

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area, with scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summaries by area ;

Quality Street : a street of high quality traditional cottages

High Street : The centre of the village

School Hill : Tile hung Cottages on a hill

London Road South : Paxton Watson houses & hedged parkway village entrance

Gatton Bottom : valley settlement round the Church

Church Hill : A Paxton Watson estate

London Road North: northern approach to the village

Station Road: around the the railway station

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Quality Street : a street of high quality traditional cottages

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

Quality Street is a relatively continuous townscape of historic buildings, with additions and restorations by Paxton Watson, with mostly open garden frontages, two storey height, handmade clay tile roofs predominant and a mix of brick, painted stucco, tile hanging, with some timber frame survival and Merstham stone. Its layout is a result of historically being the centre of the village.



The relatively tight frontage at the start of the Street on the east side



Chilbertons Manor House



Paxton Watson Houses



The former Village school. The former almshouses are located behind



Old vernacular cottages with arts and crafts renovations



The Old Froge, the former home of Ellen Terry, the actress and the source of the name of the street



The former entrance to Merstham House, the manor house of Merstham. The cottage on the left served as the lodge to Merstham House.

Townscape analysis

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High Street : The centre of the village

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

The High Street despite changes over time still gives the impression of a historic village centre, with the Georgian and earlier cottages being the dominant character of brick, render and handmade clay. These are complimented by good vernacular revival cottages of the Edwardian period. Relatively continuous townscape frontages are apparent and the village pub, former blacksmiths, post office and pound add interest to the basic mix of cottages.



The Feathers is an 18th century building with an arts and crafts frontage and in the past was the principal coaching inn in the village.



A Georgian Cottage next to Victorian revival of the same style.



Cottages and shops along the east side of the High Street. The flint is an oddity as flint (after from brown coloured field flint) was only available from quarrying in the late 19th century.



A Georgian house with Edwardian shopfronts on the east side of the High Street. This creates a fairly weak gap in the townscape. A new building on the north side of the Georgian house would help strengthen the townscape.



A 1930's parade sits relatively well within the more historic townscape but the deterioration in fenestration and large fascia signs and shutters detract from the quality of the building.



On the east side the remains of the former thatched barn are lost within the collection of vans



The poor condition of the village pond has been raised with the Hylton estate.



The overgrown state of this cottage will result in the long term witha repairs notice if it results in the structural deterioration of the cottage.



The west side of the High Street has a good townscape of Georgian cottages



The village blacksmiths is now an antique shop. The larchlap fence to the right is out of keeping.

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The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

School Hill : Tile hung Cottages on ahil .

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

School Hill is characterised by rows of small vernacular cottages with tile hanging , brick and traces of Merstham Stone. Roof pitches are short span.





A Paxton Watson Cottage



The west side of the Hill is typified by a gault brick wall, lime trees and a small thatched barn.

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

London Road South : Paxton Watson houses & hedged parkway village entrance

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary :

This street is characterised by Paxton Watson houses built from 1899 onwards, which are substantial arts and crafts house in spacious grounds. The materials are mostly handmade clay plain tiles, leaded light windows, brick and roughcast. The roof pitches are mostly 50 degree.





The Old Saddlery is an 18th century building remodelled by Paxton Watson. His alterations include the insertion of the large arched window.

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

Gatton Bottom : valley settlement round the Church

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

Gatton Bottom is a natural amphitheatre that has been enhanced by the creation of a road through the bottom of the valley in the 18th century and the siting of the medieval church on a prominence. Most of the older cottages are two storey in brick or Merstham stone, with clay tile and slate roofs. The prestigious surviving building is the Rectory or Parsonage but Merstham House formerly stood in the woods to the west.



The estate farm



The Parish Church



The Old Rectory an 18th century remodeling of an earlier house



Wellhead Pond, the source of the mill stream, suffering from dumping of refuse



The 14th century Dovecote which was rebuilt in this location when the railway was built in 1838



Wellhead Cottage, early 19th century cottage in Merstham Stone



The valley was planted with wellingtonia in the 19th century



This stone wall was built to provide a flat lawn to Merstham House and a base for a kitchen garden wall above



Wellhead Barn



The former North Lodge to Merstham House

Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

Church Hill

This area was laid in 1905 ? and most of the houses with the Conservation Area (the lower part of the Hill) are by Paxton Watson

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

The area is typified by large houses in spacious plots with leaded light windows and tile hung or roughcast elevations. Venetian windows are a feature of the Paxton Watson houses. The roof are generally 50 degree roof pitches.



Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

London Road North

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

The buildings in this locations are limited in number with the Georgian public house and the Paxton Watson archway entrance being the most interesting elements.



Townscape analysis

The following is a perambulation around the Conservation Area giving a brief description of the buildings and layout, by identity area.

Station Road area

Scale, height, rhythm, form, layout & materials summary ;

Station Road area is an eclectic mix of traditional forms with the Edwardian remodelling of the station building, a Ministry of works Telephone Exchange, a Paxton Watson Fire Station and Victorian mansions



Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail for Merstham

Architectural Conventions

The area is typified by three types of building;

1) The Vernacular. The historic buildings in the area dating from before the Victorian period. These are typified by peg tile roofs, 50 degree roof pitches, short roof spans, Merstham stone, painted render and some tile hanging. The fenestration is characterised by mostly casement windows and some sash. Burnt headers are characteristic of the brickwork.

2) Mid Victorian. These are mostly slate roofed brick houses with low pitch hipped roofs and sash windows. Windows have a vertical emphasis, in their division. High floor ceiling heights are a characteristic.

3) Arts and Crafts. These are a substantial properties of arts and crafts properties or properties restored and extended in the arts and crafts period, mostly by Paxton Watson, who arrived in the village in about 1899 as Lord Hylton's architect. His houses are characterised by handmade clay tiles, 50 degree roof pitches, large chimneystacks, gabled roofs and most noticeably Venetian windows. The use of leaded light casement windows is common.

Fenestration

Fenestration is determined by age. The predominant character of the area are painted timber casements for the cottages, sashes for more important Victorian and earlier houses, and leaded lights for the arts and craft houses.

Materials & Detail

The historic properties in the area are typified by Merstham Stone, painted render (probably mostly originally Merstham Stone), brick with burnt headers, tile hanging and rarely some Victorian flint (flint was not quarried in the area until the Victorian period).

Illustrations of Materials, Architectural Conventions & detail by period



Vernacular: Historic farmhouses and cottages in the area from the pre Victorian period, are typified by short span 50 degree pitched roofs and the use of local materials such as peg tiles, merstham stone and tile hanging.



Victorian: (left) This is typified by the use of slate roofs and sash windows set back behind the reveal.

Arts and Crafts: (right) These are typified by the revival of traditional cottage styles but in substantial properties mostly designed by Paxton Watson. Typical detailing is 50 degree clay tile roof pitches, casement windows and very large chimney stacks, with brick and tile hanging. This example shows Paxton Watson's trademark Venetian window but has recently regrettably had its handmade clay tiles replaced by a slate roof.

Typical Materials



Merstham Stone



Tile Hanging



Burnt headers



Roughcast & render



Clay Plain & Peg Tiles

5) Highway issues, Street furniture and Footscape

The centre of the village has issues with high levels of parking, poor street furniture and difficulties with unsuitable through traffic. The negative effects of this in terms of impact on the tranquility of the area are noticeable. There are a number of negative aspects in terms of poor quality street furniture and statutory undertaker infrastructure, including overhead telephone lines. The A25 requires tall lighting columns which are left as unobtrusive contemporary designs which do not draw attention to their presence but other street furniture and landscaping has an unfortunate cluttering effect on what should ideally be a pleasant village centre. Traditional footscape has been eroded, and the fixed gravel, yorkstone and flint cobbles in Quality Street have been eroded by lack of investment and intensive car parking.

These issues are addressed further in the section on townscape problems and opportunities.

The Borough Council will seek to influence the design of schemes affecting the conservation area. It will also seek to encourage the implementation of other improvements identified in this appraisal.

Gravel on tar spray is a traditional finish used for some road in the area, and reflects the character use of gravel drive in the area. Another character feature is the absence of kerbs which give a rural appearance.,

Traffic and Parking

A major issue in regard to Merstham is parking, through traffic and traffic noise. The A25 is a busy routes through the village which causes severance in terms of the pedestrian function of the village. The M25 affect s the former tranquillity of the village. The railway results in major commuter parking which congests the streets.

The origins and cause of the parking congestion in the village requires analysis. Increases in parking charges in the railway car parks more than ten years ago resulted in a dramatic increase in onstreet parking which combined with increased car ownership and residential densities in the village have resulted in a problem which visually detracts from the village as well as causing difficulties for residents. Solutions would appear to lie in better use of existing car parks, residential park area and , better control of onstreet parking.

In terms of the tranquillity of the village, this would be assisted by reduction in traffic speed and volume within the centre. This speed reduction needs to be achieved by more visually sensitive measures than than some of the existing apparatus.

It is worth also considering much longer term solutions. The potential for use of the land between the railways to provide a relief road to reduce the volume of traffic in the centre would be worth considering in the long term. Equally long term, rafting over the M25 to create a tunnel as has been achieved elsewhere would considerably reduce volumes. However without enabling development this is unlikely to be achieved. It is important however to think of a long term solution what has a considerable negative effect on the quality of life within the village.

Merstham Conservation Area Analysis of Public Realm

Identification of some issues from a Conservation Area view point

High Street



The High Street suffers from a high volume of traffic with some significant accidents due to its layout. The width of the street would benefit from consideration of the introduction of more grass verges to give the village a less urban appearance. The lamp posts are best left as discrete olive coloured contemporary designs as traditional designs and darker colours would look odd and obtrusive given their non traditional height for a village.



The clutter of street furniture, some in poor condition, and expanse of tarmac detract from the appearance of the village street.



A distorted and rusting street sign detracts from the character of the grass verge.



Relocation of BT lines underground would help reduce clutter.



Fragment so fironstone and field flint cobbles remain and it is hoped to reinstate cobbles that were removed without consent.





Where the bus shelter now stands was the village pond till the 18th century. Whilst the bus shelter has some character would relocation of the shelter and increasing the grass verge across the bus layby with removal of the collection of street furniture help create a small village green in the village centre. Equally measures are needed to prevent parking on the existing grass verge.



Erosion of the grass verge due to parking



Historic horse trough adapted for planting



The village garden is to be restored as part of the infrastructure improvements of the Home Farm scheme



Van parking spreading from private frontage to highway compared with the same view historically





The corner is a hazard but are there less obtrusive means of slow traffic in this location?



Poorly designed and maintained traffic signs

Merstham Conservation Area Analysis of Public Realm

Identification of some issues from a Conservation Area view point

London Road North



The northern approach to the village is marred by obtrusive highways signs and ribbons of car parking.

Merstham Conservation Area Analysis of Public Realm

Identification of some issues from a Conservation Area view point

London Road South



The value of the parkway laid out in the 1930's to reduce the impact of ribbon development should not be forgotten. The prevention of houses fronting the main road and the retention of the ancient native hedgerow are an important and well designed feature, giving a semi rural approach to the village.



Whilst reduction of speed is important in this location this ppor designed sign was installed despite objection to its design and has still not be painted to hid its galvanised finish.



The setting of the war memorial could much improved or perhaps relocated.

Merstham Conservation Area Analysis of Public Realm

Identification of some issues from a Conservation Area view point

Quality Street



Quality Street has been known as one of Surrey's finest groups of vernacular houses. However in recent years the domination of on street parking has detracted considerably from its character, but this has now been addressed by a controlled parking scheme. The above shows the Street just before the controlled parking zone was introduced.





The street's character is heightened by the quality of the footscape. The flint and ironstone cobbles compliment the Yorkstone paving which with the absence of kerbs and open grassed frontages create a rural character. However intense parking has cluttered this simple detailing and broken the Yorkstone paving. It is important in tackling the parking issue the street is not cluttered with street furniture and road markings, and urbanised features such as kerbs are not introduced.





The road surface itself helps create a rural character by the use of gravel as a top dressing to the tarmac.



This lamp post, which was one of the few surviving Victorian lamp posts in the Borough, is hoped to be replaced with a conservation style lamp post as part of the County PFI program.

7) Development Management & Statutory designations: Listed Buildings & Article 4 Directions

Controls operating in the Conservation Area

Designation of the Conservation Area

The original Conservation Area was designated by Surrey County Council and has been extended by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.

What is the Effect of Designation?

The principal differences from the normal form of planning control include:

- a) Control over demolition. Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition
- b) Greater control over works which would require planning permission. As many properties in the Area are not dwellinghouses and therefore do not have permitted development rights, external alterations such as changing windows or roofing materials would be controlled. 'Permitted development' rights for dwellinghouses are also more controlled.
- c) Wider protection of trees. Six weeks notification to the Council will be necessary before the intended lopping, uprooting or felling of trees. (Trees less than 7.5 centimetres in diameter, at a height of 1.5 metres above the ground are exempt). (Works to trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order will continue to need formal consent.)

When considering proposals requiring Planning Permission or Conservation Area Consent regard will be had to whether they 'preserve' or 'enhance' the special character of the area. It should be remembered, though, that designation is not intended to stop change but to better manage new development so that it does not harm the area and even brings improvements.

Article 4 (2) Directions

Article 4(2) Directions control the following changes to dwellinghouses in the Conservation Area (It would be intended to serve an article 4(2) Direction on the area). All alterations or extensions facing an open space or highway will require planning permission, unless they are like for like repairs. Changes requiring planning permission would include, for instance, changing from timber to uPVC or Aluminium windows/doors or changing the style or design of window/door, changing from natural slate or handmade tiles to machine made, concrete or synthetic slates or tiles, or the insertion of rooflights or solar panels.

All Commercial Buildings and Flats that are in Conservation Areas or Locally Listed, already require planning permission for these material changes, as they do not have permitted development rights.

Listing

There are a number of statutory and locally listed buildings in the area, which are set out in the appendices. Where planning permission is required for a locally listed building Policy Pc10 of the Local Plan and PPS5 would be a material consideration. There are also some local listed historic garden designations.

Development Management & Principles of Control

The area is largely one where the individual buildings mostly contribute to the character of the area and are desirable to retain. The general presumption therefore is in favour of retention, the only exception being some of the post war redevelopment.

The overall objective in terms of elevational treatment will be the encouragement of the reinstatement of original materials and detailing. This includes original window detail, plain clay tiles and well detailed boundary treatments and their replacement and avoiding inappropriate details such as aluminium and upvc windows of various forms, concrete tiles and alien boundary materials such as larchlap fencing.

Schedules and maps of the listed buildings, the Article 4 Direction and the local Historic Garden designations the control of permitted development will be set out in the appendices.

Review of boundaries

The boundary of the area was subject of review at the time of production of the appraisal and no revision is proposed.

Other Statutory Authorities

Statutory authorities are not generally subject to control by the local planning authority, although the provision and maintenance of their services can have an impact on the conservation area. A copy of this Appraisal will be forwarded to the relevant service providers to highlight the need for sensitive treatment within the conservation area.

Responsibilities of Owners and Occupiers

This Appraisal has identified the buildings, open spaces and individual features that define the character of the conservation area. The siting and design of new development should be such that the appearance and character of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced, and this Appraisal will be used to assess whether development proposals achieve this aim.

It is hoped that residents and other occupiers will, through this Appraisal, be made aware of the contribution that they can make to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. This can be achieved through the retention of features such as chimneys and chimney pots, boundary walls and traditional windows, the use of appropriate materials in new build and repairs, and the general maintenance of properties and land. Alien materials such upvc windows and concrete tiles should not be used.

Statement of Consultation

The draft version of this Appraisal will be issued for public consultation. Letters will be sent to all residential and business premises in the conservation area. These will outline the purpose of conservation area designation and invite comments on the draft appraisal.

Copies of the Appraisal will be sent to English Heritage, Surrey County Council and Local Societies. Their comments are invited. A press release will be issued and the Appraisal was publicised in the local press . A public meeting will be held to consider the study. The responses made to the draft Appraisal will be considered and reported to the Council's Planning Committee

Land Use & Activity

The Conservation Area is a mix of residential and commercial uses. In the High Street are commercial properties, including shops and a public house. There are also a number of other employment uses includes offices. The major traffic routes through the area have a significant impact on activity and character.



The village has always been dominated by the main road. There is a need to protect the character from the impact of traffic and the clutter of street signs and street furniture.