

Research for our site: Old Warden Park



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Old Warden Park timeline:

C.1100	Lands owned by nearby Warden (Wardon) Abbey – famous Warden Pear
1537	Abbey dissolved by Henry VIII and sold for £389 16s 6d
Late C17	Estate bought by Ongley Family
Early C18	Queen Anne's Summerhouse built
1785	Robert Ongley inherits the estate and begins to lay out park
1800-5	Road by house is diverted further north
1814	Robert 3 rd Lord Ongley inherits estate
1820s/30s	Swiss Garden created
1872	Estate sold to Joseph Shuttleworth
1875-8	Main house rebuilt by Henry Clutton
1928	Shuttleworth Collection formed by Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth
1932	First plane lands on airstrip
1939-45	Estate transferred to Shuttleworth Trust
1944	Shuttleworth College founded
1976	Swiss Garden leased and administered by Beds C.C.
Late C20	Reservoir built



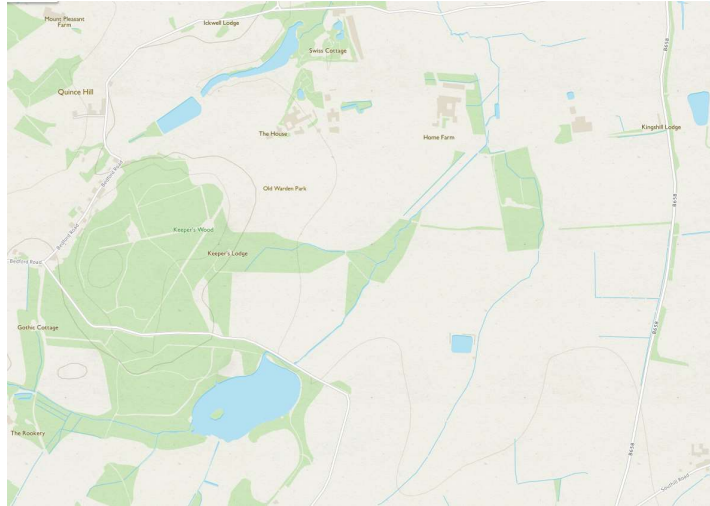
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- Basic timeline from internet searches



Google Earth – aerial photograph of Old Warden Park



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Photographs and images that were also shown are listed below.

Gordon's Map, 1736, photograph of a copy held at BARS

Thomas Jefferys, Map 1765, photograph of a copy held at BARS

Bryant's Map, 1825/26, photograph of a copy held at BARS

Sales Particulars Map, 1872, photograph of a copy held at BARS



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In accordance with BARS regulations, I have not reproduced here the photos we looked at in our workshops, but the items can be easily produced on a visit to the archives for you to make your own copies or take photographs.



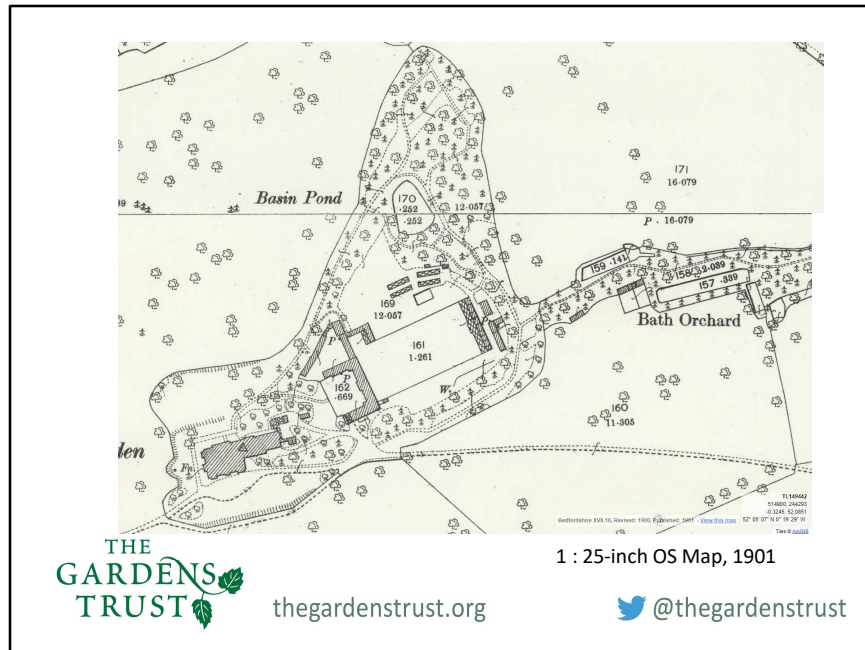
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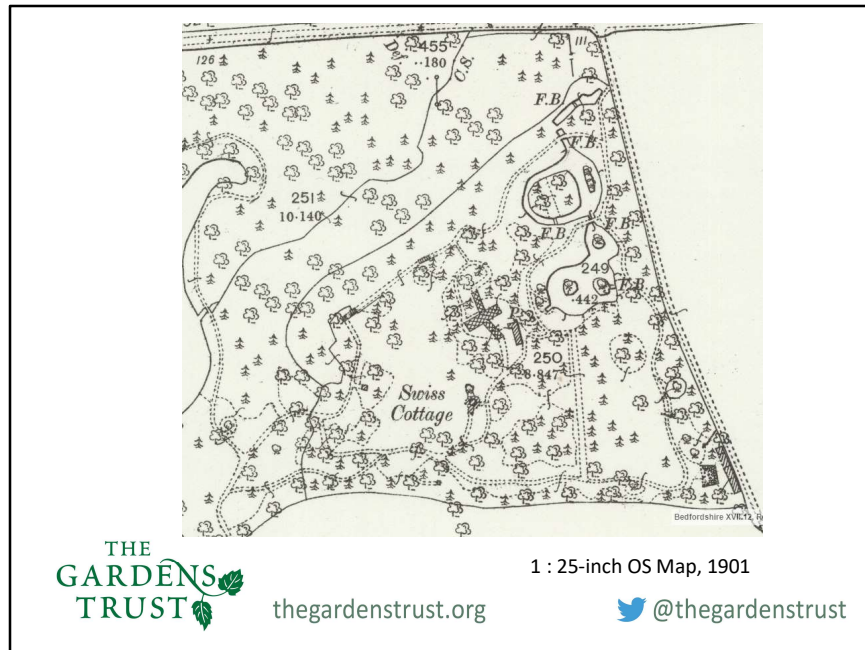
1 : 25-inch OS Map, 1901

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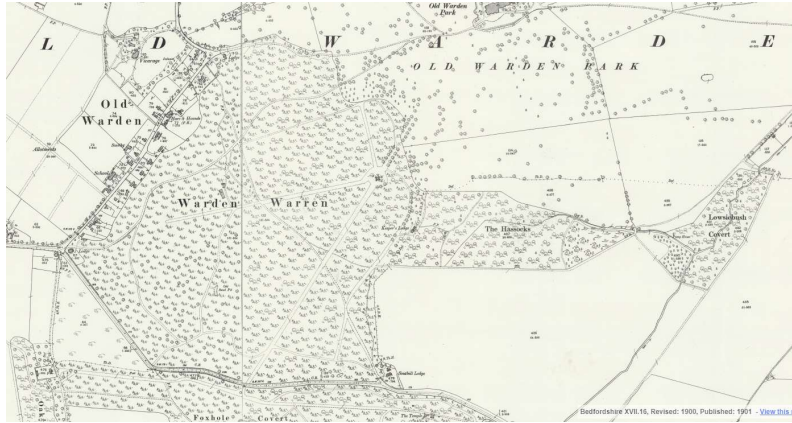
National Library for Scotland, online OS maps



National Library for Scotland, online OS maps
Detail of gardens around the house at Old Warden



National Library for Scotland, online OS maps
Detail of Swiss Gardens



1 : 25-inch OS Map, 1901



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OLD WARDEN PARK (INCLUDING THE SWISS GARDEN)
Overview
Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1000474
Date first listed: 30-Nov-1986

District: Central Bedfordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish: Northill
District: Central Bedfordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish: Old Warden
District: Central Bedfordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish: Southill
National Grid Reference: TL 14483 44179

A mid to late C19 country house surrounded by an early C19 landscape park, with picturesque Swiss Garden c 1820s-30s.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT
The Ongley family bought the Old Warden estate in the late C17. Robert, second Lord Ongley, inherited the estate in 1785 and seems to have been responsible for initially laying out the park c 1800-5 (Quarter Sessions Map 1802; OS Drawing 1804-5), during which time the road which ran close to the house was diverted away to the north, creating the current road from Old Warden to Biggleswade on the north boundary. In 1814 Robert, third Lord Ongley (1803-77) inherited the estate, creating the Swiss Garden during the 1820s and 1830s. He is thought to have been inspired by J B Papworth's Hints on Ornamental Gardening (1823), and P F Robinson's Village Architecture (1830), Robinson being employed to construct the Swiss Chalet c 1825. The garden was much commented upon during the rest of the century (Batey and Lambert 1990).

In 1872 Lord Ongley sold the estate to Joseph Shuttleworth (1819-83) who added features to the Swiss Garden and wider estate, employing Henry Clutton to rebuild the main house 1875-8. The estate was transferred to the Shuttleworth Trust during World War II and since 1976 the Swiss Garden has been leased and administered by Bedfordshire County Council, being extensively restored since 1977. The house is now in commercial use.

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Page 4 looks at Management

First of all it considers: MANAGEMENT – PLAN (a Conservation Management Plan or others plans known or apparent)

- You have to judge the management as: Active, Benign, Detrimental
- This sliding scale takes you from:
 - Is a Conservation Management Plan in place and being implemented?, to...
 - Is there a plan in place but little or no evidence of implementation?, to...
 - A management plan is not present, but some policies/framework are informing management, to...
 - No plan and/or divergent management policies

Then it considers: MANAGEMENT – ACTION/MAINTENANCE

- This sliding scale takes you from:
 - Apparent and positive across the whole site, to...
 - Positive management of key features, to...
 - All site maintained, to...
 - Inappropriate management of key features, to...
 - Whole site management impacting on significance, to...

Then page 4 turns to Trend.

- You need to consider a sliding scale from Improving to Stable to Unknown to Declining

The form finishes with scope to make notes, and your overall conclusion as to whether the site is

- AT RISK or
- VULNERABLE or
- LOW/NOT AT RISK

Ultimately, it is HE that will make the decision about whether or not a site is 'At Risk'. And added to the HAR Register. As such, your Condition Assessments will be verified – first by the GCLP's appointed consultants and secondly by HE's landscape architect. Your observations and assessments will be invaluable in helping to record the current surviving condition of the designed landscapes and constituent features at GCLP's Priority Parklands and highlight those that would benefit from more detailed assessment by HE.

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Old Warden Park lies 10km south-east of Bedford, on the east edge of the village of Old Warden. The c 172ha park is bounded to the north and west by the Old Warden to Biggleswade road, to the south by the lane from Southill to Old Warden, and to the east by agricultural land. The estate lies on the Greensand Ridge, the house sited on largely level land, with a valley containing the water features to the north-west, and on higher ground to the south-west Warden Warren woodland. The setting includes the picturesque village of Old Warden, the buildings rebuilt in the early C19 as a village orné, set amongst trees, with the cottages in varying styles set at different angles and heights, perched on grassy banks. Adjacent to the north lies Ickwell Bury (qv) park, and to the south, Southill Park (qv). Old Warden Airfield is sited on adjacent land to the east, housing the Shuttleworth Collection of old aeroplanes.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The entrances and drive system seem to be partly based on public roads which were closed c 1802 (Quarter Sessions Map 1802) during enclosure of the parish. The main entrance, set back off the north end of the main village street, lies alongside Old Warden Lodge 700m south-west of the house.

The two-storey, Tudor-style stone lodge (Henry Clutton 1874, listed grade II) stands in open lawn south of the drive, which is flanked by wooden gates and two sets of square stone piers (Henry Clutton 1874, listed grade II). From here the west drive curves east along the north edge of Warden Warren, overlooking the park to the north, and entering it 400m west of the house. The drive curves north-east, passing through the park fence some 50m south-west of the house, before crossing a sunken fence to arrive at the carriage sweep on the south front. The carriage sweep, set within a level lawn parallel with the south front, overlooks a spur from the west drive which continues east as a sunken carriageway with a fence on the north side. Thus the view into the park from the south front is unbroken. The drive continues east from the south front, to provide access to the nearby stable yard. The east drive also arrives at this point, having crossed the park from the east, giving access from farm land and the Biggleswade road.

The north drive is marked by the Ickwell Lodge (Henry Clutton 1874, listed grade II), lying 600m north of the house, giving access from Ickwell and Biggleswade. The lodge, again in Tudor style, lies on the west side of the entrance which is flanked by two stone piers (identical in style to the secondary ones by Old Warden Lodge) and attached stone screen (Henry Clutton 1874, listed grade II). The north drive curves south across the park, through the remains of a copper beech avenue, overlooking the lakes and top storey of the house (partially obscured by the hillside rising beyond the lakes) in the distance. Having crossed a brick bridge across the west end of the lakes, the drive continues south to join the west drive 100m south-west of the house.



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The remains of a south-west drive exist in Warden Warren, entered from the south end of the village street opposite the Southill estate's Warden Lodge, past Warren Lodge (early C19, listed grade II), a single-storey thatched and colour-washed cottage ornée. The drive from here serpentine north-east through Warren Wood, emerging into the park 400m south-west of the house, to join the west drive 250m from the house. Southill Lodge, also an early C19 thatched and colour-washed cottage ornée, lies on the south boundary of Warden Warren, at the south end of a further ride or drive north through the wood, which possibly took in Queen Anne's Tower which stands on the east side of the wood.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The house is edged to the west and north by a gravel path and beyond this terraced lawns bounded by the continuation of the sunk fence which bounds the south entrance court. A path runs north-east from the north front, past a thatched pavilion with rectangular canal and associated garden (possibly early C20), entering a band of pleasure grounds north of the stables and old kitchen garden which lead north to the Swiss Garden at the north-east corner of the park. The pleasure grounds, probably laid out in the 1820s, contain the C18 Basin Pond at the centre (lying 250m north-east of the house), past which the main path leads to the Swiss Garden. The path continues north through open glades and evergreen shrubs, including yews and mature trees, to reach the bridge and underpass (c 1820s, listed grade II).

The bridge is of brick faced with rough concrete to imitate rusticated stonework, with a terracotta parapet decorated with trefoil arcading; surrounded by mature yew trees, it is used as access between fields. The path emerges from the gloomy underpass to continue north and east, arriving at the delicate wrought-iron gate screen (1820s, listed grade II) consisting of a series of archways with double gates, flanked by mature trees, which is the main entrance on the west side of the Swiss Garden. A spur north from this path, shown on the 1883 OS map, runs past a late C19 brick boathouse, around the northern tip of the upper, east lake and along the north bank, arriving at Lakeside Cottage (listed grade II). This, an C18 building with C19 alterations, is timber-framed with colour-washed rendered walls and pointed-arched windows. South-east of the pleasure grounds, and now somewhat cut off from them by late C20 building, lies Bath Orchard, 400m east of the house. This elongated area of three rectangular ponds surrounded by trees, with a path from west to east, is shown c 1800 linked by a path within the pleasure grounds to the house and Basin Pond (Enclosure Map 1800; Quarter Sessions Map 1802).



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The Swiss Garden lies on gently undulating terrain, crossed by meandering paths, with many small, separate vistas achieved through screens of shrubs and mature trees around lawns and grassy spaces. Two linked ponds of irregular shape, with islands, are situated in the north-eastern part of the garden: Middle Pond to the north and Upper Pond to the south, with a smaller linked pool further north. The Swiss Cottage (P F Robinson 1825, listed grade II*) lies 100m east of the entrance, towards the centre of the garden, an ornate two-storey octagonal building with a thatched roof, set on a 'curved mound or knoll', as Papworth recommended for some buildings in 'picturesque' settings. The thatched tree shelter lies 50m south-west of the Swiss Cottage, a large oak with thatched roofing around the lower trunk. Close by to the north is a marble tablet (1829-30, listed grade II) carved to imitate an open book, inscribed with a poem (possibly by Lord Ongeley) to 'The Forgotten One'. A marble well-head (c 1900, listed grade II) in Italianate style stands nearby to the west. The sunken grotto and fernery (c 1830-3, with later C19 work, listed grade II*) lies 50m north of the Swiss Cottage, of cruciform plan with an iron and glass dome at the intersection and decorated with Pulhamite rockwork of the 1870s. the west.

A straight gravel terrace dated 1878 lies 50m north-west of the grotto and fernery, allowing views across the garden to the south and south-east. The Indian Kiosk (1829-30, listed grade II*) overlooks the Middle Pond from the north, consisting of a circular timber building with ornate stained-glass panels, elaborate bark and twig-work decoration and covered by a thatched roof. The Middle Pond has two ornate, hump-backed, cast-iron bridges (1829-30, listed grade II*), one to the north and one to the south; a third bridge (later C19, listed grade II*) crosses the channel between the Middle and Upper Ponds. The Broad Walk, probably contemporary with the terrace (late 1870s), extends for 80m north to south to the south of the Upper Pond, crossed by two cast-iron rose arches and terminated to the south by a large cast-iron urn (later C19, listed grade II) flanked by stone lions. Notable mature trees include natives planted as specimens in the C19, together with a variety of exotics. Further woodland lies to the west and north-west of the Swiss Garden, with views over the lake to



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PARK The park is bounded to the south by Warden Warren and The Hassocks woodland, and retains many mature trees, particularly to the south. Two lakes, created c 1800 (Enclosure Map 1800), dominate the park; they lie 300m north of the house but are not visible from it because of the rising land between. The sinuous lakes, created by damming and widening a small stream which enters through woodland north of the Swiss Garden, are divided by a weir towards the west end and dammed beneath the bridge carrying the north drive. West of the bridge a late C20 reservoir, with embanked sides to the north, east and south, covers the site of two further lakes which continued the series down the valley to the west. A C19 red-brick icehouse (listed grade II) lies 190m south-west of the house, set into a circular earth mound and containing a circular brick-lined room with tiers of wooden shelving.

Warden Warren, now largely coniferous woodland, was probably planted c 1800 (Jefferys 1765; Enclosure Map 1800; OSD 1804-5). A building including a tower, possibly a look-out tower, is shown by Jefferys on open land on the site of the current Queen Anne's Tower (1874), which stands on the highest ground within the present wood.

This red-brick building, with circular towers at the corners extending above the stone balustraded parapet, is now (1997) derelict. Four straight rides extend across the wood from it, including one leading along level ground to the north edge of the wood, another very short one extending north-east, aligned on the south front of the house across the park, and the other two extending through the woodland. Keepers Lodge, lying at the east edge of Warden Warren, surrounded by woodland, is a two-storey, timber-framed cottage ornée with leaded windows and a prominent central brick chimney stack, now (1997) derelict.



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KITCHEN GARDEN

Two rectangular brick-walled kitchen gardens lie north-east of the house. The older of the two, largely filled with late C20 development (1997), lies 100m from the house, adjacent to the east wall of the stable court. It is shown divided into quarters on the Enclosure and Quarter Sessions Maps (1800 and 1802 respectively), with a lawn surrounding it on three sides, on the perimeter of which runs the pleasure grounds circuit connecting house, Basin Pond and Bath Orchard, and including a perimeter walk around the walled garden itself.

The second walled garden, built c 1913 (Journal of Horticulture and Home Farmer 1913), now disused, lies 300m from the house. It has a central path running from south to north, and brick piers marking the entrances.



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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881 2nd
edition published 1901 3rd edition published 1926
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1880

Description written: September 1997 Amended:
April 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: May 1999



Old Postcard for sale on eBay!



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eBay is a great source of postcards, photographs, magazine articles etc.
You don't always have to buy the items – often you can take a screenshot of the photo for your records



- eBay again!
- West Lodge and Gates at Old Warden Park, (the stone pillar was taken out by a speeding student!)

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