

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

CHILTON HALL

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Name:	CHILTON HALL
County:	Suffolk
District:	Babergh (District Authority)
Parish:	Chilton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.051077 Longitude: 0.75328384 National Grid Reference: TL8888442765 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000226 Date first listed: 01-Jun-1984

Details

An early C17 walled garden on the site of an earlier smaller enclosure, beside the remains of a mid C16 moated manor house with woodland garden laid out in the 1930s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Chilton Hall was built by Robert Crane IV (1508/91) between 1550 and 1560 (V Herbert, pers comm). On his death in 1591 a detailed map of his lands and estates was drawn up which records the extent of the manor at that time. The Hall was surrounded by a moat with an arched gateway to the south leading to farm buildings and a small enclosure to the west (possibly a garden), beyond which lay two lozenge-shaped ponds. The estate, including a kitchen ground and orchard to the north (now arable fields and outside the registered boundary), was inherited by Sir Robert Crane V, who built the present walled garden (Tom Williamson, site inspection), his lands being divided upon his death in 1643 amongst his four surviving daughters. The Hall and grounds passed to the daughter married to Edmund Bacon, at which time Chilton possessed a large deer park to the south-east of the present site (1597 Survey). By the end of the C17 the estate had passed to the Wodehouse family whose main seat was at Kimberley in Norfolk, thus during the C18 and early to mid C19 it remained little more than a large farmhouse. In c 1800 it is believed a fire destroyed much of the Hall leaving only the east wing, and certainly by 1839 when the Tithe map was drawn up the deer park had been turned over to arable. During the latter part of the C19 the status of the site increased, being described as 'the seat of Mrs Meeking' (Kelly 1883). In 1924 the Hall, garden and immediate grounds were purchased by the English family who laid out the woodland garden during the 1930s. The site remains (1998) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Chilton Hall sits on the eastern edge of the Suffolk town of Sudbury, just beyond the west end of Chilton village on the B1115 Sudbury to Stowmarket road. The registered site covers c 6ha and is bounded to the north-west by the B1115, to the south-west and north-east by arable land and to the south-east by farmland beyond the garden woodland. The modern suburbs of Sudbury are very evident to the south and south-west such that the setting of the site is caught between the urban fringe and the rural countryside. The topography is flat, with the main view out of the site being across the western pond through a gap in the woodland garden towards the church.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There is one entrance drive off the B1115 in the north. The straight drive, lined with maple (mid C20), runs south-south-east to the east front of the Hall where the principal drive terminates in a parking area. A smaller drive carries on to sweep around the south end of the Hall and ends at the brick bridge over the moat. The original arched gateway shown across this bridge on the 1597 map has now (1998) gone leaving only the bridge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Chilton Hall (listed grade II*) sits in the southern half of the registered site, completely surrounded by a deep moat which currently occupies a similar but slightly different line to that shown on 1597 map. The Hall was built by Robert Crane between 1550 and 1560 on the site of an earlier medieval house but the major part was possibly destroyed by fire c 1800 leaving the east wing which stands today. This is constructed of red brick and is two storeys high with attics and cellars. The south gable has a moulded brick parapet with ornate detail added in the 1920s. The south-west corner has an octagonal buttress and the south-east corner an embattled turret which was also embellished in the 1920s. A door in the east front is reached by a brick and timber footbridge over the moat. In the late C18 the west front was given a Georgian facade with one- and two-light double-hung sash windows. A late C20 conservatory room has been added on this front.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds cover approximately 2ha and lie predominantly to the south and west of the Hall. Beyond the moat to the north is a narrow strip of woodland. Between the moat and the drive to the east is a simple lawn with clipped box and mature trees. The garden to the west and south of the Hall, within the moat, has a flagstone terrace and lawns planted with mature trees, including a large copper beech. Across the brick moat bridge to the south is a woodland garden planted with mixed evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs together with the remains of walks lined with clipped evergreens. This garden was developed by the then owners in the 1930s. A sunken rose garden of red brick lies in this southern tip of the site, entered through a stone arch removed from the Parliament buildings before Charles Barry remodelled them. It is now (1998) planted with shade-tolerant herbaceous plants. The two large pools between the rose garden and the south wall of the kitchen garden appear on the 1597 map and are therefore of at least C16 origin and were probably medieval fishponds (Tom Williamson, pers comm). Adjacent to the southern tip of the eastern pond is a flint-edged flower bed which was formerly a lily pond created in the 1930s, backed to the south by a curved stone wall and stone seat.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled garden at Chilton covers approximately 0.25ha and lies to the west of the Hall, beyond the moat which forms its east boundary. The red-brick walls (listed grade II) with ornamental castellated capping form the north, west and south boundaries and they date from the early years of the C17 (1597 map and site inspection). In the west wall is an arched gateway centred on the garden door of the west front of the Hall and on the outer face of the south wall is a small C17 tile-roofed animal shelter. Within the garden on the south side are two arched recesses and opposite these in the north wall is one arched recess (the remains of a second are visible). These were mostly probably constructed as viewing seats when the walled garden was built (Tom Williamson, site inspection). Beside each of these, small, modern (late C20) garden enclosures have been created with low brick walls, those to the south divided by a wall built in 1990 with bricks from the demolished Sudbury railway station, containing two 'booking-office' windows and a top contour which mirrors the topography of the railway line from Sudbury to Marks Tey. The south-east enclosure contains the remains of an unusual C16/C17 thirty-two-sided stone sundial. The present owners have recently (1990s) replanted the walled garden which is laid to grass with orchard trees in the southern half and vegetable beds in the northern half. Double herbaceous borders run east/west from the moat to divide the two areas, terminating near the west wall in a beech-hedged enclosure with central urn. Low, clipped box hedges edged with roses and lavender run along the moat boundary to connect the arched recesses and three sets of steps to north, south and centre descend from the garden to the moat.

REFERENCES

White, *Directory of Suffolk* (1844), p 536 Kelly, *Directory of Suffolk* (1883), p 850 N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk* (1975), p 166 Eric Sandon, *Suffolk Houses: a study of domestic architecture* (1979), p 212 Proc Suffolk Inst Archaeol Hist S9 36, (1996)

Maps Survey and description of the manor of Chilton, 1597 (70953), (British Library) R Corby, Enclosure map of the parish of Great Cornard and Chilton, 1813 (FL14/1/12), (West Suffolk Record Office) Tithe map, 1839 (T104/1 & 2), (West Suffolk Record Office)

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1905 3rd edition published 1928 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1904 3rd edition published 1926

Archival items Lease of 1715 concerning the Chilton estate, (HD 1969/1), (West Suffolk Record Office) Sale particulars for the Chilton estate, 1861 (2129/1 & 2), (West Suffolk Record Office)

Description written: November 1998 Amended: June 1999 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: December 1999

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.