

4 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

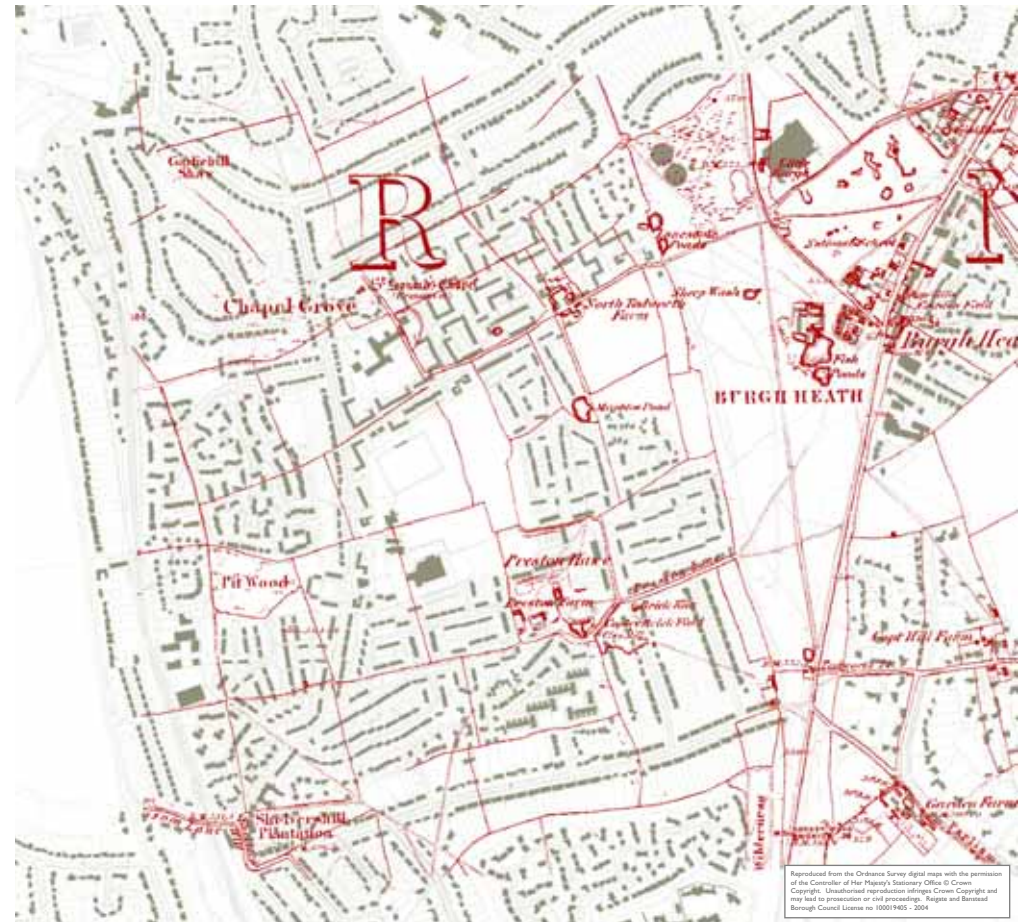
This section sets out an urban design analysis of the Preston area, including an analysis of Preston's historical development, movement, environmental quality and open space. This analysis helps to determine the opportunities and constraints which will govern new development in the area, as well as highlighting areas for improvement.

4.1 HISTORY

The plan lays the Ordnance Survey map of 1871 over the existing plan of the area. Noteworthy features include:

Burgh Heath and Pit Wood have remained largely intact;

- Marbles Pond remains an important feature in the area;
- Some Victorian field boundaries continue to play an important role in shaping the area. The boundaries defining the recreation ground and Banstead Athletic Football Club remain.



The current Ordnance Survey plan with that of 1871 overlaid in red

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Movement analysis plan

4.2 MOVEMENT

Despite good access to the strategic road network with the A240 and A217 providing good access to the M25, Preston is relatively poorly connected to its immediate environment. Access to the area is primarily focussed along the Merland Rise axis which itself connects with Great Tattenhams to the north and Shelters Way to the south. This over dominance on Merland Rise/Preston Lane and lack of vehicular connections to the east is the area's main weakness in relation to the local movement network and routes to and through the area.

The key nodes where important routes come together are concentrated along this Merland Rise axis, being the junctions between Shelters Way and Preston Lane at which point there is a small neighbourhood shopping centre, the junction between Preston Lane and Merland Rise, and the junction between Merland Rise and Chetwode Road in the vicinity of the Primary School.

Secondary distributor roads branch off Preston Lane, with the heavily engineered Waterfield providing access to the health centre and housing areas to the west. Chetwode Road and Preston Lane distribute traffic through the area to the east and are connected by Marbles Way on the east side of the recreation ground.

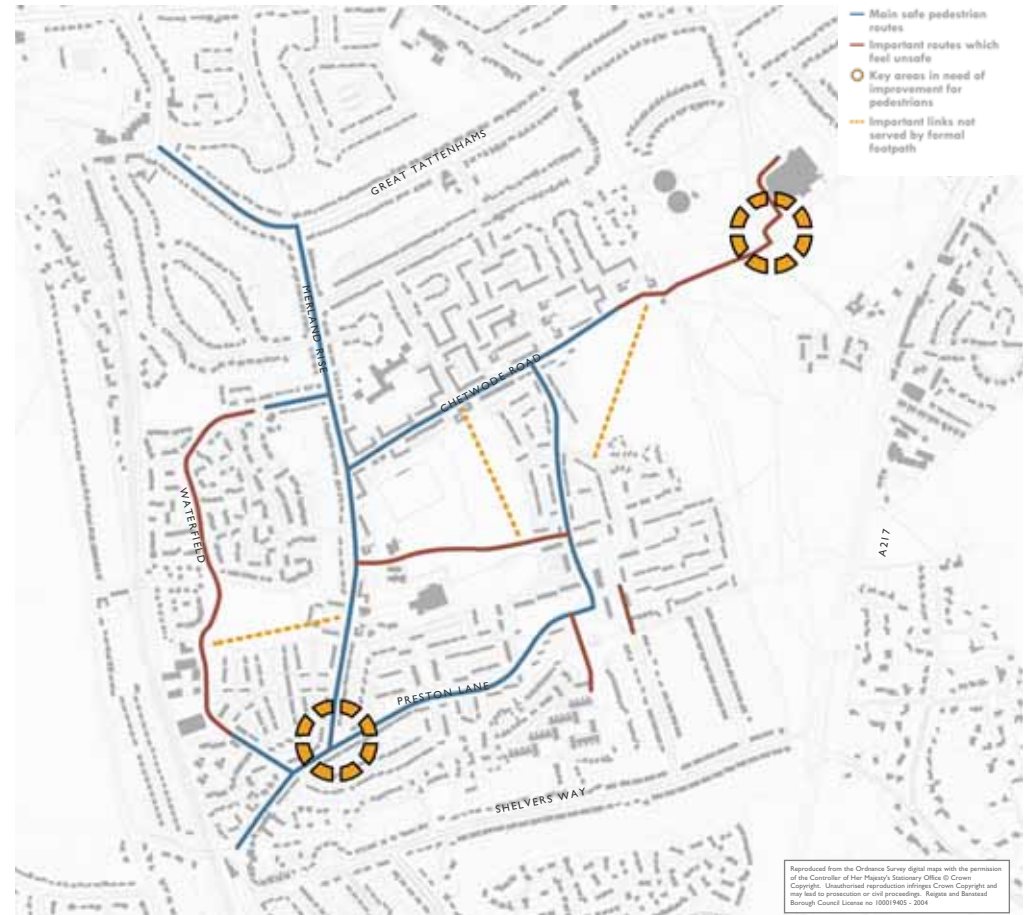
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4.3 PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

The main safe pedestrian routes through the area mirror the main vehicular routes. Generally, good links exist, via Merland Rise, to Tadworth and Tattenham Corner railway stations which are roughly equidistant from the geographical centre of the area.

Some important pedestrian routes provide links to surrounding areas where there is no corresponding vehicular connection. An important link exists between Shelters Way and Marbles Way via Copley Way in the south-east corner of the study area. This route provides much needed direct linkage with the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. There are several additional cycle and pedestrian routes connecting with Shelters Way although they are less obvious and more tortuous in nature.

A direct pedestrian route across Burgh Heath provides an important link to the Asda superstore on the A240 Reigate Road. Whilst important, this route would benefit from improvement, particularly at each end where improved sight lines could improve pedestrian safety. Once through the Heath, the A240 provides a formidable barrier to pedestrians travelling to Asda. In general, pedestrian access to Asda is extremely poor and there is scope for significant improvement.



Pedestrian environment analysis

The footpath across the recreation ground, whilst well used during the day, does not feel safe in the evening despite being lit. However, it is a key route for the area, linking the small shopping parade with the concentration of community facilities on Merland Rise.

Merland Rise is itself not well linked with Waterfield. Pit Wood provides the opportunity for improved pedestrian linkage which would better integrate the health centre with its catchment.

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Frontages analysis plan

4.4 FRONTAGES

Active frontages are those streets and spaces which benefit from the activity, movement and 'eyes on the street' generated by windows and doors being accessed directly from them. Routes which

benefit from this activity are generally safer and tend to be the ones used by local people to move through an area.

In very simplistic terms, Preston is arranged as areas of housing which surround the central recreation ground. Merland Rise,

Preston Lane, Chetwode Road and Marbles Way are the four principal routes serving these residential areas running roughly parallel to the sides of the recreation ground.

Of these routes, Merland Rise is the principal route through the area along which most of its community facilities are located. Merland Rise benefits from almost continuous frontage and consequently feels generally safe along its length.

Preston Lane, Chetwode Road and Marbles Way all benefit from some degree of active frontage. However, these frontages tend to be punctuated with breaks or the buildings themselves are well set back from the pavement, detracting from the benefits more complete or immediate building frontages can bring.

Waterfield does not benefit from any building frontage, this more recent area of housing having been designed around inward looking cul-de-sacs.

Significantly, some of the key areas of open space do not benefit from active frontages or the overlooking. Of perhaps most significance is the relationship between the new housing development at De Burgh Gardens and the remainder of the De Burgh site. This recently built private housing enclave does not positively address the De Burgh site.

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4.5 OPEN SPACE

The Preston area benefits from some very significant areas of open space. The area is framed on either side by the green belt designations of Burgh Heath to the east and Epsom Downs to the west. Pit Wood is a small but significant area of historic woodland located between the community facilities on Merland Rise and the Health Centre on Waterfield.

The Preston area is structured around the centrally located and regularly shaped recreation ground. About a third of this site is used by the privately run Banstead Athletic Football Club. Access to the recreation ground can be made from all sides, although generally these access points are low key. A skateboard park is provided on the recreation ground, although this facility does not appear to be well used.

Marbles Pond is located on Marbles Way and is an historic feature within the area. The environment around the pond has recently been significantly improved. The pond is used for fishing and further improvements are planned through a community supported and publicly funded fishing project. The pond has potentially a good relationship with the De Burgh site.

Established allotments are accessed directly from Merland Rise and although the level of take up is generally good, they



Open space analysis plan

are not understood to be particularly well used.

Incidental open space is found throughout the area where building lines have been pulled away from roads and pavements. The most significant areas of this incidental

space are along Waterfield where it appears land has been left over from the construction of the road and along the north side of Preston Lane.

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4.6 LEGIBILITY

Legibility relates to how easy a place is to understand, use and move through. Uses and local facilities should be easy to find, located on key routes that are generally accessible to most people.

Preston suffers from being difficult to find and this stems from the area's limited connections and linkages to the residential areas around it. These surrounding residential areas tend to have a more balanced socio-economic and tenure mix - a mix that is notably lacking in the Preston area - and poor connections to these more balanced areas compounds the isolated nature of Preston itself.

The movement analysis gives clues to how these linkages could be improved and the circular symbols on the plan indicate key access points for the area, which could be strengthened.

Legibility depends on key buildings and landmarks being easily accessible, both visually and physically. The retreated nature of the location of the community facilities on Merland Rise, the community buildings and sports centre, fails to create a natural heart which the area needs.

The distribution and arrangement of the area's key open spaces in relation to the location of its key services and facilities



Legibility analysis plan

provides significant scope to better integrate these together - thereby improving the legibility of the area.