Caxton Avenue

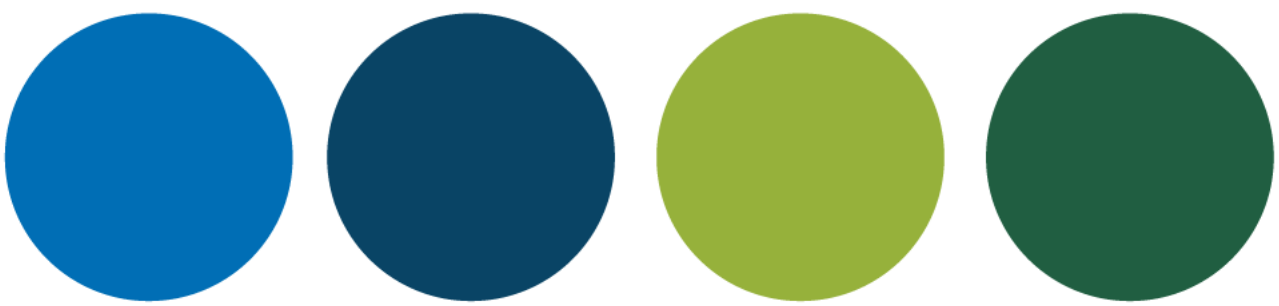
Conservation Area Appraisal

October 2022

Runnymede BOROUGH COUNCIL

Caxton Avenue
Conservation Area Appraisal

Contents



Introduction

Caxton Avenue Conservation Area growth is shown by the Ordinance Survey Mapping of the are from 1869 through to 1968.

Caxton Avenue and a section of Coombelands Lane contain 26 properties which represent the first phase of a Garden Village which was planned as a much larger development but was never completed.

It was built on land associated with Coombelands House and Coombelands Farm, with the Ordinance Survey mapping that surveyed the area in 1869 and published in 1914 showing the estate in the open countryside, with the site where the printing works would be located being occupied by a walled garden at that time.

The 1934 revision shows the 26 dwellings in place, but with some sporadic development surrounding it, with the map from 1968 showing that building development had become far more comprehensive in the area a further 34 years later. These maps can be seen on pages 6-7 of this document.

History

The history of the development and printing in the area.

Initially in Addlestone there has been a proposal for a Garden Village by Norbert Chereau, who proposed a 250-home scheme in the Surrey Advertiser, dated 14 April 1919, however, this never came to fruition. The development of these homes was a result of Percival E Jones, a printer with three print works in Birmingham and one in London who wanted to amalgamate these works into one large factory, so began to look for suitable sites to build a new works together with enough land to build his vision of a model village for the print workers.

His purchase of the Coombelands estate was completed in 1921. The estate was divided between two new companies: The Pressat Coombelands Ltd incorporated in 1921 operating the printing side of the business and Coombelands Estates Ltd, providing housing and amenities for the employees and their families. On purchase the new owners set about building a new 41,000sqft (circa 3,800sqm) print works on the site of the former walled garden.

The print works started production in 1928. A detached building in a similar style housed a social club with a full-sized billiard room. Also constructed in 1926, part funded by subsidy under the Housing Act 1923, to be occupied by print workers, were several semi-detached cottages down Coombelands Lane, then along a new road, Caxton Avenue, together with detached bungalows in Caxton Avenue and Farm Lane. In all 22 cottages and nine bungalows were built. The dwellings were in rustic style, whitewashed, with several having black stained weatherboarding at the first floor level. They had generous gardens and were built at a low density. Trees and shrubs were planted along the roads in borders that were maintained by company employed gardeners.

Coombelands House, the Lodge and Farm of 180 acres were all retained. Coombelands

House served as a hostel for single workers until the new housing was built. Along with the Social Club there were other facilities provided for the company employees including a large sports field with a pavilion and a tennis court.

World War II changed many things for the area. Coombelands House and the Press were taken over on requisition by Vickers Armstrong, the aircraft makers, based at nearby Brooklands. Only a small section of the factory remained devoted to printing, mainly producing military manuals.

Coombelands Farm was also taken over by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food in 1941 to expand the nearby Veterinary Research Laboratory.

After WWII Coombeland Estates sold 34 acres off to Ralph Vines in October 1951. It consisted of farmland, a tree nursery and mineral workings. Vines then constructed a farmhouse called Park Farm in 1952. An area of outlying land, the sports ground was retained by the estate.

WWII also meant the company lost control over the workers housing. It was difficult to obtain labour unless accommodation was offered so the company set up a Housing Association in 1955 taking advantage of government subsidies to build new dwellings. Chaucer Way was laid out in 1956 and 30 new semi-detached houses were built.

Coombelands House was demolished by 1961 as the building by that time was in poor condition. This allowed for further houses (numbers 31 to 40 Chaucer Way and maisonettes on Hartland Road) to be built in1967.

The story of printing at Coombelands after WWII was of improvement in fortunes followed by gentle decline. The Press was eventually taken over by Benn Brothers, a London printing company, in 1957 and the Jones family were no longer involved. There followed a change with the community ethos becoming less important, and the Estate company became more focused on property development. In the early 1960's Calor Gas moved onto the eastern part of the site occupying a large laboratory. This subsequently became Coombelands Business Park with several small industries occupying various units.

In June 1978 the works were purchased by the well-known local company of Ian Allan when the existing business was under financial pressure. Also, in 1978, a small cul-de-sac of houses, numbers 41-49 Chaucer Way was developed, and new dwellings constructed at Hartland Road. The social club was converted to offices in 1981. In the 1970's and 1980's the amenity land on the estate was gradually sold off for infill housing including the former tennis court on Coombelands Lane in 1977 together with various plots in Chaucer Way. In 1984, two blocks of flats were built named Wriotsley Way.

By 1982 a property company, Mountview Estates, had acquired the property holdings in Chaucer Way and Caxton Avenue consisting of roadways with associated amenity land and a substantial number of rent controlled properties housing current and former employees of the print works. When the regulated tenancies of the former company employees came to an end the houses were then sold off. Eventually, with very few tenancies left, Mountview sold the roads to residents' groups on Chaucer Way in 2000 and Caxton Avenue in 2001, the latter being to Caxton Avenue 2001 Ltd which remains the owning company of the road and verges.

In 1995 Ian Allen moved out of the print works and the tenants of the business park gradually vacated. There followed a lengthy period of plans being submitted to Runnymede Borough Council before permission was granted in 1998 for demolition and erection of a new housing estate of 50 homes called Redwoods. Thus ended 65 years of printing at Coombelands.

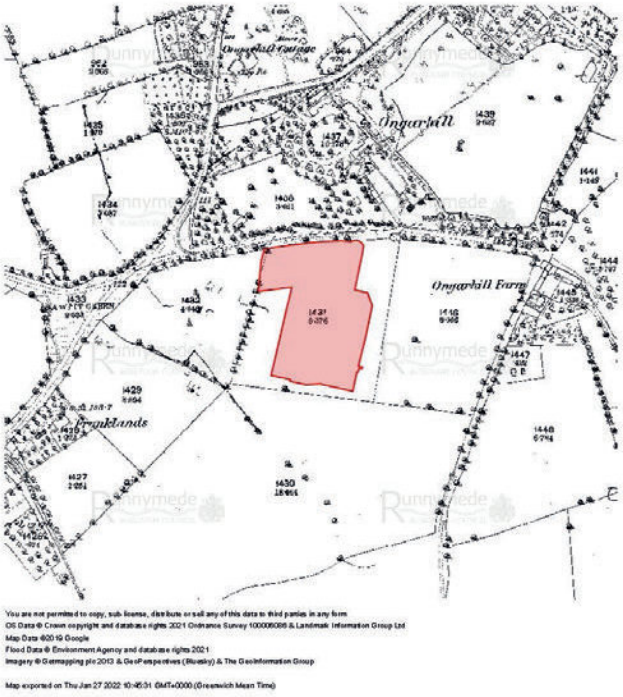
Although the printing and property company no longer manage the homes, it should be noted that there are a number of restrictive covenants upon the properties that are still in force at the time of the publishing of this Appraisal.

There is evidence of these from a lease agreement relating to 20 Caxton Avenue dated 1st May 1953, and subsequently a covenant from 1969 (for the same property) that states that the occupier is:

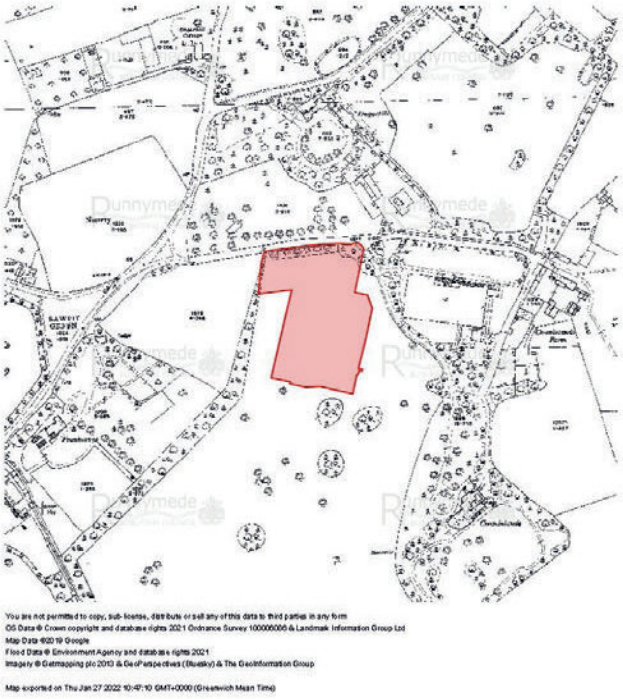
- Not to use or permit to be used any buildings or erection now or to be erected on the land hereby transferred or any part thereof for the purpose of any trade or business or for any purpose except that of a private dwelling house or that of a surgery for a doctor or dentist.
- Not to cause or permit any nuisance on the land here by transferred or any part thereof and not to do or permit thereon any act or thing which causes or may grow to cause any damage, inconvenience, annoyance, or disturbance to the owners or occupiers of adjacent or neighbouring property.
- Not to permit washing to be hung out on any part of the land hereby transferred on a Sunday.
- Not to allow the parking of caravans on the land hereby transferred or the erection of any temporary buildings thereon except with the written consent of the Transferors or their agent or agents.
- To forever maintain in good repair and proper order good and substantial boundary fences and hedges on the Eastern, Southern and Western boundaries of the land hereby transferred.

As can be seen from the above, there has been a long-standing desire to retain the character of the area as primarily residential, and the photographs taken as part of the assessment of the area show the houses have largely retained their character and style over a long period of time. The key features and influences on the design of the houses are discussed in more detail in the following section.

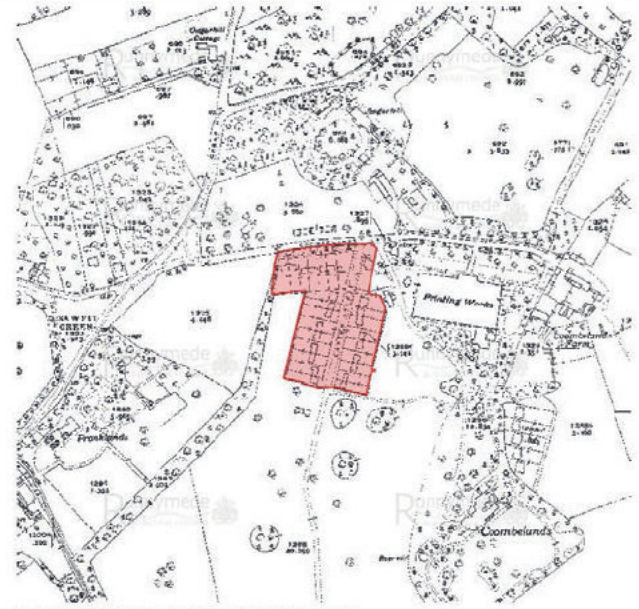
Caxton Avenue Conservation Area as shown on the 1869-1894 OS map.



Caxton Avenue Conservation Area as shown on the 1914-1915 OS map.

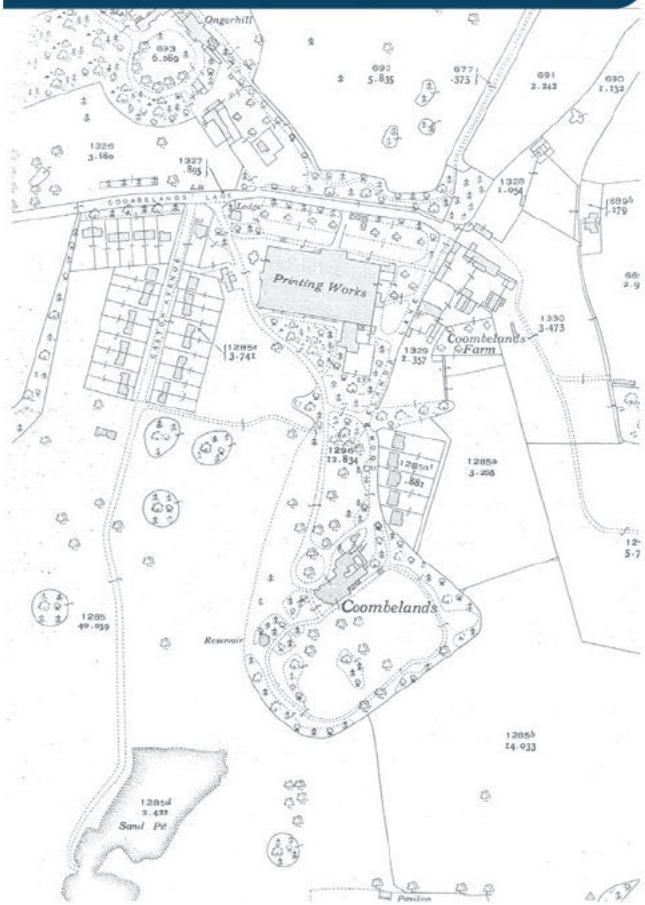


Caxton Avenue Conservation Area as shown on the 1934- 1937 OS map.



Caxton Avenue 1914 OS map. Courtesy of Surrey County Council.

Caxton Avenue 1934 OS map. Courtesy of Surrey County Council.



Caxton Avenue 1968 OS map. Courtesy of Surrey County Council.

Influences

Influences on the design of the area. The Garden City / Village movement.

The Garden City movement, like its smaller Garden Village counterpart was initiated in the UK by the planner Sir Ebenezer Howard. They were a planning concept which encouraged self-contained communities, often on the fringes of towns, in what at the time was open countryside. It was intended that local industry or agriculture would provide convenient and nearby employment. The concept stretches from the post-Industrial Revolution period (starting circa 1820-1840) to the 1920's.

These Garden settlements were planned to be distinct, self-contained, entities with shops, transport links, schools and green open spaces. Alternatively, some garden villages were sited outside cities and towns but easily served by rail or road transport. The aim of such planned villages was to combine the benefits of town life and local employment, with rural idyll, and providing better living environments to often squalid, cramped urban living.

Most Garden Villages were designed to provide rented accommodation and often, wealthy employers / manufacturers built these communities for their workforce. Many places which may be termed the original Garden Villages still thrive today with well-known examples of larger schemes including Port Sunlight, Bourneville, Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. The layouts were spacious with large private gardens, wide roads and grass verges with forest scale tree planting giving a rural arcadian feel.

The Arts and Crafts movement

Most of the house designs (both built and set out in Plans and Drawings chapter) were loosely based on the materials and proportions made popular by the Arts and Crafts Movement, which took place between (broadly) 1860-1925. This movement, which was a result of the grim industrialisation of the 19th century, led designers to seek to produce new and more beautiful environments in which people might live and delight in fine craftsmanship, using intrinsically attractive building materials.

The English critic John Ruskin (1819-1920), directed attention to the qualities of medieval architecture, holding up as models the members of the crafts guilds and the builders of larger houses. A whole generation of artists and designers were influenced by Ruskin, among them, William Morris (1834-96), who is most closely associated with the Arts and Crafts movement, took to heart Ruskin's pleas for honesty of materials and craftsmanship.

The RED House built for Morris in Bexley Heath by architect Philip Webb is the starting point of the new style. Webb turned from High Victorian Gothic style to a simpler vernacular architecture based on old English cottages and farmhouses. Most of his commissions, together with those of his contemporary Norman Shaw, were for individual private residences where the use of tile-hung facade, stained timber boarding on first floor facade, very dominant and

Example of stained timber facade.

steeply pitched roofs, hipped and swept-hipped roofs on semi-detached properties, overhanging eaves, bands of brickwork and porches were much in evidence. As this simple rustic style became fashionable among the middle classes, so the concept filtered down to architects whose work involved estate developments and to Garden City / Garden Village developers, but in a much more simple and economic form.

At Caxton Avenue the semi-detached blocks have steep and very prominent roofs with hips at each end, except for some which have a gable on one half of the semi.

Example of a Hip roof.

This is a much-used Arts and Crafts device which gives the impression that the pair is in fact one large property. Some hipped roofs use a swept hip which extends down to mid floor level. Again, this increases the dominance of the roof element.

Tile hanging or stained timer boarding to the upper floors accentuates the perceived dominance of the roofs. Substantial central chimneys complete the cottage or farmhouse style of the buildings.

Most facades are now painted white, but it is likely that facing brickwork would have been the original finish, however, the texture of the bricks beneath the painting is still a prominent feature. The windows are set in groups of three casements and no sliding sash windows are used which reinforces the 'cottage' style of the windows.

The ground floor windows have capped relieving arches which add detail and interest. Most of the side opening casement windows at Caxton Avenue have been replaced by double glazed units but the general proportions and sub-divisions of the originals have fortunately been maintained.

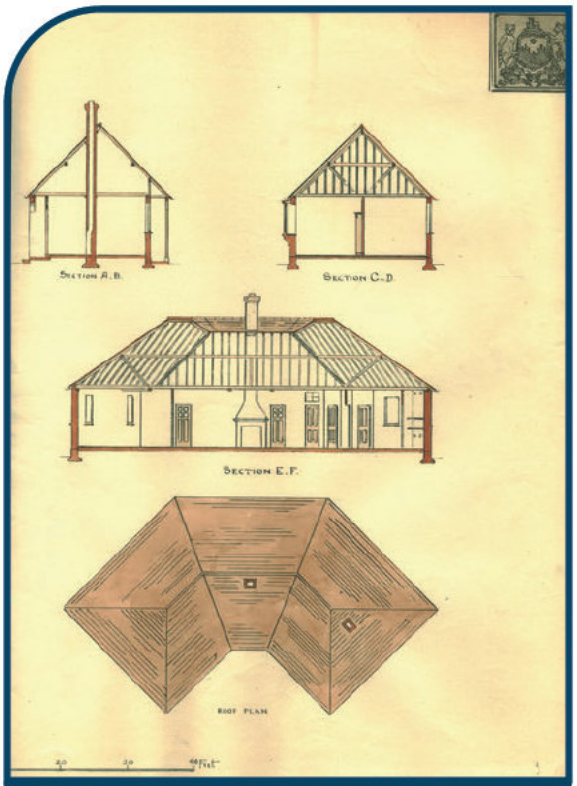
The access road is wide with grass verges planted with forest scale trees while the front property boundaries are formed of hedges. All this leads to the feel of rural living with the houses set well back amongst vegetation, again an Arts and Crafts concept.

Plans

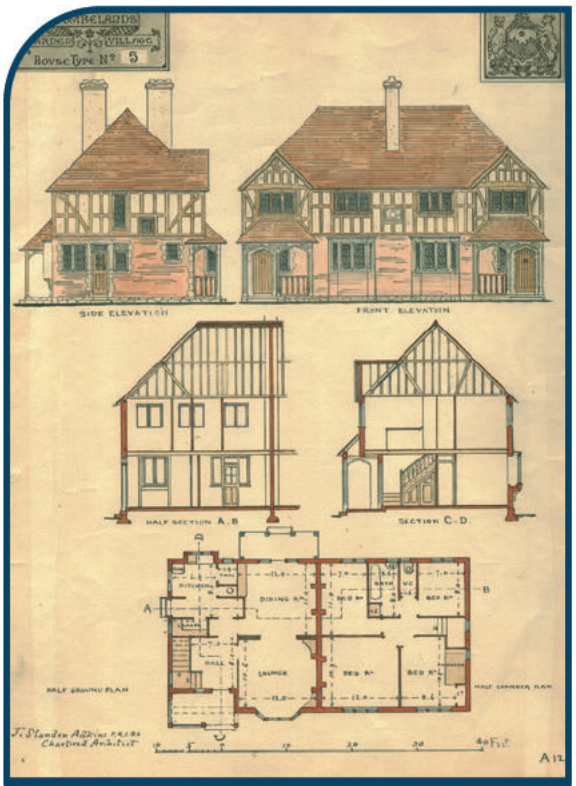
This chapter looks at a series of architect drawings and plans for the Garden Village and surrounding development that did not materialise.

The images show the plans and drawings for a series of different house types which were planned to be developed as part of the envisioned (and much larger) Garden Village which was intended to be built around the printworks. As this did not materialise, not all these types are present in the extant dwellings in Caxton Avenue and Coombelands Lane.

The series of images on page 10 were kindly provided by Chertsey Museum.

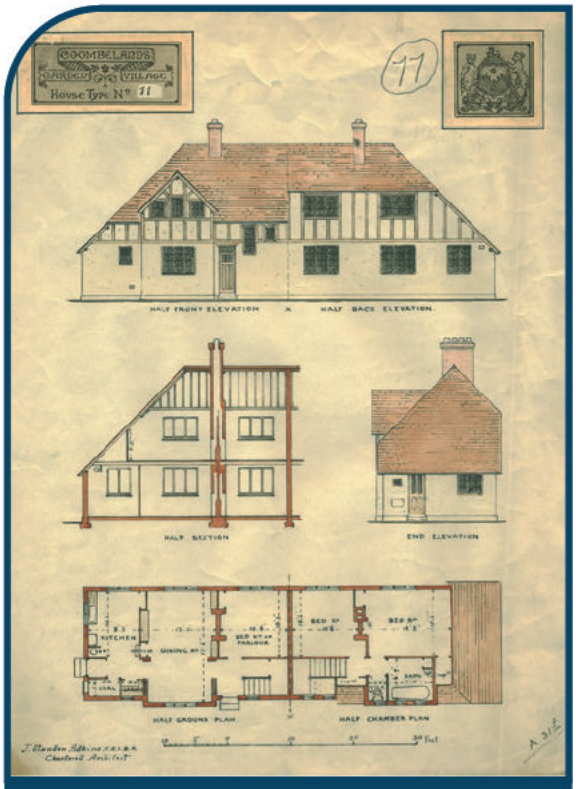


House type 1



House type 5

House type 6



House type 11

Specification

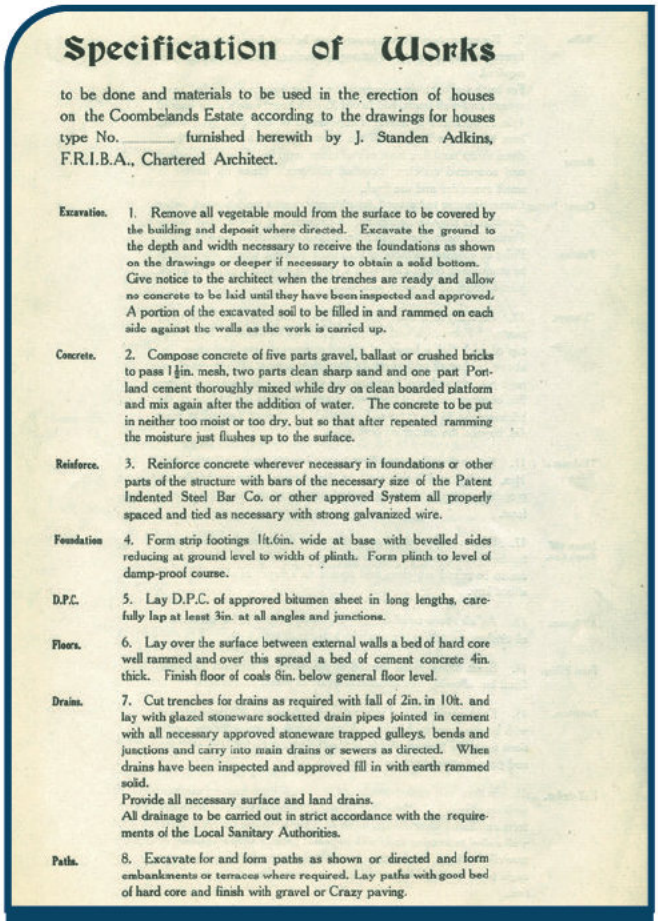
The following pages show a copy of the original specification of works for the homes built in the area. This sets out standards for various parts of the dwellings, such as the foundations, drains, paths, walls, floors, roofs, stairs etc.

The build quality, as well as the use of the relatively new cavity wall feature highlight that the properties along Caxton Avenue and Coombelands Lane are examples of high-quality and well-designed homes that were built to be directly linked to employment at the printworks. This quality has been maintained over the decades, and the Conservation Area encapsulates a discrete area of housing that was the first part of what would have most likely been a much larger Garden Village Development, if the wider area had also been developed as part of a 'proper' Garden Village.

Specification of work plans

Below are images of the original specification of works supplied by Chertsey Museum, which set out how the homes were to be constructed.

This includes reference to the relatively novel feature of cavity walls.



Specification of Works

to be done and materials to be used in the erection of houses on the Coombelands Estate according to the drawings for houses type No. _____ furnished herewith by J. Standen Adkins, F.R.I.B.A., Chartered Architect.

Excavation. 1. Remove all vegetable mould from the surface to be covered by the building and deposit where directed. Excavate the ground to the depth and width necessary to receive the foundations as shown on the drawings or deeper if necessary to obtain a solid bottom. Give notice to the architect when the trenches are ready and allow no concrete to be laid until they have been inspected and approved. A portion of the excavated soil to be filled in and rammed on each side against the walls as the work is carried up.

Concrete. 2. Compose concrete of five parts gravel, ballast or crushed bricks to pass 1½in. mesh, two parts clean sharp sand and one part Portland cement thoroughly mixed while dry on clean boarded platform and mix again after the addition of water. The concrete to be put in neither too moist or too dry, but so that after repeated ramming the moisture just flushes up to the surface.

Reinforce. 3. Reinforce concrete wherever necessary in foundations or other parts of the structure with bars of the necessary size of the Patent Indented Steel Bar Co. or other approved System all properly spaced and tied as necessary with strong galvanized wire.

Foundation 4. Form strip footings 1ft.6in. wide at base with bevelled sides reducing at ground level to width of plinth. Form plinth to level of damp-proof course.

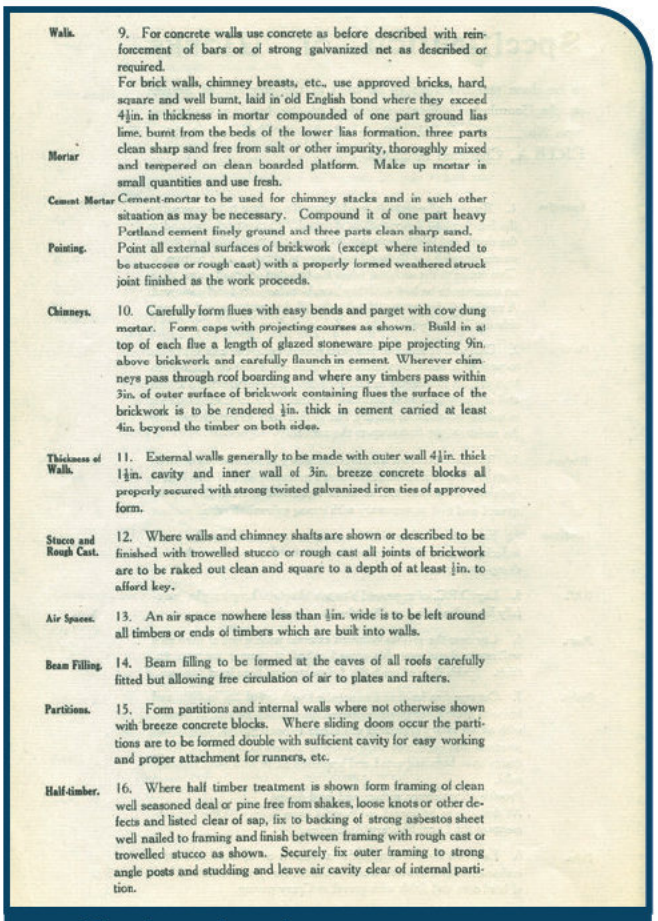
D.P.C. 5. Lay D.P.C. of approved bitumen sheet in long lengths, carefully lap at least 3in. at all angles and junctions.

Floors. 6. Lay over the surface between external walls a bed of hard core well rammed and over this spread a bed of cement concrete 4in. thick. Finish floor of coals 8in. below general floor level.

Drains. 7. Cut trenches for drains as required with fall of 2in. in 10ft. and lay with glazed stoneware socketted drain pipes jointed in cement with all necessary approved stoneware trapped gulleys, bends and junctions and carry into main drains or sewers as directed. When drains have been inspected and approved fill in with earth rammed solid.
Provide all necessary surface and land drains.
All drainage to be carried out in strict accordance with the requirements of the Local Sanitary Authorities.

Paths. 8. Excavate for and form paths as shown or directed and form embankments or terraces where required. Lay paths with good bed of hard core and finish with gravel or Crazy paving.

Specification of works front page.



Walls. 9. For concrete walls use concrete as before described with reinforcement of bars or of strong galvanized net as described or required.
For brick walls, chimney breasts, etc., use approved bricks, hard, square and well burnt, laid in old English bond where they exceed 4½in. in thickness in mortar compounded of one part ground lias lime, burnt from the beds of the lower lias formation, three parts clean sharp sand free from salt or other impurity, thoroughly mixed and tempered on clean boarded platform. Make up mortar in small quantities and use fresh.

Mortar

Cement Mortar Cement-mortar to be used for chimney stacks and in such other situation as may be necessary. Compound it of one part heavy Portland cement finely ground and three parts clean sharp sand.

Pointing. Point all external surfaces of brickwork (except where intended to be stuccoed or rough cast) with a properly formed weathered struck joint finished as the work proceeds.

Chimneys. 10. Carefully form flues with easy bends and parget with cow dung mortar. Form caps with projecting courses as shown. Build in at top of each flue a length of glazed stoneware pipe projecting 9in. above brickwork and carefully flaunch in cement. Wherever chimneys pass through roof boarding and where any timbers pass within 3in. of outer surface of brickwork containing flues the surface of the brickwork is to be rendered ½in. thick in cement carried at least 4in. beyond the timber on both sides.

Thickness of Walls. 11. External walls generally to be made with outer wall 4½in. thick 1½in. cavity and inner wall of 3in. breeze concrete blocks all properly secured with strong twisted galvanized iron ties of approved form.

Stucco and Rough Cast. 12. Where walls and chimney shafts are shown or described to be finished with trowelled stucco or rough cast all joints of brickwork are to be raked out clean and square to a depth of at least ½in. to afford key.

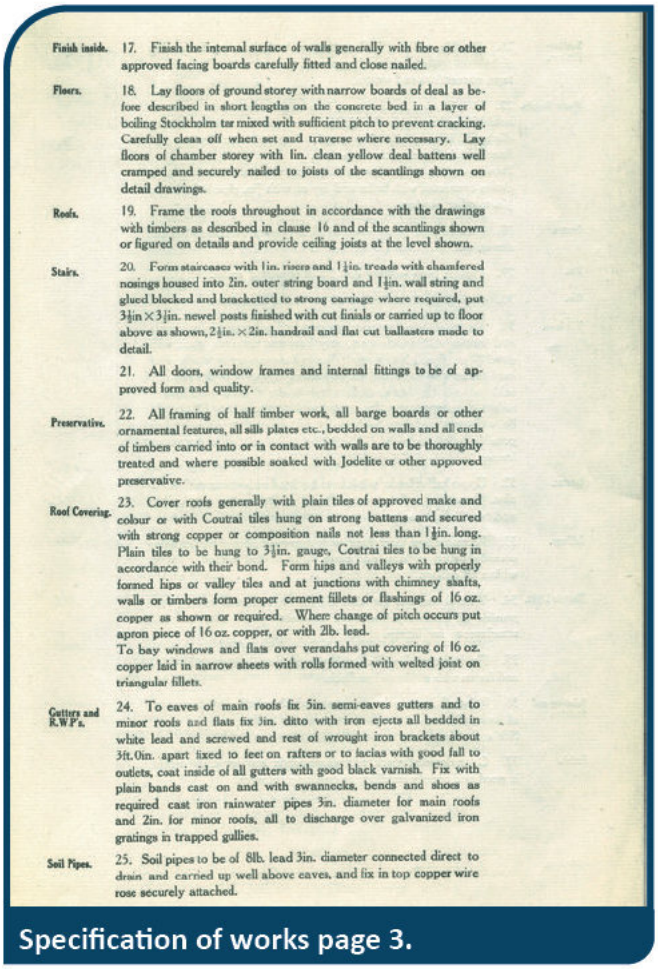
Air Spaces. 13. An air space nowhere less than ½in. wide is to be left around all timbers or ends of timbers which are built into walls.

Beam Filling. 14. Beam filling to be formed at the eaves of all roofs carefully fitted but allowing free circulation of air to plates and rafters.

Partitions. 15. Form partitions and internal walls where not otherwise shown with breeze concrete blocks. Where sliding doors occur the partitions are to be formed double with sufficient cavity for easy working and proper attachment for runners, etc.

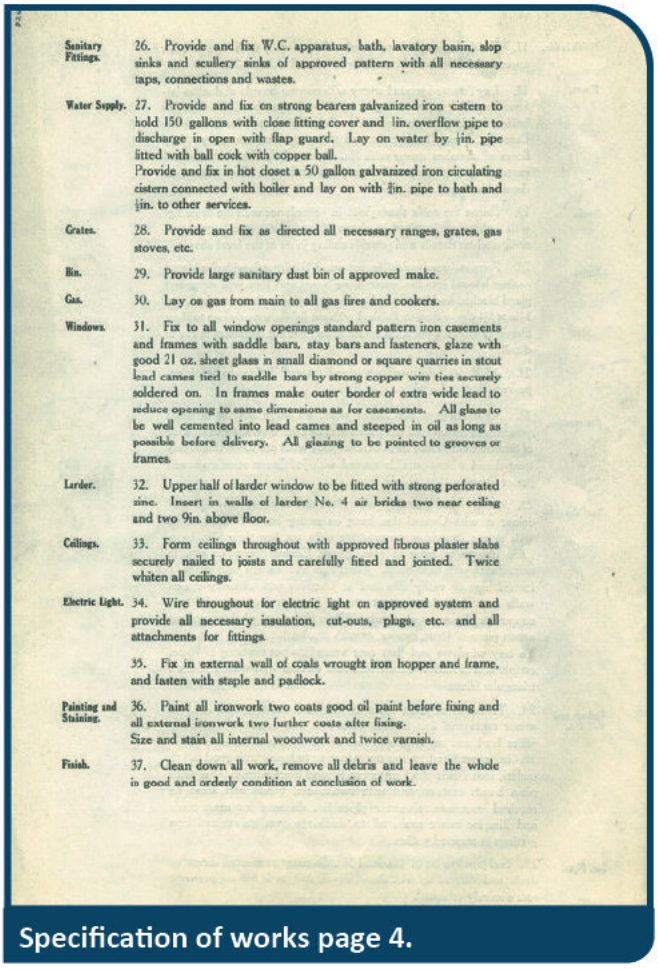
Half-timber. 16. Where half timber treatment is shown form framing of clean well seasoned deal or pine free from shakes, loose knots or other defects and listed clear of sap, fix to backing of strong asbestos sheet well nailed to framing and finish between framing with rough cast or trowelled stucco as shown. Securely fix outer framing to strong angle posts and studding and leave air cavity clear of internal partition.

Specification of works page 2.



Finish inside.	17. Finish the internal surface of walls generally with fibre or other approved facing boards carefully fitted and close nailed.
Floors.	18. Lay floors of ground storey with narrow boards of deal as before described in short lengths on the concrete bed in a layer of boiling Stockholm tar mixed with sufficient pitch to prevent cracking. Carefully clean off when set and traverse where necessary. Lay floors of chamber storey with 1in. clean yellow deal battens well cramped and securely nailed to joists of the scantlings shown on detail drawings.
Roofs.	19. Frame the roofs throughout in accordance with the drawings with timbers as described in clause 16 and of the scantlings shown or figured on details and provide ceiling joists at the level shown.
Stairs.	20. Form staircases with 1in. risers and 1¼in. treads with chamfered nosings housed into 2in. outer string board and 1¼in. wall string and glued blocked and bracketted to strong carriage where required, put 3¼in × 3¼in. newel posts finished with cut finials or carried up to floor above as shown, 2¼in. × 2in. handrail and flat cut ballasters made to detail.
	21. All doors, window frames and internal fittings to be of approved form and quality.
Preservative.	22. All framing of half timber work, all barge boards or other ornamental features, all sills plates etc., bedded on walls and all ends of timbers carried into or in contact with walls are to be thoroughly treated and where possible soaked with Jodelite or other approved preservative.
Roof Covering.	23. Cover roofs generally with plain tiles of approved make and colour or with Coutrai tiles hung on strong battens and secured with strong copper or composition nails not less than 1¼in. long. Plain tiles to be hung to 3½in. gauge, Coutrai tiles to be hung in accordance with their bond. Form hips and valleys with properly formed hips or valley tiles and at junctions with chimney shafts, walls or timbers form proper cement fillets or flashings of 16 oz. copper as shown or required. Where change of pitch occurs put apron piece of 16 oz. copper, or with 2lb. lead. To bay windows and flats over verandahs put covering of 16 oz. copper laid in narrow sheets with rolls formed with welted joist on triangular fillets.
Gutters and R.W.P's.	24. To eaves of main roofs fix 5in. semi-eaves gutters and to minor roofs and flats fix 3in. ditto with iron ejects all bedded in white lead and screwed and rest of wrought iron brackets about 3ft. 0in. apart fixed to feet on rafters or to facias with good fall to outlets, coat inside of all gutters with good black varnish. Fix with plain bands cast on and with swannecks, bends and shoes as required cast iron rainwater pipes 3in. diameter for main roofs and 2in. for minor roofs, all to discharge over galvanized iron gratings in trapped gullies.
Soil Pipes.	25. Soil pipes to be of 8lb. lead 3in. diameter connected direct to drain and carried up well above eaves, and fix in top copper wire rose securely attached.

Specification of works page 3.



Sanitary Fittings.	26. Provide and fix W.C. apparatus, bath, lavatory basin, slop sinks and scullery sinks of approved pattern with all necessary taps, connections and wastes.
Water Supply.	27. Provide and fix on strong bearers galvanized iron cistern to hold 150 gallons with close fitting cover and 1in. overflow pipe to discharge in open with flap guard. Lay on water by ¾in. pipe fitted with ball cock with copper ball. Provide and fix in hot closet a 50 gallon galvanized iron circulating cistern connected with boiler and lay on with ¾in. pipe to bath and ½in. to other services.
Grates.	28. Provide and fix as directed all necessary ranges, grates, gas stoves, etc.
Bin.	29. Provide large sanitary dust bin of approved make.
Gas.	30. Lay on gas from main to all gas fires and cookers.
Windows.	31. Fix to all window openings standard pattern iron casements and frames with saddle bars, stay bars and fasteners, glaze with good 21 oz. sheet glass in small diamond or square quarries in stout lead cames tied to saddle bars by strong copper wire ties securely soldered on. In frames make outer border of extra wide lead to reduce opening to same dimensions as for casements. All glass to be well cemented into lead cames and steeped in oil as long as possible before delivery. All glazing to be pointed to grooves or frames.
Larder.	32. Upper half of larder window to be fitted with strong perforated zinc. Insert in walls of larder No. 4 air bricks two near ceiling and two 9in. above floor.
Ceilings.	33. Form ceilings throughout with approved fibrous plaster slabs securely nailed to joists and carefully fitted and jointed. Twice whiten all ceilings.
Electric Light.	34. Wire throughout for electric light on approved system and provide all necessary insulation, cut-outs, plugs, etc. and all attachments for fittings.
	35. Fix in external wall of coals wrought iron hopper and frame, and fasten with staple and padlock.
Painting and Staining.	36. Paint all ironwork two coats good oil paint before fixing and all external ironwork two further coats after fixing. Size and stain all internal woodwork and twice varnish.
Finish.	37. Clean down all work, remove all debris and leave the whole in good and orderly condition at conclusion of work.

Specification of works page 4.

Images of the Conservation Area

Below are a selection of images of the homes along Caxton Avenue and Coombelands Lane. All images are courtesy of Runnymede Borough Council.

Winter 2021 Caxton Avenue housing.

Winter 2021 Coombelands Lane housing.

Spring 2022 Caxton Avenue housing.

Caxton Avenue, looking north from Chaucer Way

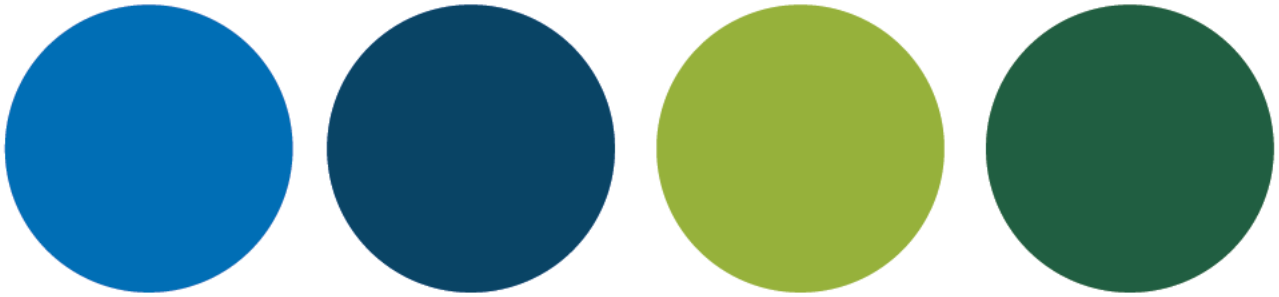
Coombelands Lane.

Porch detailing.

Modern UPVC casement windows.

Key note

Although number 23 Caxton Avenue was severely damaged in January 2019 by fire and was subsequently granted planning permission to demolish the damaged structure in June 2021 under reference number RU.21/0487, this permission was granted prior to the designation of the Conversation Area and thus should not be relied upon as a precedent for the design of buildings in the Conservation Area going forward. This is because the symmetrical designs of the houses either side of the road are a key part of the area's overall Garden Village design and allows the area to be understood holistically.



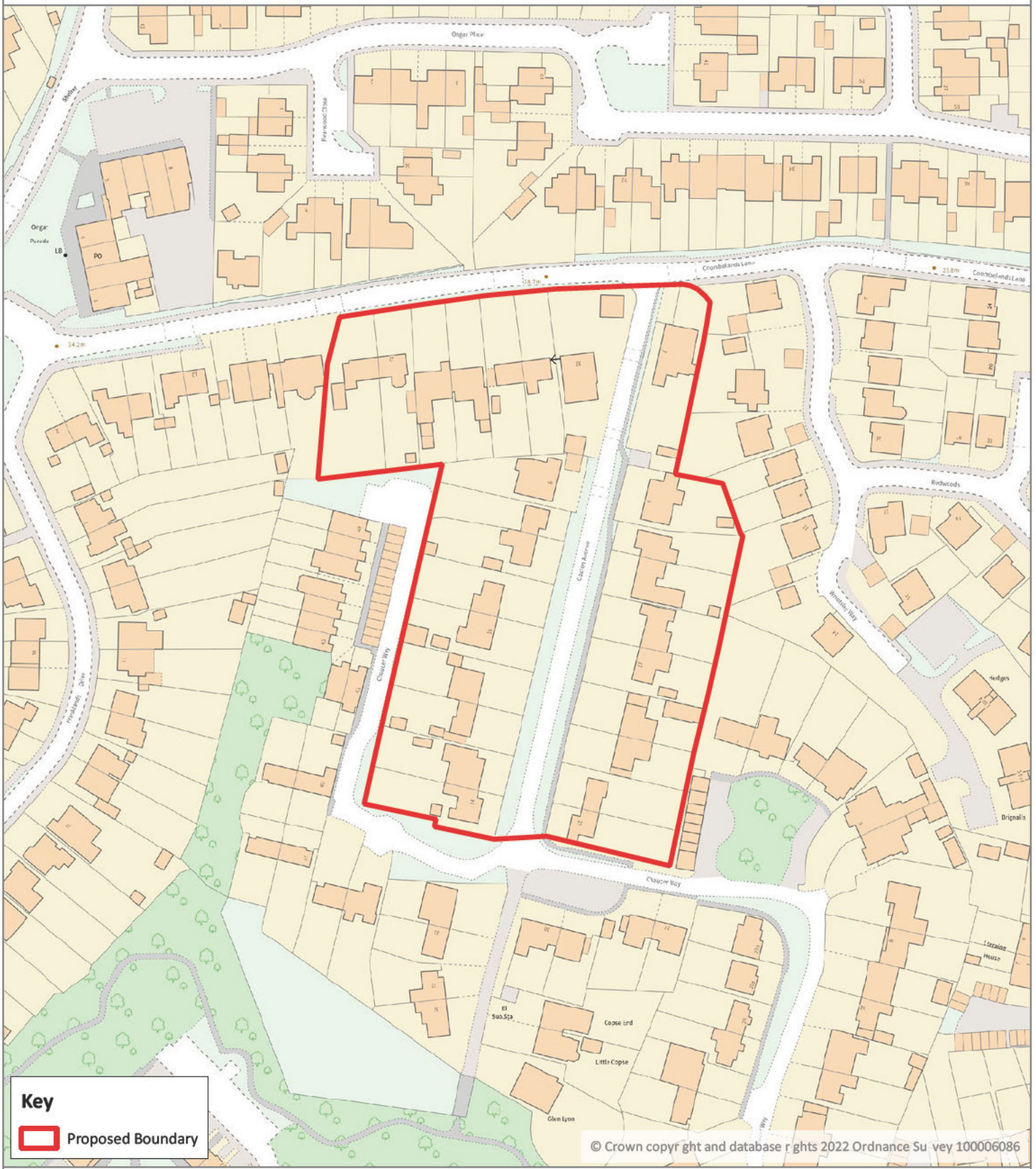
N

Runnymede BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed Caxton Avenue Conservation Area Boundary

Runnymede Borough Counc
Runnymede C v c Centre
Station Road
Add estone
Surrey KT15 2AH

Date: 10/10/2022



Sca e: 1:1,500

0 50 100 m

produced by GIS section

For all information contained within this document contact:

Planning Policy
Runnymede Borough Council
Civic Centre
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey, KT15 2AH

Tel 01932 838383

Email: planningpolicy@runnymede.gov.uk

Publication date: October 2022

Please contact us if you would like more copies of this publication, or copies in large print or other formats.

/company/runnymede-borough-council/

@runnymedebc

@RunnymedeBC

Runnymede BOROUGH COUNCIL