

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BLICKLING HALL

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BLICKLING HALL

Name: BLICKLING HALL

County: Norfolk

District: Broadland (District Authority)

Parish: Blickling

County: Norfolk

District: Broadland (District Authority)

Parish: Oulton

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Itteringham

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.815937
Longitude: 1.2191966
National Grid Reference: TG 17032 29123, TG 17610 28317
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000154
Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

A C17 and C18 formal garden with mid C19 development by Markham Nesfield, William Wyatt, and Constance, Lady Lothian and further garden work by Norah Lindsay in the 1930s, set around a C17 moated country house and surrounded by an extensive early C18 park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Blickling Hall was built by the surveyor Robert Lyminge for Sir Henry Hobart between 1616 and 1626, on the site of a late medieval moated hall which it largely replaced. It was supplied with elaborate gardens and a banqueting house, set within two deer parks, one of C12 origin. Following a period of financial hardship for the estate, Sir John Hobart (later first Earl of Buckingham) succeeded in 1698 and he continued to develop both gardens and park, creating the ha-ha and raised bank around the gardens in the 1720s and erecting the Doric Temple in c 1730. He also purchased garden statues and ornaments from the sale and destruction of Oxnead Hall in Norfolk in 1742. The second Earl succeeded in 1756 and was responsible for greatly extending the park into land purchased for the purpose by his father, for naturalising the lake, and for remodelling the Hall between 1765 and 1785. The second Earl's youngest daughter Caroline, Lady Suffield inherited the estate in 1793 and is

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known to have asked Humphry Repton (1752-1818) for advice (guidebook), although no evidence has been found that this was formally given. His son, John Adey Repton (1775-1860), did however provide designs for flower beds and garden structures. Lord and Lady Suffield were childless so succession passed to the Lothians, the family of her eldest sister Harriet. Following his inheritance in 1850, Harriet's son William, eighth Marquess of Lothian and his wife Constance were responsible for further changes including the remodelling of the west front and the excavation of a grand new flower garden. This remained until the 1930s when the eleventh Marquess asked Norah Lindsay to simplify the parterre garden. In 1940 Lord Lothian bequeathed Blickling to the National Trust, in whose ownership it remains (1999).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Blickling Hall lies in the northern part of the county of Norfolk, c 2km west of the town of Aylsham. It lies between the B1354 Aylsham to Melton Constable road to the south and the River Bure to the north and is set in a picturesque part of rural Norfolk, surrounded by extensive tracts of farmland and woodland, with meadows to the north along the Bure. The registered park, which covers an area of c 340ha in total, is mainly flat but with a gentle fall from west to east, and is almost entirely enclosed by boundary woodlands. The central sections of both the north and south boundaries are open along part of their length, giving views into the park, as is part of the east boundary which is formed by a minor country road. The main view out of the site is from the raised terrace behind the Doric Temple from which point Aylsham church can be seen. Internally main views are enjoyed from the south end of Icehouse Field north towards the Hall; from the north end of the lake looking south towards the Hall; from the west park looking south-east; and from Mount Park looking west over the lake.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Blickling Hall is approached from the south off the B1354, along a straight drive to the south front. The drive is flanked by lawns bordered by magnificent mature yew hedges backed by pollarded lime trees. A service drive runs along the outside of the lime pollards to the east to the stables and carriage houses beside The Farmyard. Numerous tracks enter the park and woods from various points, although none become carriage drives to the Hall and none of the entrances are marked by lodges.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Blickling Hall (listed grade I) is an impressive moated red-brick country house with a seven-bay front and square corner turrets which stands in the south-east corner of a substantial park. It is arranged in a double courtyard, with the entrance via a bridge over the dry moat on the south front. Above the entrance porch is a painted timber-clad clock tower. Service ranges (listed grade I) flank the south drive to east and west. The west range is now (1999) used as the National Trust's Regional Office and the east range houses visitor facilities. The Hall was commissioned by Sir Henry Hobart and built between 1616 and 1626 by the surveyor Robert Lyminge. Between 1765 and 1785 Thomas and William Ivory of Norwich remodelled the north and west facades, while in 1864 William Burn made further alterations to the west front. The service ranges date from c 1620, extensively rebuilt behind their facades in the late C19. The moat has been dry since the mid C17 and from at least the 1670s has been planted as a garden.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds cover c 18ha, mainly lying to the east of the Hall. To the south is a gravelled forecourt beyond which lies the lawn and yew hedge, the latter already said to be 'high' in 1745 (guidebook). Climbers cover the walls of the service wings. To the west is a small area of wild garden, with a central shell fountain. To the north, the gravel path which runs all around the outside of the moat is bordered by a lawn which extends towards the lake. On the east front lies the parterre. This garden is surrounded to east and south by retaining walls (listed grade II) topped by gravel paths and borders, and to the north by a high yew hedge beyond which lies a raised lawn with Chinese plane tree. The parterre is divided by gravel walks into areas of lawn decorated with clipped yew scrolls and topiary, and large square herbaceous beds. The whole is decorated with urns (listed grade II) and a late C16 central fountain brought from Oxnead Hall. When first bought to Blickling it was set up in front of Lady's Cottage but was moved to the parterre in the late C19. Within the retaining wall are recessed seats while its base is planted all along its length with deep herbaceous borders. The parterre garden was excavated by Markham Nesfield and Matthew Digby in 1870 but it was Constance, Marchioness of Lothian who provided the design and planting schemes. In the 1930s Norah Lindsay was consulted about the grounds and she provided plans

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for the planting in the moat and for remodelling the parterre garden, including the long herbaceous borders, very largely in the form in which they survive today (1999).

Steps in the east wall, c 100m from the Hall, lead up from the parterre to a c 250m long walk aligned on the central bay of the east front which leads to the Doric Temple (listed grade II*), placed here in the early C18 and possibly designed by Matthew Brettingham the Elder. Either side of the main walk are twin Wildernesses intersected with walks and paths, the framework of which was in place by 1726 although these were substantially restored by the Lothians in 1861(4 and further developed with the addition of shrubs and flowers by Norah Lindsay in the 1930s. The whole of the upper garden is enclosed by a ha-ha and raised terrace walk, created at the same time as the Temple was erected. Within the northern Wilderness is a garden with central sundial, enclosed by a high beech hedge, whilst on the south side of the southern Wilderness stands the Orangery (listed grade II), a nine-bay stuccoed brick building with a pitched copper roof which faces south over Greenhouse Park. It was designed by Samuel Wyatt for the second Earl and erected in 1782.

PARK The main extent of Blickling Park lies to the north-west and west of the Hall. Beyond the ha-ha which surrounds the east gardens are areas of parkland scattered with mature trees, particularly to the south of the Orangery where there is a high concentration of mature oak, while an avenue of mid C19 trees runs from the Temple out to the eastern boundary. North of the Hall lies the c 1km long serpentine lake which extends almost to the northern boundary. It was created in the early years of the C18 by extending a small formal pool which stood close to the Hall. On the east bank of the lake, c 450m north of the Hall, stands The Mount, put in place between 1720 and 1730 to afford fine views across the park to the west, and now (1999) surmounted by a water tower. Below The Mount to the south is an area called Mount Park which is densely planted with mature oak and sweet chestnut. The west park is largely open grass with a few scattered trees and individual plantations, surrounded by the extensive western woodlands. Part of the open park is presently (1999) under arable production. The remains of avenues from the early C18 landscape, as depicted in a series of sketches by Edmund Prideaux in c 1727 and the Corbridge map of 1729, survive in the west park today. Some 1.3km west of the Hall, on the edge of Long Plantation, stands the red-brick Tower House (listed grade II), built in the Gothic style by Thomas and William Ivory in c 1760 as a grandstand for the park racecourse which was laid out beside it. Lady's Cottage, built in 1760 as a tea house c 1.2km north-west of the Hall, is now a ruin. Also to the north-west, within Great Wood and 1km from the Hall stands the pyramidal limestone ashlar mausoleum (listed grade II*) built by Joseph Bonomi in 1793 on the death of John Hobart, second Earl of Buckingham. The mausoleum faces east and is reached from the edge of the wood by a grass clearing bordered with great yew hedges.

Beyond the B1354 to the south of the Hall is a further small area of parkland, dissected by a watercourse running through it from south to north. The area is bordered to the east by a thin plantation in which the icehouse is located.

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden covers c 2ha and is surrounded by high red-brick walls, entered in the south-east corner from the main road. It is situated some 50m to the south-west of the Hall, beyond the lime pollards bordering the entrance drive and the western service wing. Internally it has a single compartment laid to grass, with a number of recently planted (1990s) orchard trees on the east side. Both in the centre of the garden and along the north wall some old garden service buildings survive. The walled garden is currently (1999) used as a function area by the National Trust.

REFERENCES

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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)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1890 2nd edition published 1905 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1906

Archival items Edmund Prideaux, sketches of the grounds, c 1725 (reproduced in Architectural History 7, 1963)

Description written: May 1999 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: February 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.