

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

RABY CASTLE

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

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**RABY CASTLE**

Name: RABY CASTLE

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Raby with Keverstone

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Staindrop

label.localisation: Latitude: 54.593334  
Longitude: -1.8039007  
National Grid Reference: NZ 12769 22034  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000732  
Date first listed: 07-Oct-1986

## Details

A park of the mid C18 laid out with advice from Thomas Wright and Joseph Spence. Thomas White prepared plans in 1771 which may have been partially executed.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Raby Castle was the seat of the Neville family from the C12. It was used as a headquarters during the Rising of the North and was subsequently confiscated by the Crown. In 1626 it was bought by Sir Henry Vane and it remained in the Vane family who were created barons Barnard of Barnard Castle by William III in 1698. Following a family dispute in 1714 the park was stripped of its timber and deer, and the Castle of its furniture and fittings. A bill was filed by the heir, Gilbert Vane, to prevent further damage and total destruction of the Castle. Gilbert succeeded as second Lord Barnard in 1723 and set about restoring the Castle and park. The site remains in private ownership (1998).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Raby Castle lies immediately north of the village of Staindrop on rolling land which falls gently to the south. The c 230ha site is in a rural and agricultural setting. The walled northern boundary is formed by Burnt Houses Lane. The wall continues along Keverstone Bank, the eastern boundary, and along the southern boundary with Staindrop. The western boundary of the area here registered is formed by the western edge of Bath Wood, the eastern edge of Sandy Bank Wood, a track between Sandy Bank Wood and Kennel Wood, the western edge of Kennel Wood, and a line through North Wood to the west of The Folly.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** There are two entrances from Keverstone Bank: South Lodge, with a lodge and stone gate piers (listed grade II), from which a drive runs north-west, and North Lodge (John Carr, listed grade II) with paired gothic lodges from which a drive runs south-west to the Castle. Two more entrances with lodges on the south side of the site and outside the registered area are reached from Moor Lane. Ladywood Lodge is a simple stone cottage and West Lodge is a cottage

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of 1914. Drives from them connect with a network of tracks through the site and into the registered area. Approaches from the south side of the site enjoy impressive views of the Castle across lakes.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Raby Castle (listed grade I) has an early C14 core, possibly incorporating earlier buildings; a licence to crenellate was granted in 1379. The Castle was altered in the early C17 and remodelled in the C18 by Daniel Garrett, James Paine, and John Carr. C19 alterations followed. The Castle is entered from a C14 gatehouse called the Porter's Lodge (listed grade I) on the north side of the moated platform which is enclosed by crenellated walls with rectangular bastions ranged at regular intervals around the platform. The moat is dry apart from part of the southern arm which forms the northern tip of a lake. It was not drained until the end of the C18, when the drawbridge was replaced by a causeway. Raby Castle is one of the largest and most complete castles of its type in the country.

Some 300m north of the Castle, on the north-east side of the kitchen garden, there is a complex of C18 buildings including stables by John Carr (listed grade II\*), hunting stables, carthorse stables, a riding school, a cottage, and a variety of ancillary buildings (all listed grade II).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The Castle is surrounded by a gravelled walk around the edge of the moated platform, and views can be obtained on all sides, with long-distance views over lakes and parkland to the south.

**PARK** There is parkland on all sides of the Castle, and the north and south boundaries are sheltered by North Wood and Scarth Plantation respectively. Immediately south-west of the Castle there are two lakes connected by a stepped cascade, called High Pond and Low Pond. These were created by damming Silver Spring, possibly in the period c 1740-6 as part of a landscape scheme by Thomas Wright (1711-86), or alternatively, as they are not shown on a county map of c 1770, they may have formed part of White's proposals. Estate records show that large numbers of trees were planted between 1727 and 1746 and the park wall was also constructed at this time. There are a number of clumps in the southern part of the park, some of which were planted to commemorate special events, such as Royal visits, during the C20.

A walk called Terrace Walk branches from the drive from the south and runs westwards up a slope to the Temple (listed grade II), a folly of mid to late C18 date, probably by Daniel Garrett, c 350m west of the Castle. The building is in the form of an open-fronted gothick pavilion and there are views of the Castle, lakes and parkland to the south. Rising land can be seen to the north with views of Raby Hill House (listed grade II), c 1.2km north-west of the Castle and outside the registered area, which was designed in Gothick style by James Paine, mid C18. Raby Home Farm (listed grade II\*) lies at the top of a hill to the west, c 1.8km from the Castle and outside the registered area, and there are views of a gothick screen fronting the east side of the Home Farm which was designed by Paine in the mid C18. Terrace Walk leads west along a ridge from the Temple and turns south over falling land to Bath Wood. The 1858 OS map shows that it was planted as an avenue, and there are scattered trees and areas of replanting alongside it.

On the north side of Bath Wood, the Bath House (possibly by Thomas Robinson, listed grade II\*) is a pinnacled building lying c 800m south-west of the Castle. Immediately north of the Bath House there is a small, rustic, C18 cottage (listed grade II). The 1854-7 OS map shows that the Bath House then fronted a clearing in the woodland to the south.

On the north side of the Castle, Kennel Wood lies to the north-west of the kitchen garden; the C19 Kennel House, c 500m north-west of the Castle, forms an incident in the landscape on the southern edge of the Wood. A track leads north from Kennel Wood to North Wood; a folly (John Carr, listed grade II\*) of 1780 which incorporates medieval fragments from the Castle lies on high ground in a clearing c 1.4 km north of the Castle. There are views southwards from The Folly, but it cannot be seen from the park owing to the maturity of the tree cover. The woodland in this part of the park was planted by the third Earl of Darlington in the mid C19 to provide cover for game.

The park was cleared of tenant farmers and the road to Cockfield was re-routed to the east in the late C18. Parkland immediately north-west of the Castle was the site of Raby village which was demolished in 1781, a course of action proposed by Joseph Spence (fl 1750), c 1755. A county map of 1768-70 shows the position of the village and the old line of the road. Thomas White (1736-1811) produced a landscaping scheme in 1771 and was paid £1400. His scheme, which included the addition of serpentine lakes, was probably only partially executed.

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**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies on a gentle, southwards-facing slope c 100m north of the Castle. It is a rectangular, brick-walled enclosure with the back of an L-shaped stable range at the north-east corner and a serpentine south wall. A grassed border and walkway runs immediately south of this wall, separated from the park by a ha-ha with a stream running through it. A bridge with a parapet surmounted by cast-iron railings and a cast-iron gate on the park side crosses the ha-ha and leads to a central entrance (listed grade II with the garden walls) which was brought to the site from Shipbourne in Kent in the early C20. Some 25m west of the entrance there is a C19 fig house which replaced an earlier building for a fig which is thought to have been planted in the C18 (guidebook). The ha-ha runs around the west side of the garden and continues around the complex of stables and ancillary buildings which lie immediately north of the garden. The north and west sides of the enclosure are sheltered by trees.

The central entrance leads to the central enclosure and a path flanked by clipped yew hedges. This runs north up the slope to a circular lily pond. The yew hedges continue northwards, as more mature specimens, flanking a lawn with geometric beds and a terrace which runs along the north side of the garden with a lead cistern dated 1746 (listed grade II) set into the centre of the revetment wall. The terraced walk, from which there are views over the garden to the Castle standing in parkland to the south, continues eastwards through an arch cut into the hedge and leads to an enclosure formed by the hedge and wall dividing the garden from its eastern neighbour. A summerhouse, probably of 1930s or later date, is positioned against the north wall and stone steps lead down to a garden with clipped box hedges and a formal pattern of gravel walks. Plinths supporting urns of C18 date are positioned at various points around this part of the garden. On the west side of the yew hedges the terraced walk continues westwards and there is a late C20 glasshouse positioned against the north wall.

The gardens which flank the central walled compartment have lawns and borders. In the north-west corner of the west compartment there is a gardener's house (listed grade II) in the form of a gothic cottage orné. In the south-east corner there is a small building with a chimney which is the boiler house for the fig house.

The garden layout was largely created during the later C20 incorporating pre-existing elements such as the yew hedges and central pool which are shown on the 1854-7 OS map.

Immediately north of the garden there is a walled enclosure with footings for glasshouses on the west side and a range of late C20 greenhouses on the east side. A gateway leads from the east end of the enclosure to the stables area.

The garden replaced one shown on a map of 1729 immediately south of the gatehouse. An undated and unsigned plan of post-1750 date shows the garden in its present position, and it may not have been laid out in its present form until Raby village was removed in 1781.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 37 (4 December 1915), pp 760-8; (11 December 1915), pp 804-10; 146 (10 July 1969), pp 78-81; (17 July 1969), pp 150-3; 147 (1 January 1970), pp 18-21; (8 January 1970), pp 66-9; (22 January 1970), pp 186-9 B Jones, Follies & Grottoes (1974), p 319 Raby Castle, guidebook, (nd, c 1975) N Pevsner and E Williamson, The Buildings of England: County Durham (1983), pp 386-9 P Leach, James Paine (1988), pp 204-5

Maps T Jefferys, County map, surveyed 1768

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1858 OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1854-7

Archival items Notes on the estate and gardens at Raby produced by the estate at various dates (private collection) M. Tooley, unpublished notes on views, drawings and designs of various features at Raby Castle (1993), (private collection)

Description written: June 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: September 2000

## 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.