

DRAFT V4.0

APPENDIX 2 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

Archaeology

There have been no archaeological finds clearly identified as within the conservation area (CA). Within the area of 'Southern Hill' which could include the CA, hand axes and an iron age cup have been found.

Within 100 metres of the area hand axes have been found in Glebe Road (neolithic), in a gravel pit south of Christ Church (unspecified age) and on Morgan Road (neolithic). At 32 Morgan Road there is a mesolithic findspot and in Redlands a neolithic findspot.

Historical Development

Before The Mount



Figure 1 Extract from 1798 map of Reading. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. The dashed line represents the borough boundary. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries.

The Mount CA lies north of the east-west road along the ridge to Shinfield. Early development clustered around the junction with what is now Redlands Road. There was also smaller group of buildings near what is now the Queens Head and Whitley Park Lane. The area was referred

to as Southern Hill and was within St Giles parish. With the exception of the land on which Hillside was later built it was outside the boundary of the Borough of Reading.



Figure 2. Extract from 1813 map of Reading. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. The dashed line represents the borough boundary. Note the turnpike and cluster of houses at the top of Red Lane (Redlands Road). Courtesy Richard Bennett.

When St Giles tithe apportionment survey was carried in 1841 there were very few buildings along the road. The fields (55 and 56) on which The Mount estate would be built were owned by Millicent Eaton at that time and the land advertised for auction in 1873 including the Robin Hood public house¹.

The land on which Hillside was built was registered as owned by the Trustees of John Kendrick which was succeeded as a charity by Christ's Hospital.

¹ Reading Mercury 17 May 1873 p3. The occupant of field 55 on the tithe map was Thomas Attwell and 56 was occupied by Joel Patey and the owner was Millicent Eaton. The Patey family ran a public house there for some years and their piggeries caused a nuisance in the area (see Reading Mercury 7 November 1868 p2 and Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees (2021) John Dearing, David Cliffe and Evelyn Williams).

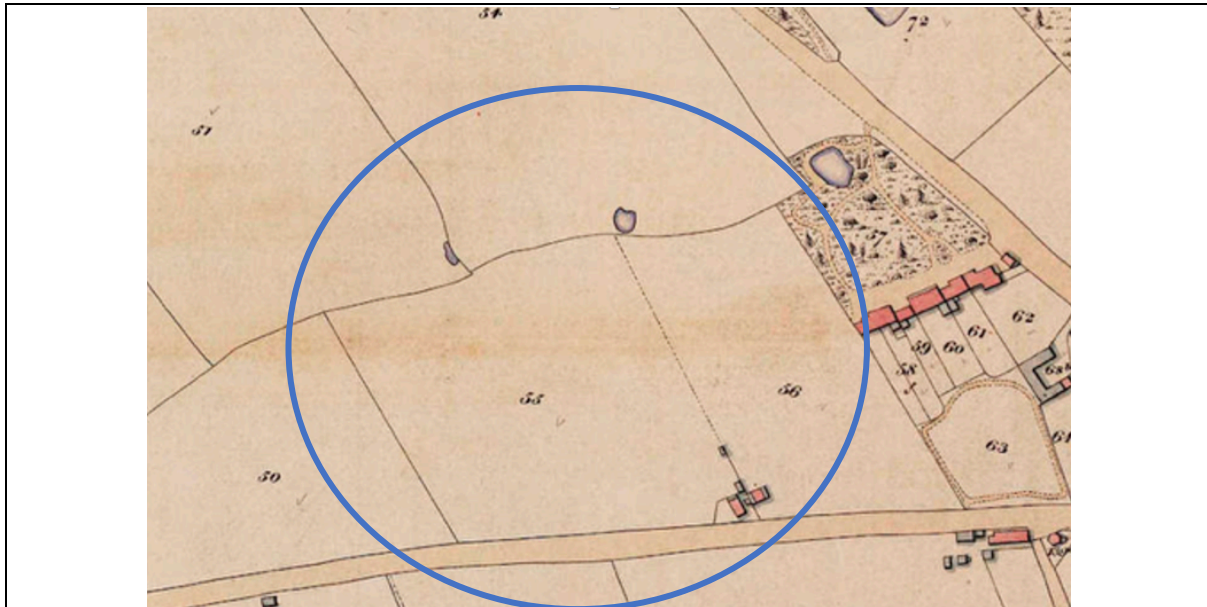


Figure 3 Extract from 1841 tithe apportionment map (1840) for St Giles Parish D/D1/96/1. The approximate area of The Mount CA circled. Courtesy Royal Berkshire Archives.

In the mid nineteenth century large properties began to appear along the ridge: Cintra Lodge; Ashton Lodge; Merton Lodge and Sutherlands. Within The Mount CA the only buildings that definitely survive from this period are: 53 Christchurch Road, the eastern lodge of Sutherlands, and 53a Christchurch Road and Linden Mews both former stables and outbuildings of Sutherlands which are within character area 2. Mildmay Cottage may also date from this time. These properties with the later addition of Mildmay Hall (now the Progress Theatre) form Character Area 2 of the CA.

A tank to hold 100,000 gallons of water erected within the grounds of Sutherlands in the 1850s supplied by water pumped from the Bath Road reservoir². It is no longer mentioned in directories from 1920.

² [O.Kean, Brief history and development of Reading Waterworks \(1950\)](#). County Borough of Reading Water Department.



Figure 4 The eastern lodge of Sutherlands, 51 Christchurch Road and 53 Christchurch Road with the water tank behind c1900. Image courtesy Reading Libraries

The Mount Estate, Hillside and W I Palmer

William Isaac Palmer (1824 – 1893) developed the estate of 24 properties on The Mount in the 1870s (Character Area 1) and Hillside (Character Area 3) as his own home in the early 1880s.

The northern border of The Mount follows the pre-1887 borough boundary. It was perambulated in 1874 by the Mayor, members of the Corporation and a large party of officials and other participants. The report of the perambulation gives an indication of the low density development of the area. Having reached Redlands House the perambulating party ‘...crossed the road, and immediately crawled through the hedge on the opposite side, and by a turn to the south entered the garden of Mr Gregory [*Oaklands*], who gave the party every assistance. Proceeding along the meadow at the rear of the water tank, a serious obstacle to further progress presented itself in the high wall of Mr Darter’s vinery [*Sutherlands*] a portion only of which was found to be within the boundary.’³

The Ordnance survey map of 1877 shows that 22 properties had been built in The Mount. To the west lay Mildmay Cottage and Sutherlands.

³ Reading Mercury 17 October 1874 p6



Figure 5 Extract from OS map 1877 showing The Mount which is complete apart from the northernmost two properties. Hillside has not yet been built. Mildmay Cottage had been built. The borough boundary is marked by the long dashed line and BP marks a boundary post. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Listed properties with addresses in The Mount are dated c.1876 by Historic England (HE). Map evidence indicates that nos. 23 and 25, the two most northerly properties were built slightly later, although both had been built by the time of the 1881 census. The listing for 59 Christchurch Road (Uplands) states that the moulded brick rosettes are 'reminiscent of Joseph Morris's' work but otherwise does not attribute the Estate to a named architect.



Figure 6 Nos 8-22 The Mount c1910. Postcard by P O Collier. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Gold cites H Godwin Arnold⁴ in crediting the estate to R Austin the architect of the [Shaftesbury Park Estate in Battersea](#), also a conservation area, built by the Artizans', Labourers', and General Dwellings Company (ALGDC)⁵. The aim of the company and its founder William Austin (no relation to the architect) was '...to build decent accommodation for the working classes, at a time when overcrowding and other related housing matters were a problem amongst the poor in London.'⁶ 82 and 84 Crescent Road, south of Palmer Park, have some similar features to The Mount. Importantly there is motif above the porch to the two terraced properties 'RA 1872'. This clearly acknowledges that the architect was Robert Austin. The same motif with a date of 1874 appears at 18 Eversleigh Road in the Shaftesbury Park Estate⁷. Elsewhere the initials of the ALGDC are prevalent.

The use of London stock bricks⁸ is exceptional in Reading. It is not currently known where the bricks were sourced but it is unlikely that they were made locally. It is clear that the location, the building materials and the architectural style mark the development out as something special. It is possible that bricks for The Mount were brought from London. W I Palmer's brother Samuel lived in London at 40 College Crescent (Camden). His house 'Northcourt', dating from 1880/81 was designed by Reading architects Morris & Stallwood and constructed of grey and Reading bricks and terracotta⁹. If bricks could travel to London from Reading it represents strong circumstantial evidence that they could travel in the opposite direction.

There is a hierarchical status of buildings. At the centre, facing south, is a terrace of two storey properties with more prestigious properties on the corners, the gardens back on to a similar terrace facing north. There are also semi-detached houses and solid square double-fronted villas. The frontage to Christchurch Road is occupied by two very large and dominating Victorian Gothic fantasies with turrets.

⁴ Sidney M Gold, A Biographical dictionary of Architects at Reading (1999). H. Godwin Arnold and Sidney M. Gold in 'Morris of Reading' (1989) state that it was built for staff of Sutton's Seeds. Other sources generally agree on Huntley & Palmers involvement. Tyack et al, The Buildings of Berkshire p276 (2010) also reference R Austin and the Shaftesbury Estate.

⁵ The company also developed the Queens Estate in Westminster. Information including a design guide can be found on [Westminster Council's website](#).

⁶ Wandsworth Borough Council (2009). [Shaftesbury Park Estate, Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy](#).

⁷ Referenced in Survey of London, volume 50, chapter 12, Shaftesbury Park Estate, [draft online version](#) on UCL, Bartlett School of Architecture website, <accessed 16 July 2025>. The [final version](#) was published by Yale University Press in 2013. The chapter includes more information about the story of the ALGDC.

⁸ The colour of the bricks of The Mount are variously described as 'gault bricks' in the HE listings and grey brick in Tyack et al, Buildings of Berkshire. We have used 'London stock bricks' as this is what we believe that they are and it is the description used in the Shaftesbury Park Conservation area Appraisal and Management Strategy. The bricks at 82 & 84 Crescent Road, in so far as they have not been painted over, and others on the street are similar in colour.

⁹ Historic England Listing entry 1386727 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1386727> (accessed 31 October 2025)



Figure 7 The Mount c1920. Uplands (59 Christchurch Road) in the foreground and Nos 2-8 The Mount, A postcard by H A Giles. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Shaftesbury Park, a forty acre site was on a much, much larger scale than The Mount. When it opened in 1874 it already had 479 houses and a final total of 1,200 was expected although plans and layout were later modified before completion¹⁰. The Architect reported 'The houses are built in four classes, containing five, six, seven or eight rooms respectively – the latter including a bath room – at moderate rentals with the option of purchase.'¹¹

The 1911 census records the number of rooms in each property and for the Mount Estate the number of rooms including the kitchen were: one property with ten rooms (57 Christchurch Road), three with nine, two with eight, ten with seven and eight with six¹².

In contrast, Hillside is built from the more typical Reading red and grey bricks. The Architect reported the commencement of the building for William Isaac Palmer in 1879 on land leased from the governors of Christ's Hospital. The architects were Morris & Stallwood and the builders, Wheelers Bros¹³.

William Isaac Palmer who never married, died in 1893.

¹⁰ [Shaftesbury Park Estate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy](#). Wandsworth Borough Council 2009.

¹¹ The Architect 25 July 1874 p47

¹² Census records do not include No36 and so we have assumed that it would have 6 rooms. A comparison with the 1911 census for Brassey Square in the Shaftesbury Park Estate shows that many properties had 6 rooms but had been split between two households. Sabine Road had smaller four roomed properties, possibly built later as they are not mentioned in the report in The Architect.

¹³ The Architect 11 October 1879



Figure 8 Extract from OS map 1898 published 1899. The Mount and Hillside have been completely built and there is a new building, the Mildmay Club, at the rear of Mildmay Cottage on the corner of Christchurch Road and the Mount. Courtesy National Library of Scotland

Hillside, properties adjacent to Sutherlands and the Sutton family

Arthur Warwick Sutton, second son of Martin Hope Sutton lived at Sutherlands from 1884-1888. His younger brother Leonard Goodhart Sutton (1863-1932), moved to Hillside after the death of W I Palmer and it was considerably extended for him by Spencer Slingsby Stallwood. Their father Martin Hope Sutton (1815-1901) had lived at Cintra Lodge on the south side of Christchurch Road from 1857 until his death when it was sold. Leonard Noel Sutton (1893-1965), son of L G Sutton grew up at Hillside and later lived at Sutherlands until his death. The house was sold when in his wife died in the 1970s and a modern property was built on the site.

Some western portions of the grounds of Sutherlands had been detached and developed before the First World War and Sutherlands Avenue laid out. In 1949 a piece of land off Sutherlands Avenue and eastern parts of the grounds and land owned by the Suttons were sold by order of Leonard Noel Sutton including, 53a Christchurch Road with buildings attached, Mildmay Cottage 55 Christchurch Road, the Mildmay Club and orchard frontage land in The Mount¹⁴.

¹⁴ Reading Standard 14 October 1949, p1

The Progress Theatre, founded in 1947, moved in 1950 from the W I Palmer Memorial Hall in West Street to new premises in The Mount which had formerly been the Mildmay Club, a working men's club founded in 1879 by Arthur Warwick Sutton¹⁵ which moved to the newly built hall in 1881¹⁶. The club was linked with other Mildmay institutions first established in Mildmay Park in north London on the initiative of Rev William Pennefather of St Jude's Church and his wife Catherine¹⁷.



Figure 9 The north side of the Progress Theatre. (Left) stage door c1950 and (right) today when the corrugated iron club hall has been obscured by later extensions. Images courtesy Progress Theatre

At first the theatre was rented from Reading Co-operative Society but in the 1960s the freehold was purchased. Over time the theatre has expanded beyond the boundaries of the Mildmay club but the extensions and additions from the central corrugated hall are still readable within the building.

Reading University

The Reading Extension College was founded in 1892 and based in Valpy Street. By 1906 most of the college had moved to land on London Road, including the Acacias, donated by the Palmer family. By the time Reading gained its own charter in 1926 new buildings had been built within what is now the London Road Campus.

The University acquired Hillside in 1949 and in the 1950 directory it was a Reading University Student Hostel. In 1979 permission was given to build additional student accommodation in the grounds¹⁸. There had been fears that the house would be demolished. Hillside was only listed in 2005, compared with the 1978 listing for properties in The Mount. The gates, gatepiers, walls and railings were separately listed at the same time. The house is currently owned by Turner Property who use part of the main building as offices with flats above and within the grounds the 1970s low rise student accommodation has been retained. Recent improvements to the site include lounge extensions to student buildings, two new accommodation buildings, a common room and attached to the house, the remodelling of the

¹⁵ Berkshire Chronicle 26 March 1881 p5 and Reading Mercury 26 March 1881 p5

¹⁶ Reading Mercury 19 November 1881 p5

¹⁷ William Pennefather, Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Pennefather#Mildmay (accessed 8 December 2025)

¹⁸ Reading Evening Post 9 February 1979 p4

gardens in 2020-2021 with a memorial to the four sons of Leonard Goodhart Sutton who died in the First World War and a history plaque¹⁹.

Surrounding Developments following the Second World War

The comparatively green but urban situation of The Mount ended as plots on the boundary were gradually developed. Bungalows were built in the mid 1950s land on the eastern edge of The Mount. Sutton Walk on the west side of The Mount and Whitby Drive which has a pedestrian route, Lancaster Close, joining Christchurch and Allcroft Roads, in the 1970s.

First occupants of The Mount

Properties in The Mount are thought to have been built for managers and clerks at the biscuit factory however census information shows that this was not a universal rule with a third in 1881 having a definite connection and a further three a possible connection.

The following properties included residents with a connection to 'the biscuit factory':

- Thomas Allen at No 3 (now 30) was a foreman
- William Baskett at No 4 (now 32) was a gardener but his son was a clerk at the biscuit factory
- John Simmance at No 6 (now 36) was a retired Baptist minister but his son was a junior clerk
- John Allen at No 9 (now 10) was a foreman and also housed a boarder who was a clerk
- Arthur Spry at No 11 (now 14) was an invoice clerk
- Edward Maze at No 12 (now 16) was an export clerk
- John Broad at Woodhill (now 4) was a legal clerk
- John Waugh at what is now 57 Christchurch Road was a commercial clerk

Others with possible links are:

- Edward Freeman (numbering unclear in 1881) at what is now 25 was a commercial traveller
- Thomas Coltman at Uplands (now 59 Christchurch Road) was a commercial traveller
- Cornelius Carr at no 5 (now 34) was a confectioner and in 1891 a biscuit maker

The rate records for 1888 after the area was included within the Borough boundary show that 6 properties were not owned by W I Palmer at that date four of which were owner-occupied²⁰.

- 2 The Mount owned by W B Williams and occupied by Henrietta Codd
- 4 The Mount owned and occupied by John Broad
- 22 The Mount (Edith House) owned and occupied by James Quelch a coal merchant who carried out business from the address
- 24 The Mount (Kates Villa) owned by J Belcher and occupied George Goodwin
- 57 Christchurch Road owned and occupied by John Waugh
- 59 Christchurch Road owned and occupied by Thomas Coltman

¹⁹ We are grateful for the information provided by Turner Property and a guided tour of Hillside and its grounds.

²⁰ Royal Berkshire Archives R/FR2/ 40 - 1888



Figure 10 Kates Villa (No 24) and Edith House (No 22) c1915. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries

Other occupants in 1881 included a surveyor, a schoolmaster, clergymen, an insurance agent, an agricultural engineer, a commercial traveller for 'engineers and agricultural machinery', an inspector and assistant in the education department, a messmaster, the high bailiff of the County Court, and a merchant and commission agent. Only one resident, a farmer's widow lived on her own means. It is possible that some of these residents had direct or indirect connections with the biscuit factory or William Isaac Palmer.

University Connections

In 1911 Henry Francis Maze, an accountant at the University College, lived at 4 The Mount and in 1921 he had three physical drill students as boarders. He was probably the son of Edward Francis Maze who had had been a clerk at the biscuit factory in 1881. George Frederick Drew at No 8 in 1911 was an agricultural instructor. In 1921 Professor of Geology Herbert Leader Hawkins lived at No 38. Other residents at this time also had boarders from the college.

Historic Associations

The development of two of Reading's largest family firms Huntley & Palmers and Sutton Seeds is well documented elsewhere and so below are mentioned briefly members of the families with particular connections with The Mount CA.

- William Isaac Palmer was the youngest brother of George Palmer and a partner in Huntley and Palmers from 1857. He was a successful breeder of shorthorn cattle at his estate at Grazeley Court and was particularly involved in the temperance movement in Reading and more widely.
- Arthur Warwick Sutton (1854-1925), brother of Leonard Goodhart Sutton (see below) founded the Mildmay Club and was involved in many similar organisations such as the Grovelands Club²¹ and the Silver Street Fireside Club and Mission²².

²¹ Reading Mercury 26 March 1881 p5

²² Reading Standard 23 September 1905 p8

- Leonard Goodhart Sutton (1863- 1932) was Mayor of Reading three times and was involved in many civic, religious and sporting organisations.
- Leonard Noel Sutton (1893-1965) like his father was involved in many civic and religious organisations.

Other notable residents:

- Edith Mary Routh lived at 23 The Mount and was related to Dr Martin James Routh rector of Tilehurst, giving his name to the Routh Lane Conservation Area. Her obituary in the Reading Standard in 1940 recorded her work with the Red Cross including at Sutherlands Hospital during the First World War. After the war she nursed an ex-serviceman who had been shot in the spine at Salonika. The serviceman was probably Frederick William Hill who in 1921 moved in to Sutherlands Cottage, 41 Northumberland Avenue which had been built for him and was opened by Leonard Goodhart Sutton²³. She left her house in The Mount to Christ Church where she was a member of the congregation²⁴.
- Alice Constance Miller lived at 2 The Mount, often referred to as Belvoir Lodge and died in 1946²⁵. She was associated with the University and in 1936 had donated Broadfield, 16 Northcourt Avenue, to the University as a sanatorium when she moved to The Mount. It is now used as student accommodation²⁶.
- Alice Moxhay lived at 15 The Mount and was also a nurse and a superintendent at the Queen Victoria Institute until 1923²⁷. She lived with her sister Gertrude who appears in advertisements for a fundraiser for the Zenana Missionary Society in 1908²⁸.
- Rev Daniel Bell Hankin former vicar of St Jude's Mildmay Park was living at Mildmay Cottage when he died in 1915²⁹.

Bibliography

As well as the specific references above the publications below have been an invaluable source of information about the area and its occupants with particular thanks to Dennis Wood, author of Views from the Hill, for his insights.

T A B Corley, Quaker Enterprise in Biscuits: Huntley and Palmers of Reading 1872-1972 (1972)

Earley Local History Group, Suttons Seeds – A history 1806-2006 (2006)

Sidney M Gold, A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading (1999)

Dennis Wood, Views from the Hill, The Story of Whitley (2017)

Newspapers and censuses via findmypast.

Street directories

²³ Reading Standard 27 August 1921 p7

²⁴ Reading Standard 23 February 1940 p6 and 12 July 1940 p7

²⁵ Reading Standard 1 November 1946 p9

²⁶ Penny Kemp, Northcourt Avenue: it's history & people (second edition 2024)

²⁷ Reading Standard 3 March 1923 p8

²⁸ Reading Standard 1 February 1908 p5

²⁹ Berkshire Chronicle 21 January 1915 p6