

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust
Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Great Bowden Hall, formerly Bowden Hall			
Address:	Leicester Lane Great Bowden Market Harborough LE16 7HP			
Ownership:	Private ✓	Public	Institutional	Other
Grid reference:	SP732 891		Map No: Explorer 233	
Official Designations	Designation: English Heritage	Reference: 189708	Grade: II	
Date original WKG created:	It is likely that the WKG was created between 1857 and 1886 when the Britannia Inn was converted into Bowden Hall.			
<p>Other key dates in development:</p> <p>Bowden Hall was not built as an original country house. It was a development and an extension of a much earlier building, the Britannia Inn.</p> <p>Early 19^c – The Britannia Inn was built to serve the canal navvies and waterway workers when the Grand Union canal was opened from Foxton to Market Harborough in 1809.</p> <p>1857 – The property was bought by William Harrington Hay when the canal system became less used due to the development of rail and road transport. He subsequently converted the building into Bowden Hall. It is likely that the WKG was part of this development. The property remained in the Hay family for the next 112 years.</p> <p>1898 – the property was put on the market. It was advertised as a Superior Hunting Box or Family residence. A large WKG is listed as part of the property. Presumably the property remained within the family as indicated above.</p> <p>1970 – Bowden Hall was bought by Geoffrey Page who lived there for 21 years, almost as a recluse.</p> <p>1991-96 – The Hall was not lived in and the fabric began to decline.</p> <p>1996 – The hall was bought by property developers who converted the Hall, the stable block and carriage house into 17 luxury apartments with 2 new lodge houses being built in the grounds. (GBHS)</p> <p>The WKG was left untended for many years but in 2003, the owners of one of the converted farmhouse buildings on the former estate, acquired the WKG and are restoring it as a kitchen garden. (Current owners)</p>				
Size and brief description:	<p>Approximately 0.66 of an acre. The WKG is situated on the opposite side of Leicester Lane to the Hall. The South wall borders the road and there was originally a farmyard outside the western wall. The buildings there have been converted into dwellings. The canal is on the West side of the farmyard.</p> <p>The garden slopes gently down towards the North, more so on the Eastern side. It is rectangular in shape but the South side is</p>			

	on a slant as it follows the line of the adjacent road.
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Current Use: After years of neglect this WKG has been sympathetically restored and is being developed as a garden by the current owners.	
Features: further information and current condition:	
Walls, doors, gates	<p>The original walls were a mixture of English and Sussex garden wall bond. There are numerous buttresses along the internal faces of the West, North and South walls and along the outside face of the East wall.</p> <p>The walls fell into a state of disrepair at the end of the 20C and the current owners have restored them in a way that is close to the original. The West and North walls have flat blue feather edged coping and the East and South walls have similar coping in red. The original South wall is likely to have had decorative red coping to match that on the walls on the Hall side of the lane. Some of this coping was found in the WKG.</p> <p>On the 1886 OS map it looks as though there was one entrance from the farmyard in the middle of the West wall and another into the lane opposite the hall in the South West corner. No other entrances are marked.</p> <p>Today, in addition, there is a doorway in the North wall towards the Eastern corner and another one at the Northern end of the West wall. This entrance has a raised segmental brick arch and there are five steps down into the garden. Finally the owners have installed a double gate at the Eastern end of the South wall that opens on to the road.</p>
Glasshouses	<p>The 1886 OS map shows a large lean-to glasshouse along almost half of the Northern wall. Parts of the wall retain signs of whitewash where this glasshouse stood. A freestanding glasshouse is shown abutting the central East/West path in the North/West quadrant.</p> <p>None of the original glasshouses are there today. The current owners have erected a large, traditionally styled glasshouse against the Northern wall.</p>
Frames	<p>The 1886 OS map shows 2 frames abutting the North/South path near the Northern wall.</p> <p>There is now a row of frames along the front of the new glasshouse.</p>
Pits	No evidence found
Hotwalls/furnaces	No evidence found
Heating	The 1886 OS map shows a lean-to shed on the outside of the North wall behind where the original glasshouse stood. This is

pipes/boilers etc.	likely to have been the boiler house as some pipework survives in the wall.	
Backsheds, workrooms, stores	The 1886 OS map shows sheds or other small buildings along the West and North walls but, apart from the boiler house, we have not been able to identify their purpose. These buildings are not there today. There is a new shed inside the WKG located in the north west corner.	
Gardener's house, cottages, bothies	The 1886 OS map shows numerous buildings in the farmyard but there exact purpose is unknown.	
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	The 1886 OS map shows a pump by the North wall towards the eastern end. The pump still survives but we found it lying on the ground in that area.	
Planting	<p>The 1886 OS map shows the garden laid out with a path running round the periphery of the site and the interior divided into 4 unequal quarters by more paths. There is no evidence of what was planted.</p> <p>When photographed in the 1980's the WKG was overgrown with low growing bushes and weeds.</p> <p>The current owners have undertaken the massive task of clearing the undergrowth etc. and the garden is now laid out with lawn and fruit trees with small areas cultivated for fruit, flowers and vegetables, including a wild flower area.</p>	
Any other information:	The restoration of the WKG is on going and so what we describe here is a snapshot taken on the day of our visit.	
Date site visited	16 th July 2014	
References:	<p>1st Edition O/S map 1886</p> <p>Discussions with the current owners who kindly showed us the WKG on 16th July 2013.</p> <p>English Heritage: Listed Buildings Register Great Bowden Estate Sales catalogue, 1st November 1898</p> <p>Great Bowden Historical Society, edited by Henry Arthur Jones, Great Bowden, A Village and its People, 1999 (GBHS)O/S</p> <p>Explorer map 233Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office (LRO)Photographs of the property taken from the air, one in the mid 1980's and the other in 2007 (copies provided by the owners)</p>	
Researched by:	Gill Knight, Rowan Roenisch and Elizabeth Bacon	
Record Compiled by:	Gill Knight, Rowan Roenisch and Elizabeth bacon	Date: 15 th February 2016



These 2 aerial photos show the WKG in the 1980's when it was derelict and in 2007 when clearing work had started. The lower photo shows the whitewash on the North wall where there was a glasshouse.





This photo shows the renovated East and South walls and the planting at the time of our visit



This is taken from the outside of the East wall and shows the buttresses. It also shows the extent of the renovation of the wall.



2 examples of the decorative coping that is thought to have been used on the original South wall



The new glasshouse and frames sited along the North wall. Also shown are the new shed, the new fruit cage, the whitewash on the wall from the original glasshouse and the restored doorway near the site of the pump