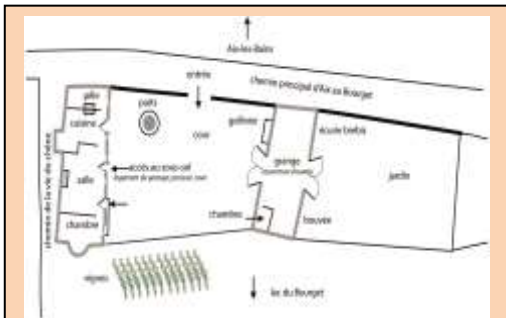


MAIRIE

An agricultural estate



A house, belonging to the family de Regnaud de Lannoy, was recorded at this location from 16th century: residence and outbuildings; henhouse, wine press, barn, stable ...

The property was let as a whole to a tenant farmer.

Tresserve was an agricultural village. Several owners worked estates comprising vines, orchards, meadows and chestnut groves.

The property "les vignes sous la ville" consisted of a farmhouse and parcels of farmland scattered over the hill, including one hectare of vines worked by a single tenant. The total property was acquired in 1750 by the seignioral lord of Tresserve, Joseph de Buttet, who already owned one tenth of the village. After the French Revolution Hector Viviand, a tradesman from Chambéry, made adjustments to the house to convert it into a summer residence. In 1863 Jacques Daudens, a restaurant owner from Paris, replaced the farm buildings with an ornamental garden and created the elegant pediment which is still a feature of the facade today.



Ellen Willmott's home and garden

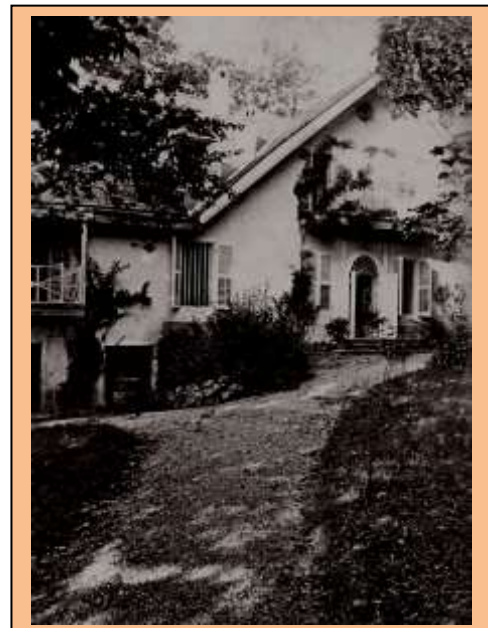


In 1890 a wealthy English lady, Ellen Willmott, age 32, came to Aix-les-Bains to "take the waters" and purchased the house. Her main residence was Warley Place, a vast 13 hectare estate situated in the county of Essex.

Charmed by the setting, she dreamt of the garden she was going to create.

From now on she would spend two months in the spring and a further two months in the autumn in Tresserve. She was often accompanied by her sister Rose, wife of Robert Berkeley.

She engaged the local, Aix architect, Jules Pin, who set about extending the building on a grand scale: he raised the building by the addition of an extra storey, installed a veranda to the west and added a tower, which was a replica of that of the old chateau in Aix-les-Bains (today the town hall).



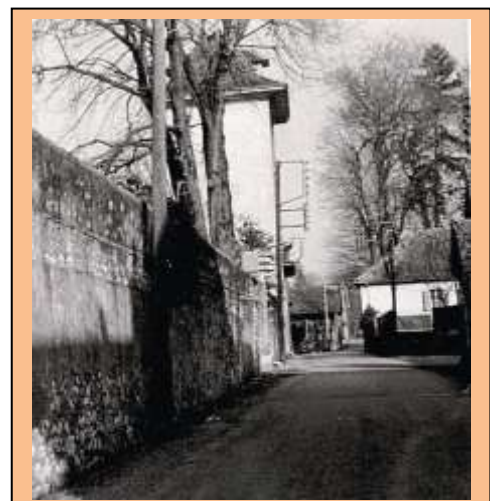
In September 1907, the house was devastated by fire. Greatly shaken by this unfortunate event, Ellen Willmott immediately set about an ambitious reconstruction project, adding an additional storey and a second tower. She incurred considerable expense in fitting out the interior: chimneys, antique wood panelling, parquet flooring, coffered ceilings and classic style furniture.



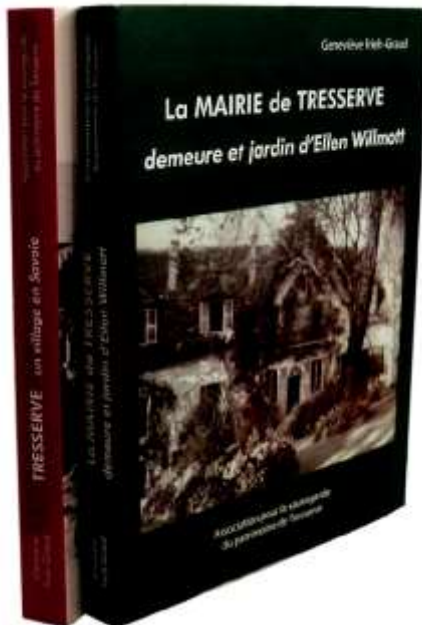
The house was magnificently restored and the garden unanimously admired by visitors ... but Ellen Willmott's fortune had evaporated: she found herself facing a financial bottomless pit brought about by her lavish and heedless spending.

To avoid disgrace and to protect her sister, Rose Berkeley, in 1920, persuaded a distant relative, Randal Thomas Mowbray, to purchase the property in order to keep the inheritance within the family.

This heralded the start of a long period of slumber. The chateau was no longer habitable, forgotten behind its high walls, even after the death of Randal Thomas Mowbray in 1942 ... The estate was then jointly owned by his wife and 12 distant cousins. It was not until 1953 that the Chambéry solicitor, Maître André Roche, tried to obtain the property. The municipality of Tresserve also wished to acquire it.



In 1960 the chateau became the Mairie.



The book, "La Mairie de Tresserve demeure et jardin d'Ellen Willmott" (The Mairie of Tresserve, Ellen Willmott's home and garden), published by l'association pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine de Tresserve, (in French but including summaries in English) is available from the Mairie

Association pour la Sauvegarde du Patrimoine de Tresserve

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