

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

SHERIFF HUTTON PARK

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Name:	SHERIFF HUTTON PARK
County:	North Yorkshire
District:	Ryedale (District Authority)
Parish:	Sheriff Hutton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.082112 Longitude: -0.99111989 National Grid Reference: SE 66100 65603 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1001462 Date first listed: 01-Feb-2000

Details

Early C 17 formal gardens created to accompany a contemporary country house, with a landscape park created in the C 18 or early to mid C 19, the whole set in the remains of a medieval deer park.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1335 licence was granted to Ralph de Nevill to impark his woods, which were part of Sheriff Hutton manor and lay within the Royal Forest of Galtres (VCH 1923). In 1616 Sir Arthur Ingram (d 1642), a notorious London financier and secretary to the Council of the North, moved to Yorkshire. He also held the office of Keeper of the Park of Sheriff Hutton, which in 1617 James I visited and hunted in, and at that time contained a 'Laund House' or hunting lodge (CL 1966). Between 1619 and 1624 Ingram built a substantial new house and attached garden at Sheriff Hutton. Within the Ingram family papers, reference is made in October 1619 to the work at Sheriff Hutton, where 'Maybank hath finished the house side down into the garden, also the two parlours next the garden, likewise one side of the stairs as high as the terrace' (ibid).

A plan, which is part of a Royal Survey of 1624 held at the British Library (Harl MS 6288 Fol 2, illustrated in CL 1966), shows the extent of the approximately oval deer park, with at its centre a bird's-eye view of the house and garden, marked as 'The new lodge built by Sir Arthur Ingram'. The park was described in this survey as 'well stored with fallow deer and set with near 4,000 decayed and decaying oaks ... where Sir Arthur Ingram has raised a very fair new Lodge ... with a fair garden enclosed with a brick wall with mount walks and fair ornaments'. The Great Lodge is depicted surrounding three sides of a courtyard, with an enclosed forecourt adjacent to this to the north-west and an enclosed garden laid out in formal style to the south-east of the Lodge.

Sir Arthur embellished his garden with shrubs, roses and fruit trees obtained from London, and directed exactly where many of them should be planted. On one occasion he sent twenty rose trees with instructions to 'have Drew set them at every corner of the knots and cut the privet into beasts and set the court walls with honeysuckle' (Ingram family papers quoted in CL 1966). In 1637 Sir Thomas Ingram, the son of Sir Arthur, and his wife took possession of the estate, employing Thomas Ventris, a sculptor of York who had worked on the house since its construction, to carve twenty heraldic beasts as garden ornaments.

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Ingram also employed other craftsmen to produce further stone ornaments and lead flowerpots. The estate was granted outright to Ingram by Charles I.

Around 1676 the estate was bought by Edward Thompson, in whose family it remained until 1880. The Thompsons remodelled the house in the 1730s, pulling down the side wings, and laid out the landscape park during the C 18 or early to mid C 19 (OS 1856), incorporating the deer park and many of the ancient oaks. During the C20 the estate changed hands several times, part of it being sold into divided ownership. The house and gardens remain (2000) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Sheriff Hutton park lies 16km north of York, in the Plain of York, to the south and south-east of the village of Sheriff Hutton. The c 55ha site is bounded by agricultural land, the Hall being situated on a slight rise overlooking the gently undulating surrounding parkland. The setting is rural, with the village of Sheriff Hutton visible on the skyline to the north-west, and views of the large ruined Castle which stands 1 km to the north-west at the south side of the village. The deserted village of East Lilling (scheduled ancient monument) occupies Lodge Field close by to the south of the park.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach leaves the West Lilling to Sheriff Hutton road 1.5km west of the Hall, adjacent to a single-storey, C19, brick-built lodge in Picturesque style. From here the west drive extends east through agricultural land, with views north to the Castle ruins (scheduled ancient monument) standing on the skyline, entering the park (and the area here registered) 0.5km west of the Hall. The drive arrives at a carriage sweep on the north-west front of the Hall from where a short flight of stone steps leads up to the front door.

A further, south-east drive leaves a lane 1.25km south-east of the Hall, extending north-west through agricultural land, and entering the park (and the area here registered) 250m south of the Hall. From here the drive curves around the west side of the former stable block, to join the west drive 150m from the Hall.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Sheriff Hutton Hall (1619-24, with alterations 1730s and mid C19, listed grade I) stands in the eastern half of the park, set on a slight rise above the surrounding park. The Hall was built for Sir Arthur Ingram in the 1620s around three sides of a courtyard, and remodelled in the 1730s for Leonard Thompson, when Ingram's side wings were demolished. It was extended for Leonard Thompson III in the mid C 19. The two-storey, brick-built, rectangular Hall is entered from the north-west front, the garden front being on the opposite, south-east side. An icehouse (mid C 19, listed grade II) is situated within a service building attached to the north-east side of the Hall.

The former stable block and brewhouse (1638, listed grade II), known as the Ranger's House, stands 50m south-west of the Hall. The long, two-storey block has been converted to domestic use, and was built for Sir Thomas Ingram from stone re-used from Sheriff Hutton Castle.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens are divided into two sections: the formal garden to the south-east of the Hall, and the informal wooded pleasure grounds to the north and east.

The formal garden consists of a central, level lawn set on a platform, overlooked by the Hall, and enclosed on the other three sides by three lower garden compartments, also largely laid to lawn. The platform slopes away to the north-east, south-east and south-west, and is divided from the two flanking compartments to the north-east and south-west by brick walls set back from the edges of the terrace and the grass banks below. A terrace walk along the north-west edge, adjacent to the Hall, connects the central compartment and two flanking compartments. The garden contains various items of statuary (listed grade II).

The garden is entered via the garden door at the centre of the south-east front. A short flight of stone steps leads down to the central garden compartment. The stone-flagged terrace walk running adjacent to the Hall extends beyond to the north-east and south-west, along the length of the north-west side of this compartment. From the terrace a low grass bank leads down to the large, rectangular central lawn, which is flanked to north-east and south-west by the two 4m high brick garden walls (c 1620, listed grade II), and extends south-east for 60m from the Hall. To the south-east the lawn overlooks a grass bank, which is divided into two stepped levels by a further terrace, down which a flight of stone steps leads to a further lawn. This lower lawn, laid out with a formal pattern of beds, is divided from the park beyond by a 2m high yew hedge, at the centre of which stand two low brick piers flanking a pair of iron gates giving access to the park. Views extend east from the south-east edge of the upper,

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central lawn, and from the gateway, across the park to agricultural land beyond. The upper and lower lawns were divided in the C17 by a section of brick wall, of which no visible remains survive, which linked the two remaining lengths of garden wall.

The stone-flagged terrace continues south-west beyond the west corner of the central compartment, passing through a gap in the south-west garden wall between a pair of 4m high brick gate piers (mid C 18, listed grade II). The terrace extends for a further c 15m along the north-west edge of the adjacent south-west garden compartment, backed by a brick wall. This rectangular compartment is also laid largely to lawn, overlooked by the bank on the north-east side, on which stands the south-west garden wall dividing it from the central lawn. At the south-east end of the compartment lies a disused swimming pool. The compartment is bounded to the south-west by an area informally laid out with lawn and shrubs, which forms part of the garden of the Ranger's House, and through which the kitchen garden to the south was formerly reached (OS 1856).

The stone-flagged terrace also continues north-east beyond the north corner of the central compartment, passing through the north-east garden wall via a gap which is marked on the south-east side by a 2m high brick pier (mid C 18, listed grade II). The terrace extends along the north-east edge of the adjacent north-east compartment for a further c 15m, at this point backed to the north-west by a C 19 wooden conservatory and brick wall separating it from a service yard adjacent to the north-east of the Hall. In this compartment the terrace lies above a grass bank leading down to the lawn below. A flight of stone steps at the north-east end of the terrace gives access to the lawn and pleasure grounds beyond this to the east. This rectangular compartment, also laid largely to lawn, is overlooked by the grass bank on the south-west side which elevates the central compartment. This bank is divided into two stepped levels by a further terrace which links at its south-east end with the bank bounding the south-east edge of the central lawn. The north-east compartment is divided from the central compartment by the north-east garden wall which stands above the grass bank. The compartment is bounded to the east by the eastern section of the pleasure grounds.

The informal, largely wooded pleasure grounds are divided into two sections which lie north and east of the Hall. Within the eastern, wooded section c 250m north-east of the Hall, are several ponds. Within the northern section an avenue leads from the north-east side of the carriage sweep north-west into the park, terminated to the north-west by a pair of iron gates and piers. From here the woodland curves north and then south-west to enclose an area of parkland. An L-shaped lake lies within the woodland at the south-west edge of these pleasure grounds. The lake has been extended (1999) east into the parkland.

PARK The park is divided into two unequal halves: that to the north-west and west of the Hall, and that to the south-east. The latter area, which lies adjacent to the formal garden, is laid to pasture, and divided into several sections by fences. In the middle of the section lying immediately adjacent to the garden stands a statue of a Roman soldier (John Ashbie 1638, listed grade II) on a stone plinth, aligned on the garden door at the centre of the south-east front of the Hall. The soldier was probably moved here from the formal garden in the C 18. The land south-west of the statue slopes up to a level plateau planted with many park trees. From here long views extend north-east across the Plain of York.

The larger, western section of the park is divided into inner and outer areas. The inner area lies north-west of the Hall, enclosed by the pleasure grounds to the north and east, and bounded to the west by a lake which has recently (1999) been extended eastwards. Several ancient oaks grow in this area, including formerly the Warwick Oak (?gone, late C20), which was believed to have been the limit to which Edward, Earl of Warwick, nephew of Richard III and the last male heir of the Plantagenet line, was permitted to extend his daily walks when a prisoner in Sheriff Hutton Castle in the C 15 (CL 1966). The outer part of the western section of the park is largely laid to arable with some parkland trees, with views extending north-west to the Castle ruins.

An aerial and subsequent ground survey (RCHME 1992) highlighted the earthwork outline of what appears to have been the remains of platforms which supported a broad avenue aligned on the north-west, entrance front of the Hall. The avenue extended c 500m north-west across what is now (1999) parkland, towards the village, but it is not shown on the 1624 park survey plan. This line has been partly broken by the recent eastward extension of the lake, and other evidence of it in the inner park may have been obscured by the spreading of spoil from the extension of the lake.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen garden formerly lay 100m south of the Hall.

REFERENCES

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The Victoria History of the County of York: North Riding II, (1923), p 173 C Gilbert, A Short Historical Guide to Sheriff Hutton Park (1965) Country Life, 140 (8 September 1966), pp 548-51; (15 September 1966), pp 628-31 H Winton, Sheriff Hutton Air Photographic Transcription Report 1993 (National Monuments Record, Swindon)

Maps Royal Survey, 1624 (Harl MS 6288 Fol 2), (British Library)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1 st edition published 1856 Archival items The Ingram family papers are held at the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds (ref TN). Description written: January 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: June 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.