

Leicestershire & Rutland Gardens Trust

Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Whatton House		
Address:	Kegworth LE67 3EE		
Ownership:	Private		
Grid Reference: SK42 SE5/203		Map No: OS Landranger: No 129	
Official Designations	Historic England listing for Whatton House & Attached Stables Reference: 1359393 (16 January 1989) Grade II 1000968 (1 February 1987) Grade II		
Date original WKG created:	C1802 (<i>Historic England SK4924</i>)		
Other key dates in development:			
1802-3	Exchange of manors was made between Thomas March-Philipps of Garendon Park and Edward Dawson, through which the latter became Lord of Whatton (<i>Nichols, 1804</i>).		
1802-3	Dawson demolished the old house and replaced it with a house built on high ground and set in a landscape park 1.5km to the north-east of Loughborough overlooking the River Soar. The house was built by Leicester architect John Johnston who also designed the County Rooms in Leicester (<i>Historic England, 1987</i>).		
c1840	The Dawsons sold the house to John Martin and moved to Launde Abbey (<i>Lord Crawshaw, 1978</i>).		
1876	House sold by John Martin and purchased by the first Lord Crawshaw, Thomas Brooks (<i>Martin Manuscripts, 1867-1875</i>).		
1870s and 1880s	Following a series of fires, the house was largely rebuilt and extended (<i>Historic England, 1987</i>). The stables and Walled Kitchen Garden were unaffected by the fires (<i>Whatton House & Gardens website</i>).		
1939-45	During the 2nd World War the house was used as a Maternity Hospital for expectant mothers from London. The family returned to the House after the war (<i>Lord Crawshaw, 1978</i>).		

Size and brief description:	The brick-walled kitchen garden which adjoins the west side of the stables was laid out c1802 (<i>Historic England, 1987</i>). Roughly trapezoid in shape, it measures approximately 90m east to west by 50m and slopes slightly down west to east. The main compartments, some of which remain under cultivation, contain much glass, some late C19 but mostly post-dating the second world war when market gardening was carried on. Along the north side of the garden are back sheds, a frameyard, and a gardener's house (<i>Parks & Gardens website; Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust (LRGT) site visit 2018</i>). See rough sketch map, <i>Figure 14</i> .
Current Use:	Remains under part cultivation by the owners for vegetable and fruit growing. A small section is used by a small nursery business. It is not open to the public (<i>Whatton House and Gardens website</i>).

Features: further information and current condition

Walls, doors and gates	Red brick walls of mainly 9 x 4 x 2.5" hand made bricks laid in Flemish bond (Figure 9) surround all four sides of the kitchen garden, the east wall following the line of the stables (<i>rough sketch map Figure 14</i>). Flat stone copings top the walls, with decorative urns set at intervals on the south and west walls. There are no buttresses.
	At some stage a hot wall on the north west side, no longer in use, was extended by six courses of factory made bricks. Lean to glass houses were erected against the extended wall. This increased height would have maximised light exposure.
	The frame yard wall was re-built c2007 (oral evidence) as it had become unstable. An attractive curved brick lintel has been inserted at the site of the original entrance to the pleasure grounds.
	There are six entrances to the WKG. The original entrance from the frame yard into the WKG was bricked up at some stage and a new entrance created (<i>Figure 7</i>). We have been unable to establish when this was but it may have been when the hot wall fell out of use in favour of using glasshouses.
	A decorative wrought iron double gate at the centre of the wall on the south side (<i>Figures 3 & 4</i>) leads out to the Broad Walk, A second decorative wrought iron single gate in the SE corner provides access to the house and swimming pool terrace.
	Two doors lead into the stables/stable yard, one of which has been boarded up.
	A door on the back wall of the Messenger glasshouse leads directly into the back sheds.

Glasshouses	<p>Five glasshouses run along the north wall. Two part-sunken double span glasshouses run parallel to these and are set in by approximately five metres. Some are late C19 but most post-date the Second World War when market gardening was carried on in the garden (<i>Head Gardener's oral information; Lord Crawshaw 1978</i>).</p> <p>The first lean to glass house, which adjoins the Bothy, is by Messenger and is the oldest. The next two, both three quarter span glasshouses, are by Foster and Pearson, as are the two part sunk double span glasshouses. Throughout, much of the original beaver tailed shaped glass panes remain. These would have encouraged the water to flow away from the wooden glazing bars to the centre of the panes.</p> <p>The two glasshouses to the west of the main entrance are the latest additions, using Richard and Sons winding mechanisms.</p> <p>The glasshouses are no longer in regular use.</p> <p>In the frameyard, a glass house has been completely re-built to the original design and footprint, including the beaver shaped panes. It is currently in use by a small private nursery (<i>Figure 11</i>).</p>
Frames	<p>There is evidence that there was once an extensive run of cold frames within the frameyard, the remaining bases of which have been converted into an attractive ornamental pond with dolphin sculpture (<i>Figures 10 & 11</i>).</p>
Pits	<p>There is evidence of the remains of pits within the frame yard which have been filled in and are now used as a display area for a small plant nursery.</p>
Hotwalls/furnaces	<p>There is an excellent example of a heated wall on the north west side, no longer in use and part dismantled (<i>Figure 8</i>). Although the chimney associated with the hot wall still exists (now topped with a flat coping stone and weather vane), no evidence of a furnace could be found. This may have been located where the new entrance was created. (See <i>Appendix I by K. Aldridge, 2018, attached.</i>)</p>
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	<p>A small boiler in one of the back sheds is still in use by the Head Gardener. A large boiler is housed in another back shed; although we do not know whether this is still in working order. Some ventilation systems are still in use. The remains of heating pipes, staging and iron supports and gratings are much in evidence throughout.</p>
Backsheds, workrooms and stores	<p>There is a small store built of newer factory bricks on the east side of garden, thought to be a tool shed now used for storage (<i>Head Gardener's oral evidence</i>). A door towards the SE corner leads to a room lined with white tiles also now used as storage, original use unknown.</p>

Backsheds, workrooms, stores, continues	In the Frameyard there are several backsheds, workrooms and stores, including the Head Gardeners Office and a mushroom house (<i>Head Gardener oral evidence</i>) which run along the north wall of the WKG. The slate roof of the open shed to the right of the entrance is supported by attractive circular pillars built of hand made brick 'specials' (<i>Figure 12</i>).
Gardener's house, cottages, bothies	<p>A gardener's house stands to the north east side of the frameyard. The remains of a five-sided, two story bothy is situated in the north west corner within the WKG with exits directly into the WKG and also into the rear yard (<i>Figure 8</i>).</p> <p>A door in the NW corner of the frameyard leads to a part glass-roofed garage.</p>
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	There is a spring fed well in the centre of the WKG. A grating in the SE corner of the WKG covers a water tank. In addition there are water tanks in the stable yard and frameyard (<i>Head Gardener's oral evidence</i>).
Planting	<p>In 1831, writing in the Gardener's Magazine, Alexander Gordon comments that "...the kitchen garden is good and contains some good forcing houses..." We have been unable to find any further descriptions of early planting. Conifers running along the West wall may remain from the time when the WKG operated as a Nursery and Plant Centre (<i>Lord Crawshaw, 1978</i>)</p> <p>Current planting includes fruit and vegetables for use by family and a small area used by small local nursery.</p>
Other key features	The two decorative wrought iron gates leading from the WKG into the pleasure grounds are a reference to the Chinese influence within the main garden, for which Whatton House is well known (<i>Figures 3 & 4</i>).
Any other information:	<p>Although the WKG is no longer open to the public, the pleasure grounds are (2018) and are well known for the unique Chinese Garden and fine species of trees (<i>Whatton House and Gardens website</i>).</p> <p>There is a former icehouse known as the Bogey Hole (listed grade II) which has been converted into a grotto, covered with mounded rockery and is likely to have been initially laid out by Mrs Dawson c 1831 (<i>Gardeners Magazine 1831</i>) (<i>Figure 13</i>).</p>
Date site visited	2nd August 2017; 28th August 2018.

REFERENCES	<p>J Nichols, <u>History and Antiquities of Leicester</u> 3, pt ii (1804), pp 1103-5, (4 vols, in 8 parts, 1795-1811, reprinted 1971), Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office.</p> <p>Lord Crawshaw, <u>Whatton Gardens</u>, 1978, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office, Ref. L712.6</p> <p>Account Book of Trustees of John Martin, 1867-1875, Leicestershire & Rutland Records Office, Ref. DG6/C/68</p> <p>Whatton House & Gardens http://www.whattonhouseandgardens.co.uk/whatton-house/ accessed 16th January 2018</p> <p>Historic England, Grade II, List Entry No: 1000968, first listed 1st February 1987. https://historicengland.org.uk accessed on line 17/1/2018</p> <p>Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, Part 26 Leicestershire</p> <p>Gardeners Magazine, Volume 7, 1831, p 427 bio-diversitylibrary.org (accessed on line 25/4/2018).</p> <p>Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1890; 2nd edition published 1903 3rd edition published 1922 OS; 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1903, all Leicestershire & Rutland Records Office, X.10 and X.11)</p> <p>Country Life, 178 (21 February 1985), pp 456-8 ;</p> <p>G Plumtree, <u>Collins Book of British Gardens</u> (1985), pp 359-60</p> <p>John German records, Whatton Estate, Ref DE 4863/52. Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office.</p> <p>Lady Crawshaw, current owner, site visit discussions, August 2018.</p> <p>Head Gardener discussions August 2018.</p>
Researched by:	<p>Sheila Burnage, Judith Hibbert & Felicity Hector</p> <p>Appendix by Keith Aldridge</p>
Record Compiled by:	as above
Date:	November 2019



Figure 1: Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden from the South, showing greenhouses 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 2: Well with natural spring in centre of Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 3: Ornamental wrought iron gate on the south side of Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden leading into the Broad Walk. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 4: Close up of Chinese decoration on double wrought iron gate, Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 5: Greenhouse mechanisms showing name of maker, Foster & Pearson, Beeston, Notts, Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila



Figure 6: View of one of the Foster & Pearson part sunken double span greenhouses at Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 7: Bricked up original entrance at Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage).



Figure 8: Close up of brick wall at Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden showing Flemish bond. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



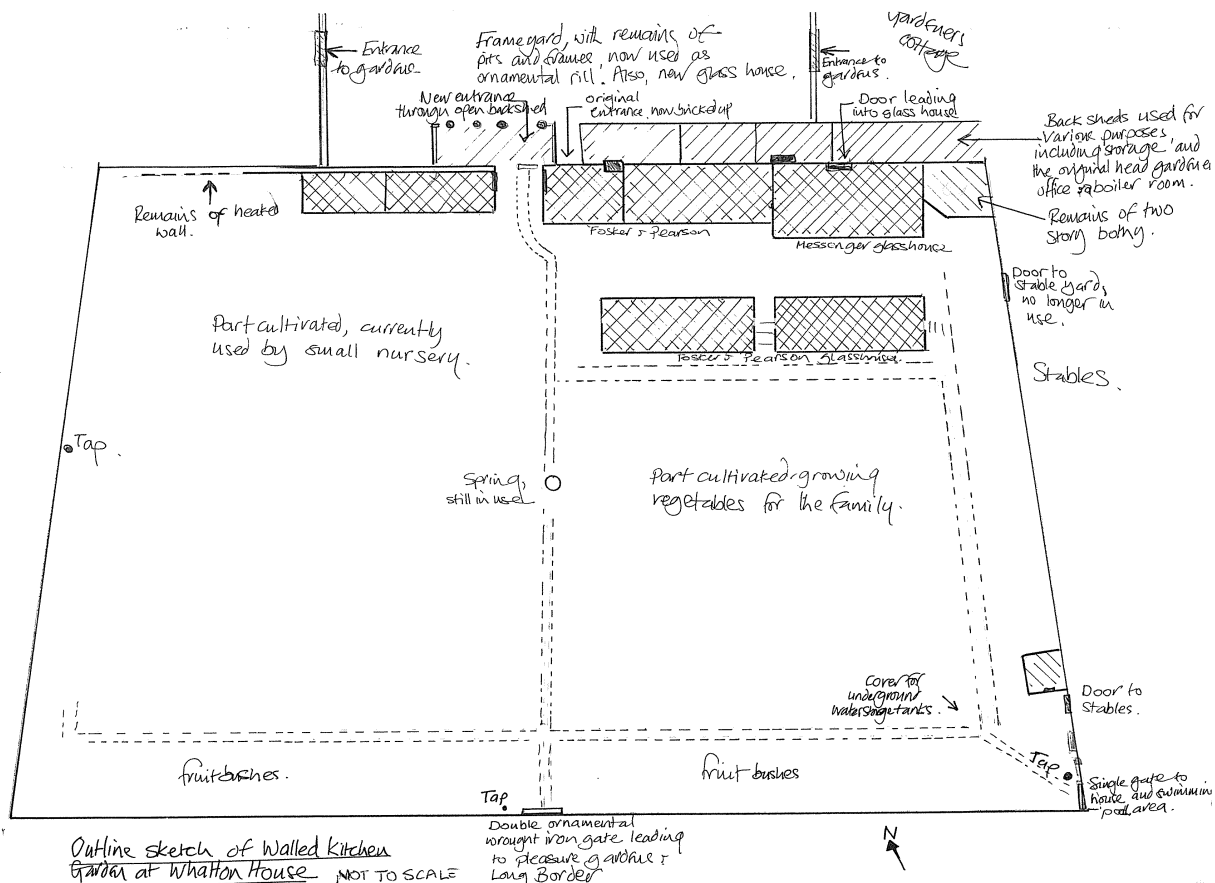
Figure 9: View of part dismantled hot wall, revealing how it was constructed. Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden north wall. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figure 10: View of the remains of a two story octagonal bothy in the north west corner of Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Figures 13 and 14: The frame yard at Whatton House Walled Kitchen Garden, showing whitewashed wall, a newly reconstructed glasshouse based on the original design, evidence of former pits and cold frames and, in the distance, the part glazed garage accessed from the frame yard. 28th August 2018. (Photo: Sheila Burnage)



Appendix I: WHATTON HOUSE HOT WALL

Hot walls were introduced in Europe in the 18C to extend the period for obtaining ripened fruit from cordon trees. The first recorded information on design, construction and operation of hot walls was probably published in Phillip Miller's "Gardener's Dictionary" of 1754.

Miller advised that hot walls should be 10 feet high with brick foundations and hollow flues starting 6" above ground level. There should be four horizontal flues, each above the other, with a furnace in an underground chamber for every 40 feet of wall. The flues would channel hot air (and smoke) from the furnace to a chimney mounted on the top of the wall. Construction of 4 parallel flues would allow the smoke flow to be reversed every 40 feet to the flue above, finally entering the chimney at the end of the topmost flue and roughly above the furnace. The flues should be 9" across and start at 30" deep for the lowest flue, 24" for the second, 18" for the third and 12" for the fourth with each flue roof being a continuous "tile" (extra large bricks) to avoid soot sticking to them. He also suggested lining the flues with a form of plaster for the same reason.

To direct most heat to the wall where the fruit was trained, he suggested a front wall of 4" thickness with a back wall 9" thick, to promote heat retention and wall stability. This gives a total wall thickness of 22" at the bottom. To further aid stability he advised that iron rods should be inserted through the wall, front to back under the tiles, to which hooks could be attached for training fruit at the front.

The use of hot walls became increasingly important in the second half of the 18C when good existing examples at Wentworth Woodhouse and Campsall were built. One significant negative, however, was the cost. Stock bricks were used, which are hand made in box moulds from carefully selected clay and to the size required, and the quantity of bricks required for such elaborate walls was considerable. Plastering the flues was also expensive. Perhaps for these reasons, the hot wall at Whatton House was built to a modified design.

The dimensions revealed by the collapsed section in the middle of Whatton's wall follow Miller's recommendation for the first (lowest) and second flues - i.e. 30" and 24" deep, respectively. The space below is sufficient for a primary flue, also of 30". There is not room for a fourth flue above the 24" section which suggests there were just 3 flues with the chimney at opposite end of the wall to the furnace.

A further departure from Miller is the use of a single standard sized brick for all of the construction. The flue "ceilings" are not oversized brick tiles but two 9" bricks butted together, resting, cantilever style, on protruding half bricks (around 6" long). Above them a single row of bricks, bonded into the external and internal walls, provides some additional stability. The underside of these makeshift "tiles" was probably plastered as there is a considerable amount of sooty plaster which has collapsed onto the base of the exposed flue.

This arrangement would avoid the making of oversized bricks and still give the recommended 9" width. The reason for this may ultimately be cost but it is also noticeable that the stock bricks used have numerous inclusions of pebble sized stone. Sorting out these inclusions would have been time-consuming and expensive. Without such quality control an oversized brick may have been a technical risk and perhaps the extra layer of plain bricks on top of the tiles would have made construction easier but still cheaper than the suggested design.

The bricks used are stock bricks 9"x2.5"x4.25". They seem to be the same as used in the nearby back-shed and were almost certainly made locally. The front (fruit side) wall is a single brick thick (4.25") and the back wall is 9" thick which follows Miller's advice.

Keith Aldridge
September 2018