

The Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Old Palace Road, Croydon **CR0**

A rare opportunity.



The opportunity.

The Old Palace of John Whitgift School, Old Palace Road, Croydon, CR0 1AX

Suitable for a range of uses and development – residential, commercial, community and leisure, subject to all necessary consents.

- Located within Croydon Old Town, a few minutes' walk to the High Street and local transport connections
- Currently used as an independent day school, (Class F1a), which will close in 2025
- Range of classrooms, teaching space, laboratories, administration, recreational space in a variety of buildings
- Further amenities include indoor heated swimming pool, tennis courts & parking
- Award winning purpose built prep/junior school building
- Grade I listed Old Palace buildings – with Great Hall, Long Gallery and Chapel
- Buildings: 104,816 sq ft (9,737 sq m) GIA in all of which freehold 69,982 sq ft and leasehold 34,834 sq ft
- Land: Freehold (2.037 acres) and Leasehold (1.28 acres) in all 3.32 acres
- For sale with vacant possession
- Offered as a whole and available as a whole or in part or parts

Overview

The Old Palace, Croydon has a long and fascinating history being the home of The Archbishops of Canterbury from medieval times to around 1780. Since then it has had a variety of commercial and residential uses.

However since 1889 it has operated as a school firstly under the ownership of a group of Sisters of the Church, and then as a direct grant grammar school from 1945 followed by an independent school for girls from 1975. The school then joined the John Whitgift Foundation in 1993.

The school will sadly be closing in July 2025 and beyond that date and it will be available with vacant possession.

Located within minutes from the High Street and set in the Croydon Minster Conservation Area, with the benefit of excellent public transport connections.

The Old Palace represents a rare opportunity to acquire a substantial and historic property in a busy south London location, with potential for continued educational use or a range of alternative uses/development, subject to all the necessary consents.







The Cathedral Building



Queen Elizabeth 1



Archbishop John Whitgift



Archbishop Thomas Cranmer



Summary

The property extends principally across two sites, either side of Old Palace Road. The main freehold site is located on the west side of Old Palace Road, adjacent to the Croydon Minster, with the historic buildings of Medieval and Tudor origins here along with the science block and the award winning architect designed purpose built school building, that dates from 2000. On the eastern side of Old Palace Road are further facilities across freehold and leasehold land including classrooms, gym/studio space and the heated swimming pool. The tennis courts are just to the south of these two sites.

Historical note

Old Palace is remarkable for its survival, with its ownership by the Church dating from Saxon times through to the 18th Century. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1066 and became a popular retreat for Archbishops with the local area having streams, woodland and a large area now know as Park Hill being used for hunting. Much work was done to the building in the 13th Century and again in the 15th Century. Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were frequent visitors and it was

Archbishop Whitgift who entertained the Queen there and she is said to have enjoyed dancing in the Long Gallery. In the 17th Century the Palace is said to have become hidden by trees and “darke”, but visitors at this time included Edward Alleyn founder of Dulwich College and John Donne, Dean of St Pauls Cathedral. It was sold in the Commonwealth era sometime at or after 1649 for £7,959 13s 6d and its use as an Archbishops’ residence continued until 1780 when an Act of Parliament gave consent for it to be sold. The property was then used as a print works, later a school for children of overseas officials in India as well as a judges’ lodging. Parts were then sold off including the land to the east to Pickfords removals. In 1887 it was bought by the 7th Duke of Newcastle and gifted to a Community of Nuns to operate as a school and the school use has continued to this day, although the school will close in 2025. It is the only one of the residences owned by the Medieval and Tudor Archbishops to have its Great Hall intact. Many of these residences were destroyed in the reign of Henry VIII or the Civil War but the Old Palace was remarkably left intact. It survived as it was used by Thomas Cranmer, Henry VIII’s Archbishop and then later on one of Cromwell’s Generals kept it in good order. It has been described as Croydon’s best kept secret.





The Cathedral Building



The Science Block

Accommodation

The property is today arranged to provide for a day school.

Area A: As above the principal buildings are on the west side of Old Palace Road and centre around the Grade I listed buildings that largely date from the 15th and 16th Century with later additions. The accommodation provides for a variety of spaces for teaching including classrooms, library and administration. The historic elements include the heavily beamed **Great Hall**, the **Long Gallery and Chapel**. The exterior of the whole palace is of stone or 16th Century red brick, with early stone windows or Georgian sashes.

Also on the west side is the **Cathedral Building** to the north of the site, which being a modern addition and dates from 2000 and was purpose built as a junior school arranged over three floors around a courtyard. This is constructed of red brick elevations and sandstone mullions and has previously won an architectural award for its design. **The Science Block** is also found on the west side and was constructed in the 1950s with a later 1980s addition.

On the east side of Old Palace Road the site comprises freehold and leasehold land. **Area B:** The freehold land comprises the **Jubilee Building** classroom block over two storeys and the indoor heated **swimming pool**. **Area C:** Adjoined to this is the leasehold property principally **The Shah Building** a former Victorian furniture depository (Pickfords) with a substantial area of additional accommodation arranged over 3 floors and providing teaching and recreational space with a gym/dance studio and **The Annex**, a 3 storey 1960s building providing extensive teaching and recreational space.

Areas D and E: In addition, there is just 50m to the south a portion of open land which is currently used as tennis courts and is accessed via Howley Road to the south of Old Palace Road.



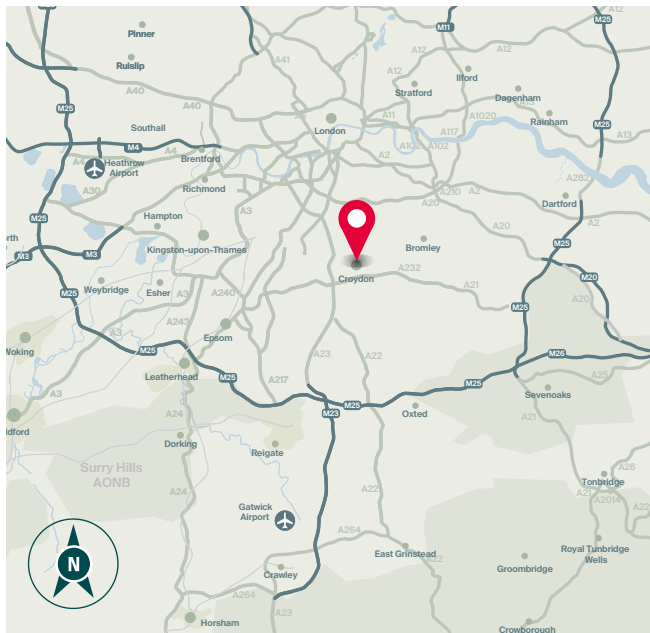
The Great Hall













Location

The property is split by Old Palace Road in the London Borough of Croydon administrative area, about 10 miles to the south of Central London. The property is positioned in Croydon Old Town, and a short walk from Croydon town centre, which lies just to the north east of the property, providing a vibrant and diverse urban area known for its blend of retail, commercial, and leisure opportunities.

In recent years, Croydon has undergone some major regeneration projects that have transformed the town centre. Future investment aims to enhance Croydon's status as a key economic and cultural hub within Greater London.

The town centre also acts as a key transport hub with railway stations providing fast connections to central London, Gatwick Airport, and beyond. The property is conveniently positioned 0.7 miles from East Croydon railway station, providing direct access to London Bridge (15 mins), London Victoria (17 mins) and London Blackfriars (20 mins).



-  Old Palace School
-  1 Croydon Minster
-  2 Town Hall
-  3 One Croydon
-  4 Park Hill Water Tower
-  5 St Peter's Church
-  6 Whitgift Almshouses
-  7 Croydon College
-  8 Fairfield Halls
-  National Railway Station
-  London Overground Station
-  Croydon Tram Station

Communication

The location benefits from multiple local transport facilities including close proximity to 3 train stations at East, West and South Croydon with fast services into London. West Croydon bus station serves routes regularly toward Morden, Wallington, Sutton and Gatwick. Various nearby tram stops provide links to Wimbledon, Elmers End and Beckenham via East Croydon.



Tram stops:

Church Street

0.1 miles to the north

Reeves Corner

0.2 miles to the north-west

George Street

0.3 miles to the east



National Rail:

West Croydon

0.5 miles to the north

East Croydon

0.7 miles to the east

South Croydon

1.1 m to the south



Road:

A236

0.2 miles

A232

1.5 miles

M25

9.5 miles



Bus:

Several bus services providing access to local destinations and Central London.



Air:

Gatwick Airport is the closest international airport approximately 18 miles to the south, accessible within approximately 40 minutes by road. Heathrow Airport is 40 miles to the north-west and is accessible via the M25 in approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes by road.

By road:



M25 Junction (J6)

32 mins



Heathrow Airport

1 hour 10 mins

Gatwick Airport

40 mins



London's West End

1 hour 20 mins

By rail:



Clapham Junction

24 minutes



London Bridge

31 minutes

London Blackfriars

36 minutes

Gatwick Airport

27 minutes

London Victoria

33 minutes

London St Pancras

46 minutes

Not to scale. Distances and times are approximates taken from Google Maps.

Site plan

Area	Building Number	Building Name	sqft	sqm
Freehold				
A	1 & 2	The Old Palace (1) & The Great Hall (2)	27,039	2,512
A	3	Cathedral Building	19,343	1,797
A	4	Science Block	13,003	1,208
B	5	Swimming Pool Building	4,989	463
B	6	Jubilee Building	5,608	521
D		Howley Road – Tennis Courts	N/A	N/A
		Total	69,982	6,501
Leasehold				
C	7	Shah Building	23,964	2,226
C	8	The Annex	10,870	1,010
		Total	34,834	3,236
E		Cranmer Road – Tennis Courts	N/A	N/A
		Total	104,816	9,737

Area	Acres	Hectares
Freehold		
A	1.50	0.609
B	0.346	0.14
Leasehold		
C	0.843	0.341
Freehold		
D	0.187	0.075
Leasehold		
E	0.443	0.17
Total freehold (A, B and D)	2.03	0.82
Total leasehold (C and E)	1.29	0.52



Area A: Old Palace



Area A: Cathedral Building



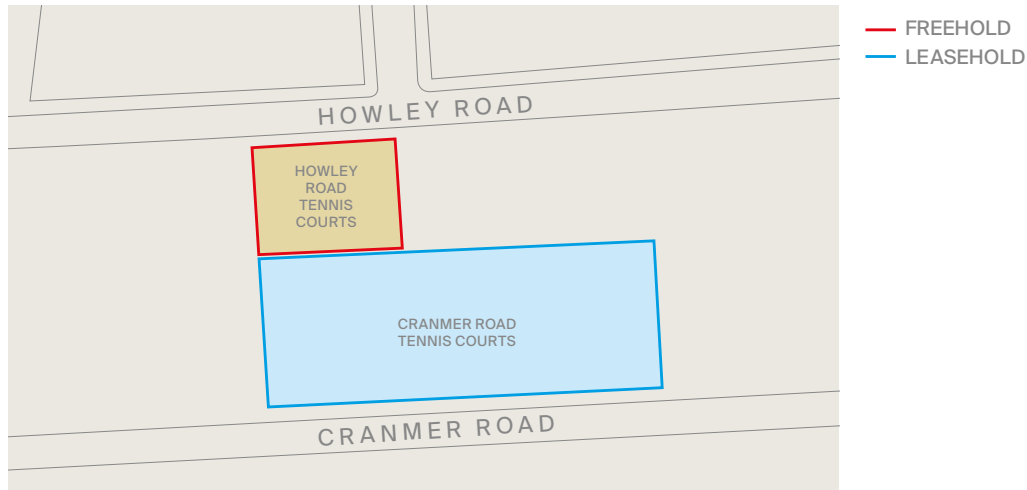
Area B: Jubilee Building and Swimming Pool



Area C: Shah Building and Annex



Areas D & E



Google, ©2024 CNES / Maxar Technologies. Data supplied by Landstack.

Planning environment

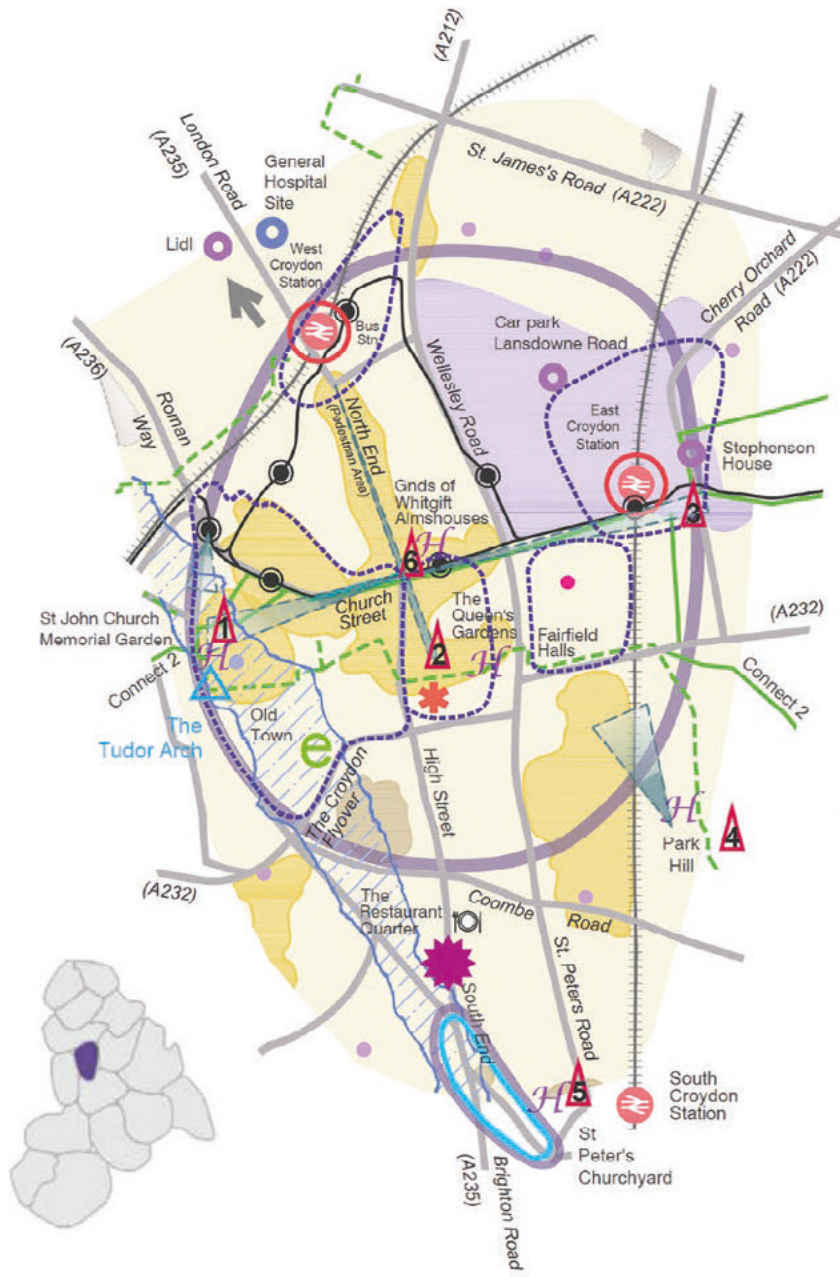
The property is in the London Borough of Croydon. Croydon's adopted development plan comprises the London Plan (2021) and the Croydon Local Plan (2018). Croydon are in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, with the Regulation 19 version being submitted for examination in November 2024. Notably, there are no changes to the property's designations proposed at the time of writing this brochure.

The Property falls entirely within the Croydon Area Planning Framework ('COAPF'), and this is divided into 6 different character areas and the property is within the Southern and Old Town Character Area. The Property is also covered by the Old Town Masterplan, the overarching objective of which is to preserve, enhance and reveal the heritage assets and historic environment of the Old Town.

In the town centre, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) has begun consultation on a Masterplan Framework that incorporates the Whitgift Centre, Allders and the immediate surrounding area of Croydon's town centre, branded as 'The North End Quarter' by Croydon Council in their emerging Local Plan. The Framework intends to establish principles to transform the North End Quarter into a vibrant, mixed-use destination that brings together homes, shops, cultural venues and public spaces.

Heritage/conservation designations

The Old Palace is statutorily listed as Grade I. The Shah building is a locally listed building. The Old Palace lies within the Croydon Minster Conservation area. Adjacent is the Croydon Minster, designed by Gilbert Scott it is also Grade I listed and the St John's Memorial Garden forming part of the curtilage to the Minster.



- Built Environment
- Existing Green Grid and connections
- Conservation Areas
- Local Heritage Areas
- Proposed Green Grid and connections
- Railway
- Railway Station
- Tram Network
- Tramstop
- Schools (Primary and Secondary)
- College
- Independent Schools
- Locally listed Historic Parks and Gardens
- Areas potentially at risk of flooding (Environment Agency data November 2012)
- Industrial Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Local Designated View
- Landmark
 - 1.Croydon Minster
 - 2.The Town Hall Clock Tower
 - 3.No.1 Croydon
 - 4.Park Hill Water Tower
 - 5.St.Peter's Church
 - 6.Whitgift Almshouses
- Local Centre
- Public Realm Improvements
- Proposed Cycle Hub
- Enterprise Centre (Creative and Cultural Industries and/or Tech Hub)
- Masterplan
- Potential District Energy Scheme
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Office Retention Area
- Potential Primary School Site
- Potential Secondary School Site

Title and tenure

The property is held under the following **freehold** titles:

- West and east side of Old Palace Road (Old Palace, Cathedral Building, Science block and Jubilee and Swimming Pool): Title Numbers: SGL238254, SGL81596 and SGL60300, SGL581350

- Part of the Howley Road recreation ground: SY53332

The property is held under the following **leasehold** titles:

- East side of Old Palace Road The Shah building, annex and car park are held leasehold under title number SGL607773. Lease is dated 19 March 1999 for a term of 35 years with an option to extend up to year 33 for a further 35 years on the same terms broadly.
- Part of the Howley Road recreation ground is held leasehold (SY52518). The tennis courts to the south of Howley Road are held pursuant to a lease dated 25th November 1998 between The Mayor and Burgesses of The London Borough of Croydon and The Whitgift Foundation.

Services

Mains water, electricity, gas, and drainage are provided. However, it is the responsibility of the Purchaser to ensure that services are available and adequate for their proposed use.

EPC

Area	Building Number	Building Name	Rating
		Freehold	
A	1 & 2	The Old Palace (1) & The Great Hall (2)	
A	3	Cathedral Building	C
A	4	Science Block	D
B	5	Swimming Pool Building	C
B	6	Jubilee Building	B
		Leasehold	
C	7	Shah Building	C
C	8	The Annex	D

Inspections

Strictly by prior appointment with Knight Frank. Prospective purchasers should be aware that inspections are made entirely at their own risk and no liability is accepted by the vendor or their agent.

VAT

We understand that the property has not been elected for VAT. The position on VAT may change from the time of issuing this brochure. All bids should be submitted exclusive of VAT.

Charities Act 2022

The property sale is subject to the provisions of the Charities Act 2022.

Fixtures and fittings

No fixtures and fittings are included.

Contents

Some contents may be available for sale separately, upon request. Extent of contents may have altered since the images were taken and at the time of any inspection.

Method of sale

The property is for sale by private treaty via informal tender. Offers are invited for the whole or part or parts of the property. Please indicate clearly on a plan and in writing on any bid form (and accompanying letter) for which part your interest/offer relates to. The bid form is on the dedicated dataroom which as below access is available on request.

Further information

Further information including legal documents, EPC rating, photographs, video tour and floorplans are available on our dedicated data room.

Please email emma.cleugh@knightfrank.com, sam.vandevelde@knightfrank.com or george.lyth@knightfrank.com for access.

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Fixtures and fittings: A list of the fitted carpets, curtains, light fittings and other items fixed to the property which are included in the sale (or may be available by separate negotiation) will be provided by the Seller's Solicitors.

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Particulars dated December 2024.

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