

**Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust
Walled Kitchen Garden Register**

Name of House:	Stapleford Park			
Address:	Stapleford, Nr. Melton Mowbray Leicestershire LE14 2EF			
Ownership:	Private	Public	Institutional	Other: x Commercial
Grid reference:	SK810181	Map No: Landranger Map No: 247		
Date original WKG created:	C 1670 (according to the EH Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). However, the bricks of the garden walls are 9" x 2", so could be a little later: late 17 th /early 18 th century.			
Other key dates in development:				
C 1849	Gardener's cottage built (according to EH listing). This date is over the archway in the adjoining wall			
1894	After 484 years of ownership by the Sherard family (who became Earls of Harborough), the estate was purchased by the Grettons and remained in their ownership till 1985.			
1987	Restoration work was carried out by the garden designer, Bunny Guinness on the walled kitchen garden, including repointing walls, repairing cast iron entrance gates, building pergolas, trellis work and seats. Box hedges were planted.			
1988	Stapleford Park opened as a country house hotel, which is its current use. According to the EH listing in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, the kitchen gardens were converted to pleasure gardens and fruit grounds after the Hall became an hotel.			
Size and brief description:	Approximately 2 acres (100 metres square). Aligned north – south and sloping towards the south. Located approximately 100 metres to the west of the house.			
Official Designations for garden (e.g. EH listing)	Designation: English Heritage: Listing for gardener's cottage and adjoining garden walls, outbuilding and summerhouse	Reference: List entry no: 10785134	Grade: II	

DESCRIPTION: CURRENT AND PAST

Features: further information and current condition:

Walls, doors,
gates

Brick walls – approximately 8ft high, lower on south side. Exterior of west wall faced with ironstone. Mixture of standard and burnt bricks. Brick size approximately 9” x 2”. No obvious brick bond pattern.

There are 4 entrances into the garden, one on each side and all with archways. The EH listing describes them as having an “elliptical arched head”. The entrance on the south wall is the main entrance: square piers with ball finials and ornamental iron gates. These were restored in 1987.

The keystone in the archway on the east side of the garden bears the inscription on the outside: “So did Wendy Payton 1988” – presumably a reference to the wife of the then owner of the hotel, Bob Payton. The keystone on the arch on the north wall (outside) has the date 1849, but, curiously, the number 4 is carved back to front!

Glasshouses

There are currently two half-span greenhouses on the south side of the north wall. They are of equal size: approximately 33.30 metres x 4.50 metres. Each is divided into three sections.

The 1884 OS map showed a single greenhouse on the south side of the north wall (on the east side of the garden). There was also a small greenhouse, positioned centrally on the south side of the north wall (where the modern conservatory for the gardener’s house now stands). The order placed with Thos. Messengers for a boiler (see below) refers to a “Muscat Vinery and 3 peach houses”, so this would presumably be the existing greenhouse, which has heating pipes. There are Foster and Pearson name plates on the door.

(However, these read: “Foster and Pearson Ltd”. As the company became incorporated in 1893, it would indicate that Foster and Pearson did work on this house after that date – maybe at the time of the installation of the second house – see below.)

On the 1884 map there were also two greenhouses on the south side of the south wall. These no longer exist – not visible on the 1930 OS map. However a trellis ‘arbour’ has been constructed on the footprint.

The 1904 OS map shows still only one long greenhouse and the smaller central house.

However, the 1930 map shows a second long greenhouse, to match the existing. This is on the left-hand (west) side of the north wall. It is also by Foster and Pearson and mirrors the other house. It is not heated. So this must have been constructed sometime between 1904 and 1930.

	<p>The current condition of the greenhouses is poor. The ironwork for opening front and roof lights remains, but there is no sign of any staging, grates for under floor heating (etc).</p> <p>The current owners anticipate renovation of the glasshouses in the near future.</p>
Frames	No frames are visible now, but the 1884 OS map shows possible frames in an area to the west of the walled kitchen garden.
Pits	No evidence
Hotwalls/furnaces	None
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	A Thomas Messenger “Quorn” boiler was installed in 1918 to heat the right-hand greenhouse (see above). Heating pipes still remain though the boiler has been removed and the boiler house demolished. (A pit remains). The 1992 listing refers to the boiler house as a “lean-to boiler house with gable stack”.
Backsheds, workrooms, stores	<p>There are extensive back sheds on the north side of the north wall. See EH listing.</p> <p>These are lean-to with 8 windows and 6 doors. One of these might possibly have been a mushroom house as there is evidence of slots in the walls for timbers to support the shelves.</p> <p>The south-west corner has an 19th century L-shaped outbuilding. See EH listing</p>
Gardener’s house, cottages, bothies	<p>Yes. The gardener’s house is listed: late 18th century and 1849, restored 1987. See EH listing for full description.</p> <p>No evidence of any bothies.</p>
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	1884 map shows two pumps – one inside the garden and one near the back sheds. None are now visible.
Planting	<p>The 1884 OS map showed the garden divided into a grid of 8 compartments with (fruit?) trees positioned along the outside paths at regular intervals. By 1930, the layout had been simplified with one main path running north to south down the middle and a cross path east to west (i.e. the existing layout).</p> <p>The current planting is ornamental, including a central pergola with a wisteria. There are some original fruit trees.</p>
Other key features	According to OS maps, there was a sundial in the garden in the centre of the garden. This no longer exists.
Any other information:	<p>In June 1983, a Feasibility Report was prepared for Melton Borough Council to investigate the possibility of using Stapleford Park as a Museum of the Countryside. The walled kitchen garden was to be used as a nursery and shop:</p> <p>“the establishment of a garden showing the history of the introduction of new plants and the resulting richness of the kitchen garden and orchard in the 19th century. There would be</p>

	a source of income for the Centre in the sales of trees, plant, seeds and horticultural supplies.”	
Date site visited	9 May 2014	
References:	OS Maps 25" = 1 mile, 1 st edition 1884, 1904 and 1930 Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office: DE2121 – Thomas Messenger Customer Records and order books Leicestershire and Rutland Historic Environment Record: Images of walled kitchen garden, dated 2 nd December 1992 Reference MLE 11658 Melton Carnegie Museum: File relating Stapleford Hall (no reference number) Daily Telegraph: 18 March 2014: Article by Bunny Guinness entitled "The magic of Britain's Walled Gardens"	
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Record Compiled by:	Sue Blaxland Sarah Bailey Karen Gimson	Date: September 2014



Above: looking north through main entrance into the garden

Below: View of garden, looking north. The conservatory in the centre is modern.





Above: view of north of garden – December 1992 Shows right-hand greenhouse and gardener's cottage behind wall.
© Historic Environment Record

Below: Gardener's Cottage





Left: Pipework and window-opening mechanism in right-hand glasshouse
Right: Manufacturer's name plate on door latch reads:
"Foster & Pearson Ltd. Beeston Notts"

Below: Archway between half-span glasshouses, leading to gardener's cottage

