# Heritage Statement

in relation to a Proposed Detached Garage at:

## Kirklees Cottage , Kirklees Park,  Leeds Road Mirfield

## 1. Introduction and History

Kirklees Park is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons: * Design: as a significant, well preserved example of a mid to late C18 designed landscape, attributed to the notable landscape designer Richard Woods, being a good, characteristic example of his work; * Historical association: for the strong connection to the legend of the death of Robin Hood, an association which was clearly exploited as part of the design of the landscape; * Group value: the Park strongly enhances the setting of a large number of heritage assets that are designated in their own rights, particularly the Grade I listed Kirklees Hall and the collection of highly graded buildings forming Home Farm. The Park retains nearly the whole suite of buildings and structures forming the C18 design, the only significant loss being the iron footbridge scrapped in 1840; * Documentary: for the survival of an extensive archive of maps, plans, documentary and pictorial sources; * Edwardian enhancement: later alterations to the Park, particularly those in the early C20, add rather than diminish the special interest of the landscape. Of particular note is the reconstruction of a Roman watchtower, being possibly the first such historical reconstruction of a Roman building in England, roughly contemporary with reconstructions in Cardiff and in Germany.

2. Kirklees Priory was a small nunnery which was founded in the mid C12, displacing an earlier medieval settlement. The priory is connected with the legend of the outlaw Robin Hood who is said to have fired an arrow from his deathbed in the priory's gatehouse to select his burial place. Kirklees Priory was surrendered to the Crown in 1539 at which point it had a community of eight nuns and was valued at £29 18s 6d. In 1544 it was granted to John Tasburgh and Nicholas Savile, but in 1565 the whole manor was conveyed to the merchant and clothier John Armytage, in whose family the estate remained until its sale in 2013. The earliest hall was at the site of the priory, later becoming known as Low Hall, forming part of the complex which later became Home Farm. Home Farm includes a number of late medieval buildings thought to have been originally part of the priory, including two aisled barns (Grade I and II* listed) and the early C16 Priory Gatehouse (Grade II*). Just to the east there is a stone walled garden which is thought to have been the priory's orchard, the wall being listed Grade II. Between about 1580 and 1640, the Armytage family spent around £10,000 adding to their landholdings and expanding a new hall, being elevated to the baronetcy in 1641. The new hall, the current Kirklees Hall (listed Grade I), developed out of a mid C16 stone mansion that was presumably built for either Tasburgh or Savile, but was expanded by the Armytages in the later

C16 and in the early C17 when the Jacobean north facing range was constructed. Home Farm also gained new buildings through this period including the cross-wing dated 1620 that was added to the medieval aisled barn closest to the gatehouse, the single-aisled cow house (listed II*), and the two-cell house (listed II*).

The earliest known plan of the estate is undated and untitled, but the style of handwriting and what the plan depicts places it in the C17, probably before the Civil War. The plan records field names including "Near and Far Castle Field" (which indicates that the scheduled Castle Hill earthwork was not the creation of C18 landscaping) as well as "Park" (which at this time covered a relatively small area south eastwards from Kirklees Hall). Home Farm is labelled "Low Hall", Kirklees Hall as just "Hall", being shown as two separate buildings linked by boundaries with what appears to be formal walled gardens immediately to the north and south. The southern building is thought to be that of the Hall itself, with the northern building interpreted as a gatehouse which was demolished after 1757. Home Farm is either depicted in a much simplified way, or at a time when there were far fewer buildings as it appears to only show the two medieval aisled barns, omitting for instance, the Priory gatehouse, the 1620 cross wing and the early C17 single-aisled cow house. The plan marks the Grade II listed boundary wall to the priory orchard (being labelled garden), but shows the site of the priory church and cloister buildings as being an empty, unlabelled enclosure. The plan also does not show the late C17 Malthouse (listed Grade I), although it does mark a small building within an enclosure labelled "Croft" which may correspond to the earliest part of The Cottage near Park Bottom Wood at the south-eastern entrance to the park.

This plan appears to be contradicted by the earliest known pictorial view of Kirklees Park, being the sketch dated 1669, and entitled "The Prospect of Kirklees Abbey where Robin Hood Died…". This was redrawn for publication in 1901 and credited to Dr Nathaniel Johnson (who was the Armytage's family doctor), but is thought to have been drawn by his brother. This sketch shows Kirklees Park viewed from the north, depicting the buildings of Home Farm, the Malthouse and Kirklees Hall in the distance. Where it deviates from the plan is that it appears to show the priory's church and other cloistral buildings, being in the form of a cluster of buildings including steepled towers. The subject of the sketch is the legend of Robin Hood's death, and this complex of buildings is consequently labelled "The gatehouse of the Nunnery", being where he died. The sketch also indicates the site of Robin Hood's grave, although the current walled and railed enclosure containing the medieval grave slab fragment (the whole being listed Grade II as Robin Hood's Grave) is thought to be early C18 in date. The picture thus demonstrates the long association of Kirklees with the Robin Hood legend, but could also be interpreted as showing that the priory church and cloister buildings survived into the second half of the C17, although there is a general assumption that they were probably demolished in the C16 or early C17.

In the late C17 and early C18 there continued to be piecemeal development at Kirklees, with, for instance, the addition of two further barns and a dovecot at Home Farm (all Grade II listed). In 1706 medieval grave slabs were discovered leading to the creation of the Nun's Grave (listed Grade II) just to the east of the farm complex. The wider landholdings of the Armitages were extensively worked for coal and other minerals, probably providing the funds for a range of substantial redevelopments that took place at Kirklees in the second half of the C18. In 1757, the landscape gardener, Francis Richardson, produced a "Survey of the Park and Gardens of Kirklees" along with a plan of proposed improvements and alterations entitled "General Plan…". The survey shows the park being bounded to the south by the River Calder, to the north by the Nun Brook (with an extension beyond the brook to include Home Farm and an orchard to the east), to the east to include Far Castle Field (but not beyond the original road between Home Farm and the old road past Robin Hood's Grave) and to the west to around the line of the current M62 motorway. The survey shows a series of formal gardens and closes clustered around Kirklees Hall, with the rest of the park divided into fields. Nun Bank is wooded, as it is today, although only down hill and to the south of the old road which was the predecessor to the 1815 turnpike road (the current A644). To the south east there is a very small structure marked at the intersection of two straight drives through a small tree plantation. This structure is thought to be Robin Hood's Grave (listed Grade II) which in this period was referred to as the "Standing Hearse", being constructed in the early C18. The survey also appears to depict the Castle Hill earthwork. The plan of proposals shows a general sweeping away of the closes around the Hall and of field boundaries within the wider park; the construction of a series of serpentine ponds down Nun Brook; the re-routing of roads and the creation of a series of meandering paths through Nun Bank Wood. The plan also proposes a large walled garden to the west of the Hall (not to the north as subsequently built) as well as a structure within the centre of Castle Hill. Before these proposals could be enacted, the unexpected death of Sir John Armytage aged just 27, saw the estate pass to a younger brother in 1758. This was Sir George Armytage (the third baronet), a friend of John Spencer who had commissioned the landscape designer Richard Woods to landscape the grounds of Canon Hall near Barnsley. Possibly at the prompting of Spencer, Woods was invited to Kirklees in 1760 to propose improvements to the park.

Although the plan by Woods has not been identified, it is referred to in accounts as "A General Design for the Improvements of Kirklees". Armytage had also commissioned John Carr of York to carry out improvements to the Hall. This building work was given precedence and it was not until 1766 that estate accounts start mentioning work under the headings "New Gardens and New Walls" and "New Road and Park Wall", with payments for the levelling of the old gardens being recorded in 1770. The large walled garden to the north of Kirklees Hall is thus attributed to Woods, as is much of the mid to late C18 landscaping of Kirklees Park with its extension to the south-east as far as Park Bottom Wood.

A survey of the whole estate by William Crossley for the fourth baronet in 1788

is considered to show the park following the improvements suggested by Woods and the alterations made to the Hall by Carr. Kirklees Hall (listed Grade I) is set in an expanse of open parkland extending eastwards, dotted with large trees. Along the western side there are irregular areas of tree or shrub planting with indications of meandering garden paths. Surviving features shown for the first time include the large walled garden, the chain of ponds down Nun Brook (thought to have been reformed from a chain of monastic fishponds), the gate lodge to Kirklees Hall (the lodge listed Grade II) with a small walled garden just to its north, the access drive along the western boundary of the park, and the access drive into the park from the south east. The plan also appears to depict the Nun's Grave (Grade II listed), which is just east of Home Farm, at the centre of a rectangular enclosure containing bushes. A number of current field boundaries are shown on the plan, although it is clear that much of the current northern park wall has been realigned since 1788. The plan also clearly shows The Cottage, which is possibly depicted on the C17 plan, as well as the buildings of Home Farm and Kirklees Hall after the additions by John Carr. The plan depicts a number of curving walks and drives linking the Hall to both the walled garden and Home Farm, as well as along Nun Bank to Castle Hill and beyond to a possible woodland garden including Robin Hood's Grave. These walks are still identifiable in the landscape. The survey also includes a small pictorial view of the Hall as viewed from the north east across the pond between Kirklees Hall and the large walled garden. This shows the iron footbridge which was built across the pond to provide a formal link between the Hall and the central entrance to the walled garden. This footbridge was installed in 1769, ten years before the opening of Abraham Derby's Ironbridge in Shropshire. Unfortunately the Kirklees iron bridge was scrapped around 1840.

The archives include an undated, anonymous plan (item 1226) thought to be late C18. This appears to be a simplified tracing from Crossley's plan which was subsequently altered with the addition of the turnpike road (opened 1815), the rubbing out of a number of field boundaries and tracks, and the drawing in of a new, straightened park boundary to the north and east. This plan is possibly Crossley's 1788 "An Attempt to Improve Kirklees Park" (item 1219 which was not deposited with the rest of the archive) which appears not to have been enacted. However it is the earliest clear indication of the ice house at the western end of the western carriage drive.

Another undated, anonymous plan (archive item 1328) is titled "Plan of Pleasure Grounds at Kirklees Park". This depicts an early C19 gardenesque-style garden laid out between the western park boundary and the large walled garden. It shows two footbridges across the Nun Brook together with a gateway through the boundary adjacent to the south-western corner of the walled garden. All of these features remain, together with some remains of the paths, although the flowerbeds, probably designed to display exotic specimen plants, are not readily identifiable. The plan also marks a well which is labelled as a fountain on later Ordnance Survey maps, the site of which is now marked by a small collection of sculptural stonework set into a bank. Photographs dating to the C19 or early C20

survive of this fountain, the gardenesque garden and the walled garden alongside photographs of other parts of Kirklees Park.

In 1828 there was a court case concerning poaching and murder. Two plans were produced for the court: a plan of the whole of Kirklees Park and a second detailed plan showing Robin Hood's Grave (listed Grade II) and the area to the south-east. These plans are the first to definitively name Robin Hood's Grave. The detailed plan also identifies the park wall and the gateway into the park from the old road, the road which had been replaced by the 1815 turnpike. The main plan shows how this was then the access to Home Farm (labelled here as Low Hall), with the access from the south east (from The Cottage labelled here as Gardener's House) first shown in 1788, not being depicted. However the main plan, although well detailed, also omits other features and paths that were thought to be in existence at this date. The detailed plan makes a distinction between the park wall, which is identified as a wall, and another boundary which runs past Robin Hood's Grave which is marked as "Pailing".

Ordnance Survey maps and written documentation show that between the 1890s and the First World War, Kirklees Park underwent a number of changes. Just outside of the park, at Park Bottom Wood, a new coal mine was opened, served by a tramway which extended north-westwards. The park wall was realigned (enlarging the park slightly to the east) to hide the mine and the tramway. Other changes included the enlargement of The Cottage, some additions to Kirklees Hall, and the construction of a deer shelter. The ha-ha around Kirklees Hall also dates to this period, as does the two-storey building in the north-eastern corner of the walled garden and a now partially ruined brick built pavilion to the west within the earlier gardenesque garden. A lot of the planting across the park was also probably renewed at around this time, along with repairs to boundary walls, weirs and other structures.

The owner of the estate in the early C20, the sixth baronet, Sir George Armytage, was interested in archaeology and history. In 1904-5 he conducted excavations in the paddock to the east of the Priory Gatehouse, uncovering the plan of the priory church and cloister, the corners of which he marked with inscribed stone blocks. The Gatehouse was turned into a small museum focused on the priory and the legend of Robin Hood. He also conducted a smaller scale excavation at Castle Hill where he uncovered remains of rough stone walling within the rampart, concluding that the site was a Roman fortification. In 1905-6 he built a reconstruction of a Roman watchtower at the centre of the enclosure. This folly was included in walks through the park and acted as a prospect tower providing views across the estate and the landscape beyond. It represents a very early example of a historical reconstruction of a Roman building, being roughly contemporary with the reconstruction of the Roman defences at Cardiff (1898-1923) and at Saalburg in Germany 1898-1907, being much earlier than the reconstruction at Metchley, Birmingham (1953) and Lunt Roman Fort, Coventry (1970s).

In the later C20, the parkland south of Nun Brook was divided into three by two belts of trees following field boundaries established in the C19, the fields being turned over to arable, but retaining parkland trees in the largest, northernmost field next to the Hall. In the late 1980s, Kirklees Hall was sold, funding the construction of a new house (Priory Gardens) immediately east of the former walled priory orchard which became a walled garden to the new house. In 1989 a sundial (listed Grade II, which had previously been sited just south of Kirklees Hall) was moved into the garden of Priory Gardens. In the late 1990s, Kirklees Hall and its associated service ranges were converted into residential apartments. In 2013 the remainder of Kirklees Park was sold, ending nearly 450 years of ownership by the Armytage family.

## 3. The Proposal

i. The proposal is to replace the existing pre fabricated garage with a new stone built detached garage with pitched roof with welsh slate roof coverings.

ii. The garage will be built with matching stone walls.

## 4. Assessment of Significance and Heritage Impact

i. The heritage impact on the existing dwelling house will be improved by the removal of the existing pre fabricated garage and erection of a natural stone built garage.

## 5 Conclusion

1 The proposed new detached garage will provide a much improved visual enhancement to the host dwellings main east elevation.

2 In the absence of any identifiable harm being caused to the interests of acknowledged importance, it is recommended planning permission be granted in respect of this scheme.