

*Working towards...*

*The Spelthorne Local Development Framework*

# Initial Draft Bridge Street Car Park, Staines Planning Brief



Supplementary Planning Document

May 2006



**Planning Brief**  
**for**  
**BRIDGE STREET CAR PARK**  
**BRIDGE STREET, STAINES**

**Initial Draft**

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

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Ref: 07/2006



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Planning Brief is to set out the Council's requirements as Local Planning Authority for the proposed redevelopment of the Bridge Street Car Park site.
- 1.2 The brief proposes that the primary use of the site should be residential with an element of public and private car parking at ground and any basement level. Any scheme must include provision for the Sea Cadets unless an alternative appropriate and acceptable site can be found for them. The resulting development must be of exceptional quality given the site's prominent location with the Staines Conservation Area, adjoining the River Thames and at an important 'gateway' into Staines town centre.
- 1.3 It is the Council's intention in due course to formally adopt this document as a Supplementary Planning Document as part of its new Local Development Framework. Currently this draft brief has no statutory status and has been prepared to facilitate early consideration of the site's future. It nevertheless is a statement of the Council's intention for the site and will be a material consideration in its determination of any planning application which might come forward prior to the brief's formal adoption.

## 2. Description of the Site

- 2.1 The exact location of the site is shown on plan 1. It is some 0.714 hectares (1.71 acres) in extent. It is broadly rectangular in shape and is accessed from Bridge Street via a shared entrance with Ashby House and Hanover House. It is in Staines town centre and, being adjacent to Staines Bridge, is prominent and at an important gateway into the town. The site also has an important frontage to the River Thames.
- 2.2 The Planning Brief site currently has two levels of public car parking with the first floor level on a deck which is broadly level with the height of Clarence Street and the approach to Staines Bridge which are both elevated above the original prevailing ground levels.
- 2.3 The car park was constructed in the late 1980s as part of a comprehensive development scheme involving the redevelopment of a brewery site immediately to the north owned by Courage and the car park site owned by the Borough Council. Courage built new headquarter offices to the north of the car park and converted the historic brewery tower fronting Church Street to residential use. The single decked car park has 280 spaces and was also constructed to provide both public parking spaces, some of which are used by the offices on weekdays under a license agreement (100 spaces). A new headquarters for Staines and Egham Sea Cadets was also provided as part of the development in the south west corner of the site. A dedicated riverside walk was also created linking existing sections of towpath either side of the site.
- 2.4 The site is located in the Staines Conservation Area and also adjacent to Staines Bridge, a Grade II Listed Building and close to other listed building and historic structures. This part of the Conservation Area is characterised by development built up to the back of the pavement. The site has a river frontage of some 70 metres. The site is in a prominent position with longer distance views of the site from the tow paths on both north and south banks of the river. The Thames at this point has a slight curve with the Planning Brief site on the outside of this curve. Long views of the site are therefore possible for up to half a mile or more from the Thames both from the south and the west. The development will be clearly visible along side/behind the historic Staines Bridge. The site is also prominent when viewed from within the Conservation Area particularly along Clarence Street but also from Bridge Street.
- 2.5 The site is within the defined 1:100 year flood risk area. The Conservation Area boundary, nearby listed buildings and flood area are shown on Plan 2. Plan 3 shows the important viewpoints.
- 2.6 The Borough Council owns the freehold of the site. All relevant ownerships in the vicinity of the site are shown on Plan 4.

### 3. Policy Context and Other Considerations

- 3.1 The currently adopted development plans relevant to the site are the Spelthorne Borough Local Plan - April 2001 and the Surrey Structure Plan - December 2004. Regional Planning Guidance is set out in RPG9 "Regional Planning Guidance for the South East" and a new Regional Plan is currently being prepared for the South East which is called the South East Plan.
- 3.2 The housing aim of the Local Plan is to:
- "To provide additional housing to the extent consistent with Structure Plan requirements and protection of the character of urban areas, and to seek to encourage choice in terms of size, type and tenure by those needing housing in the Borough".
- 3.3 The Local Plan has a housing requirement of 2400 dwellings for the period from 1991-2006.
- 3.4 The Surrey Structure Plan requires Spelthorne to provide a net addition of 2580 dwellings in the period from April 2001 to March 2016.
- 3.5 The South East Regional Assembly is currently preparing a new plan for the South East. Its intentions for the London fringe area, of which Spelthorne is part, is to meet, as far as possible the housing needs of the sub-region. In the autumn of 2005 Surrey County Council, on behalf of SEERA, consulted Surrey residents on housing requirements for the period from 2006-2026. It proposes an annual build rate for Spelthorne of about 150 dwellings which amount to 3000 for the 20 year period.
- 3.6 The employment aim of the Local Plan is:
- "To maintain a buoyant economy which meets the needs of the Borough whilst opposing additional employment growth of a scale which would place unacceptable pressure on the Green Belt, housing supply, transport infrastructure and the environment generally".
- 3.7 The Surrey Structure Plan (Policy L07) seeks to meet the development needs of sustainable economic growth. The emerging South East Plan seeks to develop and sustain a vibrant and diverse economy to meet local employment and service needs (para 2.2).
- 3.8 The Council has undertaken research for its new Spelthorne Development Plan which will be part of its Local Development Framework. This has shown that, with existing employment commitments within and immediately adjoining the Borough (including Terminal 5 at Heathrow), by 2016 there will be approximately (2600) more jobs than the projected change in the economically active workforce. There is therefore scope for the Council to reduce the extent of economic floor space in the Borough as a whole and still provide sufficient local jobs.
- 3.9 Its research on housing land shows there is sufficient to meet current Structure Plan requirements but it may need to identify further sites to demonstrate its capability to meet housing required up to 2026. The extent of local need is such that all opportunities for new house building nevertheless need to be considered.

- 3.10 Based on the research for the Council's LDF there is no case to use the Bridge Street Car Park site for additional employment development for the Borough or any other use other than the requirement to identify land for housing and need for public car parking in the town centre. The Council is undertaking a study to establish how much car parking should be retained on this site.
- 3.11 The site is suitable environmentally for housing and is at an accessible location and will contribute to a broader mix of uses in the town centre. For the reasons set out in the previous paragraphs housing is the proposed primary use of the site.
- 3.12 Policy H6 of the Local Plan seeks 50% of all housing on developments of 15 or more dwellings or where the site is 0.5 hectares or larger to be affordable. Further details of the Council's affordable housing requirements are set out in its Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing adopted in December 2004.
- 3.13 Policy H5 of the Local Plan requires the density of housing development to be at a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare. Government guidance (RPG 3) requires higher densities at accessible town centre sites. The Council's Policy H5 also requires that 80% of dwellings on development schemes should be made up of one and two bedroom units. This is to meet the particular needs of smaller households. There is also a requirement in the Borough for extra-care housing as part of its provision generally of smaller units.
- 3.14 The brief site is located within an area which is at risk from flooding. The extent of the 1 in 100 year flood risk area is shown as Plan 2. Policy BE29 of the Local Plan states that development will not be permitted in areas liable to flood unless it can be demonstrated it will not:
- a) increase impedance to the flow of floodwater.
  - b) reduce the site's contribution to the capacity of the flood plain to store water.
  - c) increase the number of people or properties at risk from significant adverse affects of flooding.
  - d) obstruct land adjacent to water courses required for access/or maintenance purposes.
  - e) adversely affect flood defence structures or other features with the same role.

The Policy looks for mitigation measures to ideally enhance flood storage capacity.

- 3.15 The Environment Agency will not support proposals for any new residential development in a flood risk area unless all the above requirements are met and there is an agreed dry route of escape available in times of flood to a point outside of the flood plain.
- 3.16 The Council's Consultants Black and Veatch, have undertaken an assessment of the potential for development on this site, including residential, to comply with the Environment Agency's requirements. For the purpose of the Flood Risk Assessment the consultants brief required them to consider both residential and non-residential uses although this planning brief seeks residential use and possibly some public car parking. They have established with the Environment Agency that:

- a) a development can be accommodated on the site on piers with undercroft parking which is capable of being designed to have no greater impact on the storage or movement of flood water than the structure of the current decked car park.
  - b) a dry route of escape can be created onto the Staines Bridge approach and then via Staines Bridge and the footway on the north side of the Causeway to Egham to a point outside of the flood plain.
  - c) a flood management plan will be required for any development on the site.
- 3.17 Black and Veatch's Flood Risk Assessment of the site is set out at Appendix 1 and includes relevant correspondence with the Environment Agency.
- 3.18 Within the brief site is the Staines and Egham Sea Cadets headquarters. It meets a social and community need within the Borough. Policy SC1 of the Local Plan requires such needs to be met and the loss of facilities resisted except where they are not needed. It is understood the organisation is willing to consider relocation and appropriate arrangements for this will be supported. The scope to retain the existing Sea Cadets building on site would in any case depend on whether the flood storage capacity represented by the site of the existing building is required to secure the comprehensive development of the site as a whole with no greater impact on flood storage capacity.
- 3.19 Local Plan Policy M3 states that the Council will make appropriate provision for public car parking in Staines by continuing provision at an appropriate level.
- 3.20 Policy BE1 of the Council's Local Plan requires new development to be of a high standard and makes specific references to scale, height, proportions, relationship to adjoining buildings, protecting important views and vistas, contributing to townscape improvement, energy efficiency and conservation and landscaping. In the case of this brief site regard must also be had to Policy BE20 which, among other matters, requires development to preserve the setting of listed buildings and Policy BE22 which requires regard to the impact on the character of conservation areas. Paragraph 4.67 of the Plan specifically refers to Clarence Street providing an important vista within the Staines Conservation Area. The intentions of these Local Plan Policies are also reflected in Structure Plan Policies SE4 and SE5. In March 1991 the Council published a Staines Conservation Area Preservation and Enhancement Plan which gives further background to issues in the Conservation Area.
- 3.21 An important consideration in new development is energy efficiency and renewable energy. Policy BE38 of the Local Plan states that appropriate renewable energy schemes will be actively encouraged subject to no adverse impacts on the environment. Structure Plan Policy SE2 requires that a minimum of 10% of the energy requirement of a development is from renewable sources. The Policy also expects the provisions of combined heat and power schemes for all development in excess of 5000m<sup>2</sup> as the norm. Policies EN1 and EN2 in the draft South East Plan Core Strategy (July 2005) makes similar requirements. Renewable energy provision must be made in the development in accordance with these policies
- 3.22 Policy RU7 of the Local Plan requires development to have particular regard to the character and setting of the River Thames and the Proposals Map defines a River

Thames Area of Special Character which extends from the river back across half of the brief site. The banding is shown on Plan 2.

## 4. Development Requirements

- 4.1 The Council's requirement is for a residential development which subject to the findings of a current car parking study of the town centre may require an element of public car parking to be retained and either provides for the retention or rebuilding of the existing Sea Cadet accommodation, or enables their relocation to an appropriate alternative site. It will require 50% of the dwellings to be affordable of which no more than one third are to be for shared ownership with the remainder for rent. 80% or more of the dwellings are to be one and two bedroom units.
- 4.2 The development must be comprehensive and of an exceptionally high quality to reflect the site's prominent location at a 'gateway' into the town centre, adjacent to the River Thames and listed buildings and within a conservation area. Any planning application must be accompanied by a detailed design statement including a Flood Risk Assessment and any scheme will be required to demonstrate how it will enhance this part of the Staines Conservation Area. The Council's guidance on preparing such statements is set out at Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The specific requirements of any development on this site are as follows:
- a) Design
    - i. Massing - the mass of the building will need to be such that it fits in with the pattern and scale of buildings in the locality and, in particular, care must be taken not to harm the setting of the nearby listed buildings including the 2/3 storey late Georgian/early Victorian properties on the north side of Clarence Street and of Staines Bridge.
    - ii. Location of buildings - This should reflect the surrounding development patterns which reinforces the existing street pattern and alignment and position of Staines Bridge. The frontage of any new building to the River Thames should be set back sufficiently to allow long distance views along the towpath through the pedestrian tunnel through which the towpath passes under Staines Bridge. This is likely to require development behind a line defined by the north side of the pedestrian tunnel and the front elevation of Hanover House. The new building will need to achieve an appropriate separation from Staines Bridge and its approach to enable access to the arches under the Bridge including one which has pedestrian access through it. The position of the building will need to meet the Environment Agency's normal requirement for a minimum eight metres wide strip area for access to and maintenance of the River Thames of eight metres wide.
    - iii. Height - this should not exceed the height of adjoining buildings and not result in the properties on the north side of Clarence Street being over dominated. Clarence Street provides a particularly important vista within the Staines Conservation Area. The street rises from Market Square to its junction with Bridge Street as do the floor levels of the buildings. To preserve the visual integrity and prominence of this important group of buildings the height of the new development should not appear to be greater than the top of the parapet of no 41 Clarence Street when viewed along the street from outside the Blue Anchor Hotel at Market Square. This does not mean the building height should not exceed the actual

height of no 41 but that along this line of view it does not give the appearance of being greater. The building(s) will also need to achieve a satisfactory transition to the scale of Hanover House to the west and relate appropriately to the existing Sea Cadet building if it is retained. The development should not obscure the important view from Staines Bridge of the historic St Mary's Church in Church Street to the north west of the site.

- iv. External Appearance and Materials - This will need to be of a high standard of design and use of materials reflecting and complementing the character of the nearby listed buildings and the character of this part of the Staines Conservation Area. The elevations and roofline will need to be appropriately articulated and materials chosen to break up the scale of the building and reflect the character of this part of the Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings. Care will be required in designing a structure which will be elevated above the prevailing ground level to ensure that the overall design of this element is attractive and the parking area does not detract. Any lift shafts or plant areas required for the development should not be readily seen from outside the site.
  - v. Secured by Design - The development will be expected to be designed to minimise the opportunities for crime and will be expected to meet Surrey Police 'Secured by Design' standards (Contact Vic Smith, Crime Reduction Officer - 01784 444269).
  - vi. People with Disabilities - in accordance with Policy H7 of the local Plan 20% of the dwellings provided on site should be suitable for people with disabilities.
  - vii. Public Art - an artistic element should be included as an integral part of the overall design of the building in accordance with Policy BE3 of the Local Plan and the Council's 'Public Art Policy for Spelthorne' March 2005.
- b) **Access and Parking**

The site access onto Bridge Street is at an already congested part of the highway network. The Council recognise, however, that where the opportunities for housing are optimised on sites within or close to town centres and there is proximity to both a range of facilities and good public transport there is more scope to limit the travel needs of these residents by private cars. Housing on such sites can be particularly attractive to these people who do not wish to have a car or make only limited use of one. Any development proposal must be accompanied by a detail transport assessment which must be prepared in consultation with Surrey County Council's Transportation Development Control Section. The Council has the following access and parking requirements:

- i. **Vehicular Access** - the new development should not significantly add to the existing traffic problems in the vicinity experienced at peak times. The extent of any impact will be dependent on a number of factors including the number and size of the new dwellings, the parking provision provided for them, encouragement given to residents to walk or use alternative transport to the private car, the amount of public car parking retained and its pattern of use and the differences in movement patterns of those occupying the residential properties and those of a public car park.

Access arrangements should be to current design standards including servicing requirements. The development must fully fund any highway requirements necessary to mitigate any adverse impacts of the scheme. Early discussion with Surrey County Council prior to submission of an application is strongly advised.

- ii. Pedestrian Access – any scheme must include good pedestrian access to the development and also maintain and, where possible, improve the quality of public pedestrian areas on the site in the form of the towpath and links from the towpath to Bridge Street and Clarence Street adjoined to the Staines Bridge. See also comments under paragraph 4.3 (a) (ii) and 4.3 (d).
- iii. Car Parking - parking provision for the residential element of the development should be at a maximum of 1 space per dwelling. An appropriate proportion of the residential parking provision should be suitable for those with disabilities.
- iv. Secure and convenient cycle parking and access facilities must be provided for all dwellings within 20 metres of the access to the dwellings. Communal cycle parking areas must be lit at night.
- v. The developer will be expected to meet the full cost of any alterations required to the junction with Bridge Street and contribute to mitigating any other identifiable adverse affects of the development.

c) Flooding

The development of the site will need to be undertaken in such a way that it has no detrimental impact on the sites flood storage capacity in a 1 in 100 year flood event, or lead to any greater impedance to the flow of flood water. As already described in paragraph 3.16 a dry route of escape exists from the southern end of Bridge Street/Staines Bridge to Egham and has been agreed with the Environment Agency. A pedestrian access arrangement within the site to the adjoining dry point must be created and maintained at all times for all future occupiers. The application must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate that the particular scheme devised complies with the Environment Agency's requirements and must also include a Flood Management Plan. Foul water drainage arrangements for the site must be appropriate to a site which is liable to flood. The Environment Agency will be consulted on any planning application and the details of the design must comply with their requirements. Early contact with the Agency is advised at the pre-application stage.

d) Landscaping

The developer will be expected to devise an appropriate landscaping scheme for all external parts of the scheme. This should consider in detail both hard and soft landscaping including the towpath and margins to the river's edge. Opportunities should be used to incorporate tree and shrub planting to soften the impact of the build development and give particular attention to the river frontage. The scheme must include the creation of a new surface to the towpath to match the finish in front of the Thames Edge development on the east side of Staines Bridge. The finish is a bonded fine aggregate surface.

The existing pedestrian route between the car park and the bridge approach must be retained and be enhanced and its surface treated in the same material as the towpath. The landscaping scheme must include details of lighting which at the riverside must match that used at Thames Edge and in Clarence Street and Bridge Street. The scheme must include an appropriate treatment of the enclosures to the bridge arches facing the development site in a manner compatible with the development and which enhances the character of the listed bridge.

e) Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation

The development must be designed to secure the highest possible standards of energy conservation both by appropriate methods of construction and insulation and in running costs including through the appropriate design and specification of any external lighting.

In line with Structure Plan Policy SE2 and the Government's objectives to reduce carbon emissions the development will be expected to incorporate appropriate measures to ensure a proportion of the energy requirements of users of the development come from renewable sources. This requirement applies not only to the residential element but also any public car parking and provision for the Sea Cadets. Structure Plan policy requires a minimum of 10% of the energy requirement of the development as a whole to be from renewables. A range of technologies exist which, subject to good design, could be included without detriment to the design quality being sought for the development. These include solar heating systems, photo voltaic panels, mini combined heat and power and possibly underground heat pumps. The Council will expect the developer's design to assess the likely carbon use of the whole development and propose measures to secure a minimum of 10% of the energy needs of the development from on-site renewable sources. Each residential unit will be required to benefit from the on-site renewable energy generation. Details of provision should be set out in the design statement for any proposed development.

f) Servicing

The development will be required to incorporate adequate waste storage and recycling facilities for the development which is readily available for use by all residents and are an integral part of the scheme. These should be discreetly positioned.

g) Archaeology

Staines town centre has an extensive history including evidence of a settlement from Neolithic times onward, including the Roman occupation. In accordance with Policy BE26 of the Local Plan the Council requires an agreed scheme of archaeological assessment or evaluation to be submitted with any application. Where evidence of significant archaeological remains are found then the more detailed requirements of Local Plan Policy BE25 will apply. These relate to appropriate physical evaluation, appropriate scheme of preservation (preferably on-site) and publication of findings.

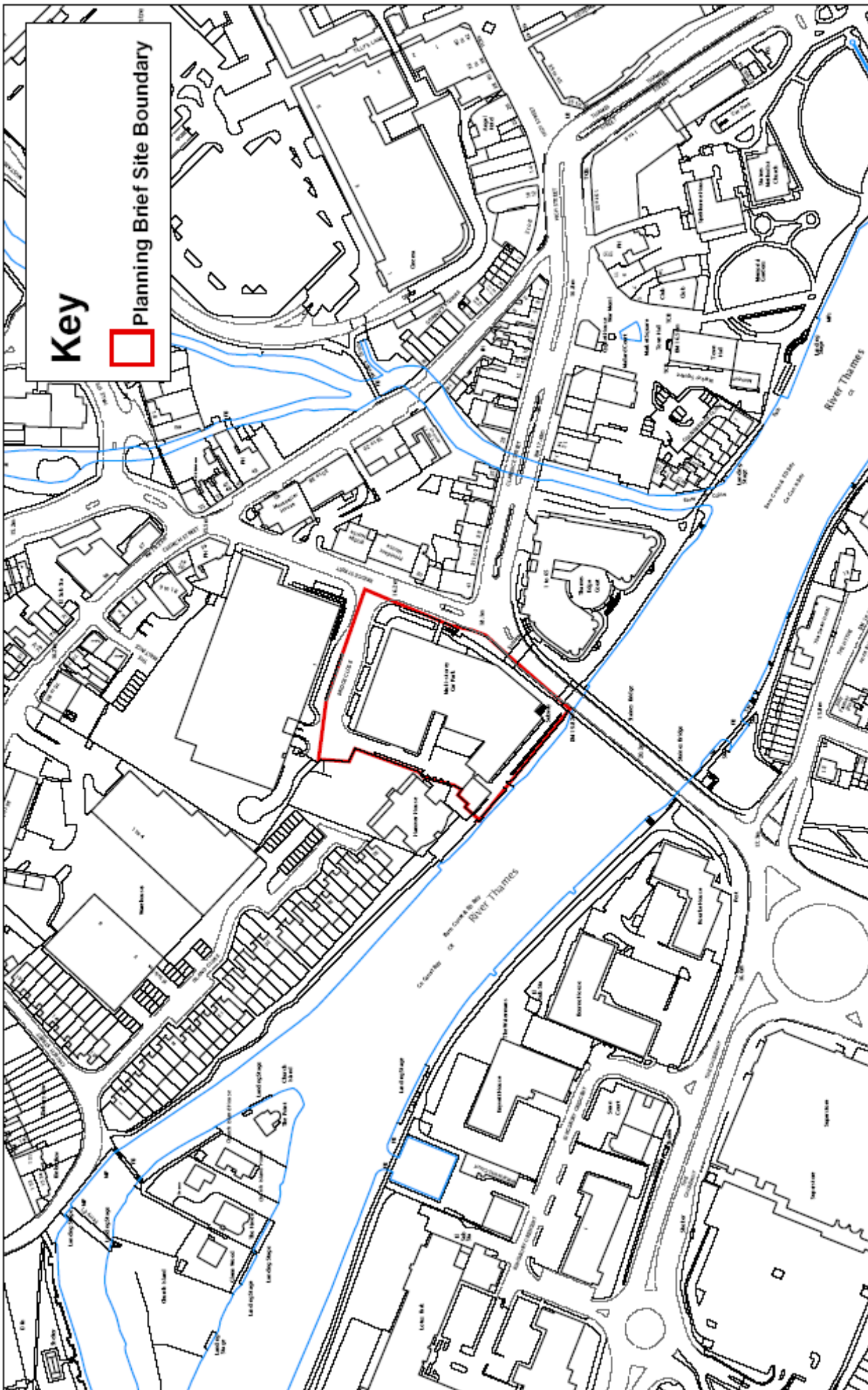
## **5. Other Matters**

- 5.1 The developer will need to consider whether the development might require an Environmental Impact Assessment. The Council can provide a 'screening' assessment of any particular development proposal prior to submission. The Council expects consultation on screening and scoping prior to formal submission of an application.

## 6. Further Information

- 6.1 The Council welcomes pre-application discussions as a way of helping developers to devise the best possible development for a site. For further information on the Planning Brief developers are asked to contact in the first instance either Paul Underwood (Assistant Head of Planning - Development Control) or Esmé Spinks (Principal Planning Officer - Development Control).
- 6.2 Other useful contacts are:
- a) Highways - Edward Josey,  
Transport Development Control,  
Surrey County Council, 0208 541 7417
  - b) Crime Reduction - Vic Smith, Crime Reduction Officer  
Surrey Police, 01784 444269
  - c) Environment Agency - Fiona McNie, Planning Liaison Officer  
0207 091 4020
- 6.3 The Council will expect a developer to undertake early and appropriate consultation with residents and businesses in the vicinity of the site prior to finalising its proposals and submitting a planning application. Applicants will be expected to submit the details of the pre-application consultation arrangements with the application and the comments made and how they have been responded to. This approach accords with good practice and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement
- 6.4 The Council will require that a full application is submitted and there will need to be a Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing structures on the site.

## Plans



**Key**

□ Planning Brief Site Boundary

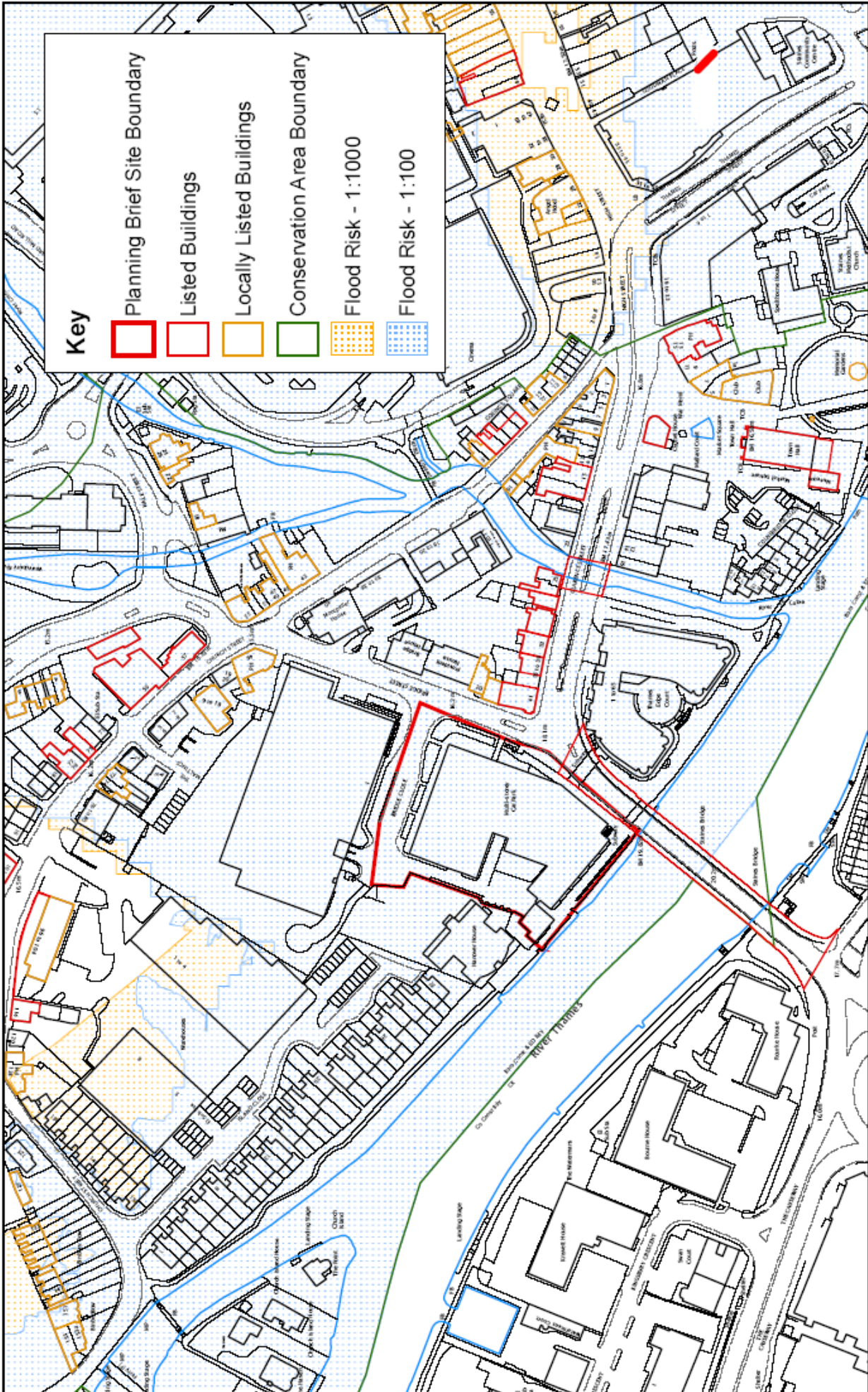
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**Plan 1: Planning Brief Site Boundary**





**Key**

- Planning Brief Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Flood Risk - 1:1000
- Flood Risk - 1:100

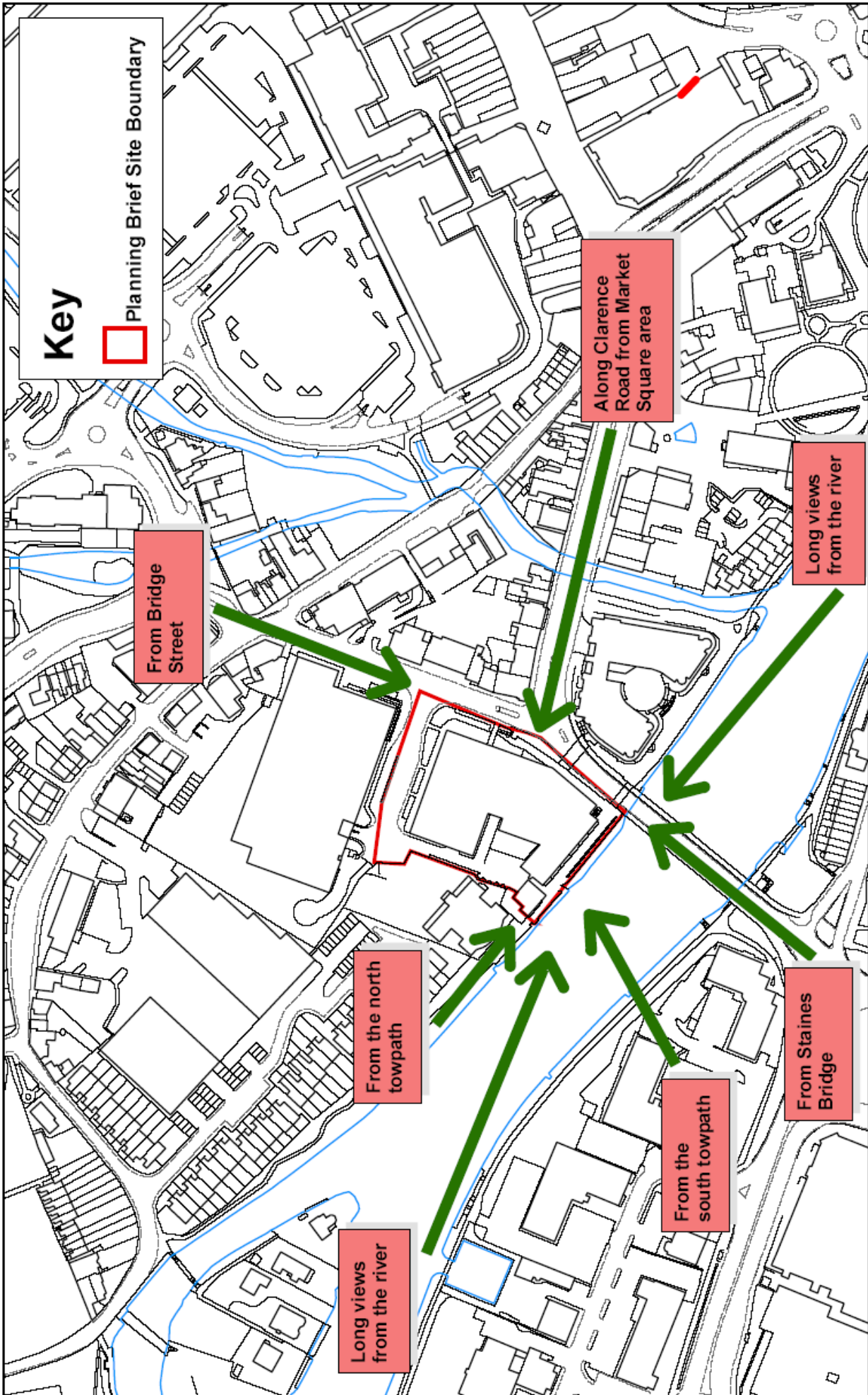
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## Plan 2: Key Planning Issues





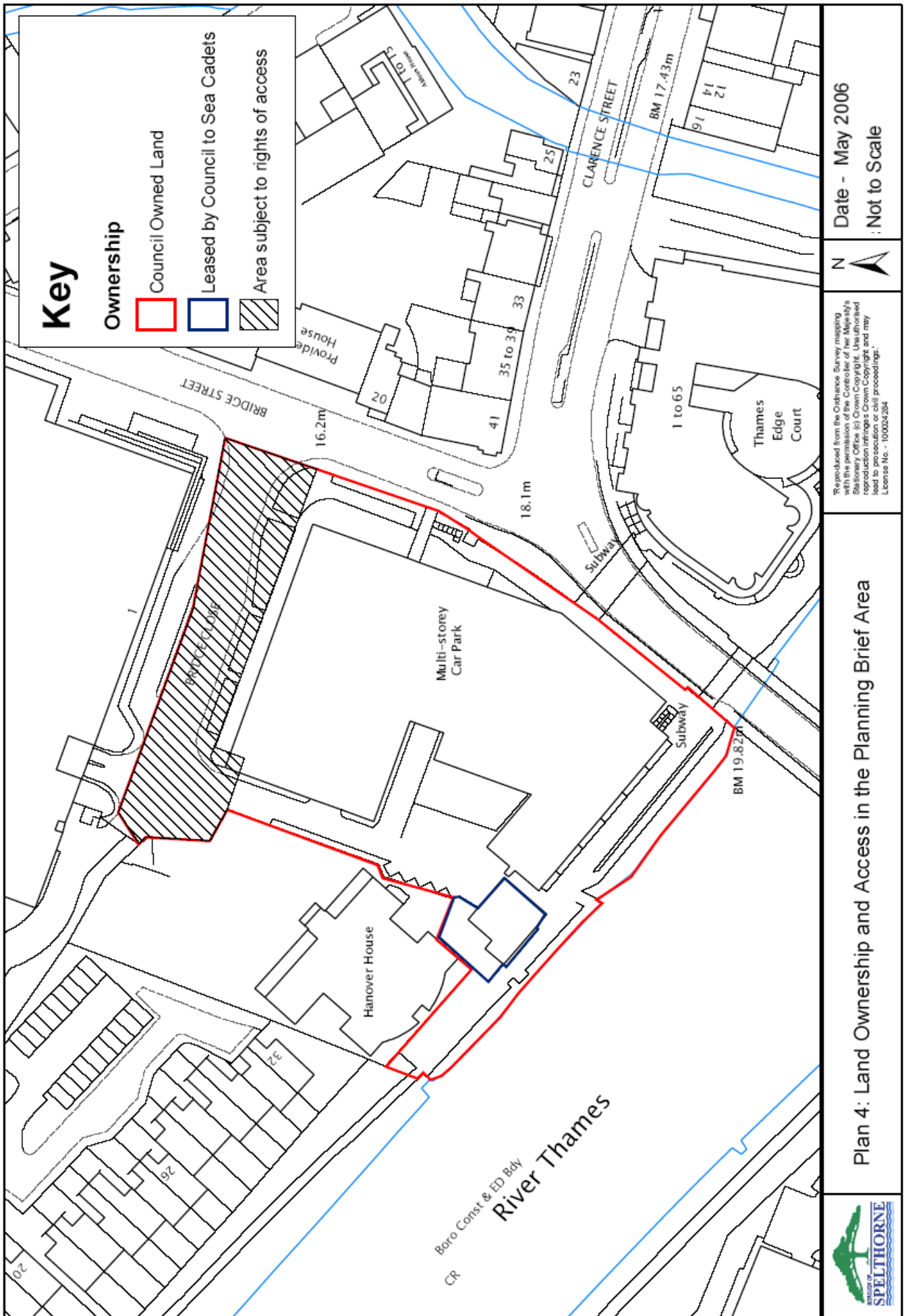


**Plan 3: Key view points of the site**

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Plan 4: Land Ownership and Access in the Planning Brief Area



