



The Ha-Ha



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RESEARCH

A ha-ha is a landscape design element that creates a vertical barrier while preserving an uninterrupted view of the landscape beyond. Before mechanical lawn mowers, a common way to keep large areas of grassland trimmed was to allow livestock, usually sheep, to graze the grass. A ha-ha prevented grazing animals on large estates from gaining access to the lawn and gardens adjoining the house, giving a continuous vista, and creating the illusion that the garden and landscape were one and undivided. The design incorporates a turfed incline that slopes downward to a sharply vertical face, typically

a masonry retaining wall. The unusual name “ha-ha” is thought to have stemmed from the exclamations of surprise by those coming across them as they were designed to be invisible unless very close to them.

In 1721, an elm avenue was planted running south from the house, apparently for “show” rather than to mark a planned access. Over the years, some of the trees died of old age; those that remained were lost to Dutch elm disease in the 1970s.

The view to the Manor in the 1960s with what remained of the elm avenue

