



YORKSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Toulston Lodge park and garden

Statement of Significance

This statement of significance for Toulston Lodge park and garden, 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

The designed landscape at Toulston Lodge is of historic interest because it retains elements of the main period of development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Records of a bowling green, popular by the mid-seventeenth century into the early eighteenth century, suggest there were earlier garden features. Toulston Lodge lies close to Tadcaster and York and its country sporting amenities for fishing, shooting and hunting, made it a desirable property. Its origins, possibly as a hunting lodge, may date back to the time of Queen Elizabeth I. Simeon Marshall a gardener with James Backhouse and Son of York, either laid out or developed the gardens in the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century. Influences of the Arts and Crafts movement are evident in the design of its sunken rose garden and its ornate wood-carved house interior, created by local architects and craftsmen.

2. Historical Value ('Narrative')

In 1611 Toulston Lodge is recorded some distance from Toulston Hall, which was built by Sir Thomas Fairfax in 1603. The Lodge located within Towlston Common probably functioned as a gamekeepers or hunting lodge for the Hall. The manor was sold to the Barwick family in the mid-seventeenth century and Toulston Lodge became the home of Lady Ursula Barwick. The family coat of arms is preserved on the exterior of the Lodge.

In the late eighteenth century Peregrine Wentworth resided at the Lodge, taking advantage of its country sporting amenities and proximity to York. He was a patron of sports, such as hunting, shooting and cock fighting and trained racehorses. During the nineteenth century there were numerous owners or tenants and it was used as a ladies' seminary and boys' boarding school and maintains that teaching tradition today as a grammar school.

The major changes to the house, gardens and parkland were made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by the Riley-Smith family, who were prosperous owners of John Smith's Brewery in Tadcaster. They employed local craftsmen, who were influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement. The architects Bromet and Thorman of Tadcaster and Leeds designed the elaborately carved interiors and Ralph Hedley and his sons produced the oak carvings.



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Simeon Marshall, associated with Backhouse Nursery in York, was involved in changes to the parkland and gardens at this time, which included a south facing terrace and ha-ha, with sweeping carriage drive across the parkland, enclosed by narrow shelterbelts. The walled garden, unusually built of stone, was sub-divided by a south-facing conservatory and glasshouses that overlooked an ornamental rose garden, whilst the northern half was retained as a productive kitchen garden with espaliered fruit trees.

3. Evidential Value ('Research')

The landscape surrounding Toulston Lodge has revealed evidence of past human settlement and there is much potential for recovering more information through archaeological survey. Excavations at Smaws Quarry have revealed Iron Age or Roman enclosures and field systems, also Roman and medieval pottery sherds and prehistoric finds. There is a network of Roman roads surrounding Toulston Lodge and excavations along the route of Rudgate Roman road (RR280) within the parkland also revealed a dyke, possibly an early 7th century boundary of Elmet. South of the parkland aerial photographs show cropmarks of the Roman road aggers and their roadside quarries.

4. Aesthetic Value ('Emotion')

Views from the southern aspect of the house across the parkland have changed and are restricted by school buildings. However, views across the former parkland, now school playing fields and polo ground, remain extensive towards the enclosing perimeter shelterbelts. The stature of mature trees within the beech clump and tree avenue by the house remain imposing. This wooded landscape and green space form a significant part of the rural landscape within the River Wharfe corridor.

5. Communal Value ('Togetherness')

Toulston Lodge, now Tadcaster Grammar School, continues the tradition of education that began in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Since 1960 teachers and pupils have appreciated the historic building and its setting. The sporting tradition of earlier periods is continued within the former parkland, where extensive sports facilities are enjoyed by the pupils. Part of the parkland was converted to a polo club, established by William Riley-Smith in the early twentieth century. Formerly hosting games by invitation, it now has a wider membership.

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