



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Skutterskelfe Park [Rudby Hall]

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Skutterskelfe Park, 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

Skutterskelfe Park lies within the valley of the River Leven and its associated streams running through the landscape were adapted for water features. Its setting affords a fine view to the Cleveland Hills to the south and 'Folly Hill' to the west. At least three mansions or manor houses have stood on this site. The current one, named Rudby Hall (listed Grade II), dates from the 1830s and is the work of the noted architect, Anthony Salvin, who may also have advised on the design of the terraced garden. The parkland and much of the woodland remains, as does the structure of the walled kitchen garden and formal terraced area, creating an attractive environment for its residents and visitors.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

The designed landscape of Skutterskelfe Park was mainly created in the latter part of the 18th century by General Cary and his daughter, Lady Amherst, to enhance a mansion, named Leven Grove, he had bought in 1754. Lord Falkland on inheriting the property in 1830 from his relative, Lady Amherst, decided to build a new mansion as befitting his new status as son-in-law to King William IV. He engaged the services of Anthony Salvin, the newly fashionable architect but, with the exception of a new terraced garden to the west of the Hall, did little to alter the wider landscape.

Due to Lord Falkland's absence from the country until 1853, no further work was done either to the Hall or the grounds. On his return though he renamed the house, Skutterskelfe Hall and added new stables. He also increased the parkland west and increased the woodland planting around the river. In 1898, the estate was bought by the Ropner family and they added a lodge (listed Grade II) off the Rudby-Stokesley road and built a pump house (listed Grade II) harnessing the river to provide electricity.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

The remains of the possible medieval village of Skutterskelfe lies to southeast of Rudby Hall where a hollow way flanked by building platforms is recorded. It may also be the site of the manor house recorded in documents of 1466. Archaeological research may reveal further evidence of the village layout and confirm the location of the manor house. The settlement appears on John Speed's map of Yorkshire c. 1611 but not on Blaeu's map of Yorkshire c. 1645, so further research may determine the chronology of the demise of the village and possibly the creation of early parkland, known as the 'Lawn'.



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The terraced garden to the west of the current Hall is now mainly grassed over, with just the remains of a fountain and a stone planter now visible. Geophysical survey may reveal below ground survival of features associated with the design of formal planting and beds in the parterre. Although thought to date from the 1830s, no designer has been found so it is possible that Salvin advised on it. It is similar in design to the one at Moreby Hall, near Stillingfleet, where Salvin worked although there the layout is credited to the gardener, John Burr.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

The designed landscape of Skutterskelfe Park takes full advantage of its natural picturesque surroundings, both within the estate boundaries and the borrowed landscape of the Cleveland Hills beyond. It was created to incorporate the key natural features of the River Leven and streams, Stell and Carr Stell and the highpoint, Folly Hill. When the Hall was rebuilt in the 1830s, the natural landscape was enhanced through further woodland planting and a new terraced garden adjacent to the Hall.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

Rudby Hall has been recently renovated and the new owners are operating it as a private hotel. Other buildings on the estate are individually owned but with the exception of the walled kitchen garden, most of the estate retains its historic appearance. This provides an enhanced setting for these buildings and an added attraction for the occupiers and their visitors.

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