

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

KIMBERLEY HALL

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

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**KIMBERLEY HALL**

Name: **KIMBERLEY HALL**

County: Norfolk

District: South Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Kimberley

County: Norfolk

District: South Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Wicklewood

County: Norfolk

District: South Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Wymondham

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.600580  
Longitude: 1.0751798  
National Grid Reference: TG0835304751  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1001007  
Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

## Details

An early C18 house with formal garden attributed to W A Nesfield, set in a park laid out by Lancelot Brown between 1762 and 1778.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Kimberley Hall and park have a long and complex history. The early medieval manor house, known as Falstoff Hall, stood within the moated enclosure which still survives in Falstoff Wood, in the south of the present park. After the marriage of Sir John Wodehouse to Sir Thomas Falstoff's daughter and heiress in c 1400, a new house, known as Wodehouse Tower, was constructed within the deer park on a large moated site c 900m to the west. This house was occupied by the Wodehouse family until 1641, when Sir Phillip Wodehouse purchased Downham Manor from Richard Buxton, which adjoined the Kimberley Estate to the east, beyond the River Tiffey in Wymondham parish. Wodehouse took up residence here; Wodehouse Tower was abandoned and demolished in 1659. Sir John Wodehouse, the fourth Baronet Wodehouse, inherited the family estate in 1669 at the age of two; by 1700 he was considering the possibility of erecting a new hall. This was to be on yet another new site, back once more in Kimberley parish and beside the deer park, c 700m north of the site of Wodehouse Tower. Two unexecuted

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*KIMBERLEY HALL*

designs for the surrounding landscape survive, one drawn by Samuel Gilpen (NRO) and the other by George London (private collection). The new hall was eventually erected in Downham parish from 1712 onwards to a design by the architect William Talman, surrounded by small enclosed gardens and a 35ha deer park. During the following decades Sir John's son, Sir Armine, commissioned Thomas Prowse to add towers to the Hall whilst outside he began to deformatise the landscape and to make a small lake. In 1762 he commissioned Lancelot Brown (1716-83) to remodel the landscape by developing the lake, a Broad Water, perimeter belts, and sweeping parkland. Sir Armine's son, another Sir John, called Brown back in 1778 to give further advice. Sir John's marriage to the heiress of John Norris allowed them to continue the development of Kimberley: by the late C18 a pleasure ground had been added to link the Hall with the walled garden and the park extended to the south. An estate map of 1827 (NRO) shows the park had been expanded to cover c 275ha and had gained three lodged entrances. In 1835 the architect Anthony Salvin (1790-1881) added curving colonnades to the Hall, making a link with the flanking wings. Sir John was created the first Earl of Kimberley in 1866 and about this time the formal gardens were updated, possibly by the designer William Andrews Nesfield (CL 1993). Three successive earls made few changes to the Hall or landscape and the fourth Earl, Lord John Wodehouse, succeeded to the title in 1941. During the war the Hall was occupied by troops, after which it was extensively modernised and altered in 1951 by the architect James Fletcher-Watson. The estate was sold into divided ownership in 1958 and the Hall and park purchased by Mr R Buxton. The site remains (1999) in divided private ownership.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Kimberley Hall lies c 4km to the north-west of the town of Wymondham, on the north-east side of the B1135 Wymondham to East Dereham road. The registered site covers c 240ha of parkland, woodland, and farmland set in rural Norfolk countryside. It is bounded to the north-east by the Carleton Forehoe to Wymondham road, partly to the north by the B1108 Watton to Norwich road and partly to the south-west by the Kimberley to Wymondham road. Elsewhere boundaries join the surrounding farmland and much of the park is encircled by woodland blocks and perimeter belts. The ground at Kimberley lies on either side of the River Tiffey which flows approximately from south to north through the park. There is a gentle slope south-west from the Hall to the lake and more dramatic slopes to the north on either side of the river valley. Peripheral areas are generally flatter.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Kimberley Hall is approached from the east, c 740m east-north-east of the Hall, off the Carleton Forehoe to Wymondham road through elaborate wrought-iron gates which link twin single-storey early C19 lodges. The drive, lined on either side by narrow strips of woodland, runs west-south-west to arrive at the north-east front where it encloses a central oval lawn. Kimberley originally had four further drives, all entering the park at various points along the southern boundary. All are now grass tracks through woodland or farmland. Two of these entrances are marked by lodges: the squared flint and tile School Lodge beside St Peter's church in Kimberley, c 2km to the west-south-west of the Hall; and the picturesque whitewash and thatch Crowthorpe or Attleborough Lodge (listed grade II) c 1km to the south-west. The other two, unmarked entrances are further to the east along the southern boundary.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Kimberley Hall is a large red-brick and stone-dressed country mansion, sitting to the east of centre of a large park. It comprises a central rectangular core with towers at each corner, and two-storey flanking service wings to the north-east on either side of the entrance front. The west and east wings are attached to the main building on this side by curving single-storey colonnades. The central core of the mansion was designed by the architect William Talman for Sir John Wodehouse in c 1712. The flanking service wings were designed and built at the same time but remained separate from the mansion until the architect Anthony Salvin was commissioned by the second Baron Wodehouse in 1835 when the curving colonnades were added. The four towers are an addition of 1755, added by Thomas Prowse for Sir Armine Wodehouse. The west service wing is now (late C20) used as the estate office. The east wing, with its central clock tower, formed the southern arm of the stable courtyard which lies beyond to the north. This is now used as an agricultural yard.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens and pleasure grounds at Kimberley are small in relation to the size of the mansion and its park, covering c 5ha including the walled kitchen garden. A formal garden lies on the south-west front, comprising an upper gravelled terrace with central steps leading down to a sunken lawn cut with flower beds. The grass rises again to form a raised terrace, originally gravelled, with low balustrade looking over the park to the lake. At the north-west end

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*KIMBERLEY HALL*

of the lawn are four rows of upright yews, the remains of the early C19 formal planting. In 1841 Grigor described the area as 'a flower garden, after the old formal Dutch style, but capable of great improvement', a treatment it is said to have received at the hand of William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881) in the mid C19 (CL 1993).

The pleasure ground lies to the south-east of the Hall, surrounding the walled garden and linking it by walks to the formal gardens and to the lake. It contains a mix of large native and exotic trees with evergreen shrub underplanting. The pleasure ground was laid out during the period of Brown's involvement with the landscape but the inclusion of species such as *Wellingtonia* demonstrate that it was developed further during the C19. Within the woodland lies the icehouse.

**PARK** Kimberley Hall sits in an extensive parkland, much of which was put under the plough during the Second World War. Part of the core of the park, together with areas of the Deer Park to the east and the river valley to the north have been retained as or returned to grass whilst the remainder continues as agricultural land. There are extensive woodlands, boundary belts, and plantations in and around the open park, with scattered trees and clumps where the grass survives. This landscape remains largely as Lancelot Brown designed it between the years 1762 and 1778. Mature trees on the surviving grassland are predominantly oak, some of a great age and therefore associated with the older landscape surrounding the earlier halls on the site, whilst a small number of massive limes c 300m to the south-east of the Hall may be remnants of the early C18 grove planting. Trees surviving from the C19 are of a greater variety of species, as are those planted since the mid C20. The remains of the three medieval manor houses survive in the park: c 1.6km south-west of the present Hall lies the moated enclosure where Wodehouse Tower sat (now, 1999, used as a tennis court); c 1km to the south-south-west in Falstoff's Wood lies the moat that surrounded Falstoff Hall (scheduled ancient monument); and c 800m to the south-east the earthwork remains of Downham Hall beside its surviving fishpond. In addition to these, just beyond the registered boundary c 600m to the north of the Hall lies the earthwork remains of Gelham's Hall.

The lake at Kimberley lies c 350m to the south-west of the Hall and presently (1999) covers c 6ha with a central island; it is backed by Falstoff's Wood. The River Tiffey flows in from the eastern corner and leaves to the north where it runs through the north park as a widened Broad Water. Construction of the lake had begun by 1754 and at first covered c 12 acres (5ha). The area was extended to 28 acres (c 11.5ha) by Brown, who also directed the widening of the river to form the Broad Water. During the C20 the lake became heavily silted and in the late C20 c 6ha have been dredged and cleared, the shores slightly recontoured, and a new island created. The Broad Water survives at approximately half its original width although the bridge which spanned it just north of the lake has gone. The mid C18 bridge over the eastern inlet to the lake, constructed during Brown's period of involvement, survives.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The walled kitchen garden lies c 300m south-south-east of the Hall. It is composed of high red-brick walls enclosing two compartments, the southern boundary of the lower compartment being defined not by a wall but by an ornamental fishpond backed by the end of the pleasure-ground planting. Both compartments are presently planted with soft fruit (1999). At the north end, to the east of the upper compartment, is a further small enclosed area known as Lady Isabel's Garden, now (1999) containing a swimming pool. South of this enclosure the remains of the old orchard area are now given over to soft fruit, although a small brick apple store survives. Outside the north wall of the kitchen garden is a single surviving glasshouse and beyond this to the north-east stands the Gardener's Cottage, dated 1880 but possibly containing remnants of an earlier building. The icehouse (listed grade II) lies outside the walled garden to the north. The kitchen garden was constructed at the same time as the Hall, the cross wall being added by Brown in the mid C18.

#### REFERENCES

John Chambers, *Norfolk Tour* (1829), p 348 J Grigor, *The Eastern Arboretum* (1841), pp 274-7 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North-west and South Norfolk* (1962), p 220 J A Andrews, *The Wodehouse Family*, (unpublished MS 1974) [copy on EH file] D Stroud, *Capability Brown* (1975), pp 112, 230 J Kenworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981), pp 147-9 *The Field*, (27 September 1986), pp 54-7 *J Garden History* 11, (1991), nos 1 and 2, pp 69-70 *Country Life*, no 14 (8 April 1993), pp 64-6 Tom Williamson, *The archaeology of the landscape park*, *BAR Brit Ser* 268 (1998), pp 256-8 Vanessa A C Buxton, *Kimberley Hall, Norfolk: Some notes on the building of the park by a daughter of the house* (nd MS, c 1990s) [copy on EH file]

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*  
*Inventory of Great Britain*  
*KIMBERLEY HALL*

Maps Samuel Gilpen, Estate map, c 1700 (Mf/Ro 499/2), (Norfolk Record Office) James Anderson, A map of Kimberley Hall and the grounds belonging to it ..., 1714 (Norfolk Record Office) Undated early/mid C18 estate map, (private collection) Lancelot Brown, Map of Kimberley Park, 1762 (Mf/Ro 499/2), (Norfolk Record Office) Lancelot Brown, Map of Kimberley Park, 1778 (Mf/Ro 514/2), (Norfolk Record Office) W Faden, A new topographical map of the county of Norfolk, 1797 (Norfolk Record Office) A Bryant, Map of the county of Norfolk, 1826 (Norfolk Record Office) Estate survey of 1827 published by Daynes, Chittock and Back (3/12/76), (Norfolk Record Office)  
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1890 2nd edition published 1907 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1906  
Illustrations Mid C18 watercolour of Hall and park (private collection) Humphry Repton, watercolour of Kimberley, 1780 (Norfolk Museums Service Acc no 28)  
Archival items Lancelot Brown, Account book, p 31 (RHS Lindley Library)  
Description written: September 1999 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: March 2001

## 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.