



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Stapleton Park

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Stapleton Park, 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

Stapleton Park is one of the few estates to have had three of the leading landscape designers of the latter part of the 18th century consulted on its formation. The lack of current evidence means that we cannot be sure exactly what Richard Woods, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown or Thomas White advised or implemented but the extant designed landscape takes full advantage of its site. This landscape also has evidence of settlement and land use in prehistoric and medieval times. The locations of a medieval deer park, deserted village and 17th century manor house, remain to be found.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Stapleton Park was an important estate developed firstly by Edward Lascelles, then by Lord Stourton and finally by Edward Petre. Lascelles acquired the property in 1762 and brought in John Carr to remodel the buildings and Richard Woods to develop the designed landscape. Twenty years later, Lord Stourton called on the services of the leading designer of the day, Lancelot Brown, who prepared a plan. Brown died soon after and it is not known whether this plan was executed as the document does not appear to have survived. In 1783 and 1784, another leading designer, Thomas White, was paid for work at Stapleton but exact details are unknown.

By 1813, a landscape park together with lake and woodland was in place as well as a large walled kitchen garden. Petre took over the estate about three years later and he developed the landscape that largely survives today. By rerouting a public road, he was able to expand the parkland and the woodland especially to the south. He also indulged his passion for horse racing and built a racecourse on his land in the south west section.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

The landscape at Stapleton also has huge potential for the discovery of much earlier periods of settlement and land use, as there is some evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age/ Roman features recorded through aerial photography and excavations.

The medieval village of Stapleton is recorded on historic maps and in contemporary records, but its exact location is unknown. Further archaeological survey may determine more about its layout and extent and provide information on dating and its decline. There is documentary



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

evidence of a possible medieval deer park in the manor of Stapleton and further documentary research and survey may locate some physical evidence of its boundaries.

The only map that predates Brown and White's involvement shows a different shape to the lake ('Fishpond'). Further research and survey work may reveal whether the water feature was part of Woods' work in the 1760s and then remodelled after 1782 following plans by Brown or White.

Similarities in design to the walled kitchen garden at Carlton, known to be by Richard Woods, gives a strong indication that the one at Stapleton was also his work but further research and survey may strengthen the case.

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

Stapleton Park lies in a natural valley that has been enhanced by the woodland planting around the perimeter. Despite its proximity to the busy A1, it retains its quiet atmosphere. Although the main house has been demolished and the parkland is now largely arable farmland, the designed landscape retains its character. Part of one of the southern plantations, Brockadale, is now a nature reserve managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

November 2017