

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

GUNBY HALL

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

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Name:	GUNBY HALL
County:	Lincolnshire
District:	East Lindsey (District Authority)
Parish:	Candlesby with Gunby
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.178251 Longitude: 0.19440978 National Grid Reference: TF 46752 66820 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000979 Date first listed: 24-Jun-1985

Details

An C18 park surrounding the remains of early C18 formal gardens with C19 and C20 additions, which together form the setting for an C18 country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Gunby appears on John Speed's county map of 1610 and in 1642 Sir Henry Massingberd, baronet (1609?80) of Bratoft and Gunby, purchased Gunby Hall, a small manor house, although he continued to live at neighbouring Bratoft (Fretwell 1993/5). His son, Sir William Massingberd, second baronet commissioned the building of a new house in 1700 to replace the family's old moated manor at Bratoft, where the family kept the 'old park'. After he died in 1723, Sir William's nephew, William Meux Massingberd inherited Gunby and in 1730 laid out a 'new' park around the new house, which had been enlarged by his grandson Henry Massingberd by 1780, the year his grandfather died. Gunby Hall was let between 1783 and 1800 to Sir Peter Burrell, later Lord Gwydir and his wife Lady Willoughby de Eresby (qv Grimsthorpe Castle). The estate passed from Henry to his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Peregrine Langton, who together carried out extensive planting in the grounds, before it was inherited by their son, the Rev Algernon Langton Massingberd. By 1897 Gunby had passed into the hands of Major Stephen Massingberd who together with his wife Margaret, made additions to the Hall and laid out new gardens. Stephen died in 1925 and his mother's will had specified that whoever inherited Gunby should take the name of Massingberd within a year. Stephen left the property to his youngest sister, Diana and her husband Field Marshal Sir Archibald Montgomery, who took the name Montgomery-Massingberd. In 1943 Gunby and its grounds were given to the National Trust to save it from demolition and use as an airfield. It remains (2000) in the ownership of the Trust and the Hall is tenanted.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Gunby Hall occupies a rural location c 2km north-west of Skegness, close to the village of Burgh le Marsh. The c 50ha site is bounded to the north by the A158 Skegness road, to the west by Gunby Lane, and to the south and east by farmland. The virtually level ground is enclosed to north and west by perimeter plantations but is open to the south and east, giving views out of the site across the surrounding farmland.

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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Gunby lies on the north boundary, through low wooden gates beside Gunby Lodge, a white rendered cottage with a tile roof standing c 400m north of the Hall. The entrance is known as the Halton Gate and was created in 1806 by Elizabeth and Peregrine Langton-Massingberd. They also constructed a lodge here although this was later replaced by the present building (Fretwell 1993/5). From the lodge the drive curves south along a lime avenue planted by Emily Massingberd in 1889, and passes through ornamental entrance gates built to commemorate the end of the Second World War in 1945, to arrive at the west front of the Hall. A gravel path beside the gates runs eastwards alongside a herbaceous border to join the turning circle around a circular lawn below the west front. The present drive replaced an earlier approach from the north which lay c 200m further to the east, now (2000) marked by an earthwork within Walk Plantation. Elizabeth and Peregrine Langton Massingberd also created a second lodge, known as the New Lodge (now Lodge Farm), c 1.4km to the south-east (outside the area here registered) which had been abandoned by 1848 (Tithe map).

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Gunby Hall (listed grade I) stands at the centre of its park. The main building (c 1700 for Sir William Massingberd) has seven bays and three storeys and is built of red brick under a flat lead roof. A two-storey, five-bay extension to the north was added in 1873 by Charles Langton Massingberd and completed in 1900 by Major Stephen Massingberd. The main entrance front to the west has a flight of stone steps leading up to the front door.

The stable blocks and coach house (listed grade II*) stand c 50m to the north of the Hall and form three sides of a quadrangle which is open to the south. The buildings are of red brick with a central semicircular arch in the west range connecting the main drive with the stable courtyard and north front of the Hall. The court was constructed in 1736 by William Meux Massingberd. On the ridge of the west range is a bellcote with a clock designed by the brothers Adam in 1778 which was brought to Gunby in 1917 from Hook Place, Southampton.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie below the west, south, and east fronts of the Hall. Along the west front of the Hall is a border planted with shrubs flanking the main entrance steps, at the base of which a paved path runs parallel to the west front. Beyond the turning circle of the drive is a lawn laid out with flower beds around a sundial, the lawn flanked by yew-hedged bowling alleys. Clipped golden yews stand at the corners of the lawn and fastigate yews at the corners of the flower beds. The garden was laid out by Stephen and Margaret Massingberd in 1901 and topiary boxes of golden privet were added in 1955.

The garden below the south front comprises a shrub border with mature wisteria against the Hall and a small lawn lying between the border and a paved path which runs from west to east along the side of the Hall. Beyond the path to the south is a larger lawn, sparsely planted with small trees and edged to the east with horse chestnuts.

Below the east front is a lawn planted with rectangular and circular rose beds which are edged with box. The beds were planted in c 1955 to replace lines of standard roses and small rose beds around a central fountain laid out by Margaret Massingberd at the beginning of the C20 (Fretwell 1993/5). The lawn, cut by a gravel path running from south to north, continues eastwards and is planted with large informal shrub beds and a large cedar of Lebanon. The gravel path runs northwards to arrive at the west end of a long, formal, brick-lined canal known as Ghostwalk Pond, c 80m east-north-east of the Hall. Gate piers flank the gravel path which continues to another set of gate piers between the path and hedge bordering the kitchen garden. Flower borders are planted on both banks of the canal which may date from c 1700 but is first documented in 1783 (ibid). It is marked as 'South Pond' in Peregrine Langton Massingberd's Tree Book (Kitchen garden plan, 1806).

PARK The Hall stands at the centre of the c 32ha park which is retained under grass and scattered with mature trees including sweet chestnut, horse chestnut, oak, and Wellingtonias. A long thin early C19 boundary plantation known as The Belt encloses the park to north and west, extending part way along the southern boundary into a ornamental planting surrounding Icehouse Pond, c 250m south-west of the Hall. Walk Plantation screens the park from the Skegness road at the north-east corner of the site, while c 150m south-east of the Hall stands the church of St Peter (James Fowler 1868?70, listed grade II*; outside the area here registered) beside a further boundary plantation known as Serpentine Holt. The park was created in c 1730 and extended to its present size by 1780. Many trees were planted by Peregrine Langton Massingberd between 1808 and 1810 with further planting undertaken by Charles Massingberd during the C19 and the Montgomery-Massingberds in the 1920s. Since then the numbers of trees have been reduced due to animal damage and Dutch elm disease.

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KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen gardens (listed grade II) lie c 80m to the north-east of the Hall and are divided into two compartments, the western and eastern gardens. The entrance to the western garden is from the stable yard through a red-brick and ashlar archway and ornamental iron gateway (1700, probably repositioned 1873, listed grade II). It leads into an ornamental garden divided into quarters by a gravel path, with a glasshouse attached to the north wall. The south-west quarter of the garden is laid out as a herb garden while the south-east quarter has a lawn with a central sundial. Running north to south along the central path is a wooden pergola of trained fruit trees, while at the eastern end of the east/west cross path is a timber and lead hexagonal summerhouse (c 1800, listed grade II) set against the east wall. North of the summerhouse is a wooden gate forming the entrance into a small orchard. A gateway beside a brick-built apple store in the south wall leads to the formal gardens below the east front of the Hall.

An archway with iron gate in the south-east corner of the western garden leads into the eastern walled garden where a brick and timber pigeoncote (c 1700, listed grade II) stands in the north-west corner. The garden is walled to the north, east, and west and hedged to the south, beyond which lies Ghostwalk Pond, and is divided into quarters by gravel paths. It is laid partly to lawn while part is still used (2000) for fruit and vegetable production. Fruit trees are trained against the south-facing north wall. Peregrine Massingberd's 1806 sketch plan of the kitchen garden shows that at this time the eastern garden was occupied by glasshouses and a melon ground. Both compartments became ornamental gardens from 1897 onwards and were replanted in the 1950s. The Herb Garden was added in 1967.

REFERENCES

W White, *Directory of Lincolnshire* (1856), p 526 *Country Life*, 94 (5 November 1943), pp 816-19; (12 November 1943), pp 860-3; 183 (2 June 1988), pp 139-41 H Thorold and J Yates, *Lincolnshire, A Shell Guide* (1965), p 71 J Anthony, *The Gardens of Britain* 6, (1979) G S Thomas, *Gardens of the National Trust* (1979), p 239 N Pevsner et al, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (2nd edn 1989), p 352 H Montgomery-Massingberd, *Gunby Hall, guidebook*, (1990) J Lees-Milne, *People and Places, Country House Donors and the National Trust* (1992), pp 122-33 K Fretwell, *Gunby Hall Park Survey*, (National Trust 1993/5) D N Robinson, *Lincolnshire Bricks, history and gazetteer* (1999), p 29

Maps J Speed, *The countie and cities of Lyncolne...*, 1610 (Lincolnshire Archives) P Langton Massingberd, 'The kitchen garden in 1806', from a sketch plan in his *Tree Book* [reproduced in Fretwell 1993/5] Tithe map for Gunby St Peter parish, 1837 (A171), (Lincolnshire Archives)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1887, published 1892 2nd edition published 1904 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1904

Archival items Survey of the walled gardens, Gunby Hall (1944) [reproduced in Fretwell 1993/5]

Description written: September 2000 Redrafted: May 2001 (EMP) Register Inspector: CEB Edited: May 2002

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.