

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

STOWELL PARK

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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**STOWELL PARK**

Name: STOWELL PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Yanworth

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.814537  
Longitude: -1.8732555  
National Grid Reference: SP 08834 12886  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1000783  
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

## Details

A C17/C18 landscape park, enclosing late C19 terrace gardens by Sir John Belcher.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Stowell Park estate, part of the manor of Northleach, was acquired in the late C16 or early C17 by Robert Atkinson (d 1607), Recorder of Oxford, who probably built the present house, on the site of an earlier one. The estate passed to his son, Henry, who bequeathed it, c 1640, to Robert's great nephew, William, second Earl of Strafford. On William's death in 1685, the estate was sold to the MP John Grubham Howe (c 1660-1722). The seat of his son John (d 1742), who was created Lord Chedworth, was at Cassey Compton but the third Lord Chedworth, Henry-Frederick Howe, returned to Stowell and died there in 1781.

In 1811 Stowell Park was sold to Sir William Scott, a judge of the Admiralty Court, who was created Lord Stowell in 1821. William died in 1824 and his brother, Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor, inherited. His main seat was Encombe (qv), in Dorset, but the seventh Earl came to live at Stowell Park and employed Sir John Belcher from 1886 to 1898. Belcher enlarged the house, altered much of its interior, and laid out the terrace gardens to its west and south-west.

In 1913, Sydney Tatchell was employed to make additions and alterations, including the conversion of the stables to a ballroom. In 1923 the Earl of Eldon sold Stowell Park to the Hon Samuel Vestey. It remains in private hands today (1999).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Stowell Park lies on the Foss Way, c 3km south-west of Northleach and 15km south-east of Cheltenham. The registered area of c 50ha is enclosed by the Foss Way on its south-east side, the small River Coln to the west, and a minor road from Northleach to Chedworth to the north-west. The registered area is bounded by drystone walls ranging from 1m to 2m in height, but the park (as shown on OS map of 1903) actually extends further south-west, to the village of Fossebridge, c 2km south-west of Stowell Park house.

The house and terrace gardens are on the highest part of the park and have views over the park and surrounding farmland, to Chedworth Woods and the hills to the west and south-west.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** There are three entrances to Stowell Park. The main entrance is from the Foss Way: John Belcher probably designed the late C19 lodge, gates, and piers which stand 550m east-south-east of Stowell Park house. The

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one-and-a-half-storey lodge (listed grade II) of limestone rubble is rectangular in plan, with a circular turret at the front-left corner. It is connected by a short length of wall to the cast- and wrought-iron gate and ashlar gate piers with ball finials to its south-west (all listed grade II). From the lodge, a winding drive leads first north and then west, entering the pleasure gardens between two gatehouses, with gate piers and gates (all listed grade II), c 90m south of Stowell Park house. These were probably also designed by John Belcher and the two-storey Tudor-style gatehouses are of coursed squared and dressed limestone, with stone slate roofs. The gate piers are of ashlar and have wrought- and cast-iron gates.

A second entrance, the only direct entrance to the park before the late C19, is 400m north of Stowell Park house, on the minor road. A wooden gate is supported by two unornamented, square limestone piers, c 1.5m high. The drive beyond is lined to the west by a row of sycamores (planted C20) with a low drystone wall just behind. A wooden gate, between two 2m high ashlar piers with ball finials, is set into the wall, c 280m from the entrance. A drive once led south from here, to the original entrance to the pleasure grounds. A hawthorn hedge stands to the east of the drive, which leads south-east, along the boundary of the registered area, and joins another drive leading south-west from the Home Farm to Stowell Park house.

The third entrance is c 300m east of the second, on the same road, and has a pair of wooden gates between two 1.5m high ashlar piers with ball finials. A hedge-lined drive leads south from the gates to the Home Farm complex, then south-west to Stowell Park house, 80m from which it is met by the second (back) drive.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Stowell Park house (listed grade II\*) stands in the middle of its park, c 500m north-west of the Fosse Way. It was built c 1600 for Robert Atkinson and enlarged by John Belcher from 1886 to 1898. It is a two-storey building with a complex plan, comprising an L-shaped Elizabethan main body. The north front (five bays) and west front (the Elizabethan entrance front) are of ashlar, as is that of the ballroom, and have hipped and crenellated roofs. Other walls are of limestone rubble. In the C19, the Cotswold-style south front, with the present entrance, was added by Belcher and summerhouses were attached to the north-west and south-west corners of the west front.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** To the south of Stowell Park is the Green Court, an extensive formal lawn through which the drive to the forecourt and main entrance passes. The entrance to the Green Court is flanked by two stone pillars with carved stone vases, on either side of which are Belcher's Tudor-style gatehouses (or summerhouses). The lawn is bounded to the west by a high hedge and limestone ashlar balustrading, with two sets of steps leading from the drive to the upper terrace (all listed grade II). To the east, the lawn is bounded by an embanked terrace and a shrub and timber belt.

A series of three late C19 terraces (c 100m by 20m), by Belcher, to the west and south-west of Stowell Park house are mainly occupied by lawns and have fine views to the south and south-west. A belt of trees runs along the north wall of the pleasure gardens and occasional trees stand on and between the terraces. The top terrace has stone balustrading with ball ornament. The lower terraces are approached by stone steps at either end. At each end of the middle terrace is a pair of C18 ashlar gate piers with ball finials. A grass path, flanked by low, clipped yew hedges, continues north on the same alignment as the terrace to a third set of piers, c 40m north of a dovecote, which mark the former entrance to Stowell Park house. A series of substantial clipped yew hedges extend at right-angles from the back (east) wall of this terrace. The third, and lowest, terrace was a bowling green 'with room for several tennis courts' (Sale particulars, 1923). It has a roofed seat, facing north, at its south end. A swimming pool and tennis court are located on a lower level, below the terraces.

Shrubs and high stone walls enclose the pleasure grounds on the east side and screen the back drive and path to the stable block (listed grade II). This late C19 building, probably by Belcher, is a one-and-a-half-storey, four-sided courtyard of limestone rubble with a stone slate roof, with domestic accommodation at the front.

The church of St Leonard (listed grade I) stands 30m north-east of Stowell Park house. Built in the C12, C13, and C17, mainly of limestone rubble with some dressed limestone blocks and ashlar, it was restored in 1898. It has a cross-gabled roof over the former central tower and a bell turret at the east end of the nave.

A C17 dovecote (listed grade II) stands c 50m north-west of Stowell Park house and has double herbaceous borders leading up to it. It has a cross-gabled roof and the walls are mainly of limestone rubble, except for south front (facing Stowell Park house), which is of ashlar, perforated by pigeon holes.

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**PARK** The park is completely enclosed by drystone walls, c 1m high on all but that part of the boundary which runs along the Foss Way. Here the walls are of roughly coursed rubble with flat stone capping, and up to 2m high. A lengthy belt of trees, mainly beech and pine, runs along the south-east boundary, just inside the wall.

The park contains scattered mature trees, mainly oaks (some of which are probably more than 300 years old), as well as occasional clumps of mature trees. A pool and coppice lie 400m south of Stowell Park house. A horse paddock, playing field, and pavilion (c 8ha in total) are to be found at the easternmost point of the park.

The registered area is part of a former deer park, which was once more extensive. In 1923, it contained 'nine-hole golf links' (Sale particulars).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Two brick- and stone-walled kitchen and fruit gardens (c 1ha) lie to the east of Stowell Park house, north-east of the stable court, and are accessed via the back drive. By 1923 they contained a variety of buildings, including an orchid house, a peach house, a propagating house, greenhouse, boiler house, potting sheds, lean-to vineries etc (ibid). The gardener's house was part of the stable block.

#### REFERENCES

D Verey, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire The Cotswolds* (1970), pp 420-1 *Victoria History of the County of Gloucestershire VII*, (1981), p 176 J Sales, *West Country Gardens* (1981) N Kingsley, *The Country Houses of Gloucestershire, Volume One, 1500-1660* (1989)

Maps Map of the Parish of Hampnett, c 1800 (D363 P3), (Gloucestershire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1882, published 1883 2nd edition published 1903 3rd edition published 1920

Archival items Sale particulars, 1811 (D1388 SL3), (Gloucestershire Record Office) Stowell Park Estate valuation, 1900 (D763/1), (Gloucestershire Record Office) Stowell Park Estate, Sale particulars, 1923 (D5658/14), (Gloucestershire Record Office)

Description written: November 1999 Register Inspector: TVAC Edited: April 2003

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.