

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

REVESBY ABBEY

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Name:	REVESBY ABBEY
County:	Lincolnshire
District:	East Lindsey (District Authority)
Parish:	Revesby
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.142888 Longitude: -0.048114366 National Grid Reference: TF3065362417 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000988 Date first listed: 24-Jun-1985

Details

A mid C19 country house set beside the remains of mid C19 formal gardens surrounded by a late C18 park with its origins in a medieval deer park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The ruins of the medieval Revesby Abbey with which the deer park was associated lie to the south-west, outside the boundary of the site here registered. It was the second Abbey, built by Craven Howard, and its associated estate which was purchased in 1714 by Joseph Banks I who undertook extensively remodelling between 1716 and 1718. Banks' house, set within mature parkland, was depicted in 1805 in an engraving by Howlett (Thorold 1999), at which time it had become the Lincolnshire home of Joseph's famous grandson, the plant collector Sir Joseph Banks. Banks died in 1820 without a legitimate heir and his estates were divided, Revesby and the Lincolnshire lands passing to his first cousin once removed Lt Col James Hamilton Stanhope. However the division of the family estates took eight years to settle during which time Revesby fell into a state of neglect and Colonel Stanhope died. His heir, James Banks Stanhope was a minor and did not succeed to the estate until 1842, during which time the Abbey was emptied. The Lincolnshire Chronicle records that in the year James Stanhope succeeded, 'the splendid park, with its delightful avenues and herds of deer are the only remnants of its former splendour'. The remaining contents of the house were dispersed and the Abbey was demolished in 1844 and the materials sold at auction. James Stanhope engaged the architect William Burn and they began the construction of a new Revesby Abbey, the third building to bear the name, 'several hundred yards north of the site of the old house' (Lincolnshire Chronicle 1842). New screen gates and a lodge were erected on the south boundary and the new Abbey, together with formal gardens, was completed in 1846. In the early 1880s, following financial losses resulting from the agricultural depression, J B Stanhope passed the estate on to his elected heir, Edward Stanhope. Edward died in 1893 and his widow in 1907. Revesby was inherited by Richard Philip Stanhope who married Lady Beryl, daughter of the fifth Earl of Clancart, but he was killed during the First World War in 1916 before they had any children. Thus there were no Stanhopes to succeed to Revesby. Further sales in 1918 and 1929 saw the loss of Sir Joseph Banks' Lincolnshire manuscripts and the house once again fell into neglect. In the 1970s the Wiggins-Davis family sold the

house and its gardens which have subsequently changed hands numerous times and become derelict. The site remains (2001) in divided private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Revesby Abbey is located c 15km north of Boston in a rural setting on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds. The c 125ha site is bounded to the south by the A155, to the west by a farm track known as Abbey Road, to the north by Terrace Lane and farmland, and to the east by agricultural land. The gently sloping ground falls slightly to the south and east and is entirely enclosed by boundary plantations, apart from a short section of the southern boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The Abbey is currently (2001) entered via an estate track running east from Abbey Road along the south side of the walled garden. The track turns south at the eastern end of the walled garden to pass the stable yard and arrive at the east front of the Abbey. This is a temporary route which probably represents the C19 back drive to the stables. It currently (2001) allows access to the Abbey until a new drive is constructed from Abbey Road directly to the west front. When the Abbey was constructed the main C19 approach was from the south off the A155 where a single-storey lodge (listed grade II), known as the Front Lodge, was constructed in colour-washed red brick under a slate roof by William Burn in c 1848. The lodge stands beside elaborate gates hung on jewel-panelled piers, with side screens in cast iron (all listed grade II), also by William Burn for J B Stanhope. The drive, now (2001) under grass, ran north between an avenue of mature limes for c 300m then curved around the site of the old Abbey before entering the gravelled oval forecourt below the east front through a further set of iron gates.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Revesby Abbey (listed grade I) is a large country house built of ashlar in the Jacobean style. The slate roofs have decorative gables, pinnacles, and ball finials. The E-plan house is entered from the east through a porch with arcaded balustrading, reached via a flight of steps. All the windows are chamfered cross mullions. The Abbey was built by William Burn for J B Stanhope in 1845, as was the stable yard attached to the north front. The house, which has been empty since the mid C20, is currently (2001) undergoing renovation.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The remains of the mid C19 gardens lie to the south, west, and south-west of the Abbey. The remains of stone steps lead up from the east front forecourt to a terrace, now grass (2001), running immediately below the south front. The terrace is connected to the lawn below it by further fragments of steps. The lawn is flanked to east and west by tree and shrub planting and is bordered to the south by a partly surviving low boundary wall with upstanding piers. In the centre of the lawn is a circular fountain pool, the fountain no longer extant. In the C19 and early C20 this lawn was laid out as a formal garden, with flower beds.

The garden to the west of the Abbey is now (2001) very overgrown with sapling trees and shrubs. It contains the remains of a further flower garden, the stone border edges of which survive in places.

Beyond the west garden and running southwards all along the western boundary is the pleasure ground known as The Shrubbery. This mixed plantation of conifers and broadleaves contains much C20 planting and self-set trees, but amongst these are the remains of the more exotic pleasure-ground plantings, including mature specimens such as cut-leaved beech, cedar, and chusan palm. There is an understorey of yew and laurel, and yew-lined walks can be traced in places. One long gravel walk which runs north/south c 50m west of the Abbey partially survives lined with yews. Within the woodland c 100m to the south-west of the Abbey stands the remains of a rose garden, much of its elaborate ironwork hoops and central gazebo still in place although greatly overgrown by the surrounding trees. A circular feature is shown in this position in more open surroundings on the 1st edition OS 6" map (surveyed in 1887), suggesting that the rose garden is a feature contemporary with the building of the house. This map also shows The Shrubbery cut through with many serpentine paths, all of which have been lost.

PARK Revesby Abbey sits in the north-west corner of the park, which extends to the south, south-east, and east. It is retained under grass and is well scattered with parkland trees of varying ages, some of great maturity and probably relics of the C18 park associated with the earlier Revesby Abbey, created on the site of the medieval deer park. There are heavily wooded areas along the northern (Abbey Plantation) and eastern (The Belt) boundaries, with the area where the two meet being called The Wilderness. These first appear on the OS 1st edition 6" map surveyed in 1887 and are therefore likely to be contemporary

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with the creation of the mid Victorian park. The park contains two small ponds: one close to the site of the old Abbey and the other in the south-east corner of the park. Some of the largest trees, including the remains of a lime avenue, survive just to the north of Front Lodge.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen gardens stands c 75m to the north-west of the Abbey. It is divided into two compartments, that to the south containing a tennis court and that to the north laid out as a herb and flower garden. The garden is Victorian, having been built in the 1840s at the same time as the Abbey. OS maps from the period show that in the 1880s it was divided into quarters and contained a range of glasshouses on the south-facing north wall.

REFERENCES

Lincolnshire Chronicle, 20 May 1842 (Lincolnshire Archives) N Pevsner and J Harris, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (2nd edn 1989), p 610 H Thorold and J Yates, *Lincolnshire A Shell Guide* (1965), p 113 C Sturman (ed), *Lincolnshire People and Places: Essays in memory of Terence R Leach (1937-1994)* (1996), pp 73-7 H Thorold, *Lincolnshire Houses* (1999), p 78 Maps Capt A Armstrong, *Map of the County of Lincolnshire, 1779* (Lincolnshire Archives) Tithe map for Revesby parish, 1837 (Lincolnshire Archives)

OS 1" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1824 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1887, published 1891 2nd edition published 1906

Description written: November 2001 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: June 2002

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.