



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Bessingby Hall park and garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Bessingby Hall park and garden, created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of East Riding Historic Designed Landscapes project.

1. Heritage Values Summary

A small compact landscaped park laid out in the mid 18th century, created by acquiring land during the period of enclosure. The gardens and parkland enhance the setting for Bessingby Hall, which is Listed Grade II. The well wooded parkland and tree belts contrast with the wider landscape of arable fields where woodland and trees are sparse. It provides a diverse environment for nature conservation. The former home farm integral with Bessingby village borders the designed landscape and their rural character is an important component of Bessingby Conservation Area, which is appreciated by the local community.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Prior to the dissolution of the monasteries the manor of Bessingby was held by Bridlington Priory, but then passed to the Crown. A series of private owners followed and by 1765 John Hudson, who came from a Bridlington merchant family, bought it. Within the following three years the open fields of ridge and furrow surrounding Bessingby village were enclosed and by 1769 parts were incorporated into a planted landscape surrounding the hall.

By the late eighteenth century the designed landscape Hudson created shows a typical layout of the time with perimeter plantations, walled kitchen garden away from the house, pleasure grounds and shrubbery next to the house, several ponds and parkland. Sited on the rising ground to the north by High Wood, overlooking the hall and park, was an observatory, or summerhouse, providing a focal point.

John's son, Harrington remodelled the house to designs by Thomas Cundy in 1807. He made some changes to the landscape, planting more areas with trees and orchards and increasing the grounds to the east, acquired from John Greame of Sewerby.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

There is a record of an earlier manor house from the thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and a substantial house with eight hearths is recorded in 1672, but the location of these are uncertain. The present hall may have been built on the site of the former manor house, but



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other locations are possible too. Within the parkland to the south of the hall, previously named 'Hall Close', is a square enclosure marked by trees on the 1854 OS map, which warrants further investigation as the manor house site. The area of the former estate home farm named 'Hall Farm' may also be a candidate. Close-by a former pigeoncote has an inset stone inscribed C R 1670, which may have been reused from an earlier building, potentially the manor house.

Investigation at the site of the observatory, or summerhouse, south of High Wood, now seemingly demolished and surrounded by woodland, may reveal evidence of its foundations, construction, size and shape.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

Bessingby Hall, a Grade II listed building, is a good example of a Palladian style Georgian house and together with its lodge, both are enhanced by their parkland and garden setting, which retains grazed pasture, ponds, mature trees and woodland belts. The house is a focal point viewed across the parkland from the main village street.

This semi-enclosed landscape provides a diverse natural environment and makes a strong contribution to the village setting, all of which lie within Bessingby Conservation Area. Although there is some modern building encroachment the landscape retains its rural character with a mix of public and private spaces, such as gardens, parkland, open green spaces, trees, hedgerows and green verges. It contrasts with the wider landscape of arable fields where woodland and trees are sparse.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

The estate buildings are now in residential use and the hall is converted into a care home. The hall retains many of its historical features, which can be shared and appreciated by its residents. The surrounding pleasure grounds are much reduced, re-landscaped and replanted, but they still provide a garden setting for their enjoyment with views across the former parkland. The close proximity to Bessingby village means the local community values the landscape.

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