



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

## Kippax Park

### Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Kippax 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

Kippax Park was an important designed landscape from at least the early 14th century and possibly earlier. On its transfer to the royal estate, its large enclosed park of up to 400 acres was well maintained until the middle of the 16th century. Thomas Bland acquired the lease of the former deer park and he built a mansion on the site in the early 17th century. This would become the focus of the designed landscape that changed little over the next 300 years, with the area of parkland being slowly expanded to reach its maximum extent in 1905. The hall was demolished in 1955 to make way for open cast mining across its site and much of the former parkland. This has now returned to open fields. With some perimeter woodland, parts of the park wall and the walls of the former kitchen garden surviving, the designed landscape still has some legibility. It also provides an important green space for the neighbouring villages.

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

The first evidence of Kippax Park as a separate area was in 1322 when it was acquired by the Crown, however Edmund de Lacy was granted free warren at Kippax in 1249. A lodge was built c.1405 on the site of the later mansion and in 1438/9, significant work was done on the boundaries possibly reducing it in size to give land to the new grange (farm). The parkland and lodge were leased to Thomas Bland in 1595, who built the mansion on the site before 1612.

The estate continued with the Bland family throughout the 17th century although no significant changes were made until Sir John Bland (6th Bt) made major alterations to the hall and probably added the new kitchen garden between 1749 and 1755. The estate remained with his siblings until the death of Anne of 1786, when it was inherited by a cousin, Thomas Davidson (later Bland). He engaged Adam Mickle II the following year to provide an improvement plan but there is no indication that this was carried out.

Thomas Davidson Bland junior expanded the estate in the first half of the 19th century by acquiring adjacent land and was thus able to increase the size of the parkland. He added two extant entrance lodges to the north and east. His grandson, John, continued with further improvements in the 1880s and the parkland reached its maximum extent by 1905. On his death in 1928, the estate went to the daughters of his cousin, who abandoned the hall. This was later demolished, with the building materials sold off in 1955. The area around the hall and parkland to the south was then used for open-cast mining. It was later returned to farmland after the mining operation ceased.



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

While the accounts of the medieval park give details of the operation of the site, more information is needed on the extent of the early park. There are the remnants of a ditch and possible bank near the former Gilberthorpe Farm (SE 41425 29700) that may be part of the original boundary but further work is needed to verify this. Little is known about the house built by Thomas Bland in the early 17th century and the designed landscape about it, apart from the sketch by Samuel Buck c. 1720. Although evidence on the ground is largely lost due to the mining, there may be more in the archives to be found.

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

The legibility of the original medieval park is still evident despite the clearing of the central section due to open-cast mining. Later features from the 18th and 19th centuries, such as the lodges, walled kitchen garden and boundary walls survive together with some of the perimeter woodland, thus making its historic design evident despite the loss of the main buildings.

Kippax Park provides an important green buffer between the expanding urbanisation of the local villages of Kippax, Great Preston and Allerton Bywater. An area next to the northern boundary of the former park is now a nature reserve, 'Kippax Meadows', run by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. To the south, two areas of woodland of the Kippax Park estate, Owl Wood and Pit Plantation, are also nature areas belonging to the same organisation.

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

While most of the former estate is now privately owned, there are public footpaths on the western side linking Kippax village and the Kippax Meadows reserve to the north and Owl Wood/Pit Plantation reserve to the south. Most of the former parkland is included in the Kippax Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2033.

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