



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Busby Hall park and garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Busby Hall park and garden, created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of North York Moors National Park Authority Historic Designed Landscapes project.

1. Heritage Values Summary

Busby Hall's designed landscape of c. 200 acres remains a good example of a late 18th century park and pleasure grounds. Although not completed until well into the 19th century, it is largely based on the design in 1766 by Thomas White, who was to become one of the most important landscape designers in northern Britain. Other features of note are the extant walled kitchen garden and separate hothouse that date from the 1770s. These were built following advice from the gardener at Castle Howard and a seedsman, William Bean, who had set up 'Scarborough Gardens', mix of pleasure gardens and market garden.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

The Busby Hall estate's origins date back to the late 16th century when William Marwood acquired the lands of Little Busby and built a new mansion house there. It remained in the Marwood family until 1764 when Jane Turner left the property to a distant relative, William Metcalfe, who then changed his name to Marwood. Jane had started to update the buildings and the designed landscape around it but it was her successor who radically altered both, using funds left to him for that purpose.

At the end of 1765, William Marwood called on the services of the landscape designer, Thomas White, who had just started his independent practice after working for Lancelot Brown for 6 years. White proposed converting around 200 acres around the Hall from fields into open parkland with shelterbelts and other plantations, in addition to a new walled kitchen garden. Work started with planting around the new stables to the north in 1767 but other parts of the plan were problematic. Marwood instead asked the head gardener of Castle Howard in 1768 to design the existing kitchen garden and Anthony Sparrow to landscape the surrounding area in 1772. Between 1776-8, Marwood erected a separate hothouse to a design possibly by William Bean of Scarborough.

While William Marwood did a considerable amount of planting of trees during his tenure of 45 years, the parkland remained limited until his nephew, Rev. George Marwood junior, inherited in late 1827. He appeared to have returned to White's plan of 1766 with the parkland now mirroring his design. Although George Marwood III made significant changes to the hothouse including putting in a new boiler in the 1840's, it appears he did little to the rest of the grounds.



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After his death in 1882, the estate was often rented out and one of these tenants, Lawrence and Ann Gjers, made the final changes to the landscape in the first decade of the 20th century.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

While the extant archive at the North Yorkshire County Record Office (ZDU) is quite extensive, there are no maps or surveys in the critical period between 1765 and 1773. Having these would help establish more clearly the extent to which White's plan was carried out when he was involved in 1767. This was one of the first commissions for White, whose career rivalled that of other noted designers such as Brown and Humphry Repton, particularly in northern England.

Apart from a survey map of 1760 and written descriptions, we know very little about the grounds around the Hall in the 17th and early 18th centuries that were removed in the 1760s. The area where the walled garden next to the house stood is open grassland and could be easily surveyed with non-invasive techniques.

The separate hothouse at Busby is a rare surviving example of its type. These freestanding buildings were often removed when such buildings became incorporated with walled kitchen gardens. Although it is likely to have been built as a vinery/peach house, further research is needed to see if more exotic fruits such as pineapples were grown in it and its original structure before modifications in the mid 19th century.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

Busby Hall is one of a number of designed landscapes in the foothills of the Cleveland Hills that take advantage of its surroundings. The topography means that it can take benefit from the shelter it provides from the south and the reliable water supply from the streams running down the hills. The Hall slightly elevated position also means it has splendid views to the northeast and the noted landmark of Roseberry Topping, to the north and the Leven valley and to the southwest with the hills next to Ingleby Arncliffe.

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