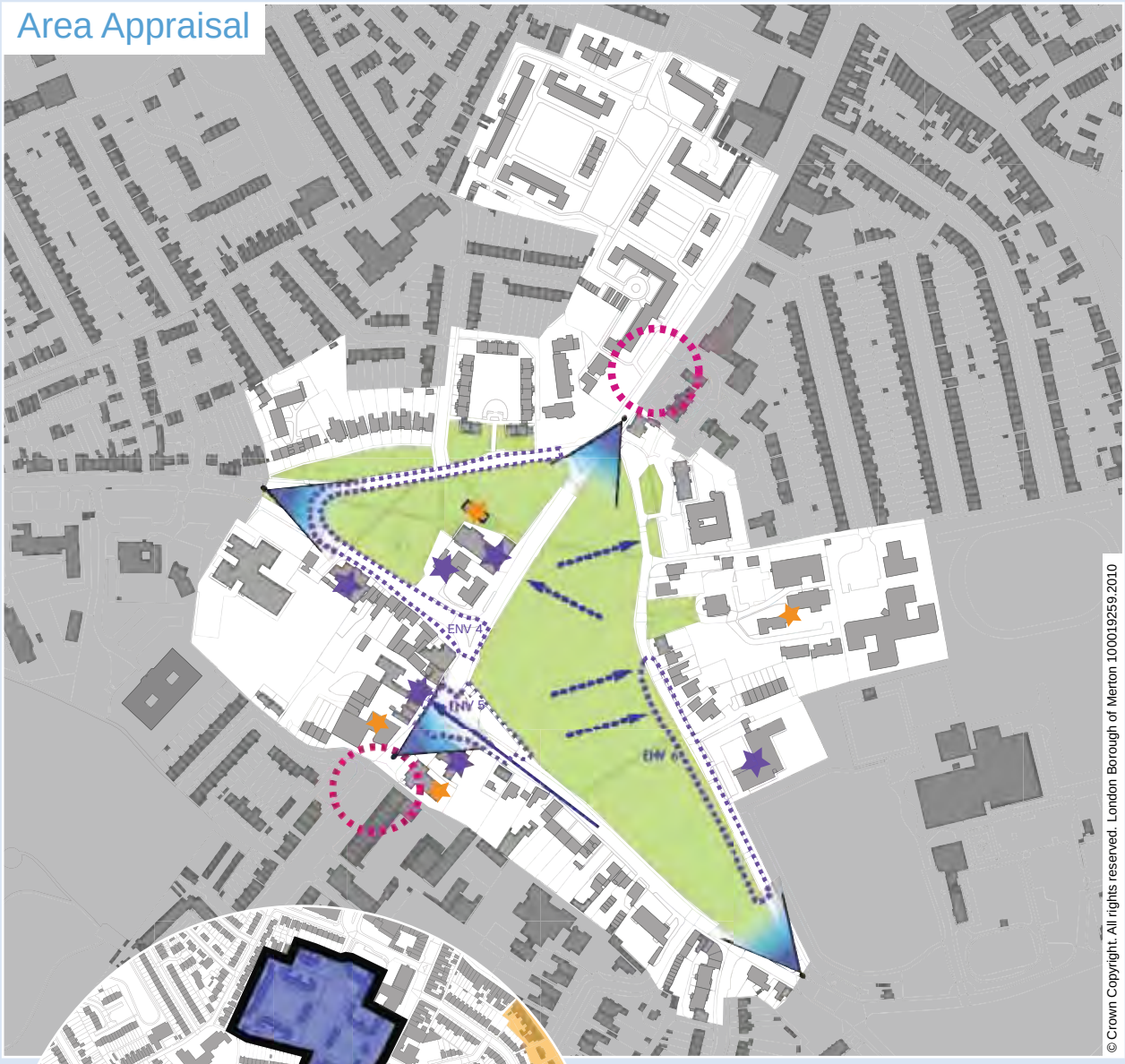
8.0 Character Area 2:
Cricket Green

Area Appraisal



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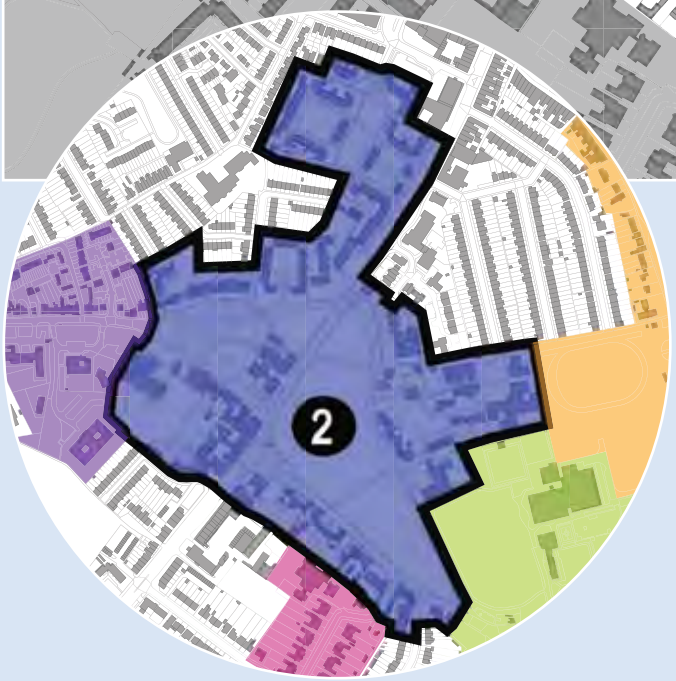
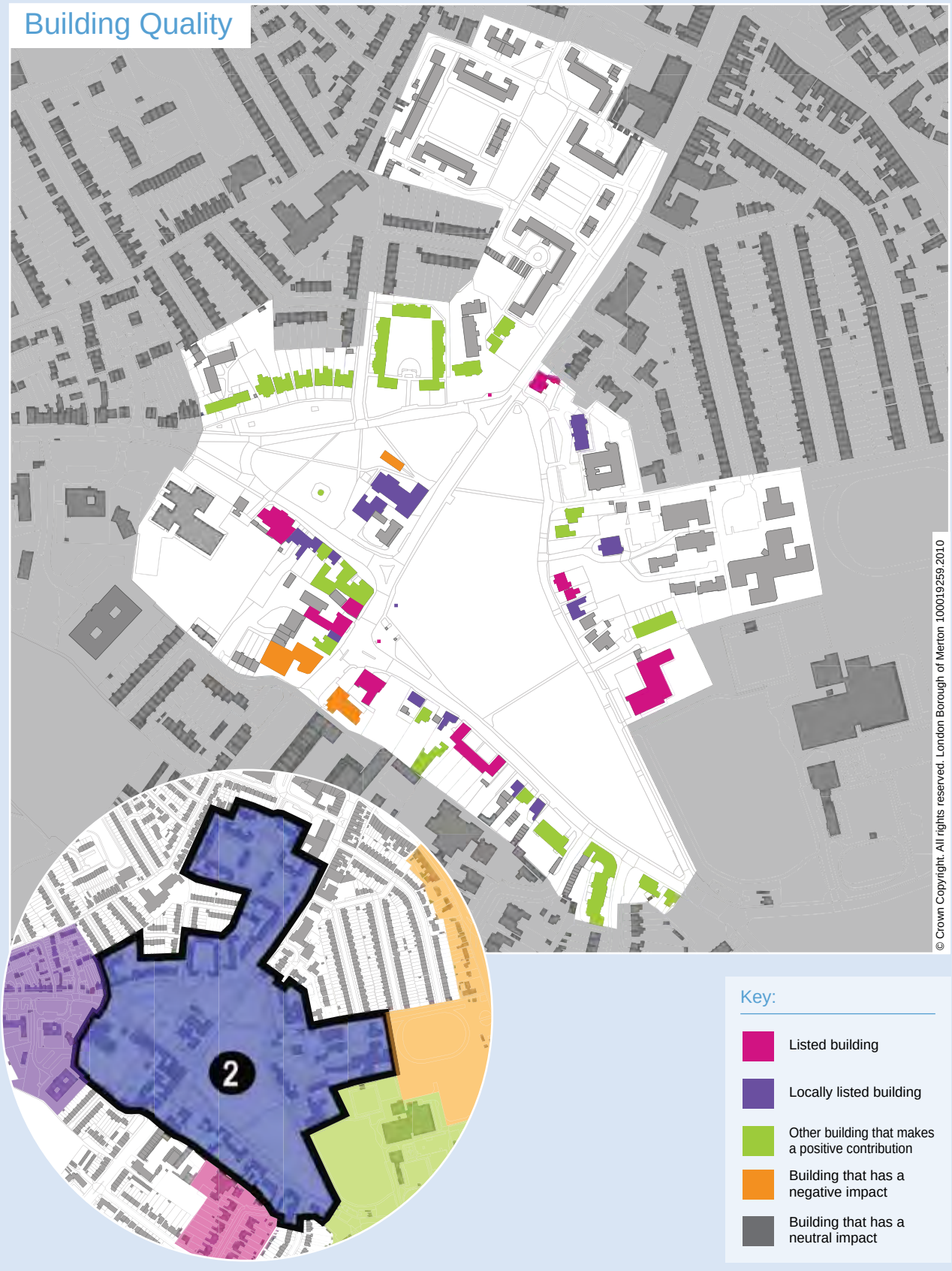


Key:

- Gateway to conservation area
- Local Landmark
- Negative feature
- View to focal point
- Glimpsed views
- Wide view
- ENV 1 — Specific environmental improvements
- Significant open space

Building Quality



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The Cricket Club

From the more confined character of Mitcham town centre and Church Road, views suddenly open out into the generous expanses of the greens edged with buildings. This sub area represents the core of the conservation area and covers an area straddling London Road. It includes both the Lower Green West and the Cricket Green and the many historic buildings that surround them. The Cricket green is the larger of the two greens with an extensive open character, surrounded by modest buildings of varying ages and styles illustrating the changes that have occurred in domestic architecture over five centuries. In contrast, lower Green West is much smaller and has a more confined character, with some of the area's most significant buildings being located within the green. Vestry Hall, the Fire station and the Cricketers Pub combine to create a significant group of buildings at the centre of the sub area.

This sub area contains a high proportion of historic buildings with seven listed buildings and nine buildings on the local list.

Many mature trees surround both greens, reinforcing the historic and aesthetic appeal of the area.

Form and Layout

The layout of the Lower Green sub area is in stark contrast to the more confined layout of the Church Road area. The Cricket Green has a very open layout, with the buildings that surround it varying in age, style and building line. The layout is informal and indicative of the way the area developed over time. Buildings are arranged in groups of terraces, detached and semi detached houses with a wide variety in building line. Plot widths vary from narrow fronted terraces at Bramcote Parade on Cricket Green to the larger footprints of the Methodist Church, the police station and Brook House. A departure from the peicemeal development of the area is Glebe Court which is a post war development of flat blocks and bungalows set in a high quality landscaped area. Building forms vary from the modest two storey brick and timber

framed cottages and terraces to the distinctive courtyard layouts of the Almshouses and Glebe Square and the more grand town houses of which Mitcham Court is an example. The small scale development around the greens is punctuated with more imposing civic and community buildings such as the Vestry Hall, the police station and the Methodist Church. Off to the north of the greens is Glebe Court which comprises of predominantly six storey flat blocks interspersed with bungalows. This variety in form and layout, gives the area an eclectic, high quality character that is unified by the greens.

The tight layout of the parades on the western side of London Road and the southern side of Lower Green West, creates a strong urban corner, contrasting with the openness of the greens. Glebe Court with its landscaped boundary treatment acts as a gateway which marks the transition from the commercial core of the town centre into the Cricket Green character area.The group of buildings made up of The Vestry Hall, Fire Station and the Cricket Green pub fronts the Cricket Green and creates it's northern built edge. The group fronts the Cricket Green emphasising it's importance in the hierarchy of spaces and visually separates the two greens. The group backs on to the Lower Green, contributing to its smaller scale more residential character.

Scale and Building Line

The buildings in the conservation area vary from primarily two storeys around the greens to a mix of two, three and six storeys along London Road. More recent buildings within the sub area tend to have lower floor to ceiling heights than the older buildings and as a result tend to have a more horizontal emphasis compared to the predominantly vertical emphasis of the older buildings. The former bank at the corner of Lower Green West and London Road and the Vestry Hall on the green, form a focus of higher buildings, reinforcing this area as the core of the sub area.

Materials and Detailing

The variety of building materials that are found in the area are roughly indicative of the different phases of the areas development. The very earliest surviving examples include the remnants of hardwood frame construction with brick infill to the rear of the Burn Bullock public house to predominantly softwood framing to the 17th and 18th Century cottages.

Softwood framing was a particularly common form of construction from the 18th Century onwards and in the case of Chestnut Cottage has a render finish to give the impression of a more solid construction.

A number of early buildings in the area are of part brick/part timber construction such as Elm and Ivy Cottages, the main part of the Burn Bullock public house. However, by far the most predominant material in the area is brick, either fair-faced or with later render, such as Elm Lodge and Cricketers Cottages. The very earliest buildings used a brownish red brick, such as in the infill panels to the rear range to the Burn Bullock.

Many of the 18th and early 19th Century buildings within the sub-area incorporated a yellow brick such as Mitcham Court and the former Parish Rooms whilst some of the later Victorian buildings included red brick as in the Vestry Hall, the Fire Station and the former bank, and gault (white) brick, often with brick dressings in a contrasting colour as in 326 London Road. Evidence of the transition from yellow to red brick can be seen in the terrace comprising 352 -356 London Road, with the earliest of the three buildings being of yellow brick and the later in red.

Preshaw Crescent, Lower Green West

Later 20th Century buildings show a return to the use of a yellow stock brick as evidenced in the Cricketers Public House, Mitcham Police Station, Brooke House, the Methodist Church and Glebe Court. Stone is also used in some of the grander buildings such as Portland stone to the ground floor of the former bank building, Mansfield stone to the entrances to Vestry Hall and red sandstone to the piers and fascia of Mitcham Fire Station. Other 20th Century buildings also have pebbledash and timber strapwork as to the front gables of the houses in Preshaw Crescent and Sibford House.

Roofs are predominantly pitched and roofing materials vary between plain clay tiles, pantiles or, increasingly during the 19th Century, (Welsh) slate. The more modern later 20th Century buildings include different roof forms and the use of different materials, most distinctive is the listed Methodist Church with its striking saw tooth roof finished with lead.

Windows to the earlier buildings are predominantly double hung sash windows with a vertical emphasis to the window opening proportions. However in many cases these have been replaced with modern window types. A dictinctive feature on the post-war flat blocks of Glebe Court are the panelled concrete balconies.

Open Spaces

This part of the conservation area is defined by the quality of it's open spaces. The open spaces within this sub area are Cricket Green and Lower Green which provide the focus for the conservation area as a whole. The Lower Green is characterised by the wide verges to the north of the Lower Green and the mature tree planting forming avenues encircling the green which is a significant contributing feature to the character of the area. The main focus of Lower Green is the War Memorial. Although the edges of the space are well defined by the buildings that surround it, the group comprising the Fire Station, Vestry Hall and Cricketer's Pub do not directly front the open space and this results in the area having a more informal, undefined character. The open

Across the Cricket Green

landscaping layout of Glebe Court and boundary treatment of trees along London Road make a positive contribution.

By contrast, the main focus of the Cricket Green is the Cricket Pitch and the pavilion located across a busy road. The majority of the key buildings within the conservation area front the green, establishing it as the most important open space within the conservation area. On the eastern side of the Cricket Green, Chart Close and Birches Close create quiet backwaters set away from the busy Cricket Green. Again mature trees enclosing the Green make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

Urban Spaces

The main urban space in the area is the thoroughfare of London Road and its junctions with the Lower Green to the west and Cricket Green to the east. The urban spaces are affected by the impact of the heavy traffic passing through the area and the Lower Green is located on a major road junction between London Road and Church Road to the west and Madeira Road to the east. However, the scale and quality of the public spaces ensures that the overall character of the area is still maintained. Cold Blows Lane is a historic lane which connected the common and the cricket green through open fields before the area was developed. It has attractive flint knapped walls and takes its name from Cold Winds that blew along it.

Views and Landscape

Trees, particularly those enclosing the green and lining the main roads encircling the green, are a significant feature of the conservation area and this sub area in particular. The trees and green spaces are of absolute value not only to the areas character but also to the areas biodiversity. A number of trees in the area have been identified as being of particular significance and are now protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

At the gateways to the open space, significant views open out from the confined spaces of the surrounding roads, such as Church Road and London Road to the wide open spaces of the greens. The attractive buildings surrounding the open spaces create impressive streetscapes, set behind the mature trees that surround the greens. There are important local views and vistas towards the Vestry Hall, and the Burn Bullock and White Hart public houses. The main significant panoramas however are the wider street views of the groups of buildings which act as the backdrop when viewed across the open spaces.

Public Realm and Street Furniture

Street furniture in this area is generally modern. The street lighting, particularly along London Road and Lower Green West comprises very tall lamp posts which are very utilitarian in appearance, reflecting the character of the road rather than the area as a whole. There are some Victorian, lantern style street lights along the east side of Cricket Green which are more appropriate to the character in terms of style and scale as well as lower levels of overall illumination.

There are, however, a number of historic structures, including the Grade II Listed milestone on the corner of Lower Green West and London Road and the horse trough which commemorates the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria at the southern junction of Cricket Green to London Road which make a positive contribution to the areas character.

A particular feature of the Lower Green is the low timber bollards that define the edges of the unenclosed areas of the green, particularly along the eastern edge of the Cricket Green and along the deep grass verge to the north of Lower Green West. Elsewhere there are a variety of different railings, with low hooped railings enclosing grassed areas between the Cricket Green and the road.

Efforts to control parking on pavements through the use of bollards, particularly adjacent to the former bank building on the corner of London Road and Lower Green West, restricts the width of the footway. Pedestrian barriers and an ad hoc mixture of paving and some redundant street furniture all contributes towards an uncoordinated appearance.

Pedestrian routes and road crossings need rationalising particularly links to the Vestry hall and the Lower Green itself and the routing of northbound traffic around the Lower Green should be reviewed with the aim of improving the environment for residents and pedestrians.

Roads have modern surfaces and kerbs are mainly slim modern concrete with a mixture of block paving, concrete slabs and bitumen pavements.

There are a few surviving sections of granite kerbs, but traditional granite sett gutters have long disappeared. The area probably would not have historically had York stone pavements having relatively rural origins, but the area could be improved with a more sensitive surfacing, particularly around the Lower Green and the London Road junctions to replace the current mix of paving materials with a more cohesive unified approach. Possibly large format concrete slabs, or even some York stone particularly along the London Road footways, such as in front of significant buildings.

Boundary Treatments and Private Spaces

Most of the buildings are located close to the street and have relatively small front garden areas enclosed with a variety of boundary treatments ranging from distinctively detailed low timber fences and gates in front of Preshaw Crescent, low brick walls in front of cottages on the south side of Lower Green West, low brick walls with metal railings, mainly modern replacement of earlier wrought iron railings such as at the former Parish Rooms and Elm Cottage and slightly more informal boundaries along the east side of the Cricket Green.

Along London Road and also on the south side of the Cricket Green, buildings are aligned hard up against the pavement without any spaces in front.

Significant buildings and Groups

There are a number of buildings in the Cricket Green sub area of significance to the conservation area, most notable are the Burn Bullock and 346/348 London Road both of which are listed and of timber framed construction are amongst the oldest surviving buildings within the borough. There are a significant number of listed buildings around the Cricket Green.

The sub-area reflects a variety of different architectural styles that have developed over the years ranging from the medieval in terms of the rear of the Burn Bullock and 346/348 London Road, to 1930s moderne in the case of Bramcote Court to innovative use of new materials in the late 20th Century as reflected in the Mitcham Methodist Church.

Many of the earliest buildings are timber framed some of which have had there front elevations modified during the 18th and 19th Centuries such as the Burn Bullock. This seems to have been a fashionable practice in the area at the time to give buildings a more modern appearance and also as a demonstration of the wealth of the owner.

The most significant buildings and structures within the sub area can be divided into ten distinct types comprising:

1. Individual early to mid 19th Century houses and villas

326 London Road: A late 19th Century detached house the last survival of a row of detached and semi-detached housed that used to be located on the west side of London Road between the Upper and Lower Greens. The building, which now provides offices for the Citizens Advice Bureau is distinctive with white ”gault” brick front elevation with projecting brick quoins and red-brick dressings and details.

Elm Lodge: Built around 1808, stands at the northern end of the Cricket Green. It is a grade II listed building and it neatly turns the corner to commence the development overlooking the east side of the Green. A detached, two storey, stuccoed Regency villa, under a shallow pitched, slate roof and typically wide, open bracketed, eaves, it presents three symmetrical bays to the Cricket Green.

Mitcham Court: Originally known as Elm Court the locally listed, Mitcham Court was probably erected as a villa around 1824 and was roughly square in plan. It was subsequently extended with the addition of two symmetrical wings to its present form around 1870. The front elevation is composed of three elements comprising the original house and the two later wings to each side, linked by a continuous raised string course at first floor level.

Mitcham Court

White House, 7 Cricket Green: The White House is an elegant grade II listed, detached late 18th Century house with a ”modernised” front facade dating from around 1826. The three storey, three bay coursed stucco elevations fit under a shallow pitched roof with corniced parapet.

Chestnut Cottage: Also grade II listed. A charming two-storey timber framed house with a plain tiled double pitched ”London” roof and a symmetrical front facade, terminating in a low parapet. The front elevation has had its timber-boarding replaced with render on lathes, probably an 18th Century modernisation to give the impression of a more solid construction.

2. Small terraces or semi-detached pairs of early to mid 19th Century cottages:

Ivy and Elm Cottages and Kingsdene: The semi-detached Ivy and Elm Cottages are built of red brick under a hipped slate pitched roof with the entrances at the extremities and the recessed sash windows forming a symmetrical pattern. They probably date from around 1800, and are locally listed buildings.

The adjoining third cottage, separated from the other two by a covered passageway in this group is Kingsdene, which is also locally listed.

Caxton Cottages: Built in 1879 from a white ”gault” brick these are also locally listed. Two storeys with a pitched roof to eaves, originally they would have had Welsh slate roofs.

Mary Tate Almshouses detail

Cricketers Cottages: Adjoining Caxton Cottages these date from the early to mid 19th Century and are also locally listed. Built of brick that has been rendered over and painted, these are a symmetrical pair of cottages with entrances at either end.

Nos.11 and 13 Cricket Green: These are a locally listed semi-detached pair of early to mid 19th Century villas. They are two storey, with painted pebbledash under a hipped slate roof with lead flashings. Both have elegant iron porches under tented lead canopies.

Mary Tate Almshouses: Grade II listed these are a single storey and arranged as an open courtyard facing onto the Cricket Green and were erected in 1829 on land formerly occupied by the Tate family's Mitcham house. Financed by Miss Mary Tate for "twelve elderly ladies of good character, regular Church of England communicants and who had never been a charge on the Parish". The Almshouses were built to the design of John Buckler in modified Tudor style in yellow stocks under a slate pitched roof forming three sides of a rectangle facing the Green.

8 and 10 Cricket Green: A two storied semi-detached pair, originally of brick but latterly rendered under a pitched tiled roof, were erected in 1835 to provide accommodation for the master and mistress of the National Infants School which survives at the rear. The architect was Thomas Finden and the building is included on the local list.

Nos. 346 to 348 London Road: Located to the right of the former White Hart (now Hodden on the Green) stands this pair of equally important grade II listed cottages. Concealed behind the "modernised" rendered Georgian facade with three simple canopy door cases and flush framed boxed sashes is a much older building. The heavy timber framing of the interior, and the gabled rear elevation show this to be in fact, a Tudor building.

3. Early 20th Century houses and groups and terraces of houses

Sibford House: Located on the corner of the Lower Green and London Road, this two storey detached Edwardian house built of brick with tile hanging to the upper floor beneath a steeply pitched tiled roof with large flat roofed dormers window and prominent chimney.

Preshaw Crescent: Preshaw Crescent represents a series of interwar half-rendered semi-detached pairs of villas under tiled gabled roofs arranged in a gentle crescent.

74 and 76 Cricket Green: On the south side of the Cricket Green, stands a simple rendered stock brick cottage with a jettied mock Tudor first floor under a hipped tiled roof.

4. Terraces of shops with residential or other uses above located in London Road.

352 to 356 London Road: Immediately adjoining Hooden on the Green to the south is this three-storey late 18th/early 19th century terrace. Comprising three distinctively different elements they combine to form a complementary group. No 352 is of a Georgian design with vertical sliding box sash windows that are set back in their reveals with finely gauged flat arches over and is locally listed. The central of the three appears later and has a prominent gable. The front elevation is more ornate than the adjacent 352 with the windows set within gauged flat arched openings set within tall brick recesses topped with a semi-circular arches. The third of the three is later still and even more elaborate in its detailing, again with the prominent first floor with tall windows opening onto a balcony and sash windows above.

5. More recent groups and terraces of houses

Brampton and Avoca, 3-5 (Odds) Cricket Green: An early to mid 20th Century pair of houses, these are two storey with brick elevations and sash windows. Over the entrance, between the two pairs of upper floor sash windows is a ceramic circular plaque.

Glebe Square: A postwar symmetrical group arranged in a square around a courtyard that sits back from The Green, with two storey yellow brick terraces on three sides with pan tiled and pitched roofs. Balconies at first floor, and patios at ground floor level provide modelling and private outdoor space.

Bramcote Court: This is an impressive four storey red brick block of 1930's flats with shops in the ground floor of the curved corner block. The flat roofed ends and hipped roof centre block feature curved corner glazing and horizontal banded panels in the 'moderne' style. Somewhat out of scale with its neighbours it is nevertheless a good example of its type and time.

Vine Cottages and Beadle Court: A 1960s development, on the site of an earlier house, which was demolished in the early 20th Century to make way for a timber yard, arranged around an open sided courtyard. The block fronting Lower Green West is arranged as a symmetrical terrace with a central shallow arched opening through to the courtyard behind, which is enclosed on two sides by Beadle Court comprising two blocks of flats. The design is uncomplicated contrasting with the more exuberant detailing of the adjacent inter war buildings.

Chart Close: A short terrace of late 20th Century cottages on the site of a former tennis court formerly within the garden of 21 Cricket Green. Two-stories and built of rendered blockwork these are of pastiche Victorian styling with traditional style sash windows and projecting canopies over the entrances.

Glebe Court: One of the first post-war social housing developments in the United Kingdom, brick flat blocks comprising of 1, 2 & 3 bedroom layouts, maisonettes and a number of bungalows built in two phases during the period 1950-1953. The relationship of the buildings to the landscaped areas and the contribution of trees particularly along the London Road edge of the development are particularly notable features of the layout.

6. Public Houses

Burn Bullock Public House: A grade II listed former coaching house on the London Road, has a front of early to mid-18th Century and a wing to the left return of 16th-17th Century. It uses yellow stock brickwork with red-dressed window heads under a hipped tiled roof. There are blind windows to the second and fourth bays at first floor, and also on the side. These have been painted to imitate real windows. The timber framed jettied wing to the north return is evidence of an earlier part of the building and chimney stacks to the east and south walls possibly date from the 16th Century. The building interior is timber framed and contains impressive panelling.

White Hart Public House: On the west side of London Road stands another former coaching inn which is grade II listed. It was substantially rebuilt between 1749 and 1751, and the resulting structure can be seen today. Its two storey elevation of seven bays which sits beneath a steeply pitched hipped slate roof that is partially concealed behind a balustraded parapet and cornice.

Queens Head Public House: This two storey building is of a typical early 20th Century design with arched head windows in a red brick ground floor and a balconied rendered first floor under a steep, hipped, tiled roof.

The Burn Bullock

Former Britannia Inn, 40 Cricket Green: A two storey probably 18th Century building now with rendered elevations under a tiled double pitched London roof behind a parapet. The three bay elevation is still recognisable as 18th Century however the building was converted into a house in the mid 20th Century.

7. Community Buildings

Fire Station: This locally listed building erected in 1927 is of a simple Classical design typical of the interwar period. Materials used include red brick on the upper floor, and ashlar sandstone on the ground floor. The roof is of green slate. The main features of interest include the curved roof slope, the diamond window set within the front facing gable, and the inscribed lettering above the fire engine doorways.

Former Parish Rooms: Dating from 1788 and listed grade II, the building was extended in 1812 when it was converted for use of a day school providing education for ”the poor”. It was repeatedly extended after that to accommodate ever increasing numbers of pupils. The building has now been converted into artists studios and flats.

Vestry Hall: Occupying a prominent position at the centre of the London Road frontage to the Green, the locally listed Vestry Hall was erected in 1887 to the design of Robert Masters Chart. In 1915 it became the Urban District Council’s Offices, and with Borough status granted in 1934, the Town Hall. Its two storey asymmetrical, elevations in red brick and Mansfield stone sit under a steeply pitched gabled, slate roof, with slate roofed dormers on the rear elevations. It has a prominent clock tower topped by a truncated spire with decorative slates and ornate dormers with louvres.

The Fire Station

Cricket Pavilion: Also on the local list and built around 1920, when traffic was somewhat lighter, the pavilion is now uniquely separated from the Cricket Green by a main road. Of two storeys in red brick under a steep pitched tiled roof with truncated hips and central gable the pavilion has a full width projecting balcony at first floor.

Methodist Church: The grade II listed Methodist Church is a large L shaped building, which was designed by Edward D. Mills FRIBA, who pioneered the innovative use of concrete, and stands on the site of an earlier Methodist Chapel. The building dates from 1958 to 59 and its design is uncompromisingly modern. The building has a striking saw tooth roof design, raised high on supporting slender concrete columns, and which overhangs to one side to create a covered cloister access to the church.

Police Station: Equally very much a building of its time, is the three storey typical early 1960's Police Station which features two storey window panel at first and second floors, set in reconstructed stone surround and mullions. The building positively adds to the architectural variety which is a feature of this area.

The Birches: The locally listed Birches is a traditional two storey house set well back at the end of its drive. The brick elevations have block bonded ashlar quoins and a steep double pitched hipped tiled roof. The general design draws inspiration from the Queen Anne period, which was much favoured at the turn of this century, when this house was built. It was constructed for Sir Isaac Wilson, a local benefactor, on site of the Birches estate owned by Sir Isaac; land and house were bequeathed on Sir Isaac's death "for the well-being of Mitcham residents" and used for health purposes; with the inception of the NHS in 1948, the site was absorbed and is currently used by the local health service.

46 Cricket Green: Formerly a Methodist Chapel this is a single storey building that dates from 1789. On one occasion John Wesley preached here so it is of historic significance. The building has been much altered.

Merton Tenants and Residents Federation, 328 London Road Mitcham: Formerly a surgery dating from the early 20th Century this single storey building occupies the plot immediately to the south of 326 London Road. As single storey red brick building with a hipped tiled roof it has been much extended and altered in recent times and may once have served as a coach house to the adjacent Sibford.

8. Commercial Buildings

Caxton House: Also locally listed, was built in 1879, and has an irregular pattern of pilasters with capitals with inset doors and windows.

Former Bank, 442-444 London Road: A survival from the time the tram route extended to Lower Mitcham promoting a short-lived focus of commercial development. This early 20th Century Building replaced a much earlier terrace and occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Lower Green West and London Road. It has an imposing three storey corner element of a classical design that stands proud of the adjacent development.

The Methodist Church

9. Small workshops occupying backland sites

Cottages and the former bank building, 342-344 London Road and behind 8-10 Cricket Green: Groups of mainly single storey ad hoc buildings squeezed into small sites mainly behind buildings and which accommodate a range of primarily artisan and craft activities such as joiners. They contribute to the compact character of development around the green and are in contrast with the openness of the green.

10. Monuments and other Structures

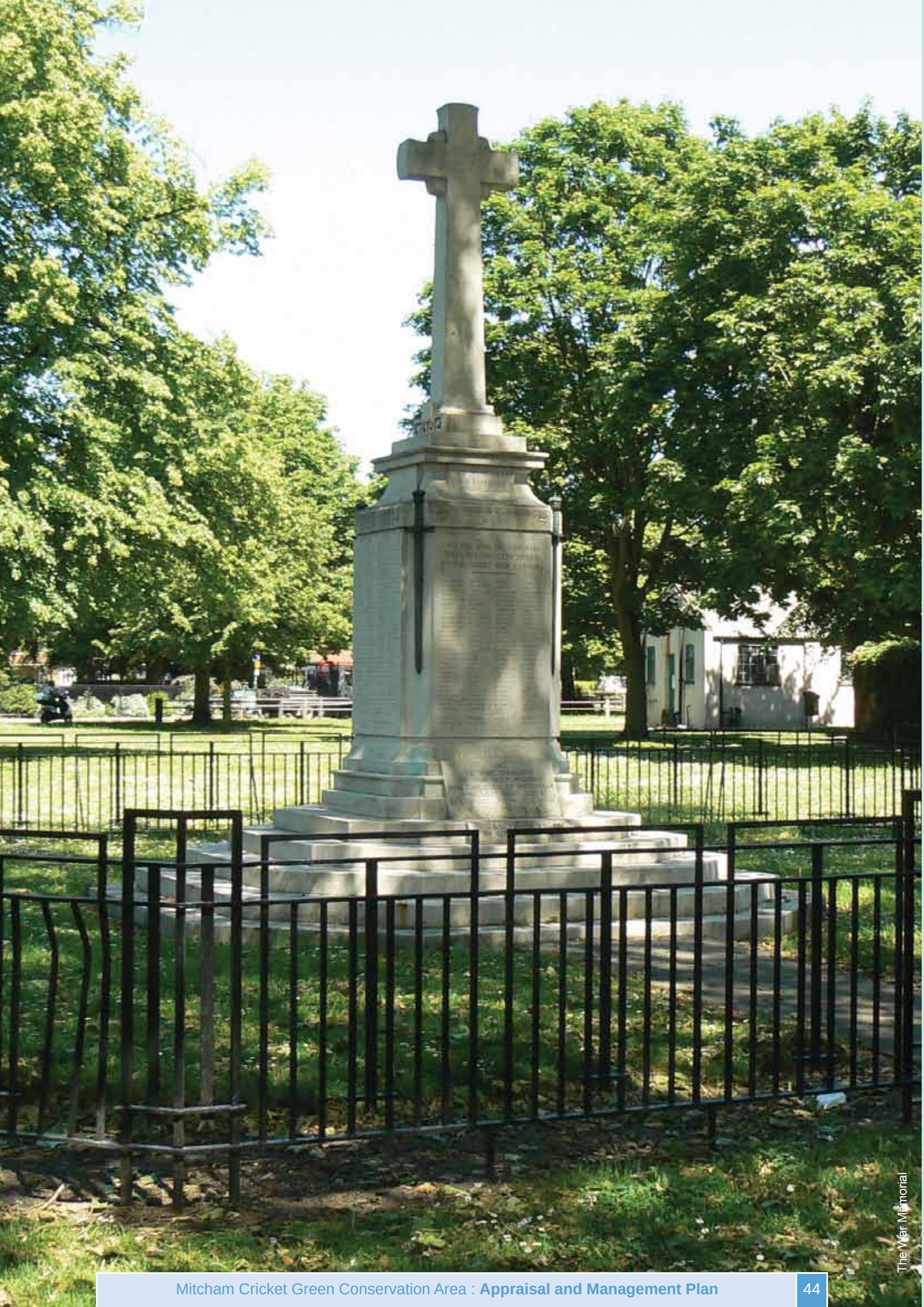
War Memorial: On the Green behind the Vestry Hall and to the west of the Fire Station stands the War Memorial constructed from Portland stone and commemorating the First World War and which was unveiled on 21 November 1920, by Lieutenant General Sir Herbert Edward Watts KCB, KCMG. Known details and short biographies of many of those commemorated can be viewed on the 'Role of Honour' website: www.roll-of-honour.com/Surrey/Mitcham.html

Milestone: Listed milestone outside Sibford Court. 18thC Portland stone, square in section.

Horse Trough: Listed drinking fountain and horse trough, late 19C, granite rectangular horse trough with chambered base on granite supports.

Cricket Memorial Stone: The locally listed memorial stone is located in the south western corner of the Cricket Green, to the east of London Road. The memorial stone is made of portland stone. It is roughly cut, and contains 4 smooth surfaced panels. It commemorates "the birthplace of the noble game of cricket which has been played here since the early 18th century".

Glebe Court



The War Memorial