

# Understanding Historic Parks & Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



'Lillingstone Dayrell House built 1845' Historic England Archive

## Lillingstone House

December 2016



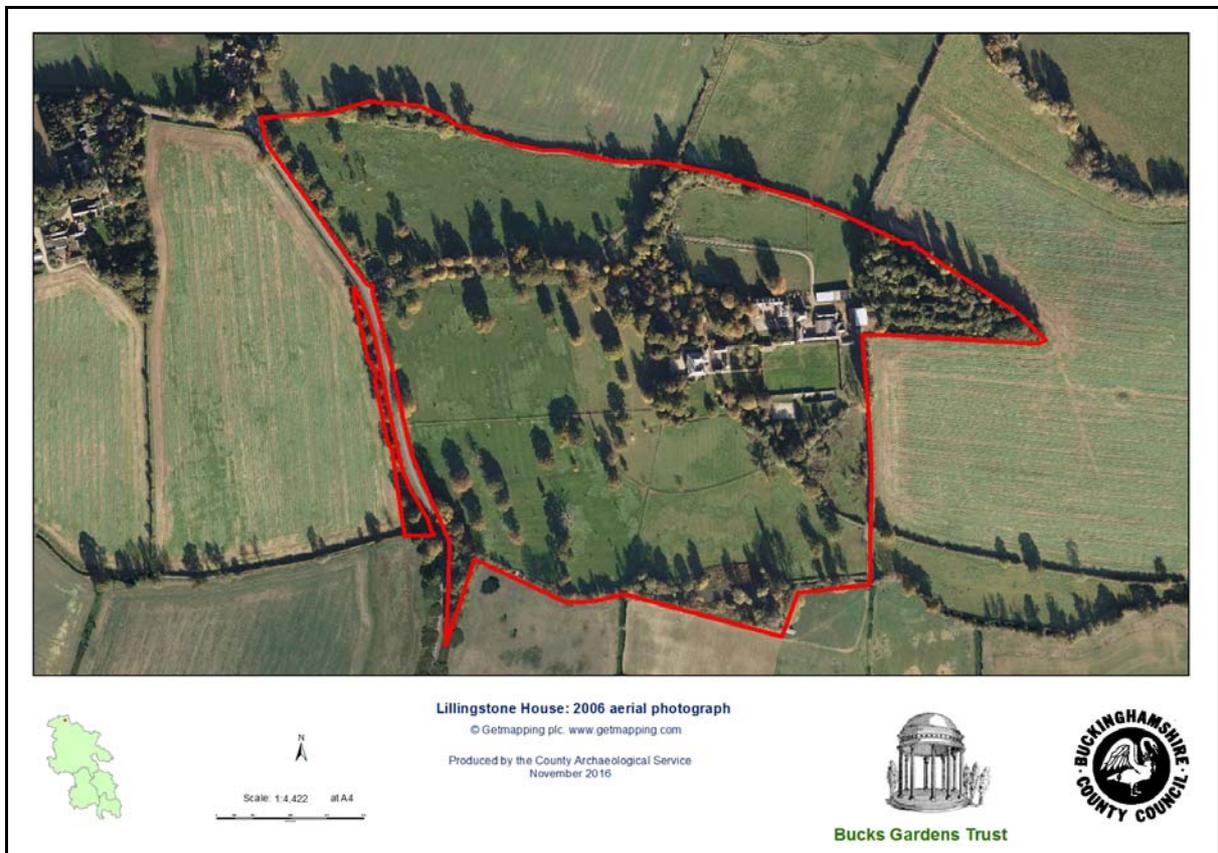
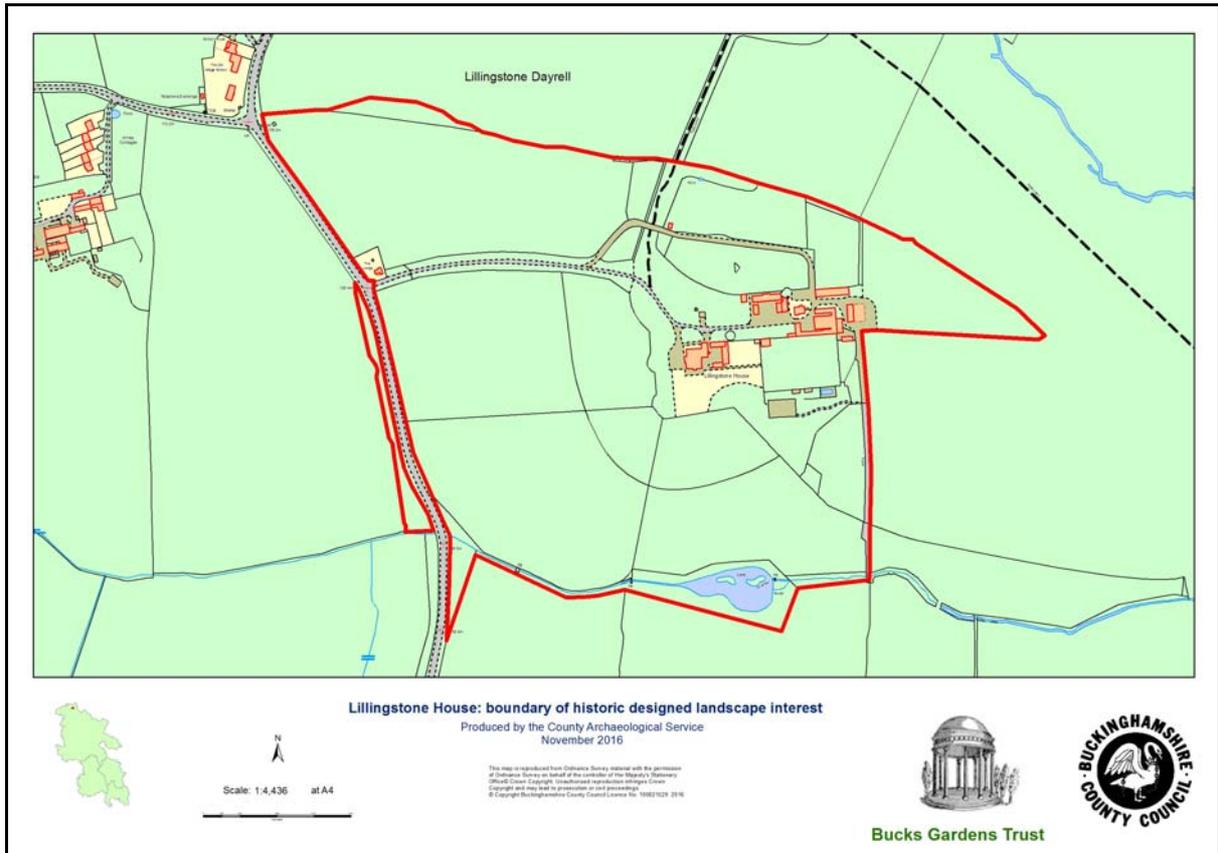
**Bucks Gardens  
Trust**



The Stanley Smith  
(UK) Horticultural  
Trust



# HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



## Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (now Historic England) (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not definitive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

## Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage/Historic England on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the Historic England *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- A map showing principal views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

## Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Gardens Trust (formerly the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society) and funded by BGT with significant grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and the Finnis Scott Foundation. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>LILLINGSTONE HOUSE</b> BCC HER 1073401000
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	AYLESBURY VALE	
<b>PARISH:</b>	LILLINGSTONE DAYRELL	
<b>OS REF:</b>	SP 705 394	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Overview

A Victorian country villa landscape developed c.1840s on a new site, including a park, pleasure grounds and kitchen garden which survives largely complete, with many mature trees. Gertrude Jekyll in 1910 advised on a sunken garden, the remains of which survive in simplified form. The extent and survival of villa gardens is not well recorded and this is a good example at this scale, with an ensemble of typical features which survives largely intact.

**Archaeological Interest:** The archaeological interest and potential in part arises from evidence relating to previous agricultural uses, including ridge and furrow in the park. There is the potential for lost buildings and landscape features, including elements of the kitchen and sunken gardens, such as former glasshouses and associated paths, structures and borders.

**Architectural Interest:** A largely complete ensemble of buildings for a mid-C19 country villa focussed on the villa (listed Grade II). Other estate structures are typical ancillary buildings including the service court, stable yard, farmstead, kitchen garden gateway and walls, many probably erected around the same time as the villa or shortly after. The lodge was probably built c. late C19/early C20.

**Artistic Interest:** The park and pleasure grounds for a mid-C19 villa which survives largely intact. The typical layout of pleasure ground terraces and informal lawns surrounds the villa within parkland containing many mature trees framing two main vistas to the west and south. The walled kitchen garden survives but is no longer productive and is instead laid to lawn. The rectangular sunken garden for which Gertrude Jekyll provided a scheme survives, but in simplified form, containing four shrubs at the corners and a central well head. Jekyll was one of the most prolific and influential early C20 garden designers, but it is unclear to what extent her scheme was executed.

The layout apparently dates largely from the 1840s when villa grounds were becoming a major part of landscape design, both in rural and urban situations. At this time the prolific writer JC Loudon published much advice for the expanding middle classes on designing villa gardens at various scales, principally emulating at small scale the pleasure grounds of country house landscapes. In his *The Suburban Gardener, and Villa Companion* (1838, pp. 170-71) he set out four classes of villas and how the gardens of each should best be laid out. Lillingstone House corresponds to the first class, which varied in extent from 50 to 100 acres including a 'park and farmery'.

### Historic interest

The historic interest is increased by the survival of documentation of the early C20 development of the garden relating to the contribution by Gertrude Jekyll in 1910 and to the Messenger glasshouses.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

By 1086 (Domesday Book) the parish was called Lelinchestance, the Manor being in the Stodfold Hundred in the lands owned by Walter Giffard. The parish pre-dates the Norman Conquest and there is evidence of Roman and Romano/British occupation west of St Nicholas' church ([www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3160](http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/3160)). The former village also lay west of the church.

The Dayrell family probably settled in Lillingstone Parva (C12 name of parish, changed later to Lillingstone Dayrell C14, *VCH*) and their right to the title 'Lord of the Manor' was recognised in 1309. They are recorded by memorial plaques on the walls of St Nicholas' Church.

The first manor house stood 60m west of the church. It was demolished in 1767 and replaced by a second manor house on the same site in 1797 (*VCH*). The second was removed by 1900 (OS).

The site of the present Lillingstone House, south of the church, was enclosed by 1764 as agricultural land (Estate Plan, Historic England Archive). It was divided into 8 fields, bounded to the west by the Towcester road and to the south by the stream. An avenue from the manor garden projected south into the north-west field. The outline of these fields formed the boundary of the later park. It remained by 1839 undeveloped agricultural land (Tithe map).

Lillingstone House was built in the 1840s, as a villa, with the grounds including pleasure grounds, park and kitchen garden constructed in a single campaign around the same time. The south front is shown in a sketch noting that it was built in 1845 (Historic England Archive BB86/5306). In this the stable block roofline appears with a prominent cupola, to one side of the villa, and the parkland in the foreground is thickly planted with young trees including many conifers. In 1885 Eleanora Dayrell (*History of the Dayrell Family*) noted that "The late Lord of the Manor Edmund Francis (1795-1881) erected a new mansion a short distance from the Manor House so the estate had two residences upon it" and that it cost £36,000. It is unclear who designed the house and landscape. Edmund Dayrell mortgaged the entire estate in 1852 for £12,000 (CBS MS D210/24/5) possibly to pay for further development, perhaps including the grounds.

The house was occupied by 1850 by a tenant, Mr G Cardwell (*Bucks Herald* 30 March 1850). The first detailed map of the Lillingstone House site is based on the OS 25" 1<sup>st</sup> edn (1880) (CBS MS D210/24/6). The house was enclosed by informal wooded pleasure grounds to the north, west and south, with a kitchen garden nearby to east, and a stable yard and the farmstead to the north-east. The well-wooded park wrapped around the pleasure grounds with a single curving drive from the road to the west. A ha-ha with two bastions divided the house and its lawns from the park to the west.

In the late 1880s the property was tenanted by Mr AB Loder whose head gardener WA Walter won various prizes for chrysanthemums in Northampton and Buckingham between 1885 and 1887. Walter was a judge at the Wellingborough Chrysanthemum Show and Mr Loder was president of the Buckingham Chrysanthemum Society (*Northampton Mercury* and *Bucks Herald* 1885 & 1887, in Radley, p. 19).

By the mid-1870 Lillingstone House was 'the seat' of A.J. Robarts Esq. (Wilson's *Imperial Gazetteer of England & Wales* vol. 4, c.1872). Other sources indicate that Capt. E.M. Dayrell sold the manor and property to Mr A.J. Robarts c.1885-87 (Mountney; CBS MS D210/24/8, cited in Radley). The Lordship of the Manor was sold to Robarts in 1887 (VCH). The layout and framework planting remained largely unchanged by 1900 (OS).

By 1903 the house was tenanted. Captain Robarts wrote to Messenger and Co. Ltd. (a highly respected horticultural glasshouse manufacturer) for advice about replacing the existing 'Green House' with a glasshouse and peach house combined, in excess of 47' long and probably 12' wide complete with a store and boiler house. This was completed in 1904 as a lean-to between the house and the kitchen garden at a cost of £263 to the tenant Hon. Mrs. Archibald Douglas-Pennant (MERL TR AD1.1531, in Radley).

In May 1910 Gertrude Jekyll provided a design for the garden; this was apparently confined to the sunken garden below the Peach House, between the house and kitchen garden (F Jekyll, *Memoir* (1934), quoted in Radley). It seems that she did not visit the site, but it is unclear what prompted this commission from Mrs Douglas-Pennant who still lived there by 1927 (VCH).

By 1947 the grounds remained much as originally laid out and completed in the C19 (RAF aerial photograph CPE/UK/2097 frame 3175 28 May 1947). The sunken garden was cultivated, and had a cruciform pattern of paths, apparently as designed by Miss Jekyll, but the glasshouse had probably gone. The kitchen garden remained partly in cultivation, with a tennis court beyond in woodland to the south that had contained an orchard.

The house remains in private ownership and the grounds have been little altered.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING**

The 27 ha. site lies in the parish of Lillingstone Dayrell, 4 miles north of Buckingham and 6 miles south of Towcester. The site lies south of the site of the former village, of which only a few scattered houses remain. The parish church of St Nicholas stands in the churchyard 1/4 mile north of the house and the former manor houses stood adjacent in the field to the west.

The roughly rectangular site is enclosed by agricultural land. It is bounded to the south by a stream and to the west by the A413 Buckingham to Towcester road. The road is bounded to the west by a narrow belt of mature trees running north between the south-west corner of the park and the Lodge. This extends a further line of trees from the south (outside the area of historic interest). By 1900 this informal belt comprised deciduous trees with specimen conifers.

The site rises gently from the west and south to the villa and pleasure ground, which occupy the highest ground, affording views back over the park to the west and south. The setting is rural, gently rolling landform, with the church, lost village and site of the manor houses to the north.

## **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

The main approach is across the west park from the A413, 350m north-west of the villa. The park entrance is marked on the north side by the two-storey lodge, built possibly c.1900, of brick with a rendered upper storey. The Lodge garden is entered via a cast iron pedestrian gateway on the east side of the Lodge, set into elegant bow-top fencing. The drive entrance is flanked by two oak piers with iron caps set into timber boarded fencing. From here views extend over the park, south-east towards the house and north-west towards the church. A further timber fence and gateway (C20) crosses the drive 40m from the roadside gateway.

The drive curves east across the park for 300m, lined by an avenue of mature oak, enjoying filtered views of the park, before entering the pleasure ground 100m north-west of the villa. From here the drive leads south-east to a rectangular forecourt below the west front of the villa. 30m north of the villa a spur leads east to the stable yard and beyond this the farm. The drive and stable yard spur were present in this form by 1880 (OS), and probably originated with the villa in the 1840s. A loop (late C20) leads off the drive 230m east of the road, curving north and east as direct farm access.

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

Lillingstone House (c.1840s, listed Grade II) stands within gardens and pleasure grounds in the east half of the site, with the entrance front to the west and the garden front to the south. The north, west and south fronts overlook the pleasure grounds and park. Attached to the east a U-shaped group of service buildings encloses a courtyard.

The two-storey house is built of yellow brick, with stone cill courses, a hipped slate roof, a deep wooden eaves cornice on brackets, and rendered stacks. The west, entrance front has six bays of barred sash windows with sliding louvred shutters. The two centre bays project slightly, as a projecting stone Doric enclosed portico to the ground floor. The portico has four columns, entablature, sash windows and central panelled studded door with a large rectangular fanlight. Views extend west from the entrance front, and south from the garden front over the park, the vistas framed by the park planting including many mature trees. A sketch view (Historic England Archive) states the house was built in 1845 and shows it in a composition with the stable block with its prominent cupola, overlooking the newly-planted park, thickly sprinkled with conifers and deciduous trees. It was described in 1885 as standing in a 'well wooded park-like portion of the estate ....' (Dayrell).

The stable block stands 80m north-east of the house and is built of red brick with yellow brick dressings under slated roofs. The main north range has a prominent central cupola. It is flanked by two further ranges to west and east, all enclosing a stable court open to the south. The farmstead including a detached house, and yard stands adjacent to the east. All these are of C19 origin, possibly coeval with the villa. The farmyard incorporates C20 buildings now. In 1885 the stabling was described as 'very extensive, even for a neighbourhood so devoted to horses and hunting as Bucks' (Dayrell).

## **GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS**

The 1.5 ha. pleasure grounds surround the villa to the north, west and south, with the kitchen garden adjacent to the east. The areas to the north and south are laid to informal lawns with scattered mature trees. The church path runs north as a spur off the drive, through a narrow neck of the northern pleasure ground leading out to a path giving access to the church c.400m to the north. This path was present by 1880 (OS). West of the forecourt is a lawn with a central well head and ornamental iron overthrow, on axis with the front door. The lawn is divided from the park by a curved brick ha-ha, the central shape of which reflects the former curve of the forecourt, before it continues to north and south along the west side of the pleasure grounds and bulges into the park at the far ends. In the late C19 the lawn was planted with two specimen conifers (OS). The ha-ha affords unbroken views from the west and south lawns over the park and wider landscape similar to those of the villa, framed in two broad vistas by mature trees.

East of the villa and service court is the sunken garden (60m x 35m). This is open to the south and walled on the other three sides: to the west by a service range, to the north by a garden wall and to the east by the kitchen garden wall. It has the remains of a central sunken parterre with low stone walls, and is laid to lawn. In 2007 (Google Earth) it retained four specimen trees at the corners of the sunken area with a central well head of similar design to the one on the lawn by the forecourt. The layout is probably the one for which Gertrude Jekyll provided a planting plan in 1910. By 1880 (OS) a 35m long lean-to glasshouse ran along the north wall. In 1903 Captain Robarts asked Messenger and Co. Ltd. for advice about replacing the existing Green House with a glasshouse and peach house combined, in excess of 47' (14m) long and probably 12' (3m) wide complete with a store and boiler house. It seems that this was completed in 1904 as a lean-to, at a cost of £263 for the tenant Mrs Douglas-Pennant (MERL TR AD1.1531 in Radley). By 1947 (RAF AP) the glasshouse had mostly gone but the rectangular layout of the area survived including a central circular layout of beds enclosing the well-head.

## **PARK**

The park encloses the house and pleasure grounds to the west and south. It is laid to pasture with scattered mature deciduous trees. Two informal vistas extend through the park to the west and south, aligned on the corresponding fronts of the house, framed by the trees. A small pond (created by 1947, RAF AP) straddles the south boundary and the agricultural land beyond, on the line of the boundary stream. A further paddock lies north of the stable block, enclosed to the west and south by the northern pleasure ground woodland. To the east it is enclosed by a triangle of woodland.

## **KITCHEN GARDEN**

The rectangular kitchen garden, measuring c.83m x 58m, lies 60m east of the villa. The garden is reached from the south front of the villa by a path running east across the lawn, passing the sunken garden, to reach a gateway. The gateway is flanked by stone piers with ball finials with an elegant ornamental iron gate framed by two panels and a semi-circular overthrow. The garden is laid to lawn with small buildings in the north-west corner. Formerly it was laid out with a cruciform pattern of paths meeting at a central well, and a perimeter path (OS), and was cultivated until after World War II (RAF AP, 1947). An area of slips ran round the exterior of the south and east walls.

South of the kitchen garden is a triangular wooded area. It contains a rectangular manège. By 1900 (OS) it contained an orchard, with a band of ornamental mixed trees along the south-west, park boundary. In the mid-C20 this was the site of a tennis court, set in a triangle of lawns and closely spaced trees and shrubs (RAF AP, 1947).

### **GERTRUDE JEKYLL (1843-1932)**

Although so often associated with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, the Surrey-based Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) worked with nearly 50 other architects as well as providing schemes outside major architectural works. Miss Jekyll provided designs for a number of other sites in Buckinghamshire including Woodside Place, Chenies (her first commission with Lutyens, 1893), Cheswick, Hedgerley (1902), Pollard's Park, Chalfont St Giles (1906), Barton Hartshorn (1908 architect Robert Lorimer, qv), Nashdom (Lutyens, 1909), Rignalls, Great Missenden (architects Adams and Holden, 1909), Pednor House (1911-12 or 1919), Chalfont Park (architect Lutyens, 1912), Fulmer Court (1913), Bramleys, Great Missenden (architect E Willmott, 1913), Orchards, Little Kingshill (1914), Little Halings, Denham (1927, architect W Sarel), Willowbrook, Eton (1927, Lutyens), Ponds, Seer Green (1928).

As at Lillingstone House, it was common for her to provide planting plans without having visited the site, based on information and plans supplied by the architects. It was also common for her to provide planting schemes for specific parts of a garden, as also happened in Bucks at Pednor House, Chesham (1911-12 or 1919), for a circular sundial garden, and in 1927 at Little Halings, Denham, for a border alongside a sunken garden.

### **REFERENCES**

- Bucks Herald* (30 March 1850).
- Dayrell, E., *History of the Dayrells of Lillingstone Dayrell ...* (Le Lievre Bros, Jersey, 1985).
- Jekyll, Francis, *Gertrude Jekyll, A Memoir* (1934), 173-74, 208.
- Mountney, F.A., *The Parish and Parish Church of Lillingstone Dayrell* (1955).
- Northamptonshire Mercury* (13 November 1885); 30 July & 12 November 1887); (21 January 1888).
- Page W (ed.) *A History of the County of Buckinghamshire* vol. 4 [VCH] (1927), 187-91.
- Pevsner, N., Williamson E, *The Buildings of England, Buckinghamshire* (2nd edn 1994), 432.
- Radley, Stephen, 'The History of the Designed Landscape at Lillingstone House' (M.A. Dissertation, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, February 2015).
- Wilson, *Imperial Gazetteer of England & Wales* vol. 4 (c.1872).

### **Maps**

- 1764, An Exact Plan of Lillingstone Dayrell ... the Property of the Revd Richard Dayrell (copy in Historic England Archive 328/1 In Lillingstone Dayrell Red Box card ref. 0328-001).
- 1770s, Thomas Jefferys, Map of Buckinghamshire (CBS)
- 1814, Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing, scale 2" to 1 mile, sh. 229 (British Library)
- 1825, A. Bryant, Map of the County of Buckingham (Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies)
- 1839, Tithe Map of Lillingstone Dayrell (TNA IR 30/3/73).
- 1884, Land Belonging to E.F. Dayrell (CBS MS D210/24/6).

## **Ordnance Survey**

25" to 1 mile, sheet 8.15

1<sup>st</sup> Edition s.1880, p. 1881

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition s.1899, p. 1900

6" to 1 mile, sheet 8

1<sup>st</sup> edition s.1880, p. 1885

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition s.1899, p. 1900

Revised edition 1950, p.1952

National Grid 1: 10,000 scale 1975

## **Images**

Aerial Photos

1947 RAF series (HER)

### **Historic England Archive**

Sketch 'Lillingstone Dayrell House built 1845' (328/37; Red Box Lillingstone Dayrell, card ref. 0328-95)

## **Archival Items**

### **Centre for Bucks Studies**

Collection of items of the Dayrell family including MS D210/42/5, 6, 8.

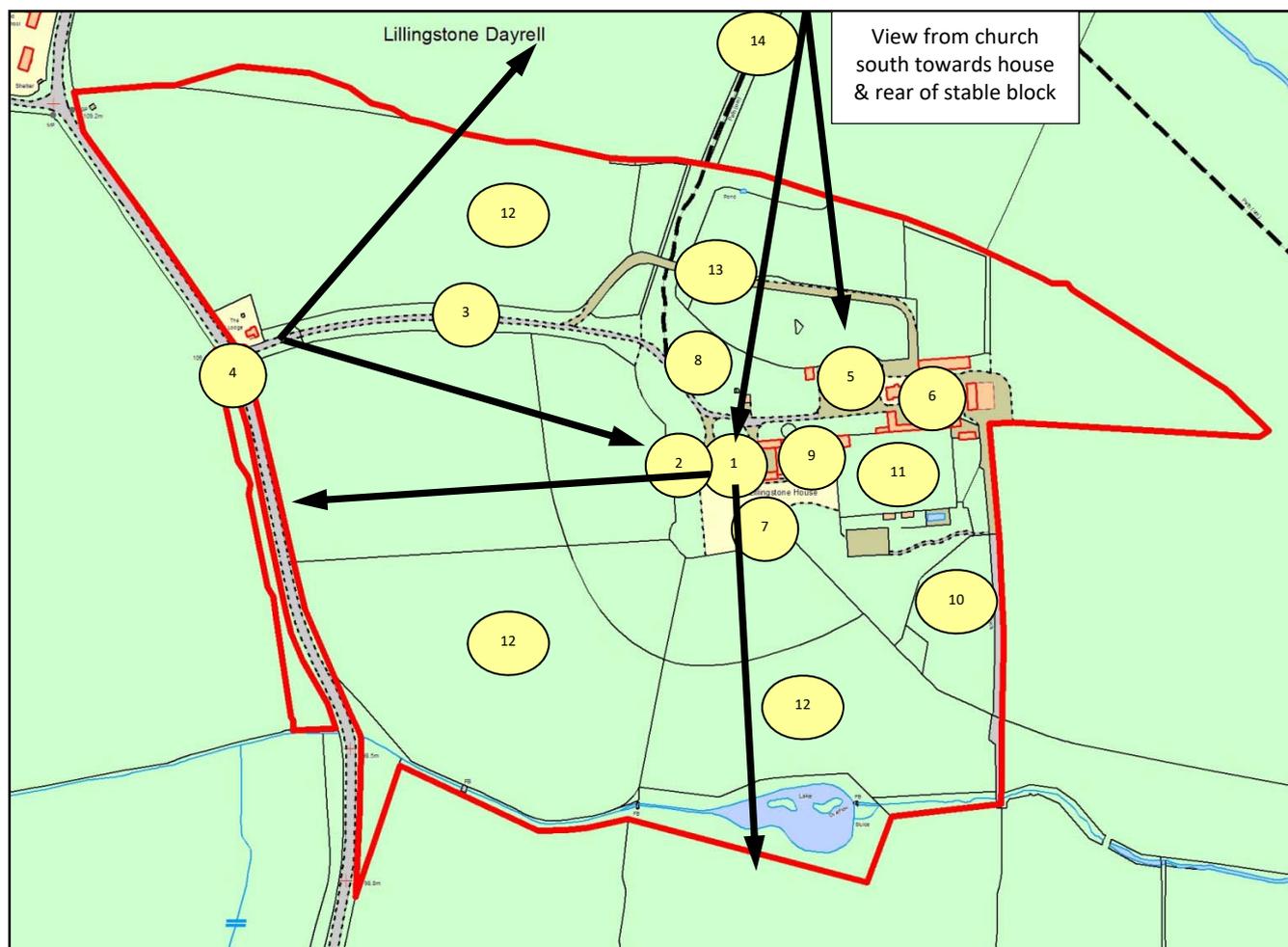
### **Museum of Rural Life, Reading University**

Messenger and Co. archive correspondence TR MES AD1/1531

1925 Catalogue of Messenger buildings (including a model of peach house similar to that at Lillingstone House).

KE, 06 November 2016, edited SR 13 Nov 16.

## KEY HISTORIC VIEWS & FEATURES



### Key to numbered features

1. House, service wing & courtyard	2. Forecourt, and ha-ha (west) lawn
3. Main drive	4. Main entrance & Lodge
5. Stable yard	6. Farmstead
7. South lawn	8. Northern pleasure ground with church path
9. Sunken garden	10. Former orchard
11. Kitchen Garden	12. Park
13. Modern farm drive	14. Church path