



TOLWORTH'S LANDED ESTATES & THE APPLE STORE

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INTRODUCTION

This was based on a talk given at a public meeting of the Kingston upon Thames Society on 21 October 2026. It was the result of ongoing research on various sources including books, old maps, old newspaper reports and Internet material. The title “Tolworth’s Landed Estates & the Apple Store” reflects an aspect of Tolworth’s history that has received little attention previously.



THE TOLWORTH APPLE STORE, A “NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET” OF KINGSTON COUNCIL

2.6 Tolworth Apple Store - We are glad to report that after lobbying from the Society, the Council has finally recognised the heritage importance of the Council-owned Tolworth Apple Store. For planning purposes it will be regarded as a “non-designated heritage asset” even though it is not a formally Locally Listed building. This means that it will have a low measure of protection under the National Planning Policy Framework. However research into the Apple Store continues, with a view to submitting a new application for Locally Listed Building status.

NEWSLETTER, KINGSTON UPON THAMES SOCIETY, DECEMBER 2025

The research was associated with an announcement in the December 2025 issue of the Kingston Society’s Newsletter that, after lobbying by the Society, the Council of the Royal Borough had decided that the Tolworth Apple Store [KT4 7QB], which it owns, was to be awarded the status of a “Non-Designated Heritage Asset”. This status confers a low level of protection under the National Policy Framework. It may now be possible to obtain Locally Listed Building status for the Apple Store, if the result of more research enables the necessary criteria to be met.



This modern map of Tolworth shows the approximate location of its landed estates which were situated close to the border with Worcester Park. Riverhill House, which became Tolworth Hall, was situated in what is now the Riverhill Mobile Home Park. The location pin marks where Worcester Park House [in Tolworth, despite its name], roughly was situated. While some have seen the Kingston Bypass as a dividing line as far as different parts of Tolworth are concerned, perhaps the railway line is more significant in this respect.

The next slide provides more information on the location of the old landed estates.



TOLWORTH, SEPTEMBER 2026

This section of the modern map focuses on the sites of Tolworth Hall [Riverhill House] and Worcester Park House.



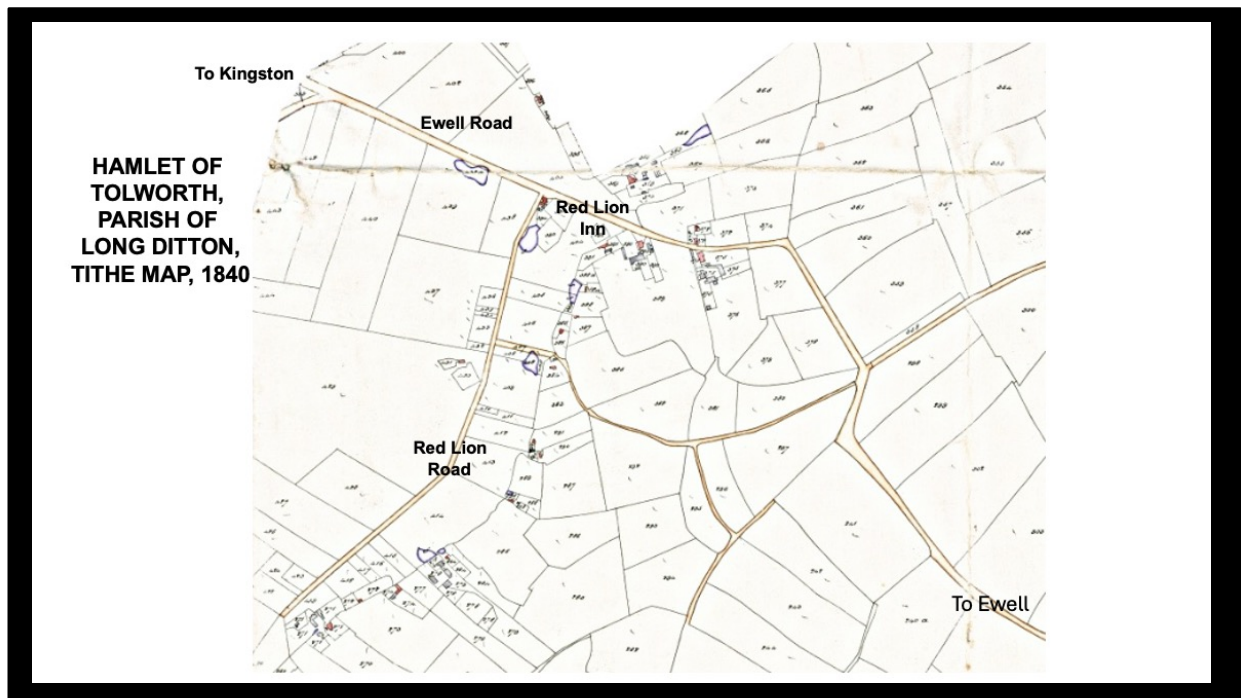
**PART 1, WORCESTER PARK HOUSE
& OCCUPANTS, 1797-1936**

**PART 2, RIVERHILL HOUSE, TOLWORTH HALL
& OCCUPANTS, 1866-1911**

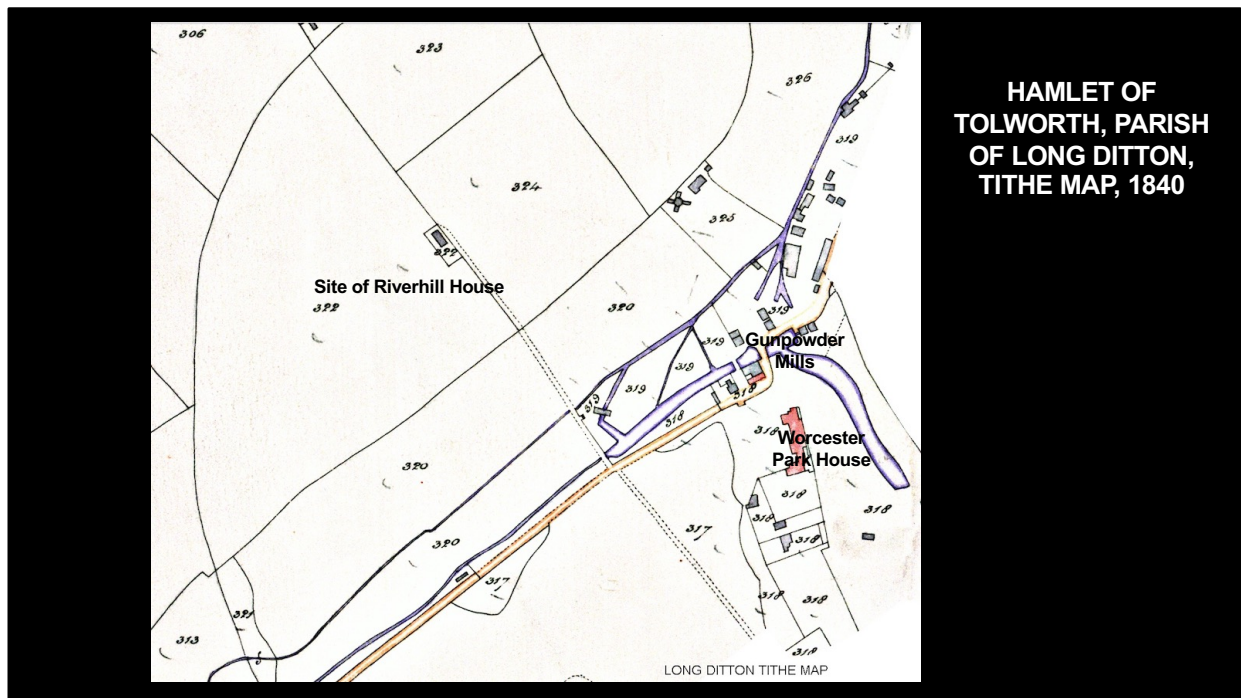
PART 3, THE APPLE STORE, Ca. 1894 - 2026

The talk was in three parts, as follows:

1. Worcester Park House & its occupants, 1797-1936.
2. Riverhill House, later Tolworth Hall, 1865-1911.
3. The Apple Store within the grounds of Tolworth Hall, 1894-2026.



The hamlet of Tolworth once was within the Parish of Long Ditton. The slide shows part of the relevant Tithe Map of about 1840. Tolworth then was largely a rural area. The map identifies the Ewell Road, the Red Lion Inn in Red Lion Road and the road to Ewell. Many fields are evident. In the 1841 Census, Tolworth's population was 317, about 50 households were identified, agriculture was the main source of income and there were at least four farms and one market garden. Four households had resident servants, an indication of sufficient income to maintain them. Two heads of household were lime burners, which suggests that at the time they had access to local chalk deposits.



The slide shows a section of the Long Ditton 1840 Tithe map that identifies Worcester Park House and the adjacent gunpowder mills. The final stage of gunpowder was the process of grinding a dried cake of mixture of the ingredients [saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal] between millstones to produce a fine powder. At the time the River Hogsmill, also known as the Ewell River or Malden River, had sufficient flow to keep the millstones turning. The site of what was to become Riverhill House [later Tolwoth Hall] is identified within a large field which was known as “Riverhill”. The grinding stage of gunpowder manufacture carried a great explosion risk. In August 1849 there was a tremendous explosion at the Worcester Park works which totally demolished some of its wooden buildings and shattered some windows of the nearby church.



OS, SURREY, XIII, SURVEYED 1866-1867, 6 IN/MILE

The slide shows a section of an OS map, 6 inch/mile, surveyed in 1866-1867, that identifies Riverhill House, Worcester Park House and the Worcester Park Powder Mills.



TOLWORTH, 1894, OS, SURREY XII.NE & XIII.SW, 6 IN/MILE

The slide shows a section of a six inch/mile OS map of 1894, which shows the significantly rural nature of Tolworth at the time.

WORCESTER PARK HOUSE – EARLY DAYS

- HENRY VIII, NONSUCH PALACE, WORCESTER PARK
- 1650, WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, COL. THOMAS PRIDE
- SIR ROBERT LONG, VISITED BY SAMUEL PEPYS
- DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND - DUKE OF GRAFTON - JOHN WALTER
- 1750-1764, WILLIAM TAYLOR, SENIOR, GUNPOWDER MAKER
- 1797, WILLIAM TAYLOR, JUNIOR, GUNPOWDER MAKER, NEW WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, LATER ENLARGED AND IMPROVED UNDER SUPERVISION OF JOHN NASH, FAMOUS ARCHITECT

The first Worcester Park House was located within the extensive grounds of Henry VIII's Nonsuch Palace. In 1650 the house was occupied by Colonel Thomas Pride, one of the men who signed the death warrant of Charles I. Sir Robert Long was the occupant in 1665 when he was visited by the famous diarist, Samuel Pepys. Between 1670 and 1730, the house was occupied by the Duchess of Cleveland, followed by the Duke of Grafton and then John Walter. From 1750 to 1765, the house was owned by William Taylor, Senior, and gunpowder was made nearby. Around 1797, the estate was owned by William Taylor, Junior. He had the old house demolished and replaced by a new one. Later, this was enlarged and improved under the supervision of the famous architect, John Nash.



WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, FROM PROSSER, 1828

This is a view of Worcester Park House from Prosser, 1828.*

*** George Frederick Prosser, 1828, Select illustrations of the County of Surrey, London, C. & J. Rivington**

WORCESTER PARK HOUSE FOR SALE, 1846

For sale...family mansion, known as Worcester Park, situate 12 miles from town, two from Kingston Station, and four from Epsom, upon which upwards of a thousand pounds has been expended by the vendor to render it fit for the immediate reception of a numerous establishment. The reception rooms are of noble proportions, and open on an extensive lawn, which gently slopes to a magnificent lake of water. The dormitories consist of 13 best bedrooms and servants' rooms making up nine beds. The offices are judiciously planned, of large dimensions, and comprise every requisite for a first-rate establishment. The grounds are of great beauty, in a high state of order, and diversified with parterres, shrubberies, arboretum, rosaries, etc., excellent kitchen garden, with greenhouse, hot house, pinery, etc. The premises are held at the low rent of £240 per annum, including 25 acres of land and all rates, tithes and taxes, and repairs of every description, together with the right of shooting over 340 acres, and fishing in the trout stream...

Transcript of advertisement, The Morning Herald, 6 August 1846

In 1846, Worcester Park House was for sale and the advertisement provides an outline description of the property. It was conveniently located, had been renovated at the cost of £1,000 [about £80,000 in 2017*], had 13 bedrooms, fine reception rooms, a lake, accommodation for servants, and beautiful grounds with kitchen garden. Moreover, it could be rented at £240 per annum [about £19,000 in 2017*], including shooting rights over 340 acres and fishing in the trout stream.

*** National Archives Currency Converter**

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>

Note, hereafter, currency conversions from this source.



WILLIAM CLOWES, 1779-1847

- 1841 CENSUS, LIVING IN WORCESTER PARK HOUSE
- PIONEER OF STEAM-POWERED PRINTING PRESS
- ***“PRINCE OF PRINTERS...HEAD OF LARGEST PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT IN EUROPE...GOVERNMENT PRINTER..”***
- DIED IN 1847, ESTATE WORTH £90,000 = £ 7 MILLION IN 2017
- TWO SONS TOOK OVER FIRM IN 1847 & SECURED CONTRACT TO PRINT CATALOGUES FOR GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851

In the 1841 Census, Worcester Park House was occupied by William Clowes, his family and servants. He was a pioneer of the steam-powered printing press and has been described as ***“the prince of printers and the head of the largest printing establishment in Europe”***. He was a printer to the UK Government and after he died his sons secured a contract to print catalogues for the Great Exhibition of 1851. When he died in 1847 his estate would have been worth about £7 million in 2017.

CAPTAIN JOHN SHEPHERD, 1792-1859

- LIVED IN WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, 1851-1853
- CHAIRMAN OF EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1844, 1850 & 1851
- GOVERNOR OF HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1856-1858
- ***"NO OTHER PERSON, IN A COMMERCIAL CAPACITY, HAD SO MUCH INFLUENCE OVER THE GOVERNANCE OF SO MUCH OF THE WORLD"***
- DIED, LONDON, ESTATE WORTH £70,000 IN 1859 = ABOUT 4 MILLION IN 2017

Captain John Shepherd, his family and servants occupied Worcester Park House from 1851 to 1853. He was Chairman of the East India Company in 1844, 1850 and 1851 and a Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1856 to 1858. It has been written of him that *"no other person, in a commercial capacity, had so much influence over the governance of so much of the world"*. When he died in London in 1859, his estate would have been worth about £4 million in 2017.

WORCESTER PARK HOUSE FOR SALE, 1852

For sale... Worcester Park, an important and very desirable freehold property situate midway between Kingston and Ewell in the county of Surrey, 12 miles from London and within a 10 to 20 minute drive of four railway stations on the South Western and Epsom lines, containing 375 acres of superior old pasture and excellent arable and woodland, lying around the house on gentle declivities divided by natural fences into convenient enclosures, together with a spacious and most comfortable residence having an elegant elevation designed by Nash, under whose able direction the house was nearly rebuilt, extensive pleasure grounds, ornamental water, kitchen garden, offices, park-like pasture in the front, two homesteads, barns, granaries, stables, cottages and lodge. As well as some extensive buildings on the [Malden river](#), which for years past has afforded water power for several mills and is available for a manufactory or ornamental embellishment. The estate is bounded by the turnpike road from Kingston to Epsom and presents many charming sites for the erection of villas. The ancient royal hunting lodge of Great Nonsuch stood on this estate. The noble avenue of stately and venerable elms evidences the grandeur of one of the approaches to a palace, of which a portion of the offices is all that remains of its former splendour: the situation, doubtless chosen for the beauty of the surrounding scenery, still retains all its attractions – Leith Hill, Epsom Downs and Coombe Wood are amongst the many pleasing objects in the rich panoramic view. Farms are let to Mr Barnes and Mr White. The residence contains all that is required of a large family and is let to Captain Shepherd, late Chairman of the East India Company. A small farm, the woods and the mills are in hand. This estate may be recommended as an improveable investment and as a suitable residential property for a nobleman or gentleman desirous of being little more than half an hour ride from London. On the boundary and forming part of the estate are the gunpowder mills worked by the power of the River Malden; these mills have been established for a century and a half and have proved a source of a large and permanent income. Any person connected with the gunpowder industry will be able to appreciate the value of this establishment, with its mills, houses, machinery, steam and waterpower, the whole of which will be included in the purchase of this estate, as well as a magazine at Erith and a wharf on the Thames at Wandsworth.

Transcript of advertisement in *The Morning Herald*, 29 June 1852

In 1852, Worcester Park House was again for sale, together with an estate including the gunpowder mills, a magazine at Erith and a wharf on the Thames at Wandsworth. It was clear therefore the the gunpowder business, established for about 150 years, and profitable, was being sold as a going concern. The advertisement noted that the residence, *“little more than half an hour ride from London”*, was designed by Nash, the estate farms were let out and that the large family residence was rented by Captain Shepherd, late Chairman of the East India Company. There is evidence that the gunpowder business was leased to the firm of Curtis & Harvey and Census reports show that manufacture continued on the site in 1861 but had stopped by 1871.



**SIR FREDERICK CURRIE, BART.,
1799-1875**

- CIVIL SERVANT & DIPLOMAT, INDIA, 1820-1853
- DIRECTOR & CHAIRMAN, EAST INDIA COMPANY, 1854-1858
- VICE-PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF INDIA, 1858-1875
- SON, HUGH PENTON CURRIE, BORN AT WORCESTER PARK HOUSE , 2 JULY 1854
- DIED, ST LEONARDS ON SEA, ESTATE WORTH £18,000 IN 1875 = ABOUT 1.2 MILLION IN 2017

Sir Frederick Currie, Baronet, was living at Worcester Park House in 1854 with his family and servants. His son, Hugh Penton Currie,, was born there in 1854. Sir Frederick had been a civil servant and diplomat in India from 1820 to 1853 was a Director, and later Chairman, of the East India Company from 1854 to 1858. He was a Vice-President of the Council of India from 1858 to 1875. When he died in 1875, his estate would have been worth about £1.2 million in 2017.



ISOBEL HESTER DRUMMOND, 1860-1945

- BORN 1860, WORCESTER PARK HOUSE
- DAUGHTER OF HARVEY DRUMMOND, 1817-1875, BANKER
- MARRIED ERNEST BOWES LYON, SON OF EARL OF STRATHMORE, 1882
- BECAME AUNT OF QUEEN ELIZABETH, QUEEN MOTHER, 1900-2002



Isobel Hester Drummond was born at Worcester Park House and baptized at St Mark's Church, Surbiton, on 4 July 1860. Her younger sister, Marion Blanche, also was born there and was baptized at St John's Church, Malden on 19 December 1861. They were the daughters of Harvey Drummond, a partner in Messrs. Drummond, a London bank. The Drummond family and its servants were recorded at Worcester Park House in the 1861 Census and there was evidence that they were there in 1862. By the time of the 1871 Census, Harvey Drummond and his family were living in Iping, near Midhurst, Sussex. In 1882, Isobel Hester Drummond married Ernest Bowes Lyon, son of the Earl of Strathmore. Thereby, she became the aunt of the late Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, was the great aunt of the late Queen Elizabeth II and was the great, great aunt of the present King Charles III.



**SIR JAMES PENNETHORNE, FRIBA,
1801-1871**

- TRAINED BY JOHN NASH & AUGUSTUS PUGIN
- ARCHITECT & TOWN PLANNER , UK GOVERNMENT
- ***“ONE OF THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED CLASSICAL ARCHITECTS OF HIS AGE AND, AS A DESIGNER OF NEW STREET & PARKS, HE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE SHAPING OF MID-VICTORIAN LONDON”***
- WORKS INCLUDE, NEW OXFORD STREET, COMMERCIAL WAY, SOMERSET HOUSE, BATTERSEA PARK, PENNETHORNE GALLERY, BUCKINGHAM PALACE
- DIED AT WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, ESTATE WORTH £25,000 = £1.6 MILLION IN 2017

Sir James Pennethorne, FRIBA, was living at Worcester Park House in 1864 and Frances, his wife, died there on 1 November 1866. He was trained by John Nash and Augustus Pugin and was a principal architect and town planner to the UK Government. It has been written that he was ***“one of the most classical architects of this age and as a designer of new streets and parks, he played a crucial role in the shaping of mid-Victorian London”***. His works included New Oxford Street, Commercial Way in Docklands, Somerset House, Battersea Park and a picture gallery in Buckingham Palace known as “The Pennethorne Gallery”. He died at Worcester Park House on 1 September 1871 of a heart attack after walking from Worcester Park Station to the house. He was buried in Highgate Cemetery. His estate would have been worth about £1.6 million in 2017. By 30 September 1871, Worcester Park House was on sale by order of his executors.

THE LANDED ESTATES COMPANY

Worcester Park House...for sale by order of the executors of the late Sir James Pennethorne...freehold residential estate of about 40 acres...situate in an undulating well-wooded and favourite district...includes a commodious family mansion, approached by a carriage drive...containing 15 bedrooms, two dressing rooms, bath room, box room, four handsome reception rooms, billiard room, spacious entrance and inner halls, work room, servants' hall, butler's pantry, ample offices and extensive cellarage...stabling for six horses, coach houses, laundry with a room over it, gardener's cottage and two other modern cottages...grounds singularly picturesque and include lawn, Italian garden sloping to ornamental running water, croquet lawn surrounded by timber trees and shrubs, secluded walks, rose garden, vinery, orchard house, two kitchen gardens [one walled], melon ground, cow house, plantation and undulating parklands adorned by ornamental timber and belted on one side by a row of noble old elms.

Transcript of advertisement, Morning Post, 30 September 1871

- COMPANY PURCHASED LAND WHOLESALE & SOLD BUILDING PLOTS
- WORCESTER PARK HOUSE ESTATE WAS ITS FIRST PURCHASE
- ESTATE SOLD TO FREDERICK CHARSLY

The Landed Estates Company Limited must have responded to this advertisement of 1871 for the sale of Worcester Park House and purchased it from the executors of Sir James Pennethorne. Already, by the time of its first annual meeting in 1865, the Company had acquired the Worcester Park estate of about 300 acres. It was its first purchase, and the overall objective was the wholesale purchase of land suitable for building purposes before selling it retail to overcome the difficulty an individual had in buying small plots from one to four acres at reasonable prices. Possibly, it had purchased Worcester Park House from Harvey Drummond, the banker, but more research is needed to explore this hypothesis. There is evidence that the Company sold Worcester Park House to Frederick Charsley, about whom little so far has been discovered.

CAPTAIN FREDERICK STEPHEN STEELE

- **LATE OF NORTHUMBERLAND MILITIA, DIED AT WORCESTER PARK HOUSE , 5 NOVEMBER 1874, AGED 43, TENANT OF THE LANDED ESTATES COMPANY**

For sale ...the Worcester Park House estate, an important and valuable freehold property...consisting of a capital moderate-size mansion, placed in ornamental parkland, containing about 40 acres, richly timbered, with gardens and pleasure grounds, with sufficient stabling...with possession on completion of purchase...the most important feature connected with this valuable property is the many advantages it possesses for first-class building purposes...to an enterprising capitalist, a building society or private company, it offers an unusual opportunity for safe investment, as by a judicious formation of new roads such an enterprise will probably be crowned with success and large profit...The house offers the quietude of a country residence, notwithstanding its nearness to London and the advantages of a healthy situation...Lot 1 comprises the mansion and grounds...Lot 2, the North Park, 18 acres of very valuable building land...Lot 3, a paddock of seven acres with two cottages...

Transcript of advertisement, The Globe, 10 March 1873

- **BY 1873, FREDERICK CHARSLY ADVERTISED FOR SALE, LOT 1, WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, AND ITS GROUNDS THEN OCCUPIED BY CAPTAIN STEELE. ALSO ON OFFER WERE “LOT 2, 18 ACRES OF BUILDING LAND” & LOT 3, “A Paddock of 7 acres with two cottages”**

By 1873, during the tenancy of Captain Steele, Frederick Charsley was advertising for sale the Worcester Park House estate of about 40 acres in three lots.

- **Lot 1 comprised “the mansion and grounds”.**
- **Lot 2, comprised the North Park “18 acres of very valuable building land”.**
- **Lot 3, comprised “a paddock of 7 acres with two cottages”,**

THE WHEELERS AT WORCESTER PARK HOUSE, 1877- 1938

For sale...the Worcester Park House Estate...consisting of a superior mansion and nearly 40 acres of richly-timbered land...Lot 1 will comprise the mansion, with the stabling, pleasure ground, kitchen gardens, orchards, shrubbery and paddocks, in all about 22 acres, let on lease to A. Wheeler, Esq., for fourteen years from September 29, 1877, at a rental of £550 per annum...Lots 2, 3 and 4, about 18 acres of beautifully timbered building land, with a frontage to the Royal Avenue, offering magnificent sites for the erection of superior residences...

Transcript of advertisement from The Field, 25 May 1878

In 1878, the Worcester Park House Estate “*consisting of a superior mansion and nearly 40 acres of richly-timbered land*” was on sale in four lots. Lot 1, mansion and grounds of about 22 acres was let on lease to A. Wheeler, Esq., for 14 years, as from 29 September 1877, at a rental of £550 per annum [about £37,000 in 2017]. Lots 2, 3 & 4, about 18 acres of building land with a frontage to the Royal Avenue were being offered as “*magnificent sites for the erection of superior residences*”. More about the Wheeler family, members of which occupied Worcester Park House from 1877 to 1938, will be explored later.



WORCESTER PARK HOUSE AT THE TIME OF THE WHEELERS

This is a picture of Worcester Park House as it would have been during the occupation of the Wheeler family [1877-1938]. The influence of John Nash has been linked to its grand appearance in different sale advertisements. Moreover, it is reported, for example, that it had long corridors, an enormous cellar, fifteen bedrooms, a small dining room, a library, a billiard room and a large dining room with turquoise and gold leaf decoration. However in 1947 a government valuer was of the opinion that while it was *“a charming example of an early 19th century villa...the appearance of the house belies its construction which was very shoddy indeed...for example, although the exterior appeared to be of bricks covered with stucco, it was actually of timber framework filled with brick-nogging, laths and plaster...”*

THE WHEELERS AT WORCESTER PARK HOUSE [WPH], 1877 - 1938, HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD, CENSUS

- 1881, PORTIA WHEELER, SENIOR, [WIDOW OF HENRY WHEELER, DIED AT BOLINGBROKE HOUSE, WANDSWORTH, 1873, ESTATE = £350,000, £22 MILLION IN 2017]
6 RESIDENT FEMALE SERVANTS, 2 COACHMEN
- PORTIA WHEELER, SNR, DIED AT WPH, 1889, ESTATE = £5,490 [£500,000 IN 2017].
- 1891, AUGUSTUS WHEELER, DIED AT WPH, 1898, ESTATE = £24,725 [£1.9 MILLION IN 2017]
6 RESIDENT FEMALE SERVANTS, 1 COACHMAN
- 1901, PORTIA WHEELER, JNR, DIED AT FOLKESTONE, 1906, ESTATE = £17,856
[£1.5 MILLION IN 2017]
6 RESIDENT FEMALE SERVANTS
- 1911 & 1921, ALICE WHEELER, DIED AT WPH, 1936, ESTATE = £27,970 [£1.4 MILLION IN 2017]
1911, 6 RESIDENT FEMALE SERVANTS, 1 COACHMAN
1921, 5 RESIDENT FEMALE SERVANTS

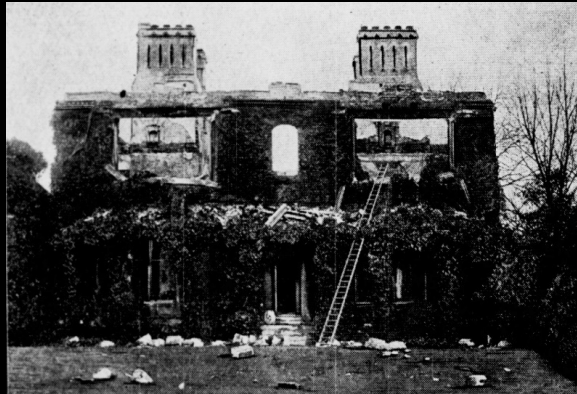
The slide identifies the heads of the Wheeler household at Worcester Park House as recorded in the Censuses of 1881-1921. Although the original lease was taken out in the name of Augustus Wheeler [described as a “retired builder” in the 1891 Census], in 1881 the head of household was recorded as Portia Wheeler. She was born in Sicily and was married to Henry Wheeler in the British Embassy in Naples. Two of her children were baptized at the British Chaplaincy in Genoa. He died in 1873 leaving an estate that would have been worth £22 million in 2017. His children were set up with annuities that would keep them independent and wealthy for the rest of their lives. The Wheelers lived in style at Worcester Park House, supported by many servants and it appears that they never abandoned their leaseholder status. The estate was run as a small self-sufficient smallholding and the Wheeler sisters were benevolent to their servants and friendly to neighbours. They provided gifts to the Malden Institute and once entertained a large party of factory girls from Battersea.

WORCESTER PARK HOUSE ESTATE AFTER THE WHEELERS

- 1936, SOLD TO FRED GOODHEW, CATERING FIRM OWNER, BUILT HOGSMILL TAVERN
- 1940, SOLD TO JOHN DEAN, SHOP BLIND MANUFACTURER & CHAIRMAN OF FULHAM FOOTBALL CLUB
 - BADLY DAMAGED BY ENEMY ACTION IN WW2
 - ANOTHER FIRE, VANDALISED & RUINOUS

[SEE DAVID RYMILL, 2012]

According to Rymill, in 1938 the whole of the estate was sold to Fred Goodhew, who owned a catering company and built the Hogsmill Tavern. In the same year, he sold a part of the estate to Streatham Property Development Ltd, a subsidiary of Wates, who had plans to build houses. By 1939, the Worcester Park House estate was completely empty and had been sold again, in 1940, to John Dean, the Chairman of Fulham Football Club. Later in 1940, it was badly damaged by Luftwaffe incendiary bombs. In 1948, after it had been vandalised and robbed of valuable building materials, the house was again badly damaged by fire and the War Damage Commission withdrew its offer to fund the restoration. A plan to convert the house into four flats came to nothing, and by the late 1960s Worcester Park House had completely disappeared.



TOLWORTH HALL [PREVIOUSLY RIVERHILL HOUSE]

"FAIRLY MODERN IN ARCHITECTURE...STATELY IVY-CLAD MANSION CONTAINING THIRTY ROOMS SET ON A BOLD EMINENCE IN A DELIGHTFULLY RURAL SPOT ON THE EXTREME BOARDERS OF THE URBAN DISTRICT OF SURBITON AND FRINGING THE OUTSKIRTS OF WORCESTER PARK" [SURREY COMET, 22 APRIL 1911]

Now is the time to focus on Tolworth Hall, previously called "Riverhill House". What was the property like? An 1876 sales advertisement for Riverhill House [to be shown on a later slide] lists 12 bedrooms, dressing room, bathroom, principal and secondary staircases, hall, drawing room, boudoir, dining room, library, offices, stabling, double coach house, man servants' rooms & an entrance lodge. The Surrey Comet, on 22 April 1911 when it reported on a fire at Tolworth Hall, describing it as *"a stately ivy-clad mansion containing thirty rooms, a typical English home set on a bold eminence in a delightfully rural spot on the extreme borders of the urban district of Surbiton and fringing the outskirts of Worcester Park"*. More will be said about the fire later. The Apple Store is located within what were the grounds of Tolworth Hall and more will be said about this later. Who built Riverhill House [later Tolworth Hall] and when was it built? Who built the Apple Store and when was it built? These questions will be addressed in the next slides.

**RIVERHILL HOUSE & WILLIAM MAXWELL
OF SWEET & MAXWELL, LAW PUBLISHERS**

- SURREY COMET, 22 APRIL 1911
*"...BUILT ABOUT HALF A CENTURY AGO FOR MR MAXWELL OF THE
WELL-KNOWN PUBLISHING FIRM OF THAT NAME..."*
- WILLIAM MAXWELL, 5 PALACE ROAD, KINGSTON, 1864-1885,
SURREY ELECTORAL REGISTER.
- WILLIAM MAXWELL, *"WORCESTER PARK, LONG DITTON"*, 1877-1885,
SURREY ELECTORAL REGISTER.
- 1871 & 1881 CENSUS, RIVERHILL HOUSE OCCUPIED BY GARDENERS
ACTING AS CARETAKERS.
- 1881 CENSUS, WILLIAM MAXWELL, EAST SHEEN.

The Surrey Comet of 22 April 1911 stated that Tolworth Hall was *"built about half a century ago for Mr Maxwell of the well-known publishing firm of that name"*. How reliable was this statement which indicated that the property was built around 1861? In the 1861 Census, William Maxwell, law bookseller & publisher, was living with his family in the Parish of St John, Hackney.. The 1871 Census recorded William Maxwell, law publisher, at 5 Palace Road, Kingston and his son William Alexander Maxwell, law publisher, at 8 Paragon Grove, Surbiton. Susan Elizabeth Maxwell, wife of William Maxwell died on 25 August 1871 and is buried in Kingston Cemetery. The Surrey Electoral Register stated that William Maxwell lived at 5 Palace Road, Kingston, from 1864 to 1885 and he is recorded at *"Worcester Park, Long Ditton"* from 1877 to 1885, which is assumed to be Riverhill House. However, in the 1871 and 1881 Censuses, Riverhill House was occupied by *"gardeners"* who were probably acting as caretakers. There is no evidence that William Maxwell ever lived on the estate. In 1881, William Maxwell was living with his second wife in East Sheen.

RIVERHILL HOUSE FOR SALE, 1876 & 1881

For sale...a valuable freehold estate, situate in the parish of Long Ditton, in the county of Surrey, and occupying a remarkably healthy and picturesque position about two miles from the Surbiton Station...comprising a handsome residence, distinguished as *Riverhill*, erected by the proprietor in a costly manner for his own occupation, placed on an eminence from whence are panoramic views of great extent and beauty, in the midst of lawns and pleasure gardens, and surrounded by park-like meadow land of 18 acres, through which it is approached by a winding carriage drive, with lodge at the entrance; the house contains 12 bedrooms, dressing room, bath room, principal and secondary staircases, hall, drawing room, boudoir, dining room, and library, complete domestic offices, stabling for five horses, double coach house, man servants' rooms, etc; possession will be given on completion of the purchase...

Transcript of advertisement, Evening Standard, 8 April 1876

For sale...freehold residential property distinguished as *Riverhill*, Worcester Park, eligibly situate in this favourite and select locality, commanding extensive panoramic views of the surrounding picturesque country...The residence of handsome elevation, replete with every modern improvement and convenience, erected at great cost, contains ample accommodation for the establishment of a merchant, banker, or private gentleman, with excellent stabling, prettily-designed lodge, walled-in kitchen garden half an acre in extent, planted with various fruit trees. The pleasure gardens of about two acres are laid out by an eminent landscape gardener in raised terraces, winding paths, and choice beds of flowers, while the whole of the park-like meadow land is profusely studded with clumps of firs, flowering shrubs, conifers, and thriving young forest trees. The whole property is thoroughly drained and comprises in all about 18 acres. With possession on completion.

Transcript of advertisement, Surrey Advertiser, 2 July 1881

The freehold property “*distinguished as Riverhill*”, to ensure that it was not confused with Worcester Park House, was on sale with vacant possession in 1876 and 1881. The 1881 advertisement lists pleasure gardens laid out by “*an eminent landscape gardener*” [so far unidentified] and a walled-in kitchen garden of half an acre planted with various fruit trees. Henry Foster, later known as Harry Hylton-Foster, probably responded to the 1881 advertisement and was living with his family and servants by about 1883. He was a director of Bevington & Sons, of Neckinger Mills, Bermondsey, leather manufacturers. The next slides provide more information about him.

HENRY FOSTER & HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER

- 1876, 17 THE CEDARS, PUTNEY, HENRY FOSTER, *MERCHANT*, DAUGHTER, MILDRED BRONNA HYLTON FOSTER
- 1878, 17 THE CEDARS, PUTNEY, HENRY FOSTER, *UNDERWRITER*, DAUGHTER, BERYL HYLTON FOSTER
- 1879, 17 THE CEDARS, PUTNEY, HENRY FOSTER, *UNDERWRITER*, SON, HARRY BRAUSTYN HYLTON FOSTER
- 1881 CENSUS, 17 THE CEDARS, PUTNEY, HENRY FOSTER, *MERCHANT FACTOR*
- 1882, 17 THE CEDARS, PUTNEY, HENRY FOSTER, *UNDERWRITER*, DAUGHTER, BARBARA HYLTON FOSTER
- **1883, HENRY FOSTER ACQUIRED RIVERHILL HOUSE, TOLWORTH**
- 1891 CENSUS, HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER, TOLWORTH HALL, *TANNER*, PARTNER IN BEVINGTON & SONS, LEATHER MERCHANTS

Baptismal records show that Henry Foster, variously described as a “*merchant*”, “*underwriter*” & “*merchant factor*” lived with his family and servants at 17, The Cedars, Putney. His daughter, *Mildred Bronna Hylton Foster* and son *Harry Braustyn Hylton Hylton-Foster* were born at 17, The Cedars. Henry Foster acquired Riverhill House around 1883 and in the 1891 Census his name had changed to “*Harry Hylton-Foster*”, he was recorded as a “*tanner*” and Riverhill House had become “*Tolworth Hall*”. Then, he was not just an ordinary tanner but was a partner in Bevington & Sons, Leather Merchants of Bermondsey.

HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER, TOLWORTH HALL, EX RIVERHILL HOUSE

- 1891 CENSUS, HENRY FOSTER, TANNER, 6 FAMILY MEMBERS, 6 RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVANTS, GARDENER & COACHMAN
- 1901 CENSUS, HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER, TANNER, 4 FAMILY MEMBERS, 5 RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVANTS, GARDENER & COACHMAN
- 1911 CENSUS, HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER, TANNER, 3 FAMILY MEMBERS, 5 RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVANTS, ESTATE KEEPER & GAMEKEEPER
- 19 APRIL 1911, TOLWORTH HALL BURNED DOWN, THEREAFTER GROUNDS MANAGED FOR SHOOTING, UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO SELL PROPERTY
 - 1921 CENSUS, TOLWORTH HALL LODGE OCCUPIED BY GAMEKEEPER & FAMILY
 - FEBRUARY 1923, TOLWORTH HALL ESTATE SOLD
- "RIVERHILL" BUILT ON SITE BY BERNARD CARDIAN LAMB, AROUND 1925, ESTATE SOLD TO SURBITON BOROUGH COUNCIL IN 1949, LEASED TO SURBITON TOWN SPORTS CLUB IN 1962, MOBILE HOME PARK & SURBITON RACEWAY

In the 1891, 1901 & 1911 Censuses, Henry Foster/Harry Hylton-Foster was living in Tolworth Hall with his family and retinue of servants. On 19 April 1911, Tolworth Hall was gutted by fire and the family relocated to Westhumble, Near Dorking, Surrey. The grounds of Tolworth Hall were managed for shooting and several unsuccessful attempts to sell the estate. In the 1921 Census, Tolworth Hall Lodge was occupied by a gamekeeper and his family. The estate was eventually sold, in February 1923, to Bernard Cardian Lamb and around 1925 a new house, "*Riverhill*" had been built on the site. In 1949, the estate was sold to Surbiton Borough Council and it was leased to Surbiton Town Sports Club in 1962. Later, the present mobile home park and Surbiton Raceway were established on the site.

HENRY FOSTER'S "REBRANDING"

- BECAME "HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER"
- FOUND ROOTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND
- SON NAMED "HARRY BRAUSTYN HYLTON HYLTON-FOSTER"
- DAUGHTER'S FORENAME "BRONNA"
- ACQUIRED LANDED ESTATE WITH LARGE RETINUE OF SERVANTS
 - RIVERHILL HOUSE BECAME "TOLWORTH HALL"
 - FILLED HOUSE WITH VALUABLE ARTWORKS
 - ACQUIRED COAT OF ARMS

Going back to what can be seen, in modern terms, as Henry Foster's *"rebranding"*. He changed his name to "Harry Hylton-Foster". He found old family roots in Northumberland and chose the ancient forenames *"Braustyn"* and *"Bronna"* for two of his children. He acquired a landed estate with a large retinue of servants. He changed the name of Riverhill House to *"Tolworth Hall"*, filled it with valuable artworks and acquired a coat of arms.*

*Surrey Comet, 22 April 1911

HARRY BRAUSTYN HYLTON HYLTON-FOSTER, 1879-1957



**BARRISTER & PARTNER
IN BEVINGTON & SONS,
LEATHER
MANUFACTURERS**

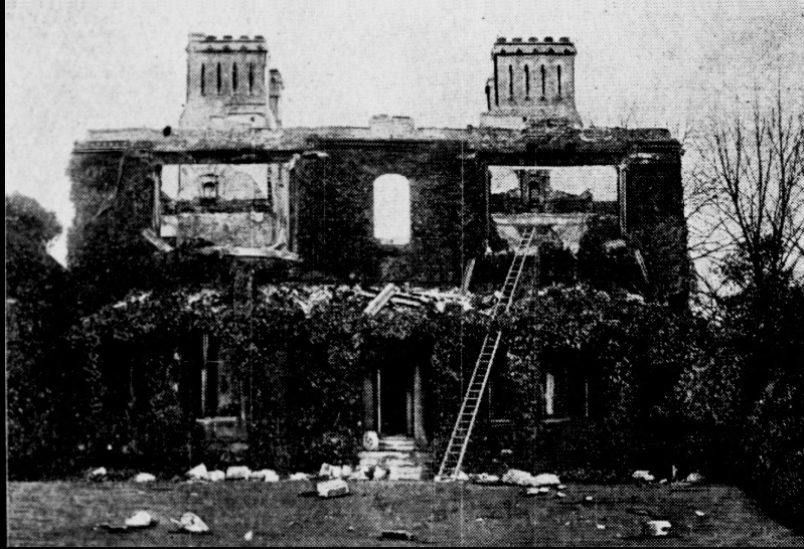
Harry Hylton-Foster's son Harry Braustyn Hylton Hylton-Foster qualified as a barrister and became a partner in Bevington & Sons, leather manufacturers.

SIR HARRY BRAUSTYN HYLTON HYLTON-FOSTER, MP



**SPEAKER OF
HOUSE OF
COMMONS,
1959-1965**

Harry Braustyn Hylton Hylton-Foster's son, also was named "Harry Braustyn Hylton Hylton-Foster" for the confusion of later genealogists. The latter had a most distinguished career in the Law, became an MP, was knighted and became the Speaker of the House of Commons.



TOLWORTH HALL AFTER FIRE, 19 APRIL 1911

Returning to the serious fire at Tolworth Hall on 19 April 1911, this received widespread newspaper coverage. *The Surrey Comet*, on 22 April 1911, wrote that, about 24 hours before the actual fire occurred the local fire station had received an anonymous telephone call about a fire which proved to be a false alarm. *The Star*, on 20 April 1911, wrote that some months before the fire of 19 April 1911 one of the rooms in the mansion had burned out. *The Surrey Advertiser*, on 24 April 1911, reported that earlier, one of the rooms at the lodge-keeper's house had burned out. We are left with the question, was arson by a malicious person involved in these fires?



THE APPLE STORE - A “NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET” OF RBK

Going back to the Tolworth Apple Store, a *“non-designated heritage asset”* of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. This is the picture of it in the Kingston Society’s Newsletter of December 2025. It is situated in the garden of a mobile home within the Riverhill Mobile Home Park. Access is difficult and this picture was taken by Alison Fure from the field to the west of the Park.

**THE APPLE STORE,
BUILT BETWEEN
1883 & 1894 BY HARRY
HYLTON-FOSTER**



This is an undated picture of the Apple Store. It is believed that it was taken before the installation of the mobile home in which its garden it currently sits. How did this building get to be called "*The Apple Store*"? It is conjectured that local residents gave it this name when they had access to the fruit, including apples, growing within the walled garden that still existed after the fire of 1911. Alison Fure describes the building as essentially Gothic with an overhanging pagoda-style clay tiled roof and interior wooden stairs that which lead to mezzanine floors once used for storing crops. Evidence suggests that the Apple Store was built between 1883 and 1894 by Harry Hylton Foster.



THE COACH HOUSE, BUILT AROUND 1876 BY WILLIAM MAXWELL

The Coach House, now converted into flats, was another building that existed after the fire of 1911. It is within the mobile home site. Evidence suggests that it was built around 1876 by William Maxwell. A “*double coach house*” is mentioned in the sale advertisement of 8 April 1876, shown earlier.



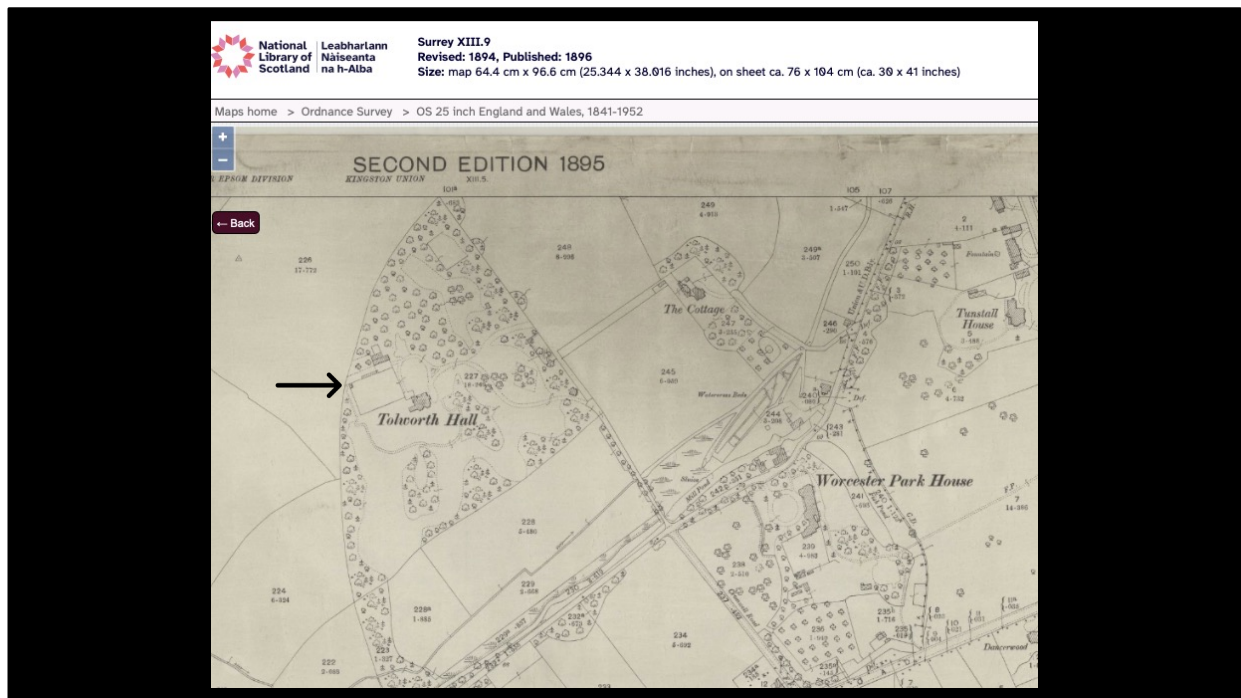
RIVERHILL, BUILT AROUND 1925, BY BERNARD CARDIAN LAMB

Also on the mobile home site is Riverhill, built around 1925 by Bernard Cardian Lamb and currently used by by Surbiton Town Sports Club.



OS, SURREY XIII.SW, REVISED 1894, 6 IN/MILE

This is a section of a 6 inch/mile OS map of 1894 that shows Tolworth Hall, with its walled garden. There is no structure within the walled garden that could be the Apple Store. Note that the former gunpowder mills area is marked as “*watercress beds*”.



This is a section of a larger OS map, 25 inch/mile, dated 1894. It shows the walled garden within the Tolworth Hall estate and the arrow marks a structure that corresponds to the Apple Store. Thus, it appears that the Apple Store was in place by 1894, during the ownership of Harry Hylton-Foster.



OS, SURREY, XIII.SW, REVISED 1910, 6 IN/MILE

This is a section of an OS map of 1910, 6 inch/mile. The arrow points to the Apple Store.

RIVERHILL HOUSE & TOLWORTH HALL, 1866-1894



**1866-1867, 6 INCH
MAXWELL**



**1894, 6 INCH
HYLTON-FOSTER**



**1894, 25 INCH
HYLTON-FOSTER**

This slide reviews that evidence for the dating of the Apple Store within the walled garden of Tolworth Hall. It was not in place in 1866-1867 during the ownership of William Maxwell. While it was not shown on the 1894 6 inch/mile map, it is shown on the 1894 25 inch/mile map, thus supporting a claim that it was built by Harry Hylton-Foster.

RIVERHILL HOUSE & TOLWORTH HALL, 1840-2026

1840, TITHE MAP

1910, OS MAP

2026, OS MAP

This slide shows that the roughly-triangular shape of the plot, formerly known as Riverhill, or River Hill, has not changed between the time of the Tithe Map of 1840 and today, 2026.



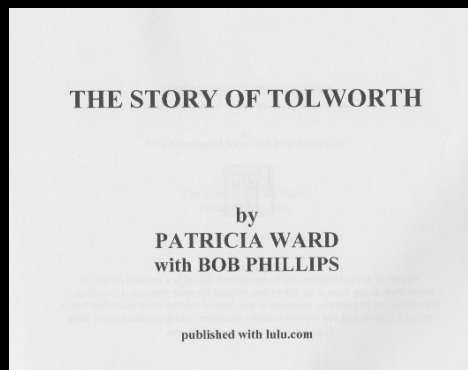
This slide is a section of the title plan of the Coach House within the Riverhill Mobile Home Park, dated 17 March 2026, it is a scale of 1:1250. The “X” marks the Apple Store and the Coach House and Riverhill are also marked.

THE APPLE STORE – SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- RIVERHILL HOUSE BUILT AROUND 1865, FOR WILLIAM MAXWELL, OF SWEET & MAXWELL, LAW PUBLISHERS, SOLD TO HENRY FOSTER [HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER] AROUND 1883. NAME CHANGED TO “TOLWORTH HALL”
- APPLE STORE BUILT IN THE TIME OF HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER AS A FRUIT STORE IN THE WALLED GARDEN OF TOLWORTH HALL AROUND 1894
- THE APPLE STORE AND THE COACH HOUSE IN RIVERHILL MOBILE HOME PARK, KT4 7QB, ARE ALL THAT IS LEFT OF TOLWORTH HALL, ONCE A TOLWORTH LANDED ESTATE

TOLWORTH APPLE STORE RESEARCH. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE.

- Riverhill House built around 1865 for William Maxwell of Sweet & Maxwell, law publishers.
- Sold to Harry Hylton-Foster around 1883, name changed to *“Tolworth Hall”*
- Apple Store built by Hylton-Foster around 1894 in the walled garden of Tolworth Hall.
- Apple Store & Coach House are all that is left of Tolworth’s landed estates.



**PATRICIA WARD & BOB PHILLIPS, 2015, THE STORY OF TOLWORTH,
TOLWORTH, BROOMFIELD PRESS**

***P. 124, ... "WE WOULD HARTILY RECOMMEND AN INVESTMENT IN LOCAL
HISTORY RESEARCH...THE STUDY OF HISTORY IS A PATH TOWARDS
DISCERNING THOSE FORCES THAT ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUR
COMMUNITIES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS..."***

**With reference to the recommendations of Ward & Phillips,
hopefully, this investment in local history research will add to
the story of Tolworth and be helpful in obtaining Locally Listed
Building Status for the Apple Store, in due course.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Alison Fure and Peter Karpinski for very helpful contributions.
- Staff of Kingston History Centre for sourcing material.
- Mark Kennedy for his expert help when my computer gave up the ghost when this talk was being prepared.

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MORE INFORMATION

Notes of this presentation, with references, shortly will be on

www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk

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