

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site
WOODCOCK HILL

Historic Name (if known)
HUGGINS (HOGGINS) DEANE

Parish/Town **St Mary's Northchurch**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL974080

Present Area (approximate) Acres

Hectares

Brief Description

The estate was part of the manor of Berkhamsted and first recorded as Woodcock Hill in 1702, although the site has been in recorded occupation since 1607. It stands about 540 feet above sea level to the south of Northchurch. Grims Ditch (Dyke) passed immediately north of the present house and parts are seen to the west and east. The house and 30 acres of ground was sold in 1840 and by 1848 the land holding had increased to 257 acres including parkland surrounding the house.

During WWII the house was occupied by Carmelite Nuns

The estate is within the Green Belt and lies mostly within an Area of Archaeological Significance. The Chilterns AONB lies to the west and further south. With the exception of the school opposite on Durrants Lane the east side of Durrants Lane is largely designated as Open Land. An Area covered by an Article 4 Direction lies immediately to the south

Principal Building: The house was built in 1848 to replace an earlier one on the site. The main block is square and of 2 storeys with an eastern extension.

The **approaches** from Durrants Lane are flanked by Lodges of 1872

The **stable block** is contemporary with the house and with the old brewhouse flanks a quadrangle to the southeast of the house. The farmyard lies between the stables and the Walled Garden. These buildings were repositioned between 1840 and 1877 when the house was rebuilt. All of these buildings have been converted to housing with the house containing three units.

Pleasure grounds: These lie to the south west of the house. A pond was constructed in 1951 but the main Victorian layout of lawn with a few specimen trees remains. A Conservatory is still in position on the south (garden front) wall.

The carriage sweep to the entrance on the north front remains, surrounding an elliptical lawn. This contained trees, then flower beds and now has one divided crescent-shaped bed.

Walled Kitchen Garden: This is situated to the southeast side of the house and is about 1.5 acres in extent. It was extended between 1840 and 1878 eastwards of about 100 ft. The back sheds on the western wall are still in place but the small glasshouse shown in 1877 has been replaced by one backing on to the old farm yard. The interior retains its cross paths and is divided into three sections for the three owners and a common grassed area. The brick walls remain on the southwest, southeast and northeast but have been replaced by a yew hedge (sometime before 1905) on the northeast. They are of yellow-grey handmade bricks laid in Flemish Bond with triangular coping bricks and stepped down to allow for falling contours. The buttresses are of brick. The farmyard walls abutting Durrants Lane are in similar style.

The Peach house was dismantled post 1951

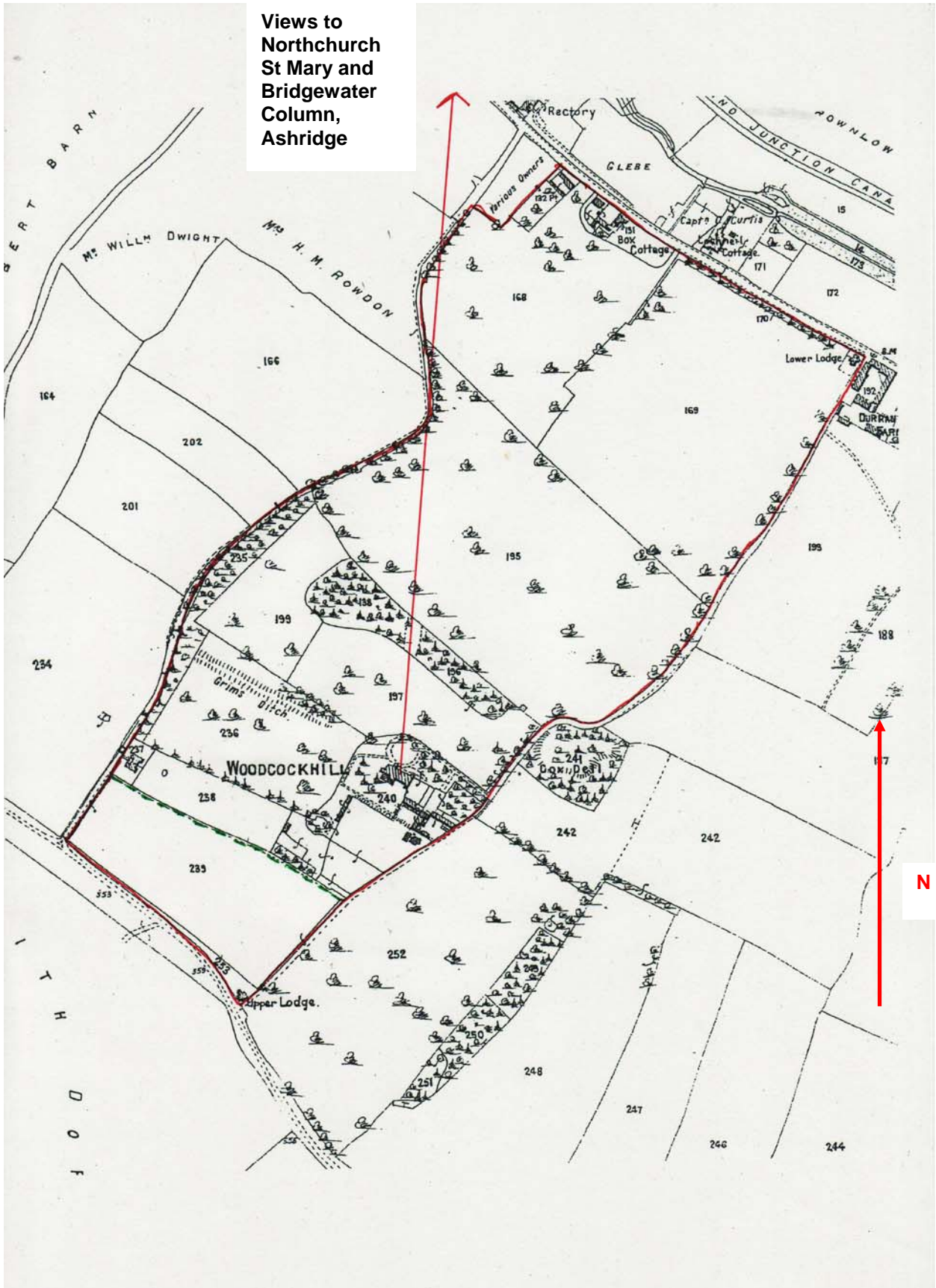
Orchard: between 1897 and 1905 a new orchard for fruit and nuts was enclosed and planted to the south of the walled garden. It contains some local varieties from Lane's Nurseries and Lane's Prince Albert was planted to commemorate a royal visit in 1841.

Park: Most land has been let for farming and, with the exception of the tree planting in the

northern Rookery tree belt remains of open character. A tree survey was carried out in 1998 and the oldest tree recorded was probably The Great Oak, planted in the early 19th century. A large number of trees were planted in the Rookery at about the same time, partly for game cover and partly for screening. Post 1840 some trees in the Rookery were felled to allow a view northwards towards Northchurch and the Bridgewater Column on the Ashridge Estate, although this has since regrown.

Important people associated with site: <i>Resident and Architect:</i>
Assessment of significance. Considerable parts of the Victorian and Edwardian gentleman's garden survive, especially in the walled garden area. It is one of the few villa residences built on the edges of towns in the Victorian era in Hertfordshire to remain largely as it was designed. It is also part of a small group of such houses in this particular area, Rossway, Ashlyns, ?? It forms a valuable transitional zone between the housing in Berkhamsted and the Chilterns AONB to west and south and also contains valuable archaeological remains at Grims Dyke.
Principal Uses: Private housing and farming
Public Access/Rights of Way: Footpath passes e -w along the garden boundary to the south of the orchard
Designations: (e.g. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, EH Register of Historic Parks & Gardens, Tree Preservation Orders, SSSIs, Nature Reserve, National Trust, County Wildlife Site, etc) SAM: Grim's Dyke Area of Archaeological Significance Green Belt Landscape Characterisation Area: 110, Ashlyns and Wiggington Plateau
Sources of information: Report available from Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies
Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust Date:

Views to
Northchurch
St Mary and
Bridgewater
Column,
Ashridge



1905 Sale Plan from Ordnance Survey



Pleasure grounds

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1877. Scale: 1:25000