

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HUNSTANTON HALL

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Name:	HUNSTANTON HALL
County:	Norfolk
District:	King's Lynn and West Norfolk (District Authority)
Parish:	Old Hunstanton
County:	Norfolk
District:	King's Lynn and West Norfolk (District Authority)
Parish:	Ringstead
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.940728 Longitude: 0.52068517 National Grid Reference: TF 69483 41122 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001006 Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

Walled and moated gardens developed from the C16 onwards, set around a moated house of C15 origins within a park which originated as a deer park in the C15, was embellished in the C17 and was greatly extended in the C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hunstanton Hall was the ancestral home of the Le Strange family, one of the most powerful Norfolk families in the C15 and C16. The brick gatehouse of the Hall was built in 1490 by Sir Roger Le Strange within a large deer park, and the main double-pile Hall (destroyed by fire in the C19) was begun in 1578 by Sir Nicholas Le Strange. A map of 1615 shows that the Hall stood at the northern end of the deer park, surrounded by a series of three interconnecting moats with an orchard to the north and bowling green to the south-east. Further alterations were undertaken between 1622 and 1626 by Thomas Thorpe for Sir Hamon Le Strange, including the building of a gateway and two T-shaped wings to the courtyard, as well as alterations to the west moat and garden walls. In c 1655 the Octagon pond and banqueting house, together with Park House, were all constructed in the park. Sir Nicholas Le Strange made further alterations to the gardens between the late C17 and early C18. Between 1750 and 1835 the Hall was leased out or unoccupied for periods. Work continued in the park, which saw an extensive planting programme between 1760 and 1779 when many of the plantations were created. In 1835 the Hall was reinhabited by the family who made further additions, greatly expanded the park and carried out major works in the gardens. Much of the Hall was destroyed by fire in 1853 and another phase of restoration and alteration was undertaken by Frederick Pready for the Le Strange family at the end of the C19. The Hall was badly damaged by another fire in 1951 and subsequently divided into apartments and sold, although the Le Strange family retained the park and part of the gardens. During the 1990s the owner of the burned-out wing has undertaken extensive restoration work. The site remains (1999) in divided private ownership.

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Inventory of Great Britain
HUNSTANTON HALL

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Hunstanton Hall lies c 2km inland from the north Norfolk coast at Hunstanton, on the south-east edge of the village of Old Hunstanton. The registered site covers c 182ha of which c 7ha lies inside the ha-ha. It is bounded to the north-west by Old Hunstanton village and to the south-east by Ringstead village. To the south lies the chalk downland of Ringstead Downs and to the west lies farmland. The park is almost entirely enclosed by boundary woodlands and plantations, with small gaps to the south and south-east looking over farmland. The topography of the area and of the park is gently rolling land although a deep esker valley and ridge runs through the southern end of the park from south-east to north-west. A spring rises in the park feeding a watercourse which flows from the higher ground in the south to the lowest point by the Hall in the north, augmented by a series of drains which run into it as the land falls gently from both east and west. Within the park are fine views from the West Belt, looking east over the park towards Holly Mount. Views from Park House on Holly Mount looking west and north are now (1999) obscured by tree growth, as is Park House itself which once acted as an eyecatcher from other points in the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main stone, Gothic-style gates (listed grade II) into Hunstanton Park lie to the north in Old Hunstanton village, at the termination of Church Road. They were built as part of the mid C19 improvements to the estate. The drive passes Hall Cottage and turns east to run north of the Hall before turning south to reach the C17 gateway (listed grade I) on the east front. A second drive enters the park through a plantation on the eastern boundary, just outside Ringstead village. The drive passes a small mid C19 carstone and slate lodge standing in woodland and runs north-west to emerge in the park. There are glimpses of the body of the park to the west although large plantations restrict the view until the Hall is seen c 350m to the north-west, when the park view also opens out. The drive joins the north drive beside the gateway on the east front.

A third entrance, in the south-west corner of the park, passes West Lodge (listed grade II), a single-storey L-shaped building of carstone and flint under a slate roof, and runs north-east along the line of the watercourse to join the other drives east of the Hall.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Hunstanton Hall (listed grade I) is a moated country house of chequer-work clunch and carstone with some knapped flint and brick ranged around three sides of a courtyard. It is entered from the east, through a C17 arched and ornamented gateway by Thomas Thorpe which leads into a grass outer courtyard bounded to the south by an embattled carstone wall (listed grade I) and to the north by a C17 two-storey stable block of carstone under a pantile roof. The moat forms the western boundary of the courtyard and the Hall is entered through a C15 red-brick gatehouse which spans the moat. This is flanked by C17 wings of carstone with brick battlements built in Gothic and Jacobean style, possibly by the stone mason William Edge. Beyond the gatehouse is a further courtyard, open to the south-west, in the centre of which stands the porch of the former C16 range (listed grade I), free-standing since the fire of 1853. The porch is built of stone, chequer-work stone, and flint in the Jacobean Mannerist style. The north wing remained roofless after the fire of 1951 until 1988 when the owner undertook extensive restorations. At the end of the north-west return is a three-storey, High Victorian domestic range added by Frederick Pready in 1873. Behind this is a two-storey range said to be part of the earliest house and a c 1900 single-storey brick block. The south wing incorporates an orangery and the south-west return matches that of the north-west. Attached to the north wing and running north-west, then west along the moat, and then south-east, is a carstone garden wall dated 1622 on the western section. To the north of the Hall is a range of working and service buildings, including a rubble carstone, brick and clunch C17 barn (listed grade II); the square stable court (listed grade II) with central brick arch and cupola with clock, designed by Frederick Pready in 1873; the square carstone and tile game larder (listed grade II); and the Stable Court Cottage (listed grade II).

Seat of the Le Strange family from the time of Domesday until after the Second World War, Hunstanton Hall was built by Sir Roger Le Strange in 1490, enlarged by Sir Nicholas in 1578, and again by Thomas Thorpe and/or William Edge for Sir Hamon in 1622/6. Further alterations were undertaken by Frederick Pready in the latter part of the C19 when new service ranges were added to the north.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds lie principally to the west of the Hall. The whole area is surrounded by a C19 ha-ha to south and west, which becomes a wall along the northern boundary of the garden. The Hall is moated to east and west, with a narrow water channel running from the east to the south-west and a further broad pool to the north beyond the stables. The western moat wall is dated 1622 and encloses a square garden area known as the Bowling

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Inventory of Great Britain
HUNSTANTON HALL

Green. This was laid out in the mid C19 with yew hedges, lawn, and formal bedding, a design much simplified in the late C20. Beyond the wide west moat, 120m to the west of the Hall, is a second enclosed garden compartment covering c 1ha. It is enclosed mainly by high mid C19 yew and beech hedges but to the north are walls (listed grade II) of red brick with stone dressings, built in 1711 by Sir Nicholas Le Strange to enclose a formal ornamental garden. The mid C19 garden was laid out by Henry Styleman-le Strange with a central east/west walk lined with holly and herbaceous borders. The holly survives but otherwise the internal layout is currently (1999) unmanaged and overgrown.

Outside the garden to the west is a 150m long raised terrace walk running north/south. The walk is bounded on the park side by a ha-ha and is finished with bastions at the north and south ends offering views across the park and glimpses of The Octagon. The southern bastion is partly enclosed with yew hedging and contains two family graves. Surrounding the enclosed garden to north and south is a woodland garden of beech, holm oak, and conifers in variety, underplanted with yew, box, and holly and cut through with winding paths. This area was developed during the mid C19 phase of work.

The brick walls are all that visibly remain of the C17 formal gardens which stood on the west side of the Hall. The ha-ha, woodland walks, raised terrace, and bastions all originate from the mid C19 phase of work, during which period part of the enclosed area was used as a kitchen garden. Small private gardens have been created (late C20) around some of the service buildings to the north since being sold as separate private dwellings.

PARK Hunstanton Park contains extensive and numerous plantations, with open areas of rolling parkland scattered with individual trees of a variety of ages but predominantly of early C19 date. There are arable areas along the western and eastern edges and on the rising ground south of Holly Mount. The boundary plantations are varied in their planting with a high proportion of conifers, most notably Corsican pine and holm oak mixed with beech, sweet chestnut, ash, oak, and sycamore, whilst the open parkland is mainly planted with oaks in groups and as individuals. Holly Mount lies 900m south-south-east of the Hall. It is a steep piece of high ground on which stands the brick and carstone ruins of Park House (listed grade II), built by Sir Hamon in 1623 as a hunting lodge and deerkeeper's house. It is known that Park House replaced an earlier hunting tower which stood in the same position (Williamson 1998). Immediately to the south-west of Holly Mount is a mixed stand of Monkey Puzzle, Coast Redwood, and cedars, of early/mid C19 origin. Approximately 200m south of the Hall is the octagonal carstone and brick banqueting house known as The Octagon (listed grade II*), constructed on an island surrounded by an octagonal moat and reached by a small brick and stone footbridge. Some 30m south of this is a small rectangular pool lined with tiles known as 'Grandfather's Bath', which feeds the octagonal pool that in turn feeds the Hall moats. North of the Hall is a series of interconnecting pools and streams known as the Mill Waters.

The park has its origins in the C15 deer park which lay to the south of the original hall. It covered c 80ha by 1615 and although it was the subject of planting, embellishment and removal of internal divisions, remained much the same size until the mid C19 when it was considerably expanded to its present size by Henry Styleman-le Strange.

KITCHEN GARDEN Part of the enclosed garden lying 150m west of the Hall and described above, was developed as a kitchen garden in the mid C19. The areas either side of the central holly and herbaceous walk were used for fruit and vegetable production and a range of derelict frames, stores, and glasshouses survive. Part of the area has been planted with Norway spruce but the whole is presently (1999) overgrown and unmanaged.

REFERENCES

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Maps J Aram, *A Map of Hunstanton Hall and park, 1765* (Le Strange OA3, M5(6), (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)

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1891 2nd edition published 1906 3rd edition published 1929 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1905

Archival items The extensive Le Strange family papers are held in the Norfolk Record Office.

Description written: March 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.