

HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST
LOCAL LIST: **DACORUM**

Present Name of Site
GADDESDEN HOO

Historic Name (if known)
Great Gaddesden Hoo

Parish/Town **Great Gaddesden**

National Grid Reference of Principal Building: TL037 128

Present Area (approximate)

Brief Description

A largely modern house with a late 16thC west wing set on the northern boundary of the park with a small pleasure ground

Principal Building: The origins of the house date back to 1420 and through the centuries it was little more than a substantial farmhouse. Not until the 17th century were wings added on the east and west sides. In 1904 a new house named The Hoo was built in the park at TL032123 along with a lodge, called The Hoo Lodge which gave access to the new house from the Leighton Buzzard Road through Hoo Wood. The old house was then largely rebuilt and named The Old Hoo. In 1949 after serving as a maternity hospital in World War II, the new house was demolished and the old house resumed its original name.

Today the mansion is a comparatively more modern house incorporating to the west the wing of an earlier house of half-H plan. The middle or hall range of this wing probably dates back to the early 16th century and was probably originally timber framed. On the sale of the Hoo Wood by the Forestry Commission some years ago, the purchaser was not allowed to rebuild on the site of what in 1904 was the new house. Instead a Scandinavian type log cabin has been build a short distance to the north east.

Approach: The approach to the mansion is from the south east along a private drive converted from the line of an old public road, closed by a Quarter Session Road Order and seen to have disappeared on the Tithe Award map of 1838. Today the drive is lined with some fine, close-set sweet chestnuts with girths of between three and four metres which were probably planted at the time the park was created.

Stable block/other utilitarian buildings: To the north east of the house there are brick stables and a possible cart house ranged round a courtyard. The courtyard range has various types of roofs – some gabled slate roofs and one hipped clay tile roof.

Pleasure grounds: A small area of pleasure ground around the mansion was separated from the park by a linear feature, almost certainly the ha ha or sunken fence which exists on this line today. There were flower beds, a herb border, holly hedges, ornamental trees and shrubs and a sheltered nut walk, grass paths, a laurel hedge and orchard.

Walled Kitchen Garden: Originally there were 2 kitchen gardens, set only a short distance from the house to the north east. Today one is still retained for kitchen garden use and the second is a rose garden with borders.

Park: The associated park of c 60 acres (24ha) was created around 1800 and is shown on Bryant's map of 1822. With the house and pleasure ground to the north, the park was bounded by a pre-existing woodland to the west (Hoo Wood) and to the east (Hoo Belt). Additional planting extended Hoo Wood to the north (Donkey's Dell). The south western boundary was open. The first OS 6" map shows the pattern of planting of the position of individual trees. Most were growing in straight lines. When the park was laid out, the owners grubbed out the existing hedgerows, leaving the standards. Some of these trees still survive – oaks with girths of 4.5 metres and there are a number of other trees still standing, including the sweet chestnuts along the entrance drive.

Important people associated with site:

Resident: Mr. M. McCorquordale who built both the new Hoo and rebuilt the existing house in 1904

Assessment of significance. A small estate of 19th century layout with much original tree planting still extant.

Principal Uses: Residential

Public Access/Rights of Way: RUPP 14, FP04, 14, 16, 23

Designations:

Grade II*: House

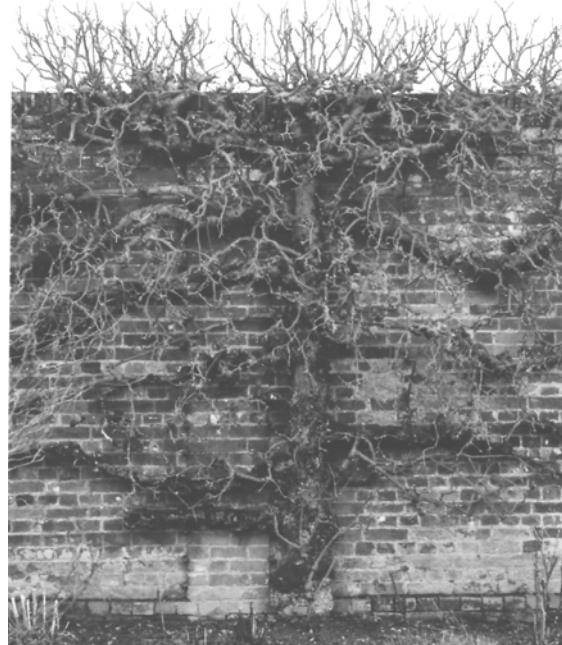
Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Rural Area Dacorum

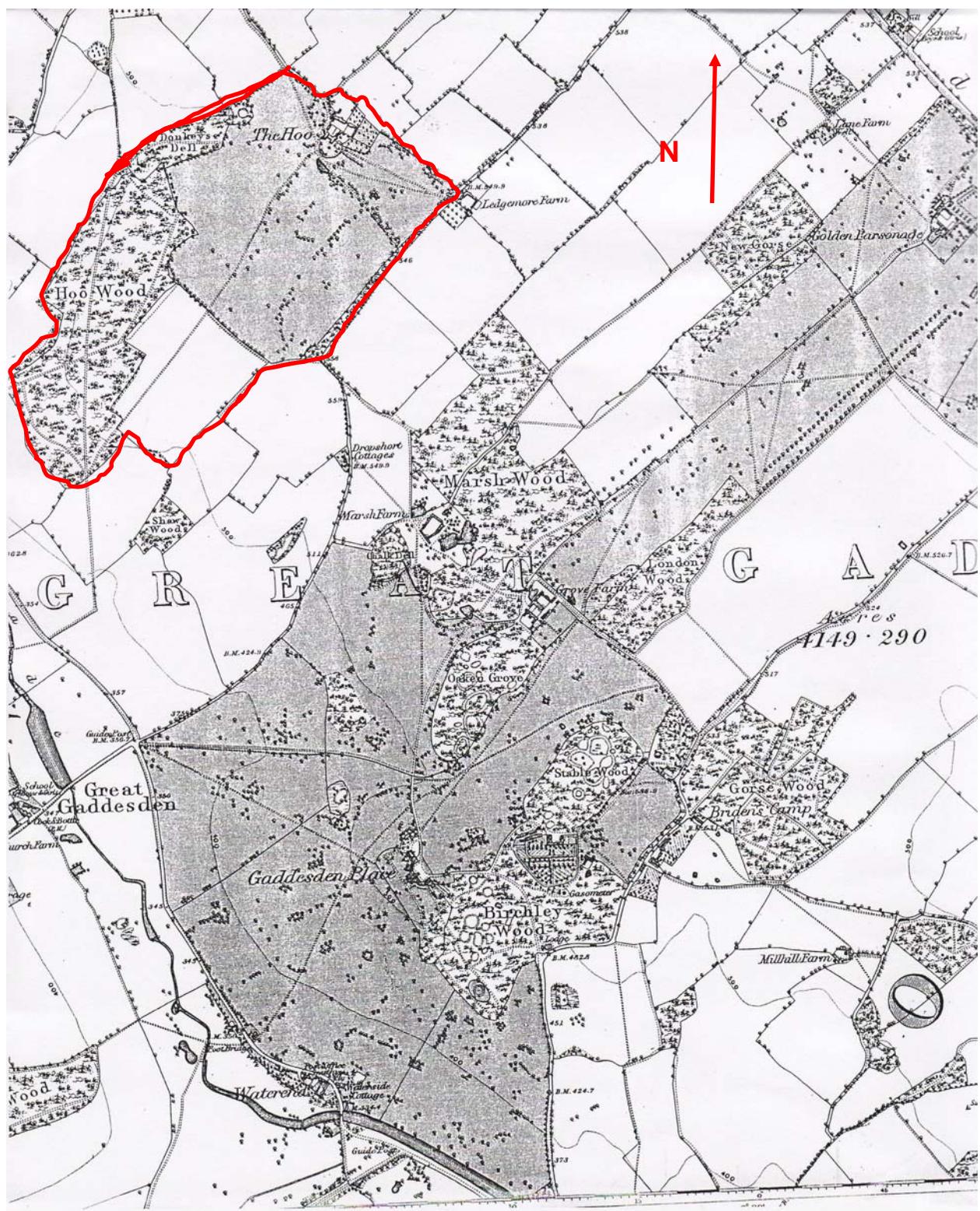
Landscape Character Area: 123 High Gade Valley

Sources of information: Original report of Hertfordshire Gardens Trust in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

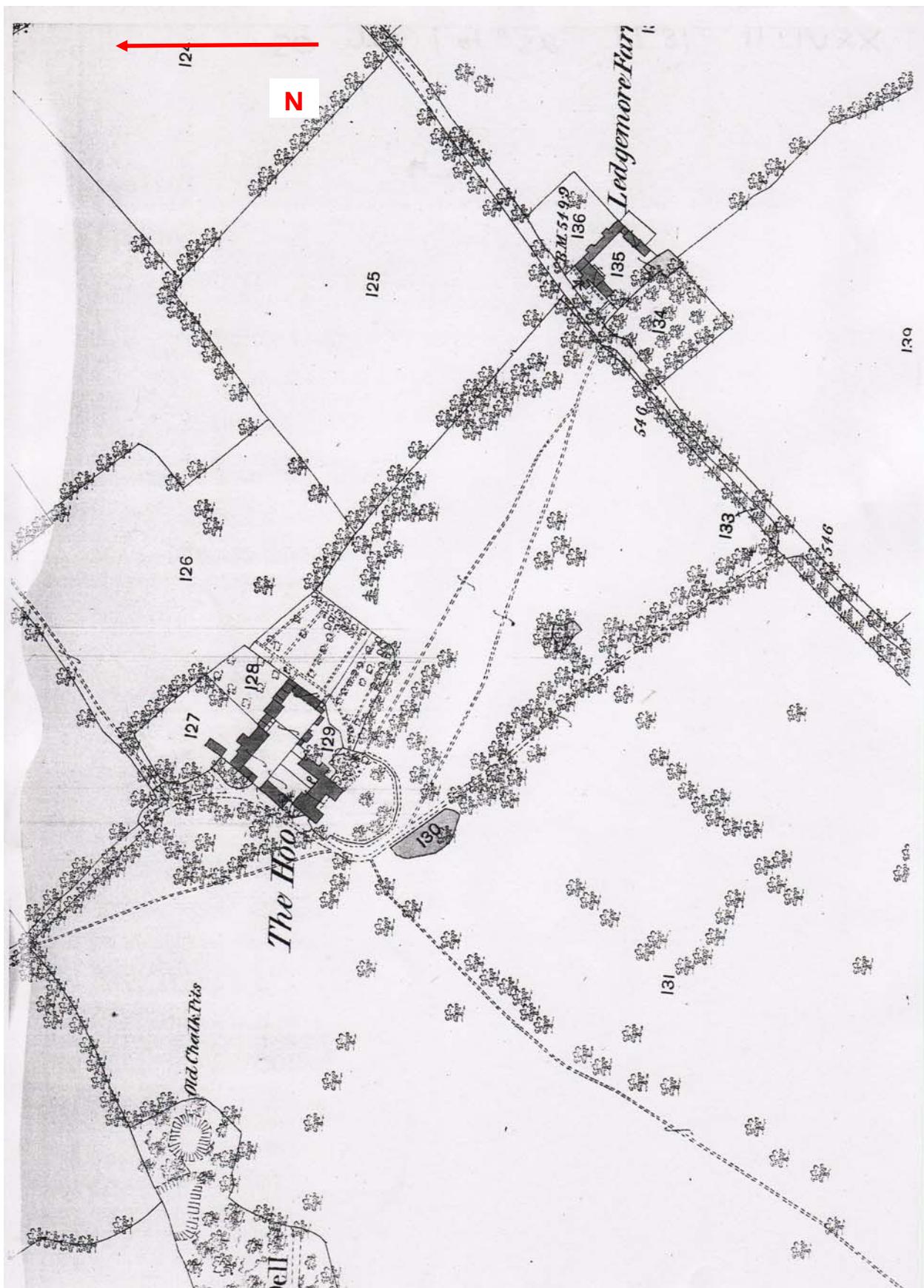
Site visited by: Hertfordshire Gardens Trust **Date:** December 2008



Walled garden at Gaddesden Hoo showing espaliered fruit tree and ornamental gateway



Ordnance Survey First Edition 1877 Sheet XXVI Scale 6" to 1 mile



Ordnance Survey First Edition 1877 Sheet XXVI.II Scale 25"