

A Brief History of Southleigh Park House.

Southleigh Park House features the remains of an early 19th-century gentleman's estate. The main house, clock tower and lodge are Grade II listed.

The estate was known in 1820 as Woodlands and was then a dairy farm. It was bought by Mr. Charles Short, who converted the house into a mansion, the front of which was of galleted flint and castellated, facing south to command a view over the sea. Extensive gardens were made, including glasshouses in 2 kitchen gardens, and ornamental woods, screening the house from the road.

In the 1839 sales particulars, the estate had grown to 160 acres. By 1870 there was considerable planting of trees, including rhododendrons and laurels round the pleasure gardens. The gardens consisted of lawns shrubberies and walks. There were 2 walled gardens to the rear of the house and the kitchen garden was about 1 acre. There were extensive greenhouses, including a vinery, camellia house, and a banana and orchid house.

By 1889, the estate known now as South Leigh, had been embellished with more ornamental planting. A small lake at the front of the house punctuated the view over a park. A lodge had been built at the NE corner of the estate, and a carriage way round to the entrance on the east wing had been established. The farm, known as Woodlands Farm, had been moved away from the house and gardens.

Particulars of South Leigh during a sale by auction on Tuesday June 23rd 1903

Occupies a beautiful situation on elevated site commanding fine landscaping and sea views extending to the Isle of Wight. Lodge with 4 bedrooms and offices.

Surrounded by splendidly timbered park. Built of flints in a castellated style and presents a very pleasing elevation. Outer and inner halls, stone paved with open hearth and stone mantel divided by glass panelled doors and roof supported by 4 columns. Double drawing room which can be separated by folding doors. Library, capital dining room, panelled ceiling, oak floor, black marble mantel piece.

Smoking room, with lavatory fitted, hot and cold water supplies. Conservatory leading to a Capital billiard room.

Domestic offices are well shut off and convenient. Butlers pantry, inner pantry with hot and cold water supplies, housekeepers room, large servants hall, butlers bed room, large kitchen with china closet, scullery, larder store, knife and boot house, closets and capital wine cellars.

Upper floor reached by principal, secondary and servants staircases.

20 bed and dressing rooms, 2 bath rooms having hot and cold water supplies, several WCs, housemaids closet, store room.

Outer offices - Bake house, wood house, servants WC, coach house, detached dairy, poultry houses, brew house and laundry.

Stabling - Stable containing 4 stalls and loose box with grooms room, large saddle rooms and 2 bedrooms over. Secondary stable (3 stalls and a loose box) and excellent coach house for 8 carriages.

Pleasure grounds - Very pretty and tastefully laid out in lawns, shrubberies and walks. Heavily timbered and contain splendid specimens of forest and ornamental timber, together with choice evergreens and luxuriant banks of rhododendrons. A pretty piece of ornamental water with well stocked fish.

Very productive kitchen and fruit gardens, walled 1 acre. Glass houses (all heated by hot water pipes) include, green houses and forcing houses on 3 divisions, lean to vinery, camellia house and vinery and an early vinery. Banana and orchid house, and a late vinery. Apple orchard planted with the choicest sort of apples. Potato house, potting shed, fruit room, store and tool rooms.

Gardeners' cottage - Parlour, living room, kitchen, 2 larders, wash house, 2 bedrooms, 2 attics, outside sheds, WC and garden.

In 1905 the estate, now 360 acres including cottages and farms, was bought by the White family and survived as a working unit until 1969,

1905 Sir Woolmer Rudolph Donati White (son of Timothy White who established a chemists business in Portsmouth in 1848. Became qualified as a pharmacist in 1869 and incorporated Timothy Whites Ltd. After he died in 1908, Woolmer assumed control of the company). Sir Rudolph Dymoke White inherited the estate after the death of his father Woolmer, in 1931.

Staff employed during Sir Woolmer and Lady White occupancy 1905-1931

Chauffer

3 housemaids

Cook

Kitchen maid

A 'tweeny' (between floors maid

Parlour maid

Butler

7 gardeners

Head groom

3 grooms

The estate was sold to the Plessey Company in 1969. A new entrance was cut from the Eastleigh Road, the kitchen gardens became a car park and a modern

office block was built in the same area. In 1994 the estate, covering 15 acres, became the property of Snell & Wilcox and was developed into the headquarters of the business.

The site is now occupied by Snell Ltd and the main house overlooks what was the park, which includes several large oak trees, and is now grazing for Southleigh Farm.

HERITAGE STATEMENT

The proposed adaption is to remove 9 number weathered and perished fibreglass roof lights that were installed an estimated 50 years ago as established by history documentation and photographs. The roof lights are part of a flat roof mansard that helped to illuminate high ceiling offices in part of the main house of Southleigh Park.

The offices are currently redundant and have not been used for several decades. This portion of the building is being restored to a good condition and the roof lights are no longer considered necessary and need to be removed. As the roof lights were not part of the original building, there is no heritage value in retaining them, nor will the heritage of the building be impacted by their removal.

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