

Sutton Town Centre

HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT

GATEWAY DOCUMENT

Delivered by :



On behalf of :



Heritage Action Zones
Historic England



Carshalton and
District History
and Archaeology
Society

Sutton Town Centre Historic Area Assessment

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Commissioned by **Historic England** and **London Borough of Sutton**

Part of the **Sutton Town Centre Heritage Action Zone**, a partnership programme from **Historic England, London Borough of Sutton, Successful Sutton Business Improvement District** and **Carshalton and District History and Archaeological Society**

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SUTTON'S HERITAGE RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUTTON TOWN CENTRE HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT

The **Sutton Town Centre Historic Area Assessment** provides an evidence base for the centre's historic environment.

It can be used to:

- Understand what defines the **heritage significance** of the town centre
- Identify the **architectural and historic interest** of the town centre's heritage assets
- Understand the distinctive **historic character and appearance** of the centre, and how the legacies of the past continue to contribute to the modern townscape
- Highlight **issues and opportunities for change** for the centre's historic environment and heritage assets

This understanding can be used to:

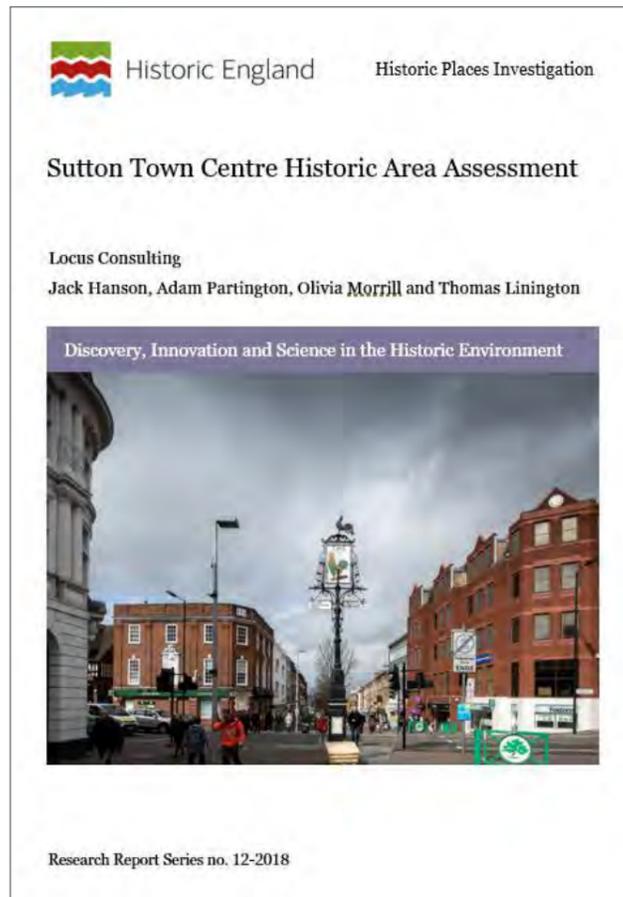
- Achieve more **informed management** of Sutton's heritage
- Assist planners, property owners, developers, heritage specialists, local communities, and others in **shaping a sustainable future for the town centre**
- **Celebrate the centre's distinctive sense of place** which is anchored in centuries of growth, change, and prosperity
- **Capitalise on existing and potential roles that heritage plays in the town centre**, composed of people, stories, spaces and buildings that can provide long-term environmental, social and economic benefits.

For more detailed information on the background, principles and processes of Historic Area Assessment see:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-place-historic-area-assessments/>



The 1907 Trinity Methodist Church by Gordon & Gunton, a landmark of the town centre. ^[4.3.3]

The **SUTTON TOWN CENTRE HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT** is delivered through two complimentary documents:



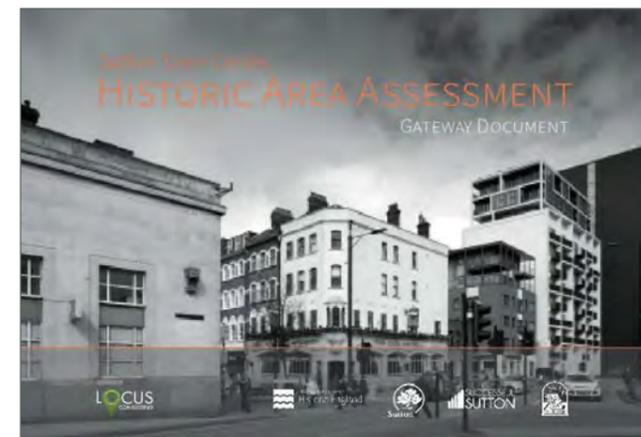
HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT RESEARCH REPORT

A stand-alone report providing detailed information on the town centre's historic environment, and the nature, level, and extent of its heritage significance.

The report includes:

- A comprehensive examination of the character of the centre's historic townscape
- A review of the architectural and historical interests of its heritage assets
- Consideration of the issues and opportunities for the future management of the historic environment
- A gazetteer of individual buildings of interest examined during the project

[Download the Historic Area Assessment Research Report](#) *



HISTORIC AREA ASSESSMENT GATEWAY DOCUMENT † (This document)

An introductory document to the town centre's distinctive historic townscape and heritage significance, most effectively used as the 'gateway' to the Research Report, as outlined on the following page.

* Research Report download link:
<http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=16009>

† Gateway document download link:
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sutton-historic-area-assessment-gateway/>

USING THIS DOCUMENT

SHOPPING PARADES AND TERRACES ^(4.3.1)

Shopping parades and terraces proliferate along Sutton's historic High Street and its surrounds, and are a key component of its character and appearance. A compendium of terrace- and parade- styles have high levels of local architectural interest both individually and as a group, with surviving examples spanning a period from the mid-19th through to the mid-20th centuries. They help to illustrate Sutton's relatively rapid evolution from rural village to thriving municipal centre.

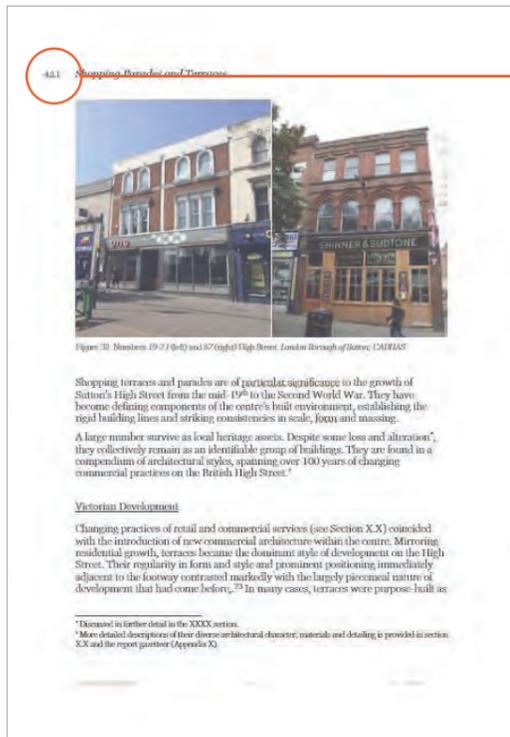


[4.3.1]

An Historic Area Assessment is a thorough investigation into an area's historic environment. The written and illustrated reports entail high levels of detail. Through a series of summary sections this gateway document is a **navigation-aid to the detailed evidence base provided in the Historic Area Assessment research report.**

Numerical references are distributed throughout this document. These are provided to 'signpost' sections of the research report, allowing rapid navigation to areas of most interest to the reader.

In this example **Section 4.3.1** of the research report is highlighted, where a discussion of the town centre's many locally significant historic shopping parades and terraces is located.



HAA Research Report



The Cock Hotel Sign of High Street. Located at the historic crossroads where the Cock Hotel and Tap stood for centuries as a key local landmark.

[4.4.2]



137-143 High Street, an Inter-war department store and one of the centre's most prominent historic buildings. ^[4.3.2]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUTTON TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE ACTION ZONE

The Historic Area Assessment has been created as part of the **Sutton Town Centre Heritage Action Zone** programme.

The **Heritage Action Zone** initiative aims to unleash the power of England's historic environment to create economic growth and improve quality of life in villages, towns and cities.

Working with local authorities, partners and community members Historic England is helping to breathe new life into old places that are rich in heritage and full of promise, unlocking their potential and making them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. Deteriorated historic buildings will be put back into use, conservation areas improved to kick-start regeneration and renewal, and unsung places will be recognised and celebrated for their unique character and heritage, helping instil a sense of local pride.

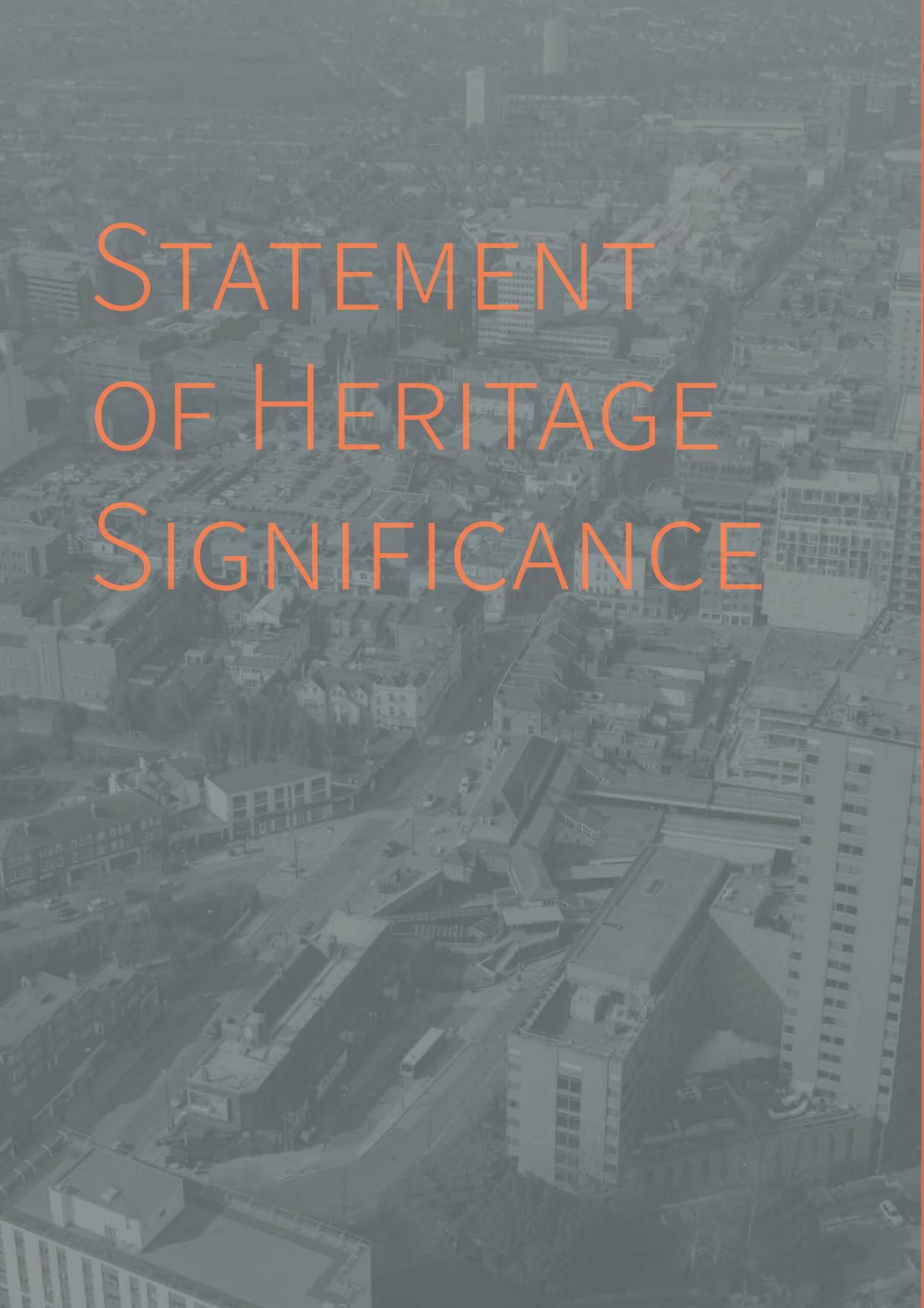
Sutton Town Centre is on the verge of significant change, identified in the London Plan as one of eleven potential new Opportunity Areas. Over forty sites have been identified for redevelopment, which will deliver more than 3400 new homes, as well as increased retail and commercial space. While this is good news for the future of the town centre, there are several challenges facing Sutton Council and its partners. This includes how to best preserve the distinctive character and significant heritage assets of Sutton in the midst of such growth, and how to balance the needs of investors, developers, businesses and residents.

The Sutton Town Centre Heritage Action Zone Partnership (launched April 2017) sees **Historic England, London Borough of Sutton, Successful Sutton Business Improvement District (BID) and Carshalton and District History and Archaeological Society (CADHAS)** working together over a three-year period (2017-2020) to deliver a series of projects that will promote local heritage, allowing it to support economic growth across the town centre.

Over the course of the programme the **Sutton Town Centre Heritage Action Zone** will:

- Support the delivery of **Sutton Council's Town Centre Masterplan**, designed to make Sutton a destination of choice over the next decade
- Develop guidance, research, and management policies to help **ensure the town centre's heritage significance is at the heart of new developments**, embracing its historic distinctiveness
- Strive to **remove the High Street Conservation Area from the Heritage At Risk Register**, creating an environment that keeps existing businesses and attracts new ones
- Engage with the local community to **increase the understanding of Sutton's heritage and the tools that are available to manage it**, through published research and engagement events
- Draw on Historic England's expertise in assessing significance and through training events, **equip Sutton Council and its partners with skills to preserve and enhance the character of the town** when working with developers
- Provide **transferable lessons for other town centres** in balancing growth with the management of heritage assets





STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This statement describes the composition of Sutton Town Centre's heritage significance, identifying how heritage assets and historic areas combine to form a place of distinctive character, enriched with special architectural or historic interest.

The Historic Area Assessment defined three themes of heritage significance. Each is discussed over the following pages:

SUTTON AT A CROSSROADS: HISTORIC HIGHWAYS AND THE TURNPIKE TRUSTS ^[2.1]

The legacy of Sutton's historical status as a significant highway, crossroads and stopping point on routes between London, Brighton and the Banstead and Epsom Downs. The historic highway remains the single most dominant feature within the townscape, whilst several characteristics have been inherited from Sutton's rural past.

SUCCESSFUL SUTTON: STRIVING FOR COMMERCIAL GROWTH ^[2.2]

The town centre's rich assemblage of commercial architecture is the product of near unremitting development and regeneration from the mid-19th century onwards. Buildings, sometimes associated with prominent local individuals and organisations, contribute to the centre's identity and are pivotal in defining its distinctive townscape character and sense of place.

THE EMERGENCE OF A METROPOLITAN TOWN CENTRE ^[2.3]

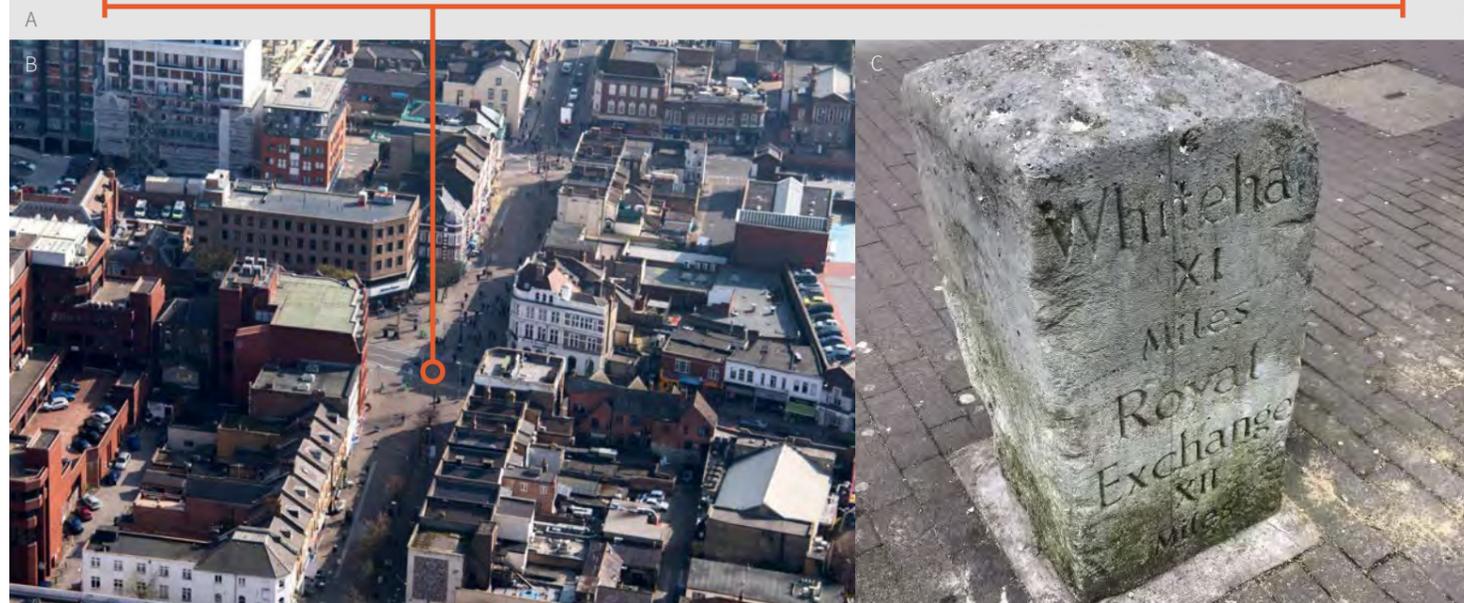
A collection of heritage assets and areas which chart Sutton's transformation from a modest railway town into the main civic and administrative centre of the modern London Borough of Sutton.

SUTTON AT A CROSSROADS: HISTORIC HIGHWAYS AND THE TURNPIKE TRUSTS ^[2.1]

A great deal of the town centre's heritage interest stems from the historical development of transportation networks. Sutton evolved in response to changing demands, new legislation, and emerging technologies, establishing an identity intricately linked to the movement of people and interchange. Sutton's crossroads acted as a strategic conduit and stopping point within a network of regional highways and stagecoach routes. Later, the arrival of the railways would establish another major intersection and mode of transport.

Sutton's highway heritage is the single most dominant townscape feature. It is now a major public open space largely reserved for pedestrian footfall. Extensive redevelopment of buildings and plots along High Street from the 19th century have left few architectural traces of its earlier history. Only subtle elements allude to what was a formative phase in the settlement's evolution.

The still active routes of historic highways remain highly tangible within the town centre's inherited character. However, as busy upgraded modern-day thoroughfares for car and pedestrian traffic, their historic roles can be obscured or overlooked.



A : Sutton's historic crossroads and the adjacent Cock Hotel were once major conduits for horse-drawn traffic, shown here in an 1851 engraving. **B** : The crossroads remains a focal point within today's townscape.^[4.4.3] **C** : The historical significance of the highway's turnpike trusts is illustrated by the High Street's milestone.^[4.4.2]

1600s-1800s

From the 17th century Sutton increasingly defined itself as a settlement with more than a local remit. Sutton became a busy highway-settlement, a stopping point located on key routes between the capital and the countryside. From the 17th century seasonal crowds flowed through the village, travelling to the races at Banstead and Epsom Downs. From the 18th century stagecoach traffic between London and Brighton increased, with Sutton established as the first stopping point along one of the most direct routes from capital to coastal retreat. A steady flow of traffic passed through Sutton between east and west, connecting the spring-line settlements of northern Surrey.

The growth in size and status of Sutton and its neighbouring settlements also increased traffic along several east to-west routes which linked villages between Croydon and Guildford.

1755

A pivotal date in Sutton's history, with the turnpiking of its north-south and east-west arteries. Established via Acts of Parliament, a turnpike required travellers to pay tolls for the use of major routes, the proceeds of which were redistributed to maintain the highways.

The crossroads of High Street, Carshalton Road and Cheam Road was formally established as a major ventricle within the northern Surrey landscape, and remains at the heart of Sutton's historical identity today.

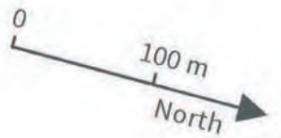
A new infrastructure of tollgates and tollhouses was developed, the highways were improved, and a system of milestones introduced. The works greatly enhanced the ability for carriages and stagecoaches to transit from London to the south.

1750s-1850s

By 1768 the influence of the highways on Sutton's socio-economic development was reflected in its layout. The settlement became defined by its linearity, stretching from what is now 'The Green' in the north to the intersection of 'Cock Hill' and Church Road in the south. Clusters of buildings lined the road, with parish registers showing a concentration of service industries catering for horse-drawn traffic (including ostlers, blacksmiths, farriers, and sadlers). Built shortly after 1755, the Cock Hotel and Tap were established at the crossroads, named in honour of the local 'cockhorses' which would be used to bolster carriages carrying heavy loads up the slope. Heightened commerce and improved transportation links brought wider prosperity. A number of large houses were built, set within large grounds. These spacious plots played an important role in the village's form and function in the 17th through to the mid-19th century.

The historic crossroads remains a ventricle for foot and road traffic, and an important focal point within the modern-day town.^[4.4.3] The locally iconic Cock Hotel sign is found here, marking the location of the eponymous historic coaching inn, once a key stopping point for travellers.^[4.4.2] High Street's linear layout creates long views along the historic highway, such as the one displayed here.^[4.6.1]





THE CROSSROADS ^[4.4.3]
The historic crossroads of High Street, Carshalton Road, and Cheam Road remains a ventricle for foot and road traffic, and a focal point within the modern-day town. The role is inherited from its 18th-century historical status as the location of Sutton's principal tollgates and coaching inn.



ST NICHOLAS CHURCH ^[4.3.3]
St Nicholas Church occupies a religious site thought to date back to Saxon times. The church was rebuilt in the late 19th century, but its sylvan churchyard is testament to the former rural village. Grave markers and memorials commemorate prominent local families of the historical village from which the modern town would grow.



HIGH STREET MILESTONE ^[4.4.2]
One of a series of navigational aids erected in 1745 between Westminster and Banstead Downs. It survives as testament to the significance of the coaching network that underpinned Sutton's development in the pre-railway era.



STREET NAMES
Illustrating long standing historical connections between Sutton and settlements further afield, such as Brighton Road.



THE COCK HOTEL SIGN ^[4.4.2]
An important and elaborate piece of historic street furniture marking the location of the Cock Hotel and Tap Hotel. A coaching inn within the settlement, the now demolished Cock Hotel was a landmark building and key stopping point adjacent to the crossroads.



PUBLIC SPACE ^[4.4.1]
The open space in front of Old Inn House reflects the layout of the historic Cock Hotel forecourt, and relative prominence of the location. The space, formed by a marked step in building line, sustains a subtle but tangible association to the historic crossroads.



THE LONG LINEAR LAYOUT OF HIGH STREET ^[4.2]
High Street's linear form is rooted in the early social and economic development of Sutton. The street is experienced through long vista views and a distinctive sense of enclosure formed by continuous building lines of properties still aligned to historical plot boundaries either side of the road.



URBAN BLOCKS AND DEVELOPMENT UNITS ^[4.2]
The grain and orientation of many urban blocks and building plots are inherited from the layout of post-medieval Sutton. Development from the 19th through 21st centuries has infilled areas between pre-existing roads, fossilising elements of a once rural landscape.



THE GREEN ^[4.4.4]
A recreational space since at least the 18th century and a rare surviving feature of Sutton's post-medieval landscape. The Green illustrates the northern extent of the historic settlement, located over one kilometre from the historic crossroads to the south.





HIGH STREET

High Street's layout continues to reflect the early social and economic development of Sutton, experienced through long views along the street, and a distinctive sense of enclosure formed by opposing building lines and plots aligned to the historical boundaries which once defined the road. ^[4.2]

SUCCESSFUL SUTTON: STRIVING FOR COMMERCIAL GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ^[2.2]

A core part of the town centre's heritage significance is drawn from the historical and architectural interest of its distinctive commercial architecture. From the mid-19th century, near unremitting processes of development and regeneration created a rich assemblage of modern and historic buildings exhibiting a variety of styles. Buildings along and either side of High Street, particularly from the early Victorian through to early Post-war periods, illustrate the adaptation of a local centre to changing demands of commerce over a period of 150 years. Properties provide a cross-section of the historical development of retail and service premises at a sub-regional level.

Today the long standing status of High Street remains emphasised by its very long extent, defined by largely impermeable lines of commercial buildings. There is a clear consistency of scale and massing, particularly in historic buildings. Prominence on a bustling High Street is expressed by eclectic architecture of commercial properties, and through accentuated corner plots.

Whilst there have been relatively significant levels of loss to traditional commercial frontages at ground-floor level, upper storeys still retain a rich assemblage of surviving features. A good number of Sutton's historic service industries also survive as prominent buildings, particularly its local banking heritage.

The immediate setting of High Street has changed considerably, particularly through the comprehensive redevelopment of former suburban areas that once flanked the historic highway for post-war infrastructure, higher density housing, and commercial redevelopment.



A: No.69 High Street, a custom-built Woolworth's store constructed in 1916 and redesigned in 1934 by in-house Chief Architect B.C Donaldson.^[4.3.2] **B**: Rare surviving ground-floor shopfront detailing at No.38 High Street.^[5.1.2] **C**: Today the High Street remains the commercial heart of the Borough, framed by a rich assemblage of buildings of architectural and historical interest.^[4.3]

1840s-1860s

Like many peri-urban settlements targeted at the time, the catalyst for Sutton's growth was the arrival of the railways. "Railway mania" defined the 1840s, with companies competing nationwide to expand their networks into the countryside around industrial centres. Investment poured into speculative railway programmes, spurred on by a booming industrial economy, a growing middle class, low interest rates, and a favourable political climate. The first line through Sutton opened in 1847, realising the potential for new commuter settlements in Surrey and seasonal revenue from the Epsom race crowds. A second line to Epsom Downs was created in 1865, and another to London via Mitcham in 1868. These connected Sutton to London Bridge and London Victoria, consolidating the town's role as a key transport junction. Wider infrastructure improvements coincided with railway development. Reliable supplies of gas and electricity were established by 1856, with both mains water and sewerage treatment facilities arriving by 1863.^[3.3]

1870s-1930s

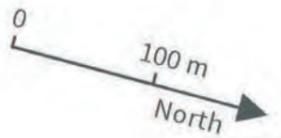
Following the arrival of the railways Sutton experienced a sustained development boom, anchored to commercial and services industries. The growth was not explosive, instead gathering pace over three decades, attaining a critical mass in the local population by the later 19th century that enabled Sutton to establish itself as the dominant commercial centre of the area. The historic coaching route of High Street formed the backbone for development, largely holding dominance over the new railway station. After a period of modest speculative growth, larger terraces and shopping parades steadily developed over the following 100 years. Throughout, demand was sustained by the town's burgeoning suburban population, housed within new residential estates located adjacent to the town centre. Service industries (particularly banks) grew to meet the demands of a growing middle class, introducing grand buildings to the centre, followed by department stores and 'multiple-retailers' in the inter-war years.^[3.4]

1940s-2000s

The post-war decades saw continued emphasis on the growth of Sutton's commercial offer. However, the nature of, and ambition for, development marked a clear departure from Sutton's Victorian and Inter-war expansion. Most significant were two large covered shopping centres constructed behind High Street. *Time Square* opened in 1985 and the *St Nicholas Centre* followed in 1992. These significantly broadened the centre's retail offer, increasing the number of retail units, and partially shifting the emphasis away from what was once a highly dominant High Street. Large supermarkets also developed within the centre, whilst smaller-scale interventions have also occurred along and behind High Street, including the amalgamation and redevelopment of traditional shopping units, often in contemporary designs. These developments illustrate the centre's continued ability to adapt as new fashions and trends for shopping arose nationally, continuing a cycle of retail redevelopment that had been ongoing for over a century.^[3.5]

Shopping parades and terraces proliferate along Sutton's historic High Street and its surrounds, and are a key component of its character and appearance. The 'Grand Parade' (152-164 High Street) is one of the town centre's most ornate, built around the turn of the 20th century in a distinctly Flemish-revival style. [4.3.1]





ADAPTATION [4.3.2]

The legacy of the town centre's rapid growth and changing socio-economic profile from the mid-19th century is illustrated through a small group of Victorian villas that adapted to meet growing commercial demands. Single-storey commercial shop frontages push out from former residential façades.



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES [4.3.6]

The growing prosperity of Victorian Sutton is reflected in a collection of historic buildings relating to professional services. These are often found in prominent locations such as on corner plots, and in the south of the town centre around the crossroads, where new services gravitated following the construction of the railway.



COMMERCIAL UNITS AND DEPARTMENT STORES [4.3.2]

Individual commercial units sit alongside the terraces and parades. They make a significant contribution to High Street, with some (particularly surviving department stores) of noted prominence. Many have historical interest through association with influential local business or national organisations.



SCALE, FORM AND MASSING [4.2.2]

Despite largely piecemeal development, High Street features a striking consistency in building layout and scale. The shared characteristic creates long views along High Street and accentuates in turn the eclectic collection of individual commercial frontages along its length.



RAILWAY STATION [4.3.8]

The railway station was the catalyst for Sutton's growth. The current station (built 1928) is the fourth iteration, making it the centre's most regenerated site. Redeveloped multiple times to meet ever-growing demand, it remains a landmark and major conduit at the southern gateway to the centre.



PROMINENT BUILDINGS [4.6.2]

A select number of Sutton's historic commercial buildings enjoy a relative prominence in the townscape, some as landmarks within views, others using corner plots to achieve a relative status over their neighbours.



ICONS OF THE HIGH STREET [3.4]

The town centre features several historic local businesses, now icons of High Street. One of the most famous, Pearson's Cycles originated as a blacksmith shop in 1860, and is now the United Kingdom's oldest bicycle shop.



SHOPPING PARADES AND TERRACES [4.3.1]

Shopping parades and terraces proliferate along Sutton's historic High Street and its southern surrounds and are a key component of its character and appearance. A compendium of terrace and parade styles have high levels of local architectural interest both individually and as a group. A key driver behind Sutton's rapid evolution from rural village to thriving metropolitan centre, surviving examples date from the mid-19th through to the mid-20th centuries.



SUBURBAN SETTING [5.3]

Although fragmented, the functional relationship between Sutton's historic commercial centre and surrounding residential areas illustrates the key role local communities have played in the centre's prosperity. Several estates were developed by people of local significance, such as Thomas Alcock's Newtown Estate.

The growing prosperity of Victorian Sutton is reflected in a collection of historic buildings relating to professional services. The 1894 Barclays Bank (constructed by and for the London and Provincial Bank) at 43 High Street is the grandest, forming a local landmark at the corner of High Street and Cheam Road. [4.3.6]



THE EMERGENCE OF A METROPOLITAN TOWN CENTRE ^[2.3]

Sutton's status as a primary metropolitan centre within Greater London evolved from the early decades of the 20th century. The legacy of this transformation, from modest railway town into the civic and administrative locus of the modern Borough, is a notable collection of heritage assets. All are of significance to the Borough, with several also recognised for their national importance.

Whilst several key historic civic buildings have been lost or redeveloped (e.g. the late Victorian Municipal Offices, superseded by the 1970s Civic Centre), a good proportion survive (e.g. Sutton Police Station), with Manor Park the centre's principal open space. All remain prominent within the townscape, illustrating the early 20th-century growth of Sutton as an emerging municipal centre.

The nature and location of 20th-century urban regeneration has had a disproportionate impact on Sutton's social and recreational heritage. Few examples survive of what was once a relatively large stock of cinemas, public houses, halls, and other amenities. The rarity of surviving buildings elevates their significance at a local level, as assets of both historical interest and communal value.



A : Manor Park is among the most prominent of assets inherited from Sutton's evolution into a metropolitan centre, remaining the centre's principal civic open space.^[4.4.4] B : Trinity Methodist Church spire.^[4.3.3] C : John Dixon Butler's 1908 Sutton Metropolitan Police Station, Carshalton Road.^[4.3.5]

1900-1939

While the railways were a major catalyst for change in the 19th century, it was within the early decades of the 20th century that Sutton witnessed truly explosive growth.

Census records for what would become the Municipal Borough of Sutton and Cheam display a five-fold increase in population between 1901 (c.15,000) and 1939 (c.75,000).

Fuelled by these new waves of suburbanites, Sutton established itself as the main administrative and commercial centre in the area, moving beyond what was once a largely transitory function (as a highway and railway interchange) to become a destination in its own right.^[3.3]

A MUNICIPAL SOCIETY

A growing population brought greater emphasis on local governing authorities and civic infrastructure. The parish of Sutton became a Local Government District in 1882, reconstituted as Sutton Urban District Council following the Local Government Act 1894. The district formally expanded in the 1920s to incorporate elements of Cheam, becoming the Sutton and Cheam Urban District, before successfully pursuing a charter of incorporation in 1934.

The formation of the Urban District preceded the development of new civic infrastructure and institutions. The now lost Municipal Offices were constructed in 1902, their Baroque style celebrating the centre's growing status. A Police Station followed in 1908 adjacent the Cock Hotel on Carshalton Road, and a new post office was constructed on Grove Road around the same time. Manor Park was then laid-out in 1914. All were constructed with styles and forms that heralded Sutton's growing metropolitan identity.^[3.4]

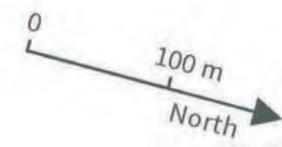
A METROPOLITAN CENTRE

A burgeoning population allowed the town to strengthen through an enhanced commercial offer, the development of expansive residential estates, and the introduction of new amenities. Between 1900 and 1939 Sutton witnessed significant expansion of its cultural and leisure facilities. New attractions catered for the evolving tastes of an increasingly metropolitan demographic, with many new premises including (now lost) cinemas, skating rinks, baths and public halls, all the hallmarks of a prospering centre.

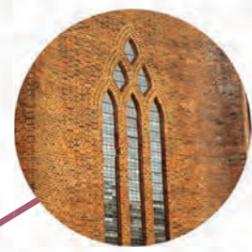
Historic mapping also displays an increase in schools and educational facilities within the town centre, alongside the several new local institutions which gravitated to the rapidly urbanising town. Ecclesiastical growth also continued apace, with expanding congregations driving the construction of several new churches.^[3.4]



The 1934 Baptist Church of Cheam Road (designed by Welch, Nugent Cachmille-Day, and Launder) is one of several significant historic churches found within the town centre. They reflect the dramatic expansion of Sutton in the early 20th century, constructed to meet the demands of growing congregations. ^[4.3.3]



SUTTON CIVIC CENTRE [4.3.5]
Surviving municipal buildings are largely distinctive of post-war approaches to municipal planning, most notably the 1970s Civic Centre which provides a more contemporary source of historical interest, illustrative of changing processes of urban renewal, and major reorganisation of London governance in the mid-20th century.



ECCLESIASTICAL HERITAGE [4.3.3]
A defined group of both nationally and locally significant historic churches reflect the dramatic expansion of Sutton in the early 20th century, all constructed to meet demands of growing congregations.

Top left: The 1937 former Christian Science Church (now the *Secombe Theatre*).

Top right: The 1934 Baptist Church by Welch, Nugent Cachmaille-Day, and Lander.



Bottom right: The 1907 Trinity Methodist Church by Gordon and Gunton.

COMMUNAL BUILDINGS [4.3.7]

A small number of surviving historic communal and recreational amenities developed en-masse in response to Sutton's early 20th-century population boom. Cheam Road Hall is of particular local importance. There is also a strong level of survival of historic public houses.



CIVIC INSTITUTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE [4.3.5]

A small number of historic civic institutions and local infrastructural buildings survive to illustrate the town's transformation into a major civic centre. Notable are the Masonic Hall (1897), Telephone Exchange (1924-1935) and Post Office (1950s) all located along Grove Road.



SUTTON POLICE STATION [4.3.5]
A Grade II listed building constructed in 1908. The station is illustrative of Sutton's growing reputation as an emerging municipal focal point, designed in an unusually elaborate 'metropolitan' style for what was then still a relatively modest peri-urban railway town.



SUTTON WAR MEMORIAL [4.4.4]
The 1921 memorial stands as testament to the impact of conflict on Sutton, bearing the names of 518 men and one woman lost in the First World War, with later inscriptions added commemorating those killed in the Second World War. It was commissioned by the local authority, designed by local architect J.S.W Burmester, with landscaping by Cheal and Sons of Crawley.

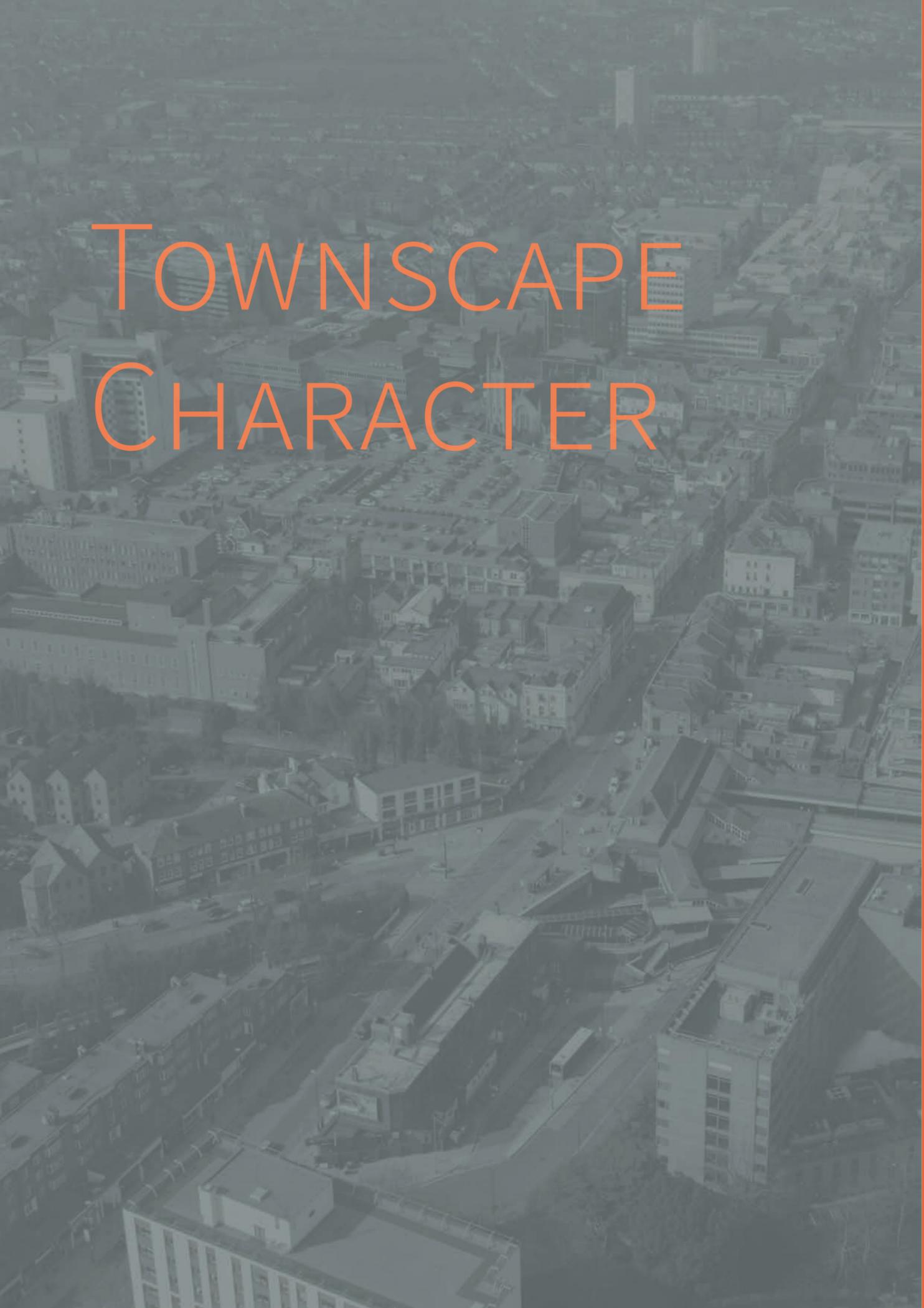


MANOR PARK [4.4.4]
An early 20th-century municipal park illustrative of the changing attitudes and aspirations of Sutton's governing authorities at the time. It reflects their growing capacity and resolve to positively shape the urban environment. Further heritage interest derives from associations with prominent local figures and key events, most significant of which is the Grade II listed war memorial.





Grove Road features a concentration of Sutton's historic civic institutions and infrastructural buildings including the Masonic Hall (1897), Telephone Exchange (1924-1935) and Post Office (1950s). [4.3.5]



TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Sutton town centre's heritage significance creates a distinctive sense of place in many ways. This section articulates how its multi-layered history is encountered today, through characteristics including its urban form, the architecture of surviving historic buildings, and the nature of public realm and open spaces.

Historic townscape characteristics can be readily appreciated, such as the eclectic architectural assemblage of High Street's commercial premises. Others are more subtle such as the grain of the historical plots of former rural houses and enclosures fossilised along the High Street. All combine to create a locally distinctive character, featuring a rich assemblage of heritage assets of architectural and historical interest.

This section examines:

TOPOGRAPHY AND URBAN FORM ^[4.1; 4.2]

How Sutton's morphology has inherited aspects of its former rural landscape, and how the scale, form, and massing of the built environment are dominated by the legacies of 19th-and-20th century growth.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER ^[3]

The evolution of the town centre's architectural character including prevailing styles, materials, and decoration over nearly two centuries of growth.

FORMS OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT ^[4.3]

The key types of buildings which collectively form Sutton's historic built environment.

PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACES ^[4.4]

The nature of the High Street's public realm and its focal points, exploring how the centre's open spaces illustrate key components of Sutton's historical development.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY ^[4.5]

Town centre gateways and the changing nature of accessibility between High Street and its suburban setting.

VIEWS AND LANDMARKS ^[4.6]

The character of views within Sutton town centre, and landmark heritage assets within the assessment area.

TOPOGRAPHY AND URBAN FORM

TOPOGRAPHY ^[4.1]

The centre's urban form is intimately linked to local topography. Established as a spring-line settlement, Sutton was orientated to sloping terrain descending from southern chalk uplands to northern clay basin. For over 1km the centre descends almost thirty metres, the steepest section being from Grove Road to Church Street. On this potentially arduous journey, the Cock Hotel Sign stands as testament to the 'cockhorses', sent out from local inns to bolster heavy carriages negotiating the slope. Today the terrain creates a series of distinct aesthetic and physical experiences, particularly views along High Street which emphasise its linearity and distinctive built form.



MORPHOLOGY ^[4.2.1]

Sutton's underlying morphology is inherited from a once rural landscape. The length of High Street reflects the linear development of the settlement along the highway. Many of the centre's numerous minor east-to-west arteries were once rural tracks, sustaining a legacy of a historical street hierarchy. The historic crossroads continues to function as a major ventricle for both foot and road traffic, illustrating Sutton's pre-railway significance. The grain of urban blocks is often inherited from post-medieval rural plots, redeveloped but fossilised in modern building lines and plot-boundaries.

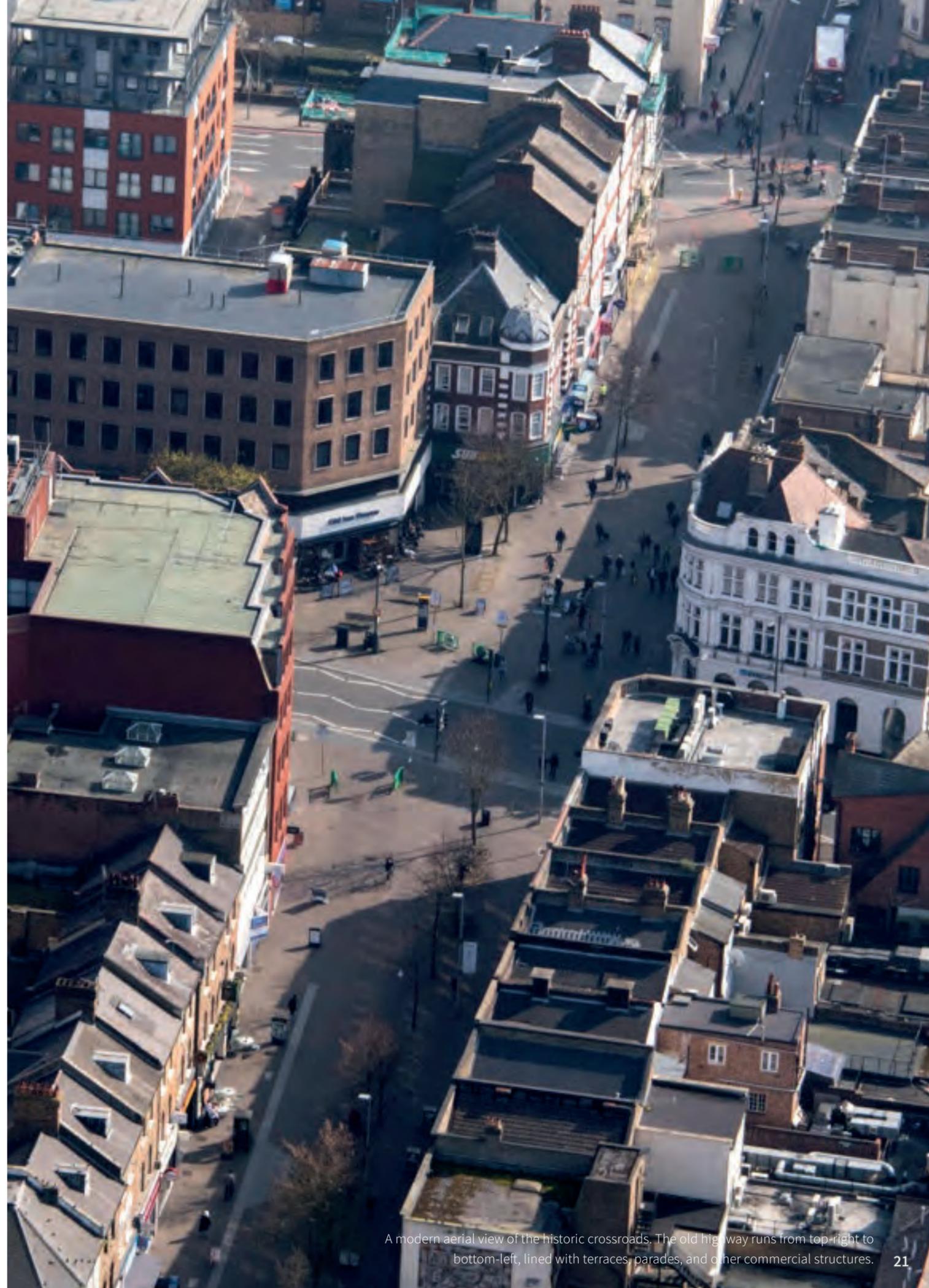


SCALE, FORM, AND MASSING ^[4.2.2]

High Street shows remarkable consistency in the scale, form and massing of its historic building stock. The long, linear building lines are a striking characteristic, formed of many parades and terraces. No buildings are afforded a notable set-back. Historic buildings are almost all three to four storeys in height. Although the extent of historic development units vary, individual units are relatively consistent in breadth. This historical urban grain creates a distinctive sense of rhythm and almost ubiquitous sense of enclosure along great lengths of High Street.



There is a marked contrast between the human scale of High Street and the imposing scale, form and massing of its immediate surroundings. These areas have been largely transformed by post-war redevelopment with large, tall buildings and infrastructure dominating. The contrast instils a sense of separation between High Street and its surroundings, fragmenting historical relationship between Sutton's commercial and residential areas. Today, the areas surrounding High Street form a 'shell', physically and experientially encasing the historic highway and its heritage assets.



A modern aerial view of the historic crossroads. The old highway runs from top-right to bottom-left, lined with terraces, parades, and other commercial structures.



1920 ————— 2017

These aerial photographs show the same perspective of Sutton town centre (viewed from the south down High Street) captured nearly a century apart. They show a marked change in the levels of preservation of the historic urban form along High Street in comparison to areas on either side. The distinct linearity of High Street prevails, defined by the long regular building lines of three-to-four storey structures (created principally by its historic terraces and parades). In contrast, areas to the east and west of High Street have been transformed by large-scale residential, commercial and infrastructural redevelopment over the last fifty years.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER ^[3.0]

Sutton's architectural character is defined by its eclecticism and human scale. Often modest, delicate and intriguing to explore, the local architecture represents nearly two centuries of the unassumingly ambitious development of the settlement from rural village to metropolitan hub.

The significance of Sutton's architecture is not observed within a narrow selection of buildings, but as the sum of its parts. The architectural progression of buildings broadly follows national trends and is largely defined by a relatively narrow palette of local materials until well into the opening decades of the 20th century. Sutton's architectural character is, however, progressive, offering a clear chronology of buildings along the street. The consistent adherence to certain parameters, such as scale, form, and massing, also often leaves only the finer details of buildings to differentiate one unit from another.



EARLY TO MID-VICTORIAN ^[3.3]

Only a relatively select number of examples of Sutton's early Victorian architecture remain along and either side of High Street. Constructed in and around the arrival of the railway in 1847, those that survive offer a partial insight into a period of significant investment, growth and regeneration of the town. In the main, classical-styled features persist from the Regency period.



LATE VICTORIAN ^[3.3; 3.4]

The final decades of the 19th century witnessed a distinct change in the design and decoration of buildings, with Sutton's High Street and surrounding areas playing host to a wide range of architectural revival styles, often combined in eclectic fashion. In the main, properties are more daring and decorative, with commercial properties actively competing for prominence within the growing centre.



EDWARDIAN ^[3.4]

The period sees the introduction of a number of previously unrepresented styles, with some of the centre's most distinctive and decorative architecture emerging. Properties were designed to more actively distinguish themselves within the established townscape. Flemish and Domestic Revival styles prevail, notably Tudor Revival in the case of the latter, alongside continued use of Classical decorative features.



INTER-WAR ^[3.4]

The architecture of the Inter war period illustrates the adaptation and innovative re-application of many of the styles that persisted in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, offering some sense of continuity. Some buildings conform faithfully to the conventions of particular architectural styles, whereas others carry forward the spirit of eclecticism of the Edwardian period, often with dramatic effect.



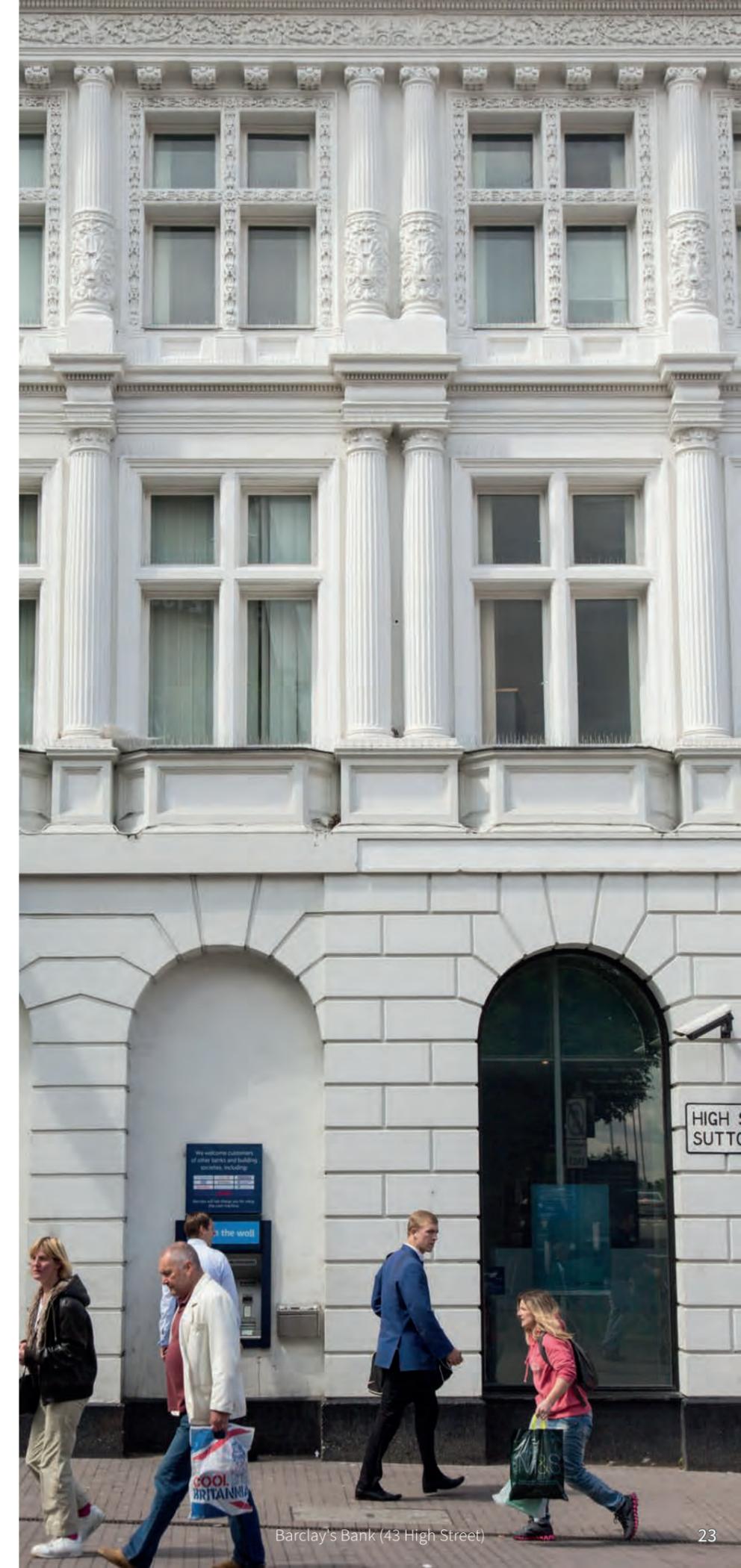
POST-WAR UP TO 1975 ^[3.6]

In the aftermath of the Second World War Sutton town centre appears to promptly return to business as usual. Significant changes in architecture include the more comprehensive redevelopment of plots and use of flat roofs. Stylistically, early buildings follow a relatively cautious approach (often continuing to be Deco inspired), with modernism embraced from the mid-1960s onwards.



1975 TO PRESENT ^[3.6]

Modernism prevails during the 1970s, marking the beginning of the final and current period of Sutton's architectural evolution. Sutton also features a number of Postmodern buildings built around the turn of the 21st century. There have been active moves towards the construction of relatively tall buildings either side of High Street, some early examples of which have now been refitted and overhauled.



Barclay's Bank (43 High Street)

Buildings clustered around the intersection of High Street with Grove Road and Sutton Park Road display the centre's architectural eclecticism. The former National Provincial Bank (left, 17 High Street) was built in 1937 in a distinctively Bauhaus style. Opposite, the Cock and Bull public house (centre, 26-28 High Street) features an Art Nouveau first floor denoting its former use as a bank. The Cock and Bull is the end unit of one of the High Street's finest late Victorian shopping parades (Nos. 30-38), two units of which are glimpsed here. In recent years multiple tall mixed-use developments have been constructed on several roads leading off High Street, adding contemporary forms and materials to the centre's architectural character.



FORMS OF HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT ^[4.3]

Sutton town centre is a multi-layered urban landscape, retaining buildings from several phases of its historical development. Collectively, their architectural and historical interests create an intriguing and distinctive sense of place, closely linked to local identity.

Specific elements of Sutton's historic built form make defining contributions to the town centre's inherited character, illustrative of three centuries of evolution towards the modern townscape.



SHOPPING PARADES & TERRACES ^[4.3.1]

A compendium of mid-19th through 20th-century historic terraces and shopping parades proliferate along High Street. They are key components of the local historic built form and many are significant local heritage assets in their own right.



COMMERCIAL UNITS & DEPARTMENT STORES ^[4.3.2]

Individual commercial units add to the centre's rich assemblage of historic retailing premises, including several notable examples associated with prominent national 'multiple' retailers. The centre's historic department stores are among the centre's most prominent buildings.



BANKS & SERVICES ^[4.3.6]

Prominent architectural legacies of financial and other professional service industries which arose to meet the new demands of Sutton's rapidly growing middle class in the late 19th and early 20th century. Banks are particularly prominent, a number of which are landmarks of the centre.



INFRASTRUCTURAL & INDUSTRIAL ^[4.3.8]

There is a significant, if localised, legacy of the development of transportation infrastructure within Sutton. Most notable are the railway station and the railway line itself, both remaining influential in the experience of the centre's heritage. Traces of historic local industry are notably rare.



ECCLESIASTICAL ^[4.3.3]

A group of significant historic places of worship stand as testament to the dramatic expansion of Sutton between the mid-19th and early 20th century. They hold particular architectural and historical interest, with several also acting as landmark buildings within the townscape.



CIVIC & INSTITUTIONAL ^[4.3.5]

A small but defined collection of buildings illustrates Sutton's evolution into a metropolitan centre from the turn of the 20th century. They reflect the growing capacities of local governance and the increasing attraction of Sutton to public institutions.



RECREATION & LEISURE ^[4.3.7]

Rare surviving examples of amenities which were once common across the town centre, catering for the changing demands of Sutton's increasingly suburban and metropolitan communities.



RESIDENTIAL ^[4.3.4]

A fragmented but important collection of historic villas and residential terraces survive within the assessment area, illustrating the demographics and distribution of Sutton's burgeoning population as it grew from rural village to urban centre.

NB. This map is provided as representation of the distribution of the different components of the town centre's historic built forms. Several buildings are assigned to multiple types (e.g. public houses converted from old banks). A building's absence from this map should not be seen as evidence of a lack of historic significance, nor is the extent of mapping necessarily representative of the extent of heritage significance within a specific building or development unit.



Top left:

The Secombe Theatre of Cheam Road, built in 1937 as a Christian Science Church. Like the nearby Sutton Baptist Church, it embraced modernity and the Art Deco movement, featuring a distinctive Moderne interpretation of a Romanesque stepped arch. ^[4.3.3]

Top right:

No.69 High Street, a custom-built Woolworth's store constructed in 1916 and redesigned in 1934 by in-house Chief Architect B.C Donaldson. ^[4.3.2]

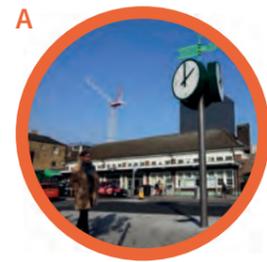
Bottom left:

Sutton Civic Offices and Central Library. Completed in 1978 and designed by the Borough Architect's Department. Its large proportions, materials, seemingly solid mass and block-like structure reflect a modernist style that became popular across the centre during the 1970s and 1980s. ^[4.3.5]

PUBLIC REALM AND HISTORIC OPEN SPACES ^[4.4]

How heritage assets are experienced within the public realm and open spaces is key to how their significance is appreciated and understood. Spaces can also hold significance in themselves, as focal points (both historic and modern) within the townscape. All these factors are at play across the town centre, with several public areas and open spaces making positive contributions to local character and helping to illustrate key components of Sutton's historical development.

FOCAL POINTS ^[4.4.3]



SUTTON STATION

The area fronting the railway station is marked by an openness of the public realm, which contrasts to the distinctive sense of enclosure experienced along much of High Street. Although busy with traffic, there is good provision for pedestrian movement, enabling appreciation of local heritage assets which include the station building, several shopping parades, and the 'Old Bank' public house.



HISTORIC CROSSROADS

The historic crossroads and site of the Cock Hotel and Tap, an area central to the historical development of Sutton. The area remains a ventricle for both road and foot traffic and features several of the centre's more significant historic buildings. The forecourt of the now lost Cock Hotel has been subtly inherited as an open space within High Street, and is still marked by the Cock Hotel sign.



TRINITY SQUARE

An open space at the junction of High Street with Throwley Road and Hill Road which punctuates the experience of consistent enclosure when passing along High Street. Whilst once featuring several locally significant buildings, today it is principally defined by prominent examples of modernist and post-modern commercial architecture.

OPEN SPACES ^[4.4.4]



MANOR PARK

Sutton's principal open space. An early 20th-century municipal park which is illustrative of the growing capacity and resolve of successive local administrations to positively shape the town centre's urban environment. The park contains one of the town centre's most significant heritage assets, the 1921 war memorial. Further heritage interest is derived with associations to prominent local figures and events.



ST NICHOLAS CHURCHYARD

Sutton's parish church is enclosed by a wooded yard, a legacy of the sylvan rural (and later suburban) character which once permeated the western assessment area. The churchyard contains commemorative features associated with prominent local people, most significantly a neoclassical 18th-century mausoleum. It is one of few remaining places allowing full appreciation of the striking architecture of St Nicholas.



THE GREEN

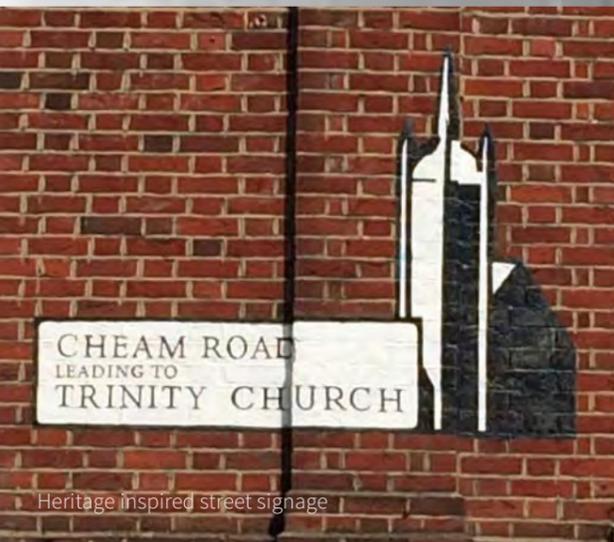
The Green is a rare surviving feature of rural Sutton, possibly originating as common land in the post-medieval era. The Green inherits its form from the rural enclosures which once blanketed the surrounding landscape of what was then northern Surrey. Several of its rural characteristics have been preserved including its open space, paths, and trees. A degree of change includes some minor relandscaping and the introduction of new amenities.





High Street.

Sutton. High Street, 1906



Heritage inspired street signage



Modern public realm improvements, High Street

HIGH STREET'S HISTORIC PUBLIC REALM [4.4.1]

There is a strong sense of enclosure along the full length of High Street, formed by the consistency of its opposing building lines, almost total absence of set-back, and the sparsity of defined open spaces. Despite their proximity to the footway buildings rarely feel overbearing or dominant. This is created by the consistency of building heights (the large majority of three or four storeys), which maintains a human sense of scale throughout.

Pedestrianisation of High Street in the early-1980s has resulted in a marked change to the experience of its heritage assets. The loss of vehicular-based traffic has reduced the ability to appreciate the centre's vehicular heritage. However, the vast public open space now provides an opportunity to better appreciate the full extent of High Street's historic significance, and particularly vista views along the former carriageway.

There is an assortment of street furnishings along High Street, some of historical interest. Of particular note are the historic Cock Hotel sign and the 18th-century milestone. Both stand as testament to Sutton's historic coaching-network and turnpike trusts. Several Victorian cast-iron street signs survive. Other modern furnishings of note include the Sutton Heritage Mosaic and a range of attractive heritage-inspired motifs on local streets and alleyways.

Today, shops and other commercial premises rarely 'spill' into High Street, with the exception of the exterior spaces annexed by some restaurants and cafes. Historically, High Street's footways would have been furnished with an array of signage, awnings, decoration, and paraphernalia relating to Sutton's thriving commercial premises.

HISTORIC LANDMARK BUILDINGS ^[4.6]

Sutton has a relatively confined group of landmark buildings. No single building truly dominates the assessment area, with the prominence of heritage assets often only experienced in close proximity. Along High Street few buildings dominate others within the local architectural hierarchy, the result of the striking consistency of the scale and massing of the historic built form. Prominence is most commonly achieved through the use of materials and architectural detailing, the design of corner plots, and the positioning of 'gateway' buildings. Landmark buildings form a more important townscape characteristic in the western extent of the centre, with Sutton's ecclesiastical heritage particularly influential.



ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

Whilst still prominent, the historical landmark status of St Nicholas Church is diminished. The tower would once have been a defining feature of Sutton, prominent in views both towards and within the settlement. Today, it has a more isolated and intimate context, with 19th- and 20th-century redevelopment obstructing many of the historical viewpoints.



BARCLAYS BANK

The 1894 Barclay's Bank (43 High Street) achieves landmark status through its ornate architecture and detailing, combined with its location adjacent to the historic crossroads. It is among the most decorative and physically prominent commercial properties within the town centre. 43 High Street also terminates views looking into the crossroads from Carshalton Road when approaching from the east.



TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

The 1907 church is a key gateway building in western approaches to the centre. It is highly distinctive through its Kentish ragstone construction and its striking form including an ornate tower at its southern end. The tower terminates views when travelling towards the centre along Cheam Road, and is visible from select locations along High Street, including Trinity Square.



SUTTON RAILWAY STATION

A major functional and architectural landmark which has acted as the gateway to the town centre for over 150 years. Its continued significance within the settlement has been reflected in a sustained cycle of renewal, redevelopment, and expansion. The 1928 building which fronts the station today is the fourth version of the façade.



SUTTON BAPTIST CHURCH

The 1934 church sits opposite Trinity Methodist Church, framing the western gateway to the town centre. It imposes itself in the townscape through its bold massing, proportions, and Art Deco design, particularly in views when approaching along Cheam Road, where the concave sweeps and triple lancet windows of its western façade make a striking impression.



CORNER BUILDINGS

(marked individually on the map)

The often impermeable, linear building lines of High Street restricted the ability for individual premises to gain a competitive advantage over their neighbours through architectural expression. Those occupying historic corner plots embraced the opportunity to stand out, with many continuing to make a positive contribution to the character of the townscape.



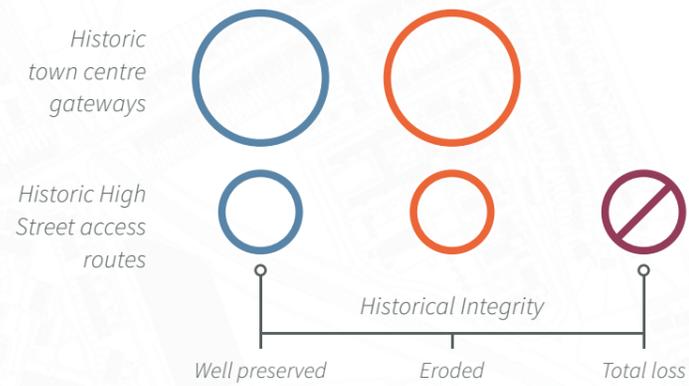
THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE OF HIGH STREET ^[4.6.1]

The layout and sustained gradient of High Street creates long views along the historic highway. These aid in illustrating Sutton's historical role on a significant coaching highway by accentuating the linearity of the High Street, a characteristic inherited from the settlement's pre-19th century development.

Today these views are framed by the continuous building lines of High Street's 19th- and 20th-century commercial architecture. Many of these buildings are local heritage assets by virtue of their architectural and/or historical interest. They collectively illustrate the sustained growth and prosperity of the town centre over the last 150 years. The descending terrain emphasises the first and second floors of buildings, which often retain a high level of historical integrity.

Views looking out from High Street are infrequent, the result of the largely impermeable building line and intensive programmes of 20th-century town centre redevelopment. Major exceptions are views out from the historic crossroads looking along Carshalton Road and Cheam Road. A small number of locations along the street allow glimpsed views of the Trinity Methodist Church tower. This infrequency of views out from High Street further enhances the overall sense of enclosure experienced along much of its length.

The extent of High Street views can be dependent on environmental factors, with the views concealed or revealed depending on the time of year. Deciduous trees have been introduced to parts of High Street, particularly the southern and central areas, leading to seasonal changes in the extent of views.



GROVE ROAD
Originally laid out with Victorian villas, Grove Road was quickly redeveloped to accommodate the growing commercial demands of the town centre. Despite some redevelopment it has retained several locally significant historic buildings, and today forms a minor town centre gateway.

CHEAM ROAD GATEWAY
Two nationally significant churches define this western gateway. Trinity Methodist Church (1907) sits directly opposite Sutton Baptist Church (1934), together framing the approach. Both are key landmarks within the town centre.

BARRIERS TO MOVEMENT
The creation of the one-way gyratory system in the late 1970s to the early 1980s and the development of large retail centres either side of the centre have created significant barriers to movement between the historic High Street and its once suburban setting. These are both physical and cognitive, created by the lanes of busy traffic, and the introduction of large, passive, and sometimes hostile frontages.

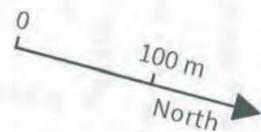
STATION APPROACH GATEWAY
The town centre's southern entrance is characterised by a transition from the open realm adjacent to the station, funnelling into the more enclosed High Street. The chamfered corners of two end-terraces create a symmetrical gateway, and frame long views down the hill along the historic highway.

CARSHALTON ROAD GATEWAY
Now principally defined by large office and commercial developments. The open character of Manor Park provides a notable contrast, with glimpsed views of the war memorial. The Barclays Bank at 43 High Street acts as a terminating structure to views inwards, and the 1908 Police Station survives as a gateway building.

PEDESTRIAN ROUTES & WORKING SPACES
The development of the Time Square shopping centre and associated buildings transformed an area once defined by 'backland' plots - working yards and ancillary spaces which serviced High Street's businesses. An historical permeability was also eroded through the loss of many pedestrian links, most notably the Sutton Arcade, and several footpaths.

BENHILL AVENUE
The 1970-1980s northward extension of Throwley Way introduced new lanes of busy traffic, affecting historic links between High Street and its suburbs. The now truncated Benhill Avenue once formed a significant route from the east, connecting Sutton to neighbouring Carshalton via road and tram.

ANGEL HILL GATEWAY
A gradual sense of transition from the greener, lower-density suburban landscapes of Benhilton, past a series of historic open spaces (including The Green, All Saints Churchyard, the deep set-backs and grass verges which line Angel Hill, and Rosehill Park further north), into the far more enclosed, higher-density urban form of the town centre.



LOCAL MOVEMENT AND HIGH STREET ACCESSIBILITY ^[4.5]

Historically Sutton has been highly dynamic, a strategically located centre sustained by the movement of people. Whilst the focus can be on the role of the railways, the history of all forms of movement is of paramount importance to understanding the centre's heritage significance, and how it is experienced today within their setting.

Many local streets and lanes originally connected Sutton to its rural hinterland and neighbouring settlements. Later these connections evolved to embrace new residential areas, vital to sustaining

the town centre's growth and prosperity through mobilising new suburban communities. Today the landscape has been transformed once again by major 20th-century infrastructural and commercial redevelopment, truncating many of the historical routes.

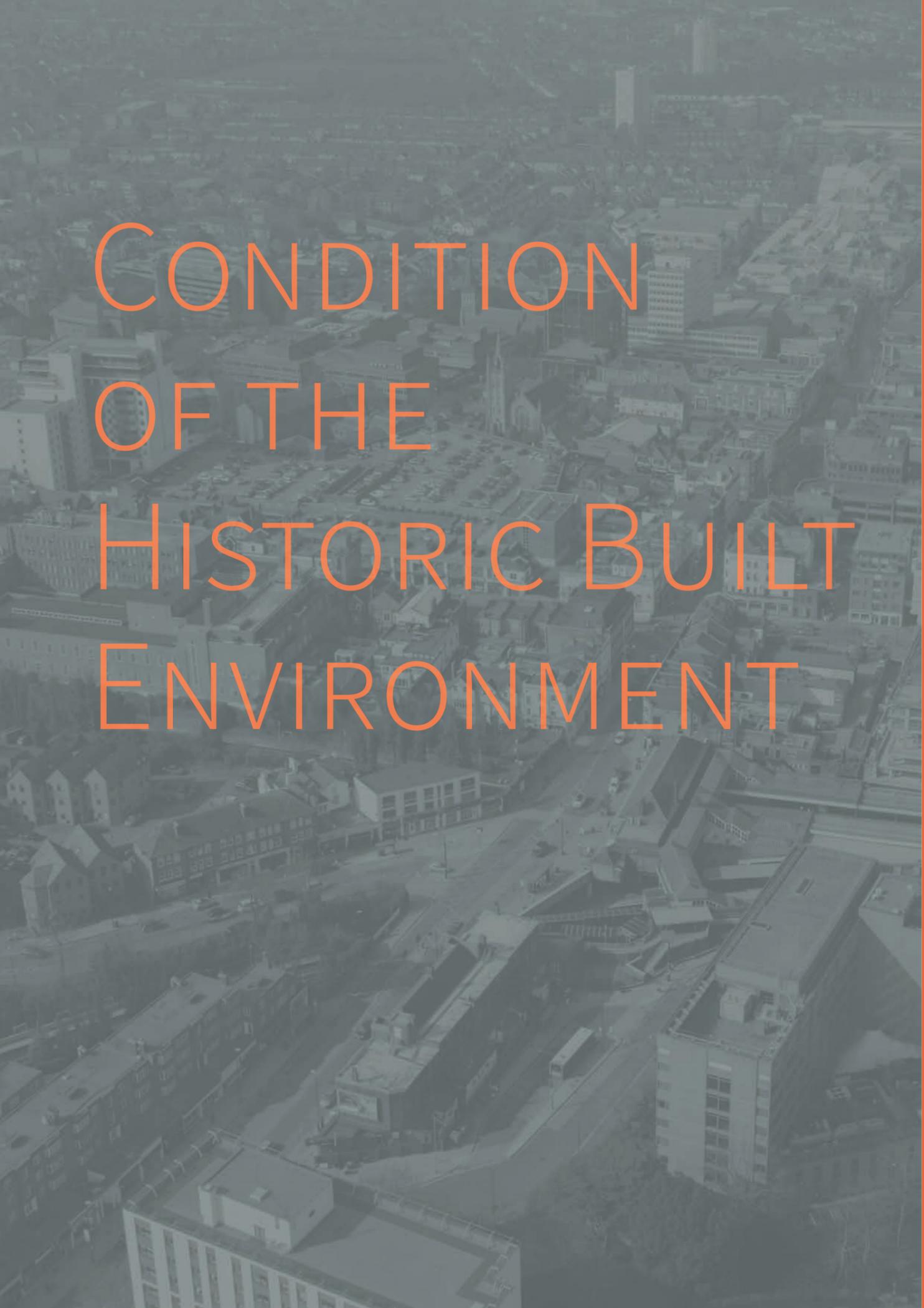
Several historic town centre gateways create distinctive experiences of encountering and leaving the area. These are often framed by heritage assets, some of which are landmark buildings in their own right.

2017

1920



These two aerial photographs show a similar perspective of Sutton town centre (viewed from the north down High Street) captured nearly a century apart. They illustrate the dramatic changes introduced to the town centre by the creation of the gyratory system and large-scale retail units, which redeveloped the land between these new roads and High Street. Major barriers to movement were created between High Street and its historic suburbs by the busy highways (e.g. the Newtown estate, yellow pins). Historic routes have either been curtailed (e.g. Benhill Avenue, green pins) or elevated (e.g. Marshall's Road, orange pins) in the local street hierarchy. In other areas wholesale demolition has truncated the extent of historic streets which once connected directly through to the High Street from residential areas (e.g. Greenford Road, blue pins).



CONDITION OF THE HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The historic townscape of Sutton town centre is the product of over 200 years of almost unremitting change, with each phase of growth responding to the evolving demands on the commercial and civic locus of the Borough.

Different phases of redevelopment and regeneration have resulted in changes to the historic environment. The survival and integrity of heritage assets and townscape characteristics varies both geographically, and in relation to the centre's multiple forms of historic development.

This section examines:

SURVIVAL AND CONDITION OF THE HISTORIC BUILT FORM ^[5.1]

Exploring the distinct patterns in the survival of historic buildings within Sutton's townscape.

INTEGRITY OF TRADITIONAL RETAIL FRONTAGES ^[5.1.2]

A large proportion of the assessment area comprises of retail frontages, illustrating the prolonged evolution of Sutton's main commercial thoroughfare.

CONDITION OF THE HISTORIC PUBLIC REALM ^[5.2]

How Sutton's main historic public spaces have changed as a result of major programmes of realm-reconfiguration over the last 50 years.

THE CHANGING SETTING OF SUTTON TOWN CENTRE ^[5.3]

Sutton's post-war redevelopment has had a significant impact on how High Street and its heritage significance are experienced today.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT ^[5.5]

Recommendations for heritage and townscape management emerging from the Historic Area Assessment.

SURVIVAL AND CONDITION OF THE HISTORIC BUILT FORM ^[5.1]

There are distinct and regular patterns to the survival of buildings within Sutton's townscape. Ground floor retail frontages have undergone very high degrees of change, in sharp contrast to their upper floors which retain remarkably high degrees of historical integrity. Either side of High Street domestic and other buildings have been comprehensively cleared, with those remaining often adapted during the 20th century. As a group, historic civic and public buildings, including recreational venues, have been nearly all lost.

TOWN CENTRE ^[5.1.1]

Since the arrival of the railways the centre has witnessed continual piecemeal redevelopment in a variety of forms, some more intrusive than others. Many traditional buildings survive but bruised, battered and at times, bowing under the pressures of repetitive redevelopment. Many buildings have been adapted, retaining observable traces of their past architecture. Modification can be incisive, with the amalgamation of neighbouring retail units a common example. Or it can be more generalised, through processes such as painting, rendering, and gradual removal of small-scale features due to decay. Whilst this can lead to a loss of architectural features across part or all of a building unit, much of the original fabric has generally survived (albeit sometimes in an unfavourable condition) presenting many opportunities for conservation and enhancement.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS ^[5.1.3]

There are a dispersed number of residential developments of varying ages in the assessment area, and the survival and condition of these are discussed on a location basis with the research report. Residential buildings within the area display varying degrees of survival, with several common forms of alterations: replacement of traditional window units with uPVC counterparts; re-roofing in concrete tile and to a lesser degree continental slate; painting or rendering, including pebbledash; adaptation of forecourts and front gardens for parking.

CONSERVATION & GENERAL MAINTENANCE ^[5.1.4]

The general upkeep of traditional buildings along High Street is good, with only a select number in fair to poor condition. There is a notable difference in condition between the northern and southern ends, with those to the north of comparatively poorer quality and general tidiness, whilst in the south there are higher levels of occupancy and more attentive maintenance. Away from High Street the condition of buildings is again fair to good, with properties largely attentively maintained.

INTERIORS ^[5.1.5]

A rapid survey of a sample of properties revealed very few premises with surviving internal features at first-floor level. All retail spaces inspected showed comprehensive levels of redevelopment, including those with good levels of preservation externally. Survival is likely to be comparatively better at first floors and above, many of which have remained in residential use since construction.

TALL BUILDINGS ^[5.1.6]

The construction of tall buildings in and around the gyratory system has continued since the 1960s, and many early examples have since been re-clad and upgraded in the 20th century.

1-7 High Street form part of the southern gateway to the town centre. At the time of assessment they were vacant, leading to their gradual degradation. Much of the historic fabric does however survive, offering opportunities for enhancement of both the buildings and the wider historic townscape.



INTEGRITY OF TRADITIONAL RETAIL FRONTAGES ^[5.1.2]



GROUND FLOOR LOSS

Building frontages along High Street have undergone the highest degree of change at ground-floor level. Alterations entail the wholesale replacement of shopfronts, down to the removal or concealment of traditional features such as pilasters and console brackets.

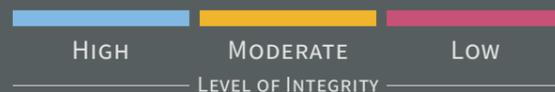
"LOOK UP!"

There is generally a high level of survival of traditional building facades above ground floor within Sutton's commercial heritage. Where they occur, alterations entail replacement of features such as window surrounds, window units, parapets and cornice decoration.



GROUND FLOOR

TRADITIONAL RETAIL FRONTAGES



ABOVE GROUND FLOOR



EXTENT OF SURVIVAL

Levels of integrity and authenticity are consistently strong above ground floor across the assessment area. There is, however, a notable geographic variation at ground-floor. Areas around the historic crossroads have survived (relatively) better, in stark contrast to high levels of loss in central and northern areas.

HERITAGE AT RISK

Whilst survival is higher above-ground-floor, architectural features are relatively frequently at risk from imminent degradation. Notable examples are 1-7 High Street, and Edward Terrace (246-254 High Street).



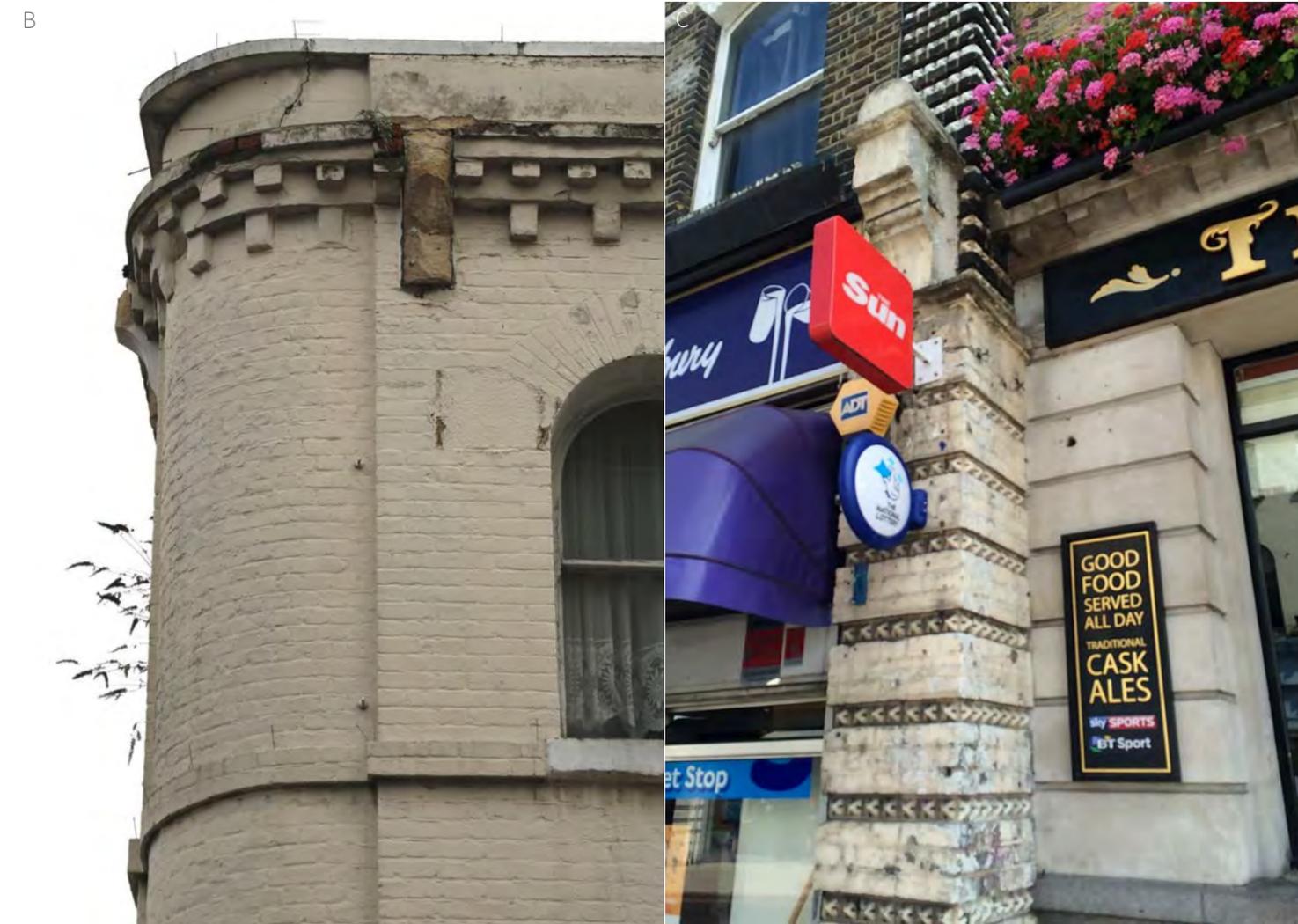
Anticlockwise from top left:

A: 113-125 High Street are an exemplar of the common disparity between levels of survival of traditional features at ground-floor levels in comparison to those above. Here, many traditional features can be identified in the upper façades, while the shop fronts have been totally replaced.

B: Where traditional features survive they can be at risk of imminent loss through ongoing processes of degradation, including weathering, water ingress and vegetation growth. This image shows Edward Terrace (246-254 High Street).

C: Commonly encountered surviving traditional shopfront features include pilasters and console brackets. This example fronts The Old Bank Public House at No. 2 High Street.

D: Frontages of Nos. 32-36 High Street, part of one of the centre's more ornate late Victorian shopping parades. Rare for High Street, they feature a combination of good survival of traditional features at both ground floor and above.



CONDITION OF THE HISTORIC PUBLIC REALM ^[5.2]

Much of the paraphernalia of the historic High Street has been lost. Historic photographs show that an array of awnings and other furniture once projected onto the street, with pavements usurped by the competing shop owners. A number of bars and cafes have begun to reclaim areas of public space through outdoor seating.

Today the High Street public realm struggles to achieve the same levels of vibrancy, individual expression, and sense of orientation along the backbone of High Street. Trees introduced have softened the ambience of the street, bringing a semi-natural feel. Pedestrianisation of the carriageway has diffused the once strong orientation, allowing activity once confined to narrower flanking pavements to become dispersed within a much broader street scene.

The use of artwork has sought to reinvigorated the street scene in some areas, such as around the gap site at the High Street junctions with Throwley Road, Sutton Court Road and the alleyway opposite 229 High Street.

The redevelopment of groups of buildings has also been intended to introduce a greater degree of vibrancy and expression, an exemplar is the run of Regency styled terraces at Nos. 202-214 now painted in a pastel colour scheme.



Sutton's historical High Street would have been a place of great vibrancy. Created both through daily commerce, and seasonal celebrations.

High Street, Sutton. Xmas Show Week. 1910.

Aerial view of the town centre from the northwest, 1929.



THE CHANGING SETTING OF SUTTON TOWN CENTRE ^[5.3]

Sutton's post-war redevelopment has had a significant impact on how the historic town centre is experienced. Levels of change vary across the assessment area, but have been particularly concentrated behind High Street, focussing on major infrastructural and commercial development.

The outcome has seen High Street 'encapsulated' within a collar of post-war redevelopment, fragmenting an historical permeability to and from its residential surroundings.

Other elements of the centre's historical setting have however been sustained, continuing to illustrate different phases of Sutton's development from rural settlement to metropolitan centre.

Key factors have been:

- Fragmentation of High Street accessibility
- Survival of historic town centre gateways
- Loss of town centre residential areas
- Survival of historic civic assets and spaces
- Loss of historic town centre amenities
- Loss of 'backland' spaces

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT ^[5.5]

The Historic Area Assessment has identified opportunities for the enhancement of the town centre's historic environment. The following list highlights various options through which this could be achieved, drawn from national examples of best practice in heritage and development management.*

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Seek to enable the findings of the Historic Area Assessment to **help inform the delivery of current and emerging policy** to support the sustainable development of Sutton.
- Consider ways each of the three themes of the town centre's heritage significance can be **conserved, celebrated and enhanced**, increasing their presence within the townscape.
- Develop **pro-active planning mechanisms** such as Design Guides, Local Development Orders, Design Review Panels, and Neighbourhood Plans to **encourage new high-quality development** to add to the spectrum that currently exists, and **help strengthen the existing distinctive character** of the town centre.
- Establish new and further develop existing working practices that encourage **elevated levels of community consultation** into the future conservation and development of Sutton's historic environment.
- Actively seek to **re-establish and strengthen links between the town centre and surrounding suburban areas**, particularly in respect of former lines of movement and views.
- **Conserve and enhance those town centre gateways** that continue to illustrate Sutton's historical development, particularly those approaching the historic crossroads.
- **Develop a Heritage Strategy**, in close consultation with local businesses, communities and the local authority, that engages with the future levels of growth expected of Sutton and defines potential future roles for Sutton's heritage as it develops further.

* NB. The list has been compiled by Locus Consulting to inform discussions between local stakeholders, and does not represent confirmed projects or deliverables yet resourced by the Sutton Heritage Action Zone partnership.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Evaluate the findings of the HAA and consider how, if and where necessary, they can be used as an **evidence base for use in development management**, specifically in relation to policies concerning design, and the historic and natural environments.
- Use the development management process, including pro-active pre-application discussions as well as planning conditions, to **maintain and re-introduce those smaller-scale legacies of Sutton's historical development**, such as its former suburban and sylvan character.
- Use Article 4 Directions or other suitable planning instruments to **control permitted development rights within the town centre**, ensuring that those architectural features that underpin its heritage significance are conserved and where possible re-introduced.
- Consider how **developer contributions** can be leveraged to the benefit of Sutton town centre's historic environment.

CONSERVATION

- **Review the full range of heritage protection and planning mechanisms** that can be applied to the conservation and enhancement of Sutton's town centre and its surrounding area.
- Seek to **afford added protection to rare surviving examples of the town centre's heritage** including its early 19th-century residential building stock and early 20th-century recreational built heritage, particularly its town halls and public houses.
- **Capture the stories of historic Sutton** to better understand the town centre's intangible heritage, and develop ways to promote it such as through artistic expression and events,
- Celebrate the history of Sutton within the **public realm**, recognising its role as an historic routeway.
- Consider ways of **harnessing the knowledge, skills and interest of long-standing local residents** as well as those new communities moving to Sutton, to help raise awareness of and celebrate its heritage (e.g. through educational initiatives and public art).

SUTTON'S HERITAGE RESOURCES

A rich resource of materials is available to those wishing to engage further with Sutton's heritage significance and distinctive historic environment. These include photographic, cartographic, documentary, and other sources, many freely available to both members of the public and commercial organisations.

NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST FOR ENGLAND

The official register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England including listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

GREATER LONDON HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (GLHER)

A comprehensive resource for the historic environment of Greater London containing over 87,000 entries providing data on archaeological sites, historic buildings, historic parks and landscapes, finds and heritage features, and supporting sources of information.

Elements of the GLHER are available online at www.HeritageGateway.org.uk | GLHER@HistoricEngland.org.uk | 020 3973 3731

SUTTON LOCAL STUDIES AND ARCHIVE

The local studies collection holds a wealth of information on past lives in the borough in books, photographs, maps, newspapers, and pamphlets. The borough's archive comprises primary source material in a variety of different formats including documentary, audio, and film.

<https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/sutton/local-studies-archives> | Local.Studies@Sutton.gov.uk | 020 8770 4747

OTHER RESOURCES

Various other online resources can provide insights into the heritage of the town centre. These include: historic ordnance survey mapping from the National Library of Scotland online catalogue (Great Britain coverage, <https://maps.nls.uk/>); historical aerial photography through 'Britain from Above' (<https://britainfromabove.org.uk/>); other maps and historical information and statistics from A Vision of Britain (<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/>); the National Record of the Historic Environment (<https://www.pastscape.org.uk/>); and other local resources including the Sutton and Cheam Bomb Map and the 'Past on Glass' archive (see following page).

WHERE CAN I GO FOR ADVICE?

For enquiries concerning the Heritage Action Zone, planning applications and policy matters, development management, Listed Building or Scheduled Monument Consent, Conservation Areas, town centre regeneration, and archaeology:

For further advice on exploring local history and archaeology:



24 Denmark Road
Carshalton
London Borough of Sutton
SM5 2JG

020 8770 5000
www.Sutton.gov.uk



4th Floor
Cannon Bridge House
25 Dowgate Hill
London
EC4R 2YA

0207 973 3700
London@HistoricEngland.org.uk



www.CADHAS.org.uk



PAST ON GLASS

Large quantities of Sutton's heritage resources are the products of dedicated projects that have identified, disseminated, and celebrated previously inaccessible resources, often delivered through partnership work and using a highly committed cohort of local volunteers. An exemplar is the Heritage Lottery funded *Past on Glass* initiative led by the London Borough of Sutton. The project conserved, catalogued, and digitised the vast collection of David Knights-Whittome (pictured right), a local photographer who during a diverse career captured a rich assemblage of imagery of local places and people. The Past on Glass archive is curated at the London Borough of Sutton archive service, with over 10,000 images available online, found by searching "Past on Glass Sutton".

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