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Hello,

I wish to make the following comments about the Merton Character Study. As a long term Wimbledon resident, I and many other local residents really value the strong local character of Wimbledon, including the following aspects in particular:

- Wimbledon's people-friendliness, its small-town feel and sense of community.
- 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. More mid to high rise blocks should not be permitted.
- Cultural venues such as Wimbledon Theatre, the Polka theatre and the cinemas are important parts of the life of Wimbledon.
- Wimbledon provides leisure facilities and there is scope to recognize the value of independent providers of restaurants 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.

While it is recognised that some updating of central Wimbledon will be valuable, it would be damaging if it does not reflect the bullet points above and leaves the area being an arid transport hub or office complex with no local character for residents.

Kind regards