Wimbledon Chase
Character Assessment
CHARACTER APPRAISAL
WIMBLEDON CHASE CONSERVATION AREA.

CONTENTs

1. General Introduction      1
2. Description of Extent of CA     1
3. Designation History      2
4. History of Development     2
5. Land Uses      3
6. Archaeology     4
7. Listed Buildings – Building Contribution     4
8. Building Plots     4
9. Building Height     4
10. Building Form     5
11. Building Line     5
12. Roof Form     5
13. Rhythm and Symmetry of Buildings     5
14. Architecture and Detailing     5
15. Building materials     8
16. Gardens and Spaces between and around Buildings     8
17. Streets     9
18. Wimbledon Chase     10
19. Trees and Landscape     10
20. Ecology     10
21. Views     11
22. Landmarks and Legibility     11
23. Positive and Negative Features     11
24. Opportunities and Recommended Action     12

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 special character of this area derives from its rigidly geometrical layout, the quality of street design and street materials, and the design quality, detailing and the architectural homogeneity of the buildings.

2. Description of extent of CA

The Conservation Area comprises 3.26 hectares. It is situated approximately 1 km to the south of Wimbledon Town Centre. It lies to the north of Kingston Rd, and to the south of the open space known as Wimbledon Chase. To the east lies Merton Hall Rd, and to the west the residential cul-de-sac Sandringham Ave.

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 R. 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 3 short cul-de-sacs (Quintin Ave, Richmond Ave and Chatsworth Ave).

The Conservation Area includes all the properties which front onto Quintin Ave (numbers 2 to 40 (evens) and 1 to 41 (odds)), Richmond Ave (numbers 2 to 50 (evens) and 1 to 53 (odds)), and Chatsworth Ave (numbers 2 to 56 (evens) and 1 to 57 (odds)). The footpath along Wimbledon Chase, adjacent to the houses in Quintin Ave, Richmond Ave and Chatsworth Ave is also included within the Conservation Area, but the adjacent open land lies outside the Conservation Area boundary.

The Conservation Area adjoins another Conservation Area to the east and south east (the Merton Hall Rd Conservation Area). This includes properties fronting Merton Hall Rd, and the Nelson Hospital (on the south side of Kingston Rd).

3. Designation History

The area was first designated as a Conservation Area on 29 November 1990. The boundary of the Conservation Area is to be amended in line with the reassessment of the Conservation Area’s boundaries which was carried out in 2004 as part of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal work. The properties in Chatsworth Avenue are to be included within the Conservation Area and the properties at 293-309 (odds) Kingston Rd are to be taken out of the Conservation Area. This Character Assessment is based on these revised boundaries.

4. History of Development

Rocques map of 1741-45 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 opposite 293-309 Kingston Rd, and the easternmost one is the present day Rush/Watery Lane.

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. However none of these buildings or plot divisions survives today.

The OS map of 1865 shows the same arrangement of Kingston Rd, Cannon Hill Lane, Blakesley Lane, the Rush and Watery Lane, as at the time of Rocque. Again buildings are 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 (immediately to the east of the Conservation Area). There are several additional quite substantial buildings which lie to the west of this one, which would seem to lie within the eastern part of the Conservation Area. This complex of buildings is named “Merton Hall Farm”.

On the north side of Kingston Rd, opposite the Cannon Hill Lane junction, there is a pond which is labelled “Bakers Green Pond”. This is roughly where Chatsworth Avenue is today.

The 1879 map (CW Bacon and Co), suggests no significant changes since 1865 either within the Conservation Area or immediately around it. Merton Hall Farm however is labelled (probably mistakenly) as “Merton Hill Farm”.

Almost all of the present day buildings within the Conservation Area are date from the first years of the 20th century. Building plans for the development of the buildings fronting Kingston Rd were submitted in 1901. Building plans for almost all of the properties in Richmond Ave were submitted between 1904 and 1905, those for most of the buildings in Quintin Ave were submitted between 1901 and 1904, and those for the buildings in Chatsworth Ave in 1905 to 1907.

The development that took place at this time respected the alignment of Kingston Rd to the south, and the alignment of the open space known as “Wimbledon Chase” to the north. However apart from these features, the new development swept away all other buildings and property boundaries and other features from previous ages.

The building at 2-4 Quintin Ave dates from 1913, and was originally used by JH Martin a pioneer in films, who used it as his studio. This activity continued until the 1920s, and spawned the later development of the nearby Merton Park Film Studios.

The OS map (surveyed 1933/34) shows the area within the Conservation Area boundary developed virtually as it is today.

Outside the Conservation Area boundary the 1933/34 map shows the Nelson Hospital adjacent to the Rush. This was built in 1911, replacing earlier buildings shown on the earlier maps. A large house set in generous grounds called “Blakesley” is shown on the south side of Kingston Rd opposite the junction with Richmond Ave. This house has since been demolished. Buildings continue to be shown within the Rush triangle in 1933/34, but these too have since been demolished.

5. Land Uses

The great majority of the Conservation Area buildings are used for residential purposes. A few are flats, but mainly they are houses. There is a commercial building at 2/4 Quintin Ave.
6. Archaeology

Properties in Quintin Ave and some of those which front onto Kingston Rd lie within an Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ), but the properties which front onto Richmond Ave and Chatsworth Ave lie outside the APZ. The APZ is based on the medieval 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 first referred to in a document of 949 AD. It was again referred to in the Domesday survey.

7. Listed Buildings – Buildings Contribution

None of the buildings within the Conservation Area is included on the Statutory List of Buildings Architectural or Historic Interest, and none is included on the Council’s Local List of Buildings of Historical or Architectural Interest.

However the following buildings are considered to make a positive contribution to the character/appearance of the Conservation Area:

- 6-40 (evens) Quintin Ave
- 1-39 (odds) Quintin Ave
- 6-50 (evens) Richmond Ave
- 1-53 (odds) Richmond Ave
- 2-56 (evens) Chatsworth Ave
- 1-57 (odds) Chatsworth Ave

The following buildings are felt to make a neutral contribution:

- 2/4 Richmond Ave
- 41 Quintin Ave.

The following building is felt to make a negative contribution:

- 2/4 Quintin Ave

8. Building plots

All of the building plots within the Conservation Area were set out when the area was comprehensively developed in the early years of the 20th century. The frontage width of all the plots is very regular, varying only from around 5 metres to around 6.5 metres.

9. Building Height

The houses and flats are all 2 storeys in height. 2/4 Quintin Ave is a predominantly single storey building.
10. **Building form**

In *Quintin Ave*, numbers 6 to 12 (evens), numbers 1 to 11 (odds) and numbers 22 to 40 (evens) comprise 3 short terraces of houses. Numbers 14/16, 18/20, 13/15, 17/19, 21/23, 25/27, 29/31, 33/35 and 37/39 are pairs of semi detached houses, but in the case of numbers 37/39 an additional later house of different design has been added to the pair to make a run of 3 houses. Numbers 2/4 comprise industrial buildings of quite different character and building form.

In *Richmond Ave* the houses are arranged in 4 longer terraces. Numbers 2/4 being later buildings, extending a pre existing terrace.

In *Chatsworth Ave* the houses are also arranged as 4 long terraces.

11. **Building Line**

The buildings throughout the Conservation Area all adhere rigidly to a clear building lines. Bay windows project forward of the general building line. The houses and flats in Chatsworth Ave, Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave have short front gardens or forecourts of between 3 and 3.75 metres.

12. **Roof Form**

Generally the roofs of the buildings in Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave are all pitched, with a fairly steep pitch, the ridges of the roofs being parallel to the street. Almost all the houses present a gable facing to the street.

The party walls and flank walls project through the roof plane, adding to the rhythm of buildings in the street.

The exceptions to this roof design are at 2/4 Quintin Ave (mainly a flat roof), at 41 Quintin Ave and at 2/4 Richmond Ave (both with hipped roofs).

13. **Rhythm and Symmetry of Buildings**

In Chatsworth Ave, Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave there is a very clear and regular rhythm to the buildings in the way that they present themselves to the street. Pairs of properties present a symmetrical elevational design, both in the cases of the terraced houses and the semi detached houses. The forward projecting bays and their gables are off set to one side of each house, and each house presents a mirror image of its neighbour.

The rhythm of the properties is created by the forward projecting bays with their gabled roofs, the flank and party walls projecting through the roofs, and the elevational symmetry of the pairs of houses.

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 houses in the area are very richly detailed, with a selection of the following features:

- Moulded bricks
- Stepped corbels in brick at the flank and party walls.
- Moulded terracotta panels
- Leaded glass to the windows
- Excellent quality coloured glass (with art nouveau or arts and crafts inspired designs)
- Unusual glazing bar patterns in the windows
- Oriel windows
- Roundel windows
- Good quality timber detailing to the porches, including in some cases, very finely cut timberwork
- Timber support brackets to the gables and to jettied upper storeys.
- Ornately cut bargeboards to the forward facing gables
- Stone detailing on arches, window architraves and gables
- Good quality gauged bricks
- Dutch gable designs
- Patterns created by use of ornate hanging tiles
- Attractive panelled front doors
- Ornate “mock Tudor” timber frame detailing

In Quintin Avenue there are 6 different elevational designs to the houses and flats, (identified A to F on plan 3).

**Type A** (1/3 Quintin Ave). This is a symmetrical pair of 2 storey properties, having the general appearance of a pair of houses, but which accommodates 4 flats. The design of this building has a close relationship to that of other flats in the adjacent Merton Hall Rd Conservation Area. The building has excellent brick and stone detailing (including moulded bricks and good quality gauged bricks) at the wide arch over the 1st floor windows. Above this there is a gable which contained a roundel feature in stone. The recessed porch uses well detailed timberwork.

**Type B** (5-11 odds, Quintin Ave). This is a short run of terraced houses with a square bay at ground level and angled bay at first floor level. There is a fine wide semi circular arch to the ground floor bay window, with good quality gauged bricks. There is a recessed porch with well detailed timberwork. The window above has a moulded brick architrave.

**Type C** (13/15, 33/35, 37/39, 6-12 odds, 14/16, 18/20, 26/28, and 34/36 Quintin Ave). This type comprises semi detached houses. The projecting bay is angled, larger in plan at ground floor than at first floor level. The gable above is supported on timber brackets. The recessed porches have good quality timber detailing, and above there is a roundel window with radiating glazing bars.

**Type D** (17/19, 21/23, 25/27, 29/31, 22/24, 30/32 and 38/40 Quintin Ave). This type is in many ways similar to type C, but the projecting bay
is square shaped, the upper level being wider than the lower one. Timber frame detailing is used on the bay. **Type E** (41 Quintin Ave). This is a later building probably dating from the 1950’s replacing what would once have been a house contemporary to the others in the road, but which seems likely to have been lost to wartime bomb damage. It is attached to 37/39 Quintin Ave, making a short terrace. It has a hipped roof at the northern end covered with plain tiles. The walls are wholly built of plain brick. The windows are metal framed “Crittal” type. **Type F** (2/4 Quintin Ave). This is an ugly, largely single storey, industrial building, but with a 2 storey element at one end. Its character is entirely alien to that of the other buildings in the Conservation Area, and it detracts markedly from the character/appearance of the Conservation Area. Its elevations are of pebbledash, it has a flat roof at the front, with pitched roofs behind. The windows are metal framed. It is thought to date from about 1920.

In Richmond Avenue there are 4 different elevational designs to the houses and flats, (identified G to J). These are identified on plan 3.

**Type G** (1-17 odds, 19-53 odds, 6-18 evens, and 36-50 evens, Richmond Ave). These are terraces of highly distinctive design. At ground floor level there are pairs of round headed windows in the front bays. These windows have ornate keystones with a leaf motif, and similar decorative stone detail to the capitals at the based of the window arches. Fluted pilasters divide the pair of windows. The sash window glazing within them has a part radial design to the glazing bars, and they have part leaded glass. The upper part of the bays have casement windows with “Georgian” style glazing bars. Above these windows there is a shallow segmental arch of moulded brick (painted). Above the arch, within the gable there are timber frame details, infilled with pebbledash panels. The gable itself has highly distinctive timber bargeboarding using an “icicle” design. The panelled front doors are well detailed (good examples are at nos. 19, 21 and 27), with art nouveau leaded and coloured glass. Porches are similarly extravagantly detailed with fretwork-cut timber panels, and leaded and coloured glass panels. The porches at 6-18 (evens) Richmond Ave are more variable in design. Above the porches there are highly unusual half-cylinder shaped oriel windows also with leaded and coloured glass. Unfortunately over time some houses have lost some of this detailing. The building materials are red brick to both ground and first floors, in some cases this has unfortunately been painted over. The roofs are of tiles, and ornate ridge tiles are evident, though in some cases these are missing.

**Type H** (20/22, and 32/34 Richmond Ave). These are relatively plain pairs of houses that form part of a larger terrace. The angled bays are larger at ground floor than at first floor level. A semi circular arch is used at the recessed porch.

**Type I** (24-30 evens, Richmond Ave). These houses sit within a larger terrace. Their design is quite similar to type I, but the bay is the same
size at ground and first floor levels. Moulded bricks are used above the
ground floor bay windows.

**Type J** (2/4 Richmond Ave). This is a later building containing a pair of
houses, which probably dates from the 1950’s. It replaces houses
destroyed as a result of the crash of a Junkers bomber in September
1940. It is physically attached to terrace at 6-18 Richmond Ave. The
ground floor projects slightly further forward relative to the 1st floor, and
has a flat roof over. The building has a pitched roof, hipped at the
southern end, and covered with plain tiles. The walls are wholly built of
plain brick. The windows are the replacement UPVC type.

In **Chatsworth Ave** there are 3 different elevational designs to the houses and
flats, (identified K to M). These are identified on plan 3.

**Type K** (14/16 Chatsworth Ave). This pair of houses sit within a larger
terrace. There are projecting square bays, in which the upper, angled
window projects forward, supported on two timber brackets. The lower
window has a shallow segmental arch above, in moulded brick. There
is ornate timber bargeboarding to the gable above with timber frame
detailing within the gable. The recessed porch has very ornate timber
detailing.

**Type L** (41-57 (odds) Chatsworth Ave). These terraced houses have
wide square bays at ground floor level, with smaller angled bays
above. The gable above the bay projects forward over the angled bay
window below. There is an oriel window above the recessed porch.

**Type M** (2-12, 18-56, and 1-39 Chatsworth Ave). These houses are
terraced, some with a square bay at ground floor level and some with
an angled bay. Above this the first floor has a smaller angled bay
window, and above that a gable with an ornate bargeboard. The
recessed porch has very ornate timberwork detail, and there is an oriel
window above.

15. **Building Materials**

In Chatsworth Ave, Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave generally the typical
building materials used are red brick on the lower parts of the building, with
pebbledash above. Mostly roofs are covered with tiles, and some houses
retain ornate ridge tiles. There is some use of stone, hanging tiles and timber
framework decoration as decorative detailing.

16. **Gardens and Spaces between and around Buildings**

In Chatsworth Ave, Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave there are narrow gaps
between the pairs of semi-detached houses, and between the terraces of
houses. They are between 1 and 2 metres wide. These provide pedestrian
access to the rear gardens.

Back gardens are fairly small, being between 11 to 16 metres in length.
Vegetation within the back garden areas is not generally appreciated from the
public realm except at the northern end, where they can be seen from the footpath at Wimbledon Chase, and where there are some large trees.

Front gardens are small, and (fortunately) too small to accommodate cars off the street. Generally they are well planted with shrubs, bushes and smaller plants, and are a major asset to the appearance of the area. The front curtilage boundaries (along the edge of the footways) have a mixture of low walls, timber fences, and low hedges or other vegetation. In general this boundary treatment is no more than 1 metre high, (see Plan 2).

Some original examples of garden paths from the footway to the front doors can be seen at (for example) number 7 Quintin Ave typical of the original design in Quintin Ave and Chatsworth Ave, (with small red tiles), and at (for example) number 32 Richmond Ave typical of the original design for Richmond Ave, (with small black and white tiles laid in chequerboard style). The Richmond Ave and Chatsworth Ave examples also have large stone stabs forming the threshold of the garden at the garden gate.

17. Streets

Both Quintin Ave Chatsworth Ave and Richmond Ave are quiet culs-de-sac, which offer a welcome relief from the traffic in Kingston Rd. Richmond Ave and Quintin Ave are laid out with a slight “dog’s leg” plan where the angle occurs approximately half way along both streets. This affects views along the length of the streets.

In Chatsworth Ave, Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave the carriageway of the streets is surfaced with black bitmac, as are the footways. Wide granite kerbs are used (300 mm wide exposed upper face).

Richmond Ave has unusual oblong shaped granite setts forming the gullys. Three rows of these setts are used in each gully, but unfortunately they have in part been covered over with bitmac.

There are few crossovers, but those that there are, are generally very well detailed. Examples can be seen at 2/4 Quintin Ave and at 50 Richmond Ave. These have large corner blocks of granite (600 mm radius), and they have 300 mm kerbs running across the line of the footway as an edge to the crossover. The crossovers are surfaced with bitmac in Quintin Ave, but with (square) granite setts in Richmond Ave.

At the Wimbledon Chase end of the three roads, the cul-de-sacs are terminated with modern “chalk stick” concrete bollards. These detract somewhat from the street scene.

The three roads have yellow lines to control parking, they are 100 mm wide, and they detract to some extent from the appearance of the street.
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 along the northern edge of the Conservation Area provides a footpath and cycle path which connect to both Richmond Ave and Quintin Ave. Most of this land lies just outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. Beyond it lies the open school playing field and playground of Wimbledon Chase Primary School. The trees within this area are referred to under the heading Trees/landscape below.

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**

There is only one Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the Conservation Area, this is at no. 13 Richmond Ave.

Both Wimbledon Chase and the adjacent edge of the Wimbledon Chase Primary School site contain many mature trees. These trees lie outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. At the north end of Richmond Ave there are some ash trees, together with a majestically large horse chestnut tree and a similarly impressive plane tree. At the north end of Quintin Ave there are good sized ash, chestnut, sycamore and poplar trees. At the north end of Chatsworth Ave there are again attractive mature trees.

There are medium sized street trees planted at irregular intervals in Quintin Ave Chatsworth Ave and Richmond Ave. These trees are of various species. Mature but severely pruned lime trees are an attractive feature in part of Quintin Ave, and attractive pruned limes and planes are to be found in Chatsworth Ave.

There are no trees in Kingston Rd, but there are large and mature trees to the south within the car parking site adjacent to Blakesley Walk. These are important from the point of view of views out of the conservation Area.

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 trees that lie within Wimbledon Chase and the adjacent edge of the Wimbledon Chase Primary School site (see the section on trees/landscape above) provide a very attractive termination to the views northwards along the length of Quinton Ave Chatsworth Ave and Richmond Ave. The scale of the trees, particularly those at the end of Richmond Ave, is spectacular, (see plans 2 and 4).

There are glimpses through these trees from all of the roads to the open land within the Primary school beyond, and to the school buildings.

The view southwards along Quintin Ave is closed by one of the pavilions of the Nelson Hospital building (slightly off set to one side), on the south side of Kingston Rd. The view southwards along Richmond Ave is dominated, and greatly enhanced, by the excellent large trees within the car parking site on the opposite side of Kingston Rd. The view southwards along Chatsworth Ave is curtailed by an oblique view of the buildings fronting Cannon Hill Lane, (see plans 2 and 4).

22. **Landmarks/legibility**

The area is not notable for any major landmarks. By far the largest individual elements within or around the Conservation Area are the mature trees along and adjacent to Wimbledon Chase.

Legibility is created with smaller scale detailing on certain buildings. The houses at the northern end of Richmond Ave have octagonal towers which terminate the front elevations, and turn the building frontages where the road meets Wimbledon Chase (see plan 2).

The north elevation of the building at 56 Chatsworth Ave has an ornate terracotta plaque with floral motif, which acts as a minor local feature (see plan 2).

23. **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.

**Positive Features**

- The rigidly geometrical layout of the area
- The quality of street design and street materials
- The design quality, detailing and architectural homogeneity of the buildings, (NB individual buildings that contribute positively are identified in section 7 above)
- The small well maintained front gardens ( see plan 2).
- The street trees, especially the lime trees and plane trees in Quintin Ave and Chatsworth Ave (see plan 4).
• The views northwards along the 3 streets to the fine trees within Wimbledon Chase and the adjacent school grounds, (see plan 2).
• The views southwards along Richmond Ave towards the fine mature trees within the car parking site to the south of Kingston Rd, (see plan 2).
• The small scale detailing which enhances legibility at 50 and 53 Richmond Ave, and at 56 Chatsworth Ave, (see plan 2).

Neutral Features
• Individual buildings that have a neutral impact are identified in section 7 above)
• The exposed flank walls, rear wings, and rear gardens and yards at 293, 309, 311, 333 and 335 Kingston Rd, all of which are significant elements in the street scene in Quintin Ave, Chatsworth Ave and Richmond Ave

Negative Features
• Individual buildings that have a negative impact are identified in section 7 above)
• The replacement on individual properties, of original window frames, and doors, and the enclosure of porches, on their front elevations
• The painting or (worse) cladding pebbledashing or rendering of brickwork elevations.
• The “chalk stick” bollards at the northern ends of Quintin Ave and Richmond Ave
• 100 mm wide “yellow line” parking controls

24. Opportunities and Recommended Action

• Redeveloping the site at 2/4 Quinton Ave with a new building more in keeping with the character of the area
• Replacing the “chalk stick” bollards with more appropriate vehicle control measures
• Replacing 100 mm yellow lines with 50 mm yellow lines
• Preparation of Article 4 Directions to protect detailing on the houses within the Conservation Area, including replacement of front doors, front windows, and alterations to porches, including the enclosure of open fronted porches.
• Consider possible Tree Preservation Orders for the major trees either within the Conservation Area boundary, or outside it, where they contribute to views from the Conservation Area.

November 2005
Wimbledon Chase Conservation Area

Plan 2 - Townscape Appraisal
Plan No DLU/2113

Key

↔️ Attractive Views
↔️ Unattractive Views
➕ Buildings making a positive contribution
นม Buildings making a neutral contribution
✗ Buildings making a negative contribution
⬛ Quality planted areas
▱ Building frontages
Building Type E

Building Type F

Building Type G

Building Type H
Building Type M