

Shirley School - Land acquisition and build

The following information is taken from documents held by Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire Archives and The Victorian County History: Chesterton Manors and other Estates

The land on which Shirley School was built in 1932 is made up from two parcels of land purchased by the Corporation of Cambridge detailed in Titles ET60/A and ET60/B (Cambridgeshire Archive)

ETA 60/A Abstract of Title of the Mayor Alderman and Citizens of the City of Cambridge of the site of Shirley School, Chesterton, Cambridge, and adjoining land.

,¹ Including

6/11/1919 Conveyance between

- 1 Robert Forsythe Scott and Henry Gurney Brewer
- 2 Johanna Cornelia Gurney
- 3 James Francis Gray

7/8/1930 Conveyance

- 1 J F Gray
- 2 Mayor, Alderman & Burgesses of the Borough of Cambridge

The Title document details a complex history of the land the understanding of which is given below.

6/11/1919 James Francis Gray (1861-1936), a dairyman of High Street, Chesterton purchased the land from Trustees and J C Gurney, (Mrs Johanna Cornelia Gurney), Widow.

Johanna was born Johanna Cornelia Pelgrim on 26 October 1846 in Leerdam,, Netherlands,. In 1867 she married Capt. Francis William Wragg of Chesterton Hall. Wragg had inherited land in Chesterton from Mary Wragg in 1866; the land had originally been owned by Frances' great-grandfather William Wragg (1756-1804)²,. When Francis died in 1876 without issue all his property was left to his widow, Johanna. In 1879 Johanna married Theodore Thomas Gurney (1849-1918), a Mathematics Professor at Sydney University.

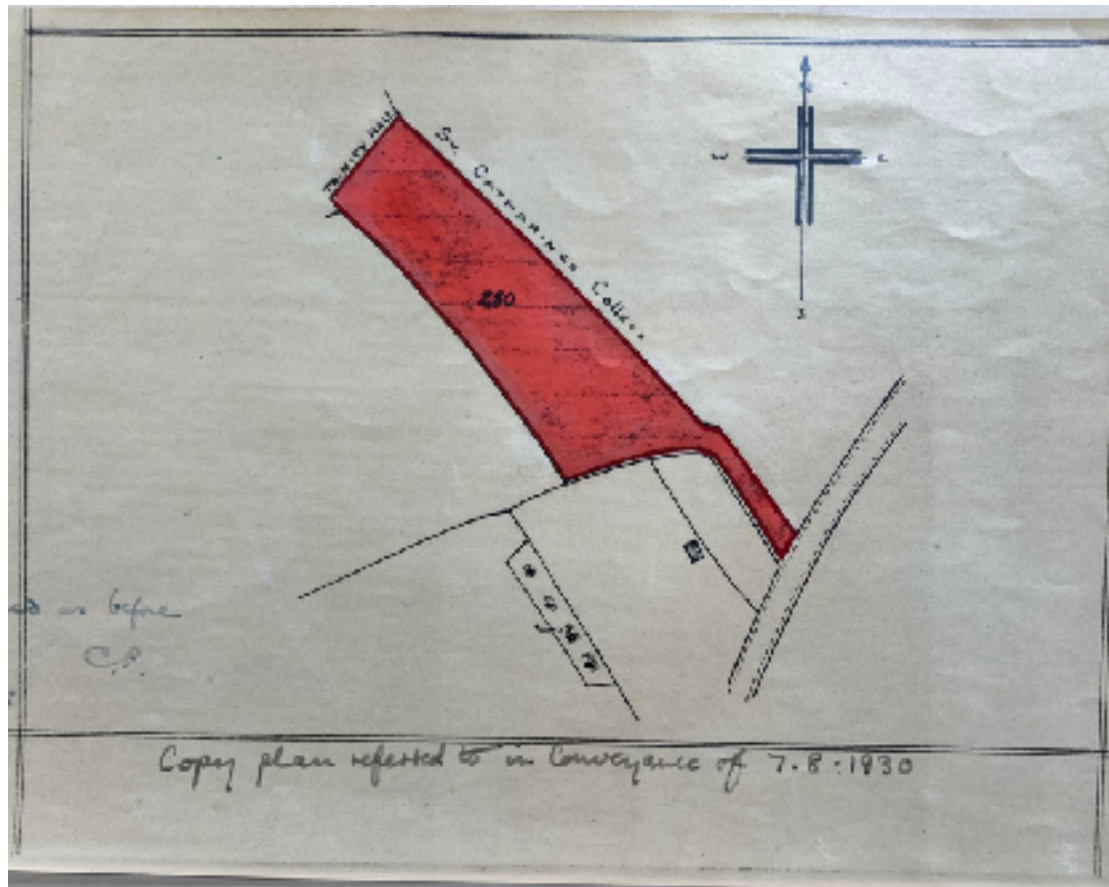
From the details given in the Title documents it appears that, prior to Johanna marrying Theodore Gurney a marriage settlement was agreed with respect to Johanna's land inherited from her first husband Francis Wragg. The Married Women's Property Act of 1870 allowed a woman to inherit land but the marriage was before the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 so Johanna may not have been allowed under law to hold the title to the property herself. The Title indicates that land was put into settlement with the 'privity' (agreement) of T T Gurney allowing Johanna to retain some control, appoint trustees and ask for property to be sold.

Theodore Gurney died in 1918 and the land 'known as Green End Close,' estimated to be 2acres 3rood 29perch, was sold on 6/11/1919 to James Francis Gray for £270.



[Note: Mrs. Wragg Gurney died in 1922 prior to which she had given almost all her Chesterton lands, 403acres north-west of the village, to St. John's College, Cambridge, of which Gurney had been a fellow. The college sold much of the land for building in the 1930s, the rest after 1945]³

7/8/1930 James Frances Grey sold the land to Cambridge Corporation by for the sum of £550



ETA 60/B Abstract of the Title of THE MAYOR ALDERMAN AND CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE to Freehold hereditaments known as part of Shirley School in the City of Cambridge⁴

This is a much larger parcel of land (23.614 acres), sold by St Catherine's College, only part of which was used, along with ETA 60/A, for the building of the Shirley School.

Detail from ETA 60/B

20th December 1929

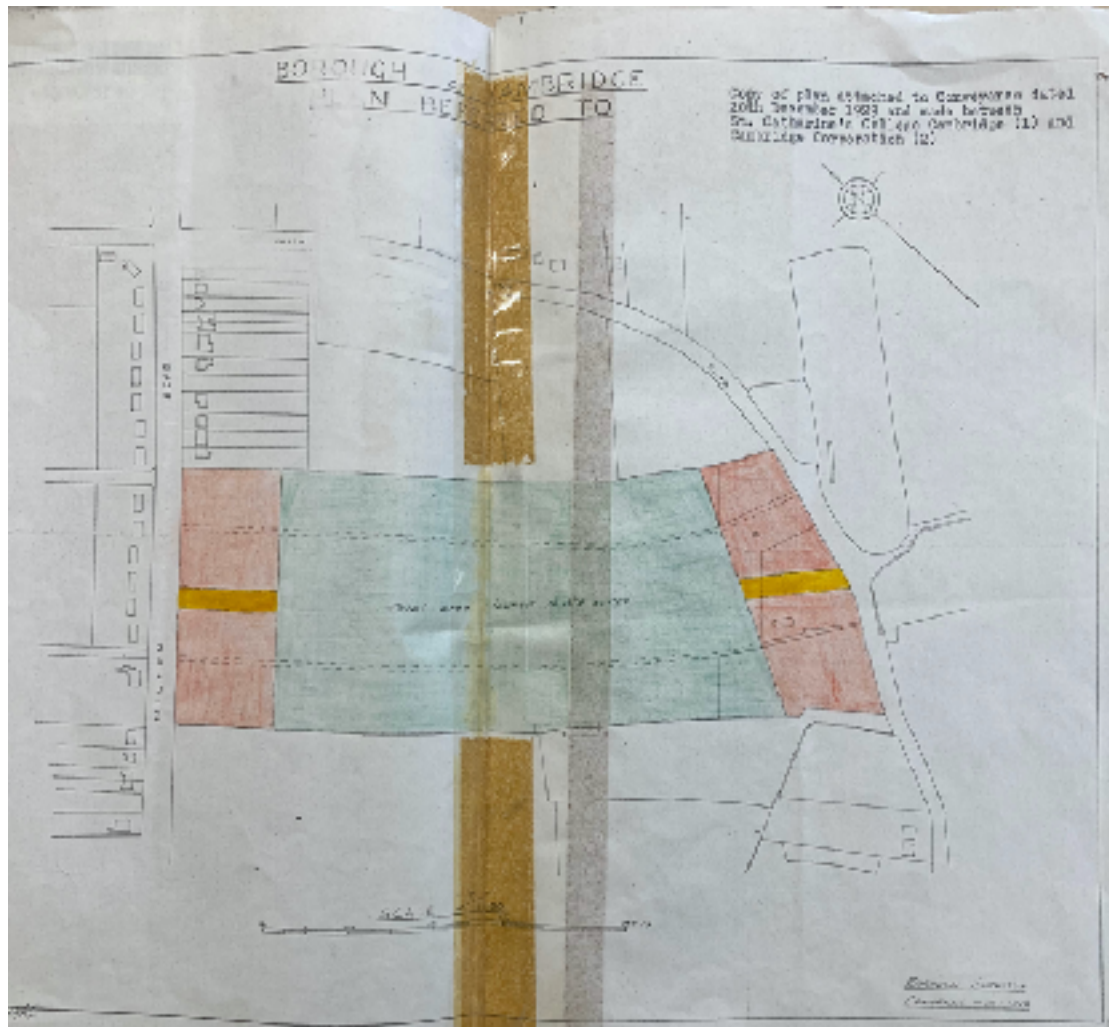
Between the Master or Keeper and Fellows of the College or Hall of Saint Catherine the Virgin in the University of Cambridge (Vendor)

And the Mayor Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Cambridge (Corporation)

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land lying between Milton Road and Green End Road Chesterton Cambridge in the Borough of Cambridge and show on the Ordnance Map 1927 Edition by the following particulars:-

No. on Ordnance Map Area

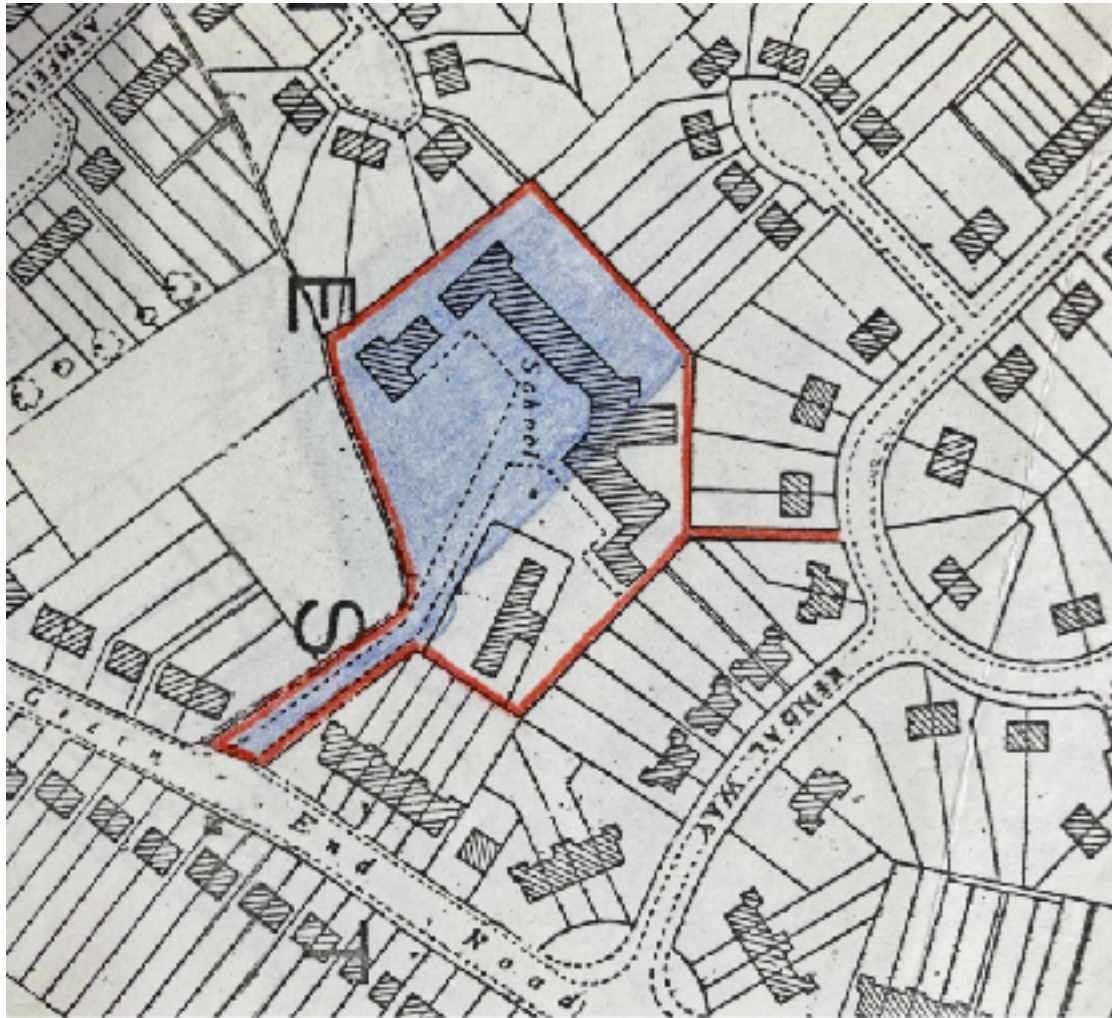
261	20.226
271	.493
272	1.347
273	1.548
(Total)	23.614

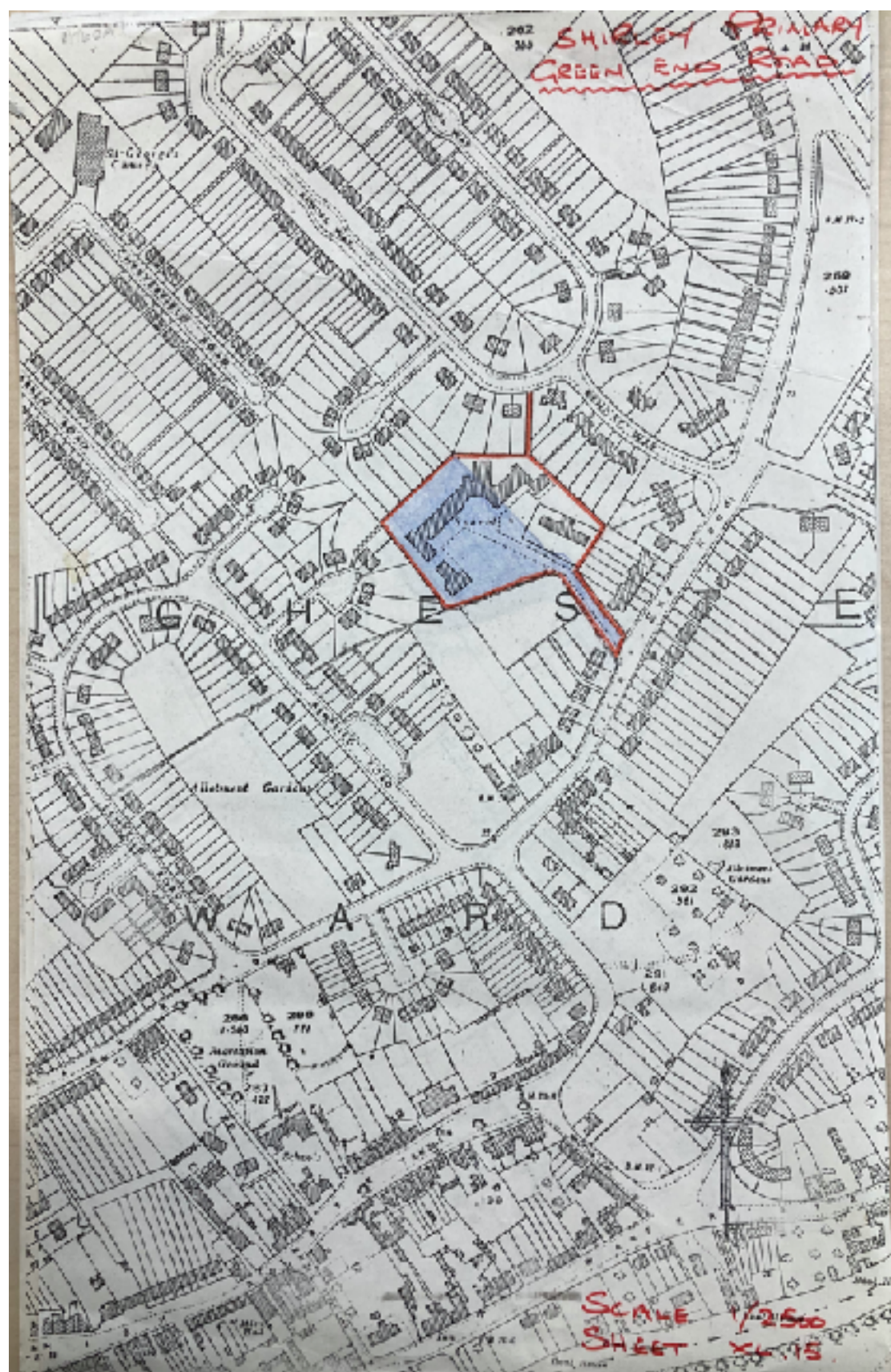


ALL which said hereditaments and premises were more particularly delineated on the plan annexed thereto coloured green, pink and brown.

Much of the land was used for the building of council houses along with the school. The ET 60/A parcel of land can be seen on this plan as located below and adjoining this land.

This is further shown in this plan, on the reverse of which is written
"Area coloured blue refers to ET 60/A"

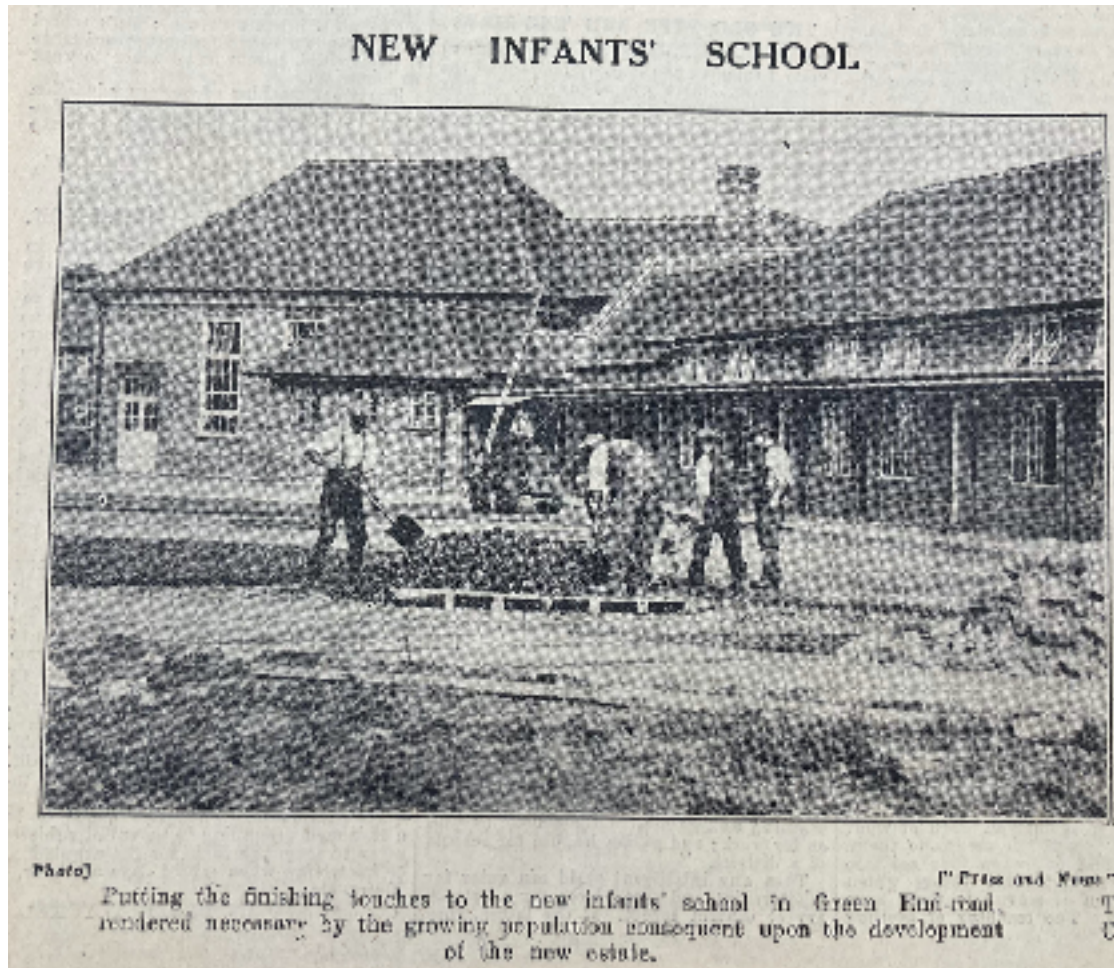




Building of the Shirley School

As originally built, the school comprised six classrooms, a hall, offices along with cloakrooms, and toilet facilities.

This photograph of the rear of the school, August 1932, shows the hall, one of the cloakrooms and some of the classrooms.



Workmen putting the finishing touches to the Shirley Infants School in Green End Road Cambridge Independent Press. 19. Aug. 1932. p.12.⁵

The school opened on 19 September 1932

¹ Cambridge Archives

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² 'Chesterton: Manors and other estates', in *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 9, Chesterton, Northstowe, and Papworth Hundreds*, ed. A P M Wright and C P Lewis (London, 1989), pp. 13-18. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol9/pp13-18> [accessed 30 August 2022].

³ 'Chesterton: Manors and other estates'

⁴ Cambridgeshire Archives

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⁵ Cambridgeshire Collection. Workmen putting the finishing touches to the Shirley Infants School in Green End Road Cambridge Independent Press. 19. Aug. 1932. p.12. G.SHL.K32