

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

RAVENINGHAM HALL

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**RAVENINGHAM HALL**

Name:	RAVENINGHAM HALL
County:	Norfolk
District:	South Norfolk (District Authority)
Parish:	Raveningham
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.512663 Longitude: 1.5340207 National Grid Reference: TM 39896 96401 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001014 Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

## Details

A late C18 house surrounded by a park of the same date, with early C20 Arts and Crafts-style gardens designed by Somers Clark.  
**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Raveningham estate was acquired through marriage by the Bacon family in c 1735. At that time the manor house stood within a moated enclosure which still survives c 500m south-west of the current house, while St Andrew's church stood isolated in open countryside. Sir Edmund Bacon built a new house, the present building, on a new site 200m to the north-east of the church in the late C18. The house was in existence by 1783, when it was depicted on a sketch map accompanying a Road Order to close a road from Loddon to Beccles in preparation for forming a parkland landscape. The new park was depicted on Faden's county map in 1797. The Tithe map of 1840 shows that successive members of the Bacon family had made alterations to the boundary by this time, creating the park which survives today (late C20). At the beginning of the C20 Captain, later Sir Nicholas Bacon, commissioned the architect Somers Clark to improve and extend the house and to lay out the gardens. Additional features to both park and gardens were added in the 1980s and 1990s by Sir Nicholas and Lady Bacon. The site remains (1999) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Raveningham Hall lies c 1.5km west of the village of Hales, north off the A146 Norwich to Beccles Road and close to the Norfolk/Suffolk border. The park extends to c 70ha, of which c 3.5ha are gardens, arboretum, and kitchen garden, and is almost entirely enclosed by boundary plantations. The Hall sits just to the south of centre of the park which is set in a rural agricultural landscape of farmland, woodland, and scattered villages. The B1136 cuts through the tip of the north park, the land beyond the road being ploughed. The Beccles Road forms the southern and part of the western boundary, while the remaining boundary woodlands back onto farmland. The ground at Raveningham is level in the south park and gently undulating in the north park, with a slight overall fall northwards. There is a fine view of the Hall looking south from the B1136.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main entrance to the park is c 400m to the west of the Hall, past Loddon Lodge, an early C20 two-storey brick and tile cottage with decorative tile-hung first floor. The drive enters through simple iron gates

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hung on stone piers and runs east to the stable block and the main entrance on the north front of the Hall. The church of St Andrew (listed grade II\*) is a striking eyecatcher from this drive. Originally, the main C19 drive, now (1999) a simple farm track, entered at the south-east corner of the park, past Beccles Lodge, a building contemporary in date and style to Loddon Lodge. From here it ran north through the park, then turned west to arrive at the north front. Yarmouth Road Lodge lies c 800m to the north-east on the outer edge of the perimeter plantation. Built at the same time as the other lodges, it marks the start of an intended carriage drive from the north-east corner of the park which was never executed.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Raveningham Hall (listed grade II\*) is a large country house of red brick under a hipped roof of black-glazed pantiles. The symmetrical south front has seven bays which overlook the gardens and the park beyond. The main entrance on the north front also has seven bays arranged 2:3:2 like the south, with an extended ground floor which forms a central porch. The U-shaped late C18 stable courtyard (listed grade II) lies to the north-west of the Hall, also built of red brick under a black-glazed pantile roof. The central bay has a clock turret with bell tower and weathervane. Raveningham Hall was built as a plain symmetrical structure of seven bays and two-and-a-half storeys for Sir Edmund Bacon in the late C18 who also constructed the stable block. At the beginning of the C20 Somers Clark removed the low flanking wings and replaced them with smaller ones and added the entrance portico to the north front. The Hall was again remodelled and reduced after 1947.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens lie to the south, east, and west of the Hall. The long brick and stone terrace with gravel walk across the south front is terminated at the west end by a yew hedge, and at the east end by a thatched summerhouse under mature trees. The low terrace wall decorated with planting has central steps down to a wide lawn, and is flanked to left and right by mixed borders. The lawn is bordered to the south by a ha-ha and the park, to the east by a herbaceous border, and to the west by a mixed shrubbery with walks leading to the church. Running south-east from the end of the Hall are three small garden compartments: a small sunken rose garden, a yew knot, and a high walled enclosure containing a late C20 pool. Beyond these to the east is an ornamental shrubbery in which stands the summerhouse. The shrubberies date from the mid C19 whilst the compartmented gardens are by Somers Clark and have an early C20 Arts and Crafts style.

Walled gardens extend westwards from 50m to the north-west of the Hall and are surrounded on their external walls by late C20 garden developments. To the east is a small formal herb garden; to the south a fine herbaceous border. The C19 ornamental pleasure-ground wood known as Icehouse Plantation, to the north-west of the walled gardens, was badly damaged in the 1987 gales and has since been developed as an arboretum.

**PARK** The park at Raveningham has all been retained under grass, divided by wire fencing. The small section north of the B1136 has traditionally been ploughed and is currently (1999) under arable. The south park is well wooded with a good scatter of very mature oak, with some beech, ash, horse chestnut, and lime of varying ages. Some of the oaks are huge pollards of more than 350 years, being survivors from the earlier farmed landscape. The church of St Andrew, located c 100m south-west of the Hall, acts as an eyecatcher from various points in the landscape. An early C20 lime avenue, aligned west of centre on the south front, runs through the south park towards the boundary plantation and forms the main southern vista from the Hall. The north park has fewer trees and more undulating ground and is bordered outside the western boundary by the picturesque C18 Sycamore Farm (listed grade II) which forms a focal point from within the north park. The perimeter woods comprise plantations of mixed hardwoods. In the south-west corner of the park lies Hall Farm, beside which stands the moated enclosure marking the site of the old manor house. This complex is screened from the park by a belt of trees.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The walled kitchen garden (listed grade II) lies off the north-west corner of the stable courtyard. The coped high red-brick wall has a gently curving north-east corner and a fine late C19 Boulton and Paul range of glasshouses in the centre of the north wall. The garden is divided into quarters, with a central apple tunnel and deep mixed borders around the perimeters. The quarters are laid to fruit and vegetables. The walled garden was built in the early C18, presumably when the Bacon family inherited the site.

#### REFERENCES

N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North-west and South Norfolk* (1962), pp 289-90 J Kenworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981), p 171 *Country Life*, 177 (27 June 1985), pp 1868-70 G Plumtre, *Collins Book*

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of British Gardens (1985), pp 41-3 A Lees-Milne and R Verey, The New Englishman's Garden (1987), pp 91-5 Raveningham, (UEA report, late 1980s) T Williamson, The archaeology of the landscape park, BAR Brit Ser 268 (1998), pp 268-9  
Maps 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 1884 2nd edition published 1907 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1906

Archival items Original documents relating to Raveningham Hall are held in a private collection. [A comprehensive historical survey of the site has been completed (c 2000) by Tom Williamson which draws on these original documents.]

Description written: July 1999 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.