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Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm writing to respond to Merton Council's Borough Character Study 2021. This is a response to the information in Chapter F.

Chapter F, Wimbledon, includes a section on the town centre (page 62). While it recognises the challenges inherent in balancing the needs of residents with demand for growth in the commercial core, the study is, in my opinion, lacking in detail and does not include many key characteristics which make Wimbledon an attractive place to live and work.

I value the following characteristics about Wimbledon in particular:

1) Wimbledon's people-friendliness, its small-town feel and sense of community.

2) Its diverse and attractive residential streets, with people living near to the narrow central commercial spine. This residential character of the town centre should be emphasised as a valuable characteristic.

The "human scale" and interest of Wimbledon are enhanced by historic buildings, such as the Old Town Hall, Wimbledon Fire Station, and the Prince of Wales pub, which are best appreciated in the context of low-rise buildings.

Mid to high rise buildings, such as the Pinnacle office building do not add character and in my opinion have a very negative impact on the local character of our town.

Cultural venues such as Wimbledon Theatre, the Polka theatre and the cinemas are important parts of the life of Wimbledon. This characteristic would be greatly enriched by the addition of a Wimbledon Performing Arts Centre or concert hall to showcase national and local musical and theatrical performances as well as encouraging other diverse talents.

Wimbledon provides leisure facilities and there needs to be more recognition to value independent providers of restaurant and wine bars.

Although Wimbledon is clearly a shopping centre, it needs improvement. Some shops serve local people well, but more independent, smaller shops and restaurants would contribute to local character, and must not be driven out by bland, corporate high street chains.

Thank you very much for taking my views into account.

Yours faithfully,