



Wimbledon Hill Road Boundary Assessment

ASSESSMENT OF THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE WIMBLEDON HILL RD CONSERVATION AREA.

At the time of this boundary assessment, the boundaries of the designated Conservation Area include the following properties:

- Malcolm Rd 1 – 11 (odds), 15 – 23 (odds), 4 – 14 (evens), 16a, and 16 – 20 (evens).
- Raymond Rd 2 – 8 (evens), 9, 10 – 22 (evens), 22a, Raymond Court, 1 and 7, land at rear of 11a/b/c/d Raymond Rd.
- Mansel Rd 2a, 2 – 28 (evens), 32, Wimbledon High School, Trinity Church, and 1 – 17 (odds).
- Wimbledon Hill Rd 28 – 58 (evens), 58, 58a, 58b, 60 – 68, 31/33 (the Alexandra Public House), 35 (the Public Library), 37 – 47 (odds), 51 – 55 (odds), 74/76 (Wimbledon High School), and 100.
- St Mark's Place 1 – 4 (consec), Galustian Garden, and St Marks Church.
- Compton Rd Marlborough Hall, no. 12, no. 1 (the former post office building), and St Mark's Church hall.
- Worples Rd 1 – 8 (consec) the Pavement
- Woodside Woodside House, and 74 – 77 (consec).
- St Mary's Rd 1a, 1 – 5 (odds), Queen Alexandra's Court, the Lodge, the Warden's House.
- Lake Rd Gate piers at south end of the road, the full width of the public highway adjacent to Queen Alexandra's Court.

The Conservation Area adjoins the boundary of the North Wimbledon Conservation Area at its extreme north-western end. Apart from that, it has no common boundaries with any other conservation area, though it is close to the Wimbledon Broadway Conservation Area, (beyond Wimbledon Bridge), and to the West Wimbledon Conservation Area (a short distance to the south-west, in Ridgway Place and Spencer Hill).

To the south-east of the Conservation Area lies the heart of the commercial Wimbledon Town Centre, to the north-east, north-west and south-east lie the affluent residential areas on the slopes of Wimbledon Hill. At the summit of the hill is the smaller commercial area of the original pre-suburban village of Wimbledon.

The Wimbledon Hill Conservation Area itself readily falls into 2 very distinct parts, firstly the commercial area focussed along the lower end of Wimbledon Hill Rd, and secondly the residential areas to the north-east and the south-west.

Assessment of Properties within the Conservation Area

Most of the properties in Malcolm Rd lie within the Conservation Area, and all of those that do (except for 16a, 15 and 17) are of significant architectural interest, some small groups of buildings have some degree of architectural cohesion, which adds to their interest. Numbers 1 – 11, are Locally Listed buildings. With the exception of nos. 16a, 15 and 17, the houses are of broadly the same period of construction. These 3 properties are of a later age and have much less architectural character, but their positions in the centre of the group make it unreasonable and impractical to exclude them from the Conservation Area.

Only the properties at the lower end of Raymond Rd are included within the Conservation Area. Most are on the south-western side of the road. This group (on the SW side of the road) are of very similar age and architectural character to those described in Malcolm Rd (above), except for no. 22a. Again a few of them have value as a group with a common architectural style. No. 22a is much more modern, and it occupies a peripheral location, but has been designed with close regard to the architectural characteristics of its near neighbours in the Conservation Area. Numbers 16, 20 and 22 are Locally Listed buildings. It is concluded that all the properties on the south-western side of Raymond Rd, currently within the Conservation Area justify their inclusion within the Conservation Area.

The character of the properties on the north-eastern side of Raymond Rd is much more varied. Raymond Court is a very different, large 1930s block of flats, which has some distinctive “art deco” detailing that period. It is not an outstanding example of that architectural style, and it include retrospective architectural references (eg the attempted “mansard” type roof) as well, but is felt to have sufficient architectural value to warrant retaining it within the Conservation Area boundaries. Numbers 1 Raymond Rd and 17 Mansel Rd occupy the 2 corner positions at the junction of Mansel and Raymond Roads. Both have the architecture characteristic of the period when the original development of the area took place (end of the 19th century – very early 20th century). Both properties occupy central positions within the Conservation Area, so it is concluded that it would be both impractical and unjustifiable to take them out of the Conservation Area.

Number 7 Raymond Rd is a later house, of the 1980s. Its character is both different and of lesser value, compared to that of other buildings in this part of the Conservation Area. It also occupies a relatively peripheral position. Nevertheless it is a modest sized building, which provides some enclosure and definition of the public street, and which has unusual large front dormer windows. With the exception of the front boundary treatment it does not detract from the character of the Conservation Area, and for this reason it is felt, on a fine balance, to warrant retaining it within the Conservation Area.

Land at the rear of 11 a/b/c/d Raymond Rd lies within the Conservation Area, but the street frontage of these properties lies outside the Conservation Area boundary. Since the designation of the Conservation Area, it appears that land has been taken from the far end of the garden of no. 15 Mansel Rd (within the Conservation Area), to create an enlarged building plot for these 4 new houses to be built. The 4 new houses, are not felt to be of such special character to warrant inclusion in the Conservation Area, nor is their architectural style particularly closely related to that of other houses in this part of the Conservation Area. It is therefore not felt appropriate to include the houses within the Conservation Area, and furthermore the section of the former garden of 15 Mansel Rd should logically be taken out of the Conservation Area, now that the original property boundaries have been adjusted.

Mansel Rd lies close to the core of the Conservation Area. Most of the buildings date from the original development of the area (late 19th and early 20th centuries), and most have distinctive architectural quality. Many buildings have architectural characteristics in common with one another, giving the added dimension of group value. The church is a Grade 2 Listed Building, and numbers 2 – 20 and 26 are Locally Listed. In general the inclusion of these properties in the Conservation Area is amply justified. There are however some more recent developments at the north-eastern end of the road, which are of more questionable value in terms of their architectural character and value. By far the worst example from an architectural point of view is the 1970s office block at 2a Mansel Rd. The design of this building

fails entirely to respond to the characteristics of the wider area, however it is impractical to exclude it from the Conservation Area because of central position within the heart of the designated area. For that reason alone, it is suggested that it should remain within the Conservation Area. Exactly the same argument applies to the 1970s office block at the corner of Mansel Rd and Wimbledon Hill Rd (60 – 68 Wimbledon Hill Rd), and again the conclusion as to its retention within the Conservation Area is also the same.

On the north-western side of Mansel Rd are the buildings of the Wimbledon High School. These are in part late 19th century (reconstructed 1920) buildings of some architectural significance and in part a post war infill building of much blander design. Behind these school buildings, and also behind the church and nos. 1 – 13 Mansel Rd, are further school buildings, which are recent developments. These backland buildings do not impact onto the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, being concealed behind those on the street frontage. In themselves they have no special architectural qualities which would warrant inclusion in a Conservation Area. It is therefore suggested that within the school site, only those buildings which front to Mansel Rd and Wimbledon Hill Rd should remain within the Conservation Area, and that the backland areas should be de-designated.

In the town centre area, the Conservation Area includes a fine terrace at 30 – 56 Wimbledon Hill Rd, which has clear architectural unity, and rhythm, and which justifies its Conservation Area status, despite some substantial alterations to the front elevations and shopfronts. Numbers 58, 58a and 58b differ architecturally from nos. 30 – 56, but are certainly of sufficient architectural value to warrant Conservation Area status. Numbers 60 – 68 Wimbledon Hill Rd have been referred to in the section on Mansel Rd, above, where it was argued that despite the building's failure to respond architecturally to the context, it would be impractical to exclude it from the Conservation Area.

The terrace of small shops (28 Wimbledon Hill Rd and 1 – 8 the Pavement) is a gem of a building, with a pronounced classical architectural style. It makes most creative use of a very difficult and shallow site. Its Conservation Area status is amply justified, despite some of the brickwork having been painted.

There are four distinct building elements to the buildings along the north-eastern side of Wimbledon Hill Rd, (i) the Alexandra Public House, (ii) the Public Library, (iii) the "Bank Buildings" terrace (37 – 47 Wimbledon Hill Rd), and (iv) the terrace at 51 -55 Wimbledon Hill Rd. The first three of these are Locally Listed buildings, the last one a modern development of unusual and distinctive design. Each of these 4 buildings provides its own highly individual architecture, and each one has design qualities which fully justify their Conservation Area status.

The St Mark's Place area has a very different character to that of Wimbledon Hill Rd itself. It is a quiet backwater like a cloister compared to the noise and busyness of Wimbledon Hill Rd. The space is enclosed by the return elevations of the Library and the Alexandra Public House (both Locally Listed), as well as the short terrace at 1 – 4 St Mark's Place. At the end of the street the contemporary architecture of the 1960s church of St Mark's, closes the view, and makes a striking, and pleasing contrast to its surroundings. All of these buildings have their own distinctive architectural style, and each element has a design quality that adds to the character of the Conservation Area. The ambience of St Mark's Place is further enhanced by the very attractively presented market stall, which occupies the Wimbledon Hill Rd end of the space.

Only a few properties in Compton Rd are included within the Conservation Area. The best buildings in this part of the Conservation Area are the return frontage of the Library, the return frontage of 37 Wimbledon Hill Rd (the end of the Bank Buildings terrace), No. 1 Compton Rd (the former Post Office building), and no. 12 Compton Rd (the former Telephone Exchange). All of these are Locally Listed buildings, and each one is quite different architecturally. The other buildings in this street, which lie within the Conservation Area (Marlborough Hall and the adjacent small church hall), are of lesser value from the point of view of their architectural qualities, but their inclusion within the Conservation Area is necessitated by the need to retain coherent boundaries for the Conservation Area.

The north-western part of the Conservation Area includes the Wimbledon Hill Rd frontage of the High School. This has three of the original late Victorian mansions, one originally a semi-detached pair, and the other originally detached building. These buildings have subsequently been converted for use by the school. A 1980s infill block has been added, linking the two original buildings, and echoing, albeit somewhat clumsily, some of their design features. The remainder of this part of the Conservation Area essentially comprises Wimbledon Hill Rd itself (the public highway), and the single building at no. 100 Wimbledon Hill Rd, which is Grade 2 Listed. The inclusion of the Listed Building is certainly warranted, but the inclusion of a roadway (without frontage buildings) in a Conservation Area is unusual. In this case it is felt, on balance that inclusion is warranted. The design of the street is itself very special, including as it does a wide area of planting which runs the length of the road, along its northern side, between the carriageway and the footway. This planting belt is raised up above the general ground level, and it contains mature trees and shrubs, informally planted. The planting belt occupies the outer edge of the curved alignment of the road, and it provides an unusually attractive and distinctive approach to Wimbledon Village, in one direction, and to the town centre in the other. On this basis it is considered that its Conservation Area status is warranted.

The north-eastern part of the Conservation Area extends along Woodside, St Mary's Rd and Lake Rd. Here the main core of the Conservation Area is centred on the group of Grade 2 Listed Buildings which make up the Queen Alexandra's Court complex of buildings. This group is a formal composition of buildings, symmetrically arranged around three sides of a central square. The open side faces towards St Mary's Rd. These buildings undoubtedly comprise the most impressive formal grouping of Statutorily Listed Buildings in the Borough. It provides an entirely proper focal point for this section of the Conservation Area. Adjacent to Queen Alexandra's Court are impressive baroque brick and stone gate piers to each side of the lower end of Lake Rd. These structures are Locally Listed. They make a highly distinctive entrance to Lake Rd, and certainly warrant inclusion in the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area also includes a very fine brick wall (late 19th /early 20th century date) along the eastern side of the Queen Alexandra's Court site, which forms the street frontage on the western side of Lake Rd. The full width of the Lake Rd public highway (adjacent to Queen Alexandra's Court) has also been included within the Conservation Area, and this is justifiable on the basis of very high quality street design considerations, including the width and curvature of the street, the quality of street materials, and the very fine street trees.

The area between Queen Alexandra's Court and Wimbledon Hill Rd comprises 4 houses on the south-west side of St Mary's Rd, a similar number on the north-west side of Woodside, and the large block of flats at Woodside House. The eight detached houses are all to individual designs, mostly good examples of their particular style, two being Locally Listed, and warranting their conservation area

status. Woodside House is rather undistinguished from an architectural point of view, and only warrants conservation area status on the basis of its focal position which links together other parts of the Conservation Area.

Assessment of Properties outwith the Conservation Area

To the west and south-west of the Conservation Area buildings are generally of a slightly later date compared to the original development within the Conservation Area. The upper end of Raymond Rd has a different character to the lower part, with more of an inter-war suburban feel, and much mock Tudor “black and white” decorative detailing. This area is not considered to possess such special character as to warrant its designation as a Conservation Area.

The lower part of Ridgway Place, which runs parallel to, and to the south-west of Malcolm Rd, is also of later date, with unexceptional post-war and inter-war suburban semis and detached houses. The upper part of Ridgway Place and the streets beyond (to the south-west) already lie within the West Wimbledon Conservation Area.

The upper part of Wimbledon Hill Rd has been the subject of substantial redevelopment, with large blocks of flats marching up the hill. Those below no. 100 Wimbledon Hill Rd (which is within the Conservation Area) are modern buildings put up in the last 10 years, while above no. 100, there are two large inter-war blocks of mansion flats. None of these developments is considered to be of such special character or value, as to warrant conservation area designation.

The Listed Building at no. 100 Wimbledon Hill Rd lies within the Conservation Area, however the building has been extended subsequent to the original Conservation Area designation, a side addition having been added on the north-western side of the building. The site on which this extension sits is currently outside the Conservation Area, it was formerly occupied by a freestanding building. This extension has been designed to be very much in keeping with the architectural style of the Listed Building, and it now reads as an integral part of it. It is therefore logical to incorporate the extension, and the land on which it has been built, into the Conservation Area.

To the south-east of the Conservation Area there is the main commercial area of Wimbledon Town Centre. Here most of the buildings in Worple Rd, the lower end of Wimbledon Hill Rd, and in Francis Grove and St George’s Rd, are modern, and mainly high density redevelopments, which date from the 1960s onwards. The design of each development seems to be unrelated to its neighbour in terms of architecture and materials. The architectural quality and the quality of detailing of these buildings is quite mixed, but is noticeably lower than is seen within the Conservation Area, and conservation area status therefore does not seem to be warranted.

The narrow street at Worple Rd Mews runs at right angles to Worple Rd, behind the properties fronting Wimbledon Hill Rd (nos. 28 – 58). These frontage properties (including their back yards and outbuildings) are included within the Conservation Area, but the Mews itself (the highway) is not. This is an unusual street, though not typically a mews in terms of the design and spatial characteristics commonly associated with that term. The street surface has recently been re-laid, re-using original granite setts, and the finished result is exemplary of quality street works. The rather haphazard backs of the frontage buildings are however exposed to view from the Mews, as are the back yards and outbuildings.

There is felt to be potential to improve the enclosure of the Mews space, and to create stronger “live” frontages facing to the Mews along its north-eastern side. Such development possibilities seem likely to offer the potential to strengthen the character of this small space, and to give a better sense of enclosure and tighter definition to the space.

It is suggested that the Mews itself should be incorporated into the Conservation Area, so that this opportunity can be highlighted, and so that the townscape benefits referred to above, can be realised through new development.

The adjacent building to the south-west is modern, large scale, well detailed and uses high quality materials. Its general architectural character is however not felt to relate particularly closely to those of the Conservation Area, so it is not suggested that that development should be included in the Conservation Area.

To the north-east of the Conservation Area there are small estates of more modern housing, at Leeward Gardens and Pine Grove, these are different in character to any areas within the Conservation Area, and are considered to be of lesser value in terms of their architectural qualities or their distinctive characteristics. The most distinctive feature in this area is the high brick wall, which surrounds the Pine Grove development, fronting onto parts of St Mary’s Rd, and Church Hill. Parts of this wall are original, and date from the last quarter of the 19th century, (certainly pre 1901 to judge from the Victorian post box fixed into the wall in St Mary’s Rd). The original sections of the wall constitute a distinctive and attractive element in the street scene. However part of the wall facing to Church Hill has been lost, and replaced with a high timber fence, and much of the wall facing to St Mary’s Rd has also disappeared to be replaced in places with a mish-mash of less attractive high timber fencing set above a lower wall. One section of the original wall does however survive on the north- west side of the Pine Grove development, and this contains the fairly rare wall-mounted Victorian letterbox referred to above.

Most of this wall is relatively remote from the designated Conservation Area, being separated from it by a lot of houses of very doubtful architectural value (the Pine Grove development), which would tend to undermine the general merits of the Conservation Area as a whole.

In Lake Rd there are three Locally Listed buildings currently outside the Conservation Area. Numbers 6 and 7 form a pair of very large semi-detached Victorian mansions, which are close to the current Conservation Area boundary. No. 10 is a large detached Victorian mansion, which is more remote from the existing Conservation Area.

There is felt to be a good case for expanding the extent of the Conservation Area in the lower part of Lake Rd, so as to include 6/7 Lake Rd and a further section of the high brick street frontage wall on the eastern side of the Pine Grove development. The inclusion of this wall would necessitate the inclusion of nos.1 and 2 Pine Grove, which otherwise would not warrant inclusion. Such a boundary revision would have the advantage of incorporating two of the three Locally Listed buildings within the Conservation Area, and giving them protection from demolition, as well as giving further recognition to the value of the brick frontage wall. No. 10 Lake Rd is however felt to be too remote from the Conservation Area, and to have intervening development of unexceptional quality between it and the Conservation Area.

The buildings on the eastern side of this part of Lake Rd (1 – 6 Pixham Court and Lake Close) are not felt to have any important architectural or historic value. It has

however been noted that new and attractive iron railings have been provided along the two street frontages of Lake Close. Including these properties within the Conservation Area would offer the benefit of incorporation of all the frontages facing towards Lake Rd within the Conservation Area, and it would create a more rational configuration to the Conservation Area, in conjunction with the addition of 6 and 7 Lake Rd. This is a finely balanced judgement, but it is felt that the slight advantage lies with including them within the Conservation Area.

Buildings further north in Lake Rd are felt to be of much lesser interest, except for the Locally Listed no. 10, but that is seen as being too remote from the existing or suggested new Conservation Area boundary.

In Woodside, Alwyne Rd and Compton Rd development is of an earlier period, comprising mainly housing or small maisonette blocks, together with mansion flats in Alwyne Rd. While these areas are generally attractive, they do not appear to present the distinctive and special architectural character generally associated with conservation areas, and they lack any other special features, which might warrant conservation area designation. There have been some redevelopments of rather over-dominant, newer buildings, between Compton Rd and Alwyne Rd, which certainly do not, of themselves, warrant conservation area status.

Conclusion

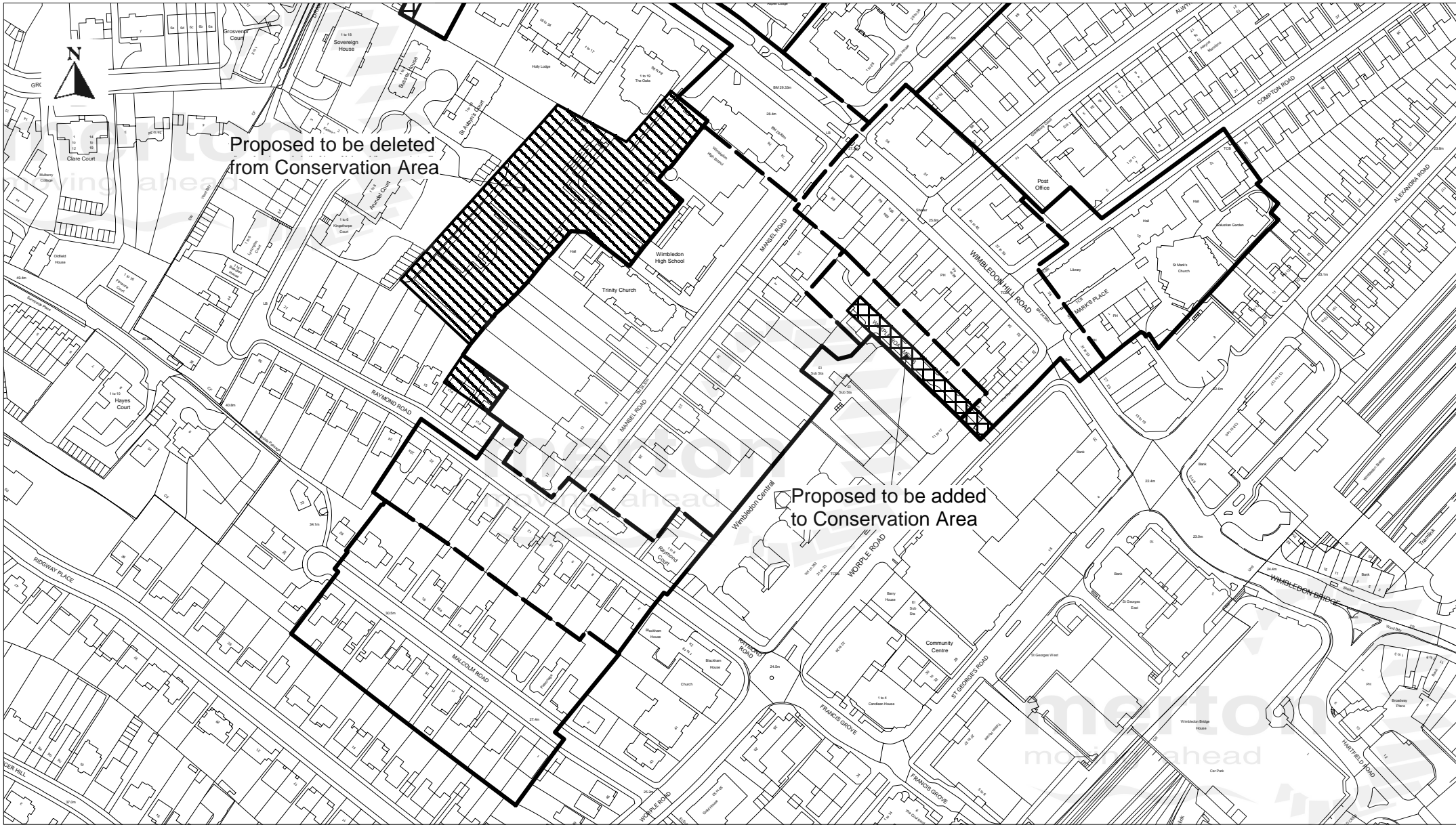
It is felt that the only areas lying outside the designated Conservation Area that should be incorporated into it are Worple Rd Mews (the highway itself), the enlarged site of 100 Wimbledon Hill Rd, 1 – 6 Pixham Court in Lake Rd, Lake Close in Lake Rd/Woodside, 6 and 7 Lake Rd and 1 and 2 Pine Grove.

However part of the Wimbledon High School site, which currently lies within the Conservation Area, should be de-designated. This area comprises the backland area of the site, behind the school buildings which front to Wimbledon Hill Rd and Mansel Rd.

It is also recommended that the rear parts of 11a/b/c/d Raymond Rd, which were originally part of the rear garden of no 15 Mansel Rd, should also be taken out of the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area Character appraisal is written on the basis of the recommended revision to the Conservation Area boundaries.

January 2006.



LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
Environment and Regeneration

Merton Civic Centre, 100 London Road,
 Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DX.

Wimbledon Hill Road Conservation Area
Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Alterations
Plan No DLU/2206a

Scale: 1/2500

Date: 18/7/2006





LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
Environment and Regeneration

Merton Civic Centre, 100 London Road,
 Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DX.

Wimbledon Hill Road Conservation Area
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Scale: 1/2500

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