



MITCHAM
CRICKET • GREEN
CONSERVATION • AREA
DESIGN • GUIDE

MITCHAM

CRICKET·GREEN
CONSERVATION·AREA
DESIGN·GUIDE

Introduction	1
The Big Village	3
The Cricket Green	6
Mitcham Park	11
Lower Green West	12
Church Road	16
Three Kings Piece	20
Cranmer Green	22
Mitcham Garden Village	25
Conservation Advice	26
Archaeological Considerations	30
Planning Advice	30
Consents	31
Further Advice	31
Contacts	31
Bibliography	31
Translation Service	32



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Illustration: The Cricket Green

INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas are designated by the Council in recognition of their special architectural quality or historical interest, the character or appearance of which should be preserved or enhanced.

The Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969 and was extended in 1990 to include John's Place in Church Path, Mitcham Garden Village and part of Mitcham Park. The particular features that merit the area's designation as a Conservation Area include the historical background, the number of its listed buildings, the charm, character and diversity of the buildings generally and the potential quality of the streetscapes and generous open spaces.

This design guide covers the whole of the Conservation Area and aims to highlight the main architectural features and important qualities that contribute to the area's character. It also puts forward recommendations and provides guidance that can be followed by owners and occupiers in order to preserve and enhance this unique area.

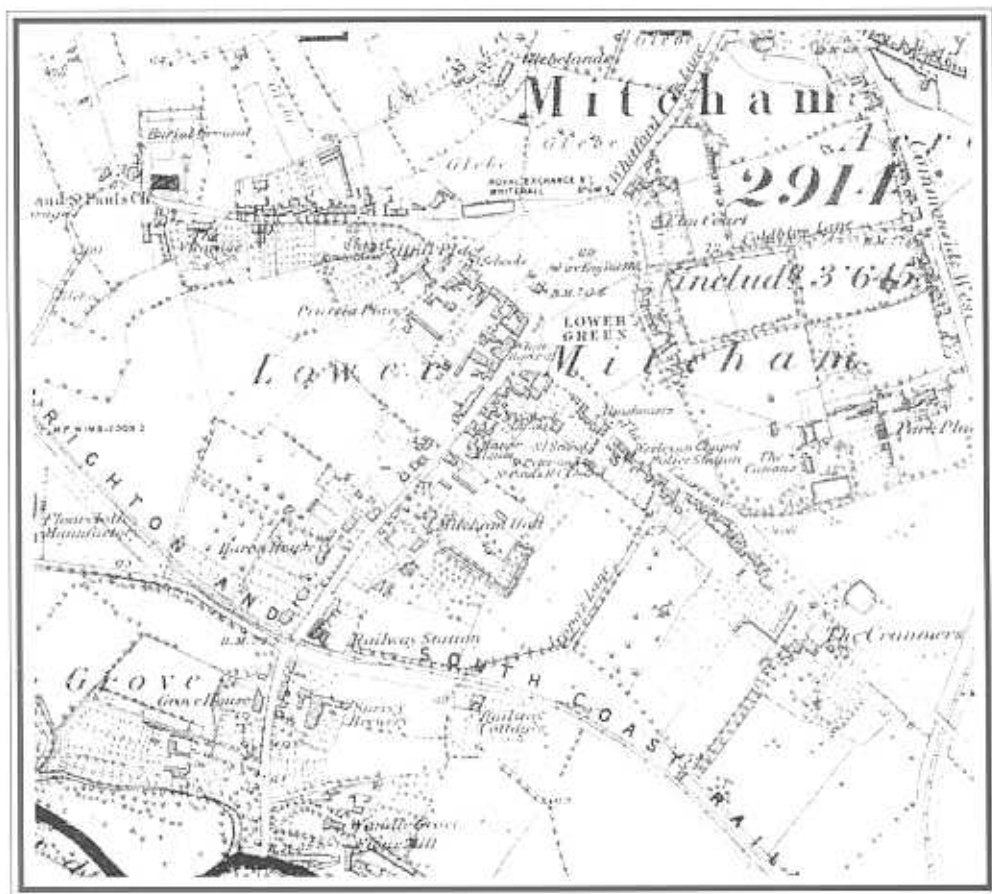
The Council can control certain adverse changes within the area by the way that it determines applications for planning permission, listed building consent and demolition. Although many of the recommendations are advisory only, they nevertheless provide guidance as to good design practise, and, as such, will be taken into consideration when planning applications are considered.

Occupiers and owners have an important role to play in preserving the character of this Conservation Area. Alterations may be small in scale, but can be prominent and have a serious impact on the area which for the most part has a cohesive character. Sensitive alterations and careful maintenance will help preserve the character of the area and also retain the value of its properties.

Merton Council hopes that owners and occupiers will find this publication of interest and will take into account the recommendations made in it when considering alterations and improvements to their properties.

If you are in any doubt as to whether or not planning permission is required for alterations to your property, please contact the Development Control Section of the Council's Environmental Services Department.
Telephone 0181-545 3117.





*Map of the Craker Green area dated 1865
 Reproduced by permission of the British Library*

THE BIG VILLAGE

Early Mitcham, or the site it occupied, was sufficiently impressive for the Saxons to dub it 'Mic' - or big - 'Ham', which may be translated as an area of settlement or village or, alternatively, as a tract of level ground lying within a bend in a river. Mammoth and early man alike had both left their mark in the locality, as had the latecomers from Rome, but for none of the early inhabitants have we found evidence of the exact location of home and hearth.

Romano-British and early Saxon cemeteries both confirm established communities, successors to which are recorded in the Domesday Book. By 1086 Bishop Odo of Bayeux and William FitzAnsculf, Sheriff of Surrey, controlled the major part of Mitcham, the remainder being in the hands of other Norman landlords. Early in the 12th century a large estate, embracing much of today's Cricket Green Conservation Area, had passed into the possession of the de Redvers family, Earls of Devon and Wight. It was returned to the Crown in 1293 and, as the manor of Vauxhall, was granted by Edward the Black Prince to the Prior and Convent of Christ Church, Canterbury in 1362. Lordship of the manor remained with Canterbury for some five hundred years before ultimately passing into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

One early focus of settlement can be envisaged in the vicinity of the White Hart. A second is likely to have been near the parish church where, off Benedict Road, both Romano-British and medieval pottery fragments have been excavated. Yet another was the site of the medieval Hall Place, where archaeological work before the erection of Ravensbury School produced a considerable accumulation of Anglo-Norman pottery and other material indicative of an important house.

In the arrangement of the house plots in Church Road, particularly on the northern side between Love Lane and Church Place, we have an example of town planning typical of the 12th or 13th centuries. As such, this part of the Conservation Area is of more than local importance.

Originally, each house plot or toft had a narrow frontage on the road, and extended at the rear often with orchards to a back lane - Love Lane - beyond

which lay the open common field. This arrangement can be seen in towns and villages all over England, the foundation of which can often be traced to an enterprising Norman landowner. In Mitcham, where the plan included two other typical elements - the proprietor's church at one end of the street and his house at the other - the scheme can be attributed to a member of the de Redvers family.

At one time part of the common waste of the parish, by 1170 the land on which the 'Canons' stands had been presented by the people of Mitcham to the newly founded Augustinian Priory of St. Mary Overie at Southwark. The Priory's estate grew with further gifts from the devout, and in 1259 Baldwin de Redvers, the 8th Earl of Devon, conveyed the advowson of Mitcham parish church to the Prior and Convent of St. Mary Overie, with whom it remained until the Dissolution in 1538. The site adjoining the 'Canons', later occupied by 'Park Place', Commonsides West, was also enclosed from former common waste at an early date, as is indicated by it being referred to 'Allmannesland' in the late 14th century.

Throughout the Middle Ages Southwark Priory administered its Mitcham estate from a farmstead or grange, the principal buildings of which stood on, or adjacent to, the site of the present 'Canons'. Here, in the 'Parsonage House' which was still standing in the 17th century, the priest appointed to serve the parish church would have had his lodgings. Here was also a hall, together with a kitchen, dormitories, dairy, bake and brewhouses, cowsheds and other farm buildings. The great tithe barn stood near the site of Cranmer Middle School. All that remains today to remind us of this era are the dovecote and carp pond and, of course, the name of the estate.

Since the early Middle Ages Mitcham had attracted London merchants and others with wealth and position to settle in this pleasant area, and following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, Southwark Priory's former estate was sold into private hands. In the 1650's much of it was purchased by Robert Cranmer, an East India merchant, and it was his son John who, in 1680, granted a lease for the building of a new house on the site of the old parsonage house and priory farm. Although substantially altered the 'Canons' is still recognisably a

house of the Restoration period. It was at one time the manor house of Mitcham, and remained the property of the Cranmers and their descendants the Simpsons, a leading family in the village, for over two hundred and fifty years.

Lordship of the manor of Vauxhall passed to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury following the Dissolution, and until the close of the 19th century Lower Green West and the Cricket Green remained within their control.

Any attempts at illicit encroachment, or other misuse of the common land within their jurisdiction, were dealt with promptly by the steward.

Elsewhere the situation was very different, for by the middle of the Victorian period manorial rights over much of the extensive common land in Mitcham were in dispute. Piecemeal enclosure was taking place for building, and the virtually uncontrolled digging of gravel and the removal of turf was reducing the main Common to a waste of swamps and yawning pits. Mounting public protest succeeded in 1891 in securing the formation of a Board of Conservators in whom all the common lands of Mitcham were vested, including the Lower Greens, Cranmer Green and the Three Kings Piece. Management of all except the main Common was transferred to the Urban District Council in 1925, and remains with the Borough Council today.

With improvement of the London to Dorking road following the establishment of a turnpike trust in 1745

through traffic increased. In addition to the long-distance stage coaches, Mitcham was served by a regular coach service to London, and its numerous inns flourished. Four inns from this period still survive in the Conservation Area.



The horse-drawn Surrey Iron Railway (used only for the transport of goods) was closed in 1846, but the Wimbledon to Croydon steam railway opened in 1855 and by 1868 Mitcham Junction provided connections to Streatham and Sutton. In 1906 the electric trams arrived with the opening of the Tooting to Croydon route, extended in 1910 to the short-lived terminus at the Cricket Green.

In the 18th century Mitcham evolved as a centre for calico printing, and in 1818 Emily Cranmer married William Simpson of Lichfield, who had interests in the industry both in Mitcham and elsewhere in the Wandle Valley. These he relinquished in the 1850's on becoming lord of the manor of Mitcham, and thereafter assumed the role of a country

gentleman and local benefactor assisting, amongst other things, in the foundation of the Lower Green Infant School in 1836, and acting as a Trustee of the Tate Almshouses. Over the same period Mitcham became renowned for its herbal industry, major facets of which were the growing and distilling of peppermint and lavender.

With the decline of both industries during the 19th Century the character of much of Mitcham began to

change. Only the area around the Lower Greens survived largely untouched, remaining as it did within the jurisdiction of the manor of Vauxhall and under the influence of the squire and remaining local gentry, who controlled the parish council.

In no small measure the survival intact of Mitcham's Cricket Green from the early 18th century can be attributed to the fact that village cricket has been played here continuously for over three hundred years. With a record of matches as early as 1707 the village club recognises only Hambledon's prior claim to being the cradle of club cricket. The pleasant aspect attracted development, and until the early 20th century several fine houses were still to be seen in the vicinity of the Green. A few remain to lend character and to preserve the traditional appearance of what must be a unique survival in the Greater London area.

Within the Conservation Area there are several reminders of the extraordinary record of the Chart family, who were to serve the Vestry, Parish, Urban District Council and Borough of Mitcham for close on two hundred years. A William Chart became vestry clerk in 1762, over half a century before his son John undertook the rebuilding of the parish church. Sixty years later the latter's grandson Robert, whose house overlooked the Cricket Green, was architect of the Vestry Hall, built to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. In 1934, as Charter Mayor at the age of 84, the same Robert Chart officiated at celebrations held on the Cricket Green to mark the grant of Borough status to Mitcham. The tradition of service to the community was also observed by Sir Isaac Wilson, a successful local building developer, to whom the Wilson Cottage Hospital, and the Mitcham Garden Village, both within the Conservation Area, largely owe their existence.

In form, the Cricket Green Conservation Area is more a collection of distinct localities than a specific place. Around the central core of the Cricket Green lie the constituent elements of Lower Green West and Church Road, the 'Canons' and 'Park Place', Three Kings Piece, Cranmer Green, the Garden Village and Mitcham Park. Each retains its own identity, whilst at the same time relating to the heart of the area.

For a relatively small and basically residential area, the range, age and character of the buildings it contains is surprisingly and refreshingly diverse. Of equal relevance, whether they be old or new, the buildings are generally (although there are one or two glaring exceptions) maintained to a good standard.

The Cricket Green area is obviously one which evinces a quiet pride in itself, and has largely succeeded in retaining a domestic and human scale in its buildings, the setting of which is enhanced by the variety of its open spaces.

By any normal urban standards there are still large, attractive areas over which adult or child can roam relatively free from constraint. Moreover the Canons Leisure Centre and the adjoining grounds of 'Park Place' provide par excellence for a range of activities for toning the body, whilst the combination of formal gardens, ancient dovecote and carp pond, with their historical associations, offers the prospect of quiet relaxation.

Until the possibility of amelioration through the diversion of major traffic routes can be realised, the impact of some through traffic, with its obvious hazards and the pollutants of congestion, noise and fumes, seems inescapable. But even here a degree of mitigation is afforded to some areas by the scale of the Greens and commonland which distinguish the area.

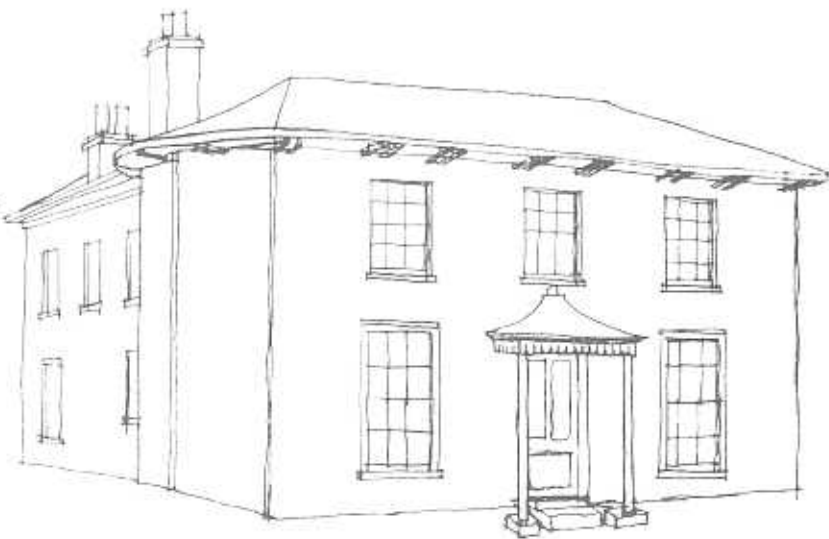
It is on the more positive qualities of the Cricket Green Conservation Area that this design guide and the enhancement proposals to be found in the following pages seeks to concentrate future attention.

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

These suggest specific schemes which would contribute to the enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area. These enhancement proposals are mainly, though not exclusively, related to land with public access or Council owned land. There is also a general need to review traffic directional and management signing with a view to rationalization and reduction to a minimum compatible with the requirements of the law and road safety.

THE CRICKET GREEN

Not only can the Cricket Green boast of having been visited by the gifted and great at its crease, it can also take pride in the quality of its surroundings. The encircling buildings have their own modest charm, and subtly reflect changes which have occurred in popular domestic architecture over five centuries. No less than seven listed buildings and nine buildings on the local list surround the area.



[1] *Elm Lodge*

Elm Lodge [1] built around 1806, stands at the northern end of the Cricket Green. It is a grade II listed building and it neatly turns the corner to commence the development overlooking the east side of the Green. A detached, two storey, stuccoed Regency villa, under a shallow pitched, slate roof and typically wide, open bracketed, eaves; it presents three symmetrical bays to the Cricket Green. The central, square-headed entrance sits beneath a tented, lead canopy supported on plain, reeded columns with a painted wood valance and half glazed doors. The square headed windows are architraved on the ground floor with recessed sashes in twelve panes on both floors. The bowed return on the left with its matching elevation to London Road makes this small, unaltered, conspicuous house a worthy feature to introduce the Green.

The adjacent, locally listed, **Mitcham Court [2]** originally known as Elm Court, was probably erected as a three-bay villa circa 1824. It was subsequently extended to its present form around 1870.

The front elevation is composed of three elements, linked by a continuous raised string course at first floor level. The original central three bay unit has a symmetrical facade with a projecting square flat topped porch, with cornice supported on Ionic



[2] *Mitcham Court*

columns. The inset entrance is fitted with a modern raised and fielded six panel door under a round headed fanlight. The original door would have been painted. The yellow stock brick two storey elevation is capped by a panelled cornice and deep bracketed eaves to the dormered and hipped slate pitched roof. The recessed six-pane sash windows are set within a flat headed stone architrave.

The recessed round headed sashed dormers in four panes are set within brick reveals with matching heads and the whole is overset by lead covered, projecting, round headed, architraved surrounds, carried on stone

corbels from the springing line, to give a distinctive and impressive crowning feature to this element of the block.

To the left is a three bay unit in matching yellow stock brick, under a flat balustraded roof with a deep bracketed cornice. The end bay is set back and repeats the central unit's window details. The other two bays are set forward with deep, flat, pedimented heads on end scroll brackets to the ground floor and arched head to the first floor. The right-hand element of two bays is one-and-a-half storeys high and also set proud with flat topped lead surrounds to sash dormers within a slate mansard roof set back behind a balustraded parapet. The balustrade and pedimented window details match those of the left-hand wing. This is a very impressive building whose excellent proportions and detailing can be appreciated in the context of the open aspect of the Green.

The adjoining **modern block [3]** is of three storeys with a hipped pitched slate roof set over a continuous second floor clerestorey and punched hole yellow brick lower storeys. A narrow splay sided central element has a feature circular first floor window and short spired roof over.

The locally listed **Birches [4]** is a traditional two storey house set well back at the end of its drive. The brick elevations have block bonded ashlar quoins and a steep double pitched hipped tiled roof. The general design draws inspiration from the Queen Anne period, which was much favoured at the turn of this century, when this house was built. The five symmetrical bays have a central projecting, enclosed, square porch with double doors, fanlight and casement sidelights under a stone balustrade. The brick side returns line with the balustrade and has a matching casement window to the porch. The first floor over is set slightly proud with a semicircular fanlight over double doors, crowned by a gable. The flush sash windows at first floor are set within square head surrounds under deep projecting eaves. At ground floor the large, flat topped, semicircular bays have curved glazed timber sashes, a timber dentil cornice and undercill brickwork.

The grounds at the rear have been recently redeveloped to provide the **Freshfields Day Centre [5]** a single storey modern brown brick unit under a wide shallow



[6] *The White House*

pitched pantile roof and a group of one and two storey housing of similar design.

The **White House [6]** is an elegant grade II listed, detached late 18th Century house with a front facade dating from around 1826. The three storey, three bay coursed stucco elevations fit under a shallow pitched roof with corniced parapet. The central bowed, enclosed and pilastered porch with square headed entrance and flanking Doric half columns sit under an iron balustrade with railings. The architraved sash windows are round headed to the ground floor and square headed above, corniced to first floor centre and fitted with blind boxes to the ground and first floors.

Chestnut Cottage [7] is also grade II listed. A charming two storey house with a plain tiled double pitched roof with transverse central valley, and a symmetrical front facade of three bays, terminating in a low parapet. The facing brickwork has been covered in pebbledash. The sliding twelve-pane sash windows are set well forward in the reveals, which suggests that the building may date from the mid 18th century.



17 The Mary Tate Almshouses

There is a central flat topped porch with moulded cornice, carried on fluted Ionic columns.

Nos.11 and 13 Cricket Green [8] are a locally listed semi-detached pair of early to mid 19th Century villas. They are two storey, with painted pebbledash under a hipped slate roof with lead flashings. Both have elegant iron porches under tented lead canopies. A two storey splayed bay to one unit has been added which has affected the symmetry of the building.

The locally listed 1960's **Methodist church [9]** has a distinctive saw toothed roof which extends to provide a cloistered access to both church and the attached church hall. It was built to the design of Edward Mills in 1958-59, and stands on the site of an earlier church. Its yellow brick and exposed concrete frame provide a very distinctive feature to the Green.

On the south side of the Cricket Green, adjacent to the petrol filling station, stands a simple rendered yellow stock brick **cottage [10]** with a jettied mock Tudor first floor under a hipped tiled roof. The two storey **Queens Head Public House [11]** is a typical early 20th Century design with arched head windows in a red brick ground floor and a balconied rendered first floor under a steep, hipped, tiled roof.

Bramcote Court [12] is an impressive four storey red brick block of 1930's flats with shops in the ground floor of the curved corner block. The flat roofed ends and hipped roof centre block feature curved corner glazing and horizontal banded panels in the 'moderne' style. Somewhat out of scale with its neighbours it is nevertheless a good example of its type and time.

Equally very much a building of its time is the three storey **Police Station [13]** nearby. A typical early

1960's design which features two storey window panel at first and second floors, set in reconstructed stone surround and mullions. A rectangular flat roofed block, with the red brick upper floors contained between stone banding and oversailing the concrete panelled ground floor, it adds to the architectural variety which is a feature of this area.

The adjoining three buildings are of varying dates and styles. The first **[14]** is a single storey red brick facade of five bays under a tiled roof with central entrance and deep sash windows. This building which dates from 1789 was a Methodist chapel and on one occasion John Wesley preached here. The second **[15]** contains two storey semi-detached houses under a steep tiled pitch roof with dormer windows. Stone cladding has been added to the front facade of one of them. The third building **[16]** was originally the Britannia Inn, now a two storey rendered house under a tiled double pitched roof to parapet. The three bay elevation, still recognisable as 18th Century, has balconied splayed bays to either side of a flat headed entrance with fanlight and sash windows to ground and first floor. A balcony with cast iron balustrade extends across the front facade overlooking the Green.

The single storey **grade II listed Almshouses [17]** were erected in 1829 on land formerly occupied by the Tate family's Mitcham house. Financed by Miss Mary Tate for "twelve elderly ladies of good character, regular Church of England communicants and who had never been a charge on the Parish". The Almshouses were built to the design of John Buckler in modified Tudor style in yellow stocks under a slate pitched roof forming three sides of a rectangle facing the Green. The doorways have dressed pointed arches with gauged heads and planked and studded doors. The segmental headed three light windows have timber mullions and diamond windows. A brick eaves



[19] The Cricket Pavilion

cornice and tall paired Tudor style chimneys with octagonal terracotta pots complete the details. The almshouses have recently been modernised to provide seven units, and this work was the winner of the Merton Design Award in 1992.

Numbers **8** and **10 Cricket Green [18]** two storied and rendered under a pitched tiled roof, were erected in 1835 to accommodate the master and mistress of the National Infants School which survives at the rear. The architect was Thomas Finden. The detailing of the gables and the decorative barge boards, drip moulds to the windows, and the arched moulding to the two entrance doors are in restrained Gothic style. The building is included on the local list.

Also on the local list is the **cricket pavilion [19]**. Built around 1920, when traffic was somewhat lighter, the pavilion is now very inconveniently separated from the Cricket Green by a heavily trafficked main road. Of two storeys in red brick under a steep pitched tiled roof with truncated hips and central gable the pavilion sports a full width projecting balcony at first floor. Virtually full width glazing on the first floor is divided into three bays with double doors in the central bay. The ground floor has a mixture of openings for timber doors and windows all set within low arched head openings.

The grade II listed **Burn Bullock Public House [20]** a former coaching house on the London Road, has a front of early to mid-18th Century and a wing to the left return of 16th-17th Century. It uses yellow stock brickwork with red-dressed window heads under a hipped tiled roof. The three storey five bay front has a central projecting Doric columned porch with modillion cornice. There is a shell porch at the side. The flush Georgian sash windows fit within square gauged headed red brick dressed surrounds, with blind windows to the second and fourth bays at first floor, and to the side. These have been painted to imitate real windows. There are two early 19th century segmental bow windows to the right-hand ground floor bays in small panes with glazing bars. There is a modillion eaves cornice which can be dated to 1911. The timber framed jettied wing to the left return has possible 16th Century chimney stacks to the east and south walls. The interior is impressively panelled.



[21] *The White Hart Public House*

On the west side of London Road stands another former coaching inn, the grade II listed **White Hart [21]**. Between 1749 and 1751 this was substantially rebuilt, and the resulting structure can be seen today. Its two storey elevation of seven bays sits beneath a steeply pitched hipped slate roof which is partially concealed behind a balustraded parapet and cornice. A matching balustrade tops the central projecting three bay porch supported on Doric columns, and framing the architraved, square-headed entrance. The matching architraved square windows have recessed sashes with the central three bays more closely spaced and set slightly proud. The rear elevation is also of interest with its flush framed windows and plum coloured brickwork.

To the left of the White Hart stands an abutting three storied early 19th century building [22]. Paired box sashes are set back in their reveals, and the front elevation of yellow stock brick terminates in the usual straight parapet. The style is that of the previous century, and demonstrates the conservatism of the average village builder.

To the right of the White Hart stands a pair of equally important grade II listed cottages, **Nos. 346 to 348 London Road [23]**. Although at first sight an 18th century origin is suggested by the three simple canopy door cases and flush framed boxed sashes, it becomes apparent on entering that the rendered Georgian facade was added to a much older building. The heavy timber framing of the interior, and the gabled rear elevation show this to be in fact, a Tudor building. The irregularity of the upper floor fenestration resulted from the need to avoid hidden timber framing.



The Cricket Green

A further feature is the horizontal sliding sashes in the three square headed dormers which protrude from the plain tiled roof. The building is surfaced in stucco under a steeply pitched dormered tiled roof.

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

- A benefit could be obtained by raising the level of the horse trough and drinking fountain at the corner of London Road and the Cricket Green, relative to the pavement level.
 - A screen of planting and a low wall, around the car park and side garden of the Burn Bullock Public House would benefit the setting of this listed building. This could include some tree planting.
 - The length of footway that runs adjacent to the south side of the Cricket Green from opposite the Almshouses to opposite the Queens Head public house could be diverted away from the carriageway, in order to make a more pleasant environment for pedestrians.
- It is therefore suggested that the space occupied by the existing footway should be laid out as a grass verge, possibly with additional trees to form an avenue, and that bollards, or other measures be taken to ensure that vehicles do not encroach onto the grassed area. The existing unattractive fencing that separates the footway from the grassed area could then be removed, and a new footway provided, in parallel to the carriageway, separated from it by approximately 6 or 8 metres.
- The entrance of the SS Peter and Paul School from the Cricket Green is in need of visual improvement. The chainlink fencing which divides the school grounds from the footway should be replaced with more attractive railings. Furthermore the unattractive pedestrian guardrailling along the adjacent kerbside should be replaced with railings of a more attractive design and a more suitable colour.
 - A low wall, possibly with railings over, could be provided with benefit, to contain the prominent car park of the Queens Head public house, which is at the corner of Bramcote Avenue and the Cricket Green.



No. 19 Mitcham Park

MITCHAM PARK

The Park, as it was known, forms a pleasant dog-legged avenue, the oldest houses of which comprise matching two storey semi-detached residences, the reasonably modest frontages concealing an 'L' shaped plan of considerable depth. The first floor elevations have either vertical sash windows or a full height, four light, unit with french windows opening onto the roof of the ground floor bay.

The corner unit and both end units have gable bays set diagonally on the external corner. The front elevations are generally in red or yellow brick to the ground floor with rendered first floors over. The steep pitched roofs were originally in plain tile with finial ridge tiles, but there are now a variety of unfortunate concrete tile replacements. The Tudorbethan upper elevations of the Cricket Green end unit are in direct contrast to the 1970's functional Catholic Junior School opposite with its curtain walling and brick flank walls.

The 'No-Entry' signs at the Cricket Green end ensure that a potential rat-run is now a quiet backwater

whose only rush hour reflects the School day. It is unfortunate, however, that the avenue of roadside trees, planted to enhance the estate, have been pollarded.

This road, with its houses set behind pleasant front gardens, is a valuable adjunct to the variety of the Cricket Green itself.

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

- The reinstatement of grass verges to separate the carriageway and the footway would enhance this part of the Conservation Area. Provision would need to be made for car parking.
- An upgrading of the fencing around the school gates and the scout and guide hut would greatly improve the approach to Mitcham Park from the Cricket Green.

LOWER GREEN WEST



[27] *Sibford House*

Sitting across the London Road from The Cricket Green, and visually separated from it by the Vestry Hall, The Cricketer's and the Fire Station, this small triangular green provides a transition from Church Road to the London Road. It was reduced to the status of a large traffic island when a one way system was introduced in 1968. The concave line of Preshaw Crescent [24], a white half-rendered terrace under tiled gabled

roofs, pivots about the detached White Cottage [25].

The postwar symmetrical Glebe Square [26] sits back from The Green, forming an attractive courtyard layout with two storey yellow brick terraces on three sides with pantiled and pitched roofs. Balconies at first floor, and patios at ground floor level provide modelling and private outdoor space. Two single

storey matching blocks enclose the courtyard at its front and frame the central entrance.

Sibford House [27], originally Edwardian, has been extended post war to the rear to provide a sheltered housing scheme. The original two storeyed house has a tiled first floor over a red brick ground floor and a steeply pitched tiled roof, with large, flat roofed, dormers. The central recessed entrance is expressed in brick pilasters under a two course semi-circular head. To the right a two storey splayed bay with arched recessed, casement window and fan lights is balanced on the left by a ground floor square bay with projecting curved cornice over continuous casements with fanlights over.

A setback extension of later date has a mock Tudor first floor over a splayed bay with recessed sash windows on both floors.

The double splayed bay symmetrical front of **326 London Road [28]** is topped by a slate pitched roof. The white gault bricks are offset by the red brick quoins to the recessed entrance with its stone capitals and terracotta arched head, which matches similar heads to the recessed windows.

Matching sash windows, larger on ground floor than first, complete a well-proportioned and attractive Victorian building.

On the west side of the Green, the listed **Parish Rooms [29]** building of 1788 was enlarged in 1812, when a Day School was established for the education of 'the poor'. Repeatedly extended to accommodate ever-increasing numbers, and regularly condemned by the inspectors as insanitary, it finally closed its doors as a day school in 1897. Subsequently used, not only by a Sunday School, but also for a wide variety of activities until, in 1987 it was sold by the Church and



[29] The Parish Rooms

converted into Artists' Studios and flats. It is built in yellow stocks under a slate pitched roof and presents a symmetrical elevation to the road. The single storey wings each have three lights with recessed sashes under brick arched heads inset as a panel between flat buttresses. The central two storey feature is set slightly proud with clock tower and belvedere surmounting a gabled roof over a symmetrical elevation entrance door with canopy, first floor entablature panel and a gable scroll. A recessed window either side: square headed sash on the first floor; and a semicircular headed fixed light on the ground floor completes the fenestration.



[35] *The Fire Station*

The adjoining semi-detached **Ivy and Elm Cottages [30]** are built of red brick under a hipped slate pitched roof with the entrances at the extremities and the recessed sash windows forming a symmetrical pattern. They probably date from around 1800, and are locally listed buildings.

The third cottage in this group is **Kingsdene [31]** which is also locally listed. It is built of red brick under a hipped slate pitched roof with French windows over a ground floored bay. All windows and the front door are recessed with flat brick arches.

Caxton House [32] also locally listed, was built in 1879, and has an irregular pattern of pilasters with capitals with inset doors and windows. The upper elevation of white brick under a slate pitched roof has a symmetrical pattern of recessed sashed windows margin lights, low arched stone heads to first floor, and brick heads to the second floor.

The adjoining **Caxton Cottages [33]** again built in 1879, also in white brick and also locally listed, originally had Welsh slate pitched roofs. They have red brick head vousoired over, the recessed sashed windows and roundheads over the doors and fan light. A recessed name panel at first floor completes the elevation.

The adjoining **Cricketers Cottages [34]** have recessed entrances at either end and recessed sash windows, all within square headed openings, forming the central features. The rendered and painted elevation, under a slate pitched roof contrasts with its neighbours.

On the Green opposite stands the War Memorial with the locally listed **Fire Station [35]** erected in 1927 alongside. The latter is of typically interwar design, the ashlar faced ground floor with inscribed fascia and cornice over has a red brick first floor under a slate pitched roof with wide eaves and diamond windowed

gabled dormer feature. The casement windows with fanlights over are set in recessed ashlar surrounds to a symmetrical pattern.

Of considerable prominence, sitting centrally on the London Road frontage of the Green, the locally listed **Vestry Hall [36]** was erected in 1887 to the design of Robert Masters Chart. In 1915 it became the Urban District Council's Offices, and with Borough status granted in 1934, the Town Hall. Its two storey asymmetrical, elevations in red brick and mansfield stone, under a steeply pitched gabled, slate roof, with slate roofed dormers on the rear elevations, and feature, corner, truncated spire, originally set a harsh and discordant note but this has mellowed with time.

To the north of the Vestry Hall stands a single storey nondescript temporary hut of rendered elevations under a corrugated roof.

The Vestry was built on the site of the old Village lockup, erected in 1765, on a plot 12 feet by 20 feet enclosed from Common Land by sanction of the Manor of Vauxhall and subsequently extended as required by the public need. However no such documentation exists for the adjoining **Cricketer's Public House [37]**.

A public house has existed on the site of the present day Cricketers at least since the 18th Century. At least four buildings have occupied the site. The third was badly damaged in an air raid in 1940. It was rebuilt in typical 1950's design with a tiled pitched roof type, and yellow brick elevations, recessed on the upper floor with a balcony balustrade and fascia over the ground floor elevation which consists mostly of bay windows with entrance doors at either end.

The Vestry Hall and public house were part of an important commercial area at the turn of the century which could boast a bank, butcher, grocer, dairy, baker, tailor as well as the public houses and local government offices, all grouped at the crossroads where the branch tramway terminated. At that time this was a very thriving area of Mitcham.



[37] *The Cricketers Public House*

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

- In the section relating to Church Road, reference is made to the removal of through traffic from that road. If this is achieved then a further major consequential benefit could be achieved, that of the removal of the one way system which currently surrounds Lower Green West. This one way system is very damaging to the character of this part of the Conservation Area, as it severs the open space from the surrounding areas, and diminishes its value to local residents. Two way through traffic could return to London Road, and the remaining two sections of the one way system could have traffic restricted to access vehicles only, as part of a cul-de-sac arrangement with Church Road. A narrower bellmouth would be possible at the corner of Lower Green West, adjacent to the Cricketers public house, so that space could be provided for landscaping.
- The route of an ancient bridleway which connected the focus of the settlement near the church to the Open East Field of the village could be given greater prominence and continuity. This path can be followed through the Conservation Area today, linking its main constituent parts, passing through the Lower Green and the Cricket Green, along Cold Blows Lane, and then across the corner of Mitcham Common to Commonsides East. The significance of this path is worthy of greater recognition by positioning crossing places so as to permit direct passage along it and by marking it either by special surfacing, or by plaques fixed into its surface.
- There is scope for minor improvement at the rear of the Vestry Hall. The enclosed area could be returned to the Green, and if the Vestry Annexe were to become surplus to requirements, then it could be demolished and returned to open space.