

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

STONELEIGH ABBEY

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

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*Inventory of Great Britain*  
**STONELEIGH ABBEY**

Name:	STONELEIGH ABBEY
County:	Warwickshire
District:	Warwick (District Authority)
Parish:	Ashow
County:	Warwickshire
District:	Warwick (District Authority)
Parish:	Stoneleigh
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.334623 Longitude: -1.5395165 National Grid Reference: SP 31474 70826, SP3345571996 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II* List Entry Number: 1000377 Date first listed: 01-Feb-1986

## Details

Early C19 gardens and park for which Humphry Repton produced a Red Book in 1809, together with a C17 detached deer park which was also landscaped in the early C19.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Stoneleigh Abbey, a Cistercian foundation, was founded in 1154. At the Dissolution it was purchased by Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. In the mid C16 it was let to a farmer, Thomas Dudley, who lived in a house on the site of the present east range, which incorporates remains of the monastic buildings. In 1561 the estate was sold to two London merchants, Sir Rowland Hill and Sir Thomas Leigh, who was married to Hill's daughter and heiress. At Sir Thomas' death in 1571 Stoneleigh passed to his middle son, Thomas, who was created a baronet in 1611. Sir Thomas rebuilt the north and east ranges of the house c 1603 and this work was completed by his grandson, another Sir Thomas Leigh, who inherited in 1626 and was created Baron Leigh in 1643. The third Lord Leigh, who inherited in 1710, visited Italy in 1711, and on his return in 1714, commissioned alterations to the house. Work continued under the fourth Lord Leigh who died in 1749, leaving a son who was still a minor. Edward, fifth Lord Leigh, came of age in 1763, and began an ambitious programme of improvements which are shown on a plan (1766-7) by Matthias Baker. Lord Leigh lapsed into insanity in 1767, and was confined at Stoneleigh until his death in 1786. He was succeeded by his spinster sister, the Hon Mary Leigh, a reclusive lady who made only modest changes to the park. At her death in 1806, Mary Leigh left Stoneleigh to her relative, James Henry Leigh of Adlestrop, Gloucestershire (qv), direct descendent of the eldest son of the first Sir Thomas Leigh (d 1571), with a life interest to his uncle, the Rev Thomas Leigh, also of Adlestrop. When the Rev Thomas heard of his inheritance, his cousin Cassandra Austen and her daughter, the novelist Jane Austen, were staying with him; together they visited Stoneleigh. Mrs Austen described the grounds with 'the Avon

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near the house amidst green meadows bounded by large and beautiful woods full of delightful walks' (quoted in Batey and Lambert 1990). In 1808, the Rev Thomas Leigh invited Humphry Repton (1752-1818), who had previously worked for him at Adlestrop, to visit Stoneleigh and make recommendations for the improvement of the estate. These were presented in 1809 in a large-format Red Book, with proposals laid out in the manner of several artists including Claude, Watteau and Ruysdael. The architectural elements of Repton's scheme have been attributed to his son, John Adey Repton (1775-1860) (Parklands 1997). Repton's work at Stoneleigh was known to Jane Austen, and informed her novel *Mansfield Park* (1814) (Batey and Lambert 1990; Batey 1996). Repton continued to work at Stoneleigh until the death of the Rev Thomas Leigh in 1813, but his commission was not continued under James Henry Leigh. Instead, improvements in a picturesque style continued into the 1830s, with advice from the Leamington architect C S Smith.

James Henry Leigh died in 1823, and was succeeded by his son, Chandos, created Baron Leigh of Stoneleigh in 1839; his widowed mother remained actively involved in the management of the estate until her death in 1843. Chandos Leigh died in 1850, and was succeeded as second Lord Leigh by his son, William Henry. In the mid C19 formal terraced gardens were laid out to the design of W A Nesfield (1793-1881) which provided the setting for a visit by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1858. In the late C19 and early C20 the park and gardens were widely described (CL 1899, 1901, 1906). The third Lord Leigh succeeded in 1905, and died childless in 1938, when the estate passed to his nephew, the fifth Lord Leigh. In the 1930s Percy Cane (1881-1976) was commissioned to alter the formal terraced gardens. During the Second World War a temporary hospital was established in the Deer Park, and agricultural experiments were carried out. After the war the Deer Park was sold to Massey Ferguson Ltd, and in the late C20 part of the Deer Park was developed as a golf course. In 1963 an area of the New Park north of the Abbey was leased to the Royal Agricultural Society of England for use as a permanent show ground. Fire damaged the west range of the Abbey in 1960, but following repair the house continued to be occupied by the Leigh family until 1992. Stoneleigh Abbey was vested in the Stoneleigh Abbey Preservation Trust by the sixth Lord Leigh in 1988, while in 1993 the Abbey and immediate grounds were transferred to the Stoneleigh Abbey Trust. A major programme of restoration has been undertaken in the house and grounds from 1997.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Stoneleigh Abbey is situated c 5.5km north of Royal Leamington Spa and c 2.5km east of Kenilworth. The A444 road passes from south to north through the site separating the Deer Park from the Abbey and New Park to the west. The c 365ha site comprises some 7ha of gardens and pleasure grounds adjacent to the Abbey, c 213ha of parkland and ornamental plantations, and c 145ha in the Deer Park to the north-east of the A444 road. The New Park to the west of the A444 road is bounded to the north by the National Agricultural Centre and to the north-west by the B4115 road. The west boundary is formed by the late C20 A46 road, while to the south the New Park adjoins agricultural land and to the south-east the boundary is formed by the A444 road. The ornamental landscape formerly extended west to Glasshouse Spinney c 350m west of the mid C20 A46 road but this land (outside the site here registered) has been developed with late C20 playing fields. The Deer Park is bounded to the south by a minor road, Stareton Lane, and by domestic properties in the hamlet of Stareton, while to the east and north the boundary is formed by Coventry Road. This road is carried across the River Avon on the early C19 Cloud Bridge (listed grade II), which features in views from within the park. The west boundary is formed by the A444 Stoneleigh Road. The east, north and north-west boundaries of the Deer Park are marked by late C20 timber pales which replace earlier park paling and traces of boundary ditches also survive. The River Avon flows in an S-shaped course from east to south through the New Park, while the River Sowe enters the site from the north, joining the River Avon c 1.3km north-east of the Abbey. The New Park is generally level adjoining the Avon, but to the south of the river the ground rises steeply within woodland known as The Grove. There are significant views north from The Grove across the park to the Abbey, the bridge and the west or Grecian lodges which were refined by Repton in the early C19. There are also views to the south-east and south from a shrubbery at the south-east end of The Grove, which encompass agricultural land south of The Grove and ornamental woodland, Bericote Wood, to the south-east of the site. The River Avon flows from north-east to south-west through the Deer Park, with areas of level ground to the east and south-east, and wooded slopes to the north and south-west.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** Stoneleigh Abbey is approached from the B4115 road to the west. The entrance is marked by a pair of single-storey, stone, neo-classical lodges, known as the Grecian Lodges (listed grade II), which each comprise a square block surmounted by a shallow pitched roof, with an inner canted bay facing the drive. The architect of the lodges is unknown: Repton's plan (1809) which included a range of half-timbered cottages on the west side of the road opposite the entrance, was not implemented, and neo-classical designs by William Porden produced in 1813 do not correspond to the lodges as built. The entrance leads to an avenue of limes which lines a tarmac drive extending c 320m south-east across the park to cross the River Avon on a bridge (listed grade II\*) comprising a wide central arch crossing the river, flanked by a pair of smaller arches which are in turn flanked by pairs of arched niches set in rusticated stonework. The bridge, known as the 'Grecian' or 'Rennie' Bridge, was designed in 1812 by John Rennie, and was completed c 1814. Repton's proposal for a triple-arched stone bridge modelled on that at Llanwrst (Red Book) was not implemented. Beyond the bridge, the drive continues south-east through an avenue of limes for c 350m to approach the Abbey from the north-west. The drive passes beneath the mid C14 Abbey Gatehouse (listed grade I) which comprises a gabled entrance arch to the west and a two-storey wing to the east, and sweeps c 80m south-east to the north-west corner of the west range. A late C20 drive leads north parallel to the north range, giving access to parking areas and garages c 50m north of the house. To the west of the Gatehouse late C20 car parks enclosed by hedges give access to a further late C20 drive which leads to the west facade of the house. East of the Gatehouse, the drive gives access to the Tudor-gothic stables and riding school (all listed grade II\*) c 100m north-east of the Abbey which were built in 1815(20 to the design of C S Smith. The stables and riding school are now (2000) being converted to commercial use. The west approach was developed in the early C19, following Repton's advice in 1809. As implemented, the west drive follows a more direct route to the north of the serpentine course advocated by Repton. The drive assumed its final form in 1814 when a public road crossing the park from north to south c 600m west of the Abbey was diverted to the line of the B4115 road.

The west drive continues west of the B4115 road, formerly leading c 1km south-west through Thickthorn Wood, a C19 ornamental plantation, to join the A452 road south-east of Kenilworth. The drive is today truncated by the late C20 A46 road which passes within the western boundary of the plantation, and survives in part as a track and in part as a footpath leading to Kenilworth. Some 1.3km south-west of the Abbey the drive is carried over a minor road, Rocky Lane, on an early C19 single-arched, rusticated stone bridge (listed grade II). To the north of the bridge and on a level with the drive stands an early C19 single-storey lodge. This drive was developed by James Henry Leigh after 1813.

A further drive approaches the Abbey from the A444 road to the south-east, the entrance being marked by a single-storey early C19 stone lodge known as Mary Lodge (listed grade II). The tarmac drive extends c 800m north-west through an irregularly spaced avenue of mature oaks, and is separated by hedges from the National Agricultural Centre to the north, and meadows, some of which are used as occasional car parks, to the south. The C18 Kennels and associated cottage (all listed grade II) immediately south of Mary Lodge and the drive have been converted in the late C20 to residential use, and substantial detached late C20 houses have been constructed in the adjoining spinney. Planning permission for further residential development has been granted (2000) for The Cunnery, a meadow adjoining the south-east drive c 300m south-east of the Abbey. Some 250m south-east of the Abbey the drive passes north of the Home Farm, the buildings of which have recently been converted to residential use. The drive sweeps north and north-west round the north side of the stables, to reach the entrance to the stable court and the Abbey Gatehouse. Before the early C19, the south-east approach was the principal access to Stoneleigh Abbey. The east or London Drive which formerly approached the Abbey through the Deer Park is now disused. The entrance to the Deer Park is marked by Tantara Lodge, also known as Bubbenhall or London Lodge (listed grade II), an early C19, stone, gabled, gothic structure built to the design of C S Smith in 1818. The lodge is today set in late C20 domestic gardens separated from the park by conifer hedges and fences. The drive, surviving partly as a track marked by the remains of an avenue of mature oaks, extends c 400m west-south-west through the park on a ridge of high ground, with views north across the River Avon to the Deer Keeper's Lodge. The course of the drive is interrupted by the buildings of the late C20 business centre. The drive formerly continued for c 1km south-west through the park before crossing the A444 road adjacent to East Lodge (listed grade II), a single-storey, early C19 stone lodge constructed in a Tudor-gothic style designed by C S Smith. From East Lodge the drive swept west for c 950m across New Park to reach the stables and Abbey. This latter section of drive, with the exception of

a final c 80m, is today used as one of the principal avenues in the National Agricultural Centre show ground (outside the site here registered). The east drive was improved and extended from an existing route by James Henry Leigh in the early C19.

Two further early C19 lodges mark points of access to the Deer Park. North Lodge (listed grade II) stands adjacent to an entrance from Coventry Road to the north, opposite a minor road leading to Baginton. The stone lodge, designed c 1820 by C S Smith, comprises a single storey and attic and is built in a picturesque Tudor-gothic style with ornamental bargeboards and gabled facades. To the south, Stareton Lodge, also known as Park Lodge and The Beehive, stands immediately to the west of a gate which today leads into the grounds of the late C20 business centre, but which formerly led to a footpath (OS 1886). Stareton Lodge comprises a single storey and attic with a half-octagon bay to the south incorporating the front door and a small Diocletian window set in the roof; the lodge is constructed in brick which was originally limewashed (Parklands 1997). A lithograph of 1825 shows the lodge with a thatched roof and a rustic verandah supported on tree-trunk pillars; these do not survive, and the house has been re-roofed with C20 shingles. The design of Stareton Lodge has been attributed to Repton (Parklands 1997).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Stoneleigh Abbey (listed grade I) stands on a terrace to the north and east of the River Avon. The mansion incorporates remains of a Cistercian abbey founded in 1154. The house comprises four ranges built around a central court, roughly corresponding to the monastic cloister; the north range of the house is built on the site of the south aisle of the abbey church. The north range, containing the long gallery, and the east range, formerly containing offices, were rebuilt in the early C17 and today (2000) retain gables and mullion and transom windows. The north range was originally entered by a double staircase leading to a door on the first floor. The staircase protected a small grotto which was praised by Repton (1809). The staircase was removed and replaced by the 'Gothic Porch' by C S Smith in 1836. The west range was rebuilt between 1714 and 1726 in a monumental Classical style by Francis Smith of Warwick. The west range returns to the north and south for four bays, which are of plainer construction. The west range contains early C18 state apartments with significant rococo interiors created between 1726 and c 1765. In 1809 Repton proposed the construction of a central portico but this was not adopted. The south range comprises the four-bay return of the west range, a recessed central section, and to the east a hip-roofed late C17 kitchen. Repton proposed (1809) the addition of a loggia, conservatory and first-floor colonnade but again these were not implemented. The west range was damaged by fire in 1960, but was subsequently restored. The house is currently the subject of a major programme of works which includes the vertical division of the house into apartments, and the restoration of the state apartments.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The formal terraces and informal pleasure grounds lie principally to the north, west and south of the Abbey. The central court of the Abbey is laid out with a late C20 knot garden. To the north of the house an approximately rectangular area is laid out with lawns planted with specimen trees. This area is bounded to the north by a stone wall screened by mature evergreen shrubbery; late C20 garages have been built adjacent to this wall. The garden is separated from the drive to the west by young yew hedges, while a drive, approximately following the course of a C19 drive (OS 1886), sweeps from south-west to north-east through the garden. The north garden was described by Repton as the Bowling Green Garden (1809), and corresponds to a walled enclosure shown on plans of 1749 and 1766, the garden occupying the site of the monastic church. To the north-east of the Bowling Green Garden a pair of elaborate early C18 wrought-iron gates surmounted by an overthrow containing a coronet and monogram (all listed grade II) lead to the drive west of the stables. The gates are supported on rebuilt square brick piers surmounted by C18 lead urns (all listed grade II). A drive leads south from the gates to the service quarters south-east of the Abbey. Some 50m south of the gates the drive passes through an early C19, stone, Tudor-gothic archway designed by C S Smith. To the east the arch connects with the Garden Lodge, while an arched opening to the west leads to gardens below the east facade comprising an area of lawn planted with mature specimen trees. The lawn has been divided into two unequal areas by a late C20 yew hedge running from west to east.

A partly stone-flagged and tarmac terrace and areas of lawn below the west facade extend c 30m to the remains of a mid C19 stone balustrade which separates the terrace from an area of level mown grass used in the C20 as a cricket ground. A mid C20 timber pavilion stands to the south. Repton advised the construction of a terrace below the west front in 1809, but the terrace as constructed in 1814 does not correspond to his proposal. The terrace was developed as a formal garden with geometric parterre beds designed by W A Nesfield in the mid C19; these were simplified by Percy Cane in the 1930s and do not visibly survive.

The terrace replaced an early C18 walled bowling green which is shown in a view from the south-west (1749), and on surveys of 1749 and 1766. Farm buildings to the north-west and west of the Abbey were removed by the early C19 when the Home Lawn, an area for sheep grazing roughly corresponding to the cricket ground, was created (Red Book).

The slope descending from the south facade to the River Avon is terraced to provide a wide lawn and a riverside walk. Stone steps aligned on the axis of the west terrace descend to a gravelled upper walk. At the east and west ends of this walk further steps descend a grass slope to reach the wide central terrace, which is today (2000) laid to grass with the remains of late C19 pedestals standing adjacent to gravel walks to the west and east of the lawn. The west walk continues the axis of the west terrace to the riverside walk which is reached by further east and west flights of stone steps which descend a grass bank. The riverside walk is retained by a stone balustrade (restored 1999, listed grade II) which breaks forward to east and west in square bastions. A central flight of stone steps descends to the water. The south terraces were developed by W A Nesfield in the mid C19 with a scheme comprising geometric beds for seasonal planting and Irish yews which does not survive. To the south-east, a mid C19 conservatory (listed grade II\*) overlooks a similar lawn, where again the mid C19 formal scheme does not survive. The conservatory was built to the designs of William Burn in 1851 (Tyack 1994).

A gravel walk south of the conservatory sweeps south-east below a curved brick wall which screens the service yard, and continues east, parallel to the south wall of the kitchen garden (listed grade II) for c 80m, to reach the Rose Garden. Some 50m south-east of the orangery, a flight of stone steps ascends from the walk to a pair of ornate C18 wrought-iron gates with an armorial overthrow which are supported by a pair of square-section stone piers set in the kitchen garden wall (all listed grade II). A further pair of gates and piers (listed grade II) is set in the garden wall c 80m south-east of the orangery, at the north-west corner of the Rose Garden. The Rose Garden comprises a level rectangular terrace which is laid to lawn and planted with mid C20 specimen conifers. At the centre of the lawn an elaborate, early C19, four-tier Coade stone fountain is supported on a pedestal cast to resemble entwined branches. The fountain stands in a circular pool, the raised edge of which is also constructed in Coade stone cast to resemble rocks with planting pockets and images of a variety of animals. The Rose Garden is enclosed to the north and east by brick kitchen garden walls, near the angle of which stands an early C19 circular, thatched rustic summerhouse (listed grade II) supported by tree trunks.

From the Rose Garden a walk descends south-east through an area of informal shrubbery for c 30m to reach a timber footbridge with lattice balustrades which crosses a stone-lined water channel to reach an early C19 timber summerhouse (restored early C20). This is situated at the west end of a long narrow island, facing along an artificially widened stretch of the River Avon to the south of the Abbey. The summerhouse has arched openings to the north, south and west, and a panelled interior with a simple bench seat. The opening to the south leads to a further riverside shrubbery walk extending c 100m south-east along the island; the stone-lined water channel extends along the north side of the island and was formerly crossed by a footbridge at the north-east end of the island. The River Avon was widened in 1809 as part of Repton's improvements by laying together the river and an adjacent mill stream. Repton's lake was retained by a stone weir c 300m south-east of the house; this dam was raised during the C19 to obscure silting and was breached by floods in the mid C20. The lake to the south of the Abbey was partially reinstated in 1999(2000). The shrubbery walk continues to the south-east of the summerhouse on the north side of the stone-lined channel, leading c 160m to an approximately circular area enclosed to the north by a bank retained by rockwork and planted with evergreen shrubbery. A semicircular drystone-lined alcove is set into this bank, while a stone-kerbed octagonal shallow fountain basin occupies the centre of the level ground to the south. Above the alcove, among mature evergreen shrubs, a stone pedestal with a low pyramid cap dated 1839 commemorates three family dogs, while to the east a further group of late C19 and early C20 dogs' headstones stand within a low, green-painted timber pale fence. The early C19 sunken garden and dogs' cemetery terminate the pleasure grounds to the south-east; a gate c 30m east of the dogs' cemetery leads to the park, while a walk returns north-west to the Rose Garden. The pleasure grounds are separated from the Cunnery to the north by a mixed hedge and timber fence.

A walk leads south-west from the south terraces through an area of shrubbery and mature trees. Some 80m south-west of the house a C19 water engine is housed in an early C19, single-storey, Tudor-gothic stone pavilion attributed to C S Smith (Parklands 1997). The walk continues c 50m south-west to a two-arched stone bridge dated 1704 (datestone) which crosses a



cascade. Beyond the bridge, the walk passes through a late C20 timber gate to enter the park. The cascade is associated with the site of a medieval mill which was demolished in 1812 as part of Repton's improvements. An early C19 stone weir in the park c 500m west-north-west of the Abbey allows water to flow into the lower river, while the former mill race is retained at a higher level by the mill island to the south. Repton used the mill cascade as a feature at the west end of the lake created to the south of the house in 1809.

**PARK** The park comprises two distinct areas: the New Park to the west and south of the Abbey, and the Deer Park to the north-east of the A444 road. The New Park remains pasture with scattered mature trees and significant areas of woodland on the north-facing slope to the south of the River Avon. The river and the watercourses associated with the medieval mill and the early C19 lake to the south of the Abbey flow in an S-shaped course from north-west to south-east through the New Park. An area of mid C20 plantation adjoins the river to the north-east of the Rennie Bridge, while to the south of the river, The Grove is an extensive area of mixed woodland which is shown on a survey of 1597. The Grove is approached by a walk which leads south-west from the mill bridge across the mill island to cross the River Avon on an early C19 footbridge with classically inspired cast-iron balustrades and hand rails (rails removed, 2000). The bridge is supported on a rectangular stone pier set in the centre of the river and has stone abutments to the north and south. In 1809 Repton proposed a bridge on a site to the east of the present footbridge, but the scheme was not implemented and the footbridge was built after 1813 to replace an earlier bridge serving a road to Ashow. Some 10m north-west of the bridge a culvert conveying water from the mill race discharges from a rusticated stone arch in a small cascade; these features formed part of Repton's early C19 alterations to the watercourses. South of the footbridge a series of walks extends north-west and south-east through The Grove. An early C19 icehouse of domed brick construction (dome partly collapsed, 2000) is built into the steep, north-facing hillside c 20m south of the bridge. Ascending the slope in a series of sweeping curves, the south-east walk passes a deep cutting c 450m south-west of the Abbey which survives from a road which formerly crossed the park from north to south, leading to the village of Ashow c 550m south of The Grove. Some 300m south-east of the footbridge the south-east walk passes through an open, north-facing glade, known as The View, which allows a panoramic vista from north-west to north-east encompassing the park, Grecian Lodges, Rennie Bridge, Abbey and the pleasure grounds, with a water meadow, How Meadow, in the foreground. The south-east walk continues for c 450m to reach the eastern boundary of the woodland; further walks pass through the woodland to reach a walk which follows its southern boundary. At the south-east corner an area of mature ornamental shrubbery adjoins a gate leading to adjacent meadows, from where there are views south-east across the River Avon to Bericote Wood, and west along the southern boundary of The Grove. The south-east walk passes across the south-east end of How Meadow before crossing the river on a bridge of C20 timber construction but which stands on older stone abutments (Parklands 1997). Some 80m north of the bridge, two pools and a water channel to the east separate a triangular area of meadow from the park to the north. Known as Home Grange Green, this was the site of a medieval monastic grange and a fulling mill which ceased to operate in the early C17 (ibid).

A further area of the New Park lies to the north-east of the National Agricultural Centre c 1km north-east of the Abbey. This area, which remains pasture with scattered mature trees, is bounded to the west by the River Avon, and to the north by the River Sowe. It is separated from the Deer Park to the east by the A444 road. The road was diverted to the east at the southern end of the park in the mid C20, leaving the late C15 Stare Bridge (scheduled ancient monument; listed grade II\*) isolated in the park. The park rises to the north of Stare Bridge with a group of earthworks at Motslow Hill, an ancient Hundred meeting place overlooking the River Sowe and Stoneleigh village. This area was taken into the park in the 1820s.

The Deer Park is today in divided use, with land to the south-west, adjacent to the A444 road, remaining as pasture with scattered mature trees and groups of trees on high ground. To the north and north-east the park has been developed in the late C20 as a golf course with a clubhouse and car park c 130m north-west of Cloud Bridge. Mature parkland oaks and other specimen trees remain on the mown grass fairways, together with areas of mixed woodland on the north- and south-facing slopes above the River Avon which flows in an S-shaped course from north-east to south-west through the park. To the south, a late C20 business park in part using mid C20, single-storey, pre-fabricated former hospital buildings occupies the south-east-facing slope above Stareton Lane. Mature parkland trees remain within the business park, together with mid and late C20 ornamental trees and shrubs. Mature trees, including picturesque early C19 groups of pines, remain adjacent to the boundaries of the Deer Park.

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Within the park remnants of a circuit of carriage drives survive; further, late C20 hard-surfaced paths have been created to serve the golf course and business park. Some 700m north-west of Tantara Lodge a two-arched stone bridge, known as the Coach Bridge (listed grade II), crosses the River Avon to allow access from the former London Drive to the area of the park on the north side of the river. The bridge was constructed in 1679 (datestone) and was subsequently altered in the C18 (listed building description). The early C19 Deer Keeper's Lodge (listed grade II) stands in an area of mixed woodland on a south-east-facing slope above the river c 220m north-west of the Coach Bridge. The Deer Keeper's Lodge comprises a two-storey rendered brick cottage constructed in a Tudor style with a single-storey gabled porch, ornamental bargeboards and leaded windows. Sir Thomas Leigh (d 1626) was granted a license to impark 700 acres (c 291ha) at Fletchamstead and Stoneleigh but the exact location of this park is unknown. In 1640 Thomas, first Baron Leigh, was licensed to impark 800 acres (c 333ha) at Stoneleigh; the creation of this park required the closure of Clowde Lane (on the line of the early C19 London Drive) and Connigray Lane which led from the River Avon to Stoneleigh village. The mid C17 park comprised some 320 acres (c 133ha), and was extended to its present area in the 1820s. Repton (1809) praised the landscape of the Deer Park, but made no recommendations for its improvement. Improvements in a picturesque style were made between 1813 and c 1839 by James Henry Leigh, Julia Leigh and Chandos Leigh with the advice of the local architect C S Smith who, in addition to designing the landscape structures, may have advised on the landscape itself (Parklands 1997).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** Three walled gardens and orchards are situated to the east of the Abbey beyond a service drive which leads south from the stables to the kitchens south-east of the Abbey. The gardens are enclosed by early C18 brick walls c 3.5m high and surmounted by stone copings (listed grade II). The west garden is entered from the west by a simple timber door, and is today laid to lawn separated from mixed perimeter borders by wide gravel walks. At the south-west corner tall stone piers support a pair of ornamental early C18 wrought-iron gates (all listed grade II) leading to the pleasure grounds. Some 15m east of the gates, an arched stone structure incorporated into the south wall is of uncertain origin, but in the late C19 was used as an aviary (OS 1886). At the north-west corner an C18 single-storey brick gardener's cottage has been extended and is set in late C20 domestic gardens separated from the body of the west garden by a beech hedge. A pair of tall rusticated stone piers surmounted by ball finials (listed grade II) is set in the east wall aligned with the west door. This leads to the east garden which is today planted as an orchard with late C20 standard fruit trees set in grass. A further entrance at the south-east corner of the west garden connects the gardens. At the south-west corner of the east garden stone piers support a further pair of early C18 wrought-iron gates with an armorial overthrow (listed grade II) which lead to the Rose Garden. To the north, and separated by a further late C20 hedge, late C20 domestic gardens surround the octagonal, early C19 single-storey brick bothy which has been extended and converted to domestic use. The bothy was formerly surrounded by the frame yard and several ranges of C19 glasshouses (OS). The west end of a further early C20 glasshouse abuts the south-east corner of the east garden, a gap in the wall leading to the south garden having been filled with late C20 timber fencing. The irregularly shaped south garden lies to the south of Home Farm and is the site of a substantial detached late C20 house.

#### REFERENCES

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## 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.