



Places in Brent

Sudbury

Grange Museum of Community History and Brent Archive

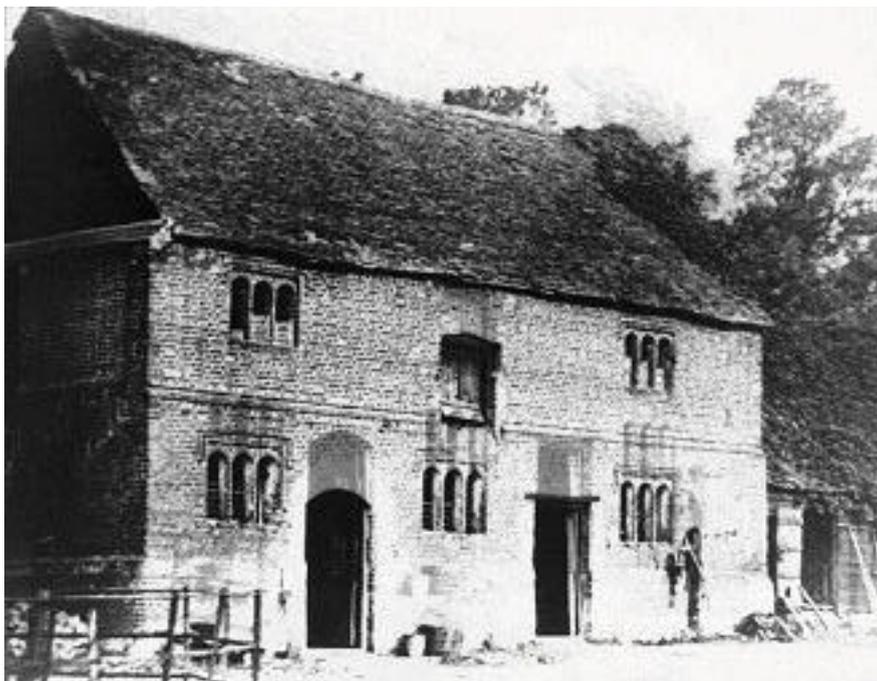
Sudbury is situated on the western border of Brent, just west of Wembley.

Early history

Little is known about early Sudbury. The name first appears in 1273-4 and means 'the southern manor'. Sudbury Common once stretched from Wembley to the foot of Harrow Hill. 'Sudbury' was a much larger area than one sees today.

Sudbury Manor was the main Middlesex residence for the Archbishops of Canterbury until the end of the 14th century. It was then divided up and leased out. The centre of the settlement was Sudbury Court. By 1547 the population was 173 adults. At Hundred Elms Farm there is an impressive 16th century brick building. It was once believed to be a chapel, but this is not the case.

In 1545 King Henry VIII gave Sudbury Manor to the North family. In 1630 George Pitt bought it from the Norths. His family, the Rushouts, became barons of Northwick in 1797. In 1912 the land passed to Captain E.G. Spencer-Churchill.



The barn at Hundred Elms Farm

In 1582 John Lyon, founder of Harrow School, provided funds for the upkeep of the road from Harrow to London, then called "Harrow way." By 1681 there was a daily coach. The road encouraged development and by 1786 had led to the building of the 'Swan' coaching inn in southwest Sudbury. Road conditions were very bad until a turnpike trust (a body that raised money to improve the roads) was created in 1801.

By the 17th century a number of people were illegally building on the common. However only 25 acres of common had been lost by 1759. Far more common land was lost after 1817, when it was taken over by local landowners, a process known as 'enclosure'.

More buildings appeared in the 18th century. The 'Black Horse' and the 'Mitre' public houses both date from the 1750s. By then Sudbury had become more densely populated. There were 70 buildings in the village in 1759.

Sudbury had always been a centre for animal farming. It was a prosperous area, and there were many farmhouses in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the 1820s and 1830s, however, the farming

community suffered as a result of a depression in the rural economy.

19th century development

The road to London and the presence of Harrow School led prosperous people to build large houses in Sudbury. Several existed by 1819. The opening of Sudbury (now Wembley Central) station in 1842, and horse bus services from this station to the 'Swan' inn, both encouraged development.

Sudbury was the first part of the Wembley area to show significant growth. By 1852 80 properties were large enough to be taxed and by 1861 signs of a shift away from agriculture can be seen. A brewery existed by 1859 and Hundred Elms Farm became a dairy. By 1864 there was a sub-post office. In the same year a workmen's hall was founded by the Misses Copland, local philanthropists who also built a new house, Sudbury Lodge, in the grounds of Crabs House, their father's smaller home. The 'Rising Sun' beerhouse existed by 1865 and a shopping centre, the Mall, grew up around the 'Swan'.

In 1873 the distinguished chemist and dye manufacturer Dr. William Perkin built The Chestnuts, turning neighbouring Seymour Villa into his laboratory. Sir George Barham, founder of the Express Dairy, came to live in Sudbury. He purchased the Copland estate in 1895, renaming Sudbury Lodge Barham House. Sudbury's population rose from 378 in 1831 to 925 in 1895.

The arrival of the railways

In 1903 District electric trains began serving the area, and from 1906 Great Central Railway services from Marylebone did the same. Electric trams followed in 1910. After 1913 there were motorbus services to Charing Cross. These rail and road services brought summer day-trippers from London to the 'Swan's' tea garden and a racecourse on the site of the present Methodist Church. More importantly, they encouraged suburbanisation.



The construction of Sudbury & Harrow Road station on the Great Central Railway, probably early 1906

From the end of the 19th century some of the large villas were sold and their grounds broken up into lots. Between 1907 and 1910 roads were built near the stations. In 1907 Sudbury Parade was built opposite Barham Park and suburban development began.

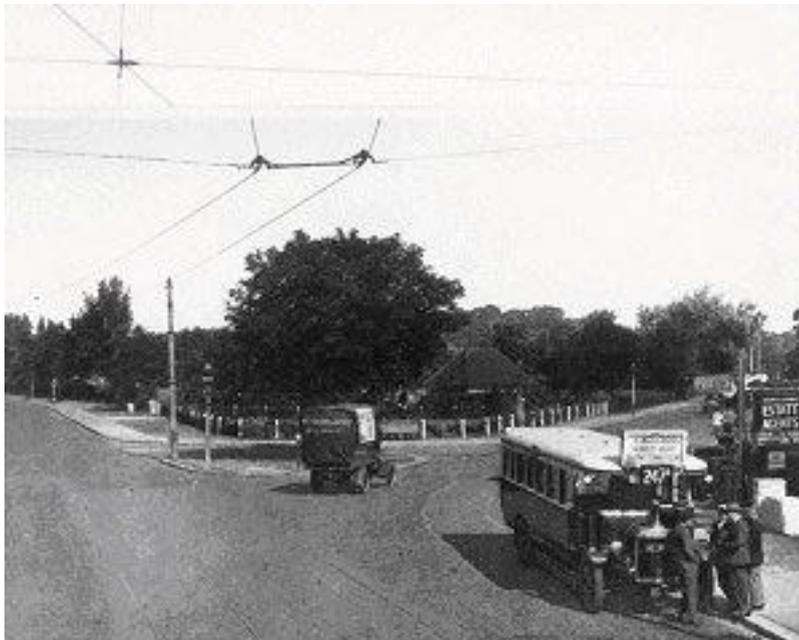
After the First World War

After the First World War many farms closed down and the land was sold for development. The 1924-5 British Empire Exhibition further encouraged house building by improving roads and creating new bus routes.

Sudbury had a temporary church from 1904, but only became an Anglican parish in 1925. Baptist, Catholic and Methodist churches were also built between the wars. The first school at Sudbury is recorded in 1846 and there was a Board School from 1880. A secondary school opened in 1928. Roman Catholic schools followed.

During the 15 years after the British Empire Exhibition the district became a suburb. In 1921 population density was 2.3 people per

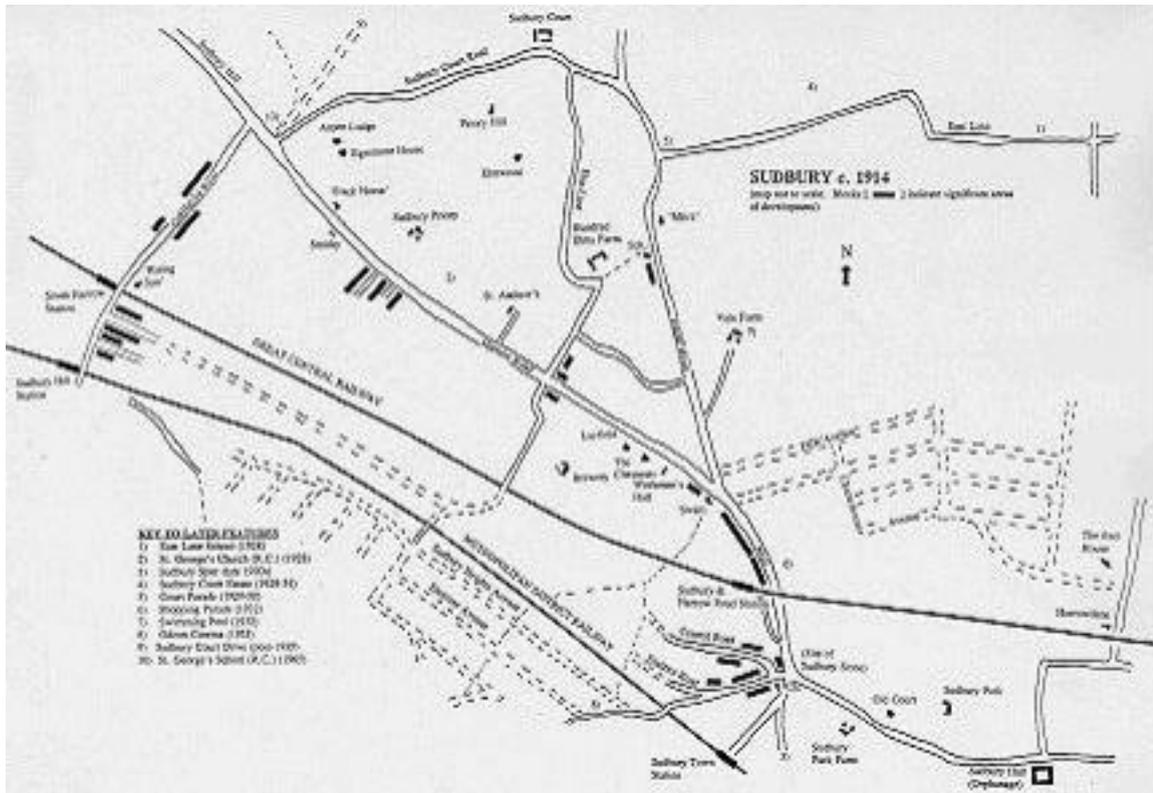
acre. In 1931 it was 9.8 per acre and in 1951 18.7. Wembley Urban District's Town Planning Scheme led to a variety of housing estates at different densities. The most notable development was Sudbury Court Estate, which was built on land sold for development by Captain E.G. Spencer-Churchill. It comprised some 1,700 'Tudorbethan' semi-detached houses, built between 1928-34 by the local firm Comben & Wakeling. Shopping parades appeared at East Lane and opposite the Mall. In 1929 a new post office was opened and in 1931 Sudbury Town station was rebuilt by Charles Holden in a striking modern style. A large but short-lived Odeon cinema was built at Allendale Road in 1935.



The junction between Watford and Harrow roads between the wars

Few open spaces survived, although in 1928 part of the holdings of Vale Farm was turned into playing fields. A public swimming pool was opened on the site in 1932. On his death in 1937 Titus Barham, son of Sir George, left Barham House and its grounds to the new Wembley Borough Council. Had he not died he would have been the Borough's first Mayor. The Council neglected the main house so badly that it had to be demolished in 1956-7, though the associated Crabs House survived to become Barham Park Library. Most of the other old buildings in Sudbury were also

demolished in the 1950s. Sudbury Court Drive was developed between 1951 and 1954, and despite a slight decline in population, construction, especially of flats, continued in the 1960s and 1970s. Nonetheless parts of Sudbury, notably Elms Lane, still feel more rural than many suburbs.



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