WHITGIFT ESTATE CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT



CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT

CROYDON COUNCIL

ISSUE

Conservation Area Approved by Cabinet on [dates]

This document is available to view and download online at: [web address]

PUBLISHED BY

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canning & Clyde Residents Association and Friends, *The Book of Addiscombe, Vols I & 2*, Halsgrove, 2000 & 2002

CONSERVATION AREA GENERAL GUIDANCE

Please read this document alongside the *Croydon Conservation Area General Guidance document,* available online at: Conservation Area General Guidance

Other supplementary planning documents are also available online via the Croydon Council website Planning pages: Supplementary Planning Documents

CROYDON LOCAL PLAN

The Croydon Local Plan is available online at: Croydon Local Plan

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What is a Conservation Area?

1. Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Conservation areas were introduced in 1967 and there are now nearly 10,000 in England. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify areas that fulfil these criteria, to designate them as conservation areas, and to review these designations from time to time. Conservation areas are classified as 'designated heritage assets' in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Summary of Significance

2. The Whitgift Estate represents a defined area developed in the 1920s and 30s when London was undergoing a rapid expansion between world wars. This was as a result of improvements in transport and the desire for housing on all levels within easy reach of Croydon Town Centre and Central London but with close access to open space for more healthy living. In addition, this estate was planned and developed along generous lines with mainly large, detached houses set in generous garden plots with wide streets and grass verges. An added feature was easy access to outdoor amenities including golf and tennis, allotments and a large park. Houses were mainly built in English vernacular, Art Deco and Moderne styles popular at the time, but with good quality materials and detailing. The work of a number of local architects is represented on the estate, with some houses sharing similar features and sometimes a mix of styles. Overall, the estate retains its original character and is an example of a defined high-quality, low-density garden suburb-style residential development representative of the era within the Borough of Croydon.

Location and Setting

3. The Whitgift estate area, just east of Croydon town centre, consists of Grimwade Avenue, Sandilands, Woodbury Close, Fitzjames Avenue, Mapledale Avenue, Harland Avenue, Upfield, Radcliffe Road (south of Harland Ave), Ranmore Ave, and the south side of Addiscombe Road between the Shirley Park Golf Club and just east of Sandilands.

3.1 It is bounded by tramline and Woodbury Close to the west, Addiscombe Road to the north, Lloyd Park to the south, and Shirley Park Bowling Club and Shirley Park Golf Club to the east; the area also incorporates a playing field within the centre of the estate.

3.2 The estate was developed to align with the sloping and undulating topography of the area, with the streets rising and curving from north to south - from Addiscombe Road towards Grimwade Avenue and running east to west in a more undulating pattern.

History and Development

4. In 1596, Archbishop John Whitgift founded his charitable Foundation through the acquisition of lands across Croydon. That October, he purchased approximately 87 acres eastward near Stroud Green, together with several farms at Woodside, Shirley, and Addiscombe, for the sum of £1,400. This established the Whitgift Foundation's ownership of the land that would later form the Whitgift Estate. These agricultural lands generated income supporting the Hospital of the Holy Trinity (the Almshouses) and the Grammar School that Whitgift had established in Croydon.

4.1 For more than three centuries, from 1596 through to the late 1920s, the land remained under Whitgift Foundation ownership and continued in agricultural, market gardening and playing field use. Addiscombe Road connected the town of Croydon to the hamlet of Addiscombe, which allowed trade to easily move between the two. During the 19th century, the character of the surrounding area began to transform.

4.2 The Woodside to South Croydon railway was completed in 1885 and ran south into a cutting and tunnel through Woodbury Farm. The opening of Addiscombe Road station in April 1864 proved a catalyst for change, attracting local businesses and new residents to the district. This marked the beginning of suburban expansion in the locality, though the Whitgift Foundation's farmland remained undeveloped. Addiscombe Farm remained to the north of Addiscombe Road and Woodbury Farm to the south.

4.3 By the 1890s, the first roads were being laid out in anticipation of future development, including Mapledale Avenue, Fitzjames Avenue, Grimwade Avenue, and Upfield. This infrastructure planning preceded actual residential construction by several decades, demonstrating the gradual transition from agricultural to suburban use until the break-up of the Ashburton Estate. Addiscombe Road was the exception, with some houses already being built by this time.

4.4 A significant milestone occurred in 1913-1914 with the establishment of Shirley Park Golf Club on land adjacent to what would become the Whitgift Estate. Designed by renowned golf course architects Herbert Fowler and Tom Simpson, the course opened on 18 July 1914. This prestigious sporting facility signalled the beginning of upscale residential development in the area, establishing the character that would define subsequent development in the 1920s and 1930s. Other sporting developments included the merger of Addiscombe Cricket Club

(previously on Canning Road) and Ashburton Cricket Club, which relocated in 1905 to part of Woodbury Farm on Radcliffe Road. In 1924, the club bought its current Sandilands ground from the Whitgift Foundation and merged with Radcliffe Road Tennis Club to form what is now the Addiscombe Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club.

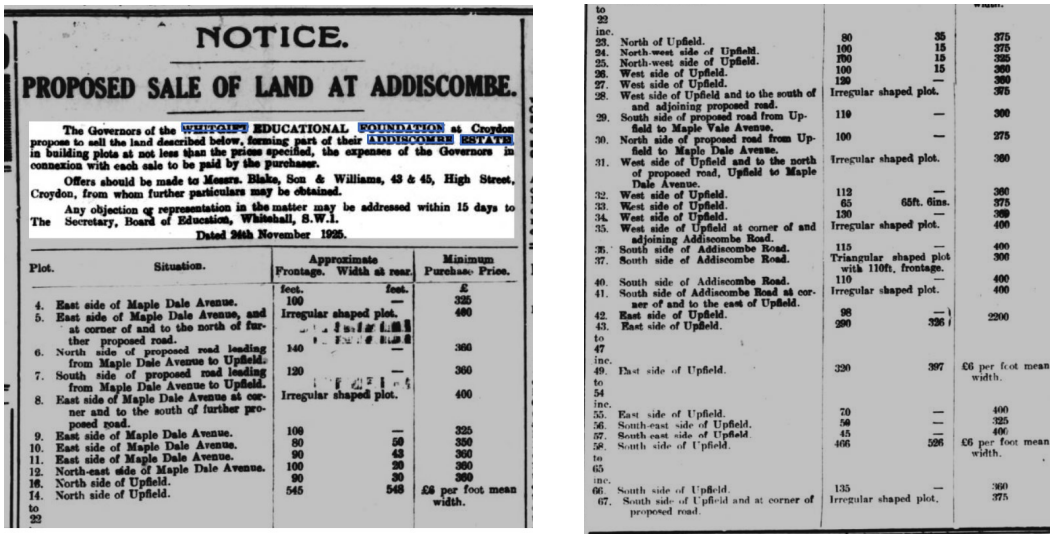
4.5 By the 1920s, the Whitgift Foundation, following the pattern of many large landholding charities of the period, began to recognise the development potential of its agricultural holdings. They began to sell freehold plots of land at Woodbury Farm and east towards Shirley. Several factors made the area highly desirable for upper-middle-class residential development: the expansion of London's suburbs, improved transport links, the increased use of cars and proximity to the newly established golf club.

4.6 The Croydon Corporation Town Planning Act 1925 established the Croydon (East) Town Planning Scheme, which zoned the Whitgift Foundation's farmland for residential development. Building plots were created progressively from 1925 as demand required. Restrictive covenants stipulated that plots should average one-third of an acre with detached houses only, ensuring the new estate maintained high quality and low density - a deliberate contrast to the denser Victorian terraced development that had characterised earlier suburban expansion in Croydon. In the architectural plans, the naming of the estate is inconsistent, with the most common names being the Whitgift Estate, the Addiscombe Estate, and the Addiscombe Estate-Shirley Park.

4.7 Development proceeded at a steady pace through the late 1920s and early 1930s. By 1935, the estate was midway through its transformation, mainly moving from the north on Addiscombe Road towards the more sloping south; building was mostly complete on Woodbury Close (Woodbury Farm buildings were demolished c1925), Mapledale Avenue and Fitzjames Avenue, partway through on Sandilands and Harland Avenue, and just started on Grimwade Avenue. The estate's street names reflected connections to the Whitgift Foundation and local history: Fitzjames Avenue was dedicated as a memorial to Walton Fitzjames Turner, a popular Governor at Whitgift School in 1921; Grimwade Avenue honoured a Croydon Councillor/Alderman; Radcliffe Road commemorated Mr Delme-Radcliffe, who became owner of the historic Addiscombe Place manor in 1808; and Woodbury Close was named after the farm which had previously occupied the land.

4.8 The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 brought development to a halt, with building paused throughout the conflict years. Post-war development resumed in 1947, with Grimwade Avenue and the southern section of Radcliffe Road completed during this period. By 1955, construction had completed on Ranmore

Avenue and the remaining portions of Radcliffe Road. An undeveloped section of Mapledale Avenue was retained as allotment gardens at this time, while the playing field at the estate's centre remained under the ownership of the Governors of the Whitgift Foundation, marking the completion of the estate's thirty-year development.



NOTICE.

PROPOSED SALE OF LAND AT ADDISCOMBE.

The Governors of the WHITGIFT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION at Croydon propose to sell the land described below, forming part of their ADDISCOMBE ESTATE, in building plots at not less than the prices specified, the expenses of the Governors in connexion with each sale to be paid by the purchaser.

Offers should be made to Messrs. Blake, Son & Williams, 43 & 45, High Street, Croydon, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

Any objection or representation in the matter may be addressed within 15 days to The Secretary, Board of Education, Whitehall, S.W.1.

Dated 26th November 1925.

Plot.	Situation.	Approximate Frontage. feet.	Width at rear. feet.	Minimum Purchase Price. £
4.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue.	100	—	325
5.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue, and at corner of and to the north of further proposed road.	Irregular shaped plot.		400
6.	North side of proposed road leading from Maple Dale Avenue to Upfield.	140	—	360
7.	South side of proposed road leading from Maple Dale Avenue to Upfield.	120	—	360
8.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue at corner and to the south of further proposed road.	Irregular shaped plot.		400
9.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue.	100	—	325
10.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue.	80	50	350
11.	East side of Maple Dale Avenue.	90	43	360
12.	North-east side of Maple Dale Avenue.	100	30	360
13.	North side of Upfield.	90	30	360
14. to 22 inc.	North side of Upfield.	545	548	£8 per foot mean width.
23.	North of Upfield.	80	35	375
24.	North-west side of Upfield.	100	15	375
25.	North-west side of Upfield.	100	15	325
26.	West side of Upfield.	100	15	360
27.	West side of Upfield.	130	—	360
28.	West side of Upfield and to the south of and adjoining proposed road.	Irregular shaped plot.		375
29.	South side of proposed road from Upfield to Maple Vale Avenue.	110	—	360
30.	North side of proposed road from Upfield to Maple Dale Avenue.	100	—	275
31.	West side of Upfield and to the north of proposed road, Upfield to Maple Dale Avenue.	Irregular shaped plot.		360
32.	West side of Upfield.	112	—	360
33.	West side of Upfield.	65	65ft. 6ins.	375
34.	West side of Upfield.	130	—	360
35.	West side of Upfield at corner of and adjoining Addiscombe Road.	Irregular shaped plot.		400
36.	South side of Addiscombe Road.	115	—	400
37.	South side of Addiscombe Road.	Triangular shaped plot with 110ft. frontage.		300
40.	South side of Addiscombe Road.	110	—	400
41.	South side of Addiscombe Road at corner of and to the east of Upfield.	Irregular shaped plot.		400
42.	East side of Upfield.	98	—	2200
43.	East side of Upfield.	290	326	
47 inc. to 49.	East side of Upfield.	320	397	£6 per foot mean width.
54 inc. to 55.	East side of Upfield.	70	—	400
56.	South-east side of Upfield.	50	—	325
57.	South east side of Upfield.	45	—	400
58. to 65 inc.	South side of Upfield.	466	526	£6 per foot mean width.
66.	South side of Upfield.	135	—	360
67.	South side of Upfield and at corner of proposed road.	Irregular shaped plot.		375

Figure 1 Croydon Times - Saturday 28 November 1925

Character and Description of the Area

Architecture

5. The area is characterised by well-maintained detached houses built in a mainly 1920s and 1930s English Vernacular style, but with eclectic decorative elements of Edwardian, Art Deco and neo-classicism. The architecture reflects typical larger housing styles found in some other parts of suburban Croydon of a similar age but with some distinct stylistic elements possibly unique to the area. Many of these original features still survive.

5.1 Many of the houses feature integral garages which represent the age during which the estate was developed, when the motor car added status and provided easier accessibility between cities, town centres and suburbs.

5.2 Overall, there is a wide variety of house types and plan forms, with some size difference. However, differing architectural authorship, building plans reveal consistent features across properties, including room layouts and uses popular at the time, use of garages and siting on individual plots, confirming the effectiveness of the covenant control system in helping to maintain architectural coherence but also the influence of the garden suburb movement popular at the time.

5.3 The house plans on corner plots are often set at 45 degrees across their sites, a feature developed from the garden suburb principles.

5.4 The progression of dates of construction across the estate reflect the popular suburban domestic styles of the time as they progressed from just after the First World War, through the Second World War to the 1950s.

5.5 Buildings range from typical 1930s detached Arts and Crafts inspired houses with mock Tudor/Tudorbethan and early vernacular influences, as well as some Edwardian detailing in the earlier examples and Art Deco styling in those built during the 1930s. Stylistic features include front gables, bays, oriels, porches, doors, windows (with varied shapes and some leaded or with coloured glass) and brick, tile, lead and render detailing. Many houses on the estate have steeply pitched tiled roofs with overhanging eaves and prominent chimney stacks. Most have either low front garden boundary walls, hedges or grassy verges. House names are also a feature, often painted on buildings or applied to front boundaries; this was a fashionable practice at the time.

5.6 Whilst an English Vernacular aesthetic dominates there are a few contrasting examples of a more Moderne style; some of these are features of the prominent corner plots within the estate.

5.7 A variety of materials is featured across the estate, ranging from timber and metal windows to natural clay roof and hanging tiles, with a predominant use of brick at ground floor and render on the upper parts of buildings which unify the varying designs.

5.8 Alterations and additions have taken place to a number of the houses over the decades which have had a varied effect on the character of the estate as a whole. Whilst most have continued in the style of the host dwelling, some have departed from the original and established character.

Examples of individual houses

18 Fitzjames Avenue is particularly well-preserved example with a high-quality design and characteristic features. It is an Arts and Crafts inspired building with tall prominent chimney stacks projecting above a distinctive roof form with three front facing projecting gables and a feature key-hole shaped recessed entrance.



Figure 2 18 Fitzjames Avenue, photo taken January 2026

Plans for individual properties identify multiple architects working on the estate, including Hugh Macintosh FRIBA (a prestigious Croydon-based architect) who designed **35 Grimwade Avenue**. This diversity of architectural practices demonstrates that development occurred through individual plot sales with buyers commissioning their own architects, rather than mass construction by a single builder.

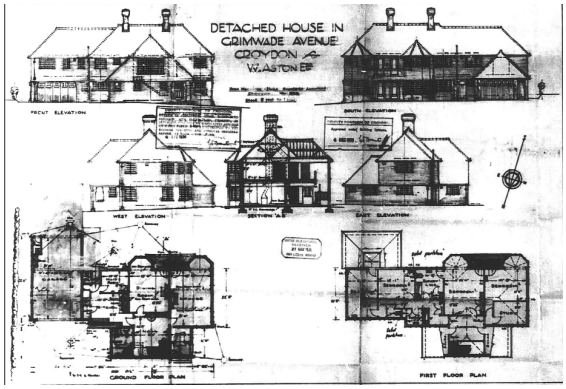
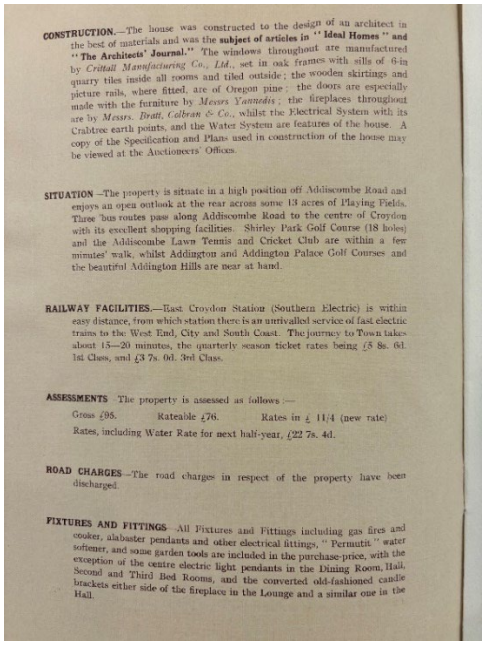




Figure 3 November 1936 Plan for 35 Grimwade Avenue, by architect Hugh Macintosh (Council Planning Record)

Figure 4 35 Grimwade Avenue, photo taken January 2026

Another notable example is **20 Fitzjames Avenue** (named "Milestone"), sold in May 1938. Sales particulars described it as standing on the 'favourite Whitgift Foundation Estate', built 'under the supervision of a well-known architect' with 'an attractive elevation in brick wholly rendered in white cement with boarded and felted roof, swept valleys, and English hand-made sand-faced tiles.' The house was featured in both Ideal Home magazine and The Architects Journal of the time.



CONSTRUCTION.—The house was constructed to the design of an architect in the best of materials and was the **subject of articles in "Ideal Homes" and "The Architects' Journal."** The windows throughout are manufactured by *Crittall Manufacturing Co., Ltd.*, set in oak frames with sills of 6-in quarry tiles inside all rooms and tiled outside; the wooden skirtings and picture rails, where fitted, are of Oregon pine; the doors are especially made with the furniture by *Messrs. Yannedis*; the fireplaces throughout are by *Messrs. Bratt, Colbran & Co.*, whilst the Electrical System with its Crabtree earth points, and the Water System are features of the house. A copy of the Specification and Plans used in construction of the house may be viewed at the Auctioneers' Offices.

SITUATION.—The property is situate in a high position off Addiscombe Road and enjoys an open outlook at the rear across some 13 acres of Playing Fields. Three 'bus routes pass along Addiscombe Road to the centre of Croydon with its excellent shopping facilities. Shirley Park Golf Course (18 holes) and the Addiscombe Lawn Tennis and Cricket Club are within a few minutes' walk, whilst Addington and Addington Palace Golf Courses and the beautiful Addington Hills are near at hand.

RAILWAY FACILITIES.—East Croydon Station (Southern Electric) is within easy distance, from which station there is an unrivalled service of fast electric trains to the West End, City and South Coast. The journey to Town takes about 15—20 minutes, the quarterly season ticket rates being £5 8s. 6d. 1st Class, and £3 7s. 0d. 3rd Class.

ASSESSMENTS. The property is assessed as follows:—

Gross £98. Rateable £76. Rates in £ 11/4 (new rate)

Rates, including Water Rate for next half-year, £22 7s. 4d.

ROAD CHARGES.—The road charges in respect of the property have been discharged.

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS. All Fixtures and Fittings including gas fires and cooker, alabaster pendants and other electrical fittings, "Permutit" water softener, and some garden tools are included in the purchase-price, with the exception of the centre electric light pendants in the Dining Room, Hall, Second and Third Bed Rooms, and the converted old-fashioned candle brackets either side of the fireplace in the Lounge and a similar one in the Hall.



Figure 5 Sales Particulars, "Milestone", 20 Fitzjames Avenue, 1938 (Croydon Archives)

Figure 6 20 Fitzjames Avenue, photo taken January 2026

No.46 Sandilands was originally designed by Charles H Ridge in 1935 in a streamlined Modern style with a flat roof, Ridge's practice was in Croydon and he was a Fellow of the Architectural Association. The flat roof, if built according to the plans, may have given trouble resulting in a pitched glazed tiled roof being added plus an infill extension at first floor level. The building still has a pleasing appearance on a prominent corner plot and is a marked contrast to the majority of houses on the estate.

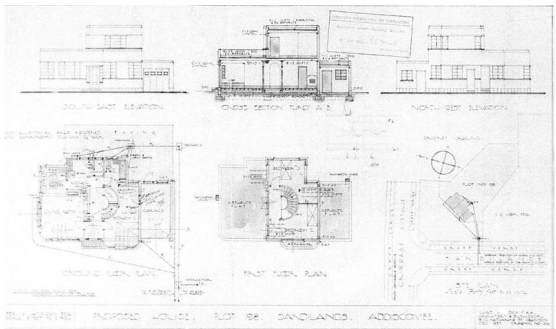




Figure 7 1935 plan by Charles Ridge (Council Planning Record)

Figure 8 46 Sandilands, photo taken January 2026

During the Second World War, the house at **34 Grimwade Avenue**, known as "Squerrys," was occupied by Geoffrey and Peggy Gowlland and their family. Letters exchanged with relatives document preparations for air raids, the impact of bombing, and the challenges of maintaining family life under wartime

conditions, while also reflecting the contribution of local residents to the war effort through nearby industrial employment. This demonstrates the estates significance as a well-preserved example of interwar suburban living with enduring communal and historical value.



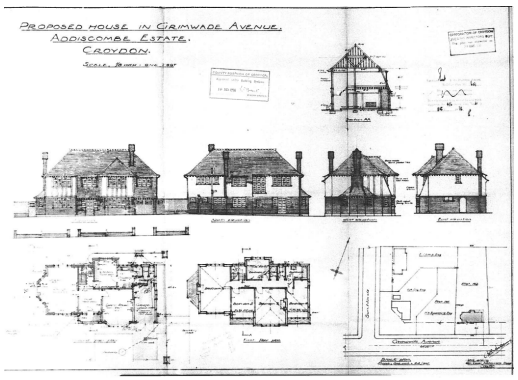


Figure 9 'Squerrys' from the front, late 1937

Figure 10 Plan of 34 Grimwade Avenue, 1936 (Council Planning Records)

Townscape

6. The Whitgift estate represents a good quality and attractive interwar planned suburban residential development which both surrounds and is surrounded by generous green space.

6.1 The proximity to Shirley Park Golf Club (established 1914), and the Addiscombe Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club at Sandilands (1925) influenced the upscale character of this garden suburb-style development.

6.2 Building covenants at the outset established minimum plot sizes and restricted development to single detached houses on each. This represented a deliberate planning approach to create a high-quality, low-density residential environment and the plot-by-plot development is reflected in the varied appearance of the estate.

6.3 The plots are laid out on a fairly regular grid which is somewhat denser in some eastern sections of the estate.

6.4 The undulating landscape and curved tree-lined roads with grass verges provide a street pattern which is generous in appearance, with wide crossroads punctuating at intervals along their length. Corner plots have curved boundaries which add to the feeling of openness. Cul de sacs within the estate end in green space which is a marked contrast to the houses lining the busy Addiscombe Road. Woodbury Close is built around a central circular green.

6.5 The equally generously proportioned houses are mostly set back from the roads behind front drives and gardens, with mixed low front boundary walls, gates,

hedges and grass verges. Some houses which are situated on sloping plots are accessed via steps and terraced front gardens, resulting in a more elevated appearance in the streetscape.

6.6 Radcliffe Road has extra wide grass verges with houses well set back from the road behind front gardens and low boundary walls and hedges.

6.7 The presence of integrated garages and driveways is a recurrent element within the townscape and distinguishes the area from earlier Victorian and Edwardian housing estates.

6.8 House names are proudly displayed in positions on houses and gates in a variety of materials and designs which are easily visible from the street. Some original cast iron street signs also remain which add character to entries of some roads on the estate.

Landscape

7. Besides most houses being set in generous gardens, many face directly onto open space, with more distant views through between houses to wider open landscape and trees beyond. This borrowed landscape lends an additional feeling of openness to the estate as a whole.

7.1 The area feels verdant, with hedge planting bordering streets and pedestrian-friendly grass verges which are planted with predominantly mature trees. This street design, along with planting in front gardens, also helps to soften the overall appearance of the estate, even though the area was designed for motor cars and many of the houses have garages and driveways

7.2 The area also features a large gated private open space with sports field at the centre of the block bounded by Sandilands and Grimwade, Fitzjames and Mapledale Avenues. Besides houses built directly around this field many other houses across the estate look out onto other green space which surrounds the estate beyond the individual back gardens.

7.3 Woodbury Close, to the west of the railway line, is built around a circular open space with a large tree at its centre. The houses on the east of the Close also back onto open space and a band of trees which obscure the railway line and the beginning of the tunnel.

7.4 There is a pond surrounded by trees and a timber picket fence, with a small outbuilding of a contemporary with the houses, on the corner of Mapledale Avenue and Upfield. This appears to be private and in the ownership of Croydon Council, although it may originally have been part of the landscape before the estate was built.

Issues and Threats

8. Original windows replaced with inappropriate materials such as uPVC and loss of original front doors and decorative coloured glass

8.1 Loss of original bay and oriel windows, porches, door and window surrounds and other decorative features

8.2 Unsympathetic side extensions

8.3 Changes to original roof pitches and addition of large dormers

8.4 Extensive alteration leading to loss of character

8.5 Substantial or total demolition and redevelopment

8.6 Introduction of unsympathetic materials

8.7 Photovoltaic panels (PVs) on front roof slopes

8.8 Loss of boundary walls and hedges

8.9 Imposing new boundary walls and gates

8.10 Landscaping and planting at the front of buildings replaced with paving

8.11 Changes to original pairs of double garage doors with small pane upperlights

8.12 Loss of original house names and street signs

Opportunities for Enhancement

9. Retention and re-instatement of original features

9.1 Alterations and additions which are sympathetic to original aesthetic of buildings and subservient to the main house, maintaining roof forms and generous gaps between buildings

9.2 Use of appropriate materials for alterations and additions which match originals as closely as possible

9.3 PVs to be sited sympathetically so as not to be directly visible from the street

9.4 Retention and re-instatement of original front boundary walls and gates

9.5 Retaining well-planted front gardens and boundaries

9.6 Any changes to original windows, doors and garage doors should match the originals as closely as possible and retain any original coloured glass

9.7 Retention of original house names and street signs

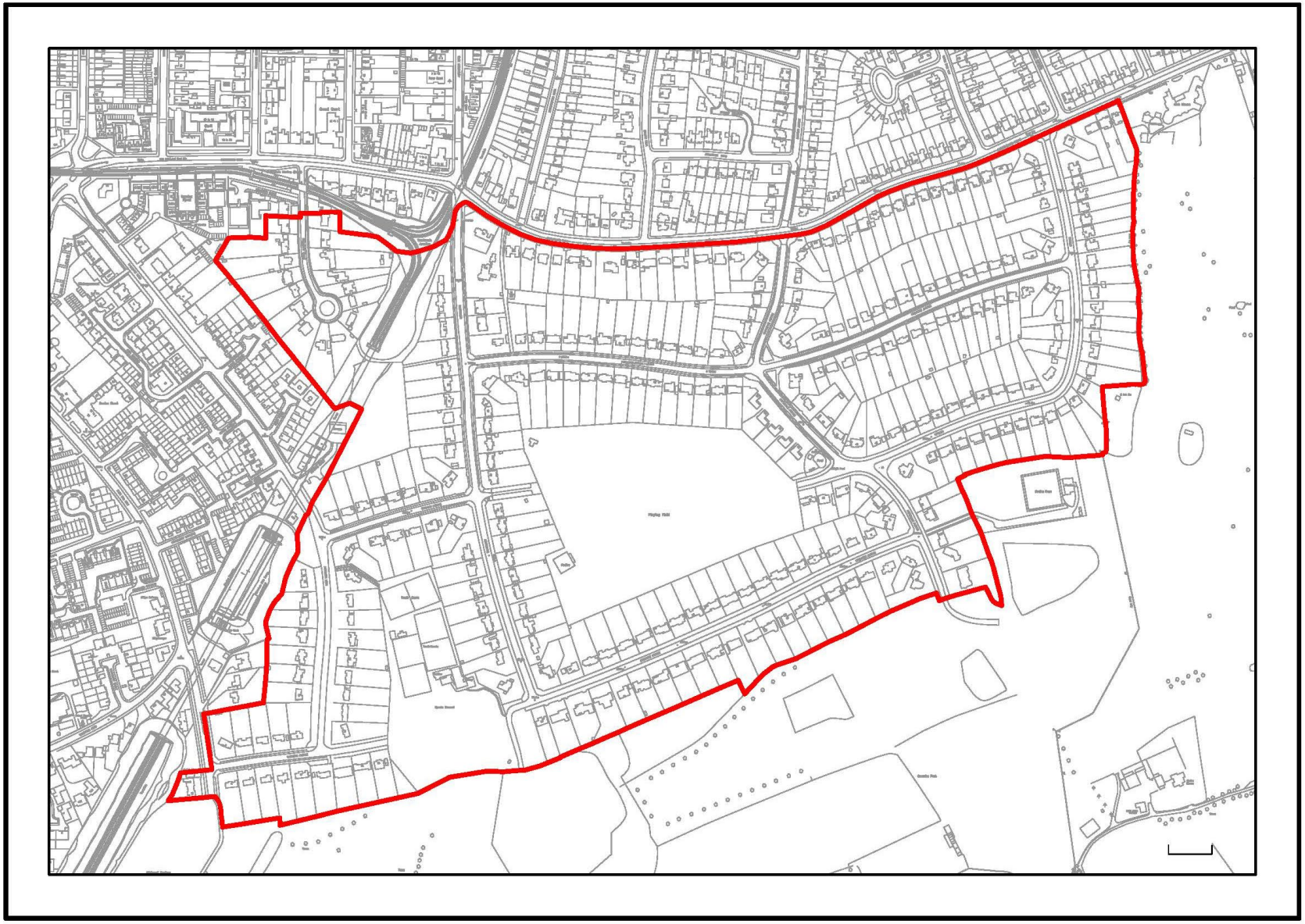


Figure 11 Whitgift Estate Conservation Area boundary

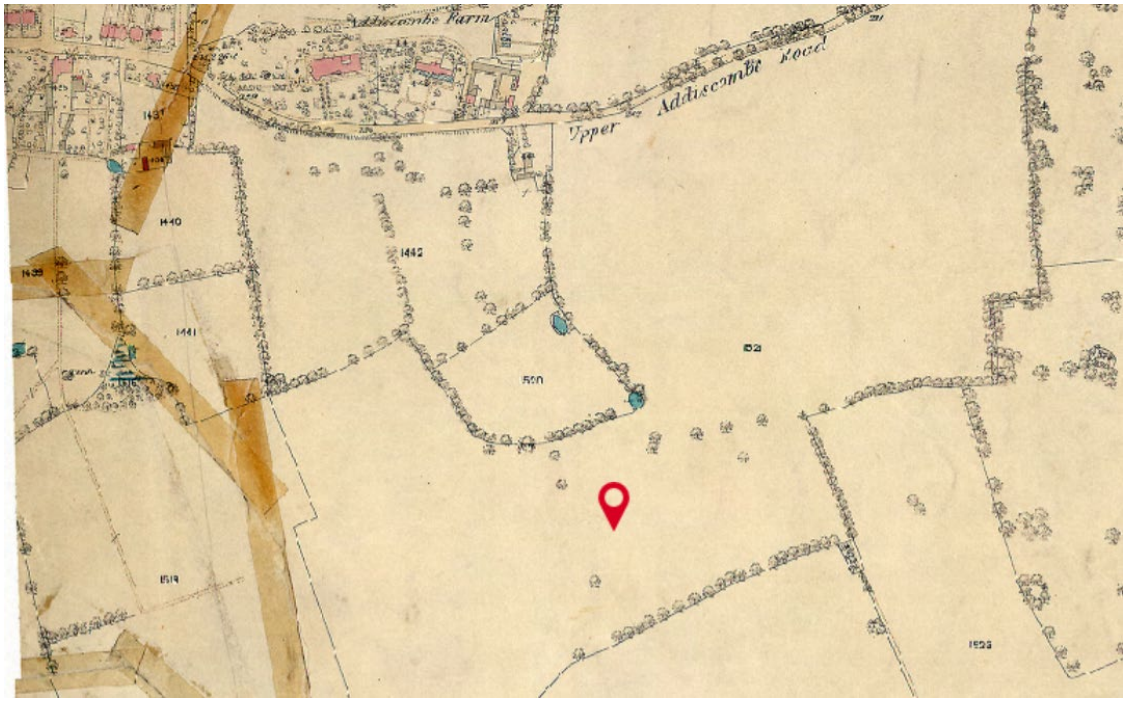


Figure12 1868 County Survey of the area on which the Whitgift Estate now stands (accessed via Cadcorp)



Figure 13 Survey 1894-1895 (Croydon Archives)

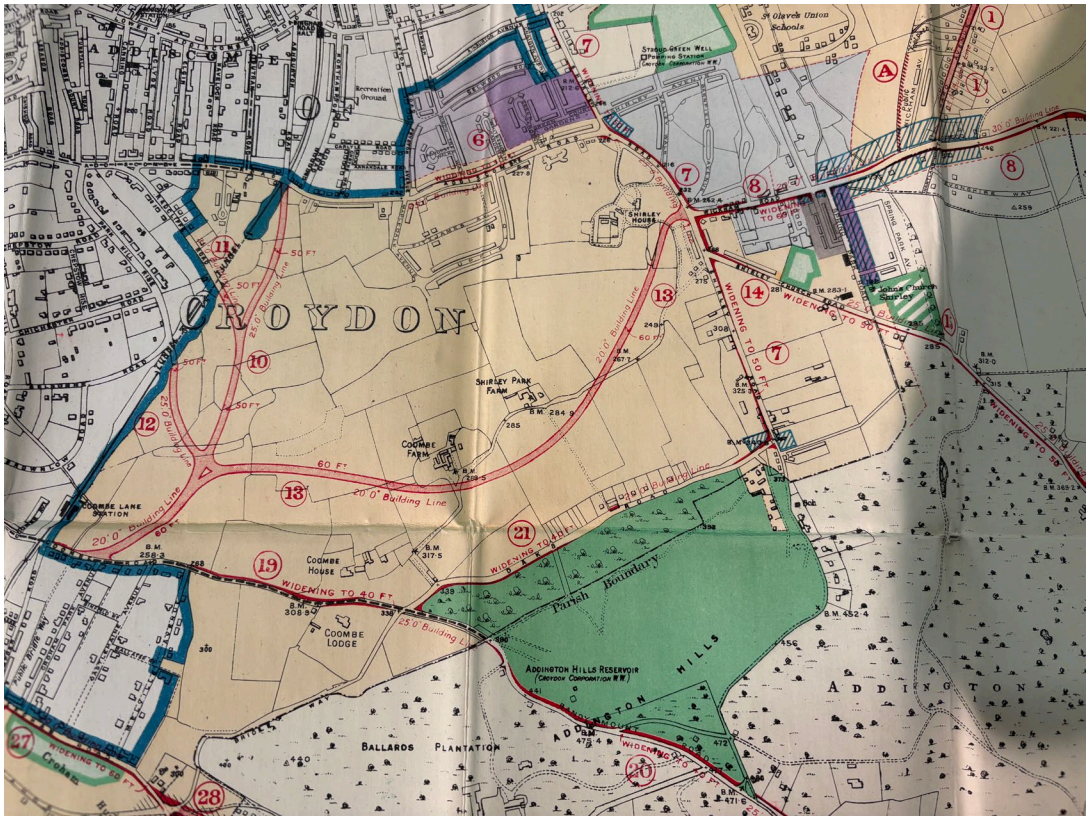


Figure 14 Estate Map 1925, Croydon (East) Town Planning Scheme (Croydon Archives)



Figure 15 County Survey Map 1940 (accessed via Cadcorp)



Figure 16 Aerial photo of Whitgift Estate, 1932. Upfield Road in centre with first houses appearing on Grimwade Avenue



Particulars

OF THE

COMPACT FREEHOLD

Reproduction Tudor Residence

"BLEWBURY LODGE,"

Mapledale Avenue, East Croydon.

N.W. Elevation to Mapledale Avenue.

The House

Is set at an angle to the road with the principal accommodation at the rear facing S.E. and overlooking open country. The elevations are partly timbered with diamond and rectangular leaded casements in oak frames. Cavity walls throughout. The roof is of mellowed tiles with typical brick chimney stacks.

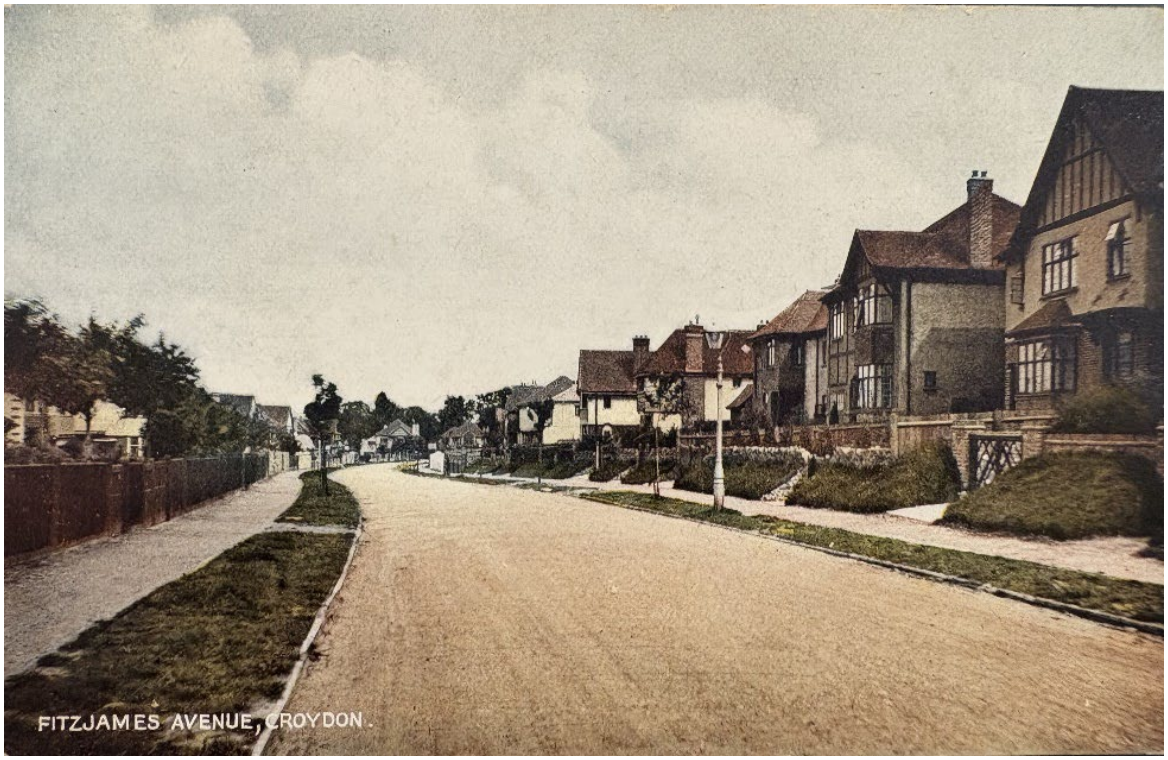
ENTRANCE HALL

With boot cupboard and Gentleman's Cloak Room, fitted lavatory basin and W.C. Polished oak flooring.

STUDY

About 12-ft × 10-ft-6, with period fireplace and dwarf locker cupboards in oak. Polished oak flooring.

Figure 17 Sales brochure, 1930s (Croydon Archives)



Figures 18 & 19 Postcard of Fitzjames Avenue, 1930s (Croydon Archives), and similar view today (below)





Figures 20 & 21 Postcard of Mapledale Avenue, 1930s (Croydon Archives), and similar view today (below)





Figures 22 & 23 Postcard of Upfield, 1930s (Croydon Archives) and similar view today (below)










































HARLAND
AVENUE



















