

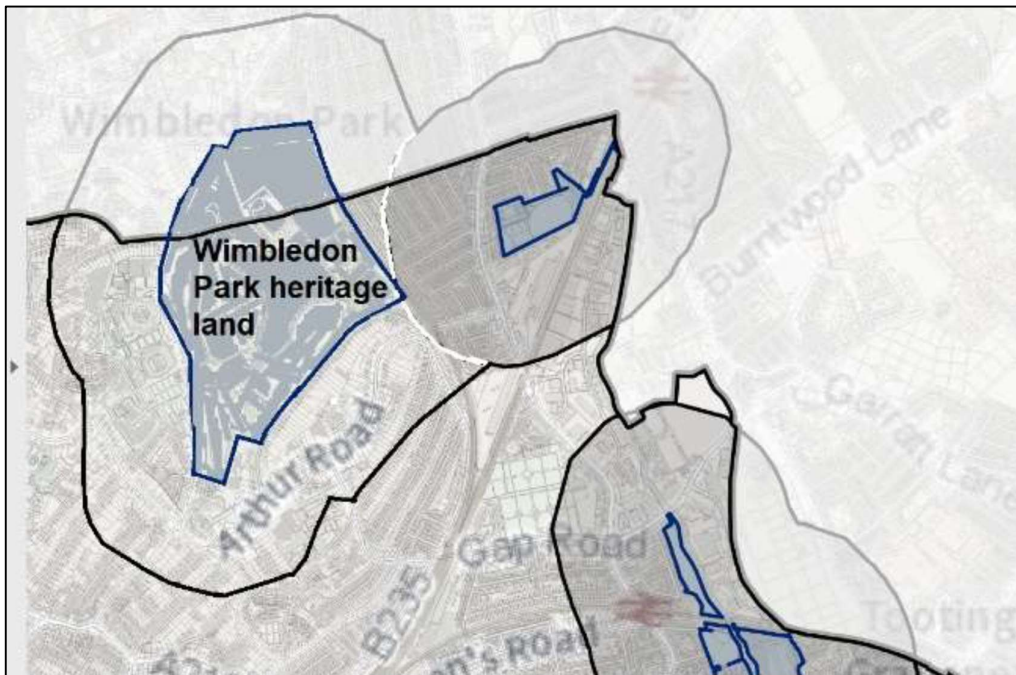


**LB Merton Local Plan Inquiry. Statement on Matter 11, question 4. Policy O15.6  
Wandle Valley Regional Park.**

**Dr D.G. Dawson, Wimbledon Park Residents' Association. September 2022**

In my September 2021 submission on the Local Plan consultation, I supported Policy O15.6, but urged revision of the boundary of the Regional Park to include the Grade II\* heritage Wimbledon Park, so resolving an old debate.

Here, I reproduce the plan illustrating my recommended change, that I included in that submission.

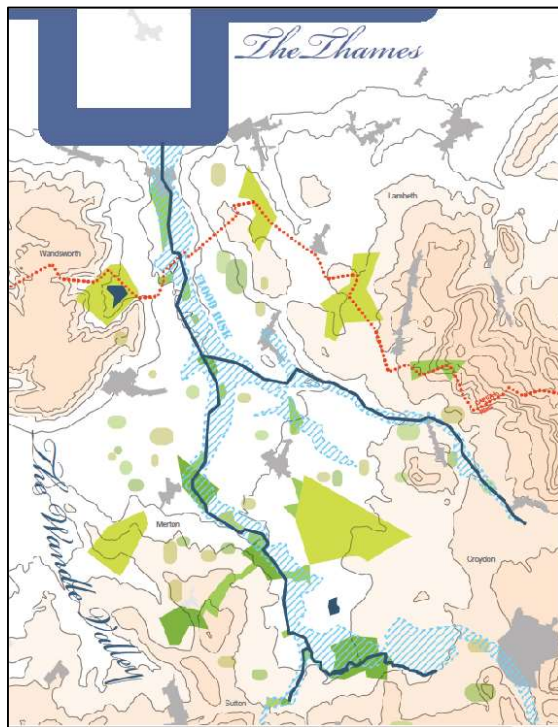


**Wandle Valley Regional Park revised to include the Wimbledon Park heritage land and a buffer strip around it.**

In the Stage 1 hearing on Proposal Wi3, I introduced this topic and was surprised to find that LB Merton resisted any change. The topic was held over for this Matter and I give my detailed reasons here.

The boundary of the Regional Park excludes Wimbledon Park. This was decided some years ago, when the All London Green Grid was in preparation. I submitted that the heritage site belongs within the Regional Park because:

1. The Grade II\* heritage land was incorrectly excluded from the Wandle Valley Green Grid Area, being shown instead as within the Arcadian Thames Area, the next area to the west. This error was corrected in the *Wandle Valley Area Strategy* (2013), but no consequential changes made.
2. Wimbledon Park Lake is the largest water body in the Wandle catchment and has considerable amenity, recreational, biodiversity and heritage value. The second and third largest water bodies are included within the Regional Park.
3. Wimbledon Park Brook flows underground to the Wandle at Earlsfield,



demonstrating hydrological continuity between the Grade II\* heritage park, its catchment and the River Wandle.

4. A Green Grid “Strategic Link”, the Capital Ring London orbital footpath, crosses the Wandle at Earlsfield and continues west through Durnsford Recreation Ground to pass through Wimbledon Park (Figure 1). This footpath leaves the present boundary of the Regional Park at Durnsford Recreation Ground and passes through suburbia to the Grade II\* site.

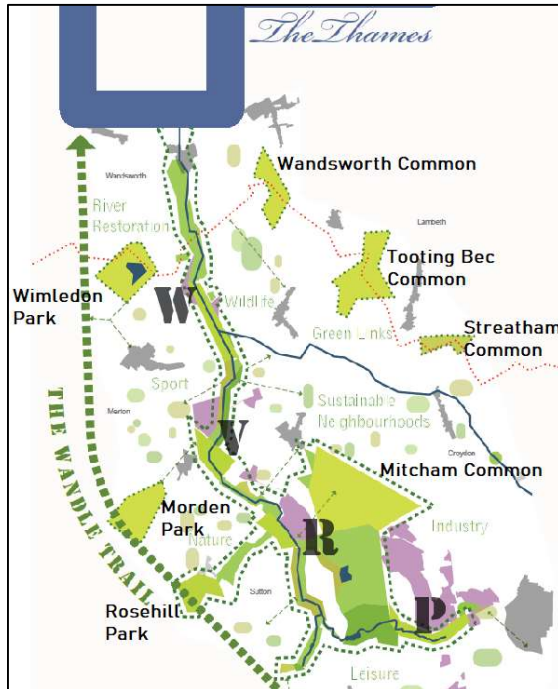
5. The Grade II\* heritage site is but 375 metres away from the nearest part of the Regional Park and included within the buffer zone of the draft plan, so is already subject to proposed Policy O15.6 e and f.

**Figure 1. The Wandle Valley Area Framework 2013.** The Capital Ring footpath is dotted in red.

The Regional Park (Figure 2) lies within the *Wandle Valley Area* as described in the London Supplementary Planning Guidance *Green Infrastructure and Open Environments: The All London Green Grid*. Figure 2 is from the *Wandle Valley Area Framework* published in 2013. This Framework excludes Durnsford Recreation Ground from the Regional Park, perhaps because the green connection between the Recreation Ground and the River is along an inaccessible railway embankment. This exclusion increases the separation of the heritage site from the park boundary. The Grade II\* land fulfils all three of the Green Grid Aims in the London Guidance:

1. *Protect, conserve and enhance London’s strategic network of green and open natural and cultural spaces, to connect the everyday life of the city to a range of experiences and landscapes, town centres, public transport nodes, the*

countryside in the urban fringe, the Thames and major employment and residential areas.



**Figure 2. The Wandle Valley Regional Park, as shown in the Wandle Valley Area Framework**  
Open space names added by me.

2. Encourage greater use of, and engagement with, London's green infrastructure; popularising key destinations within the network and fostering a greater appreciation of London's natural and cultural landscapes; enhancing visitor facilities and extending and upgrading the walking and cycling networks in between to promote a sense of place and ownership for all who work in, visit and live in London.

3. Secure a network of high quality, well designed and multifunctional green and open spaces to establish a crucial component of urban infrastructure able to address the environmental challenges of the 21st century – most notably climate change.

Despite this, the Grade II\* heritage landscape is one of five large open spaces within the Green Grid area but not within the Regional Park. Three of the others, however, lack a hydrological connection to the Wandle (Wandsworth and Tooting Bec Commons are both in the Falcon Brook catchment and Morden Hall Park is within the Beverley Brook catchment). Although most of Streatham Common drains towards Norbury Brook, the link to the Wandle is very long and tortuous. All the others are separated from the Regional Park boundary by much greater distances. Water bodies in the others are much smaller than is Wimbledon Park Lake.

Rosehill Park is included within the Regional Park, even though it drains into the Beverley Brook, is 2,000 metres distant from the Wandle and the greenspace connection to the Wandle is interrupted by the Sutton Arena Leisure Centre.

Clearly, the Grade II\* heritage park is a candidate for inclusion within the Regional Park. I submit that Durnsford Recreation Ground should be retained within the Regional Park and that applying the Regional Park policies to the heritage park would be good planning, in that it would help to deliver the London Green Grid Aims, to the benefit of both the heritage park and the rest of the Regional Park. A strategically important asset for London would be enhanced.