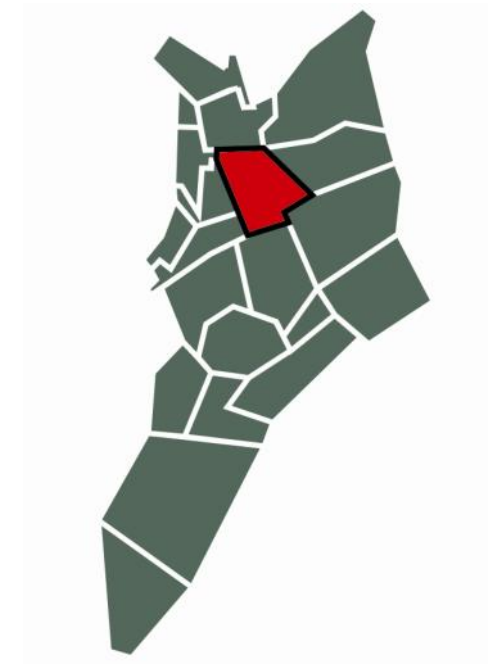




The character areas of Norbiton



The location of Norbiton

# 7 Norbiton



### **Origins and General Character**

Norbiton, once the centre of Kingston's Italian community, was a fashionable residential area with mansions and parkland, which grew from 19th century pastureland. Cambridge Road developed after the tram reached it, following its introduction to Kingston in 1906. Cambridge Gardens flats were built on the site of the Cambridge Asylum following its destruction by bombing in the second world war. The tower blocks of the Cambridge Road Estate were built following planning approval in 1967. Today, Norbiton is an area of contrasts. A coherent urban swathe to the north is cut by a car-dominated, depressing approach road to the town, where townscape quality has been 'guttled'. It hides a copious, green and visually open hinterland to the south. This green oasis, save the cemeteries and the town tip, have restricted access. Through it runs the Hogsmill river, a valuable natural asset which has been largely secured against the enjoyment of people.

### **Land Use**

Residential, cemetery, crematorium, commercial, retail, warehousing, factories, clinics, worship.

### **Movement**

The area is bounded to the south by the Waterloo to Southampton railway line with Berrylands station built on legs which overlooks the sewerage works, and to the north by the Waterloo to Kingston loop railway line. The A203 Cambridge Road/ Kingston Road is a major route into Kingston from the A3. It joins the London Road on its approach to Kingston Town centre, merging there with the A308 Kingston Hill Road and the A238 Coombe Lane West road. Significant local traffic runs are Hawks Road and Villiers Road. There is parking pressure on days when Wimbledon AFC play at the football ground.

### **Built form**

















Some squalid houses were built around Kingston cemetery which opened in 1855. Little of the better quality, later 1880's/1890's housing remains, and is mostly clustered around Hawks Road and Gordon Road. The majority of the area north of Kingston Cemetery dates from the turn of the last century. This period of building also established housing between London Road and Norbiton Avenue and along the eastern half of Gloucester Road. The council built the estate east of Gloucester Road by the 1930's.

### **Open space**

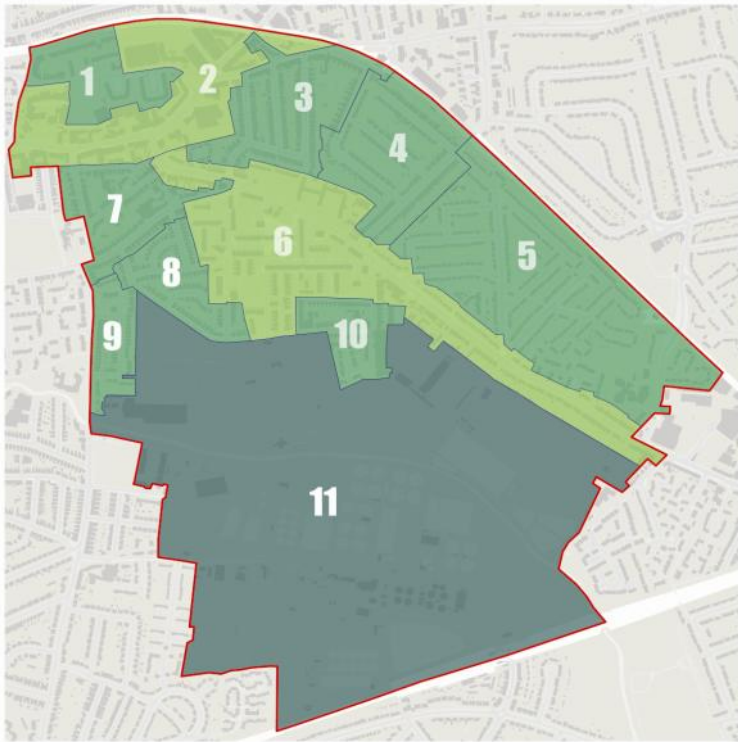
Kingston Cemetery provides a high quality space of relative quietness and calmness with its Victorian tombstones in an open setting. The ground levels add interest to panoramas. The council rubbish tip opposite intrudes with noise. The Hogsmill stream is completely hidden, indeed, earth bunds have been constructed above the river bank to reduce the disturbance of noise from the tip. The sports grounds and allotments are significant open spaces and valuable to local residents and the wider borough. The recreation ground between the Hogsmill and Cambridge Road, whilst a valuable open space, is underused and could be improved.



### Key Area Characteristics

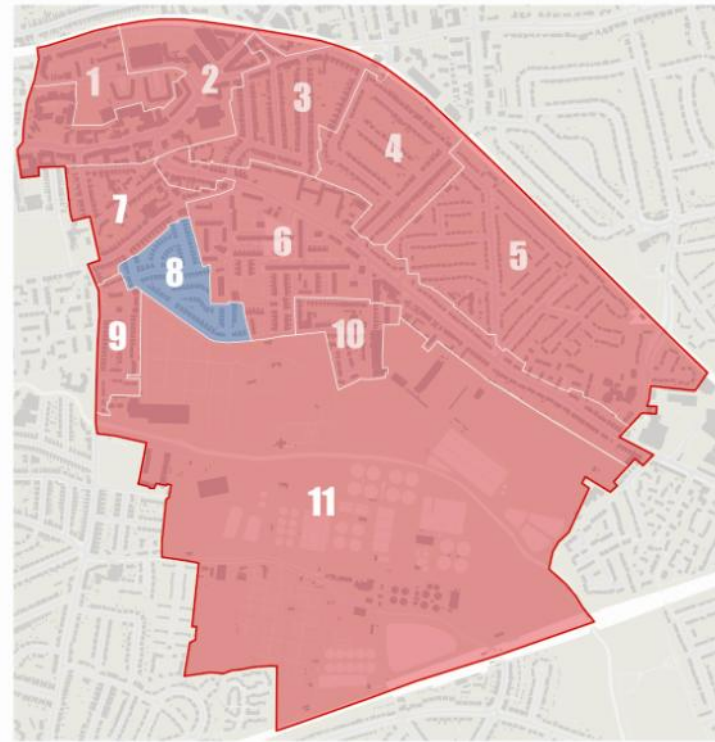
-  Major movement corridor
-  Minor movement corridor
-  Movement corridor needing enhancement
-  Area node
-  Area node needing enhancement
-  Minor Area node
-  Major gateway
-  Major barrier
-  Strategic Landmark
-  Local Landmark
-  Potential new landmark
-  Green open space
-  Open space in need of improvement
-  Key views to open space
-  Potential new view
-  Significant view to protect

## Character Area Types

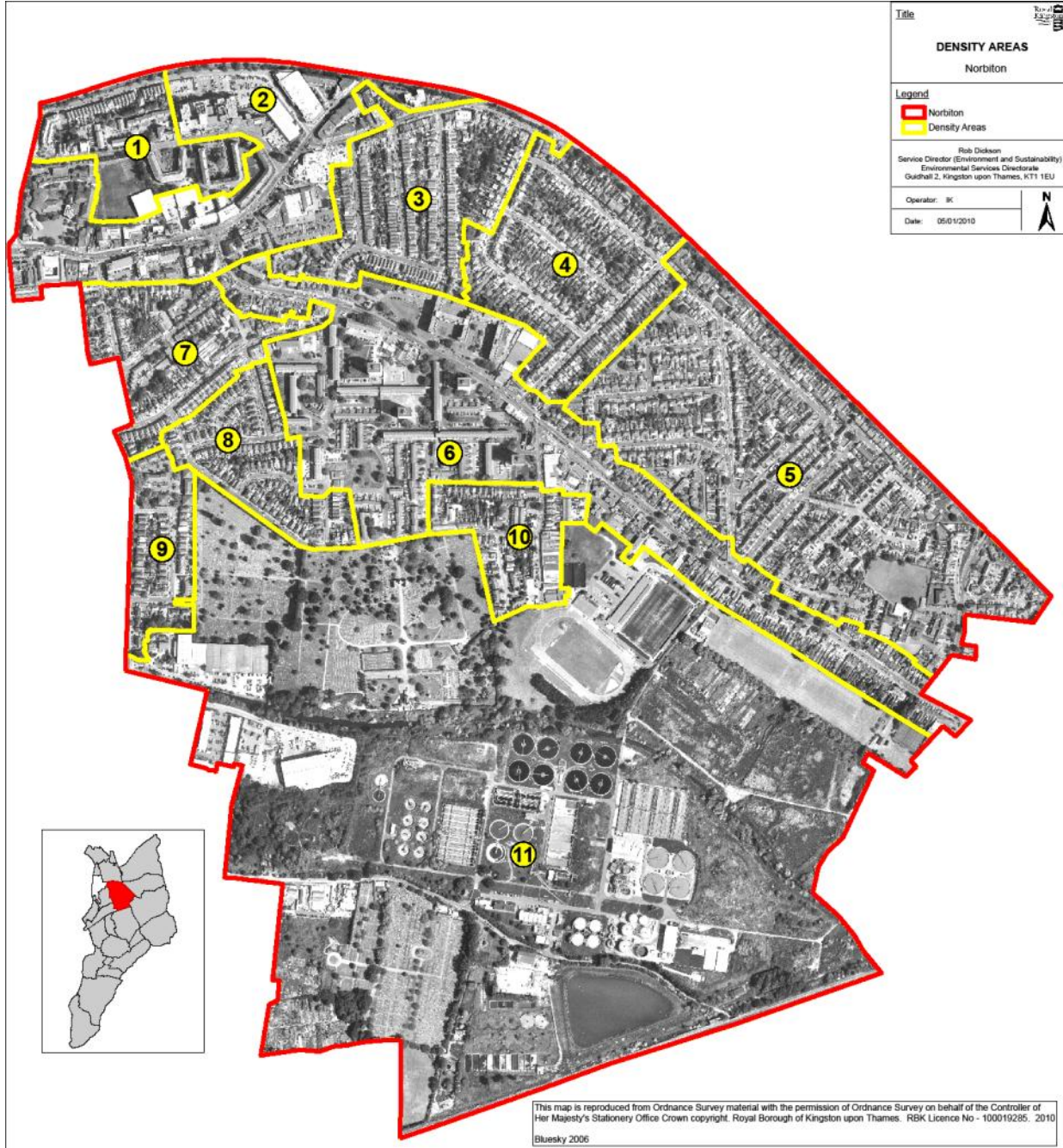


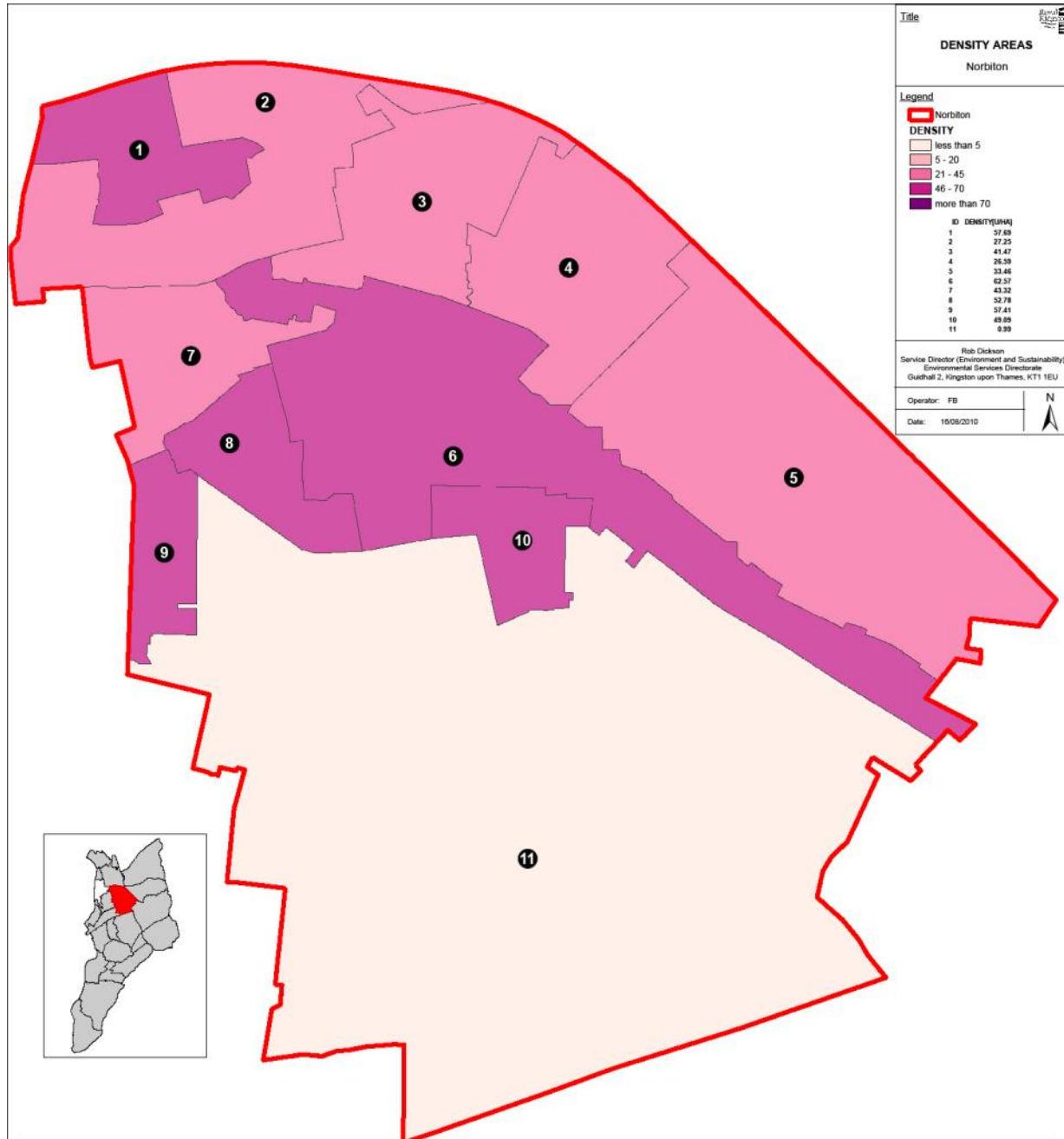
- Urban
- Inner Suburban
- Outer Suburban
- Rural / Open

## Character Area Assessment



- Area of Established High Quality
- Area with scope to reinforce the existing character
- Area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity







Gordon Road



Birkenhead Avenue

## Character Areas

### 1 Gordon Road/ Birkenhead Avenue

Gordon Road has a good public realm with recently planted street birch trees. A fine row of detached 1890's villas with decorated bays, form a coherent, largely undisturbed streetscape with most front boundaries intact. Street parking seems not to dominate, perhaps because only one side of the street has been developed, with the railway on the other side.

Birkenhead Road is missing street trees and has a poor public realm. Some late nineteenth century 3-storey villas have been stripped of their front boundaries for parking. The flats at no.9 are a poor neo-Victorian representation with poor townscape save a front boundary. The Tiffin School boundary is largely solid which detracts from the character and security of the area. Norbiton Hall, two mansion blocks of 4-storeys have a strong presence on the street but their landscape needs to integrate to the public realm landscape, when there is one. The Tithebarn development feels a relatively high density scheme, but it has been softened by planting and trees.

#### KEY ISSUES:

- Some footway trees missing
- Loss of front boundaries for on-plot parking
- Gordon Road would benefit from additional street tree planting to the railway side to soften its edge
- The public realm in Birkenhead is poor
- Mansion blocks could benefit from a landscape scheme that links to a street public realm scheme which could add a significant landscape character to offset the large buildings approaching London Road

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- This is a high PTAL area. The character of the Gordon Road houses should be reinforced by resisting the paving of front gardens for parking, and promoting the use of traditional details and materials. Any development should respect the strong coherent plot widths, building line, roofscape, storey heights and landscape character.
- In Birkenhead Road, new development should take scale cues from the Tithebarn scheme and the 3-storey villas. The Norbiton Hall mansion blocks are a maximal height and their height impact is reduced by their site configuration and landscape contribution. The open nature of the mansion blocks should be preserved from fill-in/fill-up development.

**Character area type: Inner Suburban (Density 58 dph) (PTAL 5-6a)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



London Road



London Road



Chesham Road

## 2 London Road

The London Road has a poor public realm. It is a traffic and speed dominated street. People crossing the street pass through pedestrian cages. Traffic signals do not prioritise people or cyclists. St.Peter’s Church is a resolute piece of architecture which acts as a landmark. Whilst the edges to the street are active, the environment (air, noise, speed) is poor because of the absolute domination here by the motor car which does not encourage people to walk or pause. The space is one to get-out-of-quick, as evidenced by the long-term empty ground floor shop/office units at 158-178.

### KEY ISSUES:

Some footway trees missing. The public realm in Birkenhead is poor. Mansion blocks could benefit from a landscape scheme that links to a street public realm scheme which could add a significant landscape character to offset the large buildings approaching London Road.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consider a public realm improvement scheme which could include central tree planting
- Whilst part of London Road has recently been developed 3 or 4 storeys high, any redevelopment of the last five plots to Station Road should show sensitivity to the height, plot grain, massing and appearance of the Victorian 2-storey houses in Station Road

**Character area type: Urban (Density 27 dph) (PTAL 3-6a)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**

## 3 Norbiton

The scale of Station Road belongs to the 2-storey shop buildings opposite, on Coombe Road. The golf shop presents an inactive edge and a lifeless car-park to the public realm. Shops are great activity and attractive if only the public realm could help them. Chatham, Chesham, Cobham, Clevedon, The C-Roads: Late Victorian detached villas largely intact front boundaries. Some street trees but a sea of street parking. High quality architecture to streetscape. Rhythm and spacing, cohesive scale and form is pleasing on the eye. Differs at ends of streets, in a variety context. Station Place - coherent scale and mass to the shops opposite on Coombe Road. Most front boundaries are intact and houses undisturbed by ‘enlargement or improvement’. A modest scale with elegantly stepped terrace.

### ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consideration of this character area for conservation area status/ special planning control
- Coombe Road is a valued local centre with fine 2-storey and 3-storey shopping parades - there is scope to improve the public realm to enhance shopping and walking link to the hospital
- Cobham Road: Needs public realm improvement at the commercial end else a high quality townscape with some street trees. Strongly coherent 2-storey gabled full-height bays with brickwork detailing.

**Character area type: Inner Suburban (Density 41 dph) (PTAL 3-4)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**





Douglas Road



Fleetwood Road



Double width dropped kerb



Front door contrast, area 5



Coherent massing and form enhanced by street trees, area 5



Original and replacement details



section 7 Norbiton/ page 9

## 4 Neville Road

Gloucester Road is a rat-run. Front boundaries largely intact. A less dense, less extravagant architecture than Cobham Road, less detailed, more glass.

**Character area type: Inner Suburban (Density 27 dph) (PTAL 2-3)**

**Character area assessment: 30**

## 5 Douglas Road

Eroded front boundaries and a lack of street trees. 2-storey, semi-detached houses where townscape cohesive character has been degraded by 'doing-up' the house. Mass and form is cohesive especially form, roofscape, and plot width, but the remainder is low quality.

**Character area type: inner suburban (density 33 dph) (PTAL 1b-2)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Cambridge Road Estate

## 6 Kingston Road including the Cambridge Road Estate

Kingston Road presents an extremely poor built environment that has suffered from car, lorry, bus dominance at the expense of people living there and moving along by foot or bike. Eroded front boundaries. A feeling of architectural depression and having given-up. Total dominance by car. Very useful landscape resource behind of a recreation ground and a cemetery but not tangible assets. Long gardens to houses backing onto the recreation ground appear unused with weeds 6 feet (2m) high filling lawns in many. There are street trees but leakage at every major junction/ access where highway dominates. Area desperately needs an action plan to salvage what good is left and to radically improve public realm. It is presently a 3.5 lane road including a bus lane heading in to Kingston. Needs architectural restoration. Where commercial use exists its frontage works against success of the area. Cambridge Road: The height and mass of the tower blocks are well set apart—the key character issue is the ground level which is disturbing. The public realm has disappeared. No ownership, unclear routes. Garages as inactive edge. Suggest remodelling blocks/removing garages. Potential to redevelop estate with replacement taller towers with clearer defined, high quality ground-scape. The buildings of Cambridge Gardens make a strong and interesting townscape, enhancing the architecture of the area.

### ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The area could be lifted if a landscape scheme were implemented in Cambridge Gardens—trees, parking rationalisation, lighting. Replacement stair glazing to original patterns would enhance the architecture. Avoid planting pitched roofs on these buildings.

Character area type: urban (density 63 dph) (PTAL 1b-4)  
 Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity



Cambridge Road Estate



Kingston Road.....



Kingston Road: weakened enclosure, illegibility, highway and advertisement dominance section 7 Norbiton/ page 10



Victorian school, now with sub-station and extension, off Hawks Road



Private space onto a busy Hawks Road

## 7 Hawks Road

A poor character area because of car domination where the townscape has taken second place, for example the dumping of an electrical substation onto the elegant, Victorian school. An advantage is the commercial mix and the ability to park, mix of residential and local shops. However, no street trees, and a dishevelled public realm. Hawks Clinic offers the only consistent front boundary (albeit chain link fence). Most front boundaries lost to parking in front of houses or to shop displays. A very busy road, fast, difficult to cross, and where walking on the narrow pavements makes you feel vulnerable. Albert Road has some fine 2-storey Victorian housing, but suffers boundary wall depletion, a lack of street trees, and its situation as a rat-run for cars.

### ISSUES & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Church Road, Victoria Road, Albert Road could benefit from a public realm improvement scheme such as street tree planting and anti-rat-run measures

**Character area type: inner suburban (density 43 dph) (PTAL 3-4)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



## 8 Bonnerhill Road

Characteristic of houses in a topography where they step down the hill or snake around curves as Linden Crescent/ Rowlls Road. High quality design of layout and houses of 2-storey, semi-detached, turn-of-the-century, with ground floor half bays with fluted columns, clay tiles, expressed party walls or slate with clay hips. Bonnerhill Road has some remaining mature London Plane street trees. Front boundaries are intact as half the street is effectively the cemetery, with some later infill housing. The hedge to the cemetery offers a green flank punctuated, by stone piers. Piper Road is a street of variety in roofs - gabled to one side and hipped to the other - despite intact front boundaries and no street trees, an interesting townscape. Rowlls Road has a double curve where the houses



Bonner Hill Road



Bonner Hill Road



respond in ground floor bays, 2-storey fine villas— no1 weakened by no street trees and compromised by a dominant recent roof extension. Somerset, Linden, and Portman Roads have a tighter urban grain but a strong streetscape with some street trees. Good cornering but weaker character in Portman Road to Hawks Road where it becomes commercial.

**Character area type: inner suburban (density 53 dph) (PTAL 1b-3)**

**Character area assessment: area of established high quality**

## 9 Dawson Road

The character here is strongly one of fine Edwardian houses, of 2-storeys with ground floor bays. Most front boundaries are intact, though the street lacks street trees and is swamped by parking without any breath. The townscape is one of roofs, party walls and chimneys. The northern end contains a gated development of higher density 3-storey flats and 2-storey houses but is well looked after, and planted, which reduces its impact. At the southern end, by the cemetery entrance, on the site of the old stonemasons' yard, is a modern development with little architectural relationship to the context, no reference to former use, on-plot parking with no front boundaries. It is a characterless relation to the Edwardian stock, in townscape terms.

**Character area type: inner suburban (density 57 dph) (PTAL 1b-3)**

**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**

Bonner Hill Road and area 8 characteristic detailing, roofscapes, façade design and gardens

## 10 Hampden Road

The character of Hampden Road is one of contrast, effectively dominated by a factory which appears to be lacking an enclosing wall so that the street effectively becomes part of the works, and a tudorbethan pub below a tower block, with filled-in windows painted to resemble an internal view of a countryside, log fire. The cottages have largely intact front boundaries. Bonnerhill Road has a mixture of 2-storey substantial cottages and more recent development including a commercial building of substantial size. Gladstone Road has a poor streetscape in a recent development formed around a narrow road, where front boundaries do not exist, and the street scene is characterised by freestanding wheelie bins and on pavement parking. Vincent Road has a largely undisturbed 2-storey form with some modern development. As half the street is open onto the tower block it appears to have largely intact front boundaries, however footpath parking does not help the quality of the space. Potential access link to River Hogsmill improvements and wider green spaces.

**Character area type: inner suburban (Density 49 dph) (PTAL 1b)**  
**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**

## 11 Norbiton Green Spaces

The open and green spaces, including the Hogsmill River, are an asset to this area and to wider Kingston. They represent a considerable resource but are largely unrealised. To release their potential contribution a masterplan could help define a strategy to improve links into and within the space, identify buildings and elements which do not contribute and ways to better integrate the green space to the wider townscape, and further improve existing high quality elements.

**Character area type: rural/ open (density 1 dh) (PTAL 0-2)**  
**Character area assessment: area requiring enhancement to reinforce identity**



Hampden Road



Gladstone Road



Gladstone Road



Norbiton open space



Vincent Road



Old Laundry site, Bonner Hill Road



Old Norbiton Schools,  
Cambridge Road

Area1: Gordon Road/ Birkenhead Avenue			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good:	Moderate:	Poor:
	Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	40	0
Character Area total score	40		

Area2: London Road			
Character Area Assessment Criteria	Good:	Moderate:	Poor:
	Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	10	0
Character Area total score	10		

### Area3: Chesham Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	30	0
Character Area total score	50		

### Area 4: Neville Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	30	0
Character Area total score	30		

## Area 5: Douglas Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	20	0
Character Area total score	20		

## Area 6: Kingston Road including the Cambridge Road Estate

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	5	0
Character Area total score	5		



## Area7: Hawks Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	15	0
Character Area total score	15		

## Area 8: Bonhill Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	70	10	0
Character Area total score	80		

## Area 11: Norbiton green spaces

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	30	15	0
Character Area total score	45		

### Area 9: Dawson Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	35	0
Character Area total score	35		

### Area 10: Hampden Road

Character Area Assessment Criteria	<b>Good:</b> Makes a significant contribution (Value of 10)	<b>Moderate:</b> Makes some direct contribution (Value of 5)	<b>Poor:</b> Does not contribute (Value of 0)
Clearly identifiable “edges” that distinguish it from the surrounding development			
Strong street pattern or road layout with well defined public spaces			
Building and street layout that is easy to find your way around with good connections to the surrounding streets			
Area containing buildings of architectural or historic interest			
Buildings with cohesive scale, massing and details			
High quality public realm and or generally consistent boundary treatments			
Significant trees or shrubs that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Green open spaces or riverside areas that make a positive contribution to the identity of the area			
Topography, significant views or landmarks that contribute to the experience of being within the area			
Area with few vacant or underused sites which affect the character			
Criteria score	0	15	0
Character Area total score	15		