

**ENGLISH HERITAGE REGISTERED GRADE II**

**BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL  
FAULKBOURNE  
GD1286**

**FAULKBOURNE HALL**

**TL804 165**

Late C19 gardens on the site of C16 gardens, surrounded by a park of mid C18 origins, extended during the late C19.

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

By 1426 the manor of Faulkbourne had come into the hands of Sir John Montgomery who in 1439 was granted a licence to crenellate his house there; it is from this period that the present red-brick Hall dates, incorporating fragments of the earlier timbered house. Sir John was succeeded in 1449 by his widow and then, in 1464, by his son Thomas who was well favoured by the monarchy. His wealth and power was reflected in a visit by Henry VII to Faulkbourne in 1489. Sir Thomas' widow inherited the estate in 1495 and was succeeded in 1503 by Sir Thomas' sister, Alice Spice whose granddaughter Phillipa married John Fortesque. When John died in 1518, Phillipa married Sir Francis Bryan, who was also very popular at court, being a friend to Henry VIII. Thus the status of Faulkbourne Hall and its estate remained high. One of the surviving garden walls may date from Sir Francis's time, but no other record of the landscape which surrounded his house has been found to date. Henry Fortesque, Sir Francis's stepson succeeded and his descendants held the estate until 1637 when it was sold to Sir Edward Bullock. His grandson, also Edward, added a south-east wing to the Hall in c 1693 and thanks to two marriages to wealthy wives, the Bullock family flourished at Faulkbourne during the C18. They built the stables to the south of the Hall, the walled kitchen garden to the north, and laid out pleasure grounds and a park with a straight avenue running up to the Hall from the south lodge entrance. In 1832 they added the west front to complete the present façade of the Hall and in the mid C19 extended the park to the north, realigned the north drive, and added the lodges. In 1897 the estate was put up for sale and was purchased by Mr Christopher Parker who undertook the development of the gardens, including using the remains of the moat to create cascades and a water garden. During the C20, under Christopher Parker's successors, the gardens have retained the layout he gave them. The site remains (2000) in single private ownership.

## SITE DESCRIPTION

### LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Faulkbourne Hall lies just beyond the north-west edge of Witham. The site covers c 55ha, surrounded by agricultural land. The western boundary is formed by Faulkbourne Road which links the village of Faulkbourne to Witham, while the southern boundary is defined by a track associated with Warren Farm. To the north and east the park is bounded by farm tracks and farmland. The ground at Faulkbourne Hall slopes gently from west to east, towards the course of the River Brain which runs through the eastern half of the park, rising again beyond it to the eastern boundary from which point there is a fine view of the Hall.

### ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

The two entrances to Faulkbourne Hall lie on Faulkbourne Road, one at the northern end and one at the southern end. From the mid C19 red-brick and tile picturesque South Lodge cottage c 400m to the south of the Hall, the drive passes through wooden gates and runs north through the park to arrive at the west front. North Lodge, of similar style and construction to South Lodge, stands on the west side of the drive c 450m north-west of the Hall. The drive runs south and south-east through the park, passing to the east of St Germain's church (listed grade I) and to the west of the Gardener's Lodge (dated 1899) before arriving at the gravelled forecourt below the west front. Sometime between 1838 (Tithe map) and 1874 (OS) the north drive was moved to its present position, prior to which it came past the west side of the church.

### PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Faulkbourne Hall (listed grade I) is a large country mansion constructed of red brick with handmade clay tiles. It is built in two storeys with a crenellated parapet, with projecting bays and turrets to north-west and south-east, also with crenellated parapets and octagonal crocketed spires. The body of the Hall was built from 1439 onwards by Sir John Montgomery, incorporating part of the earlier timber-framed building. This was enlarged in c 1693 by the addition of the south-east wing and again in the mid C19 when the south wing was added and the west front remodelled.

The single-storey, red-brick crenellated stable block with central square clock tower lies c 80m to the south of the Hall, linked to the Hall by a length of garden wall, part of which survives from the C16 or earlier (listed grade II). The stables were erected in 1844 by the Bullock family; they are no longer used as stabling (2000).

### GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The gardens lie mainly to the north and east of the Hall, enclosed on these two sides by the remains of the moat, divided by several weirs. The moat is fed from springs and a small lake

in the west park, which lead into a watercourse. The water flows from the watercourse into the moats and then continues out to the River Brain east of the gardens. A long herbaceous border runs along the east front, beside a grass terrace and gravel path which leads at its southern end to a small, enclosed, later C20 swimming pool area c 50m south-east of the Hall. Beyond the path to the east is a bowling green lawn, bordered to the east by the moat and to the north and south by tree planting.

Borders lie below the north wall of the Hall where lawns run up to the banks of the moat and related pools, developed by Christopher Parker in the late C19 as water gardens. A wooden footbridge over the moat level with the north-east corner of the Hall leads to a path through mixed tree and shrub planting, including some mature specimens, to the walled kitchen garden c50m to the north (see below). Beyond the water gardens to the north-west is a late C20 wild garden, known as The Glade, created on the south side of a late C20 tennis court.

#### PARK

The Hall stands to the west of centre of its c 52ha park which is retained under grass apart from the area to the north-east of the church and to the east of the walled garden. Many parkland trees were lost in the mid C20 to Dutch elm disease and later storm damage, although some mature lime and oak survive, particularly some old limes south of the Hall, as well as some fine mature cedar of Lebanon which date from the early C19. Elsewhere the park has been replanted in the later C20. The western half shown existing in 1777 (Chapman and André) contains a small spring-fed lake located c 200m to the west of the Hall. This feeds a watercourse lined with cricket-bat willow which runs west and is connected to the moats to the north and east of the Hall. The lake and watercourse are also shown on the 1777 county map. St Germain's church stands c 250m to the north-west of the Hall. Dating from the C13 it forms an important part of the landscape scheme, backed to the west by a boundary plantation. The area immediately to the north-east of the church has, during the C20, been returned to arable production.

The eastern half of the park contains two large blocks of woodland, together with osier beds along the banks of the watercourse connecting the east moat to the River Brain. The land to the north of the watercourse is under arable production, while the south-east quarter of the park remains under grass with a scatter of mature park trees. Most of the east park appears to have been added, along with part of the northern area, during the C19. Successive OS maps suggest the boundary altered several times, although surviving park trees suggest there may have been little real change in the physical landscape.

#### KITCHEN GARDEN

The partly walled kitchen garden lies c 50m to the north of the Hall. It is divided by central paths into borders used for growing flowers, fruit and vegetables and contains late C20 frames

and glasshouses. The garden was built in this position by the Bullock family as part of the mid C18 improvements and was developed as an ornamental garden by Christopher Parker at the end of the C19.

## REFERENCES

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T Wright, *History of Essex* (1836), p 230

*Country Life*, 16 (24 October 1904), pp 630-9; 66 (23 November 1929), pp 718-29

N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, *The Buildings of England: Essex* (1979), pp 175-7

J Kensworthy-Browne et al, *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses III*, (1981), p 50

*A History of Faulkbourne Hall*, guide leaflet produced by the Parker family, (nd)

## Maps

J Chapman and P André, *A map of the county of Essex from an actual survey...*, 1777 (Essex Record Office)

Tithe map for Faulkbourne parish, 1838 (D/CT 136B), (Essex Record Office)

OS 6'1 to 1 mile: 1<sup>st</sup> edition published 1881

2<sup>nd</sup> edition published 1898

3<sup>rd</sup> edition published 1920

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1<sup>st</sup> edition published 1874

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