

Dear Ms Butter,

Draft Sites and Policies Plan and Draft Policies Map

Having given observations on earlier material, my comments on the latest draft (due by 30th August) are as follows:

Section 9: Transport: Page 132 : the text advocates the enhancement

for shared use of walking and cycling routes. This appears to ignore the fact that various statutory rights of way in the Borough, (such as Church Path and Cold Blows) are designated Public Footpaths, with a width appropriate to this use, (not Public Bridleways, a higher form of designation incorporating more generous dimension). Moreover, these footpaths are of great antiquity and are cherished as heritage items. To allocate them for cycle traffic (without the detailed study which would have been inherent in applications to raise their designation to that of Public Bridleway) would risk inherent incompatibility between pedestrians and cycle traffic, to the detriment of people on foot. Various incidents in this locality have illustrated an unwillingness by cyclists to show due care for the safety of pedestrians. (Reference also Site Map, 246; Policies Map Mitcham C3. Any major attempt at widening of such routes would be at the expense of hedgerows and local character. The suggestion that a conventional public path carrying pedestrians across Lower Green West should be opened to cyclists would detract from pedestrian safety.

Future of Mitcham Fire Station Site : Page 267: the description of the Fire Station's surroundings on Lower Green West entirely omits any reference to the proximity of the War Memorial, a community memorial forming the venue for civic ceremonies. At a recent meeting of the Heritage and Design Working Group, it was confirmed that the War memorial (previously without any listed status, apparently due to decades of administrative oversight) would receive Local Listing as a matter of urgency in order to rationalise the situation.

Wandle Valley Regional Park : It is noted with satisfaction that Lower Green West will be included in the demarcation of the Wandle Valley Regional park, bringing it into line with the other Greens of Lower Mitcham. In this context, the allotment areas of the National Trust holding at Morden Hall Park, whilst lacking the visual quality of the remainder of the National Trust estate, nevertheless warrant inclusion in the Regional Park, being a significant recreational and environmental amenity.

Heritage Asset: at the same time as the progression of Local Listing for the War Memorial on Lower Green West, Council officers considered (by local request) the need to recognise the location in the Mitcham Parish Churchyard of a distinguished 'Cross of Sacrifice' War Memorial, together with the associated Commonwealth War Graves Commission gravestones. As a result of this action, the memorial and stones are also recognised for local listing.

Again, as a result of local pressure, both Figges Marsh and London Road Playing Fields are in the process of being designated as Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields, and hence as items of heritage conservation.

Mitcham Town Centre: Langdale Parade: whilst it is recognised that small sites are not shown in the main planning documents now under consideration, nevertheless, the detached sliver of Fair Green comprising the frontage of Langdale Parade is of such historic and environmental significance (especially since it accommodates major lime trees) that it should be shown as an open space element, as is the main area of Fair Green, in the various maps of the Plan. Langdale Parade Green has been under much pressure for indiscriminate erosion for paving, vehicle access, etc. in recent years. (The map 379 shows the location of the Parade but does not afford its greenspace any status.)

Green Corridors: it is noted with concern that it is proposed to remove Lower Green West, the Parish Churchyard and the grounds of public institutions along Church Road from Green Corridor status. It should be recognised that the visual and ecological cohesion of this swathe, especially the mature trees, extensive grassed areas, shrubberies, hedgerows, etc. combined with the pedestrian accessibility of Love Lane and Church Path, give the area substantial coherence.

Links between The Canons and Park Place and the former News of the World Sports Ground : it is noted with relief that the recognition of this swathe as a consolidated area of open space has been achieved.

Historic Interest of the Above Area: however the formal 'Listing' of the Canons landscape (the house itself already being listed) is long overdue. The fine lake, walled garden, lawns, shrubberies, specimen trees and the yew walk surely merit recognition. As in many other respects, the historic landscape of Mitcham is under-valued at present. The gardens contain olive trees - surely these are 'special case' trees as mentioned on Page 89, S. 30? (The lake-overlooked by a listed dovecot - is believed to have originated as a monastic stew pond.)

Changes: the western extremity of Lower Green West should continue to be shown as an integral part of Fair Green, not as an irrelevant fragment?

Page 363: Morden Park mansion was massively renovated a few years ago, although its service buildings and surrounding landscape have been lost or debased. Could some attempt be made to revive its picturesque quality as a 'set piece'?

I would be happy to attend any further meetings which may be called in future to discuss detailed elements within the implications of the Borough's planning policies and maps.

Yours sincerely,