

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

Earlham Park

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

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Name:	Earlham Park
County:	Norfolk
District:	Norwich (District Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.624691 Longitude: 1.2354295 National Grid Reference: TG1908207907 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1471383 Date first listed: 18-Aug-2020 Location Description: Statutory Address 1: Earlham Park, University of East Anglia, Norwich, Norfolk

Historique de la conservation

Earlham Hall (Grade II*-listed) originated in the late C16 and has been much extended and remodelled. It was owned by the Waller family from 1657 to 1682, by the Bacons from 1682 to 1786, and subsequently the Franks, although the Gurney family, a prominent and wealthy Norwich family of Quakers, leased the Hall from 1786 until 1912. Earlham was the childhood home of the philanthropist and prison reformer Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845).

The earliest representation of the landscape is provided by Edmund Prideaux, who sketched the hall from the east in the mid-1720s. No park is shown, but the hall is framed by an axial avenue and an area of woodland – presumably a formal Wilderness – is shown adjoining it to the west. A dovecote is depicted in the foreground, close to the Watton Road. William Faden's county map, surveyed in the early 1790s, shows that, by this time, a landscaped park had been laid out around the hall. The map suggests that this covered 200 acres, but this is probably an exaggeration for a survey of 1829 indicates that the southern portion of this area was occupied by arable land ornamented with clumps and plantations, and that the 'core' area of true parkland extended over approximately 88 acres. The map shows a number of avenues within the park; possibly relics of a C17 or early-C18 design. Many other trees stood in lines, indicating their origin as hedgerow timber. The landscape is shown in much the same way, although with less detail, on the Tithe Award Map of 1846, but the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1886 depicts a number of changes, most notably the establishment of a perimeter belt along the south boundary, blocking off the view that formerly existed across the area of ornamented farmland.

There is evidence for early formal gardens dating to the later C17 or early C18 in the immediate vicinity of the house in a series of earthworks to the south and west of the Hall. These would have been simplified and made less formal during the second half of the C19. They survive in much the same form as shown on an estate map of 1829 which also depicts a wilderness to the north-west of the house and a lawn to the south flanked by tree-covered areas and shrubberies. A straight north-south drive is shown to the east of the south-eastern shrubbery as well as a circuit of paths running through the pleasure grounds which are still largely intact. The southern and western margins of the pleasure grounds are marked on the map by a ha-ha,

its substantial scale suggesting it had been created in the early C18. A large rectangular walled kitchen garden, apparently of early-C19 date, is depicted to the north-east of the Hall, and plantations called The Heronry and Violet Grove are shown along the western edge of the park.

The gardens were extended by Reginald Gurney in the C20 (shortly before the First World War) in the area to the south-east of the house, formerly occupied by service buildings and a paddock with parkland beyond. These were described in an article in *Country Life* (May 21 1921). A broad walk with a herbaceous border was laid out, together with a sunken rose garden, the design of which was based on the formal lines made fashionable by designers like Edwin Lutyens. An extensive rock garden was created using water-worn mountain limestone and planted with a wide range of rock plants, heather, campanulas and bamboo. A box parterre garden, known as the Dutch Garden, partly surrounded by C17 and C18 walls (Grade II-listed), was also established around this time nearer the Hall.

In 1925 the Frank family sold the estate to the Corporation of Norwich. The grounds were used as a public park and the Hall became a school and then a hospital during the Second World War. Over the following decades much of the estate was built on or used for schools and playing fields; and the area to the south became a municipal golf course until it was developed as the site for the University of East Anglia in the 1960s. Earlham Hall was used by the University from 1962 and is currently the home of the School of Law.

Details

Mid- to late-C18 landscaped park with gardens and pleasure grounds laid out in the C19 and early C20.

LOCATION, SETTING, LANDFORM, BOUNDARIES AND AREA

Earlham Park is situated to the north of the University of East Anglia on rising ground above the river with the land sloping away to the west. It covers an area of approximately 35 hectares. The park is bounded to the north by Watton Road, to the east by University Drive which follows quite closely the line of the original park boundary, to the south by a C19 shelter belt (screening it from the campus); and to the west by the C18 plantations The Heronry and Violet Grove.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Three carriage drives to Earlham Hall are shown on the 1829 estate plan. The drive from Bluebell Road to the south-east has left no discernible trace, whilst the northern drive from Watton Road survives in earthwork form, leaving the lime avenue from the north-east off Watton Road as the only surviving entrance. **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

Earlham Hall (Grade II*-listed) is a large house of flint and red brick with an approximately H-shaped plan. It has a late-C16 core that was extended and remodelled in the C17, C18 and early C20. Each elevation subsequently has a different architectural character. The north entrance front is Georgian and has three bays with a pedimented doorcase, deeply recessed by two projecting wings. The south garden front is C17 and has five bays flanked by additional late-C18 canted bays, the whole ornamented by three shaped gables added in 1910 by the Norwich-based architect Edward Boardman. Attached to the east are service buildings including a former coach house and a donkey engine house. **ORNAMENTAL GROUNDS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The gardens consist of lawns to the south and west with specimen trees, including cedars, and areas of shrubbery consisting of oaks, yews, larch and flowering trees of C19 and C20 date. The whole is bounded on the west and south by a substantial ha-ha comprising a deep ditch, now overgrown, probably of early- to mid-C18 date. The lawns to the south-west of the Hall contain earthworks of a formal garden. These represent the edges of areas levelled to provide flat space for lawns or parterres, possibly a raised terrace carrying a path, and the boundary of a 'wilderness' or ornamental shrubbery shown on Prideaux's picture. The earthwork banks represent the terrace walks around its margins. Whilst this area does not now include trees of any great antiquity, there are some fine specimens of C19 and early-C20 date, such as beeches, oaks, sycamore, ash and lime. A circuit path, shown on the 1829 map, winds its way through the gardens from the south front of the Hall, up to the wilderness in the north-west, then follows the western and southern edge of the ha-ha before heading northwards through the shrubbery to the south-east corner of the lawn.

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To the south-east of the Hall is the rock garden laid out around 1914 using large blocks of Welsh limestone buried deeply in the ground forming a network of paths. It was planted with a multitude of rock plants but has now become shaded by dark green evergreen shrubs, including yew and laurel. To the north-west is the large rose garden with quarter-circle flower beds bordered by paths of narrow brick with grass borders. The garden is sunk around half a metre below ground level and is reached by semicircular steps in the north-east and north-west corners. A broad grass walk and herbaceous border separates it from the hedge marking the southern boundary of the kitchen garden. The Dutch Garden, lying immediately to the south-east of the Hall, was created around the late C19 within three-sided, red brick garden walls of probable C18 date (Grade II-listed). It is a formal parterre with box-edged beds surrounded by gravel paths.

PARK

The Hall is situated towards the north-eastern corner of the park which is therefore mostly laid out to the south and west. The park is interspersed with trees, such as beech, ash, horse chestnut and lime, mostly late-C18 and C19 in date, with the exception of the relict hedgerow oaks. The most striking example is a former pollarded oak with a girth of 6.7m, suggesting it was planted in the later Middle Ages. A series of earthworks mark former field boundaries shown on the 1829 map and the former position of avenues that were probably planted in the late C18 or early C19 (since removed). The park also contains two hollow ways of probable medieval origin, one running north-south through the south of the park, aligned on the Hall, and another running across the north-west of the park.

An C18 red brick dovecote (listed Grade II) with a square plan and shingled, pyramidal roof stands in the north-west corner of the park. It was no doubt positioned within view of Watton Road to indicate the status of the inhabitants of Earlham Hall. Immediately to the north of the dovecote are the remains of a Spigot Mortar emplacement dating from 1940, set into an earthen bank to cover the strategically important bridge across the River Yare. The remains comprise a concrete plinth with an embedded steel mount. The pit dug around the plinth, in which the operators would have sat, has been infilled. A car park occupies the north-east corner of the park.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The large kitchen garden, shown on the 1829 plan, is positioned to the north-east of the Hall. It has a rectangular plan, the irregular south wall having been realigned in the early C20 and now consisting of yew. The northern boundary and short stretches of the east and west sides are defined by a low red brick wall laid in Flemish Garden bond with external pilasters. The map regression shows that it was divided into four by paths and had free-standing glasshouses in the southern half but these have since been removed and the garden itself is overgrown and no longer in production.

Summary

Mid- to late-C18 landscaped park with gardens and pleasure grounds laid out in the C19 and early C20.

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.

Reasons for Designation

Earlham Park, a mid- to late-C18 landscaped park with gardens and pleasure grounds laid out in the C19 and early C20, is registered at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Historic interest:

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* it represents a well preserved late-C18 landscape park embellished with early-C20 pleasure grounds, all designed to emulate the prevailing tastes of the successive ages and provide an eminently suitable setting for a country house of some distinction;

* the evidence of the early formal gardens is of particular interest as such earthwork remains are rare in Norfolk.

Design interest:

* the development of the gardens in the early C20 were considered important enough to be featured in *Country Life*;

* the rock garden is a fine example of its type which, although now somewhat overgrown, retains its original composition of carefully placed blocks of water-worn mountain limestone, creating a rocky ravine and network of paths.

Group value:

* together with the Grade II*-listed Hall and attached outbuildings, the Grade II-listed garden walls and dovecote, it forms an ensemble of historic significance that aptly demonstrates the aesthetic qualities associated with succeeding periods.

Bibliographie

Books and journals

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Pevsner, N, Wilson, B, *The Buildings of England: Norfolk: 1 Norwich and North-East*, (2002)

Other

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