

THE MOUNT REDDICAP HILL SUTTON COLDFIELD

By JANET JORDAN

In 1776, a man called "Smith", tenant of Will. Jesson who owned the croft at the top of Reddicap Hill, would have been overwhelmed by the grandeur of the Victorian house that would be built there 100 years later.

Even John Lilly, first owner of that house, which he called "The Mount" would hardly have been less surprised than Smith, had he seen the blocks of flats, maisonettes, garages and old people's bungalows ultimately to occupy the site in the 1960's.

Certainly, today's inhabitants of The Mount, now a Council estate, would agree With Smith and Lilly that this is a desirable position to live in, overlooking Sutton Town, its park and immediate surroundings.

Wider research shows how the area, originally let to Smith and finally to end up in the hands of Birmingham City Council, was gradually developed over the past 200 years. It also traces the ownership of the Victorian house, with the aid of the title deeds, and gives some insight into the lives of two of the families who actually lived there.

However , this extract from the research, concentrates on one of those families, the Styles, who lived at The Mount for a brief period after the Second World War.

THE STYLES

Details of most of the owners of The Mount remain a mystery, due to lack of records and, really, all the information about the first owners the Lillys, came, as it were, from the dead!

However, one family which owned the Mount is represented by someone who is still very much alive, in the person of Mrs. Beatrice May Styles, now enjoying her retirement in Oxfordshire. Her recollections in correspondence have furnished a tremendous amount of information about the lay-out of the house and have given it a sense of being a home rather than just an interesting old building.

Mrs. Styles' husband, Frank, was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, who practised in Birmingham before the war and was the Architect for the Kingstanding Estate. After the Second World War, he practised at 85, Parade, Sutton Coldfield (see headed notepaper attached), during which period he built private houses in Jervis Crescent, Jordan Road, Walsall Road in Four Oaks, Little Aston Park, etc.

Having lived at Vesey House for a time, in 1948 Frank and Beatrice ("May) Styles decided to purchase The Mount, principally for business reasons.

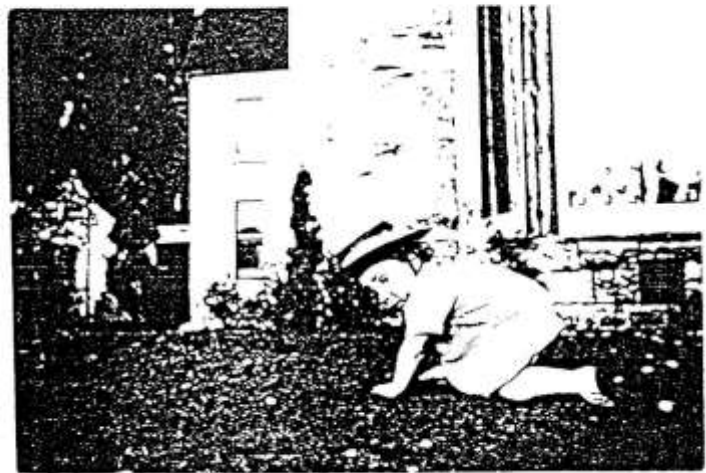
Although she and Frank only lived there from 1948 to 1950, Mrs. Styles loved the place. Unfortunately, she says, "it ate money and with no hope of development at that stage we sold it to Mr. Finer". Some of her anecdotes are worth recalling.

She vividly remembers setting fire to one of the fields when it had been mown one hot day and having to beat it out herself as it was the

Late 1940's

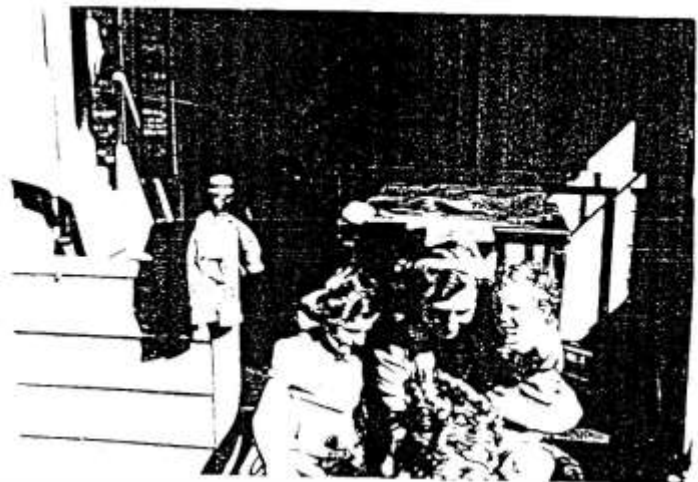
Photos of
'The Mount' loaned
by Mrs. B. Styles.

Mrs Styles' son,
outside dining room
window, showing window
to larder and gate from
yard to garden.



①

The summer house.
Mrs Styles with children.
Mr Styles ^{father} in shadow.
Dog at front came daily
from cottages on other side
of road.



②

The summer house (which
could be turned to face
the sun!). Mrs Styles
with friends, Mr. +
Mrs. W. Lewthwaite who
had their wedding reception
at The Mount.



③

gardener's day of Another time, after the war, she says "There were pigstys at the back of the outbuildings. We were on rations in those days and kept some pigs, and were embarrassed with bacon and ham and when we left we buried some in the garden to get rid of it". Perhaps Mr. & Mrs. Finer came across some pretty noxious matter in later years!

She also mentions that the house contained, as a fixture, a refrigerator large enough for a butchers shop" - full of pork and bacon, no doubt! She cannot remember shopping for comestibles; the grocery, etc., was delivered" - a luxury not afforded by the supermarkets these days.

The copy photographs here were taken from originals supplied by Mrs. Styles, showing a happy family, at leisure in the garden and making full use of the Summer House.

Turning to the house itself, with the help of her picture memory, one can stretch the imagination to a possible set of Estate Agents' Sales Particulars that could have been used when the Styles sold to the Finers in 1950.

These Sales Particulars help to create a picture of the rooms of the house and, with the help of diagrams also supplied by Mrs. Styles, it is possible to reproduce here plans of the Ground and First Floors and also of the exterior lay-out of the grounds.

(Taken from headed notepaper)

(approx. 1940's)

FRANK STYLES, A.I.A.A., F.R.S.A., M.I.M.T.R.A.
REGISTERED ARCHITECT.

85, Parade,

Sutton Coldfield,

Warwickshire.

TELEPHONE : SUTTON COLDFIELD 5034.

ESTATE AGENTS

Sales Particulars

By direction of Mr. and Mrs. F. Styles

**The Mount
Reddicap Hill
Sutton Coldfield**

A FREEHOLD OF OUTSTANDING CHARACTER SET IN MORE THAN
FOUR ACRES OF LAND



A charming Victorian residence, suitable for a large family, built to a very high specification in 1878. Having the benefit on the Ground Floor of Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Chinese Room, Breakfast Room, Kitchen, "Butlers Pantry", Walk in Larder, Boiler House and Cloaks. On the first floor, Master Bedroom with Superb En-Suite Bathroom, 5 further Bedrooms (Bedroom 3 formerly a Billiard Room/ Children's Playroom) Large Bathroom/W.C. Beautiful Central Hall opening direct to Glass Domed Roof with Balcony skirting First Floor. Full central heating.

Tennis Court, Summer House, Stabling, Pigsty

The Mount is the most outstanding property of this area. Situated at the top of Reddicap Hill, commanding a panoramic view of Sutton Coldfield and its environs. Having all amenities close by, including comprehensive shopping facilities 1 mile distant in Sutton Town. Excellent transport services to Birmingham and Lichfield. Many first class schools within easy access and also Sutton Park with its pretty lakes and natural park and woodland.

The Mount, Reddicap Hill

The property is mainly of rendered brickwork construction with decorative magpie work at upper level. Fully tiled roof and turret. Approached by a curved driveway, flanked by laurel and rhododendron bushes, opening out to a large parking area in front of the house. To the right of the main building there are double gates leading to a yard and stabling and to its left and beyond there are rose gardens, box hedges and shrubs. Three fields also belonging to the property make up the balance of the acreage and can be used to pasture horses.

On the Ground Floor:

PORCH ENTRANCE

Octagonal in shape (also forming Enn-Suite Bathroom on First. Floor), having decorative obscured glass, leading via inner door to:

HALL

Very large, open to First Floor, glass domed roof, panel led throughout. Beautifully tiled floor. Huge table, positioned in centre of floor over grid concealing central heating pipes.

The following rooms lead off the Hall, all being large and lofty with very attractive cornices:

CHINESE ROOM

Decorated with oriental green silk wallpaper, this room has free standing laquered cupboards; the present owners have furnished it with plain carpet, ottomans and large cushions to give Chinese effect.

CONSERVATORY

Specially heated. Overlooks side garden, leads via double doors to:

LOUNGE

A very large room, capable of holding two full sized settees, two easy chairs and all the usual cupboards. The fireplace is a feature of the room, being constructed of stone, with low bookshelves all along the fireplace wall. A huge bay window overlooks the side garden.

DINING ROOM

Same specification as the Lounge. The owners have furnished this with compatible antique furniture, showing the room to its best advantage.

All the foregoing rooms comprise the main part of the house. This is completely separated by a heavy door, leading to the former servants!

(1) BREAKFAST ROOM

Formerly servants' Sitting Room. Fireplace

(2) BACK STAIRCASE (UP)

(3) KITCHEN

Fireplace (range) and very large fitted Refrigerator.

(4) WALK IN LARDER

(5) BOILER HOUSE

(6) BUTLER'S PANTRY

Fitted Sink, Work Tables. One side of room completely fitted with glass fronted cupboards.

Back door, leading to gardens.

Returning to Hall:

CLOAKROOM

Toilet and washbasin, etc. adjacent to:

STAIRCASE (UP)

On the First Floor

BALCONY

Skirts whole of First Floor. Panel ling continued. All rooms lead off.

MAJOR BEDROOM and EN-SUITE BATHROOM

Situated over Chinese Room and Porch. No expense has been spared in fitting out the beautiful En-Suite Bathroom with this Bedroom, particularly the luxurious separate glassed-in shower.

BEDROOM 2

Situated over the Lounge. Scenic views over Sutton Coldfield.

BEDROOM 3

Situated over the Dining Room. Again, very scenic views. Has been used as Billiard Room or Childrens Playroom.

Continuing around Balcony:

BACK STAIRCASE (DOWN)

BEDROOM 5

Formerly servants quarters .

BEDROOM 6

Formerly servants quarters

Returning via heavy swing door to:

BEDROOM 4

STAIRCASE (DOWN)

Outside

Kitchen door leads to brick covered yard which has stabling on two sides and a fence and main gates on the third side at the top of the drive.

Formal gardens immediately around the house, surrounded by shrubbery and fields. In particular, there is a beautiful mulberry tree overlooking Reddicap Hill.

Sunken Tennis Court, approached by way of sloping lawns. The owner says this was laid as a hard court many years ago, but when carefully mown nowadays it plays extremely well as a grass court I

Overlooking the Tennis Court is a large Summer House on a turntable which one can, surprisingly easily, push around to take full advantage of the sun, or not, as one wishes.

Plans: Attached

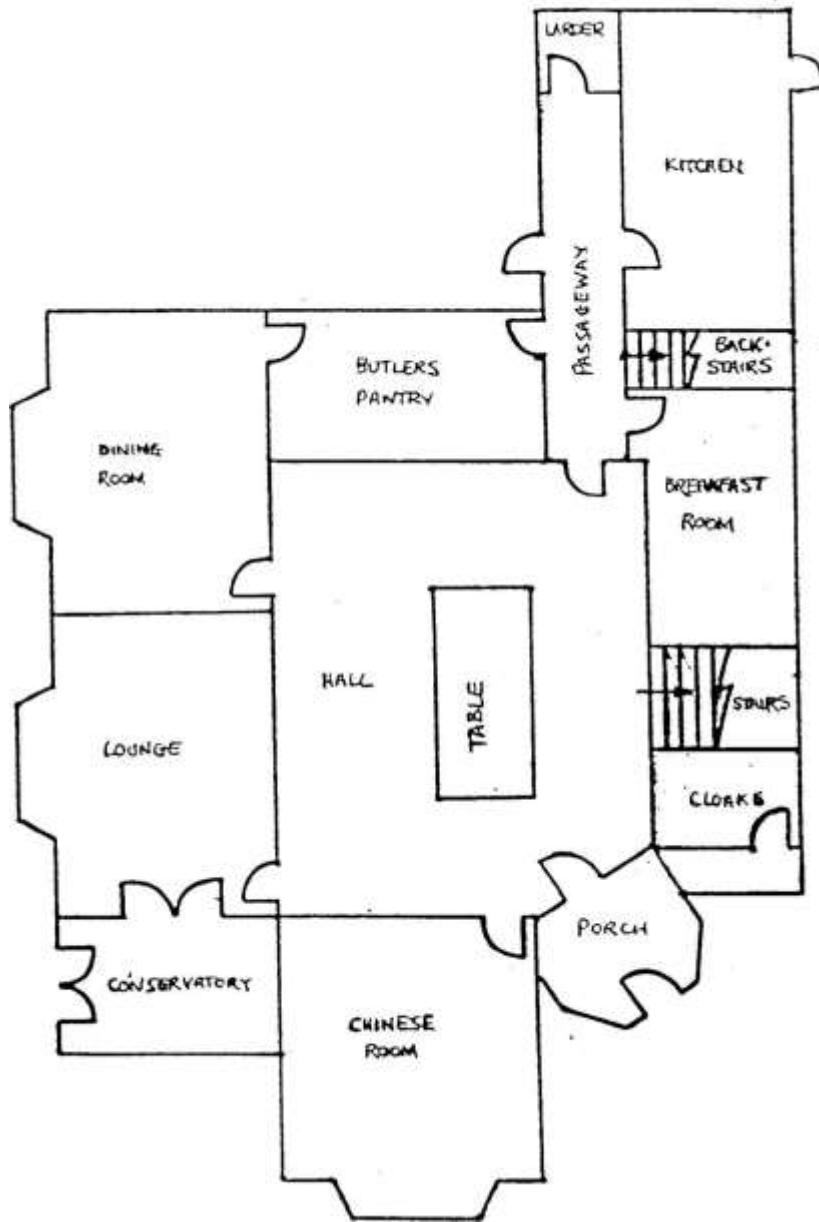
Services: All main services are connected.

Fixtures and Fittings: To be agreed with the owners.

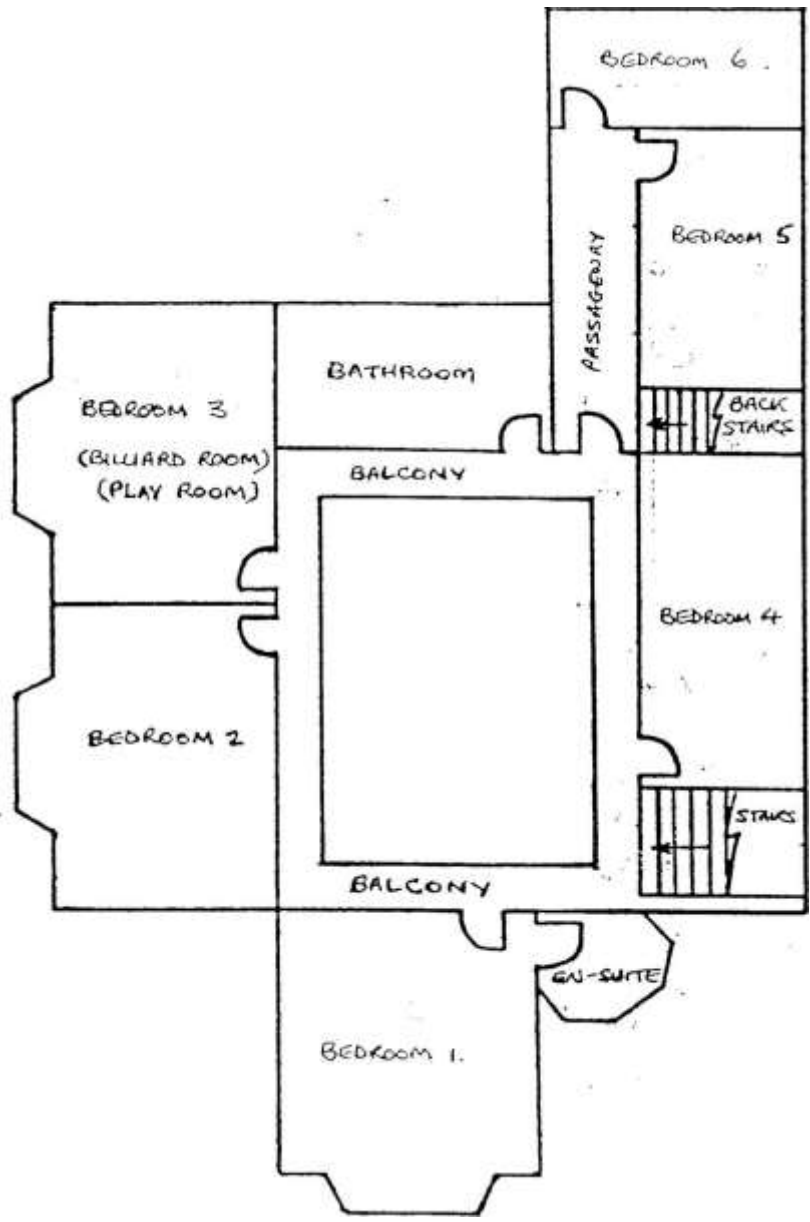
Rating Assessment: To be advised

Viewing: By appointment with the owners.

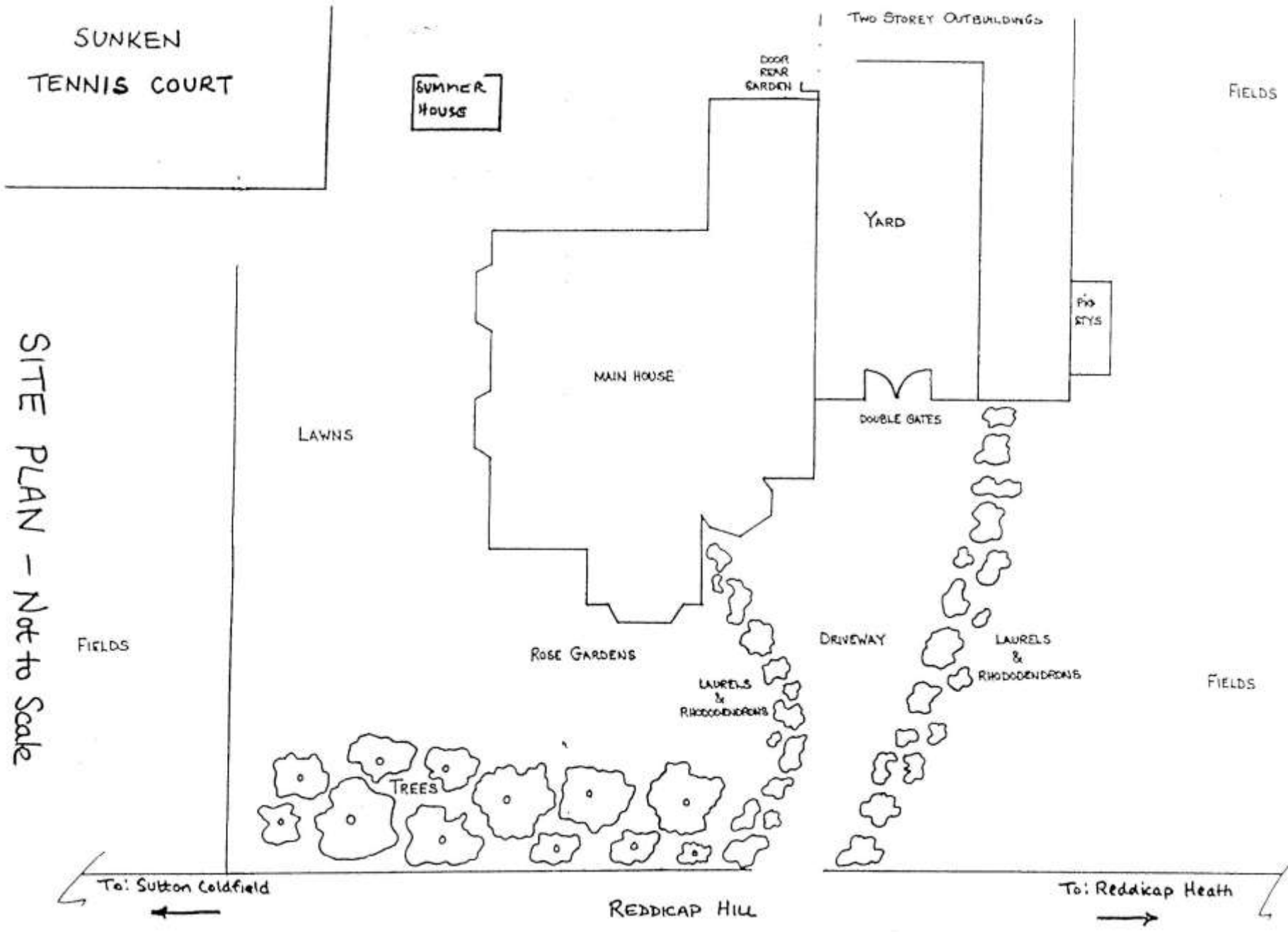
PRICE: £5,553



GROUND FLOOR PLAN — Not to Scale



FIRST FLOOR PLAN - Not to Scale



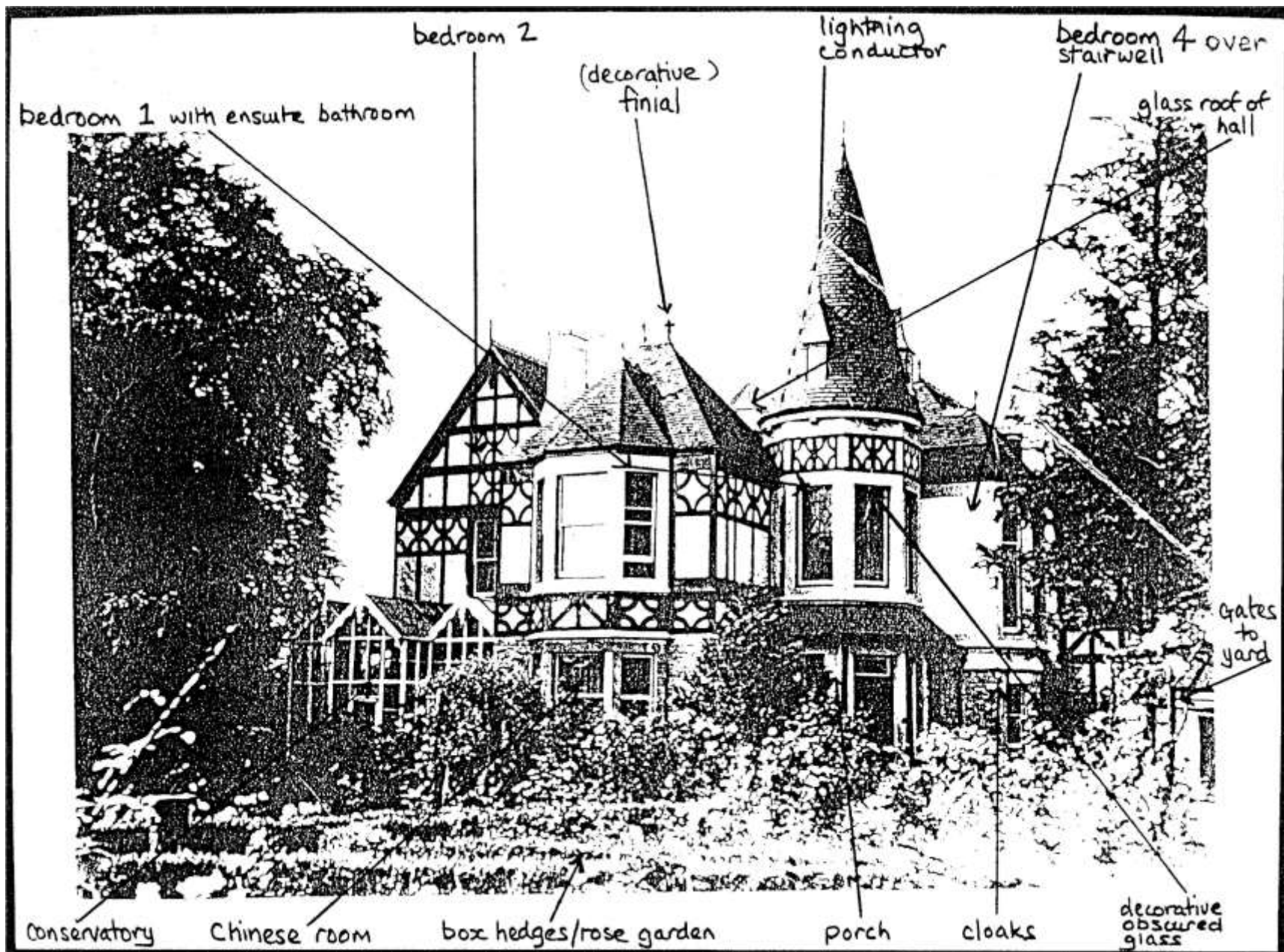
SITE PLAN - Not to Scale

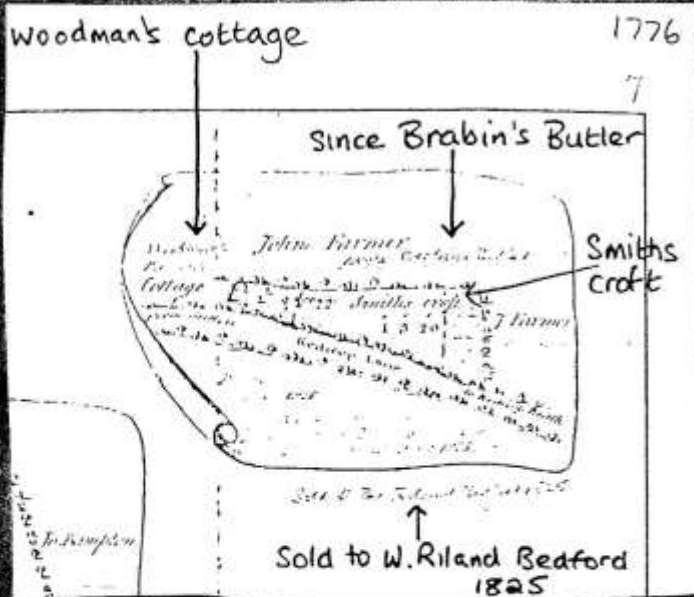
Estate Agents Particulars such as these may have enabled the Styles to sell to the Finers in 1950. Certainly, Mr. and Mrs. Styles did make a good profit as a result of the sale.

Even more fruitful was the Finers' sale to the Council in 1960. However, it does seem that The Mount only realised its full financial potential as a building site, waiting to be turned into an estate of high-rise flats, rather than in its heyday as a prestigious Victorian residence fit for a gentleman's family.

It, is nice to know of at least one of its inhabitants who valued it for its qualities as a happy home, full of the sights and sounds of balmy summer days with its thudding of tennis balls and rattling of lawn mowers in the background.

Mrs. Styles will also, no doubt, endorse the sentiment that The Mount needs to be remembered as being one of the most impressive properties ever to have been built in Reddicap Hill, Sutton Coldfield.



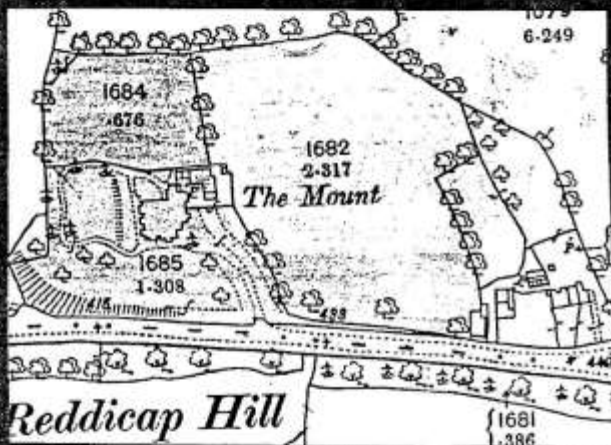


1776: Snape's Survey

THE Mount
Reddicap Hill
HOW IT GREW



1851: Enclosure Map



1889: Ordnance Survey



1938: Ordnance Survey



1965: Ordnance Survey

