

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

NORTON CONYERS

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**NORTON CONYERS**

Name:	NORTON CONYERS
County:	North Yorkshire
District:	Harrogate (District Authority)
Parish:	Norton Conyers
County:	North Yorkshire
District:	Harrogate (District Authority)
Parish:	Wath
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.182771 Longitude: -1.5198825 National Grid Reference: SE3143276439 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001068 Date first listed: 10-May-1984

## Details

Pleasure grounds with elements which may date from the C16 and C17, a water garden possibly of early C18 date and a park probably created in the early C18.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The site was owned by the Conyers family in the C11. The property was bought at the end of the C14 by the Norton family who retained it until 1569 when it was confiscated because of their role in the Rising of the North. The estate was subsequently bought by the Musgrave family who sold it to Richard Graham (created first baronet, 1628) in 1624 after his marriage to a Musgrave daughter. The estate continued in the family with one short break in the C19 and remains in private ownership (1998).  
**DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Norton Conyers lies immediately south-west of the village of Wath in an area which is otherwise rural and agricultural. The c 105ha site is in the valley of the River Ure on land which rises slightly to the north. The walled eastern boundary is formed by a minor road between Wath and Ripon, Tanfield Lane forms part of the northern boundary, and other boundaries are formed by fences dividing the site from agricultural land. A bend in the River Ure abuts with the south-west tip of the park.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** An entrance on the north side of the site lies at the south end of Main Street in Wath where Wath Lodge (listed grade II) is a gothic-style building of late C18 date beside an elaborate mid C18 gateway (listed grade II\*) with paired pedimented pedestrian gateways flanking wrought-iron gates. A drive leads south-west and south to the stables. On the east side of the site a drive leads west from the minor road to the north side of the Hall, entering a courtyard which has the remains of a C17 gate pier with balusters and columns set into a wall on the east side of the entrance. This entrance is the only one currently (1998) in use. A set of gate piers (listed grade II) which lie c 200m north-west of the Hall

relate to a route shown running north-westwards through the park on the 1909 OS map. They are of weathered red sandstone with recessed panels with gothic-style trefoil heads and pierced arrow slits.

On the south side of the site the Ripon Gates (listed grade II) lie on the north side of the road to Ripon. The gates are flanked by stone piers with distinctive bulgy rustication and were formerly capped with figures of a lion and an eagle bearing the arms of the first Viscount Preston which were brought from Nunnington Hall (qv), probably after 1757 when the Nunnington branch of the Graham family died out or in the early C19 when the estate was inherited by Sir Bellingham Graham, seventh baronet. There is an icehouse in the slope c 40m north of the gate, and a drive which is intermittently lined with yew trees runs north and north-westwards through Crow Wood. This route was the road to Ripon until rerouting to the east took place in the later C18. **PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Norton Conyers Hall (listed grade II\*) is a medieval building with extensions and alterations of the C16, C17 and C18. The south-west and north-west fronts of the building have rows of Dutch gables with bullseye windows which probably date from the late C17, and the central entrance of the south-west front has the same bulgy rustication of the Ripon Gate gate piers, which suggests a connection with a mason working at Nunnington Hall, owned by another branch of the Graham family, where there is similar distinctive rustication. Robert Trollope of York has been suggested (for example by Jackson-Stops, CL 1986) as a possible candidate. The north-east side of the Hall, which is crenellated at eaves level, is probably a surviving part of the medieval fortified manor. The Hall is in use as a private residence (1998).

On the north-east side of the Hall a courtyard is formed by a single-storey range of former stables (C17 and C18, listed grade II) and an adjoining wall. A clock tower rises from the gabled south end of the range and it is shown in a painting by Nicholas Dall of 1774 (private collection) when the attached buildings were two storeys in height.

Some 100m north-west of the Hall there are stables (listed grade II\*) ranged around a courtyard which were built in 1784 to designs by William Belwood. A building shown by Dall on the site with arcading or tall windows must have been demolished to make way for the new stables.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** On the south-west side of the Hall there is a walkway divided from the park by a ha-ha (listed grade II) which forms a promenade extending from the kitchen garden 200m to the west to a point c 100m to the south-east where the walk joins with the drive from the south. On the north-west side of the Hall there is a bowling green reputed to date from the early C17 or before and said to have been used by King Charles I who stayed at the Hall in 1632 (guidebook 1994). On the west side of the green the land rises and there are a number of stone plinths which once supported statues and urns of early C18 date. Paths lead through a patch of woodland to the stables. A ha-ha on the north-west side of the garden has a tunnel at its west end leading to the stable yard.

Pleasure grounds called Wilderness Wood are entered from a gateway north of the kitchen garden c 400m north-west of the Hall. A narrow strip of woodland is divided from the northern part of the park by a ha-ha, and a levelled platform, possibly the site of a building, lies c 30m north of the entrance. The area of woodland widens and paths lead north-west, past brickwork exposed in the roots of a fallen tree which appears to be of C17 date and may be the foundations of a building. There are a number of ponds (partially dried up, 1998) including one c 500m north-west of the Hall with a central island. A system of banks or terraces lies south and west of the pond on land which slopes down to the south-west. A large oval pond lies within the woods c 700m north-west of the Hall and the shore is planted with ornamental trees mixed with self-sown native species. The relationship of the pleasure grounds with the Hall is via a service route linking the kitchen garden and stable, which suggests that the grounds were created prior to the construction of the garden (ie pre 1774), which effectively blocks a route from the gardens around the Hall. The regular outline of the northernmost lake planted with ornamental trees suggests a late C19 or early C20 remodelling.

On the north side of the Hall there is a mound and pond (silted up, 1998) c 100m north of the building which could be the remains of a C16 viewing mound and water garden. A path called Church Walk leads north past the mound through a strip of woodland on the east side of the site to Wath Lodge.

**PARK** On the south and west side of the Hall there is an area of level grassland, called South Lawn, covered with scattered trees. A map of 1697 shows that there were buildings around the Hall and south of it at that time, with the surrounding area divided

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into fields. The clearance of the buildings and creation of the park was probably undertaken by Sir Reginald Graham who inherited in 1730, or by his son Sir Bellingham after 1755. The 1774 painting shows the park with clumps of fairly mature trees. On the north side of the Hall North Lawn is sheltered along the north side by woodland called Wath Belt. A radiating pattern of paths and drives through North Lawn, and what appears to be an avenue running north-east in the eastern part of the northern park, appear on the 1909 OS map but can no longer be clearly seen.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies c 150m north-west of the Hall, immediately to the west of the stables. It is reached from the walk running along the edge of the ha-ha west of the Hall and entered via a pair of brick gate piers which flank a decorative wrought-iron gate (walls, gate piers and gate mid(late C18, listed grade II). This entrance is aligned with an orangery (mid(late C18, listed grade II) which is shown prominently on the 1774 painting. Clipped hedges with borders alongside them flank a path leading from the entrance to the orangery and there is a circular pool (listed grade II) at the head of the path which has a central pedestal for a (removed) statue. The north wall has blocked heating flues.

**REFERENCES** N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire The North Riding* (1966), pp 273-4 *Country Life*, 180 (9 October 1986), pp 1094-97; (16 October 1986), pp 1200-4 *Norton Conyers, guidebook*, (Sir James Graham 1994)

Maps Estate Map, 1697 (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1930 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1909

Description written: November 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: October 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.