

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HOWICK HALL

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Name:	HOWICK HALL
District:	Northumberland (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Longhoughton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 55.450051 Longitude: -1.6078756 National Grid Reference: NU 24901 17424 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001048 Date first listed: 01-Jan-1985

Details

Late C18 parkland and early C19 wooded pleasure grounds, developed from 1917 onwards into an extensive woodland garden.
HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Grey family have owned and lived at Howick since the C12. Sir Henry Grey, who became High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1736, built 'a large house and elegant offices' to the north of 'the old tower of Howick, mentioned by Leyland' (Wallis 1769). This tower probably lay in the vicinity of the village, clustered around the parish church to the south-east of the Hall. Sir Henry also laid out a shrubbery and plantation to the west of the house, and built a 'new bridge of ashler-work' over the Howick Burn (ibid).

This house was demolished and a new one built, in 1782, for Sir Henry's son and heir, Sir Henry Grey Bt, MP for Northumberland, from designs by William Newton (1730-98) of Newcastle (qv Hesleyside, Wallington). The entrance front of the new house lay on the south. Charles, second Earl Grey, who inherited the estate in 1807, commissioned George Wyatt (1782-1856) in c 1809 to undertake extensive internal alterations to the house and to change the entrance front to the north. His scheme included landscape works, namely new entrance gates, as well as, the approached altered, and the lawn broken in a better style. Howick Burn, a fine trout-stream skirts the lawn, and is crossed by a neat stone bridge, of fine ashlar-work. The brook, following its course from the west, between grass-lawns, shaded by a plantation, makes its exit by a gentle fall 'a beautiful fish-pond' abounds with fine trout and perch, and the surface is enlivened by the majestic motions of two beautiful swans. (Mackenzie 1825)

By canalising Howick Burn, a wide, crescent-shaped lawn to the south of the Hall was delimited, in a similar style to that at Hesleyside (qv). The gardens, to the south of the Hall, consisted of a single terrace with lawns, sloping down to the Burn, set with specimen trees.

The parish church was rebuilt to appear as an Ionic temple within the park and the village was removed to the present site of Howick village c 1850 (Lord Howick pers comm, 2001).

During the late C19 a lower terrace was built, and set with parterres of low box hedges. A major phase of planting started in 1917 when Lord and Lady Grey developed a woodland garden within the existing C19 wooded pleasure grounds. A rhododendron garden, with many newly introduced species rhododendrons, was planted on the greensand from 1930 onwards. Early introductions of trees and shrubs were obtained directly from Wakehurst (qv), East Sussex and Westonbirt (qv),

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Gloucestershire through family connections, and from a wide circle of gardening friends including Caerhays, Cornwall (qv). A series of bulb collections and herbaceous borders were developed to the south of the terraced gardens. This horticultural family tradition has been continued through the establishment of an extensive arboretum in the east park which extends through Cushat Wood, Crow Wood, and fields to the east and north of the Hall (1990s onwards). The site remains (2000) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Howick Hall lies 7km to the north-east of Alnwick and 1.5km inland, west of Howick village. The open landscape of the North Northumbrian Coastal Plain has been modified by the extensive tree planting on the Howick estate, which lies on both banks of the Howick Burn. The Burn forms a steep-sided valley running from north-west to south-east across the estate before issuing into the sea, 500m south of Howick Haven.

Howick Hall is set on a plateau at the top of the valley. From the south front there are views, across the valley and the Howick Burn, to the parkland which rises up beyond to the horizon. The main vista southwards from the Hall is set within a framework of trees, formed by the wooded pleasure grounds.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to Howick Hall lies at the East Lodge, to the south-west of Howick village, 150m north-east of the Hall. The entrance lies through ornamental gate piers with a single-storey lodge to the north. The drive leads through a shrubbery and curves gently round southwards to the main, north entrance of Howick Hall. An entrance courtyard is enclosed by the east and west wings of the Hall, and the main, south block of the Hall. It is set with a turning circle. From the East Lodge, the road leads directly eastwards, outside the area here registered, to Howick Haven, 1.5km south-east of the Hall and the site of the Boat House (now demolished), built to receive goods for the Hall carried by sea. The West Lodge, standing 800m directly west of the Hall, lies on the B1339 and marks a secondary route to the Hall, leading through Damses Wood.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Howick Hall (listed grade II*) was designed by William Newton in 1782, for Sir Henry Grey, with a south, entrance front of nine bays and a pedimented three-bay centre. In 1809 George Wyatt was commissioned to build an Entrance Hall, in Tuscan style, on the north front. Following a fire which gutted much of the house in 1928, it was remodelled by Baker and Scott. The west wing (Newton 1782, listed grade II*) comprises the former kitchen wing, now a private residence, and service buildings, while the east wing forms the stableyard buildings (Newton 1782, listed grade II*). Both have formal elevations onto the entrance courtyard.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens lie to the south of the Hall, where a balustraded upper terrace (Wyatt 1809, listed grade II) is set against the south facade. This rectangular terrace terminates at its east and west ends with flights of moulded steps and, on the south side of the terrace, a central flight of steps lead down to a middle terrace. The middle terrace (terrace wall 1-1.5m high, Wyatt 1809, listed grade II) widens out into a rectangular platform set with a circular fountain (early C20) and yew-hedged enclosures. From the fountain a path descends to a lower terrace and then to the Howick Burn, which bounds the lawns to the south.

Two footbridges cross the Howick Burn. To the east of the Hall, in Greenseat Wood is the woodland garden of c 1.5ha, planted from 1930 onwards, also known as the Silver Wood. It contains many plants from Asian expeditions of the 1920s and 30s, and from notable British collections, all set within the shelter of the beech and oak woodland.

PARK The park of c 50ha lies to the west, south, and south-east of the Hall. The Howick Burn set in a steep, wooded valley to the south of the Hall flows from west to south-east across the park. In the C19 the wooded, northern bank carried an ornamental carriage drive through Cushat Wood. This partly survives as a hardcore track commencing on the east side of the 'dry' bridge (early C19, listed grade II), 320m south-east of Howick Hall. The Burn issues into the sea some 1.6km south-east of the Hall, at the south-east tip of Cushat Wood.

The western parkland is enclosed by Damses Wood on its north side, and along its eastern and southern boundaries by tree belts. The road to Howick village leading off from the B1339 passes from south-west to north-east through the park, separating this west park from a smaller area of land to the east. It crosses Howick Burn by way of a road bridge (early C19, listed grade II), 320m south-east of Howick Hall, which is in turn crossed at a higher level by the aforementioned 'dry' bridge. The eastern area is bounded on its north and east by Cushat Wood, adjacent to the Howick Burn, and by Crow Wood to the south. A further

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area of woodland extends towards Howick village, to the north of the east park. This lies outside the area here registered. All three areas are currently (2003) being developed as an arboretum.

The parish church, rebuilt in 1849 after a fire to designs by F J Francis, is set 100m south-east of the Hall. It lies amongst trees and within a walled churchyard, reached from the gardens across a tooled stone bridge with ashlar dressings (late C18 or early C19, both listed grade II), on the south bank of the Howick Burn. The church tower appears in a vista from the Hall, and is reached by a small path leading across a bridge from the gardens. Beyond, to the south, is open parkland set with scattered trees and clumps.

KITCHEN GARDEN A trapezoidal walled garden (listed grade II) of some 2ha lies 100m to the north-west of the west wing. The late C18 walls are faced in brick with a stone coping. On the south side of the walled garden is a terraced lawn running the length of the south wall, enclosed by a ha-ha. The ha-ha wall, c 1m in height, has a stone coping.

REFERENCES

J Wallis, *The Natural History and Antiquities of Northumberland* (1769) E Mackenzie, *View of the County of Northumberland* (1825), p 426 The *Local Historian's Table Book II*, (1842), p 269 F O Morris, *Views of Seats VI*, (1880), p 63 *Gardeners' Chronicle*, ii (26 January 1884), p 112 W W Tomlinson, *Guide to Northumberland* (1888), pp 420-2 N Pevsner and I A Richmond, *The Buildings of England: Northumberland* (1957, reprinted 1974), pp 194-5 *Country Life*, 171 (8 April 1982), pp 952-4

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1860, published 1865 2nd edition surveyed 1896

Description written: January 2001 Amended: March 2003 Register Inspector: KC

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.