



# YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

## Grinkle Park

### Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Grinkle Park, created by the Yorkshire Gardens Trust, is derived from research carried out as part of North York Moors National Park Authority Historic Designed Landscapes project.

#### 1. Heritage Values Summary

The designed landscape at Grinkle Park that can be seen today has been developed over 200 years but it is the pleasure grounds created between 1870 and 1890 that are the most significant part. Laid out by the head gardener, George Abbey, they reflected his desire to implement the latest ideas on the use of trees and shrubs, influenced by Robert Marnock and William Paul. Rejecting the formal, Italianate approach of the previous two decades and the unimaginative use of trees and shrubs, Abbey laid out areas of trees and shrubs that were designed to be as attractive and interesting as flower borders. These ideas still influence the way gardens, especially trees and shrubs, are laid out to this day. Together with the landscaped stream and its waterfalls, the pleasure grounds remain if somewhat overgrown.

#### 2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Historically part of the Manor of Easington and Boulby, the Grinkle estate was originally a farmstead that was sold off in 1715 by Thomas Conyers. However when Sir Thomas Heron Myddleton inherited the manorial lands of Easington in 1769, he decided Grinkle was a good place to build a mansion. It lay next to the ancient wooded valley of Easington Beck on the east, to the north was farmland and to the south and west, open moorland. His successor, Robert Wharton Myddleton, further developed the landscape by enclosing parts of the common land and moor to the north and west in 1817 and increasing the woodland to the east and south.

Following Myddleton's death in 1834, little was done to the estate until it was purchased by Sir Charles Mark Palmer, a wealthy industrialist, in 1865. Five years later he employed as his head gardener, George Abbey, one of the early exponents of late Victorian planting ideas promoted by William Robinson and others. Abbey, a regular columnist for the leading gardening magazine *The Journal of Horticulture, Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman*, advocated more variety in the use of trees and shrubs in articles from 1865. His planting ideas of creating tree and shrub borders mixing colours and textures were a forerunner of the style of herbaceous borders by Gertrude Jekyll and others. It is very likely that Abbey used his ideas in the pleasure grounds around Grinkle Park, which were redesigned between c. 1870 and 1890.

#### 3. Evidential Value ('Research')

Little appears to have survived of the estate archive prior to its sale in 1946 and subsequent conversion to a hotel, so most of the information we have about Grinkle comes from Abbey's



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numerous articles that cover the whole period that he was head gardener there. He writes on almost every aspect of horticulture but it is his more radical ideas on landscaping, the use of shrubs and trees which are worthy of further examination.

In one article he describes an unusual rectangular icehouse that is also designed to be a summerhouse. The icehouse at Grinkle would appear to date from the second half of the 19th century but is currently inaccessible, so a full excavation of the remains could confirm whether this is the one Abbey is describing.

While some of the specimen trees in the pleasure grounds may date from the 1870s and 1880s, they would need to be properly identified. Large parts of the former pleasure grounds are overgrown and while it is unlikely that any Victorian shrubbery would still survive, a full plant site survey would confirm whether any unusual species still remain.

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

The designed landscape of Grinkle Park has been developed by its owners over the last 200 years, taking advantage of the natural surroundings but also enhancing it through careful management and planting. In 1881, Palmer engaged the architect Alfred Waterhouse to build a new mansion and other buildings on the estate. The new house occupied the same site as the old, to minimise the disruption to the carefully laid out grounds.

Although there has been some replanting of woodland and the pleasure grounds have become rather overgrown, the footprint of the designed landscape remains largely intact. It continues to provide an attractive setting for the main house that is currently operating as a hotel. These could be further enhanced by the opening up to the public of the southern areas along the stream, where there was once a summerhouse, affording views back to the house to the north and the parkland to the south.

### 5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

From the time of Sir Mark Palmer, Grinkle Park's grounds have been enjoyed by visitors. Abbey deliberately designed the grounds to provide year round interest and hotel guests continue to benefit from the surroundings. Grinkle has always been noted locally for its display of unusual rhododendrons and attract visitors just to view these, although some of the older specimens are now being replaced by more common varieties such as *R. ponticum*. Lying within the popular North York Moors National Park, it provides a different experience to the open moorland and coast for the Park's many visitors.

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