

Hidcote

Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, UK

Photographs by Alan Ward 1997, 2006, 2014

Notes on the Making of the Photographs

Hidcote was designed by its owner Lawrence Johnston and is one of the most significant gardens of the early twentieth-century, and the first major garden acquired by the National Trust in 1948. Hidcote Manor appears in early documents as owned by a priory. Following dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, the property was used as a farmhouse until being acquired by Gertrude Winthrop and her son Lawrence Johnston in 1907.* The manor house is on an east to west axis, which was the point of departure for Johnston to begin laying out the site in an orthogonal pattern. While he began with small gardens framed by hedges near the house, the overall composition extends the east to west axis from the residence through the Great Lawn (21-23). An equally significant north to south axis follows the Long Walk (14-16). It is this insistent, organizing framework overlaid on the site by Johnston that gives coherence to the design, and allows for distinctly different design expressions within a varied and complex variety of garden spaces.

The sequence of photographs generally follows the chronology of the making of the Hidcote garden in phases over a period of about thirty years, beginning with the small spaces near the house, including the East Court (1), Old Garden (2) and The Circular Garden (4-5). That is followed by steps to The Bathing Pool, which is framed by tall box hedges, some with bird-shaped topiary (8-10). A turf path flanked by red herbaceous borders leads west to a pair of gazebos, which is a place to

pause and a point of orientation in the garden, where the Long Walk begins and extends south almost 220m from the gazebos to a gate that opens to agricultural fields (14-16). Next in the sequence is the Stilt Garden, comprised of pleached hornbeams that frame an internal view to an urn, and to a gate that opens to a view of the distant Malvern Hills (17-20). Johnston is bringing the countryside into the experience, but in each case, through a clearly marked threshold with a break in the hedges, and view beyond through a gate (16,20,32).

The concluding images show the transition from the small architecturally-ordered gardens to an apple orchard, beech allée and finally, the wilderness area (24-32). Johnston used the term 'wilderness' in a manner similar to areas identified in Renaissance inspired gardens, where the landscape is less ordered with a greater diversity of planting. Hidcote is known for its varied and colorful planting palette, however I chose to work in black and white, which is simpler and requires different sensibilities than color, and tends to emphasize Johnston's spatial framework of the garden, rather than the colorful planting design. To describe in a small black and white image the differences between the vegetative layers in a landscape design between a varied understory, a middle story of shrubs and hedges, and different trees - requires that every tone be distinctive, so that the photograph as a whole is harmonious.

List of Photographs

1. East Court with house and chapel, 2014
2. Old Garden just south of the house, 1997
3. Italian Shelter, also known as Silent Space, 2014
4. Gate to the Old Garden from Circular Garden, Cedar, 1997
5. Circular Garden, 2014
6. Small garden south of Circular Garden, 2014
7. Passage through hedges, 2014
8. Steps to Bathing Pool, 2014
9. View north of Bathing Pool and house, topiary, 1997
10. View south from Bathing Pool, 1997
11. View south of herbaceous borders and house, Cedar, 1997
12. Hedges and borders, 2006
13. View west of red borders and gazebos, 2006
14. View south from gazebo to Long Walk, 2014
15. View south of Long Walk, 2014
16. View south of Long Walk and gate, 1997
17. Approaching Stilt Garden, 1997
18. Pleached hornbeams in Stilt Garden, 1997
19. View to urn in Stilt Garden, 1997
20. View west to gate in Stilt Garden, 1997
21. View west from house to Great Lawn, 2014
22. View southeast of Great Lawn and gazebos, 2014
23. Terrace at west end of Great Lawn, 2014
24. Orchard, 2006
25. Orchard and bench, 1997
26. Orchard in fall, 1997
27. Pillar Garden, 1997
28. Path in rock bank, 1997
29. Path and wildflowers, 2014
30. Path in Wilderness, 2014
31. Opening in hedges to Beech Allée, 1997
32. View north from Beech Allée to gate, 1997

































































Notes

* For a more complete story about the history of the site and the making of the Hidcote garden see nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/gloucestershire-cotswolds/hidcote/the-history-of-Hidcote This brief historical summary is derived from this source.