

HOO FARM, WHITWELL, HITCHIN, SG4 8AE HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 2025



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TRANSFORM | RESTORE | REPAIR

1.0 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Purpose of the report	03
1.2 Existing information and gaps in knowledge	03
1.3 Site Plan	04
2.0 HERITAGE PLANNING POLICY	04
2.1 Designated heritage assets	04
2.2 Planning policy context	06
3.0 UNDERSTANDING	06
3.1 Site History	06
3.2 Historic Maps	15
3.3 Site description	20
3.4 Setting	24
4.0 SIGNIFICANCE	25
4.1 Heritage values	25
4.2 Assessment of significance	26
4.3 Proposals	27
4.4 Impact assessment	28
APPENDICES	29
APPENDIX A Bibliography	29
APPENDIX B Heritage Assets List Descriptions	29

1.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Wendy Tomlinson MSc PG Cert (Oxon) IHBC to accompany a planning and listed building application submitted for minor improvements to the farmhouse, and to guide future decision-making. Understanding the history of change to the site will help determine how best to preserve the significance of the building and its setting.

Hoo Farmhouse is located within The Hoo estate, approximately 1.5 kilometers (1 mile) northeast of Kimpton and around 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) southwest of Whitwell. The Hoo is a spur of land that runs down to the Mimram river valley, north to Whitwell and south-east to Codicote. To the south the spur slopes down to the river valley of the River Kyme on which Kimpton stands. There is documentary reference to a medieval manor house on the rolling range of hills running round the back of Kimpton but no physical evidence of the site. Further along the spur, hidden away behind trees concealed from both Kimpton and Whitwell are a couple of farmsteads, one of which is Hoo Farm.

The Hoo landscape was designed by Lancelot "Capability" Brown between 1760 and 1762. It originally surrounded a 17th/18th-century country house, which was demolished in 1958. Hoo Farmhouse was an integral part of the estate, with the surrounding land and outbuildings primarily consisting of glasshouses and walled productive gardens, designed and managed to support a large country house estate. According to its list description, the farmhouse dates to the late 17th century and is connected to an early 19th-century dairy. The former dairy is the main focus of this application.

1.1 Purpose of the report

The assessment aims to understand the history and context of the site to identify significance and assess the impact of future proposals on the site's significance. This is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework, par. 207 (December 2024). The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance. This document is based on the guidelines and policies contained in Historic England's *Conservation Principles and Policies and Guidance* (formerly English Heritage), 2008, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*; and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) *The Setting of Heritage Assets* 2017.

1.2 Existing information & gaps in knowledge

This report is based on a site survey and setting analysis using desktop research to review available documentation, OS and other maps, the statutory list description, previous planning applications where relevant supplemented by published and web-accessible information. Archival research has been carried out using Heritage Environment Records for the area including historical records, maps and images held at local archives and local history publications where available. The site's planning history, relevant to this application and a full list of resources consulted are listed in the Appendices. A visual inspection of the site and assessment of its setting for this report was carried out on 22nd January 2025.



1.3 Site plan

Fig. 1 The study site is outlined in red.

2.0 Heritage planning policy

2.1 Designated heritage assets

A desktop study of designated heritage assets within 100M of the site has identified two heritage assets associated with Hoo Farmhouse. The farmhouse is within Hoo Park and Garden, grade II and within 100M of Hoo Lodge, the former entrance lodge to The Hoo (house), demolished in 1958. The list descriptions as they appear on Historic England's website for Hoo Farmhouse is given below and the remainder in full in the Appendices.

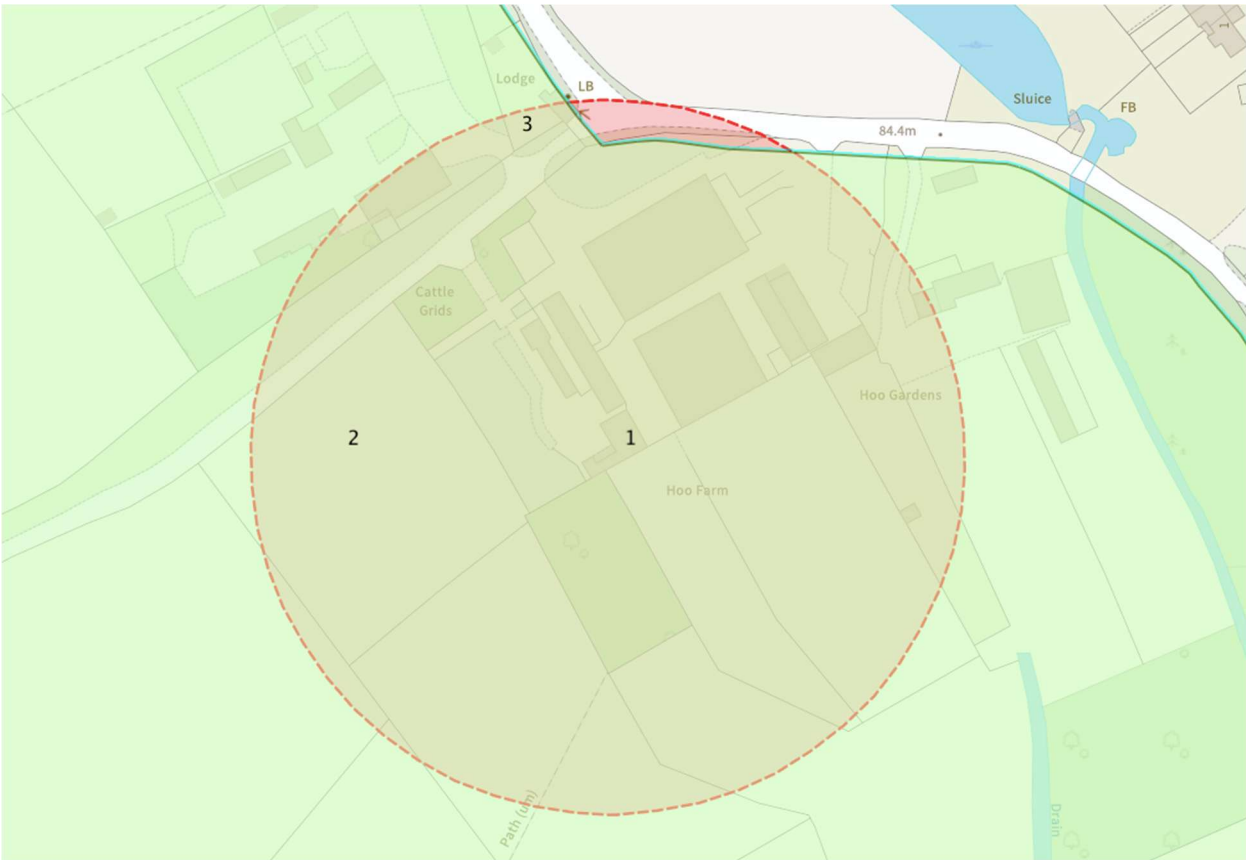


Fig.2 Designated heritage assets within 100M Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024 © Historic England.

	DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN 100M	
1	HOO FARMHOUSE AND WALLS OF ATTACHED WALLED GARDENS TO SOUTH	Grade II
2	HOO PARK & GARDEN	Grade II
3	HOO FARM LODGE	Grade II

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1176822

Date first listed: 08-Feb-1988

List Entry Name: HOO FARMHOUSE AND WALLS OF ATTACHED WALLED GARDENS TO SOUTH

House. Late C17, outhouses at rear link to early C19 dairy. Red brick with some black headers in Flemish-bond. Steep old red tile roof extending at rear over integral outshut. A 2-storeys and attics house facing E adjoining 3M high common N wall of 2 contemporary walled gardens on S. Plinth, plat-band, and corbelled eaves course with projecting headers. Symmetrical 3 windows front with 2-light lattice casement windows in heavy frames. Central door up 4 stone steps has a heavy moulded oak frame with double ovolo. Similar moulding to plank door with lozenge pattern of applied battens. Cast iron gate with steps to side passage

at NE corner. 2 large rear wall chimney in rear roofslope. Plank door to rear in heavy moulded frame. Dairy has round-headed large window on N.

2.2 Planning policy context

National policies and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) and primary legislation set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16(2) are relevant heritage considerations respecting any proposed works regarding the site. The NPPF (2024) places good design, enhancement of local distinctiveness and conservation of the historic environment at the heart of sustainable development (paragraphs 7-14, 131-141).

As stated in the Local Plan and policy documents, the strategic objectives of the natural and historic environment policies are to ensure that the region's special character, identity, and quality of life are conserved and enhanced for future generations. Together local and national policies seek to conserve and/or enhance the historic environment's special character, appearance, and distinctiveness in a manner appropriate to their historic character and significance. Policies developed to support these objectives were referred to in assessing the site and used to develop a scheme that responds positively to its environment within a highly sensitive historical setting.

3.0 Understanding

3.1 Site History: The Hoo estate was originally held by the Hoo family from the 13th century. The estate underwent significant transformations under various owners up to the 18th century when manorial lands were consolidated into a designed landscape, with a mansion house, coach house and range of outbuildings. The house at the centre of the estate was always referred to as The Hoo.

Jonathan Keate, a wealthy City wool merchant, married to Susannah Hoo, heir to the estate built The Hoo. The house was a square, three-storey building featuring gables, attic rooms, and a semi-basement. Positioned facing east, it was oriented away from Kimpton and toward Whitwell. The earliest known illustration of The Hoo, drawn by J. Drapentier for Chauncy's *Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* (1700), significantly compressed the perceived distance between the house, the river, and the public road. At the time of its construction, formal geometric gardens were the prevailing fashion. The print of the house depicts a straight driveway leading from the Codicote-Whitwell road, crossing the river and passing through multiple gates directly to the front entrance. A secondary drive veered northward, joining the road further along near its crossing at Hoo Farm. Along with several other farms, Hoo Farm was located within the park boundary and is positioned north-east of the former house site. It stands near an 18th-century Lodge that once marked the principal approach to the manor house and contiguous with an extensive walled kitchen garden that provided produce for the estate.

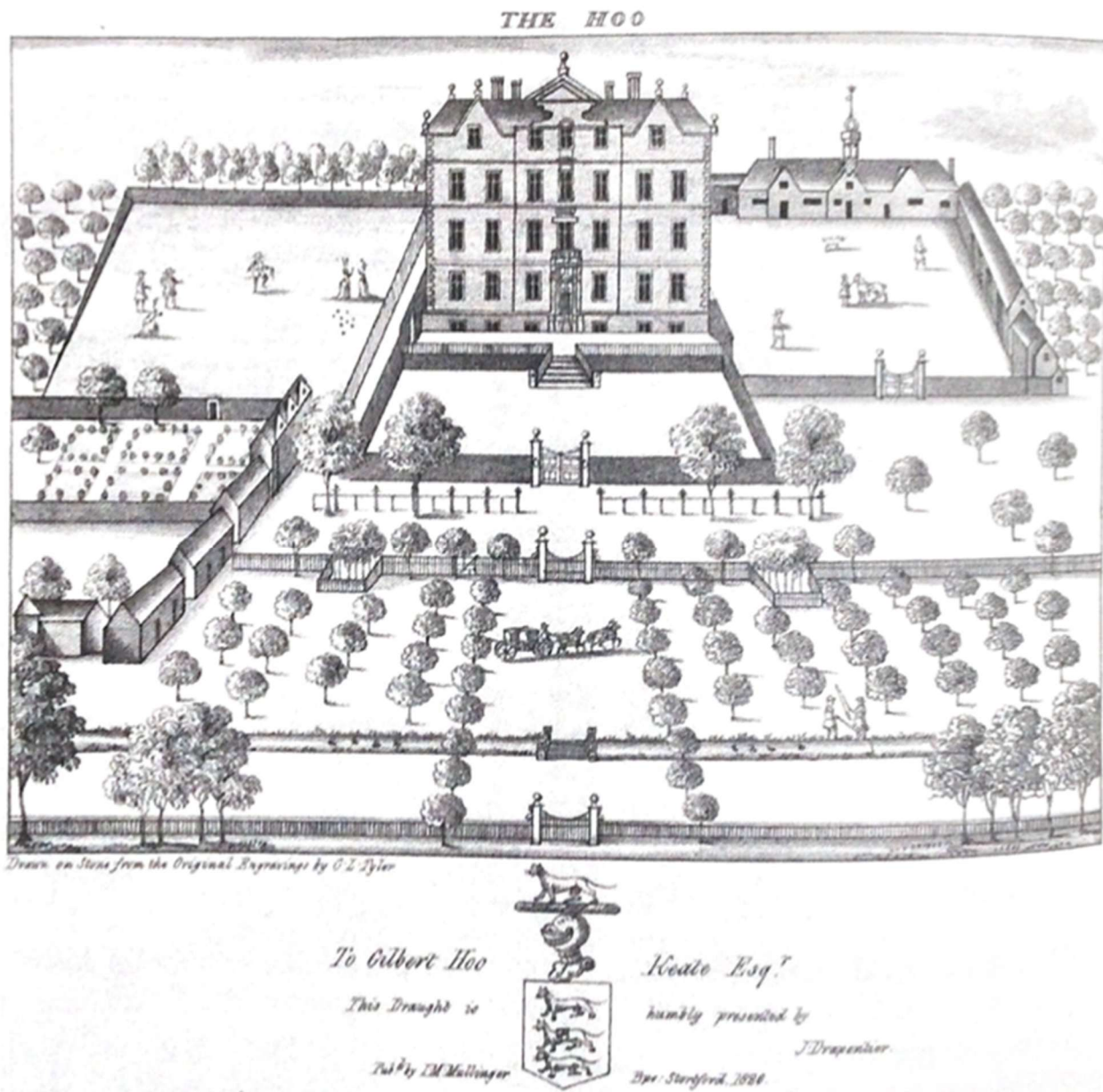


Fig.3 Late C19 copy of J Drapentier illustration 1700 East Front

In 1732, Margaret Brand, a young widow from the City, acquired The Hoo. Her late husband, Thomas Brand, was originally from Essex, and although her reasons for relocating to Hertfordshire remain uncertain, both the Brand and Keate families were influential merchant dynasties with interests in landed estates.

By the mid-18th century, the formal architectural style of The Hoo and its structured gardens, originally designed by Keate, had fallen out of fashion. The emerging trend in English estate design favoured the naturalistic "landscape" garden, characterised by expansive meadows, winding pathways, and carefully

curated vistas. Margaret's son, Thomas Brand inherited the estate after her death. He was a school friend of Horace Walpole, with whom he embarked on the Grand Tour before both later became Whig MPs. Possibly influenced by his friendship with Walpole, Brand enlisted Capability Brown to transform The Hoo's landscape and William Chambers to architecturally embellish the house and garden structures. Brown's enhancements, which remain evident in the park's meadows, woodlands, and framed views, redefined the estate's aesthetic. Walpole's enthusiasm for Gothic Revival architecture may also have played a role in estate renovations, as suggested by the distinctive window design on the south elevation of the farmhouse, overlooking the former Kitchen Garden and on the former Dairy.

Between 1749 and Thomas Brand's death in 1770, the estate underwent significant expansion, incorporating multiple farms in Kimpton and acquiring extensive landholdings and manorial rights in neighbouring parishes. By 1822, the park had been extended southward along the western side of the Mimram River and a newly planted woodland block had been strategically positioned to screen the walled kitchen garden from view from the mansion. Extensive tree planting across the parkland was employed to frame and conceal roads, driveways, and to curate selected vistas.

From at least the mid-19th century, Hoo Farm functioned as the estate's home farm, serving as the residence of a farm bailiff who managed estate land and oversaw tenant farmers across its outlying areas. The historical connection between Hoo Farm and the kitchen garden remains somewhat unclear, though both appear to date from the late 17th century. Their close proximity suggests that the farm bailiff, residing at the farmhouse, may have played a role in managing the garden's operations. By the 20th century, this was confirmed with Samuel S. Vandersluis listed as a "Pig Poultry Farmer Nurseryman" in the 1939 Register.

Hoo Farmstead is positioned north of the kitchen garden, following a traditional farmyard layout, with barns and outbuildings forming a perimeter around a central yard. The brick-walled kitchen garden, adjacent to the south elevation of the farmhouse, is enclosed by additional walls to the west and south, creating an outer compartment. A stone doorway in the southeastern wall of this section provides access from the park, with a corresponding entrance leading into the garden's inner section. A historic pathway, once linking a point 75 meters northeast of the main house to the stone entrance in the garden wall, further highlights the site's structured layout. The brick-built Hoo Farmhouse and its associated farm buildings define much of the northern boundary of the garden.

Census records from 1841 to 1901 document a succession of farm bailiffs residing at Hoo Farm, as well as the presence of a nearby "Garden House." In 1861, Stephen Cox was listed as the estate gardener, employing six men, while John Edmund, the farm bailiff, oversaw a workforce of 18 men and five boys. By 1881, the number of farm workers had decreased to 15 men, but the number of boys had risen to 20. The census also recorded a head gardener and an under-gardener living in the vicinity, though no additional garden laborers were listed. A dairy maid was employed on-site but lived independently from the farmhouse, where several agricultural laborers, classified as servants, also resided. Thomas Webb served as the farm bailiff during this later period [1881 Census]. By 1901, the site housed four separate households, including two gardeners. In the 1911 census, Ellen Webb, the widowed daughter-in-law of Thomas Webb,

occupied the seven-room farmhouse with her son, Thomas Webb Jr., who worked as a farm labourer. A "Mr. Webb" is also mentioned in a 1921 newspaper article about the sale of The Hoo estate, identified as the estate's long-serving gardener and likely refers to Thomas Webb Jr.

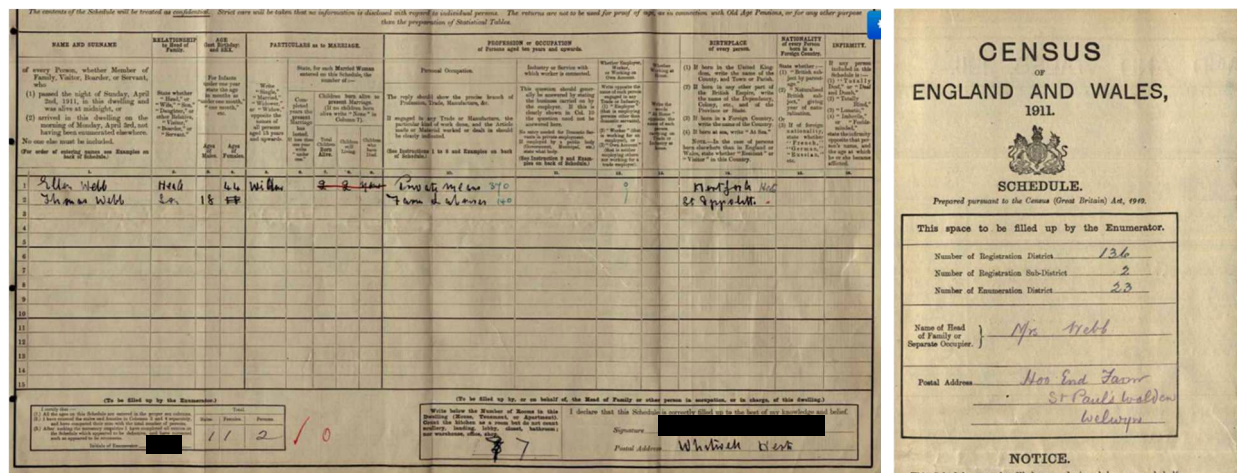
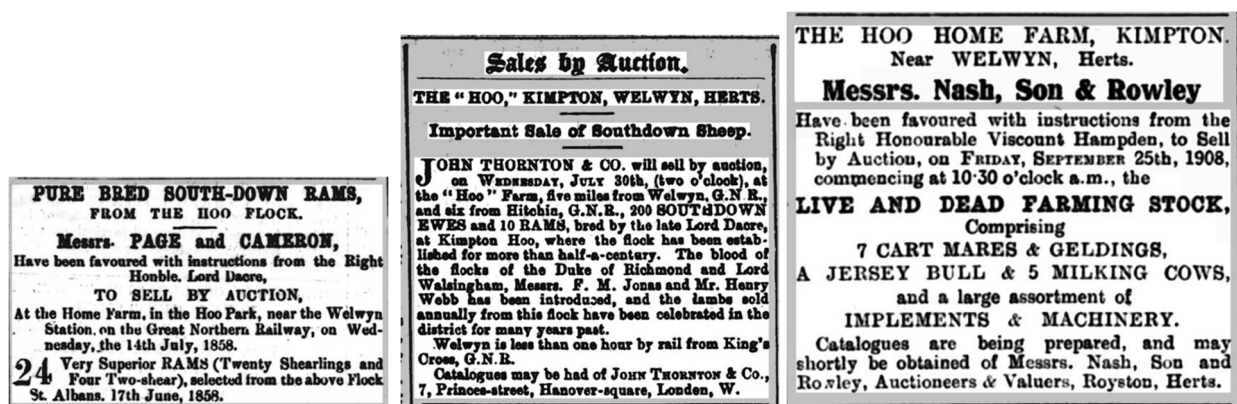
Another long-standing gardener was Stephen Cox from the 1850s. R. Fish, a correspondent for *The Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman* (April 6th, 1858), provided a detailed account of his visit to The Hoo. He notes that although he has "frequently looked in upon my neighbour, Mr. Cox, at the kitchen garden, I have seldom got as far as the house." While describing the surrounding landscape and the kitchen gardens, he subtly criticises Lady Dacre, whom he blames for the poor design and layout of the grounds.

Fish specifically remarks on the inconvenient access route between the kitchen garden and the mansion, describing it as a "narrow undressed walk" over the rising, undulating parkland. Despite acknowledging the significant changes made to the landscape, he suggests further improvements. He comments that Lady Dacre, who is "very partial to ribbon bordering," should have opted for a plantation of evergreens rather than the mixed borders she favours. He also critiques the estate's water system, arguing that the water could have been better utilised as a decorative feature to "give the idea of refreshing coolness." rather than irrigating Lady Dacre's ribbon borders. However, he praises Mr. Cox's bedding plants, stating, "I suspect it will be long before any neighbour can equal Mr. Cox, with the stock of this fine bedder."

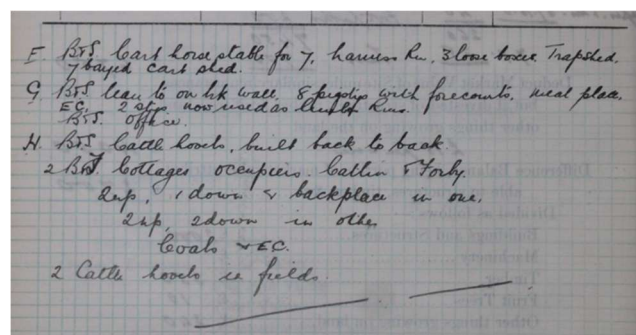
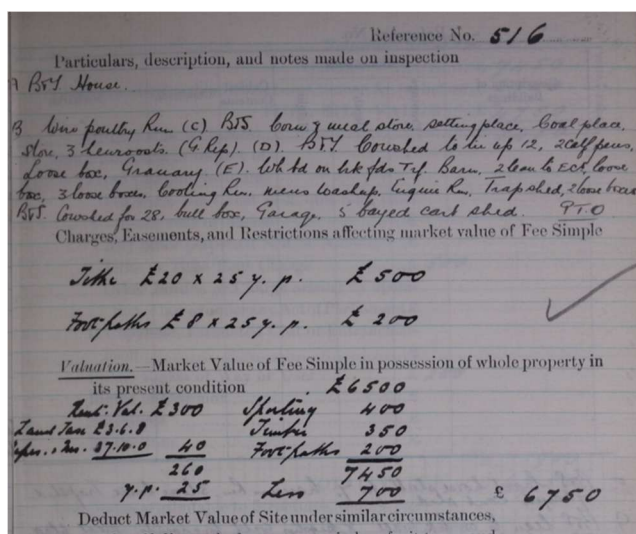
Fish later describes Mr. Cox's cottage and the layout of the farmstead:

"Mr. Cox's cottage is placed at the north-west corner of the wall-enclosed space. The farm-steading is immediately to the westward. On the boundary wall, looking eastward, a vinery is placed for early and late Grapes, being in two divisions. In front of it, and near Mr. Cox's house, the forcing frame ground used to be situated; and, I presume, all the dung for forcing had to be wheeled past his door, not of itself very pleasant, and giving to this part of the garden a littery appearance. Between Mr. Cox's house and the boundary wall, going eastward, is a large space of ground, between that wall and the river, appropriated as orchards and for kitchen cropping; and, from its proximity to the water, growing first-rate crops of Celery, &c. In a line between Mr. Cox's house and the river, commodious rooms and sheds have been erected, and a large space has been cleared out for a frame ground, with a cart entrance from the highway, so that all the manure for framing may thus easily be brought from the farmyard without interfering with, or littering, the kitchen garden."

He observes that the former forcing frame ground has now been replaced with "a useful and elegant span-roofed house," measuring between 80 and 90 feet in length and 14 feet in width, with 5-foot-high side walls, two feet of which were glass panels that opened from the ends via a windlass mechanism. The central height of the structure was nine feet, with sash bars spaced 13 inches apart. While Fish criticizes the ventilation system as inferior, he commends the estate's vines in pots and praises the cucumbers, describing them as "fit to cut."



Although the 1911 census lists Ellen Webb as the occupier of Hoo Farm [Figs.7-8], R. G. Smith is recorded by the District Valuer for Lloyd George's Domesday Survey 1910-14 as the occupier, accompanied by detailed notes regarding the uses of the farm buildings and cottages associated with the farm which includes the following: 'Timber Shed; Cement Store; Carpenter & Paint Shop; Lean-to Cement & Lime Store'. In the Gardens there is a 3 up and 3 down brick and stone cottage occupied by the Head Gardener; a two-storey Bothy; a brick and stone store and potting shed; 4 glasshouses, one of which had been built since 1909 and various frames [Figs.9-12]. By the 1939 Register the roles of gardener and farmer have been combined: Samuel S Vandersluis is listed as 'Pig Poultry Farmer Nurseryman'.



Figs.13 & 14 Sale catalogue and plan from the 1921 sale of outlying portions of the Hoo Estate

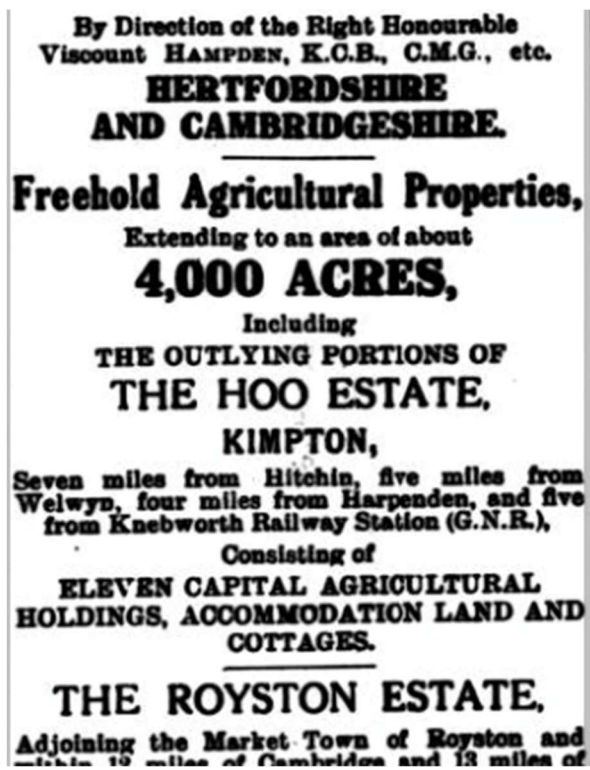


Fig.15 1921 Sept Herts & Essex Observer

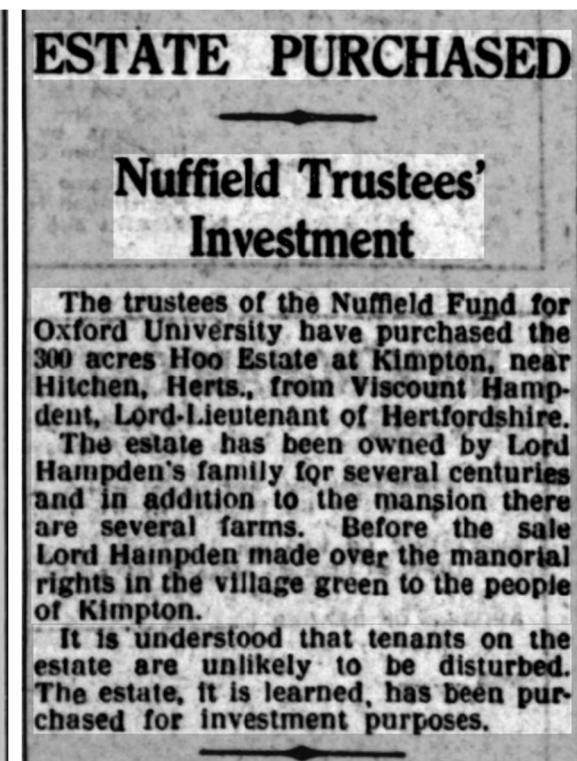


Fig.16 1938 May Birmingham Gazette

The agricultural portion of the Hoo Estate, and the Royston estate, Cambridge, owned by Thomas Walter Brand, Lord Hampden, was sold in September 1921: 1,178 acres were sold for £28,000 and the sale included several large farms but not the home farm at Whitwell. The remainder of the Hoo estate including the house, park, surrounding farmlands and the home farm was sold in 1938, marking the end of 200 years of Brand ownership and occupation of The Hoo. In a letter to his tenants, Lord Hampden expressed his regret over the decision, stating: *"I am assured that the estate will remain intact, that there is no idea of any building development, and that tenants will be treated sympathetically, with no likelihood of being disturbed... [we have] the assurance that the character of the estate will be retained. It was with great reluctance that I came to this decision to sell."*

Oxford University acquired the estate following a substantial donation from Lord Nuffield to generate a steady income for the University [Fig.17]. The purchase price was £142,000.

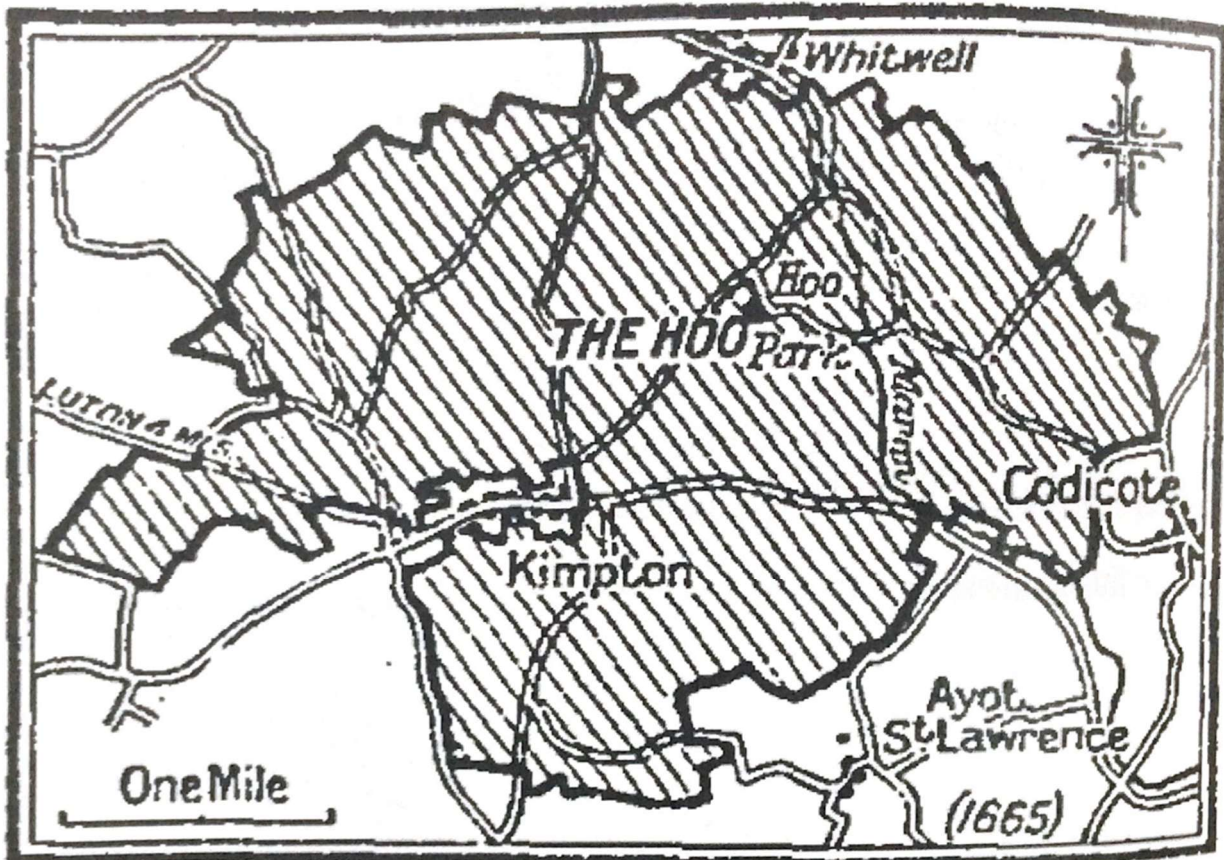


Fig.17 Univeristy of Oxford's aquisition of the Hoo Estate: 4000 acres of park land, farms and cottages 1938

In 1958, the house was demolished along with the adjoining outbuildings. The water supply, which had continued to serve nearby farms, was rerouted to a newly constructed tower. However, the coach house, stables, and some nearby cottages were retained. The site subsequently saw industrial use, first as a chicken processing plant and later for salmon packaging. Eventually, in 1990, the property was sold for residential development, leading to the construction of several detached houses around the surviving coach house and stables.

Three generations of the same family have lived and farmed Hoo Farm. Mr. C. H. Harding took over four of the farms on the Hoo Estate in 1929 and the family's involvement continues to this day. The farmhouse remains a family home, with the walled garden now incorporated into its domestic curtilage and door openings on the south elevation to provide direct access. The glasshouses have been removed and timber stables are now the only structure of note within the walled garden. The house has an unorthodox floorplan reflecting numerous incremental changes and continuous use over 300 years. The dairy was incorporated into the main living space during the last centry. The roof profile of this part of the building has also undergone modifications over time. Initially, it featured a hipped roof concealed behind a castellated parapet—an architectural detail similar to that found on another estate farm building [Fig.19]. Later, the roof was altered to a mono-pitch design using reclaimed slate, a change that was formally approved in 2016

[16/02081/LB]. The current proposal seeks to resolve design concerns related to the existing roof while implementing additional improvements.

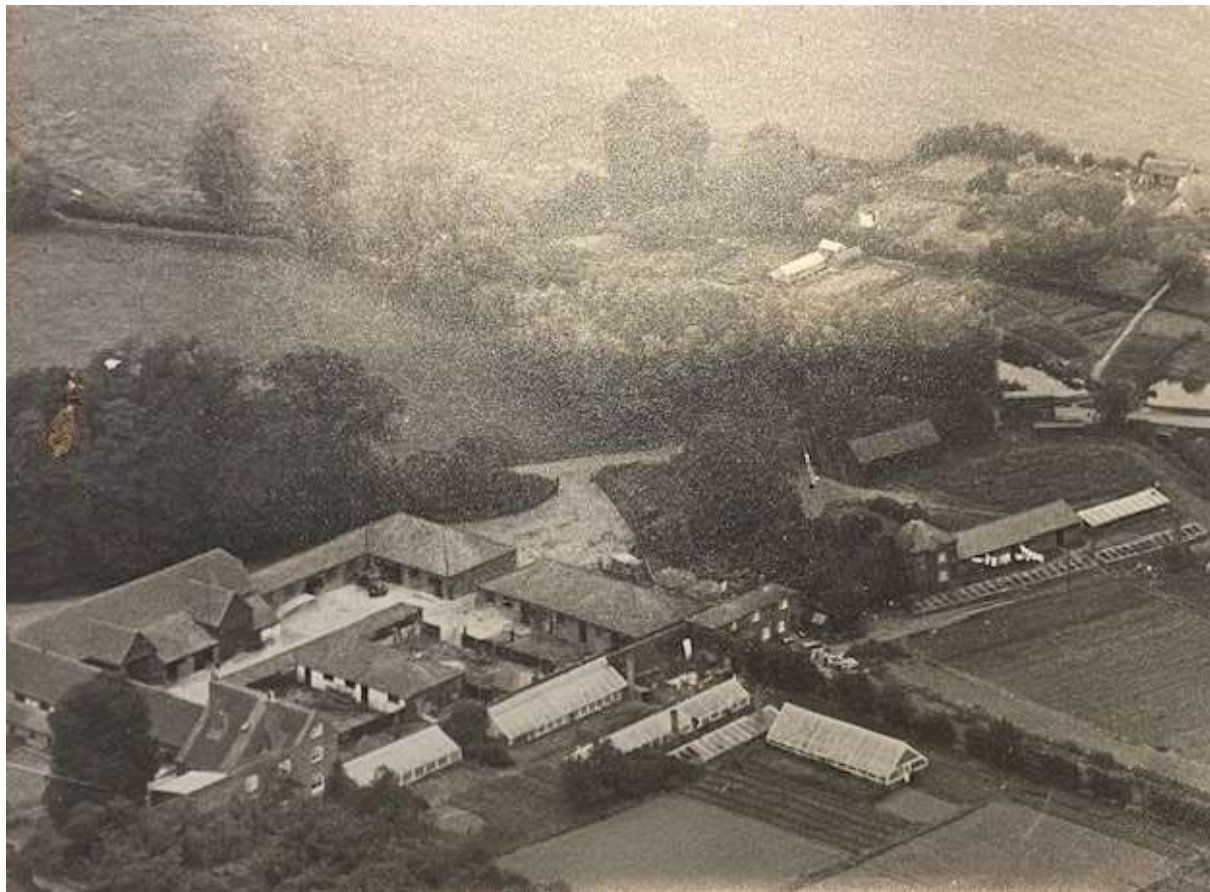


Fig.18 Aerial photograph of Hoo Farm date unknown.



Fig.19 Fig. Castellated roof similar on the Hoo Estate[Source:Family photograph]

FORTHCOMING DAIRY SHORTHORN SALES.

KIMPTON HOO FARM.

About 120 head of tuberculin tested, milk-recorded dairy Shorthorn cows are included in the dispersal sale of the live and dead stock of the Hoo Farm, Kimpton, which Messrs. Harry Hobson & Co., in conjunction with Messrs. Geo. Jackson & Son, of Hitchin, will conduct at the farms on Friday next week. Mr. C. H. Harding, who has recently taken over four of the farms on the Hoo Estate, and this well-known Kimpton herd, is disposing of the latter in its entirety, owing to the reorganisation of his farming operations.

The herd was founded by Viscount Hampden about six years ago by the purchase of a number of short-legged, deep bodied cows of correct Shorthorn type and character, and with good udders, from some of the best breeders in the district, and also from the noted Vale of Aylesbury. These animals have invariably milked well, and additions have been made from time to time with animals of similar type and quality.

Fig.20 1929 Sept Herts Express



Figs.21-22 Boundary walls and entrances to Kitchen Garden LHS Hoo Farm RHS Entrance from former mansion site.
[Source: Herts Gardens Trust]

3.2 Historic maps

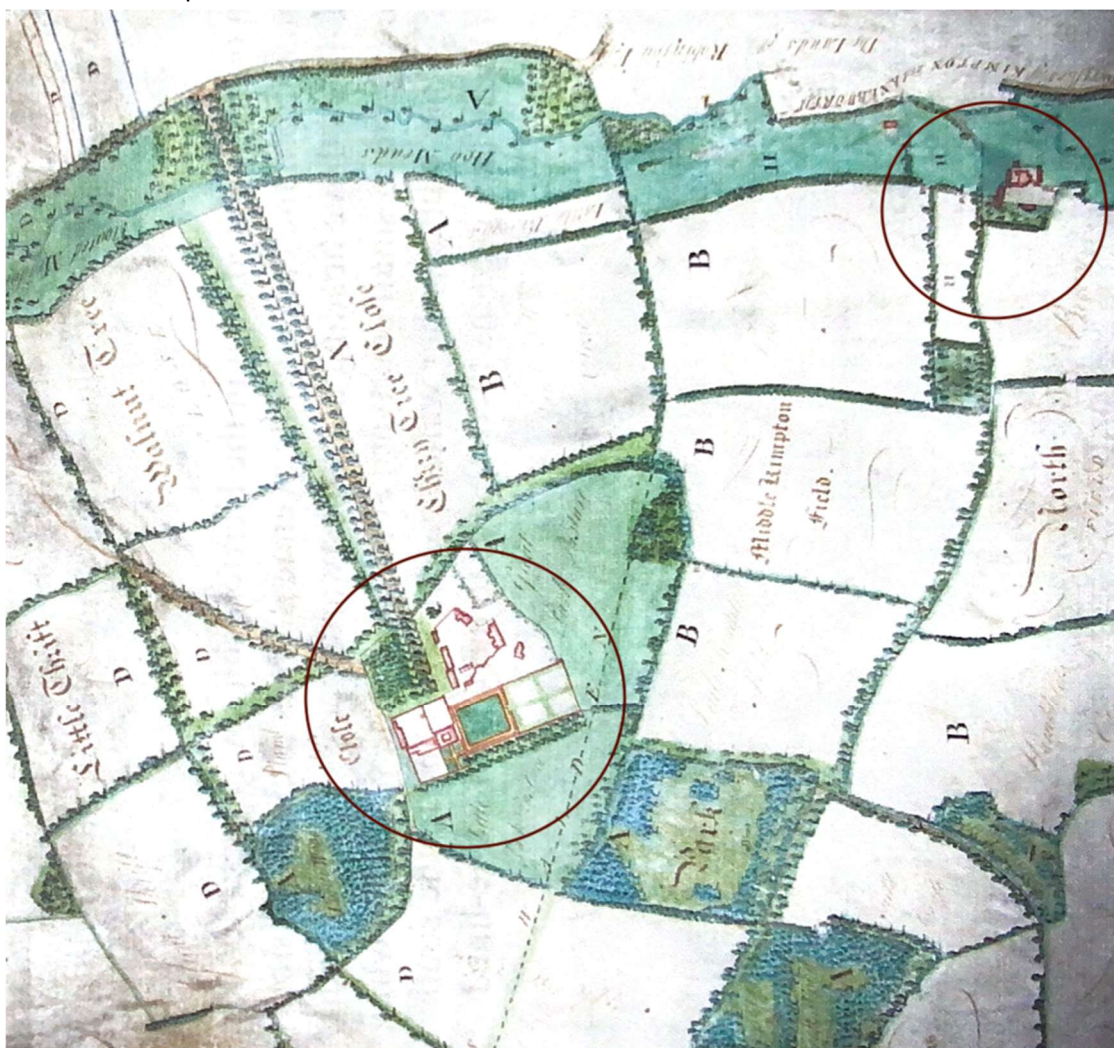


Fig.23 Early to mid-18th Century The Hoo Estate Map: The Hoo in the centre and Hoo Farmhouse NE

An early to mid-18th century estate map shows the layout of the estate before the creation of the landscape park 'Survey of the Manors of Legats, Parkbury ... situate in the Parishes of Kimpton and St. Paul's Walden' [HALS 40443] [Fig.23]. The farmhouse, north-east of the house is indicated with a rectangular planted area on the south, an open farmyard on the north and farm buildings on the north and west.

In the middle of the 18th century the estate was remodelled to create a landscape park which was first shown on the county map by Drury and Andrews, 1766 [Fig.24]. The map shows an extensive roughly square park with an area of ornamental shrubbery or woodland at its heart containing serpentine paths. The house occupied the south-east corner of the shrubbery/wood and was approached by a lane from the direction of Kimpton to the south-west. The course of the former drive is hinted at and other secondary drives and paths headed north-east and east from the northern corner of the shrubbery towards the farm. A building identified as 'The Lodge' stood between the bridge and the public road at the south east corner of the park. West of the northern end of the lake, at the north-east corner of the park, was a simple, square walled garden and adjacent was Hoo 'Farm House'.



Fig.24 Drury & Andrews' County Map 1766

Detail of the footprint of the buildings at Hoo Farm can be gained from a Tithe map (1841) [Fig.25]. The house and attached dairy have attained their current form with farm buildings arranged around a central yard. The large building on the north is a threshing barn. South of the house is a large rectangular enclosure with the western corner omitted that is described in the tithe record as a 'Garden Wilderness'.

Comparison between the Tithe Map and the 1897-98 Ordnance Survey Map [Fig.26] reveals key changes at Hoo Farm, showing its evolution from a compact farmstead with a few central buildings into a more structured and diversified operation. By the late 19th century, additional structures - glasshouses denoted by cross-hatching, and outbuildings suggest agricultural expansion and increased functionality tied to its primary purpose as the 'home farm' for The Hoo. Infrastructure improvements, including a more established road network and refined boundaries, indicate deliberate landscape shaping, linked to the Hoo Estate's parkland. Changes in land use reflect a shift from open agricultural fields to walled enclosures used for horticulture, and the developed infrastructure near water sources points to enhanced water management. Overall, these transformations reflect broader 19th-century trends in rural estate management and adaptation, and the Victorian ideal of a productive home farm to primarily meet the estate owners' domestic needs.

The glasshouses remain in place in one form or another well into the 20th century, increasing from four to five separate structures south of the house with a further one then three in an adjacent field south-west of the farmstead. The gradual increase points at greater diversification of products and possible commercial expansion of the kitchen garden. The smaller scale 1946 map shows an L-shaped structure in the walled garden that may have continued to be the glasshouses [Fig.30].



Fig.25 Tithe map 1841: plots 595 'Farm Homestead' & 594 'Garden Wilderness' [Source: <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>]

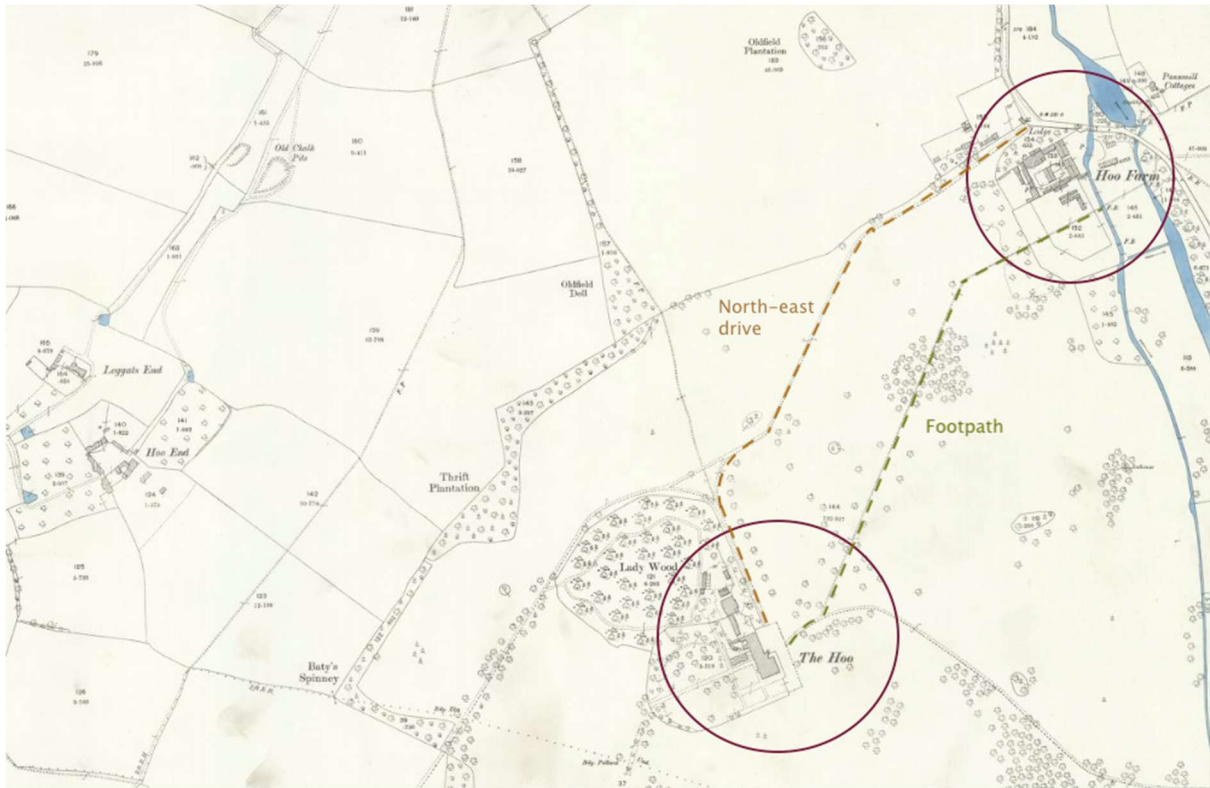


Fig.26 Hoo Farm in relation to The Hoo. Hertfordshire Sheet XX.9, Revised 1898 Published: 1897 Size: OS 25" Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland



Fig.27 Hertfordshire Sheet XX.9, Revised 1898 Published: 1897 Size: OS 25" Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland



Fig.28 District Valuer Annotated Map : Lloyd George' Domesday Survey 1910-14

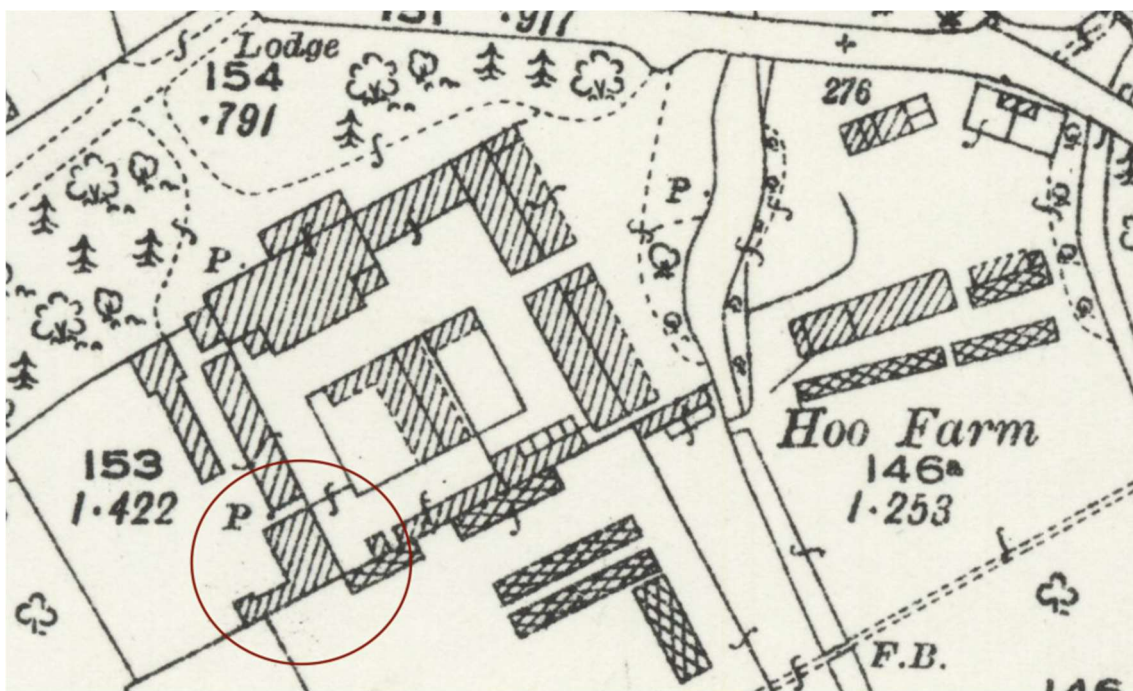


Fig.29 Hertfordshire Sheet XX.9, Revised 1922 Published: 1924 Size: OS 25" Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

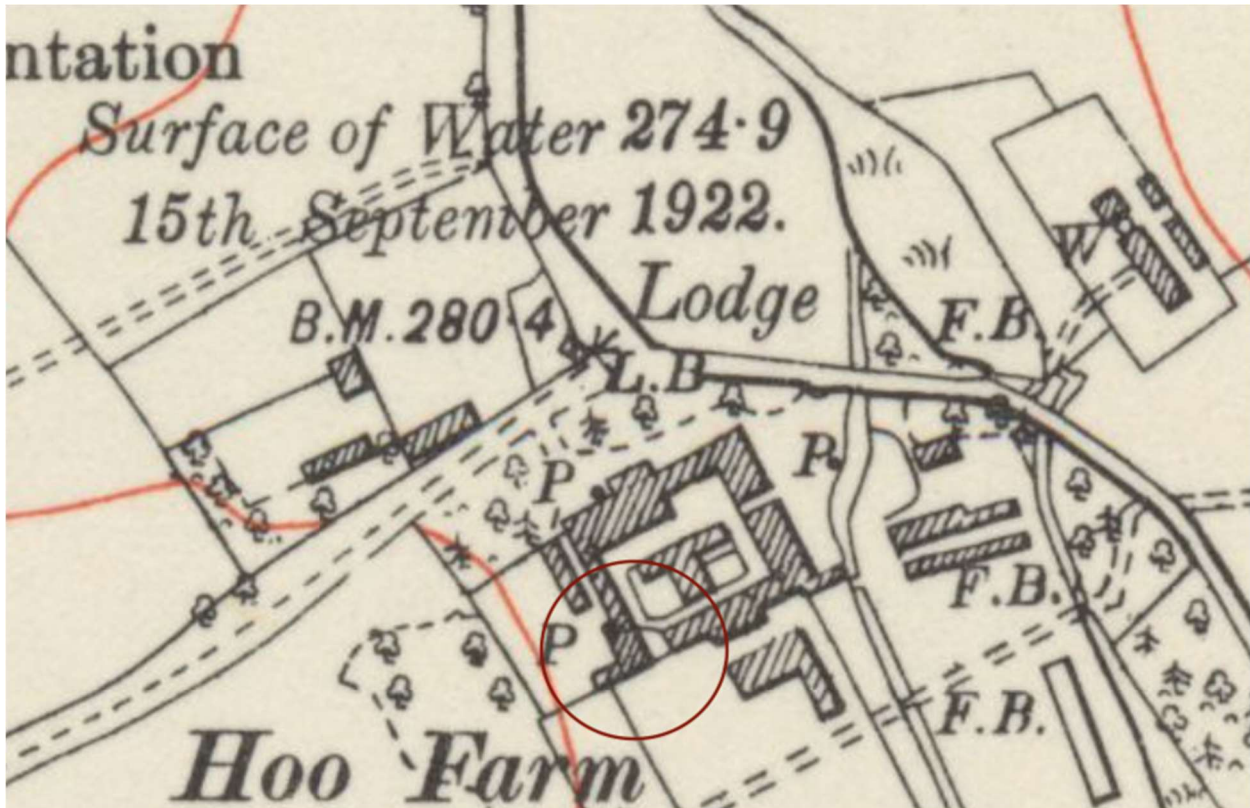


Fig.30 Hertfordshire XX.SW Revised 1946 Published: 1950 Size: 6" Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

3.3 Site Description



Fig.31 Principal elevation E facing Hoo Farmhouse



Fig.32 S facing with Gothic Revival feature windows



Figs.33 & 34 Yard elevation W with single storey section connecting to the former Dairy



Fig.35 Looking N towards farm outbuildings



Fig.36 N gable and catslide roof



Fig.37 Change of level sloping from E to W



Fig.38 Former dairy with arched window

Hoo Farmhouse is a substantial brick-built structure with a combination of Flemish and English bond brickwork. It has multiple phases of development, with parts of the building appearing to date from the late 17th or early 18th century. The house has a steeply pitched roof covered in clay tiles, with tall chimney stacks. The farmhouse brickwork is a good example of handmade, traditional Hertfordshire bricks,

displaying both intentional firing techniques and natural aging processes. The mix of red, blackened, and vitrified bricks in Flemish bond is characteristic of high-quality estate buildings and walled gardens, often associated with 18th and 19th-century agricultural and manor estates in the region. The surface shows signs of weathering and efflorescence and remnants of limewash or paint suggest past protective treatments.

The main entrance in use is on the west elevation facing into an open courtyard. Here the farmhouse is two storeys with an attic, featuring a symmetrical arrangement of sash and casement windows. Some windows have been replaced with modern uPVC units, although original features such as brick arch lintels and timber frames remain. The south elevation faces the Walled Kitchen Garden. This side is more irregular, with a taller gabled section likely representing an early core of the building. The connection between the farmhouse and walled kitchen garden is historically significant, suggesting a link between domestic and agricultural functions.



Fig.39 & 40 Gothic Revival influenced glazing on S elevation of farmhouse: timber frames and lead comes.



Fig.41 Arched window in the former dairy.



Fig.42 Roof structure exposed due to a leak in the SW corner



Fig.43 & 44 Metal-framed replacement windows in the former dairy.

The windows on the south walled garden elevation of the farmhouse are distinctive with an arched upper section, which consists of a pair of semi-circular arches with decorative intersecting glazing bars, forming a fan-like pattern. The glazing comprises small individual glass panes, held in place by lead cames. The lower sections of the windows consist of square and rectangular panes arranged in a grid pattern, contrasting with the elegant curves of the upper arches. This Gothic Revival inspired detail adds an element of architectural refinement to the otherwise simple brick façade. The windows are set within segmental brick arches.

The former dairy wing consists of a single-storey extension featuring a large arched window, likely part of an original series of at least three, designed to maximize natural light and create an airy internal space. Dating from the late 18th to early 19th century, the dairy has since been repurposed for domestic use.

The roof has undergone alterations, with a previous castellated parapet replaced by a mono-pitch slate roof. While the top segments of the arched window's glazing remain, the lower sections have been replaced, and the south and west elevations now feature modern metal-framed rectangular windows, which detract from the historic character of the structure. The original glazing and castellated parapet suggest an early Gothic Revival influence, characteristic of the late 18th century.

Internally the plan form has been adapted around a symmetrical footprint accommodating changes in floor levels reflecting the sloping nature of the site from west to east. The principal east facing main elevation is rarely used and the main focus of the house is on the west where the current kitchen and former dairy is located. There is a central staircase in the main range and a very steep winder stair leading off a sitting room formed in the single storey link extension between the house and dairy. Despite its unusual configuration the basic plan form of the house and dairy is unchanged since the 19th century as shown on tithe and OS maps.

3.4 Setting



Fig.45 & 46 Central axis LHS looking S towards walled garden and farmhouse RHS N following the line of barns and sheds



Fig.47 & 48 The walled garden S of the farmhouse



Fig.49 & 50 Boundary walls of varying heights and phases of construction.



Fig.51 Brick buttresses and diaper brickwork



Fig.52 Timber stables in place of glasshouses looking E

The setting of a heritage asset is defined as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’ (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary). The farmhouse is approached from a lane from the north running alongside several of the low brick barn ranges. Farm buildings, north and east of the farmhouse are arranged in a traditional courtyard layout, with barns and outbuildings forming a defined working yard. Barns and Stables are constructed of red brick, some with black timber weatherboarding on upper sections. These appear to be 18th or early 19th century, originally serving as stables and storage. There are several large 20th-century barns, with steel and timber frames infilling the central area of the yard used for livestock and equipment storage.

The walled kitchen garden, located to the south, is a substantial and historically significant feature, enclosed by high brick walls that retain remnants of original gateways and glasshouse structures. The walls are constructed in Flemish bond, incorporating angled brick buttresses in a contrasting brick, likely added at a later date but exhibiting a clear design intent. Several doorways are set into the walls, framed with either stone or brick headers. The height of the walls varies, with some sections capped with stone or mortar, while others are partially overgrown with ivy.

4.0 Significance

4.1 Heritage values

This section assesses the significance of the heritage asset(s) under the values set out in Historic England’s Advice Note No 12: *Statements of Heritage Significance*, 2019 and addresses the requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) 2024. The determination of significance is a key guiding factor, and all decisions should flow from an understanding of the significance and values attached to the site and are based on statutory designation and professional judgment against four broad values: archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historical (illustrative, associative, communal).

Amongst the many values that a site may embody the following aspects have been considered in this assessment: architectural and historic interest, group value, former uses of the site, local distinctiveness, and changes to the setting. While not every heritage asset shares the same set of values, these aspects are

broadly recognised as encompassing what makes an asset important in a planning and building conservation context. They help to define the cultural significance and importance of a site, or aspects of it, as advised in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (Historic England, 2015).

4.2 Assessment of significance

The assessment of significance identifies key aspects that contribute to the site's heritage value, highlighting specific areas that may be affected by alterations to the building or its setting.

Hoo Farmhouse's heritage significance is principally derived from its historical development, associative and illustrative value, architectural merit, and evidential contribution to understanding estate farming and rural life in Hertfordshire.

Hoo Farm has moderate archaeological potential due to its long period of occupation, its role as part of the historic Hoo Estate, and its association with estate farming and food production. Key factors influencing its potential include the farmstead's continuous use from at least the late 17th century, which suggests the strong likelihood of buried structural remains, former pathways, and evidence of earlier farm buildings or demolished structures from the post-medieval period. The potential for medieval or earlier activity is uncertain but possible, given the wider estate's history and its links to manorial landholding.

Historical Significance

Hoo Farmhouse is an integral part of the historic Hoo estate, which dates back to at least the late 17th century. The estate was originally owned by the Hoo family before passing to the Keates and later to the Brand family, who significantly shaped its development. The farmhouse formed part of the estate's home farm, serving as the residence of the farm bailiff and a hub for agricultural operations.

The farmhouse's role within the estate is closely linked to the broader evolution of The Hoo, which underwent substantial landscape changes in the 18th century under the influence of Capability Brown. As part of these changes, the Kitchen Garden played a crucial role in providing produce for the main house, potentially linked to its function as a working farmstead. The transition of the estate into university ownership in 1938 and the continued farming operations under the Harding family further solidify the site's historical continuity.

Associative and Illustrative Value

Hoo Farm was historically associated with the Hoo Estate, which was developed by the Brand family and influenced by the landscape designer Capability Brown. The farmhouse has strong associative value through its connection with notable landowners, including the Brand family, Viscounts Hampden, and later Lord Nuffield, whose donation facilitated Oxford University's acquisition of the estate. Documentary evidence, including census records and estate maps, demonstrates its role as a home farm, occupied by farm bailiffs and agricultural workers managing the estate's farmland. Its proximity to the 18th-century walled kitchen garden suggests a direct functional and logistical connection between estate food production and consumption.

Architectural Value

The farmhouse retains high-quality historic features, including locally fired red and vitrified brickwork laid in Flemish bond, gauged brick arches, and decorative dentil brickwork. A distinctive feature is its south-facing elevation, with elegantly proportioned Gothic Revival-influenced windows featuring arched glazing bars and delicate tracery.

Other architectural elements, such as the attached dairy and the arrangement of surrounding outbuildings, demonstrate the farmhouse's functional evolution. The dairy has undergone modifications, including a change in roof profile, but remains a key component of the farmstead.

Evidential Value

The physical relationship between the farmhouse and the walled kitchen garden suggests a direct link to estate food production. Surviving structural elements, including original doorways, remnants of glasshouse foundations, and access routes, provide valuable evidence of historical land use and agricultural practices. Situated within Hoo Park, a registered historic park and garden, the farmstead retains its rural character and contributes to the estate's broader historical landscape.

4.3 Proposals:

The proposed works for Hoo Farmhouse are focused on both conservation repairs and necessary modernisation while preserving its historical character. It is intended that the former dairy will become a family kitchen. The following is a summary of the proposals, detailed descriptions of the methodology and materials used will be found in accompanying plans and documents.

The proposals include restoration of existing brickwork, particularly in the proposed kitchen area (former dairy) and strengthening and modifications to ensure structural stability and attachment to the outer walls. This part of the farmhouse has two abutting walls with the Kitchen Garden wall with tapering gaps at their junction which require addressing as part of this scope. In various locations, crack repairs will be undertaken using Helifix bars, recessed horizontally into joints and secured with proprietary structural repair resin.

The 2016 roof works have failed in part and a new covering is proposed of artificial interlocking slates, a lighter weight material that will not put undue stress on the outer walls. The new roof form will include a verge, rear parapet, and eaves for the kitchen extension.

Like for like timber repairs will be carried out to the existing windows and doors to replace defective fabric and to draughtproof them to improve their thermal efficiency. At the same time all the windows, doors and decorative bargeboards will be decorated. External basement hatch doors will be replaced to match the current door and frame arrangement with an additional two courses of brickwork to form a raised threshold using engineering bricks to prevent water penetrating the basement.

Externally the listed walls that surround the garden (former kitchen garden) have structural issues and it is proposed that the height is raised by one brick course to improve weather resistance. There is a programme

of repointing and masonry works proposed using traditional lime mortar to maintain the historic fabric of the building.

Impact assessment:

Hoo Farmhouse and its associated gardens, both Grade II listed, hold significant historical, architectural, and evidential value. The proposed works, which aim to balance conservation with necessary modernisation, must be assessed in terms of their impact on the historic character and integrity of the site.

One of the key interventions is the adaptive reuse of the former dairy into a family kitchen. This approach ensures the continued use of the historic structure, preventing deterioration due to neglect. Structural modifications are necessary to stabilise the junction where the farmhouse meets the walled garden, and these will be carried out in a manner that minimises visual and material intrusion while preserving as much of the original fabric as possible.

Addressing structural weaknesses, particularly where the farmhouse abuts the Kitchen Garden wall, is essential for the long-term preservation of the building. The use of Helifix bars and proprietary structural repair resin, both recognised conservation techniques, will stabilise the masonry with minimal intervention. The historic masonry patterns and bonds will be retained, and crack stitching will be undertaken using materials that match the original fabric in colour, texture, and composition.

The roof of the kitchen extension, which underwent repairs in 2016, has partially failed, necessitating further intervention. The proposed lightweight artificial slate roof provides a practical alternative that will reduce stress on the outer walls. Additionally, the inclusion of a verge, rear parapet, and eaves respects an earlier form of the building while addressing structural deficiencies. There is reasonable evidence to suggest that this section of the building has been significantly altered in the past. If implemented sensitively, the replacement roof will enhance the structure's longevity without compromising its historic character. Adjustments to the roofline will not obscure or detract from historic elevations or architectural detailing.

Timber repairs to existing windows, doors, and decorative bargeboards will be carried out on a like-for-like basis, ensuring the retention of original materials wherever possible. These interventions will address decay and improve energy efficiency without compromising the building's historic character. The repairs will be executed in a piecemeal manner to avoid unnecessary replacement, and the external decoration of doors, windows, and bargeboards will provide long-term protection.

The replacement of the external basement hatch doors will be carried out to match the existing arrangements, ensuring visual continuity. The threshold will be raised by two brick courses using engineering bricks to mitigate water ingress, thereby protecting the basement while maintaining the building's appearance.

The conservation of the walled kitchen garden is another significant aspect of the proposed works. This historic feature, enclosed by high brick walls with remnants of original gateways and glasshouse structures, will undergo careful restoration. The addition of one brick course to improve weather resistance represents a minor alteration that will have little impact on the historic character of the structure. All brickwork will be executed using handmade bricks and traditional construction techniques, while repointing will be carried out with lime mortar to replicate the original colour, texture, and joint profiles.

Overall, the proposed works will have a positive heritage impact by ensuring the preservation and continued use of Hoo Farmhouse and its associated structures. These interventions respect the historic character of the site while facilitating its adaptation for modern family living. The project aligns with national and local heritage policies, including Sections 16(2), 66(1), and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The works will enhance the historical significance and architectural integrity of the listed buildings rather than diminish them, thereby contributing to the long-term conservation of the historic landscape of The Hoo estate.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix A Bibliography

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Herefordshire Gardens Trust: The Hoo [2014]

The Hoo, English Heritage [2000]

Appendix B Heritage Assets List Descriptions

	DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN 100M	
1	HOO FARMHOUSE AND WALLS OF ATTACHED WALLED GARDENS TO SOUTH	Grade II
2	HeOO PARK & GARDEN Heritage Category: Park and Garden List Entry Number: 1000912 Date first listed: 11-Jun-1987	Grade II

	Details An C18 landscape park, formerly surrounding a C17/C18 country house (demolished 1958), with work by Lancelot Brown c 1760-2. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT The manor of Hoo was held by the Hoo family from the C13. Thomas Hoo died in 1650, the manor passing to his daughter Susannah and her husband Sir Jonathan Keate, an alderman of London who became Sheriff of Hertfordshire. The Hoo manor house was rebuilt during the mid C17. Sir Henry Hoo Keate sold the manor in 1732 to Margaret Brand, who was succeeded by her son, Thomas, who employed the landscaper Lancelot Brown (1716-83) and the architect Sir William Chambers (1723-96) to embellish the landscape during the 1760s. An undated estate map of the early to mid C18 (HRO) shows a formal approach and garden enclosures, with a small park, surrounding the house prior to Brown's alterations. Upon Thomas Brand's death in 1770 the estate passed through the family, descending with the title of Lord Dacre, the twenty-third Lord Dacre being elevated to Viscount Hampden in 1884. The third Viscount Hampden sold the estate in 1938, it being subsequently in divided ownership. The house was demolished in 1958, a group of several new houses being erected on the site during the 1990s. DESCRIPTION LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Hoo estate overlies low rolling hills at the northern end of the Chiltern range between Luton and Stevenage, lying 1.5km north-east of the village of Kimpton and 2km south of the village of St Paul's Walden. The c 120ha estate is bounded to the east by the lane connecting Whitwell with Codicote, the boundary being marked by occasional short lengths of a brick and flint former boundary wall lying adjacent to the road, and on the other sides by open agricultural land. The site of the former house occupies a plateau towards the centre of the estate, overlooking much of the surrounding park which drops away to the east and north. From the valley which the eastern boundary occupies, the land rises eastwards up a hillside which draws views from the eastern half of the park and the site of the house. The setting is rural, with views from the house site to the south, east and to the north, particularly towards St Paul's Walden Bury (qv) some c 2km away.	
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ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main approach, via the south-east drive, enters the site 750m east of the site of the former house, off the Whitwell to Codicote lane, the entrance formerly marked by a lodge (OS; gone 1999). The drive curves south-west upon a raised bank or causeway which appears to have formed the dam between the northern and southern sections of the former lake, the site of which extends north along the valley from the drive, running parallel with the east boundary. Some 600m south-east of the site of the house, the drive is carried across the southern outlet of the diverted arm of the River Mimram, at the outlet of the former lake, by a single, round-arched bridge (Sir William Chambers c 1764, scheduled ancient monument, listed grade II). Built of brick, the bridge is clad in Portland stone but has lost its balustrade. From the hump-backed top of the bridge views extend north and south, up and down the Mimram valley. From here the drive ascends north-west through the park, with views extending south and north-east to the surrounding countryside. The drive arrives at the gated entrance to a gravel courtyard, having formerly opened out into a courtyard on the main, east front of the former house. The gateway now (1999) gives access to a gravel court on which stands the stable block/coach house, to the north of the site of the former house, flanked to north and south by several 1990s houses.

The north-east drive enters 800m north-east of the site of the former house, off the Whitwell to Codicote lane, the entrance marked by Hoo Farm Lodge (C18, listed grade II). This two-storey cottage, of white-painted brick and stucco, has a prominent, large, round-arched recess on the wall overlooking the drive, facing Hoo Farm to the south. From here the drive curves south-west, ascending to the plateau on which stands the site of the former house. The drive turns south c 300m north of the site of the former house, continuing along the east side of Round Wood before opening out into the gravel courtyard which lies on the east side of the group of recent houses flanking the old stable block/coach house.

The west drive gives direct access from Kimpton, passing the single-storey, brick and flint Hoo Lodge situated 1.5km south-west of the site of the former house, set back off the B651 Kimpton to Whitwell lane. The drive extends north-east across open agricultural land (outside the registered area), ascending the hillside to the C20, single-storey, rendered Hoo Park Cottage, dated 1902. From here the drive (from this point on within the registered area) continues north-east through parkland, flanked by an informal avenue of mixed species and ages, the oldest specimens being large sweet chestnuts

	and younger specimens being of oak and lime. The avenue finishes at the west corner of Round Wood, with the west drive skirting the north side of the Wood before joining the north-east drive at the north-east corner, 200m north of the site of the former house. Prior to Brown's work of the 1760s, the main drive approached straight off the lane to the east, aligned on the east front of the house from which it was separated by an enclosed forecourt, and flanked by an avenue of trees (estate map, early-mid C18). PRINCIPAL BUILDING The manor house (demolished 1958) lay in the western half of the park. Rebuilt c 1661 by Sir Jonathan Keate, it was remodelled by Sir William Chambers for Thomas Brand in the 1760s. By the late C19 (OS 1884) its main entrance on the east front was elevated on a balustraded terrace overlooking the gravel forecourt. The south and west fronts overlooked the gardens, and a service wing extended from the north front towards the stables/coach house. The site of the house is now (1999) partially covered by two 1990s houses and their gardens. The two-storey brick stable block/coach house (C18, possibly by Sir William Chambers, listed grade II), which stands to the north of the site of the former service wing of the house, has been converted for domestic use. The central block, flanked by single-storey aisles, is entered from the forecourt to the east via three large, arched doorways for coaches. GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The remains of the garden and pleasure grounds attached to the former house lie adjacent to the west of the stables and recent dwellings, the area being divided into gardens attached to the dwellings. The informal area is largely laid to lawn, with several large, mature trees, including sweet chestnuts and cedars, lying towards the western boundary. No visible trace of earlier garden features appears to survive. Long views extend south from the south side of the plateau on which the garden lies, towards a range of distant hills. To the north of the garden lies Round Wood (formerly known as Lady Wood, OS C19), an area of former pleasure grounds recently (late C20) replanted with conifers and underplanted with evergreen shrubs including laurel. Prior to Brown's work of the 1760s, two formal garden compartments extended from the south front of the house, including a bowling green. One small formal garden compartment lay adjacent to the west front (estate map,	
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early-mid C18). In the late C19 and early C20 (OS) the garden surrounded the former house to the south and west, with a formal system of paths enclosing panels of lawn close to the house, leading to less formal areas towards the north and west edges of the garden. At this time Lady Wood, an area of mixed woodland, contained a network of paths which have since disappeared.

PARK The park surrounds the garden and site of the former house and is laid largely to pasture with some arable, areas of woodland being mainly sited around the perimeter. From the site of the house the park, containing clumps of trees and scattered singles, slopes east down towards the eastern boundary. Some 500m north-east of the site of the house lies the brick-built icehouse (C18, listed grade II), sunk into a promontory overlooking the valley to the east, with its dome exposed and having lost its approach tunnel on the east side. East of this promontory the ground slopes more steeply down to the valley, reaching first the western arm of the River Mimram, and beyond this the site of the former lake, formed by Lancelot Brown c 1760-2 by diverting the river into an eastern course. The site of the lake was partly filled in during the C20 and trees planted over much of the area. The two water courses join south of Chambers' bridge at the southern end of the former lake, continuing southwards through an area of seemingly short-lived former parkland (OS 1884). A path formerly led north-east across the parkland from close to the west end of the south-east drive, giving direct access from the house to the west side of the walled garden at the north-east corner of the park.

West of the pleasure grounds, adjacent to the informal avenue flanking the west drive, lies a cricket pitch and pavilion. To the south of this lie the woodland areas of Longcroft Spring, Christmashill Wood and Hoopark Wood.

North of the north-east drive lies an area of the park which covers a steep-sided valley; this contains Oldfield Plantation and, to the west of this, a large, mature cedar of Lebanon. Views extend from the park in many directions.

Before Brown's work of the 1760s, the much smaller park lay adjacent to the gardens, to the west and south of the house, with Round Wood adjacent to the north-west (estate map, early-mid C18).

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled kitchen garden, largely laid to lawn, lies towards the north-east corner of the site and consists of an inner brick-walled compartment bounded to the west and south by a further, outer

	compartment, itself walled to the south and west (the walls being C17 and listed grade II). The outer compartment is entered from the park via a stone doorcase set at the centre of the south-west wall, with a further opening aligned with this doorway set into the dividing wall between the two compartments. Formerly (OS C19) a path crossed the park from c 75m north-east of the former house, leading north-east from the south-east drive to the stone doorway in the outer brick wall. The north-west boundary of the area is largely formed by farm buildings including the brick Hoo Farmhouse (C17 and later, listed grade II). REFERENCES Chauncy, Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire (1700), p 510 C Campbell, Vitruvius Britannicus IV, (1725), pl 18 Royal Institute of British Architects, Catalogue vol B, (1972), p 113 D Stroud, Capability Brown (1975), pp 229-30, pl 34a B Cherry and N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire (1977), pp 330-1 Country Life, 165 (19 April 1979), p 1178 Maps Survey of the Manors of Legats, Parkbury, ... situate in the Parishes of Kimpton and St Paul's Walden, early-mid C18 (40443), (Hertfordshire Record Office) Dury and Andrews, A topographical Map of Hartford-shire, 1766 OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1884 2nd edition published 1899 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1898 Description written: February 1999 Amended: October 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: November 2000	
3	HOO FARM LODGE Heritage Category: Listed Building List Entry Number: 1102436 Date first listed: 08-Feb-1988 Gatelodge to The Hoo, now demolished. C18. Painted brick with steep old red tile hipped roof. Moulded stucco dentilled eaves cornice. A 2-storeys rectangular lodge with central chimney and small lean-to porch on N end. Main front to drive on S end has central door flanked by small narrow windows below a large round arched recess above a projecting plat band which continues all round building. Segmental-headed sash window in head of arched recess. E and W sides of building have a tall arched recess to the S	Grade II

	half with the plat-band at impost level. 3/6 panes sash window in head. Recessed sash windows under segmental arches below, and on each floor in N half. Continuous chamfered plinth. Victorian wall letter-box in front wall.	
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