

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust
Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Launde Abbey			
Address:	Launde Road Launde Leicestershire LE7 9XB			
Ownership:	Private	Public	Institutional X	Other
Grid reference: SK 79735 04367	<p>Map Nos:</p> <p>O/S 1st Ed. 1884 XXX.SE, 1:10,560</p> <p>O/S 2nd Ed. 1904 XXXIII.15, 25" to 1 mile</p> <p>O/S 1930 XXXIII.15, 25" to 1 mile</p> <p>O/S 1960 XXXIII.15 25" to 1 mile</p> <p>O/S 1987 SK70SE, 1:10,000</p> <p>O/S Explorer 233 Leicester & Hinckley, 1:25,000, Rev. 1999</p>			
Official Designations	<p>Designation:</p> <p>Historic England Listing: Walls to Kitchen Garden</p>	<p>Reference:</p> <p>1361008</p>	Grade II	
Date original WKG created:	<p>First record of the walled kitchen garden is it showing on the O/S 1st Edition map surveyed in 1884. Historic England listing of the walls & a cast-iron glasshouse suggests the walls are "early C19" and glasshouse is "late C18/early C19".</p>			
<p>Other key dates in development:</p> <p>Dec. 1539: Launde Abbey was surrendered to the dissolution commissioners. The estate passed to Thomas Cromwell who was imprisoned and executed in 1540.</p> <p>1541: Launde was granted to Gregory Cromwell, Thomas' son, who started to rebuild it as a country house and estate.</p> <p>1765: After several owners, Launde was bought by John Simpson of Leicester.</p> <p>Late C18 –mid C19: The use of hypocaust heating for hot walls was popular for extending the season for fruiting tress in Britain & Europe.</p> <p>Early C19: The ha-ha, ice house, walled kitchen garden and large cast iron greenhouse were built, according to Historic England listings.</p> <p>1826 : Launde Abbey estate was inherited by Mary Finch Simpson.</p> <p>1828: Mary Finch Simpson married Edward Dawson of Whatton Hall – which has a walled kitchen garden, built in 1802, very similar to that at Launde in size, shape and orientation. This suggests that the one at Launde could have been built to the same design some time after 1828.</p>				

1829: the service wing ranges to the house were built of brick by Thomas Rickman (earlier house and stables are of stone). The kitchen garden walls and the ice house (also brick & shows the Dawson crest) were also constructed around this time.

1843: Mary Dawson died after which Edward Dawson lived principally at Whatton.

1859: Edward Dawson died and was buried at Launde. He was succeeded by Capt. Edward Finch Dawson who resided principally at Launde until the 1880s.

1886-1946: Launde is let to a succession of residents including Sir Henry Tate in 1932.

1946: The Dawson family put the house and gardens up for sale and advertised in Country Life magazine.

1957: Estate sold to the Colemans who presented it to the Diocese of Leicester for conversion to its current use as a retreat house.

Size and brief description:

The walled kitchen garden is situated 145m. (470 ft.) ESE of the main house. It is 1.37 acres in area, trapezoidal in shape with an exact E-W alignment. The ground has a slight W-E upward slope.

The north wall is 240ft. long and the south wall 300 ft. long. The distance between the north & south walls is 180 ft.

Two lean-to glasshouses are located along the inside of the north wall with brick bothies built along the outside of the wall behind them.

The main entrance to the garden from the house is a doorway at the northwest corner. Other doorways through the walls are inserted between the two glasshouses, inside the cast iron greenhouse, to the east of the cast iron greenhouse and at the mid-point of the south wall. There is currently a large gap in the walls at the southwest corner but this was originally continuous as shown on a 1949 aerial photograph.

Internal layout of the garden on the 1884 OS map had a north-south central path aligned with doorways in the north and south walls, which is bisected by a circular dipping pond. This is still the current layout with rectangular plots to either side of the central axis with grass pathways in between.

The dipping pond is built of brick with steps on one side leading down below the water level. Currently fenced off.

Current Use: Kitchen garden for Launde Abbey residents and visitor's café.

Features: further information and current condition:

Walls, doors, gates

All four walls are of red brick, between 11-12.5 ft. high and topped with flat stone copings. Some sections have been extensively rebuilt over time, especially the E and W walls. There are no buttresses.

All bricks are 8.5 x 4 x 2.5" irrespective of age and appear mostly

	<p>machine made. Coursing is variable, perhaps due to the varying wall thicknesses, generally based on the Sussex bond but with fewer headers.</p> <p>The west, east and parts of the north walls are 1.5 bricks thick (13"). The S wall is 2.5 bricks thick (23") - probably to take advantage of the warming orientation.</p> <p>The eastern section of the north wall is 2 bricks (18") thick. This section, as well as that behind the cast iron glasshouse, contains ducts for a hypocaust heating system.</p> <p>The southern half of the east wall has been rebuilt – some time after 1949 – as a half-height single brick wall. Other sections of walls, especially the west wall, have also been rebuilt or repaired but to full height and thickness.</p>
Glasshouses	<p>There are two lean-to glasshouses against the southern side of the north wall. Their locations are biased towards the east of the central axis, which means the central north-south pathway is blocked by the larger of the two glasshouses.</p> <p>The larger glasshouse is a vinery, 60 x 18 ft. divided into two equal sections. The Historic England listing describes it as "late C18/early C19". It has a brick base with profiled stone copings and glass panel walls with a sloping glazed roof framed in cast iron. The low glazed front wall has 20 sections, each with 10 glass panes, cast iron glazing bars, and a central pivot for opening. Inside this wall, at ground level, an arched aperture is visible for a vine stem planted externally. The sides walls and partition wall glazing have multiple narrow uprights with overlapping glass panes. The doors are half-glazed with square panes. Slender cast iron columns support the roof.</p> <p>Internal layout has brick-built benches, planters and a large rainwater trough – possibly to increase humidity. The floors are terracotta tiled and some sections clearly have hollow spaces immediately beneath – possibly heating ducts. In the eastern half section there are three arched niches recessed into the back wall with flat shelves for potted plants. There is an inspection hatch in the wall above the end niche (presumably for the hypocaust).</p> <p>Outside the main entrance door are two metal plaques mounted on the brick base. One says "Restored for Canon H Evans" and the other "Restored by Crown Foundry & Clarke Fabrications". Canon Evans was Warden of Launde Abbey from 1983-1992. Crown Foundry was based in Northampton and specialised in cast iron piano frames but is listed as dissolved in 1992. Clarke Fabrications are listed as steel erectors, also of Northampton.</p> <p>The second, smaller greenhouse – currently used for exotics – is 40 x 13 ft. with a wooden frame of similar external profile to the larger greenhouse but with large framed glazing and a (non-original) plastic ribbed roof. Some wall frames are sectioned with swivel panes for ventilation. It has an earth floor with partitioned beds planted with succulents & cacti. There are no benches or planters. The smaller greenhouse is not listed but both are shown on the 1884 OS map.</p>

Frames	<p>Four blocks of frames and two small greenhouses are shown on the OS maps up to 1930 in a rectangular enclosure to the north of the bothies. The 1904 and 1930 maps appear to show a boiler house attached to the greenhouse in the northeast corner. The aerial photo of 1950 shows three blocks of frames in use and a small greenhouse adjacent to one of those in the 1904 OS map (not the one with the boiler house, which does not show).</p> <p>The bases of two frames nearest the bothies currently remain but are derelict and no traces of the others are visible above ground.</p>
Pits	None
Hot walls/ furnaces	<p>Sections of the north wall are hollow and there are inspection hatches giving access to internal flues at various locations.</p> <p>Inside the bothy to the west end of the north wall are two open rectangular apertures to the hollow wall of a hypocaust system showing soot staining inside and crumbled remains of what may be plaster – often used to line smoke filled ducts. The arched top of a stoking hearth is clearly visible at floor level below. This section of wall is outside the floor plan of the glasshouses and so would have additional heat for fruit trees trained against the south side of the wall (a fruit tree is there currently).</p> <p>There are two inspection apertures on the outside of the north wall to the east of the bothy and one at a similar position inside the cast iron greenhouse adjacent to the three recessed niches. All of these openings have stone covers with inset metal rings for ease of removal.</p> <p>The hollow spaces apparent beneath the tiled floor of the cast iron greenhouse suggest that a part of the hypocaust (or other system) may have provided under-floor heating for the greenhouses.</p>
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	<p>In an interview in 2008, a former gardener at Launde, John Sills, recalled that the boiler house behind a greenhouse in the frame-yard might have been used to heat the hypocaust walls as well as the greenhouses.</p>
Backsheds, workrooms, stores	<p>There are two single storey blocks of brick built sheds/bothies (not listed by Historic England) on the outside of the N wall with Georgian style windows.</p> <p>These are currently used as tool storage but there is some evidence of earlier racking fixtures perhaps for fruit storage or mushrooms.</p> <p>One section of bothy to the east side (behind the niches in the cast iron greenhouse) was demolished several years ago when it became unstable but clear traces remain on the walls including two hatches for access to hypocaust flues.</p>
Gardener's house, cottages, bothies	<p>The Launde guidebook suggests that gardening staff lived in the bothies, at least in summer, one of which has a small corner fireplace.</p>

Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	The dipping pond has a constant water level and clearly has a permanent water supply. An ancient saw mill was sited in the vicinity of the orchard to the south of the walled garden and would have needed a constant flow for power. Staff have referred to a silted up reservoir somewhere above the site.	
Planting	<p>Fruit trees are currently trained on the insides of the north and south walls. Intermediate beds have soft fruit, vegetables, salads, herbs & flowers planted.</p> <p>Aerial photographs taken by Cambridge University from 1948-50 show fruit trees trained along the outside of the S wall. The 1949 photograph shows internal planted linear beds with some lines of fruit trees as well as fruit trained against the walls. It shows slip beds beyond the south wall and beyond that the remains of an orchard (approximately 3 acres), which is shown on all the OS maps up to 1987.</p> <p>John Sills recalled planted beds (slips) along the south side of the south wall with damsons or plums planted at the eastern end.</p> <p>The Friends of Launde historic guidebook refers to figs and peaches being grown in the greenhouses in the frameyard behind the bothies.</p>	
Other key features		
Any other information:		
Date site visited	May/June 2015	
References:	<p>Aerial photographs: - Cambridge University CUCAP: ref. AZ63, AZ64, CU3, CU4 Historic England Listings: Launde Abbey Leicestershire Records Office : - Ordnance Survey Maps - Victoria History of the County of Leicestershire - T.S. Hughes: The History of England - Launde Archives Parks & Gardens UK: Record 5216 – Summary, History Friends of Launde: A Short History & Guide to Launde Abbey Launde Abbey Historic Building Assessment North West Leicestershire Record (.pdf): Whatton House Garden of Special Historic Interest. Grace's Guide: British Industrial History</p>	
Researched by:	Keith Aldridge	
Record Compiled by:	Keith Aldridge	Date: 26 November 2015

ILLUSTRATIONS



Aerial photograph - June 1949



View of greenhouses from south – dipping pond in foreground



HE Listed iron framed greenhouse



Eastern section of bothies - now storage



Wall of old bothy with duct covers for hypocaust system