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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

TEMPLE GROUNDS

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Name:	TEMPLE GROUNDS
County:	North Yorkshire
District:	Richmondshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Richmond
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.402290 Longitude: -1.7457371 National Grid Reference: NZ 16604 00788 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001317 Date first listed: 29-Dec-1994

Details

Parkland and pleasure grounds developed through the C18 and early C19 which include earthwork remains of formal late C17 gardens.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

At the beginning of the C17, a mansion known as Yorke House (sometimes known as The Green) was built on the north bank of the River Swale, at the southern end of an area of open ground on the west side of Richmond. In 1608 it was sold to Sir William Gascoigne of Sedbury and eventually in 1631/2 to Mager Norton. In 1651 it came into the possession of Sir John Yorke of Goulthwaite and Richmond, through his marriage to Mary, Norton's daughter and it remained in the Yorke family until 1824. Important in the development of the landscape of Temple Grounds were John Yorke I (1685-1757) who married Anne, daughter of James D'Arcy MP and cousin of Sir Conyers D'Arcy, Thomas Yorke (1688-1768/70), and John Yorke II (1733-1813). On the death of John II in 1813 the estate was tenanted and in 1824 put on the market. The house was demolished between 1824 and 1827 and The Menagerie, one of the garden buildings, became the new focus. In 1844 the remaining estate, apart from the stables and walled garden, was bought by George Smurthwaite (1784-1865), a Richmond wine merchant. It passed by marriage to Norton George Lawson in 1915 and in 1949 it was sold to the Misses Murray, the last of whom died in 1991 and bequeathed it back to the Lawson family. Dr R M Lawson inherited the estate in 1992, by which time Culloden Tower had been purchased by the Landmark Trust in 1981 and restored. The site remains (2000) in divided ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Temple Grounds lie on the west side of the town on Richmond. They occupy a rolling 15ha site, bounded to the west and south by the River Swale, to the east by Cravengate (the Richmond to Lancaster Turnpike, built in the 1750s), and to the north by the Convent of the Assumption and Richmond House. The land falls steeply from the north-east to the south and south-west towards the river valley, allowing the house and park to be viewed from many riverside points within the town.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to Temple Lodge, the main residence on the site, is the mid C18 gateway (attributed to Daniel Garrett, listed grade II) at the northern end of Cravengate, opposite Newbiggin road. The entrance

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is marked by a pair of stone piers capped by carved pineapples and a pair of ornate wrought-iron gates set in the eastern boundary wall. There is also a door through the wall, immediately to the north of the gateway. The park can be entered via gates at the north and south end of Cravengate, the southern entrance passing double mid C18 wrought-iron gates to a new (late C20) drive which gives access to Culloden Tower in the centre of the site.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Following the demolition of Yorke House, The Menagerie (listed grade II), built in c 1769 on high ground above the river valley in the north-east corner of the park, was extended and adapted for use as a house which became known as Temple Lodge. It is a two-storey stone building with a turreted and crenellated centre attached to arcaded wings of five bays with a small pavilion at each end.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the north of Temple Lodge is a stone-walled garden, perhaps once the enclosure for the menagerie animals. To the south is an area of lawns and specimen trees which gives onto the park.

Some 150m to the north-west of the site of Yorke House is a wooded rocky outcrop, Mill Bank Wood, planted and laid out as a pleasure ground with terraced walks edged by low drystone walls. The area is indicated as pleasure ground on a map of 1729 and is shown as such on a sketch by Samuel Buck of 1749 entitled South west Prospect of Richmond, the latter showing that the main terraces had been formed by this date. On the highest point, overlooking the river, stood a summerhouse called the Cedar Room, marked on Jackson's map of 1773 and reference to which is made in the 1824 sale map and the 1827 conveyance. At the foot of the rock face, adjacent to the river, are four caves/grottos.

PARK The majority of the site at Temple Grounds is parkland, consisting of pasture, hay meadow, and woodland, all occupying the west-facing bowl to the west and south of Temple Lodge. A walk leads from the entrance on Cravengate to the north of Temple Lodge, then turns to run along the western edge of Temple Lodge gardens and south across the park. Its line is shown as a tree-lined track across fields on a map of 1729, linking the northern part of the estate to Yorke House. This walk, called the Green Walk in C19 documents, runs north to south, bisecting the park just below the ridge line, the land falling westwards down to the river. The grass path is supported by a drystone retaining wall along its west side, planted towards the southern end with a line of mature beeches. To the east is a steep bank, supported in part by a low drystone wall and planted with a regular spacing of mature yew and, again at the southern end, by beeches, above which the park levels out between the Green Walk and Cravengate.

From the Walk there are long views west across the park and up the Swale valley with its hanging woods on the steep southern bank of the river and, approaching the Tower, views east to the town and castle. The Green Walk leads to the Culloden Tower (listed grade II*), formerly also known as the Cumberland Temple or The Temple. Built as a banqueting house, this forms a prominent local landmark standing on a promontory slightly south of the centre of the site. It was built by John Yorke I in 1746, possibly to the designs of Daniel Garrett, and stands on or close to the site of Hudswell Tower. This building dated from before 1354 and was erected by William de Huddeswell of Richmond; it had been demolished by the 1730s.

South from the tower, the land falls steeply down to the level land adjacent to the river and the site of Yorke House. A single mature beech tree survives here, probably marking the line of the avenue which continued the Green Walk as far as the terraced gardens of Yorke House. Traces of the terraced gardens survive as earthworks. Celia Fiennes, visiting Richmond in 1698, talks of two good houses in the town with 'good gardens walled all in stone, one of which was Yorke House (Morris 1982). The gardens are also mentioned by Lady Oxford when visiting the town in 1745, who writes that Mr Yorke had a 'good house there with hanging gardens on the side of the hill' (HMC 1901). A sketch by Samuel Buck, c 1718, shows the house with formal gardens on the rising land to the north. These are shown on Harman's plan of 1724 but had been cleared away by the time of Jackson's map of 1773.

A clear change in vegetation marks the line of a lane which separated the house from its gardens and connected Yorke House to the Green Mill to the west on the bank of the river. The mill was demolished c 1765 and the lane closed off, presumably at the same time. The weir across the river at the north end of Mill Field seems to have been removed at this time too, and the mill leat along the foot of the bank filled in. A path leads west from the site of Yorke House, upstream along the bank of the river. It passes round Mill Field, following the river as it bends sharply north, then along the western edge of the park. The

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river bank from the site of Yorke House to the grottos below the pleasure ground is retained by a substantial supporting wall. The line of this path is first shown on Jackson's plan of 1773.

The park is scattered with mature trees, many of which appear to lie on the former field boundaries depicted on the 1729 map, which records the park at this time subdivided into fields. By the 1770s the park had been opened up somewhat although retaining a central boundary and two stone barns, the easternmost of which survives (2000). Richmond was well visited in the mid to late C18 and early C19 and the grounds of Yorke House are included in a number of visitor's accounts and paintings of the period, including those by J M W Turner.

REFERENCES

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Maps Harman, *A plan of ye south prospect of ye ancient burrough of Richmond*, 1724 (ZS, 1724), (North Yorkshire Record Office) *A map of Esquire York's hall Richmond in Yorkshire with the stables garden and some of his lands*, 1729 (private collection) G Jackson, *A plan of the borough of Richmond in Yorkshire*, 1773 (reproduced in Hepworth 1994)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1856

Illustrations S Buck, *Sketch of Yorke House and Gardens*, c 1718 (reproduced in Wakefield Historical Publications 1979) S Buck, *South west Prospect of Richmond*, 1749 (reproduced in Wakefield Historical Publications 1979)

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Description written: May 2000 Amended: June 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: October 2004

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.