

**South Bucks District Council**

# **Taplow Riverside Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

**Draft for consultation**

**May 2007**



**South Bucks**  
District Council



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[Consultation on this document to be added on publication]



# Taplow Riverside

Designated 12th September 2006

-  District boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Taplow Riverside Conservation Area

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Taplow Riverside Conservation Area was originally designated by South Bucks District Council in 1999. As part of its current programme to review all its conservation areas South Bucks District Council formulated proposals for amendments to the boundaries of the Taplow Riverside Conservation Area, having taken into account changes within the area as well as current legislation and guidance on conservation areas. Local residents were consulted on these proposals and invited to submit their comments by way of a questionnaire. Additional information on the proposals was provided by way of an exhibition at Taplow Village Centre in April 2006. Taplow Parish Council, Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society, English Heritage and the County Archaeologist were also asked for their views. Following a largely positive response to the consultation the Taplow Riverside Conservation Area was re-designated with amended boundaries on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2006.

The extent of the re-designated conservation area is shown on the map opposite.

The re-designation has involved the inclusion of certain areas which were not in the original conservation area, as follows:

- properties in Mill Lane to the north of Skindles, up to and including Taplow Paper Mill and part of Glen Island
- Chungates in Ellington Road
- Bridge Court
- property immediately to the north of the railway bridge (formerly called the Nutshell), currently being redeveloped
- properties on River Road to the south of the railway bridge, up to and including Harefield.

Along parts of its western boundary the conservation area adjoins the Maidenhead Bridge & Guard's Club Island Conservation Area (before local government boundary changes took effect part of the Taplow Riverside area had been within that conservation area). For further information about that conservation area please refer to the Conservation Section of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead SL6 1RF.

The purpose of this appraisal is to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of Taplow Riverside Conservation Area. It has been prepared on the basis of a survey of the area undertaken from public roads and paths and within the Taplow Paper Mill site, historical research, information from residents and the other sources mentioned in the "Sources" section of this document. However no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest. This appraisal will inform local planning policies, development control decisions and any future proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area.

## **CHAPTER 2 - PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

### **What is a conservation area?**

Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to designate as conservation areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

### **Effect of designation**

Conservation-area designation imposes additional controls over demolition, minor development and a measure of protection for trees. The Council has produced a leaflet “Guidance for Residents” which is reproduced in the Appendix. In exercising their planning powers, local planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

### **Planning in South Bucks**

The Council’s current policies relating to conservation areas are contained in the South Bucks District Local Plan which was adopted in March 1999. As the new Local Development Framework emerges the Local Plan policies will gradually be replaced by Development Plan Documents. Conservation Area appraisals will not become Supplementary Planning Documents but their provisions will be a “material consideration” when the Council is exercising its functions as the local planning authority.

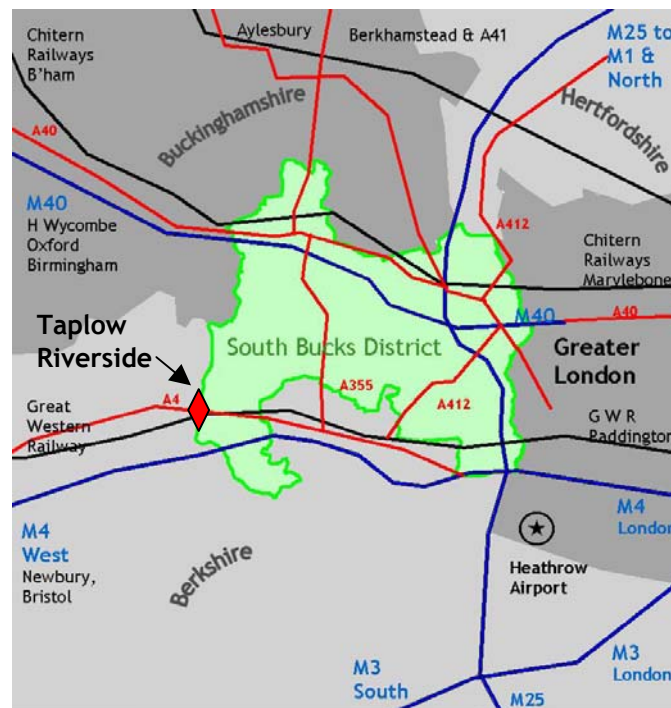


## CHAPTER 3 - LOCATION AND SETTING

Taplow parish forms the western most part of South Bucks District. The parish has roughly three divisions; the Thames river plain in the south, the wooded Burnham plateau in the north (which includes the Cliveden and Dropmore estates) and Taplow village built on the slope between the two. The Taplow Riverside conservation area lies in the flood plain on the eastern bank of the River Thames facing the town of Maidenhead across the river. The land in the conservation area is flat and does not rise above the 25 metre contour. The Burnham Plateau meets the Thames where the chalk cliffs, on which Taplow Court and Cliveden stand, loom over the northern end of the conservation area. Important communication routes which pass through the area have been crucial to its development; first the River Thames, then the road from London to Bath and Bristol (the current A4) and finally the railway. Now the creation of the Thames Path national trail has provided another link bringing more opportunities for development of tourism.

London, only 22 miles away, is within commuting distance by train. The M4 is close enough to be within earshot whilst the M40 is accessible at Beaconsfield about 6 miles away. These links combined with the pleasant riverside setting and rural backdrop make Taplow an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The conservation area forms a long narrow strip sitting on land between the Thames to the west and the Jubilee River to the east. The two bridges divide the area into three zones which display different characters, albeit with certain common themes. North of the A4 there is a mixed character, residential but mainly commercial. In the middle part between the A4 and the Brunel railway bridge a suburban character predominates, whilst the southern end consists of larger houses, more generously spaced in a rural setting. However the Thames so dominates the area that it unites all three by generating a feeling of leisure, the use which now prevails on the water.



## CHAPTER 4 - ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT & USES

The strategically important site of Taplow with a cliff overlooking the Thames is likely to have been occupied since earliest times. This is confirmed by archaeological finds of Mesolithic flint blades. Excavations in the grounds of Taplow Court (as yet not fully reported) have revealed the existence of hill forts from the Bronze and Iron Ages. There have also been Roman pottery finds in the area. The place name Taplow is derived from the Old English "hlaw", meaning a burial mound. In 1883 the local antiquarian James Rutland excavated the mound in the old churchyard next to Taplow Court and discovered the opulent grave goods of a 7<sup>th</sup> century Saxon nobleman, presumed to have been called Taeppa. These grave goods can be seen at the British Museum.

The Thames provided a convenient and valuable fishing ground as well as a communication route. In 1086 the Domesday Book entry for Taplow shows a well-favoured place with a fishery (for 1,000 eels), woodland supporting 700 pigs, plough-land and meadow. Into the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a fish weir next to Guards Club Island where eel bucks (wicker baskets) were strung across the river. Historical records reveal that valuable fishing rights were frequently contested in court.

The waters of the Thames were also harnessed to power mills. The earliest record of a mill at Taplow is in 1194. Other early references are to two mills in 1197 and to a fulling mill in 1281. By 1304 there were apparently three mills. It is thought that the earliest mill was on the site of the present Taplow Paper Mill, although, without maps, we cannot know its exact position. Taplow mills are shown on maps from 1637. It was common for mills to change their use over the years between grinding corn, fulling cloth and making paper. In 1803 a lease shows that one of the mills was being used as a cotton manufactory. The Taplow paper mill business was probably started by the Venables family in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The corn mill closed down in 1864 but paper making continued on the site until 2006.

The management of the Thames included the making of locks. The extra force required to propel large boats and barges was supplied by flash locks which were notoriously dangerous. The first pound lock on the Thames was built at Boulters Lock just to the north of the conservation area. This enabled boats to use the river safely without waiting days for water to be released through the flash lock.

It was also necessary to divert water for use in mills by cutting mill streams. And of course there was the persistent threat of flooding. The Maidenhead Bridge has marks showing the levels of particularly severe floods, such as in 1884 and 1947. The Jubilee River was completed in 2002 to alleviate the risk of flooding in the area. In part it follows the course of the old mill stream which served Taplow Mill.

Historically the course of the Thames was wider than it is today with many streams flowing through meadows, marshes and around islands, or eyots, in



the floodplain. The water was crossed via fords or causeways. The first bridge over the river linking Taplow with Maidenhead was built out of timber in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the road to the west was diverted over the new bridge. The bridge was maintained by the people of Maidenhead who collected tolls. The timber bridge was subject to frequent repairs and had to be rebuilt more than once. The present stone Maidenhead bridge was opened in 1777, a few yards to the south of the old timber bridge.



The turnpiking of the Old Bath Road boosted the coaching trade and whilst Maidenhead was the principal beneficiary, businesses such as the Orkney Arms on the Taplow side of the river provided food and lodging for coach passengers. The coming of the railway was to put an end to the coaching business. The first Taplow station, called Maidenhead Riverside Station, opened in June 1838 and was briefly the terminus for Brunel's Great Western Railway (GWR). A survey in 1834 showed that at least 70 coaches a day were using the Maidenhead bridge. Despite a reduction in the toll and compensation paid by the GWR the coaches could not compete and ceased running in 1843.

M Maidenhead Riverside station was built on the embankment near the Dumb Bell bridge. The first train from Paddington arrived here on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1838 after a 49 minute journey. In order to achieve his dream of connecting London to Bristol by rail Brunel had to bridge the Thames. His designs for the Maidenhead Railway Bridge were controversial but his feat of engineering has rarely, if ever, been matched. The brick arches were the largest and flattest ever built. The bridge was started in 1837 and completed the following year.



Following the building of a new station in Maidenhead itself the Riverside Station was renamed "Taplow" in 1869. The new, and present, Taplow Station was opened in August 1872 when Riverside Station was closed.

Whilst the end of the lucrative coaching trade had initially been disastrous for Maidenhead the advent of quick rail travel from the capital was to transform both Maidenhead and Taplow. London businessmen bought up the old coaching inns and invested in new shops and businesses. Middle class commuters came to live in Maidenhead. The river became fashionable as a place to have fun and mess about in boats at the weekend. Boat yards for building and storing boats were established on the riverbank and new and better hotels were needed to cater for the needs of the tourists.

The owner of the Orkney Arms, William Skindles, responded by extending into a building between Mill Lane and the riverbank. Skindles became the most fashionable hotel on the Thames. Soldiers from the camps at Pirbright and Windsor came to enjoy their leave by the river and the Brigade of Guards set up their boat club at Skindles in 1883, later moving across the river to the Maidenhead bank. The Guards Club at Maidenhead, since demolished, is commemorated by a public park, Guards Club Park, and Guards Club Island.

It was on Ascot Sunday and regatta days that thousands of visitors came to the river, a scene epitomised by Edward Gregory's famous painting *Boulter's Lock: Sunday afternoon*.

Messing about in boats was not confined to the middle classes. The Irish baronet, steam-launch enthusiast and hero of the Charge of the Light Brigade, Lt. Gen. Sir Roger Palmer, had Glen Island house built in 1869.

Building plots with a river frontage were scarce. By 1900 the Taplow riverbank north of Maidenhead Bridge (along Mill Lane) was fully occupied. The Taplow Mills and Glen Island House were at the northern end. Going south were Dunloe Lodge, with its lodge house (now Driftwood Cottage), then the boathouse with three small cottages called Thames Cottages. The Maidenhead Gas Works had been built in 1834 next to the river where coal could be unloaded from barges. Causeway Cottages were squeezed into the space between the Gas Works and Skindles.

South of the Brunel bridge the only building had been Orkney Cottage, probably dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Around the turn of the century other large houses were built to the south along what was to become River Road, all standing in substantial grounds.

The area between the two bridges was ripe for development to meet the burgeoning demand. Bridge Villa and Sunnyside which were mid-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, possibly with earlier origins, stood close to the Maidenhead Bridge. They have recently been demolished and replaced by flats (Taplow Quay). The present Maidenhead Rowing Club stands on the site of Bond's Boatyard.

An auction catalogue of 1904 advertises five substantial houses which had been built around 1890 along the Bath Road as having the advantage of the amenities of Maidenhead without the burden of the borough rates. Only two of these houses remain; Lansdowne Court (outside the conservation area) and the Hermitage then called Wargrave Lodge (pictured right). Amongst other attractions were “*unique*



*facilities for rowing, fishing, sailing, golf, hunting etc. whilst for motoring it makes an excellent centre, being placed on the great Bath Road, with a capital garage at Skindle’s Hotel...”*

Other contemporary houses had been built at the north end of River Road and around the turn of the century Ellington Road was developed with smaller, but high-quality, detached and semi-detached houses.

The construction of the terrace known as “Gaiety Row” was to complete the development of the conservation area in the late Victorian and Edwardian era. Officers from the Brigade of Guards Club were entertained here by the “Gaiety Girls” who were not allowed into the club house.

The fame of Skindles Hotel was transferred overseas during the First World War when soldiers christened a hotel in Poperinghe (Belgium) “Skindles”. After the war the smart motoring set frequented Skindles. Residents in the area can still remember when other properties in River Road and Ellington Road were used as nightclubs. Skindles was frequented by celebrities such as the Rolling Stones but its fortunes declined and it has stood boarded up for many years. The site of the original Orkney Arms to the east of Mill Lane, and outside the conservation area, is used as a car showroom.

In the 1930s and 1990s blocks of flats were built in River Road and in recent years parts of the large gardens south of the Brunel Bridge have been sold off for the building of modern large houses.

To summarise the current uses, the zone to the south of the Brunel bridge is residential but there is an area of grass between River Road and the river which is owned by South Bucks District Council but accessible to the public. Boats can moor here, subject to payment of a mooring fee. The Thames Path, a national trail, follows the course of River Road and is a popular route for walkers.

The part of the conservation area between the two bridges is mainly residential, but the Maidenhead Rowing Club with its car park occupies a substantial part of the river frontage here. There is a car repair business

behind the houses on the south side of Ellington Road whilst the Hermitage is a training centre.

*View from the Maidenhead Bridge of the modern flats and Maidenhead Rowing Club with a public open space on the riverbank.*



The uses along Mill Lane are mixed. Commercial use continues with boat businesses next to Maidenhead Bridge and further north. Two former boathouses have been converted into offices. The Old Boathouse is pictured left. Skindles and Dunloe Lodge both stand empty and neglected, as does the site of the old gas works to the west of the lane. There are houses between Skindles and the old gas works and next to Dunloe Lodge.

Whilst the paper mill itself has closed the paper company offices are still open. This part of the conservation area is significantly affected by commercial uses to the east of Mill Lane, but outside the conservation area. These are Severnside Waste Paper Collection Depot, the gas holder and Windrush motors.

A comparison of the Ordnance Survey maps for 1899 and 1925 shows how the central zone was heavily developed during this period (see the Appendix). However the 1914 Ordnance Survey map is misleading since it does not show certain buildings which are known from other sources to have existed at that time.



## CHAPTER 5 - LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

The whole of the conservation area lies on flat land within the Thames flood plain. The shape of the river has changed over time through natural phenomena and management of the water by man. The tip of the area forms part of Glen Island and there are loop streams around the mill site. The Jubilee River to the east of the area has been created as part of a flood alleviation scheme and follows the route of the old mill leat. The engineering of this river has produced a man-made appearance which may become more natural as the new landscaping matures.

Whilst flooding would have affected development close to the river, it was not a deterrent to building. Certain uses, such as milling and boat yards, required a waterside site and later the attraction of the river as a fashionable leisure facility was too great to make the risk of occasional flooding unacceptable. In 1814 an order diverting a footpath referred to frequent flooding of the field where the gas holder now stands.



*Part of map attached to the footpath diversion order of July 1814 (ref. Q/H/4.)*

*(Reproduced by kind permission of the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, where the original is held).*

The western edge of the Burnham Plateau, at a height of 65 metres, towers over Glen Island. The southern slope down to the Jubilee River and the A4 is more gentle.

The A4 and the railway divide the conservation area into three zones with differing landscapes.

**North of the Maidenhead Bridge ("the Northern Zone")**

Here the river is divided into narrower channels by several islands, or eyots, which are heavily wooded and restrict views across the river. The view into the conservation area from the Maidenhead bank is particularly important. The houses and flats along Ray Mead Road face the river whilst the pavement is a popular promenade, especially for visitors to Boulters Lock. Since this stretch of the Thames is heavily used by boats, the views from the river itself are important. The main river channel runs to the west of Glen Island, with the Jubilee River to the east. There is an almost continuous tree belt along the western side of Glen Island. A gap in the tree cover permits views of the listed Victorian mansion, Glen Island House, from the river and the Maidenhead bank. Trees almost completely obscure the view of the paper mill, even in winter. Mill Island House can also be seen through the gap between Glen Island and Grass Eyot, a view somewhat marred by cars parking next to the riverbank. Further south there are views, partially interrupted by other eyots, of Dunloe Lodge, the black and white half-timbered Old and New Boathouses and the boat yard. The boathouses look particularly festive at night from the Maidenhead bank since they are adorned by lights throughout the year.



Tall conifers form a particularly important backdrop to buildings in the vicinity of Dunloe Lodge when viewed from the river, the Maidenhead bank and from the south along Mill Lane.



The view of the Taplow riverbank is often dominated by the rusty gas-holder, whose height varies. This photograph was taken on one of its lower days. The views of the riverbank also vary with the seasons by virtue of tree cover but also because of the numbers of boats in store or on the water. In this winter shot the boats in store almost obscure the boathouses altogether.

Close to Maidenhead bridge the river is free of islands, giving an uninterrupted view of Skindles Hotel with a beautiful weeping willow on its lawn. The Tower House is also prominent on the bank here with the modern Pages Wharf behind.

Within Glen Island itself the views out of the conservation area to the east over the Jubilee River are of the steep wooded slopes of Taplow Court with glimpses of the white chalk cliffs. The northern end of Glen Island is outside the conservation area and is covered by trees, part being an old orchard belonging to Glen Island House. There is still one landing stage in use on the western side of Glen Island. Gaps in the trees, usually where there were once landing stages or boathouses, permit views of the river and across the main channel of the Thames to the Maidenhead bank and Boulters Lock and Ray Mead Island to the north. A photograph of 1906 shows a less wooded bank on Glen Island with some neatly trimmed trees on the water's edge.

South of the paper mill car park, views out of Mill Lane are restricted by trees, hedges and walls. Gaps in the tree/hedge boundary permit glimpses of the waste paper collection depot, gas holder and the fields and woods east of Mill Lane. To the west it is possible to glimpse the Maidenhead bank or Bridge Eyot through gaps between the buildings and in the historic wall which once bounded the gas works. Coming north along Mill Lane the eye is drawn to the attractive clay-tile clad gable end of Driftwood Cottage and the trees behind in the grounds of Dunloe Lodge. In the opposite direction the eye is led around the bend near Dunloe Lodge to the historic gas works wall and then to the tree belt opposite Pages Wharf.

When the gas works was built in 1834, the course of Mill Lane, originally a river towpath, was diverted to form a double bend. As a result the view along Mill Lane is stopped in both directions, coming north by the ugly modern barrier between the historic brick piers of the gas works gate, and coming south by the tree belt opposite Pages Wharf. This tree belt and the continuous row of buildings opposite prevent views out of Mill Lane, except to the south. Even here the rise in level to the bridge approach on the A4 restricts the view to the south.

There are views across the yard of Windrush Motors and the adjacent parking area to the north-east across open country towards Taplow village. The open area of river bank immediately to the north of Maidenhead Bridge was where the Old Bath Road crossed the earlier wooden bridge. This area was a landing stage popular with boat trippers and is the subject of Tissot's 1873 painting "The Return from the Boating Trip". Local residents recall a ferry still operating here in the 1920s. Whilst affording the opportunity for close inspection of the bridge itself and vessels on the water, the bridge's arches cut off any view to the south. There are attractive views over the river to Bridge Gardens.

The burial mound next to Taplow Court serves as a panoramic viewing platform whilst the footpath from Mill Lane across the Jubilee River gives several high level vantage points over the Northern Zone making this a sensitive site for development. Much of the conservation area itself is currently hidden by the waste paper collection depot and gas holder which dominate the landscape.



**The area between Maidenhead Bridge and the Brunel bridge ("the Central Zone")**



At the southern end of this zone the river is divided into two channels by Guards Club Island with the main channel running to the east. A footbridge joins this island to Guards Club Park on the Maidenhead bank. Eel traps or bucks were placed here into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The view from Guards Club Park is partly obscured by the trees on Guards Club Island. However the glimpses of the buildings of Gaiety Row show how they are in keeping with the ornate

footbridge, built around 1865, which linked the club (since demolished) to its boathouse on the island.

This is a heavily used stretch of river because of the Maidenhead Rowing Club where Bond's boathouse used to stand. The riverbank is more open in this zone. The Thames path in front of the boathouse and Taplow Quay provides a good vantage point to admire the elegant Maidenhead Bridge and the Victorian buildings on the Maidenhead bank (see right).



Looking south a view of the magnificent brick arches of the Brunel bridge opens up.

At the entrances to Ellington Road both from River Road and Bath Road, the eye is drawn down the road through the suburban scene to the trees near Chungates on the bend. The view of the river from Ellington Road is restricted by trees.

There are glimpses of gardens and houses and in particular a view of the Hermitage from the public footpath which runs diagonally north-west/south-east from Bath Road to the bend in Ellington Road.

The view east along Bath Road beyond the car showroom is softened by trees on the northern side and is blocked by the bend in the road. These trees also shield the gas holder.

When approaching the bridge, the white painted walls of Skindles look prominent when seen across the forecourt of the car dealership. The gradient of the road bridge obscures any view of Maidenhead itself but the roof of the Victorian Riviera hotel can be glimpsed on the opposite bank.



**Area to the south of the Brunel railway bridge ("the Southern Zone")**

South of the Brunel bridge views open out to the opposite bank and down the river itself.

The suburban landscape is left behind since the houses which line both sides of the river are set in large gardens and widely spaced. The houses and gardens to the east of River Road block any view of the arable fields behind them. The houses on the Taplow bank peter out with Harefield at the southern limit of the conservation area.



A drive and footpath between Red House and Harefield suddenly opens out at the south-eastern corner of the area with views across the flat fields towards Bray church tower to the south and Taplow village on the hill to the north.

The rear boundaries of the River Road houses form the edge of the settlement and are sensitive since they can be seen from public footpaths crossing the fields to the east.



River Road is about two metres higher than the Thames. From the water the houses south of Riverbank House are generally obscured by gardens on the riverbank, trees and hedges. The houses north of here are behind brick walls. Because boats are at a lower level, high-level features such as roofs and chimneys, as well as tree-tops and the boundary walls themselves, are particularly noticeable.

The eyes of waterborne travellers will also be drawn upstream to the two magnificent bridges which provide a vista of national importance.

The map in the Appendix shows some significant views from the public realm only but it is not possible to show all views. The "general view areas" are spaces along the riverbank from which there are views in several directions.



## CHAPTER 6 - STREETSCAPE AND SPACES

Communication routes were crucial to the development of the area. The conservation area can be accessed by boat, train, car and on foot.

The two landmarks which exemplify the importance of these transport links are the two listed bridges which make this part of the Thames a site of national importance. The east-west road and railway line which cross these bridges divide the area into the three different zones which will be dealt with separately.

### Area north of the A4 ("the Northern Zone")

The earliest land route is likely to have been a track running north-south along the river bank used as a towpath for barges on the river. North of the Maidenhead Bridge this has become Mill Lane which leads to Taplow Mill and continues up the hill to Taplow village. To the south of the A4 it has become River Road.

Mill Lane has a mixed character. The narrowness of the road, its position on the settlement edge next to open fields and the prevalence of hedges and trees give it the appearance of a rural lane and a feeling of enclosure. However the use of the road by large heavy goods vehicles visiting the Severnside depot and other commercial traffic using the boatyard and offices has a serious impact on the tranquillity of this road and the lack of pavements renders it dangerous for pedestrians.

The paper mill site has a varied collection of buildings in a heavily wooded setting. Glen Island House (now an office) was built here to take advantage of the riverside location and had ornamental and kitchen gardens, lawns, an orchard and specimen trees. Lawns remain but gardens have been grassed over and there may well be more trees now than in its Victorian heyday. Mill Island House (also now an office) had similar facilities although not on so grand a scale. The spaciousness of the grounds is an important factor contributing to the Victorian character of these large houses. Much of the paper mill site is taken up by industrial buildings which necessarily straddled the mill streams. A network of roads, paths and bridges serve the buildings and car parks.



South of the mill site is a densely wooded area next to Dunloe Lodge, another Victorian mansion. This part of Mill Lane feels enclosed by trees. The road is too narrow for lorries which have to execute complicated manoeuvres to enter the Severnside depot on the left of this photo. The eye is led around the bend towards the old gas works wall.

Driftwood Cottage, which was originally the lodge-house to Dunloe Lodge, is very close to the road. The set-back of the Old and New Boathouses permits an attractive view of the cottage when travelling north up Mill Lane. The forecourt of the boathouses (converted to offices) is used for car parking. The verge opposite is also used for parking in a haphazard fashion and looks untidy.



A makeshift blocked up gateway to a modern warehouse next to the gas holder may mark the position of an earlier stream which appears on the 1838 updated enclosure map.

The Maidenhead Gas Works was established next to the river in 1834 where coal could be unloaded from barges. As mentioned in the last chapter, the course of Mill Lane was diverted slightly eastwards to accommodate the works and this accounts for the sharp bend near the southern end of Mill Lane. The site now stands empty of buildings and has reverted to scrubland. The Victorian red and grey brick boundary wall remains except for a gap which is now filled with a functional, but unattractive, metal fence. This wall is much higher at its southern end and a blocked up doorway indicates that the wall here may have been part of a building. The old metal fittings atop the old gate piers (the gates do not survive) may have been for gas lights. The gas works was converted to a holder station in 1949 and Ordnance Survey maps show that the gas holder was moved to the other side of Mill Lane after World War II. The current gas holder can only be described as a blot on the landscape. The tradition of Taplow boatyards continues with the yard of the Maidenhead Steamboat Navigation Co. on part of the old gas works site.

The eastern boundary of Mill Lane is marked by a chain link fence and an untidy hedge and trees. The character of this zone could be summarised as a mixture of rurality and industrialisation. The photos below show the western (left) and eastern (right) sides of Mill Lane.





It appears that as many buildings as possible have been squeezed onto the riverbank between the gas works and the Maidenhead bridge. They were designed to give their best face to the river so there are no gardens but only a pavement between them and the road.

Some traditional Denner Hill setts remain at the entrance to the modern sea cadet training building ("T.S The Iron Duke"). These setts made out of a hard sandstone found in the High Wycombe area were widely used for paving in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are becoming increasingly rare as many have been ripped up and replaced. The hard standing areas outside Pages Wharf are made of the modern pink concrete paviors and are not sympathetic to either the Denner Hill setts or houses which seek to emulate the late



Victorian/Edwardian character of the area. Granite kerbs have been retained in parts of Mill Lane.

The only part of this zone where the public can gain access to the river is just south of Skindles. The crossing from the road is also made of Denner Hill setts. This space next to the grade I listed Maidenhead bridge has been fenced off as a yard for the old boathouse and so is only accessible on foot. The footpath continues under the bridge arch and so gives pedestrians a safe way of crossing the A4. This space was at one time a landing stage and a ferry was crossing the river at this point until the 1920s. The corrugated iron boathouse is a rare working survival of the many such boathouses which once stood either side of the river. James Tissot's 1873 painting *The Return from the Boating Trip* shows how smart and fashionable this spot used to be making a rather invidious comparison with its appearance today.

### **Area between the two bridges ("the Central Zone")**

This footpath continues south and is now part of the designated national trail, the Thames Path. Just to the south of the road bridge is a public open space consisting of a patch of rather unattractive grass with a wooden bench. The recently built flats (Taplow Quay) are between this space and River Road. The car park in the gap between the two blocks of flats sits behind iron railings and a newly planted hedge, presumably an attempt to hide the cars from view. Fortunately this gap permits a glimpse of the exuberant decoration on the front of Thames Bank, an 1890s house in River Road. The Maidenhead Rowing Club building is set closer to the bank and has a concrete landing stage. The club's car park to the south slopes down from River Road. The surface is covered with chippings and the raised flower beds separating the car park from the footpath are in need of attention. Part of the car park is taken up with a crane and mobile boat racks.

Parking appears to be a problem in this zone. There is a sign at the club telling visitors where not to park. River Road is unadopted south of its junction with Ellington Road and there are signs, road humps, a white gate



and white paint markings on the road outside Gaiety Row. This creates "street clutter" which detracts from the riverside setting as it becomes more rural towards the Brunel bridge.

Ellington Road forms a loop joining River Road to Bath Road. The name Ellington is derived from the ancient name of Maidenhead, known until the 13th century as South Elintone (spellings differ). The streetscape here has a leafy suburban character. Houses are set back from the road behind front gardens, which make a significant contribution to the character of this zone. Boundary treatments comprising a mixture of low red brick walls or picket fences with hedges help preserve the 1900s suburban character. Solid timber fences do not look in character. With a mixture of building styles and sizes the rhythm is irregular, another feature of late Victorian/Edwardian middle class design. Some houses are built end-on to the road to take advantage of their rather narrow, long plots. Apart from the Red Roofs terrace, a landmark building at the junction of Ellington Road and Bath Road, very few of the front gardens have been converted for parking.

The houses in Ellington Road almost appear to be satellites around the largest single building in this zone, the Hermitage, now used as a training centre. A narrow driveway leads off the busy Bath Road, creating a feeling of entering a secluded, quiet place (perhaps the source of the name).

A narrow public footpath also follows this drive and then follows the boundary fence of the Hermitage, giving a good view of the building and its large garden, again a characteristic of houses of this era. This forms a valuable space with glimpses of backs of the Victorian houses in River Road. The trees in the Hermitage garden also make a significant contribution to the leafy suburb. This path continues between the houses to issue out into Ellington Road (opposite Ellington Lodge, pictured right) and is a relic of pre-enclosure days.



Before the railway embankment blocked its route it would have led to the hamlet of Amerden.

Ellington Gardens is an unmade private cul-de-sac with a rather odd arrangement, since originally there were only four houses facing the road, all on the northern side. Number 5 was built across the bottom of the road later. The front gardens are very small but the hedge along the southern side adds greenery. There are no houses facing the road on the other side but the garages tucked away on the southern side appear rather incongruous.

The discreet street lights in Ellington Road are of the mock gas light variety, often found in conservation areas. They are more in character with the area than the modern street lights on the A4.

The character of the A4 trunk road, Bath Road, is very different from that of the quiet Ellington Road. The road is wider with pavements and grass verges either side. There is a central bollard near the junction with Ellington Road. The street light standards are tall and modern. Some roadside poles appear superfluous since they have no signs. Traffic noise is constant and vehicles are often backed-up in both directions.

Whilst the Red Roofs building provides a magnificent marker and sets the late Victorian/Edwardian character of the conservation area off the Bath Road the effect is not continued along the road. The wooden fence provides privacy for the back garden here but detracts from the area's character. Part of the original large garden has been built on with modern bungalows. One of these has an extension which projects forward of the building line, breaking the rhythm of the road frontage. The inappropriate boundary treatments along this stretch of road will be covered in more detail in chapter 8.



The flats at Bridge Court, which replaced two late Victorian houses, make good use of their corner site by adopting a curved shape, not seen elsewhere in the conservation area. Their three storey height is not oppressive since they have a shallow pitched roof and are set well back from both River Road and Bath Road, partly screened by mature trees and hedges.

Turning the corner into River Road, again there is a feeling of entering a much more tranquil zone with the hedges and trees in the gardens of the late Victorian houses on the east side. The corner site at the junction with Ellington Road is turned by the blocks of River Court; with Bridge Court they "book-end" this stretch of River Road. The grounds are spacious and the flats themselves set back from the road. They contrast with the terrace known locally as Gaiety Row (after its links with the Gaiety Girls who entertained soldiers from the Guards Club across the river). These are much closer to the road and with their gables, balconies and central tower almost over power the passer-by. They were clearly meant to see and be seen.

On the opposite side of River Road are private landing stages behind low fences and hedges which allow views of the river and Maidenhead Bridge to the north (pictured right).



**Area south of the Brunel bridge ("the Southern Zone")**

Further south River Road remains a private road serving the houses along the bank. It ends at Harefield where the Thames path continues to the old Bray ferry crossing point and beyond.

Once through the confines of the railway arches the vista opens out and a rural, more spacious character prevails. Below the level of the road is a large stretch of grass open to the public with a landing stage and mooring points. A photograph of the 1920s shows a formal garden here. There is no boundary between this lawn and River Road except for a short length of hedge.

The stock brick boundary wall of Orkney Cottage may date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. The white stuccoed house, now divided into three, does not have its main frontage to the river and can just be seen over the top of the head-height wall. The wall has tantalising features - a blocked up opening at road level and a semi-circular alcove. Local tradition has it that the lawn of Orkney Cottage was a favoured place for watching the regatta. The horse chestnuts in the grounds are a notable feature.

South of the open lawn there are private landing stages and gardens on the riverbank. These completely change the feel of the road, which is hemmed in by gardens on either side, almost creating a green tunnel where trees overhang the road, but with gaps allowing glimpses of the river. The actions of owners in planting and maintaining these gardens are very important in preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation area. Walkers are able to enjoy a glimpse of the opposite bank here (courtesy of a considerate, and inventive, home-owner) ►



The narrowness and enclosed feel of the road make wide driveways such ◀ as this look out of character.

Flag poles, moored boats, and, in one case, oars used as hand rails, lend a nautical note.

The lack of traffic means that this stretch of road is very quiet. Traffic noise from the M4 is a background murmur, the volume depending on

the wind direction. Any noise from boats on the river will obviously be greater during the summer months.

The sound of trains crossing the Brunel bridge regularly disturbs the peace, if only fleetingly.



Trees and hedges make a significant contribution to character not only in this zone but throughout the conservation area. Those which appear significant when viewed from the public realm are shown on the Trees map in the Appendix.

Boundary treatments in the southern zone are a combination of walls, picket fences, ornate wrought iron railings and gates, hedges, shrubs and large trees. Some examples are photographed below:





## CHAPTER 7 - BUILDINGS

The listing of the two bridges reflects their national importance. The eastern part of each bridge is within the conservation area whilst the remainder is within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The road bridge, Maidenhead bridge, listed Grade I, was built between 1772 and 1777 by John Townsend of Oxford to the designs of Sir Robert Taylor, the architect of Lincoln's Inn. With its graceful stone arches and balustrade Pevsner describes it as "Georgian masonry at its best."

The Maidenhead Railway bridge listed Grade II\* and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel has just two wide, flat arches over the river channel, each 128 feet long with a rise of only 24 feet. The central pier stands on Guards Club Island. The arch nearer to the path has been christened the Sounding Arch because of its echo. There is a taller, narrower arch over the old towpath, now River Road, and other arches to each side of the river to allow for flooding. Originally built between 1837 and 1838 the bridge was widened between 1890 and 1893 when the railway track was doubled. Mainly of red brick there is some stone detailing. The bridge was immortalised in J M W Turner's 1844 painting *Rain Steam and Speed*, which hangs in the National Gallery, and is one of the sites included on the government's 1999 list of tentative World Heritage Sites.

### Buildings in the northern zone

The only other listed building in the conservation area is Glen Island House (grade II). Although close to the mill, historically it had no connection with the mill business. It was built in 1869 for an Irish baronet with an enthusiasm



for steam launches. He was Lt. Gen. Sir Roger William Henry Palmer, Bart., a survivor of the Charge of the Light Brigade, whose main seat was at Kenure Park, County Dublin. The house was extended in the same style in 1884. The walls are of stock brick with Bath stone dressings around windows and doors whilst the steeply pitched roofs are covered

with plain clay tile. The many gables with their pierced barge boards, ridge crests, tall chimneys and turrets are features typical of the exuberant style of Victorian/Edwardian architecture which prevails in the conservation area. There is more than a nod to Taplow Court on the hill above. The lead-covered pointed turret is an echo of the larger version just visible on the horizon. For many years Glen Island House has been used as offices in connection with the paper mill.



Whilst Sir Roger's boathouse has been demolished, the 1880 U-shaped stable/garage block bearing his initials survives. Here the stock brick is further embellished by hanging clay tiles and with black and white timbering on the gables and roof turret. Whilst the stalls have gone there are still tethering rings and original green tiles underneath white paint.



The remains of landing stages, steps and walls in the gardens are poignant reminders of garden parties and more leisurely times in the heyday of riverbank high society.

#### The Paper mill buildings

1869 must have been a busy year for building since Charles Venables, the owner of Taplow paper mill, had Mill Island house extended in that year as his own residence. This too is used as offices for the mill. Built of stock brick with a slate roof it faces the river. Whilst more altered than Glen Island House it retains a pretty original porch and tiled entrance floor on the riverfront and attractive gardens. There are two magnificent magnolia grandiflora next to its south elevation.



Mill Island Cottage, the lodge to Mill Island House, has a datestone of 1876 with Charles Venables' initials. Dwarfed by the huge industrial buildings of the modern mill it is a reminder on a more human scale of the tradition of milling which has persisted on this site for many centuries.

The mill's former power house was probably built in the 1930s. It is of good quality, presumably because of its proximity to Glen Island House. Its hipped copper covered roof is distinctive and the building has a classical appearance with pilasters and a prominent rendered cornice.



All three buildings make a positive contribution to the character of the area because of their connection with the milling tradition. Mill Island House is an example of an early middle-class riverbank residence.

The processing buildings on the site have been altered over the years. There was a serious fire on Coronation Day in 1902. After the launch of the New Taplow Paper Mill business in 1933 there was another bout of rebuilding but without further investigation it is not possible to date the buildings accurately. The Flemish bond brickwork and metal framed windows of some parts may indicate some pre-1930 survival.

Any other residential buildings which may have existed on the mill site - and the 1851 census indicates there were six households here - have disappeared.

### Buildings on Mill Lane

Farther south is Dunloe Lodge, originally called Millstream, and dated 1896. This is another large riverside house exhibiting many of the elaborate features typical of its era - tile-hung elevations, ornamental painted bay windows, oriels, dormers, verandahs, prominent brick chimney stacks. Its current name must derive from its connection with an earlier occupant, the Earl of Clancarty formerly Viscount Dunlo (sic) who died here in 1929. As is usual with riverside buildings it presents its best face to the river, a face which is sadly diminished through years of neglect, and the building must be regarded as 'at risk'.

There are echoes of Dunloe Lodge in its former lodge, Driftwood Cottage. The tile hung gable end with its porthole window is a particular feature of the southern approach from Mill Lane.

Its neighbour to the south, the New Boathouse is a later version of the Old Boathouse, with its black and white timbering. The roofs of both are covered with modern corrugated metal sheeting. The earlier covering may have been of fancy corrugated iron, which was a feature of some Victorian riverside buildings. These two buildings have been converted into offices but preserve the typical boathouse character. With the working boatyard next door they reflect the character of the river - a place for work and pleasure.

Pages Wharf (shown right behind the Tower House) is a row of late 1980s town houses, built of brick with dormers and black and white timbering to the upper storey. They are an attempt to emulate the late Victorian/Edwardian character of the area but the materials and detailing do not match the quality of the original.



The Tower House is a landmark building on the riverbank. The tower is white with black timbering and a pyramidal copper covered roof. An oriel window and balcony hang over the river.



Another building at risk is the disused former Skindles Hotel. The hotel originated as the Orkney Arms, named after the first Earl of Orkney who bought Cliveden and the manor of Taplow in 1700. The Orkney Arms (demolished) was a three-storey 18<sup>th</sup> century building on the site of Windrush Motors on the eastern side of Mill Lane (outside the conservation area). William Skindles enlarged the hotel by extending into two-storey buildings on the riverbank, which were later extended and altered. The exact date of the building is not known but its Italianate character suggests a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. There is a, probably later, 19<sup>th</sup> century range further along Mill Lane which is slightly higher (with an attic storey). This is now converted into flats and called Mallards Reach. Skindles is arranged in two blocks with a riverside terrace. The roofs are hipped and slated and the walls faced with white-painted stucco. An entrance on Mill Lane bears the date 1883 and the initials BGBC. This was the home of the Brigade of Guards Boating Club before it moved across to the Maidenhead bank (since demolished but the site is open to the public as Guards Club park).

Skindles became the most glamorous hotel on the Thames. It was patronised by royalty and its famous lawn was the site of many a romantic tryst. The 1883 Kelly's directory describes the publican Henry Hoare as "wine and spirit merchant under royal patronage". Skindles became a popular haunt of the new motoring set and Kelly's directory of 1907 had the entry as hotel, motor car maker and garage. The "capital garage" was on the current Windrush motors site. The hotel's celebrity status continued into the 1960s with visitors reputedly including Mick Jagger and Twiggy.

### **Buildings in the central zone**

The built legacy of the late Victorian/Edwardian heyday of Taplow Riverside remains remarkably intact, especially considering the economic potential of sites close to the Thames. This reflects the evident pride of the residents in this local legacy. Almost every surviving building of this period makes a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. These "significant" buildings are listed in the table in the Appendix with a brief description of their principal characteristics. No two houses are the same. Most are detached but some are semi-detached. The asymmetry, variety and high-quality signify the widening of the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement into speculative development. Pebbledash, bay windows, black and white timbered gables, ornate barge boards, stained glass, ridge crests and roof finials were typical of the era. Good quality local materials were available from the Pinkneys Green brick and tile works, which were demolished in the 1970s. At Taplow Riverside balconies are a particularly distinctive feature, some of which built to take advantage of the river views. Many houses still have their original porches and front doors.

Whilst it is not possible to show or describe all these features a selection has been photographed and appear in the "Buildings Details" section of the Appendix.

These houses were probably all built between 1890 and 1905. Part of Gaiety Row may be a little later, since it appears to have been built in two phases.





This terrace is a landmark for its position, Edwardian appearance and its historical associations. The verandahs have been enclosed with different window treatments, some of which are not sensitive to the Edwardian character. The illustrated example with its small window panes is sensitive to the original building, unlike those either side with modern larger panes.

Ordnance Survey maps do not provide reliable dating evidence for this area since the 1914 edition does not show some buildings (such as the Hermitage) and houses in Ellington Road which are known to have

existed at that time.

A later house (probably late 1920s) which makes a positive contribution to the area is Chungates, another good quality detached house in an Arts and Crafts style, set in a spacious garden.

Next to it is Ellington Lodge, a plainer Victorian house in stock brick with a symmetrical front elevation. This looks quite different from other Ellington Road houses.



The Red Roofs building at the junction of Ellington and Bath Roads acts as a “marker” for the conservation area when approaching the Maidenhead Bridge from the east.

### **The southern zone**

In this zone the houses are large and more generously spaced. The exception is the tile-clad bungalow, Archways, which is squeezed into a narrow space next to the arches of the Brunel bridge. It looks like a summerhouse and indeed is similar to “The Summerhouse” on the opposite bank.

Orkney Cottage, (House or Lodge) was probably the only building in this zone until the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is now divided into three houses (White Place, Orkney Cottage and Eastbank) and has an early Victorian appearance. The 1869 Kelly’s Directory shows Rev. William Scott living at Orkney Cottage. It was later the home of the Hon. Harry Lawson Webster Lawson before he succeeded to the Hall Barn estate in Beaconsfield. He became the first and last Viscount Burnham and owned the Daily Telegraph for many years. In its grounds are three modern houses which have been left out of the conservation area. However a group of interesting cottages,

probably built in the 1930s, in Arts and Crafts style have been included. They look like stone Cotswold cottages and may be on the site of the stables for Orkney Cottage. There is a house of similar design near the railway bridge at Amerden.

Of the modern houses along River Road only Riverholme built in the late 1990s has attempted to revive the Edwardian style. The others are all individually designed in the fashion of their time. Most have balconies to take advantage of the river views.

The other houses which contribute to the Victorian/Edwardian character of the conservation area are Riverbank House, Fairview, Broom Croft, Red House and Harefield. All are large detached asymmetrical houses of individual design and exhibit a range of features which have been mentioned above; turrets, balconies, tile-hung elevations, finials, pebble-dash, ridge crests, etc. Two of them are pictured below:



The houses on the opposite bank are also in a mixture of styles although along this stretch they appear to be generally more Victorian/Edwardian in character and somewhat larger than the Taplow houses. Subdivision of some of the original gardens on the Taplow bank has resulted in large houses on smaller plots which is not characteristic of this more rural, spacious stretch of the riverbank.

## CHAPTER 8 - NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE FEATURES AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Some modern buildings have been included in the conservation area which are neutral; they make neither a positive nor negative contribution to the special character of the area. In the northern zone the New Boathouse is a good example of a building which matches its neighbour, the Old Boathouse. Bridge Court, with its shape and set-back from the road, makes good use of its corner site. 1 and 2 River Close are recent reasonably successful reproductions of Edwardian houses.

The principal negative features which affect the conservation area are outside its boundaries. These are the eyesores of the gas holder and Severnside depot in Mill Lane and the inappropriate Windrush building and compound on the corner of Bath Road and Mill Lane. Mill Lane is unsuitable for heavy goods vehicle traffic and the junction with Bath Road is dangerous, especially in view of the heavy traffic on the A4▶.



This makes a safe route for pedestrians particularly important. However the path under the Maidenhead Bridge - part of a national trail - is hardly enticing in its current state.

The Thames path passes through an untidy fenced-off boat yard, past arches cluttered with makeshift fences and through a grassed open space which does not invite the walker to linger and enjoy the river views.

More sensitivity in choice of surfaces for roads and paths and improvement of the open spaces would enhance the character of the area for residents and the many visitors alike.

The sensitivity of such a nationally important site as this stretch of the Thames including two “landmark” listed bridges, one of which is a potential World Heritage site, does not seem to have been recognised in the treatment of the streetscape or mediocre design of modern buildings.

The stretch of the A4 on the approach to the bridge looks rather scruffy and cluttered. An audit of signage, lighting, bollards, street furniture and road markings would be helpful in identifying how improvements could be made. The pavements on the bridge itself are dirty.

The fence next to the footpath under the Brunel bridge is modern, utilitarian and ugly. Victorian style wrought iron railings would be more appropriate. The brickwork of the bridge itself is badly stained and a survey of its condition is recommended. (This photograph of the Sounding Arch also illustrates where the bridge was widened either side of the central heavily-salted bricks).



The street “clutter” outside Gaiety Row has already been mentioned. The area would be enhanced if less visually intrusive ways of preventing unauthorised parking could be found.

The late Victorian/Edwardian buildings in the central and southern zones have suffered from remarkably little alteration. There is one example of an inappropriate large flat roof side extension and another house with uPVC doors and windows. The bungalows in Ellington Road and Bath Road are not in keeping with the two-three storey buildings prevalent in the area. Architectural details are particularly important in creating the special interest of the conservation area and this character could easily and quickly be eroded by insensitive alterations. The Council’s Conservation and Design Officers are always happy to give advice to owners and occupiers contemplating works to their property.

Boundary treatments and gardens are important not only because of their appearance but because of the sense of enclosure, which is appropriate to the prevailing style of architecture. The loss of the enclosure of a front boundary and garden, as at Laurel Cottage, makes for an unsympathetic urban appearance. Whilst walls, fences and hedges can all make suitable boundary treatments, depending on their context, the choice of material (for example walls which are not of red or stock brick look out of character), and type of fence is important. Whilst high close-board fencing may be appropriate to provide privacy for most back gardens, it is a negative factor when used for boundaries within the public realm unless masked by vegetation. Examples include fences at the corner of River Road and Ellington Road and along the Bath Road.



The 1930s flats at River Court would benefit from consistent and communal treatment of the exterior. It appears that individual flat-owners must be responsible for their own windows at River Court since there is a mish-mash of styles, mainly with uPVC frames, which are too bulky for these buildings which have an art-deco appearance. Only one flat has its original Crittall style windows and balcony door. The garages too would benefit from redecoration in a consistent manner.



An appropriate beneficial use for the important but vacant site of the old gas works would clearly enhance the area. Its historic boundary wall is a positive feature and its restoration (especially with closure of the fenced in gap) would be highly desirable.

The metal boathouse, still in operation, close to the Maidenhead Bridge adds character to the conservation area and is an important survival of the area's boating tradition but its poor condition impinges visually on the riverbank and the listed Maidenhead bridge.



The large paper mill processing building in its present form is visually intrusive whilst the condition of Skindles and Dunloe Lodge is of grave concern. Properties in Mill Lane and Bath Road, including the paper mill site, Skindles, Dunloe Lodge, the Severnside depot and Windrush Motors have recently been acquired by a new owner. This should give rise to a major opportunity to enhance the northern zone whilst preserving its special character. At the time of preparing this document no proposals have been made for any redevelopment. This appraisal merely seeks to define the special interest of the conservation area in accordance with current English Heritage guidance. More detailed investigation will be required into the archaeology, history and development of the northern zone and its buildings as part of the planning process for any redevelopment.

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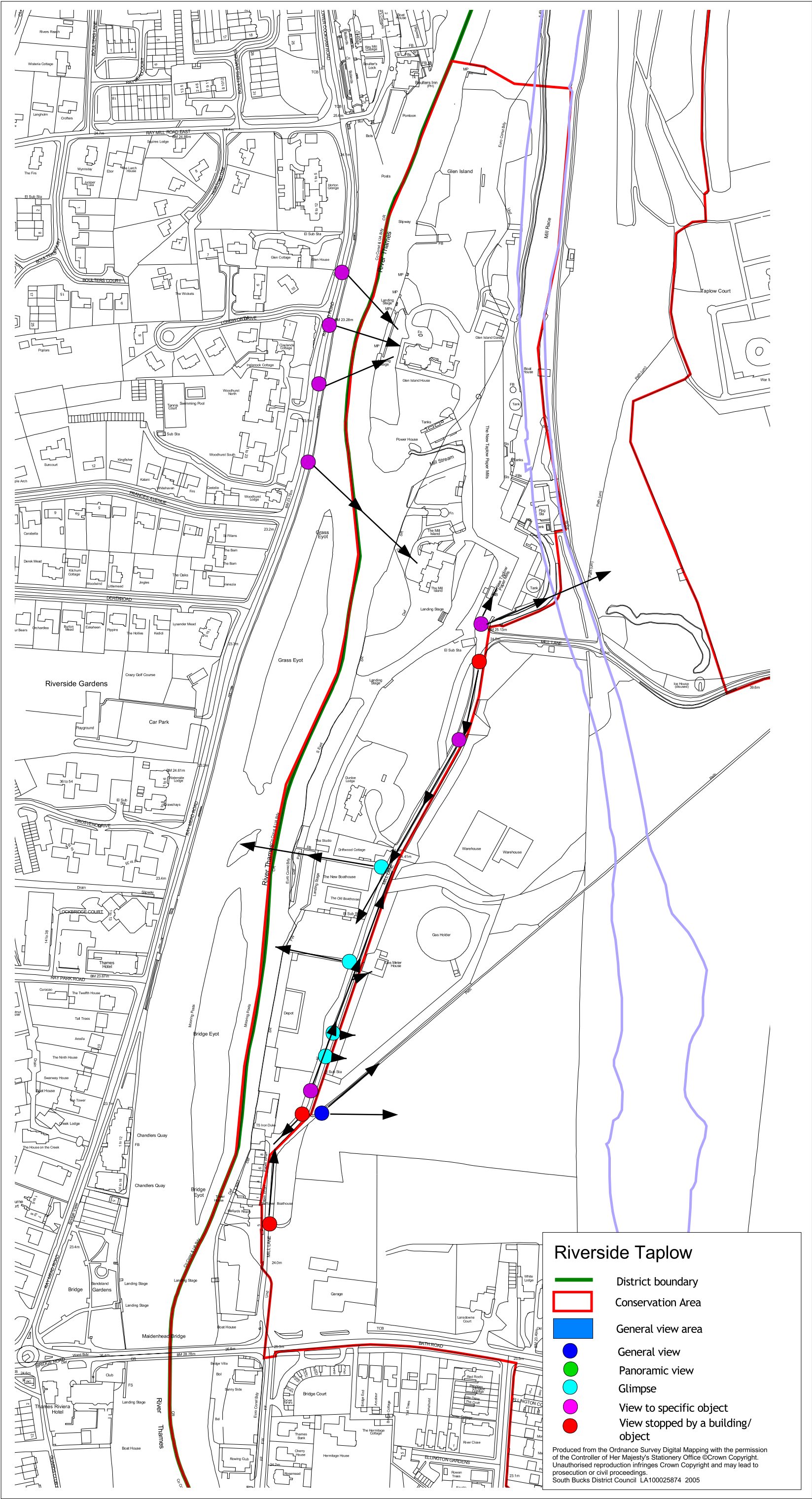
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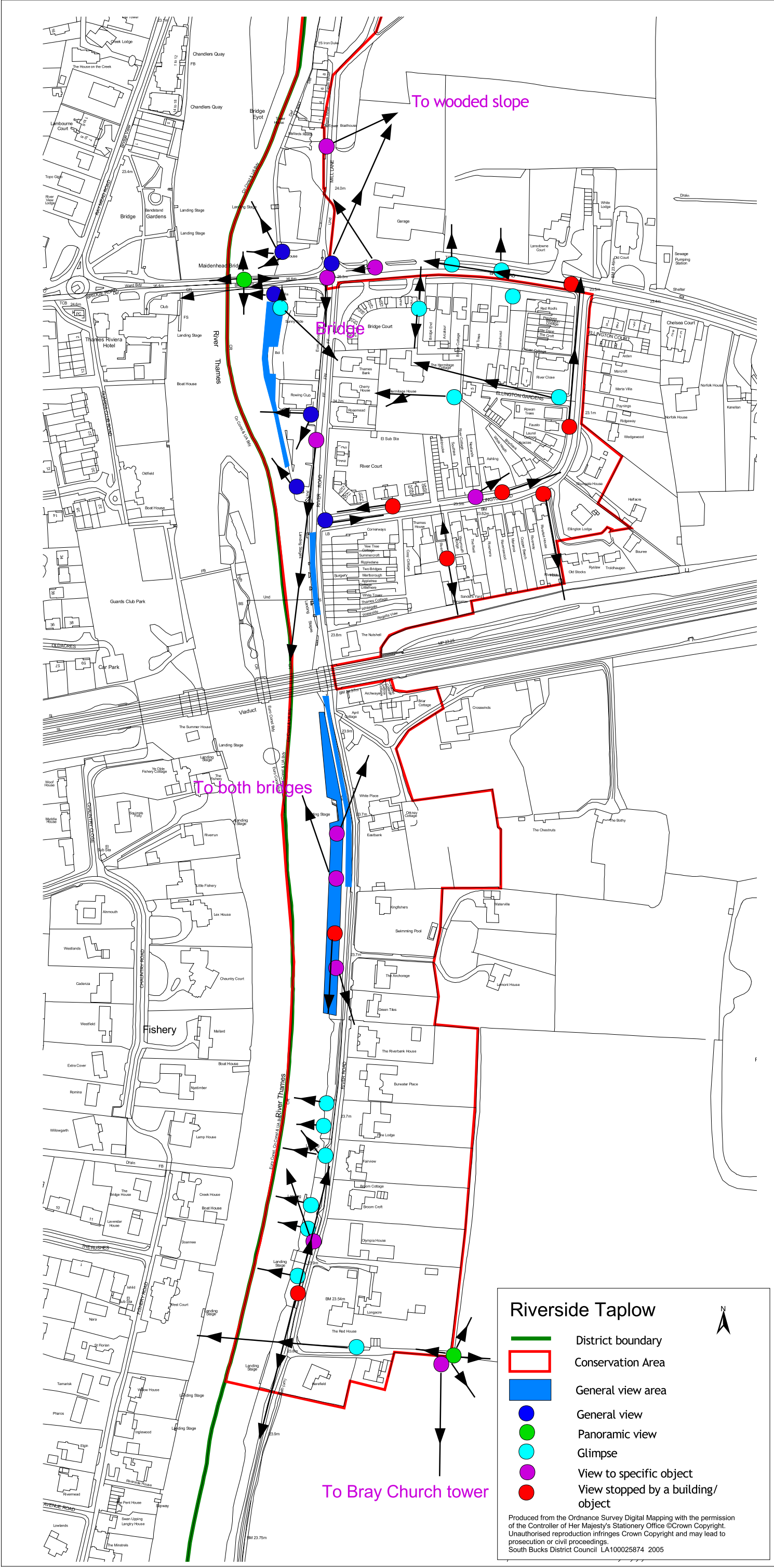




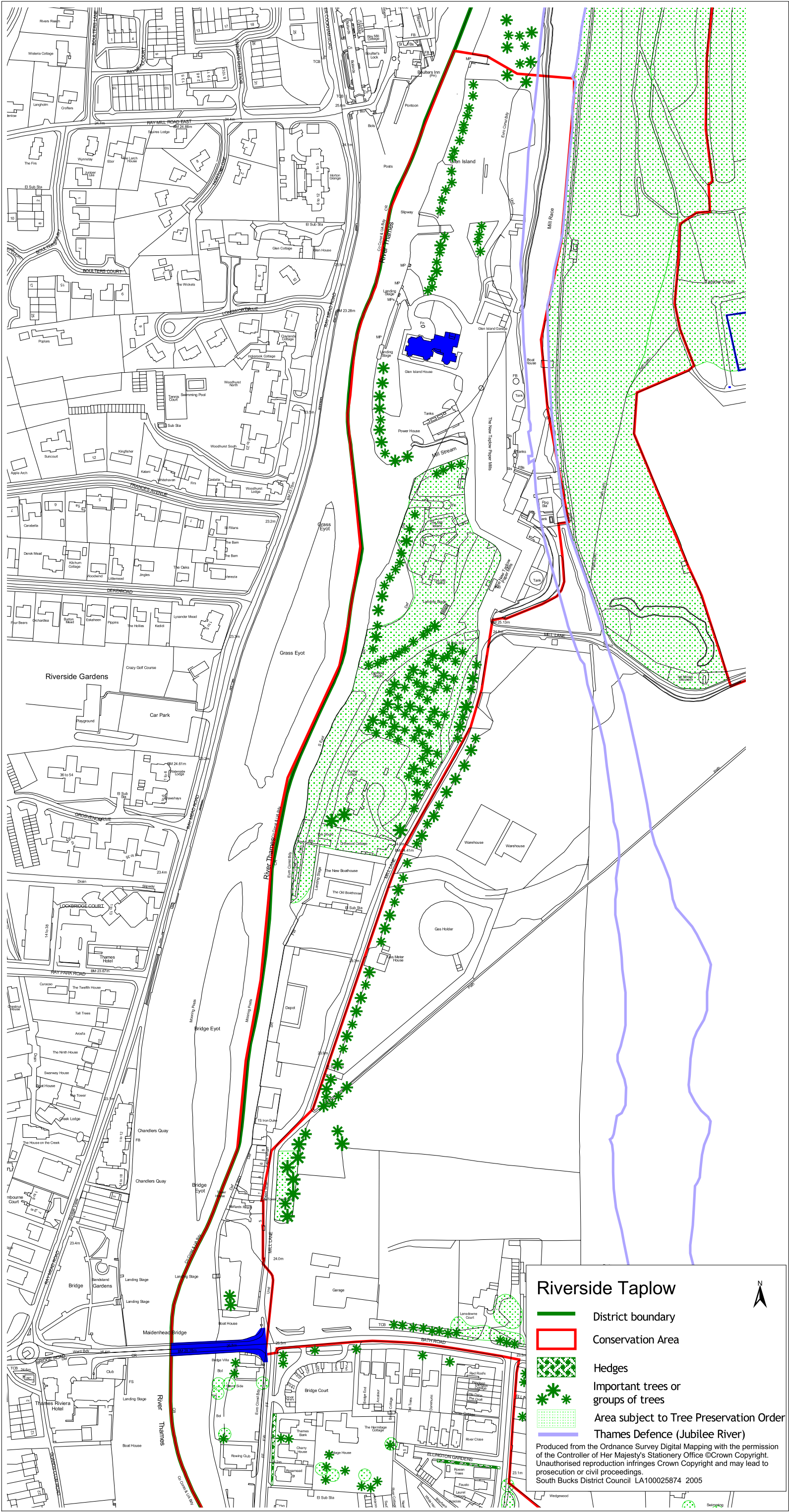
Riverside Taplow

- District boundary
- Conservation Area
- General view area
- General view
- Panoramic view
- Glimpse
- View to specific object
- View stopped by a building/object

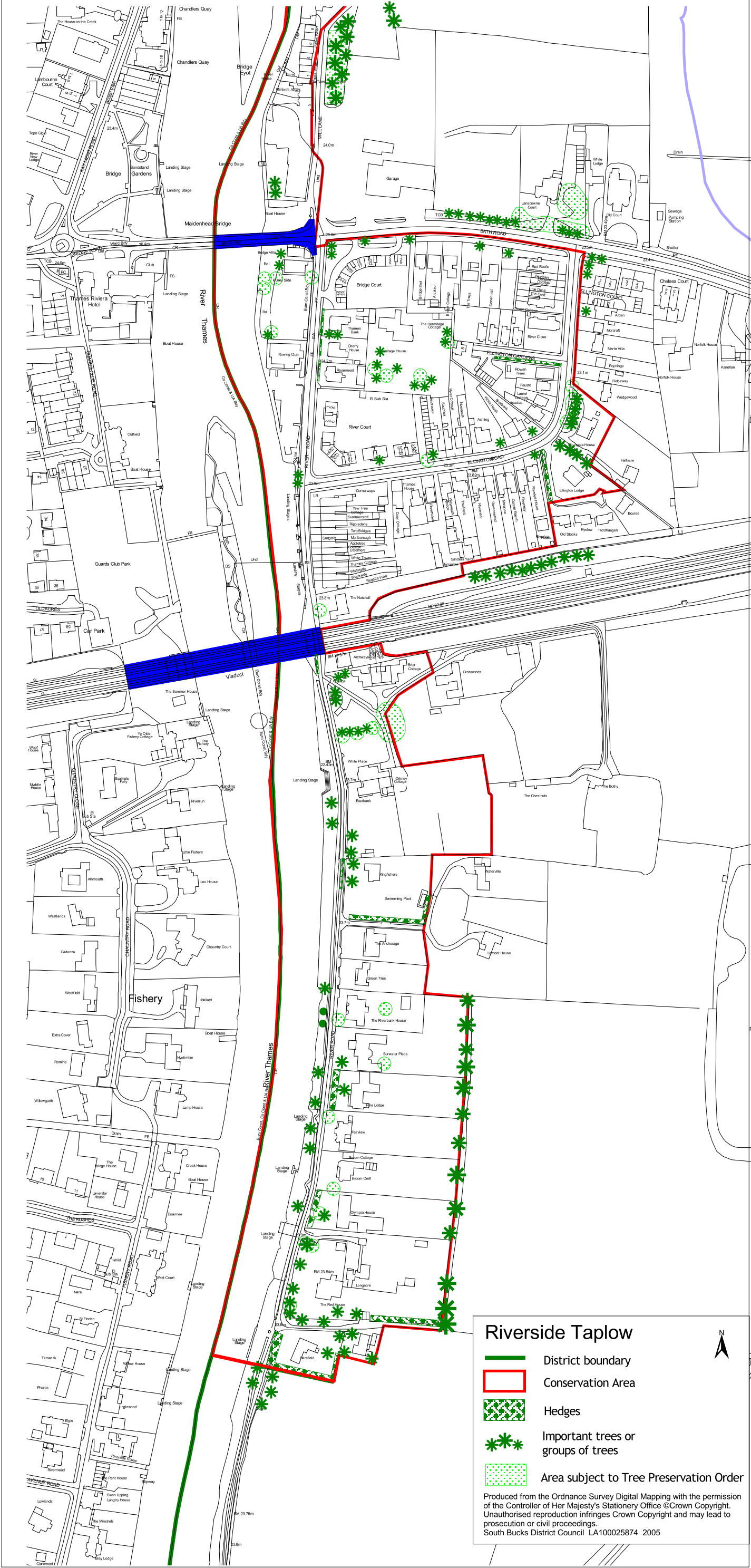
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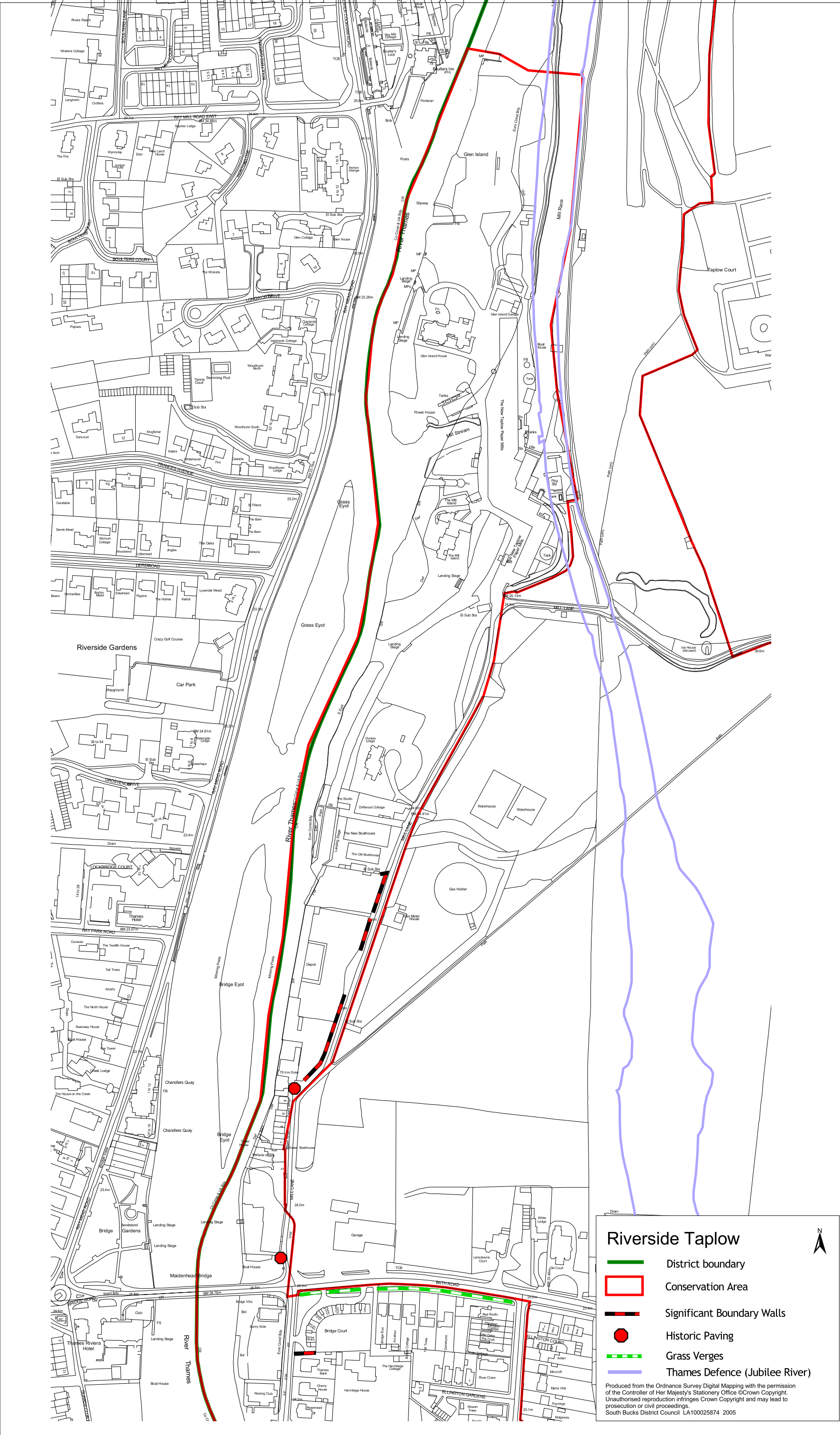




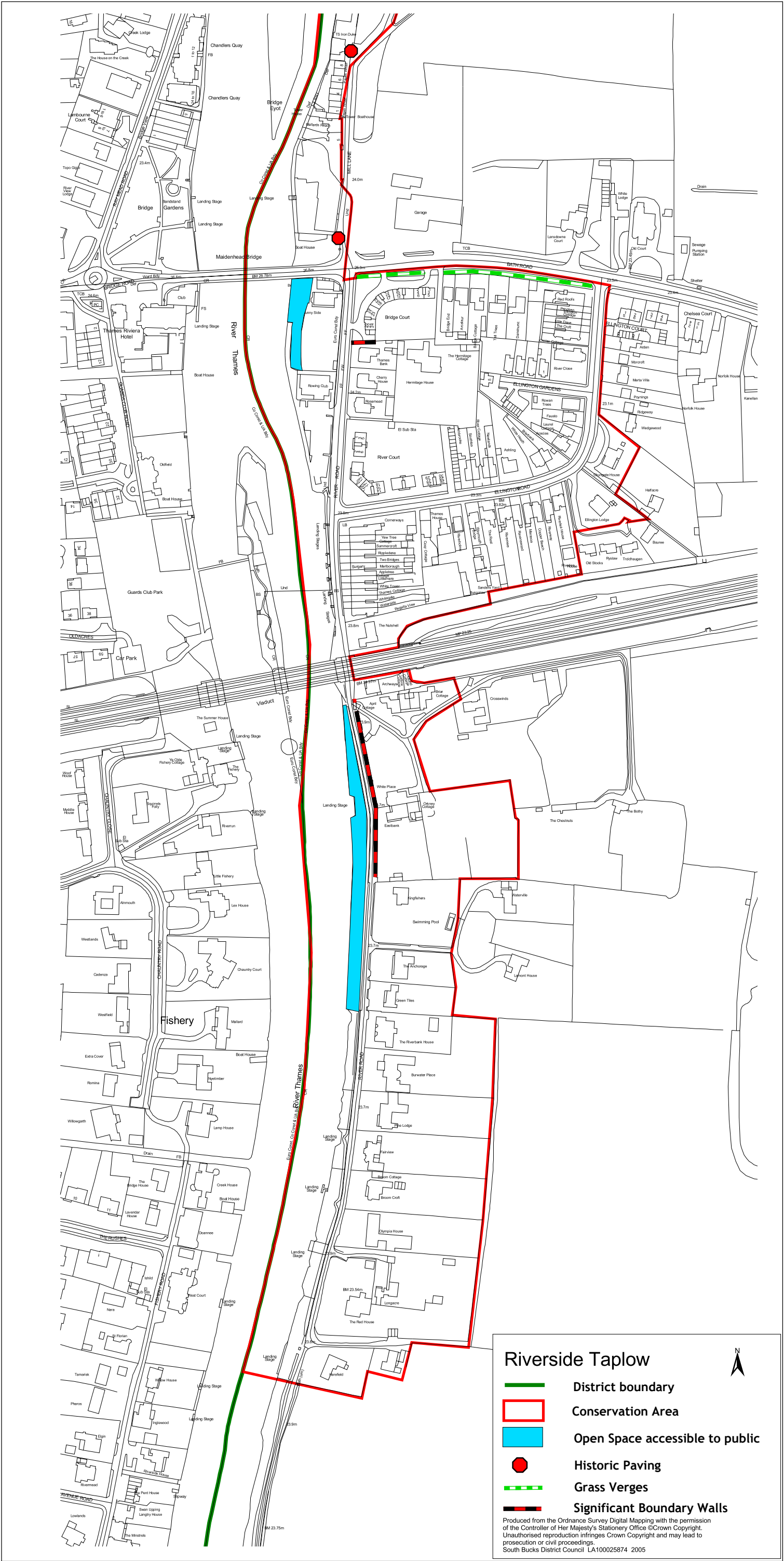


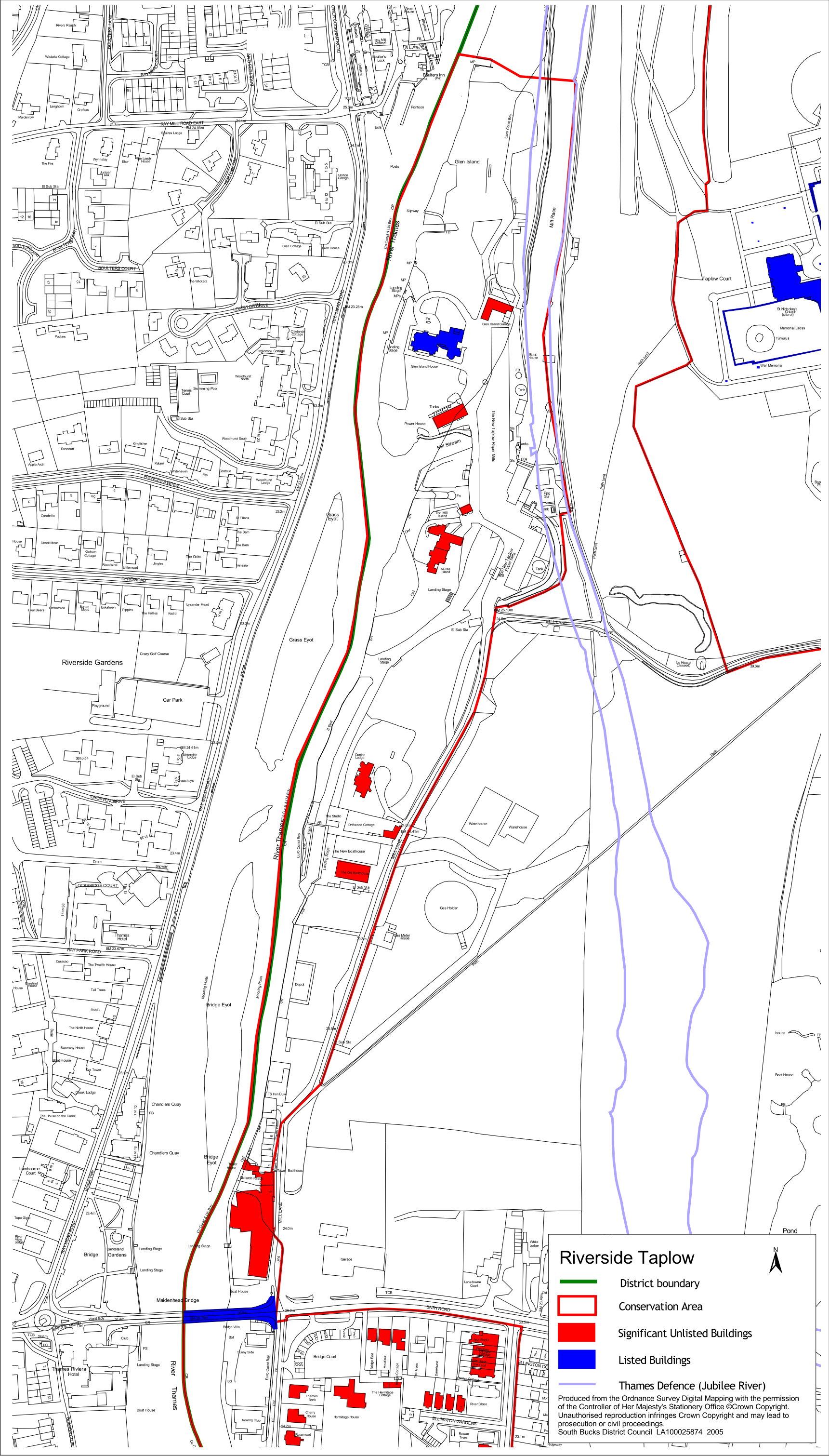




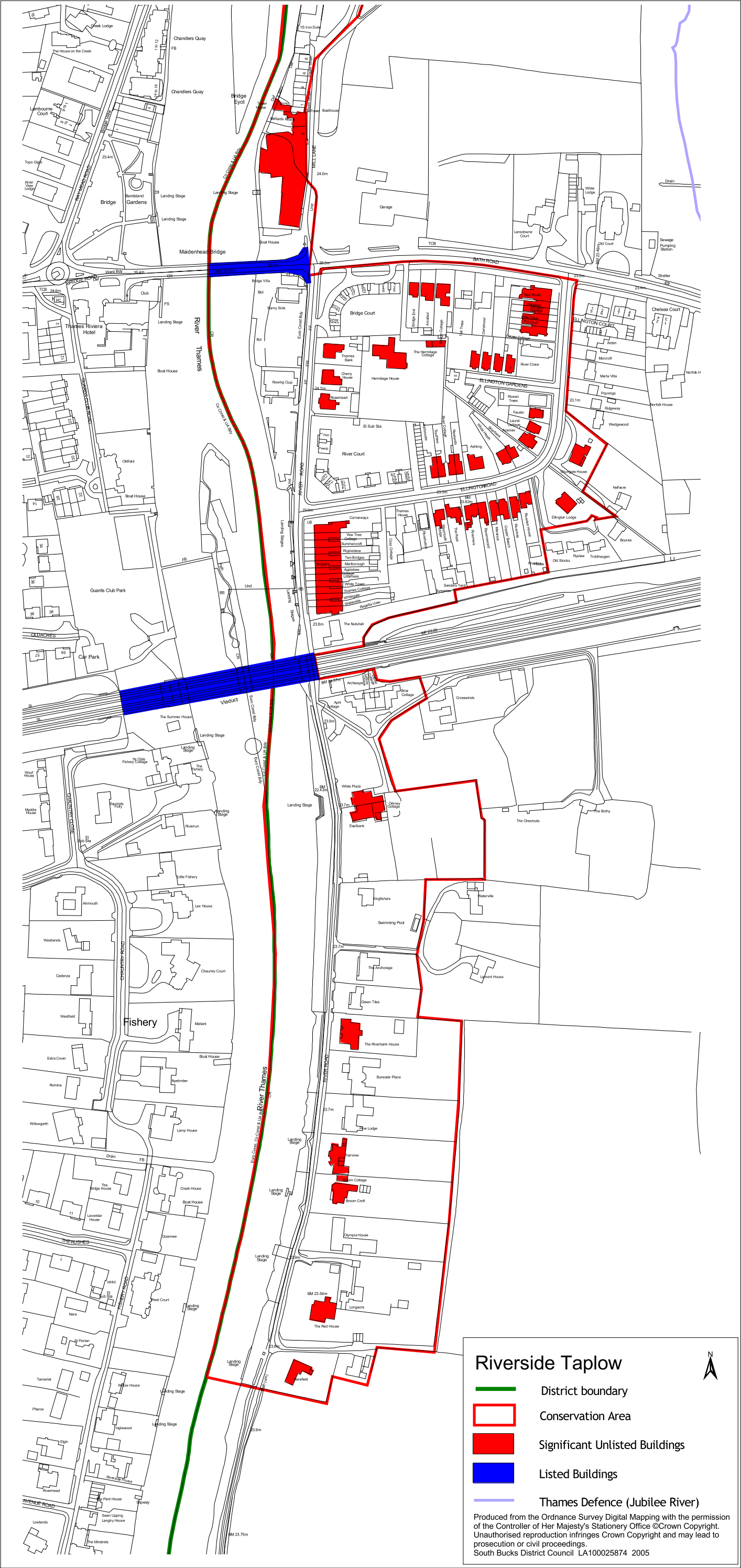












### **Listed buildings in the Taplow Riverside Conservation Area**

(These are the listed building descriptions)

#### **Maidenhead Bridge**

SU 98 SW

2/23

Listed 27.2.50.

Grade I.

Opened to traffic in 1777. Built by John Townsend of Oxford to the design of and under supervision of Sir Robert Taylor. Portland stone. 5 arches over river with four diminishing arches in the approaches, stone projecting vermiculated voussoirs, moulded cornice and balustrade.

#### **Maidenhead Railway Bridge and approach arches**

SU 98 SW

7/707.

Grade II\*.

1838. Built for GWR by I K Brunel. Red brick with some stone. A symmetrical composition of 3 approach arches, a 4<sup>th</sup> wider and taller arch over the tow path flanked by coupled pilasters, then the 2 segmental arches across the river. The segmental arches are each 128ft wide yet have a rise of only 24ft, the widest and flattest arches in the world. The bridge of Turner's 'Rain, Steam and Speed'. The other half of the bridge is in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

(NB - the western half of each bridge is within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead).

#### **Glen Island House, Mill Lane, Taplow**

496067

Listed 10/11/2006

Gentleman's residence of 1869 and 1884; no known architect.

MATERIALS: Buff brick, stone detailing, red tile roofs.

EXTERIOR: Glen Island House was built in 1869 and extended in an identical style in 1884 when a wing to the east with billiard room and bedrooms over was added. Facing south, with views west across the Thames to Maidenhead, it is a two-storey buff brick and stone house which uses an irregular plan and composition together with features like full-heighted canted bays, mullion and transom windows, turrets, fretted bargeboards, half-dormers, and tall brick ridge and lateral chimneys to create a picturesque effect. Independent access to the two parts of the house was facilitated in the later C20 by the construction of a short single-storey entrance or link on the south front. The original entrance front to the north is plainer than the other elevations, with a large, two-storey porch to the right of centre and a polygonal stair turret to the left whose conical roof rises above the general roof line. An iron dial indicates the water level in the house's tanks. The main elevations are to the west and the long garden front to the south. These have identical two-storey canted bays under projecting barge-boarded gables, one to the west and three to the south (two to the 1869 house, linked by an open verandah, and one to the 1884 part). The bays display monograms and the house's dates of construction. The west end also has a single-storey, straight-sided bay window almost wholly taken up with a mullion and transom window. This window is echoed by the annex to the billiard room which projects from the east side of the house, which is otherwise dominated visually by a row of four half-dormer windows and by the full gable at its right end.

(continued)

(*continuation*)

Attached to this corner of the house is a short single-storey range, part of the house's former service rooms.

INTERIOR: The west (1869) half of the house contains a large, double-height, staircase hall with panelling to picture rail level, a C17-style fireplace, and foliate plaster frieze; off this the two main living rooms open to the west, overlooking the river. Both these rooms have heavily carved C17-style fireplaces and like the other rooms retain their original woodwork including doors, skirting boards and window shutters. In the C20 these living rooms have been partly knocked through. Also opening off the hall is a south-facing reception room with heavy fireplace and decorative plaster cornice, and the south-facing former dining room, which also has a heavily carved fireplace, built-in sideboard, and ornate plaster cornice to its ceiling. The billiard room which occupies the south part of the east wing has dado panelling and in its east, or end, bay there is a fireplace with coloured tiles depicting Mother Hubbard and Taffy the Welshman. Above the fireplace is a window with stained glass depictions of the Palmer arms and the monograms of Sir Henry and Lady Palmer. Opening eastward off the billiard room is a small panelled annex, perhaps a smoking room. Behind the billiard room is a secondary staircase with stone cantilever stair with cast-iron balustrade and ramped oak stair rail. The main staircase has spiral-twist balusters and panelled newel posts with finials. Upstairs although the rooms have been converted to offices the general plan form survives along with most woodwork (doors, skirting boards) and plaster cornices.

HISTORY: Glen Island House stands on the east bank of the River Thames, opposite Maidenhead. It was built in 1869 for a local worthy, Lt. Gen. Sir Roger William Henry Palmer, Bart. (d.1910), a major Irish landowner, who had fought in several of the major battles of the Crimean War (participating in the Charge of the Light Brigade), and who later in life when resident at Glen Island was active in many Thames-side activities. In 1884 he had Glen Island House extended to the east in an identical style, doubling its size to create something akin to a small country house. The house stood north of Taplow paper mill, which in the mid C20 was greatly enlarged. The house has been used for many years as offices for the paper mill company.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE: Glen Island House, a Thames-side gentleman's residence, was built in 1869 and extended in a similar style in 1884 when a wing to the east with billiard room and bedrooms over was added. Although gentlemen's residences were a common type of building, Glen Island House stands out as a very good example of the genre - especially on the Thames - through the overall attention to detail both externally and internally, where the quality and decoration of some of the fittings verges on the opulent. It survives in a good and little-altered condition. The 40-year residence of its original owner, Lt. Gen. Sir W.H. Palmer - at the time a man of considerable renown - adds to its interest.

SOURCES: Who Was Who, sv Palmer, Sir R.W.H.

**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	Bath Road	Bridge End, Arcalaur & Bridge Cottage	Group of 3 houses c.1900. White painted pebbledash with plain tiled roofs. Centre house different with rendered walls and hipped roof - also replaced windows but has group value. Not distinguished or ornate but they form an interesting group on edge of the area with tall chimneys and interesting varied shapes, especially of roofs.
	Bath Road	The Hermitage & Hermitage Cottage	Formerly called Wargrave Lodge. One of two survivors of group of 5 houses sold at auction in 1904 (the other survivor is Lansdowne Court) and built around 1890 and appears unaltered externally. Red brick to ground floor with some moulded bricks around windows. Red brick quoins and dressings. Unpainted pebbledash and white painted half-timbering to upper storey. Gables. Large chimneys with recessed panels. Originally a house and later used as an hotel. Once the home of local worthy, Col. Marriott, president of the Taplow cricket club and the Middle Thames Archaeological Society and then used as a museum. Now a training centre. Hermitage Cottage contemporaneous with house - converted from stabling.
↻	Ellington Gardens	nos. 1,2,3 & 4	Group of 4 houses built end-on to road. c.1900. Pitched roofs. 2 storey with attic window in gable - octagonal in 1 & 3 and rectangular in 2 & 4. Pebbledash walls - 2,3 & 4 are painted. Full height bays - 1 & 3 are canted with dentilled cornice. Casement windows with leaded lights. Replacement windows to no. 3. Entrances to open porches have round arches. All appear to have original doors.
	Ellington Road	Red Roofs, Pendeen, Ellington Cottage, Little Dene, The Croft, Corner Cottage	Large and ornate landmark building on corner of Bath Road and Ellington Road. c.1900. 2 storey with attic storey. White painted pebbledash walls with much half-timbering. Some hanging clay tiles. Plain clay tiled roofs. Many large gables - canted bays. Porthole window with brick dressings. Casement windows with leaded lights. Wooden balcony. Porches with round headed entrances. Some original doors. Some roof finials.



**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	Ellington Road	Fausto, Laurel Cottage & Acacias	Detached. End-on to road. 2 storey with attic - rectangular attic window in front gable. Similar shapes but with differing decoration. Hanging tiles to Laurel Cottage. White painted pebble dash but Laurel Cottage & Acacias have red brick to ground floor. Half-timbering, particularly ornate on Fausto but none on Acacias. Oriel windows with projecting upper storey. Bay window. Bracketed canopy over door at side of Fausto. Side porches of Laurel Cottage and Acacias have been covered-in. Front garden of Laurel Cottage made into open-plan hard-standing. Casement windows with leaded upper lights.
±	Ellington Road	Briarbank & White Heath	Pair of semi-detached houses. Highly decorated, especially White Heath. 2 storey with attic storey. Red brick to ground floor but painted white at Briarbank. White painted pebbledash. Plain clay tiled hipped and pitched roofs with ridge crests and finials. Casement windows. Atypical bow window added at Briarbank. White Heath has a flat canopy over front door supported by large ornate brackets; double front gable - main gable has half-hipped roof with pierced and scalloped barge board; half-timbered turret on western elevation with bell shaped lead covered roof. Roof crests and finials.
	Ellington Road	Ashling	c. 1900 Detached two storey house with plain clay tiled hipped roof and later dormer. Roof crest and finials. Red brick with upper storey pebbledashed (white painted) and half-timbered. Cantled bays with large front gable projecting over one bay. Casement windows with small panes in upper lights. Porch with pitched roof.
	Ellington Road	Newlands, River Cottage, Southlea & Ashbrooke	Pair of two-storey semi-detached houses- much plainer than other houses in the road. Pan-tiled pitched roofs which are made to look like hipped roofs at front elevation by projecting beyond chimney-stacks on each side elevation. Continuous pan-tiled roofs over bay windows and doors. Ashbrooke and Newlands have white painted carved wooden posts/brackets and trellis in porch. Red brick with pebbledash upper floors painted in various colours. Rooflight at Southlea. Uncharacteristic flat-roofed extension at Ashbrooke. Apart from the southern end of Gaiety Row these are the only pan-tiled roofs in the area - might there be a connection? A 1902 sales catalogue plan shows 2 pairs of semi-detached houses in the same position named (from east to west - Meadowside, Homefield, South view and Florence Villa.

**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	Ellington Road	Chungates	Late 1920s detached 2 storey asymmetric house. Red brick to ground floor with unpainted pebbledash, half-timbered, to upper storey. Plain tiled roof. Large casement windows.
	Ellington Road	Ellington Lodge	Probably 1890s. Symmetrical with two projecting front gables and centre door. Stock brick with red brick dressings. White painted half-timbering to gables. Concrete tiled roof. Sash windows with some uPVC replacements. Different from "Arts & Craft" style houses which predominate in area.
	Ellington Road	Riverlea	Detached house - 2-storey. Pitched plain tiled roof. Gable with half-timbering. Casement windows with coloured glass in some upper lights. Porch with tiled floor and wooden spindles to front.
—	Ellington Road	Riverway, Copper Beech, Maranoa, Ravenswood, Rivernere	Copper Beech & Maranoa are semi-detached. Remainder are detached. c.1900. All are different but exhibit many of the features which add to the character of the area. These include pebble-dash and red brick, half-timbering, hanging tiles, gables, bracketed eaves and porches. Several have corner porches with elaborately carved posts and decoration. Copper Beech and Maranoa have applied decoration in the half-timbering which appear to be stylised bows and arrows and, possibly, tulips. Casement windows.
	Ellington Road	The Rest & Weymouth Lodge	Detached houses of similar style. 1890s. Red brick with ornate tile hanging to upper storey on Weymouth Lodge whilst The Rest has painted pebble dash. Full height bay with half-timbered front gable with patterned barge board. Sash windows suggest earlier date. Ridge crests on hipped roofs. Porch with pitched roof and ornate timber pattern. Steps up to front door. Long stair window. (Mandarin House (formerly Riverholme) omitted from table because of inappropriate replacement windows and doors).
	Mill Lane	Glen Island garage	Dated 1880 with initials of Sir Roger Palmer. Originally stable block to Glen Island House - partly converted to garage. U-plan, open to south-east around a stable yard. Stock brick with timber framed gables and plain-tiled roofs. Within curtilage of listed Glen Island House. More altered than the house but some tethering rings, and tiled walls remain in stable.

**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	Mill Lane	Former power house at New Taplow paper mill	1930s - stock brick with copper-covered hipped roof. One tall storey, classical appearance with pilasters and prominent rendered cornice. Marked as "roll store" on St. Regis site map.
	Mill Lane	Mill Island House	Early 19C and extended 1869 for Charles Venables, owner of Taplow mills and other paper mills in the district. Stock brick with slate roofs. Some windows replaced with uPVC. Two storey gabled entrance porch faces river and looks unaltered and retains its floor tiles. Informal picturesque composition.
	Mill Lane	Mill Island Cottage	Was the lodge to Mill Island House. Built of similar materials with date 1876 and Charles Venables' initials. 2 storeys. Extended on eastern side. Brick damaged to west and north sides.
✓	Mill Lane	Dunloe Lodge	Dated 1896. Large riverside house in picturesque style with tile-hung elevations, hipped plain tiled roofs and ornamental painted timber bay windows, oriels, dormers and verandahs. Prominent brick chimneystacks. Originally called Millstream and occupied by Mrs Benson in 1899 (Kelly's directory) so may have been built for her. By 1911 occupied by George Palmer (per Kelly's) who was a Brigadier General by 1924. Present name owed to connection with Earl of Clancarty (formerly Viscount Dunlo (sic) who died here in 1929.
	Mill Lane	Driftwood Cottage	Originally the lodge to Dunloe Lodge - also tile hung. OS map shows it was in separate occupation by 1955.
	Mill Lane	The Old Boathouse	Not dated but probably late 19C. A boathouse is shown here on the 1899 OS map. Black and white timbering - modern metal roof. With the later adjacent New Boathouse forms a landmark from Mill Lane, the river and the Maidenhead bank. Converted to office use.
	Mill Lane	Tower House	The tower is another landmark waterside building when viewed from the river, the opposite bank and Maidenhead Bridge. Black and white timberframing with pyramidal copper covered roof, decorated cornice and weather vane. An oriel window and balcony hang over the river.

**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	Mill Lane	Skindles	Important social history - see chapter 7. Surviving buildings are two storey in two main blocks, facing the river with a riverside terrace. White painted stucco with hipped slate roofs. With their deep, bracketed eaves, moulded window and door surrounds, they have an Italianate character suggesting a mid-19C date. They may have older origins as riverside villas. At the north end of the main block is a lower 2-storey wing, with the entrance to the former Brigade of Guards Boating Club, with dated key block 1883. There is a further two storey and attic range further up Mill Lane with a later 19C character. Interior inspection would be required for further investigation of the building's history and the survival of internal features.
➤	River Road	Thames Bank, Cherry House & Rosemead	Three detached 2-storey with attic houses probably built around 1890 exhibiting many of the features which give the area its character - red brick, plain clay roof tiles with ridge crests and roof finials - especially notable are the dragon finials. Hanging tiles, gables, balconies with white painted wooden carved balustrades, large chimneys, casement windows with divided upper lights. Interesting semi-circular window in gable of Rosemead.



**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	River Road	Cornerways (Ellington Road), Yew Tree Cottage, Summernote, Rippledene, Two Bridges, Marlborough, Apple Tree Cottage, White Tower, Thames Cottage, Whiteplace, Waterside, Regatta View	Known collectively as Gaiety Row because of their associations with the Gaiety Girls (one of whom married the Earl of Orkney). Asymmetrical composition of 12 houses, probably built in two phases with the southern six (including the White Tower) being built later. They are of two storeys with pan-tiled roofs with wide, shallow front gables. The northern six have an attic storey with narrower, steeper gables and plain tiled roofs. Not dated but <i>The Terrace, Riverside</i> is marked on a 1902 sales catalogue plan. They exhibit the usual late Victorian/Edwardian interesting features such as turrets, finials, pebble dash and half-timbering. The balconies have been glazed in, mostly with inappropriate large-paned windows. Summernote is a particularly good example which has retained its character. Said to have been designed in the offices of well-known Reading architect, Joseph Morris, who became Berkshire's first County Surveyor and designed several municipal buildings. Some believe that the row was actually designed by his daughter, Violet Morris, who may have been the first British female architect.
✓	River Road	White Place, Eastbank & Orkney Cottage	Original house called Orkney Lodge or Orkney Cottage. Now divided into 3. Only the upper storey and roof can be seen over brick boundary wall. Probably built pre-1850. White painted brick. Shallow slate covered multiple roofs. 12 pane sash windows. Verandah with intricate wrought iron posts.
	River Road	Riverbank House	Probably built c.1890. Prominent building with north gable end highly visible next to road because neighbouring properties set back. 2 storey with attic. Asymmetric composition with gables - pitched and half-hipped roof. Pebble dash painted white with some scalloped hanging tiles. Full-height canted bays. Balcony with modern wrought iron balustrade. Clay tile roof (replacement?). Large chimneys.

**TABLE OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

	Road	Address	Description
	River Road	Fairview	Probably built 1890s. 2 storey. Red brick, scalloped hanging tiles, moulded bricks over some windows. Unpainted pebble dash and half-timbered gables -protruding central gable has half-timbered coved cornice. Balcony and verandah each with white painted ornate wooden balustrade. Clay-tiled roof with fleur-de-lys finials. Casement windows with stained glass in upper lights.
	River Road	Broomcroft	Probably built c.1890. 2 storey with attic - central gable with window and dormer windows to sides. Large balcony and verandah with white painted wooden balustrades. White painted brick to ground floor with unpainted pebble dash to upper storey. Red brick "soldier" courses over windows. Casement windows with leaded lights. Full height bays including bay at south-west corner.
➤	River Road	Red House	c.1890s. 2 storey. Asymmetric with one gable which has porthole window. Painted brick to ground floor. Hanging clay tiles. Full width verandah. Clay tiled roof. Dragon finial on gable. Casement windows with leaded lights. Tall chimney sited down front roof-slope.
	River Road	Harefield	House partly obscured by boundary hedge. Tile-hung elevations. May be later Edwardian.

### **Materials**

The lack of good local building stone is reflected in the predominant building materials used in the conservation area. Bath stone was used only for the most prestigious developments, such as the Maidenhead Bridge and detailing on Glen Island House and the Brunel Bridge.

Local Denner Hill stone (a very hard sandstone unsuitable for building but ideal as a durable paving material) was used for road setts.

Most of the buildings in the conservation area date from around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when non-local materials, such as Welsh slate could be transported nationwide. However local clay was available for high class red bricks and tiles, especially from the Pinkneys Green brick and tile works near Maidenhead, and brick and clay tile predominate in the area.

Timber and gravel are readily available in the vicinity of Taplow.

### **Details**

At Taplow Riverside these materials were used to create high-quality details typical of that turn of the century era. Black or white half-timbering (often highly patterned) and pebbledash (usually left unpainted) were particularly fashionable treatments around 1900 as part of the Vernacular Revival. Also popular were tile-hung elevations - plain or shaped, often in a scalloped pattern, ornate brick chimneys, moulded bricks (especially around windows), pierced bargeboards, terracotta ridge crests and roof finials, bay and oriel windows. Timber was used to make elaborate porches and balconies. The riverside situation made viewing features such as balconies, verandahs, towers and turrets particularly important elements in establishing the special interest of the conservation area. Towers and turrets have a variety of roof coverings, plain clay tile, lead or copper. Sheet or corrugated metal was used for roofing, and in some cases walls, of commercial buildings, notably boathouses.

Window treatments also contributed to the exuberant appearance of buildings. Casement, rather than sash windows, are more common, with the upper parts of the window divided into several panes, sometimes with coloured and patterned glass, and frequent use of leaded lights.

It is only possible to illustrate these materials and details by showing a few examples photographed in the area.











## Conservation Areas

### Guidance for Residents

#### **What is a Conservation Area?**

An area with special historic or architectural character.

#### **Who designates a Conservation Area?**

The local planning authority has the power to designate Conservation Areas under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

#### **What does Conservation Area designation mean for residents?**

Owners of properties within a designated Conservation Area are unable to carry out certain works unless they get planning permission or Conservation Area Consent.

#### **What are these works?**

- Demolition of the whole or a substantial part of the property
- Demolition of boundary walls over a certain height
- Side or rear extensions over 50 cubic metres or 10% of the original volume up to a maximum of 115 cubic metres
- Alterations to the shape or size of the roof
- Cladding of the exterior of the property
- Erection of a satellite dish in certain locations
- Buildings (eg sheds, summerhouses) or enclosures (eg swimming pools) within the curtilage of a house, which exceed 10 cubic metres in volume.

Also, notice must be given to the authority at least 6 weeks prior to any works to **trees** within a Conservation Area. For further information please contact the Tree Officer on 01895 837376 or 837207.

#### **Are extensions allowed in Conservation Areas?**

Yes.

Planning applications in Conservation Areas, like any other location, are considered on their merits. Should a proposal to extend a property be regarded as in keeping with the character of the area by the Conservation & Design Officer it would gain permission (this, of course, is subject to Planning Officer approval based on the usual planning criteria). If the proposal is deemed not to be in keeping with the character of the area efforts can be made by the applicant to improve the proposal on the advice of Officers so that it can become acceptable and be given permission. It is through this

process that Conservation Area legislation acts to protect the special character of these areas.

**Are satellite dishes allowed in Conservation Areas?**

Yes.

If you ensure that only one satellite dish per property (of less than 90cm in diameter) is installed in a permitted location then you are free to carry out the installation without planning permission. Dishes should be sited below the roofline and away from the front of the house and the chimneys.

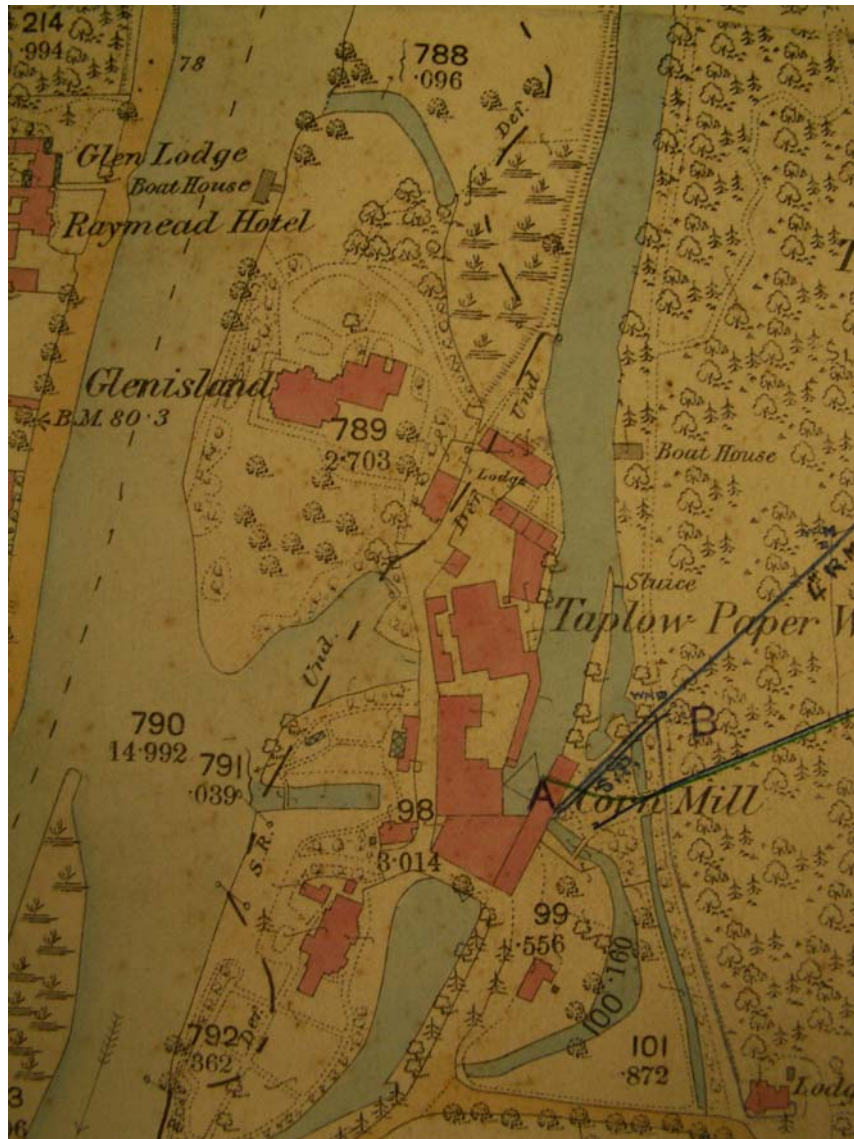
**Further advice**

Should any further information be required on any aspect of the implications of living in a Conservation Area or local planning regulations please contact Planning Admin or the Conservation Section at the Council's Capswood offices on 01895 837200.



Extract from map showing the paper mill site. This map, used to show water pipes serving Taplow, is based on the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1875 and reprinted 1888. (Held by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies ref. Ma/203 2)

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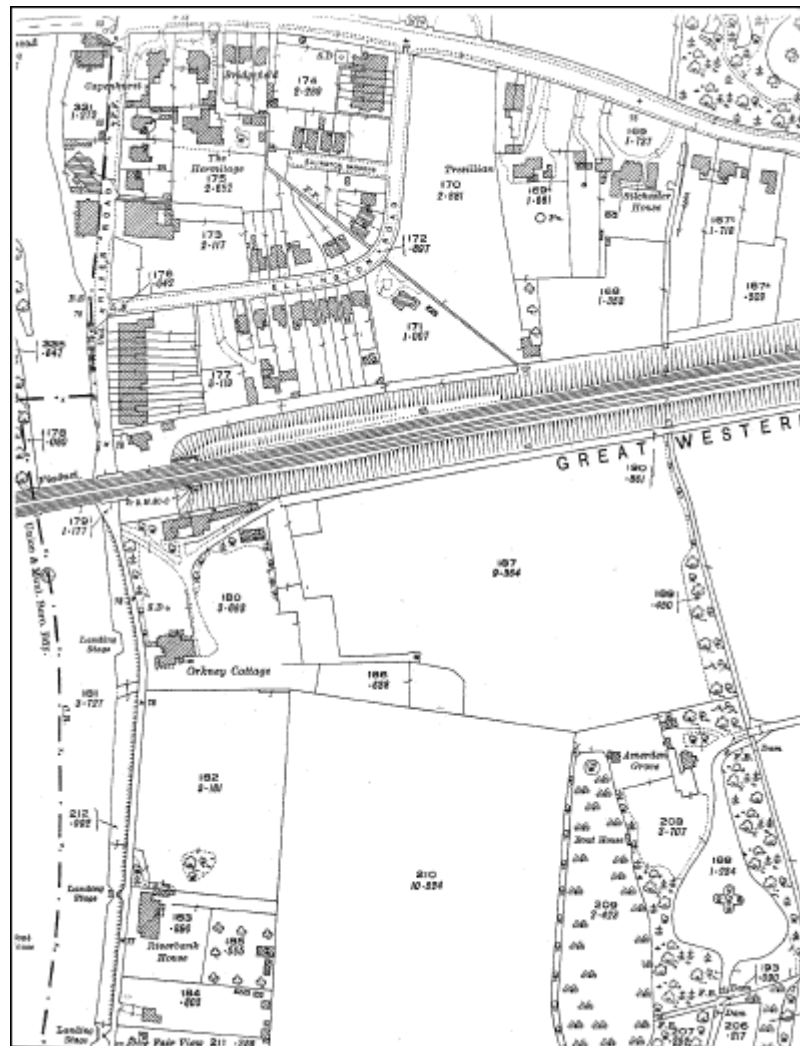
Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1899 map

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Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1925 map

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