1. **General Introduction**

Conservation Areas are designated by the Council as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced. This Appraisal was approved by the Council on 14/11/05.

The Merton Hall Rd Conservation Area falls into 4 distinct areas (see plan 1). The special character of each of these areas derives from:

- **the Rush and the buildings around**
  The very distinctive architectural qualities of parts of the Nelson Hospital building
  The Statutorily Listed, Locally Listed and other buildings within the area.
  The arrangement of buildings around the central space at the Rush, and the origins of this part of the Conservation Area in the original mediaeval Merton village.

- **Merton Hall Rd to the south of Henfield Rd and the Chase**
  The high quality detailing, and the quality building materials used on the buildings
  The quality of street details

- **the Wimbledon Chase School grounds and Wimbledon School of Art**
  The very distinctive architectural qualities of the Wimbledon School of Art and other buildings
The quality of street details
The very high quality specimen trees which are situated within the grounds of Wimbledon Chase school and Wimbledon School of Art

- the eastern side of Merton Hall Rd to the north of Henfield Rd

The varied and distinctive design of the houses
The high quality detailing, and the quality building materials, used on the buildings
The quality of street details
The Locally Listed buildings within the area.

2. Description of extent of CA

The Conservation Area which is subject of this Character Appraisal is 6.27 hectares in extent. It is situated approximately 1 km to the south of Wimbledon Town Centre. It lies to the south of Dundonald Rd, running along the axis formed by Merton Hall Rd, up to and including the space known as “the Rush” on Kingston Rd. To the south-west lies Richmond Avenue/Quintin Avenue (itself a Conservation Area), to the south and south-east lie the John Innes suburban development of Merton Park and Wilton Crescent (also Conservation Areas).

The area is entirely flat, and is at an altitude of approx 14.5 metres above sea level. It is located within a low lying belt of land which runs east to west between the River Wandle and the Beverley brook, with the higher land of Wimbledon Hill to the north west, and Cannon Hill to the south west.

The Conservation Area includes most of the properties fronting onto Merton Hall Rd which lie to the south of Dundonald Rd, as well as properties fronting to the Rush and the immediately adjacent sections of Kingston Rd.

The Merton Hall Rd Conservation Area includes the following properties:

- Wimbledon School of Art, Merton Hall Rd
- 46-48 Merton Hall Rd
- Former Tennis Courts, Merton Hall Rd, (now used for car parking and school grounds)
- 80-156 (evens) Merton Hall Rd
- 21-141 (odds) Merton Hall Rd
- the Old Leather Bottle Public House, Merton Hall Rd/Kingston Rd
- 1-12 (consec) Merton Park Parade, the Rush/Kingston Rd
- 14 Merton Park Parade, the Rush
- 10 The Rush
- 265, 267a/269 Kingston Rd, (Long Lodge)
- 271 Kingston Rd
- 279-291 (odds) Kingston Rd
- the Nelson Hospital, Kingston Rd
3. Designation History

The Merton Hall Rd Conservation Area was designated by the Council in April 1987. There have been no boundary alterations to the Conservation Area since this first designation, except for the addition of 21/23 Merton Hall Rd which has resulted from the boundary assessment made in 2004.

4. History of Development

Rocques map of 1741-45 (plan 2) shows Kingston Rd which runs through a cluster of buildings and small plots of land, which would have been the old village of Merton. This cluster straddles Kingston Rd but lies mainly on the south side of the road.

The map shows three roads connecting to Kingston Rd in the vicinity of the Conservation Area, all approach Kingston Rd from the south. The westernmost of these links to Merton Common, and is the present day Cannon Hill Lane, the middle one is the present day footpath called Blakesley Walk, which connects to Kingston Rd immediately to the west of the Nelson Hospital, and the easternmost one is the present day Rush/Watery Lane. The present day Dundonald Road is shown, marked as it was then known “Lower Worple Lane”. A footpath connected the Rush to Wimbledon, this followed the approximate line of Merton Hall Rd.

It is clear from Rocques Map that at this time there were some village buildings and small plots (possibly gardens or yards) that lie within the current Conservation Area boundary around the Rush, as well as within the central area of the Rush. The buildings in the centre of the Rush are believed to date from 1617. However none of these buildings or plot divisions survives today, though there is a suggestion of the line of Henfield Rd and Wimbledon Chase in the field boundaries shown. The name “the Rush” is believed to originate from Rush Tree House, (a pre 1750 building).

The OS map of 1865 (plan 3) shows the same arrangement of Kingston Rd, Cannon Hill Lane, Blakesley Lane, the Rush and Watery Lane, as at the time of Rocque. Again a complex of buildings is shown on the north side of Kingston Rd, including a long building which lies roughly on the line of the present day Merton Hall Rd, the complex being labelled Merton Hall Farm.

Long Lodge on the north side of Kingston Rd is shown, and it appears to be the only building from that time which still survives. The central (recessed) section of Long Lodge is believed to date from 1720-30, while the western wing (originally two houses) is circa 1750 and the balancing eastern wing circa 1785. To the west of Long Lodge this there is complex of buildings which included the original public house called the Leather Bottle, a coachman’s lodge (late 18th or early 19th century) and stables (circa 1750), together with two cottages known as Leather Bottle Cottages (circa 1730-50). These have now disappeared, the site now occupied by 271 Kingston Rd.

Other buildings, also now disappeared, are seen along the south western side of the Rush, (brick and weather boarded cottages know as “Dallett’s Rents”) on the site of the present day hospital, “Verandah Villas” oriented east to west on the site of Merton Park Parade, to the east of the Rush, and more cottages and a dairy shop within the central island of the Rush, known as “Cross Row”. Two further buildings are shown further north along the line of today’s Merton Hall Rd (to the north of the junction with Henfield Rd), one of these is labelled “Henfield Villa”. The present day Dundonald Rd is again shown, now labelled “Lower Worple Lane”.
The 1879 map (CW Bacon and Co) (plan 4), shows no significant changes since 1865, within the Conservation Area. Merton Hall Farm however is labelled (mistakenly) as “Merton Hill Farm”.

The development of the Merton Hall Estate began when George Palmer and his architect Francis James Smith together with Charles D Tuftin and his surveyor Percy H Clarke commenced building. Development in Merton Hall Rd started from the north end, and worked slowly southwards. The first building plans being submitted in 1884, while those for the terraces of houses at the south end of the road were submitted in 1901/02, while the plans for the shops and flats at 279 – 291 Kingston Rd were submitted in 1903.

The new Leather Bottle public house was built in 1897 replacing its predecessor which was located a little way to the east.

Development on the south side of Kingston Rd followed on immediately after, the plans for Merton Park Parade being submitted in 1907, to replace “Verandah Villas”. The first part of the Nelson Hospital (the pavilions - designed by F Hatch) was built in 1911, and it was later extended in 1922 and again in 1931. These later extensions involved the progressive demolition of the old buildings on the south side of the Rush.

Later development infilled a few gaps, with 10 the Rush (1929), 14 Merton Park Parade (1931), and 265 Kingston Rd (1926).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1933/34 (plan 5) shows 11 large detached houses each within a large plot, on the west side of Merton Hall Rd, to the north of the Chase. All but 2 of these (nos. 46/48) have since been demolished, to make way for the Wimbledon School of Art and the flats at Braeside Avenue.

The 1933/34 plan also shows the continued existence of the 17th century buildings within the central island at the Rush, (subsequently demolished in the 1940s). Also shown is a staggered terrace of properties situated between Long Lodge (267a/269 Kingston Rd) and the Leather Bottle Public House (where 271 Kingston Rd now stands), which have since been demolished.

Since 1933/34 the original Wimbledon School of Art building was built (thought to date from around 1935). Its later extensions date from 1983. Number 271 Kingston Rd was built in 1981 on the site of the original Leather Bottle public house and the Leather Bottle Cottages.

5. Land Uses

The predominant land use within the Conservation Area is residential (along most of the length of Merton Hall Rd and at 271 Kingston Rd). However it also notably includes

- the hospital (the Nelson)
- the Wimbledon School of Art
- retail and business uses with residential above at 142 –156 Merton Hall Rd, at 279 – 291 Kingston Rd, and at Merton Park Parade
- part of the school grounds and the car parking areas for Wimbledon Chase School and the School of Art
- offices at 267a/269 Kingston Rd.
6. **Archaeology**

The properties within the Conservation Area which lie to the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase, lie within an Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ). The APZ is based on the mediaeval village settlement of Merton. This village was polyfocal in character, with no strong village centre. The irregular village layout is evident from Rocques map (see above).

The estate of Merton originated in the later Saxon period, and it was first referred to in a document of 949 AD. It was again referred to in the Domesday survey.

7. **Listed Buildings – Buildings Contribution**

The contribution made by each building to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is indicated in plan 6, as is any listed building status.

There is one Statutorily Listed Building within the Conservation Area, this is Long Lodge (267a/269 Kingston Rd), which is Grade II. This building is late 18th century, with later additions. This building is considered to contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

There are 25 Locally Listed buildings within the Conservation Area. These are all considered to contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. They are:

- The Old Leather Bottle Public House (Merton Hall Rd/Kingston Rd)
- Nos. 25/27/29/31, 33/35/37, 39/41/43/45, 59/61, 81/83, 85/87 89/91 93/95, and 97/99 Merton Hall Rd.

In addition to the above, the following buildings (whilst not being listed) are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- 21/ 23, 47/49, 51/53, 55/57, 63/65, 67/69, 71/73, 75/77, 79, 101 – 123, and 125 – 141 (odds) Merton Hall Rd
- 46, 48, 80 – 116, 118 – 140, and 142 – 156 (evens) Merton Hall Rd
- 279 - 291 Kingston Rd
- the 4 pavilion buildings of the Nelson Hospital, (on the Kingston Rd frontage)
- 1 – 12 (consec) Merton Park Parade
- 10 the Rush
- all the frontage buildings in the Wimbledon School of Art

The following buildings make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- 271 Kingston Rd
- 265 Kingston Rd
- The Nelson Hospital (apart from the 4 pavilions referred to above)
- 14 Merton Park Parade

8. **Building plots**

There is a clear regularity to the layout of building plots for the houses on the eastern side of Merton Hall Rd, to the north of Henfield Rd. Plot widths range from around 7.5 to 10 metres, and the depth is a very uniform 45 metres.
To the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase, (on both sides of Merton Hall Rd) the plots are smaller but still regular in shape. On the eastern side they are 5 metres side and between 35 to 40 metres deep, while on the west they are 6 metres wide and 30 to 33 metres deep.

Building plots in Kingston Rd and the Rush is more irregular, no doubt influenced by the complexities of property boundaries associated with the old mediaeval village of Merton. The convex frontage, and radiating pattern of the individual plots of properties in Merton Park Parade is particularly noticeable.

9. Building Height

Buildings on the east side of Merton Hall Rd, to the north of Henfield Rd/the Chase are uniformly 2½ storeys high. The frontage buildings at the Wimbledon School of Art range from 2 ½ storeys (46/48 Merton Hall Rd), 3 storeys (the 1930s building), and 1 ½ and 2 ½ storey buildings in between. At the rear of the site the theatre is the equivalent of 4 storeys, and there are several single storey buildings.

To the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase the buildings are generally 2 storeys, the only exceptions being the Leather Bottle Public House, 279 and 291 Kingston Rd (the 2 end buildings in the terrace) (all 2½ storeys), and 271 Kingston Rd (3 storeys).

10. Building form

Buildings on the east side of Merton Hall Rd, to the north of Henfield Rd/the Chase are generally semi detached, however numbers 25 to 45 are laid out as short terraces (2 terraces of 4 houses and one of 3). Linkages between the houses in these terraces are however sharply recessed, giving a general impression of detached houses. There is one detached house at 79.

To the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase properties are generally arranged in longer terraces, the exceptions being 265/267a/269 Kingston Rd, 271 Kingston Rd, 14 Merton Park Parade, 10 the Rush, and the Leather Bottle Public House which are all freestanding buildings, and the Nelson Hospital which is a large freestanding building group.

The Nelson is arranged as a run of 4 interlinked pavilions which face directly to Kingston Rd, this is also linked to a larger more uniform building elevation which is oriented towards the Rush.

The building form of the terrace at 1 – 12 Merton Park Parade is unusual, being arranged with a convex plan form to the front façade to take the fullest advantage of a crescent shaped site.

11. Building Line

In Merton Hall Rd there is a very clearly defined building line. Buildings on the east side of the road, to the north of Henfield Rd/the Chase follow a building set back line which ranges from 5.5 metres to 7 metres from the back edge of the footway, though bays project forward of this line. To the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase, the residential terraces and the Leather Bottle public house are set back uniformly by about 3 metres. Again shallow bays project forward of this line, but in a regular and uniform arrangement.
The commercial properties at the south end of Merton Hall Rd, at 279 – 309 Kingston Rd, and at 1 –12 Merton Park Parade are set further forward, directly on the footway (albeit with very shallow open private forecourts serving as extensions to the public highway).

The Nelson Hospital building, together with 267a/269 and 271 Kingston Rd are set further back from the highway, with a distinct building line being observed in respect of both Kingston Rd and the Rush.

12. Roof Form

Buildings on the east side of Merton Hall Rd, to the north of Henfield Rd/the Chase have varied roof forms. In most cases the principal roof has a ridge parallel to the line of the road. Subordinate gables face directly towards the road. The principle roof form varies from gables to hipped roofs, with the occasional half hip.

However in some houses the main roof has a gable or a half hip facing directly to the road.

The buildings at the Wimbledon School of Art include wide spanned gabled roofs of industrial character on the newer buildings and a flat roof on the older one.

To the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase, no. 80 has 2 large Dutch gables facing the road and Wimbledon Chase. At numbers 82 – 156, and 101 – 141 Merton Hall Rd the ridges of the roofs are parallel to the road, with each property having a subordinate gable (on the west side of the road) or a hipped roof (on the east side) facing towards the road. Party walls and flank walls project through the line of the roofs. The commercial properties at 142 – 154 Merton Hall Rd have prominent though subordinate Dutch style ogee gables facing to the road.

The roof of the Old Leather Bottle has 2 equal gables facing to Kingston Rd and to Merton Hall Rd.

Numbers 279 – 291 Kingston Rd has a series of Dutch gables which face towards Kingston Rd.

The ridge of the hipped roof of the terrace at Merton Park Parade runs the length of the terrace, and the roof is regularly broken through by each party wall.

The roof at no 14 Merton Park Parade is flat as is part of the roof of the Nelson Hospital. Three of the four pavilions on the Kingston Rd frontage of the hospital have shallow pitched hipped roofs, the 4th, which was originally built as a single storey building and later extended upwards, has a flat roof.

The roofs at 271 and 265/267a/269 Kingston Rd have a shallow pitch, and are partially concealed behind parapets.

13. Rhythm and Symmetry of Buildings

There is a clear and distinctive architectural rhythm to the buildings in Merton Hall Rd which lie between Kingston Rd and Henfield Rd/the Chase. The only exceptions being the Leather Bottle and nos. 80 and 156.
This rhythm is set by the regular repetition of forward facing gables and hips, by projecting bays, and by chimneys. These features are not located centrally within each house, but pairs of houses demonstrate symmetrical elevations.

To the north of Henfield Rd (on the east side of Merton Hall Rd), there is much less in the way of architectural rhythms, though the fairly regular plot widths and the related spaces between buildings do contribute some degree of rhythm to this part of the street. A few of the house designs develop an elevational rhythm, eg the terrace of 3 houses at 33 – 37, and the terrace at 39 – 43. Matching runs of semi detached houses at 81/83 and 85/87, and also at 89/91 and 93/95 also contribute to the architectural rhythm of this part of the street.

Most, (but not all) of the pairs of semi detached houses in this part of the road have clear elevational symmetry. Numbers 97/99, 71/73 and 75/77 being the non-symmetrical exceptions. In addition the terrace at 25 – 31 Merton Hall Rd has an element of symmetry, the middle pair of houses being of one design and the 2 end houses another design. Two further terraces, each of 3 houses (at 33 – 37 and at 39 – 43) have uniform and symmetrical elevational designs.

Elsewhere in the Conservation Area, rhythm and symmetry of buildings is less apparent, though the 4 pavilions in the Kingston Rd frontage of the Nelson Hospital do possess a strong rhythmical character, as does the terrace at Merton Park Parade. The Listed Building at 267a-269 Kingston Rd has a distinct symmetry, though this has been undermined by the later addition of 265 Kingston Rd to one side.

14. Architecture and Detailing

The degree of homogeneity in the architectural design of the buildings in the Conservation Area is a major factor in the special character of the area. The majority of the buildings built in the period 1884 to 1911 are very richly detailed, with a selection of the following widespread features:

- Party walls and flank walls projecting through the roof planes
- Ornate timberwork at porches
- Intricate designs for timber window frames and glazing bars
- Moulded bricks
- Terracotta or render panels and details
- Panels of glazed tiles
- Window and other detailing in red brick
- Use of stone for detailing, often combined with brick
- Octagonal turrets at corner buildings
- Metal, terracotta or timber finials at corner buildings and on some gables
- Dutch gables
- Leaded and coloured glass

Brief details of each of the building types are set out below. The figure in brackets is the estimated date of construction, usually based on the date building plans were submitted. The contribution that each building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is recorded, positive (+) or neutral. This contribution is identified on plan 6. The different building types are indicated on plan 7.
1. **21/23 Merton Hall Rd (1884) (+ contribution)**. A pair of symmetrical semi-detached houses, with 2 half hipped roofs oriented towards the road. There are similarities in the general building form to **13 and 14** below.

2. **25 – 31 Merton Hall Rd (1891) (locally Listed, + contribution)**. This is a terrace of 4 houses the main roof being gabled. Each house has subsidiary gables facing the road above the dormer windows/projecting bays. Recesses give an apparent separation between each house in the terrace. The terrace has an overall symmetry, the centre pair matching, as do the end houses. The end houses feature 2½ storey square bays, attractively detailed timberwork on the projecting porches, panels of moulded render below the windows of the projecting bay. The 2 central houses have a more complex design, each with similar timber porches, but each with a large semi circular ground floor bay with a conical slate roof which is similar to those at **16** below. There is a pair of linked oriel windows above that, and a gabled dormer at the 2nd floor level.

3. **33 – 37 Merton Hall Rd (1896) (locally Listed, + contribution)**. This is a run of 3 terraced houses, with the main roof being gabled, with each house having a subsidiary gable facing the road above the dormer window. Recesses give an apparent separation between each house in the terrace. The terrace has an element of overall symmetry, the central house being of a different design, and the end houses being a matching pair. The centre house features a 2 storey canted bay, attractively detailed timberwork supporting the gabled roof of the projecting porch. The end houses have a 2 storey square bay, a different porch design, with a lean to roof, but again with ornate timber detailing. Attractively patterned glazing bar designs are used on the ground and 1st floor windows, as at **4** above.

4. **39 – 43 Merton Hall Rd (1896) (locally Listed, + contribution)**. This is a run of three houses of similar design which form part of a terrace of 4 (the other house is referred to in **5** below). The terrace has a gabled roof, with each house having a subsidiary gable facing the road above the dormer window. Recesses give an apparent separation between each house in the terrace. The most obvious design features are 2 storey canted bay and the large gabled dormer windows each with 3 ball finials. Attractively patterned glazing bar designs are used on the ground and 1st floor windows as at **3** above. The porches are recessed, with a semi circular arch over, as at **5** below.

5. **45 Merton Hall Rd (1896) (locally Listed, + contribution)**. This is an end of terrace house (attached to **4** above). The end of the terrace has a hipped roof. A gabled dormer faces to the street, and an octagonal tower at the corner of the building has an 8 sided spire roof topped by an ornate metal finial. As with **4** above the porch is recessed, with a semi circular arch over.

6. **46/48 Merton Hall Rd (estimated 1890) (+ contribution)**. These buildings are a pair of broadly similar detached 2 storey houses, with small dormers in the roof. They have hipped roofs and each a gable to one side, facing the road. They each have bay windows, that at no. 46 being 2 storeys, and at no. 48 single storey. Both properties have round headed arches to the centrally positioned recessed porch, and no. 48 an oval window above.

7. **47/49 Merton Hall Rd (1885) (+ contribution)**. A pair of symmetrical semi-detached houses, with a gabled roof, and with each house having a subsidiary gable facing the road above the (oriel) dormer window. Attractively patterned glazing bar designs are used on the ground and 1st floor windows as at **3** above. There is a single storey square bay which runs across the front of the pair of houses. The porches have a lean to roof with ornate timber detailing.

8. **51/53 Merton Hall Rd (1885) (+ contribution)**. A pair of symmetrical semi-detached houses, broadly similar to **9 and 11** below, with a 2 storey square bay, and a gabled roof. Each house has a subsidiary gable facing the road,
and a gothic inspired recessed porch. The ground and first floor windows are mullioned.

9. **55/57 Merton Hall Rd** (1885) (+ contribution). This symmetrical pair of semi-detached houses is broadly similar to 8 above. The main roof is gabled, and each house has a subsidiary gable facing the road, and a 2 storey square bay. However unlike 8 above, here shallow segmental arches sit above the windows of the bay, and the recessed porch and the window above it are gothic in style, similar to 11 below.

10. **59/61 Merton Hall Rd** (1900) (locally Listed, + contribution). This pair of symmetrical semi-detached houses is in a vernacular revival style, with similarities to 15 below. The building has a gabled roof, and each house has a subsidiary gable which faces the road, and which contains an oriel window. Below this there is a 2 storey canted bay. Unusually for the area hanging tiles are used between the ground and 1st floor windows of the bay and within the front gable. Ornate classically inspired timber detailing is used on the projecting porch, and zig-zag brickwork is used on the chimneys.

11. **63/65 Merton Hall Rd** (1898) (+ contribution). This symmetrical pair of semi-detached houses is broadly similar to 8 above. It has a gabled roof with a subsidiary gable on each house, facing towards the street, each with a 2 storey square bay. However compared to 8 above, it has different the gothic detailing on the recessed porch and also a gothic design for the window above, (which is also seen in 9 above). Horizontal stone bands are used across the elevation to align with the window mullions, sills and lintels.

12. **67/69 Merton Hall Rd** (1884) (+ contribution). This is a symmetrical pair of semi-detached houses. There are broad similarities in the design to 13 and 14 below, though in this case gables are used rather than half hips, and both houses have similar 2 storey canted bays, rather than just the one in the case of 13.

13. **71/73 Merton Hall Rd** (1884) (+ contribution). This asymmetrical pair of semi-detached houses is in a neo vernacular style, broadly similar to 12 above and 14 below. The general form of the building is similar to 1 above, the roof form being arranged to present a pair of half hipped roofs towards the street. The asymmetry derives from one of the houses having a forward projecting 2 storey canted bay, and the other being flat fronted. Render on the upper floors is moulded to appear as a timber frame with render infill panels.

14. **75/77 Merton Hall Rd** (1884) (+ contribution). This asymmetrical pair of semi-detached houses is broadly similar in style to 1, 12, and 13. The asymmetry derives from the different plan form and roof form of the two storey projecting bays of each house (one bay being canted and the other being square), and from one house having a half hipped roof (like 1 and 13) and the other a gabled roof (like 12) facing towards the street.

15. **79 Merton Hall Rd** (1898) (+ contribution). This is (unusually) a detached house, which has broad similarities in design to 10 above. A gabled roof faces towards the street, which projects out over an oriel window. Below the oriel is a 2 storey canted bay.

16. **81/83 and 85/87 Merton Hall Rd** (1892) (locally Listed, + contribution). These are two pairs of symmetrical semi-detached houses, which have gabled roofs, with subsidiary gables over the dormers, which face to the street. There are large semi circular 2 storey bays (of similar design to the single storey bay at 2 above). They also feature attractively detailed timberwork on the projecting porches.

17. **89/91 and 93/95 Merton Hall Rd** (1899) (locally Listed, + contribution). Two pairs of symmetrical semi-detached houses, with the main roof being hipped and with subsidiary gables facing the road. Broadly similar in design to 18 below, the main differences being that the 2 storey canted bays are adjacent
to the party walls rather than the flank walls, there is no angled bay, and (in the case of 89/91) the shape of the Dutch gable is different. The projecting porch, of classical design, is also unique to these 4 houses, being a quarter spherical niche, supported on timber brackets.

18. 97/99 Merton Hall Rd (1900) (locally Listed, + contribution). A pair of non-symmetrical semi-detached houses with the main roof hipped, similar in style to 17 above. No 99 has a 2 storey square angled bay facing towards the street corner, while no. 97 has the more usual 2 storey cantilever bay facing directly to the street. Both have Dutch gables (fluted outline) over the 2 storey bays. Tall chimneys with well detailed brickwork are notable features. Terracotta panels and moulded bricks are used in the elaborately detailed porch, each having a segmental arches over. An attractive terracotta dragon tops the gable at no. 99, and originally similar dragons topped the gables at 93, 95 and 97.

19. 101 – 141 Merton Hall Rd (1896 and 1898) (+ contribution). Two long terraces of 2 storey houses each with a gabled roof at one end and a hip at the other. Pairs of houses display symmetry. Two storey square bays project slightly forward, and have hipped roofs and either pairs of sash windows, or wide central sash flanked by 2 narrower sashes. The porches are recessed, with either a gothic style arch with keystone, or a classical inspired pediment with round-headed arch below. A mix of ornate glazed tiled panels and incised stone panels are used between the upper and lower windows in each bay.

20. 80 Merton Hall Rd (1901) (+ contribution). This house forms the end of a terrace 21 below, and from a design point of view it is an integral part of it. However its design is altogether more imposing than its neighbour, with each public façade presenting a large Dutch gable (incorporating a circular design motif). There is a fine recessed porch with a round headed arch of alternating brick and stone, and a similar arch to the adjacent ground floor window.

21. 82 – 140 Merton Hall Rd (1901) (+ contribution). Two long terraces of two storey maisonettes with gable roofs. Pairs of each maisonette property display symmetry. They have two storey square bays, this time with a gable above (repeating the circular motif used at no 20 above). The upper bay window has a wide and slightly flattened round headed arch of alternating brick and stone, and is similar to that at 22 below. The lower windows have a small pediment detail above, and well detailed glazing bars. Ornate timberwork supports a lean to porch roof. Similar maisonettes can be found at 293 – 309 Kingston Rd (outside the Conservation Area).

22. 142 – 154 Merton Hall Rd (1902) (+ contribution). This is a terrace of two storey flats over shops. Each individual property has its own symmetry. The terrace has a gable roof, with a series of subsidiary ogee shaped Dutch gables facing the road, (one on each individual property). The general design is very similar to the shops/flats at 26 below, also within the Conservation Area, except that there the gables are mainly a simpler inverted “V” shape). The upper window has the same design as that used on 21 above. Regrettably several of the individual properties have had the brickwork painted over.

23. 156 Merton Hall Rd (1902) (+ contribution). Forming the end property in the terrace 22 above. The main distinguishing feature is the corner turret with an 8 sided spire above, topped by a metal dragon finial.

24. The Old Leather Bottle Public House (1897) (locally Listed, + contribution). This is a highly ornate building with arts and crafts design influences. Wide gables face towards both Kingston Rd and Merton Hall Rd, these are infilled with timber frame and render infill panels. The ground floor windows have wide segmental arches above, with alternating brick and stone. The same
treatment is provided over the door. Horizontal brick and stone banding occurs between the ground floor windows. Unusual window mullions are seen on the 1st floor. The ground floor windows and doors include quality leaded glass.

25. Wimbledon School of Art (estimated 1935 and 1983) (+ contribution). The 1930s building is a rectangular 3 storey block with a flat roof. It is a good example of the modernist architecture of the period, though its style is a strong contrast to anything else in the area. The building is quite plain, with a regular window arrangement on all floors. Severe stone detailing is used around the windows, and the entrance porch and on the parapet. On the ground floor courses of recessed brickwork give a strong horizontal emphasis. The later buildings to the south (1½ and 2½ storeys) have an industrial character, with wide, fairly shallow gabled roofs facing towards the road. Windows extend up into the apex of the gable. The architectural style of the buildings is again unlike anything else in the area.

26. 279 – 291 Kingston Rd (1903) (+ contribution). This is a two storey terrace of shops/commercial premises with flats above. Each individual property has its own symmetry. The end properties in the terrace are 2½ storeys high. The design of the 2 storey properties is broadly similar to 22 above, except for the use of inverted “V” shaped gables here, and the principle roof form being oriented at right angles to the road. Curiously number 283 Kingston Rd has a gable of a more complex shape, with added stone detailing. The two end properties, also gabled, are higher, with in one case an oriel window in the upper part of the gable, and in the other with a bay window at 1st and 2nd floor levels.

27. the Nelson Hospital (1911/1922/1931) (the 4 pavilions: + contribution) (all other buildings: neutral contribution). This building comprises several distinct parts. The section facing to the Rush (and the immediately adjoining section facing Kingston Rd) is a plain flat roofed 2 storey building, whose only distinguishing feature is the slightly projecting 2 storey bay of stone which contains an entrance door. On the frontage to Kingston Rd the main features are the four regularly spaced pavilions (designed by F Hatch), three of which have shallow hipped roofs and the 4th has a flat roof. These pavilions are strongly symmetrical “Palladian” buildings, 3 of which have well detailed entrance porticos in stone, and all of which have strong quoins in red brick. The pavilions are in the main interconnected by single storey link buildings. A detached building, of smaller scale at the western end, integrates comfortably as part of the overall composition. It has different detailing and a more residential character.

28. 271 Kingston Rd (1981) (neutral contribution). This is a bland piece of pastiche “Georgian” style building. It lacks any credibility in terms of what it pretends to be. It is three storey, with a shallow pitched gabled roof, part concealed behind a parapet. The eastern end projects slightly forward of the main frontage.

29. 265/267a/269 Kingston Rd (Long Lodge) (267a/269 Kingston Rd central section circa 1720-30, west wing circa 1750, east wing circa 1785) (statutorily Listed, + contribution), (265 Kingston Rd 1926, neutral contribution). This Listed (Grade II) building is a nearly symmetrical 2 storey building with each wing projecting slightly forward of the central section. The centre section, which is older, has a pedimented roof form, and the two side wings have a parapet which partly conceals the shallow pitched roof. Window lintels have red gauged brick flat arches. The windows are 12 paned sliding sashes. The central section has flush framed exposed box sashes, while the windows in the two wings are recessed exposing the reveals. The building was once the home of Frederick Shields the pre-Raphaelite painter. The later addition of
265 Kingston Rd at the side has upset the symmetry of the façade of the building as a whole. The façade of no. 265 attempts to replicate the central pediment of 267a/269.

30. 1–12 Merton Park Parade (1907) (+ contribution). This is a curved terrace of two storeys, which contains flats over shop and commercial units. Each individual property has its own symmetry. There is little in the way of ornate detail or unusual features, apart from the corbels and pilasters which separate one shop front from its neighbours.

31. 14 Merton Park Parade (1931) (neutral contribution). This is a rather austere flat roofed two storey building. The little interest that it once possessed has been diminished by replacement window frames.

32. 10 the Rush (1929) (+ contribution). This building, unlike any others in the area, is built in a “butterfly” configuration, two wings at right angles, linked by a connecting section at 45 degrees to the line of each wing. The most notable feature is the well-detailed timber “shopfront”, and the complex roof form above it, which mixes a hipped roof with an inset gable. Within the gable is a round-headed panel of herringbone brickwork.

15. Building Materials

There is a wide range of building materials used in the Conservation Area. The area is generally notable for the high quality of these materials.

In Merton Hall Rd however there is widespread use of yellow London stock bricks often with detailing in red bricks. Brown bricks are used on some houses, sometimes on the flank walls. This repetition of brick types taken from a limited range of building materials contributes to the overall sense of architectural cohesion.

Render, pebbledash and hanging tiles are occasionally used. Stone and terracotta detailing is also often used. Panels of glazed tiles are used on the terraces of houses to the south of Henfield Rd and the Chase. In general roofing materials include both slate and clay tiles.

The original 1930 School of Art building uses distinctive yellow bricks with stone details, while its later buildings use a dark red brick.

The Nelson Hospital uses brown brick with red brick detailing. Slate is used on the roof.

16. Gardens and Spaces between and around Buildings

In Merton Hall Rd the front gardens of the terraced houses (at the south end of the road) are (fortunately) too small to accommodate car parking. As a result they have remained intact, and are well planted and generally well cared for. They make a significant contribution to the street scene.

Further north, on the eastern side of Merton Hall Rd the front gardens are larger, and as a result they have almost all (85%) been altered to accommodate car parking. This has been done with varying degrees of success. In the worst cases the whole of the front wall has been removed and the whole frontage hard surfaced. There are however better examples where much of the frontage vegetation has been retained, as has as much as possible of the front garden wall.
The frontage space at Long Lodge (267a/269 Kingston Rd) has been very attractively planted. The frontage at the Nelson Hospital is hard surfaced, and is used for car parking, however there are some mature trees.

17. Streets

The quality of street design and street materials is variable. Where original street materials remain then the quality is good. However there have been unfortunate recent interventions which have had an adverse effect on character and appearance.

Almost all of Merton Hall Rd has narrow (150 mm) granite kerbs, with a bitmac verge and traditional large sized ASP paving slabs. Bitmac is used at the footway crossovers. In Avebury Rd the footway design and materials are similar, except that the granite kerbs are laid wide side (300 mm) uppermost. In Henfield Rd the footway design is the same as in Merton Hall Rd.

The vehicle entrance to the School of Art is marked with old granite corner blocks. Unfortunately highly inappropriate red concrete paviours have been used to form the speed table at the junction of Braeside Avenue/Merton Hall Rd. The vehicle entrance to the Wimbledon Chase School has also recently been clumsily altered, with footway widening on each side of the entrance. Bitmac is used (quite appropriately) to surface the added footway surface, but inappropriate concrete kerbs and corner blocks have been used, and the original granite kerbs have (wrongly) been left in place marking the edge of the original footway. Unattractive tall steel posts are used around the widened footway, and pedestrian guardrailing adds further unnecessary clutter.

At the eastern end of the Chase unattractive concrete chalk stick bollards are used to no great purpose. Unnecessary guardrailing is used at the footway edge. Two small “islands” have been constructed within the carriageway to deter parking across the end of the cycle route, however they have been poorly detailed, with concrete kerbs and corner blocks, concrete surfaces and more tall steel bollards. All of these features give an unnecessarily cluttered appearance.

The southern part of Merton Hall Rd (to the south of Henfield Rd/the Chase and in front of the terraced houses) the general footway design and materials are the same as further north, except that old concrete/aggregate kerbs are used in place of granite.

At the extreme southern end of Merton Hall Rd, setts are used for the crossover of the Leather Bottle public house. Setts are also used in the gully (3 rows), adjacent to this public house. Here the footway is bitmac and the kerbs are the narrow concrete type. At the junction of Merton Hall Rd and Kingston Rd four very large corner blocks of granite are used. On the opposite (western) side of the road (in front of the shops), ASP paving is used across the full width of the footway (no bitmac verge), and various surfaces used on the private forecourts. The kerbs here are natural stone (not granite).

On the north side of Kingston Rd (east of Merton Hall Rd) the footway is made of bitmac, and the kerbs are narrow (150 mm) granite. However concrete kerbs have (wrongly) been used on the public house crossover.
On the north side of Kingston Rd (west of Merton Hall Rd) the footway has been rebuilt using highly inappropriate 400 x 400 mm concrete paving slabs with infills of unattractive red and grey concrete paviours. Private shop forecourts are bitmac. Inappropriate “conservation” kerbs have been used.

On the south side of Kingston Rd (in front of the western part of the Nelson Hospital) the footway is surfaced with bitmac and has 300 mm wide granite kerbs.

The footway in front of the remainder of the Hospital (on Kingston Rd and the Rush) has inappropriate 400 x 400 concrete slabs infilled with red and grey concrete paviours and unsuitable “conservation” kerbs.

The footway in front of Merton Park Parade repeats the inappropriate 400 x 400 concrete slabs infilled with red and grey concrete paviours. The kerbstones in this section are a mix of narrow (150 mm) granite and “conservation” kerbs.

Adjacent to no 14 Merton Park Parade the footway is bitmac, and the kerbs narrow granite.

The island in the centre of the Rush is raised above the carriageway level, the ground being contained by random (uncoursed) brickwork.

Parking controls in most of the road are defined by use of narrow pale yellow parking lines, however at the south end of Merton Hall Rd and in Kingston Rd the more usual wide yellow lines are used.

18. Wimbledon Chase

Wimbledon Chase has been preserved as a narrow belt of open space on account of a wayleave which relates to a water main that runs along its length. In 1852 the Lambeth Water Co. constructed a main through this area, from Henfield Rd in the east to the bend in Kingston Rd to the west.

This green belt of land which runs to the west of the Conservation Area, opposite the Henfield Rd junction, provides a footpath and cycle path which connects to Kingston Rd in Raynes Park. Most of this land lies just outside the boundary of the Conservation Area.

There are signs of the remains of iron railings along the northern edge of the footway that runs along the length of Wimbledon Chase, but these have been removed, probably during the last war.

19. Trees/landscape

Trees make a very important contribution to the special character and appearance of this Conservation Area. The locations of the most important trees are indicated on plan 8. There are Tree Preservation Orders at the north western corner of the School of Art site (adjacent to the Quadrant), at the western end of Sheridan Rd (Merton Park) which extends to 14 Merton Park Parade, and at 10 the Rush and the adjacent part of the Nelson Hospital site.

The contribution made by trees to the character of the area is most notable in the area on the west side of Merton Hall Rd to the north of the Chase. In the surroundings of the car park, there are magnificent mature specimen trees of the
finest quality. These include most notably limes, horse chestnuts and planes, but there are also some ash and sycamores. There are similar excellent specimen trees along the frontage of the Wimbledon School of Art, but here they are fewer in number.

Merton Hall Rd also has smaller street trees within the footways. These are mainly pollarded limes, but there are a few other species. These street trees are most obvious in the southern and northern sections of Merton Hall Rd, but they are fewer in number in the middle section of the road (between Henfield Rd/the Chase and Avebury Rd).

There are two lines of trees which flank the path into Dundonald Park (adjacent to 45 Merton Hall Rd), but the trees are of mediocre quality, and there is an opportunity for enhancement here.

There are several medium sized field maples within the frontage of the Nelson Hospital, both on the Rush frontage and on the Kingston Rd frontage. Two medium sized tree of heaven have been planted within the central island of the Rush. This island also has smaller trees and shrubs.

In addition to these there are several smaller tree groups located within or on the fringes of the Conservation Area, these are at the junction of Dundonald Rd and Merton Hall Rd (limes and ash), at Watery Lane (adjacent to 14 Merton Park Parade) (ash), and at the western end of Sheridan Rd (limes).

20. Ecology

Wimbledon Chase is defined as a Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance. The great majority of the Chase lies immediately outside the Conservation Area boundary. The site contains coarse grasses, burdock, and mallow. Further details of the ecology of this area are included in the "Merton Handbook" (London Ecology Unit).

21. Views

The Conservation Area is flat, and with its public spaces being well contained by buildings and major landscape features, it lacks any long distance views. The most notable medium distance views are:

- Across the flat open expanse of Dundonald Park, from the entrance adjacent to 45 Merton Hall Rd, towards a school and the surrounding residential areas beyond.
- Through the trees to the Primary School playing fields beyond, this view is seen from the entrance to the Primary School, immediately to the south of no 48 Merton Hall Rd.
- Along the length of Wimbledon Chase, immediately to the north of 80 Merton Hall Rd.

Other than these, the views are limited to short distance views of individual buildings and small groups of buildings, and landscape features.
22. **Landmarks/legibility**

There are no major landmark buildings in the Conservation Area, though there is a common usage of towers and spires on corner blocks at street junctions, notably at 45 Merton Hall Rd (at the entrance to Dundonald Park), at 156 Merton Hall Rd (at the junction of Kingston Rd and Merton Hall Rd), and the angled bay at 99 Merton Hall Rd (at the junction of Merton Hall Rd and Henfield Rd).

In addition the buildings at 80 Merton Hall Rd (at the junction of Merton Hall Rd and the Chase) and at the Old Leather Bottle (junction of Kingston Rd and Merton Hall Rd have adjacent building frontages, which address both of their respective public spaces, and in doing so the buildings are used to “turn the corner”. The curved façade of Merton Park Parade, the angled configuration of the frontage of the Nelson Hospital, and the butterfly configuration of 10 the Rush all do the same thing.

Minor landmarks can also be seen at 291 Kingston Rd (an ornate tablet giving the date of the building).

23. **The Nelson Hospital**

Planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the Nelson Hospital in 1995. This permission does not appear to have been implemented, and has therefore lapsed. The future of health services is under review by the Primary Care Trust, and this review is bound to have some implications for the Nelson Hospital. Further proposals for some form of development of the site therefore seem likely to remain a possibility.

This Character Assessment has highlighted that the majority of the Hospital buildings make only a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and as such their redevelopment is in principle acceptable in planning terms, subject to the new development being of satisfactory design, (which includes a requirement that the new design should respond to the character of its wider context).

The 4 pavilion buildings on the Kingston Rd frontage, and the building at the far western end of the site, are however identified as contributing positively to the character of the Conservation Area (see plan 6). Development proposals for the site as a whole will therefore be expected to retain these elements, and the design of any new building should work with them.

The only circumstances in which the buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area could be demolished, would be if clear and convincing evidence were to be provided concerning the necessity for their demolition, and this evidence will need to be provided in terms of the 3 criteria set out in UDP policy BE.2. These criteria include consideration of the efforts that have been made to find a suitable future use for the buildings, the costs of repairing and maintaining them, and the potential for substantial planning benefits that would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.
24. Positive/negative features

The positive, negative and neutral features have been referred to in the earlier part of this assessment. This section therefore summarises those references in relation to each of the 4 distinct sub areas in the Conservation Area.

The Rush and the buildings around

Positive Features
- The architectural and historic interest of the statutorily and locally Listed buildings and the other buildings which are identified as contributing positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The enclosure of the space at the Rush by the surrounding buildings.
- The unusual street layout at the Rush, which is a reminder, and which derives from, the historic layout of the mediaeval village of Merton.

Neutral Features
- Several buildings are identified above which made a neutral contribution to this part of the Conservation Area

Negative Features
- The impact of high traffic volumes using Kingston Rd.
- The undue domination of the Rush by parked cars.
- The poor footway design and inappropriate footway materials used on the south side of Kingston Rd and on the north side to the west of Merton Hall Rd.

Merton Hall Rd to the south of Henfield Rd and the Chase

Positive Features
- The architectural and historic interest of the locally Listed buildings and the other buildings which are identified as contributing positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The design quality, detailing and architectural homogeneity of the buildings.
- The rigidly geometrical layout of the area.
- The high quality of street design and street materials
- The small well maintained front gardens
- The street trees, especially the continuity provided by the repeated use of pollarded lime trees.

Neutral Features

Negative Features
- The small scale and insensitive alterations made to the buildings, including replacement of original window frames, enclosure of porches, replacement of front doors and painting over masonry.
- 100 mm wide yellow line parking controls.

Wimbledon Chase, Wimbledon Chase School grounds and Wimbledon School of Art

Positive Features
- The architectural and historic interest of the buildings which are identified as contributing positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The design quality and detailing of the buildings.
- The variety provided for the area through the presence of non residential uses.
• The majesty of the very high quality mature trees.
• The high quality of original street design and street materials (however note also negative elements below).

Neutral Features

Negative Features
• The poor street design quality in recently implemented traffic calming schemes, and their use of inappropriate materials, including bollards and guard railing.

The eastern side of Merton Hall Rd to the north of Henfield Rd

Positive Features
• The architectural and historic interest of the locally Listed buildings and the other buildings which are identified as contributing positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
• The broad design relationships, and the repetition of small details, seen in the buildings in this part of the Conservation Area.
• The high quality building materials, and the high quality detailing used on buildings
• The street trees, especially the continuity provided by the repeated use of pollarded lime trees.
• The high quality of street design and street materials, (however note also negative elements below).

Neutral Features

Negative Features
• The poor street design quality in recently implemented traffic calming schemes, and their use of inappropriate materials.
• The introduction of parking into front gardens, the associated loss of planting, and the loss of front garden boundary definition (walls, fences, hedges and gates).
• The small scale and insensitive alterations made to the buildings, including replacement of original window frames, enclosure of porches, replacement of front doors and painting over masonry.

25. Opportunities and Recommended Action

• The central space at the Rush would benefit from the planting of trees which will grow to a very large size. The scale of the space in which they would sit requires major trees in this location.
• The central space at the Rush would benefit from re-planning so as to reduce the extent of car parking, provide the parking in a more orderly way and to improve the space for pedestrians, with enlarged areas of planting.
• The shops at Merton Park Parade would benefit from a unified painting scheme for the pilasters and corbels which separate one shop unit from its neighbours.
• The entrance to Dundonald Park (adjacent to 45 Merton Hall Rd) could be made more impressive through the planting of a regular avenue of trees, all of the same species.
• The recent traffic management schemes, which use inappropriate materials and inappropriate street furniture, should, when the opportunity arises be altered, so as to minimise street clutter and to use appropriate materials.
• The 100 mm wide yellow lines should be amended to the narrower 500 mm width, so as to reduce their intrusive appearance.
• Article 4 Directions to protect the detailing on the houses within the Conservation Area, including replacement of front doors, infilling of porches and replacement of front windows.
• Tree Preservation Orders should be considered for all major trees and tree groups, which are considered to be an asset to the Conservation Area.
• To work with the Primary Care Trust in the development of any proposals for the future development of the Nelson Hospital, in order to secure a scheme which retains the buildings which make a positive contribution, and a scheme in which the design of any new buildings has full regard to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
• To install street name signs in accordance with the normal “Conservation Area” pattern.
• There is an opportunity to develop the open storage area at the rear of 46/48 Merton Hall Rd, including the removal of the associated temporary storage sheds, and to provide new buildings.

November 2005
Building Type 32
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