



Span Developments and History of the Site

‘Sites are located in first-class residential districts’

Span - Living with New Ideas

Cedar Chase was built on the site of Taplow Hill House (1860), which had then become derelict after being used as a bible college for some years.



We have deeds for the estate going back to 1914. The earliest records the death of Charles Pearce Serocold and conveyance of the property to his son Oswald Pearce Serocold by a complex scheme that included provision for Charles' wife to use the house until her own death, and for another property called 'Red Cottage' (now St Nicolas House) to be given to his unmarried daughters.

There is also mention of a field called 'Wittage' being included with the house. At this stage, the estate was larger than it is now, as it included a walled garden that now forms part of Saxon Gardens.

The woodlands were much as they are today and a pond was shown in the area that is now behind houses 6-8. In 1936 Oswald (now Colonel) and other Taplow landowners made an agreement with the Eton Rural District Council – Each of the Owners being desirous of co-operating with the Council in the preservation of the character and amenities of the District. The agreement ran for an initial period of 15 years, and limited the use of the land to agricultural purposes 'or for its present use as a private residential estate'



In 1942 the estate was sold to the Netherlands Shipping and Trading Committee Limited for £5250. It was used during the war as a rest home for Dutch merchant seamen.



In 1946 it was sold again, this time for £9670 to the All Nations Missionary Union Incorporated, which was a registered charity so the stamp of the Charity Commissioners appears on the conveyance. The walled garden was sold off in 1959 to Edgar Alan Clarke, leaving the outline of the estate as it is today.

The Missionary Union used the house as a Bible College and training centre for many years, but seems to have run into financial trouble in the 1950s as it started to make planning applications for building blocks of flats on the land. Applications for 24 flats in 1960 and 1962 were refused.

Span Developments entered the picture in February 1964, making an agreement to buy Taplow Hill House subject to the consent of the Charity Commissioners and subject to the grant of planning permission for residential development.

The sale was completed in December 1964 with £2500 being paid for the freehold and £25000 for a separate 99-year lease over the whole property.

Redevelopment started in 1965, and the first house (number 11) was sold in June 1966. The last sale was number 2, in April 1968. The houses and garages were originally sold on separate leases, with Span Estates being the freeholder.

The Residents Society bought the freehold in 1982 and then transferred the freehold of the individual houses to the leaseholders. Hence, the houses are now freehold but subject to the Scheme of Management.

