



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Newton Kyme Hall park and garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Newton Kyme Hall park and garden, 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

Newton Kyme Hall park and garden are set around the Grade II* Newton Kyme Hall, built by Admiral Robert Fairfax in the early 18th century on land above the adjacent River Wharfe. The estate remained in the Fairfax family until the late 19th century. Much of the landscape today contains the elements laid out by the Fairfaxes including the lime avenue, planted in 1712, which has remained a constant feature through the parkland to the front of the Hall. Although the limes were replaced in the mid-20th century, the view from the Tadcaster road along the lime avenue provides a splendid vista of parkland and Hall.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Newton Kyme estate was associated with a branch of the Fairfax family from about 1556 until the late 19th century. Prior to ownership by the Fairfaxes, the site had been occupied in the medieval period with evidence of ridge and furrow still remaining in the parkland. Remains of a medieval building, given the name 'Kyme Castle', have persisted within the garden and were romanticised as a folly in the 19th century. Admiral Robert Fairfax decided to build a new house, Newton Kyme Hall, on or near the site of an existing small manor house in which he grew up in the early 18th century. He planted a distinctive avenue of lime trees in 1712, using stock from the Denton estate of his young cousin and ward, Lord Fairfax. Successive generations of Fairfaxes modified the formal gardens laid out by Robert Fairfax, while retaining the overall area of parkland and garden. The Hall was extended by Thomas Loddington Fairfax in the early 19th century and his son, Thomas, made further changes to the landscape, including extension of the pleasure garden to the river Wharfe. After the Fairfax ownership, the garden was extended slightly into the parkland, at the same time as the parkland itself was extended significantly.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

Documentary evidence for the landscaping includes estate maps of 1726, 1813 and 1842. Admiral Robert Fairfax's unmarried grandson, also Robert Fairfax, kept a memorandum book, from 1774-1802, with commentary on flower, fruit and vegetable planting, pond clearing and tree felling. Although this memorandum book brings the late 18th century landscape to life, there are few other primary sources relating to the design of the landscape other than maps. It would be useful to carry out further examination of the sites of the kitchen garden, low garden and ponds.

Evidence on the ground, including aerial photography, shows the signs of ancient occupation in the area, including Roman and medieval. Remains of landscape features, e.g. platform for the building



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associated with glasshouses, can be discerned. Further documentary evidence of landscaping undertaken would be helpful.

The rock garden, associated with the eastern ha-ha, is reputed to have been built in the 1920s, possibly by the Backhouses of York. Further investigation of design and records of rock gardens may help determine the origin of the rock garden.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

Newton Kyme Hall park and garden provide a focus for the linear village of Newton Kyme which runs westwards from the Hall. A 1995 report for Selby District Council on the Special Architectural and Historical interest of Newton Kyme Village comments on landscape setting of 'exceptional visual and archaeological interest', with the parkland being a primary landscape element 'which complements the 18th century group of buildings'. Newton Kyme Hall and garden, but not the parkland, form part of the Newton Kyme conservation area as designated by Selby District Council.

The lime avenue and sweep of the parkland from Newton Kyme Hall to the Tadcaster road provide an enduring, visually attractive feature, in a landscape predominantly given to farmland. The location of the Hall and garden on higher ground above the river Wharfe and adjacent to the church provide a delightful setting. The construction of buildings, including ice-house and ha-ha, in magnesian limestone, reflects the local geology.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

A public footpath runs through the parkland to the church and thence along the River Wharfe to Tadcaster, providing community access through the parkland. The woodland area of the garden is one of the few areas of woodland adjacent to the River Wharfe in the neighbourhood and provides an important habitat. Part of the pleasure garden is opened to the public occasionally under the National Gardens Scheme.

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