

PREVAILING OR FORMER USES WITHIN THE AREA AND THE INFLUENCE OF THESE ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.

From predominantly agricultural origins the area around the River Wandle was gradually transformed as it became a stimulus for activity, initially as a crossing point for a Roman Road followed by the siting on its banks of the major religious house of Merton Priory and its increased exploitation as a source of power. Water powered and water related industries along the Wandle have played a significant part in the more recent development of the area.

Early industrial sites formed the nuclei of small developments usually comprising a main mill and associated works buildings, often including a Mill House, and small terraces of workers cottages. These industrial sites were interspersed with large houses set within their grounds mainly accessed from the adjacent road along private driveways. A centre of commercial activity can be seen to develop at an important crossing point to the Wandle, close to the former Merton Priory complex, eventually developing into the modern day Colliers Wood.



During the 19th Century, as more commercial activity developed, smaller plots comprising rows of shops along the main roads emerged as the larger houses were demolished and their sites parcelled up into smaller development packages. This process can be seen to accelerate with the introduction of the modern railways as new streets are laid out with narrow building plots which are

the foundation of the traditional rows of terraced houses that are intrinsic to much of London's residential areas. Newer industrial estates were developed with their own infrastructure in the form of roads and railway branches and sidings.

However not all the estates of the large houses were developed and some passed into public ownership. This has also significantly influenced the character of the area by securing their survival as parks preserving the open character of the river environment.

As well as the new residential developments, the new railways can be seen to have encouraged new industries to the area with the growth of new industrial estates emerging at this time, particularly Merton Industrial Estate to the west of the Wandle and Willow Lane to the south-east.

The industrial estates are shown to have expanded during the early and middle part of the 20th Century, with large factory plots and associated infrastructure. However, during the later part of the 20th Century there was a general decline in industrial/manufacturing employment and some of the older industrial areas, including some of the original mill complexes had gradually fallen into disuse. Many of these larger industrial sites have been redeveloped for residential and edge of centre retail developments, such as Savacentre on the former Merton Board Mills site in Merton High Street, particularly in the Colliers Wood area contributing to the gradual suburbanisation of the area. Nevertheless many of the old mills and other industrial buildings survived well into the 20th Century and some have been saved from re-development by conversion into new uses such as in Merton Abbey Mills. Some old buildings remain in commercial use into the late

20th/early 21st Century such as Grove Mill in Mitcham and the former leather workshop at Copper Mill Lane.



1865 Ordnance Survey Map, overlaid with a modern GIS Map

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITY OF BUILDINGS IN THE AREA

The area is mainly characterised by a number of notable 18th and 19th Century buildings. A range of buildings and several relics survive from the days of the large country houses and estates that once bordered the river and the period when the Wandle was one of the most industrialised rivers in the country a focus for industry.

There are a significant number of Listed Buildings, including:-



- Industrial buildings - embracing water mills and the former Liberty Print works at Merton Abbey Mills,



- The Charles Holden Underground Station at Colliers Wood; and



- Domestic Buildings, like Morden Cottage, Morden Hall Park - ranging from small terraces of modest workers cottages in Wandle Bank to significant historic mansions set in landscaped grounds.

Details of all Listed Buildings are given at Appendix A. There are also a number of buildings included on the Non-Statutory Local List, details of which are given at Appendix B.

The earliest buildings and structures within the conservation area comprise remnants of the Merton Abbey Complex including surviving sections of priory walls dating from the medieval period or possibly later. These incorporate elements of flint and rubble construction. There are also the remains of the Priory Chapter House.



The 18th Century Colour House, at Merton Abbey Mills, also incorporates elements of brick and flint construction with random rubble stone blocks.



Mill workers cottages, by Grove Mill, Mitcham.

Many early secular buildings dating from the 18th and early to mid-19th Centuries incorporate elements of timber frame construction. Examples include 4-8 Merton High Street, Morden Cottage in Morden Hall Park and Mill Cottages at 475-477 London Road, Mitcham.

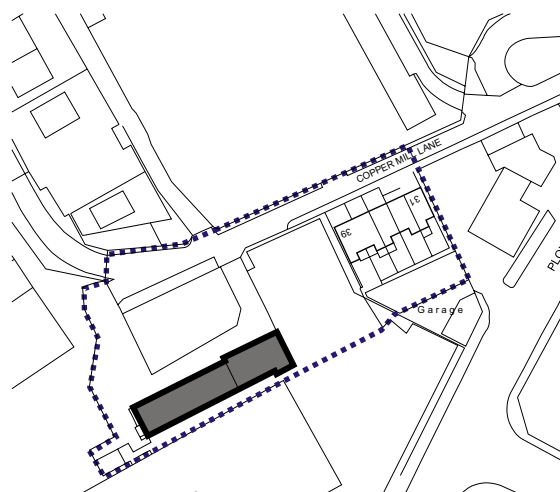
From the 17th Century, however, until the late 19th Century the most predominant material was local brickwork, either fair-faced or rendered. Many earlier buildings predominantly incorporated a red brick whilst later Victorian buildings were built of a yellow stock brick, often with brick dressing in a contrasting colour.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUPS OF BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The most significant buildings that can be seen to positively contribute to the character of the conservation areas mainly comprise those buildings that illustrate and add to an understanding of the area's historic development. More detailed descriptions of the buildings are included in the sub-area appraisals within which they fall.

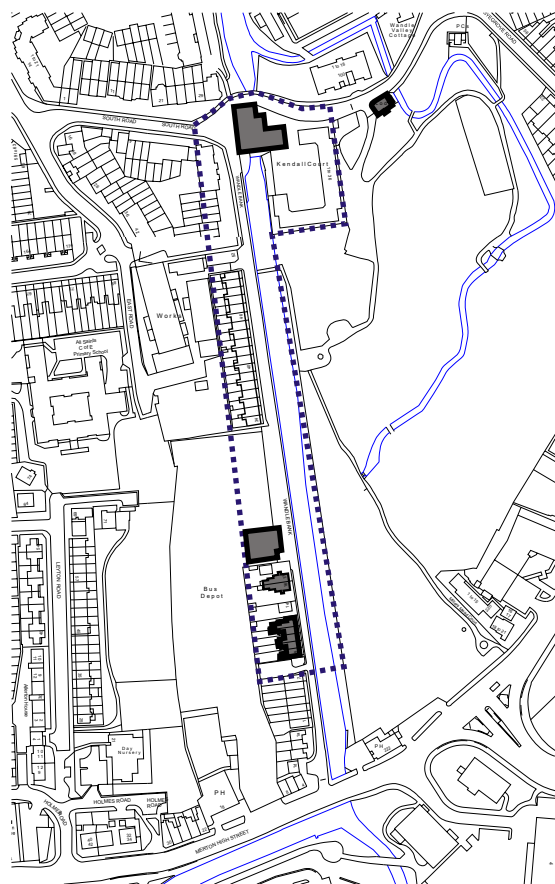
The most significant buildings or groups of buildings include: -

Sub-Area 1: Copper Mill Lane

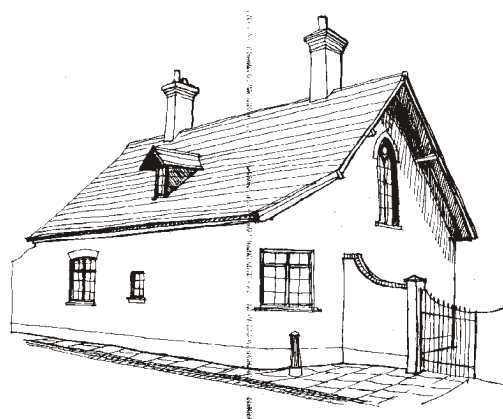


a) Copper Mill Lane surviving factory building.

Sub-Area 2: Colliers Wood



a) Connolly's Mill and associated mill workers cottages along Wandle Bank



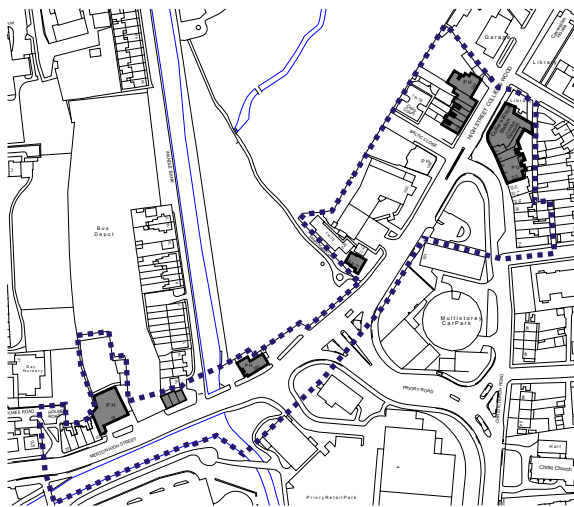
b) Wandle Park Lodge.



c) Merton Bus Garage - Wandle Bank frontage building.



f) The Royal Standard Public House



d) Properties along the north side of Merton High Street to the east of Merton Bus garage including 4-8 Merton High Street, the locally listed Royal Six Bells Public House, Millers Mead and (198-220) High Street Colliers Wood.



g) Colliers Wood Underground Station.



h) Singlegate School.



e) 180-192 Colliers Wood High Street



i) The former King's Head Public House

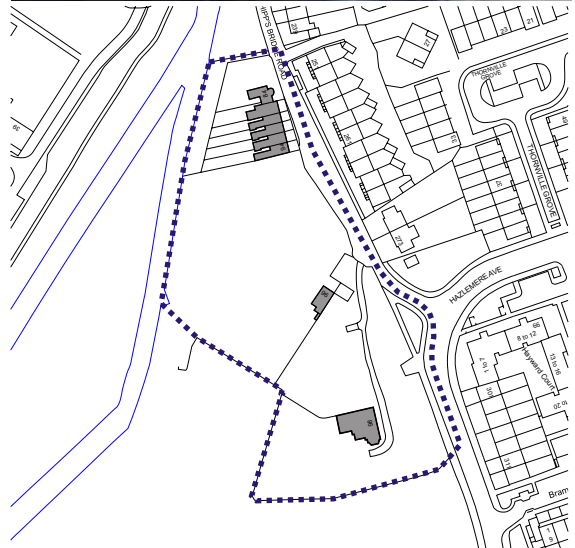
Sub-Area 3: Merton Priory



a) Merton Abbey Mills



b) Section Priory Wall Road along Station Road



b) Folly at end of Row of Cottages in Phipps Bridge Road

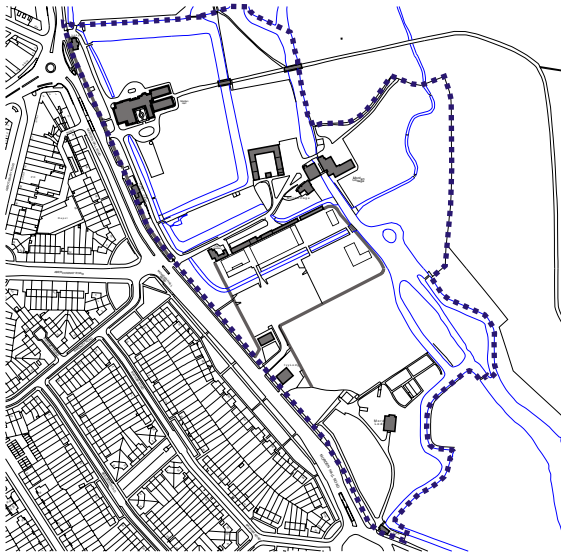


a) Cottages to the west side of Phipps Bridge Road

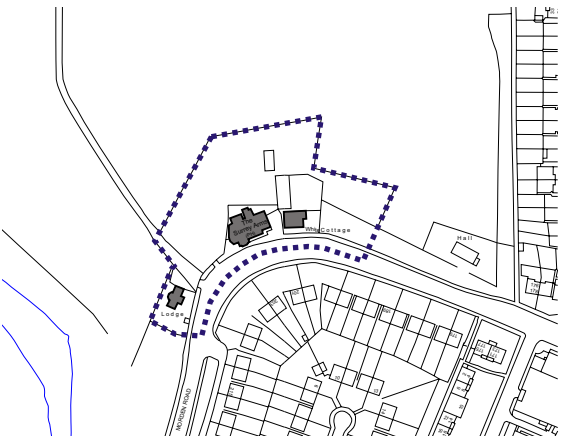


c) Wandle Villa and Wandle Lodge The Coach House

Sub-Area 5: Morden Hall and Ravensbury Parks



a) Morden Hall and former estate buildings within Morden Hall Park

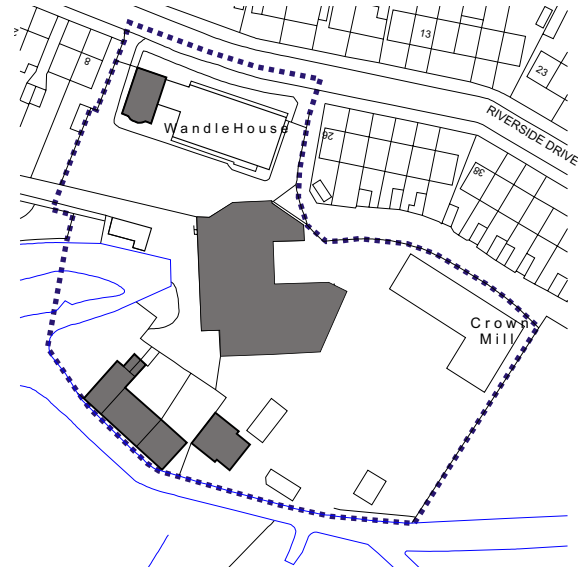


b) Surrey Arms Morden Road

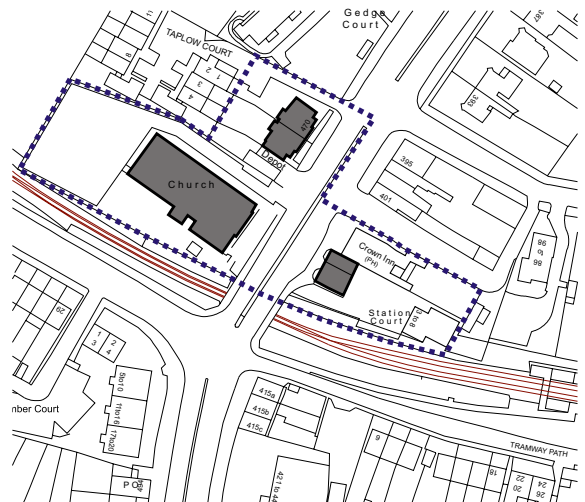


c) Ravensbury Mill

Sub-Area 6: Lower Mitcham



a) Grove Mill and Watermead Cottages



b) Former Mitcham Station, 470-484 (Evens) London Road, Mitcham

Other groups of buildings which also make a contribution to the townscape character of the conservation area in terms of their built form and relationship to their setting and their surroundings include: -

Sub-Area 1: Copper Mill Lane

a) Row of former workers cottages associated with surviving factory building Copper Mill Lane.

2. Sub-Area 2: Colliers Wood

- a) Properties along the north side of Merton High Street to the west of the locally listed King's Head Public House.

Sub-Area 5: Morden Hall and Ravensbury Parks

- a) Housing Development at Octavia Close and Rawnsley Avenue

Sub-Area 6: Lower Mitcham

- a) Site of former brewery east side of London road south of tramway.

More detailed descriptions and analysis of these buildings are provided within the sub-area appraisals within which they fall.

Other groups of buildings that comprise buildings that individually make a neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area but nevertheless contribute to the areas townscape character in terms of their relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces, their scale and form.

Sub-Area 2: Colliers Wood

- a) Re-built cottages, Wandle Bank Shopping parade, Christchurch Road to south of Colliers Wood Underground Station. Area 3: Merton Priory
- b) Commercial buildings on the south side of Station Road

Sub-Area 4: Phipps Bridge

- a) Inter-War semi-detached houses on the east side of Phipps Bridge Road

More detailed analyses of these buildings are provided in the respective sub-area appraisals.