

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT
OF STAUNTON HAROLD**

**DRAFT
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1. Context

- 1.1. Staunton Harold is a parish and hamlet in NW Leicestershire district. Staunton Harold is about 13 miles S of Derby and about 20 miles SE of Nottingham.
- 1.2. The NW Leicestershire Local Plan (NWLDC, 2021) does not recognise Staunton Harold as a settlement¹. The local plan implies that Staunton Harold is a hamlet – “a small group of dwellings with no services and facilities and where development will be considered in the context of the countryside policy (S3)”.
- 1.3. For statistical purposes, England is divided into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Staunton Harold is in ‘NW Leicestershire 5D’. This LSOA is “among the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country”².
- 1.4. The south part of the conservation area is situated on the Pennine Lower Coal Measures formation of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The north part of the conservation area is situated on the Morridge formation of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The plateau to the east of the conservation area is situated on the Helsby sandstone formation.
- 1.5. The Church Pool and Fish Pond are situated at about 85m AOD. Land rises more steeply from the east bank of the Fish Pond; the conservation area boundary follows a ridge at about 115m AOD. Land rises less steeply from the west bank of the Fish Pond; Crusoe’s Plantation is situated on a plateau at about 105m AOD. The Heath End approach rises gently from a watercourse at about 85m AOD; Joiner’s Cottage is situated at about 105m AOD.

2. Sources

- 2.1. Section 7 contains a bibliography. In addition, the following sources have been consulted:
 - The 1859 ‘Plan of the estate of Earl Ferrers at Staunton Harold’ held at the Leicestershire Record Office (25D53/2179);
 - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale maps of 1882, 1901, 1923 and 1967.

3. Development of the buildings and gardens (c.1538 to the late seventeenth century)

- 3.1. Staunton Harold appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Stantone. The Shirley family acquired Staunton Harold in 1423 by marriage.
- 3.2. Hartley (1984) identifies a “possible village site” on land to the east of the hall. He identifies earthwork features including a hollow way and a “clear platform”. Hartley says that Malthouse Cottages “may have been part of the original village”. Hutton (2012) says that the cottages probably date from the seventeenth century.
- 3.3. Pevsner (1984) says that the hall contains “fragments of an apparently Elizabethan or Jacobean house” (i.e. a house of the mid sixteenth to early seventeenth century).

¹ The local plan recognises Lount as a ‘small village’, i.e. a settlement “with very limited services”.

² There are 32844 LSOAs in England. These are ranked by deprivation with 1 being the most deprived and 16422 being the national median. NW Leicestershire 5D is ranked 21997.

- 3.4. Hill Top Farmhouse is an eighteenth-century house “incorporating earlier parts”. Tree ring analysis of samples “obtained from the roof” identified timbers “cut as part of a single programme of felling ... undertaken between 1630 and 1640” (Arnold, no date).
- 3.5. Sir Robert Shirley, “one of the leaders of the Royalist underground in the East Midlands”³, began the Chapel of the Holy Trinity in 1653; he died in the Tower of London in 1656. The exterior of the chapel was completed c.1662-65.

Development in the late seventeenth century

- 3.6. In the late seventeenth century the first Earl Ferrers “added a new north-east front to the hall and laid out extensive formal gardens around it”. According to the register entry, the formal gardens included “the rectangular Church Pool” and “productive gardens ... immediately NE of the east end of the causeway bridge”.
- 3.7. The register entry says: “The main garden ... lay NE of the hall”. It comprised “terraces ranged either side of a broad axial path ... with a canal across the bottom”. The Gate to Nowhere “originally stood on the NW edge of the main formal gardens” (sic), while the Golden Gates stood at “the entrance to the bowling green”.
- 3.8. Hartley (1984) identifies “four wide terraces” on land to the east of the hall, “which may have formed part of the formal gardens”. The seventeenth century conduit house is immediately south of the upper terrace.

4. Development of the buildings and gardens (mid eighteenth century to 1954)

- 4.1. Map 1 indicates the development of the buildings and gardens from the mid eighteenth century.

Development from the mid eighteenth century to 1804

- 4.2. In the 1760s the fifth Earl Ferrers extended the hall, adding “the east front ... and the projecting wings which enclose the Lion Court”⁴. At the same time “the formal gardens were swept away and the canals made into lakes”. The register entry says that “perhaps the main change ... was the creation of the ‘Fish Pond’ north of the causeway bridge”.
- 4.3. The Gate to Nowhere was “presumably” moved when the formal gardens were swept away. The register entry says that the Golden Gates were moved “at an unknown date” but notes that “pedestrian archways to either side” were added in the late eighteenth century.
- 4.4. A stable block (a “brick quadrangle”) was erected in the late eighteenth century. The register entry says that “it would seem likely that the productive gardens were removed” in the 1760s and some of the existing kitchen garden walling “is probably eighteenth century”.

³ Lacey A (1983) *Sir Robert Shirley and the English Revolution in Leicestershire*. Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society 58.

⁴ The Leicestershire Record Office holds building accounts 1762-68 that “deal with the rebuilding of [the] hall”. Reference 26D53/2506.

- 4.5. The 1821 Ordnance Survey drawing indicates a small building opposite the NW corner of the kitchen garden. In 1859 the building was described as a lodge [i].

Development between 1804 and 1859

- 4.6. In the 1820s “a new pleasure ground was laid out in the area between the hall, chapel and wilderness under the direction of Christopher Chamberlain”. The register entry refers to a “gothick conservatory”⁵. It says that trees around the edge of the lawn “may also be early nineteenth century”.
- 4.7. At some time between 1821 and 1859 the kitchen garden was extended to the east [ii]. The register entry says that some “stretches of the kitchen garden walling probably date from the 1820s and 1830s, when major improvements are documented”. At some time between 1821 and 1859 the ‘Peach House’ was erected and the ha-ha was extended along the west side of the kitchen garden [iii and iv].
- 4.8. At some time before 1859 an outbuilding was erected “in the NW angle of the hall”. An engraving of the north-east front published in 1804 does not indicate the outbuilding (Nichols). At some time between 1821 and 1859, a “timber yard” was erected on land that had been taken out of the deer park [v].

Development between 1859 and 1954

- 4.9. Home Farm and Park View⁶ were erected in 1861 [vi] and Nurseries Cottage and West Lea were erected in 1877 [vii]. The buildings were erected on land that had been taken out of the deer park.
- 4.10. At some time between 1859 and 1882 the tenth Earl Ferrers erected “kennels for the Quorn Hunt” (Hutton, 2012). The building is now ‘Hunt Lodge’.

5. Development of the park, 1821 to 1954

- 5.1. Map 2 indicates the development of the park between 1821 and 1954.
- 5.2. The 1821 Ordnance Survey drawing indicates the extent of the park at that date. The existing stone walls to the SW and NE of the park indicate the extent of the park in 1821. Land to the NW was ‘emparked’ at some time between 1821 and 1859 [1].
- 5.3. In 1830 the eighth Earl Ferrers laid out a “new coach road from the Ashby direction ... with a new lodge and gates” (Hutton, 2012) [2]. At some time between 1821 and 1859 Melbourne Road was straightened and Melbourne Lodge was erected [3]. The list entry describes Melbourne Lodge as mid-nineteenth century.

⁵ The Leicestershire Record Office holds garden accounts 1827-30 including “expenditure on the building of a greenhouse (1830)”. Reference 26D53/2495. The conservatory was demolished c.1899-1923.

⁶ The Leicestershire Record Office holds drawings for “a pair of semi-detached cottages at Staunton Harold” by Henry Ward of Stafford. Reference 26D53/2180.

- 5.4. In 1821 land to the east of the hall had ceased to form part of the park and garden. In 1859 the land comprised 'Hill Side' and 'Wilkins Close'. At some time between 1859 and 1882 the land was 'emparked' [4] and a shelter belt was planted along Melbourne Road. Hill Top House was erected at some time between 1859 and 1882 [5].
- 5.5. In 1906 the tenth Earl Ferrers erected a "mausoleum in the churchyard" for his wife Frances Eugenie⁷. Crusoe's Plantation was laid out at some time between 1903 and 1923.

6. Redevelopment since 1954

- 6.1. Map 3 indicates the redevelopment of the park since 1954.
- 6.2. Staunton Harold Hall was requisitioned by the army in 1940 and its contents were sold in 1949. The National Trust acquired the Chapel of the Holy Trinity in 1954. In June 1956 the River Dove Water Board acquired land to the north of the Fish Pond and demolished the gamekeeper's house [a].
- 6.3. In October 1954 the Staunton Harold estate was offered for sale by auction⁸. The park and garden were offered for sale in four lots: Staunton Harold Hall, part of Hillside Farm⁹, part of Home Farm and the kitchen garden. In July 1955 the Rural District Council granted planning permission for the use of the hall as a nursing home (AR/768)¹⁰.
- 6.4. Between 1954 and 1967 land to the west of the conservation area was 'disemparked' and parkland trees were felled [b].
- 6.5. In 1973 the Rural District Council granted planning permission for the use of the stable block as a dwelling and estate office (AR/4835). In 1976 the District Council granted temporary planning permission for Mr Herbert to use part of the stable block as a "craft pottery and showroom" (76/1240/P)¹¹. Between 1977 and 1983 the District Council granted planning permission for a mix of uses at the stable block including showrooms and workshops¹².
- 6.6. In 1975 the District Council granted planning permission for a bungalow ('Wetecroft') in the kitchen garden (75/0431/R). In 1989 we granted planning permission for the change of use of the kennels to four apartments (89/0813/P); an 'amenity area' and garage were developed on land to the north [viii]. In 1991 we granted planning permission for the change of use of the "timber yard" to a house (91/0840/P).

⁷ See www.mmtrust.org.uk/mausolea/view/107/Ferrers_Mausoleum.

⁸ The Leicestershire Record Office holds three copies of the auction sales particulars. References 26D53/536b, DE646/5 and L333.

⁹ 'The Malthouse' was offered for sale as a separate lot (lot 12).

¹⁰ The register entry refers to trees "felled in the late 1950s".

¹¹ "At various times we tried unsuccessfully to obtain permission for conversion to houses and for bulk storage. In 1974 Geoff Herbert came asking if he could rent some rooms to start a pottery. I sent him off to the council offices without much expectation of seeing him again. To my surprise he was back a few weeks later." Blunt (2001).

¹² Planning permission was granted for a dwelling (77/0593/P), a "pottery and showroom" (79/0136/P), a "studio and showroom" (80/0525/P), a "tea room" (81/0386/P) and two workshops with living accommodation (83/0220/P and 83/0703/P).

- 6.7. In 1989 the District Council granted planning permission for a car park [ix and 6] on land to the south of the kitchen garden (89/0814/P) and “two small areas of car parking” at Staunton Harold Nurseries (89/0871/P). Before 1989 “a considerable amount of overspill parking [had occurred] in a random manner on driveway verges and on grassed areas”¹³.
- 6.8. Agricultural buildings at Hill Top Farm were erected c.1991 following a fire (91/0224/P). Additional agricultural buildings were erected before 2005, affecting the alignment of the “straight elm-lined avenue” [c and 7].
- 6.9. At ‘West Lea’ land was added to the residential curtilage at some time before 2005 [x]. In 2019 we granted planning permission for a “garden building and implement store” [xi] at Joiner’s Cottage (19/01086/FUL).

7. Bibliography

Arnold A (no date) *Tree ring analysis of timbers from Hill Top Farm*

Blunt J (2001) “Adapting to change: Staunton Harold over the last fifty years”. In Fox J (2001) *Staunton Harold*

Hartley R (1984) *Medieval earthworks of NW Leicestershire*

Hutton B (2012) *Staunton Harold: Houses and people in a Leicestershire parish*

Nichols (1804) *The history and antiquities of the county of Leicester: West Goscote Hundred*

NW Leicestershire District Council (2021) *NW Leicestershire Local Plan*

Stevens H (1821) *Ordnance Survey drawing: Hartshorn*

¹³ NWLDC (2001) said that a car park was created c.1986 to the south of the kitchen garden “to compensate for the closure of an informal parking area provided below the conduit house”.