



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Escrick Park

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Escrick Park, created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of Selby District Historic Designed Landscapes project.

1. Heritage Values Summary

The Escrick estate has been shaped by its owners over 300 years. The designed landscape around the Grade II* Hall includes not only aesthetic features such as terraces, pleasure grounds, parkland and woods but also fishponds and later duck decoy ponds for sport. With the exception of the walled kitchen garden, the design remains largely intact, including twin icehouses and most of the entrance lodges. The development of the village has reflected that of the estate and now forms part of the Conservation Area.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

When the Thompson family acquired the Escrick estate in 1668, the manor house was in the centre of the village with the surrounding land being fields and woods. With the construction of the new Hall c1690, they began to reshape the landscape to provide a suitable setting for the house. By 1754, they had removed the village houses immediately south of the Hall and created the area known as the 'Long Walk', an avenue of elms bordering a section of land of 32a. To the north of the house, they put in a kitchen garden and a small plantation.

The main development of the parkland however was not until after 1781, when Beilby Thompson was able to move the adjacent church to the north part of the village and remove more village houses. This process continued to the 1820's when Paul Lawley Thompson was finally able to complete the park with the move of the public roads further east and west, thus creating the northern section known as the 'Deer Park'.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

Escrick unusually has two adjacent icehouses, both apparently in operation at the same time. The records show at least one was in place by 1764. The first record of the second is on the OS 6" map of 1892. An initial inspection showed that both had internal bricks dating from the 19th century, so it is thought that the earlier one (with east facing entrance) had been refaced, possibly when the second one was built. More evidence for this may be found by detailed archaeological survey.

While the southern ('Moor Head') duck decoy pond has been researched and subsequently restored, the northern pond would merit further investigation. In the survey done by Oxford Archaeology North in 2009, they described its shape as unusual possibly as a result of its adaption from an earlier pond. There is a record of six ponds being dug to be used for keeping fish in 1764,



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the location of five of these has been identified but the one in the 'Carr' has not and it may be the site of the later duck decoy pond.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

The design of the park at Escrick reflected the owners' desires not only to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape but also to have a varied sporting estate with its early fishponds and later duck decoy ponds as well as the deer park. This, together with the close involvement of the owners in creating the landscape, has led to a varied and interesting layout that largely remains intact. It is the setting for the hall, Escrick Park, a Grade II* listed building and a range of other associated buildings, which are also listed.

While the position of the manor house and subsequent Hall in the centre of the village restricted their ability to create a garden and landscape park immediately, its elevated position afforded fine views across the largely flat landscape. To take advantage of this and enhance their surroundings they removed parts of the village and Church, relocating them and creating an estate village.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

The northern section of parkland, the Hall, the older part of Escrick village and St Helen's Church are in a Conservation Area that reflects their joint development. It helps ensure the character of the area and its mature setting is protected for the community.

The estate owners encourage engagement with the local and wider community opening up parts of the parkland for riding, walking and holiday homes, giving access to areas such as ancient woodlands, referred to on the mid 17th century map as 'Great Wood Common' and now part of Common Wood and Hollicarrs Wood.

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