



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Kirkby Hall, Park and Garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Kirkby Hall, Park and Garden, 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

Kirkby Hall, Park and Garden has historical, associative value as one of four designed landscapes to have been created by the Aislabie family. Kirkby illustrates the development of their ideas of the English Landscape Garden and the Picturesque and affords those with an interest in both the Aislabies and 18th century landscape design the opportunity to compare and contrast with Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey, Laver Banks and Hackfall.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

Although historical evidence relating to Kirkby Hall is limited, it has been possible to trace the development of the site from the 18th century onwards and, to a degree, for earlier periods through the survival of archival material. There are some surviving, contemporary mid 18th-century bills and accounts which indicate that works were being implemented at Kirkby Fleetham under the direction of the mason and gardener Robert Doe, who also worked at Studley and Hackfall. There is also a mid 18th-century painting and late 18th-century survey book and plans, which illustrate and record the designed landscape at that time.

The site is known to be associated with William Aislabie, who also developed the designed landscape at Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey and created the Picturesque landscapes at Hackfall and Laver Banks, sites lying within a short distance of Kirkby Fleetham. Studley Royal and Hackfall are Grade I on the Historic England 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England', recognised as being of exceptional interest. Studley Royal Park, including the Ruins of Fountains Abbey, is also a World Heritage Site of outstanding universal value.

The significance of Kirkby Hall lies in its association with the Aislabie family, their other designed landscapes, and its contribution towards an understanding of the development and implementation of the ideas of landscape design of these notable landowners. The Aislabies are significant as gentlemen amateur gardeners, whose ideas and designs have influenced the development and practice of landscape gardening from the 18th century to the present day.



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3. Evidential Value ('Research')

There have been later alterations to the Hall and surrounding gardens and parkland, some of which is now under arable cultivation and there are areas of additional tree planting. Nonetheless, the extent of the original designed landscape is still legible. There is high potential for archaeological evidence to survive below ground, for example evidence of the former garden buildings which were erected up on the woodland terrace walks. There is also potential for earlier archaeological remains to be identified through archaeological field survey and intervention, including evidence for the medieval manor of Kirkby and prehistoric activity in the area.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

The site largely retains the legibility of its original form and layout, although the views to the eastern parkland from the Hall, and northwards from the woodland terrace, are altered and obscured by more recent woodland planting. It remains possible, nevertheless, to appreciate the original landscape design. The relative tranquillity of the location and its rural, landscape setting is still preserved.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

Although mainly a privately-owned landscape, the Church of St Mary and associated burial ground lie central to the designed landscape, immediately adjacent to the Hall. A number of family members of those who lived and worked at the Hall and on its estate are buried here. A notable late 18th-century monument to William Lawrence by Flaxman, erected by his parents, lies near to his remains, and those of his father, inside the Church.

17.01.20