YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

A guide to researching an historic designed landscape by Louise Wickham

Part 1 - Getting started

The first thing you can do is 'desk research'. This is to identify the key features of the designed landscape and to prepare a draft initial chronology i.e. what was done and ideally when and by whom. For a list of typical features, see Appendix.

Step 1 – Look at Ordnance Survey maps

For all sites, there will be historic OS maps to look at. Here in Yorkshire, we are fortunate to have some of the earliest in the 6" to one mile series, surveyed from the late 1840s. They may be viewed at National Library of Scotland website where an almost complete series of the first editions of 6" and 25" are available for our area.

Go to their maps home page - https://maps.nls.uk/ and select 'Map Finder with Outlines'. In the top left box either type in the name of the site or, if you know it, the grid reference in the second box. Then select 'OS Six-Inch' in the box at the bottom left. When you press enter, selected maps will appear as icons on the right-hand side in date order. To pick one, click on it and it will open on your screen. You can them zoom in using the +/- buttons at the top left.
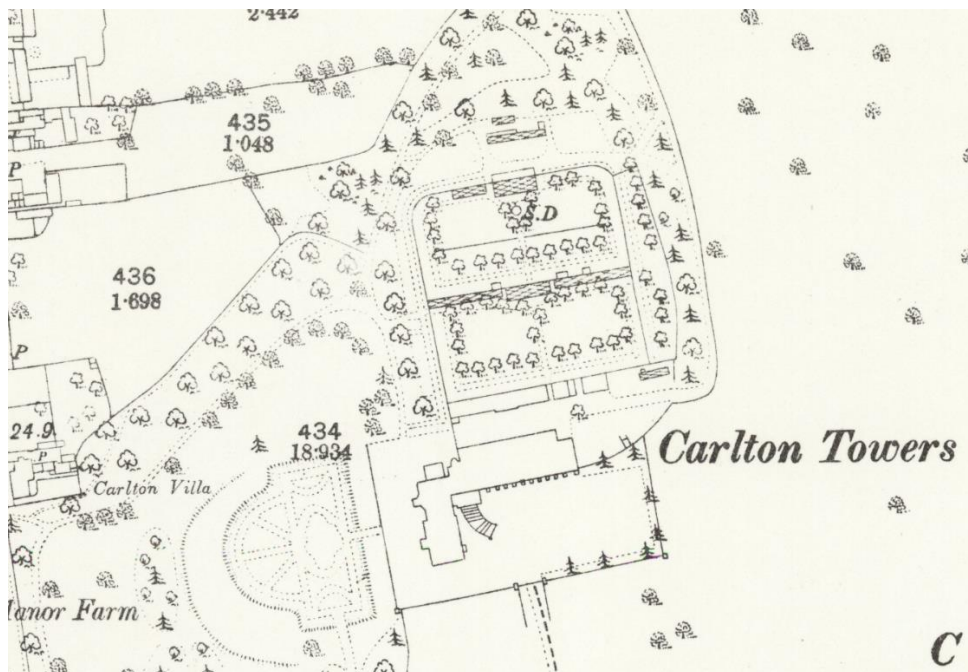
Step 2 – Make a list of the features

Using the earliest OS 6" map, make a list of all the possible features of the designed landscape. Don't worry at this stage if you are not sure or can't identify them readily, just note down their location and a description to remind you. Also look as widely as possible as some estates were very large and included distant features.
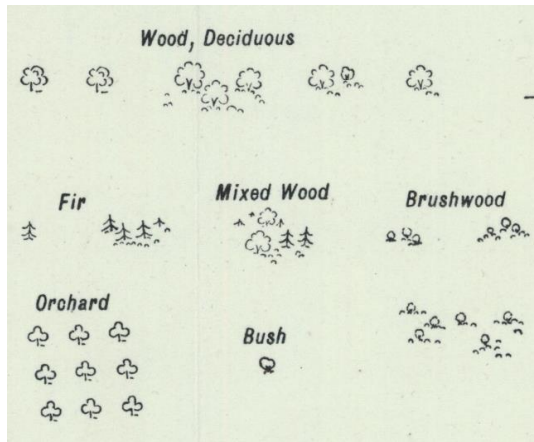
In the example above for Carlton Hall, obvious features are: the main building (Hall), Carlton Park (parkland is usually shaded or 'stippled'), 'Fish Pond' or lake, carriageway, entrance, courtyard, Water House, Ice House, Gardener's House and some scattered areas of trees denoted by the tree symbols either grouped as plantations or as single trees. Things that need further investigation are the buildings immediately to the north of the Hall, including the walled enclosure, the rectangular shapes in the parkland and the elliptical shape in the extreme north.

Next look at the 1st edition 25" map to examine these areas more closely.

We can see now that the walled area is in fact a kitchen garden with fruit trees and glasshouses (hatching or marked in blue denotes this) and to the north are more glasshouses. We can also see now that there is a parterre garden to the west of the Hall that does not appear on the earlier map and a S.D., which stands for 'sundial'. You can also see that the types of trees are marked – here are the symbols used:

Step 3 – Start to prepare a chronology of the site

Just by using the OS maps, we can identify changes from c. 1850 onwards. If we look again at Carlton's landscape on the map from the early 20th century, we can see that the parkland has increased and there are many new plantations:

Note the date the map was surveyed (listed on the top of the page on NLS page) to give yourself a time frame for the change (in this case between 1849 and 1888, as the changes first appear on the 25" 1st edition surveyed that year).

Step 4 – Start to identify features created pre c. 1850

This is more challenging. You can look at earlier maps but beware as they are not always accurate and usually only show large features e.g. the Greenwood map surveyed starting in 1817 and revised in 1827/8 (on NLS site under County maps – Yorkshire, https://maps.nls.uk/counties/yorkshire.html) shown below for Carlton.

Jeffrey produced large scale maps of Yorkshire c. 1771 (probably surveyed between 1767 and 1770), however there were 3 editions with the last one in 1800. North Yorkshire County Record Office has a set of the 1st edition and copies of the 3rd edition can be found at https://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A92720. However caution is needed as the revisions were not consistent. They also give very little usable detail apart from the estate's owner.

Step 5 – Alternatives to maps for dating built features

Start with the easiest one: the main house. Changes to this often meant changes to the designed landscape. If they still exist, they are most likely to be listed and information about them can be found on Historic England's website - https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/. For the example of Carlton, the first OS map usefully gives us a date – 1614 but this is rare, although comparing subsequent maps can alert you to changes in the buildings. You can always try searching for the name of the building on the internet that may give you additional information.

Next look at other built features on the estate. Use HE's listing to see if they are on there or a general internet search.

Step 5 – Add owners to the list

You will see that the Jeffrey's maps usefully give the owner's name at the time of the map's production that gives you a start. Next see if there is an estate archive listing on the National Archives general listing - https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/. For Carlton, we find searching 'Carlton Towers' takes us to the estate/family listing https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F18029 that leads us to Hull History Centre and their records - http://catalogue.hullhistorycentre.org.uk/catalogue/U-DDCA where the catalogue gives a history of ownership.

If there is no estate archive listing, one alternative is to look for details about the parish where the estate is located in the Victoria County History for Yorkshire. Unfortunately, they only cover parts of the old East Riding and North Riding but online copies can be found at https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/vch--yorks. Using the parish to search, you could try https://www.genuki.org.uk/ that lists old trade directories and other information about owners but it is mainly 19th century. If nothing else, do an internet search on the name of either an owner you do know about to trace other family members or the name of the site.

Step 6 – Lay out information gained in chronological order

Either using a spreadsheet (Excel) or a Word document table, list what you have found out so far with source. Using the example of Carlton:

Date	Details	Source
Early 14th century	Stapleton family established at Carlton	Hull History Centre catalogue of estate papers (U DDCA)
1614	Carlton Hall built by Elizabeth Stapleton (widow of Brian)	1st edition 6" OS map/ HHC catalogue
c. 1660 - 1707	Sir Miles Stapleton, owner	HHC catalogue
1707-16	Estate owner, Sir Miles' nephew, Nicholas Errington senior [later Stapleton]	HHC catalogue
1716-50	Nicholas Stapleton junior owner	HHC catalogue
c. 1740	Wing added to Hall	HE listing no 1295955

1750 - 1821	Thomas Stapleton (son of Nicholas) owner. Improved Carlton estate, landscaping park and adding east wing & stables	HHC catalogue
1767-70	Carlton Park and lake not shown?	Jeffrey's map
c. 1770	Water Tower built by Thomas Atkinson, also gatepiers and railings on main road from Snaith to Carlton village	HE listing no 1174041/ 1148394
By 1827/8	Carlton Park and lake in place	Greenwood's map
1821 - 36	Thomas's son, owner	HHC catalogue
1839 - 1854	Owned by Miles Thomas Stapleton	HHC catalogue
By 1849	Walled kitchen garden in place, some perimeter planting, icehouse and gardener's house	1st edition 6" OS map
1854 - 1892	Henry Stapleton, son of Miles Thomas, owner	HHC catalogue
1873-5	Modifications to main structure of Hall by Edward Welby Pugin	HE listing no 1295955
c1875	Gates, railings and piers in front of Hall by EW Pugin	HE listing no 1148393
1875-90	Modifications of interior of Hall by J F Bentley	HE listing no 1295955
By 1888	Parkland expanded, new plantations and parterre garden	1st edition OS 25" map
1895	Mona Stapleton, niece of Henry, sole heiress. Marries into Fitzalan Howard family in 1914, whose descendants still own it	HHC catalogue

Step 7 – Draw conclusions from evidence gained so far

Laying out the evidence chronologically as above allows you to start making connections. Historic designed landscapes are often a series of layers as owners make changes to reflect the gardening fashions of the day. In the example above the open parkland and lake are typical of the second half of the 18th century (often referred to as 'Brownian' style after the designer, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown). The parterre garden of the later 19th century was a revival of an earlier style that was popular in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Again looking at the Carlton example, we can conclude:

- As the Hall was first built in 1614, there were likely to be gardens associated with it from the beginning that were probably redesigned so have disappeared

- The parkland and lake probably date from the second half of the 18th century, i.e. earlier than the evidence we have so far of being from 1827/8
- The regular shape of the lake looks like it is man-made and we know the adjacent water tower dates to c. 1770, so the lake may well date from this period
- The expansion of the parkland and additional plantations between 1849 and 1888 may well have been part of an overall improvement programme to the estate in the 1870s, given the large changes to the Hall

Step 8 – Make a list of questions to direct further research

Clearly there are still a lot you don't know but making a list of questions will help guide your further research, particularly when it comes to looking at archive material. Think about periods when significant changes may have been made, for example when the estate acquires a new owner through inheritance/purchase or the main house is being built/altered. This will focus your initial enquiries as estate archives can often have hundreds or indeed thousands of documents.

From the example for Carlton, some key questions are:

- Was the lake created in the 1770s?
- Was the parkland around it created at the same time? If not, when?
- When exactly was the parkland extended in the later 19th century?
- When was the walled kitchen garden constructed?
- When was the icehouse built?
- Were these changes part of an overall design? If so, do we know who did the design?
- Can we find out anything about the designed landscape about the time the Hall was built?
- The Stapletons owned the estate from the medieval period, was Carlton Park part of a deer park for example?

Now you are ready to go to Stage 2 where you start looking at archive material and other historic resources before going to Stage 3 to look at what is remaining on the ground.

All Ordnance Survey maps are reproduced here with permission from the National Library of Scotland

Appendix - Elements of a designed landscape

We only include man-made features that are mainly aesthetic not practical (e.g. excludes arable farmland) and are usually 'attached' to main property but not always

Buildings and structures
Main house and associated service buildings [stables etc]

Entrance lodges, gates and gatepiers

Separate garden buildings/structures – summerhouses, seats, pergolas, orangeries, fernerys, bathhouses, eyecatchers, 'follies'

Walled [kitchen] gardens and their associated buildings – glasshouses, fruit stores, bothy, boiler houses, [forcing] pits, wells, dipping ponds

Functional buildings such as icehouses and game larders

Roads and paths
Useful to look at public roads as they can get moved to 'improve' landscapes

Entrances into the property

Carriageways within the estate

Bridle paths [for horse rides]

Footpaths in pleasure grounds

Paths in walled gardens

Parkland/gardens
Parkland may be enclosed by ditch/ha-ha or fence, used for grazing or for keeping animals for hunting

Pleasure grounds – mixture of shrubbery, small trees and borders typically around main house (though not always) that is walked in rather than riden

Specific gardens e.g. rose gardens, herbaceous borders, 'American gardens' or pinetums, rockeries

Plantations, clumps, shelterbelts and specimen trees

Water features
Lakes [large, irregular] or ponds [smaller]

Canals [with straight lines]

Fishponds

'Ice' ponds [for collecting ice]

Waterfalls [man-made with natural or artificial stone]

Fountains

Lily pools