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HISTORY OF HASTINGS HOUSE

In 1937, Warren Hastings, an English naval architect with a gift for story-telling, moved to Salt Spring Island from Sussex, England with his new bride Barbara. According to Hastings, he and Barbara “decided to build on Salt Spring Island because we love the sea and we think it is one of the most beautiful places in the world, with a lovely climate.” Hastings built the Manor House in 1939 to resemble the 11th century English Manor House where Warren and Barbara Hastings had resided in Sussex, because their “furniture was suitable for a house of this type.”

The large Inglenook fireplace in the Manor House is a reproduction of a type found in Tudor homes in Sussex. The rocks for the fireplaces and chimneys were all quarried on the estate’s own land. The wood floors are of end-grain fir, random width, fastened with black boat nails. The iron hardware for hinges on the doors and iron window frames were made by the local blacksmith. The hand split shakes for the roof were made locally as well.

Four other historical buildings comprise the Hastings House estate. Of special note is The Farmhouse, which was built around the turn of the century and was long thought to be haunted because of its colorful history. The Post was the first Hudson’s Bay Post on Salt Spring Island where trading was conducted on the honour system.

In 1980, Warren Hastings sold the property to Shan and Donald Cross of Calgary, Alberta, who turned the estate into an elegant hotel. Fifteen years later the current owners Bonny O’Connor and Jerry Parks purchased the property with the goal of maintaining the courtesy and charm of Hastings House. Since then, the dining area in the Manor House has been expanded, enabling the hotel to accommodate dinner guests who are not staying overnight. Seven new Hillside Suites, including the Somerset Premier Suite, have also been newly constructed on the hillside above the Manor House.