

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

Name of House:	Skeffington Hall			
Address:	Main Street, Skeffington, Leicestershire			
Ownership:	Private <input type="checkbox"/>	Public	Institutional	Other
Grid reference:	SK7418302640		Map No: Explorer 233	
Official Designations	Designation: English heritage	Reference: ID 190615	Grade: II*	
Date original WKG created:	<p>The WKG may have been created c.1871 as the bricks used to build the garden walls are similar to those used to build the stable block of 1871.</p> <p>The first documentary evidence found was the 1886 OS map.</p>			
<p>Other key dates in development:</p> <p>Circa 1450 – Large house built.</p> <p>Circa 1530 – House extended.</p> <p>Early or mid 17C – Extended again.</p> <p>Circa 1814 – House divided into 2 dwellings.</p> <p>1860 – William Ward Tailby (one of the founders of the Fernie Hunt) moved into the hall.</p> <p>1871 – William Tailby built the stable yard.</p> <p>20C – The hall had a series of owners.</p> <p>1938 – Count Armand bought the hall and made significant changes during the 2nd World War.</p>				
Size and brief description:	<p>The WKG is c.1.8 acres. The house, the stables and the WKG are adjacent to one another. The stables are to the west of the house and the WKG to the north.</p> <p>The WKG is a rectangular shape with a curved boundary at the eastern end. The 1886 OS map shows it divided into 3 sections that still survive (see sketch plan 1, 2 and 3).</p> <p>The garden is currently divided between 2 owners. Ownership of the northern part of the WKG (section 1) includes the gardener's cottage that forms part of the west wall (permission for access not given for this section). The rest is made up of 2 sections that form an L-shape: section 2 to the south and section 3 to the east of section 1.</p>			

	<p>Section 2 is sub-divided into 3 sections, to the west a tennis court, a pump yard in the centre, and to the east a lawned area.</p> <p>Section 3 has an internal walled section (in the form of a pentagon) which currently includes a swimming pool, and an outer area that is wooded and fenced.</p>
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Current Use: Pleasure gardens.

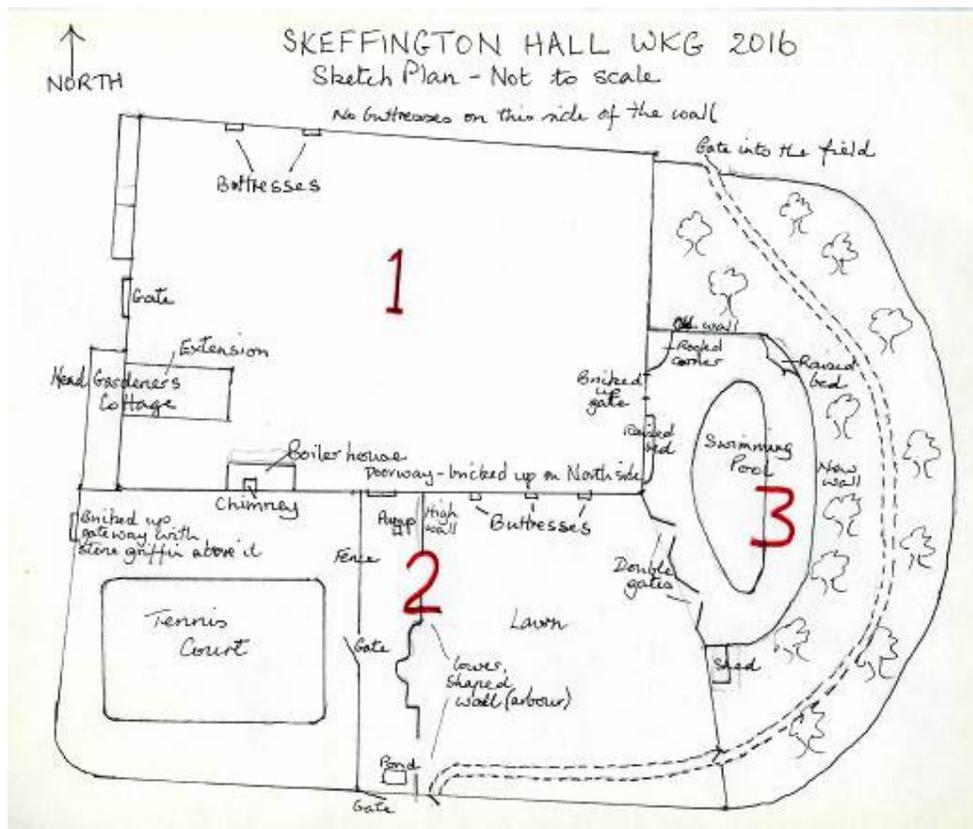
Features: further information and current condition:

<p>Walls, doors, gates</p>	<p>WALLS The original walls are Flemish garden wall bond.</p> <p>In section 1 the north wall is 28 brick courses high and the saddleback coping is of blue brick. There is a drip course consisting of 2 sloping and projecting courses of slate.</p> <p>The WKG west wall forms part of sections 1 and 2. In section 1 the west wall comprises the back wall of the gardener's cottage and of 2 other single story buildings. In section 2 the west wall is higher to the north.</p> <p>The WKG south wall is very low, 12 brick courses high, and the saddleback coping is also of blue brick. The southwest corner of this wall is curved.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the outer, east curved boundary to the WKG (framing a wooded area in section 3) was ever a wall (see OS1886 &1904). There is a small pentagon formed from the rebuilt east walls of sections 1 & 2 and new walls further east within section 3. Only the north wall of the pentagon is of original build.</p> <p>The map in the 1961 sale catalogue shows an ornamental north/south wall subdividing section 2 just to the east of the glasshouses and the pond. This still survives and has a central rectangular recess with a 'gargoyle'. The wall is capped at 4 points with dogs and lions (two of each), and at each end by finials.</p> <p>ENTRANCES In section 1 there is evidence of 3 entrances; only one is from outside the WKG and this is situated on the west wall next to the gardener's cottage. The other two are bricked up: one leads into section 3 and the other into section 2.</p> <p>In section 2 there is evidence of 7 entrances. There are single gateways through each of the two central dividing north/south walls and there is a bricked up gateway (or possibly an alcove) on the west wall with a stone griffin above it. There are 2 entries from the south into section 2: one into the pump yard directly opposite a bricked up entry in the south wall of section 1. A little further along there is an</p>
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	<p>entry opening into the lawn area. Then there are 2 entries to the east into section 3: one is double gated and opens into the swimming pool area, the other opens onto a path through the wooded area.</p>
Glasshouses	<p>In the tennis court area of section 2 there were 2 south facing, lean-to glasshouses on the area's north wall. (OS1886, 1904, SMG 1972) There is evidence that the larger one was a vinery which contained seventeen vines, a peach and a nectarine. (SMG 1961) On the back of the wall that supports the 2 lean-to glasshouses there is evidence of a small building with a chimney. (SMG1961,1972; AP1950s, 1970s)</p> <p>In the centre of the same area there was also a free-standing glasshouse. (OS1886, 1904)</p> <p>3 of the glasshouses were manufactured by the company, Messenger. (SMG 1972)</p> <p>None survive.</p>
Frames	<p>The early maps show cold frames along the length of the larger, lean-to glasshouse.(OS1886, 1904) While they are mentioned in the sales catalogues they are not marked on the accompanying catalogue plans.(SMG1961,1972)</p>
Pits	
Hot walls/furnaces	
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	<p>There is evidence of a small building with a chimney on the back of the wall that supports the 2 lean-to glasshouses. (SMG1961,1972) (AP1950s,1970s). It may have been a boiler house.</p> <p>The 1961 sales catalogue refers to: <i>'Two heated greenhouses with Beeston boiler. Vinery, Peach and Plant houses all heated by Robin Hood Boiler'</i>.</p> <p>The 1972 sales catalogue describes: <i>'Two Messenger hot houses, both heated by a Wilson "Wallflame 60" oil-fired boiler with time control and tank, and a lean-to vinery with seventeen vines a peach and a nectarine, with heating pipe (disconnected)'.</i></p>
Back sheds, workrooms, stores	<p>There is map evidence of a lean-to building along the west wall beyond the gardener's cottage. (OS1886, OS1904) This may have consisted of back sheds but there is no hard evidence to support this.</p>
Gardener's	<p>The gardener's cottage survives, being specifically referred</p>

house, cottages, bothies	<p>to from 1904. (OS1886, OS1904, SMG1961, SMG1972)</p> <p>The following description appears in the 1972 catalogue <i>'The cottage contains four rooms and is connected to the Estate Water Supply System. Main electricity connected. Private drainage system with Lot 1.</i></p> <p><i>There are many shrubs and flowers – the walled garden and the whole form a most attractive setting for a house.</i> (SMG1972)</p> <p>There is no evidence of bothies.</p>
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	<p>Early OS maps show an oval-shaped pond by the south wall in the centre of section 2. (OS1886,1904) In 1961 it was described as an 'ornamental' pond. (SMG1961) This was formalised as a rectangle when the yard was paved in 1987.</p> <p>The early maps also show a pump to the north of the pond. The pump housing remains but the water is now supplied through a tap.</p>
Planting	<p>The OS maps show a mixed woodland area to the east of section 3 and this survives.</p> <p>The only references to planting were found in the post 2nd World War sale catalogues.</p> <p>1961: 'extensive shrubs, trees and fruit bushes. Flower beds. Rose garden.'</p> <p>1972: 'The well stocked vegetable garden contains asparagus and strawberry beds, espalier fruit trees and soft fruit bushes. Rose walk with brick arbour and pond.'</p> <p>When visited there were mature espalier fruit trees against the north tennis court wall; the lawned area had herbaceous borders with shrubs; there were plants in raised beds and pots in the swimming pool area.</p>
Other key features	
Any other information:	<p>The 1961 catalogue refers to 'a sun trap' within the WKG. When visited there was a swimming pool in section 3 and it may have been this area that was described as the sun trap.</p>
Date site visited	16-11-2016, 14-03-2017
References:	<p>Chettle Derrin, Aerial Photograph of the site c. 1950s, (AP.1950s)</p> <p>Chettle Derrin, Aerial Photograph of the site c. 1970s,</p>

	<p>(AP.1970s)</p> <p>Chettle Derrin, MA student, Historical information (DC)</p> <p>Historic England, Listing Description Skeffington Hall, 1951, (HE1951)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey map 25inch XXX1X.1, 1st edition, 1886, (OS1886)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey map 25inch XXX1X.1, 2nd edition, 1904, (OS1904)</p> <p>McClellan, Nigel, present owner of sections 2 and 3 of WKG, (NM)</p> <p>Shakespeare, McTurk & Graham and John D.Wood & Co., Sale Catalogue, 2nd November 1961 (SMG1961)</p> <p>Shakespeare, McTurk & Graham, Sale Catalogue, 28th June 1972 (SMG1972)</p>	
Researched by:	Gill Knight, Elizabeth Bacon, Rowan Roenisch	
Record Compiled by:	Gill Knight, Elizabeth Bacon, Rowan Roenisch	Date: 21-02-2018



Sketch plan showing the main features of this complex garden



Alcove or bricked up gateway in the west wall of section 2 with a stone Griffin above it



Photograph of vinery from sales catalogue (SMG 1961)



North wall of section 2, tennis court area, showing left to right, end wall of gardener's cottage, espalier trees, and chimney of former boiler behind wall.



This shows the central part of the north wall of section 2 with a door into section 1. The entry is bricked up behind the door. The pump is in its original position (OS1886) but it has a modern casing with a tap inside.



Ornamental cross-wall with niche and lions capping the wall. The Griffin is just visible in the recess.



The swimming pool area taken facing the north wall.



This is the outside of the north wall of section 1. This shows the double slate drip course.