

Twickenham Station and Surroundings Design Standards

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

**Policy and Design Section
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.
Adopted 11th October 2010**

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1.0 Status of this document

- 1.1 The area covered by this SPD comprises a number of sites in different ownerships, which collectively are very important to the town centre. The aim of the SPD is to ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken to these sites to ensure the best overall development for the town in terms of layout and design.
- 1.2 The draft Design Standards SPD will be supplementary to adopted policy namely saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) proposal sites T3, T17 and T23 and the adopted Core Policy CP7. It will have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document and will be a material consideration with respect to any developments within the area covered.
- 1.3 Emerging policy, in particular the Development Management Development Plan Document (DMDPD) will include a taller buildings policy (published in autumn 2010) and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SADPD) (consultation 2011) will be consistent with this SPD.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 The document was subject to formal public consultation (in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and statutory requirements) from 16th July – 27th August 2010. The final version, taking account of the 150 consultation responses received was adopted on 11th October 2010.

3.0 Policy Background

- 3.1 The 2008 London Plan required the Council to identify areas in the Borough which were appropriate for tall buildings in the Core Strategy. The Council commissioned a study by Turley Associates in 2008 which identified two areas of the Borough, around Twickenham and Richmond station where taller buildings might be appropriate, subject to design considerations. This was referred to in the justification (para 8.2.1.6) to Core Policy 7 which states:

“in addition, taller buildings may be suitable in Richmond and Twickenham town centres close to the stations, rather than other town centres, if car travel can be minimised and townscape setting left unharmed. All such proposals will require full design justification based on a comprehensive townscape appraisal and the use of 3D modelling images, and be assessed using the criteria for evaluation identified by CABI and English Heritage in “Guidance on Tall Buildings” and local guidance”

- 3.2 There has subsequently been one application which was allowed on appeal for a building adjoining Regal House, as well as discussions with developers with regard to the Sorting Office and Station sites. This SPD will form part of the local guidance referred to in policy CP 7, Map 1 refers to the areas covered.
- 3.3 The adopted Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and emerging DMDPD and Site Allocations DPD policies will be applied with respect to any development proposals on the site, as will adopted SPG and SPD and any other guidance or

policy which may be adopted in the future. Any new development will be expected to provide or fund the provision of infrastructure such as education, open space/recreation, transport/parking and health. There will be a requirement for planning contributions in line with the Planning Obligations Strategy or any subsequent update.

4.0 General Principles

- 4.1 “Taller buildings” mean those that are higher than their surroundings whereas “tall buildings” are considered to be those of 6 or more storeys. Richmond Borough has a generally low rise nature, even in Richmond and Twickenham centres the taller buildings are of modest height compared to areas in Central London and other cities. It is not the intention that there should be any very tall buildings in the Borough, which would change its character from suburban to urban.
- 4.2 The area in Twickenham which policy CP7 states ‘may be suitable for taller buildings’ was identified in the Turley Study as including Regal House. It is considered that due to the proximity of low density residential and 2-3 storey character areas, as well as the need to protect the skyline and views from Richmond Hill that Regal House and its proposed extension (Hotel use) should be the highest point. On this basis it is considered any buildings on the Station closest to Regal House should not compete with Regal House in terms of scale but should immediately begin to make the transition between this high point and the residential area to the north.
- 4.3 The ground levels within the SPD area vary due to the bridge over the railway line, to avoid confusion, throughout this document all heights referred to are measured from ground level – i.e. the level of Mary’s Terrace, and storey heights refer to conventional storeys (residential or commercial.) Regal House is therefore referred to as 10 storeys. When storeys are referred to, these are maximums and any accommodation in the roof will be regarded as a storey. Furthermore, the maximum height will include any roof top structures such as masts or plant, which will not be permitted at a later date if they would cause the building to exceed the maximum height within this SPD. For visual reasons such structures should be designed as part of the building rather than seen as an “add on.”
- 4.4 The overall approach of the SPD is to promote a vision for this area, which is seen as a suburban centre where very tall buildings are considered to be inappropriate. The maximum storey heights reflect this approach and are also based on a visual analysis by professional officers taking account of views into, out of and within the sites, relationships with neighbouring properties, the River Crane and metropolitan open land as well as the prevailing character of the town. Taller buildings or features will only be acceptable subject to a full design justification based on a comprehensive townscape appraisal and there being significant local community support. In addition key considerations are:-
 - **Impact on the skyline and views from Richmond Hill**
The highest building in the area is Regal House, which is 10 storeys high. Regal House dominates views by virtue of its volume, height and footprint, and any building on Twickenham station or its car park should not create a similar townscape impact. A recent appeal decision was allowed for an

extension to Regal House which ranged from 10 storeys immediately abutting Regal House to 3 storeys nearer the houses in Mary's Terrace side. Whilst the Council was not in support of this building it is accepted that this development may take place. However, no further buildings should exceed the current heights in the area so that the skyline is not broken, and views from the surrounding area and from key vantage points such as Richmond Hill respected.

- **Impact on residential areas**
New buildings should not unreasonably impact on neighbouring residential areas in terms of bulk and mass, overlooking, neighbourliness, sunlighting and daylighting, noise and disturbance.
- **Impact on Listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit, conservation areas and Metropolitan Open Land**
Any proposals should not adversely impact on the quality of these related areas and buildings.
- **Gateway/ Feature**
There is potential to form a gateway or feature to the town centre between the Station and Sorting Office sites close to London Road, Twickenham.
- **Building form**
Avoid large areas of buildings with flat roofs of similar heights, to avoid monotony.
- **Impact on natural environment**
Any proposals should not adversely impact on the ecological status of the river corridor and in-channel habitat due to overshadowing.

- 4.4 Schemes on the Sorting Office, Station and Station Yard should be mixed use, details of proposed land uses for these sites are set out in Saved UDP proposal sites T3, T17 and T23 respectively.
- 4.5 A riverside walk in the position shown is required as a result of any redevelopment of T3 and T17. The riverside walk should be sensitively designed to incorporate areas of natural or semi-natural bank where there is sufficient space and ecological enhancements to protect and enhance the river corridor and in-channel habitat. The Environment Agency require all buildings to be set back 8 metres from the riverbank / flood defence and any man-made flood defences to be maintained at the minimum standard of protection for the lifetime of the development. The part from the station eastwards could be an informal route, whereas that from the station westwards should be recognise that on occasions may be used by students and rugby spectators.
- 4.6 A link under London Road utilising the existing tunnel will be expected as part of the redevelopments of the Sorting Office and the Station, this should join the east /west access route as shown on the map, and also link into North/south pedestrian routes on the west side of London Road.
- 4.7 There will be a need for developments within the area to relate well to each other. It is particularly important that developers of buildings on the Sorting Office and the Station demonstrate the relationship between proposals on the

two sites as part of any planning submission. The prominence of these locations means they must create places of high architectural and urban design quality.

- 4.8 All new and refurbished buildings and outside spaces should be fully accessible for disabled people.
- 4.8 In terms of sustainable construction, a 20% reduction in carbon emissions will be expected from on-site renewable energy production and all buildings will need to meet a Breeam 'Excellent' or Code for Sustainable Homes 'Level 3' rating, be dual aspect and preferably naturally ventilated.
- 4.9 The surface water run-off rate should be limited to greenfield run-off rates, using SUDS wherever possible, following the SUDS hierarchy. Opportunities should be taken to replace impermeable surfaces with permeable ones and use living roofs where appropriate (see emerging DMDPD policy SD 5). The suitability of permeable surfaces and infiltration techniques should be informed by the Preliminary Risk Assessment and an assessment in to the depth of the groundwater table.
- 4.10 On-site car parking and services to met essential needs of residents and businesses should be carefully integrated to avoid adverse impacts on the visual or residential amenity or the effective use of the sites.
- 4.11 There should be a comprehensive high quality approach to hard and soft Landscaping,
- 4.12 Preliminary Risk Assessments must be submitted prior to the principle of development being decided to help ensure that there is no risk to groundwater or river water quality, given the requirements of the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

5.0 Site specific requirements (see attached map)

5.1 Area 1 – Twickenham Station (T17 in saved UDP)

Whole site

- Connecting the station closer to the town centre, by giving it more active frontage and a better presence within the street as an individual building is necessary. This could be achieved by relocating the station building over the tracks to include level access and escalator provision to platforms.
- Clear variation and modulation in height and gaps between existing and proposed buildings will be necessary, a wall of development would not be appropriate facing the street, or across the site. The Council's vision for the area is that the height should not exceed 4/5 storeys on any part of the site. Taller buildings or features will only be acceptable subject to a full design justification based on a comprehensive townscape appraisal and there being significant local community support. Consideration should be given to lowering the height on the London Road frontage to avoid a "tunnel" effect; As the site is largely north facing, new buildings, whatever scale or density, must not adversely overshadow existing or other proposed buildings, proposed amenity space, or the river.

- Any development or redevelopment should provide full disabled access to all areas.
- Provision should be made for spectators from RFU and Harlequins events including provision for holding areas and efficient access to platforms, and movement of students to local colleges to and from the Station must be taken into account.
- A taxi and bus drop-off area, and public plaza to the front of a new station building allowing safe and overlooked meeting/waiting space for pedestrians and travellers must be maintained.
- Ground level activity and natural surveillance in the form of small retail units could be investigated although this should not compete with town centre retailing.

Northern section (beside river)

- Riverside walk to be created alongside River Crane, to be designed to incorporate ecological enhancements to protect and enhance the river corridor and in-channel habitat .Breaks should be created in the wall at appropriate locations to open up views of the River This could be an informal route. (see also para 4.5). Buildings should be set back 8m from the river to meet Environment Agency requirements, 'oversailing' development would not be acceptable.
- 2/3 storey houses oriented towards the river to minimise impact on residences in Cole Park Road, take advantage of the riverside setting and provide natural surveillance to the walk.
- If station re-located, public space should be provided in front of new station (see below), new development could however step forward of existing, subject to sight lines.

Southern section (over line)

- Public space should be provided to the front.
- The Station and entrance should have prominence.
- Tallest section should be towards Regal House, no taller than Bridge House (4/5storeys) to avoid "over urbanisation" and reduce impact on skyline and surrounding areas.
- Reduce heights towards Mary's Terrace – 2/3 storeys, to avoid adverse impact on this residential terrace.

5.2 Area 2 – Post Office Sorting office (part is T3 in saved UDP)

Whole site

- Riverside walk and open space should be retained alongside River Crane, however, there is scope for flexibility in MOL boundary; The riverside walk should be sensitively designed to incorporate areas of natural or semi-natural bank where there is sufficient space and ecological enhancements to protect and enhance the river corridor and in-channel habitat (see also para 4.5).
- Link to be provided under railway line to riverside walk and to existing North/South pedestrian routes on the west side of London Road.
- Retain treed appearance around site.
- Built development - scale should increase towards East of site, and from North to South.

- Buildings should incorporate a lower section fronting London Road to avoid a “tunnel” effect.
- The Council’s vision for the area is that the maximum height should not exceed 4/5 storeys and include a variety of roof forms. Taller buildings or features will only be acceptable subject to a full design justification based on a comprehensive townscape appraisal and there being significant local community support.
- Re-development should take account of the area designated as “other site of nature importance”

Eastern section

- Building not to step further towards London Road than Bridge House to avoid “canyon” effect.
- Buildings beside River Crane should not exceed 2-3 storeys to relate well to River Crane walk and avoid adverse impact on Heatham House.
- Buildings to South should be no higher than Bridge House (4/5 storeys from ground level).

Western section

- Up to 3 storeys, more domestic scale to relate to existing cottages, Buildings of Townscape Merit in Station Road and MOL.
- Allow views through between buildings.
- Consider reuse/ retention of railway/ warehouse building.

5.3 Area 3 - Station Yard (T23 in saved UDP)

- Scale/ massing should form an intermediary between that of Bridge House and surrounding development, 3-4 storeys to avoid adverse impact on residential area.
- Provide a positive frontage towards The Albany (Building of Townscape Merit)
- Include tree planting on the railway side to screen new development and add to landscaping in otherwise built area.

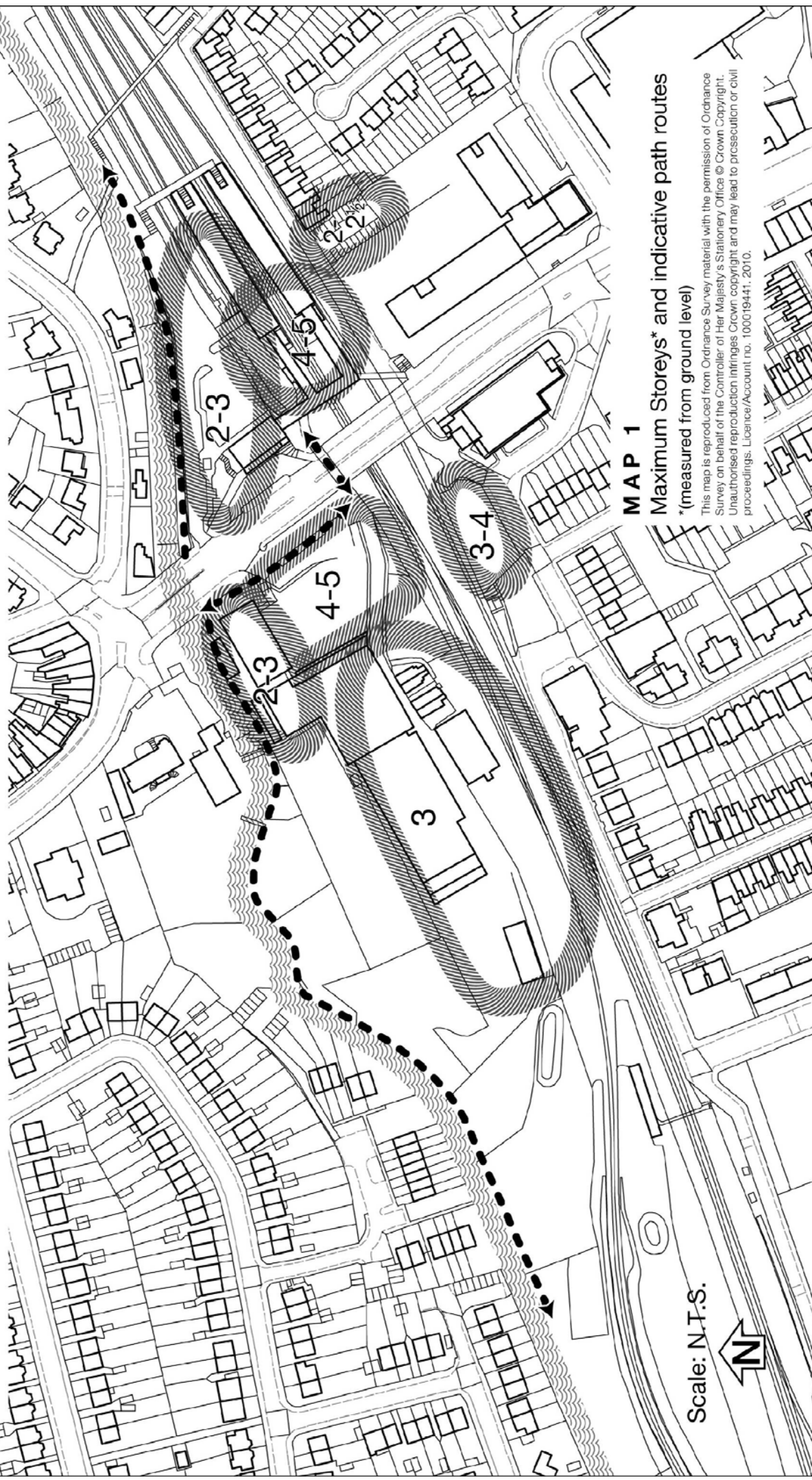
5.4 Area 4 – Regal House

- Permission already granted for building ranging from 10 to 3 storeys towards Mary’s Terrace.

5.5 Area 5 – Garages at Mary’s Terrace

- Continue building line of existing terrace, to match existing built form and avoid overshadowing/overlooking of gardens of Mary’s Terrace.
- Scale to relate to that of Mary’s Terrace – 2-2.5 storeys to relate well to existing residences.

TWICKENHAM STATION & SURROUNDINGS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE



MAP 1

Maximum Storeys* and indicative path routes
*(measured from ground level)

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Scale: N.T.S.

