

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

Name of House:	Cold Overton Hall (The walled kitchen garden is now Gates Garden Centre)			
Address for the walled kitchen garden:	Somerby Road Cold Overton Leicestershire LE15 7QB			
Ownership:	Private	Public	Institutional	Other: Commercial
Grid reference: SK811099		Map No: Explorer 234		
Official Designations	Designation: Historic England listing for Cold Overton Hall and Adjoining Garden Walls	Reference:  189859	Grade:  I	
Date original WKG created:	1818 (see below)			
<p>Other key dates in development:</p> <p>C 1660: The House was built by John St. John (Pevsner and Williamson 1984)</p> <p>1818: The Walled Kitchen was created by John Frewin Turner, the owner of Cold Overton Hall. The inscription: JFT 1818 is carved on the keystone above an archway which would have been the main entrance into the walled kitchen garden.</p> <p>1914/15: The house was restored and enlarged by James Montague, the owner at that time. (Pevsner and Williamson 1984)</p> <p>1920: The estate, including the walled kitchen garden, was put up for sale. (<i>Jackson Stops Sale Particulars for Cold Overton Hall. 1920</i>)</p> <p>1946: The estate, including the walled kitchen garden, was again put up for sale. (<i>Escritt and Barrell Sale Particulars for the Cold Overton Hall Estate. 1946</i>)</p> <p>The latter failed to sell and was rented by Fred and Ivy Gates to use as a market garden.</p> <p>1950: The size of the Hall was reduced with the 1914 additions mostly demolished.</p> <p>1951: There was a further sale of the estate, including the walled kitchen garden (<i>Knight, Frank &amp; Rutley Sale Particulars for Cold Overton Hall. 1951</i>)</p> <p>On this occasion, Fred and Ivy Gates purchased the former walled kitchen garden and continued to develop it as a market garden.</p>				

<p>1950's: Fred's son, Brian Gates, joined him in the business in the mid 1950's. The market garden continued to expand, selling produce into nearby Oakham, Melton and Leicester, as well as selling a small amount direct to the public.</p> <p>1980's Commercial growing expanded further in the 1980's and the business began supplying large companies including Tesco and other major supermarkets. Sales to the public also increased significantly during this time and it was during the mid 1980's when the nursery began to evolve into the destination garden centre that it is today.</p>	
Size and brief description:	<p>3 acres (according to 1951 sale particulars).</p> <p>The walled kitchen garden is located approximately a quarter of a mile from the Hall, on the south side of the Somerby Road. It is therefore completely separate from the gardens belonging to the Hall. The site slopes quite steeply due south.</p>

<b>Current Use:</b> As a commercial garden centre	
<b>Features: further information and current condition:</b>	
Walls, doors, gates	<p>The original main entrance is on the Somerby Road. The gate is flanked by brick pillars and the walls to either side of the gates form a semi-circular concave shape.</p> <p>According to the OS map, there do not appear to be any additional entrances into the garden.</p> <p>The north wall still remains and the original east wall is visible inside the Garden Centre (near the pay tills). This wall is sloping, rather than stepped, following the gradient of the land.</p> <p>The walls are approximately eight feet high and are constructed in a variation of English Garden Wall bond. The copings are flat York stone.</p>
Glasshouses	<p>The sale particulars of 1920, 1946 and 1951 list various glasshouses which no longer exist, with the exception of a small "oval" glasshouse, which was relocated to a house in the village (Oval refers to the roof shape not the base).</p> <p>The following glasshouses were listed:</p> <p>Four span-roofed Richardsons houses on brick foundations, about 40 ft x 12 ft. (W. Richardson &amp; Co. were hot-water engineers and greenhouse manufacturers from Darlington)</p> <p>One lean-to heated glasshouse.</p> <p>(The present-day No. 8 greenhouse is where the row of Richardsons glasshouses were located.)</p> <p>All the glasshouses were heated.</p>
Frames	<p>Three sets of concrete cold frames.</p> <p>One large double-span heated frame on brick foundations</p>

	(Sale particulars 1920)
Pits	None listed
Hotwalls/furnaces	The current owner has advised that all the external walls were heated.
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	“Robin Hood” Boiler: Beeston Boiler Co. (1920 and 1946 Sale Particulars)
Backsheds, workrooms, stores	A brick and slated range of potting sheds; toolshed; motor-mower shed; flower potting shed with shelving; store shed and office at the end with electric light. (1946 Sale particulars)  None of these remain.
Gardener’s house, cottages, bothies	In the 1946 Sale Particulars, the Gardener’s cottage is described as “brick and slate and contains: living room; kitchen; scullery; cellar and three bedrooms; outside tool place; coal place; piggery and E.C. Electricity is laid on and water is from pump”  There is no evidence of a bothy though the present owner believes that there was one.  The Gardener’s cottage still exists today, alongside the Somerby Road.
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	Water to the Head Gardener’s cottage was from a pump but there is no indication of the source of water for the walled kitchen garden (1946 sale particulars)
Planting	The 1885 OS map shows the garden divided by paths into four equal sections  The 1920 sale particulars refer to the walled kitchen garden being “entered through a charming Rosery”. This is believed to have been in an Italianate style as there is a stone plaque with a lion’s head inserted into the north wall, adjacent to the entrance.  Other references to planting include:  “highly cultivated and well stocked with fruit trees, bush fruit, asparagus beds, etc. (1920 sale particulars)
Other key features	None
Any other information:	See separate Appendix for notes of an interview with the present owner.
Date site visited	18 September 2015
References:	OS Map Surveyed 1884, published 1885 25”:1 mile XXVII-16 (accessed from National Library of Scotland website: <a href="http://www.nls.uk">www.nls.uk</a> )  OS Map revised 1902, published 1904 25”:1 mile. XXVII-16 (accessed from Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and

	<p>Rutland)</p> <p>Jackson Stops Sale Particulars: Cold Overton Hall, Leicestershire 1920. Record Office Ref: DE 643</p> <p>Escritt and Barrell Sale Particulars: The Cold Overton Estate. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1946. Record Office Ref: DE3762</p> <p>Knight, Frank &amp; Rutley Sale Particulars for Cold Overton Hall. 1951. (Document belongs to present owner)</p> <p>Pevsner, N. &amp; Williamson E. (1984) <i>The Buildings of England Leicestershire and Rutland</i> Penguin Books Limited</p> <p>Nigel Gates, current owner of Gates Garden Centre (Interviewed 18 September 2015)</p>	
<p>Researched by:</p>	<p>Sue Blaxland, Sarah Bailey, Karen Gimson</p>	
<p>Record Compiled by:</p>	<p>Sue Blaxland</p>	<p>Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017</p>

## **APPENDIX**

Record of Interview with Nigel Gates on 18 September 2015

(He is the present owner of Gates Garden Centre and grandson of Fred and Ivy Gates, who started the original business)

Fred Gates was a foreman gardener at Waddesdon Manor, which had 70 full time gardeners. He then worked on the Sandringham Estate, where he met and married, Ivy, whose father ran the electricity plant for the Estate. The King's head gardener, Mr Cooke (?) recommended Fred for the job of head gardener at Knossington Grange (mid 1930's) and this was how he came to Leicestershire, working for the Straker family. Mr and Mrs Straker had no children and, after their deaths, the Grange was left to a nephew, Lord Rossmore, who sold it.

Fred had intended to go back to Hertfordshire but the walled kitchen garden at Cold Overton came on to the market and he first rented it, in 1948 then bought it, in 1951. Fred's son, Brian Gates, joined him in the business in the mid 1950's. The market garden continued to expand, selling produce into nearby Oakham, Melton and Leicester, as well as selling a small amount direct to the public. Commercial growing expanded further in the 1980's and the business began supplying large companies including Tesco and other major supermarkets. Sales to the public also increased significantly during this time, and it was during the mid 1980's when the nursery began to evolve into the destination garden centre that it is today.



Original Entrance Gate viewed from inside the garden centre. Shows concave shape of wall and stone carving inserted into the wall.



Aerial view taken from a photograph belonging to the present owner. This shows the walled kitchen garden, in use as a plant nursery/garden centre but before the west, east and south walls were either demolished or incorporated into new buildings.



Entrance archway with JFT 1818 inscribed into keystone



“Oval” greenhouse in private garden in village