

# Capability Brown at Wallington



The walled garden at Wallington © National Trust Images

Capability Brown advised Sir Walter Calverley Blckett about the walled garden at Wallington and may have designed the Owl House that now overlooks the East Wood.

From his boyhood years Brown would have been very familiar with the Wallington estate, which now extends to 13,000 acres (5,260 hectares) of park, woodland and pleasure grounds. He went to school in Cambo village, which lies 1.5 kilometres to the north. George Brown, his older brother, worked as a stonemason for Sir Walter.

Despite his strong family connections with Wallington there are no records of Brown's involvement in the improvements there during the 1760s. More is known about his designs for Rothley Park, 6 kilometres to the north-east, where Sir Walter planned to transform the rugged scenery with a new lake, buildings and eye-catchers or follies.

The National Trust: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington)

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For more information about Brown and his work go to [capabilitybrown.org/research](http://capabilitybrown.org/research)



## Capability Brown

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) was born in the Northumberland village of Kirkharle, and went on to popularise the English landscape style, advising on over 250 large country estates throughout England and Wales.

Formal gardens gave way to naturalistic parkland of trees, expanses of water and rolling grass. He also designed great houses, churches and garden buildings, and was skilled in engineering, especially with water.

This guide was created as part of a festival celebrating the 300th anniversary of his birth. Find out more about the man and his work at [capabilitybrown.org/research](http://capabilitybrown.org/research)

Portrait of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, c.1770-75, by Richard Cosway (17421821)/Private Collection/Bridgeman Images.



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Aerial view of Wallington © National Trust Images

### Walled garden

The L-shaped ornamental walled garden (listed Grade II\*) at Wallington lies on sloping ground, 650 metres directly east of Wallington Hall. There had been an older walled garden on a site in the East Wood, where the Garden Pond is now. Even if Brown did not design this area, with its stone staircase and Neptune's Gate, he may have advised Sir Walter in the 1760s about locating the garden away from the house.

### Owl House

Brown has been credited with designing the three-storey Owl House (listed Grade II). This is a brick gazebo with an external staircase, situated on the north side of the walled garden behind a 20th century conservatory (listed Grade II). It gets its name from the stone owl that sits on top, representing the Calverley family crest. Owl House was probably built around 1766, when Sir Walter was remodelling the estate. Although there is no plan, this building does look similar to the one Brown is known to have designed at Talacre, Wales, although that was in stone.

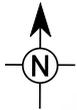


Owl House and conservatory © National Trust Images

### Rothley pleasure grounds

During the 1760s, Brown was one of the designers who planned elements of the new pleasure grounds for Sir Walter at Rothley, part of the wider estate at Wallington. He drew up a masterplan and four other drawings for the Low Lake, a five-arch 'sham' bridge, banqueting house, coach house and circular garden. The High Lake, which had already been completed by 1769, has a serpentine shape and naturalistic landscaping that are typical of Brown, although it's not known whether he designed it. The Low Lake was the only part of Brown's scheme completed in Sir Walter's lifetime.

# Discover Wallington Visitor Map



## Capability Brown features

- Ice house
- Conservatory and Owl House
- Walled garden
- Eye-catcher
- Viewpoint
- Specimen trees
- Woodland or copse
- Other trees or shrubbery

- Visitor Centre
- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Parking

300 yards

300 metres



Rothley Lake © National Trust Images

## Wallington and the Trevelyan family

When Sir Walter died in 1777 the estate passed to his nephew, Sir John Trevelyan, whose main home was at Nettlecombe in Somerset. During the 1850s Sir Walter and Lady Pauline Calverley Trevelyan carried out work on the house, employing Newcastle architect John Dobson.

In 1941 Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan, who had been an MP and cabinet minister, gave Wallington to the National Trust.

The 17th century Wallington House (listed Grade I) includes beautiful murals, ceramics and paintings. In the grounds, visitors can explore the Heritage Tree Trail and a number of other walks and trails.

The Low Lake at Rothley is not accessible to the public, but you can enjoy the walled garden at Wallington, which is carpeted with thousands of crocuses in spring. There are also plans to develop the Owl House as a visitor attraction, as it offers fine views from the first floor across the walled garden.

## Biodiversity at Wallington

Wallington has a variety of habitats including parkland and mixed woodland of both deciduous and coniferous trees. The River Wansbeck forms Wallington's southern boundary and is rich in wildlife, supporting our native White clawed Crayfish and otters. Thanks to a major conservation project a significant population of rare Red Squirrels thrive in the woods at Wallington.



Wallington House © National Trust Images