

# Mitcham Sub Area Neighbourhoods



DRAFT

1

**13** Mitcham Common

# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Origins and General Character

This neighbourhood encompasses a vast area of public open space namely Mitcham Common and pockets of housing which straddle the periphery. The common is roughly 460 acres, it has evolved through centuries of use, its boundaries, physical structure and ecology have all been subject to change.

Mitcham Common is ancient common land, which once extended much further and before clearance in Neolithic times was oak woodlands; it adjoined Croydon Common, Beddington Farmlands and Waddon, and included the various greens that remain around Mitcham. It was divided between four manors and was long used for agriculture and grazing, and in the early 19th century was used for gravel extraction. Today the boroughs of Merton, Croydon, Sutton and the Corporation of London are involved in the preservation of the common, making an annual contribution to its maintenance costs; and in 1997 it was agreed that the common and adjoining farmlands and Beddington Park would form part of the larger Wandle Valley Country Park. The Golf Course was established on the Common in the late 1890s and until 1924 when the golf club's rights

ceased it covered a far greater part of the Common, then reduced to its current area by the Conservators. Some land has been lost to railway and roads. There are a number of ponds on the common, many created as a result of grave extraction, which continued until the 1980s, and some ponds have since been infilled. Among those that remain are Seven Islands Pond created post 1867 and Bidder's Pond north of Croydon Road, and One Island Pond south of Croydon Road. There are a range of habitats such as woodland and scrub, ponds and grassland. The Common was originally flatter than at present, some areas having been artificially landscaped, such as Tilbury Hill completed in 1984. The reshaping of the common was used to remediate parts of the common which were used for rubbish dumping during the mid-20th century. The areas both sides of Cedars Avenue were infilled in the 1940s, and the hill facing the pond was the site of a domestic dump in the 1950s and 60s. Both of these areas are now dominated by vegetation associated with waste ground and disturbance. There are also significant tracts of woodland and scrub mainly along Croydon Road and Commonsides East. In 1995 Mill House Ecology Centre opened on the site of a 19th

century windmill. Part of it remains in the grounds of The Mill House restaurant / pub, which also opened in 1995. The Ecology Centre has study facilities and is generally for educational use. Behind these buildings are the old football pitches that are now managed as neutral grassland, but were used as a tipping site, being reinstated after the Second World War. Further up Windmill Road is the Windmill Trading Estate which has been there in one form or another since 1782. The Estate was demolished in 2009 to make way for a residential development.

## Land Use

Primarily the common is a site of nature conservation and is used for passive recreation activities for example dog walking, fishing and wildlife observation. There is some residential use around the periphery of the common. There are also 2 public houses / restaurants, golf clubhouse and common wardens office / educational facility in the Mill House.

## Built Form

The majority of the neighbourhood is public open space as illustrated on the figure ground overleaf as a large void. Residential buildings line the edge of the common to the north and



View of Mitcham Common



# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

southwest. These are terrace blocks or detached houses built in the early 20th century. To the southwest there are a number of blocks within the common environs which denote Mitcham Junction and the golf clubhouse. Straddling the western boundary is the Mitcham Garden village with its distinctive keyhole shaped close layout. This development is part of the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation area and is a distinct enclave in the neighbourhood. There are also 2 pubs namely the Ravenburys Arms to the west and the Mill House pub at the centre, the Mill House is adjacent to the Mill House Ecology Centre. On the former Windmill Trading Estate site a recent development to the north of the common is clearly visible as a cluster of large rectangular blocks arranged around courtyards.

## Movement

The common is enclosed and intersected by a network of busy roads. Croydon Road, Carshalton Road and Beddington Lane are part of the strategic road network. Croydon Road is heavily congested as is Carshalton Road, Beddington Lane and Windmill Road are also busy routes. The junction at the gateway into the neighbourhood becomes clogged with traffic and there are often

tailbacks as a result. The pedestrian environment around the common is poor as footways are narrow; this is particularly evident on Commonsides East. Pedestrian access to the Common is impeded by heavy traffic flow and lack of crossing points. There are also parking issues along Commonsides East. Cycling provision is poor on most roads as there is little space given over to cyclists. In the common cycle access, routes and parking are poorly defined. There is an aspiration to improve cycling access and routes through the common. In addition there is a desire to upgrade existing cycle routes along Croydon Road and Beddington Lane. A tramlink route and railway run through the area which create a barrier at the southern end of the common. Mitcham Junction is located off Carshalton Road; train routes which stop here connect the area to Sutton and central London. A number of bus routes run through the area.

Watneys Road which was formerly used as a rat run has been blocked off and left with trees gradually enclosing the space; there is scope to convert this route into cycle lane or common land.



Figure ground



View of Seven Islands pond

# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Open Space

A large proportion of this neighbourhood is open space as part of Mitcham Common. The large common plays host to a variety of habitats such as grassland, heathland, woodland, scrubland and ponds. These habitats support a variety of wildlife and plant life.



View of the common from Watneys Road



Bidders Memorial



Varied plant life on the common



# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Neighbourhood Analysis



# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Heritage Assets

**Heritage map to be added at later stage**

# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Character Areas

- 1 Mitcham Common
- 2 Commonside East / Mitcham Junction
- 3 Mitcham Garden Village

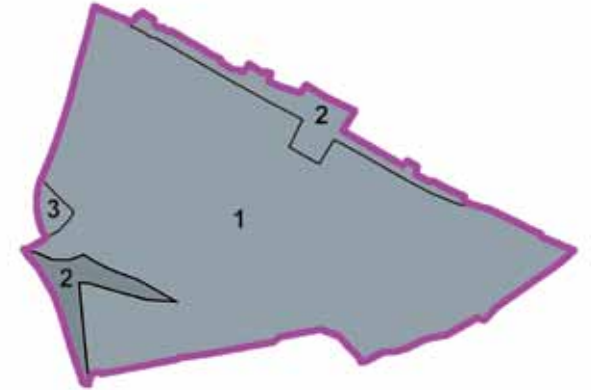






# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Character Areas Assessment, Issues and Guidance



# 1 Mitcham Common Character Area

## Assessment

### Character Statement

This character area comprises a large proportion of the neighbourhood, it covers the vast area of Mitcham Common. The common is partitioned by the roads which dissect it.

The common comprises of a mosaic of different habitats such as lowland acid grassland, heathland, grassland, woodland and ponds. The layout of these habitats has an organic informal appearance, they are managed to ensure animal and plant diversity. Grassland is predominantly central to the common interspersed with pockets of scrub whilst woodland tends to straddle the periphery. There are significant tracts of woodland and scrub mainly along Croydon Road and Commonsides East. A particular feature of this open space is the undulating topography, such as the artificially created hills from which there are panoramic views of the surrounding area. The plant life is punctuated by ponds such as Seven Islands Pond, One Island pond and Bidders pond. The character of the common changes to the south in Mitcham Golf Course which has a more formalised appearance however it is interspersed with wildlife habitat.

There is little built fabric in this character area apart from the Ravensbury Arms, The Mill House

restaurant/pub. The Mill House Ecology Centre was built on the site of a 19th century windmill. Part of it remains in the grounds of The Mill House restaurant/pub, the base of windmill is grade II listed which comprises 1 storey circular brick enclosure with original timber superstructure comprising horizontal and diagonal beams. Both pubs although dating from different periods are similar in style; they are set back from the road behind car parking with beer garden to the side or rear surrounded by mature trees. The Ravensbury Arms was originally built during the Edwardian period but has been much altered, it has a rural vernacular with timber beam decoration, horizontal windows and central gable feature. The Mill House restaurant/pub is built in a similar Arts and Craft style. On the common there is also a carved granite monolithic stone which is a grade II listed memorial in commemoration of George Parker Bidder although this is obscured from view by vegetation.

The common is surrounded by busy roads, crossing these roads can be difficult therefore pedestrian access into the park could be enhanced by improving crossing points.

### Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

**Identity**  
**Urban Layout**  
**Movement**  
**Architectural Interest**  
**Built Form**  
**Public Realm**  
**Trees**  
**Landscape**  
**Features**  
**Economic Vitality**

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of the chapter.

Overall Score: **60**

**Area type:**  
Area with scope to reinforce the existing character



View of pathway alongside Seven Islands pond.

# 1 Mitcham Common Character Area

## Issues & Guidance



Areas of woodland



Areas of grassland



Scrubland and wild flowers



Ravensbury Arms set back amongst mature trees



Seven Islands pond



Grade II listed base of Windmill at Mill House

### Issues

#### Public Realm:

- Pedestrian environment around the Common is poor due to heavy traffic, narrow footpaths or absence of footpaths.
- Pedestrian access to the Common is restricted by poor crossing points on busy roads.
- Lack of cycle lanes / facilities on roads around the Common and also across The Common.
- Watneys Road is left disused, the road surface detracts from the wild habitat in the surrounding area.
- Isolated incidences of litter which detract from the natural beauty of the Common, particularly around the periphery of Commonsides East and seating areas within the common.

### Guidance

#### Public Realm:

- Investigate the enhancement pedestrian environment by improving footpaths and crossing points around the Common.
- Investigate incorporating Watneys Road into the Common as wildlife habitat and/ or pedestrian / cycle route through.
- Lack of cycle lanes / facilities on roads around the Common and also across The Common.
- Investigate additional litter bins at problem areas.

### Enhancement Projects

**MC 1:** Enhancement of pedestrian environment - crossings / or footpath

**MC 2:** Enhancement of cycle facilities around and across common including Watneys Road.



# 2 Commonsides East / Mitcham Junction Character Area

## Assessment

This area comprises residential areas along the northern and southern edge of the common. Development of the existing residential houses facing onto the common appears to have started in the Edwardian period until the 1930s. To the north there are typical 1930s 2 storey blocks of terraced houses set back from the road behind small front garden. Some terraces are set back from main road by rectangular green space. There is variety in the style of houses with some having more ornate motifs. The predominant style is a modest 2 storey house with ground floor projection and upper square bay finished in either painted render or pebbledash with terracotta roof tiles interspersed with semi-detached houses with low sweeping gable features. There is a cohesive block of Edwardian houses built in red brick, some have been painted over, features include double square bay, front gable detail, decorative bargeboard, timbering, protruding ridge tiles, raised gables and recessed porch. There are also examples of modest Edwardian cottages around the junction between Commonsides East and Windmill Road. These are 2 storeys in render or pebbledash however a number are built in red brick with render decoration above lintels and horizontal

brick decoration. A distinctive pair is the locally listed 205-207 Commonsides East; which is an early to mid-Victorian domestic gothic pair of semi-detached houses. The dwellings are built in predominately red brick and roofed in clay tiles. The front elevation has paired gables with distinctive steep pitch roofs with bargeboards. It has ornate diagonal, tall, single and grouped chimneys with distinctive stepped brickwork. There are also 11 contemporary blocks of 3-5 storeys. Blocks are finished in brick with timber panels, cladding and glass balconies. On Carshalton Road the houses are 1930s with some Arts and Craft style features. Pebble dash finish and red tile hangings are prevalent along Aspen Gardens. There are also examples of jettied upper bay with gable feature finished in red tile hangings. Motifs include double square bay or bow window, recessed porch and timber detail on front gable. A break from the residential development is Mitcham Junction and the Mitcham Golf Course Clubhouse. Mitcham Junction is a locally listed Victorian station built in stock brick. The proximity to the Common gives this area a leafy characteristic. The tall established trees around the common enhance these residential areas. Properties along Commonsides East have views onto the common.

### Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

- Identity
- Urban Layout
- Movement
- Architectural Interest
- Built Form
- Public Realm
- Trees
- Landscape
- Features
- Economic Vitality

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of the chapter.

Overall Score: **65**

**Area type:**  
Area with scope to reinforce the existing character



Edwardian cottages facing Mitcham Common on Commonsides East

# 2 Commonside East / Mitcham Junction Character Area

## Issues & Guidance



Mitcham Junction station



Commonside End



Edwardian terrace on Commonside East



Contemporary blocks off Commonside East



1930s development on Aspen Gardens



View of Commonside East with the distinctive chimney stacks of 205-207 in the background

### Issues

#### Public Realm:

- Paving; tarmac, fragmented finish in places.
- Pedestrian environment adversely affected by heavy traffic. Lack of quality pedestrian facilities and public realm treatment.
- Loss of original boundary treatment and or front garden.

#### Built Form:

- Changes to original materials such as windows and painting over brickwork eroding character of original properties.
- Proliferation of satellite dishes on houses in some streets which creates visual clutter along the front elevation.
- Vacant site at the corner of former Windmill Trading Estate creates a void in the streetscene.

### Guidance

#### Public Realm:

- Improve public realm surface treatments.
- Retain front boundary and garden landscape features.

#### Built Form:

- All alterations to properties to be informed by the original detailing and materials.
- Investigate the development of vacant site to repair streetscene.
- New developments should be creatively designed to be sympathetic in terms of massing, materials and details to the natural landscape of the common and adjacent properties.



# 3 Mitcham Garden Village Character Area

## Assessment

### Character Statement

Mitcham Garden Village is a distinct locally listed enclave which is enclosed by the railway line and Carshalton Road. It is a keyhole shaped close with houses facing inwards, grouped around a green. It is a gated community reserved for the elderly and part of the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area. This quiet backwater with its gardens with well kept clipped hedges survives virtually unchanged and continues to provide the pleasant domestic community envisaged by its designers (Chart, Son and Reading).

This development consists of 10 terraces each containing 4 two storey houses, together with 2 pairs of similar semi-detached houses. The development dates from between 1929 and 1932. The architectural style of the development is influenced by the vernacular revival, based on the Tudor period. This development was originally conceived by a local benefactor, in order to cater for the needs of local elderly people. The materials used include brown brick, some laid in panels of herringbone, Tudor style timber frame with pebbledash render between at the gables, dormer windows and porches, and roof tiles. The development as a

whole has a very strongly cohesive feel that results from the uniform architecture, and the layout of the buildings around varied communal open spaces. The main features of interest include the first floor jetties projecting beyond the ground floor, the very pronounced gables (including dormers and porches) with their steeply pitched roofs, and the massive chimneys. The overall layout of the development is also of interest, including in particular the grouping of the buildings around green spaces of various sizes. Changes have been kept to a minimum, and have not undermined the cohesive architectural character of the buildings.

All cottages are two storeys and set back from the green behind private gardens. The 'village' has a secluded location. Landscape within the open areas is informal, grassed areas whilst private gardens are clearly marked with clipped privet hedges. The public realm layout and scale ensures that pedestrians can safely use the carriageway.

### Criteria Based Assessment

The qualitative attributes of each character area are assessed by using the following criteria:

- Identity
- Urban Layout
- Movement
- Architectural Interest
- Built Form
- Public Realm
- Trees
- Landscape
- Features
- Economic Vitality

Each criteria point is scored according to whether the contribution made to the character area is good, moderate or poor. The total score defines whether an area is an:

- 1) Area of established high quality
- 2) Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- 3) Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity

Character area assessment sheets with breakdown of score and neighbourhood assessment map are located at the end of the chapter.

Overall Score: **90**

#### Area type:

Area of established high quality



Cottage detailing including gables with timber strapwork and prominent chimneys



# 3 Mitcham Garden Village Character Area

## Issues & Guidance



Secluded location of the 'Village'



Roofed porches and decorative brick infill panels



Houses arranged around the green



Entrance into the development



Cottage style windows

### Issues

#### Public Realm:

- Signage at entrance to Mitcham Garden Village Green adds clutter to the streetscene.

### Guidance

#### Public Realm:

- Rationalise signage on Mitcham Garden Village Green.

### Enhancement Projects

**MC 3:** Rationalise signage on Mitcham Garden Village Green

# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

1 Mitcham Common Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
<b>Identity:</b> Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development	Good		
<b>Urban Layout:</b> Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces	Good		
<b>Movement:</b> Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			Poor
<b>Architectural Interest:</b> Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest		Moderate	
<b>Built form:</b> Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			Poor
<b>Public Realm:</b> High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments		Moderate	
<b>Trees:</b> Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
<b>Landscape:</b> Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
<b>Features:</b> Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area	Good		
<b>Economic Vitality:</b> Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			Poor
<b>Criteria Score</b>	50	10	
<b>Character Area Total Score</b>	60		

2 Commonside East / Mitcham Junction Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
<b>Identity:</b> Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development		Moderate	
<b>Urban Layout:</b> Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces		Moderate	
<b>Movement:</b> Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets		Moderate	
<b>Architectural Interest:</b> Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest		Moderate	
<b>Built form:</b> Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details		Moderate	
<b>Public Realm:</b> High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments		Moderate	
<b>Trees:</b> Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
<b>Landscape:</b> Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area	Good		
<b>Features:</b> Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area	Good		
<b>Economic Vitality:</b> Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character		Moderate	
<b>Criteria Score</b>	30	35	
<b>Character Area Total Score</b>	65		

# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

3 Mitcham Garden Village Character Area			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good: Makes a significant Contribution (Value of 10)	Moderate: Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Poor: Does not contribute (Value of 0)
<b>Identity:</b> Clearly identifiable edges that distinguish the area from the surrounding development			
<b>Urban Layout:</b> Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
<b>Movement:</b> Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
<b>Architectural Interest:</b> Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
<b>Built form:</b> Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
<b>Public Realm:</b> High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
<b>Trees:</b> Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
<b>Landscape:</b> Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
<b>Features:</b> Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
<b>Economic Vitality:</b> Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria Score	80	10	
<b>Character Area Total Score</b>	<b>90</b>		



# Mitcham Common Local Neighbourhood

## Character Area Assessment

