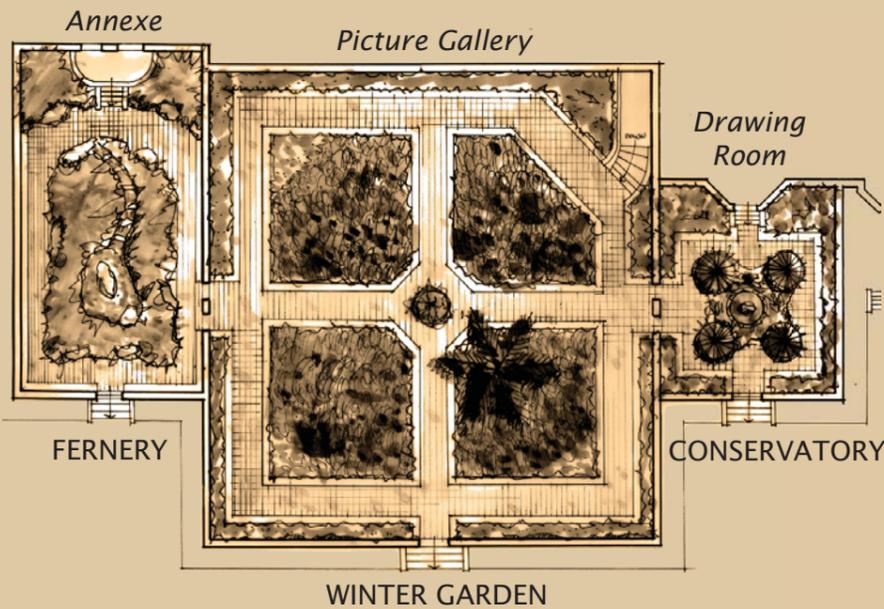


# The History of Avery Hill Winter Garden

## THE ORIGINAL VICTORIAN WINTER GARDEN



## Gardening - A Victorian Pastime

The Victorians were passionate about gardening. Glasshouses and winter gardens provided the perfect opportunity for the wealthy to display tender plant varieties, tropical foliage and flowers, even through the bitter winter months.

Such constructions were the pride of rich and extravagant families and were built at a time when plant collecting was highly fashionable. They were often for private pleasure, not the public visitor attractions they are today.

With the death of John North the Avery Hill mansion was placed on the market for sale, but it took two years for a buyer to be found. The mansion was sold at a greatly reduced price and the new owner never took up residence, leaving the property empty.



In 1902, the London County Council purchased the property with twenty-eight acres of parkland for £25,000 and in 1903 opened the parkland and some of the rooms to the public. Several years later it was opened by the LCC's education committee as its first residential training college for female teachers. In 1908 the training college acquired Southwood House, to the south of the park, and built halls of residence. During the 1970's, further subjects were taught at the college, and Avery House and surrounding parkland is now the Mansion Site of the University of Greenwich.

Most of the mansion house was destroyed in the Second World War and most of the buildings on site are post war. However the Winter Garden, entrance hall to the mansion, picture and sculpture galleries (now the library) all remain.

The Winter Garden has suffered decay over time as materials have deteriorated, and costs of maintenance, particularly heating, have escalated. Initiated in 2009, the Winter Gardens are now undergoing a significant refurbishment taking into account their historic context.

## Historical Timeline

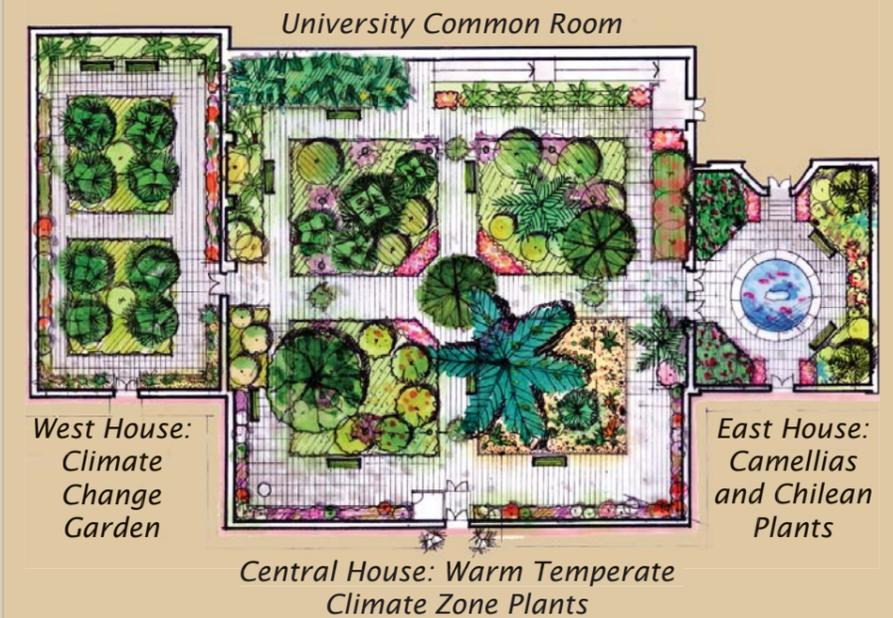
- 1888 Colonel North buys Avery Hill House
- 1890 Mansion House and Winter Garden completed to layout by M G Abbey, Head Gardener for Avery Hill Estate
- 1896 Colonel John North dies
- 1896 - 1906 House lies empty
- 1902 London County Council Park Committee buys the estate
- 1904 London County Council Education Committee open Avery Hill Training College
- 1941 Extensive damage caused by flying bomb in WWII
- 1944 Mansion house badly damaged by bombing, Winter Garden Closed



The original  
Canary Island  
Date Palm

*Phoenix  
canariensis*

## THE RESTORED WINTER GARDEN



- 1957 Greater London Council begins repairs and alterations. Many original features were lost including marble staircase, stone landscaping, pools and waterfalls
- 1962 Winter Garden opened to the public
- 1985 Avery Hill Training College merges with Thames Polytechnic
- 1986 Thames Polytechnic takes over the Winter Garden
- 1994 University of Greenwich purchases the Winter Garden from the London Borough of Greenwich
- 2009 University of Greenwich purchases the Winter Garden from the London Borough of Greenwich

• Nikolaus Pevsner identified the Winter Garden as the '...best survival in London of such Victorian extravagances'... in his Survey of Englands Buildings.



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