

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

SWARKESTONE OLD HALL

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

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**SWARKESTONE OLD HALL**

Name: SWARKESTONE OLD HALL

County: Derbyshire

District: South Derbyshire (District Authority)

Parish: Swarkestone

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.852537  
Longitude: -1.4466507  
National Grid Reference: SK 37360 28481  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II\*  
List Entry Number: 1000685  
Date first listed: 04-Aug-1984

## Details

An early C17 pavilion and walled enclosure, and walled gardens relating to Swarkestone Old Hall.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Swarkestone Old Hall was the home of the Harpur family. The family moved to Calke Abbey (qv) in the C17 after the Civil War and the building was leased out before being partially demolished in 1746-7. The attached garden walls fell into disrepair and are now in ruinous condition (1998). The ruins of the Old Hall and attached walls are in private ownership while the pavilion, The Grandstand, is owned by the Landmark Trust (1998).

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Swarkestone Hall lies immediately east of the village of Swarkestone in an area which is rural and agricultural. The c 2.5ha site is on level land and the boundaries are formed by walls and fences separating the site from fields. Included within the boundary is a set of C17 gate piers on the south side of the B5009 and the track leading from them to the site.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The entrance to the site is via a track leading south from Barrow Lane. A set of C17 gate piers (listed grade II) lie c 300m north-west of The Grandstand and a path running south-east from them probably represents the C17 approach.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Swarkestone Old Hall, which was probably built during the C16, survives as a wall with windows and a chimney breast to which walls are attached (ruins and attached walls listed grade II\*).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** The gardens associated with Swarkestone Old Hall fall into two areas, the former gardens enclosed by walls attached to the ruins of the Old Hall (listed grade II\*), and a pavilion or banqueting house called The Grandstand and its attached walls (listed grade I), which lies c 170m north of the Old Hall.

A walled enclosure to the east of the Old Hall consists of stone rubble walls in semi-ruinous condition (1998) forming a rectangular enclosure within which the building would have stood. The enclosure is used as rough pasture.

On the west side of the Old Hall there is a sub-rectangular enclosure with rubble walls which is used for pasture. Ploughing in 1988 revealed a system of gravel paths which described a square with quartering paths leading from a central circular walk.

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An opening in the west wall of the enclosure leads to a further stone-walled enclosure, also used for pasture, which is divided into two halves by a brick wall.

The Grandstand stands at the head of a rectangular enclosure which is detached from the walls around the Old Hall and constructed of masonry of superior quality and capped with moulded copings. An entrance at the south end of the enclosure leads to a grassed area which is overlooked from the north end by The Grandstand. The building is of two storeys with an arcaded loggia flanked by square turrets with domed ogival lead roofs which rise above the embattled roof line. There is a twelve-light mullioned and transomed window at first-floor level. The building was heated and a tall chimney rises from the rear. It dates from after 1623 and has stylistic affinities with the Little Castle at Bolsover Castle (qv), suggesting that the architect may have been John Smythson (see Girouard 1983). A payment of more than £110 to mason Richard Shephard for a 'bowle alley house' in 1630-2 (Girouard 1983) may well refer to The Grandstand and suggests a use for the enclosure overlooked by the building. Other sources suggest alternative or additional uses such as bull baiting (Pevsner 1978) and it is likely the area was put to a variety of uses, possibly including the performance of masques. The flat roof of the Grandstand is accessible and could be used as a viewing platform. This, together with the large window in the room below and ground floor loggia, would have supplied generous accommodation for spectators.

The Grandstand and attached walls were subject to major repairs and restorations during the 1980s and are owned by the Landmark Trust (1998).

## 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.

## Bibliographie

### **Books and journals**

Girouard, M, Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House, (1983), 123

Pevsner, N, Williamson, E, The Buildings of England: Derbyshire, (1978), 337-8

### **Other**

OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1881, published 1890

The Stand, Swarkestone (RCHME report, NBR 33072)