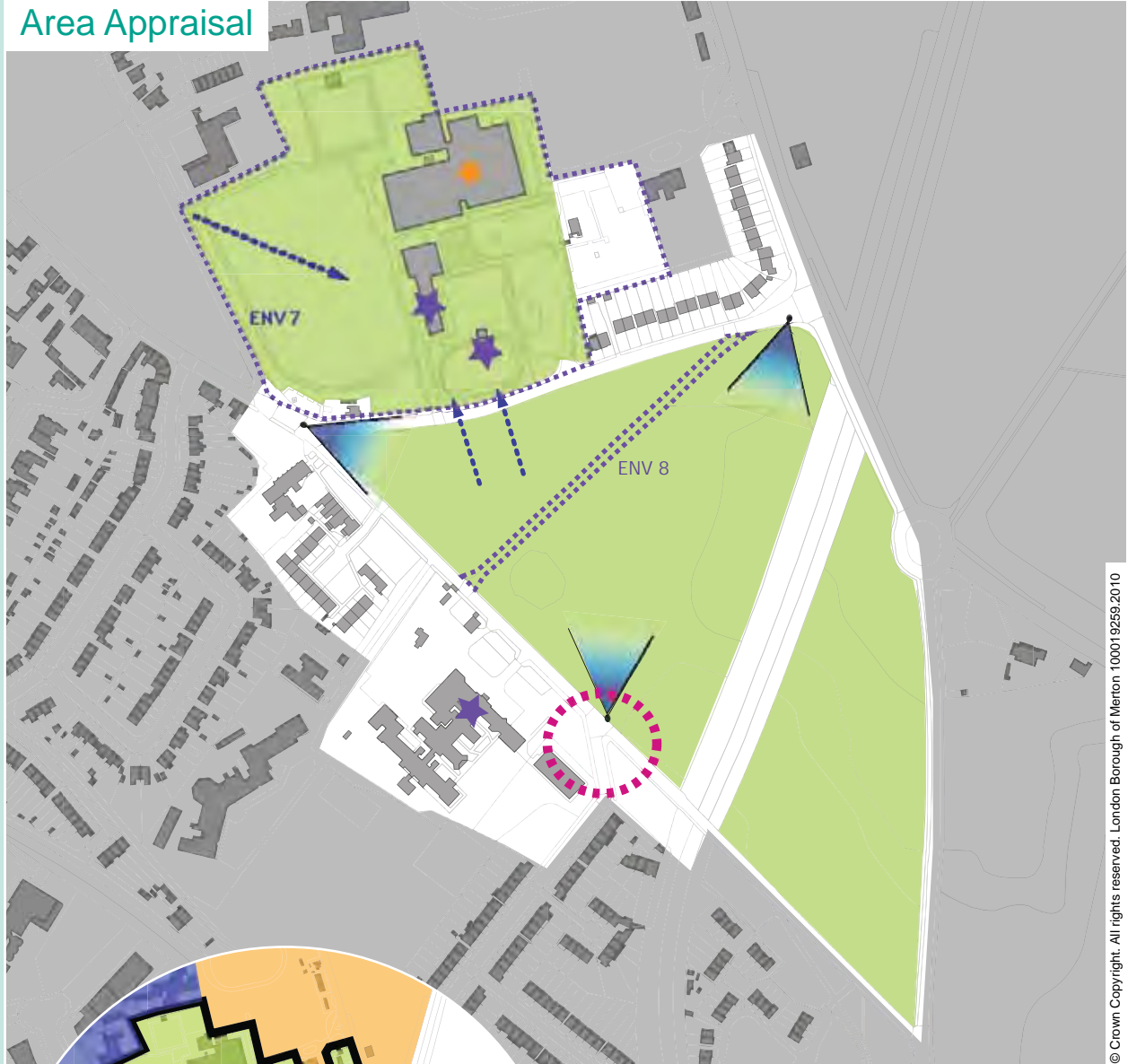
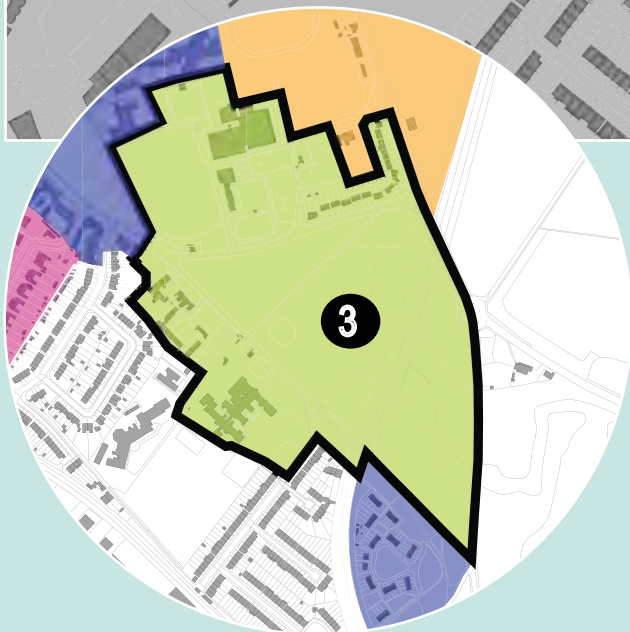


9.0 Character Area 3: Cranmer Green









Area Appraisal



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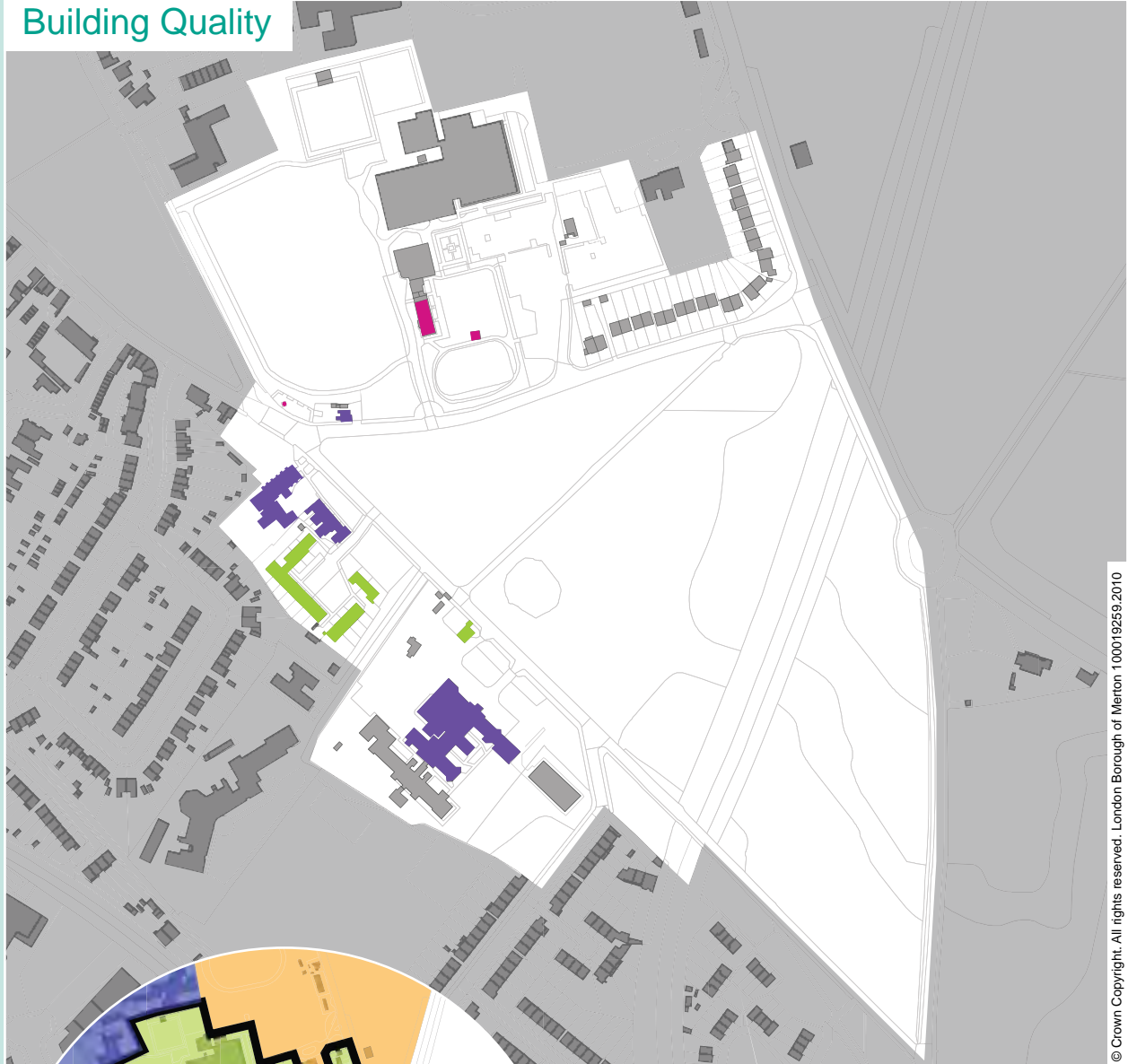


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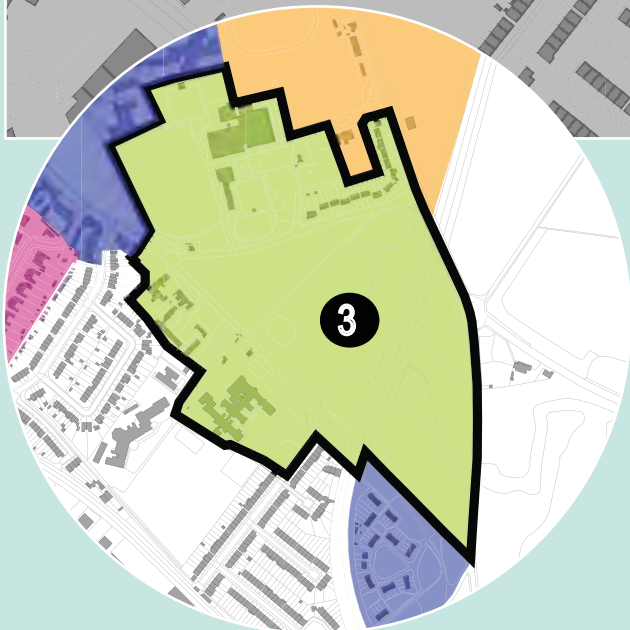
-  Gateway to conservation area
-  Local Landmark
-  Negative feature
-  View to focal point
-  Glimpsed views
-  Wide view
-  Specific environmental improvements
-  Significant open space

9.0 Character Area 3: Cranmer Green

Building Quality



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Key:

-  Listed building
-  Locally listed building
-  Other building that makes a positive contribution
-  Building that has a negative impact
-  Building that has a neutral impact



Cranmer Green

The Cranmer Green sub-area covers an area to the east of the Cricket Green and embraces the grounds of the Canons. Cranmer Green and the area of Mitcham Common between the railway line and Carshalton Road along with the buildings facing onto the green are all included within the area.

The character area is characterised by the surviving historic manor house of The Canons and the qualities of the buildings overlooking Cranmer Green which, like the conservation area as a whole, subtly reflect changes which have occurred in popular domestic architecture over five centuries. There are three statutory listed buildings and a listed Obelisk at the junction of Madeira Road and the Cricket Green and eight buildings on the local list within the sub-area. Again, mature trees have a significant impact on the character of the conservation area, particularly along Madeira Road.

Form and Layout

This character area is defined by larger detached buildings set within open grounds contrasting with a much finer grain of the smaller residential development. The character area is dominated by the open space of Cranmer Green and its surroundings. Buildings edge two sides of the Green and are predominantly of an informal layout with a wide variety of building line.

A group of semi-detached houses at the corner of Madeira Road and Commonsides West are closely spaced with relatively narrow frontages. Small scale cottages fronting Cranmer Road and the later development behind them share this narrow frontage character. Other buildings within the character area including Wilson Hospital and the Canon's Leisure Centre, are set within larger plots and the main historic buildings, although originally residential now accommodate other uses.

Buildings on the north side of Cranmer Green i.e. The Canons and the leisure centre are set well back from Madeira Road behind extensive mature landscape, with the other buildings in the area directly fronting the Green.

Building forms vary from the low slightly open layout of the Wilson Hospital to much more tightly packed cottages and terraces.

Scale and Building line

Buildings within the area are predominantly of one and two storeys. Although they are all predominantly low, they vary enormously in terms of their footprint, from small narrow fronted cottages to the large extended footprint of the Wilson Hospital.

Building lines around the green are generally varied with a mixture of properties fronting the greens and others set back and at right angles to the green. The semi-detached houses on Madeira Road have a strong building line fronting the green.

Materials and detailing

There are a variety of different building materials that predominate within this character area. By far the most predominant material in the area is brick, either fair-faced or with later render, such as Cranmer Cottages. There is a variety of brick including a brownish brick to the Wilson Hospital, red brick to the houses in Madeira Road/Commonside West and yellow stock brick as can be seen at Cranmer Farm Close. Older buildings have traditional bonding mainly Flemish bond whilst newer recent developments predominantly employ modern stretcher bond.



Catholic Church of St. Peter and St. Paul

The more modest residential developments are not embellished with ornate architectural features but the larger buildings do have decorative details such as emphasised quoins, moulded cornices, as at The Canons and the Wilson Hospital, bold pediments and portico to the main entrance to the Wilson Hospital and the brickwork detailing of the arched window openings to St Peter and Paul Church. Roofs are predominantly pitched with plain clay tiles.

Windows to the earlier buildings are predominantly double hung sash windows with a vertical emphasis to the window opening proportions. However in some cases these have been replaced with modern window types.



Wilson Hospital detail

Open Spaces

The most significant open spaces within this sub area are Cranmer Green and the grounds to the Canons.

Cranmer Green covers an area of about 3 hectares and includes a pond that has been identified as being a site of local importance for nature conservation. The eastern part of the Green between King George VI Avenue and the railway line is also a designated Local Nature Reserve. The green is roughly triangular in form and contains a scattering of trees and areas of acid grassland, improved neutral grassland and native woodland towards its eastern boundary in addition to the pond. A significant number of wildfowl graze in the area.

The Green takes its name from the family, which held the lordship of the manor of Mitcham for much of the 18th century. The land opposite the pond, now the Wilson Hospital and grounds, was the site of their family home, The Cranmers.

King George VI Avenue bisects the green and is aligned with the original entrance to the now demolished Cranmers house. The avenue is lined on each side by a row of flowering trees, which appear to be planted in the later part of the 20th Century.

The Canons has been in local authority ownership since 1939. The present grounds comprise an area of parkland as well as areas of car parking associated with the adjacent Leisure Centre. These grounds contain the remains of original estate walls, which are important parts of the house's curtilage and features of the conservation area.



The Canons

The area to the east of the railway line, effectively cut off from the main body of the conservation area by the railway line effectively forms part of Mitcham Common and comprises an area of woodland to the west of the Mitcham Common golf course. The area is managed by Mitcham Common Conservators who prepared a management Plan for the whole of the Common covering the period from 2007 to 2012. The area is quite densely wooded so not much used for recreational pursuits but it provides an important local habitat, forming part of the Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation extending over the part of Mitcham Common lying within Merton. The area also effectively screens the railway line from the Common.

Urban Spaces

The main urban space in the area is the area around the Obelisk at the junction of Madeira Road and Cricket Green. The area is significant as a focal point within the area and would benefit from an improvement scheme to emphasise its significance. There is potential to possibly link the space to the Canons entrance and its grounds.

Views and Landscape

The mature landscape both within and around the open spaces makes a significant contribution to the character of the area.

Views within the area range from wide panoramas to glimpses over walls to the canons and the dovecote. Approaching the area from Carshalton Road, dense woodland on the northern side of the road narrows the outlook. At the junction of Cranmer Road and Caesar's walk the views open out dramatically to the open space and buildings around it. The Wilson Hospital building is an attractive local landmark at this point where the aspect opens out.



Wilson Hospital

Approaching the area from the Cricket Green, views open out from the Cricket Green as the road divides into Madeira Road and Cranmer Road. Trees within the grounds of the Canons and also the Wilson Hospital contribute significantly to the areas suburban character, they also provide an important backdrop to significant buildings and mitigate against the environmental impact of traffic by absorbing noise and pollution. There is a significant group of trees to the east of the hospital, which are an important green feature within the area. Trees along the grass verges on the south side of Cranmer Road also contribute significantly to the area's character.

There are a number of specimen trees within the grounds of the Canons, many surrounding the pond to the south of the Dovecote and around the perimeter to the grounds to the east of the house.

Public Realm and Street Furniture

Street furniture in this area is generally modern. The street lighting, along Madeira Road and Cranmer Road comprises tall lamp posts which are utilitarian in appearance. On the green, Victorian style lanterns complement the character of the area. Generally street furniture is varied with metal bollards surrounding the green and concrete bollards at Cranmer Farm Close.

The Grade II Listed Obelisk makes a positive contribution to the area's character. As with the rest of the conservation area, there are a variety of different items of street furniture, such as litter bins, seats, planters and again the area's character would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach to the design and siting of these items generally.

There are few examples of surviving historic street furniture within this part of the conservation area, but there is a cast-iron post box in Cranmer Road. The roads have modern surfaces and most kerbs have been replaced with mainly slim modern concrete with a mixture of block paving, concrete slabs and bitumen pavements. There are a few surviving sections of granite kerbs, mainly on the south edge of Cranmer Road.

The area being mainly of a suburban village character probably would not have historically had flagstone paving having relatively rural origins. However, the area could be improved with a more sensitive surfacing, particularly around the Cranmer Green and the Obelisk to replace the current mix of paving materials with a more cohesive unified approach. Around the green itself, steel bollards protect its edge. Although not of traditional appearance, they do not detract from the character of the area. Low rails with timber bollards line the southern side of King George VI Avenue with more utilitarian steel rails on the northern sides.

Boundary Treatments and Private Spaces

Unlike the adjacent Green character areas, most of the buildings are set well back from the street behind green verges or in the case of the Canons and Wilson Hospital, within open grounds.

Front boundaries on the south side of Cranmer Road are mainly open or comprise low picket fences and hedges, and hooped, parkland style fencing enclosing Cranmer Farm Close. This contrasts with the more enclosed character of the Canons grounds, with relatively high brick boundary walls which screen the grounds from the effects of traffic.

The housing to the east of the Canons, wrapping around the corner from Madeira Road have low, predominantly brick boundaries. The entrance to Cranmer Primary School has some old cast or wrought iron railings and gates, which is a rare survival. Behind these are a more

modern, utilitarian secondary gates in mild steel. There are also some steel railings and gates to the Canons Lodge which are of an art deco style which is unusual for the area.

Significant Buildings and Groups

The buildings cover a range of ages and styles from the 16th Century Dovecote to late 20th Century housing at Cranmer Farm Close. Some of the original smaller building plots have been amalgamated into single developments such as at 6 Cranmer Road. All have reasonably proportioned storey heights with a general vertical emphasis to the elevations.

There are a number of significant buildings in the Cranmer Green character area, most notable are the Canons and the adjacent Dovecote and the Wilson Hospital. The Canons and Dovecote are amongst the oldest surviving buildings within the borough.

The character area reflects a variety of different architectural styles that have developed over the years ranging from the medieval in terms of the Dovecote, the oldest surviving complete building in Mitcham, Victorian ecclesiastical as in the St. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church, interwar Classical styling of the Wilson Hospital to 1960s housing at Cranmer Farm Close.



The Dovecote and pond

Important buildings and structures within the sub area can be divided into distinct types comprising:

1. The early Manor House

The Canons, Madeira Road: The Canons stands in its own grounds and is set well back from Madeira Road. The present grade II* listed Canons house was erected in 1680, extended in the 18th century, and remained in the ownership of the Cranmer family and their descendants the Simpsons until 1939. It is built in brick with later coursed stucco, under a hipped tiled roof. The two storeys plus basement and attic has a west facade of five bays with two bay extension to the left. The grounds contain a number of early walls which are survivals from the original estate grounds and also contains the Grade II Listed Dovecote and also the locally listed Canons Lodge. The lake within the grounds is of significance and in need of comprehensive restoration.

2. Community Buildings

Wilson Hospital, Cranmer Road: This locally Listed hospital was opened in 1928 having been endowed by Isaac Wilson. Chart Son & Reading were the architects for the building, who also designed the Fire Station and Vestry Hall. Set within a large plot it is a one and two storey building under a steeped pitched tile roof. The scale and proportions of the building reflect that of the early Manor Houses and it set back from the road behind a landscaped zone. The hospital is of a "corridor plan" with the wards arranged at right angles to the central spine corridor as a series of linked pavilions reminiscent of the earlier pavilion plan hospitals. Recent works involving the installation of new car park lighting have had a negative impact.

St Peter & Paul's Church, Bell Tower and Presbytery: These locally listed buildings were completed in 1889 to the designs of Frederick A. Walters. The church has five bay buttressed side elevations with inset windows with semicircular heads under brick arches. The offset bell tower, has exposed bells set within its arches. The Presbytery is built with a matching brick to the church with a tile roof and has recessed Georgian sash windows in square openings.



Cranmer cottages



3. Small terraces or semi-detached pairs of late 18th Century and early to mid 19th Century cottages

Cranmer Cottages, 3 - 5 Cranmer Road: These are locally listed and believed to date from the late 18th Century, on land enclosed from the Green. Formerly part of a larger terrace, these are built of brick with later render. These are two storeys with a tiled pitched roof and their smooth rendered two-storey elevations with canopied doors provide a visually important element to the Green.

Cranmer Farm Cottage, 6 and 7 Cranmer Road: No 6 Cranmer Road occupies the site of an earlier short terrace that was orientated at right angles to the road possibly dating from the 18th Century. The building was either adapted or re-built as a single unit in the early 20th Century. No.7 Cranmer Road at the end of the terrace is single storey also built of red brick and dates from the early 20th Century. The building is architecturally distinctive from the rest of the terrace and has the appearance of a small hall or chapel. The building however marks the entrance to Cranmer Farm Close.

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

Canon's Lodge, Madeira Road: Marking the boundary and entrance to the Canon's is Canons Lodge a small, single storey, locally listed, lodge building dating from around 1870. Built of brick and breaking the boundary wall line the building marks the location where the original entrance gate to the Canons once stood.

5. Mid twentieth century semi-detached pairs of houses

"News of the World" Houses, Madeira Road and Commonsides West: These asymmetrical pairs of inter-war semi-detached houses were built by the News of the World presumably for their employees. The designers were London Architects E. G Culpin and Bowers who were also responsible for the rebuilding of Southwark Town Hall in the 1930s. One half of each pair has a gable and the other a hipped roof.

6. Late twentieth century housing developments

Cranmer Farm Close: This is small close of 1960s two-storey housing arranged in a courtyard and is relatively well maintained. They are built of yellow stock brick with the elevations broken into panels interspersed with composite cladding panels. The development, which received a Civic Trust commendation in 1968, is set back from the road with mature trees and excellent views out to the green.

7. Other structures

Dovecote to the Canons, Madeira Road: Set within the grounds of the Canons the grade II listed Dovecote has the date 1511 carved in one of the chalk blocks making it the oldest remaining complete building in Mitcham. Built of chalk blocks with contrasting knapped flint plinths and panels and red brick quoins it is a fairly modest square single storey structure under a hipped tiled roof surmounted by a timber louvred cupola. It makes a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Roosts were provided for some 500-600 birds and the right to keep pigeons was jealously guarded by the Lord of the Manor at a time when this could supply a valuable additional source of food in hard winters.

The nearby pond probably originated from a carp or 'stew' pond belonging to the Augustinian Priory of St. Mary Overy at Southwark.

Obelisk, Madeira Road at junction with Cricket Green: This monument was erected by the Reverend Richard Cranmer in 1822 to commemorate the appearance of a natural artesian spring following a period of prolonged drought. Built of rendered brick it has an inset Portland Stone tablet. It is a grade II listed monument and an important feature within this part of the conservation area.

