

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF THE WANDLE VALLEY LONDON

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**FUNDED BY NATURAL ENGLAND ON BEHALF OF THE
WANDLE VALLEY PARTNERS: DECEMBER 2012**

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Whilst we acknowledge the assistance of other people and organisations, this report represents the views of the consultants alone.

David Hares Landscape Architecture
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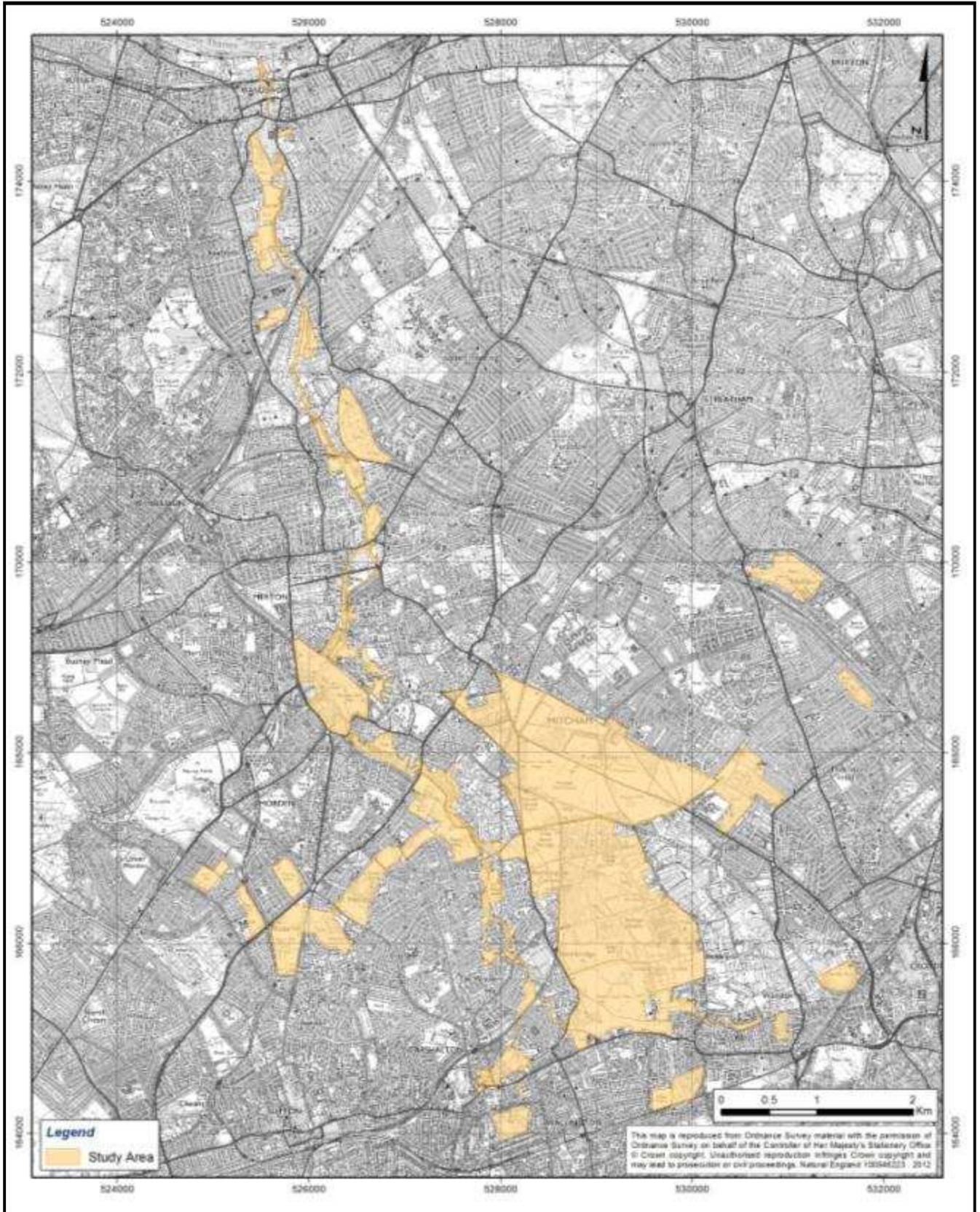


Figure 1: Location and extent of study area.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The River Wandle is a tributary of the Thames located to the south west of London. The river's catchment area extends from the chalk ridge of the North Downs in the south to the Thames in the north. The Wandle valley runs through the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon, linking the Surrey countryside to the urban Thames.

A landscape character assessment of the Wandle valley was commissioned by Natural England in 2009 to explore approaches to landscape in urban areas, support strategic policy for landscape enhancements, inform land use planning, and to assist in the development of the Wandle valley as a future regional park. The study area was based on the areas of existing open space within the valley which are associated with the river. Following consultation the assessment was updated, revised and published as this final report in December 2012. The area assessed was expanded to cover the area of the Wandle Valley Regional Park (as defined by the Wandle Valley Regional Trust in 2012) and this is shown on Figure 1.

1.2. Landscape Character and the Natural Signature Approach

Natural England is the Government's adviser on landscape, and, as part of this role, leads on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) in England on behalf of DEFRA.

The ELC defines landscape as: 'An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. (Council of Europe 2000)

The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning. It applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection such as national parks.

In 2009 Natural England identified the Wandle valley as a key area to test approaches to landscape in urban areas, in particular through exploration of the concept of the 'natural signature' through which the natural environment defines, or has the potential to define, people's perception and understanding of the city. This led to the original commission for a landscape character assessment of the valley to both test out this approach and to provide evidence to support the proposal for the valley to be considered as a regional park.

The concept of the natural signature was further developed in 2010 with the publication of London's Natural Signatures, the London Regional Landscape Framework. This aimed to reconnect Londoners with the underlying and often hidden natural landscapes of the capital and described twenty two distinct natural landscape areas, each with its own unique identity. This gives a wider context to the natural signature of the Wandle and the valley and the surrounding natural landscape areas which are shown in figure 2.

1.3. Aims of the Landscape Character Assessment

The original aims of this landscape character assessment were to:

- Provide a background document to inform land use planning within the Wandle valley.
- Provide a detailed assessment of LCA/ green infrastructure to support strategic policy on landscape enhancement.
- Contribute to the development of a green infrastructure strategy for the proposed regional park focused on the landscape and biodiversity value of the river corridor (All London Green Grid Framework, Draft Area Framework 8: Wandle Valley, 2010).
- Identify and develop the concept of a 'natural signature' or 'watermark' which reflects the local heritage of the valley
- Provide a mechanism for the delivery of Natural England's duty for landscape in urban areas

- Support and secure the regional park for the Wandle valley

In addition the final revised and updated document informs and provides a context for the projects in the Living Wandle Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership grant application

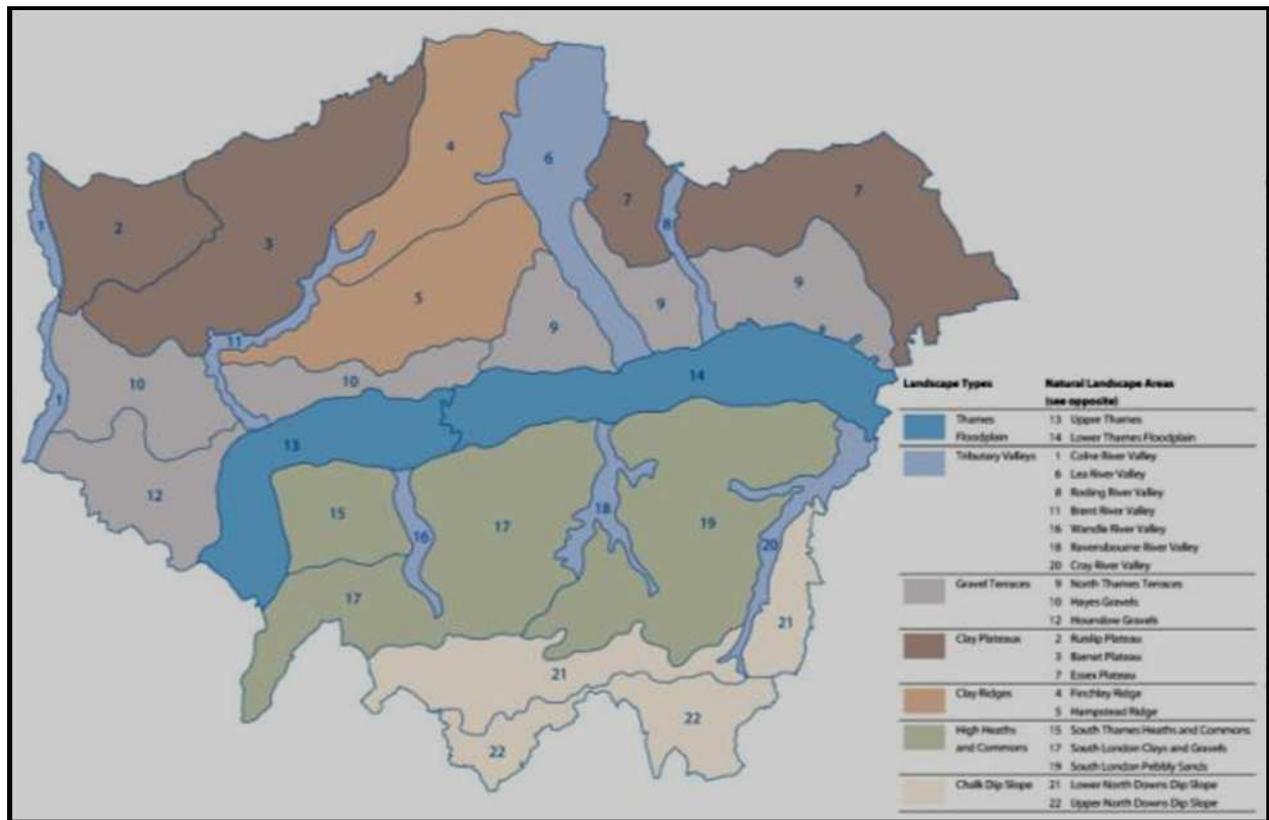


Figure 2: Extract from London's Natural Signatures, the London Regional Landscape Framework. The Wandle is area 16.

1.4. Report Structure

Section one of the report gives the context for the Wandle landscape including the natural environment, the history and perceptions of the valley landscape.

Section two is the landscape character assessment which describes the landscape types and, within them, the landscape character areas. This section looks at the key characteristics for each area and gives options for change outlining opportunities for enhancement and addressing issues affecting the landscape character.

Section three of the report considers opportunities for the development of multi-functional landscapes in the Wandle valley as part of a future regional park. It considers how reinstatement of the natural signature can be combined with addressing the major environmental issues within the valley. These include enhancing the ways in which the green infrastructure within the park might help mitigate climate change, contribute to local food production and improve access to green spaces. The final chapter of the report brings together these opportunities for enhancement into an overall landscape vision for the Wandle Valley.

Appendix 1 describes the methodology of the landscape character assessment process; how this study relates to previous landscape character assessment work and the technique has been adapted to suit a predominantly urban setting.

2. THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE

2.1. Geology

The river Wandle is formed from two chalk streams which are supplied by water that has percolated through the chalk strata of the North Downs. The water emerges as springs at the foot of the chalk where it meets the less permeable strata of the London Basin. It is believed that the river may once have drained a larger area, including parts of the Weald before the erosion of the Wealden syncline allowed other streams to capture its headwaters.

Geologically there is a pattern of east-west bands of sedimentary rocks which become less permeable towards the north, with the Thanet Sands, Reading and Woolwich beds separating the London clay in the North from the chalk in the south.

All of these sedimentary rocks were deposited under ancient seas. The three subdivisions of chalk (upper, middle and lower) were formed from the calcium rich skeletons of microscopic single celled marine plankton during the Cretaceous period some 50 million years ago. Subsequent earth movements led to the distortion of these deposits and the formation of folds and basins which were subsequently filled by further sediments. These included the London clay and the Thanet sand, Woolwich and Reading beds which were deposited in the Thames basin some 30 million years ago during the Eocene period.

Deposition of further material has occurred in more recent geological periods, particularly as a result of the massive floods which followed the thawing of the land during and after the various glaciations which ended some 20 thousand years ago. During this period vast amounts of material were washed down the Thames and its tributaries and deposited as gravel terraces along the sides of the flooded rivers. Along the Wandle these gravels were composed primarily of flints. These gravels have recently been dug from the Beddington farmlands area.

2.2. Topography and Drainage

The whole catchment of the river Wandle extends to a total of some 200 square kilometres and stretches from Rosehill in the west, to Streatham in the east and almost as far south as the M25. The northern boundary being where the River Wandle meets the tidal Thames, to the north of Wandsworth. The eastern side of the catchment is drained by the River Graveney and the Norbury Brook, both tributaries of the Wandle which are culverted or heavily constrained by concrete channels for much of their length. The adjoining catchments to the west are the Beverley brook and Hogsmill river which are included with the Wandle catchment by the Environment Agency (EA) for catchment planning purposes.

Whilst the Wandle catchment includes a considerable proportion of the higher land associated with the less developed North Downs chalk aquifer, this study is largely focussed on the northern section of the catchment which is predominantly urbanised. The main River Wandle flows from two sources, at Carshalton and Croydon, where springs fed by groundwater from the Chalk issue to the surface. The rates of flow from these springs depend on the level of groundwater within the chalk, which is replenished by winter rainfall, but reduced by water abstraction. The elevation of the spring sources are at approximately 40 M AOD, and the river flows down to the confluence with the Thames at Wandsworth at the rate of 2 Metres/ kilometre over its 19 Kilometre length .

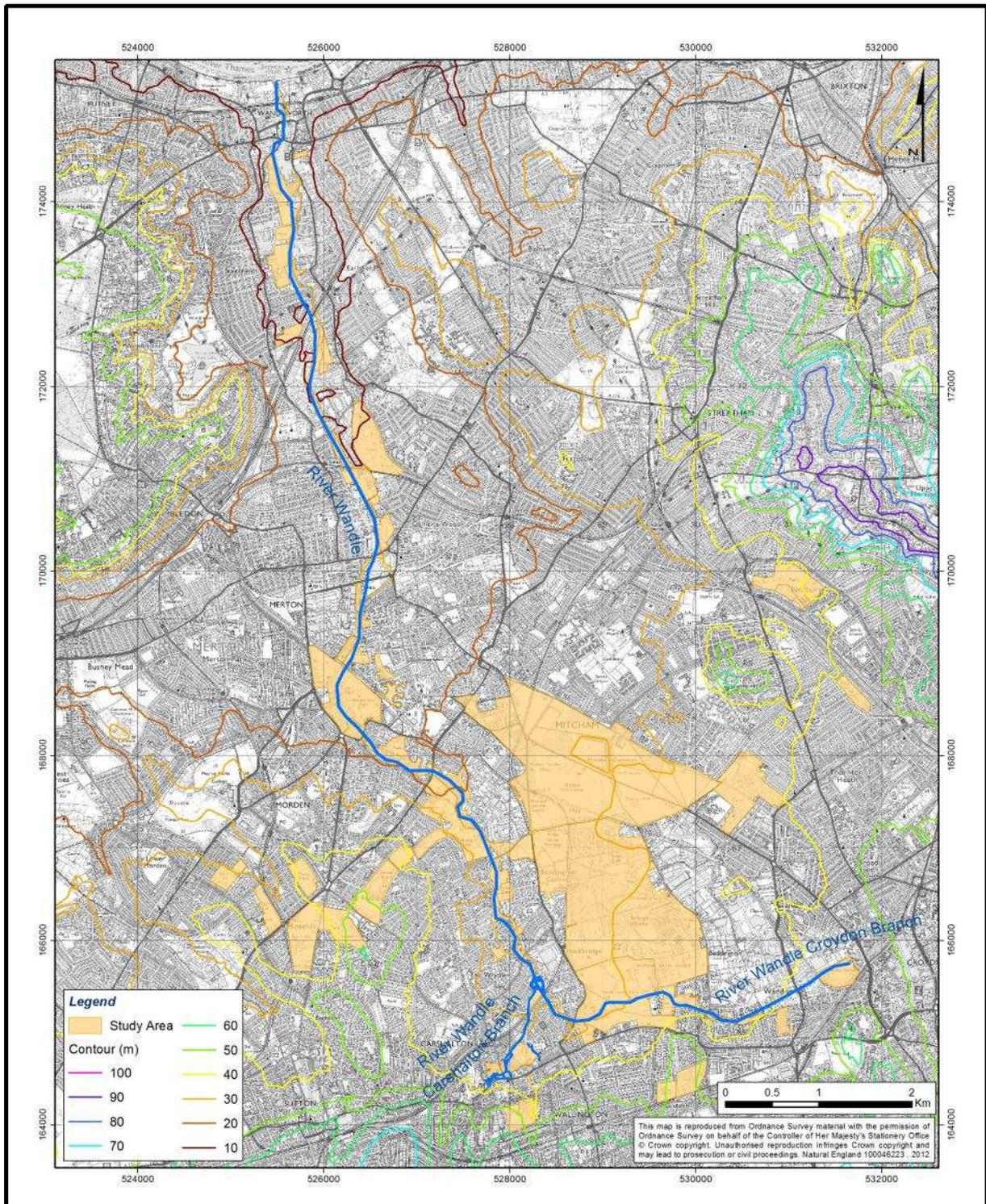


Figure 3: Contour mapping showing the topography of the valley.

The landform of the lower river catchment reflects the pattern of deposition and erosion of the London clay and the river terrace gravels. The higher areas such as Rose Hill (50M AOD) and Streatham Common (85M AOD) are areas of exposed London clay which were sufficiently high to be unaffected by the gravel deposition, whereas the lower lying areas of the valley have bands of gravel deposits running broadly parallel to the river. The largest areas of undeveloped gravels are found in a block of land at Beddington, where they are currently being worked as part of the Beddington Farmlands scheme. The gravel extraction sites could ultimately create a series of wetlands and recreational water bodies where pits remain unfilled.

The Wandle has a relatively narrow flood plain for most of its length which reflects the size of the river, and the characteristics of the flows. The chalk headwaters have a relatively constant flow and are therefore less inclined to flood than the lower parts of the catchment which drain either the impermeable clay, or the hard surfaces of the urban area. Whilst the average rainfall throughout the EA catchment plan area is 694mm a high proportion of this is lost to evaporation and transpiration before reaching the river. It is suggested that the effective annual rainfall in the urbanised area is 160mm, and that most of this water is immediately lost as run-off into the surface water drainage system due to the impermeable soils and hard surfaces of the urban area.

At the time of the preparation of the first catchment management plan for the area in 1994, the average flows within the Wandle were 143Ml/d (million litres per day) whilst the average for the whole catchment plan area totalled 274ml/d. The total licensed groundwater abstraction at that time was estimated at 240 ml/d. Clearly the abstraction of groundwater from the chalk aquifer is having a significant impact on the flows within the river. Flows from the two areas of source springs on the Wandle average 12 ml/d, with the remaining 90% of the flow being made up from either treated sewage effluent from the Beddington Sewage Treatment Works (STW), or surface run off. During periods of summer drought it is normal for the springs to dry up and at these times the Sutton water company pump water into Carshalton ponds to maintain flows and prevent the ponds from drying out. The former lake in Wandle Park Croydon was filled in during the 1960's due to the lake drying out regularly through low summer flows. Further downstream there is a consistent base flow throughout the year due to the constant outflow from the sewage works.

2.3. Soils

The pattern of soils reflects the underlying geology of the valley and the banding of the south to north geological sequence. There are well drained loam soils in the immediate area of the source springs, which soon give way to soils derived from the river terrace gravels or the heavy London clay. The valley floor holds deposits of lime rich alluvial material with a high water table. These are shown in figure 3.

The permeability characteristics of the soils influence the nature of the river flows, most of the soils within the lower catchment and river valley are relatively impermeable, and this, combined with the high concentration of urban hard surfaced area means that most rainfall flows rapidly into the surface water drainage system, rather than being buffered within a permeable soil. This contributes to the manner in which water levels rise rapidly whenever rainfall occurs within the Wandle valley, making the lower river more prone to flooding.

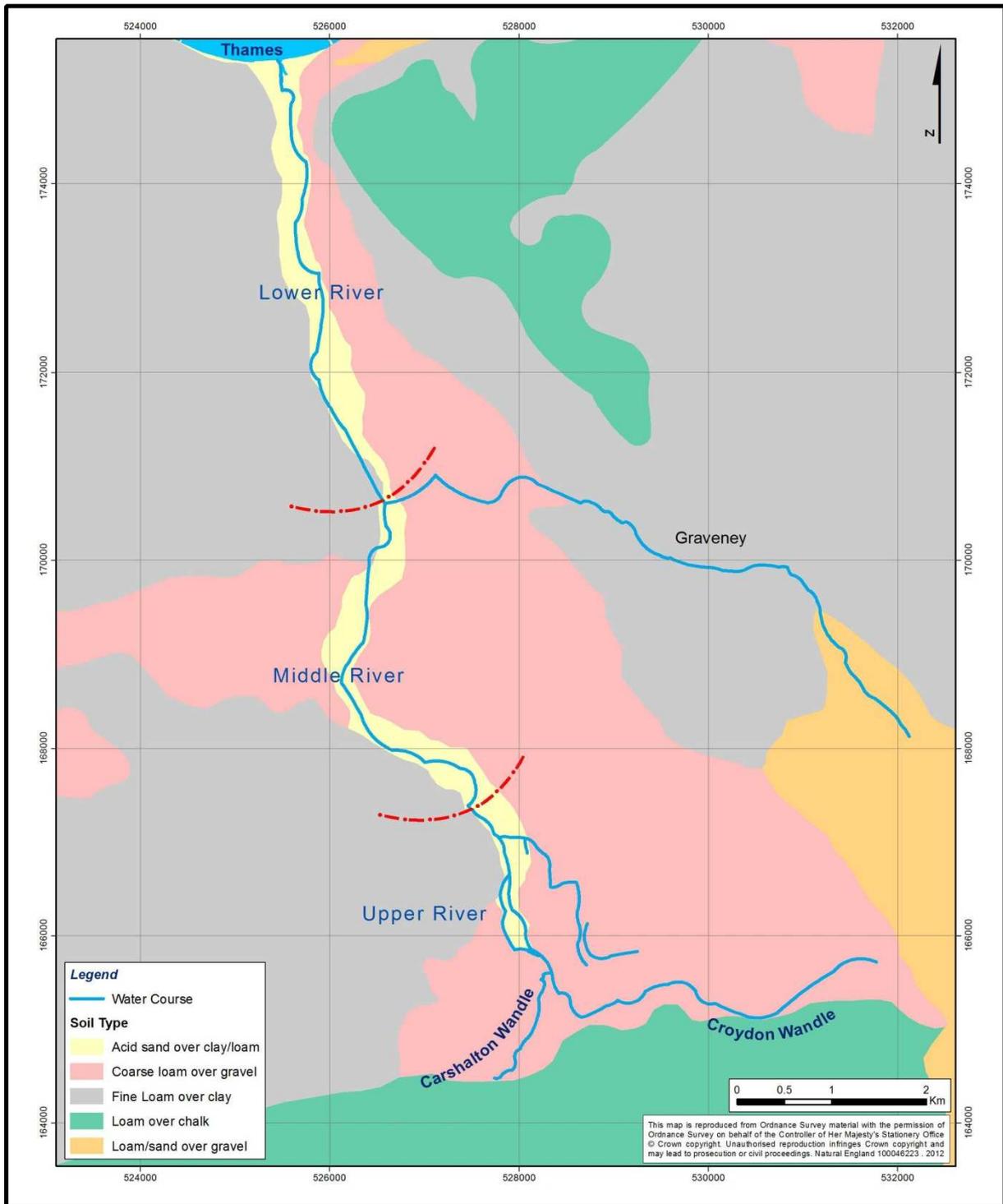


Figure 4: The pattern of soils within the study area

2.4. Ecology and Vegetation

The juxtaposition of water and land give riverbanks and wetlands the opportunity to support both land and water species. A chalk river such as the upper Wandle is typically blessed with clear well oxygenated water with a rich supply of plant nutrients, and consistent temperature and flow regimes. These in turn can support a good range of plants, invertebrates and fish communities, which in turn support a good range of birds and mammals. Further downstream where the river moves onto a clay or urbanised substrate and water quality

deteriorates there are fewer opportunities for wildlife due both to the changes in flow characteristics and the water being less able to support plant and invertebrate life.

Human activity has progressively changed the natural character of the river banks and floodplain over the centuries from predominantly rural grazing land to housing and industrial land with occasional relic areas of open space. Even semi natural areas of wetland or vegetation are now few and restricted to nature reserves, parklands and odd undeveloped corners.

Whilst the river valley is predominantly urban, the river corridor provides an important link through the suburbs between natural areas close to London and the Thames, and to the wider countryside of the North Downs.

There are 13 areas which have been designated as local nature reserves these are at:

- Morden Hall Park
- Mitcham Common
- Sutton Ecology centre grounds
- Wandle Meadow Nature park
- Wandle valley wetland
- Watermeads (Mitcham)
- Wilderness Island
- Ravensbury Park
- Bennett's Hole
- Beddington STW/ farmlands
- Spencer road
- Lower Wandle and
- Cranmer green.

Figure 5 shows the location of these sites.

The following notable species of wildlife which are subject to protection under European designation are understood to be found in the valley:

- European water vole, (which is the subject of a reintroduction programme with suitable habitat being created at Watermeads.)
- Pipistrelle Bat
- Bittern

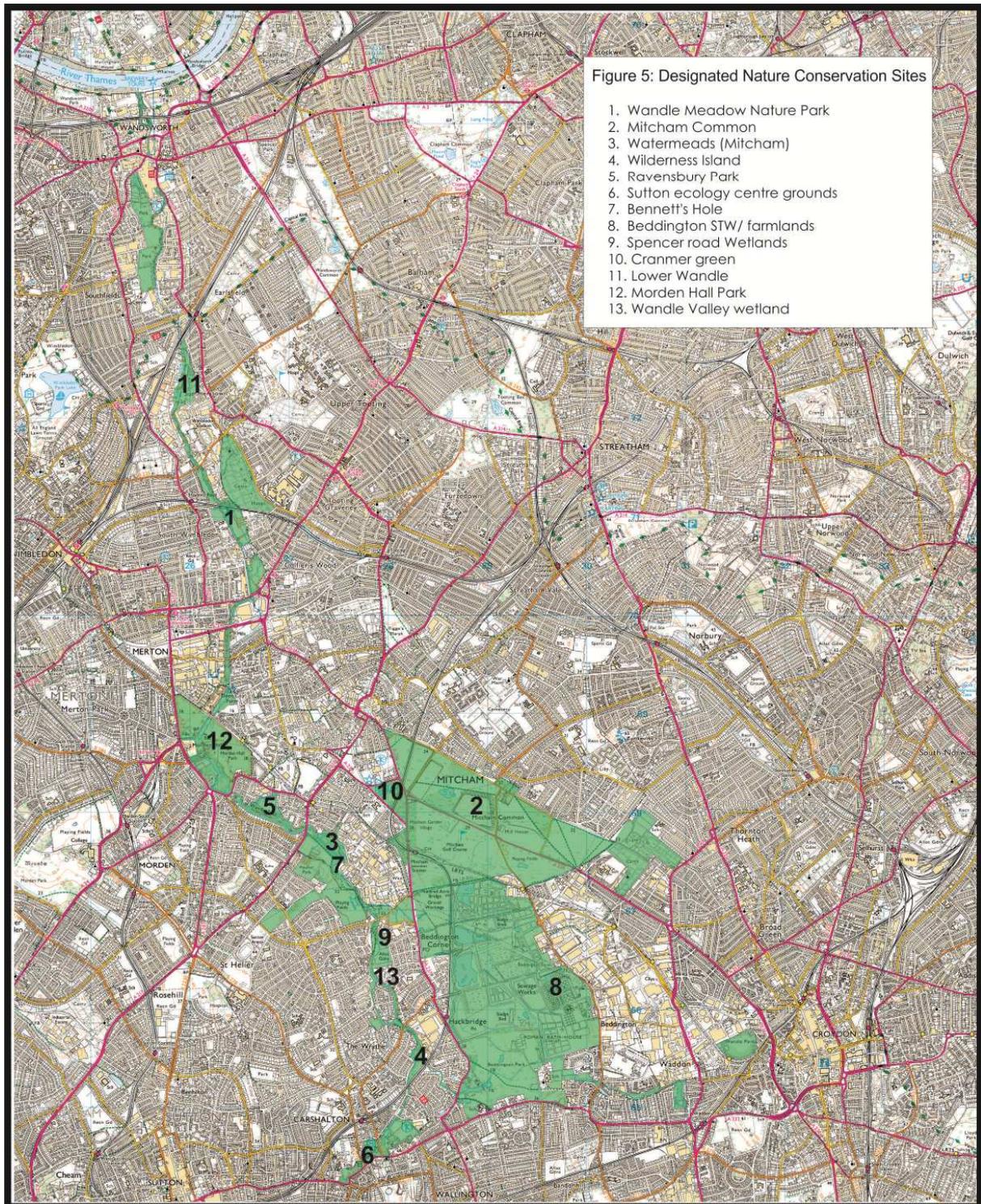


Figure 5: Showing the location of designated nature sites

The river and associated land, due to the urban location, is vulnerable to the introduction of alien species, and in particular to the spread of exotic water plants which have been sold through the aquarium trade. These include floating pennywort which has recently been the subject of a clearance project funded by the Environment Agency, and Japanese knotweed which is common beside the river in industrial areas.

3. EVOLUTION OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

3.1. Prehistoric

The primeval natural landscape of wildwood, marsh and open clearings which would have been found in the valley was subject to some modification by the hunter gatherer peoples of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. Flint axes were used to fell trees for firewood or wooden tools, particularly on drier land along the side of a river which offered good access to fish and water. Palaeolithic flint tools have been found in the gravel terraces which were deposited over the Palaeolithic land surface following the more recent glaciations which ended at about 10,000BC. Flint tools from this period have been found around St Anne's Church in Wandsworth. Mesolithic flint implements are more frequently found in the areas around the headwaters of the river at Waddon, Beddington and Carshalton, close to the camp site from this period which has been identified at Orchard Hill.

A move away from the nomadic towards a more settled lifestyle began during the Neolithic period, and this is likely to have led to woodland clearance occurring around each settlement site. Pottery making made use of clay deposits exposed along the river, and evidence of pottery from this period has been found at Mitcham. The development of metal alloying and casting skills during the Bronze Age between 2400 and 700 BC encouraged the development of settlements. Herding of livestock and sowing of cereals would have encouraged further woodland clearance and cropping of the lighter soils, most probably those located on the Thanet sands and the higher gravel terraces. Bronze implements from this period have been found at Beddington and Carshalton, whilst Bronze Age weapons have been dredged from the silts at the mouth of the River where it meets the Thames.

The Iron Age period (700BC to 43AD) was characterised by the construction of defensive encampments which have been found at Beddington Wallington and Carshalton. A series of underground chambers near Waddon Ponds, are also thought to date from this period. The development of iron tools would have made it easier to fell trees to create pasture and till the land, although it is likely that much of the heavier London clay soils were still marshland or woodland at this stage.

3.2. Roman (43-410AD)

The Romans would have found a partially cleared mixed mosaic of woodland marsh and grassland in the Wandle valley following their main invasion in 43AD. Native settlements on drier land along the edges of the valley would have been located close to a series of small cultivated fields with pasture land, marsh and woodland all of some importance to the local people who would have valued the fish in the river.

The Romans founded Londinium shortly after their arrival and built a series of military roads to link their towns. Stane street, the road from Londinium to Noviomagus Reginorum (Chichester) runs across the Wandle near Merton Bridge close to the site of what later became Merton Priory, and then continued through Morden on the line which is now followed by the A24. Another road, towards Brighton crossed the river between Waddon Ponds and Purley Way.

Whilst much of the landscape which had slowly been cleared by the native tribes was unaffected by the Roman invasions, we do know that the Romans helped to increase the area under cultivation, for the production of cereals to help feed the army and associated camp followers. At this stage the first mills were built on the river to harness the steep falls for the milling of grain into flour. Roman villas were generally part of a large farm and the villa and bath-house which has been identified at Beddington may well have been part of such a complex.

3.3. Saxon

The Saxon period saw the development of small villages at strategic points through the valley, which included the sites of settlements which exist today.

A Saxon cemetery has been identified at Mitcham close to the River and may be the site of the Battle of Merton in 871 in which King Eathered of Wessex was mortally wounded.

The villages of Croydon, Beddington Carshalton and Mitcham are all likely to have had Saxon origins. The pattern of parish boundaries and the locations of churches may also date from this period in a number of cases.

3.4. Norman

The Norman Conquest brought the surveyors of the Domesday Book to the Wandle valley and they have provided a record of the various manors, villages and landowners at that time. It tells us that the village of Carshalton held 12 acres of meadow and a mill, that Morden also held a mill whilst Beddington had 2 mills as well as 20 acres of woodland and 24 acres of meadow. Sutton and Mitcham are also mentioned as are Tooting and Streatham which were all small villages at the time. In all 13 mills were recorded on the river at the time of the Domesday survey in 1086.

3.5. Medieval

A series of manors and ecclesiastical institutions grew from the Saxon and Norman origins, profiting from the power of the river and proximity to London which enabled local producers to supply and trade with the markets of the city. The main product taken east is likely to have been the flour milled from locally grown wheat by the water mills on the river.

Merton Priory was an important religious institution which was founded in 1117 and given royal patronage by Queen Matilda, Henry III and Edward III. It occupied a key site next to the river and grew to occupy an area of 60 acres before its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1538.

Morden hall was owned by Westminster Abbey and subsequently sold at the time of the Dissolution. The deer park may have been added later in the 16th Century.

Carew Manor in Beddington was formed by the merging of two estates in 1381. The Carew family subsequently built a Tudor Great Hall and created a deer park in the 1530's which covered all of the current Beddington Park, the site of the sewage works and Mitcham Common. In addition to areas of enclosed parkland there would have been areas of parish common land, woodland and meadow.

3.6. Post medieval

Although the post medieval river was driving some 24 mills the water quality was still good and the river supported a brown trout fishery which is mentioned by Camden, and subsequently Isaac Walton. This was clearly an important amenity which was the subject of a Royal edict in 1606 which made the river a Royal preserve.

The Post medieval landscape of the Wandle valley was subject to the influence and commercial demands of the city of London. Better quality land would have supplied market garden crops to the city markets following enclosure of the open fields; however the process of enclosure was slow and had not been completed by the 19th century. Crops of carrots, parsnips and turnips were also being grown in open field strips throughout this period. Hay for London horses would have been cut from meadows and Lammas land in the valley bottoms, carters would return with manures from London stables after making the deliveries, to nourish the root crops on the gravel soils.

The mills were attracting other industrial processes to the area, this included the growth of the cloth industry which started with the fulling of woollen cloth in the 13th century and had expanded to occupy 4 mills in Carshalton Wandsworth Wimbledon and Merton by the 16th Century. Foreign expertise was attracted to the area and a number of French

Huguenotémigrés settled in the Wandsworth area in the 17th century as a result of religious intolerance in France. They helped to develop the calico industry (treating imported cotton cloth) the dyeing industry and the felt hat industry, particularly in the Wandsworth area.

3.7. C18

The mills continued to drive forward the industrial processes of 18th century London, with further industries developing along the valley. These included paper and parchment making, leather, gunpowder and oil mills as well as snuff milling. The metal industry also became an important user of the rivers power, with iron ore being crushed prior to smelting and then iron blanks being rolled cut and drilled using the power from the river. Copper was also shaped, stamped and pressed by mills on the Wandle to form kettles pots pans and even the blanks for farthings and halfpennies.

The industrialisation process made wealthy men of the entrepreneurs who owned the mills and often subsequently invested in building fine houses in the local area. An analysis of the homes of the local gentry in the 18th Century would have included members of the London aristocracy and gentry who favoured the area for their country homes, as well as city merchants, lawyers and government servants. Many of the fine houses and large gardens from this period survive today including Grove House, Morden lodge, The Grange, Strawberry lodge, Wandle Villa and the grounds of Carshalton House. Morden Hall Park is now owned by the National Trust although the house, like many of the other buildings has been converted to a non-residential use.

The 18th century landscape of the valley was becoming more heavily populated with the expansion of the villages, and the ever increasing influence of London. Croydon in particular had expanded to a population of 6000 by 1801, making it the largest town anywhere near London. The city of London with a population of 900,000 at the end of the 18th century sucked in a prodigious amount of food and other supplies from the surrounding area and the Upper Wandle supplied large amounts of watercress to the hungry city.

The mouth of the Wandle had been developed as a harbour and was the starting point for the Surrey Iron Railway, which was to take horse drawn carts to Portsmouth, although a limited success, it was only built as far as Merstham.

Wandsworth was however dominated by the calico industry which employed three quarters of the population of the village at that time, focussed on the mills and factories along the river and associated bleaching and treatment ponds and drying areas.

3.8. Victorian change

Improvements to the transport systems around London were a major feature of the changes which brought housing development closer to the valley during the Victorian era. London was growing rapidly to satisfy an international demand for goods and trade. The whole economy was booming and there was a massive demand for offices, docks warehousing, factories and staff to work in them. The development of the railways helped to provide transport into the capital and the London and South Western railway depot at Nine Elms was built in 1838 as part of the rail building programme which brought lines and stations to Wandsworth and Wimbledon. Rail links to Croydon were subsequently built, then a Croydon to Epsom line. Horse drawn trams followed the newly improved roads and took commuters into the city or to the stations. This stimulated the growth of the south London suburbs which were starting to spread into the Wandle Catchment through the Victorian period.

The mills on the river continued to power a range of industrial processes, these changed from time to time as demands for one product dropped and others rose. Milling of flour continued, as did the iron, leather, dyeing and calico printing mills. One of the Merton Abbey Mills was purchased by William Morris the pre Raphaelite artist, architect and social reformer in 1881 to expand his design and textile company producing textiles and subsequently

glassware in accordance with his socialist principles. Another mill was used by Liberty and Co to produce their silk and other fabric designs up until the 1970's.

The production and treatment of fabrics was not confined to the inside of the mills. Initially during the 18th Century bleaching of the imported calico fabric took place in the open air in bleaching grounds, where the fabric was bleached by the sun. The printed fabrics were also laid out in the meadows to dry even during the time when Morris and Co were using the area.

Historical mapping of the valley shows that in spite of the new railway embankments crossing the river the valley was still relatively rural at the end of the Victorian period. New housing had been built around the new railway stations at Croydon, Carshalton, Earlsfield, Mitcham Morden, Merton Abbey and Merton Park.

The upper arm of the Wandle had originally risen above the old town of Croydon as a seasonal winterbourne running from Purley in the south joining a spring next to the Brighton road, but abstraction has now lowered the water table to make the current source of the Croydon arm the springs next to Waddon ponds.

Croydon had reached the size of a small town in the 1830's and further growth put pressure on the river which supplied the town with drinking water and then received much of the towns waste. It was thought to be responsible for outbreaks of cholera in 1840. There were also a series of court cases between the mill owners and the Croydon Council over the quality of the water. This forced the town to appoint a board of health and undertake sanitary improvements in the 1850's. This included the building of a sewage works which was initially located on the east side of Wandle Park and discharged into the river. The town was one of the largest located so close to London and was incorporated as a Borough in the 1880's.

Victorian Carshalton was a large and genteel country village (4800 people in 1887) with a cluster of grand houses around the ponds, which had been formed from marshland as part of a series of ornamental works by the owners of the two manors, Carshalton Park and Stone Court. Carshalton Park was the original source of this part of the Wandle, but abstraction from the aquifer has meant that the source is now often further downstream at the Upper pond, which is artificially maintained by pumping.

Merton Abbey station was built on the site of Merton Priory during the 1850's as part of a link between Streatham and Wimbledon, triggering some late Victorian housing in this and the adjoining Colliers Wood areas. The station was short lived however and was removed in the mid-20th century

3.9. C20th change

The 20th century has seen major expansions into the Wandle valley of residential development and industrial uses. The construction of what is now the Northern underground line in 1929, and the construction of a series of residential estates, particularly the Phipps and St Holier estates by the LCC in the 1930's has changed the rural river valley of the Victorian era and dramatically squeezed the area of open space associated with the river. Many of the areas of open space close to the river, which were associated with the mills, such as the calico bleaching grounds and leather drying fields were to become industrial estates, as have some of the nine beds which once supplied watercress to London markets. The traditional mill industries have been replaced by either related or new industries; these include chemical, plastic, paint and electrical components.

Power for the industries and residential areas is now supplied by high voltage cables carried on tall pylons from the National grid to switching stations beside the river at Plough lane. Depots for council waste lorries are also based close to the river.

A growing population has led to increased pumping from boreholes, and the lowering of the water table which supplies the headwaters of the river. The supply springs have dried up in periods of drought and made what were once ornamental lakes muddy puddles. This problem led to the culverting over of the Wandle through Wandle Park Croydon in 1967. As well as the increased risk of drought, the increased population has produced considerable volumes of waste water, and up until the 1960's the Wandle was classified as an open sewer. Improvements to the Beddington waste water treatment plant in the 1970's and 1980's have now helped to enable improvements in water quality for reintroduced brown trout to survive in the river.

The urbanisation of the valley has led to an increased rate of run off as precipitation falls in the catchment. This has caused problems with flooding which were particularly severe in 1956. Major flood alleviation works were undertaken in the late 1950's which increased the capacity of the river channels and the speed at which water flowed down to the Thames. The natural channels and channels which had been modified to serve the mills were deepened or straightened. In some cases the channels were lined with concrete or further culverted. The river Graveney which joins the Wandle at Summertown is now so heavily concreted and culverted from its source at the head of the Norbury Brook that most local people do not even realise it was once a river.

Although many of the grand 18th and 19th century houses have now been lost or redeveloped, in many cases local authorities have stepped in and bought the ornamental grounds which border the river and these open spaces are now in public hands.

There has been considerable and often vocal local support for efforts to safeguard the heritage of the river, dating back to the 19th century when John Ruskin the art critic and social reformer funded the clearance of a spring and building of a fountain in Carshalton. The threat of development led to the formation of the River Wandle open spaces committee before the First World War, and the creation of some sections of river walk, it also enabled the purchase of land at Watermeads which was given to the National Trust in 1911. Further gifts to the trust included land at Morden Hall in 1941. The GLC created a River Wandle Liaison group in 1969, and then subsequently the Wandle Group was formed in 1973. These two groups helped to establish the Wandle trail and co-ordinated various improvement works. The Wandle Trust was formed in 2001 as an environmental charity and has masterminded a series of projects to help clean up and restore the river, taking a particular interest in water quality.

A new attitude to the river has been brought about by the increased interest and awareness of environmental issues during the last thirty years. The remaining areas of open land in the catchment have been designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and local authorities are all working together to help enhance the river and recognise its value as an amenity. Redevelopments which take place close to the river are now planned to take more account of the river and making provision for the Wandle trail where appropriate.

A recently published guide to the river and trail (River Wandle Companion and Wandle Trail Guide: Bob Steel with Derek Coleman, Culverhouse Books 2012), provides a wealth of detail on the natural and cultural heritage of the area, and includes detailed mapping of the heritage sites along the river. Figure 6 illustrates some of the locations of the various mills, and designed landscapes located along the river.

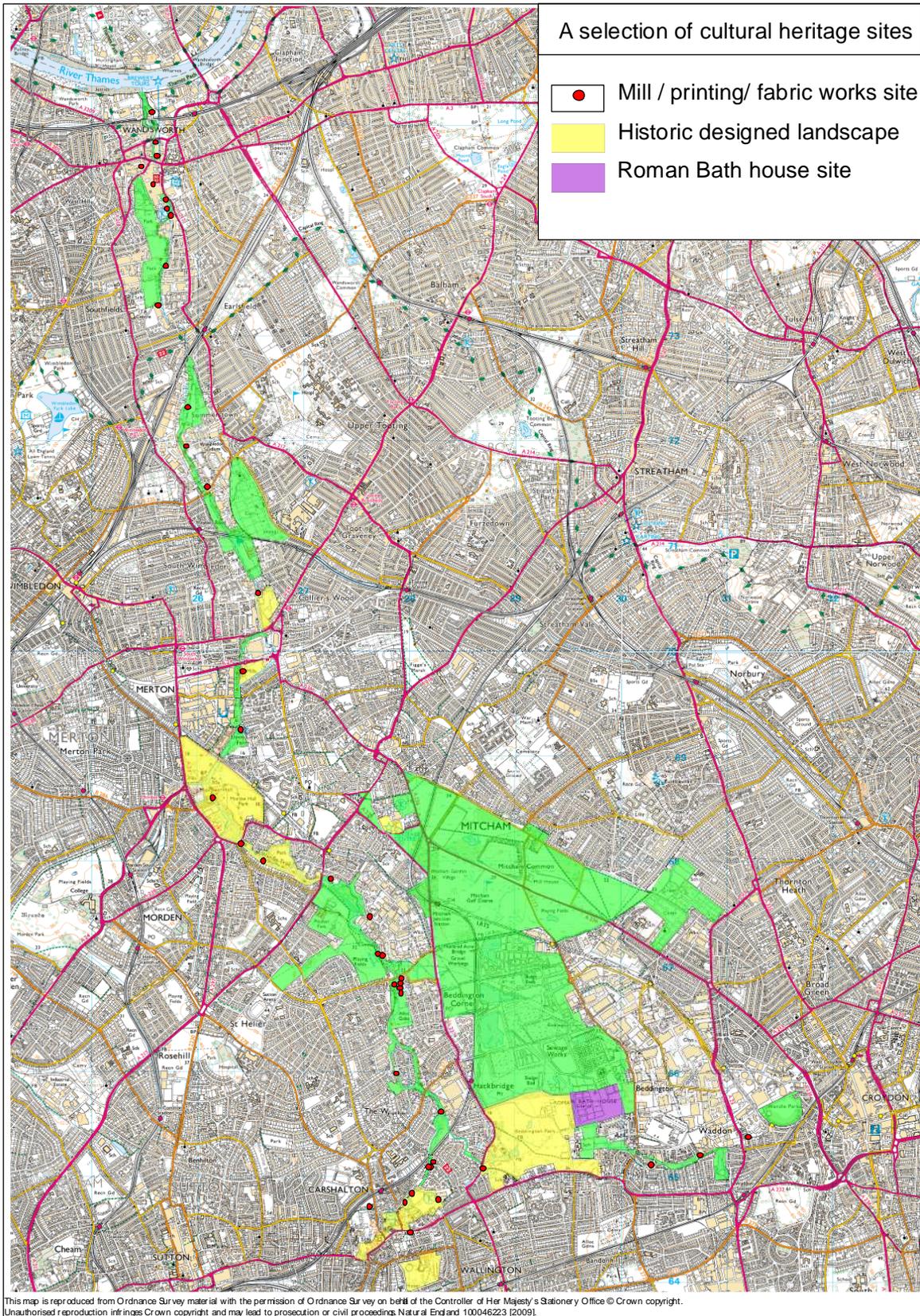


Figure 6: A selection of cultural heritage sites

4. PERCEPTION OF THE WANDLE LANDSCAPE

4.1. Artists, writers and celebrated visitors

The river valley has been featured in the works of a series of writers and artists who have either lived in or visited the area over the centuries.

One of the first writers to mention the Wandle is Camden's Britannia in 1586 which refers to 'the cleared rivulet Wandle so full of the best trouts'.

The quality of the fish in the river is a favourite subject for later writers; Isaac Walton's first edition of the Complete Angler in 1653 says that Wandle trout had marbled spots like a tortoise.

Alexander Pope the 18th century satirical poet mentions the river in his poem Windsor forest which describes the tributaries of the Thames thus:

*"Around his throne the sea-born brothers stood;
Who swell with tributary urns his flood:—
First the famed authors of his ancient name,
The winding Isis and the fruitful Thame!
The Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned;
The Loddou slow, with verdant alders crowned;
Cole, whose dark streams his flowery islands lave;
And chalky Wey that rolls a milky wave;
The blue transparent Vandalis* appears;
The gulphy Lee his sedgy tresses rears;
And sullen Mole that hides his diving flood;
And silent Darent stained with Danish blood."*

(*romantic Latinised version of Wandle)

The presence of Lord Nelson, who had become a national hero before he bought Merton Place, has endowed the area with considerable Nelson folklore. He is recorded as having fished and caught trout in the river at a series of different locations, as well as having watched cricket at Mitcham Green. The branch of the river through the estate was remodelled and known as 'the Nile'. Mrs Hamilton was obliged to sell the property soon after Nelson's death at Trafalgar and it was demolished some forty years later. The site is now occupied by housing and industrial estates.

In 1817 Hansell described the valley thus:

It can boast of giving splendour to trade and a repose from its fatigues every quarter of a mile its course is accompanied by elegant chateaus and obstructed by commerce- mills succeed each other at a short distances down the whole stream

John Ruskin used to visit an Aunt in Croydon and was familiar with the river from an early age and in his book Praeterita in 1830 wrote:

...under the low red roofs of Croydon, and by the cress-set rivulets in which the sand danced and minnows darted above the Springs of Wandel

He also described how:

'As it gurgled through the meadow the bourne appeared a lovely rivulet, about five feet wide and from one to two feet deep with a nice gravelly bottom for the trout to spawn in'

Later however the emphasis had changed from the quality of the trout to the more picturesque landscape and in 1889 it was recorded that:

No longer does it flood its watercress beds and turn vulgar water wheels but now it winds through lovely gardens where money and ingenuity are devoted to developing its beauties where bowers and charming vistas rustic bridges glens glades and varied vegetation form a fit setting for its crystal loveliness

Members of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood of artists are linked with the valley, as were the arts and crafts movement through the work of William Morris.

Morris produced a Wandle chintz which he mentions in a letter to his daughter, saying that 'although the wet Wandle is not big but small,' he wanted to make the pattern 'very elaborate and splendid to honour our helpful stream'.

The pre Raphaelite artist Arthur Hughes lived at Wandle Bank, just downstream from Morris's mills. Also close by was the potter Wilfred De Morgan who had worked with Morris but established his own workshop close to Merton Abbey mills. Local artists who worked in the area at the turn of the 19th century include William Tatton Winter, who spent 13 years in Carshalton and painted a number of views of the Wandle, including the painting at Figure 6 below showing a view across a bridge over the Wandle next to a mill.

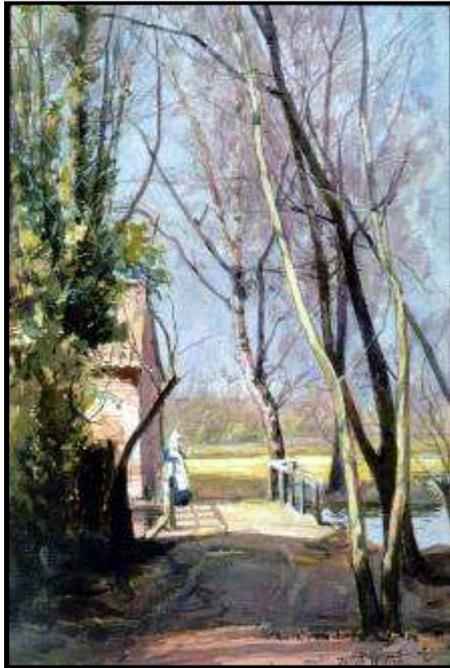


Figure 7 Carshalton park grotto and canal (now dry) and William Tatton Winter Bridge and Mill over the Wandle

Winifred Madder worked in the area slightly later and her watercolour at Figure 7 records the Grotto in Carshalton Park which was once one of the sources of the Wandle.

Little Holland House in Carshalton was built and decorated by the Artist Frank Dickinson between 1904 and 1906 in accordance with Arts and crafts principles.

Modern writers who have set novels in the Wandle area include Michael de Larrabeiti who has based the *Borrible* trilogy in the area of his youth between Wandsworth and Croydon.

4.2. Landscape images in Art and Literatures.

Examination of the late 19th century views of the river, from both art, and photographs show that the river still had much of the form and channel of a chalk stream, although we know the vicinity of the mills had been changed by the construction of mill leats and impounding structures. There are generally pool and riffle sequences, and the river is relatively shallow, particularly in the upper Carshalton and Croydon arms.

As is common in the upper reaches of modern rural chalk streams, the fledgling river or winterbourne runs through the centre of fields rather than being part of a field boundary. There are sometimes reed beds along the side of the river in these open situations. Further down, the river becomes tree lined with stock proof field boundaries on one side.



Figure 8: Early C20th Postcard of Wandle willows near Beddington

Many of the paintings and photographs show a mixture of willows (often pollarded,) poplars (both Lombardy and Black) alders and elms adjoining the river.



Figure 9: Early C20th Postcard of the River Wandle at Beddington Bridge

Simple bridges and mills are a favourite subject. In all cases the artists are recording a traditional English pastoral idyll, often with a combination of river, grazing cattle, trees and occasionally geese or ducks.

Local literature over the centuries makes regular reference to the quality of the water and associated fish and other aquatic life.

Other written material tells of the produce which came from the Wandle valley, including a whole range of aromatic herbs and essential oils which were grown in the market gardens of the Mitcham area, including lavender, cloves, rosemary, and chamomile. peppermint and bergamot. We also know that the Carshalton area supported cherry and walnut groves, as well as the watercress already mentioned which was also produced from the Croydon arm of the river at Beddington. Walnut wood was used as a source of a vegetable dye before the advent of synthetic colours. It has also been suggested that local Alder wood was used for the hatblocks which were used for forming the felt hats for which Wandsworth was once famous.

PART 2: THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE WANDLE VALLEY

5. THE LANDSCAPE TYPES

5.1. Character assessment methodology

The character assessment was commissioned in November 2008 and commenced with data gathering and desk study. Site work was undertaken in December 2008 and the method was based on the recommendations of CAX 84. This involved the completion of a survey proforma and collecting photographs for a number of locations to give an even coverage across the study area. A draft character map and descriptions were then produced which have been refined through consultation with members of the Wandle Forum at a workshop held at Morden Hall Park. The character assessment was updated to include new areas after further detailed fieldwork in 2012.

5.2. Landscape character change down the catchment.

The nature of the river and associated landscape varies as the river flows down the catchment from the headwater streams to the sea.

In summary the characteristics of the River Wandle from its headwaters to the river mouth are:

- The upper reaches, which are typically narrow chalk streams carrying small volumes of higher quality water along a channel which is less likely to be concrete lined, and more likely to have a natural character, with riffle beds and pools, soft banks and vegetation within the stream.
- The middle reaches, with a wider and deeper channel which often flows through parkland with relics of ornamental plantings, although typically the river is defined by willow and poplar trees, which on occasion hide the river from the adjoining open space.
- The lower reaches, where the channel is often heavily engineered, the water level is well below the adjoining land, and the riverside is heavily built up. In general buildings face away from the river and the river flows through a corridor of 'back' land and is rarely a feature of adjoining open space.

In the past the upper part of the Wandle catchment reflected the character of atypical chalk winterbourne stream. This was fed by a series of springs from the line where the chalk meets impervious or saturated strata. Seasonal variations in the height of the water table caused low summer flows and higher flows in winter in the uppermost part of the streams; the winterbournes. Unfortunately as a result of the high levels of extraction from boreholes in the upper catchment, the upper parts of the two feeder streams, the Croydon and Carshalton branches are dry and or culverted. They are likely to remain that way unless water abstraction is reduced. The former ornamental canal in Carshalton Park was fed by a spring from a grotto at the southerly end, but this and the carrier channel to Grange Park has been dry for a number of years.

The chalk streams were used to power mills from the medieval period onwards; and were also adapted for ornamental reasons or watercress production. Many parts of the two upper sections of stream remain the least physically modified and apparently most natural sections of the river in appearance. This is primarily due to the lower risk of flooding in this part of the river, which has meant that the channels of the streams have been less prone to human intervention such as deepening, widening and hard river engineering.

Although the volumes of headwater flowing from the chalk are now relatively low and consequently more vulnerable to pollution incidents, the quality of this water is relatively good. It is not unusual to see typical chalk stream vegetation such as water crowfoot. This is not to say that the upper catchment streams are always picturesque, as certain sections run across concrete beds or sides, particularly where mill leats flow through narrow gaps between housing. The two branches of the upper river, the Carshalton and Croydon streams join together at Wilderness Island and the combined streams flow as the main River Wandle past Hack Bridge and Culvers Avenue to Goat Bridge. The greater flow from the wider river and combination of gravel bed, shallows and pools mean that this part of the river is potentially one of the most picturesque.

The character of the Wandle and its water quality change to the south of Goat Bridge once the Beddington effluent carrier joins the river. This provides much of the water flowing through the middle section of the river, which becomes broader and deeper as a result. The river flows past a series of parks and open spaces, many of which incorporate former ornamental parks which were created for private landowners in the 18th or 19th centuries. The river becomes more urban in character below Morden Hall Park and is tightly squeezed between housing and industry although Wandle Park and Wandle Meadow Nature Park offer open space adjoining the river.

The lower reaches of the river begin to change from the junction with the River Graveney at Southfields. In general from this point down; the river has suffered the highest amount of hard engineering and is highly constrained by hard banks. It has been over-deepened to the point that the water level is considerably below the level of the adjoining land. Presumably to ensure the channel can carry peak volumes of run off from the urbanised catchment during high rainfall.

Landscape characterisation of a built up area is heavily influenced by the nature of the built form, and land use. Underlying geology, landform and historical patterns are often smothered under buildings and other modern uses. Whilst our brief was to focus purely on the open spaces which remain in the valley, these are frequently influenced by the adjoining buildings or industrial uses. Our character areas may often appear to be based on land use, and areas such as cemeteries or allotments are often dominated by the use. Wherever possible it is desirable to identify surviving features of the historic character as part of the focus of projects, particularly elements of the rural cultural landscape or Natural Signature which remain within the urban or suburban landscape.

A total of eleven different character types have been identified and described, these are shown on figure 10 and include:

- 1. Urbanised channel**
- 2. Victorian and Edwardian terrace back-lots**
- 3. Allotments**
- 4. Municipal parks and sports fields**
- 5. 20th century housing and flats**
- 6. Modern Industrial backlands**
- 7. Park and common land**
- 8. Cemeteries**
- 9. Nature conservation areas**
- 10. Tidal Thames**
- 11. Disturbed and restored land**

The subsequent chapters describe each individual landscape character type, and general options for change, before considering each of the individual specific landscape character areas in more detail.

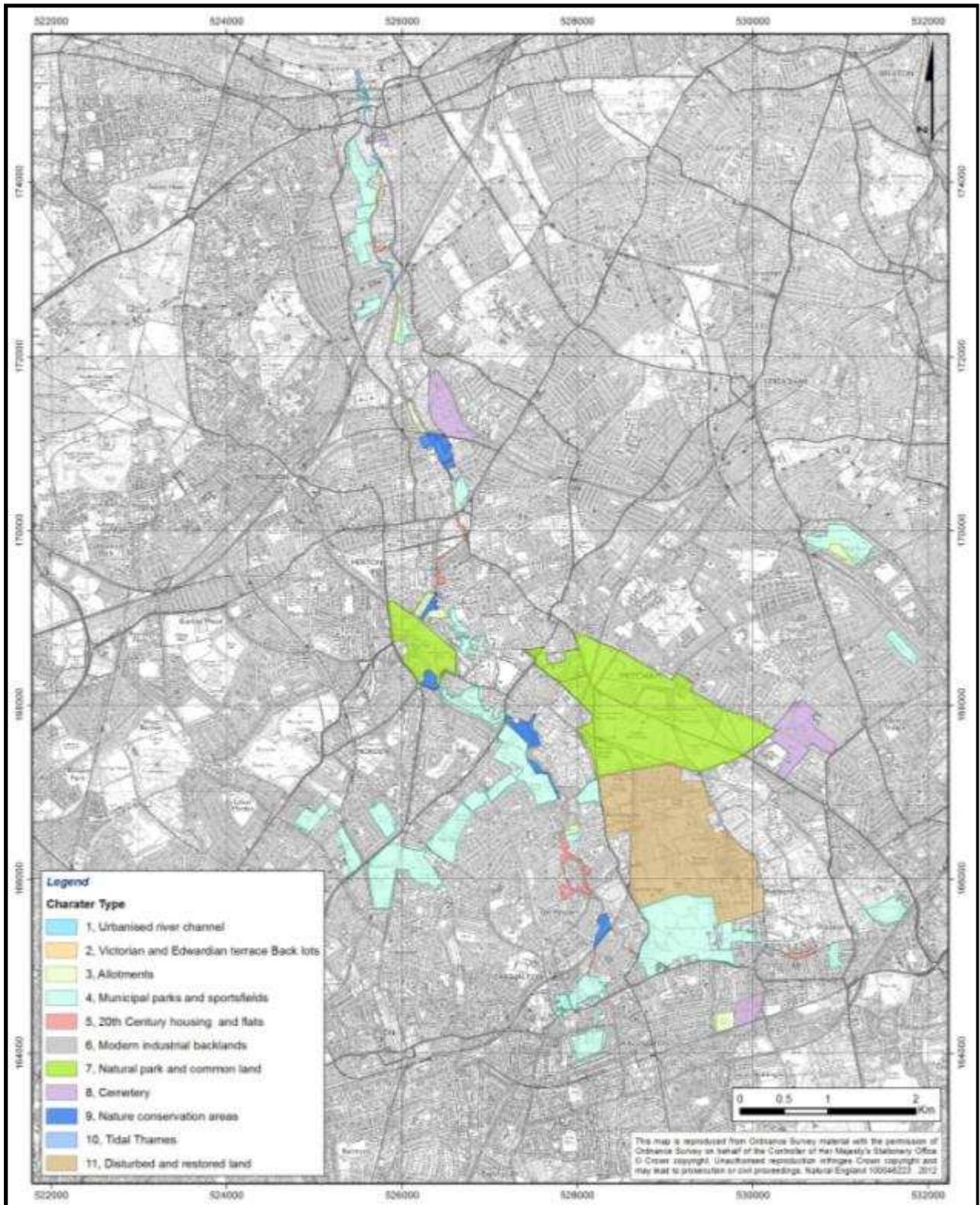


Figure 10: landscape character types: (N.B. A larger scale copy of this drawing is included at Appendix 2)

6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 1: URBANISED CHANNEL

6.1. Character type description

The urbanised channel character type is the part of the river valley which has been most heavily controlled and built up. Typically this character type runs through the most densely built up parts of the study area in Croydon, Wandsworth and Morden. It includes areas where the River Wandle has been culverted as well as the River Graveney, which is heavily culverted. Generally this character type is narrow and focussed on the river channel which is hidden between the backs of buildings. These channels attract rubbish due to a negative perception of the river.

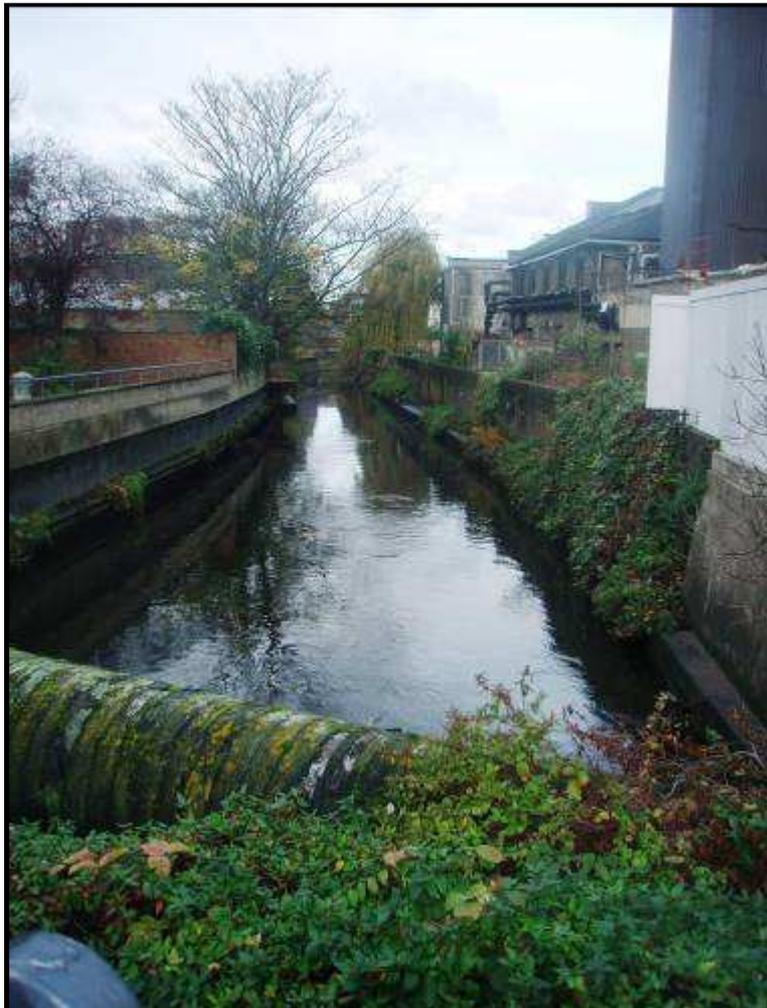


Figure11: Urbanised channel at Wandsworth

The key characteristics of this type are

- Narrow spaces between buildings
- Over-deepened river channel often with concrete bed
- High hard edges to channel
- Backs of buildings face river
- No space for wildlife
- Few trees but those present are colonising species e. g. sycamore.

6.2. Options for change

Whilst the river is currently often hidden in these sections, in many ways these areas offer considerable opportunities for the enhancement of the urban fabric by restoring and re-creating associations with the river. The proximity to urban areas in locations such as Wandsworth, mean that the river itself could become a centrepiece for new urban spaces. A good example of the potential this approach offers is at the junction of Garratt Lane with Mapleton road where a new sitting area has been created next to the river.



Figure 12: New paving and sitting area at Garratt Lane next to the river

This scheme has helped to draw attention to the presence of the river, there may have been opportunities to lower the bank edge to make the river more visible and also for the design and layout of the paving to bolster riverside character. Climate change may well make these open spaces within the urban area more popular in the future.

In locations where there are limited opportunities for reconfiguring the existing river channel, the natural signature could be revived by using a palette of plants and materials which echo the natural landscapes which were once a feature of the area.

6.3. Individual character areas Type 1: urbanised channel

Wandle valley landscape character area 1A The Causeway/ Ram brewery

Character type	Urbanised river channel			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description:The Causeway and The Ram brewery site lie north and south of the busy Armoury Way which forms the eastbound part of the South circular road in this location. The river passes under a painted concrete bridge almost unnoticed by the thousands of cars and lorries rushing by. The Causeway provides access to industrial areas and car parking, and to the weir and sluices which separate the tidal Thames from the fresh water river. A wall and steel railings separate the concrete lined channel from the Causeway, and a similar concrete lined channel passes the Ram Brewery leading to Wandsworth High Street. The Causeway and Ram Brewery are typical of the **urbanised river channel** landscape character type, although there is access along the side of the Causeway; and some associated green spaces, whilst there is no access to the section adjoining the Ram brewery area.



Photo 1A 1: The Causeway : looking south towards south circular; brewery behind

Photo 1A2: The Ram brewery backing onto the Wandle; looking south.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 27m 34.40s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 36.61s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 27m 31.70s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 37.36s

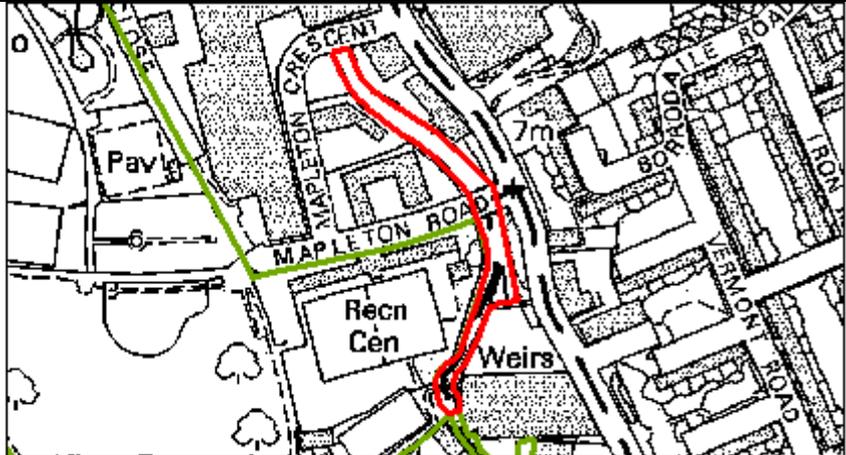


Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated by traffic noise from South circular road and railway • River is largely hidden behind buildings or walls • The river channel is constrained by concrete sides.
Difference from type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Causeway has some limited green spaces.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the green spaces adjoining the Causeway • Access & channel enhancement during brewery redevelopment.

Wandle valley landscape character area 1B Mapleton Road/ Garratt Lane junction

Character type		Urbanised river channel		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: The River Wandle is a feature of this urban open space at the junction of Garratt Lane with the Mapleton road bridge across the Wandle. Open steel railings both on the bridge, and beside the river allow views into the river, which has good in-channel vegetation. This space offers an insight into the potential benefits that the river can provide to enhance urban life; with new private open spaces facing the river now being used as seating areas, in contrast to the older developments which have blank walls and security fencing backing onto the river. The footpath to the south of Mapleton road is narrow and restricted, but overhanging trees and vegetation help soften the hard walled in river.</p>				
				
Photo 1B1: Mapleton Road bridge looking south along Garratt Lane		Photo 1B2: Mapleton Road bridge looking north behind offices		
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 27m 11.50s Longitude: W 0d 11m 29.81s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 27m 12.44s Longitude: W 0d 11m 31.62s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow spaces between buildings • High hard edges to channel • backs of buildings face river • Little space for wildlife • The river channel is constrained by concrete sides. 			
Differences from type :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access and green spaces overlook the river at Mapleton road 			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the channel edges to replicate more natural edge • Ensure redevelopment proposals offer public access and channel enhancements. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 1C Dunshill Road

Character type		Urbanised river channel		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: The heavily restricted route of the river winds under the railway and between the gardens of Edwardian villas, factories and more recent housing close to Earlsfield Station. Much of this section of channel is split by a longitudinal weir which controlled the flow to the former Flock mill which straddles the river. There is little access along the river, but bridges on Dunshill and Penwith road permit views of the channel which is slightly wider here, than in other parts of this type. Incidental creepers and ruderal vegetation help soften the otherwise generally hard concrete lined character of the channel.</p>				
				
Photo 1C1: Dunshill Road bridge looking north towards Flock mill		Photo 1C2: Penwith road bridge looking south, the main Portsmouth railway line is just visible.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 26m 33.85s Longitude: W 0d 11m 28.78s		Photo position
				Latitude: N 51d 26m 32.27s Longitude: W 0d 11m 24.25s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow spaces between buildings • High hard edges to channel • backs of buildings face river • Little space for wildlife • The river channel is constrained by concrete sides • Very little access along the river. 		
Differences from type :		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channel subdivided by longitudinal weir • Slightly broader channel than type. 		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the channel edges to replicate more natural edge • Ensure that redevelopment proposals offer public access and channel enhancements. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 1D Beddington Lane/ Wandle Road Beddington.

Character type		Urbanised river channel		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton h
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
				Croydon
Description: In this character area the route of one of two channels of the Croydon branch of the river flows between the gardens of suburban housing. In this section, between Beddington lane and Wandle Road, the river channel is over deep and heavily constrained by concrete walling. In addition there is no access to the channel which runs under the roads in culverts.				
				
Photo 1D1: Beddington Lane looking upstream/ east		Photo 1D2: Beddington Lane looking upstream/ east showing the bridge.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51 d 22m 16.62s Longitude: W 0 d 7m 54.44s		Photo position
		Latitude: N 51 d 22m 16.62s Longitude: W 0 d 7m 54.44s		
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow spaces between buildings • High hard edges to channel • backs of buildings face river • Little space for wildlife • The river channel is constrained by concrete sides • No access along the river. 		
Differences from type:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrower channel than type as it is one of two channels. 		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the channel to replicate a natural edge • Ensure that redevelopment proposals offer public access and channel enhancements. 		

7. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 2: VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN TERRACE BACK-LOTS

7.1. Character type description

Most of the Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing which was built after the expansion of the railways into suburbs from the 1850s onwards have turned their backs on the river, (with the notable exception of Wandle Bank in Merton). The 10-15 metre long back gardens have a narrow frontage onto the river. Many properties have riparian ownership of small sections of the river bank. This has led to inconsistent treatment of boundaries and the use of the riverside space from decked garden areas to waste ground with signs of neglect. Private ownership of this land means that the Wandle Trail is absent.



Figure13 Victorian backlots at Wandsworth

The key characteristics of this type are

- The backs of the buildings and gardens face the river
- Rear garden trees are generally ornamental in nature
- Victorian or Edwardian terraced housing defines the riverside space
- Occasional historic mill buildings or conversions occur
- A mixture of different boundaries to the river give a haphazard quality
- Hard bank treatments either concrete or sheet piling prevent erosion of the river bank, but in turn prevent any natural shallows at the water's edge.

7.2. Options for change

In situations where one side of the river is subject to private ownership, any enhancement works would need to occur on the opposite bank, e.g. In King Georges Park Wandsworth. In other situations, such as on the River Graveney in Tooting, where terraced housing backs onto the river on both sides, the river is completely enclosed and there are few options to enhance the river.

7.3. Individual character areas: Victorian and Edwardian terrace back-lots

Wandle valley landscape character area 2A Twilley Street

Character type	Victorian and Edwardian Back lots		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: This section of the river has a distinct character as a result of the juxtaposition of Victorian terrace housing which backs onto the river, with King Georges Park which sits on the opposite side of the river. There is access to the west side of the river, but the east bank consists of the rear gardens of residential properties, which front onto Twilley Street. The character area is subdivided by Kimber road which crosses the river and park and provides views into the river from the bridge. Since the housing was constructed in the late Victorian period, mature trees have become established in the rear gardens and on the river bank, which gives a leafier character to parts of this area.

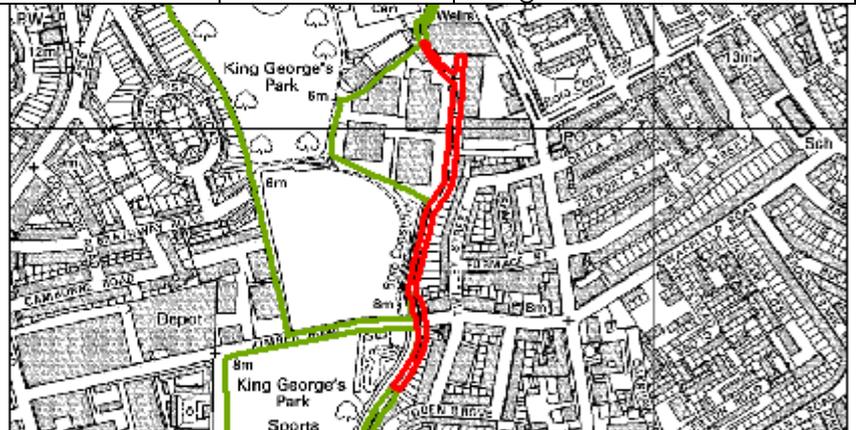


Photo2A 1 From King Georges park looking east towards the rear of Twilley street

Photo 2A2: The rear of the Twilley Street properties facing the river.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 26m 59.36s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 32.11s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 26m 58.59s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 32.67s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- The backs of the buildings and gardens face the river
- Rear garden trees are generally ornamental in nature
- Victorian / Edwardian terraces define the riverside space
- A mixture of different boundaries give a haphazard quality
- Hard bank treatments either concrete, or sheet piling, prevent erosion, but prevent any natural shallows at the water's edge.

Differences from type:

Typical of type

Options for Change:

- Encourage landowners to adopt the riverbank & maintain it
- Undertake channel enhancements where feasible.

8. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 3: ALLOTMENTS

8.1. Character type description

Various groups of allotments fringe the river, often as part of council owned parks and open spaces. All allotment sites are different, with a varying mix of highly productive plots and uncultivated ones. Some sites can be considered visually haphazard with sheds, plastic awnings, multi-coloured sheeting and diverse containers stored randomly on individual plots. In some cases the immediate riverside plots are less well managed as the plot holders struggle with plants spreading from the riverbank. Never the less these spaces have a certain vitality and an important role as productive open spaces providing fresh produce and exercise for the plot holders, as well as social interaction between the users.



Figure 14: Allotments adjoining the river at Earlsfield

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation
- Occasional store sheds, cold frames and glasshouses
- Some trees along the boundary between river and allotment
- Haphazard appearance
- Generally no access along the riverbank through allotments.

8.2. Options for change

The allotments are normally owned and leased by the council, and changes to the management of the riverside allotments should be possible, most probably through negotiation with individual allotment associations. Furthermore the Environment Agency has powers to direct effective management of riverbanks up to 10 metres either side of the watercourse.

There appears to be potential for the allotment holders to benefit from the river with the provision of close watering facilities for the crops with the agreement of the Environment Agency. There is also growing interest in the health and sustainability aspects of allotment

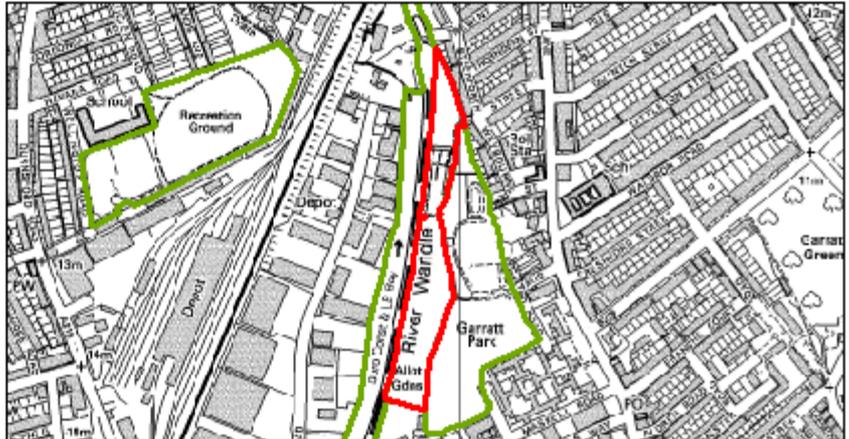
gardening, and there is potential for further sites along the valley. These could, like continental allotments, be well integrated into the open space networks, with standard buildings to act as summer houses and stores. There is scope to develop some specific guidelines for the design and management of the peripheral areas of allotments in order to ensure these sit more comfortably into and add value to the emerging natural landscape of the Wandle Valley.



Figure 15: Neat and tidy allotment gardens in France at Amiens next to the river Somme. Amiens is well known for the hortillonnages which are allotments formed on man-made islands in marshland.

8.3. Individual character areas: Allotments

Wandle valley landscape character area 3A Garratt Park Allotments Steerforth Street

Character type	Allotments			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: The allotments are located between Garratt Park and the river and form a narrow strip of land which is subdivided into 120 plots; however the northern and southern sections of allotments are subdivided by a rifle range. The allotments have access for key holders from a separate gate from Weybourne street, which includes some vehicular access. The northern section of allotments is separated from the river by a line of mature trees, whilst the more irregular layout of plots in the southern part of the site is more open to the river. In both cases there is a tall concrete wall along the riverside which separates the allotments from the river, although much of this is covered with climbing vegetation.</p>				
				
Photo3A: The northern section of allotments		Photo3A2: The southern section of allotments		
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 26m 16.21s Longitude: W 0d 11m 22.66s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 26m 5.76s Longitude: W 0d 11m 25.45s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation • Occasional store sheds cold frames and glasshouses • Some trees along the boundary between river and allotment • Haphazard appearance • Generally no access along the riverbank through allotments. 			
Differences from type:	Typical of the character type			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage plot holders to adopt their riverbank and help maintain the bank • Review condition and need to replace camp-shedding • Undertake channel enhancements where feasible • Encourage plot holders to keep plots under cultivation. 			

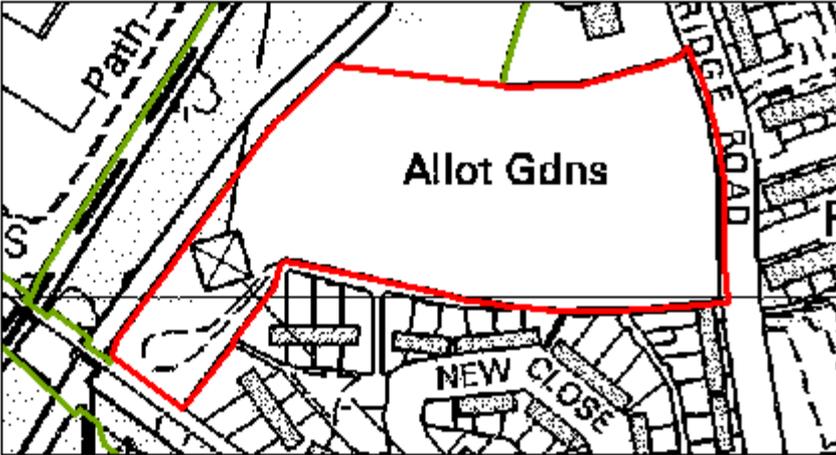
Wandle valley landscape character area 3B Havelock Allotments

Character type		Allotments		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: These allotments are located between Havelock Road and the river to the south of Plough Lane. The narrow strip of land is subdivided into 83 plots, which are accessed from Plough Lane via a central track which runs through to Havelock Street. The eastern section of allotments is separated from the river by a line of mature trees, whilst the western boundary abuts a mixture of Edwardian and post war housing. Mature trees in the gardens of these houses help to define the western edge of the allotments.</p>				
				
Photo3B 1 The northern entrance to the allotments from Plough Lane		Photo 3B2 .The southern section of allotments seen from the Wandle Trail to the east		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 25m 42.68s Longitude: W 0d 11m 16.81s		Photo position
				Latitude: N 51d 25m 34.54s Longitude: W 0d 11m 9.41s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation • Occasional store sheds cold frames and glasshouses • Haphazard appearance. • Generally no access along the riverbank through allotments. 		
Differences from type :		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many trees around the perimeter, including willows between river and allotments. 		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage plot holders to adopt their riverbank and help maintain the bank • Review condition and need to replace camp-shedding • Undertake channel enhancements where feasible • Consider management guidelines to encourage plot holders to keep their plots under cultivation. 		

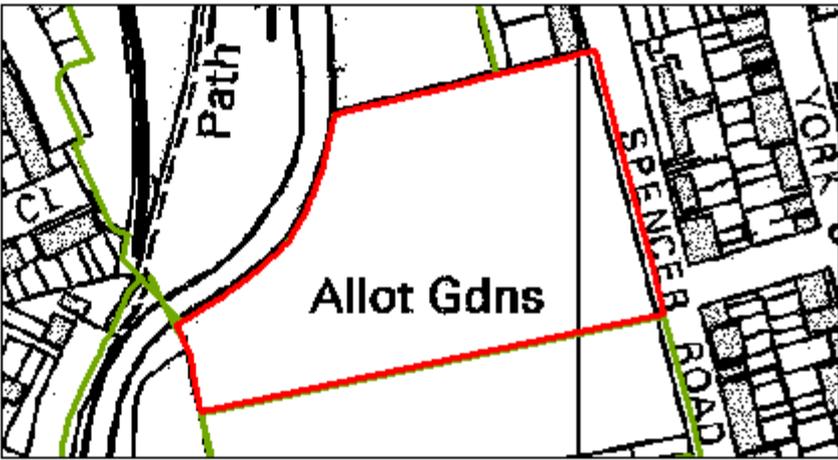
Wandle valley landscape character area 3CDeen City Farm

Character type	Allotments		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
Description: The City farm is located on the west side of Bunces Meadow, opposite Phipps Bridge allotments and next to the Bunces meadow nature reserve. The farm is leased from Merton Council although the land belongs to the National Trust who own much of the immediate area. The farm has a rectangular plot to the north of the river; which is screened from the Wandle trail by dense native hedging. Parts of the site are crossed by high voltage electricity cables.			
			
Photo3C 1: Looking in to the city farm from Bunces Meadow		Photo 3C2 .Entrance to the city farm from the Wandle Trail at Phipps Bridge	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 27.47s Longitude: W 0d 11m 7.60s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 30.68s Longitude:W 0d 11m 4.04s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> subdivided into small fields largely hidden from public view by established hedging. 		
Differences from type :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hedging around much of the perimeter Public farm not allotments Access between farm and river. 		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Farm would appear to have a potential wider role in helping to maintain the landscape in a more sustainable way Explore feasibility of using farm animals for conservation grazing of nearby grassland and hay cropping of grassland areas for winter animal feed. 		

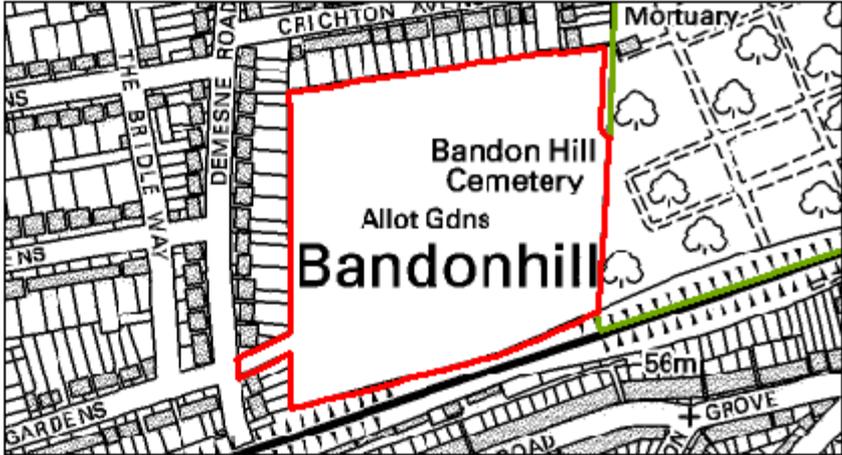
Wandle valley landscape character area 3DPhipps Bridge road allotments

Character type	Allotments			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: The Phipps Bridge road allotments consist of 52 plots which extend northwards to the more southerly of the two river channels which the Wandle forms at this point. The land between the two channels is difficult to access and appears to be currently unmanaged. Mature trees define the western and northern boundaries of the allotments, whilst Phipps Bridge road forms the eastern boundary and the rear gardens of the post war housing on New Close forms the southern boundary. A number of the plots appear to be unmanaged.</p>				
				
Photo3D 1: looking west towards Bunces Meadow from Phipps Bridge road		Photo 3D2: looking north west from Phipps Bridge road		
Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 24m 22.93s Longitude: W 0d 10m 57.43s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 24m 22.42s Longitude: W 0d 10m 57.33s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation • Occasional store sheds cold frames and glasshouses • Haphazard appearance • Generally no access along the riverbank through allotments. 			
Differences from type:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of the character type 			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage plot holders to adopt their riverbank and help maintain the bank • Undertake channel enhancements where feasible • Consider management guidelines to encourage plot holders to keep their plots under cultivation • Consider planting hedging along Phipps Road boundary. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 3E Spencer Road Allotments

Character type	Allotments		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon
<p>Description: The 0.9 Hectare Spencer road allotments are located between Spencer road and the river; on the north side of Watercress park; a small 1 hectare park managed by the London borough of Sutton. The boundaries to Spencer road, and Watercress park are open green steel railings, whilst the northern and western boundaries consist of woodland or riverside trees.</p>			
			
<p>Photo3E 1: Looking into the allotments from Spencer road; the trees mark the line of the Wandle in the background.</p>		<p>Photo 3E2: Looking east towards the allotments across Watercress Park.</p>	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 23m 0.88s Longitude: W 0d 9m 41.36s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 22m 55.92s Longitude: W 0d 9m 49.92s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation • Occasional store sheds cold frames and glasshouses • Haphazard appearance. 		
Differences from type :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of the character type 		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider planting hedging between Spencer road and the allotments • Consider management guidelines to encourage plot holders to keep their plots tidy and under cultivation. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 3FBandonhill allotments

Character type	Allotments		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon
<p>Description: The Bandonhill allotments are located between Demesne Road, Crichton Avenue and the railway line in Wallington. The allotments border the Bandonhill cemetery to the east which is separated by a fence and a belt of mature trees notably poplars. The allotments are actively used although in some areas a few have been abandoned. The area typically includes cultivated areas, garden sheds, shelters and poly-tunnels. The main entrance to the allotments is from Demesne road which is secured to prevent theft and vandalism.</p>			
			
Photo 3F 1 : Bandonhill allotments from the adjoining cemetery looking west.		Photo 3F2: The entrance to the allotments from Demesne Road looking east.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 21m 52.09s Longitude: W 0d 8m 12.92s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51 d 21m 45.78s Longitude: W 0d 8m 25.69s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation • Occasional sheds shelters and poly-tunnels • Haphazard appearance • No public access. 		
Differences from type:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical of the character type 		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider management guidelines to encourage plot holders to keep their plots tidy and under cultivation • Consider planting hedging & trees around the boundary fence. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 3G Norbury Park allotments

Character type	Allotments		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton branch
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: The Norbury park allotments are located on the south side of Norbury Park and are accessed from Norbury Avenue. The allotments are actively used although in some areas a few have been abandoned. The area typically includes cultivated areas, gardens, shed, shelters and poly-tunnels. There is a hut for the sale of surplus produce next to the main entrance which is otherwise secured to prevent theft and vandalism. The site is managed by Norbury Horticultural society. The site includes a section of the Norbury Brook, a tributary of the Wandle.



Photo3G 1: Norbury park allotments from the adjoining park looking west.

Photo 3G2: Public footpath between allotments and Norbury Manor Girls College.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 40.93s
Longitude: W 0d 6m 59.33s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 41.21s
Longitude: W 0d 6m 59.90s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Small scale plots in varying stages of cultivation
- Occasional sheds shelters and poly-tunnels
- Haphazard appearance
- No public access.

Differences from type :

- Typical of the character type.

Options for Change:

- Consider management guidelines to encourage plot holders to keep their plots under cultivation
- Consider planting hedging and trees around the boundary fence.

9. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 4: MUNICIPAL PARKS AND SPORTS FIELDS

9.1. Character type description

Many of the open spaces along the Wandle are the relics of historic estates or gardens which came into public ownership during the late 19th or early 20th century during the course of the urbanisation of the valley. This often coincided with a period when the current parks practice was to plant ornamental tree species and construct recreational facilities such as boating lakes, bandstands, bowling greens, rose beds and sports fields. This inevitably changed the character of these areas which have moved from a rural to municipal parks character and have landscapes which reflect their amenity or recreation function. The open spaces which are probably the least affected are Mitcham Common and Morden Hall Park, both of which have been subject to different styles of management and are consequently more reminiscent of a rural landscape today, and have consequently been allocated to a different character type.

Many of the municipal parks have relatively little perimeter planting and consequently the built up areas beyond the boundary are quite visible from within the parks. Where the river runs through the parks there are often ornamental ponds or lakes, and the river is crossed by picturesque bridges. In some cases fencing of the water body has been undertaken to prevent access, presumably to address safety concerns. Camp-shedding of one sort or another is present but may not be completely necessary. Bank treatment is generally close mown grass up to the river edge. In situations where just one bank of the river is next to the park the treatment is often quite different. In these cases the river may have been straightened in the past, be overgrown and or hidden from view. It is often fenced off possibly with trees or hedging separating the river from the park.

These municipal parks and sports fields offer the biggest opportunity to restore the natural character of the Wandle and significant steps towards this have been taken for instance at Wandle Park, Colliers Wood and Wandle Park in Croydon.



Figure 16: Municipal parks and sports fields adjoining the river at Wandsworth

The key characteristics of this type are

- Closely mown amenity grassland

- Generous areas of open space, but with buildings apparent around the perimeter
- Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups or woodlands
- Sports pitches and tennis courts
- Hard recreational facilities and buildings often associated with the pitches and courts such as changing rooms, booking kiosks etc.
- Ornamental water bodies and boating lakes in some instances
- Occasional trees along riverside but river often hidden unless it runs through the centre of the park.

9.2. Options for change

Where the river runs through these spaces there is the greatest opportunity for the natural signature of the Wandle valley to be redefined and reinforced. Channel restoration is the obvious intervention and has already been carried out at Wandle Park in Colliers Wood and Wandle Park in Croydon. Further opportunities exist in a number of other places within this character type. Figures 17 and 18 shows the contrast between a section of 'natural' channel recreated at Wandle Park and a concrete lined section at Beddington.



Figure 17 Restored 'natural' channel at Wandle Park



Figure 18: Beddington Park. The river is constrained by concrete channels.

A change in the amount of management could also be very effective in many locations, where heavily improved and closely mown grass is unnecessary, and a return of some areas to a less intensive management regime would help to achieve a more diverse sward which would be beneficial to wildlife and help revive a more natural character. This is shown in figure 19, where long grass has been left around the perimeter of an open space and even helps to hide cars parked along the road edge.



Figure 19: showing how reduced mowing can give a more natural character to the edges of public open spaces, as well as being better for wildlife.

There is frequently no apparent evidence from a distance of the presence of the river within these open spaces. This is illustrated below, where extensive areas of grass and standard trees are located either side of the river, but the presence of the river is not obvious. Restoration of the natural signature in this character type could be achieved by a combination of channel restoration, appropriate tree planting and the establishment of wetlands and less intensive meadow management.



Figure 20: The river runs across the middle distance in this illustration, but is not visually 'signed' by typical riverside trees, such as Willow Alder or Poplar.

Tree planting could be based on the planting of riverside willows, which ideally would be pollarded after establishment, and occasional Alders, Lombardy and Black Poplars at suitable locations. A clear line of trees along the river is a feature of the upper / middle catchment of chalk streams in rural areas, and this was also a feature of the Wandle until the early to mid-20th century. Where space permits tree lines could be re-established to help sign the river and revive the natural signature. In some housing areas in parts of the valley, tall riverside tree project above the roof line indicating the presence of the river.

Much of the river has some form of artificial reinforcement, but this is not always necessary, particularly in open spaces within the upper catchment where there is space for erosion to occur. Opportunities to remove unnecessary bank-shedding would allow a more natural bank to develop. The photographs below show how natural river banks add interest to the river landscape compared to constrained banks and river bed. Permitting the development of a natural bank profile and emergent vegetation is also beneficial to wildlife particularly bank dwelling mammals and birds such as water voles and kingfishers.

The urban design of streets and open spaces which link to the riverside parks, can also help offer opportunities to reinforce the river valley character of the area through the use of a palette of typical waterside plant species such as members of the poplar and willow family. The creation of bog or wetland areas planted with signature wetland species such as flag iris, marsh marigold and reed-mace will also help to reinstate the natural signature of the area.



Figure 21: showing a more natural riverbank. Figure 22 showing concrete lined channel



Figure 23: Natural edging rather than camp-shedding has allowed emergent vegetation to establish in the river adding interest and a more natural character.

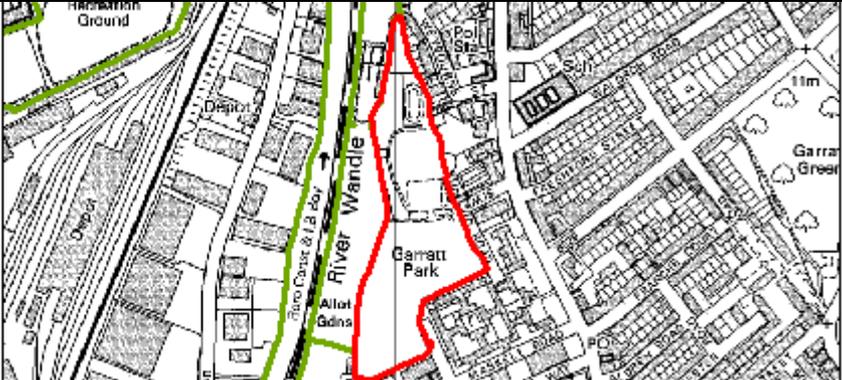
9.3. Individual character areas: Municipal parks and sports fields

Wandle valley landscape character area 4A King Georges Park Wandsworth

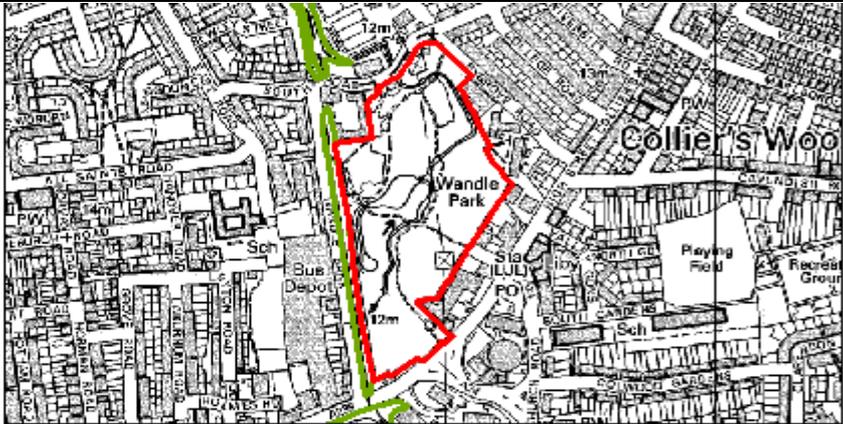
Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: King Georges Park is a narrow strip of former flood plain which runs parallel to the river and lies to the west of the Wandle. The southern part being contiguous with the river, whilst the northern part is separated from the river (which is in tunnel at this point) by the Southside shopping centre, housing, and offices, which are currently being redeveloped. King George's park is typical of the Municipal parks and sports fields landscape character type, holding a range of facilities with few natural areas. The park is subdivided by Kimber road, which separates the leisure areas, a bowls club, tennis and pond from the playing fields to the south. A range of children's play facilities are located in the centre of the park. There are lines of mature trees and a limited area of riverside walk which does include naturalistic planting.</p>			
			
Photo4A1: looking north towards the play area with the Southside commercial centre behind.		Photo 4A2: The Entrance to the park from Mapleton Road.	
Photo position	Latitude 51d 27m 2.80s Longitude 0d 11m 38.10s	Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 27m 10.13s Longitude:W 0d 11m 36.92s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Generous areas of open space but with buildings apparent around the perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Sports pitches and tennis courts • Hard recreational facilities and buildings often associated with the pitches and courts such as changing rooms, booking kiosks etc. • Ornamental water bodies and • Occasional trees along the riverside but the river is largely hidden. 		
Difference from type	Typical of the character type		

Options for Change:	<p>There are various opportunities to restore a more natural landscape character in line with the Natural Signature of the Wandle such as to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and more extensive grassland management;• encourage re- engagement readily with the river, by a combination of lowering barriers and paths to make water accessible.• creating off line wetlands and new minor channels or braiding to flow through the park to feed new water features ;• the creation of wildlife areas to provide an educational resource for the one o clock clubs.
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Wandle valley landscape character area 4B Garratt Park

Character type		Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Garratt Park is a narrow strip of former flood plain which runs parallel to the river but set back behind a strip of allotments (Character area 3A) and lies to the east of the Wandle. The park is in two parts, a more formal part with areas of lawn and shrub beds, the children's playground, cycle track and a sports court, and an informal area of open grassland. The Park was opened as a public park in May 1906. As the land was low lying and adjacent to the Wandle River a network of ditches had been created over the centuries to contain the water to fend off danger of flooding. In preparation for laying out the park these ditches needed to be filled in and in 1905 clay from East Hill, was used to raise the riverbanks. In 1970 a bend in the Wandle was straightened out as the continuation of flood relief work.</p>					
					
Photo4B1: looking south west towards the river.		Photo 4B2: Looking west towards the river.			
Photo position		Latitude:N 51d 26m 11.36s Longitude:W 0d 11m 19.04s	Photo position		Latitude:N 51d 26m 11.45s Longitude:W 0d 11m 18.92s
					
Location plan		Extent of area			
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Buildings apparent around the perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Sports pitches and tennis courts • Hard recreational facilities and buildings often associated with the pitches and courts such as changing rooms, and kiosks • Ornamental water bodies • Occasional trees along the riverside but the river is hidden. 			
Differences from type:		The allotments separate the park from the river.			
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime • Reorganising the boundaries of park and allotment to provide a section of riverside access • creation of wildlife areas to provide an educational resource for the one o clock clubs. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4C Wandle Park Colliers Wood

Character type		Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment		Upper		Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Wandle Park occupies approximately 11 acres and is situated on the site of a former millpond; The park was once the site of WandlebankHouse, built in 1791 by James Perry and owned by him until 1821. Perry owned the corn mill next door and was also editor of the 'Morning Chronicle. The main channel of the RiverWandle forms the western boundary of the park whilst a former mill leat was restored as a natural river channel in 2000, assisted by EU and other funding. The photographs below show how the park is now managed in a more extensive and naturalistic way; and how the restored river channel illustrates how river restoration could enhance the environment of other parks and open spaces within the valley.</p>					
					
Photo4C1: Looking west over the restored river channel with more natural river profile.			Photo 4C2: looking across the park to Merton High street.		
Photo position		Latitude:N 51d 25m 12.49s Longitude:W 0d 10m 45.62s		Photo position	
				Latitude:N 51d 25m 11.56s Longitude:W 0d 10m 46.18s	
					
Location plan			Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some trees along the riverside but the river is largely hidden. 			
Differences from type :		The more natural character of the Park illustrates the opportunities to enhance other areas within this character type; this is the least 'municipal' in character and the presence of the more natural river and riffle beds adds sparkle to the park.			
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote this scheme as an example of what can be achieved to help restore the natural signature of the river & valley • Explore the potential for removing the fence and opening up the western boundary to the main river channel, with suitable re-profiling of the main river edge opposite Wandle Bank • Find ways to extend the natural character of the park and restored channel upstream across Colliers wood High street, and downstream into Wandle Meadow Nature Park. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4D Ravensbury Park Morden Road

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Ravensbury Park is a 6.68-hectare, roughly triangular park situated north of the River Wandle between Merton Road and Bishopsford Road. In the C18th the park was part of an industrial area with Ravensbury Mill located on the river at the western end of the park and a calico factory to the north. The main house and private gardens of the Ravensbury estate became derelict and were subsequently bought by the council and turned into a park in 1930. A lake was added in the 1970's when new housing was built on the boundary. A former mill leatforms part of the northern boundary of the park, adjoining a new play area. There is a car park next to Morden road, and new facilities associated with a new medical centre. There are a number of large and unusual trees, including particularly large planes.</p>				
				
Photo4D1: Looking east (upstream) from the bridge over the river.		Photo 4D2 : view across the park		
Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 23m 48.37s Longitude:W 0d 10m 48.29s	Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 23m 53.33s Longitude:W 0d 10m 47.56s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Buildings apparent around the perimeter • Ornamental water bodies • Large mature and unusual trees • Many trees along the riverside and the river is largely hidden. 			
Differences from type:	Ravensbury Park is relatively natural and has been designated as being of local nature conservation significance. Whilst much of the planting is ornamental the riverside is relatively picturesque, although over-widened and straightened in the past.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake channel enhancements to main river and former mill leat where feasible • Extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime. 			

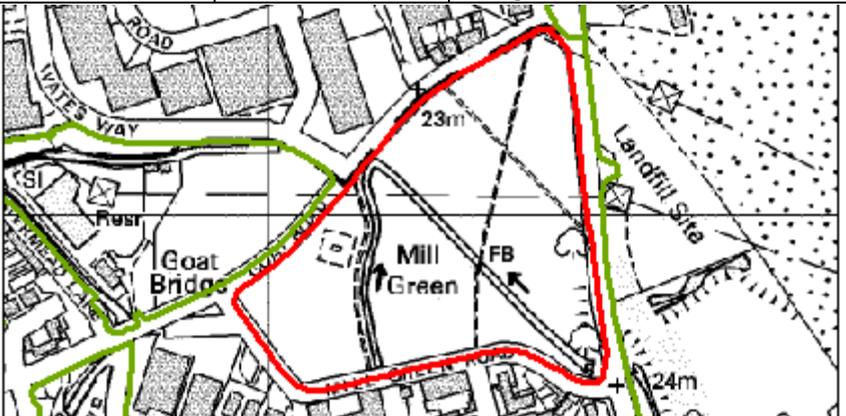
Wandle valley landscape character area 4E Poulter Park Bishopsford Road

Character type		Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: Poulter Park is home to a range of sports clubs including Tooting & Mitcham Community Sports Club, with an all-weather football pitch. The park consists primarily of grass sports pitches and hard facilities associated with the clubs. The river Wandle forms the northern boundary to these pitches, and the Wandle trail follows the boundary between the pitches and the river. The open views are dominated by high voltage pylons and cables. The park is named after the main donor who enabled Bishopsford House and playing fields to be purchased as playing fields</p>				
				
Photo 4E1; Looking up the drive towards the former Bishopsford House recently rebuilt 2001.		Photo 4E2 Looking towards the river from Peterborough road.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 23m 30.77s Longitude: W 0d 10m 18.07s		Photo position
		Latitude: N 51d 23m 30.75s Longitude: W 0d 10m 18.01s		
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Generous areas of open space with buildings apparent around perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups remain from former garden • Sports pitches and tennis courts • Hard recreational facilities and buildings often associated with the pitches and courts such as changing rooms, booking kiosks etc. • Occasional trees along the riverside but the river is largely hidden. 		
Differences from type :		Typical of the character type although the features of a municipal park such as ornamental tree groups and water bodies are generally absent		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss opening up the riverside to the park with landowners • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime, where it is compatible with the sports use • Consider planting trees in unused areas. 		

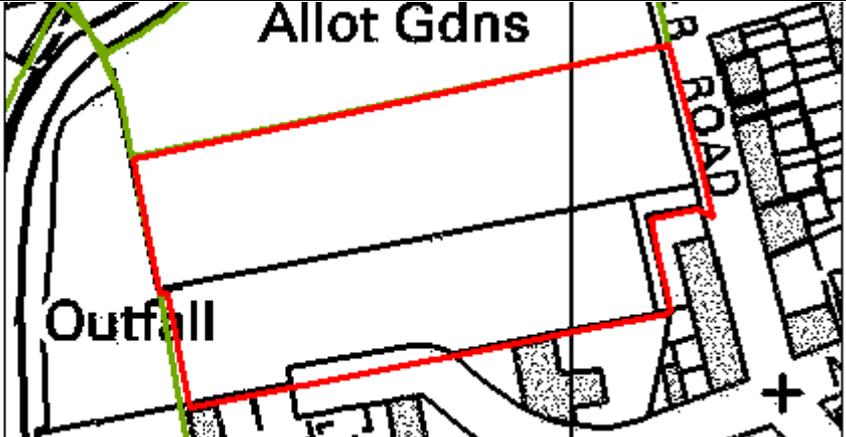
Wandle valley landscape character area 4F St Helier Open Space Wrythe Lane

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle		Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: The St Helier Open space was set out as amenity land during the building of the St Helier housing scheme by the LCC in the late 1920's. The design sought to follow the principles of a garden city and consequently over 1/8th was designated as open space. This space included various old oak trees which still dot the area today. The space is separated from Poulter Park to the east by Peterborough Road, and then further subdivided into three sections by Green Wrythe lane and Middleton road. The spaces slope upwards away from the valley, with the space which is closest to the valley being primarily an area of copses and woodland. The central section is a mixture of grass sports pitches, woodland scrub and old hedgerows, whilst the western section includes both pitches and hard facilities associated with the Sutton arena athletics tracks. The open views are dominated by high voltage pylons.</p>				
				
Photo4F1: Looking south west across the uppermost part of the space to the hospital.		Photo 4F2: Looking towards the river from Middleton road		
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 23m 1.27s Longitude: W 0d 11m 7.36s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 23m 9.60s Longitude: W 0d 10m 45.25s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Generous open space but buildings apparent on perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Sports pitches and tennis courts • Hard recreational facilities and buildings associated with the pitches & courts such as changing rooms, booking kiosks etc. • Occasional trees along the edges of the sports fields. 			
Differences from type:	The features of a municipal park such as ornamental tree groups and water bodies are absent, as is the river.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, to parts of the perimeter, as part of a more extensive grassland management regime, where compatible with sports • Consider planting unused areas with trees • Improve footpath and cycle links to the Wandle trail. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4G Mill Green

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle		Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch		Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Mill Green is an area of open space which lies close to the confluences of the two branches of the Wandle, and is managed as part of Mitcham Common. Mill Green is dissected by two waterways. One is the Beddington Effluent Carrier, which takes treated effluent from the sewage works to the River Wandle. The other is a ditch, which was once part of a branch of the River Wandle. Although the Carrier is concrete-sided with little wildlife value, the water quality of the treated effluent has improved in recent years and now supports a range of insects and fish. The ditch is choked with aquatic vegetation and heavily shaded along much of its length and in need of remedial management. Up until 2009 the main habitats were hay meadow, amenity grassland, woodland planted in the early-1990s and two watercourses. In 2010 the Conservators after a public consultation exercise undertook to enhance the nature conservation value of the Green, whilst continuing to provide areas for informal recreation, by changing the mowing regime, extending the hay meadow and woodland areas.</p>				
				
Photo4G1: Looking along the concrete lined Beddington effluent carrier		Photo 4G2: Looking across the west side of the green from the south.		
Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 23m 14.12s Longitude: W 0d 9m 34.13s	Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 23m 11.30s Longitude:W 0d 9m 39.32s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generous areas of open space but with buildings apparent around the perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups. 			
Differences from type :	The changing management means that the character is becoming less municipal and more typical of Mitcham Common which is characterised as <i>Rural parkland and common</i> character type.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for river restoration to the effluent carrier • Undertake restoration works to the ditch • Consider creating an off line storage pond • Improve footpath and cycle links to the Wandle trail. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4H Watercress Park

Character type		Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
Croydon				
<p>Description Watercress park is a small (1.08 Ha) area of open space which lies south of Goat Road and next to Spencer Road allotments. It is managed by London Borough of Sutton and includes a section of the east bank of the Wandle which has mature trees at this point, and includes a copse next to the allotments on the northern edge. The Wandle trail crosses from the west to the east bank here, and follows the easterly of two branches of the river around Wilderness Island to the south. The park facilities include a Multi-use games area and grass kick about space. Proposals for the redevelopment of the industrial estate on the northern boundary may help to fund enhancement and provide better access to the river.</p>				
				
Photo4H1: Looking into the park from the Wandle Trail.		Photo 4H2: Looking north west across the river from the riverside section of park.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 22m 58.89s Longitude: W 0d 9m 50.27s	Photo position	
		Latitude: N 51d 22m 55.92s Longitude: W 0d 9m 49.92s		
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings apparent around the perimeter southern and eastern perimeters • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Closely mown amenity grassland • Sports pitches and tennis courts • Occasional trees along the riverside but the river is largely hidden. 		
Differences from type:		The relatively small size of the park contrasts to the many larger municipal parks with more hard facilities.		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up better views of the river which is relatively picturesque at this point • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime • Consider planting unused areas with trees. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 4I The Grove & Sutton Ecology Centre

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: The Grove is an area of parkland & open space which lies to the north of the village ponds in Carshalton. It was formerly a part of an historic estate; The Grove estate, which was divided in the early C19th. What is now The Grove Park was purchased by Carshalton UDC in 1924 and opened as a public park. It is managed by London Borough of Sutton and features parts of the Carshalton Branch of the river which flow from the two Carshalton ponds; which are features of the village. Two roads cross the park and separate it from the grounds of the Sutton Ecology Centre (formerly gardens of the lodge) and the Honeywood Museum which adjoin the western end of the pond. The facilities within Grove Park include a former water mill, ornamental pond (in addition to the 2 village ponds), cascade, ornamental plantings and recreation areas with Play area crazy golf, bowling club and ball court. It is understood that the council are planning to dispose of some of the buildings.

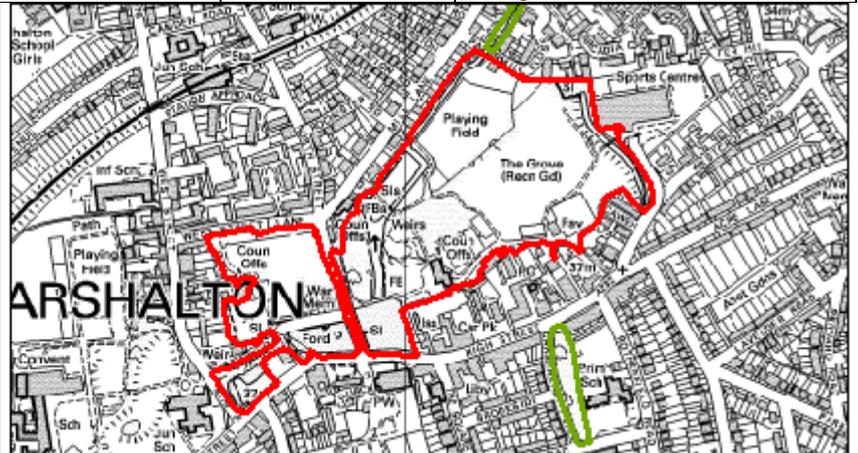


Photo 411: Looking upstream to the cascade.

Photo 412: across the park to the leisure centre.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 2.47s
Longitude: W 0d 9m 44.84s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 1.72s
Longitude: W 0d 9m 42.28s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings apparent around the perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Closely mown amenity grassland.
Differences from type :	The park is atypical in that the river and associated water features are a major attraction of the park. The historical ornamental elements are also atypical as are the presence of urban village ponds and the grounds of the ecology centre which are managed as an educational facility.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove toe-boarding and aim to restore the natural river banks • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime.

Wandle valley landscape character area 4J Grange Gardens and Beddington Park.

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description: The Grange and Manor gardens form the western most part of Beddington park, which was formerly a deer park attached to the medieval palace of Carew manor (now a school) on the eastern side of the park. Historically Carew manor dates from the 15th Century, and held a much larger area of land, and was laid out with grand avenues and a lake in front of the manor in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was purchased as a public park in the 1920's and is managed by London Borough of Sutton who are also responsible for Grange and manor parks on the eastern side of the area. These more intensive ornamental gardens were laid out in the Victorian era and purchased by the council in the 1930's, along with the Grange which is now a restaurant. Current facilities include ornamental lakes and ponds which are fed by the Croydon branch of the river, football pitches, tennis courts, cafe's & restaurants as well as play areas and a skate park. Church Paddock and the Warren are areas of pitches and woodland which lie to the south and east of Carew Manor and form part of the eastern section of Beddington park which follows the Wandle to Beddington lane.

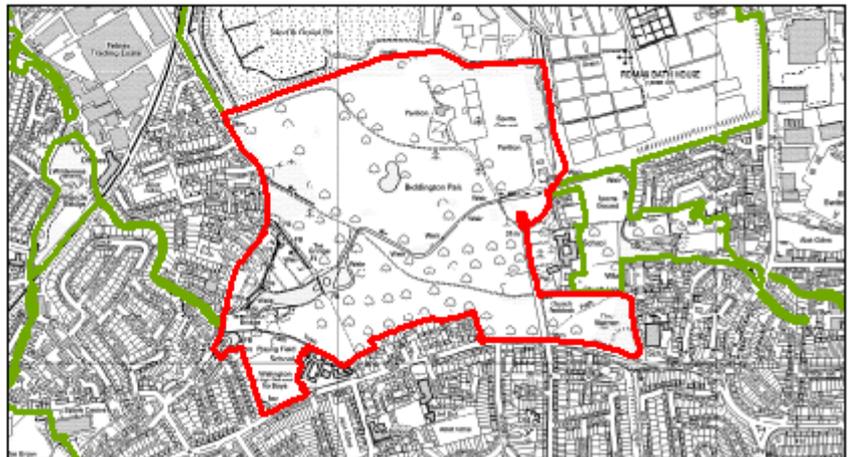


Photo411: Looking south west across the lake in the Grange.

Photo 4J2: view looking east across Beddington Park towards the flint bridge.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 17.33s
Longitude: W 0d 8m 56.33s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 21.55s
Longitude: W 0d 8m 58.04s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Closely mown amenity grassland
- Generous areas of open space
- Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups
- Garden features of historic interest
- Sports pitches and tennis courts
- Hard recreational facilities and buildings often associated with the pitches and courts such as changing rooms, booking kiosks etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ornamental water bodies.
Differences from type :	There is considerable variety across the area from the open amenity grassland of Beddington Park; to the ornamental gardens of Grange park. The consistent feature is the river which is more highly constrained than is necessary and generally lacking in natural character.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove toe-boarding and aim to restore the natural banks of the river through Beddington Park Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime Retain and restore garden features of historic significance including some hard river edging Consider removing or restoring edgings from ponds and channels in Grange Park

Wandle valley landscape character area 4K Church Paddock and the Warren

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper		Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description: This area of open space sits between the access road to Carew Manor from Croydon Road and Beddington lane. Church Paddock is an area of open space which is used for events, and lies south of Church Path, which links to Beddington Lane from the Manor. The Warren lies to the north and east of this path and includes the Croydon Branch of the Wandle in a relatively natural state. The northern boundary includes a brick estate or garden wall, to Crispin terrace, as well as the Beddington Sewage works.

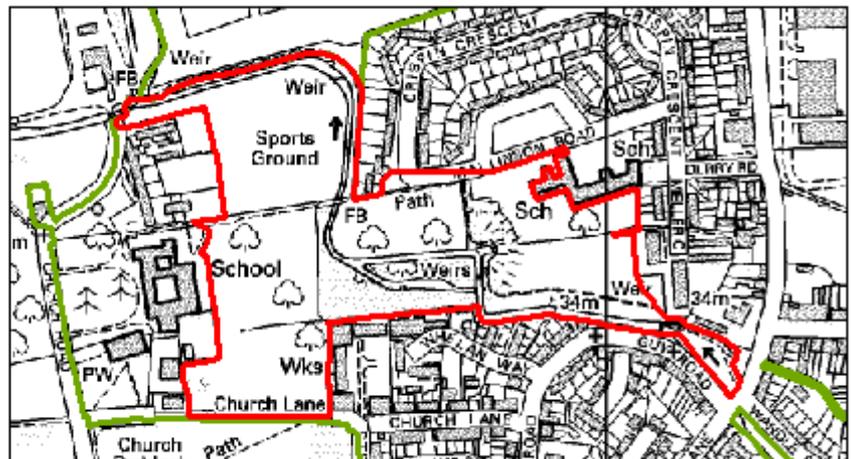


Photo4K1: Looking downstream across the Warren from Beddington Lane.

Photo4K2: Looking upstream to the north-east of Carew Manor.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 16.98s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 58.81s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 25.32s
Longitude: W 0d 8m 19.50s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Closely mown amenity grassland to Church Paddock
- Relatively natural winding river through the Warren which has small areas of woodland
- Generous areas of open space but with buildings apparent around the perimeter.

Differences from type:

Absence of sports facilities

Options for Change:

- Remove toe-boarding and aim to restore the natural banks of the river
- Encourage managers to introduce wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, of Church Paddock and move to a more extensive grassland management regime.

Wandle valley landscape character area 4L Waddon Ponds

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description: Waddon ponds is a relatively small but well used area of ornamental gardens and ponds which is largely surrounded by pre and post war housing. Access along Mill Lane to the north, now feeds a large industrial estate although the former corn mill remains, although the mill pond was replaced by watercress beds and then industry. The ponds are fed by springs which now act as the source of the Croydon branch of the Wandle, as the higher springs which once fed the river have dried out through over abstraction of the chalk aquifer. The facilities include the ponds, ornamental gardens, playground and toilets. Canada geese graze much of the grassland.



Photo4L1: Waddon Ponds looking north east from the west side of the park.

Photo 4L2: A. Looking south east across the southern side of the park.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 12.26s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 16.86s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 9.70s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 15.37s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Ornamental water bodies. • Generous areas of open space but with buildings apparent around the perimeter
Differences from type :	There are no sports facilities and the area is unusual as it does not contain or sit beside the river Wandle, the waters exit the ponds into a culvert which re-emerges to the west of the former Mill at Richmond Green.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove toe-boarding and aim to restore the natural banks of the pond • Encourage managers to introduce wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime • Seek to reduce damage to the grass by Canada geese.

Wandle valley landscape character area 4M Wandle Park Croydon.

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description: Wandle Park is currently being renovated. It was an area of open space with occasional ornamental trees (which are located around the former pond which was filled in during the 1960's) over the culverted river. However a lottery funded project is restoring the river and a pond as well as providing restored and enhanced facilities. These include a new playground, outdoor gym and bandstand, café, toilets, new skate park and ball court area.



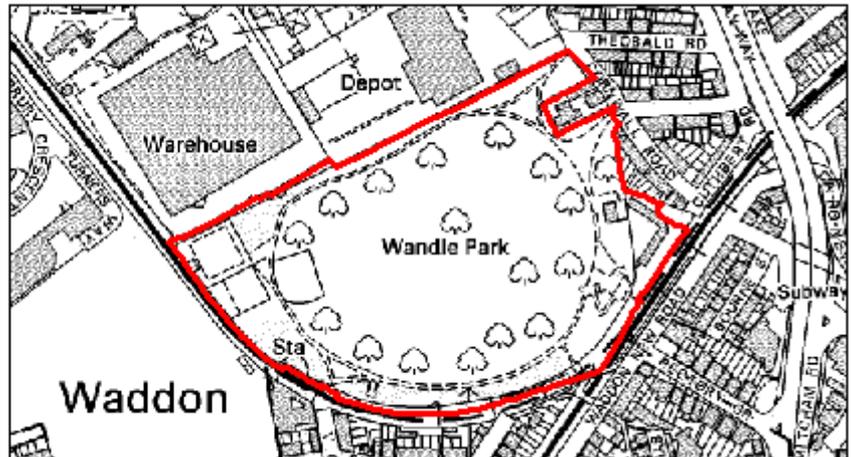
Photo4M1: WandlePark during restoration work to restore pond and river.



Photo 4M2: Wandle Park looking north towards former power station chimneys.

Photo position
Latitude:N 51d 22m 25.81s
Longitude:W 0d 6m 45.38s

Photo position
Latitude:N 51d 22m 25.19s
Longitude:W 0d 6m 48.14s

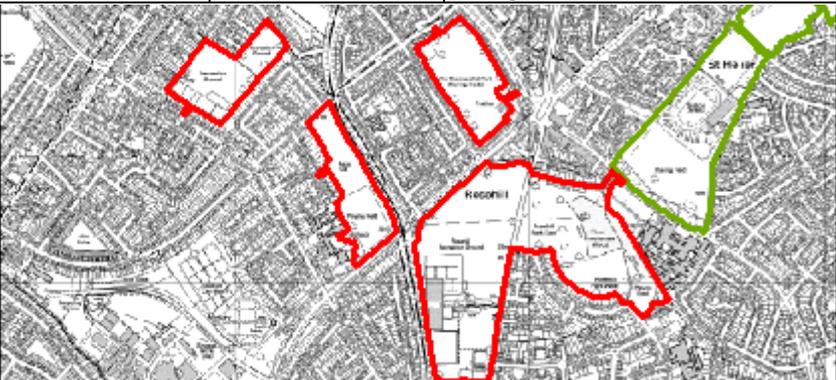


Location plan	Extent of area
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closely mown amenity grassland • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Ornamental water bodies • Good areas of open space with buildings apparent on perimeter.
Differences from type :	The restoration master plan suggests that the works will help to restore the character of the park and that ground levels will be lowered to enable the opening up of a section of the river.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage managers to introduce wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, & change to extensive grassland management regime.

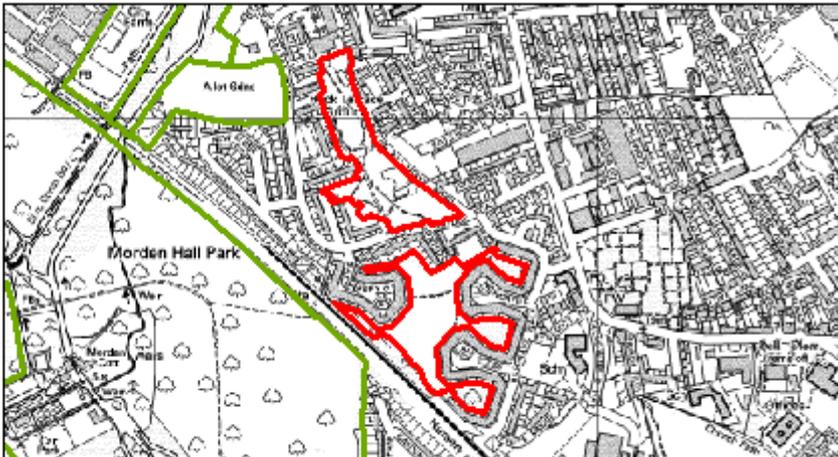
Wandle valley landscape character area 4N Carshalton Park

Character type		Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
				Croydon
<p>Description: Carshalton Park is situated south of the High Street in an area bounded by Ruskin Rd, Ashcombe Rd, Woodstock Rd. and the Park. The park occupies 9.28ha which is about a tenth of its original size. Originally a deer park and then planned to be an 18th century pleasure ground with a palace mansion, only a small part of these plans were implemented, Since 1892 the park has been sold off for housing development. However evidence of the deer park and planned 18th century landscape can be seen in the mature sweet chestnuts, ornamental trees, the remnants of the canal and grotto. The park also includes the old 'Hogpitpond' now a dry amphitheatre, modern tennis courts and a children's play area. The higher south west section of the park has impressive views north of the city of London and is popular with dogwalkers. The dry bed of the stream from the canal to the Grove along Carshalton Place has been included in this character area</p>				
				
Photo4N1: Looking north across the park towards Ruskin Road		Photo 4N2. Across the east side of the park and the horse chestnut lined dry canal		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 21m 35.45s Longitude: W 0d 9m 43.25s		Photo position
				Latitude: N 51d 21m 44.53s Longitude: W 0d 9m 37.55s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remnant of an old deer park • Features of an 18th century pleasure ground, canal ,grotto • Mature and ornamental trees • Open parkland with formal enclosed recreation and play areas • Attractive Edwardian railings surrounding the park • Open mown areas of grassland and open space. 		
Differences from type :		Mature character and historic features such as canal and spring.		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate possibility of restoring the grotto. • Implement management plan to restore heritage features, plant new specimen trees and improve interpretation. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 4O Rosehill Open spaces

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle		Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: This group of open spaces at Rosehill includes three recreation grounds and two areas of open space with sports facilities. Reigate Avenue, Sutton Common, and Thomas Wall Park, primarily provide recreational facilities for bowls, tennis, soccer and athletics, although Reigate Avenue is also used by the adjoining Glenthorne High School. Reigate Avenue dates from the 1930's and has decorative iron railings and a line of mature trees on the east boundary between the railway line and cycle path. Otherwise it is primarily open mown sports grass. Thomas Wall park is similar but provides changing facilities primarily for soccer. Sutton Common Park contains a bowls club, tennis courts and playground, with some mature trees. The two open space areas are located either side of Rosehill and are known as Rosehill Park east and Rosehill Park west. The west area includes a tennis academy which occupies much of the southern area, and a cricket pitch. The eastern area, which backs on to St Helier Hospital, contains mature trees and a woodland area (Greenshaw wood) which separate the hospital from the park. The park contains a cycle route linking to other parts of the borough.</p>				
				
Photo4O1: Rosehill Park east looking towards the west across Rosehill road.		Photo 4O2: Thames wall park is primarily open grassland overlooked by surrounding housing.		
Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 22m 54.14s Longitude:W 0d 11m 25.82s	Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 23m 12.11s Longitude: W 0d 11m 39.29s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings apparent around the perimeter • Isolated ornamental trees with occasional tree groups • Closely mown amenity grassland • Sports pitches and tennis courts • 1930's ornamental railings. 			
Differences from type:	In most cases there is no apparent relationship to the River or valley.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, and moving to a more extensive grassland management regime • Consider planting unused areas with trees. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4P Phipps Bridge Estate

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon	Carshalton	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
Description: The Phipps Bridge estate originally dates from the 1960's when the original high rise housing blocks were built. These were not popular however and were subject to a major programme of refurbishment in the 1990's. The estate includes 4 and 5 storey blocks of system built flats and the associated open spaces include various recreational and play areas. The open spaces were generally planted with perimeter trees during the 1960's and 70's and there is now a population of established semi mature trees. Shrub planting is not popular due to concerns regarding security and is restricted to a few small areas.				
				
Photo4P1: Looking towards the play area & skateboard ramps from Phipps Bridge road.		Photo 4P2: Looking west from Belgrave road.		
Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 24m 15.44s Longitude:W 0d 10m 47.33s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 18.13s Longitude: W 0d 10m 50.12s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tall buildings dominate the perimeter of the open spaces • Established trees • Closely mown amenity grassland • various play facilities. 			
Differences from type	The open space is dominated by the former GLC housing estate.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address concerns about security and lighting of public areas • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, introducing wild flowers to parts of the perimeter, & moving to a more extensive grassland management regime in some areas. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4Q Dunsford Road recreation ground

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: The recreation area lies next to the primary school and railway line with adjacent houses backing onto the open space in the north with business premises along the south side. It is well fenced with its main entrance on the west side bordering onto Wellington road. This western area close to the school caters for young children with a specific play area. The eastern part of the site is mostly open close cut grass with tarmac paths, the occasional flower bed and ornamental tree. There is an access gate from Lucien road which is currently closely fenced with hoardings to separate the recreational area from the extensive building work on the school site. A long distance path passes through the recreation area from this gate to Wellington road.</p>				
				
Photo4Q1: Looking east along the northern boundary.		Photo 4Q2: Looking south across the recreation ground.		
Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 26m 16.16s Longitude:W 0d 11m 45.97s	Photo position	Latitude:N 51d 26m 18.87s Longitude:W 0d 11m 39.35s	
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> residential and business premises on northern and southern boundaries of the recreation area Isolated ornamental trees Closely mown amenity grassland with tarmac surfaced paths Play areas Substantial fencing around the perimeter of the site. 			
Differences from type :	The relatively small size of the park contrasts to the many larger municipal parks with more facilities. There are no natural areas.			
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install additional signposting showing access to recreation area Encourage managers to create natural grassland areas in the northern east corner of the site to improve habitat and increase biodiversity Plant more trees along the perimeter boundaries. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 4R Norbury Park

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton branch
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon
<p>Description: Norbury Park is located close to Norbury Station and the A23 London to Brighton Road. It was formerly a golf course in the 1920's, and purchased by Croydon Council in the 1930's to create a park; although the southern corner is now occupied by a secondary school. Norbury Park is a large area of open space with potential to increase its value for ecosystem services. There are fenced off allotments on the south side, and changing facilities and toilets in the centre, as well as play facilities in the eastern sector. Small blocks of relatively young trees have been planted in the corners of the park with individual trees along the main paths. The Norbury Brook runs alongside the park, it is a tributary of the Wandle which lies approximately 4 kilometres to the West. The Brook is primarily fed by surface drainage water & liable to rapid change when there is run off. Most of the Brook is culverted & hidden from view.</p>			
			
Photo4R1: The play area looking east.		Photo 4R2: View across the park to the north-west. A young tree avenue crosses the park.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 45.40s Longitude: W 0d 6m 57.51s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 43.90s Longitude: W 0d 6m 59.44s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings apparent around most of the perimeter • Closely mown amenity grassland • Sports pitches and play areas • Allotments along one boundary • Groups of trees screen parts of the boundary • Important area for ecosystem services. 		
Differences from type :	Typical of the character type.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore option of creating overspill pond or wetland linked to the Norbury Brook • Explore option of diverting brook into the park & enhancing channel • Encourage managers to extend areas of more natural grassland, to improve habitat and biodiversity .Encourage the development of wildlife corridors along the perimeter of the site with appropriate planting and management regime. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 4S Thornton Heath Recreation Ground

Character type	Municipal parks and sports fields			
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton branch	
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon

Description: Thornton Heath recreation ground is an area of sports facilities and play areas which was acquired by Croydon Council in the late Victorian era. It was formerly a popular facility for all age groups but now principally serves the younger generation. The area is well fenced from the surrounding residential buildings with mature trees in places on the boundary and along the main paths. It is dissected by a well-used tarmac path.

The recreation area is situated approximately 4 kilometres from the River Wandle but lies next to a section of the Norbury Brook which is largely culverted through Selhurst, Norbury and Streatham before becoming the River Graveney and coming to the surface where it joins the Wandle south of Plough Lane.



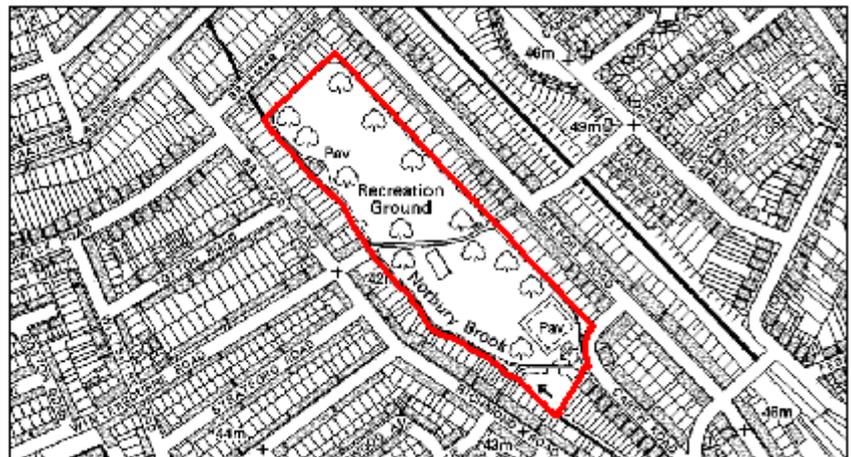
Photo4S1: The play area next to mature trees looking east.



Photo 4S2: The entrance to the area from Winterbourne road, the Norbury Brook is a concrete channel beyond the railings.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 5.89s
Longitude: W 0d 6m 29.12s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 5.68s
Longitude: W 0d 6m 33.47s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Buildings apparent around the perimeter
- Mature trees
- Closely mown amenity grassland
- Sports facilities, equipment and play areas.

Differences from type:

The park is similar to other areas of this type.

Options for Change:

- Encourage managers to create natural habitat areas in unused corners of the site and along perimeter
- Planting of native shrub species and wild flowers may improve biodiversity value of site in areas not used for sport or play equipment.

10. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 5: 20TH CENTURY HOUSING AND FLATS

10.1. Character type description

There is considerable variation in the nature of the housing which has been built next to the river in the 20th century. It varies from the suburban villas of the 20s and 30s through London City Council (LCC) and Greater London Council (GLC) flat blocks, to more recent sheltered housing and speculative development by national house building companies. In general the LCC/ GLC rental housing was built taller, with four or five stories, in order to provide more associated open space. Most of this tends to ignore the river, which was classified as an open sewer at the time these buildings were constructed. Consequently high walls or fences were built to segregate residents from the river. The prevailing attitude to water safety at the time also encouraged the fencing off of the river.

More recent housing has acknowledged the river, and whilst fencing is not always absent, many of the more recent housing schemes face the river.

In general the management of the public spaces next to the river reflects the prevailing attitude that the river is still a constraint rather than an asset. There are opportunities to enhance management and make the most of the river either in existing open spaces or as part of redevelopment of worn out housing stock.

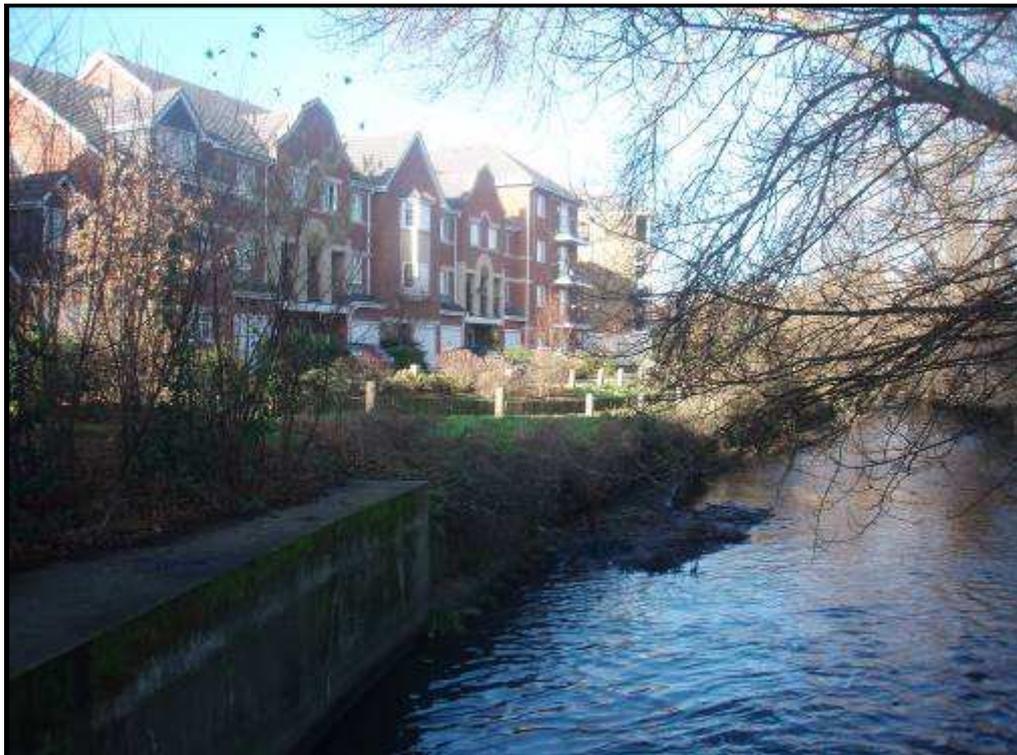


Figure 24: 20th Century housing adjoining the river at Colliers wood

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Mixture of housing and flats from 1920s to the present day apparent from the river corridor
- Modern housing sometimes faces the river
- Older housing is generally fenced off with high walls or fences against the river
- Often some generous areas of public open space associated with the river within the scheme
- Trees often planted parallel to the river.

10.2. Options for change

Redevelopment of riverside sites for housing offer opportunities for enhancement of the river edge. The provision of more space and the creation of more natural (and safer) edges to the river will improve the urban environment. Housing areas will benefit from using the natural signature planting and design approach, with pollarded willow trees, shallow margins and emergent vegetation along the river's edge. The provision of safe access and egress points to the river will improve safety.

The housing at Merton Abbey Mills in Figure 24 below adopts a positive attitude and allows uninterrupted views out over the river. The simple grass lawned bank to the river is similar to the Cambridge backs and illustrates a riverside garden that is simple and well cared for.

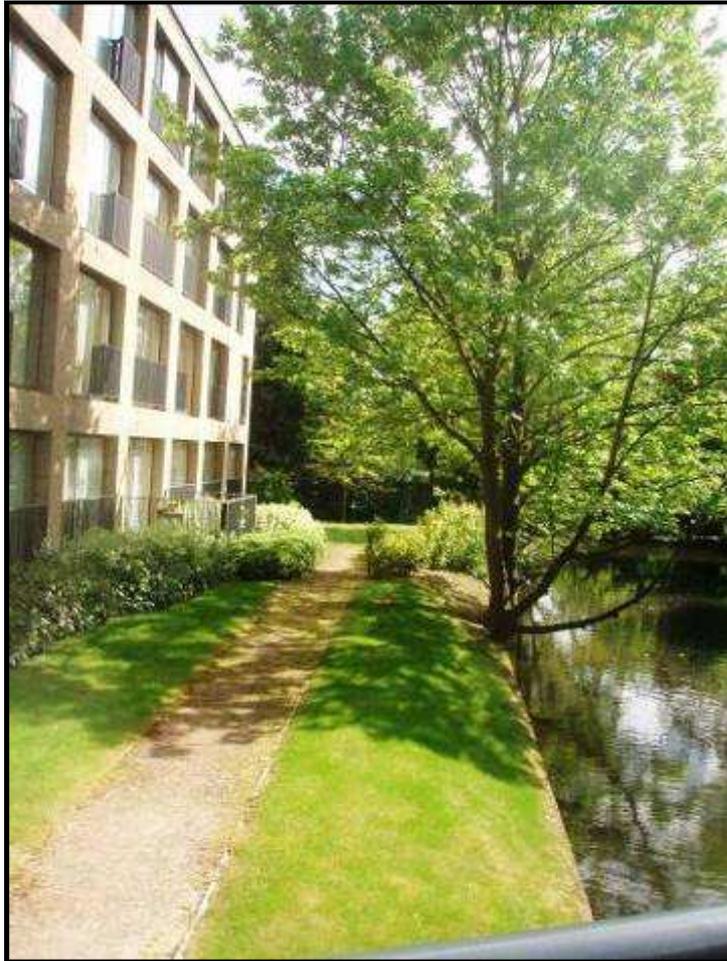
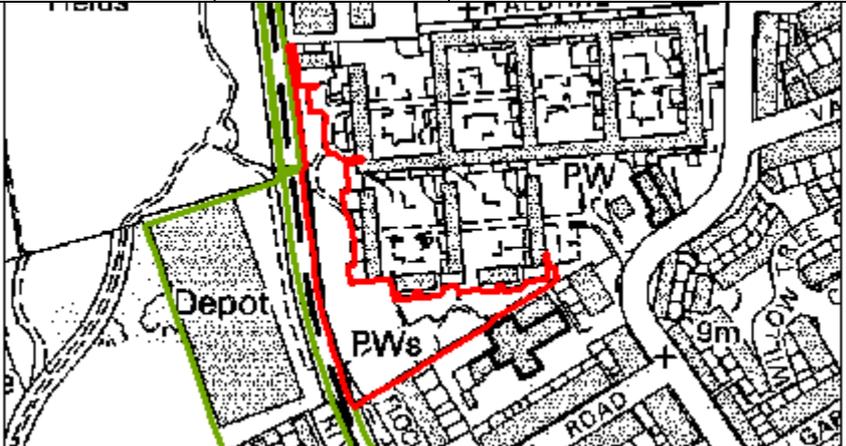


Figure 25. Housing at Merton Abbey Mills facing the river

10.3. Individual character areas Type5: 20th Century housing and flats

Wandle valley landscape character area 5A Henry Prince estate

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
Description: Henry Prince Estate is a typical 1930's LCC housing estate which is formed from 4 storey pitched roof, brick built blocks of flats clustered around a total of 6 squares which back onto the river Wandle. The main road through to the river runs under distinctive archways and is called Wandle Way. A pedestrian bridge provides access across the river, but the river banks are walled and fenced off so that it is not possible to see the river from the housing. The spaces between the housing and the river are generally areas of open grassland with occasional ornamental trees, and predominantly willows planted next to the river, which restrict views across the river to King George's park.			
			
Photo 5A1 looking upstream across the river. Walls and trees separate housing from river.		Photo 5A2. Open space associated with the 1930's estate.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 26m 42.13s Longitude: W 0d 11m 35.17s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 26m 39.40s Longitude: W 0d 11m 33.53s
			
Location plan	Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classic 1930s LCC housing stock • Open spaces are separated from the river with high walls • Public open space associated with the river within the scheme does not relate to the river • Trees planted parallel to the river prevent views out across open spaces beyond the river. 		
Differences from type :	Typical of the character type		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for open spaces associated with the housing to improve the environment • Removal of walls and clearance of the banks will open up views of the river 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 5B Wandle Bank

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: Wandle Bank is a straight section of north- south residential road which faces the river and includes housing from a range of periods. The southern end, adjoining Merton High street includes Victorian terrace and villa housing, whilst most of the remaining 2 storey housing dates from the 1930s to the present day. The street is not exclusively housing, a section of offices is associated with the London transport bus garage behind, and other offices have been designed to mimic a residential terrace in style. The most northerly section of housing is in Bewley Street to the north of the former Connolly's leather mill (now flats) which straddles the river. This more recent housing is four storeys high and sits further back from the river, with a planted margin separating the river from the street.</p>			
			
Photo5B1: looking north / downstream; Wandle Park is to the right beyond the riverside trees.		Photo5B2: looking north /downstream; riverside path next to Bewley Street.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 59.83s Longitude: W 0d 10m 50.33s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 25m 12.79s Longitude: W 0d 10m 52.91s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings face onto the river • Generally steel railings and parked cars separate river from the street • The river has been straightened and over deepened but contains healthy vegetation and gravel bed • Trees beyond the river block views towards park. 		
Differences from type :	This character area almost uniquely faces the river, perhaps due to its Victorian origins when the river was perceived to be an asset.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming parking problems and moving cars away from the river would be highly beneficial, as would exploring ways of reducing the barrier effect of the railings • Re-profiling of the bank to soften the current hard edge would also be desirable, possibly on the east bank next to the park • Investigate why the pedestrian bridge linking Bewley Street to Wandle Meadow Nature Park is a dead end. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 5C The Pickle

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: New housing to the south of Merton Abbey extends eastwards from the Wandle along the side of a tributary stream; the Pickle Ditch. This was one of the original courses of the river, but became a backwater when mill leats were built to take the main river flow to its current course past Merton Abbey Mills. The stream is heavily overgrown, and heavily silted up. The trees provide screening between the newer housing and the back gardens of the pre and post war housing along Runnymede, a street which runs parallel to and south of the stream. The character area also includes two other separate sections of this stream, including a spur south of Merton High Street, and to the south of Windsor Avenue.

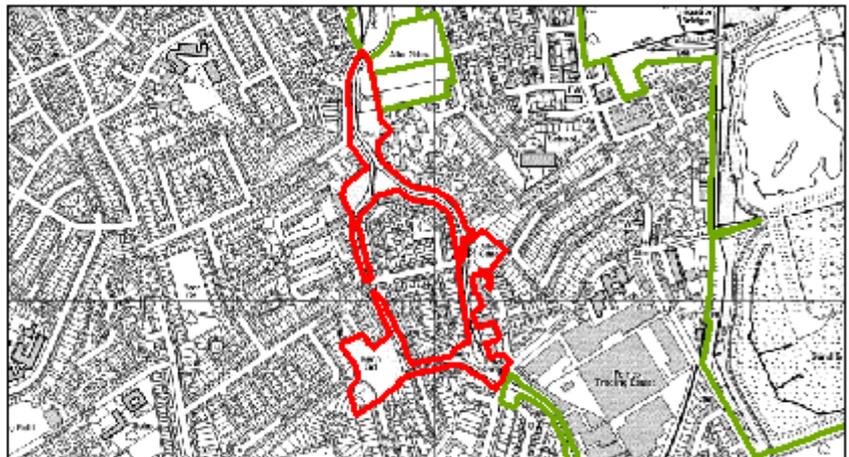


Photo 5C1: looking west downstream; along the Pickle Ditch, which joins the Wandle beyond the flats.

Photo 5C2. looking north upstream; along the Pickle Ditch.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 45.83s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 56.04s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 45.66s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 56.56s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Flats overlook the stream, although a dense tree screen along the stream block views over the water
- There is a footpath along the side of the stream
- The stream is heavily silted up.

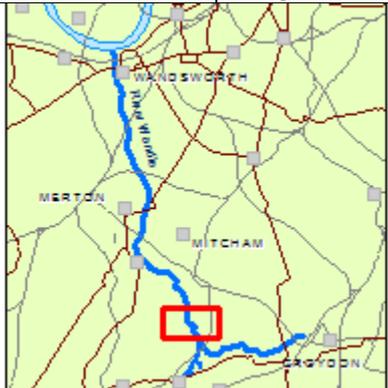
Differences from type :

The new blocks of flats overlooks the silted up stream, whilst the stream is largely hidden from older housing to the south.

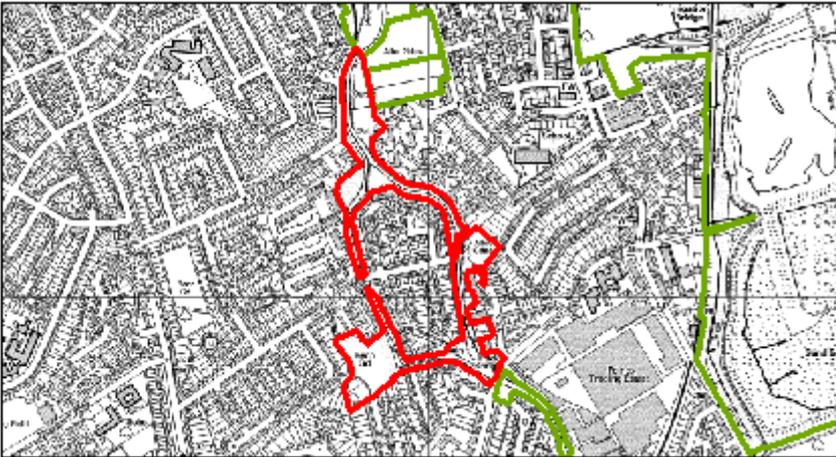
Options for Change:

- Some thinning or coppicing of the trees to permit views and clearance of silt from the stream.

Wandle valley landscape character area 5D Culvers Avenue Hackbridge

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: This character area extends to the north and south of Culvers Avenue, which crosses an island formed by two branches of the river. The easterly now being the main branch with the Wandle Trail to the east side, and a former mill channel forming the westerly branch. Land on the island was once part of the Culvers estate and used as a calico bleaching ground and for gardens of 18th and 19th century villas. However semi-detached housing was built over the northern part of the island in the 30's, and subsequently part of the southern half. One of the villas (The Culvers) remained until the 1960 before being replaced with housing. In addition to land on the Island, land either side of the river both to the north and south of the island includes some public open space (such as Dale Park) as well as open space associated with housing. In this middle section of the river there is a more rural character due to the lower density of housing and wider areas of open space associated with the river. The channel does not appear to have been over-deepened and there is generally a more natural bed to the channel with more native vegetation such as water crowfoot.</p>			
			
<p>Photo 5D1: looking downstream on the east side of the island next to the trail. Low trip rail separates housing from river at Corbet Close.</p>		<p>Photo 5D2: looking upstream on the east side of the Island towards Hack bridge.</p>	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 41.50s Longitude: W 0d 9m 39.94s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 40.10s Longitude: W 0d 9m 39.81s
			
Location plan	Extent of area		
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rear gardens back onto the river • Parts of Culver Avenue overlook the river • More generous open spaces either side of the river with primarily mown grassland and trees • Some access to the west bank 		
Differences from type :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally more open and higher density of native trees, • Play areas adjoining the river are not heavily fenced off 		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-profiling of bank edges or removal of hard bank structures where space permits, and thinning of overhanging trees 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 5 Mill Lane Carshalton

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon
<p>Description: Mill Lane runs south from Wilderness Island past The Grove to Carshalton Ponds. Parts of Mill Lane abut the river and include riverside open space. In other areas the river runs behind new housing which faces onto or is accessed from Mill Lane. Along much of this route the Wandle trail follows the western side of the river, and includes both a cycleway and footpath, as well as railings to separate the river from the path. In other locations where the railings are absent the river is hidden by many young willow trees. This is unfortunate as in this location the width, depth gradient and elevation of the river are generally reminiscent of a natural stream rather than the heavily engineered river which exists in other locations.</p>			
			
Photo 5E1: One of the locations where the river is visible from Mill lane.		Photo 5E2: looking north/downstream showing trail and access road running parallel.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 14.87s Longitude: W 0d 9m 34.98s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 7.80s Longitude: W 0d 9m 40.37s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Railings separating path from river • Areas screened by young willow trees • Cycle and footpath access to the west bank. 		
Differences from type :	More urban riverside areas but a smaller, narrower more natural stream.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some coppicing of streamside trees to allow better views into the stream • Alternative future planning of new housing developments to prevent paving of the whole riverside corridor (e.g. photo5E2 where shared use of access road would have prevented need to pave the whole riverside corridor). 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 5F Wandleside Wallington

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon

Description: Wandleside is a private section of the Croydon branch of the river which links to Wilderness island (where the two branches merge) at the entrance to Beddington Park from London Road Wallington. The river runs between the rear gardens of a 1930's housing estate (Wandleside, Victoria and Birchwood avenues, Meadow Walk and St Marys avenue), as well as 1960/70's terraces Bowman's Meadow and River Close. Views along the river from London Road show a narrow corridor with the stream being relatively natural in character with no bank revetments or over deepening. Himalayan balsam seems to have taken hold on the banks however.



Photo 5F1: Looking west downstream along this private section of river from London Road

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 13.69s Longitude: W 0d 9m 9.42s



Location plan	Extent of area
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public access to either bank of the river Rear gardens of suburban housing back onto the river corridor Mature trees to the south side are shading the river corridor.
Differences from type:	Absence of public access to river corridor on both sides of river.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a riparian residents group to engage local residents and provide assistance in flood, drainage, and channel maintenance Seek to ensure that any redevelopment of riverside plots will provide riverside access in the future.

Wandle valley landscape character area 5G

Character type	20th Century Housing		
Character area name	Richmond Green		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: Richmond Green is a generous strip of riverside open space to the south of a distributor road which provides access through a predominantly 1970's housing estate just downstream from the former Whaddon Flour mill. The road is to the north of the river, which flows west at this point and most of the open space lies to the north, although the Wandle trail and a narrow strip of open space run along the south side of the river, linking the ends of a series of north - south residential roads and 1930's housing. The river is relatively small and natural in character. There are numerous young trees along the banks which include self-sown sycamores among the more characteristic poplars.

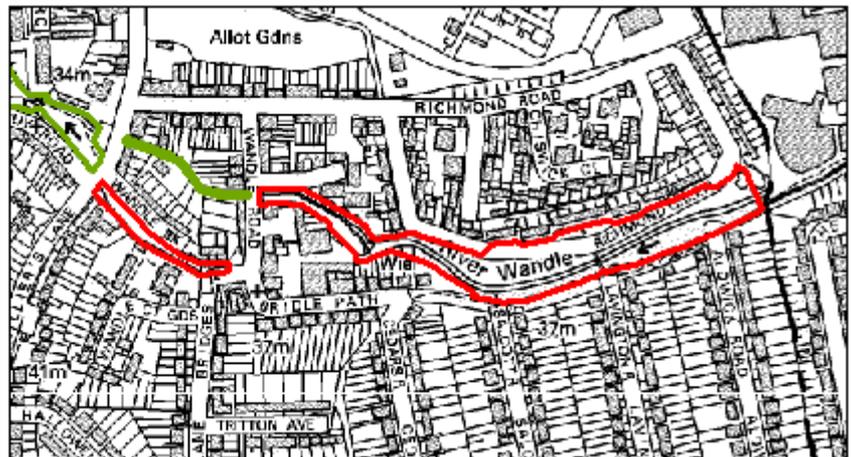


Photo 5G1: Looking downstream and across the stream towards Richmond Green.

Photo 5G2: Looking upstream and north to Richmond Green.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 14.80s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 24.18s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 22m 11.32s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 37.75s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Good public access to either bank of the river
- Rear gardens of suburban housing back onto the river corridor on the south side
- Mature trees are shading the river corridor.

Differences from type :

Relatively natural character of stream.

Options for Change:

- Coppicing and pollarding of willows and poplars, and removal of young sycamores to provide more light and visibility of stream channel
- Change to management of grassland on Richmond Green to encourage more diverse sward.

11. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 6: INDUSTRIAL BACKLANDS

11.1. Character type description

Whilst the industrial uses of the river date back to medieval times, the small scale piecemeal industrial uses which once followed the river have been replaced by more modern industrial sites with larger buildings, and large areas of associated car parking and storage space. This character type also includes areas used for major utility infrastructure, such as high voltage pylons, transformer stations and sewage works.

Industrial backlands generally face away from the river, with blank walls and security fences bordering the riverside. The Wandle trail passing through two industrial estates in Earlsfield is probably one of the less attractive of the sections where the river is visible.



Figure 26: Industrial backlands adjoining the river at Wimbledon

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Large areas of car parking and hard surfaces
- Large modern industrial buildings dominate the river corridor
- Ugly high security fencing face the river and riverside paths
- Invasive weeds such as Japanese knotweed
- Large scale utility sites such as transformer farms and sewage works
- High potential for improvement.

11.2. Options for change

The industrial backlands of the valley offer the greatest potential for positive landscape change. A number of industrial sites are outdated and located in areas where re-development to housing or offices is likely. In these locations there is the potential for the river to be given more space as part of planning gain, and for the future riverside to become an attractive asset to any new development.

Environmental improvements could easily be included within planning permission for new development. These could include restoration of lost features of the river channel such as meanders, riffle beds and pools, and the removal of hard bank reinforcement, with its

replacement by soft vegetated edges. Planting of willows can help to stabilise the bank with their root systems, and provide shelter and shade along the river. These environmental improvements would add value to the development, offering opportunities for attractive new external spaces on the riverside. The natural signature of the valley would also be enhanced in the process.

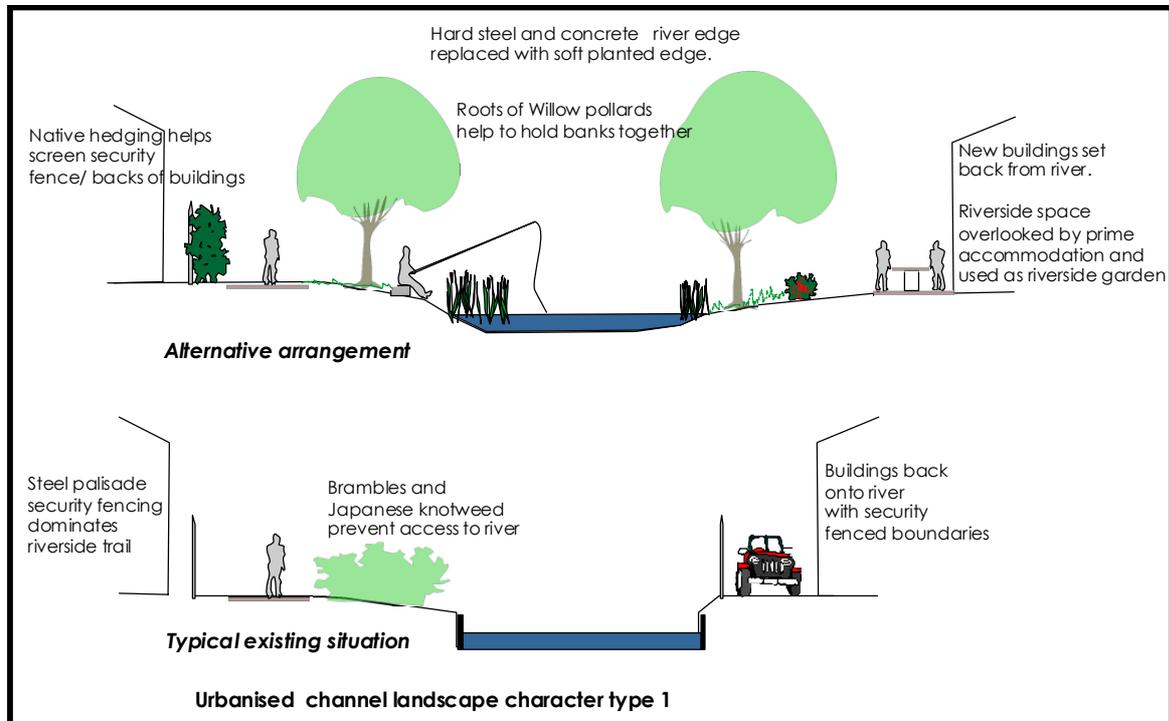


Figure 27: Options for the re-profiling of the river to provide attractive riverside spaces associated with new development.

11.3. Individual character areas Type 6: Industrial backlands

Wandle valley landscape character area 6A Bendon Valley, Riverside & Lydden Grove Southfields

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: This series of industrial units occupies part of the east side of the river running through Southfields, opposite King George's park. Typically most of the units present their back walls to the river, and there is limited space on the riverbank between these walls and the channel. In consequence much of the narrow river bank is covered with ruderal vegetation or debris. A bridge allows access across to the river into King George's park from Lydden Grove. In other locations service areas back onto the river, or there is a line of parking.

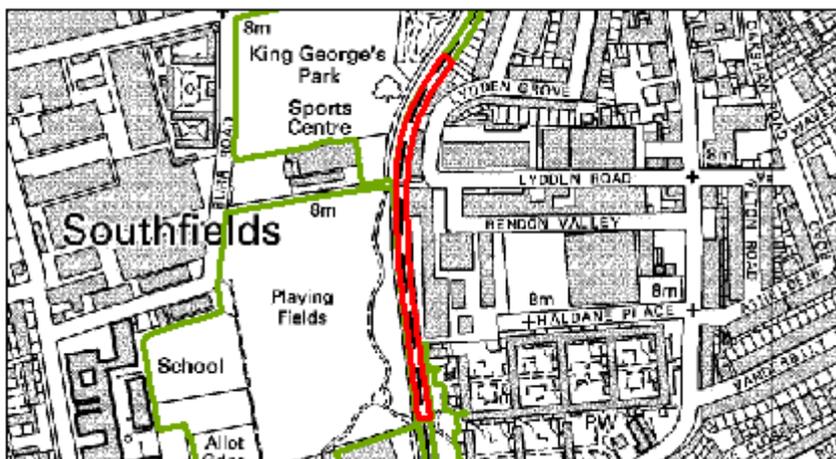


Photo6A1: Looking upstream from King Georges Park bridge ;the industrial buildings back right against the river

Photo 6A2: Looking down -stream from King Georges Park bridge; the industrial buildings back right against the river

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 26m 48.42s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 36.02s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 26m 49.05s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 36.13s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Industrial buildings back right onto the river corridor.

Differences from type :

Typical of the character type.

Options for Change:

- Seek to ensure that any redevelopment of the industrial units will provide riverside access and a wider natural corridor in the future
- Undertake management of bankside vegetation, particularly invasive non-native species.

Wandle valley landscape character area 6B Flock Mill

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: The old Flock mill at Earlsfield is part of a group of former mills factories and warehouses which are concentrated around the Penwith Road area. These are intermixed with the Duntshill Road urbanised channel character area (1C) and areas of Edwardian terrace housing. Generally in the process of piecemeal redevelopment or conversion, the mills are being converted to offices or flats, whilst former industrial buildings are being upgraded to offices. The buildings are generally sited right on the river bank, and if parking or storage areas abut the river, these are walled off and the river is ignored. There is generally no riverside access apart from the views along the river from the bridge crossings.



Photo 6B1: Flock Mill straddles the river and houses a children's nursery, the building on the left has recently been converted.



Photo 6B2: Industrial units either side of the river to the south of Penwith road.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 26m 36.16s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 34.01s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 26m 32.27s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 24.25s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Industrial buildings back right onto the river corridor

Differences from type :

Typical of the character type

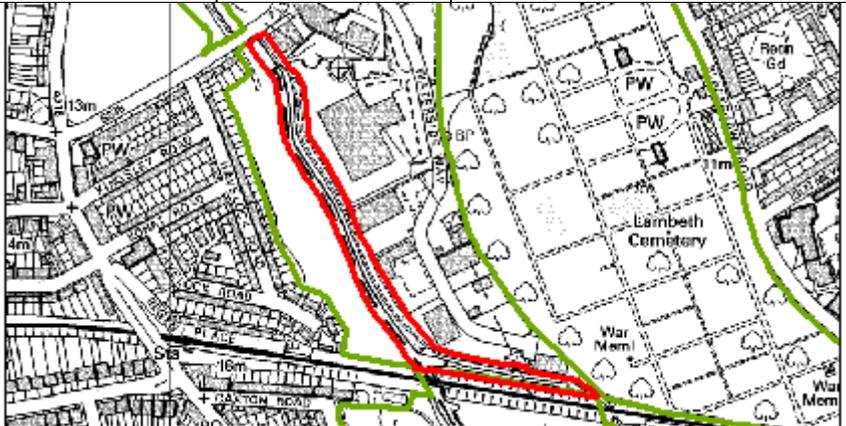
Options for Change:

- Seek to ensure that any redevelopment of the industrial units will provide riverside access in the future.

Wandle valley landscape character area 6C Weir Road/ Lower Wandle nature reserve

Character type		Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: The Lower Wandle nature reserve occupies the west bank of the river between Plough lane and Trewint street. In this location the river is the borough boundary between Wandsworth, and Merton. Merton Council has designated the corridor of land as a Local nature reserve and commissioned a management plan for this land which the council owns. The area varies in width between 10 and 40 metres, and the western boundary is the Weir Road industrial estate which was a redevelopment of the former Wimbledon Sewage works.</p>				
				
Photo 6C1: High voltage electrical infrastructure follows much of the river valley.		Photo 6C2: Much of the vegetation is ruderal, views of storage yards & industrial buildings.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 25m 46.62s Longitude: W 0d 11m 20.90s		Photo position
				Latitude: N 51d 25m 59.77s Longitude: W 0d 11m 28.70s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial buildings either side of much of the river corridor • Vegetation typically nettles scrub and willows. 		
Differences from type :		Typical of the character type		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to ensure that any redevelopment of the industrial units will provide riverside access in the future • Undertake vegetation management and coppicing of trees in accordance with the management plan, and include removal of invasive species • Bank restoration; either through removal of the high concrete walling which constrains the channel and prevents the development of marginal vegetation, or • The creation of lower level soil or gravel steps within the channel to help screen the concrete side and enable marginal plants to establish. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 6D Waterside Way

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
Description: Waterside Way is a modern industrial estate which occupies the east bank of the river and backs onto the Wandle trail. It includes retail warehouses, car dealers and auction sites. The trail runs along the top of an embankment which was built to prevent flooding of the industrial estate, which lies at a lower level. The building of embankments and over deepening of the channel was most probably undertaken during the 1950s and 60's. The river is now much lower with high hard banks. In other places the steep banks are covered in vegetation most notably willow trees. The public route which is separated from the riverbank by railing is high and remote from the water surface, as is the case along much of this lower section of the river.			
			
Photo 6 D1: The Wandle trail runs along the side of the Graveney on the left and the industrial units on the right, facing downstream.		Photo 6 D2: Coppiced young willows are a feature of the riverside along this section.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 25m 29.84s Longitude: W 0d 10m 58.64s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 25m 41.15s Longitude: W 0d 11m 13.20s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial buildings back on to east side of the river corridor • Wandle trail located on flood embankment • Coppiced young willow trees railings and high hard banks separate walkers from water. 		
Differences from type:	The rear walls & fencing of the buildings are generally less evident.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake vegetation management and coppicing of trees and include removal of invasive species. • Bank restoration; either through removal of the high concrete walling which constrains the channel and prevents the development of marginal vegetation, or • The creation of lower level soil or gravel steps within the channel to help screen the concrete side & allow marginal plants to establish. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 6E Merton High street

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: At Merton High street the river forms the boundary between a large supermarket, and what was once part of the main Roman road into London. Here the juxtaposition of road and river is relatively unusual, with only railings separating the river channel from pavement and busy road. The opposite (south) side of the river has a gently sloping bank and more generous riverside corridor with the path set closer to the level of the water in front of the supermarket. The riverside corridor is more constrained to the south where it is squeezed between industrial development on both sides of the river and the path is high above the level of the water.

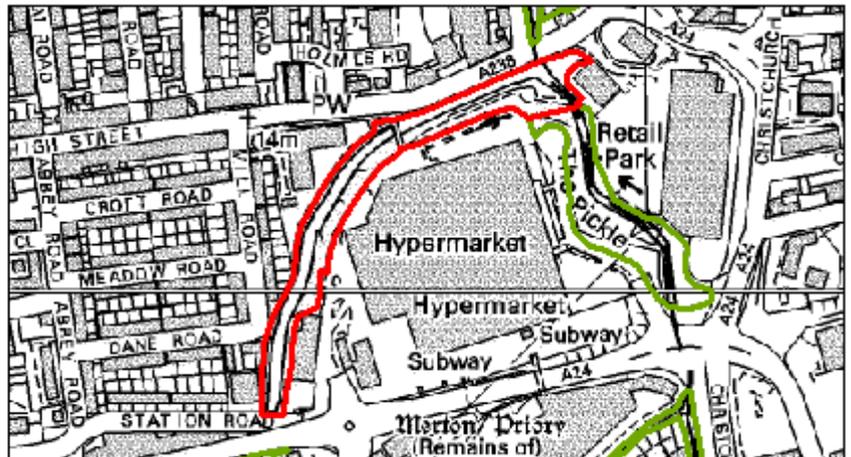


Photo6E1: Looking towards Merton High street and Colliers Wood from the site of the Morris printing works

Photo 6E2: Looking upstream along Merton High street opposite the large supermarket which dominates the area.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 24m 56.84s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 58.62s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 24m 59.34s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 50.89s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Industrial or commercial buildings back on to at least one side of the river corridor.

Differences from type :

The manner in which the design of the supermarket faces onto the river and uses it to make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

Options for Change:

- Bank restoration either through removal of the high concrete walling which constrains the channel and prevents the development of marginal vegetation, or
- The creation of lower level soil or gravel steps within the channel to help screen the concrete side and enable marginal plants to establish.

Wandle valley landscape character area 6F Lyon Road

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: This character area is divided into two sections of riverside with modern industrial/ commercial premises defining the boundary. The most southerly section runs from the car park for Deen city farm northwards to Windsor avenue. This is a relatively generous space with the Wandle trail also acting as access road for the city farm. The northern section runs past Merton Abbey to Merantun Way. In this section the trail follows the west bank. Pedestrian bridges provide access to the east bank, Merton Abbey and the only working mill. This is where the remaining parts of the former Liberty printing works have been converted to markets pubs and food outlets. There is a rich heritage to this area which has been largely obscured by recent developments. As is the case elsewhere, much of the river corridor in this character area is overhung by large electricity pylons and cables.</p>			
			
Photo 6F1: The northern part of the area holds Merton Abbey area of former mills & print work		Photo 6F 2: Looking north downstream along the access road to Deen city farm.	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 45.22s Longitude: W 0d 11m 1.77s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 24m 37.54s Longitude: W 0d 11m 4.45s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial or commercial buildings back on to at least one side of the river corridor • Relatively wide river corridor • Rich heritage which is largely hidden. 		
Differences from type :	The river is generally more accessible and less heavily constrained by piling and concrete walling.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank restoration of the northern section; either through removal of the high concrete walling which constrains the channel and prevents the development of marginal vegetation, or • The creation of lower level soil or gravel steps within the channel to help screen the concrete side and enable marginal plants to establish • Provide better access to the heritage features of Merton Abbey. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 6G Wates Way & Wandle Technology Park

Character type		Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: These two industrial sites lie north and south of Goat bridge in Mitcham. Wates Way is a very large industrial estate located on the east bank of the river, to the north of Goat bridge and Mill Green. This estate backs onto the eastern side of the river where there is a more generous width of riverbank than in many other similar locations. There is no access to or disturbance of the northern bank of the river here and consequently space at Watermeads has been designated as a local nature reserve. Water quality changes here as a result of the discharge from the Thames Water Beddington sewage treatment works. The Wandle technology park to the south of Goat bridge and Wandle trading estates are older and smaller estates which have grown piecemeal after the former corn mill at this site became redundant. The water quality and river bed and vegetation appear to be relatively healthy. The two industrial estates are relatively well hidden from the river corridor by mature trees.</p>				
				
Photo 6G1: Looking upstream with Bennetts Hole on the left.		Photo 6G2: Looking upstream from Goat bridge. Wandle trading estate is behind sign.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 23m 29.31s Longitude: W 0d 10m 11.96s		Photo position
				Latitude: N 51d 23m 12.28s Longitude: W 0d 9m 48.55s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial or commercial buildings back on to the east side of the river corridor • Relatively wide river corridor • River channel is wide and shallow with emergent vegetation on sides and few bank structures. 		
Differences from type :		The river corridor is wider and the boundaries of adjoining commercial sites are less obvious, largely hidden by bankside trees. Banks are generally less heavily constrained by piling and walling.		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coppicing and pollarding of waterside trees to allow more sunlight onto the water. 		

Wandle valley landscape character area 6H Restmor Way Hackbridge

Character type	Modern industrial backlands		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon

Description: Restmor Way is located on the east bank of the river to the south of Hackbridge road. The access road separates the industrial and commercial buildings from the river, which has a relatively natural profile at this point. The Wandle trail follows the opposite (west) bank at this point and there are views across to the Restmor way buildings on the opposite bank. The river channel contains a good mix of gravel beds and water plants including water crowfoot.



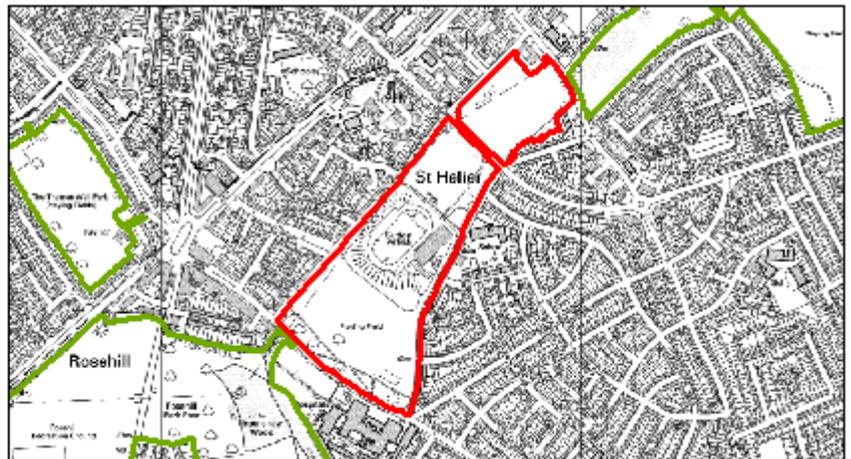
Photo6H1: Looking north east across the river to the Restmor way buildings and access road in foreground.



Photo 6H2: This is where river waters discharge from the Wilderness Island (River gardens) screen through two culverts into the river.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 35.63s
Longitude: W 0d 9m 32.12s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 22m 31.94s
Longitude: W 0d 9m 29.52s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Industrial or commercial buildings separated from the river corridor by access road
- Relatively natural channel profile
- Few trees on east bank.

Differences from type :

The river is separated from the industrial areas by the access road.

Options for Change:

- Planting of riverside trees on the east bank of the river
- Seek to ensure that any redevelopment of the industrial units will provide wider soft river corridor and access in the future.

12. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 7: NATURAL PARK AND COMMON LAND

12.1. Character type description

This character type could be considered as 'London countryside'. It appears to be semi-natural and almost rural in character, due to a combination of management and screening trees which hide the presence of adjacent buildings and urban development. Examples include parts of Mitcham Common, Beddington and Morden Hall Parks. The size and low key management of these areas are important. Distant views and the screening of suburban features around the perimeter give a real feeling of openness with a more rural character. Whilst all amenity areas are important at a local scale, these larger 'natural' open spaces have a much greater potential to offer the psychological benefits which research tells us are important for mental well-being.



Figure 28 Natural Park and common land adjoining the river at Morden Hall

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Large areas of open space with relatively open interior
- Frequently less heavily managed and more 'natural' character
- Edges and perimeter housing often hidden by trees
- Trees are often mature
- Often of historical interest or containing historical sites or earthworks.

12.2. Options for change

Subtle changes in management, by the development of new management plans, combined with the adoption of 'best practice' local community consultation, could help to ensure that these important areas demonstrate ways in which other smaller open spaces can be adapted to the 21st century demands on the Wandle Valley.

In future years much of the Wandle valley will need to make provision for a whole range of uses. Land areas will come under pressure to provide for more than just one use. For example, golf courses and sports fields will need to provide habitat for wildlife, shade for

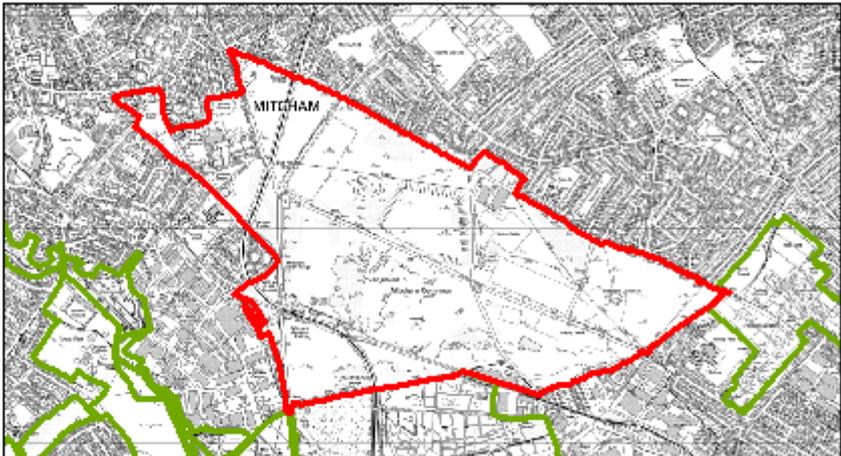
urban cooling and occasional storage for flood waters. Land will need to become multi-functional. This need not compromise the main land uses, indeed a wildlife rich shady golf course or sports field complex could be more attractive to users than an open bare grass area. Similarly natural parks can accommodate seasonal wetlands and occasional flooding which is a natural feature of the valley. The Natural park areas can therefore be used to both provide an example for other land managers, and help to restore signature features of the Wandle valley which have been lost.

12.3. Individual character areas Type 7: Natural Park and common land

Wandle valley landscape character area 7A Morden Hall Park

Character type		Natural park and common land			
Position in Catchment		Upper		Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Morden Hall Park is a 50 hectare parkland area which was donated to the National Trust by its former owner in the 1940's. The former deer park once extended to 250 hectares but parts have been developed in the 20th century. The major buildings have been leased out to commercial tenants, but the estate buildings in the core of the site which were associated with the Snuff Mill have been converted into visitor facilities and workshops. The park includes features of historic interest, formal winding tree avenues, ornamental trees, formal rose gardens and mown grass as well as more natural areas of rough grassland and wetlands. It is understood that the park was grazed by cattle up until the 1970's.</p>					
					
Photo 7A1: Mature ornamental & native trees help screen housing around the perimeter.			Photo 7A2: Area of grassland in the north of the park.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 24m 9.44s Longitude: W 0d 10m 59.48s		Photo position	
				Latitude: N 51d 24m 23.66s Longitude: W 0d 11m 20.23s	
					
Location plan			Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large area of parkland with relatively open interior spaces • Generally less frequently managed and more natural in character than other public spaces • Edges and perimeter housing often hidden by trees • Historic ornamental trees and other parkland features. 			
Differences from type :		Greater number of features of historic interest than other character areas in this type.			
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore re-introduction of grazing cattle to suitable areas possibly through co-operation with nearby city farm • Explore opportunities to remove hard concrete channel edges and create wash-lands through suitable areas of the park. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 7B Mitcham Common

Character type	Natural park and common land		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon
<p>Description: Mitcham Common is a 182 hectare area of common land which is managed by a group of conservators in association with the three boroughs which overlap its boundaries. In addition to a golf course which occupies the centre of the common, there are various habitats ranging from ponds to woodland heath and acid grassland. A number of areas of open space about the common and these have been included within this character area. They include Cranmer Green, Commonsides East and Willow Lane. Trees help to screen perimeter buildings and create the impression of a tranquil rural open space in locations where traffic noise from the busy roads crossing the common cannot be heard. Many parts of the common have either been dug for gravel or subject to tipping in the past, which has led to the relatively uneven topography in some areas. The Common has some contiguity with Mill Green and Goat Road, close to the River Wandle.</p>			
			
Photo7B1: South east of the Mill House ecology centre		Photo 7B 2: Looking across to the common from Mill Green.	
Photo position	Latitude: N51d 23m 45.63s Longitude: W 0d 08m 40.36s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 23m 14.12s Longitude: W 0d 9m 34.13s
			
Location plan		Extent of area	
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large area of land with relatively open interior spaces • Generally less frequently managed and more natural in character than other public spaces • Edges & perimeter housing often hidden by trees giving rural effect. 		
Differences from type :	Typical of this character type.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore re-introduction of grazing cattle to suitable areas as a way of diversifying structure of grassland. 		

13. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 8: CEMETERIES

13.1. Character type description

Cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds are an important part of the urban landscape, with their significant memorial role. The cemeteries in the Wandle valley vary from the small scale historic burial grounds (such as the old burial ground in Wandsworth) through to the more extensive and modern cemeteries such as Lambeth, Croydon and London Road Cemetery Colliers Wood. The latter are composed of straight tarmac paths and generally straight lines of memorial stones, with occasional ornamental trees among the extensive areas of grass.



Figure 29: Typical Cemetery in the valley at Wandsworth

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Regular pattern of gravestones and memorials
- Regular pattern of straight tarmac paths
- Occasional ornamental trees
- Closely mown and organised landscape with extensive grassland
- Perimeter buildings visible throughout.
- Characteristic Edwardian railings and brick/stone pillars.

13.2. Options for change

These areas are valuable urban space which have the potential to offer more value for wildlife, habitat, and public benefit by being managed as a multi-functional landscape. Where opportunities exist it would be desirable to set space aside for planting native trees such as willow poplar and alder adjoining the river, whilst other species such as small leaved lime could be used in a more formal manner within the cemetery. Reduction in the intensity of management may also be possible, if not all of the cemetery needs to be closely mown. Older parts could be less intensively managed with an annual 'hay' cut to allow wild flowers to establish rather than a uniform approach being taken in all areas.

13.3. Individual character areas Type 8: Cemeteries

Wandle valley landscape character area 8A Lambeth cemetery

Character type	Cemetery		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: Lambeth cemetery is located on the east side of the river, close to the river Graveney and the Waterside Way Industrial estate. It was established in the mid Victorian era and extended in the 1870's to its current area of some 16.5 hectares. The northern section is now a crematorium, but the majority of the southern section is densely packed with graves on a grid layout. The main eastern perimeter fronting onto Blackshaw road is typically Victorian with steel railings set into a low wall with blue brick copings and brick pillars. This boundary is also defined by a line of mature horse chestnut and lime trees. There are other trees scattered through the cemetery and along the rear boundary to Waterside Way.



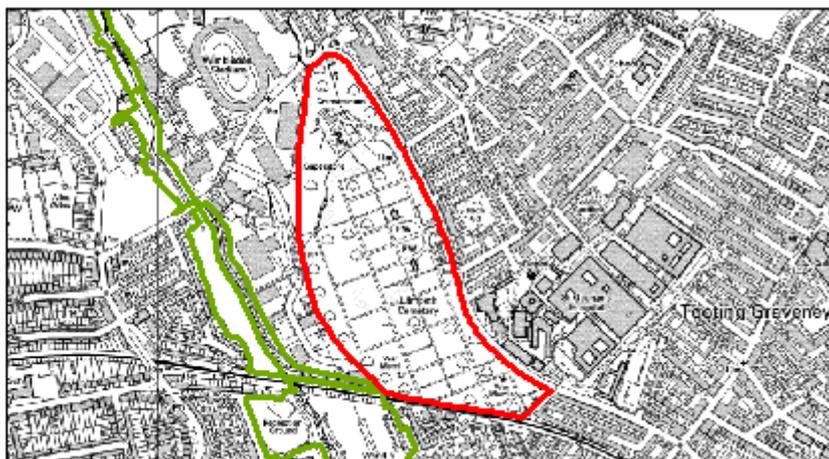
Photo 8A1: There are some mature internal trees within the older part of the cemetery.



Photo 8A 2: Boundary trees and Victorian railings along Blackshaw road.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 25m 46.60s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 53.13s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 25m 46.64s
Longitude: W 0d 10m 53.32s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Regular pattern of gravestones and memorials
- Regular pattern of straight tarmac paths
- Occasional ornamental trees
- Closely mown and organised landscape
- Perimeter buildings visible throughout.

Differences from type

Typical of the type

Options for Change:

- Explore options for changing the level of management around the eastern perimeter
- Consider planting more trees.

Wandle valley landscape character area 8B Mitcham Road Cemetery Croydon

Character type	Cemetery		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: Mitcham road (formerly Croydon) cemetery is located at the eastern end of Mitcham Common and was originally established in 1897. It was enlarged in the 1930s, when a crematorium and associated formal gardens were added. The layout is a simple grid of paths with some avenues of limes and other ornamental trees. There are two main entrances; to the crematorium from Thornton road, and Mitcham road. Both entrances have gateways with semi-circular walled forecourts defined by brick plinth walls stone copings and steel railings above. Brick piers support the railings at regular intervals. Trees help screen the interiors of the cemetery from outside.



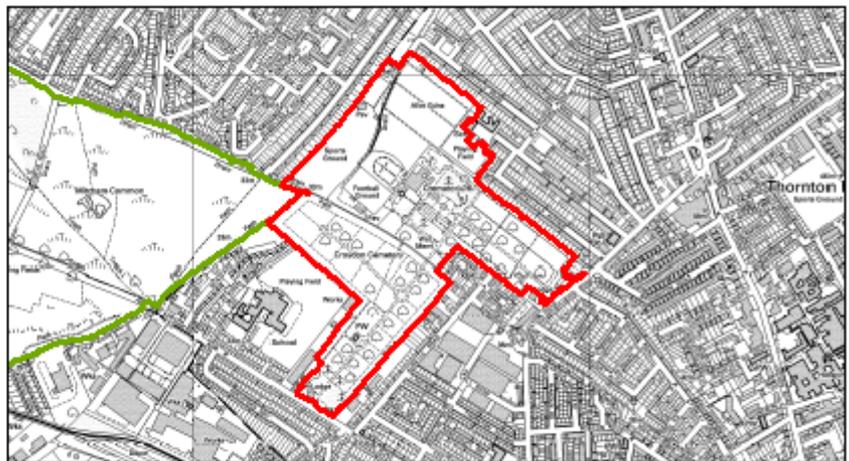
Photo 8B1: Graves are generally laid out in a dense geometric pattern.



Photo 8B 2: Distinctive piers and railings at entrances.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 23m 29.78s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 16.73s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 23m 19.45s
Longitude: W 0d 7m 43.45s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Formal entrances with straight tarmac roads bordered by trees, hedges and flower beds
- Organised landscape with regular pattern of gravestones, memorials, paths and screening hedges
- Occasional ornamental trees
- Closely mown grass between memorials and in remembrance garden.
- Perimeter buildings visible throughout.

Differences from type:

Typical of the type

Options for Change:

- Explore options for changing the level of management around the perimeter zones
- Consider planting more trees.

Wandle valley landscape character area 8C Bandonhill cemetery

Character type	Cemetery		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: Bandonhill cemetery is located north of the railway line between Plough Lane and Queenswood Avenue in Wallington. The cemetery was established in 1900 with a chapel and 14,000 burial spaces. The formal landscape extends over 6.25 hectares. The layout is a simple grid of tarmac roads and paths with some ornamental trees. Memorials are organised to a rectilinear pattern with mown grass in between. The boundary is fenced with intermittent mature trees. A small belt of mature poplars along the boundary fence line separates the cemetery from the Bandonhill allotments in the west



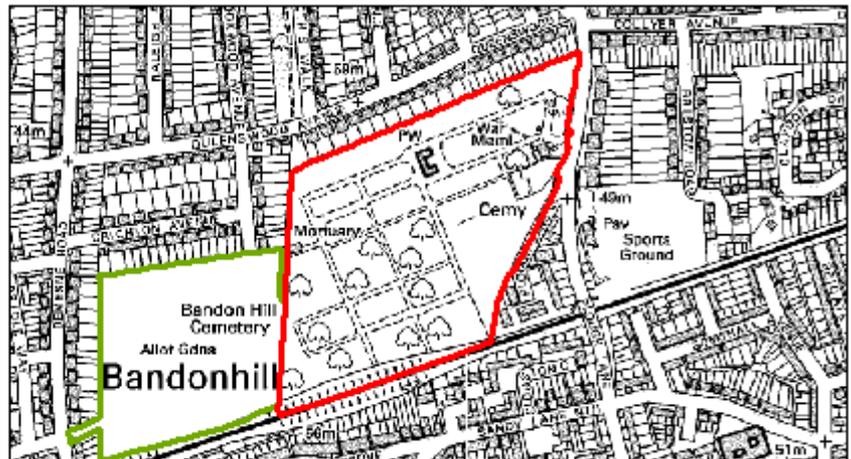
Photo 8C1: The avenue of Cherry trees is a feature of the cemetery.



Photo 8C 2: There are some mature trees in the older part of the cemetery.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 21m 52.40s
Longitude: W 0d 8m 6.98s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 21m 52.23s
Longitude: W 0d 8m 12.71s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Formal grid layout with tarmac roads and rectilinear plots
- Organised landscape with regular pattern of gravestones, memorials and paths
- Avenue of cherry trees as a feature
- Occasional mature trees
- Closely mown grass between memorials
- Perimeter buildings visible throughout.

Differences from type:

Typical of the type.

Options for Change:

- Explore options for tree planting and alternative grassland management around the boundaries.

Wandle valley landscape character area 8D Old Burial Ground Wandsworth

Character type	Cemetery		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: The Old Burial Ground is located on the east side of Garrett Lane, and to the north of a supermarket, a short distance from the culverted river Wandle under the Southfields shopping centre. The burial ground dates from the mid-19th century and was closed for burials in the 1930's. The burial ground is oriented east- west with a central path at the western end abutting Garratt Lane. At the junction there is a radial paving and planting feature which fronts onto Garrett Lane. There is a scattering of mature trees within the old burial ground and more recent ornamental planting as part of the works joining the central path to Garratt Lane. Most gravestones have been removed to create an open amenity area.

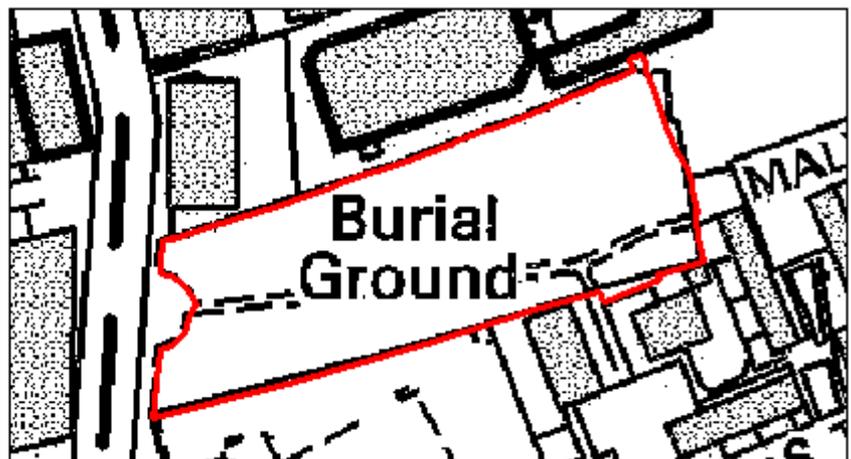


Photo 8A1: Garratt Lane interface; the radial planting and paving area.

Photo 8A: 2: Central path through burial ground supermarket boundary wall on right.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 27m 18.99s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 33.09s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 27m 19.82s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 32.28s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular pattern of gravestones and memorials • Regular pattern of straight tarmac paths • Occasional ornamental trees • Closely mown and organised landscape. • Perimeter buildings visible throughout.
Differences from type :	Most gravestones removed to provide open amenity space.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for changing the level of management around the perimeter.

14. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 9: NATURE CONSERVATION AREAS

14.1. Character type description

The Wandle valley has a number of small nature conservation areas some of which are protected through the land-use planning system and others through designation as Local Nature Reserves. They are often carefully managed by local conservation groups. There are also other small areas which have become important for nature conservation through non-intervention or non-intrusive management which are currently not protected. These can appear chaotic with fallen trees, willow scrub and overgrown bushes. There is great potential for the creation of new semi natural habitats throughout the Wandle valley to provide links and connections that would help wildlife.



Figure 30 Nature conservation areas adjoining the river at Morden Hall

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Limited access
- Often incorporate willow woodland
- Can appear unmanaged
- Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value.

14.2. Options for change

Management plans for nature conservation areas should be prepared after thorough local consultation. Wherever possible, and subject to the needs of legally protected species, these should permit some access for educational purpose. Management should be sympathetic to the needs of wildlife and encourage a diverse flora and fauna. In certain areas grazing should be considered as an option if it is feasible and would help to improve the diversity of the habitat.

Many of these areas contain plants which were once a common feature of this part of London, which have become rarer as a result of the urbanisation of the valley. Plants

associated with the river, including wetland and aquatic plants are among these signature species which were once common in the valley.

Trees include the native Black Poplar, *Populus nigra ssp betulifolia* (NB hybrid poplars have been planted in the valley during the last 50 years) and pollarded Crack Willows *Salix fragilis*. Water plants include the chalk stream Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus penicillatus var. calcareous* whilst associated wetland plants include water mint *Mentha aquatica*, Common Reed *Phragmites australis* Reed mace *Typha latifolia* and the Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris*.

Signature birds and mammals include the kingfisher, heron and water vole, whilst the brown trout and various dragon and damsel flies are also key species associated with the river.

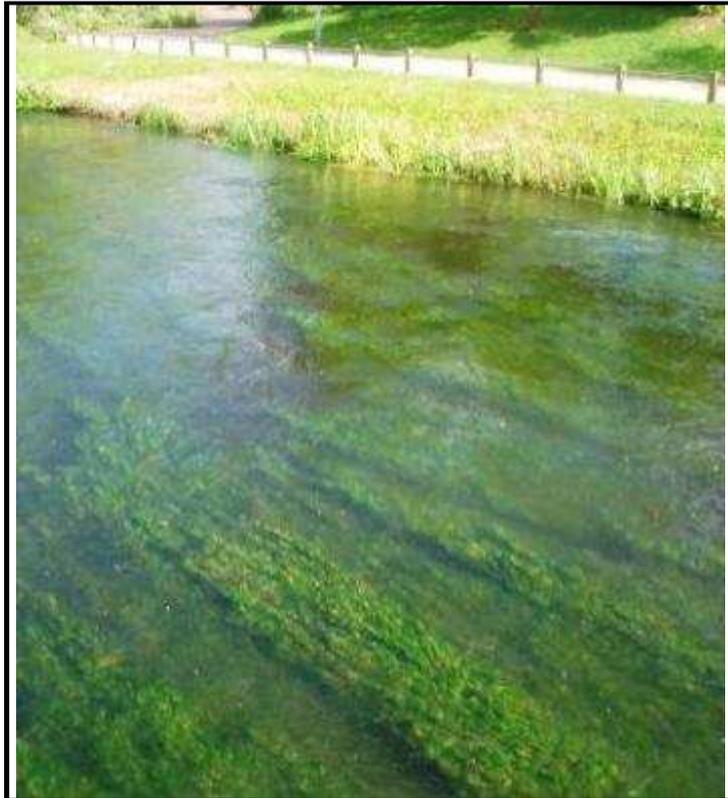


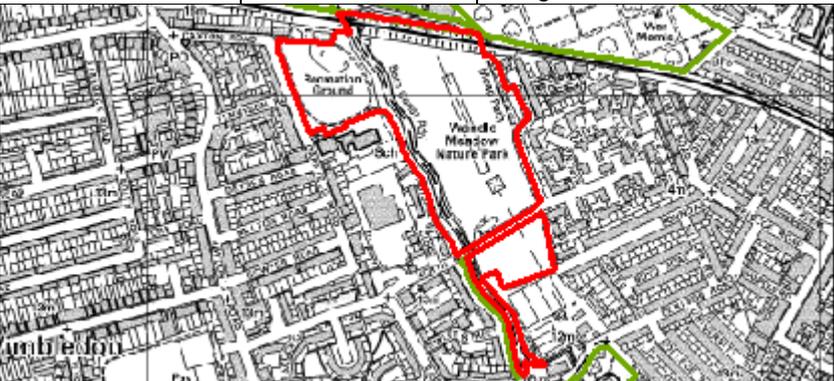
Figure 31. Water Crowfoot within the river helps add variety to the habitat in the channel and is a key element of the natural signature of the river valley.

The river provides the connection and mechanism to enable these plants and animals to spread along the valley if suitable areas are made available for nature. Ensuring that these spaces are made available and suitably managed, will help to restore the natural signature of the Wandle valley and help to reinstate the lost natural character of the landscape.

Interpretation of some of the nature conservation areas is highly desirable and offers the opportunity for the promotion of the Wandle Valley Regional Park, and its work to restore the natural signature of the valley. Existing local interest buildings could provide opportunities for interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage of the valley to the wider public. Opportunities to encourage local people, schools and voluntary groups to visit and appreciate these natural areas should also be created by running programmes of events including, walks, talks and volunteering tasks.

14.3. Individual character areas Type 9: Nature conservation areas

Wandle valley landscape character area 9A Wandle Meadow Nature Park

Character type		Nature conservation areas			
Position in Catchment		Upper		Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle		Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: Wandle Meadow Nature park occupies the site of a former water treatment works and was derelict between 1970 and 1993 when a derelict land grant funded the removal of above ground structures and filling of underground tanks. The habitats which had developed were largely retained and in the period since the park was opened the area has become an established nature reserve with general public access. The river runs along the west side of the park and is now quite heavily overgrown, with crack willows in particular starting to split and fall over. Perimeter vegetation helps to conceal the housing around the perimeter, although the overhead pylons, and North road dominate the centre of the site. The owners of neighbouring housing seems to have an ambivalent attitude to the park, a footbridge across the river from new housing in Bewley street remains incomplete with no access to the ground from the deck!</p>					
					
Photo 9A1: Looking north west across the Park from the Chaucer Way entrance.			Photo 9A 2: The concrete flood wall and piled bank could probably be dispensed with.		
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 25m 24.26s Longitude: W 0d 10m 53.15s		Photo position	
				Latitude: N 51d 25m 22.79s Longitude: W 0d 10m 59.03s	
					
Location plan			Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of woodland trees around the perimeter and adjoining the river • Can appear unmanaged • Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value • Relic structures from past use as sewage works. 			
Differences from type :		Typical of the type.			
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for removing barriers to bank access and re-profiling the banks to allow shallow margins to develop • Explore allowing flood waters to spill into the park in to washland areas • Implement a programme of pollarding willow trees • Complete the incomplete footbridge link to Bewley St. • Provide enhanced interpretation facilities • Explore opportunities to enlarge the park area by extending south. 			

Wandle valley landscape character area 9B Bunces Meadow

Character type	Nature conservation areas		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton branch
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton

Description: An island of land to the south of Phipps Bridge opposite Deen City farm, Bunces Meadow is the name of the meadow now occupied by the farm, however the area of open space also includes the two channels of the river (one is known as Ruckers Cut) and the remains of various mills and a calico bleaching ground which was covered over by filling in the 1950's. The area is crossed by pylons and cables and there are a number of mature willow trees which are starting to split apart. Water quality in the river is generally good at this point, but in stream vegetation tends to cover the river when flows are low.

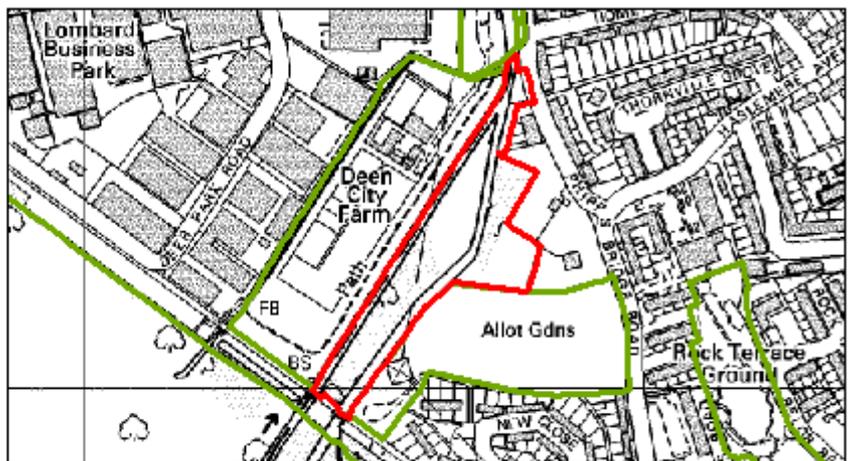


Photo 9B1: looking north east across the two channels

Photo 9B 2: looking east towards the Phipps Bridge estate.

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 25.31s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 9.00s

Photo position Latitude: N 51d 24m 25.87s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 9.05s



Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:

- Range of often self-sown willow trees
- Pylons and tall housing blocks visible
- Can appear unmanaged
- Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value.

Differences from type :

Typical of the type

Options for Change:

- Explore options for re-profiling the banks to allow shallow margins to develop
- Implement a programme of pollarding willow trees
- Undertake periodic management on central island and in channel.

Wandle valley landscape character area 9C Morden Hall Park Wetland

Character type	Nature conservation areas		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton branch
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
			Croydon

Description: This island of woodland is located in the south west corner of Morden Hall park, and is located to the west of the main river channel, and separated from Morden road by a mill leat from Ravensbury Mill. The woodland is hidden from view by timber fencing on the south and west sides and includes a heronry. It has been managed as a wildlife sanctuary since the late 19th century.

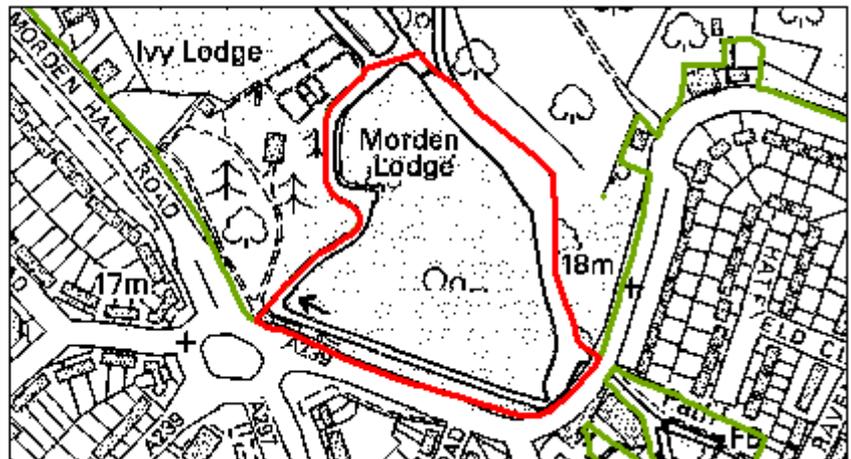


Photo 9C1: Looking upriver towards Ravensbury, conservation area to right.

Photo 9C2: Looking across the river to the conservation area.

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 24m 0.46s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 5.06s

Photo position
Latitude: N 51d 24m 1.48s
Longitude: W 0d 11m 5.47s

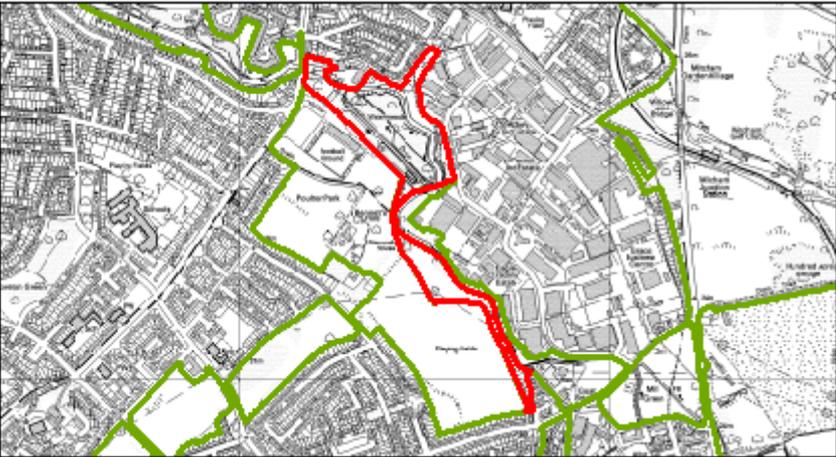


Location plan

Extent of area

Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of often self-sown willow trees • Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value.
Differences from type :	More heavily wooded with more mature trees than the type.
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake periodic management, such as pollarding of willows.

Wandle valley landscape character area 9D Watermeads and Bennetts Hole

Character type		Nature conservation areas					
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower			
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton			
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton			
<p>Description: Watermeads is an area of wetland which used to be flooded as part of the management of the river to maintain a head of water for the mills downstream. It was bought by the River Wandle open spaces committee in 1913 and is now under the ownership of the National Trust. Access is heavily restricted and it is managed as a wildlife sanctuary and designated as a site of metropolitan importance for nature along with Bennetts Hole on the south side of the river. The site has provided a suitable habitat for recent efforts to re-introduce water voles to the river by London Wildlife Trust. Bennetts Hole is accessible from the Wandle trail which runs along the west bank of the river at this point. These two site are both located just downstream of the outlet from Beddington sewage works, which joins the river below Goat Bridge.</p>							
							
Photo 9D1: looking upstream towards the Watermeads bank from the west.		Photo 9D 2: Looking upstream with Watermeads on left Bennetts Hole on right.					
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 23m 32.17s Longitude: W 0d 10m 9.33s		Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 23m 29.31s Longitude: W 0d 10m 11.96s	
							
Location plan		Extent of area					
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of often self-sown willow trees • Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value • Trees screen the riverside from built development beyond the river corridor. 					
Differences from type :		Banks are generally soft and water levels are relatively high compared to other parts of the river.					
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake periodic management to remove invasive plants such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed • Maintain areas of open grassland by controlling willow scrub. 					

Wandle valley landscape character area 9E Wilderness Island

Character type		Nature conservation areas		
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton
<p>Description: Wilderness Island is located at the junction of the Croydon and Carshalton Branches of the river, and lies on a peninsula of land which is severed by a railway embankment. The site is managed by London Wildlife trust and there is free access to the reserve across a pedestrian bridge from River Gardens. Perimeter railings and overgrown banks prevent access or views of the river at this point, which is heavily overgrown. By contrast at the most southerly end of the 'island' the river is visible and there are no railings.</p>				
				
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 22m 22.30s Longitude: W 0d 9m 30.76s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 23.96s Longitude: W 0d 9m 32.49s
				
Location plan		Extent of area		
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of often self-sown willow trees • Diverse vegetation with associated biodiversity value • Trees screen the riverside from built development beyond the river corridor. 		
Differences from type :		Banks are generally soft and water levels are relatively high compared to other parts of the river.		
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake periodic management to remove invasive plants such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed • Maintain areas of open grassland by controlling willow scrub • Consider the removal of railings and opening up of views into the river channel from River Gardens. 		

15. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 10:TIDAL THAMES

15.1. Character type description

A small section of the Wandle valley at its confluence with the Thames is tidal below a weir located in The Causeway in Wandsworth.

The area is characterised by the tidal mud banks at low tide and the daily ebb and flow of the river. This part of the valley was once a small port and the beginning of the Surrey iron railway, the horse drawn tramway which once reached as far as Merstham. The Wandle at this point is still industrial in character with large industrial sheds/ and superstores and waste transfer buildings dominating the surrounding area.

The Thames path crosses the river at this point and a series of improvements have been undertaken to create associated sitting areas.

The mud and gravels of the river and the adjoining gravel terraces are an important repository of archaeological material. A hoard of Bronze artefacts was discovered here and is now located in the British Museum, it has been suggested that this may have been an offering to a river god.



Figure 32: Tidal Thames adjoining the river at Wandsworth at low tide

The key characteristics of this type are:

- Tidal creek which dries with the tide
- The high fluctuations in water level mean that massive depths of steel camp shedding are exposed at low tide
- Long distance views out across the Thames
- Large scale modern industrial buildings dominate
- Limited hard public space.
- Few riverside trees
- The presence of relics of industrial heritage.

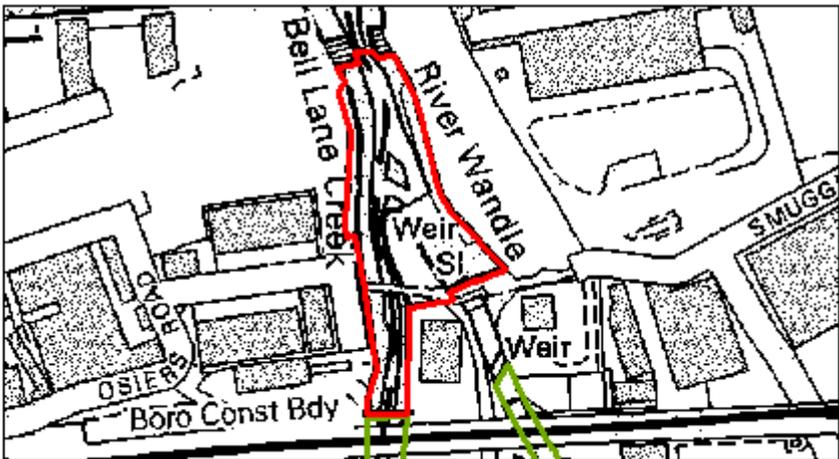
15.2. Options for change

Redevelopment of sites adjoining the river is currently taking place, and offer opportunities for suitable hard and soft landscape to be established next to the river. Whilst the presence of railway embankments, busy roads and utilities mean that this will always be a gritty hard landscape, suitable hard landscape treatment and interpretation of the rich industrial heritage of this particular area could enhance the industrial character of this particular landscape area.

Suitable treatments may be limited to the provision of interpretation panels adjoining the river and key features such as the three former corn mill sites. The creation of riverside sitting areas for local people where space permits, and the planting of pollard Willows or Alders and Poplars.

15.3. Individual character areas Type 10: Tidal Thames

Wandle valley landscape character area 10A Smugglers Way

Character type		Tidal Thames			
Position in Catchment		Upper	Middle	Lower	
River Branch		Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton	
London Borough		Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton	Croydon
<p>Description: The river meets the tidal Thames near to Smugglers Way, a relatively new road which provides access to a series of modern industrial units and the Borough waste transfer facilities, where refuse is loaded onto river barges. The environment is a stark contrast to the upper and middle reaches of the river; and is dominated by large utilitarian buildings and high security fencing. The river is some distance below ground level and highly constrained by concrete and steel</p>					
					
Photo 10A1: Looking upstream, the river is situated behind the black railings.		Photo 10A2 :Looking upstream towards the weir which separates tidal and freshwater river			
Photo position		Latitude: N 51d 27m 41.02s Longitude: W 0d 11m 37.71s		Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 27m 41.02s Longitude: W 0d 11m 41.06s
					
Location plan		Extent of area			
Key characteristics:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidal creek which dries with the tide • Long distance views across the Thames • Large scale industrial buildings dominate • Limited areas of hard public space • Tidal fluctuations in water level expose massive depths of steel sheet piling at low water • Few riverside trees • Some relics of industrial heritage. 			
Differences from type:		Typical of type.			
Options for Change:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any future redevelopment proposals provide soft space and public realm enhancements associated with the river. 			

16. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE 11: DISTURBED AND RESTORED LAND

16.1. Character type description

The area between Beddington Park and Mitcham Common is owned by Thames Water. As a result of changes in the operational area required for the sewage works, surplus land has been used for gravel extraction over the last twenty years. This area was approved for landfilling on appeal, and is now being restored by phased land-filling in accordance with a master-plan which is due for completion in 2023. Sutton Borough Council has approved the restoration scheme to convert this area into a *Wandle Valley Country Park*. Other existing uses within this area include the Beddington sewage treatment works, and associated sludge beds, as well as completed and restored former landfill sites.

At present the area is characterised by a combination of security fences and tipping, embankments, screen woodland vegetation and landfill mounds. The sludge lagoons are below the general ground level and therefore not visible, but the smells are apparent. The central area is also dominated by the power lines which march across the landscape from the former Croydon power station the planned restoration scheme restores the land-filled area as a combination of grassed mounding and lakes, with public access where it is compatible with the primary aim of nature conservation.

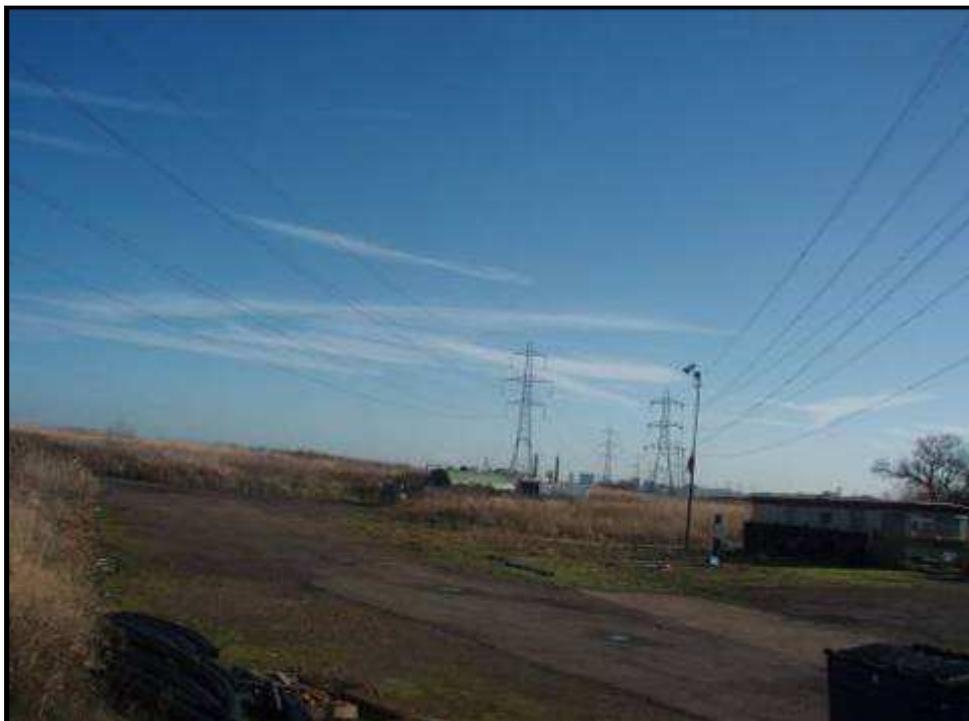


Figure 33: Disturbed and restored land at Beddington

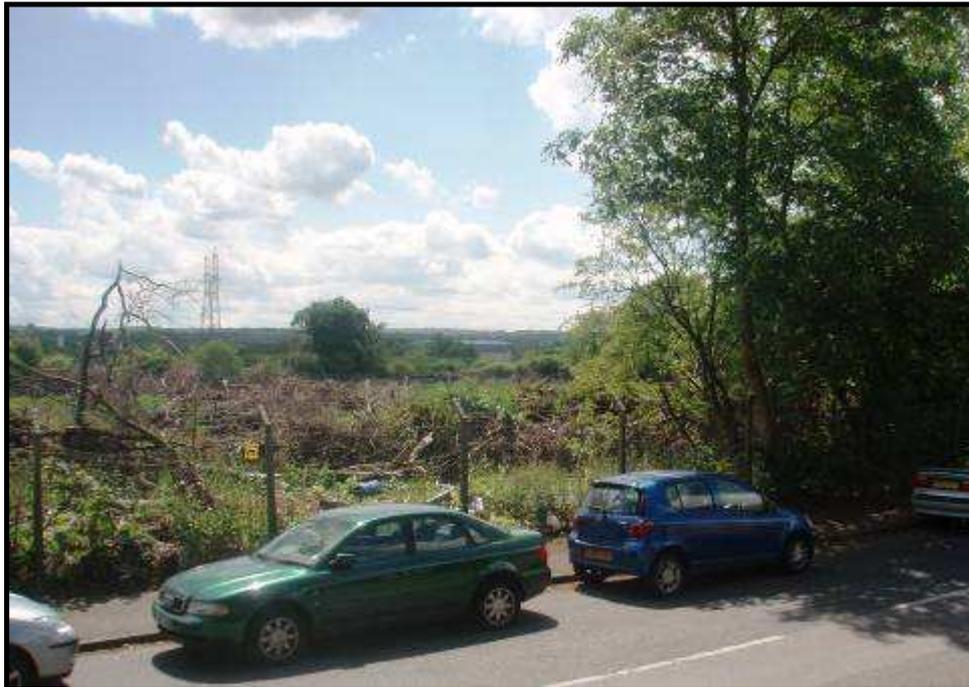


Figure 34: view from Beddington lane

The key characteristics of this type are:

- A disturbed landscape of old and current mineral working.
- Mounding areas formed as a result of landfilling
- Central area dominated by electricity pylons
- Subdivided by railways and haul roads
- Fringing woodland and cycle routes
- Filter beds and structures associated with sewage works
- Tall security fencing
- Derelict and abandoned character abutting Beddington lane.

16.2. Options for change

This landscape is currently subject to a period of phased filling and restoration which will continue for the next 15 years. Certain peripheral areas will remain unchanged however and the current disturbed landscape in the central area will be handed over in a phased manner to a charitable trust with an endowment, with lakes on the western boundary being the first area to be completed.

16.3. Individual character areas Type 11: Disturbed and restored land

Wandle valley landscape character area 11A Beddington Farmlands

Character type	Disturbed and restored land		
Position in Catchment	Upper	Middle	Lower
River Branch	Main river Wandle	Croydon Branch	Carshalton
London Borough	Wandsworth	Merton	Sutton Croydon
<p>Description: The current Beddington Farmlands area, (which is due to become part of a Wandle Valley Country Park) is currently part of the Thames Water Beddington Sewage works site which is subject to mineral working and land filling under a long term planning agreement. The master-plan which is due to be completed by 2023, envisages restoration to a series of grassed mounds and lakes which act as balancing ponds. At present the area is relatively down at heel in appearance due to the dereliction around the perimeter of the site, the dominant electricity pylons, and the incomplete nature of the restoration.</p>			
			
Photo 11A1: Looking across the new lakes towards Croydon		Photo 11A2: Looking towards the mounds on the farmlands from near Carew Manor	
Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 38.17s Longitude: W 0d 9m 13.48s	Photo position	Latitude: N 51d 22m 24.46s Longitude: W 0d 8m 25.61s
			
Location plan Extent of area			
Key characteristics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disturbed landscape of old and current mineral workings • Unnatural mounding areas resulting from land-filling • Central area subdivided by railways and haul routes. • Fringing woodlands and cycle routes • Filter beds and structures associated with sewage works • Tall and unattractive perimeter security fencing. 		
Differences from type:	Typical of type.		
Options for Change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the new perimeter fencing to the completed country park is of a high quality • Remove the hardware associated with mineral working and land-filing unless it has heritage value. 		

16.4. Mapping of landscape character areas

The mapping of individual character areas has been undertaken using a geographic information system (GIS) and detailed 1:10000 scale map base. This has meant that character area boundaries follow individual features such as the edge of the river channel or a fenced boundary. In some cases this means that the landscape character area boundary does not follow the boundary of the land use type, but follows the appropriate feature which in our views defines the edge of the character area.

16.5. Designed landscape areas

The Wandle valley has a rich cultural heritage which includes designed landscapes from the Tudor period to the present day. This includes the deer parks from the Tudor period at Beddington and Morden Hall as well as 17th, 18th and 19th century landscapes associated with former mansions such as Stone Court, the Grove, and The Grange.

16.6. Historic landscape features

There are a number of other historic features within the valley which are less grand but of equal importance to the character of the area. These are features which have remained, often in spite of the development of the area. These are areas where for example medieval boundary hedges were used to subdivide terraced housing at Colliers Wood, former water cress beds which have now been covered by industrial units, ancient paths and Roman roads, as well as lanes often named after a river, wetland or long lost plant. There are a number of mill lanes for example which sometimes reflect the produce of the mill such as Copper Mill lane, or former bridges which have given their name to a whole area such as Hack Bridge.

16.7. Identity, and perception of the valley by local people

An informed sample of the local residents were asked to offer their suggestions on what they considered to be the most important features of the valley landscape. Not surprisingly the river itself is considered to be both one of the most important features and one of the favourites. Fishermen recognise the water quality and flow characteristics of the river as a chalk stream, and the associated shallows and water crowfoot are still present in spite of the past history of mill and flood management in the stream.

Historical features which are or could be present hark back to the natural landscape character of the post medieval landscape before the urbanisation of the lower catchment during the last 150 years include :

- Clean spring water,
- grazing animals
- trout / fish other wildlife
- shallow upper winterbournes through open grass fields
- water cress
- reeds fringing a winding channel,
- winding river in its middle reaches where the river becomes a boundary and is tree lined with willows and poplars
- lower reaches with wider floodplain, meandering course and fringing wetlands
- Osier beds for baskets
- Cricket bat willows
- Pollarding of willows

PART 3: A LANDSCAPE VISION OF THE WANDLE VALLEY

The third part of the landscape character assessment explores how the landscape and open spaces, (the 'green infrastructure'), within the valley could change and be adapted to provide more opportunities and benefits (better 'ecosystem services') to the area in the future.

The following sections consider how it is possible to mitigate climate change, adapt the water environment, improve the natural environment and create more recreational opportunities as part of a sustainable landscape vision for the valley, which recognises existing cultural patterns and sense of place.

The final section identifies the natural signature of the Wandle valley showing how existing natural features which contribute to the local identity of the valley should be protected and restored. Recommendations for the reinstatement of other features which were once part of the more natural landscape are also suggested to enhance the local character of the area and reinforce the natural signature.

It ends with a vision which illustrates ways in which these ideas could be implemented throughout the length of the valley.



Figure 35: Parts of the river have a more natural character.

17. LANDSCAPE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Wandle valley is an important part of the green infrastructure of London. The open spaces and natural areas of the valley link the Thames to the suburbs and the Surrey hills. The green space network provides health, wellbeing and community benefits and will play an increasingly important role in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The green-space network of the valley offer opportunities to adapt to climate change by:

- Improving flood management and water treatment, creating wetlands to help store water, slow down run off and reduce pollution.
- Reducing flooding by changing hard surfaces to permeable surfaces to slow and reduce storm water run off
- Carbon sequestration through creating woodlands and wetlands
- Reducing the urban heat Island effect by planting trees and creating new water bodies
- Opening up covered rivers and creating more natural channels to enrich the landscape of the river corridor.
- Investigating the rivers potential for micro hydro power generation given its past history of power generation.
- Providing communities with better access to nature and tranquillity
- Providing people with walking and cycling options encouraging a healthy lifestyle.
- Encouraging local production of food and associated natural products.
- Strengthening the community's link with the environment, its sense of place and natural signature.

Adapting the green infrastructure can be undertaken in ways which maintain and re-establish the 'natural signature' of the valley landscape. In the process the natural identity of the river valley can be restored and reinforced

The future development of the Wandle Valley landscape will therefore depend on a clear vision, effective management and implementation of a strategy to realise the multifunctional benefits of the area to achieve greater levels of sustainability.

17.1. Flood Management

Climate change is likely to lead to more extreme rainfall and greater storm surges through the catchment. The river drains surface water from the catchment to the Thames at Wandsworth. As the catchment has become more urbanised, less water has been able to infiltrate into the soils and a greater proportion of rainfall ends up in the surface water system. Whilst much of the lower catchment consists of relatively impermeable clay soils, these still help to store some water before runoff occurs. Roofs, roads and hard paved areas shed storm water into the drainage system immediately causing sudden surges of water down the river. These surges wash dirt oil and other chemicals through surface water drains to the river. The Environment Agency and local authorities are actively promoting and requiring the techniques of *Source Control* and *Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS)* to be applied within new developments to reduce any resulting additional problems.

Mitigating the problems caused by existing hard surfaces would also help reduce run off. At the local scale this would include retrospective installation of features to supplement or replace traditional piped drainage systems. These include:

- Green roofs (which store and slowly release rainfall falling on these areas)
- Permeable paving surfaces which permit rainfall to infiltrate the soil
- Infiltration trenches and swales which both store and infiltrate the first surges of water into the drainage system
- Soak-aways to feed water back into the water table.

All of these mechanisms put water back into contact with soil, which helps to buffer the surges of storm water down the catchment, and allow soil based microbes to oxygenate and clean contaminants from the water.

This process could happen on a larger scale if wetlands were constructed along the edges of the river to help soak up storm surges.

17.2. Wetlands

The river Wandle is fed by springs where groundwater from the chalk aquifer of the North Downs issue to the surface. As a result of changing levels of abstraction from the aquifer, the quantities of water reaching the river via the source springs has declined as water demand has grown. The springs in Carshalton Park dried up many years ago due to abstraction levels. At present low flows in the Carshalton branch are made up by the distribution company once levels drop to a minimum.



Figure 36: The canal in Carshalton Park which fed the ponds via the High street.



Figure 37: The dry river channel from Carshalton Park next to the High Street

An increase in the demand for water could increase periods of low flow within the river. Adequate quantities of clean water are clearly critical to the health and landscape value of the river and all of the associated wildlife. The construction and flooding of wetland areas for water storage would help cushion the peaks and troughs of flow by absorbing peak flows and releasing water slowly during lower flow periods.

Wetlands can also provide natural water treatment to help improve the quality of water in the river. Natural processes within the river such as aeration / oxygenation at the water surface, (which is particularly effective in shallow riffle beds) and exposure to sunlight help to naturally cleanse water. Water plants, also help to oxygenate the river, and remove nitrates and other pollutants if they are present. Reed beds are particularly effective at helping to cleanse water, through a combination of bacterial action on the root surfaces and the plants removing nitrates for growth.



Figure 38: Wetlands and associated plants such as marsh marigold were once a feature of the wetlands in the valley which have now been lost.

Construction of wetland areas whether reedbeds, willow, marsh or wet meadow, could be a key element in the process of the adaptation of the valley landscape to climate change

17.3. Sequestration of carbon, and tree planting

An increase in woodland and trees within the open spaces along the Wandle Valley will help with the sequestration (locking up) of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Trees also help to provide shelter from wind, shade and a more pleasant environment during prolonged heat-waves. The use of appropriate traditional riverside trees such as Willow Alder and Poplar will also help to restore the natural signature of the valley.

17.4. Urban cooling

Pavements and buildings reflect and store heat during hot weather raising the temperature of urban areas and making outside spaces uncomfortable. Trees and vegetation can help cool the air and provide welcome shade during hot weather and reduce this urban heat island effect. In periods of drought and extreme heat, trees and vegetation can only help to mitigate the heat island effect if consideration has been given to the storage of irrigation water for these extreme events. The storage of winter rainfall in wetlands or artificial storage

tanks can help towards achieving summer cooling. The presence of the river and other water bodies can also add to the cooling effect, and provide a focal point for external urban spaces.

Rising temperatures will tend to encourage new uses for external space, with well-designed areas with water and shade becoming popular picnic and drinking spaces. As a result of the history of the Wandle being viewed as an industrial river, there are currently very few locations where riverside pubs or cafes occur next to the river. Changing climate may well encourage us to spend more time sitting, eating and drinking in the parks and open spaces close to the river. New development along the river could take opportunities to provide spaces where people congregate.

17.5. Quality of life and natural landscape

There is increasing evidence that contact with 'nature' in the urban environment is good for both physical and mental health. Natural views – of elements such as trees and lakes – promote a drop in blood pressure and are shown to reduce feelings of stress.

The financial value of natural land within the city is also well documented by a series of studies, which show that quality of life is important and that companies relocate to areas where there are generous and well managed open spaces and parks. Other studies show that creating and maintaining green infrastructure deliver tangible economic and social benefits, including better health and well-being.



Figure 39: Grove park Carshalton, contact with nature adds to quality of life.

17.6. Exercise and Health

Safe, clean, accessible open spaces encourage people to walk more and therefore improve their health. The Wandle Valley can offer a whole range of healthy exercise options from vigorous team sports to gentle fishing on the river. The public open space and footpath / cycle-path networks play an important part in offering these health benefits, with the Wandle trail at the focus of the network. Enhancement of accessibility to the footpath network, and to other attractive open spaces will help to improve the health of the nation. Similarly open spaces can provide tranquillity, particularly if shade or water is present. This helps offer a refuge from the pressures of modern city life.

17.7. Education

Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by providing opportunities for us to walk, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment. Our open spaces are a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill-health. It is therefore important to encourage local people to make use of the open spaces and educational facilities which are available in the Wandle valley. The valley offers opportunities for children to learn about nature, local history and geography. Once children have been taken to use the spaces in the valley they are more likely to return, and become more closely linked to their local environment.

17.8. Growing your own

Much of the Wandle valley, and particularly the area around Mitcham once grew food or herbs for the London market. The valley still contains a number of allotment sites, which are often oversubscribed.

There are opportunities in the valley to identify sites for new allotments and encouraging suitable management of existing ones. These might consist of the development of new community gardens as well as the provision of new land for food growing.

18. THE NATURAL SIGNATURE: A LANDSCAPE VISION FOR THE WANDLE VALLEY

18.1. The natural environment and natural signature

The Wandle valley is an important natural link between the countryside and the city. The river valley helps to provide the connectivity and habitats for London's wildlife. It is already home to a series of designated nature sites (see Appendix 3). Opportunities exist to link these sites into natural corridors creating a network of habitats.

The river and its associated land now provide a range of different habitats, but generally on a smaller scale than they did during the 19th century. Recent improvements in water quality should now be matched by improvements to the habitat potential of riverside land. Water margins are one of the richest wildlife areas, and these areas of the Wandle valley offer huge potential for the enhancement of land for biodiversity. At present significant sections of the river margins are constrained by steel, concrete or timber revetments and camp-shedding. Restoration of the margins of the river through the creation of more natural edges and the re-introduction of appropriate species will dramatically enhance the nature conservation value of the river, make it more attractive, and help restore those elements which contribute to its landscape character.

The multi- functional landscape of the future Wandle valley could also provide more space for nature by less intensive management of existing open spaces and the provision of areas for nature in new developments.



Figure 40: In this location the river is restricted by concrete edging and the river margin offers little wildlife potential



Figure 41. In this location the more natural river margins offer better potential habitat for wildlife and the restoration of the rivers natural signature

18.2. The natural signature

The idea of natural signature has developed from the concept of 'local distinctiveness' which the charity Common Ground has championed since the early 1980's. It is a reaction against the standardisation of buildings, shops and town centres, and the loss of the particular features which give a place a sense of local identity. The idea of local distinctiveness reflects the way in which people relate to a specific place, and how places hold a whole range of natural and cultural layers which help to give that place a special identity.

A whole range of layers contribute to local identity ranging from archaeology and architecture through language, events, plants, folklore and engineering to landscape.

The natural components of local identity form the 'natural signature' of the valley. These are the combination of natural elements which have been hidden or lost as a result of development, which could be reinstated to help restore the distinctiveness of the valley landscape. In the future it is hoped that local people will be able to recognise the Wandle valley as being a particular 'natural' area of London with its own clear identity.

The Wandle valley came under increasing influence from the capital over three centuries, culminating in much of the valley being lost to housing development in the 20th century. During that period the valley had provided a range of services and products to the London market, ranging from textiles milled by the waterpower of the river, through the cultivation of watercress and other specialised wetland crops such as withies to herb growing, with lavender and other crops grown on the sides of the valley.

At the centre of the valley the natural signature feature was and still is the river, which has changed from a winding, reed fringed, pollard lined, chalk stream with an abundance of fish to a heavily modified urban water channel.

The open spaces along the sides of the river, which were once wet meadows, became deer park, then parkland, gardens, and finally housing or industrial land. The few open spaces which remain are either recreation grounds, allotments, cemeteries or municipal parks.

Landscape character in these areas is heavily influenced by the current urban land use and management, although relic features of the previous uses are often still apparent, and provide clues to how the past character and natural signature could be restored.

A landscape strategy which seeks to revive the natural signature of the valley will need to both reintroduce and rebuild the natural signature features and species of the area, where this is feasible and relevant. The identification and promotion of the natural signature will help people re-connect with the heritage, culture and identity of the local area.

In the Wandle the re-naturalisation of the valley would include the reintroduction of signature species such as willows and their re-pollarding, replanting of alders and poplars, re-creation of reed-beds, planting of withies and growth of watercress. It would also include developing guidance for new landscapes that provide a design palette of plants and materials that promote the natural signature.

Sympathetic methods of management of the municipal parks and recreation grounds, and design and planting informed by the design pallet would also embed the natural signature. In places where it is appropriate and feasible the reintroduction of grazing would help to restore the wet grassland and associated signature species which once occupied much of the valley. The main natural signature feature is however the river and further works to restore a more natural profile and banks should be the priority target for the future landscape of the valley.

19. A LANDSCAPE VISION FOR THE WANDLE VALLEY

19.1. A landscape vision

The landscape vision for the valley brings together opportunities to address various issues and enhance the landscape of the valley

Vision:

A vibrant healthy multi-functional landscape, in which people recognise and are inspired by the natural and cultural heritage of the valley and river.

1. The natural identity of the river valley has been restored through the identification and reinstatement of key natural signature features of the landscape character.
2. The diversity of local landscapes in the valley are maintained and enhanced through recognition of local identity and character.
3. Good levels of clean healthy water are maintained within the river throughout the year through flows from headwater springs, subsidiary streams, tributaries, and seepage from valley wetlands, flood and irrigation storage ponds and other sustainable storm water storage mechanisms.
4. The river and its banks support a rich and diverse natural fauna and flora, and provide a biological habitat corridor between the rural headwaters and the urban Thames.
5. A high proportion of the river has a natural morphology (pattern of pools and riffle beds), and banks which are free of artificial protection structures.
6. The rich cultural heritage of the river and valley is conserved for future generations.
7. People are aware of the natural and cultural heritage of the river which has become an important and valued landmark within the valley.
8. People have re-engaged with the natural and seasonal cycles of the river, such as fast winter flood flows and gentle summer flow.
9. People can make use of attractive riverside sitting and eating areas for access and cool respite next to the river.
10. People are aware of the cultural heritage of the valley and the sense of place which this provides, through recording, interpretation, and where appropriate, through adaption and reuse of historic buildings to meet modern needs in a sustainable manner.
11. Riverside spaces provide exercise food and tranquillity for the local community who value the river and associated spaces as an educational resource and community asset helping to build respect local pride awareness and responsibility.

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APPENDIX 1 METHODOLOGY

1. Methodology

The methodology for this landscape character assessment has been based on the Landscape Character assessment guidance for England and Scotland (2002) (CAX84), but modified to suit the requirements of the brief and the nature of the area concerned. Preparation of the draft landscape assessment included:

- Desk study of relevant existing background information
- Identification of draft character types prior to
- Field survey and fixed point photography of a minimum of ten different locations within each draft character type
- Review and adjustment of draft character types and identification of key characteristics.
- Presentation and review of draft character areas at workshops with local representatives of the Wandle forum.

2. Finalization of character area description and mapping.

The draft report was completed in 2009 and consultation with key partners and with the local community was undertaken by Groundwork London. The results of the consultation informed this final version of the characterisation and are included in Appendix 3.

Completion of the final characterisation included:

- Incorporation of consultation comments
- Adding the assessment of landscape character areas to the landscape types to give greater detail and geographical focus to the study
- Updating the report to reflect physical and policy changes since 2009.

3. Previous Landscape Character Assessments

The Environment Agency (EA) has been a key party to the development of the technique of landscape character assessment. During the 1980s and 90's they commissioned research on the application of the technique to River corridors, and developed a methodology for the application of the technique to rivers. This was subsequently applied to a number of catchments in the Thames region including that of the Wandle. The River Wandle and Beverley Brook landscape assessment was produced in 1998 and follows the methodology described in EA Technical handbook 2. This assessment of the river corridor has provided some very useful background material for the current character assessment.

4. Landscape Character Assessment and how it can be applied in urban areas

The technique of landscape character assessment (LCA) has been developed since the 1970's with the support of Natural England and its predecessors the Countryside Agency and Countryside Commission who funded a series of research projects to refine and promote the technique in a structured way. It identifies areas of distinctive character and the key characteristics which contribute to local distinctiveness. After the analysis of areas in this way it is possible to identify the distinctive character of the local landscape.

The LCA technique has been recognized as having a key role in land use planning, both nationally and internationally. The European Landscape Convention provides for the protection of all landscapes including urban and peri-urban landscapes, with character assessment being an important part of the process. Raising the awareness of society and involving local people in decisions regarding landscape policy are also key features of the convention.

Character assessments which focus on urban areas have primarily referred to historic towns and cities such as Winchester and Oxford, although other urban areas have been included within district wide character assessments. Similar techniques such as townscape and conservation area appraisal have been used in urban areas, but many of these have been focused on the built form and do not include the landscape of open spaces within an urban

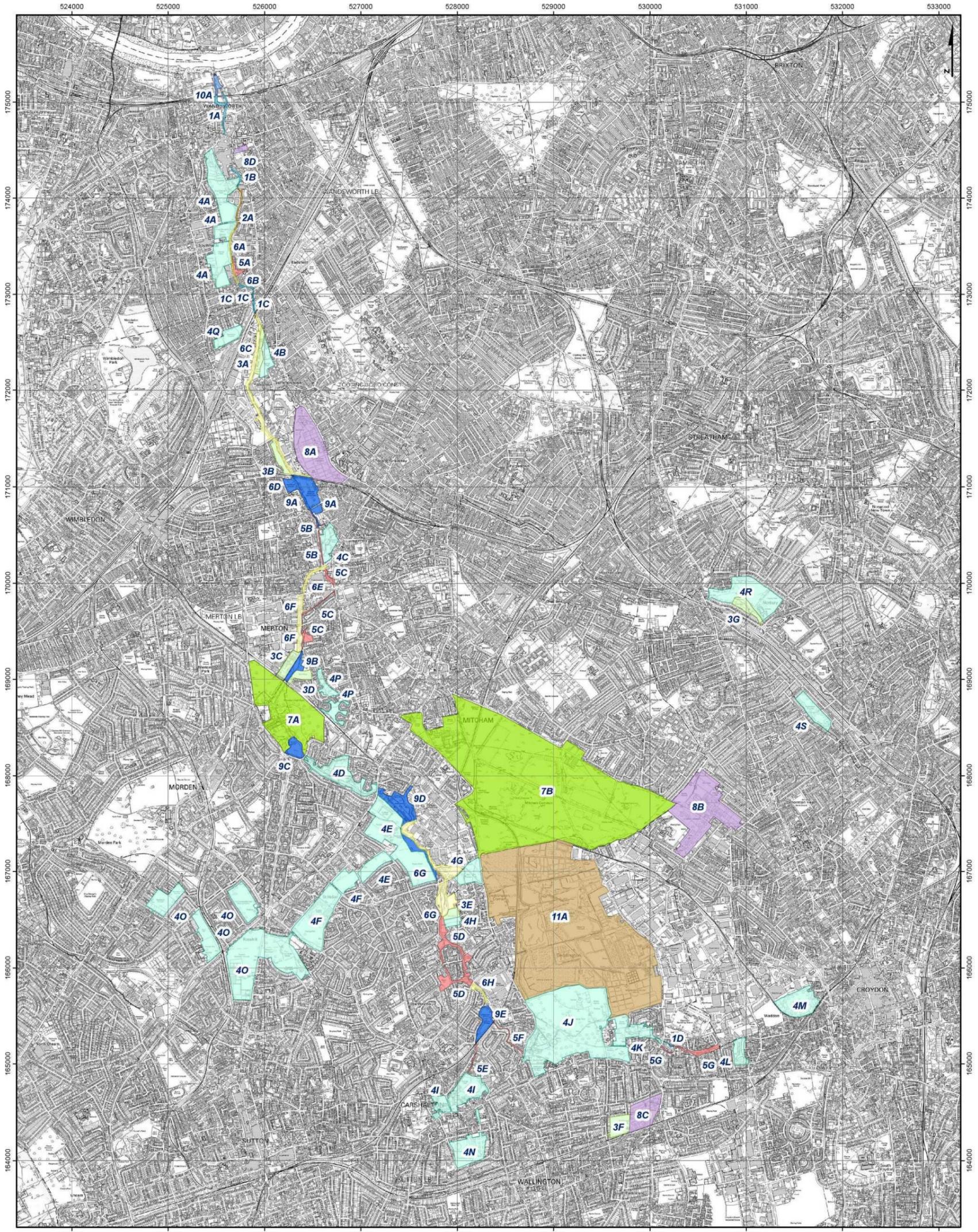
area. This assessment will cover the variety of open spaces linked to the River Wandle, and where appropriate their built environment setting, but the brief has been to focus purely on open spaces and not to cover the built areas within the valley.

Landscape character is derived from the complex interaction of a variety of different forces. These include the natural environment; geology, topography drainage, soils and biology and how human actions have modified the natural landscape character over time.

In an area with a rich pattern of past uses like the Wandle valley, the cultural heritage of human use will always be a significant feature of the overall landscape character. Whilst much of the valley has been subject to development within the 20th century, which has in places obliterated signs of previous use, there remains a complex and partly hidden pattern of local heritage. The various features of this local heritage contribute to the distinctive identity of the area.

An important part of the process of landscape character assessment therefore in an urban area is to seek out and identify clues to those cultural and natural features of the landscape which contribute or have contributed to its local distinctiveness. The term 'natural signature' has been used to describe the combination of landscape features which give the area its local landscape identity.

APPENDIX 2: MAPPING OF CHARACTER AREAS



Legend	
Wandle Valley Character Area Type	
■ 1, Urbanised river channel	■ 6, Modern industrial backlands
■ 2, Victorian and Edwardian terrace Back lots	■ 7, Natural park and common land
■ 3, Allotments	■ 8, Cemetery
■ 4, Municipal parks and sportsfields	■ 9, Nature conservation areas
■ 5, 20th Century housing and flats	■ 10, Tidal Thames
	■ 11, Disturbed and restored land

Scale:
 0 0.5 1 2 Km

Notes/Caveats:
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Project:
Wandle Valley Landscape Character Assessment

Figure:
 Character Areas

APPENDIX 3: DESIGNATIONS

20.1. Local Nature reserves

Name	Area Ha	Reference
LOWER WANDLE	2.52	1083011
WANDLEMEADOWNATUREPARK	3.44	1009355
RAVENSBURY PARK	7.27	1421578
BENNETT'S HOLE	1.21	1008774
SPENCER ROAD WETLANDS	1.04	1009153
WANDLE VALLEY WETLAND	0.62	1083012
WILDERNESS ISLAND	2.72	1009242
SUTTON ECOLOGY CENTRE GROUNDS	1.33	1009760
CRANMER GREEN	3.21	1082904

20.2. Scheduled monument

Name	Area Ha	Reference
MERTON PRIORY (SITE OF)	3.37	LO151
ROMAN VILLA E OF BEDDINGTON PARK	18.90	LO112

20.3. Registered Parks and Gardens (England)

Name	Area Ha	Reference
MORDEN HALL PARK	40.1	2608
SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL	21.94	5080

20.4. Other relevant designations present

Surface water Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) 2006
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (England)

APPENDIX 4: RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

1. European Landscape Policy

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK on March 1st 2007 and seeks to embody the protection of all landscapes in law, whether urban, rural, peri-urban, degraded or outstanding landscapes.

The ELC defines landscape as:

‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’.

The ELC recognises the multifunctional value of landscapes and that identification and assessment of all landscapes is intrinsic to land use planning.

To deliver the objectives of the ELC in the UK, the government has encouraged the use of the green infrastructure approach. Landscape character assessments and the preparation of landscape strategies are vital tools in identifying and understanding the green infrastructure of an area.

2. National Planning Policy

Recent national legislation on planning, climate change, housing, health, transport and localism have all referred to the importance of natural areas and the need to plan and sustain a network of open spaces to provide green infrastructure as part of the development of sustainable communities.

National, regional and local planning policy guidance identifies the importance of high quality multifunctional green open space for improving wellbeing and quality of life.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which came into effect in March 2012 sets out the Government’s economic, social and environmental planning policies for England and its requirements of the planning system. Extracts from relevant sections of the NPPF are listed below.

National planning policy framework policies

The NPPF includes the policy that:

‘(114) Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach, planning positively for creation, enhancement and management of networks of green infrastructure’.

Green Infrastructure is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as:

‘a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.’

Policies to make the most of the multiple benefits that land can give on a landscape scale are included in the NPPF:

‘(17) Encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production)’

And:

‘(109) The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services’

In relation to ecological networks a strategic and cross boundary approach is given in the policies:

‘(114) Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach, planning positively for creation, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity’

‘(117) to minimise impacts on biodiversity, planning policies should plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries’

The importance of local character is emphasised in the NPPF:

‘(58) Local and neighbourhood plans should... be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments... respond to local

character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.'

The Wandle Valley can demonstrate many of these policies with partnership working along the course of the river across the four local planning authorities, the Mayor of London and other statutory and third sector organisations.

3. The London Plan

The London Plan sets out strategic principles that will govern development in the Greater London Area over the next 20-25 years and was published in July 2011. A range of policies support the conservation and enhancement of the Wandle valley landscape including:

Policy 2.18 Green infrastructure: the network of open and green spaces

The Mayor will work with all relevant strategic partners to protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of, and access to, London's network of green infrastructure. This multifunctional network will secure benefits including, but not limited to: biodiversity; natural and historic landscapes; culture; building a sense of place; the economy; sport; recreation; local food production; mitigating and adapting to climate change; water management; and the social benefits that promote individual and community health and well-being.

In areas of deficiency for regional and metropolitan parks, opportunities for the creation of green infrastructure to meet this deficiency will be identified and their implementation supported, such as in the Wandle Valley Regional Park.

The plan also contains specific policies relating to the Public realm and Local Character (see Appendix 2) and encourages Boroughs in the preparation of their LDFs To consider the different characters of their areas to identify landscapes, buildings and places where that character should be sustained, protected and enhanced through managed change. The plan suggests characterisation studies such as this in the Wandle Valley can help in this process.

The London Plan sets out the concept of the Blue Ribbon Network; a complex of semi-natural and man-made water systems which provide an invaluable natural resource for London. It is a dynamic system, subject to natural forces of tides, erosion and floods that should be protected and enhanced. The plan promotes the continued ecological recovery of the Blue Ribbon Network by using opportunities to improve habitats and biodiversity. Open spaces next to the river network provide areas for flood mitigation measures and create opportunities to improve the natural landscapes of the river

The plan also contains policies to restore and enhance the Blue Ribbon Network by taking opportunities to open culverts and naturalise river channels, increasing habitat value and restricting development to maintain the open character of the Blue Ribbon network.

The London Plan principally sets out strategic principles that will govern future development in the Greater London Area, with the overall aim of promoting sustainable development. Policies show the need to plan, protect and enhance the provision of high quality green infrastructure. The plan also seeks to improve the urban environment protecting character and sense of place, open spaces, biodiversity and natural resources to mitigate climate change and reduce CO2 emissions. Extracts of relevant policies from the London Plan are available in Appendix 2.

The Mayor proposes to protect, promote and improve access to the network of open spaces, strengthening the promotion of urban greening, urban agriculture.....and supporting the development of open space strategies and implementation frameworks such as the Wandle Valley Regional Park

The reviewed London Plan continues to realise the importance of London's open and natural environment and contains relevant policies to support the development of improved green infrastructure in the Wandle Valley. These are listed below.

RELEVANT LONDON PLAN POLICIES

Policy 7.4 Local character:

A Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.

Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass b contributes to a positive relationship between the urban structure and natural landscape features, including the underlying landform and topography of an area is human in scale, ensuring buildings create a positive relationship with street level activity and people feel comfortable with their surroundings allows existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place to influence the future character of the area is informed by the surrounding historic environment.

Policy 7.5 Public realm

- A. London's public spaces should be secure, accessible, inclusive, connected, easy to understand and maintain, relate to local context, and incorporate the highest quality design, landscaping, planting, street furniture and surfaces.
- B. Development should make the public realm comprehensible at a human scale, using gateways, focal points and landmarks as appropriate to help people find their way. Landscape treatment, street furniture and infrastructure should be of the highest quality, have a clear purpose, maintain uncluttered spaces and should contribute to the easy movement of people through the space. Opportunities for the integration of high quality public art should be considered, and opportunities for greening (such as through planting of trees and other soft landscaping wherever possible) should be maximised. Treatment of the public realm should be informed by the heritage values of the place, where appropriate.
- C. Development should incorporate local social infrastructure such as public toilets, drinking water fountains and seating, where appropriate. Development should also reinforce the connection between public spaces and existing local features such as the Blue Ribbon Network and parks and others that may be of heritage significance.

Policy 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

- A. The Mayor supports the creation of new open space in London to ensure satisfactory levels of local provision to address areas of deficiency.
- B. The loss of local protected open spaces must be resisted unless equivalent or better quality provision is made within the local catchment area. Replacement of one type of open space with another is unacceptable unless an up to date needs assessment shows that this would be appropriate.
- C. When assessing local open space needs LDFs should:
 - a) include appropriate designations and policies for the protection of local openspace
 - b) identify areas of public open space deficiency, using the open space categorisation set out in Table 7.2 as a benchmark for all the different types of open space identified therein
 - c) ensure that future open space needs are planned for in areas with the potential for
 - d) substantial change such as opportunity areas, regeneration areas, intensification
 - e) areas and other local areas
 - f) d) ensure that open space needs are planned in accordance with green
 - g) infrastructure strategies to deliver multiple benefits.
- D. Use the CABI Space/Mayor of London Best Practice Guidance 'Open Space Strategies' as guidance for developing policies on the proactive creation, enhancement and management of open space.

Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature

- A. The Mayor will work with all relevant partners to ensure a proactive approach to the protection, enhancement, creation, promotion and management of biodiversity in support of the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy. This means planning for nature from the beginning of the development process and taking opportunities for positive gains for nature through the layout, design and materials of development proposals and appropriate biodiversity action plans.

Policy 7.28 Restoration of the Blue Ribbon Network

Planning decisions should restore and enhance the Blue Ribbon Network by:

- a) taking opportunities to open culverts and naturalise river channels
- b) increasing habitat value; development which reduces biodiversity should be refused
- c) preventing development and structures into the water space unless it serves a water related purpose (see paragraph 7.84)
- d) protecting the value of the foreshore of the Thames and tidal rivers
- e) resisting the impounding of rivers
- f) protecting the open character of the Blue Ribbon Network.

Within LDFs boroughs should identify any parts of the Blue Ribbon Network where particular biodiversity improvements will be sought, having reference to the London River Restoration Action Plan

4. Borough Plans

Planning policies which are relevant to the Wandle valley can also be found in the separate Unitary Development plans, strategy documents and emerging Local Development Frameworks of the four London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Sutton, Merton and Croydon.

They all incorporate policies which aim to protect the natural environment of the Wandle valley, its potential as an important water resource, haven for wildlife, natural green corridor, visual and recreational amenity and the importance of its natural areas to the health and wellbeing of the local communities.

5. All London Green Grid

The All London Green Grid SPG was published in March 2012. This aims to promote the concept of green infrastructure, and increase its delivery by boroughs, developers, and communities, by describing and advocating an approach to the design and management of green and open spaces to deliver hitherto unrealised benefits. These benefits include sustainable travel, flood management, healthy living, and creating distinctive destinations; and the economic and social uplift these support.

The Wandle Valley is area 8 within the ALGG.

Strategic green infrastructure opportunities identified are:

- 1) Continue work to create a new regional park as a vehicle to improve the quality, management, funding and identity of open space within the Wandle Valley.
- 2) Improve the ecological and environmental value of the River Wandle through restoration projects (such as de-culverting the river in Wandle Park), habitat enhancement and species re-introduction, and projects which seek to mitigate flood risk.
- 3) Create a 200 hectare country park at Beddington Farmlands through the restoration of land used for gravel extraction and landfill tipping, linking Beddington Park with Mitcham Common.
- 4) Create a district park through the unification of Pouter Park, Reverb Wood, Middleton Open Space, St Helier Open Space, and Rose Hill Park.
- 5) Create improved cycle and pedestrian connections to the Wandle Valley and Wandle Trail from the surrounding areas – through significant open spaces such as the proposed district park, and a suite of projects connecting the River Wandle to Croydon Town Centre.
- 6) Develop an exemplar sustainable neighbourhood at Hackbridge – with low carbon development closely integrated with the River Wandle through improved cycle and pedestrian connections, and energy generation associated with river restoration projects.

7) Develop a mutually beneficial relationship between the open space network and industrial space within the Wandle Valley from facilitating access improvements through to nurturing a unique sense of place which can help to enliven and enrich the identity of the regional park.

8) Capitalise on the area's abundance of heritage assets including watermills, mill races, Merton Priory, and Merton Abbey Mills, to develop the regional park as a landscape rich in historical character.

A draft framework for the Wandle Valley area was produced in 2010, further developing plans for green infrastructure in the valley.

6. Other associated regional strategies and relevant policies

The Mayor's Water Strategy sets out aspirations for water management, from rainwater drainage, water supply, sewage disposal, flood management and catchment planning to ensure there is integration between land and water management proposals.

The GLA has also produced a Regional Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to accompany the London Plan. The Wandle valley is mentioned in the Central and South London SFRA. Separate Strategic Flood Risk Assessments have also been prepared for the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton, and Croydon.

Many regional partners have produced strategic policy documents which are relevant to the Wandle valley. Some of the most important in relation to this study are mentioned below, (however, this is not a comprehensive list):

- Natural England Green Infrastructure guidance
- The Environment Agency Catchment Management plans.
- The London Rivers action plan jointly produced by a range of partners including EA, NE and the River Restoration Trust.
- Wandle Valley Regional Park A Vision for the future

The Wandle Valley Green Ribbon Initiative in 2005 was a sub-regional response to the GLA's Blue Ribbon network. It led to the establishment of the Wandle Forum which brought together the key stakeholders of the valley. The Wandle Forum with other statutory and non-statutory partners in the Wandle valley worked together to produce a vision for a regional park for the Wandle valley.

Strategic objectives for the Wandle valley can also be found in management documents and policy statements prepared by various non-governmental organisations with an interest in the area such as Groundwork London, the National Trust, and the Wandle Trust. Particularly notable is the Catchment Plan for the Wandle which the Wandle Trust is producing which includes extensive consultation and engagement with local communities along the length of the river.

APPENDIX 5 RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Wandle Valley Consultation Initial Report 03.09.09

Prepared for: Natural England

Prepared by: Hannah Crump, Community and Education Officer



Background

In March 2009, Groundwork London was commissioned by Natural England to complete a consultation exercise based on the natural characteristics of the Wandle Valley as part of the emerging Wandle Valley Regional Park (WVRP). This was to follow the completion of a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) carried out by Natural England; a process used widely to understand the differences between landscapes with the aim of making decisions that reflect local distinctiveness and contribute to sense of place.

The purpose of Groundwork London's consultation was to both inform and promote the LCA (and consequently the WVRP) by engaging with people living in the four boroughs that encompass the proposed WVRP (Croydon, Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth) and fulfilling the following objectives:

- To raise awareness of the landscape of the Wandle Valley by showing people what the landscape used to be and what it is now through mapping and photographs;
- To identify what the current level of awareness and understanding of the natural features of the Wandle Valley are amongst local residents; and
- To encourage the local community to start thinking about what the Wandle Valley could be like in the future and what parts of the Valley could be improved promoting an active role for the community in the development of the Wandle Valley Regional Parks.

METHODOLOGY

Groundwork London attended the Wandle Festival on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th June 2009 at Merton Abbey Mills, Merton and King Georges Park, Wandsworth respectively.

Groundwork London produced information boards (Figure 1a) with highlights from the vision document, "Wandle Valley Regional Park – A Vision for the Future", and photographs of the Wandle Valley to attract visitors to the stands and raise awareness of the proposed Regional Park.



Figure 1a Stand at Merton Abbey Mills



Figure 1b Tight-tastic planting activity

Groundwork London also gave out environmentally friendly gifts and ran a 'tight-tactic' plant potting activity to encourage people to take part in the consultation (Figure 1b).

Participants were asked the following questions:

- 1) What do you think is **natural** about the Wandle Valley?
- 2) What **natural features** would you like to see revitalised in the Wandle Valley?

Two main display boards were exhibited that mapped the Wandle Valley area and some of its' key landscape features that put the questions into context and encouraged people to relate to the area. These were shown on the map with photos or graphics and some text, i.e. *Did you know that the area around Colliers Wood used to be a lavender field?*

People received coloured post-it notes (colour denoting borough of residence) to write their answers on. For location specific areas they were encouraged to stick their answers directly onto the map. Those who preferred were interviewed by staff and their responses noted on A4 questionnaire forms.

Additional staff carried out consultations using the questionnaires at other Festival venues covering the Boroughs of Croydon and Sutton.

Respondents were also asked to select from a list of six potential project areas up to three specific activities that they would like to see undertaken within the Wandle Valley. The suggested projects were linked to climate-proofing and physical/intellectual access to the green spaces within the Wandle Valley as follows:

- Planting projects
- Provision of Green Education in play areas

- Water storage to protect against flooding
- Green roofs
- Solar panels/Solar powered lighting
- Improving access

Who took part?

A total of 163 people from across the Wandle Valley area took part in the consultation at the four locations, broken down as follows:

Borough of Residence	Number of Respondents
Merton	29
Sutton	35
Croydon	15
Wandsworth	65
Other	19
Total	163

THE RESULTS

As results for the two primary questions were all qualitative, comments have been grouped under the following themes.

For Question 1- What do you think is natural about the Wandle Valley?

- River
- Green space
- Wildlife
- Plants/trees
- Access/river paths
- Other

For Question 2- What natural features would you like to see revitalised in the Wandle Valley?

- River
- Green space
- Wildlife
- Access/river paths
- Litter/fly-tipping
- Education/activities

- Other

Question 1

There were a total of 223 comments in response to Question 1. The majority of comments made were about the River Wandle (30%) followed by wildlife (20%), plants/trees (19%) and green spaces (18%).

The river was referred to in terms of its speed, wildlife and the banks.

Most participants wrote about 'Wildlife' generally and others mentioned specific species such as kingfishers, herons, foxes and squirrels. Plants and trees included references to wildflowers, bluebells and the wetlands. Green spaces mentioned were parks such as Morden Hall Park, Wandle Park and Beddington Park. One respondent from Wandsworth noted that there was "very little" natural about the Wandle Valley and that more planting was necessary to encourage wildlife although another thought that it was beginning to look like the "countryside".

'Other' comments were focused on the heritage features of the Wandle area including Merton Abbey Mills suggesting that these man-made historical features are considered by some as 'natural'. This is reflected in 'Education and activities' in Question 2. Other comments suggested that the whole of the Valley was Natural.

A full breakdown of the responses by theme is shown in the table below. The narrative responses are attached in Appendix 1.

Number of comments by Borough and theme on what is natural in the Wandle Valley

Borough of Residence	Theme					
	<u>River</u>	Green space	Wildlife	Plants / Trees	Access/ River Paths	Other
Croydon	6	5	5	3	0	2
Merton	11	9	12	10	2	3
Sutton	13	5	7	8	1	3
Wandsworth	17	17	17	14	5	1
Other	10	5	5	8	4	5
<u>Total</u>	67	41	46	43	12	14

Question 2

In responding to Question 2, the majority of comments also fell into the 'River' category (22%), most of which were focused on clearing up the river and removing litter from it.

Access to the river was also of high priority (15%) with many comments made on improving

the river pathways and banks. For example, a Merton resident suggested the need for “*good access to good pathways*”, and others made points on signage and advertising along walkways. One resident in Merton saw access to the river as a factor that influences business improvement.

Protecting and improving ‘Wildlife’ also received 15% of the comments, with a particular focus on birds, often named species such as Canada geese, herons, coots, swans and ducks. Some participants also suggested that the lavender fields be brought back when referring to ‘Green space’.

‘Litter’ received 12% of comments, including the need for ‘dog bins’, bins at picnic sites and regular clearing of bins that have overflowed.

Suggested ‘Educational and other activities’ included more activities for school children, markets, a museum, planned walks, more events in parks, a boating lake and a zoo,

‘Other’ comments included the view that the Wandle Valley should be left how it is and not changed.

A full breakdown of the responses by theme is shown in the table below. The narrative responses are attached in Appendix 2.

Number of comments by Borough and theme on what natural features should be revitalised in the Wandle Valley

Borough of Residence	Theme							
	<u>River</u>	Green space	Wildlife	Plants/ Trees	Access/ River Paths	Litter / fly-tipping/ site mgmt	Education/ Events	Other
Croydon	6	2	3	3	2	2	3	0
Merton	6	3	5	4	7	1	1	2
Sutton	14	2	4	5	3	2	6	1
Wandsworth	13	5	13	5	14	18	12	5
Other	3	6	3	1	2	0	0	2
<u>Total</u>	42	18	28	18	28	23	22	10

Projects supported

In line with the responses to Question 2 the potential projects that had most support from respondents were improvements to access, 55% of respondents, and those involved with planting, 48% of respondents. Green education activities for young people were thought to be a good idea by 36% of respondents. Activities aimed more directly at climate-proofing were less popular with only 23% of respondents supporting green roofs and 30% solar power. However 33% were concerned with flood risk and supported water storage projects.

A full breakdown of responses is shown in the table below.

Number of supporters for each potential project by Borough

Borough of residence	Suggested Project					
	Planting	Green Education	Water Storage	Green Roofs	Solar Power/ Lighting	Improving Access
Croydon	12	7	9	4	5	12
Merton	17	13	9	9	9	21
Sutton	14	14	12	11	18	14
Wandsworth	24	19	16	11	12	38
Other	12	5	7	3	6	6
<u>Total</u>	79	58	53	38	50	91

CONCLUSIONS

The Wandle Festival weekend was a very productive time to engage with residents on the Wandle Valley Regional Park as events covered all Boroughs that have land within the proposed boundary. There were a high number of attendees as the Festival is very well known in the area attracting residents, local businesses, other partners and stakeholders.

The information boards sparked interest in the natural features of the Wandle Valley and allowed participants and passers-by to identify with past and present landscapes. The responses to Question 1 show that there was a very broad interpretation of 'natural' among respondents and staff noted that some people had initially found it quite difficult to get to grips with the concept of 'natural' in what they perceived as an essentially urban environment. It was very clear from the responses that while green space, plants, trees and wildlife were all considered to be important natural elements of the Wandle Valley the most significant natural aspect of the Wandle Valley was the River Wandle itself.

Question 2 encouraged the participants to think about how the Wandle Valley Regional Park could enhance their local area resulting in suggestions for a large number of practical physical improvements. As with the responses to Question 1 the main focus of the respondents in terms of where they would want to see improvements was on the river itself followed by conserving and enhancing the associated wildlife and improving access to the river and its environs.

Staff working at the consultation had the opportunity to draw people's attention to the vision document, 'Wandle Valley Regional Park- A Vision for the future' and a number of copies were distributed to interested consultees. Leaflets relating to the Wandle Trail, unfortunately now out of print, were also popular with consultees reinforcing the survey results relating to the importance of accessibility.

Staff also collected the details of approximately 50 people who were interested in finding out more and volunteering in the Wandle Valley area, providing a valuable database for project works in the future. It was interesting to note that a higher proportion of respondents that perceived their green spaces as suffering from neglect such as litter and vandalism, were keen to offer their support as volunteers than those who perceived their green spaces to be well maintained.

It is intended to have the questionnaire available in hard copy and on the Wandle Valley Regional Park website alongside a full copy of the draft Landscape Character Assessment and a summary on an A5 flyer as part of an on-going consultation process.

Appendix 1

Responses to Question 1: What do you think is natural about the Wandle Valley?

Responses from Croydon residents

River, Abbey Mills

River, wildlife, fish, wild flowers, foxes

Pockets of green, wildlife, cultural history
Abbey Mills and river, variety of wildlife, peaceful trail. Nature meadows, woods, ponds, trees, parks, river

Beddington Park. Fast flowing river.

Vegetation next to pond. Wildlife/birds

Could be improved

Wildlife, river, fields

Open space

River

Open spaces

Responses from Merton residents

River, new trees.

Natural.- look at fishing, walking along, long grass/ swamp areas, wildlife.

Birds - variety

Morden Hall Park - water, mills, Wandle nature meadow park, herons, Kingfishers.
Half-finished bridge in Wandle nature park that need to be completed, proper pathways to get over the river, oily water in Wandle park

Water, herons in the river, birds, trees seeing the green.

The plants, sometimes the water builds up, new trees that grow, Merton Abbey particularly natural

Water, flowers, shap, animal, trees, landscaping.

River, bluebells

Morden Hall Park. Seeing river. More wilderness

Animals, vegetation and river

River. Foxes and squirrels

Morden Hall. Wandle meadows, plough lane, Earlsfield.

Wildlife, trees.

Trees in Wandle Park

Wild bits with untidy bits. Big trees and foxes.

River

Kingfishers, the river.

The wetlands

Gardens, wildlife, kingfishers and wildflowers

Many areas overgrown and natural

Represents Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. London wide. MPGA may be able to offer modest grant aid.

Responses from Sutton residents

River, river bank from Morden Hall Park to Abbey Mills.

River, wildlife, plants

Chalk river, grazing land, birds, ducks/moorhens

Carshalton Ponds. Birds, Canada geese, herons, coots, swans, ducks, Morden Hall Park

River

River

Animals, trees

Lots of greenery and parks, open spaces for families

Waterways

River course, natural grass areas, wooded areas

Not sure

River

Being untouched

Flowers and animals

The waterways

Trees, streams

Parks

The river, flora and fauna

Watermeads, greenery in urban environment.

Birds

Already as natural as possible

Metropolitan public gardens association - geomorphology of valley is greatest asset.

Watercourse and views from watersheds. Also Norwood grove in Croydon has view across tributary valley of Norbury Brook and River Graveney.

Responses from Wandsworth residents

Green spaces, not built up

River, Fish + wildlife, Plants

Very little! We certainly need more natural features. More plants and planting to encourage native wildlife!

The river, fish and plants. More birds, fish and dragon fly.

River life, fish and trees + river pathway

Gradient from Surrey to Thames, short river from Downs to Thames

Parks, but not sure if they have been created.

That so much of it is accessible

River Wandle, birds

Trees and lots of sports

The way is it beginning to look like the country side

The poor path river bank

River (again)

Its great and gives information different natural aspects

Nature habitat

The river/open space

Life along river

The river

Not much is natural. It's managed

River but I'm not sure...birds, fish, insect-life.

Animals, plants

River (Natural) Need cleaning. Park not much more to be done

Planting. River -birds, -cleaning, -boats in the future

Animals. Plants + trees

I think the river is a great place to see and the birds I really enjoy when I came every morning to see that beautiful place. You will feel relax and fresh

River Wandle, Foliage

Natural plants, trees and wildlife. River activities. The grass and the park it was through.

Plant life and the river. Insects and birds.

Naturalness of the river and the banks.

Natural. Move like etc. and less built up. Wild plants not "park" type stuff.

Natural -River, modern park, historic aspect. Revitalise -easier access, park and walk, info maps along way. Controlling dogs pooh

Grass, River

Water + Greenery

Wildlife Morden Hall Park, Wandle Park

Wildness in the city

Lots of green spaces.

Course of the river- Some of the vegetation

River, birds, plant life, quiet

Green space

The parks, bring also to walk/cycle alongside

Scenery

Ponds, grass, trees, river

The Wandle river and the park areas.

All of it

Trees, the Wandle, grass

The parks and wildlife are surprisingly abundant for London

River, park

River, Wandsworth Common, riverside

Natural-Parks, little pockets of green, joined up paths, space more accessible.

Would like more information made available re Wandle Valley

The Wandle

River and wildlife.

Responses from residents of other Boroughs

Tow paths, river bankside, small parks, trees, Wandle Meadow, Abbey Mills

River, green space for kids, wildlife

River and all plants around

River, parks, open spaces

River and wildlife

More accessibility, camouflage

River and fish

Wooded areas, river is beautiful clear and tidy, birds, herons

Wildlife and plant life

Water, plants

River, trees

River paths

Lake, bridge, planting provides great learning environment for kids.

Trees, parks

Appendix 2

Responses to Question 2: What natural features would you like to see revitalised in the Wandle Valley?

Responses from Croydon residents

More trees, more lavender fields, more child friendly areas, more seating, more markets

More re-cycling bins, clean river, more trees planted. Create wilderness areas. More planting. Wardens. Encourage birdlife, toads, badgers etc.

Riverbank habitat, more development. Uncover river at Wandle Park. Celebrate open river. More cultural history

Bring back lavender field and watercress beds

Wandle Park boating lake

Keep up the good work at the Mills- how about a museum?

Green areas. Natural paths

Wildlife, natural water that's clean.

Cleaner river. Better parks

Cleaner rivers

Clear rubbish from river

Responses from Merton residents

Streams cleaned

Good access to good footpaths. Good maintenance

More plants, flowers. River cleaned.

Keeping river clean. Introducing new birds in area. Signage and advertising.

Bee hives. Plants for butterflies, ladybirds, dragonflies.

Better access to river. More noticeable as a National Park.

Make river cleaner

Footpaths and natural areas. Like to see more natural animals and flowers.

Natural play areas for kids and families

Don't touch it!

Screening of 'ugly' buildings

More info. History and nature. More for dogs and owners (poop bins).

Feeding birds. Mobility access (wheelchair user)

Encourage people to walk path to improve businesses.

River

Greener areas around Morden. More trees, more green. Otters, badgers. Connect station and green spaces.

General restoration of riverbanks.

Responses from Sutton residents

More wildlife, wild flowers

Mills restored to working order. River cleaned of rubbish. Clearer water.

Need to look after spawning beds. Control speed of river

Greater recognition of landscape and of minor drainage features. Realisation of Wandle's confluence with River Thames

Path by Carshalton Pond needs cleaning of bird faeces. Sign advertising museum.

River. Plant trees to encourage wildlife. More facilities for families.

River

Play parks, river

Waterways

Planned walks

Marshlands areas for watching birds, wildlife

More flowers

River

Water features

Water

The ponds

All waterways cleaned up

River

Water voles, badgers, foxes, kingfishers, herons, widest diversity of fish life and natural plants in rivers. Native plants and trees

De-culvert river. Naturalise it. Stop putting barriers to prevent asb (sic). Cycle trail signage very poor

Children's play areas, river walkways

Water quality

Markets

Like to see rubbish cleared

Responses from Wandsworth residents

Fly-tipping e.g. shopping. -trolleys removed. -increase visits from schools. -increase awareness.

More bins, picnic areas, less rubbish or none! Improve access to Wandle

Natural features. More trees (especially native ones). More animals (all kinds but especially native ones that were here in the first place.

More paths, we love the Wandle.

More use of the river, access and nature trails.

Improve riverside access especially Earlsfield.

Riverbank. Access to river frontage. Cycle path alongside river.

More spring planting, flowers

More green, more parks

A little zoo

The area where the Wandle goes into the Thames improved

Fish

River

Having a zoo for the children would be a good idea as they can see different animals
More into available for people to use area. Ensure schools engage with local environment

Bridges/Fishing

Wildlife, ducks in ponds, fish in rivers, butterflies in high grass

More green, open spaces

Rubbish is a problem

Trees. But...though I have lived in Wandsworth for 22 years .I have never taken a walk along the Wandle. Better information could be made available regarding access to the Wandle.

Cleaner water, remove rubbish, more events in parks

Busy, close to nature, would like to see squirrels, dogs. Visit often - play in park and activities, helping to keep clean and tidy.

Wandle Meadow Nature Park has great potential as a local nature reserve, but it is sadly neglected. The ponds dry out quickly, with loss of tadpoles, too much rubbish dumping, very little management of the environment.

Lots of greenery and nature. Like to see more birds esp. herons

Cleaner, more for disabled, more activities

Permanently kept clean encourage wildlife, events children. Woodland-natural, birds.

Bird identification site (plaque) near mouth of River Wandle/Thames

Animals in the parks, more interesting plants

River Wandle pathway with closer access to the river.

Wildlife that has adapted (river course has been changed), cleaner (to encourage more wildlife), educate kids to not feed ducks or structured form/ pay for feed

Stop pollution getting into the river (now a lot cleaner than the 50s. Why not a Wandle Path? (Like Thames Path)

It seems to be quite natural and very luxurious already, the paths are very accessible for walking and prams/pushchairs, bikes, etc. So apart from keeping the river clean, not much needs doing.

Nothing really as everything is left as it should be

Years ago coracles used to go along the river would be nice to see again?

I'd like to be able to walk by the river, the whole way, not leave it around Earlsfield. I wish the river Graveney was more like a river and less like a concrete ditch

Better access to the river for walkers and cyclists, cut back stinging nettles other weeds that are overgrown, cycle paths need to be wider, no access by Earlsfield, more investment and work

Clean up certain parts. Old fridges, motorbikes, car tyres.

Wandle Park, dustbins are always full and overflowing, dog bins are overflowing too

Don't change it. Love it the way it is.

Cleaner rivers/river banks

Access to river, cleaning of river, wildlife encouragement

River

Happy with recent development.

General environment of rivers, improve appearance, smells, wildlife

Swans and Ducks (wildlife)

Cleaner ponds, more facilities for special needs.

All of it.

The Wandle

More fish, less rats.

Open space to sit by the river.

Nothing, it looks lovely already

River, park

Wandle River, fish stocks

Revitalise, -cleaned up

Pond cleared of litter.

Water quality

Not sure what Wandle Valley is.

Originally waterways.

The pond in King Georges Park

Responses from residents of other Boroughs

More green space access on Wandle riverside.

Clean river, make spaces to walk and play

Cleaning of river

More seating, more for cycling

More play areas for kids

Camouflaging buildings

Flowers, animals, greenery

Joining up green space

River needs to be cleaned

Habitat for nature, beauty in the parks.

Install watercress beds. Bring back old industries



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