

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LARTINGTON HALL

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Name: LARTINGTON HALL

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Cotherstone

District: County Durham (Unitary Authority)

Parish: Lartington

label.localisation: Latitude: 54.553829
Longitude: -1.9672669
National Grid Reference: NZ0221517621
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000731
Date first listed: 07-Oct-1986

Details

Garden of c 1863 probably designed by Joseph Hansom, parkland of mid or late C18 and mid C19 date.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The estate belonged to Robert de Lascelles in the C12 and following various changes in ownership it was sold in 1639 to Francis Appleby and passed through marriage to the Maire family. An undated map of the park by Anthony Sparrow was drawn up, probably in the late C18, and it is possible that Sparrow, who had worked as a foreman for Richard Woods, was responsible for the design himself. The estate passed to Henry Witham, a noted amateur geologist, in the early C19 and stayed in the family until the early C20 when it was sold. After several changes of ownership it passed to the Mayhew family. The site continues to be privately owned (1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Lartington Hall lies immediately east of the village of Lartington. The c 42ha site is on rolling land which falls slightly to the north and east, and rises to the south before falling steeply to the valley of the Ray Gill. The setting is rural and agricultural. The northern boundary is formed by a fence dividing the outer precincts of the kitchen garden from fields, and by a stone wall which runs along the north edge of Grotto Wood. The eastern boundary is walled, and the southern boundary along Lartington Lane (the B6277) has a wall surmounted by cast-iron railings which are probably those commissioned from Walker & Emley of Newcastle in 1870. A narrow stretch of parkland south of the road is fenced. A disused railway cutting and fencing forms the north-western boundary.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance is from the village where there are two sets of gate piers at the east end of the main street. From these drives lead east to a porte-cochère on the north side of the Hall and north over the Scur Beck to the kitchen garden. The C18 estate map shows an avenue approach from the village to the entrance, and there are some mature trees, including specimens of Wellingtonia, on the south side of the village main street. There is another gated entrance from Lartington Lane on the south side of the site, from which a drive runs north-west to a set of gate piers (mid-late C19, listed

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grade II) c 40m north-east of the Hall surmounted by statues of Demeter on one side and the Muse of Literature on the other. This entrance leads to the porte-cochère. This was formerly the principal entrance and is now (1998) disused.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Lartington Hall (listed grade II*) probably originated in the late C17, though there may have been an earlier building on the site. There are additions of the late C18, including a chapel, and of the early C19, including a ballroom (formerly museum) of c 1836 attributed to Ignatius Bonomi which was commissioned by Henry Witham to house his library and geological specimens. Joseph Hansom (1803-82) made additions to the house around the ballroom in the period 1862-3.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS There is a formal garden to the south and east of the Hall which is defined by a ha-ha surmounted by railings on the south and east sides, with a circular bastion at the south-east corner and a wall of polychromatic brickwork on the north side. The north wall has a series of rusticated buttresses, each of which is surmounted by a statue or urn and is attached to a set of stone gate piers surmounted by large statues of Hercules and Bacchus (wall and gate piers listed grade II). The garden on the south front is terraced in two stages down to a central sunken lawn with a late C20 pond. A set of steps at the north-west corner of the terracing has a balustrade. Two more sets of steps at the south-west and south-east corners respectively. To the south is an area of lawns with a grassed terrace running along the south side of the garden, which has three sets of steps leading up to it (all steps listed grade II). To the west there is a paved area with rockeries and paths leading through it. There are views from the east side of the garden eastwards over the park with glimpses of the church of St Mary (C12/C14, listed grade I) in Barnard Castle in the distance. It is likely that parts of the castle ruins (medieval, listed grade I) may have been visible in the past when tree cover was less mature.

The gardens are thought to have been laid out by Joseph Hansom (Robinson Penn 1995) who made alterations to the Hall in the period 1862-3. An early C18 drawing by Nathaniel Buck shows that there was a walled garden with a formal parterre on the south side of the Hall, but this had disappeared by the time the C18 estate map was made. This shows a curving line which was probably a ha-ha, and a print of late C18 or early C19 date shows grassland sweeping up to the Hall from the park. The garden has been laid out with formal beds late C20.

On the west side of the Hall there is a courtyard and to the west of this scattered trees with paths leading through them. On the north side of the Hall the drive leads to the porte-cochère and north of this there is a lawn divided from the park by a ditch and a fence. There are views to the north over the Scur Beck to the kitchen garden and open land beyond.

PARK There is parkland on the north, east and south sides of the Hall. The park is composed of two parts, the area north of Lartington Lane which is shown on Sparrow's C18 map, and a strip of land south of the road with a fishpond along its southern side which was probably imparked in 1858 when the pond was constructed.

The parkland to the north of the Hall, called the Paddock, is fenced and planted with exotic species including Wellingtonia, Araucaria and cedar. To the east of the Paddock, c 100m north-east of the Hall, a stream issues from a tunnel and runs down a cascade to join the Scur Beck. This is the outlet from a reservoir which formerly served the Hall and lies c 300m to the east, outside the registered area.

To the east and south-east of the Hall the park lies on rolling land with pronounced ridge and furrow. It is planted with scattered trees, mainly mature oaks with some young limes. Grotto Wood shelters the northern boundary and the banks of the Scur Beck, which runs approximately east/west in front of the kitchen garden across the park. There is a series of six cascades along the Beck which are not indicated on the 1854 OS map but appear on that of 1911. The C18 map shows the Beck as a series of oval lakes, but it is not known whether these were ever created. Crow Wood shelters the west side of the park and is divided from it by a ha-ha.

On the south side of Lartington Lane parkland is sheltered on the west side by a band of planting which includes Wellingtonia. A path leads through the trees down the slope to a stone boathouse on the edge of a stretch of water called Low Fish Pond which has a series of four stepped weirs at its east end. The slopes around the pond are wooded. The pond was created by damming the Ray Gill in 1858 and the water level was altered later in the C19 in connection with its use for supplying Barnard Castle Station. The weir was altered and restored late C20.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden lies on a south-facing slope overlooking the Scur Beck, c 120m north of the Hall. It consists of a sub-rectangular enclosure with a mixture of brick and stone walls, with former bothies, now (1998) a private

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house, at the centre of the north wall. Attached to the north-east corner there is a former garden house which has been enlarged and converted to a private residence. The gardens are now (1998) private ornamental and vegetable gardens. The garden is shown on the late C18 estate map.

OTHER LAND A private cemetery lies c 60m north-west of the Hall. An entrance with early to mid C19 gate piers surmounted by statues of religious figures leads to a rectangular walled enclosure with a mausoleum/mortuary chapel (1877, listed grade II) at the north end.

REFERENCES

N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire, the North Riding* (1966), pp 223-4 Samuel Buck's *Yorkshire Sketchbook* (1720), Wakefield Historical Society facsimile reprint (1979), p 368 *Lartington Hall Management Plan*, (Robinson Penn Partnership 1995)

Maps Anthony Sparrow, *Estate Plan*, late C18 (private collection)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1854

Description written: April 1998 Register Inspector: CEH 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.