



Wimbledon Hill Road Sustainability Appraisal



Sustainability Appraisal Statement for Character Appraisal of Wimbledon Hill Road Conservation Area

Introduction

This statement sets out the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal into the character appraisal and boundary assessment for the above Conservation Area. A character appraisal is a document that looks in detail at the special character of a Conservation Area accurately describing the areas history, layout, land use, building form, architecture and urban space. It then goes on to recommend the positive and negative features and any suggested opportunities and recommendations within the Conservation Area. The boundary assessment is a separate document that looks specifically at changes to the boundary of the Conservation Area. It should be noted that the boundary assessment precedes the character appraisal and takes its recommendations into account.

The need to review and monitor the boundaries of the existing Conservation Areas through the preparation of Character Assessments is recognised in paragraph 4.28 of the Merton's Unitary Development Plan. And in paragraph 4.38 it sets out that these character assessments are to be published as Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG or, since the commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act a Supplementary Planning Document.

Background

The Government has recently made changes to the planning system through the commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. The new Regulations require that any document that needs to be termed a Supplementary Planning Document SPD has to undergo a Sustainability Appraisal, including character appraisal of Conservation Areas so that it can be a material consideration in any decision relating to development in the Conservation Area.

Sustainability and sustainable development has become a key issue for government and is reflected in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy and its five key aims. These are living within environmental limits, ensuring a strong healthy and just society, achieving a sustainable economy, promoting good governance and using sound science responsibly. There is a growing wealth of guidance being produced for planning which increasingly incorporates these issues.

This appraisal has been produced in accordance with the guidance 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks'. The appraisals level of detail has been applied in accordance with the spatial scale, size and possible environmental effects of the designation.

Scope of the appraisal

To undertake scoping for a sustainability appraisal the document to be appraised needs to have strategic aims and objectives. In the case of a character assessment this is not possible as the main strategic objective of this type of document will be the same as the objective of the policy it is based on, ie to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. And this appraisal should not be looking at the policy as this will be the focus of an appraisal of the relevant Development Plan Document when this is undertaken. It should also be pointed out that the Character Assessment does not have any significant land use proposals for redevelopment nor does it include a major programme of enhancement therefore making it hard to come up with various options.

However, to be in compliance with the Regulations and the SEA Directive it is necessary to follow the process set out in ODPM guidance. Therefore it is necessary to consider options and environmental impacts. Environmental impacts are likely to be minimal as a Conservation Area is protectionist in nature. The only suitable alternative to carrying out the appraisal is the "do nothing" option of not doing the character appraisal at all. This option would not be acceptable because the council has a statutory requirement to undertake a character appraisal.

Any changes to the boundary of the conservation area will be appraised as well as any opportunities or actions that maybe recommended by the character assessment. The factual detail and description of the conservation area, which is the bulk of the document, is irrelevant to this process.

Description of the conservation area

Wimbledon Hill Road is a very varied conservation area covering the busy commercial area of Wimbledon town centre as well as the residential areas to the south-west and north-east. It covers just over 11 hectares. Almost the whole area falls within an archaeological priority zone. The character appraisal has split the area into sub-areas. The first is the town centre section which includes retail, offices, housing, restaurants, public houses and a library. There are a number of locally listed buildings and eight statutorily listed buildings.

Boundary Changes

Inclusion of Worple Road Mews (the highway itself), the enlarged site of 100 Wimbledon Hill Rd, 1 – 6 Pixham Court in Lake Rd, Lake Close in Lake Rd/Woodside and 1 and 2 Pine Grove. Removal of part of the Wimbledon High School site and the removal of some of the rears of houses on Mansell Road.

Actions

- Shopfront restorations and other front of building work
- Replace 100mm yellow road markings with 50mm
- Any expansion of the library should have a design brief
- Any redevelopment should be in keeping with surrounding building height and massing
- Use of appropriate footway materials in the town centre
- Removal of street clutter including guard railings
- Seek Article 4 directions against the creation of hardstanding for vehicles
- Seek Article 4 directions to protect against front of house alterations

The Sustainability Framework

The basis for the appraisal is the development of a Sustainability Framework. This is a draft set of objectives developed by the council that cover the sustainability issues for the borough. These objectives are developed through assessment of the objectives of various other documents from European Directives to the Mayors London Plan (Spatial Strategy) through to other council policy documents such as Merton's Environmental Action Plan. The baseline of environmental information is also taken into consideration when setting out the sustainability objectives. Many of the sustainability objectives are not relevant to the opportunities and proposed actions of the character appraisal but have been included anyway for completeness sake. Instead of tabulating the results a comments column has been included that aims to summarise the various types of positive and negative effects.

Topic	Objective	Comments
Land-Use	– Increase the use of urban brown field land	Any future redevelopment of the church, library or other sites may increase the use of brown field land.
Minerals and soils	– Where possible maintain and enhance soil quality	Any future redevelopment of the church, library or other sites may have an impact on soil quality. This could be positive or negative.
Waste	– Reduce the amount of waste generated, maximise reuse, recycling and recovery and reduce our reliance on landfill disposal	Any future redevelopment of the church, library or other sites should consider the provision of waste facilities. Construction waste should also be considered.
Carbon Reduction and Energy	– Ensure specific measures to improve carbon efficiency are used in new developments, refurbishment and/or renovations and extensions.	Any future redevelopment of the church, library or other sites could incorporate energy reduction measures.

Pollution	– Ensure the risks of pollution to human health and all areas of the boroughs environment are reduced	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Biodiversity and the Natural Environment	– Further protect existing designated sites through the use of S106 agreements	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
the Built Environment and its heritage	– Encourage sustainably built development	The additional protection suggested for the buildings through article 4 direction will help protect the areas heritage.
Basic Needs	– Increase the number of appropriate affordable housing units in Merton to reflect increases in demand	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Work and the economy	– Maintain local employment capacity	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Health	– Improve health equality	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Transport and access	– The need for travel is minimised	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Crime	– Reduce the level of street crime	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Education	– Increase educational attainment of the boroughs residents	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Equity and Participation	– Poverty is reduced	This is not relevant for this appraisal.
Cultural, leisure and social activities	– Improve the access to and quality of open spaces	This is not relevant for this appraisal.

Conclusions

The proposed boundary changes to the area will not raise any sustainability issues neither will the proposals to improve and further protect to the character of the area. Any redevelopment of the church, library or other sites will need to consider sustainable development principles.

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