

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

RAYNHAM PARK

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Name: RAYNHAM PARK

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Dunton

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Helhoughton

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Raynham

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.799362
Longitude: 0.79506620
National Grid Reference: TF 88529 26084
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001015
Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

Elements of a C17 and early C18 formal landscape, set within a park developed from the C17 onwards, possibly influenced by William Kent and Thomas Ripley.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The second Sir Roger Townshend purchased the manor of Rainham from Lady Isabella Neville in 1543, together with the old hall which stood on the east bank of the River Wensum. The new Raynham Hall was designed and built by Sir Roger's great-grandson, a third Sir Roger, from 1619 onwards, on a new site c 300m east-north-east of the old hall. The site was abandoned in 1622, restarted the same year and finished in 1637. Sir Roger Townshend had seen the Prince of Wales' lodgings by Inigo Jones at Newmarket and been heavily influenced by it in the design of his new house (present owner pers comm, 1999). Extensive geometric gardens were laid out around the new house which stood centrally within a rectangle of four separate enclosures, surrounded by a park of c 180ha through which ran a great north-east to south-west axial avenue. Sir Roger's son Horatio was responsible for almost doubling the size of the park and making extensive alterations to the gardens. In 1687 Charles, second Viscount Townshend inherited the estate, which remained unoccupied until 1698 when he began renovation work, making

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another series of alterations to the gardens, the results of which were partially depicted on a set of drawings made by Prideaux between 1725 and 1727 (private collection). During the 1720s and 1730s both William Kent and Thomas Ripley were employed on interior renovations and additions to the Hall and between 1724 and 1731 Ripley spent £1690 digging the lake and £205 on general landscaping (Rosenheim 1989). Kent also recorded his views on improvements to the landscape in a letter written to Sir Charles in 1735 (J Garden Hist 1991). By 1785 the park had developed a naturalistic character, the formal gardens had been largely removed, and the kitchen garden relocated to its present position south of the Hall. The south-west end of the great axial avenue survived through all the phases of landscape development and was replanted during the C19. In 1866 the church of St Mary was rebuilt for the fifth Marquis and at the end of the century a water tower was added to the service wing. During the C20 most of the park outside the ha-ha has been put under the plough. The lake was cleared and dredged in the early 1930s with further work undertaken in the 1970s. The gardens on the north-east front have been much simplified. The site remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Raynham Park lies mainly on the west side of the A1065 Fakenham to Swaffham road, c 5km south-west of Fakenham at East Raynham village. The park straddles the area between East and West Raynham. The River Wensum runs from south-east to north-west through the west side of the park and the land falls gently to the south-west across the whole site. The ground is gently sloping with the Hall enjoying a rural river valley location. The site boundaries are formed by the A1065 Roman Road to the east with East Raynham village central along this road. Woodland belts and arable land mark the boundary to the north with a minor country road along the western section of the north boundary. The Wensum valley and West Raynham village form the western boundary, with plantations and arable land to the south. The main views into the site are focused on the Hall (up the main lime avenue from West Raynham village over the lake, and across the park from the north-east to and from the site of a pyramid (now lost) placed in a narrow opening in the boundary woodland, a view once lined with trees right through the east park. With the north-east and south-west front doors open it is said to be possible to stand at the pyramid site and see through the Hall to West Raynham village (present owner pers comm, 1999).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES From East Raynham the main entrance drive passes double two-storey flint lodges with brick dressings and slate roofs (listed grade II) built in the neoclassical style in 1825. The grass-edged drive is flanked with a strip of ornamental tree and shrub planting, backed to the south by a thin strip of woodland. The shrub planting, mainly rhododendron, is of mid C19 date, with more mature lime and oak at the entrance and again close to the Hall. The drive arrives at the gravelled south-west front and was developed as the main entrance during the first part of the C19. From West Raynham the approach is along a village road lined by very mature lime trees and enters the park past a single two-storey lodge (listed grade II) built of knapped flint with brick rustications and dressings in c 1840. The drive turns north-west to pass St Mary's church and then swings north-east to approach the Hall along the lime avenue, at the end of which it enters the courtyard on the south-west front through an early C19 cast-iron screen and pair of carriage gates hung on stone piers (listed grade II). This was the early C18 main drive to the Hall and a bridge was planned to span the water; this was not executed after there were found to be eleven springs in the way.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Raynham Hall (listed grade I) is a large five-storey country house of red brick with stone dressings under a slate and lead roof, displaying Classical and Palladian influences. It sits to the south-west of centre of the park and is built in an overall 'H' plan, with Dutch gables at the corner of each bay. The entrance front on the south-west has a central seven-bay section with flanking two-bay ends whilst the entrance on the north-east (garden) front is defined by the centre three bays being of three storeys and entirely stone dressed. The Hall was designed and built by Sir Roger Townshend between 1619 and 1637 in association with his mason/builder William Edge. Off the north-west corner of the Hall lies a red-brick two-storey service wing (listed grade I), added for the second Viscount Townshend by William Kent and Thomas Ripley in c 1731 (Pevsner 1962). The wing has a hipped slate roof with off-centre leaded cupola and at the northern end of the range is a free-standing, red-brick, four-storey square water tower (listed grade II) added at the end of the C19. A red-brick wall runs off

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the north-east corner of the Hall, enclosing a courtyard in front of the service wing. The wing now (1999) includes space for garaging as well as living accommodation.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens at Raynham lie predominantly to the east of the Hall. The south-east front looks onto an area of lawn with one mature cedar of Lebanon. The lawn leads around to the main gardens to the east and north-east of the Hall. A central lawn aligned on the centre bays of the north-east front carries marks in the grass of the early C17 formal gardens, and this is flanked to south-east and north-west by two yew-hedged enclosures planted with roses and other herbaceous plants. The garden is bordered to the east by the ha-ha, beyond which lies the open park. To the north-west is the service wing's gravel court, bounded to the north-east by a wall attached to the Hall. A row of very old sweet chestnut run between the north-east face of the wall and the yew enclosure beyond it. To the south-west is the gravel entrance court, bounded to the west by cast-iron rails and gates, with a small evergreen shrubbery on the north-west edge of the court.

Details of the creation of the first formal gardens at Raynham are very well documented in the early C17 correspondence, building accounts, and garden accounts (Townshend Papers). The pattern of these gardens exists as parchmarks in the pasture to the east of the present hall. A set of drawings by Prideaux dated 1725-7, show formal lawns, walks, and topiary to the east and south, and an extensive formal layout to the west enclosed by high hedges to left and right, extending as far as the lake (Williamson 1998), but by 1732 the Earl of Oxford noted that the Hall was 'free of all walls' as the gardens were removed and a naturalistic landscape developed. The lines of the hedges were reinstated as the lime avenue to the south-west in the C19 and a small simple formal garden planted on the north-east front in the mid C20.

PARK The park at Raynham is presently (1999) mainly arable. A few scattered mature individual trees survive, the greatest concentration being around the Hall where the parkland grass remains. These stand mainly to the north and west, and south-east along the drive where the park is divided by fences into horse paddocks separated from the arable land by a line of large lime. Tree species are mainly lime, sweet chestnut, oak, beech, and an occasional cedar. From the west front of the Hall, an avenue of large lime runs west, crossing the lake and a canalised stretch of the River Wensum and continuing west through small grass fields to the woodland boundary and West Raynham village. The lake is c 650m long, running from north-west to south-east following the line of the river. On the south side of the avenue, some 350m to the south-west of the Hall is St Mary's church (listed grade II*). It was designed in 1866 by the Newmarket architects Clark and Holland; built of flint with stone dressings under a slate roof, it is surrounded by low wrought-iron railings, thus acting as a focus within the park landscape. Beyond the north side of the avenue, to the north-west are horse paddocks which surround a stableyard complex (listed grade II), together with the remains of the red-brick and pantile C16 gatehouse for the old hall (listed grade II) which stand on the banks of the river. The south park is (1999) all arable with no surviving parkland trees, except for a newly (late C20) planted row of limes which lines the road from West to East Raynham as it cuts through the south park. To the north-east of the Hall the land is all arable with very few individual parkland trees remaining and the area is partly open to the farmland beyond and partly enclosed by boundary woodland of mixed character. The eastern section of the main vista to the east boundary is now defined only by the gap between Little and Great Model Wood on the boundary itself. The early C18 pyramid eyecatcher which stood in the gap has been lost, as has the avenue of trees which ran through the park defining the view. The wooden pyramid was noted by the Earl of Oxford in his diary, following a visit to Raynham in September 1732 (Townshend Papers).

Raynham Park was created by Sir Roger Townshend in the early years of the C17 to accompany the building of the new hall, at which time it covered c 180ha. It was extended by his son Horatio, and by c 1660 covered c 300ha. In 1724 the lake was created by Thomas Ripley for Charles Townshend (Rosenheim 1989). In 1735, whilst working on the Hall, William Kent proposed the removal of some of the geometric features near the Hall to create a more open parkland landscape and a map (possibly only a proposal map) of 1738 (Townshend Papers) shows the park to be largely empty with all the earlier avenues gone, including most of the main east/ west vista. By 1785 a further map records a park landscape of open grass with a scatter of trees and various clumps and plantations, covering some 315ha. The subsequent 100 years saw little change apart from a small expansion to north-east and south, such that it now (late C20) covers 375ha, and the reinstatement of the main east/west avenue.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden at Raynham stands c 500m to the south of the Hall, the 3.2m high brick walls enclosing a trapezoidal area of c 2ha entered through the main gate on the west wall (four other smaller entrances exist on the

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remaining walls). The outer walls survive in good condition although internally it is not used for vegetable crops and the garden structures of frames and glasshouses are derelict. The picturesque gardener's cottage lies in the north-west quarter whilst the remainder is divided by a beech hedge, a spruce belt, and wooden fences into horse paddocks. One row of old fruit trees remains in the south-west quarter and the outside walls to north and west are screened by an evergreen shrubbery. An early C17 garden account (Townshend Papers) records the development of a kitchen garden close to the Hall. The feature was relocated twice, the walled garden being moved to its present site in the late C18 (the estate map of 1785 shows it to be new at this time).

REFERENCES

Country Life, 24 (18 July 1908), pp 90-9; 58 (14 November 1925), pp 742-50; 131 (8 March 1962), p 527 Architectural History 7, no 36 (1964), pp 95-7 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North-west and South Norfolk* (1962), pp 148-51 J M Rosenheim, *The Townshends of Raynham. Nobility in transition in restoration and early Hanoverian England* (1989), pp 167-89 J Garden History 11, (1991), nos 1 and 2, pp 83-9 T Williamson, *The archaeology of the landscape park*, BAR Brit Ser 268 (1998), pp 33/4, 80/1, 269-71

Maps Estate map, 1621 (private collection) Estate map, 1785 (private collection) W Faden, *A new topographical map of the county of Norfolk, 1797* (Norfolk Record Office) Estate map, c 1811 (BL 60), (Norfolk Record Office) A Bryant, *Map of the county of Norfolk, 1826* (Norfolk Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1885 2nd edition published 1907 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1906

Illustrations E Prideaux, series of garden drawings, 1725(7 (private collecton)

Archival items The bulk of the Townshend family papers are held in a private collection, the remainder being lodged at the Norfolk Record Office.

Description written: March 1999 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: March 2001

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.