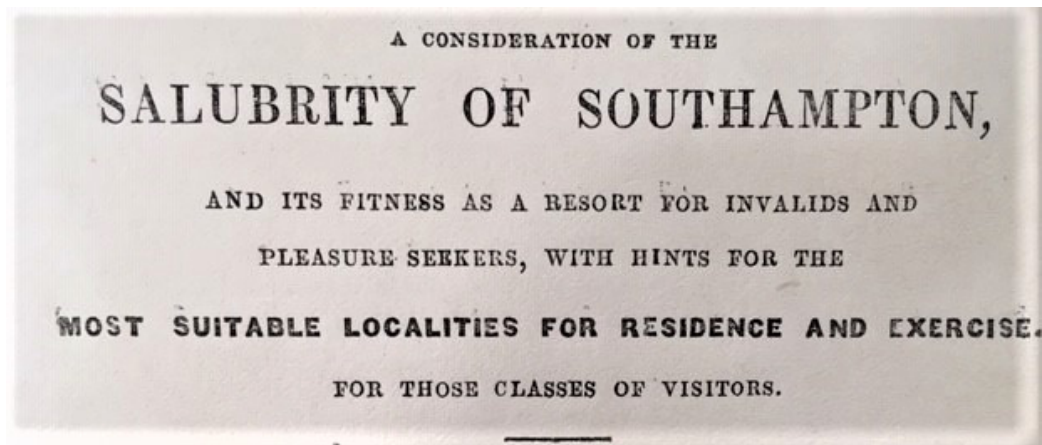


# VICTORIAN COUNTRY HOUSES OF LOWER HIGHFIELD, SOUTHAMPTON

PETE THOMAS

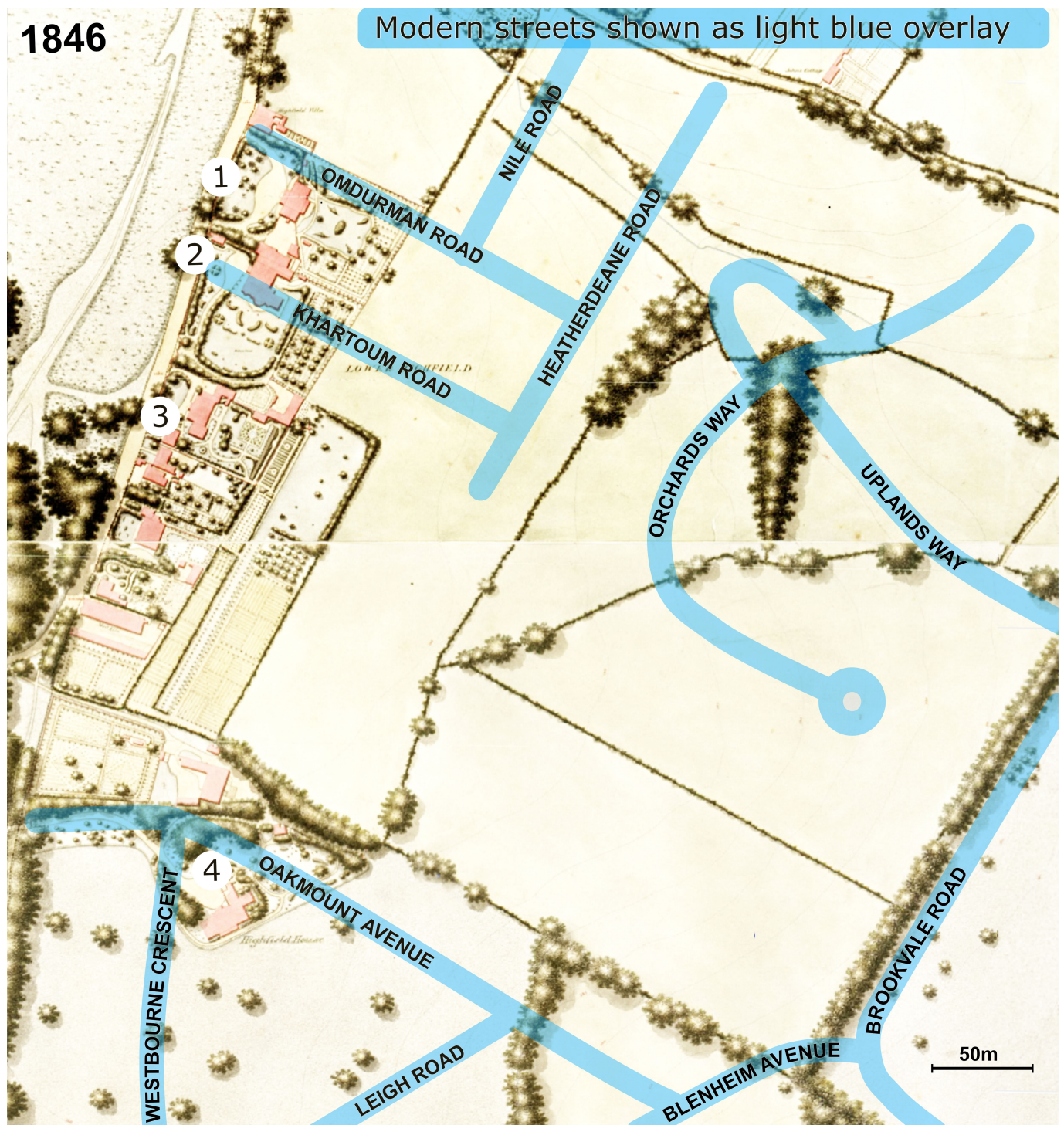


# 1846 map

This area was known as Lower Highfield. The map shows three large houses next to each other on Highfield Road and a fourth further south. It does not give the names of (1), (2), and (3), but does name (4), the house further south, Highfield House (if you have superhuman eyesight).

These houses were situated at the highest point of the area, and must have had a beautiful view across fields and woodland to Southampton Water.

The roads built since we have shown as overlays on the map.



## 1850 map

This map is less reliable but shows the names of the occupants or the house.

1. General Rogers'
2. [Lt. Col. Crabbe's](#)
3. [The Rosary](#)
4. Highfield House



Not possible to show overlays as the scale appears to vary within the map.

## (1) General Rogers

There is very little information about General Rogers, except that his house may have been known as the [Old Manor of Highfield](#), but we know a lot more about his neighbours to the south - houses 2, 3 and 4.

## (2) The Crabbes.

While the name of his house remains a mystery, we do know that Lt. Col. Eyre John Crabbe was a supporter and benefactor of Highfield Church and School as well the Royal South Hants Infirmary (to which he made numerous donations and has two wards named after him). He also became a Justice of the Peace.

In 1846 he married wealthy widow Harriett Hollis, whose husband (d.1844) had started development on the Highfield Road plot in 1834. The Colonel bought the property from the executors in 1847. Harriet died in 1848.

He remarried in 1851 to Elmina, whose mother and father were both very wealthy plantation owners in Jamaica.

Records show the family lived in Highfield Road until 1856<sup>1</sup>. Round about that time Eyre John had plans to build [Glen Eyre, a new house in Bassett](#) which was completed in 1860, but his death in 1859 meant he never had the pleasure of seeing it completed. In 1860 his widow Elmina and children moved to Glen Eyre House.

His son [Eyre MacDonell Stewart Crabbe](#) born in 1952 went on to become a Brigadier General, described by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as “You could not help noting him if you tried. A burly, broad-shouldered man with full, square, black beard over his chest, his arm in a sling, his bearing a medieval knight-errant. It is Crabbe, of the Grenadier Guards.”



Brigadier Eyre Macdonnell Stewart  
Crabbe

He was a highly distinguished officer and fought in the Sudan (including the Battle of Omdurman) and the Boer War. His first wife was Emily Constance Jameson (of the Irish Whiskey fame). His son (Campbell Tempest) is shown in the Jameson

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<sup>1</sup> Need to check this, where did they live between 1856 and Glen Eyre in 1860???

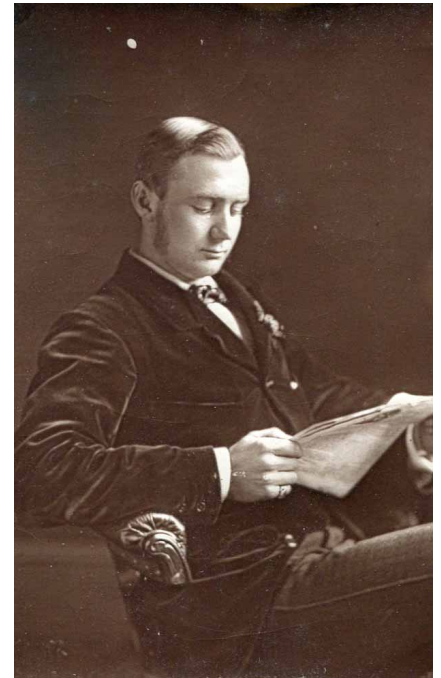
family archives as being born in Bassett in 1897 so we may presume this was at Glen Eyre House, although the Brigadier's death in 1905 was in Aldershot.

### (3) The McCalmonts

The Crabbes' neighbour to the south was [Reverend Thomas McCalmont](#) who lived at The Rosary from 1861. His son [Alfred Leighton McCalmont](#) famously became mayor of Southampton in 1877 at the age of 26 - the youngest ever mayor in the country. He sadly died in 1880 of typhoid. There is a stained glass window in Highfield church dedicated to the McCalmonts.

The grounds of The Rosary were extensive - not just the large back garden we see on the map, but also the fields to the east as far as Brookvale Rd and northeast to Highfield Lane.

The stream we see in the maps of 1850, 1870 and 1897, starting west of what is now Nile Road, has since been built over. It flows southeast until it emerges in Orchards Way and continues towards Brookvale Road and on through Portswood Residents' Gardens.



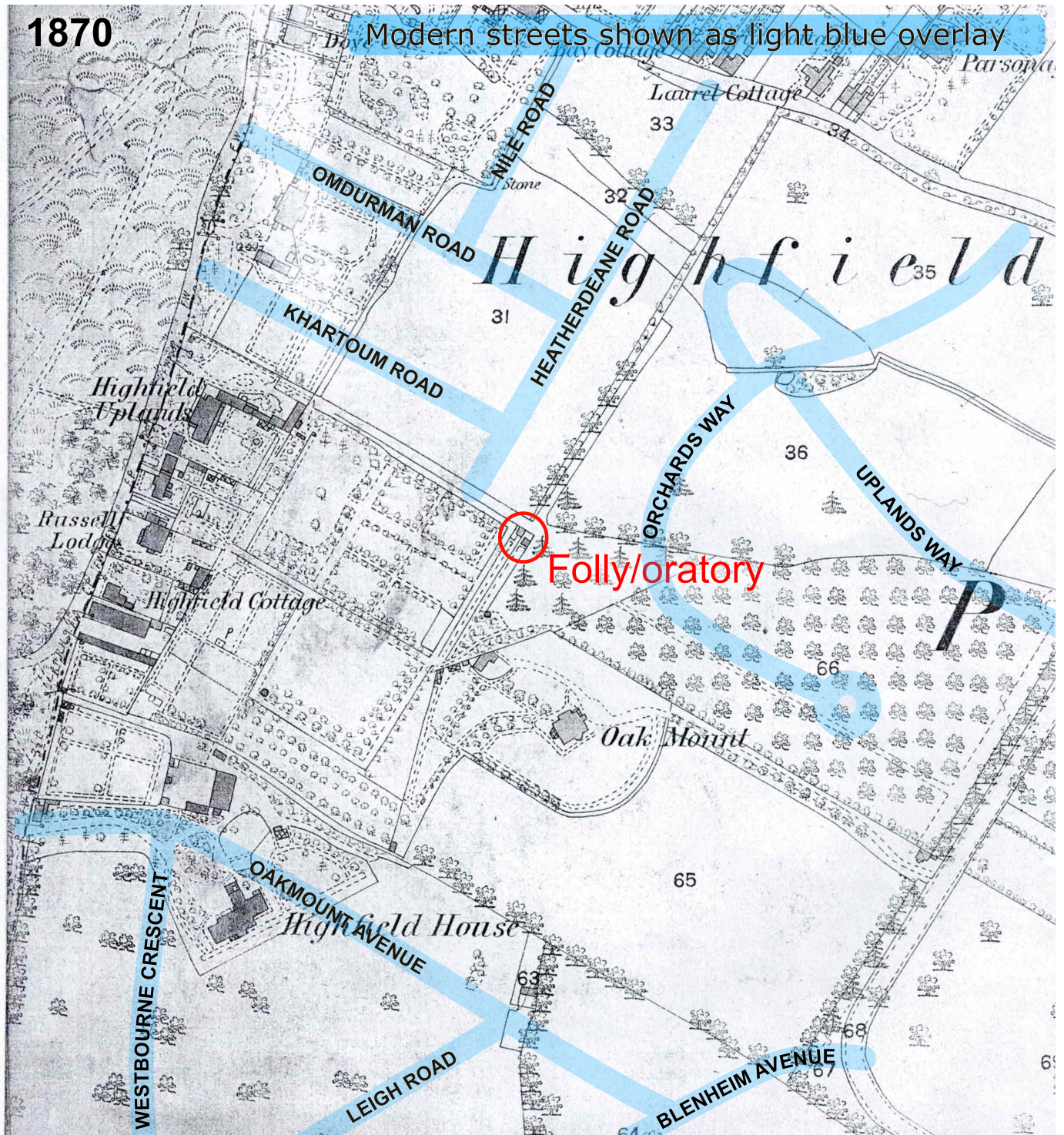
Alfred Leighton McCalmont



## The 1870 map

This shows that the Crabbe's old house (just south of what is now Khartoum Road) has been demolished.

The Rosary has been renamed to Highfield Uplands (presumably by Thomas McCalmont when he bought it in 1861).



We can see that Brookvale Road has been built following the lines of two hedgerows. We also see what is now De Grouchy Lane leading to Oak Mount, built in 1850 as a private residence before becoming a school in 1907. When the school closed in 1989 the house was modernised and converted into four flats. At some time its name changed from Oak Mount to Oakmount House. This name was then adopted by John Smith when he built Oakmount Avenue in the 1920s as part of the development known as the Oakmount Triangle.

Also in this map you can see what appears to be a folly, but may be a private oratory, at the end of Highfield Uplands' garden. An oratory would make sense in the right of the occupant being a Reverend.

It remains to this day in the garden of 65 Heatherdeane Road. The yellow bricks and wall are similar to what remains of Highfield House further down the Road, which gives us a clue that Uplands House was of a similar style.

An adjacent building of a similar size on the map suggests there may have been a pair of them, or the other one may just be a shed. *(PT note : follow up on info just received about what this second one may be)*



#### (4) Highfield House

This originated about 1810. This “pleasant and agreeable villa” was built by Captain (later Admiral) Edward James Foote RN (1767-1833), who lived there from 1819.

He was acquainted with the novelist Jane Austen, and famous in his time for a published attack upon Nelson’s savage conduct against rebels at Naples in 1799.

Another admiral, William Morier (1790- 1864), brother of the novelist James Morier, lived there in the mid nineteenth century. These naval connections might explain a cannonball recently found in the garden of 24 Oakmount Avenue.



Charles Hayter c. 1800. A very fine portrait of Admiral Foote, with history. Set in a gilt locket frame with hair panel reverse. 3" x 2 1/2"

**A BEAUTIFUL FREEHOLD ESTATE,  
NEAR SOUTHAMPTON,**

With a handsome Residence, will be Sold by Auction, by  
**MR. CHARLES BROOKS**, who has been honored with instructions from the Proprietor to offer by **PUBLIC COMPETITION** on Thursday, June 14th, 1849, at the Dolphin Hotel, Southampton, at two o'clock, that most compact and beautiful **FREEHOLD ESTATE** and **VILLA RESIDENCE**, within two miles of Southampton, known as "Highfield House and Park," in the most perfect state of substantial and ornamental condition; comprising in the whole nearly **Twenty-One Acres** of most valuable **PARK LAND**, about seven of which (inclusive) will be sold with the residence, and the remaining **Fourteen Acres** or thereabout will be divided into good and proportional lots for building detached Villas thereon. This spot is decidedly one of the most attractive in Hampshire, and adjoins the beautiful and romantic Southampton Common, of 360 acres, clothed in rich foliage. Its elevated position commands most interesting and extensive views, and in every direction the eye meets a pleasing prospect. Its approach through the beautiful Avenue on the North road leading to Winchester, to the extent of a mile and half, is not to be surpassed; and the handsome carriage drive through the Park, Lawn, is sheltered with evergreens and shrubs in the highest perfection.

The Lawn and Pleasure Grounds are tastefully laid out, on which is a Greenhouse. This Villa contains entrance hall, dining Room, 29 by 18, and 14 feet high; two splendid drawing rooms, 36 by 20, a morning room communicating, 18 by 14, and gentleman's room, 15 by 10 (all 12 feet high), a comfortable housekeeper's room, good sized butler's pantry room, men's sleeping room, large pantry, larder and cellar, a spacious and lofty kitchen and scullery, and many other usual and useful offices.

**ON THE FIRST FLOOR** are four best Bed-rooms, and Dressing-room, water and other closets. By a separate staircase are four servants' Bed-rooms.

**THE OUT PREMISES COMPRISE:** A very large and most productive high-walled Kitchen Garden, large Coach-house and Stabling, with harness room, loft and men's room, numerous outbuildings, and a small Farm Yard with every convenience, Cart-houses, Piggeries, and Sheds.

The whole or any part of the Furniture, which is excellent, may be included, or taken at a valuation, and very early possession can be allowed.

Immediately following lot one will be offered for Public Competition the beautiful **PARK-LAND** of about 14 Acres, in 27 lots for building superior Villas or Cottages thereon; arranged as per plans, which can be seen at the Auctioneer's Office, 8, Above Bar, Southampton; and at Messrs. Newman and Lyon, Solicitors, Yeovil, Somerset, where printed particulars may be had, and every information obtained, and orders to view, *without which no one can be permitted on the premises.*

The whole of this estate is in the Parish of South Stoneham, where all ratings are exceedingly moderate, and not subject to any Southampton rates and taxes.

Mr. Charles Brooks begs respectfully to call the attention of Private Gentlemen, Speculators, Builders, and others, to this delightful spot of land, it being not only the most advantageous speculation ever entered into in this county, but unquestionably the most desirable and really valuable of any within the vicinity of the highly-estimated and beautiful town of Southampton.

**N.B.** The Auctioneer has also the pleasure to announce to every purchaser that great accommodation will be afforded; by way of mortgage, on reasonable interest.

1849 sale of Highfield House



Highfield House - artists impression

Afterwards the house passed through a group of distinguished local and related families, ending with the Morley Lees who sold it in 1910 along with the estate for speculative development. The original lodge still exists at the northern entrance to Oakmount Avenue. You can see the distinctive yellow brickwork of the wall facing the common.

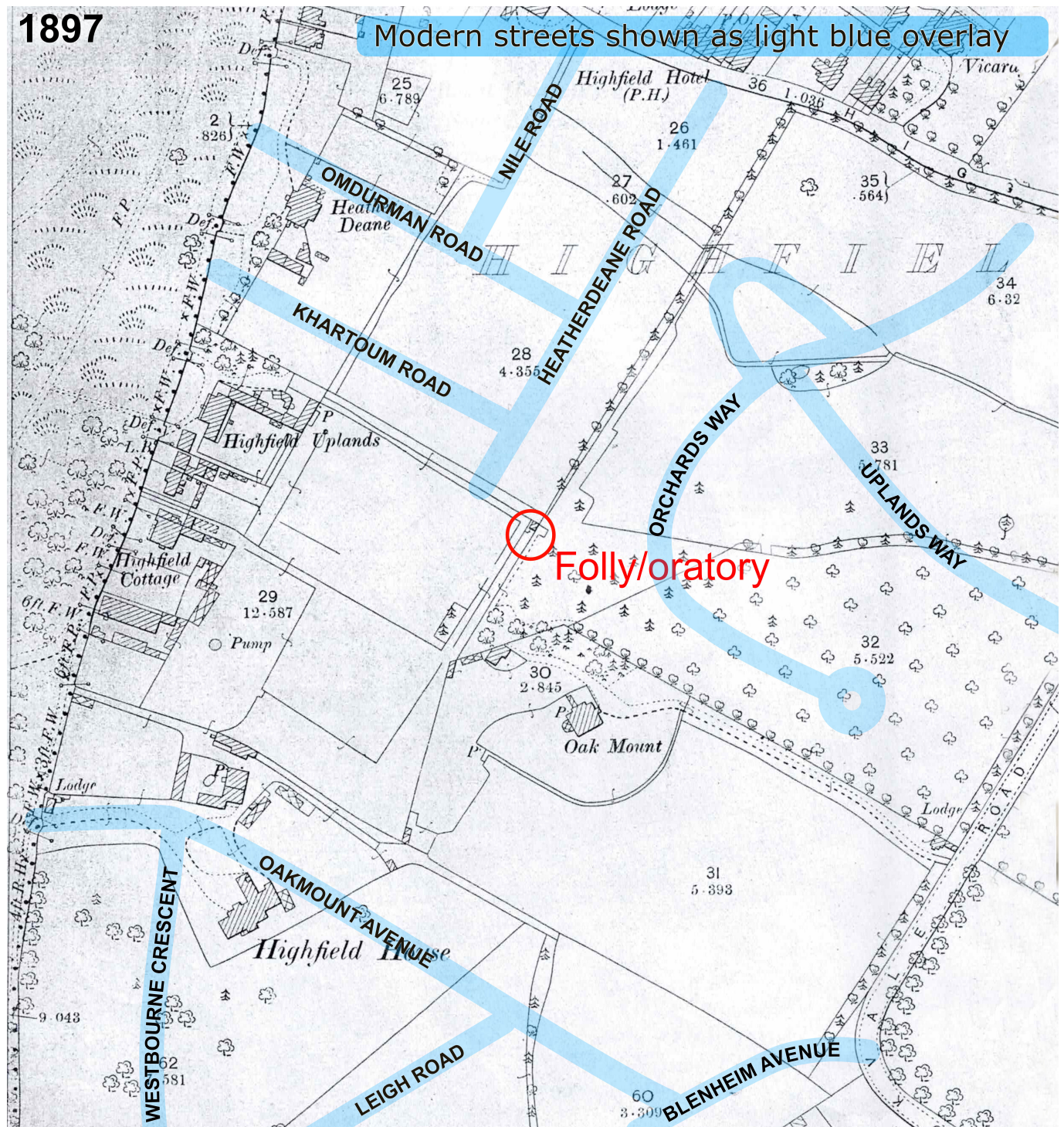
The house had a walled garden behind what are now nos. 1 - 5 Highfield Road. Some of the wall remains, see <https://otra.org.uk/highfield-house>).



## The 1897 map

At this time nothing has yet been built on the Crabbe house previous plot.

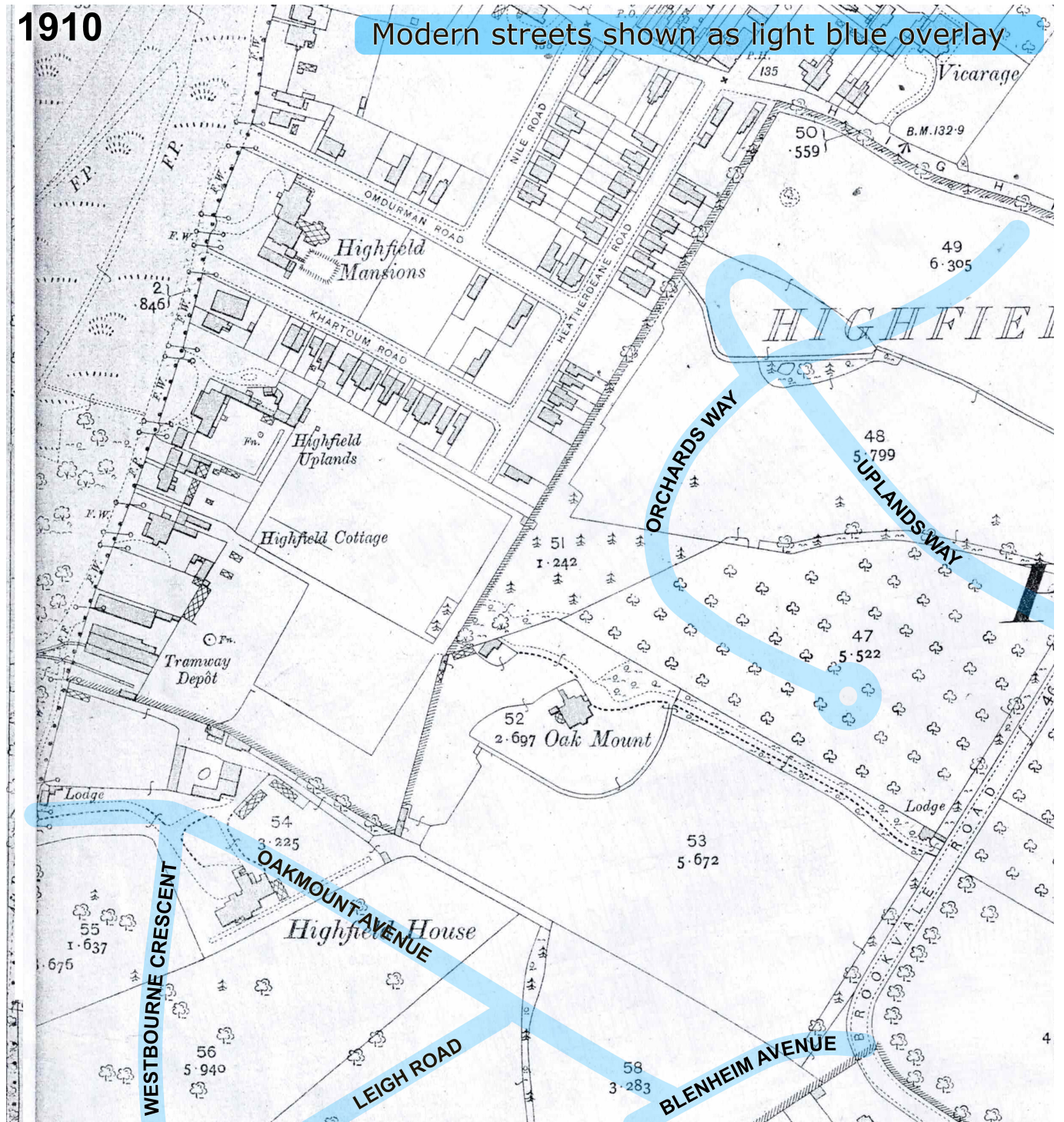
The name of the General's house is now shown as Heather Deane.



It appears the second building next to the “folly/oratory” is no longer there.

# The 1910 map

We can see Khartoum, Omdurman, Nile, and Heatherdeane Roads have been built.



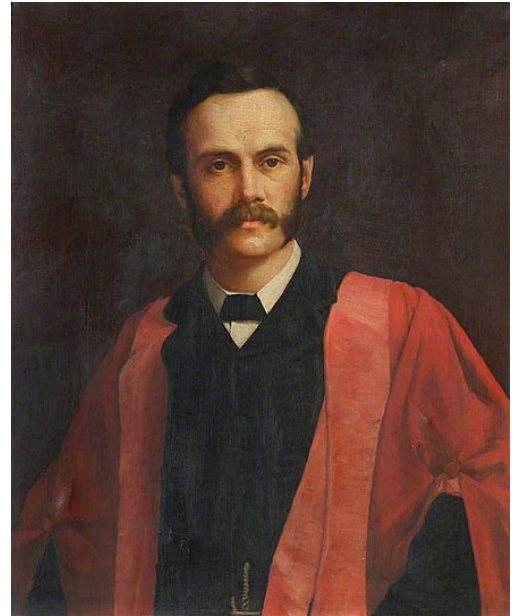
Two houses are now shown on the site of the Crabbe's House. (24 Highfield Road and 1 Khartoum Road). The second small building by the folly is back!

Mr Gudgeon, a hotelier of Winchester, had bought Heather Deane from the General's widow around 1895. He had grand designs to convert it into a hotel and

renamed it Highfield Mansions, added an extension between the main house and the narrow building to the south, a winter garden (recreation room) along with tennis courts at the back. As we know the name Heather Deane lives on with Heatherdeane Road.

After only a few years Mr Gudgeon died and the house was left empty and allowed to decay. It was acquired by Dr Alexander Hill, Principal of University College Southampton, who renovated it.

Works were complete by 1914 when Dr Hill lived in the old part and made the new extension available for student accommodation and social life. When war broke out later that year he offered the house to the Red Cross to use as a hospital and it was once again renamed and became known as Highfield Hall.



Dr. Alexander Hill



Dr Hill moved into a house on Khartoum Road, but continued to improve the garden with ["rare and beautiful flowers which gave intense pleasure to the](#)

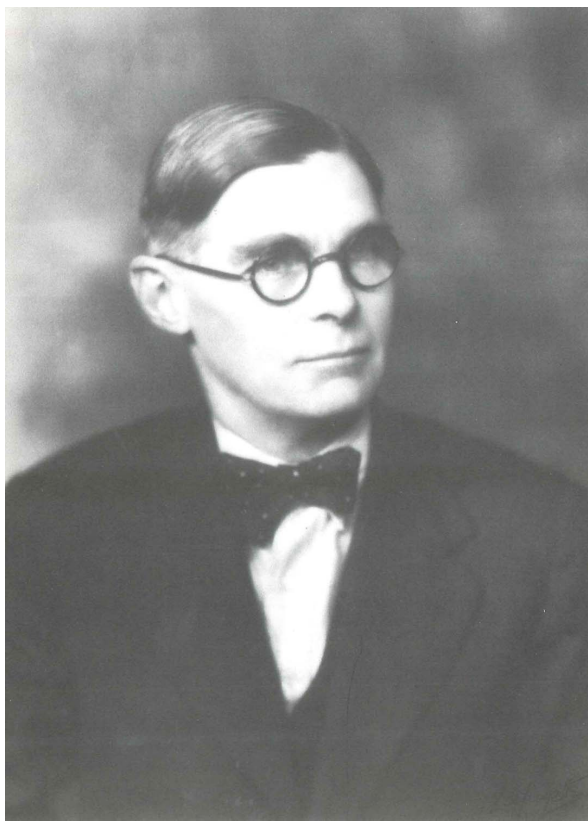
[wounded men.](#)” He did not move back in after the war and the house became accommodation for women students.

Highfield Uplands is still shown on the 1910 map but was sold soon after. The house was demolished to make way for Taunton’s School and the southeastern part of the grounds became playing fields in 1926.

The larger estate (woods and fields) to the northeast was bought by [Herbert Collins](#) who built the [Uplands Estate](#) on it, starting with the Brookvale Rd properties in 1922.

In 1910, Highfield House was purchased by the developer John Smith, who built the Oakmount Triangle on the grounds.

The map of 1911 shows work had started already on Blenheim Avenue and one property on Westbourne Grove (now Westbourne Crescent).



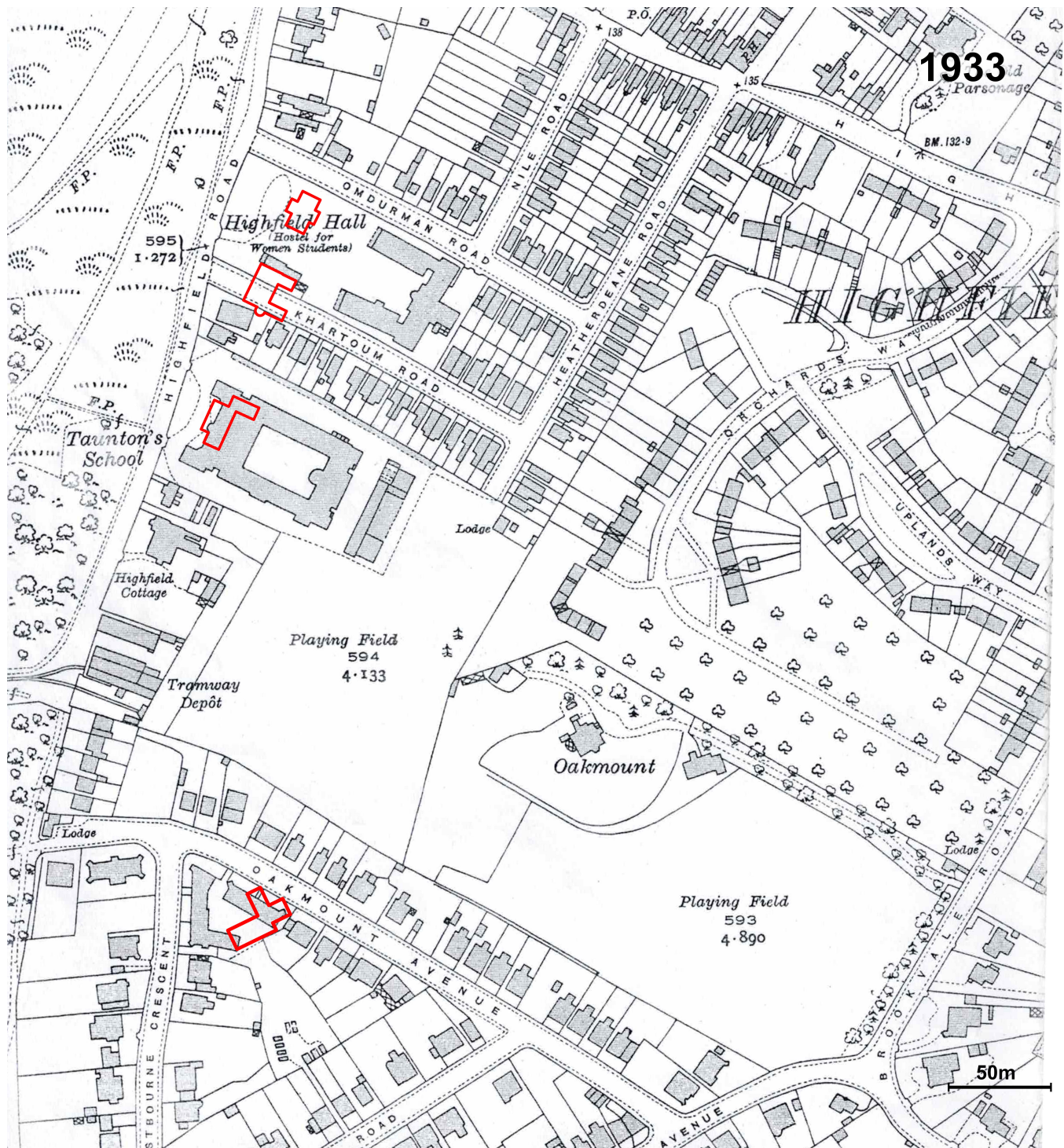
John Smith



## The 1933 map

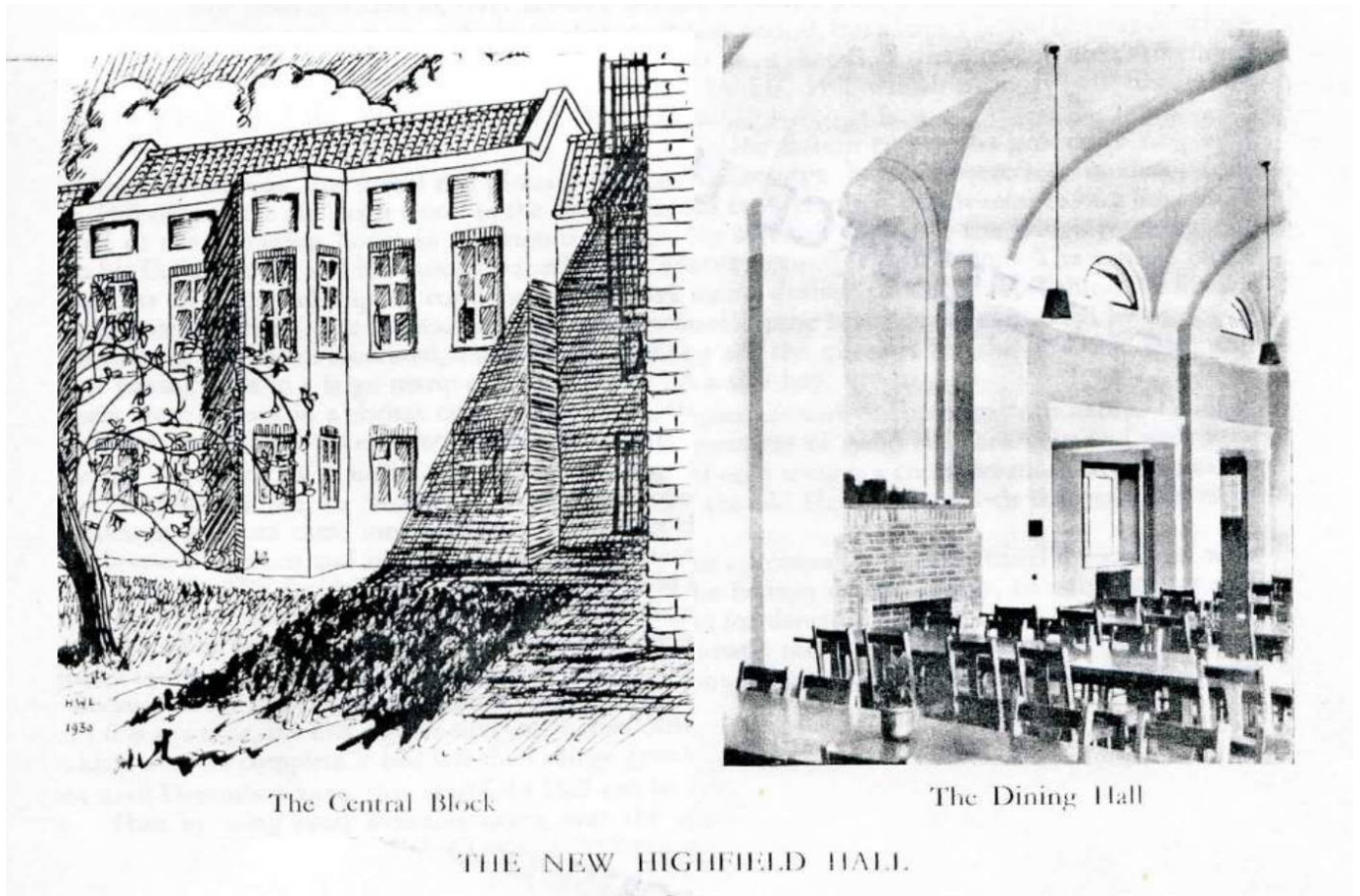
The overlays in red show the original sites of all four Victorian houses. We can see that Taunton's School is now on the site of Highfield Uplands. The original Highfield Hall had been demolished in 1932 and its site is now a large forecourt or front garden for the (New) Highfield Hall built to the east.

One building from the original house is shown as surviving the demolition, at the south of the forecourt, possibly this was originally the stables.



The forecourt (the site of the old Highfield Hall) was developed in the 60s(?) when Wolfe House was built.

The name Highfield Hall is now used to include both the newer Wolfe House and the 1933 building now called Aubrey House.



Meanwhile in the Oakmount Triangle, Highfield House had been demolished in around 1929, and in its place we can see Leigh and Westwood Mansions.

Had it not been demolished it would have been finished off twelve years later by the Luftwaffe, as we can see in this 1941 photograph of Westbourne mansions.



[Heather Deane House](#) Sotonopedia

[New Highfield Hall - Wessex - Vol1 No.3 1930](#) -Sale of Hotel, wartime use as hospital, development of New Highfield Hall.

[Alfred Leighton McCalmont](#) Sotonopedia

[Alfred Leighton McCalmont](#) Articles and clippings from the Southern Reformer

[Eyre MacDonell Stewart Crabbe](#) - Grenadier Guards

[Uplands Estate](#) - Herbert Collins

[Highfield](#) Wikipedia

[Christ Church, Highfield](#) Sotonopedia

[Wright, Frank B, History of Glen Eyre House, Bassett and Glen Eyre Hall of Residence, University of Southampton](#) - The Crabbes, Highfield Road, Glen Eyre

Notes: Trying to make sense of how the 19th century maps related to each otherwise a bit hit and miss as the surveying was obviously less precise back then. The 1850 map especially so, in spite of Philip Brannon calling it a *Complete & Correct Map of Southampton*. This needs checking as there is no date on the map and I have seen references to it as 1870.