no rear door, but extends northwards to provide an additional room. The north side of the loggia wall has two weatherboarded sheds dating from the late 20th century. **See photos nos.**

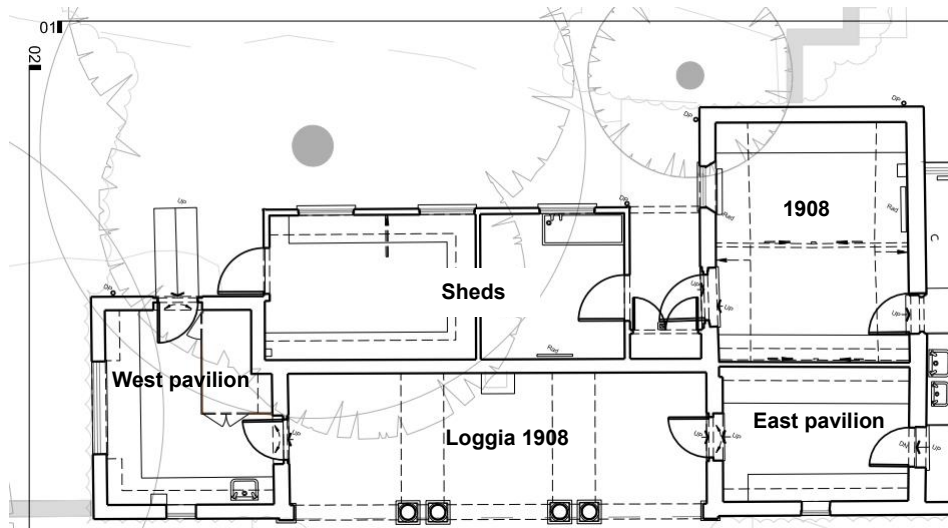


Fig. Ixix Loggia and pavilions floor plan

3.80

The following photographs from Benedict Fenwick's collection and reproduced by Philip Wray show steps linking sections of the garden, many of which survive.

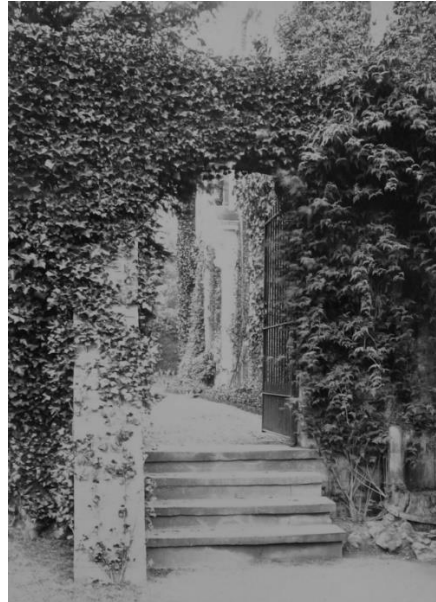


Fig. Ixx Garden steps 1913

3.81

A garden summerhouse and shelter also feature, though both are now lost.



Fig. Ixxi Summer house and shelter 1913

3.82

On the north side of the house, sandstone steps lead down to a sunken lawn (once used for tennis) which has a series of brick pergolas on its south and east sides; the latter on a terrace running to a north boundary containing wall, which is surmounted by a path running to a belvedere. The building comprises a single room with dado panelling and a commemoration board recording the replanting of the orchard with “the generous support of Old Girls & Friends of PHC”.



Fig. Ixxii Pergola Garden

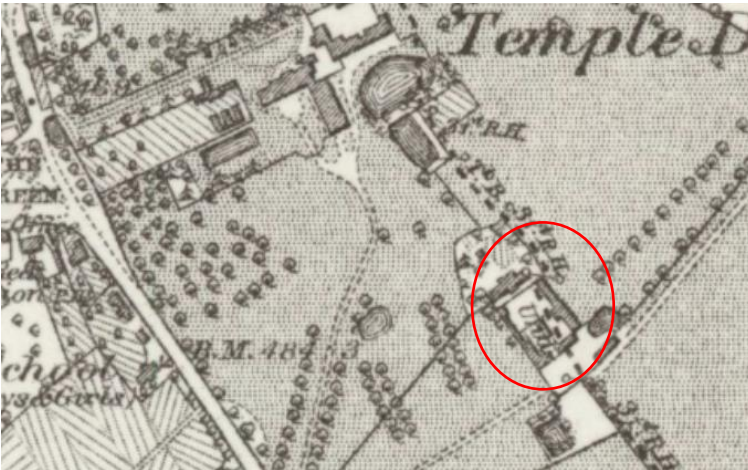
3.83

The pergolas survive though some columns have been repaired. **see photos nos.**

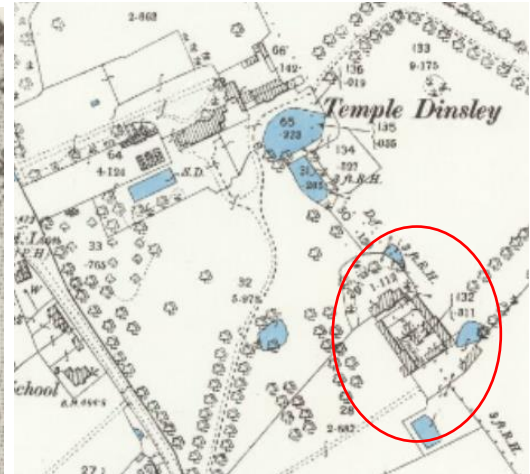
Park Buildings

3.84

Within the park are a number of buildings and structures, some of which are listed independently at grade II. A group are sited to the south of the main house, comprising a timber framed barn, a brick pump house and the grade II listed piggery. These are situated on the site of Temple Farm. The farm group is shown on nineteenth century maps though the site is older. The farmhouse was situated at the north side of the farm group. The 1898 map shows a series of ponds around the farm which are part of the spring line and provided farmers with a ready water supply.



Map I 1878 map showing the farmstead



Map m 1897 showing farm and ponds

3.85

Philip Wray notes that in 1873, the farmhouse was described as being 'comfortable' and built of brick and tile. It consisted of a hall, two sitting rooms, a scullery, a cellar, a dairy, five bedrooms and a store room. The farm complex was refashioned by Lutyens for the Fenwicks around 1909 and the photograph below is the only known image of Lutyens farmstead.



Fig. Ixxiii Farmstead circa 1909

3.86

The farm buildings were demolished before the 1924 OS map (below) was surveyed. This would place the demolition of the farm during the ownership of Temple Dinsley by Douglas Vickers who had acquired the estate in 1918 and sold it in 1927

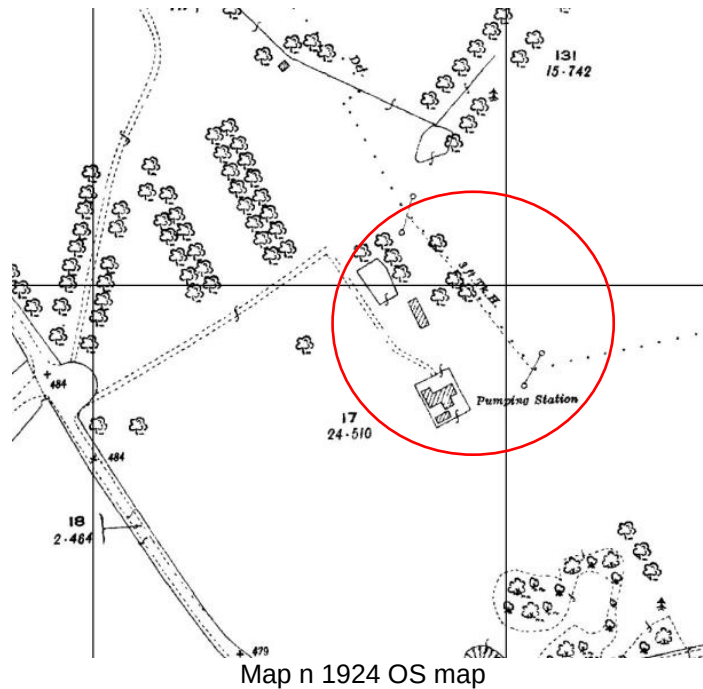


Fig. Ixxiv Surviving Park Buildings

Pumping Station (Pump House)

3.87

The 1924 map shows a pumping station and tank house at the southern end of the former farm complex. According to Philip Wray, it was still operating in 1945, but had been discontinued by 1975.



Fig. lxxv Pumping Station c.1913 with Tank House on the left

3.88

It comprises two separate buildings within a recently fenced area; built of red brick, laid in a Flemish bond, with plain tiled roofs. The larger building is divided into three parts, a larger rectangular, central section with separate 'wings' on both flanks. The northern flank has a small rectangular wing attached at its west end. This has a roof hipped to the north with a central doorway (without doors) on its north side, a window on its west side and an internal door which links to the central section. The central section is damaged. Its west elevation formerly had a four light casement window set in a recessed brick arch (see fig. lxxv above). Although the brick arch remains, the remainder has been demolished, leaving a large, crude opening. It has a window (boarded-up) on its east gable elevation and on the north side, leading into the field. The interior has been entirely stripped and retains whitewashed walls.

3.89

The southern wing is almost square in plan form and attached centrally to the south side of the central block. Complementing the north wing, it also has a hipped tile roof and has door openings (without doors, but enlarged beneath concrete lintels) on its east and west elevations, with window on its south side with four top hung lights each of six panes with the glass intact.

3.90

This building with its wings was the pumping station.

3.91

The separate building is the well house and contains a well beneath its timber floor and the remains of a pumping mechanism. It has a diamond-shaped air vent in its west gable and a single door at its east end, beneath a brick arch, leading out to the field. It has windows between brick pilaster buttresses on both of its flank walls. See photographs nos. 114-120

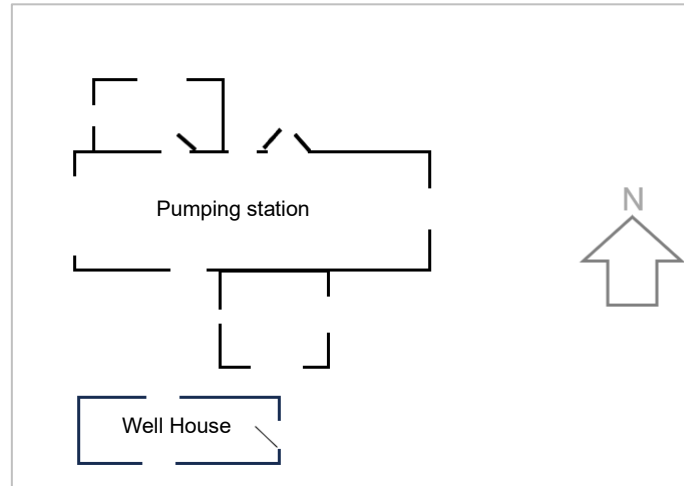


Fig. lxxvi Pump House diagrammatic floor plan

Tank House

3.92

North of the pumping station is a timber framed and weatherboard clad building with a hipped plain clay tiled roof. This is the tank house for the pumping station. The photograph below shows it to the side of the pumping station as a small weatherboarded building with a pyramidal roof. The photograph dates from around 1913 and the 1922 map seems to show a larger rectangular building with a hipped rather than pyramidal roof. The building was extended southwards between those dates. extended or replaced between those two dates.

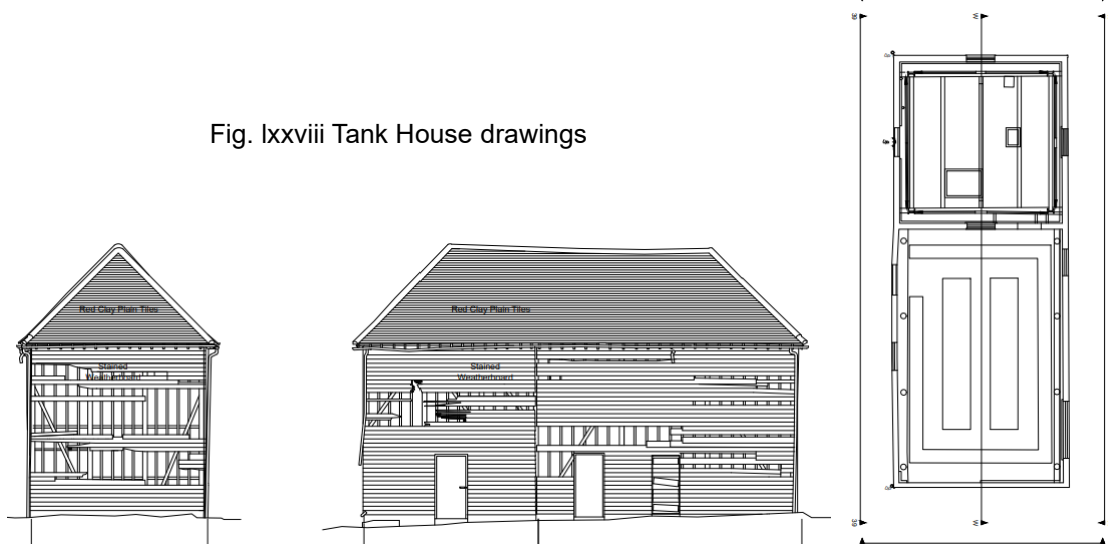


Fig. lxxvii Tank House 1913 and 2014

3.93

The present building approximately 10x6 metres matches the building shown on the 1924 map. The southern end of the building has an open doorway on its west side, with a second blocked doorway immediately south of it. It has internal wooden 'matchboard' clad walls and ceiling which is partially open to the loft space above. There are rows of cast iron pillar supports running along both its east and west walls. The second section to the north has no ceiling but had a metal storage tank directly above within the loft space. Unused for some years, its condition is deteriorating with slipped tiles and missing weatherboarding in places. Metal bracing has been inserted in the north section to support the structure. See photographs nos. 121-125

Fig. lxxviii Tank House drawings



The Piggery

3.94

The piggery is the only surviving farm building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for Henry and Violet Fenwick. It stands in splendid isolation, yet is clearly visible from the main drive across the parkland. It is grade II listed and described as follows:

Small farm building in the park. Probably c.1908 by E.L. Lutyens for H.G. Fenwick as part of the works at Temple Dinsley. Red brick in Flemish-bond with steep pyramidal handmade red tile roof. A small square single-storey building with stable door in middle of NW side. Half-round ridge tiles to hips. Central small window on SE side lower half blocked. Eaves project about 1ft in middle of NE side. An important landscape feature in view of the mansion from the park. Included for group value.

3.95

It is in a poor condition (see photographs nos.126-129).

The Ice House

3.96

The ice house is sited to the north of the piggery within a cluster of horse chestnut trees, one of which grows out of its cap. It is grade II listed and the description reads as follows:

Icehouse. C18. Red brick with some blue bricks. A deep large conical well with domed cap buried under an earth mound and approached by a low segmental vaulted narrow passage on NW about 4M long and about 1.5M below ground level. The passage is crushed inwards by tree roots and is unroofed at its outer end. Wooden crosspiece for former door halfway along passage.

3.97

Assuming the date given in the list description is correct, the ice house may have been built to serve 1714, Benedict Ithell's house of 1714, perhaps by Joseph Darton jnr. before 1812 at the time, he was acquiring property in the village of Preston. But as the architect Tim Buxbaum notes, at that time ice houses were still the province of the very wealthy and it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that nearly all country houses had them, especially those of the mercantile class. He notes that

*The ice house in the grounds of the mid-nineteenth century country house was typically a freestanding masonry structure, the roof vault covered either with earth or with a thatched roof.*²²

3.98

The majority were built between 1750 and 1875 and Buxbaum goes on to note that many were sited near to stables and close to fish ponds, often on the sloping bank of a stream, helping to solve the problem of drainage and water supply. The form of the ice house at Temple Dinsley is typical of many, comprising a passage, a chamber and a drain with a vaulted roof covered with earth. It would seem likely that it was built around 1840 when the house was being extended and 'improved' by Thomas Halsey.

3.99

Its condition is clearly parlous and it is a 'building at risk.' As noted in the Management Plan,

*As ice house structures are often used by bats, particularly hibernating bats, due to the stable, low temperatures they provide, the one on site has high potential to support roosting bats.*²³

The Lodge

3.100

A residential lodge house is situated to the east boundary of the park, on the north side of the college exit. It is brick built with a pitched tiled roof. No lodge is shown on the 1878 map, but a single lodge is shown in this position on the 1897 edition.

²² Buxbaum *Icehouses* p.7

²³ The Landscape Agency op. cit. p.170

3.101

The Lodge was built between these two dates and is shown on the photograph below, taken before Lutyens commenced work, c.1909.



The

Fig. lxxix Lodge c.1909 (left and 2023 (right)

Gates & Walls

3.102

Although possessing a single lodge, the estate has a number of gates and piers, not only in the immediate vicinity of the house where they form a part of the gardens and forecourt arrangement, but also on the perimeter of the park. The main approach enters off School Lane, with a gate set back off the road between two brick-built gate piers with stone dressings flanked by a brick park wall, a grade II listed and all designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.



Fig. lxxx Main entrance gates, walls and piers

3.103

The southern section of the wall leads south with a further gate and pair of piers, also by Lutyens and also grade II listed, in similar style to the main gateway but a more modest affair. Opening onto the south park this was the farm entrance to the former Temple Farm.

3.104

It now leads to the pumping station. A functional, galvanised five bar gate contrasts with the ornate brick gate piers and detracts from the quality and character of the gateway space.



Fig. lxxxi Gates to pumping station

3.105

The Walled Garden is located adjacent to the Dower House to the north of the estate. Described in the Management Plan, the area within the walled garden *is now overgrown with coniferous trees. The wall comprises a perimeter one brick thick wall varying in height from around 800mm to 1600mm. The wall steps at various points and includes a plain tile creasing. An opening is located to the south west end which includes an ornate iron gate. The wall is in poor condition to most of its length with long sections subject to full or partial collapse.*²⁴



Fig. lxxxii Walled garden

3.106

The park wall runs to each side of the Dower House entrance before being replaced by a modern fence as far as the village fish pond. From this point the original wall resumes back to the main entrance gates. The northern half of the park contains the Dower House (early eighteenth and early nineteenth century, listed grade II). It is a large, irregular, red-brick house of two storeys standing to the north of Temple Dinsley house on lower ground. It has not been considered in this initial heritage appraisal

²⁴ The Landscape Agency op.cit. p.147

'Maintenance Building within Summerhouse Wood

3.107

A wooden, single story maintenance building has been located within the Summerhouse Planation, which is a twentieth century planted wood. This modern building is extremely well screened from view.



Fig. lxxxiii Entrance to Summerhouse Plantation (arrowed left) Maintenance Building (right)

Description of the Main Buildings

4.1

For ease of reference the main buildings of the former Princess Helena College comprise the Old House, the West Wing, the East Wing, East Annexe (former Stable Coach House) and West Spur (Art Block and the Pavilion). The Teaching Block is within a former outbuilding.



4.2

The south elevation contains the central Old House dating from 1714, with Lutyens wings to the west and east, connected to the 18th century building by recessed blocks; the wester link containing in part remnants of the extension added around 1880 for John Weeks. The West Wing formed part of Lutyens initial phase of 1908-9, later heightened around 1935 by Felix Lander. The East Wing replaced the Halseys' earlier service wing of around 1840 and was extended by Lutyens in two phases, and the original Lutyens East Wing was heightened in the late 20th century by Sean Lander. (See photos 1-6)

4.3

The East Annexe and undercroft were added by Lutyens in 1911-13 and finally linked onto the coach house stables range which had been rebuilt after the fire of 1888. (See photo 7). Differences in the brickwork of the former stables shows earlier masonry which survived the fire and was retained during the rebuild. (See photo 8)

4.4

The front elevation presents the 18th century house with the extensions by Lutyens and the Landers. The rear elevation is more complicated. The rear of the former stables has been much altered, notably during the late 20th century. Further to the west, the rear of the East Annexe has been modified as the College built over the former kitchen yard, extending in the 1960s and again in the 1980s. (see photos 9-11)

4.5

The north elevation of the Old House, shows its form altered by the insertion of Halsey's bay window into the dining room. The walls, stone steps and pool are all part of Lutyens design for the north garden, as shown by Weaver 1913. (See photo 13).

4.6

The rear elevation further to the west shows Felix Lander's extension to Lutyens West Wing and the addition of the Art Block around 1970 (see photo 14). The west elevation to the Rose Garden, shows Felix Lander's heightened roof with dormer windows (see photo 15)

Interior: Old House

4.7

The entrance hall presumably, prior to Lutyens intervention, provided two reception rooms either side of the front door. The western reception room had three windows to the south and a fireplace; the eastern reception room had two south-facing windows and a corner fireplace (the third window would light the access into the service wing).

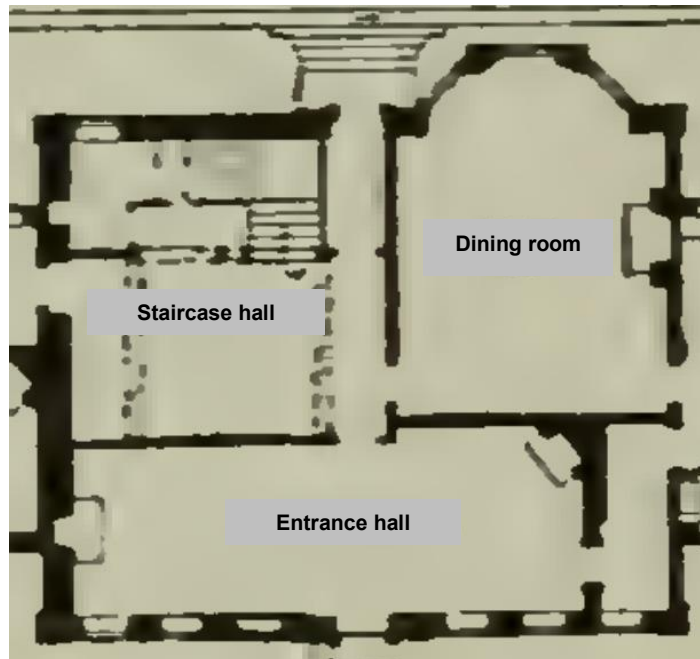


Fig. lxxxiv Extract from Lutyens drawing (see below)

4.8

Lutyens simply created a single entrance hall whilst maintaining separation from the staircase hall. The arrangement seems to have survived until later in the century (possibly as part of the adaptation of the building to provide for the boarding school). The dividing wall between entrance and staircase halls has been removed, without trace, whilst the wall creating the east reception room has been replaced in a slightly different position to incorporate the front door. (See photos 16-21)

4.9

The 'reinstated' east reception room, now forms a lobby for the main entrance, retains panelling (now dark stained) and the corner fireplace. The staining of the walls is not as Lutyens intended

nor is the wooden floor; Weaver notes, *The entrance hall is simply panelled in white, and the walls of the inner stone-paved hall are treated in like fashion.*²⁵ Door furniture and even radiator grilles were all designed by Lutyens and although many of the latter survive, some have been replaced with plywood copies.

4.10

Although Lutyens stone floor has been replaced with floorboards, a section of flooring survives in the corridor which leads off the passage next to the stairs and links to the back door and the terracing of the north garden (see photo 23).

4.11

The dining room was located to the east of this corridor. It formed part of the eighteenth century house and was extended by a bay window on its north side by the Halseys in the 1840s. Weaver notes that its southern end was cut off by a wooden partition which formed a passage-way from the staircase hall to the old kitchen offices²⁶. (See photos 24-25)

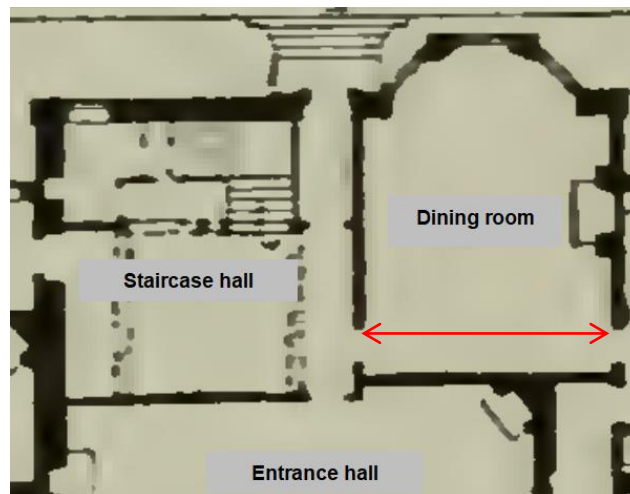


Fig. lxxxv Position of wooden partition

4.12

Above the entrance and staircase hall were principal bedrooms with a passage on their north side running westwards to the bedrooms above the West Wing and eastwards to the rooms above the service wing, running along the main staircase landing. There are two principal bedrooms facing south towards the front courtyard. These are linked with a smaller dressing room. There are two north facing bedrooms to the east of the stairs and these have views across the north terrace to the north lawn. All of the bedrooms retain Lutyens panelling, fireplaces, window seats and window shutters, but all have had fitting added by the boarding school, including light fittings and sink. (See photos 27-37)

4.13

The second floor attic rooms are accessed via secondary stairs and run along a corridor from the Old House to the East (service) Wing. The rooms have been adapted by the Princess Hellena College to provide kitchenettes and gyp rooms on the north side and small bedrooms on the south side; two of the latter within the Old House retain fireplaces. See photos 38-40)

²⁵ Weaver 1911 op. cit. p.570

²⁶ Weaver 1911 op.cit. p.568

Interior: West Wing

4.14

The corridor which leads off the Staircase Hall to the West Wing forms a part of Lutyens 1908-1909 extension. The opening from the hall was originally arched but was later altered by Lutyens to provide a narrower doorway and enable a more regular pattern of panelling on the fireplace side of the staircase hall.

4.15

The corridor runs along the north side of the link with a single room, 'the boudoir' on the south side. This retains its corner fireplace and panelling (see photo 41). The corridor then arrives at Lutyens fine garden hall with its corner cabinets forming an octagon. To the south is the drawing room and to the north, the smoking room. These rooms which retain their fireplaces and cupboards are marred notably by the replacement light fittings and are best described by Weaver (see paragraph 3.43 above and photos 42-50).

4.16

Lander's extension of around 1960 has sash windows on the north and east walls with a door on its west side leading into a stair case lobby (see photos 51-53). This gives access to the first floor bedrooms which run all the way southwards along the first floor of the West Wing. The door on the ground floor leads from the staircase lobby into the Arts Block of the 1970s, which retains its Arts Captains honours board (see photos 54-55).

4.14

The first floor of Lander's extension provides additional school rooms, one of which at the north end has been fitted with a 21st century kitchen (see photo 56). It links into a corridor which runs through the bedroom of Lutyens West Wing. This results in a fireplace on the east wall being located within the corridor and the insertion of a stair to the second floor added by Felix Lander around 1935, cuts across a room and its west window. Many of the rooms retain Lutyens panelling painted white (see photos 57-61).

4.15

The middle room on the west front retains its French window opening onto a small balcony overlooking the Rose Garden (see photo 62). The bedroom at the southern end of the West Wing has not been compartmentalised and retains some features, including panelling and a fireplace in its east wall, though shelving has been inserted during its use by the school (see photos 63-64).

4.16

A corridor leads off the end room to link to the stair landing of the Old House. The corridor runs along the north side of Lutyens link block with two rooms on the south side. These were originally a single room, but subdivided to create a bathroom, though a corner fireplace (sited above the fireplace in the ground floor boudoir) is still in place (see photos 65-66)

4.17

The second floor added by Felix Lander in 1935 provides additional school accommodation. The stair from the first floor reached a glazed lobby added later in the 20th century to reduced fire risks and a corridor runs the entire length with bedrooms and showers on either side, lit by dormer windows (see photos 67-68).

Interior: East Wing

4.18

Lutyens east wing replaced the 1840s service rooms with a new service block. It is this side of the house which has undergone most alteration. At the east side was the service stair and to the north of the stairs were a croquet mallet store and a larder.



Fig. lxxxvi Ground floor plan of Lutyens East (service) Wing

4.19

To the south of the service corridor is a 'lavatory' with cupboards and sink forming a cloakroom (see photos 69-70). Adjoining to the east is the housekeeper's room which is shown on the Lutyens ground floor plan as comprising a store and rooms for the chef and housekeeper. These are now amalgamated into a single room with a fireplace of around 1890., surrounded by linen fold panelling and clearly brought from elsewhere. It possesses a particularly fine door (see photos 71-72).

4.20

To the north of the East Wing, the butler's rooms have been combined into a single space and the pantry turned into an office (see photos 73-74).

4.21

Stairs in the East Wing serve the basement and changes in level along the former service corridor attach the East Wing to the East Annexe. This area was remodelled by the Princess Helena

College, so that the corridor is lined with trophy cabinets and a short flight of steps leads onwards to the school hall in a processional manner (see photos 75-79). The hall is lined with panelling with inserted honours boards, sadly with damaged lettering. It has a parquet floor and a stage at its north end. It is lit by specially designed light fittings and by a series of roof lanterns,

4.22

The first and second floors of the service wing are accessed by a secondary staircase. On the first floor it connects through the east link to the landing of the Old House and provides further access into the East Annexe. The link to the Old House has a small room and a lavatory on its south side and a former bedroom with a fireplace on its north side (see photo 80). The condor from the Old House through the link arrives at an arched opening with a linen cupboard on one side and a dinner bell within the arch on the south side. A second staircase leads both to the floors of the East Wing and East Annexe (see photos 81-82).

4.23

Both the north and south section of the East Wing have rooms. On the north side steps lead to a corridor with the rooms on the west side. These comprise a store, a bedroom with a corner fireplace and a cast iron grate and the north end room with views out to the north gardens (see photos 83-85).

4.24

The rooms on the south section of the wing are accessed by a flight of steps of the second staircase, which leads to two rooms on the east side; the first with a window looking east towards the stables and the second with a fireplace on its west wall (see photos 86-87).

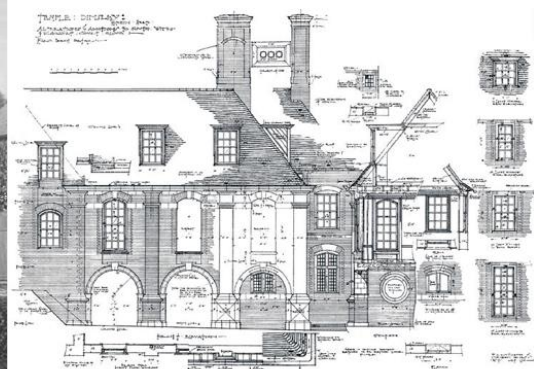
4.25

The rooms on the second floor of the east wing were provided when its roof was heightened by Sean Lander. The extension provides rooms either side of a central corridor which runs the length of the wing and terminates at both ends with larger rooms.

Interior: East Annexe (with Coach House and Stables)

4.26

Lutyens extended the service wing eastwards. The photograph and drawing below show the service wing as completed by Lutyens originally in 1911 and the drawing shows how it was extended to the east in 1913-14.



4.27

The East Annexe was further extended northwards by the Princess Helena College to provide improved kitchen and dining facilities during the late 20th century and attached to the school hall. Rooms within Lutyens extension and the coach house and stables range were adapted on all floors for teaching purposes, together with the school office and staff workroom and Lutyens coach house included the school tuck shop. Below the building, the large basement which was used during the Second World War, is still whitewashed and houses plant. First floor rooms to the rear of the coach house and stables retain fireplaces and have views to the rear outbuilding, which was converted into the Teaching Block. (See photos 83-89)

4.28

The school hall has two doors on its west wall which lead directly into the main dining room and kitchen areas built within a flat roofed extension. This area was partly adapted from Lutyens service rooms, but is largely a modern spaced lit by roof lanterns (see photos 90-92 & 94). A 'dumb waiter' survives complete with its hoist wheel (see photo 93)..

Teaching Block

4.29

The 1910 drawings by Lutyens (Victoria and Albert Museum) show a garage building and a petrol store disguised as a dovecote. These probably formed the basis of the Teaching Block. The present block rises to three floors and provides student and staff accommodation above classrooms. Taking advantage of the sloping ground, its three storey element is viewed within the context of the sports hall, whilst the south elevation facing the yard to the rear of the former stables seems a modest single storey building (see photos 95-101). The remains of the earlier building are revealed by differences in the brickwork, with the older bricks of darker red, set in a lime mortar, contrasting with the newer bright red brick, laid in a matching Flemish bond, but within cement mortar.

4.30

The Sports Centre was attached to the Teaching Block further down the slope to the north in 1983 (see photos 102-1023 and The Science Block was built to the east in 2003 (photo 104).

Discussion & Conclusion

5.1

Temple Dinsley is a grade II* listed building and is situated within a registered historic parkland, also grade II* listed. Its significance was succinctly summarised by Historic England in the pre-application advice given in March 2023:

Temple Dinsley is a multi-phased designed landscape focussed on a c1714 country house substantially remodelled and enlarged from 1908 by the renowned architect Edwin Lutyens alongside contemporary redevelopment of the formal gardens adjoining it to the west and north, potentially with input from Gertrude Jekyll (although no planting plans are known). This formal core is set within an early 18th century landscape park that was further embellished from the mid-18th century and as part of early 20th century investment by the estate's owners. From 1935, it became a private girls' school, Princess Helena College, which closed in 2021, resulting in the site's being put up for sale.

5.2

As a grade II*listed building, it is of more than special interest (only 5.8% of listed buildings are grade II*) and it is situated in a grade II* historic park which makes a vital contribution to the setting of Temple Dinsley. The park contains further grade II listed structures which are of high significance, notably the piggery designed by Lutyens, and a surprising survivor given the demolition of Temple Farm buildings.

5.3

The II* grading of Temple Dinsley owes much to the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens. The interior of the house was considerably remodelled and furnished by him and the resultant rooms which have withstood subsequent alteration or subdivision by the Princess Helena College are of particular significance. In particular, the ground and first floor rooms of the earlier eighteenth century house and the rooms on the ground floor of the west (garden) wing have remained unaltered since Lutyens time and any subdivision of these should be avoided.

5.4

Opportunities arise on the upper floor of the west wing where rooms have been subdivided at the expense of their originally intended plan form, leaving for example a fireplace stranded in a corridor. Alterations to such rooms could have a positive heritage benefit. The ground floor of the east (service) wing has been much altered and is now difficult to interpret the original function of individual spaces. Again, this offers opportunities for significant improvement to the benefit of the overall heritage asset.

5.5

The occupation and extension of Temple Dinsley by the Princess Helena College has had a variable impact and some extensions to the building are discordant, though others have been executed with great sympathy to Lutyens designs. It would be simplistic to suggest that these elements of the building have no significance. They are important in understanding the evolution of the country house through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This needs to be respected and features such as honours boards should be retained where they survive.

Archive Deposition

6.1

Copies of the Historic Building Record together with survey drawings and photographs will be deposited with the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record in accordance with their requirements.

References

Buxbaum, Tim	<i>Icehouses</i>	Shire Album 278 1972
Elders, Joseph	<i>Report on archaeological works undertaken by the Dinsley Archaeological Project on earthworks in the grounds of the Princess Helena College, August-October 2000</i>	Dinsley Archaeol. Project 2000
Hertfordshire County Council	<i>Historic Environment Record</i>	
Hertfordshire County Council	<i>Historic Environment Record</i>	
Historic England	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice</i>	2016
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Kelly & Co.	<i>Directory & Gazetteer of Hertfordshire</i>	1908 1912
Page, William (ed.)	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Hertford vol III (VCH)</i>	HMSO London 1912
Page, William (ed.)	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Hertford vol IV (VCH)</i>	HMSO London 1971
The Landscape Agency	<i>Princess Helena College at Temple Dinsley Parkland Management Plan</i>	Draft March 2014
Weaver, Lawrence	<i>Temple Dinsley near Hitchin Herts</i>	Country Life Vol. XXIX no.746 April 22nd 1911
Weaver, Sir Lawrence	<i>Lutyens Houses and Gardens</i>	Country Life London 1921
Wray, Philip	<i>The History of Preston in Hertfordshire website</i>	2007 et seq. https://www.prestonherts.co.uk/

Appendix 1: Photographs

Main Buildings: exterior



1. South elevation Old House central within front courtyard, recessed links to either side connecting to Lutyens west and east wings



2. Entrance gates with overthrow



3. Lutyens West Wing with garden wall hiding College swimming pool, formerly site of the fish pond



4. Lutyens East (Service) wing



5. West wing east elevation with chimney stack



6. Steps alongside East Wing. Wall to left has outbuilding attached as shown on 1884 map (map g) and fig. xi



7 East (service) wing with East Annexe extended by Lutyens 1911-13



8. Gable end of former stables showing differences in brickwork and rebuilding after 1888 fire



9 Rear of former stables with circular windows of the 1890s amid traces of whitewash behind a former yard wall, with a 20th century store to the right. There is rebuilding above the string course and dormers inserted as the building became used for additional accommodation



10. Rear of East Annexe



11. Late 20th century extensions



12. Rear elevation of Old House, with Lutyens east and west links and the Halseys' bay window to the dining room ca. 1840s. The wall pool and steps form part of Lutyens original north garden layout.



13. Rear elevation long view across the north lawn



14. Art Block and Sean Lander's extension to the left



15. West elevation from the Rose Garden, showing Felix Lander's heightened roof with dormer windows.

Old House Interior



16. Entrance Hall on left and main staircase hall looking south

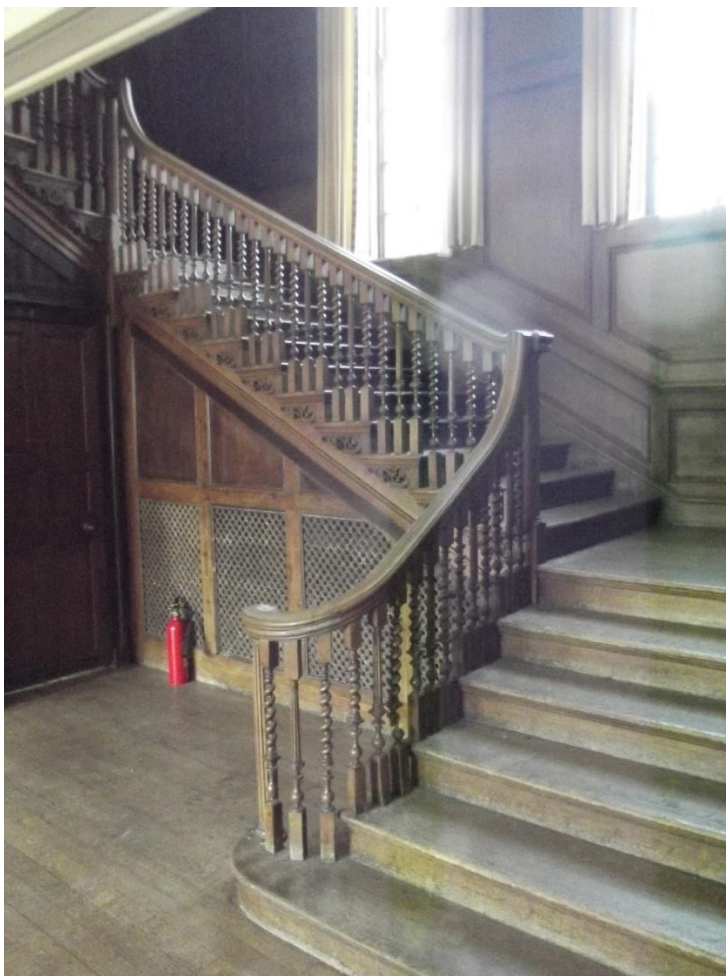


17. Staircase Hall looking west with fireplace



18. Staircase Hall looking north

With link to the West Wing on the left and to the dining room and service wing on the right



19. Staircase with modified lower section. (Compare with fig. xxxviii)



20. Entrance Hall looking east. Door on the left is a cupboard and on the right the door leads into a lavatory with modern sanitary ware



21. Entrance Hall looking west with front door



22. Staircase Hall looking east. The half glazed door is later and leads into the corridor connecting the Old House with Lutyens service wing and the dining room. A second door next to the stairs leads to a back door in the north wall.



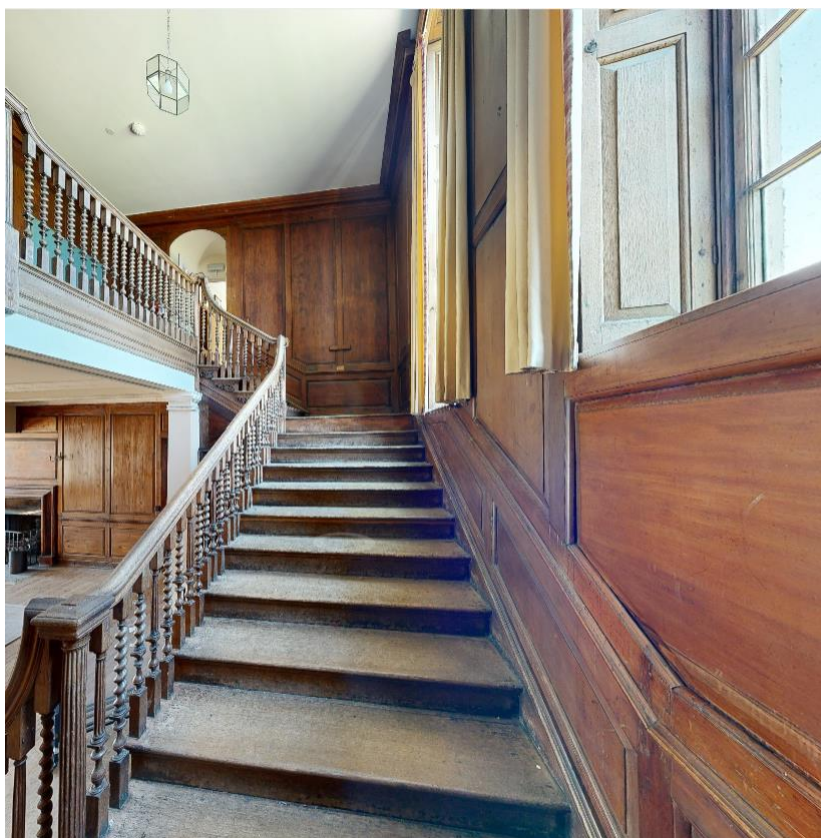
23. Corridor to back door with Lutyens stone floor



24. Dining Room looking north-east



25. Dining room looking south-east



26. Main stairs leading to the first floor of the Old House.



27. First floor landing



28. Corridor running west from the landing to rooms in the West Wing



29. East side of landing with door to rooms above the dining room



30. Main bedroom above staircase Hall, looking west, with views to front courtyard. Modern ceiling light fitting.



31. Main bedroom looking east with door leading into dressing room and into second main bedroom



32. Dressing room



33. Second main bedroom looking east. Door on the left leads onto the landing. Door to the right leads into a 20th century kitchenette



34. Corridor to east of the landing with small north bedroom, on the left



35. Main north bedroom with window seat and shutters and Lutyens panelling, but with 20th century sink



36. Second north bedroom with fireplace



37. Second north bedroom with arched window, seat and shutters and fireplace



38. Second floor corridor with bedrooms on the left and kitchenettes and gyp rooms on the right



39. Second floor north side



40. Second floor south side

West Wing Interior



41. The Boudoir on the south side of the link corridor between the staircase hall and the West Wing



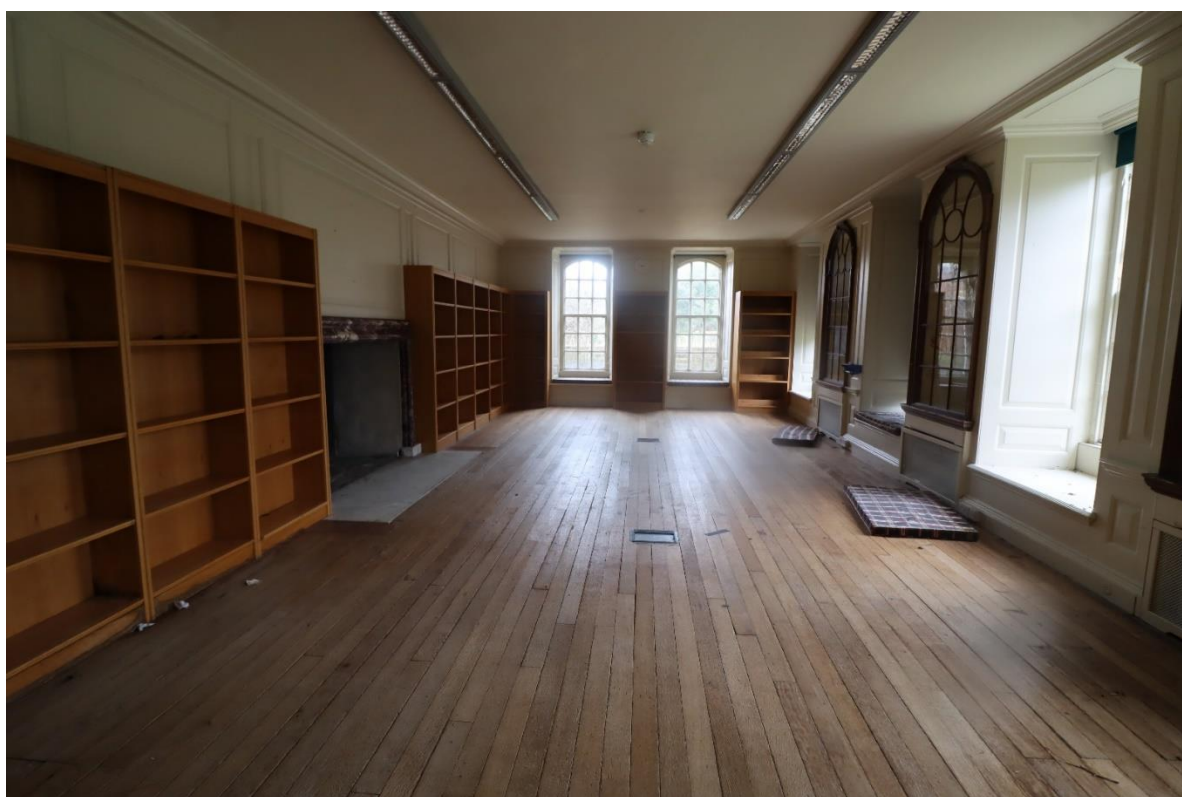
42 Garden Hall looking east



43. Garden Hall looking west



44. Garden Hall looking north into the Smoking Room



45. Drawing Room looking south



46 Drawing Room looking north



47. Drawing Room windows and cupboard on west wall



49. Smoking Room looking north with pair of doors in the end wall leading into Sean Lander's extension of c.1960



50. Smoking Room fireplace on east wall



51. 1960s extension on the north side of Lutyens West Wing looking east



1960s extension looking west



53. Stairs within the 1960s extension



54. Arts Block 1970s



55. Arts Captain Honours Board



56. 1960s extension first floor lockers



57. Former bedroom fireplace located in corridor



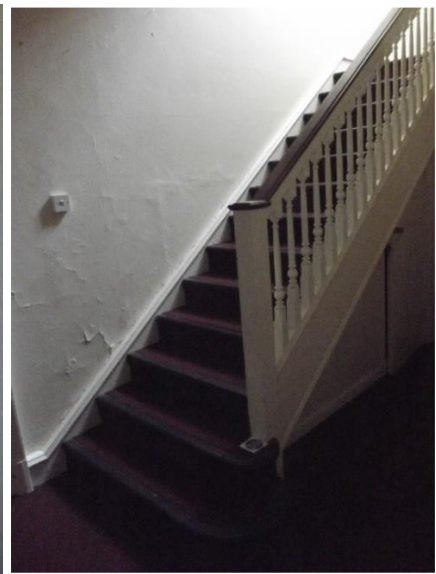
58. School rooms retaining Lutyens panelling



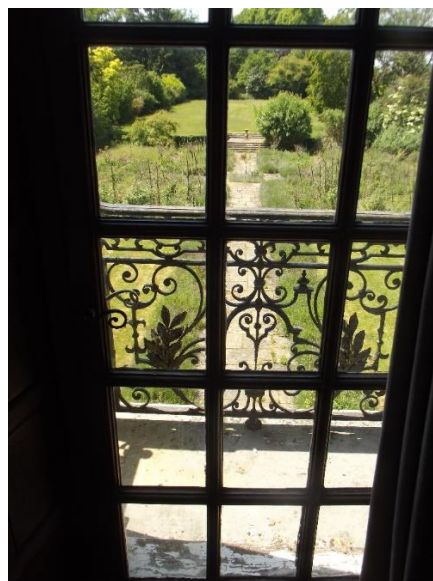
59. Wall cutting through former bedroom



60. New room formed by subdivision



61 Felix Lander's stair to second floor



62. Middle bedroom with window to balcony looking out to the Rose Garden



63 South end room of West Wing looking south



64. Fireplace in east wall



65. Inserted bathroom on first floor of link block



66. Fireplace above the boudoir



67 Second floor stair lobby



68. West Wing second floor south end room

East Wing



69. Ground floor cloakroom with panels below sinks



70. Cloakroom cupboards



71. Fireplace in housekeeper's room



72. Door to housekeeper's room



73. Butlers Room and store now forming a single room



74. Former pantry now an office



75. Corridor lined with school trophy cabinets



76. School Hall with honours boards within the panelling, a parquet floor and designed light fittings.



77. School Hall honours boards with damaged lettering



78. College coat of arms above door on the east side of the hall



79. Hall light fittings



80. Fireplace in north room of link to East Wing



81 The second staircase



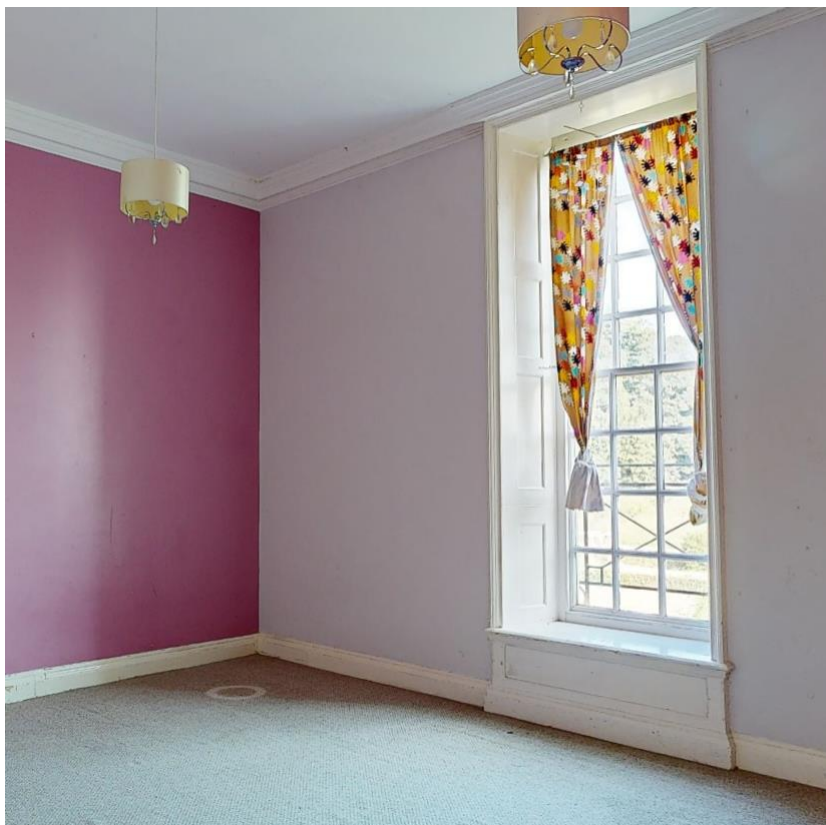
82. Dinner bell in arched opening looking west to the link block



83 Corridor on north of East Wing with rooms on the left



84. Central room with corner fireplace



85. North end bedroom of East Wing



81. East Wing south section room looking east



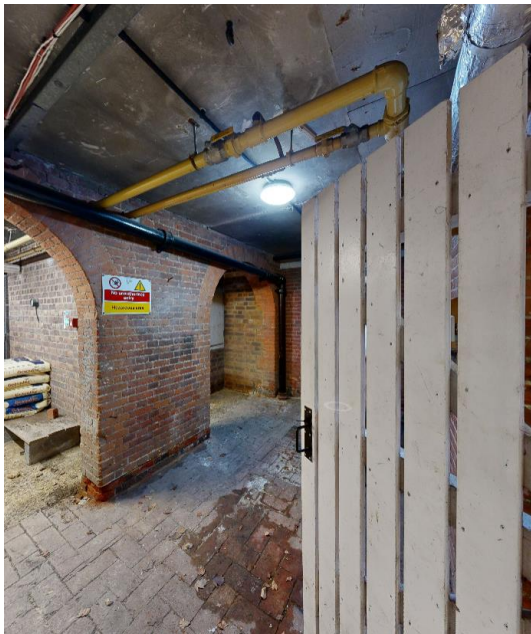
82. East wing end room, south section with fireplace on west wall.



83. Ground floor room in Lutyens annexe used for teaching purposes.



84. Lutyens Coach House used for school purpose including a tuck shop



85. Basement



86. First floor workshop above stables created from two rooms. Originally probably used by grooms



87. First floor fireplaces in coach house/stables on the north side



88. View from rear first floor rooms looking north to the outbuilding (now the Teaching Block)



89. Corridor running along the north side from the annexe towards the East Wing



90. School dining room with doors on right leading into the school hall



91. Dining room looking north



92. Preparation rooms



93. Dumb waiter



94. Rooftop view across the school dining room with roof lanterns.
The pair of taller lanterns to the rear light the school hall

The Teaching Block



95. Teaching Block viewed from the Stables



96. Teaching Block south-west side. The section on the left is of late 20th century date, whilst the projecting wing hides the 1918-35 building



97. Teaching block west side, with earlier building to the rear and heightened in 1979



98. Teaching Block from the north-east



99. Accommodation block 1983



100. Teaching Block extension



101. Contrasting brickwork



102. The Sports Centre



103 Sports Hall interior



104 Science Block

The Garden Pavilions and Loggia



105. Pavilions and loggia



106. Loggia looking to west pavilion



107. Loggia looking to east pavilion



108. South pavilion interior



109. Brickwork repair on south wall of west pavilion



110. Pergola garden with mix of round and square columns

Belvedere



111. The belvedere from the west



112. Belvedere from the south showing basement room



113. Belvedere interior with commemoration boards

Pump House



114. Pump House north elevation from Tank House, showing north wing on right and central section behind



115. Pump House west elevation



116. Pump House east elevation with well house to the left & south wing of central section to right



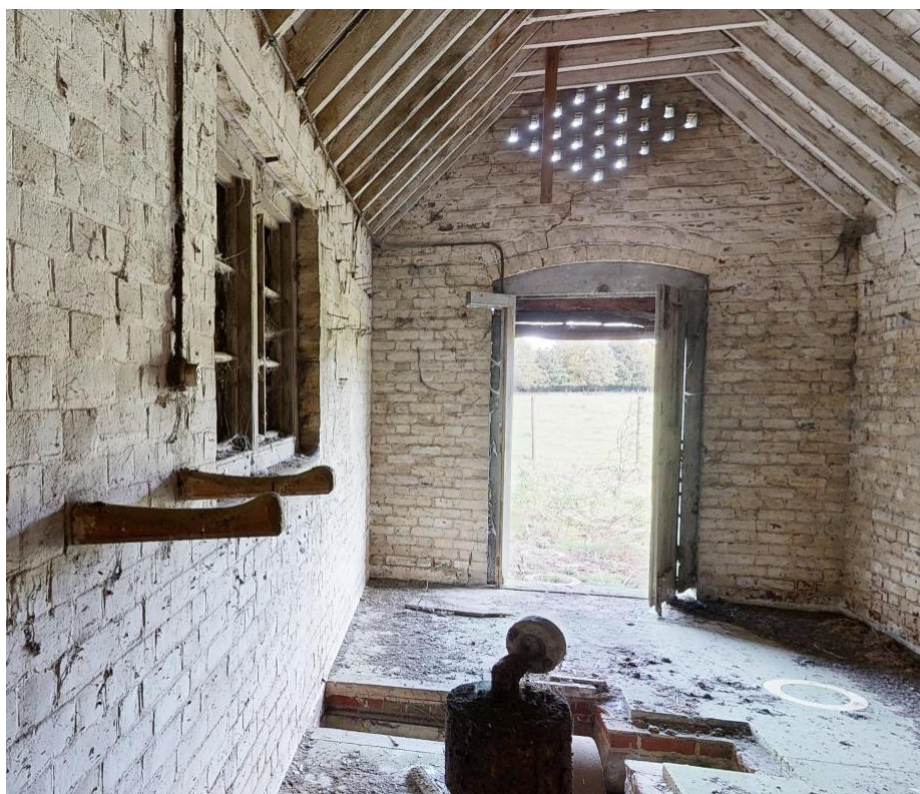
117. Pump House central section from the south



118. Central section interior



119. South wing interior



120. Well house interior

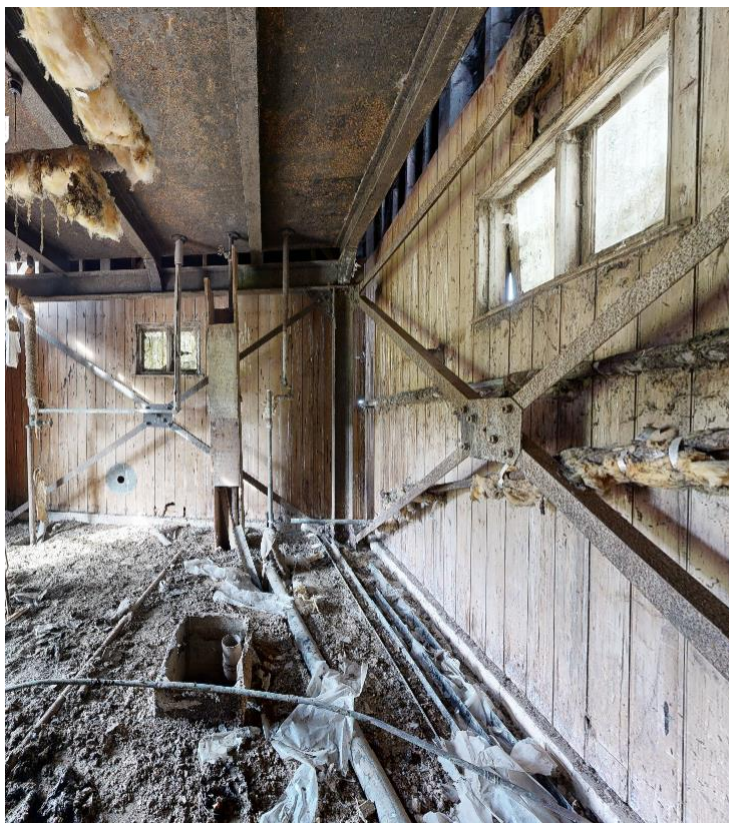
Tank House



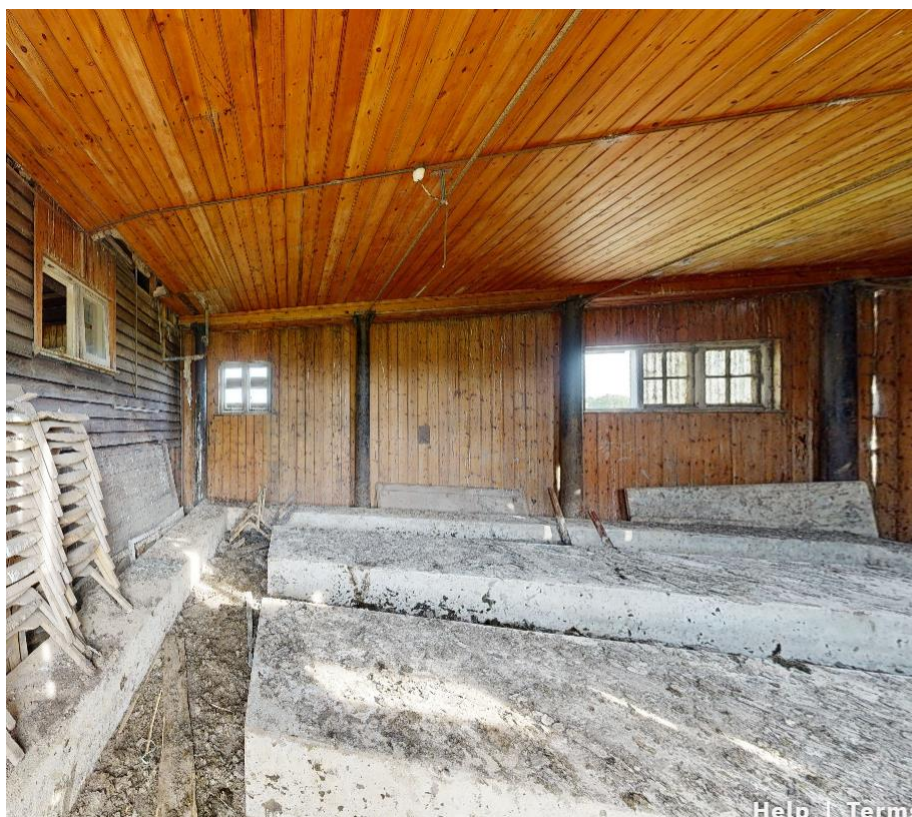
121. Tank House west elevation



122. Tank house north section looking west showing metal restraining braces



123. Tank House north section looking north



124. Tank house south section looking east



125. Tank House south section showing cast iron pillars and concrete floor supports for water tank

The Piggery



126. The Piggery in its park setting



127. The Piggery view from the west



128. The Piggery viewed through the door



129. The Piggery interior looking east

Appendix 2: Drawings

In view of the extensive nature of the buildings, a full set of drawings is appended separately.

Appendix 3: List Descriptions

Princess Helena College, Temple Dinsley, with terraces, steps, walls, railings, gates, pergolas, and garden buildings (formerly listed as Temple Dinsley)

List Entry Number: 1307766

Date first listed: 09-Jun-1952

Date of most recent amendment: 08-Feb-1988 (Upgraded to II*)

GV II*

Manor house, now Princess Helena College for girls, with terraces, steps, walls, railings, gates, pergolas, and garden buildings. '1714' on front rainwater heads, for Benedict Ithell of Chelsea who bought manor 1712, altered and enlarged 1908-9 for H.G. Fenwick ('1909' on rainwater heads) by E.L. Lutyens, and further extended to E by him for Fenwick 1911 (the Arches). Alterations internally and roofs of cross-wings jacked-up 4ft for headroom for dormitories in 1935 by Felix J. Lander for Princess Helena College. Subsequent alterations and extensions for college. Lutyens incorporated the C18 tall 2-storeys stable block to E of main house as a racquets court, subsequently altered to domestic accommodation. Gardens by Gertrude Jekyll 1909-12. Red brick with lighter red dressings, some stone dressings. Older house in Flemish-bond, Lutyens work in English-bond. Steep pitched old red tile roofs, 2 parallel half-hipped roofs over older parts, hipped roofs to Lutyens work. Wrought iron railings and gates to forecourt. York stone paving to terraces and steps and landings of garden staircases and pergolas. The early C18 central part is a double-pile, 2-storeys cellar and attics house facing S, with central-entrance, end-chimneys plan. Symmetrical, 7 windows wide, S front, with corner pilasters in header-bond with stone cap and urn above parapet level. Similar pilasters flank central door bay. 3 flat-topped dormers. Flush-box sash windows with 6/6 panes (sashes renewed by Lutyens replacing 2/2 panes Victorian sashes), with segmental heads below deep segmental light red gauged arches with stepped Portland stone keystones, the taller central stone fluted. Rainwater head near each end has a heraldic badge in the form of a rising bird with date '1714'. Stone moulded doorcase with entablature and segmental pediment renewed by Lutyens to former pattern (original similar doorcase on N front). Old 8-panelled door. N front similar with urns on corner pilaster, pilaster flanking 8-panel central door with segmental pedimented doorcase, and 7 upper windows. Those to right of centre have 2 very deep stair windows. Large red brick mid C18 canted bay to left of door with flat gauged arches to sash windows, and reserved canted sides. Lutyens added a long 2-storeys wing symmetrically on each side linked by a recessed 2-storeys and attic link with prominent Dutch gable to N and S. The form of the gables is a reference to similar gables to the crosswings of the C17 brick house formerly on this site shown in Drapentier's engraving of c.1700. The link has a large semi-circular window with keystone and triple-sash above 2 segmental tall sash windows, with 3 windows to ground floor on E link but 2 on W link. The height of the wing parapets range with that of the main house and they each have corner pilasters with stone caps and urns to S and N fronts, with 2 storeys and 2 windows wide. Steeper Lutyens hipped roofs have chamfered angles and have been jacked above parapet level, the new elevation tile hung, and dormers inserted over windows below c.1935. The site slopes steeply down to E and Lutyens built a kitchen wing at lower level there with 5 flat topped sash dormer windows. In 1911 he built a nursery extension to E of this with

stone arcaded ground floor, Tuscan stone columns within and 3 bays pilastered S elevation with very steep tile roof. This links to the tall 2-storeys C18 former stable block with plinth, plat-band and steep hipped roof adapted by Lutyens and altered to 3-storeys domestic accommodation since. Elaborate W elevation of W wing, 11 windows long, introduces a moulded stone cornice at eaves level, recesses in parapet over windows, and pilasters with stone bases and caps marking where a 2-windows section breaks forward one bay in from the corners. Recess with segmental base and head in place of 1st floor window in end bay. Stone central frontispiece with wrought iron balcony to pilastered and segmental French doors over moulded hood to glazed doors with bolection moulded stone surround. Narrow window on each side of door and above. Windows flush-box Sashes with 6/6 panes, segmental heads and segmental arches with fluted keystones, plain on 1st floor, stepped on ground floor. Wall extending to W links to twin garden houses linked by a Tuscan loggia, facing S. Wooden entablature has guttae to corona to emphasise the 2 rusticated pilasters to each hip-roofed single-storey garden house. 2 pairs of Portland stone Tuscan columns and engaged square stone pier at nearer corner of each house. Jekyll rose garden on W front and garden walls and revetment walls with flights of steps extend westward defining terraced gardens and an upper pool to SW of W wing. Flight of steps and landings alternately convex and concave on plan descends northwards into hedged garden at Nil. Upper terrace links wings on N front with pierced balustrade of brick rusticated dies and curved tile infill. Steps descend to right and left to second terrace level at which a circular stone pool with lead statue is half recessed in a hemicycle tiled vault central under the upper terrace, revetted terraces run northward at a higher level, from the upper terrace to a grand terrace along the N front which has 3 flights of steps descending to a sunken garden, the middle flight on axis of old house, the others on axes of wings having divided lower flights to W and superimposed pergolas of oak cambered beams and circular and square special brick piers. E pergola continues across E side of sunk garden and over the steps in the revetted terrace on the N side of the garden with another flight of steps further W on axis of old house. N terrace extends to E and has a gazebo corbelled out from its battered SE corner. This is a formal square single-storey pyramid roofed building with entrance by 3-panel fielded door on W flanked by narrow windows, flush box sash windows central on S and E with 6/6 panes. 3 stone steps to door. Panelled interior with fielded panelling all in plaster. Chequered brick and tile floor. Brick-walled forecourt to C18 house retained with its moulded brick capping to side-walls, corner piers, outswept iron railings on top of dwarf wall with scrolled standards at intervals, and double gates with scrolled standards, overthrow and cresting with repouse ornament. Lutyens linked side walls to ends of 2 new wings by dwarf walls, square piers with moulded stone cap and railings interrupted by a wrought iron gate with scrolled standards on top of dwarf wall and elaborate scrolled overthrow with repous6 ornament similar to C18 original. Set in wall of kitchen court is sandstone plaque brought from former premises of Princess Helena College in Ealing dated 1881.

Pine panelled interior to older house with wide cut string stair with carved tread ends and 3 balusters to each step, one fluted and 2 barley-sugar twisted. Heavy stock-lock to front door. Case-locks and 6-panel fielded doors. Lutyens interiors in W wing with central octagonal Garden Hall with C18 corner cupboard at NE with hemicycle top, shaped shelves and painted cove and keystone. Copy at SE. Former birdcages in outer angles. Fluted pilasters and dentilled entablature to panelled Smoking Room at N. Panelled Drawing Room at S with red marble bolection moulded fireplace and china cupboards between windows.

The 1714 house replaced the house of the Sadleir family, owners since the Dissolution. Before this the manor was the property of the Knights Templars C13-C14 and then of the Knights Hospitallers with a small religious community here. Benedict Ithell, Deputy Treasurer to Chelsea Hospital is said to have paid for the manor in 1712. The contractors for Lutyens work in 1908-9

were Norman and Burt of Burgess Hill, Sussex. (RCHM (1911)165: VCH (1912)10: Laurence Weaver Houses and Gardens by E L Lutyens Country Life, 1913, chapter 16: Pevsner (1977)359: Lutyens Exhib Cat (1981)123, 194).

Temple Dinsley: Registered Park & Garden

List Entry Number: 1000919

Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987

Grade II*

Details

A country house of early C18 origin, substantially enlarged by Edwin Lutyens 1908-11, at which time he and Gertrude Jekyll collaborated on the creation of the formal garden around the house. The house and garden are surrounded by C18 parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor house of Temple Dinsley was rebuilt by Benedict Ithell in 1714, following his purchase of the manor in 1712. Before this there appears to have been little garden surrounding the C17 house, which had a walled entrance forecourt largely surrounded by a paling fence enclosed by a line of trees (Chauncy 1700, reproduced in CL 1911). The manor passed through several hands during the remainder of the C18 and C19, being in the possession of H G Fenwick by the early C20. In 1908 Fenwick employed Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) to enlarge the house substantially and remodel it. At this time Lutyens collaborated with Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) in creating formal gardens to the west and north of the house, providing a further extension to the house in 1911. The house became a school in 1935, in which use it remains (1999).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Temple Dinsley lies adjacent to the east side of the village of Preston, 5km south of the centre of Hitchin, at the north-east end of the Chiltern Hills. The c 50ha site is bounded to the east, south and west by lanes, that to the west, School Lane, being one of the main village streets of Preston which is partly marked to the south of the house by a red-brick wall (E L Lutyens c 1908, listed grade II). To the north the boundary is marked by agricultural land. The ground is gently undulating, rising to the north-west of the house, with a pronounced valley extending north-east from the north side of the gardens, down which distant views of Letchworth are visible. The setting is rural, with further buildings by Lutyens for Fenwick lying adjacent to the south boundary, these being the former model farm, Ladygrove Stud Farm (also known as Minsden Farm, now converted to domestic use) and Kiln Wood Cottage (both E L Lutyens 1912-13, listed grade II). Lutyens and Jekyll were also working on the gardens at Putteridge Bury (qv), 6km to the west, at around the time Lutyens was employed in further extensions at Temple Dinsley.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach enters off School Lane, 250m south of the house, set back off the road between two brick-built gate piers with stone dressings flanked by a brick park wall (E L Lutyens c 1908, all listed grade II). The northern section of the wall extends north alongside School Lane; the southern section leads south, with a further gateway (E L

Lutyens c 1908, listed grade II) set into it close to, and in similar style to the main gateway. The southernmost of the two gateways, opening into the south park, led to the former Temple Farm Homestead (now gone). The south drive curves northwards across the park, down a slope to the gravel forecourt lying on the south, entrance front, enclosed by brick walls. The south end of the drive was formerly (OS C19) flanked by an avenue of trees. The lowered south wall of the forecourt supports wrought-iron railings, at the centre of which lies the entrance to the forecourt, flanked by wrought-iron gates and piers with an overthrow (listed grade II* with the house), giving access to the main door at the centre of the south front. Iron pedestrian gates are set into the west and east walls where they meet the south sides of Lutyens' cross wings. In the early C20 (CL 1911) the southern half of the forecourt was laid to lawn divided by the gravel drive leading to a carriage sweep in the northern half. Luxuriant herbaceous borders ran along the inner sides of the west and east walls.

The east drive enters at a two-storey lodge standing 450m east of the house, adjacent to the St Paul's Walden to Gosmore lane. From here a straight drive extends north-west, flanked by an avenue set in strips of mown grass, along the south-west side of Summerhouse Plantation. Views extend from the eastern section north-east towards Letchworth. At the west corner of the Plantation the drive turns south-west down a slope, passing two oval pools at the edge of the park, giving access to the service yard on the east side of the house. The drive continues south to join the south drive 50m from the house. In the C18 and C19 (Dury and Andrews, 1766; OS C19) the east drive was flanked by a straight avenue, replanted in the late C20.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Temple Dinsley (1714, enlarged and remodelled by E L Lutyens 1908-9, listed grade II*) stands towards the west side of the site. The early C18 core of the two-storey brick building is flanked by Lutyens' cross-wings, with a kitchen wing (1908) and nursery extension (1911) both attached to the east. The extension links with the C18 former stable block adapted by Lutyens and since converted to domestic accommodation. In the late C19 (OS), a substantial wing projected south from the south-east corner of the house along the outer side of the east forecourt wall; this was demolished before 1900 (OS C19).

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens are divided into a series of interconnected compartments largely related to the west and north fronts of the house, laid out by Lutyens with planting designs by Gertrude Jekyll, c 1909-10. The garden structures are listed grade II* with the house.

A doorway at the centre of the west front opens out into the formal Paved Rose Garden. A stone-paved path, flanked by narrow borders and beyond this panels of lawn, leads to a square parterre laid out with a geometric pattern of rose beds surrounded by further stone paving. The south side of the garden is bounded by a brick retaining wall, beyond and above which lie the Diamond Garden and Pool Garden. The north side is bounded by a brick wall into which is set a covered loggia, overlooking the centre of the rose beds, separating two garden houses. The loggia is supported on the south side by white pillars and flanked to west and east by the garden houses: square, brick garden pavilions with pyramidal roofs, each with a door opening out into the loggia. The west side of the Paved Rose Garden is bounded by a low, brick retaining wall with a flight of stone steps at the centre leading up to an open lawn enclosed by brick walls, the former Herbaceous Garden. In the early C20 this area contained broad herbaceous borders running west from the steps to the west wall along the north and south walls. The borders flanked a central path aligned on the door in the west front. The contours of the path are still visible (1999). The garden wall enclosing the former Herbaceous Garden is of C18 origin, and enclosed the former walled

kitchen garden, the east wall of which stood close to the site of the west front of the adjacent cross wing of the house.

A second east to west axis runs parallel and adjacent, overlooking the Paved Rose Garden and Herbaceous Garden from the south. At the east end of this axial layout, the Diamond Garden is entered from the western forecourt gate, and also from the south-east corner of the Paved Rose Garden. From a stone path connecting these two entrances a broad flight of stone steps with tile risers leads south up to a raised lawn flanked by rose borders. This lawn overlooks the forecourt to the east, and the park to the south, being bounded on these two sides by brick retaining walls. From the top of the steps a stone path leads west between raised brick and stone rose beds to a further short flight of stone steps up to the Pool Garden. This is dominated by a swimming pool with a concrete surround set in lawn overlooking the Paved Rose Garden and loggia, below to the north. Formerly, as laid out by Lutyens, the body of water was an informal ornamental reflecting pool, and was enclosed by stone paths set in grass. At the west end of the Pool Garden a flight of steps set in a low, brick retaining wall leads up to the Spring Garden, laid to lawn with a stone path leading west into the Small Herbaceous Garden, now (1999) laid to lawn and partly enclosed by clipped hedges. Formerly a path led west across the Small Herbaceous Garden, flanked by herbaceous borders. The west side of the Garden is bounded by a stone cross path which leads north into and across the Herbaceous Garden, and west of the path the Garden is bounded by the tall, brick garden wall standing adjacent to the village green.

A stone cross path at the east side of the Spring Garden gives access via a gateway to the park to the south, and to the Herbaceous Garden to the north down stone steps set into the dividing wall. The cross path continues north across the Herbaceous Garden, leading down stone steps between brick gate piers set into the north wall and down to the Side Path, which connects the west garden boundary with the Pergola Garden to the east. The cross path from the Spring Garden crosses the Side Path, leading north to the curved, stone Magnolia Steps which lead down to a stone-paved area. Here, two circular beds containing mature bush magnolias flank to west and east a small paved area, with a further flight of curved stone steps leading down to the north into the Rose Garden. The Rose Garden is laid to lawn and largely enclosed by clipped yew hedges with entrances set at the centre of each side. Formerly (early C20) this was planted with a pattern of rose beds. The northern entrance leads into woodland, the western entrance gives onto stone steps leading up to the informal Top Lawn, and the eastern entrance leads to a lawn set with several mature trees including a large holm oak overlooking the formal Pergola Garden.

A doorway at the centre of the north front opens out onto the formal North Terrace. Stone steps lead down to a stone terrace with a pattern picked out in bricks, flanked by Lutyens' west and east cross wings and bounded to the north by a terracotta balustrade on top of a brick retaining wall supporting the terrace above. Two flights of stone steps oppose each other as they lead down from either end of the stone terrace, to a further stone terrace bounded to the south by the brick retaining wall which here has a hemispherical arch in which a small circular pond is partly recessed. To the south of this lies a narrow rectangular formal lawn flanked by herbaceous borders, these in turn flanked by retaining walls supporting stone paths leading north from the steps which lead down from the top terrace. These paths are bordered by lawns leading along the north front of the projecting cross wings.

A flight of stone steps leads down from the central lawn of the North Terrace to the Pergola Garden, a rectangular sunken lawn surrounded by raised brick terraces on the north, east and south sides, and by a grass bank on the west side. A grass path runs along the top of the west

and north terraces, and a stone path along the east and south terraces. A flight of stone steps leads down to the lawn from the centre of the west side, with a broader, central flight on the north side aligned on the centre of the house, and a further, narrower flight to the west of this. The east terrace is covered by a pergola with brick piers, with alternate circular and square piers and wooden cross members linking the tops of the piers. At the south end of the pergola a flight of stone steps leads south up to the easternmost of the two lawns flanking the central North Terrace Lawn. A further flight of stone steps leads up from the south side of the sunken lawn in the Pergola Garden, to the western of these two flanking lawns.

At the north end of the pergola stone steps lead up to the Belvedere (Lutyens c 1908), a small, square stone building with a pyramidal roof, which is offset to the east of the pergola, overlooking to the south the Small Orchard which bounds the Pergola Lawn below to the east. The Belvedere overlooks the park to the east, with long views to the north-east along a valley, beyond the park towards Letchworth. The broad steps on the north side of the Pergola Garden lead north up to the Orchard, which itself slopes up to the north, overlooking the Pergola Garden and north front, and bounded to the west and north by woodland and to the east by a clipped yew hedge covering a brick retaining wall. It is now (1999) laid to rough grass, having lost almost all of the orchard trees. Views extend east and north-east, as from the Belvedere, which stands at the south-east corner.

In the late C19 (OS), a small garden lay immediately north of the house, covering the area now occupied by Lutyens' cross wings and North Terrace. The Side Path led west alongside the kitchen garden on the west front, giving access to a path through a narrow belt of wooded pleasure grounds on the west boundary which led northwards to the Dower House. South of the kitchen garden lay a rectangular compartment containing a rectangular pool on the site of that in the C20 Pool Garden. The Orchard, the Pergola Garden and other compartments north of the Side Walk, together with much of the enclosing woodland, were created on land taken in from the park by Lutyens and Jekyll.

PARK The park, laid to pasture and woodland, bounds the house and gardens to the east and south, and is divided by the east drive into north and south halves. At the centre lies Summerhouse Plantation, planted in the early to mid C20. The southern half of the park contains some mature specimen trees, with the remains of an avenue leading south-west from the east drive 200m east of the house, aligned on the site of the former Temple Farm Homestead (now gone). A brick icehouse (C18, listed grade II) lies 250m east of the house, south of the east drive. The Piggery (E L Lutyens c 1908, listed grade II) stands 240m south-east of the house. It is a small, red-brick farm building with a steep, pyramidal tiled roof, built as an eyecatcher within the park, particularly from the house and south drive.

The northern half of the park contains the Dower House (early C18 and early C19, listed grade II), a large, irregular, red-brick house of two storeys standing 300m north of Temple Dinsley house on lower ground.

In the late C19 (OS) the south park contained the remains of several avenues, including a fragment of a double avenue lying c 150m south-east of the house, on which it was aligned, together with the avenue flanking the south end of the south drive, and the avenue extending south-west from the east drive to the former Temple Farm Homestead. This farm, demolished in the early C20, formerly occupied a prominent position c 250m south-east of the house (Dury and Andrews, 1766; OS C19).

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled, rectangular former kitchen garden, converted in the early C20 into Lutyens' Paved Rose Garden and Herbaceous Garden, extends west from the house, still largely enclosed by the remains of the C18 and C19 walls (OS 1884).

REFERENCES

Country Life, 29 (22 April 1911), pp 562-72; 40 (30 December 1916), pp 2-6 L Weaver, Houses and Gardens by E L Lutyens (1913), pp 221-31 G Jekyll and L Weaver, Gardens for Small Country Houses (5th edn 1924), pp 219-20 J Brown, Gardens of a Golden Afternoon (1982), p 170 Temple Dinsley History & Restoration Proposals (1992)

Maps Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1899 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898 3rd edition published 1924

Description written: March 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: October 2000

Park Wall facing School Lane and 2 Pairs of Gate piers and Flanking Walls at Main Gate to Princess Helena College, Opposite Crunnell's Green

List Entry Number: 1102432

Date first listed: 08-Feb-1988

Grade II

Park wall and 2 pairs of gatepiers and flanking walls. Circa 1908 by E.L. Lutyens as entrance to Temple Dinsley for H.G. Fenwick. Present pair of iron gates after 1935 for Princess Helena College. Park wall plum brick in English-bond with tile creasing to half-round coping bricks above sloping scarcement. Lighter red bricks for angle of semi-circular embayment to gates. Similar but narrower light red brick and Portland stone dressings to gatepiers. Wall about 1.75M high interrupted by 2 gateways asymmetrically placed in semi-circle. Northerly gateway in use as main entrance to college. Other has field gate and formerly led to farm buildings. 4 piers identical, about 5ft x 2.5ft x 10ft high with broader faces to front and rear. Each has a squared stone plinth projecting slightly and is capped by an overhanging stone moulded cornice with swept locking semi-circular wide niche with moulded sill and apron, hemicycle gauged brick and tile head. Keystone to arch and recessed spandrels. Brick check for gate with hollow chamfered stone top. Both faces of all 4 piers the same. Excellent brick craftsmanship.

Icehouse among Chestnut Trees at Princess Helena College, Temple Dinsley (250 Metres to east north east of main entrance door) At Grid Reference TL 1833 2483, School Lane

List Entry Number: 1176789

Date first listed: 08-Feb-1988

Grade II

Icehouse. C18. Red brick with some blue bricks. A deep large conical well with domed cap buried under an earth mound and approached by a low segmental vaulted narrow passage on NW about 4M long and about 1.5M below ground level. The passage is crushed inwards by tree roots and is unroofed at its outer end. Wooden crosspiece for former door halfway along passage.

The Piggery at Princess Helena College, Temple Dinsley (240 Metres to south east of Main Entrance Door) At Grid Reference TI 1829 2471

List Entry Number: 1347448

Date first listed: 08-Feb-1988

Grade II

Small farm building in the park. Probably c.1908 by E.L. Lutyens for H.G. Fenwick as part of the works at Temple Dinsley. Red brick in Flemish-bond with steep pyramidal handmade red tile roof. A small square single-storey building with stable door in middle of NW side. Half-round ridge tiles to hips. Central small window on SE side lower half blocked. Eaves project about 1ft in middle of NE side. An important landscape feature in view of the mansion from the park. Included for group value.

Appendix 4: Oasis Form

OASIS ID: johnselb1-253048

 Analytical Buildings Record (level 3) at Temple Dinsley, Preston, North Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

Form lifecycle

Form changes

Export

Delete

Review period

Project notes

The new records will not have a status in the same way as the old system did but it will say if all the core fields have been completed.

Show

10

entries

Search:

Action ↕	Date ↕	Notes ↕
New record via OASIS interface	17 Jul 2024 10:14	New record via OASIS interface by John Selby for John Selby - Level O1

Appendix 5: Hertfordshire HER Summary Form

Site name and address:			
Temple Dinsley, Preston, Hertfordshire SG4 7RT			
County: Hertfordshire		District: North Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: Temple Dinsley		Parish: Preston	
Planning application reference:		Awaited	
HER Enquiry reference:		N/A	
Funding source:		Private client	
Nature of application: Planning permission & listed boiling consent for residential use			
Present land use:		Vacant (former Princess Helena College)	
Size of application area:		50 hectares	Size of area investigated: 50 hectares
NGR (to 8 figures minimum):		TL 181782 4799	
Site code (if applicable):			
Site director/Organization:		John Selby Heritage Consultancy	
Type of work:		Historic Building Record (Historic England Level 3)	
Date of work: 2023-2024		Start: 8 th June 2023	Finish: 12 th April 2024
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum:			
Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record			
Related HER Nos:		N/A	Periods represented: Post Mediaeval
Relevant previous summaries/reports			
N/A			
Summary of fieldwork results:			
A former Knights Templar and then Hospitaller site, which at the suppression of the order was granted in 1542 to Sir Ralph Sadleir. His house was reconstructed during the Mid-C17 for Sir Edwyn Sadleir. This mansion was located to the rear of the current house and was initially retained alongside it. The current building dates from 1714, with the remains of an 18th century coach house and stables, partly destroyed by fire in 1888. For much of the 19th century, Temple Dinsley was owned by the Darton family and tenanted. Sadleir's house was demolished between 1815 and 1832. And the old house reduced to its current size. During 1839-1840s Thomas and Frederica Halsey leased, refurbished and extended the house and gardens. From 1869 to 1879 John Weeks leased the house and gardens and carried out additional changes and extensions. IN 1908 the estate was purchased by Herbert George and Violet Fenwick who employed Sir Edwin Lutyens to remodel and extend the house. This took part in several phases and the gardens were laid out to designs by Gertrude Jekyll. Lutyens also designed farm buildings, a pump house and piggery in the park, which partially survive with the remains of an 18th century ice house. When the Fenwick's divorced the property was eventually purchased in 1935 by the Princess Helena College which added further building through the 20th and 21st centuries. The college closed in 2021.			
Author of summary:		John Selby	Date of summary: 19 th July 2024