

Castle Howard

Henderskelfe, North Yorkshire, UK

Photographs by Alan Ward 1985, 1997

Notes on the Making of the Photographs

Castle Howard is one of the earliest landscape gardens, marking a departure from rationally-ordered Renaissance gardens that had been adapted to England from the continent. In the early eighteenth-century, intense criticism was directed toward the elaborate formality of these earlier gardens with their excessive topiary and allées. The influence of new ideas about landscape design was not necessarily expressed as a complete break with the past, as early landscape gardens like Castle Howard, transition from the geometrically ordered designs of the past, evolving to a more naturalistic form over time. Charles Howard, the third Earl of Carlisle, first set out to build a great house in the 1690's which would express in architecture his family, its heritage and make an enduring legacy for the future.* John Vanbrugh, architect of Castle Howard, developed a landscape plan focused on the entry sequence and the immediate environs of the house in the spirit of Renaissance gardens (1-13). Later additions by the third Earl beginning in the 1720s, added buildings and monuments at key locations further afield to make a significant landscape garden at Castle Howard, that was layered on to the landscape of the more geometrically ordered spaces.

An existing woodland east of the house, known as Ray Wood, that was planned to be removed and levelled, was instead preserved. A slightly curving path avoids the trees and follows the alignment of the

main street of the former village of Henderskelfe, that was once on the site (14-17). The preservation of woodlands marks a decisive shift in what constitutes a garden, by incorporating the existing topography and vegetation.** The curving path, adjacent to the woodlands, rises to the Temple of Four Winds, which is one of several monuments and temples sited to appear like scenes from the Roman campagna in a greatly expanded spatial composition (19-24). Views from the temple extend to a triple-arched stone bridge over a tributary, that was modified to appear as a naturalistic lake (24-26). The last significant addition to the landscape garden is the family mausoleum, a large classical pavilion set on a broad plinth. It was positioned further east, almost five-hundred meters on a hilltop, where partially visible beyond woodlands from The Temple of Four Winds (24-25,27-28).

The photographs illustrate Vanbrugh's initial phases of landscape design in the approach to Castle Howard and its adjacent gardens (1-12), followed by the latter phases of expansive landscape spaces with classical structures (15-28). The mature vegetation now framing the views, along with refinements and adjustments to the design over the years to rehabilitate the eighteenth-century design, make Castle Howard appear as a more unified composition of a landscape garden than was originally conceived.

List of Photographs

1. Carrmire Gate, south approach, over 1.5km from house, 1985
2. Pyramid Arch Gatehouse and obelisk beyond, 1985
3. Obelisk at round point, right turn to Castle Howard, 1985
4. View west to obelisk, Castle Howard on the left, 1997
5. View west, entry drive, 1997
6. View east to Castle Howard, Boar Garden on the left, 1997
7. Boar Garden west of Castle Howard, 1985
8. Walled garden, 1985
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27. Woodland and family mausoleum, 1985
28. Family mausoleum by architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, 1985

























































Notes

Selected Publication of the Photographs:

Linden-Ward, Blanche, *Silent City on a Hill: Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery*, 1989

* See Charles Saumarez Smith's well-researched account of the history of the site in the book *The Building of Castle Howard*, (London, Pimlico, 1997). The author presents evidence based on original documents from the Third Earl of Carlisle, that the landscape design evolved over time, rather than the result of a more comprehensive vision.

** See Saumarez Smith's fascinating story of Ray Wood. The first plan for the site was drawn by George London, the prominent designer and nurseryman. It included allées, round points and canals - irrespective of the existing topography and required the regrading of Ray Wood. It was not executed, however Ray Wood and its existing mature beech trees were preserved as a prominent feature of the landscape garden. Ray Wood was cleared in the 1940s and later replanted.