



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

## Baldersby Park

### Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Baldersby Park [Newby Park], created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of the Historic Designed Landscapes project.

#### 1. Heritage Values Summary

The historic designed landscape of Baldersby Park, formerly known as Newby Park, has been shaped by its owners over three centuries with advice from three of the leading landscape designers of their day: George London in the early 18th century, Adam Mickel II in the 1780s and 1790s and Joseph Paxton in the 1840s. The focus of the design of the estate was the hall, a Grade I listed building, created between 1718 and 1730 in the Palladian style. That design remains legible with elements surviving from the three main periods of development.

#### 2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

The hall, built between 1718 and 1730 for Sir William Robinson, is an early example of the Palladian style. It replaced the existing hall that Sir William had set in a walled park with adjacent formal gardens and a wilderness. The nurserymen, London and Wise, provided many of the trees in the park and beyond, as well as plants for the parterre garden and it is possible George London advised Sir William on the design. In the park aligned to the hall, the extant canal and obelisk at its southern extent were put in c. 1704-9.

Thomas Robinson (2nd Lord Grantham) took over the lease of the estate from his father on the latter's death in 1770, as it was owned by his cousin. Having made plans as early as 1764 with his father to alter what was now an old-fashioned layout, it was only after his marriage in 1780 that Grantham was able to implement them within the confines of the lease. He engaged the landscape designer, Adam Mickel II, that year who remained at Baldersby until 1793 despite the death of Lord Grantham in 1786. The current layout of the main park, together with the southern shelterbelt, date from this time.

By 1845, Grantham's son (later 2nd Earl de Grey) had inherited Newby Hall and Wrest Park, so decided to sell Baldersby to George Hudson, the railway tycoon. While the main changes were to the hall and service buildings, Hudson commissioned Joseph Paxton to redesign the kitchen garden and possibly to alter the gardens in front of the hall. With Hudson's bankruptcy, the estate was sold to Viscount Downe in 1854 but with his early death in 1857, it became the home of his widow and her second husband. They remodelled the gardens to the west of the hall, added the eastern shelterbelt and reinstated many of the early 18th century avenues.



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John Brennard bought it in 1901. Following a major fire at the hall the following year, he enlarged the western formal gardens and added at least 12 new glasshouses in the kitchen garden. With the sale of the estate in 1925 to Skellfield School, most of the former parkland was leased to two farms and the kitchen garden became a commercial market garden. With the closure of the school in 1970, the two farms bought the leased land leaving 50 acres adjoining the hall, which became the site of the present Queen Mary's School in 1984. The former kitchen garden is now a static caravan park.

### 3. Evidential Value ('Research')

The first designed landscape, created in the 1630s, was a deer park probably on the higher ground to the west. Although the royal licence allowed 150 acres to be emparked, its exact size, boundaries and location of its lodge are not known. Further archival research and site surveying of the area may yield more information. The extent to which George London designed the early 18th century landscape is also worthy of more investigation. His extensive nursery business with Henry Wise has been well documented but there is less known about his design work and his involvement in their implementation.

The acquisition of the Newby Park estate by George Hudson in 1845, prompted the first major change to the designed landscape since the 1780s. While the latter phase of development is well represented in the archives, little archival evidence remains from the period when Hudson employed the leading garden designer of the day, Joseph Paxton. The redesign of the walled kitchen garden has been attributed to him by a contemporary source but it would be interesting to find out what else Paxton was responsible for.

### 4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

Despite the division of ownership of the estate in the 1970s, the designed landscape of the 18th century is still legible and appropriate setting for the Grade I listed main building.

### 5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

While the grounds remain largely private, divided between the school and the two farms, the site is the venue for the annual Deershed festival in July. This occupies the lower parkland around the canal, belonging to one of the farms. The owners of this area also regularly bring schoolchildren here with their teachers, where they learn to appreciate this historic landscape.

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