

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

STANFORD HALL

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**STANFORD HALL**

Name:	STANFORD HALL
County:	Nottinghamshire
District:	Rushcliffe (District Authority)
Parish:	Rempstone
County:	Nottinghamshire
District:	Rushcliffe (District Authority)
Parish:	Stanford on Soar
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.809809 Longitude: -1.1741296 National Grid Reference: SK 55766 23904 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001640 Date first listed: 05-Aug-2002

## Details

A late C18 landscape park with gardens and pleasure grounds largely laid out in the C19, with additional early C20 features.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In 1558 Queen Mary granted her goldsmith, Robert Raynes, an estate of 1200 acres (c 486ha) at Stanford, formerly in the possession of Thomas Knifton who was convicted of treason, and in 1641 Raynes' grandson, another Robert, built a stone hall there (Oldfield 1980). The estate was sold in 1661 to London Alderman Thomas Lewes, subsequently passed to the Philips family of nearby Garendon, and in 1770 passed to the Dashwood family (ibid). Between 1771 and 1774 Charles Vere Dashwood, at one time High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, demolished the old Hall and commissioned a new brick mansion (Throsby 1790). A c 1730 view from the south (Harris) shows the Hall with a range of domestic offices to the east and extensive walled formal grounds to the south, the whole within an enclosed deer park. In comparison a late C18 view from the south-east (Throsby 1790) shows the new Dashwood mansion, framed by belts of trees, at the head of sloping pasture. Both illustrations indicate a pond or lake on lower ground to the south-east of the Hall. In the early C18 view the water is shown with straight tree-lined banks with similarly lined rectangular islands while the late C18 view shows clear curving banks to the lake and a wooded island. The estate, enlarged by the Dashwoods, was sold in 1887 to the Ratcliffe family, brewers from Burton upon Trent. The Ratcliffes were responsible for much redevelopment including major alterations and extensions to the Hall, the laying out of formal gardens, the remodelling of the early C19 walled kitchen garden, and the construction of a stable block. The architect for these works was W H Fletcher.

In 1928 the estate, then comprising some 3000 acres (c 1215ha), was sold to millionaire businessman, Sir Julien Cahn (1882? 1944) of the Nottingham Furniture Company. Cahn carried out a series of major works including remodelling much of the

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interior of the Hall, the construction of an adjoining 352-seat Art Deco-style theatre, and laying out an Italian courtyard. Within the grounds he laid out various sports areas and from an existing reservoir and two ponds constructed respectively, a swimming pool, a sea-lion enclosure, and a penguin pool. The architects responsible for most of Cahn's Stanford projects were White Allom Ltd, with the theatre interior, which has been described as one of the best theatres of the period (Pevsner and Williamson 1979) by Cecil Aubrey Masey.

Following Cahn's death in 1944 Stanford Hall and 300 acres (c 121ha) were put up for sale. For a brief period during the Second World War the Hall and grounds were used as an army transport supply centre. The property was purchased by the Co-operative College which relocated to Stanford Hall in late 1945. The remainder of the estate (outside the area here registered) was retained by the Cahn family trust (College leaflet, nd).

The College carried out various alterations and extensions to the Hall and within the grounds. The property was sold again in 2001 and the Hall and grounds are now (2002) in the ownership of Raynsway Properties Ltd.

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** The 121ha site is located c 1.5km west of Rempstone and c 1.5km north-north-east of Stanford on Soar. To the north the irregular site is bounded by Melton Road and to the west by Leake Lane and King's Brook Court, a small residential development incorporating converted farm buildings. To the south, north-east, and south-east the grounds adjoin farmland. A public footpath leading south-east from Melton Road runs adjacent to the north-east boundary which is marked for c 500m by a c 1.4m high brick wall, probably dating from the C19. Elsewhere boundaries are generally marked by timber fencing and hedges.

The land to the north and north-west of the Hall is relatively level, rising very slightly to the north-west. To the south and south-east the grounds, which occupy the north-west slope of the King's Brook valley, fall sharply and then more gently to the south-east where two ponds are situated within the narrow, level valley bottom. Beyond the south-east boundary and the King's Brook the ground rises steeply, with the head of the south-east valley side forming a line of enclosure to views to the south and south-east. To the south-west the valley sides decline, giving views out over farmland at a lower level and the town of Loughborough. The surrounding area is in mixed agricultural use. Home Farm is situated immediately to the north of Melton Road and Rempstone Hall, on the same road, c 1.1km to the east (both outside the area here registered).

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The principal entrance to the park is to the north and lies at the north-east corner on the boundary with Melton Road. It is set back from the road with a concave quadrant of iron fencing to the east and a low timber fence to the west. This north entrance is marked by a carriage entrance with late C19/early C20 wrought-iron gates between circular iron piers. Immediately to the west of the entrance is the early C20 Arts and Crafts-style single-storey North Lodge, in brick below a steeply sloping red-tiled gabled roof. The entrance and Lodge are as indicated on the 1921 OS map. From the principal entrance a gently curving approach drive leads south-south-east for c 330m before dividing, with the east arm leading to a complex of former outbuildings and the other following a serpentine route southwards to the main entrance front of the Hall. The approach drive is generally lined to the west with late C20 timber livestock fencing; c 300m from the principal entrance there is a late C20 vehicle entrance barrier. Views of the Hall from the drive are very largely obscured by individual and small groups of mature trees until the final curve in the approach drive, some 140m north of the Hall, is reached. This line of approach is largely as indicated on the 1884 OS map and is likely to date from the building of the new Hall in the late C18 and alterations to the park as evidenced by the late C18 (Throsby 1790) view of the Hall. To the north the Hall adjoins a large entrance court, enclosed by a stone balustrade and with approach drives entering from the north-east and north-west. Some 140m north of the Hall a further drive links the two approaches, with the area thus enclosed largely open lawn with some perimeter trees. This arrangement is largely as indicated on the 1884 OS map.

A second entrance lies on the western boundary with Leake Lane but is not currently (2002) in use. It is marked by a carriage entrance flanked by two pedestrian entrances, all with Arts and Crafts-style timber gates between stone piers. This west entrance is set back from the road between low, convex quadrant brick walls topped with timber fencing in similar style to the gates. Immediately to the north of this entrance is situated a two-storey lodge with brick, vertical tile, and timber panel elevations, in similar but more ornate style to the North Lodge. From this entrance a gently curving tree-lined approach drive, flanked by low

hedges, leads c 350m north-east to Middle Lodge which adjoins the drive to the north. Middle Lodge is a two-storey dwelling in similar style to those at the entrances. From Middle Lodge the approach drive, flanked by late C20 timber stock fencing, continues north-eastwards between parkland for c 450m before curving south-east to the main entrance front of the Hall. This entrance and the two lodges are as indicated on the 1921 OS map and appear to be late C19/early C20 features.

Some 250m north-west of the Hall a grassed farm track leads northwards from the second approach drive to a pedestrian entrance, marked by a low timber gate, c 350m west of the principal entrance. This entrance and north-west approach drive are indicated on the OS map of 1884 but not on that of 1921. To the east of the Hall a farm track through an area of woodland leads eastwards to join the footpath adjacent to the north-east boundary (outside the area here registered).

The 1730 (Harris) view of the Hall and park shows a northern entrance and straight axial approach to the earlier Hall from the north, as well as formal gardens and a second entrance on the southern boundary from which a curving carriage drive winds through the western area of the park. No evidence of these features appears to survive.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Stanford Hall (listed grade II\*) is situated c 550m to the south of the north entrance on a level platform at the head of terraced ground falling to the south and south-east, and thus commands long views out over the park and countryside in these directions. The brick mansion was designed and constructed in 1771<sup>24</sup> by Henderson of Loughborough for Charles Vere Dashwood. The Hall was greatly altered and extended in c 1892 by W H Fletcher for the Ratcliffe family, and altered again in the 1930s, principally by architects White Allom for Sir Julien Cahn. In the second half of the C20 the Hall was again altered and extended for use as a college. The north-facing entrance front, with pediment and pilasters, is flanked by C18 forward curving wings with further late C19 and C20 wings extending to east and west.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The grounds immediately surrounding the Hall are laid out with formal gardens to the south and south-west, an informal walk and tennis courts to the west, a largely open lawn to the north entrance front, and former aquatic enclosures set into the grassed slope to the east.

The formal gardens to the south of the Hall comprise three terraces, descending to the south. The first, adjoining the central section of the Hall and the eastern theatre wing, provides a wide, 120m long walk bounded by a stone balustrade, with sections of stone balusters between lower solid panels, above a stone retaining wall. To east and west the terrace terminates with semicircular projections forming viewing platforms. Two slight changes in level along the gravelled walk are marked by stone steps. Stone steps descend from four rectangular landing projections to the second terrace to the south. Some 40m from the west end of the terrace one set of steps is axial with the main north and south entrances to the Hall and a projecting semicircular viewing platform, 40m to the south, on the third, lowest terrace. Some 40m from the east end of the first, uppermost terrace a late C20 concrete fountain is sited axially with a set of steps. From the terrace steps wide gravel paths lead south, across a central 10m wide grassed terrace planted with large clipped specimen golden evergreens, to further short flights of stone steps leading down a low embankment to a wide gravel walk running east/west on the third terraced area. This third terrace, c 30m wide, is laid to lawn with clipped evergreens and circular planting beds between wide formal gravel paths and is bounded to the south by a low stone retaining wall. This retaining wall is constructed with symmetrical returns and projections, axial with the Hall main entrances, providing a series of viewing stations over the lower parkland and countryside beyond. Only the uppermost terrace is indicated on the 1884 OS map. The whole of this formal terraced area is largely as indicated on the 1921 OS map but with the uppermost terrace subsequently extended to the east, one set of stone steps repositioned, and another set added so that the lower terrace paths do not wholly relate to the steps above.

Adjoining the west end of the uppermost terrace to the north is a square Italian garden enclosed on three sides by an open arcade with Ionic concrete columns, laid out with formal beds around a coloured mosaic floor and central octagonal pool and fountain, now a planting bed. The garden adjoins the Hall to the east and dates from the 1930s. Axial with, and c 60m west of, the Italian garden is situated a formal rectangular rose garden enclosed by tall yew hedges with a central entrance to each side. The rose garden is laid out with formal, symmetrical stone-paved paths separating lawned areas with planting beds and with a small pool with fountain at the centre of the garden. To the north-west of the rose garden an informal oval lawn is enclosed by mature trees and shrubbery with the whole bounded to the west and north by a stone ha-ha. A perimeter path within this area, incorporating the rose garden, forms a circular walk which leads, 110m west of the Hall, to a single-storey tennis pavilion

(listed grade II) in timber and render below a hipped thatch roof, dating from the late 1930s. Immediately to the west of the pavilion, below the ha-ha, are three hard-surfaced tennis courts. The area enclosed by the ha-ha is shown on the 1884 OS map laid out with trees and a circular walk.

To the east of the Hall the ground falls steeply to the south and set into this grassed area are two stone-walled enclosures, both with concrete-lined pools (listed grade II). The enclosures, on tiered levels, are separated by a small stone footbridge flanked by two stone pedestals, one with an urn (listed grade II with the pools). These features were constructed in the 1930s on the site of earlier fishponds, the larger, higher enclosure for sea lions and the lower as a penguin pool. A further shallow circular concrete-lined pool (now dry) is sited 10m to the south. On rising ground c 15m south-east of the former sea-lion enclosure is sited a stone garden pavilion (listed grade II) with central archway over Doric columns and a hipped fish-scale slate roof, also dating from the late 1930s. To the east of this area, south of the kitchen garden, is a mixed woodland with informal footpaths and tracks running through it; the layout is roughly as indicated on the 1884 OS map.

Some 20m to the south of the shallow circular pool the pleasure grounds are bounded by a stone ha-ha which continues westwards for c 330m in an informal curving line, c 120m to the south of the Hall. From this point the ha-ha returns north for c 80m and then encircles the shrubbery to the west of the Hall. This ha-ha may be, in part, on the line of the division between gardens and park shown on the 1730 (Harris) illustration.

Some 40m north-east of the Hall is situated a detached two-storey brick former training centre with residential accommodation built in 1981. To the north of this building, and c 100m north-east of the Hall, is a two-storey brick former coach house and stable building with a central courtyard and open-sided courtyard to the west, converted to College accommodation in c 1977. Between these buildings, and c 90m north-east of the Hall, is sited an octagonal game larder (listed grade II) with brick base and weatherboarding below a conical tiled roof, dating from the late 1930s. Adjoining the former stable building to the north is an open-air swimming pool (listed grade II) enclosed to the south, west, and north by rough-hewn rock and ashlar walls incorporating seats, rock pools, and grottoes and to the east by a single-storey entrance building. The pool and rockwork dates from the late 1930s and is in the location of an earlier reservoir (OS 1921).

**PARK** The park comprises irregular expanses of open ground, now (2002) largely grazing pasture divided into paddocks by timber stock fencing. To the north of the Hall an area of flat parkland is planted with individual and small groups of mature deciduous trees with a double line of trees adjacent to the north boundary with Melton Road. An icehouse is indicated within the park, c 50m south-west of the principal entrance, on the OS map of 1884 and is understood to survive. Open areas of ground within this northern area formerly included a football pitch and, to the west of the principal approach drive, a cricket field laid out in the 1930s. To the north-west this northern area is enclosed by a belt of woodland comprising Ash Plantation and Lings Spinney and to the south-west by Dog Kennel Wood, with the western approach drive leading through an open area of ground between the two. This open area is enclosed to the west, adjacent to Middle Lodge, by the meeting of two further belts of woodland, The Belt to the north and The Privets to the south. Further enclosure is provided to the north by a field hedge linking The Belt to Lings Spinney and to the south by The Privets which extends east to Dog Kennel Wood. All of these woodland belts are largely as indicated on the 1884 OS map but with Lings Spinney now extended to the east and a former area of open ground between The Privets and Dog Kennel Wood now wooded.

To the south of the Hall and pleasure grounds the sloping parkland is generally more open with occasional individual mature trees and, c 180m south of the Hall, a copse adjacent to a field boundary. To the north-west this area is enclosed by Dog Kennel Wood and to the north-east by an irregular area of woodland extending from the pleasure grounds to Cherry Hill, adjacent to the eastern boundary. To the south-east the parkland is defined by two elongated ponds in the valley bottom, the larger to the south-west with a wooded island providing a focal point to views from the terraced gardens. The pond banks are partially lined with shrubs and mature trees. The ponds are as indicated on the 1884 OS map and are in the location of more formal ponds illustrated in 1730 (Harris).

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The former brick-walled kitchen garden (listed grade II) is situated 160m north-east of the Hall. Trapezoidal in plan, it retains the former two-storey gardeners' accommodation and stores in the centre of the outside of the west and north walls. Within the garden, adjoining the north wall, is a range of glasshouses with a central projecting conservatory.

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The layout dates from the early C19 with late C19 alterations and additions. To the north of the walled garden is a range of further glasshouses and stores, with a part-underground boiler house to the west and a small two storey mid C20 gardener's house to the east.

**REFERENCES**

J Badeslade and J Rocque, *Vitruvius Britannicus* (1739, reissued 1967), pls 106, 107 J Throsby, *Thoroton's History of Nottinghamshire* republished with large additions (1790) [facsimile edn 1972] N Pevsner and E Williamson, *The Buildings of England: Nottinghamshire* (1979), p 335 English Heritage Register Review: Nottinghamshire (1995) Stanford Hall Co-operative College, guide leaflet (nd) *The Co-operative College - Origins and Development* at <http://staff.co-op.ac.uk/College.htm> (2002)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 1922 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1921 edition

Illustrations J Harris, Bird's-eye view of Stanford Hall, the seat of Francis Lewis Esq (in Badeslade and Rocque 1739)

Archival items G Oldfield, Stanford Hall (notes prepared for a talk to members of the Thoroton Society 1980), (90.2q; Nottinghamshire Record Office Library)

Description written: July 2002 Register Inspector: HMT Edited: November 2002

## 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.