

Housing the Workers

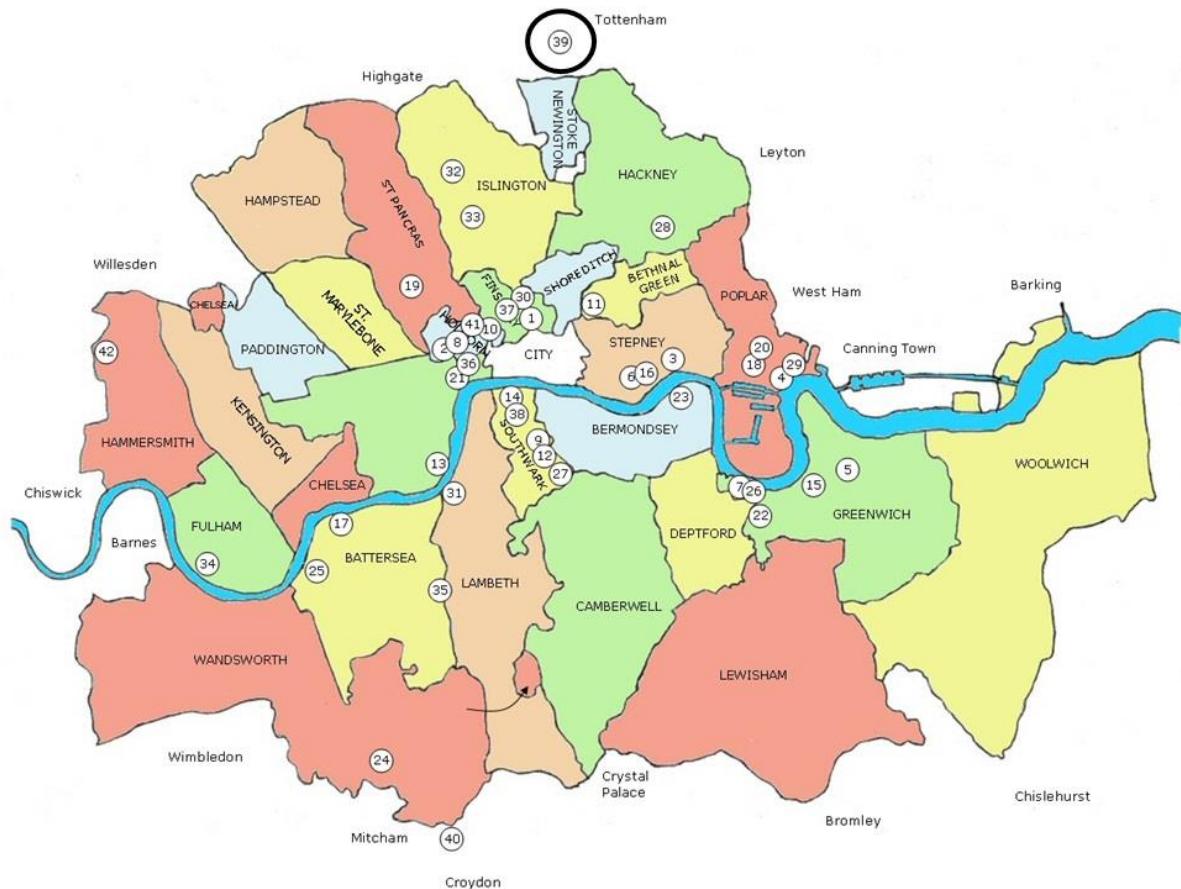
Early London County Council Housing

1889-1914

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August 2015

Part 3 – the schemes in detail

39 – White Hart Lane Estate



White Hart Lane Garden Estate, Tottenham, 1907

Built under Part III of the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act

This is the second garden estate developed by the council and became very large after WW1, but the initial development was carried out between 1907 and 1911. The houses seemed to lack some of the architectural flair of the earlier Totterdown Fields housing and are a better match to those from the later Totterdown phase. This suggests that lessons were learnt with the first Totterdown phase, and future garden estate housing needed to be more cost-effective.

The Council purchased a very large estate of nearly 226 acres between White Hart Lane and Lordship Lane in Tottenham in April 1901 (as a comparison, Totterdown Fields was just under 39 acres). This was more land than the Council needed for its plans and was not helped by including three parcels of land to the north of the main body and which were separate from it. It was decided to only develop the main body of the land and sell the three remaining parts, although it took until 1911 for the Housing Committee to gain permission to do that. The area was already well supplied with cheap working-class housing and so the Housing Committee applied to the Local Government Board to build houses in a garden estate for working classes and others (rather than cheap housing solely for the working classes). This was agreed in 1912 and the resulting post-war development was for larger and better quality housing. The original section which is the subject of this paper covered the southern portion of the area to be developed.

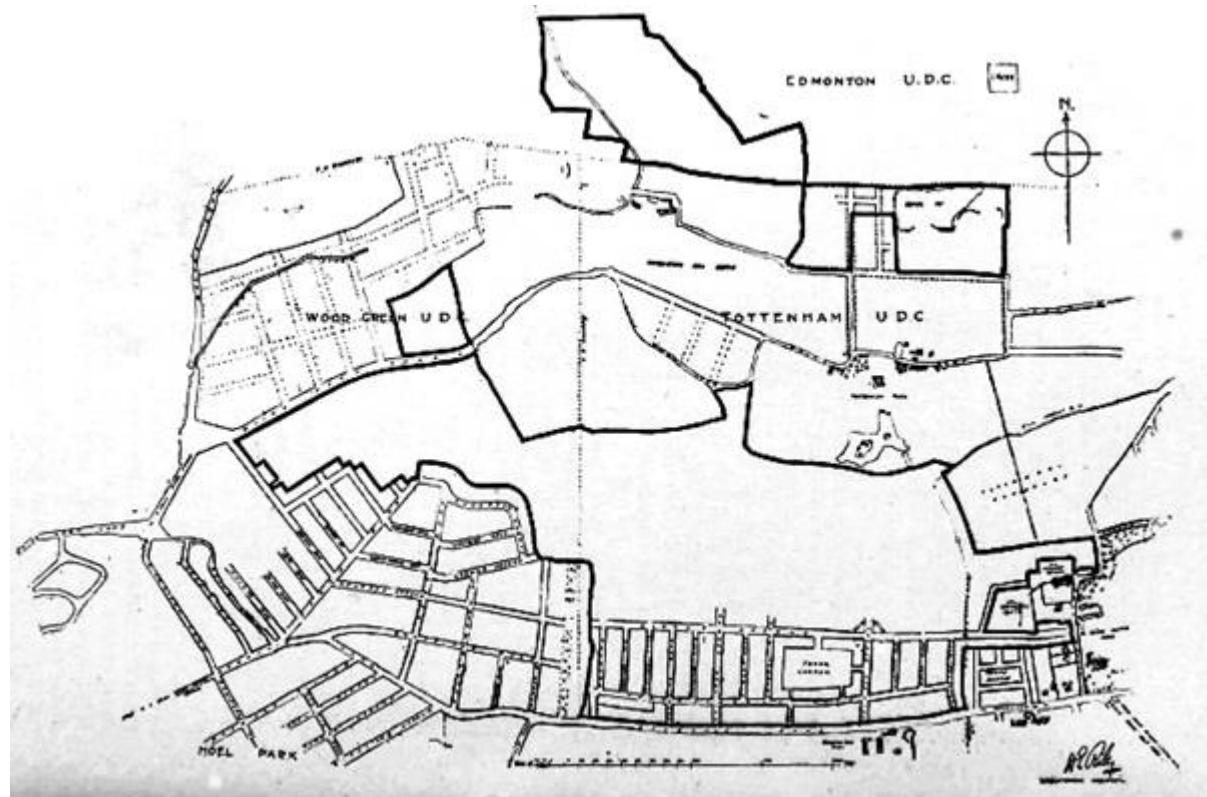


Fig. 1: The White Hart Lane site, as purchased, outlined. The upper three sections were sold off.ⁱ

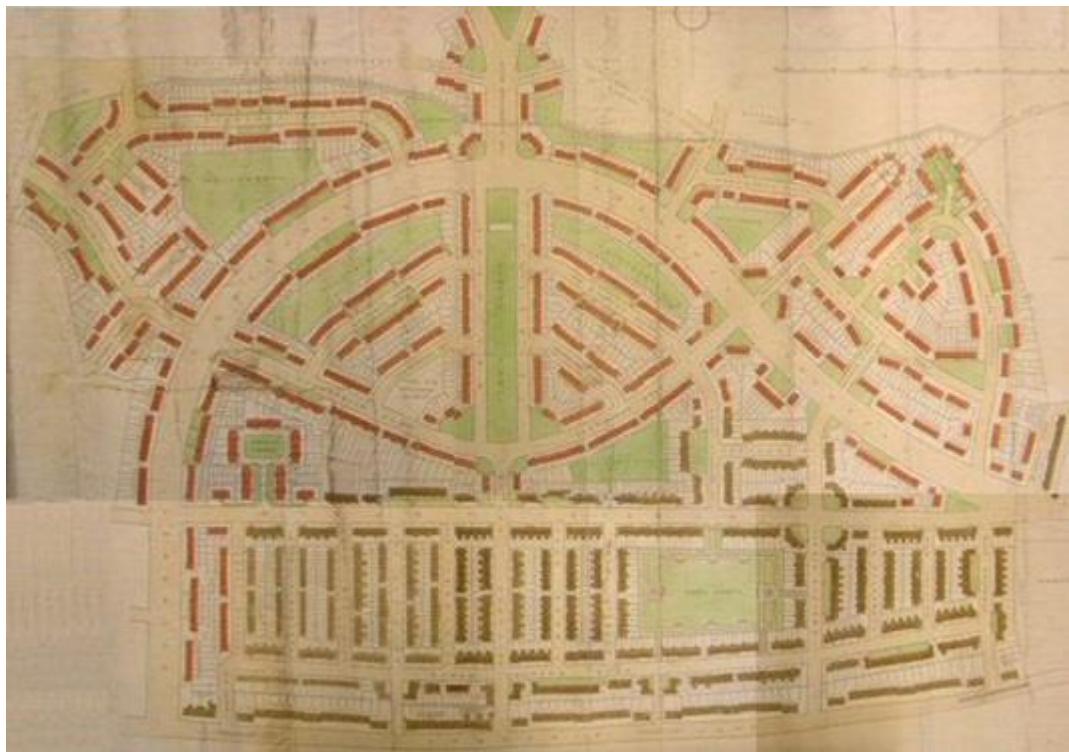


Fig. 2: The site as eventually developed. The pre-War houses are the darker buildings at the bottom (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

The pre-war housing is very similar to that on the second and third Totterdown phases but with most of the White Hart Lane housing having baths. In total, 886 cottages (all two-storey) were built before or during WW1, at which point development stopped through lack of manpower and materials.

The main development on the southern part of the whole estate was known as the Tower Gardens section and is easier to view in Fig. 3 below:

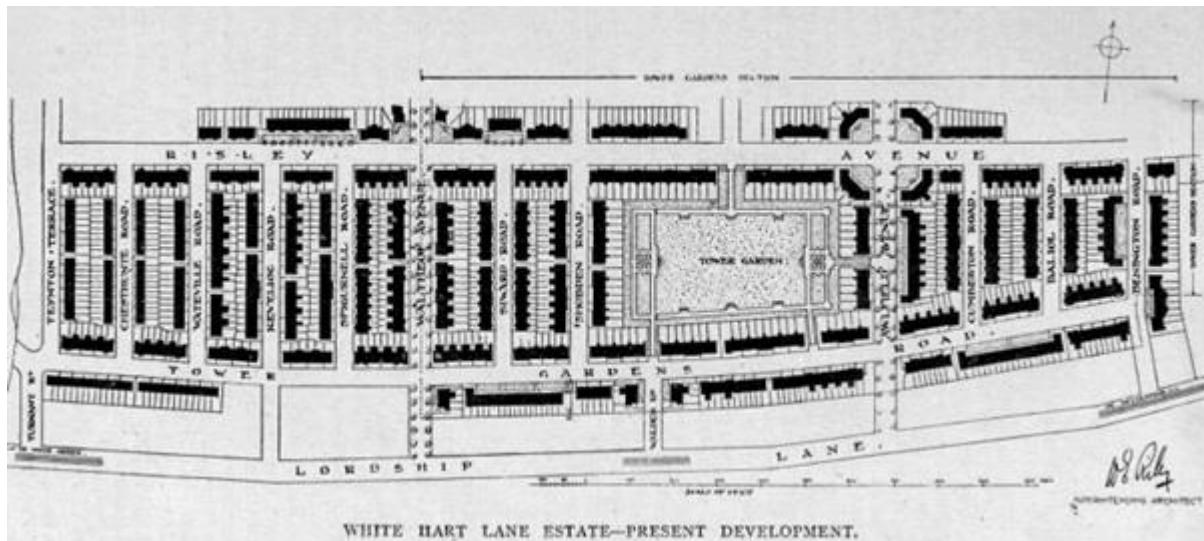


Fig. 3: The Tower Gardens section of the estateⁱⁱ

The funding for this first phase of the garden estate is an interesting one. In 1899 Sir Samuel Montagu Bt. (Lord Swaythling from 1907) offered the Council a 25 acre piece of land in Edmonton to use for working-class housing. Because this was in Middlesex, the County could not take him up on the offer as they were unable to purchase land outside their London boundary for the purposes of building housing. The 1900 amendment to the Housing of the Working Classes Act removed that restriction but the Council felt they were still unable to take up the offer. No specific reasons are given but it is assumed that the land in question was too far from London to be viable. Following discussions with Sir Samuel, he generously changed his offer to be one of £10,000 towards land for housing whether already purchased or not. The Council used the money towards the development of the Tower Gardens phase. Some of the money was set aside for the Tower Garden itself, with the remainder going towards the cost of the housing. One unusual condition attached to the gift was that all the housing built with the aid of the gift: “....shall be offered in the first instance, and from time to time as vacancies occur, to residents of three-years' standing and upwards in Whitechapel division of Tower Hamlets, without distinction of race or creed”. Sir Samuel Montague was MP for Whitechapel from 1885 to 1900. If the target was the Jewish community it seemed they were not prepared to take up the offer of first choice of a vacancy as far out as Tottenham as the area has never had a Jewish community, even to this day. Neither did the substantial Irish community in Whitechapel take up the offer as there has never been a Catholic church that covers the White Hart Lane estate. Nevertheless, a noble gesture by Sir Samuel Montagu, but one that resulted in cheap working class housing that was simply too far from the indigenous population of the East End. The Council could have put the money towards other projects nearer London but the reasons for choosing White Hart Lane as the recipient of the fund, despite the distance from Whitechapel, is not known. Possibly the proximity of White Hart Lane to Samuel Montagu's lands in nearby Edmonton was simply the reason. Sir Samuel Montagu continued with philanthropic projects and there is today a Swaythling Housing Society providing care homes in the Southampton area. Knowing that Sir Samuel contributed such a large sum, it is surprising that none of the roads on the estate are named after him. The unusual names of the roads are from ancient lordships and earldoms, cleverly giving a connection with Lordship Lane, but not to a Swaythling or Montagu. The illustrations below are just examples of the variety of housing built.

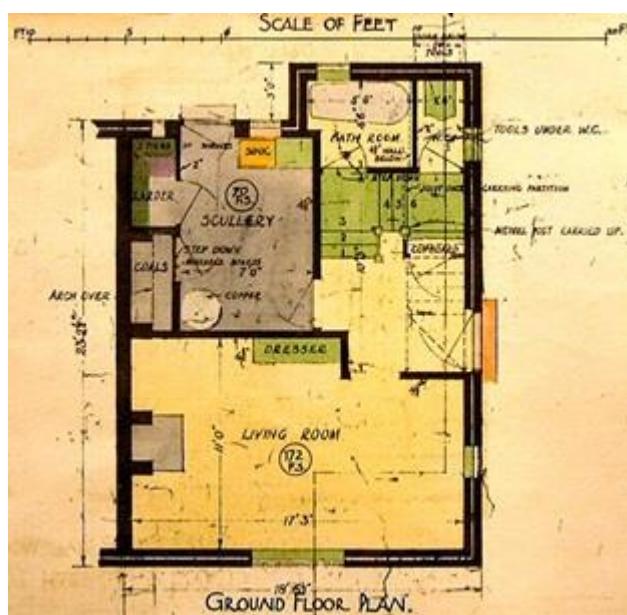


Fig. 4: White Hart Lane, Type "A" (3 rooms) end of terrace, ground floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

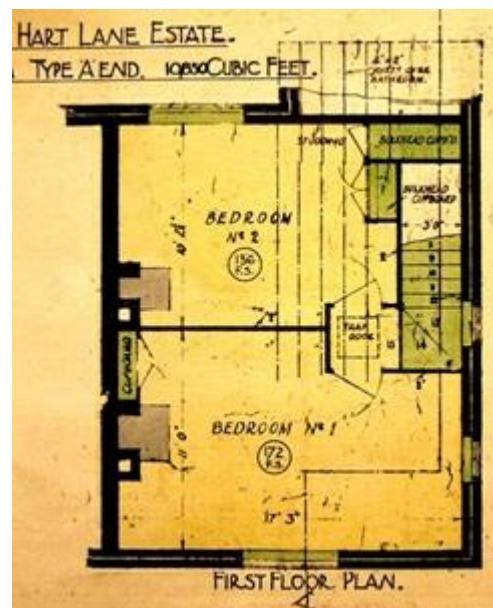


Fig. 5: White Hart Lane, Type "A" end of terrace, first floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

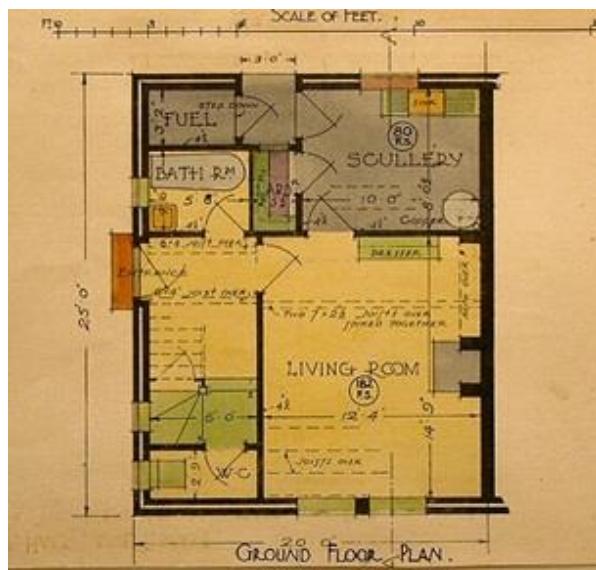


Fig. 6: White Hart Lane, Type "B" end of terrace, ground floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

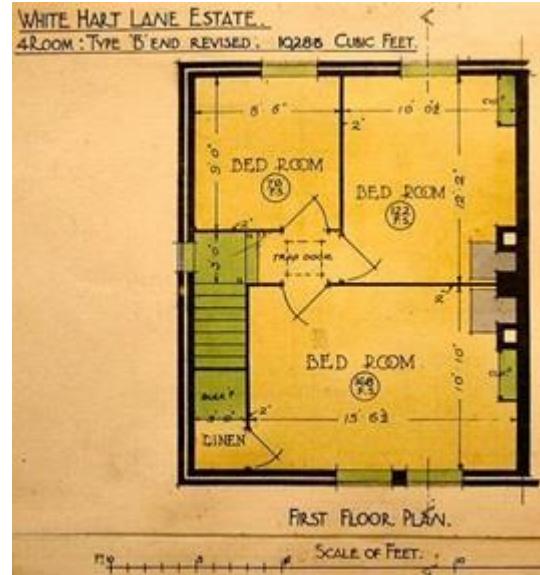


Fig. 7: White Hart Lane, Type "B" end of terrace, first floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

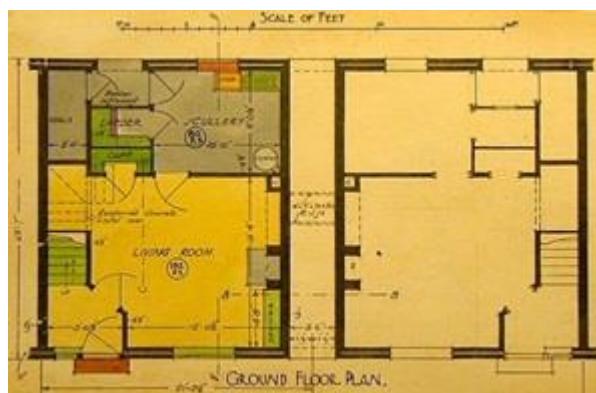


Fig. 8: White Hart Lane, Type "C" intermediate, ground floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

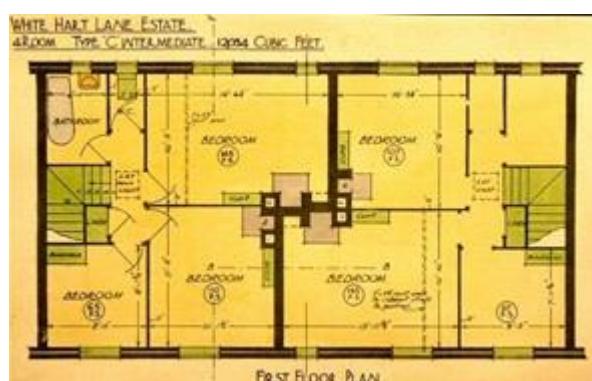


Fig. 9: White Hart Lane, Type "C" intermediate, 1st floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

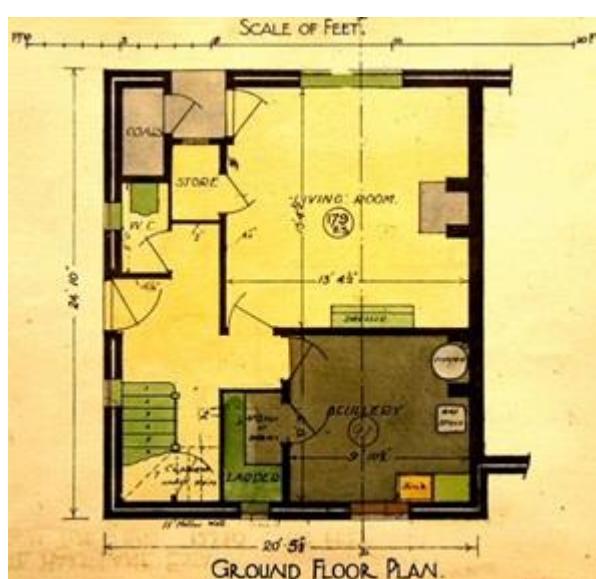


Fig. 10: White Hart Lane, Type "D" end of terrace, ground floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

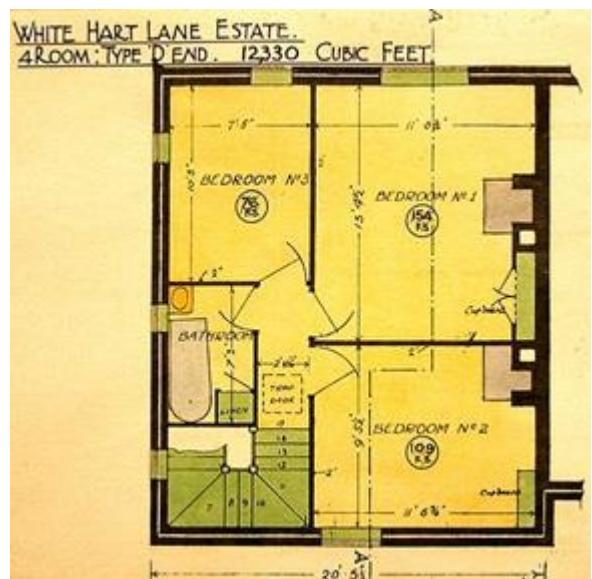


Fig. 11: White Hart Lane, Type "D" end of terrace, first floor (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)

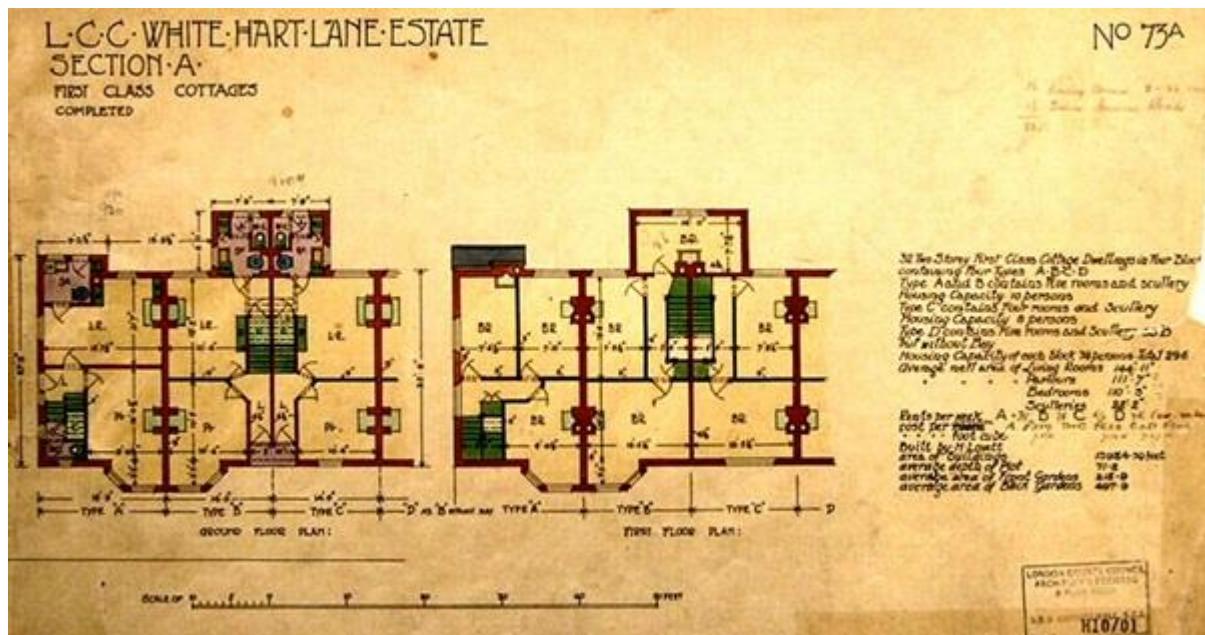


Fig. 12: White Hart Lane, 5-roomed cottages (LMA ref: LCC/AR/HS/03/056)



Fig. 13: White Hart Lane, Waltheof Ave., 1907
(LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0894)



Fig. 14: White Hart Lane, Kevelioc Ave., 1907
(LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0894)



Fig. 15: Shobden Road, 1907 (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0894)



Fig. 16: Waltheof Ave 2009



Fig. 17: Shobden Road 2009



Fig. 18: Awlfield Ave 2009



Fig. 19: Seward Road 2009



Fig. 20: Shobden Rd 1910 (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0894)



Fig. 21: Risley Avenue entrance to the gardens, 1907 (LMA ref: SC/PHL/02/0894)

The cost of the White Hart Lane Tower Gardens scheme is not possible to calculate in the same way as the previous properties have been in this paper as the cost of the land was substantial and was not filled with housing until after WW1. However, the Council had thoughtfully provided costs for the erection of each of the house types and these are: 3-roomed, £175; 4-roomed, £225; and 5-roomed, £245ⁱⁱⁱ. These costs include architects' fees and other incidentals.

As the cost per acre for the purchase of the whole site is known to have been £400 per acre, and the Tower Gardens phase is 110 acres, the costs of the land for this development is calculated as £44,000. The cottages in Tower Gardens, as developed as the first phase, were to house a theoretical maximum of 5,889 persons. This calculation, based on 2 people per room (which excludes the scullery), is not an accurate method for White Hart Land as the five-roomed properties included a lounge and parlour downstairs although they had three bedrooms. The costs, as known, are in table is below:

	Outgoings	Income	
Cost of 110 acres for Tower Gardens phase	£44,000		
Cost of 224 x 3-roomed cottages @ £175	£39,200		
Cost of 273 x 4-roomed cottages @ £225	£61,425		
Cost of 236 x 5-roomed cottages @ £245	£57,820		
Total cost of buildings and land			£202,445
Gift from Samuel Montagu		£10,000	
NET COST			£192,445
Cost per person (based on 5889 persons)			£33pp
Balance of Accounts 1913-14	£18,971	£20,540	£1,569 (7.6%)

Table 1: White Hart Lane Garden Estate costs

The above calculations should not be taken as accurate, but as a guide and comparison to other developments. The figures do not include the income for the sale of the surplus plots of land to the north of the main estate as these are not known, nor the cost of laying out the streets and sewers, which were calculated for the whole estate over a substantial development period. Although these two unknown figures may have eventually cancelled each other out, the cost of the street works probably exceeded the cost of sale of surplus lands and so the net cost per person is likely to have been closer to £40 than £33. The figures also do not include the cost of laying out the garden in the centre of the Tower Gardens development. The whole scheme was not completed until 1927.

The 1911 census returns should provide an interesting set of statistics for the estate. This is the first LCC estate that requires the residents to have a noticeable commute into London as regards time and costs. There were many employment opportunities to the east in the fast-developing Lea Valley but the earliest residents of the estate were expected to be workers from London who wanted a house and garden in the suburbs. As the estate consisted of 3, 4 and 5 roomed houses (all had 2 or 3 bedrooms upstairs) they were ideally suited to families where the head of household could afford the time and cost to commute. As the last development should have finished in late 1909 all the housing would have been available for 18 months by the time of the census. The occupancy of the housing is quite acceptable with the smaller and cheaper housing having few vacancies. It is not surprising to see that most unoccupied housing is amongst the more-expensive 5-roomed examples. In total, the occupancy is a very respectable 80%, with the breakdown of 93% occupancy for 3-roomed houses, 90% for the 4-roomed and a disappointing 62% for the 5-roomed. The rent for the 5-roomed houses was clearly not attractive to many prospective tenants.

A deep analysis of the data as regards the size of the household, the occupations of those earning, their likely place of work and where the family originate from has shown that there is no obvious demographic or occupational trend to the residents. The distance from central London will always result in tenants being in the higher-earning occupations and this is reflected in the high proportion of tenants in what is now called "white collar" occupations. The results can be seen in Fig: 22 below. It is not possible to accurately ascertain from the census where the adult occupants would have worked but there some can be identified in occupations that match companies who would have recently moved to new factories in the Lea Valley at Tottenham Hale, a short distance to the east of the estate. The largest employees included: Millington & Sons manufacturing stationers; Gestetner Duplicators; The Eagle Pencil Company (now Berol); and Lorilleux & Bolton printing ink manufacturers. All these companies had recently moved out of London and all were connected with the printing or stationery trades.

Analysis was also carried out on where the head of the household originated from. However, if there were a number of children over 5 years old, their predominant birthplace was taken as being the original house location for the family. This analysis can never be considered accurate because of migration due to work opportunities, or a desire to move to an area where the wife's family may have originated from, but it will provide a trend and help the analyst to decide on whether the LCC was successful in occupying the houses with those who would otherwise be looking for housing in the inner London area. The area breakdown selected was: locally born, from an area between Tottenham and The City - called the Great Northern Railway (GNR) Corridor; the rest of London, East Anglia and elsewhere. The results can be seen in Fig: 23 below. There is a small surprise in the proportion that originated from the GNR corridor. The Rest of London proportion are from all over the rest of London, including many from the

Southwark and adjoining boroughs. The high proportion from the rest of the UK is also a small surprise although many of these would probably have recently moved to a more central London location and took the opportunity to move out to Tottenham. Not having local family ties in London would make Tottenham a more acceptable place to live.

The census returns shows that overcrowding was almost non-existent, but there were a significant number of households with additional adult earners living with them either recorded as lodgers, or family members taking the opportunity to live with close relatives and be able to commute to London. This would have enabled many households to be able to afford the rent and cost of commuting and so take the opportunity to move out of crowded London.

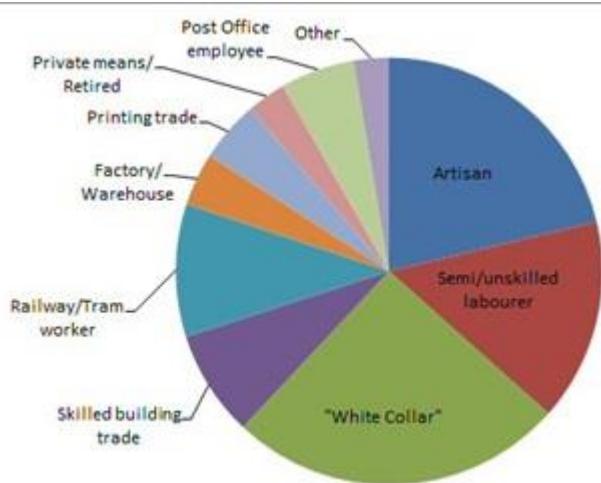


Fig: 22: White Hart Lane: breakdown of head-of-household occupations

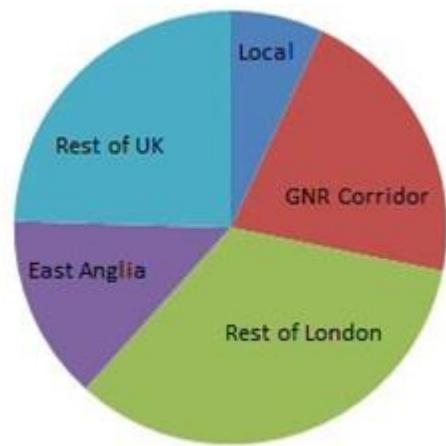


Fig: 23: White Hart Lane: breakdown of head-of-household migration to Tottenham

The estate today looks a lot like it must have done before WW1 apart from mature trees and plenty of privet hedging. The estate has been protected by a preservation order since 1978. This order prevents unsympathetic alterations such as the painting of brickwork, ensures the retention of all original hedging, and bans satellite dishes at the front of the buildings. Even minor alterations cannot be made to the external structure without planning permission. These restrictions are very similar to those imposed on Totterdown Fields.

Footnotes

ⁱ Housing of the Working Classes 1855-1912; LCC; 1913; p74

ⁱⁱ Housing of the Working Classes 1855-1912; p75

ⁱⁱⁱ Housing of the Working Classes 1855-1912; p76