

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

THORESBY PARK

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**THORESBY PARK**

Name: THORESBY PARK

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Bassetlaw (District Authority)

Parish: Carburton

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Bassetlaw (District Authority)

Parish: Clumber and Hardwick

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Bassetlaw (District Authority)

Parish: Elkesley

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Newark and Sherwood (District Authority)

Parish: Edwinstowe

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Newark and Sherwood (District Authority)

Parish: Ollerton and Boughton

County: Nottinghamshire

District: Newark and Sherwood (District Authority)

Parish: Perlethorpe cum Budby

label.localisation: Latitude: 53.237055  
Longitude: -1.0485092  
National Grid Reference: SK6360371536  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: I  
List Entry Number: 1000361

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Date first listed: 01-Jan-1986

## Details

A C19 country house set beside mid C19 formal gardens by Anthony Salvin and pleasure grounds by Edward Milner, surrounded by parkland of the late C17, with C18 alterations by Francis Richardson, possibly Lancelot Brown in 1768, and by Humphry Repton who produced a Red Book in 1791.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1589, William Lodge, an alderman of London, lived in a mansion in Thoresby Park which in 1633 was acquired by Robert Pierrepont, first Earl of Kingston (d 1643) (CL 1979). Robert Pierrepont's eldest son, Henry Pierrepont became the second Earl and his nephews, Robert Pierrepont (d 1682) and William Pierrepont (d 1690), succeeded as third and fourth Earls. An estate map was produced in 1680 showing the mansion with a terrace and pleasure grounds, and shortly afterwards William Pierrepont rebuilt the mansion. When William died in 1690 his younger brother Evelyn (d 1725) became the fifth Earl and was later created first Duke of Kingston. In 1715, Evelyn was responsible for creating a lake in the park. His grandson, Evelyn Pierrepont, the second Duke of Kingston, inherited in 1725 and in 1768 he commissioned John Carr of York (1723-1807) to rebuild the Hall (Stroud 1962) after a fire in 1745, while his gardener Francis Richardson, and possibly Lancelot Brown (1716-83), began work on the landscape. When the second Duke died in 1773 his nephew, Charles Meadows inherited the estate. He adopted the name of Pierrepont, became Viscount Newark in 1796 and was created first Earl Manvers in 1806. Charles made several improvements to the mansion and called in Humphry Repton (1752-1818) who produced a Red Book for the park in 1791 which included plans for remodelling the southern pleasure grounds and cascade, parts of which were carried out (Daniels 1999). When the first Earl Manvers died in 1832 his third son, Charles Pierrepont inherited as second Earl Manvers. The second Earl Manvers' second son, Sydney Pierrepont became the third Earl Manvers in 1860 and in 1864 he commissioned Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) to build a new hall at Thoresby on a site to the north of the old one. William Andrews Nesfield (1793-1881) was called in in the early 1860s but it is not clear if any of his advice was followed and in the last quarter of the C19 Edward Milner (1819-84) was commissioned to lay out a pleasure ground north-west of the Hall. The earldom died out with the death of the sixth Earl Manvers in the mid C20. During the Second World War the army occupied the south-east part of the park and a camp remains in use here. The Hall, sold to British Coal in 1979, changed hands again in 1988 when it was purchased by a property developer. It stood unoccupied and derelict until 1999 but has since been restored and opened as a hotel in October 2000. The park remains in private ownership and a new house, to be known as Thoresby Park, is currently (2001) under construction.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Thoresby Park stands in a rural setting c 9km south-east of Worksop and 3km north-west of the village of New Ollerton. The undulating c 800ha site is bounded to the north by a deep woodland belt, beyond which lies the south boundary of Clumber Park (qv), and to the south and west by further extensive woodlands. To the east, part of the boundary is formed by woodland and part by the A614, with Perlethorpe village lying just beyond the centre of the eastern boundary plantation. A minor country road cuts through the park to the north of the Hall, connecting the villages of Haughton in the north-east to Budby in the south-west.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The present (2000) entrance to Thoresby Hall is from the Haughton to Budby road. A new drive, created to serve the hotel, runs south to the new car park (2000) on the north side of the Hall and then turns to approach the Hall from the east through elaborate wrought-iron gates supported on crested iron piers flanked by railings (all listed grade I). The forecourt contains a gravelled drive around a geometrical grassed area edged by radial stone kerbs and is enclosed by stone walls capped with ornamental urns to north and south. The historic drives and lodges which served the Hall are no longer linked to it although several lodges survive on the boundary. Ceres Lodge (listed grade II), 1.9km south-west of the Hall, Buck Gates/Edwinstowe Gates on the southern boundary, and White Lodge (originally known as Proteus Lodge, listed grade II) on the eastern boundary all had drives which, on the OS map of 1840, converged on the Chestnut Avenue. Part of this

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Avenue survives, extending north/south through the centre of the southern half of the site and forming a strong visual feature in the landscape. The River Meden is crossed by two stone bridges. The Green Bridge (early C19, listed grade II), possibly the bridge proposed by Repton in his 1791 Red Book, appears to have replaced an earlier bridge linking the earlier houses to Perlethorpe, and a new bridge on the line of the drive created to serve the new Hall which crosses the Meden c 250m east of the Hall. The minor country road crossing the north park enters the park at Shepherd's Lodge c 1.4km to the north-east of the Hall and leaves it by Cameleon Lodge c 1.2km to the south-west of the Hall. On the northern edge of the open parkland stands Morris Dancer's Lodge c 1.5km north-east of the Hall.

With the original Thoresby Hall converted to a hotel, a new principal house, Thoresby Park, is under construction at the eastern end of the lake. All the historic drives within the park are currently (2001) being reorganised to provide a circuit drive around the perimeter of the park, with several spurs off this focusing on the new house, the main entrance to which will be via the village of Perlethorpe, on the eastern boundary.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Thoresby Hall (listed grade I) is an Elizabethan Revival-style mansion built to a square plan with a central courtyard. It is constructed of rock-faced rusticated ashlar with ashlar dressings and slate roofs and stands four to five storeys high. Thoresby was designed by Anthony Salvin for the third Earl Manvers in 1864 and was completed in 1871, to replace John Carr's earlier house which stood c 400m to the south. It is the fourth house set within Thoresby Park. The 1680 estate map shows a house standing west of Perlethorpe village, north-east of the present lake. This house, which was remodelled possibly by William Talman (1650-1719) in 1683 for William Pierrepont, fourth Earl of Kingston, was destroyed by fire in 1745, to be rebuilt by John Carr in 1762 for the fifth Earl (Stroud 1962). Carr's house was demolished when the present Thoresby Hall was built (Architect Hist 1961). Since its sale for conversion to a hotel in the late 1980s, a new private house has been under construction in the park, at the eastern end of the lake, close to the site of the earlier buildings.

The stables (listed grade II together with the stable cottages and riding school) stand 150m north of the Hall and are built of plain and rock-faced ashlar and brick with slate roofs. They were erected in 1865 to a design by Salvin. Within the courtyard stands a statue of the sphinx by C G Gibber (c 1685, listed grade II), relocated here from the west formal garden in the late C20. Some 100m north-east of the stables stands the late C19 Round Stable (listed grade II). Built of brick with slate roofs to a circular plan enclosing a central yard, it has ten bays.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens and pleasure grounds lie to the south, west, and north-west of the Hall, while new hotel buildings and a car park lie to the north. The south formal garden is terraced and from the upper level flights of steps, with lion and obelisk finials, lead down to the lower terrace which is divided and surrounded by gravel paths. Rusticated ashlar retaining walls mark the north, east, and west boundaries of the garden with octagonal gazebos (listed grade II with the terrace walls) set in the south-east and south-west corners. Between the gravel paths are lawns inset with stone-edged flower beds and clipped yews. Flights of steps from this level lead southwards to the lowest terrace, the southern boundary of which has a convex edge. Set in the lawn of the terrace is an octagonal ashlar fountain (1865, listed grade II) with four mounded semicircular flanking basins. From the terraces there are views over the cricket ground and the park beyond. The south formal garden was probably designed by Anthony Salvin for the third Earl Manvers in 1864-5 (CL 1986). West of the Hall lies a series of formal lawns, which since 2000 have been redeveloped by the hotel. They are bounded to the west by a bowling green.

North-west of the Hall lies the C19 pleasure ground designed by Edward Milner (pers comm). From the west end of the path which extends from the upper terrace in the west garden a radial lime avenue runs from north-west round to north-east through the wooded pleasure grounds, ending close by the road linking Shepherd's Lodge to Cameleon Lodge. Set within the pleasure grounds is a circular rosary with the remains of wire supports surrounded by a privet hedge, now under renovation (2001).

Beyond the south garden lie the remains of pleasure grounds associated with the earlier Thoresby Hall and it is here that the new house is under construction. In the C19 paths from the formal gardens led c 550m south-west to the c 25ha Thoresby Lake, formed in 1715 (CL 1979) by the damming of the River Meden and recorded on a painting of the same year by Peter Tillemans (ibid). On an island to the east of the main part of the lake stands a brick and ashlar icehouse (mid C19, listed grade II), to the south of which is a rustic cascade (c 1685, listed grade II), altered by Humphry Repton in 1791 to incorporate two channels of natural stone from Creswell Crags flanking the central island. South of the lake lie the pleasure grounds of Nelson's Grove,

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through which a path runs eastwards from Pierrepont Bridge at the west end of the lake (c 2km south-west of the Hall). Some 500m along the path is the slate-clad Nelson pyramid (c 1800, listed grade II) while 480m further east from the pyramid is a monument to Nelson's Navy (c 1800, listed grade II). Nelson's Grove is bounded to the east by Ice House Wood, within which stands a memorial urn (1802, listed grade II) to Henry Hamilton constructed by Coade and Seeley. On the north bank of the west end of the lake stands a monument (1812, listed grade II) to Spencer Perceval (Prime Minister 1809-12) comprising an ashlar sarcophagus on an inscribed base.

Humphry Repton's Red Book of 1791 contained proposals for these early pleasure grounds, some of which, according to the OS (1899) appear to have taken place. In *Theory and Practice of Gardening* (1803) Repton makes the only known mention of Lancelot Brown working at Thoresby when he writes that:

'I shall have occasion to propose a different idea to that suggested by Mr Brown - he frequently mistook the character of running water; he was too apt to check its progress - such was his intention with respect to the stream of water which pours through Thoresby Park.'

His proposals in the Red Book appear to be shown overlaid on those by Brown (pers comm).

PARK Thoresby Hall stands in the northern half of an extensive park which is dominated by large blocks of woodland and C20 woodland strips dividing up the open park, much of which is cultivated. To the north of the Houghton to Budby road stands Osland Wood and Piperwell Wood north-west of the Hall, the remainder of the area being open park and farmland, divided by woodland strips and scattered with circular clumps of trees.

To the south of the Hall, between the south gardens and the eastern end of the lake, stands the cricket ground and accompanying pavilion, on the south side of which is an area of woodland known as the Deer Park. The south park is divided by the Chestnut Avenue, which is shown on the 1680 estate map and therefore predates the Talman house. To the east of it stands a large block of woodland enclosing the army's Proteus Camp, an area requisitioned during the Second World War and still in use. North of this woodland lies Charles Wood and Coronation Plantation, while on the eastern boundary of the site south of Perlethorpe is Henry's Grove.

The park was carved out of Sherwood Forest Park in 1589 and enclosed by William Pierrepont, fourth Earl of Kingston in the late C17 (CL 1986). By the early C18 the enclosed fields had been given a formal character by the addition of rides, rondpoints, and patte d'oie through woodland, particularly to the north of the Hall (estate map, 1738). The formality was gradually removed during the mid to late C18, a process started by Francis Richardson, the Duke of Kingston's gardener, who in 1760 made a serpentine river from a cascade in the garden to a cascade by the Kennels (CL 1986). C19 OS maps show that the park was heavily wooded at this time and divided into different areas, rather than being of an open character. During the C20 many of the fields were taken into agricultural production and from the 1940s onwards the large coniferous woodlands were planted. Since the construction of the new house was started, the focus of planting in the park has altered and will gradually be developed in relation to the new Thoresby Park rather than the old Thoresby Hall.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The c 2.25ha L-shaped kitchen garden lies within woodland c 450m east-north-east of Thoresby Hall. A gardener's house stands in the north-east corner with outbuildings in the north-west corner and against the north wall. A walled garden is marked to the north-west of the old Thoresby Hall as 'Kitchen Garden' on Repton's plan of 1791 and as 'Gardens' on both Sanderson's map of 1835 and the 1840 OS map. This garden is on the site of the present garden and the kitchen garden therefore predates the building of the present Hall in 1864-71. It is currently (2001) in use as a commercial nursery.

#### REFERENCES

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Maps Estate plan, 1680 (Nottinghamshire Archives) Estate plan, 1738 (Nottinghamshire Archives)

OS Old Series 1" to 1 mile, published 1840 OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1899 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1920

Archival items Humphry Repton, Red Book for Thoresby Hall, 1791 (private collection)

Description written: October 2000 (CEB) Redrafted: June 2001 (EMP) Amended: October 2001 Register Inspector: CEB/EMP

Edited: February 2002

## 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.