

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

LOWESBY HALL

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

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
LOWESBY HALL

Name: LOWESBY HALL

County: Leicestershire

District: Harborough (District Authority)

Parish: Cold Newton

County: Leicestershire

District: Harborough (District Authority)

Parish: Lowesby

label.localisation: Latitude: 52.662880
Longitude: -0.93525338
National Grid Reference: SK 72109 07772
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000962
Date first listed: 01-Feb-1987

Details

Formal gardens, including elements by Sir Edwin Lutyens, and a landscape park associated with a country house.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The manor of Lowesby was purchased in the mid C17 by Richard Wollaston (d 1691), a gun founder. His heir was his son Josiah, whose son Isaac (d 1737) was succeeded by his younger son Isaac, who on the death of his uncle in 1749 succeeded to the title of baronet. He died in 1750 and his wife in 1753, leaving as heir an infant son Sir Isaac Lawrence Wollaston. On his death in 1756 his estates passed to his two sisters, Sarah, later wife of Taylor White, and Anne, who in 1772 married Thomas Fowke (kt 1777, d 1786). The family estates were divided by Act in 1777, and Lowesby was apportioned to Lady Fowke. The Fowkes remained owners until well into the C20. In 1910 Capt Harold Brassey, their tenant at Lowesby, brought in Edwin Lutyens (1866-1944) to alter and extend the Hall and to improve the gardens. Lutyens had built a Cotswold house called Copse Hill at Upper Slaughter for Brassey six years before. Lowesby remains (1998) in private hands.

DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Lowesby Hall and its service buildings stand west of the medieval church of All Saints and the adjoining hamlet of Lowesby 13km east of Leicester, c 1km west of the B6047 from Market Harborough to Melton Mowbray. Hall and park lie on the north-east side of a stream valley, the watercourse, the Wreke, forming the south-western boundary of the park. The B6047 Melton Road bounds the site to the north-east, and its junction with Park Road, which turns off it to the south-west, defines the northern corner of the park. The south-east boundary of the park follows field edges, and runs through the earthworks of the medieval village of Lowesby (scheduled ancient monument), larger and more populous than the present settlement. The area here registered is c 50ha.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
LOWESBY HALL

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The north forecourt of the Hall is approached via a private drive past the north side of the churchyard.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Lowesby Hall (listed grade II*), of red brick with blue headers and a hipped, Swithland slate, roof, is of c 1707. The north-east, entrance front is of nine bays, the outer two bays on each side formerly projecting hipped gabled wings but now linked by an inserted full height corridor, probably added by the Fowke family. The central door is set in a full height canted bay. The north-west, side elevation is relatively plain and of six bays. The south-west, garden front is of eleven bays, the central three projecting and set beneath a pediment. This front is continued to the south-east by a low range (housing, inter alia, a swimming pool), partially the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens, who worked on the Hall and grounds in 1910.

On the east side of the north forecourt is a brick-faced stable block (listed grade II), superficially C18 but apparently of 1910 and by Lutyens. North and east are other outbuildings, one (listed grade II) with a C17 core, possibly an earlier stable block. Also listed (grade II) is a pair of ironstone cottages, probably early C18.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Lutyens set to work on the gardens in 1910. The scheme he produced survives largely intact, although somewhat simplified.

North of the Hall is a long grass forecourt, with an oval gravel turning circle. To the north and west is a low brick wall of c 1912 by Lutyens. Down the east side of the forecourt is a tall stand of mature horse chestnuts, which are continued to the east, alongside the drive as it runs towards Lowesby church, by a group of mature, mixed specimen trees. From the forecourt there are views north and west across the park. Slightly below, and west of the south end of the forecourt, is a terraced lawn, also bounded by a low brick wall. In the park immediately west of this is a small cricket pitch.

Running along the south-west, garden front of the Hall and the low range to its south-east is a broad, raised gravel walk, in 1905 called the Promenade. Steps and a small brick-paved terrace, all probably by Lutyens, adjoin the south-east end of the building. The walk is retained by a stone-coped, 3m high, brick terrace wall, probably C18, possibly lightly remodelled c 1912 by Lutyens. A central flight of thirteen semicircular stone steps (listed with terrace wall grade II), also probably C18, lead down to the main lawn. At the bottom (south-west) of that lawn, complex brick steps (listed grade II) of c 1912 by Lutyens lead down the grass terrace to a lower platform-like lawn, retained by short walls running south-west to north-east. The steps take the form of opposed semicircles with an intermediate circular landing of herringbone work.

From the lower lawn a plain flight of brick steps leads down to the line of a path along the top of the slope above the fishpond. At either end of the path are further steps of c 1912 leading to hedged bench apses. The fishpond is 80m long and 10m wide, and runs north-west to south-east along the bottom of the lawn. Rising up at its south-east end is a rockery, set at the top of which and looking along it is a summerhouse or seat with pedimented facade and a circular brick rear. Listed (grade II) as possibly of c 1912 and by Lutyens, it is in fact shown on early C19 maps and is probably of the mid C18. To the south of the fishpond is woodland, which continues up the west side of the main lawn where there are a number of mature specimen trees. A second rectangular fishpond, still partly extant, is shown on early C19 maps within the woodland, roughly parallel to the first, with buildings or seats east and west of it. These no longer survive.

South-east of the main lawn is a rectangular lawn (in 1916 a formal rose garden) with battlemented yew hedges on three sides and a 5m high brick ramp on the north-east side. Although the ramp looks modern, it (or a predecessor) was noted in 1916, and may be the new strawberry wall noted by Alexander Gordon in 1830. In the north-east corner of the garden is a single-storey summerhouse (listed grade II), octagonal, brick and probably C18 and with a full-height opening on all sides but the back. Early C20 iron gates lead through to a quartered parterre garden with central fountain basin to the south-east. From this steps lead up, northward, to a large rectangular rose garden, running along the top, north side of which is the main gravel walk along the head of the garden. Down the east side of the whole garden, between it and the walled kitchen garden, is a narrow, grassy slip with a path down it.

Early C19 views of the Hall suggest it was then surrounded by lawns with shrubberies and specimen trees, and in 1880 Nichols noted that 'the grounds around the house are beautifully adorned with trees' (Nichols 1880, 340). There were considerable changes made to the gardens in the 1820s and early 1830s when the pleasure grounds and gardens were extended.

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England
Inventory of Great Britain
LOWESBY HALL

PARK The Hall stands towards the southern, lower end of a wedge-shaped park which extends c 800m from south-west to north-east and c 800m along the brook which forms its south-west boundary. The park is entirely grassland. Extending 500m north-east from the Hall's forecourt up to the park boundary are the earthworks of medieval Lowesby; to the north of the earthworks is ridge and furrow. Running uphill north-east from the north-east end of the forecourt is a broad avenue, partly replanted in the 1990s. There was already an avenue on this line in 1815. At the start of the avenue, in a slight hollow 50m beyond the end of the forecourt, are the banked edges of a broad rectangular pond, c 80m long. Already present in 1815 this was apparently drained in the later C20. A second avenue, of mixed specimen trees, runs north-west from a gate near the north end of the forecourt. This is on or very close to the line of a drive present in 1815 and still apparently in use in the mid C20. It extends for c 350m to Park Road, which runs south-west through the northern part of the park.

There was already a park in 1815, its north-eastern boundary apparently the hedgeline on the crest of the hill 400m north-east of the Hall along which a plantation belt had been established.

KITCHEN GARDEN To the south-east of the pleasure gardens, and south of the early stables, is a brick-walled kitchen garden (walls listed grade II). Measuring c 100m long from north-east to south-west and c 50m wide, the garden slopes markedly downhill to the south-west. Against the top, north-east wall is a long lean-to greenhouse of c 1900, in very good condition. The adjoining section of the garden is used (1998) for vegetable growing. There is a hard tennis court in the lower part of the garden. The kitchen garden, mapped in 1815, was modernized (and perhaps in part rebuilt) by Lowesby's gardener Alexander Gordon in 1830 (*Gardener's Mag* 1831, 429).

REFERENCES J Nichols, *History and Antiquities of Leicester* 3, pt i (1800), pp 339-40 (4 vols, in 8 parts, 1795-1811, reprinted 1971) *Gardener's Magazine* 7, (1831), pp 428-30 *Country Life*, 18 (9 September 1905), pp 342-8; 37 (8 May 1915), pp 626-33; 39 (22 January 1916), p 105 C Hussey, *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* (1953) M Binney and A Hills, *Elysian Gardens* (1979), p 20 N Pevsner, E Williamson and G K Brandwood, *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* (1984), pp 296-7 *Maps Map of Lowesby, 1815* (Leicestershire Record Office: 41/88) *Map of Lowesby, 1821* (5047/14), (Leicestershire Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: Leicestershire sheet 32 NE, 1st edition published 1891 Leicestershire sheet 32 NE, 2nd edition published 1904 Leicestershire sheet 32 NE, 1950 edition

Archival items Early C19 engravings of Lowesby (private collection)

Description written: November 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: July 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.