

## Comment

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Comment by	MR MICHAEL GREEN (1170799)
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Nature of response	
Do you agree with this content?	Object

### Please tell us why

#### ***'South West Darlington'. Picture 5 Site 009 Blackwell Grange East***

The objection is being made on behalf of the 'Parkland Heritage Network' (Open Spaces Member no: 76611). It encompasses the views made in the 2018 consultations, the 2015 consultations and the many discussions following a community/ward meeting and the publication of an Archaeological/Historical report commissioned by Darlington Borough Council in 2012. (File uploaded)

The objection relates to site 009 inclusion in 'Assessment of Development Site Options South West Darlington'. Picture 5 Site 009 Blackwell Grange East.

The Non-Technical Summary of the Sustainability Appraisal Submission explains the reasons for the inclusion of Site 009, as being a requirement to follow the adoption of a Sustainability Framework by the Local Authority in November 2016.

The updated September 2017 version of the Sustainability Framework continued to contain the inclusion of site 009 Blackwell Grange East. The Draft Sustainability Appraisal Document published alongside the Draft Local Plan in its consideration of "relevant significant environmental, social and economic sustainability issues" during the 2018 consultation process, included Site 009.

In making the objection it is recognised that a Sustainability Appraisal has to be seen as a process, and that through the 2018 Local Plan Consultation many changes have been made throughout the Borough, including Blackwell Grange East. The objection is an overspill from 2016 and carried over to 2017 following the very articulate and detailed concerns and objections by the community in the 2015 consultation.

These can be accessed as LINKS in Appendix (III) p46 of the 'Local Green Space Submission' for the Historic Parkland located in Policy ENV 6 Local Green Space of this consultation Portal as an uploaded PDF file.

The 'Parkland Heritage Network' believes that this should be noted as a current 2020 objection to the Sustainability Appraisal record, as a way of safeguarding positive changes to the Local Plan which have been made through consultation:

(i) Firstly because of the uncertainty over the possible relaxation of planning rules and regulations currently outlined in the new Business and Planning Bill. (Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the Bill it received Royal Assent on 22 July. The Bill is now an Act of Parliament.)

(ii) Secondly because of fears that the broader government effort to overhaul the planning system may take decision making away from Local Authorities.

(iii) Thirdly that a fresh Sustainability Assessment of options for South West Darlington may be opened by this relaxation, allowing future plans, perhaps by a new local Political Administration, to be influenced by the initial 2016 Sustainability Appraisal. Thus reverting to the situation prior to the February 2020 Cabinet and Full Council decisions, which now offer in the Local Plan some degree of protection to the Historic Parkland.

(iv) Fourthly, it is believed that had greater weight been given to the work, evidence and recommendations of the commissioned Archaeo-Report by previous administrations in 2012 and in 2015, and the detailed and well informed concerns and solutions offered by the community, the *Sustainability Appraisal* would have looked very different today.

**The Objection to Picture 5 Site 009 Blackwell Grange East. based on the Sustainability Appraisal record relating to 009 from 2016 to present date as follows:**

(a) A belief that 009 should have never appeared in 2016-2017 Sustainability Appraisal. Earlier consultations and the quality of comments presented by over 174 respondents, and the strong evidence cited in those consultation papers of 2015 support this belief. ( LINKS in Appendix (III) p46 of the Local Green Space Submission)

(b) The strength of this evidence is presented in the Archaeo-Environment report published in 2012, which concluded the need to preserve and protect this Historic area. This document was presented, following its publication, at a community/ward meeting, and was the subject of much discussion between the community, other interest groups and the Local Authority from its 2012 publication right up to 2015. The evidence and recommendations of the report pointed towards, no development on 009, or 1820 Parkland in its entirety, seeing this as '*unsustainable and not justified*'. This was as early as the initial 2016 Local Authority *Sustainability Appraisal*.

(c) At present the site does not yet have additional protection as a *Local Green Space* or a listed *Heritage Asset* by the Local Authority. Full criteria for both *Heritage and Green Space* are evident and have been submitted in this consultation 'ENV 6 Local Green Space' as an uploaded PDF file and APPENDIX C DARLINGTON'S HERITAGE ASSETS uploaded File: *Ethnographic Study-Part 5* .

(d) Within this objection, is the unjustified, inaccurate and undignified description given to the 009 area of land in in the Sustainability Appraisal. (Disused golf course] The swathe of 009 lies within, and is part of, the 1820 boundary of the original Parkland along with the 'listed wall' and brick ha-ha. It should also be noted that in the earlier Local Plan presentation as far back as 2001, the Blackwell Parkland held the same status in terms of landscape and the historic as 6 other landscapes, and listed with the 6 others of historic interest in the Borough.

(e) The area of Parkland in its entirety has been recorded in history since 1183. During its long history, time spent as part of a golf course represent only **4% of its historic time-line!** Of the remaining recorded time-line, **40% was as landscaped gardens and Parkland, and 56% as farming land.**

(Hence the abundance of trees and wildlife, the well preserved ridge and furrow, and its status as Local Wildlife Site)

***'Blackwell Grange sits on top of layers of history which each have a story to tell. The remarkable survival of pre-golf course features of more than one period is unusual.'* (Archaeo-Report 2012)**  
***"Area of Parkland which meets English Heritage criteria for designation as a Registered Parkland."***  
**(ZONE 3) (p 41 Archaeo-Report 2012)**

There is a positive outcome of the 2018 Draft Consultation process, which now needs guarding. This outcome may be attributed to the following:

(i) It was a well publicised Local Plan, stressed as being Borough wide and giving the entire community an opportunity to comment.

***"The Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will set out areas of longterm investment and growth over a twenty year period, 2016 - 2036."***

***"It will outline where significant new development should go and will include policies to protect valued environments and heritage."***

***"A six week consultation is taking place from 21st June to 2nd August 2018 on the Darlington Borough Draft Local Plan. This is your opportunity to give us your views on the Draft Local Plan and to help shape how the borough will grow in the future."* (Darlington Borough Council 2018)**

(ii) The result of the recent loss of the adjacent Meadows and trees to developers in February 2018, clearly acted as a catalyst, adding strength to those community objections, evidence and responses already made during the 2015 consultation. Local and town-wide residents became highly motivated to any future loss or developments and responded accordingly.

(iii) The high level of response and detailed objections to the potential loss of a huge swathe of this Historic Parkland was clearly understood during consultations, and reflected in Officers' comments in Cabinet Report Pack. (Tuesday 11th February 2020 Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington Pages 309-326)

***"In response to representations that highlighted the sensitivity of Site 009 relative to the land to the south of the site, it is proposed to be replaced with revised site 403."***

***A plan of this change is available in Appendix 2b."(Appendix 2b.337)***

This welcome outcome for the Parkland within the Local Plan was approved at both Cabinet and subsequently at Full Council level February 20th 2020. Although the outcome of the Draft Local Plan and the removal of Site 009 is a very positive move forward, it is felt that this *objection* within *Sustainability Appraisal* be noted, drawing attention and keeping focus upon the value and sensitivity of the Parkland. The Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal guarding any future possible infringement and loss of this Historic asset and Green Space, and focusing on the two uncertainties referred to earlier:

(i) Any future Political changes locally and/or nationally.

(ii) Any current and future changes that broaden government effort to overhaul the planning system.

As for site 403, there was never a full consensus for accepting development here, but the rationale behind this outlined in the 2012 report was understood by many. There are now concerns locally for the density of any future development on the 'Blands Corner Triangle':

(a) The recommendations of the Archaeo-Report 2012 (pp 3,4) do not sit comfortably with the 72 dwellings referred to in Appendix B 'Housing and Employment Allocation Statements Site 403 Blackwell Grange East of the Local Plan submission:

***"The buildings would need to be low lying so that the development was not obtrusive in views from the hotel. The emphasis should be on high quality innovative design that creates a well-wooded- character-area, of sufficient quality to justify the loss of this land."***  
**(Archaeo-Environment 2012)**

(b) Appendix B does not give enough detail on the type of dwelling proposed. The density of the Storey Homes new development on the adjacent lost meadows has more the appearance of a modern estate and does not give confidence to any future development.

In addition, much change has taken place since the 2012 survey and the Archaeo-Report '*Statement of Significance*,' the 2015 consultation and the 2018 Draft Local Plan. Local Plans and projected housing needs have to adjust to this change. When planning current and projected housing needs, and considering the effect of land loss of designated Local Wildlife Sites, Officers and Elected Members have many decisions to make:

- Local Authorities have now to consider and regularly review their climate change statements and policies.
- They are required to respond to the impact of the Environment Bill 2019-2021.
- They are now managing a changed world and the unimagined changes to society and employment due to Covid-19 and its effect on local planning. Bearing in mind that the purpose of the *Sustainably Appraisal* is to work out if the Local Plan Policies and proposals are the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives.

These restrictions and requirements, may lead Elected Members to a rethink and a reconsideration of the justification and the necessity for such additional housing within the 'Assessment of Development Site Options South West Darlington'.

**If you have any supporting documentation you feel is relevant, please upload it here.**

[Statement of Significance:](#)



**Blackwell Grange Golf Club  
Statement of Significance**

**Archaeo-Environment for  
Darlington Borough Council**

**August 2012**



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## Summary

*This report is a study of the significance of Blackwell Grange, in particular the land around the Grange which is currently used as a golf course. Blackwell Grange itself now operates as a hotel which is leased from Darlington Borough Council. The golf course is also in the ownership of Darlington Borough Council and they wish to explore options for development potential within part of the grounds.*

*Historically, Blackwell was a separate village and township south west of Darlington and Blackwell Grange appears to have been built c.1710 for George Allan. Land around the house was laid out with formal avenues and walled gardens and orchards and beyond as arable land divided with hedgerows and trees. This land was redesigned in 1802 along naturalistic principles first made popular by the likes of Capability Brown in the 1760s. When the local mill fell out of use in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mill Lane which extended from the village to the mill (now Skerne Park), was closed and the land to the south absorbed into the wider parkland around the Grange, thus extending it down to Blands Corner.*

*The special interest of the parkland is in the survival of historic documents which have allowed the pre-1790 planting regime to be identified amongst the subsequent 1802 planting design which survives in reasonable condition. These historic maps of 1790 and 1802 are of considerable historic significance. Using these maps, some correlation can be seen between present day trees and parkland features and those depicted on the 1802 map and even the 1790 map. This combined with the survival of ridge and furrow throughout the park has created a landscape that is a palimpsest with layers of landscape design, each identifiable with the help of the two maps. The presence of ridge and furrow in parkland is common, but the ability to identify the pre- English parkland scene amongst the later naturalistic styles is unusual and raises this parkland to a status that may well merit designation.*

*Future management therefore needs to conserve and enhance the key features which either date from the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century or to the 1802 remodelling as follows:*

- ❖ The fish pond which dates to the first landscaping between 1710 and 1790.*
- ❖ The field boundary which extends from the fishpond to the Grange.*
- ❖ The Pleasure Walks and Coach Roads*
- ❖ The tree clumps and mature isolated stands north of Mill Lane (site of)*
- ❖ The brick wall boundary, stone gateposts and the 'sunken fences' and ha-ha*
- ❖ Retain/ replace views from the Grange/hotel south to Mill Lane and east towards Skerne Park*
- ❖ The Lime Avenue*

*Other heritage assets which offer opportunities for reuse include:*

- ❖ The walled garden and former orchards to the west. The basic structure should be retained but there is scope to consider their reuse in a way that brings the walls into active maintenance and allows future readability*
- ❖ The ice house is beyond saving but is an important part of any 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century house. It could create an opportunity for community excavation or interpretation. It can also be left untouched, but should not be destroyed without detailed recording.*
- ❖ Similarly, the air raid shelter offers an opportunity for a community restoration programme with a view to it being used as part of key stage 2 teaching.*

- ❖ The stone groundsmens' building on Carmel Road South should remain in some sort of use so that it is maintained.
- ❖ The northern Coach Drive could be reopened.
- ❖ The watercourse should be retained but offers opportunities for enhancement (but not as a serpentine lake as this was never implemented)
- ❖ Estate rails and kissing gates with pine cone/ acorn tops offer a means to harmonise the parkland character where necessary, but especially along the Coach Roads.

Moving forward....

There is scope to consider some alternative future management of the parkland which will enhance that which is significant, benefit the hotel and its guests and offer opportunities for development where necessary. These actions will need to be considered together in order to ensure that there is an adequate public benefit to compensate for any harmful effect on the heritage assets.

The parkland divides into different zones of sensitivity, each of which are summarised below.

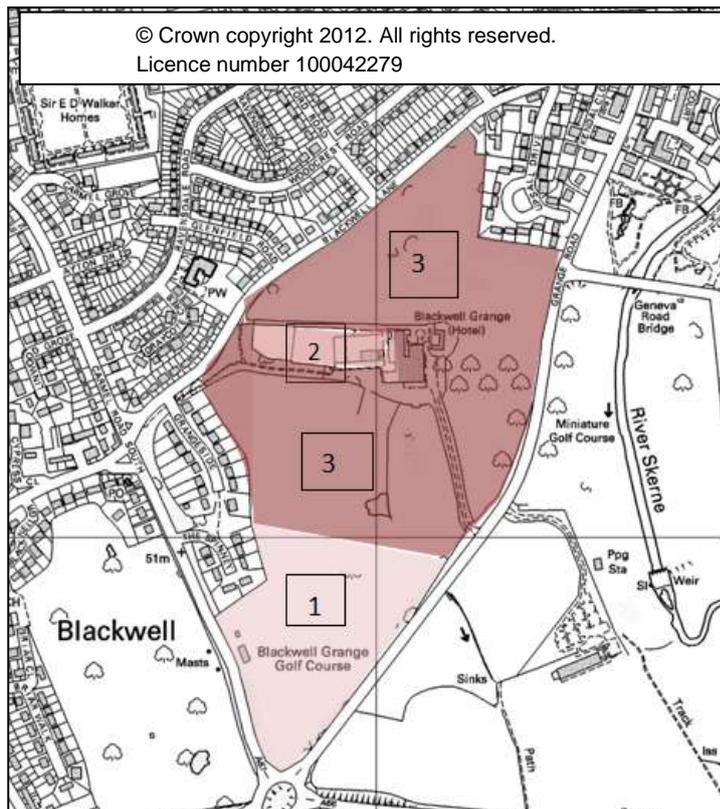


Figure 1. Zones of sensitivity

- ❖ Zone 1 Land between Mill Lane (site of) and Blands Corner

Land in the south of the park was not formally part of the designed landscape of 1802 or in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, this area is less sensitive to change than land to the north of Mill Lane and future development may therefore be possible which extends the Spinney southwards along Carmel Road South and include the area nearest Blands Corner and the south end of Grange Road. It might also make this land more flexible for development if Mill Lane is restored as a minor country lane which would create an additional access point and return a clearly defined edge to the zone of high significance.

*Any development here would be best suited to high quality residential development which would need to retain a strong tree canopy to the perimeter (including Mill Lane if it is reopened) so that the character of the Blackwell area is retained. The perimeter woodland planting could extend the Pleasure Walks and provide a pedestrian route shielded from traffic.*

*The buildings would need to be low lying so that the development was not obtrusive in views from the hotel. The emphasis should be on high quality innovative design that creates a well wooded character area of sufficient quality to justify the loss of this land. The existing stone building offers a flexible space with domestic scale windows and doors, as well as the large agricultural doors and should be retained and reused.*

❖ *Zone 2 The walled garden and former orchard*

*This is a sensitive area which could be brought back into active use for residential, small high quality business use or additional accommodation for the hotel. The red brick wall should be retained as should the Pleasure Walks, and gravel walks outside the walls. New buildings could reflect the form and overall style of a typical garden hot house, so be against the garden walls, probably a lean to roof design, and have a strong use of glass in their fabric. The property divisions could also make use of the geometric layout of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century flower beds and gravel walks and be defined with gravel paths or low lying planting.*

*There were two other enclosures west of the walled garden. There is a little more flexibility here for development, but it still needs to be sensitive and of a low density, with trees and paths forming the structure. It could take the orchard as its inspiration and provide structured planting of fruit trees to create new avenues or landscaped features.*

*Zone 3. The parkland*

*This area is most sensitive to change and no development should be pursued. Instead, the park would be best served with a parkland restoration plan which will provide a planting regime that builds in a long term plan for the restoration of parkland features. This would benefit the hotel and would also create an attractive public space, thus resulting in the public benefit that will offset any harm to the parkland. Funding for a parkland restoration plan can be made available from the Heritage Lottery Fund and should the council wish to pursue the possibility of having the park designated (zone 2-3 only), this may increase the chances of obtaining the funds necessary.*

## **Acknowledgements**

Grateful thanks are due to the ever helpful staff at the North Yorkshire Records Office, Durham Records Office and Durham University Special Collections as well as staff at the Local Studies Library in Darlington. I am also grateful to Mr Doug Christie, Blackwell Grange Golf Club's secretary and to one of the club's groundsmen, Richard Pybus who made fieldwork fun by providing a chauffeur driven golf buggy. Richard and his colleagues were also very knowledgeable about the grounds and were able to direct me towards features quickly and easily. I would also like to thank Tim Crashaw for commissioning the work on

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

behalf of Darlington Council and to his colleagues Steve Petch, Linda Soderman, Martin Chapple and Bryan Huntley for their help in acquiring information, mapping or data.

Report author: Caroline Hardie, Archaeo-Environment Ltd

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## Introduction

*“we pass the rookery, the avenue, and the splendid elms of Blackwell Grange...”* Dresser 1899, 15

Blackwell Grange Hotel and the surrounding golf course are located on the southern fringe of Darlington. Together with South Park, they form an important green wedge extending into the urban area and create a gentle transition between rural agricultural land between Darlington and Croft, the leafy suburbia of the Blackwell area and the increasing urban environment of high quality Victorian and Edwardian suburbs that lead to the town centre fringe. The A66 Darlington Bypass and the Council owned Stressholme Golf Course, run to the south. The hotel site covers 3.64ha, is owned by Darlington Council and leased to the Hotel. The golf course covers approximately 32ha, of which 23.27ha is owned by Darlington Council and leased to Blackwell Grange Golf Club. The study area is the land owned by the Council, situated to the east of the A67 Carmel Road South. Historically, it was in part, parkland associated with Blackwell Grange, a private house and for many years the home of the Allan family who had an important role in the expansion of Darlington in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Options are now being explored to assess the potential for the golf course to offer development potential. Any development needs to comply with the principles of sustainability outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. More specifically, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to ensure that there is a description of the significance of any heritage assets or their settings in order to understand the potential impact of change on that significance (para 128). As Blackwell Grange is a listed building and the area around it is clearly within its setting the Borough Council have commissioned this report which will explore the significance of the golf course east of Carmel Road South and assess to what extent any heritage interest might be able to withstand change, or whether there are heritage assets which should be conserved, embraced or enhanced as part of any future management of the land.

This report starts with a description of how the area evolved into its current form using a variety of primary, secondary and tertiary source material and site visits. It then places it in a wider national and regional context. The nature, extent and level of significance is then explored for each element or heritage asset. Cascading from this information, it is then possible to identify whether any part of the study area could be developed without an unacceptable loss of significance, or where the planning balance might allow public benefit to be weighed against the loss of heritage assets. Where development might be possible, it will explore to what extent the historic environment can provide inspiration and guidance to help change fit in with the spirit of place. The report does not assess the interiors of any of the buildings, but does assess the significance of their surroundings.

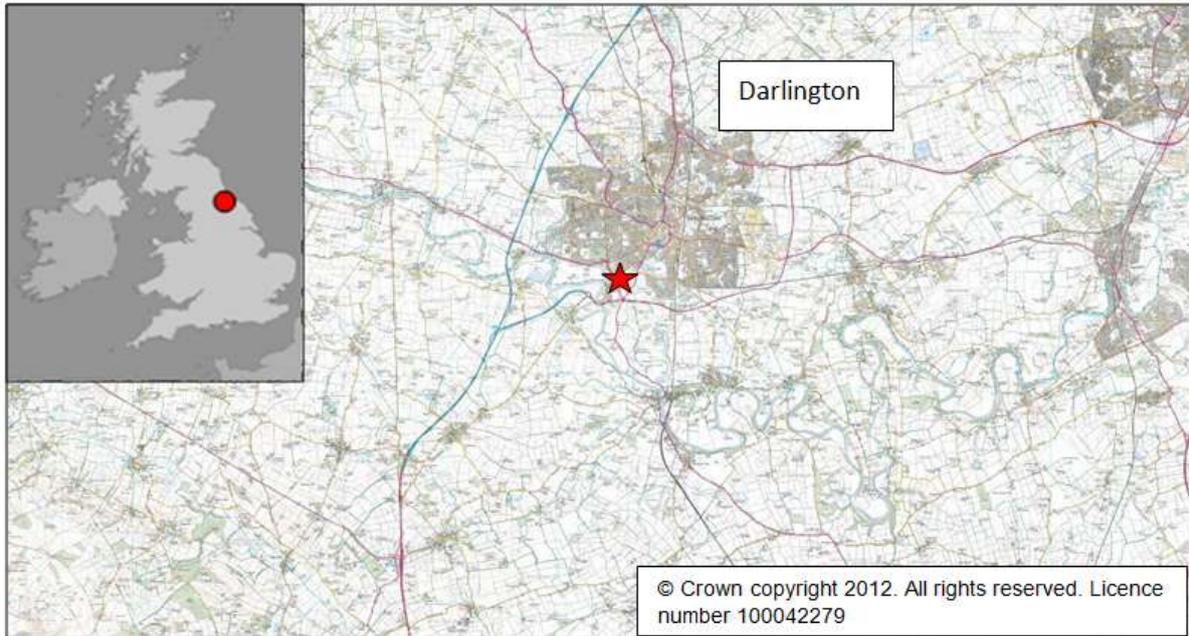


Figure 2: Location plan: Blackwell Grange

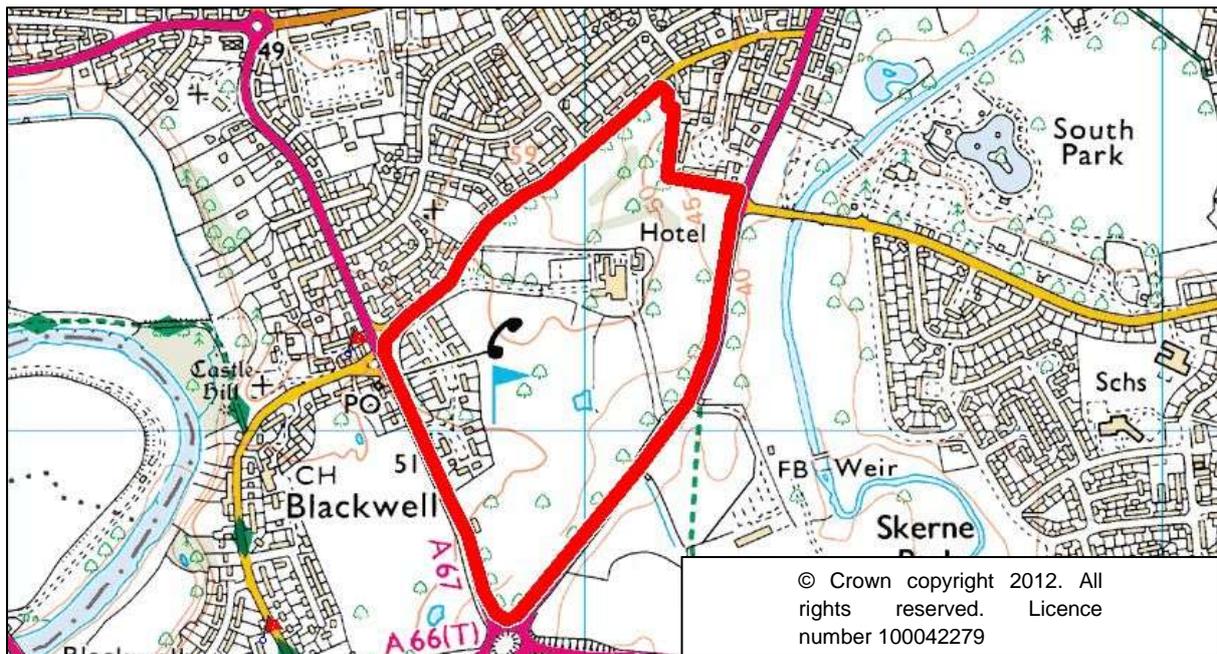


Figure 3: The study area in solid red outline

## Planning policy

### *The National Planning Policy Framework*

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012, replacing all the previous Planning Policy Statements, including PPS 5, as well as various other planning guidance policies. The central theme of the NPPF is the 'presumption in favour of

sustainable development', set out in twelve core land-use planning principles which underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.

Although matters relevant to the historic environment are scattered throughout these principles, particularly design, urban and countryside policies, it is the section on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment which supersedes PPS 5, whilst following that document's significance-led approach to decision-taking. The government and English Heritage have not formally agreed a methodology to meet the policy framework for the historic environment, but the Practice Guide which was originally published with PPS5 has not been withdrawn. Therefore the approach to assessing significance in this document follows the approach outlined in the original PPS5 practice guide.

The framework makes a number of relevant points which need to be taken into consideration at the Blackwell Grange site. It emphasises the importance of town centre vitality, the retention of cultural buildings (para 28) and requires sustainable development. It defines this as development which responds to local character and history (para 58) and also seeks to find a balance between innovation and the need to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness (para 60). The NPPF recognises the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation and the wider benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring. It also notes that new development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para 126). Where significance has to be weighed against any wider benefits, the NPPF makes it clear that the benefit should be a public one, not a private one (para 133).

#### *Conservation areas*

Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest. There are sixteen conservation areas in Darlington Borough and two in the town itself. The nearest is the West End Conservation area which surprisingly excludes Blackwell Grange Park, but does abut it. These places are protected under the provision of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which defines them as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. In conservation areas, permission from the Council is required to make certain changes that would not normally require permission elsewhere. A conservation area appraisal has been produced for the West End Conservation area and it highlights tree cover and open green spaces as being significant features (Darlington Borough Council 2010, 3).

#### *Listed buildings*

Blackwell Grange has already been assessed as being nationally important and as such is designated as a listed building being of special architectural or historic interest. It is listed grade II\* and the 18<sup>th</sup> century stable courtyard and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage to the north east are listed grade II. There are a few listed buildings in the surrounding area, but they are separated from the parkland by modern suburban buildings and are now divorced from any

visual historic context. They include the Punch Bowl Inn which was formerly the home farm to Blackwell Grange and therefore has an historic association with it.<sup>1</sup>

Grade II\* buildings are those which are particularly important buildings of more than special interest and grade II buildings are those of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. Only 10% of listed buildings nationally are listed Grade I or II\* and there are about 500,000 listed buildings in England. Any alterations which would affect the character or significance of the listed buildings or elements of significance in their setting, would require listed building consent. Further, any buildings within the curtilage of the listed buildings and which was built before 1947 are also considered to listed. The boundary of the parkland as far as the line of the former Mill Lane, Grangeside, The Spinney, Blackwell Lane and Upsall Drive should therefore be considered as curtilage.

#### *Registered parks and gardens*

The parkland is not registered as being of Special Historic Interest, but is close to South Park which is registered grade II. Blackwell Grange Park is separated from South Park by Upsall Drive. Grade II sites are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them (English Heritage 2010, 3).

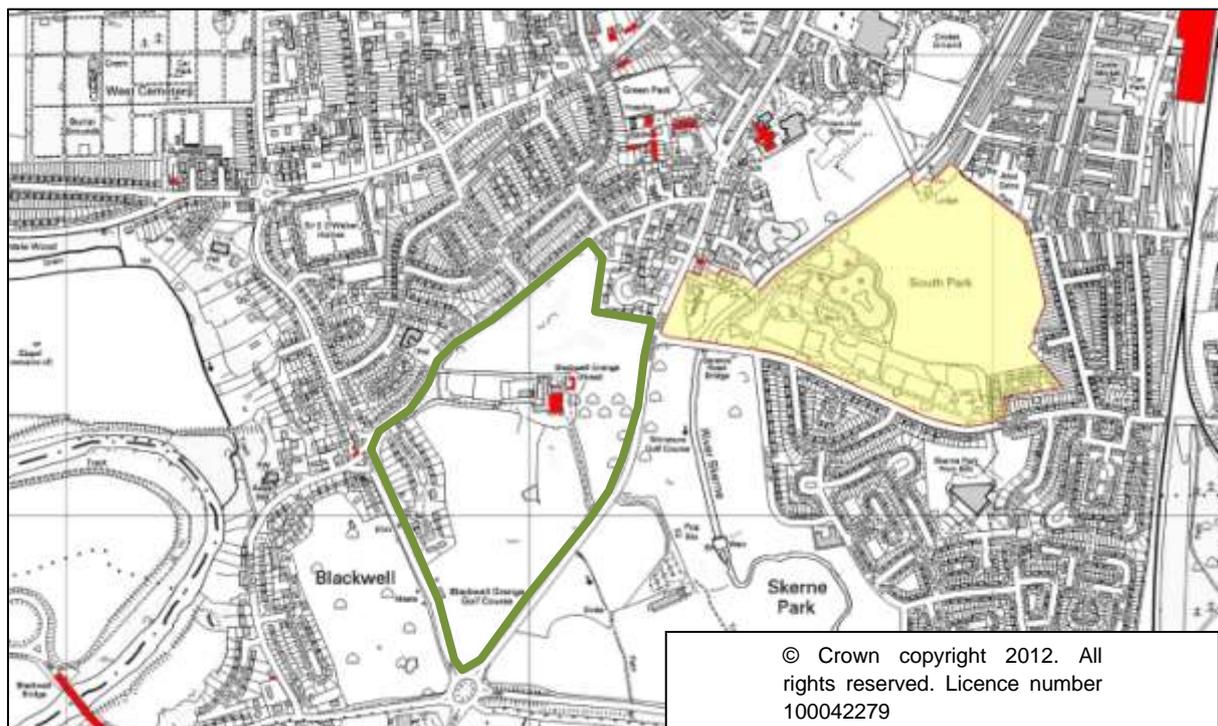


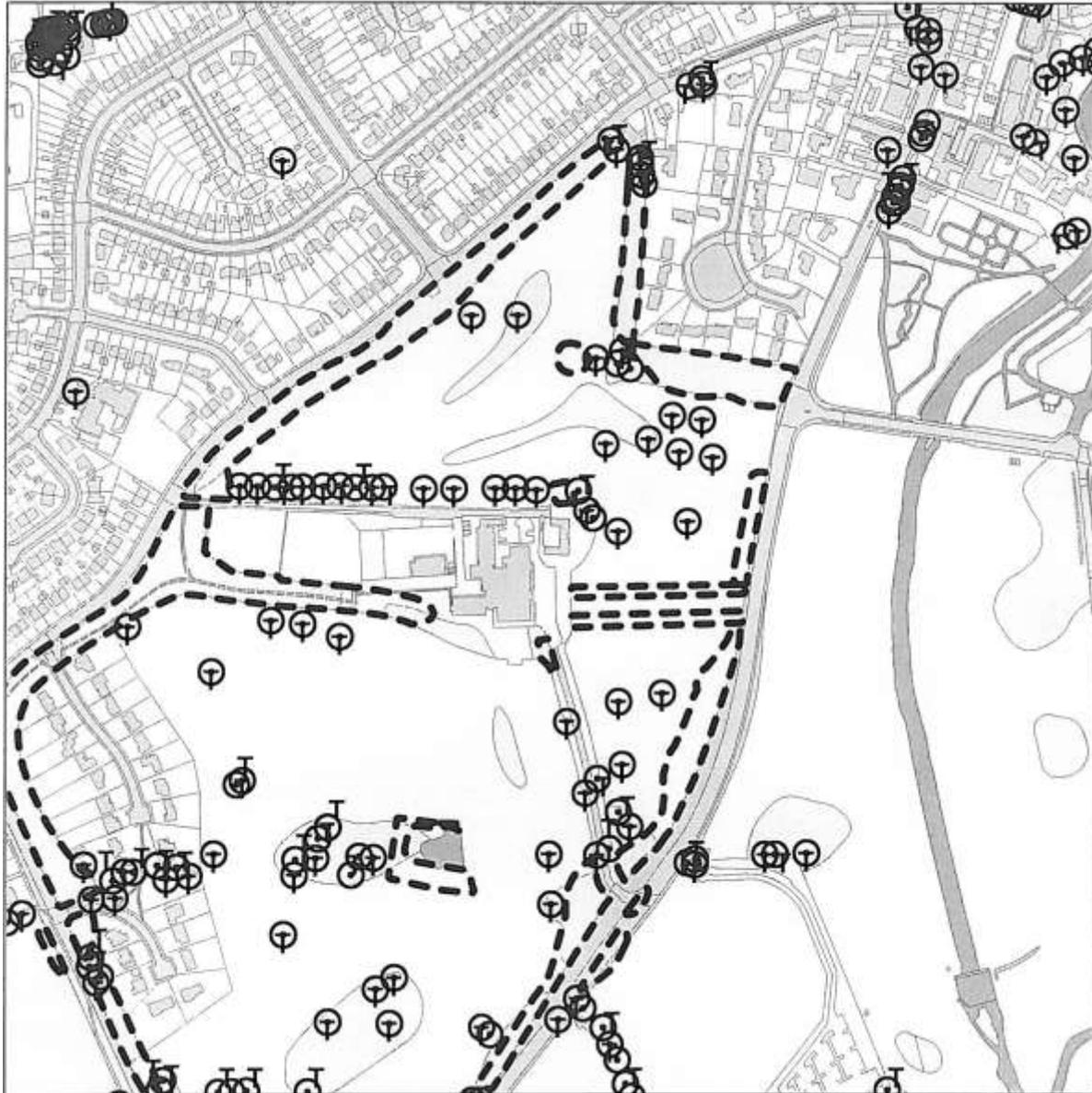
Figure 4: Listed buildings within the park and in the surrounding area in red; the registered gardens in yellow and the study area in green

#### *Tree Preservation Orders*

The study area is rich in tree preservation orders (TPOs) recognising the maturity, amenity and wildlife value of the trees. There are 370 TPOs in Darlington Borough, the earliest order dating from 1945. Some 4,800 individual trees and 300 groups of trees are included

<sup>1</sup> From notes by Vera Chapman in the Crown Street library local studies section, Darlington

altogether.<sup>2</sup> A tree preservation order prohibits the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, willful damage or destruction to trees without the local planning authority's consent. This also includes the cutting of roots which will result in damage to the trees (Department for Communities and Local Government 2006).



Scale : 1:4444

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Organisation	Darlington Borough Council
Department	Department
Comments	
Date	31 August 2012
SLA Number	0100023728

Figure 5: Tree Preservation Orders in Blackwell Grange

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/Living/Planning/ProtectionControl/DevControl/TPOs.htm>

### Local Plan Saved Policies

Darlington Borough Council's Core Strategy sets out the local planning policy framework and policy CS14 seeks to retain local distinctiveness and clearly defined character areas. It highlights the importance of views along Grange Road, the tree canopy skyline of the south west area and the green wedge of the Blackwell area as important characteristics of the town. It also seeks to protect, enhance and promote the quality and integrity of Darlington's distinctive designated or nationally significant built heritage and archaeology and in both respects the policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.

### History of Blackwell Grange

*'The Grange, a handsome spacious mansion of brick, stands about a mile to the South of Darlington, on rising ground betwixt the Tees and Skerne, commanding a rich and varied prospect over Darlington and the adjacent country. A fine avenue of aged branching limes forms the approach from the great road'*<sup>3</sup>

Although the settlement of Blackwell has a long history stretching back at least as far as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the evolution of Blackwell Grange, and consequently the grounds around it, appear to have their origins in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when an existing house was purchased by the Allan family. Accounts vary as to what form this house took. The family of Hill who the Allan's purchased it from apparently had an estate and a handsome mansion-house in Blackwell already.<sup>4</sup> There have been other suggestions that there was a more modest farm house there which incorporated fireplaces and vestiges of earlier buildings (Harris 1972). There is in fact no definitive evidence of a building having been on the site before.



Plate 1. The central bay, minus the later porch, (shaded) represents the earliest part of the house and would have been the elevation seen on the approach to the house from the main entrance through the formal grounds from 1710

<sup>3</sup> From: 'Parish of Darlington', The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham: volume 3: Stockton and Darlington wards (1823), pp. 350-377. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=76365> Date accessed: 21 August 2012.

<sup>4</sup> From: 'Parish of Darlington', The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham: volume 3: Stockton and Darlington wards (1823), pp. 350-377. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=76365> Date accessed: 21 August 2012.

From 1693 building works commenced on the new Blackwell Grange with works complete in 1710 for George Allan, a wealthy industrialist. The first phase of building at the Grange appears to have consisted of five bays and three storeys and can now be seen in the centre of the long east range (Pevsner 1990, 155). The building was relatively simple, possibly even austere with a fully symmetrical frontage consisting of windows all equally spaced and sizing conforming to classical proportions fashionable at the time and a central doorway. The building represents one of the villas which formed some of the earliest development outside the borough boundary; others (all later) included Polam Hall in 1780<sup>5</sup>, West Lodge at about the same time, Elmfield off Northgate in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and Greenbank, East Mount was built about 1832 above Freeman's Place and this was the only villa to be constructed at that time on the east side of the Skerne (Cookson 2003, 65).

The grange was extended in 1717-22 (Harris 1972) and it may have been to this period or the 1710 completion that the formal grounds were laid out with geometric features and tree avenues.

### *The Formal Early 18<sup>th</sup> century Park*

One day in January 1790 proved to be a memorable day for those associated with the Grange. The incumbent at that time was James Allan, renowned for being the 'crossest and sternest man who ever lived'. On this day, James Allan died and a tremendous storm swept over the grounds and the rest of Darlington, uprooting trees and shaking buildings to their foundations (Harris 1972). Perhaps because of the scene of devastation that was left behind, the new resident, another George Allan<sup>6</sup>, appears to have commissioned a survey of the grounds the following July by John Manhay or Manbray of Darlington (ZDG (A)). The 1790 layout appears to have been of some antiquity and captures the height of parkland fashions from the 1720s. It was clearly seen to be old fashioned by 1790 and so the storms provided an opportunity to update.

This early 18<sup>th</sup> century layout had consisted of formal tree lined avenues which cut across the grounds; one leading to the Grange from Grange Road (1) and this must have been the formal approach to the house; the 'fine avenue of aged branching limes' which formed 'the approach from the great road' in 1823.<sup>7</sup> The plan suggests that it may have terminated with an archway on Grange Road (6). All other avenues appeared to have evolved from field boundaries and trees grew along a small watercourse to the north (33) which was crossed by two small bridges. Around the Grange, formal kitchen gardens (56) and orchards were enclosed behind walls; one walled garden (56) had small buildings in two of its corners. These were presumably viewing places to sit and admire the garden and the view back to the house. To the west, a formal rectangular pond was located close to Mill Lane (2). The field pattern (and the continuing presence of ridge and furrow) suggests arable use; however an engraving dating to 1783 shows deer and horses in the foreground (plate 2). However

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<sup>5</sup> Polam was known as Polumpole in the 12<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>6</sup> The antiquarian and installer of a printing press in the house producing many prints and manuscripts of local interest

<sup>7</sup> From: 'Parish of Darlington', The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham: volume 3: Stockton and Darlington wards (1823), pp. 350-377. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=76365> Date accessed: 21 August 2012.

this is a later reworking of an earlier illustration and so may have been updated by the artist to reflect the contemporary trends in landscaping.

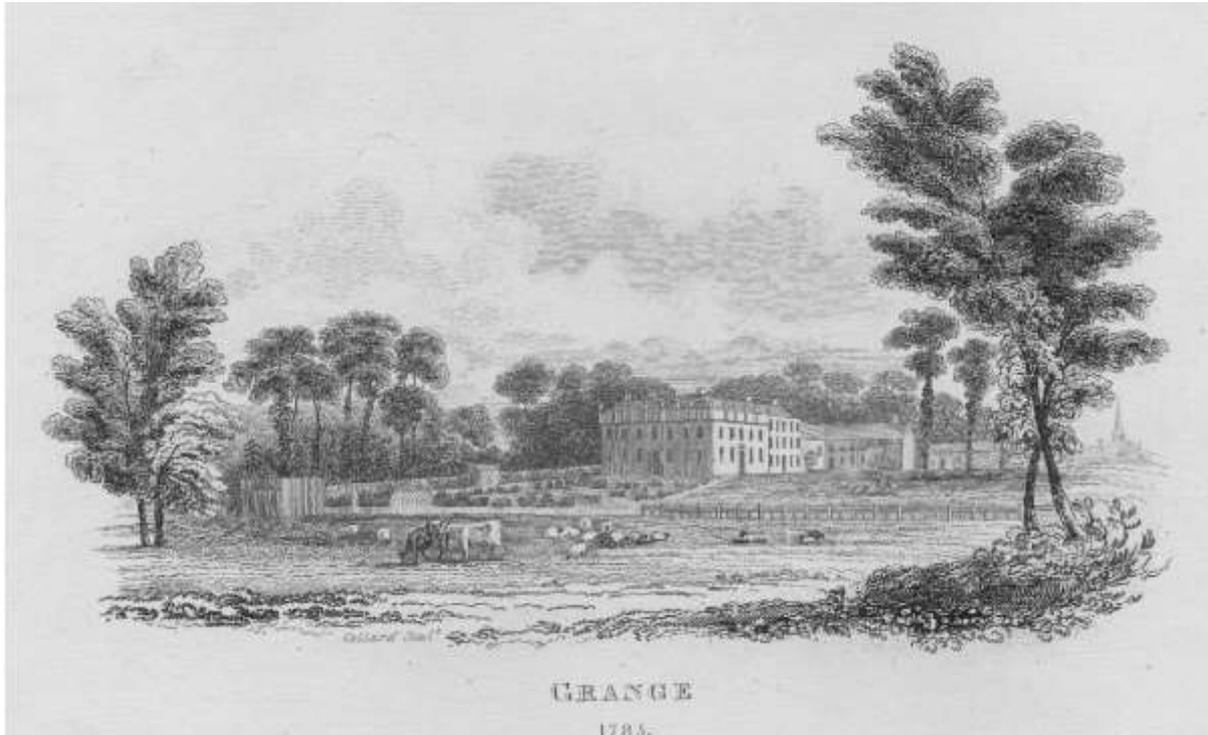


Plate 2. *The Grange in 1783; by which time it had been extended with new wings. The grounds retain formal enclosures and fences which had become old fashioned, but the occasional tree clump has put a more fashionable mid 18<sup>th</sup> century gloss on this pastoral scene. In the distance the tower of St Cuthbert's Church in Darlington can be seen. This is still possible from the park from high ground – the subsequent tree planting making it increasingly difficult to appreciate such views. (Collard, William, 1792-1847 probably engraved from an earlier painting or illustration and so possibly updated by the artist).*

There are few obvious designed views in this landscaping scheme with the exception of the formal approach along the lime avenue which must have framed the house and the viewing stations in the walled garden. The lime avenue must have also helped to frame views of the Glassen Sikes across Grange Road upon exiting the grounds. This may have been quite spectacular when the sky was reflected in the watery fields; although no contemporary accounts mention this (the name does imply an appreciation of the glass-like qualities of the pools however). The 1783 engraving shows St Cuthbert's Church on the horizon, providing a visual link to the town. This would have been possible at the time, and the prospects over Darlington continued to be appreciated in 1823 (ibid), but such views have become more difficult with the maturing and subsequent planting of trees.

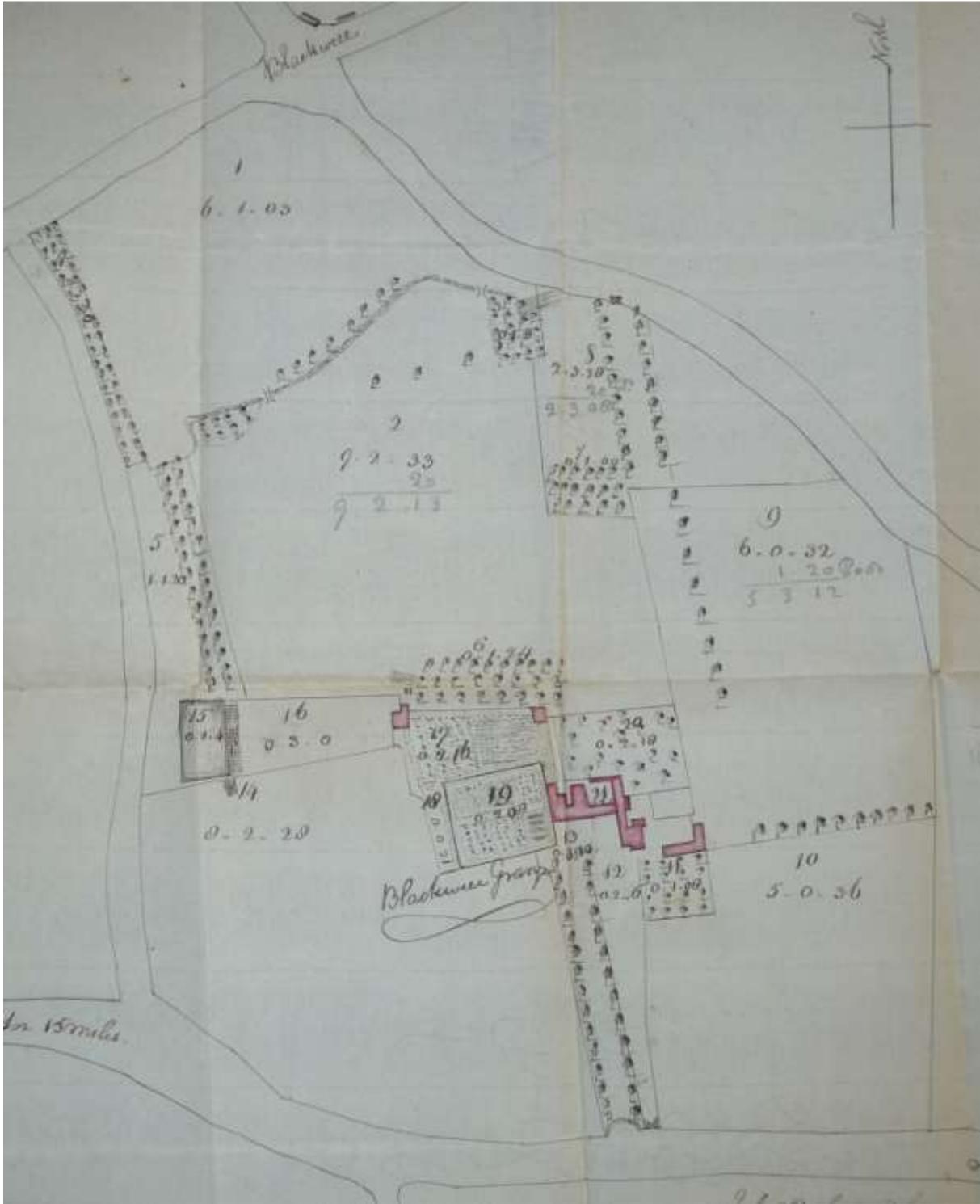


Figure 6. The layout of the grounds around Blackwell Grange in 1790. This survey was presumably commissioned in advance of a new landscape design prepared in 1802 and is in a geometric style popular in the 1720s. The rectangular fish pond is clearly marked and tree planting is rigidly geometric. The north arrow actually points west.

Elements of this early landscaping scheme still survive today. The avenue of trees which formed the approach remains (1) and the property boundaries of Grangeside follow the course of the small tree lined stream which is still located along the northern boundary wall as a wet ditch (33). The fishpond (2) with its stone edging still survives and many of the tree lined avenues were retained, but softened in the more fashionable naturalistic style in 1802

(11, 24, 49, 50, 51, 52). One field boundary (69) which runs north-south from the Grange to the fishpond also survives complete with hawthorn hedging. Just to the south of the fishpond there is also a feature, not on the 1790 plan which abuts the field boundary (70). This is a mound, possibly reworked as a tee by the golf club. The function of the mound is not understood, but has the appearance of a viewing station designed to look back towards the house while taking in a view of the fishpond (2). Throughout the parkland, extensive ridge and furrow survives including headlands, all testament to ploughing prior to the 1802 landscaping (68, 71, 78-9, 81-2, 86, 88).



Plate 3. Ridge and furrow which must pre-date the 1802 landscaping (left) and the fishpond (right). The pre 1790 field boundary is located just to the right of the fishpond

### Then and now...



Figure 7: The routes of the watercourse on the 1790 map has become fossilised by the garden boundaries of Grangeside (in red). The stream ditch remains between the tree clump to the north (in blue) and the highlighted stretch of stream, but is currently dry (summer 2012). A low brick wall forms the boundary with the pleasure walks that were to be laid out in 1802 along the roadside. The two areas of planting shown in blue can also be seen to have their origins in 1790.



Figure 8. The main avenue approach from 1790 (left) remains on site (right), although it became redundant as the approach after 1802



Figure 9. The 1790 plan of the fishpond and two field boundaries heading towards the building in the corner of the walled garden (left). The golf course today (right) with the fish pond still extant and the field boundary surviving as an earthwork topped with hawthorn. The route of Mill Lane can also be seen.

### The Landscaped Park from 1802

The mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century saw a national trend which swept away the formal parklands of old and replaced them with softer naturalistic designs with an emphasis on beautiful views. It is evident that the existing regime at Blackwell Grange was a mature one and perhaps because of that, the new scheme was to incorporate a number of the trees already planted. The long avenue to the house was to be retained, but it no longer functioned as an approach. This was presumably the 'aged' lime avenue referred to in 1823. Such direct approaches to the principal elevation were no longer fashionable and instead two longer indirect routes with only the merest glimpses to tempt the visitor was the order of the day. The new design had two entrances, or Coach Roads; one from the Grange Road (66) and one from Mill Lane (7, 35). The direct approach from Blackwell Lane (11) was retained with its avenue of trees which may have served primarily, servants and tradesmen from Blackwell village and Darlington. A 'Front Lodge' (37) was proposed (or at least shown) opposite the Mill Lane, but appears never to have been built.



Figure 10: Plan of the Alterations Intended at Grange ... 1802

Other formal tree avenues would be softened with addition planting to remove the regular lines and replace them with a flowing natural looking planting scheme. Clumps and isolated stands were added in the centre of the parkland to create a typical English parkland scene. The planting was designed to add interest, disguise the disagreeable, frame views and to

structure a series of pleasure walks. These walks were shown in the 1802 proposals as sinuous paths weaving like tentacles from the house; forming drives around the perimeter, and shorter circular walks around the house and more formal garden areas. The woodland was also of course a commercial commodity, with most estates carrying out regular felling and replanting for timber supplies.

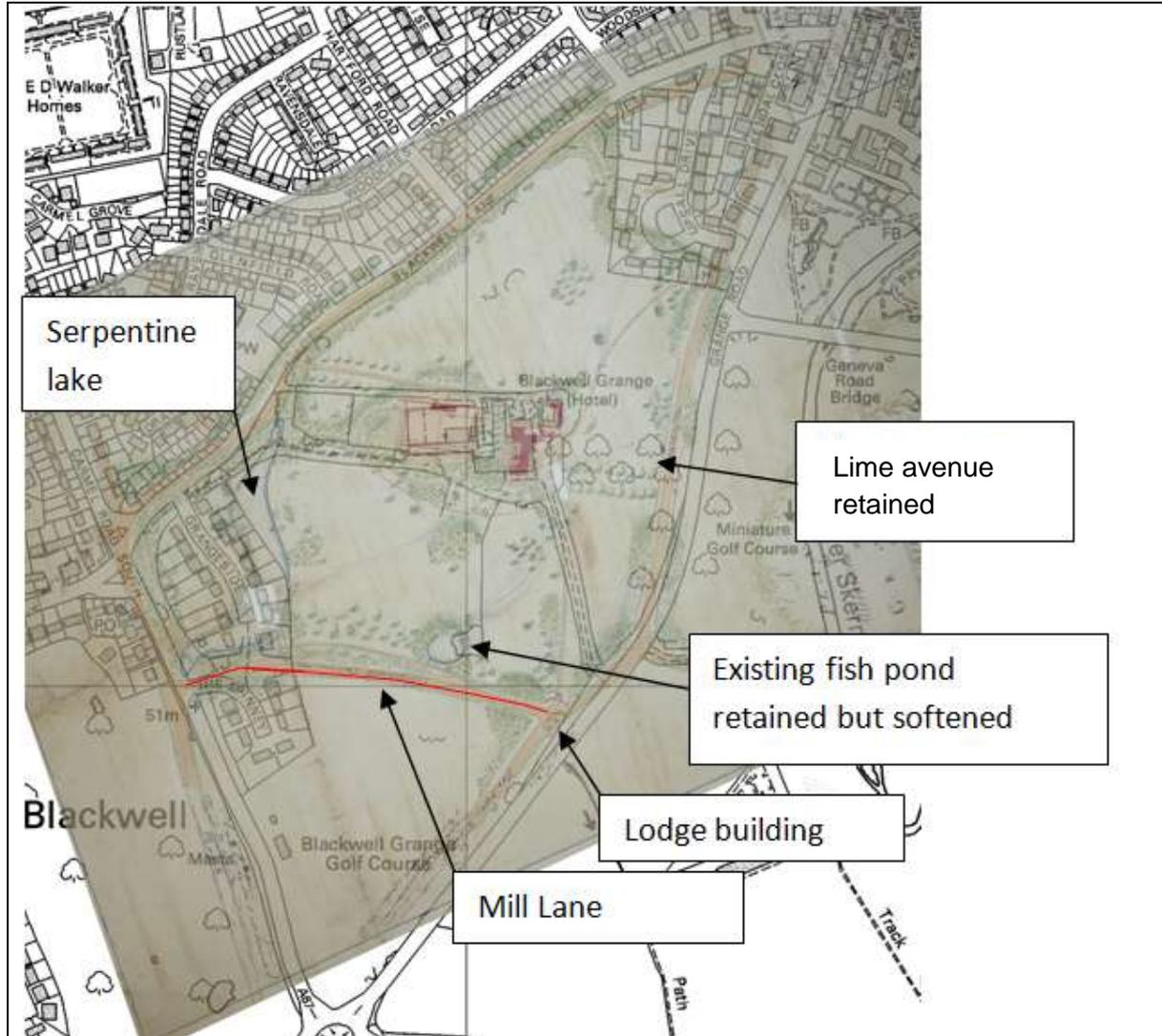


Figure 11. The 1802 proposals overlaid on to a modern map. This shows that land south of Mill Lane was not originally part of the designed parkland although planting took place along it to shield views out of the park and at its junctions

The small watercourse which ran across the west of the site was to be transformed into a large serpentine lake (38) and the small rectangular fish pond (1) near Mill Lane, was to be retained. The 1802 plan however created a more natural shape for the pond, but this softening of the edges was never implemented. The serpentine lake was never constructed, perhaps due to financial difficulties which led to the splitting up of the estate in 1811. Had it proceeded, the Pleasure Walks were designed to cross it at either end over two small bridges supported on three buttresses each. The political ambitions of George Allan were also to take their toll on the estate finances to such an extent that Allan declined to stand for election again in 1818 because of the costs of his previous election in 1813. Ultimately large parts of the Allan estate would be sold in 1833, leading in no small way to the rapid growth of Darlington outside the medieval town boundaries (Cookson 2003, 70).



Figure 12. The proposed serpentine lake, crossed at each end by bridges

No record has been found of what trees were planted, with the exception of the limes along the 18<sup>th</sup> century approach and a reference to 'splendid elms' in 1899 (Dresser, 15). Longstaffe in 1854 referred to 'laurel walks' as well as the 'noble avenue of ancient limes' (p xxx-xxx1). However, if the model being used was of the English parkland, then the trees most typically planted were native species such as oak, lime, beech and sweet chestnut and the surviving trees in the park today confirms the presence of predominantly lime, oak, beech and sycamore. The planting of specimen trees such as Giant Redwood and Cypress would not become fashionable until the 1850s. Typically, faster growing trees would predominate around the park circuit. This circuit weaved its way around the site perimeter to create pleasure walks and spilled over the edges on to the other side of the Darlington road, so the road appeared to cut through circular clumps. The pleasure walks have also survived in part along Blackwell Lane (18, 20, 21).

The formal enclosed gardens to the south and east of the Grange were swept away and replaced with lawns (15), but the orchard (53) was retained to the west (see the tithe map 1847-8). Closer to the house were more formal gardens with a hot house and gravel paths around its perimeter (39). Importantly, this 1802 design never included land to the south of Mill Lane which formed the boundary of the designed parkland, although the proposal did allow for plantations around the edge of the land to the south in order to continue the circuit and to convey a sense of the land being part of the parkland, even if it was on the other side of a road. Planting along Mill Lane would however limit views to the south.



Plate 4. One of the stone gateposts that marked the Grange access points off Blackwell Lane

The importance of an uninterrupted view of the green sward, scattered with trees, meant that most designed landscapes of the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century had a ha-ha. No 'ha-ha' is referred to on the 1802 proposals, but the term 'sunken fence' was used in various places, namely along part of Grange Road, a short stretch between the proposed serpentine lake and Blackwell Lane and various stretches south of the walled garden and pleasure walks below it (4, 10, 32, 60-1, 72, 75).

This survives along the boundaries of the park and south and east of the Grange as a low brick wall which had the ground levels piled up against it on the inside elevation so that the wall was invisible from the house. Where it ran along Grange Road, it rendered the road invisible, thus affording views down the old avenue, straight across to the Glassen Sikes and mill race (27) which were located there. Today, this 'sunken fence' is buried beneath brambles and amongst trees and the stretch south of the lawns is slumping southwards. It is clear that it post dates the lime avenue as the 'sunken fence' is used to block the avenue entrance used prior to 1790. Brick walling was also used to define the northern boundary, although this was not shown on the 1802 plan. The entrance gates were substantial stone pillars with rounded copes and these can still be seen amongst the overgrown vegetation. It is not clear what the perimeter boundary was along Mill Lane as this was removed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, if one ever existed.



Plate 5. Part of the ha-ha south of the house, now leaning southwards and in need of maintenance

Not shown on the map, but also built in 1802 was a folly or eye catcher located on the river bank 1.8km to the west. Given the local topography and allowing for the fact that there were no houses in the intervening space, it is not likely that this was ever designed to be seen from the Grange. It may have been part of a ride out from the Grange, possibly with views back towards the parkland, but not the house. Alternatively, it may have related to Blackwell Hall which would have had greater intervisibility.



Plate 6. An eye catcher built in 1802, but it is unlikely that it could ever be seen from the Grange

The proposed parkland of 1802 therefore had a number of ‘must have’ features which were at the height of fashion, in the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century. However such parkland schemes were still being developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and so it was not so surprising that George Allan attempted to catch up with the naturalistic fashions. It is interesting to compare these to what the typical mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century landscaped parkland would have contained:

Table 1. Principal features of 18<sup>th</sup> century parkland (from English Heritage 2007, 3)

<i>Informal clumps of trees, single trees and woodland</i>	Y
<i>Perimeter belts and rides</i>	Y
<i>Irregular, natural-looking water bodies</i>	Y (not transformed into lake however)
<i>Entrance drives and carefully contrived drives and rides</i>	Y
<i>Informal but composed views from the main approach, from ridings around the park and from the house’s principal rooms and entrance.</i>	Y
<i>Designed views to eye catchers such as a purpose-built structure or folly within the park, a clump of trees planted on a distant hill top or a neighbouring building</i>	N
<i>Ridings often extended outside the park into the surrounding estate to include views of farmland and more distant beauty spots</i>	? (folly could relate to this)
<i>Ideally the house appeared to rise directly from the landscape park, but more often than not shrubbery walks or other discreet garden areas continued to be valued in the near neighbourhood of the house with kitchen gardens hidden out of sight</i>	Y
<i>Tree planting in parkland largely used a restricted palette of predominantly native trees, such as oak, lime, beech and sweet chestnut, with only occasional use of exotics such as Cedar of Lebanon – specialist plantations of American and other exotic trees became increasingly popular towards the end of the 18th century</i>	Y
<i>Plantations grown for timber, with oak extremely popular for its economic and symbolic value</i>	?
<i>Perimeter planting mixed fast-growing species such as Scots pine with the slower growing hardwoods</i>	Original tree mix not known, but surviving trees suggest yes
<i>Sporting use of the park dictated the need for game-cover, with laurel, box, and broom frequently planted as an under storey in woodland.</i>	Not known, but laurel was used on paths

Greenwood’s map of 1820 shows the Grange parkland with a number of elements of the 1802 scheme having been implemented including the circuit of trees and pleasure drives. It is not detailed enough to see all the features and there is no sign of the serpentine lake. It is also clear that the northern tip was still not part of the park. The next most detailed map of Blackwell Grange is the tithe map of 1847-8 (fig 13) which at the time, according to the apportionment, was occupied and owned by William Allan, not George Allan. This depicts the established gardens around the house, the plantations and the various fields which at

that time were down to grass; none of the park was used for arable and so the surviving ridge and furrow today clearly pre-dates 1802.

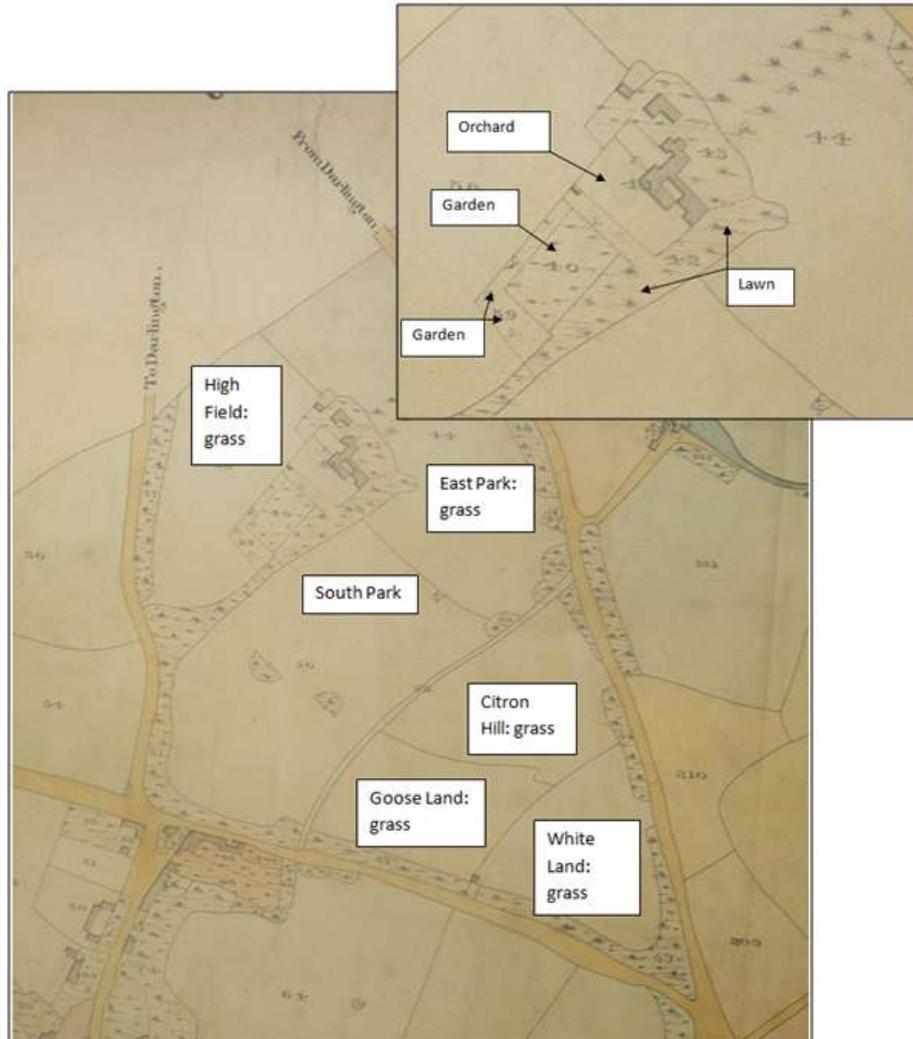


Figure 13: The tithe map of 1847-8 annotated with field names and land use where known. All land beyond the house was used for grazing

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map published in the 1860s (fig 14) started to flesh out the parkland as it reached maturity. Here the tree clumps positioned at the main entrance were shown and the intention to manage and frame views towards the house is evident. The fishpond had retained its pre-1790s regular shape and another parkland feature could be seen in the form of a bath (3). It is not clear what purpose this had; bath houses were common enough features in parklands, but a bath on its own suggests something more modest. This date of map also confirmed that the serpentine lake was never constructed. The park rails still extant within the parkland are not shown on any plans or historic photographs, but were normally added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in similar parks (97-101).

To the south, the layout of the grounds around Blackwell Hall could be seen to be designed in as much as a circuit was planted around its north, west and south

*'The old front gardens lay to the south of the hall but the present ones are 1802 under the superintendence of the celebrated George Allan, who did so much to increase the fame and to diminish the revenue of the family.'*  
Bonsfield 1881

perimeter; as Blackwell Grange already had a circuit of trees on its adjacent west perimeter, presumably no such circuit was deemed necessary on the opposite side of the road on Blackwell Hall land. The presence of the circuit all the way round Blackwell Grange's park, suggests that views between the two houses, belonging to the same family, were not important. However Blackwell Hall at this stage, retained field boundaries which split up the landscape, rather than creating the fashionable green sward of uninterrupted views. However it did have one circular tree clump to the south which presumably created a focal point for views from the hall.



*Plate 7: View of Blackwell Grange with sheep in the foreground from W.H.D. Longstaffe's *The history and antiquities of the parish of Darlington* published in 1854 (facing page xxxi). Informal tree clumps frame the view of the house and the carriage drive winds its way towards the entrance on the left. This is much as the surveyors must have found it when producing the tithe map of 1847-8.*



Figure 14: 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map 6 inch scale dating to the 1860s

The second edition OS map marked on significant change to the parkland; namely the loss of Mill Lane. This had served the villagers in providing a direct route towards the mill to the east, but by this time, such small scale mills had gone out of use in favour of larger more commercial mills. By removing this lane, the land to the south could become part of the formal parkland. There are hints that this was already underway; the tithe map of 1847 still showed Mill Lane, but the land to the south of it was already under pasture, so that visually, it created a continuation of the pasture land as seen from the Grange, even if field boundaries here served to create some visual division.

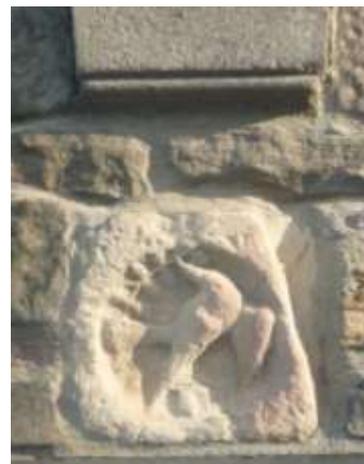


Plate 8. A late 19<sup>th</sup> century stone building on the land absorbed into the parkland after the 1860s and before 1890. The inset shows a small much older carving above the arched entrance; the keystone also appears to have been reused from a much finer building and appears to depict a dove carrying an olive branch.

Perhaps as part of this absorption of the land to the south of Mill Lane, two stone buildings were constructed along the edge of what is now Carmel Road South (31). The larger

building was a U-shaped building forming a courtyard. Part of this range still survives and it can be seen that the north entrance was arched for coaches or horses and above the arch, below the keystone, is a small carving in relief. It appears to have been part of a larger carving and is set on its side; it is tempting to think of it as something from the late George Allan's antiquarian collection and is a reminder that a stone carved with foliage graced the entrance to Blackwell Grange in 1835 (Longstaffe, xxxi). The carving may be a dove carrying an olive branch – a symbol of peace or to drive away evil spirits in classical times, suggesting that the carving is of some antiquity. Square window openings run along its length, plus one on the south end and domestic scale doorways are located on its south and east sides. It is a substantial building, which apart from the domestic sized windows, is agricultural in character and is clearly fitted out to house stock internally.

The addition of this new land required the adoption of a boundary feature of some sort, and from the beginning the simple wooden rail fence appears to have been adopted along Carmel Road South. This has given the area a rural rustic character which enhances that already supplied by the rich tree canopy.



*Plate 9. Blands Corner Lane End in c.1900. The new extended southern boundary of the park was defined by rustic wooden fencing mirrored on the Blackwell Hall side of the road. This remains the predominant fencing type on Carmel Road South, although the presence of advertising banners today does little to enhance to historic character of the area*

However the setting of the park was beginning to change towards the north and Darlington. The northern tip of the park had never been developed; indeed it appears to have been specifically excluded by the planting of the circuit. In the 1860s this was the site of South Villa which was surrounded by orchards and nurseries. By the 1890s more buildings were being located within the grounds of South Villa.

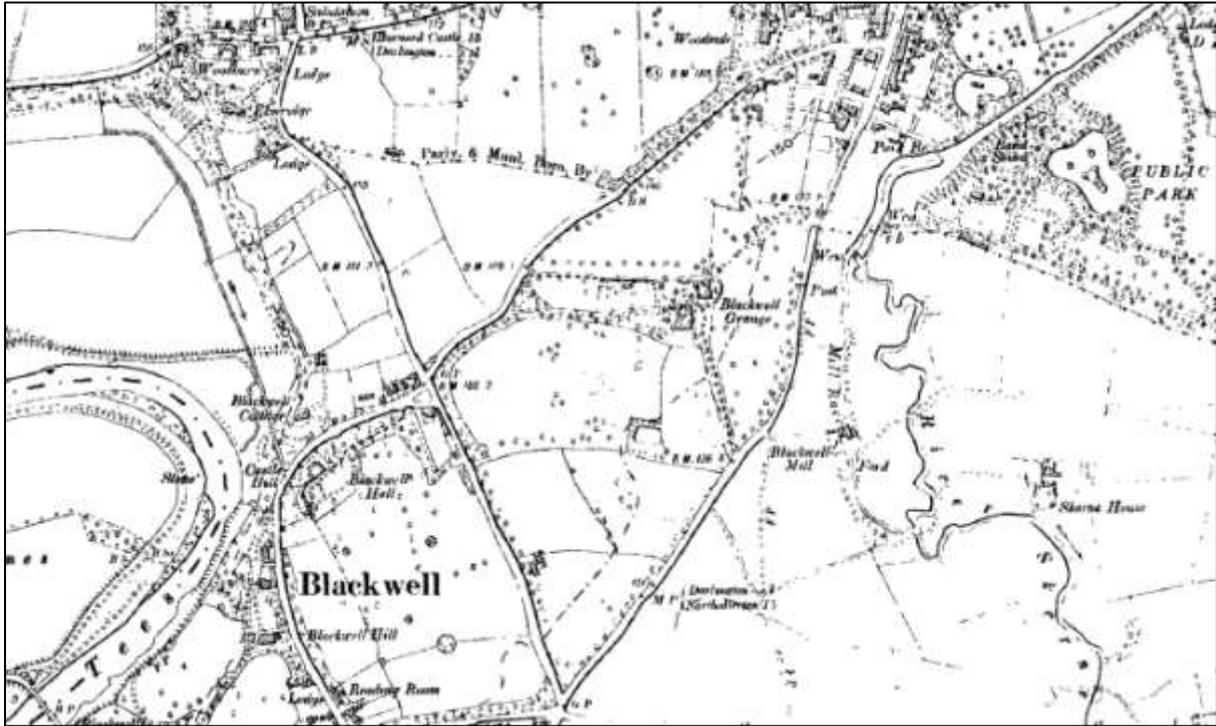


Figure 15: 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map 6 inch scale dating to the 1890s. Mill Lane is reduced to a field boundary.

### *The Park in the 20<sup>th</sup> century*

In 1913, Wooler was still able to describe Blackwell Grange as a ‘well wooded park’ with ‘a fine old house with ivy covered walls’ (p245). However the 20<sup>th</sup> century started a series of encroachments on to the parkland, but all development slowed down during both wars. Blackwell Grange Golf Club was formed in 1931, but was located initially in the grounds of Blackwell Hall, not the Grange. In 1939 an air raid shelter was added to the Grange in the ha-ha / sunken fence ditch south of the Grange (Da/NG2/8270) for Sir Henry Havelock Allan and remains to this day. By 1945, the land to the south of the Grange had reverted to arable and field boundaries were reintroduced, removing the important green sward of the parkland scene. A number of the tree clumps had begun to lose their shape and additional planting obscured the lime avenue. The Grange was purchased by Darlington Corporation in the 1950s after the death of Sir Henry Spencer Moreton Havelock-Allan in 1954. The golf club was to extend to the Grange in 1971 and earthwork operations to form tees would add to the features in the landscape. Additional planting would in some cases obscure the original design, as in the lime avenue and the creation of planting to form drives, and in some cases, create the beginnings of a new woodland perimeter. The walled garden lost its hot houses, but gained a gym and became a car park. The grounds also lost orchards which were to become waste ground only rich in the fruit of the bramble.

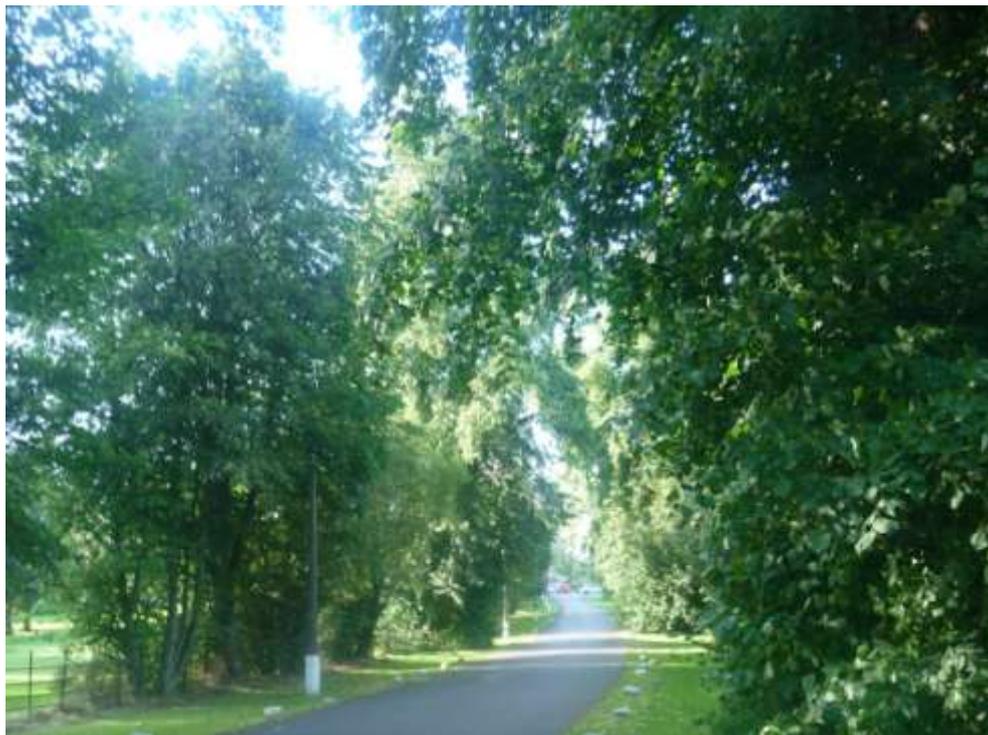


Figure 16. The third edition OS map dating to 1915 showing the growth of suburbia in the surrounding area. The park still retains its integrity with extant tree clumps, pleasure walks, the fishpond and lime avenue.

Then and now....



*Plate 10: The approach to Blackwell Grange in 1937*



*Plate 11. In 2012, the approach has much more planting and self seeded trees which hide the Grange from view until very late on the drive*



*Plate 12: By 1945 (Google Earth) the parkland had reverted to arable south of the Grange. The three circles mark trees which may be left over from tree clumps set out in 1802, many of which were derived from more formal planting prior to 1790. Most of the tree planting along drives and the park perimeter were also set out before 1790 or in 1802. The field boundary along these tree groups to the south of the Grange is the route of Mill Lane. The tennis court can also be seen immediately south of the ha-ha.*

Beyond the park boundary, the land on the north side of Blackwell Lane was developed with housing in the 1920s and 30s. This radically altered the setting of the parkland from a quiet rural lane to middle class suburbia. However the rich tree cover was retained and this was to form the essential character of the new suburb. The Pleasure Walks were retained and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century developments at The Spinney and Grangeside were set back to respect them. Carmel Road South retained its avenue of mature trees and although the Glassen Sikes had gone, the land to the east of the park was still rural in character. While the new housing respected the tree cover, it did little to reinforce local distinctiveness with standard housing stock that failed to enhance or respect the historic character of the Grange or the village.

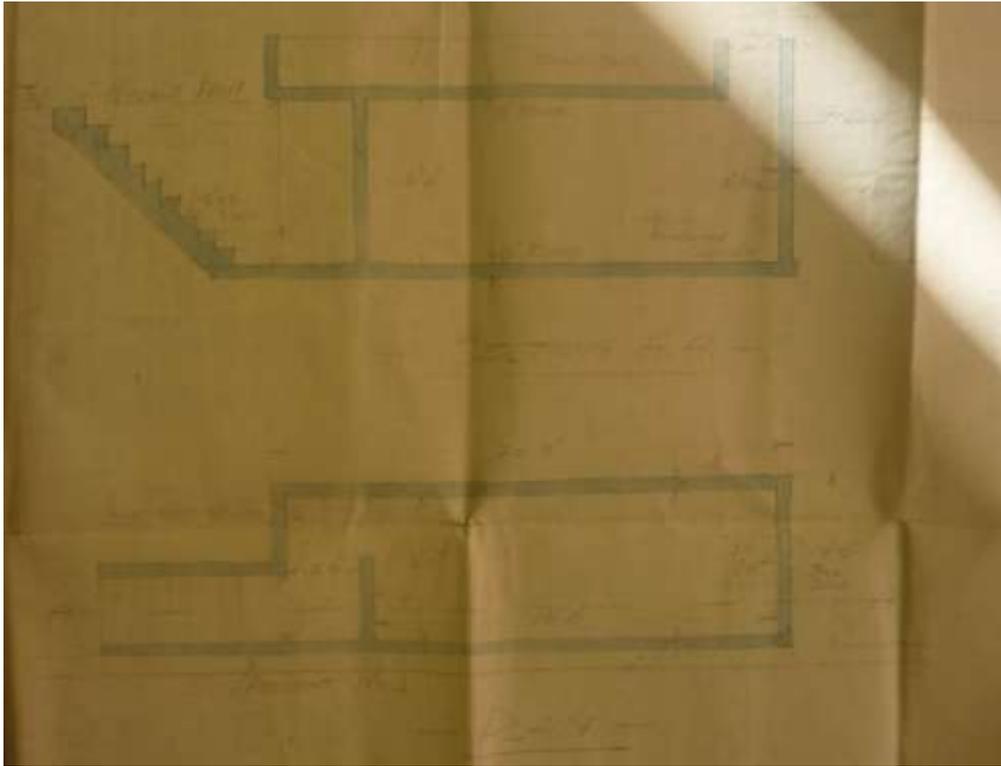


*Plate 13. The walled garden lost its hot houses which were located against the white wall and became a car park with a later gym constructed inside. The hotel gained an unattractive extension which succeeded in creating a simple, symmetric style that remained subordinate to the main building, but failed to be attractive in any way*

To meet the needs of a growing population, roads were widened along Grange Road, an approach to the entrance widened along the main road to create a sliproad and in the process some of the parkland wall removed. The northern drive which exited the Grange just south of what is now Upsall Drive was closed off – the differential brickwork can still be seen opposite the road to South Park. The junction of Carmel Road South and Grange Road at Blands Corner evolved from a rural 1930s garage into a busy roundabout where distracted drivers could no longer afford the time to appreciate the parkland.



*Plate 14. The entrance to the ice house (left) faced north. The ice house has collapsed into its void leaving a dip in the ground. The top of the air raid shelter in the overgrown ha-ha ditch (right).*



*Plate 15. Plan and section of the air raid shelter built in the ha-ha ditch in 1939 (Da/NG2/8270)*

### *The 21<sup>st</sup> century parkland*

Today, the parkland continues to make a positive contribution to the character of the Blackwell area with a tree lined perimeter that gives the area a green and leafy feel. The wooden fence lines of Carmel Road South counter the busy traffic with a rural character and the red brick boundaries provide a well defined terminus to the parkland. The stone gateposts are becoming overwhelmed by unmanaged vegetation and are disappearing from view. The Pleasure Walks still provide a community benefit and offer a retreat from the traffic, but the lack of vegetation control has prevented views from the hotel to the south and east and has removed some of the carefully controlled views of the hotel from the carriage drives.

Despite the use of the site as a golf course, it is remarkable that so many features survive from before 1790 and from 1802. New planting may have muddied the design, but the old planting remains and so many of the changes are reversible. The presence of ridge and furrow, pre 1790 field boundaries, the original 1790s fish pond, the original early 18<sup>th</sup> century tree lined avenues and the watercourse that was nearly a serpentine lake, but instead retired to become a boundary at the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, are remarkable not just because they survive today, but because they survived the trend towards naturalistic landscaping which was famous at the time for sweeping everything away that went before.

The presence of many 1802 features allows that landscape to be reconstructed and read by those in the know. It outlines in visual form the fashion for the naturalistic landscaping, the long uninterrupted views of the green sward, the growing appreciation of landscape and views which would ultimately result in protected landscapes, the 'staycation' of the late 18<sup>th</sup>

and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and the conservation movement. It is a landscape that is currently undervalued and under-appreciated because none of the users realise the age and philosophy that underlies and influences the shape and form of the golf course. However the recent uncovering of the garden steps of 1802 from dense vegetation by golf club grounds men, has started the process of awakening an interest, while the names of four golf holes relate to historic features such as the Ice House, Tennis Court, The Limes and of course Havelock Allan.



Plate 16. One of the pleasure walks along Blackwell Lane (left) and recently uncovered garden steps, now in need of conservation.

### Key views and setting

*'Blackwell Grange with its noble avenue of ancient limes filled with rooks, its laurelled walks, and choice accompaniments of every kind, is indeed a lovely retreat; close to the town of Darlington, and yet with scarce a wall; so bounded by pleasant plantations and verdant grass, that it loses not a charm of rural beauty. A delightful vista terminated by the tower of St John on the one hand, and a magnificent champaigne view ending in the Yorkshire hills on the other, constitute it the very spot for the man of refined and educated ideas. At the entrance of this elegant and spacious mansion lies a fragment of a coped tombstone, said to have come from Hartlepool, sculptured with foliage.'*

Longstaffe 1854, xxx-xxxi

The landscape as designed in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently in 1802 had a number of designed or fortuitous views either within the park or beyond. These appear to have been the following:

- ❖ Inward looking views from viewing stations within the early 18<sup>th</sup> century walled gardens and possibly outward views down the park to the fishpond. These viewing stations were destroyed by the 1802 remodelling.

- ❖ Managed views of the approaches (and exit). The lime avenue would have framed views both to and from the house. The lime avenue continued to frame views seamlessly across Grange Road with the help of the sunken fence and these views would have been of the wetlands known as Glassen Sikes.<sup>8</sup> Glassen Sikes has now gone, but the land is still green, however views are no longer possible due to a lack of vegetation control along the perimeter. The present approach to the hotel is now too overgrown to create the sense of drama that such an approach should have.
- ❖ The creation of a woodland circuit to keep the land south of Mill Lane in the view and appear to be part of the parkland, even when the Lane was still active
- ❖ The creation of woodland clumps at main entry points ensured that the approach to the house was via tantalising glimpses, rather than a more formal avenue which they replaced. The effect is now lost due to over planting and self seeded trees.
- ❖ The principle elevation of the house was to the east across the ha-ha where the lime avenue approach was. The presence of a ha-ha on the south side of the Grange suggests that views from the house across the green sward to Mill Lane were important. However these views would have terminated at Mill Lane where tree planting existed from before 1790. Additional tree planting south of the fish pond was proposed in 1802 which would have closed off the last remaining view beyond Mill Lane. The first edition OS map suggests that views over the fish pond to the south were still possible as no tree planting had taken place to stop the gap, but a clump just to the south only permitted views to the clump and no further. By 1890 and the publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map, some tree planting had also taken place south of the fish pond and so views south of Mill Lane would not be possible.
- ❖ The layout of the walled garden suggests that the gravel paths were designed for views along each axis
- ❖ Historic accounts of the Grange tend to refer to the house's fine prospects and views of The Cleveland Hills (also referred to as the Yorkshire hills by Longstaff in 1854). For example, Kelly's Directory of Durham dating to 1914 refers the importance of the views of the Cleveland Hills, but also that the house was surrounded by rising and well wooded ground. Such views are still possible from high ground above and north of the hotel.
- ❖ The spire of St Cuthbert's is shown on an engraving of Blackwell Grange of 1783 and this is still possible from part of the park. The spire is not on any axis or designed view, but its presence may have had some artistic value to previous residents. Today, the tower of Bank Top Station can also be seen.
- ❖ Longstaffe (1854, xxxi) also refers to a vista terminated by the tower of St. John's. This can still be obtained today from some high places within the park, but the church was not built when the parkland was laid out and so is a fortuitous view.

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<sup>8</sup> The Glassen Sikes was an area of water logging which created pools of water. This was also the area of the mill race and mill. The land appears to have been drained in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century



*Plate 17. View of St Cuthbert's spire from the park*



*Plate 18. The flat topped tower of St. John's can just be seen over the tree canopy*

Views which were not important include the following:

- ❖ Views to Blackwell Hall. The laying out of a tree circuit between the Grange and the Hall suggests that such views were not important.
- ❖ Views to the folly do not appear to have been possible even down the avenues and are quite impossible now due to intervening development. The folly was located on the low lying river terrace which had trees along the river banks and so was excluded from any long distance views.
- ❖ With the exception of views along access points and wider fortuitous views of distant hills or landmark features, views out of the parkland appear not to have been important as the tree circuit would prevent most views once the trees were established.

Designed views to or from the park, which contribute towards the significance of the park and the Grange, are therefore those along the entrance drives and from the lime avenue towards Skerne Park, formerly Glassen Sikes.

Views within the parkland which are of significance include those from the principal rooms of the Grange which face south towards where Mill Lane used to be and east towards the entrance. Views to the west do not appear to have been important as tree cover was planted west of the Grange which would prevent views.

This would appear to be confirmed by artistic representations of the Grange which focus on the south and east elevations as the important views of the building, even before the parkland remodelling of 1802 (see fig 2 of Grange 1783 and figs 7 and pl. 10).

In terms of protecting setting, any future management of the parkland should seek to respect views of the Grange from the south and east approaches and between the Grange and the fishpond. Views from the Grange to the south as far as the line of Mill Lane and east to Skerne Park should also be protected. There are currently no views from the Grange to any part of the park due to modern development to extend the hotel, or lack of vegetation control.

#### *Other setting issues*

The landscape around Blackwell Grange parkland has altered considerably since the Grange was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1860, the village was described as:

'Blackwell is a neat little village...pleasantly situated on the banks of the Tees, and surrounded by rich meadows, green pastures, and thriving trees'. (Fordyce 1860, vol I, 492)

In 1841 the village had only 65 inhabited houses and even less in 1851. The growth of the suburbs of Darlington have consumed the 'neat little village' and left the home farm of Blackwell Grange, 'stranded in suburbia'.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, although there are one or two buildings in the wider area which have an historic association with Blackwell Grange, such as the listed farmhouse, formerly the Punch Bowl Inn, or have a temporal link with it, such as some of the fine high Victorian houses, or a family link such as the folly, all have become visually divorced from the Grange and its park and no future development is likely to alter that relationship.

*'The village occupies a fine swell of ground rising over the river, and commanding the deep meadows and green levels of the Tees, which form an amphitheatre of three or four miles, hemmed in by rising wooded grounds.'*<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, the wider area still lies close to green pastures and meadows, and trees (and open green spaces) are still an important aspect of the character of this part of Darlington. Therefore, not only are these spaces important as a setting to the West End Conservation Area and the registered parkland of South Park, they, and the views to the Cleveland Hills are also significant to the setting of Blackwell Grange and its park.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted from the listing text of an 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse on the north side of Blackwell

<sup>10</sup> 'Parish of Darlington', *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham: volume 3: Stockton and Darlington wards* (1823), pp. 350-377. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=76365> Date accessed: 23 July 2012

## Blackwell Grange Park in context

The character of the park as laid out in 1802 derived from mid 18<sup>th</sup> century fashions, although it is clearly much later. What was particularly important to the 18<sup>th</sup> century designer and ‘persons of genius and taste’ was the management of views and the roles that each tree clump, ornate farm building or stable had to play in controlling framed views of the landscape, gardens or house. The mid 18<sup>th</sup> century was a time of radical change in gardening. The rigid formality of earlier centuries gave way to a more ‘natural’ look inspired by landscape paintings of artists such as Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa, discovered by the aristocracy while on tour in Europe. The leaders in promoting this approach in Britain were the architects Sir John Vanburgh and William Kent, together with the designer Charles Bridgeman who developed the renowned gardens at Stowe in Buckinghamshire (now in National Trust ownership). Capability Brown served some of his early years there and helped to introduce a more informal style to Bridgeman’s designs, eventually spreading his informal naturalistic styles in parks and gardens throughout the country. This was the inspiration for the layout proposed at Blackwell Grange in 1802 and although it appears to be a very late date, it often took many decades for a parkland to be fully laid out, possibly starting in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the last lodges and tree clumps planted not until the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In order to place Blackwell Grange in national context, it is worth comparing it to the criteria for designation prepared by English Heritage (2010, 3) as follows:

- *Sites formed before 1750 where at least a proportion of the original layout is still in evidence.* If Blackwell Grange was complete in 1710 and the grounds were being redesigned in 1790, then it implies that the original layout predates 1750. Indeed the layout as depicted in 1790 was already old fashioned by 1750. A number of features have survived from this period largely because they were adapted in the new scheme. This was unusual. One of the main criticisms of Capability Brown and his followers was that they destroyed established beauty and undertook wholesale tree felling (Clifford 1983, 43-4) and as a result, few English ‘naturalistic’ parklands have tangible remains of what went before. Surviving features from 1710-1790 include field boundaries, ridge and furrow, the fish pond, the lime avenue approach and the earlier tree lined avenues which were only softened by the later scheme. Blackwell Grange therefore meets this criterion for designation.
- *Sites laid out between 1750 and 1840 where enough of the layout survives to reflect the original design.* The second phase of development dates to 1802 and largely survives. The main structural elements of woodland circuits and pleasure walks, carriage drives, ha-ha, sunken fences, tree stands and clumps, garden walls and steps and archaeological evidence of hothouses, the ice house all survive. Blackwell Grange therefore meets this criterion for designation.

Further considerations which may influence selection, and may exceptionally be sufficient by themselves to merit designation, are:

- *Sites which were influential in the development of taste, whether through reputation or reference in literature.* Blackwell Grange does not appear to have been influential

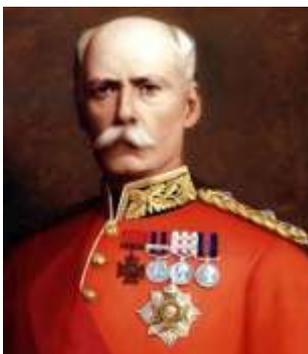
and despite it being the location of George Allan's printing press, does not feature itself in renowned publications.

- *Sites which are early or representative examples of a style of layout or a type of site, or the work of a designer (amateur or professional) of national importance.* At Blackwell Grange, the surveyor who produced the plan of the grounds and gardens was John Manby (?). The designer of the proposed plans of 1802 is un-named. There is no evidence that its layout is the product of a nationally important designer. Neither is the park especially representative of any particular style. It was rather late for the naturalistic styles of the 1860s and unusual in its enhancement and adaptation of the original layout.
- *Sites having an association with significant persons or historic events.* The park is associated with a number of significant people:

### George Allan (antiquary and publisher)



George Allan, the son of James Allan of Blackwell Grange, Darlington, was born on 7 June 1736. He was an eminent lawyer in Darlington, and was also very active as an antiquarian, being particularly interested in Co Durham's history. He acquired the collections of Gyll, Hunter, Mann, Hodgson and Swainston, in addition to the important natural history museum of Marmaduke Tunstall of Wycliffe which went on to inspire the engravings of Thomas Bewick. He was also bequeathed Thomas Randall's manuscripts in 1775. Added to the extensive library he built up himself, this made a valuable resource for antiquarians to use and Hutchinson's *History of Durham* (1785-1794) in particular owed much to his patronage and assistance. In 1768 he set up a private press at Blackwell Grange and published a number of documents, such as Cromwell's letter about setting up a University at Durham, along with collections about Durham's history, such as *Collectanea ad statum civilem et ecclesiasticum comitatus Dunelmensis spectantia*, and more general topographical works such as Thomas Falkner's *Of the Patagonians* (1788). He pursued research into his antiquarian interests including the hospitals of Gateshead, Sherburn and Greatham, the bishops of Durham and the Free Grammar School of Darlington. He retired from the law in 1790 and died of a stroke on 18 May 1800. However, this association is of regional significance rather than national significance and is not sufficient on its own to merit designating the park.



**Lieutenant General Sir Henry Marshman Havelock-Allan, 1st Baronet**, VC, GCB, DL (6 August 1830 – 30 December 1897) was an Indian-born British soldier and politician who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his brave deeds in India at the ripe old age of twenty six. He inherited Blackwell Grange, the former property of his cousin Robert Allan, changed his surname to Havelock-Allan (as was required by the will of the latter) and became an MP for South East Durham from 1885 to 1892. He was re-elected in 1895 and also became colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment, stationed in India, that year. It was there that he was killed by Afridi clansmen on

the Afghanistan side of the Khyber Pass in 1897 and he was later buried in Rawalpindi. He had a reputation as a national war hero during his lifetime, but most of his fame arose not from his association with Blackwell Grange, but with his adventures abroad. In isolation, his association with Blackwell Grange is not sufficient to merit designation.



**Sir Anthony James Allan Havelock-Allan, 4th Baronet** (28 February 1904 - 11 January 2003) was born at Blackwell Grange and became a prolific and successful British film producer and screenwriter whose credits included *This Happy Breed*, *Blithe Spirit*, the 1968 version of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Ryan's Daughter*. After working with her on *This Man in Paris*, Havelock-Allan married actress Valerie Hobson on 12 April 1939. They divorced in 1952. In 1943 he founded his own company, Cineguild and following *In Which We Serve*, on which he was Associate Producer, in 1945 he, Noël Coward and Ronald Neame produced David Lean's *Brief Encounter*. Havelock-Allan also worked with Neame on Lean's *Great Expectations* in 1946 and was nominated for both films for the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. He also founded Constellation Films in 1947 and co-founded British Home Entertainment with Lord Brabourne in 1960. Many of his films are still nationally renowned although he did not appear to live at Blackwell during his prolific career and therefore his association with the Grange is relatively limited.

- *Sites with a strong group value with other heritage assets.* Blackwell Grange is adjacent to the registered park at South Park and between them they document the fashion for landscaping from the formal layouts of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (at Blackwell Grange), the subsequent fashions for the English Parkland (at Blackwell Grange) and then the Victorian 'gardenesque' and the drive for healthy places to be provided by and for the local community (South Park).

On the basis of English Heritage's criteria for designation, Blackwell Grange appears to meet them because of its good survival of features which pre-date 1750 and also date to 1802. The presence of golfing features which have been created either through additional planting (drives) or through earthmoving (tees and greens) have detracted from the park, but the planting is reversible and the earthworks do not remove the readability and understanding of the landscape.

The following statement of significance explores what is significant about the park in more detail and will help to identify which areas are more or less sensitive to change. It is however clear that not all of the park meets the designation criteria. Land to the south of what was Mill Lane did not have a designed park or garden layout prior to 1750, nor was it the subject of the 1802 remodelling and it therefore is not of designatable quality.



Figure 17. Area of parkland which meets English Heritage criteria for designation as a registered parkland. Land to the south of Mill Lane was not part of the formal park and so has been excluded.

## Statement of Significance

The broad divisions of national, regional or locally important convey an indication of overall importance, but such broad divisions need to be refined in order to provide a basis for decisions about intervention and management, not only articulating the key values, but relating them to specific elements of the site. Each historic asset has a unique cultural significance derived from a wide range of varying interests and perspectives encompassing not just the physical fabric of the site but also its setting, use, history, traditions, local distinctiveness and community value (Kerr 2000, 4). Successful management or development of a site is based on protecting these various elements, foreseeing any potential conflicts of interest within them, and minimising any potential threats arising in the future.

The following section looks at just what it is that contributes to the unique site significance of the parkland based on information outlined above. This is to help assess any impact on its significance and its setting as outlined in the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

This assessment of significance includes an assessment of the nature, extent and level of significance of the heritage asset and how this helps to understand its importance. The *nature of the heritage asset's significance* is divided into archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest (HEPPG 2010, para 12).

Consideration is also given to the *extent of that significance* (HEPPG 2010 para 55). Not all aspects of a heritage asset are equally significant. For example, a later extension or development may detract from the architectural or historic interest of an asset, and it is important to know this when making decisions about its future management. This statement of significance helps to distinguish between what should be cherished and what should be changed and can help to inform future management. Where a feature has been destroyed

and has no significance at all, based on current evidence, then the extent of significance will be 'destroyed'

The *level of significance* is also important and this is based on to what extent a particular element contributes to the asset's heritage significance. For example a 19<sup>th</sup> century staircase might make a considerable architectural contribution to the character and significance of a particular Victorian building, but a mid 20th century extension might make a limited or no contribution to significance. Within this report the following terms are used to define significance and are designed to aid informed conservation and the need to balance heritage significance with the wider public benefit of the proposal which is the spirit of the National Planning Policy Framework:

**Considerable:** *aspects of the site considered as seminal to the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance of the site, the alteration or development of which would destroy or significantly compromise the integrity of the site.*

**Some:** *aspects that help to define the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance of the site, without which the character and understanding of place would be diminished but not destroyed.*

**Limited:** *aspects which may contribute to, or complement, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance of the site but are not intrinsic to it or may only have a minor connection to it, and the removal or alteration of which may have a degree of impact on the understanding and interpretation of the place.*

**Unknown:** *aspects where the significance is not clearly understood possibly because it is masked or obscured and where further research may be required to clarify its significance.*

**None:** *aspects which may make a negative contribution or a neutral contribution where its loss would make no difference to our understanding and interpretation of the place.*

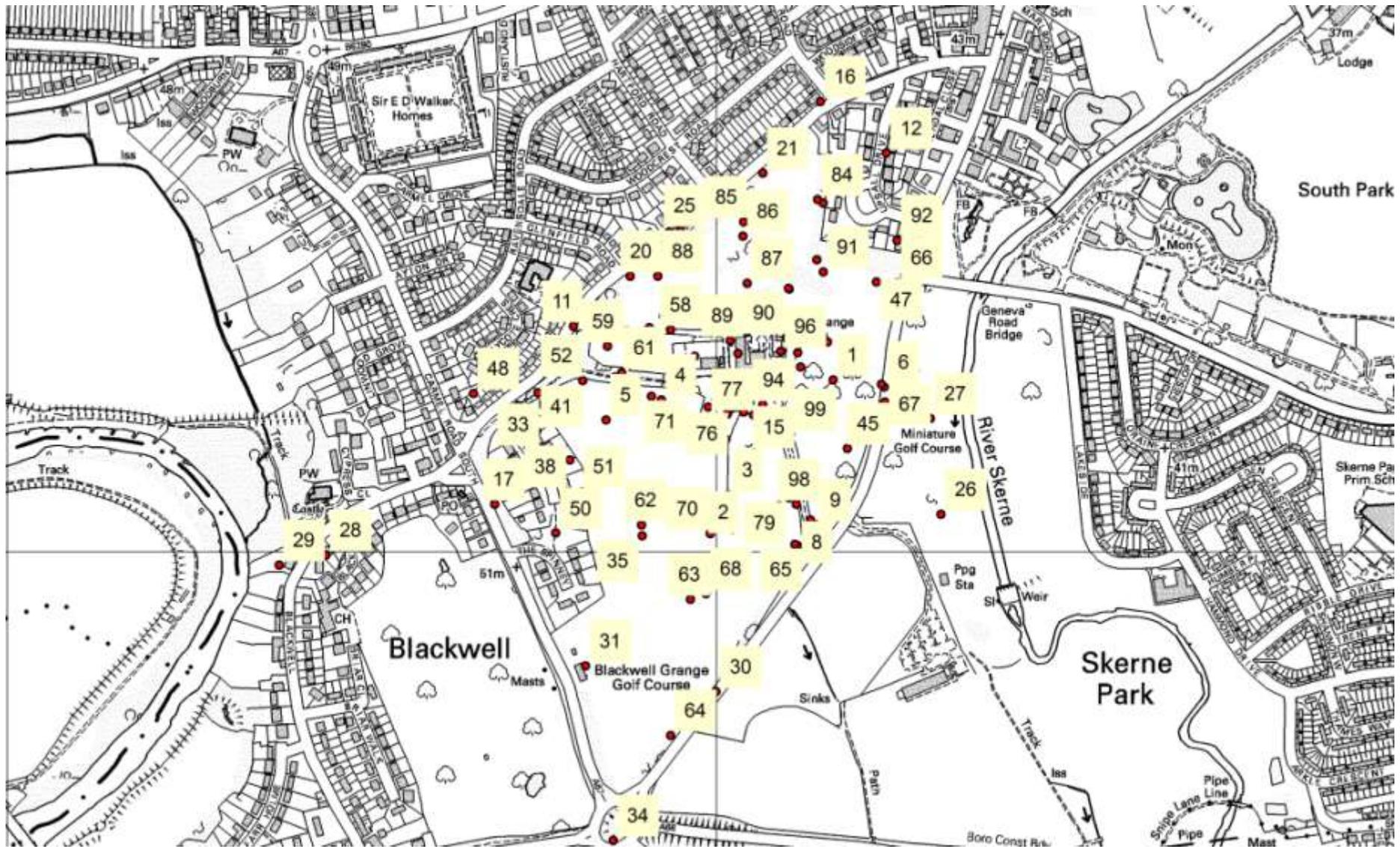


Figure 18. Location of heritage assets referred to in the statement of significance

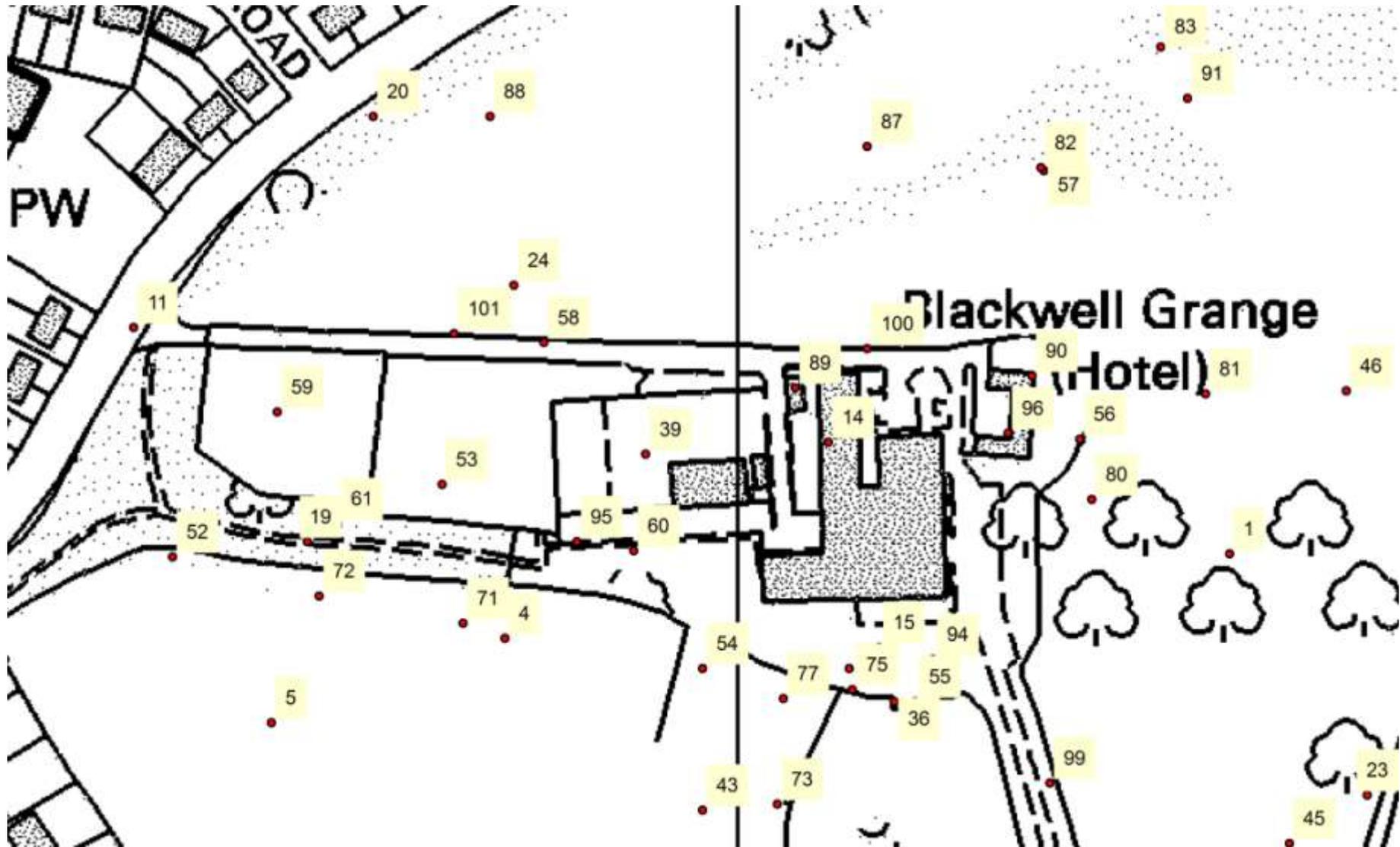


Figure 19. Detailed location map of heritage assets referred to in the statement of significance around the Grange

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

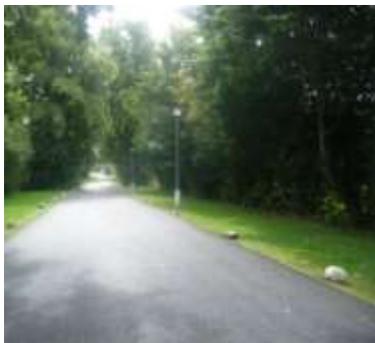
**Table 2: Significance table**

ID	Easting	Northing	Brief description	Source	Significance type	Significance level	Extent of significance	Notes/ image
1	428164	513240	Lime avenue present before 1790 and referred to in 19 <sup>th</sup> c accounts as 'ancient'.	1st ed OS map; 1790 survey, ZDG (A),	Architectural	Considerable	Lime avenue from ha-ha to brick wall on Grange Road – mature limes only	
2	427982	513046	Fish pond shown on survey of pre 1790 and so part of earlier design to go with 1710 house. Still extant	1st ed OS map, 1802 and 1790 survey ZDG (A)	Architectural	Considerable	All of the pond including stone kerbing and views back to the north	

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

3	428016	513079	bath	1st ed OS map	Historic	Destroyed	Shown on 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map but nothing noted on the ground
4	427922	513212	Sunken fence, see also 10, 32, 60, 61, 72 and 75	1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	<i>Extent not clear</i>
5	427844	513184	tree clump	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Considerable	May be absorbed into linear planting which includes 40, now part of drive
6	428236	513230	entrance before 1790 – shown as an archway on Grange Road	1790 survey	Archaeological	Destroyed	No evidence of break in wall so wall of one build over the entranceway

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

7	428135	513030	entrance from 1802	1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Includes gates and walling and 'Coach Road'	
			lampposts possibly 1950s-50s		Architectural	Limited	Lamp posts along coach road	
8	428114	513008	tree clump to frame entrance	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Considerable	Mature lime and beech trees	
9	428140	513037	tree clump to frame entrance	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Considerable	Mature lime and beech trees	
10	428232	513234	extant sunken fence proposed in 1802, see also 4, 32, 60, 61, 72 and 75	site visit 22.8.12; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Wall and earthwork on Grange Road east of the Grange.	Very overgrown

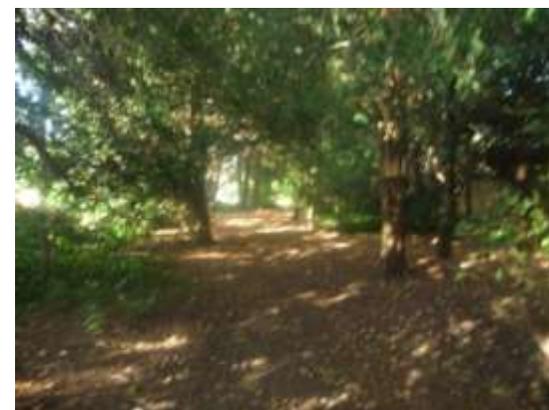
*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

11	427798	513315	Entrance from Blackwell Lane, present before 1790 with a gate on to Blackwell Lane. Probably original 1710 entrance	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Considerable	Route of drive and avenue of mature trees associated with it and stone gate posts
12	428239	513557	grounds of South Villa	1st ed OS map	Historic	Limited	Shown on 19 <sup>th</sup> c mapping but now largely built over as Upsall Drive
13	427933	513447	Prescot's stile	1st ed OS map	Historic	None	Shown on 19 <sup>th</sup> c mapping only
14	428030	513277	orchard	tithe map 1847	Historic	Destroyed	Now under hotel development



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

15	428047	513209	lawns around house	tithe map 1847	Architectural	Considerable	Land to south and east of hotel and contained by haha
16	428146	513629	Woodside Lodge	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Destroyed	Mapping evidence only
17	427687	513066	Pleasure Walks. See also 18, 20, 21, 22 and 84	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Now the west boundary to Grangeside



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

18	427720	513204	Pleasure Walks. See also 17, 20, 21, 22 and 84	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Now runs along Blackwell Lane from Grangeside
19	427856	513244	Pleasure Walks	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Walk south of hotel grounds heading west to perimeter pleasure walks along Blackwell Lane
20	427878	513385	Pleasure Walks; continuation of 17, 18,22 and 84. Walk becomes less clearly defined further north at no 21	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Woodland running parallel to Blackwell Lane



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

21	428065	513529	Pleasure Walks. Continuation of 17, 18, 20, 22 and 84	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Woodland running parallel to Blackwell Lane
22	428150	513487	Pleasure Walks set out in 1802 survey. Continuation of 17, 18, 20, 21 and part of 84	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Mature trees which now form the boundary with Upsall Drive
23	428210	513160	Pleasure Walks	1st ed OS map; 1802 survey	Architectural	Considerable	Mature trees along Grange Road



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

24	427925	513329	Avenue of trees along former gravel walk (as called in 1802)	1st ed OS map; 1790 survey, 1802 survey,	Architectural	Considerable	Mature trees running from Blackwell Lane to Blackwell Grange along gravel walk
25	427949	513449	Boundary stone 1 mile to GPO	1st ed OS map	Architectural	Some	Isolated metal boundary stone
26	428316	513052	Blackwell Mill	1st ed OS map	Archaeological	Some	Site only plus mill race
27	428301	513186	Mill race for Blackwell Mill	1st ed OS map	Archaeological	Some	



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

28	427449	512995	Blackwell Hall	1st ed OS map	Archaeological	Limited	Destroyed	
29	427383	512981	Castle Hill	Map evidence only	Archaeological	Unknown	Location on maps	
30	427999	512804	Mile post Darlington 1/2 mile and Northallerton 15 miles	2nd ed OS map	Historic	Unknown	Unknown	
31	427815	512840	Stone building used as animal shed with typical sloping floors for drainage along bays facing length of wall	2nd ed OS map	Architectural Archaeological	Some Limited	Building Below ground remains of destroyed building adjacent	



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

32	427748	513222	Low brick wall along watercourse, referred to as a sunken fence in 1802 proposals. See also other sections 4, 10, 60, 61, 72, 75	1802 design; site visit 22.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Extent of low brick wall along watercourse edge in north part of site	
33	427755	513205	watercourse, tree lined, shown with two foot bridges over it in 1790. Proposal to turn it into a serpentine lake in 1802 never came to fruition. Ditch now wet in places, but not running with water	1790 survey; 1802 survey; site visit 22.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Length of watercourse now runs across north end of site and no longer runs down the back of Grangeside, but continues west under Carmel Road South	
34	427854	512596	Guide post	1st ed OS map	Historic	None	Destroyed	Destroyed by roundabout

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

35 427895 513022 Mill Lane (centre of) 1st ed OS map Archaeological Limited Route now survives as earthwork east west across the site south of the fishpond



36 428052 513191 Air raid shelter built in 1939 and still extant. Da/NG2/8270 Archaeological Considerable Located in ha-ha ditch south of Grange lawns



37 428091 512961 Front Lodge proposed on 1802 plan ZDG (A) xiv 23 Historic Limited Possibly never built, was located at junction of Mill Lane and Grange Road



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

38	427793	513128	proposed serpentine lake to be derived from watercourse; to be crossed with two bridges on the Pleasure Walks	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Historic	Considerable	Extent of watercourse and down rear boundaries of Grangeside
39	427969	513273	Walled garden proposed in 1802, now a car park. Site of hot houses visible. A gym has been built in NE corner; boot scraper outside north gate	ZDG (A) xiv 23; site visit 30.8.12	Architectural  Archaeological	Considerable  Some	Walls, gates and gateways  Below ground information relating to former planting schemes and vertical archaeology relating to hot house construction



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

40	427836	513140	tree clump proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Possibly absorbed into linear planting as part of drive which extends to clump 5
41	427746	513168	tree clump proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Destroyed	Now under Grangeside but one mature tree visible on APs
42	427816	513061	tree clump proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Still on boundary of Grangeside
43	427988	513155	tree clump proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Destroyed	Destroyed by drive



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

44	428088	513064	shelter planting to drive proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Mature planting towards south end of coach road	
45	428184	513144	shelter planting to drive proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Mature planting on west side of wall along Grange Road	
46	428203	513294	shelter planting to drive proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Mature planting on west side of wall along Grange Road	
47	428225	513377	shelter planting to drive proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23	Architectural	Considerable	Mature planting on west side of wall along Grange Road	
							See above	

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

48	427657	513221	shelter planting to drive proposed in 1802	ZDG (A) xiv 23; site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Destroyed	Now under Draycott Crescent
49	427898	513062	tree lined avenue present in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Some	Mature trees absorbed into drives, no longer form avenue
50	427773	513026	tree lined avenue present in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Destroyed	Now under The Spinney
51	427826	513084	tree clump present in 1790, now two lime trees	ZDG (A); site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Two lime trees
52	427811	513239	tree clump present in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Considerable	Part of mature tree planting along pleasure walk south of gardens and orchards (site of)

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

53	427901	513263	orchard present in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Some	Enclosure remains, but now waste with no trees
54	427988	513202	tree avenue or orchard in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Limited	Some trees may survive, and partial route, but mostly cleared
55	428059	513191	formal gardens in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural Archaeological	Destroyed to create lawns Considerable	Lawn area to south of Grange
56	428114	513278	orchard or gardens in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural Archaeological	Destroyed to create lawns Considerable	Lawn area to east of Grange
57	428102	513367	hedgerow or tree lined field boundary in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Considerable	Possibly absorbed into 1802 planting which is still extant

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

58	427935	513310	hedgerow or tree lined field boundary in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Considerable	Now tree lined drive which may have absorbed hedgerow
59	427846	513287	hedgerow or tree lined field boundary in 1790	ZDG (A)	Architectural	Considerable	Enclosure
60	427965	513241	ha-ha laid out in 1802- referred to as 'sunken fence'	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Lawns south of Grange. See also 4, 10, 32, 61, 72, 75
61	427866	513250	ha-ha laid out in 1802- referred to as 'sunken fence'	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Extent not clear, see also 4, 10, 32, 60, 72, 75
62	427894	513037	tree grouping of oak, sycamore and lime on 1790 survey and extant	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Mature oak, sycamore and lime

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

63	427963	512933	tree grouping of sycamore and lime on 1st ed map 1860 and extant	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Mature sycamore and lime
64	427935	512743	isolated tree plus two younger limes	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Mature tree
65	428110	513010	tree clump on 1802 survey and extant	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Mature trees
66	428254	513376	Break in brick boundary wall marking infilled entrance?	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Brick wall opposite road to South Park



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

67	428237	513209	end of brick wall circuit	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	On Grange Road
68	427985	512941	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field
69	428020	513041	field boundary bank with hawthorn shown on 1790 survey and extant	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Considerable	Runs from fish pond north to ha-ha



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

70	427991	513025	earthwork mound possibly a viewing mound or old tee	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Unknown	South of field boundary 69
71	427908	513217	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field
72	427860	513226	watercourse with low red brick wall (sunken fence) adjacent, 1802. See also 4, 10, 32, 60, 61, 75	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Along northern boundary



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

73	428013	513157	earthwork hollow joining house gardens and field boundary, possibly an old holloway	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	South of lawns and ha-ha
74	428037	513202	continuation of earthwork hollow joining house gardens and field boundary, possibly an old holloway	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	South of lawns and ha-ha
75	428038	513195	ha-ha laid out in 1802. See also 4, 10, 32, 60, 61, 72	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	South and east of house



Overgrown, not so clear, suggesting ground levels altered with construction of ha-ha



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

76	428021	513200	18th century garden steps in brick with stone steps and finials	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Leads from ha-ha south of house
77	428015	513192	20th century tennis court (site of), now a tee	site visit 30.8.12; tee named after a tennis court, but not shown on 1st - 3rd ed maps, but 3rd ed has enclosure	Archaeological	Limited	Below Tennis hole level area
78	428043	513101	ridge and furrow, partially planted over	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

79	428102	513075	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field
80	428118	513258	18th century culvert in brick, partially collapsed	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Considerable	East of haha in wooded area; area of significance extends underground for an unknown distance
81	428156	513293	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

82	428101	513368	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field
83	428141	513408	18th century ice house with north facing entrance; ice house collapsed	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural and archaeological	Considerable	Large hollow area with two brick foundations of entrance visible. Concrete slab of no interest
84	428142	513492	3 limes forming avenue shown on 1802 survey	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Three limes



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

85	428038	513461	views of Cleveland hills possible here; views referred to in 19th c accounts and directories	site visit 30.8.12	Artistic	Some	Views possible in limited places from higher ground (hills not visible on photo due to grey skies)	
86	428037	513441	ridge and furrow	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Throughout field	
87	428043	513375	Views of St. Cuthbert's church possible from here	site visit 30.8.12	Artistic	Some	Very limited views in summer from high ground in NE corner	

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

88	427917	513385	Headland or holloway earthwork heading towards Blackwell Lane	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Some	Hollow shaped earthwork heading towards Blackwell Lane
89	428019	513295	outbuilding in brick with pantile roof, possibly a stable or coach house pre 1860	site visit 30.8.12; 1 <sup>st</sup> ed OS map	Architectural	Some	East of walled garden, covers roof and walls. Wide doors appear to be later and so not significant, interiors not seen. Treat as listed



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

90	428098	513299	19th century cottage attached to 18th century stable courtyard, part of listed building	site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Listed 19 <sup>th</sup> century house, significance covers all elevations, windows, chimneys and rainwater goods, not 1930s door.
91	428150	513391	path shown on 1802 survey; adjacent planting of lime avenue remains in part	ZDG (A) xiv 23; site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	Mature trees only
92	428254	513435	Drive shown on 1802 survey, now partially under Upsall Drive	ZDG (A) xiv 23; site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Limited	Destroyed
93	428111	591378	Blocked entrance to boundary wall of 1802	site visit 30.8.12	Archaeological	Limited	On Blackwell Lane, blocking not significant



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

94	428065	513205	sun dial shown on 1st ed map 1860	1st ed OS map	Historic	Limited	Destroyed	
95	427946	513244	summer house shown on 1st ed 25 inch OS map	1st ed 25 inch OS map	Historic Archaeological	Limited Some	Destroyed Below ground remains only	
96	428090	513280	18 <sup>th</sup> c Stable courtyard (listed grade II)	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Considerable	All courtyard buildings and spaces including wood store and mounting block	
97	428132	513044	Metal estate rail fencing with acorn topped finials, probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	All metal estate fencing and kissing gates	



*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

98	428112	513066	Metal estate rail fencing with acorn topped finials, probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	All metal estate fencing and kissing gates, mostly along coach roads
99	428104	513164	Metal estate rail fencing with acorn topped finials, probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	All metal estate fencing and kissing gates mostly along coach roads
100	428043	513308	Metal estate rail fencing with acorn topped finials, probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	All metal estate fencing and kissing gates, mostly along coach roads
101	427905	513313	Metal estate rail fencing with acorn topped finials, probably 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Site visit 30.8.12	Architectural	Some	All metal estate fencing and kissing gates, mostly along coach roads

## Summary of significance

The special interest of the parkland is therefore in the survival of historic documents which have allowed the pre-1790 planting regime to be identified amongst the subsequent 1802 planting regime. These historic maps of 1790 and 1802 are of considerable historic significance. Using these maps, some correlation can be seen between present day trees and parkland features and those depicted on the 1802 map and even the 1790 map. It is possible that some of these tree clumps and avenues are original to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although undoubtedly, some will have been replaced. This combined with the survival of ridge and furrow throughout the park has created a landscape that is a palimpsest with layers of landscape design, each identifiable with the help of the two maps, which are in effect, before and after images. The presence of ridge and furrow in a parkland is common, but the ability to identify the pre- English parkland scene amongst the later naturalistic styles is unusual and raises this parkland to a status that may well merit designation.

The presence of the two developments at the Spinney and Grangeside have diminished that significance, but not sufficiently to demote the park to only local significance. Indeed, the retention of the pleasure walks around Grangeside have helped to make an otherwise bland development fit in, whilst retaining the tree cover that is an important characteristic of the area.

Similarly, the golf course has diminished significance, but much is reversible. The earthmoving operations have made little impact on the ridge and furrow; the flat earthwork platforms of hole and tee adding to the palimpsest. The golf club have added to the tree cover rather than taking it away and have introduced arboricultural management which may well have extended the life of the mature trees.

The key designed views have been through some modification. The principal elevations of east and south views from the hotel remain, although the lack of tree management around the ha-ha has temporarily rendered them impossible; this is of course reversible. The avenue of limes no longer frames any view to the hotel and again this is reversible through better vegetation management. The coach road approach to the hotel no longer has the peep show drama that was intended in 1802 due to poor tree management and the northern coach road which exited just south of where Upsall Drive is now, has fallen out of use. The 1802 Pleasure Walks are still there; they need some restoration works in places and they incorporate earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century avenues in some cases. The key to the retention and enhancement of significance is through improved vegetation control and a planting regime that recognises the significance of this park.

Future management therefore need to conserve and enhance the key features which either date from the earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century or to the 1802 remodelling as follows:

- ❖ The fish pond which dates to the first landscaping between 1710 and 1790.
- ❖ The field boundary which extends from the fishpond to the Grange.
- ❖ The Pleasure Walks
- ❖ The tree clumps and mature isolated stands north of Mill Lane (site of)
- ❖ The brick wall boundary, stone gateposts and the 'sunken fences' and ha-ha
- ❖ Retain/ replace views from the Grange/hotel south to Mill Lane and east towards Skerne Park

❖ The Lime Avenue

Other heritage assets which offer opportunities for reuse include:

- ❖ The walled garden and former orchards to the west. The basic structure should be retained but there is scope to consider their reuse in a way that brings the walls into active maintenance and allows future readability
- ❖ The ice house is beyond saving but is an important part of any 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century house. It could afford an opportunity for community excavation or interpretation. It can also be left untouched, but should not be destroyed without detailed recording.
- ❖ The stone grounds mens' building on Carmel Road South should remain in use so that it is maintained.
- ❖ The northern Coach Drive could be reopened.
- ❖ The watercourse should be retained but offers opportunities for enhancement (but not as a serpentine lake as this was never implemented)
- ❖ Estate rails and kissing gates with pine cone tops offer a means to harmonise the parkland character where necessary

**Moving forward....**

There is scope to consider some alternative future management of the parkland which will enhance that which is significant, benefit the hotel and its guests and offer opportunities for development where necessary. These actions will need to be considered together in order to ensure that there is an adequate public benefit to compensate for any harmful effect on the heritage assets.

The parkland divides into different zones of sensitivity, each of which are considered below.

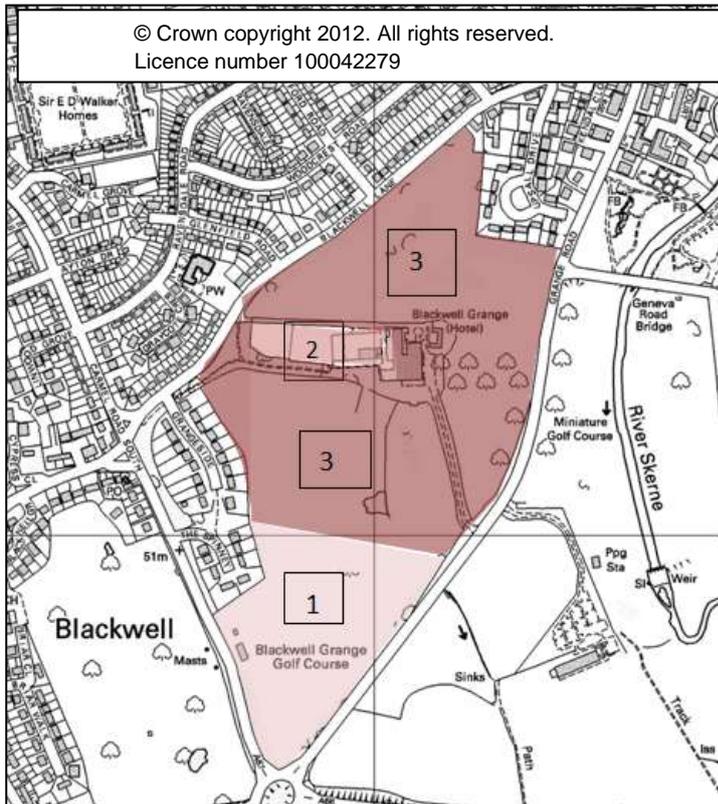


Figure 20. Zones of sensitivity

❖ *Zone 1 Land between Mill Lane (site of) and Blands Corner*

Land in the south of the park was not formally part of the designed landscape of 1802 or in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it is accepted that all designed landscapes create a ripple effect of decreasing design elements extending from the country house. Consequently, the land south of Mill Lane was not ignored, but given a lighter touch treatment of shelter belt planting and later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a tree clump. This means that this area is less sensitive to change than land to the north of Mill Lane and future development may therefore be possible which extends the Spinney southwards along Carmel Road South and include the area nearest Blands Corner and the south end of Grange Road. It might also make this land more flexible for development if Mill Lane is restored as a minor country lane which would create an additional access point and return a clearly defined edge to the zone of high significance.

Any development here would be best suited to high quality residential development which would need to retain a strong tree canopy to the perimeter (including Mill Lane if it is reopened) so that the character of the Blackwell area is retained. The perimeter woodland planting could extend the Pleasure Walks and provide a pedestrian route shielded from traffic.

The buildings would need to be low lying so that the development was not obtrusive in views from the hotel. The design of suburban buildings in the Blackwell area is not sufficiently locally distinctive to provide a template for future design and the use of Georgian styles should be actively discouraged so as not to compete with Blackwell Grange itself. The emphasis should be on high quality innovative design that creates a well wooded character area of sufficient quality to justify the loss of this land. Particular attention should be made to boundary features around individual properties which will avoid breaking the land up too much – the estate rail may be an appropriate style which references the parkland without dominating the layout. The existing stone building offers a flexible space with domestic scale windows and doors, as well as the large agricultural doors and should be retained and reused. The agricultural character should be carried through in its new use and the carving above the arched door retained.

❖ *Zone 2 The walled garden and former orchard*

This is a sensitive area which could be brought back into active use. The original form of the Grange's west elevation has been lost as the hotel has expanded and the 1970s extension has detracted from the significance of the west elevations. There may have originally been views from the west elevation along the tree lined walks, but these are now lost because of 20<sup>th</sup> century development.

Ideally this zone is best placed to be a walled garden and series of orchards, but it is possible to design a development which makes best use of its special qualities which could be residential, small high quality business use or additional accommodation for the hotel.

Taking the walled garden first, the red brick wall and its gateways should be retained and will define any new development. The adjacent Pleasure and Gravel Walks (as they were originally called) should be retained along with tree cover. It would be possible to move the entrance points in the garden wall providing that their new form reflected the original; boot scrapers should be retained and restored. New buildings could reflect the form and overall

style of a typical garden hot house, so be against the garden walls, probably a lean to roof design, and have a strong use of glass in their fabric. Other appropriate subordinate materials would be brick and metalwork and glass or pantile roofing. The walled gardens were divided into four geometric sections and the present gym uses one quarter. That leaves three quarters available for development. Gardens should predominate, but fencing discouraged – property boundaries would be better defined with gravel paths or low lying planting.

The existing gym has made use of some old brick to window and corbel details and the arched windows reflect Georgian and Victorian window design and so some attempt has been made to help it fit in. However it should not be referenced too strongly in new development as its massing is too heavy to reflect the hot house character which is more appropriate. There is also scope for any south facing properties to make use of solar and photo-voltaic energy which would be best designed at the outset rather than retro fitted.

There were two other enclosures west of the walled garden. These are on the site of an orchard and field boundary from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and a pleasure walk that curved round to link a path from a now blocked gate on the west side of the walled garden to the walks south of the walled garden. The two enclosures shown on maps today are later and the land is currently not used. There is a little more flexibility here for development, but it still needs to be sensitive and of a low density, with trees and paths forming the structure. It could take the orchard as its inspiration and provide structured planting of fruit trees to create new avenues or landscaped features.

### *Zone 3. The parkland*

This area is most sensitive to change and no development should be pursued. Instead, the park would be best served with a parkland restoration plan which will provide a planting regime that builds in a long term plan for the restoration of woodland features including Pleasure Walks, the ha-ha, the boundary walls and sunken fences and the fish pond in particular. It should introduce a better maintenance regime so that vegetation is managed and views returned along coach drives, and from the south and east faces of the hotel. This would benefit the hotel and would also create an attractive public space, thus resulting in the public benefit that will offset any harm to the parkland. It could also explore the benefits, if any, of returning the missing northern coach drive. As part of this package, there is scope to create a community excavation of both the ice house and the air raid shelter; the latter providing a long term asset for key stage 2 children who study the Second World War and could visit the shelter in a safe environment with their school. Again this would help to ensure that any development had a public benefit.

Funding for a parkland restoration plan can be made available from the Heritage Lottery Fund and should the council wish to pursue the possibility of having the park designated (zone 2-3 only), this may increase the chances of obtaining the funds necessary.

## **Conclusion**

Blackwell Grange golf course sits on top of layers of history which each have a story to tell. The remarkable survival of pre-golf course features of more than one period is unusual. The drive for the fashionable naturalistic styles of the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century which inspired the 1802 redesign at Blackwell, was famous for sweeping everything away that went before.

However at Blackwell, no such clean sweep was used; the existing early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century layout was reused and adapted and so with the help of two historic maps, we can discern today the remains of the earlier parkland in amongst the English parkland scene and the golf course. Throughout it all, the ridge and furrow which is 18<sup>th</sup> century at the latest, but may extend back to medieval times and served the villagers of Blackwell, has survived the redesigns and the earth moving operations of the golf course. The survival of two periods of landscape design in particular, means that much of this parkland is of designatable quality. That does not however mean that it must be preserved as found in entirety.

The park falls into three zones of sensitivity. Within zone one there is scope for high quality low lying development outside the main designed area of parkland which retains pleasure walks to the perimeter and thus provide a safe walking environment away from traffic and sustains the existing leafy character of Blackwell.

Zone two is more sensitive to change but there is still scope for low density housing/ small business or additional hotel accommodation within the walled garden which references garden hot house architecture. The adjacent formal orchards can also provide low density development but with a freer hand to design something of a suitably high quality that reflects its position within an historic park and the setting of two groups of listed buildings. It however needs to retain the existing structure of walks and drives.

Zone three is most sensitive to change and a parkland restoration plan and subsequent public access would best serve the significance of this asset and provide a beautiful historic environment for hotel guests and Darlington residents alike. Within this zone the ice house and air raid shelter offer opportunities for community projects.

Trees and residential development do not always make good partners. Some residents may feel that the tree lined avenues create threatening environments and cause maintenance problems through leaf fall and building regulations can make the proximity of trees and houses problematic. However it is important that trees continue to form the external framework of any new development so that it offsets the impact on the parkland. A sense of security for future residents can be introduced by other means such as wide avenues with well managed trees that allow light to filter through and low density development that does not abut the trees but gives them space and allows light into gardens. Provision needs to be made throughout the parkland whether in the new residential areas or not, for long term arboricultural management to prevent self seeds growing up and blocking out the designed treescape.

There are other opportunities too. The planting of trees in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not just about creating beautiful places; it was also about providing a resource for the estate. That resource remains and can be built into any new development. The generous use of trees will make the use of solar panels on new buildings unlikely (apart from in the walled garden), but it creates an opportunity for biomass, which when taken with the woodland resources of Skerne Park and South Park provides an opportunity for sustainable energy worth pursuing as part of a high quality development.

Other forms of sustainable energy are also worth considering such as ground source heat pumps, usually best designed into a scheme when the necessary earthmoving is already causing disturbance.

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## Archives

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Da/ NG/2/8270      Completion certificate for ARP shelter at Blackwell Grange dated August 30<sup>th</sup> 1939

*Blackwell Grange Statement of Significance*

D/X/172/1                      City election private accounts 1813 of Sir Henry Havelock liberal

D/Bo/G56/235 "1 Feb 1850    Clippings re Sir Henry Havelock to be restrained from cutting down ornamental trees at Blackwell Grange – timber had been undisturbed for previous 25 years

North Yorkshire Records Office

ZDG (A) 1-23 plans of Blackwell Grange 1790 and 1802, valuations, wills, rent books