

## Hill House and Warrax House Site Report

**Grid Ref:** Hill House TL 388123, Warrax House TL 386123

**Parish:** Stanstead Abbots



**Ordnance Survey Map**

**Scale 25":1 Mile (not to scale)**

**Sheet XXX.13 1880**

The earliest mention of the site is as Warrax Common Field for the village of Stanstead Abbots, which contained a 1acre plot and a messuage (HALS DE/B888/TI). No references to the park or houses has been found for the 18<sup>th</sup> century but a small park does appear on both the 180 Ordnance Survey Drawing and the 1821/21 Bryant Map.

**Ordnance Survey Drawing**

**No 141 Ware 2**

**1800**





**A Map of the County  
of Hertford**

**A. Bryant  
1821/221**

### **The Houses**

Historic England Listing for Hill House (Grade II) states it was built c.1800, i.e.in the late Georgian period, and the HCC Listing for Warrax House states it is shown on the 1840 Tithe Map and perhaps on the Bryant map. On neither the OSD nor the Bryant maps are houses shown in position of the current properties, though that may be due to the small scale. They do confirm that the site was a small park round a gentry house from at least 1800. The archaeological report by Robertson confirms that the hillside was terraced during the building of Hill House. No garden terraces are shown on any maps, so this may be just the house platform. The planning application for Warrax House conversion from Children's Home to multiple occupancy (2007) calls Warrax House a Victorian House

From the maps it is difficult to ascertain where the original boundaries between the two properties lay. The current boundaries of Warrax House are shown on the planning application for conversion (EHDV 3/07/1530/LC)

Kitchen gardens are depicted on the 6" ordnance Survey map of 1873/80 adjacent to Hill House and to the north of Hill House and southwest of Warrax House. Both of these are set in orchards. Another large orchard separates the two houses with a walled garden to its north with a drive leading to Hill House, to which it must belong.

### **Kitchen Gardens and Orchards**

The orchard for Warrax house lies to the south west of the house overlooked by a glasshouse joined to the main house. Further orchard trees are shown on a narrow belt alongside the walled kitchen garden (to the northeast of the house) and a further orchard beyond the kitchen garden. No glasshouses are shown in the Warrax House Kitchen Garden

The large Hill House kitchen garden facing south has slips along its eastern perimeter leading to the southern small orchard separated from the main orchard. Some fruit trees appear to remain within this orchard.

This larger orchard is surrounded by a mixed tree belt which extends down the southern side of the Warrax House estate.

A smaller orchard lies to the south of Hill House with a glass house at its northeastern edge. It may be that this glasshouse contained peach or other fruit trees as there is a conservatory attached to the house itself just to the side.



**Ordnance Survey Map**

**Scale 6": 1 Mile**

**Sheet Essex XL**

**Surv 1873**

**Publ 1880**

### **Approaches**

Neither property had an entrance lodge. Hill House is approached by a long drive from Cappell (Chapel) Lane (or Park Road on some maps) and appears to have had an avenue of coniferous trees for the section nearest the house with a scatter of trees along the south eastern side of the rest of the drive. The drive terminated at the south west aspect. It then divided going north to the stable block and on to the kitchen garden and south to the house entrance.

The walls of the kitchen garden are still visible on the present-day aerial photos but the garden appears overgrown. A tennis court has been installed outside of the eastern wall in part of the parkland

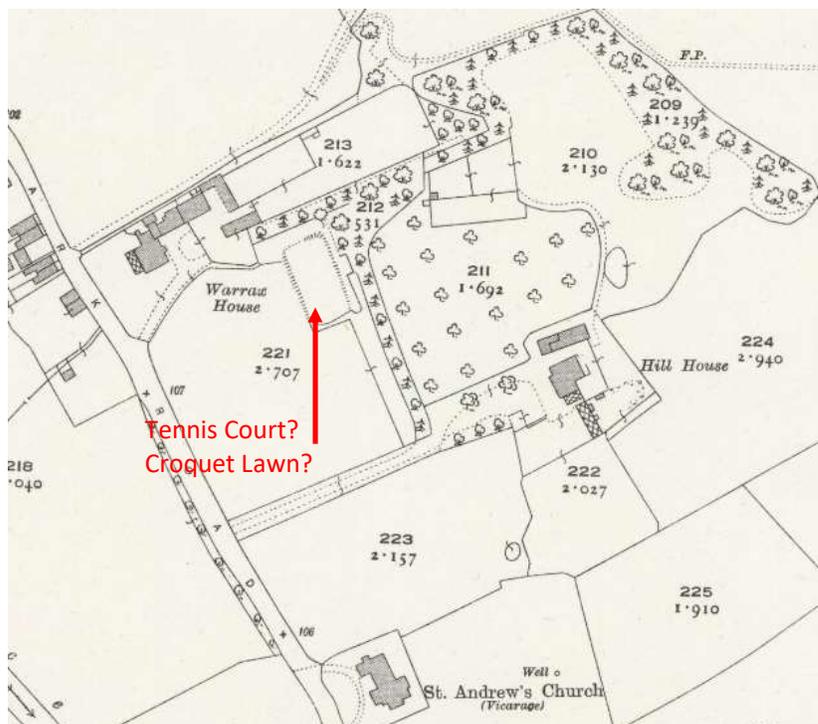
Warrax House is much nearer the road and was approached by a short drive leading to the entrance on the southeast aspect with an entrance from the entrance courtyard running north to the stables and office courtyard.

### Pleasure grounds.

There appears to be a small garden to the rear of Hill House, containing a tree and adjacent to the back of the glasshouse were two small sheds. This area now contains a swimming pool. The garden for Warrax House may be the orchard to the southwest of the house which contains very few trees and the glasshouse may have been a conservatory.

### Parkland

The main area of parkland appears to be at the top of the hill behind the gardens. It is surrounded by a very thin belt of trees, except on its southeastern boundary, and contains a large clump of deciduous trees. Land to the southeast of Hill House towards the parish church is divided into what may be paddocks (the Tithe Map could confirm this)



Ordnance Survey Map  
Scale 25":1 Mile (not to scale)  
Sheet XXX.13  
surv. 1919 publ. 1921

By 1919 the only major change in the laying out of a large excavated area at Warrax House. This may be an area made level for croquet or tennis courts, both popular at the time. At present it appears unused and partly overgrown. By 1938, the parkland behind the properties has become filled on the northern with a mix of trees and at present it has assumed the appearance of a wood



Google earth Aerial showing walled kitchen garden (red rectangle)

### Further Work

Viewing the archives at HALS, including DE/Hx/E812 and DE/B888/TI. Finding aerial views of the site. Visiting the site if possible, especially the orchards and walled garden to ascertain how much historic fabric survives.

### References

Bryant, A 1821 *A Map of the County of Hertford*

Page, W. 1912 *Victoria County History: Hertfordshire Volume 3*

Robertson, A. (2005). *Hill House, Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire, Archaeological Excavation*. Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. <https://doi.org/10.5284/1004582>.

*Kate Harwood, Hertfordshire Gardens Trust. December 2021.*

