



Staunton Park Regency Farmhouse – Heritage Statement

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1.0 Introduction

Staunton Country Park lies on the northern outskirts of Havant, and is owned by Hampshire County Council. Within the Southern part of the park is a Grade II Listed Regency Farmhouse and dairy building, which houses a café and ancillary park accommodation.

The café suffers from poor access, problematic internal circulation and life-expired server installation. This Heritage Statement forms part of a Listed Building Application covering proposed alterations which aim to address these issues and ensure the Farmhouse is able to retain its key role in the function of the Park.

2.0 Understanding the Heritage

2.1 Background

Staunton Park is deemed to be of national importance, and is registered Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens from which the following summary description is taken:-

“A Regency landscaped garden, laid out in the 1820s and 1830s on the site of late C18 pleasure grounds and a walled garden, with a series of specialist gardens and follies by Sir George Staunton to accommodate his Chinese and botanical interests. The gardens are surrounded by a park of C18 origin, which was developed by Sir George in the early C19, and also incorporates late C19 alterations”.

The Park contains some of the last remaining remnants of the ancient Forest of Bere containing diverse and valued habitats and species, and contains ten listed structures, including the Regency Farmhouse.

The Regency Farmhouse, in the SE corner of the Park, was listed in 1984 as Grade II, and the Historic England Listing Entry Summary reads as follows:

“Farmhouse. C18, with early C19 additions. House, with a larger (older) rear wing (dairy). Brick, with a tile roof. Symmetrical front (south) of 2 storeys, 3 windows. Hipped roof, with brick dentil eaves. Walling of blue header panels between the vertical red panels which enclose the openings, red quoins, blue panels between the upper and lower openings, pointed arches to the upper openings, rubbed flat arches to the ground floor. Late C20 casements, the ground floor having pointed lights within the rectangular frame. Plain doorway (cornice missing) with small 4-light fanlight. The rear wing is lower, of painted brickwork with cambered ground floor openings, casements, and plain doors.”

2.2 Context

Staunton Country Park (also known as Leigh Park) lies on the northern outskirts of Havant, on the west side of the B2149, Petersfield Road. The 90ha registered area comprises c 19ha of kitchen and nursery gardens, pleasure grounds, and paddocks associated with farm buildings, c 30ha of woodland, and c 41ha of parkland.

The eastern third of the site lies on level ground which falls in gentle undulations towards the north-west boundary with the wooded ridges of the Forest of Bere beyond forming the distant view. The housing estates of Leigh Park abut the site to the south-west, south, and south-east although on the south-east boundary they lie beyond Petersfield Road, the northern half of which (Durrants Road) is fringed by detached houses interspersed with tree belts.

Middle Park Way, built in the 1950s, cuts from west to east across the southern third of the site, separating the area known as South Gardens from the North or Leigh Park Gardens. To the north-west and north, the woodland and grassland of the park merges into wooded farmland.

Both North and South Gardens are entered from Middle Park Way, with the entrance to the public car park in South Gardens situated some 80m west of its junction with Petersfield Road. Pedestrians enter a few metres further west, at a pair of gateways with brick piers and iron gates which stand facing on opposite sides of the road and from which gravelled paths lead northwards towards the lake and pleasure grounds and southwards to the ornamental farm attraction entrance buildings. These, converted from C19 coach house and garden use, stand against the south-east wall of the kitchen garden. The paths follow the route of the main drive to Sir George Staunton's house, which stood adjacent to the south-east corner of the kitchen garden.

Following the demolition of both the C18 and C19 houses, the present principal buildings, which stand to the south-east of the kitchen garden, comprise those structures surviving from Sir George Staunton's building works, some of which have C18 origins.

Some 70m to the south-east of the site of the former house are Leigh Park Farmhouse (now known as the Regency Farmhouse) and Dairy (listed grade II).

2.3 Historic Development of the Park

- **The 18th Century**

The early landscape of Staunton Park was associated with pasturing of stock in Havant Thicket and the Forest of Bere, which was in the ownership of the Bishop of Winchester.

A new lease in 1775 'reserved to the Bishop the right of all the growing timber, the right to cut and cart it, and the right of hunting, chasing and taking deer, in The Thicket, part of the Manor'. Since the people of Havant were also entitled to cut timber 'from the town wastes, which included The Thicket', this caused disputes with local people such as Joseph Franklin. The lease was surrendered in 1784, and a new lease granted to Richard Newland, who began selling off parts of the manor of Havant.

The Thomas Milne Plan dated 1791 (Fig 1) shows the holding, which is named Ley, in the ownership of Harrison Esq. The outline of the holding is shown, of rectangular shape, with the boundary marked by fencing and a line of trees. It appears to extend north as far as mid way along Middle Thicket Lane, well beyond the fork off from the Havant to Rowlands Castle main road, and on a similar level to Wakefords Copse. The position of the house and walled garden is marked, as are the farm buildings and cottages on the east side of the road. In 1792 Harrison sold the holding covering approximately 20 acres to Admiral John Frederick.

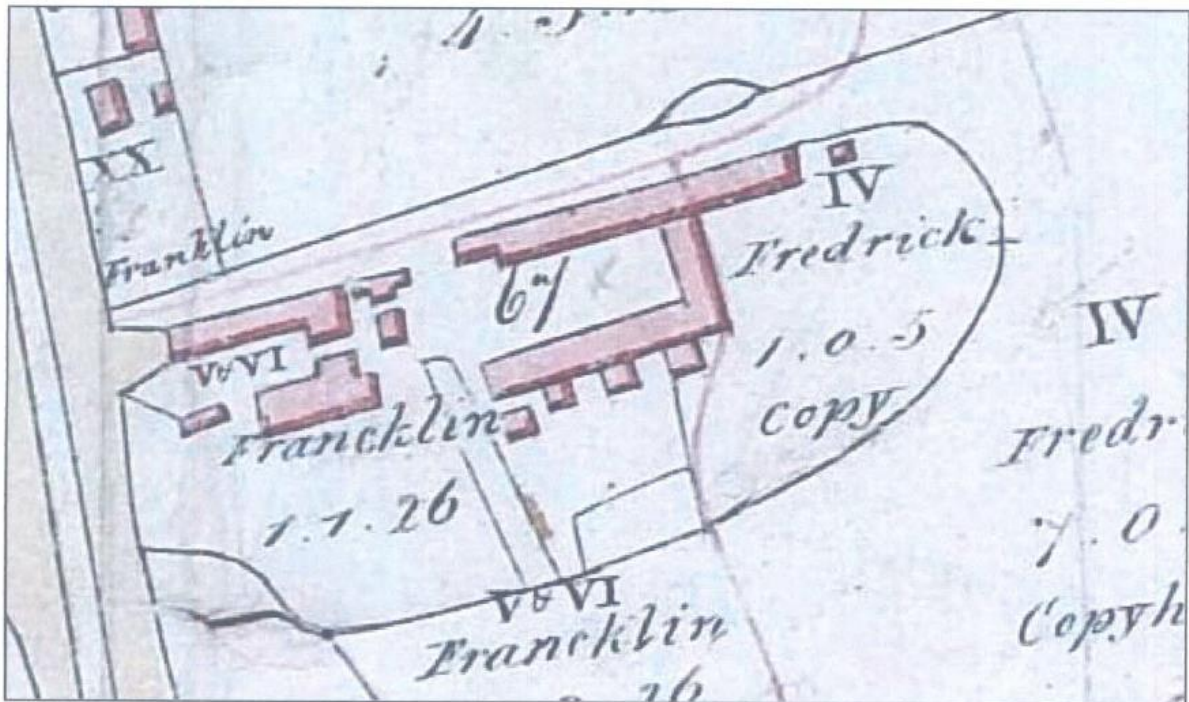


Fig 1. Detail of plan of the estate dated 1792-1800 showing the farm buildings

- **The 19th Century**

In 1800 Frederick's widow Ann sold the house with nine acres of land to William Garrett, a man of local influence. In the same year Richard Newland conveyed the manor of Havant, with its rights, members and appurtenances to Garrett.

A contemporary description provides an account of the house and estate;-'The House at Leigh, previous to its occupation by Mr. Garrett, was very small, and the land attached to it quite inconsiderable'. Around 1802 Garrett enlarged and almost rebuilt the house, using the Southampton architect, Kent, who had built other residences in the neighbourhood.

At the same time he acquired the 220 acres of land belonging to Franklin. With further land purchases of contiguous land Garrett enlarged the estate into one of the largest in the district. The 400 acres were enclosed with a park paling, and named Leigh Park. Garrett built a small pond for the watering of cattle on the edge of Havant Thicket, and converted the farm into a Ferme Ornee.

- **The 20th Century**

By the 1930's the expense of upkeep and changes in social conditions made the running the estate extremely onerous. The original range of glasshouses had mostly disappeared by then. In 1936 Angela Fitzwygram sold 1,265 acres of land in West Leigh and Leigh Park to Portsmouth City Council. In 1940, the estate was requisitioned by the Ministry of Defence and the Victorian mansion was taken over by the Royal Navy. Huts and structures were erected to service the naval occupation, and mines were tested in the lake.

The Fitzwygram family remained owners until the end of World War II. In 1944 Angela Wygram sold the estate in its entirety to Portsmouth City Council. The Council together with a consortium bought the estate in order to build a major housing scheme on the land. John Studley, Director of Parks and Recreation, was responsible for the remaining estate, which was designated as parkland. He gradually brought the Pleasure Grounds and Walled Gardens under the control of the Parks department, and began rectifying the years of damage and neglect. The Walled Garden became used as a display space for allotment gardening, demonstrating different horticultural techniques.

By 1959 the Stone house had become too expensive to maintain and it was pulled down, and the glass houses, gardens and estate buildings began to decline. The original east boundary wall of Storeys Gardens was demolished when the Petersfield Road was widened in the 1960'S. Before the 1950's the main entrance had been on the Petersfield Road, opposite Wakefords Copse. During the 1970's all the leased parcels of land were returned under the control of the Director of Parks and Recreation, Peter Maunder, and following consolidation of the land holdings, it was opened as a new public open space.

Within the Ferme Ornee, a major facility for the display and breeding of rare breeds was created, making it one of the first local authority farm parks. A collection of pigs, sheep, cattle, poultry and cart-horses was brought together.

In 1987 following the establishment of Staunton Country Park, control of the historic estate and surrounding lands passed to a joint Management Committee representing eight partner bodies. Thereafter work began on repairs and restoration of the Estate. The Park suffered significant damage in the great storm of 1987, when 87 specimen trees were lost, followed by a further 30 trees in the storm of 1990.

In 1997 an HLF grant supported the restoration of the Ornamental Farm, the Stone Terrace, and the Coach House.

2.4 Historic Development of the Ferme Ornee and Farmhouse

During the medieval period, the land at Leigh Park comprised woodland and pasture which lay adjacent to the ancient Royal Forest of Bere. By the C18 there was a farmhouse on the site which was occupied by a Mr Harrison of Ley. This was purchased by William Garrett who in 1802 enlarged or rebuilt it, enclosed a park of some 420 acres (170ha), and laid out '*productive gardens ... shrubberies ... and the whole of the lands [as] a perfect ferme ornée*' (Sale catalogue, 1819)

Approximately 70m to the south-east of the site of the original Sir George Staunton house is Leigh Park Farmhouse (now known as the Regency Farmhouse) and dairy (listed grade II), dating from the C18 and C19. The farmhouse, restored in the 1990s and in use as a tea room, comprises a two-storey building of red and blue brick with a pitched tiled roof and pointed gothic arches to the upper windows on the south front. East of the farmhouse is an L-shaped range of a mid C19 red-brick barn and cowshed, with a further open-fronted timber and brick cartshed on the east side (group listed grade II); these now house farm animals (for the farm trail) and other country park uses.

In 2004 further internal alterations were carried out to the farmhouse and dairy buildings, and a linking extension was constructed to the North, to connect the dairy to the adjacent barn.

A plan detailing the development of the Farmhouse is shown in Appendix A

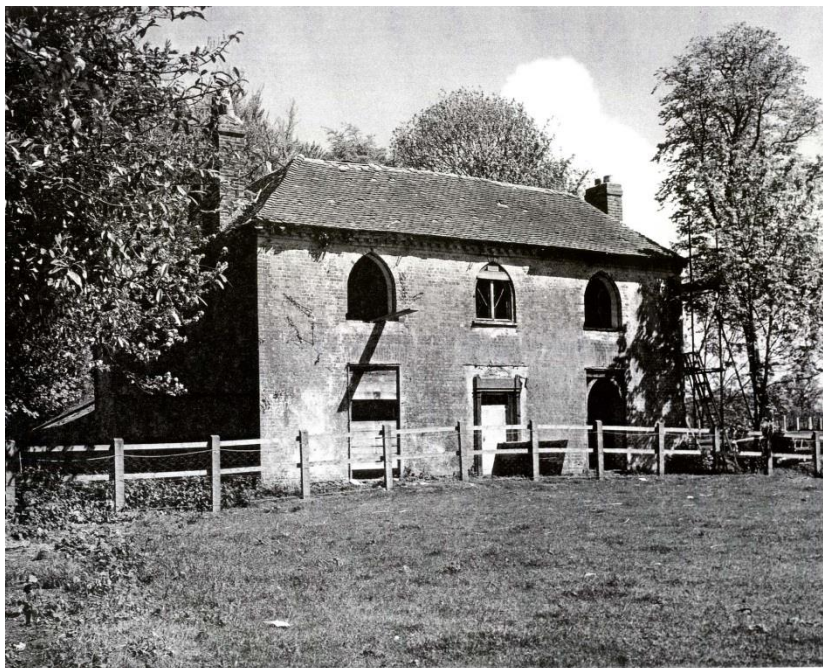


Fig 2. Farmhouse South Elevation just prior to 1990's repair project



Fig 3. Current view of East side of Farmhouse and Building 15 to the right hand side.



Fig 4. Current View of South elevation of the Farmhouse



Fig 5. Existing north return elevation of Regency Farmhouse, indicating modern brickwork between door and window, existing full width timber lintel, vent grille above, and inadequate signage.

3.0 Statement of Significance

The Regency Farmhouse was listed Grade II in 1984. In summary it is a two storey farmhouse with a north protecting wing. The brick symmetrical front has a hipped roof, with brick dentil eaves, and walling of blue header panels between the vertical red panels which enclose the openings, red quoins and blue panels between the upper and lower openings, with pointed arches to the upper openings. The rear wing is lower, of painted brickwork with cambered ground floor openings, casements, and plain doors. It sits wholly within a conservation area. (Refer to Appendix B)

Evidential Value

Evidential value derives from the physical remains that have been inherited from past activity on the site.

- Building 30 Room A contains what it assumed to be it's original stone floor.
- The beams erected as part of the connecting of Buildings 31 and Room A are evident at ceiling level (Ref Southern Archaeology Report)
- The original masonry partitions are evident within both Buildings 30 and 31 with the original opening and door between Rooms A and B still in use.
- The assumed original shutters to the West are evident within Room A, and it is assumed that most of the windows to the East elevation of Building 30 are original.
- Original stone floor to Room C.
- Original timber beams are evident at the ground floor of Building 30.

Refer to Appendix A for room reference locations.

Historical Value

The historical value of the buildings is mostly based in their relationship rest of the Staunton Park site, and the development of the Ferme Ornee. Stephen Switzer (1682–1745), born in Hampshire, was an English garden designer and writer on garden subjects, coined the term Ferme Ornee, as an ornamental garden, and describes the 18th Century idea of laying out a country estate partly according to aesthetic principles and partly for farming. The Regency Farm buildings at Staunton are amongst the original buildings constructed by Harrison in the 18th Century and as such are of considerable local historical value.

Aesthetic Value

Both the brick farmhouse and the dairy building to the north have high aesthetic value. Both comprise significant proportions of their original fabric and are in good condition. The stone flooring, windows and masonry partitions add greatly to the aesthetic character of the dairy buildings. The gothick

windows of the farm house, restored in the 1990's, are of high aesthetic value and together with the brickwork patterning and dental course contribute greatly to the character of the building.

Communal Value

As a Country Park in the ownership of Hampshire County Council, Staunton plays a major role in the community of Havant and Hampshire. The farm houses a range of animals and hosts numerous events throughout the year and the tea rooms within the Farmhouse are instrumental to it's success.

Summary of significance

The Regency Farmhouse is one of the earliest buildings on the estate still in existence. The values outlined above come together to form a building of moderate local significance within the community.

4.0 Assessment of Impact

4.1 The Proposals

The proposals are as indicated on drawings P12225 – 2211 and 2215 and can be summarised as follows;

1. Enlarged door opening to North return elevation of Regency Farmhouse, with new canopy above. This alteration is proposed in order to enlarge the opening width of the entrance door into the café and includes provision of a level threshold. The current door is very narrow and coupled with the threshold this makes access into the café very difficult for those of limited mobility, or users of pushchairs. The proposal comprises an external ledged and braced door to maintain the external appearance of the building group, and which when fixed open will sign the cafe as open for business. An internal glazed door will enable the internal environment to be maintained, and will enable compliance with Approved Document Part M. The new canopy will provide a degree of weather protection to the enlarged door and will also help to signal the entrance to the café.
2. Removal of stud wall and changing room within the NE corner of the Regency Farmhouse. This will enable a more generous circulation space at the entrance point to the café.
3. Alternations to the Served Area. It is proposed to remove the modern served within the dairy part of the building, and to provide a new fit for purpose installation which is suitable to serve the projected visitor numbers to the Park. Within Room B it is proposed to replace the current modern terracotta tiles with a new suitable sympathetic floor covering. The original stone flooring to Rooms A and C will be retained.
4. Alterations to the WC's. In 2004 a modern link building was constructed between Building 30 and Building 15, which can be seen on the construction phases plan Appendix A. It is proposed to carry out internal modifications to this link building in order to increase the number of WC's serving the café.
5. General redecoration and new lighting throughout Building 30 (The Dairy)

4.2 Statement of Impact

1. Enlarged door to North return elevation of the Farmhouse, with new canopy above:

Modern brickwork is evident to the east side of the current doorway, indicating that at some point historically the opening in this location had been wider. The proposed new opening size for the door is proposed to be the minimum width required to enable the building to be wheelchair accessible and will retain the visual character of smaller openings within a masonry elevation. The proposed new canopy is recessive in scale, and will have minimal visual impact, and the removal of the modern vent grille serving the changing room will benefit the elevation.

It is therefore considered that the impact on the building is low to moderate.

2. Removal of stud wall within the NE corner of the Regency Farmhouse:

It is believed that this is a modern stud wall and was constructed in circa 1990 to form a changing place for the staff at the Park. Therefore overall this element of the works is considered to have a negligible impact on the building.

3. Alternations to the Servery Area:

The current servery is life-expired and is not part of the historic fabric of the building. The impact of it's removal and replacement with an up to date replacement is therefore considered to be low

4. Alterations to the WC's:

As part of 2004 extension, alterations to the WC's are considered to have low heritage impact on the building.

5. General redecoration and new lighting throughout Building 30 (The Dairy)

Lighting and decorative colours will be selected to compliment the character of the buildings. The existing light fittings are modern and are life-expired. Therefore this element of work is considered to have low heritage impact on the building.

4.3 Justification and Mitigation

The external alterations to the Farmhouse have been designed to sit sympathetically within their context, ensuring they do not impact on the character of the building and its setting.

The alterations to the Regency Farmhouse noted in section 3 above are key to the ongoing successful functioning of the building. Many customers are currently deterred by the queuing and difficult access issues presented by the building in its current form, and the most impactful element of work - the widened door - will enable the building to become more accessible and therefore have a higher throughput of customers.

The café function represents a significant proportion of income generated at the Park and its ongoing viability, and improved accessibility is vital to the continued sustainability of the Park as a whole.

5.0 Bibliography

- Leigh Park a 19th Century Pleasure Ground Derek Gladwyn Middleton Press 1992
- Listing description from the English Heritage Register of Historic Gardens
- Listing description from the English Heritage Register of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
- Staunton Park Conservation Plan updated by HCC Property Services 2017
- The collections of the Hampshire Records Office Winchester
- Historical Geography of the Forest of Bere. Hants. D.J.Carter. 1968
- Southern Archaeological Services Ltd Report on Refurbishment of Model Farm Dated 5/8/2003-25/5/2004

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Plan showing the construction phases of the buildings

Appendix B – Plan of Conservation Area