

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

FORCETT HALL

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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Name:	FORCETT HALL
County:	North Yorkshire
District:	Richmondshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Forcett
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.502520 Longitude: -1.7367001 National Grid Reference: NZ 17149 11943 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001063 Date first listed: 10-May-1984

Details

Gardens and park of c 1740 possibly by Thomas Wright incorporating part of an Iron Age oppidum.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Forcett lies on the north-west edge of a large Iron Age oppidum, one of the largest and most impressive monuments of its type in northern England. The Shuttleworth family owned Forcett from the 1590s and it was Richard Shuttleworth who rebuilt the Hall and laid out the park in the 1740s. The estate was sold in 1785 but it remained intact and is in private ownership (1998).

DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Forcett Hall lies immediately west and south-west of the village of Forcett in an area which is rural and agricultural. The c 90ha site is on land which rises on each side of a lake which runs north-west/south-east across the centre of the site. The boundary is walled and formed by the B6274 on the east side and minor roads on the other sides.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance is on the north-east side of the site where there is an imposing entrance screen and paired lodges (Daniel Garrett c 1740, listed grade II*). A central triumphal arch surmounted by urns is linked to the lodges by a low wall surmounted by railings from which a drive leads north-west and west to the Hall. An entrance on the north side of the site has early C18 gate piers (listed grade II) probably also designed by Garrett from which a drive runs south-east towards the Hall.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Forcett Hall (listed grade I) is shown in a drawing by Samuel Buck of c 1720 as a Jacobean house with narrow south wings. In c 1740 Daniel Garrett substantially remodelled the building. The entrance front is pedimented and has rusticated giant pilasters while the garden front is articulated by giant Ionic pilasters and has a central entrance with a double staircase leading down from it. Immediately to the east of the Hall and linked to it by quadrant walls flanking C18 gate piers, an C18 stable block (listed grade II*) is ranged around a courtyard.

St Cuthbert's church (listed grade II*) lies c 400m south-east of the Hall, outside the area here registered, within a churchyard. It has Norman or earlier origins and was partially rebuilt in 1859.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS A terrace runs along the garden front and central stone steps lead down to a path which runs south between lawns and encircles a fountain, much as shown on the 1857 OS map. There are views south from the

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terrace and lawns over the park and lake with rising land beyond. A path leads south-west through woodland, which is separated from the park by a ha-ha, to a mound called The Mount which stands at the north-west end of the lake and was probably formed from spoil created by its construction. On the south-east side of The Mount, c 350m south-west of the Hall, there is a grotto (C18, listed grade II*) with an arched opening flanked by two smaller openings in the rustic stonework. The interior of the grotto has barrel-vaulted chambers and a passage leads from the rear of the central bay to a brick-lined icehouse. The grotto is similar to a design by Thomas Wright (1711-86) published in 1758. The path continues through woodland and joins with a path which runs east across the park to the south side of the lake. A painting of c 1770 (Harris 1979) shows the grotto and The Mount with a circular domed building crowning it, with the lake in the foreground and park and Hall in the background.

On the east side of the Hall a ha-ha divides the wooded pleasure grounds from the park and a path leading south from the main entrance drive is a former carriage drive called Church Walk. Some 400m south-east of the Hall the walk joins with an earthen bank which is part of an Iron Age oppidum called Stanwick (scheduled ancient monument) which runs along the eastern boundary of the park from this point. The bank gives good views in every direction but to the south. The drive leads to a boathouse on the eastern tip of the lake, c 550m south-east of the Hall and the bank has been modified to form the lake's dam. The drive continues to the top of the hill on the south side of the lake and turns briefly to the west at a point where long-distance views can be obtained. To the south the rampart continues with a footpath running along the top of it and c 400m to the south of the dam there is a hollow on a site marked 'grotto' on the 1857 OS map. Some 90m south of this the bank has been modified to create a platform supported by a semicircular wall, possibly the site of a seat.

PARK The park is sheltered on every side by tree belts and consists largely of open grassland divided by the lake which is more than 600m in length. The area north of the lake is called Front Park and that to the south High Park. In the southern tip of the park woodland is called Scot Butts. The tree cover and layout is much as shown on the 1857 OS map.

It is not known who was responsible for the design of the park but several sources (for example Leach, CL 1974) suggest Thomas Wright as a candidate. Wright had worked alongside Garrett on commissions at Wallington (qv) in Northumbria and elsewhere. The incorporation of the prehistoric ramparts into the landscape could be seen as an expression of interest in them, perhaps for their historic or sublime qualities, and some archaeologists regard the oppidum as a designed landscape in its own right since it is thought to have symbolic or ritual, rather than defensive origins (see Bowden in Pattison 1998). Wright was interested in antiquities and published books on Roman and Saxon remains.

KITCHEN GARDEN The kitchen gardens (walls, gates and Garden House listed grade II) lie c 150m north-east of the Hall and consist of two walled enclosures, the eastern of which has the park perimeter wall as the east side and has within it a dovecote (listed grade II*) which is a hexagonal structure raised upon an arcaded base, perhaps to provide shelter for livestock. The western garden has a pavilion called the Garden House attached to the north wall which has large sash windows and an interior with decorative plasterwork. To the east of this, ranged along the north wall, there are a number of bothies and ancillary buildings.

REFERENCES Samuel Buck's Yorkshire Sketchbook (1720), Wakefield Historical Society facsimile reprint (1979), p 365 N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Yorkshire The North Riding (1966), pp 163-4 Country Life, 155 (12 September 1974), p 694-5; (17 September 1974), p 194 J Harris, The Artist and the Country House (1979), p 297 J Hatcher, Richmondshire Architecture (1990), pp 89-93 P Pattison (ed), There by Design, Field Archaeology in Parks and Gardens (1998), pp 23-6 Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1857 2nd edition published 1919 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1914 Description written: November 1998 Register Inspector: CEH Edited: October 1999

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.