

Silverstone Farm Report June 12 2024

The Art Appreciation group members enjoyed an afternoon with a difference this month at Silverstone Farm. Approximately 35 years ago George Carter purchased the farm house and outbuildings with surrounding land and began planning his very unusual green garden. Yes, I say green garden because there were no flowers except for one white rambling rose climbing up the main barn wall. Other than that, the gardens were a mix of every green imaginable.



The farm was located between Fakenham and Dereham and the drive took us along leafy narrow single track roads and we were quite relieved we didn't come face to face with a tractor!



After being greeted by our host we began the tour by entering the first of many areas which were each linked by narrow pathways cut through high, precisely manicured hedges separating them and each pathway created a long vista with a sculpture of some sort at the end.

Because I was in awe of each area with the different trees and shrubs which were carefully trimmed into various shapes, that I tended to stand and gaze

so I was then at the back of the group when we reached the next garden so I missed hearing George name all of the trees and plants, but I wouldn't have remembered the Latin names anyway so I just admired his work.



We walked through avenues of trees which created archways, through an orchard area to a pond garden and courtyards, all different from the last but still very very GREEN.



George Carter is a renowned designer of gardens who has showcased at Chelsea and many of us were reminded of the sculptures portrayed in his works like the sentry boxes, obelisks and urns. What was so amazing about those was that some were simply made of plywood and painted so that from a distance they looked very real.



We saw into his workshop and wandered through his office cum sitting room where every surface was covered with garden designs in planning stages and lots of etchings of famous gardens of past years were hung upon the walls. All fascinating.

Then there was the library packed with books from floor to ceiling covering three walls situated in a room on the mezzanine floor in the converted barn where we were entertained to a delicious afternoon cream tea served by our host.

There was so much to see and admire but time ran out. I could easily return to Silverstone Farm.

Thank you, George Carter, for a wonderful informative afternoon.

Report by Jenny Bargh. Photos by Jill Davis

Additional photos and reporting below



More information from <https://www.historichouses.org/house/silverstone-farm/> and AI

Silverstone Farm is a remarkable estate located in North Elmham, East Dereham, Norfolk. The property boasts notable gardens that have been featured in national publications, drawing inspiration from Dutch and French historic references¹. Here's what you need to know:

1. **Garden Design:** Over the past 27 years, the garden at Silverstone Farm has evolved into a series of formal architectural enclosures. These spaces are thoughtfully divided by hedges of Yew, Hornbeam, Beech, Box, and Holly. The result is a harmonious blend of structure and greenery.
2. **Ornamental Buildings and Objects:** As you explore the grounds, you'll encounter a collection of ornamental buildings, furniture, and objects—all designed by the talented George Carter. His creative touch adds a unique and artistic dimension to the landscape².
3. **Sculptures:** Among the highlights are the sculptures scattered throughout the gardens. These pieces evoke a sense of wonder and intrigue, inviting visitors to pause and appreciate their beauty. From wooden gazebos to other intriguing forms, each sculpture contributes to the overall aesthetic.
4. **Neo-Georgian Farmhouse:** Visitors have the opportunity to explore the ground floor of the 1920s neo-Georgian farmhouse. The library and large entrance hall in the barn (part of the 1830s farmyard complex) provide glimpses into the past. The interiors feature a mix of classical-style furniture designed by the owner, along with items from the 18th and early 19th centuries.
5. **Elegant Formal Gardens:** The two-acre formal garden is a true gem. Influenced by Dutch and English formal gardens from the 17th and early 18th centuries, it incorporates plant material typical of that era. Unusual evergreens, favoured as topiary subjects during that period, add character to the green spaces.
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