

Merstham Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

January 2014

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Rhythm: plot size, unit size

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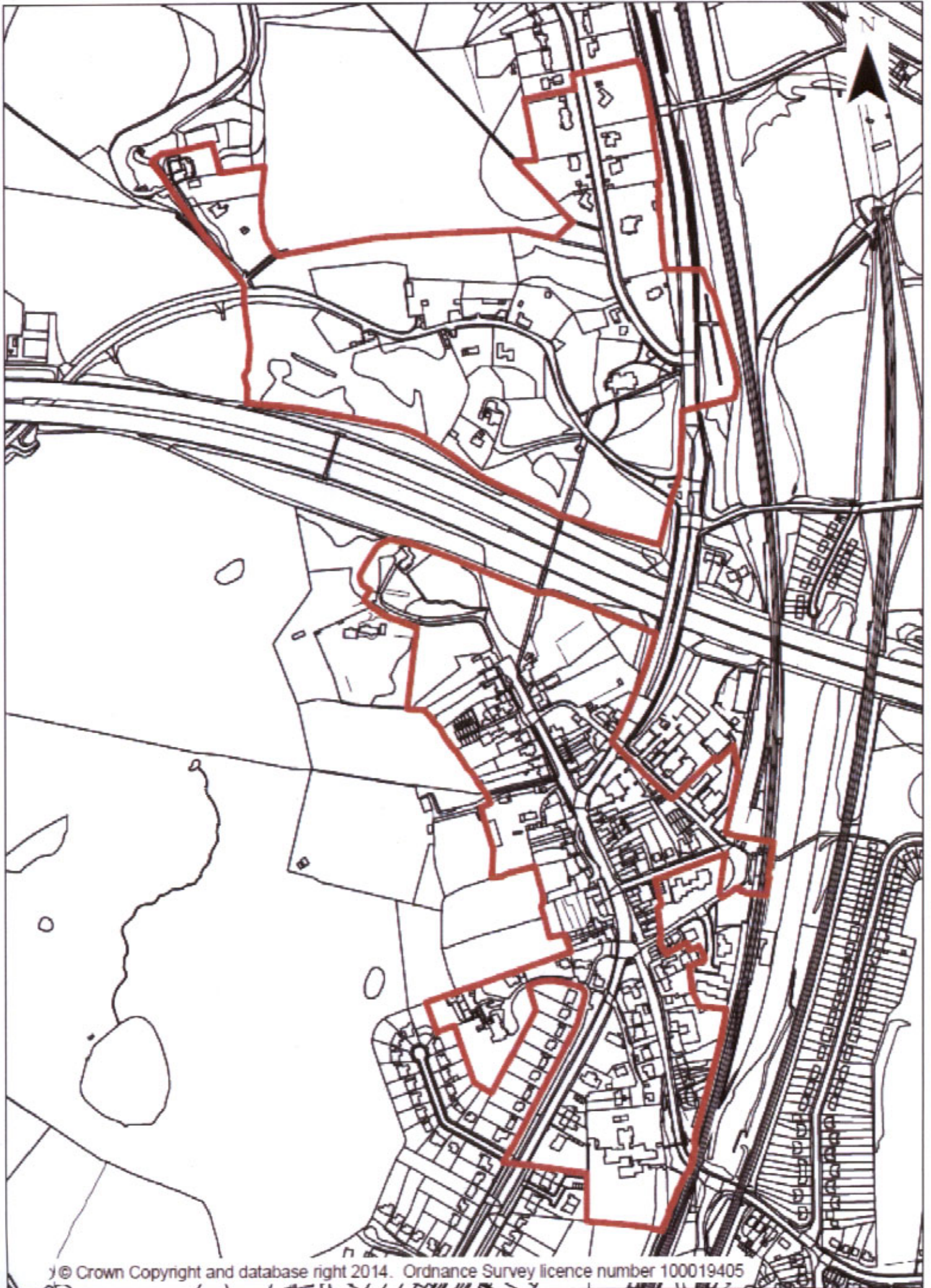
Greenery: Trees, Shrubs

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Merstham Village Conservation Area



Introduction

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas were first designated as a result of the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are defined in the legislation as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990: Section 69(1)(a)). The Borough contains 21 Conservation Areas at present.

Designation gives the local planning authority greater control over extensions and demolition, the display of advertisements and works to trees. Special consideration has to be given to proposals for development or redevelopment within them, to ensure that the character or appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced. In most cases, however, conservation areas are living and working communities with both residential and commercial uses. The purpose of designation is not to stifle or prevent change and evolution, but to control it in such a way as to maintain and enhance character and local distinctiveness.

Purpose of Appraisal

Local authorities are advised by English Heritage to carry out appraisals that should identify the key features of the area and how they combine to give a place its particular character. By establishing what makes a place special and distinct, the local planning authority can more effectively ensure that change through development, or through other changes resulting from its own actions or those of other statutory authorities, do not undermine this character and can in fact enhance it.

As well as identifying the positive features of a place, an appraisal can also highlight areas where there is scope for improvement. This could be in terms of new development or redevelopment, or more small-scale improvements to, for example, the appearance of street furniture or signage. The results of appraisals can also be used to help prioritise available resources for environmental enhancement. This appraisal also sets out the Enhancement Scheme for the area, which makes reference to potential areas for enhancement, as well as providing guidance for use in the development control process.

The Planning (Listed Buildings And Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets in sections 71 a duty to formulate policies for preservation and enhancement. The 2005 Borough Local Plan Policy Pc 14 reinforces this objective. English Heritage guidance states that policies are needed that clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of an area it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and the means to achieve this. A clear assessment and definition of an area's special interest is needed.

The structure of this Conservation Area Appraisal is based on the English Heritage documents "Conservation Area Practice" and "Conservation Area Character Appraisals" and the RTPI's 'The Character of Conservation Areas' document. It follows the urban morphology approach of cascade from large to small elements.

Main Character and Basic structure Topography and Geology

Main Character & Basic structure

Merstham is located on the scarp slope of the North Downs, straddling the M25.. The special interest of a conservation area is derived from the interrelationship between the particular townscape and landscape features and it is this character, which the local planning authority will seek to preserve or enhance through statutory and discretionary controls. The special interest of the Merstham Conservation Area is derived from the format of a traditional village with church, street, farms, inn as well as vestiges of manor house and mill pond, complemented by the later arts and craft development. The predominant character of the buildings is vernacular with arts and craft. There is a need to strengthen the cohesiveness of the buildings, particularly from the highways network.

The key Identity Areas are ;

Quality Street : a street of high quality traditional cottages

High Street : The centre of the village

School Hill : Tile hung cottages on a hill

London Road South : Paxton Watson houses & hedged parkway village entrance

Gatton Bottom : valley settlement round the Church

Church Hill : A Paxton Watson estate

Compared with some areas, the traditional village has remained relatively the same scale despite new roads and railways, perhaps due to land remaining largely in manorial ownership with limited disposal of plots for development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Topography

The village is situated at the head of a valley to the south of the North Downs, at a strategic gap in the ridge, about 110 metres above sea level, rising to 135 metres on Church Hill.

Geology

Merstham village is largely located on the undulating Gault Clays, with the Church on an Upper Greensand prominence with Gatton Bottom in a dry valley with rising ground to the Lower Chalk North Downs ridge at Church Hill. The raison d'être for the village's location is due to the spring line at the Church, providing drinking water and power for a mill and mill pond on the gault clay, the ancient route through the North Downs gap forming a crossroads with the east west route. The geology provides ample materials ; Merstham Stone from the Greensand, sometimes rendered due to its softness, red brick and tiles from the brick earths, yellow gault tiles (now rare) and caramel coloured field flints and ironstone from the greensand. The darker unoxidised flints are a rare sights, as they are not found in the the Lower Chalk and were only quarried in the late 19th century.

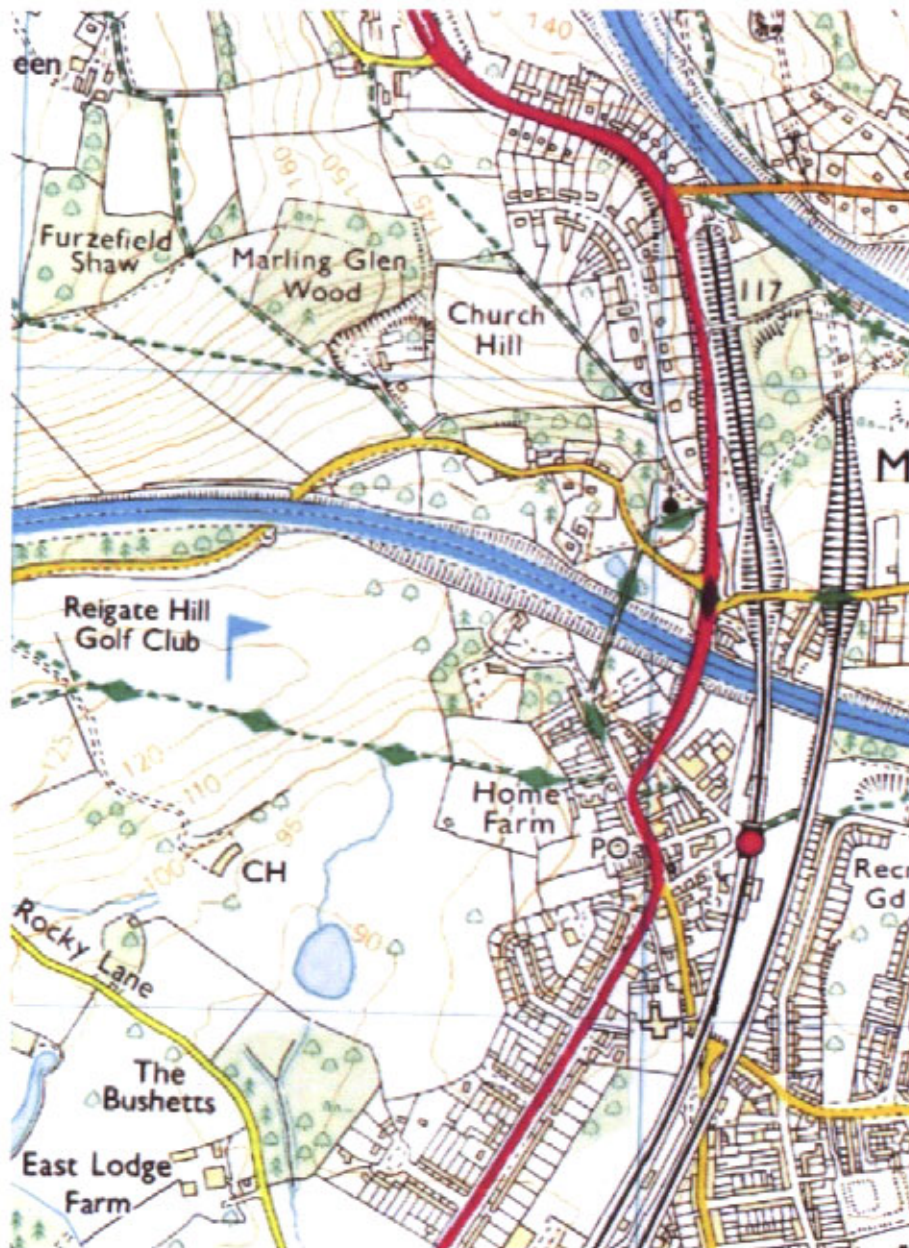
GEOLOGY & CONTOURS



h ³	Middle Chalk 150-200ft.
	Melbourn Road
h ⁴	Lower Chalk 120-150ft.
h ⁵	Upper Greensand 30-60ft.
k ¹	Gault 150-340ft.
h ¹	Folkestone Beds 120-280ft.

Geological Map

The Chalk forms the steep scarp slope of the North Downs with the high ground of the Upper Greensand below leading to the undulating Gault Clay around the main part of the village.



Contours

The key topographical feature is the steep scarp of the North Downs on the north end of Merstham village. The village street is relatively flat but with the undulating Gault Clay apparent in the landscape to the west and School Hill to the south.

2) History

Merstham has its origins as a spring line village at the foot of the north downs in a strategic north south gap in the ridge. An intermittent bourne issue from the foot of Merstham Hill in wet weather, though this has reduced with the reduction in the water table. The Merstham sandstone quarries were in the Upper Greensand formation. Stone from the Merstham quarries was used in the medieval period for Westminster Palace, Windsor Castle, St. Paul's and London Bridge. The chalk at Merstham was also famous for lime as a fertiliser. The mineral works at Merstham helped to bring about improved means of transport.

Historically Merstham had been a long straight street stretching from School Hill to Marling Glen. In 1807 a turnpike road to Croydon was provided, the most notable features being London Road North and South, creating the s shaped layout of the present main road. In 1805 the horse drawn Surrey Iron Railway, was extended to Merstham, and was the earliest public railroad of any consequence in England. The steam railway opened in 1838 with a station built in 1844, which was rebuilt in 1906.

The Pilgrim's Way runs through the village. The identification of a single route as the Pilgrims' Way was an invention of the Victorian Ordnance Surveyor, Edward Renouard James in 1871 and there seems to be little historical evidence for the route shown on the Ordnance Survey maps at this time. However, pilgrims would have passed through the Surrey towns and villages on their way to Canterbury and the ridge route may have origins as an ancient trackway across the Downs.

Close to the church was Merstham House, the seat of Lord Hylton. The original Manor House would have stood where the M25 now is, just north west of the Glade House. The garden mount of the Manor House survives in the grounds of the Glade House as a hump, and had formal gardens which survived until the Great House was built on the site in the late 18th century. South-west of the church in Court Lodge Mead are terraces, which are the remains of old village gardens of houses demolished by the Lord of manor, but they are not the terraced gardens of the manor-house, as these would have been located in the vicinity of the golf course.

A national school was established in 1849 and extended as a board school in 1889. A new school was built in London Road South in 1898. The Abbots of Christchurch had a prison at Merstham, which may be the structure in the street on the Rocque map of 1768.

In the medieval period the fields round the village were divided into three common fields and to the south were the Townend Meads or Towney Meads, the meadows of the town men or villani. There was no Enclosure Act, but William Jolliffe, who bought the manor in 1788 and died in 1802, consolidated the holdings and turned the common fields into open park land.

The earliest mention of Merstham was in 675 when it was granted to the abbey of Chertsey, which came ultimately into the possession of the abbey of Christchurch, Canterbury in 1018. In 1539 it was surrendered and granted to Sir Robert Southwell, Master of the Rolls. It then passed through several hands until it sold in 1788 to William Jolliffe, who was succeeded in 1802 by his son Hylton. Hylton Jolliffe died without issue in 1843. His nephew Sir W. G. H. Jolliffe, bart, was created Baron Hylton and held the manor until 1876. His heir the second baron died in 1899, and it

passed to his son the Lord Hylton who is lord of the manor. Considerable parts of the village are still part of the Hylton estate, though the family no longer live in the area.

William Jolliffe, after his purchase in 1788, built what was called the Great House, west of Merstham Street. This was pulled down in 1834 and the remains sold to Lord Monson for building Gatton Park. Merstham House, which was also known as the Cottage, was built by the Rev. W. J. Jolliffe, father of the first Baron Hylton and became the manor house. Merstham House itself was pulled down after the war but in the grounds is the Glade House built in 1933 in the same style as Merstham House by the Art Deco architect Gordon Jeeves, so it in some sense keeps a visual memory of the previous manor house. Another manor house, of Chilberton, a sub manor in the north of the parish, is located in Quality Street, with the date 1598 upon it. In 1905 it was bought by Mr. Paxton Watson, who carefully restored the house.

A mill is mentioned in the Domesday book, and in 1569 two water-mills are mentioned and one water mill in 1705. In the 18th century (after 1784), the windmill was built on the outskirts of the village but this was demolished at the end of the 19th century and the remains used as a Lych Gate. The water mill was converted to run on steam power but was demolished in the early 20th century.

KEY DATES

1788 William Joliffee purchases Manor and Great House built but pulled in 1834 (Gates from Petersfield)
1802 William Joliffe dies
804 Iron Railway
1807 Turnpike Road built
1809 Colonel Hylton gives up residence Rev William lived in The Cottage
1816 new road from Merstham to Gatton
1834 The Great House demolished
1838 Railway built
1894 The Feathers rebuilt
1897 arrival of architect Paxton Watson
1902 Sir Seymour and Lady Hicks Ellaline Terriss moved to the Old Forge. Quality Street is named after J.M.Barrie's play "Quality Street", as they appear in the play.
1903 Church Hill laid out

Hyltons moved to Ammerdown and Merstham House is demolished after the war. The Glade by Gordon Jeeves built in 1933 in same style but with Art Deco touches.

Other Historical Items of Note

The Lodge was formerly The Red Lion Inn

In 1816 the Old Poorhouse by Parsonage entrance was pulled down and rebuilt by Hylton Joliffe in Quality Street

Paxton Watson lived in the Barn House which he designed. His sister lived at Meadowside.

The thatched Barn, in the High Street burnt down in 1969

There are the remains of the Village Pound in the High Street by the Forge.

The Old Saddlery supplied leather saddles and stirrups and was enlarged in 1931 by Paxton Watson.

The Rectory was also known as The Parsonage



The new Merstham Poorhouse built 1816, with the later school of 1849 and 1889 at the front, Quality Street

2) History illustrations

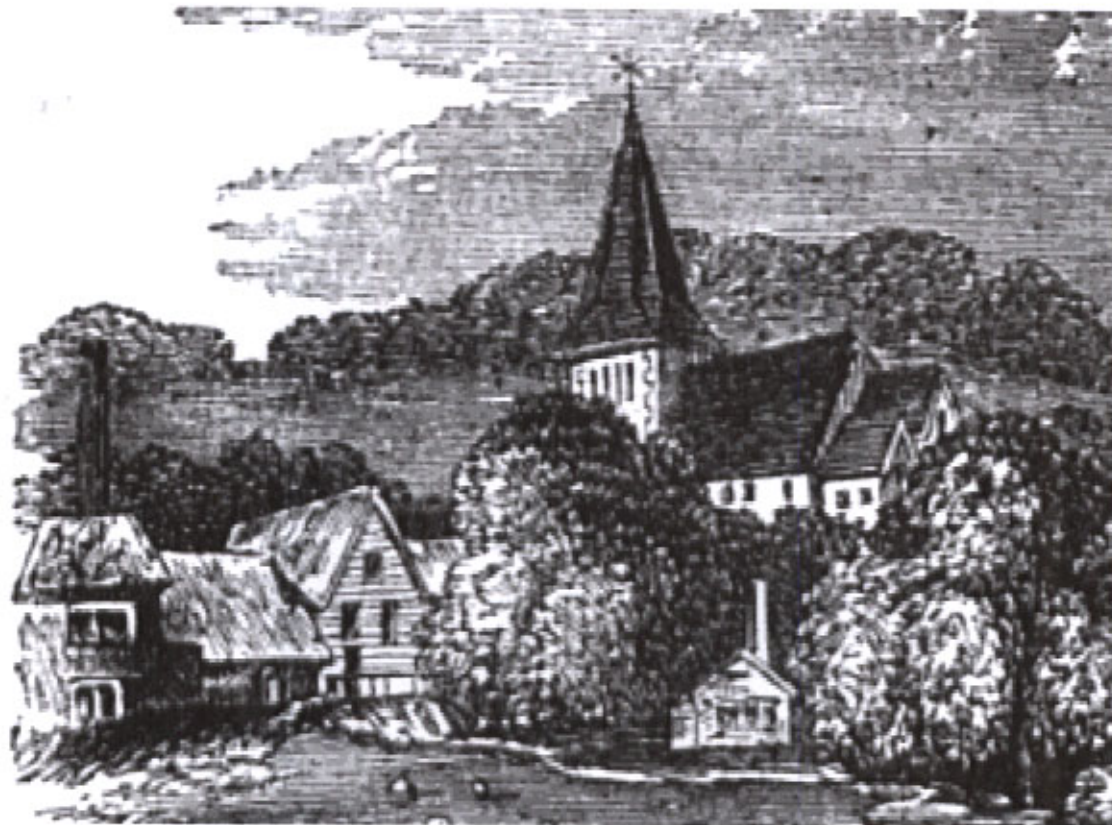
Historic illustrations can be useful for understanding the architectural interest of an area and opportunities for thinking about reinstating landscapes or townscales which have been damaged over time.



Merstham Church c1903 note the grass verge , now woodland



The churchyard was noted for its high Elms. There is still an Elm hedge.



1853 view of watermill and church. The watermill stood by what is now the bridge over the M25 to the right of London Road North.
(From "The Official Illustrated Guide to the Brighton and South Coast Railways")



Church Pond or Mill Pond , only a small portion of which survives



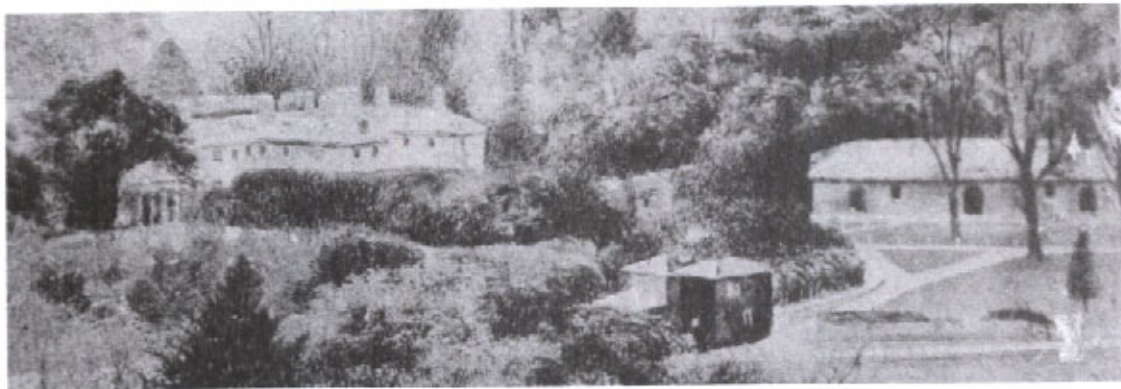
The Old Rectory c1905 an earlier building with 18th century brick face which was subsequently rendered,.



Aerial view in early 20th century showing the rolling landscaping which was valued as parkland



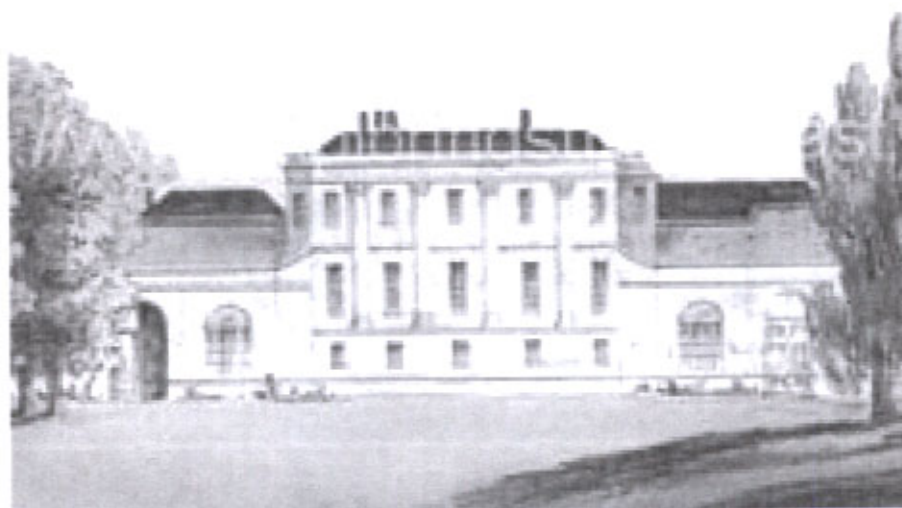
Merstham House in 1885



Merstham House c1900 with stables to right and North Lodge still standing



Glade House by the art deco architect Gordon Reeves in 1933. It was built in the grounds of and modelled on Merstham House.



The Great House stood at the end of Quality Street opposite Merstham House but was demolished for structural reasons in 1830. It is similar to Ammerdown Park, Somerset designed by James Wyatt in 1788 for Thomas Samuel Joliffe. Both houses have a similar composition with engaged columns and Venetian windows.



Original post for the 1902 play Quality Street . Seymour Hicks and Ellaline Terriss who lived at The Old Forge appeared in J M Barrie's play "Quality Street" in 1902. and moved to what later became known as Quality Street in 1904.



The Old Forge 1926 after restoration by Paxton Watson



The Old Forge in the 19th century



The Old Wheelwright's Shop, Quality Street, which was demolished for Paxton Watson's Barn House in 1903. Paxton Watson restored the Old Manor to the right in 1905. It was the manor house of a sub manor, Chilberton, in the north of Merstham parish.



Quality St c1903



Quality St with the gates to Merstham House, with the Old Forge and the old School on the right



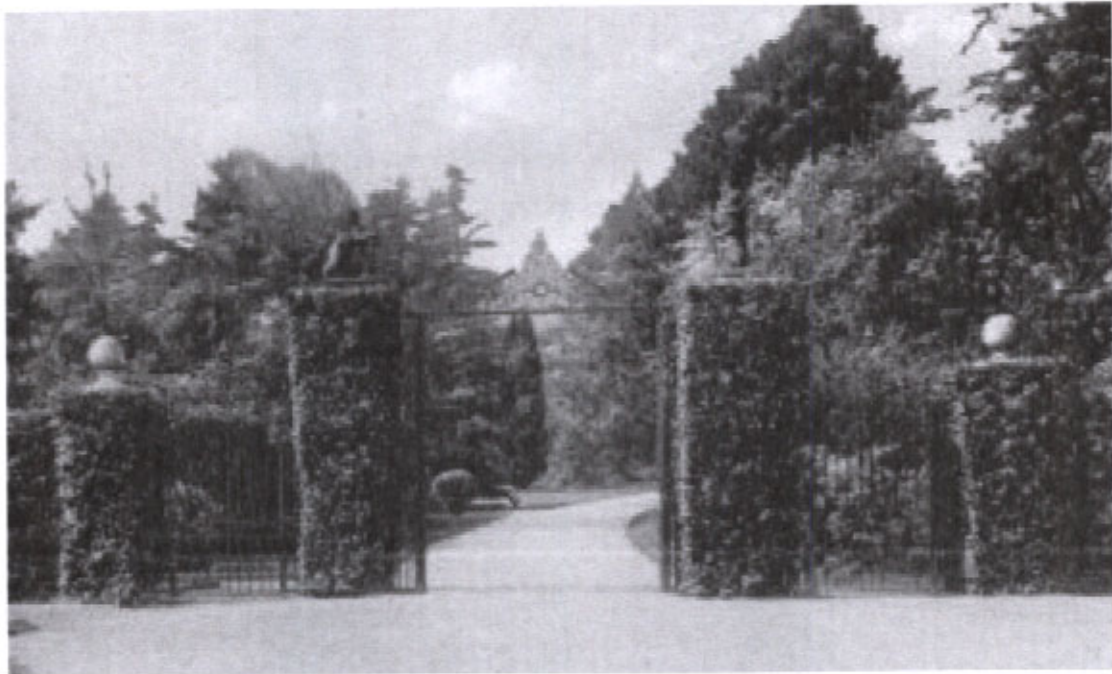
The Refreshment Rooms , with the White Elephant Coffee Tavern behind, a Coffee Tavern. 1904



Early 20th century Quality Street with no cars, no road markings, no kerbs or street furniture.



The gates to Merstham House. These were moved to the Joliffe's estate in Ammerdown, Somerset



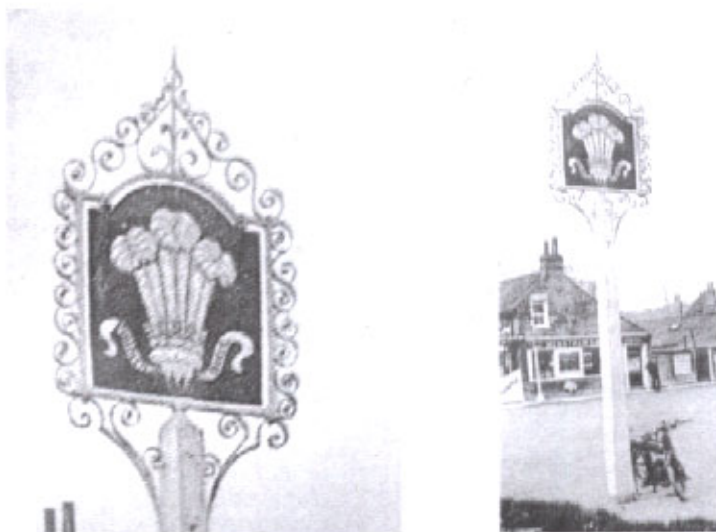
The gates to Merstham House in Quality Street c1900 and now at Ammerdown Park, Kilmersdon, Somerset. The gates were originally moved to Merstham from another Joliffe House at Petersfield.



The village before the rebuilding of the Feathers in 1895



The Brighton Coach at The Feathers c1904. The Inn was rebuilt in 1895 with the original Georgian building still visible behind.



The 18th century Joliffe Arms sign. A symbol of the village, a copy of which has been erected as a village sign



The High Street in 1902, note the Baptist Chapel, now demolished and Post Office.



The Cottage of Content public house, now a dwellinghouse, the village pound and blacksmith and the old thatched barn c1903



The Old Thatched Barn was a village landmark until burnt in 1969.



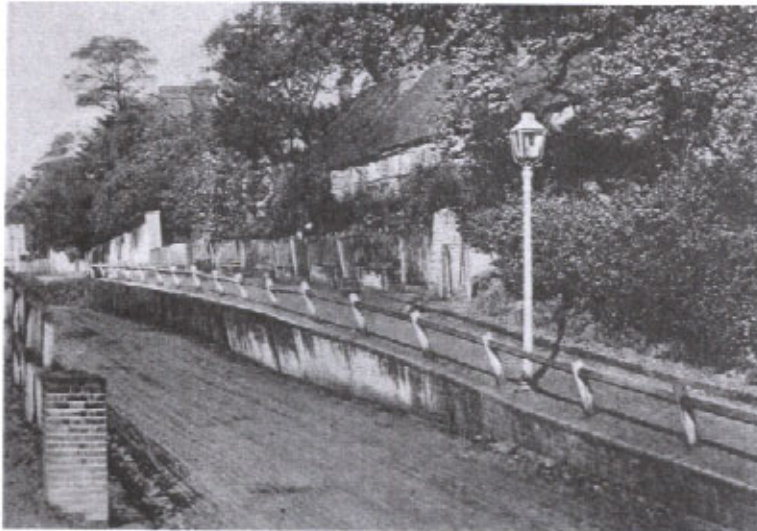
Whilst the traffic has increased in recent years, Merstham has suffered from being a well used route for many years with consequent loss of grass verges, despite being a wide street.



Smale's Saddlery, which still stands by the war memorial



The railway station before refacing in 1905



School Hill c1903



Merstham windmill demolished in 1896 and parts of which were used for the Church Lychgate. It stood near Rockshaw Road

Note ;The Windmill and Thatched Barn, High Street from "Merstham As Time Goes By"
By Peter White

MERSTHAM HISTORY IN MAPS



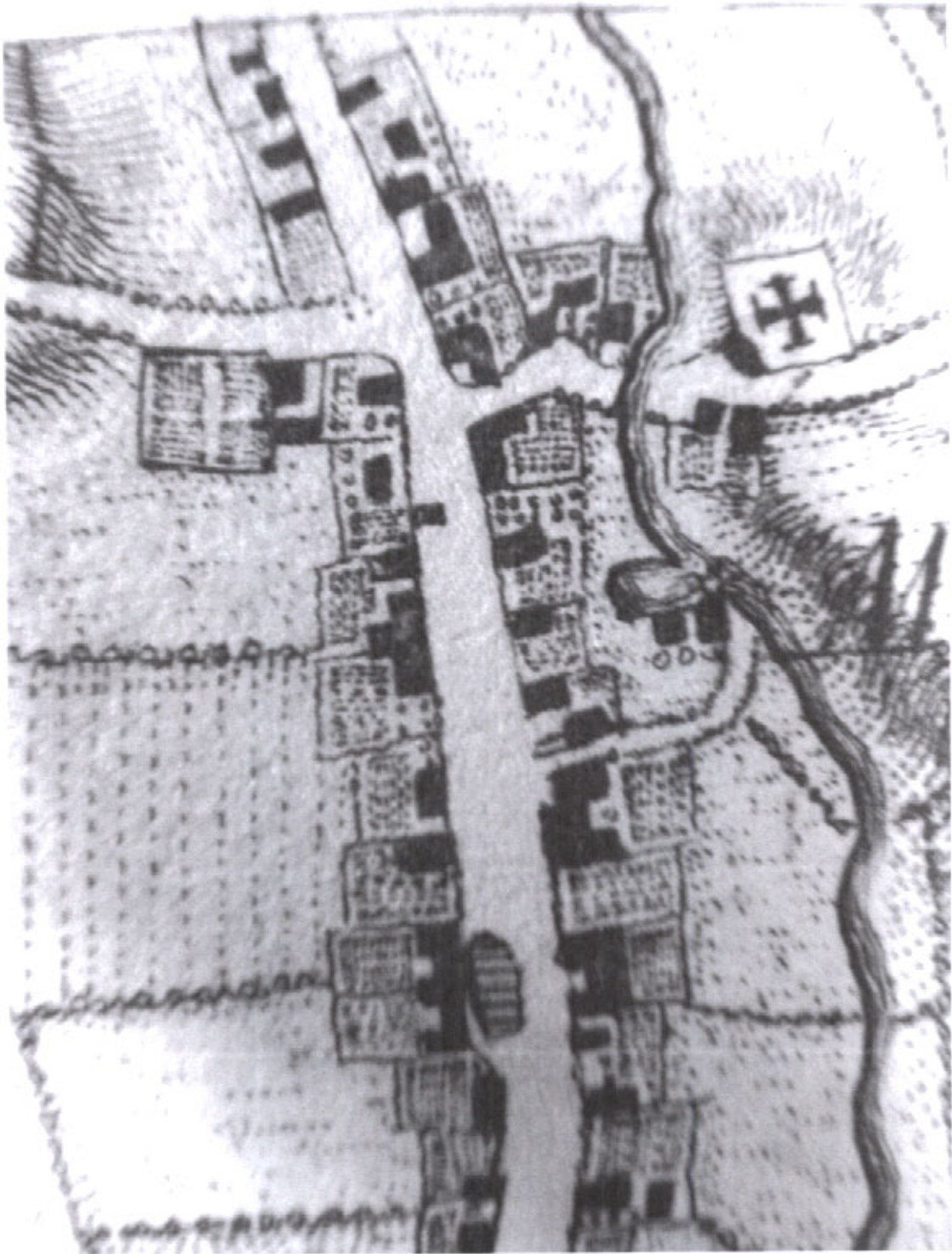
Senex 1729 showing the strategic importance of the village as one of the few routes north south and west east (the Pilgrim's Way)



Merstham in 1768



Merstham 1768



The Rocque map of 1768 shows the village pond where the bus shelter now stands. The four posts on the north west junction are probably an earlier village pond, now where the M25 runs through. The building is the steet may be a cage or prison, as the Abbey of Christchurch did have a prison at Merstham. To the right is the mill pond and watermill and church is marked by a cross.



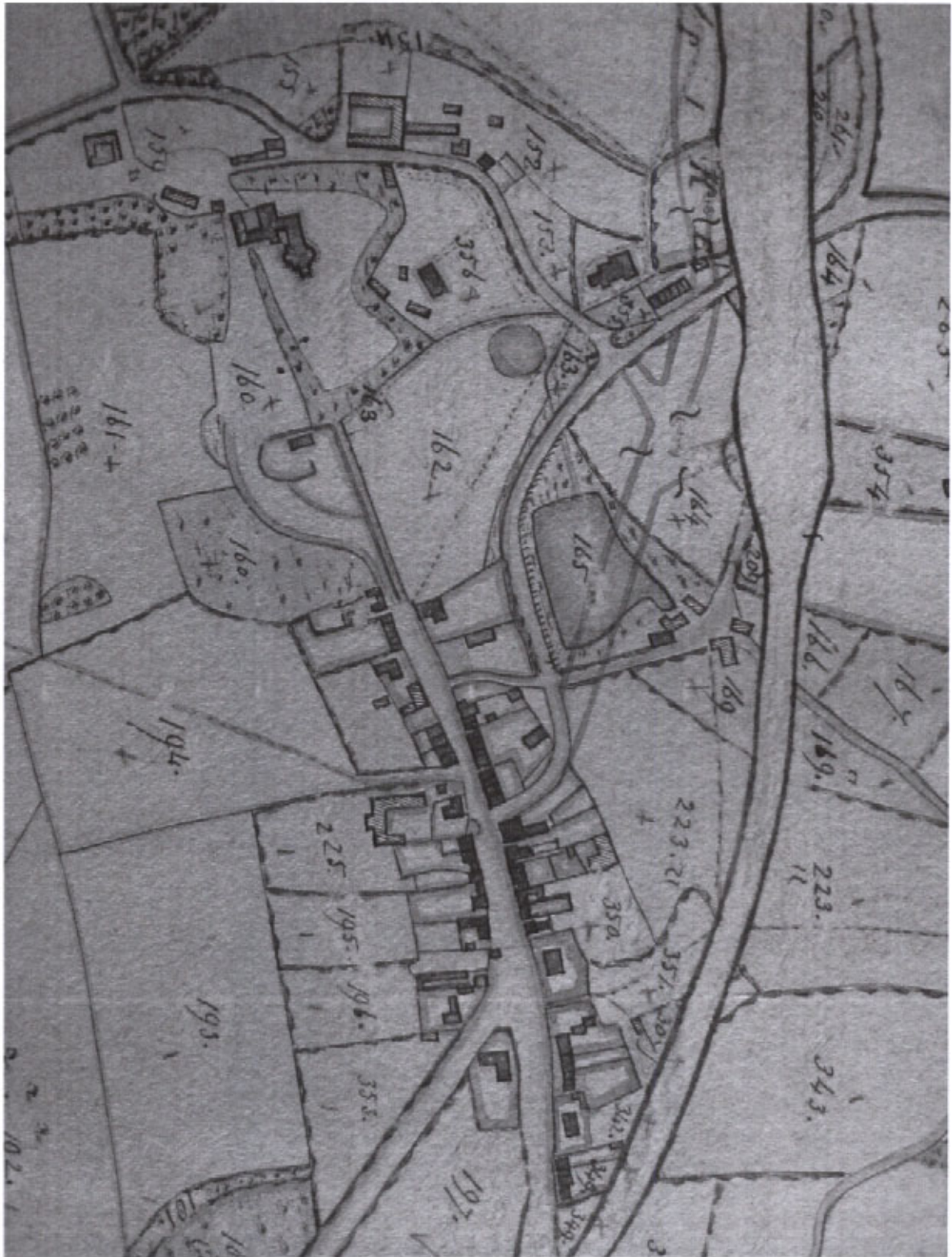
Merstham Lindley & Croseley 1793 showing the new windmill



Merstham Map survey 1806 to 1810 (but this section post dates the 1807 turnpike). The Great House and large parkland is noticeable but the north south route is still surviving at this stage, but with most of the cottages demolished in the vicinity of the Great House.



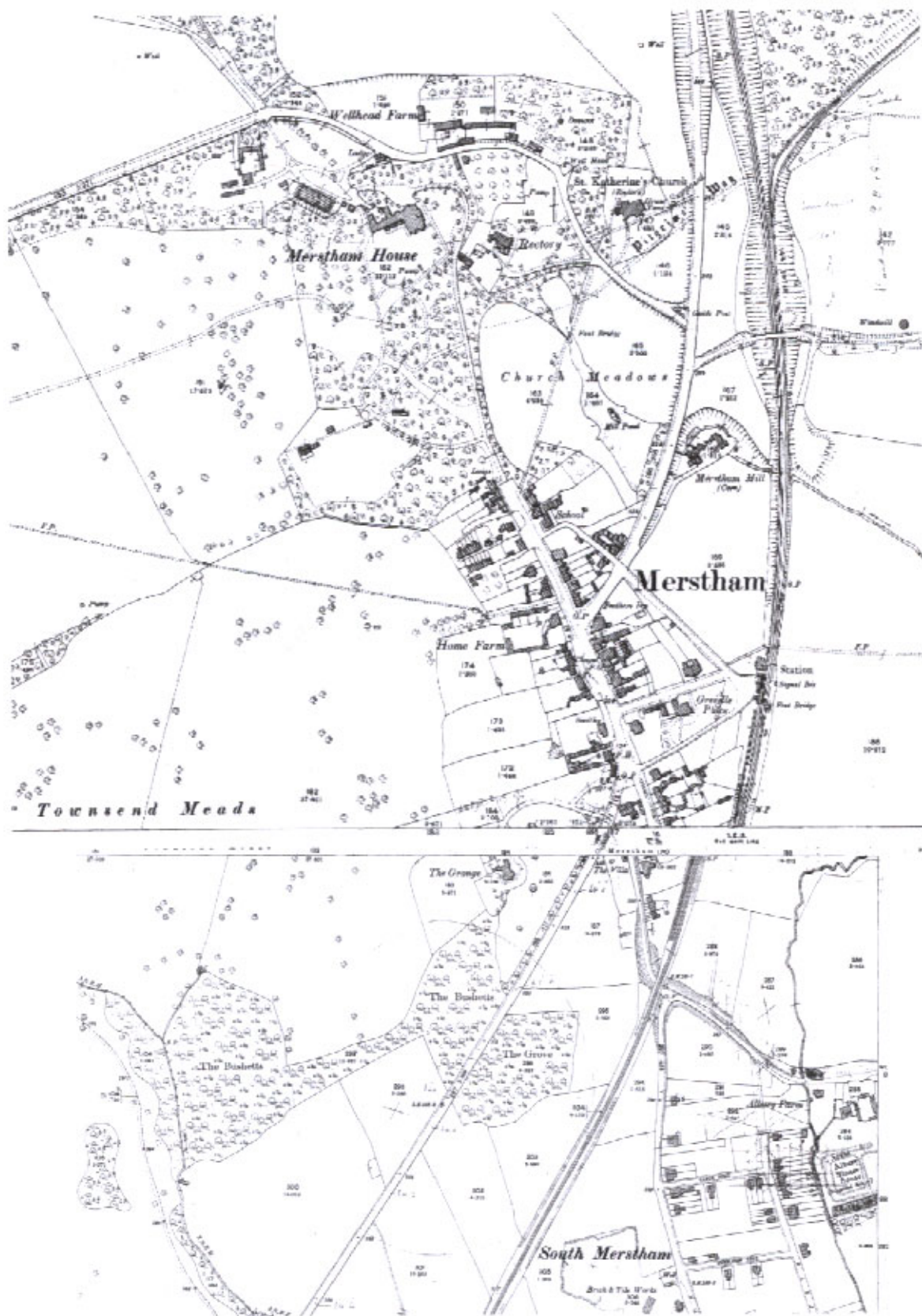
Greenwoods 1823 Map showing Great House still standing at this date and parkland developing around it , with the historic north south road severed. The turnpike roads have created London Roads North and South



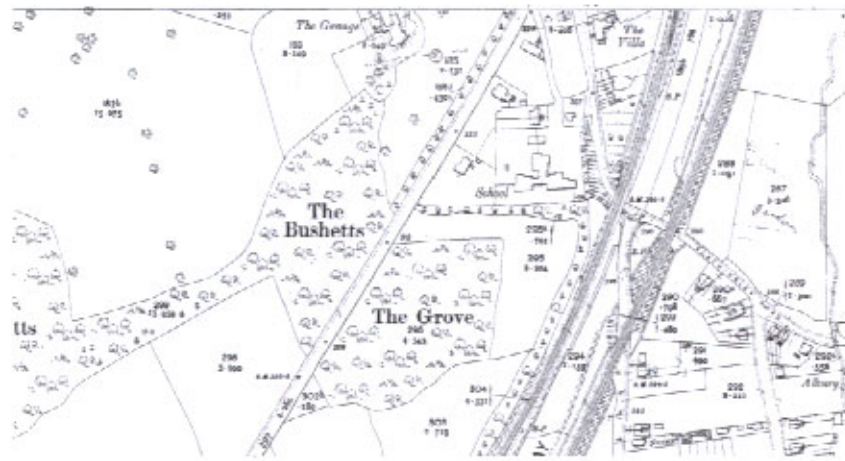
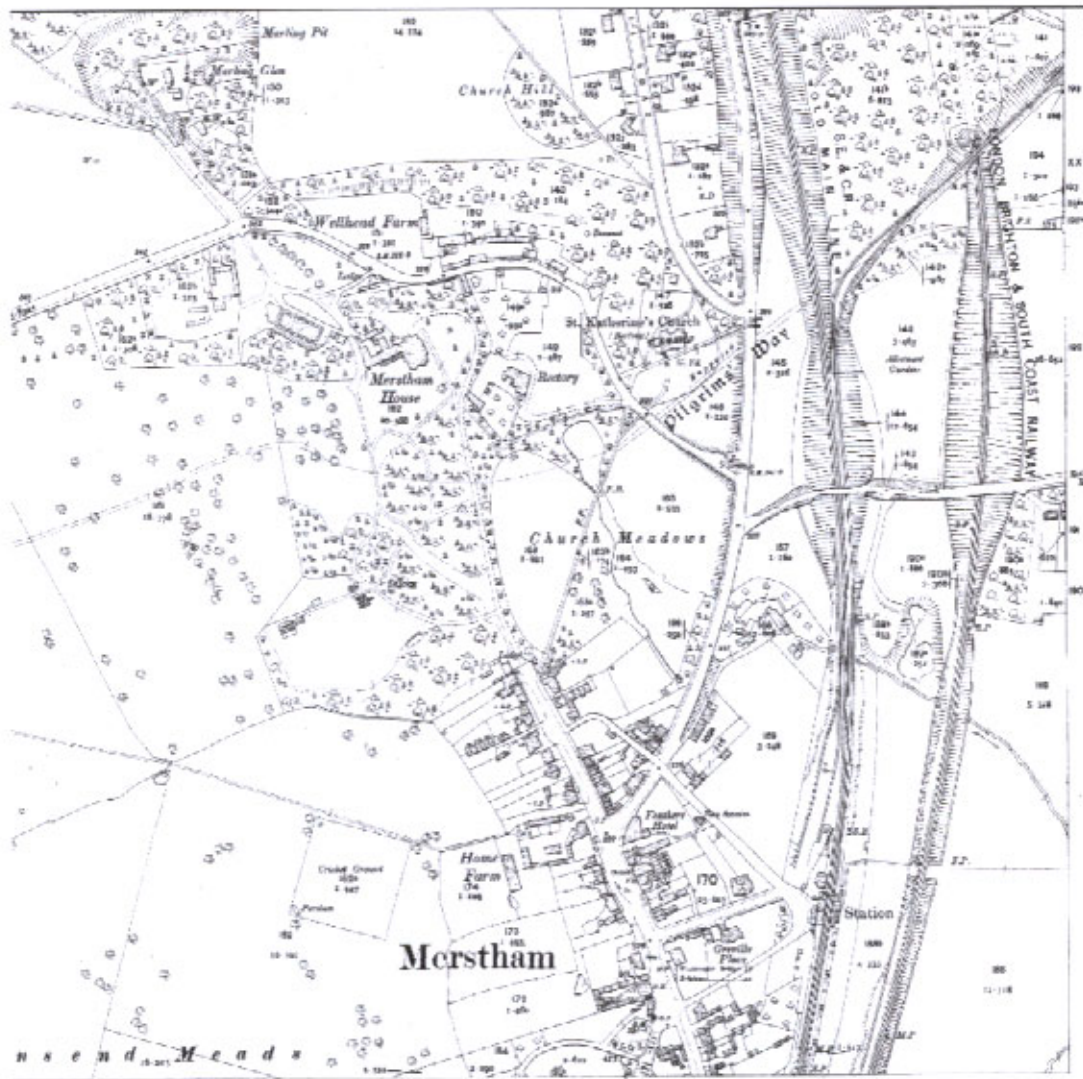
1838 Tithe Map showing the Great House demolished (1834), the architect Knowle's extended Merstham House, the alterations to London Road North due to the building of the railway, cutting the millpond in two. A smaller village pond is apparent by Home Farm, where the village garden now stands.



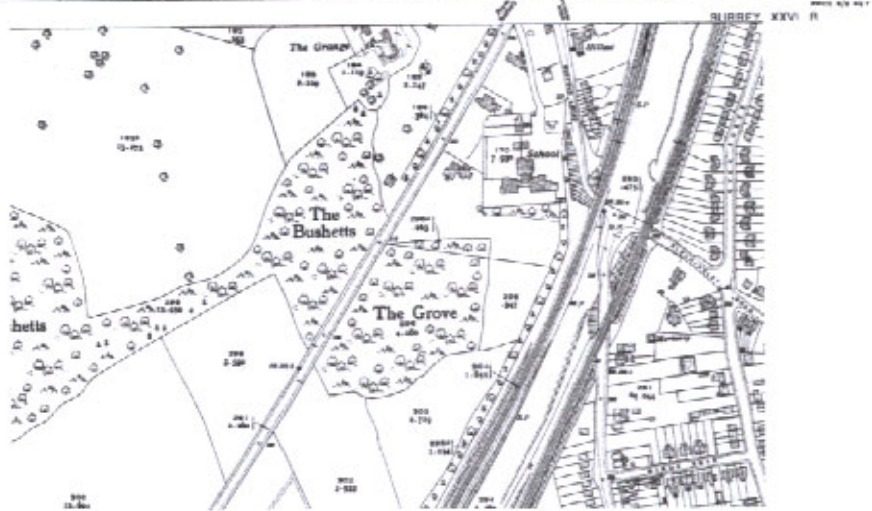
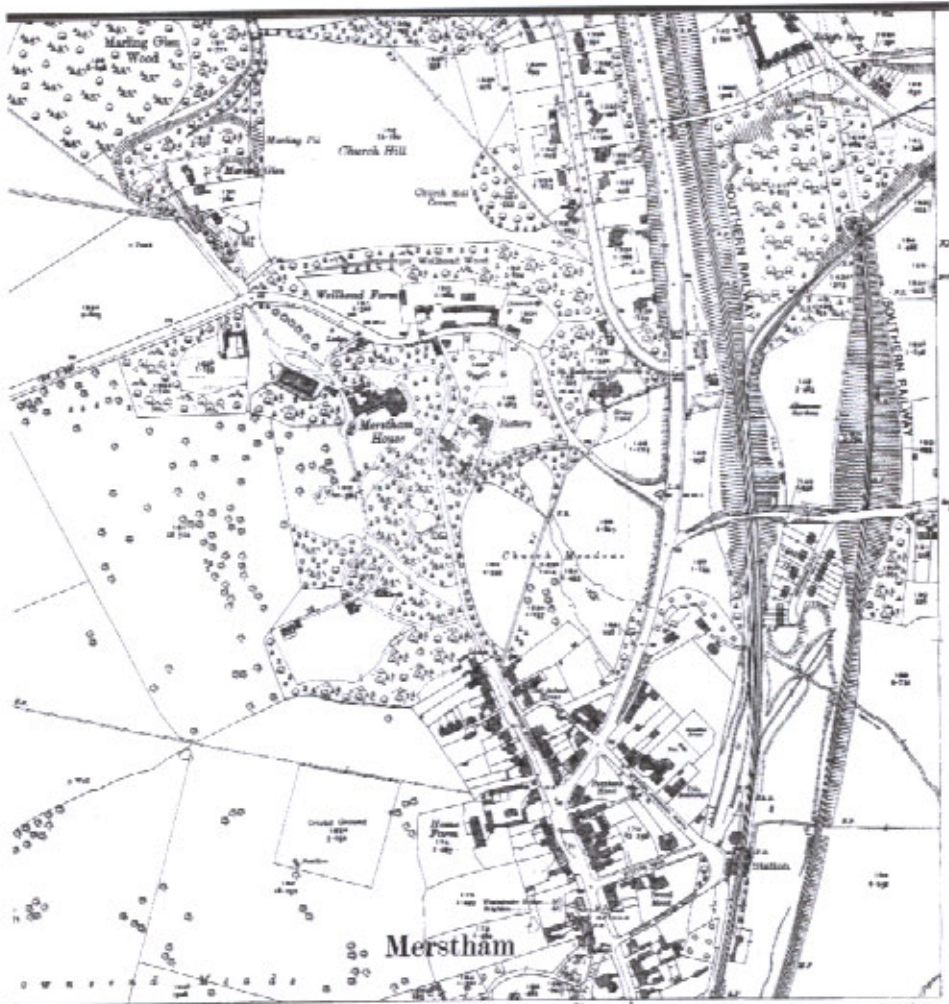
1869



1895 survey 1896 edition



1911 survey 1913



1932 edition top
1933 edition bottom
Gordon Jeeves Glade House base d on Merstham House is still to appear