6.0 Other Sites Proposed for Redevelopment within the Core Area

- Nos. 5-7 Upper Green West, north side (No. 4 is part of proposals site 1.MI and Nos. 8-9 are proposed for retention).
- Nos. 12-16 Upper Green West, south side (Iceland & Conservative Club).
- Nos. 3-27 Upper Green East, north side (& sub-station to rear).
- Nos. 1-8 Langdale Parade, Upper Green East, south side.
- Nos. 1-10 Majestic Way (north side).
- Nos. 9-17 Western Road (Blockbuster & Netto).
- Nos. 37-39 Western Road.
- Nos. 193(works)-201 London Road (north side of St. Mark’s Road).
- Nos. 205-211 London Road (south of St. Mark’s Road). Planning permission granted in January 2003 for additional storey, currently under construction.
- Nos. 213-221 London Road (north of White Lion Ph).
- Nos. 234-244 London Road (north of Sibthorpe Road).
- Nos. 246-256 London Road (south of Sibthorpe Road).
- Surface car park, Raleigh Gardens.
- No.225 London Road.

6.17 Other Sites Within the Study Area with Extant Permissions

- Land to rear of Three Kings PH and No. 23 Commonsde East. Planning permission granted in September 2004 for residential development to the rear and flats above the pub.

6.18 Other Sites Outside the Core Area with Development Potential

- Nos 174 London Road and 14 Bond Road. Light industrial premises to the rear of site 4.MI.
- Mitcham Library, No. 157 London Road.
- Nos. 29-33 Upper Green East, north side.
- Car repair garage, Nos. 1-7 Clarendon Grove (& adjacent yard).
- Nos 189-191 London Road.
- No. 30 St. Mark’s Road, community hall and warehouse.
- No. 26 St. Mark’s Road, Royal British Legion Club.
- No. 159 Commonsde East & Alpine Works Hallowell Close.
- Light industrial yard, adjacent to No. 2 Hallowell Close.

7.0 Main Development and Urban Design Guidance

Vision, Aims and Objectives

7.1 The Vision for the regeneration of Mitcham is:

‘To provide a district town centre with quality shopping, quality housing, a quality environment, good transport links and improved community facilities’

7.2 The Key Aim is:

‘To achieve this by regenerating Mitcham to be an economically, commercially and environmentally viable and sustainable town centre’

7.3 The Key Objectives for achieving this are:

- To create an economically sustainable and viable town centre through improved quality and quantity of commercial, retail, residential and community uses.
- To create a socially and environmentally sustainable community.
- Create vibrant and attractive public spaces.
- Achieve high quality urban design, architecture and open spaces.
- Provide a greater quantity and mix of land uses in the town centre.
- Enhance accessibility to and around the town centre, whilst promoting sustainable transport.

7.4 The guidance in this SPD is intended to be flexible and be able to respond to, and accommodate, a range of options for detailed design. Regeneration proposals must, however, show how they respond to the detailed guidance in this SPD and fully justify any significant variations from it.

7.5 The regeneration of the town centre must be based on a sound economic argument, and this is a theme that runs through this SPD and should inform all regeneration proposals. A successful regeneration must turn around the decline of the town in a way that will be self sustaining and robust enough to adapt to future social and economic changes. It must therefore produce a step-change increase in quality that will dilute the existing concentration of factors that are responsible for the town’s decline. A vicious circle of decline must be replaced by a virtuous circle of renewal and prosperity.

7.6 Given the current condition of the town centre, this can only be achieved by major intervention through a comprehensive redevelopment to provide the facilities the town centre needs to regain its prosperity. This should generally be provided through an increased quantity and quality of retail uses, increased quality commercial and business uses, increased quantity of (appropriate tenure) of housing and improved community facilities. Provision of increased residential units in the town centre of an appropriate tenure is an important element in attracting high quality retail uses through increasing the disposable income of residents, and particularly important in giving the town the ability to sustain economic prosperity. The Property Market Overview conducted by CBRE is summarised in Section 11 of this SPD and appended at Appendix D.
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Town Centre Analysis

Historic Development

7.7 Mitcham developed as a village on a crossroads on the coaching route out of London in the pre-railway era. This character remained as the railways passed around the village, rather than serving it. The village, being located some distance from the Wandle valley, also escaped much of the industrialisation that developed along the river. Plan 3 shows Mitcham at the turn of the 20th Century. The village remained a generally prosperous north Surrey village until it was absorbed into the urban growth of London in the inter-war period of the 20th Century. This new development ensured continued prosperity as a small urban town centre. The post-war period saw a combination of social and economic factors that led to the town beginning to gradually decline in its prosperity. Elements of the town’s village character remain today, most notably the Fair Green.

Economic Decline

7.8 A visible decline of the area began in the 1960s. Over the years, Mitcham town centre has failed to compete with the nearby centres of Wimbledon, Tooting and Streatham, as well as major metropolitan centres of Kingston, Sutton and Croydon. The most notable signs of decline in the town centre are the low quality of its physical fabric, architecture and landscaping; and the poor state of repair of many buildings and areas of the public realm, especially those constructed in the second half of the 20th Century. The town centre’s decline is also visible in the low quantity and quality of its retail offer and other central facilities. In comparison with other, more prosperous town centres in south London, Mitcham has to cope with the additional challenges posed by the fact that it is surrounded by some of Merton’s most socially and economically deprived residential wards.

7.9 A survey of land uses shows a variety of retail facilities and services in the core area of the town centre (see Plan 4), with more shops along London Road and Upper Green East and West. Housing is located mostly at the edges of the town centre and on some of the top floors within its core area. Community and leisure facilities are sparsely distributed throughout the town centre area. Small run-down shops and services, closed retail facilities, restaurants and vacant premises are signs of the economic decline in Mitcham. Specialist shops, which do not rely on high footfalls and normally occupy secondary retail locations, have appeared in the primary retail locations and pedestrianised areas of the town centre.

Accessibility & Transport

7.10 At a local level, a sizable population of residents can be found within an 800m (10 min walk) radius of the town centre and its public spaces (see Plan 5). However, a number of large urban areas without streets, and broken or missing pedestrian connections result in complicated routes and increase the walking distance from the surrounding local residential areas into the town centre (see Plan 6). Currently only part of the planned network of cycle routes for Mitcham has been implemented. Routes along Western Road, Commonside West and the town centre remain to be implemented. Completing this network of safe and convenient routes through and around the town centre will have to be addressed in regeneration proposals. The majority of the
residential areas surrounding the town centre are characterised by relatively low car ownership and thus a real opportunity exists to increase walking and cycling from the surrounding residential area.

7.11 Mitcham is dominated by through vehicular traffic. This is due to its proximity to other centres and a lack of alternative routes. The characteristics of the mini by-pass of Holborn Way and the gyratory emphasise the dominance of traffic and exacerbates problems for local pedestrian movement. As a result low levels of pedestrian activity in the town centre were identified by the results of a pedestrian movement observation study carried out in November 2004 (on a weekday 12:00-14:00). The results are shown on Plan 7. The hourly movement rates recorded during the busiest (lunchtime) period on a weekday were generally lower than average lunchtime levels found in district centres of similar size and catchment. The highest movement rates were observed in Majestic Way at its western end and in London Road, to the south of the Fair Green.

7.12 In terms of the public transport provision, Mitcham town centre is relatively well served by buses, giving it a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 4. However, its accessibility is lower than most other urban centres in the borough, as it is not served by rail or tube services. PTAL is the adopted London wide measure of the accessibility of a point to the public transport network, taking into account walking access time and service availability. It is an important consideration when setting appropriate parking and residential densities for new development. The nearest rail stations are Tooting Broadway tube (2.7km or 35 min. walk), Colliers Wood tube (1.9km or 25 min. walk), Tooting railway station (1.5km or 20 min. walk), Mitcham tramstop (1.1km or 15 min. walk) and Mitcham Junction railway station and tramstop (1.6km or 20 min. walk). These distances are also shown on Plan 5.

7.13 The combination of inconvenient or missing pedestrian routes, a low quality public realm and built fabric, the barrier effect of heavy traffic enveloping the centre and relatively poor public transport provision contribute to low footfalls within the centre. This has a substantial knock-on effect on the economic performance of the businesses within it, most of which are directly dependent on footfall.

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