

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Eresby Hall: the remains of a post-medieval house and gardens overlying a medieval manor house

PARISH: SPILSBY

DISTRICT: EAST LINDSEY

COUNTY: LINCOLNSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 33133

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): TF39486522

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the buried remains of Eresby Hall, a post-medieval house with formal gardens located immediately to the west of the present Eresby House and north east of Eresby House Farm. The Hall and gardens reused, and partly overlie, the remains of a medieval manor house.

In 1086 land at Eresby, previously held by Aschil, was in the possession of the Bishop of Durham. During the 12th century the land passed by marriage to the de Bec family and in 1296 John de Bec was granted a licence to crenellate the manor at Eresby. The de Becs retained Eresby until the early 14th century when it passed by marriage to the Willoughby family and became a family seat. In 1505 the lands passed to William Willoughby of Parham and during the 16th century Eresby passed, via marriage, to Charles Brandon who built a new house on the site, replacing the old manor house. The new house, constructed to the south east of the earlier one, later became a minor residence of the family, who made their home at Grimsthorpe. The property subsequently passed by marriage to the Berties and later was in the possession of the Duke of Ancaster. By the 18th century, formal gardens had been laid out around the house. The house was accidentally destroyed by fire in 1769 and by the 1790s only a few outbuildings and a pair of gate piers survived. At the end of the 18th century, the two gate piers were made into one and topped by a commemorative urn; this pier, Listed Grade II, still stands and is included in the scheduling. The H-shaped building dating from the 17th century, known as Eresby House, approximately 50m east of Eresby Hall, was originally a house, converted to stables in the 18th century and reconverted to a house in the late 19th century. Eresby House is a Listed Building Grade II and is not included in the scheduling.

The buried remains of Eresby Hall lie to the south west of Eresby House. The Hall, built during the 16th century, was depicted on 18th century maps as an H-shaped building. To the north of the Hall was a turning circle, or carriage sweep, with a central oval-shaped ornamental feature. A pair of gate piers, shown in a sketch of 1791, are believed to have flanked the entrance to the carriage sweep. The eastern pier, constructed in brick with ashlar dressings and topped by an urn, as mentioned above, still stands, and the foundations of the other pier will survive as a buried feature, together with the layout of the carriage sweep. Beyond the gate piers, to the north, is a tree-lined

avenue which formerly led from the house to Spilsby church, about 1km to the north east, the burial place of members of the Willoughby family. The southern part of the avenue, extending to a distance of approximately 10m immediately north of the standing gate pier, is included in the scheduling. The remainder of the avenue, which is now interrupted by a bypass road, is not included in the scheduling.

To the east of the Hall is a short west-facing scarp which marks the eastern extent of the remains of the post-medieval gardens. A dry channel, aligned east-west, indicates the location of the Hall and the northern edge of the formal gardens, formerly laid out to the south of the Hall. The channel measures approximately 20m in length, 4m in width and 1m deep, its southern edge formed by a flat-topped bank, about 4m in width. These remains are the only surviving parts of an extensive garden complex.

The visible and buried remains of the earlier medieval complex, representing the 13th century manor, are located to the north west of those of the post-medieval Hall. Limited excavations undertaken in the 1960s partly revealed building foundations, approximately 50m north west of the Hall, and the remains of a stone wall and a buttressed tower, 100m north west of the Hall and adjacent to the moat. Excavated evidence suggests that the complex took the form of a fortified house, including a great hall and kitchen, dating from the 13th century. The building foundations, in sandstone and brick, showed evidence of rebuilding or refurbishment in the mid-15th century, during the time of the sixth Lord Willoughby. The stone wall, with the buttressed tower at its west end, is believed to represent the northern curtain wall of the medieval complex and to date from the 13th century. Part of a brick wall, standing up to 1m in height approximately 45m to the south of the buttressed tower, revealed during the excavations, is still visible above ground.

A subrectangular pond, known as 'The Canal', located approximately 90m south of the Hall site, formed part of the garden layout. The Canal has been extensively altered and is not included in the scheduling. A Y-shaped pond, known as 'The Moat' lies immediately to the north and west of the remains of the complex. The pond is believed to represent a post-medieval ornamental water feature, possibly adapted from a medieval moat. The pond has been significantly altered in modern times and is therefore not included in the scheduling.

All fence posts are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Post-medieval formal gardens are garden arrangements dating between the early 16th and mid-18th centuries, their most characteristic feature being a core of geometric layout, typically located and orientated in relation to the major residences of which they formed the settings. Garden designs of this period are numerous and varied, although most contain a number of recognisable components. For the 16th and 17th centuries, the most common features are flat-topped banks or terraces (actually raised walkways), waterways, closely set ponds and multi-walled enclosures. Late 17th and 18th century gardens often reflect the development of these ideas and contain multiple terraces and extensive water features, as well as rigidly geometrical arrangements of embankments. Other features fashionable across the period include: earthen mounds (or mounts) used as vantage points to view the house and gardens, or as the sites of ornate structures; 'moats' surrounding areas of planting; walled closes of stone or brick (sometimes serving as the forecourt of the main house); and garden buildings such as banqueting houses and pavilions. Planted areas were commonly arranged in geometric beds, or parterres, in patterns

which incorporated hedges, paths and sometimes ponds, fountains and statuary. By contrast, other areas were sometimes set aside as romantic wildernesses. Formal gardens were created throughout the period by the royal court, the aristocracy and county gentry, as a routine accompaniment of the country seats of the landed elite. Formal gardens of all sizes were once therefore commonplace, and their numbers may have comfortably exceeded 2000. The radical redesign of many gardens to match later fashions has dramatically reduced this total, and little more than 250 examples are currently known in England. Although one of many post-medieval monument types, formal gardens have a particular importance reflecting the social expectations and aspirations of the period. They represent a significant and illuminating aspect of the architectural and artistic tastes of the time, and illustrate the skills which developed to realise the ambitions of their owners. Surviving evidence may take many forms, including standing structures, earthworks and buried remains; the latter may include details of the planting patterns, and even environmental material from which to identify the species employed. Examples of formal gardens will normally be considered to be of national importance, where the principal features remain visible, or where significant buried remains survive; of these, parts of whole garden no longer in use will be considered for scheduling.

The foundations of the post-medieval house and formal gardens and remains of the medieval complex at Eresby Hall survive well as a series of earthwork and buried deposits. The buried remains will preserve information concerning the extent, construction and subsequent alterations of both the post-medieval house and gardens and the medieval complex which preceded it. The association of the post-medieval remains with those of the medieval complex demonstrates the development of the site over a period of 500 years and will contribute to an understanding of the development of high status components of the medieval and post-medieval landscapes. The remains of the post-medieval formal gardens reflect the changing social expectations, aspirations and tastes of the period. Limited archaeological excavation has demonstrated the survival of buried remains on the site, and, as a result of detailed documentary research, the site is quite well understood.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 22nd October 1970 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Lincolnshire 243

NAME: Eresby Hall (site of)

Scheduling amended on 9th February 1972:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Lincolnshire 243

NAME: Eresby Hall (site of)

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 33133

NAME: Eresby Hall: the remains of a post-medieval house and gardens overlying a medieval manor house

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 20th July 2001