

Ravensbury Estate, Morden
Visual Impact Study
October 2016



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Client

Circle Housing

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Visualisation

Millerhare

Introduction

1. This Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Peter Stewart Consultancy as part of the evidence base for the case for regeneration of the Ravensbury Estate. The Visual Impact Assessment will analyse the visual impact of the estate in its existing form, and in particular the visual impact from the surrounding streets towards the estate.
2. The analysis of the existing situation around the estate will be carried out primarily through the consideration of images that have been taken from key locations surrounding the site. The selection of these viewpoints is made following the examination of maps and aerial photographs, as well as site visits and with the aim of including a range of locations from which the site is visible. It includes viewpoints from local conservation areas. The viewpoint locations have been agreed with the London Borough of Merton.
3. Sue McGlynn was commissioned to carry out an urban design review in 2015, which would examine the quality of the built environment of the Ravensbury Estate. The present report builds on that review by introducing more information on visual considerations of the townscape around the estate.

The Site

4. The Site is the Ravensbury Estate, in the London Borough of Merton. The estate is located southeast of Morden centre and is bound by Morden Road to the north and west, beyond which is Morden Hall Park. To the east the estate is bound by Ravensbury Park and to the south it is bound by the River Wandle.

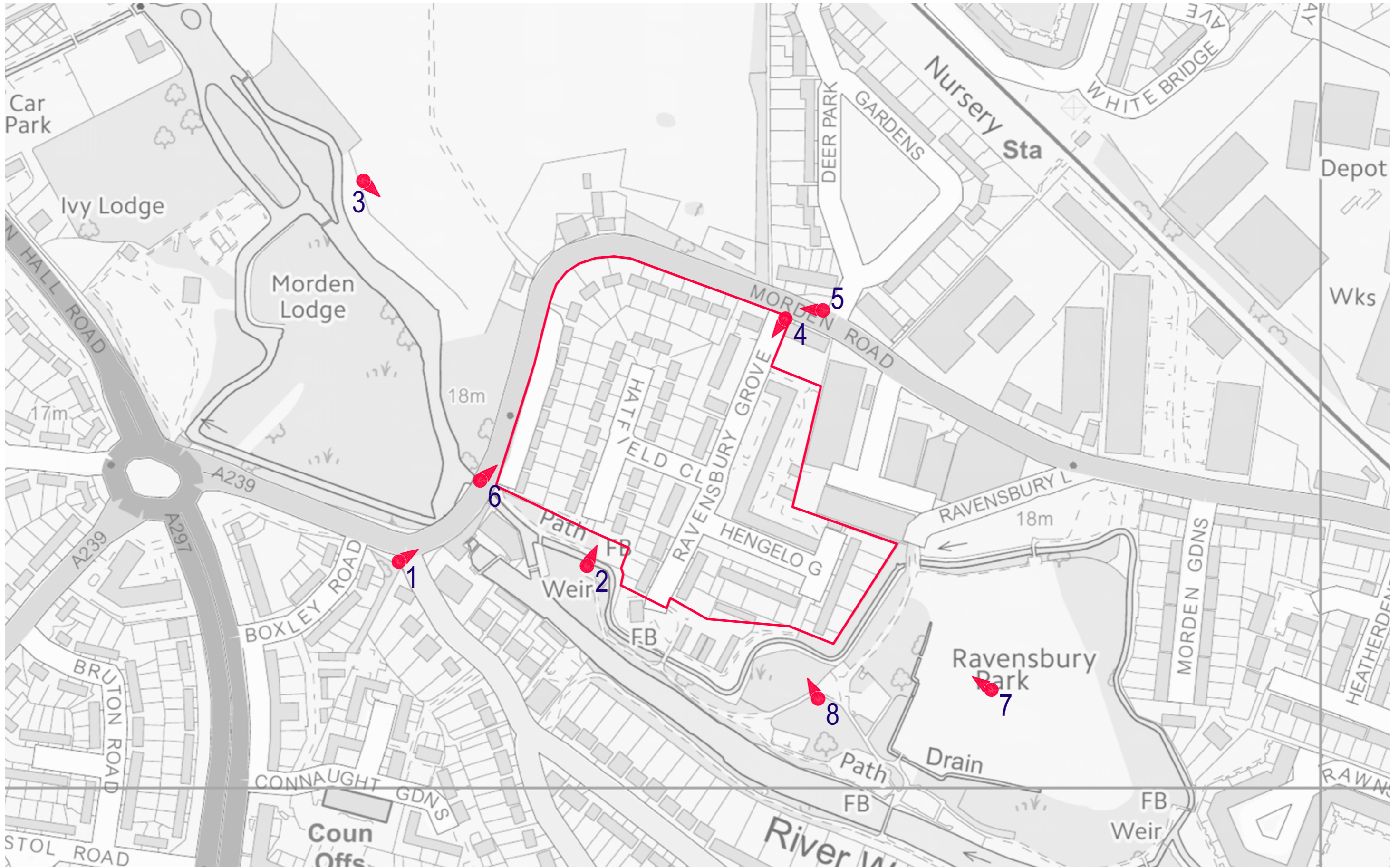
Context

5. The Ravensbury Estate was developed in the early 1950's and consists of a mix of terraced houses and blocks of flats.
6. The estate has a distinctly different character from much of its surroundings; to the north, south and west the estate is surrounded by parks with extensive grounds and mature trees, as well as the River Wandle that runs alongside it to the southwest; along its' boundary to the north and west the estate is adjoined by Morden Road, a main arterial road through the area, along which are a number of listed and locally listed buildings; to the east the estate is bounded by an industrial site.
7. Though there are a number of residential developments in the wider context of the area – to the west and the northeast in particular – Ravensbury Estate sits fairly isolated, both in its location and access as well as in its use in the immediate area. The estate is only accessible from the surrounding area through one entry point for vehicles and two points for pedestrians, further adding to the sense of isolation.
8. As discussed in the Urban Design Review for Ravensbury by Sue McGlynn, the Ravensbury Estate's urban

structure, landscaping and layout is fairly successful. However, as an estate it is secluded from the surrounding urban fabric. Additional pedestrian and cycle routes through the estate could benefit the urban structure of the estate and make its surrounding assets directly accessible.

Views and Visual Impact

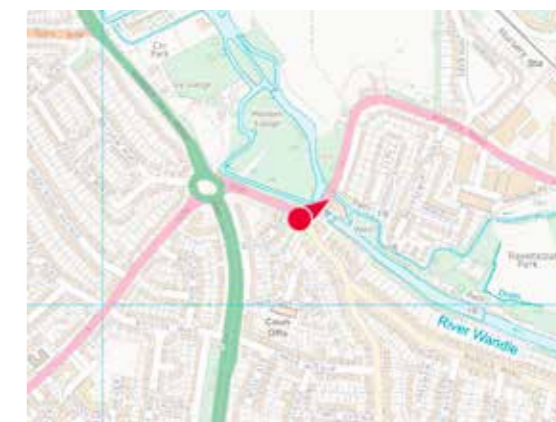
9. This report will include and describe eight views that have been identified by Peter Stewart Consultancy and agreed with the Local Authority, in order to give an understanding of the existing townscape character in the areas surrounding the Ravensbury Estate.
10. The viewpoint locations have been agreed by Merton Council on the basis of a desktop analysis (using google maps and working knowledge of the estates). The location of viewpoints was considered by identifying a study area centred on the estate and limited to locations from which the estate and buildings in it can be seen. Within this study area, candidate viewpoint locations were identified based on an examination of maps and aerial photographs, maps of conservation areas, and maps and lists of listed buildings. The final selection of viewpoints was made following a site visit and with the aim of including a range of typical townscape locations from different directions from which the estate is seen, and from which the effect on other points nearby can be deduced.
11. The assessment of individual views and the conclusion (which has been informed by the view assessment) consider the townscape and views as they would be experienced by viewers in reality. Photographic images of townscape are no more than an approximation to this, for a number of reasons:
 - Viewers have peripheral vision; their view is not restricted by borders as a photograph is, and they can move their eyes and heads to take in a wide field of view when standing in once place;
 - Viewpoints themselves are not generally fixed. Townscape is experienced for the most part as a progression of views or vistas by people who are moving through streets or spaces rather than standing still;
 - Photographs do not reflect perception of depth of field as experienced by the human viewer due to parallax;
 - The photographs illustrate the views in conditions that are particular in respect of time of day and time of year, daylight and sunlight, and weather, and the view will appear differently to varying degrees when any of these things vary (for example a photograph with deciduous trees will look different in summer and in winter. Once the trees lose their leaf in winter, they can be perceived as smaller and more will be visible in their background); and
 - Townscape is experienced not by the eye alone but by the interpretation by the mind of what the eye sees, considered in the light of experience, knowledge and memory.
12. Opposite is a map indicating the positions from which these images were taken.



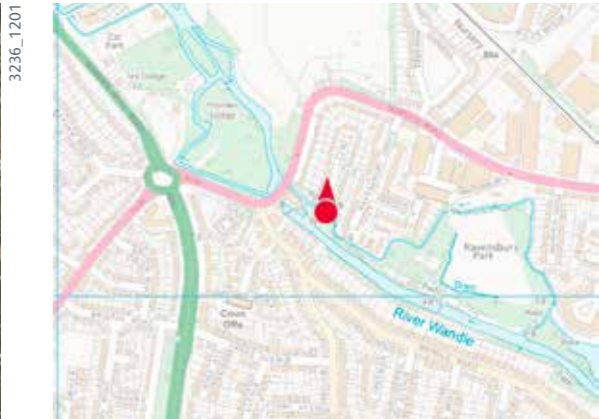
[View location map](#)



Existing



13. Viewpoint 1 is located on the junction of Wandle Road with Morden Road, on the south-western corner, looking northeast, towards the estate. The grade II listed Ravensbury Mill is the focal point of this image, with the road and the trees from Morden Hall Park making up much of the rest of the view. A few houses of the existing estate can be seen in the background, at the centre of the image.



14. This image was taken from the footbridge over the Wandle River, to the west of the estate, looking back towards Rutter Gardens. The predominant feature in this view is the bridge and the trees around it. Parts of the terraces along Rutter Gardens are visible through the trees.

Existing



Existing



15. This viewpoint is located along a footpath on the southwest edge of Morden Hall Park, facing south. The main aspect of this image is the park itself, with its landscaping and trees. Some houses from within the estate are visible in the centre of the image through the landscaping.



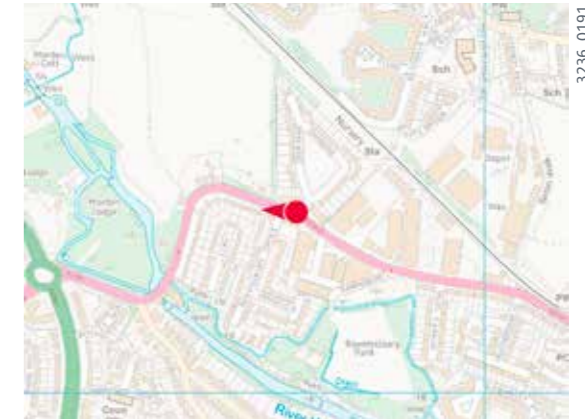
Existing



- 1.16 This image was taken from Ravensbury Grove, on the corner with Morden Road, facing south, into the estate. The main element in this image is the street itself, along with the landscaping surrounding it and in particular the two trees in front of the flats, in the centre of the image. Buildings belonging to the estate can be seen through the landscaping along much of the street. The gate and railings seen to the left of the image are not part of the Ravensbury Estate.



Existing



3236_0191

3236_0191

17. This viewpoint is located along Morden Road, near the junction with Deer Park Gardens, facing west along Morden Road and the east edge of the Ravensbury Estate. Morden Road is the main element seen in this image. The houses and landscaping either side of the road are also noticeable. The grade II listed White Cottage is seen in the distance on the bend of Morden Road, but is not very noticeable from here.



Existing



- 1.18 This viewpoint is located across the street from the estate, on Morden Road, facing east. This image shows Morden Road, as well as the sliproad in front of the estate, as well as the trees that are planted along it. The semi-detached houses of the estate are clearly seen along the sliproad, till the bend of Morden Road.



Existing

3236_0171



3236_0171

19. This image was taken from within Ravensbury Park, facing northwest, towards the direction of the estate. This image offers a view from within the park, with a foreground of grass and a background of mature landscaping and trees. The estate cannot be seen from this location, when trees are in leaf.



- 1.20 This viewpoint is located in the west edge of Ravensbury Park, facing north towards the direction of the estate. The park and the trees are the main feature in this image. To the right of the image is an outbuilding that has been left to disrepair. In the background, between the tree foliage, parts of the estate buildings are barely visible.

Existing

Conclusions

21. The townscape character surrounding the Ravensbury Estate is mixed: the Ravensbury and Morden Hall Parks create a beautiful environment, with the character created by an abundance of green landscaping; the Morden Road is a busy arterial road in the area, and the only way to access the estate with a car; and the industrial site to the east offers little to the area in terms of urban design and townscape.
22. The visual impact of the Ravensbury Estate in its existing form is neutral. The scale and architecture of the existing buildings work well in their existing context, though the density of the built form is rather low on the estate. Images 2 and 6 in particular also show the limited permeability through the estate, with image 2 highlighting the lack of connections to the adjacent Ravensbury Park and the River Wandle.
23. As with the Urban Design Review by Sue McGlynn, this report concludes that there are no particular issues with the estate in its current form in regards to townscape and visual impact, but that some improvements, including better access into the estate for pedestrians and cyclists, would be welcome.

