

**MORDEN**

# I MORDEN

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

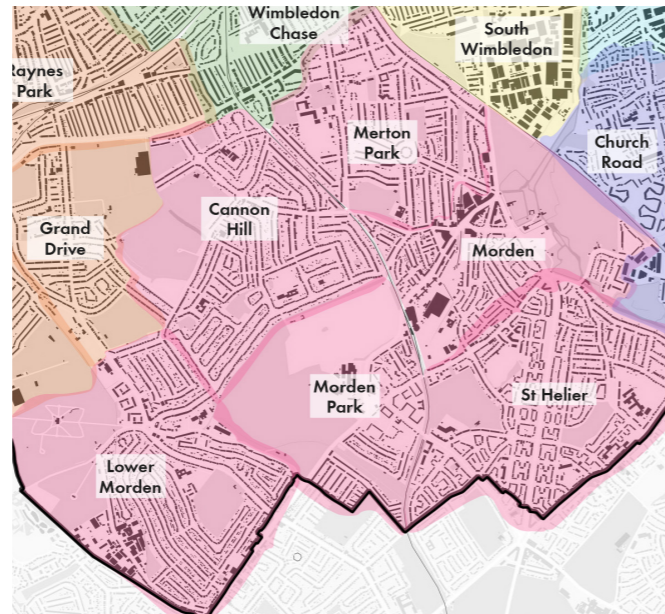
The Roman road of Stane Street continued through the Morden area of Merton, and as a result this area has a long history. Archaeological finds suggest there would have been a Roman settlement in the area. The oldest surviving buildings in the area include Morden Hall and Morden Park, both built in the second half of 18th century.

However, until the arrival of the London Underground this area remained largely rural. Through the inter-war period a new town centre (away from the historic village centre of Morden) and residential neighbourhoods grew up around Morden station, joining with Merton Park which had been developed earlier by John Innes at the end of 19th century.

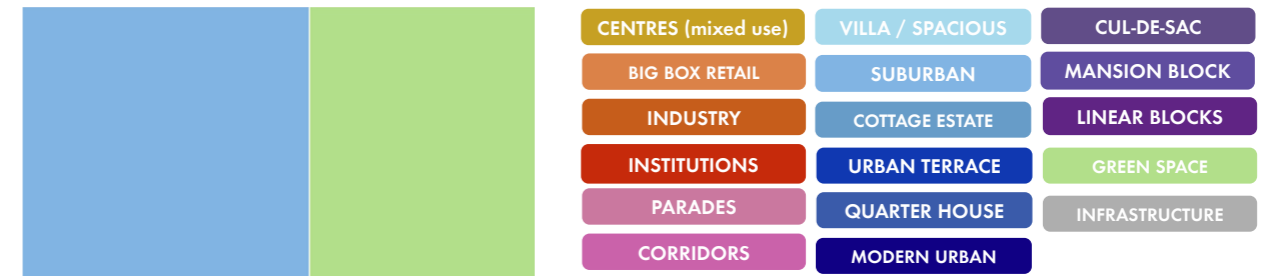
Today, the area is an attractive suburban location for Londoners. The area has a consistency in scale with dominance of inter-war and 1940/50s development. Morden Park and Morden Hall Park are two important historic features, but both could be better celebrated and integrated in the way the area has grown.

The A24 Epsom / London Road now weaves its way through the area, but remains an ancient route and important connection. The River Wandle runs along the eastern side of the area, but is also underplayed in how it relates to the Morden area.

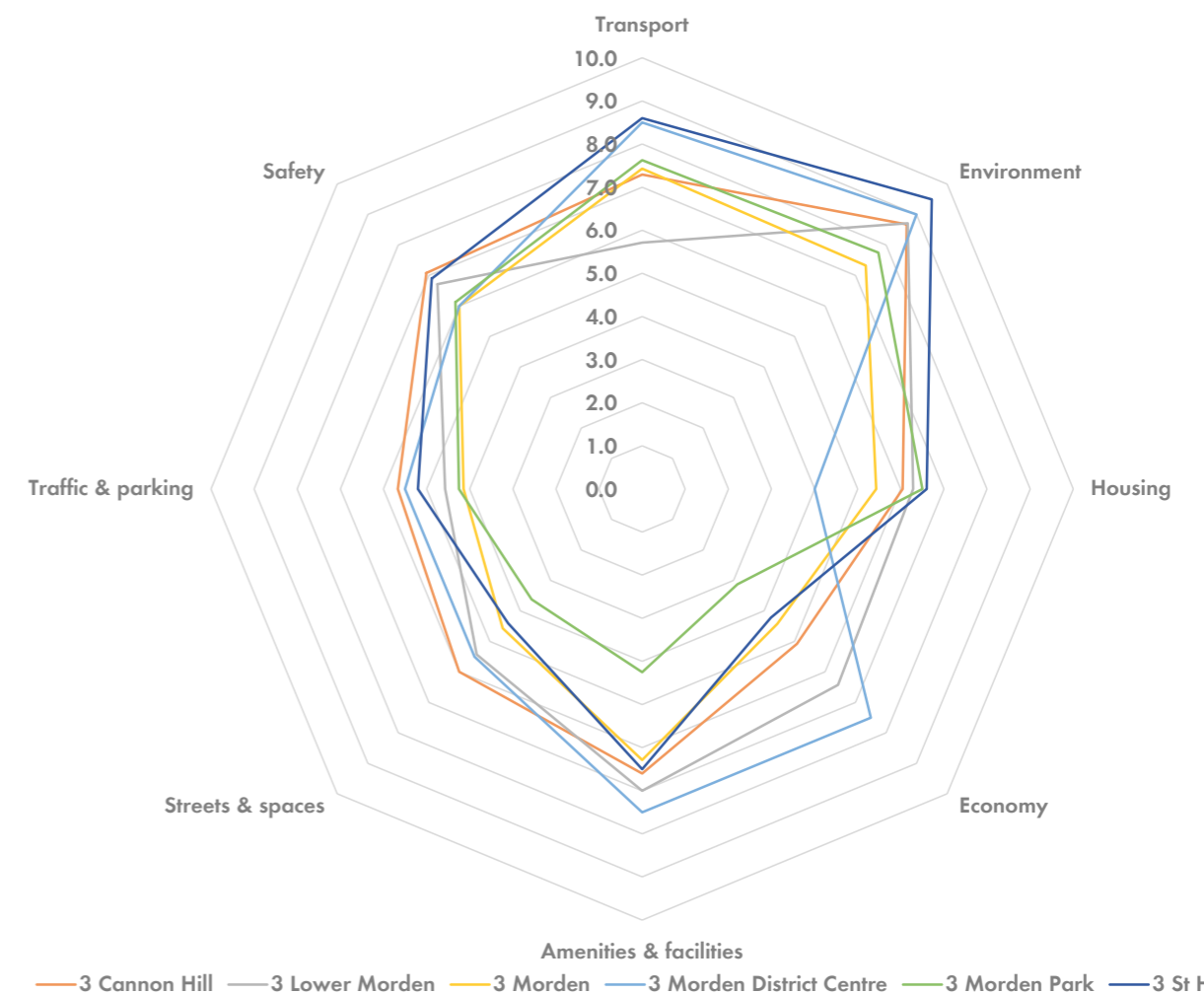
The area is made up of six residential suburban neighbourhoods, each relating to retail centres. Morden town centre is the most significant centre and has intensified over the years. The consistency in scale and built form throughout the neighbourhoods in the area means that change stand out and therefore intensification needs to be thoughtfully introduced.



A plan illustrating the neighbourhoods within the area



A graphic to illustrate the dominant types of development within the area. The Morden area is one of the most consistent in the borough with almost 85% of the area made up of only three typologies - suburban homes, green space and cottage estate homes.



Over 400 people responded to the survey for the Character Study. The graphic below illustrates the average of how satisfied residents were with the particular theme in their area.



**What you said was special**  
 Good access to transport and green spaces



**What you said was special**  
 Park, people and roads

**MORDEN**

**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Focus is the town centre - historic commercial centre developed following northern line extension in 1920s
- Beyond town centre, predominantly residential in character - low rise suburban housing with more open 'garden city' style layout to the south, and more formal denser grid layout to west.
- Apartment blocks west of town centre
- Punctuated by major movement corridors - London Road, Morden Hall Road and Aberconway Road
- Civic centre and Baitul Futuh mosque are key local landmarks
- Morden Hall Park open space with historic buildings and features scattered to south
- Excellent transport links and open spaces

**key issues / opportunities**

- Transition between densifying town centre and suburban residential could be improved, currently quite abrupt
- Poor relationship between Morden town centre and Morden Hall Park - hidden access points, busy major roads with few crossings - opportunity to improve this
- Improve pedestrian and cycling environment in centre
- Opportunity to reimagine Morden as a young and vibrant town centre through context-led mixed use development
- Barrier of railway line along park's edge to east - explore opportunities to improve connections across

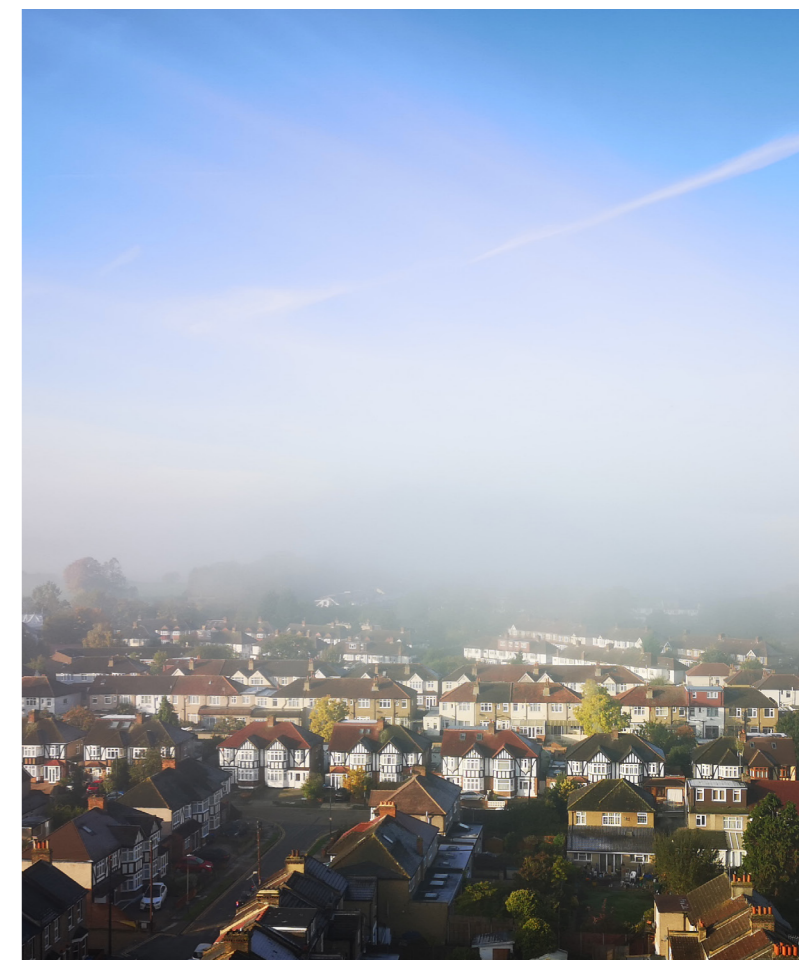
**ST HELIER**

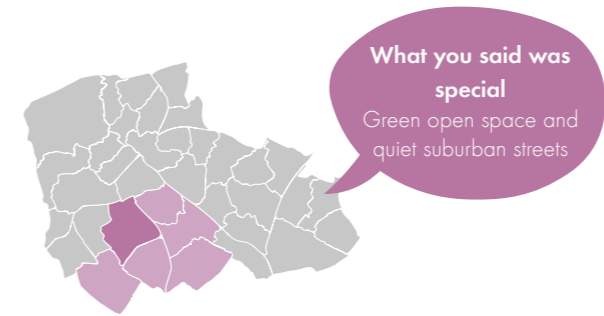
**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Focus on St Helier Avenue which cuts through the middle of the area
- London County Council (LCC) interwar planned residential estate designed with garden city characteristics - cul-de-sac comprised of red brick terraces around greens a key feature
- Large areas of open space for recreation and green verges / hedges enhancing quality and green character of area
- Shopping parades with flats above
- Morden Recreation Ground to south

**key issues / opportunities**

- Loss of front gardens to hard standing and replacement of hedges - opportunity to reinstate these
- St Helier Avenue is a busy car dominated route - opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle environment along this wide route
- Public realm improvements at shopping parades
- Explore infill opportunities for cottage style housing, potentially on corner plots





**MERTON PARK**

**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Mainly residential area with mix of late 19th century larger semi detached houses (in arts and crafts style) and later 1920s/early 1930s semi-detached and terraced housing
- Strong sense of composition with a regular plan radiating from a central circle
- Despite different stages of development, architectural features used to unite area and give it coherent character and identity
- Grassy verges, front gardens and mature trees give it a leafy and green character
- Part of area in John Innes Conservation area and several locally listed buildings
- Pockets of more recent development
- Mostyn Gardens is a large park and recreation ground which serves the area. Other planned landscape assets include Kendor Gardens and Church Lane Playing Fields

**key issues / opportunities**

- Loss of front gardens and boundary walls
- Unsympathetic alterations / extensions
- Tree planting and reinstatement of verges
- Improvements to public open space e.g. Kendor Gardens, Mostyn Gardens
- Promote walking and cycling as alternative to busy movement corridors - improve walking and cycling connections over the railway

**MORDEN PARK**

**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Morden Park a key feature of the area - extensive parkland, woodland and playing fields
- London Road forms its eastern boundary with housing beyond - 1950s free form blocks set in green space like at Hatfield Mead, and suburban interwar low rise terraced streets with garden city layout
- Haig Home estates arranged around courtyards set in landscaped surroundings
- Cluster of community uses on London Road with park setting including leisure centre, school, college campus and leisure centre
- Much of the area is included in the Upper Morden Conservation Area and there is a concentration of listed buildings

**key issues / opportunities**

- London Road is busy major movement corridor - poor pedestrian environment, sparse planting, few crossings etc - real opportunity to transform into an active travel corridor
- London Road has poor relationship with Merton Park - few access points and hidden away - opportunity to improve this
- Barrier of railway line to east restricts permeability and access
- Large areas for parking e.g. at Harvester / college - scope to review and potential to explore opportunities for infill

**CANNON HILL**

**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Spacious and suburban residential area consisting of 1920s/1930s terraces and semi-detached homes
- Garden City character at Whatley Avenue and surrounding roads
- Cannon Hill Common a key feature with woodland and meadow habitats - offers views across London
- Examples of mansion block typologies e.g. Meretune Court and Merton Mansions
- Shopping parades along key routes - Martin Way and Cannon Hill Lane
- Schools, churches, a community centre and open space are other uses
- Grassy verges are an important contributor in this area

**key issues / opportunities**

- Some neighbourhood nodes need enhancement - strengthen the role of local shopping parades and seek opportunities for intensification
- Loss of boundary walls, green verges and front gardens to hard surface detract from overall character
- Railway line acts as major barrier to northeast
- Celebrate the green spaces and improve walking and cycling links to them

**LOWER MORDEN**

**Distinctiveness - heritage and key features**

- Mainly residential - curving terraced streets with low rise interwar homes
- Garth Road transitions from residential street to predominantly industrial uses - stark contrast in character
- Key open spaces include cemetery and King George's Recreation Field
- Pockets of other non-perimeter housing typologies including free form blocks set within open spaces
- Area generally feels a little left behind and would benefit from renewed interest and investment

**key issues / opportunities**

- Improve edges of Garth Road industrial area - opportunities for intensification whilst protecting employment uses
- Above shop infill opportunities e.g. at Grand Drive shopping parade



**proposals / opportunities:**

- Reimagine character
- Re-examine character
- Repair character
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (major)
- ↔ Corridor Intensification (minor)
- Enhance parade
- ↔ Strategic greening and improvements
- ↔ Strategic improvements
- - - Active travel improvements
- - - Local green link improvements
- ↑ Improving connection to park

**baseplan:**

- Area Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Green Space
- Locally Significant Industrial Sites
- Strategic Industrial Locations
- Train/Tube/Tram Station
- ★ Strategic Landmark
- ★ Local Landmark
- Road
- Rail
- Waterway
- Waterway Link

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**Growth themes**

**Restore the London Road (A24) as a key focus through the area**

This ancient route represents a logical location for intensification and an opportunity to enhance sustainable connections. The approach would see development brought forward to positively address the route and the intensification of existing development such as retail parades. Alongside this, the wide section could be used to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure, transforming this route into a key piece in Merton's active travel network.

**Celebrate the area's historic parks**

Both Morden Park and Morden Hall Park are fantastic assets to this area, but are currently underplayed. The edges of Morden Park should be transformed to create a positive edge to the London Road and a series of celebrated entrance points from all sides. At Morden Hall Park the overall connection to the town centre should be strengthened and the quality of the environment along Morden Hall Road enhanced.

**Support the evolution of Morden town centre**

Morden is comparatively a young area in London which is still evolving and maturing. The core of the town centre needs to evolve to serve the growing community. The intensification of Morden town centre should be supported whilst establishing a transition line/zone to enable it to be comfortably set within the wider suburban neighbourhoods.

**Use the avenue streets as sustainable corridors**

Generous avenue routes such as St Helier Avenue provide great opportunities to maximise cycling and walking provision. Alongside this reallocation of space in street section, there could be a move to encourage intensification/diversification of uses at key points along their routes.

**Recognise Morden South station as a key future node**

The area around Morden South station has seen the growth of some key uses, most notably the mosque. The presence of key community assets such as the mosque and Morden Park, and the accessibility of this node afforded by the station and A24 route, make it a strong location for intensification which would benefit the nearby suburban residential areas.

**Reveal the waterways**

The River Wandle runs along the eastern boundary of the area and opportunities exist along this stretch to regenerate adjacent sites as has been achieved in Mitcham along the river. Introducing new development fronting on to the river alongside environmental improvements would ensure Morden benefits fully from the presence of the Wandle. In addition, there are other watercourses currently hidden which could be revealed as positive environmental features in the wider area.