



HOLLY BANK WOOTTON OXFORDSHIRE

HERITAGE REPORT
DECEMBER 2019

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Worledge Associates

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South elevation of Holly Bank, notice its elevated position and Gothic features

WORLLEDGE ASSOCIATES

We are a solutions-orientated heritage consultancy, committed to the effective management of the historic environment. We help our clients identify the heritage significance of their historic site, navigate legislative and policy frameworks, and find design resolutions. Our clients, who include public authorities, private individuals, community groups, and corporations, have praised our positive approach to managing change, and our eye for quality design.

Worlledge Associates was established by Nicholas and Alison Worlledge in 2014. Nicholas came to private practice with 35 years' experience working in heritage management for local authorities. This intimate knowledge and understanding of council processes, planning policy, and practice helps Worlledge Associates support clients in securing positive outcomes.

Since 2014, Worlledge Associates has advised on a range of development projects for domestic, commercial, military, and educational use. Now supported by a small team of dedicated researchers and specialists, Worlledge Associates is ever-growing and has widened its remit to offer content development and training. Every member of our team brings a unique set of skills to the business, but we all believe in the capacity of the historic environment to contribute to our collective economic, social, and cultural well-being.



Oblique view of the south elevation of Holly Bank, looking east towards the drive

INTRODUCTION

The intelligent management of change is a key principle to sustaining and conserving the historic environment. Historic England and successive government agencies have published policy and advice that extends our understanding of the historic environment and develops our competency in making decisions about its management.

Paragraphs 4-10 of Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) explains that applications (for planning permission and listed building consent) have a greater likelihood of success and better decisions will be made when applicants and local planning authorities assess and understand the particular significance of an asset, the extent of the asset's fabric to which the significance relates, and the relative importance of that significance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019), in paragraphs 189 and 190, expects that both applicant and local planning authority take responsibility for understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the impact of a development proposal. Local authorities should, the NPPF explains, consider the significance of the asset in order to 'minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.

It has never been the intention of government to prevent change or freeze-frame local communities. Current policy and good practice show that change, if managed intelligently, can be successfully accommodated within the historic environment. This not only sustains significance but can add to the way we experience and understand historic places.

This report has been prepared to establish the heritage significance of Holly Bank House. It includes a brief history of the parish of Wootton, and the history and development of Holly Bank House and grounds. It will describe the house, and setting, and based on an understanding of its history, fabric and setting, define its heritage significance.



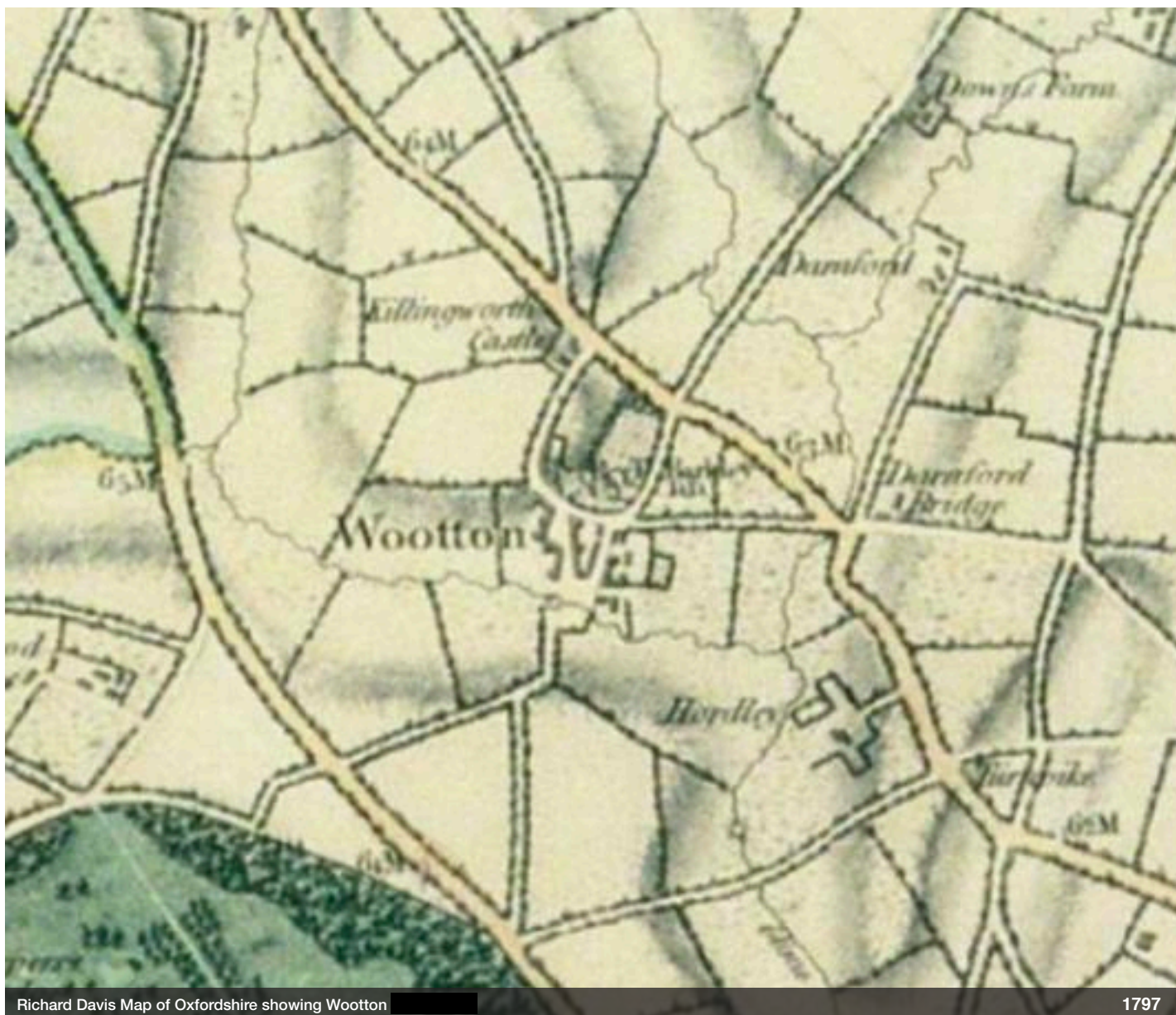
Saxton Map of Oxfordshire 1579 showing Wootton in relation to Woodstock and Oxford

BRIEF HISTORY OF WOOTTON

The following information is substantially drawn from the Victoria Country History for the Parish – A History of the County of Oxfordshire, Volume 11, Wootton Hundred. (A P Baggs, Christina Colvin, H M Colvin, Janet Cooper, C J Day, Nesta Selwyn and A Tomkinson, 'Parishes: Wootton', in A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 11, Wootton Hundred (Northern Part), ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1983), pp. 259-285. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol11/pp259-285>)

Wootton lies about 9 miles north west of Oxford and 2 miles from Woodstock on the river Glyme. It was historically the main settlement between the rivers Glyme and Dom which flowed into Blenheim park. The village has been in existence since 950 AD.

Wootton was the centre of an Anglo-Saxon royal estate, to which was attached the jurisdiction of Wootton hundred. The large ancient parish (4,274 a. in 1881) included the hamlet of Old Woodstock and there were other settlements at Ludwell, Hordley, and Dornford which had been reduced to one or two isolated farmhouses by the end of the Middle Ages. In 1894 Old Woodstock was created a separate civil parish of c. 51 a., reducing Wootton parish to 4,222 a. (1,709 ha.).



Richard Davis Map of Oxfordshire showing Wootton

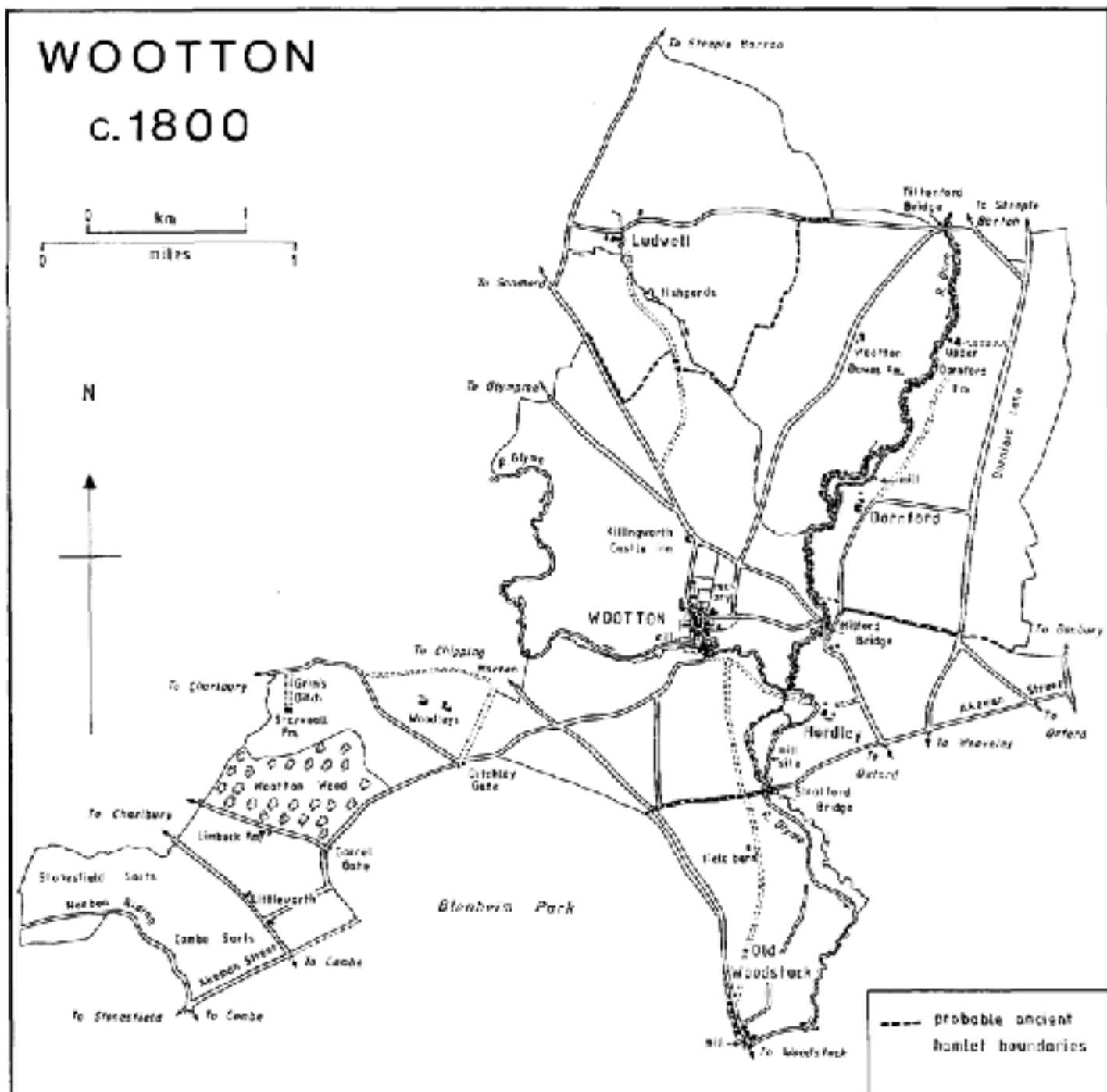
1797

The village name meaning tun (settlement or enclosure) by the wood, has passed through various changes over the centuries. It was first mentioned by the name Wudetune in 958 AD when the Saxon King Edgar gave 20 hides to the Thane Ethern. Other iterations have included Oitone and Optone (1086); Wotton (1216 -1307); Wotthone (1270) and Wuttun (1274-9). It was also referred to as Wootton without Woodstock (1464) and Wootton Whitechurch (1842). Today the village is sometimes referred to as Wootton by Woodstock to distinguish it from other Oxfordshire villages of the same name.

The population – at its peak reaching 1250 in 1851 – has fluctuated reflecting the various socio-economic conditions. Beginning with a

small population of 45 at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), the population rose steadily over the 12th and 13th century before a heavy depopulation in the 14th century - presumably following the plague. It recovered steadily throughout the 17th century before sharply rising in the 18th century on account of the flourishing gloving trade in Woodstock. Changing economic fortunes however would see it decline again from the mid 19th and early 20th centuries.

In terms of agricultural practice, there may have been wholesale reorganization of the fields by 1375, when a north field was mentioned; thereafter until inclosure in 1770 all holdings were either in the north or west fields, commonly called 'ends'.



Parish of Wootton, c.1800 from VCH

The inclosure award of 1770 dealt with 2,367 a. of the parish, excluding Hordley, Dornford, and Ludwell, and some smaller areas of old inclosure. There were over 50 allottees. Several new farmhouses were built outside the village, notably Wootton Down Farm and Littleworth Farm on the rectory estate and Starveall Farm on the poor's land. In 1862-3 Holly Bank Farm was established on fields south of Wootton Down Farm, and west of Dornford.



The garden setting to the house

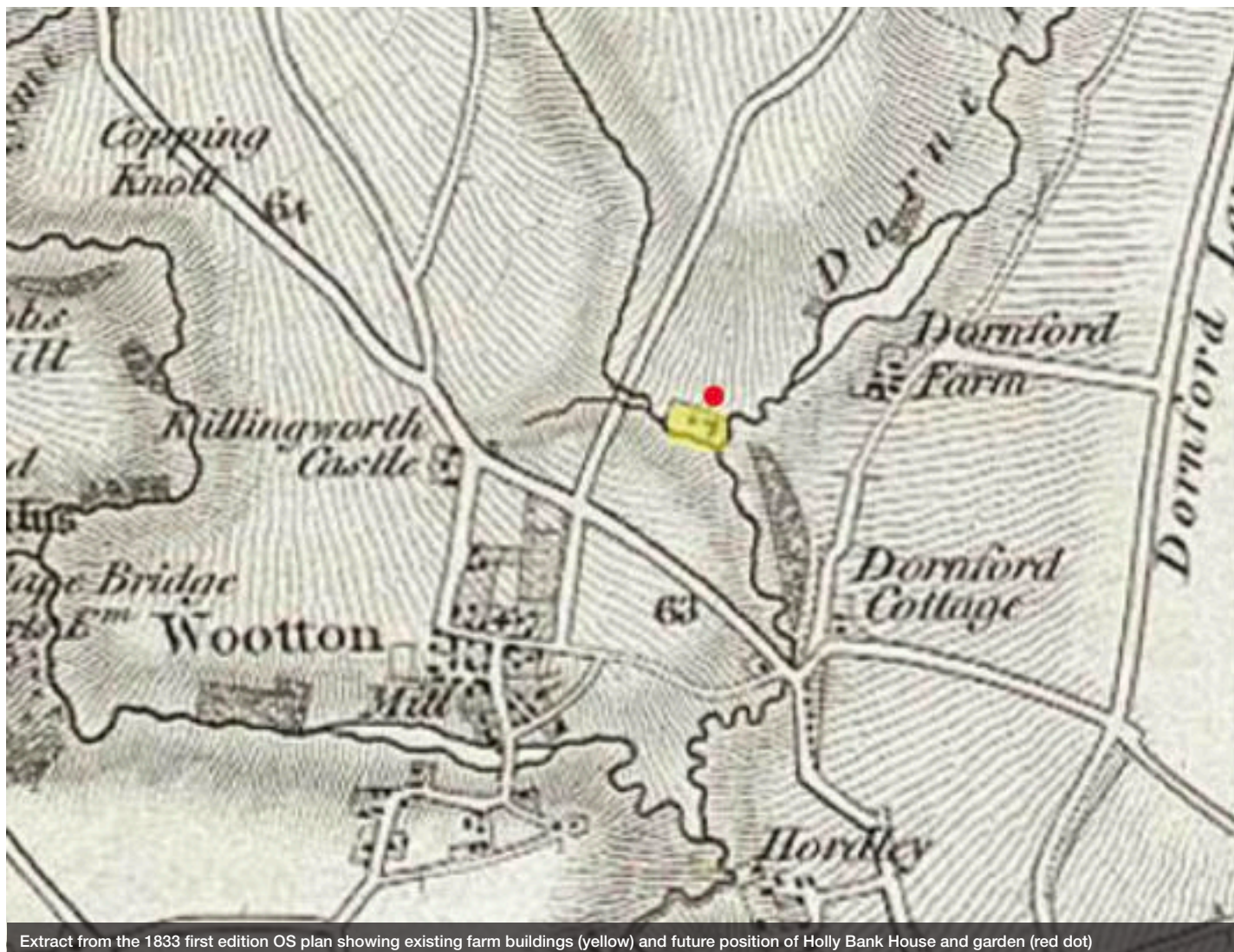
BRIEF HISTORY OF HOLLY BANK AND OWNERS

The house now called Holly Bank, but previously Wootton House, was constructed 1862 (initial and date stone in gable) for a Mr John Rowland, a farmer who previously farmed 'Manor Farm', Islip, Oxford.

JOHN ROWLAND CIRCA 1816 – 1902

John Rowland was born circa 1816 in Oxford. In the 1843 Tithe Award Survey of Islip, Oxfordshire, he is listed as a tenant of 243 acres of farmland. In the 1851 census he is living at Manor Farm, Upper Street, Islip, Oxfordshire. He describes himself as a farmer of 340 acres employing 13 men, 3 boys and 2 women. In the 1861 census he still residing at Manor Farm Islip and described as farming 430 acres employing 13 men and 7 boys. He is married to Mary (nee Creek) and has a family of 3 sons and 5 daughters. His eldest son Thomas, 19 is listed as an architect. The household also includes a governess, cook and 2 housemaids. It is unclear if John Rowland owns or leases this land.

He is described in local papers as a successful sheep farmer of 20 years. In circa 1861 John Rowland purchased land north east of Wootton. It appears the land formed part of a farm as the site included a number of existing farm buildings adjacent to the river which ran through the property, which are shown on the 1833 one inch first edition Ordnance Survey Plan.

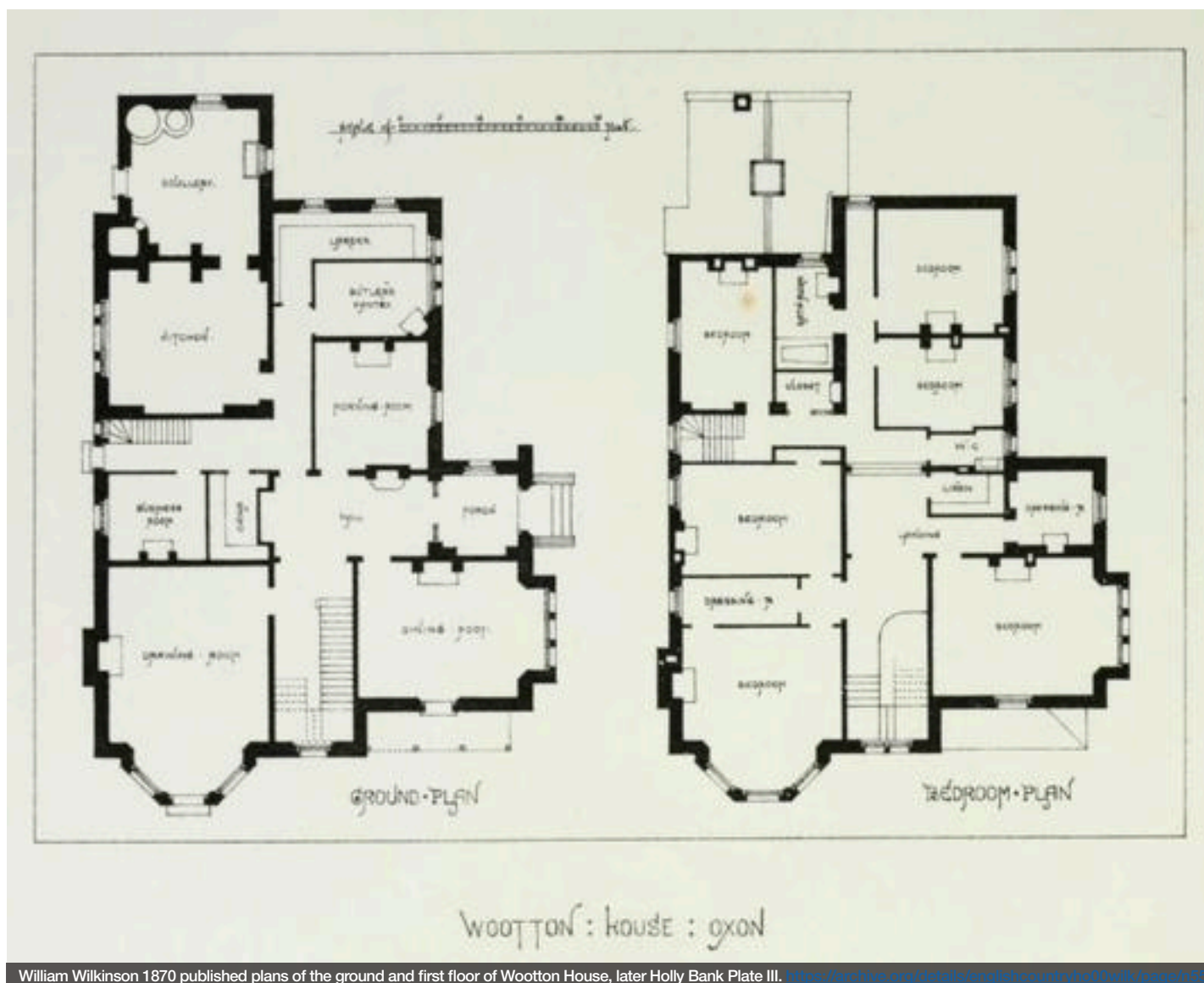


Extract from the 1833 first edition OS plan showing existing farm buildings (yellow) and future position of Holly Bank House and garden (red dot)

In 1862 he commissioned the Oxford based architect William Wilkinson (1838- 1911) to design him a house on a plot just north of the village of Wootton. The house appears to have been ready in early 1863 as the Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette on 14 February 1863, carries an advertisement for the sale of livestock, wagons, carts and furniture on the premises of Mr J Rowland, Esq., who is leaving Islip. In the previous August he sold his 390 flock of sheep. In the Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette of 2 August he is described as a breeder of sheep for the last 20 years.

It is unclear exactly when John Rowland and his family move to his new home, but in April 1863, he is noted as being resident at 'Wootton House', when the 18 April edition of the Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette, list him as a Director of The Randolph Hotel Company, Oxford, Limited, a hotel designed by his architect William Wilkinson.

In 1870, William Wilkinson published *English Country Houses: Sixty-one Views and Plans of Recently Erected Mansions, Private Residences, Parsonage-Houses, Farm-Houses, Lodges, and Cottages; with Sketches of Furniture and Fittings; and a Practical Treatise on House-Building*, J Parker, London and Oxford.



William Wilkinson 1870 published plans of the ground and first floor of Wootton House, later Holly Bank Plate III. <https://archive.org/details/englishcountryh000wilk/page/n56>

It included plans and a sketch image of Wootton House, (Plates III and IV) which was renamed Holly Bank after 1863. It describes the house as comprising:

Basement Plan Wine cellar, Beer cellar, General cellar

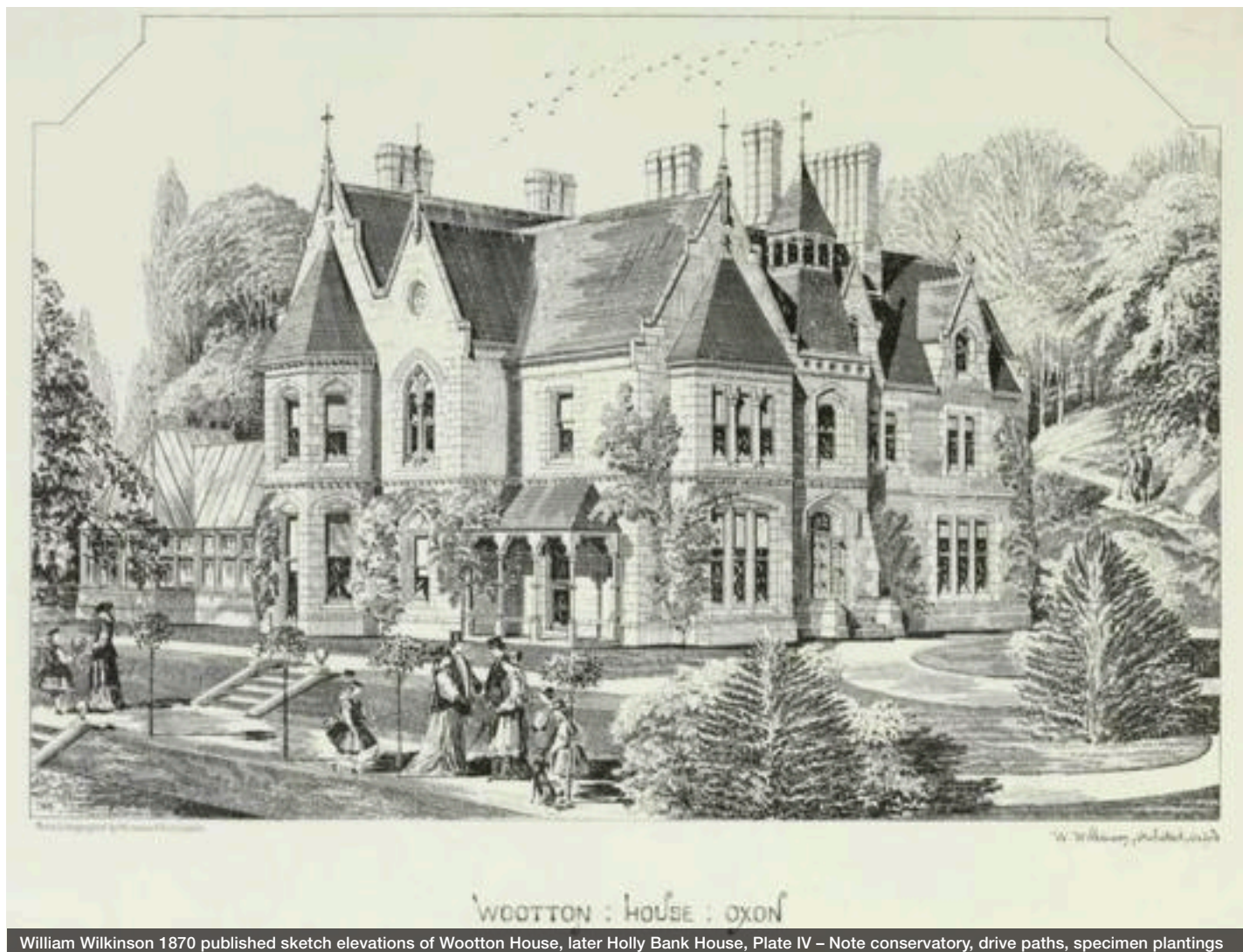
Ground floor Drawing room, Dining Room, Morning room, Business room, Kitchen and scullery, Butler's pantry, Larder and china closet

First floor Six bedrooms, two dressing rooms, bathroom, linen closet, W.C., Store closet

Second floor Four bedrooms

It includes a brief description:

The entrance is on the east side, the position being influenced by an existing approach: the principal rooms look south. The stones for the walls were dug on the estate by the contractor, and the lime burnt on site. The walls are lined with bricks.



William Wilkinson 1870 published sketch elevations of Wootton House, later Holly Bank House, Plate IV – Note conservatory, drive paths, specimen plantings

In the 1871 census the family is living at Holly Bank. John Rowland describes himself as landowner, occupier of 300 acres employing 10 men and 4 boys. His wife, 3 daughters and a son, and a visiting niece, plus 4 servants, described as groom, cook and 2 housemaids share the house. Unfortunately, on 18 October 1871, Thomas John Rowland of West Street, Banbury, aged 30 died. (Oxford Journal, 21 October 1871 page 5)

In 1872 unrest occurred amongst agricultural labourers in Wootton.

According to the VCH John Rowland was prominent in responding to the issue and formed a Farmers' Defence Association.

Between 1876-80 the area was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey which showed the house and landscaped grounds, which includes an ornamental lake with an island, a stable block and coach house to the north and a walled kitchen garden to the south east, with a mixture of deciduous and conifer trees in the grounds. To the south, adjacent to

the stream is a group of farm buildings, some of which are shown on the 1833 one-inch OS plan. The house has a conservatory, as shown on Wilkinson's 1870 published sketch.

At probate his estate was valued at £14,032 (£1.097 million 2017). Following Rowland's death, the family left Holly Bank to Eastbourne and in October 1902, the household contents and farm stock were sold.

In September 1904, Holly Bank Farm comprising 95 acres with farm buildings and yards. was again available for let (Oxford Times, 24 September 1904 page 3).

In the 1910 Valuation the owner of the estate is Rev. William Creek Rowland, the surviving son of John Rowland, living in Bridgewater, Somerset. Holly Bank House and land comprising 25 acres is occupied by a Mr H J Clark. The balance of the estate of 91 acres and buildings is occupied by Joseph Giles.

COLONEL JOHN CHARLES BASIL EASTWOOD (1862-1934)

In the 1911 census summary a Colonel Eastwood is listed as living at Holly Bank, with the household comprising himself and 4 women.

It appears that Col Eastwood invested considerably in the house and grounds. From an examination of the 1919 25-inch OS map it is noted the conservatory at the south west corner has been replaced by a solid building, and some additional service buildings have

been added to the north of the house. There are green houses and buildings inside and outside the walled garden.

Col Eastwood died in September 1934.

In September 1937 the whole of the contents of Holly Bank were put up for sale (Bucks Herald 17 September 1937 page 5).



OS six-inch plan surveyed 1876-80 showing the house and grounds with a kitchen walled garden and set of farm buildings to the south, some of which appear on the 1833 one-inch plan



25-inch OS plan surveyed 1876-80 showing greater detail of the house and grounds. House has a conservatory as shown on the 1870 sketches published by Wilkinson, a stable and coach house to the north with a walled garden to the south west and a lake with an island to the south informal groups of trees and shrubs



Extract from 25-inch OS 1899 showing little change from the 1876-80 plan.

HENRY WICKHAM STEED (1872-1956)

Research has shown that in 1949 Henry Wickham Steed and Mrs Violet Steed (nee Mason) were living at Holly Bank.

It would appear that during this period Holly Bank Cottages were erected on the access road leading to Holly Bank House. These are shown on the 1:10,560 OS plan published in 1955. They comprise two pairs of two cottages.

LORD JOHN ANDREW CHRISTOPHER KERR (1927-2018)

Research indicates that the estate was purchased by Lord John Andrew Christopher Kerr and his wife Isabel in 1956, as the recent sales particulars in 2018 indicate the house and estate has been in the same family for over 50 years. He is noted as living at Holly Bank in 1970 and 2003. The estate appears to have been less extensive than the 116 acres in the 1910 valuation. Lord John Kerr is known for founding Bloomsbury Book Auctions in 1983, and died on 3 May 2018

PLANNING HISTORY

In 1976 a Conservation Area was designated for Wootton. The boundary includes Holly Bank and its grounds (**See Appendix 1**).

On 29 June 1988 Holly Bank was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (**See Appendix 1**).

On 4 March 2009 planning permission was granted for the part demolition of farm buildings in the unlisted group of barns south of Holly Bank (09/0061/P/DCA), and conversion of two barns to office accommodation, erection of new single storey link between converted barns and single storey side extension to unit one to form meeting room, formation of new car parking areas (09/0060/P/FP). This development was undertaken.

In 2018 Holly Bank was placed on the market. The estate comprised 49.60 acres in 4 lots.



Extract from DV-VIII-206 XXI-12 and 16 Valuation Maps and DV-X-94 valuation book Oxfordshire History Centre showing the Holly Bank Estate No. 97 coloured pink



Extract from 1919 25-inch plan showing Hollybank.



2018 sales brochure map showing extent of the Holly Bank Estate

GROUND FLOOR 1870



From William Wilkinson English Country Houses Plate III

GROUND FLOOR 2018



Ground floor plan, as existing

DESCRIPTION OF HOLLYBANK HOUSE

From comparing the original ground and first floor plans published in 1870, and the 1876-80, 1898 and 1919 25-inch plans with the current ground and first plans it is possible to identify a number of phases of development of the house. There are no 1870 plans for the basement and second floor.

CHANGES FROM PUBLISHED PLANS

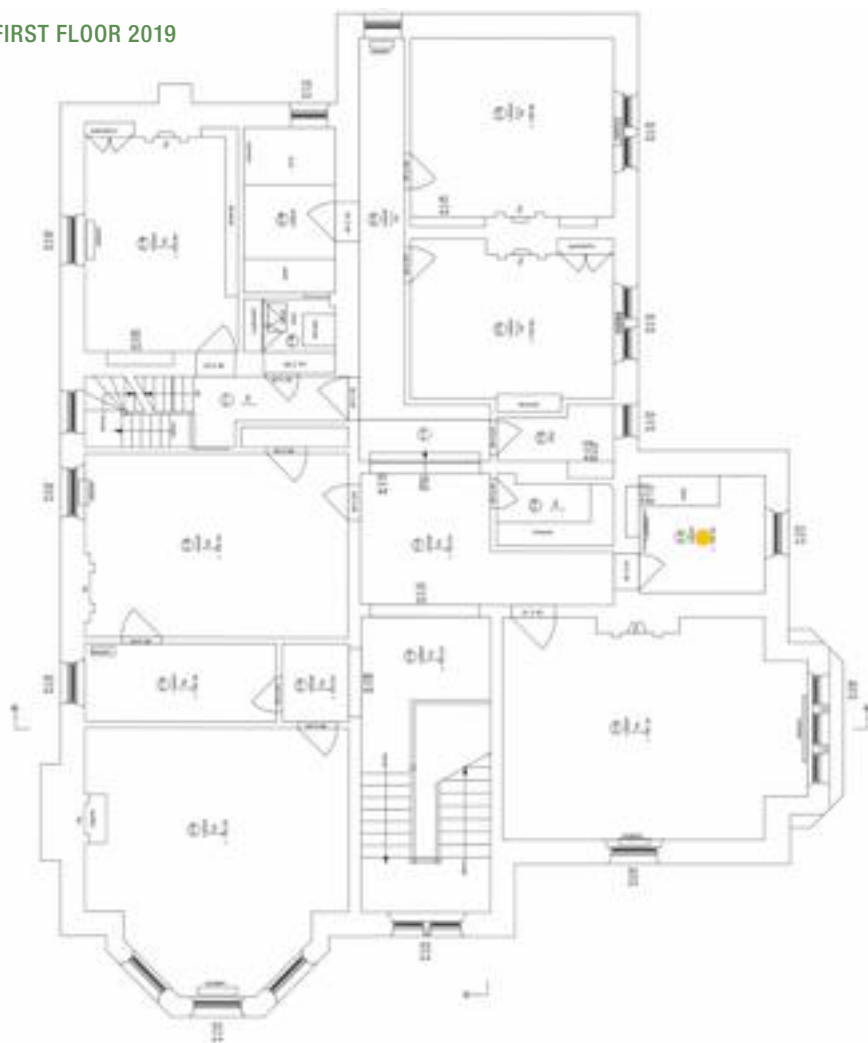
The most noticeable is the additional single storey wing added to the west of the house. While not shown on the drawings the 1870 sketch showed a conservatory in this location. This is marked on the 1876-80, and 1898 25-inch plans with a glazed cross hatch, but the 1919 25-inch shows a solid structure and the small extension on the west side and small extension to the north. The veranda to the south side of the dining room has been replaced by a canted bay while the eastern straight bay has been extended out and canted. The current images of the house, however, suggests that this changes may have taken place during the original construction. It is unclear when the extension was made to the porch

FIRST FLOOR 1870



From William Wilkinson English Country Houses Plate III

FIRST FLOOR 2019



CHANGES

There are few changes to the layout and uses of the first-floor rooms between the 1870 and 2019 plans, with a dressing room over the porch being a bathroom (yellow dot). Evidence suggests that the majority of these changes date from the 1911-1935 when Colonel Eastwood owned the house.

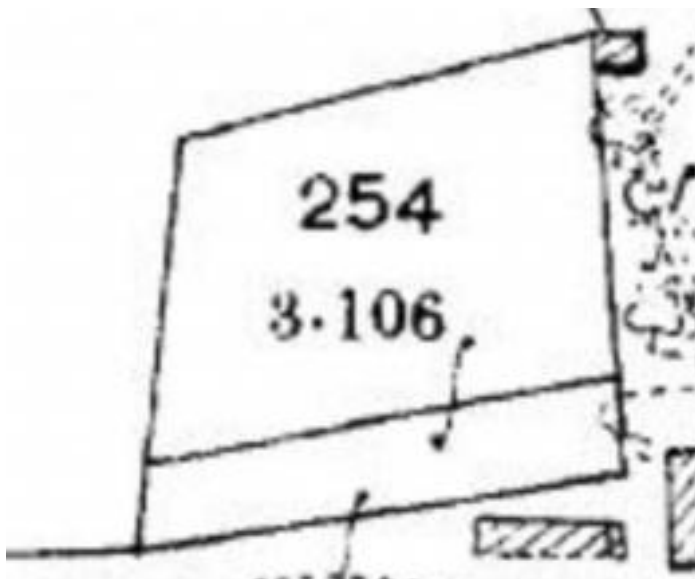


This rather grainy c 1930 image showing the extension replacing the conservatory and the addition of a canted bay to the south and alteration to the eastern bay

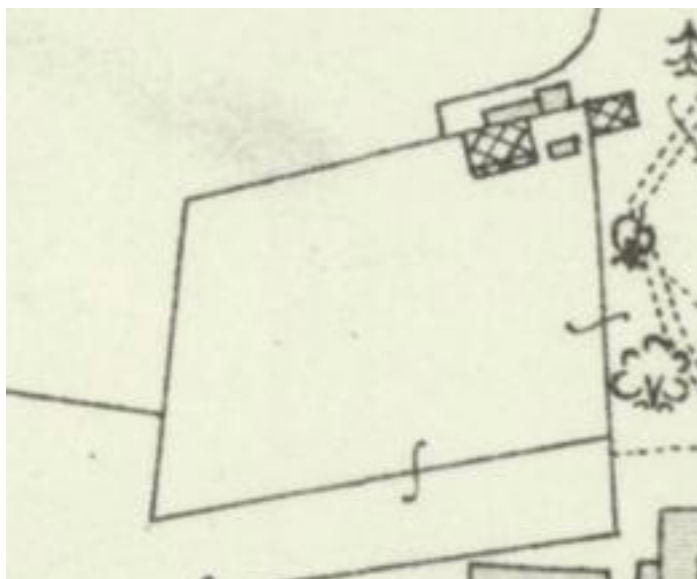
1876-80



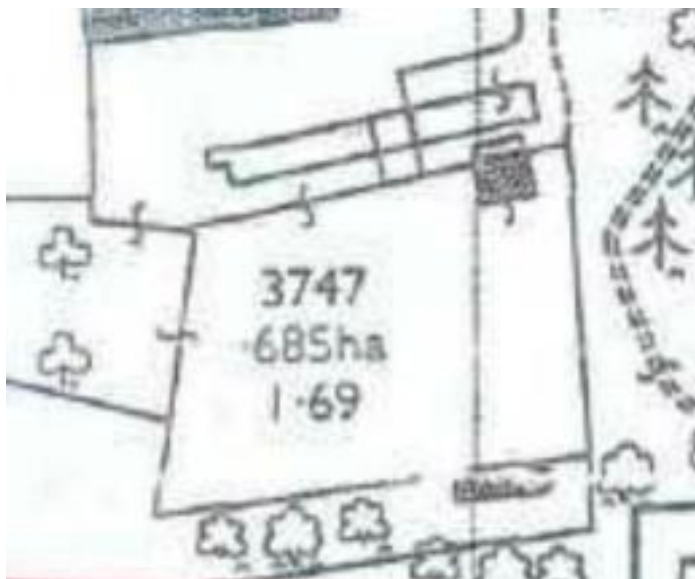
1898



1919



1974



Evolution of the walled garden from 25 inch and 1:2500 plans

WALLED GARDEN

This is shown on all the 25-inch OS plans 1876-1974.

The 1876-80 plan being the most detailed. It appears to comprise the standard cruciform path division, with a smaller enclosed garden to the south with a small building, and a small building on the outside of the wall on the north-east corner.

The 1898 plan is less detailed but the two divisions seem to be in place as is the small external building in the north east corner.

The 1919 plan provides more detail of the buildings, which have increased internally and externally. There are two small buildings on the exterior of the north wall, with the north-east structure now shown as a glasshouse. There appears to be a glasshouse inside the walled garden on the northern wall and a small shed. The area to the south is not enclosed at the western end.

The 1974 plan shows the greenhouse inside the wall with a small building on the outside and a building to the south of the walled garden. The walled garden is currently overgrown.



The eastern end of the northern wall of the walled garden



Part of the northern wall with the remains of brick cold frames

Holly Bank is designed in the Gothic Revival style. The Gothic Revival drew inspiration from medieval houses and churches, with asymmetrical elevations, steep pitched roof, projecting gables, projecting bay windows, pointed arches for doors and windows, large chimney stacks. Medieval motifs are often used both externally and internally. Gothic revival houses are usually of brick or local stone, with clay tiles, or increasingly welsh slate. The principal elevations often had a clear hierarchy with the entrance front generally having more display and detailing than the other public elevation, and the non-public elevations generally unadorned. The service range or rooms were usually placed out of general view, opening up into a service courtyard.

Holly Bank demonstrates many aspects of this styles, although it is quite modest in detailing, reflecting the increasing move to simplicity as opposed to ostentatious display in house design. Having 10 bedrooms and holding lands of originally over 300 acres (later reduced to 120 acres, and now 50 acres), it would have been considered either a small country house, or a substantial country villa.

EXTERIOR

Holly Bank is asymmetrical with steep gable double height projecting bay with steep hipped roof and stone finial. The entrance marked by a double height porch with room over, deep pointed arch door surround with double timber doors, with a pointed arch window on the east

elevation. It has a parapet with quatrefoil detailing and a hipped roof. The double and triple windows have stone mullions. The mullions to the first-floor projecting bay have decorative capitals. Running around the ground and first floor of the bay is a dentil course, which also runs across the entrance porch. The windows to the ground floor bay and one-over-over timber vertical sliding sashes, while to the first floor they are two-over-two sashes. The remainder of the façade is plainer with in roof dormers, with pointed arched windows to the second floor and single and double two-over-two sash windows to the first floor and six-over-six sashes to the ground floor.. There are no dentil courses. There are multiple projecting chimney stacks. The service range is detailed more simply and emphasises the hierarchy of use.

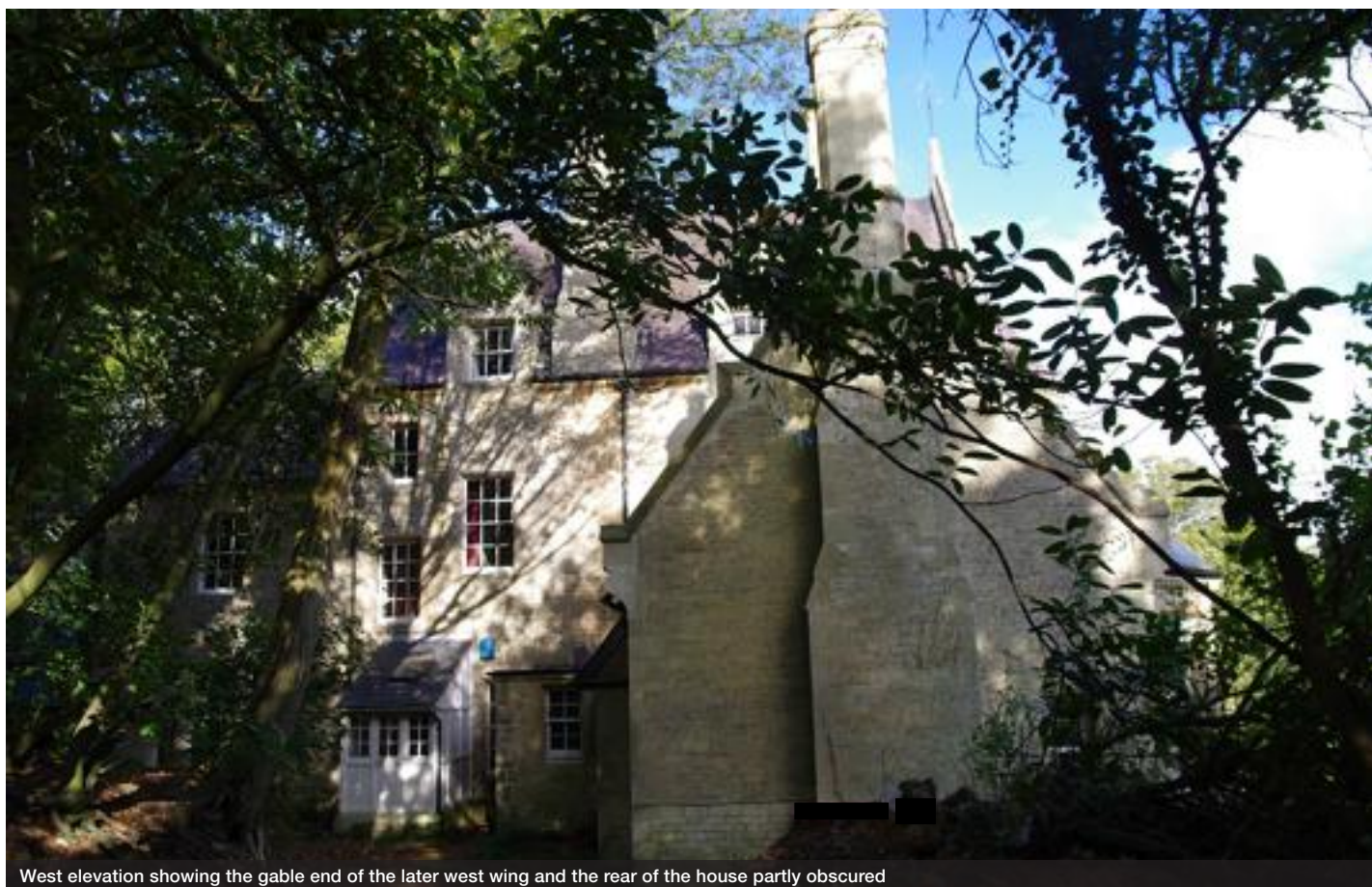
The south elevation is asymmetric with a large steep pitched roof gable with a finial, and a double height three-sided projecting canted bay with a steep hipped roof. Adjacent is a narrowed double height projecting gable with a pointed arched door surround to the ground floor and a pointed arched window to the first floor with a stone mullion and decorated capital. The gable has a plaque '1862 JR'. To the east is a three-sided canted bay with a parapet with a simple dentil detail, which runs around the rest of the façade. The western extension post 1911, reflects the same architectural detailing of the 1862 façade. The windows are two-over-two timber vertical sliding sashes, with the majority having shade boxes. The south elevation offers views over the gardens and the driveway.



View of the front east elevation from the main drive, the spur to the right of the image leads to the service yard.



View of the south garden elevation showing the later single storey extension to the west and the ground floor bay



West elevation showing the gable end of the later west wing and the rear of the house partly obscured

The west elevation is a plain elevation with no projecting bays, with two roof gables to the second floor, with plain straight heads, as compared to the pointed arched dormer windows to the east elevation. The elevation steps down from three to two floors at the northern end and then to a single wing (scullery). The windows are primarily six-over-six timber vertical timber sashes, with the dormer

three-over-three. There is no detailing or enrichment to the elevation. The west elevation through its architectural composition and detailing clearly provides clues to the hierarchy of the interior rooms, which are service rooms on the ground floor, secondary bedrooms on the first floor, and servants rooms in the roof space.



The very plain north elevation on the east side and the end wall of the single storey scullery on the west side.

DETAILS

The florid details to the capitals to the first floor windows to the east and south elevations, and end of the drip moulds to the front door are reflective of the “Early English” period of Medieval Architecture, as described by Thomas Rickman in ‘An attempt to describe the Architectural Styles of Architecture in England’ first published 1817, and throughout the 19th century by Parker & Co, Oxford and London.

INTERIOR

ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE

The front door leads into a vestibule with a timber and glazed screen with a central door giving access into the entrance hall. The screen is ecclesiastical in its detailing reflective of a chancel screen. The entrance hall has a stone chimney piece, with a pointed arch, and chamfered sides, with the top reflecting the design of the great fireplaces in Medieval halls. The hall provides access to the staircase and to the drawing room and morning room, and the drawing room all of which have pointed arched heads and six panel arched head doors.

The staircase is stone with cast-iron newel posts and balusters and a mahogany timber hand-rail.

DINING ROOM

This lies on the east and south-eastern side of the house, which according to Robert Scott Burn in his 'Grammar of House Planning' 1864, was the ideal location. It has high ceilings, deep skirting boards and plaster cornices, and large windows to provide maximum light. The post 1911 canted bay provides access and views to the garden to the south.



View of the staircase through the arched opening looking south with the and half-landing and the door from the hall into the south garden and the arched head doorway to the drawing room



View of the dining room with bay to the east and canted bay to the south

MORNING ROOM

According to Robert Scott Burns (1864) this room was used by the ladies of the house for breakfast, and ideally should be placed on the east side of the house which is best for the morning sun. Its detailing is simpler with less deep skirtings and cornices.



DRAWING ROOM

The drawing room was the most important room in the house used for the reception of visitors. It was where visitors and the family gathered before dining and for the evenings, and for receptions. Burn (1864) recommend the room should aim for 'cheerfulness, refinement, elegance, and refinement of style' (page 48) It has deep skirtings and cornices and six-panel gothic doors





LIBRARY

This room replaced the conservatory post 1911 looking south out of the canted bay. It is unclear if this was its original use, but served this use for Lord Kerr, the antique book dealer.

SERVICE END

Rear porch with simple tiled floor, stone threshold and stone flag floor to the service corridor and the simple service staircase to the first floor for servants. Within the service range, there are a suite of rooms that provide distinct functions that reflected how the house was run.





View of the kitchen looking west with original sink and cupboards

SCULLERY



View looking north with door to service yards and south to the kitchen

LARDER AND BUTLERS PANTRY



View of the larder with slate tops



View of Butler's pantry with fireplace

BUSINESS ROOM

J C Loudon (1832) suggested this should be placed close to the rear service door so the owner could meet staff or delivery people to avoid them going through the main house.

FIRST FLOOR

This contains six bedrooms, two principal bedrooms with bay windows and facilities, and four secondary bedrooms, three small ones

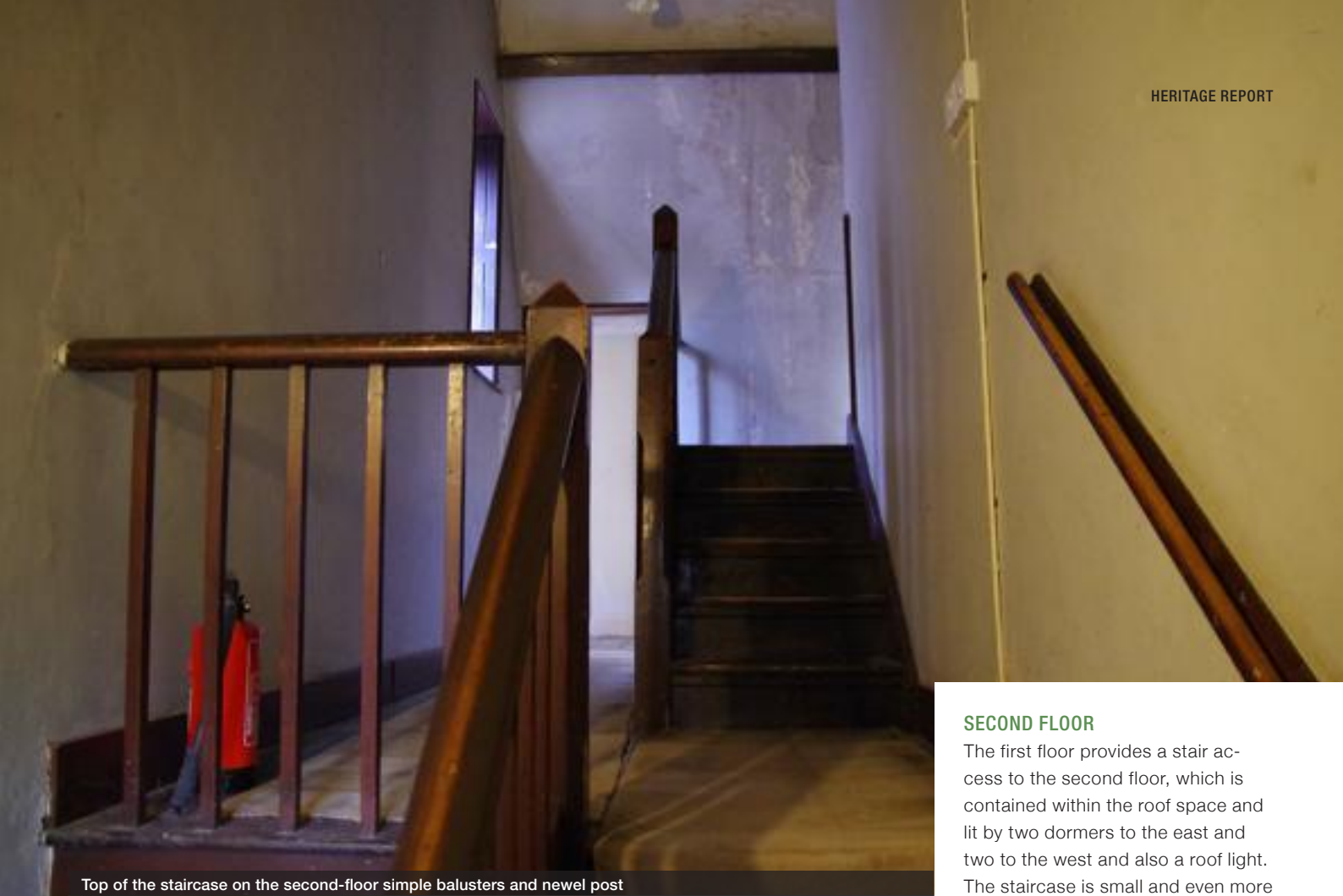
to the north side and one of intermediate size one located between the principal bedroom and the small rooms. They are all served by fireplaces with original fire surrounds. The importance of the rooms is emphasised through their size, position relative to best light and aspect, ancillary accommodation, and architectural detailing. One additional bathroom has been added in place of a dressing room over the porch.



The principal bedroom (1) with the three-sided canted bay looking south over the grounds. Spacious, well-lit with deep skirtings, panelling to the bay



Bedroom six with fire surround



Top of the staircase on the second-floor simple balusters and newel post

SECOND FLOOR

The first floor provides a stair access to the second floor, which is contained within the roof space and lit by two dormers to the east and two to the west and also a roof light. The staircase is small and even more modest than the servant's stair from the service end of the house. These four bedrooms would have provided sleeping accommodation for live-in servants. **Images of these rooms are set out in the gazetteer at the end of the reports**



Example of servant's bedroom in the roof space, reasonably spacious lit by roof light, simple joinery for the door and skirtings, small Gothic fire surround

GARDEN SETTING

Holly Bank lies at the top of a rise of a platform possibly created by the excavation of stone to construct the house, which from William Wilkinson's 1870 book we know was quarried on the site.

From the series of OS Maps, it does not appear to have had a formally laid out planted garden, but a less formal landscape treatment with the circuitous drive running from the south east across the front view from the house arriving around to the eastern front of the house, with an additional drive leading off to the north to the service yard and a small turning circle with a specimen tree. There appears to be a lawn to the south west of the house with tree planting to the north and south with footpaths. Beyond the lawn is the walled kitchen garden,

which historically had cruciform paths but now evidence of circuitous paths leading into the garden from the east.

The south elevation of the house looks out over the lawn. The grounds are planted to curate views around the grounds and on approaches to the house. With few specimen trees the layout reflects the 'picturesque' philosophy of clumps of trees trying to appear more natural, with informal drive and paths.

To the south east of the drive is a group of deciduous and conifer trees with a canal feature along the boundary. South of this is a historic lake (now almost entirely dried up) with an island and footbridge. The lake is another potential source of the quarried rock.



25-inch OS plan surveyed 1876-80 showing the house, access drive, lake, walled garden – an informal landscape garden setting to the house.

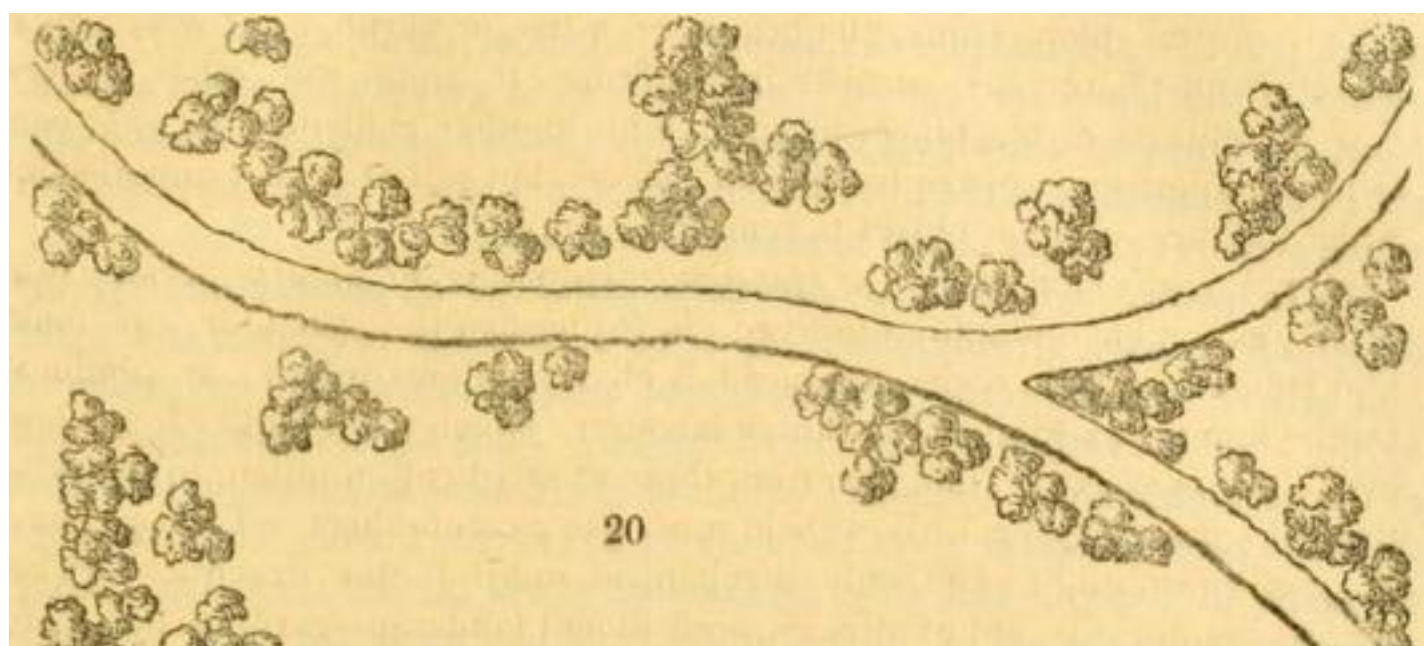


Illustration from J C Loudon 'The Villa Gardener' published 1850 page 39 illustrating the picturesque planting philosophy of clumps of trees along a well-defined drive



View of the drive running north east



View of the south elevation from the drive



View of the south east corner of the house from the drive



Approaching the east elevation along the drive



Eastern approach to the house from the drive



Aerial image from the recent Frank Knight Sales Brochure showing the house in an informal landscape setting looking out over a grass embankment, with fields to the north

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Holly Bank House is included in the National Heritage List for England, grade II. List Entry 1367977. The list description reads:

House. Built 1862 by William Wilkinson. Squared and coursed limestone; gabled Welsh slate roof with moulded stone coping; stone stacks. Double-depth plan. Domestic Gothic style. 2 storeys; 3-window range. Front has 2 gabled bays to left; left bay has 2-storey canted bay window with dogtooth-carved eaves. Canted bay window with similar eaves and C20 French windows to right. Pointed tympanum arches and pelmets over plate-glass sashes; central bay has 2-light Gothic window, with foliate capital to shaft, over C19 French windows. One-storey range with canted bay window to left. Right side wall has panelled door set in moulded pointed-arched doorway, and similar Gothic windows to square bay window canted on first floor. Interior not inspected but noted as having Gothic-style features, including stone fireplaces and panelled doors.

Heritage significance is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Annex as comprising:

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'

Placing the area in its historical context and describing its characteristics and appearance is an important component of the evidence gathering exercise to inform understanding of a place's significance and contribution of its setting. As Historic England explains in 'Conservation Principles' (2008) understanding how a place has evolved and how different phases add to or detract from its significance is a part of that exercise.

Though published after the building was added to the statutory list the Historic England, the Listing Selection Guides (2011) offer some background for the reasons to include a building on the statutory list.

As a house type it is dealt with under Suburban and Country Houses Listing Guide, re-published by Historic England, December 2017. The guide includes a useful brief history of a range of house types, including the villa, and in relation to 19th century developments writes of the Rural Villa:

'The idea of a rural retreat represented by the country house was maintained and perpetuated on a smaller scale by the villa or detached house, even when it was built in a suburban location.

Country houses grew smaller and less complex as they became more a retreat from urban rural life than the centre of a working agricultural estate; likewise business and professional families in the cities eschewed the cramped and unhealthy conditions of a terraced house for a detached house in its own grounds, set (thanks to transport improvements) within easy reach of town.

The substantial villas and detached houses of the Victorian period were the homes of self-made men of considerable wealth – though derided by the landed as the "nouveaux riches".'

While constructed on a newly acquired rural site, Wootton House, later Holly Bank, designed by William Wilkinson, would have looked just as comfortable on Norham Manor, a development in North Oxford laid out by William Wilkinson, for which he produced a sketch c 1860 of its potential development. There are a number of 'Gothic' style houses exhibition similar forms and details to Holly Bank. Similar designs were also included in William Wilkinson's 1870 publication 'The English House'.



Extract from William Wilkinson's circa 1860 sketch of the potential development of Norham Manor, North Oxford for St John's College.

Wootton House, later Holly Bank was designed during this period, and would have been classified by John Claudius Loudon as a Country Villa, although others would consider it a small Country House as it was surrounded by a reasonable size estate and farmland. It was farmed by John Rowland during his period of occupation (1862-1902) although the estate reduced from 300 acres in 1871 to 120 acres by 1881. Subsequent occupiers, however, appear to use Holly Bank as a small country house, with the estate further diminishing in size to 50 acres.

WILLIAM WILKINSON (1819-1901)

This short biography draws on the article 'Three Oxford Architects' by Andrew Saint, published in 1970 in *Oxoniensia*.

William Wilkinson was born in 1819 in Witney Oxfordshire. He entered into the families auctioneering business. It does not appear that he had any formal training in architecture, but in 1841 he had designed a church at Lew, Oxfordshire. He remained in the family business until 1856, when he left and set up a practice in St Giles, Oxford, and by 1860 had a practice at 5 Beaumont Street. He had undertaken a number of commissions by this date, but from 1860 his career rapidly developed, the most significant being commissioned by St John's College to layout the Norham Manor Estate, North Oxford, which extended to a general superintendence role over the whole development of North Oxford. This appears to have involved laying out the roads, deciding on the sites for villas, and some level of veto over designs. He also designed houses in North Oxford.

He was soon commissioned for jobs outside of Oxford, including an office block in London (1860-61) which was well reviewed. An important Oxford Commission was the Randolph Hotel (1864-66), where he designed 'not only the exterior but every internal arrangement'. His body of work, listed by Andrew Saint, (pages 68- 78) included public buildings, churches, parsonages, commercial and agricultural buildings spanning the period 1841-1880. In 1870 he published his book 'English Country Houses: Sixty-one Views and Plans of Recently Erected Mansions, Private Residences, Parsonage-Houses, Farm-Houses, Lodges, and Cottages; with Sketches of Furniture and Fittings; and a Practical Treatise on House-Building, J Parker, London and Oxford.'

When William Wilkinson retired, H W Moore assumed the practice and the supervision of the St John's Estate development. William Wilkinson died in 1901. Andrew Saint, in discussing the work of these two architect's comments:

'it is hardly an exaggeration 'to say that' the whole of Oxford between St, Giles' Church and Summertown, boarded on the west by the Oxford canal and on the east by the Cherwell, is the concept of Wilkinson and More'

It is possible that his eldest son, Thomas John Rowland, listed as an architect in the 1861 census played a role in the choice of architect as it is very likely he would have been aware of the architects practicing in Oxford.

ARCHITECTURAL AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY OF THE VICTORIAN HOUSE

Understanding of the contemporary thinking and fashions for the design of houses and villas is important as it provides a historical context and helps understanding of the plan form and appearance of Holly Bank. Before the late 17th century, servants dined, slept and worked in the main part of the house with their employers. Before this period only the very grandest houses had distinct secondary areas, often courtyards known as the Kitchen of Base court, which were not, however, exclusively for the servants. By the late 17th century, the idea of giving servants their own designated areas had been adopted in the houses of the aristocracy and gentry. They were given their own specific floors, usually the lowest (basement area) and the highest (garrets in the roof space). The basement may also contain the kitchen larder, servants dining hall and other service rooms. These rooms which were entirely in main block of the house, and constituted distinct servants' quarters, were to be the forerunner of the service wing.

In the 19th century the service requirements such as the kitchen, larder, laundry, stores, servants' rooms, with strict hierarchies, and whole top floors for servant sleeping accommodation, were integral to the design of a house of any pretensions.

Mark Girouard in discussing the Victorian Country Gentlemen's House commented that "By 1850 there was a more or less generally accepted view of the kind of house suitable for an English Gentleman... A gentleman's house should be substantial serious and preferably in a style associated with the traditions of English country life. It should be dignified, as was suitable for the rank of its owner,

but not ostentatious; designed for family life and the entertainment of friends rather than for show. It should provide decent quarters for the servants. It should protect the womanliness of women and encourage the manliness of men. It should be comfortable but not luxurious." (Girouard, Mark, The Victorian Country House, 1971, p.1)

The many books published on the design of villas and houses provided advice on the layout and use of rooms, conscious of the need for social separation. An article on Victorian interior design makes the following points:

- Recommendations included proper organization of rooms to reflect social expectations. In the home, regard was placed on separation between children, adults, servants, guests and genders.
- One distinctive feature of Victorian interior design is the separation of space. The homes had as many rooms as possible and each room had a specific purpose. Public and private areas of the home were clearly designated and decorated accordingly. There were rules regarding rooms, what could be in them as well as who could frequent them and when.
- Servants and children were relegated to specific utilitarian rooms carefully designed for rest, relaxation, cooking and cleaning. Male and female adults also had separate and shared quarters.
- Culturally, Victorian rooms were about status, economics, and perfectionism. It was a common idea of the times that your home represented cultural values, and home management was expected to represent social norms.
- A house from this period was idealistically divided in rooms, with public and private space carefully separated. The drawing room was the most important room in a home and was the showcase for the homeowners where guests were entertained. The dining room was the second-most important room in the house.

These social separations were achieved through the placement of rooms, and architectural detailing, which allowed anyone approaching or entering the house, or indeed working in the house which were the private family rooms, and which were the service rooms, and servants' quarters. All architects of this period would have designed houses to ensure these requirements were met.



Doorway to the service building immediately adjacent to Holly Bank, not assessed internally

THE 'GOTHIC REVIVAL' STYLE

Wootton House, later Holly Bank was designed and later extended, in the 'Gothic Revival' style, of which William Wilkinson was well versed.

The Victoria and Albert Museum's guide on the "Gothic Revival" style includes the following;

'Gothic Revival was one of the most influential styles of the 19th century. Designs were based on forms and patterns used in the Middle Ages. Serious study was combined with a more fanciful, romantic vision of Medieval chivalry and romance. A wide range of religious, civic and domestic buildings were built and furnished in the Gothic Revival style, which flourished from 1830 to 1900.

Gothic buildings of the 12th to 16th centuries were a major source of inspiration to 19th-century designers.

The writings of A.W.N. Pugin, (1812-1852) and John Ruskin (1819-1900) had a major influence on the style and theory of the gothic Revival.

This 'Gothic Revival' rejected the rigidity and formality of classical architecture, and sought a return to medieval and vernacular forms, and the use of traditional materials and craft. The buildings were asymmetrical, with steep sloping gabled and hipped roof form, with plain tiles or stone slates, with large multiple chimneystacks. The windows could have pointed arches with thick mullions and transoms. Internally the detailed followed the style, with floor tiles intimating medieval encaustic tiles, arched openings, gothic detailing to staircases, joinery and fireplace surrounds.

Architects, builders, carpenters, masons of this period would have been aware of this style and the details required to both the exterior and interior of a house, with only some general direction from the architect supervising. Numerous books were issued over this period providing examples and details for architects as well builders and tradesmen.



Image of the 'snug' on the western side of the house, part of the post 1911 extension and connected to the library. The door to the right of the image connects to the original part of the house

ROBERT FRANCIS KILVERT (1840-79) AUTHOR OF "KILVERTS DIARIES" AND ELIZABETH ANN KILVERT (NEE ROWLAND) WIFE AND WIDOW

Elizabeth Anne Rowland married the Rev. Robert Francis Kilvert on 20 August 1879 in the church at Wootton and was widowed on 23 September 1879. She returned to Holly Bank where she remained until the family moved to Eastbourne in 1902. She took to Holly Bank the diaries that her husband had been keeping.

The diaries were edited and published a three-volume selection Selections from the Diary of the Rev. Francis Kilvert (Jonathan Cape, Vol I: 1870–1871 pub. 1938, Vol II: 1871–1874 pub.1939, Vol III: 1874–1879 pub.1940). In the 1950s it was discovered that all but three of the original diaries had been destroyed by an elderly niece of Kilvert.

Despite the lack of specific references in the Diaries to Holly Bank, it is known Francis Kilvert did visit the house following the marriage and is likely to have visited at other times. Furthermore, the publications on Kilvert make numerous references Holly Bank as being the home of his wife and then widow, with the Kilvert Society erecting a plaque at the church to commemorate the marriage, mentioning Holly Bank. A niece of Elizabeth Kilvert states that she used to read to the diaries in her bedroom at Holly Bank.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

With regard to the historical development of the house and garden, and its surviving elements, the significance of Holly Bank can be summarized as follows.

EVIDENTIAL

Holly Bank, formerly Wootton House, was constructed in 1862 on farmland purchased by John Rowland, a well-established and successful Oxfordshire sheep farmer, to serve an existing farm with buildings, but also as a comfortable family house for his large family. The villa which is little altered since it was constructed, and its landscaped grounds including walled garden and ornamental lake, provide evidence to help understand the physical, economic and social considerations that influenced the form and development of a reasonably substantial mid-19th century villa in a rural setting.

HISTORICAL

The end of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century saw the construction of substantial villas or small country houses on rural estates, designed by architects to cater for the increasing prosperity of the successful merchants, professionals, or farmers and their desire and ability to own a modern family home with all amenities set in generous surroundings. Holly Bank, while located on a working farm, with 10 bedrooms, principal family rooms, service area, set in a generous planted landscape and with a walled garden, is historically significant as an unaltered example of a mid-19th century architecturally designed substantial villa in an informal designed landscape setting.

The creation of villa and garden developments at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, was mirrored by an increase in interest and popularity of architectural design, horticulture and gardening, catered for by design and gardening books and periodicals which provided detailed advice on the setting, design and layout of villas and gardens. Holly Bank with its 'ideal' orientation, circuitous access drive, location of the coach house and stables, the walled garden, ornamental lake with an island and footbridge, and informal planting, reflects contemporary design philosophies of the period.

The house is notable for its historical association with John Rowland (1816-1902), whose initials and date of construction are on the house. Rowland was a well-established and successful breeder of Oxfordshire sheep who purchased and developed Holly Bank in 1862, and remained there until his death in 1902. In addition to farming, he was a director of the Randolph Hotel, Oxford, member of the local Conservative Association, and led the local opposition by farmers in 1872 against the attempts of agricultural workers to unionise.

The house has significance for its historical association with the architect William Wilkinson (1819-1901) one of the leading, most prolific and successful Oxford Architects, who designed churches, police stations, commercial buildings, including the Randolph Hotel, Oxford; laid out much of North Oxford for St John's College, designing a number of villas on the estate, and a number of small country houses or villas, mostly in the formal Gothic Revival. He also published a book of his designs in 1870 and again in 1875, which included the design for Holly Bank (Wootton House). Holly Bank is historically significant as an example of the architectural work of William Wilkinson in the Gothic Revival Style.

Likewise, Holly Bank has historical significance as the home of Elizabeth Ann Rowland (1846-1911), the wife of diarist Rev Francis Kilvert (1840-1879). Elizabeth Kilvert inherited the extensive diaries kept by her husband, and on her death passed these to a member of the family, after allegedly censoring them to remove references to herself. Surviving diaries were transcribed and in the later 1930s extracts were published to great acclaim. Books and articles on Francis Kilvert make reference to Holly Bank as does a commemorative plaque erected by the Kilvert Society, at St Mary's Wootton. While Francis Kilvert may have visited Holly Bank, the association is with Elizabeth Ann Kilvert (nee Rowland) as her home from 1862 to 1902, and where from 1879 she kept, and allegedly read the Diaries.



South elevation

AESTHETIC – ARCHITECTURAL

Holly Bank is an architectural and aesthetically significant example of a substantial villa designed in the Gothic Revival style, displaying all the key elements and design features of the style, both externally and internally. Asymmetrical elevations; steeply pitched gables roofs with moulded stone copings; projecting gables; projecting porch; projecting canted bays with steep hipped roofs; straight and arched windows stone mullion windows; foliate capitals to shafts; deeply moulded pointed front door surround with foliate drip moulds; dogtooth carved eaves and decorative string course detail. Internally the division between the entrance porch and hall is marked by a carved decorative screen with Gothic detailing; the doorways to the principal rooms are arched with six panelled doors with gothic details; the stone principal staircase has cast iron newel posts and balusters;

Many original decorative details survive intact, illustrating the social hierarchy and the functions of spaces of a mid 19th century villa, advocated in architectural books of the period. The spatial hierarchy is marked by the physical position of the rooms relative to available light and views, and relative to each other with a clear physical and visual division between the principal family rooms, and service rooms, and servants quarters, emphasised by the architectural detailing of each room through joinery, cornice details, fire surrounds, and floor

coverings. The porch and main hall giving access to the principal staircase and rooms is covered in Minton encaustic tiles, the service corridor and rooms by stone flags. The hierarchy is carried through to the first floor with principal and secondary bedrooms; and the second floor, accessed via a steep simple timber staircase to servants' rooms within the roof space.

AESTHETICS – LANDSCAPE

The informal planted landscape setting, the principal structure of which remains from 1862, with the circuitous drive, ornamental lake, walled garden and substantial trees and shrubs, demonstrates the mid-19th aesthetics advocated in contemporary books and periodicals on designs of villa's and gardens settings.

COMMUNAL – SOCIAL VALUE

Holly Bank, a mid-19th century Gothic Revival villa in a landscape setting instils a sense of identity, a well understood aspect of the English landscape, of the rising prosperity and status of the successful farming class, who could demonstrate this through the construction of individually architecturally designed villas in a rural setting, laid out in accordance with contemporary design philosophies. Holly Bank is also a reminder of the resources of the subsequent 20th century prosperous owners who maintained the house and grounds.



Oblique view of Holly Bank from the driveway, looking west. Notice the planting which creates glimpse views of the house.

CONCLUSION

Holly Bank, a grade II listed building, was built in 1862 by John Rowland, a well-established and prosperous sheep farmer, as a house to establish a new farm, but also as a modern family villa for his family. He chose William Wilkinson, a recently established and increasingly successful 'architect' in Oxford to design the house. It was constructed using stone quarried and bricks made and clamped burnt on site, and imported slate. The house is designed in a restrained gothic revival style, with architectural detailing from the exterior reflected in the detailing and finish of the interior. It is a design that typifies the architect, featuring in his publications as the archetypal rural gothic villa.

John Rowland died in 1902 and soon after the house was leased by the family and eventually sold. Between 1911 and 1924 an original conservatory at the western end of the house was replaced by a single-storey stone wing in a design to closely match the rest of the house. A bay window was also added and a couple of minor extensions to add a WC and a rear porch.

The house retains original internal features and retains understanding of the functional and social hierarchy that informs how the building was designed and used.

The layout of the garden, which was informal with a circuitous drive, lawns and groups of trees and shrubs together with a walled garden and ornamental pond remain substantially as laid out, although the walled garden has fallen into disrepair and is overgrown. Despite this, the grounds provide an important setting to the house, which is elevated on an excavated bench giving views over the garden and drive to the south.

The building has not undergone any major investment for a number of years and is in need of a major overhaul of services and adaptation to meet the needs of contemporary society. This report provides the evidence of the building's heritage significance to inform the details of any proposal.

APPENDIX 1: ENTRY IN THE NATIONAL HEIRTAGE LIST FOR ENGLAND



HOLLY BANK

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1367977

Date first listed: 29-Jun-1988

Statutory Address: HOLLYBANK

County: Oxfordshire

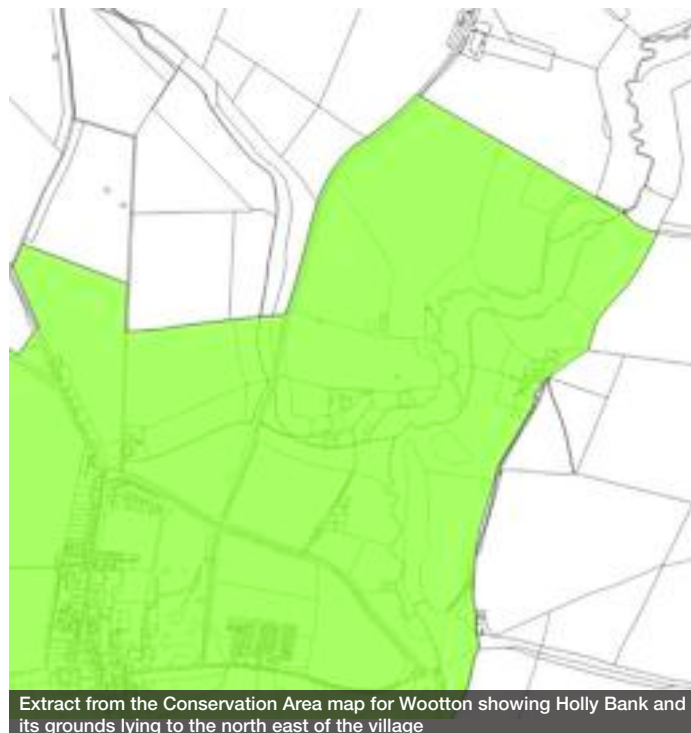
District: West Oxfordshire (District Authority)

Parish: Wootton

National Grid Reference: SP 44452 20490

WOOTTON SP42SW 3/289 Hollybank - II House. Built 1862 by William Wilkinson. Squared and coursed limestone; gabled Welsh slate roof with moulded stone coping; stone stacks. Double-depth plan. Domestic Gothic style. 2 storeys; 3-window range. Front has 2 gabled bays to left; left bay has 2-storey canted bay window with dogtooth-carved eaves. Canted bay window with similar eaves and C20 French windows to right. Pointed tympanum arches and pelmets over plate-glass sashes; central bay has 2-light Gothic window, with foliate capital to shaft, over C19 French windows. One-storey range with canted bay window to left. Right side wall has panelled door set in moulded pointed-arched doorway, and similar Gothic windows to square bay window canted on first floor. Interior not inspected but noted as having Gothic-style features, including stone fireplaces and panelled doors.

BOUNDARY OF THE WOOTTON CONSERVATION AREA WHICH INCLUDES HOLLY BANK AND GROUNDS



GAZETTEER

EXTERIOR



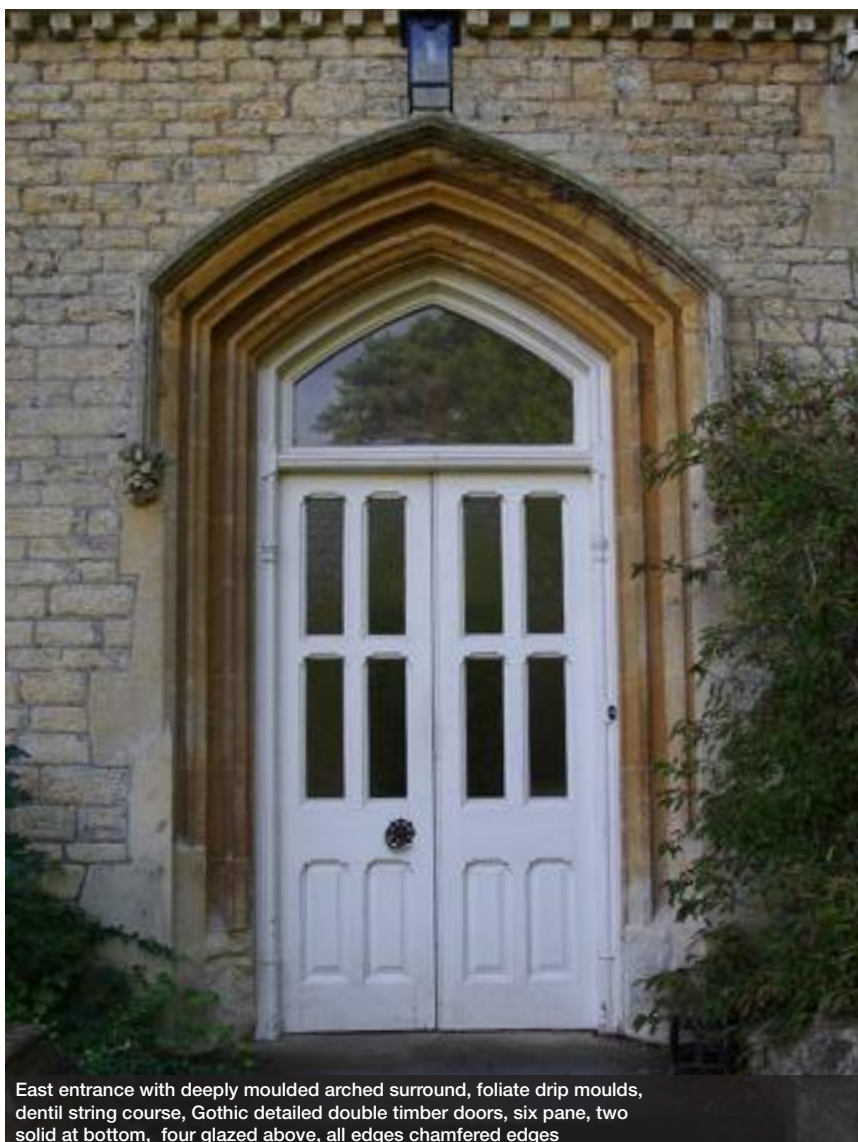
East elevation showing range of Gothic architectural detailing – deeply moulded arched entrance to porch, arched window over with capitals to architraves, quatrefoil parapet detail to top of porch, dentil string course, foliate capitals to the two mullions of the first floor projecting bay window, carved details to eaves, steep pitched hipped roof



South elevation Initials JR and 1862 date plaque to steep projecting gable to coping with carved corbel detail, arched head to window carved details to eaves, foliate detail above the rainwater head



View of the c 1911-19 Library extension to the west with similar, but simpler, carved eaves detail decorative corbel and coping to the gable with iron finial, large projecting stone chimney, steep pitched gable and hipped roofs.



East entrance with deeply moulded arched surround, foliate drip moulds, dentil string course, Gothic detailed double timber doors, six pane, two solid at bottom, four glazed above, all edges chamfered edges