



1	Producing the Walton on Thames Settlement Area Character Assessment	2
2	How to use the settlement and sub-area analysis	3
3	Walton on Thames Character Assessment	4

1 Producing the Walton on Thames Settlement Area Character Assessment

This companion guide forms an integral part of the Elmbidge Design and Character SPD. The guides provide a reference source for considering the character of an area as part of the design process for new development.

1.1 The following Character Assessment for Walton on Thames has been developed in partnership with the local community assisted by design consultants (Forum Heritage Services and Context 4D) and Elmbidge Borough Council.

Community Involvement

1.2 A community workshop was held at the Walton Day Centre on 7 April 2011, which allowed local people to talk about the character of their local area and suggest ways in which that character might be maintained and enhanced in light of future development. The community organisations that attended included the Walton Society and a local ward Councillor.

1.3 As well as providing a wealth of information about their local area, the community participants were instrumental in the subdivision of character areas and the identification of key features in Walton.



Sub dividing the character areas at the community workshop

1.4 The second half of the workshop concentrated on the design process and allowed participants to see how the new SPD would work.

1.5 Participants were given the opportunity to appraise the context and setting of a site in practice using maps and notation symbols to assist them. A site visit involved appraising an edge of town centre corner plot, considering issues such as impact on historic assets, continuation of the building line and creating a pivotal corner. As well as this exercise, the site visit included a walk through Walton town centre observing both local character and buildings of historic importance as well as new development such as The Heart and the High Street improvements.

1.6 The community issues and specific issue text boxes that are featured within the character assessment provide a summary of those issues raised at the workshop.

1.7 A feedback session held on the 15 September 2011 allowed participants to check the draft assessment adding any additional comments and providing further information where appropriate.

2 How to use the settlement and sub-area analysis

Step 1: Identify the settlement area and sub-area your development site falls within, using the character area map to help you. The maps also provide an overview of the wider context of the area.

Step 2: Read the introduction to the settlement area, which gives a brief overview and a summary of key features, providing you with a snapshot of settlement character and highlighting key issues identified from community workshops.

Step 3: Read the sub-area analysis, taking note of specific local concerns and where to find additional design guidance.

2.1 In order to inform your design proposal, it is important to evaluate and understand the key characteristics of the settlements and their sub-areas. Understanding an area's character will help to deliver high quality development that contributes to the distinctiveness of the local area and sense of place. In order to do this effectively, the Borough has been subdivided into 8 settlement areas, reflecting those in the Core Strategy. Each settlement area has been further divided into sub-areas, derived from fieldwork and group discussions at the community workshops.

2.2 The sub-area analysis describes its predominant characteristics such as building types, use, scale, grain, tree cover and any heritage assets. Reference may be made to specific design guidance you should take account of when considering your development proposal. In some instances, reference is also made to case studies that may be particularly relevant to the type of development likely to occur in the sub-area. These are contained within the main document and illustrate the process of understanding local character through context and site appraisal, which will generate a

design concept and indicative design. Each case study offers just one solution to how a site could be developed and there may be instances when other case studies are relevant, depending on the nature of the development.

2.3 Where the community workshop identified specific issues affecting a particular sub-area, a box is included to highlight these concerns. This is intended to help you carefully consider the local context and the sensitivities of the site's surroundings. It provides an opportunity to show how you might address specific concerns highlighted in relation to sub-areas. These may not be exhaustive but are provided as prompts for consideration.

2.4 For sites that fall on the edge of two sub-areas or settlement boundaries, you will need to take into account adjoining sub-areas, which may have an impact on the context of the site. In many ways the design requirements of these sites are more complex to resolve as they may be at a key transition between one type of development and another.

2.5 You should use the settlement and sub-area analysis as a starting point to develop a clear context for your proposal. This should be considered in more detail through site visits etc, taking account of the specific location of the development site.

The analysis of character and context should be an integral part of a Design and Access Statement.

3 Walton on Thames Character Assessment



Introduction

3.1 This settlement area, which borders a sizeable section of the River Thames, contains the largest town in the Borough, Walton on Thames. The town centre has recently seen major redevelopment with completion of 'The Heart', a large mixed use scheme which provides housing, high quality retail units, a library, restaurants, bars and cafés, located around a pedestrianised street to the south-west of the High Street.



The Heart

3.2 The settlement area has two conservation areas; Walton (Riverside) and Walton (Church Street/Bridge Street). The former includes part of the medieval settlement, including a surviving Manor House (Grade I Listed) and remaining elements of the riverside village (particularly parts of the road and street layout). The area is known locally as Old Walton.

3.3 There was a small expansion of the town in the late 19th century with the laying out of Winchester Road which became the spine road for mostly later development (early and mid 20th century) which formed the tight grid of streets seen today. However, it was not until the 20th century that Walton expanded through a series of large developments to the south and east of the town centre, including the development of Ashley Park, and the progressive infilling of roads and consolidation of large houses along Hershams Road to the Halfway and the station environs.

3.4 The area to the east of Sidney Road was developed during the inter-war and post-war periods. Rydens is notable for possibly the largest concentration of single storey or chalet style houses in the Borough. In addition, there is much variation in house type, scale and density across this settlement area. This stretches from the low and high rise flats, to very large detached houses set in generous plots.

Summary of key Features

- Highly focused, fine grained town centre (with medieval origins) with extensive residential suburbs predominantly dating from the early to late 20th century
- Very popular riverside easily accessed.
- Three distinct shopping areas which have different but complementary functions
- Wide and diverse range of house types including high rise flatted development in both residential blocks (Wellington Close) and mixed use schemes (The Heart and The Halfway – Kings Court, Hershams Road)
- High degree of mature broadleaf tree cover to large parts of the settlement area, particularly to front boundaries
- Elevated reservoirs and open flood plain to the north form an important buffer between Molesey and Walton and create key entry-points to the residential suburbs
- Strongly defined gateways to the settlement area (in-part by railway and river)

- Two designated conservation areas- Riverside and Church Street/Bridge Street and the Grade I listed Old Manor House ⁽¹⁾
- Fewer street trees when compared with other parts of the Borough
- Much extension and alteration of existing housing stock.
- Some areas of high architectural quality such as Ashley Park and elsewhere as isolated groups or individual houses (parts of Sidney Road, Kings Road and Manor Road environs)



Walton Methodist Church

Issues identified from the Community Workshops

- It was generally felt that there were a number of important potential redevelopment sites, some currently light industrial, within and to the edge of the town centre which needed careful consideration, but could provide significant benefits in terms of sustainable development, located close to a vibrant and successful town centre.
- Potential development sites will often include historic buildings or their setting which need to be carefully considered.

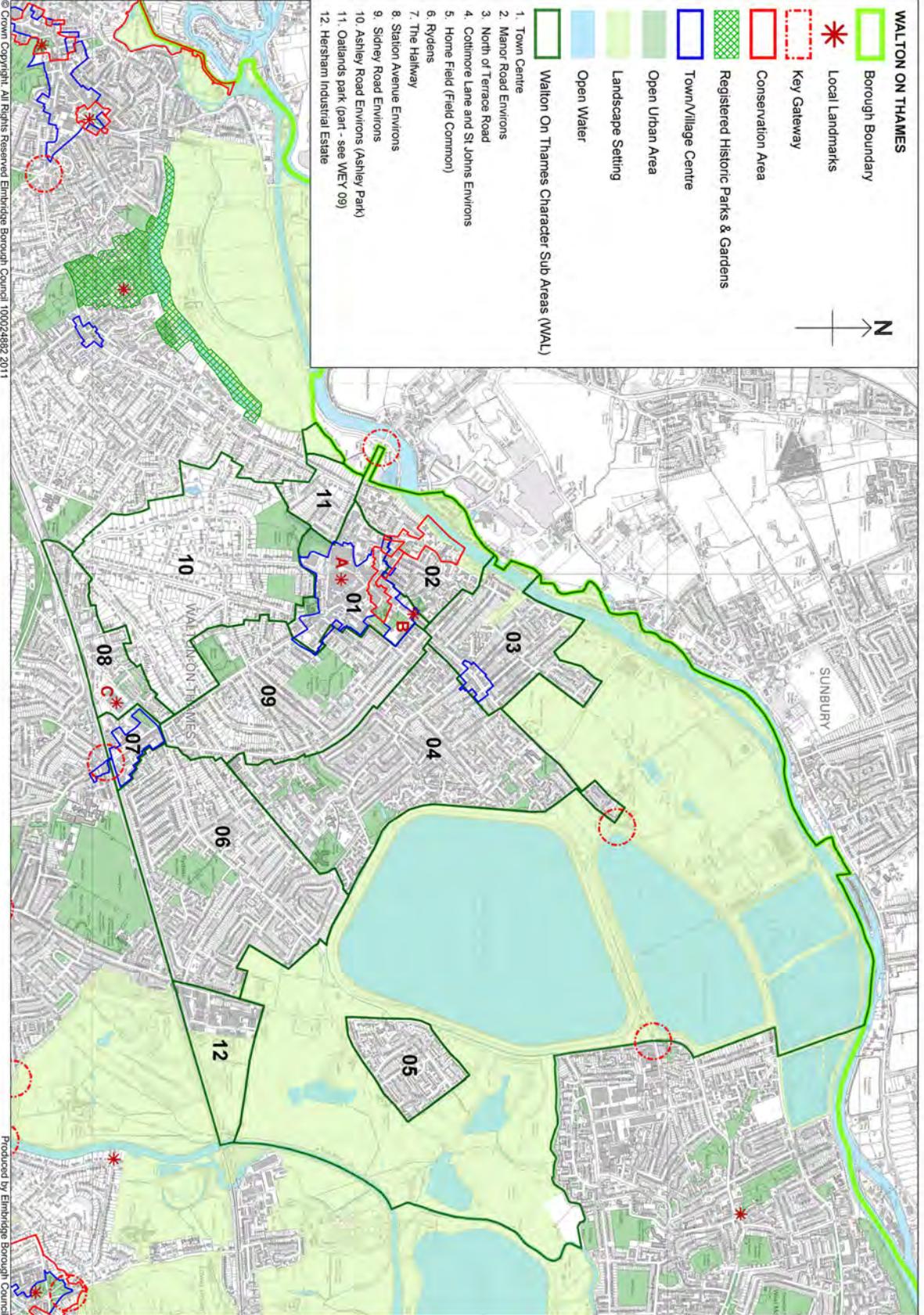
Local Landmarks

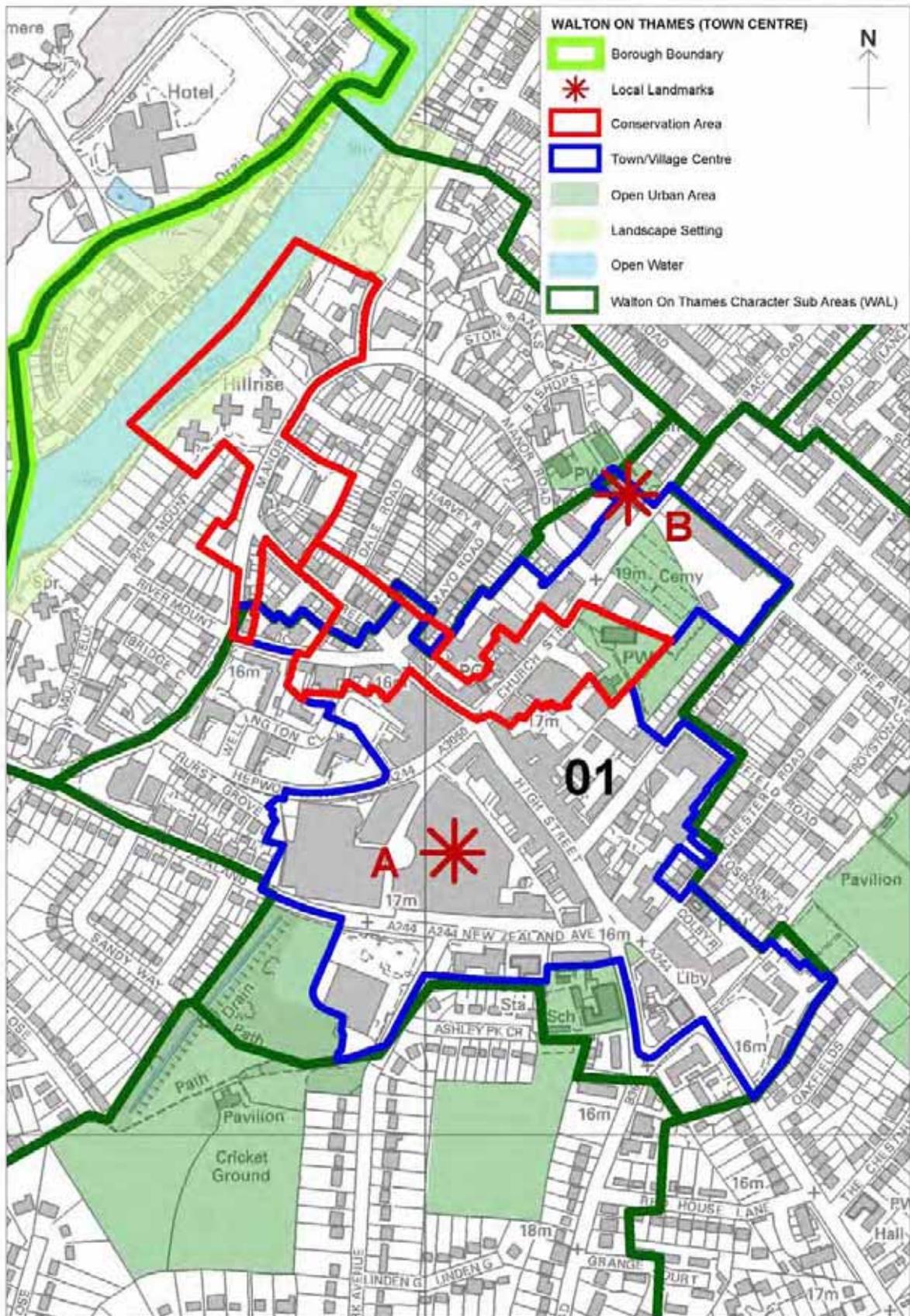
As featured on settlement map

- A. The Heart, Walton Town Centre
- B. Spire, Walton on Thames Methodist Church, Terrace Road
- C. Former Grade II listed Birds Eye Offices, Station Avenue

3.5 The following maps can be viewed in more detail using the Council's interactive mapping system 'My Elmbridge' which is located on the Elmbridge Borough Council homepage

1 To find out more about these conservation areas please see <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/heritage/ConAreas.htm>





The Sub-areas

WAL01: Town Centre

Overview

3.6 This is a complex mixed use area, recently the subject of major redevelopment, and is divided into two sections;

- the older core of Walton comprising the High Street and Church Street to the north (part of which is designated as a conservation area)
- 'The Heart' and Wellington Close to the south and west

3.7 From medieval origins, the High Street and Church Street sections of the sub-area add to the high quality bespoke retail spaces to the south.

3.8 Prior to the 1920s much of the south side of the High Street formed the edge of Ashley Park with houses to the north converted at ground floor to provide shops.

3.9 The relatively modest domestic scale and fine grain of early development still survives in the High Street and Church Street sections of this sub-area.



High Street, Walton

3.10 To the older sections of the town centre two and two and a half storey buildings are commonplace.

3.11 'The Heart' is at a far larger scale extending to seven storeys in places with the flats adjacent to Wellington Close extending to ten storeys.



Wellington Close flats

3.12 This area has a very strong urban character and has the highest density of housing and mixed uses within Elmbridge.

3.13 There is a high degree of architectural quality and articulation in old and new buildings and a vibrant mix of commercial, retail, cafes, restaurants and residential uses.

3.14 This is a hard edged urban core with very little tree cover. Where this is found, it is focused on areas such as the cemetery and northern edges of the cricket ground which borders the town centre.

3.15 Open space is a combination of hard surface public realm and other green space for example the cemetery and cricket ground.

3.16 Despite the significant redevelopment of the town centre there remains a relatively high number of statutory listed buildings and part of the Walton Conservation Area (Church Street/Bridge Street) falls within this sub-area.



Grade II listed buildings, Church Street

3.17 A number of buildings of local interest, and a small number of locally listed buildings, are also to be found within this sub-area for example the Old Library and former School Master's House to the south of the town centre.

Opportunities

3.18 There are significant development opportunities within this sub-area. **Case Study CS5 and CS6** will be of most relevance in this part of the Borough.

WAL02: Manor Road environs

Overview

3.19 This sub-area is almost entirely residential with the notable exception of the Grade II listed converted barn and complex which make up the Riverhouse Community Arts Centre and the Walton Day Centre, Manor Road.

3.20 There is a cluster of popular public houses on the waterside and Manor Road.



Thames Street, a mix of house types from 17th to 20th century

3.21 The road layout and network of paths, particularly the access points to the riverside, are likely to date from the medieval period and in this respect they provide a framework for development which has occurred at a higher density than other parts of Walton and resulted in an attractive fine urban grain.

3.22 Notable views of this part of the town can be had from the north side of the river. The skyline is particularly evident and sensitive to change in these views.

3.23 Houses are generally of a modest scale, two storey, with some older properties with dormer windows. There is much use and conversion of roof spaces with the use of rooflights and dormers.



Roof lights and dormer windows to Dale Road

3.24 A series of flatted developments to the riverside at three storeys add to the range of buildings in this older part of the Borough and are well-landscaped for the most part with trees.

3.25 This area is generally referred to as 'Old Walton' and its Thameside related activities (which include a number of rowing clubs) is part of its essential character.

3.26 The scale of the buildings, changes in level, and the mature trees are features which give this small but well-defined area a special character which is reflected in its partial conservation area status.

Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- The insertion of oversized and inappropriately placed dormer windows to roof extensions was highlighted as a particular issue in this sub-area.

Opportunities

3.27 Given the already high density and fine grained character of established and often historic built form, development opportunities are likely to be limited.

3.28 In light of the issues raised at the community workshop, roof extensions and dormer windows will require sensitive design. Please see the Home Extensions Companion Guide for further advice.

3.29 Any future development located close to the river frontage should take into account specific design advice featured in section 6 on riverside development.

WAL03: North of Terrace Road

Overview

3.30 This sub-area is residential to the north of Terrace Road.

3.31 Terrace Road itself is a major gateway into Walton on Thames, with mixed use development, mostly comprising shops with residential above or purpose built units which include offices and services.

3.32 This local centre (between Russell Road and Sunbury Lane) is a very distinct and well-used section of the sub-area and serves the relatively high density residential areas which lead off forming a tight grid of streets and cross streets.



Local centre, Terrace Road

3.33 The exception to this is the modern development, Thamesmead, which is offset from the grid creating triangular spaces along the plan.

3.34 To the north of this is a nine storey block of flats, which contrasts with the established late Victorian scale and grain of this sub-area.



Thamesview House

3.35 Beyond the building is an open space stretching to the riverside. Along with a number of access points from roads adjacent to the River and tow path, this open space provides public access to the River Thames, enabling pedestrians and cyclists to avoid busy roads into and out of the town centre.

3.36 Houses are generally two storey and semi-detached.

3.37 The occasional narrow detached house is found and there are a series of short terraces to parts of some streets.

3.38 The building line is consistent throughout and strongly defines views along these streets.

3.39 A key characteristic of this sub-area is the fine grain and consistency to plot size and ratio, but with subtle variation to groups of houses; some with gables on to the street; some with bays to the ground floor; and others in short terraces with modest architectural detailing.



Sunbury Lane

3.40 The richness of variation to individual and groups of houses, combined with the grid-like streets, forms a distinctive townscape throughout this sub-area.

Opportunities

3.41 Development is likely to take the form of infill (see **Case Study CS3**) or possibly involve land to the rear of shopping areas (**Case Study CS4**).

WAL04: Cottimore Lane and St Johns environs

Overview

3.42 This sub-area is mostly medium to high density inter-war and post-war houses and flats.

3.43 Houses are generally two storey with limited articulation and mostly pitch roofs facing the roadside, although there are some groups of gable to roadside houses (usually older properties), which provide interest in the streetscape.

3.44 Flatted development is generally found in clusters, particularly the group of three, eight storey blocks at Vicarage Fields to the far east bordering the Queen Elizabeth II reservoir, which are local landmarks, and to the St Johns area to the south.



Flats to St Johns Drive

3.45 The building line to most houses is close to the back of pavement with only small front gardens between the roadside and frontage.

3.46 There has been a loss of front boundary walls and the use of gardens for parking spaces. This has had a significant effect on the character of some streets within this sub-area.



Front gardens replaced with parking, Carlton Road

3.47 Whilst there are hedges and ornamental trees within front gardens, there is a lack of mature trees and no grass verges.

Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- Loss of front boundaries and gardens to parking spaces.

Opportunities

3.48 This sub-area could potentially accommodate a range of development from small scale flatted development, replacement buildings and sub-division of larger plots where they survive. **Case Studies CS1 and CS2** will be particularly relevant.

WAL05: Homefield (Field Common)

Overview

3.49 This sub-area is separated from the remaining residential suburbs of Walton, and surrounded by the reservoirs to the west and

east, although their presence is not apparent until almost immediately adjacent to their grass banks.

3.50 Homefield functions almost as a separate local centre. It has a small parade of shops and a strong community spirit.

3.51 Post-war housing development is set on an informal grid of streets with cul-de-sacs leading from a main feeder road which serves the whole development.

3.52 Houses are two storey, mostly semi-detached, but some are on short terraces and set around communal green spaces.

3.53 There is a distinct openness to the development within this sub-area, with open boundaries and limited tree cover, although there are some street trees to wide grass verges and mature hedges to some houses.



Field Common Lane

3.54 Recently, a large part of the Oakbank Avenue has been redeveloped, replacing substandard housing with a mix of flats and houses.

Opportunities

3.55 Development is likely to take the form of infill to existing established patterns of medium to high density and redevelopment of existing buildings.

3.56 In this grid-like street layout, the role of proposed development will be important. For guidance on this please see the diagrams at **section 5 on the roles within the streetscape** in addition to **case study CS3**.

WAL06: Rydens

Overview

3.57 This sub-area is almost wholly residential.

3.58 It is mostly characterised by small, low-rise two storey detached and semi-detached houses interspersed with some flats. These are generally three storey, often with flat roofs.



Flats to St Martins Drive

3.59 A notable exception in terms of scale is the private estate south of Rydens Road bounded by Crofton Avenue, Shaldon Way and the railway. Within these roads there is a concentration of bungalows with some chalet style housing. This is one of the larger areas of this type of housing in the Borough, and is quite distinctive.



Bungalows to Crofton Avenue

3.60 A notable characteristic of this part of the Walton is the green front boundaries and rear gardens with mature broad leaf trees to both, often making a significant positive contribution to the public realm.

3.61 Grass verges and street trees in places add to the verdant qualities of the street scene.



Rydens Road

Opportunities

3.62 Within this medium density residential area, new development might be accommodated through sub division (**Case Study CS2**) or redevelopment of brownfield sites (**See Case Study CS3**).

WAL07: The Halfway

Overview

3.63 This part of the settlement area is particularly distinctive in terms of its mix of older buildings, varied uses and presence of the railway bridge which effectively acts as a well-defined 'gateway' to the Walton settlement area.



Shops in Hersham Road

3.64 This important local centre comprises independent shops, cafes and restaurants in addition to a garage and car sales, fire station and petrol station. This mix of uses means that there is constant activity, movement and interest which makes for a dynamic townscape.



Mixed use character of this part of Hersham Road

3.65 The older shops, with flats and some office accommodation above, have bay windows and Dutch style ogee gables fronting the roadside.

3.66 Occasional mature trees, some of them specimen trees particularly towards the railway line, add some valuable greenery to the street scene.

3.67 Views north along Hersham Road into sub-area WAL09 are notable for their dense green borders to the roadside in contrast to the hard edges of built form at The Halfway.



**View looking north from Station Avenue/
Hersham Road junction**

Opportunities

3.68 Development within this sub-area is likely to have a mixed use character. **Case studies CS4, CS5 and CS6** may be relevant.

WAL08: Station Avenue environs

Overview

3.69 This sub-area comprises Walton on Thames rail station, which sits on an area of land to the north of the railway dissected by Station Avenue.

3.70 To the north, flatted development (including maisonettes) has replaced older villas to this part of the settlement area. These are all set back from the road generally in communal green spaces with some tree screening from Station Avenue.



Flats to Trafalgar Drive leading off Station Avenue

3.71 To the south of Station Avenue is a large office development dating from the 1960s. This building is Grade II listed. Of particular note is the integral landscaping including a long pool and abstract sculpture of flying birds fronting the roadside elevation.



Former Birds Eye Foods Offices

3.72 Elsewhere there is some evidence of architectural innovation and experimentation, with developments having asymmetrical roof profiles and reflecting much of the use of materials and architectural simplicity of the Span Developments (seen in nearby Oatlands Park (see WEY06) and sharing some of the spatial qualities of these developments.

3.73 This area, when compared with adjacent sub-areas, has a mixed use.

3.74 The station, car sales showroom and garage area, offices and flats are all separate and could potentially have an improved relationship with the road and public realm.

3.75 What is notable is the very high degree of tree cover, almost throughout, making for a pleasant public realm.

Opportunities

3.76 The area has good public transport and high density development may be appropriate in some circumstances.

3.77 For guidance on achieving high quality replacement buildings for flatted developments please see **Case Study CS1**.

3.78 For specific design guidance on the design of future commercial development please see **section 6**.

WAL09: Sidney Road environs

Overview

3.79 This sub-area comprises largely residential development, with a number of small schools and older buildings which have been converted to institutional and office uses.

3.80 There is a lower density of built form to much of this area with some large and very large houses set in generous regular plots.

3.81 Mostly two and two and a half storey detached houses but some semi-detached.

3.82 Most houses are set back from the roadside in gardens with side access and driveways providing off street parking.

3.83 Boundaries are generally mature and landscaped and often contain a mix of broadleaf and ornamental trees.



Sidney Road

3.84 The road layout is on an irregular grid of mostly long straight, partly tree-lined, streets forming part of the early 20th century expansion of the town with later 20th century infill.

3.85 There are some individual houses of high architectural quality.

3.86 Varying degrees of articulation to the roadside, including projecting gabled bays and more modest canted and bowed bays and porches are common.



Houses to Sidney Road/Bowes Road junction

3.87 To the north-west corner of the sub-area, the Winchester Road environs is a Victorian extension to the town and comprises a regular grid of streets running parallel and perpendicular to the High Street. Most houses here are two/two and a half storey mix of

detached and semi-detached units set back from the roadside generally at a fine grain, and higher density to the rest of the sub-area.

Specific issues raised at the Community Workshop

- Insertion of oversized rooflights and dormers to front roof slopes
- On-street parking in places gives front gardens a cluttered appearance

Opportunities

3.88 The Sidney Road environs, with the possible exception of the older roads adjacent to the town centre, may offer some opportunities for new development of houses or flats (**Case Study CS1**).

3.89 Roof extensions and on street parking provision will require sensitive design in light of the comments made at the community workshop. Please see the **Home Extensions Companion Guide** for advice.

WAL10: Ashley Road environs (Ashley Park)

Overview

3.90 This sub-area originated as the grounds of Ashley House, built 1602-7 and demolished in 1929 with half acre plots sold from 1930.

3.91 It is a private estate but has Ashley Road passing through the centre (the B365) which is a busy thoroughfare leading to one of the few railway crossing places which links Walton to the major road networks to the south.

3.92 The sub-area comprises large detached houses set in regular generous plots.

3.93 Houses often have significant open green space to their curtilage.

3.94 There is generally a fixed building line but the presence of landscaped boundaries and mature trees and tree groups, combined with the often gentle curve of roads, gives an informal feel to the area.

3.95 It is semi-rural in places with most houses at least partially obscured by vegetation and tree cover.



Adelaide Road

3.96 Some of the older houses show a confident and bold use of vernacular materials and characteristics, particularly the use of faux timber framing and controlling the massing of buildings through articulation of the roof, possibly incorporating projecting gables and catslide roofs over garage extensions.



Houses to Ashley Road

3.97 The cricket ground to the northern edge links this sub-area with the town centre (WAL01) and is an important, attractive tree-lined green amenity space.

Opportunities

3.98 Development could take the form of the replacement of existing buildings (**Case Study CS1**) or possibly sub-division of plots (**Case Study CS2**), subject to careful consideration of the established low density grain of existing development.

WAL11: Oatlands Park (part – see WEY09)

3.99 Please see the description for WEY09 of which this small extension in the Walton Settlement area forms part.

WAL12: Hersham Industrial Estate

Overview

3.100 This sub-area comprises a small industrial estate to the edge of the residential area, adjacent to the railway line and set around a grid of roads with two access and egress points but no through road.

3.101 Units are set out on small to medium sized plots often surrounded by hardstanding used for parking or storage.

3.102 There is generally an office/administration block of two or three storeys to the roadside, usually brick with a flat roof with large profile metal or asbestos cement sheeting clad industrial spaces behind.

3.103 These are mainly used for light industrial and manufacturing with some storage and distribution.



Lyon Road, Hersham Industrial Estate

Opportunities

3.104 This area is strategic employment land and unlikely to be redeveloped in the short term.

3.105 For design guidance on the design of future commercial development please see **section 6**.