

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SHADWELL PARK

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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SHADWELL PARK

Name: SHADWELL PARK

County: Norfolk

District: Breckland (District Authority)

Parish: Brettenham

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.407022
Longitude: 0.82056258
National Grid Reference: TL 91955 82522
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1001019
Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

A mid C19 formal terrace garden, pleasure ground, and walled kitchen garden, set within a mid C18 landscape park with mid C19 details.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Robert Buxton acquired the manor of Rushworth in Shadwell during the C16, initially holding a lease from the fourth Duke of Norfolk. In c 1715 John Buxton, amateur architect of Channonz Hall in Tibenham, began to rebuild what he called Shadwell Lodge and to lay out the grounds. The main features however of the design which survives today (1999), including the layout of the plantations and the creation of the lake, are the work of his son, also John, between the 1740s and 1760s and these are recorded on William Faden's map of the county dated 1797. The house was altered by John Soane in c 1789 and again by Edward Blore in 1840-3, but it is the work of S S Teulon between 1857 and 1860 that completely transformed the house in the Gothic style. During the same period the formal gardens to the west and south were laid out, a pleasure ground was planted between these and the kitchen garden, and the park was embellished. The estate remained in the Buxton family until 1895 when it was sold to John Musker who simplified the west garden. The Musker family sold Shadwell in the 1980s and the site remains (1999) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Shadwell Park lies c 4.5km to the east of Thetford on the north side of the A1066 Thetford to Diss road. The long thin site covers c 220ha bounded to the south by the A1066 and to the north by the River Thet. To the east are the villages of Shadwell and Brettenham whilst to the west is farmland and forestry. The park runs along the Thet river valley giving it a gently sloping topography from the road in the south down towards the river in the north; the house is set close to the river at the eastern end of the park. The estate is set in a gently rolling rural landscape of large fields and woodland blocks punctuated by small villages. The western half of the site is heavily wooded, with perimeter woodland belts around the remainder.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are three lodged entrances to Shadwell Park and two unmarked approaches. The main drive runs from East Lodge (listed grade II) between South Wood and Thetford Wood on the A1066, north-east through

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the park, past the west front of the house to enter the stable courtyard on the north side. Both Faden's map of 1797 and the OS surveyor's drawing of 1815 show this entrance to have been further to the east and devoid of a lodge. The OS 1st edition 6" map of 1887 however shows the present position of the entrance with its lodge in place. The second entrance is marked by Forest Lodge (listed grade II) which is situated in Snarehill Wood at the westernmost point of the park. This drive is depicted, with lodge, on Faden (1797) but not on the OS 1815 map or indeed on the 1887 edition, both of which show the drive reduced to a track and no lodge. By 1905 however the OS 2nd edition shows both the status of the drive and the existence of the lodge reinstated. The third lodge lies in Brettenham village, across the River Thet to the north of the house. It is identical in materials and style to Forest Lodge and therefore presumably of the same date. The entrance is linked to the site by a footpath and footbridge over the river, the footpath being wide enough to have allowed a carriage to pass and the remains of wider bridge foundations also being visible in the river. The map evidence is ambiguous for the history and status of this drive. An entrance from Shadwell village in the east is shown consistently on every map from 1797 onwards and may have once been the principal approach to the entrance court on the east face of the house. Between 1887 and 1905 Bridge Cottages were built beside this entrance but today (1999) the cottages have been demolished and the drive reduced to the status of a track. A further track enters at the easternmost point of the park and crosses the park past St Chad's Well to join the east drive before the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Shadwell Court (listed grade I) is a large, rambling country mansion built in the Gothic style of Caen stone, ashlar, brick, and flint with a slate roof. The main east front is a mix of Jacobean and Gothic and forms a strikingly punctuated skyline with its towers and turrets. The north facade is connected to a range of service buildings. Shadwell Lodge (as it was originally known) was begun in 1715 by the owner John Buxton to his own design and comprised a compact three-storey square house. This was extended significantly in 1840(2 by Edward Blore who is responsible for the south and west fronts. In 1857-60 S S Teulon made further considerable alterations, remodelling the east facade and adding the service courtyard to the north, linked to the entrance court in front of the house through an arch topped by a clock tower (listed grade II*). The archway leads into a second court to the north, made up of stable ranges and a brewhouse, with central fountain and circular game larder (all listed grade II). During the early years of the C20 further small alterations were made by the architect H J Green.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds at Shadwell cover c 4ha and sit to the south and west of the house. To the east of the house lies a gravelled entrance court bounded to the north by the clock tower, to the east by balustrading and gate piers, and to the south by a retaining wall topped by balustrading with a central flight of steps up to the level of the south garden. To the south is an area of grass, thought to have been the site of a mid C19 formal garden (owners' agent pers comm, 1999), although the only trace of this by 1887 (OS). To the west, a wide gravel terrace runs along the west facade of the house with raised parallel paths running west at right-angles from each corner. These enclose a sunken area of lawn with central sundial and terminate 40m west of the house in balustraded flights of steps which descend to a lower grassed area. On the top of the northern flight of steps is a twin-arched stone loggia with flat roof and wooden seating. At the west end of the lower grass area are three statue plinths and one statue, situated in front of a low iron railing allowing fine views across the park and lake beyond. In the north-west corner is a hidden garden compartment completely surrounded by tall box hedging, the interior of which is now completely overgrown. The west garden was laid out during the mid C19, extended west but simplified at the beginning of the C20 and now (1999) laid to grass.

Approximately 100m to the south of the house lies the start of the pleasure ground, the walks of which link the house to the kitchen garden 250m to the south. The pleasure ground covers some 2.6ha and consists of mixed ornamental tree and shrub planting, with a predominance of evergreens such as yew, box, holly and pine interwoven with a series of winding paths edged by great flint boulders. Within the planting lies one of Shadwell's three icehouses. As late as 1964 the area is said to have had a central walk lined with trellis (Girouard 1979).

A further area of woodland, immediately to the north-west of the house, contains a straight formal walk running south-west from the edge of the stable courtyard to the boundary with the park and is linked through to the west garden by two short lengths of path. This may have been a further area of pleasure ground but the planting here is more in character with the woodlands within the park and may, therefore, have simply been planted during the mid C19 to screen the new service buildings from the drive. The remains of another icehouse lie in this area of woodland.

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PARK The park at Shadwell can be divided into three areas. The east park is largely open grass with a small number of trees, mainly oak and beech, and three large blocks and a long boundary woodland to the south. Along the southern boundary lie a row of horse paddocks and modern (late C20) wooden stable buildings. The ground surface of the east park is uneven, with the land falling generally from east to west. A striking earth bank runs along the line of the drive from Shadwell village. Approximately 400m south-east of the house is St Chad's Well, covered by a flint-domed building of unknown date. The east park, and some of the paddock enclosures, are shown by Faden as existing in 1797 and can therefore presumably be attributed to John Buxton II. The main body of open park lies in the centre of the site, to the west of the house. The expanses of pasture allow views from the house towards the lake which lies alongside the River Thet on the northern boundary. The lake, lying 300m to the west of the house, covers 45ha and has six islands of varying size. Much of the planting on the islands and lake boundaries has been recently restored (1990s), and at the same time the edges have been lined with granite boulders. There are few individual trees in this part of the park, with the main mature planting represented by two clumps of oak near the east end of the lake. Towards the southern boundary are a string of small, mixed species woodlands including Scots pine and larch, the gaps between two of these woodlands having been planted with maize for the game. Close to Stake Wood, 350m south-west of the house, stands the portico from the original C18 Shadwell Lodge. It is thought to have been moved here at the very end of the C19 for use as a viewing seat (owners' agent pers comm, 1999). An 8-furlong 'horse gallop' has been created (late 1990s) in this part of the park, running south-west from the edge of the west garden towards the tip of South Wood which lies midway along the southern boundary. John Buxton laid out the west park, digging the lake in 1754 and winning a medal for his tree-planting activities in 1764 (CL 1978). During the mid C19 the C18 woodlands along the southern boundary were broken up into the blocks which exist today, the lake was widened and the islands and a cascade at the western tip were added (no trace of the cascade remains today, 1999). The westernmost area of park is densely planted with trees, cut through with rides, and is known as The Forest. It is a mixed plantation with some open areas of heathland and was added to the park in this form during the mid C19. Inside the park the main views are from the west, garden front across the park to the west end of the lake and back from this point towards the house; and a panoramic view of the park from a viewing seat close to Stake Wood on the eastern half of the southern boundary.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden covers c 1ha and lies 250m south of the house. It is enclosed by a high octagonal brick wall and the entrance on the north face is ornamented in the form of a gothic flint outbuilding with gabled roof (listed grade II). The kitchen garden is divided in half by central parallel yew hedges between which is an iron-framed rose arch running the length of the garden. The compartment to the west of this is given over to a small plantation of Norway spruce beside the remains of the orchard. The compartment to the east also contains a spruce plantation together with an area of vegetable production. Beyond the wall to the east is an outer service compartment with late C19 glass ranges on the north and east walls and a picturesque gardener's cottage in the south-east corner. There is no known documentation as to the original date of construction of the kitchen garden. It first appears on the 1887 OS 6" map and is therefore thought to have been part of the works on house and grounds undertaken during the mid C19, although it is possible that it originates from the mid C18 period of works and is simply not shown on the earlier maps.

REFERENCES

N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North-west and South Norfolk* (1962), p 307 *Country Life*, 136 (2 July 1964), pp 18(21; (9 July 1964), pp 98-102; 164 (7 December 1978), pp 1974-5 M Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979 edn), pp 194(205 *J Royal Society of Arts* 129, (September 1981), pp 678-81 J Kenworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981), p 183

Maps W Faden, *A new topographical map of the county of Norfolk, 1797* (Norfolk Record Office) A Bryant, *Map of the county of Norfolk, 1826* (Norfolk Record Office)

OS Surveyor's drawing, 1815 (British Library maps) OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 2nd edition published 1905 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1905

Archival items Drawing of the original Shadwell Lodge, (Centre for East Anglian Studies archive)

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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.