

THE OFFICERS' MESS GARDENS

MILLBROOK PARK, MILL HILL EAST
FORMER INGLIS BARRACKS

LOCATION



Aerial photograph during construction in 2012.

HISTORY

Before the establishment of the barracks in the early 20th century the area was predominantly farmland.

The end of the 19th century saw a significant increase in the size of the British Army with Colonial expeditions and the second Boer War (1899-1902) all requiring more resources than expected and resulting in the construction of new facilities across the country including the Mill Hill Barracks. Known as 'The Garden' due to the rural location, the barracks were renamed in the late 1930s to Inglis Barracks in honour of Lieutenant-Colonel William Inglis of the 57th infantry regiment (West Middlesex), who coined the phrase "Die hard" during the battle of Albuhera in 1811.

The early buildings were constructed for the Middlesex Regiment in the early 1900's and followed standards developed by the Design Branch of the War Office, under the management of Architect Harry Bell Measures. Measures was also known for his station buildings for the Central Line on the London Underground such as Oxford Circus, which still survives. The Officers' Mess building bears a date-stone of 1904 and provided a high standard of accommodation for the Officers and a level of segregation from the men. In January 1961 the Middlesex Regiment moved out of the barracks and much of the site was taken over by the Home Postal and Courier Communications depot of the Royal Engineers. Married quarters housing and associated facilities were built in the 1970's. The site has also been used as a filming location for both television dramas and film. In 2007 it was fully decommissioned and in 2011 received planning permission to be redeveloped for new housing, a school and public parks.

WAR MEMORIAL

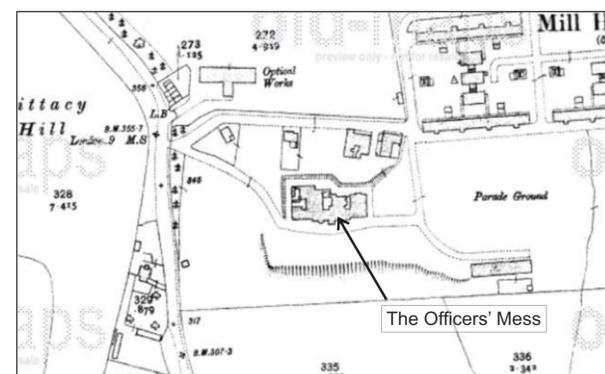
A war memorial was located in what now forms the play area and was relocated to The Ridgeway near St Pauls Church in 2012. It was a typical design erected after the First World War in Portland Stone, and commemorates those fallen in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and in various campaigns between 1757 and 1913.



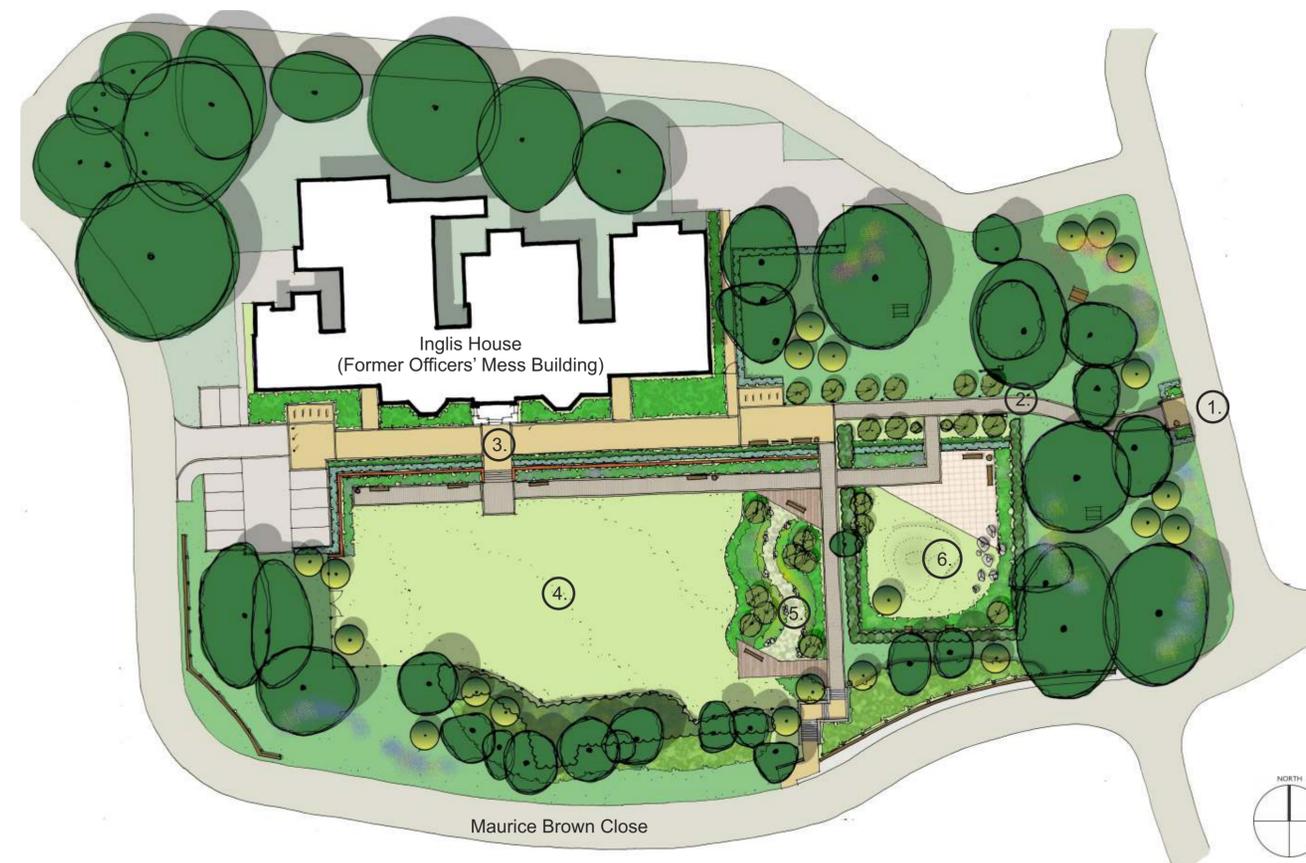
Middlesex Regimental Badge



War memorial prior to relocation



1914 OS Map of the Officers' Mess



The Officers' Mess in the early 1900's.



The Barracks in the early 1900's.

THE GARDENS AND MESS TODAY

The gardens have been redeveloped as a public park and extended maintaining much of the original structure and mature tree planting.

The new main entrance to the garden (1) opens into the mature woodland garden which features picnic tables and spring bulb planting. A set of retained metal gates (2) leads through to the formal planting borders (3) in front of the former Officers' Mess which has been redeveloped into flats. The formal lower lawn terrace (4) was a feature of the original garden, surrounded by mature planting it has views towards London. A 'rain' garden (5) to the east of the lawn is designed to help prevent flooding by temporarily holding water. The site of the relocated war memorial (6) is now a play space and planted with species to attract wildlife.