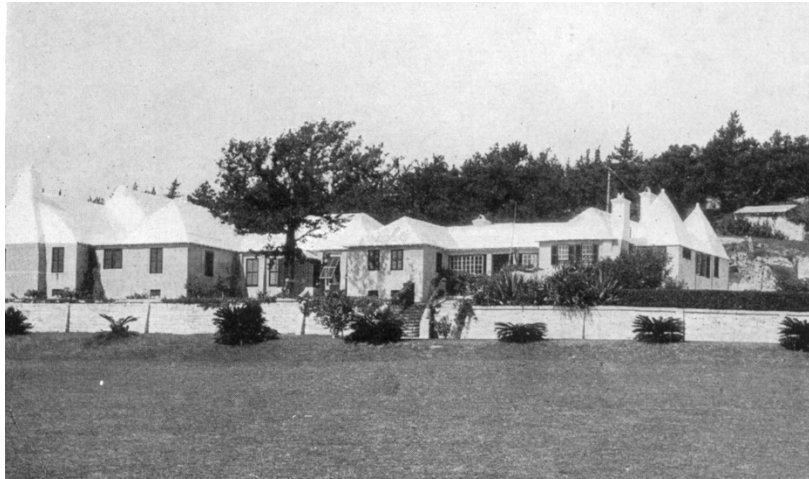


## Southlands, 81 South Road, Warwick



**Southlands was photographed in the early 1920s for the Bermuda Trade Development Board brochure.**

Anna, the wife of Montreal merchant James Morgan, bought 31½ acres and an old Bermuda house from the heirs of Thomas Dunscomb in 1913. The core of the house can be traced with certainty to 1820 but is thought to date as far back as 1745. The property was already known as Southlands and it became James Morgan's retirement project. Using stone cut from his quarries, he almost immediately began to extend the house. With the help of Bermudian architect Edward Tucker, the integrity of the original U-shaped house with its three uniquely-positioned butteries was not compromised. The quarries were turned into individually themed gardens with a variety of exotic imported plants. The Egyptian quarry for instance contained a pool of water lilies fringed by papyrus. Morgan purchased several nearby properties, eventually owning over 80 acres.

A philanthropist in Canada, James Morgan was generous in Bermuda. In 1920 he gave money to his neighbourhood school, Warwick Academy, which allowed them to complete the wings and build the assembly hall. He was a member of the Warwick Parish Development Committee set up in 1917 to tackle the deficiency in the food supply by encouraging home gardening and the cultivation of all available land. The Morgans held fundraisers at Southlands to help with the cost of equipment needed for the newly opened King Edward VII Memorial Hospital.

Anna Morgan died in 1929 and her husband James in 1932. Both were buried in a mausoleum on their beloved Southlands estate. Subsequent owners, Grace Metzger Torrey and then British Brigadier Harry Dunbar Maconochie, maintained the quarry gardens, often opening them to locals and visitors. From 1977 until 2005 when owned by the Willowbank Foundation the house was well maintained but the gardens were allowed to grow wild which in a way suited their quarry settings. The deep cut through a quarry to the Forest Hills development is particularly impressive.



**By 2019 Southlands was being taken over by invasives. Note the casuarina growing out of the roof.**

Sadly, since 2005 when the Bermuda Government acquired the property, the house Southlands, a Grade 2 listed building, has become derelict. Vandals, squatters, invasive foliage and neglect have all contributed to its now sorry condition. A fine building, well documented, deserves better while the grounds, now officially a public park, could be a wonderful asset for all Bermudians.



**The house and grounds were cleared of invasive foliage in 2023.**

To learn more of the history of Southlands see *Bermuda's Architectural Heritage Series: Warwick* published in 2019.

Sources: The Bermudian Feb 1931 & July 1932, RG 18 Mar 1949, 12 Apr 1953, Bermuda's Architectural Heritage Series Warwick, Canadian Homes and Gardens, Apr 1928.