



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Thorpe Hall park and garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Thorpe Hall park and garden, created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of the East Riding Historic Designed Landscapes project.

1. Heritage Values Summary

The designed landscape at Thorpe Hall, Rudston is of particular historic interest because it retains much of the layout of its gardens, parkland and plantations, shaped from the late 18th to the early 20th century; it retains some elements of the 'rustic picturesque' style. The late 19th century ornamental terraces and gardens, enhanced by statues, preserve much of their structure and mature planting. Extensive water management systems canalised the Gypsy Race and fed two serpentine lakes, although these are all but dry now. Many buildings, which supported the running of the estate, still survive, including a handsome stable block (partly converted to residential accommodation), pumping house, icehouse and home farm complex. Of particular note and are the listed ornamental buildings, especially the dairy, billiard room with orangery and octagonal game larder, which are rare survivals of early 19th century date. Under the same ownership for over 200 years, the landscape today is a thriving working estate engaging with local communities and providing a resource for leisure and nature conservation. The mature parkland and wider setting preserves important prehistoric and medieval settlement, with potential to reveal further features.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Thomas Hassell probably rebuilt the present Hall around 1718 but he and his son appear to have done little with the grounds, despite their relationship to the Wentworth family at Bretton Hall. Later owners, Godfrey Bosville and his wife, Diana (Thomas Hassell's niece), were the first to create a garden in their brief occupation from 1778 to 1784. Little evidence remains, but from contemporary accounts, it would appear to have elements of the fashionable picturesque style.

However, it was not until 1813 when Godfrey Macdonald inherited the estate, that the landscape we see today was created. By this time, fashions had moved on and the ideas of Repton, who mixed the formal with the rustic were popular. The most notable features from this period are the 'rustic picturesque' dairy (Listed Grade I) and canal with bridges (Listed Grade II), harnessing the Gypsy Race to feed two serpentine lakes.

The last owners to develop the gardens were Sir Alexander Bosville Macdonald and his wife, Alice, in the late 19th and early 20th century. They developed a formal Italianate garden with terraces south of the hall, a style that had been promoted by designers such as Harold Peto.



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3. Evidential Value ('Research')

Contemporary accounts from 1779 when Godfrey and Diana Bosville were extending the house describe a 'magnificent roothouse' used for dining. Its location is uncertain, but if found, there is potential to recover remains of the building and its context, surviving either above or below ground.

The parkland at Thorpe Hall retains evidence of past settlement from prehistory through to the medieval period and some parts are scheduled monuments. Sub-surface remains revealed through aerial survey, geophysics and excavation, have uncovered some aspects, but there is potential to discover much more. There is good survival of earthworks, particularly the medieval settlement of Caythorpe and manorial complex and gardens beyond on the fringes of the parkland. Further investigation of surviving earthwork enclosures and boundaries in the parkland may place them within this medieval context, or confirm an earlier date.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

The gardens and parkland sited in the Great Wold Valley of the Gypsy Race is a dramatic setting for Thorpe Hall (Listed Grade II*). There are views and vistas across the parkland, which retains mature trees, to the rising southern slopes and along the valley floor to the wider setting beyond. The large plantations and tree belts form significant areas of woodland within the valley and surrounding arable fields of the chalk Wolds.

Statues (some Listed Grade II) enhance the south facing terraces and formal Italianate gardens laid out with walks. The surrounding pleasure grounds retain mature trees, encompassing rustic buildings, such as the ornamental dairy (Listed Grade I) and octagonal, timber game larder (Listed Grade II). The former billiard room and orangery (Listed Grade II) sit above the terraced croquet lawn, with views across the parkland.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

Thorpe Hall is a working estate that engages with the community, providing access to its landscape by offering holiday accommodation within converted estate buildings and conversion of the interior of the walled garden for caravans. Outdoor events offer opportunities for families to experience the landscape together. The estate promotes conservation through guided nature, flora and fauna walks.

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