

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

LYME PARK

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

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Name:	LYME PARK
District:	Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Disley
District:	Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Lyme Handley
District:	Cheshire East (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Pott Shrigley
National park:	PEAK DISTRICT
label.localisation:	Latitude: 53.337447 Longitude: -2.0573584 National Grid Reference: SJ 96278 82284 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000642 Date first listed: 10-Jun-1985

## Details

A medieval deer park, landscaped in the later C17 and C18, and gardens and pleasure grounds of C17 to C20 date, associated with a country house.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Legh family acquired Lyme by gift in 1398. It became the family's principal seat in the mid C16 when Sir Piers Legh (1514-89) built the core of the present house. In the late C17 a scheme of formal avenues and vistas was laid out. In the 1720s and 1730s the existing house was greatly enlarged and remodelled for Peter Legh (1669-1744) by Giacomo Leoni (c 1686-1746). In the early C19 many of the interiors were remodelled by Lewis Wyatt (1777-1853), who also added an Orangery and remodelled the gardens for Thomas Legh (1792-1857). Legh's nephew and successor, William John Legh (1828-98), was created first Lord Newton in 1892. In 1946 the third Lord Newton gave the Hall and 1323 acres (c 550ha) to the National Trust, which in 1947 granted a ninety-nine-year lease on Lyme to Stockport Corporation. In 1994 direct management of the property reverted to the National Trust, although Stockport continues to make an annual contribution to its maintenance.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Lyme Park lies on high moorland on the western edge of the Peak District, at the south end of the Pennines 10.5km south-east of Stockport. The landform is dominated by a series of ridges running north/south connected by steep-sided valleys. Most notable is Elmerhurst Valley, which runs down the centre of the park, from south-west of the main, north entrance to Mill Pond north-west of the Hall. While much of the northern and western

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parts of the park have fertile and productive grassland, the higher eastern and southern parts, especially Park Moor, have a thinner, unimproved sward. The northern tip of the park adjoins the A6 road from Stockport, while to the north-west, south-west and north-east watercourses define the line of the park boundary, the nine-mile (14.5km) circuit of which is stone-walled. The origin of the line the park wall takes to the south and east, around the edge of Park Moor, is not known. The registered area comprises c 560ha.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Today (1997) visitors to Lyme Park approach it from the north along the Main Drive of 1902-3 off the A6, past the Main Lodge of 1860 (listed grade II). Forward of this are tall, sandstone, late C17 gate piers (listed grade II), moved here c 1860, perhaps from the end of the approach past The Cage (see below). Another lodge, the Little or Red Lane Lodge, lies 400m to the south-east at the end of Red Lane. The adjoining gate piers (listed grade II), the upper parts late C17, were moved here c 1860. Main Drive replaced Hawthorn Drive, which runs parallel with and slightly to the east of it. Hawthorn Drive became the main approach to the Hall after the arrival of the railway, which clips the northern tip of the park, in 1854-7. A still earlier approach, the Green Drive, follows a line above the Main and Hawthorn Drives.

Before the 1850s the principal approach was from the south-west, through Hase Bank, from an entrance south-west of West Park Gate. That drive replaced one from West Park Gate itself, which in the C18 ran round Hase Bank. Its line can still be followed, with vistas and buildings (first The Cage and then The Lantern) being revealed before, as the last bend is turned, the Hall appears high above the sunken garden with an impressive background of woodland and The Lantern.

The drive from East Lodge, a C19 building, was established between 1740 and 1825.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** There was a house at Lyme by 1465. Lyme Park (listed grade I), which stands tucked into a ledge in the landscape, was transformed in the 1720s and 1730s by the Venetian architect Giacomo Leoni (c 1686-1746), with a grand, fifteen-bay Palladian south front overlooking the main garden. This house incorporates an Elizabethan building. In the early 1800s Lewis Wyatt (1777-1853) adapted a number of the interiors for Thomas Legh, creating interconnecting state rooms and a new dining room. He also added an orangery.

Some 75m north-east of the Hall is the stone stable block (listed grade II), built in 1863 by Alfred Darbyshire. A further 300m to the north-east, on the far side of the kitchen garden, are the kennels of 1870 (listed grade II), in which Lyme's mastiffs were formerly housed.

Some 300m north-west of the Hall, on the north bank of Mill Pond, is a group of estate buildings (listed grade II) of 1904 by C H Reilly of Liverpool in the Vernacular Revival style, now converted to a shop and tearoom.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens extend to c 17 acres (7ha). The contrast between the grounds around the Hall, parts of which are laid out in a highly formal manner, and the high and wild parkland beyond, is one of the most striking features of Lyme.

On the north side of the Hall is a forecourt with turning circle, part of Wyatt's scheme of the early C19. The gate piers are late C17, the gates and railings of 1821 by Wyatt (all listed grade II). To the east is a car park; in the C19 this was a formal garden, also part of Wyatt's work. Above the north-east corner of the car park is a C19 meat safe (listed grade II).

A gravel terrace runs along the south front of the Hall. To the south the shaved South Lawn runs gently down to the 150m long stone-edged South Lake, in the middle of which is an island with shrubbery. A stone wall set back c 5m from the walk around the north-east end of the lake may mark its edge before its size was reduced by Wyatt. The lake is supplied by two streams, one of which enters at its east end and the other down a short cascade in the centre of the south side. Water leaves the lake via a channel at its west end, past a pumphouse of 1902. On the far side of the lake is the start of the Lime Avenue of c 1670, which carries the eye uphill and southward across the park for c 500m to, and originally through, Knightslow Wood.

The gravel terrace continues west as a path to the West, or Bull Ring, Terrace, part of Wyatt's early C19 work (walls etc listed grade II). From this, a lawned compartment which tapers slightly to the west, with semicircular stone bench seats at the north-west and south-west corners, there are views down into the Dutch Garden and west to the park, although the latter views are somewhat obscured by the tops of C20 specimen trees in the Vicary Gibbs Garden below.

The 'Dutch Garden', its name recalling the earlier formal garden with cascade which was created here c 1700 and which survived until removed by Wyatt c 1818, was laid out c 1860 by the first Lord Newton. It is bounded to the north and east by 4m high

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stone retaining walls with regularly spaced urns along the top. At the base of the walls is evergreen planting. The central part of the garden, c 40m square, is laid out in a formal quartered design employing ivy and box. It has a central fountain and in each quarter a cherub statue representing one of the four elements.

To the east of the Hall the gravel terrace path continues in a straight line past the gardens in front of the Orangery, rising via five flights of steps to Top Lawn, to the south of the stables. Within this there are sinuous paths and herbaceous borders. A group of yews shelters what is believed to have been a cock-fighting table, on the site of a C17 gazebo. To the south the lawn is bordered by Killtime, a small valley, lushly planted in the 1930s, which carries one of the streams which supplies the lake at its west end. At the east end of Killtime is Hampers Bridge (listed grade II), a stone bridge of the 1750s which when built gave access to the kitchen garden. The former kitchen garden area is now the Fallow Deer Park.

Wyatt's Orangery (listed grade II\*) lies c 50m north-east of the east end of the Hall. Completed by Alfred Darbyshire in 1862 it is an eleven-bay, gritstone ashlar building, the central three bays canted forward. Its tiled floor is of 1862, part of the work of Alfred Darbyshire who was brought in to complete the interior. The tall central fountain was introduced in the 1980s. To its south is a lawn, with sunken beds to either side of the path leading south from the Orangery's central door to the main east-west gravel path. East of the sunken beds is a wheel bed and two cross-shaped ones. The terrace wall and steps to the south of these beds are listed grade II.

Immediately north-east of the Orangery is the Rose Garden of c 1913, quartered and with a central boy and fish fountain. In the middle of the north wall is a summerhouse, the hipped roof of which is supported on stone piers. The garden was restored 1995-6. Documents reveal much detail about the history of the gardens at Lyme (Estate Papers). The South Lake may be the 'new pool', presumably of formal design, noted in 1609, other features of about that date being a new boathouse, garden arbours, and a pigeon house. Much work was done on the gardens in the later C17, by which time there were terraces to the east of the Hall. Peter Legh who inherited in 1687 seems to have been much influenced by Chatsworth, in 1703 creating his own cascade with canal and fountain in what became the Dutch Garden.

Between 1813 and 1820 Lewis Wyatt formalised the south and west sides of the Hall, buttressing up the terraces, removing the cascade and reducing the South Lake still further. He also built the Orangery to the east of the Hall and restructured the terracing. The Orangery was finished off only after 1857, when formal bedding schemes were introduced at Lyme and the Italianate parterre replaced the sunken garden. Changes by the second Lord and Lady Newton after 1898, who were assisted by their friend the eminent plantsman Vicary Gibbs (1853-1932), included the creation of the Rose Garden and the herbaceous borders. PARK The moorland park, established by 1359, originally formed part of Macclesfield Forest, and the herd of 380 red deer (fallow deer were reintroduced in the 1990s) is thought to be descended from native forest deer. It is encompassed by a nine-mile long drystone wall, which replaced a wooden palisade between 1598 and 1620. Tall drystone walls - many constructed 1687-1744 as part of Peter Legh's improvements at Lyme - are also used extensively within the park to protect its woodland.

Within the park are various structures. The most imposing is The Cage (listed grade II\*), which stands like a great tower house at the end of a ridge 700m north of the Hall. From it there are panoramic views north to the Pennines and westward across the Cheshire Plain to Wales, as well more immediately across the park to the Hall. Erected in the mid C16 as a hunting tower, the structure was rebuilt to a design by Leoni in 1733-5 as a three-storey gritstone tower with attached square corner towers. Similarly situated on open grassland at the end of a ridge is Paddock Belvedere (or Cottage) (listed grade II), which lies c 1km south-west of the Hall. The third major building in the park is The Lantern (listed grade II\*), an eyecatcher erected in 1729, probably on the recommendation of Leoni (NT notes). This stands 600m east of the Hall, just below the skyline, now within Lantern Wood but originally on open moorland. Only the rubble ruins remain of a fourth such structure, Stag House, almost 2km south of the Hall. This formed the focus of the view down the Lime Avenue.

The partial imposition of a geometric plan upon the park, with avenues and viewpoints, took place before 1676. It has been suggested that it was conceived by Richard Legh (1634-87), who was probably familiar with the work of the leading French landscape designer Andre Mollet (d c 1665). The principal view down the Lime Avenue formed the central spoke of a patte d'oie which radiated from the Hall. One lateral spoke focussed on Paddock Cottage to the south-west, the other on Game Keeper's House, at Bowstones, to the south-east. Paddock Cottage and Game Keeper's House were modest, white-painted, two-storey

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structures, whereas Stag House was a large and imposing folly described in 1750 as 'an old castle whited up' (NT notes). The Lime Avenue was replanted in the 1840s.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The kitchen garden lies c 300m north-east of the Hall, beyond the stables. Constructed in the 1860s, probably to designs by Alfred Darbyshire, most of the garden structures, including Victorian glasshouses, were removed in the later C20. All that survives is the large Gardener's Cottage (listed grade II) with its verandah in the centre of the north side of the garden, part of the north wall and the sheds behind.

The documentary sources (Estate Papers) show that from the later C17 or before there was a strong tradition of plantsmanship at Lyme. Hot beds and greenhouses are mentioned in 1683. At that time the kitchen garden lay south-east of the Hall, in Calves Croft on the edge of Hampers Wood.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 16 (17 December 1904), pp 906-15; 156 (5 December 1974), pp 1724-7; (12 December 1974), pp 1858-61; no 5 (1 February 1996), pp 40-5 Lady Newton, *The House of Lyme* (1917) Lady Newton, *Lyme Letters* (1925) L Cantor, *The Medieval Parks of England: A Gazetteer* (1983), p 17 Lyme Park Restoration Management Plan, (Elizabeth Banks Associates Ltd 1993) NT notes for visit by NT Council (1994) NT notes on *The Lantern and Paddock Cottage* (nd, c 1996) Lyme Park, guidebook, (National Trust 1996)

Archival items Large amounts of unsorted estate papers, principally C17 and earlier are in the John Rylands Library, Manchester. C19 material is in the Greater Manchester Record Office.

Description written: July 1997 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: April 1999

## 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.