

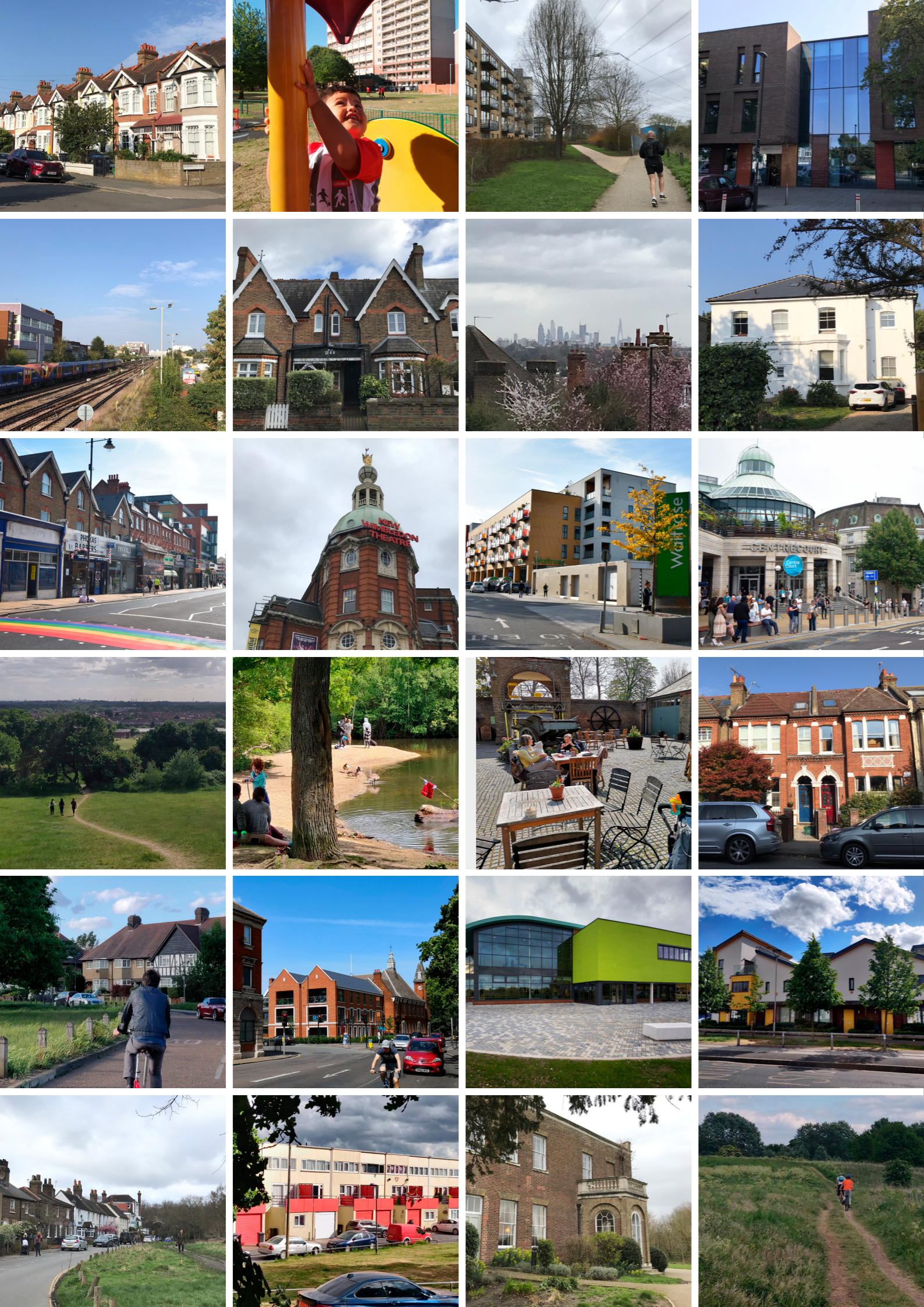
MERTON

Character Study



Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners

Solidspace



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A large, bold, white letter 'A' is centered on the left side of the image. The background is a solid blue color with a faint, light blue map of a city grid overlaid on it. The map shows various streets and building footprints, with some areas appearing more densely packed than others. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

WHY CHARACTER?

A WHY CHARACTER?

A.1 WHAT IS A CHARACTER STUDY?

Merton has a unique and special character that deserves to be celebrated. This distinctive identity will be used to shape the borough's future and help define the exciting next chapter of growth. This Character Study sets out a description of the physical form of the borough, its history, places, streets and buildings. This analysis helps to provide an understanding of the particular attributes which make the borough of Merton what it is today, and draws out the identity of each neighbourhood within the borough. This has been informed by extensive consultation with local residents and stakeholders - with over 450 people participating in the consultation. This process of understanding character is important as it illustrates the distinctiveness across the borough and how these local qualities should inform future approaches to managing growth and change.

Why do we need the study?

Merton, like every other authority in the country has to play its part in solving the nationwide housing crisis. To create a Merton based solution, the Character Study provides an understanding of the characteristics of individual places to inform a context led strategy for the delivery of new homes and other development.

The New London Plan puts significant emphasis on boroughs to deliver growth. It no longer includes the Density Matrix, which sets out appropriate density ranges related to the site's setting in terms of location, existing building form and massing, and the index of public transport accessibility (PTAL) which has been included in previous London Plans. Policy D3 of the London Plan sets out that an appropriate form and density of development must be established through the adoption of a design led approach which takes full account of local character and context. As such it is now even more important for local policy to shape where and how places should grow and change. It is therefore critical that future development is informed by a detailed understanding of the borough's character, and an appreciation of its qualities and places so that growth can be tailored to individual neighbourhoods. This process acknowledges that there is a limited supply of land in Merton and therefore there is a need to use it efficiently.

The study's aim is to define an approach to growth for different parts of the borough, informed by an analysis of character. Where areas have a strong existing character this will be reinforced and protected. In other areas there may be opportunities to re-examine what is there with opportunities for improvement. In areas with less existing positive character there may be opportunities to reimagine these areas into new places.

This report builds on the partially completed character work which was done by Merton Council to help inform the previous draft of the Local Plan. An update to this work is in response to the significant growth and change in the borough since this time and the shift in GLA policy.

What will this document be used for?

This study has been prepared to assist the Council, community groups, stakeholders and others with an interest in the borough to better understand Merton's distinctive local character. It will support preparation of the Council's new Local Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and be used to inform a character and 'place-based' approach to managing growth in the borough. Similarly, neighbourhood forums will be able to draw on this study to assist with the preparation of their neighbourhood plans. The report will also inform decisions made by The Council and should be an important tool used by developers and others investing in Merton to ensure proposals positively respond to the local context.

How was this document made?

The methodology for creating this Character Study is about bringing together a library of data sources to build up a clear picture of the borough. GIS data from the Council, GLA Datastore, Office for National Statistics and other open-sources has created the plans, alongside photography, historical research, site visits and analysis. This has been underpinned by extensive public engagement and conversations with residents to develop our understanding and to draw together the conclusions within this study. The approach to engagement is set out over the following page.

A.2 WHAT IS CHARACTER AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

In many ways, the character of a place is defined by an individual's perception of it. This process is partly intuitive and therefore subjective. However, it is possible to gain a common understanding of character, based on evidence and combined perceptions, which seeks to achieve a level of objectivity.

In simple terms, urban character can be understood as the combination and interplay of three factors. First, the physical fabric of the city – the landscapes, buildings, townscape and material infrastructure that exist today. Second, the social fabric of the city – the life and activities that take place within the material environment and how communities use and adapt it. Finally, the historical narrative of a place – why and how development started there and the ongoing story of its evolution.

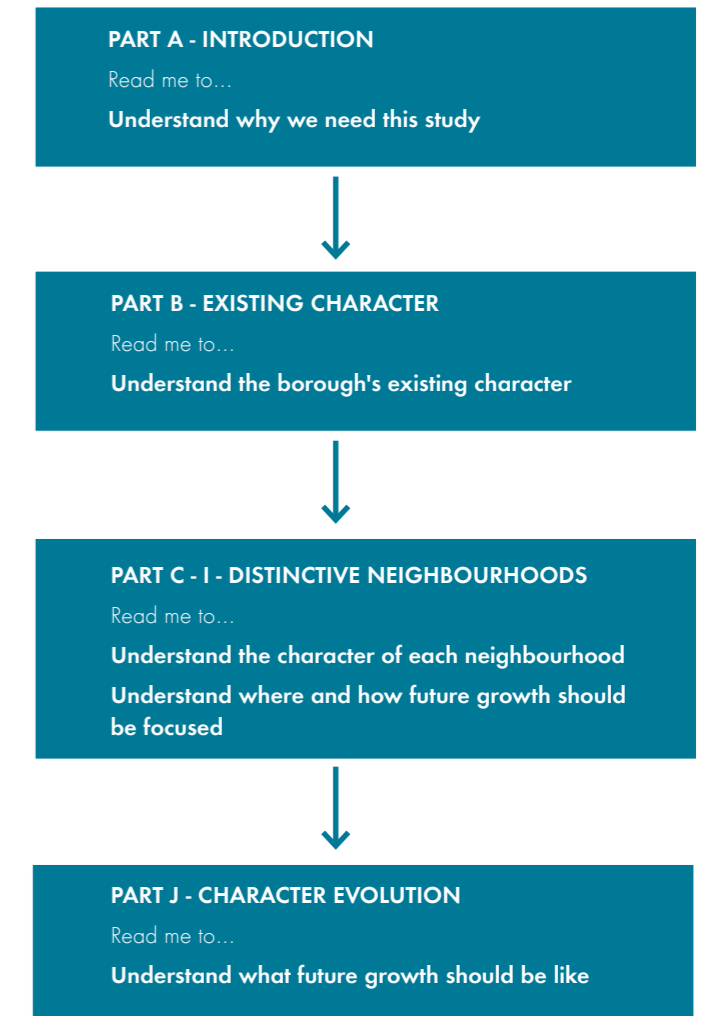
Character is present at multiple scales and at different levels of resolution, hence distinctions can be made between the general character of London and that of specific boroughs, neighbourhoods or streets, while recognising that all of these categories overlap and inform each other.

Character is also inextricably linked to time; it is not static but dynamic, and it may change suddenly or gradually over decades as layers of urban fabric are introduced, adapted or even erased. Present character is the product of successive past generations' interactions with the place they themselves inherited, using and modifying it to fulfil their needs, styles and aspirations.

The study of character is a means to engage with the story of a place. It allows us to connect with the humanity of each place and understand how people's lives, thoughts and actions have left their imprint. Making sense of Merton's complex evolution allows designers and planners to make more informed decisions about how the borough's neighbourhoods ought to grow in the future. This helps to write the next chapter in the story of each place, keeping the thread of history alive.

A.3 HOW DO YOU USE THIS DOCUMENT?

The following flow-chart illustrates the structure of this report and the purpose of each section:



A.4 WHAT DID YOU TELL US?

Merton Council was very keen that this Character Study had an extensive programme of engagement to help test the emerging ideas and ensure that local residents were happy with the way their neighbourhoods were represented. Covid 19 hit shortly after this study was commissioned which has meant that the plans for consultation have needed to be adapted and evolved to take an online and digital form. Over 450 people have contributed to the engagement process which is an incredible achievement given the recent challenging context.

Quotes from all of the engagement events help to illustrate this report and ensure the voice of local residents is recognised within this study.

Online public survey

A digital survey was designed and went live online between 7 September and 5 October 2020. 416 people responded to this from within all areas of the borough. The survey was designed to test the proposed neighbourhoods and review their boundaries. We also wanted to understand what people valued about each neighbourhood and better understand what could be changed and improved.

Community groups survey

Within the report we wanted to reflect the diverse and rich community that Merton has, and that is an important part of its character. We also wanted to understand the networks, reach and spread of groups

and organisations across the borough. A short survey was designed to share with a representative cross section of groups to help convey this message within the report.

Stakeholder workshop

Around 30 people attended the Character Study Workshop – both residents and representatives from local groups and organisations. Attendees were organised into groups to discuss the parts of the borough that they were most interested in.

The agenda for the evening was as follows:

- 18:00 Introductory presentation
- 18:20 Discussion 1 - the neighbourhood boundaries
- 18:30 Presentation - existing character and opportunities for each borough area
- 19:00 Discussion 2 - area ideas and opportunities
- 19:30 Next steps and close

Attendees were asked to comment on the draft neighbourhood areas which had been identified and ratify the changes made as a result of the online survey. A further round of amendments were made as a result of these conversations.

During the second discussion, attendees were asked to consider the following questions within their discussion groups which related to a section of the borough;

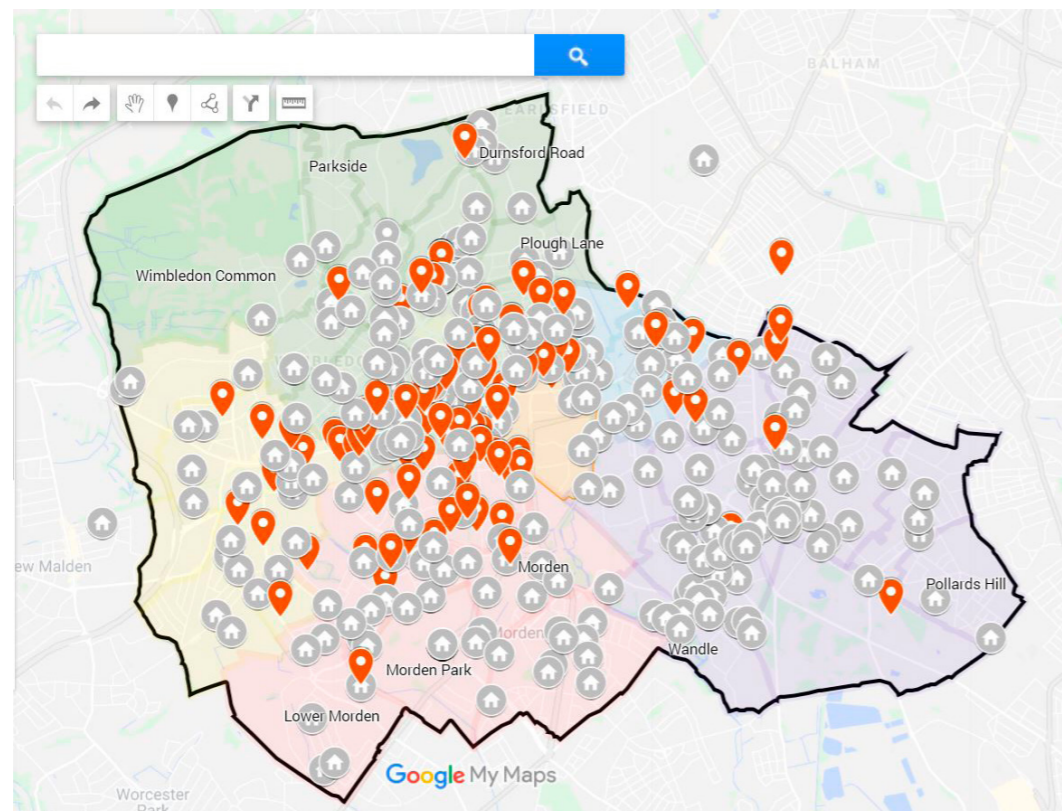
- What are the areas key assets? How would you describe its character?
- What are the key issues for the area?
- What are the key opportunities for the areas continued evolution?

Attendees were split into groups according to their geographical area of interest and discussions were really useful to explore ideas about growth and development and what was important to protect in terms of the character of each area.

Next steps

The engagement process on this project will continue. The council plans to adopt this report as a Supplementary Planning Document. This will involve a six week consultation period in early 2021 to give everyone a chance to review all the ideas in this report in more detail.

Please see the appendix which contains a detailed summary of all of the comments received through the survey and a write up of the stakeholder workshop.



The adjacent plan illustrates the geographical spread of responses to the online survey. Three quarters of respondents were happy with the way the boundaries had been drawn, the red dots illustrate the clusters of respondents who wished the boundaries to be drawn differently. Their feedback has been used to amend the boundaries within this document

"We're asked what makes Merton.....Merton? In terms of "character" there's little that's distinctively Merton - it is after all just a 50 year old political construct. It is the neighbourhoods within it that have distinct character."

"Lots of green space, kind and humble community, period buildings and features, localised shopping"

Interesting/disturbing to note that the "emerging" character for the different parts of the borough is increasingly similar to each other - variety across the Borough being diluted by most recent changes"



B

EXISTING CHARACTER

What is Merton's character?

B EXISTING CHARACTER

B.1 WHAT IS MERTON'S CHARACTER?

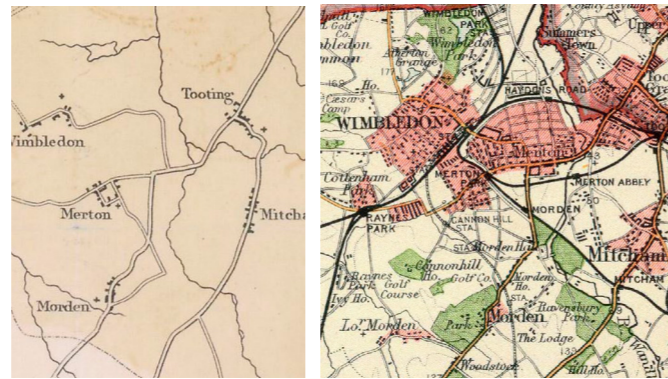
Merton's past has shaped its character

The character of Merton can be understood by exploring its rich and varied history - why and how settlements started here and the ongoing story of its evolution.

Merton has a long and interesting past, with evidence of an Iron Age camp at Wimbledon Common, Roman remains, and the establishment of Merton Priory in the 12th century. Early maps show a handful of small settlements spread across the borough, mostly Anglo-Saxon in origin, formed by the natural landscape and ancient routes. Merton was focused along a key trade route - Stane Street, and Merton Abbey and its industry grew up close to the river Wandle at the junction with the ancient road. Upper and Lower Mitcham formed on low-lying plains by the river, and were centred on two village greens. Wimbledon, conversely, grew at the top of the hill where Wimbledon Village is today - its focus has since moved to around the station.

These settlements endured into the 18th century accompanied by new industrial activities which were initially focused along the Wandle. By the turn of the 19th century, Merton was very much still part of Surrey, divided into four ancient parishes - Merton, Morden, Wimbledon and Mitcham. The area was a rural retreat and desirable to London's gentry seeking solace from the plague-ridden city. Merton was set apart from London, but connected to it with routes into the city centre. Today, Merton's early beginnings can be seen in its churches, like St. Mary's in Merton Park, as well as large manor houses set within historic gardens, like Morden Hall House and Morden Park. Small workers housing and lodges fronting onto village greens like at Mitcham give another glimpse back in time to Merton's early days.

By 1890, the railways had reached Merton. The plan opposite shows a clear pattern of development around the stations, especially around Wimbledon. You also see the beginnings of Merton Park, which developed based on early garden suburb principles.



1830 plan showing key centres Map of London in 1922 (Bartholomew)



River Wandle at Mitcham ©Merton Council



Wandle on Merton High St in 1920 ©Merton Council

In the 19th century you see the emergence of small pockets of Victorian terraced housing and larger grids of Late Victorian houses built in long terraces, like the Apostle Roads at Raynes Park. Grand detached houses on large plots adorned the streets around Wimbledon. The railways were a catalyst for industrial growth, and brought the development of industry around Mitcham and Morden, which saw a boom in craft and textile manufacturing.

By 1922, Merton was almost a suburb of London, but not quite. Unlike other areas with a similar radius from London, countryside filled the gap between Merton's merging villages and the rest of the growing city. The expansion of the railway network through Merton, Morden and Motspur Park furthered growth, and the northern line extension in 1926 led to the creation of London's only bit of metroland around Morden station. Slum clearance from inner London during this period led to the formation of London County Council's distinctive cottage estate, St Helier's. During this period, a mix of typologies emerged, from Edwardian terraces to interwar suburban terraced and semi-detached housing. Garden City style planned council estates, low density private estates and mansion blocks were also important to Merton's housing story.

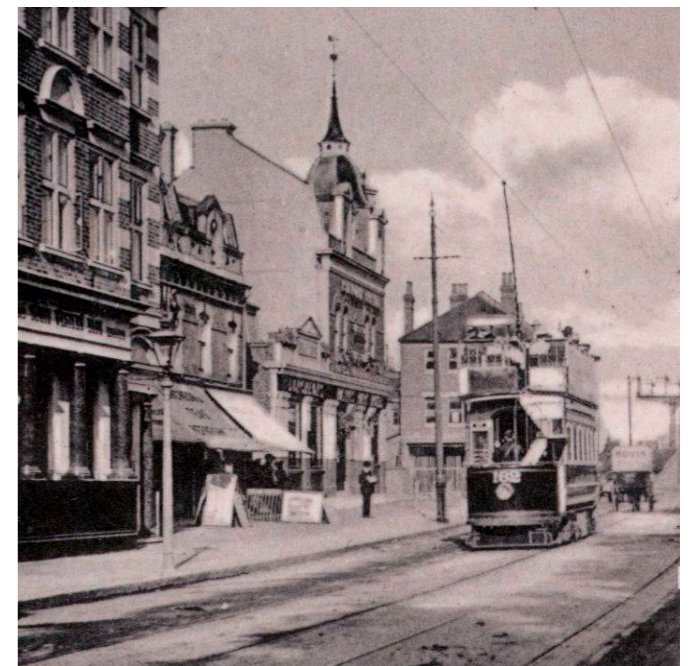
Housing growth accelerated after the war, including reconstruction of parts of the borough that had suffered severe bomb damage, like at Wimbledon, Mitcham and Colliers Wood, but also new development on undeveloped areas, including parts of Morden. Higher density mansion block typologies emerged, as well as cul-de-sacs and new industrial buildings. In the 1960s, low rise and mid rise Council estates were built like at Phipps Bridge, Pollards Hill and High Path. Big box retail on former industrial uses transformed parts of Merton like at Colliers Wood in the late 1980s and early 1990s. And more recently higher density developments or infill development close to public transport nodes like at Raynes Park have evolved the character once again.



Lavendar fields at Merton ©Merton Council



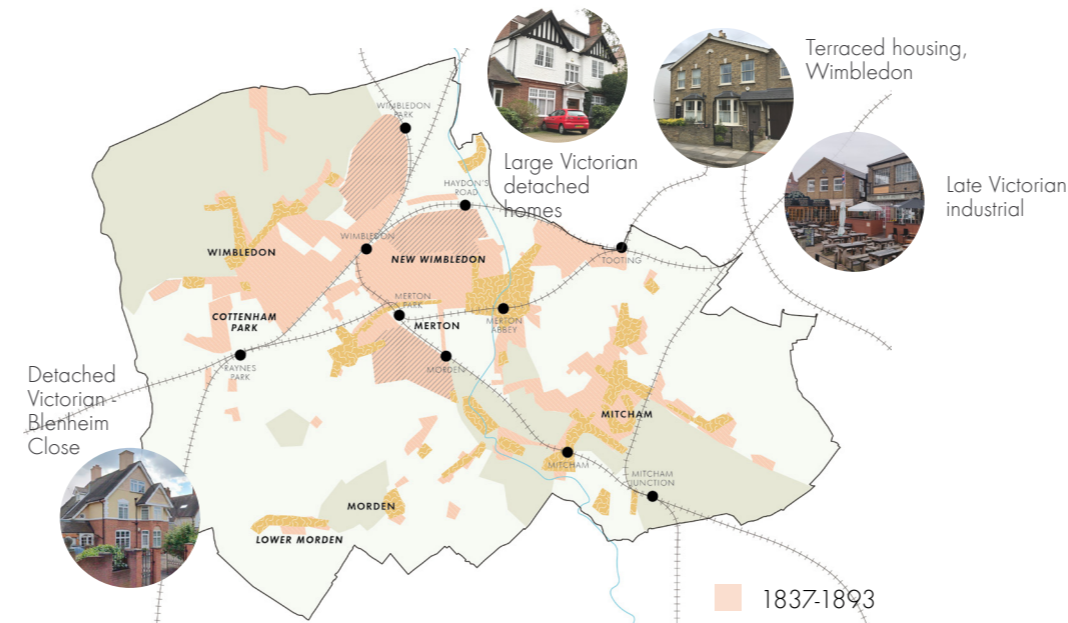
Deer Park Road ©Merton Council



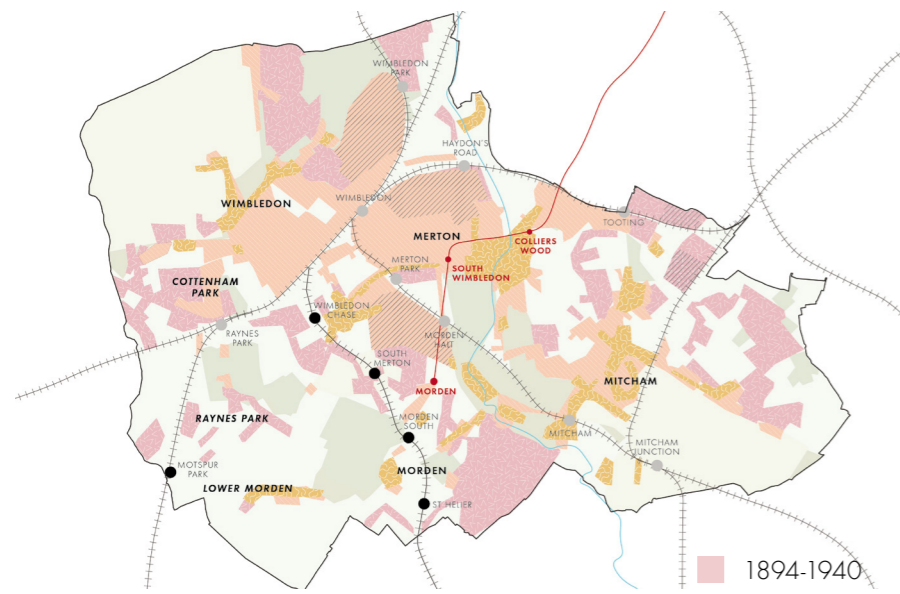
Raynes Park Station Approach ©Merton Council



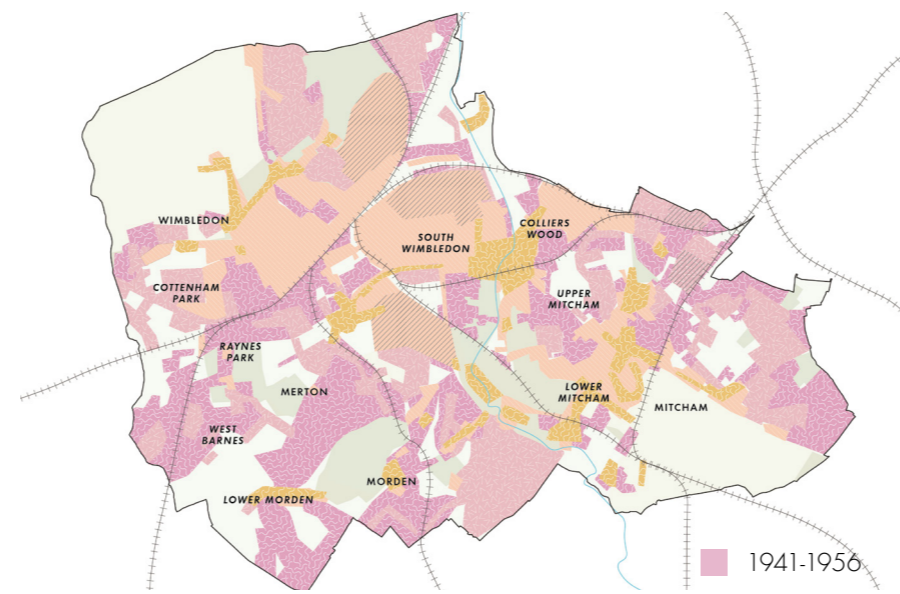
Merton in 1836



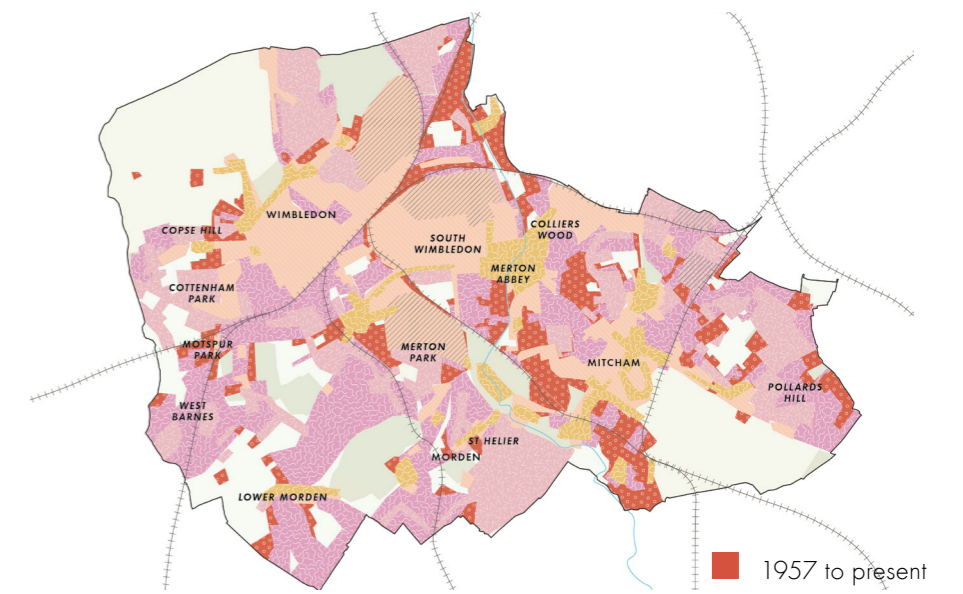
Merton in 1893



Merton in c1940



Merton in 1956



Merton today
(note: plan shows predominant period of development for areas, rather than dates of individual buildings)



Byegrove Road, Colliers Wood



Municipal cottage housing



Merton Park Estate - semi detached



St Helier Estate - garden city



Steers Mead Mitcham, 1940s



Hatfield Mead, Morden



High Path Estate



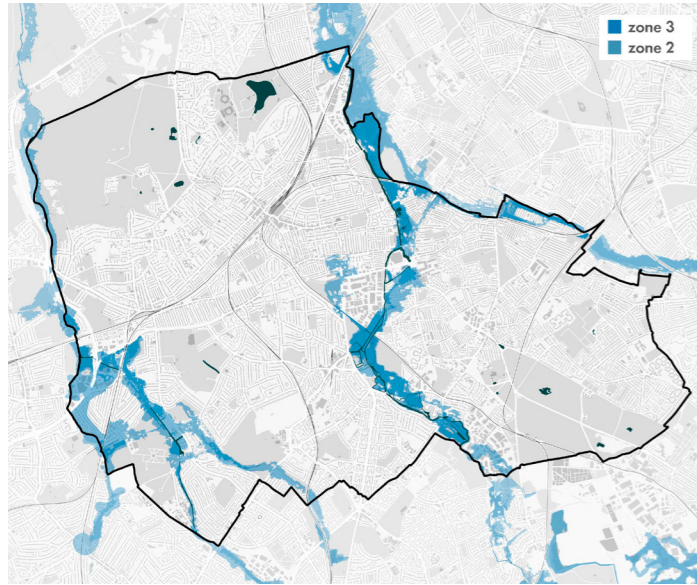
Pollards Hill Estate



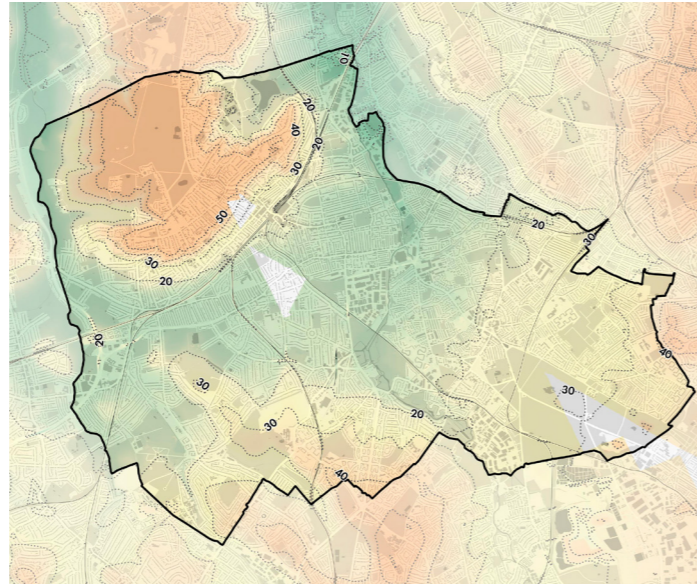
Heathfield Drive, Mitcham



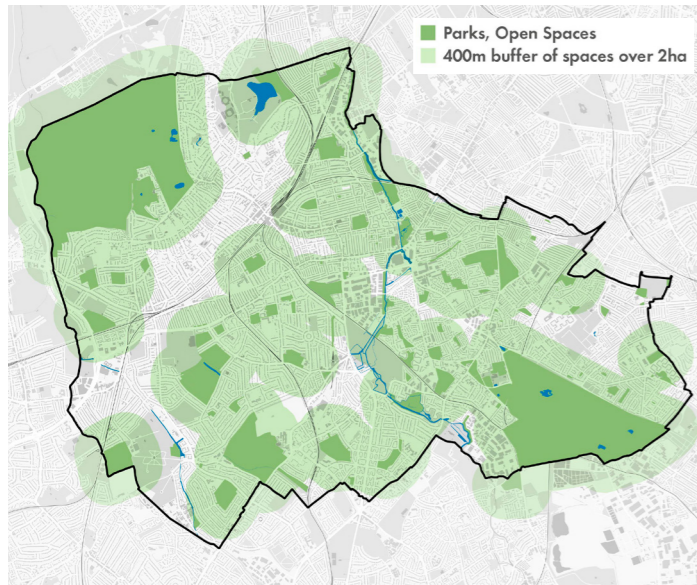
Merton Abbey Mills



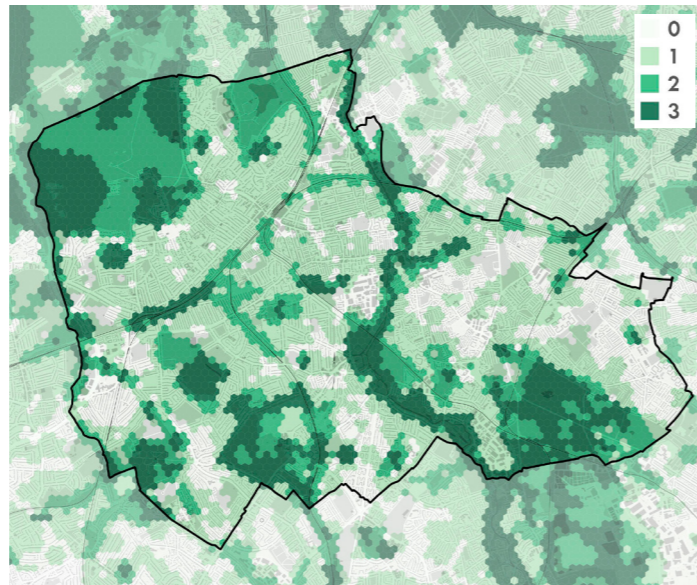
Merton's blue infrastructure - the Wandle and Beverley Brook (Please see appendix for A4 copies of all plans)



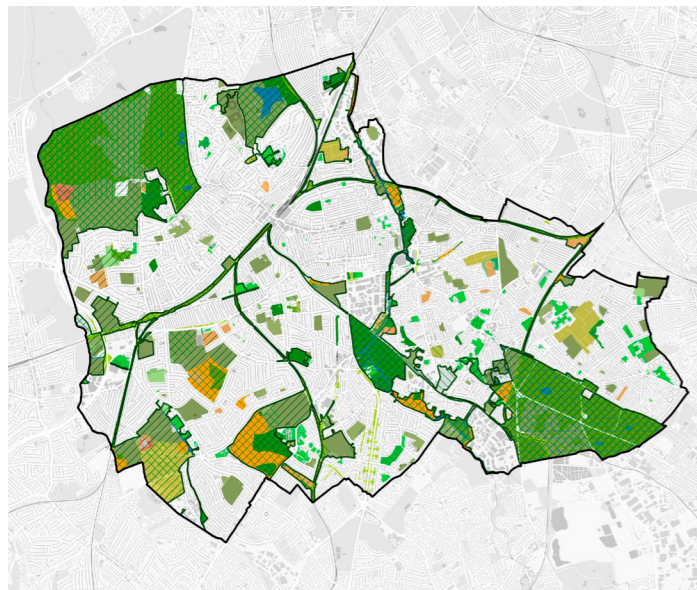
The borough's topography illustrating the distinctive hill at Wimbledon



There are many ways of mapping open space deficiency - here we see areas with no green shading that are not within a 5 minute walk of an open space



Biodiversity - tiles with a score of 0 indicate no know protected species, sites or habitats. Tiles with a score of 3 indicate all 3 categories. (Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) 2019 data)



- Environmental designations**
- Green Corridors
 - ▨ Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - ▨ Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
 - ▨ Metropolitan open land (MOL)
 - ▨ Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust
 - Local Nature Reserves
- Green and blue network**
- Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms
 - Amenity
 - Cemeteries and Churchyards
 - Children and Teenagers
 - Green Corridors
 - Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace
 - Other
 - Other Urban Fringe
 - Outdoor Sports Facilities
 - Parks and Gardens

The borough's network of green and blue assets including type and policy designations

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Physical and natural character

Merton's physical and natural landscape has shaped its evolution, is highly valued by its existing residents and will continue to be an important part of its future identity. As an outer London borough, Merton has a wealth of green open spaces including Mitcham, Wimbledon and Cannon Hill Commons, Morden Hall Park, Morden Park and Ravensbury Park. The Wandle Valley Regional Park, one of the greatest networks of open space in London, also runs through the centre of Merton providing a superb leisure and nature feature. This blue infrastructure, alongside its topography have a major influence on its character. The Wandle provides a seam of natural and more 'wild' feeling landscape through the centre of the borough, whilst the sharp topography of Wimbledon Hill gives long views of tree tops and into central London.

The prevalence of open spaces is hugely valued by residents and the 'sense of green' is a feature that is appreciated across the borough. As one of the greenest boroughs in London, Merton's broad range of parks, open spaces and nature conservation areas are worth £2.5 billion¹ in terms of the benefits they bring for health and wellbeing, property values, water quality improvements and carbon storage.

Merton's green and open space also provide rich habitats and biodiversity, resulting in open spaces that have a varied character. Merton has 9 designated areas of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), which cover an area of 960Ha (26% of the borough). Wimbledon Common is Merton's only SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest), designated for its wide expanse of wet heath on acidic soil. It is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for its role as a habitat for the Stag

¹ Natural Capital Accounts for Public Green Space in London (Vivid Economics, October 2017)

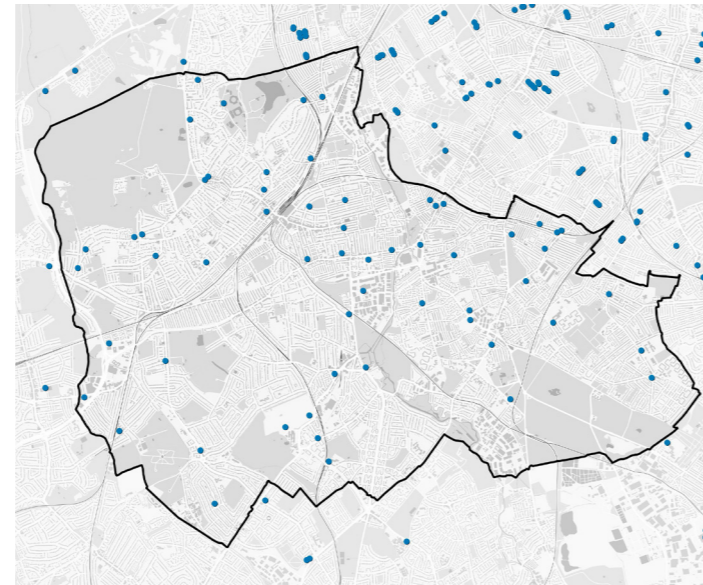
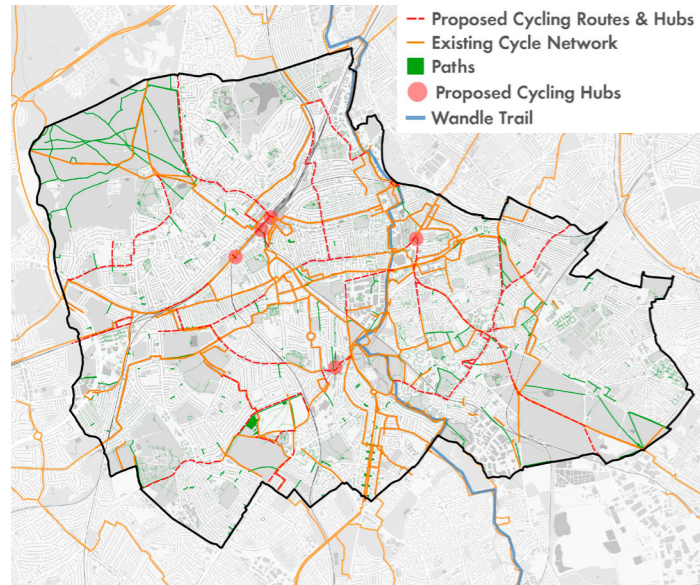
Beetle. Merton has 15 Local Nature reserves, 56 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and 18 designated Green Corridors.

Given the extensive network of green spaces, the borough has high accessibility to Regional Parks (98%) and Metropolitan Parks (99%). There is also a good level of accessibility to District (77%) and Local (72%) Parks. There are some areas (particularly noticeable along the railway line from Raynes Park to Wimbledon) where there are gaps in access, particularly to both District and Local Parks, which should be targeted for improvements in accessibility and 'pocket greening'.

Maintaining and improving this varied character for the future is vital, and improvements could include biodiversity enhancements such as pollinator-friendly meadows, tree-planting, green walls, green and blue roofs, bat and bird roosting provision and rain gardens. Although Merton has an overall tree canopy cover that is greater than the London average, a sustained expansion of the urban forest through new tree and woodland planting will also be an important part of the strategy. In terms of its blue infrastructure, delivery of river restoration projects, habitat creation projects, increases of permeable surfaces and management of surface water flood risk will be critical for improving water quality and reducing flood risk.

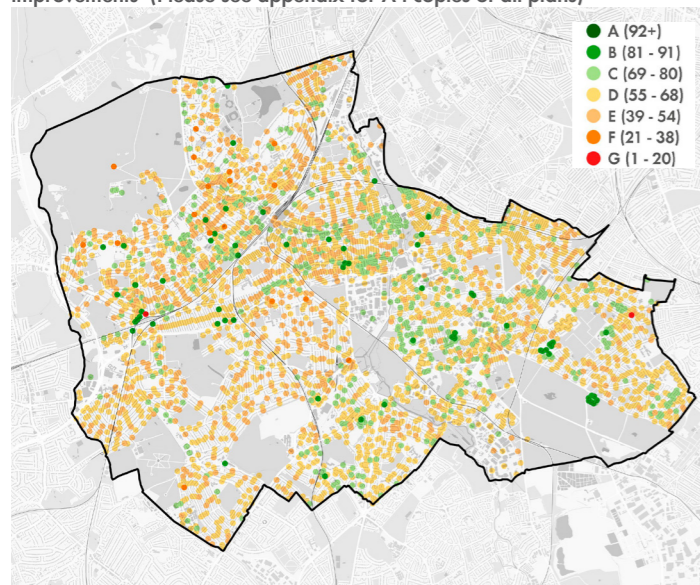
Maintenance budgets will remain under pressure, but with the growth of the borough, the increase in population offers an opportunity to generate more revenue and drive development-related funds towards essential improvements in park quality and accessibility. The borough's community groups should continue to be supported to play a valuable role in both helping to maintain and bring vitality and identity to a number of key spaces.





Active travel network (such as cycling and walking) with proposed improvements (Please see appendix for A4 copies of all plans)

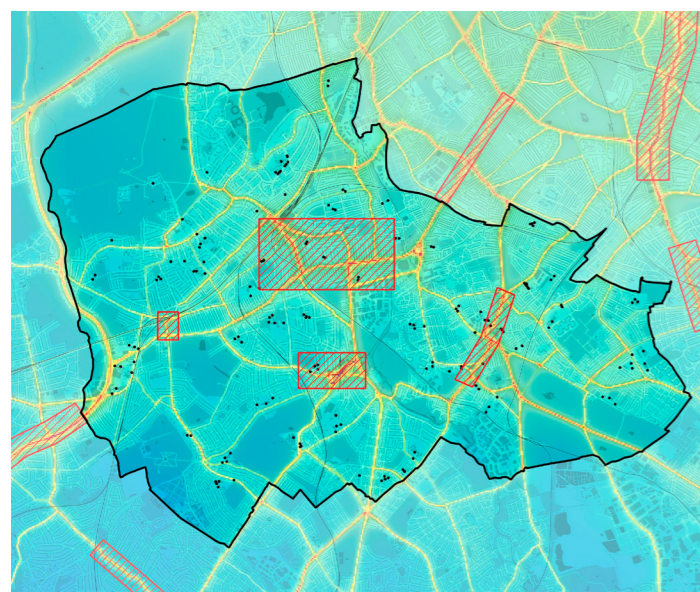
Location of EV charging points



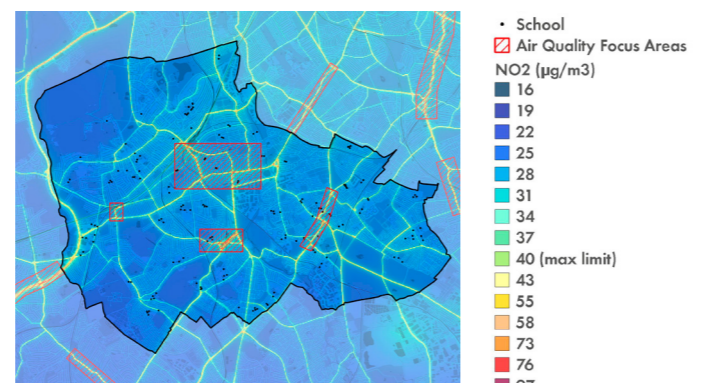
EPC ratings - energy performance of buildings - postcode average



Locations of recycling and waste facilities



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Air Quality Left 2013 Above 2020 projection

Environmental character and climate change

Tackling the effects of climate change remain a challenge; one that the Council has placed at the forefront of its agenda by declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019 and setting ambitious carbon reduction targets to make Merton carbon neutral by 2050. Many of the impacts of climate change and important mitigation measures have an impact on the quality and character of streets and spaces in the borough. Merton has its own Climate Strategy and Action plan (see appendix for link which sets out a tailored approach.)

The borough's extensive open spaces and green infrastructure, discussed on the previous page, are a significant asset in Merton's fight for a more environmentally friendly borough. Net environmental gain is an important feature as a changing climate brings problems of heat, drought and flood risk; all posing direct risks to people, property and vegetation. The past century of urbanisation has resulted in incremental losses of local vegetation and the sealing over of natural ground surfaces, which has made urban areas of Merton more vulnerable to the urban heat island effect and to floods at times of high rainfall. Interventions to help mitigate these impacts should include increased tree planting to create shade, reduction in sealed surfaces which can "bounce" radiated heat back into the urban environment and delivery of new green spaces which remain cooler than surrounding urban areas.

Other important factors, mapped on the opposite page include the borough's excellent connectivity, allowing residents to make sustainable movement choices. The borough's active travel network (such as cycling and walking) shows the extensive cycle routes across the borough as well as proposed improvements. As changes to private vehicular movement shifts towards electric,

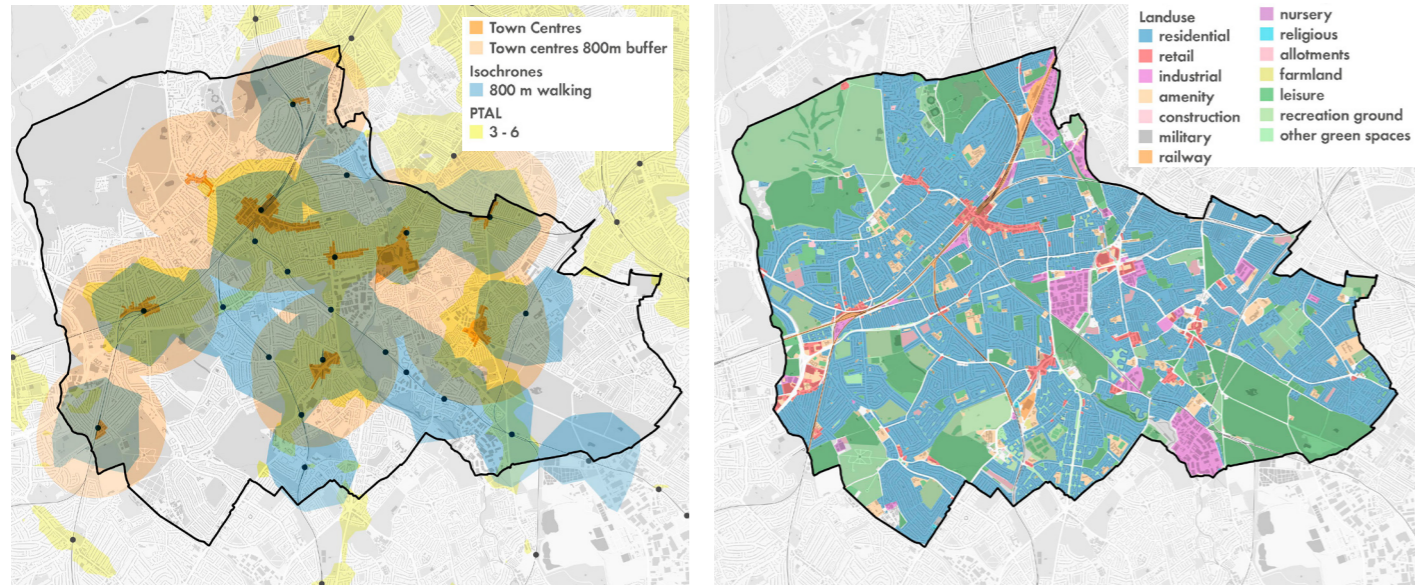
Merton is well placed to support residents to make this choice with an ever increasing network of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points embedded within the public realm.

Traffic congestion is a major concern as it lowers air quality and fragments the urban environment for those seeking to walk and cycle. There are four Air Quality Focus Areas in Merton - referenced in New London Figure 9.1. The air quality monitoring network run by Merton has shown that the UK annual mean NO2 objective (40µg/m3) continues to be breached at a number of locations across the borough including Colliers Wood, Morden, Tooting and South Wimbledon¹. In terms of the physical environment and changes to improve character, new development throughout the borough should include tree planting, urban greening and sustainable drainage systems in order to mitigate air quality problems on transport corridors, water quality problems and local flooding in built-up areas and to increase shade. A good network of recycling centres and the Council's recycling collection services all contribute to residents being able to dispose of waste in an environmentally friendly way. More recycling bins alongside regular waste bins in parks and public spaces will help residents and visitors to reduce waste going into landfill.

The built character of the borough has an impact on the environmental efficiency of buildings. The EPC ratings map shows the energy performance of buildings by postcode average. Older buildings are likely to have a poorer performance whilst changes such as insulation and double glazing can improve efficiency. Changes for improved environmental performance need to be carefully planned to ensure they do not have a negative impact on historic quality and character.

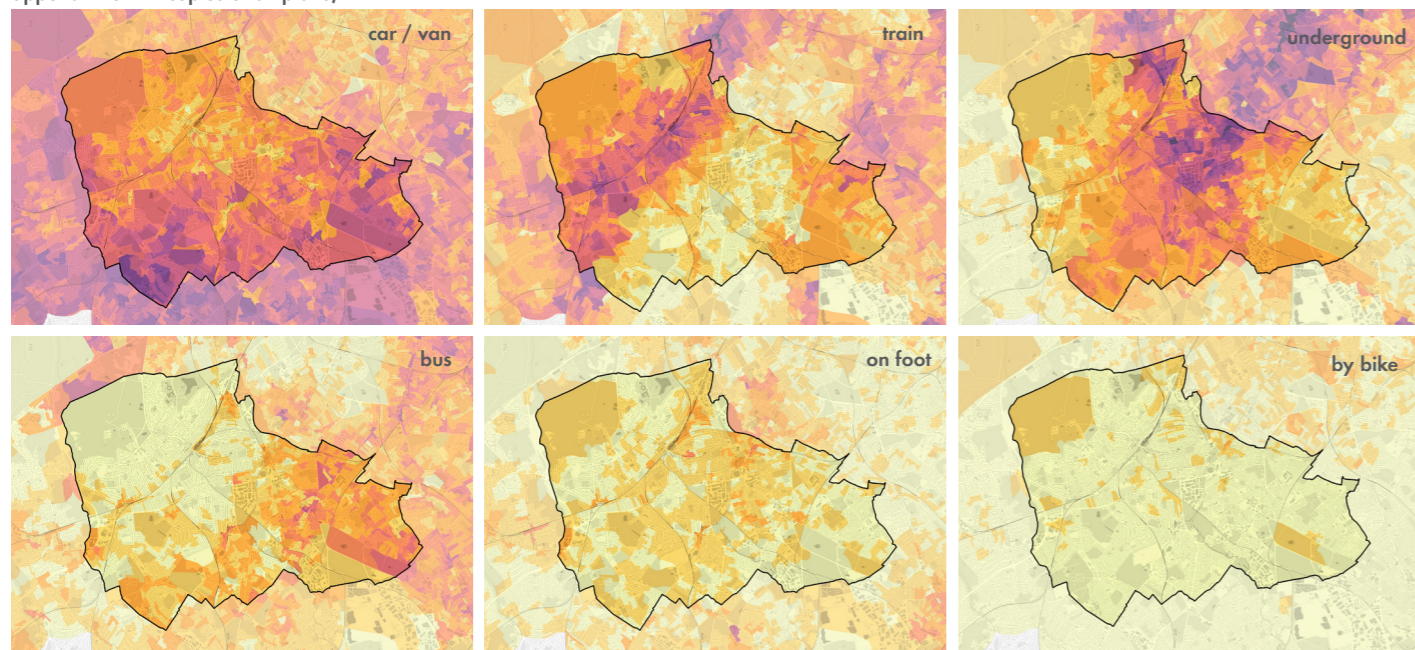
¹ Merton Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2023





Accessibility to services and transport (Please see appendix for A4 copies of all plans)

Indicative land use plan



Method of travel to work

Functional character

The borough's character is heavily influenced by the network of places that have developed, and the way people use them and travel around. The pattern of town centres and neighbourhoods and the relationships and distances between places, both in and out of the borough, have a huge impact on people's experience of Merton.

Although it is one of the smallest London boroughs with an area of 37 square kilometres, it contains several distinct areas with different identities. Wimbledon town centre is the primary centre in the borough and is designated as a Major Centre in the London Plan hierarchy. It is Merton's main shopping and entertainment centre, and office location. Wimbledon is a key contributor to the economic success of Merton as a borough and is recognised globally due to the tennis Championships held annually at the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

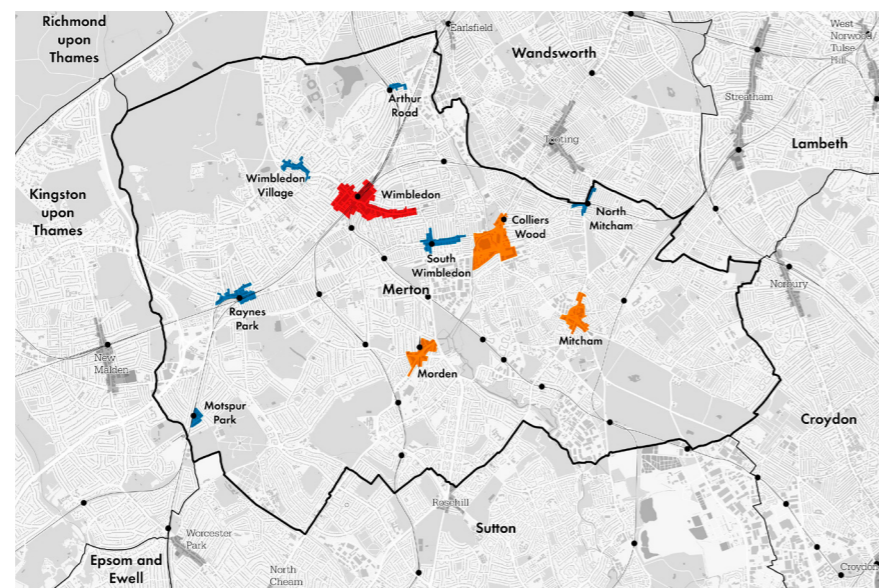
The borough's district centres include Colliers Wood, Mitcham and Morden which each provide important shops and services for residents and visitors. There are also a number of smaller local centres scattered across the borough at Arthur Road, Motspur Park, North Mitcham, Raynes Park, South Wimbledon and Wimbledon Village that each have their own distinct character.

Due to its location, the borough has always benefited from its proximity and good connections to central London, while also being able to maintain a more suburban feel than neighbouring inner London boroughs. Outside of Wimbledon Town Centre, the most urban parts of the borough are located to the north,

adjoining the border with Wandsworth. In terms of the way the borough functions, the northern edges of Mitcham have an important relationship to Tooting, and similarly, Arthur Road with Earlsfield. The most suburban areas to the south at Morden and Mitcham merge with the neighbouring boroughs of Sutton and Croydon. This shift from urban to suburban London happens within the borough and is important to acknowledge in terms of the future evolution of these places.

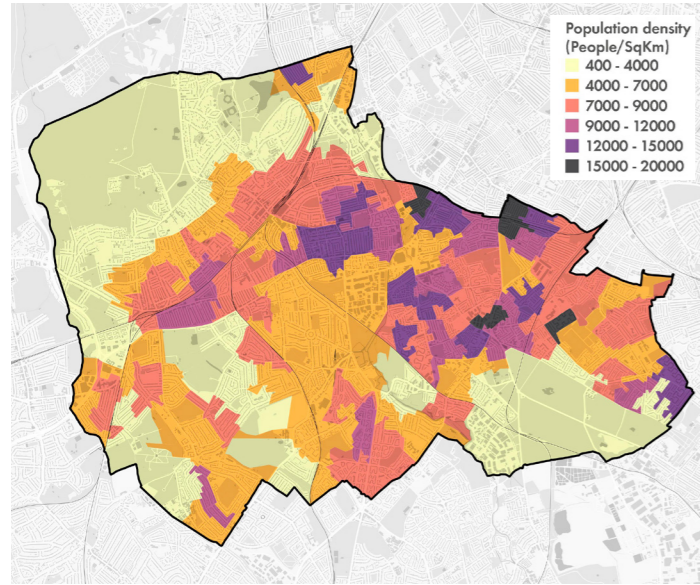
Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) vary across the borough and significant areas in the south east and south west of the borough have the lowest accessibility levels in Merton. The methods of travel to work diagrams illustrate the split across the borough influenced by these accessibility levels, with those in the south of the borough travelling by car and van.

As illustrated by the accessibility to services and transport diagram, the higher PTAL levels are concentrated around the town centres and transport interchanges of Wimbledon, Morden, Colliers Wood, Mitcham Town Centre and Raynes Park. These areas also have good access to shops and services. This diagram is helpful as it illustrates the areas of the borough that have poorer access to both transport and town centres, with areas in grey not being within 800m (a 10 minute walk) of either. It is worth noting that a lack of an orbital rail network means that there is a greater reliance on vehicular trips to make certain connections across and outside of the borough.

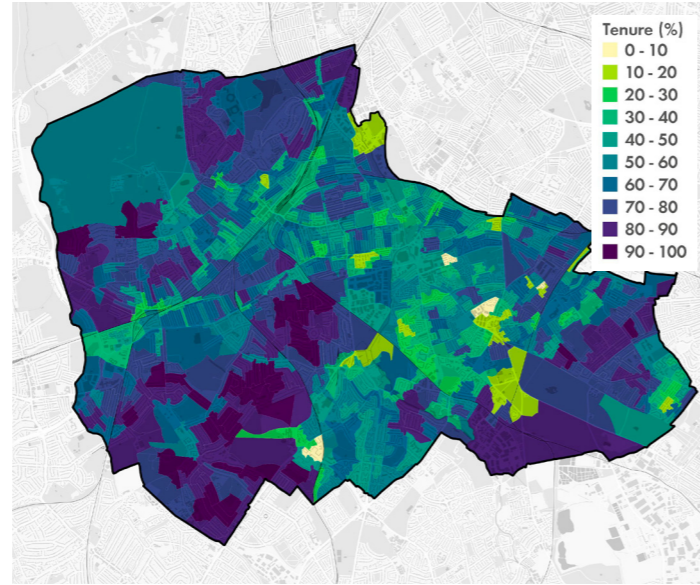


Town centre hierarchy and relationship with other boroughs and centres © Crown copyright [and database rights] (2021) OS (London Borough of Merton 100019259, 2021)

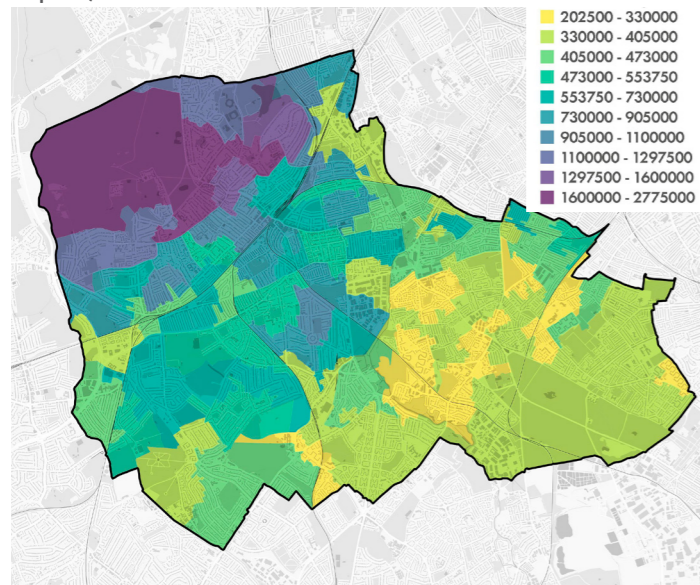




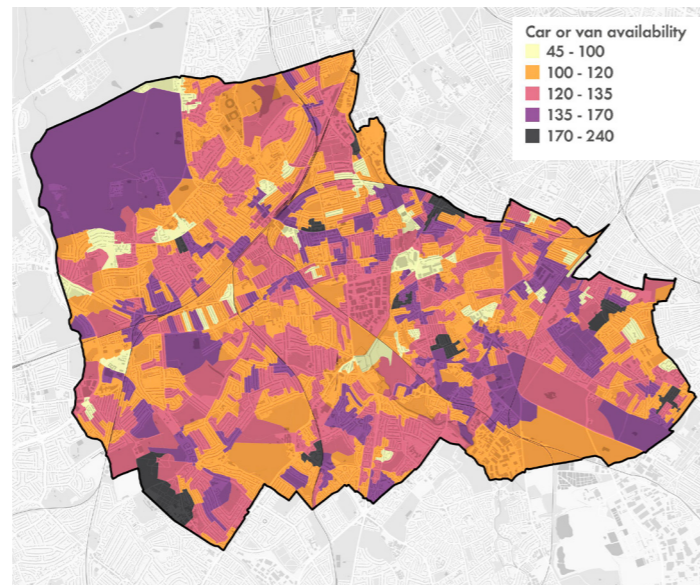
Population density (Please see appendix for A4 copies of all plans)



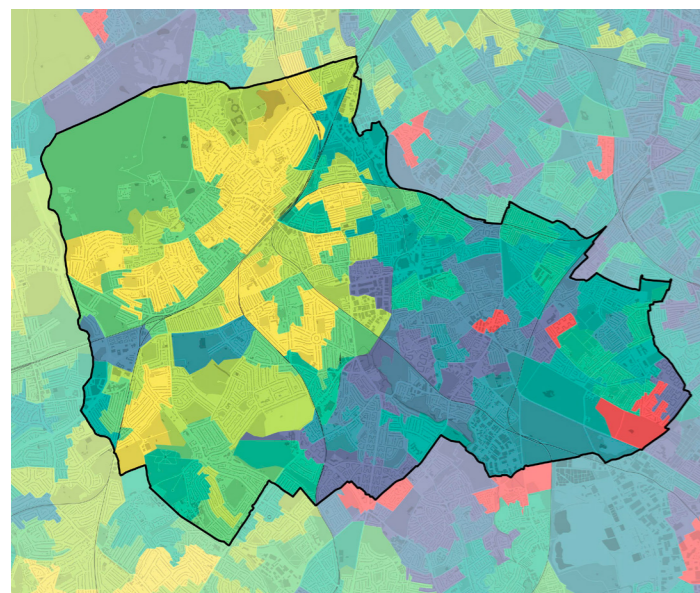
Property ownership - map showing those that own their home



Median house prices (£)



Car or van ownership (total number of cars or vans available to members of households within each Output Area)



Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) where 1 is most deprived 10% of LSOAs © Crown copyright [and database rights] (2021) OS (London Borough of Merton 100019259, 2021)

Socio-economic character

The people that live in Merton help shape the character of the borough. Its residents shape its neighbourhoods and drive the sense of vitality and identity of different parts of the borough. According to the GLA, the projected population estimate for 2020 is 211,800, making it one of the least densely populated Boroughs in London, contributing to the suburban feel of many areas.

A number of key characteristics of Merton's population includes:

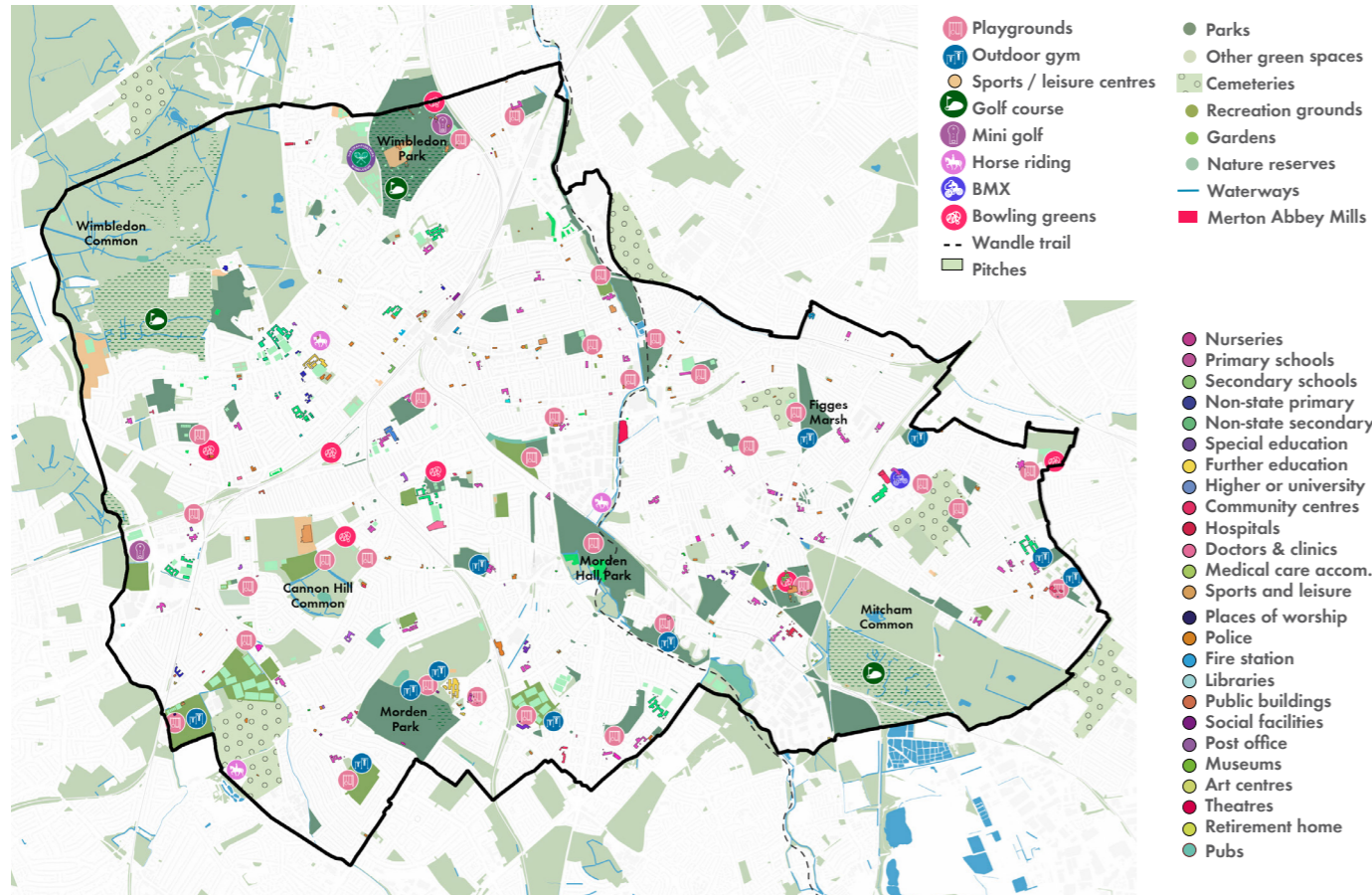
- Merton's population is fairly youthful with around half in the 15-45 year old age group. An estimated 20% of the population are children aged 0-15. This is the same as the London and slightly above the national average of 19%.
- Merton has a similar ethnic mix when compared with the rest of outer London. This is reflected in Merton's status as the 23rd most diverse local authority in the UK.
- Merton's population is largely in the top two approximated social grades. These are higher and intermediate managerial and professional occupations and supervisory, junior managerial and administrative. This represents about 67% of the resident population which is in line with the London average but below more affluent neighbouring Boroughs such as the London Borough of Wandsworth (75%)
- Economic activity rates in Merton are higher than Greater London and national averages.
- According to the Annual Population Survey (APS), in 2013 an estimated 81.2% of Merton's working age population were either in employment or seeking work, which is above the national average of around 77%.

- According to the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), Merton is one of the least deprived Boroughs in London and nationally. The IMD data shows that the Borough ranks at 208 out of the most deprived 326 Local Authorities in England. In London it is within the top five least deprived Boroughs. However there are small areas of the borough, generally towards the east, that are the more deprived - within the top 30% most deprived LSOAs nationally.

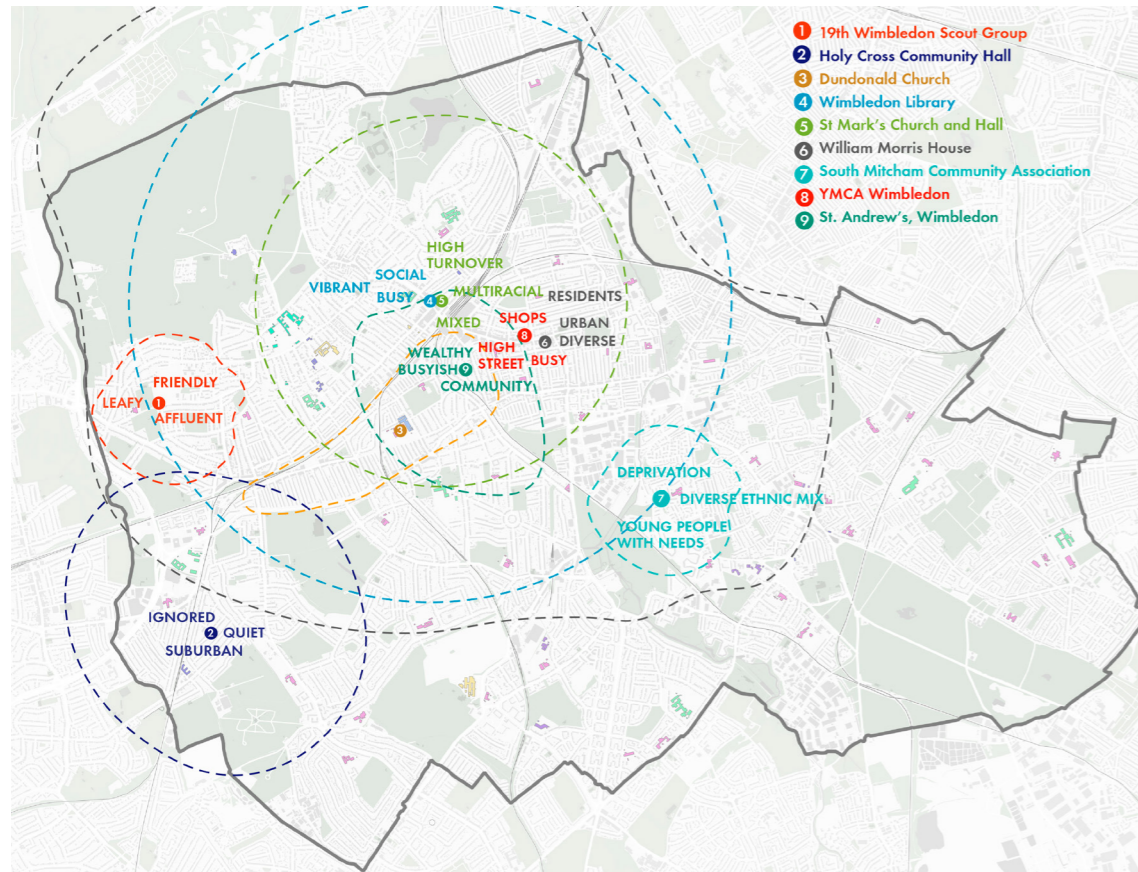
This east to west split in the borough can be seen on a number of the plans to the left where house prices, property ownership and vehicle ownership follow a similar spatial trend to the IMD data.

Ensuring communities have good access to affordable housing, jobs, skills, training and education, public transport and health and community facilities will help promote equality and inclusion. Protecting and improving the character of the entire borough will have an important impact on inequality, making positive changes to the social and physical environment will in turn improve the health, pride and happiness of residents.





Mapping of community and leisure uses cross the borough by type



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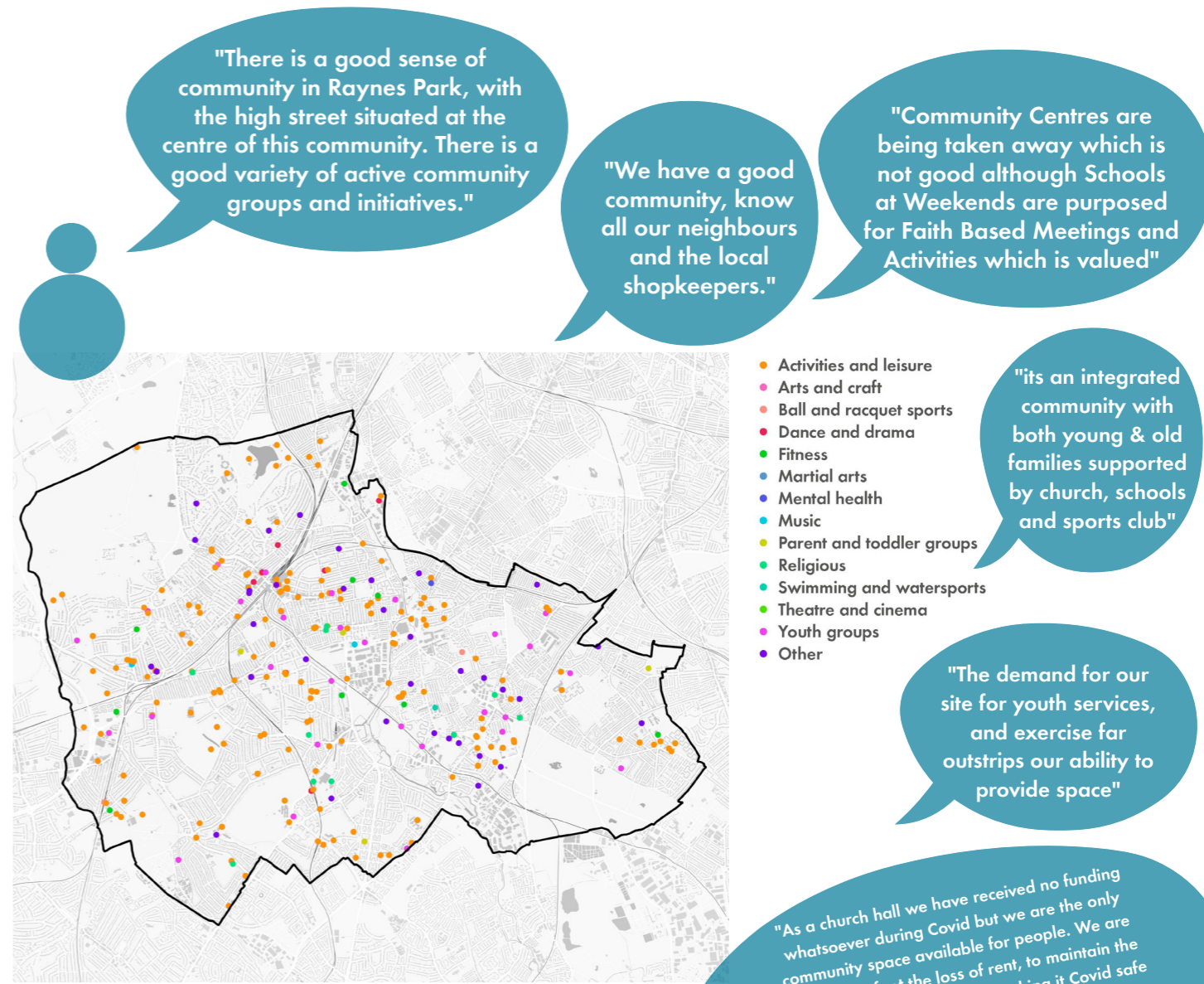
The adjacent plan illustrates a range of the responses received to the survey of community organisations. This plan illustrates their 'catchments' - the perceived area to which the service or organisation draws its visitors. This shows the range in type and draw of services - some which extend beyond the borough boundary.

The words on the plan illustrate the description given about the character of their local area

Community character

Merton's population shapes the character of the borough and makes different neighbourhoods feel distinctive. Many residents highlighted their local community, friendly residents and network of groups and activities for all age groups as something they valued about the existing character of their local neighbourhoods.

The plans on these pages illustrate in different ways the location and range of community and leisure services across the borough - an important network that contributes to why local people value their neighbourhoods. Below is a plan that has been created to illustrate the breadth and geographical spread of groups, clubs and societies that meet across the borough.



The above plan maps the location and category of community uses, services and organisations listed on Merton Connected to help illustrate the diversity and importance of this network in the borough (Merton Connected is a charity that supports the voluntary, community and faith sectors in Merton and promoting and encouraging volunteering for over 35 years)

"There is a good sense of community in Raynes Park, with the high street situated at the centre of this community. There is a good variety of active community groups and initiatives."

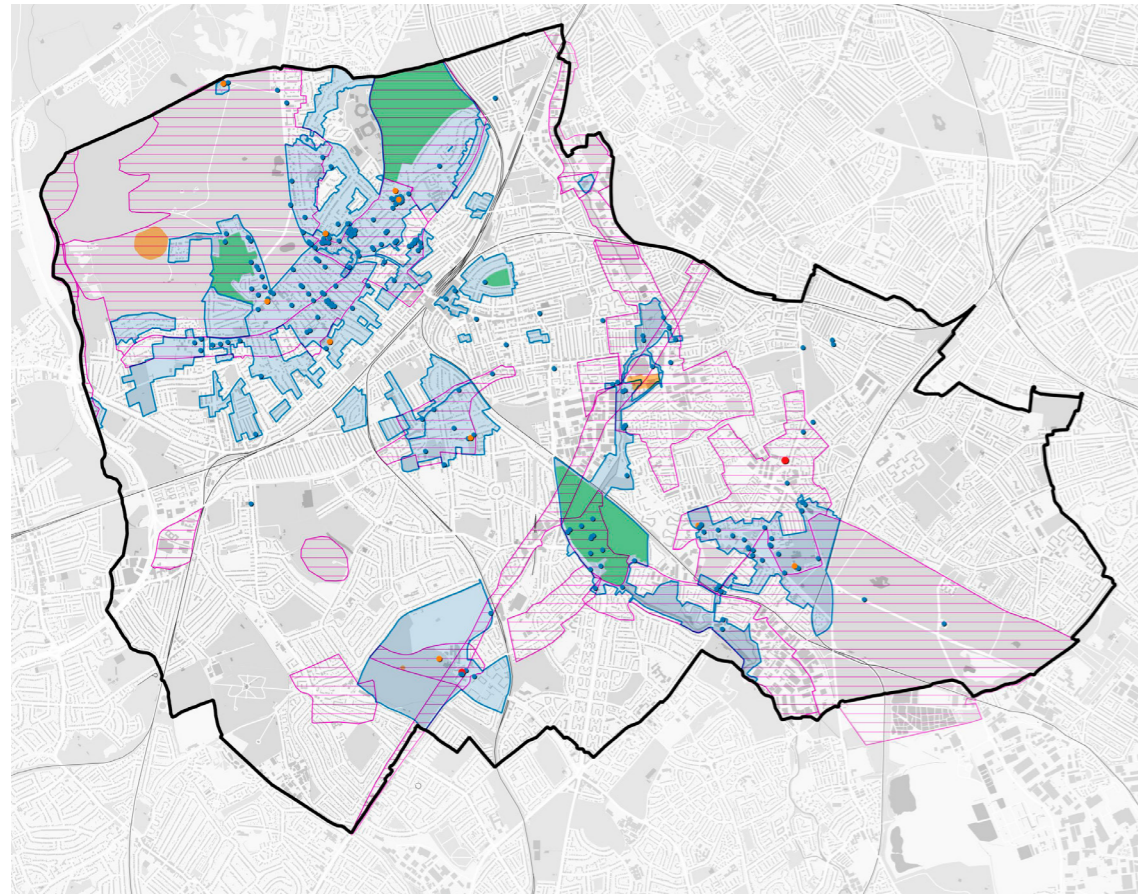
"We have a good community, know all our neighbours and the local shopkeepers."

"Community Centres are being taken away which is not good although Schools at Weekends are purposed for Faith Based Meetings and Activities which is valued"

"its an integrated community with both young & old families supported by church, schools and sports club"

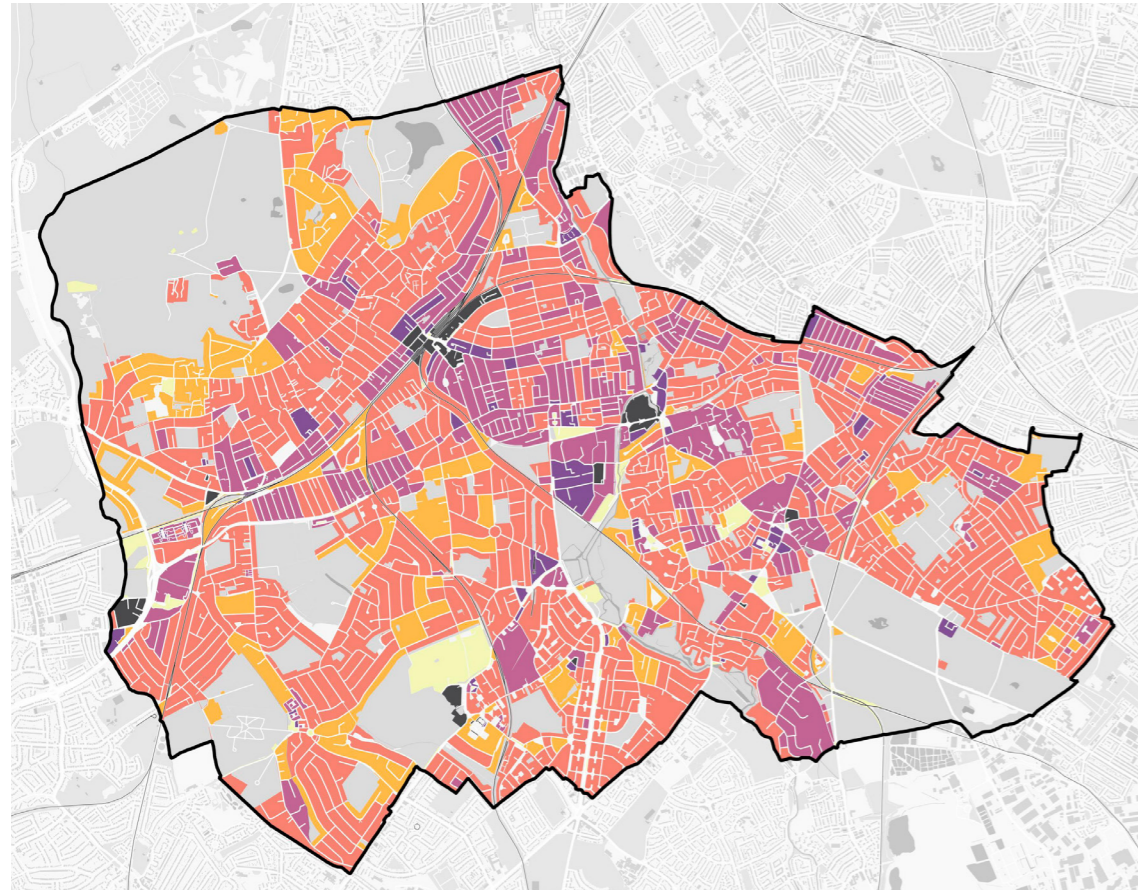
"The demand for our site for youth services, and exercise far outstrips our ability to provide space"

"As a church hall we have received no funding whatsoever during Covid but we are the only community space available for people. We are expected to foot the loss of rent, to maintain the building, to cover the cost of making it Covid safe and then reopen so that our community has a place to come. This is utterly unreasonable when the council won't collect rubbish without commercial rates being paid, we have no cycle racks and no support"



Historic assets and conservation areas

- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- APZs
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Listed buildings
 - I
 - II*
 - II



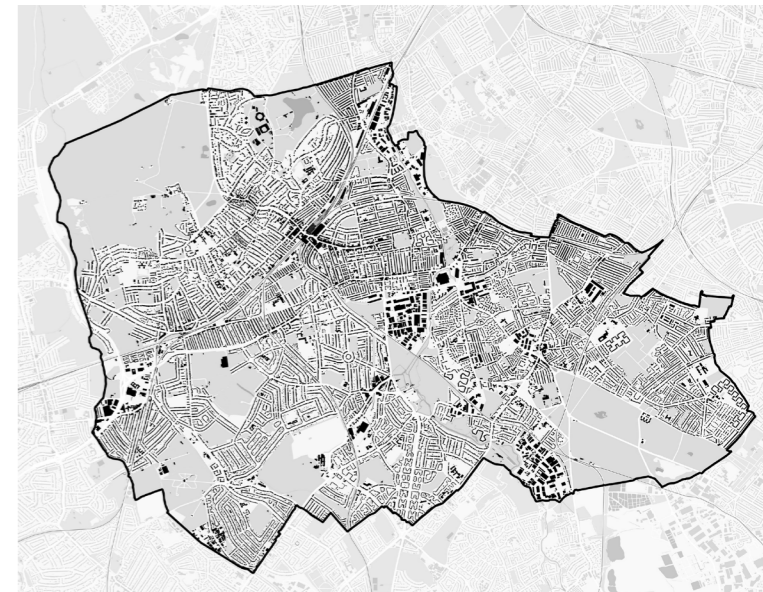
A map of the density of the borough measured using Floor Area Ratio. This is the measure of the a buildings floor area in relation to the size of the plot that the building sits within (a ratio score of floor space to plot)

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Built character

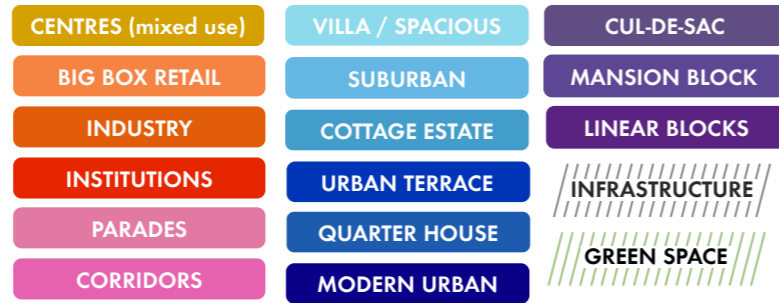
The borough's built environment has a significant impact on the overall sense and quality of its character. There are a number of ways to map and understand this including the 'typological' mapping set out over the following pages, as well as maps to understand the density and grain of development. Density can be mapped in a number of ways but Floor Area Ratio gives the best understanding of the built character as it takes into account the amount of available space and accounts for mixed use areas. The plan on the opposite page illustrates the denser areas (darker colours) focused in Wimbledon town centre, Colliers Wood and Raynes Park where Victorian terraces create higher density areas. You can see these areas of tightly packed and regular streets on the adjacent built morphology plan, in stark contrast to the larger darker and irregular shapes of the industrial areas of the borough.

Merton's heritage assets and the wider historic environment protected by conservation areas are special areas of the borough that contribute to the borough's distinctiveness and identity. They should be used to inspire new development of high quality. The borough has a rich and diverse built character which provides exciting opportunities for contemporary architecture that does not slavishly copy from its past, but create sophisticated contemporary 'relatives' of the existing buildings and townscape - buildings that complement rather than copy historic character. 28 Conservation Areas and listed buildings are illustrated on the plan on the opposite page. Merton's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management plans provide detailed analysis, descriptions of architectural assets and features and guidance for applicants in these areas of the borough (see appendix for website link).

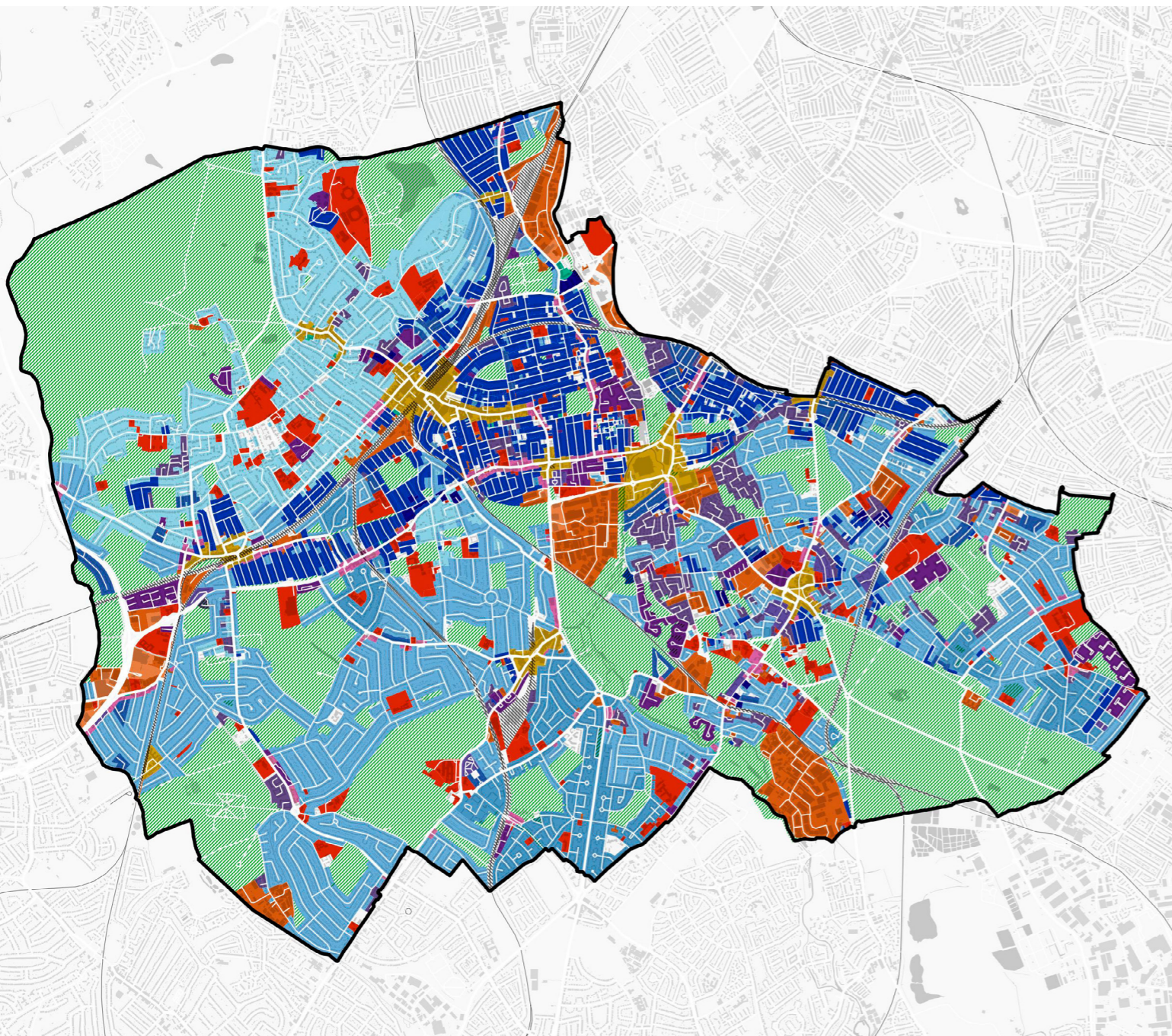


Built morphology - illustrating the grain and scale of buildings within the borough





Types of development have been classified. These are shown in the key and plan below, where the plan is coloured in accordance with type. This quickly allows us to see patterns and the geographical spread across the borough.



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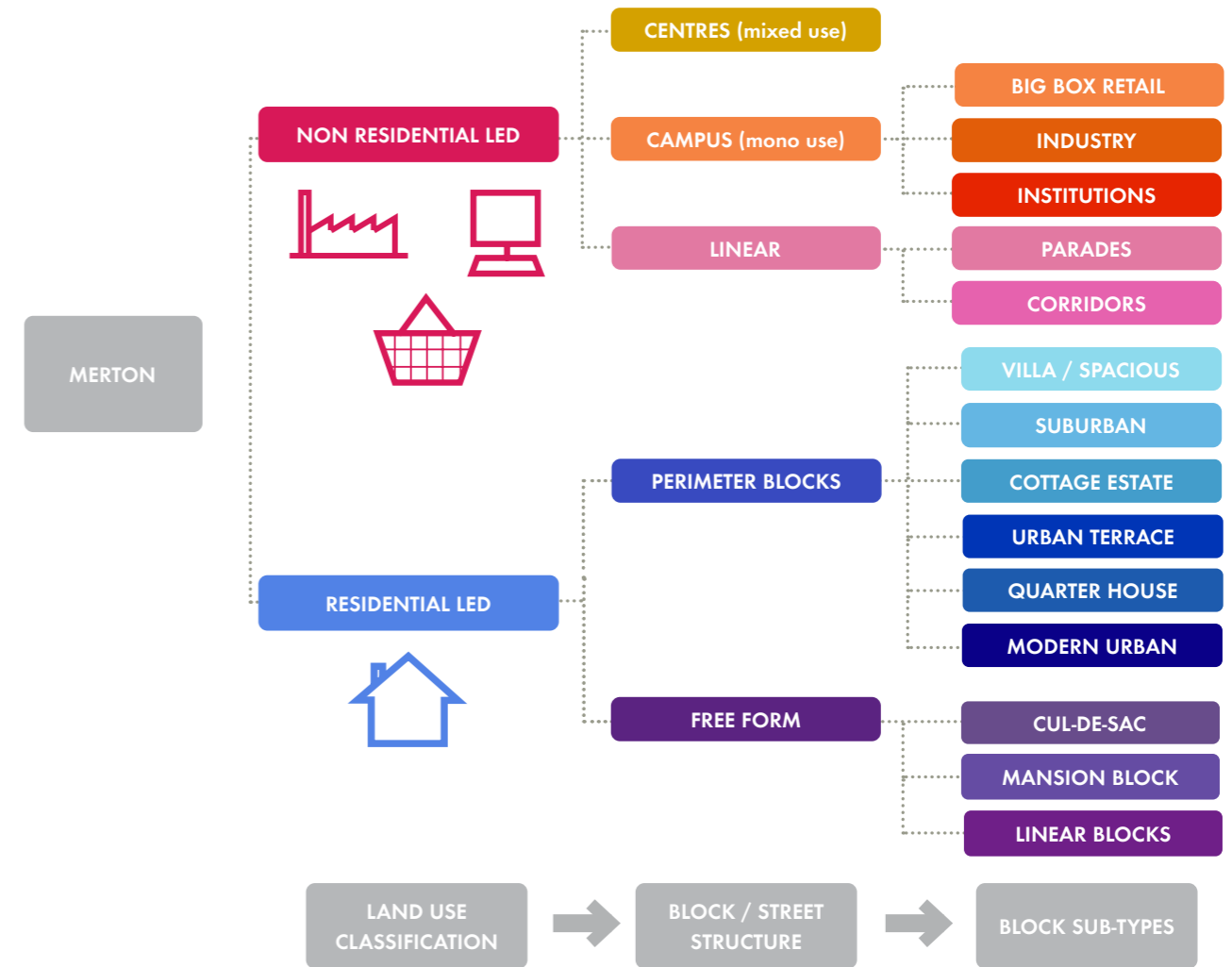
Built character - typologies

Typology is the systematic classification of places according to their common characteristics. By identifying the various townscape characters found in Merton and then identifying where they are present, it is possible to describe the form of the borough in detail. It also provides a structure which helps to identify common issues that are prevalent for each townscape type and to consider the implications for future development.

The diagram below illustrates how the borough has been classified. The first stage is according to prevailing land use, the second stage of classification is according to the street structure and the final classification is a series of specific types reflecting the the blocks building form and age.

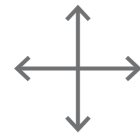
The categories and colours on the adjacent plan correspond to the categories on the typology tree below. The categorisation of the borough into typologies has been undertaken through detailed survey. The predominant character of the block determines the typology assigned for each area.

On the following pages, a summary of each type is described to help explain the urban form and how it impacts on the character of the borough. Within Part I of this report the geographical spread of these types are explored further, and the implications for future changes and intensification.



Non residential led typologies

Mixed use areas of the borough are seen within Merton's centres, linear typologies including parades and corridors, and within 'campus' environments.



Centres

The borough's centres are hugely diverse in scale, character and origin. However there is a sense of a distinctive typology in that they form the 'nodes' within the borough that are an alternative grain to their context. Often clustered at a cross-roads or series of junctions, their mix of uses and variety creates a denser and diverse scale and grain to anywhere else in the borough.

The individual character of centres is drawn out within Parts C-H of this report.



Linear typologies

These typologies come in two scales - parades and corridors.

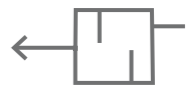
They are found across the borough and deliver many of the shops and services local people require in mixed use areas outside of the borough's larger town centres.

These typologies are linear in form and provide activity and a mix of uses along the borough's more primary routes. They tend to be very diverse in terms of scale and grain of buildings.

Parades have the sense of being a 'destination' or place, whilst corridors are often a more gradual and continual linear environment linking places. They tend to occur along the key connecting routes in the borough.

| CENTRES | LINEAR PARADES | LINEAR CORRIDORS |
|--|--|--|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Location / extent Located relatively evenly across the borough serving the local population. All of the largest centres are located away from the borough boundaries. | Location / extent Merton's suburbs are well served by an evenly spread network of local parades. They are often associated with a transport node or key junction and appear more to the south and east of the borough. | Location / extent Typically trace the historic routes in the borough that have experienced the greatest churn - elongated strings of mixed use / mixed scale, outside of allocated centres or local parades. |
| Urban form Often evolving from a historic centre, they are intensely urban environments with a strong focus on commercial activity and a scale and type of buildings not found anywhere else. | Urban form A characteristic of the suburban typology, local parades form the centre of neighbourhoods and generally appear on a primary street or key junction. Create active frontage along an elongated linear route. | Urban form Generally the widest routes in the borough with the greatest mix in terms of building age and form. Gaps within the frontage and a mix of uses are common. |
| Buildings Vary significantly in scale and form, and cover a wide range of periods and styles. There are some examples of historic fabric retained and these provide a human scale and fine grain of unit size. | Buildings Typically larger in scale than their surrounding context by at least an additional storey. In style they will mirror residential context and typically have a relatively fine grain. | Buildings The greatest range in terms of architectural style and quality. Office buildings, retail sheds, garages and converted residential buildings. A wide range of massing and scale, typically taller than the context. |
| Streetscape Urban in character and dominated by traffic movement. Pavements vary in width, but are usually more cluttered than in residential areas. Some areas of pedestrianisation and public space. | Streetscape A wider street section than the residential context to support car parking, wider pavements and greening. Short-stay on street car and cycle parking is often available that is vital to support viable trading locations. | Streetscape Generally poor environmental quality with expansive tarmac and traffic. Elements of short-stay car parking to support businesses and shops are important to support this type of environment. |
| Typical storey height 3 - 5 | Typical storey height 2 - 3 | Typical storey height 2 - 6 |
| Typical street width 12 - 22m | Typical street width 18 - 25m | Typical street width 18 - 30m |
| Typical block size 130 x 80m | Typical block size 140 x 50m | Typical block size 70 x 50m |
| Parking on-street and multi-storey car parks | Parking on-street | Parking on-street |
| Open space hard surface | Open space verges | Open space verges |

| CAMPUS INSTITUTIONS | CAMPUS BIG BOX RETAIL | CAMPUS INDUSTRY |
|---|---|--|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Location / extent Smaller campuses located evenly across Merton serving each neighbourhood. Significant leisure campus at AELTC and larger education campuses to the east of the borough. | Location / extent A relatively limited extent across the borough with clusters generally at the borough boundary like at the A3 and Plough Lane. Colliers Wood Town Centre also has significant examples. | Location / extent Merton has a number of larger estates (Weir Road, Jubilee Way and Willow Lane) historically located along the Wandle, as well as smaller areas, generally along the railway lines. |
| Urban form Typically larger buildings standing within an area of landscaped open space, with a significant boundary treatment around the perimeter. Often will present a primary or grander entrance to one edge. | Urban form Typified by large format warehouses to accommodate retail uses such as supermarkets, DIY stores or car showrooms. Designed around car use with a limited street network. | Urban form Layouts in the larger estates are fairly planned/legible with a main loop road feeding smaller yards. In other areas they are located in small 'left-over' and awkward shaped sites. |
| Buildings Vary widely in built character but have generally been formed over time (with elements from different periods) and accommodate more than one use or component, with a distinct public front door. | Buildings Generally low quality warehouse style buildings designed for a relatively short life span. Simple in form and detail with limited glazing or references to local vernacular. | Buildings Typically buildings are lower quality warehouse style buildings. Sizes of units relate to function. Some older and attractive brick construction. |
| Streetscape Challenges to permeability created by the perimeter treatments and scale of the sites. Often include some grassed areas for recreation / visual amenity and hard standing for car parking. | Streetscape Large areas of open hard landscaped space designed for car parking. Limited areas of landscape and a public realm that is not pedestrian orientated leads to a low quality and illegible environment. | Streetscape Streetscape is designed to be tough and cheap to repair, often including details such as high kerbs and no pavement. Service yards and buildings are located behind access roads. |
| Typical storey height 2 - 4 | Typical storey height 1 - 2 | Typical storey height 1 - 2 |
| Typical street width 12 - 15m | Typical street width n/a | Typical street width 12 - 15m |
| Typical block size 70 x 50m | Typical block size 140 x 110m | Typical block size 100 x 80m |
| Parking hard surface | Parking hard surface | Parking hard surface |
| Open space semi-public, often grassed | Open space hard surface | Open space hard surface |



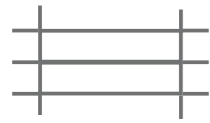
Campus typologies

Campus typologies provide a significant amount of Merton's mixed-use and non-residential floor space, particularly outside of the town centres and local parades.

In Merton the campus typologies include institutions (such as schools, leisure and health), big box retail environmental and industrial estates.

These environments are defined by their generally mono-use environments - where a single function dominates the environment. They tend to have an identifiable 'entrance' where the type or quality of environment shifts. Particularly in the big box retail and industrial typologies this tends to mark a shift to a lower environmental quality with lower-scale development.

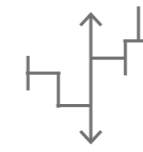
Although many industrial areas perform an important employment function and service the borough, some campus environments offer good opportunities for intensification and growth by being more intensively used, with a greater variety of uses.



Residential led typologies - perimeter blocks

Perimeter blocks have a continuous active frontage along one edge, with a clear delineation between public and private space. Their plan form looks like a grid of connected streets - this can be rigid or more relaxed in form.

| VILLA / SPACIOUS | SUBURBAN | COTTAGE ESTATE | URBAN TERRACE | QUARTER HOUSE | MODERN URBAN |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Location / extent To the west of the borough, generally focused on the hill up to Wimbledon Common and park. | Location / extent The predominant housing type within the Morden area, also to the south of Raynes Park and in areas of Mitcham. | Location / extent A focus in St Helier and south of Morden town centre, with some smaller areas in Mitcham, north of the common. | Location / extent From central Raynes Park eastwards to Wimbledon and Colliers Wood. | Location / extent Edges of Colliers Wood and towards the east of the borough. | Location / extent Edges of denser town centres and along key routes. |
| Urban form The lowest density of the perimeter blocks - large detached or semi-detached homes set within larger plots. Generally free flowing street layouts with clear breaks and set backs from the street. | Urban form Streets have a regular grid, taking a regular form of parallel streets. In some cases this grid is more flexible grid, taking a more relaxed and organic form, introducing curved roads and creating variations in block depth. | Urban form Planned layouts, featuring a network of streets and spaces which together establish an overall pattern, often geometric and with elements of symmetry. | Urban form A regular grid in form, most likely to be Victorian and Edwardian. Tightly arranged, regular rows of houses with on-street parking. Grid system provides a high degree of permeability and is generally easy to navigate. | Urban form Generally seen as part of the urban terrace form and suburban form in a regular grid, with slightly larger plots. Generally as short terraces or semi-detached. The appearance and scale of houses. | Urban form A form that has only existed since the late 2000s - typically deep in plan, medium rise and deliver high density homes. A continual perimeter frontage with breaks for service areas or car parking access. |
| Buildings Vary widely in style and detail - often designed as an individual, influenced by the urban fashions of the period. Generally larger properties, now sometimes split as apartments. | Buildings Typically built in the inter-war years by private developers. Semi-detached and short runs of terraces which feature a relatively rich architectural palette and variation between plots. | Buildings Typically associated with inter-war public sector housing which drew on the garden city movement. Homes with cottage-like proportions, modest detailing and a limited palette of materials. | Buildings Most likely to be built to a regular design in significant groups. Plot widths are narrow at 4-5m which establishes a high frequency of front doors with a strong rhythm and relationship to the street. | Buildings Two-storey buildings with flats above and below, either with individual ground floor front doors or a communal entrance shared between a small number of dwellings. | Buildings Generally comprised of buildings with very rectilinear shapes, forming successfully simple streets and spaces. Blocks are usually made up of flats but can also include town houses or stacked maisonettes. |
| Streetscape Often associated with the older and important routes through the borough with a substantial scale. Large set-backs and front gardens mean that quieter residential areas have a very green and quiet character. | Streetscape Typically a wider street pattern than Victorian forms of development. Streets were usually designed around the car, with front garden parking spaces and verges between driveways. | Streetscape Streets tend to have a wider profile with planned verges, front gardens and green spaces. Traditionally privet hedges to define boundaries. Designed with strong symmetry and a sense of order and group composition. | Streetscape Strong and coherent due to the consistency and rhythm of the terraced architecture. Streets typically have a narrow profile with very shallow front gardens. Dominated by on-street parking. | Streetscape Seen as part of a consistent street scene within the terraced or suburban street environment. | Streetscape High quality examples successfully provide private open spaces as well as attractive communal green spaces, well overlooked within the block pattern. Private space is provided via terraces and balconies. |
| Typical storey height 2 - 3 | Typical storey height 2 | Typical storey height 2 | Typical storey height 2 | Typical storey height 2 - 2.5 | Typical storey height 4 - 6 |
| Typical street width 22 - 32m | Typical street width 50 x 200m | Typical street width 15 - 30 m | Typical street width 12 - 20m | Typical street width 12 - 20m | Typical street width 18 - 25m |
| Typical block size 75 x 200m | Typical block size 75 x 200m | Typical block size 50 x 150m | Typical block size 60 x 150m | Typical block size 60 x 150m | Typical block size 80 x 170m |
| Parking front drive | Parking no | Parking front drive / on-street | Parking on-street | Parking on-street | Parking basement / parking courts |
| Public open space no | Public open space no | Public open space set pieces of grass | Public open space no | Public open space no | Public open space courtyards |
| Private open space front and back gardens | Private open space front and back gardens | Private open space front and back gardens | Private open space back gardens | Private open space back gardens | Private open space balconies |



Residential led typologies - non-perimeter blocks

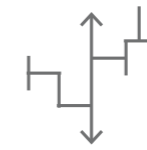
These residential types have more disjointed urban fabric, often with an unclear delineation between public and private space. Their plan form will be mixed with dead-end streets and areas of car parking.

| CUL-DE-SAC | MANSION BLOCK | LINEAR BLOCKS |
|--|---|---|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Location / extent Most prevalent between Colliers Wood and the eastern boundary of the borough. | Location / extent Edge of centres and generally along key routes in the borough. | Location / extent Relatively limited typology evenly distributed across the borough. |
| Urban form Small infill areas and some larger privately developed neighbourhood. Streets lack legibility and permeability, where the street structure is dictated by buildings arranged to fit around road and turning circle. | Urban form Larger blocks of purpose built flats that present a strong rhythm of form and are often made up from symmetrical blocks that partially define the street frontage. Typically fail to establish a clear structure of routes and private spaces. | Urban form These estates are typically post-war in construction. They are often made up of different built elements with larger blocks, maisonettes and houses. This mix fails to establish a clear structure of routes and private spaces. |
| Buildings Typically two storeys. Unlikely to have a tight relationship to the street and so can feature projecting elements such as porches or an integrated garage. Vary greatly in form, materials and details. | Buildings Style influenced by Victorian tenement blocks. Often built from brick or with a brick facade, deck access and shared stair cores. Some blocks have quite a grand aesthetic and are generally taller than their context. | Buildings Building in the postwar period was an experimental time and therefore slab estates very enormously in the mix of materials, details and styles. Brick, rendered elements and panel systems all feature. |
| Streetscape Housing is arranged in an informal layout resulting in an irregular street profile. The streets often contain small areas of parking and irregular shaped front gardens. Sometimes pedestrian only routes provide links. | Streetscape The mansion blocks will typically have their own private grassed areas and car parking that they sit within. Larger estates can be illegible with unclear fronts and backs where there is deck access. | Streetscape Buildings within these estates relate to pedestrian routes as well as typical streets, creating vulnerable areas enclosed by fences. Parking areas frequently account for a significant land take, reducing the quality of the environment. |
| Typical storey height 2 | Typical storey height 3 - 5 | Typical storey height 3 - 8 |
| Typical street width 15 - 20m | Typical street width 12 - 20m | Typical street width 12 - 20m |
| Typical block size 50 x 120m | Typical block size 50 x 80m | Typical block size 50 x 200m |
| Parking front drive / on-street | Parking car park | Parking car park |
| Public open space no | Public open space shared gardens | Public open space shared gardens |
| Private open space front and back gardens | Private open space balconies | Private open space balconies |



Residential led typologies - perimeter blocks

The following images help to describe the typical materials and architectural features of each of the typologies



Residential led typologies - non-perimeter blocks

The following images help to describe the typical materials and architectural features of each of the typologies

| VILLA / SPACIOUS | SUBURBAN | COTTAGE ESTATE | URBAN TERRACE | QUARTER HOUSE | MODERN URBAN |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Urban form / street scene | Urban form / street scene | Urban form / street scene | Urban form / street scene | Urban form / street scene | Urban form / street scene |
| Wide grass verges, street trees, spacious, properties set back with front gardens | Narrow grass verges, street trees on plot and on street car parking | Originally characterised by wide green verges and front hedges and fencing | Narrower tree lined streets with a continuous frontage and small gardens | Generally similar in form to urban terraced typology. | Generally larger buildings providing continuous frontage |
| Features | Features | Features | Features | Features | Features |
| Use of varied glazing, prominent porches and chimneys, pitched roofs | Bay windows, tile hang, porches and pitched roofs, gables with mock Tudor detailing, barge boards | Pitched tiled roofs, cottage proportions, tile hanging, use of symmetry in design, prominent chimneys | Rhythm of bay and sash windows, decorative door and window pediments, recessed porches | Wider front recessed porches, double width paths, bay and sash windows, pediments | Large format windows, balconies and terraces, expressed structure |
| Materials | Materials | Materials | Materials | Materials | Materials |
| Varied and often mixed within one home - brick and render common | Render, UPVC windows, tiles and wood frame details | A consistent and minimal material palette - brick, tile and some render (pastel colouring) | Generally brick with stucco detailing / red brick detailing and wooden barge boards | Generally brick, original doors are timber with glazed detailing | Brick dominant material with metal and render detailing |

| CUL-DE-SAC | MANSION BLOCK | LINEAR BLOCKS |
|--|---|--|
| Typical image | Typical image | Typical image |
| Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern | Grain / roof pattern |
| Urban form | Urban form | Urban form |
| A disconnected urban form resulting in larger areas of tarmac and parking | Often larger buildings standing within open space | Typically a disconnected urban form with pedestrian only routes |
| Features | Features | Features |
| Pitched roofs, flat fronted, canopies and protruding porches, tile hanging, small casement windows | Pitched roofs, large windows and cills, horizontal rhythm within the facade detailing | External balconies, deck access, integrated garages, horizontal rhythm |
| Materials | Materials | Materials |
| Mixed material palette - brick, tile, render | Generally brick or painted brick | Mixed material palette - brick, tile, render |



MERTON'S DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Where will future growth
be focused and how will
it be distinctive to my
neighbourhood?

C MERTON'S DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

C.1 NEIGHBOURHOODS AND BOROUGH AREAS

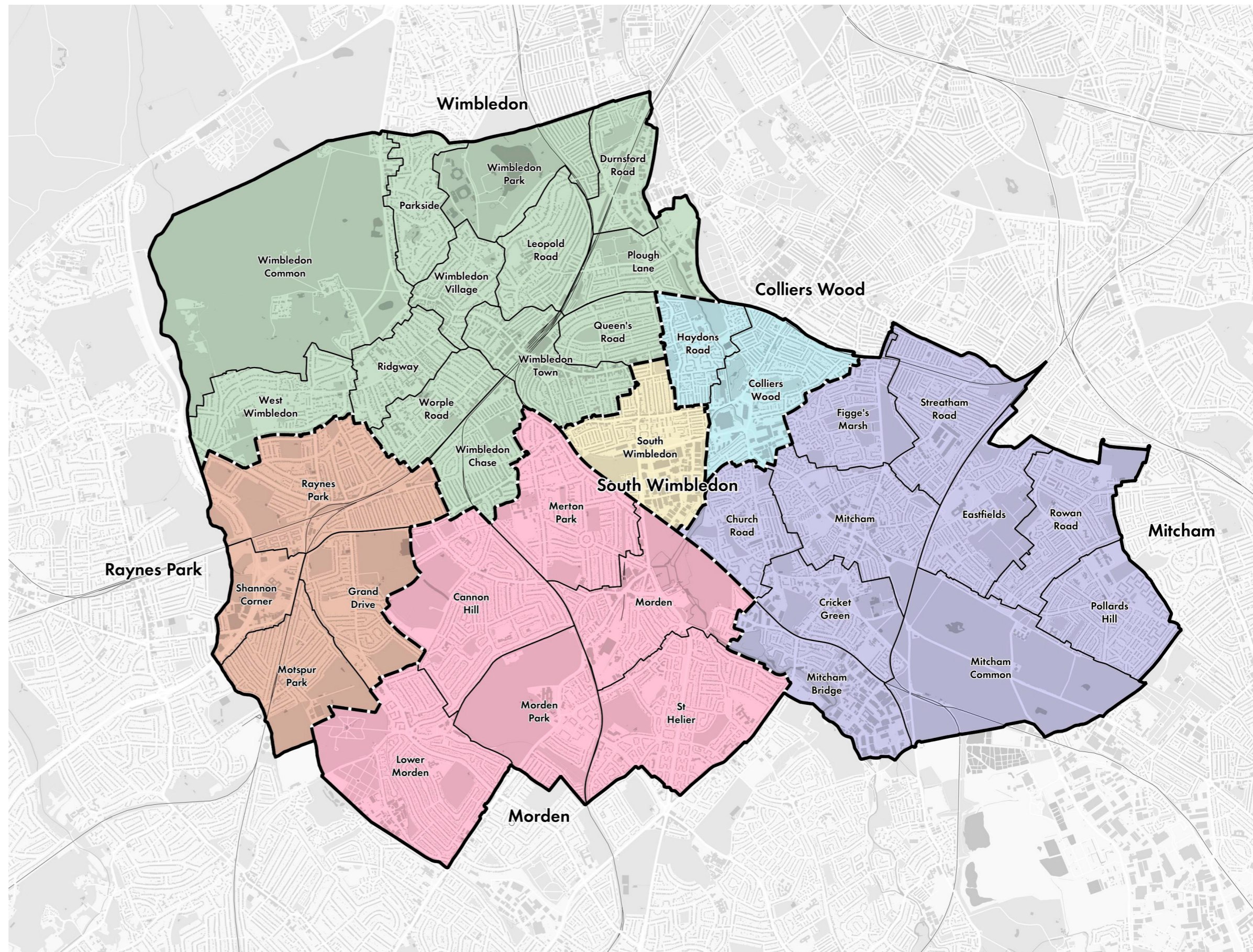
An understanding of local character must operate at a variety of scales. Early pages within this report provide a borough wide picture, with the previous pages offering a more detailed block-level appreciation. Between these two scales, is the geography upon which local people's understanding of character is generally based - one of neighbourhoods and areas.

The adjacent plan illustrates an interpretation of the neighbourhoods in the borough. It has been developed in conjunction with local residents and stakeholders through an online survey and workshops. This is an inherently subjective exercise and it is acknowledged that places in the borough will mean different things to different people.

As set out in the earlier historic analysis, many of Merton's places developed from a series of villages across the borough and along important routes into central London. Later these villages were subsumed by London's expansion with the opening of the railways, but they still have an influence on the sense of place in these neighbourhoods.

Today, the borough comprises a series of places and neighbourhoods which each have a subtle character of their own. Each of the neighbourhoods overlap with each other to acknowledge the blurred edges of some places, whilst some boundaries are stronger as they are defined by a railway line or river. Some places are defined by a historic village, some by a high street and others by a green space or landscape asset. Other influencing factors include the presence of a train station or local parade, or association with more administrative cues such as postcodes.

The 36 neighbourhoods have then been grouped into six sub-areas. The neighbourhoods have been grouped by similarities in character and sense of place informed by: discussions at community workshops; the mapping of physical assets such as topography, landscape and urban morphology; the historic evolution of each area; analysis of land use and housing typologies and their future growth direction.



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The purpose of this process is to help shape policies in the emerging Local Plan and ensure that character and the existing identity of neighbourhoods is a key consideration. The Draft Local Plan is place-based and this ensures that policies for each of the neighbourhoods are tailored to the distinctive sense of place and character of different parts of the borough. This Character Study has helped to shape the definition of these neighbourhoods and will ensure that future growth and change are responsive to the varied identity and challenges across the borough.

The following chapters describe the six areas in the borough, drawing out the story of each area and the character of each distinctive neighbourhood. Each chapter has three key sections:

- An introduction to the sub-area
- Information about each of the neighbourhoods within the sub-area, setting out the key features, and

identifying any significant issues and opportunities. These are a summary of ideas generated by the team as a result of public engagement and analysis of each area.

- Finally, each chapter concludes by setting out some growth themes for the sub-area - identifying key priorities that describe what should be protected, what could be improved and where growth is considered most appropriate in the context of the character of each area.

The nature of how intensification and interventions should differ across the borough in response to character has also been considered, providing an indication of where key areas of growth sit on the spectrum of repair - re-examine - reimagine. The diagram below illustrates at a diagrammatic level how the nature of intensification should vary across key areas of the borough.

A greater intensity of growth is appropriate in some locations, while the strategy should be focused on re-use and infill in other parts of the borough. More comprehensive reimagining would be appropriate in some areas - such as alongside significant infrastructure investment, estate regeneration or where large big box retail sites present opportunities for more fundamental intervention - where through redevelopment it will be possible to create better continuity with the surrounding neighbourhood. In the borough's key centres, the emphasis should be on re-examining character. Although many of these places are attractive historic centres, some more fundamental interventions could help to repair the existing character through the redevelopment of available sites along and behind the high streets or adjacent to railways to help intensify the most sustainable locations.

For other neighbourhoods, the emphasis should be on repairing and protecting the existing fabric and condition, enhancing the existing character through sensitive infill and re-use of existing building fabric. Throughout the borough, in residential areas, there will be opportunities for sensitive infill development that helps to raise the quality of neighbourhoods and complement the existing character.



This diagram provides a high level overview of the growth spectrum in the borough, illustrating indicatively where each neighbourhood sits on a continuum from repair through re-examine to re-imagine. Many of the neighbourhoods will have variety within them in terms of the potential for change. Please see the detail in the following chapters that explains the approach for each neighbourhood and the growth themes that have been identified.

Each of the chapters concludes with a key framework plan. The key for these plans is expanded in the adjacent column to explain in a bit more detail the propositions set out within the plans (please see p33, 37, 47, 53, 63 & 67 for the framework for each area):

- **Place intensification - re-imagine**
More fundamental intervention through the redevelopment of larger sites or centres to be bolder about the level of change, using the prevailing character from surrounding areas to influence re-design
- **Place intensification - re-examine**
Some interventions possible to reflect the existing character through the redevelopment of available sites, generally along and behind high streets
- **Place intensification - repair**
Enhance the existing character through infill, re-use of existing building fabric and development that is sensitive and context-led

Corridor intensification

Opportunities to rethink and improve the environments along key routes through development that sensitively increases the scale, alongside public realm enhancement

- ↔ **Corridor Intensification (major)**
Development and public realm improvements along more significant corridors
- ↔ **Corridor Intensification (minor)**
Development and public realm improvements along more minor corridors
- **Enhance parade**
Development opportunities and public realm improvements within parade environments

Enhanced routes

Environmental improvements to green spaces and routes

- ↔ **Strategic greening and improvements**
A potential future aspiration to raise the quality of this route. This might include changes such as creating better space pocket parks, tree planting and greening
- ↔ **Strategic improvements**
A potential future aspiration to raise the quality of this already greened route. This might include changes to improve the overall function of the route by improving the space sharing between modes or public realm quality.
- ↔ **Local green route improvements**
Local improvements to the continuity of routes between green spaces including the quality of public realm, crossings and greening
- ↗ **Improving connection to park**
Improvements to the level of access and visual connections into green spaces



Strategic improvements to key corridors might include continuous cycle routes, tree planting (as at Lea Bridge Road, Waltham Forest) or pocket parks at key intersections of active travel corridors delivered alongside new development (Rodney Road, Southwark)



COLLIERS WOOD

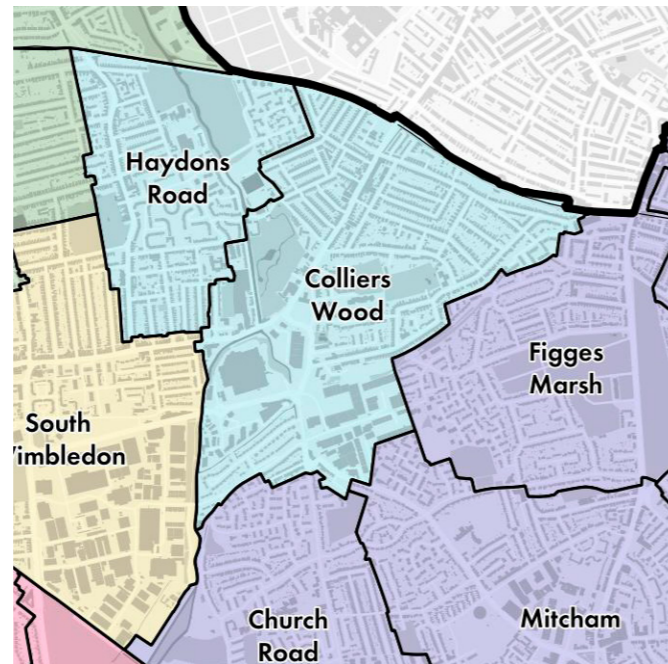
D COLLIERS WOOD

D.1 INTRODUCTION

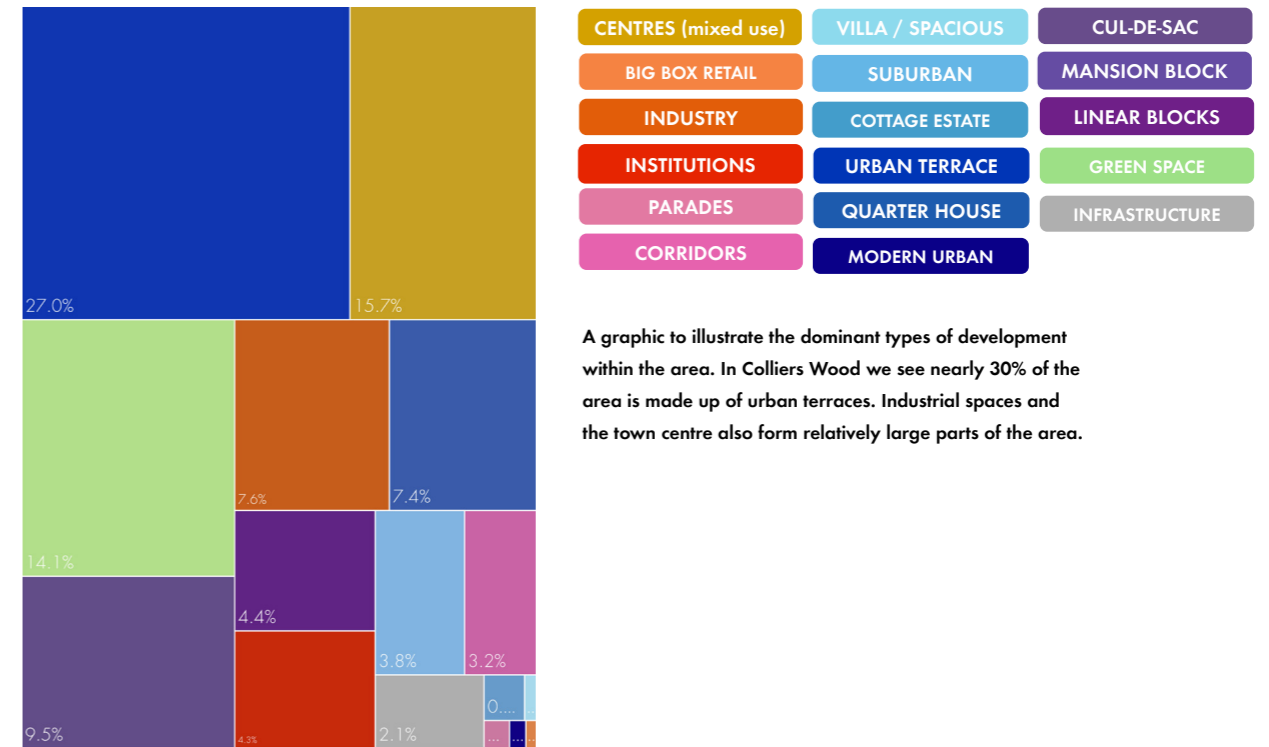
Colliers Wood formed along part of the Stane Street Roman Road. Many of its unique assets today are elements of its early history including Merton Priory which was founded in 1114 and the Merton Abbey Mills. This cluster of industrial buildings dates to the early 18th century and by 1750 Merton Abbey had become a calico cloth printing centre home to major figures of the textile design industry including William Morris and Arthur Liberty.

Colliers Wood town centre remained a small riverside hamlet up until the late 19th century but by 1914 the area was densely developed with the tube station opening in 1926. The development of the gyratory system in the 1960s and the development of the retail parks in the 1980s/1990s are key moments in the area's evolution that are still having a significant impact on the character of the area. Recent investment in Britannia Point, the library and the public realm around the underground station have improved this part of the high street and connections into the surrounding green spaces.

The two neighbourhoods within this area - Colliers Wood and Haydons Road are closely related with the Wandle Park forming the spine between the two. Opportunities exist to further improve the connectivity between these neighbourhoods. As key development sites come forward around Colliers Wood, development that repairs the prevailing grain will be vital. The London Plan promotes new Opportunity Areas in London including "Wimbledon, Colliers Wood / South Wimbledon", with a target of 5,000 homes and 6,000 jobs and the key sites to the south of the tube station (the car park south of Britannia Point and Priory Retail Park) will be important first steps in improving the character and functioning of Colliers Wood town centre. The redevelopment of these sites provides key opportunities in continuing to improve access to and visibility of the river and in revealing the industrial character of Merton Abbey Mills.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
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A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. In Colliers Wood we see nearly 30% of the area is made up of urban terraces. Industrial spaces and the town centre also form relatively large parts of the area.



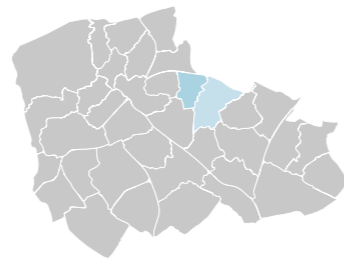
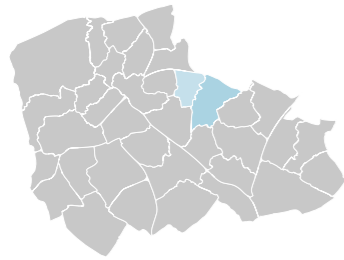
Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area. See appendix for individual neighbourhoods.

What you said was special

The river, the heritage buildings at Merton Abbey Mills, the community feel, green spaces

What needs improving

"The buildings in Colliers Wood have been improved, but there is more work to do to make it seem like a busy London centre - currently the high street seems left behind and the shopping centres seem like car parks with shops. There needs to be more dedicated community space"



COLLIERS WOOD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Absence of a clear centre along the old Roman Road 'Stane Street'
- Dominance of outdated retail park environment
- The River Wandle and attractive industrial heritage at Merton Abbey Mills are unique local asset which are currently disconnected and hidden.
- 1960s - creation of gyratory system and the Britannia Point. Covering Merton Abbey archeology with the flyover.
- Attractive Victorian /Edwardian terraces
- Colliers Wood recreation ground and the Wandle Park - recent investment in connections such as Baltic Close

key issues / opportunities

- Celebration of major textile design history - William Morris and Arthur Liberty
- Rediscovering the river and better wayfinding and setting for assets such as the archeology and mill.
- Redevelopment of Priory Retail Park - urban grain and street pattern reintroduced
- Review further development opportunities on west side of High Street

HAYDONS ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Predominantly a residential area
- Haydons Road as the key route through the area - mixed in age and use with green spaces of the recreation ground meeting the main route
- Victorian two storey terraced houses from the late 1800s and 1990s, cul-de-sacs and town houses
- All Saints estate 1.5 - 3 storeys low rise and low density
- Wandle Meadows Park and more formal recreation grounds

key issues / opportunities

- Haydons Road - infill opportunities to raise quality
- Improve strategic connectivity between green spaces - through All Saints and North Road
- Design guidance for residents within historic terraced streets: boundary treatment, windows, roof and porches and the value of landscaped front gardens.
- Improve access around Wandle Valley storm tanks



Growth themes

Redevelopment of the retail parks at Colliers Wood into a riverside mixed use urban district that celebrates its industrial heritage

The unique local assets should be the starting point for any plans for the redevelopment of this area. A comprehensive and joined up masterplan should set out a phased strategy for the reimagining of the area between Colliers Wood High Street, south to Merton Abbey Mills and east to also include the Tandem Centre. The first phase of this strategy will include the car park south of Britannia Point and Priory Retail Park.

- The key moves of any plan for the area should include;
- Seek opportunities to better celebrate the major textile design history of the area including Morris and Liberty - this could include a museum/information area, wayfinding, materials and motif selection.
 - The opening up and revealing of the riverside for leisure, biodiversity and to drive design quality.
 - The industrial heritage should drive the design ethos and quality - impacting the choices in terms of material character, urban grain and an urban connected street pattern
 - Transform vehicular dominated routes with a negative character and severing effect into streets with a pleasant character for all modes

Repairing sites along key corridors and enhancing the quality of these routes

Merton High Street and Colliers Wood High Street form the key spine through the area. They are the 'front door' of Colliers Wood and should be a high quality welcome to the area. These are highly sustainable locations with a varied character due to the age of the streets. Older routes tend to be more varied and this characteristic presents opportunities to reexamine and repair the existing environment. Public realm enhancements will include improved crossings, shop front improvements, pavement widening (where possible) and street planting. These changes will help improve the character

of the environment and shift away from a traffic dominated route. Infill sites along the corridor will deliver new homes and commercial spaces to repair the positive frontage. Where there are low quality low-rise buildings, these gaps should be repaired. Stepping up the height on corner plots will help to mark junctions and deliver the intensification of these sustainable locations.

All saints - legibility and strategic green connectivity

Opportunities to enhance the east-west strategic green connectivity through the All Saints Area should be improved. North Road provides an exciting opportunity to connect between Haydons Road Recreation Ground and the Wandle Park.

Design guidance for residents within Victorian / Edwardian streets

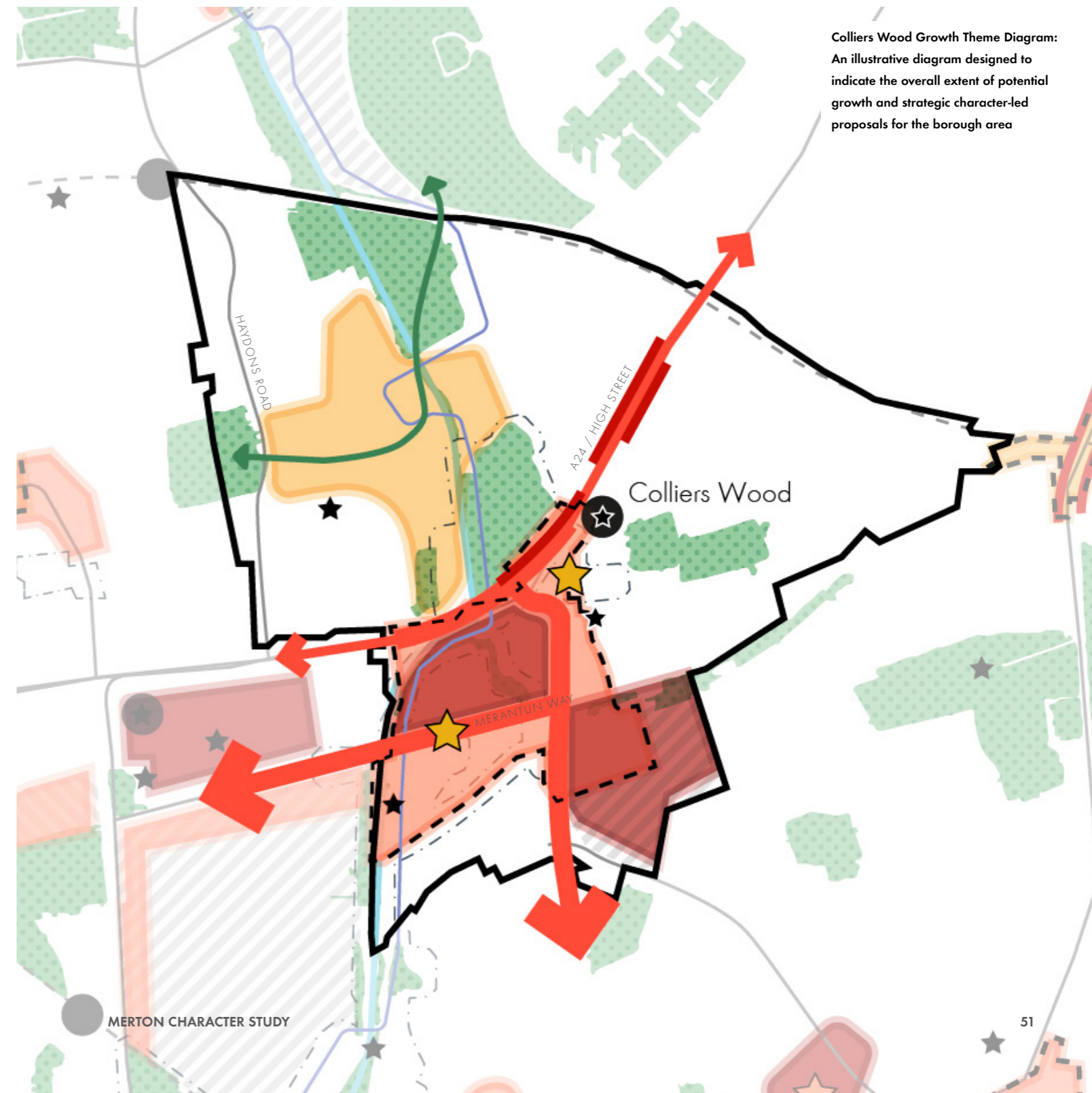
Opportunities to repair and enhance the existing character and quality of residential areas should be explored. Through small sites design guidance, residential enhancements should include guidance on boundary treatment, window replacement, roof and porches and the value of landscaped front gardens.

proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- ↔ Local green link improvements

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
- ▨ Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- ▨ Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- ★ Strategic Landmark
- ★ Local Landmark
- Road
- - - Rail
- Waterway



Colliers Wood Growth Theme Diagram:
An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area



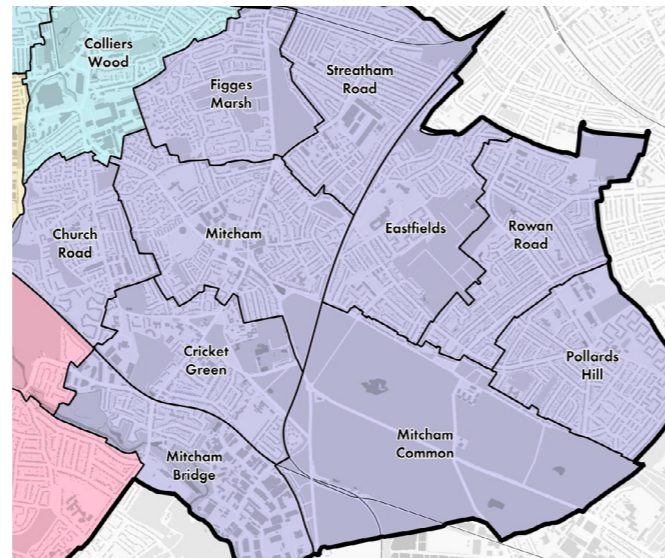
MITCHAM

E MITCHAM

E.1 INTRODUCTION

"Lots of green space, kind and humble community, period buildings and features, localised shopping"

Mitcham means 'big settlement'. It's big in the sense that it grew as two parts - Upper and Lower, which formed on the low-lying plains by the river, centred on two village greens. It's also big in that it has played a significant role for Merton over the years - the area's lavender fields and soothing air attracted residents to settle in this part of the borough before industrialisation took off. Mitcham's identity transformed in the 18th century from a rural retreat into a industrial powerhouse, first as a Calico cloth printing centre, and later a manufacturing hub, with companies producing a range of products into the 20th century, from confectionary to fireworks to paint. Housing expansion transformed the character of the borough in the intewar years, and again after the war with the emergence of low density mid-rise blocks like at Pollards Hill and Eastfields. More recently, Mitcham is leading the way in providing new, award-winning sustainable forms of development, like at Brenley Park and along Rowan Road.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
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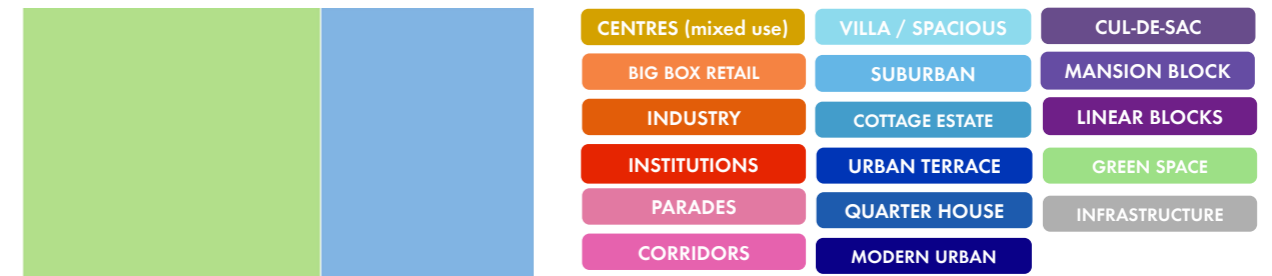
The Mitcham sub-area is divided into 10 neighbourhoods. The areas share a consistent scale but are diverse in their built form and character. Mitcham's dominant typology is suburban housing with historic fragments interwoven in, including pockets of Victorian terraces, shopping parades and old industrial buildings. Mitcham Town Centre is its main commercial centre, although places outside of the borough like Tooting, Streatham and Norbury play an important role for shopping and other services. The area is characterised by a string of green spaces, from Figge's Marsh in the north, to the historic Upper and Lower Greens in the centre, and Wandle Valley to the south. Mitcham Common and its edge has its own unique character to the southeast. Adjacent to the common is The Willow Lane Trading Estate, a significant piece of industry for the borough.

It's easy for Mitcham's 'big pieces' to steal the limelight, but just as important to Mitcham's identity are the smaller, more hidden 'yokey' spaces in the borough, and the diverse communities that value them. Leisure and

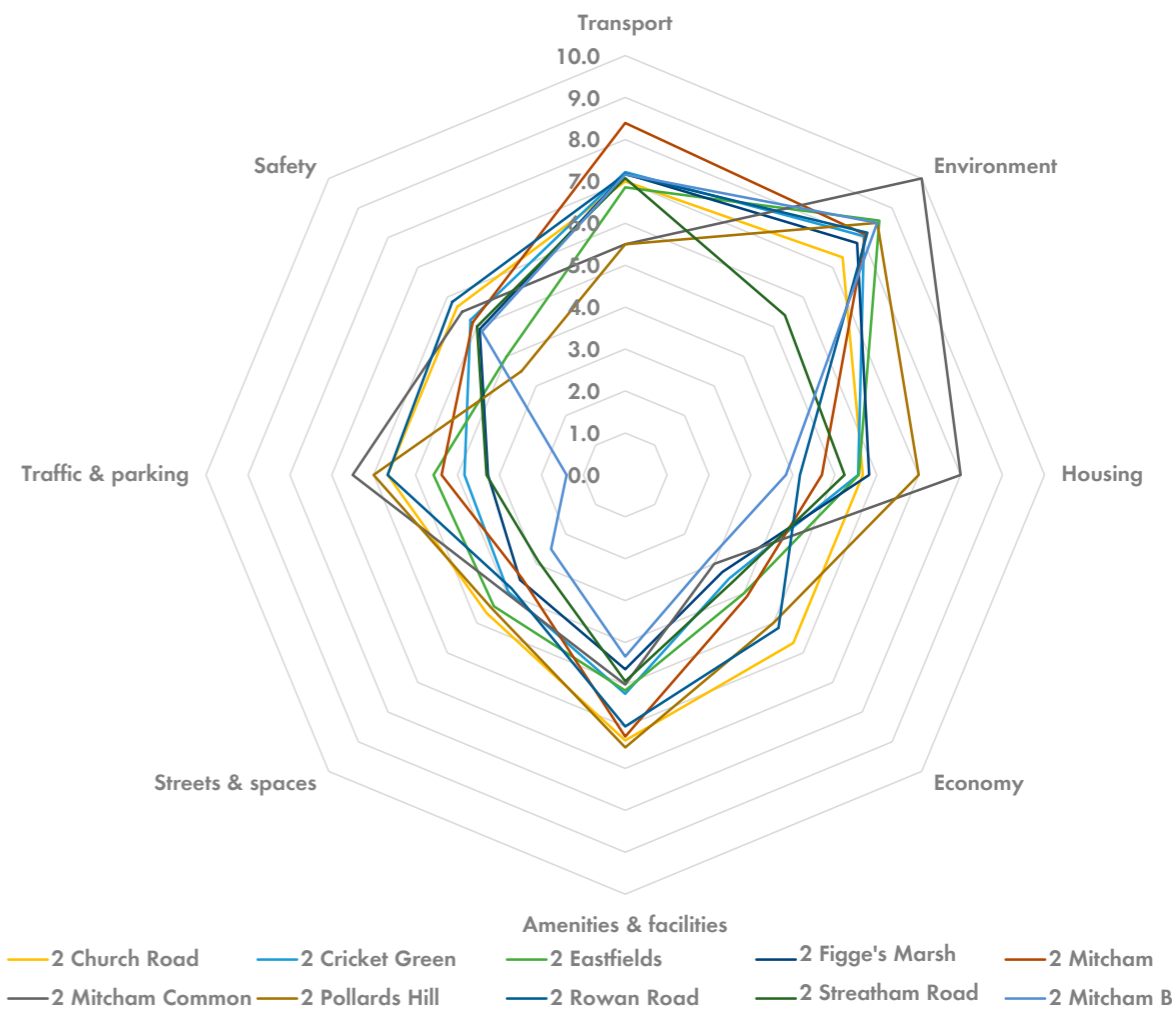
community uses like the Rowan Road and Oakleigh Way recreation grounds, Mitcham tennis courts and the BMX track, are often unassuming and tucked away behind suburban streets but are vital spaces for Mitcham and its residents.

The area faces its own distinct challenges. Parts of Mitcham are far more deprived and disconnected than elsewhere in the borough, with poor public transport access to the town centre and other neighbourhoods. A key part of the strategy for Mitcham is about strengthening the role of local neighbourhoods, and improving connections between these and Mitcham town centre.

The focus for the next 10 years will be to transform the town centre to a place more people want to use for socialising, leisure and shopping to boost local business. Alongside this, ongoing investment in delivering new homes, enhancing the public realm and enhancing infrastructure will support growth in the centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.



A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. Mitcham is one of the areas within the borough which has the greatest mix of typologies. Large amounts of green space (35% of the area) and suburban housing (25%) of the area are the most prevalent.

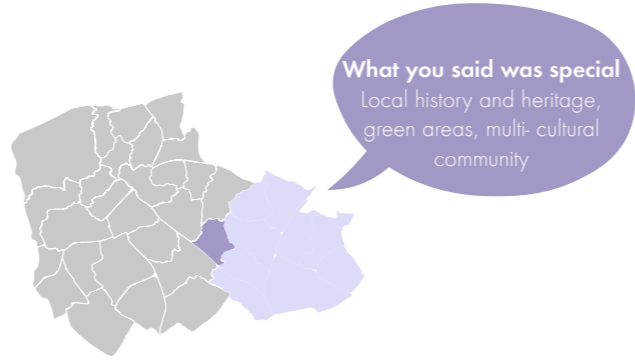


Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area. See appendix for individual neighbourhoods.



What you said was special

Easy commute to work, small shops and historic features, diverse, green spaces everywhere, village feeling of the town centre



What you said was special

Local history and heritage, green areas, multi-cultural community

MITCHAM

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Historic mixed use town centre, focused on Upper Green with tight urban development surrounding it which still retains the typical medieval form of narrow house plots on north and eastern side of the Green
- Diverse range of building heights and styles
- Looser development along the key routes with a fragmented character - mainly retail interspersed with community uses
- West of London Road - large industrial / commercial footprints and more residential to the east of the area (1930s short terraces and blocks of six-storey flats)
- London Road runs north-south through the area and A236 intersects - both busy movement corridors
- Gasholder a key landmark

key issues / opportunities

- Original focus of the Upper Green has eroded
- Improve poor shopfront quality and support local shopping parades
- Car dominated along the key corridors - poor pedestrian environment in places
- Improve pedestrian and cycling links to wider residential areas without reducing green verges
- Infill development e.g. housing above shops, underutilised sites to reinforce area
- Public realm enhancements - create a green spine and enhance gateways to help improve the connectivity to Mitcham Cricket Green
- Opportunity to improve the market

CHURCH ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Formerly industrial use prevalent, now mainly housing with a varied character
- Post 1945 council housing to south - large modernist blocks set in open space, 1980s cul de sacs to north
- Early 20th century grid iron terraces to east
- Wandle Valley conservation area and listed buildings - key green corridor
- Phipps Bridge Estate a key part - built in 1960s, redevelopment since
- Industrial/business uses off Church Road
- Everetts Place - old workers cottages - insight into earlier rural character
- Allotments, recreation space and nature conservation green route - leafy character along western edge

key issues / opportunities

- Busy traffic corridor that creates east-west disconnect
- Permeability hindered in places
- Pockets of underutilised space
- Poor wayfinding
- Loss of front gardens
- Ambiguity between public and private
- Reduce vehicle dominance of Church Road and strengthen edges
- Adoption of underutilised space to green space / infill opportunities
- Higher quality pedestrian routes
- Tree planting to enhance public realm



"Church Road has plenty of open spaces close by. Steeped in local history and heritage. Multi-cultural community. Community Centre in the heart of the Phipps Bridge Estate. Most high-rise blocks have been removed. Some good schools. Local children's play-park is one of the best in Merton. Good bus and tram links. Deen City Farm is excellent. Some local shops. Lots of larger shops nearby."



What you said was special
Green spaces, heritage, cricket and community events, houses with character, leisure facilities, good walks, good for families

What you said was special
Trees and grassy areas, polite and welcoming people, historical, sense of community

What you said was special
Close community feel, small green spaces, heritage, diverse community, zone 3 location

What you said was special
River Wandle, green spaces, parks, houses and heritage

CRICKET GREEN

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Area centres on the historic Cricket Green (where the game has been played every year since 1685) and the exceptional quality of development from different periods around it
- Significant civic and institutional presence and modest scale and informal layout of buildings
- Much of the area is within the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area - number of listed and locally listed buildings including Mitcham Parish Church, Mitcham Court, Cricket Pavillion and the Canons House
- Sense of openness and small scale character - semi rural in parts with its trees and green spaces key to its character
- Housing varied in scale from blocks of flats to 1930s detached housing and small scale Victorian cottages

key issues / opportunities

- New and enhanced pedestrian routes providing new links and reducing severance caused by heavy traffic
- Sensitive infill opportunities that reinforce historic character and strengthen key views
- Reveal significance of Cricket Green's story and strengthen Conservation Area identity through quality of new development, tree planting and public realm
- Sustain shopping parades and bring vacant pubs back into good use
- Repurpose institutional buildings and grounds and heritage buildings at risk without damaging historic character

EASTFIELDS

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Railway line forms western boundary, Eastfields Station a major gateway
- Used to be an area known as East or Common fields, used for the cultivation of herbs, roses and lavender
- Mitcham Great Wood used to occupy the site of the Streatham Park Cemetery
- Predominantly residential character - mix of tight Victorian terraces, 1930s semi detached suburban housing (some art-deco style), post-war cul-de-sacs and free form blocks and contemporary development like at Brenley Park
- 1960s Eastfields Estate has distinctive layout from the surrounding built form
- Spacious, quiet and suburban character with curving street layout and high proportion of green open spaces

key issues / opportunities

- Poor public realm in places e.g. uneven pavements / sparse planting - opportunity to reflect the area's history as a horticultural centre
- Barrier of the railway line to west
- Loss of front gardens to parking
- Strengthen the role of shopping parades - intensify and improve public realm
- Eastfields estate regeneration

FIGGE'S MARSH

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Centred on Figge's Marsh, a historic triangular green space, and London Road, a busy movement corridor
- Victorian and Edwardian 3-4 storey gabled terraces with shops by station including locally listed terrace
- Later infill along London Road
- Rest of area predominantly residential - late Victorian / Edwardian terraces, 1930s housing and 1990s cul-de-sac
- London Road cemetery also an important green space and landmark
- Mature trees important landscape asset

key issues / opportunities

- Fragmentation of character due to poor quality infill along London Road
- Traffic dominance and poor pedestrian environment along London Road
- Few trees, loss of green verges
- Loss of original features / poorly maintained commercial buildings
- In residential streets, poor paving / road quality, poor boundary treatments and loss of front gardens
- Poor alterations / extensions in places
- Strengthen western edge of London Road and create 'green spine' - tree planting, landscaping, reduce traffic dominance
- Opportunities around Myrna Close car park area

MITCHAM BRIDGE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- The Wandle is a key historic waterway shaping the character of this area
- Two halves linked by footpath - large self-contained industrial land to southeast and enclaves of housing between Wandle and tramline to northwest - mix of semi-detached interwar housing, 1970s freestanding low rise blocks e.g. Watermeads and 1980s/90s housing
- Open and leafy character of the Wandle, Watermeads Nature Reserve and Ravensbury Park alongside it
- Major movement corridors of London Road and Morden Road run through part of the area - varied in character - big box units opposite open space and low rise housing
- Historic remnants of Wandle's industrial character - Wandle Valley Conservation Area covers some of the area

key issues / opportunities

- Disconnected within and between neighbourhoods - tramline to north and green space to south act as barriers
- Lack of local shops
- Protect the strategic industrial land and encourage new employment uses
- Protect historic industrial buildings
- Strengthen walking and cycling links along the Wandle
- New pedestrian links across Wandle and tramline





MITCHAM COMMON

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Large proportion of area is the historic public open space, comprised of heathland, grassland, woodland, scrubland and ponds, enclosed and intersected by network of busy roads and railway / tram lines
- Undulating topography a key feature and numerous panoramic views
- Housing and commercial development face the common to north and southwest
- Industrial uses on its edges turn its back on the open space and are self-contained
- Mitcham Garden Village is a distinct locally listed enclave - early 1930s
- Large Golf Course creating sense of green

key issues / opportunities

- Managing the impact of new development on views from Mitcham Common
- Pedestrian access to common impeded by heavy traffic flow and cycling provision poor
- Improve footpaths, crossing points and cycling infrastructure around the common
- Opportunity to make more of it - to use its historic features to shape leisure and recreation activities
- Opportunity to strengthen the role and function of Mitcham Junction
- Explore provision of food outlet / pop-up coffee van or cafe - good for walkers and encourage the community to mix a bit more



POLLARDS HILL

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Developed from 1930s, formerly farmland and Pollards Hill Wood
- Open grain of the post war Pollards Hill housing estate to north - high density low rise scheme of 3 storey houses and flats zigzagging around edge of large open space and community uses
- Rest of area characterised by cohesive rows of interwar suburban houses with front and back gardens
- Southwest of neighbourhood radiates out from central roundabout with interconnecting streets between
- Pollards Hill and Sherwood Park recreation grounds are green spaces
- Trees and front gardens key feature to be celebrated

key issues / opportunities

- Can feel like a 'backland' area
- Poor public transport accessibility
- Lack of tree planting in places
- Loss of front gardens to parking and large areas of estate given over to parking
- Inappropriate alterations to buildings
- Poor quality public realm in places
- Tree planting to celebrate former wooded character of parts of the area
- Improving public transport accessibility and links to Mitcham town centre
- Public realm improvements



ROWAN ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Bounded by cemetery, Northborough / Manor roads to east with Rowan Road running through the middle
- Mainly residential area with interwar low rise terraced streets
- Small pockets of light industrial
- More recent award-winning sustainable development on Rowan Road with homes, community facilities and park
- Rowan Road key movement corridor in this part of the borough

key issues / opportunities

- Can feel like a 'backland' area
- Rowan Road a busy thoroughfare - car and traffic dominated
- Poor public realm in places e.g. uneven pavements / sparse planting - tree planting and improving public realm
- Strengthen the role of shopping parades - intensify and improve public realm
- Loss of front gardens to parking



STREATHAM ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Mainly residential area with Streatham Road forming the main thoroughfare through the neighbourhood
- Large shopping parade along Streatham Road and housing further south
- 1930s tight terraced streets to the east of Streatham Road up to railway line in contrast with more fragmented housing typologies on its western side
- To west - mix of late Victorian / Edwardian terraces and interwar cottage-style housing along curved streets
- 1980s/1990s cul-de-sacs contrast with the consistent low rise character
- Mitcham Industrial Estate - large industrial / big box retail footprint off Streatham Road
- North East Mitcham Community Association and green space a key asset

key issues / opportunities

- Streatham Road a busy thoroughfare - traffic dominated
- Poor public realm in places e.g. uneven pavements / sparse planting - opportunities for tree planting and upgrades to public realm
- Potential to strengthen character around key transport node of Tooting Overground Station
- Strengthen the role of shopping parades (such as Streatham Road and London Road leading into Tooting) intensify and improve public realm away from large landscape features to north - future adaptation to climate change will need street greening and smaller spaces



Growth themes

Intensifying Mitcham town centre and improving connections to it from nearby neighbourhoods

The town centre is one of the most historic parts of Mitcham and is a vibrant and resilient hub of activity. It has some really lovely assets, including its Victorian shopping parade and historic green. Post-war infill development has filled gaps where the original fabric has been lost, some of which has harmed the prevailing character of the area. There are significant opportunities to repair and intensify, including on underused sites or single storey units where building upwards could accommodate new housing. The history, existing scale, grain and massing of the town centre should inform a tailored and place-based strategy for growth which will help Mitcham town centre to be the beating heart for the area again. Part of the parcel of achieving this is to reduce the impact of the busy road network and improve walking and cycling connections to the town centre from nearby neighbourhoods.

Establishing London Road as a key corridor in need of improvement - for greening, movement and character

London Road is the main route through the sub-area and connects a series of green spaces and local centres that help to characterise the area. There is an opportunity to establish this route as a green spine and intensification corridor that stitches these pieces together through the creation of a network of green infrastructure, including extensive tree planting and improvements for walking and cycling. Development of sites along London Road should help achieve this vision by prioritising a high quality and sustainable environment and by strengthening the edge condition along this corridor. These improvements can also be applied to other key routes in the area.

Celebrating the identity and resilience of local neighbourhoods

Mitcham's shopping parades and local centres are really important, particularly around Rowan Road and Pollards Hill which are located a considerable distance from a major town centre. Many are in poor condition with poorly maintained buildings, vacant shops and a low quality public realm. The Covid-19 government lockdown has given people a renewed appreciation for their local corner shop. There is an opportunity to strengthen the role of local parades through exploiting intensification opportunities (corner sites, upward extensions and redevelopment of single storey units), shop front improvements and public realm enhancements, including improved crossings.

Regeneration of Eastfields to provide new homes and bring community benefits

The regeneration of Eastfields Estate will help to create an integrated and sustainable residential neighbourhood in the heart of Mitcham that helps to enhance the character of the area. New community facilities will bring wider benefit to the local community.

Reinforce the character of Lower Mitcham and Cricket Green

The architectural and historic qualities of this area are protected by conservation area status and new development must be of an exceptional standard and integrated well with its context in order to contribute to its special character. The residential development on the Cricketers Pub, adjacent to the former Fire Station is a good example of this.

Strengthening edges and repairing sites along key corridors

The A216, A236 and Church Road are key routes, which in parts have a poor quality street environment that encourages faster traffic at the expense of street activity and pedestrians. Gaps in the frontage along these routes provide a good opportunity to repair the condition of these routes, alongside improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and greening enhancements, to contribute to an overall more positive pedestrian experience.

Celebrating Mitcham's significant industrial heritage

As well as its old houses and greens, Mitcham has a rich industrial heritage which grew around the Wandle. There are still significant pieces of industry which play an important role for Mitcham and London more widely. Employment uses within industrial areas and historic industrial buildings should be protected and celebrated, whilst also allowing employment typologies to evolve by integrating new types within housing-led development schemes.

Backlands and corners intensification at Pollards Hill south

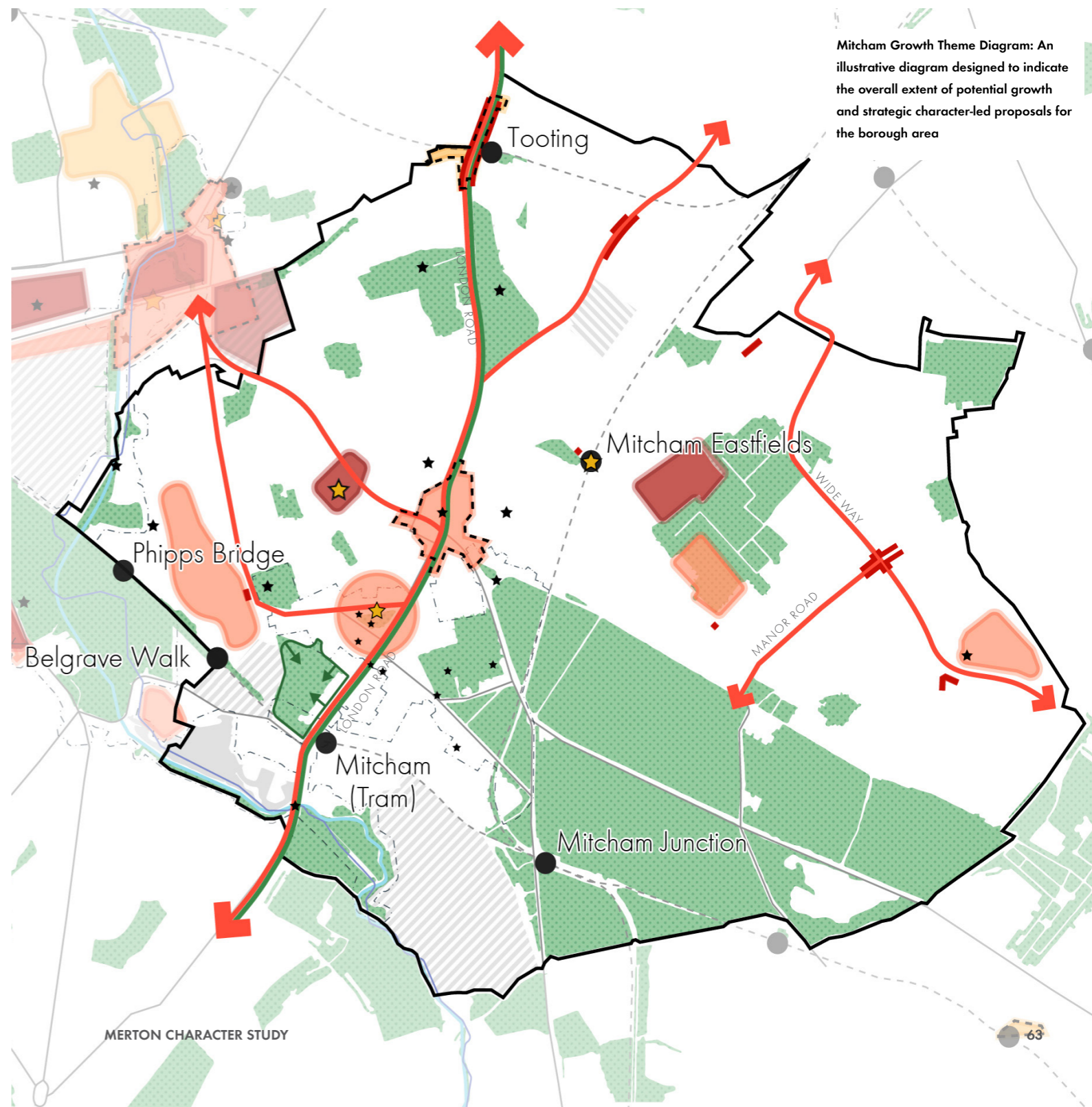
There may be opportunities for suburban intensification on the backlands and corner plots within the Pollards Hill south area. Merton's Small Sites Toolkit SPD will help inform what development should look like within this suburban setting to encourage development that is in keeping with the existing character. This document sets out guidance for the material palette, scale and features to help reinterpret the suburban character for new development.

proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- ↔ Local green link improvements

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
- Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- ★ Strategic Landmark
- ★ Local Landmark
- Road
- Rail
- Waterway



Mitcham Growth Theme Diagram: An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area

F

MORDEN

F MORDEN

F.1 INTRODUCTION

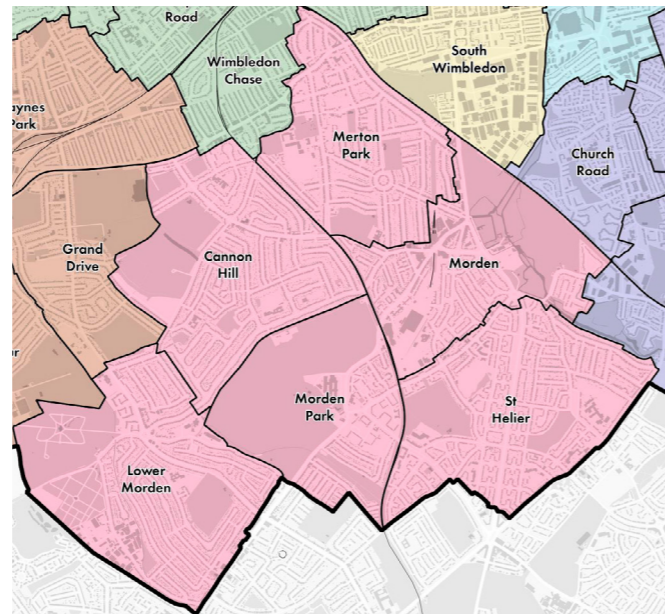
The Roman road of Stane Street continued through the Morden area of Merton, and as a result this area has a long history. Archaeological finds suggest there would have been a Roman settlement in the area. The oldest surviving buildings in the area include Morden Hall and Morden Park, both built in the second half of 18th century.

However, until the arrival of the London Underground this area remained largely rural. Through the inter-war period a new town centre (away from the historic village centre of Morden) and residential neighbourhoods grew up around Morden station, joining with Merton Park which had been developed earlier by John Innes at the end of 19th century.

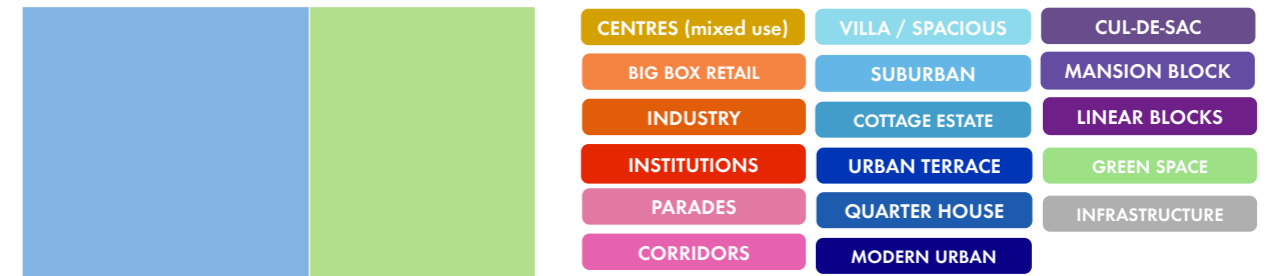
Today, the area is an attractive suburban location for Londoners. The area has a consistency in scale with dominance of inter-war and 1940/50s development. Morden Park and Morden Hall Park are two important historic features, but both could be better celebrated and integrated in the way the area has grown.

The A24 Epsom / London Road now weaves its way through the area, but remains an ancient route and important connection. The River Wandle runs along the eastern side of the area, but is also underplayed in how it relates to the Morden area.

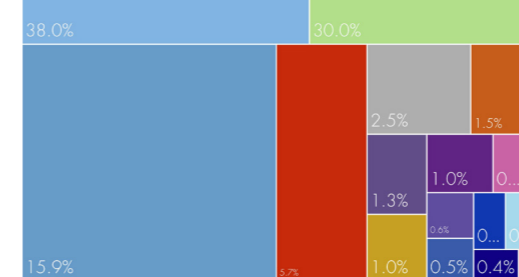
The area is made up of six residential suburban neighbourhoods, each relating to retail centres. Morden town centre is the most significant centre and has intensified over the years. The consistency in scale and built form throughout the neighbourhoods in the area means that change stand out and therefore intensification needs to be thoughtfully introduced.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
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A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. The Morden area is one of the most consistent in the borough with almost 85% of the area made up of only three typologies - suburban homes, green space and cottage estate homes.

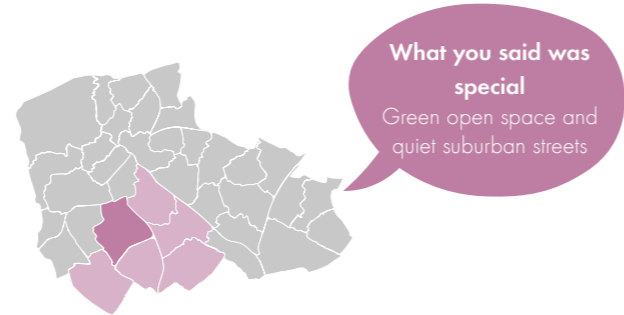


Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area. See appendix for individual neighbourhoods.





What you said was special
Good access to transport and green spaces



What you said was special
Green open space and quiet suburban streets

MORDEN

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Focus is the town centre - historic commercial centre developed following northern line extension in 1920s
- Beyond town centre, predominantly residential in character - low rise suburban housing with more open 'garden city' style layout to the south, and more formal denser grid layout to west.
- Apartment blocks west of town centre
- Punctuated by major movement corridors - London Road, Morden Hall Road and Aberconway Road
- Civic Centre, the station and Baitul Futuh mosque are key local landmarks
- Morden Hall Park open space with historic buildings and features scattered to south
- Excellent transport links and open spaces

key issues / opportunities

- Transition between densifying town centre and suburban residential could be improved, currently quite abrupt
- Poor relationship between Morden town centre and Morden Hall Park - hidden access points, busy major roads with few crossings - opportunity to improve this
- Improve environment in centre with traffic calming, greening and public realm enhancement
- Opportunity to reimagine Morden as a young and vibrant town centre through context-led mixed use development
- Barrier of railway line along park's edge to east - explore opportunities to improve connections across

CANNON HILL

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Spacious and suburban residential area consisting of 1920s/1930s terraces and semi-detached homes
- Garden City character at Whatley Avenue and surrounding roads
- Cannon Hill Common a key feature with woodland and meadow habitats - offers views across London
- Examples of mansion block typologies e.g. Meretune Court and Merton Mansions
- Shopping parades along key routes - Martin Way and Cannon Hill Lane
- Schools, churches, a community centre and open space are other uses
- Grassy verges are an important contributor in this area

key issues / opportunities

- Some neighbourhood nodes need enhancement - strengthen the role of local shopping parades and seek opportunities for intensification
- Loss of boundary walls, green verges and front gardens to hard surface detract from overall character
- Railway line acts as major barrier to northeast
- Celebrate the green spaces and improve walking and cycling links to them





LOWER MORDEN

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Mainly residential - curving terraced streets with low rise interwar homes
- Garth Road transitions from residential street to predominantly industrial uses - stark contrast in character
- Key open spaces include cemetery and King George's Recreation Field
- Pockets of other non-perimeter housing typologies including free form blocks set within open spaces
- Area generally feels a little left behind and would benefit from renewed interest and investment

key issues / opportunities

- Improve edges of Garth Road industrial area - opportunities for intensification whilst protecting employment uses
- Above shop infill opportunities e.g. at Grand Drive shopping parade



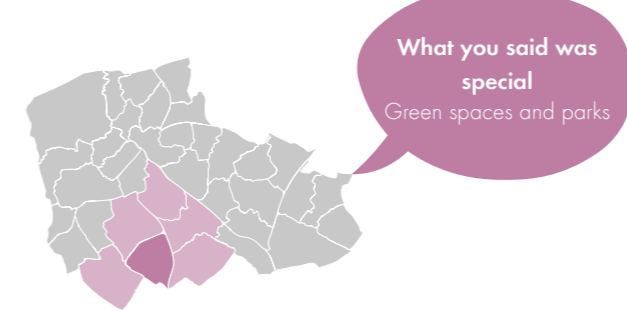
MERTON PARK

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Mainly residential area with mix of late 19th century larger semi detached houses (in arts and crafts style) and later 1920s/early 1930s semi-detached and terraced housing
- Strong sense of composition with a regular plan radiating from a central circle
- Despite different stages of development, architectural features used to unite area and give it coherent character and identity
- Grassy verges, front gardens and mature trees give it a leafy and green character
- Part of area in John Innes Conservation area and several locally listed buildings
- Pockets of more recent development
- Mostyn Gardens is a large park and recreation ground which serves the area. Other planned landscape assets include Kendor Gardens and Church Lane Playing Fields

key issues / opportunities

- Loss of front gardens and boundary walls
- Unsympathetic alterations / extensions
- Tree planting and reinstatement of verges
- Improvements to public open space e.g. Kendor Gardens, Mostyn Gardens
- Promote walking and cycling as alternative to busy movement corridors - improve walking and cycling connections over the railway



MORDEN PARK

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Morden Park a key feature of the area - extensive parkland, woodland and playing fields
- London Road forms its eastern boundary with housing beyond - 1950s free form blocks set in green space like at Hatfield Mead, and suburban interwar low rise terraced streets with garden city layout
- Haig Home estates arranged around courtyards set in landscaped surroundings
- Cluster of community uses on London Road with park setting including leisure centre, school, college campus and leisure centre
- Much of the area is included in the Upper Morden Conservation Area and there is a concentration of listed buildings

key issues / opportunities

- London Road is busy major movement corridor - poor pedestrian environment, sparse planting, few crossings etc - real opportunity to transform into an active travel corridor
- London Road has poor relationship with Morden Park - few access points and hidden away - opportunity to improve this
- Barrier of railway line to east restricts permeability and access
- Large areas for parking e.g. at Harvester / college - scope to review and potential to explore opportunities for infill



ST HELIER

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Focus on St Helier Avenue which cuts through the middle of the area
- London County Council (LCC) interwar planned residential estate designed with garden city characteristics - cul-de-sac comprised of red brick terraces around greens a key feature
- Large areas of open space for recreation and green verges / hedges enhancing quality and green character of area
- Shopping parades with flats above
- Morden Recreation Ground to south

key issues / opportunities

- Loss of front gardens to hard standing and replacement of hedges - opportunity to reinstate these
- St Helier Avenue is a busy car dominated route - opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle environment along this wide route
- Public realm improvements at shopping parades
- Explore infill opportunities for cottage style housing



Growth themes

Support the evolution of Morden town centre

Morden is comparatively a young area in London which is still evolving and maturing. The core of the town centre needs to evolve to serve the growing community. The intensification of Morden town centre should be supported whilst carefully considering the transition line/zone to enable it to be comfortably set within the wider suburban neighbourhoods.

Restore the London Road (A24) as a key focus through the area

This ancient route represents a logical location for intensification and an opportunity to enhance sustainable connections. The approach would see development brought forward to positively address the route and the intensification of existing development such as retail parades. Alongside this, the wide section could be used to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure, transforming this route into a key piece in Merton's active travel network.

Celebrate the area's historic parks

Both Morden Park and Morden Hall Park are fantastic assets to this area, but are currently underplayed. The edges of Morden Park should be transformed to create a positive edge to the London Road and a series of celebrated entrance points from all sides. The town centre regeneration should improve its connections to Morden Hall Park and the quality of the environment along Morden Hall Road enhanced.

Use the avenue streets as sustainable corridors

Generous avenue routes such as St Helier Avenue provide great opportunities to maximise cycling and walking provision. Alongside this reallocation of space in street section, there could be a move to encourage intensification/diversification of uses at key points along their routes.

Recognise Morden South station as a key future node

The area around Morden South station has seen the growth of some key uses, most notably the mosque. The presence of key community assets such as the mosque and Morden Park, and the accessibility of this node afforded by the station and A24 route, make it a strong location for intensification which would benefit the nearby suburban residential areas.

Reveal the waterways

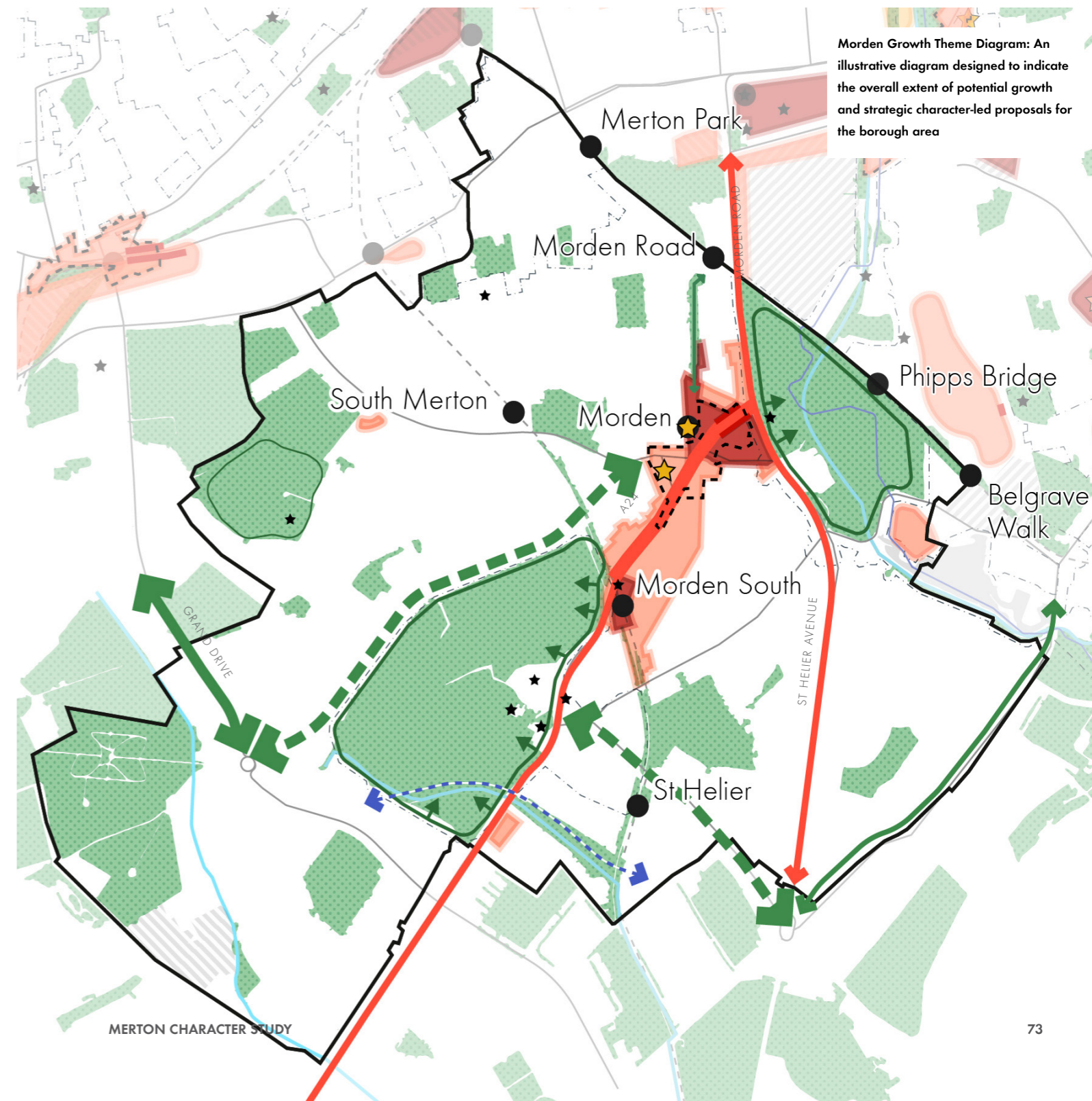
The River Wandle runs along the eastern boundary of the area and opportunities exist along this stretch to regenerate adjacent sites as has been achieved in Mitcham along the river. Introducing new development fronting on to the river alongside environmental improvements would ensure Morden benefits fully from the presence of the Wandle. In addition, there are other watercourses currently hidden which could be revealed as positive environmental features in the wider area.

proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- ↔ Local green link improvements

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
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- ★ Local Landmark
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- Rail
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Morden Growth Theme Diagram: An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area



RAYNES PARK

G RAYNES PARK

G.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of the borough was developed later than Wimbledon having been rural landscape and farmland until the railway and road infrastructure stretched out and connected this area to a growing London.

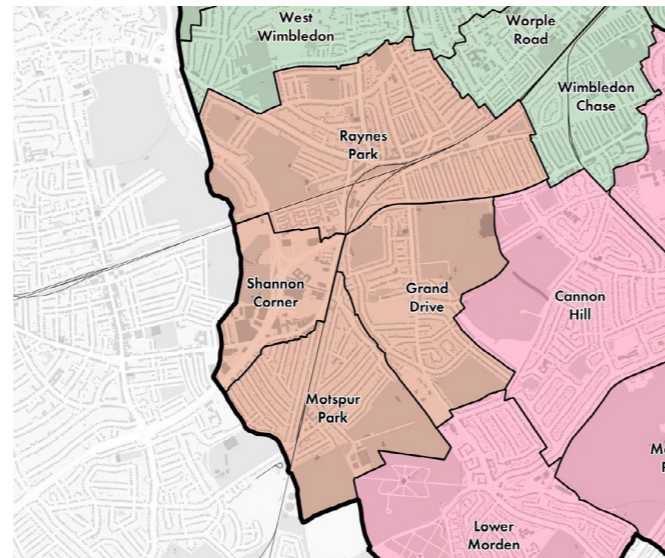
The sub area is formed of four neighbourhoods - Raynes Park itself, Shannon Corner, Grand Drive and Motspur Park.

Raynes Park forms the key centre in the area from which a series of Victorian and Edwardian residential streets and neighbourhoods emanate. Raynes Park and Grand Drive were developed first and still retain a strong historic character. Motspur Park has a distinctly suburban Metroland style character, having been developed in the inter-war period. Whilst Shannon Corner is the focus for more modern and larger format development, having evolved on the back of major road infrastructure including the Kingston bypass.

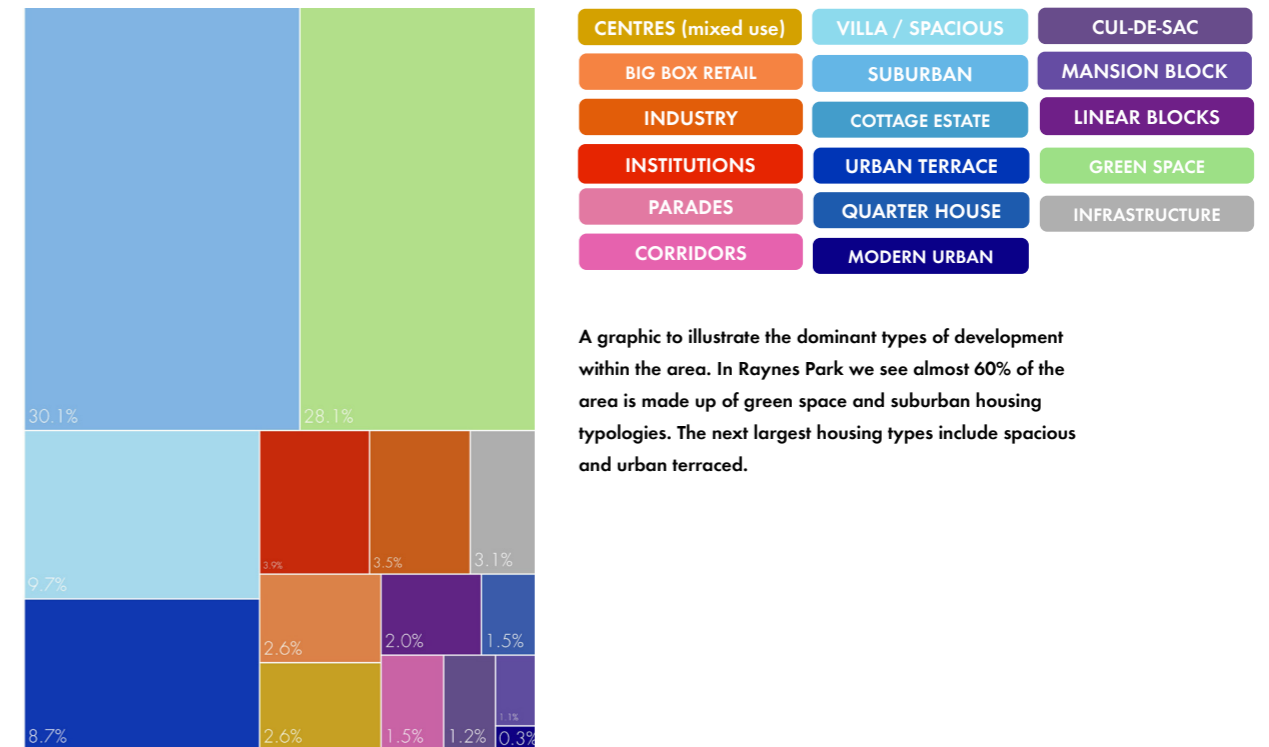
There is a stark difference in intensity and character between areas north and south of the rail line at Raynes Park. Within this is an opportunity to better connect the pieces either side of the rail line, and in doing so translate the quality of intensification that occurs.

The A3 (Kingston) Bypass route had a huge impact on the area causing the natural course of growth to change direction resulting in the severance of links to areas to the west.

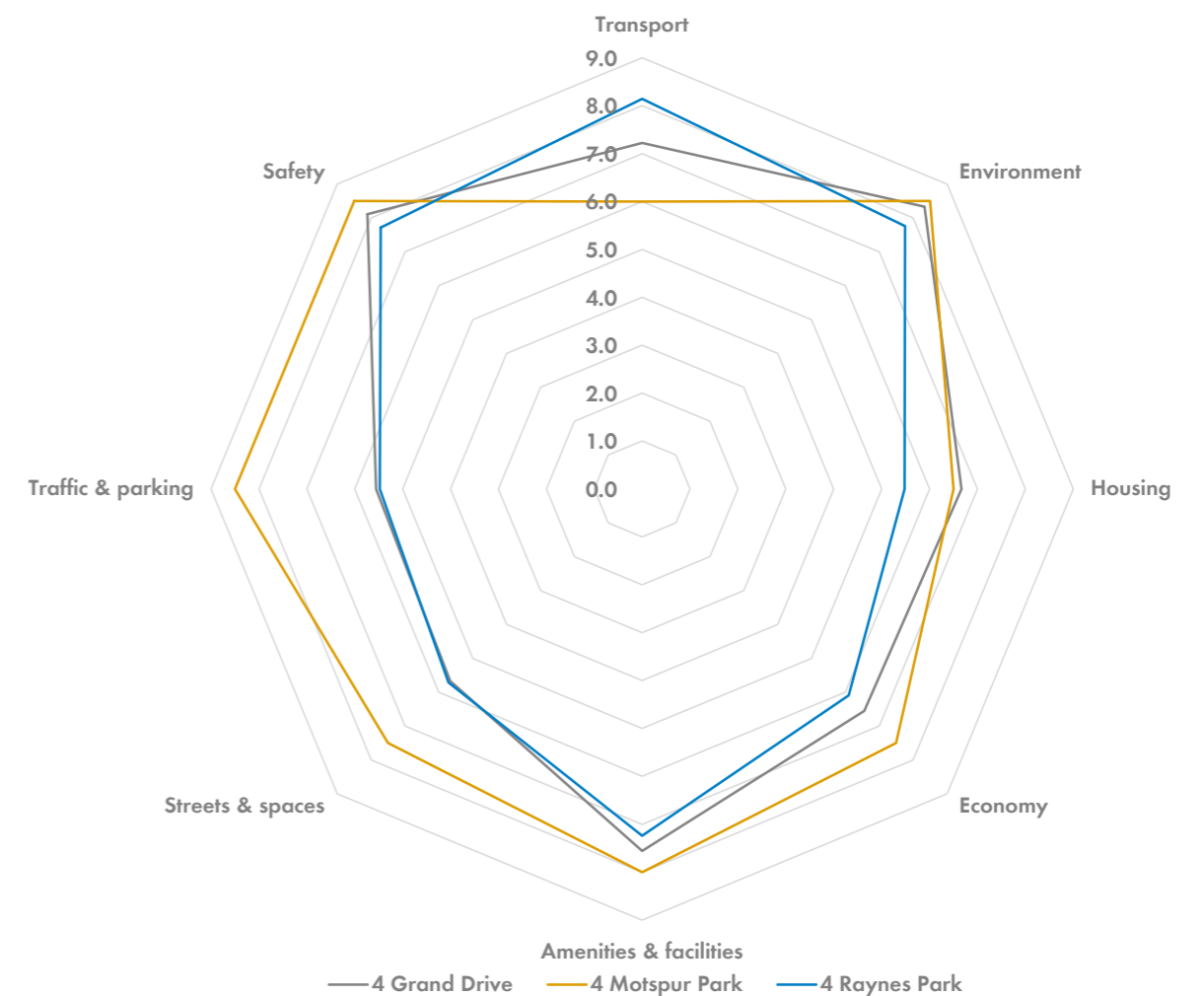
Away from the large landscape features to the north there exists a deficiency in open space and green infrastructure. Future adaptation to climate change will need street greening and smaller spaces to be introduced alongside new growth.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
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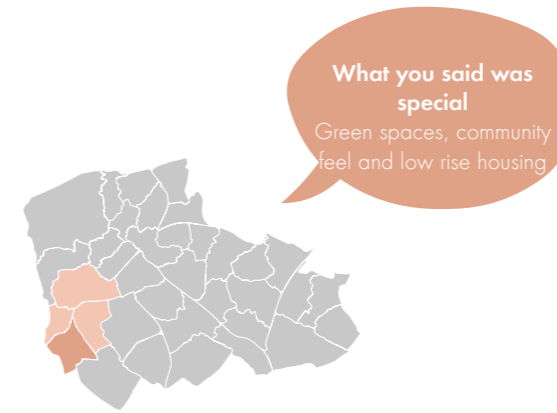
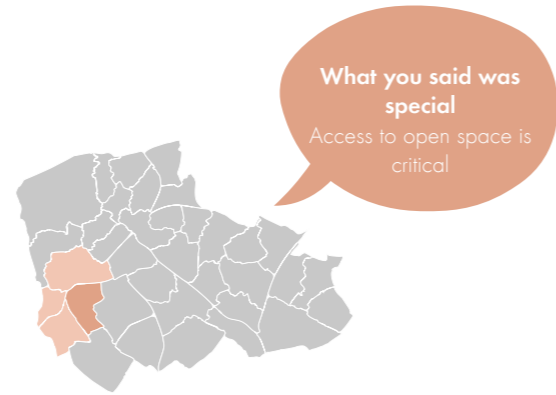


A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. In Raynes Park we see almost 60% of the area is made up of green space and suburban housing typologies. The next largest housing types include spacious and urban terraced.



Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area. See appendix for individual neighbourhoods.





RAYNES PARK

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Historic town centre which grew up in the late Victorian /Edwardian era on the back of the arrival of the railway.
- Raynes Park is located at the fine point of an 'urban wedge' which stretches along mixed use railway corridor from the east.
- Spacious 'Wimbledon Hill' character to north and views south from here.

key issues / opportunities

- High incidence of conservation areas - particularly to the north of the rail line - which has supported high quality character.
- Stark difference between the quality of intensification coming forward north and south of the rail line - to the south the intensification that is happening slowly is much lower quality.
- Cottenham Park was the only development pre-1900 and as such the rail station relates much more strongly to the north, with connection issues persisting today for neighbourhoods to the south.
- Opportunities to enhance the quality of shop frontages and development in the town centre.

GRAND DRIVE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- The alignment of Grand Drive was originally marked by a hedgerow across open fields in maps dating from the 1870s.
- St. Saviours Church opened in 1907 and the distinctive row of "Arts and Crafts" villas opposite followed shortly after.
- High incidence of open space and green infrastructure which gives this area a particularly green character.
- Generally terraced homes set on generous streets and laid around areas of open space.

key issues / opportunities

- Generous street section of Grand Drive lends itself well to supporting improved walking and cycling provision.
- Scope to enhance the entry points into green spaces for example Heath Drive and entrances to the Paddock from Parkway.

MOTSPUR PARK

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Laid out as a suburban residential area in the inter-war period linked to the opening of Motspur Park station.
- Generally short terraced blocks of four homes with generous rear gardens. Some street trees, but generally a pattern of reducing street greenery.
- Area looks south to New Malden rather than north to Raynes Park.

key issues / opportunities

- Consistency of character and format across the whole area means there are limited opportunities for intensification beyond plot-by-plot.
- Motspur Park station currently looks primarily east, and so opportunities could be explored to better link the residential area to the west.
- Potentially scope to intensify immediately around the station itself.

SHANNON CORNER

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Defined largely by major infrastructure including the A3 and its imprint.
- Large footprint retail sheds set within expansive surface car parks
- Schools and community infrastructure are often at the boundary between infrastructure and neighbouring residential areas.

key issues / opportunities

- Strategic highway infrastructure creates a significant barrier to movement in the area, particularly with raised routes and intersections.
- Big box retail is appropriately located linked to this infrastructure, but the links back into local centres are poor making this provision an island which is only driven to.
- The underlying landscape and brooks is hidden and masked by development at present, but represents an opportunity to transform the area in the future.
- Potential for larger retail sites to deliver homes in the longer term.
- Existing employment clusters delivering jobs and services to the wider area.



Growth themes

Support Raynes Park town centre

as a characterful local centre serving both sides of the tracks. Emphasise the role of the existing centre as a service centre for the wider community. Knit together the connections more convincingly and the parcels of underused space within or immediately adjacent to the centre. This might include thinking about the mix of uses on sites south of the rail line, and supporting enhanced access through the rail arches. Opportunities to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on the centre and enhance the pedestrian and cycle environment generally should be explored.

Enhance access to existing open spaces

This area is blessed with a number of larger open spaces, some more accessible than others. There are opportunities to enhance both the quality of the spaces and the access into them. This would help ensure the underlying character and intentions built into this area are fully appreciated and optimised. Opportunities for smaller green public spaces such as parklets within existing and new neighbourhoods should also be encouraged.

Enhance the role of stations as connecting pieces

At both Motspur Park and Raynes Park an imbalance exists between the sides of stations. To address this opportunities to intensify those blocks closest to the station entrance on the "other side" should be explored, as well as enhancing the station entry points with public realm enhancement and step-free access in general.

Use the avenue streets as sustainable corridors

Maximise the provision for active travel routes for cycling and walking along generous routes such as Grand Drive. Start to encourage intensification/diversification at key points along their routes. Both Grand Drive and Coombe Lane have important roles in supporting sustainable movement up to the potential future Crossrail 2 link at Raynes Park.

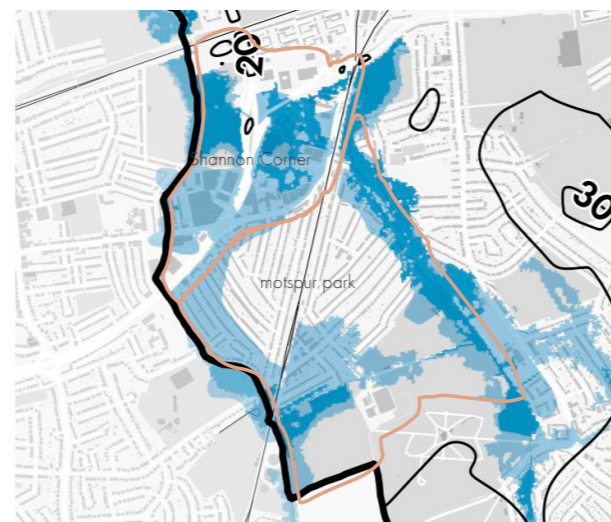
Connect in Shannon Corner

Seek to move to a more local connection for this shopping area. Accept that Shannon Corner provides a different, but necessary, type of retail, but that over time it needs to be drawn into the surrounding area's functioning, in particular with links to Raynes Park centre. In doing so future flexibility should be considered, in particular to avoid building in inflexibility at ground floor when intensifying sites. This will require careful balancing of strategic retail/employment and new residential.

Address the isolation of non-retail sites in this area including West Barnes Estate. Enhance the connections through these parcels and to Raynes Park centre.

Reveal underlying landscape assets

Opportunities to use the landscape history of areas such as Shannon Corner and Motspur Park to inform future change could help address resilience to climate change, in particular water infrastructure. The network of brooks and watercourses through the area could form a more positive part of current character whilst also supporting environmental functions.



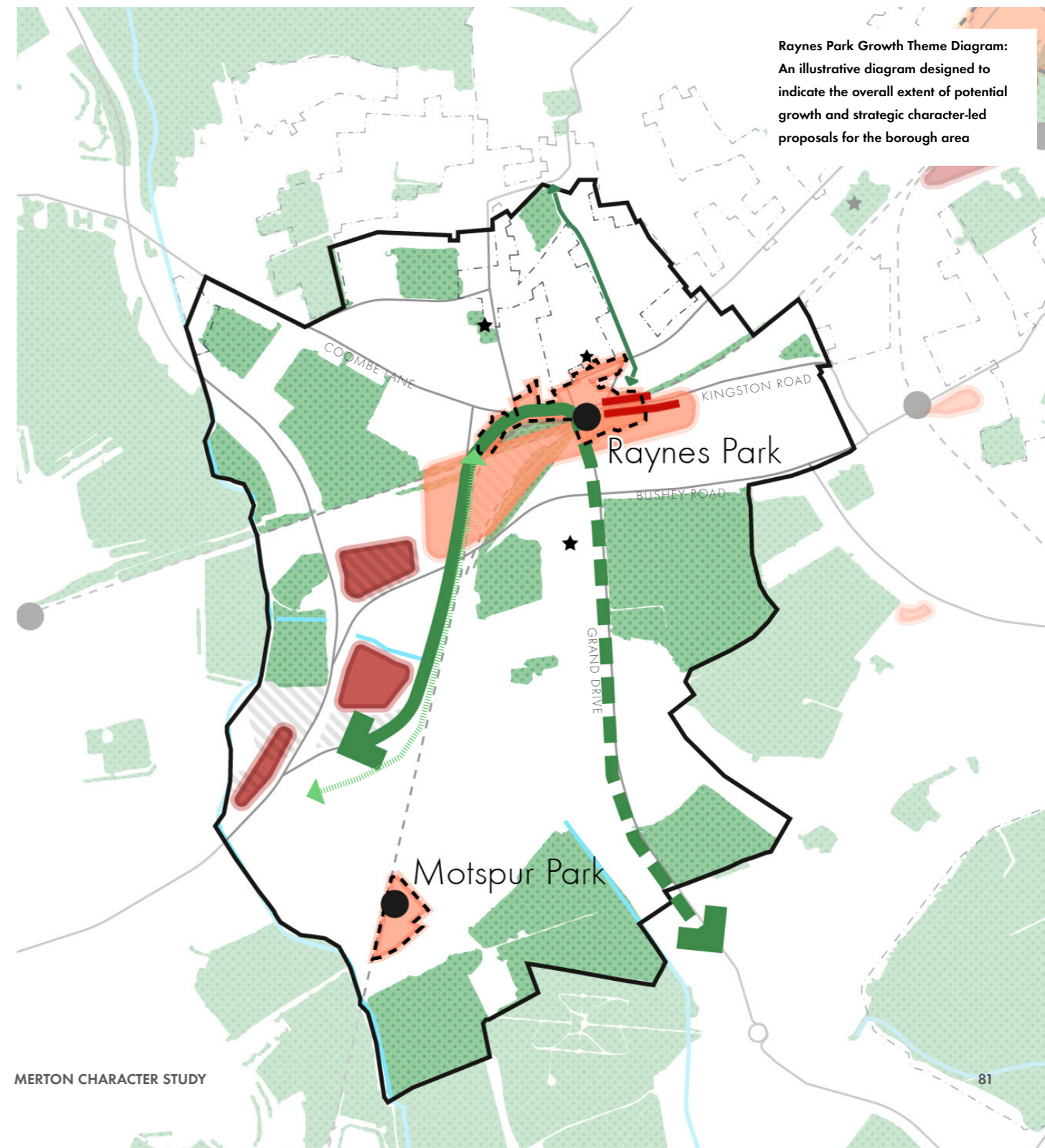
Flood zones
 ■ zone 3
 ■ zone 2

proposals / opportunities:

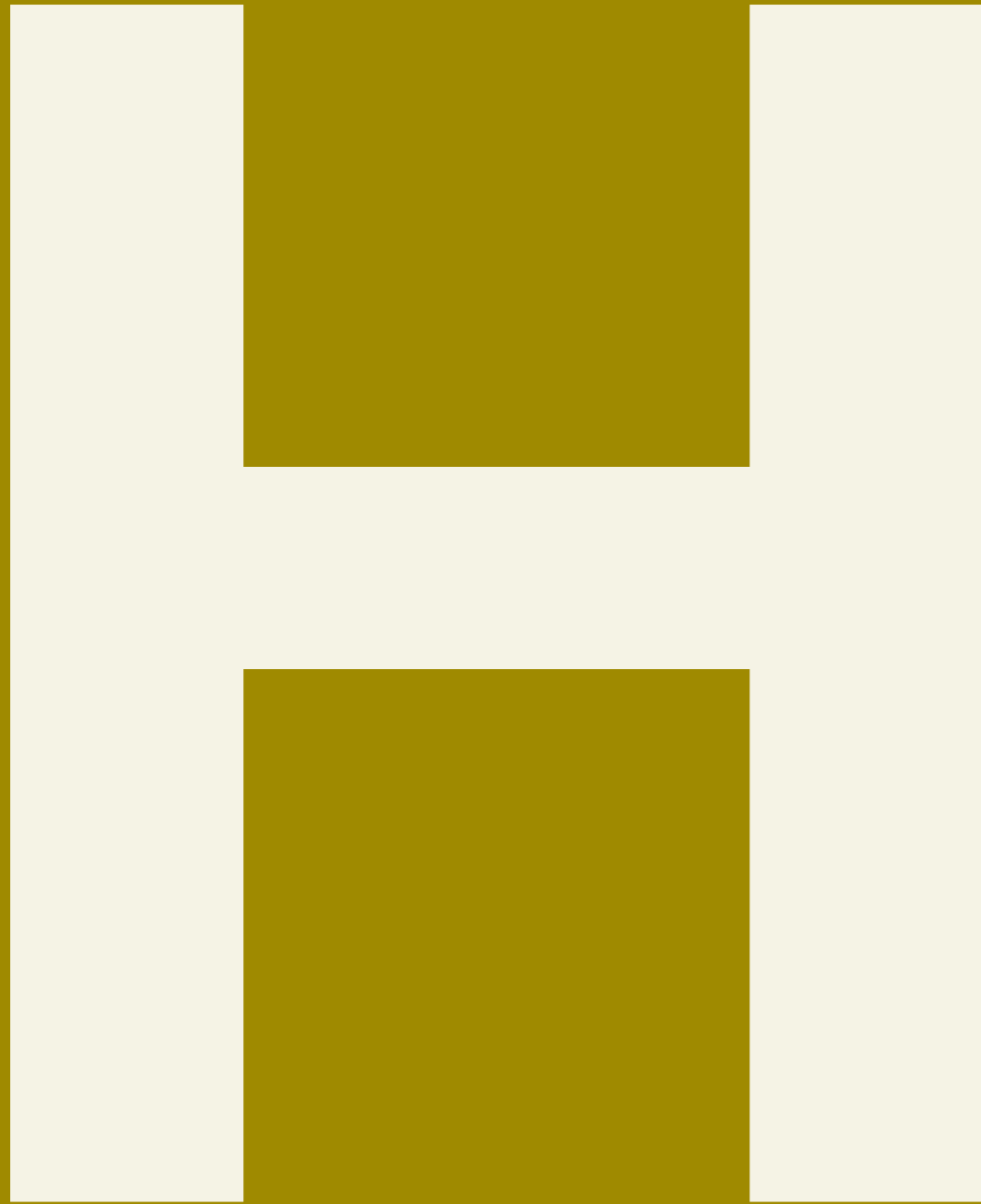
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Raynes Park Growth Theme Diagram:
 An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area



SOUTH WIMBLEDON

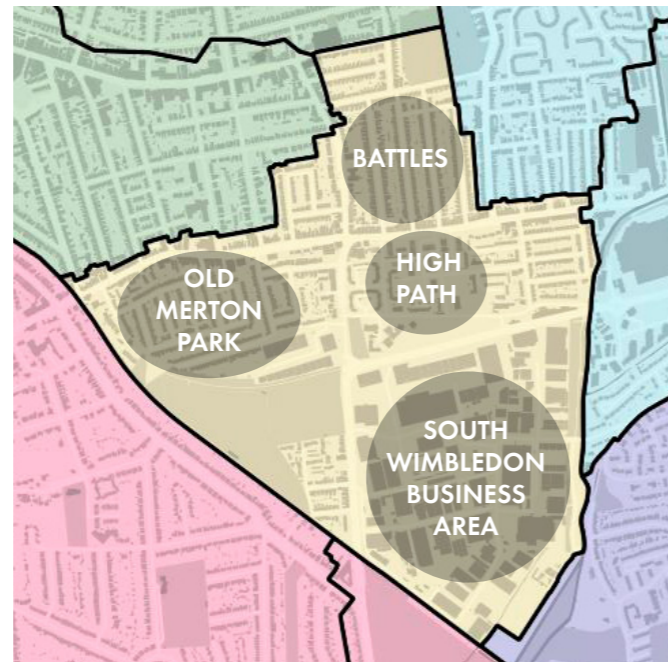
H SOUTH WIMBLEDON

H.1 INTRODUCTION

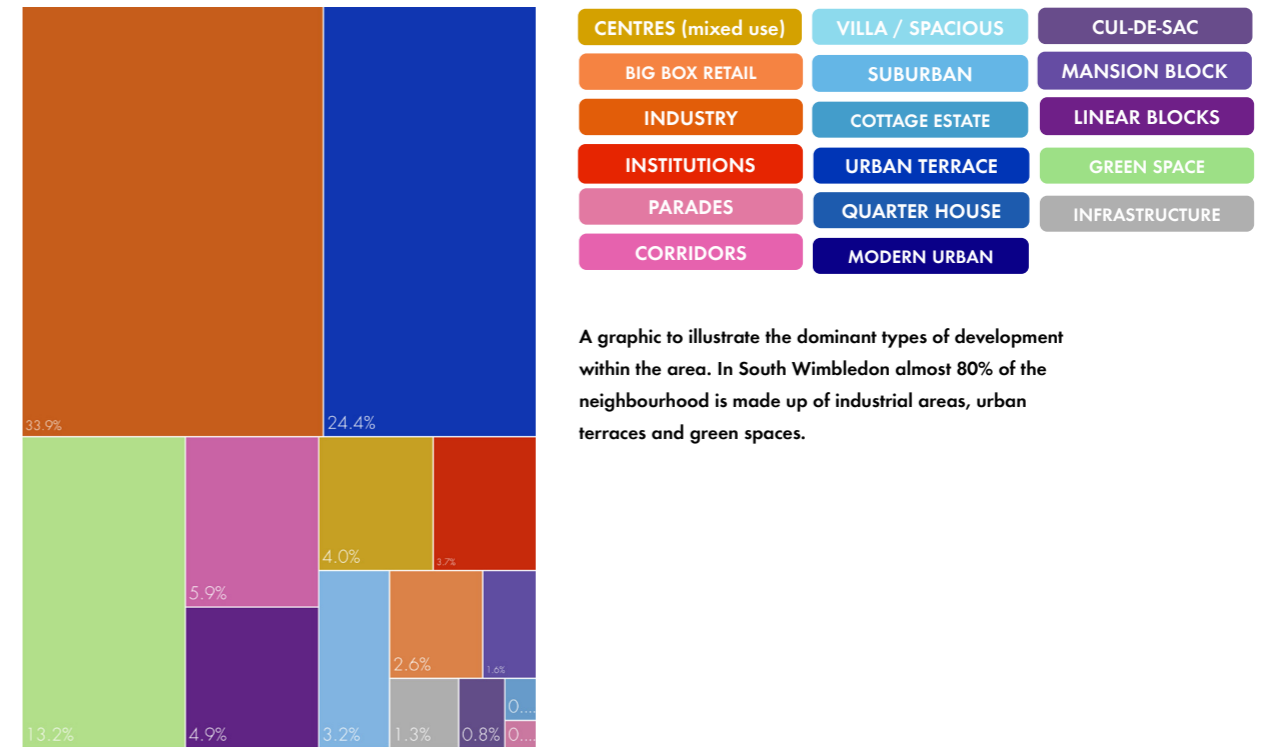
Historic maps illustrate the important link between the development of South Wimbledon and the Colliers Wood Corridor - developing as a place together along Merton High Street and as a result of the industry that developed around Merton Abbey in the early 18th century associated with the water mills on the River Wandle. The existing centre of South Wimbledon was once part of Admiral Lord Nelson's "Paradise Merton" estate and historic assets visible today include St John the Devine Church and Nelson Gardens which commemorate his death.

Today the centre of South Wimbledon is marked by the attractive underground station building which sits at the key junction which marks the centre of the proposed new Local Centre. This centre stretches in all directions from this crossroads with a variety of shops and services for local residents. Distinctive residential neighbourhoods are located behind these main corridors including - the "Battles" roads of Victorian / Edwardian terraces, "Old Merton Park" to the west and the High Path estate itself. Merton Road and the residential streets to the north west provide important connections to Wimbledon Town Centre within easy walking distance.

South Wimbledon is a singular neighbourhood within its own borough sub-area. Feedback from residents on the plan of the borough neighbourhoods explained that this area is significant and distinct from Colliers Wood. Although an important relationship exists with Wimbledon Town Centre the station and local high street form their own 'place'. Having the centre separate from the rest of the borough is an important part of recognising its future role and status. The regeneration of High Path and other development along the key corridors through the area will provide important opportunities to continue to positively evolve the character of the place and reinforce the distinctiveness of this local centre.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
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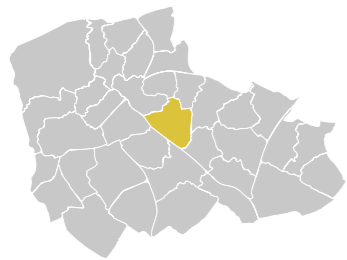
A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. In South Wimbledon almost 80% of the neighbourhood is made up of industrial areas, urban terraces and green spaces.



Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area.

What you said was special
 The attractive, human scale, victorian and edwardian buildings. Local independent high streets for shopping and dining

What needs improving
 "South Wimbledon station - needs greening and junction improvements. How can this become more of a destination? With leisure, culture and community uses? The parks needs to have better facilities (Cafes, more gardens rather than just grass etc...)."



SOUTH WIMBLEDON

**High path and South Wimbledon Business Area
 Distinctiveness – heritage and key features**

- Planned regeneration of High Path modernist estate will provide a mix of uses, new open space and high quality homes.
- South Wimbledon Business Area includes Merton Industrial Park and Lombard Business Park to the south of Merantun Way and Nelson Trading Estate off Morden Road. It is home to a diverse array of industrial, employment and community uses.
- Deen City Farm an enclave of urban farmland.
- The Wandle Trail to the east is tree-lined, and provides a tranquil cycle and pedestrian route.

Key issues / opportunities.

- Opportunities to Improve the interface between Morden Hall Park and Abbey Recreation Ground with South Wimbledon Business Area creating an opportunity for a greener industrial estate.
- Morden Road is a poor quality environment and creates east/west severance.
- Opportunities to improve connectivity between green spaces and improve the quality of environment and biodiversity.
- Industrial estates - 1930s brick buildings, connectivity to Wandle and improved edges
- High Path estate regeneration

**Battles and Old Merton Park
 Distinctiveness – heritage and key features**

- Distinct character of predominately Victorian/Georgian period homes on tree lined streets.
- Nursery Road Playing Fields and Abbey Recreation Ground are used for recreation and play host to facilities such as cricket wickets, football pitches, playground and pavilion.

Key issues / opportunities.

- Design guidance for residents within historic terraced streets: boundary treatment, windows, roof and porches, the value of landscaped front gardens and improving environmental performance.

**Merton High Street
 Distinctiveness – heritage and key features**

- A busy linear shopping parade that connects Merton east to west and comprises of predominately commercial uses and homes.
- South Wimbledon underground station is a Grade II listed and marks a significant intersection.
- Buildings are typically late Victorian or Edwardian 3 storey shopping parades with shop fronts on ground floor and offices/residential accommodation above.
- Buildings of note include the Grade II Manor house, which dates from the 1700s with weatherboarding to one side, and later brick Georgian façade. Merton Hall is a red/brown brick building from 1899 with stone detail clock tower. Also of note are the former council offices from 1900 in red brick with carved stone detail and Palladian window

Key issues / opportunities.

- Better provision for active travel (such as cycling and walking) can improve air quality.
- Opportunities for improved planting can improve air quality and biodiversity levels.
- Improving the quality of shopfronts will have a positive impact on the character of the high street, however many shopfronts have been poorly converted to homes that offer little to the character of the high street.
- A mixed quality of upward extensions has had a negative impact on the character of the high street. Opportunity for guidance on upward extensions (small sites toolkit).



proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- ↔ Local green link improvements

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
- Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- ★ Strategic Landmark
- ★ Local Landmark
- Road
- Rail
- Waterway

Growth themes

Reimagining Morden Road as a green corridor that celebrates the gateway to south Wimbledon connects strategic green spaces

The Morden Road/A219/A24 provides the gateway to South Wimbledon centre. It currently provides a traffic and tarmac dominated arrival to the centre. There are significant opportunities to reimagine this route between Morden Hall Park and South Wimbledon Station. The assets of Nelson Gardens, Abbey Recreation Ground and Morden Hall Park linking to the River Wandle all have frontage along the route and should provide the launchpads for a significantly greened route to help mitigate pollution and enhance the environmental quality. Significantly re-balancing the road space towards active travel (such as cycling and walking), sustainable modes and greening, as well as seeking opportunities to deliver more positive frontage to the road should be a key priority.

Enhancements to the sustainable corridors within the area should include public realm enhancements with improved crossings, shop front improvements, pavement widening (where possible) and street planting. Infill sites will deliver new homes and commercial spaces to repair the positive frontage. Where there are low quality low-rise buildings, these gaps should be repaired. Stepping up the height on corner plots will help to mark junctions and deliver the intensification of these sustainable locations. These types of changes along Kingston Road / Merton High Street will help improve the character of the environment and shift away from a traffic dominated route.

Strengthening the identity of Morden Industrial Area through the intensification of its thresholds to make it a better neighbour and protect its long-term sustainability

Morden Industrial Area is an asset for the local area - providing jobs, supplies and services for the local area. Although its character as an industrial area is

inherently 'working' and practical, investment and changes can still occur to make it a better a neighbour and support the area as a successful and sustainable business location. The existing network of businesses should be supported through better communication and networking to help connect businesses with each other and to local residents - celebrating and advertising the diversity that exists.

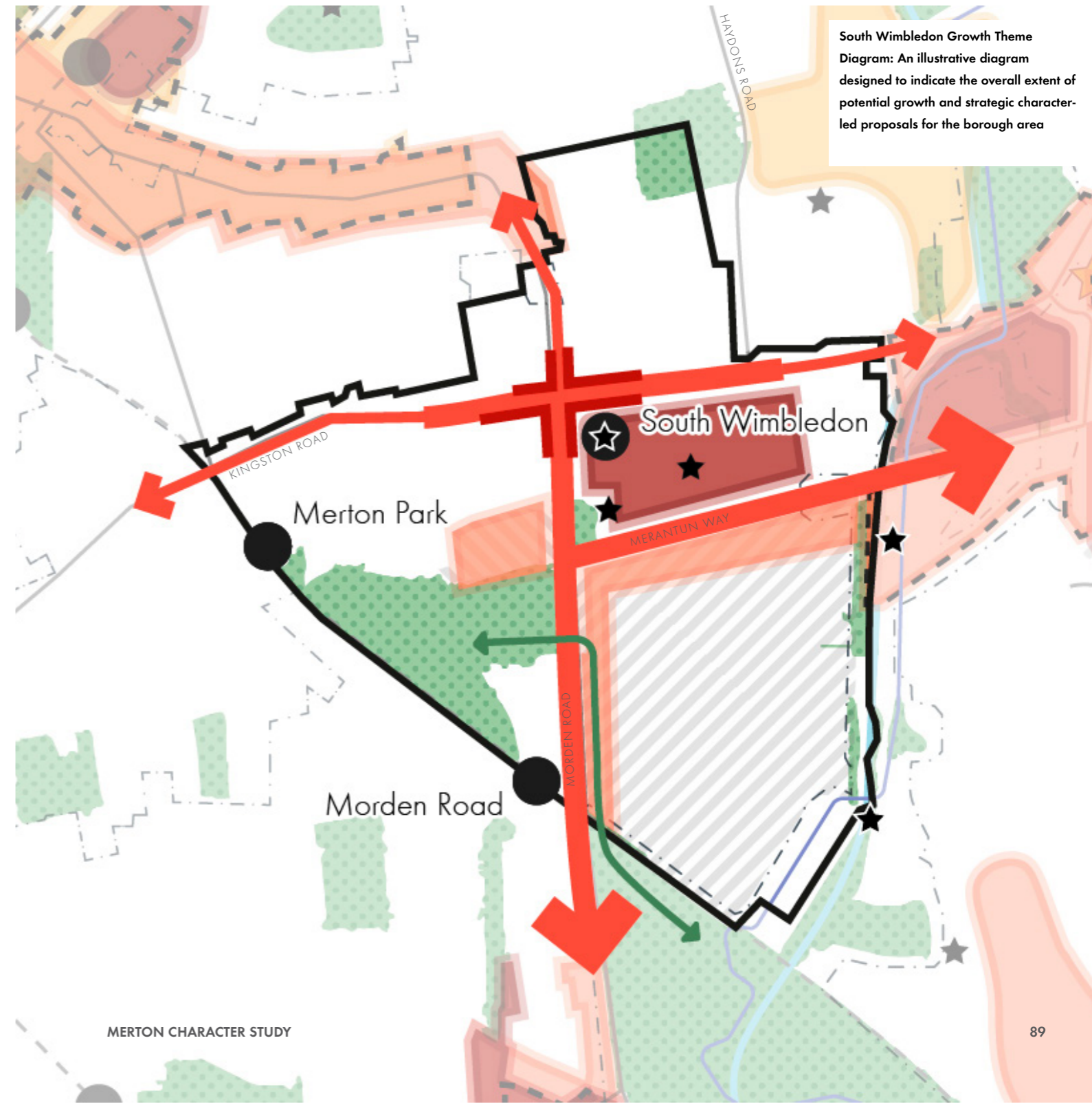
In terms of physical investment, the connectivity through the Wandle River can be improved to enhance the environment within the estate and better promote access to Deen City Farm. There are also some robust and attractive 1930s brick buildings which should be protected to help retain a diversity in the building materials and character. Redevelopment that provides more active frontage and densifies the edges of the estate will be supported to help make it a better neighbour and improve the existing negative edges along the A24.

Regeneration of High Path Estate into an integrated sustainable urban residential neighbourhood

The delivery of this major regeneration scheme will have a significant positive impact on Morden Road and Merton High Street, as well as delivering new quality homes, and a sense of focus at the tube station. More legible connections through the estate will better integrate the character of this area with surrounding neighbourhoods and provide a new green space for residents.

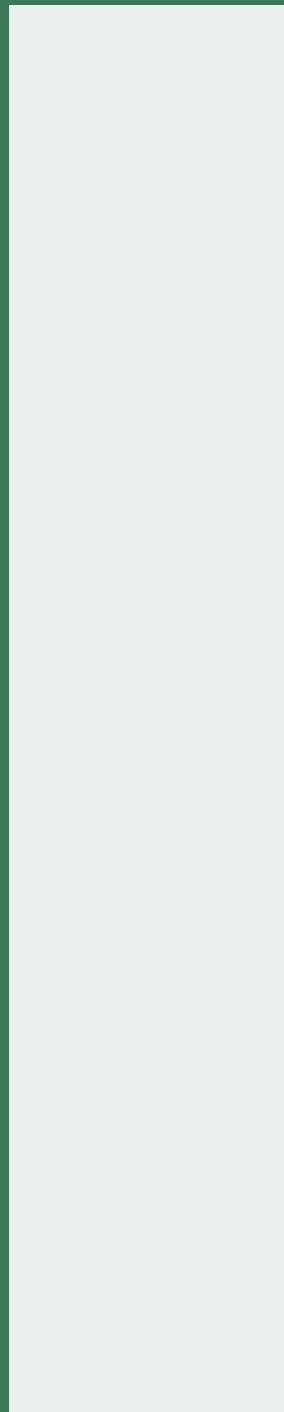
Design guidance for residents within Victorian / Edwardian streets

Opportunities to repair and enhance the existing character and quality of residential areas should be explored. Through small sites design guidance, residential enhancements should include guidance on boundary treatment, window replacement, roof and porches and the value of landscaped front gardens.



South Wimbledon Growth Theme
Diagram: An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area

WIMBLEDON



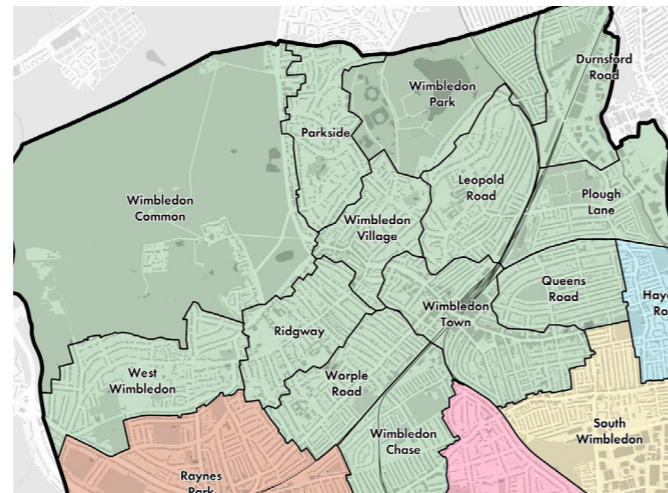
I WIMBLEDON

1.1 INTRODUCTION

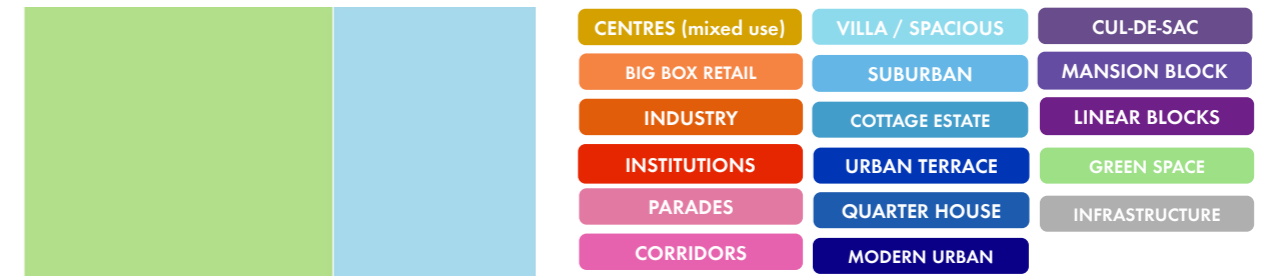
Wimbledon has a long history with evidence of an Iron Age camp at Wimbledon Common which has formed a varied and unique character across the area today. Originally the centre of Wimbledon formed at top of hill where 'Wimbledon village' is today. Since then, the focus of the town centre has moved down the hill to around the station when the railway opened in 1838. The second half of 19th century saw rapid expansion with villas and terraced houses built in residential neighbourhoods fanning out from the town centre joining the village and the train station, and expanding from the high street. Growth peaked in the 1930s after the expansion of the town centre in lower lying areas. During WWII many of the largest Victorian houses were sub-divided into flats or replaced with apartment blocks.

Today the town centre's popular leisure, cultural, retail and food & drink offer, together with Wimbledon Village's boutiques, bars, restaurants and expansive green spaces make Wimbledon a popular area. 13 neighbourhoods make up the Wimbledon area - with the buzzy centre and historic village as two of these, surrounded by residential neighbourhoods which all have a strong pull to these centres. Two neighbourhoods are dominated by very large green spaces; Wimbledon Common and Wimbledon Park - with Parkside, West Wimbledon, Ridgway and Leopold Road strongly associated with these spaces and all have a spacious green character. Worple Road and Wimbledon Chase lie to the southwest of the town centre with Queen's Road to the north - all with a more urban grain. Plough Lane and Durnsford Road make up the boundary of the borough to the north.

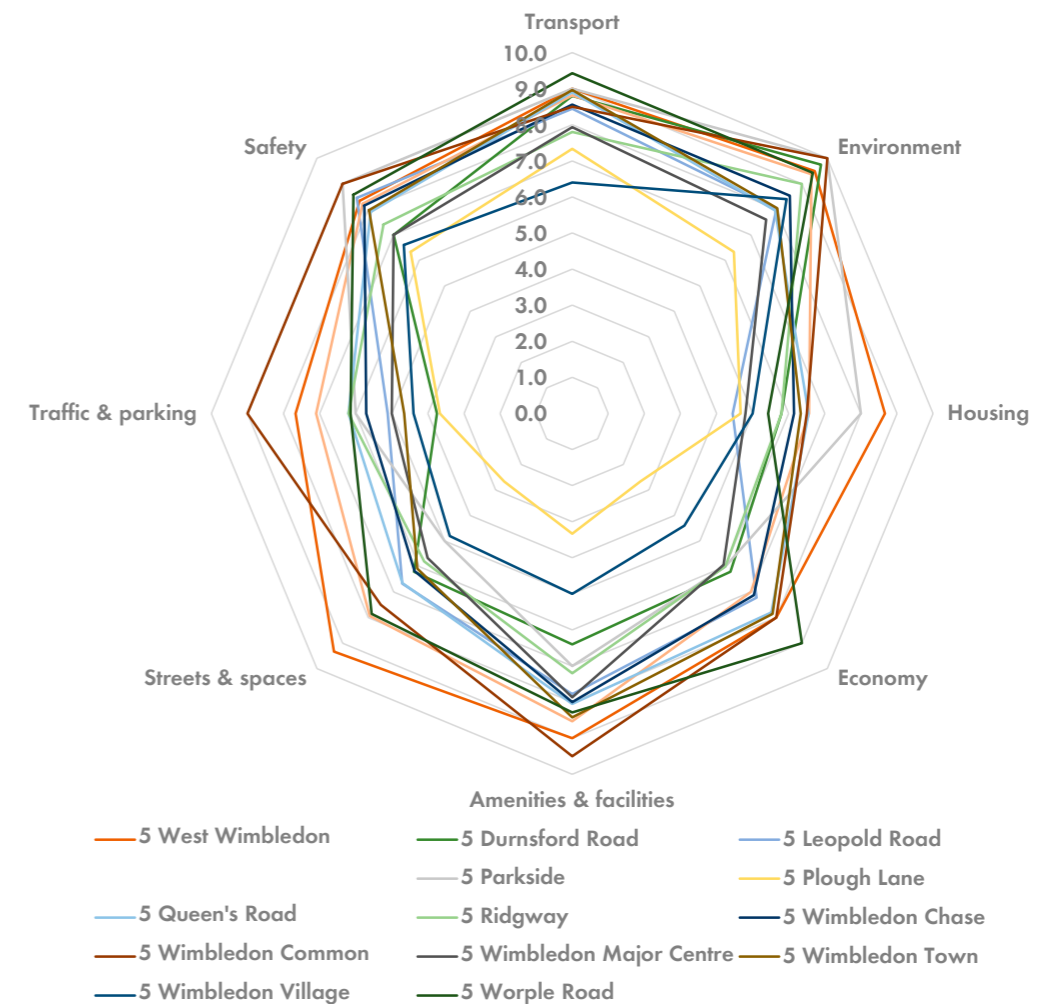
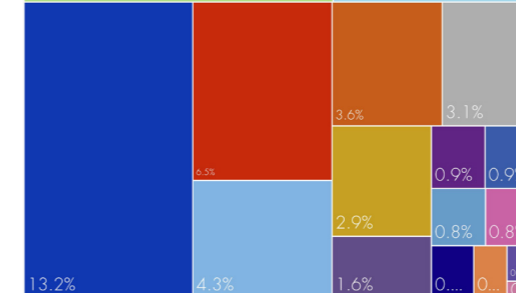
Wimbledon is described as an Opportunity Area, alongside Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon, in the emerging London Plan with the potential to accommodate 5,000 homes and 6,000 jobs. It is also within two proposed Growth Corridors; Crossrail 2 South and the Tram Triangle. This demonstrates the pressure for growth and the importance of understanding the character of each of the areas distinctive neighbourhoods.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area
© Crown copyright [and database rights] (2021) OS (London Borough of Merton 100019259, 2021)



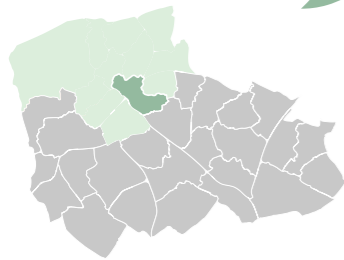
A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. 36% of the neighbourhood area is green space. The largest type of housing are the 'spacious' typology and urban terraces.



Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area. See appendix for individual neighbourhoods.

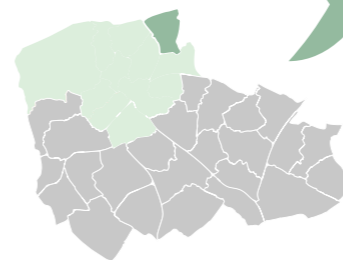
What you said was special

The blend of commerce, culture, leisure, retail and residential. The landmarks on the Broadway and leafy residential streets



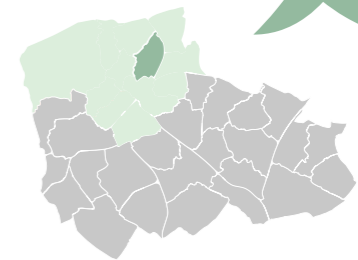
What you said was special

Good access to green spaces, sports clubs, transport links and attractive and consistent terraced streets



What you said was special

Residents enjoy the good access to green space, good transport access and attractive tree-lined residential streets



WIMBLEDON TOWN

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- The neighbourhood includes the largest / primary town centre in the borough - a key centre for retail, leisure/ culture and employment
- A mid-rise character with an attractive historic high street. A number of large bulky buildings and the one-way system have a negative impact on the centre.
- Mixed gridded terraced streets to the south of the Broadway and up Wimbledon Hill Road with blocks of flats on and behind this key spine.

Key issues / opportunities

- Key sites identified in the Future Wimbledon SPD for the core town centre including along the railway corridor, surface car parks and sites along the Broadway (<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/regeneration-projects/future-wimbledon>).
- Development in the commercial centre should take account of the existing scale and views from The Ridgway and the grain of the historic centre.
- Exceptional design quality will be required to help raise the quality of the environment and deliver new green spaces further south on The Broadway to improve the character of this area.
- There are challenges in mediating between the scale of the surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the core town centre and key sites that come forward here will need to carefully consider this transition.
- Design guidance for residents within historic terraced streets to help improve the quality of the public realm including boundary treatments, windows, roof and porches and the value of landscaped front gardens
- Opportunities for design guidance for sensitive intensification of terraced residential streets through extensions and conversions. Rear garden development to form new mews and the redevelopment of larger plots will deliver new homes in appropriate locations.
- Connectivity to surrounding green spaces should be enhanced (such as the planned improvements to Wimbledon Hill) to help overcome the lack of accessible green space in the centre.
- Smaller parades on the edge of the town centre within generally residential areas support the vitality of the town centre and good vehicular access needs to be maintained



DURNSFORD ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Historically part of an industrial corridor along the River Wandle and railway corridor. Along with the river, these cause barriers to connectivity
- The residential area contains dense, consistent and attractive Victorian terraced grids between open spaces.
- Durnsford Road itself is as an important North to South connector and link to Wandsworth
- Important relationship north to Earlsfield and along Garratt Lane

key issues / opportunities

- Erosion of street greenery for parked cars - dominance of parking in some narrower streets.
- Poor environmental quality along key corridors - dominated by industrial traffic and hard landscaping
- Opportunities to repair the edges to the green spaces through development to the south fo Durnsford Road Recreation ground
- Strategic placemaking considerations with Garratt Lane/Wandsworth boundary as new development comes forward



LEOPOLD ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

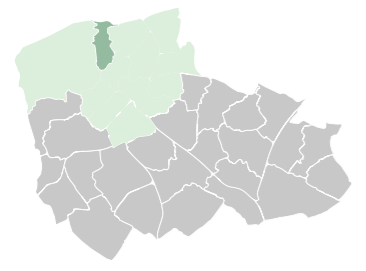
- Roads are generally north/south and follow the topography that drops down to Wimbledon.
- The majority of the neighbourhood is made up of terraced or semi-detached gridded streets with larger detached properties at the top of the hill on Arthur Road. An area of flats and mansion blocks is located to the very south of the area nearest Wimbledon Hill and the town centre.
- Local shops and services are provided at the parade on Leopold Road and at Wimbledon Park.

key issues / opportunities

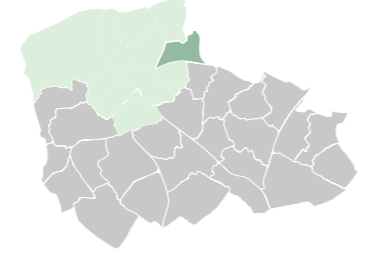
- A number of large campuses disrupt the gridded street pattern and positive frontage this affords - opportunities for infill development to repair this
- Value of trees and planting with street scenes which should be retained and enhanced
- Opportunities for design guidance for appropriate and sensitive intensification of the area through extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots.
- Opportunities along the railway line for infill and intensification in keeping with the scale of the area.



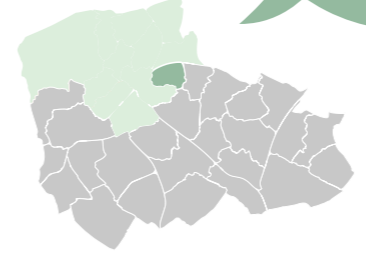
What you said was special
Access to green spaces, green spacious character and excellent connectivity to the A3



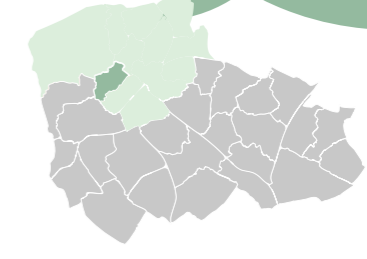
What you said was special
Access to green spaces, multicultural, close to transport and convenient local shopping



What you said was special
South Park Gardens and the quiet residential streets with historic character



What you said was special
"The area has everything, vibrancy, good shopping, great selection of restaurants etc, great transport links, and open spaces with the Common. Just a great place to live!"



PARKSIDE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Loosely structured, heavily treed, low density suburban development with substantial detached houses.
- An organic and open feel to the road network with a coarse grain - a number of dead-end streets creating quiet, private streets.
- Large plots with generous gaps, large front gardens and set backs from the street creating a green character
- Parkside forms the eastern boundary of the common with a consistent frontage of generous mansions set back from this key spine.

key issues / opportunities

- Sense of former landscaped estates - value of trees and planting with street scene which should be protected and enhanced both in the street and private gardens
- Opportunities for design guidance for appropriate and sensitive intensification that maintains the existing characteristics of the area through extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots.
- Public realm improvements and signage along Parkside to enhance the sense of driving carefully 'through' the character of the Common and help reduce traffic speeds.

PLOUGH LANE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Historically part of the industrial corridor along the River Wandle and railway corridor.
- Area divided by Durnsford Road which is an important North/South connector.
- A diverse area with dense terraced streets to the south such as the Haydons Park estate, the cemetery and industrial and retail uses to the east of the Wandle.
- Local shops and services at Haydons Road and Leopold Road and within retail park.
- Physically divided from the rest of the borough by rail lines and cemeteries.

key issues / opportunities

- Poor environmental quality along key corridors - dominated by industrial traffic and hard landscaping.
- Strategic placemaking considerations with Garratt Lane/Wandsworth boundary as new development comes forward.
- Ongoing improvements to the River Wandle corridor - surfacing, biodiversity enhancements and cleaning/litter picking.
- Opportunities to review opportunities for vehicular management and traffic calming in residential streets

QUEEN'S ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- An area of attractive gridded historic terraced streets, partly protected by a conservation area
- Larger double fronted villas facing the park and along Queen's Road
- South Park Gardens as a key asset which forms an attractive central manicured green space, very popular with the local community and cared for by an active residents group
- Some infill within larger blocks and small campuses for primary schools and community uses

key issues / opportunities

- Challenges in mediating between the scale of the residential neighbourhood and the core town centre with opportunities for sensitive infill on Stanley Road, Trinity Road and South Park Road.
- Design guidance for residents within historic terraced streets: boundary treatment, windows, roof extensions and porches and the value of landscaped front garden
- Some further opportunities for mews/garden development within large blocks in keeping with the scale and character of the area

RIDGWAY

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

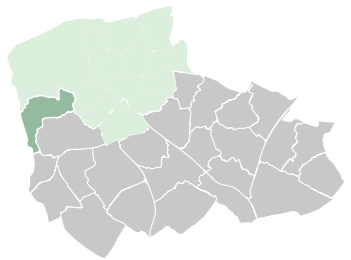
- A largely residential area with large plots on gridded streets with mixed typologies - substantial detached houses, cottages and blocks of flats.
- Steep topography giving a distinctive character with the stepped rising of properties affording long views
- Shops and services on the Ridgway serve local residents with the Village at the areas boundary
- The northern boundary of the area connects to the common providing outstanding links to green spaces

key issues / opportunities

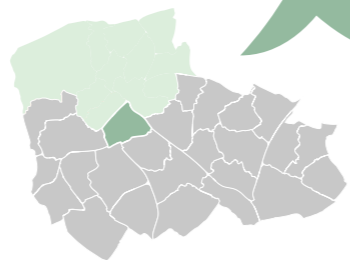
- A number of large campuses disrupt the gridded street pattern and positive frontage this affords - opportunities for infill development to repair this
- Value of trees and planting with street scenes connecting to the green character of the common
- Opportunities for design guidance for appropriate and sensitive intensification of the area through extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots. Concern from residents about large basement extensions.



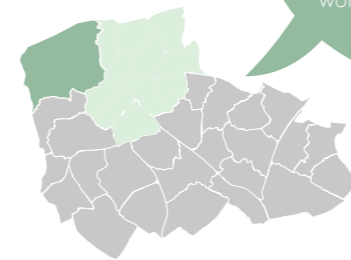
What you said was special
 "The area benefits from large amounts of green space and a village atmosphere"



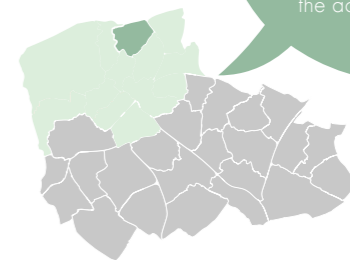
What you said was special
 family oriented with good schools, local facilities and community spirit



What you said was special
 "It has the feel of a village but is a part of London and very close to the city. Outstanding access to wonderful and natural green space"



What you said was special
 The famous home of Wimbledon Tennis and the activities in the park



WEST WIMBLEDON

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Generally loosely structured suburban development, large plots with substantial detached houses.
- A large number of dead-end streets creating quiet, private streets. Copse Hill is the key connecting route through the area.
- A heavily treed area with generous green spaces within the neighbourhood as well as connections north to the Common.
- Local shops and services at Coombe Lane with an excellent provision of local sports clubs

key issues / opportunities

- Opportunities for design guidance for appropriate and sensitive intensification of the area through extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots.
- An area with low PTAL - review of bus network and cycle route opportunities and opportunities for traffic calming on busy streets
- Negative impact of the A3 infrastructure to the western boundary - improve connections to services in Norbiton

WIMBLEDON CHASE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Railway key boundary to the north and Kingston Road to the south. Structured around Dundonald Park and the campus environment at Wimbledon College of Arts and the adjacent primary school.
- Successful secondary parade supported by location of medical centre and train station. The Nelson Health Centre as a high quality local landmark that is well valued by residents.
- Quiet Victorian/Edwardian residential streets with largest plots and greenest feel to the south east, with more mix in types of homes to the north west.

key issues / opportunities

- Design guidance for residents within historic terraced streets: boundary treatment, windows, roof and porches and the value of landscaped front gardens - good example of a dense but low-rise environment.
- Potential small sites intensification opportunities around surface car parks within campus environments and around tram tracks.
- Further densification of the corridor of Kingston Road alongside public realm enhancement and shop front improvement.

WIMBLEDON COMMON

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- Majority of the neighbourhood comprised of the outstanding natural green spaces of the Common, Cannizaro Park and the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club.
- Set around the Green are homes which form a grand ensemble of distinguished period buildings including Cannizaro House and Park. Further north is an area of cottages with the post-war Council estate at Chester Road tucked behind.
- Parkside forms the eastern boundary of the common with a consistent frontage of generous mansions set back from this key spine.

key issues / opportunities

- Guidance for the ongoing subdivision, conversion and extension of larger properties.
- Opportunities for natural childrens play areas on the common or in Cannizaro Park
- Ongoing management and improvements of traffic and car parking for access to the Common
- Public realm improvements and signage along Parkside to enhance the sense of driving carefully 'through' the character of the Common and help reduce traffic speeds.

WIMBLEDON PARK

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- A largely non-residential neighbourhood area
- The campus of the All England Lawn Tennis Club forms the western half of the area with large sports arenas dominating views along Church Road.
- Green spaces of Wimbledon Park Golf course and Wimbledon Park form the eastern half.
- Home Park Road forms the southern boundary with a consistent frontage of generous mansions set back from this route.

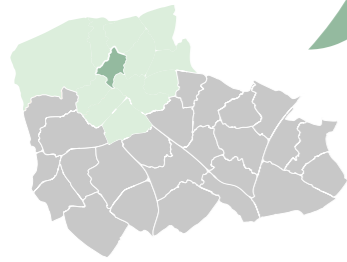
key issues / opportunities

- Large areas of green space are not publicly accessible and the routes into the park could be more legible due to level changes. Improvements to boundary treatments or development that provides more positive frontage to edges and streets should be encouraged in appropriate locations.
- A masterplan for the All England Lawn Tennis Club is currently underway.



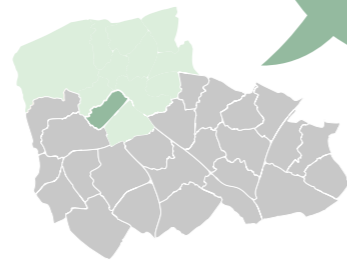
What you said was special

"Proximity to amenities of village shops and restaurants together with the closeness of the open spaces of the common and parks"



What you said was special

Trees and grassy areas, polite and welcoming people, historical, sense of community



WIMBLEDON VILLAGE

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- The neighbourhood is defined by the commercial centre which has a unique and attractive village character.
- Residential streets which run eastwards from the centre and sit on top of the hill between the centre and St Mary's Church are also included, some of which have a tight historic character, and moving further east are larger detached properties.
- Strong connection with the common - the war memorial as an important transition between village and green.

key issues / opportunities

- Further public realm improvements to really mark out the village as an important location. Improvements to Wimbledon Hill are planned to improve the connection to Wimbledon Town Centre.
- Opportunities for design guidance for appropriate and sensitive intensification that maintains the existing characteristics of the area through extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots.
- Some concern about a need for better curation of shops and services - desire for independents.

WORPLE ROAD

Distinctiveness - heritage and key features

- The key spine connecting Wimbledon Town Centre to Raynes Park - an important corridor with employment, leisure and community services.
- A denser and more varied character between Worple Road and the railway tracks - some blocks of flats and employment uses.
- The topography rises to the west of Worple Road along quiet residential streets of varying character - villas, terraced cottages and mansion blocks.

key issues / opportunities

- Further opportunity for infill and densification along Worple Road, alongside public realm enhancement and greening to help reduce the impact of traffic
- Development of sites along the railway line whilst improving crossings over and along this pedestrian route
- Potential for sensitive infill, retrofit and redevelopment of larger plots into blocks of apartments north of Worple Road



WIMBLEDON



Growth themes

The Future Wimbledon SPD was adopted in November 2020 and sets out a vision for the centre. This document sets out a number of priorities which are reflected under principle 1 which will enhance the character of the core town centre. A number of other area-wide principles are highlighted from 2 - 5.

Delivering the SPD vision: "Wimbledon has the potential to be south west London's premier location for business, leisure, living and culture: an exemplar for good quality placemaking"

Five principles to deliver this vision include:

- 1) Design quality - drawing inspiration from its past, enhance the setting of existing assets and respond to the material palette, scale, and views.
- 2) Public realm - Deliver new spaces and enhance existing ones
- 3) Urban greening and sustainability - deliver public realm and development that is a leader in these areas.
- 4) Future of the high street - a mix of uses that support vibrancy and vitality of the centre
- 5) The station and railway - Deliver a world class station that has a sense of arrival with access to rail, underground, tram and buses.

These principles will help to guide high quality design that is in keeping with Wimbledon's existing character, whilst improving the quality of the town centre at key opportunity sites along the Broadway and railway corridor.

Enhancing the network of green routes to connect the under-served centre to wider assets

The wider area of Wimbledon feels green and has a number of large open spaces, however the town is poorly provided for. Enhancing the key routes from the town centre out to these more significant spaces through tree planting, pocket parks, pavement widening and planting will help to promote the character of 'greenness' that is valued in residential areas. The value and role of private gardens should also be noted.

Corridors stepping up density towards Wimbledon centre

The core town centre relies on a number of 'feeder' roads or 'supporting acts' in terms of the services and type of homes they offer residents. These corridors will continue to provide this role and help in mediating the density and scale between the core town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods. Further intensification and infill along these routes will help deliver new homes and services.

A joint strategy with Wandsworth for Garratt Lane /Dursford Road Wandle corridor

The River Wandle is both an asset and an opportunity in character terms. Along with the railway lines, rail depot and transport corridors it creates barriers and a sense of dislocation to areas at the north east edge of the borough. There is a key placemaking opportunity for cross-borough working to think in a joined-up way about this area between Haydons Road and Earlsfield. Key opportunities including improving the quality of connections, mediating between distinct areas of character and land use and enhancing green open spaces and the river corridor.

Small sites design guidance

Much of the neighbourhoods in Wimbledon have a consistent and established character. This does not mean that these areas cannot deliver new homes but design guidance will be required for appropriate and sensitive intensification. Opportunities may include extensions, rear garden development, conversions and redevelopment of larger plots. The appropriateness of each method will depend on a number of factors including the type of home, size of plot, size of block and extent of overlooking. In some cases, neighbours may be able to work together to deliver an opportunity. The Council has adopted a Small Sites Toolkit (SPD) which will help set out appropriate guidance.



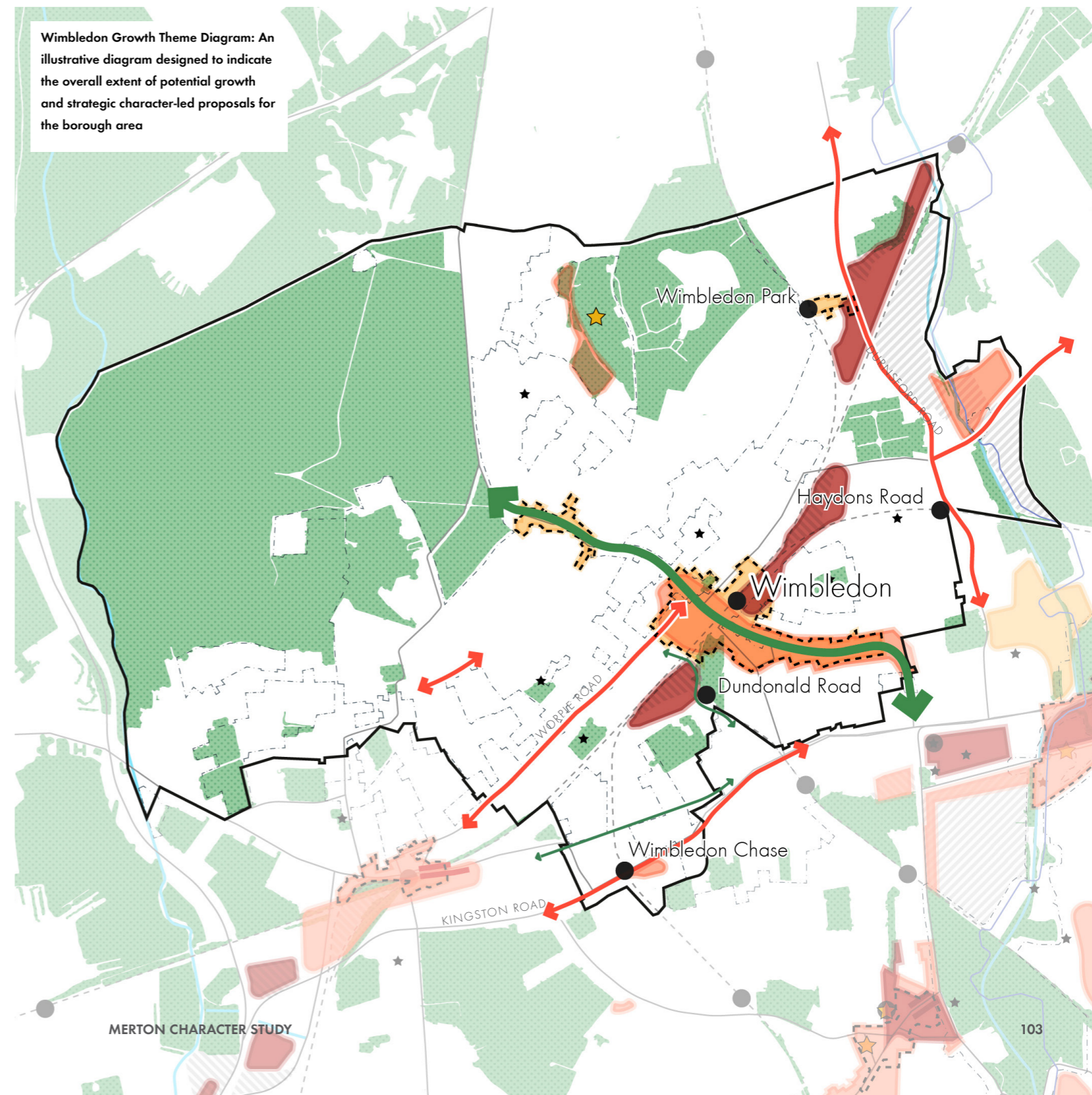
The Future Wimbledon SPD is the document which sets out the vision and detailed proposals for Wimbledon core town centre

proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- ↔ Local green link improvements

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
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- Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- ★ Strategic Landmark
- ★ Local Landmark
- Road
- Rail
- Waterway



Wimbledon Growth Theme Diagram: An illustrative diagram designed to indicate the overall extent of potential growth and strategic character-led proposals for the borough area



CHARACTER EVOLUTION

What should future growth
be like?

J CHARACTER EVOLUTION

Context-led growth

The aim of this character study is to ensure that the growth that happens in the borough over the next decades is informed by a good understanding of existing (and past) context. It is really important that the next stage of evolution learns the lessons from past development in the borough - the successes and the failures. We want to draw the thread of what makes each area distinctive and great into directing how and where future development should happen.

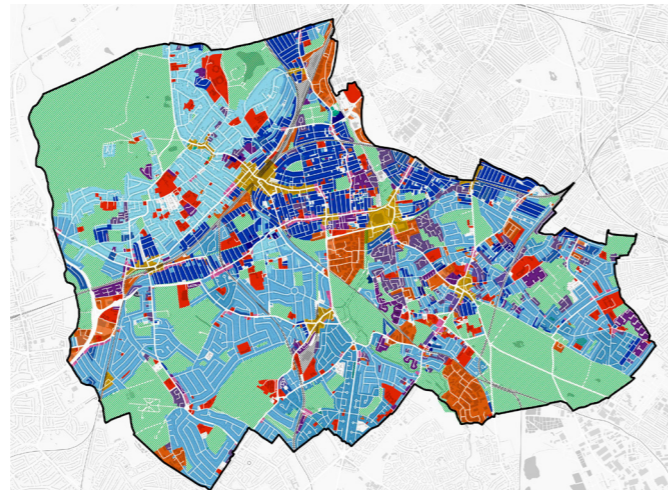
Context-led growth in Merton must dig deeper than replicating building materials and forms, it should recognise hidden character potential - lost landscapes, buried waterways and lost grain and connections. It will be about identifying how existing development types which are valued in the borough can be sensitively and positively intensified. However, it is also about highlighting thresholds - beyond which change needs to be limited. This will include protecting open spaces, routes, as well as sensitive conservation areas/zones. In areas of significant redevelopment, it is about identifying how sites should be steered to best support local character. This doesn't mean styming transformation, rather looking for the local character hooks for design and structure rather than simply using precedents from elsewhere.

Earlier in this report an assessment of the borough's existing typologies was explained (pages 28-23). This mapping helps understanding the existing character of the borough. Each of these types has a different potential for evolution, and, taken alongside the growth themes for each sub-area (pages 26-67), provides a comprehensive understanding of how the character of each area should evolve. The assessment set out over the following pages identifies opportunities for improving performance, key considerations, development opportunities and reinterpretation of the type for new housing within the borough. The study at the block level illustrates how development can respond to local character and how new homes can be successfully integrated within the existing context.

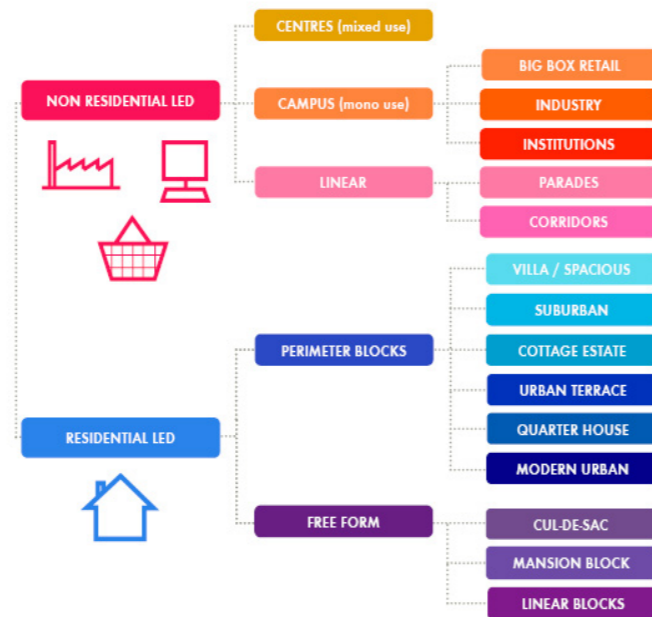
The final section within this chapter focuses on the role of tall buildings in evolving the character of the borough - setting out a rationale for where these are felt to be appropriate from a character perspective.

The table on the opposite page illustrates a summary of the key environments across the borough which each need a tailored approach to intensification to deliver much needed housing growth. Each row of the table has a corresponding section within this chapter which sets out opportunities and examples of context-led growth within each type of environment.

It is important to note that the design and layout of the physical environment and building security is key to creating safe environments and reducing crime and



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disorder. Designing out crime 'Secured by Design' accreditation, alongside strategic Counter Terrorism (CT) guidance and the incorporation of its principles should be core, and form part of planning any new development, town centres, public spaces, transport hubs, future streets and in evolving building typologies.

Similarly a key priority should be a focus on increasing green infrastructure within urban environments and across all building typologies. This may be done by retrofitting including methods such as green roof

systems and roof gardens; green walls to provide insulation or shading and cooling; and new tree planting or altering the management of land (e.g. management of verges to enhance biodiversity). Other issues relating to the protection of natural resources, including air quality, ground and surface water and soils within proposals should also be considered.

| NO. | TYOLOGIES / ENVIRONMENT | EXISTING BUILDING TYPES WITHIN BLOCKS | POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES / FORMS OF INTENSIFICATION | OBJECTIVES OF INTENSIFICATION (BEYOND HOUSING PROVISION) |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1.1 PERIMETER RESIDENTIAL-LED FORMS | | | | |
| | Metroland / Suburban | Semi-detached, detached, short terraces, quarter house | Surface parking, ambiguous green open spaces, loft/rear extensions, backlands, amalgamation of plots | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain continuous active frontages along perimeter Clear delineation of public/private space Reinforce/complement the existing character (Garden city/cottage style, Metroland or terraced streets) |
| | Garden city principles / cottage estate | Semi-detached, cottages, terrace | Ambiguous green open spaces, loft/rear extensions, backlands, amalgamation of plots | |
| | Urban perimeter | Terrace, Villa, quarter house, mews, apartment blocks | Infill, corner/end of terrace, garage sites, backlands, loft/rear extensions, amalgamation of plots | |
| 1.2 NON-PERIMETER RESIDENTIAL-LED FORMS | | | | |
| | Higher density free-form | Mansion blocks, slab blocks, towers, maisonettes, mansion blocks | Infill, surface parking sites, partial redevelopment, comprehensive redevelopment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reintegrate the urban fabric Connect dead-end streets Improve delineation of public/private space |
| | Lower density free-form | Houses, semis, maisonettes, bungalows | Infill, surface parking sites, garages, partial redevelopment, comprehensive redevelopment | |
| NON-RESIDENTIAL LED FORMS | | | | |
| 1.3 | Centres (allocated town centres) | Ground floor commercial units, offices, residential / storage above | Change of use class, infill, surface parking sites, garages, roof extensions | n/a - too context specific |
| 1.4 | Campus environments | Industrial sheds, big box retail parks, education/ institutions | Change of use class, partial redevelopment, surface parking sites, yards, roof extensions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve thresholds Rebalance/diversify mix of uses Activate underutilised land |
| 1.5 | Linear - parades and corridors | Mixed use blocks, parades and terraces, petrol stations | Partial redevelopment, infill, ambiguous green open spaces, surface parking sites, roof extensions, backlands development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make environments better suited to pedestrians and human scale |
| TALL BUILDINGS | | | | |
| 1.6 | Tall buildings | Taller elements than the prevailing context | Roof extensions, conversion, partial or comprehensive redevelopment | n/a - too context specific |

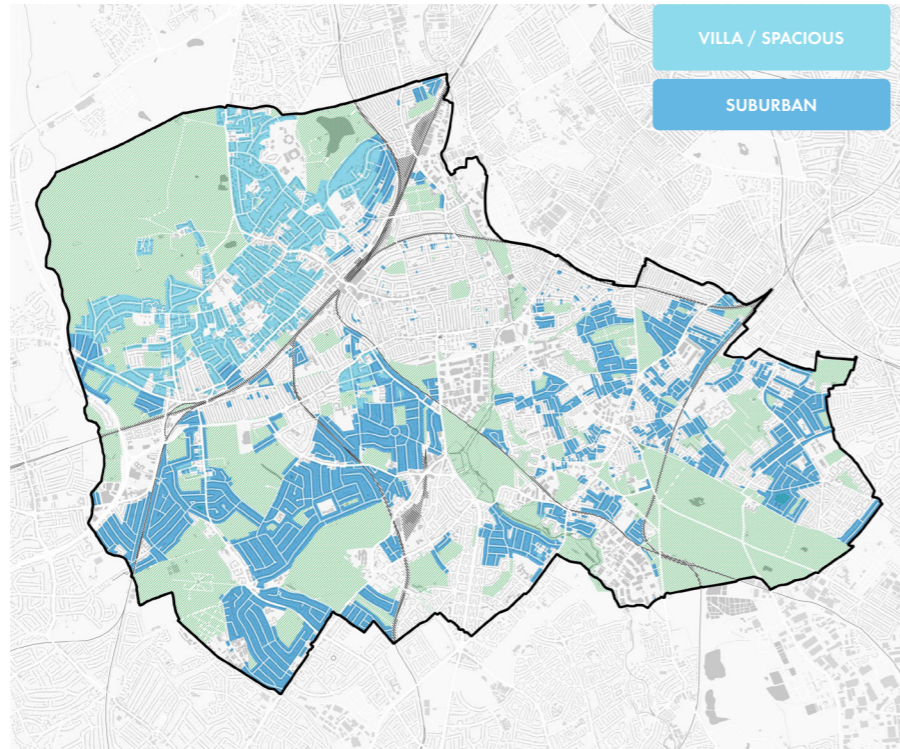
J.1 PERIMETER RESIDENTIAL

Lower density perimeter residential-led forms - 'spacious' and 'suburban'

Given their often uniform prevailing character, existing suburban areas of Morden can prove challenging in terms of the potential for change. Their scale and grain tends to be generally consistent and low-rise with only minor undeveloped areas with potential for new development. Opportunities for change will generally focus on the intensification of existing plots or where larger sites come forward for a change of use. The looser form and larger plots of the 'villa/spacious' typology may offer more opportunities for infill development between plots, where this can be done sensitively.

Key considerations for interventions will include:

- Block depth - e.g. <40m excludes garden development, >100m allows for mews
- Garden centre line - if this is off centre, it reduces the complexity of introducing new homes
- Block aspect - an east-west block could result in single aspect north facing units
- Geometry - unusual step ins or curves can limit opportunities
- Mix of uses - sites such as former / underused garages can present more significant opportunities
- Existence of hard standing access routes would facilitate internal mews or rear garden dwellings



The lowest density 'Villa/spacious' typology is located to the north of the borough on the hill towards Wimbledon Common. The 'suburban' typology is consistently found to the south west and neighbourhoods to the east



- Opportunities for intervention**
- 1 Vacant corner sites
 - 2 Deep plots with large gardens
 - 3 Wide plots on long curved corners
 - 4 Large building envelopes and profile

Opportunities for context-led growth within the suburban block type (the 'villa/spacious' block is an even lower density version of the above diagram, with larger plots and a greater number of detached properties)



VILLA/SPACIOUS
Examples of context-led growth:

1. Sensitive conversions, extensions and division of single large buildings into multiple smaller dwellings (Eagle House, Wimbledon Village, Merton)
2. Redevelopment of larger plots to deliver multiple new homes in keeping with existing scale and grain (Montem Square, The Drive, Merton)
3. Careful integration of new dwellings (a) to the rear of larger properties (b) with care taken to reduce overlooking/impact on adjacent properties (Parkside Gardens, Merton)
4. Mews style development - integration of new homes at the rear of larger plots facing a more minor route. New development is in keeping with the diminutive style and scale (Parkside, Merton)



VILLA/SPACIOUS
Examples of context-led growth:

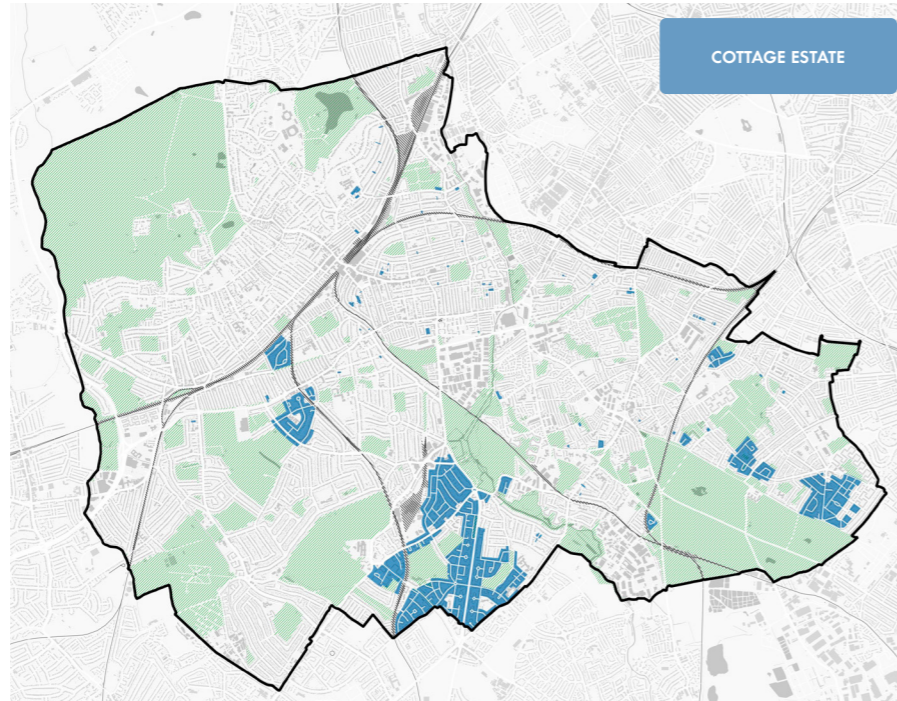
1. New dwellings delivered on a former garage plot at the end of a street - modern reinterpretation of style, materials and features (Durnsford Road, Harp and Harp architects)
2. Redevelopment of larger opportunity sites to deliver new streets in keeping with existing scale and grain (Rowan Park, SW16, Merton)
3. Reinterpreting suburban style and features, reflecting arts and crafts influences of adjacent pubs, with a clever stepping up of scale using varied roofline (Nunhead Green, AOC architects)
4. Potential delivery of a new home on an underused area within a perimeter block of existing homes. Careful design is required to maximise light and minimise overlooking and impact on existing homes

Lower density perimeter residential-led forms - 'cottage estate'

The 'cottage estate' typology is another low density residential form found in a number of locations across the borough. The plan form varies significantly from the 'suburban' typology which results in alternative context-led growth opportunities.

Future opportunities must take account of the geometric street pattern, often with elements of symmetry and set pieces. Streets tend to have a wider profile with planned verges, front gardens and green spaces. Although some of these green spaces - both within the street scene and within blocks add value to the streetscene - others are under-used and have been converted to hard-standing. Overall there is a need to restore the green character in these neighbourhoods, however, careful redevelopment of some of these spaces (see case study) could result in the upgrading of other spaces for biodiversity and more active amenity use. The street pattern and regularity of spaces means that one approach could be repeated across an area resulting in new consistency and area-wide investment.

In terms of style and aesthetics, homes were built with cottage-like proportions and features, modest detailing and a limited palette of materials. This limited material palette, use of matching brick colour, with a reinterpretation of the cottage-like proportions will be imperative in the successful integration of new development within these areas, that have such a strong and consistent character.



There is a very consistent area of the 'cottage estate' typology to the south of the borough around St Helier Avenue, with smaller neighbourhoods to the far east of the borough and east of Raynes Park



Opportunities for intervention

- 1 Underused open space - consider how these spaces could be better used
- 2 Internal grassed areas, garages and overgrown spaces could potentially be infilled where they are underused and considered surplus to requirements
- 3 Larger building envelopes could be retrofitted and subdivided

A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the cottage estate typology

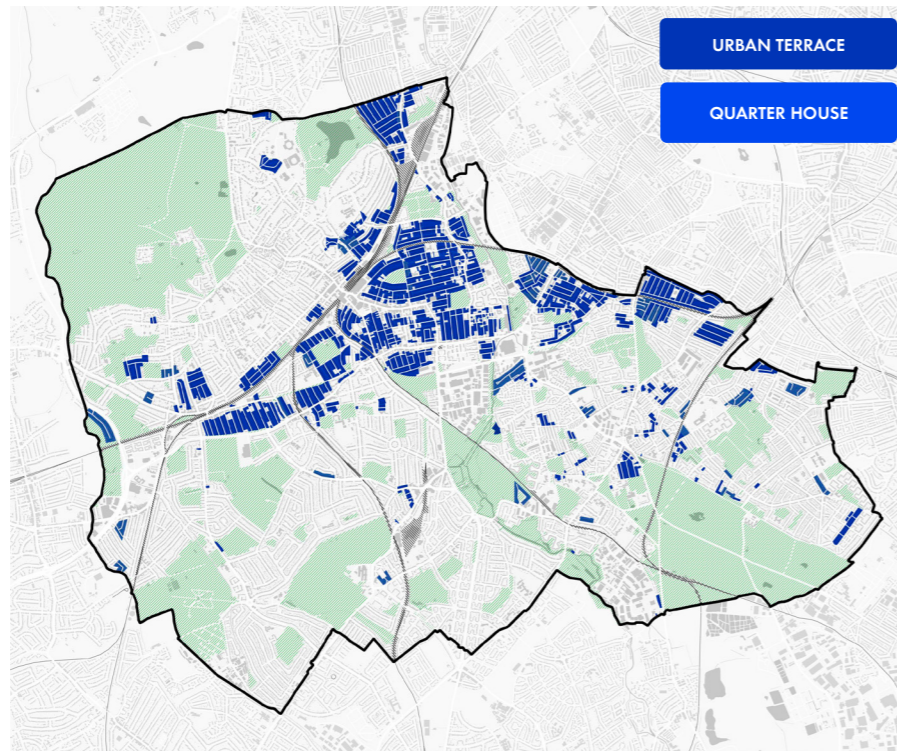


Higher density perimeter residential-led forms - urban terrace and quarter house

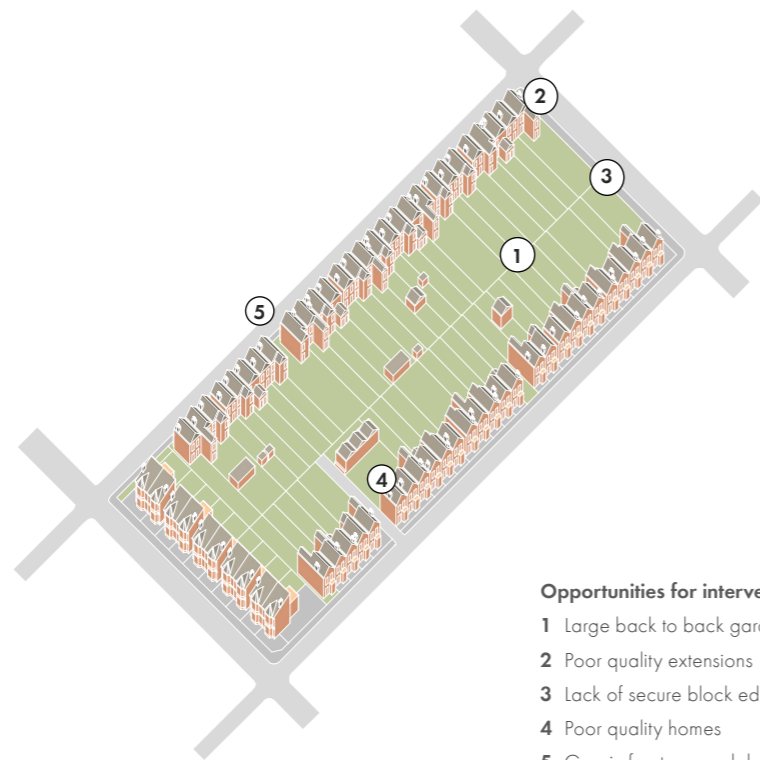
Terraced forms of development tend to have a more urban character - with a continuous perimeter frontage and a regular and gridded street pattern. Due to their more urban character, they successfully integrate small blocks of flats, both as part of their original developments delivered as 'quarter houses' as well as new buildings that complete the corner of blocks.

Key considerations for interventions will include:

- Block depth - e.g <40m excludes garden development, >100m allows for mews
- Garden centre line - if this is off centre, it reduces the complexity of introducing new homes
- Block aspect - an east-west block could result in single aspect north facing units
- Geometry - unusual step ins or curves can limit opportunities
- Mix of uses - sites such as former / underused garages can present more significant opportunities
- Existence of hard standing access routes would facilitate internal mews or rear garden dwellings
- Potentially suitable for intensification through town houses, though should consider existing form and facades - where this is articulated through bay windows or detailing, new development should respond.



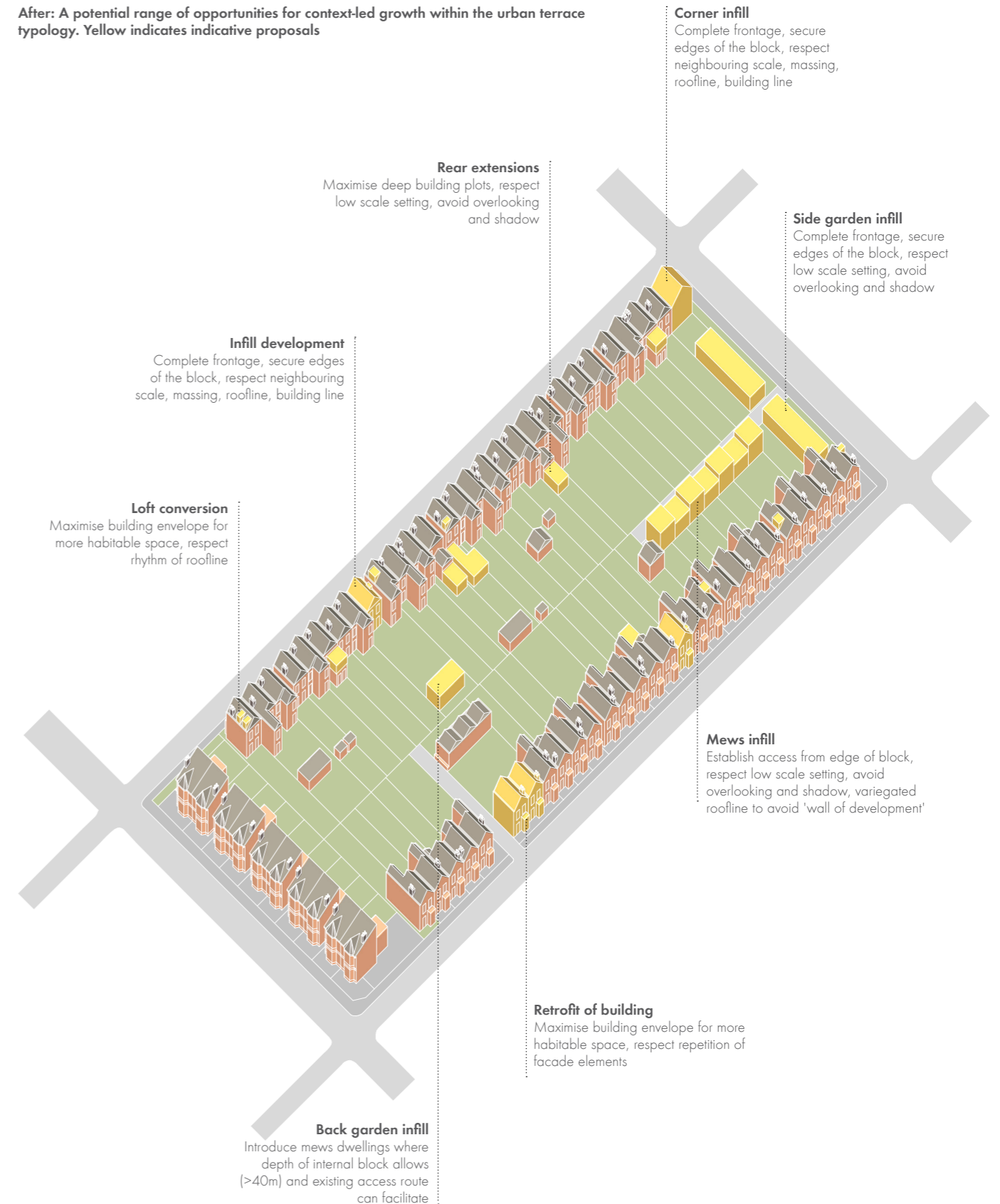
The majority of the higher density perimeter forms are 'urban terrace' which are located in a triangle stretching across the borough from Raynes Park to central Wimbledon and Colliers Wood



- Opportunities for intervention**
- 1 Large back to back gardens
 - 2 Poor quality extensions
 - 3 Lack of secure block edge
 - 4 Poor quality homes
 - 5 Gap in frontage and rhythm

Before: A potential range of instances which provide opportunities for context-led growth within the urban terrace typology

After: A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the urban terrace typology. Yellow indicates indicative proposals





1

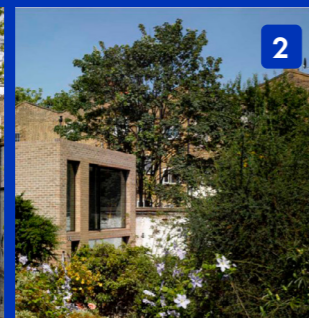
URBAN TERRACE

Examples of context-led growth:

1. New dwellings delivered at the end of a terraced street - modern reinterpretation of style, materials and features (Red House St Aidan's Road, Dulwich - 31-44 Architects)
2. Garden intensification: This sensitive scheme delivers a new home on an underused area within a perimeter block of existing homes. The scheme is carefully designed to maximise light and minimise overlooking and impact on existing homes (Kings Grove Peckham, Morris + company)
3. Change of use: A former light-industrial site is redeveloped for residential use with careful design of upper floors to minimise impact and overlooking using screens and frosted glazing (Graveney Mews, Inglemere Rd, Merton)
4. Wellsborough Mews, successfully mediates between two scales. Providing higher density frontage along Kingston Road, with smaller houses integrated within the site behind (Kingston Road, Merton)
5. Stage House successfully increased the density of a corner plot within an area of urban terraced and semi-detached properties. The building rises to four stories, with the fourth set back within parts of the block to minimise its impact on adjacent homes. (Montague Road, Merton)



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5

Case Study

This is an example of an industrial backland site which currently sits in the space at the centre of a terraced residential perimeter block, at the rear of gardens. The case study illustrates one potential method of intensifying the use of this type of site for residential-led mixed use. This site benefits from two access points which gives the opportunity to create a new street of 2 and 3 bed live/work units.

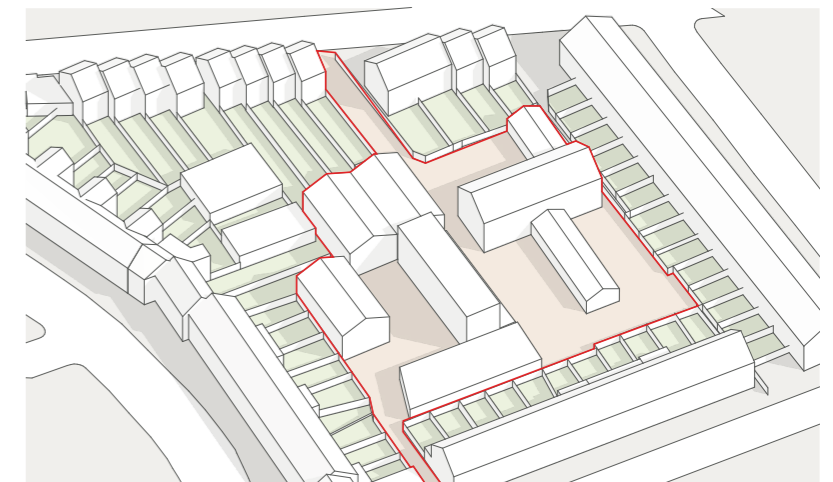
The proposal for this site is a mix of two and three bed 3 storey live/work houses, with the ground floor providing the work space. In our post-covid world there is a growing focus on live/work housing typologies, this proposal addresses this trend. However, the design for this site could of course be mixed in different ways,

with an entirely residential proposal, or one that gives one side of the new street to employment use.

In this illustration, the houses are arranged around a new shared surface street which runs through the site. Each house has a rear garden that abutts the existing gardens. This site allows for generous distance between elevations both within the development and surrounding it. The distances indicated will not be achievable on more constrained sites, so overlooking both out of and within the development will need to be addressed in the placement and direction of windows, and how boundaries are formed. On all such sites the provision of parking spaces needs to be carefully designed to support the wider use of the shared street.



Indicative example massing



Indicative example location - site before intensification



Indicative example plan of how this type of site could be developed to deliver new homes in keeping with the existing character of the area



Nieuw, Leyden



Byhusene, Copenhagen



Iliffe yard, London SE17

Precedents for this kind of mixed use yard environment

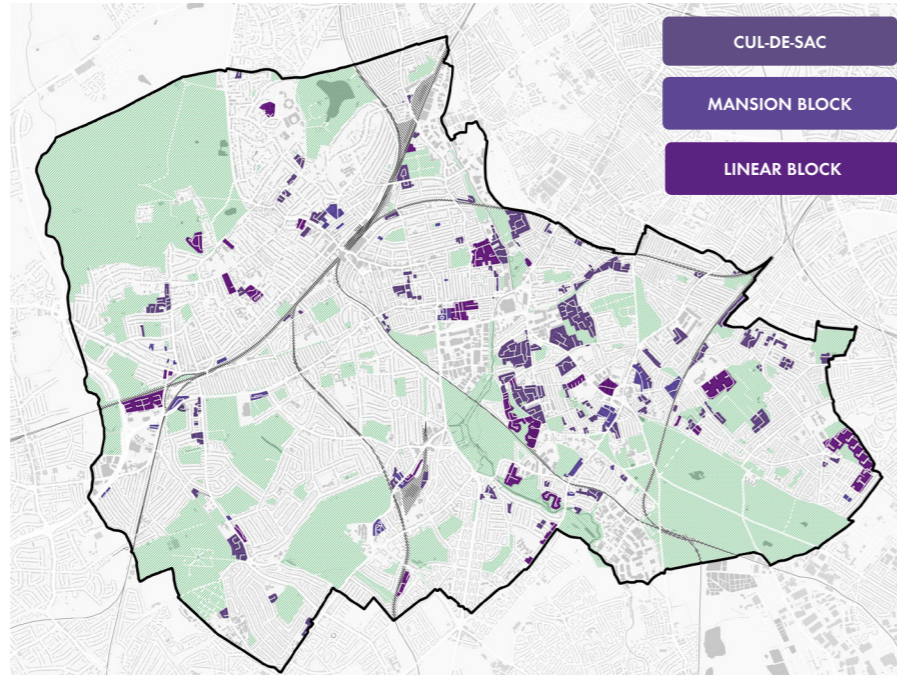
J.2 NON PERIMETER RESIDENTIAL

Non-perimeter residential-led forms

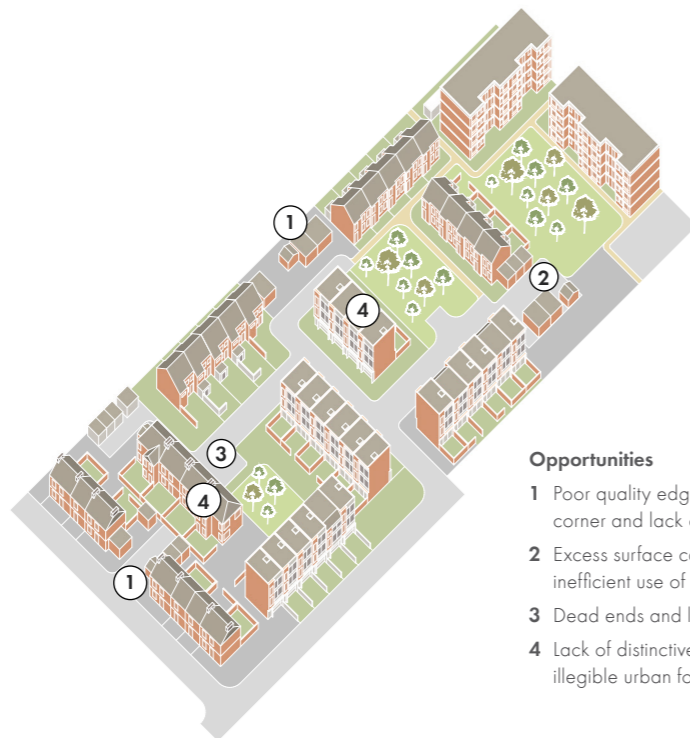
Whilst perimeter forms of development make up the majority of the existing residential areas of Morden, there are a range of housing areas which break with this pattern and introduce more complex street patterns and layouts. Intensifying these areas often requires a bespoke response to the layout of existing development - identifying where underused spaces could be used for development in a way that supports better integration of the housing into the wider area. For these housing types the key focus is on enhancing the delineation of public and private space through intensification or partial redevelopment. This must be done sensitively so as not to lose the very benefits that make these areas great places to live.

Key considerations for interventions will include:

- A strategic vision and framework is required on these sites to successfully deliver long-term objectives and transformation
- Repairing the urban fabric through the creation of routes, streets, spaces and buildings that integrate with surrounding grain
- Soft edges - delivering public realm and movement investment outside of the red line boundary to blur the edges of development
- Gradual transition in scale to mediate between low density surroundings and higher density proposals
- Overcoming severance of road and rail infrastructure is often required - achieving strong pedestrian and cycle connectivity through these sites is essential.



The three types of non-perimeter residential development in the borough - cul-de-sacs, mansion blocks and slab block estates are all well represented, with a greater incidence of all three in the eastern half of the borough

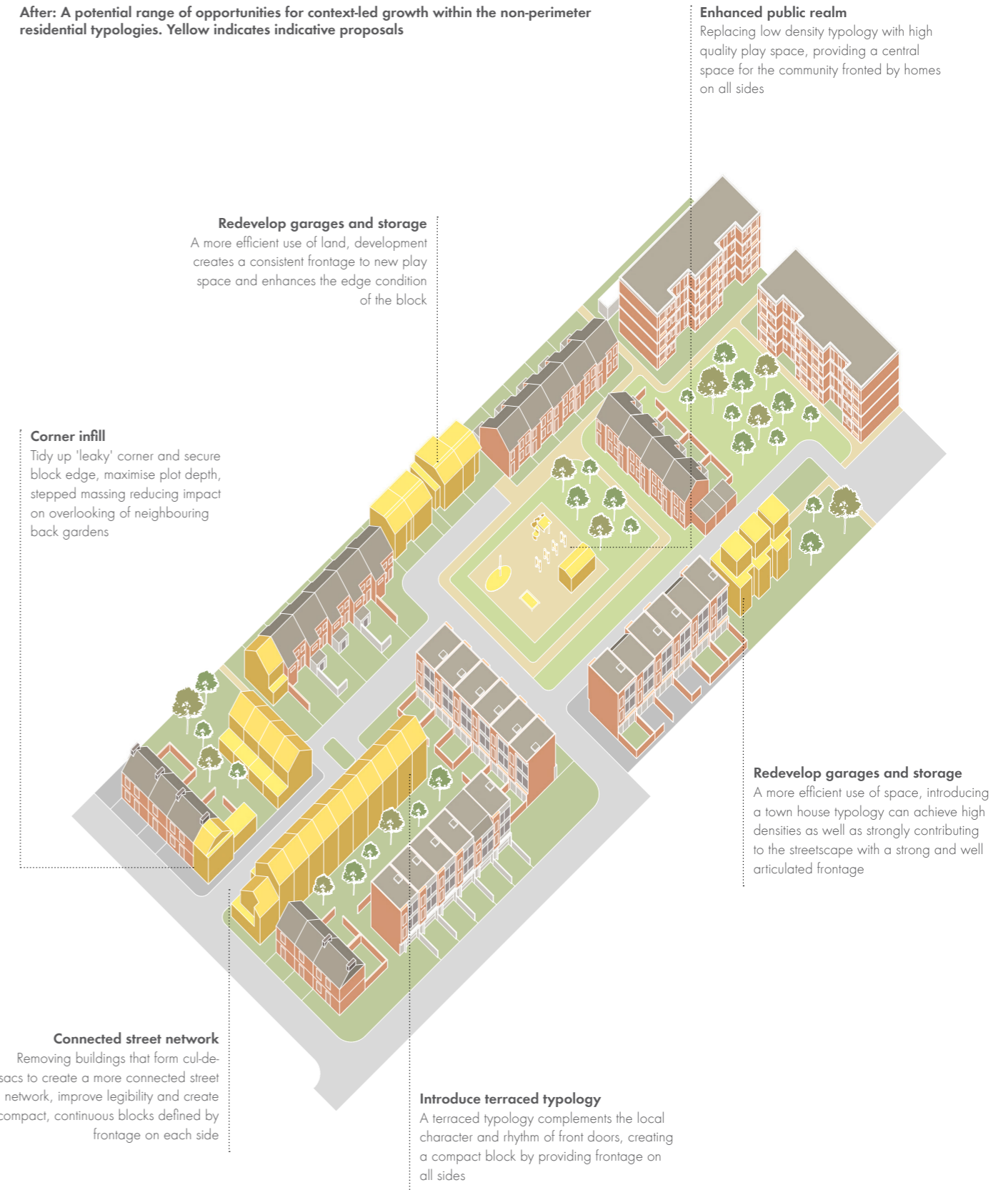


Opportunities

- 1 Poor quality edge condition/corner and lack of frontage
- 2 Excess surface car parking, inefficient use of land
- 3 Dead ends and lack of connection
- 4 Lack of distinctive character, illegible urban form

Before: A potential range of instances which provide opportunities for context-led growth within the non-perimeter residential typologies

After: A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the non-perimeter residential typologies. Yellow indicates indicative proposals





NON-PERIMETER RESIDENTIAL
Examples of context-led growth:

1. Infill development on slab estates or cul-de-sacs to support block and street structure such as Auckland Rise by HTA Design. New buildings alongside more trees, play spaces and a food-growing area, new footpaths and lighting, and improved parking layouts within the estate (Croydon).
2. Partial redevelopment and intensification of slab estates as part of a wider masterplan to enhance the integration of an estate into the wider area and support South Wimbledon Local Centre (High Path regeneration, Merton)
3. Re-configuration of mansion block estate such as Darbshire Place through infill development to rationalise the environment, securing the block edge and framing an internal courtyard space. (Niall McLaughling Architects for Peabody, Whitechapel)
4. The Rye Apartments: Flatted infill development on a corner plot that responds to and overcomes privacy and daylight constraints, responding to neighbouring building forms. (Tikari Works, Peckham Rye).
5. Additional storeys added to create new homes in an accessible location, alongside the refurbishment of Mansion blocks at Malden Court (Raynes Park, Merton)



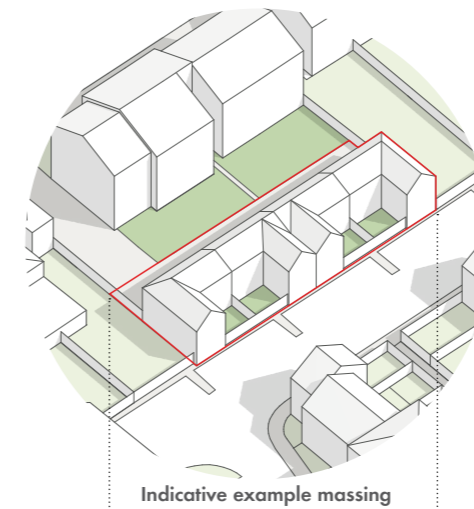
Case Study

This case study explores an example site within a 'non-perimeter' area, where a cul-de-sac meets the rear of another street. This creates 'messy' and illegible areas for pedestrians that are more complex to navigate. The proposal attempts to provide a clearer frontage to existing streets.

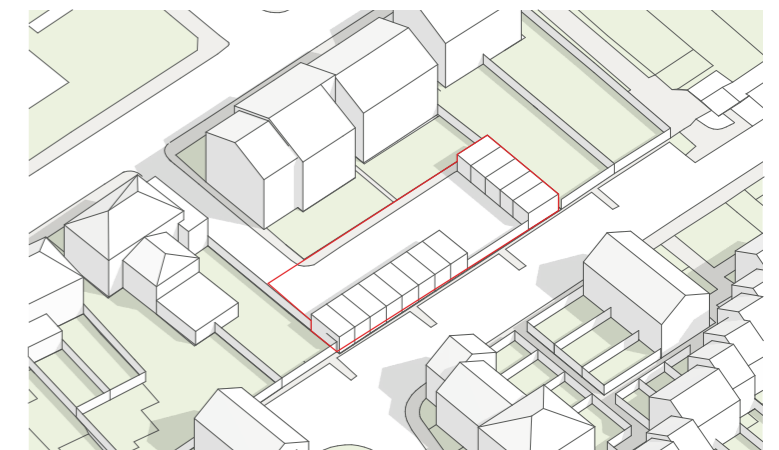
The site is currently occupied by garages. The site is owned by the freeholder of the apartment block to the north so gives an opportunity for the landowner, or an SME developer, to intensify the site.

The proposals introduces new houses accessed via the existing side entrance off the main road. The proposal is for four 3 bed houses which wrap around a private courtyard. A communal garden space is created between the existing block and the new houses.

Overlooking within the development is the main constraint of this site, with the placement of windows into the courtyard being particularly important. Although the houses are accessed from the main road an active frontage is created along the close to the rear, with the sides of the houses extending to the back of pavement.



Indicative example massing



Indicative example location - site before intensification



Indicative example plan of how this type of site could be developed to deliver new homes in keeping with the existing character of the area



Precedent for this type of intensification: Moray Mews, Finsbury Park, London

J.3 TOWN CENTRES

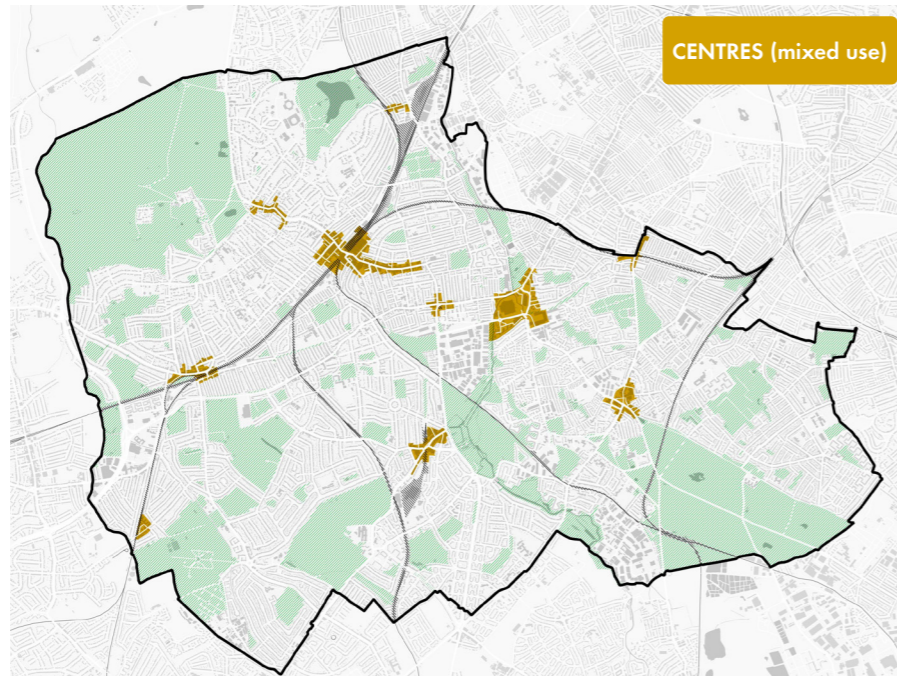
Non-residential led - Centres

Town centres are the commercial, cultural and civic hub of our communities and increasingly need to accommodate high density development. High density typologies are especially scrutinised and need to deliver quality at every stage of design and delivery.

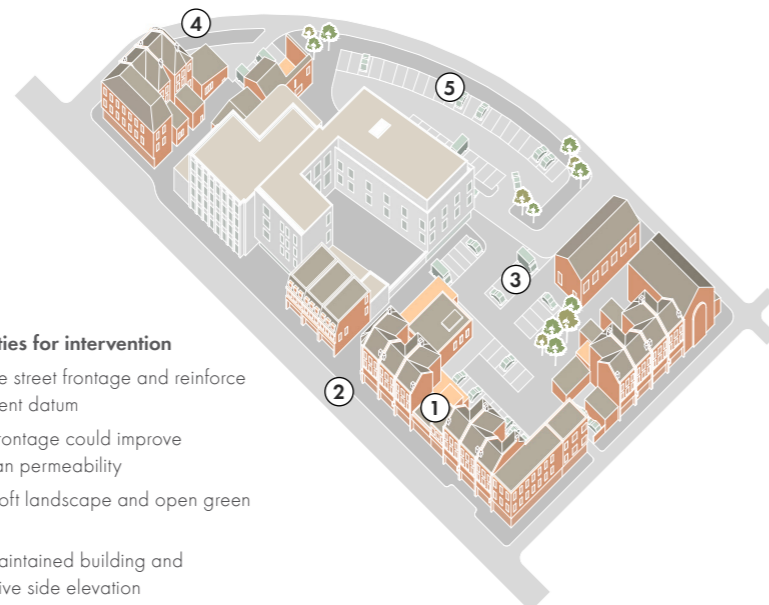
Scale and massing that responds to its context is important, using massing to mediate between existing low rise and higher proposals. Edge condition is also important, such as articulating facades through historic vernacular and planting to soften blunt edges between proposals and the public realm.

Key considerations for interventions will include:

- Seek to repair finer grain and permeability of historic centres; often lost to 20th century development
- Mixed uses should be prioritised, with ground floor non-residential units and residential above
- Creating consistent datum along frontages - vertical extensions set back can go higher and preserve street profile
- Public realm enhancements can improve existing or introduce new pedestrian routes and spaces
- Irregular blocks often exist either side of a high road but proposals should seek to complete frontage along block perimeter
- Suitable and sensitive for high density, tall schemes - introducing podium development can achieve taller extruded massing whilst positively meeting the ground
- Where a number of tall buildings may come forward, these should consider one another. The relationship between the buildings will have a significant impact on the townscape.



The mixed use town centres in the borough include the larger centres of Wimbledon and Collier's Wood as well as Morden, Raynes Park and Mitcham. Each form key locations for increased density.

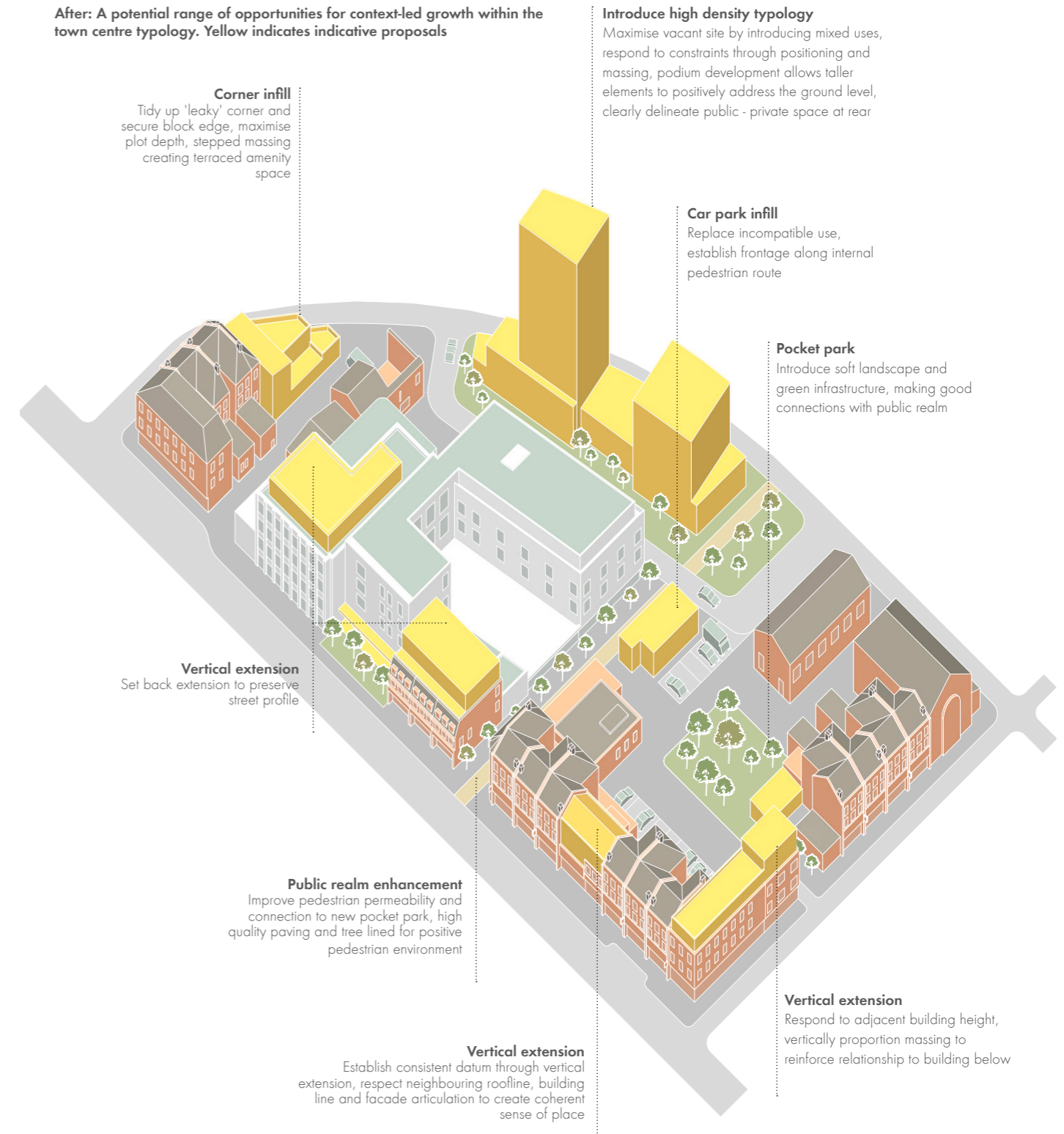


Opportunities for intervention

- 1 Complete street frontage and reinforce a consistent datum
- 2 Gap in frontage could improve pedestrian permeability
- 3 Lack of soft landscape and open green space
- 4 Poorly maintained building and unattractive side elevation
- 5 Vacant car park sites - increasingly incompatible with centres

Before: A potential range of instances which provide opportunities for context-led growth within the town centre typology

After: A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the town centre typology. Yellow indicates indicative proposals



Corner infill

Tidy up 'leaky' corner and secure block edge, maximise plot depth, stepped massing creating terraced amenity space

Introduce high density typology

Maximise vacant site by introducing mixed uses, respond to constraints through positioning and massing, podium development allows taller elements to positively address the ground level, clearly delineate public - private space at rear

Car park infill

Replace incompatible use, establish frontage along internal pedestrian route

Pocket park

Introduce soft landscape and green infrastructure, making good connections with public realm

Vertical extension

Set back extension to preserve street profile

Public realm enhancement

Improve pedestrian permeability and connection to new pocket park, high quality paving and tree lined for positive pedestrian environment

Vertical extension

Establish consistent datum through vertical extension, respect neighbouring roofline, building line and facade articulation to create coherent sense of place

Vertical extension

Respond to adjacent building height, vertically proportion massing to reinforce relationship to building below



1

TOWN CENTRES

Examples of context-led growth:

1. Following the closure of Debenhams in the historic Arding and Hobbs department store in the heart of Clapham Junction the building has been bought by W.RE. It will be refurbished with a significant roof extension and will deliver new workspace, co-working space and boutique retail and leisure uses on the lower floors (Clapham Junction)
2. Roof extensions adding new units to existing high street properties - a new four storey property inserted into the high street, replacing a one storey retail unit. The new building repaired the retail frontage and created a consistent datum, reinforcing the commercial role of the street. (Gordon Shrigley Architecture, 276 Bethnal Green Road)
3. Intensification through estate regeneration to intensify around centres and tube stations. High Path regeneration to deliver new homes, a new park and new shops, cafes and community space at South Wimbledon (PRP architects)
4. Redevelopment of low rise, poor quality and poor performance high street buildings to deliver strong frontage and high density development (Lewisham)
5. Sustainable reuse of existing architecture: Wellington House is a retrofit scheme which retains 80% of the original building, whilst doubling the floor space. By MATT Architecture (Wimbledon Hill, Merton)
6. Colliers Wood library successfully utilises community uses to provide an active frontage to the high street whilst delivering new homes above (Colliers Wood, Merton)
7. Reconfiguration or redevelopment of large format and coarse grain blocks such as 20th century indoor shopping centres into finer grain high density pieces of town centre (redevelopment of Westgate Shopping Centre, Oxford)



2



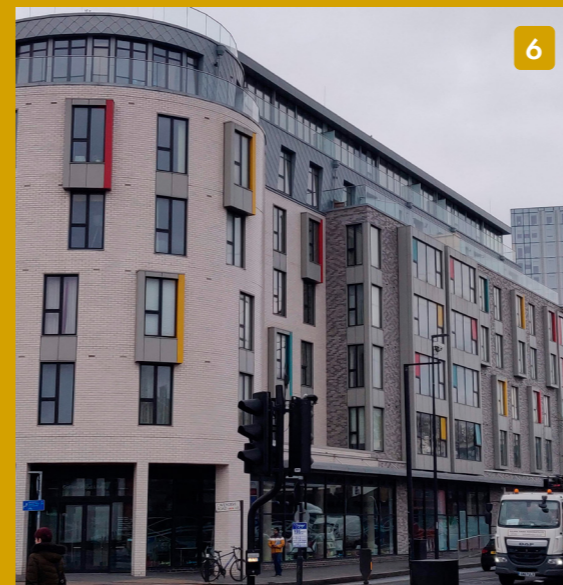
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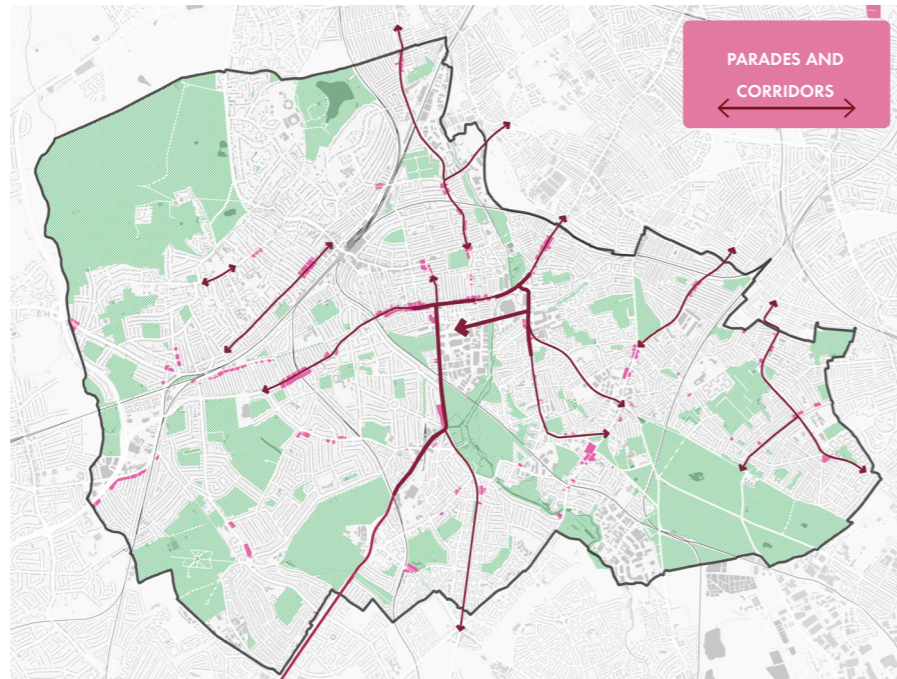
J.4 LINEAR - CORRIDORS & PARADES

Non-residential led - Linear typologies

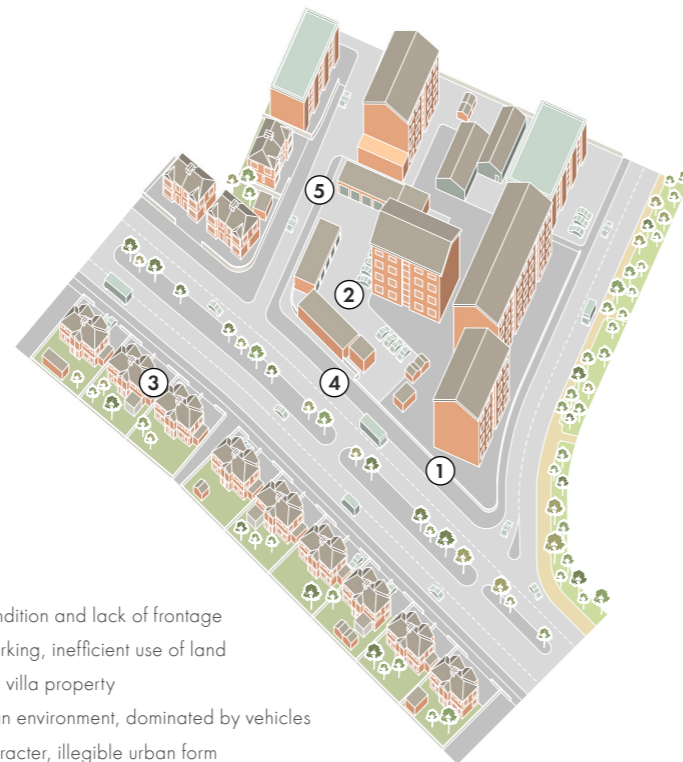
These typologies come in two scales - parades and corridors. Parades have the sense of being a 'destination' or place, whilst corridors are often a more gradual and continual linear environment linking places. They tend to occur along the key connecting routes in the borough. Due to their diversity in terms of scale and grain of buildings, alongside their accessibility, they are generally sustainable locations for growth. The quality of these environments can be poor due to vehicular dominance and new development and investment can help to positively address this character.

Key considerations:

- Creating strong frontage and articulation onto route will help positively evolve character
- Suitable for high density development - can contribute to reimagining of character
- Development must take account of excessive noise levels and poor air quality - mechanical ventilation and non-opening windows should not result in poor quality habitable environment or poor facade articulation
- Strengthen and tighten building line through new development - better framing route
- New development to align with prevailing block structure - creating permeable and coherent sense of place
- Pedestrian and vehicular access to / from busy arterial routes must be considered early in design process



This plan shows the parades and corridors that sit outside of the designated town centres. In reality many of these parades and corridor environments extend into the borough's town centres



Opportunities

- 1 Poor quality edge condition and lack of frontage
- 2 Excess surface car parking, inefficient use of land
- 3 Low density detached villa property
- 4 Poor quality pedestrian environment, dominated by vehicles
- 5 Lack of distinctive character, illegible urban form

Before: A potential range of instances which provide opportunities for context-led growth within a typical example corridor environment

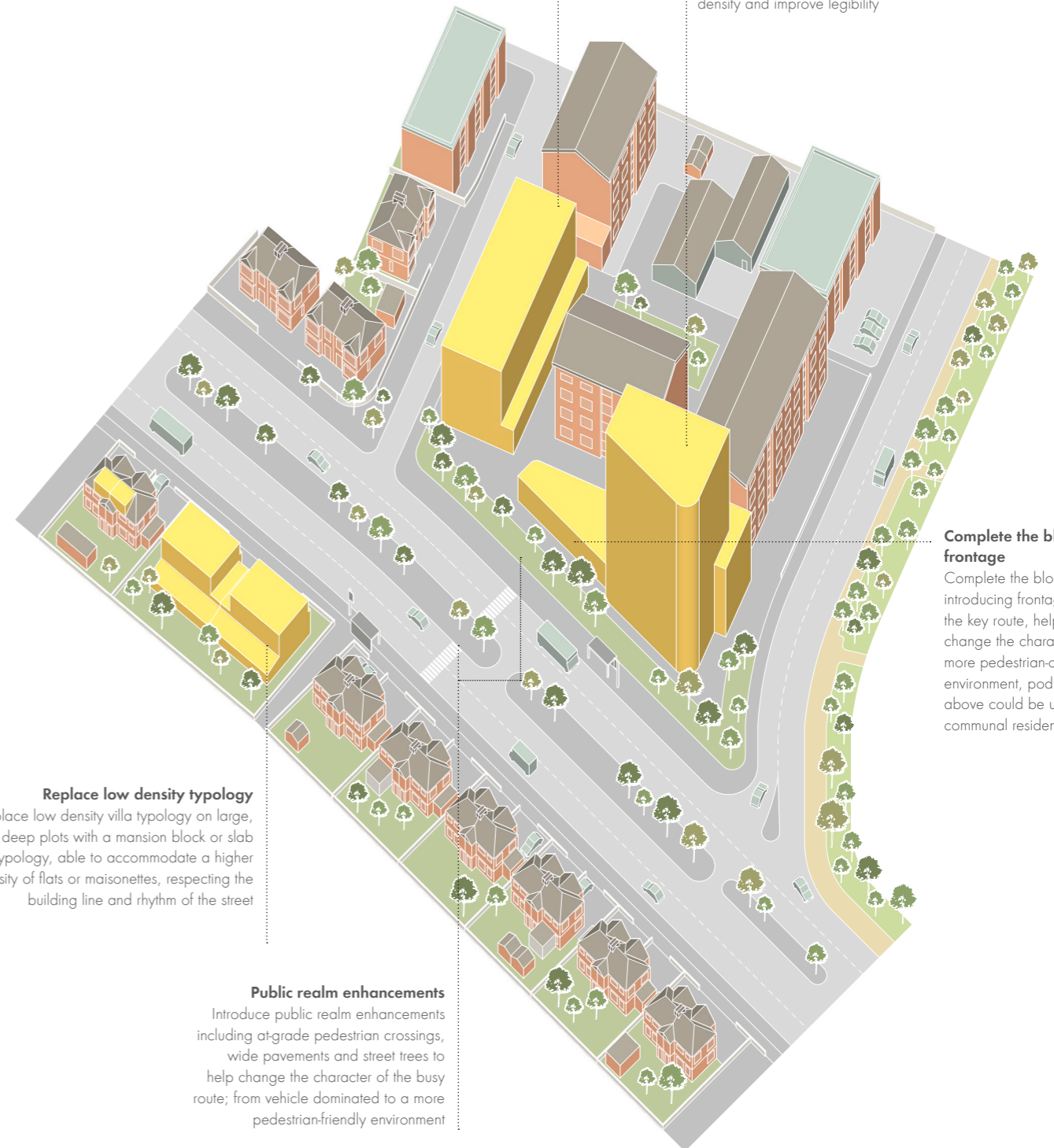
After: A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the corridor typology. Yellow indicates indicative proposals

Redevelop car parking lot

A more efficient use of land, mid-rise development can help to formalise the urban environment, creating consistent frontage to the block, a consistent datum and a more coherent sequence of spaces between buildings

Introduce high density typology

Tall buildings could be suitable to a corridor site, with a step up in height helping to define a more distinctive character. Concentrating massing on a podium 'shoulder' will create a better quality environment at ground level, whilst concentrating massing at the corner of the block can achieve high density and improve legibility



Complete the block with frontage

Complete the block by introducing frontage along the key route, helping to change the character to a more pedestrian-oriented environment, podium gardens above could be used as communal residential space

Replace low density typology

Replace low density villa typology on large, deep plots with a mansion block or slab typology, able to accommodate a higher density of flats or maisonettes, respecting the building line and rhythm of the street

Public realm enhancements

Introduce public realm enhancements including at-grade pedestrian crossings, wide pavements and street trees to help change the character of the busy route; from vehicle dominated to a more pedestrian-friendly environment



PARADES
Examples of context-led growth:

1. This scheme illustrates the opportunities that corner sites present to step up the scale, which can be done in a traditional style (Old Brompton Road - Earls Court)
2. This mixed use scheme delivered new homes above a larger ground floor commercial use, successfully integrating an increase in scale (Haydons Road, Merton)
3. Nelson Health Centre refurbished and re-used historic buildings to create active frontage with community uses, integrated into a wider local parade (Wimbledon Chase, Merton)



CORRIDORS
Examples of context-led growth:

1. Contemporary new architecture in keeping with adjacent historic assets raises the quality of a key corridor in the borough (Cricketers, Lower Green, Merton)
2. Mizen Heights delivers an element of significant height at the corner of a large plot to help balance the width of the very wide corridor (Colliers Wood, Merton)
3. This 'Mansion Block' scheme by Peter Barber cleverly steps up in scale along a key corridor, whilst delivering significant amenity space for each home (Peckham Road, Southwark)



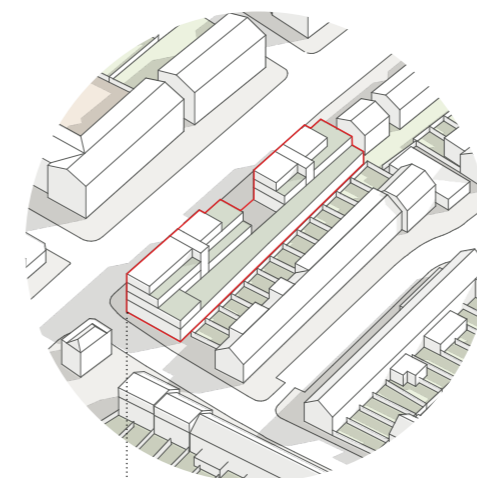
Case Study

This case study illustrates the potential of sites along or near to key corridors. Some corridors include parades and therefore how they relate to existing shops and services will need to be considered.

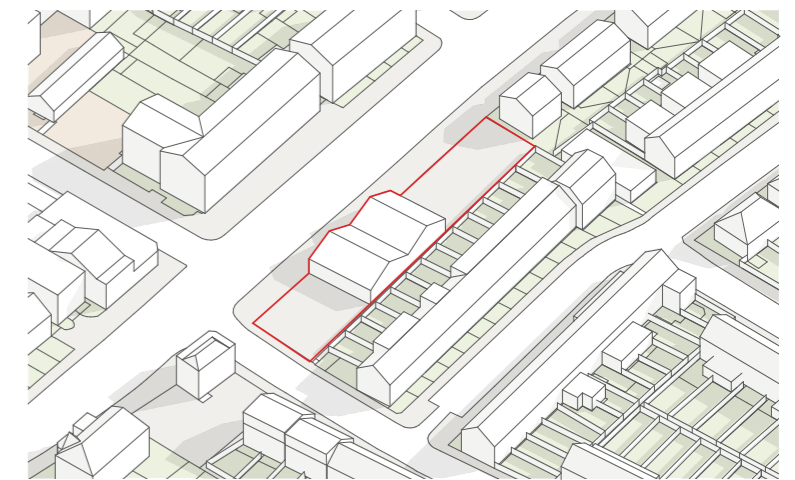
The site illustrates an opportunity for a scheme with a partly commercial ground floor with residential above to help strengthen and improve the quality and continuity of the frontage along this important corridor. The site is quite long so a courtyard is incorporated into the ground floor for use by the commercial units. The residential units sit above the commercial space, either side of the courtyard. The residential units all have generous external amenity space, with a communal terrace on the first floor.

A key consideration for the design of a site such as this is the overlooking to the houses to the rear. This means that windows to new residential units must be set back from the site boundary. Amenity space can be used as a buffer. To reduce the daylight/sunlight impact the development has on the houses to the rear the building steps back at each storey.

The proposal rises from two to four storeys across the site. There is potential for a fifth storey on the corner which would need to carefully consider the context.



Indicative example massing



Indicative example location - site before intensification



Indicative example plan of how this type of site could be developed to deliver new homes in keeping with the existing character of the area

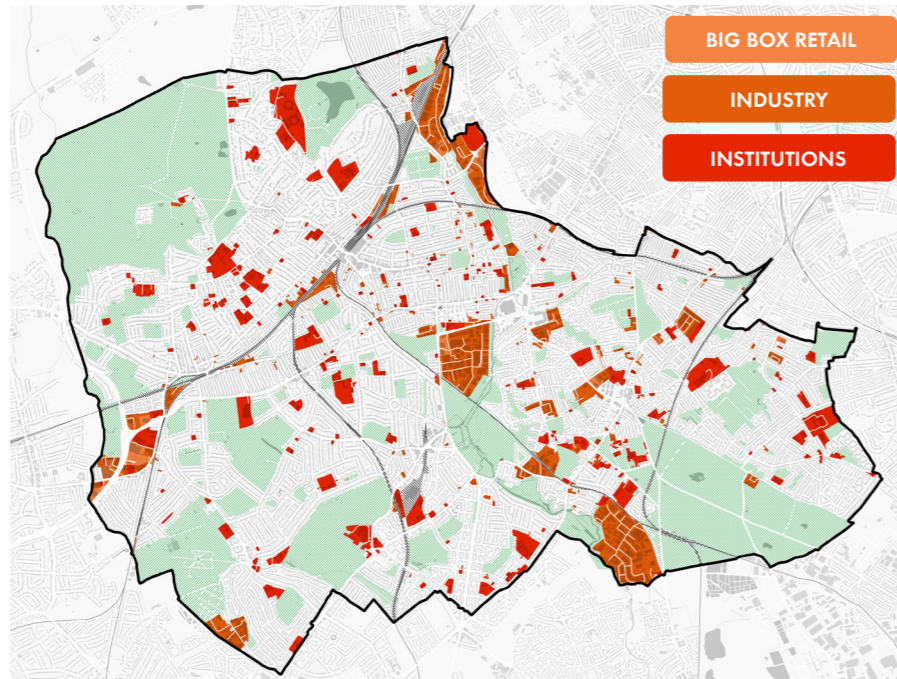
J.5 CAMPUS

Non-residential led - Campus

Campus typologies are defined by their mono-use, and provide a significant amount of Merton's non-residential floor space, particularly outside of the town centres and local parades. Although many industrial areas perform an important employment function and service the borough, some campus environments offer good opportunities for intensification and growth by being more intensively used, with a greater variety of uses. Improvements may be about improving the quality of the internal public realm environment alongside making these areas better neighbours to their context. Development should not necessarily be about changing the use.

Key considerations should include:

- Strategic vision and masterplan required from the outset in order to successfully deliver long-term objectives and transformation
- Repairing the urban fabric through the creation of routes, streets, spaces and buildings that integrate with surrounding grain
- Soft edges - delivering public realm and movement investment outside of the red line boundary to blur the edges of development
- No net-loss of employment floorspace in designated Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) and Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) required
- Overcoming severance of road and rail infrastructure is essential - strong pedestrian and cycle connectivity
- Resilience needed with masterplans demonstrating flexibility between uses and 'alternative futures'



This plan shows the spread of the three types of campus within the borough - big box retail, industry and institutions.

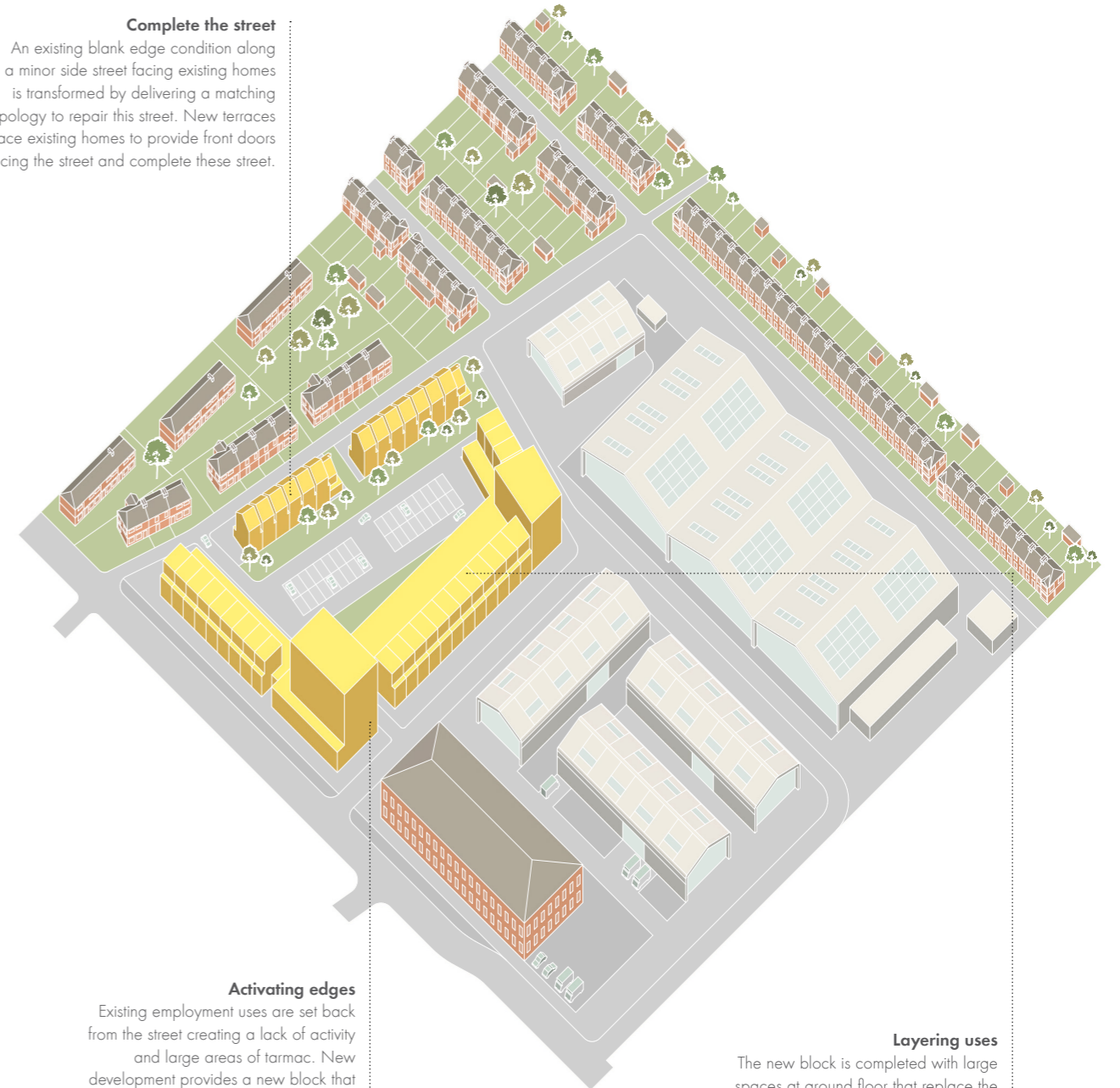


Opportunities

- 1 Poor quality edge condition and lack of frontage
- 2 Low density development and vacancy
- 3 Excess hard standing, inefficient use of land

Existing condition (illustrative example) showing big box retail and employment uses adjacent to homes

After: A potential range of opportunities for context-led growth within the campus typology. Yellow indicates indicative proposals



Complete the street

An existing blank edge condition along a minor side street facing existing homes is transformed by delivering a matching typology to repair this street. New terraces face existing homes to provide front doors facing the street and complete these street.

Activating edges

Existing employment uses are set back from the street creating a lack of activity and large areas of tarmac. New development provides a new block that addresses the street edge, with service areas behind. The scale of buildings step up at the corner of the plot to deliver residential units at this point.

Layering uses

The new block is completed with large spaces at ground floor that replace the existing employment space. These buildings could still be entirely employment in use, or have new residential units stacked above employment uses at ground.



BIG BOX RETAIL
Examples of context-led growth:

1. 440 homes arranged over four buildings, utilising a podium to accommodate a supermarket at ground floor, maximising land use efficiency. The podium courtyard responds to local historic landmarks and provides quality amenity space for residents. (Smithfield Square, Hornsey, LB Haringey. John Robertson Architects)



2. In Raynes Park a large Waitrose is accommodated on a former surface car park with almost 100 new apartments in the heart of the town centre - integrating a large store into the existing town centre



INSTITUTIONS
Examples of context-led growth:

1. The new Harris Academy provides a strong frontage to High Path - forming one of the important first steps in the regeneration of this estate (South Wimbledon, Merton)



2. Tidemill Academy is a two form entry Primary School and Nursery (480 Pupil capacity) delivered on an urban 0.53 ha site. The scheme delivers activity to the street and wider connections with the community including access to the schools library and hall out of school hours. The rooftop of the school accommodates a ball court (Deptford, LB Lewisham. Pollard Thomas Edwards).



INDUSTRY
Examples of context-led growth:

1. Stanmore Place is a successful scheme that delivers new homes at a higher density and uses an innovation/business centre to mediate or provide a buffer between the industrial uses to the south, and new homes to the north (Canons Park, LB Harrow)



2. At Caxton Works, light industrial uses are accommodated at ground floor as part of a separated and insulated podium with residential uses included above (Bow, LB Tower Hamlets)



3. Bennets Courtyard is a high quality designed residential scheme that successfully references and reinterprets its industrial context (Fielden Clegg Bradley, Merton Abbey Mills, LB Merton)



J.6 TALL BUILDINGS

The role of tall buildings

Tall and high density buildings can offer a range of benefits. For example, they can reduce the carbon footprint per dwelling by using district energy systems; they can help people live closer to local centres, reducing sprawl and retaining vital open land. When situated close to transport links, such buildings can reduce the reliance on cars and encourage healthier ways of getting around. Tall buildings can also improve wayfinding and add to the visual intricacy of neighbourhoods.

However, perhaps more than any other housing typology, tall buildings must balance the needs of individual homes with broader townscape considerations. This type of building can have a profound, lasting impact on the skyline and can significantly compromise the character of historic areas if they are situated inappropriately or poorly designed. A single tower inserted into an already well-connected site with significant activity at ground level is likely to be more successful as both a home and an integrated 'piece of city' than one on a more suburban or isolated site. This housing type is suited to areas on the 'reimagine' end of the spectrum (see p.30).

Building heights in London

London has traditionally been known as a low to mid-scale city with inner areas of compact density and outer areas of suburban development interspersed by occasional, prominent markers on the skyline such as church spires or modern office buildings. This depiction has changed significantly since the regeneration of the London Docklands in the 1980s and, in recent decades, with the City of London's eastern cluster of towers leading the way and many high-rise developments in both inner and outer London boroughs following suit. What can be considered tall has varied across time and, understandably, still varies today across London. The prevailing height of buildings also varies between inner and outer London boroughs, meaning that the definition and impact of a taller building will vary accordingly.

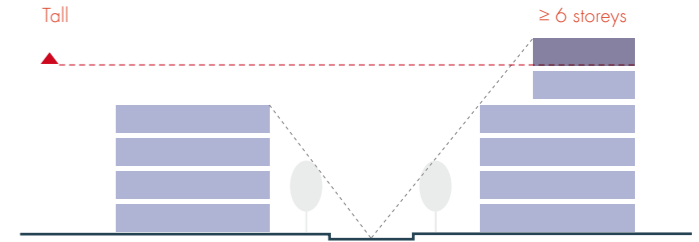
The London Plan requires Local Planning Authorities to define what is considered a tall building based on local context. Furthermore, it states that tall buildings should not be lower than 6 storeys or 18 metres measured from the ground to the floor of the uppermost storey (see policy Policy D9 Tall buildings).

Defining tall (and mid-rise) in Merton

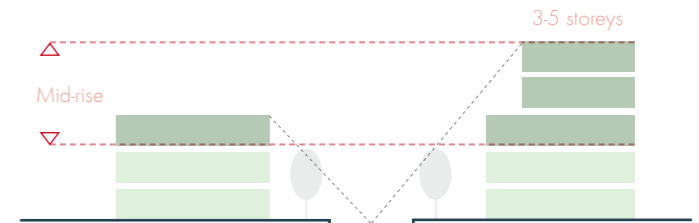
The London Plan definition of tall buildings (i.e.

minimum 6 storeys or 18 metres) is appropriate for Merton as it accurately captures the scale of the tallest buildings in the borough which are concentrated within town centres or mixed-use areas, with few exceptions. It is highly unlikely that a tall building would be appropriate in low-scale, residential area (i.e. consisting of 2-3 storey suburban houses) which accounts for most of the borough (see land use map on p.12).

Instead, a more contextual definition is needed for these areas to describe new developments which 'appear tall' relative to their surroundings but are still below the London Plan definition. Developments such as these can be described as 'mid-rise' and range between 3-5 storeys. Mid-rise developments are suited to all areas on the repair-reimagine spectrum as they can effectively increase residential and employment densities of neighbourhoods without radically impacting their scale and built character. Applications for mid-rise developments will be judged on a case-by-case basis, however, they will not undergo the same level of design scrutiny as tall buildings.

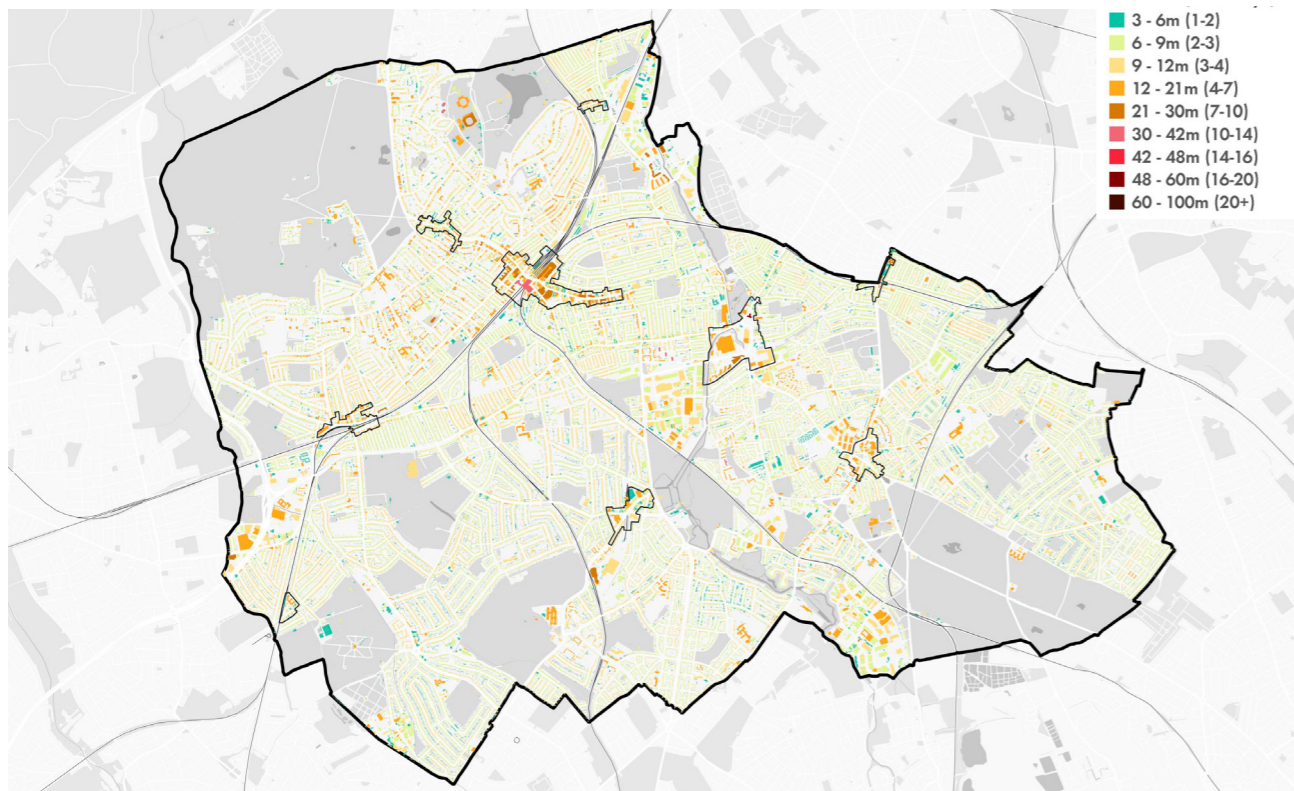


Cross-section of a street indicating what a tall building would look like in a town centre location



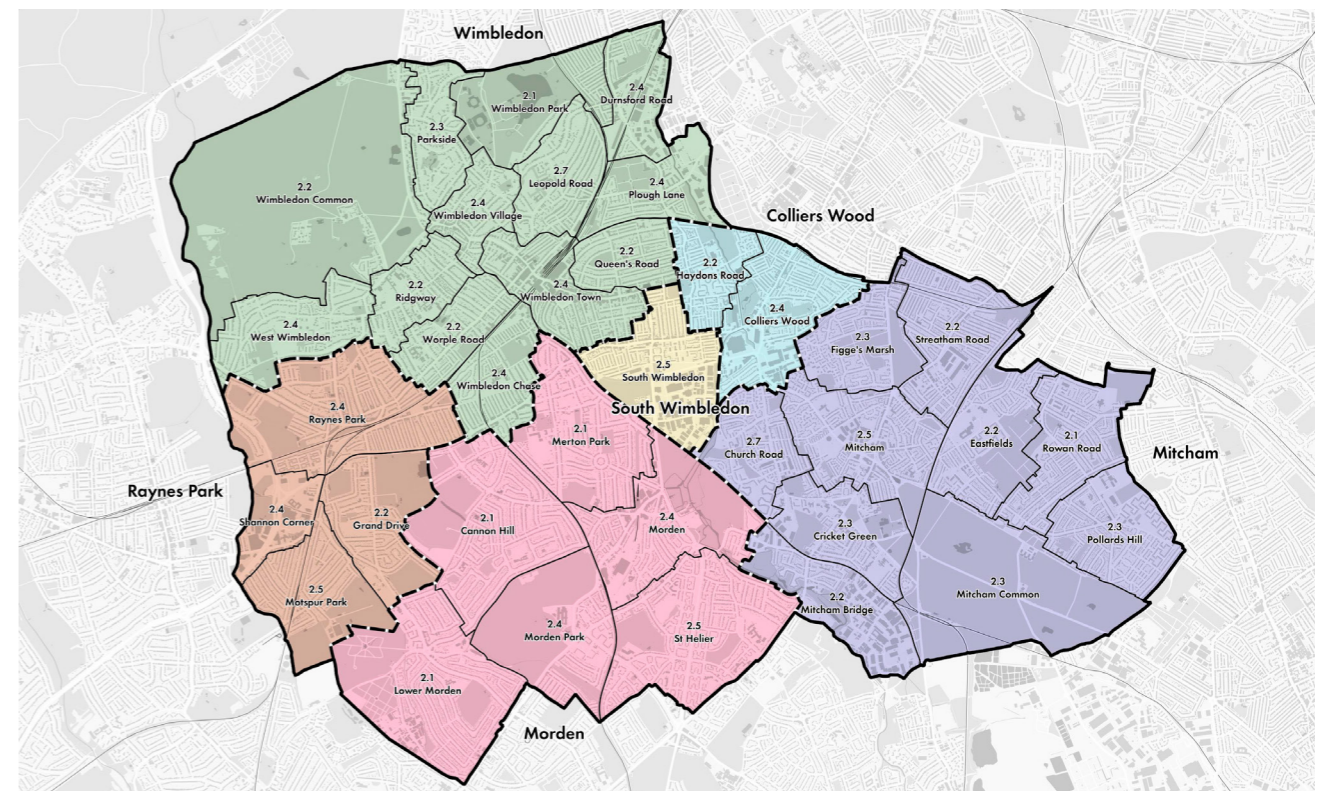
Cross-section of a street indicating what a mid-rise building would look like in a low-scale / residential area

- Mixed-use building
- Residential building
- Tall
- Mid-rise



Existing building heights and town centre locations across Merton

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Prevailing heights across the different sub-area of Merton, expressed in number of storeys

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A framework for character-led tall buildings
 Applicants who are considering tall building proposals on their sites should consider the following issues and questions during the pre-app process and in anticipation of submitting their outline or detailed proposals to the Council.

A - Site selection
 As part of the initial development appraisal, it is important to review relevant policies and guidance for the site which may set out parameters and constraints for its future development. For example:

- Has the site been allocated by the Council? If so, does the allocation include any guidance regarding building heights or density?
- Has the site been highlighted in the Local Plan, Local Development Framework, Area Action Plan, Supplementary Planning Document or any other policy document which is considered material evidence for evaluating planning applications? If so, what guidance has been provided in relation to building height or density?

B - Sensitivity issues
 Some locations are particularly sensitive and, therefore, less suitable to tall building development for a number of reasons, typically regarding the setting of heritage assets or the potential for overbearing visual prominence. Due to these sensitivities, proposals which seek to exceed the prevailing height of surrounding buildings would require a strong urban design rationale for doing so. Applicants may wish to consider mid-rise forms of development (i.e. 2-3 storeys) on sites within low-scale suburban neighbourhoods where tall buildings would be inappropriate.

C - Suitability
 Using the overall suitability map as a guide, applicants can assess whether their site is in a more suitable location for tall buildings. Proposals for tall buildings on such sites will be considered providing they are responsive to their surroundings and demonstrate exceptional design quality. Proposals must consider their immediate and local character, townscape and socioeconomic context as well as the natural environment.

D - The natural environment
 When considering the natural environment, proposals for tall buildings should aim to:

- Assess whether a site is liable to flooding and ensure that the flood risk may be properly managed and mitigated if it is not prohibitively high.
- Seek to protect and enhance the open quality and amenity of Metropolitan Open Land and other Public Open Spaces including parks, rivers and canals.
- Consider the existing ecosystems and surrounding site and demonstrate how the proximity of tall buildings to biodiverse woodlands or water bodies supporting notable animal species would not negatively impact on their upon their habitats and migration patterns.
- Limit excavation and work with the site topography and limit to exploit prospects and panoramas without impeding local views.

E - Considering context
 It is essential for applicants to demonstrate an understanding of the existing social and physical character of an area beyond the red line boundary of the site. Applicants should:

- Undertake a high-level analysis of the surrounding area, taking into account the urban form and character of existing buildings and their prevailing heights.
- Identify the appropriate character theme which has been assigned to the site (on the reinforce-repair-reimagine spectrum) and consider whether this supports the principle of tall building development.
- Identify the borough area and neighbourhood in which the site is located and to demonstrate how their proposals can contribute to the Council's specific objectives or priorities for that area.
- Demonstrate how the proposal aligns with the relevant planning policies and local character to achieve optimised capacity.
- The larger the site, the greater potential impact that its development will have on local character. Tall buildings on large sites should demonstrate their positive contribution to Good Growth.

F - Urban design principles
 Having established suitable locations for tall buildings, applicants must ensure that proposals:

- Consider alternative options for equally dense but lower / medium-rise forms of development as part of the design process.
- Present a clear townscape merit and justification for their height which ought to be proportional to their role and function in the immediate and broader context.
- Integrate taller elements within larger blocks with varied massing which can mediate between the scale of proposed developments and existing buildings.
- Seek to retain or improve the cross-sectional profile and character of existing streets.
- Reinforce the spatial hierarchy of the local and wider context by aiding legibility and wayfinding.

Proposals for clusters of tall buildings (i.e. three or more within close proximity) should:

- Be designed with varied heights to provide visual intricacy across the existing skyline.
- Position the apex of building heights closer to the centre and lower building heights towards periphery of the cluster.

G - Visual impacts
 Proposals for tall buildings should evidence how they respond sensitively to the local character through visual impact testing of nearby, mid-range and long-distance views. This can be achieved through:

- Zones of Theoretical Visibility Testing (ZTV)
- Accurate Visual Representations (AVR)
- Verified views analysis

These techniques can be used to ensure that tall building proposals have taken local heritage assets and historical settings into account and that no harm is done to the local character of the built environment. Such testing is particularly important within Conservation Areas, near listed buildings and in places where there is heritage at risk. In such areas, the choice of construction method and careful selection of materials, colours and outward appearance is key to ensuring that tall buildings enrich and reinforce rather than work against their historic settings.

H - Architectural design principles for tall buildings
 The following key principles should be considered in the design of tall buildings and their management.

L - Crown
 This includes the roof and uppermost storeys, provide opportunities for new inflection points in the skyline. The extent to which a tall building's crown is idiosyncratic or sympathetic to the local character should depend on the role of the building in relation to its position and wider context. It is preferable that the upper floors should be articulated and distinct in material and form to the middle. Roof-top telecoms and mechanical equipment (such as plants, BMUs and lift overruns) ought to be integrated and concealed by parapets. While publicly accessible viewing platforms are encouraged, any outdoor amenity spaces must ensure safety for persons at height and street level.

K - Middle
 The design of the main building volume should consider the impact on wind flow, privacy, light and overshadowing. The three-dimensional form should balance the internal programmatic requirements with outward elegance and appearance to and from surrounding buildings, streets and spaces. A direct relationship between the typical floor plate(s) and facade composition is desirable - as is the harmonious modulation of elements such as balconies, recesses, and fenestration. The selection of visible materials and lighting ought to reinforce or enhance the townscape, particularly at night-time.

J - Base
 The base of a tall building should be animated by active frontages and provide a welcoming arrival experience. Public spaces around the base should be generous, well-designed and contribute positively to the local context. Front of house areas such as entrance lobbies, circulation and shared spaces should be safe and well lit. Communal spaces should be easy to access, inclusive and visible from the surrounding streets. Back of house areas should be well organised and sufficiently large to accommodate essential functions such as bike storage, bin storage, car parking and refuse collection.

I - Safety and management
 Tall buildings benefit from a clear delineation of public and private space. Defensible spaces and active, street-facing frontages at ground floor can provide a sense of enclosure and safety. The security and management regime of communal areas should ensure that the operational use of the building follows best practice. Well-defined evacuation strategies will minimise the impact of fire, flooding and other situational hazards.

Sensitivity to tall building development

Part B of the framework for character-led tall buildings (p132) encourages applicants to consider a number of objective criteria that provide a general understanding of the relative sensitivity of different parts of the Borough for tall building development. These criteria relate to whether a site:

- is within or near a Conservation Area
- includes or is near Heritage at Risk
- is near Listed buildings
- is near Locally listed buildings

The following set of maps indicative which areas are affected by each criterion in turn. These culminate in a composite sensitivity map which overlays all the factors indicating areas which are most sensitive to tall buildings, with the darkest areas considered most sensitive.

Conservation areas

Conservation areas are a well-established designation employed by local planning authorities to manage areas of special architectural or historic interest. The historic environment is a vital part of creating a sense of place; not only do local people value the historic environment and historic assets, they often add financial value to the property.

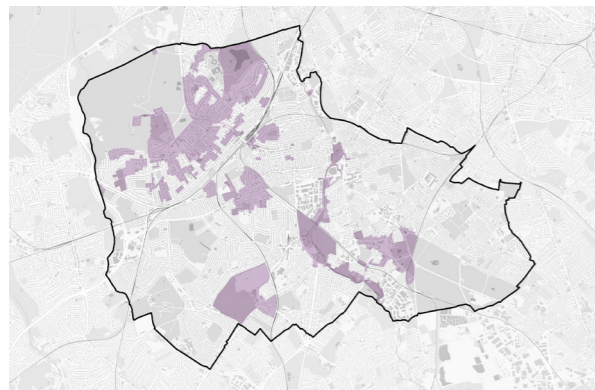
Conservation areas can also be potentially suitable areas for tall buildings, they are not mutually exclusive attributes. However, proposals for tall buildings need to ensure that conservation areas and other historic assets continue to be preserved and enhanced.

Listed buildings and locally listed buildings

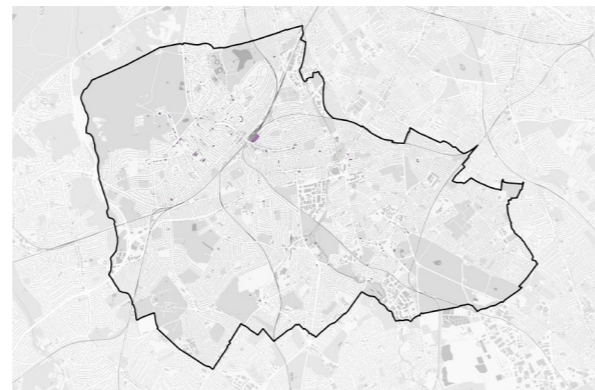
Special regard needs to be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, as opposed to keeping it utterly unchanged. Site-specific analysis will be required to determine the potential impact of new tall building proposals on such heritage assets.

Heritage at Risk

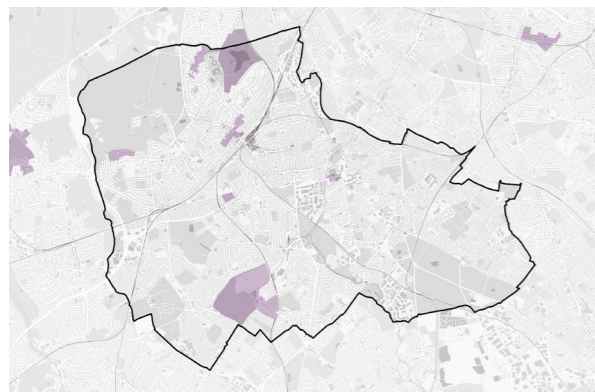
Heritage Land is defined as open land of historic value, including sites listed on the on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England. Their open space character means developments from far away, inside and outside of the borough, could still negatively impact on their historic setting - they are therefore considered sensitive. Heritage at Risk (HAR) identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development.



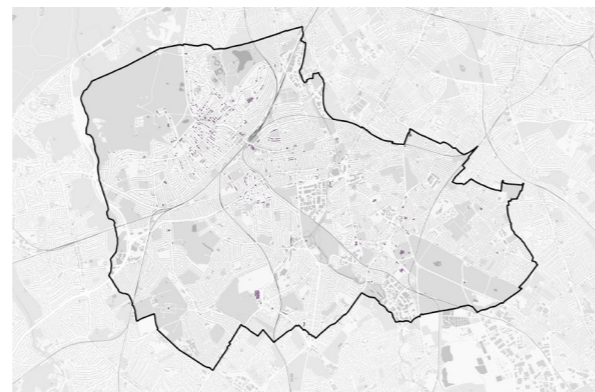
Conservation Areas



Listed buildings



Heritage at Risk



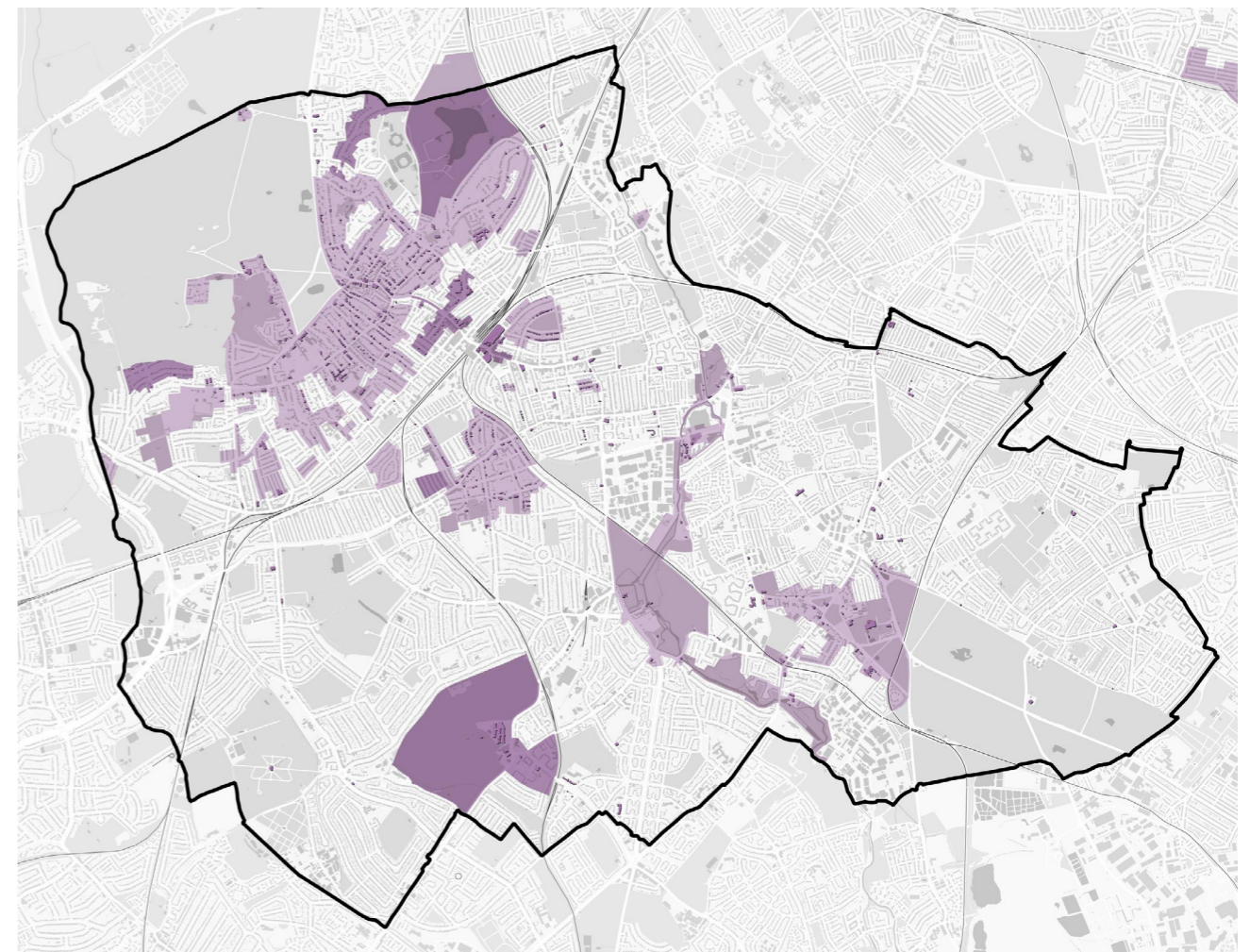
Locally listed buildings

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Example of a tall building in a sensitive location



Goswin Street, Southwark. Image © Allies and Morrison. New build scheme of six storeys where the lower four storeys reinforce the scale of existing buildings across the street while the upper two floors are stepped back to accommodate a tall element.



Level of sensitivity heatmap based on all criteria overlaid

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moderate high

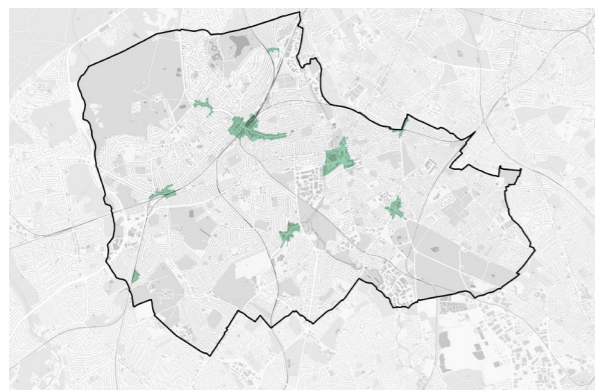
Suitability to tall building development

Part C of the framework for character-led tall buildings (p132) encourages applicants to simultaneously consider other criteria that offer a general understanding of the relative suitability of different parts of the Borough for tall building development. These relate to:

- Proximity to a town or local centre
- Opportunity or Intensification Areas
- Proximity to a public park
- Accessibility by bicycle
- Accessibility to public transport
- Strategic area for regeneration

Each criterion is shown independently below and as a composite heat map.

Proximity to a town or local centre

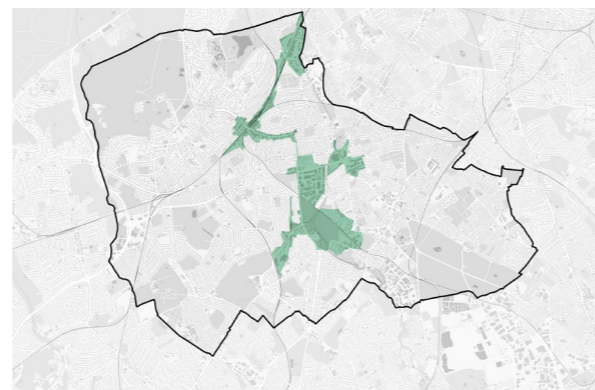


Town and local centres

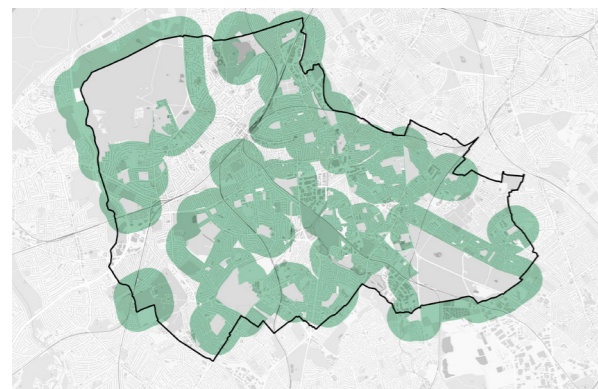
In addition to public transport accessibility, the NPPF also recognises the importance of commercial and shopping centres as locations best suited to making the optimum use of land. Merton borough has a network of town centres including Major, District centres (London Plan Town Centre Network) and Neighbourhood Centres. Town centres represent mixed use, urban environments with a range of shops and services provided, making them amongst the most sustainable locations for higher density development and therefore the most suitable for tall buildings.

Opportunity or Intensification Area

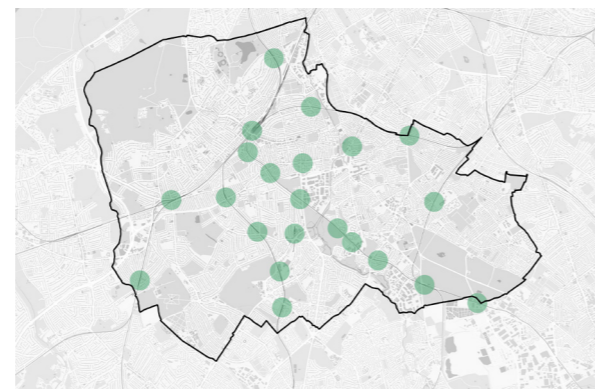
Opportunity Areas are identified as significant



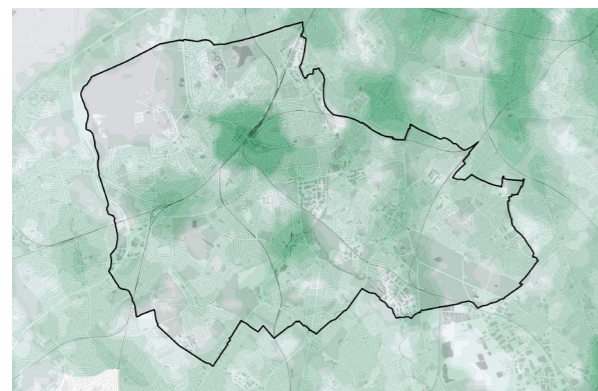
Opportunity Areas



Proximity to a public park

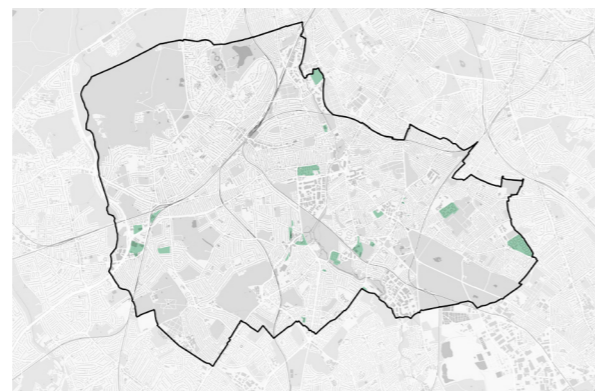


Proximity to a station



Accessibility to public transport

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Regeneration opportunities (potential estate regeneration opportunities and key site allocations suitable for residential development)

regional locations with development capacity to accommodate new housing, commercial development and infrastructure (of all types), linked to existing or potential improvements in public transport connectivity and capacity. Taking maximum advantage of these sites being unlocked means delivering significant volumes of high quality, high density development including strategic housing growth. Merton Opportunity Area and the South Wimbledon/Colliers Wood intensification area are considered more suitable for tall buildings.

Proximity to a public park

Good access to open space is a key criterion for the suitability of tall buildings so residents have good access to greenery. The GLA stipulates that all homes should be within 400m of an open space of 2 hectares or greater.

Proximity to a station

Merton is home to a number of stations served by National Rail and Transport for London services, reflected in the large areas of high PTAL. In addition to taking advantage of the accessibility this affords, the immediate setting of stations tends to be

urban in character and therefore more suitable for accommodating tall buildings. Often train stations can provide areas of focused regeneration, where tall buildings can help contribute positively to defining a new, higher density character.

Accessibility to public transport

One of the most important factors in determining a site's relative suitability for a tall building. This is underpinned by the requirement set out in the NPPF to make the optimum use of land, especially where there is an existing shortage of land for meeting identified needs, as there is across the capital. High density development is encouraged in areas well served by public transport (NPPF para 123). The assessment here is that areas with a PTAL rating of 3 or more are considered to be areas most suited to potential tall buildings.

Note

The existence of tall building clusters was discounted as a criterion, given that their presence is not considered an automatic indicator of suitability for further tall buildings nearby.



Level of suitability heatmap based on all criteria overlaid

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moderate high

Examples of contextual, mid-rise intensification in low-scale / residential areas



Quicks Road, South Wimbledon. Image © Google Street View



Stage House, Wimbledon. Image © Google Street View



Flora Court, Croydon. Image © Pitman Tozer Architects



King Edward's Road, Hackney. Image © Hawkins / Brown



Essex Close, Waltham Forest. Image © Bell Phillips Architects



Great Eastern Buildings, Hackney. Image © Karakusevic Carson Architects

Examples of context-led, tall intensification in town centre locations



Mizen Heights, Colliers Wood. Image © Future Merton



Number One, Wimbledon © MATT architecture



Wellington House, Wimbledon. Image © MATT architecture



Agar Grove, Camden. Image © Hawkins / Brown



Westbourne Baptist Church, Westminster. Image © Allies and Morrison



Porters Edge, Southwark © Maccreanor Lavington



FUTURE MERTON

What does this mean for the borough?

K FUTURE MERTON

The nature of growth for Merton

The pressure for growth and the need for homes applies to every London borough and Merton must play its part in supporting good growth. Every borough is different and the way in which it can accommodate targeted growth is also therefore different. As an outer London borough with a largely suburban character, Merton faces particular challenges in accommodating a step change in housing numbers.

This character study identifies how the growth needed can be absorbed in a way which reinforces local character and allows it to evolve in response to need. For Merton this means:

- An emphasis on **supporting and reinforcing the role and character of town centres** in the borough. This means reinforcing the existing character and qualities in most town centres whilst accommodating intensification - so allowing centres such as Wimbledon to intensify within acceptable limits and with a strong emphasis on environmental enhancement alongside growth.
- In two key centres, **Morden and Collier's Wood**, there is the opportunity to **shape growth in a way which supports an evolution of these places** with a more transformational impact. Both centres have elements of a strong bone structure and can use intensification to enhance and evolve existing character - enabling them to grow into vibrant community hubs for the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- **Restoring historic routes as the backbone of the borough**, emphasising their importance as sustainable corridors, attractive environments and logical locations for intensification. Many of these routes are ancient high roads and with investment can again be the focus for activity in the borough.
- **Celebrating the borough's green infrastructure** assets and network. The borough is blessed with a wealth of high quality green spaces that vary from wild commons to Green Flag Award winning recreational spaces that are cherished by residents. Many of the

housing neighbourhoods in the borough were planned around a network of green infrastructure, ensuring residents had access to sports grounds, formal gardens and biodiversity rich woodlands and heaths. Re-emphasising this inbuilt green infrastructure as well as promoting some of the avenue streets as green / active travel corridors could significantly enhance the character of the borough's neighbourhoods and their sustainability.

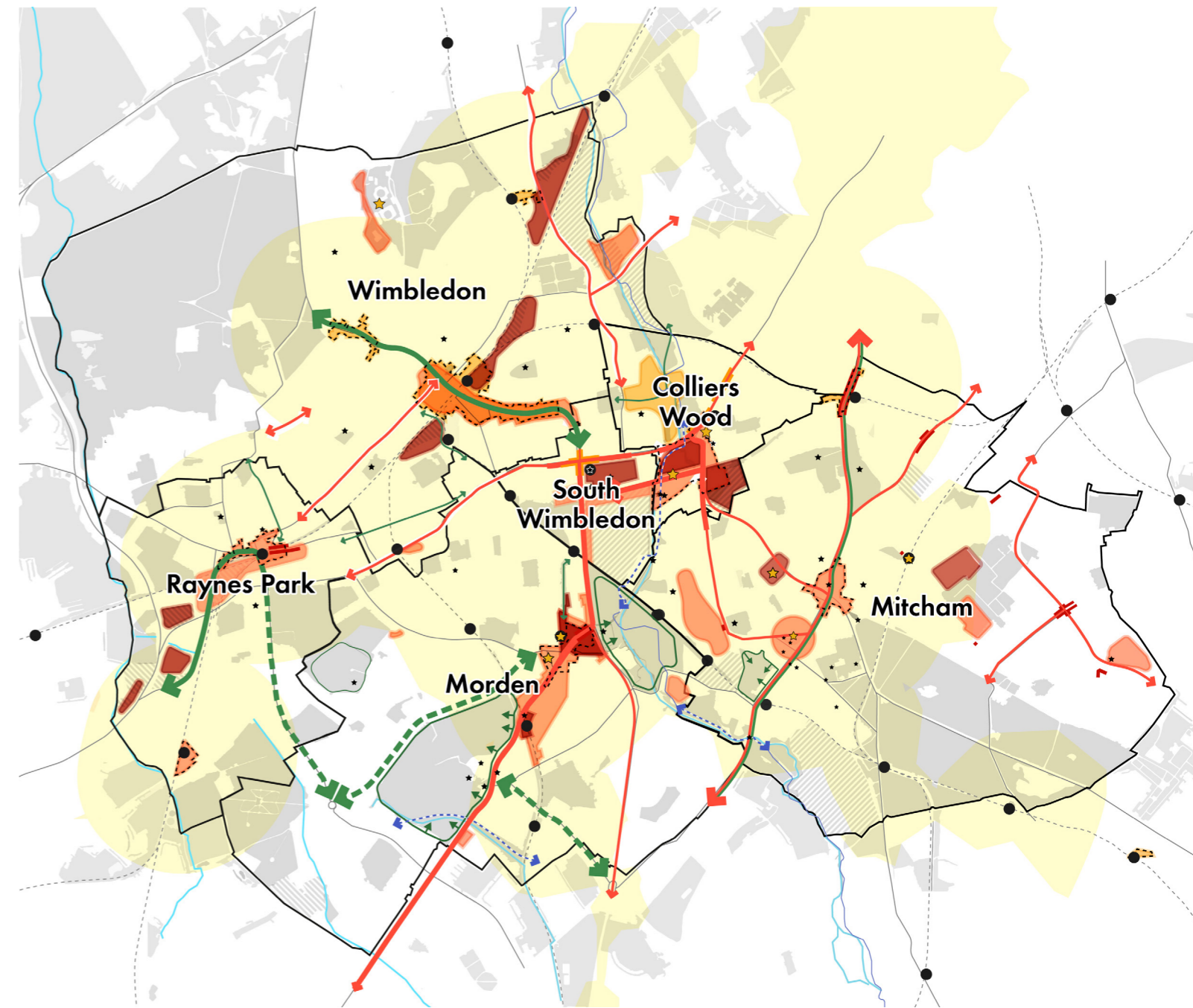
- **Revitalising waterways as blue corridors and continuous walking and cycling spines** could provide opportunities for both landscape restoration as well as new waterside development. Brooks and streams run through and alongside areas for future development and offer character-led opportunities for environmental enhancement and climate resilience.
- **Strengthening the role of local parades and smaller centres as local hubs of activity** has multiple benefits. Such an approach celebrates the identity and resilience of local neighbourhoods, allows intensification to happen in appropriate locations within suburban neighbourhoods, whilst also supporting local patterns of movement and the viability of commercial and community uses.
- **Overcoming the barriers created by rail and road infrastructure** through exploring opportunities for new development/uses and introducing new crossings could both enhance the accessibility and character of neighbourhoods and local centres. Improving existing crossings and introducing new bridges could transform how neighbourhoods are integrated.
- **Managing transitions between areas** through sensitive approaches to density and massing as well as environmental enhancements. This will be particularly important for centres such as Morden and Colliers Wood, but also between industrial and residential areas to better support both activities. It will be important to value existing industrial/employment spines such as along the River Wandle whilst looking for opportunities to ease the transition between areas and raise environmental quality generally.

proposals / opportunities:

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- Small sites search area: repair character in areas of the borough with good accessibility and access to services through the development of available small sites (See Small Sites Toolkit SPD)
- Corridor Intensification (major)
- Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- Strategic greening and improvements
- Strategic improvements
- Local green link improvements
- Improving connection to park

baseplan:

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
- Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- Strategic Landmark
- Local Landmark
- Road
- Rail
- Waterway
- Waterway Link



Borough-wide proposed growth strategy to support the evolution of character

Next steps

The approach to growth set out in this character study provides a strong basis for the Local Plan. Embedding this strategy in planning policy will set the borough on course to meet its housing and jobs targets in a way celebrates and supports local character.

This document provides high level guidance and a selection of case studies for how different types of areas could best be intensified. To ensure the recommendations in this study translate into high quality context-led development and interventions on the ground, further support and guidance will be needed.

Masterplans for key areas of change: In locations where character will be evolving through intensification, masterplanning will form an important step to refining the direction of change and the appropriate grain and massing. Both Colliers Wood and Morden will need to be steered by overarching masterplans to help make the very best of the next phase of change and ensure the transition between surrounding neighbourhoods and the denser centres is comfortable.

Small sites guidance: Merton's Small Sites Toolkit (SPD) provides invaluable guidance on how the potential of smaller sites can be optimised in a way that sits comfortably in each neighbourhood. This guidance builds on the themes and approaches set out in chapter J.

Further design guidance: The suburban nature of much of the borough makes intensification in many neighbourhoods a challenge. Over time it is likely that demand will grow to sub-divide suburban properties in the same way that more urban Victorian terraced areas experienced in previous decades. To ensure such a trend is managed appropriately and does not exacerbate existing problems, such as loss front gardens and greenery, there will likely be a need for design guidance, or at least a set of parameters or thresholds that should be adhered to in order to protect local character and support climate resilience. Further guidance may also be valuable to support local design coding as the planning system shifts towards this emphasis.

L LIBRARY OF RELATED DOCUMENTS

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

London Plan

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan/london-plan-2021>

London Plan Guidance and SPGs

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/london-plan-guidance-and-spgs>

Merton Local Plan

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/local-plan>

Merton's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/conservation-heritage/conservation-areas-list>

Future Wimbledon SPD

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/regeneration-projects/future-wimbledon>

Small Sites Toolkit SPD

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/supplementary-planning-documents/small-sites-toolkit>

Merton's Shopfront Design guide SPD

https://www.merton.gov.uk/Documents/shop_front_cab_060417_website.pdf

Merton's 2011 Character Study

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/regeneration-urban-design/borough-character-study>

Merton Air Quality SPD

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/supplementary-planning-documents/air-quality-spd>

Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Raynes Park Enhancement Plan

https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/0190_raynes_park_plan.pdf

Historic England Technical Guidance

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/>

Safer By Design principles

<https://www.securedbydesign.com/guidance/designguides>

Town & Country Planning Association: Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=34c44ebf-e1be-4147-be7d-89aaf174c3ea>

