

Conservation Area Appraisal



Maidenhead Riverside

June 2010

Planning Policy Manager
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF



Foreword

By Councillor Mrs Alison Knight

Lead Member for Planning and Development

The Borough Council has carried out studies of the two former riverside Conservation Areas around Boulter's Lock and Maidenhead Bridge, and has now designated a new, extended Conservation Area. This area extends along Ray Mead Road, linking the two former areas and continues southwards to encompass the riverside properties of The Fisheries estate. This long riverside Conservation Area helps to reinforce the fact that this is an area of special quality.

This appraisal document, which describes the important features and characteristics of the area, will be used when planning decisions are made that affect the area. The approach used follows advice set out in English Heritage guidance.

This is the first full appraisal to be carried out for the two former Conservation Areas and is part of a longer-term project to review all the existing Conservation Area Appraisals in the Borough, and to complete appraisals for Conservation Areas that do not presently have one.

The Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal also includes a Five Year Conservation Area Management Plan, which is intended to summarise the actions that the Council plans to take in the period to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced.

A draft version of this document was subject to a public consultation exercise during December 2009 and January 2010. As a result of public interest and a desire to include more of the Fisheries Estate, a second public consultation took place during March 2010. This final version of the document contains the amendments made in response to comments received from both consultations.

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the Appraisal or Management Plan, please contact:

planning.policy@rbwm.gov.uk

or

Conservation and Design Team
Planning Policy Unit
Planning and Development
Town Hall
St Ives Road
Maidenhead
SL6 1RF



Foreword

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Introduction

1 Introduction

What Does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

1.1 A Conservation Area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69). The responsibility for designating Conservation Areas lies with the Local Planning Authority.

1.2 The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect the wider historic environment. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic street layout, use of characteristic materials, style or landscaping. These individual elements are judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national. Above all, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are irreplaceable.

1.3 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to review all their Conservation Areas regularly. English Heritage recommends that each area is reviewed every five years.

1.4 Conservation Area Designation provides extra protection within Conservation Areas in the following ways:

- Local Authorities have general control over most complete demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas
- Local Authorities have extra control over minor development
- Special provision is made to protect trees within Conservation Areas
- When assessing planning applications, Local Authorities must pay careful attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

1.5 The Local Authority can include policies in the Local Plan or Local Development Framework to help preserve the special character and appearance of Conservation areas.

What is the Purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal?

1.6 The aim of the Appraisal is to:

- Identify the Special Architectural and Historic Interest and the changing needs of the Conservation Area
- Clearly define the Conservation Area boundaries
- Increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation of the area
- Provide a framework for planning decisions
- Guide controlled and positive change within the Conservation Area, thus avoiding mediocrity of development

What is the Status of this Document?

1.7 A draft version of the document was published for public consultation during December 2009 and January 2010 and a second round of consultation also took place during March 2010. This process is summarised in Appendix 6. Following both consultation exercises, all comments received have been considered and some amendments to the document have been made. This final version of the document has been approved for publication by the Lead Member for Planning and Development, and endorsed by the Cabinet of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, for use to guide and inform all planning considerations and other council activities in the Conservation Area, on Thursday 24th June 2010.

1.8 This Conservation Area appraisal is not part of the Local Development Framework (see chapter 2) but has been prepared in the context of national, regional and local planning policy. Upon adoption it will be used to guide future planning decisions.

1.9 The contents of this appraisal and the associated maps and appendices are intended to highlight significant features but they should not be regarded as fully comprehensive and the omission of, or lack of reference to a particular building or feature should not be taken to imply that it is of no significance. This significance may only be fully identified at such time as a feature or building is subject to the rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

1.10 Similarly, the controls that apply to elements vary and in some instances the items that have been identified as significant features cannot be fully protected by planning legislation. Further guidance on the controls that apply in conservation areas is given on the council's website www.rbwm.gov.uk or in the leaflet

Introduction

'Conservation areas- what they are and what it means to live in one'. Copies of the leaflet, and initial advice on individual planning queries can be obtained by contacting the Council's Customer Service Centre either in person at the Town Hall Maidenhead, via the Council website, or by telephoning 01628 683 810.

Introduction

Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The current Development Plan for the area consists of the following documents:

- Regional Spatial Strategy: The South East Plan May 2009
- The Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire incorporating alterations (1997 & 2001);
- The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (adopted 1998)
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations Adopted June 2003).

2.2 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Local Plan will be replaced with a new form of planning strategy called the Local Development Framework (LDF). Unlike the Local Plan, the LDF will consist of a number of documents which fit together. Until the LDF is established, relevant policies from the Local Plan have been saved and will continue to guide planning decisions. Several saved policies directly relate to Conservation Areas and can be found in the attached Management Plan.

2.3 Further details about the Local Plan, and the progress made on the LDF, can be found on the Council's website, or by contacting the Council's Strategy and Plans Team.

Background

Background

3.1 Prior to the designation of the Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area, there were two separate Conservation Areas within the area; Boulters Lock Conservation Area and Maidenhead Bridge and Guards Club Conservation Area.

3.2 Boulters Lock Conservation Area was first designated in July 1969 and was later amended in September 1989. This Conservation Area was based around the area immediately associated with Boulters Lock itself, including the whole of Boulters Island, Ray Mill Island and a small area to the north of these islands along the river bank as far north as Maidenhead Court Boathouse and Archway House in Court Road. The southern part of the boundary ran tightly around the bottom of Boulters Lock Island.

3.3 Maidenhead Bridge and Guard's Club Island Conservation Area was designated in September 1989. The Conservation Area extended northwards from Brunel's railway bridge, including Guards Club Island, Maidenhead Bridge, Bridge Gardens and reaching northwards to the Thames Hotel. A number of residential properties on Ray Park Avenue were also included.

3.4 When the Maidenhead Bridge and Guards Club Conservation Area was first designated the borough/county boundary extended across the river to the eastern bank and the Conservation Area extended to this area. In 1991, following administrative boundary changes, parts of the original Conservation Area transferred to Buckinghamshire and were subsequently incorporated into the Taplow Riverside Conservation Area, which was designated by South Bucks District Council in 1999 and amended in 2006. This Conservation Area now extends on the east side of the Thames from south of the railway bridge to as far north as the boundaries of Taplow Paper Mill and Glen Island. For further details of this Conservation Area please refer to the Conservation Section of South Bucks District Council, Capswood Business Centre, Oxford Rd, Denham, Uxbridge, UB9 4LH. The character appraisal for this Conservation Area can be downloaded from www.southbucks.gov.uk.

3.5 The Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area now effectively links the former Conservation Areas, resulting in a large, linear area stretching from south of Brunel's Bridge to north of Boulters lock. The boundary includes what is considered the most significant remaining elements of Maidenhead's riverside frontage. This has resulted in frontages to some of the larger, flatted developments being included whilst the flats themselves are not. This approach has been taken in order to encompass the remaining mature planting, which is considered a fundamental feature of the riverside.

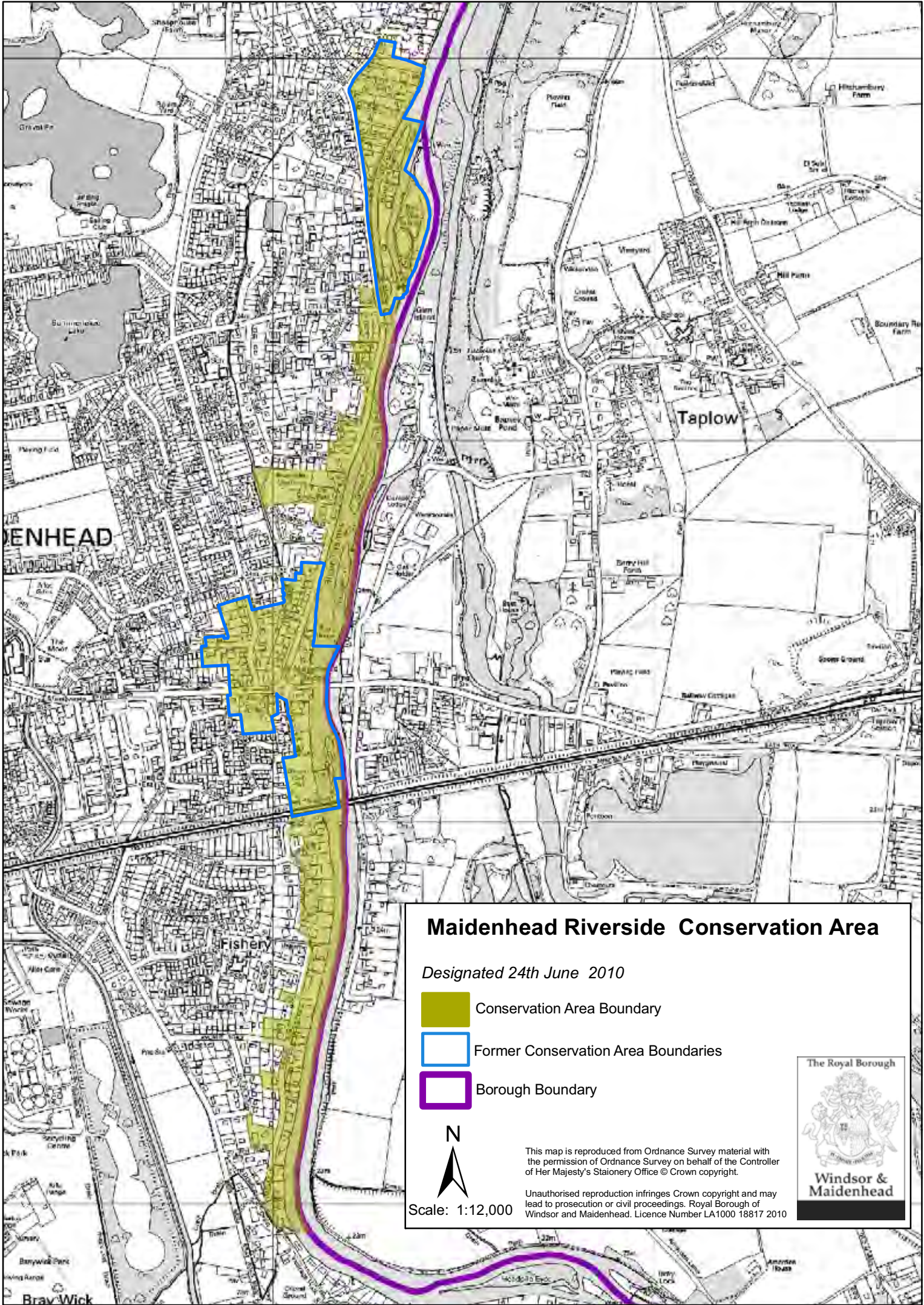
3.6 The Conservation Area includes the larger detached properties south of Brunel's Bridge down to Bray Village Conservation Area. It is considered that the properties along this stretch of land, known as The Fisheries, provide a positive addition to the riverside.

3.7 The importance of the Thames along Maidenhead's riverside frontage is emphasised throughout the document. The Thames dictates land use and development in the area as well as serving a fundamental recreational purpose and Conservation Area status helps to maintain this important frontage from inappropriate development. The boundaries attempt to include all those features which have a direct relationship with the River Thames and as such the Conservation Area does not extend to include any properties to the west of Lower Cookham Road. It is felt that from this point, the properties do not have the same emphasis towards the riverside and therefore are not thought appropriate to be included within the Conservation Area.

3.8 The Conservation Area boundary effectively mirrors and extends past the revised 2006 Taplow Conservation Area boundary, ensuring a more cohesive treatment of the river frontage, with both sides of the Thames receiving equal protection from inappropriate development.




3.9 The Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area is also supported by the identification in the RBWM 2008 Townscape Characterisation study of Maidenhead's 'Victorian/Edwardian Riverside Villa Suburbs' as a unique zone within the borough.

3.10 There is significant history to the area overall as a late 19th century riverside resort with large detached riverside villas. Despite the large areas of modern infill, this history can still be read through the road layout, plot boundaries and the promenade.



Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area

Designated 24th June 2010

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Former Conservation Area Boundaries
-  Borough Boundary



Scale: 1:12,000

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Background

Summary of Special Interest

Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the area is made up of five principal components.

- **The River Thames:** This is the most significant feature of the area, providing unique views both in and out of the Conservation Area, as well as the stimulus for continued use of the area. The area is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3 (high risk of a future flooding event) which has impacts on any development within the area.
- **Historical Significance:** The area contains Maidenhead's built reminders of the golden age of the Thames. The area has retained a largely turn of the century character, associated with the period when the area was a fashionable resort and an important bridging point. There are also important industrial associations with the remaining Mill buildings and the lock system.
- **Architectural Character:** The area includes the most significant surviving group of grand 18th century mansion houses within Maidenhead and also reflects a significant period of building in Maidenhead within the late 19th century and early 20th century. Buildings are typically Arts and Crafts inspired or Jacobean revival in style and feature detailing such as ornate façades, applied timber framing, carved gables and elaborate cupolas and chimneys.
- **Openness and Greenery:** The area is extremely green, with large numbers of mature trees and bushes, and a number of important tree screens. The area is also significant for the number of public parks, utilised by visitors to the Thames as well as the local community.
- **Transport:** The area developed as a result of transport links and the importance of these links remains today with the presence of nationally important road and rail bridges. The A4, the Great Western Railway line and the Thames remain fundamental transport links to the area.

Summary of Special Interest



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Summary of Special Interest

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

Location and Setting

5.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a large Borough, located to the west of London. The principal towns are Windsor and Maidenhead although there are a number of smaller settlements and villages. The area is predominantly rural between the main towns. The northern boundary of the Borough follows the path of the River Thames.

5.2 The town of Maidenhead is the largest in the Borough with a population of around 58,000. It is situated to the north west of the Borough and the town centre lies some three quarters of a mile west of the River Thames.

5.3 Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area is located on the eastern edge of the settlement, along the western banks of the River Thames and includes the Maidenhead Bridge and Brunel Railway Bridge. It faces Taplow riverside on the opposite bank.

5.4 To the south of the Conservation Area lies the village of Bray and to the north, following the Thames Path will lead to Cookham.

Topography / Geology

5.5 Maidenhead lies within the broad, flat Thames Valley, with the Conservation Area lying within the Environment Agency's designated flood zone. The settlement is located primarily on a chalk bedrock geology which is partly overlain with deposits of alluvium and river gravels.

5.6 The riverside area is characterised by the broad, flat open floodplain of the Thames, which is the principal water course within the Royal Borough and has driven the nature and pattern of settlement, trading and industry within this landscape for thousands of years. The relatively steep slopes on the eastern part of the river to the north of the Conservation Area have also helped dictate development.

5.7 The underlying geology of the Conservation Area is Flood Plain Terrace and the area is particularly susceptible to flooding, having been affected no less than nine times within the past 100 years, with the most recent event in 2003.

5.8 The risk of flooding and attempts to alleviate this risk has led to many schemes within the area, including the 'Maidenhead, Windsor & Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme'. Part of this scheme is the Jubilee River. Although much of the Jubilee River is beyond the borough boundary, this feature has had a huge impact on the hydrology of the floodplain landscapes within the area since its completion in 2002. The man-made channel is over 11 miles long, leaving the River Thames at Boulton Weir and running east past Taplow. At the time of its formation the channel represented the largest man-made river project ever undertaken in Britain.

History and Development

5.9 The history and development of the Conservation Area have always been guided by its relationship to the River Thames. Although the medieval settlement of Maidenhead was centred on the current High Street, some three quarters of a mile from the Thames, the river affairs along this stretch of water have always had a dominant effect on the town.

5.10 Before the present settlement came into being in the 13th century, the importance of the river was reflected by early settlers. The earliest inhabitants of the Thames riverside were hunter-gatherers, living in caves and rough shelters.

5.11 It was the act of bridging the Thames that eventually dictated the site and development of the current town. There is evidence of a wooden bridge in roughly the current area from around 1250, which effectively put the town on the main route from London to Bristol. The only riverside development during this period was the construction of timber wharfs. A 16th century description cites that the Maidenhead Bridge stood alone with a wharf nearby stacked high with timber and firewood.

5.12 Maidenhead itself received township status when Queen Elizabeth I conferred a Charter of Incorporation in 1582. This made Maidenhead a free town and provided for a new scale of tolls for merchandise passing over the bridge. More significantly for the riverside area, the Charter granted a fishery fifty feet each side of the Maidenhead Bridge. The Fisheries were areas of the Thames where the catching and selling of fish was permitted.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

5.13 For many centuries the Thames was a waterway used largely for transportation of goods to and from London. In the mid 18th century, barges were hauling 69,000 tonnes of goods upstream annually. At this time Maidenhead riverside was an area of working wharves, locks, mills and other buildings of a commercial nature.

5.14 The area around Boulters Lock and Ray Mill Island demonstrated the commercial emphasis during this period and had two important historical associations. One is with the lock itself and associated river traffic and the other is with Ray Mill. There is reference to a lease of Ray Mill as early as 1346 and it is thought two mills were operating here in the medieval period. Ray Mills in the 18th century stood at the end of Boulters Lane, only moving to the island when the present lock was built in 1828.

5.15 Rocques Map of 1761 is the earliest which shows Maidenhead in any detail. The map shows Ray Mills and refers to Boulters Lock. There is no residential development on the riverside. At this time the river itself would have been undeveloped with banks overgrown. The towpath was a public right of way but was mainly used by horses and connected barge workers. Stabling for barge horses and accommodation for bargemen was located on Ray Mill Island.

5.16 The replacement of the timber bridge in 1772 with a stone structure, designed by Robert Taylor, was the stimulus for the first non-commercial development near the riverside area and for the street and property boundaries remaining today. To the south of the current Bridge Road, Bridgewater Lodge and Oldfield Lodge were constructed and to the north, the Ray Lodge Estate was created. The Ray family soon sold the estate and by 1865 the Lodge was the home of the astronomer William Lassell, who built his own observatory in the garden. This is clearly marked on the 1875 OS map at the north east corner of the kitchen gardens and its site is incorporated into the north western boundary of the Conservation Area.

5.17 By the mid 19th century the town of Maidenhead was becoming an important commercial centre and this was reinforced by the decision of the Great Western Railway Corporation to bridge the Thames at Taplow. This was achieved by Brunel's construction of the Maidenhead Viaduct in 1837. The bridge opened in 1839 and carried the first train across the Thames. Brunel's Bridge had the longest brick built arches in Europe and was a great feat of Victorian engineering.

5.18 The immediate effect of the railway was disastrous for Maidenhead's town centre, which had developed and made its fortune as a result of the coaching trade. Neither did the advent of rail do anything to assist the dwindling barge trade. However, it was the advent of the railway which was to provide the catalyst for the expansive late 19th century development of the Maidenhead riverside.

5.19 Losing the revenue created from barge tolls, river officials looked to promote pleasure traffic for income. London was growing at speed and tempted by the short commute to the countryside thousands of Londoners flocked to the river. In 1870, six steamers were coming through Maidenhead on a daily service to Oxford. The Thames Conservancy, formed in 1857 to take over river management, started to demand registration and a fee for such craft. By 1889 there were 12,000 registered.

5.20 The change was seen along the banks of the Thames at Maidenhead in the arrival of new boathouses. Boat-building became an important, if small, industry to Maidenhead. A riverside promenade was erected and people flocked there during the summer months to watch the rich indulge. Maidenhead riverside became a centre for the building and letting of boats and launches. Hampton H Woodhouse, proprietor of the Thames Hotel was a significant boat maker and hirer. In 1899 he built the Maidenhead Court Boathouse north of Boulters Lock.

5.21 Along with the day visitors came the first London commuters and their desire for houses inspired local developers to take advantage. There was a boom in house building by the river which was now regarded as a fashionable area. Large chunks of the Ray Lodge estate were sold off and Ray Park Avenue was created with 29 building lots, many of which still retain the same plot boundaries. At this time all the Ray roads were constructed. The rapid expansion of the area is demonstrated in the 1875 and 1912 OS maps (appendix 1). By 1912, the riverside is lined with detached villas from the newly developed Fishery Estate to the north of Boulters Island.

5.22 The land along the riverbank south of Brunel's Bridge, historically belonged to St Michael's Church in Bray until the late 19th century, although it was fishery land. By the 19th century Mrs Annie Smith, who lived in the Fishery, the first property to be constructed south of Brunel's Bridge in 1890, owned willow beds on the river below the bridge. On the death of the St Michael's Vicar in 1887 she approached the Church and bought most of the land. By the end of the 19th century this fishery land was sold off in plots. In 1891 40 lots went up for sale, the most expensive lining the river.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

5.23 The riverside area drew the interest of Victorian high society due to the proximity of Taplow Court and Cliveden. The two big houses entertained the world famous including royalty and international ambassadors, giving Maidenhead riverside a cosmopolitan air. The steady stream of visitors who stayed with the Grenfells at Taplow Court and the Astors at Cliveden included King Edward VII, Lord Kitchener and Oscar Wilde. William Henry Grenfell, elevated to Lord Desborough, was a champion of the Thames and its uses. He was both Captain and coach at Maidenhead Rowing Club, located next to the Thames Riviera Hotel. This interest was originally focused on the inn known as Orkney Arms on the Taplow side of the Thames, which was subsequently bought by William Skindle and became known as Skindles Hotel. This hotel is considered responsible for the origins of Maidenhead as a fashionable, elite resort.

5.24 Many hotels and clubs soon followed suit and sprung up along the riverfront. Boulters Lock was at the centre of the merriment and was at this time the most famous and busiest lock on the Thames. The lock was replaced in 1829 and again in 1912 (opened by Lord Desborough). The most famous lock keeper was Turner who served from 1880-1904. In 1909 the Thames Conservancy bought the Ray Mill Island and demolished the mill, but retained the Mill House which became Boulters Lock Hotel.

5.25 The Ascot Sunday parade was the culmination of the social season. Thousands crowded the river bank to watch the cream of high society at play. In 1888 on Ascot Sunday as many as 800 boats passed through Boulters Lock, whilst on the same day in 1904 this figure had risen to 1000 small craft and 182 launches.

5.26 Maidenhead became known as 'Mayfair on the Thames' a playground for the rich and famous during the 'naughty nineties' (1890-1914). The best known of the Maidenhead clubs was that of the Brigade of the Guards. In 1903 Lord Cheylesmore donated two Edwardian houses, Riverside and Edendale and an island in the Thames for the purposes of creating their new premises. Outside there was a swimming pool, croquet lawn and on the island a boathouse. Their annual Ascot Ball was famous and frequently attended by royalty.

5.27 Jerome K Jerome (1899, *Three Men in a Boat*) 'Maidenhead is too snobby to be pleasant. It is the haunt of the river swell and his overdressed river companion. It is the town of showy hotels, patronised chiefly by dudes and ballet girls'.

5.28 The Ray Mead Hotel is illustrated on the 1875 OS map and by 1890 was extended and boasting full electricity throughout, however by 1910, had gone bankrupt. The Thames Hotel was built by H Woodhouse by 1883. The Thames Riviera Hotel was originally conceived as mansion to let but later opened as a hotel in 1888. Many of the riverside clubs were held in back rooms and cellars of private houses which had sprung up along the riverside. The wharf which had existed from the 12th to the 18th century by Maidenhead Bridge was replaced by Bridge House in the 19th century, which was converted to Murrays River Club in 1911.

5.29 The late Victorian era had a huge influence on the riverside of Maidenhead and shifted the focus of the area from commercial activities towards recreational pursuits, the legacy of which remains today. The population of Maidenhead during the last two hundred years illustrates the importance of the railway and the subsequent Victorian boom. In 1801, the population of Maidenhead was at 949 and had altered little from medieval times with fewer than 200 homes. By 1851, following the advent of the railway, the population had more than tripled to 3,603. By the end of the Victorian era in 1901, this figure had reached 12,980.

5.30 The riverside frivolities were brought to an abrupt halt in 1914. After the war, the festivities were renewed, although never to the same scale. However, until WWII, Ascot Sunday was still considered the social event of the year. In 1932 over 12,000 vehicles were recorded travelling over the Maidenhead Bridge bringing people to watch the spectacle. By the 1940's, the riverside society had all but diminished. The boatyards largely closed down, the punting regatta moved away and the pleasure steamers were replaced by diesel. Much of the riverside area was redeveloped for mass housing following the end of the war. Murrays River Club was closed and demolished by the 1940's, becoming Bridge Gardens. The Guards Club was closed and largely demolished in the 1960's. The connected island and much of the land was then landscaped to form Guards Club public park.

Archaeology

5.31 The name Maidenhead first came into use in the 13th century to describe the small settlement previously known as Ellitone. The settlement was closely allied to the River Thames crossing, with the timber bridge, first documented in 1280, forming the main crossing point of the Thames for east-west traffic.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

5.32 Although the main centre for Medieval settlement and activity was to the west in the area of the High Street, the Riverside area is known to have been exploited throughout the Prehistoric period. The Thames formed an important focus for transport, communication and food, and its fertile hinterland supported livestock and cultivation. Small excavations associated with redevelopment show that features reflecting this activity survive below ground.

5.33 In addition, a number of important artefacts have been found in the Thames in this area. Deposition of objects in a river or lake often marks a ritual process, and objects dating throughout the Prehistoric period and beyond have been retrieved, usually through dredging. These include Neolithic axe-heads, Bronze Age arrowheads and spears, Iron Age currency bars and an early Medieval sword.

5.34 Inevitably as the Riverside has become more intensively developed, some archaeological features will have been lost, but it must still be assumed that the area still has a high potential for retrieving evidence from the Prehistoric and Medieval periods. It is likely that applications for larger-scale redevelopments will attract conditions requiring archaeological works in mitigation, in line with local and national planning policy.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

The General Character and Form of the Area

The General Character and Form of the Area

6.1 The Conservation Area forms a long, narrow stretch of land lining the River Thames. It is defined by low density, detached housing and large green open spaces. The Thames dominates the area giving the focus towards leisure and recreational pursuits.

6.2 The Thames forms a natural boundary and has dictated development in the area, either in utilising the river for commercial purposes or building to take advantage of the river setting. The Thames has affected the siting of roads, the orientation of properties and the architectural character of properties. The Conservation Area is narrow and linear in form following the bank of the river.

6.3 The built form consists of large, detached and often elaborately detailed late Victorian and Edwardian dwellings lining the River Thames and set back from the road in large plots with mature planting. Later development has diluted this form to some extent with the addition of large scale flatted developments, but as a whole the turn of the century character can still be read.

6.4 The focal point of the Conservation Area is the Grade I Maidenhead Bridge, not only visually but in terms of road layout and building form. The 18th century development of the area is found near the bridge and the greatest concentration of remaining 19th century building is also found in this area.

6.5 The character of the area is largely derived from the setting of the Thames and through the number of large open spaces and mature planting to be found. There are several public parks in the area well utilised by the public. The tow path runs for nearly the length of the Conservation Area from the Maidenhead Bridge northwards, assisting the linear character and providing long, uninterrupted views to the Thames.

6.6 Maidenhead riverside is essentially a residential area, albeit it one which attracts a number of visitors due to its special location. Any non-residential activities tend to cater towards these visitors in the form of cafes, hotels and restaurants. The level of non-residential activity affects both road and river traffic to the area.



Special Features of the Area

Special Features of the Area

Important Buildings

7.1 The most significant structures within the Conservation Area are the two listed bridges. Maidenhead Bridge, built in 1777 and Grade I listed, is an attractive thirteen-arch Portland stone bridge, authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1772, designed by Robert Taylor and built by John Townsend of Oxford. The Grade II* Maidenhead Railway Bridge was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and was completed in 1838. The railway is carried across the river on two brick arches, which at the time of construction were the widest and flattest in the world. The two bridges are the most prominent forms of architecture within the Conservation Area.

7.2 The remaining 18th century development within the Conservation Area is of a similar, classical style of architecture and the buildings from this period are all listed. The grade II* Oldfield Lodge, built in 1790, is an impressive three storey yellow brick building with a hipped slate roof and flanking chimneys. The neighbouring Bridgewater Lodge is a two and a half storey property with raised basement, constructed from red brick, also with a hipped slate roof. The imposing Ray Lodge remains off Ray Park Avenue, but has been subdivided into flats. The building is a three storey red brick property. The buildings all share common classical features such as parapets, cornices, tall sash windows, fanlights and pilasters.

7.3 The remaining buildings of significance in the Conservation Area reflect the late 19th century/early 20th century development of the area. This period is the most significant in terms of architecture within the Conservation Area with the revival Jacobean and Elizabethan style setting the tone through the use ornate design. One of the best examples of such is Oldfield on Guards Club Road, a large detached gothic revival style building from the late 19th century and listed Grade II. The building is red brick with timber detailing and a red clay tile roof. The design is irregular with turrets and steep pitches and is a highly decorative property. The wrought iron footbridge which attached the Guards Club complex to the neighbouring island is a decorative addition and is Grade II listed.



7.4 The remaining hotels of the Victorian era are significant to the area. The Thames Riviera Hotel is a large building on the banks of the Thames, significant in its dominant location next to the Maidenhead Bridge, it is a large three to four storey building in a cream render. The Thames Hotel further north on Ray Mead Road is another prominent building of four storeys. Built in 1883 of red brick construction with a steep pitch roof and tall gable ends.

7.5 The Boulters Lock complex contains the oldest buildings within the Conservation Area, with the existing mill buildings dating back to the 17th century. However, these buildings have undergone extensive rebuilding. The Lock Keepers Cottage is an attractive Victorian building of yellow brick and contrasts favourably with the black and white Mill buildings. The former Mill house has been converted into Boulters Restaurant and is a key building along the riverside with a newly refurbished balcony area. Outside of Boulters Restaurant is a Grade II listed K1 telephone kiosk, painted in a distinctive green and a prominent local landmark. On Boulters Island, the contribution of Peter Freebody and Co's boat yard is important, as one of the last remaining examples of traditional boat building activity on this part of the Thames.

7.6 Of the remaining examples of Victorian/early Edwardian domestic architecture within the Conservation Area, one of the best of these is the Grade II listed Maidenhead Court Boathouse, a palatial boathouse built in 1899. This building demonstrates many of the revival Jacobean and Elizabethan features found throughout the Conservation Area, including decorative tile hanging, black and white applied timbering, decorative bargeboards and cast iron railings.

Special Features of the Area



7.7 Other examples of this revival style include the group of cottages known as Thameside and the highly decorative Weir House and the Belfry. These properties again feature the black and white colour palette, with decorative turrets and balconies, cast iron, terracotta ornamentation and ornate windows.

7.8 On a smaller building scale, the properties along Ray Park Avenue represent well maintained examples of turn of the century domestic architecture, built as a designed plot, the properties have largely retained original boundary lines and planting, as well as the decorative features which make the properties distinctive, such as timber casement windows, decorative gable ends and clay tile roofs with terracotta ridge tiles.

7.9 To the south of the Conservation Area, along the Fisheries, there are several buildings that make a positive impact to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. West Court, a Grade II listed property to the southern boundary of the area, is a large house built in 1899 by William Neve. The property is of an irregular design with a distinctive belvedere.

7.10 Non-listed buildings of merit within the Fisheries include The Fishery, built in 1890, Lex House and Chantry Court. All are large, individually designed properties of an arts and crafts style, with similar features including half timbering, decorative tile roofs and timber balconies. Continuing down Bray Reach, there are further examples of decorative Victorian/Edwardian properties which contribute to the character and appearance of the Area, stretching down to Sommerville, a late 19th century property abutting Bray Conservation Area. The property formerly known as Langtry House is a significant building along this stretch, now subdivided, the decorative Edwardian building dominates views at this stretch of Bray Reach.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

7.11 There is a consistency in building material utilised throughout the Conservation Area. The general lack of stone in the area meant that it was only utilised in detailing for the more prestigious buildings, or in the construction of the road bridge.

7.12 The local brick works at Pinkneys Green and the nearby tile works provided much of the material for the high quality turn of the century buildings and created a distinct colour palette through the repeated use of red brick and red clay tile.

7.13 Non-local materials are found within the Conservation Area, particularly through the use of Welsh slate and with the advent of the railways came the importing of bricks and materials at national level. However, the warm red colour palette has largely been retained.

7.14 The use of high quality detailing is a dominant theme throughout the Conservation Area, with popular decorative treatments such as black and white half timbering and ornate ridge tiles utilised consistently.

7.15 Timber is another material used throughout the Conservation Area to create ornate features such as balconies, turrets and bargeboards. Windows were predominantly of timber construction, largely casements, with decorative pane divisions and leaded lights common.

Special Features of the Area

Trees and Open Spaces

7.16 Trees are of huge significance to the Conservation Area, with the green nature of the riverside being one of its key characteristics. Many of the trees in the riverside area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, reflecting their important quality and amenity value. The public parks have numerous examples of mature trees. This planting reflects typical planting of the 19th century and early 20th century. In some cases, remaining prominent trees in new development relate to large building plots of former properties.

7.17 The trees in the Conservation Area are well maintained and have a positive impact on both views to and from the Conservation Area.

7.18 The green character of the Conservation Area is assisted by the large number of open spaces. These areas of open space are a contributing element in the special character of the area. The most significant open space is of course the River Thames and as such the related promenade and tow path are significant linear open spaces. The Thames Path is a national long distance trail and is well utilised by locals and visitors alike.

7.19 Bridge Gardens is a small open space at the foot of the Maidenhead Bridge and on the site of the former Murrays River Club. At the foot of the bridge are 2 plaques, one giving the history of the bridge, the other a reminder of the flood of 1947. The Gardens have several mature trees and a distinctive trough in memory of Ada Lewis was erected in November 1908 and serves as a reminder of the age of horse drawn traffic. The trough was originally sited on the opposite side of the road, outside the Thames Hotel, but was moved in the 1970's.



7.20 Guards Club Park is one of the larger parks within the Conservation Area and offers significant views of Brunel's rail bridge and Maidenhead Bridge. The Park was created by the Maidenhead Civic Society to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 and is maintained by the Council. The gates which lead into the park from Guards Club Road were originally from Maidenhead's first public library opened in 1904. The Park is located in the site of the former, notorious, Guards Club. The spire to the former club boathouse now covers the shelter in the park. The unique ornate footbridge, was built around 1865 and led to the club boathouse on the opposite island. The bridge was last renovated in 1997. The island is now home to wildlife and provides nesting sites for swans, moorhen and coot.

7.21 Ray Mill Island is one of the most significant open spaces within the Conservation Area. The Island's name is derived from the Ray Mill owners. The Council has been responsible for the island from the 1950's. The island includes a public café, toilets, various sculptures and an aviary. At the northern end of the Island lies Boulters Weir, one of 50 weirs remaining on the Thames and managed by the Environment Agency.

Special Features of the Area



7.22 Reitlinger Open Space is a small area with significant views to the river and located next to the Thames Riviera Hotel. The space is named after Henry Reitlinger, a fine art collector with a wide and varied collection. On his death in 1950, the collection was vested in a trust, the "Henry Reitlinger Bequest" which in turn opened the Reitlinger art gallery within Oldfield, however, this was short lived.

7.23 Riverside Gardens and Play Area is a well used open space off the promenade which has on site facilities of a cafe, crazy golf and children's play area. The land for Riverside Gardens was acquired by the council in 1949.

Important Views, Vistas and Landmarks

7.24 Views both in to and from the Conservation Area are one of the most significant features of the area. Components such as the River Thames, the Maidenhead Bridge and Brunel's Bridge and the picturesque Boulter's Lock combine to make this area recognisable and distinctive not only within the Borough, but at a national level.



7.25 Many of the views within the Conservation Area have featured in books and paintings. Books such as Jerome K Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* describe the views of the area. The oil painting *Rain, Steam, and Speed* by the 19th century British painter J.M.W. Turner is widely accepted as the view of Maidenhead Railway Bridge. The view is looking east towards London. The painting is now in the collection of the National Gallery. Boulter's lock has been the subject of a number of paintings due to its picturesque nature. For example, *Boulter's Lock, Sunday Afternoon* (1882–97) by Edward John Gregory, which is probably his most well-known painting.

7.26 The River Thames dominates the vista and is the fundamental natural landmark within the area. The width of the river allows for extensive views in and out of the Conservation Area to the east. As this stretch of the Thames has a significant amount of river traffic, views from the Thames into the Conservation Area are equally as significant as those towards the river.

Special Features of the Area

7.27 The dual structures of Maidenhead Bridge and Brunel's Bridge span the river and bisect the landscape. Built in different eras, in different styles and with different materials, the two bridges compliment and contrast one another and create a unique visual landmark within the area. The bridges interrupt the views of the Thames and create visual interest. The wide arches of Brunel's Bridge frame views looking through to the narrower, smaller scale arches of Maidenhead Bridge.



7.28 There are views to the wooded escarpment of the Cliveden Estate on the Taplow side of the river, as well as glimpses of Taplow Court from Maidenhead Bridge, which form a distinctive element to the landscape setting. The views over the Thames to South Bucks are of importance and reflect the traditional commercial emphasis of the Thames through the remaining Boathouses. The Paper Mill on the South Bucks side is almost completely obscured by trees and mature planting, however the gas works are visually intrusive on this side of the river. From sections of the higher area of the Cliveden Estate, longer views in towards Maidenhead can be glimpsed.

7.29 Despite the width of the Thames the wooded eyots or islands narrow views from along the Promenade. Glen Island is the largest of these eyots and is heavily wooded, apart from views over to the 19th century Glen Island House, a decorative Victorian dwelling. North of Maidenhead Bridge and at Boulters Lock the views are much shorter giving a more enclosed feel. From Ray Mill Island distinctive views of the weir can be seen.



7.30 Between the two bridges the river is partially divided by Guards Club Island and the small iron footpath is an attractive landmark. There are glimpses over to the Taplow side in this area, where the late 19th century Gaiety Row can be viewed.

7.31 South of Brunel's Bridge views tend to be much more open, the landscape is much flatter in this area, the Thames is wider and there are no eyots to obscure the open vista. In this section of the Conservation Area the mature trees, particularly the attractive weeping willows, and the riverside properties are significant local landmarks. Views over to the Conservation Area from the South Bucks side are most prominent in this area, with the buildings fronting directly on to the river.

Special Features of the Area



7.32 Turning away from the Thames, long views down the historic Bath Road and into the town core from the river are significant. Here, the tall brick boundary walls of the 18th century development help to draw the eye towards the town.

Street Furniture and Paving

7.33 Due to the fact that the area remains a main thoroughfare for traffic, the roads within the Conservation Area are covered in a modern tarmac and the pavements lining the roads are also tarmac. However, some York stone is utilised immediately around the Lock area. The promenade is a tarmac surface, although north of Boulters Lock, the landscaping becomes softer and the towpath becomes a mixture of gravel or grass.

7.34 Most of the kerbs are concrete on the principal roads, some stone setts demarcate the smaller roads such as Court Road. Stone cobbles are also used for decorative use on the pavement of the Promenade towards Maidenhead Bridge. On the Bridge itself, granite curbs are in evidence.



7.35 Street lighting is mixed throughout the Conservation Area with modern and more traditional styles. Along Fishery Road, there are examples of traditional style decorative lamp columns, which are a positive addition to the area. The street columns along Ray Mead Road are of a traditional lantern style, often with hanging baskets at lower level. Cast iron railings are used along the promenade, complimenting the light columns and creating a uniform design to this area. Bollards are also found in this area.

7.36 As the area has a strong recreational focus, there is an abundance of public seating in various styles providing a significant functional purpose. Timber public benches line the promenade.

Special Features of the Area



7.37 The listed telephone kiosk is the most distinctive and unusual piece of street furniture within the Conservation Area and is well maintained. The telephone was originally sited by the lock and has subsequently been moved to stand in a prominent position outside Boulters Hotel. The telephone kiosk is no longer in active use.

7.38 There is a great deal of signage in the area, due to the busy road network and the level of tourist activity. The signage tends to vary in style, with more traditional directional columns used throughout the parks and public areas.

7.39 There are several informative plaques in the area, provided by the Maidenhead Civic Society, to commemorate significant sites, such as Brunel's Bridge and Guards Club Park. There is a further plaque along the promenade, quoting a poem. The plaques provide an added interest to the visitor.

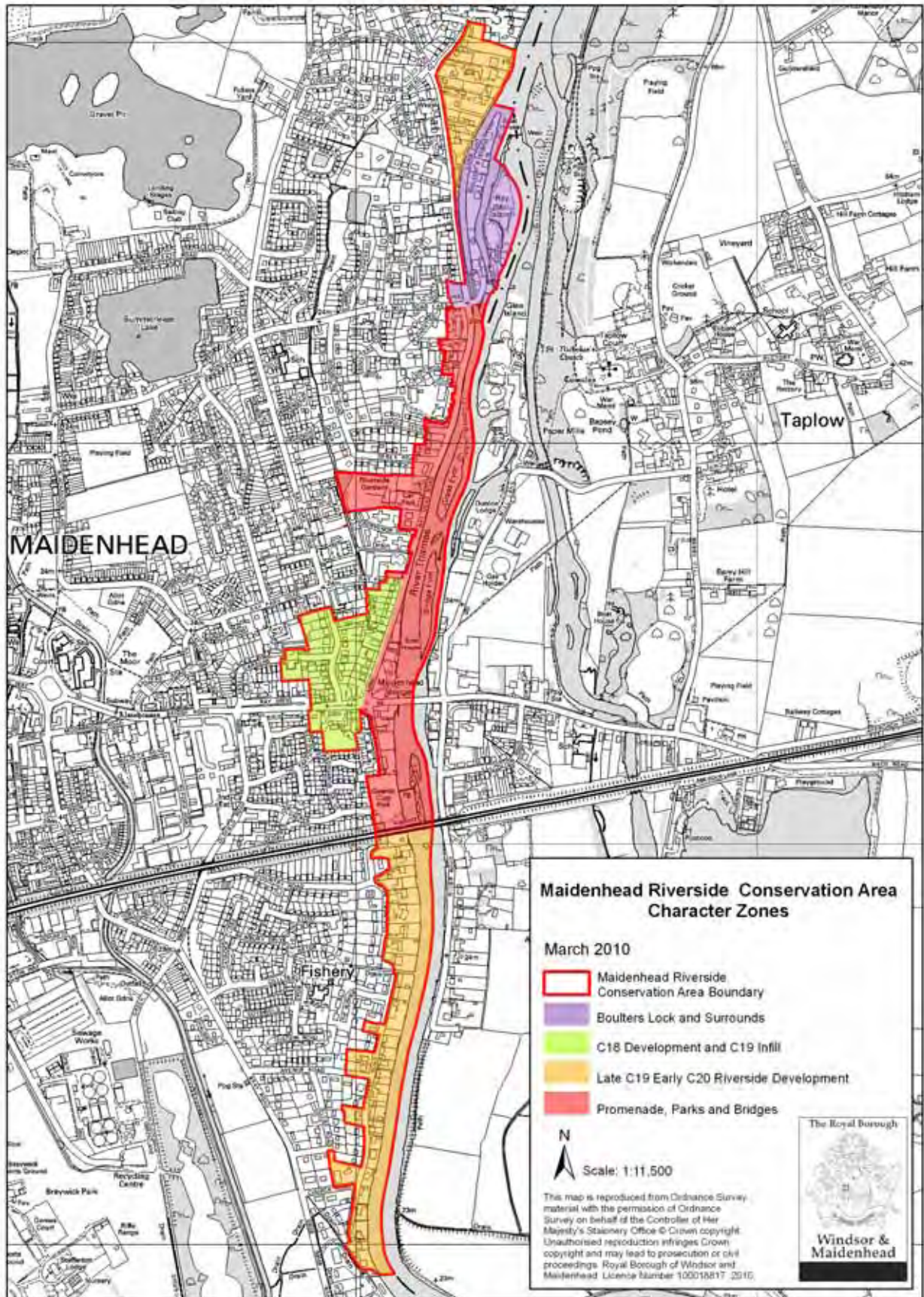
Character Areas

8 Character Areas

8.1 The Conservation Area lies within the area analysed in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Assessment (2008), which provides an assessment of the character and composition of the built environment of the whole of the Borough area that is outside the designated green belt. The analysis includes a factual description of the townscape of all settlements, defines generic townscape character types that occur throughout the Borough, and identifies character areas within each settlement that fall within these generic types. Using this analysis two character types are identified within the Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area: Victorian/ Edwardian and Riverside Villa Suburbs, and Leafy Residential Suburbs. Whilst the analysis of the character types in the Townscape Assessment has been used in reviewing the Conservation Area, and the guidance of that document can be considered together with this appraisal, for the purposes of this study a slightly different approach to character has been taken to include detailed consideration of the historic development and functioning of the area, as well as the nature of the present buildings and landscape.

8.2 Taking this more detailed approach has resulted in the identification of four character areas as opposed to the two identified in the Townscape Assessment, however, the general descriptions and boundaries are taken into consideration. The four character areas display different characteristics, albeit with certain common themes. The first area is in two parts and defined by the residential development south of Brunel's Bridge and north of Boulters Lock. This zone encompasses the north and south boundaries of the Conservation Area. The second character area encompasses the 18th century development near Maidenhead Bridge and the subsequent 19th century building within the former gardens. The third character zone focuses on the central core of the Conservation Area, the promenade, parks and bridges. Finally, the fourth character area includes Boulters Lock and Ray Mill Island.

Character Areas



8 Character Areas

(A) South of Maidenhead Rail Bridge (B) North of Boulters Lock

8.3 This zone is largely characterised by late 19th century and early 20th century residential development and is found to the north of the Conservation Area, beginning opposite Boulters Lock and to the south of the Conservation Area, from Brunel's bridge along Bray Reach to include the riverside properties of the Fisheries Estate .

8.4 The properties south of Brunel Bridge front directly on to the river and as such there is a very quiet atmosphere with no traffic. The atmosphere is similarly secluded to the north of Boulters Lock, where the only division between the Thames and the buildings is the public towpath.

8.5 The development north of Boulters lock and island is now largely composed of detached residential properties of the 20th century, but includes the listed Maidenhead Court Boathouse. There are several other significant buildings in this section, including the distinctive Thameside cottages. The area reaches the northern boundary of the Conservation Area and includes properties fronting Lower Cookham Road and Court Road as well as those fronting the Thames. The properties along these roads are included to reflect the 19th century plot layout when the first buildings were constructed in this area.

8.6 In 1890, work had begun on the properties south of Brunel Bridge, an area which later became known as the Fisheries. The Fisheries now stretch as far south as the village of Bray and contains expensive and highly desirable housing, with the properties fronting the Thames each distinctive and individually designed. The properties include the listed West Court and other distinctive buildings such as the former Langtry House, now subdivided but reputedly built for actress Lily Langtree, mistress of the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII.

8.7 Both parts of this area have an exclusively residential use, with properties designed to take advantage of the river frontage

Character Areas

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| <p>Building period</p> | <p>Building evolved over a relatively short period in this area, beginning in the 1880's. Predominantly late 19th/ early 20th century late Victorian and Edwardian vernacular architecture. Later 20th century infill evident, with some interesting and individual designs present along the Fisheries.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Plot size and form and relationship to road</p> | <p>The properties are predominantly large detached villas, many set within large garden plots and of individual design. Some of these properties have subsequently been subdivided into flats and terraces. Most properties have an asymmetrical, sprawling form. All properties tend to front the river with those along The Fisheries built particularly close to the water. Later and modern infill has largely tended to respect the generous plot size and orientation towards the river; however there have been some additions which have resulted in smaller plots along the Fisheries.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Building Height</p> | <p>The majority of properties are imposing buildings of generous proportions, largely two storeys in height. However, some of the larger late 19th century properties are three storeys or contain attic areas with ornate dormers.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| <p>Rooflines</p> | <p>On the late 19th century and early 20th century properties red clay tile is the predominant material used almost universally. This is partly due to the steep pitched roofs which are commonly used. Often clay tiles are laid in a decorative manner with contrasting plain and scalloped courses. Gable ends are dominant and tend to front the river featuring elaborate detailing such as tile hanging, decorative timber bargeboards and half timbering.</p> <p>On the more modern properties, the traditional steep pitch roofline has largely been replicated, however there are some interesting examples of flat roofs and mansards present.</p> <p>Within the Fisheries, there are several examples of more shallow roofs of a slate construction, a traditional example of which is Sommerville.</p> <p>Chimneys are a common functional feature and tend to be a prominent part of a house design. They are universally brick built, often with elaborate detailing.</p> <p>Dormer windows are commonly found, particularly on the more ornate properties and are a traditional feature of these properties.</p> |  |
| <p>Windows and doors</p> | <p>The majority of the windows on the traditional properties are of timber construction and painted either black or white. Both side hung casements and vertical sliding sashes are in evidence.</p> <p>These windows often have rich detailing in the composition of the mullions and large oriel and bay windows are also common. There are several examples of full length glazing leading to verandas and balconies, largely to take advantage of the river views.</p> |  |
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Character Areas

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| | <p>Doors tend to be of timber construction and painted a variety of colours, although many doors are at least partially glazed. Often open entrance porches are an important design feature.</p> | | |
| <p>Facing Materials</p> | <p>The local red brick is the prevalent construction material, usually laid in flemish bond. The brick detailing tends to be quite simple, except on chimneys where a more elaborate detailing is often utilised.</p> <p>Buildings are often rendered, particularly at upper level, in white, in a mock tudor style. Timber panelling and hanging tiles are also utilised at upper level and many properties replicate a half timber design.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Special Features</p> | <p>Elaborate detailing is a common feature with decorative ridge tiles, overhanging gables, half timbering, decorative porches, ornate timber balconies and tall, gothicised viewing turrets all in evidence.</p> <p>Boat moorings and boathouses are a special feature of the area, found in almost every garden plot. Most are modest timber moorings, however there are examples of larger boathouses, particularly in the Fisheries area.</p> <p>Along Fishery Road, the older properties on the west side of the street retain a link with the river through slipways linking the road to the Thames.</p> |  |  |

8 Character Areas

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| <p>Landmarks</p> | <p>The presence of the Thames is the most significant landmark.</p> <p>The Brunel Bridge dominates the landscape at the Fisheries and the regular train service is the most dominant sound on the quiet area.</p> <p>To the north of Boulters Lock, Boulters Island is a significant landmark.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Trees</p> | <p>Trees and mature planting make a contribution to the character of the area with many trees covered by TPO's. Several mature weeping willows dominate the area south of Brunel's Bridge and the tall pines to the rear of the properties on Chauntry Road provide an important green backdrop. Within the Fisheries Estate there are many attractive, mature trees within garden plots and lining Fishery Road.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Boundaries</p> | <p>The properties in the area all have clearly defined boundaries, usually demarcated by mature, green landscaping.</p> <p>The properties south of Brunel Bridge all front directly on to the river and are divided from one another through planting and mature hedgerows. This creates an open appearance when viewed from the river and is in contrast to their roadside elevation, which is demarcated by tall walls and fencing, creating an enclosed and private atmosphere.</p> <p>Fishery Road has no formal pavements and most properties are demarcated by verges, although in many instances walls and hedges front directly on to the road.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| | <p>To the north of Boulters Lock the towpath runs between the gardens of these properties and the river. This has resulted in more definite boundary planting and fencing at the riverside, as properties seek to create privacy from the public path. Again the roadside elevations and those properties on Court Road, tend to be definitely demarcated with tall walls and fencing. This boundary demarcation is usually in sympathetic materials to the local vernacular, such as timber panel fencing and red brick walls.</p> <p>On the properties south of Brunel's Bridge, cast iron railings are utilised as a decorative feature to divide the garden areas from the river. The railings are often ornately detailed, around a metre in height and painted black. They are often complimented by cast iron lanterns.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Traffic and Parking</p> | <p>Traffic is a minor concern in this area. All properties front on to the river and are accessed by residential cul de sacs to the rear. As such there is no through traffic and noise is minimal.</p> <p>As the majority of properties are large and set in mature plots, off road parking is often easily accommodated within garden plots and does not impact on the overall character of the area. Within the Fisheries Estate, some properties have smaller plots and cannot accommodate off street parking. This has led to some on-street parking along Fishery Road, which is exacerbated by the erosion of verges in other parts of the Fisheries.</p> |  |  |

Table 1

8 Character Areas

18th Century Development and Ray Park Avenue

8.8 This area focuses on the development along the lower section of Ray Park Avenue and Ray Mead Road and is characterised by detached residential properties set well back from the road, behind ornamental hedges and fencing with gravel drives and gates. The area also contains the highest concentration of housing in the Conservation Area, with buildings set in tighter plots than elsewhere, reflecting the planned nature of the site.

8.9 The origins of this area are the three large Georgian Houses, all of which are listed buildings. Within the former grounds of the largest of these houses now sits a well maintained example of a late 19th century/early 20th century designed suburban plot. The grounds in which this suburban plot now sits formerly belonged to Ray Lodge and consisted of a wooded park with a small stream and Ray Lodge Mansion in the centre.

8.10 This area is distinctive in that the focus is not exclusively on the Thames. Ray Park Avenue has no river frontage, nor do the 18th century properties. The character in this area is established instead through the architectural detailing of the properties and the well maintained property frontages.

8.11 Distinctive architectural features such as black and white half timbering are dominant and local materials such as red brick and clay tiles are utilised. Decorative timber casement windows, tile cladding and dormers are prevalent.

8.12 There is a leafy, suburban character to the area, largely through the presence of mature planting and fine trees. This is reinforced by well established private gardens that are often bounded by tall hedges, providing a sense of privacy to the properties. However, the area also includes the main traffic junction within the Conservation Area, leading to the busy Maidenhead Bridge and as result, often has issues with traffic congestion.

8.13 The area is primarily of residential use. However, Oldfield Lodge is now a busy private clinic, attracting daily visitors. The larger properties to the south of Ray Mead Road are used for a commercial purpose with several restaurants. There is a busy petrol station located within this area and a small surgery is located within one of the properties on Ray Park Avenue.




Character Areas

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| <p>Building period</p> | <p>The area is defined by two building periods. Late 18th century building is evident in the surviving mansion houses all in a classical style. These large, detached properties contrast with the late 19th century development of Ray Park Avenue and this section of Ray Mead Road, which are predominantly of a domestic arts and crafts style. The properties along these streets were all largely built at the turn of the century, with little modern infill and as such there is a very uniform character to the area.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Plot size form and relationship to road</p> | <p>The 18th century period is characterised by large, grand, detached properties set back from the road in mature, landscaped settings. The 19th century development, which evolved in part of the plot of the original Ray Lodge grounds, is also defined by detached dwellings, albeit on a smaller scale, set back from the highway in individual plots. Street proportions are generous in the area with tree-lined avenues and. Mature planting and green space within properties prevalent. Several front garden areas have now been turned over to parking.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Building Height</p> | <p>The late 19th century development is typically of two storeys, with some attic areas in use. The 18th century development is of grander scale, predominantly three storey and dominates the landscape. Ray Lodge is three storeys tall with a basement level.</p> |  |  |







Character Areas

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| <p>Rooflines</p> | <p>Both red clay tile and Welsh slate roofs are in evidence. The 18th century properties all feature slate hipped roofs, of a shallow pitch hidden behind brick parapet walls. The red clay roofs to the 19th century development are of a much steeper pitch with a variety of ridges and gable ends fronting the highway elevation. Decorative features are commonplace on these properties, with timber bargeboards, exposed rafters and ornate terracotta ridge tiles and finials.</p> <p>Chimneys are a common functional feature, tending to be tall and brick built. Even on the smaller domestic properties the chimneys are large, ornate and prominent features of the buildings. Dormer windows are a common feature on the late 19th century buildings, tending to be of a small scale and decorative.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Windows and doors</p> | <p>The windows on the 18th century buildings are all of a classical style, of timber construction and painted white. The majority are vertical sliding sash subdivided with timber glazing bars. Oldfield Lodge features tall Palladian windows. The late 19th century development has a well maintained selection of timber windows, again painted white. There is a mixture of side hung casements and vertical sliding sashes and the use of glazing bars varies to create decorative styles. Bay and oriel windows are commonly used.</p> <p>Doors are largely of timber construction on the majority of properties and are painted a variety of colours. The 18th century buildings retain classical features such as glazed fanlights whilst the 19th century dwellings feature open porches and partially glazed doors.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| <p>Facing Materials</p> | <p>Local red brick is the dominant building material, with Oldfield Lodge being the exception constructed in a yellow stock brick. Most properties have exposed flemish bond although the later properties tend to utilise decorative features over the brickwork, particularly at upper level. This detailing includes applied timber framing, decorative hanging tiles, roughcast and smooth render, usually painted white.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Special Features</p> | <p>Decorative features reflective of the arts and crafts style give the area a distinct character. Turrets towers and full height bays are all utilised for decorative purposes and ornate terracotta features such as plaques, tiles and moulded parts are all utilised. Ornate front porches, decorative bargeboards and overhanging gable ends all contribute to the arts and crafts style.</p> <p>Garages and outbuildings are a common feature, with some surviving examples of early coach houses remaining, complementing the design of the properties.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| <p>Landmarks</p> | <p>The key landmarks to the area are the large Georgian Houses. By virtue of their height, scale and design these buildings are dominant on the street scene, with the exception of Ray Lodge, which is now completely enclosed, although visible from longer distances above surrounding development.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Trees</p> | <p>Mature planting is found throughout the area, in particular in the grounds of Oldfield Lodge, where several significant trees are found, providing an important tree screen to the Bath Road.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Boundaries</p> | <p>All of the properties have clearly defined boundaries. On Oldfield Lodge and Bridgewater Lodge the boundaries are very strongly demarcated with tall 2m red brick walls which are a prominent feature of this part of the Conservation Area. Ray Lodge in contrast, has lost much of its original formal demarcation due to the subdivision of the grounds.</p> <p>The property demarcation along Ray Park Avenue is less formal, largely in the form of soft landscaping with mature trees and hedging. Fences or brick walls of around 1m tend to front the highway. This is echoed along Ray Mill Road where a variety of hedge, fences and low brick walls are utilised.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| <p>Traffic and Parking</p> | <p>The area is dominated by the junction of the Bath Road and Ray Mead Road with heavy levels of traffic during peak hours. Heavy goods vehicles often travel along the roads and adds to the general feeling of traffic congestion.</p> <p>Ray Park Avenue is a quieter, suburban road on which parking is restricted, this ensures the streetscape appears uncluttered through a lack of parked cars. Most of the properties have turned limited sections of the front garden over to parking in this area, however due to the relatively large plot sizes and mature boundary planting, this is not generally detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.</p> |  |  |
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Table 2

8 Character Areas

The Promenade, Parks and Bridges

8.14 The Promenade, parks and bridges represent the central core of the Conservation Area and this zone is most dominated by the River Thames, providing a visual focus to the area.

8.15 The character of this area is less defined by the buildings of the area, but more the unique setting of this area on the Thames. However, the built form is still significant and key buildings within the area are the existing hotels, the Thames Hotel, the Grade II listed Oldfield and the Thames Riviera. The boathouse style buildings along the waterfront are also significant. All dominate the streetscape and river frontage and have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the area.

8.16 Remnants of the 19th century development of this area remain in plot boundaries, mature planting and some existing build. New development has created modern, executive flats along the riverside, however there are still examples of surviving 19th century development, particularly with smaller lodge houses to larger estates remaining.

8.17 The two bridges dominate this area, as they do the Conservation Area as a whole. They impact on views, provide fundamental transport links and also reflect the history of the area as a major communication link.

8.18 The area is significant for the number of mature trees and open spaces to be found within it, providing an important green backdrop to the Thames, the bridges and the riverside housing.

8.19 To the immediate north of Brunel's Bridge are Guards Club Park and Guards Club Island and a Grade II listed footbridge. Originally, the Brigade of Guards Club provided recreation for the officers who were stationed at Windsor and Pirbright. A large clubhouse contained a ballroom and in its Victorian heyday, the guards Club Ball attracted debutants and royalty. In 1949 Guards Club Park and Guards Club Island and listed footbridge were used in a scene within the Ealing comedy film, Kind Hearts and Coronets, a black comedy starring Alec Guinness.

8.20 The area has a recreational use, reflected through the number of hotels, public parks, cafes and amenities to be found in the area. However, the area is still primarily residential and is considered a highly desirable location.

Character Areas

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Building period</p> | <p>The building period varies along the riverside promenade, however there is significant surviving evidence of the late Victorian riverside development in the large buildings of Oldfield, the Thames Riviera and the Thames Hotel. There is evidence of modern infill along the promenade although original plot boundaries have been largely maintained.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Plot size, form and relationship to road</p> | <p>The buildings tend to be large, detached properties set in large grounds. The smaller scale, domestic properties tend to be set back from the promenade with sizeable front garden plots. Ray Mead Road divides the properties north of Maidenhead Bridge from the road, whilst those south of the Bridge front directly onto the river. The exception to this is the boathouse style buildings directly north of the bridge and the late 20th century Chandlers Quay complex. Original plot sizes have been maintained and small gate houses remain, indicating where larger turn of the century dwellings were located.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Building Height</p> | <p>Building height varies in reflection to the variety of building periods and styles in this area. The 20th century domestic properties tend to be two storey whilst the Victorian buildings are of a larger scale and often three to four storeys in height. Modern 20th century flatted development is also of a more dominant height.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Rooflines</p> | <p>Again rooflines are varied within the area although the common roof material is red clay tile. Some Welsh slate is also prevalent. Where slate is utilised, roofs are of a shallower pitch. The pitches on the tiles roof vary but tend to be of a steep pitch and often have decorative features such as terracotta ridge tiles, finials and fancy scrollwork to gable end bargeboards. The roofline of Guards Club Mews is particularly ornate and of a Gothicised style. Modern development within the area has largely respected the local vernacular and utilised traditional materials.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Windows and doors</p> | <p>On the late Victorian properties windows are largely timber and painted white. There is a mixture of vertical sliding sash and side hung casements utilised. Oldfield has retained full length bay windows, decorative dormers and circular oriels and is a particularly decorative example of late Victorian glazing. There is evidence of modern intervention on some buildings with the use of upvc.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Facing Materials</p> | <p>Brick is the prominent building material and the local red brick frequently utilised. Some modern dwellings are constructed from concrete, although finished in a render. The bricks are left exposed, usually in a Flemish bond on most traditional buildings, particularly at lower level. Render and roughcast is commonly used, with buildings painted white, or in a muted shade such as the Thames Riviera.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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| <p>Special Features</p> | <p>Architecture in this area has made sure to take full advantage of the riverfront location and as such, properties feature decorative touches such as balconies, both of timber and cast iron construction and are orientated towards the river. There is also evidence of surviving large scale boathouse style buildings.</p> <p>This area largely focuses on recreation with several large public open spaces, parking areas, pedestrian footpaths, public seating and cafes. The large hotels emphasise this recreational focus.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Landmarks</p> | <p>The River Thames is the clear landmark, influencing land use, road layout, property design and all views.</p> <p>The two bridges span the river, dominant through their contrasting design and materials.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Trees</p> | <p>The mature plane trees lining the promenade are particularly significant and break up the hard landscaping of the busy road.</p> <p>The mature trees and planting to be found in the numerous parks and gardens</p> |  |  |

Character Areas





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|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>Boundaries</p> | <p>The boundaries are clearly defined in this area, particularly dividing residential properties from public domain. Residential properties tend to have a mixture of 2m walls, hedging and fencing to give privacy. A particularly unusual wall is found on the junction of Longworth Drive which appears to be a façade of a former brick built property. The window openings can still be made out. Much of the boundary demarcation is green in the form of mature planting and this contributes to the green character of the area.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Traffic and Parking</p> | <p>The area is dominated by traffic with the busy A4094 linking Maidenhead to Cookham and beyond. During peak hours this area can be congested and impede on visitor appreciation of the area.</p> <p>Parking is contained within plots and often within garages, the large plot sizes allowing room for this. There are several public carparks in the area to accommodate visitor parking.</p> |  |  |

Table 3

Character Areas

Boulters Lock and Surrounds

8.21 This area is focused around Boulters Island and Ray Mill Island, including the lock and associated buildings. Boulters Lock has been the focal point of Maidenhead's riverside industry for centuries, but since the turn of the century has attracted visitors instead, with thousands of tourists in the summer months.

8.22 The area is defined by the lock itself, formerly known as Ray Mill Lock, after the adjacent mill. There has been a lock in the area since 1772 and history of a mill existing on the island since the 14th century. Indeed, it is thought that the name 'Boulters' is a derivation of the milling term 'bolting'. With the 19th century expansion of the area, the lock became a popular and intriguing place to visit.

8.23 Ray Mill Island is now a park administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It is named after the Ray family. The mill continued to produce flour until the 1920s.

8.24 Boulters Island is accessible by motor vehicle across Boulters Bridge across the tail of Boulters Lock. The island has a number of private houses, a restaurant and a small boatyard with a slipway. Ray Mill Island lies alongside to the east separated from Boulters Island by the Ray Mill Stream.





8.25 The properties on the island tend to be of a smaller scale and are more varied in architectural style. The former mill buildings have been almost completely rebuilt but still reflect a commercial style. Other buildings tend to imitate a 'boathouse style' with the use of finishes such as weatherboarding. The properties on the island are well screened by mature planting and have less visual dominance than other properties in the Conservation Area.

8.26 The main use of the area is now for recreation, the former mill now a restaurant. Ray Mill Island is a public open space with cafes and is well utilised in summer. The lock also draws interest with many pausing to watch boats pass through.

Character Areas

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| <p>Building period</p> | <p>The remaining Mill buildings date back to the 17th century, however these have been extensively remodelled and rebuilt. The 19th century development includes the Boulter's Restaurant and the lock-keepers House whilst 20th century development has evolved along Boulter's Island in the form of small residential dwellings and boathouses.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Plot size, form and relationship to road</p> | <p>Due to the narrow, linear nature of Boulter's Island, the properties tend to sit in small plots, with the River on either side. Most properties are detached, fairly large dwellings, with the exception of the former Mill buildings, which have been subdivided into flats. These buildings including the hotel, sit within a comparatively tight plot for the size and scale of the buildings.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Building Height</p> | <p>Roof heights are predominantly two storey and some single storey buildings. The larger properties such as the hotel, contain attic windows and appear of a larger scale.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas

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|--------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Rooflines</p> | <p>Rooflines are varied with some hipped roofs and some simple pitches, with clay tile being the common roofing material. Boulter's Hotel is the exception with a scalloped slate tile roof. Dormer windows feature on Ray Mill Cottage.</p> |  |
| <p>Windows and doors</p> | <p>The traditional properties feature timber windows, painted white, in either vertical sliding sash or side hung casements. The modern bungalows have windows from more modern materials, but still all painted white.</p> |  |
| <p>Facing Materials</p> | <p>The choice of facing materials vary with timber weatherboarding a common choice, in a variety of muted colours. Render, in white is dominant.</p> |   |

8 Character Areas

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|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| <p>Special Features</p> | <p>The area draws crowds, largely through the picturesque lock itself which is well utilised, particularly in summer months. To take advantage of this, there is a strong focus on tourism, with an ice cream kiosk by the lock and on Ray Mill Island, a coffee shop, public seating and toilets.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Trees</p> | <p>Boulters Island and Ray Mill Island both provide visual screening through mature trees and planting.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Landmarks</p> | <p>Again, the main landmark of the area is the River itself, being the reason for the existence of the mill and the lock. However, Boulters Lock is a significant local landmark and the former mill buildings also contribute positively to the area.</p> |  |  |

Character Areas





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| <p>Boundaries</p> | <p>Property demarcation is informal and tends to be through mature planting.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Traffic and Parking</p> | <p>The area has vehicular access for residents only and some limited on site parking for the restaurant, however some properties are only accessed by boat.</p> |  |  |

Table 4

Character Areas

Opportunities for Enhancement and Change

Opportunities for Enhancement and Change

Condition

9.1 The majority of properties within the Conservation Area are well maintained and set in attractive grounds. Therefore, there is little need for action to be taken to repair individual buildings, although there are some exceptions to be found along Ray Park Avenue.

9.2 The refurbishment and general works undertaken to Boulters restaurant have allowed what was a previously run down vacant building in a prominent and popular location to be brought back into use.

9.3 The open spaces are well taken care of, as are the public open spaces.

Sensitivity to Change

9.4 Maidenhead riverside is considered a desirable suburban location and as such, will always be subject to pressures of change. The character of the area would be impacted upon negatively through the further erosion of traditional plots and the insertion of more large scale flatted developments. The retention of the remaining 19th century development is fundamental to the Conservation Area.

9.5 Flood-proofing measures and flood resilient design are likely to be the biggest issues in these areas in terms of future development. How buildings are designed to take account of both floodplain policy and also the surrounding Conservation Area will need careful consideration by developers. In particular, the incorporation of flood voids, raised floor levels and the effect this will have on ridge height, windows and doors will need to be accounted for. Please note that the River Thames is classified as a "Main River". As such, under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991, and the Thames Land Drainage Byelaws 1981, the prior consent of the Environment Agency is required for any proposed works or structures, in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank both watercourses.

9.6 The erosion of architectural details of properties would have a significant impact on the Conservation Area. Alterations such as the replacement of traditional timber windows with UPVC double glazed units or the modification of a roof covering are aspects which can fall outside general planning control but could have a huge impact on many properties in the area. The proposed Article 4(2) direction could help to address this issue (see Additional Planning Controls).

9.7 The forthcoming Crossrail development will see the overhead electrification of the Great Western line between Paddington and Maidenhead and this will require the Brunel Bridge to undergo some changes in order to accommodate the overhead line equipment. The proposed overhead masts will have a significant landscape impact and affect important views along the river and they will affect the appearance of the listed railway bridge and the setting of the adjacent Grade I listed road bridge. Furthermore, the increased amount of high speed train traffic may have an impact on the Conservation Area.

9.8 There are proposals to alter the traffic control system at the Maidenhead Bridge roundabout. The design of this will need to take account of the sensitive location and seek to minimise the impact of any signage for example.

9.9 The character of the area is also sensitive to change through any loss of green spaces or significant planting.

Negative Areas

9.10 Heavy volumes of traffic along the A4 exacerbate noise pollution, congestion and speed, which can all contribute to the deterioration of the Grade I listed bridge. The A4094 can be equally as congested during peak hours and creates a negative feature within the Conservation Area. Maidenhead Bridge is classified as a congestion hot-spot in the draft 2009 RBWM Local Transport Plan: Issues and Options Paper.

9.11 The petrol station, although serving an important local function, does have a negative impact due to the large expanse of tarmac immediately surrounding the garage. The visually unattractive area of open hard standing is at odds with the soft, green landscaping of the Conservation Area generally. Furthermore, the building itself is utilitarian in nature and constructed from inappropriate materials that do not compliment this part of the Conservation Area.

Opportunities for Enhancement and Change

9.12 The roundabout approaching Maidenhead Bridge is a further negative aspect at the Bridge due to the signage, form and materials used in the construction of the roundabout. The use of small setts does not compliment the green nature of the Conservation Area. Due to the proximity of the roundabout to the petrol station, there is a dominance of hard landscaping in this area which is at odds with the mature landscaping elsewhere.

9.13 The former Skindles Hotel on the South Bucks side of the river has been a neglected and vacant building for many years and its appearance detracts from views from within the Conservation Area.

9.14 Modern intervention has harmed the area with the construction of large scale flatted developments which do not respect the smaller scale domestic turn of the century architecture.

Enhancement Opportunities

9.15 The areas which could most benefit from enhancement largely relate to commercial premises, the petrol station for example could be enhanced with the introduction of more greenery to either screen or break up the petrol station from the river frontage. Planning permission has been granted for a replacement building on the site, which if implemented could provide an opportunity to enhance this area, through more sympathetic building design and the introduction of more landscaping.

9.16 The Grade I listed Maidenhead Bridge currently has mixed concrete paving slabs on the pavement and wide granite kerbs. As part of proposed repair work it is intended to repave the bridge with better quality materials, which will be a positive enhancement to this significant bridge.

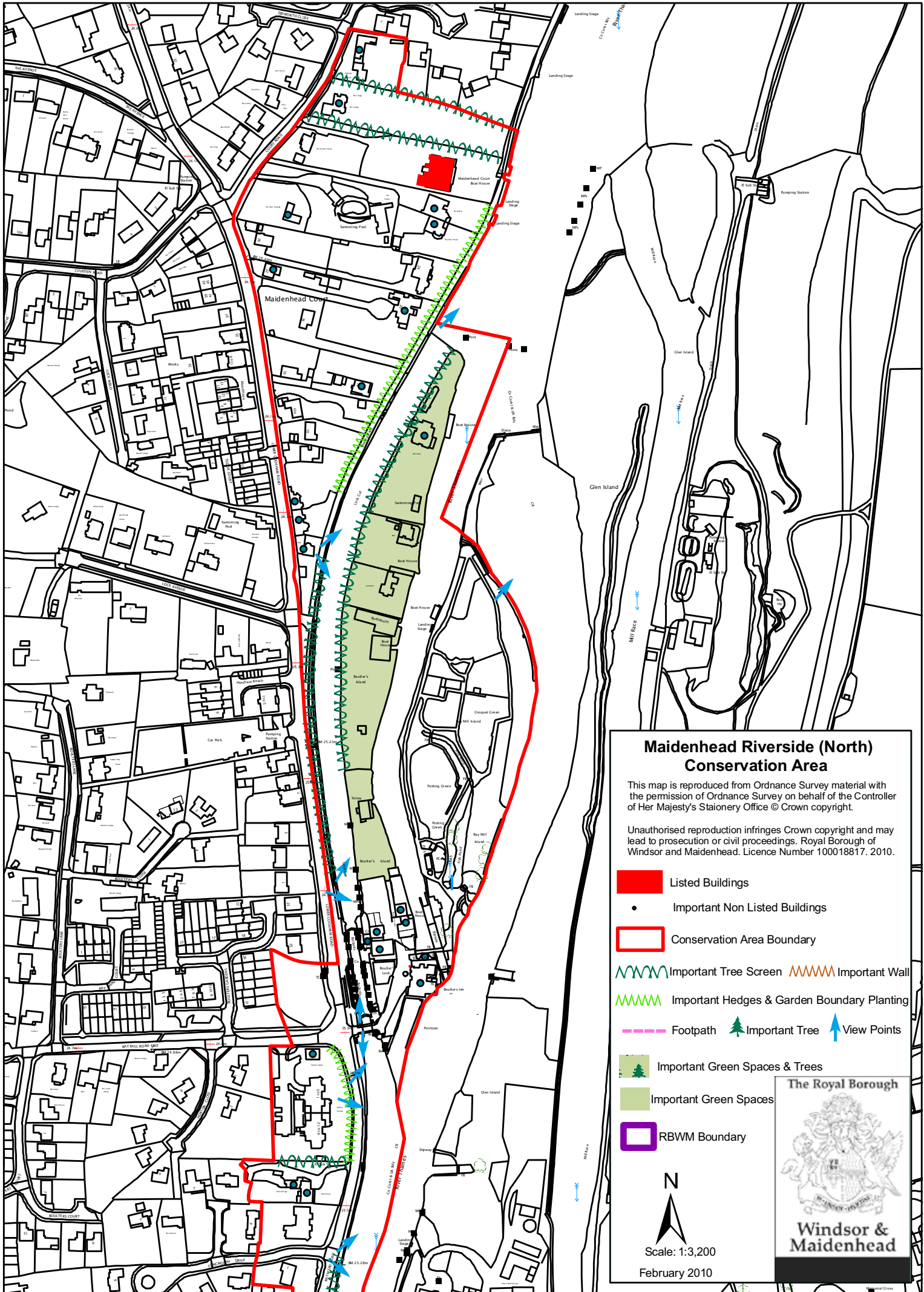
9.17 The former Skindles site and some 48 acres of neighbouring land on the South Bucks side of the river are proposed for regeneration and have been the subject of a detailed planning application in outline only, which was subsequently withdrawn. The redevelopment of this large site could serve to positively enhance the setting of the Maidenhead riverside, provided any proposals were undertaken in a manner sympathetic to the historic character of the area.

9.18 Regular maintenance of the trees within the Conservation Area is to be encouraged to protect the wooded character. There is evidence of new planting associated with new development, which is a positive enhancement to the area. Recent work along the promenade has introduced grassed areas immediately around the trees. This is primarily to help the trees survive but has the additional benefit of enhancing the green appearance of the area.

Opportunities for Enhancement and Change

Map of Main Features of Conservation Area

Map of Main Features of Conservation Area




Maidenhead Riverside (North) Conservation Area

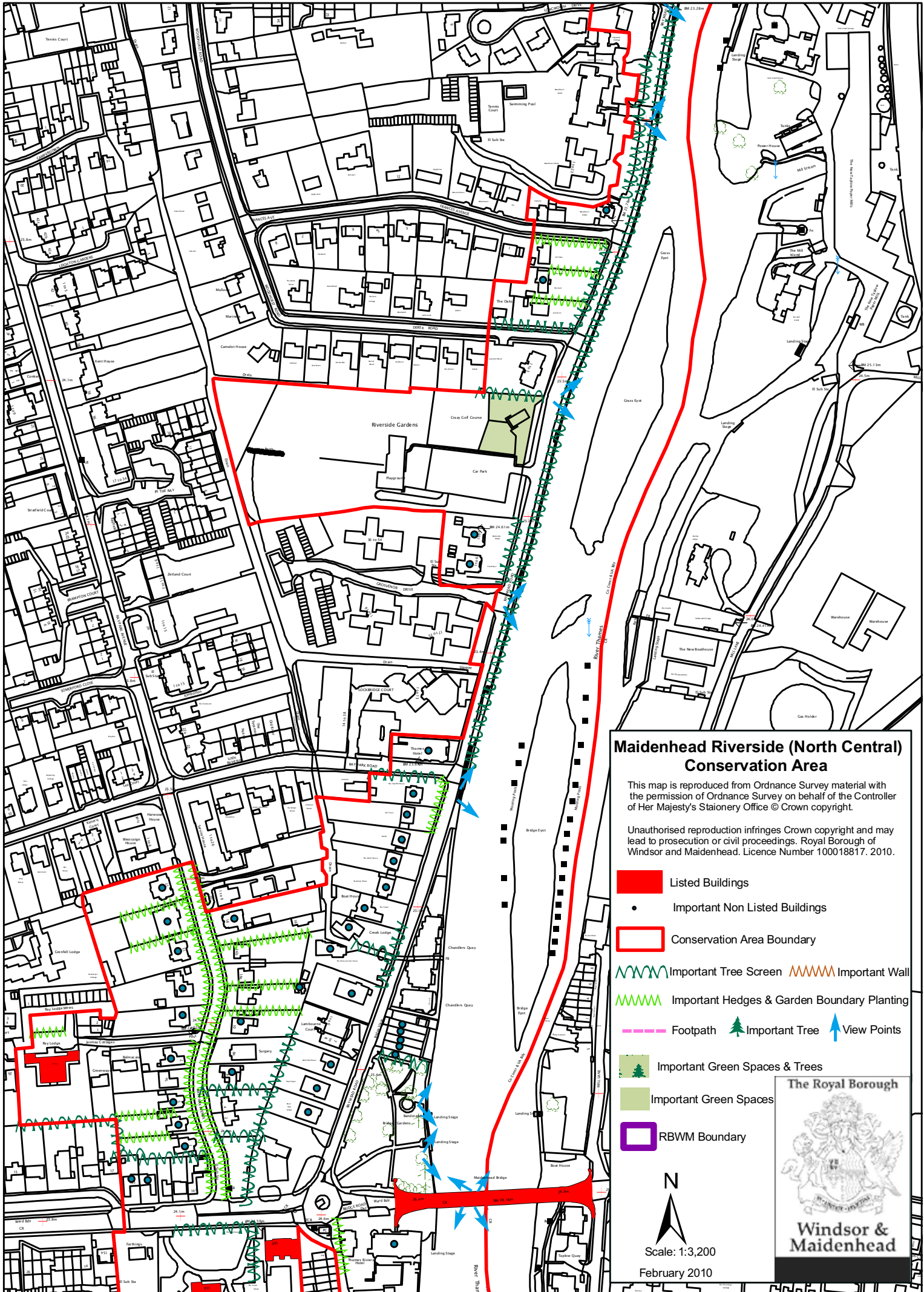
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- Listed Buildings
- Important Non Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Important Tree Screen
- Important Wall
- Important Hedges & Garden Boundary Planting
- Footpath
- Important Tree
- View Points
- Important Green Spaces & Trees
- Important Green Spaces
- RBWM Boundary


 Scale: 1:3,200
 February 2010





Maidenhead Riverside (North Central) Conservation Area

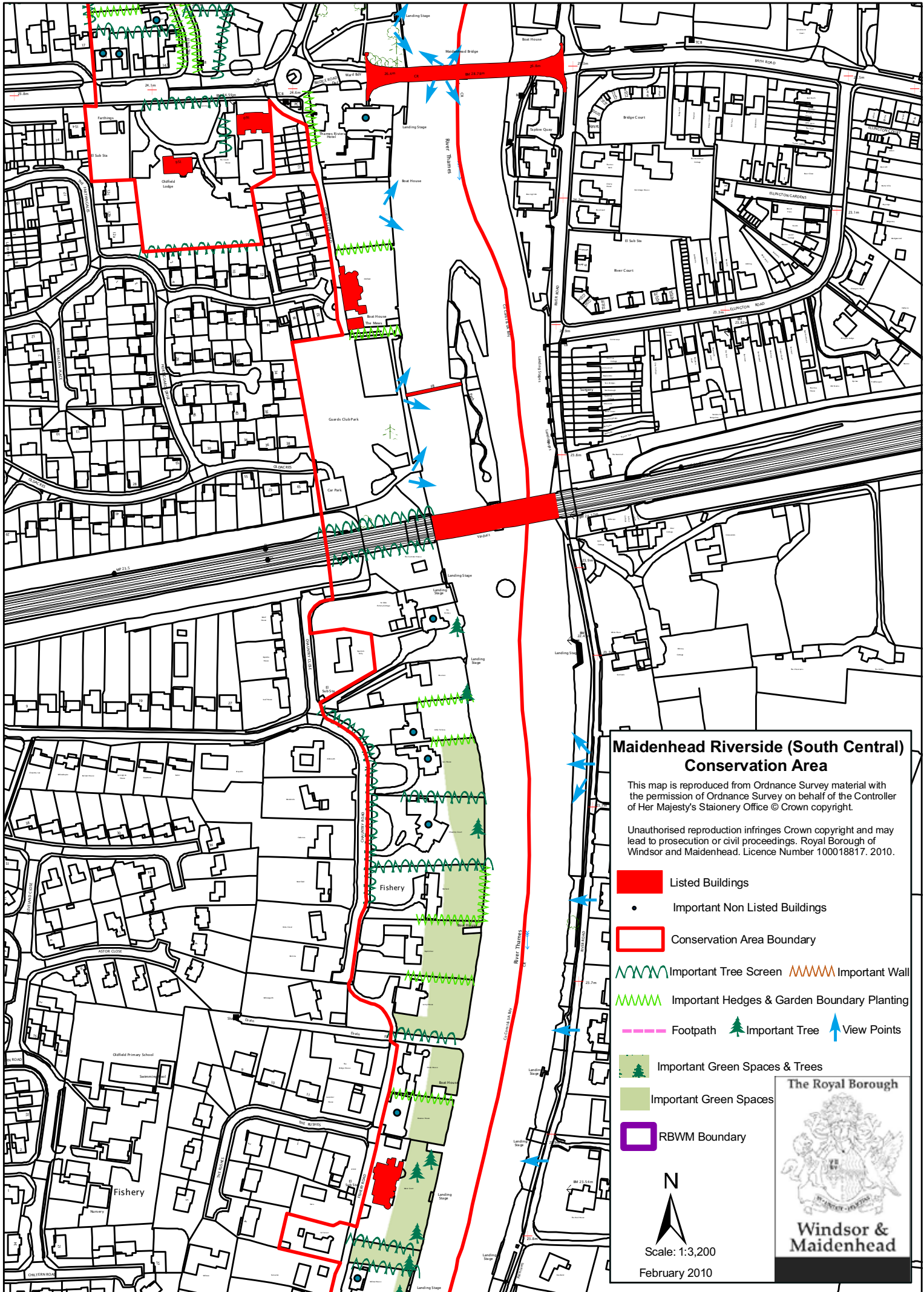
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- Important Green Spaces
- RBWM Boundary

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 Scale: 1:3,200
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Maidenhead Riverside (South Central) Conservation Area

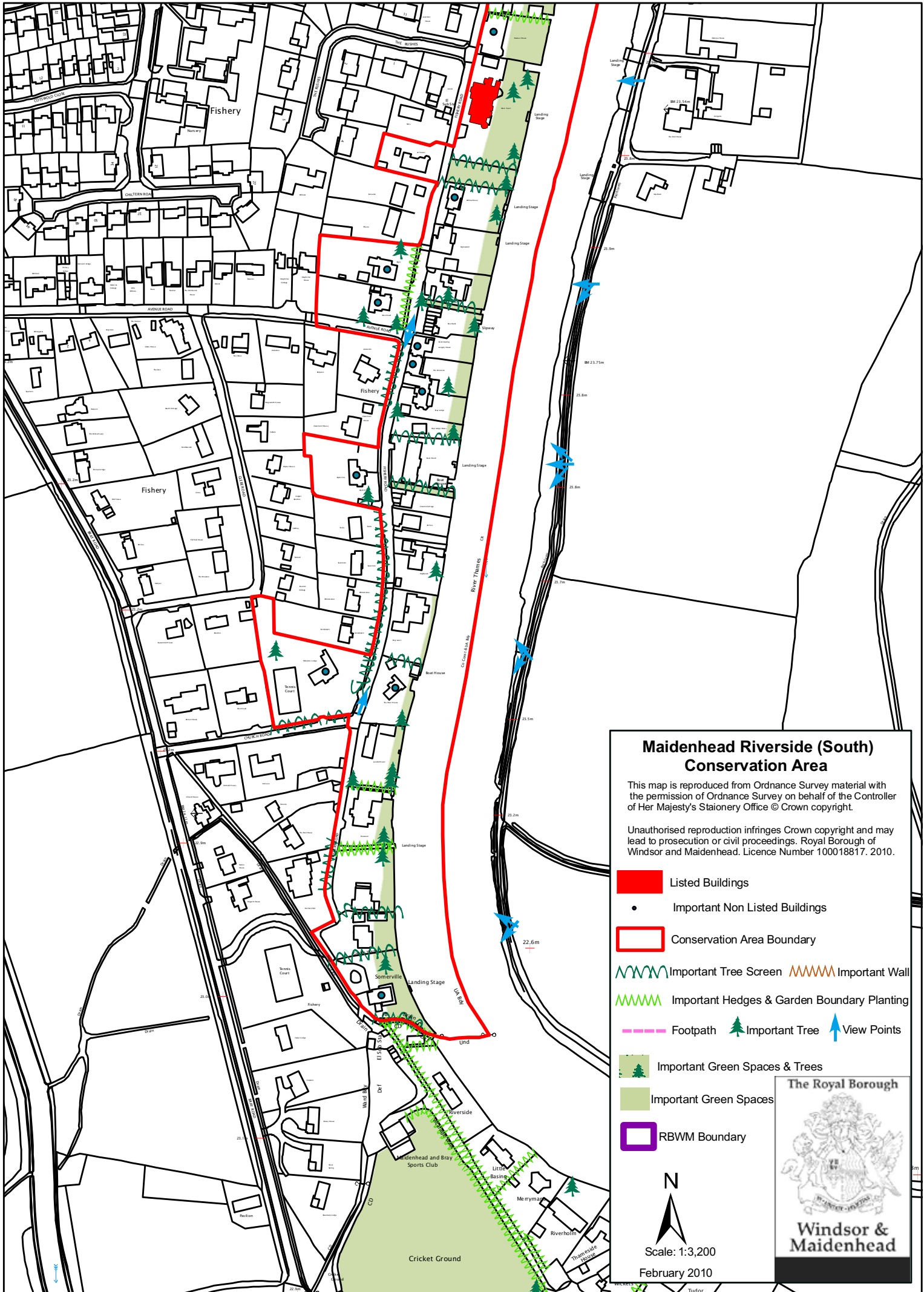
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Maidenhead Riverside (South) Conservation Area

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