DENNIS PARK CRESCE NT

CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDE
What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area, was originally designated by the Council in November 1990 and following further consideration, its boundaries were extended further in February 1995. The extended area now consolidates what is a very distinctive area, characterised by an attractive layout of housing with open spaces of land and mature landscaping.

This guide has been prepared to explain the powers and policies of the council in relation to development in the neighbourhood and to explain how you, as a resident, can contribute towards the preservation and enhancement of the area. The guide aims to highlight the important features of the area that contribute to its character and how improvements can be carried out without destroying it’s character.

The Council can control any adverse changes in the area by the way that it considers applications for Planning Permission for new development and Conservation Area Consent for demolition of existing buildings. However, “permitted development rights”, which allow for householders to undertake some changes without formal permission, may result in small scale changes which overall may have a large impact on the character of Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area.

Although many of the recommendations included in this guide are advisory only, they provide a reference for good design practise, and as such will be taken into account when any planning applications are considered. Sensitive alterations and careful maintenance will also help to preserve the character of the area as well as enhancing the values of properties.

If you are in any doubt as to whether Planning Permission is required for alterations to your property, or whether you require any advice on design matters, please do not hesitate to contact the Environmental Services Department at the address given in the back pages of this guide.
The Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area (as extended) includes all properties within Dennis Park Crescent and Burstow Road, the majority of properties in Toynbee Road, and some properties and land in Lower Downs Road. The exact boundaries of the Conservation Area are shown on the map.

Local History

Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area covers properties and land in Dennis Park Crescent, Burstow Road, Lower Downs Road and Toynbee Road. Construction of the houses in this area began in 1921, on land that was once part of Thomson's Nursery. David Thomson held extensive nurseries in the area and was famed for his fruit garden in Wimbledon. The new houses that were erected on his nursery were often referred to as the Council's Housing Estate, which at the time was the Wimbledon Borough Council.

The land upon which the houses were built was clearly defined. To the north was the Wimbledon to Kingston Railway line, whilst to the east the land had to be kept clear for the possible construction of a new railway line. Although the proposals for this much
Water Company acquired an easement of over 33 feet of land along the route, and this allowed for further pipes to be laid in 1869, 1885 and 1899. The pipes were laid only a little below the surface and this, it seems, is largely why The Chase has remained undeveloped.

Once the houses on the Council's housing estate were eventually completed, it was possible to live in one of these standard brick built homes for a fully inclusive rent of only 24 Shillings 6d!

The names given to the roads were at the suggestions of the Councilors at the time. The name of Birstow Road (note the original spelling) was put forward on historical grounds, as there was attached to the old Manor of Wimbledon, an outlying district in Surrey known as Birstow.

Toynbee Road was named in memory of Dr. Joseph Toynbee, a celebrated resident of Wimbledon and founder of the village club.

As the map of 1879 shows, the area at this time was largely undeveloped. Worple Road did not link Wimbledon with Raynes Park until 1891 when new residential development became extremely popular.

The name of Dennis Park Crescent was believed to be a compliment to the Borough Surveyor who undertook much work on behalf of the Council in connection with the estate. Although his name was not Dennis, it was believed that it was named after his son!
The prominent feature of this area, and the main reason why it has been designated as a Conservation Area, is because of the vegetation and mature street trees which give the area a very unique character.

Although the properties within the Conservation Area are not of great architectural merit compared with some of the Borough's other Conservation Areas, the housing layout and the spaces between buildings create a pleasant environment, which it would be desirable to preserve and enhance.

The majority of the buildings are semi-detached or terraced two-storey family houses, of a uniform architectural style. They are of a fairly simple inter-war style, with red tiled hipped roofs and gable ends.
Many have lean-to open porches and external walls which are finished with red brick at the ground floor level, but pebbledashed at first floor level. Small archways through the terraced properties are another common and attractive feature of these houses.

The generous spaces between buildings is a characteristic of the area, with medium sized front gardens and large rear gardens, many of which have mature plants, hedges and trees within them.

In Dennis Park Crescent, the island of open space with it’s large Plane tree, acts as an important focal point of the road. The building frontages surround this space, creating an attractive relationship between buildings and spaces for both local residents and passers-by.

This part of the Conservation Area should also be noted for its street trees and grass verges. Those trees in both Dennis Park Crescent and Burstow Road are predominantly mature Silver Birches, giving the area a very special and unique character.

Similarly, mature landscaping plays an important role in the character of Toynbee Road. The street scene is an attractive one with a small hedge between the footway and the road on the northern side, and a wide planted strip of land on the other side, again between the footway and the road, upon which are a number of mature bushes and trees bounded by attractive hooped railings. The vegetation on both sides of the road clearly enhances the area considerably, resulting in a unique character that it would be desirable to preserve or enhance.

The roads are of sufficient width to allow two vehicles to pass, provided that there is no on-street parking. However, most properties now have hardstandings for cars, and some have their own garages. On-street parking is limited by the attractive grass verges and mature street trees that line the roads, the majority of which are silver birches.

Recent traffic calming measures in the surrounding area have helped to improve the quality of the environment.
GARDENS

The front gardens in particular are important in contributing to the character of the area, as together with the vegetation that lines the roads, they add to the unique character of the street scene. Rear gardens also contribute significantly to the nature conservation and ecological value of the area.

The green setting also contributes immensely to the character of the houses. Thus wherever possible, the planted hedges in front garden areas should be retained and regularly trimmed. Where front garden boundaries have been removed, consideration should be given to reinstating them preferably with hedging, especially so in Toynbee Road. Alternatively, a low level fence or wall, say about 0.5 metres in height, with vegetation above may be appropriate. However, high level panelled fencing and brick walls should be avoided.

The paving over of front gardens is undesirable as a landscape setting contributes considerably to the character of the houses. Thus wherever possible, shrubs, trees and hedges should be retained.

Whilst there is pressure to use the larger front gardens for the parking of cars, especially in Toynbee Road, this will unfortunately involve the loss of vegetation. However, with careful planning the impact can be minimised. The diagram overleaf shows one of many ways in which this can be achieved. In any case, it should always be possible to retain a considerable amount of soft landscaped area with shrubs and trees adjacent to the actual houses or front boundaries. Front gardens should not be paved over.

When considering new landscaping for either front or rear gardens, a balance should be maintained between native and non-native trees and plants.
**TREES**

Trees contribute much to the character of the streets in Merton, but particularly in the Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area. Dennis Park Crescent and Burstow Road are characterised by a number of SIlver Birch trees in the street, and a large Plane tree in the open area of space in Dennis Park Crescent also acts as an important focal point. In Toynbee Road, a combination of mature trees, bushes and hedges create a special character, separating the road from the houses and pedestrian footways.

In all of the roads within the Conservation Area there are also a number of trees and other vegetation that lie within the front and rear gardens of properties. These greatly improve landscape amenity and enhance the setting and appearance of buildings. They also provide a valuable habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. It is vital therefore, that care is taken to protect and maintain new trees both in front and rear gardens, as well as street trees.

Before undertaking any type of work to a tree within a Conservation Area you usually need to make a written application to the Council at least six weeks in advance of the proposed works. You should therefore always check with the Council if you are planning to carry out any works to trees. If a Tree Preservation Order is made, or if one already exists, then you also need the Council’s permission before doing any work to that tree.

The Council operates a Volunteer Tree Warden Scheme, which encourages members of the public to become involved in the caring for trees within their locality. The scheme is also a way of alerting the Council to any damage to trees, such as vandalism, disease or bad management. A contact telephone number is given at the end of this guide.
The oval shaped area of open land in Dennis Park Crescent and the planted areas in Toynbee Road are very important features, and with their mature vegetation, they greatly contribute to the unique character of the Conservation Area. It is important that these areas are retained, and the Council will therefore endeavour, wherever possible, to improve the appearance of these areas.

Attractive planted areas of land at the junction of Lower Downs Road

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**GRASS VERGES & OPEN SPACES**

The grass verges and other open spaces, especially in Toynbee Road, are another important feature of this area, and every attempt should be made to retain and look after them wherever possible. Where front gardens are used for car parking, then not only will vegetation be lost from within the curtilage of the property, but some of the street vegetation will also be lost as a result of the need to create crossovers, to allow vehicular access to the property.

The Council therefore wishes to discourage any additional car parking in front gardens, as it is likely to be to the detriment of the street scene. Similarly, vehicles should not be driven over grass verges or other open spaces, as this will damage them and detract from the appearance of the area.

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電話：0181 545 3397

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with both Toynbee Road and Burstow Road also feature as "gateways" into the estate from Lower Downs Road, clearly distinguishing the Conservation Area from the surrounding areas.

The Council will endeavour to maintain all those open spaces within the Conservation Area for which it is responsible in an appropriate way, ensuring that the vegetation does not become too overgrown in the interests of safety and security, whilst also not allowing the vegetation to be lost to new development or encroached upon by vehicles. The Council will also consider appropriate landscaping treatment to that area of land at the northern end of Burstow Road, adjacent to the mini-roundabout, so as to create a "gateway" into the area from the direction of Merton Hall Road.

**CAR PARKING**

Dennis Park Crescent, Burstow Road and Toynbee Road are all residential roads which are of sufficient width to allow two vehicles to pass, provided that there is no on-street parking. Parking on-street is limited due to the relatively narrow width of the roads, and the attractive and important grass verges, street trees and landscaping in the area. Toynbee Road can appear especially attractive when no vehicles are parked in the road, as any vehicles are usually well hidden behind landscaping or within the curtilages of individual properties. The majority of the houses in the area already have some form of off-street parking be it a hardstanding or a garage and therefore it is usually unnecessary to park in the road. The Council wishes to discourage any further increase in parking in front gardens, and would like to encourage where appropriate, an improvement to existing parking arrangements in these areas.

Above: An example of a good front garden layout to accommodate space for the parking of vehicles
The construction of new garages or hardstandings, in either front gardens or in the spaces between buildings will generally require the Council’s permission, whether it be planning permission, building regulations approval, or agreement to the formation of a crossover. In most cases it will be necessary to submit a 'Footway Crossover Application for the construction of a crossover from the public highway. A fee is charged for this, and you are responsible for the costs of the works, including the cost of any relocation of underground services or street furniture. The positioning of the crossover should always ensure that any street trees are retained. Applications for the erection of a garage or garages will be considered on their merits with regard to individual circumstances, the impact that the development will have on the neighbouring properties and the loss of open space and vegetation involved.

Car parking in front gardens will involve the removal of the front boundary. However, this should be restricted to a minimum width so as to just allow a vehicle access into the property thereby retaining the existing front boundary. This is especially important where the boundary consists of vegetation, be it a hedge, shrubbery or trees. The diagram shows a recommended layout to accommodate a car parking space in a front garden. Proposals should always seek to retain all existing trees.

The materials to be used for surfacing in such areas should be selected with care, to ensure that they complement the building and its surroundings. The use of block paving or setts is often more appropriate than a uniform concrete or bitumen surface. Consideration should also be given to installing appropriate gates across the opening. It should always be possible to retain some loft landscaped areas, with trees and shrubs adjacent to the houses, front boundaries, or along the sides of the hardstanding or garage.
Whilst some garages in the area are of good design, others are in a poor state of repair or have been constructed with little regard to the design of the house or neighbouring properties. If you are considering replacing or building a new garage, attention should always be given to its relationship with adjacent buildings. They should be recessed behind the building line of the houses and materials should be used that match or compliment the existing dwellings. Flat roofed garages look out of place in this area, and pitched roof forms are far more appropriate. Although garages may not always require planning permission, it will be necessary to obtain Building regulations Approval. For further information you should contact the Environmental Services Department.

In some cases it would be desirable to improve the existing parking facilities in front gardens, especially to provide better landscaping, in line with the recommendations above. The Council has also produced a guide on Car Parking in Front Gardens. Please contact the Environmental Services Department if you would like a copy.

ROOFING

Roof Forms and Coverings

The retention of the original roof forms and coverings on all the houses is desirable and the use of materials or treatments which replace or disfigure the traditional coverings, such as the introduction of concrete tiles, synthetic slates of composite material or plastic, should be avoided.

Re-Roofing

If re-roofing works are to be carried out, existing sound tiles should, if possible, be salvaged and re-used. This should help reduce the cost of the work. If this is not appropriate then a material should be selected that is compatible, in terms of both colour and shape of tile, with the neighbouring dwellings.
Where possible, adjoining properties should be re-roofed as a whole, to prevent ridging and to maintain a unified appearance. Some materials, particularly heavy concrete tiles can also affect the structure of the roof.

**Flashings**

Flashings should be in lead, and should be installed by an experienced contractor; sand and cement flashings around chimney stacks should be avoided.

**Gutters and External Pipework**

Cast-iron is generally more durable than plastic and should be considered when gutters and downpipes are replaced; other materials that are available include powder-coated aluminium, which look very similar to cast-iron and can be cheaper. Whatever material is used, it

**LOFT CONVERSIONS & ROOF EXTENSIONS**

Generally, Planning Permission will be required for any roof extension that would result in an alteration to the roof form. However, extensions to the front or side of roof slopes will not be permitted and at the rear, large projections beyond the roof slope should be avoided. Dormer windows can have a damaging effect on the appearance of a dwelling and if they are necessary then they should be carefully blended into rear roof pitches. Rooflights, where the glazing is in the same plane as the roof tiles (such as Velux windows) are a far more acceptable way of providing natural light to any roof extension. All types of loft conversion also require Building Regulations Approval, so if you are planning any modifications to the roof, then in the first instance you should seek the Council’s advice.

Above: a poor match of rooftiles with unnecessary junctions between the different roof materials.
Chimneys

Chimney stacks should be retained, even if the flues are not used. Pots on disused chimneys can be capped with lead, slate or a ridge tile. Care must be taken to allow ventilation whilst minimising the penetration of water.

EXTERNAL WALLS

Existing Brickwork

A large number of houses are half pebbledashed, with brickwork at ground floor level and pebbledashing on the first floor. Exposed brickwork on the ground floor of the houses is an attractive feature and is in keeping with the original design of the dwellings. It should not therefore be painted, rendered, pebble-dashed or clad in stone or reconstituted stone. This may, in any event, increase the amount of maintenance required, and the application of paint layers or other covering can reduce the value of the houses and make them more difficult to sell.

It is possible to remove paintwork from original brickwork, but this should only be undertaken by a specialist contractor with a proven expertise in this field. Sand blasting is not recommended as it is likely to

should always be black in colour.

Consideration should be given to using cast-iron or aluminium pipework on more prominent elevations even if plastics are used on rear or secondary elevations.

The installation of additional pipework on the front elevation should be avoided.
damage the face of the bricks. However, it is suggested that a small sample of the brickwork is always tested before undertaking any work to the complete wall.

**Repointing**

Careless or unnecessary repointing can spoil the appearance of the original brickwork.

The old pointing has weathered to blend in with the bricks, and unless badly deteriorated to a point where repointing is essential, then it should not be altered. If it does become necessary to repoint, then it should be undertaken by an experienced contractor.

**Rendered walls**

In many of the houses the brickwork has been pebbledashed as part of the original design of the house. This should be retained and maintained in a reasonable state of repair, and may be protected to protect it further against weathering. White paintwork is preferable to any other colour as this is complimentary to the style of the housing and if used generally, it re-enforces the coherent character of the area.

Where pebbledashing, rendering or stone cladding has been added to the original brick walls, then it would be very difficult to restore the wall to its original finish. Consideration in these cases should be given to rendering the facade with a smoother finish, and to paint it white or a colour that matches the adjacent

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**DIFFERENT TYPES OF POINTING**

- Bucket handle pointing
- Flush pointing
- Recessed pointing
- Strap pointing
- Tuck pointing
- Weathered pointing
brickwork. Stone cladding can be re-
moved, although it will not generally be possible to restore the brickwork to its original condition. However, it can be rendered and painted in a similar manner.

Replacement Doors & Windows

The original windows and doors, where surviving, are generally well made and seldom deteriorate if well maintained. Renovation is preferable to replacement. Sills or bottom rails, which may have perished due to exposure to the weather, can be cut out and replaced with new matching pieces joined to the existing in a traditional way.

Where windows have deteriorated to a point that replacement is essen-
tial then consideration should be given to new units made to the original design. Generally it is difficult to obtain a suitable standard pattern from commercial stockists, although occasionally a standard window or door can be found which can be reasonably modified to fit in with the existing house design. In any case, the glazing bars on the new windows should follow those of the original design. The Council may be able to help with advice on suitable suppliers.

When replacing the front door, again the replacement should, if possible, be of a similar style as the original to blend in with the entrance porches. Modern replacement windows and doors of different styles, patterns or materials do not blend well with the existing architectural style and should be avoided.
DOUBLE GLAZING

If the windows are draughty and you are considering some form of insulation, the best solution is to fit secondary glazing to the insides of the existing windows. This avoids altering the appearance of the elevations yet still achieves the required improved standards. Any divisions can follow the glazing bars of the existing windows.

However, where there is no other alternative than double glazing, the design of the windows should match that of the original as far as possible, so as to preserve the character of the houses. Timber frames are preferable to other materials. Aluminium replacement windows should be avoided. The Council can assist with advice on the design of windows and suitable suppliers.

Care should always be taken to provide opening windows to ensure that adequate ventilation is maintained and that some means of escape is available in case of emergency.

New Door and Window Openings.

New door and window openings at the side and rear of properties will not normally require the Council’s permission. However, they should where possible be carefully designed to copy the original details, and the sizes should be of a scale appropriate to the whole house. For changes to the front elevation you should contact the Council for further advice.

PORCHES & CONSERVATORIES

The majority of the houses in this Conservation Area have attractive tiled, open sided canopies supported by timber struts, rather than enclosed porches, and these are a feature of the area which should be retained and maintained wherever possible.

Porches are often constructed from unsympathetic materials and may appear out of character with the house, although a successful porch can be achieved with sensitive design, using traditional materials and incorporating a pitched roof. The addition of porches or bay windows to the fronts of houses may require planning permission and will always require Building Regulations Approval. The closing in of any recessed porches, if essential, should
be in the form of a glazed screen which should be designed with care. Glazing bars and frames should be constructed of timber and should be set back.

Conservatories or verandahs should be located at the rear of the building. They should be lightweight and constructed of painted timber with plain, untinted glazing and built to a style and scale appropriate to that of the house.

EXTENSIONS

There is scope for extending many of the houses, either to the side or the rear, although this will obviously depend upon the location of the house in relation to the surrounding properties and the space available.

However, extensions to the sides of the properties are to be discouraged, as they will disrupt the rhythm of the buildings and the spaces between them, which is a feature of the area. In all cases careful considera-

Porches, conservatories and extensions should be sympathetically designed to complement the main building.

Wrong: Addition is too large, the doorway/window is too large, and the flat roof projects too far forward.

Right: Roof design relates well, and the size is acceptable.
tion must be given to the effect of any proposal on the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring properties. All new extensions should respect the original design of the house in terms of window style, proportions, building materials and architectural details. They should be sub-ordinate to the main house, generally single storey and with a pitched roof which should not rise above eaves level. Flat roofed extensions should be avoided as they do not fit in with the character of the area and are more likely to give rise to maintenance problems.

**PLANNING ADVICE**

Extensions that are above a certain size will require Planning Permission and will be assessed on their particular merits, taking into consideration their affect upon the amenities of adjoining residents, whether or not they complement the existing building, and whether they have any impact upon the appearance of the area. All extensions require Building Regulations Approval. If you are considering extending your property you should consult The London Borough of Merton’s published guidelines on residential extensions. These are available from the Merton Civic Centre and local libraries. Alternatively you should contact the Development Control Section of the Council’s Environmental Services Department.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

The installation of satellite dishes and burglar alarms on the elevations of buildings can have a harmful visual effect on both your own as well as your neighbours houses and can have a detrimental effect on the character of the Conservation area. Television aerials and other telecommunications equipment should, whenever possible, be sited at the rear of property and mounted below eaves level. In some situations planning permission will be required for the installation of a satellite dish. Similar considerations also need to be taken into account if you are proposing to instal solar panels.

Telecommunications equipment should, wherever possible be located at the rear of property and should be as unobtrusive as possible, especially
from the street. The locations shown above are shown in descending order of acceptability, with "A" being the most preferable.

**THE STREET SCENE**

The Council will endeavour, where possible, to maintain the street scene, including street furniture, street trees and grass verges, in a way which is in keeping with the characteristics of the Conservation Area. Consideration will also be given to ways in which the open space in Dennis Park Crescent can be improved, especially with regards to curtilage treatment.

**NEW DEVELOPMENT**

Any Planning Applications for new development will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that it blends in with its surroundings in terms of design, scale, massing and materials used. However, major developments, such as new housing, cannot be accommodated within the Dennis Park Crescent Conservation Area. The Council will resist any such proposals as they are likely to spoil the unique character, spacing and rhythm of the existing dwellings.

All new development will be expected to meet Merton Council’s published guidelines for development and commitment to ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities are catered for.
whether Planning Permission is required, or you would like some further information regarding the contents of this brochure, then please do not hesitate to contact the Environmental Services Department of the Council at the following address;

Environmental Services,
London Borough of Merton,
Merton Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden,
Surrey,
SM4 5DX

020 - 8545 3074 Design & Conservation
020 - 8545 3815 Trees
020 - 8545 3984 Development Control
020 - 8545 3145 Building Control

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