

Ashburton Park Community archaeology project

May 2026



CROYDON
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Ashburton Park Restoration Project

We are 1 year into a 3-year national lottery heritage funded project to deliver capital improvements in Ashburton Park, celebrating 100 years since the site became a public park



Improvements to the Park

- Better paths and lighting
- A new wetland area
- A community garden
- A band stand
- More plants & flowers = more insects!
- Better signage- Stories about the park & plant information



The old tea kiosk- To be replaced



Recap of thanks

- Croydon Council
- Friends of Ashburton Park
- Heritage Fund
- Oasis Charitable Trust
- Ashburton Park Hall and Ashburton Park Hall Café
- The many young people, carers, teachers, parents, community members and offers of support
- All of you!







Ashburton Park Archaeology project 2026

Stroud Green House

The western part of the park is likely to hold the most significant archaeological features of the park. Between Ashburton Hall and the remains of the 1920s tea kiosk would have once stood the 18th century 'Stroud Green House' and the late 19th century convent building. The remaining foundations to both buildings, and any associated buried garden features, would be local heritage assets.

Revealing History

Part of the design development for the park would consider how the layout of the main house and associated buildings could be visually depicted and acknowledged in today's park. With associated interpretation boards and signage, celebrating the connection to the parks history and giving visitors to the park an understanding of the parks past.

Examining LIDAR information of the park along with historic mapping helps to locate the remaining features. The Friends of Ashburton Park and the local community could be involved in the formation of any visual reference to the historic features.



Ashburton Hall Footprint, Placed 9th May, 2024. [Ashburton Hall Footprint](#), Google Earth



OS 25 Inch 1888-1915. Showing functional remains of Ashburton Hall in red © Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland www.maps.nls.uk



LIDAR Image of Site from National LIDAR Programme record ©MOLA



Newly constructed Convent linked to Stroud Green House by the Cloister. © Museum of Croydon Collections



Fig 3 Rocque's map of Surrey of 1762

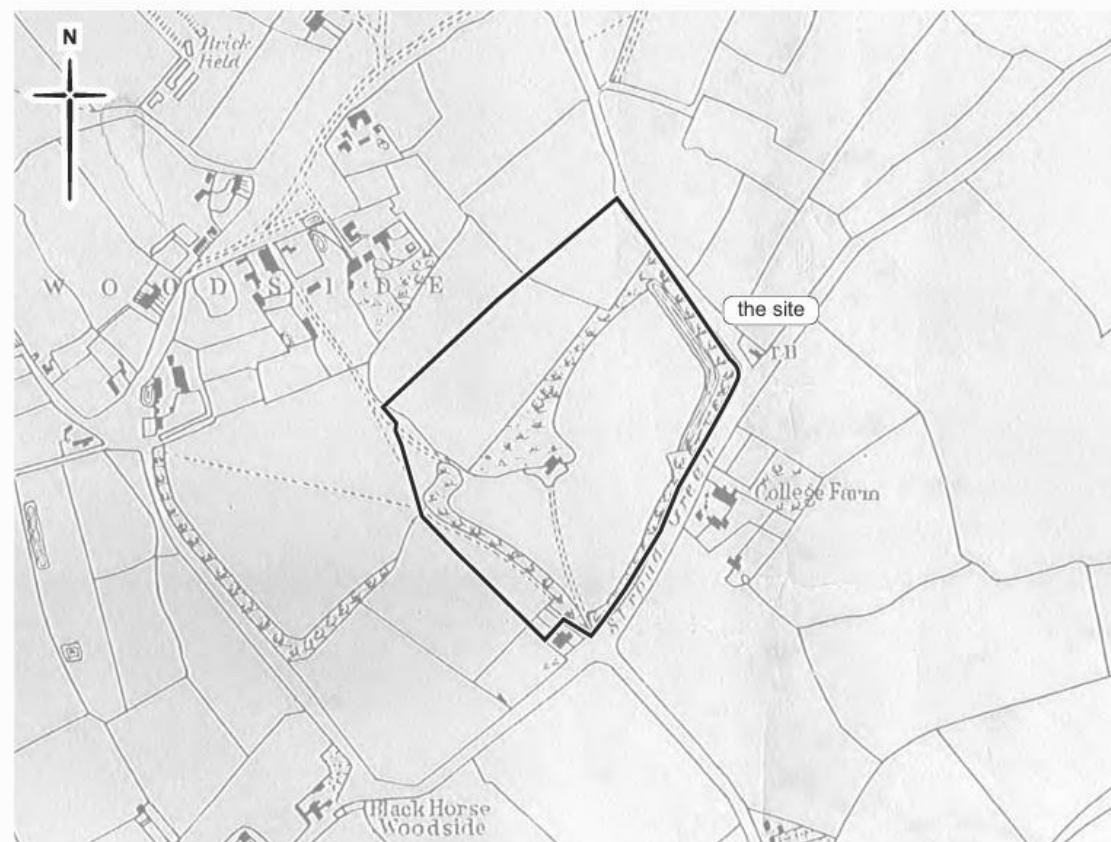


Fig 5 Robert's Croydon Parish map of 1847

Stroud Green/Byculla House



Timeline:

Stroud Green House, Woodside Convent

- Notable feature of Croydon's rural landscape in 17th century
- By 18th century, estate was a prominent landmark a grand Georgian residence surrounded by ornamental gardens, a kitchen garden, agricultural lands, and a picturesque lake
- The estate's head gardener, lived in Park Lodge, oversaw its productive and ornamental grounds. Kitchen gardens, supplied fresh produce to the estate.
- Rocque's map of Surrey in 1762 and the Croydon Rate Book 1778 records Woodside lands belonging to Joseph Humphrey
- By 1788, later known as Byculla House, was built- suburb in south Mumbai (Bombay), Mr Tanner connections either with the East India College at Addiscombe or with India itself.
- The property reverted to its old name in 1869 when Henry Dorling, a horse racing enthusiast, purchased Stroud Green House and grounds and lived there from 1869 to 1878



- 1878, Father Arthur Tooth (1839-1931) bought the estate, established Woodside Convent & St. Michael's Orphanage, founded at Hatcham in 1872, to the site.
- In 1880, added St. Raphael's hospice, a refuge for women. Finally, in 1884, St. Gabriel's Orphanage for Girls was added to the complex
- 1924, Father Tooth sold Woodside Convent to Croydon Borough Council for £20,000



Lady Ashburton



- The ground then opened to the public a year later in August 1925. The 1882 building and chapel became Ashburton Public Library, a use which continued until 2006
- Grounds were retained as a park, and were named after Lady Ashburton, who in the 1870s was celebrated for her literary gatherings
- During World War II, Ashburton Park played a vital role in the Dig for Victory campaign
- Park was used for the annual Croydon Summer Show, which ran over 2 days with events up until midnight, animal shows as well as flower, fruit and vegetable shows, illuminations and dancing.



Ashburton over time

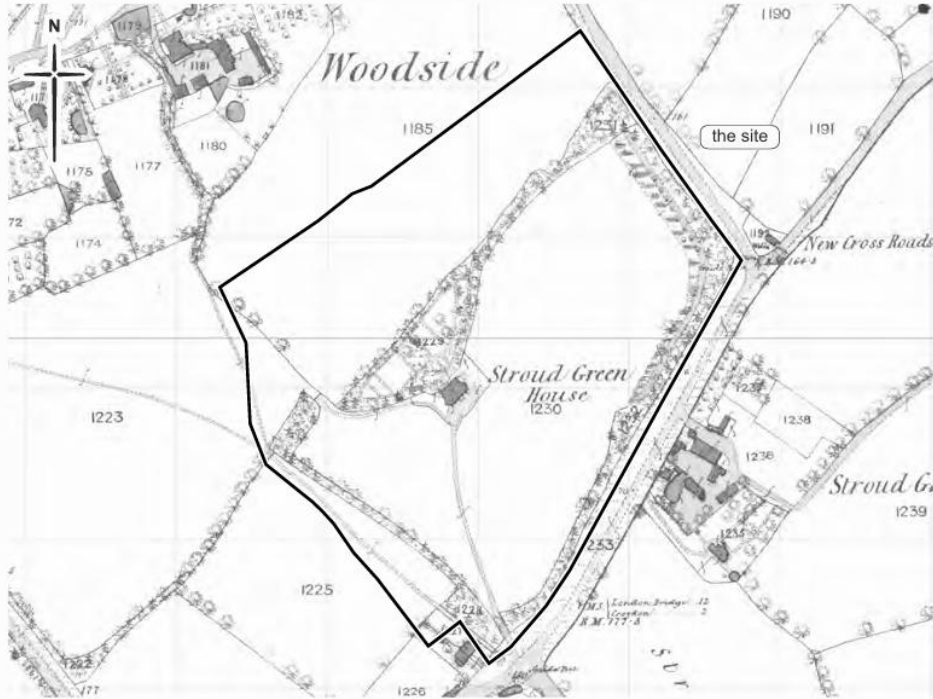


Fig 6 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25":mile map of 1861

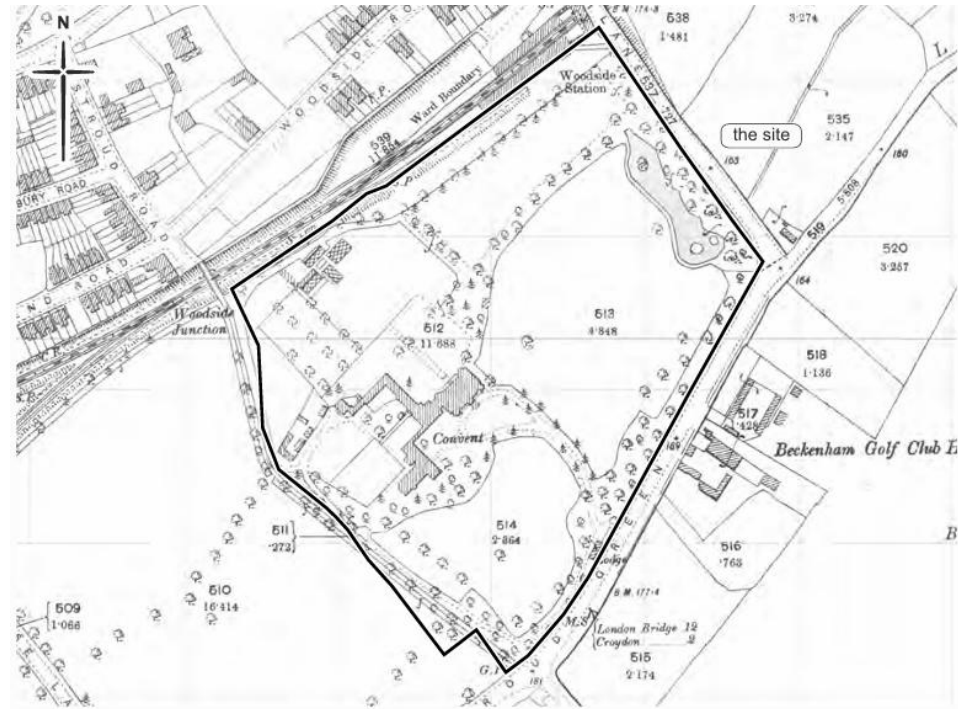


Fig 7 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25": mile map of 1898



Fig 8 Ordnance Survey 25":mile map of 1933



Fig 9 Ordnance Survey 25":mile map of 1941



Our finds!





Foundations











Impact

2 weeks of archaeology digs:

Engaged over **420** members of the community

Over **200** school children from 4 local schools

Sessions for under 5s, SEN-friendly, older adults, women-only, Croydon Learning Disability Floating Hub, Oasis Museum of Croydon & Ashburton Library





Community archaeology

“The children didn’t want to leave”

“Best half term ever!”

“I could stay here for hours” “

“So lovely doing activities together outdoors and getting to meet new people”

“I really see the value of opportunities for people to connect with place, history, memory, and one another”

“The kids couldn’t stop talking about the session back at school”





Would you visit Ashburton Park again?



