



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Thirkleby Park

Statement of Significance

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

1. Heritage Values Summary

The eighteenth-century park and gardens of Thirkleby Hall have largely disappeared though some features still survive and there is some potential for adding information through further research. The information provided by Sir Thomas Frankland's letters add to understanding of horticulture in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century. Today the site is a caravan park and the remaining amenities of the site contribute positively to the experience of residents

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Thirkleby was held by several generations of the Frankland baronets who were prominent in both local and national life. In particular the 6th Baronet, Sir Thomas Frankland, was a botanist, horticulturalist and Fellow of the Royal Society as well as the newly formed Linnean and Horticultural Societies. He was responsible for remodelling the estate in the late eighteenth century. He built a new hall which is associated with the 18th century architect James Wyatt. Though the hall was demolished, the stables and the lodge survive.

The layout of the late 18th century park is associated in part with the designer Adam Mickel II, though Sir Thomas was also closely involved. The letters of Sir Thomas, an enthusiastic horticulturalist, to James Smith of the Linnean Society, along with contributions to the early Horticultural Society, provide detailed illustration of activities in the kitchen garden.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

There are letters of Sir Thomas Frankland only recently made available, which may add further information about his horticultural activities. There is good archaeological potential for learning more about the early hall, situated near the church. Geophysical survey could reveal the shape of the early gardens as well as the footprint of the house.

The potential to find further evidence of the eighteenth-century pleasure gardens and park are slight as the site is now a caravan park. However this has preserved the lake, some individual trees and a dedicatory plaque. The stables have been converted to new use. New buildings in the vicinity of the former hall have probably removed any archaeological traces of that building and its immediate environs.

The walled garden survives but was not in a good state of repair in 2019. The dipping pond survives and there is evidence of wall flues serving an early glasshouse. Further information could be yielded by a more thorough survey of the interior. The service buildings outside the wall on the north are



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dilapidated but architectural study could give more evidence of the history and use of these structures.

Oak Wood appears to have survived intact and parts of Ruddings Wood. Some original trees probably survive, though a survey could add more information. The same is true of the Avenue which is much reduced. Some fir trees exist, though their age is uncertain.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

The former park and woodland can currently be enjoyed by residents of the caravan park. This is situated in and around the original lake which is available for anglers. The caravans are situated in the remains of the former Ruddings Wood. There are also views from the caravan park of the North York Moors escarpment to the east as noted in early descriptions of the eighteenth-century hall and gardens.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

The history of the estate and the Frankland family are important for local people resident in Great Thirkleby and figured in the history produced by a local history group to mark the Millennium. The core of the park continues to contribute to the social experience of residents of the caravan park.

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