

Ravensbury RA Response to Stage 3 Local Plan for Ravensbury

1.0 Introduction:

This is the Ravensbury Residents Association response to Merton Council's Stage 3 Pre-Submission Local Plan for Ravensbury.

2.0 Overview of Report

In the Stage 3 report, it does appear that very little attention has been paid to certain aspects of the residents Stage 2 responses. We would like the Planning Inspector to request copies of all of these Stage 2 responses in order to independently ascertain to what extent the residents own views have been overruled by the council officers own personal viewpoints which lack proper professional substantiation relative to the actual experience of living in Ravensbury the residents themselves.

Case in point is EP R1 para 3.242 (page 150) concerning the reversal of the Ravensbury Court flats. At all stages of this consultation, many residents have said that this is a ridiculous idea, but Merton Council have chosen to retain this idea even at Stage 3, showing lack of regard to consultation responses.

It also appears that conversations between the council and their housing partner Circle Housing (now Clarion/Latimer) have exerted excessive influence in certain aspects of this final version of the Local Plan.

Case in point are the references to the area of Ravensbury Garages at the southern end of Ravensbury Grove. At first this area was barely even referred to in the draft Local Plan, due to Merton Council's desire to sell off the site as quickly as possible, & thereby advancing the push for demolition of the Ravensbury Estate. This area has now been granted planning permission in advance of the Local Plan being finalised. This seems to be an attempt to usurp the proper process of consultation for the Local Plan, and therefore the push for regeneration and the consultation itself has been seen as an affront to Ravensbury community at large. This is why many residents feel it to be pointless to partake in the consultation.

3.0 Previous Responses to Stage 2

It should be noted that we have provided extensive responses to Stage 2 of the Local Plan, but have observed that some of these points have been ignored by Merton Council and their Future Merton team at Stage 3. Those responses will not be extensively repeated here but we hope they will be reviewed by the Planning Inspector.

4.0 Policy EP R1: Townscape

Paragraph 3.242 makes mention of the reversal of Ravensbury Court flats. This idea was revealed to the residents of Ravensbury Court who thought the idea preposterous. They were more than happy with their current layout as it provides the privacy & intimacy of a post-war mews type arrangement. Furthermore, the interior courtyard provides for a sense of community and has done for a number of generations. It seems that the council is unhappy with a cohesive community such as Ravensbury and it is also unhappy that such an enormous amount of scorn has been poured upon their ideas. This idea has to be one of the most ridiculous ones ever meted out on a thoroughly undeserving number of residents.

In paragraph 3.243, Ravensbury Court is said to have "a rather dead frontage". Some residents thought it might be nice to be able to access the grassed areas through a new back door, but none thought it a good

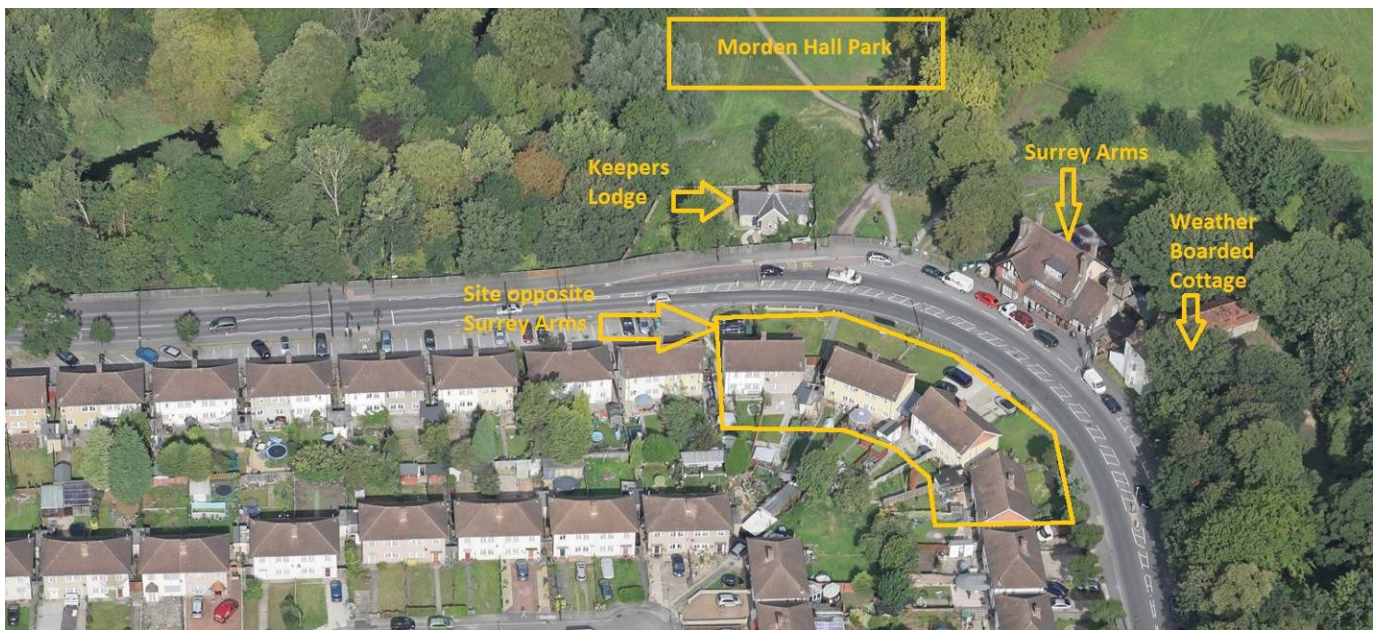
2 Ravensbury Residents Association - 3rd February 2017

idea to actually reverse the entire layout to suit. Why this idea has been retained at Stage 3 is beyond any understanding. It should be also noted that residents did not want further concrete patios to be installed to the rear of their properties.

Photographs and Diagrams relevant to Section EP R1:



Image above: Corner of Morden Road at the Surrey Arms, Image below: Aerial image of same





Images above: Ravensbury Park entrance onto Morden Road



Images above: Ravensbury Court



Images above: Ravensbury Court



Images above: Ravensbury area including Hengelo Gardens, Rutter Gardens, Hatfeild Close & Ravensbury Grove



Above: Aerial view of Ravensbury as a whole



Above: The significant tree-line when observed from Ravensbury Court & Hengelo Gardens





Image: Ravensbury Park Entrance onto Morden Road



Images above: Ravensbury Mill



Image: Better locations for pedestrian crossings

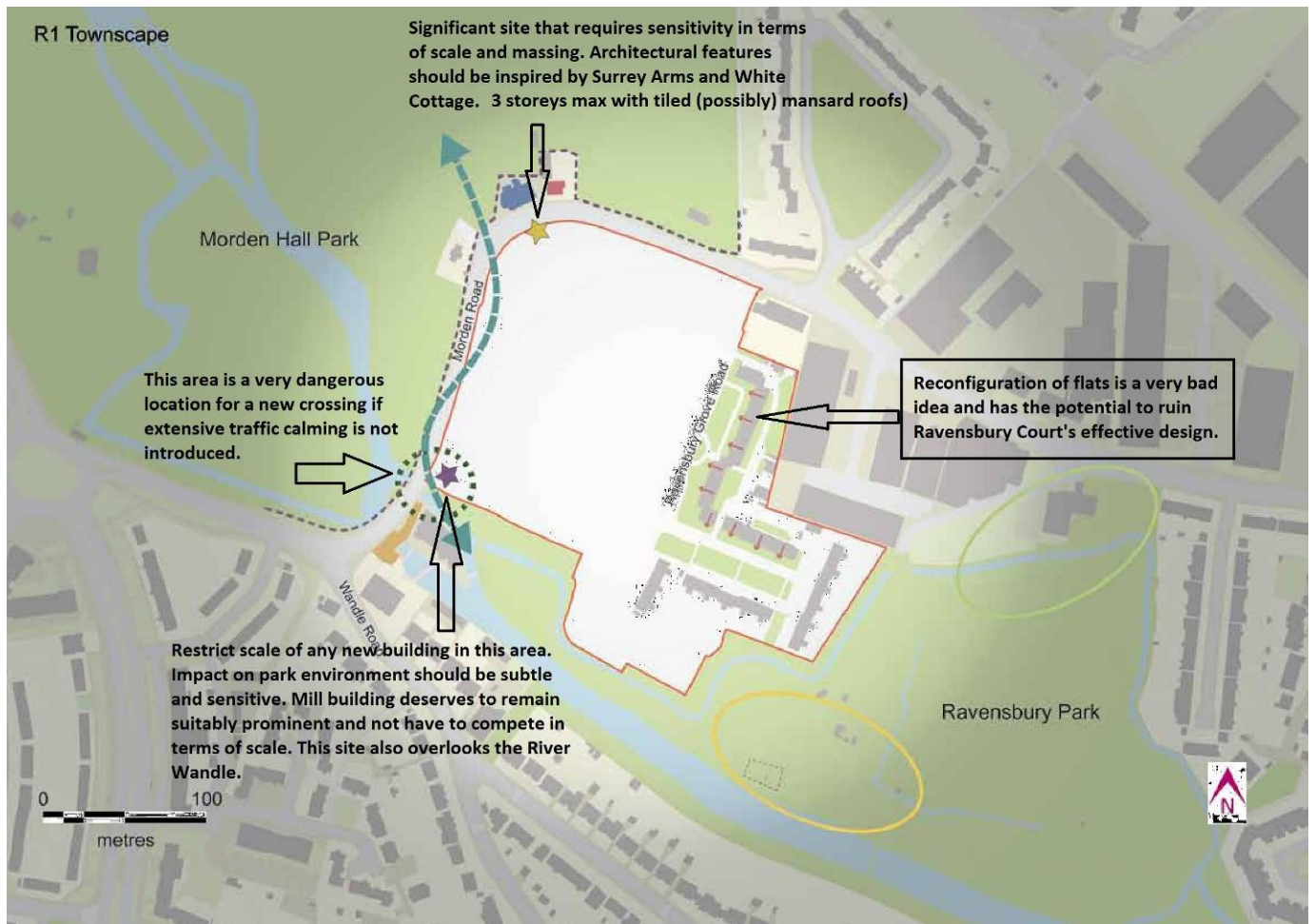


Image: Page 152 - R1 Townscape Map.

5.0 Policy EP R2: Street Network

EP R2 part b) states that Ravensbury Grove MUST be extended fully to the boundary of Ravensbury Park, suggesting that a paved area or road should be run right up to the park. However this ignores the fact that the southern end of Ravensbury Grove forms designated open space land that has been used by residents for access to the park as well as an area for leisure pursuits and relaxation ever since the estate was built. This area must not be lost. For many years this has formed a transition zone from park to estate. This area has been invaluable to residents as it presents an introduction to the estate and also actively extends the park into the estate. We feel that the report serves to undervalue this grassed space in order to enable excessive construction density.

In paragraph 3.252, the Morden Road access lane should be retained. Flood attenuation measures can be served without removal of this area which currently serves as shared space and for incidental play.

In paragraph 3.253, residents have repeatedly rejected the potential for a new access onto Morden Road. A new access would ruin the secluded nature of the estate, which it should be noted is considered by both residents and professionals as a high quality of the area, allowing for relaxation, seclusion from the busy main road and a very high quality of living for those away from the main road.

Running a straight Ravensbury Grove up to the park will also serve to destroy the tranquillity of this area. It should also be noted that Ravensbury Grove will need speed attenuation measures in order to reduce speeding in future. There is little mention in this report of speeding and prevention of anti social behaviour through motorbikes or speeding cars.



Image above: Southern part of Ravensbury Grove with effective traffic measures



Image above: Southern part of Ravensbury Grove with effective traffic measures



Image above: Southern extremity of Ravensbury Grove on approach to park.



Image above: Hengelo Gardens & grassed areas with parking facilities.



Image above: Pedestrian Movement from Ravensbury towards park & tramstops

6.0 Policy EP R3: Movement & Access

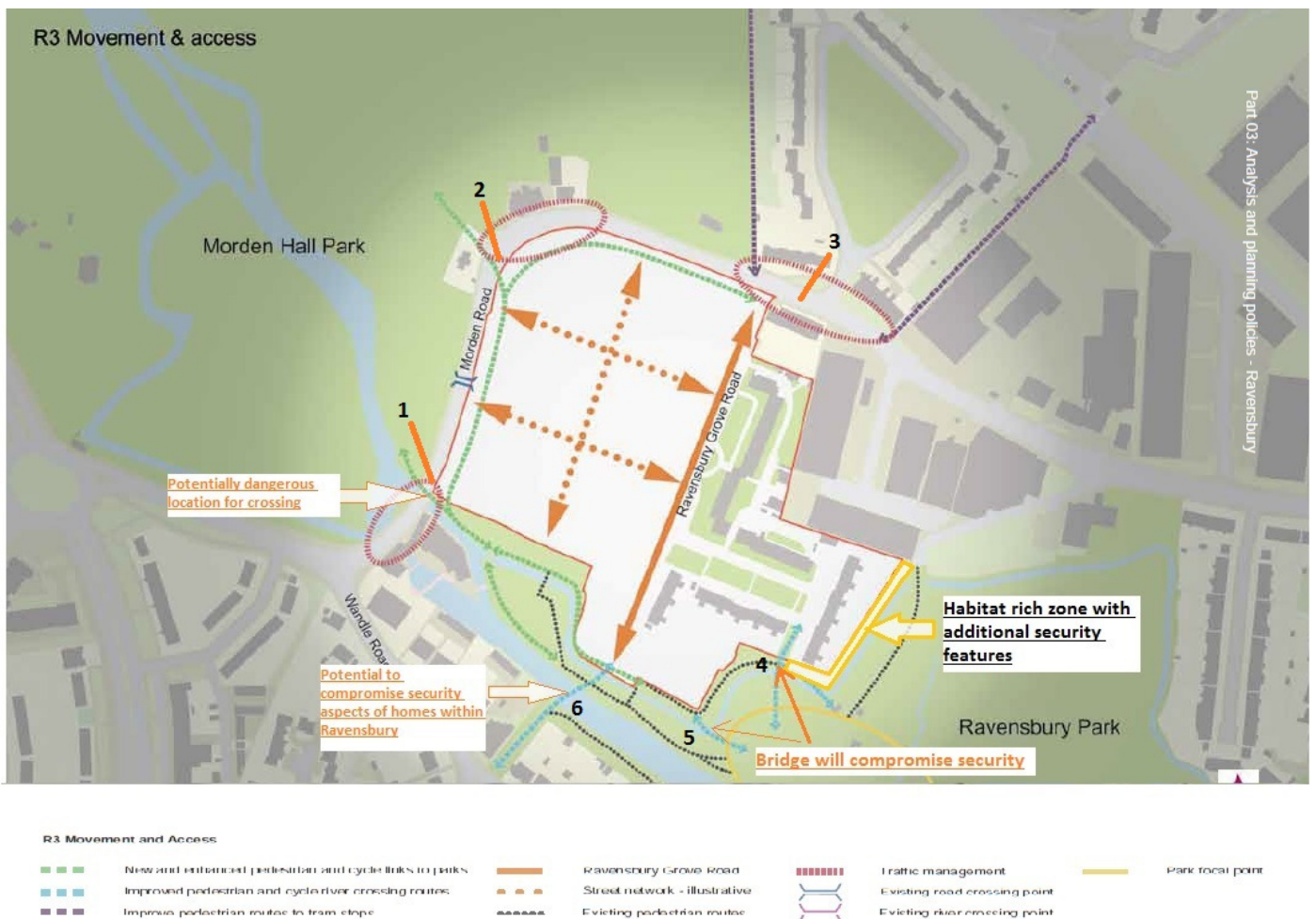
Little has been said of the Ravensbury Urban Design review report by Sue McGlynn Urban Design Ltd, in which mention is made in regards to:

"However, it is important not to make the estate over-permeable as this will undermine seclusion for residents and disperse movement and activity without any real gains in wider connectivity."

Our residents back this concept and feel that the theme of permeability is exaggerated in terms of the benefits to Ravensbury.

We feel that there has been no suggestion to improve links with Morden in terms of crossing Morden Road. Removal of the current crossing and moving it towards the Surrey Arms helps leisure usage but does nothing to encourage the safe passage of commuters. Inclusion of another crossing at the junction of Wandle Road would be preferable due to the fact that many people attempt the dangerous crossing in order to shorten the journey towards Morden. This should form part of the traffic calming measures suggested.

Ravensbury Grove will need speed attenuation measures in order to reduce speeding in future. There is little mention in this report of speeding here and prevention of anti social behaviour through motorbikes or speeding cars.



Images above: R3 Movement & Access with annotations

7.0 Policy EP R4: Land Use

Densities are key to the character of Ravensbury and should be moderated in an area of such outstanding character. We are concerned that there is little here in this section than fully reflects the unique environment of the Ravensbury estate and the need to restrict the densities to the benefit of the immediate area and that of Merton generally.

8.0 Policy EP R5: Open Space

The open space directly adjacent to Ravensbury Park has the potential to be of lower quality than that currently in existence. In fact, the planning permission for Ravensbury Garages has already implied that the actual quality of the space is a feature that lacks proper interrogation. We would request that the language in this section be strengthened to preserve high quality views and appreciation of Ravensbury Park. Replacing the total area of say a grassed space with chunks of gardens that will no longer be public space is not the correct reinterpretation of open space. Also suggesting that the sum area of patches of grass placed around a paved area is equal to the previously large expanse of grass that provided for an extensive view of the park and also provided communal leisure space, seems an incorrect deployment of planning guidance. Positioning a building in the direct line of sight of the park seems against the spirit of planning itself.

Essentially, the division of a large open space into multiple area and redistributing those parts around an area in piecemeal fashion should be proscribed in this section. This would enable the quality of the space and environment to be retained and enhanced.



Image above: Southern extremity of Ravensbury Grove on approach to park.

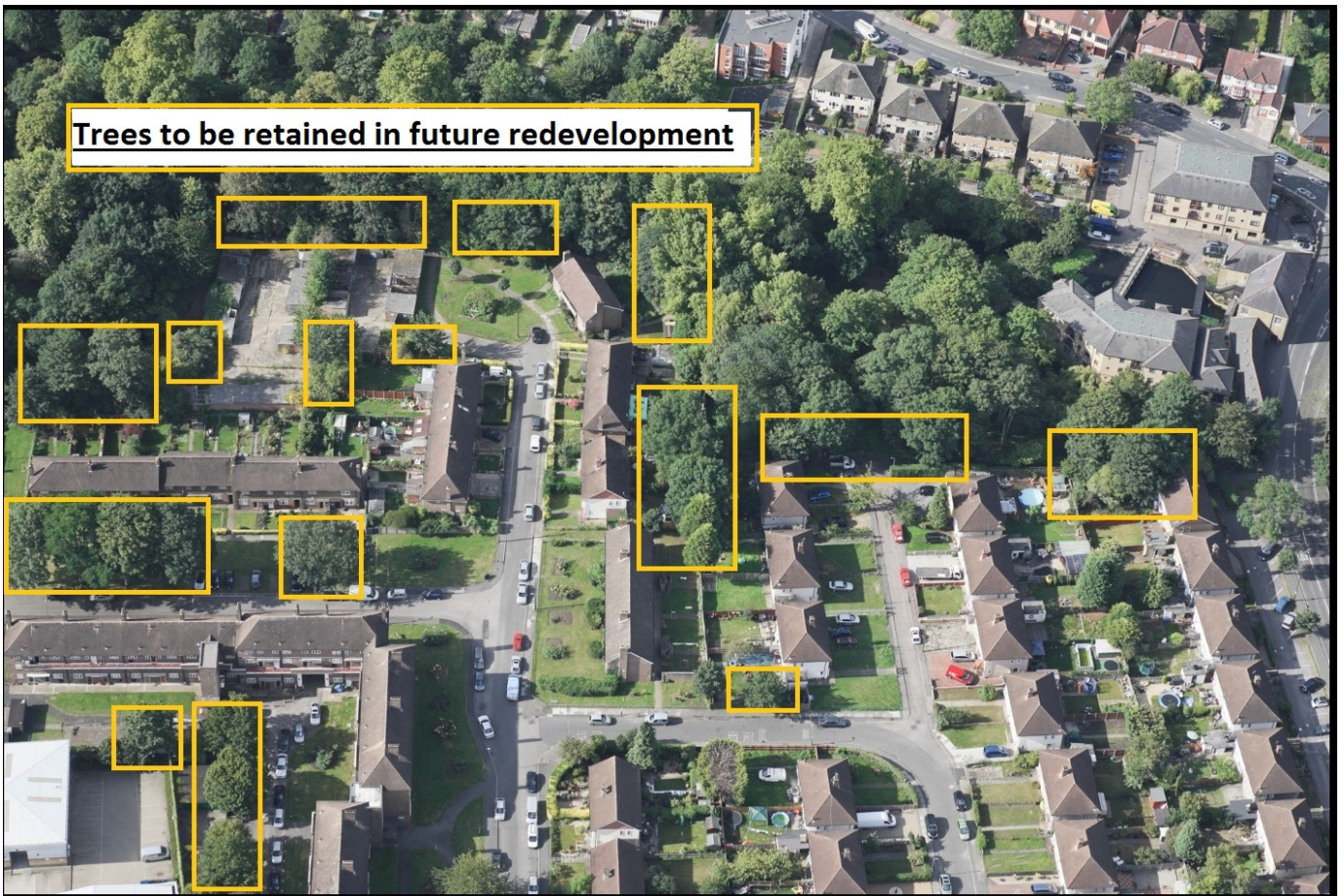


Image above: Trees within the Ravensbury Estate requiring proper survey & retention

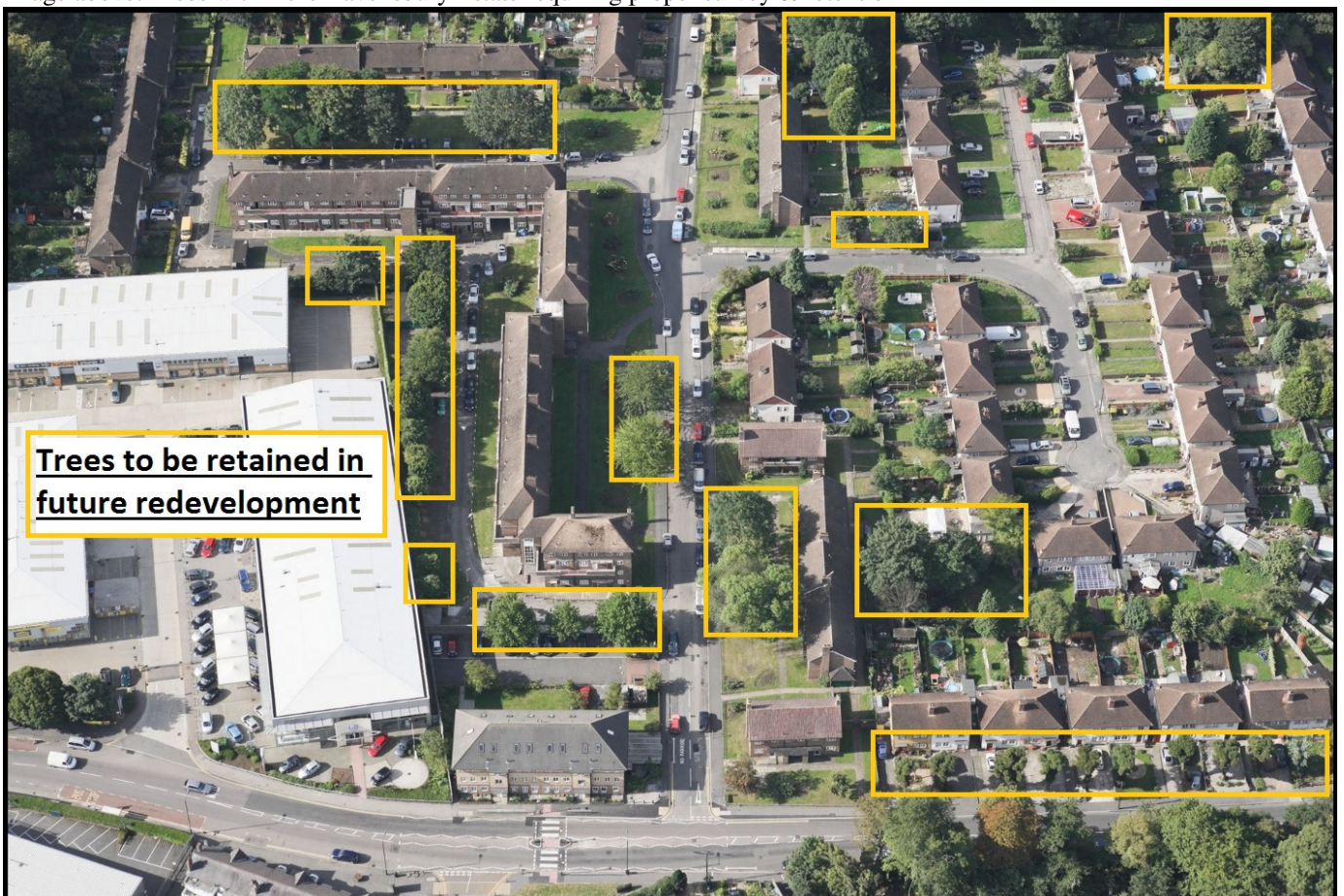


Image above: Trees under threat within the Ravensbury Estate requiring proper survey & retention

9.0 Policy EP R6: Environmental Protection

Little seems to be said in regards to the creation and promotion of habitat within the estate as the current estate layout provides for wildlife through its large gardens, extensive number of trees and shrubbery. The new estate should readily incorporate wildlife provision through the planting of hedges, trees and general shrubs. There will otherwise be a sum loss of wildlife & habitat through the regeneration of Ravensbury.

Gardens and even homes themselves should be designed to actively promote wildlife in the form of birds, invertebrates and small mammals.

Green roofs could be incorporated but there seems to be no mention of this.

Maintenance of the banks of the Wandle needs to be controlled by means of a wildlife statement detailing when its ok to trim vegetation and which trees should be left alone. We have had recent cases of Merton Council instructing their tree surgeon contractors to cut back the trees and carry out their own risk assessments. We think risk assessments for wildlife need to be created independently in such a sensitive area frequented by roosting bats and other creatures. Independent wildlife risk assessments should be incorporated into part n)

In terms of flooding, nothing has been said of the Ravensbury Mill which has two channels already, one hidden beneath the mill, and one that runs alongside. This suggests that there is no need for a small channel along Morden Road and that such a channel would actively promote flooding due to the contours of the land in the area.

Existing flow paths could be exacerbated by the incorrect provision of roads and openings on to Morden Road. Provision should be made for studies to examine the impact of the road layout on flooding and the modifications required to improve the situation.

In paragraph 3.289 we think it advisable to agree where the top of the bank of the main river actually lies, and to consider the reinstatement of the bank where possible if this is of benefit to the wildlife habitat.

In paragraph 3.291, the use of open swales could suggest the use of gravel, but we do not think this particularly suit the estate character and does little to encourage earth worms which are a staple diet of many creatures in the area. We request that grassed swale area are considered equally.

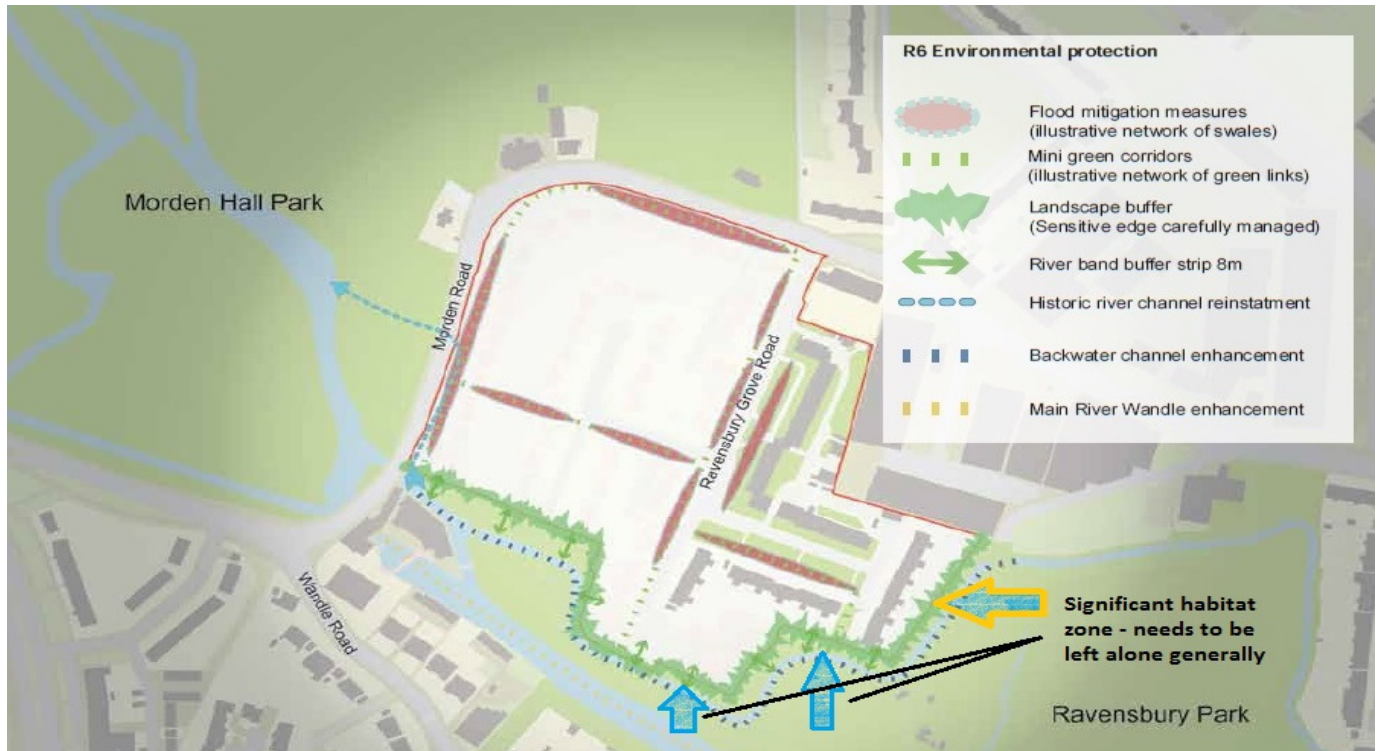


Image above: R6 annotated with observations

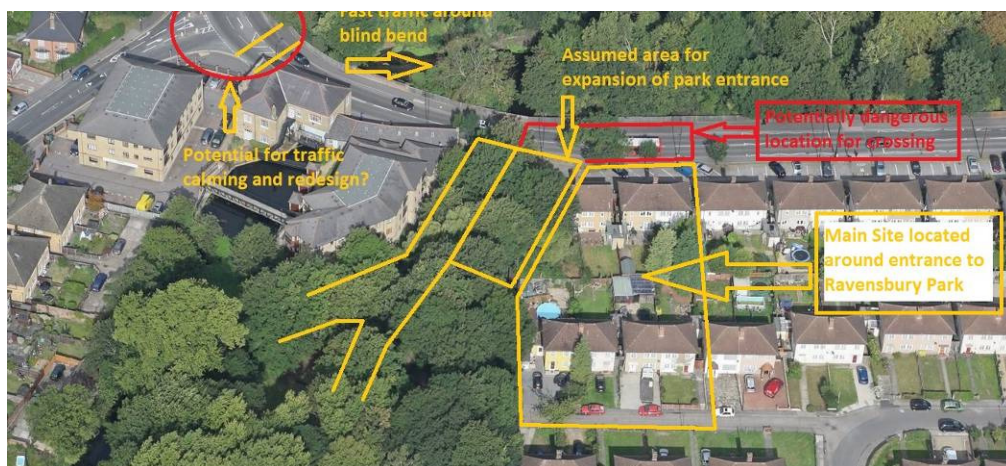
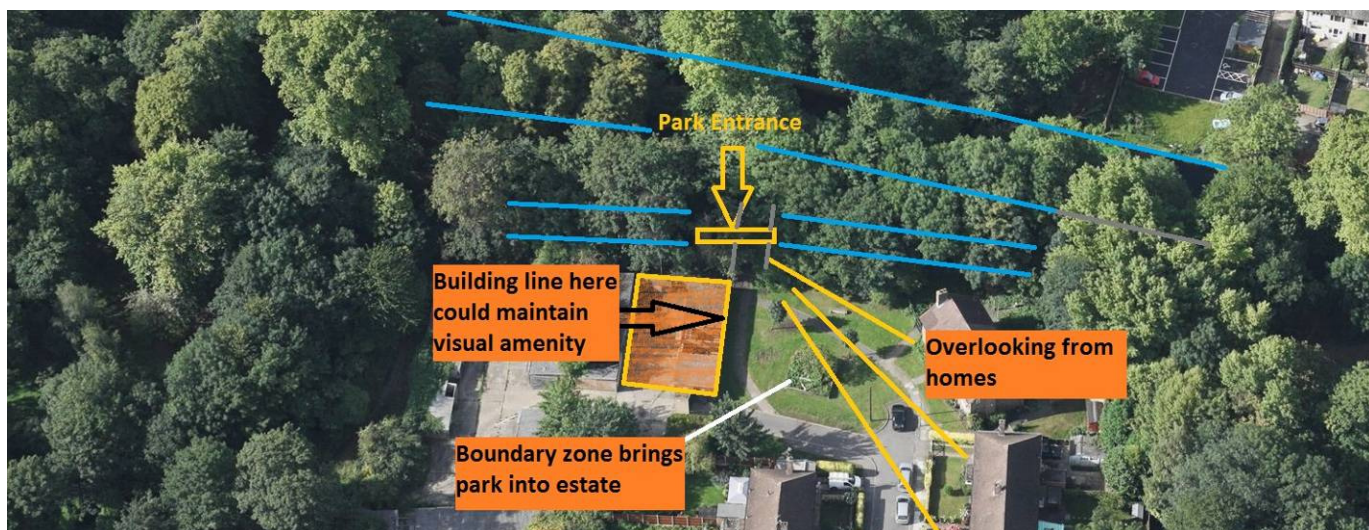
10.0 Policy EP R7: Landscape

Nothing has been said of the extensive area at the southern end of Ravensbury Grove and how the Ravensbury area will be made worse by the overdevelopment of this uniquely sensitive area. Excessive height here impact on the entirety of Ravensbury estate and will also damage the park itself. The public views here should be mostly retained, otherwise they will be lost forever.

We have included our response to the planning application as this covers many of the salient points in regards to Landscape in Ravensbury. Please see Appendix 3.0, attached separately.



Images: View towards garages at southern end of Ravensbury Grove (LHS) & Existing buildings & glade (RHS)



11.0 Policy EP R8: Building Heights

We think that "taller buildings must be located around the edge of the estate" is open to misinterpretation, and that more specifically Morden Road should be defined as the location for slightly higher buildings. Ravensbury Grove must not receive taller buildings and neither must the southern boundary with Ravensbury Park.

It should be noted that Ravensbury Court is actually a part 3 and part 4 storey building. The part 3 storey is closer to the park and does not attempt to compete with the surrounding tree canopy. This should inform future buildings to not exceed 3 storeys in height. The 4 storey element of Ravensbury Court actually serves to screen the industrial estate. Therefore any building of 4 storeys in height will effectively screen the tree canopy of Morden Hall Park and Ravensbury Park, which should be fully proscribed.

We think it unfortunate that no mention of storey heights has been made in section EP R8.

The character of Ravensbury is made up of the scale of the buildings. Along Ravensbury Grove, buildings should not exceed 3 storeys, preferably with the uppermost storey being contained within the roof. In fact 3 storeys incorporating roof space living is an ideal height around Ravensbury as it enables higher density without excessively impacting on the character and environment. Mansard roofs could be employed to good use in this respect.

It is important not to compete with the 4 storey element of Ravensbury Court as the result will ruin the character of the area.



View across Ravensbury Grove (LHS) & View behind Hengelo Gardens towards garages area (RHS)



View of Rutter Gardens (LHS) & View towards Hatfeild Close (RHS)



Views around Ravensbury Court showing established mature trees forming a vital backdrop



Image: Northern End of Ravensbury Grove showing significant trees and two storey construction befitting landscape



Gladed area where Ravensbury Park extends into Ravensbury Grove: requires enhancing & preserving

Image: Southern end of Ravensbury Grove showing gladed area where park blends with estate.

Tree locations requiring retention in order to preserve character of Ravensbury

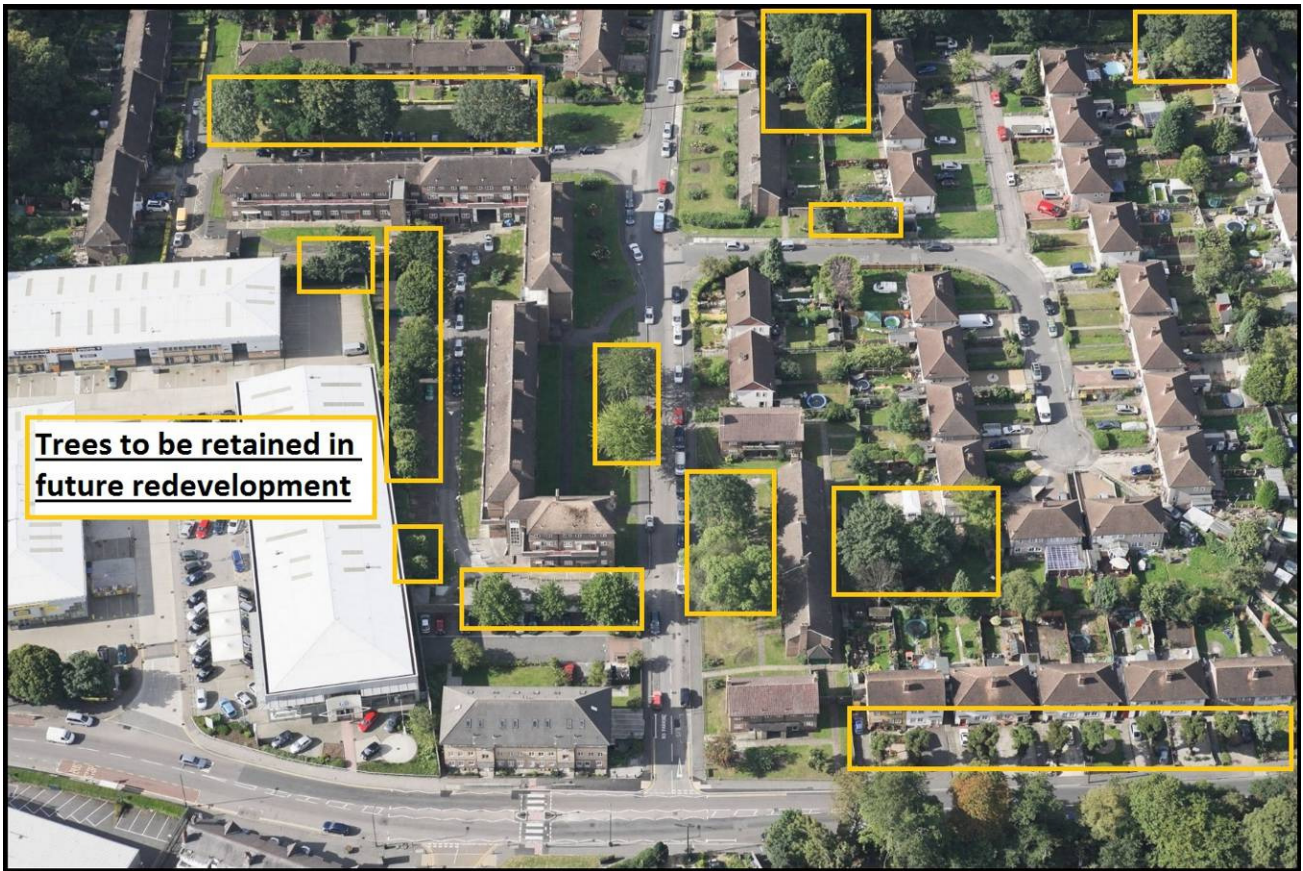


Image above: Trees to be retained in Northern end of Ravensbury

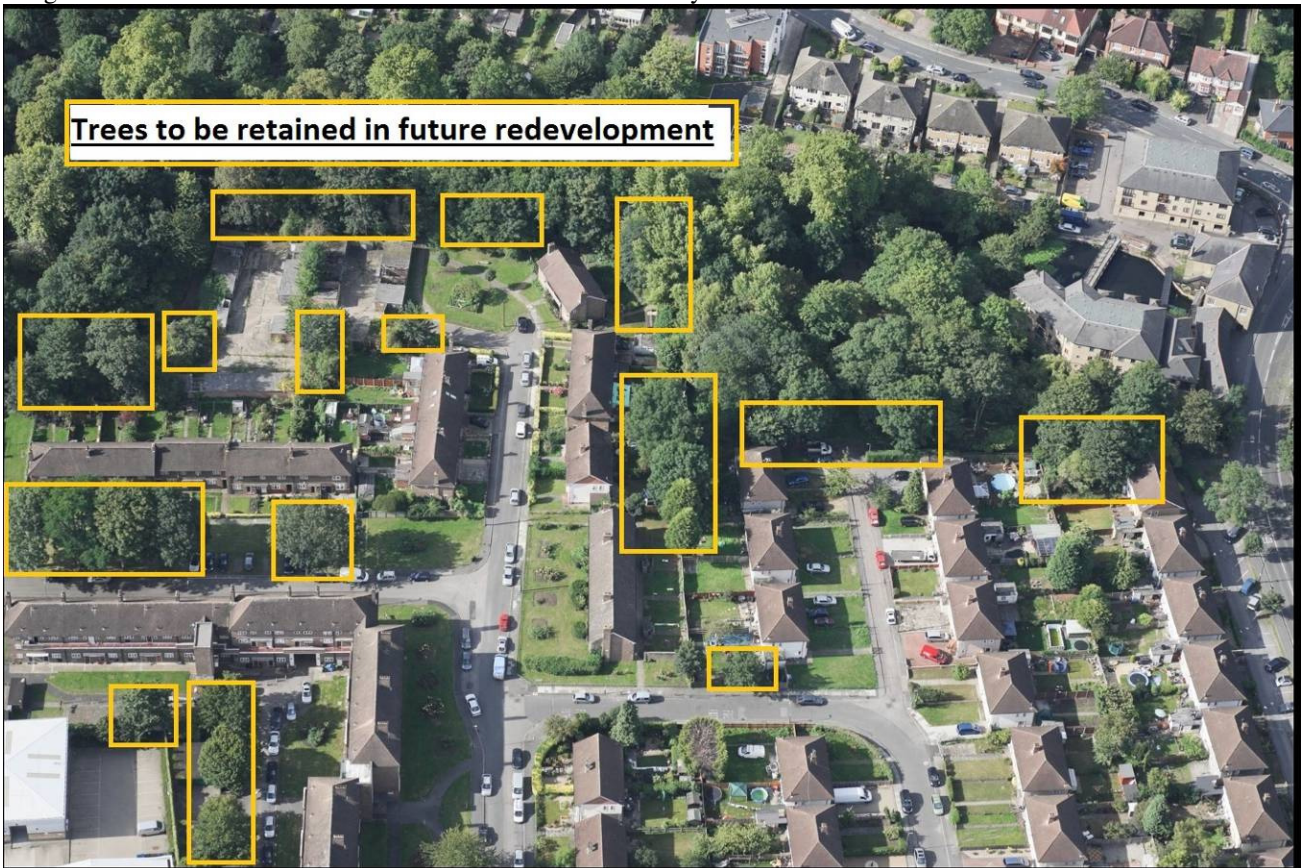


Image above: Trees to be retained in Southern end of Ravensbury

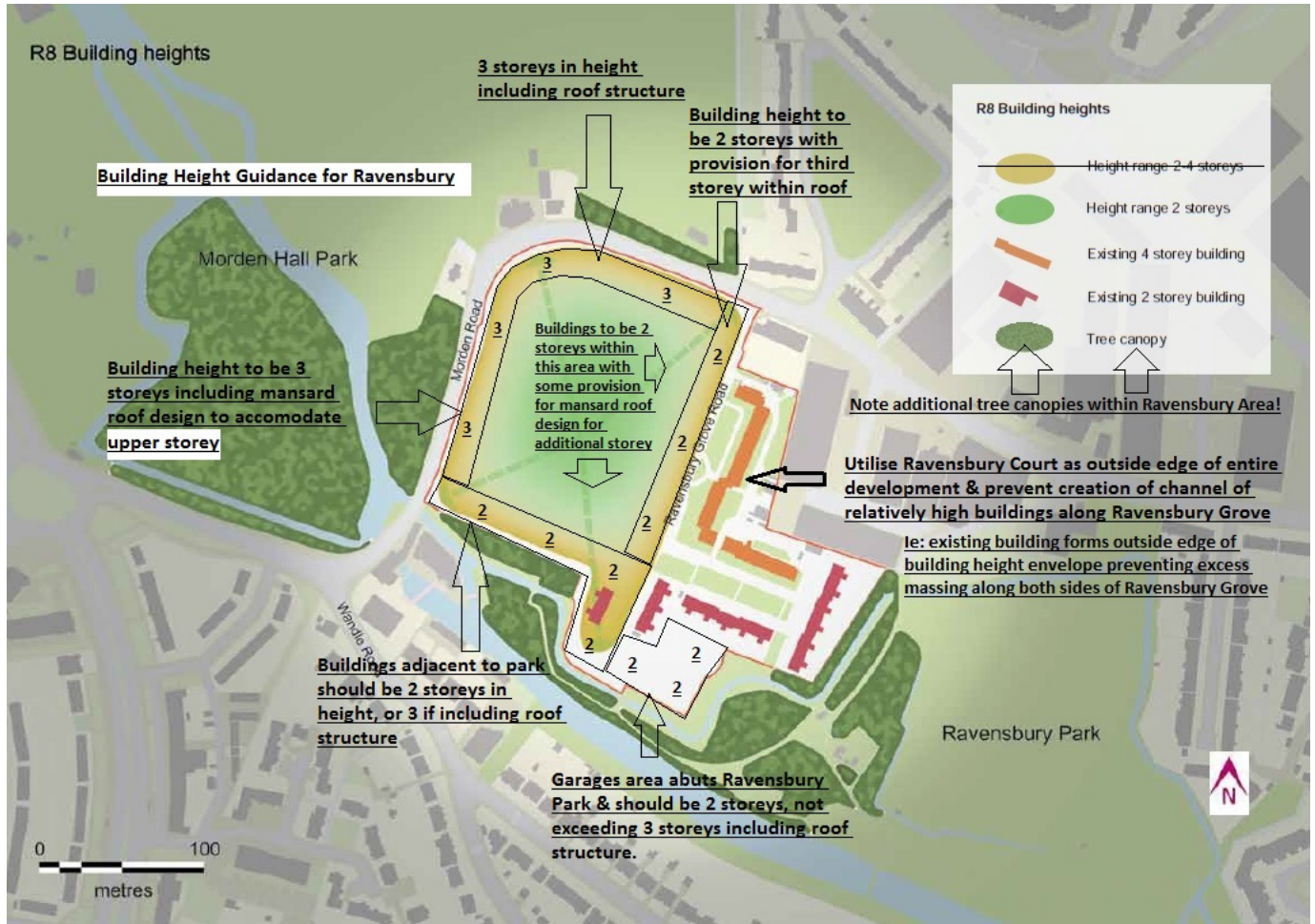


Image above: Effect on views from existing buildings towards garages area



Image above: Effect on views from Ravensbury Court across Ravensbury areas



Image above: Views from Ravensbury Court looking West

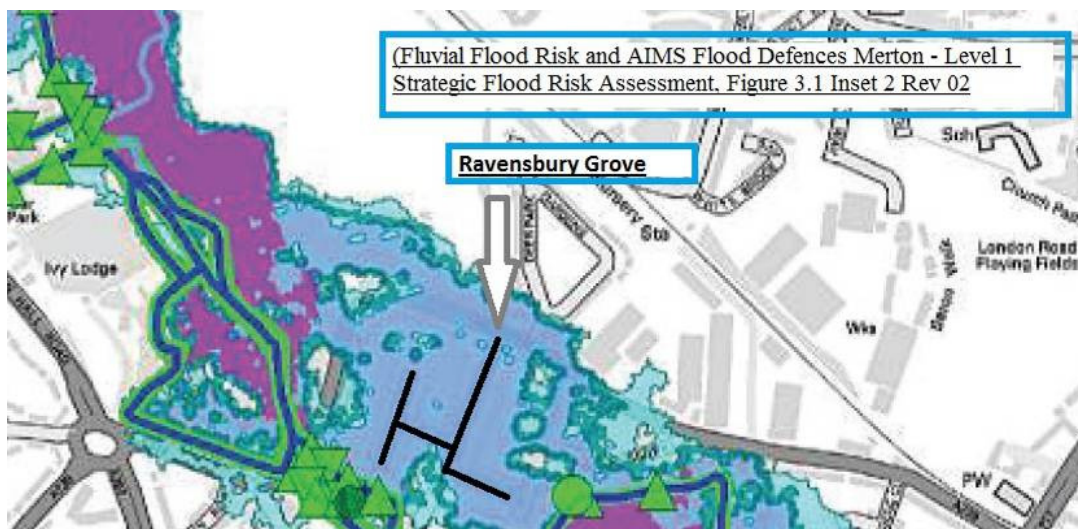




Image above: Extents of Ravensbury Estate/Village



Image above: View along Hatfeild Close with tree-line including Morden Hall Park beyond.



Images above: Southwest & Northwest corners of Ravensbury Village



Images above: Southeast & Northeast corners of Ravensbury Village

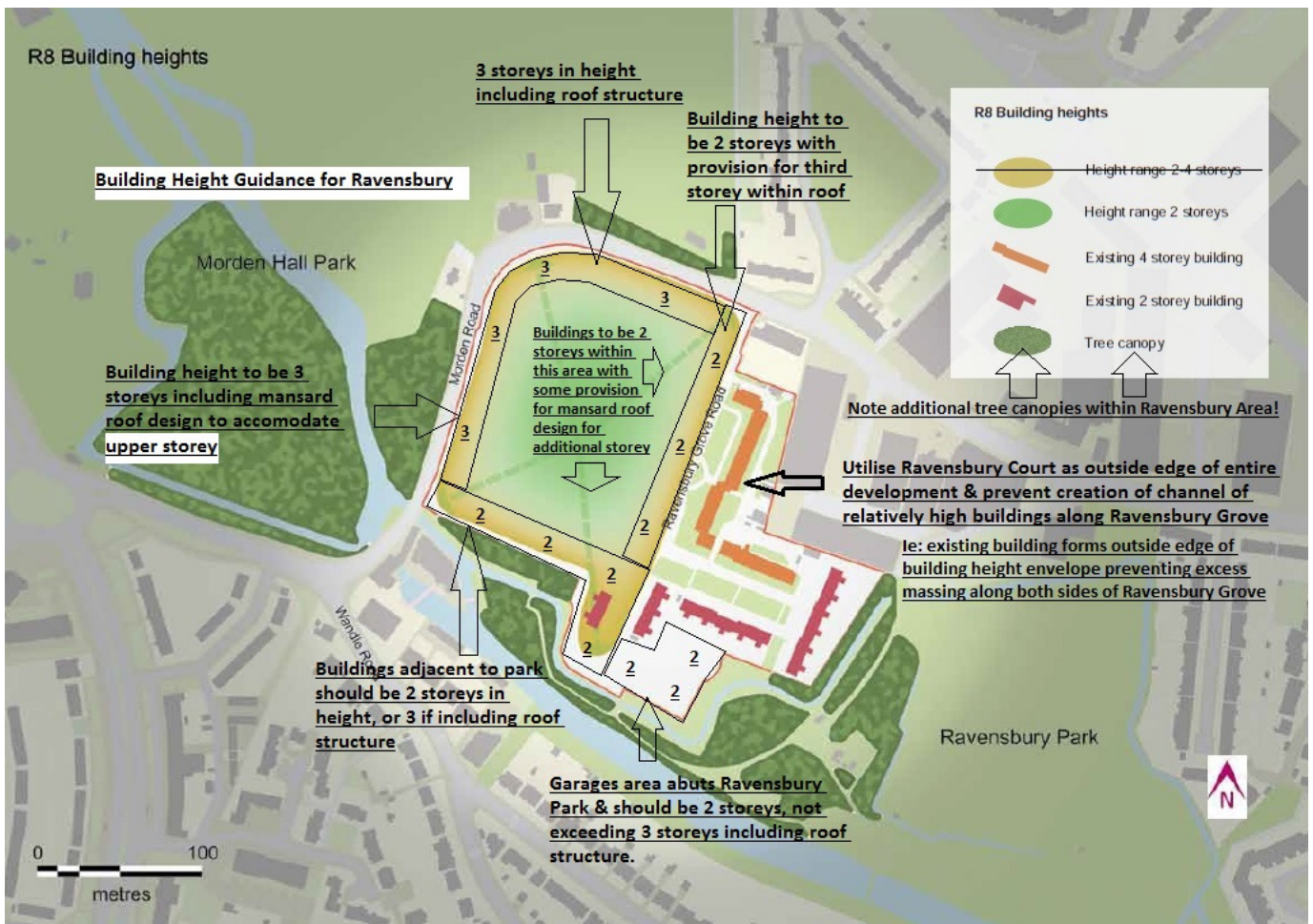


Image above: annotated R8 Building Heights map with guidance on heights proposed

14.0 Conclusion:

Whilst we appreciate this opportunity to guide the future of Ravensbury, we also think that many opportunities are being lost. Namely those that will preserve the unique character and environment of Ravensbury.

The now 4 year old push for regeneration has resulted in a great deal of anger from residents. This has been due to the high levels of disregard meted out by the housing association's regen team towards existing members of the Ravensbury community.

Many residents are only too aware of the beauty that resides in Ravensbury and the fact that any redevelopment will effectively scar the setting of the area and result in a net loss of area afforded to social housing and quite possibly the loss of quality public space. The fact that the self same regen team meet with the council's Future Merton on a regular basis only serves to muddy any possible concept of impartiality during the assembly of the Estates Local Plan.

We therefore hope that the information we have provided enables the independent Planning Inspector to judge this document appropriately & fairly.

Christopher Holt, Chair RRA.

Ravensbury Residents Association.

APPENDIX 1.0 : 3D Renders of our understanding of the proposals

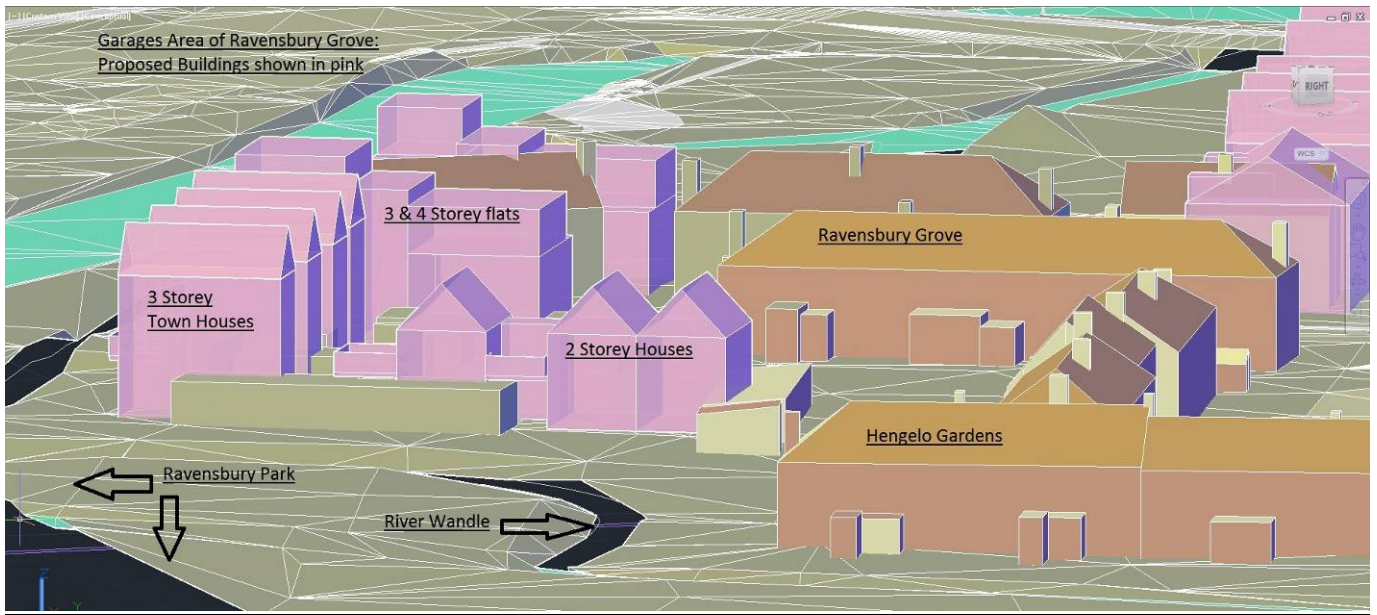




Image above: proposed buildings shown in pink with Orlit homes (etc) shown in white

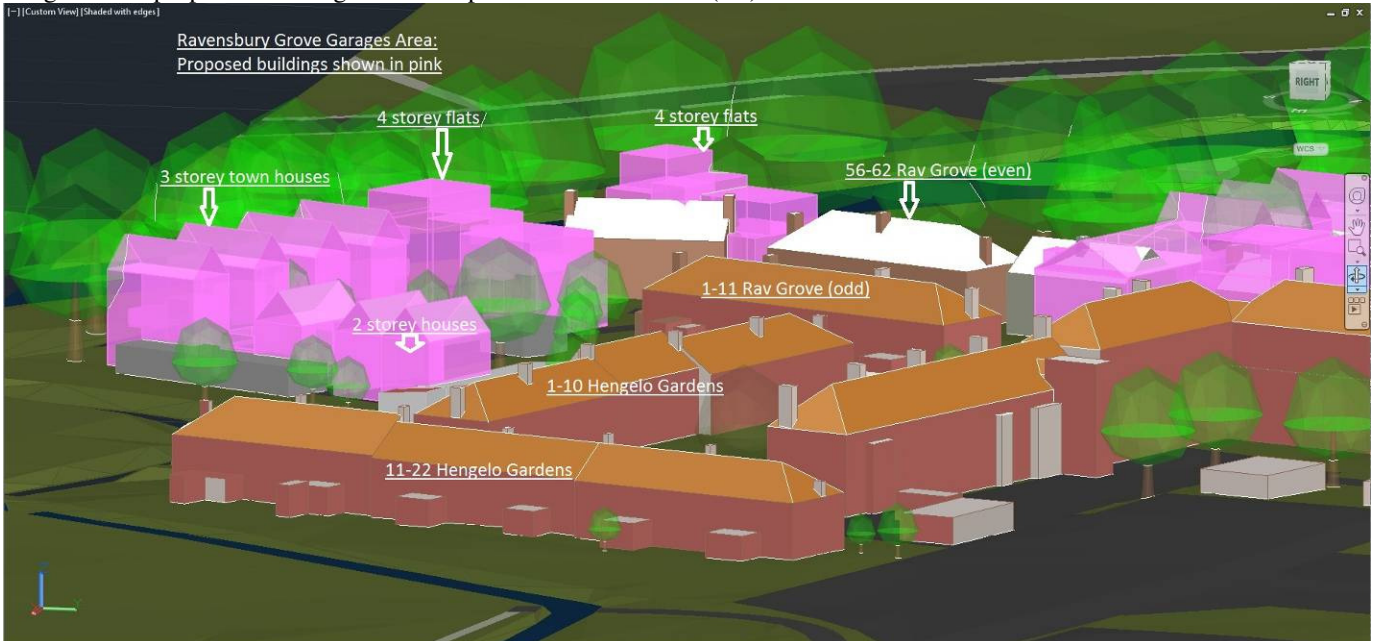


Image above: proposed buildings shown in pink with Ravensbury & Hengelo homes (etc) shown in orange

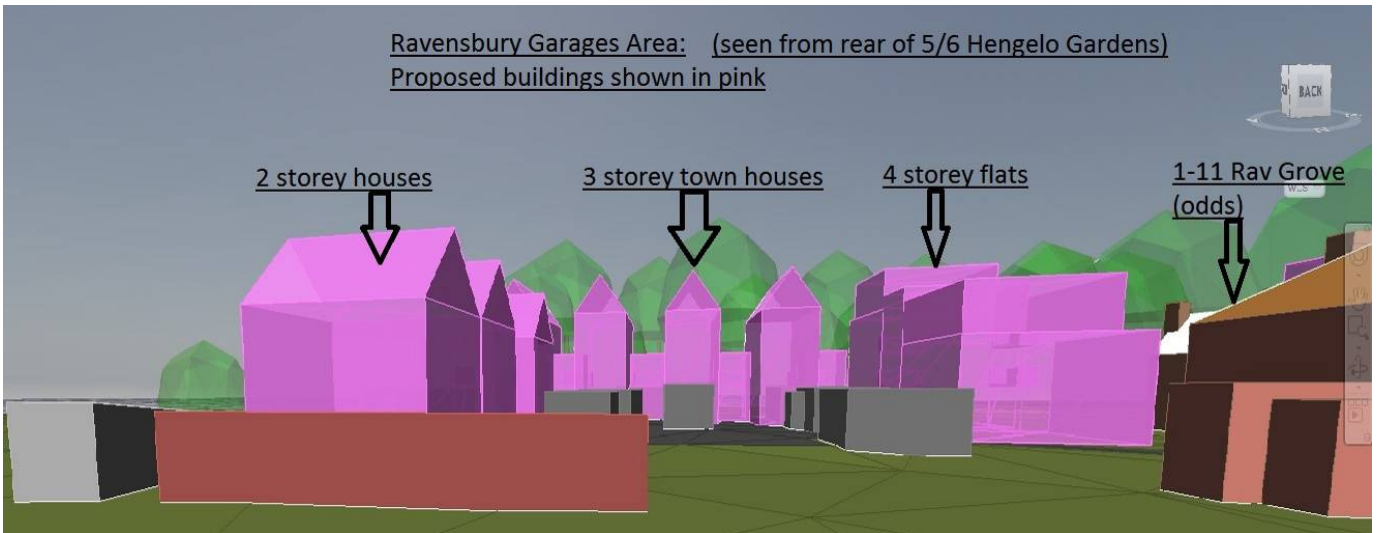


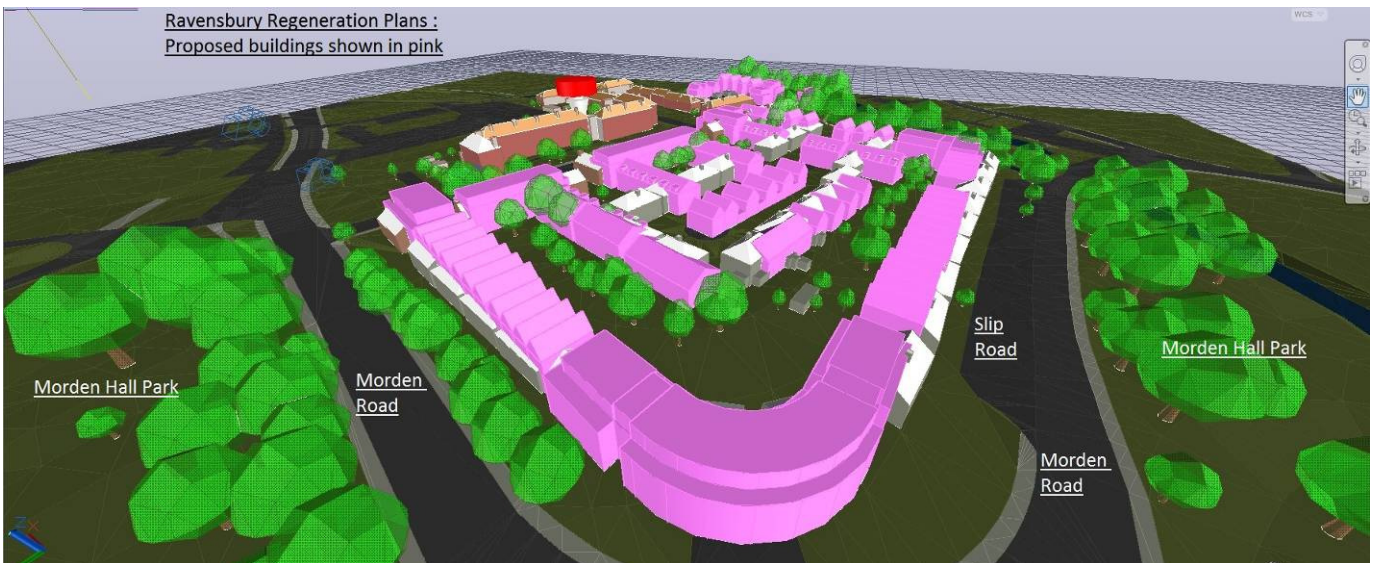
Image above: Garages area seen from Hengelo Gardens proposed buildings shown in pink



Image above: proposed buildings showing proposed redevelopment density

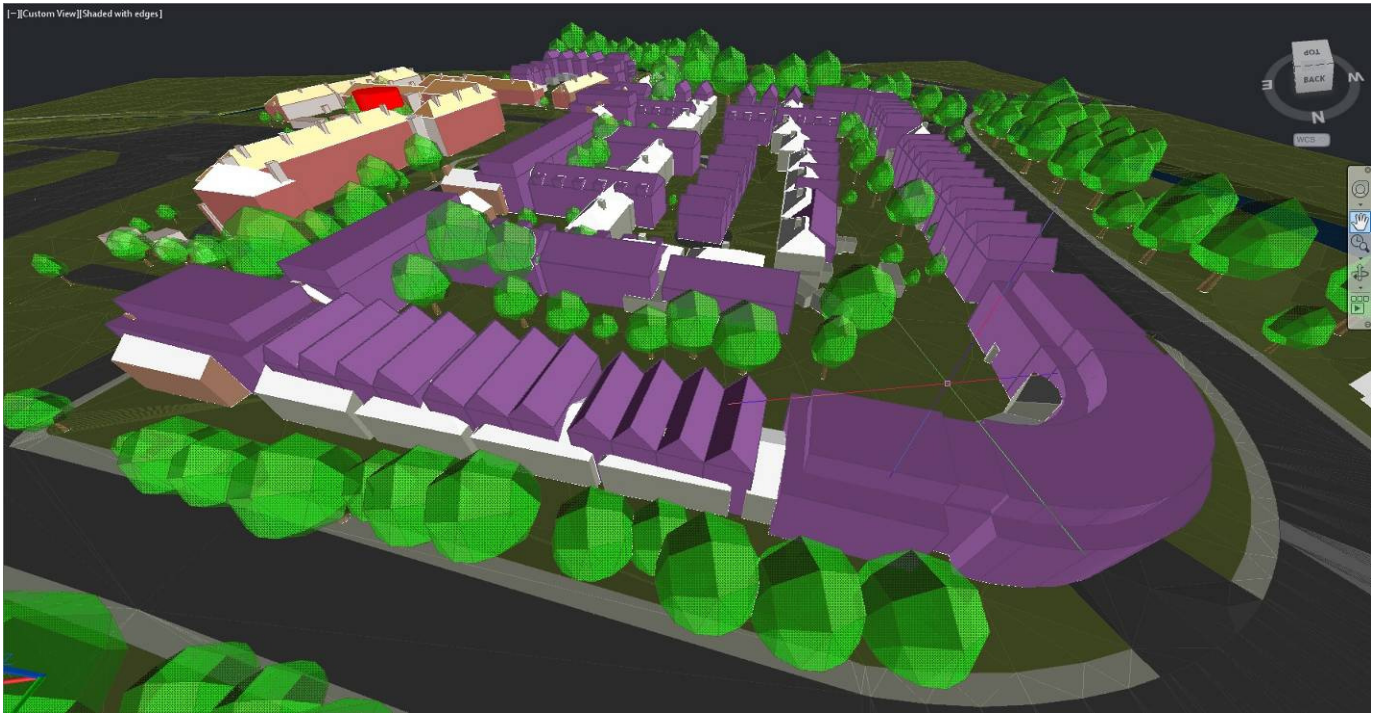


Image above: Existing buildings showing overall density



Ravensbury Regeneration Plans :
Proposed buildings shown in pink







APPENDIX 2.0: CHMP Reports on Ravensbury Orlit Housing

1 Asbestos Surveys

It is noted that asbestos was only found in the soffit panels of the Orlit houses on Ravensbury. In 34 Ravensbury Grove, one of the recently refurbished properties, these soffit panels were replaced with plastic. However following discussions with CHMP staff, we are unable to ascertain whether the proper asbestos procedures were followed.

The results of the asbestos surveys by Pennington Choices Ltd (dated 15th & 19th September 2014) concur with residents own information regarding Merton Council checking all properties and finding no evidence of asbestos asides from the soffit boards.

2 Ravensbury Existing Stock Refurbishment Appraisal by HTA

It is noted that this report makes mention of the Energy Performance Certificates and the potential energy costs to residents. For clarity we think it would be important for Circle to present potential per annum costs of living in the new homes so that residents would have a better idea of total costs and be able to forecast appropriately.

3 Structural Assessment of Orlit Homes by Tully De'Ath

Structural Assessment Report of Orlit Houses Revision A 6th November 2014

We note the comments regarding the Chloride Content, namely:

"6.11 GBG tested fifty dust samples for chloride content. These samples were taken from the PRC columns and beams and the in-situ mortar joints. The chloride contents of all seven mortar samples were low at 0.15% or less. Generally the chloride content of the concrete samples were also low at 0.07% or less. There were six exceptions to this however which showed a chloride content ranging from 0.16% to 1.33%. These were on two samples extracted from the secondary beams within 193 Morden Road, three samples extracted from columns within 20 Hatfield Close and a single sample extracted from a primary beam in the roof space of 20 Hatfield Close."

We note the comments regarding the Cement Content, namely:

"6.12 From visual inspections of eight samples, the cement contents vary between 10.3% to 18.7%. GBG consider these are indicative of reasonable to good quality precast concrete. The variability of cement content is considered not uncommon for structures of this age."

We note the comments regarding High Alumina Cement, namely:

"6.13 High-alumina cement (HAC) is an alternative cement mix to Ordinary Portland cement (OPC). It became favourable within the industry as concrete made from it sets rapidly and has a high initial strength. However, under certain conditions it loses strength over time due to a chemical process. As such, it became classified as a deleterious material and was banned from use in 1975. The BRE report on Orlit Houses highlights that many of the precast reinforced concrete elements and in-situ Structural Assessment Report of Orlit Houses Revision A 6th November 2014 11264 Page 14 of 18 mortar stitches of the Orlit houses that they surveyed contain HAC."

6.14 Twenty four samples were tested by GBG across the four properties. None of these were found to contain HAC."

We note the comments regarding Petrographic Examinations:

The results of all the petrographic examinations showed that the concrete appears to be good quality with no obvious evidence of significant distress.

We note the concluding remarks of the Structural Engineers report, namely:

"8.6...There have been no structural engineering concerns identified however and the concrete frames, where investigated, are in a reasonable structural condition. The main concerns highlighted with the BRE research related to concrete beams on flat roofs. The roofs of the Orlit houses at Ravensbury Estate are pitched. It should be recognised however that this conclusion is based on only a limited amount of investigations within a small proportion of all the Orlit houses."

"8.7 If the conclusions reached from the assessment of the 4 Orlit houses were to be reflected in the other 68 properties, then the main issues to consider are linked with the effects of water ingress and the cladding panels.

*8.8 Water ingress can affect the condition of the roof timbers through beetle infestation or decay. As has been seen with the entrance canopies, water ingress can also cause deterioration of concrete elements, especially where reinforcement is allowed to corrode. **To extend the useful life of such buildings it is therefore important to have an effective maintenance regime in place to keep external finishes in good order and to limit potential for water ingress.***

8.9 It is therefore important to keep gutters and downpipes clear for debris so they can work effectively."

"8.10 The cladding panels need to be made good where the joints in the cladding panels have opened up. This will reduce the potential for water ingress. The spalled and cracked corner panels also need replacing and will require additional restraint to tie them back to the structure behind. This will take the form of remedial wall ties and these may also need to be introduced around window and door openings where there are currently a lack of ties. Such an approach will require both a visual and a radar survey of every elevation to be carried out.

8.11 The strategy for repairs to the cladding panels needs to be coordinated with non-structural matters to improve the insulation to the elevations. The cavities which are currently filled with insulation are potential encouraging water to become trapped in the building. Options here include removing the cladding panels so that the insulation can be removed or over-cladding the building with a new rainscreen.

8.12 Similarly the cracking to the window frames should also be made good.

8.13 Although not significant structurally the concrete entrance canopies and support where deteriorated should also be made good and/or removed and replaced with new canopies. The junction of the canopy with the elevations needs to prevent water draining back on to the elevation."

From these results, we conclude that the Orlit homes are essentially structurally sound and require responsive maintenance to keep them in that way.

4 Ravensbury Case for Regeneration by Savills

We note the purpose of the document, namely: *"...to set out the findings of the technical work that has been undertaken to date and to demonstrate the economic, social and environmental arguments for and against the "Case for Regeneration" of the Ravensbury Estate, whilst giving equal consideration to reasonable alternative options."*

We also note that:

"... it has been developed to form part of the evidence base for LBM's emerging Estates Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) which will set out the planning policy framework against which regeneration proposals for the Estate will be assessed as part of any future planning application. Therefore, this Case for Regeneration is intended to be an important consideration at the independent examination of the DPD to assist the Inspector in the assessment of whether the submitted DPD is prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and whether the plan is sound, as per Section 20(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and whether it is, as per the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) (paragraph 182):

- “*positively prepared*”;
- “*justified*”;
- “*effective*”; and
- “*consistent with national policy*”.

We feel that the case for demolition with regards to the structure of the Orlit Homes has been vastly overstated relative to the evidence made available by the structural engineers. Savills appear to have missed the concluding remarks within the Structural Engineers report. We suggest that it is possible that the writer of the Savills report was unable to properly interpret the findings of the Structural Engineer.

We note the following paragraph:

"...CHMP are fully committed to continuing to consult closely with residents and other stakeholders."

We would like to point out that this close consultation, performed by the regen team and their professional advisers, has been very arrogant from the outset. Residents have been furious at how CHMP cherry-picked their comments to suit their objectives. To suggest that there are a number of residents who lack confidence in the integrity and conduct of the regen team at CHMP would be an understatement.

We note the paragraph:

"Continuing to take a reactive approach to repairs to these properties as issues arise would involve significantly higher costs to CHMP than considering a comprehensive regeneration of the Estate over a period of 50 years."

However the costs concerned have not been detailed or referenced. Therefore we are unable to qualify these expressions of intent. In fact there are very few facts available throughout this document and it is impossible to quantify or qualify any of the statements. Therefore we find this document lacking in proper evidence.

We do understand the notion of land however, which seems to feature highly in this report. The available land that the Orlit Houses occupy is considerable and potentially very valuable relative to its salubrious location. We understand that an increase in density would bring a great deal of revenue in. To many of our residents this seems to be the only reason why regeneration is being proposed, due to their own knowledge that their homes are structurally sound.

We note that in 6.39, the writer of this report presumes to second guess the Environment Agency's own advice on flood risk. We find this somewhat misguided. We believe the report also references an out of date flood risk plan as this has been recently revised.

We note that in 8.22, the writer suggests that a high level of support has been received for the scheme. However we believe that this support has been chosen somewhat selectively. It would be most appropriate to be able to scrutinise these results. Interpreting results such as these can be something of an art.

We note that in 8.28, it has been impossible to properly validate these assumptions, which is especially necessary considering the nature of Savills acting on behalf of the developer rather than as an independent advisor.

5 Ravensbury Urban Design Review

We note the following:

"This study sets out to evaluate Ravensbury against the established principles of good design and does not attempt to make aesthetic or value judgements on the architectural style of Ravensbury. Instead it concentrates on the physical, spatial and environmental aspects of the design and the quality of the neighbourhood that results."

We note the following:

"Urban structure summary

4. Ravensbury is very 'shallow' in terms of walkability to both the urban facilities on Morden Road and the leisure and play facilities afforded by the riverside and other green spaces. This perhaps explains why residents value this seclusion so highly: they have the benefit of a quiet and secluded neighbourhood combined with direct and convenient connections to local facilities, services and recreation spaces.

5. It is important not to make the estate over- permeable as this will undermine seclusion for residents and disperse movement and activity without any real gains in wider connectivity."

These comments are supported by the residents own comments. Numerous residents have described the seclusion as effectively being highly valuable to them. In addition, the residents have also made mention of effectively limiting proposals in increasing permeability. Therefore we support statements 4 & 5 in the Urban Structure Summary.

We note the following:

"...Building facades have been mapped according to the following classifications:

- Active frontage is defined as facades that having both doors and windows of inhabited rooms (ie not bathrooms, storerooms, lobbies or garages) at regular intervals along the street or route to provide surveillance as well as contact and movement between inside and out.*
- Passive frontage is defined as facades with only windows of inhabited rooms but no doorways, providing surveillance but no contact between public and private space.*
- Dead frontage is where the edge to the public space or route is a blank wall or wall that is effectively blank, for instance rows of garage doors or where windows are obscured."*

It should be noted from the maps provided for Ravensbury Court that there is practically zero dead frontage, but instead some passive frontage (ie providing "good surveillance"). We would state that this has proven to be very feasible over time and that this provides support for our earlier statements dismissing the proposal to re-orientate the ground floor flats.

We note the following:

"In summary, most building facades contribute positively to the surveillance, liveliness and activity of streets and communal spaces"

"Layout summary

1. The figure ground plans show that Ravensbury adopts a similar 'perimeter block' pattern of development to surrounding residential areas.

2. There is a strong and consistent correlation between building alignment and the line of the street. This can be seen at the external perimeter of the estate where the building line follows the curved edge to Morden Road as well as the internal perimeter where buildings follow the simple rectilinear street layout.

3. There are few ambiguous spaces within Ravensbury and buildings are used to make very clear distinctions between the communal spaces of the estate and the private spaces of the home.

4. Most building facades contribute positively to the surveillance, liveliness and activity of streets and communal spaces. Houses all face the streets in a consistent manner, providing continuous active frontage with doors and windows. However, the entrances to maisonettes and flats are all switched to the 'rear', reducing contact and activity between buildings and streets.

5. There is very little dead frontage to the main routes of the estate. The spaces with the least intervisibility and surveillance are the garage courts and the pedestrian paths. This issue could be remedied during the regeneration of the estate."

As residents, we agree that Ravensbury has very little wrong with it. We point out that in relation to item 4, the comment about rear facing flats, many residents enjoy the privacy that this design infers. They find it a positive feature rather than negative.

We note the following:

"Should the regeneration option be taken and the number of dwellings increased significantly then car parking might become a serious problem. This will need careful design and management to prevent the streetscape of the new neighbourhood from being dominated by parked cars and also to prevent this becoming a source of friction between new and existing residents."

This is indeed a problematic area. An increase in density will definitely cause a great deal of problems along these lines. However, a number of cars that park on the estate are actually workers from the VW garage. We even have had Ravensbury Grove used as a temporary showroom car park with one resident counting 15 cars from this company.

We note the following:

"Landscape

Areas of private gardens Ravensbury has a distinctive landscape and an open and green character. The whole estate is set within a significant area of high landscape value, with access to an extensive area of parkland and the green corridor of the River Wandle. Even its 'urban' northern and western boundaries with Morden Road face the woodland within Morden Hall Park. Internally, the estate maintains this green and open character. This is created by a combination of design features: wide building to building set backs; grassed communal spaces; mature trees; hedges on plot boundaries and other planting in large, private front gardens. The height of the largest building on the estate, the 4-storey block of Ravensbury Court, is balanced by building to building set backs of approximately 30 metres, the communal open spaces and the tree-lined streets. The line of trees on Hengelo Gardens is particularly impressive and mirrors the height and enclosure of Ravensbury Court on the other side of the street."

"All elements of the landscape are well maintained, with the exception of the frontage to Morden Road between the junction with Ravensbury Grove and The Surrey Arms. Here the houses are set well back from the main road behind a row of mature pollarded trees that form an attractive feature along this stretch of busy road. However, the frontages to these properties are noticeably less well cared for than the rest of the estate. The Morden Road frontage facing Morden Hall Park is set behind a slip road that insulates houses from the main road. These homes are, by contrast, very well maintained. There is no obvious physical reason for this difference between the two Morden Road frontages and may reflect other social or economic factors. The landscape setting, mature trees and other planting are the most significant features of the estate. Together they create a most attractive residential setting, offering quiet and secluded spaces within the estate as well as easy access to the network of green spaces that surround the estate. As part of the green corridor of the River Wandle the trees have ecological value as well as their visual significance and role in wellbeing. No matter which option is selected for the future of Ravensbury, it will be important to protect mature trees and increase tree planting wherever possible."

We find also important to point out that on page 44 of the Urban Design Review, the writer has identified the areas in front of the flats in Ravensbury Court as private gardens. This is quite the opposite to certain CHMP officers attempting to tell residents that these areas were ambiguous. Residents are only too aware that the courtyard is part of their home, as indeed are passersby.

We note the following positive statements about Ravensbury:

"The various open spaces within the estate are well-located in terms of intervisibility and surveillance, meaning that they are well overlooked from buildings and passers by even at distance. There is little or no evidence of graffiti, litter or antisocial behaviour within the estate and residents report a strong sense of community and communality. Physical evidence of this can be seen in the amount of personalisation of gardens and threshold spaces by doorways to the maisonettes and flats."

We also note the summary on page 47:

Quality of the external environment summary

The Ravensbury Estate has a distinctive identity, mainly by virtue of its secluded setting and landscape but also because of the formal arrangement and massing of building groups to define spaces within the estate. The development options are complex on this site, and will mainly be determined by ownership and building condition rather than urban design or landscape. However, there is clearly potential to increase density and building height through various permutations of retention and regeneration.

- 1. Ravensbury has three very different characters: The busy, urban edge to Morden Road; the green and 'rural' edge to the River Wandle; and the secluded communal and private spaces within the estate.*
- 2. High levels car ownership were apparent at the time of the survey but this is unsurprising in a suburban location with a PTAL rating of 2, 'poor'.*
- 3. Should the regeneration option be taken and the number of dwellings increased significantly then car parking might become a serious problem. This will need careful design and management to prevent the streetscape of the new neighbourhood from being dominated by parked cars and also to prevent this becoming a source of friction between new and existing residents.*
- 4. Generally, pedestrians and drivers use the same street spaces to move around and routes feel safe, legible and direct. There are very few pedestrian -only routes within the estate but all could be improved.*
- 5. Ravensbury Estate is set within a distinctive and significant area of high landscape value. Internally, the estate maintains this green and open character. This is created by a combination of design features: wide building to building set backs; grassed communal spaces; mature trees; hedges on plot boundaries and other planting in large, private front gardens.*
- 6. The landscape setting, mature trees and other planting are the most significant features of the estate. Together they create a most attractive residential setting, offering quiet and secluded spaces within the estate as well as easy access to the network of green spaces that surround the estate.*
- 7. The lack of formal play spaces within the estate would not appear to be a problem for residents. This is partly because of the number and size of private gardens but also because Ravensbury Park offers a very accessible, well-equipped play area. The parks and riverside paths also provide excellent opportunities for leisure and activity for all age groups.*
- 8. There is little or no evidence of graffiti, litter or antisocial behaviour within the estate and residents report a strong sense of community and communality.*

We note the main Urban Design Review summary:

The Ravensbury Estate has a distinctive identity, mainly by virtue of its seclusion and landscape setting but also because of the formal arrangement and massing of building groups that define spaces within the estate. The development options are complex on this site, and are likely to be determined by ownership, viability and building condition rather than urban design or landscape.

1. The Ravensbury Estate is located in a relatively isolated part of the Borough, as reflected in its PTAL classification of 'poor' (2).

2. The extensive parks, riverside open spaces and other barriers surrounding the estate make it an enclave and there is relatively little that can be done to integrate Ravensbury better into its wider area.

3. This relative isolation creates, on the one hand, a quiet and secluded residential neighbourhood but, on the other hand, restricts movement options for residents and is likely to encourage more trips to be taken by car.

4. There is some scope to improve access on foot and cycle through the process of regeneration.

However, it is important not to make the estate over-permeable as this will undermine seclusion for residents and disperse movement and activity without any real gains in wider connectivity.

5. Analysis of building facades reveals that the entire external and internal perimeters of the estate have active or passive frontages providing good levels of surveillance. Conversely, there is very little dead frontage with the exception of the edges to garage courts and the pedestrian paths that are not overlooked.

6. The density of the estate at 43 dwellings per hectare (dph) is similar to surrounding development of the same period. However, this is low by modern standards, even in a suburban location, and there is potential to increase density and building height through the various permutations of retention and regeneration.

7. Ravensbury Estate is set within an area of high landscape value. Internally, this green and open character is maintained by the presence of grassed communal areas, mature trees and other planting. Together they create a most attractive residential setting, offering quiet and secluded spaces within the estate as well as easy access to the network of green spaces that surround the estate.

8. It is important that mature trees and riparian landscape are protected and improved. This is most likely to be possible with masterplan options that combine retention and regeneration rather than complete redevelopment.

9. There is little or no evidence of graffiti, litter or antisocial behaviour within the estate and residents report a strong sense of community and communality.

10. High levels of car ownership were evident at the time of the survey.

11. Currently, a large proportion of the houses have on-plot parking with the rest being provided on street. However, car parking may become a serious problem should regeneration options significantly increase the number of dwellings on the site. This will need careful design and management.

12. The Building for Life 12 assessment for Ravensbury results in 8 'greens' out of the 12 questions.

This Urban Design Review has merely repeated what the residents have been saying from the start of the regeneration consultation: that Ravensbury is about as perfect as you're going to get in terms of environment for a broad demographic within Merton.

Point 4 supports the residents argument regarding limited permeability preserving the benefits of the Ravensbury area. Point 5 supports the good overall design of Ravensbury, that it is not actually in need of fixing in the first instance. Point 7 & 8 further illustrates just how valuable this area really is, in terms of a personal level and in terms of the immediate environment. Point 9 points to the fact that the community at large are significant in their sense of neighbourhood, and that Circle's lack of understanding and arrogance has damaged the community. The residents believe that this is exactly what they want to do - divide and conquer: push through a regen and get their return on investment. Point 12 identifies the very high quality of living that Ravensbury residents have in their current environment.

Appendix 3.0

Please see attached document RRA-16P1968 response to planning.