

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LUMLEY CASTLE

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Name:	LUMLEY CASTLE
District:	County Durham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Bournmoor
District:	County Durham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Great Lumley
District:	County Durham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Little Lumley
District:	County Durham (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.851540 Longitude: -1.5487195 National Grid Reference: NZ 29073 50842 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001395 Date first listed: 15-Jul-1998

Details

Pleasure grounds and park with which a number of leading designers are associated, several main phases of activity occurring during the C18 making their mark as part of the present landscape.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1389 Sir Ralph de Lumley was granted licence to crenellate by Bishop Skirlaw; the estate has remained with the family. In a letter to Lord Cowper discussing his programme of work for September 1701, George London (d 1714) writes: 'I believe that near the 5th of September I shall be in York; if so, I shall be at Lumley Castle, Lord Scarbrough's, near the 12th and shall continue thereabouts till the 17th' (quoted in Green 1956). London was the first of a series of major designers known to have been consulted on the landscape. Sir John Vanbrugh was called upon in 1721 to provide a design for courts and gardens for the second Earl of Scarbrough (d 1740) who succeeded his father in this year. In 1729, Stephen Switzer stayed at Lumley while preparing *An Introduction to a System of Hydraulics and Hydrostatics* and it would seem likely that he too would have discussed the setting of the Castle. Two designs exist which show extensive and highly complex landscaping proposals; they are unsigned and undated but have been attributed to Charles Bridgeman (d 1738). There is also a third unsigned and undated design which on stylistic grounds is of the early C18. Records of 1730 attribute the laying out of walks and planting of significant plantations to the second Earl and, since the second Earl was his first patron, it is possible that Thomas Wright (1711-86) was involved at

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Lumley. Finally, a plan survives for a design for the park by Thomas White (1736-1811), dated 1768, White having worked for the fourth Earl of Scarborough (the latter having inherited in 1766 from his uncle, James, youngest brother of the second Earl) at Sandbeck Park, Yorkshire (qv), and there are estimates for work from a Mr Mickle, presumably Adam Mickle, father or son, who had also been involved at Sandbeck.

The house is now (1998) in use as an hotel.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Lumley Castle lies immediately to the east of Chester-le-Street, but on the far, east side of the River Wear which here runs roughly south to north through the landscape. The boundaries of the park are formed by the river to the west, Brough's Gill to the south, Chester Road to the north, and the Chester-le-Street bypass and the wooded park belt, The Ride, to the east.

The Castle stands at the top of the rising land on the east bank of the Wear, above Lumley Park Burn immediately to the east. The Park Burn bisects the site, flowing through a narrow, steep-sided wooded valley which runs south-east to north-west through the park, the woodland being known as Lumley Park Wood. To the north of the Castle, the Burn turns westwards to meet with the river, the parkland extending onto the plateau beyond.

To the west, across the river, Chester-le-Street has expanded such that the landscape is now densely urban; to the south and beyond the A1 to the east, the setting is predominantly agricultural, while to the north a strip of farmland and the Chester Road divide the Lumley from the Lambton estate.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The present main route to the Castle from Chester-le-Street is a drive which forms the continuation of Ropery Lane shortly after it has crossed the river at Lumley New Bridge, the public road making a sharp bend to continue in a south-easterly direction as Lumley New Road. This drive leads east across the rising parkland to the west front, turning sharply north to run alongside the ha-ha, turning back on itself to approach the west, entrance front. The continuation eastwards of this drive at the point where it meets the ha-ha was added in the late C20. The drive dates from the building of the New Bridge in the first decades of this century, being present by 1921 (OS). Originally, a fine pair of gates stood at its head, purchased from The Deanery in Chester-le-Street, but these were taken down having suffered repeated damage from buses using the area as a turning point.

A second, more scenic drive enters the park at a gateway which stands a little to the east of Lambton Bridge on the main Chester Road, 1.2km north of the Castle. From here the drive runs south, terraced into the steeply sloping, wooded east bank of the river, here known as The Staples, offering views out to the south and west across the river and water meadows beyond. Some 200m south of the gate, a bend in the river takes it away from the line of the drive, this continuing south divided by a stone wall (as shown on Buck's engraving of 1728, from the low-lying land known as The Haughs which lies between it and the Wear, this area having been laid out in the late C20 as an extension to the golf course. As the drive reaches Ford Cottage, which appears to occupy the site of a building shown on the Buck engraving, the approach swings eastwards to cross Lumley Park Burn. Passing over Hag Bridge it then runs south across the parkland to cross the drive from the west 100m to the north of the Castle, from here continuing to the west front.

Unlike the plan by Forster of 1748 which shows the entrance on the east front and no north drive, Thomas White's plan of 1768 shows two approaches, following similar routes to the present north and New Bridge drives, meeting at a turning circle below the west front. The 1748 plan indicates the approach from Chester-le-Street was via the Lumley Ferry through The Haughs to Lumley Ford Gate, this approach being still in existence in the late C19.

Some 300m to the south-east of Lambton Bridge, again on the main Chester Road, stands a lodge, Lumley Lodge (present on the 1st edition OS map of 1858) with, to the north-west, a gateway with gates, piers and flanking walls (listed grade II; the gates of late C19 date and the piers and walls of the C18). A track from this Lodge forms a back drive to the Castle leading south, parallel to the drive through The Staples but on the top of the valley side, passing into the park through the boundary belt at an estate cottage, from where it crosses the northern park. After descending Hag Bank it meets with the north drive to cross Hag Bridge. Access from the south is via a lane which forms a continuation of Lumley New Road when travelling west, the public road veering southwards to skirt round the edge of the park. The approach enters the site at the eastern end of the park and runs

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north, along the very eastern edge of the park, parallel with the course of the Lumley Park Burn. Some 150m to the east of this entrance stands Lumley Park House (listed grade II), dated 1721 and perhaps that building shown in the distance on the Buck engraving. The line of the drive appears on the 1748 plan.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING The Castle (listed grade I), now (1998) run as an hotel and restaurant, stands at the centre of the park, on the top edge of the western bank of the Lumley Park Burn, the main views from this elevated position being west over the river towards Chester-le-Street, and south across the park to the farmland beyond. Below the west front, and as first shown on an illustration of c 1700, stands a sandstone sundial (listed grade II), dated 1716, on a white marble column and pedestal. In 1389 Sir Ralph de Lumley was granted licence to crenellate the building by Bishop Skirlaw, this being confirmed in 1392 by Richard II. Alterations were carried out c 1570-80 by John, Lord Lumley, and again in 1721 by Sir John Vanbrugh who stayed at Lumley for a week in 1721 'to provide Lord Lumley with a General Design for the Convenience, and making the Courts, Gardens and Offices suitable to it' (Downs 1987). Vanbrugh's work included improvements to the west front so that the house faced a view over the valley to Chester-le-Street. Immediately to the north is the attached early C18 service court, now (1998) converted into bedroom accommodation for the hotel.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The Castle stands within an area of pleasure grounds defined by a ha-ha (shown on the 1st edition OS 6" published 1858) which lie as lawns to the west beyond the gravelled forecourt, and to the south; Buck's engraving suggests the pleasure grounds in the early C18 to have been quite densely planted on the south front. In 1778, an estimate was provided by a Mr Mickle 'for a road, sunk fence, Planting, Draining and levelling at Lumley Castle', and the sunk fence may refer to this ha-ha.

Paths lead east from the Castle along the sides of the Burn which can be crossed by Lamb Bridge 150m south-east of the Castle, a footbridge level with the eastern end of the park, and Lumley Forge Bridge which carries the public road, Forge Lane, at the very eastern tip of the site. From Lamb Bridge there is a view south to a waterfall; to the east of the footbridge the Burn flows through a short length of tunnel, presumably constructed to facilitate transport to and from the quarry which lay immediately to the east of the park belt, to the railway at Pear Tree Terrace.

The plan by Thomas White dated 1768 includes proposals for the wooded dene and it seem likely that there were enhancements to the Burn valley at this time. White's plan shows rides in the woodland and a circular lawn to the north of the Castle on the site of the kitchen garden, it being proposed that this feature be relocated to down near the river at Lumley Ford Gate and Ford Cottage.

PARK The main part of the park occupies the falling ground beyond the ha-ha to the west and south-west of the Castle. The southern part has been in use as a golf course since at least the 1920s (OS 3rd edition), being expanded in the mid C20 to include the area to the west. Since 1995, the course now occupies the northern part (The Haughs) also, the clubhouse and car park lying at the bridge end of the west drive. Cutting through the west side of the south park is Lumley New Road, constructed in the early C20 (pre 1921; OS 3rd edition); White's plan shows a drive taking a similar line to this road but continuing further south before turning eastwards south of Lumley Riding.

Earthworks from the earlier landscaping and a number of mature trees, including some old limes, survive in the park, particularly west of the Castle. Buck, in 1728, notes that the Castle 'stands in a beautifull Park on the side of a rising Hill curiously planted with Trees, at the bottom of which runs ye River Were, affording a delightful prospect to it's pleasant Situation.' The plan of 1748 shows a broad, tree-lined walk leading from the west front to the river and a wilderness planted to the north before the Burn and beyond a further line of trees parallel to the central avenue. This now defines the north side of this area, a similar line of trees sectioning off the land to the south, the existence of this layout being confirmed through Buck's engraving although the southern division here is shown as a hedge-line. The two documents show the southern park still with field boundaries running down at right angles to the river; White's plan however illustrates this ground as parkland, cut in two from west to east by what appears to be a sunk fence.

A building known as The Boat House, reached by a continuation west of the drive north from the Castle before it turns to cross Hag Bridge, stands at the north-west corner of the site, just above the junction of the Burn and the river. It would appear to occupy the site of a small building, perhaps a mill, shown on the Buck engraving as standing at the weir.

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To the east side of the Castle and the Park Burn is a second area of park defined by a straight wooded belt known as The Ride, a feature marked on the 1748 plan which labels the land it contains as The Park. Now divided into fields and without parkland trees, this part of the park is in agricultural use. The Chester-le-Street bypass cuts through its very northern edge replacing much of The Ride, and the modern road has been taken as the northern boundary of the registered site.

KITCHEN GARDEN The irregular, walled kitchen garden lies 200m to the north of the Castle within the Dene, on the north side of the Burn, and is reached by a path which leads north from the stable court and across a footbridge over the water. A gardener's cottage, The Garden House, stands at the northern end of the garden. The c 1721 plan attributed to Bridgeman indicates that the garden was extant by this date, as does the 1748 plan, but account books suggest that improvements and much rebuilding was carried out in the 1770s.

REFERENCES

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Maps Two unsigned and undated plans, c 1721, attrib Bridgeman by Dr P Willis (private collection) Plan, ?early C18 (private collection) Forster, Mine Workings on the Lumley Estate, 1748 (private collection) Thomas White, Plan of Lumley Park, 1768 (private collection)

Description written: September 1998 Register Inspector: HJ Edited: September 2000

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.