

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site **ASHLYNS HALL** Historic Name (if known)

Parish/Town **Berkhamsted**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL991 068

Present Area (approximate): immediate environs to house 12.5 Acres

Brief Description

The estate may go back to Reginald Asselyn, recorded in 1314. The present house, on the hilltop, was built in the late 1780s by Matthew Raper FRS (East India Company silk merchant). In 1801 the estate was bought by James Smith; by 1838 the entrance had probably been moved to the west side and alterations made, including the conversion of a balcony on the south bow-fronted projection into an iron verandah. For many years in the 19C the house was the home of Augustus Smith, who was influential in Berkhamsted and elsewhere. In 1933 the estate was bought by the Thomas Coram Foundation, and Ashlyns School built on the north part of the grounds.

Principal Building: Early C19 house of stucco with Welsh slate roof and of 2 storeys and attics, in a roughly rectangular plan. The south west garden front has a central 3-storey semi-circular bow with floor cast iron verandah. The south east garden front has central pediment. The north east wing added since 1930.

Approach: The approach in 1766 was from the southeast via short straight drive from the old public road. The drive was flanked by further formal areas with the service/stable yard situated perhaps to the northwest. By 1877 the house was approached by a long drive curving west then northeast from a Lodge at Brickhill Green, past the stable block to a forecourt on the southwest front overlooking an informal grass area. Following the construction of the A41 dual carriageway the drive veers northwards bypassing the lodge, although the line of the old drive is still visible in part.

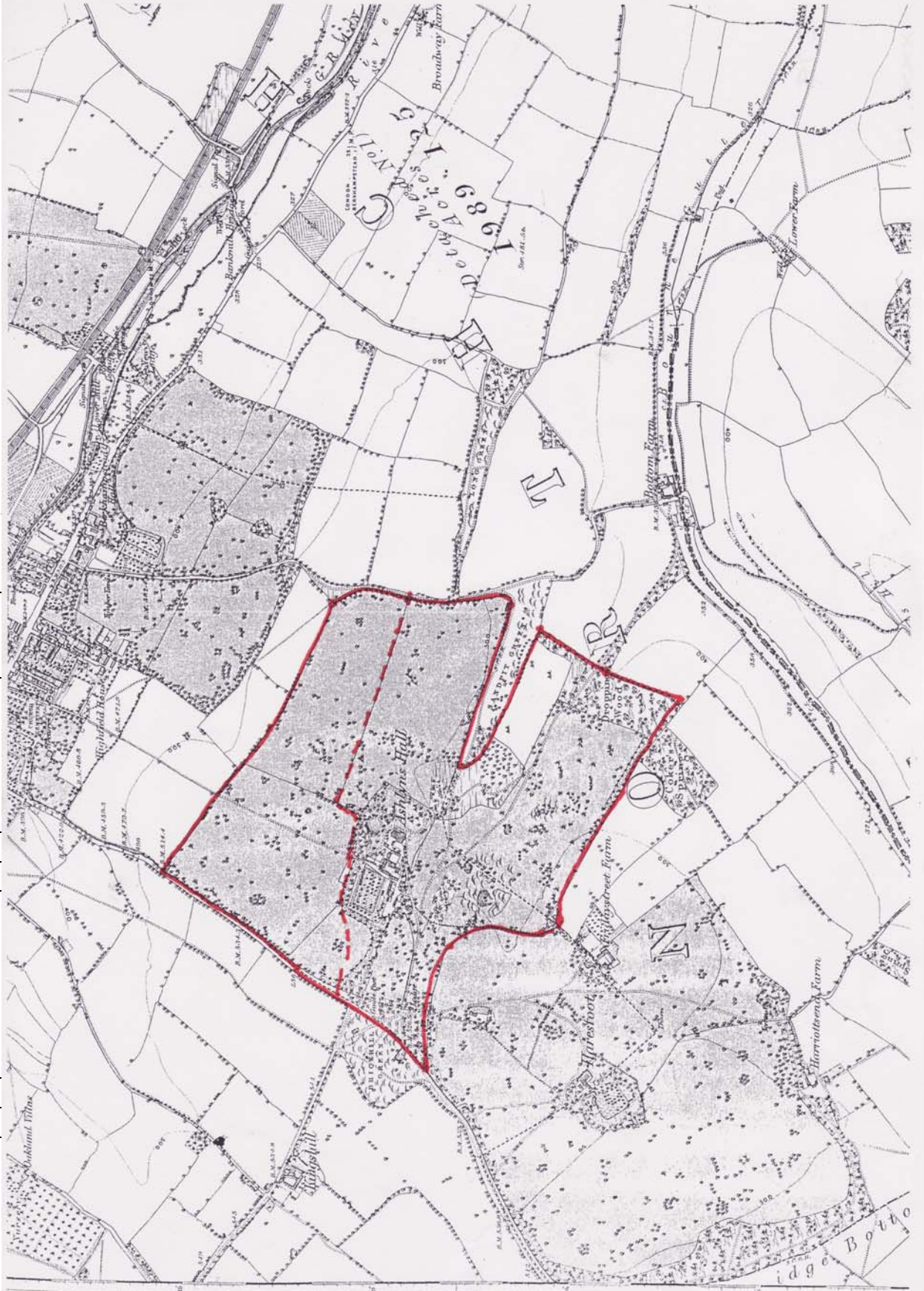
The Lodge is a 2 storey building, of brick under a tiled roof. It was originally one block with 2 small central side wings, but has been much extended and no longer has a direct connection to the mansion

Stable block: This lie to the west of the mansion and was approached from the western forecourt of the mansion with the entrance to the stables on the southeast side. Built in the 18th century but much altered and now, altered. Red and grey brick, tiled roofs, corbelled cornices. Irregular fenestration of sashes and casements. Three ranges around a square courtyard (now with a flower bed in the centre) with the southwestern side open. A further range adjoins the west side of the western range. Small louvred and tiled 19th century steeple is astride roof of north east wing

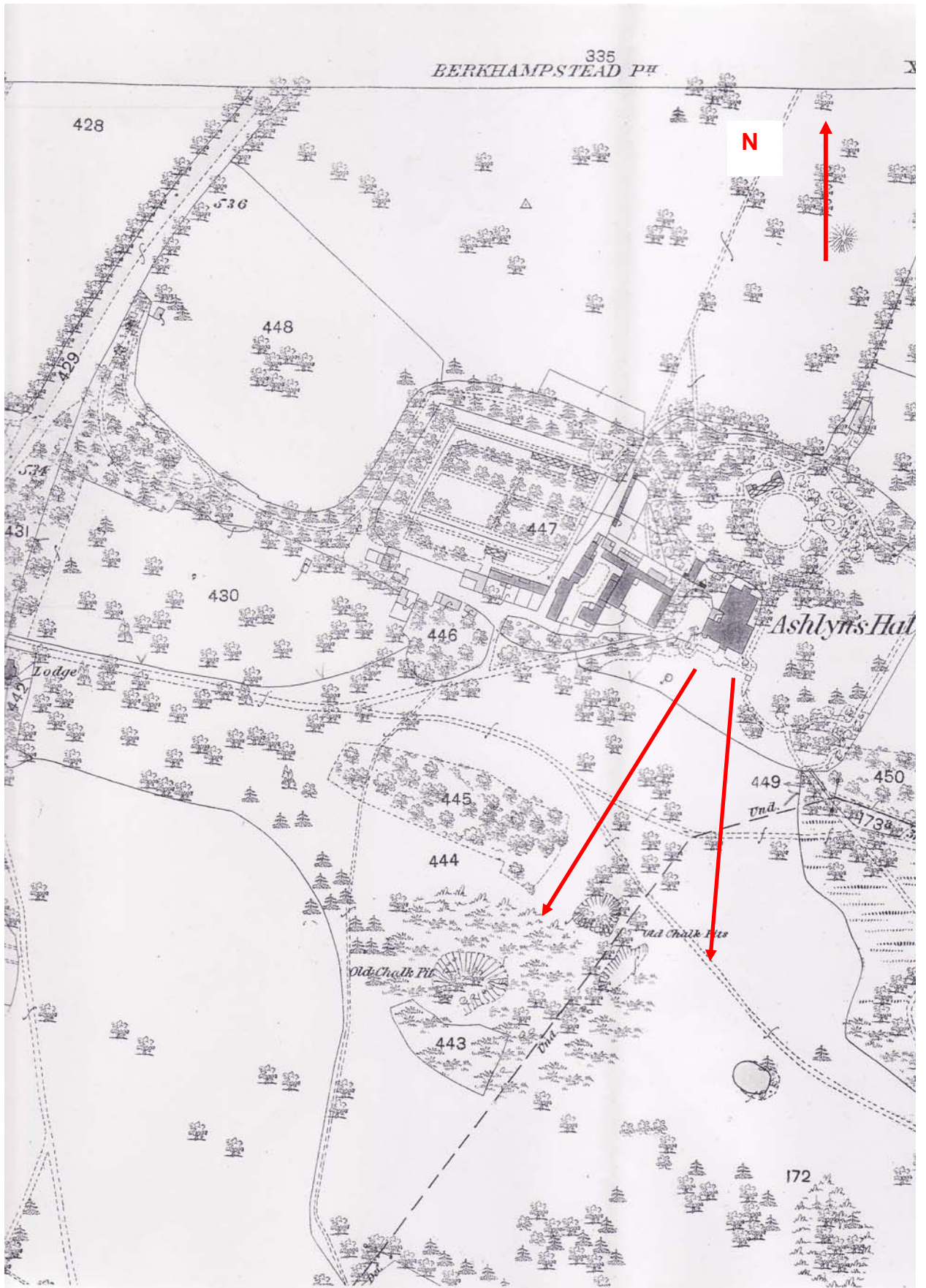
Pleasure grounds: There are significant gardens shown in 1766 at Ashlyns with grand terrace running northwest to southeast along the garden front (northeast side) of the house with central walk to a semi-circular feature at northeast end of gardens. The grass plat was flanked by either double avenues or groves of trees. By 1st ed. OS (1877) the formal gardens have been replaced by a perimeter path and meandering paths through woodland or shrubberies on the northwestern side with a small glassed building, possibly a conservatory, in the northwestern corner facing a circular feature surrounded by a path. 1990 HCC aerial photomap shows formal circular layout S of house which is still extant. The grounds to the north of the

house are now laid to lawn and trees but the views southeast from the mansion over the former parkland have been preserved.

Walled Kitchen Garden: The walled kitchen garden to the east of the mansion had cross paths and perimeter walk s within it with 2 greenhouses to on the north wall and a further greenhouse outside the south wall in the slips. By 1979 the range of glasshouses on the north wall had been lengthened to occupy most of the wall and three freestanding glasshouses added in the northwest corner. Various sheds occupied part of the slips and were also built to the south of this



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Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII.5 1st Edition 1877 . Scale 25":1 mile