

Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Origins and General Character

The northern boundary of the Wandle neighbourhood is the London Tramlink line, which formed part of the old disused Surrey Iron Railway (used between 1803 and 1839) and was the first public railway in the world. Tramway Path just behind Carshalton Road forms the eastern boundary enclosing the large industrial area found in the south-eastern part of the neighbourhood. The southern boundary is the boundary of the London Borough of Sutton and the footpath behind Wandle Road, giving access to Ravensbury Park in the St. Helier neighbourhood, and the western part is enclosed by the extent of Ravensbury Park, Ravensbury Grove and Ravensbury Path.

The Wandle enters the Borough to the south of the neighbourhood near Willow Lane, and plays a significant role in the history and development of the area as the Domesday Book lists at least 13 mills on the river in 1086, and is likely to have been used long before this date due to the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon burial ground nearby in the early 20th century in the Heatherden Close area just off Morden Road. It was the Wandle's steep gradient, which made it unnavigable, but a valuable site for milling.

As a result the industrial heritage in this neighbourhood is evident. The stretch of river between Goat Bridge (Goat Road) and Mitcham Bridge (London Road) was extensively used for milling from the 17th to 19th centuries including tannery, parchment and leather manufacturing, logwood, copper, corn, dyewood, calico bleaching, snuff and paper milling. Only one mill remains standing along this stretch, Grove Mill, which was built in 1907 after a fire destroyed the previous mill and is now residential.

The 1919 Ordinance Survey map shows the Wandle neighbourhood remaining largely rural, with villas lining the London Road, just prior to being overwhelmed by interwar development.

This part of the Wandle has been subject to diversions and channel cutting to alleviate flooding and to direct the flow of water towards mills and also served as ornamental features such as the artificial lake that can be found in Ravensbury Park. From Morden Hall Park the Wandle meanders past Ravensbury Park, which was part of the Ravensbury Estate whose associations stretch back to the 13th century being part of the Manor of Ravensbury and the park still bears evidence of its 18th century landscaping.

The Wandle Trail passes through Ravensbury Park and links Morden Hall Park to the Watermeads Nature Reserve, creating a linear chain of linked open green spaces.

The Watermeads Nature Reserve is significant in that it was one of the first properties to be acquired by the National Trust which was pioneered by Octavia Hill. The 11 acres of restricted access Watermeads was given to the National Trust in 1913 and represents a fascinating wetland and river environment.

Prior to the extensive interwar development in this area, the meadows surrounding the river were largely cultivated for watercress due to the Wandle's propensity to flood and the purity of the water which created ideal conditions for production and was also famed for its trout fishing.

The Wandle neighbourhood is now a mixture of interwar development, industrial park and open spaces with the river Wandle at its heart.



Morden Gardens

Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Built Form

This neighbourhood is roughly divided into two halves with only footpath links joining them together. A large industrial estate to the south east around Willow Lane shows various sized footprints, ages and materials in their form with some pleasing landscaping in parts with small to medium sized trees. Powerlines and pylons cross the entire neighbourhood and are visible in many roads.

The north-west half is a combination of open spaces comprised of the Watermeads Nature Reserve, Tooting and Mitcham Football Club on the south side of the Wandle linked to Ravensbury Park by the Wandle Trail. The stadium at Tooting and Mitcham Football Club, otherwise known as Imperial Fields, was built in 2002. The far north east is characterised by a small area of industrial use with the rest of the area formed off the major arterial routes of historic London and Morden Roads where interwar development is most prevalent in a two-storey terrace or semi-detached form and Watermeads Estate, a significant 1970s 3 storey town house development, considered to be one of the most attractive council developments of its time in London. Their meandering form makes best use of the site and views of the

surrounding parklike land and Wandle. Unusually these townhouses are clad with buff coloured vitreous enamel panels above the ground floor level. The surviving buildings from the Wandle's original use as a milling site are Grove Mill (locally listed) and Crown Mill along with the Mill Cottages (listed), which together form a picturesque group on the Wandle, all being residential.

Just behind this group on Riverside Drive is Wandle House, a late 18th-century listed villa built in London stocks with sash windows inset in decorative arches. Riverside Drive is otherwise comprised of interwar two storey terraces and Wandle House has an unsympathetic 1960s link and extension that generally overwhelms the size and shape of the original Georgian building.

The extension to Brookfields Avenue just behind Tramway Path shows more recent development in a 1980s style, these buildings are 2 and 3 storey terraced townhouses and flats with large grassed areas and trees creating a pleasant environment before arriving at Mitcham tramstop off Tramway Path.



Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Land Use

This neighbourhood is largely industrial in use, with large footprints in many of the industrial units.

The remaining use is residential as mainly interwar development and the 1970s Watermeads Estate with the open space of Ravensbury Park and Watermeads nature reserve providing space for leisure facilities and nature conservation.

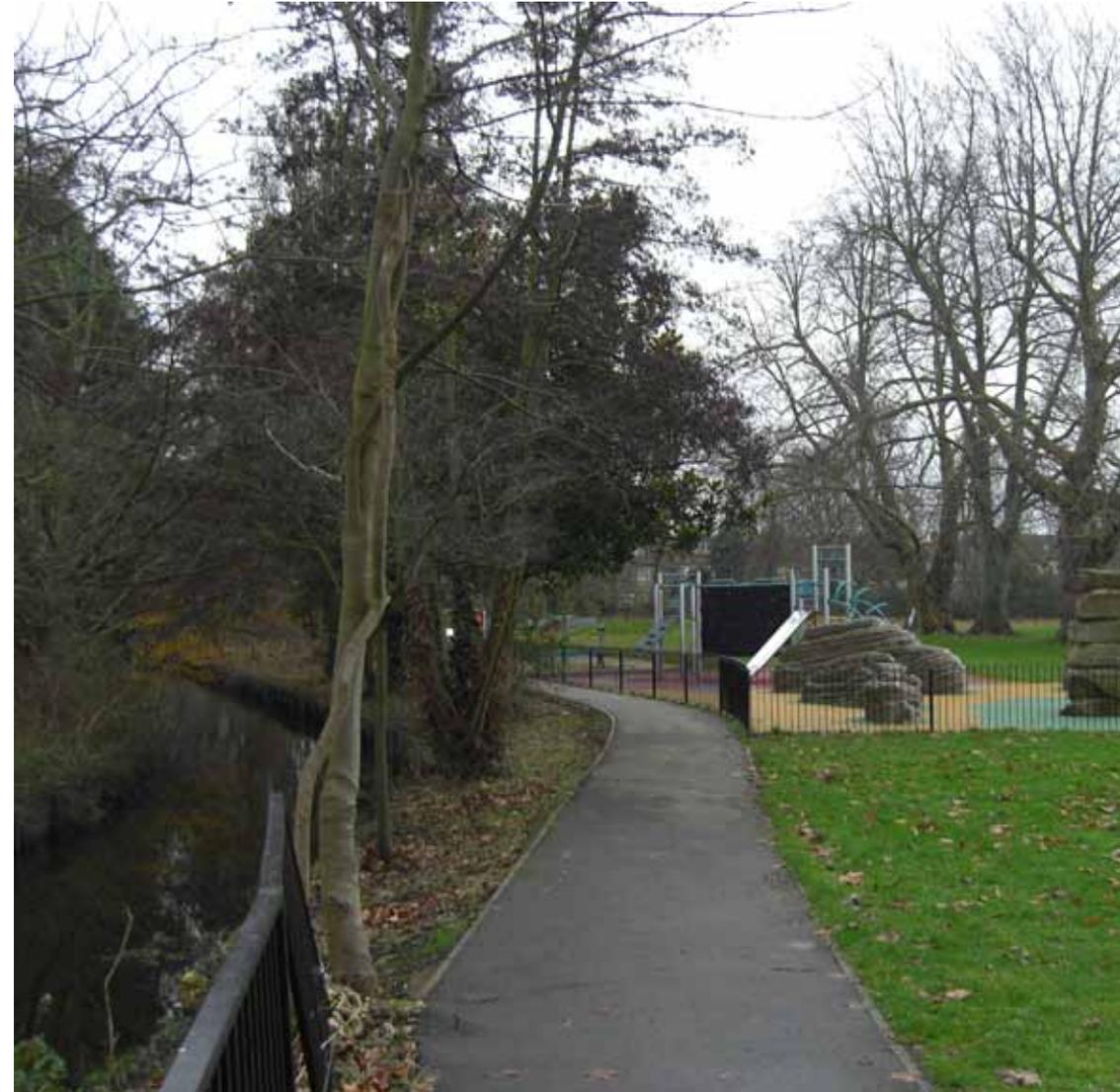
Movement

The major movement corridors of the A217 London Road and Morden Road form a junction in the north part of the neighbourhood where the Mitcham tramstop can also be found. London Road distributes traffic from Mitcham to the Rose Hill roundabout and Morden Road diverts traffic towards Morden.

Wates Way in the industrial south east finds the industrial area completely self contained, with one entrance/exit point off Goat Road. Wates Way leading to Willow Lane is a busy thoroughfare within the estate, but does not offer a way through the estate.

Open Space

Ravensbury Park is a 6.68 hectare piece of land which was formerly part of the Ravensbury Estate saved from development by the Urban District Councils of Mitcham, Morden and Merton who jointly purchased the remaining grounds of the Manor House to set aside as a public park in 1929. The park is located next to the Wandle and is a relic of the river's prosperous industrial history. There are many established trees and woodland and the site has been identified as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. A lake was created in the park in the 1970s in conjunction with Watermeads Estate in order to prevent flooding to the area. There is a play area and public conveniences. Watermeads is a nature reserve of 4.33 hectares owned by the National Trust. It is currently not accessible to the general public but its lake has recently been restocked by the Environment Agency for fishing by Morden Hall Park Angling Club and delivers social benefits, including recreational and educational value to the local community. The lake benefits from a disabled fishing platform. These two open spaces are linked by the Wandle Trail via Mitcham Bridge over London Road.



Ravensbury Park - channel of Wandle and play area

Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood Analysis



- General Neighbourhood Characteristics**
-  Major movement corridor
 -  Minor movement corridor
 -  Major barrier
 -  Major Gateway
 -  Minor neighbourhood node
 -  Key view to open space
 -  Glimpsed views
 -  Green open space
 -  Significant landscape feature
 -  Waterspace
 - W**  Public realm enhancement needed

Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Heritage Assets

Heritage map to be added at later stage

Wandle Local Neighbourhood

Character Areas

- 1 Willow Lane
- 2 Ravensbury
- 3 London Road
- 4 Brookfields



1 Willow Lane Character Area

Assessment

The Willow Lane Character Area is comprised of two parts. The main area is formed by the Willow Lane industrial estate which is completely self contained with access from Goat Road. The size, form and materials used in the buildings is completely variable and ranging in date from 1920s to the present.

There are green parts to this area which back onto the Wandle and give access to a riverside walk from Willow Lane which links the London Road Character Area to the Willow Lane Character Area and is also part of the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. There are medium sized trees and hedges in some of the roads which contribute to a greener feel to the streets which tend to feel very industrial in parts.

There are a few buildings worth mentioning in this part of the Character Area. One can be found in Willow Lane, currently occupied by Morrison Utility Services, and is a 1950s brick built two-storey building with original red painted Crittall windows. Another can be found in the Eagle Trading Estate and is a red brick built interwar commercial building with large cast iron windows with massive stone lintels above and individual courses of engineering bricks above and below the stone lintels.

Overhead power cables and pylons are to be found in this Character Area which stretch right across the neighbourhood.

The other part of the Willow Lane Character Area can be found on either side of Morden Road in the northernmost part of the neighbourhood.

The triangular shaped building pictured right in Morden Road falls within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area and could benefit from some simplification of signage and less visible anti intruder spikes.

The interwar row of shops on the north side of Morden Road as you enter the Character Area from the west is a locally listed building and displays a fine example of green glazed roof tiles on a mansard roof with dormer windows. All period features have been removed, such as the windows and shop fronts and the decorative brickwork is disguised by the large shop signs at the front of the building.

Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

Identity
Urban Layout
Movement
Architectural Interest
Built Form
Public Realm
Trees
Landscape
Features
Economic Vitality

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of this chapter.

Overall Score: **60**

Area type:

Area with scope to reinforce the existing character



Willow Lane - Grace Business Centre

1 Willow Lane Character Area

Issues & Guidance



Footpath from Willow Lane



Morden Road



Wandle Way



Morden Road



Willow Lane



Wates Way - Eagle Trading Estate

Issues

Public Realm:

- Unsightly boundary treatments in some instances.

Built Form:

- Replacement UPVC windows and alterations to original size and shape of windows.
- Haphazard alterations and additions to some properties.

Guidance

Public Realm:

- If there is need for security split-top palisade fencing is recommended with hedges or shrubs surrounding it to soften the boundary, this is particularly important in more visible locations such as Morden Road.

Built Form:

- Retain existing features where they exist and follow original glazing patterns when replacing windows.
- All alterations to properties to be informed by the original detailing and materials.

2 Ravensbury Character Area

Assessment

The Ravensbury Character Area is mostly comprised of the open space to be found in the Wandle neighbourhood. The main open spaces of this area are Ravensbury Park, with the Watermeads Estate taking full advantage of its idyllic location, Watermeads Nature Reserve which is closed to the general public to benefit nature conservation and Imperial Fields, which is Tooting & Mitcham United Football Club's ground. The attractive group of buildings that are made up by Grove and Crown Mills and the Mill Worker's Cottages along with a few more recent buildings can also be found within this Character Area, along with a few buildings on the London Road, which include Ravensbury Court, an interwar block of flats with commercial space below, built as part of the St. Helier Estate, a Murco petrol garage and a couple of semi-detached two-storey 1980s houses built in London stocks. Ravensbury Park is what remains of the old Ravensbury Estate, and is now a picturesque park with access points from Wandle, Morden and London Roads. The park itself is comprised of woodland, meadows, walks along the Wandle and a play area. The remains of the demolished Ravensbury Manor can be found amongst the foliage and woodland near the river. There are

bridges and kissing gates that cross the Wandle along the Wandle Trail leading to the 1970s development of Watermeads Estate. The Watermeads Estate falls under the Wandle Valley Conservation Area and is set in the landscaped gardens of the demolished Mitcham Grove and is formed by three-storey townhouses and flats lined with buff vitreous enamel panels from the first storey upwards. Links are provided from the vehicle access areas to the open space via wide passages under the flats. The original window form and colour (brown) is important to maintain cohesion to the terraces. The Wandle Trail provides a link over the 19th-century Mitcham Bridge and between the National Trust Watermeads Nature Reserve and Tooting & Mitcham United Football Club, which is also used as a community sports club. The club was built in 2002 and has modern sporting facilities. The group of buildings including grade II listed white weatherboarded Mill Cottages along with locally listed Grove Mill are also found within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area and are set in a highly picturesque spot on the Wandle.

Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

- Identity**
- Urban Layout**
- Movement**
- Architectural Interest**
- Built Form**
- Public Realm**
- Trees**
- Landscapes**
- Features**

Economic Vitality
Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of this chapter.

Overall Score: **85**

Area type:

Area of established high quality



Watermeads Estate over artificial lake in Ravensbury Park

2 Ravensbury Character Area

Issues & Guidance



Neglected chalet in Ravensbury Park



Mill Worker's Cottages



London Road



Watermeads Estate

Enhancement Projects

W1: Area behind Access Self Storage building in Ravensbury Lane is in a poor state with hoarding that has collapsed in places. Attention to this area is required.

W2: Pedestrian crossing required on London Road linking the Wandle Trail more safely over Mitcham Bridge.

W3: Explore options for neglected buildings in Ravensbury park, and cut back some of the overgrowth so that the area is opened up to make it more positive.

Issues

Public Realm:

- Woodland in Ravensbury Park is overgrown in places.
- Litter in the River Wandle and around parts of the Wandle Trail.
- Neglected amenity buildings in Ravensbury Park.
- Lack of safe pedestrian crossing over London Road connecting the Wandle Trail.

Built Form:

- Inappropriate replacement UPVC windows in Watermeads Estate disrupting lines and overall appearance of the estate.
- Trellis boundaries facing open space in Watermeads Estate replaced by solid fences in varying styles disrupting the cohesion of the development.
- Placement of satellite dishes on highly visible façades.

Guidance

Public Realm:

- Maintenance of woodland and landscaping required in areas around amenity buildings.
- Litter clean up operation required.

Built Form:

- All alterations to properties to be informed by the original detailing and materials.
- Placement of satellite dishes in visually unobtrusive place on buildings.

3 London Road Character Area

Assessment

The London Road Character Area is formed around the major movement corridors of London Road and Morden Road and is a medium density suburban area. Small parts of the Character Area fall into the Wandle Valley Conservation Area. The London Tramlink runs across the northern part of the boundary where the Mitcham tramstop can be found on Tramway Path. Medium sized trees can be found in the roads in the western part of the Character Area.

The main form is terraced and semi-detached 2 storey interwar houses using various materials and in varying forms in different roads. Some interwar bungalows can be found at the eastern end of Brookfields Avenue.

Wandle House in Riverside Drive is a Grade II listed late 19th-century square-shaped building with an unsympathetic 1960s linked extension. There is loss of front boundaries in some roads, but is particularly noticeable in Morden Road and Morden Gardens. Where possible hedges and softer boundaries such as picket fences should be encouraged to soften the streetscapes.

Pylons and cables are highly visible across the area with a pylon sitting just behind the row of shops on London Road.

The buildings that actually stand within the Wandle Valley Conservation Area are the parade of shops with 2 storeys above and a mansard roof in London Road (see right) and Wandle House. Otherwise the Conservation Area includes the north side of Morden Road backing onto the Tramlink line and the area to the front of the buildings along the eastern side of London Road. There is therefore an opportunity to enhance these parts of the Conservation Area, in particular the removal of the advertisement boards in Morden Road and the advertisement boards to the front of the hoarding surrounding the site in London Road. The Beeches Estate block on London Road, Amber Court in London Road and the development in Runes Close are the only post 1945 developments to be found in this Character Area. Runes Close are 1980s terraces of London Stock brick two-storey houses in a tarmac-heavy environment. Amber Court can be found at the junction of London and Morden Roads and is a modern 2-3 storey block of flats with a shallow roof pitch built in brick, surrounded by large verges and trees. The Fieldway Nursing and Residential Centre is a modern purpose built centre just set back on Tramway Path.

Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

- Identity**
- Urban Layout**
- Movement**
- Architectural Interest**
- Built Form**
- Public Realm**
- Trees**
- Landscape**
- Features**
- Economic Vitality**

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of this chapter.

Overall Score: **60**

Area type:

Area with scope to reinforce the existing character



Morden Road

3 London Road Character Area

Issues & Guidance



Brookfields Avenue



Retention of hedges in Heatherden Close



The Beeches Estate, London Road



London Road



Pylon behind London Road



Advertising in Morden Road

Issues

Public Realm:

- Loss of front boundary/replacement of softer with hard boundaries.
- Placement of satellite dishes on front façades.
- Laying of front gardens to hard standing for car parking.
- Display of large advertising boards in the Wandle Conservation Area.

Built Form:

- Replacement UPVC windows and doors lacking the original design elements eroding character of houses.
- Infilled porches disrupting the lines of terraces.

Guidance

Public Realm:

- Reinstatement and/or retention of boundaries where possible.
- Move satellite dishes to less obtrusive area on the building.
- Resist intrusive advertising in Conservation Areas, explore options to remove advertising from these areas when appropriate.

Built Form:

- Retain existing features where they exist and follow original glazing patterns when replacing windows.
- All alterations to properties to be informed by the original detailing and materials.

4 Brookfields Character Area

Assessment

The Brookfields Character Area is a small Character Area sandwiched between Tramway Path and the Willow Lane Industrial Estate and can be found as an extension to interwar Brookfields Avenue. This is a medium density, 1980s suburban development. The general form is 2-4 storey terraced houses and flats built in brick with weatherboarding to the first storey of houses, concrete roof tiles with coordinating green panels on all buildings giving the development a coherent feel. UPVC windows are used in most areas.

There are large verges running from the pavement to the buildings with medium sized trees creating a pleasant, open-plan, green streetscape.

Just off Brookfields Avenue, between Grove Farm Court, a terrace of houses described above and the Willow Lane Character Area is the Jan Malinowski Centre a purpose built, single storey, modern day centre for people with learning disabilities.

Meadow House is a residential care home next door to the Jan Malinowski Centre. It shows a modern two-storey brick built exterior with pitched and gabled roof, UPVC windows all in a traditional style.

Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

- Identity**
- Urban Layout**
- Movement**
- Architectural Interest**
- Built Form**
- Public Realm**
- Trees**
- Landscape**
- Features**

Economic Vitality

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of this chapter.

Overall Score: **70**

Area type:

Area with scope to reinforce the existing character



Brookfields Avenue

4 Brookfields Character Area

Issues & Guidance



Meadow House



Grove Farm Court



Brookfields Avenue



Brookfields Avenue



Jessop Place



Brookfields Avenue

Issues

Public Realm:

- Tarmac heavy area around Meadow House.
- A few cases of enclosure of front gardens which breaks up the open-plan green nature of the design of this development.

Built Form:

- Infilled porches disrupting the lines of terraces.

Guidance

Public Realm:

- Opportunity for landscaping around Meadow House.
- Resist enclosing front gardens to retain the original design intention of the development.

Built Form:

- All alterations to properties to be informed by the original detailing and materials.

Wandle Local Neighbourhoods

1 Willow Lane Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Identity: Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development	Good		
Urban Layout: Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces	Good		
Movement: Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets		Moderate	
Architectural Interest: Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest		Moderate	
Built form: Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details	Good		
Public Realm: High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			Poor
Trees: Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area		Moderate	
Landscape: Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area		Moderate	
Features: Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			Poor
Economic Vitality: Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character	Good		
Criteria Score	40	20	
Character Area Total Score	60		

2 Ravensbury Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Identity: Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development	Good		
Urban Layout: Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces	Good		
Movement: Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets		Moderate	
Architectural Interest: Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest	Good		
Built form: Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details	Good		
Public Realm: High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments		Moderate	
Trees: Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
Landscape: Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
Features: Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area	Good		
Economic Vitality: Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character		Moderate	
Criteria Score	70	15	
Character Area Total Score	85		

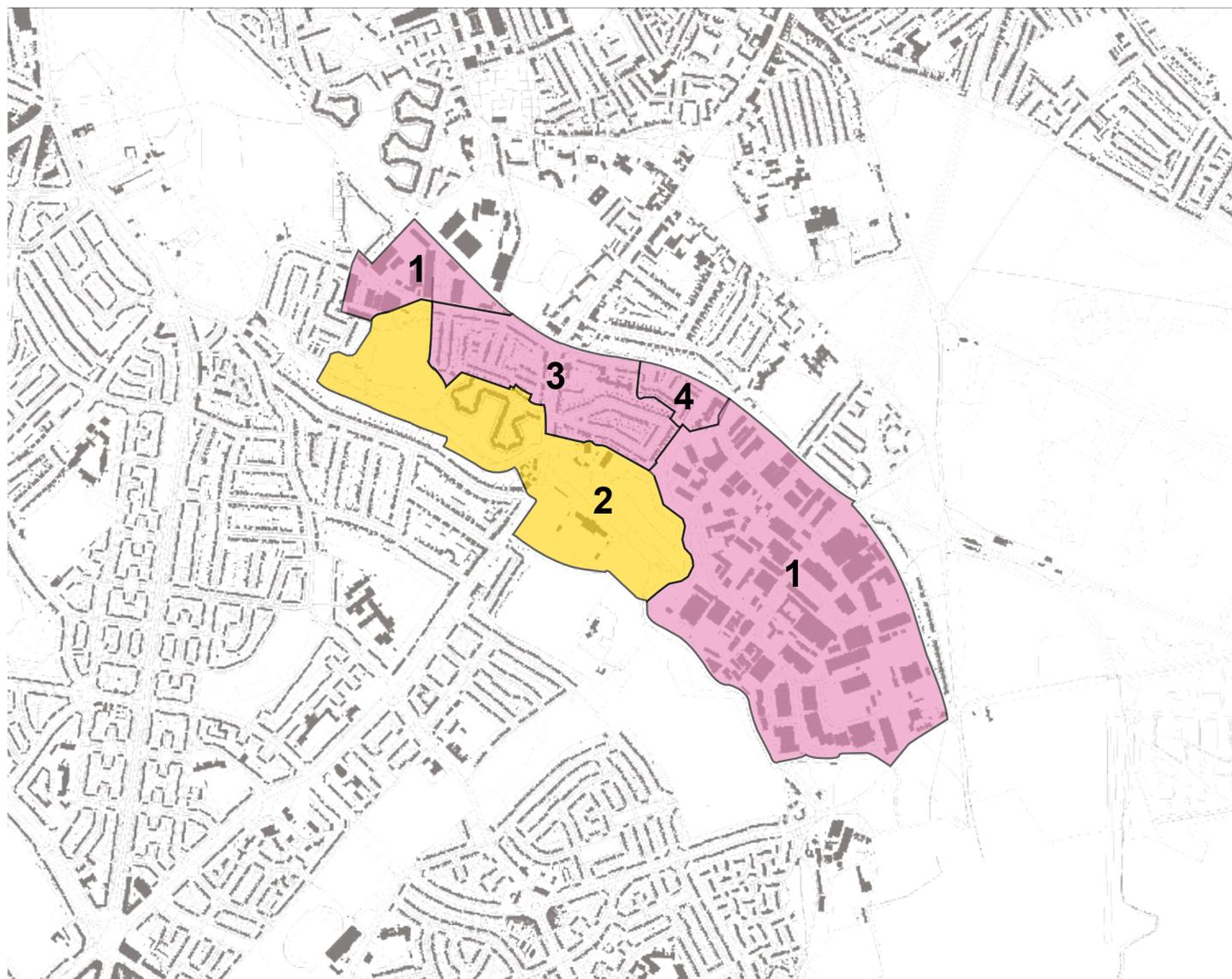
Wandle Local Neighbourhoods

3 London Road Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Identity: Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development	Good		
Urban Layout: Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces	Good		
Movement: Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets	Good		
Architectural Interest: Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest		Moderate	
Built form: Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details	Good		
Public Realm: High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			Poor
Trees: Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area		Moderate	
Landscape: Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			Poor
Features: Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			Poor
Economic Vitality: Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character	Good		
Criteria Score	50	10	
Character Area Total Score	60		

4 Brookfields Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Identity: Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development	Good		
Urban Layout: Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces	Good		
Movement: Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets	Good		
Architectural Interest: Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest		Moderate	
Built form: Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details	Good		
Public Realm: High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments		Moderate	
Trees: Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area		Moderate	
Landscape: Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area		Moderate	
Features: Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			Poor
Economic Vitality: Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character	Good		
Criteria Score	50	20	
Character Area Total Score	70		

Wandle Local Neighbourhoods

Character Area Assessment



- 1** Willow Lane
 - 2** Ravensbury
 - 3** London Road
 - 4** Brookfields
-  Area of established high quality
 -  Area with scope to reinforce existing character
 -  Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity