

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CATTON HALL

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Name:	CATTON HALL
County:	Norfolk
District:	Broadland (District Authority)
Parish:	Old Catton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.658171 Longitude: 1.2945646 National Grid Reference: TG2291311811 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000269 Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

A late C18 country house set in the remains of a Victorian garden, surrounded by a park landscaped by Humphry Repton in 1788, being his first paid commission.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Catton Park is first shown on Faden's 1797 county map as a small designed landscape of c 18ha with a hall standing towards the northern perimeter. The land was acquired by Jeremiah Ives, a prominent Norwich merchant, as a site for his new 'villa' and he gave Humphry Repton (1752-1818) his first paid commission to design the landscape setting. A Red Book does not appear to have been prepared but the site is mentioned in Repton's account books (NRO), which include a reference to one day spent on site with 'Wilkin', presumably his architect friend William Wilkins, the probable architect of the Hall. Jeremiah passed the estate to his son Frances in 1820. Between 1835 and 1852 Catton was in the possession of George Morse, who in 1852 placed the estate on the market. Surviving catalogues from this sale (NRO) provide the first detailed illustrations of the landscape and show the planted park, a well-wooded pleasure ground, and a walled kitchen garden. John Henry Gurney acquired the site at the 1852 sale; he expanded the park to the west, created a new south drive, laid a new garden on the south front, and altered the walled garden. Catton passed to Samuel Gurney Buxton in 1886 and it remained in the hands of the Buxton family until 1948 when the Hall and its surrounding gardens were sold to the County Council for use as a retirement home. The Council developed much of the garden to the north, including the site of the walled garden, for housing and the remains of Hall Farm House, the coach house, stables, and Orangery were surrounded by the expansion of Old Catton village. The retirement home was closed and the Hall and remaining gardens sold in 1994 to Michael and Patricia Cooke who converted part of the Hall for office use and restored the remainder as a private dwelling. The site remains (1999) in private but divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Catton Hall is located on the north side of Norwich city, completely surrounded by urban development. It is bounded along its north side by Old Catton conservation village, running along Church Street. The west boundary is formed by St Faith's Road, concealed along the length of the park by a long shelter belt of exotic species. Dense perimeter woods form the south boundary which borders on the Mile Cross Road (Norwich inner

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ring road), whilst much of the east boundary, again screened by perimeter plantations, is formed by Oak Lane. The topography of the park, which covers c 39ha, is gently rolling with a gradual fall from west-north-west to east-south-east, rising again beyond Oak Lane to the north-east into the old Deer Park. The Hall stands on the higher ground in the north-west corner of the park. The main views out of the site are from the south front of the Hall looking south over the park to the rooftops of the city in the distance, a gap in the tree line focusing the eye on the spire of Norwich Cathedral.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Catton Hall is now from the north along the modern Parkside Road off Church Street. The C19 north entrance to the Hall is located to the east of Parkside Road where wrought-iron gates and stone gate piers (listed grade II) survive, leading to the forecourt of Hall Farm House and the C18 Orangery (listed grade II), both lying outside the registered area. The Orangery is now used as a village hall. A service drive in the west connects St Faith's Road to the west front of the Hall. The south drive enters the park c 600m south of the Hall off Oak Lane and runs north through the park to arrive at the east front of the Hall. This entrance is marked by elaborate gates and railings hung on stone piers (listed grade II) and passes the single-storey South Lodge (listed grade II), of stucco brick with hexagonal tile roof, added by the Buxton family in the mid to late C19. When Repton laid out the park at the end of the C18 he created a drive from the north-east which purposefully passed a group of cottages, one of which Repton is thought to have designed himself (Williamson 1998). The drive does not survive but the cottage does, a picturesque colour-washed brick and thatch building known as Holiday House (listed grade II) situated on the northern boundary of the park, c 350m east-north-east of Catton Hall.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Catton Hall is a large, late C18 country mansion with rendered and colour-washed walls under a slate roof. It is built in five storeys to a U-shaped plan, the centre of the 'U' being filled with a one-and-a-half-storey C19 library wing projecting north. Extending south from the west corner is a mid C19 Palladian-style cast-iron and glass Camellia House, now without its cupola. The south facade has five bays with three windows in the bays, cast-iron balconies added in the late C19 and an early C20 covered loggia which connects to the Camellia House. The entrance front to the east is divided into three by slender columns with capitals, the central door now without its porch. The Hall was built in c 1780, possibly to a design by William Wilkins, for Jeremiah Ives and was extended and given a new south front in the mid to late C19 by Samuel Buxton.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds at Catton are now much reduced and little remains of the historical planting. To the north is an open lawn, edged by a scattering of trees which screen the housing development beyond built on the site of the late Victorian and Edwardian gardens and the walled kitchen garden. To the east the drive opens onto a tarmac parking area for the offices. To the west and south-west is a further area of parking although the drive here is flanked by the remains of a dense shrubbery of large laurel and yew under a deciduous tree canopy. The south front looks onto what survives of the mid C19 formal garden. The remains of a stone terrace wall marks a change in level of the lawn, with a gap in the wall where steps originally connected the two. Two large upright yew survive beside the south end of the Camellia House, otherwise all the planting is late C20 and concentrated around the perimeter of the garden, against the fence which divides the garden from the park (there is no evidence on the ground of a ha-ha).

PARK The park at Catton covers c 39ha, reduced from the 45ha laid out by Repton, and lies to the south and east of the Hall. It is currently (1999) partly under arable cultivation and partly in set-aside, with only the Deer Park retained under grass. Some very mature trees survive scattered over the whole area, mainly oak and horse chestnut with conifers and beech close to the perimeters. The oaks may date from the Repton period. By contrast the old Deer Park has very few mature trees and is cut through from north to south by a modern (late C20) ribbon planting of mixed tree species. The boundary woodlands around the body of the park are of mixed character with a high proportion of exotics and conifers along the western boundary. Some of the surviving boundary plantations date from the late C18/early C19 although the western belt, known as Fiddle Plantation, dates from the mid C19. The fall in the ground from north to south and the careful planting of the southern boundary plantation allows views out of the park towards the city from the south garden terrace of the Hall.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden was originally located to the north of the Hall. It was demolished in the mid C20 to make way for a housing estate.

REFERENCES

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N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North-east Norfolk and Norwich* (1962), p 288 D Stroud, Humphry Repton (1962), p 36 J Kenworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981), p 98 G Carter et al, Humphry Repton (1982), pp 15, 101, 158 T Williamson, *The archaeology of the landscape park*, BAR Brit Ser 268 (1998), pp 122, 195-6, 225-6 Maps Map of suggested course of road order, 1778 (C/Sc 1, Road Order Book 3, 298(9), (Norfolk Record Office) 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) Tithe map for Catton parish, 1843 (Norfolk Record Office) Catton Park Estate, map accompanying Sale particulars, 1852 (DS24 (290) Cabinet II), (Norfolk Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1904 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1905

Illustrations H Repton, *Views in Catton Park*, c 1788 (Norwich Castle Museum)

Archival items H Repton, *Account books for his early years* (MS10 T131 B), (Norfolk Record Office) Sale particulars, 1852 (DS24 (290) Cabinet II), (Norfolk Record Office)

Description written: May 1999 Amended: February 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: February 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.