

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FELBRIGG HALL

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Name: FELBRIGG HALL

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Aylmerton

County: Norfolk

District: North Norfolk (District Authority)

Parish: Felbrigg

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.895032
Longitude: 1.2629953
National Grid Reference: TG 19583 38051
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000185
Date first listed: 18-Sep-1987

Details

Park and woodland developed throughout the C18 from an earlier deer park, possibly at the hand of Humphry Repton, surrounding a C17 Jacobean mansion with C19 gardens simplified in the late C20.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Windham (or Wyndham) family acquired the manor of Felbrigg, which included a hall and park, during the C15 and during the 1620s Sir John Windham made substantial alterations to the Hall for his son Thomas, adding a new southern range. Thomas' son William Windham I commissioned the gentleman architect William Samwell in 1674 to greatly extend the Jacobean house. By this time the park covered c 65ha, bounded (probably uniquely in Norfolk (by a wall, and before he died William was responsible for extending the woodland planting and developing a geometric landscape around the Hall (Williamson 1998). Ashe Windham succeeded in 1689 and in the early years of the C18 built the Orangery and the new service courtyard on the east side of the Hall, whilst his wife directed further planting in the grounds and the woods. When Ashe died in 1749, William Windham II began to dismantle the formal landscape and he soon engaged the architect James Paine (1717-89) to remodel the Hall. After only twelve years at Felbrigg, William died in 1761 and was succeeded by his son, the great politician William Windham III (1750-1810) who was often absent from Norfolk. The landscape however continued to evolve under the direction of his agent Nathaniel Kent, and during the 1770s and 1780s new plantations were made, a lake created, a new kitchen garden built, and an icehouse constructed. Some of these alterations may have been directed by Humphry Repton (1752-1818) who lived at nearby Susted and was a close friend of his landlord William Windham III (Garden Hist 1985); certainly Repton made a drawing of the park in 1793 and in 1806 he and his son John Adey were giving advice on minor architectural matters. By the time William died without heirs in 1810 the park had been extended by a further 60ha and had acquired much of the character

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it maintains today (1999). The estate passed to his half-brother William Lukin on condition he change his name to Windham. In 1824 he commissioned the architect W J Donthorn to make further alterations to the buildings. Lukin's son William Howe Windham continued his father's work until succeeded in 1854 by 'Mad Windham', an eccentric spendthrift, during whose time the estate rapidly declined (guidebook). Eventually the estate was put up for sale and was purchased in 1863 by John Ketton. The Hall, parkland, and the woods remained much neglected at the end of the C19 but when the estate passed to the Ketton-Cremer family in 1923 a gradual process of improvement began. Robert Wyndham Ketton-Cremer carried on this work and on his death in 1969 he left the estate to the National Trust, in whose ownership it remains. Robert was a major in the Home Guard during the Second World War and the High Sheriff of Norfolk (1951-2) and a Justice of the Peace. He was actively involved in the founding the University of East Anglia. In the park, he planted the Victory V in 1946 to commemorate VE day and his brother, flying officer Richard Thomas Wyndham Ketton-Cremer, who was killed on active service during the Battle of Crete in May 1941. Robert wrote 'it is exactly 20 years since my brother died in Crete when we waited for news of him and heard none'. There is a memorial plaque to Richard in the Church of St Margaret at Felbrigg and he is commemorated on the Alamein Memorial in Egypt. (1999).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Felbrigg Hall is located c 3km south-west of Cromer on the north Norfolk coast. It is bounded to the north by the A148 Holt to Cromer road; to the east by Felbrigg village and the B1435 Felbrigg to Roughton road; to the west by a minor road running along the brick and flint park wall; and to the south by farmland. The rectangular park, covering c 440ha, is almost entirely enclosed by boundary woodlands and plantations, with only a few gaps to the east and south. The park is set in a well-wooded part of the Norfolk countryside, far enough inland not to be influenced by the coastal scenery. It sits on a gentle slope from south to north, with the Hall sitting on the higher ground to the north, backed by rising woodland (the Great Wood). The surrounding woodlands preclude views out of the park, which internally focus on the Hall and St Margaret's church.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES There are a number of approach drives and lodges around the boundary of the estate. The main Victorian entrance c 1.4km to the north-east passes the single-storey twin neo-Jacobean Cromer Lodges (listed grade II), built by William Howe Windham in 1841 to designs by G and J C Buckler. The oak-lined serpentine drive runs south-west along the southern boundary of Great Wood to arrive at the main gravelled forecourt on the south front. Sexton's Lodge, built in the neo-Jacobean style for John Ketton in 1864 stands 750m to the north-west, on the north side of the drive which runs from the Hall through Great Wood. In the south-west corner of the park, c 1.25km from the Hall, stands Keeper's Cottage, a single-storey brick and tile building which resembles a drawing by John Adey Repton dated 1845 (guidebook). This is (1990s) no longer connected to a drive through the park. In the south-east corner c 1.6km from the Hall stand the Marble Hill Lodges which flank the late C18 main park entrance. These, which are very similar in style and construction to Keeper's Cottage, being single-storey, red-brick and tile cottages with stepped gables, also resemble a John Adey Repton drawing of 1845. This drive, its line altered and now (1999) reduced to the status of a farm track, meanders north-west through the park and past the church to join the Cromer Drive east of the Hall. A section of this drive forms part of the Weaver's Way long-distance footpath. Mustard Pot Lodge, c 150m south of the Cromer Lodges, is a two-storey hexagonal brick building which is shown on an estate map of 1830 marking the entrance to the old eastern drive which was realigned when the Cromer Lodges were built.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Felbrigg Hall (listed grade I) is an impressive Jacobean country house built of rendered brick and flint with stone dressings under a slate and black-glazed pantile roof, in four main phases. It has an irregular ground plan with a seven-bay, two-storey entrance facade to the south dating from the 1620s, and a west facade of eight bays added in 1685 and overlooking the garden. The north front looks out over the American Garden, while to the east is a rendered brick two-storey rectangular service range (listed grade II*), currently (1999) used as offices. A cupola, with clock to the south face, stands over the centre of the south facade, topped by a lead roof and weathervane. Attached to the east of this range is the stables courtyard (listed grade II*). The courtyard is entered on the south side through an archway flanked by iron railings and the buildings currently (1990s) include a cottage, tea shop, and other visitor facilities.

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The Hall was originally built between 1621 and 1624, possibly by Robert Lyminge for William and Thomas Windham, and was further extended by the addition of a new west wing between 1674 and 1685 by William Samwell for William Windham I. James Paine remodelled the Hall between 1751 and 1756 and added the east service wing, which was itself remodelled in 1824 by W J Donthorn who also added the stables.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens at Felbrigg Hall lie principally to the west and north of the Hall and cover c 2ha in all. To the west is a lawn bordered by gravel walks and edged with a ha-ha to south and west. On the north side of the lawn, 100m to the north-west of the Hall, stands the Orangery (listed grade II) looking south over the garden. The west lawn was originally known as the Parlour Garden in the mid C17 but in the early C18 Ashe Windham built the Orangery and enlarged the area to become the Green House Garden. The formal lawns and borders remained through the C19 but have been much simplified in the C20. To the north of the Hall lies the American Garden, a series of walks through a collection of exotic trees, shrubs, and conifers thought to have been designed by Broderick Thomas (presumably William Broderick Thomas) who provided a plan for John Ketton in June 1865 (guidebook). On the south front of the east wing stands a small garden of box-edged beds filled with roses laid out in the mid C20.

PARK Felbrigg Park can be divided into two main areas. To the north of the Hall lies the Great Wood which incorporated the site of the old deer park immediately to the north of the Hall when the woods were developed during the C18 and C19. Part of the Wood is given over to conifer plantations but much of its character is provided by the large number of veteran oak, sweet chestnut, and beech which survive. Within Great Wood c 700m north-west of the Hall stands the C18 circular brick icehouse (listed grade II). Two rides cut through the Wood to form a V-shape (apex to the north) which were established in 1946 by Robert Wyndham Ketton-Cremer to commemorate VE day and the death of his brother Richard. Designed to be seen as a 'V' from the air, the two linked avenues of beech trees some 350m long, are at Victory Wood. Some 350m to the north-east of the Hall stands Hall Farm (farmhouse and barns listed grade II) (a complex of modern and traditional farm buildings partly screened from the rest of the park by trees.

The open park lies to the south of the Hall and has recently (1990s) been returned to grass from arable production. It includes, c 400m to the south-east, the church of St Margaret (listed grade II*), the medieval parish church which acts as an eyecatcher from various points in the landscape. The south-west corner of the park dips down to Felbrigg Pond, an irregular body of water c 300m long, hidden by the landfall from the Hall. It was created by William Windham III as part of the late C18 development of the park. The southern park is almost entirely enclosed by boundary woodlands, with some peripheral areas to the south and south-west currently still under arable (1999). There is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest that Humphry Repton had a directing hand in the design of the park at Felbrigg because he lived so close to the park and was a good friend of the family at the time, often making visits to Felbrigg (Garden Hist 1985).

KITCHEN GARDEN The walled kitchen garden (listed grade II) lies c 200m east-north-east of the Hall, surrounded by high red-brick walls and divided into three compartments. The southern section is enclosed by walls on three sides and is open to the south. It is currently (1999) laid to lawn. The central and northern compartments are divided by gravel paths into box-edged borders, the central section filled with flowering plants and early C19 glasshouses along the south face of the north wall, while the northern section is used for fruit and vegetables. Arched gateways in the centre of each wall focus on the mid C19 octagonal brick Dovecote (restored 1937, listed grade II) which stands centrally on the south side of the northernmost wall. The walled gardens now have shrub borders, herbs, and recent (1990s) collections of *Crataegus* and *Colchicum*, as well as older fruit trees and borders. Behind the north wall of the kitchen garden is an area of orchard (planted late C20) surrounded by a low red-brick wall. William Windham III was responsible for the building, or rebuilding, of the walled garden in the 1780s.

This list entry was subject to a Minor Enhancement on 14/04/2020

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1890 2nd edition published 1907

Description written: May 1999 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.