Elmbridge: Key Features

Elmbridge is a Surrey borough located in the prosperous South East region, immediately to the South West of London. It is a highly desirable area due to its easy access by rail and road to Central London and high quality environment. The companion guides provide detailed assessments for each of the 8 settlement areas in Elmbridge, which should be referred to before embarking on a design proposal. This overview provides an insight to what makes Elmbridge such a special place and why it is so highly valued by the local community.

Open Spaces

- Green open space, either within or surrounding the urban areas, is close at hand to most residents in Elmbridge
- 57% of the Borough is Green Belt
- Significant areas of common land
- Strategic open urban land and other open urban land such as school playing fields, allotments, recreation grounds, parks and gardens provide highly valued open spaces throughout the urban area.
- Greens located across the Borough, particularly in towns and villages, add to the attractiveness and distinctiveness of local areas, encouraging biodiversity, providing drainage and improving air quality.
- Many residential properties have large, well landscaped, gardens.

Trees and Landscape

- Elmbridge is known for its abundance of trees and high quality green spaces
- Great diversity of trees on the commons, woodlands, park estates, private gardens and public highways providing 21% canopy cover.
- 2.8% of total land area is Ancient Woodland.
- Trees add scale, structure and interest and help to reduce pollution and provide important habitats for a variety of insects, birds and mammals.

Views and Vistas

- Key strategic views, many characterised by their tree dominance, including the River Thames and across to the Surrey Hills.
- Short views and local townscape views often around the Borough’s notable church spires.
- Long views are often foreshortened by tree enclosure or changes to topographical levels combined with woodland.

For a detailed assessment of the character of Elmbridge please see the overview companion guide
**Historic Assets**
- Rich historic environment
- 24 conservation areas, 750 statutory listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- 3 historic parks and gardens

**Architectural Styles**
- 18th century houses are widespread across the Borough
- Some modern Neo-Georgian and some Queen Anne Revival examples of the late 19th century
- Victorian Villas can be found in areas such as Kent Town, East Molesey and Giggs Hill Green, Thames Ditton.
- Fine examples of Arts and Crafts’ architecture found in areas such as Foley Road, Claygate
- 20th century vernacular revival style is present in many of the town and village centres
- Inter-war and post-war redevelopment of the town centres
- Striking modern developments, including Mercedes Benz World and ‘The Heart’ at Walton Town Centre

**Uses**
- The 8 urban settlement areas are predominately residential
- Large detached and semi-detached houses dominate.
- Flatted developments are now common in some parts of the Borough.
- Town and Village centres provide mixed uses mainly retail, cafes, restaurants and bars, residential and office buildings.
- Commercial areas such as Brooklands and Molesey Industrial Estate
- Public buildings such as the Civic Centre in Esher, as well as numerous village halls and community centres
- Recreational uses such as Xcel Leisure Centre and all weather sports pitches at Waterside Drive
- Visitor attractions, including Sandown Racecourse, Brooklands Museum, Painshill Park and Claremont Landscape Gardens.

**Waterways**
- The River Thames, Wey Navigation, River Mole, Ember and Rythe shape and define the Borough.
- The riverscape provides contrast between open wider landscapes and more intimate views along tree-lined banks.
- The waterways provide a highly valued recreational resource as well important wildlife corridors.