

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SCARISBRICK HALL

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	SCARISBRICK HALL
County:	Lancashire
District:	West Lancashire (District Authority)
Parish:	Scarisbrick
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.606101 Longitude: -2.9294007 National Grid Reference: SD3860112573 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000951 Date first listed: 01-Apr-1986

Details

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC INTEREST

A landscape park possibly altered following Repton's Red Book of 1803 associated with a country house extensively remodelled and extended by the Pugins in the mid C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Scarisbricks held the manor of Scarisbrick from the C13. In 1802-3 Thomas Eccleston (d 1809), who had changed his name from Scarisbrick on inheriting the Eccleston estates from his uncle, commissioned the Reptons to produce plans for a new house and park. Neither was acted upon, and after his death Eccleston's son Thomas Scarisbrick employed John Slater, a Liverpool builder, to undertake work at Scarisbrick between 1813 and 1816 in connection with Thomas Rickman (d 1841), Professor of Architecture to the Liverpool Academy of Arts. Scarisbrick died in 1833, and after a disputed succession the House of Lords decided in 1838 in favour of Charles Scarisbrick, Thomas' younger brother. This gave him an estimated income of ?40,000 a year, which later increased considerably through coal mining interests and from the development of Stockport. In later life he was said to be worth ?60,000 a year and to be the richest commoner in Lancashire. From the time he inherited the estate Charles was buying pictures, furniture, books, armour and so forth from London dealers. It has been suggested this shifting of capital into goods and chattels may have reflected not only an interest in the arts and medieval antiquities but also a desire to provide for his illegitimate children (he had a long-term liaison with Mary Anne Braithwaite, who bore him two sons and a daughter, from the 1830s), who were disbarred from inheriting the entailed estate. The Scarisbricks were an old Catholic family, and it was probably Edward Hull, one of the dealers that Scarisbrick bought from, who c 1836 introduced him to the young Catholic-convert architect A W N Pugin. Pugin was soon after invited to begin the transformation of the Hall, for which a generous budget was provided. Pugin died, worn out and mad, in 1852, and Scarisbrick in 1860. The estate was inherited by his sister, the seventy-two-year-old Dame Ann Hunloke, who then changed her name (the title being dubious) to Lady Ann Scarisbrick. She brought in Pugin's son Edward Welby Pugin (d 1875) to redecorate and extend the Hall. On her death Scarisbrick passed to her only daughter Eliza Margaret, Marquise de Casteja. That family retained the Hall until 1923 when it was sold to Sir

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Thomas Talbot Leyland Scarisbrick, a grandson of Charles Scarisbrick. His son sold the Hall in 1946, and for most of the time since it has been an educational establishment. In 1998 it was owned by a company.

DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Scarisbrick Hall stands in the centre of its park on Martin Mere, drained in the later C18 by Thomas Eccleston, 5km north-west of Ormskirk. Scarisbrick village lies on the north-west edge of the park, and Bescar on the north-east. Roads run along three sides of the park boundary: to the west the A570 Ormskirk to Southport road, and to the north and east the B5242 (Bescar Brow Lane and Hall Road) from Scarisbrick to Burscough. To the south the park is bounded by the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. The area here registered is c 180ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES Only one of the four C19 drives to the Hall is still functional. This approaches on a straight line from the west. At the end of the drive, on the A570, is a lodge of 1902. Some 500m to the south an early C19 pair of two-storey lodges, now whitewashed, stand at the end of a drive which formerly ran east before turning to approach the Hall via the west side of the lake and the main gates on the south side of the forecourt. Two drives approached from the east side of the park. One drive ran past Home Farm. At its end, 500m south of Bescar, stand two lodges. On the north side of the drive is North Lodge (listed grade II), now two dwellings, probably of c 1840. It is a three-bay, two-storey, sandstone building, crenellated and with Tudor-gothic windows. The south lodge is a large, two-storey building of the late C19. Between them are stone gate piers. The gates, by the elder Pugin and moved here from the south forecourt, are missing. The fourth lodge, Castle Lodge, of the mid C19 and in the gothic style with a bay window, was demolished in the 1940s. It stood close to the south-east corner of the park. Sandstone flanking walls survive. The drive from this (no longer extant), which was laid out only after 1846, ran west across the park before crossing the Hurlston Brook at the south end of the lake via the Marchioness Bridge.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Scarisbrick Hall (listed grade I) faces south, and is an extraordinary gothic concoction almost wholly the work (see above) of A W N Pugin (1836-45) and his son E W Pugin (1861 onwards). The west wing, modernised by Pugin senior, forms a cross wing to his great hall, which has intricately traceried, full height, bay windows and a gabled porch. The east wing was added by E W Pugin, who also pulled down his father's clock tower (a model for that built over the Houses of Parliament) and built instead the 50m high spire-topped tower which dominates the Hall and is visible for miles around. The gothic kitchen at the east end of the complex, by A W N Pugin, is octagonal with a steeply-pitched roof.

Immediately east of the Hall is a gothic stables complex (listed grade II), with elements by both Pugins, including a brick gatehouse facing the south garden and approach incorporating a large circular corner tower. Classrooms have been built within the yard.

The medieval hall is believed to have occupied a moated site, parts of which survive in Old Wood 200m north-west of the Hall. This was replaced, probably in the C16, by a building on the present site. An abortive scheme for improvements to that structure was produced by Humphry Repton's son John in 1802-3, and works were undertaken 1813-16 in which Thomas Rickman had some involvement (see above). The Hall was refaced in stone and a great deal of gothic detailing added. It was this building which Pugin adapted, and the west wing of the shell of the old Hall still survives as modernised 1813-16 with only minor alterations.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

Little remains of the C19 gardens around the Hall, and the ha-ha which ran around the south edge of the pleasure grounds was infilled in the mid C20. To the south of the Hall a symmetrical arrangement of circular and curvilinear stone-edged beds survives, although their interiors are mostly grassed over. The approach drive and paths around them are tarmacked. The east half of the south garden extends to the north bank of the lake, while along the east side of the garden is woodland. About 100m south of the Hall and on the central axis through the south garden, tall, crudely decorative iron gates (listed grade II) of c 1870 stand at the end of the approach drive across the end of the lake. These are supported on ashlar piers, and there are short ashlar walls leading off to either side. Those replace gates designed by Pugin which were moved to the Bescar Lodge. The parkland west of the lake is used as a playing field by the school which occupies the Hall.

The woodland east of the south garden continues as lawns, shrubberies and specimen trees around the east side of the Hall. Running through this area are stone-edged paths. Fifty metres south-east of the Hall is a hard tennis court. This occupies the site of a large, free-standing conservatory (standing in 1893) which was itself built on the site of 'a sort of Crystal Palace',

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reputedly (but improbably) said to have been built to house some of Charles Scarisbrick's paintings (Lea 1893). North of this is an enclosed rose garden with a central, oval, stone-edged bed. A gap in the north side of the surrounding hedge leads to a single-span iron footbridge of the 1880s across a culverted stream.

In the north-west angle of the Hall is a grassy court, with a C19 brick wall with pierced stone balustrading along its north side. Adjoining the Hall to the west is a car park. On its west side is a small, square, sandstone, gabled garden seat with alcoves, of 1836 by A W N Pugin.

Statuary and garden furniture, some by the Pugins, was sold off c 1963.

PARK The park, like the surrounding countryside, is flat. Streams - the Eas Brook to the north, and Hurlston Brook to the south - run across the park from north to south, and there are many drains, especially associated with the woods of the western and southern sections of the park. The streams supply a now roughly square lake (its south end is truncated; originally the lake was triangular) whose north bank forms the south edge of the Hall's pleasure grounds. An island in the lake is heavily overgrown. The woods are the main feature of the park. Extending for 250m west of the Hall is mature ornamental woodland with an understorey of rhododendron, which continues north of the Hall as Old Wood. In the latter, 200m north of the Hall, is an icehouse (listed grade II) of c 1800. Around the southern edge of the park, Paddock Wood, Canal Wood, Such Hey Wood and Meadow Hey Wood form an unbroken belt when viewed from the south, entrance front of the Hall. On the north side of Meadow Hey Wood is Bath Wood, which has a round pond. Its name suggests the pond, or perhaps a purpose-built plunge, may have been used in the early C19 as a cold bath. Within Paddock Wood is a large clearing, once a pheasantry and now used by the Girl Guides for recreational purposes. At its centre is a two-storey brick building. The southern half of the park is flat farmland. To the east of the Hall, Mill Wood screens the former Home Farm, which stands on the south side of the drive from Bescar Lodge. Closer to the Hall, on the north side of the drive, is a late C19 dairy with a glazed lantern turret. For a time this was used as a mausoleum.

The north half of the park is flat, arable land. A thin plantation belt runs around its perimeter, broadening as Chapel School Plantation to screen Scarisbrick village, and as Culshaw's Plantation to hide Bescar. At the centre of the north-west quarter of the park, 600m north-west of the Hall, is an octagonal iron-framed feeding shelter (listed grade II), probably late C19. When erected it stood at the intersection of four fields and served all of them.

The park was probably formed in the 1790s. In 1802 Humphry Repton (1752-1818) was called in by Thomas Scarisbrick Eccleston to produce a replanting scheme for the park (Red Book January 1803). It may be that the lake was dug as a result of this, although this is uncertain, as is whether any other of his suggestions was taken up. By the time of the Tithe map in 1839 the park was complete, apart from limited later planting. It was turned over to agricultural use c 1948.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden area on the north-west side of the Hall is grassed over and contains large numbers of single-storey classrooms. A mid C19 brick cottage, perhaps for a gardener, stands 100m to the east.

REFERENCES G Lea, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of Scarisbrick*, Ormskirk Advertiser, 1893 [reproduced in duplicated typescript] *The Victoria History of the County of Lancashire* 3, (1907), pp 265-70 *Country Life*, 123 (13 March 1958), pp 506-9; (20 March 1958), pp 580-3 D Stroud, *Humphry Repton* (1982), pp 124-5 M Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (1979), pp 110-19 G Carter, P Goode and K Laurie, *Humphry Repton* (1982), p 156 *Scarisbrick Hall: A Guide*, (Lancashire County Council 1987)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Lancashire sheet 83 NE, 1st edition surveyed 1845-6 Lancashire sheet 83 NE, 2nd edition published 1909 Lancashire sheet 83 NE, 1929 edition

Description written: July 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: October 1999

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.