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BAWDSEY MANOR **Date Registered: 19th April 2000**

SUFFOLK **Grade: II**

SUFFOLK COASTAL **Site Reference Number : 4313**

A series of gardens laid out between 1885 and 1909 by the owners, Sir Cuthbert and Lady Quilter with advice from Alfred Parsons RA, and containing an extensive artificial Pulhamite cliff built in the 1890s by James Pulham.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Bawdsey Manor is a building of relatively recent construction: it does not occupy the historic site of the manor of Bawdsey which, to judge from an estate map of 1727, lay within Bawdsey village beside the parish church. The 1843 Tithe map for Bawdsey shows the site empty of buildings except for a Martello tower created during the Napoleonic War period, the small Manor Farm complex (later known as the Manor Dairy), and a cottage occupying what was later to be the site of East Lodge. The remainder of the site was empty fields and the track leading down to the ferry across the Deben passed through Manor Farm.

In 1886 a local farmer, John Shepherd, sold the land to a successful businessman, Sir Cuthbert Quilter, whose family rented the nearby Hintlesham Hall. Originally designed by a local architect, William Eade and constructed as a holiday home for the Quilters, Bawdsey Manor became the family home during the 1890s and the Quilters continued to develop both the house and the grounds, with the help of the architect Alfred Parsons, together with his partners Captain Partridge and Charles Tudway. Sir Cuthbert also commissioned James Pulham to work in the grounds in the 1890s (Garden Hist, 1997).

The Red Tower was added to the house in 1895; the White Tower completed in 1904; and the two linked together in 1899 by the existing white frontage. Charles Tudway became more closely linked to the family in 1909 when his second daughter married Quilter's fourth son (Shepherd 1999). Cuthbert Quilter continued to acquire land in the area around the house, retaining the old track as a park drive from East Lodge and creating Ferry Road further to the north. Eventually he built up an estate of some 3200ha and also acquired the title of Lord of the Manor of Bawdsey.

From 1885 to 1906 he was MP for Sudbury and was created baronet in 1897. Following his death in 1911, he was succeeded by his son William Eley Cuthbert Quilter. In 1937 William sold the house and grounds to the Air Ministry who used it as a research station working on the development of radar. After 1939 the site was used as a training school and radar station up until 1974 when it was closed for four years. It reopened in 1979 as an air defence unit, finally closing in 1986. Following another period when it was unoccupied, the site was purchased by the present owner (2000) who moved his international language school here in 1994 from Harlow in Essex. Apart from some individual cottages, the site remains in single ownership and is used as a base for the private Alexander's language school.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Bawdsey Manor occupies c 57ha on an exposed coastal location beside the North Sea, some 14km south-east of Woodbridge. It lies in an isolated position c 3km south-west of the village of Bawdsey, close to the mouth of the River Deben where there is a ferry to Felixstowe, reached by a road from Bawdsey village. Ferry Road marks the northern and western boundaries of the park, the north-east boundary backing onto farmland and the south-east boundary formed by the beach and the sea. The Manor stands on a slight prominence above the cliff, the land falling gently away to the west and north, and steeply to the beach.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Bawdsey Manor is approached from the east and the west, both lodged entrances being off Ferry Road. The early C20, single-storey East Lodge sits beside simple brick gate piers hung with wooden gates which lead to the east drive. This tree-lined drive runs south-west, flanked to the north by water meadows and to the south-east by open grass, past the Manor Dairy complex and through the stable block c 250m north-east of the Manor, to arrive at the north front. The West Lodge, an early C20, two-storey vernacular 'cottage'- style building, sits beside a small group of estate cottages by the Felixstowe ferry point. The drive runs east between the west lawn and cricket pitch, crosses a bridge over a piece of water known as the Long Pond (fed from drains attached to the Deben) and joins the east drive to arrive at the north front.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Bawdsey Manor (listed grade II*) is a rambling country mansion built of red brick with stone dressings in several stages between 1886 and 1908 in a range of styles including gothic, Elizabethan, and Jacobean. The ashlar north front is of two storeys and has two projecting three-storey towers with corner turrets that rise to a fourth storey. To the west is the Red Tower, of red brick with two octagonal turrets at its corners; and to the east the White Tower, of similar height but constructed of ashlar. The south-west, garden front has a three-bay covered loggia leading onto a raised terrace in the angle of the house while the south-east front faces the sea and looks onto a raised garden area.

No single architect has been attributed with the building of Bawdsey Manor. A local man, William Eade, is mentioned as the designer of the original summerhouse (East Anglian Daily Times, 1927), while Alfred Parsons RA worked on parts of the estate from 1899 onwards. A connection between the architect Detmar Blow and the Manor also exists, with Blow having designed the gateway into the walled garden (Shepherd 1999).

The stable block, water tower, Gardener's and Groom's Cottages (all listed grade II), game larder and racquet court are situated c 250m to the north-east of the Manor. They are constructed of red brick with red tiled roofs and decorated with mock timber-framing with rendered or pebble-dash infill. This complex was added by Sir Cuthbert in c 1900 and now forms part of the working buildings of the school.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens at Bawdsey cover c 3.5ha and lie to the south-west and north-east of the Manor, with the artificial cliff walk running to the south-east. From the south-west front a series of terraces

(listed grade II), now laid to grass (2000), drop in four stages to a level grassed area, originally a cricket pitch. The red-brick retaining walls of the terrace are cut through by an elaborate staircase which divides into two on the second level.

Below the platform is a substantial boathouse which opens onto the third level, originally an extension of the Long Pond which led past the chapel in the grounds (c 400m to the north-north-west of the Manor and now a ruin) and allowed the Quilters to attend chapel by boat each Sunday. This section of the pond was filled in by the RAF in the mid C20.

At the north end of the top terrace is a single-storey octagonal Tea House (listed grade II), with copper domed roof, Italian tiled interior, and three open arches leading onto the terrace. At the south-west corner of the Manor the terrace rises again up to a further enclosed lawn on the south-east front. The eastern boundary of this garden is formed by a wall of Pulhamite, with a grotto-like tunnel leading into a completely enclosed round sunken Secret Garden created by Lady Quilter on the site of the old Martello Tower. Originally a garden of roses, bedding, and tubs, flanked by a circle of clipped yew, the area is now (2000) grassed over although the early C20 layout survives. Further grotto-tunnels lead north and south out of the garden, and steps lead east onto a bank planted as a raised shrubbery beyond which, at a lower level, lies the Sunk Garden. This contains the remains of a central lily pool and Pulhamite pergola leading out to the cliff walk. In 1903 this area was a garden of roses, hydrangeas, and herbaceous plants, which in the following five years was developed by Lady Quilter and Alfred Parsons to include the Lily Pond and the Pergola. The northern boundary of this garden is formed by a yew and holm oak walk leading to the kitchen garden.

The southern grotto-tunnel out of the Secret Garden leads onto an artificial cliff, constructed of Pulhamite, running for some 250m along the shore. This striking feature starts at an access point leading off the main south-west terrace and ends just beyond the walled kitchen garden. It comprises a c 15m high 'rockery wall' which was created in the 1890s by James Pulham 3rd for the Quilters as both a habitat for alpine plants and as a sheltered cliff walk with places to sit and enjoy the sea view. The cliff path runs midway between the beach and the gardens, past seats, caves, and waterfalls all created in Pulhamite. The tunnel from the Secret Garden leads to the largest of the 'cave' areas with seats and 'windows' looking over the sea. The pergola in the Sunk Garden is aligned on a balconied view over the cliff. Although the walk is now (2000) very overgrown with some gun emplacements built into its side, vestiges of the original planting remain.

PARK

The land surrounding the gardens is bounded to the north by the old track to the ferry which was moved northwards by the Quilters to create an area of seclusion around the Manor. The ground comprises a mixture of open grass sports areas to the west (used as a cricket pitch in the early C20), water meadows to the north, and grass to the east, all surrounded by tree belts planted predominantly with a mixture of holm oak and Corsican pine. A denser block of woodland in the north-west corner now (2000) contains a picnic area. Many of the RAF buildings on the site have been removed although two residential blocks c 300m north of the Manor, the receiver building c 300m to the north-north-east of the Manor, and the radar tower c 500m to the north-east of the Manor, all remain.

Some 200m from the Manor, beyond the east wall of the kitchen garden, is a service yard with associated buildings and gardens, now (2000) in poor condition, while beyond this, a further 100m to the north-east, lies the early C20 Honeymoon Cottage. The buildings of Manor Dairy survive beside the radar tower, c 500m north-east of the Manor. These include the Dairy and Laundry

Cottages, both now domestic buildings associated with the school, and a group of stables no longer in use.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled kitchen garden (listed grade II) lies c 150m north-east of the Manor, immediately to the north-east of the Sunk Garden and is currently (2000) all laid to grass. It is entered through an elaborate gateway, designed by the architect Detmar Blow, in the west wall, which originally led onto a central path, flanked by ornamental planting and aligned on the Lemonry (listed grade II) attached to the east wall. Other glasshouse ranges have been demolished. Beyond the wall to the south is a Yew Walk at the top of the artificial cliff. Parsons and Partridge were responsible for the design of the kitchen gardens which originally included a central lily pond, shrub borders, and wide grass paths in addition to fruit and vegetables (Shepherd 1999).

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MAPS

A map of the Bawdsey estate, 1727 (HA 30:50/22/26.1), (East Suffolk Record Office)
Tithe map for Bawdsey parish, 1843 (East Suffolk Record Office)
MOD plan of Bawdsey Manor, 1943 (private collection)
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