

Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage

REPRESENTATIONS ON SITES AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

March 2012

1. Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage is the civic society for the Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We have been closely involved in the development of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and development proposals in the area. We are also part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice.
2. The Sites and Policies DPD is an important document shaping the future development and land use of the area and we welcome the opportunity to comment on both the potential development sites and the draft proposals map.

Context

3. We strongly support the clear framework of protection and enhancement for Cricket Green provided by the 2003 Unitary Development Plan, the core strategy in the adopted Local Development Framework and the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. We have considered the proposals against this policy framework.

Potential development sites

Birches Close and Wilson Hospital

4. Mitcham Cricket Green Community and Heritage has taken a close interest in the future of these two sites over many years, including participation in the recent planning appeal relating to Birches Close. We welcome recognition that the future of the two sites is linked and will be critically affected by the decision over which is to provide the Local Care Centre. We ask that Merton works closely with Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust so that the decision over the location of the Local Care Centre is informed by planning and urban design as well as healthcare considerations.
5. Both sites make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and have significant constraints. Birches Close was covenanted for community uses and we believe both sites should continue the traditions of Cricket Green in providing for health, education and community use. We do not support residential use other than for institutional purposes on either site.
6. There are important urban design considerations for both sites and any future plans should be developed within the context of an overall design framework developed in conjunction with the local community. This should respect the existing building footprint on both sites, avoid any loss of open space and retain the character and setting of the existing historic buildings; including Birches House, the important frontage of Wilson Hospital and the ancient Cold Blows footpath. Development at the Birches should also work within the constraint of the existing Cricket Green road

which is a key access route. Retention of the character of this road as a permeable boundary with ready access across it for pedestrians is key to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

Mitcham Fire Station

7. Mitcham Fire Station is one of three important buildings on the most prominent and important site in Cricket Green. Along with Vestry Hall and the Cricketers public house it forms part of a unique assemblage of buildings on an island site in the heart of the Conservation Area.

8. We have been closely involved in discussions over the future of the Cricketers public house, including the two recent planning applications and appeal which have failed to recognise the importance of this site. We are also involved in discussions with Merton and others about the future use and development of Vestry Hall.

9. We urge that the Sites and Policies DPD considers the future of this island site in a comprehensive way so that all three buildings are addressed together. We believe there are opportunities to connect the three sites both physically and in the way they are used and managed which would bring important benefits to the area while respecting their individual character and overall contribution to the Conservation Area. Historically, development was only permitted on this part of the ancient green for community use and we believe this should continue to guide future development or change of use. Residential development should not be permitted and any future residential use should be secondary and related to the community use of the sites.

Worsfold House

10. We favour community and educational uses for the future of Worsfold House and would encourage it being considered alongside the future of Cricket Green School.

Other sites

11. We would welcome discussion about a number of other sites in the area which are not addressed in the Sites and Policies DPD. These include:

- the future of Canons House, Madeira Hall and the Canons grounds where we are in active discussion with Merton – we believe there is significant potential to upgrade and improve this area and its public use but this should not be funded by the release of any land in the grounds of Canon's House or Park Place for residential development
- the future of the land around the Burn Bullock which needs to respect the setting of this listed building and secure the future of the Cricket Pavilion that provides the base for the longest established use of a cricket ground in the world.

12. We are also aware that the sites included in the DPD are predominantly those owned by the Council or other public institutions and that there are a number of other development sites under consideration which are not included. We would welcome the opportunity of feeding in our views on these.

Draft proposals map

13. We have considered the proposed changes and addition to the Proposals Map.

Tram Line Network

14. We do not support inclusion of a proposed route for the Tram Line Network to implement Policy 09TN Tooting to Sutton via Willow Lane and Mitcham Town Centre at this stage. This is premature. The proposals would have a major and highly detrimental impact on the character of Cricket Green Conservation Area as well as intruding on Cranmer Green Local Nature Reserve, Three Kings Pond and the residential area between Caesar's Walk and Mitcham Garden Village. The proposed line will also have a major impact on traffic flows in the area and would need to be accompanied by significant additional traffic management measures.

15. Given this major impact it is important to explore a number of alternatives. We would welcome the opportunity to contribute and need to be assured that this has been done before a route is included on the Proposals Map. Other options include a different configuration at Mitcham Junction, a closer alignment along Carshalton Road and a different alignment initially running east of the main rail line at Mitcham Junction.

16. Until the different options have been publicly debated it is premature to identify a route and safeguard the alignment.

Other changes

17. We are pleased to welcome inclusion on the proposals map of:

- the bowling green, tennis court and copse in the Canon's grounds as new open space
- Commonsie Rough as a new Site of Interest for Nature Conservation
- the boundaries of Wandle Valley Regional Park.