

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

LODGE PARK

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*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**LODGE PARK**

Name: LODGE PARK

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Aldsworth

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Farmington

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Northleach with Eastington

County: Gloucestershire

District: Cotswold (District Authority)

Parish: Sherborne

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.810375  
Longitude: -1.802221  
National Grid Reference: SP1373212434  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: I  
List Entry Number: 1000770  
Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

## Details

Deer park established in years after 1624 with deer course for hunting and an elaborate standing or banqueting house, with overlay of planting and other features to a plan by Charles Bridgeman from mid 1720s.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Lodge Park was built as a hunting lodge for the Duttons of Sherborne House (qv). Sir John Dutton (d 1657), known as 'Crump' Dutton from his hunchback, inherited the Sherborne estate in 1618. According to his memorial in Sherborne church he was 'Master of a large Fortune and Owner of a Mind Aequall to it'. In the 1620s he acquired several parcels of land and created a

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new hunting park (that is, Lodge Park) which by c 1634 had a lodge to watch the hunt from and a walled deer course. This park was in addition to the Home Park, created at Sherborne in the late C16. In 1709 the estate passed to the cultured John Dutton, whose two marriages to heiresses allowed improvements to the estate. Those included the landscaping of Lodge Park to a design by Charles Bridgeman (d 1738), carried out between c 1725 and sometime after Dutton's death in 1743. Sherborne and Lodge Parks and the surrounding estate (without Sherborne House) were bequeathed to the National Trust, in whose ownership they remain, by the seventh Lord Sherborne on his death in 1982. In 1998-9 extensive restoration took place in and around the Lodge, and to a lesser extent in the park.

**DESCRIPTION**

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Lodge Park is bounded to the south-west by the unclassified road from Eastington, 1km north-west of the park, to Aldsworth, 2km to the south-east. The Lodge stands on the south-east boundary of the park, which follows an unclassified road off the A40 which passes c 2km to the north en route from Oxford to Cheltenham, which is c 25km to the north-west. The curving north boundary of the park follows field edges. The area of the registered park is c 115ha.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Until the late 1990s the main approach to the Lodge was via a straight drive from the east from the axially placed entrance off the public road. This comprises 5m high ashlar gate piers, iron gates, and twin lodges (all listed grade II), all of 1898 and by M King of London. From this the drive ran across the line of the deer course and up the centre of the forecourt to the house. As part of the restoration works of 1998-9 the drive was covered preparatory to the construction of a new drive for visitors to one side of the forecourt.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Lodge Park (listed grade I), of five bays and two storeys, originally consisted of just two rooms: a hall on the ground floor and a banqueting room above, the two communicating via a grand detached wooden staircase at the north-west corner. The central windows of the banqueting room gave access to a three-bay balcony over the portico; the coursing could be watched from here, or from the roof, surrounded by a parapet. Despite much speculation about its architect's identity - the name of Balthazar Gerbier (d 1663), a contemporary of Inigo Jones, has been suggested, together with Valentine Strong as that of its builder (Fretwell 1990) - it remains anonymous. The building was refurbished by John Dutton from about 1725, and accounts mention the involvement of Vassalli, Wootton, and William Kent, the last of whom provided new furniture for the banqueting room. Later the building was converted first to estate cottages and then, in 1898, to a dower house for Lady Sherborne. She added rooms behind, destroyed the staircase, and divided the two long rooms into four smaller apartments. An extensive restoration of 1998-9 largely removed the post-1725 alterations and reinstated the banqueting room.

South of the Lodge, facing onto the deer course, is the Coach House. This is a flat-fronted two-storey building of c 1900. North-east of the Lodge are single-storey C20 garages whose removal was anticipated in 1999.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** East of the Lodge is the entrance forecourt, grassland which is open to the deer course. On the line of the axial drive across the forecourt, c 40m east of the Lodge, is a circular fountain basin (listed grade II), probably installed c 1898 when a new garden was laid out when the Lodge became a dower house. In 1999 the fountain basin was infilled, and the drive from the front lodges removed as part of the restoration of the landscape by the National Trust.

John Dutton's account books show intense gardening activity during the period 1723 to 1742 (Pearson Assocs 1995). In 1733 high walls were built to enclose triangular pieces of woodland either side of the Lodge, of which only that to the south survives today (1999). A stone terrace was built at the back of the Lodge, and in 1735 a four-sided ha-ha (which partly survives) to divide it from the park. Serpentine walks (not extant) were laid out in the woodland between the terrace and the ha-ha. To the front of the Lodge the forecourt was added, together with iron palisades and gates from Daniel Parslow of Woodstock.

**PARK** The park comprises two main elements: the former deer park, and the course along and beyond its north-east boundary. The Lodge overlooks the south-west end of a stone-walled deer course, c 1 mile (1.6km) long, narrowing from c 200m at its start, close to the A40, to 88m at its end, near the Lodge. Originally there were pens and 'pinching post' markers at either end but no visible trace of these remains. Later internal subdivisions were in the process of removal in 1999. Close to the south-west end of the course, 25m south-west of the Coach House, a squat, monumental C18 gateway (listed grade II) with ashlar piers and iron gates gives access to the park.

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The park itself is contained within a rubble-stone wall, much of which remains at or close to its original height of c 2.5m. The park occupies grassland sloping downhill to the small valley along which the River Leach (in fact, little more than a stream) runs north/south through the middle of the park. The valley bottom is flat and wet, and may represent the silted-up remains of the serpentine canal proposed by Bridgeman. The 10m wide and 200m long marshy River Leach Pool, cut along the centre of this, probably represents relatively recent, perhaps C20, agricultural activity. At the point where the river enters Larkethill Wood towards the south end of the park it is carried through a high-quality stone culvert, probably part of the work done to Bridgeman's plan.

The Great Avenue (see below) running west from the Lodge, whose alignment is marked by tree pits, was replanted in the 1990s. Various blocks and belts of woodland lie around the outer edge of the park. Towards the south end of the park is Larkethill Wood, probably in existence when the park was created. This is confined by a high stone wall, another wall running off in a serpentine line through the wood south-west of the river. Shelter belts run along most of the western boundary of the park, expanding eastward as more solid blocks of wood which partly replicate elements of Bridgeman's planting scheme. Straddling the River Leach in the centre of the north side of the park is Sally Coppice.

In the centre of the north-east quarter of the park is a long barrow. In the south-east quarter, south of the end of the course, is a walled field, at the north-west corner of which is a yard with a shelter and a tall stone barn with central, gabled, threshing doors. Tradition suggests (G Howarth pers comm, 1999) that this is where deer were slaughtered.

The land for Dutton's new deer park, which lay partly in Aldsworth parish, was acquired between 1624 and 1640. It was enclosed within a high wall, and in 1655 Dutton was allowed to stock it by taking deer from Wychwood Forest. The lodge was built before c 1634 when it, and the park, were described by the visiting Lieutenant Hammond:

one stately, rich, compacted Building all of Free-stone, flat and covered with Lead, with strong Battlements about not much unlike to that goodly, and magnificent Building the Banqueting House at Whitehall. This stately house [Mr Dutton's] is mounted on a High Hill ... plac'd within a wall'd Parke, that is well stor'd with good Venison: This stately Lodge was lately built at the great Cost and Charges of a noble true hearted Gentleman, more for the pleasure of his worthy friends, than his owne profit; Itt is richly furnish'd to entertaine them to see that Kingly sport, and pleasure, admirably perform'd, in that rare Paddocke course of a mile in length, and walled on either Side. There I spent a full houre, with the good favour of the Keeper, in viewing that neat, rare Building, the rich furnish'd Roomes, the handsome contriv'd Pens and Places, where the Deere are kept, and turn'd out for the Course; and the manner, and order of the Paddock Sport. (quoted in Kingsley 1989)

The manuscript rules governing the use of the course show that it was not confined to the family but could be used by any gentleman who wished to try out his dogs on payment of 2s 6d per animal and 10d to the slipper. In 1712 Atkyns mentioned the 'pleasant paddock course, with a beautiful lodge-house'.

Charles Bridgeman, who at the time was working at Stowe (qv), Bucks, was brought in by John Dutton to landscape Lodge Park in the mid 1720s. Visits by Bridgeman are recorded in 1725 and 1729, and in 1729 he was paid £70 for his services and for supplying a plan, discovered in the Bodleian Library in the 1990s. Already in 1725 borings were being made to see if his proposed pool on the River Leach was feasible. At the same time the park was enlarged by a little on the west side, adding 3 acres (c 1.2ha) in 1723 and 12 acres (c 4.8ha) in 1726. As well as trees supplied from the estate (some 4600 tree holes were dug in the park, probably mainly in plantations enclosed by quickthorn hedges), many were purchased: 10,000 Scots pines, 800 willows, 1050 hollies, and 4500 hawthorn (Pearson Assocs 1995). In the east half of the park, aligned on either side of the Lodge ha-ha, was a new Great Avenue, put in by 1737. This was c 400m long and c 175m broad, with its west end aligned on the other main formal aspect of the planting, a stepped wedge of plantations in the west half of the park rather resembling an arrowhead with the point to the west. Work in the park was still in progress at the time John Dutton made his will in 1742. This stipulated Bridgeman's plan was to be completed, and the plan was physically appended to the will. A later payment suggests Dutton's wish was complied with. The park was painted in 1749 by George Lambert (Fretwell 1995, Fig 5). Unusually, little or no later landscaping was carried out here, and it is the remains of Bridgeman's design which survives in the late C20.

#### REFERENCES

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Maps Charles Bridgeman, *Plan of improvements, 1720s* (Bodleian Library, Oxford) *Plan, c 1820* (in Fretwell 1990, Fig 6)  
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881-3, published 1884  
Description written: March 1999 Register Inspector: PAS 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.