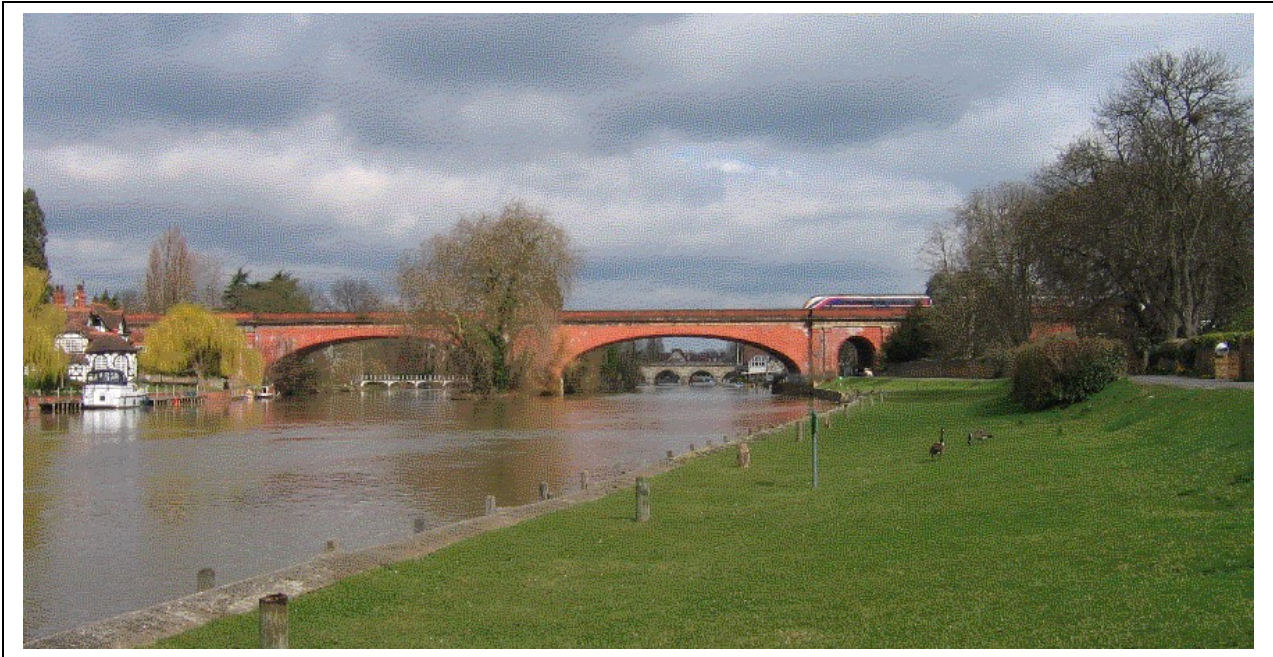


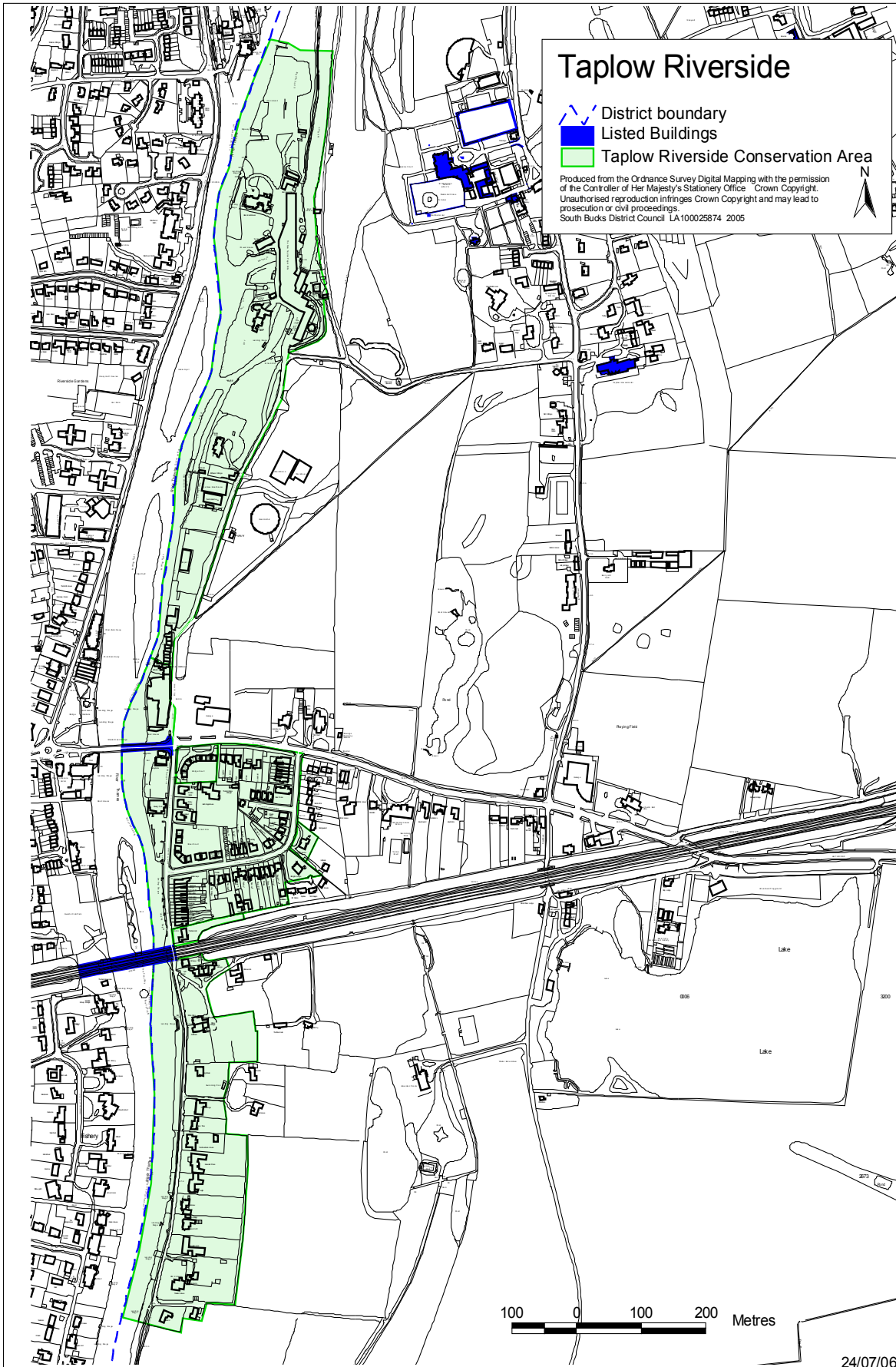
**DRAFT**  
**Conservation Area Character Appraisal**



**Taplow Riverside**  
**Designated 1999**  
**Reviewed 2006**

**Conservation areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Section 69 (1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.**

**This document identifies, describes and illustrates the features and characteristics that justify designation of Taplow Riverside as a conservation area. Any alterations or extensions to buildings within or adjacent to the Conservation Area are constrained by the need to respect the special characteristics identified in this document and in the Council’s local policies.**



## **Location & Setting**

Taplow Riverside lies on the eastern bank of the River Thames with Boulters Lock to the north and Bray to the south. The settlement is on the western edge of South Bucks District and faces the town of Maidenhead across the river. Despite being on the edge of Taplow Parish it has strong historic links with the village. Taplow Court, which overlooks from the promontory above, has been a highly valued site for many thousands of years due to its proximity close to and above the river. The resources that the river has to offer have made it an important feature of Taplow, socially and economically, throughout history. The Thames has been the boundary of parishes, counties, and possibly even Saxon kingdoms.

## **Origins & Development**

The greater Taplow area has been an extremely desirable land holding from early Neolithic times. Its importance is conferred by its strategic position close to, and overlooking, the River Thames. It is thought that Taeppa, a Saxon lord or Thane, might have been interred in the burial mound or “hlaw” (hence Tap-Low). 19<sup>th</sup> century digs revealed the most important archaeological finds from this era prior to the discovery of Sutton Hoo in Suffolk.

More recent excavations in the grounds of Taplow Court have revealed an Iron Age hill fort, constructed over a fort of Bronze Age origin, and with evidence of earlier settlements. Flintheads and other bronze age finds have also been discovered in the Thames riverbed at Taplow Riverside and point to the vital strategic importance of this riverside location from the earliest of times.

While the riverside itself may not have provided a secure settlement base for early communities, the escarpment running up towards Taplow Court was used extensively by Neolithic and Roman farmers. Later occupiers such as the Saxons could well have settled on the riverside although no evidence suggests that this is the case. However, at this time the river could be crossed without a bridge due to the presence of larger eyots between the banks. This key access point to a Saxon thane’s territory would have been defended.

Later, King William gave the manor of Taplow to his half-brother the Bishop of Bayeux in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The manor remained in Church hands until the reign of Henry VIII. James I sold the manor to nobility and it was eventually passed, without Cliveden, to the Grenfell family (Lord Desborough) in 1852. Glen Island House, in the northern part of Taplow Riverside, was built in 1863 for an Irish baronet, Lt Col Roger Palmer, as his English residence. Palmer, one of the 600 that rode at Balaclava, became an additional notable resident in the area and conferred a sense of aristocracy on the riverside, which had always been in the shadow of Taplow Court.

Development has utilised both the recreational and commercial uses of the river through its natural power. The exclusive detached villas, which were established from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, were not only desirable residences in themselves but also linked with the river through either business or pleasure uses, or both. Residents past and present have used moorings on the riverside, also boatyards, steam launch companies and hotel businesses have been established. These trades encouraged and catered for the leisure activities which have been popular pastimes throughout history, from pleasure-boats to rowing clubs. Further development spread from the riverside along Bath Road and into Ellington Road and, therefore, lost some of this connection with the river, if none of the handsome Edwardian architectural features. However, the settlement is largely focussed between and around the important historic bridges. It became a more desirable location after the coming of the

railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century although the Ordnance Survey map of 1912 still shows very few properties at Taplow Riverside.

The mixed use is foreshadowed by, and entwined with, earlier and concurrent commercial uses in the area which also harnessed the power of the river. Riverside life has a long association with milling of various forms, which at Taplow Riverside stretches back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The milling itself is largely hidden from the view of the Thames (although it sits almost astride the newly created Jubilee River, making this a dual riverside location) and the meandering Mill Lane connects the mill to residential and additional commercial areas.

Development of the historic framework at Taplow Riverside has taken place through mixed use: residential, leisure, industrial and commercial. It is a place where the upper and middle classes have lived and played, and the working classes have worked to fulfil those needs. All of these uses are tied to the River Thames and associated watercourses, and latterly the Jubilee River. Throughout a long history of habitation, the power of the river has been used in different ways. Firstly, for its power to provide food as well as transport. Later, its course became a hindrance and had to be bridged. The structures that were built across the Thames are the defining architectural landmarks of the area, but also represent a new age which, in turn, brought a new era to the riverside which was based around leisure and residential, as well as commercial, uses.

### **Landscape and Views**

The development of Taplow Riverside has been guided by its relationship to a natural feature - the river. The Thames has affected the siting of the roads, the orientation of the properties and some of the architectural features. Also, the general design of properties: there has been a tendency to design roof terraces on the elevations of residences which front the river. The level ground at the valley floor has also allowed for a long terrace to be constructed on River Road between the two bridges. The bridges were constructed in different eras, in different styles and for different forms of transport. They span the river, bisect the landscape, and curtail the views up and down the Thames, interrupting the vistas with large, handsome structures of brick and stone.

The landscape has also dictated the business uses in the area. Certain types of industry, such as milling, have been possible through the natural waterways at this location. The narrower tributaries, which surround the mill site, confer a verdant valley floor character. The larger expanse of the Thames has provided a key transportation route to and from London which has been utilised in a variety of commercial enterprises, including steam launches and goods shipping.

The width of the river allows for extensive views in and out of the Conservation Area to the west. Residential houses, flats and a hotel line the bank on the Maidenhead side of the river. This wide view is contrasted by the long narrow view to the east. Both the Great West Road (A4) and the Great Western Railway line project into the distance. The avenue of trees either side of the A4 gives a leafy, suburban feeling to the view out of the Conservation Area. To the northeast the views are across a rural and open area, leading up to the Burnham plateau on which Taplow Court imperiously stands. Occasional mature trees and the rusted gasholder, the latter being especially conspicuous in the leafless winter months, are the only interruption to the view up the broad, sweeping embankment.

### **Townscape and Spaces**

The area is characterised by its valley-floor/ waterfront location in the shadow of the bridges and the wooded hill leading up to Taplow Court and Village, and to the Cliveden estate. River Road follows the curving course of the river. The wide area of land between the highway and the river edge accommodate the Maidenhead Rowing Club and boathouses as well as modern residential development and Skindles Hotel. Distance between the buildings and the wide bank is retained to some extent, if diminished. The area to the south of the Conservation Area, beyond the Sounding Arch has a more open character with a wide grass verge, a steep bank and a high brick wall or hedging behind, over which large detached residential properties look towards the river.

### *River Road*

Within the Conservation Area, the distance between the bank and the line of properties on River Road is maintained although there are closer groupings of tall houses. The tall Gaiety Row terrace gives way to the wide entrance to Ellington Road. On the north corner of Ellington Road/ River Road are the 1930s flats of River Court, also 3 storey. Continuing along the road to the north sit 3 large late Victorian detached houses on large plots with broad spaces between. Finally, on the corner of the Bath Road are more 1930s flats (Bridge Court) and individual houses lead round to the northern entrance to Ellington Road. The design and position of Bridge Court mirrors that of River Court on the southern corner of the block. The area on the river in front of them was previously largely open land with a few residential properties and boathouses. It now houses more flats and a large clubhouse. This has cluttered the bank at this location and disrupted the previous delineation of building heights in this townscape.

### *Bath Road*

This wide and busy road connects Slough and Maidenhead and, in Taplow Parish, has featured large detached residences since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The loss of some of these houses recently has been unfortunate and an historic group of buildings has been lost as a result. The sole survivor within the Conservation Area is The Hermitage which sits on a large plot, set back from Bath Road and bounded on each side by residential roads. Its driveway leads out onto Bath Road where the streetscape contains the Bridge Court flats on the corner and the 1930s houses running towards Ellington Road. The Windrush garage and forecourt packed with cars on the opposite corner contrasts with this residential streetscape, being low-rise, commercial and set further back. Historically, the site contained the original Skindles Hotel and Orkney Arms.

### *Ellington Road*

The area including Ellington Road does not reflect the riverside character of closely positioned tall houses which face the river. It is of a fairly standard, if high quality, Edwardian suburban character. The wide road and large plots define the townscape at this location, although a significant amount of recent development (infill and otherwise) in Ellington Road highlights current pressures in the area. Large front gardens accentuate the feeling of space in the area and low brick walling add to the suburban character and give a sense of rhythm to the street.

### *Mill Lane*

The remaining part of the Conservation Area consists of the former Skindles Hotel building on the western side of Mill Lane, closest to the river. It dominates the skyline at this location and the attached houses to the north create a terracing effect, which hides the river from view. The townscape here is distinct from that on the other side of the Maidenhead Bridge

and a commercial character takes over from the residential (although the southern part did also have a commercial usage at one time). The lane bends to create a deflected view which leads up to the Taplow Paper Mill via boatyards and with a high red brick wall further concealing views of the river. The mature trees across the road counterbalance the hard frontages of the buildings. The path of the road has changed over time: on the 1787 enclosure map it ran closer to the riverfront. The lane turns sharply, leads over the Jubilee River and rises steeply towards the Village. Taplow village could have provided homes for some of the mill workers during a variety of the mill's incarnations throughout history. This is especially likely given that historic maps show no habitable structures along the riverside at this location.

### *Glen Island*

At the sharp turn on Mill Lane, Glen Island lies along the northerly continuation of the riverbank. Its streetscape is dominated by the clash between trees and the harsh edges and modern materials of the main mill building. Interspersed between these are a group of properties that are sensitively placed to each other, the mill itself and the two rivers and watercourses. The manager's office (The Mill Cottage) assertively faces the entrance to the island, confronting the visitor with an unadorned Victorian style, which is dwarfed by the large mill to its side. The mill owner's house (Mill Island House) next to it has been heavily and unsympathetically extended although at the rear it clearly relates to the River Thames, its lawn and outhouses (of residential character) opening out to the water and the grass eyot adjoining Driftwood Cottage.

A tarmac road leads north, curving around industrial buildings to Glen Island House, the detached villa of the landowner, and its stable block. The space and relationship between the buildings is different at this point to that found further south in the Conservation Area. Glen Island residences are surrounded by the water, but do not directly front it. Unlike River Road, they are grouped informally and surrounded by gardens with vegetation that has matured to screen the buildings from some parts of the river, its tributaries and each other. The fine quality buildings on this site are not complemented by the architectural appearance of the current mill buildings themselves. Beyond the local milling tradition, which stretches back for many centuries, what is of interest, and what creates the existing special character, is the unusual placement of a quality 19<sup>th</sup> century residence among all this active industry.

### **Green Space**

Most of the green space that relates to this Conservation Area is visible rather than tangible. The wooded hill of Taplow peers over the Riverside. Green fields roll down the hillside across the Jubilee River valley to Mill Lane and Bath Road into the floodplain below. Apart from this, there is relatively little open, green space. One previously open area directly on the waterfront has been developed into the Rowing Club and residential housing.

A large green space is, however, located on the south side of the Brunel bridge. The riverbank here is common land and is mostly laid down to grass between the road and the river. Some open areas are located behind River Court and next to Hermitage House, but is on private property and enclosed. The privately owned Glen Island and the grass eyot also have lawns surrounded by, and interspersed with, trees of many species. However, the character abruptly changes to that of managed woodland beyond Glen Island House's second lawn. The abundance of trees and watercourses, and the absence of traffic, has ensured that a rich natural habitat has established itself here: birds, insects and wild flowers flourish along the riverbank.

## Uses

Former uses are mixed although changes of use have occurred over many centuries, even millennia. The builders and occupiers of the Bronze Age hill fort, on the present day site of Taplow Court, would have descended to the river and fished, bathed and used its course for transportation and trade. The natural resources of the river would continue to be valued until modern times when the motorisation of vessels and milling processes have encouraged different uses, increasingly leisure based ones.

Although crop marks show evidence of extensive Neolithic and Roman farming, the heavy gravel content of the soil has not suited farming well. Mineral extraction and quarrying has, however, been profitable in the area since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Hampton Court account books for the 1530s show burnt lime and bricks having been brought down the Thames from Taplow Quarry. In earlier eras, the main economic base for the area has been the Thames, which provided fish; and the surrounding woodland, which suited the farming of pigs, the hunting of game (the right of free warren was much sought after) and fuel provision.

The river, or Taplow's relationship to it, has always been the primary feature of the area, socially and economically. The Thames has been the boundary of parishes, counties, and possibly even Saxon kingdoms. It was a vital resource in the area and the focus of much activity: by the medieval period, water was being used to power mills. In The Domesday Book of 1086, 1,000 eels from the fisheries in Taplow Manor are mentioned. This stretch of the river was crowded with eyots, which could have provided temporary crossing until a bridge was constructed. In 1768 there was an Act of Parliament, which banned people from mooring boats at Taplow Mill stream in response to trespassing in the gardens of Taplow Court. Fishing disputes were numerous throughout the centuries and indicate the importance of fishing in the area.

Due to its proximity to Taplow Railway Station, the River Thames and the large estates of landed gentry such as Cliveden, Dropmore and Taplow Court, the Riverside became an area of upper class social activity in the Edwardian era. This attribute had a disagreeable side to it, satirised by Jerome K. Jerome in "Three Men in a Boat": *"Maidenhead itself is too snobby to be pleasant. It is the haunt of the river swell and his overdressed female companion. It is the town of showy hotels, patronised chiefly by dudes and ballet girls. It is the witch's kitchen from which go forth those demons of the river - steam-launches. The London Journal duke always has his 'little place' at Maidenhead; and the heroine of the three-volume novel always dines there when she goes out on a spree with someone else's husband"*. The reference to "ballet girls" is redolent of the "Gaiety Girls" who lived and entertained from Gaiety Row on River Road. A strong local historical link also exists with the military through the Maidenhead Brigade Guards Club (now Skindles Hotel) and Sir Roger Palmer of Glen Island who was a retired Colonel (2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards) who rode with the 600 hundred at Balaclava. Latterly, he acted as umpire for the annual Guards Club regatta and was also owner of a number of steam-launches. The mixed use along the riverside is intriguing and long established. Perhaps unique is the siting of a minor aristocratic residence so close to an industrial workplace, which again highlights the mixed use character of the area.

The current prevailing use is residential and recreational to the south, and industrial to the north (Taplow Paper Mill and Severnside Recycling Centre). A mixture of commercial and residential use nestles between the two. Some businesses are no longer solely focused on

providing services related to water pursuits although the moorings and boat hire/ river trip businesses are still important to the character of the area, as are the ancillary equipment such as cranes which are kept on the quaysides.

There are no shops in the immediate vicinity. Other commercial enterprises exist on the edges of the Conservation Area: a car retailer is on the corner opposite the Skindles Hotel and a gas holder is located half way up Mill Lane.

### **Architecture**

The architecture of the area is mixed in style and age. In the centre, fronting the river between the bridges are 1930s flats, an Edwardian terrace, modern flats, large Victorian villas, an 18<sup>th</sup> century road bridge and an 19<sup>th</sup> century Brunel railway bridge. Further back from the river is Ellington Road with large, handsome Edwardian houses, either detached or semi-detached.

To the north lie buildings and areas of mixed use: residential and commercial. A more open area fronting the River Thames, and in much need of improvement, gives way to boathouses and a marina, some handsome 19th century properties, and finally to a wooded area containing a paper mill with a long industrial history. To the south are properties of a firmly residential character, but still relating to the river that has influenced their architectural characteristics.

### *River Road*

The most prominent architecture in this road, and the whole area, is that of the bridges. Maidenhead Railway Bridge was designed by I. K. Brunel, the bridge's "Sounding Arch" was built in 1838 and is famous as the longest (and most shallow) single span brick built bridge in the world and its scale makes it the dominant architectural feature of the area. It is listed grade II\* and is evoked in Turner's painting "Rain, Steam and Speed" (before 1844). Maidenhead Road Bridge was opened to traffic in 1777, is grade I listed and is built of Portland stone by John Townsend under the supervision of Sir Robert Taylor. It is of significantly smaller scale than the Brunel bridge and differs in character from the looming Victorian structure. A wooden bridge stood slightly north of the current road bridge from around 1280.

All other architecture is subordinate in scale and appearance but efforts have been made to reflect the riverside setting. Gaiety Row is an extensive terrace of late Edwardian 3 storey houses with a charmingly cluttered character achieved by the many windows, balconies and a tower, all of which face the river. River Court & Bridge Court are 1930s flats, also 3 storey, and of no particular architectural interest beyond a solid 1930s appearance. River Court's extant use of balconies continues the riverside tradition. The blocks successfully bookend the row, although are architecturally unexciting and capable of improvement.

Rosemead, Cherry House and Thames Bank are fine late 19<sup>th</sup> century detached red brick residences with interesting architectural details such as gargoyles and decorative bargeboards, almost completely hidden from the river by the recent insertion of Taplow Quay, two modern blocks of flats with a small garden area between. The extensive wrought iron wraparound balconies on these blocks are not to be found elsewhere within the Conservation Area and straightjacket the building. The uninspired design of the structures have few features taken as cues from the neighbouring architecture, and none from the fine 18<sup>th</sup> century houses which previously stood on the site in a dilapidated state. The bulkiness of



Taplow Quay is perhaps in deference to the slightly older Maidenhead Rowing Club. The bulk of this canoe store is its primary, and least flattering, characteristic. The overdominant gable end in a property which sits so close to the river has resulted in a much altered view of the river and the riverside from some key vantage points. While boathouses are naturally part of riverside scene, traditionally they will either take the form of groups of smaller buildings or be set back further from the river as was previously the case when Bond's boatbuilders operated on the River Court site. The architecture of this structure is otherwise unremarkable.

With the exception of the few properties closest to the Sounding Arch, the properties south of the Brunel Bridge are all large detached private residences which front the river and have a particular riverside character. Some are Edwardian and all have large windows, mostly with balconies. Orkney Cottage (now incorporating The White Place) is probably the earliest building to remain in the area having been constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its neighbour, incorporating April and Briar Cottages, is a charming stone construction of the 1930s which shows past forays into introducing new materials to the area which are uncharacteristic and yet still show character. Orkney Cottage's northerly orientated position behind a high wall, shows that the tradition of making buildings address the river so directly has not always been the fashion.

#### *Ellington Road and Ellington Gardens*

Edwardian houses are interspersed between and behind with modern development of a residential character. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture is typical of its time, with each house having its own individual details, but with a general continuity of style: two storey with large gables fronting the road, brick built with metal or timber windows with leaded panes. Ellington Gardens is an adjoining cul-de-sac and dates from a similar period, but the buildings are of a smaller scale. The area around the northern entrance to Ellington Road has retained less Edwardian character with more recent and newly built properties which do not carry through the earlier properties' attention to design details and sensitive relationship of building scale to size of plot.

On the far corner is Chungate House, a large unaltered Edwardian detached residence, set back from the road. Despite some tree coverage on its boundary, the house still dominates the view out of the existing Conservation Area in this direction while still contributing positively to its character. It has a solid, unadorned style, somewhat squat and wide in shape with relatively little alteration.

#### *Bath Road*

Bridgend to Danehurst are an unremarkable set of 1930s houses in themselves and represent a continuation of the mix of flats and houses in the area and complete the link to the northern entrance to Ellington Road. However, tucked behind is The Hermitage: a fine late Victorian property and a rare survivor of a group of buildings built on land owned by the Desboroughs of Taplow Court. It represents a stage of quality development and residential settlement at Taplow Riverside before Ellington Road was laid out. Across the road is the Windrush garage. The architecture of this car sales showroom gives the impression of a temporary structure, constructed as it is of steel and glass with thin metal sheeting to the sides and rear. It would happily sit in any industrial estate, but on the corner of Bath Road and Mill Lane, opposite the Conservation Area and a Grade I listed bridge it is somewhat out of place, along with its highly visible branding.

### *Mill Lane*

To the north, the Conservation Area extends beyond the road bridge to include a ramshackle *boathouse*. This corrugated iron structure has no architectural merit and yet has a certain charm as the poor cousin of the brutish Rowing Club on the other side of the bridge. It stands next to the site of a famous painting of an Edwardian scene by James Tissot, “Returning from a Boat Trip” (1873).

Looming over the boathouse (and the bridge) is the *Skindles Hotel* (formerly Maidenhead Brigade Guards Club), a disused building which looks rather forlorn with whitewashed walls and boarded windows. The Victorian structure has been disused for many years but appears to have a sound structure. In its former incarnation the building contributed to the leisure use of the Thames and provided employment. It is brick built, rendered and painted, with slate roofs of various heights. Its architectural features, including stone dressings, are plain and further neutralised by the whitewash. However, the scale of the building is still impressive.

*Causeway House/The Tower Boathouse/Pages Wharf* are built of brick in a “wharf” style, being of 3 storeys and terraced. They follow the bend of Mill Lane and lead to open land, which also fronts the river. The *boathouses*, which are the next properties along the riverside, are converted for office use but retain the character of their former use. The elevations fronting both the river and the road are largely glazed and the steeply pitched roofs have open gables. Behind the boathouses and Driftwood Cottage is a modern, but charming, small house with a large inlet mooring built below it. It relates well to the private moorings, which are on the neighbouring grass eyot.

*Driftwood Cottage*, an attractive, late 19<sup>th</sup> century building adjoins the boathouses and stands as a lodge to *Dunloe Lodge* at its entrance. Its red brick is partly painted white and it boasts a fine chimneystack. The cottage is positioned very close to the road, while Dunloe Lodge is set back behind mature trees. The Lodge’s fine architecture and bulk magnifies that of Driftwood Cottage with fine red brickwork and tilehanging, and yet it is sadly diminished through dereliction. The dire state of this house with broken windows, collapsing roof and other deterioration is unfortunately its most resounding characteristic.

### *Glen Island*

These properties are located in the grounds of the currently operational Taplow Paper Mill. The area has a milling tradition dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They form a loose grouping of buildings with Glen Island House the most ostentatious. It was built 1869, extended 1884, in Picturesque style, for Lt. Gen. Sir Roger William Henry Palmer, Bart. and is one of the least altered mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century large riverside houses on the Thames. It is unusual in having been built as the English seat of a baronet and prominent military man. *The Stable Block* is dated 1880 and stands close by, of squatter appearance and built in a half-H plan.

To the south is Mill Island House, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century building, extended in 1869 for Charles Venables, owner of Taplow Mills. It was probably built for George Venables, his predecessor, and is a handsome residence of stock brick in Flemish bond, with slate roofs. The Mill Cottage directly next door has an 1876 datestone but was extended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is also built of stock brick, with gabled and half-hipped slate roof.

All the above buildings have architectural quality and historic character and are located on the western side of the island, detached from the mill buildings themselves.

### *Taplow Paper Mill Buildings*

Little or no historic fabric remains in the hulking main mill buildings which are 20<sup>th</sup> century replacements. Their physical appearance: at least three storeys high, with facades of red brick, grey metal sheet cladding and tall metal chimneys, have never been physically attractive and have not worn well. The uninspiring exteriors are detrimental to the appearance of the area and do not have any riverside character worthy of retention. The value of the mill site itself is purely by historical association and its relationship to the watercourses which surround it. The one structure of any interest which is directly associated with the operation of the mill is the 19<sup>th</sup> century plant room which is detached from the main mill towards the Thames. It is a long rectangular red brick structure with a plain cornice and green copper roof. The minor architectural details smarten the industrial building without overdressing it.

### **Materials**

All residential structures are brick built. Roofs are typically claytile or slate and windows are either of timber (on Victorian properties) or metal (on later periods). The majority of buildings are of brick construction using local red brick generally in the traditional Flemish bond. Several properties, particularly the 1930s flats, are rendered or painted white. The newer properties use less traditional roof coverings such as artificial slate and concrete tiles. Modern industrial buildings use non-traditional materials such as chrome finished flues which are not historical and not indicative of the special character of the riverside.

### **Negative Features, Neutral Areas & Enhancement Opportunities**

Taplow Riverside is less fortunate than its neighbour Taplow Village in its avoidance of unsuitable infill development. Also, there are substantial areas along the riverside which have lost any prior architectural character through disuse or unsympathetic design. This means that there is substantial room for improvement and development, particularly in parts of Mill Lane. The current value of this sub-area is not architectural but historical through its river use and particular association with steam launches. Future redevelopment here should be sympathetic to its riverside setting. Ideally, commercial uses associated with the river would continue to some extent.

On Glen Island there is a distinct division of architectural quality while the green valley floor character pervades. The road through the site loosely delineates the division: buildings of historic and architectural value (which, therefore, should be retained) on the north and west of the road; structures of no merit (removal of which would enhance the area) to the east. Removal of the modern main mill buildings and improvement/ renovation of the other structures would be welcome in conservation terms. While Dunloe Lodge has fallen into disrepair through neglect it is hoped that some of its original character can be salvaged in a renovation project, which would further enhance the area as a whole. The industry itself has developed and produced buildings of an unattractive appearance, which could and should be improved. But what remains, and what justifies the determination that this area is “special” is that a considerable amount of architectural and historic character remains around the mill buildings in the form of the historic structures, trees, gardens and waterways.

Buildings which detract from the character of the Conservation Area include the Rowing Club in its present form, and the Taplow Quay flats which crowd the bank, obscure the fine facades of the Victorian residences from the river, and have no great architectural merit. Similarly, River Close on Ellington Road is out of character with the Conservation Area: the

properties could be considered too large for their plot size and, therefore, of unsympathetic design. Skindles Hotel could also be called a negative feature given its current derelict state. Furthermore, the car showroom opposite imposes itself in an unwelcome fashion on the character of the area with its prominent signage, brilliant lighting and decorative paving.

An additional negative feature of this part of the Conservation Area is the large amount of heavy goods traffic on Mill Lane. The width of the lanes and the pavements do not lend themselves to the volume and size of the traffic and this detracts considerably from feel of an area associated with leisure and relaxation. Also, the gas holder and recycling plant that abut Mill Lane and the Conservation Area are negative features.

There is little scope for further new housing within the current Conservation Area, given that the existing spaces between properties play such an important part in the character of the area.

A development threat is the proposed CrossRail project, which could see the alteration of the Brunel bridge with overhead cabling. Also, an increased amount of high-speed train traffic would have a detrimental effect on the character of the area, aurally and visually.

## **Designations**

### Listed Buildings

Grade I

Grade II\*

Grade II