

Tipler

Future Merton Team  
Merton Civic Centre  
London Road  
Morden SM4 5DX

Dear Future Merton

### **New Local Plan consultation: Stage 3**

I object to the removal of Open Space status from the strip of woodland behind 274-312 Cannon Hill Lane. I live at 286 Cannon Hill Lane and have not been notified by Merton council of this proposed change, nor have any of my neighbours whose properties, like mine, border this woodland. I only became aware of this proposed change when a planning application (21/P1851) was submitted to build on the land. Such a decision to change the land's Open Space status without consulting neighbours lacks transparency and is undemocratic.

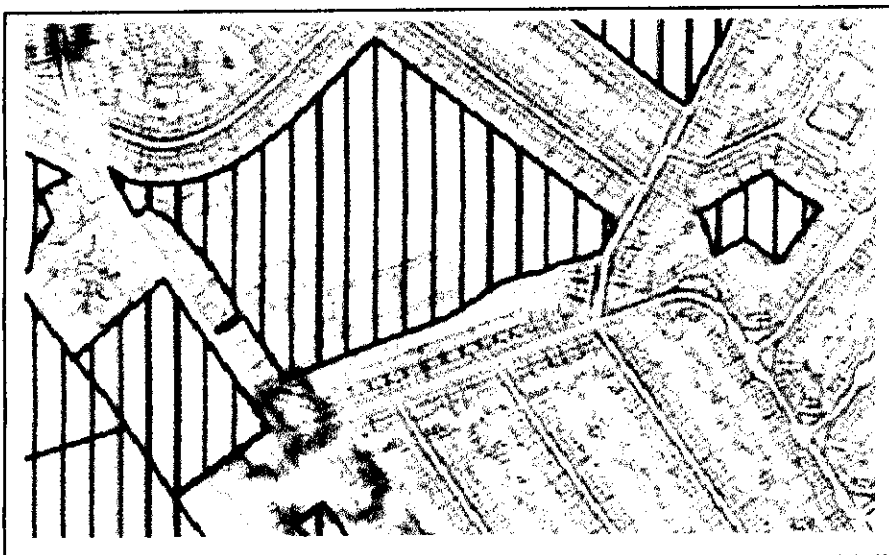
### **Policy O15.1 (p504 ff)**

I am concerned that the land behind 274-312 Cannon Hill Lane houses bordering the AELTC's Raynes Park Playing Fields (P002) is no longer listed as having Open Space Status as it used to, according to the lists in

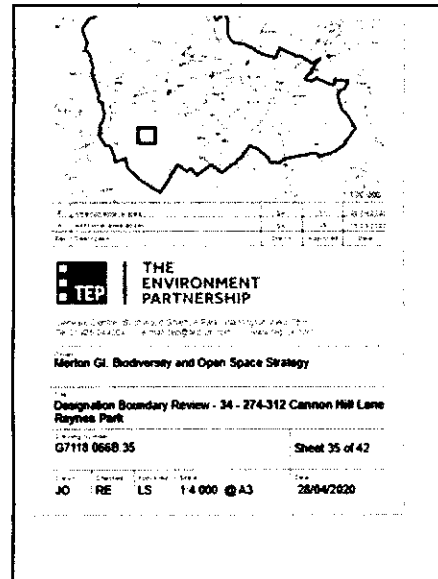
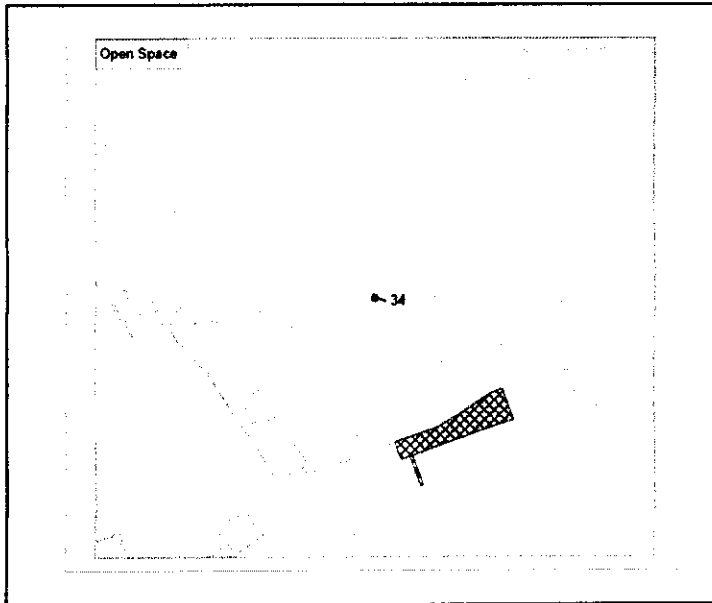
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/Documents/17%20Appendices%20Merton%20Local%20Plan%20Reg19%20July21.pdf>

This change can also be seen on the map

([https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Raynes%20Park%20Maps\\_FINAL\\_.pdf](https://www.merton.gov.uk/assets/Documents/Raynes%20Park%20Maps_FINAL_.pdf)):



Without consulting residents like myself who would be affected by the change, The Environment Partnership recommended the removal of the site's Open Space designation: age 16/41 shows more clearly that The Environment Partnership suggests the removal of Open Space Designation (TEP34):



The TEP report states:

**Site 34: 274-312 Cannon Hill Lane, Raynes Park**  
**Open Space (P002)**

3.170 This site is located at the rear of six residential properties along Cannon Hill Lane. It is privately owned and is accessible only via a shared and gated driveway in between 320 and 322 Cannon Hill Lane. The All England Community Sports Ground lies directly adjacent to the north and the land to the west is currently unused (formerly a Scout Hall). The site is approximately 0.2 hectares in size and contains overgrown vegetation and some larger trees.

3.171 The site does not form part of the adjacent site known as Raynes Park Playing Fields, however it has been give the same designation. Given that it is landlocked, the site does not offer any public accessibility or visual amenity and is not designated as a Green Corridor or SINC.

3.172 It is recommended that the Open Space designation be removed for this parcel of land as it does not meet the Open Space criteria.

However, in the Merton Core Planning Strategy 2011-26, Policy 13, states

*“21.4 People use open space for exercise, play, socialising and relaxing. Visual accessibility is equally as important as physical access.”*

This is restated in the New Local Plan (p507):

*15.2.1. Open space can be multi-functional; people use green and open spaces for many purposes including exercise, play, food growing, socialising and leisure. Visual accessibility is equally as important as physical access. The protection and enhancement of open spaces enables the provision of areas for active and passive leisure activities, has a positive impact on health and wellbeing, provides opportunities for social cohesion ...”*

Although residents cannot go onto the land, it is “visually accessible” and provides a “positive impact on communities’ mental and physical health” for all of us.

At least 27 species of bird regularly frequent the land; pipistrelle bats forage over the trees and other mammals are also present. This land provides an important ecological route from the Pyl Brook / St Catherine’s Field towards Cannon Hill Common. As the AELTC Community Sports Field becomes increasingly developed with domes over tennis courts, its value as a bat foraging area is likely to decrease, so it is becoming ever more important to protect the strip of woodland behind the Cannon Hill Lane houses.

I believe that removing this land’s Open Space designation is contrary to Policy N6.1 (page 220):

*m. Requiring development to respect local character, heritage and amenity in surrounding residential neighbourhoods.*

and its justification (page 224)

*6.1.13. The suburban neighbourhoods within the neighbourhoods will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that new development respects local character and amenity, and where appropriate historic value.*

(<https://www.merton.gov.uk/Documents/06%20Raynes%20Park%20Merton%20Local%20Plan%20Reg19%20July21.pdf>)

Loss of Open Space status could allow development on this woodland site which would not “respect the local character, heritage and amenity” for neighbours.

Please retain the Open Space status of this site.

Yours sincerely

